

## COMMUNICATIONS

TO THE EDITOR OF *TRADITION*:

In the interest of "intellectual honesty," permit me to comment upon the article of my friend, Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, on "Arrogance or Humility in Prayer" (*TRADITION*, Vol. I, No. 1).

Rabbi Rackman unfortunately misses the basic motive for introducing change into the traditional liturgy. It is not a question of arrogance or humility. The basic issue is sincerity, ordinary truthfulness. The question is whether it is honest to petition the Almighty for that which one's soul abhors. Because animal sacrifices are revolting to the contemporary mind have the prayers for their restoration been eliminated from the Reform prayer book. For me, as for many others, and I believe for the vast majority of my fellow Jews, it is impossible to conceive a kind and merciful deity finding any pleasure in the slaughter of innocent animals, either for the

expiation of sin, or for thanksgiving. A deity who would require animal sacrifices and find satisfaction therein, does not deserve adoration and love. Such a deity is in the same category as the god who would require human sacrifice.

To the question Rabbi Rackman raises about accepting "Love Thy Neighbor" in Leviticus 19 as a divine mandate, and not that which precedes the injunction, there is quite a rational explanation. The religious genius, who according to Rabbi Rackman was the author of the exalted ethical injunction "Love thy Neighbor as thyself," was not the one who penned the preceding sentences. A "religious genius" of lesser stature and of an earlier date authored the details touching certain sacrifices.

Once the assumption is made that the Bible was authored by a "religious genius," why is it not permissible to assume that there were several men of "religious genius,"

and that each reflects the state of religious development of his own particular day? Is this not an honorable solution?

How many Jews would welcome the restoration of animal sacrifices, and rejoice to see the old Temple restored with its ancient sacrificial system as enjoined in Leviticus? How sacred would the Sabbath be if two sheep without blemish were slaughtered on the day?

I would deem it nothing short of a calamity if the sacrificial system were restored. And I believe so would many members of the Rabbinical Council.

I trust that you will publish this letter in the interest of truth, and for the sake of the Torah.

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RABBI RACKMAN ANSWERS :

*First, I must make it clear that when I referred to a "religious genius" or God's "gifted servant" I did not mean to suggest that I subscribe to the view that the Torah was composed by a man. I argued rather—in the u-le-taamakh mood of talmudic discourse—that even those who subscribe to such a view must ponder how the person they would thus exalt could have been so barbarous as not to abhor what they consider patently abhorrent! And if they assume that the Pentateuch was authored by several geniuses of varying ethical statures, then what about the ethical stature of the final editor? Was he schizoid and incapable of discerning the contrasts which Dr. Lewis finds so pronounced? How did he reconcile all the verses of Chapter XIX of Leviticus to portray a deity who enjoins the loving of one's neigh-*

*bor and the slaughter of innocent animals in His service? Indeed, it was Franz Rosenzweig who must be given the credit for reminding us that no matter what theories the so-called "Higher Criticism" may advance, we must not forget that at least a "Redactor" fathomed and appreciated the Pentateuch as a unit, and attributed equal sanctity to all its parts.*

*Second, I did not mean to suggest that all Orthodox Jews are modest and all the non-Orthodox arrogant. Can one ever boast of his modesty?! I had hoped my readers would understand that there is a difference between the implied premise of mood of a philosophical position and the character of the philosopher articulating it. Professor Emil Fackenheim, for example, may suggest that all naturalism in religion implies self-centeredness but that does not mean that all naturalists are themselves personally self-centered. Thus I argued that the philosophical premise and mood of Orthodoxy is humility. One asks, "How does an Orthodox Jew use the traditional prayer-book despite his awareness of the many challenges of modernism to his use thereof?" My answer is, "He must use it in that humility which becomes the mood of prayer."*

*But, says Dr. Lewis, it is intellectually dishonest to petition for that which one abhors. My answer is that the position of Orthodoxy is not only intellectually honest but the position most consistent with religious commitment. Despite the vituperation my essay has provoked, no one has answered its arguments. Many have challenged its supposed innuendoes. But its arguments apparently are not fallacious. If this is so, then there remain two intellectual approaches—that of Orthodoxy and that of non-*

Orthodoxy. And what, in the final analysis, determines why one is preferred to the other? It must be a commitment, rather than a syllogism. And if it is a commitment, then the commitment must be analyzed in terms of its religious quality. Humility is the quality for which I argued.

