

1979

"TO BE A BLESSING..."

The Nature of the Covenant of the Jewish People With God

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JUST A FEW DAYS AGO, A STUDENT IN MY BIBLE COURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY CAME UP TO ME AFTER CLASS TO ASK A QUESTION. "RABBI," HE SAID, "SOME OF THE CHRISTIAN STUDENTS IN MY DORM HAVE BEEN TALKING TO ME ABOUT THE JEWISH COVENANT WITH GOD. THEY TELL ME THAT CHRISTIANS HAVE THE NEW COVENANT WITH GOD AND WE JEWS HAVE THE OLD COVENANT. I AM EMBARRASSED TO SAY, RABBI, THAT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE JEWISH COVENANT IS. CAN YOU TELL ME SOMETHING OF ITS CONTENT AND MEANING?"

THIS YOUNG MAN IS RATHER TYPICAL OF OUR JEWISH COLLEGE STUDENTS. BY AND LARGE, THEY ARE IGNORANT OF JUDAISM. THEY COME FROM SUBSTANTIALLY ASSIMILATED HOMES, AND THEY KNOW LESS ABOUT THE BIBLE THAN DO THEIR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS. MORE IMPORTANT, THEIR LIFE IS NOT INFLUENCED IN ANY WAY BY THE MOST BASIC OF JEWISH IDEAS - THE IDEA OF A COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE. IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT THIS ELEMENTARY SUBJECT MIGHT BE THE TOPIC OF OUR CONVERSATION TONIGHT.

AT THE TIME WHEN JUDAISM CAME INTO BEING, SOME 4,000 YEARS AGO, THE PAGANS BELIEVED THAT THERE WERE MANY GODS AND THAT THESE GODS WERE CAPRICIOUS. THAT IS TO SAY, THE PAGANS THOUGHT OF THE GODS AS BEING VERY MUCH LIKE HUMANS WHO SIMPLY HAD THE POWER TO DO WHATEVER THEY WISHED. THUS, THE GODS WERE THOUGHT TO BE, AMONGST OTHER THINGS, SELFISH, PUNITIVE AND UNRELIABLE. WITH SUCH A VIEW OF THE GODS, THE PAGANS HAD TO BE FEARFUL ABOUT LIFE AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR A PREDICTABLE FUTURE. ACCORDINGLY, THEY DEVELOPED HIGHLY INTRICATE SYSTEMS OF MAGIC, THE PURPOSE OF WHICH WAS TO COMPEL THE GODS TO DO WHAT THEY WANTED. MAGIC WAS THE ONLY HOPE FOR STABILITY.

IT WAS JUDAISM WHICH FIRST PRESENTED THE IDEA TO THE WORLD THAT GOD WAS NOT AT ALL CAPRICIOUS. ON THE CONTRARY, HE WAS THE SOURCE OF REGULARITY AND STABILITY IN THE WORLD. IT WAS MANKIND, TAUGHT THE ISRAELITES, WHO WAS WHIMSICAL. IT WAS WE HUMANS WHO, BY OUR IMPERFECTIONS AND DELIBERATE MISDEEDS, BROUGHT EVIL AND IRREGULARITY INTO THE WORLD.

THE ISRAELITES INTRODUCED THE REVOLUTIONARY IDEA THAT GOD WAS ASSOCIATED WITH ETHICAL LAW. NOT ONLY DID HE WISH MANKIND TO FOLLOW THIS LAW, THEY TAUGHT, BUT GOD HIMSELF WAS BOUND BY THIS LAW. HE WAS NOT FREE TO BE CAPRICIOUS. THIS IS THE PROFOUND IDEA WHICH COMES OUT OF THE STORY OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH. GOD SEEMS TO WANT TO DESTROY THESE TWO CITIES BECAUSE THERE IS SUCH EVIL THERE. BUT ABRAHAM IS PICTURED AS REMINDING GOD OF HIS LIMITATIONS. "HOW CAN YOU DESTROY THE GOOD PEOPLE WITH THE WICKED," ASKS ABRAHAM OF GOD? "SHALL NOT THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE BE JUST? CHALILAH L'CHAH, IT IS FORBIDDEN TO YOU TO DESTROY THE RIGHTEOUS WITH THE WICKED." THIS IS, INDEED A QUIANT STORY, BUT IT TELLS US A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE ISRAELITE CONCEPTION OF GOD. HE WAS BOUND BY HIS OWN ETHICAL LAWS.

THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE IS A GOD OF COVENANT. THAT IS TO SAY, HE ENTERS INTO A CONTRACT WITH THOSE WHOM HE FAVORS, AND HE CAN BE RELIED UPON TO FULFILL HIS COMMITMENTS TO THE NTH DEGREE. GOD, SAYS THE BIBLE, IS AN "EL NEH-EH-MAN, A FAITHFUL GOD," A GOD TO BE TRUSTED. WE ARE TOLD IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS THAT GOD ENTERS INTO TWO MAJOR COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS. THE FIRST CONTRACT, OR BRIT, IS MADE WITH NOAH AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL MANKIND. GOD INFORMS NOAH THAT IF HE WILL ABIDE BY CERTAIN GENERALLY ACCEPTED LAWS, SUCH AS THE PROHIBITION OF MURDER AND ADULTERY, GOD WILL ASSURE THE REGULARITY OF THE SEASONS AND THE ABSENCE OF NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS THE GREAT FLOOD. THE TEXT READS, "WHILE THE EARTH REMAINS, SEEDTIME AND HARVEST, COLD AND HEAT, SUMMER AND WINTER, DAY AND NIGHT SHALL NOT CEASE." THE ANCESTORS OF ABRAHAM KNEW THAT A GREAT FLOOD HAD COME TO THAT PART OF THE EARTH, AND THEY HAD THOUGHT THAT THE GODS HAD SENT THE FLOOD SIMPLY OUT OF MALICIOUSNESS. THE GOD OF THE BIBLE IS QUOTED AS SAYING TO NOAH, "I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH YOU; NEITHER SHALL MANKIND BE DESTROYED ANY MORE BY THE WATERS OF THE FLOOD." THEN WE ARE TOLD THAT GOD DESIGNATES A SIGN WHICH WILL FOREVER BE THE SYMBOL OF HIS PROMISE. THAT SIGN IS THE RAINBOW.

"A BLESSING TO THE NATIONS"

HAVING MADE THIS UNIVERSAL COVENANT WITH ALL MANKIND ASSURING THE REGULARITY OF THE SEASONS ON EARTH AND ITS RELATIVE SECURITY, GOD, ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, MAKES ONE MORE SIGNIFICANT COVENANT, THIS TIME WITH THE HEBREW PEOPLE, BEGINNING WITH ITS FOUNDER, ABRAHAM. THE BIBLICAL TEXT TELLS US THAT THIS UNIVERSAL GOD WAS LOOKING FOR A PEOPLE THAT WOULD BE SO DEDICATED TO HIS LAWS THAT THROUGH THEM HE WOULD BE ABLE TO TEACH AND REACH ALL MANKIND. THE HEBREWS, THEN, WERE PART OF GOD'S PLAN FOR THE WORLD. JUST AS HE CHOSE ABRAHAM AND MOSES AND THE PROPHETS TO BE HIS MEDIATORS WITH RESPECT TO THE HEBREW PEOPLE, SO HE CHOSE THE HEBREW PEOPLE TO BE HIS MEDIATORS TO THE OTHER NATIONS.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS TELLS US THAT GOD SAID TO ABRAHAM, "I WILL BLESS YOU AND MAKE YOUR NAME GREAT...AND YOU MUST BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS." (Gen 12:2). THE CONTENT OF THE BRIT OR COVENANT THAT GOD MADE WITH ABRAHAM IS NOT GIVEN TO US IN DETAIL. WE KNOW ONLY THAT ABRAHAM IS TOLD THAT HE MUST "WALK IN GOD'S WAY." NO DOUBT "GOD'S WAY" IS A EUPHEMISM FOR GOD'S LAWS. INDEED, THE LAWS OF THE TALMUD ARE CALLED HALACHAH, THE WAY. WHEN THE COVENANT IS ESTABLISHED, GOD DOES NOT TELL ABRAHAM THAT HE WILL BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR SPECIFIC BELIEFS. JUDAISM IS NOT A RELIGION WITH A CATECHISM, BUT ABRAHAM IS TOLD THAT HE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ACTIONS. IT IS HIS CONDUCT THAT WAS THE HEART OF THE MATTER.

