

Auxiliary Text of Source Material for

"RAV KOOK"

a series of three lectures by

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The following letters identify the translators of the excerpts of the works of Rav Kook collated in this Auxiliary Text:

- JA --- Jacob B. Agus, "The Banner of Jerusalem" (N.Y.:1946)
SB --- Samuel H. Bergman, "Faith and Reason" (Phila.:1961)
LS --- Leon D. Stitskin, "From the Pages of Tradition",
Tradition (III:2)
NL --- indicates those passages I have translated by myself
from the original Hebrew.

In addition to the above books and articles, there is a growing literature in modern Hebrew on Rav Kook, the latest of which is Shmuel Avidor's excellent "The Man Against The Tide" (Jerusalem:1962)

A. SIGNIFICANT DATES IN
THE LIFE OF RAV KOOK
(Rabbi Abraham Yitzhak haKohen Kook)

Elul 6, 1865 - born in Griev
1880 - goes to Lutzin for studies
1884 - enrolls in Yeshiva of Volozhin
1887 - marries and moves to Ponovezh
1889 - accepts Rabbinate in Zoimel
1895 - becomes Rabbi of Boisk
1904 - elected Rabbi of Jaffa
1914 - stranded in Europe
1916 - accepts Rabbinic post in London
1919 - elected Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem
1921 - elected Chief Rabbi of the Holy Land
Elul 3, 1935 - Rav Kook dies

"I write not because I am able to write,
but because I am unable to keep silent."

-- Rav Kook

B. THE YOUNG RAV KOOK from the Autobiography of Abraham Shoer (JA)

The boy, Abraham Isaac, was an exceedingly diligent student. As I understand it now, his diligence was not the same type that is described by Ch. N. Bialik in his famous poem, "The Masmid." Bialik's "Masmid" (diligent scholar) learned Torah in order to attain the scholarly level of an "illuy" or a "gaon", but the diligence of Abraham Isaac derived entirely from a sense of piety--therefore, his ardor was most remarkable. If he failed to learn Torah for a short period of time, he would feel genuine sorrow--real, physical pain. . . . Once, as was our custom, we studied at night. The hour was late. We learned on the "bimah". Around us there was deep silence. In the second room, the other Yeshivah-bachurs were already long asleep. Before us, above the Holy Ark, the Perpetual Light was burning. We rested a little from our work and sat down to converse for a while, and he said to me in a voice tense with mystery, "Do you know, it is possible that only you and I now cause the world to be preserved? It is possible that G-d is now engaged in judging the world, and the sins of mankind are even now being weighed against its merits. The sins outweigh the merits and Michael, the Archangel, takes our words of Torah and places them on the merit-scale, causing it to outweigh the scale of sin. Thus, we may be saving the whole world, and we are only children." ... On the three nights preceding the fast day of Tisha B'av, Abraham Isaac would close the Gemaras at midnight, we would go down from the "bimah" and sit down on the floor by the side of the big stove, remove our shoes, and recite the prayers of "chatzos." Abraham Isaac would cry with bitter tears as he recited the lamentations over the destruction of Jerusalem.... Unusual were his love for Eretz Yisrael and his longing for the rebuilding of the Holy Temple and the coming of the Messiah. I remember that I asked him once in my childish naivete, "Why do you cry so much during your "chatzos" prayers? I, too, love Eretz Yisrael and I, too, want to go up to this beloved land, and my father, my father surely longs for the Holy Land and awaits the coming of the Messiah and he..." Abraham Isaac interrupted me suddenly with such natural simplicity that I remained speechless. "Neither you nor your father are priests. But I am a Cohen (priest)."

C. ISRAEL'S LOVE OF GOD

1. From "Ikvei ha-Tzon" (JA)

Spiritual conceptions fall into three categories in their relation to the division of humanity into nations:

There are, first, universal and holy conceptions that are entirely independent of national boundary lines... The second category consists of ideas which are universal in content, but which acquire different forms among the several nations in accordance with the style of their thoughts and their ways of life... But there is also a third category of holy and true ideas that are peculiar to Israel alone, not only in point of style, but in inner content and significance as well... There is no other nation in the world, the sole stamp of which is justice, and the most inward aspiration of which it is to behold the realization of the Divine rule. The yearning for the dominion of God's Will is our supreme desire; it pulsates mightily in our most inward life and those who wish to perceive their Jewish soul will sense it in this mighty longing within their inner essence. This is the root of the love of God which dwells in our souls....

