



Max M. Kampelman Papers

Copyright Notice:

This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code, Title 17). Researchers are liable for any infringement. For more information, visit www.mnhs.org/copyright.

"FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF: BASIS OF PEACE"

REMARKS BY

MAX M. KAMPELMAN

BEFORE THE

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

83RD ANNUAL DINNER

J.W. Marriott Hotel
Washington, D.C.

May 18, 1989

It is a privilege for me to appear before you this evening. The American Jewish Committee represents the best of American democratic aspirations and the finest of Jewish traditions. Judaism and American values form a unique and complementary merger of interests, the objective of which is to achieve freedom and dignity for all mankind.

Those of us who try to carry forward the values of our Jewish traditions so that we may have the right to be called "The People of the Book" cannot shirk our special responsibility to contribute to the onward evolutionary development of Man as a human being. Indeed, if there is any meaning to the term "chosen people" and if there is any justification for the inexplicable survival of the Jewish people over the ages, when they could have been just a footnote

in the pages of history, it must be a renewed commitment to remember the lessons and values of The Book as we strive to build a just society and understand the serious obstacles in the path of that realization.

The ancient Hebrew tribes made their historic contribution to civilization by proclaiming to their neighbors that there was only one God. The immense significance of that insight was in the concept that if there is only one God, then all of us are His children and, thus, brothers and sisters to one another.

Let me elaborate upon this. The Talmud asks: "Why did God create only one man?" In order that all men would have the same ancestor, and no man could claim superiority over another, was the response. The Talmud later proceeds with the tale that when the Egyptians, in pursuit of the Hebrews, drowned in the Red Sea and the angels were said to rejoice in Heaven, the Lord rebuked them, saying: "My children are drowning and you would rejoice!"

The religious principle of human brotherhood has inevitable social and political implications. Democracy is the political expression of that religious ethic. The notion that human beings are the children of God and that they thus have the

potential for developing that which is God-like within them is clearly anathema to any political system which does not respect the dignity of the human being. The development of democracy as a political philosophy and system of governance was an inevitable outgrowth of the belief in the dignity, liberty and integrity of the human being.

Another important contribution of religion to democracy is the Biblical assumption, common to most religions, that there is a source of higher authority. This obviously suggests that Man and his institutions are fallible. If Man is fallible, he should be humble. Yet, throughout history, great injustices have been committed in the name of religion by those who, without humility, were persuaded that their's was the only true faith and warranted superiority.

It is said that Bishop Fulton J. Sheehan was scheduled to speak in Philadelphia at a town hall and decided to walk from his hotel there. He became lost and was forced to ask some boys to direct him. One of them asked "What are you going to do there?" "I am going to give a lecture," replied the Bishop. "About what?" the boy asked. "About how to get to heaven. Would you care to come along?" "Are you kidding" said the boy, "you don't even know how to get to town hall."

The First Amendment to our Constitution, prohibiting Congress from making any law "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" was the earliest and most successful attempt, within the spirit of religion, to guard against those who might improperly use governmental power to corrupt it by advancing their vision at the expense of others. Alexis de Tocqueville quickly grasped the significance of the separation of church and state, noting:

"Upon my arrival in the United States, the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there the more did I perceive the great political consequences resulting from the state of things, to which I was unaccustomed. In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom pursuing courses diametrically opposed to each other; but in America I found that they were intimately united, and that they reigned in common over the same country . . . I found that they differed upon matters of detail alone; and that they mainly attributed the peaceful dominion of religion in their country to the separation of church and state."

G.K. Chesterton, with that same appreciation, later called America "A country with the soul of a church".

