



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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FINAL

REMARKS

BY

MAX M. KAMPELMAN

UNIVERSITY OF JUDAISM

TRIBUTE DINNER IN HONOR OF JACK OSTROW

Los Angeles, California

January 27, 1994

Thank you, Stanley. It is good to be introduced by a dear friend, particularly one with as keen and perceptive a mind as Stanley Zax's. Thank you for every one of your lovely exaggerations.

In the words of that immortal master of English rhetoric, Mr. Samuel Goldwyn, I have a few words to say before I begin to speak.

This is my first participation in an activity with the University of Judaism. I am grateful to Jack and Bella Ostrow for providing the occasion for me to be here with you this evening. Your University has an outstanding international reputation for excellence in education and for a special commitment to Jewish values in a complex evolving civilization. The fact that this outstanding audience has assembled so soon after the dramatically shocking events of recent days is a tribute to the University and its meaningful religious message for large numbers of people.

The title of Ambassador these days is, as you have heard, frequently associated with my name. One would think that after 14 years, I would be accustomed to that honor. It is said, however, that you can get the Jew out of the Bronx, but you cannot always get the Bronx out of the Jew. In any event, soon after I was appointed an Ambassador by President Carter in early 1980, my Aunt Rose, may she rest in peace, came to mind. Some of you may have had your own Aunt Rose, skeptical and all-knowing.

I imagined my coming to her with the information that I had just been appointed an American Ambassador. There would be a moment of silence, a quick gesture of incredulous skepticism, and then as the message would sink in, I could hear her slowly say "Maxie, good," followed by a pause. Then: "Look. By me, you are an ambassador. By you, you are an ambassador. By momma, you are an ambassador. But, tell me, Maxie, by an ambassador are you an ambassador?" I am afraid, my friends, that by that criterion and even after appointments to ambassadorial roles by three presidents, the question to me remains an appropriate one.

With all due respect to the world of diplomacy and hoch politik, however, I have no hesitation in asserting that the richness of our national heritage, the strength of our religious values, the promises of our evolving civilization -- all these are more likely to be enriched by the depth of learning symbolized by the University of Judaism than by the processes engaged in by diplomats and politicians which too frequently absorb our voyeuristic attention.

It isn't that any of us should have any illusions about the omniscient character of those who have chosen academic life as their means of self-expression. The story is told of an American scientist, who, while visiting the office of the Nobel Prize physicist Neils Bohr, was astonished to see a horseshoe hanging over the door. "Dr. Bohr," he exclaimed, "surely an objective, dedicated scientist like you doesn't believe in such superstitions." Bohr answered, "Of course, I don't. The idea is nonsense. I am told, however, that a horseshoe will bring you good luck whether you believe in it or not."

Much has been said about the historic role of the Jewish people with learning and with the higher values of the spirit. Jews are proud of that identification. I must, however, now refer to the skepticism of another one of my aunts, Tanta Shaindel, may her soul rest in peace. She was left a small run-down Jewish bookstore by her second husband when he passed away, may his soul rest in peace. Business was awful and yet when a man went into the store to buy a book as a Bar-Mitzvah gift, I can now hear her say: "Buy him better an umbrella." The purchaser was taken aback and asked for an explanation. "That he'll sometimes open" was the response.

The anthropologists tell us that there is such a thing as "folk memory." The Jewish folk memory intermingles learning and culture with the past, present and future of the Jewish people. This respect for learning is part of Jewish folk memory. That is why we are called the "People of the Book." The University of Judaism is an integral part of that folk memory. The Ostrow Library is now an integral part of the University.

It is a tribute to Jack and Bella Ostrow and a measure of their human qualities that they have chosen to dedicate their energies, money and leadership capacities to these values of higher civilization. Jack does not want this evening to concentrate on him. I respect that humility, even though it is extremely difficult in the Jewish tradition to be humble. Indeed, I sometimes think it takes a kind of arrogance to proclaim humility.

