

DEAR RABBI LAMM, PLEAS,

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DEC. 21

IM IN BETWEEN CLASSES AT BAR-ILAN, WHICH IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO BEGIN A LETTER OF THIS SORT. WHEN IT WILL BE FINISHED I CAN'T SAY SINCE IM CERTAIN THAT IT WILL BE QUITE LONG.

FIRST AN APOLOGY AND AN EXPLANATION. THE FORMER FOR THE DIFFICULTY YOU WILL ENCOUNTER IF YOU ATTEMPT TO READ THE WHOLE THING. MY HANDWRITING, IF ONE CAN EMPLOY SUCH A WORD HERE, IS ROTTEN TO BEGIN WITH AND GOES DOWNHILL AFTER THE FIRST HALF-HOUR OR SO. IN SHORT, BUT THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO SINCE MY ARRANGEMENT HERE DOES NOT COVER SECRETARIAL HELP; EVEN IF IT DID, A LETTER LIKE THIS WOULD NOT BE INCLUDED.

THE EXPLANATION CONCERNS WHY I AM WAITING. I HOPE THAT I WILL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY WHICH RELATES TO YOUR OWN INTEREST OR EXPERIENCE, BUT ESSENTIALLY THIS EFFORT, AS I SUSPECT IS TRUE OF SOME SUCH WRITING, IS AN ATTEMPT TO PUT ON PAPER A NUMBER OF IDEAS AND OBSERVATION, WITH THE FORM OR PRESENTATION SELECTED ALMOST AT RANDOM. OF COURSE, I HOPE THAT YOU RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS A MEREVIEW OF MY ESTEEM THAT THIS IS SENT TO YOU; WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT SINCE YOU FIND THIS UNREMARKABLE FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, I STILL STILL FEEL SATISFIED.

ACTUALLY, FROM THE TIME THAT I ARRIVED A MONTH AGO, I HAVE MEANT TO WRITE. TWO CIRCUMSTANCES FED THE IMPULSE. THE FIRST WAS THE VOICER MEETING ON THE SYNDICATE COUNCIL, WHICH DUE TO UNFORTUNATE ILLNESS I WAS LUCKY TO MISS. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE EFFECTIVE DECISION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WAS TO STAY IN SCA, THOUGH NO VOTE WAS TAKEN. THIS IS NO SURPRISE, PARTICULARLY SINCE I SENSED THAT AS TIME PASSED J. KANARSKY WOULD BACK AWAY FROM HIS ORIGINAL RESOLVE. MOREOVER, I HAVE NO FEELING OF GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT, PERHAPS BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN OTHER MATTERS FOR WHAT ALREADY SEEMS A LONG TIME.

AT ANY RATE, I MUST ADMIT THAT CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IS NOT THE GREAT TRAGEDY OF KHAL YISROEL. BY THIS I MEAN TO AGREE WITH YOU THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT OF THE IMPORTANCE WHICH ADVOCATES ON BOTH SIDES HAVE MADE IT TO BE. I STILL DO NOT ACCEPT SOME OF YOUR EXAGGERATED RHETORIC, IF ONLY BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN GIVEN A LONG OFFENSIVE TO MANY WHO DO NOT MERIT OFFENSE.

IF IT IS NO TRAGEDY TO STAY IN, IT CERTAINLY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN A CRIME TO GET OUT. IN FACT, THE SCA IS A WORTHLESS GROUP, INCREDIBLY SO, AND I THINK THAT EVEN WITHOUT THE HALACHIC-IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT I WOULD OPT FOR WITHDRAWAL. SO MANY OF THE OLD AGENCIES DO SO LITTLE GOOD AND AT LEAST

SOME MEASURE OF BAD THAT IT WOULD BE ALMOST A DISH TO STIR THINGS UP THROUGH SUCH ORDINARY ACTS AS PUTTING.

BUT THE ISSUE IS RESOLVED, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT. I CANNOT SAY WHETHER IT WILL COME UP AGAIN IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY, BY WHICH I MEAN TO EXCLUDE THE TRITE HANDER TECHNIQUE.