There is one other related ingredient of belief common to all major religions that must here be noted. It is that the human being is not only capable of reaching God-like dimensions through the process of growth, experience, performance and

faith, but that there is also a baser and lesser part of the human being. The ancient Jewish Rabbis referred to that in the soul which was good and that in the soul which was evil, "Yaitzer Hatov" and "Yaitzer Harah." Reinhold Niebuhr, the great Christian theologian, called it "Children of Light and Children of Darkness." We have here as well the root of modern psychiatry. This dichotomy in the human being is understandably also found in the societies which the human being creates. Thus, just as democracy is the political expression of the religious notion of human brotherhood, so is dictatorship an expression of the destructive side of us. This explains the horrors of the Nazi phenomenon, as well as the brutalities of the Soviet system.

Throughout the ages, forces have arisen determined to resist and turn back the forward movement of civilization. But history has demonstrated that the power of Man to stretch himself into a more God-like form of self cannot be permanently denied. Thus, the importance of the biblical assertion that Man was made in the image of God. Within every age the drive for human liberty and dignity is dominant.

Those of us privileged to be alive in this period must come to grips with a new world, one which is evolving so rapidly before our eyes that it challenges our imagination in ways never before known to man. Henry Adams wrote in 1909 that "the

world did not double or treble its movement between 1800 and 1900, but, measured by any standard known to science . . . the tension and vibration and volume and so-called progression of society were fully a thousand times greater in 1900 than in 1800." To calculate the movement between 1900 and today would be impossible. We are seeing more changes in technology and communication in a single generation than have taken place in all of mankind's previous history. New computers and developments are stretching our minds and our grasp of reality to the outermost dimensions of our capacity to understand them. And yet today, as we look ahead, we must still say with Adams that we only have the minutest glimpse of what the universe really is. "Our science is a drop," he continued, "our ignorance a sea."

We are clearly on the verge of the day when no society can successfully isolate itself or its people from the currents sweeping the rest of us, because new ideas and information will move as rapidly and relentlessly as the winds whose currents affect us all. New scientific discoveries simultaneously complicate and threaten as well as promise to improve our lives. New concepts are required to define how we can achieve the security and dignity that we seek for ourselves and our fellow men and women. They also require a recognition that in such a world there can be no true security for one of us unless there is security for all.

The lessons for the United States and the Soviet Union -- the most important security relationship of our time -- are evident. In this nuclear age, there can be no justification for violence and terror in order to achieve ideological goals, no matter how noble they appear to be. One's faith today cannot be propagated by the sword. Unilateral security is an anachronism. It will not come from either withdrawing from the world or attempting national impregnability. Instead, we must learn to accept in each of our countries a mutual responsibility for the lives of people in all countries.

It is easy for us to verbalize these verities; it is much more difficult to realize them, particularly today, when a more sophisticated Soviet leadership is increasingly co-opting for its own use the very words we have long employed, such as "democracy." Our task is to welcome their use of our language, but to point out that the words continue to be contradicted by some of their deeds and practices. We must be able to distinguish between rhetoric and reality. There are highly significant changes taking place in the Soviet Union. We hope for more and we hope for continuity, but it is premature to substitute the word "trust" for "hope."

There is reason to believe that what we are observing today in the Soviet Union is a multi-national state in ferment, with

widespread smoldering yearnings for liberty and self-determination becoming increasingly evident. There is, furthermore, an explosive growth of the Islamic population in Central Asia. Indeed, the revival of religion in the Soviet Union creates a special dilemma for Communist authorities.

We in the United States, in the meantime, will come closer to our goal of human freedom and democracy to the extent that we understand that our religious values are at the center of it all. Our quest for peace is to protect the human being and the civilization he is continuing to build, so that the evolutionary process of which we are an integral part can continue to strengthen that which our religious teachers call the God-like within us.

All of us and our societies fall short of our aspirations. We grow by stretching to reach them. As we do so, however, let us be reassured by the conviction that the future lies with freedom because there can be no lasting stability in societies that would deny it. Only freedom can release the constructive energies of men and women to work toward reaching new heights.

A human being has the capacity to aspire, to achieve, to dream, and to do. We seek these values for all the children of God. Our task, your task as lenders of the American Jewish

community, is to stretch ourselves and our society to come closer to that realization. To preserve and expand the values of human dignity and democracy is our special responsibility. It is also our special opportunity. That is the challenge of the Jewish historic message. That is the challenge of the American dream.