The tale is told of a Rabbi devoutly praying on Yom Kippur. Overwhelmed by humility, he beat his breast and tearfully proclaimed: "O Lord, I stand humbly before thee. You are everything. I am nothing. I am nothing." The cantor, affected by the Rabbi's intense piety, stood up and chanted: "O Lord, I, too, am nothing. I am nothing." The President of the synagogue, building on the same mood, loudly repeated: "O Lord, I am nothing. I am nothing." The lowly shamas, caught up in their fervor, joined in the chorus: "O Lord, I, too, am nothing. I am nothing." Whereupon the President nudged the cantor and angrily whispered: "Look who thinks he's a nothing!"

The ancient Hebrew tribes made their contribution to civilization by proclaiming to their neighbors that there was only one God, thereby establishing the basis for the belief that if there is only one God, then we are all of us His children and thus brothers and sisters to one another. This led a rabbi in the Talmud to declare that the part of the Old Testament stating that Man was made in the image of God is probably the most important portion of the Bible. Here, in this dedication to human rights is the root of our system of laws, the essence of the American ethic, and here is the

foundation for the political democracy which permanently binds the welfare of the Jewish people with the national interests of the United States.

The most familiar and the most repeated of the Hebrew prayers is "The Shma": "Here, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." This constant reminder and reaffirmation of faith may well answer the riddle as to why the ancient tribes of Israel have survived through the ages, while their early tribal neighbors have disappeared into footnotes of history. My diplomatic assignments have called for me to travel to many different parts of the world. Wherever I have been, the "Shma" in my visits to the synagogues has been the unifying bond. That and the message of human dignity and brotherhood that it carries is our reason for being.

But we know that men and women do not always behave as children of God. A corollary has evolved, therefore, as an integral part of Judaic teaching. The rabbis declared that there is in our heart and soul that which is good and noble and God-like; and there is in our heart and soul that which is base and evil. They called it "Yaitzer Hatov," the good part of our being, and "Yaitzer Hara," the bad part of our being. The story of our evolving nature is the story of the conflict between those forces within us and within the societies we create. We have the capacity to reach for the stars, but our feet remain planted in the dirt of the earth. The Catholic belief in "original sin" conveys a similar message. Reinhold Niebuhr, the Protestant theologian, called it "Children of Light and Children of Darkness." Freud called it the "id" and the "ego." How else can one explain the Holocaust, the excesses of Stalinism, the brutality today in the former Yugoslavia?

Modern liberalism with which I have long identified myself, has its roots in the Age of Reason with its faith in Man as a rational being. Many 18th and 19th century intellectuals based their philosophy on this faith, but it is of interest to note that observant Jews, in the main, instinctively separated themselves from what later came to be recognized as the naive optimism of that period. They were skeptical partially because in the midst of that optimism they continued to experience severe anti-Semitism and cruelty. That strain of liberalism, however, remained strong and hardy. It wasn't until quite recently that it began to lose influence and credibility as many began to question its assumptions.

Liberalism, eager to challenge the insensitivity and lack of compassion identified with conservatism, chose to avoid facing up to the implications of the "Yaitzer Hara" and retreated to a pattern of "denial." If you can deny to yourself and others that an event, or society, or person is evil and threatening, you can avoid facing the consequences of how to meet that evil. We saw this in the widespread liberal assumption that communism in the Soviet Union or China was nobly motivated; that it was only red-baiters who were exaggerating and distorting its objectives. The New York Times, this morning, reports that Communist archives now reveal substantial military assistance and training to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua; to the guerrillas in Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras; to the PLO. You and I remember that at the time the U.S. made these charges, many of our liberal friends denied them as lies.

Denial was also associated with philosophic relativism, where distinctions between right and wrong began to blur. The lofty argument went: "What right do we have to judge others? The Gulag in Russia? Nazi concentration camps?

Maybe. But we have homeless in the city streets." When Ronald Reagan used the term "evil empire," he was severely criticized. I remember asking what else other than "evil" is it to put political prisoners in psychiatric hospitals and give them drugs to diminish, distort and destroy their psyches?

