"A Rabbi's Appraisal of Prof. Albert Einstein"

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I - This Sunday, March 14, the entire civilized world will join in wishing well to one of our fellow-Jews, Prof. Albert Einstein, on the occasion of his 75th birthday. The tribute, the compliments, the praise will flow freely to this greatest genius of the twentieth century. And there is no doubt in anyone's mind that this humble genius, this master of the atomic age who is a fanatic lover of peace, will richly deserve every word of tribute.

II - Others will speak of Einstein's contribution to science. Others will wax ecstatic over his Thematics of Relativity, his Gravitational or Tensor Field Theory. We laymen are not able to sufficiently appreciate these contributions. We therefore cannot add any more to them.

What is appropriate, this morning, to a Rabbi at the service in a sermon-lecture, is a total picture of Einstein, not as a biography of a person, but as the story of the moral personality of a Jew.

Let us discuss this noble man, Israel from three points of view. Let us inspect him as a human being, as a Jew, and as a scientist. And even while remembering that this very Einstein is not infallible, not the truth can be wrong, let us see what praise there is in him, in his life and personality's thought, that can be turned over to us laymen.
Einstein as a human being

A. Many aspects of E's essential humanness that earn admiration.
   - His warmth, simplicity, his devotion to peace.

B. But, above all, his outstanding quality is courage.
   - This is perhaps the most independent spirit of the age.
   - He regards life not as a smooth path, but as an exciting adventure.
   - He writes: "Every man... has at all times been keenly aware that life is an adventure, that life must, forever, be wrestled from Death."

C. He has always been courageous in his pursuit of truth.
   1. A young man in early twenties when he broke the back of classical Newtonian physics, and presented such a revolutionary theory that few understood him, and many thought he was either joking or rantingly serious.
   2. In several bold strokes he changed the scientific equation of time, of space, of the relation of matter to energy. He showed the amazing ability to think without prejudice and with clarity. Above all, it required courage, courage to defy 3 centuries of solid scientific achievement.

D. He has always shown courage in his personal demeanors.
   - What is suggesting that people dress the way Einstein does. Nothing cared about long hair and tattered overcoats. But the fear that the man is independent, reflects itself in his dress too. Not that this is a virtue, but it is an forgiving characteristic of courageous physios.
2. He could have all the social glamour in the world if he had chosen; yet he does not seek it, and even despises it. His life as a human being is dominated by a warm simplicity, even in his thinking as a scientist is not of cold and awesome complexity.

His talk, his statements, all his utterances are made with a disarming and courageous frankness.

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1. He is courageous in his loyalty to Democracy and Political Liberty.

As a human being, as well as a persecuted Jew, he has defied all tyrants and aspirants to tyranny.

a) He early recognized Hitler's anti-Semitism, and in 1933, in a speech in Princes Street Gardens, he said: "Wherever I go I carry all the weights and cares of my people. I cannot help them, I can only warn you."

b) He championed Communism in his famous letter to Communist leaders, and in a letter to the World Peace Congress at a time when even the word "communist" was a dirty word. He damned them sharply and fiercely, and in this country, still retained some part-time sympathy with Russia. He thought Einstein was "a gallant fighter for his people." The World Peace Congress at a time when even the word "communist" was a dirty word.

2) He challenged McCarthy and Nixon in this democratic spirit when he counseled a teacher to plead the 5th amendment only several months ago. He may have been wrong in his advice...
but it was not a deep respect for the American Constitution
and it was perhaps the only fully defiant stance taken
against the demagogues. There was an "innocuum und
understanding". There was no talk of a "family one".
There was no desire to "keep away from personalities."
There was only a little old refugee man, with long hair
and a turtle-neck sweater, putting the concept of his
heritage against the bragan ranting of an embryo Hitler.
Yet Americans learn how to deal with demagogues.
Yet presidents learn how to stop potential tyrants.
Yet all men learn how to live with courage and independence.
But Jews learn how to be themselves and resist mockery
and disdain with courage and fearlessness.
And we all learn the eternal virtues of the human soul.