ONE FINAL COMMENT ON THIS SUBJECT. I HAVE HEARD THAT DURING THE DISCUSSION AT UOCHA, M. FEVERSTEIN REMARKED THAT THE "ISSUE" OF THE "DISH" WAS A POLITICAL ACT. NOW THIS IS A PRETTY EVIL THING TO SAY. OF COURSE, IN A REAL SENSE WHAT HAPPENED WAS POLITICAL, IF BY THIS ONE MEANS THAT THE DECISION WAS THE PRODUCT OF THE FEELINGS, PRESSURES, AND INFLUENCE-SITUATION OF THE MID-1950'S. AFTER ALL, IT WAS NOT ABSTRACT THEORIZING OR ACCIDENTAL THAT AT AN EARLIER TIME THE PROCLAMATION WAS NOT MADE. BUT THIS IS NOT THE SENSE WHICH HE HAD IN MIND. HE WAS THINKING OF PERZIN OR SOMETHING OF THE SORT. NOW BOTH OF US KNOW THAT MOE HAS ABOUT AS SCRAMBLED A BRAIN AS ONE CAN FIND AND HIS ARTICULATIONS ARE CONGRUENT WITH THIS STATE OF MIND, YET I THINK THAT IT'S HIGH TIME PEOPLE IN THE UNION OR THE RABINATE OR IN THE "INTELLECTUAL" RANKS OF ORTHODOXY START SPEAKING A LITTLE LESS DISRESPECTFULLY OF A DASH OF A. MORE ABOUT THIS LATER.

THE SECOND ITEM WAS A PIECE BY ED FISKE OF THE NEW YORK TIMES WHICH APPEARED ON THE DAY THAT I LEFT YOUR SHORES. IT DEALT WITH (AMONG OTHER MATTERS) THE NEW ORTHODOX LEFT. THE ONLY REASON I CAN FIND FOR THE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION PAID TO THE N.O.L. IS THAT THE WHOLE THING IS SO EILST THAT IT IS EASY TO WRITE ABOUT. BUT IT IS A TRIBUTE TO SOMEONE THAT, APPARENTLY WITHOUT THE SACRED INTERVENTION OF EGO-CHAMP BERNARD TWENSHY, THE TIMES WILL GIVE COVERAGE.

IF ONE WANTS TO BE EXTRAVAGANT, IT CAN BE SAID THAT THE N.O.L. ENCOMPASSES A J'IVN. I AM SURE THAT ITS INFLUENCE ON ORTHODOX AFFAIRS AND THAVVAT IS NOT MUCH BROADER. ADULTON, WREENBERG, HARTMAN, WFSHOVNS, ET AL. HAVE NOT SAID ANYTHING NEW AND RELEVANT FOR WHAT SEEMS EONS; THEIRS IS A "DULL, OBSESSIVE, LITANY," WHICH MUST BE THE REASON WHY ONE DOES NOT FIND JO IN THEIR RANKS. YOU OUGHT TO BE FLATTERED.

RACHMAN'S LAST PIECE IN JUDAHIM WAS ALMOST SOPHONIC, HE IS

CERTAINLY RIGHT IN CONTRAST OF THE THINGS HE ATTEMPTED TO SAY, BUT AS IS THE CUSTOM IN HIS SCHOOL, HE REPEATEDLY INVOLVED IN THE SORT OF UNKIND COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO H. FEUERSTEIN. BUT LEAVING THE PETTINESS AND NUMEROUS ERRORS ASIDE, THE PRINCIPAL WEAKNESS IS HIS APPROACH TO DSD; THE AREA WHERE HE HAS TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION IF HE IS TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A TRUE RELIGIOUS LEADER.

