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Believe not those who say . . . , 1941.

"BELIEVE NOT THOSE WHO SAY...."

The Need for Tough-mindedness in a Rumor-Ridden World

By
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

At
The Temple

On
Sunday morning, November 23, 1941

During excavations in Pompey, the following inscription was found -- "They say. What do they say? Let them say." I would suggest that that is a good thing to inscribe on the doorposts of all of our minds.

Never was an age so rumor-ridden as ours. Whenever men's apprehensions are great, in times of war, in times of disaster, when men fear greatly, or when men hope greatly, they become easy prey to rumor, to propaganda, to reports of the most fantastic sort. It is at those times that the rumor-monger, the demagogue, the rabble-rouser enjoys a real holiday.

Ours is such an age.

When you add to this the fact that powerful governments today regard the spreading of rumor, of lies, half-truths, which we call propaganda, as a legitimate and most important weapon of total war, submarines, tanks, and are spending for the spreading of rumor, half-truths, whole lies, not millions, but hundreds of millions of dollars, you will realize how serious is the attack which is being made today upon the integrity of the human intellect. How grave is the danger to the poise, the equilibrium of the human mind. Our channels of information are being deliberately polluted, and this pollution is endangering the mental health of the human race.

There isn't today a newspaper in any of the axis countries, or the axis dominated countries, which is today practically the whole of Europe -- I say there isn't a newspaper which is not a vehicle of the dissemination of lies and distortion. All vital news is today fabricated, official communiques. Even in democratic countries ⁱⁿ many sections, the public press is definitely biased to that which is presented as objective information.

There is hardly a textbook in many totalitarian countries today on the social sciences, economics, sociology, history, psychology, anthropology that hasn't been rewritten to accommodate itself to a party line. History has been recast to bring it into conformity, to agreement to the particular party in control. Radios blare twenty-four hours a day with hearkenings of misinformation, stuffing the years of men with false reports. That is a menace to the minds of the race. There is an additional menace.

Truth can be cool, and calm and objective. Truth speaks for itself and appeals to the logical mind of men. A lie is calculated deliberately to incite, to arouse, to impassion, to influence him. Cunning political propagandists understand that. The most cunning of all of them, Hitler, said in his book, "Mein Kampf": "Generating power of great change is not so much insight as hysteria." If you want to bring about great change, don't depend upon insight; count upon arousing and creating hysteria among people. So that in this propaganda-ridden age of ours, men are not only being misinformed, but emotionally roiled, agitated, confounded. And men cannot think clearly when emotionally disturbed. In such an agitated mood men become frightfully sensitive. of clear thinking. They become intolerant / They become suspicious of it, as if it were a secret assault, a covert assault or attack, as something conspiratorial. I suspect that some day our age will be known as the "Lying Age", or the "Age of the Unbridled Tongue", or the "Age of auto-intoxication", or "self-stupefaction". Our age will be known as the time when mankind having conquered illiteracy, succumbed to fabrication.

Now in the past, men have been amply warned about listening to rumor, scandal, gossip, or about indulging in them. It has become part of the private moral code of people. Only in recent years has it

become imperative to warn men of listening to gossip, rumor and scandal emanating from public sources, from parties, groups, from the government, itself. Why the guilt and the shameless extravaganza of group mendacity far exceeds anything that the private individual has ever been guilty of.

Now in the Bible the rumor-monger is known as the man of "unclean lips"; rumor is known as "the evil tongue", or the "lying tongue". One of the Ten Commandments was set aside to warn against the spreading of false reports: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor"... "Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile." The Rabbis went even further and said: "The man who repeats falsehoods, half-truths is as if he denied the existence of God." "Rumor-mongering", they said, "is a greater sin than murder, incest or idolatry". "The rumor-monger is to be shunned as a leper. God and he cannot live in the same world. He will have no portion in the world to come."

