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The Three Marks of an Educated Man, 1967.

The Three Marks of an Educated Man
Daniel Jeremy Silver
March 19, 1967

The educated slave becomes fractious. Train an apprentice and you train a competitor. The informed citizen is critical of the policies of his government. A widely-read communicant disputes the authority and the doctrine of his priest. The child who is trained beyond the intellectual horizons of his parents becomes an alien in his home. Education, dear friends, is subversive. Education is abrasive of the social order. Throughout history the established institutions of society have organized themselves to limit the schooling and the education available to the masses and to the minorities. Of course, you train a few men to perform the competently simple tasks of agriculture. Of course, you train the townsfolk to be skilled craftsmen, but no more. A richer intellectual diet would be too much for their rude mental equipment.

What is true of nations is true of families. A young man who has been trained beyond the attitudes and horizons of his home becomes an alien among his own. He no longer understands or has the ability to be understood. There are some African tribes in which the young person who enrolls in the mission school goes to the city, is actually danced out of tribe. He has become someone else and that he will never again be one of them. The adult world rationalizes that education is confusing and misleading. Where is that young man whom you dressed up for Sunday School, who knew what was right and what was wrong, that disheveled and unkempt youngster back from college? Obviously there is something at the university which many need to protect their youngsters from in their innocence, confusing if not corrupting.

I suspect that over the course of history far more men were busy denying learning than encouraging it; In the Roman Empire less than five percent of the population was literate. In England, France and Germany a good education and higher education remained the exclusive monopoly of the privileged classes until this century. In the Colonial Empires of Asia and of Africa the number was far less. A few native princes were brought up in private schools and sent on to Oxford or the Sorbonne and welcomed into the establishment and a small percentage of the population was trained to be the functionaries and minor administrators, but beyond that the colonial powers had little interest in raising the intellectual sights of the masses. After all, knowledge is power and those who had privileges are not about to raise up rivals and hasten the loss of those privileges.

The establishment in the United States knew exactly what it was about when two generations ago it imposed rigid quotas on Jews and Catholics entering the better schools and the professional schools. If you don't want the Jew or the Catholic sharing power with you, joining the executive suite or the State Department you have only to keep him away from the training grounds where he can earn his brevet. The South knew exactly what it was about when it set up separate but unequal schools, academic institutions for the white, vocational institutions for the negro. The white schools produced the elite and the elite required trained hospital orderlies, maids who could take messages, assembly line workers who could read simple instructions in order that their lives may be fully graceful. They need some schooling, but not the same schooling.

Anti-intellectualism, obscurantism, is a flaw that runs through the heart of Western civilization. Over the years it has developed a justification of its own. Education is a corrupt enterprise. Education destroys the native integrity, the simplicity, the wholeness of the child. Send your child to college and he'll come back bedraggled and dirty, somehow not quite the fine young man you sent away. Simplicity is equated with saintliness. Intelligence somehow undermines innocence. In the Western tradition the assumption is that the wise man is Socrates - a traitor to his society and class. He is the man who seeds doubt and is suspect of disloyalty. You can't count on his loyalty or even his morality. Education corrupts - saintliness is simplicity. In the Middle Ages you had groups like the Iknobantes, a religious brotherhood who refused to admit into the confraternitz anyone with a degree of theological training. The assumption was that once you were trained you no longer could be single-hearted with your god. And you have still in the United States the Amish and the Mennonites who refuse to educate their children beyond a certain level because beyond that level the air is too rarified and the youngster might get light-headed and question the rural ideology which sustains these communities in rustic simplicity.

Throughout history the educated fool is the egghead, a constant figure of ridicule. You find him in the Greek tragedy, you find him in the modern comic strip, you find him in object of attack by the McCarthy's of every age. The educated somehow are different than, set apart from. They know all the theories but they cannot manage their own lives. You've heard it again and again and again. We fear the educated man. We provide inferior education to the masses. Western

man has a long history of turning away from, of being fearful of, of denying to himself and to his children and to his community the blessing of education. Obscurantism is a bed-rock attitude of western cultures - save its Jewish components. Judaism is the one scholar-loving culture in western civilization. Judaism is the one intellectualist religion. Judaism is the one religion which insists that one must make his study a fixed duty. Judaism made no claims that the simple man was a saintly man. The boor, the fool, the ignorant, cannot be a pious man. The rabbis used to say that there are four things which grace a man's life and add to his grace in the world to come.

