**Judaism and Adam Smith**

1. **The Theory of Moral Sentiments, Adam Smith (1723-1790)**

**The administration of the great system of the universe ... the care of the universal happiness of all rational and sensible beings, is the business of God and not of man. To man is allotted a much humbler department, but one much more suitable to the weakness of his powers, and to the narrowness of his comprehension: the care of his own happiness, of that of his family, his friends, his country....** But though we are ... endowed with a very strong desire of those ends, it has been entrusted to the slow and uncertain determinations of our reason to find out the proper means of bringing them about. Nature has directed us to the greater part of these by original and immediate instincts. Hunger, thirst, the passion which unites the two sexes, and the dread of pain, prompt us to apply those means for their own sakes, and without any consideration of their tendency to those beneficent ends which the great Director of nature intended to produce by them.

The rich only select from the heap what is most precious and agreeable. They consume little more than the poor, and in spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their own conveniency, though the sole end which they propose from the labours of all the thousands whom they employ, be the gratification of their own vain and insatiable desires, they divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements. **They are led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants, and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of the society, and afford means to the multiplication of the species.**

1. ***Wealth of Nations,* Adam Smith**

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.  We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.

1. קהלת פרק ד, ד

וְרָאִיתִי אֲנִי אֶת כָּל עָמָל וְאֵת כָּל כִּשְׁרוֹן הַמַּעֲשֶׂה כִּי הִיא קִנְאַת אִישׁ מֵרֵעֵהוּ גַּם זֶה הֶבֶל וּרְעוּת רוּחַ

And I saw all the toil and all the excellence of work, which is a man's envy of his friend; this too is vanity and frustration.

1. אבן עזרא קהלת פרק ד,ד

וראיתי - **רוב עמל האדם** גם כשרון מעשיהם **בעבור בני האדם שיקנאו זה בזה וירצה להתפאר על חברו ושלא יהיה הוא חסר ממנו** בדירתו ומלבושיו ובניו ומאכלו וחכמתו וטוב השם:

**The majority of a person’s toil** and production **is due to the jealousy that one has on another; one wants to glorify themselves over the other and lack compared to them** in clothing, children, food, wisdom, and reputation.

1. בראשית רבה (וילנא) פרשת בראשית פרשה ט, ז

והנה טוב מאד זה יצר רע, וכי יצר הרע טוב מאד, אתמהא, **אלא שאלולי יצר הרע לא בנה אדם בית ולא נשא אשה, ולא הוליד ולא נשא ונתן**, וכן שלמה אומר (קהלת ד) כי היא קנאת איש מרעהו.

 “And behold it was very good” refers to the Evil Inclination. But can the Evil inclination be “very good?!” **But without the Evil Inclination, a person would not build, marry, reproduce, or conduct business.** Thus Shlomo said, “A man’s envy of his friend.”

1. תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף נד עמוד ב

תנו רבנן: שבעה דברים מכוסים מבני אדם, אלו הן: יום המיתה

The Sages taught that seven things are concealed from humanity. They are: The day of death…

1. עץ יוסף בראשית רבה פרשה סה סי' יב

כי אילו ידע האדם את עתו היה מת מדאגתו, והיה מתרשל בתשובה עד היותו קרוב למות והיה ממעט בישובו של עולם ורצון ה' שיהיו הכל עסוקים בישובו של עולם.

For if a person knew their time, they would die of worry. They would delay repenting until they approached death. And they would minimize developing the world, whereas Hashem’s desire is that everyone should be occupied with developing the world.

1. אורח ישרים שם (R’ Menachem Zvi Tektin)

**נ"ל כי "מכוסין" פירושו כי לא יזכור אדם אותם תמיד** **כי אם היה האדם זוכר את יום המיתה תמיד אזי לא היה חפץ לבנות ולנטוע בעולם שאינו שלו.** ע"כ כאשר חפץ ה' לשבת את עולמו, שם ה' תשוקת החיים בלב כל אחד ואת יום מותו לא יזכור ומכוסה הוא ממנו כאלו לעולם יחיה. ואף כי רואה הוא בעיניו איך המות מניף מגלו בכל יום ומתים אנשים בריאים וחזקים, עכ"ז ידמה כי עליו לא יעבור הכוס ועוסק הוא בעולמו בחשק נמרץ.

**It seems to me that “covered” means that a person doesn’t constantly “remember” their mortality.** **For if they would, they would have no desire to build and plant in the world what is not their own.** Thus, since Hashem’s desire is to settle His world, he imbued a love of life within the heart of every person; the reality of mortality is hidden, as if they are immortal. Even if a person sees with their own eyes how death reveals itself each day, with [even] strong, healthy people dying, they nonetheless believe that the “cup” will never pass to them, and they continue to push forward developing the world.

 