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24. 12. 69.

Dear Rabbi Lamm,

I trust you are well. I have just come back from the I.U.J.F annual conference at Carmel College to which I went as a delegate for L.S.E. I learnt from one of the delegates, who is going to the W.U.J.S seminar in Helsinki, that you are also attending to give a lecture. I hope that it will stimulate creative discussion amongst the students, many of whom are not committed but greatly concerned with what Jewish identity really means & involved. ~~and~~ I personally feel that it is this type of student ^{who} has so much potential if one can only get across to them.

In connection with this theme I was told the other day that in Gateshead ^{Yeshiva} they tell their ^{g'mara} that ^{g'marot} if they must avoid 2 things like the plague: "Z"DA and university. Both are like dry rot - once it sets in it is impossible to eradicate (sic). It seems that thought, whether it be religious or secular, is a danger to the faith. This attitude conveys what I felt instinctively during my Yeshiva days - that outside the confines of Theonomy, the Litvisch Yeshiva world has nothing of value to say to the outside world. All they can do is make affirmations and declarations of faith and belief which on analysis demonstrate intellectual shallowness. Any objective observer must agree that they ^{have} made an important contribution to Orthodoxy, but they have failed abysmally in showing that ^{Z"Y} is aiming at ^{the} N'YE. All cultural/intellectual activities are taboo as are ^{the} RISHONIM and philosophy. How can there be communication with the outside world with such a narrow & ^{blundered} approach?

Now to the topic of this letter. I hope you will be patient with my style. I do not take any particular stand but try to develop a train of thought, then reflect & discuss it as I go along. To be honest I haven't yet disentangled exactly how I feel. I hope you understand.

Freedom + Commitment.

We Jews are natural champions of justice and freedom. Having suffered so much for so long, it is these values which we ^{really} cherish.

and appreciate.

But granted freedom from external foreign persecution, what internal freedom do we want to allow within our own ?^{רְאֵבָן}? What would modern Jews, who have a commitment to ^{western} living in a relatively free world, like to believe?

I am sure we would like to believe in the integrity of man; that everyone has his individual task to perform in this world. Each man is an ^{פָּרוֹת} ^{פֶּרֶס}. The ideal is the well balanced personality which has developed to the best of his/her ability ^{לְהַזְנוֹת} ^{וְנִזְנֵת} ^{וְנִזְנֵת}. The ^{תְּבוּנָה} explains that ^{פֶּרֶס} is so called because the man is linked to ^{מִצְרָא} ^{מִצְרָא} - which has a tremendous ^{תְּבוּנָה} ^{תְּבוּנָה}. And lastly one should be true unto ones ownself - to ones true Self.

However what is the ^{+ essentially} ^{רְאֵבָן} approach? It seems to me that ^{רְאֵבָן} initially is a heteronomy. It lays down a comprehensive pattern of living. There is a good reason for this at the level of social law - without law, anarchy would prevail. A developed system of law and ethic based on a valid sanction of belief in God and His ^{רְאֵבָן} is much more likely to preserve the fabric of society. Even at this level the ^{רְאֵבָן} would like the heteronomous nature of the ^{רְאֵבָן} to be internalized and become more and more autonomous. The latter state, however, is never the true sanction for obedience.

But in this relationship with God - which is a personal activity - why does the ^{רְאֵבָן} ^{surely directly} tell us so dogmatically what to do. Not all ^{רְאֵבָן} are ^{directed} ^{surely} at moral perfection (as which seems to indicate), at the disciplining of the animal in man. Surely at the higher level ^{רְאֵבָן} are a means of expressing our true love for God, as a response. (The ^{תְּבוּנָה} at the end of ^{קְרָבָה} ^{רְאֵבָן}) Especially ^{פְּרִתָּה} are the greatest expression of love for the ^{פֶּרֶס} ^{לְהַזְנוֹת} — ^{לְהַזְנוֹת} ^{רְאֵבָן} ^{וְנִזְנֵת}

Yet we see that the ^{רְאֵבָן} forces a Jew to keep every ^{רְאֵבָן} however personal it may be. The transgression of the slightest ^{לְהַזְנוֹת} is punished with ^{רְאֵבָן}. With all ^{רְאֵבָן} the ^{רְאֵבָן}'s can use questionable forms of "persuasion" until a person "voluntarily" says ^{רְאֵבָן} ^{יְהָוָה}. Of course the idea is that all ^{רְאֵבָן} should be done

from $\pi\gamma\pi$ and potential punishments are really meant to be of a deterrent effect ($\pi\gamma\pi$ was rarely carried out). But, without being presumption, is such a comprehensive Divine dictatorship necessary or advisable? At a deeper level life is meant to be a process ^{not in} learning, experiencing and becoming more and more free. ^{similar to} terms of base licentiousness but what Jung calls individualization. The $\pi\gamma\pi$ approach seems to be inhibitory and averse to the maturation of an integrated personality.