EVEN THE MOST LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF THE HISTORY OF OUR PEOPLE - WHICH IS HIS SITUATION - TEACHES THAT THE HISTORY OF DSD CAN BE SUMMED UP BY SUCH WORDS AS DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE. LAWS HAVE CHANGED REPEATEDLY AND THIS ACCOUNTS FOR THE FACT THAT DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES HAVE HAD DIFFERENT LAWS, ETC. THE CHANGES HAVE BEEN BOTH IN THE DIRECTION OF EASING-UP AND ALSO IN THE DIRECTION OF MAKING THINGS TOUGHER: THE METHODOLOGY OF DSD DOES NOT IMPLY ONLY JIHAD OR JISID, ALTHOUGH AS THE FRANKS P'OT EXPLAINS, METHODOLOGICALLY, THE DIP IS MORE SOUND. ADDITIONALLY, THE DSD (AS ROCHMAN MEANS TO SAY) DOES NOT TRANSCEND HUMAN THOUGHT OR ACTION; IN FACT, ITS LOGIC IS DIALECTICAL FOR SIMILAR HISTORICAL CONTEXTS QUITE PROPERLY HAVE PRODUCED ITALIC DECISIONS OF REMARKABLE VARIATION.

MORE MUST BE CONCLUDED. THE TYPICAL JESHIVA STUDENT AND ONE MIGHT EVEN SAY VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE RIGHT WING OF ORTHODOXY IS IGNORANT OF THE HISTORY AND METHOD OF DSD. IT IS NOT FAR FROM THE TRUTH TO SAY THAT THERE ARE THOSE WHO THINK THAT LAWS HAVE CHANGED LITTLE OVER THE PAST 1,000 OR 500 YEARS, ETC.

THIS IGNORANCE IS OFTEN COMBINED WITH AN ATTITUDE THAT A J'ISPOD WHICH DIFFERS FROM THE FORMER VIEW IS ALWAYS IPSE FACTO BAD. IT CANNOT BE DENIED, AS ROCHMAN AND OTHERS RIGHTFULLY CONTENT, THAT IN SOME IMPORTANT RESPECTS THE MOOD WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY IS QUITE REPRESSIVE. (THIS IS TRUE OF ALL ORTHODOXIES; AND THE PHENOMENON MAY BE SAID TO BE THE PRECONDITION FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION. BUT IT CANNOT BE THE SOLE ELEMENT! THE OPTIMUM SITUATION, IF I MAY GENERALIZE, IS THE MAINTENANCE OF TENSION BETWEEN THE FORCES OF CHANGE (LIBERALISM) AND THOSE OF STAYING PUT (REPRESSION). IF EITHER SIDE COMPLETELY PREVAILS, THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION IS SERIOUSLY UNDERMINED.)

SINCE THE MOOD AND METHOD OF REPRESSION ARE SO WELL KNOWN, I WON'T ANALYZE THE SUBJECT MORE FULLY HERE.

AFTER CONCEDED SO MUCH ABOUT DSD, IT MIGHT BE ASKED,

IS THERE ANY JOURNAL OR FORUM IN THE USA FOR THE LEFT WING? THE LEFT WING AND SO MUCH OF THE ARKOVITE RABBINATE RELY ON HOMILETICS AND POLEMICS; THEY ESCHEW PROPER HETEROLOGIC DISCOURSE AND THEN WONDER AT THEIR LACK OF AUTHORITY. AND IN THEIR IMPOTENCE THEY SEE SCARECOWS, WHICH THEY FIND IN THE WORLD OF THE YESHIVA AND THE DP'D' (10).

THERE IS NOTHING MORE DISTURBING TO ME THAN THE CONTINUOUS ATTACKS AGAINST DP'D' 'OK, IN THE FIRST PLACE, IT OUGHT TO STRESS THAT THE OFTEN REPEATED CHARGE THAT IT IS THE RIGHT WING OF ORTHODOXY OR THE YESHIVA WORLD WHICH IS MEANING IS REGULARLY BELIED BY THE VITRIOLIC ATTACKS ONE FINDS EVEN IN TRADITION AND CERTAINLY IN LESS RESPONSIBLE PLACES. INDEED, I HAVE NEVER HEARD A "DEAN" DENOUNCE THE AMERICAN RABBINATE OR THE LEFT WING. MOST OF THE CHARGES ARE THE PRODUCTS OF THE AUTHORS' FRUSTRATIONS OR FAILURES TO GAIN WHAT THEY REGARD AS PROPER RECOGNITION.

