

The indispensable return of a public Sabbath.

A conversation between economics and theology on community building in the midst of radical uncertainty

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Abstract

In 2011 Tomas Sedlacek argued in his bestseller *Economics of Good and Evil* that the Sabbath has disappeared from today's economic theory (2011, p. 89). However, in 2012 Ariely pleaded for a return of the Sabbath as a coordination mechanism in economics that support the governance of the human condition. Ariely focused on dishonesty. In this paper the focus is the human condition of radical uncertainty. In their book *Radical Uncertainty* (2020), the economists John Kay and Mervyn King reject the claim of neoclassical economics that radical uncertainty can be reduced to risk. People do not only live in a world of risk, but also in a world of radical uncertainty. For Kay and King, the role of an economist is to help politicians, public servants, business people and families to think about their economic and social issues. They do so, not by providing an universal theory, but to select relevant narratives. In this paper the Exodus narrative is selected as a relevant narrative to deal with radical uncertainty, based on the work of public philosopher and rabbi Jonathan Sacks. In Sacks' interpretation of the Exodus, a political, better said 'public' Sabbath, is seen as key institution for community building in the midst of radical uncertainty, based on relational assumptions of human beings (Sacks 2010, p. 331). First results are presented from ongoing research in the Dutch infrastructure sector, which is confronted with radical uncertainty, due to the transition to a future-proof living environment.

References

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