THE COVENANT IS RENEWED, THE BIBLE TELLS US, WITH EACH OF THE PATRIARCHS, WITH ISAAC AND JACOB, BUT WE DON'T REALLY GET TO KNOW THE SPECIFIC LAWS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BRIT UNTIL THE GREAT HAPPENING AT SINAI. IT IS THERE AT THE HOLY MOUNTAIN THAT THE ENTIRE PEOPLE ARE INVITED BY MOSES TO ENTER INTO THE COVENANT. WE LEARN FROM MOSES THAT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE THE CORE OF THESE LAWS, BUT THERE ARE MANY MORE LAWS RELATING TO ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE. IF YOU ENTER THE COVENANT, MOSES TELLS THE PEOPLE, YOU MUST HAVE JUST SCALES IN YOUR GROCERY STORE. IF YOU ENTER THE COVENANT, YOU MAY NOT STEAL A PERSON AND SELL HIM OR HER INTO SLAVERY. IF YOU ENTER THE COVENANT, YOU MUST RETURN THE ESCAPED DONKEY OF YOUR ENEMY, IF YOU HAPPEN TO FIND THE DONKEY. THE LAWS OF THE COVENANT ARE BIASED IN FAVOR OF THE POOR AND THE DISENFRANCHISED. AGAIN AND AGAIN THE HEBREWS ARE REMINDED, "PROTECT THE POOR, THE WEAK AND THE STRANGER, FOR YOU WERE STRANGERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND YOU KNOW THE HEART OF THOSE WHO SUFFER."

BOTH REFORM AND ORTHODOX JEWS AGREE THAT JEWS ARE BOUND TO GOD BY THIS COVENANT, BUT THE ORTHODOX INCLUDE IN THE BRIT THE LAWS OF THE TALMUD. REFORM JEWS EMPHASIZE THE LAWS OF THE BIBLE, ESPECIALLY THE ETHICAL LAWS.

COULD OTHERS JOIN THE COVENANT?

MY STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY ALSO WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE COVENANT GOD MADE WITH THE JEWS COULD BE EXTENDED TO INCLUDE OTHER PEOPLE NOT BORN INTO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. THE PROPHETS, WHO LIVED MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS AFTER ABRAHAM, MAKE IT CLEAR THAT OTHER PEOPLE WERE WELCOME INTO THE COVENANT, BUT NOT ON A COMPROMISE BASIS. TO ENTER THE COVENANT WITH THE GOD OF ISRAEL, ONE MUST ACCEPT HIM ONLY AS GOD AND ONE MUST ACCEPT THE YOKE OF THE LAW. CONVERTING TO JUDAISM WAS NOT A MATTER OF ACCEPTING A SET OF BELIEFS, IT WAS A MATTER OF AGREEING TO LIVE UNDER THE SPECIFIC TERMS OF THE ETHICAL LAW. IT WAS JUST THIS PROBLEM THAT DIVIDED PAULINE CHRISTIANS FROM THE JEWS. PAUL TAUGHT THAT IF YOU BELIEVED IN JESUS YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO OBEY THE LAWS OF THE TORAH (PRESUMABLY BECAUSE YOU WOULD BE NATURALLY GOOD). #

