

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

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Is Anything Wrong with Judaism?

— or —

WHAT HAPPENED TO ELIEZER?

IN ONE of the Jewish weekly papers there appeared some time ago an account of an earnest, young orthodox Jew, Eliezer, who was obliged to spend a night in Bellevue Hospital on account of his religious zeal. And it was his own Jewish brethren who put him there!

He had been standing outside of one of the largest Reform temples in New York City on the occasion of the New Year, Rosh Hashannah, and silently handing out leaflets to the people as they entered this place of worship. He was not a missionary trying to convert them to another faith, but just a simple, earnest, orthodox Jew who had strong feelings on the matter of Judaism, and what it should be.

His leaflets were so out-spoken and condemnatory of all who merely went to the temple or synagogue as a matter of form, but did not live by the precepts of their religion, that all he succeeded in doing was to arouse the ire of his fellow-Jews. The temple officials considered him a nuisance, pestering the people who were entering the synagogue and asked the police to remove him. As a result of his refusal to speak even to the police, he was lodged for the night in Bellevue Hospital. Here is the young man's story of the incident in his own words:

"I stood on the public sidewalk in front of the temple and silently passed out the papers to anyone who reached for them. There was

no disturbance, and none registered a complaint to me. Later I saw a temple official approach the policeman on the corner, and the latter came up to me and requested that I leave. When I continued silently to pass out the papers, he pushed me away. Again I returned and he then left me alone. By then there was a considerable crowd in front of the temple. The policeman now approached me very angrily and pushed and pulled me until I fell down, and when I rose he gripped both of my arms and started to squeeze so hard that I lost my breath and fell faint to the ground."

An ambulance then took him away, and when he came to, he found himself in the psychiatric ward of Bellevue Hospital!

THE CONTENTS OF THE LEAFLETS

What were the contents of the leaflets that so enraged the temple officials that they called for the police on one of the most holy days in the Jewish religious calendar? Did he blaspheme the name of God, or urge the people to keep away from the temple? Was he an atheist ridiculing religion, or a hated missionary? Let us read part of the contents of his leaflets to see what the matter was all about:

"TO MY PEOPLE"

"In this land of freedom, we can worship the Lord and follow the sabbath; no Torquemada to torture us into accepting another faith; no Hitler to throw us into the gas chambers. What did you do with your freedom? You used it to walk further and further away from the Lord, until today you can scarcely be recognized as the children of Israel....."

The voice of the Lord came unto me saying: Stand before the congregations of your people and declare their sins. They have forsaken my laws, they rebelled against me.... For me they have no time. They do not seek my ways. Cry out against their evil, so they may consider and amend their ways! You have kindled the wrath of the Lord. You have learned nothing from the fate of our 6,000,000 brethren. Your days in this land are numbered.

Eliezer, a Servant of the Lord."

WAS HE RIGHT?

For our part we are inclined to agree with a great deal of what this young man said. We are perfectly sure that God is not satisfied with elaborately designed buildings, magnificent Sefer Torahs decorated with expensive crowns of gold and precious stones, or even sweet-voiced hazans, engaged for special occasions to lead the prayers of the worshippers. He wants us to know the *contents* of the law, and to *live them*. Whether we be nominal Christians, or observing Jews, is exactly the same—a religion that means nothing more to us than to attend a place of worship at intervals, regular or irregular, and to carry out certain rites in our homes but makes no difference in our daily living and social contacts, is valueless, and cannot be pleasing to God. Long ago the prophets of Israel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the others condemned this same attitude toward the things of God. Read the strong words Isaiah used in his denunciation of Israel:

Hear the Word of the Lord ye rulers of Sodom, listen to the teaching of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. For what reason do I need your offerings of rams and fat beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of goats... your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. They are a trouble unto me. I weary to bear them, and when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you... Yes, when ye make many prayers I will not hear.

(Isaiah 1:10-15).

And what did the people do with Isaiah and the other prophets who insisted that there was more to religion than merely

What Say the Rabbis of Messiah?