But Dr. Lewis cannot pray for that in which he does not believe—the restoration of animal sacrifices. Here, too, we ought to recall the very impressive and obvious argument of Franz Rosenzweig. He suggests that it is “comical” for confirmed non-vegetarians to be horrified by the “slaughter of innocent animals.” I wonder how many who reject the traditional prayer-book are not carnivorous. But even if they are vegetarians, as Rosenzweig adds, the prayer for the reinstitution of sacrifices is a prayer for that which we cannot fully comprehend. And when we pray for that which we cannot comprehend, but pray for it only because God has ordained it, then we are praying for what He wants rather than what we want. This is essentially the difference between the prayer of a spiritually mature person and the prayer of one who is so immature that his prayers cannot transcend what he can himself visualize. Indeed, if we pray only for that which we comprehend, we ought not pray for immortality or the messianic era—for none of us can possibly visualize what we shall be or do in such a state. To all of this, Dr. Lewis will no doubt reply that he does not believe that God ever ordained half of Leviticus. To which I revert to my original argument: I cannot, with intellectual honesty, reject one half of the Bible and accept the other.

This is the crux of the issue—our divergent approaches to the Bible and all the sancta of Judaism. One

spokesman of Conservatism, in reply to my essay, wondered whether I am as humble when I read the writings of Aristotle or Grotius or Hobbes as when I use the Siddur. Perhaps not. God, Torah, and Siddur, I approach one way; the world's classics, I may approach differently. If I had the same approach to all of these my intellectual honesty would prompt me to declare myself a secular humanist and not a religionist. Another spokesman of Conservatism, however, interpreted my essay as prohibiting the passing of any judgment whatever on the Jewish tradition. One wonders whether he even read those paragraphs of my essay in which I spoke of the critical approach traditionalists have always taken in study and prayer. The hallmark of the traditionalist, however, is that he has a critical approach to his own conclusions, as well as with regard to others'. And this is as it should be.

In closing I might caution Dr. Lewis against equating a God who requires human sacrifice with a God who wants animal sacrifice. *Vive la difference*: Indeed, even though God outlawed human sacrifice, it is often necessary to martyr one's self for Him and His cause. However, the least that can be said for authentic Judaism is that it regarded the sacrifice of humans as a greater price to pay for principles than the sacrifice of animals. The antinomian religions or heresies which sprang from Judaism apparently did not prevent many members of humane societies in Europe from being more sensitive to the pain caused pets that belonged to Jews than to the anguish and agony of humans in crematoria. Let us, therefore, avoid equations that first make animals as dear as men and then make them dearer.

TO THE EDITOR OF *TRADITION* :

I was gratified to receive the first issue of *TRADITION* which I hope will satisfy a long felt need in modern Orthodox circles in this country: an English journal in which the relevancy of Judaism to the problems of our time can be expounded from your point of view. As the editor of a similar journal published by The Rabbinical Assembly of America, *Conservative Judaism*, I wish you every success in this significant undertaking.

There was one matter in your first issue which troubled me and perhaps others of your readers as well. Rabbi Hyman Tuchman in his perceptive summary of recent halakhic literature takes up an article by Rabbi Hershel Matt entitled "Kashrut in Conservative Judaism." Rabbi Tuchman has every right to analyze this article as well as any other article which he feels significant enough to be brought to the attention of the reader. What troubles me is his manner of criticism which at times appears to move beyond the realm of rational judgment—which one would expect in such a journal—into the area of popular journalism. In his enthusiasm to make his point, Rabbi Tuchman has committed the serious errors of commission as well as omission. Let me deal with them in that order.

