

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY

OU\_158077

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



**OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

Call No. 296 / 556W      Accession No. G10844

Author Shulman, e. E.

Title What it means to be a Jew. 1960

This book should be returned on or before the date last marked below.



# **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A JEW**

*Other Books by*  
Charles E. Shulman

**PROBLEMS OF THE JEWS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD**  
**EUROPE'S CONSCIENCE IN DECLINE**

**WHAT  
IT MEANS  
TO BE  
A JEW**

**BY  
CHARLES E. SHULMAN**

**CROWN PUBLISHERS, INC.  
NEW YORK**

© 1960 by Charles E. Shulman  
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 60-8624  
Printed in the United States of America

Second Printing, September, 1960

The author is grateful to the following publishers for permission to quote:

Behrman House, Inc.: *A World Passed By* by Marvin Lowenthal  
The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.: *A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem* by Milton Steinberg

Central Conference of American Rabbis: *Central Conference of American Rabbis, Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention, June 23rd to June 28th, 1953*, Vol. LXIII, edited by Bertram W. Korn; *Proceedings of the Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference, November 16, 17, 18, 1885*

The Devin-Adair Company: *A Partisan History of Judaism* by Elmer Berger, copyright 1951 by The Devin-Adair Co.

Farrar, Straus and Cudahy: *The American Jew; Character and Destiny* by Ludwig Lewisohn; *A Gallery of Zionist Profiles* by Louis Lipsky

Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.: *A Believing Jew* by Milton Steinberg; *Basic Judaism* by Milton Steinberg

Harper & Brothers: *Mid-channel* by Ludwig Lewisohn; *Up Stream* by Ludwig Lewisohn

The Jewish Publication Society of America: *By-Paths in Hebraic Bookland* by Israel Abrahams; *Studies in Judaism*, Vol. 3, by Solomon Schechter; *The Voice of Jerusalem* by Israel Zangwill, copyright held by The Jewish Publication Society of America

J. B. Lippincott Company: *The Torch-Bearers* by Alfred Noyes, copyright 1922, 1949 by Alfred Noyes

The Macmillan Company: *Where Judaism Differed* by Abba Hillel Silver, copyright 1956

Penguin Books, Inc.: *The Arabs* by Edward Atiyah; *Judaism: A Historical Presentation* by Isidore Epstein

G. P. Putnam's Sons: *Challenging Years; The Autobiography of Stephen Wise*, copyright 1949 by G. P. Putnam's Sons; *Three Cities* by Sholem Asch, copyright 1933 by Sholem Asch

Yale University Press: *We Survived*, edited by Eric H. Boehm

Thomas Yoseloff, Inc.: *Judaism as a Civilization* by Mordecai Kaplan; *The Service of the Heart* by Evelyn Garfiel

The Histadruth Ivrit of America, Inc.: *Complete Poetic Works of Hayyim Nahman Bialik*, Vol. I, edited by Israel Efros, copyright 1948

## FOREWORD

CHARLES SHULMAN is a true scholar who regards every contact with persons or ideas as an opportunity to enlarge his knowledge, enrich his understanding of life, and increase his effectiveness as a rabbi. A religious teacher, he holds it to be his principal business to relate timely problems to timeless principles.

He knows the American people and our national scene as few men do. He has traveled extensively in every region of these United States and is equally at home in a midwestern city and a New England village. A chaplain during World War II, he lived in the midst of danger and death in the South Pacific. Being a Jew, he understands the frustrations and the faith of American Jews and he also has intimate knowledge of the people and leaders of ancient and modern Israel. He recognizes the intimate relationship among all peoples of all faiths in finding resources to face their problems.

Out of this rich background Rabbi Shulman insists that the conquest of "inner space" is at least as important as the competition for "outer space." This book draws a fine focus on the dilemma of the Jew today.

"External manifestations of Jewish identity . . . do not and cannot compensate for the absence of the internal evidence of Jewish values," he says. "Without it (the spirit that gives meaning, direction and purpose to individual and group living) institutions are husks."

He reminds us that "there is much talk these days about a religious revival in American Jewish life. It seems to be substantiated by such external evidence as well-attended synagogue services, large Sunday and midweek enrollments, burgeoning day schools, the imposing new religious edifices that dot the national landscape. . . . But if we were to look behind this façade

we might discover little of the genuine religion in the accepted sense of the word. . . . The cultivation of abiding human values and association with things spiritual are the only standards by which a religious revival can be judged."

In graphic style, Charles Shulman probes deeply into the dilemmas confronting man. So, although this book would be a valuable contribution to our best religious literature if it were addressed only to Jews, its significance is enhanced because it deals with universal human problems. These include externalism, religiosity parading as religion; sanctimony without reverence; preoccupation with secular aims; membership in organizations, a competitor of personal devotions; charity as ego fulfillment instead of a religious undertaking; and an increasingly complicated society, a competitor of all teaching and tradition.

Here are modern man's threats: a religious movement without great spiritual meaning; lofty ritual without understanding of its historic setting; personal and liturgical prayers without piety, and in consequence, action without a sense of destiny, producing frustration and meaninglessness.

Saint-Exupéry, writing about the agony of France during World War II, said: "If a man is to strive with all his heart, the significance of his striving must be unmistakable. The significance of the ashes of the village must be as telling as the significance of the village itself."

Charles Shulman, writing in this tense moment, when mankind searches for its soul, has not sought to lull anyone into complacency but rather to summon his readers to re-examination, renewal and revival. Perhaps, if they read this book carefully and meditate deeply, his aim may be realized.

Harold C. Case  
President, Boston University

October 26, 1959

# CONTENTS

Foreword	v
----------	---

## I. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A JEW

What is a Jew?	11
The Disadvantages of Being a Jew	15
The Advantages of Being a Jew	21
What is the Jewish Philosophy of Life?	26
The Character of the Jew	32
On Reading Jewish Literature	41

## II. PERSONALITIES

Stephen S. Wise	49
Sholem Asch	62
Leo Baeck	68
Israel Zangwill	75
Louis D. Brandeis	79
Hayim Greenberg	83
Ludwig Lewisohn	88
Henrietta Szold	93
Aaron David Gordon	100
Milton Steinberg	105

## III. ISRAEL

Israel's Not-So-Secret Weapon	115
Sermons in Stones	120
The Arabs	124
Religion in the State of Israel	129
On Defining a Jew	137
Richer than the Rothschilds	143

Tel Aviv	147
The Great Redemption	150

#### IV. PROBLEMS

The Corrosion of Assimilation	161
Our Missing Intellectuals	165
Revival Without Religion	170
The Key to Jewish Survival	175
Charity in Three Languages	180
The Function of the Rabbi	185
Language and Culture	193
Is Piety a Lost Art?	200
Darwin's Impact on Judaism	206
Trends in Reform Judaism	214

#### V. ISSUES

The Right to be Different	223
Rabbis and Good Will	228
The Lost Individual	234
Holiness à la Hollywood	240
The Reconstructionist Credo	243
Painless Causes	246
The High Cost of Prejudice	250

I. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A JEW

TO DEBBY



## WHAT IS A JEW?

WHAT IS a Jew? Originating in antiquity the name, like the person of the Jew, has never failed to arouse the curiosity of the peoples of the world. The Jew has lived under suspicion, revilement, discrimination, segregation, persecution, torture and expulsion. And he has endured. He has been attacked and defended, condemned and extolled while maintaining an unbroken identity. Few outside the Jewish fold have been able to understand how he survived. The late Rabbi Milton Steinberg undertook to tell the story of the phenomenon a few years ago in the luminous pages of a book he entitled *The Making of the Modern Jew*.

The survival of the Jew is as much a source of pride to him as it is a mystery to those who do not know him or his way of life. For there have survived with him the culture patterns known to his ancient forbears. And this cannot be said of any other people living today. Some measure of its significance can be gained from the words of Israel's prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, spoken before the Jerusalem Ideological Conference in July, 1957:

When we contemplate the cultural and spiritual map of the Middle East today—whose cultures you have studied—we see a most extraordinary thing. In not a single one of these countries, either Egypt or Babylonia, Syria or Canaan, is there any living remnant of the language spoken by the people of those days. There is nothing left of the language of Egypt, Akkad, Babylonia, Aram, Moab and Sidon. The religions and cultures developed by the peoples two, three and four thousand years ago have entirely disappeared. It is only in one corner of the Middle East—in Israel—that there lives a people speaking the language

spoken by their forefathers four thousand years ago, maintaining the literature created by their prophets and sages in those far-off days, and thus preserving unbroken and unchanged a tradition four thousand years old, although it is heir to all modern achievements of science and technology, and has absorbed all the heritage of modern culture.

The fact that the Jew maintained a separate identity while living among many peoples and tongues has added to the complexity of his being. If it gave him maturity born of the instinct for survival and wisdom learned from experience, it also brought him the perplexities that accompanied his continuing adjustment to changing environments. Heinrich Heine, a Jew, could speak of him as a misfortune, while Frederick the Great's chancellor, a Christian, could consider him a miracle. Between these extremes of judgment it is possible to discover a thousand estimates of the Jew, ranging from the "Syriac fossil," a term used by the historian Arnold Toynbee, to Tolstoy's lyrical paean to "the sacred being who brought down fire from heaven, the everlasting fire to illumine the world."

The marks of a Jew may be discovered in certain characteristics which have remained unchanged throughout his long career on earth. Four such characteristics are easily discernible. They are memory, community, faith and destiny.

The Jews are a community based on memory. A common memory, the great Jewish scholar Solomon Schechter noted, has kept the Jewish people together. One generation passed on to the next its heritage and its experiences that were constantly accruing to it. This expanding memory formed an organic community.

Without memory the Jew could not have maintained his identity. He has continued his life by virtue of his remembrance of things past—the Exodus from Egypt, the receiving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, the observances of the festivals as "signs and memorials," the utterance of his prayers in memory of the departed, the respect for the teachings of his prophets and sages, and a host of other elements that color his history. Without his memory he would be doomed

to disintegration and assimilation among the peoples of the earth.

It is the community which evokes the loyalty of the Jew to his way of life: he is part of some twelve million associates in a spiritual enterprise. The loss of six millions of his people under Hitler has only drawn him closer to his own. It is as part of a community that he is judged, traduced or praised. It is through his community that he feels a sense of security and well-being. Rabbi Joel Blau aptly expressed this relationship in Jewish life when he said: "In himself the Jew is nothing; in his people he is everything."

It is the community that gives the Jew effective sanction for the ceremonies, customs and laws which he follows. It stimulates his pride in the shared undertaking so characteristic of his observances. One has only to consider the nature of Jewish philanthropy to appreciate the great role which the community plays in the life of the individual Jew. It makes of him a social being par excellence. His synagogue prayers are, with but few exceptions, couched in the plural. His great festivals are dedicated to a group of people redeemed from slavery, possessed of the Ten Commandments, dwelling in booths in the wilderness, saved from dire peril in Persia, fighting to regain its lost freedom in Palestine in the days of the Maccabees, and struggling against odds for survival in the ghettos of Europe throughout the centuries. Even on the sacred days of the New Year and the Day of Atonement the individual Jew was not to expect divine grace before he had secured the forgiveness of such of his fellowmen as he might have wronged.

Jewish historians have often noted that persecution served as a means of preservation. But they have also noted that individual Jews were sustained by their knowledge of the commonness of ceremonies, beliefs, superstitions, language and holy days. Wherever a Jew might wander on the surface of the earth he would find his kinsmen. He would be able to share his traditions with them. He was at home everywhere.

A Jew is known by his faith. It gives him purpose in his daily living. He consciously or unconsciously feels a kinship with Moses and Isaiah, Hillel and Maimonides, and the ideals of these spiritual heroes of yesterday are translated into the ideal-

ism of Brandeis, Einstein, Stephen S. Wise or Chaim Weizmann. It is his faith that lends the Jew his optimism while the black clouds of social tension and war hover overhead. He somehow hopes that the better angels of human nature will prevail in the disturbed atmosphere of nations and men, and that the instruments of science will be used for purposes of peace and social well-being instead of destruction.

It is faith that fills the Jew with determination to seek education for himself and his children, the same faith that stirred his ancestors to seek learning while the peoples surrounding them were generally primitive and unschooled. An early Jewish teaching, "an ignorant man cannot be religious," was intended to impress him with the fact that knowledge is the handmaiden of sensitiveness in human life. Education may not solve all the problems of existence, but it clears the jungle of fear and ignorance which breeds social evil and it paves the road to a better tomorrow. It is faith that supported the Jew throughout the centuries in his vision of a nobler day when each man shall dwell safely under his own vine and fig tree with none to make him afraid. It still supports him in his belief that the game is worth the candle, that the daily struggle for bread has meaning because it is related to man's upward and onward climb to partnership with his God in the making of a decent place on this earth.

The Jew has a sense of destiny; without it his history would have no meaning for him. The heroic struggles and the sufferings of his fathers, the loss of six millions of his people in recent years, the handicaps in all fields of endeavor that have always confronted him in every land—all are part of the role of a servant of an ideal: a more perfect social order marked by justice and righteousness. They constitute the witness to the prophetic determination that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The Jew survived the wretched slavery of ancient times and the brutal assaults of the modern tyrants in the belief that he had a purpose to fulfil. Even in his martyrdom he sensed that he was the sacrifice on the altar of a nobler day. In his march to the death chambers in the Nazi concentration camps he sang:

I believe with perfect faith  
In the coming of the Messiah  
And though he tarry, I will wait daily  
For his coming.

Were he not possessed of a sense of destiny the Jew would not keep his appointed religious seasons. He would forget his association with the original Passover that is forever linked to the yearning of all men to be free. He would cease to revere his biblical and rabbinic teachings and would lose the identity he has so stubbornly maintained for centuries. It is his belief in a destiny that impels him to continue his institutions so deeply imbedded in his past. His present-day existence in defiance of time and the pressures of the modern world, his destructions and his phoenixlike rebirths, his extraordinary loyalty to his own, all bear witness to his cosmic dreams and visions.

## THE DISADVANTAGES OF BEING A JEW

IT IS HARD to be a Jew, as the famous Yiddish humorist Sholom Aleichem observed a long time ago. The Jew is a member of a minority group. His religion, his history and his experience are distinctive enough to attract attention even in spheres where his outward life is hardly distinguishable from that of his neighbors. In democratic lands the differences that separate him from the majority in the body politic may be only psychological ones. In authoritarian countries where segregation is more common, the distinctions may be both physical and psychological. In either case they are sufficient to cause the Jew discomfort, insecurity and fear.

Such well-known studies as Gustave LeBon's *The Crowd* and

W. Trotter's *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* reveal a major difficulty which every minority has to contend with, the dislike of the unlike. Israel Zangwill, a celebrated Anglo-Jewish writer, stated the problem of the Jewish minority in more precise terms: "Whereas, the unlike is usually situated at a safe distance, the Jews bring the unlike into the heart of every milieu and must thus defend a frontier line as large as the world."

In America the Jewish disadvantages can be traced to psychological causes. There is no compulsory segregation for Jews and there is no overt hostility of the kind the Jew has known in European countries, and still knows in undenazified Germany, in Soviet Russia and in Arab countries. But there is, nonetheless, a feeling of difference in the midst of the majority that has wide repercussions in American Jewish life.

In a little-known essay from *Memories and Portraits* called *The Foreigner at Home*, Robert Louis Stevenson speaks of the relationship of the Scotch lowlander to the highlander in these terms:

In spite of the difference of blood and language the lowlander feels himself the sentimental countryman of the highlander. But from his compatriot in the south the lowlander stands consciously apart. He has had a different training; he obeys different laws. He makes his will in other terms. His eyes are not at home in an English landscape, or with English houses. His ear continues to mark the English speech, and even though his tongue acquire the southern knack, he will still have a strong Scotch accent of the mind.

It is the accent of the mind that creates disadvantages for Jews in democratic societies. However slight it may be, it is sufficient to set into motion a series of pressures that the American Jew encounters frequently in his daily experience. It is manifest in the discrimination he finds in housing, in education, in employment, in business and in the professions. It establishes social, cultural and economic barriers that are difficult to hurdle. It is responsible in goodly measure for the

fact that capable Jewish lawyers turn eventually to other Jews for partnership or remain independent, that gifted Jewish doctors must practice in Jewish hospitals, and that able Jewish businessmen are mostly to be found outside the areas of gentiles.

Because of these pressures Jewish hopes of success in the economic field are dependent upon factors over which the Jew has little or no control. These are connected with his social position as a member of a minority group. The disadvantage becomes greater as the corporation mergers become larger in scope under the control of non-Jewish executives. If anyone has doubt about the fast disappearing personal element in the economic field, with which Jews might be able to cope, he has only to read William H. Whyte's volumes *The Organization Man* and *Is Anybody Listening?* There he may discover how deadly to Jewish aspirations the new American corporation policies can be. Future leaders in management are told what girls to marry, what homes to live in, what clubs to join, what neighbors to cultivate, etc. Jews are not normally included in such patterns. What is true in the industrial and business fields is correspondingly true in the professions.

Apart from the matter of planning a career there are other psychological obstacles in minority living that leave their mark of insecurity upon the Jew. "Some are born Jews," said Isaac Goldberg, paraphrasing the Bard, "some achieve Jewishness and some have Jewishness thrust upon them." While this is not universally true in modern-day Jewish life, it is nevertheless a fact that many Jews do have their Jewishness thrust upon them. So long as they live in large urban centers they feel the safety of their numbers and are not overly much disturbed with how they conduct their social and spiritual lives. But when they begin to move to the suburbs they find it better to belong to a synagogue because their neighbors are affiliated with churches. Conformity, however involuntary, becomes a badge of respectability. This is not necessarily the most desirable form of loyalty; it is the psychological tribute that the minority pays to the majority.

