

INTRODUCTION

I have not searched the annals of Jewish journals, but I doubt that many have merited a single editor for quarter of a century. Rabbi Walter Wurzburger is presented with this expanded, festschrift edition of *Tradition* not just for the quantity of his service, but for its quality. It is not easy to sustain any editorial vision, especially a vision of balance. *Tradition*, as Rabbi Wurzburger conceived it, was to be a journal for the full range of Orthodox Jewish scholarly thinking. It was to be a sounding board, not necessarily for definitive perspective or halakhic decision. It was to present a literate, learned face of Orthodox Judaism, and allow for interchange and clarification.

There are risks in such an enterprise. To chart new ground, to explore fresh formulation, is always difficult; especially when the purpose is to sustain the unchanging, revealed Word of God. With an unusual degree of success, Rabbi Wurzburger nurtured the delicate balance from 1962 to 1987. He was temperamentally suited to his chosen task. A careful philosopher of strong convictions, he listens to views different from his own. A thinker committed to his own vision, an editor facilitating the vision of others, Rabbi Wurzburger gave *Tradition* the respect it enjoys today.

Appropriately enough, this festschrift in Rabbi Wurzburger's honor reflects the diversity of disciplines within Orthodox Jewish thought. It includes articles on philosophy and homiletics, polemics and exegesis, as well as analyses drawing upon scientific, medical, liturgical, and historical perspectives. Topics range from pressing issues of the day to eternal preoccupations of the Jew. It is more than serendipitous that one name more than any other crops up in various contexts in this festschrift—the name of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

Rabbi Wurzburger enjoyed a special relationship with the preeminent Rabbi Soloveitchik—the “Rav.” It is one of Rabbi Wurzburger's everlasting achievements to have secured for *Tradition* the Rav's first major publications in English, including arguably his

most important work in English, "The Lonely Man of Faith" (Spring, 1965). If the Rav has become a 20th-century thinker beyond Orthodox Jewish confines, the impetus stems from arrangements with the Rav that Rabbi Wurzburger sought, nurtured, and consummated in *Tradition*.

The travails and pressures brought to bear upon an editor, not to mention the endless details of printing production, test his mettle. Will his program survive, or surrender? Rabbi Wurzburger enabled *Tradition* not just to survive but to thrive. He galvanized well-established Orthodox Jewish voices and brought new voices to the fore. Now he has passed the reins of leadership to a seasoned rabbi and author, Emanuel Feldman.

Rabbi Wurzburger's capacities as pulpit rabbi in Boston, Toronto, and New York, professor of philosophy at Yeshiva University, counselor, and friend have enriched both the staff and the readers of *Tradition*. May God grant Rabbi Wurzburger blessings of sound mind and body until one-hundred-and-twenty.