2. From "Eder Ha-yekar" (JA)

The whole hierarchy of Jewish law and custom, including the extra burdens of rabbinic ordinances and folkways which the Jewish people voluntarily assumed, is the detailed expression of the inner love of the people of Israel to the Name of God, the Torah, the nationhood and the land of Israel--all of which are inseparably intertwined. Inner love and sacred yearning seek to expand and break out thru whatever channels are close at hand. The most natural way to express religious feeling among the people of Israel is to impress the seals of love, joy, reverence, and pious trust on the forms and ways of personal and group life. This was the genuine feeling of the nation as a whole, from the beginning until the end, so long as its spirit was healthy and strong; its custodian is the vital and virile part of the nation, the geniuses of piety and learning. The Torah and all its commandments in their minutest details, as expressed in thought and deed, form a great and mighty Divine poem, a poem of confident trust and love. Every commandment and law has a unique musical quality that the congregation of Israel perceives and appreciates. It evokes the blossoms of reverent joy and song within us. It is for us to remove the warts from the ears of our sons, "the thorns and thistles that surround the noble flower," so that the waves of song will echo in their hearts as well, uplifting their souls with the same natural exaltation that is common to all in whom the spirit of Judaism is properly developed.

Thus, we observe lovingly the customs of Israel that have no basis in Divine Revelation, because of our reverence and affection for our nation--an affection that is sacred, derived from a high, divine source. The basic principle in the observance of the commandments of our Sages is the fact that the whole nation has accepted them, so that the honor of the nation, its historical influence, and its eternal, divine quality, are incarnate in them. Therefore, whatever is more ancient is more beloved since the will and the general character of the nation are revealed in it.

3. From the introduction to "Olat Riyah" (LS)

The constant prayer of the soul struggles to emerge from concealment into the open, spread out over all the living faculties of the spirit and soul as well as over all the forces of the entire living body. It likewise yearns to reveal its essence and the power of its activity in the environment, in the universe, and in life. For this reason we are in need of those cosmic judgments which are derived from the study of Torah and Wisdom. As a result, preoccupation with Torah and its wisdom is the constant unfolding of the hidden prayer of the soul. "The soul of every living being shall bless Thy name, O Lord our God."

Proper prayer issues only from the consciousness that, in truth, the soul is always in prayer. Indeed, the soul hovers about and clings to her beloved ceaselessly; but during the time of actual worship the perpetual supplication of the soul is revealed in actu. This is the joy and delight, the splendor and glory of worship which is like a rose that opens its beautiful petals towards the dew or the sun's rays that stream down upon her with their dazzling light. Indeed, "would that man prayed all day."

Prayer encourages the soul to fulfill its appointed task. When days and years have gone by without meaningful worship (tefillah be'kavvanah), there accumulate in one's heart numerous stumbling blocks that produce a feeling of inner spiritual sluggishness. When, however, a healthy attitude returns and the gift of prayer is restored from on high, the barriers are cleared away with every supplication and the numerous impediments that accumulated in the flowing streams of the upper reaches of the soul gradually vanish. And with the ascension of the soul that soars with every prayer, depending on the nature of its time, certain portions of it come to heal the inadequacies of the past. To be sure, the deficiency is not overcome all at once; it is a gradual process, as the luminous source of prayer slowly reveals its lights...Prayer is for us and for the whole world an absolute necessity and also the most pure kind of joy.

The waves of our souls beat uninterruptedly. We demand of ourselves and of the world a perfection that existence, with its limitations, cannot grant us. We thus find ourselves in deep despair and in a mood of frustration that can turn us against our better judgment and against our Creator. But before this cancer has had enough time to spread within us, we come to pray. We pour out our words in prayer and uplift ourselves to a world of absolute perfection. Then our inner world too is rendered, in truth, absolutely perfect and our mind is filled with serenity. And the same rhythmic process that our inner will effects in all existence, of which it is a part, inclines the balance of the whole world toward the side of merit.

Prayer is the ideal of all the worlds. All being aspires toward the Source of its life; every flower and every blade of grass, every grain of sand and every clod of earth, everything which pulsates visibly with life and everything in which life is concealed, the smallest and the largest creatures, the angels and the holy seraphim, all the details of being and all its universality -- all yearns, longs, aspires, and craves for the perfection of its lofty, living, holy, pure, and mighty Source. Man absorbs all these longings at all times and occasions and he is uplifted and edified through this holy desire. The time for the unfolding of these holy desires comes in prayer, which sends forth waves of light freely and in sacred reflection to the Almighty's wide expanses. Man elevates with his prayer all creation, unites with him all being, raises and exalts everything to the Source of blessing and the Origin of life.

4. From the introduction to "Shabbat ha-Aretz" (NL)

The nature of the collective soul of the Congregation of Israel is its Godliness. It was not by its own determination that it acquired its Godly superiority. Not because of any individual qualities, not because of its piety and rightness of heart, did this virtue come. The physical and spiritual character of its race gave it its religious strength and potency, which it did not obtain by its own free choice and which no wrong choice can gainsay. Free will has, of course, a great function regarding natural character: a good choice can enhance and refine it and

express it in a perfect and worthy manner; and an evil, lowly choice can darken the light of the innate character and sully its brightness, dulling the heart to the spiritual wealth hidden in the life of the soul. But this dullness of heart and darkening of the light cannot last forever; the innate character is assured of its continued existence and its arousal to life once again.