It is a cruel blow when normal processes of growth are impeded because of psychological obstacles. The Jewish child may know prejudice early in life at the hands of his playmates. The

Jewish youth may meet it in the social complex of the high school or the college. And the Jewish adult may have felt it sufficiently in daily life to believe in the necessity of supporting anti-defamation activities to protect him as much as possible from the results of covert anti-Semitism.

Efforts to combat feelings in the hearts of men seldom produce satisfactory results. That which is imbedded in the social order cannot easily be eradicated by a change of location, a change of dress, a change of language or by public relations. The late Rabbi Milton Steinberg perceived this quite clearly when he recommended more Judaism as an antidote to anti-Semitism. This, he felt, could create inner self-respect and the courage to resist onslaughts on one's integrity. It is not easy to play the role of the outsider. When there is insufficient compensation within for the rejection of others there is bound to be discomfort, ranging from undefined states of insecurity to self-hatred.

The phenomenon of self-hatred was one of the by-products of the emancipation of the Jews in central Europe in the nineteenth century, and is still in evidence in America. In 1903 the Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger, while admitting his Jewish origins, hurled his bitterest invectives against his own people, whom he accused of amorality and unholiness. His knowledge of Jewish life and lore was scant. The late lamented Jewish sociologist Kurt Lewin had made extensive studies in Jewish self-hatred and pointed to the psychological reasons why his people are apt to show such signs. They invariably come in the wake of the insecurities and the disadvantages associated with the position of minority peoples. Every member of a minority group, he pointed out, is apt to carry some element of self-hatred in his being because of his position in society. This may be seen in his sense of inferiority or in his unusual aggressiveness manifested in compensation for his insecurity. In milder forms it may be seen in undue emphasis on having Christmas trees in Jewish homes or in eager participation in good-will meetings. Unfortunately for all such efforts they do not cure the social ills. A two-thousand-year-old gulf cannot be bridged by compromises of this type.

It is hard to be a Jew and to be torn between sympathy for

one's people on the one hand and the desire for the approval of one's neighbors on the other. When Israeli forces invaded the Sinai peninsula many an American Jew suffered anxiety and anguish as the pressures mounted against the State of Israel. The world Jewish position became more difficult under the buffetings of the Arabs, the Russians and the Americans. The anxiety was not lessened by the knowledge that the American government had done nothing to establish the right of Jewish military personnel to serve at any air base in the world—including the one in Saudi Arabia specifically barred to Jews. Nor was it eased when the President of the United States welcomed the Saudi Arabian king who had promulgated the decree barring Jewish servicemen from his country, and who had demanded that American firms desiring to do business with the Arabs must first submit the religious identifications of their employees. No minority can be objective under such circumstances.

It is hard to be a Jew when the Jewish religion and the Jewish events of history are not adequately understood or represented. Whether it be an American secretary of state who, in his ignorance, publicly expresses the naïve notion that Arab hostility to Jews in the Middle East stems from the fact that the Jews killed Mohammed, or whether it is the belief held by many Christians that the Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus, the consequences of such opinions are invariably detrimental to Jewish life. The harmful results that follow from them can be detected in the hostile attitude toward the State of Israel by some groups, in the religious prejudices displayed by others and in the discriminatory practices against Jews in many areas of the western world. The National Conference of Christians and Jews has made only slow headway in eradicating from church teachings and religious textbooks interpretations damaging to the Jewish people. The Jews, in their effort to set the record straight, seem always to bear a disproportionate share of the responsibility for creating good will and better understanding. Gotthold Lessing in his play *Die Juden* has his Jewish character say: "If the relationship of two peoples is to be one of honesty both must contribute equally to it. But how can this be when the persecution of

our people is stressed in the other's religion and is considered almost praiseworthy?"

Finally, it is a disadvantage for the Jew to be dependent upon the advancement of democracy and cultural pluralism in an age of conformity and other-directed thinking of the kind described by David Riesman in his book *The Lonely Crowd*. The pressures that arise in times of national insecurity and international tensions are liable to disturb the democratic way of life profoundly and to bring in their train suspicion and fear on a large scale. Disturbances in the thinking of the majority invariably affect the position of any minority.

The true test of a civilization, as John Stuart Mill has pointed out, is the extent to which it can harbor without friction the greatest and richest variety of character, experience and cultural multiformity. Many had believed this test proved in the nineteenth century by the spread of democracy. But the world of the twentieth century savagely repudiated Mill's theory, and the Jew suffered most in consequence of this fact. He, of all people, has had ample opportunity to know the fragile foundations on which social orders rest. If he is conscious of the disadvantages of his position, he will not be shocked when confronted with problems peculiar to his minority status. They may help him develop a sound philosophy by which to live under the conditions imposed by the majority; they may also stiffen his backbone and make him more resolute in defense of his traditions, while teaching him the distance that society has yet to travel before the highly desirable state of cultural multiformity can be achieved.

It is hard to be a Jew, and the elimination of the difficulties that beset him must await the greater maturity of the majority of the populations with whom he shares his life on an unequal basis. In the meantime the advice of one of his illustrious sages of antiquity can still serve him in good stead: "It is not thy duty to complete the work, but neither art thou free to desist from it."

## THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A JEW

BEING A JEW has its advantages although many people may find this difficult to believe. The advantages are not so clearly discernible as are the disadvantages, but they are very important in identifying the Jewish character and in giving the Jew a certain sprightliness and zest for living that is noticeably felt in every society of which he is a part. They are his intangible assets and they far outweigh the physical handicaps that often attend his life; they are basic to his survival throughout the centuries, and contribute to his stubborn will to live. It is important for the Jew to know his advantages: they are the compensations that serve him in good stead when his path is strewn with sorrow and tribulation arising from forces over which he has little or no control.

The Jew possesses an advantage in living dangerously. As a child he has to be more alert in adjusting to his environment. This alertness accompanies him all his life. He may not always be aware of it, but deep in the recesses of his mind are the historical factors that his forbears had to overcome to survive. History shows him that his people have been expelled from one country or another more than two hundred times in the past two thousand years. With this knowledge and with the added problems that face him he quickly learns the limits of tolerance in his social order. He develops the capacity to bear his wounds and to surmount his obstacles.

Sigmund Freud tells us that when he first entered the University of Vienna in 1873 he met with disappointments. He was expected to feel inferior and alien because he was a Jew. He refused absolutely to succumb to inferiority feelings. As to alienation, he did not feel it was a matter of exceptional regret,

for in spite of the exclusion he thought that as a human being he could not fail to find some nook or cranny in the framework of humanity. "These first impressions at the university had one consequence which was afterward to prove important," he wrote in an autobiographical article, published in the *Jewish National Monthly* in 1956, "for at an early age I was made familiar with the fate of being in the opposition and of being under the ban of the compact majority. The foundations were thus laid for a certain degree of independent judgment."

Freud's experience is common in Jewish life. A member of a minority is often compelled to develop an adventurous spirit. He is unlikely to accept the thesis that this is the best of all possible worlds. He is mentally conditioned to the idea of change and is prepared to take risks and to participate in new ventures and the search after new points of view.

It is the minority status of the Jew that has given him a questioning spirit in his outlook on life. His pacifism, for example, is deeply rooted. The war colleges of the nations may well admire Israel's military prowess in defeating the Arabs, but the Jew in Israel is far more concerned about the loss of human life, both Arab and Jewish, that results from military operations. His Bible reveals the background of his thinking on this subject. Dr. Nelson Glueck, the noted Middle East archaeologist, in describing the Hebrew king Omri, tells us that the archaeological records of the ancient peoples who fought against Jews describe Omri as a feared warrior and list in detail his great military exploits. But the Bible dismisses the Jewish king with only a few lines and considers him an inconsequential figure. Very early in his history the Jew ceased to glorify wars and warriors.

Only a challenging nature can elicit great results from human undertakings. When it dwells on the inadequacies of the social order it develops prophecy. When it focuses on scientific problems it produces relativity or psychoanalysis or the polio vaccine. It is no accident that the Jew has been in the forefront of the exploration of the mind and spirit in western civilization. It is because of the circumstance often forced upon him by his isolation that he has developed an inquiring mind which has proved of such great benefit to mankind.

It is an advantage to be a Jew because he often possesses moral courage in a world of conformity, inner freedom in the midst of physical constrictions. It takes a great deal of strength to dwell apart from the mass physically or psychologically, to hold reservations about mass outlook and opinion that is often mistaken for wisdom. The Jew has been holding such reservations for centuries. His faith often left him exposed to ignorant, hostile neighbors. His synagogue often stood alone amidst centers of worship that fostered hatred for him. But he maintained his integrity and carried high his torch of learning. He still loved life, espoused cheerfulness in spite of man's inhumanity to man. He was often the leaven in the culture of his social order, as he is today.

Many years ago a Viennese author, Hugo Bettauer, wrote a book called *City Without Jews*. It is still instructive reading because it shows the effect that a small Jewish minority can have on the progress of the larger community. The late Leo Baeck, a gifted student of the cultures of the western world, also distinguished the societies that contain Jews from those where no Jews live. As far as we can look back, he noted in a pamphlet of lectures, the world has always been divided into two parts, historically and culturally, by a line running north-south across the highest mountains in the world, the Himalayas. One part is without Jews. The other part has Jews; this is the western world. Where Jews live there is apt to be ferment, scientific progress, higher living standards, the struggle against despotism and corruption. Where no Jews live there is backwardness, illiteracy, poverty and authoritarian government. Where Jews live one is apt to find rebellion against stagnation and the urge to enjoy the fruits of the earth in freedom. Where no Jews live one will more readily find decay and feudalism.

It is an advantage to be a Jew because the Jew is not likely to be subject to the mass hysteria that so often limits the growing and maturing of the body politic. Long ago his law-giver warned him: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou bear witness in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to pervert justice." Since he himself has so often been the victim of persecution and discrimination, he knows the dangers of generalizing about other human beings and their

traits. It is a remarkable characteristic of the Jew that he has lived according to the teaching of the talmudic sages for the past two thousand years: to be among the persecuted rather than among the persecutors. The late Joshua Loth Liebman once commented on this phenomenon in an interesting essay that he called *The Mystery of the Lost Hatred*, in which he observed:

In spite of all the tragic experiences of the Jewish people throughout the ages, an amazing thing occurred in the inner attitude of Israel—an attitude which can bring much inspiration and hope to our hate-torn world of today. Many sociologists and psychologists try to explain why the non-Jew has hated the Jew in history, but few indeed ever ask why it is that the Jew does not hate the non-Jew. After all, there is the problem of anti-Semitism in the world, but not a problem of anti-Gentilism. This very fact is a mystery which, as we consider it, will produce some great spiritual lessons for our bewildered humanity. . . . The Jews never became haters of the world in the way that the world sometimes has become the hater of the Jews.

The struggle of the Jew to survive the onslaughts of the centuries has given him a sense of humor. There is no humor quite like the Jewish humor because it is blended of sophistication, realism and skepticism in the face of the confident assumptions of more powerful men. The Jew's capacity to laugh at himself as well as at his world has given him a sense of sanity and balance and has proved to be his measuring rod by which he can appraise the unhappier social order from which he has suffered greatly. In the Russia of the sixties, for example, where he suffered crushing disabilities, he could answer with a smile a Russian military officer who persisted in calling his dog "Abraham": "Sir, it is a pity that you have given your dog this name; now he can never be an officer in the Russian army." And in the Russia of the twentieth century he could have his marriage broker say to an outraged prospect who had protested the appearance of an eligible bride by pointing out her cross-eye, crooked nose, etc.: "Well, that's the way of the world; some prefer Picasso, and some don't."

It is an advantage to be a Jew because the Jew has a sense of

history. When he recalls his past he recalls great figures who have left a deep and abiding mark on civilization. His ethical imagination has given him a sense of patience throughout the centuries. He has been waiting a long time for the era of social justice and peace. Without patience he might long ago have disappeared. He has never compromised with his belief that ultimately evil will be eradicated on earth.

Messianism was more than a pious hope in Israel; it was a categorical imperative. The dramatic language in which Jewish history is told serves only to emphasize the elements of patience and hope which have always accompanied Jewish experience. The Exodus from Egypt had its repercussions centuries later in distant America, and the Jewish way of life planted on American soil by European immigrants who had fled oppression and persecution has been as much associated with America's future role as a great moral force among the nations as with the opportunities to create high living standards under a democratic system of government. Few are the Jews who have not thrown their full sympathies on the side of the underdog in life's battles and who have not looked eagerly to the betterment of human conditions everywhere on earth. "May the time not be distant O God," reads the ancient Jewish prayer, "when all men shall invoke Thy name, when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness, when the world will be perfected under the kingdom of the Almighty, and all the children of flesh will call upon Thy name."

There is infinite wisdom in patience. When patience is harnessed to longevity it gives an individual an outlook on life that is not easily dismayed by the evils devised against him. The Jew has given ample proof of this in times past. He carries in his consciousness memories that have been tested by time and have not been found wanting. These memories cluster about the unfinished task of making this earth a better abode for human beings.

It is an advantage to be on the side of right, as it is an advantage to be on the side of the inevitable winner in the struggle between good and evil. That is all that has mattered to the Jew. It gave meaning to his survival in earlier days. It still matters greatly to the modern Jew who, under freer conditions,

is still confronted with the same challenge, the building of a social order that shall give men everywhere the opportunity to live fully and to live well.

## WHAT IS THE JEWISH PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE?

MANY YEARS AGO Albert Einstein, one of the greatest of the children of Israel, stated that there was no Jewish view of life. In an article which he wrote for the *Forum* in 1928 he said:

There is, in my opinion, no Jewish view of life in the philosophical sense. Judaism appears to me exclusively concerned with the moral attitude in and toward life. Judaism is not a faith. The Jewish God is but a negation of superstition and an imaginative result of its elimination. The essence of the Jewish concept of life seems to me to be the affirmation of life for all creatures. Life is holy, i.e., it is the highest worth on which all other values depend. There remains, however, something more in the Jewish tradition so gloriously revealed in certain of the Psalms, mainly a kind of drunken joy and surprise at the beauty and incomprehensible sublimity of the world, of which man can obtain but a faint intimation. This seems to me to be the loftiest content of the God idea.

Einstein's view of Judaism is not the generally accepted Jewish point of view. The overwhelming majority of the Jewish people regard Judaism as a faith and look upon God as a personal influence in their lives. And for all their lack of scientific knowledge their judgment on Judaism is sounder than Einstein's.

Judaism never had a systematic philosophy in its early stages. It underwent a great disciplinary experience in espousing the Ten Commandments and the laws and regulations scattered

throughout the Bible. The "incomprehensible sublimity" that Einstein spoke of is dependent on, if not intimately linked with, an awareness cultivated by the disciplines which arise from man's dedication to certain ideas and practices.

Philosophy as such did not enter Judaism until there were challenges directed at the Jewish way of life. In the first century the challenge was presented by Hellenistic thought. The philosophic works of Philo of Alexandria was an answer to it, but it was only an episode in the long period of Jewish history. Very few philosophic elements entered the Talmud, the record of Jewish experience of almost a thousand years before and after the Christian era; there were scattered individual expressions of thought and these were not related to any systematic process of philosophy. In the Middle Ages Greek philosophy, reinterpreted through Arabic scholarship, again challenged Jewish ideas and beliefs. This resulted in answers by such great Jewish scholars as Saadia, Judah Halevi, Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, Albo, Crescas and others. In addition, numerous sects sprang up in Judaism between the seventh and ninth centuries. These compelled talmudic scholars to vindicate their ideas and principles. This was the forerunner of the systematic religious thinking that was later to play an important role in medieval Jewish life.

Many centuries were to pass before the Jewish people again resorted to philosophical writing to establish their religious point of view. In the days of Moses Mendelssohn in the late eighteenth century when the Jews felt the impact of European civilization and were challenged by modern philosophies, they responded once again. From the first-century writings of Philo to the modern writings of Mendelssohn, Hermann Cohen, David Neumark, Zevi Diesendruck, Harry A. Wolfson, Max Kadushin and others, the Jewish attitude toward God, the world, and man has been presented in response to the particular challenges of a particular social order. Even the greatest of the Jewish philosophers never exercised widespread influence upon his people through his philosophic teachings. Maimonides is remembered more for his *Mishna Torah*—his teachings of the Jewish tradition—than his *Moreh Nevuchim*, his guide for the perplexed. But this is not to say that there is no Jewish view of life.

From its very inception Judaism was an ethical system guided by an intuitive sense of values. God was assumed, not speculated about as in Greek philosophy. Teleology, the interest in final causes, concerned the Jews far more than the intermediate steps in philosophical thinking. When a heathen demanded of Rabbi Akiba that he prove the existence of God, Akiba asked the man to prove that a weaver had made his coat. When the heathen remarked that anyone knows that a coat implies a weaver, Akiba answered that as a coat implies a weaver and a door a carpenter, so does a universe imply a maker, God. Judaism believes in the eventual triumph of man's better nature over the forces of evil that thwart justice on earth. It is a hope that through disciplinary experience which leads to the refinement of the human character, society would possess an understanding and sympathy and tenderness sufficient to permit it to live in peace and tranquillity. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace," said the prophet, "and the effects of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever." Einstein's idea of the "kind of drunken joy and surprise at the beauty and incomprehensible sublimity of this world of which man can obtain but a faint intimation" would seem dependent on, if not intimately associated with, a larger awareness of the world cultivated by disciplines rising from man's association with man, as well as with the universe. The nearest and dearest things we know and remember are human beings. We long for social contact, for the fulfilment of the gregarious instinct long before we seek the solitude and the perception of the vastness which will give us glimpses of the infinite. Einstein himself may be remembered as much for his humanity as for his researches in physics.

The problem of setting forth a philosophy of Judaism is complicated further by the fact that Judaism is not a religion of salvation by faith. Such religions as are based on this conception will more readily develop systematic philosophies to substantiate their postulates. Judaism was crystallized as a religion in biblical and talmudic times without a definitive creed. The well-known thirteen articles of faith enunciated for the masses by Maimonides eight hundred years ago never became the official creed of Judaism. They served primarily as a guide.

