***HaRav, The Rav and the Rebbe #2 – Halakhic Mind and the Shofar***

**1)Rabbi Jonathon Sacks, “Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik’s Early Epistemology: A Review of The Halakhic Mind” Tradition 23:3 (1988), 76**

The program of *The Halakhic Mind* is essentially prior to both these enterprises. In it, R. Soloveitchik sets out his claim for the cognitive status of religion for the methodological autonomy of the philosophy of religion, and for the primacy of Halakha as the basic datum from which a philosophy of Judaism should be based. This looks very much like the epistemological prologue to the two other works.

**2)*The Halakhic Mind* pg. 5**

Great philosophical systems are never produced in a scientific vacuum, but usually follow the formation and completion of a scientific world perspective. This priority of scientific knowledge to philosophical interpretation can be discerned twice in the history of philosophy: First, the Aristotelian natural sciences and metaphysics, which dominated occidental thought throughout ancient and medieval times; and second, the Galilean-Newtonian mathematical physics, which fostered philosophy of nature.

**3) *The Halakhic Mind* pg. 92**

Judging Maimonides’ undertaking retrospectively, one must admit that the master whose thought shaped Jewish ideology for centuries did not succeed in making his interpretations of the commandments prevalent in our world perspective…The reluctance on the part of the Jewish *homo religious* to accept Maimonidean rationalistic ideas are not ascribable to any agnostic tendencies, but to the incontrovertible fact that such explanations neither edify nor inspire the religious consciousness. They are essentially, if not entirely, valueless for the religious interests we have most at heart.

**4) *The Halakhic Mind* pg. 40**

The *homo religious* moves in a concrete world full of color and sound. He lives in his immediate, qualitative environment, not in a scientifically constructed cosmos. Hence, as long as cognition was the exclusive privilege of the scientist (and of the philosopher who followed in his traces), the *homo religious* sought haven in other spheres.

**5)*The Halakhic Mind* pg. 24**

What is perhaps most striking in all these considerations is that the physicist himself, in expounding “peculiar” epistemological theories concerning the physical world, has helped deliver the philosopher from his bondage to the mathematical sciences. Neils Bohr… developed his so-called theory of Complementarity… according to this theory, there is a dualistic approach to the physical universe – the spatio-temporal and the causalistic. Paradoxically enough, both aspects, although complementary in theoretical exposition, are nevertheless mutually exclusive when formulated mathematically.

**6)*The Halakhic Mind* pg. 47**

The category of time may serve as an illustration. The natural sciences attempt to convert time into quantitative chronometry (Bergson) or chronogeography (Russel); the humanistic sciences conceive it as a creative quality identifiable with the stream of consciousness (James) or pure duration (Bergson).

**7)Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Memories of a Giant*, 286**

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**8)*The Halakhic Mind* pg. 86**

The philosopher of religion in his regressive movement from objectivity to subjectivity should not undertake the explanation of religious norms by antecedence, for there is no causal continuity in the passage from one order to another. The subjective correlate does not interpret an objective commandment. The reconstruction method is recommended, but it cannot generate a causal explanation of religion. At this point many philosophers have blundered. The cure of the “why” question followed them relentlessly.

**9)*Man of Faith in the Modern World* Volume 2, pg. 92-95**

There are three types of questions we may ask about any phenomenon. “Why” probes motivations to establish why things are the way they are; “how” seeks explanations as to how they function effectively; and “what” looks for interpretations to establish meaningfulness…

Asking “why” God issued certain commandments is seeking to comprehend the unfathomable… In response to the question “Why did God create the world?” we should not say that He is kind and wanted to bestow goodness on the world or that a king needs a kingdom. The very notion of need implies that He has insufficiency which He sought to overcome. This is obviously untenable. The only acceptable answer is, “He willed it.”…

Asking “how” for *hukim* is also nonsensical. How does sprinkling of the watery ashes of the *Parah Adumah* cleanse the ritually unclean (Num. 19)?... We willingly and reverently accept the incomprehensible “how” even as we dutifully embraced the unfathomable “why.”…

Remaining is the third question, “what,” which inquires about the meaningfulness of particular *mitzvoth* to the individual and society. This is a legitimate pursuit. Nay it many even be meritorious to inquire, “How can I integrate and assimilate this *mitzvah* into my religious consciousness and outlook?” What thoughts and emotions should I feel when the *Parah Adumah* chapter is read in the synagogue?” How can it help me achieve devekut, a greater closeness to God?”

**10)Rav Soloveitchik, *The Rav* (by Rabbi Rakeffet),pg. 150**





**11)*Before Hashem You Will Be Purified*, 23-24**





