

MAY, 1968

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xxx The fact of our attendance here this evening is nothing else. The very fact that we have come to listen to something about Yahadus, to take council together about any aspect relating to our Jewishness means that we want to remain Jews within the context of Western Society, where for the first time in the history of our people it is possible to opt out of the Jewish people without the stigma of conversion and betrayal. Never before was it possible for a Jew simply to vanish from his Jewishness without Schmad that free ticket of admission into higher Gentile Society. When therefore we gather and whenever we gather to declare that we want to remain Jews and we are not choosing the option of disappearing and vanishing we reveal a sense of responsibility for our Jewish heritage. It is that term and that concept that I should like to speak about this evening.

RESPONSIBILITY

What does it mean, what are its sources and how is it discharged? First let me say something which may appear to be rather self-evident; and that is that responsibility means the ~~xxx~~ ability to respond or to answer. The prerequisite for responsibility is the awareness that we are being questioned. Jewish responsibility is the response to a summon, to a challenge, to an interrogation. Jewish life lived responsibly is a reaction to a questioning G-d. We live under a question mark that comes at us ~~xxxxx~~ from Above. Ever since the first Divine question was directed at our first forefathers and the Rabone Sheolem said to Adam Harishon Ayekah? Where are you? What are you going to do with your life? That question became enshrined in Mankind and conscious and when man decides to answer that question or at least to entertain it at that point we have achieved responsibility. Chazal in the Medrash maintain that the word Ayekah, Aleph, Yud, Chaf, Heh by rearranging its vowels reads Ecah, and it tells us that when man fails to entertain the questions ~~xxxx~~ the Divine questions Ayekah? Where are you? What are you doing with your life? How are you going to manage your destiny? At the moment that we fail to listen to the Ayekah, at that moment there is ~~xx~~ only tragedy. Ecah. The lamentation of how could it happen to us. That means that every Jew must always listen with sensitivity and ~~responsibility~~ sensibility,

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to the word of the prophet and the word of the Torah "Mah Hashem Doresh Meimoch." What does the L--d require of thee.?" That is the question that must pursue us . That must give us no rest . That must veritibly destroy our peace of mind because a real Jew doesn't look for a peace of mind. Peace of mind is something which we automatically discover like happiness as a result of a full life. Whoever goes consciously in search of happiness will ^{never} find it. Whoever looks for peace of mind has already losses ~~im~~mediately and irrecoverably. The Jew tries to disturb his natural peace of mind by always looking for a fresh answer to the question of G-D . What does the L--d require of thee?" The Jewish Qup Vadis. Where are you going? All of Jewish life , All of Jewish life and not only the Pesach Seder Revolves about questions , intellectually how did Jews ^{their} normatively express intellectual and cognitive yearning. Through learning, through learning Gemarah. What is Gemarah if not a series of questions and challenges. Doresh, dorash Moseh, Moses not only preached , he asked, questions. With us the name for a school is Bet Hamedrash . Literally the House of Questioning. Not only of interpretation but of questing and questioning. That is intellectually, we question ; as a matter of actual living, we live under G-d's quest and under G-d's question. So that this form of responsibility which means that to be ^oresponsible you have to live in a manner that will be an answer response to G-d's question , "What are you ~~xxxx~~ doing? How are you discharging your duties? is not really that self-evident at all. It means that real responsibility as a Jew requires first of all a [?]ceistic foundation that we recognise that there is a Boreh Olam and that the Jewish community if it is to be a responsible Jewish community has to rest on a Jewish faith. On a religious faith. It is not enough to have communal politics or survival as Judaism the terrible words and the result of the terrible degradation of our faith, but rather a Judaism built on Torah, on Mitzvot , on a response to the Divine command. In its broader sense it means that a responsible Jew must have Emunah. And Emunah does not only mean faith; Emunah even more means faithfulness. It does not mean faith in the ~~xxxxx~~ sense that I should scribe to some abstract Dogma . It means that I am a trustworthy fellow . That I am a reliable person . When we say of the Rabone SheOlam as Moses

3. said in ^uHazinuh. Kel Emunah . He is a G-D of faith . What does that mean? And the Yal--- says Kel Shemamin Bivruoh. A G-D who believes in his creatures. G-d believes in us . He has faith in us . That means he has asked us the question , Ayekah? What are you going to do?" How are you going to live the years I have given you? and he has a certain faith which he deposits in our life. It is now up to us to prove worthy of this Divine Emunah by responding responsibility to the Divine question, so that number one, - responsibility cannot exist in a Jewish sense without faith in Rabone Sheolam.

