

"A RESPONSE TO THE VIOLENCE OF OUR TIME"

or

"THE NEED FOR A LIVING LAW"

High Holiday sermon by
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WITHIN THE VAST LITERATURE KNOWN AS THE TALMUD, THERE IS A TRACTATE, A SMALL SECTION, KNOWN AS "PIRKE AVOT", OR "THE SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS". THIS SECTION INCLUDES A COLLECTION OF SOME OF THE GREAT TEACHINGS OF THE RABBIS OF TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO AND MORE. WHEN I STUDIED THIS TRACTATE IN RABBINICAL SCHOOL, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT ALL THE SAYINGS WERE SUBORDINATE TO ONE SPECIAL TEACHING. THIS SUMMARY STATEMENT READS THIS WAY, "THE WORLD RESTS ON THREE PILLARS, ON TORAH, ON REVERENCE, AND ON DEEDS OF MERCY". LET US CONSIDER THIS ROSH HASHONAH MORNING JUST THE FIRST OF THESE PILLARS ON WHICH THE WORLD STANDS, TORAH. WHEN OUR FATHERS USED THE WORD TORAH, THEY MEANT NOT ONLY THE BASIC CONCEPT OF LAW, BUT ALL OF THE DETAILED LAWS WHICH ARE ENUMERATED IN THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES THAT WE CALL THE TORAH. THE RABBIS UNDERSTOOD TORAH TO MEAN BOTH CIVIL LAW AND MORAL LAW. THE CONCEPT OF TORAH INCLUDED BOTH THE WRITTEN LAW AND THE LAW YET TO BE DERIVED ON THE BASIS OF NEW SITUATIONS AND NEEDS. FOR THE RABBIS IT WAS THE BASIS OF RELIGION AND OF GOVERNMENT.

AS JEWS WE ARE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED WITH MODERN ATTACKS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LAW. WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WARY OF THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT THEY ARE NOT CONCERNED WITH THE RULES OF SOCIETY OR WITH ITS NEEDS. JEWS HAVE HAD THEIR SHARE OF RADICALS, WITNESS THE PROPHETS. THEY HAVE HAD GREAT TEACHERS WHO OPPOSED THE "ESTABLISHMENT", WHO CRITICIZED KING AND PRIEST, EVEN UPON THREAT OF DEATH, BUT THOSE RADICALS WERE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LAW. THE COMPLAINT OF THE PROPHETS WAS THAT KING AND PRIEST HAD ACTED ABOVE THE LAW, THAT THEY HAD VIOLATED THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW. OUR GREATEST JEWISH REBELS HAVE USUALLY FOUGHT FOR THE TRIUMPH OF THE PROMISE IMPLICIT IN THE LAW. LIKE MARTIN LUTHER KING THE PROPHETS PROCLAIMED THEIR DREAMS OF THE ULTIMATE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW. THEY WERE OPPONENTS OF THE STATUS QUO OF THEIR DAY, BUT THEY WERE CHAMPIONS OF THE LAW.

IT IS IN THIS LIGHT THAT WE ATTEMPT TO ANALYZE TODAY THE GREAT THREAT WITHIN WESTERN SOCIETY TO THE SANCTITY OF LAW. ALL ABOUT US ARE SIGNS OF THIS THREAT, BOTH FROM THE POLITICAL RIGHT AND THE LEFT. RIDING THROUGH GEORGIA, YOU SEE THE SIGNS, "IMPEACH CHIEF

JUSTICE WARREN", AN ANTI-COURT SENTIMENT THAT NOW REVEALS ITSELF IN THE STRONG RESISTENCE TO THE NOMINATION OF THE FIRST JEW AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT. TO THE ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE OR REACTIONARY ANYONE WHO SPEAKS IN TERMS OF A GROWING LAW IS CONSIDERED A REVOLUTIONARY. FOR WARREN AND FORTAS, THE VALUE OF THE CONSTITUTION IS THAT ITS SPIRIT IS BROAD ENOUGH TO COVER AN EVER INCREASING RANGE OF HUMAN NEEDS. FOR WARREN AND FORTAS, WHITE PEOPLE ARE NOT THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE CIVIL RIGHTS. THIS INCLUSION OF THE BLACK MAN WITHIN THE PROTECTION OF THE LAW IS A THREAT TO THOSE WHO HAVE ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THE LAW TO MEAN FREEDOM FOR WHITES AND PROTECTION AGAINST NEGROES. THE SAME FUNDAMENTALISTS WHO SING, "GIVE ME THAT OLD TIME RELIGION, IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME", ARE SINGING, "GIVE ME THAT OLD INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW, IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME". THE TRUTH, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE LAW AS WELL AS RELIGION, CANNOT SURVIVE AT ALL UNLESS MEN SEEK TO USE IT IN THE SERVICE OF AN EVER INCREASING KNOWLEDGE. THE TALMUD*, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD AS AN EXPANSION OF THE LAW OF THE TORAH.

