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"THE BIBLE AS LIVING REALITY"

INTRODUCTION

(This is a mixed audience of Orthodox-Conservative-Reform.

"The Fourth Mission." Reform believe in "mission" - "mishen" milk and meat; Conservatives - men and women; Orthodox - state and religion. This is the fourth illustration: "mishen" all three groups!)

1. Zohar (Mishpatim) on Torah: Torah compared to maiden in castle motioning to secret lover....gradually reveals herself completely...from this we learn:

- (a) must never take Torah superficially
- (b) Torah contains layer upon layer of meaning, and can hardly ever be exhausted
- (c) to succeed, we must develop a personal relationship with Torah: we must love Torah
- (d) if you strive to penetrate castle, Torah will cooperate

2. How not to study Bible

- (a) Not as literature; though it is that too. Heschel on analyzing Einstein's relativity theory for its penmanship.
- (b) Not critically: No unified, agreed theory amongst critics, except that Torah is not what it says ~~ex~~ it is

(c) NOT as arch^eology: although a valuable medium for understanding Biblical times, and ~~confirming~~ confirmation of ~~Vx~~ Biblical records; "Torah" min ha-shamayim" versus "Torah min Ha-^e ~~artz~~." _A

(d) not psychologically: armchair psychologists generally faulty. Book on Job I saw several years ago, concludes psychologically: his father either too lenient or too strict. Only small, parochial minds slur unique, towering geniuses of spirit, try to apply own provincial categories to the unique.

The above are ^{with} autopsy not analysis; deal ~~as~~ Bible as dead body, not "living reality."

3. How then?

(a) must take Torah's claim ~~as~~ seriously ~~as~~ - encounter it honestly, face it squarely

(b) thus; Bible's claim is that it is word of G^od. Not a record of man's thoughts about G-d, but G-d's thoughts about man. Bible is not man's theology, but G^od's anthropology.

(c) a question of interpretation. ~~ix~~ (story Yiddish paper, "Queen of China to US looking for husband," -- "Empress of China on maiden voyage to N.Y.") Not infinitely plastic, not rigidly monolⁱthic. Freedom of interpretation within limits. The Oral Law--all of Judaism is the Bible according to Rabbinic, oral interpretation.

(d) not an abstract philosophy, but a guide to achieving

collective Jewish and individual human destiny practically.

Hence; Halakhah...

4. Is Bible Relevant to Modern Man? To be living reality,
must be relevant. Answer is : yes. Three examples:

(a) does life have value? Ex

(b) does man have a chance?

(c) Are we alone?

5. Does Life Have Value? (Are we only a revolutionary result
a resounding
of accidental large molecules...?) Answer: ~~kyuskt~~ " yes"

(a) VE-chay bahem.

(b) early vegetarianism... affirmed by kashruth

(c) no pain to animals; no special greeting on shoes; prohibition
on leather shoes on Yom Kippur.

(d) H^uman ~~lax~~ life has special dignity -- preserve by not
overworking, not beast on burden. Dignity issues from
Source...incorporated in Sabbath legislation

6. Does Man Have A Chance? (Existence threatened by nuclear
age poisoned atmosphere...) Answer : a tentative " yes"

(a) man is more than a thinking animal. Medieval scholastics:
Natura - suppositum

(b) thus: "Image of G-d". Ramban: "let us make a man in
our image..."

(c) this "image" is the suppositum man's freedom, uniqueness.

(d) two inclinations: Yetzer tov, and yetzer ra. Neither

fatalistic original sin, nor irrational romantic optimism.
~~Original~~ Original sinfulness: Man is inventor of gas chambers,
but man also enters them with Shema Yisroel on lips. G-d to
Cain: sin crouches at door, but "you shall rule over it."
(e) thus: pivotal principle of Judaism: "and thou shalt
chose life."

7. Are We Alone? (alienation, ~~afx~~ solitude, loneliness of
modern metropolitan man, existential problem) Answer: a
conditional "yes" -- depends on us.

(a) Two conceptions of G-d: personal, impersonal or trans-
personal: related - absolute; close - remote. YOU, ~~xxf~~
avant-garde theologians on "death of G-d" Story of sign at
City College: "G-d is dead- Nietzsche; Nietzsche is dead-
G-d.")

(b) Judaism affirms both (not contradiction, but paradox):
L-rd and G-d...history and nature...holiness and glory...

(c) Function of Man: to enlarge area of divine personality,
to bring G-d down to earth...how? by exercising human
personality. By what means? ~~xx~~ Answer: Study of Torah ,
observe mitzvot, prayer, When we confront G-d with our
very human personality, we evoke him out of inscrutable
transcendence into personality.

(d) Samson Raphael Hirsch: Greeks have no possessive word
for G-d; Hebrew: Elokenu; Yiddish: Gottenyu. When exercising

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~~for a messenger(angel) of the L-rd of hosts as he is,~~
as a messenger of G-d.

this personal encounter with G-d, man is not alone.

8. Conclusion (^{Must be brief} ~~Must be brief~~ because of throat -- threatened to cut)

(a) As Jews are - nothing to live for, nothing to offer world,
other than Torah.

(b) we covenanted by G-d; record of covenant is Torah

(c) Saadia : we a nation only by virtue of Torah

(d) At Sinai: "A holy nation" and "A kingdom of priests". ~~Emmanuel~~
Function of priesthood to world

(e) Priesthood - Malachi: for lips of priest shall keep
knowledge (what kind of knowledge? -- Math? Business
trend? No:) and Torah shall they seek at his mouth...

for a messenger(angel) of the L-rd of hosts ~~is he~~ is he, Israel
as a messenger of G-d.