

Does God Sleep In on Sunday Mornings? Does it Matter if We Do?

I. The Problem and the Need

Rabbi Avaham Isaac Kook: *The Pangs of Cleansing*

THE PANGS OF CLEANSING

All the ideological controversies among people and all the inner conflicts that every individual suffers in his world outlook are caused by the confusion in the conception of God. This is an endlessly profound realm and all thoughts, whether practical or theoretical, are centered in it.

One must always cleanse one's thoughts about God to make sure they are free of the dross of deceptive fantasies, of groundless fear, of evil inclinations, of wants and deficiencies.

tual vitality. The greatest impediment to the human spirit, on reaching maturity, results from the fact that the conception of God is crystallized among people in a particular form, going back to childish habit and imagination. This is an aspect of the

offense of making a graven image or a likeness of God, against which we must always beware, particularly in an epoch of greater intellectual enlightenment.

All the troubles of the world, especially the spiritual,

lower level of intellectual life. No grandeur of God is then manifest in the soul, but only the lowliness of wild imaginings, that conjure up a form of some deceptive, vague, angry deity that is dissociated from reality. It confuses everyone who believes in it, depresses his spirit, blunts his feelings, inhibits the assertion of his sensibilities, and uproots the divine glory in his soul. If such a person should repeat all day that this faith is the faith in the unity of God, his statement would be empty, and it would register nothing in his soul. Every sensitive spirit must turn his mind away from this. And this is the atheism which is due to arise prior to the messianic liberation, when the knowledge of God is due to run dry in the household of Israel—and in the entire world.

The tendency of unrefined people to see the divine essence as embodied in the words and in the letters alone is a source of embarrassment to humanity, and atheism arises as a pained outcry to liberate man from this narrow and alien pit, to raise him from the darkness of focusing on letters and expressions, to the light of thought and feeling, finally to place his primary focus on the realm of morals. Atheism has a temporary legitimacy, for it is needed to purge away the aberrations that attached themselves to religious faith because of a deficiency in perception and in the divine service. This is its sole function in existence—to remove the particular images from the spec-

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Fourth, I believe that it is hardly necessary to state that philosophical training for the rabbi is of paramount importance. I do not deny the historical fact that Judaism has been bent more on the formulation of objective rules of conduct, specialized methods of halakhic research and formal technical analysis than upon the translation of our inner experience into a universal philosophical language. Judaism has been satisfied with an implicit philosophy and metaphysics, not feeling the need for outward expression as to the ultimate goal and mysterious origin of our great transcendental experience. However, slowly and painfully we have learned that the want of a philosophy, defined in discursive terms, might be very annoying in times of crisis and historical transition. Had, for instance, Second Commonwealth Judaism formulated its great moralistic doctrines in a philosophical vernacular comprehensible to both Jew and non-Jew of that era, Christianity would not have been able to boast throughout the ages that it had discovered new ethical horizons and would not have been credited with being a progressive religion. The Gentile would have known then that the "new" vistas allegedly unlocked by the founders of the church had

been beheld long before their advent by the Jewish rabbis and moralists. *Yahadut* [Judaism] has always suffered from a sense of shyness and reluctance to disclose its wisdom to the outside world, and this lack of metaphysical boldness and resoluteness has revenged itself upon us more than once. Thank God that a few of our greats, like Maimonides and others, realized the need for philosophical self-revelation and self-expression and resorted to metaphysics and philosophy to meet the challenge of difficult and unfriendly times. If the perplexed cry out for a guide, we must satisfy their needs and offer them philosophical counsel and leadership. We must engage in the heroic struggle for traditional *Yahadut* on all fronts, the philosophical one included.

On the other hand, let us not forget that

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ceeds out of the mouth of G-d" and "His breath"—that alone continuously brings it forth from naught and nullity into being, and gives it existence. Hence, there is truly nothing besides Him.
An illustration of this is the light of the sun which illumines the earth and its inhabitants. [This illumination] is the radiance and the light which spreads forth from the body of the sun and is visible to all: it gives light to the earth and the expanse of the universe. Now, it is self-evident that this light and radiance is also present in the very body and matter of the sun-globe itself in the sky, for if it can spread forth and shine to such a great distance, it can certainly it can shed light in its own place. However, there in its own place, this radiance is considered naught and complete nothingness, for it is absolutely non-existent in relation to the body of the sun-globe which is the source of this light and radiance, inasmuch as this radiance and light is merely the illumination which shines from the body of the sun-globe itself. It is only in the space of the universe, under the heavens and on the earth, where the body of the sun-globe is not present, that this light and radiance appears to the eye to have actual existence. And here, the term YESH ("existence") can truly be applied to it,