2. What is the Hebrew word for responsibility? One word - Achrayis. Achrayis is a rather strange word . Have you ever thought of what an origin is? One of the greatest of our authorities , probably one of the very first lexocographers in Judaism, and one of the giants of the Gaonik period, Rabbi Nathan of Rome, the author of the Auruch , gives us a very interesting and Halachik answer. He says that the word Achrayus - responsibility comes from the Hebrew word ~~Acharis~~ Acharis. Acharis means permanence and durance. And he explains it as follows: In Jewish Law, in Halacha there is such a thing as Mechosim SheYesh Lohem Achrayis. If I want to borrow money, you say you will lend me money , provided I will give you a mortgage . There is something which I can give to you as a security upon which you have a leian. I cannot do that upon a suit .
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 I can do it upon a taperecorder, upon a chair , because these are metaltalim , ~~x~~ they are moveable. I can do it ~~shx~~ only on Carca , on earth on real property , because real property is Mechosim Sheyesh Lohem Achrayis. It is responsible . Why responsible? Because real property Carca, has Acharis, it endures, no matter what you do to reinstate it, it is going to last. No matter what happens to it, you plant on it, or build on it , or use it as a play ground , but it is going to endure as long as the ^{World} ~~xxxx~~ does. And therefore it has Acharis, whereas a moveable object does not endure, is not permanent , cannot be used for ~~i~~ a lenian because it has not Acharis , it has no Achrayis. What we learn therefore is that responsibility is tied in with a concept of endurance, and the equation works both ways. You can be responsible only when you believe that your whole phylosophy^y and you whole way of life, whatever you are responsible for will endure, and on the other hand it can endure and

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achieve Acharis, only if you act with Achrayis, with responsibility.

Therefore, my second point is that Jewish responsibilities in our times, calls upon us to declare not only verbally but inwardly, our faith

in the Acharus, in the permanent, not only in the survival but in the triumph of what we believe in, of what is known unfortunately as

Orthodox Judaism. I confess you have never liked the term. You find no place in the Gamarah or in the Torah that we are ~~xx~~ called orthodox.

I think Moshei Rabenu and ~~xxxx~~ ^{the Rambam} would have been shocked to be called orthodox. But you know it was a name that was given to us by those who departed from ~~xxx~~ the Jewish religion, they called us orthodox.

So we have no choice but to do what the Quakers did. To take the term of approgiam and so to live that it becomes a badge of honour. Well I

don't like it but if it is a badge of honour we have to wear it, Responsibility means therefore for us to live, work, operate on the premise

not only under premise, under confidence, that badge that we call orthodox will triumph that it has an Acharis. Now that is not always

easy. Not if you want to remain with your feet firmly enplanxted on the ground and not if you want to listen to what others say. I know we are all young in this audience, some less young some more young,

but we are all young and in our life time and I am sure that in my years, at least four or five times that I have read major pronunciamentos

by knowledgible sociologists of Jewry that orthodoxy has come to an end.

You know what Mark Twain once ~~xxxx~~ said when his obituary was published in the morning paper, He wrote into the editor, " I have read my

obituary and find it exxagerated. Nevertheless when I say that we must have faith in the future of orthodoxy I don't mean to believe our own

propaganda. I don't mean that we have tell ourselves a Bobemaysah ^{of} and believe it. Others will tell us, now look how can you speak ~~xxxx~~

a futu~~re~~ for orthodoxy, you know very well that in many fully orthodox synagogues or rather in many formally orthodox synagogues there are

people who nominally subscribe to the attendance of orthodoxy and it is orthodoxy without ~~xxxxxx~~ orthoproxy. It is right thinking but not