The first is to honor his father and his mother. The second is to make peace between a man and his neighbor. The third is to do deeds of loving kindness and the fourth is to study, to devote a fixed schedule to the world of learning. And they added Talmud Torah Keneged Kolam (Hebrew). The learning process is the equal of all of the other virtues. Judaism glorifies the educated man. The title rabbi means simply teacher. The synagogue is so involved in the educational enterprise that the very name it took on to itself was shul for schule, school. If a Jewish father refused to educate his child he could be coerced to do so by the courts. Two thousand years ago Jews established the first mandatory public educational system. The rabbis debated long and loud whether a man needed to close his books if the hour of daily worship intruded upon his study time. Search history and you will find few illiterate Jews though you may find in Judaism a tendency to over-

estimate the intellectually nimble. Families wanted as their son-in-law the brightest

quickly became tired of this routine. It was not enough. They wanted more and so

of the young scholars of the Yeshiva and there was a tendency to reward far beyond its worth the photographic mind and sheer intellectual nimbleness. You will find in our ethical literature any number of warnings against this kind of adulation. But the point is that ours is the one culture in which this kind of overestimate of a scholar could take place. In the Roman civilization the scholar was usually a Greek slave. In medieval times the tutor sat at the very foot of the table. In modern America the educated class until very recently was certainly little honored and meagerly recompensed.

Israel glorified the sage. Judaism was a schoolhouse. The Jew looked on his religion as Torah, as teaching. I have often wondered where this tradition began, how it is that Judaism uniquely of the cultures of the West took on this intellectualist tradition. It wasn't always so. You look at the early history of the Bible you find non-intellectual heroes, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Amos - great men but none of them associated with a school. None of them glorified the learning process. In pre-exilic Judaica when the prophets began to attack the cult, the ritual, in the name of righteousness they talked of many virtues - justice, peace, holiness, but never of the duty of learning. The educational emphasis begins only with the exile when the Jews were driven out of Judea by the Babylonians in the late 6th century BC. The Temple was in ruins and our fathers had to find some way of continuing corporate life without the central institution of the synagogue. For awhile the established surrogate on sacrifices, they would come at the appointed hour, sing the hymns and the psalms which had been sung in the sanctuary. They quickly became tired of this routine. It was not enough. They wanted more and at

some point in post-exilic times their leaders began to read to them from the scrolls of the law. They took from the ark, as we take from our ark, the Torah scroll and they read from it and interpreted it. Something of our intellectual's tradition grows from the simple fact of the Torah having been written down, being available for comment, discussion and interpretation. But that is not a satisfactory explanation. It is too accidental for something which is so basic. I believe that the real reason lies in the unique nature of our faith. There is a line in the book of Proverbs which I read to you this morning. "The beginning of knowledge is the fear of the Lord." Knowledge begins in religion. I think this is true historically in our Jewish tradition. All the other religions of antiquity assumed God was an oriental despot. He demanded absolute, abject subservience, obedience from the worshipper. Royal cults were imposed upon the people. Obedience, submission, these were the virtues demanded. Judaism began as the search of a people. Abraham leaving his home travelling outward. He was outward bound looking for a dimly perceived God and a new way of life. Judaism is based on a covenant, on a contractual relationship between God and man. Israel is a junior partner and the obligations rested heavily upon her. But Israel is a partner, we have certain rights. Abraham could argue with God. Isaiah could say to God, "Come, let us reason together."

Our people brought their pride as well as their piety. Faith was search as well as submission. The people which seeks keeps its pride and dignity. Learning is the dignity of a man. Learning makes you stand tall, learning makes you, in a sense, an equal of the divine as far as man can be equal to the divine. God

is wisdom and man becomes God-like insofar as he masters the wisdom of the world. Wisdom is power and wisdom is knowledge and wisdom is the capacity to act with some degree of effect. Whatever the reasons, by post-exilic times, Judaism was founded on wisdom. The leader was the scholar, the synagogue was the school-house, the virtue was Torah training, study learning.

Now all this is history and one might say it is past history. The world seems to have caught up to the old Jewish emphasis on education. The human work-horse is, in the 20th century, obsolete. A nation which does not mine the genetic potential, God's gift to us, in its population will atrophy, wither. The greatest treasure a nation has today is its human resource but it is a resource which must be unlocked and it can be unlocked only by training, by education. Education is the fastest growing enterprise of the world next to warfare and some say this race between generals and generalists will determine the fate of man. We want more education, better education. Two generations ago it was unusual for a man to graduate from high school. Today the small percentage who do not graduate from high school, that drop out, we consider to be a serious social problem. Education is offered to us as the panacea for almost all of our social ills. The world has caught the ancient Hebrew vision with a vengeance. But I wonder. For history is rarely discontinuous and the obscurantist tradition, the anti-intellectual tradition, is deeply rooted into the Western way of life. Perhaps it has simply gone underground. This becomes apparent when we look carefully at the educational enterprise today. Where the Jews spoke of Torah as the search for values as a humanistic enterprise, know how to teach us how to learn more but not how to teach us how to think, to be more in and of ourselves. I am frightened by the prospect of a generation of

we speak today of education as a fact-seeking enterprise, as the mastering of certain techniques, of certain skills. Half the world seeks to train the mind while washing the brain. Half the world seeks technicians for its plants and tacticians and for its armies but does not want trouble makers who will criticize the ideology, the sounding doctrine.

