

APHORISMS AND OBSERVATIONS

III

God is not an executive Vice President of the Cosmos in charge of Human Happiness. A truly religious person does not wake up in the morning and say to God, "What have You done for me recently?" God is not looking for our votes in an election or popularity contest. He wants our service, not approval.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik: The problem with American Jews is not so much that they are not shomrei shabbat, but that they are not shomrei erev shabbat...

Authentic religion does not cater to what people want and think they need. It teaches them to want what they really need.

George Orwell: If the war didn't happen to kill you, it was bound to start you thinking.

Today we know more than ever before -- but we understand less.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Karelitz ("The Hazon Ish"): Everything is difficult. I have hardly ever come across anything that is easy.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Ladi once said to a hasid who complained about his economic situation: "You worry always about what you need, but you never seem to worry about others who may be needing you."

The late Abraham E. Rothstein, former President of The Jewish Center: "Friendship can make certain demands, but when it demands a substitute for the teaching of our Fathers, on that point there can be no wavering, no compromise."

The above, in the same address to The Center on Yom Kippur 1930: "We older people well remember the days of our youth. We could not help observing how seriously our parents took their faith, how fervent they were. We could not help but observe the many sacrifices they made for it; but it was not all a one-sided affair because we also noticed what happiness they derived from it. They are happy; we are not. Why? Simply this. They accepted it whole-heartedly and in times of stress and worry, took all the comfort and solace that our religion so abundantly offers. When in joy they were so grateful and appreciative to the source whence all good comes. And why are we not happy? Because most of us are half-hearted in the matter. We can be just as happy as they were, would we take it whole-heartedly as they did. It is up to us."

Backbones are more important than wishbones.

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