When we persuade ourselves that evil does not exist, or has been exaggerated, or is not significantly worse than we are, there is less need or justification to do anything about resisting or defeating it. This led to a conclusion by many liberals that we should not waste our money on arms, although some, including some Members of Congress I know, had no problem voting drastically to cut the U.S., defense budget and at the same time supporting more U.S. arms for Israel; and saw no inconsistency in that. Let us rather, so the refrain went, spend our resources on public housing or welfare. This thought pattern contributed to the weakening of liberalism as a dominant force in our body politic. But the refrain still continues. Opposition to defense expenditures led to opposition to President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. By calling it "star wars" it became unnecessary to analyze it or understand it. But, without SDI, or Ballistic Missile Defense, there is no defense against ballistic missiles carrying nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

North Korea has recently sold 150 of its new missiles to Iran. These are missiles with a range of 1,000 kilometers. Israel and Saudi Arabia and Turkey and more of our friends and allies in the Middle East and in Southern Europe are suddenly within range, vulnerable to immediate and total destruction from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. There is no defense at hand! And, the Congress, led by many who believe themselves to be devoted friends of Israel, has again voted not only to cut ballistic defense funds further, but to cut

funds for space defense research. Yet, the only way Israel can ever hope to have that extra minute or two of warning to enable attacking missiles to be stopped before they reach Israel's population and cities is through having eyes in space.

It is time -- long overdue -- for liberalism, if it is to play a constructive role in the politics of the new world we are entering, to reinvigorate itself with the ethic, experience, understanding and wisdom of our religious values.

A brief word about the new world we are entering. Francis Fukiyama, using Hegel's historical analysis, optimistically called it "the end of history", meaning that the direction in which we were heading was making it clear that democracy and liberty were our destiny, given their obvious superiority as systems of governance. Harvard University's Sam Huntington, on the other hand, did not see how we could escape an inevitable violent clash of civilizations on perhaps a worldwide scale.

Following my retirement from government in January, 1989, I was called back on five different occasions to deal with the substance and mechanism for Europe's place in the new world. At the Paris Heads of State Summit in November 1990, the mood in Europe was euphoric. At the Helsinki Summit of July 1992, only nineteen months later, the mood was a depressing one as Europe came to understand that it was impotent in the face of growing ethnic violence. The question remains: Are we entering a new world based on a commitment to human dignity? Or will it be a new world which repeats the hatreds and divisions and savageries of yesterday. Evidence is available to support either answer.

The fact is that either world may evolve and that neither world is inevitable. It depends on us and on our willingness to commit ourselves to support the "Yaitzer Hatov" within us, that which recognizes that we are all brothers and sisters to one another. The goal of democracy and human dignity is there for us to reach, if we can resist the temptation to draw into ourselves and ignore our human responsibilities. It is our country, the United States, that carries this responsibility, because it is our country that must carry the mantle of world leadership.

We have, regrettably, not yet shown the maturity to fulfill that responsibility. Our indecisiveness with respect to the former Yugoslavia has permitted Serbia, the aggressor, to shift the international discussion to the question of how much of its illegally and cruelly-seized territory it can keep in a peace treaty, thereby making it clear to other potential aggressors that military aggression can be profitable -- a formula for catastrophe. Similar indecisiveness has been evident in other areas of the world.

Our apparent naiveté, furthermore, has encouraged anti-democratic and anti-reform communists and fascists in the former Soviet Union. When reformers were in the position to influence events in Russia, we made financial promises that we did not deliver. It should not surprise us that this led to their repudiation by a disgruntled, impoverished people. Now that Soviet era managers are back in power, we first misinform the American people during the President's visit there and say they will carry out reforms. We then quickly reverse ourselves, ignoring the reality that we contributed to the debacle.