IT ALSO MUST BE SAID THAT THERE ARE SO FEW DP'D' 'OK AND FOR THE MOST PART THESE ARE HARRIED AND TIRED MEN THAT ONE CAN'T EVEN GUESS AT WHY THE CRITICS REGULARLY GET SO HEATED.

THERE ARE OTHER POINTS TO BE MADE HERE, BUT I RATHER SPEND TIME ON OTHER MATTERS. I ONLY HOPE THAT THE UNDESERVED, ALMOST PERSONAL ATTACKS, CEASE. THERE IS NO REASON FOR EVERY WRITER TO IMITATE ELIEZER OR LOUIS BERNSTEIN.

A STAY IN ISRAEL, CERTAINLY IN A NON-TOURIST CAPACITY, INEVITABLY LEADS TO THOUGHT ABOUT ALIYAH. I AM NO EXCEPTION, THOUGH BECAUSE I MUST RETURN TO A RATHER UNCERTAIN FUTURE IN NEW YORK, I CAN'T SAY THAT I'VE BEEN TOO INTENSIVELY THINKING ABOUT THE QUESTION. STILL, SHOULD CIRCUMSTANCES TEND TOWARD A GREATER DESIRE TO SETTLE HERE ? 1) MY WIFE WOULD BE MOST HAPPY; SHE IS ALREADY CAMPAINING IN THIS DIRECTION AND 2) BAR-ILAN HAS ASKED ME TO COME BACK TO ACCEPT A PERMANENT POSITION, AT A RATHER HIGH SALARY BY LOCAL STANDARDS. THESE TWO FACTORS SHOULD INDICATE THAT THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT IS NOT COLORED BY A REALIZATION THAT, PRACTICALLY SPEAKING, I CANNOT COME HERE.

TO HEAR AMERICANS TALK - THAT IS, THOSE WHO HAVE SETTLED IN ISRAEL - THE ONLY FACTOR TO CONSIDER IS THAT ALL JEWS BELONG IN ISRAEL. THEIR TESTIMONY IS RENDERED LESS ACCEPTABLE BECAUSE QUITE FRANKLY MANY OF THEM LIASE ALIYAH BECAUSE THEIR LIVES IN AMERICA WERE NOT TOO HAPPY.

BUT THE PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTY WITH THIS ATTITUDE LIES IN ITS PROMOTION OF A SINGLE CONSIDERATION WHICH IS ELEVATED TO THE STATUS OF AN IMMUTABLE MORAL LAW. I AM WILLING TO RECOGNIZE THAT ISRAEL IS A KEY FACTOR HERE; COULD ANYONE SERIOUSLY MAINTAIN OTHERWISE? ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL, WHICH IS NEVER THE CASE, THE CHOICE MUST BE ALIYAH. SINGLE THINGS ARE NOT EQUAL, THE DECISION IS A PRACTICAL ONE WHICH EACH FAMILY MUST MAKE AFTER THINKING AND DISCUSSING ITS OWN SITUATION. IN SUM, I MUST RESIST THE PIOUS VAINNESS OF ALIYAH ADVOCATES WHO DON'T WANT TO RECOGNIZE THE REAL PROBLEMS PEOPLE FACE.

FOR MYSELF, A VERY DECISIVE CONSIDERATION IS THE SORT OF OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO ME BY ISRAELI RELIGIOUS SOCIETY AS COMPARED TO THE SAME IN THE U.S.A. BY THIS I DO NOT MEAN THE PROSPECT OF BEING MORE ORTHODOX. I'LL ACT ABOUT THE SAME IN BOTH COUNTRIES RATHER THE QUESTION IS WHETHER I WOULD HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN INTELLECTUAL AND COMMUNAL AFFAIRS SIMILAR TO THE ONE I ENJOY IN AMERICA. THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE I NOTE THAT TOO MANY AMERICAN OLIM, INCLUDING YOUNG PEOPLE, ARE IN ISRAEL TO DIE. THEY ARE NOT BEING CREATIVE, AND CERTAINLY NOT COMMUNITY Minded. LIVING HERE IS THEIR CONTRIBUTION, WHICH MAY BE IMPORTANT ENOUGH, BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR ME.