Now, following these words and the [concerning the nature of the creation], every intelligent person will understand clearly that each creature and being is actually considered naught and absolute nothingness in relation to the activating Force and the "Breath of His mouth" which is in the created thing, continuously calling it into existence and bringing it from absolute non-being into being. The reason that all things created and activated appear to us as existing and tangible, is that we do not comprehend nor see with our physical eyes the power of G-d and the "Breath of His mouth" which is in the created thing. If, however, the eye were permitted to see and to comprehend the life-force and spirituality which is in every created thing, flowing into it from "That which proceeds out of the mouth of G-d" and "His breath," then the materiality, grossness and tangibility of the creature would not be seen by our eyes at all, for it is completely nullified in relation to the life-force and the spirituality which is within it, since without the spirituality it would be naught and absolute nothingness, exactly as before the Six Days of Creation. The spirituality which flows into it from "That which pro-

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פרק ג והנה אחד הדברים והאמת האלוהי כל משביל על דבר יבין לאשוח אך שכל נברא ויש הוא באמת נחשב לאין ואפס ממש לגבי כח הפועל וזהו פיו שבנפעל המזהה אותו תמיד ומצוי מאין ממש ליש ומה שכל נברא ונפעל נראה לו ליש וממש' וזהו סודות שאין אנו משגיגים ודאמס נעניי בש' אה כח ה' וזהו פיו שבנברא אבל אילו ניתנה רשות לעין לראות ולהשיג את החיות והחיות שכל נברא השפיע בו ממצוה פ' ה' וזהו פיו לא היה נשמות הברא וחומר וממש נראה כלל לעינינו כי הוא נבל כנמצאות ממש לגבי החיות והחיות שבו מאד שמבניעדי החיות וזהו און ואפס ממש כמו קדם ששה ימי בראש' ממש והחיות השפיע עליו ממצוה פ' ה' וזהו פיו וזהו לכוון המצוה חסד מאפס ואין ליש ומזהו און איך אפס בלעוד באמת והמשל לזה הוא אור השמש המאיר לארץ ולחרים שהוא זה ואור המרפס מן השמש ונראה לעין כל מאד על הארץ ובחלל העולם והנה זה פשוט שאור וזהו הזה יש נ'כ בנף ודמ' כח השמש עצמו שבשמים שאם מרפס ומאד למדוק כי כ'ש שזכר לראוי במקום ממש רק ישם במקום ממש נחשב הווי הזה לאין ואפס ממש כי בל ממש במצוה לגבי נף כח השמש שהוא מקור האור והווי הזה שהווי והארץ וזהו און רק האדה סאדה מלפני העצם כח השמש רק בחלל העולם תחת כל השמים ועל הארץ נאין כאן נף כח השמש במצוה נראה כאן האור והווי הזה ליש ממש לעין כל ונפל עליו כאן שם יש באמת משא"כ

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משא"כ כשהוא במקורו בנף השמש אין נפל עליו שם יש כלל רק שם אין ואפס כי באמת הוא שם לאין ואפס ממש שאין מאד שם רק מקור לכוון שהוא נף השמש המאיר ואפס בלעוד וכדברים האלה ממש כדמיון כנלמם הם כל הברואים וזהו און ואלו כדמיון פיו השפיע עליהם ומזהו און מקום הם עצמם אינם רק כמו אור חיו מרפס מן השפיע וזהו ה' השפיע ומתלבש בתוכם ומצוה מאין ליש ולכן הם כמלים במצוה לגבי מקום כמו אור השמש שבכל במצוה ונחשב לאין ואפס ממש ואין נאך בשם יש כלל כשהוא במקורו רק תחת השמים שאין שם מקור כך כל הברואי אין נפל עליהם שיש כלל אלא לעיני כיש' שלטן שאין אנו האדם ומשגיגים כלל את המקור שהוא ח' ה' המזהה ארם. ולכן נראה לעינינו נשמות הנבראים וחומר וממש שרם יש נמד כמו שגרא אור השמש יש נמד כשאין במקורו רק שבוה און המשל רומה לנמשל למי לכאדה שבמשל אין המקור במצוה כלל בחלל העולם ועל הארץ שגרא שם אור ליש נמד משא"כ כל הברואי הם במקום תמיד רק שאין המקור נראה לעיני כיש' ולמה אינן כמלים במצוה למקום אך להבין זה צריך להקדים:

פרק ד ביהנה כתיב כי שמש ומנן ה' אלהים פ' מנן הוא נחם לשמש לזמן שזכור תבויח למכלל כשארול לעוד לטא הקב"ה מצוה המה מצרחה רשעים גידונן בה כי וכמו שגרהק מצן כעד השמש כך שם אלהים מצן לשם ריחה כזה ויש

exists, just as the light of the sun appears to have actual existence when it is not within its source.
But in the following, the illustration is apparently not completely identical with the object of comparison. For in this illustration, the source [the sun] is not present at all in the space of the universe and upon the earth where its light is seen as actually existing. Whereas, all created things are always within their source, and it is only that the source is not visible to our physical eyes. [If so], why are they not nullified in their source? To understand this, some prefatory remarks are necessary.