Equally seriously, we respond to threats from the Russian military by slowing the entry of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic into NATO membership, thereby revalidating Yalta and legitimizing a special Russian interest in decisions affecting former Warsaw Pact countries.

Furthermore, we encourage the Russian military, by publicly proclaiming that it is appropriate for them to have a military presence in the other former Soviet states., now legally independent member states of the United Nations, so long as those states consent to that Russian military presence. Weren't we told during the days of Stalin and Brezhnev that Soviet troops were in the European countries of the Warsaw Pact with their consent?

We can do better. We must do better. Our indecisiveness and gullibility must be overcome. We must understand and fulfill our responsibility to champion democracy and the cause of human dignity in the world.

Science and technology are today globalized and the results have been awesome in their benefits to the human race. Our economies are rapidly moving toward globalization and that, too, shows promise of dramatic improvement in the human condition. It is only the world of politics that lag behind and impedes our ability to absorb successfully the benefits of science, technology and economics. it is in our interest as a nation that we lead in that direction.

[The pattern which I criticize this evening has also had adverse domestic consequences. The criminal was not to be held fully responsible for the crimes he committed, because he, too, was a victim, a victim of a society which kept him in poverty, and, thus, forced him or her into a life of crime. This, too,

ignores the truth about our nature which Judaism has taught us, the Yaitzer Hara within us. Criminals must be held accountable for their behavior. There is no better way to have an impact on them and protect our society from their excesses. We fail to fulfill our responsibilities as champions of human dignity if we deny that a growing number of criminals are a threat to that dignity which dare not be ignored.

Political democracy is based on the premise that no single individual has the wisdom or the right to govern the affairs of another without his or her consent. Democracy and its institutions exist to provide the mechanism for that consent. Democracy does not mean that the majority will always be wise and correct with its decisions, but right or wrong, consent is present if those governed are free to become part of a majority and, in any event, can vote the rascals out.

Democracy, furthermore, does not mean that the individual cannot be restrained. Government is the opposite of anarchy and accepts the need for restraint as well as persuasion. A democratic society sets up rules for itself, a mechanism for achieving consent of the governed. The issues to be decided by those who govern must be vented, so that those governed have adequate information available to them to increase the possibility that their instincts and judgment and votes are relatively well informed and hopefully intelligent and wise.

Thus, the right to speak out on the issues; the right to publish; the right to propagate and hear views on those issues; the right to assemble and talk about the issues -- without discrimination and government interference. These

noble and practical and sensible rules of the game are designed to strengthen democracy and expedite "consent" of the governed, but they have been distorted. It is a distortion if we extend these protections, for example, to include behavior and words and exhibitions that are grossly offensive to reasonable sensitivities, indecent, pornographic. These insults to human dignity do not strengthen our democracy or expedite the process of obtaining the consent of the governed. They are irrelevant to them. They are abominations which society may or may not decide to tolerate. To assume that by protecting these abominations we are strengthening democracy is a delusion, contrary to the fundamental principle of human dignity on which our democracy is based. Freedom of speech is an integral part of our Constitution, not because the framers believed that self-expression is good personal therapy, but because political democracy requires freedom of communication for ideas and programs and information. Pornography and obscenity are not related to obtaining consent of the governed and are not forms of expression intended to be protected by the Constitution.

One further thought. The premise of democracy and of our religious values is based on the assumption that each human being has inherent equal dignity. Thus, it is wrong for the United States government itself or for our laws to permit the selection of an individual for employment because he is a "he," or "white," or Christian. I respectfully suggest that it is also wrong to select an individual for employment because she is a "she," or "black," or "Hispanic." Nondiscriminatory merit must be the standard, no matter how superficially appealing the slogan of "diversity" may be. Otherwise, we strengthen the tendency toward "Balkanization" in our country and weaken the threads of the democratic fiber which has been our strength. Special education

and training to lift standards "yes." Discrimination in employment "no." The fact that so-called "diversity" is an integral part of current U.S. government personnel policy adds to my concern that it is a serious threat to the E pluribus unum bond which has kept our nation strong and fundamentally united.