Even in America surprisingly little of our educational enterprise is devoted to thinking. Manipulating, yes; memorizing, certainly. What of a National Merit scholar? He is merely a young man or a young woman who can choose which of five factual answers to five factual questions are correct with a great deal of consistency. The National Merit scholar ship's measure is now simply how good a teaching machine, how good a human computer is that particular child. If you look at our educational system you realize that increasingly it has turned away from that which provokes thought, those questions of basic value and has simply turned toward the engineering of human skills. We place a child before a teaching machine, IBM or some other company provides us with punched rolls of tape and the child ultimately becomes a tape that can spin and spin over again and give us the very highly sophisticated answers that we require. But are these really the answers that we require? What good to us are most of our experts? They know how to do their narrow job. They know how to build the highway straight through a community, through all of its beauty, and all of its stable neighborhoods, but they don't know how to build the community or to save human values. They know how to save a life but not how to let a life die where there is no hope for that life and only pain. They know how to teach us how to learn more but not how to teach us how to think, to be more in and of ourselves. I am frightened by the prospect of a generation of

narrowly circumscribed experts, each one highly capable of his narrow field, none of them knowing how that field relates to that which is ultimate and basic in human values. The rabbis used to say "Thou shalt not make the Torah a spade to dig with." Study is not vocational, it is not professional. If a man wanted to be a craftsman, a guildsman, a doctor, a lawyer, he learned this by apprenticeship. This kind of process is obviously impossible in the 20th century but certainly we could bring more of Torah into our educational system. Certainly we could give the teachers in our secondary schools a greater degree of freedom to challenge children with the basic values of our society. We send a man to college and we give him one or two general courses in history or western civilization and beyond that he specializes for six or seven years without asking the basic question, why? What are we building? Where are we going? Of what use is all this information? What larger responsibility do I have as a scientist and a technician except to push further the boundaries of human knowledge? Torah was a life-long enterprise. It began in the schools, it continued throughout life.

Education today is an increasingly narrow enterprise. The man learns his profession and he continues to read in his profession and he rarely reads anything beyond the journals of his specialty. One way to turn the human race into a group of Pavlov-trained dogs who respond to certain cues, who can perform certain complicated functions all for the leader, all on direction when the bell rings, is to continue unhesitatingly the present trend in education. This is a trend which has been created by the anti-intellectualist authorities who fear to have their power, their traditions and attitudes contested. Ours is a world of revolutionary change.

Children are growing into a world far different than anything we can really imagine. To bind them to the attitudes that are ours is to hobble them, to put chains on their ankles, to prevent them from building any real hope into their world. We need to teach them to think, to challenge, yes, to challenge our faith, yes, to challenge our moral standards, yes, to really think through what we mean by right and wrong, truth as a truth and a lie. We offer them very little opportunity to do so. Schools say it's the home's responsibility. The home says it's the religious school's responsibility. The religious schools say we have so little time and the child absorbs like a sponge. But where does he think? Where is the challenge to doubt? What kind of education do we want? What are the marks of an educated man? Degrees? Each of us has known what the tradition calls a Hebrew, an ass loaded with books - a man with every conceivable academic degree who has no sense whatsoever. Is that the mark of an educated man? We measure an educated man by the number of books in his home, by the fact that he has a photographic memory and can recall title, author, chapter and verse and character and fact. Does that make an educated man? Is an educated man a man who can diagram complicated electronic circuitry and make it work simply because his fingers are nimble, that he can read a diagram, carry it out. Is that an educated man?

I submit to you that there are three standards by which we can judge if a man is educated or not. The first is this, is he religious? Does he have a faith? In man? In values? In goals? Religion forces you to seek, forces you to relate facts to life. Is he religious? The second standard of an educated man is this: Is he critical? Is he judicious? It is easy to absorb, to be the sponge, but most of

of what's told us is told us for an ulterior purpose. Men try to convince us that we ought to vote for them, do what they want us to do, agree with them. The truly educated man has the ability to judge each man's profession to him against his religious standards, against what he feels to be right and wrong, good and evil. An educated man is a man with a profound faith. He's a man who's profoundly skeptical but his skepticism is not that sophomoric skepticism which denies all the values of life because it is tied to a faith, it is tied to a positive value. He simply questions why you are badgering him to agree with you. The third mark of an educated man is is he flexible? Is he aware, is he alert? Judaism pioneered what is called today continuing education, booklearning from the cradle to the grave.

