## RAV KOOK – BRIEF SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The library of volumes by and about Kook is large and constantly growing. All I can do here is offer the merest sampling.

The standard edition of Rav Kook's works, published by Mossad Ha-Rav Kook (the Rabbi Kook Foundation) in Jerusalem, runs to nineteen volumes of essays, letters, halakhic responsa and treatises, Talmudic commentaries, and other writings—this in addition to other collections of essays and teachings that have long been in print. These have in recent years been supplemented by the publication of many works that had remained in manuscript, most significantly a number of his spiritual diaries in their original forms, especially Shemonah Qevatzim, the eight notebooks written during the heroic period of his theologizing, 1910–19, which were the mother lode for the many works culled and edited by Zvi Yehudah (Orot, Orot Ha-Teshuvah, and Orot Ha-Torah among them), and by David Cohen ("Ha-Nazir"), editor of the theological magnum opus, Orot Ha-Kodesh (Lights of the sacred), as well as works edited by others. A number of other notebooks have been published in recent years, in censored editions, under the title Pinkasei Ha-Reiyah, and uncensored, under the title Kevatzim mi-Ktav Yad Kodsho.

The finest English translations of Kook, to my mind, are those by the late Ben-Zion Bokser, in two volumes, his *Abraham Isaac Kook* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1978), published as the part of the Paulist Press series, Classics of Western Spirituality, and his *The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook* (Teaneck: Ben Yehuda Press, 2006). Bezalel Naor published a valuable and richly annotated translation of the first edition of Orot (Northvale/London: Jason Aronson, 1993) along with other illuminating volumes of studies and translations, not least among them of Rav Kook's siddur commentary, recently published by Koren/Maggid.

Yedidya Sinclair's brief, beautiful volume, Rav Koo's Introduction to Shabbat Ha'Aretz (New York: Hazon, 2014) is remarkably well done, and an exemplary synthesis of scholarly and theological understanding with real literary grace. His Sinclair's own introductory essay is one of the finest introductions to Rav Kook I have ever seen. Ari Ze'e Schwarts'z The Spiritual Revolution of Rav Kook

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(Jerusalem: Gefen, 2018) is a very nicely done volume of translations that introduce the reader to Rav Kook's thought world.

Other translations readers may wish to consult have been published by Alter Metzger, Moshe Weinberger, Tzvi Feldman and David Samson.

Rav Kook has been the subject of scores of academic volumes and literally hundreds of studies and monographs (not to mention a large and growing body of popular literature), almost all in Hebrew, though some are in English. Readers seeking to learn more about him in English are advised to consult Yosef Ben-Shlomo, Poetry of Being (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defence, 1990), perhaps the best brief introduction to him; Zvi Yaron, The Philosophy of Rabbi Kook, translated by Avner Tomaschoff (Jerusalem: Eliner Library, 1991), a broad and well-organized survey of his basic ideas; and the essay collections edited by Benjamin Ish-Shalom and Shalom Rosenberg, The World of Rav Kook's Thought, translated by Shalom Carmy (New York: Avi Chai, 1991), and by Lawrence Kaplan and David Shatz, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and Jewish Spirituality (New York: New York University Press, 1995). The latter contains a very helpful bibliography of works by and about him available up to that time. Another essential volume is Aviezer Ravitsky, Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism, translated by Jonathan Chipman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Jonathan Garb's volume, The Chosen Will Become Herds: Studies in 20th Century Kabbalah (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) has wonderfully insightful discussions.

We still have no proper full-length biography of Rav Kook. For now, see Yehudah Mirsky, Rav Kook: Mystic in a Time of Revolution (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014) and his forthcoming Towards the Mystical Experience of Modernity: The Making of Rav Kook, 1865-1904 (Boston: Academic Studies Press).

For related episodes and background: Arthur Hertzberg's *The Zionist Idea* (New York: Atheneum, 1959) is still unsurpassed as a basic introduction to Zionist intellectual history. A marvelous introduction to the cultural dimensions of pre-1948 Zionism in Palestine is Ben Halpern & Jehuda Reinharz, *Zionism* 

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and the Making of a New Society (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2000). A meticulous and wise discussion of the Arolosoroff affair and Rav Kook's role in it was greatly aided by Monty N. Penkower's study, included in his volume Twentieth Century Jews (Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2010).

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Rav Kook in His Time and Ours Beit Avi Chai, Jerusalem, September 6, 2020 Yehudah Mirsky

## THE GREAT WAR

16 'ע אורות ע' ה:סד, אורות ע'

בנין העולם, המתמוטט כעת לרגלי הסערות הנוראות של חרב מלאה דם, דורש הוא את בנין האומה הישראלית. בנין האומה והתגלות רוחה הוא ענין אחד, וכולו הוא מאוחד עם בנין העולם, המתפורר ומצפה לכח מלא אחדות [...] התרבות העולמית מתנודדת, רוח האדם נחלש, מחשכים מכסים את כל העמים. החשך יכסה ארץ, וערפל – לאומים [ישעיה ס, ב]. והשעה הגיעה [...] כל התרבויות שבעולם יתחדשו על ידי חידוש רוחנו [...] ברכת אברהם לכל גויי הארץ תחל את פעולתה בתקף ובגלוי, ועל פי יסודה יחל, מחדש, בניננו בארץ ישראל. החרבן העכשוי הוא הכנת תחיה חדשה, עמוקה ואופיית.

