

1. All of us have participated, at one time or another, in cause of social justice: fight anti-semitism; fight discrimination vs Negroes; Puerto Ricans, Mexicans etc.;
2. But few of us, unfortunately, realize that in so doing we are actually continuing a great Jewish tradition. Saving the oppressed from oppressor, persecuted from taskmaster etc. is a great fundamental of our faith.
3. As with all else in Judaism, Man must learn from G-d. And G-d is ZOKEIF KFUFIM, POKEIACH IVRIM, SHOMEIR GEIRM, YASSOM V'ALMANAH Y'ODED...He is a SOMEICH NOFLIM, a MOTZI ASSIRIM.....
4. But this is more than thory. The life of the greatest Prophet who ever lived demonstrates very clearly that this is an essential pattern of Jewish action:
 - a) saves Israelite from Egyptian taskmaster
 - b) saves one Jew from another
 - c) saves daughters of Pharaoh from the shepherds

Notice that this pattern of social justice is a broad one: includes Jew-Gentile; Jew-Jew; Gentile-gentile.

Moses does not suddenly become a prophet. He must first prove himself. And he does so in the eyes of G-d and history by first espousing the cause of the underprivileged and the oppressed in his passion for social justice.

5. Maimonides maintains that the first step in the career of any prophet is that of protecting the underprivileged and the oppressed. A Prophet never is for the established powers against the oppressed, but always the reverse.
6. Well, if we are to follow the ethical ideal of "imitatio dei", of patterning our ethical character on that of G-d, if we are to act as the sons of Prophets which we are, then we too must at all times and in all situations espouse the cause of social justice. The question then is: how do you go about it? What do you do?

Let us turn to the words of our Rabbis in the Midrash (Shmos Rabba 1-34) and there we shall find three ways of so doing. Our Rabbis wonder about the verse VAYACH ES HA'MITZRI - Moses killed the Egyptian in saving the Israelite from this cruel oppressor. How did he do it? - three opinions are offered which are the prototypes of three ways of achieving social justice.

7. 1st way: HIKAHU BE'EGROF - physical help, personally involving yourself in order to save the persecuted. illustrations: those who volunteered Israeli army...those who gave freely material means to Israel...those who donate to cause of unpopular poor defendants whether it be a Negro down south or an illiterate up north...those who are volunteer nurses in our city hospitals... this is in keeping with Jewish Prophetic Tradition
8. MAGROFI SHEL TIT NATAL VE'HOTZI ES MOCHO .. struck him with an instrument in his brain. i.e. an intellectual defense, an appeal to the minds of the men to rise and stand by the cause of justice even if unpopular. Examples:
 - a) political work for Israel in America to counteract the vicious Arab propaganda....
 - b) the letter-to-the-editor in most recent issue TIME magazine which is outright anti-semitism.....
 - c) appeal to the minds of men to understand, accept democracy
 - d) intellectual fight vs intellectual anti-semites ("Pharisees", "Higher Bible Crit")
9. HIZKIR ES HA'SHEM V'HARGO ...by our own remaining true to our own religious tradition we automatically align ourselves with G-d, hence with justice.
 - a) report Hapoel Hamizrachi in latest cabinet only because of N.Y. Times editorial

criticizing extreme leftist non-religious nature government. This editorial by non-Jewish source is what shamed Ben Gurion into accepting religious demands in Israel. Embarrassing...dismaying...we should wield SHEM HAMFORASH ourselves, try to influence fellow Jews

b) famous sermon by John Haynes Holmes on the debt of Christianity to Judaism - points out that among many other things, Christianity's Church Service stems from Jewish origin of Beis Haknesses - and remarks, in passing, that it comes from Jews going to synagogue even though so many of them do not do so today. Is indirect, sharp, caustic, but perfectly proper criticism of Jews. Only proper, right defense: HIZKIR ES HSAHEM... act religious...

c) the charge "atheistic Jews"..... can become much more serious than we think. Must return to SHEM, to sources religious tradition.....

10. Summarize: espousing cause Social Justice is not only not outside Jewish tradition, but is something we Jews taught the world. It is a prerequisite for the Prophet, an imperative for every Jew, for G-d too acts that way.

Three ways: physical, Material and financial help....intellectual battle...and strengthening of our own religious loyalties.

11. Only by doing so can we hope to strive successfully for the institution of Justice in this our world. May G-d give us the wisdom and power to do so. May He endow us with the Jewish passion for Justice for all peoples. And may He lead us all to a bright new world where such striving will be unnecessary, for injustice will be abolished and the Word of G-d will be supreme.