

## APHORISMS AND OBSERVATIONS

### II

People are not upset at their own lack of intelligence. They bristle only when others say they are not bright.

*Edward Dahlberg: Few can annihilate one day without anticipating another which will make them just as wretched.*

More: All experiences are quite similar: we simply have new names for them and imagine that what happened in the past is quite different from what is occurring now.

*Still more: When one realizes that his life is worthless, he either commits suicide or travels.*

Rabbis often brood: does all my talking ever do any good? R. Israel Salanter answered: "People say that Musar (preachment) goes in one ear and out the other. True enough, but meanwhile it goes through your head..."

*A great teacher of Musar: It is said that every lie must contain a grain of truth if it is to exist. Today, however, people act as if every truth must contain some falsehood if it is to survive.*

Ernest Becker: The man of knowledge in our time is bowed down under a burden he never imagined he ever would have: the overproduction of truth that cannot be consumed... we are choking on truth... The insignificant fragments (of knowledge) are magnified out of all proportion, while its major and world-historical insights lie around begging for attention.

*Strange: those who attend services every day rarely complain about the length of the prayers. Those who come early on Shabbat sometimes complain. Those who arrive at 11:00 A.M. or so are more vociferous about the length of the service. But the three-to-five-times-a-year "daveners" are usually those who complain most. Conclusion: the more you "daven," the more you like it, and the less you "daven" the less you like it.*

Eric Hoffer: There is probably an element of malice in the readiness to overestimate people: we are laying up for ourselves the pleasure of later cutting them down to size.

*More Hoffer: People who bite the hand that feeds them usually lick the boot that kicks them.*

SH. Y. Agnon: When people truly believe, and a man cannot imagine that it is possible to exist without prayer -- then prayer is prayer. Now that faith is weakened, and a man knows that it is possible for him not to pray, then even if he prays -- his prayer is no prayer.