Cardinal Heenan, the head of Roman Catholics in England, said recently that the greatest strength of the Catholic Church is its insistence on ~~obedience~~ authority, dogma and submission to it. Also E. Fromm in his 'Fear of Freedom' suggests discusses authoritarianism and although some of his observations are obvious oversimplifications and generalizations, makes the valid point that there is a certain psychological type who will find it very satisfying to submit to authority. E.g. the Germans love to be regimented. Similarly the submission to $\pi\gamma\pi$ may be easier for certain type of Jew but for others may be seen as a great obstacle + liable to stultify development.

But, on reflection, need the $\pi\gamma\pi$ be viewed from this negative perspective? The regimen of $\pi\gamma\pi$ can be seen as stepping stones not stumbling blocks. One needs a discipline for eventual creativity and true freedom of expression. I know this from my own experience of playing the violin. Many years are spent mastering the techniques of fingering, bowing and reading music. When one actually plays a piece of music, however simple, one is literally obeying scores of rules: the exact notes, the scale, speed, type of bowing, intonation and pressure, accents, vibrato and different variations of sound — all simultaneously. At a more advanced level there is the problem and challenge of interpretation and here is tremendous scope for different improvements. E.g. Toscanini's interpretations are coloured by his Italian virility, while Klemperer is more Germanic and stolid. Yet both have exactly the same score. Throughout their lives the great musicians attempt to improve and deepen their interpretation of the old masters.

It is undoubtedly true that נִשְׁנָה תַּיִן can give a person a tremendous real and true freedom — when one's true Self blossoms and the תַּרְבָּה תִּשְׁנָה is integrated & sublimated. The story is told of the תַּרְבָּה תִּשְׁנָה who during a 'rabrenig' jumped onto the Table in ecstasy and exclaimed:

תֵּה תְּכֹסֵךְ נֶפֶשׁ תַּרְאֵק ? אֲלֵיכֶם כְּלֹבֶד יְהֻנָּה, תְּכֹסֵךְ נֶפֶשׁ תַּרְאֵק ? אֲלֵיכֶם כְּלֹבֶד יְהֻנָּה

Later he explained:

כִּי־זֶה־הַתְּהִלָּה (תַּרְבָּה־תִּשְׁנָה) הַצְּדִיקָה תְּמִימָה וְתִּשְׁנָה
• זֶה־עַמְּנָה פְּנִים פְּנִים יְהֻנָּה - פְּנִים יְהֻנָּה פְּנִים יְהֻנָּה ק

Torah living has both its objective and subjective aspects. One needs to build on the latter — the outer structure of the תַּרְבָּה . פְּנִים Jennings says about constitutional conventions that they are the flesh which clothe the skeleton of the law. It is the individual who must give נִשְׁנָה and vibrancy to תַּיִן living. As Heschel says we accept so that we can explore.

Laffer (נִשְׁנָה) have a tremendous depth and for this reason I dislike the Hermetic tendency to symbolize everything, although this approach is sometimes interesting. נִשְׁנָה are metasymbolic. I have just been reading a book on Beethoven's spiritual development by J. W. Sullivan the famous mathematician, musician and philosopher. He criticizes those musicologists, notably a Marx, who attempt to explain and rationalize all music. He says "The function of Beethoven's later string quartets is to communicate valuable spiritual states and these states testify to the depth of the artist's nature and to the quality of his experience of life. Such states cannot usually be correlated with definite situations and for that reason no programme can be given them." How much more so with נִשְׁנָה which come from the Highest Source.

One's belief in the efficacy of נִשְׁנָה תַּיִן is strengthened when one looks at the outside secular world. Man may be more free, but he is more alone. As E. Fromm calls it modern man has "freedom from" but not "freedom to". Secular man is obsessed with sex, materialism and pursuit of fantasies. We

Truly this is an age of ~~1984~~ 2005. Koestler labels it the 'Age of Longing', and Auden 'The Age of Confusion'. With mass mechanisation and increasing aspiration for material affluence we tolerate and admire our status seekers, hidden persuaders, pyramid climbers and organization men. Even the social sciences are becoming dehumanized when they keep talking about social/economic engineering. Perhaps Torah discipline should be rammed down the throats of modern man to prevent him from committing physical and spiritual suicide and falling into the abyss of animal paganism.

