

**Rabbi Bun bar Hiyya Qoheleth Rabbah 5.11 § 5** [Parallel versions in *y. Ber.* 5c 2.8; *Cant. Rab.* 6.2.]

When R. Bun b. R. Hiyya died, R. Zera went in and delivered a funeral oration over him on the present verse, SWEET IS THE SLEEP OF A LABOURING MAN [5:11]. To whom was R. Bun b. R. Hiyya like? to a king who possessed a vineyard and hired many labourers to work it. Among them was one labourer far more skilled in his work than the rest; so what did the king do? He took him by the hand and walked with him up and down. Towards evening the labourers came to receive their wages and this labourer came with them, and he gave him the full amount. The others began to grumble, saying, "We toiled all day, whereas this man toiled only for two hours, and yet the king has given him his full wage." The king said to them, "What cause have you for grumbling? This man in two hours did more good work than you in a whole day." Similarly R. Bun b. R. Hiyya learned in twenty eight years more Torah than an eminent scholar could learn in a hundred years.

**Semachot de Rabbi Chiyah 3.2 (Young 1988, 264)**

How do the righteous come [into the world?] Through love, because they uphold the world through their good deeds. How do they depart —also through love. R. Simeon ben Eleazar [ca. 190] told a parable. To what may the matter be compared? To a king who hired two labourers. The first worked all day and received one denarius. The second worked only one hour and yet also received one denarius. Which one was more beloved? Not the one who worked one hour and received a denarius! Thus Moses our teacher served Israel 120 years and Samuel [served them] only 52 years. Nevertheless, both are equal before the Omnipresent. As it is said, THEN THE LORD SAID TO ME, THOUGH MOSES AND SAMUEL STOOD BEFORE ME [Jer 15:1] and thus he said MOSES AND AARON WERE AMONG HIS PRIESTS [Ps 99:6]; concerning them and others like them He says SWEET IS THE SLEEP OF THE LABOURER WHETHER HE EATS LITTLE OR MUCH [Qoh 5:12].

Tanchuma Ki Tissa 3, 151a (English translation AM from the German Horeb edition):

R. Levi said: To what may this issue be compared?

To a king who hired workers for his work. While they were working, the king took one of them and went for a walk with him. In the evening the workers came to receive their reward. The worker, who went for a walk with the king, came to receive his reward. Can the king say to him: you worked only two hours with them; receive according to your accomplishments? He (the worker) also can say to the king: If you had not let me be idle and go for a walk with you, my reward would have been greater.

So it is with the Holy One, blessed be He, blessed be his name. The king is the Holy One, blessed be He. And the worker, that are those, who toiled in Thora. He who has devoted himself to Thora for 50 years, and he who has devoted himself to Thora for 20 years or 30 years, can say: If you had not abducted me, I had devoted myself to Thora even more. Therefore Salomon says: "[Sweet is the sleep of the labourer] whether he eats little or much", their reward is equal.

**Sifra on Lev 26:5**

"And I will have regard for you" (Lev 26:9). They tell a parable: to what may the matter be compared? To a king who hired many labourers. One labourer was there who had done work for the king many days. The labourers came to take their wages and that labourer was among them. The king said to that labourer, "I will have regard for you." These many labourers have done little work and therefore I will pay them a minimum wage. But you have a great reward which I will add up for you in the future." Thus Israel seeks their reward in the present world from before the Omnipresent. The nations of the world likewise seek their reward from before Him. But the Omnipresent says to Israel, "My children, I will have regard for you. These nations of the world have done only a little work for me, and I will give them a minor recompense. But you have a great reward which I will add up for you in the future." As it was said, "I will have regard for you" (Lev 26:9).

**Midrash Psalms 26.3.**

When a king hires good labourers who perform their work well and he pays them their wage -- what praise does he merit? When is he worthy of praise? When he hires incompetent workers who do not do their work properly and yet he pays them their full wage."