And as if anticipating our modern age and propaganda-ridden age and world in which groups ~~associations~~ and political parties seek to establish themselves in power or to seize power or to exploit by poisoning the mind of the people -- the twelfth Psalm which I read to you this morning, calls attention to those kinds of people -- those who say: "We will make ourselves great by our tongue. Our lips are with us. Who can be our master?" That beautiful twelfth Psalm warns against these people: "God's words, the true words, are pure words -- like silver refined in a furnace -- purified seven-fold." That is the way a spoken word, a responsible word of a group of men, and particularly of government, must be. "The pure word, refined in a furnace, purified seven-fold."

The Nazis came into power by way of the lying tongue. They lied about the last war. They lied as to why Germany lost the war. They lied about themselves and their misfortunes after the war. They lied about the Jews. They lied about race. They lied about history. They concocted a lying program which promised all things to all men and which they had no intention of carrying out and which they scrapped the moment they came into power. They lied about sovietism and bolshevism as the enemies of the human race. Then they made friends with it. They lied to every country and broke every pledge and treaty they made with them. They spread their lies all over the earth in order to disrupt countries, in order to disunite them, in order to make them easy prey to their domination.

The supreme example of colossal mendacity that mankind has ever known is the Nazi Regime in the last ten years. And many have been taken in by these lying powers. Many have been taken in by their talk... about new order and the wave of the future.

Now is the time to warn people -- "Believe not those who say" that the Nazi revolution represents a new order. The French Revolution did represent the wave of the future. It is true the French Revolution was guilty of many excesses. The French Revolution might have succeeded without those excesses. The French Revolution came as a great emancipatory, liberating movement to end feudalism, to free man from the forces of tyranny. It freed them. It came to emancipate the human mind, to appeal to one's reason. And so there arose the cry "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"

But this fake new order which the Nazis and Fascists introduced brings no liberation to mankind. It shackles and enslaves people. It enslaves nations which are conquered. It enslaves the individuals both of the vanquished and the victorious nations. It appeals not to reason, but to hysteria.

Believe not those who say that the Nazis world system is the system of the future, that this new system is being brought about by its forces invincible. Something has happened to their invincible forces on the steppes of Russia. Something is happening to them in Lybia. The best they can hope for is a stale-mate for these invincible forces.

Believe not those who say that God is on the side of the strongest battalions. That is a Prussian lie. In the long run, in the last analysis, God is on the side of those people who can draw from their inexhaustible reservoirs of spiritual righteousness.

Believe not those who say that democracy is thoroughly played out and that this war will so regiment democracies that they themselves will unknowingly become dictatorships. That is more cunning propaganda. Exactly the same thing was said in the last war, but out of the last war great democracies arose, not dictatorships, but even finer and stronger democracies such as England, France, the United States and numerous other democracies.

It is only defeat that will destroy democracies. All democratic forms of government can and will change. They always have changed. It is the genius of democracy that can make it change without breaking, that makes it more responsible, more efficient.

As long as the people in a democracy cherish freedom, fight for freedom, as long as they retain the right to vote, and the conviction that opposition must be tolerated, as long as they believe in the right

of free assembly, free expression of thought, they are secure in the democratic way of life. They can permit their chosen leaders all the power which they require.

Believe not those who say that there always will be war. What is the use of being involved in this war? It is always the case of dog eat dog. Peace is only a pause. Life is the will to power. Look at the last war! Look at the failure of the League! It is going to happen again. Why do anything about this war? Believe not those who say this. This is defeatism. This is sacrilege.

For shall we not continue day after day and month after month and year after year to fight disease just because there has always been sickness in the world in spite of medical science, hospitals? Men and women still suffer from diseases. Shall we stop the fight on disease? Shall we stop searching for ways of fighting against disease. Can we not reduce the incidents of war? Are there no war preventatives? Is there no war prophylaxis? Is the fact that one failure was fatal take place and to the world indicative that another failure will/be fatal? Where is it written. Who dares to prophesy such doom for mankind?

