

NORMAN LAMM

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BANQUET ADDRESS - U.O.J.C.A. PACIFIC REGION
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA

I.a. Pleased to meet so many wonderful people.

b. I have learned to like you so much, that I will not speak too long. No longer give long speeches because of throat -- listeners threatened to cut.

II. The essence of my message: to accept a sense of responsibility.

plunk . Origin of the ~~wordxxxxxxofthexword~~ word

a puzzle to philologists. Geonic scholar R. Nathan of

Rome (author of Arukh) as follows. In Halakhah, their

is a distinction between real estate and chattel; former

is considered property which has aharayut, whereas chattel

~~does~~ does not have aharayut. This means: that debts incurred

before the sale of real estate can be collected from the

property even if it has been sold or gifted, whereas the

same ~~is~~ is not true of chattel. Then^{US}, what aharayut

means is that a commitment is made on the basis of

simple, something which is enduring, lasting, permanent.

The idea of responsibility is connected with the idea of permanence. Because real estate always exists and lasts, it can become the source of responsibility in incurring a debt; whereas chattel is destructible and temporary, and hence cannot serve as a source of responsibility.

b. The relation of aharayut and aharit ~~is~~ works both ways: we are able to exercise responsibility when we have faith in the endurance ~~and~~ of our commitment, and we guarantee permanence when we ~~are~~ exercise responsibility.

c. Our question then is: how are we to discharge our sense of responsibility, our aharayut, towards the great heritage of Judaism entrusted to us?

III. a. First, we must have faith in the Aharit of Orthodox Judaism.

b/ The past has always seemed better than it really was.

Tendency to over-romanticize.

c. We have always been a minority: Moses and the Levites; the prophets and their idolatrous^{ou} contemporaries; Pharisees as one of twenty-four sects; Geonim -- queried whether tfillin must be laid by non-rabbis; R. Tam : ten years no mezuzah; Maimonides! letter ~~to~~ to the Sages of Lunel; Netziv pessimistic about his generation.

d. American Orthodox Jewry thirty years ago -- its Orthodoxy deceptive. They had few alternatives to the habits, customs and sentiments which they brought ~~to~~ with them from Eastern Europe. Their affiliation was largely sociological. Had they lived today, ~~the~~ the great majority might not have been Orthodox. Therefore, most of the Orthodox commitment we have of the present American-born generation is the ~~the~~ king that has survived challenges, alternatives, options. It is therefore an intelligent and committed orthodoxy. (See Charles Liebman's article in "A.J. Yearbook", 1965.)

IV.

a. Today, to repeat: we can boast of day schools, higher yeshivot, x Yeshiva University, A.O.J.S., Yavneh, and, last but not least: U.O.J.C.A.

b. Often we have good results, but simply do not notice them. Thus, Hasidic interpretation of statement in the Amidah, "may our eyes behold when ~~may~~ Thy Shechinah returns to Zion." Question: should we not pray ~~that~~ that ~~the~~ the Shechinah return to Zionx, why pray that our eyes see it? Answer: Often the possibility exists that the Shechinah indeed returns to Zion but we are blind to the historic event taking place before our eyes. Hence ~~we~~ we pray: may our eyes behold...

c. Your own weekend an inspiration to me as a visitor: prayer, grace, zemirot, attentiveness to Torah...

V.

a. The future. The prophets of gloom about the future of

Orthodoxy amongst us by their very existence reveal ~~their~~ their concern, love for Judaism. Such concern was unexpected thirty years ago.

b. Interesting quotation from recent ~~an~~ article, "Orthodoxy in ~~a~~ American-Jewish Life" by Prof. Charles S. Liebman, in recent issue of American-Jewish Yearbook, 1965: The only remaining vestige of Jewish passion in America resides in the Orthodox community, and it is passion and dedication, not psychoanalytic studies of divorce, which will stem the tide of intermarriage... Whether the Orthodox community as ~~an~~ such, however, can generate sufficient force to meet ~~the~~ the intellectual stirrings ~~an~~ and the emotional quests ~~a~~ in the ~~a~~ American-Jewish world remains to be seen. The non-Orthodox intellectual is not ready yet to embrace Torah and Halakhah in their entirety. But ~~the~~ two things have ~~long~~ changed. First the old antagonisms to the world of

Orthodoxy are gone for many intellectuals furthest removed from Orthodox life. ~~Then~~ Secondly, there is a recognition and admiration for Orthodoxy as the only group which today contains within it the strength and will to live that may yet nourish all the Jewish ~~world~~ world."

c. Our ~~is~~ success ~~is~~ can be measured by the fact that others emulate us. Thus, our great contribution of day school education: now ~~is~~ copied by Conservative and even Reform. More than that, my experience in Springfield where Mrs. Breck asked my assistance in founding a Catholic institution along Hebrew Day School lines. With all immodesty, I am the only rabbi to have founded a Catholic yeshiva.

VI.

a. Second, we must have faith in the aharit ~~fixes~~ of all Israel, including the non-Orthodox.

b. Our approach must be that of genuine love. The Netziv's

interpretation of Perek, "Love people and bring ~~them~~ them close to Torah," implies that the people that you are to love are yet ~~still~~ alienated ~~from~~ and distant ~~from~~ from Torah.

c. Forget such labels as "reform" and "conservative" -- remember just that they are Jews.

d. For the great majority of American Jewry, Judaism (to paraphrase ~~guy~~ G.K. Chesterton) Judaism has not been tried and found wanting; it has not been wanted, and not tried. Story of Shammash looking for tenth ~~man~~ man ~~for~~ for minyan, accosting young man in street who looks Jewish. Man says he would like to ~~become~~ join the minyan, but on principle he doesn't because he has learned from experience that whenever he does not pray minhah, he is successful in his business deals. Shammah asks: true, but what happens when you do pray the minhah? Young man:

to tell you the truth, I never tried that...

VII.

a. Third, we must accept a personal aharayut as baalei-batim.

Referred yesterday to difference between a member and

baal habayit. ~~Remember~~ Remember a that bayit, house, is legally equivalent ~~to~~ to karka, real estate. Both speak of aharayut.

No clericalism in Judaism.

b. Two versions of yekum purkum which we say every

Saturday. First for rabbis, second for congregation, layman. One of Reform's first deviations was to eliminate one of these: the one ~~of~~ for laymen~~x~~. Judaism is destroyed by eliminating laymen, even more than by eliminating rabbis.

VIII.

a. And if have aharayut will have aharit. Personal anecdote which is completely true: story of Beebee Kagan.