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Inherent to all traditional religion is the peril of stagnation. What becomes settled and established may easily turn foul. Insight is replaced by cliches, elasticity by obstinacy, spontaneity by habit. Acts of dissent prove to be acts of renewal.

It is therefore of vital importance ^{for} religious people to voice and to appreciate dissent. And dissent implies self-examination, critique, discontent.

Dissent is indigenous to Judaism. The prophets of ancient Israel who rebelled against a religion that would merely serve the self-interest or survival of the people, continue to ^{stand out} ~~serve~~ as inspiration and example of dissent to this very day.

An outstanding feature dominating all Jewish books composed during the first five hundred years of our era is the fact that together with the normative view a dissenting view is nearly always offered, whether in theology or in law.

Dissent continued during the finest periods of Jewish history: great scholars ^{e.g.} ~~and~~ sharply disagreed with Maimonides, ^{and} Hasidism that brought so much illumination and inspiration into Jewish life ~~evoked strong opposition on the part of those so called "dissenters."~~ ^{was a movement of dissent.}

In the past centuries, even under conditions of repression and of danger to their very existence, Jews continued to persist in their dissent from both Judaism and Christianity, thus retaining a ^{spiritual} loyalty unmatched in the history of humanity.

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Judaism in its very essence came into being as an act of dissent, of dissent from paganism, as an act of non-conformity with the surrounding culture. And unless we continue to dissent, unless we continue to say NO to idol-worship in the name of a higher YES, we will revert to paganism.

The greatness of the prophets was in their ability to voice dissent and disagreements not only with the beliefs of their pagan neighbors, but also with the cherished values and habits of their own people.

Is there dissent in Judaism today? ~~Too little, too~~
~~feeble.~~ Creative dissent is not simply repudiation or demur. Creative dissent comes out of ^{love and} faith, offering ^{positive} alternatives, a vision.

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creative

The scarcity of dissent today may be explained by
the absence of assets that make what makes creative dissent possible:

deep caring, concern; untrammelled radical thinking

informed by rich learning, a degree of audacity and or

courage, and the power of the word. The dearth of people

and who
who are both rooted in Jewish learning, think clearly and

care deeply, who are endowed with both courage and power

of the word, may account for the spiritual vacuum, for

the state of religious existence today.

Judaism whose stance is audacity is presented as
a religion of complacency; Judaism is a call to grandeur,

but what we hear is a system of trivialities, common place, theological
cliches.

So much of what is given out as Jewish thinking is obsolete liberalism
or narrow parochialism. The education offered in most Jewish schools is
insipid, flat, and trivial.

There are dissenters in Judaism today. Yet those who ~~speaking loudly~~ *attract the most*
attention are frivolous, *authentic*
are incoherent, while those who are ~~oppressed~~ speak in a small still voice which
the Establishment is unable to hear.