Believe not those who say that nothing is involved in this war, that England is as guilty as Germany, that its communities are as totalitarian as the Nazis. No nation is without guilt. But no past sins of one belligerent can be used to extirpate the present sins and the present guilt of Hitlerism. Hitler and Hitlerism must be destroyed before any rectification anywhere in the world can take place. A victory for Hitler will mean a collapse into barbarism. A victory over Hitler means another chance to build for a free, organized and peaceful world.

Believe not those who say that over-populated countries need room to expand. That is a fraud. It is one of those attractive arguments

which turns out to be a fraud. Those who conquer other lands do so not in order to settle their populations. They do so in order to exploit the native populations of the country. While at home they continue not to reduce their population, but to accelerate their population. The Germans had colonies before the last war in which to settle their excess population. They did not go to those colonies to solve their problem of over-population. They went to settled populations like the United States and other lands because they were far more attractive economically.

What nations require is free access to raw materials. What great nations require is the right of immigration. That does not call for the political control of territories. That calls for an international arrangement and to what people require which will allow all peoples free access to raw materials/without sacrificing the natives in those countries from which raw materials come.

Believe not those who talk about race, about religion, that all Jews are wicked, all Germans are evil, and all Catholics are a menace and that all Orientals are a peril. Generalizations of this sort are the most common and the most dangerous forms of evil among us. The demagogue and rabble-rouser always generalizes. He always resorts to a blanket indictment. He always smears with a large brush. A fact can be refuted. An individual who is libeled has recourse to the Court of Law. But a people, unfortunately, cannot be exonerated in law. A group has no recourse to law when libeled. So a group can be slandered and the majority of the population aroused against it so that it is ultimately victimized. The demagogue is thus protected. is a This is/~~the~~ most despicable and most dangerous fault. Believe not those who talk in generalizations of races, nations.

What I am trying to say, dear friends, is that what men and women need today is to seek their minds, to resist all this. They say! What do they say? Let them say! Who are they? What are their credentials?

Where do they get their information? Trace things down to their source. Is it first-hand information? From whom did you receive it? These are questions you must ask, significant questions. They say...Who are they? And why are they saying it? Why are they spreading this information? What are the motives behind it:

Among the famous ordinances of there is this very interesting law: "One should speak truth, and speak what is pleasant; one should not speak unpleasant truth; one should not speak pleasant falsehood. This is fixed law."

Now, when a man is circulating unpleasant truths, ask yourself immediately, "Why is he doing it?" What does he stand to gain by it? They say: What do they say? Is it truth, or is only part of the truth. Is it the truth, the whole truth, or a half-truth. Half-truths are worse than whole lies. Check up! Look up the authorities? Do not go for science to a poet, for biology to a politician, for military strategy to an air-mail carrier to a house-painter for race doctrine. Go to authorities. There are many ~~of~~ unbiased sources of information.

They say. What ^{do}/they say? Watch out for the meaning of words. There are so many words that people bandy about. Just what do they mean by that term. You will be amazed that two people mean two separate things by the same term.

Most heat is produced by lack of clarity and definition. They say. What do they say. Let them say. Do not be disturbed by the rantings and ravings of other people. You go about your business which is the business of truth-questing unperturbed. Turn not to right or to left. You follow your line. Seek the truth. Have confidence in the worlds which Zola had confidence in the dark days when all the world was ablaze with lies, falsehoods and rumor, even as Europe is today. Zola held before his eyes always this motto: "The Truth is on the March." "Nothing shall stop me!"

1). Pompey - They say. What do they say? Let them say!
 Good to inscribe ~~on~~ on doorstep of one's Mind. Esp. to-day.

2). Never was an age so Rumor-bidden as ours.
 Whenever men's apprehensions are great, rumor - field-day
~~periods~~ ^{periods} of war, times of Disasters, when men fear greatly
 or hope greatly - they become easy prey to Rumor, Propag.,
 and reports of most fantastic sort.

The Rumor-monger, the demagogue, the rabbit-rouser then
 enjoys a real holiday. It's ^{all} meat for them.

Ours is such an age.

