

Talk to First Year Students/RIETS—5/4/01

1. Franz Rosenzweig/The Inaugural Address of the Frankfurt *Lehrhaus*; 1920:

“Then came the Modern Age. At one blow, it vastly enlarged our intellectual horizons and our very lives. The teaching of Judaism struggled to keep pace with this rapid expansion. What was new was not so much the collapse of the ghetto wall; even previously the Jew moved beyond the bounds of the ghetto. What was new was not that the Jew’s feet could now take him farther than ever before. The new feature was that the wanderer no longer returned at dusk. The gates of the ghetto no longer closed behind him, allowing him to spend the night in solitary learning. And gradually, the wanderer found his spiritual and intellectual home outside the Jewish world.

We are the children of those wanderers...”

2. Our dilemma: Our audience—syngg/school=the “wanderers,” w homes elsewhere, while *our* מקום is the מ”ביה...How reach them w-o diluting our message, diminishing selves?

3. First: Strengthen yourselves in באמונה וגם ת”ת...

*תורה: exploit yr opportunities here...no outside jobs/school (unless permission ZC). Throw yrslvs into lrmng...& no neglect ירקות... שאר...

*אמונה: always rmmbr the רבתי of שמע—not שמא....

4. 2nd: I-o to reach Wanderers, need t *communicate & persuade*.

Can’t do that successfully if appear dogmatic/unthinking...

So how reconcile *conviction & communic’n*? שמע and שמא?

*on basics—all שמע;

*on applications—שמא;

* Inwardly—שמע; outwardly must be שמא

NOTE: שמא

5. Elaborate on שמא:

*not=mealy-mouthed; just not dogmatic...

*enough *real* שמא to keep you tolerant/respectful

*& don’t disparage ת”ת even if opposed own *rebbeim*; דן לכף זכות:

ריש לקיש מנהגו באוריתא סגין הוה נפיק ליה לבר מתחומא דשבתא והוא לא ידע לקיים מה שני באהבתה תשגה תמיד(—ירושלמי ברכות פ”ה דף ט ע”א)

(שמא in context=“reel,” be *fartumelt* by; but pun: שוגג...)

Note: no question his ש”ר, no whisper’g campaigns; only—respect f his greatness, no assumption of guilt, knowing that Torah permits unconventional lives as well as conventional,