AROUND THE TIME OF JESUS, PERHAPS FIFTY YEARS OR SO BEFORE HIS BIRTH, WE KNOW OF TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY WITH RESPECT TO CONVERSION. RABBI SHAMMAI LED THE SCHOOL WHICH SEEMED TO DISCOURAGE WOULD-BE CONVERTS, BUT OF RABBI HILLEL THIS WELL KNOWN STORY IS TOLD: "A NON-JEW CAME UP TO RABBI HILLEL AND ASKED, "COULD YOU SUMMARIZE FOR ME THE TEACHINGS OF JUDAISM IN ONE SENTENCE." ## RABBI HILLEL REPLIED, "DO NOT DO UNTO OTHERS WHAT YOU WOULD NOT HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU: NOW GO FORTH AND STUDY TORAH." THE KEY PHRASE IN THE RESPONSE IS "NOW GO FORTH AND STUDY TORAH". THE STORY IS INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT JUDAISM WAS NOT MERELY A RELIGION OF GENERAL RULES. ONE HAD TO LIVE BY THE WHOLE LAW TO BE A JEW IN THE TRUE SENSE.

RABBI HILLEL ALSO TAUGHT, "BE AMONGST THE DISCIPLES OF AARON, LOVING PEACE AND PURSUING IT AND THUS BRINGING PEOPLE CLOSE TO THE TORAH." THIS IS INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT IF A JEW SET A PROPER EXAMPLE TO OTHERS, HE WOULD ATTRACT PEOPLE WHO WOULD WANT TO BE LIKE HIM, WHO WOULD WANT TO STUDY THE TORAH AND BECOME A JEW.

IT WOULD SEEM FROM THE ATTITUDE OF THE PROPHETS (SEE ZECHARAIAH CH. 14: 8-9) AND FROM CERTAIN RABBIS LIKE HILLEL THAT IT WAS DESIRABLE TO PERSUADE NON-JEWS TO JOIN THE COVENANT GOD HAD MADE WITH ISRAEL.

FOR SOME TIME, PERHAPS FOR MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS, THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CONSIDERED THEMSELVES TO BE MERELY ANOTHER SECT OF JEWS. JESUS CLEARLY SEEMS TO HAVE REGARDED HIMSELF AS A JEW, AND HE DELIVERED HIS MESSAGE ONLY TO JEWS. ABOUT SIXTY YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF JESUS, PAUL, THE REAL FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY, BEGAN TO SPEAK OF A "NEW COVENANT" THROUGH WHICH NON-JEWS MIGHT ENTER

The conflict as to whether one earns salvation in Christianity by faith or "works" continues to this day. Fundamentalists tend to emphasize faith alone. Liberals, like Jews, emphasize deeds more.

Literally, "while standing on one foot".

A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THE NATURE OF PAUL'S COVENANT WAS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM THE COVENANT OF MOSES, FOR PAUL HAD SPENT MUCH TIME IN ROME, AND HE SHOWS THE INFLUENCE OF THE ROMAN AND GREEK RELIGIONS. FOR PAUL, THE MAIN THING IS NOT ETHICS BUT SALVATION BY GRACE. FOR MOSES, THE ANCIENT COVENANT WAS A WAY OF LIFE, - A METHOD BY WHICH TO BUILD THE GOOD SOCIETY IN THIS WORLD. FOR PAUL, THE NEW COVENANT WAS A "MYSTERIOUS" WAY TO ESCAPE DEATH,# -IT WAS A WAY TO AVOID PUNISHMENT FOR ONE'S SINS AND TO GAIN "ETERNAL LIFE".