3). And to that the fact that govts now regard the spreading
 of lies = propaganda - as a ^{most important} leg. ^{subliminal} weapon of diplomacy &
 Total War - and are spending billions - you will realize
 how serious is the attack upon integrity - intellect.

- How grave the danger.

- Channels of Information polluted - endangering mental
 health of race.

- There isn't a ~~single~~ newspaper - his-distribution.

communiqués - Bias also in many forms.

- Hardly a Text-book -

- Radio blares out 24 hrs. a day - cacophany of
 "stuffing the ears of men with false reports"

4). A truth can be cool, calm, objective.

A lie ~~must~~ is calculated to incite, arouse, impress
 Pal. propog. understand it - "Generating power of great
 change is not so much in right as hysteria"

So that men are not only being misinformed - but emotionally
boiled - agitated - confounded -

- And men can't think clearly when they are emot. disturbed.
- They become intolerant & do thinking - suspicious of it -
as if it were a secret assault - a covert attack -
some thing conspiratorial.

5. Our age will some day be known - "Lying Age". or "The
Age of the Unbridled Tongue" or "Auto-Intoxication" or
"Self-Strupification". a time when mankind, having
engaged literary muscled to fabrications.

6. Men have been amplified w/ listening to rumor,
gossip or scandal or indulging in it - as part, their
personal moral code. Only in recent years has it become
inspirational to warn men w/ listening to such rumor &
causal emanating from public sources - their part
their class, their very soul. The guilt & stigma attached to
it far exceeds anything that the private circle is capable
of.

- The rumor-monger is called in Bible perilous like

- Rumor is to be shunned - Evil tongue: to be shunned - lying tongue

- to be shunned -

- to be shunned -

- Rabbi: to be shunned to be shunned to be shunned

- A greater sin > Murder, incest or adultery

- Shunned as a Leper

- God and he cannot live in same world

- No portion in world to come -

7/ As if anticipating an prophesied modern age - Ps. 12
conquer by means, the lying tongue.

"Those who say: we will make ourselves great by our tongue.
{ "Our lips are with us. Who is our master?" Isaiah 57: 15
Isaiah 57: 15

"God's words (true words) are pure words. like silver re-
fined in a furnace - purified seven-fold"

8/ Nazis came into power by way of lying tongue. They lied
about last war - lost - misfortunes after the war -
They lied about the Jews. They lied about Race. They
lied about history.

They concocted a lying program - all things to all men -
never intended to carry out - + script

They lied about Soviet Russia - Bolsheviks - ^{unreliable} ~~first~~ enemies,
born from father - + unreliability. enemies again

They lied to every country - + broke every pledge + treaty

They spread their lies - other lands - to dis unite

9/ Many have been taken in - by their lies
Wane of Future - New Order

"Behold not those who say -

The Fr. Rev. ^{liberating} ~~urged~~ in a new order. Committed houses
comes as emancipatory movement - to end feudalism -
to free man from ~~being~~ tyranny - to enlarge ^{scope of} ~~scope of~~
mind - liberty - equality - ~~fraternity~~ ^{affection} ~~fraternity~~ ^{affection} ~~fraternity~~ ^{affection}

Plus New Order appear to Nylen - Fay - Racism - Costo
to Nat. chairman - to Costo - Enslaves mind -
Bump chairs to men strikers - war & peace.

10/ "Believe not those who say - Nazi and system is
future - Its forces invincible ~~nothing~~ Something has happened
already lost the war - Best can hope for - State - matters
Russian "hearts" are giving these super-men the dubbing
of their life -

And in Libya - these self-proclaimed elite, the earth are
tasting the ^{worst} ~~whip~~ ^{disgrace} ~~demer. punishment~~.

"Kehin... hunger battalions - protest faith + righteousness

11). "Behens not that... Dem. is things - played-out - this war will no repent - Became delta lucky (Lucky)
they said it in last war - R. Eng. U.S. emerged - + numerous other smaller nations.

only defeat will destroy an enemy 1 cont.