I DO NOT KNOW AT PRESENT HOW, IF I LIASE ALIYAH, I WOULD FIT IN THERE. BUT I DO KNOW AMERICA, AND I HAVE FORMED SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT ISRAEL.

IN SOME IMPORTANT RESPECTS RELIGIOUS COMMUNAL LIFE IN ISRAEL IS CLEARLY SUPERIOR TO THE SITUATION IN THE U.S.A. IT IS MOST IMPRESSING TO SEE IN VIRTUALLY ALL SYNAGOGUES THE COMING TOGETHER AND COMMUNICATION OF PEOPLE OF SHARPLY VARYING RELIGIOUS APPROACH. IN SOME VERY ORTHODOX PLACES, IT IS COMMON

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TO FIND DAVENING SIDE BY SIDE THE STREIMEL WEARER AND THE MAN
WITH A SMALL KIPAH. AND I SENSE THAT THERE IS A GREAT DEAL MORE
RESPECT FOR PEOPLE MORE (OR LESS) ORTHODOX THAN IS THE CASE
BACK HOME. I HAVE HEARD SOME VERY CLASSIC TYPES PLAINLY EXPRESS
THEIR LOVE FOR THOSE LESS RELIGIOUS. BUT IN AMERICA, THE STREIMEL
WEARER - EVEN THE DAVENER WITH A TALLIS ON HEAD - IS VIEWED
IN MOST LARGE ORTHODOX SYNAGOGUES IN ANYTHING BUT A FRIENDLY
MANNER. AND THE SAME ATTITUDE FACES THE SMALL-KIPAH-WEARER
IN SOME SITZBLATT.

BUT ALL OF THIS IS PART OF THE MORE IMPORTANT PHENOMENON
OF DIRECT, MEANINGFUL RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND
NONOBSERVANT. IN PART THIS IS THE PRODUCT OF THE REQUIREMENT IN
A JEWISH STATE THAT JEWS OF ALL TYPES DEAL WITH ONE
ANOTHER. BUT WHATEVER THE EXPLANATION(S), THE ENTIRE THING
IS MOST HEARTWARMING.

THERE IS, ONE MUST ADMIT, MORE INTENSE EXPRESSIONS OF
ANTI-JEWISH RELIGION HERE THAN IN AMERICA, AND NOTHING IS MORE
DISTRESSING TO THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS JEW THAN THE FACT
THAT THE SORGE OF BUNDUT ATTITUDE WHICH HARDLY EXISTS
ANYMORE IN THE U.S.A.; FINDS TOO FREQUENT EXPRESSION IN
NEWSPAPER, THE UNESSET, ETC.

STILL, ON THE QUESTIONS OF INTRA-COMMUNITY RELATIONS, THE
U.S.A. CAN'T COMPARE WITH ISRAEL. IN AMERICA, RELIGIOUS AND
NONRELIGIOUS HARDLY EVER RELATE AS JEWS, WHICH IS TERRIBLE
IF ONLY BECAUSE INCREASED ENCOUNTERS WOULD MAKE THE TORAH
WORLD STRONGER. WE DO HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY AND
OFFER, BUT SO FAR WE SEEM SATISFIED TO RELY ON SUCH
FACADES AS THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL, WHICH DESPITE ALL OF THE
SELF-SERVING RHETORIC OF ITS ORTHODOX DEFENDERS IS LITTLE
MORE THAN A BARRIER TO COMMUNICATION.

A SECOND ASPECT WHERE ISRAELI LIFE IS MORE ADVANCED
IS THE INTELLECTUAL STIRRINGS AND OUTPUT OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY.
I HAZARD THE GUESS THAT IN MOST WEEKS HERE, MORE ESSAYS,

RESPONSE, BOOKS, ARTICLES, ETC. ARE PRODUCED THAN PERHAPS IN AN ENTIRE YEAR IN AMERICA. I HAVE HEARD THE EXCUSE OFFERED THAT AFTERALL HEBREW IS THE LANGUAGE OF ISRAEL, ETC., BUT THIS IS LAKE, FOR I INCLUDE IN AMERICA'S OUTPUT MATERIAL PUT OUT IN ENGLISH.