(1) Rabbi Tuchman takes issue with Rabbi Matt's thesis, as, incidentally, do many non-Orthodox scholars. But drawing the inference from Matt's paper that his distinction in Jewish observance between essentials and non-essentials could lead to observing the Sabbath Day on a Monday or a Tuesday, asserting

that Rabbi Matt's proposition leads to a "Karaite heresy" and, furthermore, smacks of Christianity is more the result of the reviewer's fervor than his thought. Such epithets are violent, harsh, and dangerous to use, especially so when one uses them to describe another's conception in how to observe Jewish tradition. I submit that this kind of journalistic name-calling has no place in a scientific magazine.

(2) Serious as the error of commission is in Rabbi Tuchman's analysis, the error of omission is far more serious in my opinion. Rabbi Tuchman fails to mention that Rabbi Matt's article was only one in an entire issue of *Conservative Judaism* devoted to the topic of *Kashrut* and that, furthermore, both the lead article in that issue and the second article in that issue were devoted to a defense and a philosophy of the traditional observance of *Kashrut*. . . . It would seem clear from the contents of the magazine in which Rabbi Matt's article appeared that his article represented only one point of view. Why did Rabbi Tuchman not state that?

I have dealt with this matter in some detail, because its repetition can easily mar the standards which you are setting for your publication. I do not believe I was the only reader that was disturbed. The errors of commission and omission were serious, and they were made against a Movement which, however you may disagree with it, is committed to "conserving" our heritage. Within this Movement there are several points of view, as there are, I believe, within your own Movement. Do you really believe that at this point in the history of Jewish tradition, such statements and such lack of state-

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ments by Rabbi Tuchman add to the understanding of the Conservative Movement and to the solution of the problems of our time?

Rabbi SAMUEL H. DRESNER

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*It is unfortunate that Rabbi Dresner did not read the previous analysis of Rabbi Matt's article with greater care and objectivity. Had he done so, he would have noted that Rabbi Tuchman discussed the thesis of Rabbi Matt concerning the Halakhah, not that of the Conservative movement. Indeed, the latter would have been an immense task since, to quote Rabbi Matt, "At first glance the range of halakhic practice would seem to be so broad and so varied—even among its rabbis and its teachers—as to be almost chaotic." If this appears so to Rabbi Matt, how much more so to one who is an outsider to the movement.*

*Rabbi Tuchman writes that "if this approach of 'personal patterning' is accepted by Conservatives, Conservatism will become the one faith where one man's meat is almost literally another man's poison or its close equivalent." Obviously, it was not assumed that Rabbi Matt's thesis has already been accepted as a working philosophy by the Conservative movement.*

*Dr. Dresner's ascription of what he describes as "journalistic name calling" is most regrettable. An attempt to define and categorize may provoke disagreement, but it cannot justify the use of epithets or a response on any level save the ideational and the logical.*

*First, the term "Karaites" is offensive to Dr. Dresner. But Rabbi Matt's thesis does not fundamentally differ in*

*its approach from that of the Karaites. He writes "Each person's pattern will differ from his fellow's; all will share in accepting both the three fundamentals and a holy concern to spell them out in concrete detail." In A History of the Jewish People by Max L. Margolis and Alexander Marx, we read of the Karaites (p. 262): "It was the boast of the new sect that no two of its members agreed. Anan himself undermined authority by his double precept: 'Search the Scriptures diligently, and lean not upon my opinion.' Any one might interpret Scripture according to his own lights, and no one's ruling need be accepted by others." On page 261 we read concerning the founder of the Karaite movement, Anan ben David: "In all matters of belief or dogma Anan was at one with those he left behind (the main body of traditional Jews). What differentiated him was his dissent from tradition. 'Forsake the words of the Mishnah and Talmud, and I will make unto you a Talmud of my own.'"*

*Is not this really Rabbi Matt's thesis? Among the Karaites too "each person's pattern (differed) from that of his fellows." The Karaites too accepted certain fundamentals, in their case the words of Scripture. Beyond the accepted fundamentals, Halakhah was to the Karaites a matter of personal patterning. Thus, to be more specific, the Karaites accepted the need to observe Kashrut and the Sabbath, but created a new Halakhah about the dietary laws and Sabbath observance. There were even some whose practice must have approximated that of the traditional Halakhah.*

