

Rav Soloveitchik: Community and the Ethical Personality

I. Three components in **man's awareness of himself as an ethical being**

- Ethical act has two motives
- Human consciousness of the fact that they are distinct from nature. though we share much in common with nature and are bound with it in important ways, our mental perception reveals our uniqueness to us (78-79)
- A breach with nature moves us to an I-Thou encounter and relationship with another "subjective existence" (79)

2. The ethical: three claims

- ethical imperative is experienced as a must and as something that can be ignored
- ethical experience is the threshold of personal existence—
- We begin actualizing the ethical when we meet with another subjective unique existence

3. Emergence of Ethical Personality and Human Personality

- Human beings charged (Gen. c. 2) with the continuation of G-d's work in developing the soil (continuing to cultivate in the garden)
- G-d observes Adam as Levado (alone)—Gen. 2:18-20
- G-d now wishes to transform human from human-animal to human-personality. There are two stages in the development

4. The creation of Community

- Community is created upon the recognition of the Thou
- Community is created when I bring the other into existence through recognition (19)

Martin Buber: I and Thou as Foundation of Ethics

1. I-Thou, I-It.

- I-It: an objective cognitive relationship.
- I-Thou: non-objective, non-cognitive relationship.
- The starting point of all experience is 'I'

2. Why "I –Thou"

- The I-It and I-Thou relations as the basis of ethics
- Kantian idea of moral worth/dignity

3. Progression of the dialectic of I-Thou

- I-Thou can not be controlled or predicted. It must come out of encounter.
- I-Thou is unlike I-it, which is the mode of experiencing
- I-Thou is the primitive relationship, manifest in the way that we address others.
- I-Thou becomes I-It
 - Technology
 - Our relationship to the natural environment.

4. The Diminution of Spirit:

- Spirit is the way we exist in the world
- Our life with fellow human beings is separated into two realms (92):
 - the realm of the It
 - the realm of the I or feelings

5. The Relation to G-d

- We must be hold the world (we can't look for G-d in certain places)
- We must go forth to the world with our whole being in order to encounter G-d (127)

6. Relating to G-d, Relating to Others

- Relations to G-d is not a relation of dependence
- Relation to G-d is not is not an act of immersion

- Critique of mysticism
- The relation to a human being is the proper metaphor for the relation to G-d
 - we have to encounter G-d's actuality with a human actuality
 - we will not be accepted by G-d if we have forsaken other human beings
 - The loving relationship takes us to G-d.
 - community is also an important way to reach G-d