Since Judaism lays so much stress on conduct, it is under-

standable that Einstein would assume that it has no view of life in the philosophical sense. Philosophy is concerned with logic, with theoretical argumentation. Judaism would appear to be more psychological than logical since it is so closely tied to daily human life on earth. Yet it is possible to explain Judaism in terms that convey a philosophical view of man and his universe. Three elements are constant in this religion. They are unity, sanctity and sanity.

Life is unified, and God is the source of all life. Far from grounding morality in awe as Einstein has done, the Jewish view of morality is based on the conception of dignity which follows the realization of the unity of the world and the inter-relationship of things, on the conception that man is a partner of God in the running of the universe. The Jewish God is far more than a negation of superstition: He constitutes the core of the fundamental idea of Judaism. As Kaufmann Kohler stated in his book *Jewish Theology*:

There can be no disputing the fact that the central idea of Judaism and its life purpose is the doctrine of the One Only and Holy God whose kingdom of truth, justice and peace is to be universally established at the end of time. This is the main teaching of Scripture and the hope voiced in the liturgy.

It is the quest for Judaism's unknown God that constitutes man's greatest adventure on earth. In striving to attain harmony with nature and kinship with all living things he is filled with a sense of the continuity of life and draws meaning from his experience. He is thus tied to the past as well as to the future. It is interesting to note in this connection that shortly before his death Einstein was working on a scientific formula that would express the complete unity of the universe. He was following traditional Jewish thinking in his field of endeavor.

Life is sacred. This theme is magnificently proclaimed in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Leviticus known as the Holiness Code. Behind it is the ethic that constitutes the heart of the political philosophy of democratic government: No man is good enough to rule over another. The injunctions of the Bible are fairly familiar to us: Thou shalt not curse the deaf,

nor put a stumbling block before the blind; Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The categorical imperative for these ethics is God. The introduction to these ethics is the phrase "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." God, as the prophet Ezekiel phrases it, is the sanctifier of Israel. While it may be questioned whether the term "holiness" is a philosophical term, there can be little doubt that it is a definitive one so far as the Jewish people are concerned. God and the sacred are synonymous in Jewish thinking. A favorite name for God in rabbinic literature is "The Holy One, Blessed be He."

Life is sane. Judaism holds that it is, at its best, balanced, reasonable and sensitive. It has through intelligence achieved a measure of justice and righteousness on earth; it will some day achieve through similar means the unfulfilled hopes and dreams of the prophets and sages of Israel. The German Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen termed Judaism a religion of reason because it appeals as much to the intellect as it does to the heart. Illustrations of this truth abound in rabbinic literature. Even the minutest religious commandment can contain the elements of sanity and rationality. The Talmud relates the story of Rabbi Hillel who spoke of bathing as a religious duty. When his pupils asked him why he considered this to be so, he answered: "If somebody is appointed to scrape and clean the statues of the king which are set up in the theaters and circuses, is paid to do the work, and furthermore associates with the nobility, how much more should I, who am created in the divine image and likeness, take care of my body!" The ancient sages of Israel uttered a principle that is respected to this day in Jewish life when they incorporated in the Jewish prayer book the words, "Thou favorest man with knowledge and teachest mortals understanding." It was expected that man would use his faculties of reason in following the dicta of his religion.

The ideas of unity, sanity and sanctity are not limited to the Jewish religion, nor is Judaism alone in holding its particular view of man and the universe. But it has consistently clung to these ideas and given them distinctive emphasis through daily

affirmation. In doing this it has demonstrated a definite philosophic pattern of thought which can without great difficulty be explored further in the fields of ethics, logic and metaphysics. Einstein's objection to formulas in the religious area is not new. Before his time there was a similar objection voiced by the great naturalist philosopher Ernst Haeckel who wrote in his volume *The Riddle of the Universe*:

The astonishment with which we gaze upon the starry heavens and the microscopic life in a drop of water, the awe with which we trace the marvelous working of energy in the motion of matter, the reverence with which we grasp the universal dominance of the law of substance through the universe—all these are part of our emotional life, falling under the head of natural religion . . . The modern man who has 'science and art'—and therefore 'religion' needs no special church, no narrow, enclosed portion of space . . . His church is commensurate with the whole of glorious nature.

Solomon Schechter, in his well-known essay *The Dogmas of Judaism* called attention to the mistake of interpreting the part for the whole in Judaism. Judaism, he said, was intended to regulate not only the actions of its adherents, but their thoughts as well. We may identify the Jewish religion with life itself, but we must not forget that a life without guiding principles and thoughts is a life not worth living. The greatest Jewish thinkers of the ages considered guiding principles necessary, hence their efforts to formulate the creed of Judaism so that men should not only be able to do the right thing, but also to think the right thing. One cannot fulfil God's commands without direction, and direction calls for dogmas. There must always be a point around which the ideas of religion concentrate; this point Schechter called dogma.

Einstein was mistaken. There is an essential view, a philosophy of Jewish life. It is a dynamic approach to the universe through a unifying God about Whom the values of life are woven. This enables the Jew to see his world clearly and to see it whole.

## THE CHARACTER OF THE JEW

CONSCIENCE CAME late into the world. Its arrival marked a definite change in the order of society. For a million years, perhaps, life was wild on our planet. The gloom of the jungle hovered over all, and early man lived by the same instincts that guided other creatures about him. He fought the elements as they did, and died as they died, leaving behind no memories of his struggles beyond the crudest of flints and shards. Then there appeared a gleam of light in the thick darkness, and the cunning creature that fought his own kind as he had fought other kinds of life, perceived something that had long been hidden from him. On that day the age of character was ushered into existence. Human acts were now challenged. Life was interrupted in its seemingly aimless course. Prophets rose to rebel against the ingrained habits of the centuries. Record after record appeared to describe the new impulses that had come into being. To the human feelings of pain and sorrow was added the feeling of remorse, a perpetual reminder of the imperfections of yesterday and an incessant questioning of the worth of man's gains.

Egyptians and Babylonians built magnificent civilizations and fell by the wayside because conscience was not woven into the fabric of their culture. Assyrians, Chaldeans, Sumerians, Hittites and Persians brought human achievement to amazingly high levels. The Greeks and Romans infused into the experiences of mankind the germs of majestic philosophy, great art, science, poetry and law. But because they held conscience too lightly they, too, sank into the silence of the centuries. Only the Jewish people survived the dreadful ordeal of conscience. The story of that survival constitutes one of the great dramas of history.

The Jewish people had known days of primitivity and super-

stition. Desert stretches and fertile areas alike had brought childlike reactions to the infinite. But once the torch of prophecy was fairly lit, the flame grew to gigantic proportions. Conscience may have dawned in Egypt as James Henry Breasted the great Egyptologist has stoutly maintained. It may have been adumbrated long before Israel proclaimed allegiance to moral values. That does not matter greatly. Conscience came to maturity in Israel! That is of vital importance to humanity. Upon the devotees of Judaism rested the knowledge that this conscience was a precious thing. It assumed greater and greater proportions in their experience. It plagued them in the hour of their conquest, beat upon their awareness in the hour of their degradation, entered into their Mosaic code which decreed eternal duties for future generations, formed the inspiration of the sagas of their judges and kings and finally burst into a consuming fire in the hearts of their great prophets who, eight centuries before the Christian era, dreamed mighty dreams that have not been matched in the aspirations of mankind.

The Jewish religion defies the usual classifications of religion because the Jew has carried his norms, customs and practices uninterruptedly throughout the generations. His religion was wedded to human destiny. It depended for its survival upon a definite group of human beings, the children of Israel, and this group, in turn, linked its fate to the teachings of Judaism. Therefore his religion embraces more than faith, prayer, synagogue, ritual, holy day and functionary. It is a culture, a pattern of life that has been colored by the experiences he has known. It centers not only about certain ideas and beliefs, but also about living interpretations of those ideas and beliefs. The Talmud, that vast ancient encyclopedia of Jewish knowledge, gives perhaps the best definition of this many-sided tradition in the simple statement that Israel, God and Torah (Jewish teaching) are one. They are indivisible and grew through each other. Only by subjecting himself to the discipline of the Torah could the Jew find freedom, and only by recognizing that discipline as a means of stimulating the growth of conscience could he survive in a world of disintegration and decay.

In early antiquity the children of Israel were formed into a cohesive unit. Scattered tribes gathered under a single banner

pledged faith to a common cause and spoke of a common ancestry. This union has never been dissolved and has been a source of constant puzzlement and irritation to nations and individuals alike. To our own day the very survival of the Jew has been construed in some quarters as a conspiracy against humanity. But misunderstanding and attack have not hitherto broken asunder those bonds which succeeding consecrated generations knit together and represented in a literature that is in this era as challenging to humanity's waywardness as it was in the days of the great prophets.

If Israel dwelt apart in the ancient world it was only to escape the contaminating influence of idolatry and the more effectively to forge the spiritual weapons by which it might protect conscience. Its very particularism became its chief asset. On the one hand it emphasized its abhorrence of practices which degraded human life, and on the other hand it developed within its community a respect for the sacredness of the human personality. By means of his particularism the Jew experimented with his aspirations toward justice and nurtured definite notions with regard to conduct. The world has beheld the result of those experiments in the exalted literature of the Bible, the Talmud and in hundreds of ethical creations throughout the centuries. But it has beheld the results even more clearly in the sacrifices and sufferings of the Jewish people on behalf of conscience. Leopold Zunz, greatest of Jewish scholars of the nineteenth century, opens his treatise *Synagogue Poetry During the Middle Ages* with these moving words:

If there be an ascending scale of sufferings, Israel reached its highest degree. If the duration of afflictions, and the patience with which they are borne, confer nobility upon man, the Jews may vie with the aristocracy of any country. If a literature which owns a few classical tragedies is deemed rich, what place should be assigned to a tragedy which extends over fifteen centuries, and which has been composed and enacted by the heroes themselves?

The dedicated pursuit of the ideal of conduct in human life was not to be for a particular century, nor for a particular age, but forever. The sparks that were to burst into the flame of

prophecy had long been carefully ignited at the humble tribal hearth.

Prophecy has colored Jewish life since the days of Moses. All the ceremonies and customs linked to priestliness and designed to preserve the identity of the Jew were universal in their import and meaning. Passover, for example, was celebrated in commemoration of the deliverance of a particular people from the bonds of Egyptian slavery. Yet the dominant note of this festival turned not upon prayer for continued freedom for Israel alone, but upon the hope that all men might some day be free. The rites that the priest administered in the Temple were not long permitted to supersede the ideal they symbolized. Whenever they did become pre-eminent there was always a Jeremiah in Israel to utter the warning:

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Put your burnt offerings into your sacrifices and eat the meat thereof. For I spoke not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burning offerings and sacrifices.

When the whole institution of the priesthood was buried by the Romans in the ruins of the burned Temple in Jerusalem the great rabbi Jochanan ben Zaccai taught that no army and no might could destroy the true sacrifices of Israel: a contrite heart and a loving spirit. To the Mosaic injunction "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests" was added the significant phrase "and a holy nation." Sometimes prophecy was not easily discernible in the distinctive ceremonials and folkways of this people, but it was present, nevertheless. It was in the regimen of the ghetto life and was expressed in the hope for a redeemed humanity. Priesthood, which was at one time limited to a class of Jews ministering to the Temple area, became transformed into a community enterprise covering all the Jewish people. For two thousand years Israel's sacrifice of a loving spirit has been the moral discipline by which it might develop a nobler society. Priesthood served only as the body to concretize and make manifest the spirit of prophecy. Without that spirit the corporate existence of Israel would have ended long ago. Through it the people who began their career with Abraham of

Chaldea, continued on through Moses, Isaiah, Akiba, Saadia, Maimonides, Ibn Gabriol, Joseph Caro, Elijah Vilna and Bialik. Priesthood and prophecy thus form the heart and core of Judaism. When these are manifest in a Jewish personality they reveal a saintliness exemplified by a reverence for life, by courage in meeting the difficulties of existence and by a faith in the eventual achievement of goodness among men. Wherever a synagogue stands, wherever an age-old Hebrew prayer is uttered, there will be found an affirmation of the truths enunciated by Israel's prophets, sages and scholars throughout the centuries. The Jewish people of modern times may not know the resting place of their dead Moses, but the living Moses abides in their hearts. His words have been interpreted and reinterpreted in all generations, and his teachings are to this day proclaimed in the schoolroom and in the house of prayer as they were proclaimed thousands of years ago: "Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor favor the person of the mighty, but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor. Thou shalt not take vengeance nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The Jew has steadfastly devoted himself to the fostering of certain important concepts that permeated beyond the boundaries of his community and influenced the life of the entire western world. The first of these is God. This concept interprets the unity of life. It is constantly stressed in Jewish thinking. The individual aspects of existence are important, but each in itself does not permit a complete view of the universe. The whole must be envisaged if man is to comprehend his place on earth. This principle of unity is clearly evident in all Jewish literature. In science, for example, Maimonides demonstrates it by his declaration of one God, one law and one element. In aesthetics the welding of goodness and truth is seen as producing the resulting beauty of the spirit. In politics the element of conscience is not absent from the theory of responsible government. In individual daily life the hallowed things are not separated from the profane things. In ethics the weakness of man is equated with his strength. In the speculations of the philosophers this life is not set against the next life, nor is this world

set against a future world. And in theology God is not a transcendent being sundered from the humors of existence, but is very nigh to man.

A second concept exalted by the Jew is democracy. The Greeks and Romans, as we have noted, contributed much to western civilization. They laid the foundations of the sciences, developed laws to govern humanity, evolved systems of philosophy, wrote noble epic poems of the nature of the universe and of man. But they despised the humble in their midst. While their philosophers spoke majestically of the potentials of the human spirit they tolerated human slavery and bore with the iniquities of their social order. Israel's relatively crude state had overlooked similar inequalities in its earlier days but, having felt the pressures of conscience, it could no longer find uniform approval for unjust lordship over human life. Democracy is at the root of the Mosaic laws and constitutes the main theme of every prophetic discourse. When the children of Israel begged the prophet Samuel to appoint a king over them he warned them of the great danger that lay in such a course of action. "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you," he told them; "he will take your sons and appoint them for himself for his chariots and to be his horsemen and some shall run before his chariots . . . and he will take your daughters to be confectionaries and to be cooks and to be bakers. And he will take your fields and your vineyards and your oliveyards even the best of them and give them to his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you . . ."

When the prophet Amos inveighed against the order which condoned the selling of the needy for the price of a pair of shoes, he foresaw clearly the doom of the state that scorned democracy. He described in vivid language the weakness of a government designed to benefit the few. "For I know how manifold are your transgressions," he cried, "how mighty are your sins; ye that afflict the just, that take a ransom, that turn aside the needy in the gate. Therefore, the prudent doth keep silent in such a time for it is an evil time." Democracy in Israel meant the protection of the right of every man to life and freedom, a scrupulous observance of that right and an

awareness of the interdependence of all the citizens of the state. The humble were just as important as the great. What mattered was not the origin, but the character. In the talmudic area, when Roman life was colored by despotism, the Jewish blacksmith and the head of the Jewish academy sat together in the seats of learning. And in feudal times the Jewish moralists were forever exhorting their followers to be mindful of the dignity of their fellow creatures. "If worldly wealth be lent to thee," wrote Eleazar Rokeah of Worms, a sage of the thirteenth century, "exalt not thyself against thy brother; for both of ye came naked into the world, and both of ye will surely have to sleep at last together in the dust."

Because of this deep-rooted democratic principle inherent in Judaism we can understand how the prophets of Israel were impelled to rise in fury against those who ground the poor into the dust, and why they proclaimed the doom of a land that scorned the rights of the multitudes within its borders. It is in the light of democracy that the term "chosen people" assumes its true meaning. It is not chauvinism or arrogant pride, but the acceptance of a covenant with destiny fixed by their ancestors in dim antiquity, a perpetual reminder of a great responsibility on behalf of the humble among men.

A third characteristic of the Jew is reverence for life. Life is holy. It is, as the Psalmist puts it, fearfully and wonderfully made. It is a divine breath. Therefore, it must be carefully guarded and prized. All the forces of life must glorify life and elevate it to be but little lower than the angels in the scale of creation. How great the Jewish concern is for a single human being can be ascertained from the criminal laws of the Talmud. These laws carry the death penalty for certain offenses, yet Eleazar ben Azariah, one of the great rabbinical judges of antiquity, said that a Sanhedrin (Supreme Court) which executes a person once in seventy years represents an evil generation. And when it came to the examination of the two necessary witnesses in a criminal case the judges solemnly warned them:

Know what you are about to do. You are about to testify concerning the life of a human being. It may be that because of your testimony the death penalty will be invoked. A human life is at stake and there is nothing in the world

comparable to it. A jeweler may stamp his seal upon one piece of gold, and upon another. All the impressions are identical. But the Creator of the universe stamped millions of pieces of clay in His image, and no two human beings are alike. For this reason each person is entitled to say "For my sake was the world created," and he who destroys a single life is considered as if he had destroyed the whole world, while he who saves a single life is considered as having saved the whole world.

The sensitiveness of the Jew to social disunity and maladjustment is based on long developed awareness of the bitter cost of ignorance and selfishness, the twin sources of inhumanity in the world. The poet Richard Beer-Hofmann emphasized the same thought in his beautiful interpretation of Jacob's dream. In an uncommon and remarkable description of the patriarch who had begun his career by deceiving his brother Esau and who had later wrestled with God and man to become Israel, Beer-Hofmann indicates the true measure of the Jewish character through Jacob's awakened social conscience. His answer to God's messenger announcing the boons and blessings to be conferred upon him is typically prophetic:

And doth He choose only to toss  
Us gifts and promises of wealth and might  
And glory? Is our blood so little worth  
That He should pour it through the veins of kings?  
I want not Lordship. Knows He not that?  
What? Doth He really think I envy them—  
Egypt and Babylon and the Phoenician kings?  
I envy none—not even you, your blessedness.  
Could I be happy in a suffering world?  
By day, by night, in dreams, I feel the touch  
Of every living thing; to me man, beast,  
The stones and grasses of the field all cry,  
With mute imploring eyes they cry  
To me, and yet the answer must be His.