INDEED, THERE MAY BE FEW PARALLELS IN THE HISTORY OF OUR PEOPLE TO THE INTELLECTUAL IMPOTENCY OF AMERICAN RELIGIOUS JEWRY. TRADITION WHICH USED TO BE GOOD, IN MOSTLY SECOND OR THIRD RATE NOWADAYS. JEWISH LIFE PUBLISHES MOSTLY TRASH, AND IN ALL RESPECT I MUST SAY THAT I AM AMAZED THAT YOU SO OFTEN PUBLISH THERE. THE JEWISH OBSERVER IS SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN J.L., BUT ITS DEFECTS ARE WELL KNOWN AND SO ON. IT'S ALMOST INCREDIBLE: WE HAVE THOUSANDS OF RABBIS, TEACHERS, SCIENTISTS, LAWYERS, ETC., AND JEWISHLY WE TALK AS SOME INARTICULATE SEMI-MORON. MAYBE YOU CAN EXPLAIN THIS, I CAN'T.

THIS INTELLECTUAL POVERTY EXTENDS TO THE FIELD OF HALACHIC DEVELOPMENT, ALREADY DISCUSSED, WHERE, DESPITE SOME FEELING THAT ISRAELI POSHIM ARE TOO RESTRAINED, ISRAEL IS FAR ADVANCED AND CERTAINLY ALSO TO JEWISH EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT. IN THIS LATTER AREA, THE WEAKNESS IN AMERICA IS MOST PRONOUNCED ON THE TALMUD TORAH LEVEL, WHERE ANACHRONISTIC, NONFUNCTIONAL METHODS AND INSTITUTIONS MAINTAIN THE FICTION THAT THERE IS SOME SORT OF MASS INSTITUTION. SOME DAY, I LIKE TO DISCUSS THIS WITH YOU; MAYBE YOU CAN GET THE ORGANIZED EDUCATION-FRAUDS, THE JEC AND THE ROMBER AASE, TO STOP SQUANDERING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WHILE ALLOWING MILLIONS OF JEWS TO BE LOST.

A THIRD AREA OF COMPARISON IS THE STRENGTH OF THE ORGANIZED RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY. ACTUALLY, HERE WEAKNESS IS THE

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STORY ON BOTH SIDES OF THE GLOBE. IN ISRAEL, THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES DOMINATE AND DO LITTLE SAVE PREVENTING OTHERS FROM BEING ACTIVE AND CREATIVE. IT'S AMAZING TO FIND THE ABSENCE OF A FLUID ORGANIZED COMMUNITY SUCH AS WE HAVE IN THE U.S.A. THIS IS TRUE THROUGHOUT ~~JERUSALEM~~ ISRAELI AFFAIRS; "JOINT" LEADERS USUALLY ARE 50 OR SO.

IN THE USA, THINGS ARE BETTER IN THE SENSE THAT ACTIVITY IS USUALLY ENCOURAGED AND ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS ARE NOT HARD TO COME BY. HOWEVER, OUR MAJOR GROUPS DEAL IN IRRELEVANCES OR IN THOSE ACTIVITIES WHICH DO LITTLE MORE THAN INSURE THAT THE GROUPS WILL STAY IN BUSINESS. I WILL CONSIDER ONLY THE VOJCA BECAUSE IT IS THE BIGGEST AND ALSO THE WORST OF THE ORGANIZATIONS. IT HAS GOODWILL AND INTENTIONS GALORE AND ALSO OPPORTUNITIES, BUT ITS OUTPUT IS PUNY. EVEN IN THE NCSS THERE IS ATROPHY. ESPECIALLY UNDER JOE KARASIK HAS THE VOJCA COME UPON BAD DAYS. JOE MAY BE THE BEST INTENTIONED LEADER AROUND, HE SURELY IS THE LEAST ABLE. HE HAS NO INSIGHT, VISION, CREATIVE TOUCH, OR SO MUCH ELSE WHICH COUNTS. IF YOU ARE STILL READING THIS, PERMIT ME TO HUMBLY ASK YOU TO PERFORM WHAT WOULD BE ONE OF THE IMPORTANT SERVICES OF YOUR LIFE: TRY TO GET JOE KARASIK TO STEP DOWN AFTER HIS CURRENT TERM ENDS.