5. From "Ha-mahshavah ha-Yisraelit" (JA)

All the troubles in the world, especially the ills of the soul, such as sadness, impatience, disgust with life, despair--all diseases which are in truth peculiar to the psyche of a human being, are due only to the failure to understand how to face and contemplate clearly the majesty of God in utter surrender. Submission to the Deity is a natural quality in every creature and in every particular phase of being, for all things that exist humble themselves before the totality of existence and before the Source of that totality. In this universal submission there is no sorrow or mental anguish, but pleasure and pride and inner heroism, resplendent in radiant beauty.

D. THE LOVE OF ISRAEL

1. From "Orot Yisrael" (NL)

The love of Israel derives from the faith in the divine light of the Congregation of Israel: that it is an essential quality which will not vanish despite changing times. This higher love and its cause -- the inner faith in its divine root -- must especially stir people of heart and spirit during the times of the nation's spiritual decline, the times when the trodding upon the holy and contempt for religion appear in all their strength, to appreciate that nevertheless Israel's power is greatly and mightily directed to G-d, to consider its inner light which penetrates the spirit of the whole and whose dwelling place is also in every individual Jewish soul, whether obvious or not, even in the most backward soul which is far removed from the way of the Lord....

This great love with which we love our nation does not make us blind to its faults; but we find its innate self, even after the most unfettered criticism, "all beautiful, my beloved, and there is no defect in thee."

2. From a letter to a Mizrahi periodical during the Stavsky trial (JA)

From the bottom of my heart which bleeds for the distress of my people I wish to send this reply to your kind letter:

I testify before heaven and earth that my whole heart and soul are dedicated to the totality of our nation and to every one of its sections and parties, because I believe in perfect faith that every part is a particular limb in the sacred and wonderful organism of the whole congregation of Israel....

I believe and I know that the perfect salvation of Israel will be achieved in the Providence of God by the cooperation of all parties, including that of the embattled groups.

Only truth in its purity...leads me to attempt to save him who was condemned to death, with no grounds whatsoever for the accusation. I am completely permeated with the conviction that the accused is innocent and just and entirely pure of the slightest taint or suspicion of murder. And it is clear to me that no Jewish individual or group had anything to do with this murder.

In every party and in every group there are certainly things that I cannot agree with, but this cannot possibly lead me to lessen my flaming love for our sacred nation and for every one of its parts, even by a hair's breadth, or to distribute it unevenly between those who revere me and those who despise me. I love them all with a love that knows no bounds.

3. From "A Manifesto concerning an Act of National Treachery"
("against those who stab the Jewish soul with daggers")
"Azkarah" (JA and NL)

We protest publicly against those who would tear the Jewish soul apart, against those who wish to shatter the wonderful wholeness of Jews and Judaism. Only a whole Judaism do we know!

A bitter mockery is this dispute, as to whether our national or religious dimensions constitute the content of our life. The wholeness of "Thou are One and Thy Name is One, and who is like unto Thy people Israel, one nation in the earth" cannot be separated or broken up.

We demand full restitution for that which has been robbed from us. The crime which cries unto heaven must be completely atoned for. Our precious, holy land, full of wonder and splendor; our pride, our human rights and human dignity; our national and individual rights in all countries--must be returned to us completely, without compromises, without hypocrisy--entirely, in all completeness....

We are in duty bound to explain to embattled humanity its obligations toward us. We gave much to humanity. In the ethics of mankind, we have inspired the power of life; our spiritual heritage pulsates in the inward substance of all cultured religions. We have saved and do now save all humanity from the dark slavishness of paganism, on the one hand, and from the lifeless, weak-kneed, anemic God-forgetfulness, on the other hand. Our wondrous history, suffused with the Divine Spirit, is and always will be the foundation for the purest spirit of humanity, the seed for the development of all human nobility.

The peoples have paid us back very handsomely: by robbing us of our land, exiling us from it, and burning our Holy Temple; with massacres, with pogroms, with the fires of the auto de fe, with yellow badges, with the shouts of "hep, hep" in the streets....

How amazing it is that in this wondrous time, when the Hand of G-d is so wonderfully revealed in the history of the world and of our nation, there should be found people of dull wit and insensitive heart, who have the "chutzpah" to voice opinions which fragmentize and diminish the great, original, Jewish wholeness - at the very time when the knowledge (of this wholeness) is so very important for our whole historical position.

And now, as we stand already at the end of the war...is it not our duty in this awesome, wonderful, and holy hour to inform all humanity, especially the fighting cultured nations, that the crime of crimes will remain hanging over their heads if they will not cleanse themselves from the robbery and the butchery that they have perpetrated against us, that they will make themselves even more miserable than the misery that they will inflict upon us?...