A fourth concept held by the Jew is peace. The pages of Jewish literature abound in expressions of peace sentiments. Indeed, the very greeting of salutation between Jew and Jew is "shalom"—peace. The majestic vision of Isaiah has had its

counterparts in every period of Jewish life. Israel's traditions have not dealt kindly with him who violated the peace of the land; King David, the singer of Israel's Psalms, was denied the privilege of building the Temple in Jerusalem because his hands were stained with blood.

Peace to the Jew was not only something connected with international life, but a matter of vital daily concern among individuals in every walk of life. He who established good will among quarreling neighbors was entitled to the same heavenly consideration as the most esteemed of scholars and saints. This deep yearning for peace imbedded in biblical, talmudic, medieval and modern Hebrew literature is the synthesis of justice and love abiding in the heart of man. Peace cannot be based on force, nor buttressed by armaments. It is the very foundation of the world. The crowning achievement of a man's life is his contribution to the sum total of peace. The Mishna, the earlier portion of the Talmud, closes with the statement that God has not found any other instrument of blessing for Israel except peace.

Judaism is linked indissolubly with a people that has survived the vicissitudes of time. Both have endured because they valued the importance of conscience in the life of man. The pathetic struggle of modern society is an ironic tribute to the correctness of the Jewish intuition. The bread for which men labor is not yet fully satisfying, nor has the gift of science brought them emancipation from fear and insecurity. The Jew sees in the acts of modern men the repetitions of the evils witnessed by his ancestors in the days of the Caesars. He is concerned with the spectacle of scientists, educators, philosophers and artists at the mercy of brute force and power. The contributions of Greece and Rome that dominate western civilization have not brought great happiness to mankind; they have yet to be softened by prophetic dreams and harmonized by conscience before they can be effective instruments in the promotion of peace and brotherhood among men. The intangible value of the Jewish teaching is as important as the tangible goods necessary to sustain physical life. The Jewish God is an awakened conscience in endless search after the beauty compounded of goodness and truth. The Jewish law is a culture which is rich and varied be-

cause it is blended with centuries of continuous life. And the Jewish existence is millennial because it is linked to a moral order established by the refined character of man.

## ON READING JEWISH LITERATURE

JEWISH LITERATURE can be enjoyable reading. This fact is sometimes overlooked by those unfamiliar with it and those who consider it only from the scholarly standpoint. Current popular books on Jewish themes may not necessarily be edifying. They are apt to show the application of skilful techniques to the seamy side of modern Jewish life. The "Wastelands" and "Marjorie Morningstars" and "Remember Me to God" type of book may be faithful portrayals of an inadequate Jewish life. They do not reflect the best that is to be found in the Jewish experience, nor do they afford the fullest enjoyment which ought to carry in its wake a deep appreciation of Jewish values and an aura of inspiration which lingers on long after the book has been read. There is a surprisingly large number of Jewish books that can communicate these desirable qualities. They are seldom located among the evanescent best-sellers.

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who counseled us not to read a book unless it was at least six years old. Time, he said, sets its own stamp on literature. This is eminently true of the Jewish book. For more than half a century the oldest book club in the United States, the Jewish Publication Society, has been offering to the English reading public books that have become Jewish classics—Heinrich Graetz's *History of the Jews*, Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews*, Israel Zangwill's ghetto stories, and others. They constitute the type of Jewish literature that can be reread often, for profit and pleasure. One or two will serve as illustrations from the society's lists; another is added

from the books issued by general publishers. The three volumes dealt with briefly in this discussion may be relatively unknown to many readers today because they have been out of print for long periods of time. But they are rewarding reading because their contents reveal a rich harvest of Jewish literary endeavor, a graceful literary style, a wide range of subject matter and an emphasis on important events in Jewish history.

*By-Paths in Hebraic Bookland* was written many years ago by the Anglo-Jewish scholar Israel Abrahams. The very title is intriguing. It is a charming collection of vignettes on Jewish life in many lands and covers an astonishingly wide area of Jewish thought: Philo's *Contemplative life* in ancient Alexandria, Josephus' answer to the anti-Semite Apion in Rome, Sherira the Gaon's philosophic studies in Babylon, Nathan of Rome's famous encyclopedic dictionary in medieval Italy, Ibn Gabirol's poem *Royal Crown* in Spain, the Sarajevo Haggadah in Yugoslavia, Joseph Hahn's *Note Book (Yosef Omez)* in Germany, Manasseh ben Israel and Rembrandt in Holland, Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* in England, and Imber's *Hatikvah* in America, to mention but a few of the subjects.

The writing is in lighter vein, but it bears the imprint of the scholar, nonetheless. It shows us that popular writing can be erudite writing. The little essay *The Sorrows of Tatnu* consisting of only a half-dozen pages offers us perhaps the best evidence in substantiation of the Emersonian dictum referred to above. It tells a story that has tragic parallels in our time: the decimation of Jewish life in Europe by the Crusaders. "Tatnu" constitutes the Hebrew letters for the year 1096, the year of the first Crusade. In commenting on the massacres of the Jews of that period Dr. Abrahams observes:

No institution is founded on its dead, it is its living upholders who alone can support it. We tell these stories of the dead, because, in their day, they, living, recognized that to save themselves men must sometimes sacrifice themselves. To pay, as the price of life, the very thing that makes life worth living is an ignoble and futile bargain. The Sorrows of Tatnu, regarded as an expression of this conviction, are converted from an elegy into a paean. But the song is discordant unless we, who sing it, are also prepared

to act it, in our own way and in our own different circumstances. *Den Toten zur Ehre, den Lebenden zur Lehre.*

The Jewish survivors of the Crusades wrote their *Martyrbücher* (Books of the Martyrs) and their *Av Harachamim* (God of Mercy) prayer which is still recited in the synagogues of the world to this day on Sabbath mornings. But the Jewish survivors of the six millions who died at the hands of the Nazis have thus far not found an enduring literary vehicle for perpetuating the memory of those who perished in the greatest tragedy in Israel's long history. Some day a religious poet among the Jews will compose a prayer that will memorialize the Jewish victims of the Nazi holocaust at every sacred service in the synagogue to match the age-long prayer commemorating the victims of the Crusaders almost a thousand years ago.

Another source of enjoyable reading is the three-volume work of Solomon Schechter known as *Studies in Judaism*. It is a golden treasury of Jewish literature replete with wisdom and marked by a classic English style. Schechter often expressed himself in aphorisms that became winged words to inspire his generation toward new and greater loyalties to the Jewish faith. His style is all the more remarkable because he did not begin to use the English language until he was past the age of thirty. In such essays as *The Chassidim, Saints and Saintliness* and the famous *Four Epistles to the Jews of England* Schechter reveals the warm glow of Jewish piety manifested by past generations of his people, a piety which made Judaism a vital daily life experience and something intimately woven into their character and destiny. His theological essays, *The Dogmas of Judaism, The History of Jewish Tradition, The Law and Recent Criticism* and *The Doctrine of Divine Retribution in Rabbinical Literature* gave the world an understanding of the rabbinic mind, an understanding that was lacking then among Jews as well as non-Jews. It was Schechter who coined the felicitous phrase "Catholic Israel." While his name will always be associated with his discovery of the Genizah fragments—papyri which had been buried in Egypt—that brought back to life the missing book of Ecclesiasticus after two thousand years, he proved in these essays to be more than a brilliant

Hebrew scholar. He was also a flaming apostle of the living Jewish tradition which he so ably represented in his person. His scholarship was not of the ivory tower variety; it was exciting and infectious. He could defend his people on a level that Jewish defense agencies of today might study with profit. When nineteenth-century Christian scholars began to whittle away the Jewish influence on western civilization by their "higher criticism" of the Hebrew Bible, Schechter was quick to call their endeavor "higher anti-Semitism."

In dealing with the subject of Jesus and Christianity as related in Joseph Jacobs' novel, *Jesus as Others Saw Him; a Retrospect, A.D. 54*, Schechter offers some sound advice to his people on the manner of evaluating Jesus as a Jew:

Israel is greater, not only than any of his sons, but than any of the sects and systems which ever went forth from his loins—Essenism, Sadduceeism, Pharisaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism.

Almost all the epithets and metaphors indicative either of the meekness of Jesus or of his communion with God were originally applied to Israel, from which they were transferred by his pupils to the founder of their sect, and we have no doubt that a thorough study of Jewish literature will lead to the conviction that Jesus was less meant as an incarnation of God than as an incarnation of Israel. . . .

A third Jewish literary work that can be read with much pleasure and profit is Marvin Lowenthal's *A World Passed By*. Where Abrahams is concerned generally with people, and Schechter with ideas, Lowenthal is occupied with places and objects. It is an urbane and witty book. It is also a treasure house of mementos of Jewish civilization in Europe and North Africa in days gone by, beautifully written and beautifully illustrated. It might be called a Jewish Baedeker, only it is much more attractive than the average tourist guide. The very table of contents is arresting: Ancient Israel in the Louvre, Tale-Telling Stones from Palestine, From Champagne to Brittany, The Golden Age in Toledo, Havens in the Low Lands, Survivals in England, Italy—"Land of the Dew," A Thousand

Years along the Rhine, The Four Lands of Poland, Under Islam in Africa, etc. The author tells us in his foreword that the book is meant for pleasure and use, and adds:

As for its use, I planned it to be a comprehensive guide—the first in any language—to old and often little-known seats of Jewish civilization in Europe and North Africa. And I have tried to communicate something of the delight I found in wandering among these neglected scenes which, though they lie on the beaten highways, offer a new world for travellers. . . .

However, I soon discovered that in describing the art, monuments, and survivals of the Jew, the men who fashioned them and the legends they evoke, I was retelling Jewish history. So the pleasure of the book, if any, will lie in reading it and watching the epic of Israel unfold itself in the shards and stones left from the drift of forty centuries.

Lowenthal is a superb storyteller as well as an imaginative guide. With this book in hand the traveler in Europe and North Africa would not have to depend on the superficial descriptions of Jewish scenes offered by tourist-agency guides often poorly equipped if not actually devoid of Jewish knowledge of the objects they describe. He will be able to learn what is beneath the surface of such evidences of Jewish life as he sees in his travels abroad. Typical of the wit and wisdom of this descriptive literature is the anecdote of the German beadle:

I once related to a friend the story told me by the beadle of Worms regarding the miraculous rescue of the woman who, I claimed, was the mother of Judah the Pious. "Not so," said my friend, "I too was in Worms; and the woman, I might tell you, was the mother of Rashi." "You were listening," I replied, "to another beadle."

There are dozens of Jewish books of equal charm and quality now neglected on library bookshelves. They exist to delight those who never had the pleasure of discovering the inspiration to be found in Jewish books. Through them it is possible to gain a deep insight into the Jewish character. In them we can discern the nobility of Jewish survival that has made Judaism

a proud heritage for the modern Jew to own. It is certain that those reading such books for the first time will be stimulated toward the attainment of a keener awareness of the varieties of the Jewish experience and a desire to read more Jewish books of enduring worth. They offer great reward for the effort made to absorb their contents. To the uninitiated they will prove a revelation; to the knowledgeable they will be a delightful reminder of extraordinary people, places and ideas which the name "Jew" can conjure up.

## II. PERSONALITIES



## STEPHEN S. WISE

TEN YEARS HAVE passed since the death of Stephen S. Wise. When viewed from the perspective of history ten years is but a fleeting moment in time, but to those who knew Wise and came under the spell of his dynamic personality, the decade since his passing has been a very long one. Deprived of his presence, the Jewish people seem singularly bereft, and it is sad to contemplate that there is a generation growing up with no intimate knowledge of the one authentic leader to have emerged from American Jewry.

Wise was a towering figure and an irreplaceable one; his death created a void that is yet to be filled. He lived in a time of imposing political figures—Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt to mention but two—who radiated enormous force and power and who combined with these characteristics great charm and warmth of feeling. These charismatic qualities were also evident in Wise, for like all great men he possessed a magnetism which irresistibly drew people into his field. But again like his powerful contemporaries, Wise also discharged his own boundless energies and vitality on a recalcitrant world and altered stubborn facts and realities. He resembled the Hebrew prophets in his relentless passion to transmute injustice, ugliness, and selfishness into values in harmony with divine injunction.

Unlike other Jewish personalities of his day, Stephen S. Wise came closest to the masses of his people because of his personal impingement upon the affairs of men. (When a letter arrived from some Jew abroad addressed to "Rabbi, United States," the American postal authorities had no hesitation in delivering it to Wise.) From presidents of the United States to the humblest among Jews and Christians came recognition of

his position as the universal representative of the Jewish people, as the guiding spirit in the struggle to eradicate social injustice. No pulpit in the land resembled his. No religious institution could match his program founded on social vision, social consciousness and social service. He was the twentieth-century embodiment of the prophetic tradition and, like his exalted forbears in Israel twenty-five hundred years ago, he inveighed against injustice with similar recklessness, passion and fervor. He, too, identified the cause of justice with all humanity.

And, like the prophets of Israel, Stephen S. Wise loved his people with a great love; his wrath at their spiritual poverty was commingled with the tenderness born of an understanding of their uphill struggles in all lands. Where they were physically oppressed he sought to alleviate their wretchedness. Where they were free but reluctant to meet the challenge of freedom, he sought to shame them into consciousness of their missed opportunities and responsibilities. There was hardly a single Jewish community in the world that did not regard Wise as the voice of Israel. But he was more than a spokesman; he was also the conscience of Israel. Even those who were bitterly opposed to his thinking and fought him determinedly throughout his career grudgingly acknowledged his hold upon the hearts of his people.

The rich organlike tones of his voice, which rendered him one of the outstanding orators of modern times, never resounded except on behalf of justice and righteousness. When he spoke from the pulpit of a synagogue or church his words reached far beyond the immediate congregation and touched distant lives, bringing the message of Israel's prophets and sages to all mankind. When he espoused labor's aims in its struggle for fair wages and decent working conditions, he was seeking compliance with the biblical injunction "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy . . ." When, as a young rabbi, he cast his lot with Theodor Herzl and made a place for Zionism in American Jewish life, it was in the furtherance of the Jewish principle of ransoming the captive and giving a home to the homeless. When he established the Jewish Institute of Religion to train rabbis for the liberal Jewish

ministry he acted in the tradition of his people in extending the word of the Lord and raising up disciples to advance the Jewish way of life. When he instituted a social-service program at the Free Synagogue he captured the essence of the Jewish religion as taught by Isaiah: to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and hide not from one's own flesh. When he engaged himself in securing civil rights for the Negro, when he inspired the law and social-action program of the American Jewish Congress, it was in keeping with the Jewish intuition that no social order is secure so long as any part of it is denied the elementary right to live in freedom and dignity. When he attacked corruption in civic affairs he remembered the prophet Amos who had cried "Woel!" in the face of officials who had betrayed their trust. And when he bore the agony and martyrdom of his people during the dark days of the Hitler era, it was because as a Jew he could not be at ease while his brothers perished in concentration camps and gas chambers.

Stephen S. Wise's career was one of many contradictions. He was a Reform rabbi, but conformed to little of the Reform ideology in his ministry. When he felt that Reform was too slow in recognizing the needs of changing times and conditions, he established his own seminary, The Jewish Institute of Religion, which trained rabbis able to serve all wings of Judaism equally well. He vigorously defended Orthodox loyalties, yet conducted his own services at Carnegie Hall on Sunday mornings. He was a General Zionist and the moving spirit in the Zionist Organization of America, yet he interpreted the word "general" in its widest sense, showing deep sympathy for all shades of Zionist thinking. He broke with Dr. Chaim Weizmann, head of the World Zionist organization, because of fundamental differences in political policies concerning Palestine, but later they became reconciled, and he stood loyally by Weizmann's side in subsequent Zionist struggles. He supported Vladimir Jabotinsky's revisionist viewpoint on British misrule in Palestine when, with Jacob de Haas, he published the book *The Great Betrayal*. But shortly after its publication he excoriated Jabotinsky for his attitude toward labor in Palestine. He was a Democrat in politics, yet would not hesitate to support a Republican candidate he deemed worthy of public office;

often he lashed out at both parties when he believed that they had compromised their avowed principles.

Wise was thirty-three years old when he founded the Free Synagogue in New York in 1907. It was not his original intention to do so. While serving as rabbi in Portland, Oregon, he accepted the call to Temple Emanu-El in New York, only to discover that its pulpit was subject to the control of the board of trustees of that congregation. This circumstance was perhaps a fortuitous one, but it led him to the daring decision to establish his own free pulpit in New York, a move that was destined to inaugurate momentous changes in American Jewish life. The Free Synagogue was a fountain from which many of Wise's later causes flowed.

His first preaching was undertaken in the Hudson Theatre, then in the Universalist Church on West Eighty-first Street, and thereafter for thirty years in Carnegie Hall. From his pulpit there issued forth the pronouncements that were not only to challenge his generation, but also to mark his leadership in American Jewish life. He was identified with so many great and noble causes that he embodied in his person a remarkable record of the social progress of the America of his time as well as the crises which wracked his people throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

But Stephen S. Wise was first and foremost the rabbi. As such he won lasting renown. The freedom of the pulpit which he possessed enabled him to serve all Jews, not merely members of his own congregation—indeed, all men, not merely members of his own faith. His Reform colleagues looked askance at him when he announced at the outset of his career in New York that there would be no place for those who would not be Jews in the fullest sense. The Orthodox and Conservative contemporaries were confused by the dichotomy between his Reform affiliation and his genuine determination to serve all Jews. But they recognized his profound commitment to Judaism—total Judaism—and to all the Jewish people. They sensed the greatness of his Jewish heart and trusted him to preserve and defend their cherished traditions. Twenty-five years later, when celebrating the silver anniversary of the founding of the Free Syna-

gogue, he gave evidence that the trust had not been misplaced. He spoke these words from his pulpit:

I have come to recognize, however tenaciously I must share the liberal mood, that the conservative spirit has its rightful place in the Jewish totality. I have come to see that the weakness and virtue of much of the so-called liberal Judaism in America has been due to the absence of a vigorously challenging and vitally contested conservatism. As I have had occasion to say to you time and again, our quarrel is not with Jews who are different, but with Jews who are indifferent; not with Jews who wish to preserve and magnify certain aspects of the Jewish totality, but with Jews, such as there are, who would minimize if not destroy everything Jewish; not with Jews who would conserve and safeguard too much, but with Israelites who would preserve nothing but their own skins.

