

## FOUR MODES OF RELATION BETWEEN MAN AND GOD

### I. GOD AS CONTRACTUALLY INDEBTED TOWARDS ISRAEL

#### A. DEUTERONOMY 7:12-7:15

① 12. Wherefore shall it come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy father; 13. And he shall love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 14. Thou shalt be blessed above all peoples: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle; 15. And the lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.

#### B. DEUTERONOMY 8:18-8:20

② 18. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day; 19. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish; 20. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so ye shall perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.

#### C. DEUTERONOMY 9:5-9:6

③ 5. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; 6. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people

### II. GOD AS DOMINEERING PARENT

#### A. DEUTERONOMY 8:2 - 8:5

④ 2. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.; 3. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live; 4. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years; 5. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

5 **B. DEUTERONOMY 1:31** "The Lord thy God bore you as a man bears his son."

6 **COMPARE:** "When are you His children ? When you obey him." Abba Ben Kahana. *Tanhuma, Ekev.*

7 **CONTRAST:** "When a father complains that his son has taken to the evil path, what should he do ? Love him more than ever." Proverb ascribed to the Baal Shem Tov

### III. GOD AS ALTRUISTIC FACILITATOR/MODEL FOR ISRAEL'S SELF-ACTUALIZATION

#### A. DEUTERONOMY 10:12 - 10:19

8 12. And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul; 13. To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good ?; 14. Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.; 15. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people as it is this day; 16. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked; 17. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, not taketh reward; 18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment; 19. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

9 **COMPARE: MICAH 6:6-6:8**

6. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God ? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old ?; 7. Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil ? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ?; 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

#### ISAIAH 1:11-1:18

10 11. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? Saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats; 12. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts ? ; 13. Bring no more vain oblations; incense of abomination they are unto me; new moons and sabbaths proclaim no more to be holy convocations; I cannot bear iniquity and solemn meeting; 14. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to hear them; 15. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood; 16. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine

eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; 18. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

#### IV. RECIPROCITY, INTER-DEPENDENCE AND DIALOGUE

11 **A. HENRI BERGSON:** "The mystics unanimously bear witness that God needs us."  
"Religion...regards God, above all, as a being who can hold communication with us: now this is just what the God of Aristotle...is incapable of doing." *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, pages 230, 243.

12 **B. HANANIA** "God redeemed Himself, as it were, when He redeemed Israel." *Talmud Yerushalmi, Sukka 4.3*

#### 13 **C. THE ZOHAR**

"The power above is set in motion by the impulse from below, even as vapor ascends to form the cloud. If the community of Israel did not first give the impulse, the One above would not move to meet her, for yearning below makes completion above." *Gen. 35a*

#### 14 **D. ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL**

"The bible speaks not only of man's search for God but also of God's search for man. 'Thou dost hunt me like a lion', exclaimed Job (10:16)...This is the mysterious paradox of Biblical faith: God is pursuing man. It is as if God were unwilling to be alone, and he had chose man to serve him. Our seeking him is not only man's but also His concern, and must not be considered an exclusively human affair. His will is involved in our yearnings. All of Human history as described in the bible may be summarized in one phrase. God is in search of man...When Adam and Eve hid from his presence, the Lord called: 'Where art thou?' It is a call that goes out again and again. It is a still small echo of a still small voice, not uttered in words, not conveyed in categories of the mind, but ineffable and mysterious, as ineffable and mysterious as the glory that fills the whole world. It is wrapped in silence, concealed and subdued, yet it is as if all things were the frozen echo of the question 'Where art thou?'. *God in Search of Man*, pages 136-37.

#### 15 **E. MARTIN BUBER**

"The world is twofold for man in accordance with his twofold attitude. The attitude of man is twofold in accordance with the two basic words he can speak. The basic words are not single words but word pairs. One basic word is the word pair I-You. The other basic word is the word pair I-It." *I and Thou*

#### 16 **F. HAROLD KUSHNER**

"It is Buber's contention that we all want I-Thou relationships...but we don't know how to achieve it...His answer is a theological one. God relates to each of us in a I-Thou fashion. God

never uses us to meet His needs. He is always aware of our needs and feelings. And by the same token, our relationship with God, if we get it right, will always be an I-Thou relationship. False religion may try to teach us to use God, to push His buttons so that He will give us what we want, to bribe him by pious actions and flattering words. But such religion only makes God into an object, a God who exists so that we can use him. True religion...teaches us to meet God, not to manipulate him." *Who Needs God*, page 98.

# Ekev @ the DC Beit Midrash

Tuesday, August 12, 2003; Yom Shlishi, 14 Av 5763

## Welcome to the DC Beit Midrash!

The Chumash (Five Books of Moses) is divided into 54 portions, which Jews read sequentially each week in services. On a regular evening, a member of our community will lead us in a text-study of this portion, or *parsha*. The voices of both past and contemporary interpreters will inform our discussion. Every week, a sheet summarizing the Torah portion of the week and the other sources the teacher will use will be provided to aid you in your study.