AH IN ALL, I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO MEASURE THE ORGANIZATIONAL INFIRMITIES OF THE USA AGAINST THOSE OF ISRAEL. ~~WE~~ HAVE ENJOYED GOOD OPPORTUNITIES IN AMERICA, THOUGH ONLY HEAVEN KNOWS WHETHER WE'VE DONE ANY GOOD. SO FAR, I CAN'T SEE ANY ROLE IN ISRAEL, BUT THIS MAY BE THE PRODUCT OF MY IGNORANCE OF THE FULL SITUATION.

MORE AND MORE I AM CONVINCED THAT THE WELFARE OF THE ISRAELI RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY WOULD BE ADVANCED IF THERE WERE NO RELIGIOUS PARTIES AND ALSO IF RELIGIOUS PARTIES OR GROUPS WERE

NOT SO INSISTENT UPON ESTABLISHING LEGAL NORMS FOR ALL OF ISRAELI JEWS. FOR INSTANCE, I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE DATHIM DID NOT TRY TO BAN TELEVISION ON SHABBOS.

THIS MAY SOUND INCREIBLE COMING FROM ME, BUT THIS IS HOW I FEEL. THE SUBJECT IS DIFFICULT AND I'D LIKE TO WRITE ON IT WHEN I GET BACK. FOR THE PRESENT, A FEW OBSERVATIONS.

ONE OF THE PARADOXES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN ISRAEL IS HOW IN CERTAIN RESPECTS THE CHAREIDIM (NETUREI KARTA, ETC.) ARE MORE LIBERAL THAN RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS. THE FORMER EITHER DO NOT RECOGNIZE ISRAEL OR DO NOT THINK OF THE STATE AS EFFICACIOUSLY PROMOTING RELIGIOUS LIFE. FROM THE STATE AT MOST THEY SEE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO THEIR OWN THINK, WHICH WHILE THEY DON'T RECOGNIZE IT MEANS THAT THE NONOBSERVANT ARE ALSO LEFT FREE.

THE RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS VIEW THE STATE IN A RELIGIOUS, MESSIANIC OR PRE-MESSIANIC LIGHT. THE STATE HAS A RELIGIOUS FUNCTION, AND THEIR JOB, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF THE OTHER ZIONISTS, IS TO ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENTAL OR LEGAL SECTARIANISM. THIS MEANS THAT THEY WANT LAWS THAT COVER EVERYBODY.

THIS CAN BE SEEN ON THE AUTOPSY QUESTION. THE VERY ORTHODOX DEMAND ONLY A LAW OR HOSPITAL PRACTICES WHICH GIVES EACH INDIVIDUAL THE RIGHT TO VETO A POSTMORTEM ON HIS BODY OR THAT OF A CLOSE RELATIVE. BUT THE MILRAHA AND CHIEF RABBINATE INSIST THAT THE LAW EMBODY THE HALACHIC BAN ON ALL AUTOPSIES, SAVE IN EXCEPTIONAL CASES.

THERE ARE OF COURSE MANY OTHER EXAMPLES. TELEVISION, PIG-BREEDING, AND SO ON.

BECAUSE I CANNOT ACCEPT, AT LEAST NOT WHOLLY, THE RELIGIOUS ZIONIST INTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS

FUNCTION OF THE PS'ON AND BECAUSE I DON'T BELIEVE IN COERCION AND, IN ANY EVENT, DOUBT ITS EFFECT, I THINK THAT I COULD ACCEPT WITH EQUANIMITY THE SORT OF SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE THAT PREVAILS IN THE U.S.A.