WHILE SOME AMERICANS ARE BITTER OPONENTS OF THE ATTEMPT TO EXPAND THE MEANING OF THE LAW, OTHERS ARE SEEKING TO GET THEMSELVES EXEMPTED FROM THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LAW. SOME OF THE LATTER ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED BY THE LAW IN THE PAST, AND THEY ARE SUSPICIOUS OF A LAW ADMINISTERED BY THOSE WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY MISUSED IT. TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, SOME OF THE NEWLY MILITANT NEGROES. THEY HAVE SAID TO THOSE OF US ON THE DADE COUNTY EQUAL OPPORTUNITY BOARD, "WE WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE US THE MONEY TO SPEND IN THE NEGRO COMMUNITY. WE DON'T WANT ANY WHITE PEOPLE TELLING US HOW TO SPEND THE MONEY, AND THAT INCLUDES THIS BOARD". "SINCE THE NEGRO IS THE ONE IN NEED", THEY TELL US, "HE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO SPEND IT THE WAY HE WANTS, EVEN IF HE MAKES SOME MISTAKES IN DOING IT". WHAT THESE MORE MILITANT NEGRO LEADERS ARE SAYING IS, "WE HAVE BEEN DENIED RESPONSIBILITY AND POWER ALL THESE LONG YEARS. WE HAVE NOT BEEN THE BENEFICIARY OF THE RULES. NOW WE WANT TO ADMINISTER THE RULES WITHOUT SUPERVISION FROM THOSE OUTSIDE OUR COMMUNITY AND WITHOUT REGARD TO THE LETTER OF THE LAW". THE QUESTION HERE IS WHETHER THOSE SUFFERING REAL ANGUISH FROM VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW IN THE PAST HAVE THE RIGHT TODAY TO BE EXEMPTED FROM THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LAW. THE ANSWER, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS IN THE NEGATIVE. HOPE FOR THE NEGRO LIES IN HIS BEING INCLUDED WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF AMERICAN LAW AS A FULL AND EQUAL PARTNER. THERE IS NO HOPE FOR THE NEGRO OR FOR ANYONE ELSE IN THAT SHADOWY AREA BEYOND THE LAW. HOPE FOR THE NEGRO LIES IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS PROHIBITING

*THAT GREAT CORPUS OF LAWS, CASE DISCUSSIONS, AND LEGAL AND RELIGIOUS COMMENTARIES, DEVELOPED BY THE JEWS FROM BIBLICAL TIMES IN TO SEVERAL CENTURIES OF THE COMMON ERA.

DISCRIMINATION IN HIRING. HOPE LIES FOR HIM IN THE NEW LAWS PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION IN THE RENTING OF APARTMENTS AND IN THE SALE OF HOMES. THOSE OF US WHO PRETEND TO BE SUPPORTERS OF THE LAW MUST MAKE CERTAIN THAT WE ARE NOT PICKING THOSE LAWS WE WANT TO OBEY AND THOSE WE WANT TO VIOLATE.