Chapter 4

It is written: "For a sun and a shield is Hava'ye Elokim." The explanation of this verse [is as follows]: "Shield" is a covering for the sun, to protect the creatures so that they should be able to bear [its heat]. As our Sages, of blessed memory, have said, "In Time to Come, the Holy One, blessed be He, will take out the sun from its sheath, the wicked will be punished by it. . . ." Now, just as the covering shields [i.e., conceals] the sun, so does the name Elokim shield [i.e., conceal] the name Hava'ye, blessed be He.

increases, when it is in its source, in the body of the sun, the term YESH ("existence") cannot be applied to it at all, and can only be called naught and non-existent. There it is indeed naught and absolutely non-existent, for there, only its source, the body of the sun, gives light, and there is nothing besides it.
The exact parallel to this illustration is the relationship between all created things and the Divine flow [of the life-force] from the "Breath of His mouth," which flows upon them and brings them into existence. They are in their source, and they themselves are merely like a diffusing light and effluence from the flow and spirit of G-d, which issues forth and becomes clothed in form and brings them from naught into being. Hence, their existence is nullified in relation to their source, just as the light of the sun is nullified and is considered naught and complete nothingness and is not [even] referred to as "existing" at all when it is in its source; only beneath the heavens, where its source is not present, can it be called "existing". In the same manner, the term YESH ("existence") can be applied to all created things only [as they appear] to our corporeal eyes, for we do not see nor comprehend at all the source, which is the spirit of G-d, that brings them into existence. Therefore, it appears to our eyes that the materiality, grossness and tangibility of the created things actually

Nefesh Hachaim 3:3,4

In truth, I would refrain from speaking about these matters as our Rishonim did...

But then I returned and saw that that was for them in their time but now, these are days without teaching, and each person goes as they see fit

It is clear from many places in the Zohar that the singular master has not end, fills the world, surrounds the world and from his perspective he is called 'filling the world but from our perspective, those that are commanded with the holy Torah, we refer to it as surrounding the entire world for the trait of filling the world with the honor of God is hidden from us.

And the idea that is true is that from the perspective of God, also now, after he created the world, he fills it with a simple joining, and 'there is nothing but him' is completely true

ובאמת היינו מונע עצמי מלדבר בענין זה כלל, כי הראשונים י"ל הסתירו הענין מאד, כמו שתראה דברי קדוש ה' הרוקח ז"ל,

הובא לעיל, שלא דבר בזה רק ברמז, כי נאמנה את אל רוחם וכסו דבר.

אבל שבת וראיתי, שקד היה יפה להם לפי דורותיהם. אבל עתה, הו' ימים רבים ללא מורה, וכל דרך איש ישר בעיניו להלך אחרי נטיית שקלו, וכל יצר מחשבות לב האדם מלא רק לעוף במחשבתו אל כל אשר יטנו לנו. והעולה על כלם, שזה תורת כל האדם, ונעשה משל גם כפי כסילים, לאמר, הלא בכל מקום וכל דבר הוא אלטות גמור, ועינים ולקם כל הימים להצמיח ולעזו בזה, עד שגם נצרים מנצרים ממשכא להו לכיהו לקבץ כל מעשיהם והנהגתם בזה לפי שכלם זה.

כי מבאר בבמה מקומות בזהר, שארון יחיד אין סוף ברוח הוא, כמלא כל עלמיו וסובב כל עלמיו, והינו, שמצדו יתקרה נקרא בבחינת "ממלזו כל עלמיו", ומצדנו כפי אשר נצטוינו בתורה בענין הנהגותינו בתורה ומצות, וכפי השגתנו בחוש, נקרא ית"ש בבחינת "סובב כל עלמיו", שבחינת ממלא כל עלמיו הוא כבוד אלהים הסתר דבר מצדנו.

והענין כי ודאי האמת, שמצדו יתקרה, גם עתה אחר שקרא וחדש העולמות ברצונו, הוא ממלא כל העולמות והמקומות והבריות כלם בשווי גמור ואחדות פשוט, "ואין עוד מלבדו" כמשמעו ממש, וכמו שקתבתי לעיל ממקראות מפרשים וכשם הרוקח ז"ל, יכמו שתקנו לנו קרמונינו ז"ל לומר קדם התפלה "אתה הוא עו' שלא נברא העולם אתה הוא משנברא העולם", רוצה לומר אף שקבר נבראו העולמות ברצונו הפשוט יתקרה, עם כל זה אין שום שנוי והתחדשות ח"ו, ולא שום תציצה מתמתם בעצמות אחדותו הפשוט, וזוא הוא גם עתה בקדם הבריאה, שהיה הכל מלא עצמות אין אף ברוח הוא, גם במקום שעומדים העולמות עתה.