NEW COVENANTS FOR OLD

IN TIME, THE OFFICIALS OF CHRISTIANITY WERE TO TEACH THAT GOD HAD ABROGATED HIS COVENANT WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND HAD REPLACED IT WITH THEIR COVENANT. THE VERY TERM THEY USED FOR THEIR COVENANT, THE "NEW COVENANT", IS A TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW "BRIT CHADASHA", WHICH COMES FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH. THE LATEST TEACHERS OF CHRISTIANITY MAINTAINED THAT JEREMIAH, WHO LIVED AROUND 600 B.C.E., WAS SPEAKING ABOUT THE NEW CHRISTIAN COVENANT THAT WAS TO BE ESTABLISHED 600 YEARS LATER. IF YOU READ JEREMIAH CLOSELY, HOWEVER, YOU KNOW THAT HE WAS SPECIFICALLY TALKING ABOUT THE NEW AND GRANDER COVENANT THAT GOD WAS MAKING WITH THE ISRAELITES IN THE TIME OF THE PROPHET. THE TEXT READS, "BEHOLD THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE LORD, WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH...AND THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE...I WILL PUT MY LAW IN THEIR INWARD PARTS, AND IN THEIR HEARTS WILL I WRITE IT, AND I SHALL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE...FOR I WILL FORGIVE THEIR INIQUITY, AND THEIR SIN I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." IT WOULD BE HARD TO FIND A TEXT WHICH MORE AFFIRMS GOD'S CONTINUING ACCEPTANCE OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL.

FOR 1500 YEARS, THE DOCTRINE OF THE ELECTION OF CHRISTIANS AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE WAS AN ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIANITY. ON THE BASIS OF THIS, CHRISTIANS ASSERTED THAT THEY WERE DESTINED FOR HEAVEN AND THE JEWS FOR HELL. HAVING CONSIGNED THE JEWS TO HELL, IT WAS THEN POSSIBLE TO TREAT THE JEWS WITH CONTEMPT. WE ALL KNOW THAT THE HOLOCAUST WAS THE END PRODUCT OF THIS ATTITUDE, BUT AS FATHER FLANNERY POINTS OUT IN HIS BOOK, "THE ANGUISH OF THE JEWS", FIVE MILLION JEWS WERE KILLED IN EUROPE BEFORE HITLER WAS BORN, AS A RESULT OF RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE.

FOLLOWING THE HOLOCAUST, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A SHARP CHANGE IN THE TEACHING OF MANY CHRISTIANS. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, WHICH HAD BEEN ONE OF THE WORST OFFENDERS IN EUROPE, HAS DECLARED IN RECENT DECADES THAT THE COVENANT GOD MADE WITH THE JEWS IS AN EVERLASTING COVENANT AND THE JEWS HAVE NOT BEEN REJECTED. LIBERAL PROTESTANTS ALSO SEEM TO SHARE THIS NEW VIEW. KARL BARTH, THE EMINENT CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIAN, HAS WRITTEN THAT CHRISTIANITY GETS ITS CLAIM TO A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AS A BRANCH GRAFTED TO THAT LIVING TREE WHICH IS CALLED JUDAISM.

DO MODERN JEWS WANT TO BE "THE COVENANT PEOPLE"?

THE QUESTION WHICH IS MOST IMPORTANT TO JEWS, HOWEVER, IS NOT WHAT DO THE CHRISTIANS THINK ABOUT OUR COVENANT. THE IMPORTANT QUESTION IS WHAT DO JEWS THINK ABOUT IT? DO WE TAKE SERIOUSLY THE IDEA THAT WE STAND IN A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND THAT WE HAVE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN THAT REGARD? DO WE STILL WANT TO SHOULDER THE BURDEN OF BEING A B'RACHAH, A BLESSING TO THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH? DO WE WANT TO BE IN ISAIAH'S PHRASE AN "ORE L'GOYIM, A LIGHT UNTO THE NATIONS"? DO WE WANT TO BE GOD'S MEDIATOR?

In the sense of the Greek mystery religions.

THERE ARE AMERICAN JEWS WHO ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT THE COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP, BUT ONLY IN A PERFUNCTORY MANNER. THEY ARE MUCH LIKE THE PAGAN WHO CAME TO RABBI HILLEL AND ASKED HIM TO SUMMARIZE JUDAISM IN ONE SENTENCE. THE PAGAN WAS HOPING THAT HE COULD QUALIFY AS A JEW BY FOLLOWING THE ONE RULE, "DO NOT DO UNTO OTHERS WHAT YOU WOULD NOT HAVE THEM DO TO YOU." MANY JEWS TODAY SAY, "I AM A GOOD JEW. I FOLLOW THE GOLDEN RULE. I DON'T HURT ANYBODY." THESE JEWS FORGET THE SECOND PART OF HILLEL'S RESPONSE TO THE PAGAN, "NOW GO FORTH AND STUDY TORAH." IF A JEW WANTS SERIOUSLY TO BE PART OF THE ANCESTRAL COVENANT WITH GOD, HE HAS TO BE A STUDENT OF TORAH. HE MUST LEARN IN NUANCE, IN DEPTH, THOSE REQUIREMENTS WILLINGLY ASSUMED BY JEWS IN THE PAST, AND HE MUST BECOME A PART OF THOSE EXPERIENCES WHICH HAVE MADE OF THE JEWS A DIFFERENT PEOPLE.

