

Thank G-d for Atheism

The Pangs of Cleanings ~ *Rabbi A. I. Kook Orot 124 Zeronim*

- 1) 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 G-d...
- 2) One must always cleanse one's thoughts about Hashem to ensure they are free of the rubbish of deceptive fantasies, of groundless fear, of evil inclinations, of wants and deficiencies.
- 3) Faith in G-d enhances human happiness only to the extent that divine greatness is probed and studied by those who are competent to do so.
- 4) Then the soul is illuminated by the divine light, through bonding in love and full understanding to Him who is the life of all life. All feelings, all ideas and all actions thus become refined....
- 5) All the divine names, whether in Hebrew or in any other language, give us only a tiny and dull spark of the hidden light to which the soul aspires when it utters the word "G-d." Every definition of Hashem brings about heresy, every definition is spiritual idolatry; even attributing to Him intellect and will, even the term divine, the term 'G-d', suffers from the limitations of definition.
- 6) The greatest impediment to the human spirit, on reaching maturity, results from the fact that the conception of G-d is crystallized among people in a particular form, going back to childish habit and imagination. This is an aspect of the offence of making an idol or a likeness of G-d ...
- 7) Since the thoughts concerning G-d in their basic elements are unclear, G-d is conceived by the multitude and even by individuals who should be their leaders, as a ruthless power from whom there is no escape and to whom one must necessarily be subservient.
- 8) No grandeur of Hashem is then manifest in the soul, but only the lowliness of wild imaginings, that conjure up a form of some deceptive, vague, angry G-d 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.....
- 9) 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.
- 10) 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...

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1] Timid and emotional people who, out of fear, are not reflective, and do not dare to probe the greatness and of the divine conception and what it means to honor Him, find in the conception itself a source of stumbling. The duty to honor G-d becomes for them a ruthless demand of a being eager for unlimited honors. It degrades their very refined and noble sensibility, and makes of them sad and cruel slaves who hate one another and who, in truth, hate G-d deep in their hearts, though they always speak words of love and honor when they mention G-d's name. "With their mouth and their lips they honor Him, while their heart is remote from Him" [Isaiah 29:13]