

Lecture on Science and Judaism to be delivered  
at Friday Night Forum, Young Israel of West Side

OUTLINE:

A- Introduction:

1. The success of my talk to you this evening is based on two things: the length of my memory and the shortness of yours. You see, after I had already notified your chairman that the topic of my talk would be "Science and Judaism", or something of the sort, I remembered that about two years ago I addressed your Collegiate Group on this very topic, and by this time it was already too late to speak about something else since it usually takes me more than two weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech. However, I know very well that those of you who heard me then have conveniently forgotten the bill of goods I was peddling and, besides, I believe that I really have something new to tell you. Since then many of the theories I expounded have materialised into practical affairs.
2. The border between Sc and Re has been pictured as a very tight one, and an adventure in the understanding of their relations to each other is as bad as walking on a tight rope; you take the risk of falling, on one side, into the biting witticisms of cynical scientists and, on the other side, into the pious rebukes hurled at you by self-proclaimed indignant Protectors of the Faith. So, if for no other reason than that of a risky adventure, we should find it interesting to know something of what is going on in this twin-planet of Sc & Re. True, we may be getting into hot water, but I believe in occasionally getting into hot water - it keeps you clean.

B- Body.

- 1- The Speculative Conflicts. Copernicus, Galileo opposed by Church & Darwin and geology by Jews took Long history polemics. Neither side clear in details which is most important. In fundamentals, can be no conflict. Reply from religious side ranges from stubborn denial to move one inch, though giving more figurative

not by Jew-writers. Don't know why.  
 will say why later.

though I don't know of any polemic writings by great Jews.



interpretation to certain parts Bible not against Judaism - Maimonides, others.

Others marked by complete submission to utterance of any scientist regardless

reliability results. Wrong, doesn't consider fallibility scientists as humans.

פסוקים בפרשת ויקרא פסוקים שיש להם חשיבות

Adam's sin- "L'rooach ha'yom", Zeitgeist. Sometimes Sc theories proven to be

ridiculous. Even Darwin thought so - anecdote about Darwin and Humbug. <sup>beetle (head); cricket (body); grasshopper (wings); spider (feet)</sup>

2. Futility. So far, several generations polemics - no results, consequence or use.

No effect, visible, upon us as true to Torah & Tradition. "Man gazing upon stars

is at mercy of puddles on road", goes Chinese proverb which I made up. Personally,

lack of practical results - now or any time in future - makes such specul'n

suspicious to my American mentality so accustomed to pragmatism & practicality.

As young American Jews who adhere firmly to Yahadus and Halacha, our reaction

to this fracas is one big howling "So what?". Conflict or no conflict, I will

believe and if ancestors <sup>were</sup> cousins of Garagantua no reason for no teffilin, will

not change color of tsisis. <sup>that's why we famous Jews with no Darwin's may be right to be practical</sup> Newton: O Physics preserve us from Metaphysics. <sup>consequence</sup>

3. The Practical Consequences. One field where sensationalism of Sc vs Re absent,

where conflict exists & where our recognition of it is helpful for us practically

is in the conflict facts on which Halacha based vs facts as science knows them.

(explained)

also where no conflict, just where science aids in elaboration of Halacha, as in determination of 15/10/11 RAN 112

Examples: louse on Shabbos, Ta'am ke'ikar, etc. Halacha is body of Talmudic

principles to be applied to facts; knowledge of latter depends on state of

scientific progress. Stress no longer on conflict, which we no fear, but use of

sc knowledge & methods sc research to reestablish Halacha more secure basis.

This must be great contribution our age to Judaism. Chazal many times considered

this - "nishtaneh ha'teva" - accepted it as natural that man learns more Nature.

Previously frowned on this - not hostile to facts, just apathetic. Must use

Recent pamphlets, USA & Israel: science vs metaphysics, religion

horse-sense: stable thinking. only metaphys. No mention Name of G-d in Mishna, Hagiga vs

it, show how Halacha almost exclusively anthropocentric: <sup>even in 11/12/10</sup>

4. AOJS. 2 yrs ago group young men & women scientists & Trad'nal Jews form organ'zn <sup>also in 11/12/10</sup>

AOJS

w. these goals in mind, Average age about 24-5, some PhD's, all over America,

medical researchers, chemists, one atom-bomb physicist etc. Goal not "Psak"



but investigation which can lead to it. Stress. Just starting. Some us who just started hit blind alleys, but will not stop. Even knowing what is wrong is valuable. Edison and 50,000 failure exp'ts for storage battery. "Lo alecha ha'melachah ligmoe ve'lo atah ben chorin le'hibatel memenah" (Abot).

5. You and our theme. We who are versed in Judaism and in at least one other field have raw materials necessary for work this sort. Try to find out <sup>one;</sup> attitude Judaism to problems in your field, and <sup>two;</sup> see how you can, by your special training, contribute to Yahadut. Indifference reflects lack of complete faith in truth of Yahadut or misunderstanding basis Halacha. Chronic inaction. Story tefillin, Rashi Rabenu Tam, no entanglements in conflicts.

C- Conclusion.

- 1- Importance of AOJS. While it is easier to be indignant at top of your voice and use flowery metaphors and powerful invective in speculative aspects Sc & Re, small group devotes time & energy to less sensational but more fundamental & practical affairs. "Hilchasa Le'mashicha" important since Meshiach not far off. Prepare groundwork for Eliahu.
2. You. Your contribution will be worth-while if not for correctness of views then at least for opening up avenue of investigation, show approach. Even if you are not equipped to partake in such work, at least I hope that you have been impressed with one fact - that Judaism is not other-worldly; it is here and now, concerned with test-tube fact and everyday experiences of man, his emotions fears loves and ~~hate~~ frustrations; respects his <sup>scient. method</sup> knowledge and assimilates him and his knowledge in its stream of historical continuity, barring the great panorama of Life in all its manifestations <sup>this is</sup> ~~^~~ Judaism.