It will change - always has - then can change without
breathing - more respiration - more efficient -

as long - can vote - phurition - Free Press etc

12. "Behem — always will be was! Why get involved
in this one? Dog eat dog! Peace is only Pause
"He is will to Peace" — Look ~~at~~ at last has —
Look at Fashings Lyrics!

This is defeatism! This is sacrifice!

Shall we not fight disease - bec. there has always been vetters
in world - In spite of med. sc. - hospitals, clinics -

Can we not reduce the incidents of war - or there is no war
preventions war - propaganda - There are!

One failure is not fatal to mankind's aspirations.

13) Believe not - nothing involved in this war - just another
- Eng. is as guilty as Germany. ^{Eng. means as} Russians total as tops

No nation is without fault. But just wars, are hell
do not expiate present sins, they are there. The offender &
the monster in world today is Nazi germ. - Hitler
& Hitlerism must be destroyed before any retribution
anywhere can take place.

A victory for H. means a collapse into Barbarism.
A victory over H. - means another chance - to build
for a free, eq. & peaceful world.

14) Believe not - over-populated countries need room
to expand - a fraud - conquer lands not to settle
there but to exploit nations population - themselves
stay at home - & ~~use~~ encourage even accelerated
increase of pop.

need free access to raw material &
right of immigration - not pol. control over
immigration.

15/ Behem - Nat. destiny - bound up with conquest.
intell. + sp. + tactics - features. all else is not
destiny but parapsychism - no character - equilibrium

16/ Behem - he alib. race - religious - all Jews are
wicked - all permanently evil - all Calvinists a menace -
all Orientals a peril -

Generalizations of this sort, are the most common and
most dangerous form of minor mongering. (Banned indict
interest charges)

The demagogue + rabble-rouser always generalizes.

He sums with a large brush - primary colors -

Facts can be refuted. Unlaid can be exonerated in
a court of law - but laws protect the weak
none to protect the guilty - a people can never
be exonerated in law - The demog. is thus
protected.

He may succeed in disorganizing the ind. + 100,000,000
ind. by attacking them not merely, but collectively

That's his damnable dangerous strategy.

17/ Tough-mindedness. "They say. What do they say?"

① Who are they? What credentials? Justify them clearly?
Where did they get this information? Trace the sources?
First hand? From where?

(2) Why are they spreading that information? For how? Motives?
Ordinance of Mann!

"One should speak truth, and speak what is pleasant; one should not speak unpleasant truth; one should not speak pleasant falsehood. This is fixed law"

Why is one circulating unpleasant truth? What does he stand to gain by it?

(3) They say. What do they say? Is it true? The whole truth? The $\frac{1}{2}$ truth which is untrue? whole lie? Check up! Look up the authorities? Do not go for science to a poet, for biology to a politician, for military strategy to an air-mail carrier, for ~~the~~ see doctrine to a house-painter.

"(4) Watch out for depositions! From us, terms seasons populations"
They say. What do they say? Let them say!

Go your own understinked, truth-judging way.
Turn not to the right or left. Be Tough-minded.

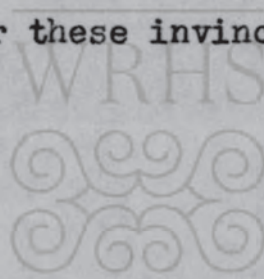
The truth is on the march. Nothing can stop it.
Present - impose play upon your trust

Refudates ourselves with chaotic days { Fluidity of institution = terms
I learn in chaos = terms, chaotic
Old bottles may hold New Wine
New Bottles - "old deers"

But this fake new order which the Nazis and Fascists introduced brings no liberation to mankind. It shackles and enslaves people. It enslaves nations which are conquered. It enslaves the individuals both of the vanquished and the victorious nations. It appeals not to reason, but to hysteria.

Believe not all those who say that this new system is being brought about by forces invincible....

Something happened to that invincible air-force. Something happened to that invincible country on the steppes of Russia. Something is happening to it on the desert sand of Lybia. The best we can hope for is a stalemate for these invincible



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