But, if on the contrary, the results of the war will also bring about, together with the other requirements of righteousness, our return and rehabilitation; if the nations will atone for the horrible crime and will help us to organize ourselves fully on our land and will aid us to establish our own government, making it possible for us to rejuvenate and make fruitful our ancient ways of life--our calm, original, secular and holy, material and spiritual, brave and peaceful ways of life--then the mark of eternal shame will be removed from the society of mankind...

E. THE NON-OBSERVANT

1. From "Hazon ha-Geulah" (JA)

What these nationalists really want, they themselves do not know. So powerfully united is the spirit of Israel to the Spirit of God, that even the one who says that he has nothing to do with the Spirit of God, the moment he admits that he desires to share in the spirit of Israel, then the Divine Spirit enters into the inwardness of his aspiration even despite himself. An individual may tear himself apart from the source of life; not so the nation, the whole congregation of Israel. Therefore, all the possessions that are dear to the nation on account of the national spirit are suffused with the indwelling Spirit of God: its land, its language, its history, its customs.

2. From "Zikkaron" (JA)

As it is impossible for wine to be without yeast, so is it impossible for the world to be without the wicked. And even as the yeast ferments the wine and keeps it in its proper strength, so the vulgar desires of the wicked bring sustenance and strength to the vital current of all men--the average and the saintly.

When the yeast is removed and the wine is allowed to stand without it, it is liable to be spoiled and soured. Life in exile weakened the vital forces of our nation; the amount of yeast had been reduced to the point where there was real danger to the existence of our nation, because of the lack of a coarse grasp of life, that is redolent of matter and soil and animality.... The yeast are the bearers of wickedness and atheistic defiance that must be expected in the age immediately preceding the Messianic era....

3. From "Iggerot ha-Rayah" (1905) (NL)

An Open Letter; To our Young Brethren Who Dwell in the Holy Land, Peace!

I turned to you, beloved brethren, to present you with a holy ethical obligation to cast off yourselves a great disgrace, which was unwittingly placed upon you, especially those who dwell in the Holy Land, by the editor of "Hashkafah"...in his polemic with the "Zion-Zionists." His last words struck my heart, and I believe they did the same to everyone whose Jewish heart has not completely withered in him, to anyone in whom a human heart still beats. I believe that all those who are sensitive to this great offense will find no spiritual rest until they have expressed vigorous public protest against these words which were printed, unfortunately, in a Jerusalem periodical.

These are the exact words: "another terrible argument urged by the Zion-Zionists against the Ugandists, is that the Ugandists have turned their backs on our entire past. What hypocrisy there lies in this argument! People who have themselves turned their backs on our past reproach others for doing the same thing! Let us not fool ourselves: only those who belong to the group that 'seeks sins' (i.e. the Orthodox) have not turned their backs upon our past, but we others have done so, and that is our praise and our glory." Now, I know as well as you that this is not the first time that we have seen such blasphemous words, aimed at the very soul of Israel, printed in our new, negative literature. But that a writer should dare to declare in the name of the entire community that all of us have turned our backs on our past, opposed only by those of the group who "seek sins" (of whose existence I do not know in actual fact), whom he constantly describes as people lacking in intelligence and culture; thereby declaring in public that all people of dignity and honor, at least those of the young people who have settled in the Holy Land, have turned their backs on our past, and that this is their pride and glory -- that a single individual should arrogate to himself this broad authority to speak on behalf of all our people with such irresponsibility about the relationship of a whole people to its history, this is a most unusual piece of "chutzpah." I see no way for us to avoid an open protest, lest our silence be mistaken for consent...

Now, I do not wish to involve myself in the debate between the "Zion-Zionists" and the "Ugandists." Certainly there are in both parties decent people who truly love their people and who do not at all turn their backs on our past, just as there are such people amongst those who are opposed to the entire Zionist movement. It is a bad omen for a party when it thinks that only it possesses the source of all life, all wisdom, and all decency, and that everything outside it is "vanity and a striving after wind." It is therefore self-understood that the Ugandists do not need to defend themselves against this malicious report that they have rejected the past. The best proof for this are the Mizrachists, whom no one can accuse of rejecting the past, and nevertheless they are Ugandists...

Let me return to my major point. With all my love for studying and teaching the foundations of our beliefs, I am far from wanting to force my opinion on any person, which is unthinkable in our days; and therefore if the editor of the "Hashkafah" were to state these things as his private opinion, it would never occur to me to debate with him. But now that he has mentioned these things in the name of the community, which of course includes our young people here in the Land of Israel, it is impossible to pass over it in silence...

With pride and a strong spirit, beloved brethren, let us bear the standard of our Torah and our people, and in the name of our God let us go forward.

The Eternal of Israel will neither lie nor disappoint us, and His good word shall not prove empty. "Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face turn pale, when he seeth his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, as they sanctify My Name, the Holy One of Jacob, and venerate the God of Israel."

I am, their servant who longs for the happiness of our nation and yearns to glory in our heritage, Abraham Isaac Ha-Kohen Kook, servant to a holy people in the Holy Land, Jaffa.

