

NORMAN LAMM
NOVEMBER 12, 1961

THE JEWISH CENTER
ADULT ED. PROGRAM

Fall Supper Lecture Series

"YEHUDAH HALEVI"

3. THE "KUZARI": THE ROLE OF ISRAEL

1. SYNOPSIS: 11th CENTURY POET, RABBI, PHYSICIAN, PHILOSOPHER

** REJECTS RATIONALISM.... BUT NOT REASON

** DIFFERENCES BETWEEN G-D OF PHILOSOPHERS AND G-D OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, & JACOB.....

** THESE ARE NEGATIVE: WHAT DID HE HIMSELF BELIEVE?
MENTIONED: "AYIN NISTERET", INTUITION.... TODAY: MAJOR PART HIS OUTLOOK

2. HISTORIOSOPHY:

**YHL EMPHASIZES EXPERIENCE AS MAIN SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE, MORE THAN REASON
(THUS: POETRY INFLUENCED FORM KUZARI; MEDICINE HIS EMPHASIS EXPERIENCE)

** W. Y.HL HISTORY A MAJOR CATEGORY SIGNIFICANCE ...COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE ISRAEL ITS HISTORY

** MAJOR EVENTS THIS COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE ARE EXODUS & REVELATION, ESP. LATTER
-UNLIKE OTHER MED. PHILOSOPHERS, NOT BEGIN W. GEN. PRINCIPLES & PROCEED TO PARTICULAR,
BUT BEGINS W. PARTICULAR EXPERIENCE AS A FACT, PROCEEDS TO GEN. PRINCIPLES.
-THUS, RABBI TO KING VERY BEGINNING (AS LAST WEEK) G-D TOOK US OUT OF EGYPT....

-REVELATION: EMPHASIZE THAT IT WAS A FACT, WITNESSED LARGE NUMBERS PEOPLE,
TRANSMITTED GENERATION TO GENERATION....(HISTORICAL MEMORY)

OMIT in 540265
READ: AUX. TEXT: SUMMARIZE LAST PAR. P.6, READ FIRST HALF P.7

-CRUCIAL SIGNIFICANCE REVELATION ("TORAH MIN HASHMAYIM") TO JUDAISM;
WITH IT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ORTHODOXY, NON-JEWISH BRANDS FAITH

3. THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

** YHL SPEAKS OF HOLY PEOPLE, HOLY LAND, HOLY DEEDS

** READ: AUX. TEXT P.7, #III (FIRST 5 STANZAS ONLY)

** TO YHL, JUST AS RELIGION IS MORE THAN PHILOSOPHY, SO IS JUDAISM MORE THAN RELIGION

** LIVING SUBJECT OF JUDAISM IS: THE JEWISH PEOPLE (UNIQUE IN THIS RESPECT). HEART OF WORLD

**ISRAEL: SPECIAL QUALITY GIVING IT INYAN ELOKI (SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP W. G-D, HIS REVELATION
TO MAN, & MAN'S READINESS TO RECEIVE THIS REVELATION). A PEOPLE CAUGHT UP W. G-D....

**ALL OTHER NATIONS UNDER NATURAL-HISTORICAL LAW, ISRAEL: SPECIAL DIVINE PROVIDENCE

** ISRAEL AS HEART OF WORLD IS PART OF IT, BUT YET DIFFERENT: SEGULAH — BIOLOGICALLY AND HISTORICALLY EQUIPPED FOR THIS SPECIAL DISTINCTION. THE INYAN ELOKI MAKES ISRAEL QUALITATIVELY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PEOPLE, LIKE REASON MAKES MAN QUALITATIVELY DIFFERENT FROM ANIMAL.

**READ: AUX. TEXT P.6, 2nd & 3rd PARAGRAPHS

~~question: is this racist?~~

*** QUESTION: IS THIS NOT RACIST? WHAT MEAN? ALLAGREE WITH Y HL?

**NOT ALL AGREE. THUS MAIMONIDES: ABSOLUTE EQUALITY PROSELYTE & NATIVE JEW, WHEREAS YHL: PROSELYTE NO PROPHECY

OMIT in synopsis { **PROF. SOLOMON ZEITLIN (JQR No.35): YHL POSITS ETHNIC, RACIAL SUPERIORITY. "THE PHILOSOPHY OF YHL IS TRADITIONALLY AS WELL AS HISTORICALLY WRONG" IS A POINT OF VIEW. BUT I BELIEVE PROF. Z. READS TOO LITERALLY, NOT BET. LINES

**DESPITE DIVISION BET. ISRAEL, OTHERS, IS NOT ABSOLUTE.

-ETHICAL LAWS GIVEN TO ALL PEOPLE.