THE BIBLE TEACHES US THAT GOD INFORMED THE JEWS THAT THEY WERE TO BE A HOLY PEOPLE, A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, DOING GOD'S WORK. THE WORD HOLY MEANS "SET APART, DIFFERENT." IF THERE IS ANYTHING AMERICAN JEWS DON'T WANT, IT IS TO BE DIFFERENT. WE WANT TO BE JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. WE WANT TO DRESS LIKE THEM, COMPLETE TO THE TATTERED JEANS, THE SHORT SHORTS, AND THE EXPOSED BOSOM. WE WANT TO SMOKE THE SAME POT, SNIFF THE SAME COCAINE, AND DRINK THE SAME BRANDS OF LIQUOR. WE WANT TO INDULGE IN THE SAME SEXUAL FREEDOM. WHAT WE AMERICAN JEWS CAN'T HANDLE IS JUST THIS REQUIREMENT TO BE DIFFERENT, TO BE ABOVE THE CROWD, TO REJECT THE COMMONLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR. TO THE EXTENT THAT WE ARE SO UN-DIFFERENT, SO ASSIMILATED, JUST TO THAT EXTENT WE ARE UN-JEWISH. TO THAT EXTENT, WE CEASE TO BE GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE, THE BEARERS OF HIS SPECIAL COVENANT.

ARE WE JEWS CAPABLE OF EXTRICATING OURSELVES FROM THE MEDIOCRITY AND IMMORALITY OF OUR TIMES? THAT IS A QUESTION THAT EACH OF US MUST ANSWER FOR HIMSELF, BUT LET US BE SURE OF ONE THING, THE WORLD NEEDS SUCH A DEDICATED PEOPLE NOW MORE THAN EVER BEFORE. WITHOUT A MODEL TO FOLLOW, WITHOUT A GROUP WILLING TO ESTABLISH A HIGHER LEVEL OF BEHAVIOR, THE WORLD WILL SINK FURTHER INTO THE MIRE IN WHICH IT NOW FINDS ITSELF. PERHAPS THE WORLD IS REALLY DOOMED TO SLIP BACK INTO ANOTHER LONG PERIOD OF THE DARK AGES, BECAUSE THERE IS NO ONE TO HEAR GOD'S CALL.

THE PROPHET ISAIAH TELLS US THAT GOD IS ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR THOSE WHO WILL BE HIS AGENTS ON EARTH. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH QUOTES GOD AS CALLING, "WHO WILL PROCLAIM MY MESSAGE, AND WHO WILL BE THE MEDIATOR OF MY COMMANDS?" IN ISAIAH'S DAY, NO ONE ANSWERED UNTIL THE PROPHET RESPONDED, "HINENI, HERE I AM, OH LORD. WHAT WILL YOU HAVE ME DO?" IF EVER A MODERN JEW IS TO BE OPEN TO GOD'S CALL, IT SHOULD BE ON THIS NIGHT OF NIGHTS, ON YOM KIPPUR. I PRAY THAT EACH OF YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SAY IN HIS HEART AT THIS MOMENT, "HINENI, HERE I AM, OH LORD. WHAT WILL YOU HAVE ME DO?" I PRAY THAT THIS WILL BE THE MOMENT WHEN EACH OF US FINDS WITHIN HIMSELF AN ECHO OF THE GREATNESS WHICH ONCE MOTIVATED OUR ANCESTORS.

A Sermon Given
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