

History, Hegel and Rebbe Akiva

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ויקרא כג

לג וינדבר יהוה אל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. לֵד דְבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה חַג הַסּוּפוֹת שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לִיהוָה. לֵה בְיוֹם הָרֵאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ כָּל-מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ. לַו שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תִּקְרְיֻבוּ אִשָּׁה לִיהוָה בְיוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אִשָּׁה לִיהוָה עֲצָרְתָהּ הוּא כָּל-מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ.

רמב"ן

עצרת היא...: וצוה בחג המצות שבעה ימים בקדושה לפנייהם ולאחריהם כי כולם קדושים ובתוכם ה', ומנה ממנו תשעה וארבעים יום שבעה שבועות כימי עולם, וקדש יום שמיני כשמיני של חג, והימים הספורים בינתיים כחולו של מועד בין הראשון והשמיני בחג, והוא יום מתן תורה שהראם בו את אשו הגדולה ודבריו שמעו מתוך האש : ולכך יקראו רבותינו ז"ל בכל מקום חג השבועות עצרת, כי הוא כיום שמיני של חג שקראו הכתוב כן. וזהו מאמרם (חגיגה יז.) שמיני רגל בפני עצמו הוא לענין פז"ר קש"ב. ותשלומין דראשון הוא, כי הוא אצילות הראשונים ואינו כאחדות שלהם

Ramban: And He commanded seven days on the Festival of Matsot, with holiness before them and after them, 'since they are all holy and amongst them is the Lord.' And He counted from it forty-nine days - seven weeks - like the days of yore, and He sanctified the eighth, like the eighth [day] of the Festival (Sukkot). And the days that are counted between them are like the intermediate days of the festival (chol ha-moed) between the first and eighth day of the Festival. And it is the day of the giving of the Torah, on which He showed them His great fire. And therefore in every place, our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, called the Festival of Weeks, the convocation - as it is like the eighth day of [Sukkot], that the verse called the same.

יבמות דף סב, ב רבי יהושע אומר נשא אדם אשה בילדותו ישא אשה בזקנותו היו לו בנים בילדותו יהיו לו בנים בזקנותו שנא' (קוהלת יא) בבקר זרע את זרעך ולערב אל תנח ידך כי אינך יודע אי זה יכשר הזה או זה ואם שניהם כאחד טובים ר"ע אומר למד תורה בילדותו ילמוד תורה בזקנותו היו לו תלמידים בילדותו יהיו לו תלמידים בזקנותו שנא' בבקר זרע את זרעך וגו' אמרו שנים עשר אלף זוגים תלמידים היו לו לרבי עקיבא מגבת עד אנטיוכוס וכולן מתו בפרק אחד מפני שלא נהגו כבוד זה לזה והיה העולם שמם עד שבא ר"ע אצל רבותינו שבדרום ושנאה להם ר"מ ור' יהודה ור' יוסי ורבי שמעון ורבי אלעזר בן שמוע והם הם העמידו תורה אותה שעה תנא כולם מתו מפסח ועד עצרת אמר רב חמא בר אבא ואיתימא ר' חייא בר אבין כולם מתו מיתה רעה מאי היא א"ר נחמן אסכרה

Yevamot: R. Joshua said, If a man married in his youth, he should marry again in his old age; if he had children in his youth, he should also have

children in his old age; for it said, In the morning sow thy seed and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they shall both be alike good. R. Akiba said: If a man studied Torah in his youth, he should also study it in his old age; if he had disciples in his youth, he should also have disciples in his old age. For it is said, In the morning sow thy seed etc. It was said that R. Akiba had twelve thousand pairs of disciples, from Gabbatha to Antipatris; and all of them died at the same time because they did not treat each other with respect. The world remained desolate until R. Akiba came to our Masters in the South and taught the Torah to them. These were R. Meir, R. Judah, R. Jose, R. Simeon and R. Eleazar b. Shammua; and it was they who revived the Torah at that time. A Tanna taught: All of them died between Passover and Pentecost.

Maharal - Chiddushei Aggadot – And the fact that they died from Pesach until Shavouot, even though it is the best of all times, and yet they still died... is to show that they sinned and that they shouldn't say that they died naturally. And also there is to say that this period indicates the honor of the Torah...