Protest From the Young

IT MUST NOT BE SUPPOSED THAT THE MILITANT NEGRO IS THE ONLY ONE IN OUR SOCIETY SEEKING THE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF BEING EXEMPTED FROM CERTAIN KINDS OF RULES. SOME OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ALSO SEEKING THIS KIND OF PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT. ALL OF US WERE SICKENED BY THE SPECTACLE THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE STREETS OF CHICAGO DURING THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION. WE CANNOT CONDONE THE EXCESSIVE VICIOUSNESS OF THE CHICAGO POLICE, WHO CLEARLY WERE OVERREACTING TO THE THREAT OF A MOB SET ON DISTURBING THE CONVENTION. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR EVIL TO BE DONE IN THE NAME OF THE LAW, AND I BELIEVE THAT MANY CRIMINAL ACTS WERE PERFORMED BY SOME POLICE ON THAT SHAMEFUL EVENING. TO USE THE LAW UNJUSTLY IS TO UNDO THE LAW. SOME OF THE POLICE ENJOYED SWINGING THEIR BILLIES A LITTLE TOO MUCH. WE DON'T WANT TO OVERLOOK THE PROBLEM OF POLICE BRUTALITY WHICH EXISTS IN SO MANY CITIES. (PERHAPS, MIAMI IS NOT WITHOUT ITS PROBLEMS IN THIS REGARD). NONETHELESS, WE HAVE A RIGHT TO BE DISTURBED BY SOME OF THE THINGS THAT WENT ON ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE IN THE CHICAGO POLITICAL RIOT.

IT IS NOW COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT THE F.B.I. HAD INFORMATION THAT SEVERAL KNOWN MURDERERS WERE EN ROUTE TO CHICAGO JUST AT CONVENTION TIME. THEY HAD CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT SOME OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE MOB WERE GOING TO TRY TO CREATE A RIOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF TYING UP THE CONVENTION, AND, PERHAPS, INFLUENCING ITS RESULTS. A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF DEADLY WEAPONS WERE CULLED FROM THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MARCH. THE MOB, IN FACT, HELD UP TRAFFIC IN THE STREETS SUFFICIENTLY TO MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR CONVENTIONEERS TO GET TO THE HALL TO CARRY ON THEIR BUSINESS. THERE IS NO LAW ON THE BOOKS OF CHICAGO OR IN THE UNITED STATES WHICH AUTHORIZES A MOB TO BLOCK THE STREETS WITHOUT A PREARRANGED LICENSE. CLEARLY, THE MOB KNEW IT WAS IN VIOLATION OF THE LAW, AND IT CHEERFULLY SET ABOUT TO EMBARRASS THE POLICE. IT SUCCEEDED BEYOND ITS WILDEST HOPES.

THE MOB SCENE IN CHICAGO TIES IN, I THINK, WITH THE MOB SCENE AT : COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY WHERE HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS TOOK OVER THE PROPERTY OF THE UNIVERSITY AND DEMANDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION FOLLOW THE WISHES OF THE STUDENTS. NOW, UNLAWFUL SEIZURE OF PROPERTY IS NO SMALL CRIME IN OUR SOCIETY. THE COLUMBIA STUDENTS

WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS LARCENY WERE NOT AT THAT TIME TOO MUCH CONCERNED WITH THE LAW, YET THEY LATER COMPLAINED LOUD AND LONG, WHEN THE POLICE DETERMINEDLY REMOVED THEM. THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS, THE STUDENTS SAID, HAD BEEN VIOLATED. THEY WERE NOT CONCERNED WITH THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF THE UNIVERSITY. IT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN THAT THE STUDENTS OF COLUMBIA HAD SOME REAL COMPLAINTS AGAINST THEIR UNIVERSITY, BUT THE VIRTUE OF THESE COMPLAINTS, IT SEEMS TO ME, CANNOT BE FAIRLY TESTED IN THE SHOW OF FORCE WHICH THE STUDENTS SET IN MOTION.

