

OU JERUSALEM CENTRE.

RABBI DR ALAN ABRAHAM KIMCHE

“Great Jewish Thinkers”

Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik (1903-1993)

1. A most influential and significant Jewish Leader of 20th century.
2. a 200 years rabbinical dynasty of both paternal and maternal.
3. Named after his great-grandfather the “Beis Halevy” RY Volozhin
4. Talmudic training in Russia and academic training in Berlin
5. 1932 moved to USA Boston representative of Agudat Yisrael
6. 1935 only visit to Israel to submit candidacy for ChR of Tel Aviv
7. 1944 Chairman of Mizrachi Religious Zionists of America.
8. Rosh Yeshiva University RIETS Rabbinical College 1941-1986
9. Non-messianic Religious Zionism - “Kol Dodi Dofek” 1956
10. “Lonely Man of Faith” - 1965. Religious Existentialism.

“The Lonely Man of Faith”

Creation of Man in Bereishit Ch.1

(ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרִדּוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וּבְבְהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הַרְמֵשׁ הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ
 (ז) וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם
 (ח) וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבִשְׁתֶּה וּרְדּוּ
 בְּדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיַּי הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ
 (ט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נֹתְתִי לָכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עָלֵי-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ
 וְאֶת-כָּל-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ פְרִיעַץ זֶרַע זָרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ

Creation of Man in Bereishit Ch.2

(ז) וַיִּצְרֶה יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עֶפְרָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפְח בְּאָפִיו נְשִׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה

(ח) וַיִּטֶּע יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהִים גֶּן־בְּעֵדֶן מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּשֶׂם שֵׁם אֶת־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָצָר
 (כא) וַיִּפְלֵ יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהִים תְּרִדְמָה עַל־הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אַחַת מִצִּלְעוֹתָיו וַיִּסְגֶר בְּשָׂר
 תְּחִתָּנָה

(כב) וַיְבַן יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַצֵּלַע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיְבִאָהּ אֶל־הָאָדָם
 (כג) וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעַם עִצָּם מִעֲצָמֵי וּבָשָׂר מִבָּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ
 לְקָחָהּ־זֹאת

(כד) עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד

Rav Soloveitchik proposes that the two accounts of the creation of man (in chapters 1 and 2 of Bereishit) portray two types of man, two human ideals. In their approaches to God, the world and the self.

The first, he calls Adam I, - is guided by the quest for dignity, which is a surface social quality attained by control over one's environment. He is a creative and majestic personality who espouses a practical-utilitarian approach to the world.

Adam II, on the other hand, is guided by the quest for redemption, which is a quality of the depth personality attained by control over oneself. He is humble and submissive, and yearns for an intimate relationship with God and with his fellow man in order to overcome his sense of incompleteness and inadequacy. These differences carry over to the type of community each one creates: the "natural work community" (Adam I) and the "covenantal faith community" (Adam II).

God not only desires the existence of each of these personality types and each of these communities, but actually bids each and every one of us to attempt to embody both of these seemingly irreconcilable types within ourselves. We must attempt to pursue both dignity and redemption.

The demand to be both Adam I and Adam II leads to a built-in tension in the life of each person responsive to this call; and because one lives with a constant dialectic, a continual oscillation between two modes of existence, one can never fully realize the goals of either Adam I or Adam II. Unable to feel totally at home in either community, man is burdened by loneliness.

Some Important Ideas derived from Adam1 and Adam2 analysis:

1. Validating the creative, natural, material, ambitions of Man as part of his Divine legacy as Adam1 create partnerships and groups to build and shape and dominate the world.
2. Defining the spiritually sensitive Adam2, who marvels and meditates at on the wonders of Nature seeking the presence of God in every moment and place.
3. Adam2 is essentially a Lonely Man of Faith, meeting God alone.
4. The contrasting types of communities and friendships made by Adam1 in contrast to Adam2. קנה לך חבר.
5. Re-define yetzer hara; that engagement in material benefits and pleasures is an integral part of the Divine intention. בכל דרכך דעהו.
6. Contrast sharply with the Christian view that only after The Original Sin was Man driven by material interests, and that to attain a true spiritual life one must abandon materialism, live as a monk or nun in denial of one's physical nature.
7. The resolution of the these two dimensions of human nature is not the ability of one to obscure the other, rather it is a dialectic process moving back and forth between these two modes of existence. רצוא ושוב.
8. The quality of 'GEVURA' he translates as a form of heroism, contrasted to classic heroes who are making a public display of courage, Adam1 has the inner courage to engage fully in the material world but drawing on his spirituality of Adam2 he is able to resist its seductions and excesses.
9. The key to this dialectic is in a different essay by RYBS called 'Halakhic Man'. In which the Man uses the concepts of halakha to reconstruct his world and sees everything in the framework of its halakhic meaning.