## This Week's Parsha (Torah Portion):

Eikev (Deuteronomy), Chapter 7: Verse 12 to Chapter 11:Verse 26

In this week's *parsha*, Moshe continues his review of the exodus experience, reminding the Israelites of how God has cared for them in the wilderness. He reiterates the covenant and continues to review the general rewards that will benefit the Israelites if they are faithful to God and follow God's commandments. It is simple: if the Israelites follow the Torah, God will bless them in the land, and drive out their enemies. If they do not obey God, then...

Moshe warns them not to follow other gods or engage in idolatrous worship practices. Moses also reminds the Israelites of some of their earlier rebellious incidents, including the events around the building of the Golden Calf and the destruction of the first set of tablets. The *parsha* concludes with the passage which is used liturgically as the second paragraph of the Shema. These words reiterate the connection between Israel's piety and God's blessing.

([http://www.kolel.org/pages/parasha/devarim\\_summary.html#devarim](http://www.kolel.org/pages/parasha/devarim_summary.html#devarim))

## This Week's Sources

### Martin Buber

(1878-1965)

Jewish theologian and philosopher, born in Vienna. He studied philosophy at Vienna, Berlin, and Zürich, then became attracted to Hasidism, founding and editing a monthly journal *Der Jude* (1916-24). He taught comparative religion at Frankfurt (1923-33), and directed a Jewish adult education programme until 1938, when he fled to Palestine to escape the Nazis. He became professor of social philosophy at Jerusalem, where he wrote on social and ethical problems. He is best known for his religious philosophy, expounded most famously in *Ich und Du* (1923, I and Thou), contrasting personal relationships of mutuality and reciprocity with utilitarian or objective relationships.

(<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/phil/phil/buber.html>)

### Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

(1907-1972)

Heschel was a European-born scholar and philosopher. He received a classical Jewish education, and a doctorate from the *Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin. He later succeeded philosopher Martin Buber in Frankfurt on the Main. With the rise of the Nazis, Heschel was deported to Poland and eventually made his way to the United States by way of England. In the United States, Rabbi Heschel taught at the Hebrew Union College beginning in 1940, and he joined the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1945 as professor of Jewish ethics and philosophy. Heschel's works attempt to penetrate and illumine the reality underlying religion, the living dynamic between God and Man, through the understanding of Jewish text and experience. In this quest, Heschel recognized the limited value of the tools of the philosopher. While reason may help structure his inquiry, it is limited in its ability to quantify the aspect of divinity that is infinite and unquantifiable. Heschel's work fits into two categories. He did traditional scholarly study and interpretation of classic Jewish texts. Additionally, he sought to offer an authentic theology based on traditional sources that could be applied to the questions and challenges facing the modern Jew. His approach to the challenges of modernity was composed not only of the rhetoric of philosophy, but was also brought to action through his involvement in the civil rights movement and other areas of social activism.

(Excerpted from <http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknow/sources/ajheschel.shtml>)

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## Rabbi Harold Kushner

Rabbi Harold Kushner is Rabbi Laureate of Temple Israel in Natick, Massachusetts. He is a native of Brooklyn, New York and a graduate of Columbia University. He is the author of several best-selling books, including *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, published in 1981 and translated into 12 languages. Rabbi Kushner is internationally recognized for his writings and the comfort and guidance which they provide. He holds six honorary degrees and has received numerous distinguishing awards, including the Christopher Medal and The Yitzhak Rabin Award. In 1995, he was honored as one of 50 people who have made the world a better place in the past 50 years.

Contemporary

(<http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknaw/sources/hakushner.shtml>)

## The Zohar

The Zohar ("Radiance") is the greatest classic of Jewish mysticism. It is a mystical commentary on the Torah, written in Aramaic and Hebrew; it contains a Kabbalistic theosophy, treating of the nature of God, the cosmogony and cosmology of the universe, the soul, sin, redemption, good and evil, etc.

(c. 1200)

(<http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zohar>)

## Henri Bergson

French philosopher who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927. Bergson argued that the intuition is deeper than the intellect. His *Creative Evolution* (1907) and *Matter and Memory* (1896) attempted to integrate the findings of biological science with a theory of consciousness. Bergson's work was considered the main challenge to the mechanistic view of nature. He is sometimes claimed to have anticipated features of relativity theory and modern scientific theories of the mind.

(1859-1941)

(<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/bergson.htm>)

## This Week's Teacher

### Tamir Damari

Tamir Damari graduated from Yeshivah of Flatbush High School, Binghamton University (B.A., Philosophy) and The George Washington University (J.D.) He works as a commercial litigator in Washington, D.C.

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