It was always characteristic of Wise to see Jewish life in its totality. This concept was to recur time and again in his spoken and written utterances. It was the clue to the philosophy which guided him in all the movements he espoused. His Zionism conformed to the vision of the founder of the movement, Theodor Herzl, who viewed the Jews the world over as one people. Wise's activities in the American Jewish Congress and in the World Jewish Congress were extensions of his Zionist activities and followed the belief that Jewish rights were indivisible everywhere.

His strong advocacy of the law and social-action program of the American Jewish Congress carried his notion of the totality of Jewish life to the greater society which embraced all races and creeds. In an address before the American Jewish Congress in 1946 he stressed this theme, saying:

The American Jewish Congress is at one and the same time a cause and a movement. As a cause we are concerned with the maintenance and the magnifying of the American ideal . . . The American Jewish Congress clearly sees that the business of democracy is not to safeguard one minority, but the rights of every minority within its life.

The social-service program which Wise instituted in the Free Synagogue constitutes a striking example of his concept of totality in religion. The prophets of Israel, whom he enthusiastically followed, had stated in effect that religion must be in all things or it was in nothing; that it must be everywhere or it is nowhere; that it must touch all life or it touches none of it. Thousands of men and women whom the New York welfare agencies were neither prepared nor equipped to serve came to the Free Synagogue to receive help from a staff of trained workers. Some of the important institutions of the New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies owe their origin to the social-service department of the Free Synagogue which served as a laboratory for the untried social and welfare needs of the community. One—the Louise Wise Service started in 1916—is today considered by the Child Welfare League of America to be the leading adoption agency in the country. Others which came into being within the precincts of the Free Synagogue are now indispensable service agencies in America's Jewish metropolis. Wise saw his social-service program as an integral part of his religious work, and he explained the necessity for it in his autobiography *Challenging Years*:

I had felt from the beginning that a synagogue should be more than a gathering of divine worshipers and that within a synagogue's life, worship should be translated into collective and organized human service. I could not abide the reproach that in most synagogues social service is left to the sisterhoods when these do not limit themselves to the meeting of mortgage interest, as if the wise and true care of the needy bore no relation to brotherhood and brotherliness.

The social-service program of the Free Synagogue, however, was not limited to the sick and maladjusted; social service for Wise had a much wider meaning. The program of the Free Synagogue touched not only the sick and the needy, but also the forgotten slum dwellers, the underprivileged and the unemployed. Here was no synagogue for the few, sealed off in an atmosphere of comfortable smugness. The Free Synagogue, under Wise's inspiration, administered to the physical and

spiritual calls of a vast city. It was dedicated, as was its founder, to the larger needs of the community. Stephen S. Wise once defined a social worker as "the priest of God ministering at the altar of human hope"; he might have been describing himself.

The Jewish Institute of Religion which he founded—now merged with the Hebrew Union College—was a natural outgrowth of the Free Synagogue. By training rabbis for modern Orthodox, Conservative or Reform pulpits, it affirmed the essential unity of Judaism. "The old difficulties and quarrels and even battles over creed were of little moment by the side of the consciousness of the deepening need of Jewishness," he declared. "For us Jewishness meant and means a sense of the oneness with our Jewish brothers in all lands and times, whatever the circumstances, their so-called faith or unfaith." The Institute stressed the "prophecy of tomorrow," rather than the "survival of yesterday." It was a powerful antidote to the "uncatholic sectarianism" that marked Jewish religious life earlier in the century. If present day Jewish religious life in the United States is not rent by hopeless divisiveness, Stephen S. Wise and the influence of his Institute of Religion deserve considerable credit for it.

He fought many ideological battles to free the American Jewish community from the fetters imposed upon it by the few. He sharply attacked the philosophy of that influential minority of affluent Jews who divided Jewish life into two parts—the wealthy, self-appointed spokesmen and the unnumbered masses whose views were not taken into account. This minority, mostly in the Reform camp, was vehemently opposed to Zionism and disdained the democratic process in Jewish affairs. Membership in a Reform Temple at that time often resembled that of an exclusive club. Nor was Reform's cause enhanced by the attitude of many of its leaders. Even its foremost and finest representatives, men like Kaufmann Kohler, then president of the Hebrew Union College, expressed prejudices that made it virtually impossible to obtain a united Jewish community. In a famous address delivered before the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1911 Kohler demonstrated the parochial character of Reform by such sentiments as the following:

Will this Judaism of ours assume a different aspect amidst the constant influx of new elements of Jewry bringing along different views and traditions which tend to lead backward instead of forward, which, instead of Americanizing the Jew threatens to orientalize him? The foundations of liberty and humane qualities laid by the Puritan, the Quaker and the Cavalier, by the framers of the American Constitution will not be overthrown or radically changed by the millions that are yet to enter the land. Neither will the American Jew and American Judaism be Russianized, Hebraized or orientalized by visionary idealists.

A "visionary idealist," Stephen S. Wise, proved Kaufmann Kohler wrong in his prediction. He brought "Russianized, Hebraized and orientalized" Judaism into the Reform Temples by founding his own seminary and sending his disciples across the country to preach his principles. They were revolutionary in character and they changed the face of Reform completely. The battles over them often took place on the floor of the conventions of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and Wise and his sympathizers in the American Reform rabbinate were destined to win most of them. Today Reform Judaism vigorously backs the Zionism that Kaufmann Kohler so vehemently opposed, and it stresses the peoplehood of Israel that he minimized. Liberal Judaism is no longer an aloof, aristocratic entity, and the present Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion bears the impress of Wise more than it does of Kohler.

When Wise discovered that the pulpit of Temple Emanu-El which had been offered him was subject to the censorship of its board of trustees he bluntly told the officials of the congregation that in his view the pulpit and politics are not separate areas of life. He had demonstrated earlier his firm allegiance to this conviction from his Oregon pulpit. He was to demonstrate it on a national scale as rabbi of the Free Synagogue. When in 1906 he was asked by one Emanu-El board member, "What do you mean by a free pulpit?" he replied:

I have in Oregon been among the leaders of a civic reform movement in my community. Mr. Moses, if it be

true, as I have heard it rumored, that your nephew, Mr. Herman, is to be a Tammany Hall candidate for a Supreme Court judgeship, I would if I were Emanu-El's rabbi oppose his candidacy in and out of my pulpit. . . .

Mr. Guggenheim, as a member of the Child Labor Commission of the State of Oregon, I must say to you that if it ever came to be known that children were being employed in your mines (I refer to your presidency of the copper mines . . .) I would cry out against such wrongs. . . .

Wise never deviated from this courageous stand and never failed to speak out. If the average rabbi today with a passion for civic improvement finds his way less difficult it is because Wise prepared the stony ground. That American pulpits—both Jewish and Christian—are freer than ever before is in no small measure due to his outspoken boldness at a time when the climate was generally hostile to his advanced ideas.

Wise's major campaigns against evil in government did not arise out of sudden impulses. They were born of an ingrained revulsion against corruption in civil life. In *Challenging Years* he relates how he remembered clearly his childish disgust with certain things about elections in New York City. He had noticed at a very early age how men were led to the ballot boxes by party precinct leaders of both parties. The politicians helped the voter to vote.

In 1907, shortly after his return to New York from Oregon, Wise quickly took the lead in condemning political corruption. When a dinner was tendered to Richard Croker, the outgoing Tammany boss, and Wise heard that it had been attended by a dozen or more New York Supreme Court justices (as well as the district attorney who had just been elected on an anti-Tammany ticket), he attacked the exhibition and termed it "New York's night of shame." He spent many years thereafter tilting lances with Tammany Hall. The Walker investigation climaxed his many clashes with that powerful organization. Of that episode he wrote in his autobiography:

It should be made perfectly clear that Mayor Walker was not a disease, perhaps not even a symptom. He was merely the registering of one of the symptoms of what I regard as a recurring disease in the City of New York. The

City Affairs Committee, of which I was an officer, was not engaged in a manhunt. The coming or going of Mayor Walker was quite incidental to the general business of the city government. We have got to go much deeper and eradicate the attitude of the citizenry that makes possible the election of a Walker. . . .

In his unremitting battle against man's inhumanity to man, Wise followed a conviction that religion cannot be effective if it is not put to daily use. He felt that all ministers of religion were for justice in principle, but they were too ready to be silent about injustice in practice. The whole social order became his battle ground. In 1908 he campaigned for women's suffrage. In 1909 he became one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In 1914 he fought for a bill in Congress to establish a commission to inquire into old age, sickness and unemployment insurance. In 1919 he backed the American Federation of Labor in the steel strike, openly condemning Judge Elbert Gary and the steel corporation from his pulpit. In rapid succession he attacked the canning industry when it sought to legalize a seventy-two hour week for women employees, exposed the exploitation of workers in the needle trades, challenged Henry Ford, assailed the Ku Klux Klan, and sought freedom for Sacco and Vanzetti. In 1928 he defended the right of a Roman Catholic, Al Smith, to hold the office of President of the United States. In 1944 he appeared in Washington to support the enactment of a Federal Fair Employment Practices Law, proud of the fact that the American Jewish Congress, which he headed, was the first national Jewish organization to advocate legislation to eliminate discrimination in employment.

Stephen S. Wise's impact on the social conscience of every religious group in the United States was enormous. He demonstrated vividly that the humanistic and social values implicit in prophetic Judaism have relevance for mankind and were particularly meaningful in modern times. No segment of society which suffered the lash of discrimination or humiliation as social outcast failed to move his heart or to elicit his sympathy. He was one of the few religious leaders who evinced in his day a profound concern over the injustices that were

visited on the Negro in this country. He was almost alone in rebuking labor unions for their exclusion of Negroes from their rolls, warning them that few tendencies in American life were more menacing than the shutting out of the Negro toiler from the ranks of organized labor.

It was in the service of his own people, however, that Wise found his greatest fulfilment. The Zionist movement which he symbolized in the United States since his youth was the movement of a people struggling for freedom in lands of oppression. He was an apostle of Jewish nationalism when it had practically no adherents in the United States. The American Jewish Congress, to which he gave vitality, scope and direction, was the movement of the Jewish masses who had been denied a voice in their destiny. The World Jewish Congress, which he headed during some of the most crucial moments in Jewish history, became the united voice of Jews in many lands. It was Zionism, however, that constituted for Wise the motivating force behind all his activities on behalf of the Jewish people. In his book *A Gallery of Zionist Profiles*, Louis Lipsky sums up the effect of Zionism on Wise's career:

He met Herzl and other Zionists in Europe. The isolation of Wise (as well as of American Jewry) was broken by the advance of Zionism. Thus, while in a general way Wise had a cursory knowledge of Jewish theology from German sources and from his father, his Jewish masters were not theologians or rabbis. They were Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau, whose sensational utterances at Zionist Congresses inspired an evergrowing Jewish interest in the United States. That movement thus conceived became the guide of his life, colored his thinking (but did not monopolize it) and gave what he said when he spoke on Jewish subjects a tone of dignity and purpose it could have acquired from no other source.

Lipsky was eminently correct. It was Zionism that furnished Wise his concept of Jewish peoplehood and unity, which moved him to become the leading spirit in the organization of the American Jewish Congress and later the World Jewish Congress. This profound sense of identification with his people's destiny expressed itself most intensely when he became

the most formidable and unrelenting foe of Hitler and the Nazis. He was so outspoken, so passionate and so effective that the Nazis regarded him as one of their prime enemies. He spearheaded the Madison Square Garden rallies against Hitlerism which sharpened American awareness of the specter of barbarism that hovered over the world. He sparked the boycott of Hitler Germany. He was a proud and stalwart figure as he marched in the vanguard of the parades which protested the wanton destruction of Jewish life in Europe. At those times he called to mind the prophet Jeremiah who, twenty-five centuries earlier, stalked through the streets of Jerusalem with a yoke on his shoulders to symbolize his people's captivity.

Wise, too, bore a heavy yoke in the days of Jewish martyrdom in Europe. He not only fought the Nazi juggernaut, but also was compelled to defend himself from the reproaches and attacks of his own people who shrank from an open and determined campaign to combat Nazism. Such Jews even went so far as to declare that Wise was an agitator and demagogue who injured the Jewish cause. These were the same people who had confidently predicted that "even in the Germany of Hitler a patriotic, self-respecting citizen of the Hebrew religion will experience very little difficulty and will suffer no handicap." When Wise was castigated for his advocacy of the anti-Nazi boycott on the ground that it hurt American relations with Germany, he riddled that argument with scorn. His faith in American democracy was, he maintained, stronger than those shriveled spirits which attacked him. He declared that he had been an American for sixty years and a Jew for four thousand years.

Wise never hesitated when he was summoned to undertake the responsibilities of Jewish leadership. No matter how onerous the burden he was called upon to bear, he carried it willingly. The Hitler period, it may be recalled, was also the time when the British government issued its infamous White Paper on Palestine which virtually cut off Jewish immigration to that land and trapped innumerable thousands of Jews who might have found haven there. Wise was outraged by this flouting of the Balfour Declaration, and he fought a bitter struggle in the effort to alter the stubborn British point of view which was to

doom thousands of innocent Jews held in Hitler's concentration camps in Europe. Both he and his wife, Louise Waterman Wise, permitted themselves no rest in their effort to alleviate the tragedy of their own. Years later, when Mrs. Wise, as head of the women's division of the American Jewish Congress, was offered a decoration by the British government for her services to the British war effort, she felt so deeply about the inhuman conduct of the British mandatory government of Palestine that she refused to accept the honor.

It requires the passage of generations before the contributions of great men can be realistically assessed. Such men are usually enveloped in a haze of adulation and legend, and time is required to permit them to emerge in distinctive form. Undoubtedly, as time unfolds, the heroic stature of Stephen S. Wise will become increasingly evident, and the impact he left on the life of his people and his world will be measured more completely. But even after a decade it is possible to discern the manifold fruits of his labors that enhanced the creativity and the security of the Jewish people and that helped to banish oppression and injustice in many areas.

The aspirations of Zionism to which he devoted himself so completely and so magnificently during his lifetime have become triumphantly realized. Today the flag of the reborn State of Israel flies with those of other nations at the United Nations. The American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress have continued the program he inspired. They continue to give effective leadership on many fronts throughout the world in the struggle to maintain and fortify the principles of democracy and freedom for all people, to promote the unity and creative survival of the Jewish people, to assist Israel in developing her life in freedom. All these principles Stephen S. Wise represented in his lifetime, and the dynamic force which the American and the World Jewish Congress were to exert in the Jewish community and throughout the world is a vivid testimonial to the values by which he lived.

The prodigious energies of Stephen S. Wise were expended in far-flung directions and the effect of his labors can be distinguished in a variety of institutions and practices which we take for granted today. The great metropolis of New York

breathes cleaner political air because of the battles he waged against corruption in civic life. The New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies is now an all-embracing service agency thanks in part to the many undertakings in this field tried and proved for half a century in his Free Synagogue laboratory. The seminary he founded shares the name of the greater institution with which it was merged in his lifetime and follows to a great degree the principles he stood and fought for. The civil rights program which he pioneered in the company of American moral giants of another day has been transferred into legislation reflecting higher national standards of economic and political democracy. The labor movement, whose cause he supported long before the clergy of America thought that it was a minister's obligation to promote the welfare of the working class, is now a great and powerful force in the life of the nation. His legacy is interwoven with the fabric of our contemporary society.

No man struggled harder than Wise to lift the common man to the levels of responsibility commensurate with his freedom. He did not achieve all his goals. His concept of the totality and unity of Jewish life did not take as deep a hold on American Jews as he would have wished. The bigotry he attacked from a thousand platforms has not yet been eradicated. But no faithful recorder of the twentieth-century scene will be able to overlook the tremendous influence he exerted on the social awakening of his time. He changed men's minds and presided at the birth of new worlds. We shall not soon see his like again.

## SHOLEM ASCH

SHOLEM ASCH DIED at the age of seventy-six while on a visit to England. He was buried in a large woolen prayer shawl in accordance with an oft-expressed wish to be laid to rest as any

other Jew. He requested that his final burial place be in Bat Yam in the land of Israel where he had resided during the last few years of his life. Thus ended the career of an extraordinarily gifted Jewish writer who is destined to be a controversial figure in Jewish life long after his death.

He was a strange paradox. He wrote the best-selling novels, *The Nazarene*, *The Apostle* and *Mary* after half a century of labors in the Jewish vineyard where he was considered the equal of, and by many the superior in stature to, Mendele Mocher Seforim, Isaac Loeb Peretz and Sholom Aleichem. Certainly he ranked with these great writers among the immortals of Yiddish literature. He had given to the world unforgettable portrayals of Jewish life in eastern Europe in books like *In the Beginning*, a beautiful collection of tender Bible tales, *Motke, the Thief*, a widely known and treasured classic about a vagabond compelled by circumstances to become a thief and a murderer, *Salvation*, which he himself considered his best work and the cornerstone of his literary structure—a masterful description of a world that is no more. He had written epic works like *Three Cities*, volumes of short stories like *Children of Abraham* and plays like *The God of Vengeance*. Then, with his fame securely established, Asch turned to writing novels about New Testament characters that delighted the Christian world and confused and angered a great part of the Jewish world.

