

Yom Iyyun

November 5, 2001

"COPING WITH CATASTROPHE AND CRISIS—HALAKHIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS"

- 1st: delightd YU/OU/RCA gettg toghr. It's about tm we attained unity nt jst talkd
- Obviously, occasioned by WTC disaster. How respond?
- Before consdrng massv catastroph—indvdl: Death.: DOUBL EFFECT—
עשר--הנה אנכי הולך למות ולמה זה לי בכורה
יצחק--הנה נא זקנתי לא ידעתי יום מותי (ונתן ברכה לעשו)
- Look at secular history: BLACK DEATH—again Paradoxcl Doubl Effect—
Bubonic plague, raged throughout Europe betw 1348-1350; 1/4-1/2 populn perished.
Impact→profound doubl effect on behavior of pop'n. *People reacted by extremes, either seekg recourse t relig thru repentnc/supplicatn t God, or reverting t licentiousnss /lawbreakg /savagry.* (Toward end 1348-early 1349 countless Js lost lives in massacres which spread thru Europe as a result of accusatn that Js poisond wells/other water sources.)
- * DEBAUCHERY – Destructn Sodom→drunknss & incest (בנותיו של לוט, בנותיו)
- ♦ ESCHATOLOGICAL ELEMENTS: Toward end שני בית, whn ominous clouds of complt nationl catastrophe began t gather, eschatologicl note was soundd esp loud. Speculations rife: End of Days/hope new era by divine intervention. Doctrine of משיח, heralded by נביאים, seen as a hope shortly t b realizd. Some Js fled to desert there t await המשיח. So Qumran sect (most scholars: identical with Essenes).
- SAADIA: Double Meaning of גלות: "partly as punishmt/partly as test"; latter also *purifying value*: "... we hv swum in the roaring waves of the kingdoms, and, as the smelting of silver in the furnace, in their fires... *we have been purified*."... Saadia: there must b meanng/end t galut. " This=correct religious manner of explaing "every universl catastrophe such as famine/war/pestilence." In this respect, galut is like othr naturl/historic: כיון שניתן רשות למשחית אינו מבחין בין צדיקים לרשעים
- ♦ MOST IMPT: TOR'S EXPLICIT REACTION: בצר לך ומצאוך כל הדברים: אֶלְקִיךָ וְשִׁמְעָתָּךְ בְּקִלּוֹ וְיִדְּוֹלֵךְ וְיִשְׁמְרֵךְ וְיִשְׁמְרֵךְ וְיִשְׁמְרֵךְ... i.e., TESHUVA... Not just indvl sins but reorientation whole persy/reassessmt all values in light vulnrblty/mortlty/fraglty
- ♦ SUMMARZ: Neg results =debauchery (לוט); collaps value systm (נשד) Pos: gv blessg (יצחק); tests-purifctn (ר"ס); Teshuva Mixed: משיח—sustains w hope; but danger: impatience
- TODAY: call f תשובה esp in place... both for ישראל & for USA..
*USA: Now apprtly return t faith—just hope not ephemral. And: part of תשובה=destry evil. Catastrophe→teshuva→unity: Historn Shelby Foote--<Cvll Wr, "U.S. are." >War, "U.S. is..." Took 670,000 dead to convert are to is. Americans must unite to uproot terrism--& b patient bec new kind war
*ISR: → unity→peace.: [ויהי שלום בין חירם] וכן חכמה לשלמה כאשר דבר לו ויהי שלום בין חירם . Greatest expression and proof of Solomon's wisdom=not his contribution to תנ"ך of 3 sacred books, not his 3000 proverbs or 1005 poems or certainly his 1000 wives--but שלום that he made peace with his neighbor, Hiram. We need חכמה—badly!—didn't use; seems out of place
- For us indvly?—follow ex יצחק: R. Kook=חיים של ברכה-brng int life