Would you like to know why the 53rd chapter of Isaiah is not read in the Synagogues today and why the Rabbis have eliminated the reading of it from the Haftorah in the Sabbath services? Did you know that the Musaf Prayer of Yom Kippur corresponds almost word for word with Isaiah 53? Study this matter for yourself. For 5¢ in stamps you may have our folder, "An Astonishing Yom Kippur Prayer." Write us for it.

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL, 236 West 72nd Street, New York 23, N. Y.

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the carrying out of traditional ritual? They rejected them; they cast them out, and in some cases even stoned them to death! How dare the prophets—how dare this young man—condemn their piety as being useless, futile and even abhorrent to God? It is very convenient to have a religion that doesn't get under our skin, but allows us to live any kind of a life we choose to as long as we carry out blindly the customs we have been taught.

DOES GOD WANT RELIGION?

When we read the story of this earnest young man, Eliezer, we felt very sorry for him. There is no doubt that telling the truth, as he did, could have no other results. I am sure that he knew that the prophets of Israel that went before him preaching the same message were persecuted for the very same reason, for people do not change their ways very readily. They do things because others do them. I once asked a Jewish friend why he ate only kosher food, and fasted on the Day of Atonement. He answered that he did these things simply because it is a religious tradition and the custom of his people. "But why must *you* do it?" I insisted. And finally he admitted, "I do it because my father did it, his father did it, and his father did it before him, and also all good Jews do it." What a tragedy! There was to him no meaning in his religion, no moral force, no reaching out for God, only identity with a way of life!

DOES THIS DESCRIPTION FIT YOU?

How true it is that the same attitude is to be found in people of every religious faith. They just do things because they have been taught to do them, or because others do them. No, it is not *religion* God desires or that will save man or influence his life, but true faith, and we have to be sure that our religious practices are not a snare that is taking us further away from God, instead of nearer; not a substitute for the real thing.

On one occasion Jesus of Nazareth spoke very strongly to His Jewish brethren on this very subject, when He said:

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat... They say and do not... All their works they do for to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the bands of their garments (their talisim), and love the uppermost places of the feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi....

(Matthew 23:2-7).

Now we could well add to these words and say, "They are only interested in the meticulous observance of the customs of their fathers, and God is not in all their thoughts. They do these things because it gives them a sense of pride, of being Jews."

Eliezer was persecuted by his brethren because he told them the truth. Truth has never been popular. But he should know that others met the same and even a worse fate. The greater the truth the greater the indignation it arouses.

Jesus of Nazareth who came to teach, among other things, that faith in God and belief in His Word must be supreme, was crucified. The Jews rejected him because He condemned their hollow practices. Nor did the Gentiles, who worshipped idols and deified men, accept Him any more readily. They were in power; they crucified Him. His own people, the Jews, rejected Him, the Gentiles killed Him.

This is an easy out when our conscience tells us what we hear is true and we don't like it, we say, "Away with Him! Get rid of Him somehow!"

THE ONLY TRUE AND LIVING WAY.

One one occasion a great Jewish leader approached the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to Him at night. We can understand that, too. He wanted to speak to this One Who was the leader of a cause that seemed to be contrary to the accepted traditions of his people, but he was an honest enquirer. So he went by night, and we have a complete record of the interview he had at that time. What did he ask, and what was the answer he received? Let us read the story as we have it in the New Testament:

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you you of heavenly things?

(John 3:1-12).

It seems absurd, doesn't it? "Ye must be born again." What does it mean? Among other things it means simply this. We have to take from our minds all preconceived ideas of religious observance,

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known to Israel the truth
concerning the Messiah.

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Tuesday	2:45 P.M.—Women's Bible Class Children's Class 7:00 P.M.—Jewish Missionary Training Institute
Wednesday	7:00 P.M.—Bible Study Class, Fellowship
Thursday	7:00 P.M.—Jewish Missionary Training Institute

and our own views of what God wants, and we have to become like little children again. Then when God sees our willingness to accept the truth, and to walk in His ways, through His Holy Spirit, we receive a new birth, and having been born again we walk in newness of life. Then we can put the right value on the things that we should do for God. Then we get the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to enable us to live lives worthy of the faith we now have, because we have come to God in His way and on His terms. Then we surely will accept the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, on our behalf. Our sins will be cleansed and it will matter little to us what our friends and our relatives and our neighbors have to say about us, because we then know that our relationship with God is right. To Eliezer we would say, if he reads these words of ours, "Good, but not quite good enough. If you have seen so much of the truth, come all the way and you will be blessed of God."