BUT SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE IN ISRAEL MUST MEAN THE REJECTION OF RELIGIOUS COERCION BY CHURCH AND OF ANTI-RELIGIOUS COERCION BY THE STATE AND QUASI PUBLIC AGENCIES. THE ~~RELIGIOUS~~ LATTER FORM IS SUBTLE, BUT IT HAS BEEN PUT TO PREVALENT. AFTER ALL, IT IS NOT WHOLLY ACCIDENT THAT AFTER CENTURIES OF STRICT RELIGIOUS LIFE, VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE NEW GENERATION OF SEPHARDIM ARE NONOBSERVANT.

A SECOND AND RELATED PRECONDITION IS THAT LATITUDE MUST BE ALLOWED TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY OF THE SORT DISCUSSED IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY CONTROL IN ~~THE~~ NEW YORK AND OTHER PLACES. I THINK THAT ROCK-THROWING ON SHABBOS IN MEA SHEARIM WAS A SIN AND I CAN'T EVEN ENTERTAIN THE POSSIBILITY OF EVER BELIEVING OTHERWISE. BUT IT WAS ALSO WRONG TO PERMIT CARS TO DRIVE THROUGH AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE INHABITANTS AND WITHOUT ANY PRESSING PUBLIC NEED. IF CENTRAL PARK CAN BE EXCLUDED TO VEHICLES ON SUNDAYS (BECAUSE THAT IS THE "LIBERAL" THING), SO CAN MEA SHEARIM BE CAR-FREE ON SHABBOS. NOW THAT CARS ARE BANNED, MEA SHEARIM IS MORE BEAUTIFUL AND MEANINGFUL.

A THIRD AND ALSO RELATED PRECONDITION IS THAT GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES TREAT RELIGIOUS LIFE EQUITABLY. A CASE IN POINT IS THE MILRACH'S RECENT CAMPAIGN FOR FAIR TREATMENT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITY, ONE OF THE BEST THINGS THE PARTY DID

IN A VERY LONG TIME HERE, NO ONE WANTED TO COERCE ANYONE ELSE, STILL THE RATHER FORMAL, POLY REQUEST FOR THE POST OF ONE OF THE DEPUTY MINISTERS OF EDUCATION WAS GREETED BY SCORN AND ANGER. MAPAM CAN INSIST ON CONTROL OF AGRICULTURE, AND SO ON, BUT THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES CANNOT SEEM TO PROTECT THEIR EDUCATION. WELL, THAT'S NOT FAIR AND NOT IN ACCORD WITH MY CONCEPT OF SEPARATISM.

THE ABOVE PARAGRAPHS EXPRESS ONLY BRIEFLY WHAT ARE PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS.

I'VE BEEN WRITING ABOUT ISRAEL AND ALIYAH, THOUGH I KNOW THAT PRESENT PLANS CALL FOR MY RETURN TO THE USA IN LESS THAN A MONTH TO TAKE UP THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR WITH RESPONSIBILITIES IN POLICY AREAS OF CONCERN TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. THIS SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT CHALLENGE, AND PERHAPS IT IS, BUT I CAN'T GET ENTHUSIAST. AT LEAST NOT FROM THIS PLACE; WE'RE ENJOYING OUR STAY VERY MUCH, WITH A COMFORTABLE AND WELL-LOCATED APARTMENT. BUT THE MORE IMPORTANT REASON FOR WANTING TO STAY IS THAT I DO NOT RELISH WORKING WITH SOME OF THE ODDBALLS AND MAIN FOOLS WHO SEEM TO SPEAK FOR THE COMMUNITY. IN A "JEWISH" RESPECT, THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WAS A HARROWING EXPERIENCE. CHARLES FRANKEL OF THE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT AT COLUMBIA ~~SEEMED~~ HELD A HIGH POSITION IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT WHILE L.B. JEWSON WAS PRESIDENT. IN A RECENT ESSAY IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST HE WRITES OF THE ACADEMIC INSIDE GOVERNMENT: "THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT, IN A WORD, IS LIKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING IN AND OUT OF JAIL."

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FINISHED SIX DAYS AFTER I STARTED TO WRITE.