SOME OF YOU MAY THINK THAT THE WIDESPREAD ATTACKS ON THE LAW, WHETHER IN AMERICA OR ABROAD, ARE ISOLATED EVENTS. THIS IS NOT ENTIRELY SO. I DO NOT THINK THERE IS A CLOSELY ARRANGED INTERNATIONAL CONSPIRACY, BUT I THINK WE OUGHT TO BE AWARE THAT THERE IS A GROWING ALLEGIANCE AMONGST THE YOUNG INTELLECTUAL AVANT GARDE TO CERTAIN PHILOSOPHERS AND THEIR THEORIES OF ACTION THROUGH VIOLENCE. THE CHIEF PROPHET OF THE NEW VIOLENCE IS HERBERT MARCUSE, A SEVENTY YEAR OLD PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA. DR. MARCUSE BELIEVES IN THREE MAIN VIEWS: FIRST, HE BELIEVES THAT THE KIND OF ACTION SUPREMELY REQUIRED TO CHALLENGE THOSE WHO ARE IN AUTHORITY IN MODERN SOCIETY IS VIOLENCE. "ONLY VIOLENCE", HE CONTENTS, "WILL FORCE OFFICIAL SOCIETY TO DROP THE SMILING MASK OF TOLERANCE AND REVEAL ITS INNER VICIOUSNESS". LET US CONSIDER THIS STATEMENT AGAINST WHAT HAPPENED IN CHICAGO DURING THE TIME OF THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION. DR. MARCUSE HOLDS THAT, "ONLY VIOLENCE WILL FORCE THE OFFICIAL SOCIETY TO REVEAL ITS INNER VICIOUSNESS". IF WE ARE TO ASSUME THAT A SMALL CORE OF THE MOB IN CHICAGO HAD JUST THIS PURPOSE IN MIND, THAT IS, TO BAIT THE POLICE, THEN, THE CHICAGO POLICE WERE JUST PAWNS IN THEIR HANDS.

ANOTHER TEACHER OF THE NEW VIOLENCE (FRANTZ FANON) WRITES, "VIOLENCE IS A CLEANSING FORCE. IT FREES THE NATIVE FROM HIS INFERIORITY COMPLEX AND FROM HIS DESPAIR AND INACTION: IT MAKES HIM FEARLESS AND RESTORES HIS SELF RESPECT.. VIOLENCE ALONE... MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR THE MASSES TO UNDERSTAND SOCIAL TRUTHS". IN THE LIGHT OF THIS TEACHING, YOU CAN SEE WHY A VERY FEW NEGRO MILITANTS LIKE STOKELY CARMICHAEL AND RAPP BROWN CALL FOR VIOLENCE TO STIMULATE AND FUSE THEIR PEOPLE. MOST NEGROES FEAR A RESORT TO VIOLENCE AND WANT HELP AGAINST VIOLENCE-SEEKERS, EVEN IF THEY ARE BLACK.

WE CAN SAY THAT MARCUSE IS AGAINST ALL THOSE WHO ARE IN POWER WHETHER THEY BE CAPITALISTS OR COMMUNISTS, AND HIS HOPES REST IN ALL THOSE WHO ARE "OUT" OF POWER - THE YOUNG, THE NEGROES, THE POOR. AT THE SORBONNE, THE PARIS UNIVERSITY, DURING THE RECENT

STUDENT RIOT IN FRANCE, THE FOLLOWERS OF MARCUSE POSTED A MANIFESTO WHICH READ IN PART, "THE REVOLUTION THAT HAS BEGUN CALLS INTO QUESTION NOT ONLY CAPITALIST SOCIETY BUT ALSO INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION AS A WHOLE. THE SOCIETY OF CONSUMPTION MUST DIE A VIOLENT DEATH. WE WANT A NEW AND ORIGINAL WORLD. WE REJECT A WORLD IN WHICH THE CERTAINTY THAT YOU WILL NOT DIE OF STARVATION IS ACQUIRED IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RISK OF DYING OF BOREDOM". AS YOU KNOW, THIS PULPIT HAS OFTEN CRITIZED MODERN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY THAT SEEMS TO SMOTHER THE FEELINGS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS SOCIETY ROARS TOWARD GREATER EFFICIENCY. NONETHELESS, ONE WONDERS WHETHER THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL, IN A FREE SOCIETY LIKE OURS, CAN EVER BE SERVED BY A RESORT TO VIOLENCE. THERE ARE CERTAIN DANGERS IMPLICIT IN ANY RESORT TO FORCE. NONETHELESS, IT WAS ONLY YESTERDAY THAT THE REV. WILLIAM CLOANE COFFIN OF YALE UNIVERSITY GAVE A SERMON IN WHICH HE SAID, "...AMERICA IS NOW RESISTANT TO CHANGE...HAVING PRETTY MUCH FAILED THE TRIAL BY SPIRIT, YOU MAY FIND THE TRIAL BY BLOOD HAS BEGUN".