*Secondly, Dr. Dresner is inaccurate when he accuses the reviewer of stating that "Rabbi Matt's proposition . . . smacks of Christianity." On the contrary, the two are specifically*

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contrasted in the last paragraph which states "Judaism cannot accept the narrow dead-end street of no Halakhah at all as in Christianity or a Halakhah which is purely personal as in Conservatism." Dr. Dresner is clearly hypersensitive on this point.

Our critic is further disturbed at Rabbi Tuchman's extrapolation of the Matt thesis to the observance of the Sabbath Day. It should be quite obvious that a logical system may be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to more than one sphere of thought. The somewhat playful attempt to construct a situation whereby the Sabbath, if we apply Rabbi Matt's halakhic system, might be observed on days other than Saturday, is predicated on the supposition that "all Conservative Jews would be asked to accept the concept of a day of rest, but the permissive element would concern, among other features, the particular day which one will observe." Of course, if the particular day observed were part of the fixed requirement and not a permissive element, the nightmare envisaged in the article would not come to pass. However, any other permissive feature could receive similar treatment.

Turning to the last point made by Dr. Dresner, it is of course true that there are "points of view" within every movement. But this remark begs the question. After all we are discussing Halakhah and specifically Kashrut. Within Orthodoxy there is no difference of opinion on the need to observe both the halakhot of Kashrut and the Halakhah in general. Jewish law is not something to be created anew by each generation. This fundamental viewpoint is obviously not shared by all Conservative writers.

It is unfortunate that a serious discussion of Matt's article, from the

viewpoint of traditional Halakhah, has led to this undeserved attack upon the reviewer, in which the essential criticisms remain unanswered. Can it be that on the level of reason there is no disagreement with the analysis made of Rabbi Matt's thesis? It would appear so from Dr. Dresner's response.

THE EDITOR

### TO THE EDITOR OF *TRADITION*:

In the Vol. I, No. 1 issue of *TRADITION* you published a review of my book *Culture and Judaism*. In this review there are several mistakes and distortions.

The reviewer writes, "The attempt to discredit the theories which the author feels are incompatible with Orthodox Judaism turns into a list of *who said what* and *what was said about it*, rather than an objective examination and critique of the data and the hypothesis drawn therefrom."

This is not true at all. I have done this in the first essay only. In the other 18 essays it was not done at all or in a very limited way.

Even if I had done this in all the 19 articles there is nothing wrong with supporting my own statements with statements made by the most prominent specialists in each field of science. This makes the argument even stronger and more acceptable.

Moreover, in science as well as in Jewish tradition one is obliged to cite the origin of each thought and the source from which this idea is taken. It is strange that even a reviewer in *TRADITION* has to be reminded of the saying of our sages, "You may infer that whoever reports a thing in the name of the person who said it, brings deliver-

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ance to the world." An honest scientist always mentions the source and gives proper credit to those whose words he cites or uses.

I gathered all the valuable material from scientific sources and from the tremendous scientific literature in English, German, French, Dutch, and Hebrew, citing many quotations from Bartalanffy and R. Goldschmidt to Kelvin and Schaxel.

Nevertheless I have added my own arguments even in the first article, e.g. my argument on "the Biogenetic Law in Botany" on page 12, my argument on "Vestiges" on page 15, and my remarks on yeast as the "Lower Forms" on page 17. I could give many more examples but I limit myself to these.

The reviewer continues, "The author's general approach is to present theories which he feels threaten the traditional point of view and then to marshal generalized counter-statements in rebuttal. These statements are in the form of pseudo-scientific armchair speculations, not backed by any presented scientific evidence."