-OLAM HABA - TO ALL PEOPLE.

-ESCHATOLOGY: ALL PEOPLES MERGE INTO ISRAEL. HOW POSSIBLE IF RACIAL INFERIORITY?

-PROSELYTE CAN SHARE ALLELSE OTHER THAN PROPHECY (WHICH VERY FEW ANYWAY)

→ * -IF RACIAL ARROGANCE, WHY DID HE COMPOSE THE BOOK IN FORM DIALOGUE WITH GENTILE KING?

**WHAT YHL TRYING TO SAY: TRIES TO DEFINE (TOO CLOSELY) THE UNIQUENESS OF ISRAEL AS A HISTORICAL FAITH — I.E. BASED ON ETHNIC ELEMENT BUT TRANSCENDING IT.

-BLENDING OF SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL, RELIGIOUS & NATIONAL (ESP. IN GALUTH) EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO DEFINE. TO HAVE HISTORICAL BASIS, NEEDS ETHNIC COMMUNALITY.....

-BASICALLY, PROBLEM AGITATING YHL IS "WHO IS A JEW?" (STORY;...?whoever lays Tefillin; or if doesn't, feels bad because knows he should") ^{others tell him} PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION ALONE: NO HISTORICAL BASIS; HALAKHAH ALONE: MINIMAL.....

-HENCE: ETHNIC & SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS TOGETHER DEFINE UNIQUENESS; TAKEN INDIVIDUALLY: WRONG...

**OF COURSE, YOU MAY DISAGREE WITH YHL IF YOU WISH.

-WITHOUT BEING CHARITABLE, YOU MAY EVEN DISMISS MY ARGUMENTS ON BEHALF OF YHL AS SO MUCH APOLOGETICS BECAUSE OF MY OWN ROMANCE WITH HIM: I'M PREJUDICED

-IF SO, CALL ON DEFENSE'S MAJOR WITNESS: MAN WROTE BOOK "A THEOLOGY OF ELECTION", SAYS: UNFAIR REFER EVERY BIOLOGICAL ELEMENT AS "RACIALISM", WHAT DIVIDES ISRAEL FROM REST HUMANITY IS NOT ALL PHYSICAL, NOT ALL SPIRITUAL - BUT UNIQUE COMBINATION BOTH.

OMIT in synopsis { **WHO IS THIS MAN ..? NAME: JAKOB JOCZ - "MESHUMAD"!!.....

(FURTHER: READ MARKED PARTS PP. 194-5 IN KARL LOWITH'S "MEANING IN HISTORY" - IS PROF. OF PHILOSOPHY AT HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY - A GENTILE)

4. THE HOLY LAND (& HOLY TONGUE).....JUST AS YHL SPEAKS OF THE NATURAL SUPERIORITY OF ISRAEL AS PEOPLE, SO SPEAKS OF GEOGRAPHIC SUPERIORITY OF ERETZ ISRAEL, AND LINGUETIC SUPERIORITY OF HEBREW.....HIS GREAT ZIONISM.....

OMIT in synopsis { ***REPROACH OF KUZARI APPLICABLE TODAY: READ KUZARI, PART II, # 23.

5. THE SACRED DEED. (MITZVOT). PURPOSE MITZVOT: DEVEKUT

**SINCE RELIGION EMANATES FROM G-D, NOT FROM MAN, IT IS G-D WHO TELLS MAN HOW TO REACH HIM. MITZVAH IS DIVINELY AUTHORIZED MEANS FOR "DEVEKUT". "EIN HA-ADAM MAGI'A EL HA-INYAN HA-ELOKI ELA BI'DEVAR HA-ELOKI"....PRACTICE OF MUTZVOT: CLIMATE OF G-DLINESS.

IF TIME ← **READ AUX. TEXT FROM NEXT TO LAST PAR. P.7 TO MID P.9; THEN VERY LAST PAR. P.10

6. CONCLUSION: RABBI BERAKHIEL:

most Jewish of 5 Thinkers

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