To all who read these words we would say, also, trust not in your own thoughts or devices or customs, or even in your religion. Remember it is not all roads that lead to God. There is only one way, and that is through Him Who said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."—C.K.

והקמת
עליהם
רעה
אחד
יחוסאל 5"ר, 23

רעה ישראל

אנכי
הוא
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א מאנאטליך בלאט צו ערקלעהרען צו ישראל דעם אמת'דיגען משיח
— THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL —

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וואס איז מבוה יידישקייט?

אָדער
די מעשה שהיה מיט אליעזר

בעלי בתים? און זיי האָבן אזש געדארפן צו פארן שפארן א יידישן יינגעמאן אין משוגעים הויז? און צו באַרויבן א יידישן יינגען מאן פון זיין פריידי הייט, ספעציעל אין די ימים ייראים? צו דער צו איז דאָך דער יינגערמאן נישט קיין גאָט־לעסטערער, ער האָט דאָך נישט גע'דרשן'ט אַטעאיזם, נאָר ריין יידישקייט! לאָמיר לייענען א טייל פון דעם אינ-האַלט פון דעם ליפלעט וואָס האָט אזוי שטאַרק אויפגערגעגט אונזערע שול יידן: דער קאַפּ: „צו מייענע יידן.“ „אין דעם דאָזיקן לאַנד פון פרייהייט קענען מיר דינען אונזער גאָט אויף דעם אופן ווי מיר ווילן. עס גיבט דאָ נישט קיין האַרדיאָן קיסר צו צווינגען אונז מיר זאָלן אַרבעטן אום שבת, מיר האָבן דאָ אויך נישט טאָרסוואַמאָדאָ דער בלוי-טיקער מערדער פון שפּאַניע וועלכער האָט געצוואונ-גען יידן זיך צו שמד'ן. מיר האָבן דאָ נישט קיין היטלער, וועלכער זאָל אונז וואַרפן אין די גאָס קאָ-מערן. וואָס האָט איר געטאָן מיט אייער פרייהייט? איר האָט אויסגענוצט אייער פרייהייט צו אַוועק גיין ווייטער פון גאָט! היינט איז שוין שווער צו דערקענען אַז איר זייט די קינדער פון ישראל!“ „דער מעכטיקער קול פון גאָט איז צו מיר גע-קומען און אזוי געזאָגט: גיי און שטעל דיך פאר די יידישע קהילה און זאָג אַז זיי האָבן געזינדיקט. זיי האָבן פאַרלאָזט די געזעצן פון גאָט, זיי האָבן זיך צעבונטעוועט קעגן מיר! זיי האָבן קיין צייט נישט פאַר מיר, זיי זוכן נישט מער מייענע וועגן! גיי, און שריי אויס אין די גאַסן זייערע שלעכט-קייטן, כדי זיי זאָלן זיך פאַרטראַכטן און אויסבעסרן זייערע וועגן. איר האָט צעפלאַקערט גאַט'ס צאָרן, איר האָט גאָרנישט געלערנט פון דעם לעצטן חרבן פון זעקס מיליאָן יידישע קרושים, אונזערע ברידער. אליעזר, א דינער פון גאָט