מסכת מכות דף כד, ב

שוב פעם אחת היו עולין לירושלים כיון שהגיעו להר הצופים קרעו בגדיהם
כיון שהגיעו להר הבית ראו שועל שיצא מבית קדשי הקדשים התחילו הן בוכין ור"ע
מצחק
אמרו לו
מפני מה אתה מצחק
אמר להם
מפני מה אתם בוכים
אמרו לו
מקום שכתוב בו (במדבר א, נא) והזר הקרב יומת ועכשיו שועלים הלכו בו ולא נבכה
אמר להן
לכך אני מצחק דכתיב (ישעיהו ח, ב) ואעידה לי עדים נאמנים את אוריה הכהן ואת זכריה
בן יברכיהו
וכי מה ענין אוריה אצל זכריה
אוריה במקדש ראשון וזכריה במקדש שני
אלא תלה הכתוב נבואתו של זכריה בנבואתו של אוריה
באוריה כתיב (מיכה ג, יב) לכן בגללכם ציון שדה תחרש [וגו'] בזכריה כתיב (זכריה ח, ד)
עוד ישבו זקנים וזקנות ברחובות ירושלם
עד שלא נתקיימה נבואתו של אוריה הייתי מתיירא שלא תתקיים נבואתו של זכריה עכשיו
שנתקיימה נבואתו של אוריה בידוע שנבואתו של זכריה מתקיימת
בלשון הזה אמרו לו
עקיבא ניחמתנו עקיבא ניחמתנו:

Makkot: Once again they were coming up to Jerusalem together, and just as they came to Mount Scopus they saw a fox emerging from the Holy of Holies. They fell a-weeping and R. Akiba seemed merry. Wherefore, said they to him, are you merry? Said he: Wherefore are you weeping? Said they to him: A place of which it was once said, And the common man that draweth nigh shall be put to death, is now become the haunt of foxes, and should we not weep? Said he to them: Therefore am I merry; for it is written, And I will take to Me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the Son of Jeberechiah. Now what connection has this Uriah the priest with Zechariah? Uriah lived during the times of the first Temple, while [the other,] Zechariah lived [and prophesied] during the second Temple; but Holy-Writ linked the [later] prophecy of Zechariah with the [earlier] prophecy of Uriah, In the [earlier] prophecy [in the days] of Uriah it is written, Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field etc. In Zechariah it is written, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, There shall yet old men and old women sit in the broad places of Jerusalem, so long as Uriah's [threatening] prophecy had not had its fulfilment, I had misgivings lest Zechariah's prophecy might not be fulfilled; now that Uriah's prophecy has been [literally] fulfilled, it is quite certain that Zechariah's prophecy also is to find its literal fulfilment. Said they to him: Akiba, you have comforted us! Akiba, you have comforted us.

G. F. W. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*

Change while it imports dissolution, involves at the same time the rise of *a new life* - that while death is the issue of life, life is also the issue of death.....Spirit - consuming the envelope of its existence - does not merely pass into another envelope, nor rise rejuvenescent from the ashes of its previous form; **it comes forth exalted, glorified, a purer spirit.** It certainly makes war upon itself - consumes its own existence; but in this very destruction it works up with existence into a new form, and each successive phase becomes in its turn a material, working on which it exalts itself to a new grade.”

“Our mode of treating the subject is, in this aspect, a Theodicaea, ... so that the ill that is found in the World may be comprehended, and the thinking Spirit reconciled with the fact of the existence of evil. Indeed, nowhere is such a harmonising view more pressingly demanded than in Universal History; and it can be attained only by recognising the *positive* existence, in which that negative element is a subordinate, and vanquished nullity.”

Rav Kook, "The Doctrine of Evolution" (*Orot haKodesh*, III, p. 555)

The doctrine of evolution ... is more similar to the ..Kabbalah than all other philosophies.

Evolution, which proceeds on a course of improvement offers us the basis of optimism in the world.... In probing the inner meaning of evolution toward an improved state, we find here an explanation of the divine concepts with absolute clarity. It is precisely the Ein Sof in action that manages to bring to realization the infinite potentiality.

Evolution sheds light on all the ways of G-d. All existence evolves and ascends, as this may be discerned in some of its parts. Its ascent is general as well as in its particulars..... Existence is destined to reach a point when the whole will assimilate the good in all its constituted particulars. This is its general ascent: No particularity will remain outside, not a spark will be lost from the ensemble. All will share in the climactic culmination....

Rav Kook, "The Sage is Greater than the Prophet" (*Orot* pp. 120-1)

It was, therefore, needed to assign the ... general principles to the prophets and ... the particulars to the sages....

In the course of time the concern with the work of the sages predominated over the work of the prophets..... At the end of the present epoch, when the light of prophecy will begin to have its revival, there will develop a reaction, a pronounced disdain for the particulars...

This will continue until the radiance of prophecy will reemerge....not as unripe fruit, but as the first fruits full of vitality and life, and prophecy itself will acknowledge the great efficacy in the work of the sages, and in righteous humility exclaim: "The sage is greater than the prophet." This transcending of one-sidedness will vindicate the vision of unity expressed by the psalmist: "Mercy and truth have met, justice and peace have kissed, truth will rise out of the earth and mercy will show itself from heaven: the Lord will also bestow what is good and our earth will bring forth its bounty." (Tehillim 85:11) **The soul of Moshe will reappear in the world.**