right acting. Therefore how can you speak of ~~xxxxxxx~~ renaissance of

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orthodox life, It's true but I am not going to deregate, those, who at least are orthodox. I don't approve of half measures, but half measures are better than no measures and someone who subscribes at least nominally to orthodoxy has at least ~~xxxx~~ evinced the desire to hold on. Maybe he will give his children a Jewish education. Maybe his children will be more than nominally orthodox, if at least he holds on. Furthermore let us not forget in a quick over-view in Jewish history, that those who were completely, utterly, and uncomprisingly loyal to the ~~Jewish~~ Jewish tradition were not always the majority. We seem to look back upon the age of East European Jewry as the golden age that was normative for all of Jewish history as if we are the first ones in the entire three and a half ^{orthodox} millennia of Jewish history were actually ~~xxxx~~ observant. Jews are not necessarily the majority of the entire Jewish community. But it is not so. I say a spoke of a saving remnant. There always was a saving remnant that carried the community along with us. There always was a creative few that was able to inspire and to galvanise an entire community and therefore save it. Look at the days of Moses. The man went up to the mountain and he was gone according to Chazal six hours more than the prescribed time. And how many people abandoned him? The majority of the Jewish community. One tribe of Levi out of twelve remained loyal. Look at the history of our people in the days of our prophets. The majority of ~~x~~ our people were back-sliders into idolitry. What was the faith of almost all the prophets? ~~xxxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ Prophecy wasn't a job for a good Jewish boy. Most ~~xxx~~ prophets refused their commision because the faith of a ~~xxx~~ prophet was usually to be killed.; because he was unpopular. He was striving to re-introduce an idea which was held only by a despise minority. The majority of Jews had left Judaism, had left Torah, had left the Rabone SheOlam. In the days of the Beth Sheni, The Second Temple, we after all are descendant from the Pharasees, the much malined Pharasees. According to the Talmud the Pharasees were Echod Michov Daled Kitos BiYisroel. We began as a minority one of twenty four sects. To go down through the ages. You know there is a teshuvah responsible in the days of the Gaonim the great Babylonian period of Jewish history in which a Shaleh was directed to a Gaon as follows: I would say it sounds English but really it sounds more American.

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Where a man asked a Gaon is it true that only Rabbis have to wear Tefellin? An American experience in the ~~xxxxx~~ ancient Babylon . Apparently most people didn't know that they had to put on Tefellin. It is the kind of icarius religion we know of. Rabbi shouldn't ride on Shabbat. He should daven, he should learn , This is an ancient custom, a glorious one, but an ancient one. Rabenu Tam the grandson of Rashi writes in the Sefer Hayosoh that when he came to a certain community in France and this is in the great flourishing Franco/German community which created Rashi and Tosfos probably that one of these ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{very} greatest eras in our history. That in one community Jews had not put a Mezuzah on their door for ten years. Every day they said the Shemah . Maimonid^{ies}, the great Rambam after whom came the ~~Rxx~~ Ramban and after whom ^{there} came some of the greatest Gedoleh Chachme Seforah in a brooding letter of despair evinces his typical Jewish^pesimism. Jews wern't always optimists in some ways we have become pesimists and he writes Vechacmeh~~XXXXXX~~ Marsaille the Sages of France, he said, except for you in Marseille and a few tiny communities in the Arab North African coast Torah has vanished from the Jewish people and I don't know what is going to happen. One of the letters of the Rambam. And if you look at the Teshuvahs of the Nitziv, The Rosh Yeshiva of Belogan he says almost the same thing about . So that in every community, in every age it has almost been indemic with us to question what has happened to us, where ~~wxx~~ we're going and whether we can make it. And we've always made it. AND WE WILL. Because we^lwill always have an acharis and there will always be one. We have a tendency we Jews to to romanticize the past, things were always better in the Alteheim. Things always were once glorious, it wasn't so . Believe me there were Amaratzim in Poland, there were Amaratzim in Russia and there are Pecursim in the greatest Jewish Centres. Not as bad as today possibly but it was worse before. It was worse and things may be bad it does never mean that we may desist but never should^{it} discourage us and never may we allow ourselves to plunge into despair. One of my colleagues at Yeshiva University he is in the faculty of political science, a young professor already making quite a name for himself in this particular discipline Charles Leedman wrote an article about three years ago about American orthodoxy for the

7. American Jewish year book and he points out something that is of extreme relevance. I ~~assume~~ ^{assume} it is even relevant and of interest to Anglo Jewry. He says that fifty years ago apparently all Jews in America were orthodox. Today nominally we are in the minority. Does not this mean that we have lost? and he says no it doesn't. Because fifty and sixty years ago when my parents came to the United States, when they came ~~to~~ there, it was the thing to do, to belong to an orthodox Shul not because you had a rumative commitment. It was a kind of religious, dymenciablenunsmanshot. You came to a strange country, you were to use the American term I don't know if it is used here a Greenhorn, which means you were an immigrant and looked down upon you weren't fully Americanised and America of course is a country of super-patriotism and therefore you band it together with your town folk, with your landsmen and since at home you went to Shul so here you built a Shul. It was the past century ~~xx~~ ago an arlarc of today's ^{Jewish} community centre. Therefore to say that fifty years ago the majority of the community was orthodox is not necessarily correct. At least not in America. Today when you have orthodox Jews in America they are those who do not have those association and they are for the greatest majority those who have apted for this way of life voluntarily, consciously and conscientiously, and they cannot be compared quotatively, it is like adding apples and pears. What we have done in the United States is to try to build up the vital chore to assure the Acharis, the fringes it is true are assimilating they are being eaten ~~xx~~ away and we have no assurance and no guarantee that they are going to survive for ever. But at the same time that you have this centrifible force going away from the centre and disappearing opting out of the community you have powerful centripicle forces moving inwards so that we have today the Ezrat Hashem a great day school movement of primary and secondary schools in the United States. Today we have a Yavneh which is a University of boys and girls, university men and women who formed their own organization without adult help, with sometimes adult discouragement and they have formed a groups body with sixteen young people and today they have over eleven or twelve hundred in the greatest universities in the country. We have other organisations which bespeak a renaissance, of Torah in a context ~~ix~~ of contemporary society.