Thank you.

PHONE-O-GRAM®

for:

Hyatt Book

Mr. Kampelman

5/18

M *r.* Alford Moses

*the most
precious*

4.00 5.00

transit

*Johnson
Ford
Kissinger*

☒ Telephoned

☐ Will call again

☐ Returned your call

☒ Please return the call

☐ Came in

☐ See me

BLK TIE

Message:

spend

am.

liberties

helpful

metalia

from

AJC

for

to

asked Bush he

Geo Shultz

and primary

cont make

may

Phone:

662-5196

Date

5/5-F

Time

3:49

By

Recep

PHONE-O-GRAM[®] for: *Sharon*

M *Myce Kaplan* of _____

☐ Telephoned

☐ Returned your call

☐ Came in

☐ Will call again

☐ Please return the call

☐ See me

Message: *AJC - New York*

*public relations dept wants quote
from speech*

Phone: *212 751-4000* Date *5/15* Time *10:00* By *net*

FRIED, FRANK, HARRIS, SHRIVER & JACOBSON

A PARTNERSHIP INCLUDING PROFESSIONAL CORPORATIONS

SUITE 800

1001 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N. W.

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20004-2505

(202) 639-7000

CABLE STERIC WASHINGTON

TELEX 892406

DEX 6200 (202) 639-7003

DEX 6200 (202) 639-7004

DEX 6500 (202) 639-7005

DEX 6500 (202) 639-7008

Message

Operator

Date: 5/7/89

Total number of pages 12 (including the cover sheet)

To: MARSHA TURKIN

Company Name: AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Direct Line to Confirm: 212-751-4000

From: SHARON DARDINE

Re: BIO OF MAY M. KAMPELMAN

Comments: PER YOUR REQUEST

IF FOR ANY REASON YOU NEED TO CONTACT US, PLEASE CALL:

THE TELECOPY OPERATOR AT (202) 639-7126, 7125

TELECOPY OPERATOR INFORMATION ONLY:

Time Started:

11:08

Operator's initials:

MH03

11:36

PLEASE WRITE CLIENT NUMBER ON BACK

Client Number: 99999-788

Direct Line to Fax Machine: 212-319-0975



The American Jewish
Committee

Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street
New York, New York 10022-2746
212 751-4000 / FAX: 212 319-0975
Office of the President

Theodore Ellenoff
President

Leo Nevas
Chair, Board of Governors

Robert S. Jacobs
Chair, National Executive Council

Edward E. Elson
Chair, Board of Trustees

Sholom D. Comay
Treasurer

Robert S. Rifkind
Secretary

David F. Squire
Associate Treasurer

Mimi Alperin
Chair, Executive Committee

Ira Silverman
Executive Vice-President

Vice-Presidents

Bernard Abrams
Orange County, CA

Meta S. Berger
Chicago

Herbert Cohen
Atlanta

Arnold B. Gardner
Buffalo

Jerome R. Goldstein
New York

Rita E. Hauser
New York

David Hirschhorn
Baltimore

Alfred H. Moses
Washington, D.C.

Mary Shapero
Detroit

Jerome J. Shestack
Philadelphia

Gordon Zacks
Columbus

Honorary Presidents

Morris B. Abram

Howard I. Friedman

Arthur J. Goldberg

Philip E. Hoffman

Richard Maass

Elmer L. Winter

Maynard I. Wishner

Honorary Vice-Presidents

Nathan Appleman

David B. Fleeman

Martin Gang

Ruth R. Goddard

Andrew Goodman

Raymond F. Kravis

William Rosenwald

Shirley M. Szabad

Elise D. Waterman

Max M. Fisher

Honorary Chair,
National Executive Council

Executive Vice-Presidents Emeriti

Bertram H. Gold

John Slawson

May 9, 1989

The Honorable Max M. Kampelman
1001 Pennsylvania, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Max:

On behalf of the officers and leaders of The American Jewish Committee, I am writing to express our great pleasure that you have agreed to accept our American Liberties Medallion at our 83rd Annual Dinner on Thursday evening, May 18, 1989 at the JW Marriott Hotel in Washington, DC.