4. From Rav Kook's Diary, December 1913 (NL)

The Moshavah Poriah was founded two years ago. It covers an area of 4,000 dunam. Here they are planting olive trees, almond trees, grape vines. Also building beautiful homes. We are told that the young people eat Terefah in their kitchen, desecrate the Sabbath, and do all kinds of domestic work, such as laundering, etc., on the Sabbath. As we came here we heard shots. Immediately the workers ran to the place of the shooting and captured an Arab who was stealing a sheep from the flock. The workers grabbed the thief and imprisoned him until the next day when they will bring him to the government court. It was wonderful to witness the lovely, polite conduct of the workers even towards the contemptible thief who was now in their hands. They gave him a decent place to sleep, food, and drink. Here we saw a ray of light from the natural righteousness of the Jewish heart, sparkling as it was revealed. "Jacob shall not now be ashamed... as he seeth his children...as they sanctify My Name"...

F. OUR MODERN TIMES

1. From "Orot ha-Tehiyah" (JA)

Faith and love mutually interpenetrate when both shine in the soul in perfection; when the light of one attains a high peak of perfection, the light of the other is stirred from the depths of the soul to shine in all its fullness. Man is not as perfectly adjusted to any spiritual force as he is adapted by nature for faith and love; this is proof that in these powers of the soul all the essential elements of his being are contained. Thru the natural bent of the individual and the interaction of social groups, thru the processes of civilized life and thru the inner impetus of human society, the faculties of faith and love tend to rise to progressively higher levels of perfection. Out of faith and love, all the other spiritual beacon lights which illumine the ways of human life and of existence generally are emanated. Faith and love are the very essence of life both in this world and in the world to come; there would be nothing of value left in the travail of life if these two luminaries, faith and love, were taken from it.

Contemporary civilization as it is now taking shape thruout the world is founded entirely on unbelief and hate, forces which negate the essence of life. It is impossible to overcome this disease of modern culture save by uncovering the repositories of good that are contained in the treasures of faith and love--and this is our purpose in revealing the secrets of the Torah.

Torah is love, and the mitzvot, faith--these are the channels thru which the flow of faith and love continues unceasingly...

2. From "Iggerot ha-Rayah" (NL)

Although the world continuously declines, nevertheless this is only in its outward manifestations, i.e. its acts and character are in decline in comparison with previous generations, in so far as the individual souls are concerned. But inwardly, that is: regarding the power of the total sanctity of the nation of Israel, every generation adds to the previous ones, because holiness is cumulative. Hence the little holiness of the Torah and good deeds of the later generations adds light to the former ones; while sin bears no fruit and is not additive...Therefore, the totality of the nation in its inwardness possesses more divine light now than in the past.

3. From "Hazon ha-Geulah" (NL)

Our present generation is a wonderful one, a generation that is altogether amazing. It is difficult to find another like it in all our history. It consists of many opposites, light and darkness coexisting in it. It is lowly and despicable, yet elevated and lofty; altogether guilty -- and altogether innocent! It is a strange generation: mischievous and wild, yet exalted and noble... You find, on the one hand: increasing "hutzpah," the son unashamed before his father, youngsters insulting their elders; and on the other hand: charity, decency, justice, and compassion gaining strength, idealistic and intellectual power breaking out and ascending. A generation of this kind, ready to meet death bravely because of goals it considers worthy, often solely on account of inner feelings of righteousness and justice, cannot be considered lowly, even if its goals are all wrong.

4. From "Iggerot ha-Rayah" (NL)

A LETTER TO THE FATHER OF STRAYING SONS (1908)

... I was terribly sorry to learn of your anguish over your children... Yes, my dear friend, I understand very well your heart-ache. But if you think, as do so many of our learned people, that it is best nowadays merely to abandon those young people who have strayed from the ways of Torah and religion because of the powerful currents of our times, let me tell you openly that this is not the way pleasing to G-d... They are helpless (in trying to overcome the tide of G-dlessness) and we dare not treat one who is coerced as one who willingly transgresses. There is hope for their future. The inner soul of the holiness of Israel is concealed within their hearts in the form of a number of good characteristics which they possess... and their inner inclinations for goodness and love. Therefore when they behold all the injustice that prevails in public life, as they see it, they become warriors for the common weal; and although they may be utterly wrong, it is impossible to liken them to wicked people who follow their animal instincts without decent purpose. If we will not abuse these stragglers, but draw them close to us as much as possible, then when the tides of the times turn and they recognize the great error in their thinking, because of which they rejected their ancestral tradition, they will be ready for repentance and improvement, and the generations following will thus be exalted and uplifted, firm in the dignity of Israel and in the divine Light that illuminates from within with all warmth and strength.

(over)

Therefore my advice to you is that although you cannot burden yourself more than your capacity will allow, nevertheless bring them close to you by providing for their needs as much as you can; this will offer you an opportunity to express to them, in your letters, words of reproach in good taste. It is certain that words that come from the heart will be effective -- whether much or little; but even a little is most precious.

The most important way of addressing "musar" to these young people, is first to inspire them not to abandon the love of the people from which they were hewn, and not to imagine that they will achieve a proper and honored status in life by drawing close to non-Jews who will befriend them only for their own benefit and then, in time of crisis, will relish their downfall. By arousing this love of nation, there will be awakened the spark of religious feeling and inclination towards holiness which is hidden in the depths of the Jewish soul; eventually this may result in improved conduct, which ultimately may bring to the healing of complete repentance. We must never despair of any one of the holy seed...

Know that this repentance will come about as a result of rational understanding and a desire for righteousness... just as they left our fold because of what they considered intellectual reasons, so when they return they will return because of the intellect... The transgressors and the rebellious ones who are not prisoners of lust but victims of mistaken ideas, will return on a very high level. We therefore have great hope for all our children, and let us strengthen them and not leave them...

G. RELIGIOUS POETRY

1. From "Ha-Tarbut Ha-Yisraelit" (JA)

All being whispers a secret to me: I have life, take, please take-- if you have a heart and in the heart there is blood, that the poison of despair has not sullied;

But, if thy heart be uncircumsized and my beauty holds no charm for thee-- being whispers to me--away, away from me, forbidden am I to thee!

If every gentle twitter, every flash of beauty, not the splendor of holy song but the stream of foreign fire in thee arouse--away, away from me, forbidden am I to thee.

And a living generation will arise
That will sing to beauty and life;
And youth without end
From the dew of heaven will derive.

And a living people will attend to the flow of the secrets of being from the splendors of Carmel and the Sharon, and out of the tenderness of song and the beauty of life--the light of holiness will rise to overflowing. And all being will murmur to him, My chosen one, I am for thee intended!

2. From "Orot Hakodesh" (JA)

And life is so joyous, so sacred, so filled with the majesty of the Name of the Lord. You long to express His name, to interpret the exalted light. You are filled with an intense thirst, pleasing in the extreme, to fill your mouth with the praise of the G-d of gods. And out of the abundance of pure fear, the intensity of holy trembling, you return to silence.

3. From "Zikkaron" (JA)

Expanses, expanses,
 Expanses divine my soul doth crave.
 Enclose me not in cages,
 Of matter or mind.
 Thru heavenly vastness my soul doth soar
 Unfenced by walls of heart
 Or walls of deed--
 Of ethics, logic or mores--
 Above all these it soars and flies,
 Above the expressible and nameable,
 Above delight and beauty.
 Exalted and ethereal,
 Lovesick am I--
 I pant, I pant for my Lord,
 As a deer for river banks.
 Oh, who can my anguish relate?
 Who lyre be, to sing my agony,
 To voice my bitterness,
 The endless pain of expression?
 I thirst for truth, not concepts of truth. ←
 Lo, I ride above the heavens,
 Wholly absorbed within the truth
 Wholly pained by travail of expression;
 How can I the great truth articulate
 Which my heart overfills?
 Who can to multitudes uncover,
 To nations and individuals
 The total fullness that is creation,
 The sparks of light and warmth
 Which my soul doth contain.
 I see those flames arising,
 Bursting thru all firmaments.
 Who perceives them?
 Who of their vigor can relate?
 I am not one of God's elected heroes,
 That found all worlds within them
 And did not care if others
 Their riches knew or not.
 These herds of sheep that walk erect,
 Will it matter if they know the height of man?
 Is then aught harmed by ignorance?
 But, I am to this world enchained.
 The living, they are my friends.

Sarcastic
about

1/16/13 3
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My soul with them is intertwined;
 How then illumination share with them?
 For all that I relate
 Doth only hide my radiance,
 Becloud my inner light.
 Thus, great is my pain and anguish.
 My G-d, be Thou my help in trouble!
 Grant me the gifts of articulation,
 Expression, the mind's translation--
 That I might of Thy truths narrate,
 Thy Truth, O my G-d.

H. THE UNITY THEME

1. From "Orot Ha-Kodesh (NL)

One of the functions of the revelation of the mysteries of the Torah in the world is to look upon the profane too from the point of view of the holy, and know that in truth there is nothing absolutely profane in the world. ... Thus all values draw closer together and the unity of the worlds stands out...

The world is not torn apart, fragmented. It stands as a powerful structure. The heavens and the heavens above the heavens together with the bowels of the earth, form one unit, one world, one existence... When humanity endeavors to achieve greatness in its works, the spiritual light is bound to shine in all its strength. And when Israel girds itself to elevate even its material possessions, then the light of holiness begins to thrive in the world. And the light of the world's redemption and eternal life come ever closer.

The sacred must be built upon the foundations of the secular. The secular is the "matter" of the sacred, and the sacred is its "form." And the stronger the matter, the worthier the form.