Separatism is insidious. This is illustrated by the growing influence of the Nation of Islam within the African-American community, particularly among its youth. This organization, led by Louis Farrakhan, who has called Judaism a "gutter religion" and has asserted that AIDS is the result of a conspiracy of American and Israeli doctors to infect black babies, was recently legitimized by a "covenant" entered into with the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP. The Farrakhan group is the largest black anti-Semitic organization in America. In recent weeks, a state-run college in New Jersey paid a fee to a Farrakhan associate to deliver a harangue urging blacks, once they assume power, to slaughter all white South Africans. He attacked "Columbia Jew-niversity" in "Jew York City," and blamed the Jews for the Holocaust. Audience reaction? Applause, cheers, even by some faculty members. And, with one or two commendable exceptions, it took from November 29 until last week for voices of condemnation to be heard from America's mainstream black leadership. The "covenant" with the Nation of Islam, furthermore, remains in effect; and Mr. Farrakhan's response is that the Jews are plotting against him.

Being black or a "Reverend" does not provide sanctuary from critical evaluation or condemnation. Martin Luther King sought justice and not power. He preached love and not hate. Those who plant the seeds of hate should not be surprised when it grows into violence. To first condone hate by entering into a covenant with it and then piously to condemn the violence it obviously produces is to be either hypocritical or blind. Our country yearns for a

consistent moral leadership from all segments of our society to help tie our nation together in a joint effort to deal effectively with the serious problem of racism and separatism which remains in our society.]

It is not the ideological rigidities of either liberalism or conservatism that merit our loyalty and commitment. It is to democracy that we must turn to fulfill politically our religious values. James Madison in the Federalist wrote of "qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence," but he also noted the Judaic-Christian belief that there is "a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust." I quote Reinhold Niebuhr: "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination toward injustice makes it necessary." Our challenge is to advance the evolutionary development of the Children of God by striving to defeat the darkness element within us as we work for the day when the species Homo Sapiens evolves to become the species Human Being. That is the challenge that Judaism presents us. We must earn the right to be the Children of God. That is our justification for surviving.

Thank you.

MMK SCHEDULE
CALIFORNIA
January 25-28, 1994

Tuesday, January 25

9:00 a.m. Depart National

Arrive Palm Springs

Zenith to arrange for hotel to transport you to resort
LaQuinta Resorts, LaQuinta, CA
619-564-4111; fax 619-564-5758

7:00 p.m. Dinner with Stanley and Barbara Arnold

Wednesday, January 26

Thursday, January 27

late
afternoon Zenith Plane to Los Angeles
Beverly Wilshire Hotel
310-275-5200

Friday, January 28

Tentative Breakfast with Jastrow and Praeger

Approx.
1:00 p.m. Depart Los Angeles for Washington

January 31, 1994

Amb. Max Kampleman
Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson
1001 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Max:

Just a short note to thank you for the remarks you made at Jack Ostrow's dinner the other night. Jack was most appreciative.

The Alfalfa Club dinner was truly spectacular and many of the people I spoke with, agreed with the comments you made Thursday night about our foreign policy. I had a brief visit with Jim Baker who had wonderful things to say about you and the CSCE process. I bumped into Jim Billington as we were walking into dinner and asked him whether he participates with policy in the administration. He said when they make speeches, they ask for his input, but never when it comes to policy.

Sol Linowitz and I had a brief visit and I told him you enjoyed his book. He was pleased to hear that.

I spent 1/2 hour with Carl Lindner before dinner and the first person we ran into was Hank Greenberg of AIG. All in All, it was very worthwhile. Marshall Coyne and I had lunch with Ted Stevens. Ted indicated that there was no real legitimate debate on health care and the strategy was to get 51 votes, which Ted thinks will happen solely on a party line basis.

Thanks again for speaking at Jack's affair.

Best personal regards,

Sincerely,



STANLEY R. ZAX
Chairman & President

SRZ:m

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