Yet, if this is the situation of secular man, which is recognised by many responsible and serious thinkers, why does this not lead them into the arms of organized religion? A post-grad from Chicago at L.S.E. confided to me after Saint Lewis' *Silas* (which have been extremely successful and each twice monthly sessions have lasted on average for about 3-4 hours as opposed to the planned 1 hour) "I admit that in the states Reform Judaism is decadent, ^{but} in my experience orthodoxy seems to me to be obsessively rigid — I don't know, to be honest, which is worse." There is an element of truth in this observation.

What is it that deep down worries me? I believe whole-heartedly in a commitment to IBNI. Every ideology accepts that people are different and that there cannot be complete conformity in everything. The solution is that there must be an uncompromising basic commitment to certain values — beyond that everyone must be allowed to develop in their own sweet way.

I have read enough about political theory not to accept that democracy is ~~not~~ the ideal system or the panacea to the humanity's ills. But I cannot work up any enthusiasm for a theocracy. I would ~~prefer~~ to live in England where there are accepted values and a person is left to develop his own potentialities. I would have some misgivings about submitting to politicians who claim a direct Divine sanction for everything they do. The root of my feelings is that I present day orthodox rabbis are suspect in my eyes. I donot think they are really concerned with the integrity of man.

P.R.W.
23/2/77
7/1/30/1977
Orthodox
Religious
values

Differences
between
orthodox
and
non-orthodox

freedom, but only with their narrow understanding of God's will. (Of course, this can be explained and justified on many grounds, but I don't wish to enter into polemics) They explain that a person is only free who occupies himself with the study of תורה which they interpret literally, with tremendous logic and argument, as only + exclusively as the study of the folios of Torah literature and good deeds. I doubt whether this is true or even practical. Surely $\text{glor} \text{ קידוש}$ תורה means more than man should, in whatever he does, try and live within a spiritual dimension. For the Jew he has a particular Jewish way of חיות תורה and thus he does not remain earth-bound.

Let's face it תורה is a comprehensive ideology. Our rabbinical leaders are human not infallible supernus. If they had political power in a theocracy they would crush any slight aberration at any level, no doubt quoting chapter and verse. Admittedly, at present, this is an academic point. When the מָלֵךְ comes perhaps everyone will be so nice and sweet and man will live in complete anxiety and serenity. Nevertheless, I think anyone who is deeply committed to a תורה must realize the implications of the תורה discipline. I feel I would be suffocated in a תורה state.

This aforementioned point was brought home to me when I read a letter in Tradition Winter '68 by a Jeffrey Silver in which he criticizes your article 'Faith & Doubt'. I know nothing about the writer but he seems to me to be very spiritually arrogant. Obviously he feels very secure because he displays a ^{widely} breadth, if not depth, of learning and can quote the relevant passages in good, modern articulate English. He doesn't seem to realize that there are people who are more spiritually sensitive than himself; who have experienced the mental hell of the dark night of the soul, who are terribly aware of man's existential crisis; who are extremely doubtful that things are all well, bright and beautiful but predominantly $\text{glor} \text{ וּנְז}$. (Kierkegaard "The 'Happy' man is not curious) This is initial human situation. One's task is, as Milton explains so poetically, in בְּרוּגַג נִבְרָגַג . תְּהִקָּה is not something static

which we dogmatically affirm. It is a process of becoming, of gradually trying to understand, to know what we don't know. *YNKJ NX3NI NRC*. God forbid that people like Mr Silver should ever be in a position of power over others.

I am a liberal. I believe in the *PRK RBC* and I like to think I derive this from *ZL3PZ P7YJ* not secular humanism. I would like to dream of a society based on *P7YJ* in the widest sense. Would it not be wonderful if as an orthodox Jew I could endorse Arnold Laski's famous words: "We shall make the *baisil* of our state consent to disagree. Therein we shall ensure our greatest harmony". But, then again, he would insist on a basic uniformity & standards for all. ~~But~~ Yet I am sure Variety in Diversity is a very Jewish belief.

7.13.7.2.

I myself have found fulfilment ~~within~~ in a *P7YJ* framework. But I rebel against the attitude of and which seems to be the corollary. *P7YJ NR* affecting other activities than *P7YJ* haunts me when I am honest & reflect on what ~~is~~ Theocracy would entail. I am constantly aware of the *PRD* from *PN* *PLR SK PR'S TK* in *TK NR* & Job 28., but I still dare to suggest the obvious oversimplification and half-truth that:

"The Law was made for man
Not man for the Law."

On reading through the letter I must apologise for sometimes going off on a tangent and not ~~keeping~~ to the basic theme. I haven't made a cogent argument either way. I await your guidance and thank you in anticipation for your patience

Yours sincerely

Michael Tabor.