

VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL: TWO WORLDS

Evening and morning, two worlds.
This world and the next world, two worlds.
Rabbi Hanoch once pondered,
"What is the difference between us and the others?"
We and the other nations both believe that there are two worlds.
They, too, say, "In the other world."

The difference lies in this:
They think that the two worlds are separate and severed.
We profess that the two worlds are in their essence one,
"and shall one day become one."

How do they imagine these two worlds? For some
Vertically:
One world below, the other above.
One world here and the other there.

For others two worlds
Horizontally.
One stretch of time and place,
Side by side one world alongside another.
One time, one world entering into another.
One world partially achieved, one world yet to be accomplished.
One world actualized, and the same world to be realized.
Both worlds are one, bound to each other
memory and history was, is and ought to be.
One world, yesterday, today and tomorrow, linked in yearning and work,
Linked in dreams and effort, horizontally.

- *Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis*