

"GOD, MAN, AND ALL THOSE BAKED GOODS"

(outline only)

1. Will leave reference to "baked goods" to end; קידוש as well as other refreshments always come at very end

2. Circumstances in which theme came into focus for me--in חדר אטום at Plaza in Jerusalem during first air raid alert in Gulf War Jan. 18, 1991. Was giving שיעור to 3-4 students, all in gas masks. Question: אלה ברכב ואלה בסוסים ואנחנו בשם ה' אלקינו נזכיר. Really? Then what are we doing with gas masks on? Why look for anti-missile missiles, etc.?

So: כל לא בחיל ולא בכח כל אם ברוח אהל ה"צ. So why "sealed rooms" and Patriots to fight Scuds? Why an army and air force altogether? And more: why does David himself say המלמד ילי לקרב אצבעותי למלחמה?

Briefly: what part played by God (השגחה פרטית, miracles, destiny, באסערט) and what by man (arms, politics, economics, science)? Same question not only war, but all life...?

3. Two great ideas contend w each other through all J. history:

* גאולה = wholly act of God. Man = passive; all God's show

* True, without God, nothing; but faith not substitute for human effort. Man may not be playwright, but neither is he puppet. Man is an actor in drama of life; can even write part of own script--as long as God's will achieved at end of play.

First = QUIETISM. Human initiative in redeeming self, society, world is act of *hubris*, defiance of God.

Second = ACTIVISM. בחירה חפשיה implies: God wills that man be assertive, active.

4. Quietism: המגיד הגדול במזרח-- man reaches spiritual apex in self-annihilation, בטול היש, thus: אג"ל - אל"ן. (This is secret of תשובה--adopting new personality requires first annihilation of present ego, then fashion new one: אג"ל-אל"ן-אג"ל.) So, R. Bachya: השתדלות superior to בטחון (hence: work only for enough to live that day...)

Activism: Heard name of Rav Kook: why open door when welcome Elijah at Seder--if he can make all those appearances, climb stairs, etc., surely can open door himself? Ans.: If you don't open the door yourself, Elijah and Messiah will not come!!

5. Analysis of Consequences:

* Quietism. Positive: deep piety. Serenity. Realistic view human limitations. Negative: pessimism. Despair. When physician says, "it's all in God's hands"... Paralysis of will. באסערט leads to fatalism: no self-help, no resistance to tyranny, etc. This is basic ideology of Satmar, נטורי קרתא.

* Activism. השתדלות based on idea man is partner of God. Saadia-אלקים-צלם means man images divine creativity. S.R. Hirsch--אשר ברא אלקים לעשות--"for man to do." R. Leibel Eger on what he learned in Kotzk--אלקים ברא אלקים. Positive consequences: allowed us to survive...הירבן ביהמ"ק...and, even more, שואה. Thus, ideology of Zionism and founding State of Israel. Negative: blind to man's marginality. Arrogance. Myth human omnipotence.

6. Precedents in Jewish History, Thought. (Dr. Joseph Goldschmidt)

* Quietism: גאולה מצרים...שליה...שרף...מלאך...אני ולא מלאך. Not even Moses (who thus not mentioned in Haggadah). לא תצא איש --God does all, apparently.

* Activism: שיבת ציון under Ezra, Nehemiah. Babylon rather than Egypt. Used diplomacy, strategized, organized, exercised leadership. השתדלות --"שתדלנים". True, prophets predicted (70 years earlier), God promised; but activists realized the dream, fulfilled the promise.

So: both have legitimate precedents.

6. Yet: mistake overdraw boundaries, overstate the case for each.

* Only Activism: Secular nationalism, not Judaism! When Israeli secularists refer Bible- is falsification of תנ"ך I embarrassed after Six Day War, universal enthusiasm, ההרור חשובה, Israeli generals U.S. debunked: all our planning, courage. כחי. לעוצם ידך עשו לי את כל החיל הזה. Not so arrogant after Yom Kippur War. Recently, R. Kalman Kahana (Poalei Aguda MK) in Knesset: Only time I heard Abba Eban mention God's Name Knesset--when he quoted speech by Sadat! וכדאל בויגון וקצר.

* Only Quietism: equally untenable. Proof from יצ"ח faulty: Was miraculous but not magical. Thus (Dr. Israel Eldad), God brought on עשר מכות, but first מכה delivered by man--Moses: ייך ה' ילהם לבם. What of verse קפיצה נחשונה. Contemporary Hebrew: תחלישון? Answer: Mechilta quotes R. Judah the Prince: is not declarative but interrogatory verse... Also, on next verse, אמר לו הקב"ה, לא עת עתה, מה תצק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו, דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו. Instead: ...לא תצק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו. ...ואתה הרים את מטק.

Hence: need both, should interpenetrate, Egypt and Babylon define limits.

8. Hence, answer to my first question re: ברכב אלה etc.:

Verse end Proverbs, והבל היופי אשר לראת ה' היא תתהלל.
Question: How reconcile Torah's praise feminine pulchritude Rebecca, Rachel, Esther; Rabbis--Eve? (I: don't know any case Torah described רשע as beautiful!) explains: if woman has *only* beauty, charm--is שקר and הבל. But if has in addition יר"ש, then היא תתהלל for חן ויופי as well!

So: They come *only* with רכב וסוסים, while we come with ה' שם in addition to רכב וסוסים--and missiles, tanks, etc. Same for בנהל ולא בכה.

9. Granted both, which has primacy today? Egypt or Babylon model?

Each was right in its own time.

Egyptian model--appropriate young, immature people. In infancy spiritually, psychologically, nationally. Hence, needed "magic" food--מן. (J.T. Blessing is חסמים מן השמים).

Babylon Model--appropriate mature people. With בטחון, emphasized השתדלות. So, no longer advisable, therefore stopped as Joshua led them into א"י. Mature people want to achieve on own. Saadia on why בננו, why didn't He create world all perfect, and ans: man not enjoy such world, needs to accomplish on own. Today's BT>FFB... My own special love for ספרים I saved up to buy as kid > those got as gift or bought later on w no difficulty.

So too: health (ירמב"ן:) רפואה לרפואה, פרנסה. My challenge to Satmar, Neturei Karta: why not as quietistic w personal matters as פרנסה and רפואה? (Story: sell raffle for Cadillac old lady for \$1. She refuses: "if באשערט win Caddy, will do so without raffle...")

10. Can gather my own orientation (Religious Zionism--generally).

Can yield neither השתדלות nor בטחון. Both divine and human intersect at almost every point.

How combine? Intellectually & emotionally--בטחון; practically in deed and action--השתדלות.

As a mature people--tested both triumph & defeat, glory & catastrophe--our challenge is יוסעי. Act--vigorously, well.

W all its faults, State Israel is only one we have (Wiesel story:

MD to old woman, "let me see your tongue." "I don't like it."
"But doctor, it's the only tongue I have.")

11. (didn't give for lack of time). Finest Biblical event that illustrates concatenation divine and human purposes: JOSEPH STORY

Each principal acts in complete freedom, autonomy, yet all pieces fall into place to carry out divine design. Thus, Midrash: ב"ר יעקב היו עסוקים במכירת יוסף, יעקב היה עסוק בשק ואפר על יוסף, יחזקיה היה עסוק במעשה חמר, והף הקב"ה היה עסוק בורא אורו של המלך המשיח....

12. Now for the "desert"--"all those baked goods":

Rav א"ר years ago at שער in Moriah Cong., teaching ברכות, on ברכה מעילין ז' מינים שנשתבחה בהן א"י: ברכה אחרונה חמשת--rather minor אחרונה, פת, anything made of חמשת מינים of grain, "all those baked goods," get full treatment of complete ברהמ"ז. Why? Ans: 7 species grow mostlyt by selves; man only prunes, waters, etc. But 5 grains--man is major actor, actively involved in creative process: tends, reaps, grinds, pounds, sifts, bakes, etc. And what man contributes of his own creativity and sweat of his brow is more deserving of full and unabbreviated thanks to הקב"ה !

(See my sermon, "Fate or Destiny?- Man's Role in Changing Hisd Life", 1/18/70; A-438; A-671; A-753; F-97)