

Great Neck/Orthodox Caucus/Am Echad/Oct. 27, 1998

Introd: *If I asked one symbol cond'n A-Jy today: "?"*. And
greatst challeng: convert ? →! --that Yes, we hv a future!

1. **Survival** A-Jy imperiled 2 factors: **Numbers:** Intrmrrrg--
52%... Current 13M → 5-6M in one gen'n... Also: demographics:
Since '60, world Jy=ZPG; A-J=NPG.
Don't be consoled by bromide "outreach"= mantra
(ST: Chelm... build clinic at foot mt.)
Only bright spot: Orthx/ultra-Orthx growth
But what of maj'y Js? ... *Tragedy!!*
2. 2nd: **Disunity:** UNITY Jewish People--urgent, yet
industrial size yawn... will not preach... But clear: עם אחד
= critical Q: Jewish survival/continuity.

Most disturb'gt memory my youth: beg WWII--הצלה
Collect'n: I Polish Jewish, what care Belgn Js!..
Evn tho a worst case exmpl, & much mr cooprn later...

*political divisions in **Israel**: Peace... mutual demoniz'n
*relig/cultural splits **A-Jy**: attacks vs Orthx by Ref-Cons
ldrs=unpredntd! Pity: could be constructv...
But we Orth not blamelss: insult/shun them
Never good word about each other...

- But: equally grave prob: We stand tod--critical
juncture hist'y people: פטולי חיתון Our gen'n mst
mk fateful decision: remain 1 ppl, or fragmentd t
2/2+ pppls unable marry... therefore permannntly
divided fr each other? Potent'y, this=mr
disastrous>splitting Davidic kingdom into 2
>death Solomon.

*The fact of our disunity now looms over us like some giant,
brood'g, threaten'g presence, one that we deny at own peril.*

3. So: let's **concentrate on unity**, i.e., minimum nec'y for
self-preserv'n, not mythical/fictional "unity" which never
existed except f brief moment Sinai.

*Theological--: תפילין של ה'--מי כעמך ישראל גוי א' בארץ
*Pract'l Q: unity vs Principle: which should prevail?

The conflict=not completely a new one. Gemara:
Moses/Aaron= archetypes 2 differing attitudes: M: יקוב הדין;
A: אוהב שלום ורודף שלום, את ההר
preeminence of law/principle, A--peace/unity.

Tanna de'vei Elyahu: in a contest betw love for Isr/Torah...
Middle Ages. Saadia: אין אומתנו אומה אלא ע"י התורה.
Halevi: Israel= the constant, unchangeable pole

So, which prevails/abandon? Wholeness of Torah /unity of the people? The Right: must maintain hegemony Torah even at expense of oneness of Isr. Left: must strive to effect the unity of Israel even if it means compromising the Halakha.

My answer is clear: In our present sit'n, dare not ask such Q, bec=a prematurely forced & therefore false dichotomy! When Nazis bored by ordinary torture of Js reachd zenith sadism--psych'l torture. choose father/mother; 2 childrn killed. To force us t choose betw love f Torah/Israel=cruel, inhuman demand. Granted, under extreme conditions, we may conceivably hv t decide which t choose/abandon. But to ponder the Q & choose sides f imminent application before every single solution has been examined and tested, is an act of gargantuan irresponsibility.

We can/must hold on t both elements f dear life. No J may cavalierly despair of/abandon thousands upon thousands of fellow Js. And no J has right t dispense w integrity of Hal, source our spiritual/communal existence & only guarantee that we and generations after us will remain Jewish.

S need forgo minr demnds/polit gains/ instt'l prestige in favr J unity

4. So what will keep us together??

- a) Despite lower a-S, the גויים... QE-II/Mendel/Entebbe
- b) Return to Religion, to Torah! A secularzd nat'm = bankrupt
ST: Uri Avneri (Heb Nat'l)... Today: "post-Z'm"

J lf. must go all th way, mk leap fr rallies→religion,
protest →practice, Z'm alone or J identity alone→totality
of J exper'ce, or--late R. Maimon: fr kultura→kol Torah!

c) J ed: Those w most/most intensive J ed--least defections;
least J ed--most. Othx comm'y overstated success in attract'g
BTs; both here/Isr, defections out-number returnees. But
by/large, number Orthx out-marriages is far less than others.
And as go t other end spectrum, where J ed is either
shamef'y dilute or totally absnt, nmbers increase. The ripple
becomes a stream, the stream a river, and the river a flood.

5. Till now: Unity--comm'y/large scale/masses/institns.

But: country-cities-commties-families... **indiv's**
& key to largr unity=כבוד הבריות: Tol'ce/fr'p/love

- Must undrstand: הבריות implies בורא ...

6. Tonight (8 חשון)=yahrzt... גרונדי יונה Spain d 1263

(=735 yrs)...שערי תשובה...History Lesson:
Maimonist Controv'y...Maim'ts scurrilously atckd RY
...He zealous anti-Maim't...→ burn מדע מר"נ altar
church by Dominicans/Franciscans...RY appalled. Later:
(1242) *exactly same spot*--Talmud burnt (24 wagonloads)!
Deeply penitnt/sees how *not* disagree...wrote שערי תשובה

7. Not mean can't disagree!

ת"ר: הרואה אוכלוסי ישראל אומר: ברוך חכם הרזים. שאין דעתם דומה זה לזה, ואין פרצופיהן דומים זה לזה.

So too remarkbl/apparntly paradoxicl Mishna in Avot V:

כל מחלוקת שהיא לש"ש סופה להתקיים ושאינה לש"ש אין סופה להתקיים איזו היא מחלוקת שהוא לש"ש זו מחלוקת הלל ושמאי ושאינה לש"ש זו מחלוקת קרח וכל עדתו:

Strange!— BUT: same רבנו יונה:

הכוונה שלעולמיתקיימו במחלוקת, היום יחלוקו בדבר אחד, למחר בדבר אחר. למחלוקת יהיה קיום ונמשך ביניהם כל ימי חייהם, ולא עוד אלא אורך ימים ושנות חיים יוסיפו להם. ושאינה לש"ש אין סופה להתקיים, רק במחלוקת הראשון ייספו ויתמו ושם ימותו כמחלוקת של קורח

R.Yona say'g: מחלוקת stirs juices, shows new possibilities; diversity=healthy

ST: Zeide--no put on tefillin bec ור"ת ...

But must be conductd w כבוד הבריות ...

Nvr let disagreemt→polemics→שנאה...

More: positivly: start here & now; realz we Js a small ppl...

Bt J ppl=each commty... So: n snub: Ashk/Seph; MO/Haredi; Meshedi/Teheran; Sym/Iraq; Habad/Mitnagdm

Get to know each othr; invite home/synag; disagree agreeably
Learn to love--אהבת ישראל...

8. SO: let's agree t disagree agreeably... Let all opinions flourish, providd לש"ש, encouraging honest diversty &, w same passion, barring mutual denunc'n, delegitm'n^{[NL1][NL2]}, humiliat'n

Repeat R.Yona: למחלוקת יהיה קיום ונמשך ביניהם

ולא עוד אלא אורך ימים ושנות חיים יוסיפו להם ...

--Miguel de Unamuno ("Tragic Sense of Life"): May

Gd deny y peace bt grant y glory"