Most of us spend a few years in college, in an intellectual hot-house. We got a few preconceptions and prejudices and a smattering of some philosophy. We judge everything that has happened to us by that smattering of ignorance. The Jew walked every day of his life. He did only as much as he needed to do in business in order to be free for the debates, the challenge of other men who were thinking, the pleasure of reading, the pleasure of ideas. I see very little of this in our 20th century. Each of us plows his own furrow straight and true toward some financial goal. But ideas - they belong in college. Flexibility of mind? How many of us has ever changed our basic attitudes toward values and toward life? Yet, how could we not but have changed course in a world which is as rolling, as tumultuous, as our world is? Are the values of the early twenties really satisfactory thirty or forty years later? In the space age, the technological age and the age of the explosion of population? There has been more learning, more factual information,

your son to college or your daughter but encourage him to get an education and not simply a training.

in those thirty years than in all prerecorded history, yet, we hold on to the simplicities. Faith, judiciousness, awareness, flexibility, these are the marks of an educated man. The educated man is not a man who lives in an ivory tower. In our tradition the lawyer, the scholar, the teacher, lived in and with and for. He entered the arena; he debated politics; he was the judge; he was involved in the legal system; he was very much concerned with the political climate of the day. He knew that there might be absolutes but he knew also that men needed the larger prospectives and the broader horizons in order to make effective judgement. Action, awareness, alertness, faith : these are the marks of an educated man.

Let me close by saying simply this: every Jewish boy and girl must go to college, or so every Jewish parent says. I doubt it. I doubt that the best Torah, the best education is available today, in a mass seminar hall, the television set here, loudspeakers all around the room, and the professor reading from the book that he published two years ago. Education involves contact, the clash of ideas, the search for values. It can take place in the business office and in the marketplace quite as easily as at the university. It can take place in the silence of the night where we confront the printed page, someone else's ideas and wrestle with them. It can take place in the quiet of the living room when we sit with a parent or a friend and debate and discuss policies and politics. College presents us a certificate to employment and little more and our world badly needs the academy of Torah, the informal ways of learning, the hours of reading, the hours of discussion, the clash of debate. For it is here that we learn. The old teacher said, "I learn from all of my pupils and I learn still more from the humble people in the marketplace." Send your son to college or your daughter but encourage him to get an education and not simply a training.

The nature of living in the Roman Empire at the height has been
estimated at \$70. The rule of living in colonial coffee & banana areas
for America. Coffee culture power were treated & sent to Oregan & to
Santo Domingo & elsewhere into the establishment; but beyond the
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del. had no appeal to the colonial power. Knowledge in power &
no privileged groups would be to be placed. First, however those
usually asked it was almost under rigid administrative guidelines were
set up 1/2 century ago at the university & professional school. If
you don't want to share power under Colonial & free - the
1st step is to say the history of these groups & even to the
training grounds for the State Dept in the Executive branch.
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needed in a regulated school system, handbook training for the
elite. Voluntary training for the masses - after all the
business elite need competent personnel & hospital order.

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- 2) making power between a man & his fellow
- 3) class of living condition
- 4) and the way of the world - which is equal

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studies for the ritual of daily prayer

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no preference

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6.20 PM news

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2 copies - one copy of the report -
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Cuba, Oceans & mountains - West at sea - The sky
What a scenery as we go up of desert floor -
sufficient many people - by a way

3-16-41

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Kaddish

Friday *Jan 17*

Sunday *Mar 19*

Those who passed away this week

IRWIN A. ADLER
FLORENCE GREENBAUM
ELSIE WEIL

Yahrzeits

ALFERD B. SHIELDS
ARMIN H. WOHLGEMUTH
WILLIAM E. FERTEL
LESTER BENSEV
MEYER H. FORSCH
LOUIS NEUMAN
SAMUEL S. WEBER
MARVIN A. KANE
SAMUEL A. ROTH
NATHAN SEIDMAN
SOPHIE KLOPFER STRAUSS
HOWARD SIMON SAKS
LOUIS SCHOEN
MARY NEWHOUSE FIRTH
MANI MARCHAND

SARAH BAUMOEL
MYER BLUMBERG
JENNIE GOLDSMITH
LEON SPERLING
ROSE SPILKA
FRANK H. FOX
REBECCA HELLER
SAMUEL S. ROSENTHAL
BERDIE STOTTER COLE
ROSE BERNSTEIN
NORMAN HARRIS
WILLIAM B. FISH
ROSE POLLAK SPEER
BLANCHE M. MAYER
LENA MENDELSON