

October 8, 1996

אשר
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YU Alumni-Israel

1. Thank: award... **Cardozo**: "I=singularly accessible t expressions of regard."

I'm especially pleased...this event. From beginning I took special pride YU Israel Alum, prob'y as expression my own frustration: best & brightest & most idealistic came on Aliyah, on the front lines in both war and peace; rest of us had to make do with back-office support, nurturing a lingering, irrepressible guilt feeling like a headache which refused to go away.

ST (told me by Ezer Weizman): Italian colonel WW II--plan attack, blows whistle, runs into hail bullets, looks back for troops--sees them in trenches clapping & shouting, "Bravo, Colonel"....

So, even during most trying period, we continued and accelerated 1-year-in-Israel program. You should know: We encourage year-in-Israel (now sometimes 2-3 yrs!) despite fact that cost for these close to 500 youngsters (about \$2.5 million) is equal to more than 1/2 our annual deficit for undergrad schools!

2. **ST**: 60th anniv'y--like 2 days: **י"ב וט"ב**... **Me/YU=ט"ב ושמח"ת**...

3. **inside story** early yrs. First--the **ט"ב** part: When I first came in, rather innocently, even naively, I thought of the verse in Job (8:7): יסגה מאד--small beginnings, modest starts, but the promise of greater achievements later. Well, I'm thankful that indeed it worked out that way--but there was one slight change in punctuation. Instead of merely **מצער**, small, the word turned out to be **מצער**--painful, very stressful and left its permanent mark on my psyche...

Discov'd 1/3=debt service; owed \$55M. Decided renegotiate; banks refused. Chap 11--faculties thru paces...some top profs ran... LOW POINT: sign ch.11 papers offices Weil Gottschalk - מן השמים עכבוי - Tenzer/Gov Carey - agreed \$35M...RAV's talk to top BT members...paid in full Feb '78. And ט"ב was over...

4. Even in those dark days, those 3 or 4 first dismal years I never thought serving Yeshiva was anything but a **privilege**. I always considered it a great מקום תורה, the cradle of TuM, the academy where Rav taught for >40 years.

6. But, תודה לא-ל, the situation has improved in every way, and we have emerged from what was close to **ט"ב** to a rousing שמח"ת...Let me tell you just a bit about some of the things happening at your alma mater--part of the reason I refer to it as שמח"ת:

7. **News about YU--**

* (~2 weeks ago)--#45/first tier US News & World Report

* בתי מדרשים, מספר הכוללים

- * Distinguished scholarships...
- * TUM Journal; 3 different Torah journals; 4th Orthod Forum volume coming up
- * Commission on Judaism & Human Values (more: I hope to have more to say about this and what I think can be a major achievement of YU alum in Israel when I speak in Jerusalem Sat. Night.)
- * --all this not inexpensive: cost of running YU~\$1,000,000 a day!

8. **My main lesson from 20 years in YU Presidency:** that I must follow the truth as I see it, and that I must be patient with others because people's minds take long to change, and perceptions lag behind reality...

YU is in the midst of all tensions that bedevil the Jewish comm'y, especially the Orthodox--today even more than usual. YU has many friends, some friends who are critical--and a large number of bitter, implacable enemies. Serious public issues emerge on our agenda from time to time, and they resist simplistic solutions. . There are enormous pressures on us--on me!--and any decision has vast consequences. What to do?

First: after weighing all alternatives, *follow your own truth, what you consider the authentic thing to do!* Reb Hirsch Rimanover used to restate the commandment לא תונו as לא תונו איש את אמתו as Don't distort own truth...

And the Berdichever used to explain the Talmudic injunction that every one must say בשביל שלי נברא העולם as בשבילי נברא העולם in my own authentic path...

ע"י במדרש הידוע לענין בריאת אדם, שהמלאכים נחלקו, אלה --"יברא, ואלה אל יברא. צדק אומר "יברא, אמת-- אל יברא. חסד -- "יברא, שלום--אל יברא. מה עשה הקב"ה, השליך אמת ארצה, כדכתיב "וישלך אמת ארצה", ויאמת מארץ תצמח", וברא את האדם.

והשאלה נשאלת: מדוע השליך אמת ארצה ולא שלום, שגם שלום הצביע נגד בריאת האדם? האדמו"ר מקוצק באר, כדרכו, שה' השליך אמת ארצה ולא שלום, שאם אמת נשאר, אין "רוב" שיכול להכריע את האמת.

ונראה גם פירוש אחר: לו היתה האמת קיימת במלואה, היה המצב כך שהיה קשה לבן אדם להתקיים. רס"ג כבר כתב בספר "האמונות והדעות" שלו (בהקדמה) על "האמת המרה" שבני אדם בורחים ומשתמטים ממנה. אמת הבאה מן השמים פירושה אמת מחלטה, בלי פשרות וללא תנאים, ואמת כזאת מטילה אימה בבן אדם שהוא יציר חלש ופגום, ממש כשם שאי-אפשר לאדם להתקיים תחת השמש במלואה שקרניה מאירים את כל פינות הוויתו ללא צל. על-כן, הבאור הוא לא רק שהאמת הציעה שהאדם אל יברא שכולו שקרים (כדברי המדרש) אלא שאי-אפשר לו להברא ולהתקיים בנוכחותה של האמת הטהורה הערטילאית. ולכן "השליך את האמת ארצה" לא רק להפטר ממנה כדי שיוכל לברוא את האדם על-פי הרוב של יועצי עליון, אלא שהאמת שהיא הכרחית לחיים תקינים ומוסריים לאדם תצמח מן הארץ, דהיינו, שתופיע לאט לאט, ותיכנס לחיי אנוש באופן אורגני וטבעי, וכך סוף-סוף יוכל האדם לבקס חיוו על האמת במידה המספקת ומתאימה לו, מה שלא היה יכול לעשות אם האמת באה מן השמים, כלומר, ללא התחשבות עם יכולתו של האדם לקלוט ולספוג את האמת.

That has been the overriding and underlying principle of Yeshiva: It has to be *our* אמת, we must travel on our very own שביל, not that mapped out for us by others, and yet we must be patient and understanding, in the confidence that אמת מארץ תצמח.

9. This truth about truth may have some relevance to you in Israel vis-a-vis us in America: There are probably goodly number of you who don't understand us--why we still

remain in USA, how we are reconciled to Galut when the Mitzvah is to come here, etc.... I understand why you have difficulty understanding those of us who share your commitments but have not yet followed your lead. BUT--not every truth can be assimilated & acted upon in same time-frame as others. Some truths, like some plants, take longer to sprout and grow than others...

10. Let me close by thanking you again, and by reaffirming the interdependence of our Yeshiva family--you here in Israel, and those of us still in the Golah: Must remember we're really a "family," bound both institutionally and ideologically. No other group espouses a total loyalty to Torah with openness to worldly learning, to other Jews, to non-Jews with whom we share certain universal concerns, and to the general ideals of Religious Zionism.

We share not only the same alma mater, the school we all attended, but also the religious experience and growth that was given to us; ST Eisenhower - Unified Command-English secretary- asked for schedule (*skedule*), she said: here we pronounce it *shedule*. That evening reception by Churchill, who asks Ike: How well do you know Gen. Bradley? Ike: "Oh, Omar and I went to *shul* together"...

At Yeshiva we went to both school and shul together....