

A minority must fear inaction, but even more it must surely avoid misguided action, though such action may be motivated by the best of intentions. A Jewish minority should never resort to crooked, unethical means to benefit their cause. They forget that with every devious method they actually deny the purity and the godliness of their cause. They will reject every dishonorable act and will regard deviation from truth and honesty as a violation of its sanctity: כל עשה אלה כל עשה עול "For it is an abomination to God whoever does this, whoever acts dishonestly" (Deut. 25, 16).

We criticize that action which, trusting in the godliness of its cause, leaves its future entirely to God. But when faced with the choice of using improper methods, inactivity is a virtue. והיתה מנחתו כבוד ("and his resting place shall be honor"—Isaiah 11,10). Once we have reached the limits of honesty and straightforwardness, let us entrust our future to God.

"Only by dutiful righteousness shall you establish yourself! Keep away from injustice, because you have nothing to fear, and from confusion, because it shall not come near you. Behold, nothing will have even a fleeting existence without Me; whoever dwells beside you will ultimately fall to you. Behold, I have created the master that blows the fire of coals and brings forth a tool for his work. . . . A tool that is forged against you shall not succeed, and every tongue that rises against you in judgment you shall charge with injustice. This is the destiny of the servants of God, and whose dutiful faithfulness stems from Me, says God."

—Isaiah 54, 14–17

There is one other particular danger which is to be feared by a Jewish minority. It is what we would like to call a certain intellectual

narrow-mindedness. This danger becomes especially acute the more closely a minority clings to its cause and the more anxious it is to preserve that cause. We have already pointed out that, by virtue of its weak position, a minority depends for its survival on whether it can further and foster within all its members the spirit of the cause it represents. In order to prevail, a minority must be wholly imbued with the truth for which it stands. We have already noted that such intensive spiritual concern with its cause is the essential prerequisite for the minority's survival and have hailed this concern as the most significant advantage that a truth stands to gain when its guardians constitute a minority.

However, precisely such complete dedication to its cause may easily lead the minority into intellectual one-sidedness. This may well stunt to a degree the development of the minority's unique intellectual life. Furthermore, it may make that minority incapable of representing its cause effectively to the outside world. Thus, such one-sidedness in a minority may do grave damage to the very cause that the minority seeks to preserve and to promote. The richer the minority's cause, the more will the minority treasure it. But then it may easily come to regard all other knowledge in "outside" domains as unnecessary, or even as utterly worthless. It may reject all intellectual activity in any field outside its own as an offense against its own cause, as an inroad upon the devotion properly due to that cause and an infringement on its prerogatives.

Such a one-sided attitude does not stop at mere disregard for other intellectual endeavors. Once this attitude has taken hold in a Jewish minority, that minority will be unable to form a proper judgment and a true image of those intellectual pursuits which are not cultivated in its own ranks but pursued mainly by its opponents. Then, as a result of simple ignorance, the minority will begin to fear that which at first it merely neglected out of disdain. Consequently the minority will begin to suspect the existence of an intrinsic close relationship between these "outside" intellectual pursuits and those principles to which the Jewish minority stands in opposition.

Indeed, the minority may come to regard these "outside" pursuits in themselves as the roots of the spiritual error which it deplors in the majority. Eventually it may reach a point where it will fearfully shun all intellectual endeavors other than those directly related to its own philosophy as an enemy of its cause and as a threat to the purity and

loyalty of its adherents. Rather, it has cause to regard all truth, wherever it may be found on the outside, as a firm ally of its own cause, since all truth stems from the same Master of truth. Finally, the minority should not regard all disciplines that are compatible with its own principles as enemies. The cause represented by a Jewish minority is not purely theoretical but also involves the practical life of its adherents. It demands the dedication of all aspects of life to the realization of its principles. It can have real, true existence only to the extent to which it can mold and dominate the most varied facets of everyday living. Thus, it is only natural that such a minority must attach maximum importance to the realization of its principles in practice. Indeed, it will have to recognize its adherents by the extent to which the latter fashion their lives in accordance with its principles.

The approaching Maccabean festival is a luminous illustration of the vital, decisive, historic role of the Jewish minority in our history. No matter how dangerous these times are for our minority, or how threatening the pitfalls we face, how serious the trials before us, or how precipitous the mountains ahead may seem, we will prevail. Those impressed by overwhelming numbers and superior power may be tempted to join the enemies of Torah. But we must always remember that when God kindled in the remnant of Israel the wish to rebuild His Sanctuary following the Babylonian exile, He called out to the leaders of this smallest of all minorities: *כי אם ברוחי*, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit" (Zechariah 4, 6). These words are emphasized by our prophet to help us appreciate the full significance of the Maccabean festival, which celebrates the triumph of a small group, a minority, over a majority that exulted in its alien culture, its power, its influence and its sheer numbers. God sends this call also to the faithful in our own day. And if they will live in the spirit of this Divine summons, they will be able to avoid the pitfalls and to climb the most inaccessible heights. — *מי אתה הר הגדול*, "who are you, O great mountain . . . you who will become a plain"—(v. 7). Even if the faithful should succeed in contributing no more than one single stone to the structure that is to rise again, let them remember that even Zerubbabel was bidden to bring only one stone, the main cornerstone *הראשון*, *והרביעי* *אח האבן הראשון*, but that this one first stone, placed in such a spirit, was promised an abundance of blessed grace, *תשאור חן חן לה*, "with exclamation of, Grace, grace to it!"

תשאור חן חן לה!