The world structure currently in the midst of collapse, amid the dreadful storms of the bloody sword, requires the building of the Jewish nation, which is one with the revelation of its spirit, and one with the disintegrating world structure, which is awaiting a force full of unity and a higher spirit . . . World culture totters, the human spirit is weakened, darkness covers all the peoples, <u>night covers the earth, and mists, the nations</u> [Isaiah 60:2]. And the hour has come . . . All the world's cultures will be renewed by the renewal of our spirit . . . Abraham's blessing to all the peoples of the world will begin its work, and on that foundation there will begin anew our building in Eretz Yisrael. The current destruction will prepare a new rebirth, deep and transforming

שמונה קבצים, ז:יב

וכנסת ישראל תחיל תזעק בחבליה: אוי נא לי כי עיפה נפשי [...] קמים נבוני לבב בחצות לילה, וידיהם על חלציהם כיולדה, על צרת העולם, צרת ישראל, צרת השכינה, צרת התורה, הם בוכים ומבכים. ויודעים הם ומכירים את עמק הצער במקורו ובתולדותיו, יודעים שכל הצרות

והמחשכים, כל נהרי נחלי הדמים הנשפכים [...] אינם אלא תולדה קלושה מהד הקול של אותו הצער העליון, צער השמים, צער השכינה.

Knesset Yisrael screams in its bonds: Woe am I, my soul is weary. The secrets of Torah are to aliens, the Torah burns, its parchments burn and the letters fly (after BT Avodah Zarah 18a)...The wise of heart arise at midnight, hands on their loins like women in labor: for the sorrow of the world, of Israel, of the *Shkehinah*, of Torah, they weep and wail. And they know the depth of the sorrow in its fount and origin, that all the sorrows and darkness, all the rivers and streams of spilled blood...are nothing but a faint result of the echo of the higher sorrow, of heaven, of the *Shekhinah*, of the separation of essential idealism from its fount of delight...and they call for teshuvah, *and we are to God and our eyes are to God*." (SK 7:12)

## שמונה קבצים ז:קיב, אורות הקודש חלק ב, עע' 444-445

יש שהוא שר שירת נפשו, ובנפשו הוא מוצא את הכל [...] ויש שהוא שר שירת האומה [...] ויה מתדבק באהבה עדינה עם כללותה של כנסת ישראל, ועמה הוא שר את שיריה, מצר בצרותיה ומשתעשע בתקותיה [...] ויש אשר עוד תתרחב נפשו עד שיוצא ומתפשט מעל גבול ישראל, לשיר את שירת האדם [...] ויש אשר עוד מזה למעלה ברוחב יתנשא, עד שמתאחד עם כל היקום כולו, עם כל הבריות ועם כל העולמים, ועם כולם אומר שירה [...] ויש אשר עולה עם כל השירים הללו ביחד באגודה אחת, וכולם נותנים את קולותיהם, כולם יחד מנעימים את זמריהם [...] שירת הנפש, שירת האומה, שירת האדם, שירת העולם, כולם יחד מתמזגים בקרבו בכל עת ובכל שעה. והתמימות הזאת במילואה, עולה היא להיות שירת קודש, שירת אל, שירת ישראל [...] ישראל, שיר אל, שיר פשוט, שיר כפול, שיר משולש, שיר מרובע [על פי תיקוני ישראל [...] ישראל, שיר השירים אשר לשלמה [שיר השירים א, א], למלך שהשלום שלו [שיר השירים רבה ג, א (ו), מהדורת וילנה].

There is one who sings the song of his soul, and in his own soul finds all . . . And there is one who sings the song of the nation...who cleaves with gentle love to Knesset Yisrael as a whole, and sings her song with her, grieves for her sorrows and delights in her hopes . . . And there is one whose soul expands farther beyond the bound of Israel, to sing the song of man . . . And there is one whose spirit expands and ascends even higher, to the point of unity with all creation, with all creatures and all worlds, and sings with them all . . . And there is one who ascends above all these songs in a single union, and all sound their voices . . . The song of the self, of the nation, of man, of the world--all come together within him at every time, in every hour. And this perfection in all its fullness ascends and becomes a sacred song, God's song, Israel's song . . . Yisrael, shir-El, Godsong, a simple song, doubled, tripled, quadrupled, the Song of Songs of Shlomo [Song of Songs. 1:1], The King to Whom Peace, Shalom, belongs. [Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah, 3:1(6), Vilna ed.]

שמונה קבצים ו:קא, אורות ע, 14

הנחנו את הפוליטיקא העולמית מאונס שיש בו רצון פנימי, עד אשר תבא עת מאושרה, שיהיה אפשר לנהל ממלכה בלא רשעה וברבריות זהו הזמן שאנו מקוים [...] והנה הגיע הזמן, קרוב מאד [...] אנו קבלנו [בזמן התנ"ך] רק את היסוד כפי ההכרח ליסד אומה, וכיון שנגמל הגזע הודחנו ממלוך, בגוים נתפזרנו, נזרענו במעמקי האדמה, עד אשר עת הזמיר הגיע וקול התור ישמע בארצנו [על פי שיר השירים ב, יב].