At times the sacred overwhelms the profane, until it weakens it. Then there must follow a period in which the profane demands retribution, and the profane demands its debt from the sacred with interest; and arrogance ("chutzpah") prevails.

But when the profane grows strong at the expense of the sacred, it prepares, by virtue of profane character, its own perdition.

For ultimately the sacred must demand payment- not by oppression, not with arrogance ("chutzpah") and through usury; rather, the power of the holy will be so elevated and lofty that the profane will submit to it, become part of it, and be completely removed from its profane foundation. "And he that remains in Zion and is left in Jerusalem shall be called holy."

2. From "Orot ha-Kodesh" (SB)

All length, height, depth; every light, generation, fertility, process; every impulse in poetry and every spark of reason; lights which flame eternally and lights which burn for a moment only; all this sublime reality is in truth nothing but refractions of G-d's being, sparks of divinity ... Genuine science teaches us the unity of the world, of body and soul, of imagination and reason, of the lowly and the exalted ... This truth far transcends the limited findings of the scholarly disciplines which man has designed to illumine and clarify his world. We cannot make any absolute distinctions between various levels of being; their difference is merely one of degree. The world unites and reconciles all contradictions; all souls and all spirits, all events and all things, all desires, drives, and enthusiasms; everything is part of a larger order and kingdom. G-d is King.

mystic exp.

scientific

panentheism

3. From "Ha-Mah shavah ha-Yisraelit" (JA)

How shall man obtain a conception of the majesty of the Divine, so that the innate splendor residing within his soul may rise to the surface of consciousness, fully, freely, and without distortion? Thru the expansion of his scientific faculties; thru the liberation of his imagination and the enjoyments of bold flights of thought; thru the disciplined study of the world and of life; thru the cultivation of a rich, multifarious sensitivity to every phase of being. All these desiderata require obviously the study of all the branches of wisdom, all the philosophies of life, all the ways of the diverse civilizations and the doctrines of ethics and religion in every nation and tongue.

4. From "Iggerot ha-Rayah" (1907) (NL)

... The most enlightening principle in theological matters, as in all lofty subjects, is to leave the constricted area where opposing opinions clash and seek to destroy each other, for that exalted summit from which all ideas can be seen in their roots, perceiving how all of them are basically one; and how only differences in outer conditions and circumstances of life and state of mind divide them. The stable thinker who uses common sense in addition to a clear, proper sensitivity, will be able to appreciate every element for its own value, joining all ideas so that each will make up for the lack in the other, even where these ideas appear antagonistic to each other. This is the highest attitude, which issues from a true recognition of God, "Who includes all and takes them together." Yet one must be very careful to distinguish between this general proposition, which seeks to probe to the depths of each of these ideas and to cherish every sensitivity according to its true worth, and between the cold "tolerance" which comes only from indifference to the spiritual world; this latter must retreat before the light and spark of life, and the first must grow and constantly blossom in a higher and higher degree, until the world is filled with the knowledge of God... And with the replenishing of scientific knowledge and the enhanced understanding of every idea in all its details, there will also grow great the power of that original peace which combines them all.

5. From Rav Kook's Diary, July 1919 (NL)

Whoever it was who said about me that my soul is split was right. Of course it is split. It is impossible to imagine anyone whose soul is not fragmented.

Only the inorganic world is whole; man is possessed by conflicting aspirations. There is always an inner war raging within him. Yet the whole (purpose) of man's service is to resolve these conflicts in his soul by means of a general idea through the greatness and loftiness of which everything is included and arrives at a complete harmony.

It is understood that this is only an ideal for which we strive, unattainable by mere man born of woman; but through our efforts we can come closer and closer to it. This is what the Kabbalists call "Yihudim" ("unifications").

I. SCIENCE AND RELIGION

1. From "Iggerot ha-Rayah" (1908) (NL)

In general, I regard it as my duty to draw your attention to ideas that have arisen as a result of recent researches, which in the main seem to conflict with the plain meaning of the Torah. My opinion about this is that every straight-thinking person ought to know that although all these new ideas are not necessarily true, nevertheless there is no need for us to deny them and oppose them, for it is not at all the aim of the Torah to tell us simple facts and stories. What is important is the content, the inner meaning of the subject, and this becomes loftier in the presence of an opposing force which challenges us to strengthen ourselves... There is no difference to us if there was really a golden age in which man enjoyed every kind of physical and spiritual pleasure, or whether existence began at the bottom and grew upwards, and is still evolving. We must know only that there is a decided possibility that even if man reaches the highest level, prepared for every distinction and bliss, nevertheless by following evil ways he can destroy everything and bring ill-fortune upon himself and his descendants for many generations to come. This lesson we learn from the existence of Adam in the Garden of Eden and his sin and banishment....

In general, the idea of a slow evolution is now only at the beginning of its development, and undoubtedly will change form, and then will give birth to visions in which there will also be present discontinuities which will complete the picture of reality; then will the light of Israel be understood in its essential clarity....