THE FIRST PREMISE OF DR. MARCUSE IS THAT VIOLENCE ALONE CAN EFFECTIVELY CHALLENGE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY. HIS SECOND PREMISE IS THAT FREE SPEECH IS NO VIRTUE. HE ENCOURAGES HIS FOLLOWERS TO SUPPRESS VIEWS WITH WHICH THEY DISAGREE AND TO HOWL DOWN THOSE WHO EXPRESS SUCH VIEWS. IT IS IN THE LIGHT OF THIS CREED THAT WE CAN LOOK AT THOSE STUDENTS WHO HAVE SHAMELESSLY TRIED TO HOWL DOWN SOME OF AMERICA'S MOST RESPECTED PERSONALITIES. NO DOUBT, YOU READ IN YOUR PAPERS ON FRIDAY MORNING OF THOSE STUDENTS IN BOSTON (THE ACADEMIC CENTER OF AMERICA) WHO GREETED VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY WITH NAZI JEERS OF SIEG-HEIL! WHAT HAPPENED IN BOSTON IS A REMINDER THAT THE OPPOSITION TO FREE SPEECH IS A FEATURE OF ALL RADICAL MOVEMENTS. I MIGHT ADD THAT IT IS ALSO A FEATURE OF INTELLECTUAL ARROGANCE, WHETHER OF THE LEFT OR RIGHT.

THE THIRD PREMISE OF DR. MARCUSE AND HIS FOLLOWERS AROUND THE WORLD IS THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO GAIN POWER, BUT IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO HAVE A SPECIFIC PROGRAM OR SPECIFIC GOALS. THE IMPORTANT THING NOW, DR. MARCUSE CONTENDS, IS TO TANTALIZE THOSE IN POWER. ONCE POWER IS GAINED, THERE IS TIME ENOUGH TO DEFINE GOALS. IT IS IN THE LIGHT OF THIS TEACHING THAT WE MUST LOOK AT THE STUDENT RIOTS WHICH SO ENDANGERED FRANCE IN RECENT MONTHS. THE NEW YORK TIMES IN REPORTING ON THE RIOTS SAID, "THE MARCHERS DID NOT FLY THE RED FLAG OF COMMUNISM...THEY FLEW THE BLACK FLAG OF ANARCHY".

The Real Tragedy

THE TRAGEDY OF THE BLIND AND WILD RESORT TO VIOLENCE ON THE PART OF DISSIDENT FORCES IN AMERICA AND AROUND THE WORLD IS THAT THE VIOLENCE WILL CERTAINLY NOT BENEFIT THOSE WHO ARE PRESENTLY SUFFERING INJUSTICE. ONCE VIOLENCE SETS IN, IT IS NOT THE STUDENTS, THE NEGROES, AND THE POOR WHO WILL BENEFIT, BUT THOSE WHO BEST KNOW HOW TO USE VIOLENCE. IT IS CLEAR THAT WHEN VIOLENCE BREAKS OUT IN A NEGRO GHETTO, FOR EXAMPLE, A FEW WHITES MAY BE KILLED, BUT MANY, MANY, MORE NEGROES ARE KILLED. ONCE THE TOOLS OF VIOLENCE ARE USED, THOSE WITH THE BIGGEST GUNS AND THE LEAST RESTRICTIONS ON USING THEM ARE THOSE WHO TRIUMPH. VIOLENCE CANNOT BE THE WAY TO VICTORY FOR THE IDEALISTS AND FOR THOSE WHO HAVE JUST CAUSE TO WISH FOR CHANGES IN SOCIETY. THEIR GREATEST HOPE LIES WITHIN THE LAW AND WITHIN THAT DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WHICH PERMITS AND ENCOURAGES CHANGES IN THE LAW TO ELIMINATE INEQUITIES. IT IS TO THIS WHEEL THAT THE TRUE REVOLUTIONARY OUGHT TO APPLY HIS SHOULDER.