In the light of his career this enterprise seemed as puzzling as the intensity of his Christological thinking. What is more amazing about Asch is that he had been planning to write a life of Jesus throughout all the years in which he was contributing so richly to the Jewish field the great Yiddish works that were to establish his reputation in the world of letters. In a little-known interview published in January, 1944, that Asch granted to Frank S. Mead, editor of the *Christian Herald*, he said:

I couldn't help writing on Jesus. Since I first met him he has held my mind and heart. I grew up, you know, on the border of Poland and Russia, which was not exactly the finest place in the world for a Jew to sit down and write a life of Jesus Christ. Yet even through these years

the hope of doing just that fascinated me. For Jesus Christ is to me the outstanding personality of all time, all history both as Son of Man and as Son of God. Everything he ever said or did has value for us today and that is something you can say of no other man, dead or alive . . .

I suppose that the final inspiration to write, the insistence that I write came to me in Palestine. I saw that I could never write about Jesus until I went to his homeland. So I went in 1907. Then the story really came alive . . . If you want the date it was in 1908 that the real writing began . . .

Jewish reactions to Sholem Asch's venture into the Christian field were not uniform. His confused people found it hard to cast him into limbo after so many truly great Yiddish works had come from his pen. Chaim Liberman, noted Yiddish writer and leading columnist for the *Jewish Daily Forward* reflected considerable Jewish sentiment in his book called *The Christianity of Sholem Asch*, a bitter attack on the man whose earlier writings had been published by the same newspaper. Maurice Samuel, noted Jewish author, who had translated the first two of Asch's Christological works, refused to translate the third, *Mary*, for reasons which he did not disclose until some time after the appearance of the book. He, too, was shocked and puzzled by the turn of Asch's writing. In a letter to Asch which he wrote in 1948 and made public years afterwards, Mr. Samuel said:

It baffles me that you should consider the book a contribution to better understanding between Jews and Christians. I am painfully certain that the book, if published as it stands, will do two things, increase anti-Jewish feeling and bring your name into disrepute. I don't want to see either of these things done . . . In *The Nazarene* and *The Apostle* you took the more or less neutral stand that Jesus came for the gentiles, not for the Jews. In this book you say flatly that Jesus came to liberate the Jews from the "rabbis and scholars." In the earlier books you were at pains to show that the ethics of Jesus were rooted in the developing Jewish traditions. But in

*Mary* you make it appear that Jewish law and ethics become petrified after Moses . . .

British and Israeli Jewry did not react in the hard manner as did American Jews. When he died the London *Jewish Chronicle*, the celebrated journal which could hardly be considered radical in Jewish thinking, gave him tribute and honor and defended his Christological writings, saying:

Not only Yiddish literature, but the whole world of humane letters is deprived of a giant figure in the death of Sholem Asch. While he was generally recognized as the greatest Yiddish writer of this generation, the translation of his works into English and many other languages and their widespread diffusion had given him a universal fame . . . The attacks that were made upon him by some theological partisans were really a tribute to his ability to stimulate discussion about those fundamental issues which will confront all thinking men and women in these times. It may well be that we have said farewell to the last great Yiddish writer of all time.

It is ironic that the religiously oriented London *Jewish Chronicle* could include the *Jewish Daily Forward* among the "theological partisans" who attacked Asch. The *Forward* is primarily a socialist newspaper and looks upon Judaism from a sociological point of view. But the position of the London Jewish journal is such that it reflects the thinking of British Jewry as a whole.

In Israel, Asch was well received in the closing years of his life. Capacity audiences came to hear him whenever he spoke in public. The Israeli ambassador to Great Britain attended his funeral and thus lent official recognition to the place of importance that Israel reserved for Asch.

There are two Sholem Asches that must be considered in any full appraisal of his writings. One is his early period when he devoted himself exclusively to Jewish life and produced the Yiddish literature that endures among his people. The second is the man who occupied himself with his interpretations of Christianity in the hope, as he expressed it, that the result would bridge the gulf between the two great religions

and end the separation that has existed for two thousand years.

Asch's Yiddish writings assure him a high place in Jewish life. He was a magnificent storyteller—one of the greatest of all times—and his stories and novels will inspire Yiddish readers in years to come. There are few scenes in literature as gripping as his account of the spiritual dual between the rabbi and the priest for the soul of a Jewish girl in love with a Christian as depicted in his *Salvation*. But his people will not honor him unreservedly. They will always hold doubts about his integrity because of his preoccupation with Christian subjects in his later years. Neither will his hope of bridging a two-thousand-year-old gulf between the two religions be fulfilled by his later writings. Christians are likely to interpret them as confirmation of their point of view. Jews will continue to doubt their value as instruments of good will.

The works of the early Asch are the truer measure of his literary genius than his "obsessive" novels which did him little good and the Jews even less good. To paraphrase a saying in the New Testament, what did it profit Asch to acquire world fame and fortune through such undertakings and lose his Jewish soul? All his protests against Jewish attacks that followed the appearance of his Christological novels did not obscure the suspicion in many Jewish circles that he was an apostate. Nor did the publication of his *One Destiny* and *My Personal Faith*, written to explain his position, help to resolve the confusion in Jewish circles about his ultimate place in the literary life of his people. His later writings lacked the spontaneity that marked him as the master craftsman at the height of his powers. His *East River*, *A Passage in the Night*, *Moses* and *The Prophet* added little to his stature. In his earlier writings Asch was able to do something which his contemporaries could not do. He used his talents to depict universal themes on a scale comparable to Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. His *Three Cities* still remains as a magnificent canvas on which can be seen the chaos, the war and the misery attending the Bolshevik revolution forty years ago. It still offers instructive reading to those seeking understanding of the way of Communism. With prophetic insight Asch wrote:

The new gods sat in the high places, on the tribunal.  
... "Messianic days—and no messiah!"

... The old methods of luring human bodies into his [Moloch's] insatiable maw were no longer effective: "Czar" and "fatherland" were already stale catchwords. So Moloch had discovered a new one, "revolution."

Sholem Asch was a controversial figure in Jewish life long before he wrote *The Nazarene*. His *The God of Vengeance* which was published in 1905 was considered an important play, but it stirred considerable feeling in Jewish ranks because of its bold description of the seamier side of Jewish town life. He had written his first novel in Hebrew, but Isaac Loeb Peretz, the great Yiddish writer, persuaded him to make Yiddish his medium of expression. His novel *Kiddush Hashem*, which was published by the Jewish Publication Society in English translation, remains to this day a remarkable analysis of the helpless Jewish position in the time of the Chmielnitzki massacres in Ukrainia and Volhynia in 1648. In this novel there is pictured on a small scale the frightful holocaust which overcame the Jews of central and eastern Europe three centuries later under Hitler. But Asch did not write the story of the disaster that befell his Jewish people during his own lifetime. It was left to a non-Jew, John Hersey, to tell the epic tale in his novel *The Wall*.

Asch wrote two books dealing with the Nazi destruction of Jewish life. One was called *The War Goes On*, a novel dealing with Jewish life in Germany in the early days of the Hitler dictatorship. The second, *Tales of My People*, published in 1948, is a volume of short stories dedicated to the six million Jews who perished in the Nazi era. It is conceivable that with his great talents Asch could have told the story of the greatest Jewish tragedy in history in the grand manner of his *Three Cities*. But his preoccupation with Christian thought dulled the brilliance of his earlier Jewish perspective; however, in spite of the fact that it removed him from the orbit of his people, it could not detract from his genius. Sholem Asch's Jewish writings will be read long after his other work is forgotten.

## LEO BAECK

WHEN LEO BAECK died at the age of eighty-three the Jewish world lost one of its most distinguished and colorful personalities. He was not only an outstanding Jewish scholar, but also a symbol of Jewish dignity and saintliness at a time when Jewish fortunes were at their lowest ebb during the Hitler era. Leo Baeck was the rabbi of a Berlin congregation when Hitler came to power. He was a leader in the Reform Jewish movement in Europe and a member of the faculty of the rabbinical seminary in Berlin, the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. He was well known for his Jewish studies. His books *The Essence of Judaism* and *The Pharisees* were for many years recognized as authoritative statements on Judaism and the Jewish position in history. The colossal Jewish tragedy in Germany brought Baeck to the fore as chairman of the National Committee dealing with Jewish affairs, a council established to represent the entire Jewish community of the country in dealing with the Nazis. He proved his fitness for leadership in those days of Israel's agony by great resolution, saintliness of character and unparalleled courage. When sixty million Germans spurred on by the Nazi government were using every known technique to destroy the will to live of the tiny Jewish minority of slightly more than half a million souls, Baeck composed a prayer to be read in all the German synagogues on the eve of the sacred Day of Atonement, the year's holiest night. The prayer has become a classic document. It reads in part:

In this hour every man in Israel stands erect before his Lord, the God of justice and mercy, to open his heart in prayer. Before God we will question our ways and search our deeds, the acts we have done and those we have left undone. We will publicly confess the sins we have com-

mitted and beg the Lord to pardon and forgive. Acknowledging our trespasses, individual and communal, let us despise the slanders and calumnies directed against us and our faith. Let us declare them lies, too mean and senseless for our reckoning. . . .

. . . In this day of sorrow and pain, surrounded by infamy and shame, we will turn our eyes to the days of old. From generation to generation God redeemed our fathers, and He will redeem us and our children in the days to come. We bow our heads before God, and remain upright and erect before man. . . .

When the synagogues in Germany were destroyed in one day, thousands of Jews fled the country in panic. Baeck, too, could have left the land of bondage. He chose to remain with his people. When in 1939 he escorted a group of Jewish children to London, he could have remained in freedom in Britain, or he could have migrated to the United States where he had been offered a teaching position on the faculty of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio. He chose, instead, to return to Germany and share the heavy burdens of his people. He suffered their common fate when he was incarcerated in the Theresienstadt concentration camp. He was then nearly seventy years old. He endured twenty-seven months of imprisonment under Nazi brutality and survived where younger men broke down and died. The story of that chapter of his life has been movingly recorded in Eric H. Boehm's book *We Survived* published by the Yale University Press some years ago. He was harnessed to a heavy garbage-wagon and while he performed labors ordinarily assigned to animals he discussed philosophy with the man harnessed alongside of him. He taught the concentration camp inmates patience and fortitude in their trials. No greater example of the Jewish will to live could be written than Dr. Baeck's description of his activities in Theresienstadt when he was not under the lash of the taskmaster:

Religious services were held wherever and whenever a group felt the desire for it. In the evening or early hours of the morning we maintained our faith and gave strength to all in prayer. In our services we recalled bibli-

cal times—the commandments, the prophets, the Messianic idea—and earlier persecutions of the Jews. Thus a community arose out of a mass and we could forget the misery around us.

Baeck was saved from execution in his first months in the concentration camp because another rabbi named Baeck had been reported on the death notices sent to the Gestapo headquarters. He was later recognized by the notorious butcher Eichmann of the Gestapo and his doom was sealed. But the Russians arrived in the nick of time and liberated him.

He was now past seventy-two years of age. He might well have followed the course of rest and retirement. Instead he plunged into Jewish life on a scale truly astonishing for one so advanced in years and one who had undergone so much in his lifetime. He traveled the continents, lectured at the Hebrew University in Israel, addressed gatherings on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal, taught courses at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in the United States, presided over the meetings of the World Union of Progressive Judaism in London, lent his energy to the development of the State of Israel, and proved to be a vital force in world Jewish leadership. Liberation from a German concentration camp seemed to renew his days as of old. He was one of the most active and creative octogenarians of modern times.

Leo Baeck's position in Jewish life was an exalted one. His writings helped to teach many in his generation. He had the unique distinction of standing alone against the *Protest Rabbiner* (protesting rabbis) of Germany in supporting Theodor Herzl and the Zionist movement in his country. He was a valiant champion of the Jewish position in the early days of his rabbinate when he wrote an essay in reply to *What is Christianity?* by the famous German Protestant theologian Adolf von Harnack. The Christian thesis derogated Judaism. Baeck's essay was later amplified in *The Essence of Judaism*. He argued that the heart of Judaism lies in its God conception and in its moral commands. The moral law taught in the Bible, elaborated in the Talmud and codified by subsequent Jewish philosophers has guided the Jew throughout the ages. In this sense the essence of Judaism is universal and eternal.

In later writings he expanded his point of view, but he never departed from it. Differentiating between the temporary and the enduring in Judaism he said in *Commentary* magazine in 1948:

Two thousand years ago the wise rabbis counseled building a fence around the law. This fence protected the philosophy of the numerically weak people and controlled their lives in days of uncertainty when philosophy could not live exposed to the harsh, alien world that encompassed them. The hedge was in the form of customs and ceremonies. Many of our practices came into being because of the necessities of that particular age. Others arose out of the needs of later periods of Jewish history. It is conceivable that our own age will produce its quota of customs and ceremonies to meet the conditions and areas of present-day living. There is only one standard by which these forms can and ought to be judged—do they protect the permanent qualities of the Jewish religion and give them body and life and meaning?

It is possible to lose sight of the forest because of a few trees. Dr. Baeck called attention to the fact that the hedge grew so high at times that the Jew could not see what was going on in the rest of the world. Sometimes the fence in the form of custom and ceremony became more important than the principles which it was designed to protect; sometimes it prevented the Christian from understanding Jewish life. Nevertheless, those who built the hedge around the Jewish philosophy of existence built better than they knew. They protected the Jewish ideal and kept it clean and bright. However, hedges have to be trimmed to be attractive. They cannot be considered as elements disassociated from the idea that is Judaism. Herein lay Dr. Baeck's liberalism. He insisted that we must be careful not to mistake the hedge for the house we live in. We must not elevate the customs and ceremonies above the great truths they illustrate.

In a lecture entitled *The Jew—The Mental Character and the Historical Situation*, delivered at New York's Temple Emanu-El in 1950, he gave further evidence of his conscious-

ness of the golden chain of Jewish association that lends meaning and substance to the Jewish religion today. He said:

In a people of a younger moral memory, of a smaller substance conscious and subconscious of spiritual life, of a shorter history in culture and religion, perhaps centuries could be set aside. A people such as the Jewish people, with so vigorous a history, with so deep a moral and religious foundation, with so strong an inherited faith and attitude, cannot do without these centuries. And even suppose some individual may try to do so; a Jewish people outside its historic and religious spheres, wherever its place, would be a displaced or a misplaced people. Moreover, peace of mind, peace of soul, both of the individual and the community, is conditioned by an inner equilibrium; in a very good measure it is, therefore, dependent on the harmony between the days and the generations, the conscious and the subconscious. The reality and the soundness of the Jew's mental character is founded herein.

Leo Baeck remembered his people and its history all the days of his life, but he cast doubt and confusion on his Jewish position in the minds of many Jews when he publicly stated after World War II that the Jewish people forgave the Germans for their atrocities. Like Professor Martin Buber, who had rationalized the terrible period of Jewish suffering under Hitler with the thought that God had gone into hiding, Baeck forgot the lines of Deuteronomy that form the background of the Bible on the Sabbath day called *Zakhor* (Remember), when there are recalled the words: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were enfeebled in thy rear, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God . . . thou shalt not forget." Writers like Aaron Zeitlin, while praising Baeck's contribution to Jewish life and literature, nevertheless condemn him for what they call his assimilationist outlook on life. In spite of his membership in the Jewish Agency and his presidency of his country's *Keren Hayesod* (Palestine Foundation Fund) such writers term him psychologically a "German of Mosaic persuasion." This is

due primarily to the fact that they tend to equate the period of the emancipation in Germany with the period of assimilation. And they cite as proof Baeck's own words contained in his *Essence of Judaism*. There he states that Jews by their spiritual composition cannot but feel kindly toward their homelands in spite of pain and sorrow inflicted upon them, that because of their universalistic character Jews cannot but feel at home in any country in the world. Critics like Zeitlin believe that his kind of Judaism is an abstract one admixed with German Protestantism. They say that by such standards of Judaism as Baeck raises, one does not have to be a Jew to be Jewish in spirit and character.

In all fairness to Dr. Baeck, no judgment of a man is adequate if it be detached from the context of his philosophy. Baeck's seemingly paradoxical attitude toward the Jew and Judaism is recorded in a published statement he made on the subject while on a visit to the United States several years ago. He was a dualist in his thinking. In seeking to answer the question "What does new life in the land of Israel mean to all of us?" he answered that he saw the entirety of Jewish life as an ellipse, a formation determined by two foci, two centers of strength. In ancient times, he maintained, there were even two realms, the land of Judah and the land of Israel—two realms, but one body under one obligation, a formation with two centers of history. Later on there were two great separate communities of Jews in Babylon and Palestine. But they felt deeply the wholeness and uniqueness of their unity. Judaism has kept its breadth through its centers controlled by unity of purpose.

Within this point of view Baeck could find comprehensible what his critics found to be incomprehensible—the attempt to make his peace with the Germans even though he had been a victim of their atrocities and was saved from extermination by a hair's breadth, as it were. During a lecture he was asked: "In view of their avowal of 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' how can Christians justify the Crusades which killed so many Jews?" He replied that the question of the Crusades was but one example of the tragedies which have afflicted humanity whenever fanatic faith superseded genuine religion

and then became an instrument of politics. Jews were usually the first victims. No religious man can justify such acts, but this does not mean that we must be hard-hearted or self-righteous; we must take into consideration the background, environment and circumstances. Sometimes cruelty results from the world's indifference to situations that spawn perverted minds and perverted actions.