In general, this is a great principle in the contest of ideas: any idea which appears to contradict some aspect of Torah, ought not necessarily be denied by us at first; rather, we must erect the palace of Torah above it and thus be uplifted through it, and as a result of this uplifting true ideas are revealed. Later, when we are no longer under pressure, we can also oppose it confidently....

2. From "Iggerot ha-Rayah" (1905) (NL)

Concerning the number of years since creation in relation to current geological calculations: It is widely known that there were many epochs before the beginning of the reckoning of our epoch, as is well known from the works of our

early Kabbalists. Thus, in the Midrash Rabbah we read that "God builds worlds and destroys them." In the Zohar we are told that there were many kinds of people, other than Adam, mentioned in the Torah; except that there one must plumb the profound metaphors deeply, for they require very extensive explanation. Therefore, those excavations which imply that there were many epochs of creatures, including humans, but that there was not during this time any general cataclysm and new creations, for this there is no convincing proof, only hypotheses which we need not consider.

But actually we do not need this kind of argumentation, for even if the theory of the evolution of species were clearly established, there would also be no conflict; for our reckoning is according to the literal meaning of the Biblical verses, which is much more relevant to us than the knowledge of antiquity which does not bear great value for us. Certainly the Torah concealed a great deal in "Maaseh Bereshit" (the story of creation), and spoke only in hints and parables, for everyone knows that "Maaseh Bereshit" is part of the "mysteries of the Torah", and if all that the Torah relates is to be taken literally, then there is no "mystery." The Midrash has already stated, "to relate to flesh and blood the power of 'Maaseh Bereshit' is impossible, therefore Scripture simply wrote: 'In the beginning God created'..."

What is important above all is the fundamental idea that issues from the entire subject: to know God and to lead a pure, ethical life. God who grants everything according to a measure, even the degree of spirit of which each Prophet is capable, condensed these exalted matters into these particular images in order that human beings shall with great effort be able to draw therefrom what is most spiritually helpful and elevating for them...

At any rate, there is no conflict between any word of the Torah and any scientific idea, except that we must remember not to accept hypotheses as certainties, although they be widely accepted, for they may well be passing fancies, and as soon there develop new instruments of investigation, all the "new" theories will seem ridiculous, and all the great wisdom of our days will appear as small-minded, and only the Word of God will remain forever...

For the foundation of all is what we teach in the world: that all is the work of God, and the intermediate steps, few or many, even in the millions, are all the work of God Who has made His world complete, and Whose power, wisdom, and glory is infinite. There are times that we specifically mention the intermediate, in order to get a broader picture, and there are times that we skip over it and say such things as "and God created," "and God made"; even as we say "then Solomon built the Temple," without recording such details as: Solomon commanded his Ministers, and the Ministers their subordinates, and they said to the architects, and the architects to the craftsmen, and the craftsmen to the ordinary laborers -- because this process is well known and is unimportant. So, whatever will yet be learned concerning the greatness of God's ways and intermediate steps during tens of thousands of years -- all of them will make us more aware of the glory of God; and all of this is now usually abbreviated (in the Bible).

Essentially, there is a determined time for every idea and thought to be born and to be active, without accident or chance. For instance, we can now appreciate that if the fact of the motion of Earth were known thousands of years ago the great masses of people would have been afraid to stand on their feet lest they fall because of that motion, and they certainly would have been afraid to build big buildings; this would have led to great fear and unimaginable retardation of progress...

(rewording only if time OK)

Only after a period of maturation were people able to accept the idea of the motion of Earth and derive benefit from the idea.

So it is with regard to the world of the spirit. For instance, the Providence of God is the foundation of all human ethics and happiness, and when this idea will be clarified and widely accepted in the world it will be the foundation of all human bliss... Now, the people of Israel had to make strenuous efforts in order to convince the pagan world that despite the vastness of the natural world, man is not so insignificant, so low, that his ethical conduct is of no value; rather, the ethical record of man is immensely more important than other creatures far greater in size. But it was not easy to make this idea prevail, while at the same time preserving the inner recognition of the glory of God, which is equally the greatest foundation for human perfection... All this effort was necessary in order to accommodate in man's small heart the picture of the greatness of creation and the lowliness of man together with the vision of God's greatness and His transcendence above all conventional human values. If at that time men would have known of the vast number of worlds, such as scientists believe in today, then man himself would have appeared as puny and his morality as nothing, and it would have been impossible to instill in him a living spirit of worthiness and dignity. Only now, that Man has already successfully assimilated the ideas of which we spoke, will he be unfrightened by any quantitative greatness. But all this requires propitious timing and the right kind of preparation; and narrative descriptions -- whether they derive from scientific research of nature, or whether they come from prophetic revelation -- must always carry with them the power to enhance life and happiness in truth, and not merely to bring man a collection of fragmented information to play with as in a child's game. When you will understand this, you will also appreciate that there is a lofty value both to what is revealed and to what is concealed...