

JUDAISM AND THE MORAL REVOLUTION

(add to previous one, affection)

{omit RABBI LAMM's office}

(1) In discussing the setback in personal relationships in contemporary life, mention the scene in "The Bald Soprano," by Eugene Ionescu: A man meets a woman, engages her in polite conversation, and they discover to their surprise that they came into New York on the same train from New Haven that morning. Further conversation reveals that they live at the same address on Fifth Avenue. As time goes on, they learn further that they share the same apartment and have the same seven year old daughter. Husband and wife meet, never having known each other before.

Thus: Lo tov heyot ha-adam levado . Marriage has as one of its two goals affectionate companionship, the banishment of anomie and alienation, not levado.

(2) In further discussion of code morality add ^(after H II) that without code morality we have nothing. But does that mean that once we do observe the rules, that Paradise will materialize, that automatically there will become love and "meaningful personal relationships?"

No, obviously not. The case for code morality can not be based on illusion or propaganda. First, love and relationship are certainly cherished in Judaism, but not as the highest goal. People who for psychological or cultural reasons can not be "turned on" are no less valuable, nor is their life any less meaningful. Human beings who have made the greatest contribution to history have not necessarily been those who have developed deep relationships. One of the secular saints of our time was Albert Schweitzer. Yet a woman who worked as a nurse with him, volunteering to be ^{work in Lamborne} told me a couple of years ago that she never saw a more dedicated man -- and a colder, more tyrannical and impersonal human being. He gave his life for others, and treated those others in a patronizing and condescending fashion. Is Schweitzer to be condemned to the limbo of those who could not live up to the misunderstanding of Buber's I-Thou? (Mention Ramban on ve-ahavta le-reiakha kamo-kha -- that it is haflagah to expect it in the positive, predicative, full affective sense; rather, "act lovingly.")

Second, code morality does not create love or relationship, but provides the minimum conditions for its possibility. Israeli rabbinic writer: "Woe to the people that lives its domestic life according to the Shulkhan Arukh only." Halakhah is the minimum for normality. It is up to the Jew thereafter to turn to Agadah, mysticism, ecstasy, and ordinary mentschlichkeit to fulfill his personality.

THE NEW JEWISH REVOLUTION

(1) In discussing the setback in personal relationships in contemporary life, mention the scene in the film "The Last Days of Pompeii". A man meets a woman, engages her in polite conversation, and they discover to their surprise that they came into New York on the same train from New Haven that morning. Further conversation reveals that they live at the same address on Fifth Avenue. As time goes on, they learn further that they share the same apartment and have the same seven year old daughter. Husband and wife meet, never having known each other before.

Thus: Lo tov never ha-adam l'admo. Marriage has as one of its two goals affectionate companionship, the partnership of souls and affection, not admo.

(2) In further discussion of code morality add that without code morality we have nothing. But does that mean that once we have a code, that code will materialize, that automatically there will become love and meaningful personal relationships?

No, obviously not. The case for code morality can not be based on illusion or propaganda. First, love and relationship are certain-ly based in Judaism, but not as the highest goal. People who for psychological or cultural reasons can not be "turned on" are no less valuable, nor is their life any less meaningful. Human beings who have made the greatest contribution to history have not necessarily been those who have developed deep relationships. One of the secular saints of our time was Albert Schweitzer. Yet a woman who worked as a nurse with him, volunteering to be told me a couple of years ago that she never saw a more dedicated man -- and a colder, more tyrannical and impersonal human being. He gave his life for others, and treated those others in a patronizing and condescending fashion. Is Schweitzer to be condemned to the limbo of those who could not live up to the misunderstanding of loves (Mention Kamen on ve-shavta la-reishit kama-cha -- that is halakha to expect it in the positive, rather than, self affective sense; rather, act lovingly.)

Second, code morality does not create love or relationship, but provides the minimum conditions for its possibility. Halakha provides the minimum conditions for its possibility. Halakha is the mind which "wakes to the people that lives its domestic life according to the Shulchan Arukh only." Halakha is the mind that for normality. It is up to the Jew thereafter to turn to avodah, mysticism, ecstasy, and ordinary menschlichkeit to fulfill his personal life.

Those who live by the rules and have not attained a decent personal relationship are all the more blameworthy because they have been given the opportunity to do so. But, ultimately, the code has provided for a modicum of normalcy in the home even where genuine relationship does not exist. Example: a child brought up in a home where the rules are observed but there is no deep relationship, such as in Ionescu's scene mentioned above, may have been deprived of a background of emotional richness, but certainly has sufficient normalcy to begin life with severe disadvantages. The same can not be said of a youngster growing up in a home where parents pant after "personal, meaningful relationships" by exchanging partners. A child who grows up never knowing who which parent is with, grows up in a home that is phony and corrupt, with all its much-vaunted relationship, and begins life as a cripple.