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“EMERGING FROM THE CAVE”

VI. The Challenge

Orthodox Judaism in our generation is beginning to emerge from its cave. It must never reject that cave entirely. There will and always should be some who will guard it and prefer to live in it. G-d bless them.

But, as R. Simeon and R. Eliezer learned 1800 years ago, that cannot hold true for the entire people of Israel. To insist upon it is to diminish the Jewish people and particularly the Jewish State. If there are those who prefer this type of existence, then the divine voice commands them: return to your caves, and do not impose your wish upon the community. As a people we must leave our self-contained caves and risk the great perils — and they are many and tragic — of attempting to live the life of Torah in the wide community, joining the rest of the world in the daily pursuits of all mankind, and endeavoring to be **mekadesh shem shamayim be-rabbim**, to sanctify the Name of G-d in public.

Our G-d-ordained duty is to bring the **trei medanai assa**, the two myrtle twigs of Judaism, to the entire world; to offer all Jews and all mankind the sweetness and pleasantness of Torah; to challenge them both to recall the glories that were and prepare for those that yet will be; to inspire **teshuvah u-maasim tovim** wherever we are; to look confidently towards what destiny is yet to bring us; to acknowledge the **mitzvot** as our most precious and most beloved possession.

Then indeed we shall be able to live out our lives Jewishly and beautifully and meaningfully, and in dignity and respect and pleasantness.

NORMAN LAMM