FINALLY, LET ME ASK THAT NOTHING I HAVE SAID THIS MORNING BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT I BELIEVE THE GREAT DANGER IN AMERICA LIES ON THE POLITICAL LEFT. ON THE CONTRARY, THE LEFT HAS ALWAYS BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH LIBERAL PROGRESS IN AMERICA. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF LEFT. THERE IS THE LEFT THAT BELIEVES IN CONSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS AND THE SANCTITY OF LAW, AND THAT "OTHER LEFT" THAT BELIEVES IN THE MYSTICAL GLORY OF VIOLENCE.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS MY BELIEF THAT THE GREATEST DANGER IN AMERICA IS ON THE FAR RIGHT. TO ME, THE GREAT CAUSE FOR CONCERN ABOUT THE NEW LEFT IS THAT IT WILL SUPPLY THE FAR RIGHT ^{with} AN EXCUSE TO GAIN POWER. FORMER PRESIDENT EISENHOWER HAS WARNED US THAT THE GREATEST DANGER TO AMERICA IS "THE ALLIANCE OF THE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX WITH THE MILITARISTS". THIS IS A RIGHTEST ALLIANCE. THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY, WHICH LINES UP ON THE FAR RIGHT OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, BELIEVES IN THE WORDS OF ITS FOUNDER. "...THE GREATEST ENEMY OF MAN, IS, AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN, GOVERNMENT." MR. WELCH WANTS TO DO AWAY WITH THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT/^{Based on law} AND TO ESTABLISH HIMSELF OR SOMEONE HE LIKES AS THE NEW LEADER. RECENTLY, ONE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES OPENLY CAME OUT WITH AN INVITATION TO THE BIRCHITES TO JOIN HIM. IT IS PRECISELY THIS KIND OF CANDIDATE WHOM AMERICA HAS MOST CAUSE TO FEAR, AND HIS POLITICAL POSITION IS DEFINITELY ON THE FAR RIGHT, LINKED WITH THE MILITARY.*

*SINCE THIS TALK WAS GIVEN THIS CANDIDATE HAS NAMED AN OUTSTANDING MILITARY HAWK AS HIS VICE-PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE.

IT IS INTERESTING THAT BOTH THE NEW LEFT AND THE BIRCHITES ARE ATTACKING THE GOVERNMENT. BOTH THE NEW LEFT AND THE FAR RIGHT SEEK "FREEDOM", BY WHICH THEY MEAN FREEDOM TO DO WHAT THEY WANT WITHOUT THE LIMITATIONS OF A HUMANITARIAN LAW. IN THIS CONNECTION, LET US THINK AGAIN OF THE TEACHING OF THE TALMUD WHICH SAYS, "WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE WITHOUT IT MEN WOULD SWALLOW EACH OTHER ALIVE", AND, AGAIN, THE DICTUM, "THE WORLD STANDS ON THREE THINGS,...THE FIRST OF WHICH IS LAW".

I WOULD BE SUSPICIOUS OF ANYONE WHO THINKS THAT OUR SOCIETY IS 100% PERFECT AND NOT REQUIRING IMPORTANT CHANGES. I WOULD ALSO BE SUSPICIOUS OF ANYONE WHO SAYS THAT OUR SOCIETY IS TOTALLY DECADENT AND DYING. CLEARLY, SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ARE NEEDED IN OUR SOCIETY TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT ALL OF ITS SEGMENTS SHARE IN ITS ADVANTAGES. A RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED PERSON WILL WANT TO WORK FOR THOSE CHANGES WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED AND WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN AMERICA ARE SUFFERING EACH AND EVERY MOMENT BECAUSE OF OUR SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS IN THE PAST. LET NOT OUR APPRECIATION OF THE SANCTITY OF LAW DILUTE OUR ZEAL IN WORKING FOR THE REDRESS OF LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCES. LET US NEVER HIDE BEHIND THE LAW AS AN EXCUSE NOT TO SEE THAT EVERYONE HAS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION, HOUSING, AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES. THE LAW, THE TORAH, IF YOU WILL, OF ANY SOCIETY, MUST BE NOT ONLY A FOUNDATION, IT MUST ALSO BE A SPRINGBOARD. WE PRAY THAT WE MAY COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN THE LAW SERVES ONLY THE PAST, IT INVITES REVOLT.

OUR PRAYER BOOK CALLS THE TORAH A "TORAT CHAYIM", A LIVING LAW. LET US, WHO ARE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO DWELL IN THIS DEMOCRACY, LABOR TO SEE THAT THE LAWS OF AMERICA ARE LIVING LAWS, GIVING EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FULL LIFE TO ALL AMERICANS. ONLY THEN WILL AMERICA EXPERIENCE THAT TRANQUILITY OF WHICH THE FOUNDING FATHERS DREAMED.