Rationalize as they will, neither Baeck nor Buber can establish a good moral case for their conduct in turning the other cheek to the country where Jews still lie unknown and unnumbered in their graves and where the associates of Hitler disclaim knowledge or responsibility for what took place before their eyes. The *Av Harachamim* (God of Mercy) prayer that is recited on the Jewish Sabbath in the synagogues of the world is not alone for the Jewish victims of the days of the Crusades, but for every Jew and every non-Jew who ever fell in innocence before a tyrant. When Leo Baeck remembered his people, as he so often did in his long and illustrious life, he rendered ridiculous the judgment that he was of an assimilationist type of mind, or a German of the Mosaic persuasion. But when he forgot his people in the name of rationalized universalism, as he did in the instance of bespeaking forgiveness for the most terrible destruction in all Jewish history, he was less than the majestic figure of heroic proportions who had been the flaming symbol of decency in a Germany gone mad. The universalism of the prophets can have many interpretations. But none can exceed the particularistic kind of devotion to it by the one people that has exalted it as an eternal hope for all mankind while holding close to its inner integrity and keeping its memories of pain and sorrow as hallowed tribute to its martyrs. Dr. Baeck, like Professor Buber, had sufficient Jewish tradition on his side to refrain from voluntary effort at conciliation with those who, like Lady Macbeth, show the "damned spot" on their hands, evidence of the murders they committed. Baeck was a man of tremendous proportions in a world of little men. He possessed moral integrity and courage where others fell by the wayside. His writings will continue to inspire both Jews and non-Jews in years to come. Because of his saintly character he endeared himself to all who came in contact with him; there

are religious leaders living today who can testify to his influence and to the shining faith that emanated from his great spirit.

In a religion like Judaism it is not a sin to forgive where forgiveness is called for. It is only a pity to forget where forgetfulness is not called for.

## ISRAEL ZANGWILL

ISRAEL ZANGWILL belongs to another generation. But his influence is still felt in the Jewish world. His stories of ghetto life are the source of perennial delight to the English-speaking Jews. His translations of great medieval Jewish religious poems give added meaning to the high Holy Day and Festival prayers. And his spirited essays in defense of Jews and Jewish ideals have great timeliness in the world of today because they were written under the impulse of prophecy for a modern age. Zangwill caught the eternal message of the Jew. His writings reflect it.

Zangwill's life was not an isolated one. He was one of England's great Jewish leaders in the days of such giants as Joseph Jacobs, the eminent Jewish historian, Claude Montefiore of Synoptic Gospels fame and Solomon Schechter who had come from eastern Europe to adorn Cambridge University scholarship with his vast erudition. He was an early associate of Theodor Herzl, a glowing apostle of the Zionist movement to which he lent the prestige of his name and the abundance of his talents. And although he clung to the idea of "Territorialism"—the establishment of a Jewish homeland elsewhere than in Palestine—there was no gainsaying the power and the influence of his support for a Jewish homeland in the early days of the Zionist movement when every notable recruit to the cause was such a precious asset. He remained to his dying day a staunch advocate of the Herzlian concept of the Jewish State, and if he had strong reservations about the Balfour

Declaration which declared England's readiness to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, time tended to vindicate his suspicions of the motives of Britain in the clash of interests between Jews and Arabs.

Zangwill's writings are fresh and vital because he wrote in several styles. He was a wonderful storyteller, as can be discovered in his *Children of the Ghetto*, *Dreamers of the Ghetto* and other such creations. He was a gifted poet, as can be seen in his beautiful and felicitous translation of the medieval *piyutim*, the difficult, complex Hebrew religious poems in the prayer books for the Jewish holy days. And he was a superb essayist, as can be noted in the remarkable collection of his various shorter pieces under the title *The Voice of Jerusalem*. Zangwill also wrote plays that were produced in London and New York theaters. He was the author of books on such general themes as *Italian Fantasies*, *Plaster Saints* and others. His book *The Melting Pot* contributed a distinctive phrase to the English language.

Zangwill's lasting fame rests upon his ability to portray the Whitechapel ghetto district of London as it existed in the eighties and nineties of the last century. This he did in matchless English prose. He became the world's foremost Jewish publicist of his day. The essays in his volume *Voice of Jerusalem* are, without doubt, the most powerful and eloquent apologetics ever written on behalf of the Jew, and his particular essay in that volume *The Position of Judaism* is generally considered to be the greatest single exposition of the Jewish philosophy of life to be found in the English language. The unforgettable force of Zangwill's imagery is expressed in such sentences as the following:

The religion of a race is its vision of the Good, even as its science is its vision of the True, and its art is its vision of the Beautiful. Israel's vision of the Good was God; and to his unifying instinct the True and the Beautiful had no separate existence. . . .

. . . The chronicle of Israel is a record of backslidings and castigation, a religious epic whose incidents only serve to point morals, and its mightiest heroes are weak and sinful. And this conception found material realisation in a

moralised state-system: in a theocracy to which nothing human was alien, so that sanitation was as much a part of religion as sacrifice; in a worship of Justice and Mercy; in an unfaltering adoration of Right before Might that was a paradox in a Pagan world; in a brotherhood of Israel which was to be the nucleus of the brotherhood of man. . . .

Were Zangwill living in the age of Arnold Toynbee he might have given answer to the professor's theory of living Jewry being no more than "Syriac fossils." That answer might well have matched his magnificent delineation of the Jew in history written half a century earlier. It still remains, however, as the most effective statement descriptive of the historical position of the Jew in the context of civilization. The irony, the wit and the authority behind his writing on this subject can be instructive to those in our time engaged in defending the place of the Jew in the world.

Long before Hitler came to power the Jewish position had begun to deteriorate throughout the world because of attacks of notorious anti-Semites and their unwitting tools. There were in circulation in those earlier days the forgeries known as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Russia, the writings of Gobineau in France, the creations of Stocker in Germany, Houston Stewart Chamberlain in England and the editors of the *Dearborn Independent* in the United States. Zangwill was one of the earliest of the Jewish writers to answer the vicious attacks on Jewish life and integrity. His observations, like those of Heinrich Heine before him, were prophetic of the turn of events that was to take place in Germany. In the first decade of the twentieth century he wrote:

Already the charge against the Jews begins to be, not that they killed Christ, but that they, with their Christ, killed the old national gods. Chauvinism is creeping into theology, and lament for the slaughter of these innocents is becoming the *dernier cri* of decadence. . . . Two Jews, Christ and Karl Marx, have ruined Latin civilization! And so the racial Valhallas are revisited, pilgrimages are made to the Pantheons. . . .

Zangwill, as one of Theodor Herzl's earliest lieutenants, felt that destiny was calling to the Jewish people in the person of

the great Zionist leader whom he introduced to British audiences as the architect and founder of the third commonwealth. He said that the Jews had followed Dr. Herzl's amazing career with approving good will or admiring hostility. They could not pretend to ignore what Herzl means to the Jews; neither could they refrain from welcoming him as a prince in Israel who bears his people's sorrows in the manner that Moses felt the Egyptian bondage. In the long centuries of Israel's exile the nation produced many great men, he noted. But Dr. Herzl was the first statesman the Jews had since the destruction of Jerusalem.

Israel Zangwill foresaw many of the problems that would trouble the Jewish people living in free countries and subject to the pressures of assimilation. In an essay contributed to the Nahum Sokolow jubilee volume he reflected much of the concern that Jewish leaders in our day manifest over the weaknesses in Jewish religious life, over the difficulties of maintaining the distinctive character of Judaism. He observed that

Language . . . is the proof of life. There can be no difference of life without difference of language. . . .

Let us apply this test of life to the so-called emancipated Jewries to the Jewries of the post-Ghetto period. . . . Among the richer and more educated Jews of London, all words of a specifically Jewish character have been gradually dropped. Even the word *Shule*, one of the last to go, has been replaced by synagogue. . . .

. . . It is not, perhaps, so much that a change of vocabulary produces a change of conception; more probably the conception is already in process of transformation under the influence of the alien environment . . . . When the Hebrew salutation "Peace be to you" is abandoned for "How do you do?" or "How's business?" we are afforded the indication that Jewish consciousness and ideals have been silently under transformation, and that the ideas of the *milieu* are winning their way. . . .

Reading or rereading Zangwill's writings will prove a rewarding experience for Jews of our time who imagine their problems are new or peculiar to their age. They will discover that this English Jew had a phenomenal grasp of the significance of the changes that confronted Jewry in its entrance into

the modern world, that his range of thought was encyclopedic, that his intuitions were prophetic, and that he still remains a brilliant guide for a generation caught between the worlds of yesterday and tomorrow.

## LOUIS D. BRANDEIS

HEBREW PROPHECY WAS stamped upon Louis D. Brandeis at birth. His people were proud Jews who had come to the United States to seek freedom denied them in central Europe. One of his kinsmen, Lewis N. Dembitz, had written the standard work, *Jewish Services in Synagogue and Home*, published among the first volumes of the Jewish Publication Society in 1898. It is still a classic work in its field. Brandeis grew up in a liberal atmosphere and absorbed the best of American traditions that were commingled with his Hebraic passion for justice and righteousness. If one wished to know the character of Justice Brandeis he could find no better illustration than the dramatic incident that preceded his nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States.

When Supreme Court Justice Joseph Lamar died in January of 1916 President Woodrow Wilson cast about for a successor to the vacant high office. He told Attorney General Gregory that he wanted someone from New England, and Gregory answered that Brandeis was the man. At that moment Brandeis was delivering a lecture before the American Bar Association Convention at Northwestern University on "The Living Law." This is what he was saying:

The trouble with law is that it is not living. It has not kept pace with the rapid development in political, economic and social fields. Legal justice has failed to conform to contemporary conceptions of social justice. Since the adoption of the Constitution the ownership of the tools of production has passed from the workman to the em-

ployer. Legal science—the unwritten or judge-made laws—ignores the new social needs, and courts continue to apply eighteenth-century ideas of individual liberty and the sacredness of private property. The struggle for the living law must be waged.

Here one can discern in legal phraseology the call of the ancient Hebrew prophets who were concerned with the human life of a community far more than they were concerned with its property. His words are reminiscent of the call of Amos: "Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Israel I will turn away the punishment thereof; but for the fourth I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes." It was Brandeis who gave substance to Roosevelt's New Deal and inspired the phrase "horse and buggy days" used by the president to stimulate thinking on the changed conditions of the modern world. It was he who helped create the broad base of economic equality and the social security that is now accepted as natural to the American way of life.

But it is interesting to note that when Brandeis was informed of his nomination to the Supreme Court he was on the way to address a Jewish mass meeting on the subject of the suffering Jews of Europe. He came late to his own people. A chance meeting with Jacob de Haas, onetime English secretary to Theodor Herzl, revealed to him the magnificence of the Zionist adventure. He applied his philosophy of the living law to the Jewish conditions of the time. Jews abroad were not living; they were merely existing, waiting for a better day. Palestine was not just an ideal to him; it was a reality. Here the last Jew could be rehabilitated in an atmosphere of intensive Jewish life and culture. For fifty-eight years of his life Brandeis had been separated from his people. Now he felt consciously the ingrained social character of the Jews represented in their striving after the things that had created America—the spiritual fruits of three thousand years of civilization. He felt that his people had something that must be saved for the world. They needed a home in order to preserve their ethical ideals. Once he became convinced of this need he more than compensated for his late beginnings.

Brandeis threw himself into the Zionist cause with the zeal that was typical of all his efforts. He studied Zionism diligently and thoroughly and became an eminent authority on Palestine. He traveled from city to city to rouse his fellow Jews to the necessity for building up the land. One thing he constantly sought to impress upon his auditors: The successful modern Jew is not a self-made man, but the beneficiary of an inheritance, a treasure to be transmitted to posterity unimpaired at least, if not augmented. He identified Zionism with the movement of the early Pilgrim Fathers of New England.

Brandeis' equation of Zionism with Americanism is a ringing challenge to those Jews and Christians in our time who are unduly concerned about the problem of dual loyalties. It constitutes a sound rebuke by the most illustrious of American Jews to the negative spirit of the American Council for Judaism which, by its conduct, has proved itself to be neither American nor Jewish. We recall his words because they have as much meaning now as when they were first uttered over a quarter of a century ago:

Let no American imagine that Zionism is inconsistent with patriotism. Multiple loyalties are objectionable only if they are inconsistent. A man is a better citizen of the United States for being also a loyal citizen of his state and of his city; for being loyal to his family and his profession or trade; for being loyal to his college or lodge. Every Irish-American who contributed towards advancing home rule was a better man and a better American for the sacrifice he made. Every American Jew who aids in advancing the Jewish settlement in Palestine although he feels that neither he nor his descendants will ever live there will likewise be a better American and a better man for doing so.

The story of Brandeis' life is admirably summed up by a story he himself told on the occasion of his famous address before the American Bar Association referred to above. There were two men, he said, whose lives he would have cared most to have lived. One was Bogigish, a native of the ancient city of Ragusa off the coast of Dalmatia—a deep student of law who, after gaining some distinction at the University of Vienna

and in France, became a professor of the University of Odessa. When Montenegro was admitted to the family of nations its prince concluded that, like other civilized countries, it must have a code of law. Bogigish's fame had reached Montenegro, for Ragusa is but a few miles distant. So he invited Bogigish to undertake the task of preparing a code for his country. But instead of using his great knowledge for this purpose Bogigish proceeded to Montenegro and for two years literally made his home with the people—studying everywhere their practices, their needs, their beliefs, their points of view. Then he embodied in law the life which the Montenegrins lived. They respected that law because it expressed the will of the people.

Brandeis' teachings will live on in Jewish life because he helped his people to know self-respect. This he did by his labors in restoring the ties of the Jew to his noble past and by making him conscious of the possibilities of his wonderful future. If the American people will have cause to remember Brandeis with gratitude it will be because of their knowledge of his capacity to show them the way to a more abundant life.

At dawn of a summer morning in 1937 the writer and his wife left with a fairly large group of Jews from the Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek in Palestine for the founding of a new settlement on an ancient Arab site called Juara. The new colony was to be known as *En Hashofet* (The Well of the Judge), dedicated to Justice Brandeis. Brandeis knew in advance of this event. He was happy at the honor bestowed upon him, and he contributed generously of his means toward its development in the stony Judean hills. He would have appreciated the ruggedness and determination of the young settlers who moved the rocks with their bare hands before they could use a plow. Today En Hashofet is the center of the fruit-growing area in Israel. Its progressive school system established by Joseph Wilfand, a Harvard graduate, is modeled after the famous Winnetka progressive education project in the suburb of Chicago. It is altogether in keeping with the ideas that Brandeis had enunciated in his rich full lifetime. Not only does this progressive settlement in Israel perpetuate the name of one of the greatest of American Jews, but the spirit of the law which he so magnificently interpreted in his long career on the bench

and at the bar. The impress of this spirit is felt in many corners of the world today.

## HAYIM GREENBERG

THERE WERE MANY facets to the remarkable personality of Hayim Greenberg. He was a Labor Zionist, yet he received an honorary degree from a theological institution, the Hebrew Union College, which numbers among its alumni a group of rabbis violently opposed to Zionism. He was steeped in Jewish lore and literature and knew well the rabbinic mind, yet he had a close affinity for Mahatma Gandhi and Gandhi's teachings. He was a secularist in his outlook. But he possessed the spirituality that is usually attributed to the devoutly religious individual, the saint and the mystic. He was popular with the masses, yet was a deeply introvertive man. He probed the lot of the worker and fought by the side of the humble. But his thinking reflected more the philosopher and the poet. He was a layman. Yet he could deliver sermons that might be the envy of most rabbis.

Hayim Greenberg was a great man by all the standards that characterize great men. A linguist of extraordinary abilities, a seminal thinker and an editor whose influence reached far and wide, he was also a gifted public speaker much in demand on the lecture platform. But his greatest influence was perhaps felt at the coffee table, for he was a great conversationalist in an age too busy for conversation. He was a member of the Jewish Agency Executive, and he made no small contribution to the labors that brought into being the State of Israel. But he will probably be remembered more for the fascinating pieces which he wrote for *The Jewish Frontier* and *Der Yiddisher Kempfer*, the publications he edited for many years.

His breadth of view and his encyclopedic learning were manifested whenever he defended the Jewish position in the

world. Those who did not know Jewish history, nor understand Jewish psychology, could easily attack the Jew. Greenberg, whose knowledge seemed universal in scope, could meet his opponents on their own ground. Toynbee, for example, could derogate the Jews of today. But he did not know Jewish literature, nor was he aware of the processes of Jewish history. Hayim Greenberg, who knew Christian history and literature, could include the Christian point of view in his search for an answer to the questions concerning the course of civilization. Freud, who had little familiarity with Bible scholarship, could claim in his book *Moses and Monotheism* that Moses was originally an Egyptian and that the Hebrew culture is a borrowed culture. Hayim Greenberg, who did know psychology, disposed of Freud's charge with the profound observation that it does not matter very much who invents a good product; what is important is the use made of it. The Egyptians may have invented monotheism, but the Jews lived by it. Therefore, the original Jewish Bible has survived to this day among the people who bear the stamp of that survival, whereas the Egyptians of today have little relationship to Ikhnaton, the purported original advocate of monotheism.

Greenberg refused to let his people escape their history and destiny. He was recognized as a Zionist leader who saw Zionism as only a part of the life development of the Jewish people. On one occasion when he spoke to the Rabbinical Assembly of America of the future of the Jew in the Diaspora, he said:

Our problem is what shall we do with the very many Jews who belong to *Am Yisroel* (The People of Israel) by heredity, biology, environment, on the basis of some tradition, experienced or rejected, but who do not belong any longer or are not aware that they belong to the *Knesset Yisroel* (The Fellowship of Israel), which is not an ethnic concept, but a purely spiritual one. I will tell you why I ask this question. Perhaps you will be amazed at listening to these words from a Zionist. Zionism means something to me; it always has since the early days of my boyhood. But Zionism itself is one of the elements, or one of the aspects of the manifestation of a deep spiritual crisis in Jewish life. Zionism itself was an indication of the begin-

ning of a separation between two concepts—*Am Yisroel* and *Knesset Yisroel*.

