

# I. The Arc of Becoming: Discernment and Jewish Process Theology”

Basic Concepts of Process Theology:

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## II. God as Process

“Does the awareness of God depend upon our conceiving God as a personal being, or may God be conceived in other ways and yet be the subject of our awareness, or the object of our worship?...Nothing would be lost if we substituted [for the notion of a personal being] the one of ‘process’, which, at least with the aid of science, most of us find quite understandable. Why, then, not conceive God as process rather than as some kind of identifiable entity?”  
Mordecai Kaplan, *The Future of the American Jew*. pp. 182-3.

“the world is finally not made of ‘things’ at all, if a ‘thing’ is something that exists over time without changing. The world is composed of events and processes.”<sup>2</sup>  
C. Robert Mesle, *Process-Relational Philosophy: An Introduction to Alfred North Whitehead*. p. 8.

## III. All Life is Becoming: *Ehyeh asher Ehyeh*.

“This name (*Ehyeh asher Ehyeh*) incorporates the sense of God being in all moments, past, present and future, while also capturing the sense of God as Becoming, as the ultimate creative power that urges us toward ever-more complex and integrated levels of existence, toward freedom and ‘salvation’.”  
Rabbi Toba Spitzer, *Reconstructionist*, Fall, 2005. p. 61

‘Walk to the edge of what you know and sit awhile.’ Rabbi Karyn Kedar

## IV. Creation is ongoing.

“A river issues from Eden to water the garden (Genesis 2:10) ...That river flowing forth is called the world that is coming—coming constantly and never ceasing. This is delight to the righteous, to attain this world that is coming, constantly watering the garden and never ceasing. Zohar 3:290b (Idra Zuta); trans. Daniel Matt

“The uniqueness of the Zohar lives in the new function ascribed to the verse, namely, its role in awakening the mystic and/or the reader to mystical consciousness. The Zohar sees this verse as describing not only the quality of the divine flow from *Ein Sof* to the divine attributes, but also the dynamic structure that lies at the core of all reality.”

Melilla Hellner, *A River Flows from Eden*. p. 233.

## **V. Panentheism**

*U' melo kol ha' aretz kevodo: The earth is full of God's glory.*

*Leit atar panui minei: There is no place devoid of God.*

## **VI. All of life is interconnected, inter-dependent, interrelated.**

"No theology has earlier or better embraced the truth of our radically, relational interdependence than has the movement called process theology. As Cobb and Griffin write, process thought 'gives primacy to interdependence over independence as an ideal. Of course it portrays interdependence not simply as an ideal but as an ontologically given characteristic.'" Catherine Keller, *On the Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process*. p. 22

"Absolute egoism is ontologically ruled out. No actuality is concerned solely with itself." John Cobb & David Ray Griffin. *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*, p. 27

"Ultimately, spiritual direction is not about us at all. It is about God. It is about turning to God and claiming our relatedness. It is about orienting ourselves to a desire in us beyond (individual) needs.... All spiritual direction has a prophetic edge. It is a process that calls us to truths at odds with the norms and temptations of the culture we live in. It asks that we claim a love greater than our own desire and make hard choices in the name of that love." Ann Kline

## **VII. God's Power is not coercive. It is persuasive.**

"The divine Eros is felt in each creature as the 'initial aim' or the 'lure'. It is a lure to our own becoming, a call to actualize the possibilities of greater beauty and intensity in our own lives." Catherine Keller, p. 99.

"The content of the 'divine aim' for the particular creature is that moment's best possibility....Here is the question, perhaps finally the only question that matters: In this moment, will you somehow materialize the possibility? Will you in traditional language, heed God's will? Like a wave cresting, turning, might you sense the wisdom for this moment? Do you begin, however minutely, to embody the love that is possible---in this moment, in this time, this place?" Catherine Keller, p. 101.

Rabbi Simon said: You will not find a single blade of grass that does not have its *mazal* -- constellation of stars and/or angel -- in the heavens that says to it "Grow!" *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit* 10:6

**VIII. *This passage from Song of Songs is meditation on the divine lure. Can we hear the voice of the Beloved inviting us?***

The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes,  
Leaping upon the mountains, Bounding over hills.  
My beloved in like a gazelle, Or a young stag  
Look, there he stands Behind our wall,  
Gazing in at the windows. Looking through the lattice.  
My beloved speaks to me:  
"Arise , my love, my fair one, And come away...."  
*Song of Songs, 2:8-10*

**VI. *God is in process too. God evolves in, through and with us.***

"So you are My witnesses, says the Lord, and I am God" (Isaiah 43.12). Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai taught, "If you are 'my witnesses,' I am God, and if you are not my witnesses, I am not, as it were, God."  
*Midrash, Pesikta de Rav Kahana 102b*

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