The Medallion is the highest honor our organization has to bestow. It is awarded for "exceptional advancement of the principles of human liberty," and past recipients have included Martin Luther King, Henry Kissinger, Elie Wiesel, George Shultz and Natan Sharansky. In view of your outstanding record as a world statesman and champion of human rights, we are honored to add your name to this distinguished list.

The Annual Dinner will be preceded by a reception for dais guests in the Capitol Ballroom at 6:30 PM, with the dinner program beginning at 7:30. Please note that black tie is required for dais guests.

The highlight of the Dinner program will be our presentation of the Medallion to you. We look forward to hearing your response, which should run approximately 15 minutes. We would ask you to focus your remarks on recent developments in East-West relations and their impact on human rights and Soviet Jewry.

Also on the program that evening will be the presentation of AJC's Mass Media Award to Thomas L. Friedman, chief diplomatic correspondent of The New York Times. In addition, I will be receiving a special presentation as I complete my term as national president of AJC.

The Annual Dinner will be followed by a reception in the Capitol Ballroom, which we hope you will attend.

If we can provide you with any further information, please don't hesitate to call Shula Bahat, Coordinator of our 83rd Annual Meeting, at the above number.

I look forward with pleasure to seeing you in Washington on May 18th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ted", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Theodore Ellenoff

TE:es

THURSDAY, MAY 18

7:30 PM

83rd ANNUAL DINNER

Grand Ballroom

Presiding
Sholom D. Comay, Pittsburgh

National Anthem
Steven L. Zelinger, Washington, DC

Invocation
Elaine Wishner, Chicago

~~Keynote Address~~ Presentation of American
Liberties Medallion

Presentation of Mass Media Award
Mimi Alperin, New York

Response
Thomas L. Friedman,
Chief Diplomatic Correspondent,
The New York Times

Special Presentation
Dr. Morton K. Blaustein, Baltimore

Response
Theodore Ellenoff, New York

Benediction
Bishop E. Harold Jansen
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Response
Hon. Max M. Kampelmar
Former Ambassador +
Head, U.S.
Delegation to the
Geneva Arms
Reduction Talks

10:00 PM

PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION

Grand Ballroom Foyer

THE AMERICAN LIBERTIES MEDALLION is the highest honor the American Jewish Committee has to bestow. It is given in recognition of a lifetime of service in the cause of human freedom and human rights for men and women everywhere. It is inscribed: "For exceptional advancement of the principles of human liberty."

Recipients

January 1955: Judge Learned Hand
October 1956: Governor Herbert H. Lehman
October 1957: Judge Joseph M. Proskauer
April 1959: Father John LaFarge, S.J.
April 1960: Erwin Griswold
October 1960: Jacob Blaustein
April 1961: Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr
May 1962: Judge Thurgood Marshall
May 1963: Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson
November 1963: Irving M. Engel
April 1964: Honorable Dean Rusk
May 1965: Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
November 1965: Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg
May 1966: President Lyndon B. Johnson
May 1967: Stephen R. and Audrey Bruce Currier
May 1969: Governor W. Averell Harriman
October 1969: John W. Gardner
May 1970: Roy Wilkins
May 1971: Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.
May 1972: Elie Wiesel
May 1973: Roger N. Baldwin
October 1973: Chief Justice Earl Warren
May 1975: Morris B. Abram
May 1976: Dr. John Slawson
May 1977: Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
May 1978: Bayard Rustin
October 1978: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
May 1983: Hon. Claude D. Pepper
October 1983: Senator Henry M. Jackson
November 1984: Helen Suzman
May 1985: Justice William J. Brennan, Jr.
May 1986: Hon. George P. Shultz
December 1987: Natan Sharansky
October 1988: Ambassador Sol M. Linowitz