And occasionally, near the middle
in numbers in some small apartment in Princeton, N.J.,
Our friend the Jew, our friend who rambles on numbers in some small apartment in Princeton, N.J.,
and let us think of the good land in giving life and health
to this man whose courage is real.
And let us think of the lonely and towered
Giant, the man who wrote about himself:

"I live in that solitude which is painful
in youth, but delicious in years of maturity."

- Einstein as Jew

A. No, not "observant". Do not forget his background - assimilation...

B. His writings reflect deep cogitation, groping with

C. - She writes that his maternal religious inspiration when young...
D. His friends say that never — not even when he received the Nobel Prize — did he feel as happy at an honor as when Yeshiva University named its new medical school after him — the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

E. While his early writings show anti-Semitism, he has become a staunch Zionist ever since he has given his prestige to Israel.

F. Main quality as Jew — his pride at being a Jew, especially because of the cultural heritage of Jews which places learning of scholarship so high in Jewish values.

G. writes w. disdain & disgust vs. American Council for Judaism & others who ashamed themselves we need rather kiss the feet of non- Jews than pull ourselves up by our boot-straps. Here is man not ashamed of his heritage, nor ashamed of his heritage, and not ashamed of himself.

V. Einstein as Scientist

A. We have mentioned his courage & boldness. We know something of his accomplishments. We need not mention his genius, his imagination, and his extraordinary grasp of the technical aspects of physics. Yet we speak rather now of his goals, particularly as manifested in recent years.

B. His basic goal is most essential achievement — unity. His Relativity unified scientific concept of Time and Space. Yet until this year this space-time concept has not been related to it. The known facts of gravity & gravitational fields. In a brilliant theory and formula just published, E. moved much closer to his cherished goal — a Unified Field Theory.
one formula which will express, relate, and unite all scientific knowledge about the Universe. This formula has yet to be proven, if a way for doing can be found. But this is certain—that the quest for Unity, harmonizing principle, is now the sole preoccupation of this unparalleled genius.

C.

What does this search for Unity in Science have to do with Judaism?—Very much, essentially. For what is the basic Jewish conception if not Unity? What has been the mission and task of all Jewish prophets, teachers, and rabbis throughout the ages, if not the dissemination of the idea that Q-d is that which explains all phenomena and all experience?

Until Einstein, sight, gravity, electricity, time and space each ruled supreme in its own domain, unaffected by and unrelated to each other. It was Q-d which taught that all are aspects of one omitted truth, One Nature.

Until Abraham, and Israel, war and peace, love and hatred, the earth and the heavens, plants and animals, each was thought to exist in itself, and . . . gods were presumed to rule over each separately. It was Abraham, and Moses, and Judaism which taught that One Q-d, Perfect in His Unity, created all, does now guide all these.

The Unified Field Theory of Judaism, which includes in its scope not only
natural phenomena, and only Time & Space & atoms &
Electrons, but also Love & Peace & The Dignity Man &
& The Destiny of the World.

The spirit and ambitions of Einstein are therefore closely
attuned to that of Judaism. Both look for unity, in
The One, in the World. But where & stop & the
boundaries of material existence, Judaism includes
all life, all experience, in the showing the One God.

A. We have discussed the moral personality of this great Jew,
then, in three phases - as a human being, as a Jew, as a teacher.

B. As a human being, he can teach us the virtue of Cowory.

C. As a Jew, he can teach us to be proud of our
people, our heritage, our religion, our homeland.

D. As a scientist, he teaches the nobility, lofty conception
of Unity which is a formula in Einsteinian physics,
and the living God in Judaism.

On this, his 75th birthday, all Jews, all Americans, and
all mankind, wishes this brilliant giant, peace, health,
and success. May God grant that his years be many and
fruitful, that the creativity of his mind open new vistas
and he used to peace; that the morality of his personality
will inspire all men.
and may we all come to understand, appreciate and realize the following credo, just written by Einstein himself:

"All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom."

Benedict