נאכט אין דעם משוגעים־הויז. מיר גיבן דאָ איבער די געשיכטע פון אליעזר'ן אין זיין אייגענע שיל-דערונג. „איך בין געשטאַנען אויף דעם טראָטואַר לעבן דעם טעמפל, און האָב שטילערהייט אויסגעטיילט ליפלעטס צו יעדן וועלכער האָט נאָר פאַרלאָנגט; עס איז ניט פאַרגעקומען קיין שום גערודער, אָבער פּלוצלינג האָב איך דערזען אַ פּאָליציאַנט זיך דער-גענטערן און ער האָט מיך אויפגעפאַדערט צו פאַרלאָזן דעם פּלאַץ. אָבער ווען איך האָב אים אינגאָרירט און פאַרטגעזעצט מיין אויסטיילן די פּאַפּירן האָט ער מיך אַוועק געשטויסן בנ'וואַלט, אָבער איך בין צוריק געקומען און ווידער אויס-געטיילט מייענע פּראָקלאַמאַציעס. דאָן זיינען שוין געשטאַנען אַ שפּאַר ביסל מענטשן אַרום מיר, דער פּאָליציאַנט איז שוין ווידער דאָ! דאָס מאָל איז דער פּאָליציסט שוין געווען ביז, און האָט מיך געשטופּט און געשטויסן, ביז איך בין אנדער גע-פּאַלן, אָבער ווען איך האָב זיך אויפגעשטעלט האָט ער מיך אָנגעכאַפט ביי מייענע צוויי הענט און אזוי שטאַרק געקוועטשט אַז איך האָב גע'חלש'ט. איך בין שוין דאַמאָלס געפאַלן מאַכטלאָז צו דער ערד.“

אַן אַמבולאַנס האָט אים דאַמאָלס געמוזט אַוועק טראָגן, און ווען ער האָט זיך אויפגעכאַפט צום באַאווסטזיין איז ער ערשטוינט געוואָרן ווען ער האָט אויסגעפונען אַז ער געפינט זיך אין אַ הויז פון וואַהנזיניקע!

וועגן וואָס האָבן די ליפלעטס געשריבן?

וואָס איז געווען דער אינהאַלט פון די פּאַפּיר-לעך, וועלכעס האָט אזוי שטאַרק אויפגערגעגט די שול

אין אייגעם פון די יידישע צייטשריפטן אין אַמעריקא, איז מיט אַ קורצער צייט צוריק דער-שינען אַן אַרטיקל וועגן אַ יידישן אַרטאָדאָקסישן יינגען מאַן, וועלכער האָט געמוזט פאַרברענגען אַ גאַנצע נאַכט אין בעלוויי שפּיטאָל פאַר נערוון קראַנקע, בלויז דערפאַר וואָס ער איז שטרענג רע-ליגיעז, און די וועלכע האָבן אים דאָרט אַהין פאַרשיקט זיינען געווען זיינע אייגענע ברידער יידן! ער איז געשטאַנען אינדרויסן פון דער גרעסטער יידישער רעפּאָרם שול אין ניו יאָרק און האָט שטילערהייט געטיילט פּראָקלאַמאַציעס צו אַלע די וועלכע זיינען געגאַנגען אין דער שול דאַוונען. ער איז נישט געווען אַ מיסיאָנער, וועלכער האָט עמעצן צוגערעדט צו אַן אַנדער גלויבן, נאָר איז פשוט געווען אַ הייסער חסידישער יינגערמאַן, וועל-כער האָט אויסגעדריקט זיינע געפילן אין דער פּאַרם פון פּראָקלאַמאַציע־טיילונג. דאָס איז געשען אין די טעג פון ראש השנה, דאָס היינטיקע יאָר. די בלעטלעך, וועלכע ער האָט פונאַנדער גע-טיילט זיינען געווען אַ פּראָטעסט געגן די וועלכע גייען אין דער שול דאַוונען נאָר אַלס פּאַרם, אָבער אַלזוי איז מען נישט רעליגיעז. דאָס וועלן זיין פרום איין טאָג אין יאָר, האָט זיך געזאָגט אין די בלעטלעך, טויג נישט. יידישקייט איז אַ טאָג טעג ליכע זאָך, האָט געטענה'ט אליעזר אין זיינע בלעט-לעך.

זיין אַרבעט האָט אָבער אַרויס געברענגט די שול פירערס פון זייערע כלים, און זיי זיינען געוואָרן זייער ביז אויף אליעזר'ן. די שול פירערס האָבן אים באַטראַכט ווי אַן אָנשיקעניש רחמנא לצלון, פון וועמען מען דאַרף וואָס שנעלער פטור ווערן. זיי זיינען געגאַנגען און גערופן אַ פּאָליציי מאַן, און מען האָט אים געמאַכט צו שלאָפן אַ גאַנצע