8. Last but not least of course Yeshiva University with its fourteen or fifteen schools at the last count, and some 7500 students, 2200 faculty this certainly is a sign that we have done something. We have achieved something and never need we despair because Jewish communities, Torah communities especially are with each other throughout the world and when one is strong all are strong. And when one is weak all of us must rush in, to help and that is why all of us must always bear in mind the welfare of a smaller community. Of course, we sometimes tend towards a blue mood or a grey mood, we don't even realise what is happening, and that is not good because then we don't realise what can happen if we bestir ourselves. You know one of the prayers we say in the Shemoneh Esreh is Vesechezenu enenu beshuvcah letzion berachamim, "May our eyes behold o mighty G-D how your shechinah returns to Zion, your presence returns to Zion. A Chassidic Rabbi asked why not praise ~~the~~ seduh. May your Shecinah return to Zion why may our eyes see and he says because it is a special prayer. Frequently the Shecinah has returned to Zion but we are blind to it so we say Rabone SheOlam give us that gift of clear voyance of simple insight and vision that we should be able to see the better path the silver lining, that we may be able to see the Shecinah return to Zion, and that you and I may be able to see in our respective communities that we indeed do have an Acharis. And I believe that speaking of the American community our greatest cryterian of our successful path and this holds true for anything whether business, publishing or merchandising or advertising, the greatest compliment is imitation. And we have been imitated in the day school movement, not only by conservatives who have begun to build a day school movement. Not only by some orthodox, reform groups have begun to do it. But even by non Jewish groups. I must tell you Bede de Avdeh Uvdah, It happened to me. It is appropriate to speak of new England ~~here~~ in old England. For about five years I was a Rabbi in a new England community in Springfield Massachusetts. And there we had a struggling day school which is still struggling but doing very well. Struggling financially and doing well educationally. Marvellous combination. No school should do well financially its a bad sign. A synagogue without a mortgage it means its not doing enough. But let me tell you what happened, ~~We had~~

9. we built a Springfield Hebrew Day School. Now Springfield is in Western Massachusetts, perhaps you will remember a name of a certain family in Eastern Massachusetts. There is a family called Kennedy and the Kennedys in Eastern Mass. are the leading lay Catholic family. Well in Western Mass. there is another family that are ^{only} ~~only~~ second to them. They are the Kennedys of Western Mass. and they are the Breck family. Do you have Breck shampoo here? They are the pillars of the Church very distinguished and very noble people and they have their parochial school. Mrs. Breck was very friendly with the wife of the President of my synagogue and of my Day School. And one day she said to me, "You know Rabbi, Mrs. Breck is rather ~~is~~ shy, she ~~is~~ would like to speak with you. She wants some advise. I said right I should be pleased to speak to her. ~~if~~ She came to see me in my study, She said "You know Rabbi we have parochial schools where Nuns do the teaching and we are very unhappy. The educational standards are very low. We would like to have a school for Catholics like you have for your Jewish children. Could you give me advise on how to proceed. To build a Catholic Day School. And she was very insistent upon it and I gave her advise, community problems, Parish problems, financial problems, and with all due imodesty friends please forgive me for it, I think I am the only Rabbi in the World who built a Catholic Yeshiva. So that responsibility requires of us to have Acharis in the triumph in all we believe in, what has ^{be}come known as orthodox Judaism.

3. Responsibility at this time and juncture of our lives and our history calls upon us to have faith not only in the Acharis of our own community but in the Acharis of Kellal Yisroel. Orthodox nonorthodox no matter what label they give themselves, irreligious, secular. How? Neither by capitulation nor ChasVesholem by animosity that can possibly be avoided. The Nitziv whom I mentioned a few moments ago, the Rosh Yeshiva of Belogan once said, where we say in Avos in the Ethics of the Fathers, Ohev Es ~~Is~~ Habrious Umekarban leTorah. To love people and bring them closer to the Torah. Who are these people whom we must love asks the Nitziv? And he said obviously people who are -----

over to second side