This is *not* true. Let us take, for example, the article "Harmony and Design in Nature." In order to show that there is harmony and design in Nature I bring two of the laws of Kepler, the law of Titius-Bode, as well as some very peculiar mathematical relationships in Astronomy. For Chemistry I cite Dalton's law and for Biology Mendel's law. In the article "Old Antiquated Laws and Modern Medicine" I present the scientific work of Wynder *et al.*, Kennaway, Ravich, Vineberg, Rubin, and Sorsby on the relationship between cancer and circumcision and the laws of *Niddah*. These are all well-known medical doctors or scien-

tists of high repute. I cite the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, the *British Journal of Cancer* and the publication of the 5th Congress International du Cancer, Paris 1950.

Are these *pseudo*-scientific armchair speculations? . . .

In all cases I have tried to bring as much scientific evidence as possible and as far as it is understandable to the intelligent layman, to teachers and students, and other intellectuals. If all these essays had been written in the same way as, for example, my scientific publications in *Experimental Medicine and Surgery* or in *Chronica Botanica* no publisher should have published such a book and only a limited number of scientists would have been able to read it.

The reviewer further writes, "Without scientific analysis of the ideas presented, without evidence to support or deny the scientific claims made, the author groups various scientists and philosophers into productive and destructive categories."

This statement of the reviewer is *not* true.

I oppose Spinoza, Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, Freud, Weininger, and Nietzsche and I think that each and every Jew and definitely each and every Orthodox Jew should deny their ideas because their common denominator was and is that they deny a purpose in creation, they deny the Jewish idea of a Creator and Ruler of the world. They all laid the foundations for the tremendous destruction of our people as I have shown in my essay "The Price of Error."

In regard to the "destructive categories among the scientists and

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philosophers," I have one main objective in mind: to show that they did *not* bring scientific proof as they wanted the world to believe.

I do not understand what is wrong with "cursing Haman and blessing Mordecai" (as the reviewer writes). It is our holy duty to curse Haman and his followers even if they are noted philosophers or known scientists. We must show our youth how destructive their work was and we have to teach our children to know them for what they are. Moreover, we have to show that they *never* brought real scientific proof and this is what I have done in my essays.

Will Durant in his excellent book *The Story of Philosophy* states that Nietzsche was the spiritual son of Darwin and this is confirmed by two

professors of philosophy: Howald and Schweigler. There is no doubt that Nietzsche was the father of the Nazi ideology. The logical conclusion of this is that the spiritual children of Darwin and Nietzsche committed the most atrocious crimes of all times. It is a *mitzvah* to be an iconoclast, to destroy the idols of modern culture who have brought such a disaster and such a calamity on the Jewish people. . . .

I could have added more examples to show that the reviewer was, to put it mildly, *not* accurate, *not* correct, and *not* exact. I did not do so because I understand that my answer has to be brief.

Dr. S. B. ULLMAN

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TRADITION *Recommends :*

## *“The Philosophy of Purpose”*

Due to the unprecedented response to Dr. Samuel Belkin's essay, *The Philosophy of Purpose*, Yeshiva University has issued a third printing of the monograph, first in the series of *Studies in Torah Judaism*. Critics and reviewers in the United States and abroad have hailed the essay as a challenging articulation of traditional Jewish philosophy in modern idiom. Rabbis throughout the country have instituted special adult study groups and are planning to use the entire series of *Studies in Torah Judaism*, edited by Rabbi Leon Stitskin, as a basis for study and discussion. The essay by Dr. Belkin has been translated into Hebrew in Israel.

The monograph, as well as all future numbers, may be obtained at Yeshiva University's "Studies in Torah Judaism Department," 186th Street & Amsterdam Avenue, New York 33, New York; Bloch Publishing Company, 31 West 31st Street, New York, New York; or from Mr. Simon Weber, Program Chairman of the Yeshiva University Women's Organization, 720 Ft. Washington Avenue, New York, New York.

Rabbi Meyer Kramer of Cong. Adath Zion, Penway & Friendship Streets, Philadelphia, has prepared a special syllabus on *The Philosophy of Purpose* to be used for adult study groups.

TRADITION heartily recommends this valuable essay to all its readers.