The clue to Hayim Greenberg's life and labors lay in his concept of the role of his people throughout history. He once noted that his people were conquered physically on many occasions, but that they were never conquered spiritually. Because they chose God they became a chosen people. Through this act they lived creatively in every age—the period of the Bible, the Mishna, the Gemara, the Geonim, the Cabala, the Shulhan Aruch and the modern period. Jews are not an ethnic minority, he maintained, but the bearers of a theory of the cosmos. Minorities come and go; the cemeteries of history are full of dead peoples.

When the New York Board of Rabbis celebrated its seventieth anniversary some years ago, it invited Greenberg to address its assembly. The rabbis present counted in their midst many scholars in rabbinic lore. They were profoundly moved by this layman's knowledge of Jewish literature as they listened with rapt attention for almost two hours to his exposition of Jewish spiritual problems in the modern age. He told them about a conversation he had heard on a ship sailing from Italy to Israel. It was between several rabbis who were leaving the hardships of Europe to settle in the land of their fathers. The subject was *Tisha b'Ab*—the fast day on the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Ab in commemoration of the destruction of both ancient Temples in Jerusalem. Should not this day be abolished now that Jerusalem is restored and no longer sits solitary? All agreed except one young rabbi. He insisted that there is still need to observe this day as a fast. He argued that *Tisha b'Ab* represents the evil in the human heart. Evil has not yet been eradicated from the world; until it has been done away with we cannot abandon this day of mourning for the waywardness of the human spirit.

The inspiration for his thinking was drawn from a great variety of sources; he was master of a dozen languages. His articles in the special issues of *Der Yiddisher Kempfer* constituted authoritative statements on Jewish history, medieval commentary and Talmud lore. His more frequent essays were re-

flective of his wide reading and his thorough grasp of the philosophy of many peoples. His expression was always direct. He often spoke extemporaneously and later developed the spoken utterances into classical essays in Hebrew, Yiddish or English. The effectiveness of his appeal was deep and lasting: No one who ever heard Hayim Greenberg speak could forget the effect he caused by his personality; no one who ever read his mature writing could fail to be instructed.

Once he participated in a symposium of journalists before the convention of the Conservative rabbis of the United States on the subject "Whither American Judaism?" He spoke more like the prophet than the journalist, being concerned less with the foibles and failings of the American Jews than with their vision in an age of confusion. He told them of reading in a Hebrew book (published in Israel but written in Russia) of an exchange of correspondence between two rabbis in the Soviet Union. One was the rabbi of Bobruisk and the other was the rabbi of Pavlograd. They were discussing the future of Jews in Russia. The younger rabbi in Pavlograd inquired whether it was worth continuing in the rabbinate. His synagogue was not attended; there was no school permitted for the teaching of Hebrew because of Communist proscription. But the Jews of the city paid his salary even though he had comparatively little to do. Would it not be better for him to resign and become a factory worker in Russia and still maintain his integrity as a pious traditional Jew? The rabbi of Bobruisk advised him not to resign. He wrote about cycles in human history. Fundamentally there are only two cycles, he said, the naturalistic and the metaphysical. Now we are in the midst of a new naturalistic cycle, he told his colleague, a secular cycle in a highly developed industrialized world, and inside Soviet Russia there was great aspiration toward achieving a technological civilization. "Our duty," he continued, "is to be patient and wait. This new naturalistic cycle is going to commit suicide. I can already see the germs of death in this new government. Then there will follow a metaphysical outlook which will permeate Soviet Russia—and not only Russia, but the whole world. And the language of the Jew will be better understood than it is today. But in order to welcome the emergence of this new cycle I must

have you in Pavlograd and you must have me in Bobruisk, and there must be hundreds like us in other places. That is your task."

Greenberg's influence was powerful because he dealt with the eternal in the experience of Israel. Without the certainty of the Jewish religion he saw Jewish life as a horizontal matter. He sought to teach his confreres the greatness of a vertical Judaism that penetrates through the layers of Jewish history to the very core—the Jewish prophet and his enduring message. This message always emphasizes the consciousness of man's place in history. He drew freely from his rich storehouse of learning to illustrate the basic concepts of his philosophy. The important thing, he maintained, is to know your relationship to those who preceded you and the reasons why they thought as they did about the world and about man.

He once told the story of the *Hassidic* (Mystic) rabbi who was visited by a Hassid out of season. The visitor was troubled by doubt. "Why does that bother you?" the rabbi asked him. "I can't live in a world without God," the disciple answered. "Then go home and forget about it," the rabbi told him; "so long as a layman is genuinely worried about God it is a good sign."

Hayim Greenberg was not concerned about the religiously perplexed Jew, but about the non-perplexed, the ignorant, the indifferent one whose roots were shallow. He was not concerned about forms, only principles. And in his pursuit of spiritual values he caught and interpreted the message of the prophets of Israel as few have done in our day. He once said that what we need are not guides for the perplexed but guides for the unperplexed. To have read his words, to have listened to him on the public platform, was to understand somewhat better the meaning of the call of the prophet Jeremiah: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, let not the rich man boast of his riches, let not the strong man boast of his strength, but if a man must boast, let him boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth. For in these things do I delight, saith the Lord."

## LUDWIG LEWISOHN

LUDWIG LEWISOHN WAS one of the gifted and sensitive artists of our time. He was a controversial figure in his younger days when he was associated with liberal thought and endeavor, and he was a controversial figure in his later years when he gave himself completely to the Jewish people and their problems. But whatever his cause, he espoused it vigorously and eloquently, for he was one of the great stylists of the English language and had few peers in the literary field.

He had begun his career as a literary critic and a fierce protagonist of the liberal way of life. He had won acclaim for such writings as *The Modern Drama*, *The Story of American Literature*, *The Spirit of Modern German Literature*, *The Poets of Modern France* and the widely known *Up Stream*. Then, because of personal setbacks which were attributed to his Jewish origins, he turned his back on the large world and directed his energies toward the Jewish people. An unbroken stream of thought bearing on the Jew and the Jewish attitude toward life came from his pen. For a generation his name was linked almost exclusively with books, articles, pamphlets, public addresses and social endeavors connected with the lot and destiny of his people. Among the better-known books of this period were *Israel*, *The Island Within*, *Mid-channel* and *The American Jew*. He was not content to devote himself exclusively to literary undertakings. He plunged into Zionist activities and, for a time, he edited the publication of the Zionist Organization of America called *The New Palestine*. He lectured in many parts of the country on Jews and Judaism. And he ended his last years as Professor of English at the Jewish-sponsored Brandeis University.

It is recorded that when Frederick the Great published some poems, he was disturbed by the criticism of them from the pen

of Moses Mendelssohn. He summoned the critic and demanded to know how he had dared criticize the poetry of an emperor. Mendelssohn is reported to have answered that when emperors write poetry they take the same chances as poets. There could be no doubt about Lewisohn's pre-eminence in the field of letters, but there was doubt about the quality of his Jewishness despite his ardent espousal of Jewish values over the years.

He wrote with passionate eloquence and with moving intensity on such Jewish concepts as justice, peace and decency in human relations. His scalpel laid bare the hypocrisies of western civilization and his volume *Israel* constitutes an echo of the earlier intuitions of Max Nordau whose forgotten book *The Conventional Lies of Society* shocked the nineteenth-century world. But he had no particularly Jewish home life, no great Jewish roots to make him the representative Jew. It is one thing to plead fervently on behalf of the disciplines of Jewish life embodied in the commandments and traditions. It is quite another thing to embrace these disciplines wholly. In his *Mid-channel* Lewisohn wrote:

Our house . . . is a Jewish house, wherein appropriate symbolical tokens—hard enough to find, alas, so far have these things fallen into neglect—of our history and its memories and its pieties are plain for all men to see. We try to avoid over-emphasis and even the shadow of going beyond our needs and convictions. So we have placed no *mezuzah* at our door . . . Nor do we, like the Italian *ritornati*, practise the *mitzvoth*, the good acts of obedience to the *halakoth*, the decisions of the sages. But we are very sure that the spirit of the decisions of the sages, profoundly applicable to modern life as it happily is, is the dominant spirit of our house. . . .

It is difficult to understand the precise nature of such a Judaism. Certainly no religious Jew—Orthodox, Conservative or Reform—could possibly accept such an attitude as representative of Judaism and the Jewish tradition. The kind of compromise that Lewisohn made with his theory and his practice was bound to leave him in an isolated position. There is an illuminating *midrash* (the interpretative-story literature of the

Talmud) dealing with a debate between three disciples of the great rabbinical leader Judah the Prince, the compiler of the Mishna. They were discussing the most important verse in the Bible. One said it was "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Another said it was "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." A third answered that it was ". . . the one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning and the other lamb shalt thou offer at dusk." They brought their dispute before their master who decided in favor of the third. The other two disciples protested, "How can you consider a daily animal sacrifice-offering superior to loving the Lord and loving one's fellow men?" He replied that professions of justice and love do not establish the character of the ethical bond with religion, but that daily practices do. It is through practice that ethics have meaning.

Lewisohn's inconsistency increased in proportion to the intensity of his espousal of the neo-Orthodox point of view. He may have been an eloquent preacher to his people, but he was not fully at ease spiritually in Zion. Perhaps this was at the base of his contradictory nature. The very sharpness characteristic of his later writings seemed to indicate an unfulfilled inner need, a wish to establish that which needs no establishment by one at home in his group. His *Up Stream* in which he speaks of his childhood gives us an indication of the difficult path Lewisohn was attempting to follow:

Two scenes stand before me which symbolise the character of the social group from which I sprang. This is one: I am sitting in a half-darkened room and my heart beats and my cheeks burn. It is Christmas Eve. I look out through the dark pane and across the street. Ah, there, behind an uncurtained window, a tree with candles. . . . And at last, at last, a bell rings. The folding doors open and there—in the drawing room—stands my own tree in its glimmering splendor and around it the gifts from my parents and my grandmother and my uncles and aunt. . . .

And the other scene: It was my grandmother's custom, in pious remembrance of her husband, to visit the temple on the chief Jewish holidays—New Year and the Day of Atonement. And once, on the day of the great white fast, I was taken to see her. . . . The rabbi, the cantor and the

large congregation of men were all clad in their gleaming shrouds and their white, silken praying shawls and had white caps on their heads. . . .

Two scenes. But the first was native and familiar to the heart of the child that I was: the second a little weird and terrifying and alien.

The sages of the Talmud commented on the difficulty of learning in later years. Elisha ben Abuyah said it is like ink written on blotted paper; the new writing is not clear. There is likelihood of difficulty in the readjustment of one's habit patterns to meet a new world. Up to the age of forty Lewisohn was only faintly Jewish, then suddenly his universalistic outlook changed to the particularism which characterized all his later writings. To attribute this change to conversion would be to oversimplify the thinking of one of the keenest minds of our generation. The change in his outlook was in reality no sudden one. A careful reading of *Up Stream* might reveal side roads which would eventually lead to the main highway of his Jewish thinking in his later years. He was a frustrated man. He had felt in his literary profession the curse of discrimination. He had associated this discrimination with personal exile, and the personal feeling connected with his own earlier creative life was transferred by him with considerable logic and skill to the people from which he sprang. The seeds of sympathy for the handicapped of his people were thus sown. He realized that his own roadblocks and frustrations were part of his heritage as a Jew. Slowly and painfully he traversed the road back to his people. He learned Hebrew. He studied Jewish history and literature intensively. He acquainted himself to an amazing extent with the religious ethics of his group, as his beautiful illustrations in *Mid-Channel* demonstrate. He wrote analytical essays on the Jewish point of view. And always he sought the core of the meaning of Jewishness. Even his columns in the Anglo-Jewish press gathered together under the title *The Answer* reflect the arduous thought and labor of a man who was a late discoverer of great truths rather than a convert to a new religious doctrine. The fact that Lewisohn came to Judaism because of disappointments in other realms is far less important than the fact that he reinterpreted in his exquisite

English prose style the Jewish way of life and thought, its sublime aspiration in worlds of cynicism and decay. We see these interpretations in such early volumes as *Israel* (1925) and such late writings as *The American Jew* (1951). He had a remarkable intuition in sensing the Jewish view of life. He noted that it is not easy to be a Jew, that it will be easier when the Jew is content to be himself, to listen to his own soul, that in the moral world he cannot understand compromise. When the great oppressed the humble, the prophets of Israel sought to destroy the state even unto obliteration.

In *The American Jew*, written thirty years after his return to his people and couched in the form of an apologia pro vita sua, he gives evidence of the clarity of his insight into the Jewish approach to society. In a brilliant passage he bares the incessant struggle of Hebraic thought against the inroads of the lesser things of life:

For so soon as we use our reason we know that even could technical manipulation build a painless society, the painlessness would be only that of the stalled ox. The conscious mysteries of birth and death and bereavement, of spiritual sorrow, of the passing of love, of the chasms between aspiration and fulfillment, the dread of the soul falling a blinded thing in an unmeaning universe—all these unquenchable sorrows would remain. Religion is man's way of dealing with these. And they are as sharp as, if not sharper than, the pains of the bodily wants. Homelessness in the universe is a deeper anguish than maladjustment in a transitory social structure. And perhaps we shall be able to build a society in which men will be less alienated and homeless when we have recovered a sense of the universe as not empty and meaningless but as divine and rational.

It is possible that in these sentences Ludwig Lewisohn described his own situation. Homelessness and alienation were his lot in his earlier years. They did not completely leave him in his later years, even though he had seen the flame of Sinai in the sky and learned to read the signs in the flame. If he oftentimes struck an impatient note in his themes it was because he was searching for an end to his own alienation and homelessness. He was enamored of the Jewish religion, but not

deeply attached to it. He was of the land of Israel but not in it, despite the fact that he knew the meaning of exile. His own contradictory nature gave him no inner peace; his Jewish roots were not deep enough to give him complete security.

But there is no gainsaying the authenticity of Ludwig Lewi-  
sohn's Jewish intuition in a pagan world from which he re-  
coiled because of its brutality and its inhumanity. One cannot  
but think of his creative achievements in terms of permanent  
contributions to twentieth-century Jewish life. Both the art  
and the artist recall to us the lines of Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Wrought in sad sincerity;  
Himself from God he could not free.

## HENRIETTA SZOLD

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO the world was shocked by the wave of pogroms that swept over tsarist Russia. These pogroms followed the notorious May laws that confined the Jews of that unhappy land to districts called "The Pale." Thousands of Russian Jews left the hate-ridden country to migrate to the United States. They settled mostly in centers on the Atlantic seaboard. In the city of Baltimore where many of these Russian Jews came there lived a young woman, Henrietta Szold, daughter of one of America's outstanding scholarly rabbis, Benjamin Szold. Her early training gave her a keen grasp of the problems of the underdog in life, and a sure instinct for service to her fellow men. In her childhood her home was associated with the movement for the liberation of the American Negro. With the influx of Jewish immigrants it became a hospice for the newcomers. She began to apply her wisdom and gifts to the service of the strangers in her community in a fashion that clearly marked her as a leader in the field of social service. There were no evening schools in Baltimore or any other city.

Miss Szold inaugurated evening classes to teach the immigrants the language and the customs of America; at the age of twenty-three she was a pioneer in Americanization programs. Fifty years later Fiorello La Guardia, mayor of New York, conferred upon her the freedom of the nation's metropolis and said that it was Americanization such as that in which she pioneered that made possible his own career in the new world, that by such labors America was saved from a new slavery. Had she only this achievement to her credit, Henrietta Szold would be remembered in history as a great contributor to the direct development of her own people and to the indirect growth of her country; she had lived a complete life in this dedicated undertaking.

When the Jewish Publication Society of America was formed, it required a competent secretary. It turned to Henrietta Szold, brilliant and facile in her scholarship, possessed of a knowledge of languages and devoted to Jewish learning. For twenty-three years she held the position of secretary of the society, serving also as a member of the publication committee. It was not an easy task, for it demanded voluminous correspondence in several languages and the translation of books into English for the benefit of the American Jewish public. Her versatility in editing, translating and organizing contributed no little to the expansion and growth of the society. She translated the first two volumes of Louis Ginzberg's classic *The Legends of the Jews* from German, Nahum Slouschz's *The Renascence of Hebrew Literature* from the French, and Moritz Lazarus' standard two-volume work *Ethics of Judaism* from the German. She compiled the index to Heinrich Graetz's *History of the Jews*, a five-volume work, and together with Cyrus Adler, edited the well-known *American Jewish Year Book* annually. In 1942 she was elected an honorary vice-president of the organization. Had her labors ceased at this point in her life, she would be remembered with gratitude for her extraordinary accomplishments. She had earned a pre-eminent place as student and scholar among the people of the book. The character of the Jewish Publication Society of America was shaped and molded by this remarkable woman.

When Miss Szold's father died, her love for the great rabbi

and her devotion to his ideals brought her to the Jewish Theological Seminary where she took the regular rabbinical course of studies. She thus had the distinction of being the first woman to study at a rabbinical seminary in the United States. Other women followed her, but none possessed her knowledge or equaled her capacities. It was her profound Jewish scholarship and her great literary abilities that won for her a world-wide reputation among her people long before her Zionist activity established her enduring fame. In the year 1892 Nahida Remy Lazarus, a well-known German-Jewish author, published a book called *Das jüdische Weib* (The Jewish Woman) dealing with famous Jewish women throughout the centuries. The story of Henrietta Szold's life and accomplishments was included in its pages. She was as firmly established a personality among her own people on the European continent in those days as among her own in the land of her birth.

When the Zionist movement was organized Henrietta Szold was one of its earliest supporters. The forerunner of the Zionist Organization of America was known as the Federation of American Zionists. Miss Szold became the secretary and, in that capacity, she perhaps contributed more than any other individual toward the understanding of the aims and ideals of such men as Herzl, Nordau, Sokolow and Weizmann among American Jews. With these labors she might well have marked an end to a creative and inspiring career, but her greatest work was yet to be performed.

In the year 1909 Henrietta Szold visited Palestine. It was not the land of Israel we know today. But the effect the country had upon her imagination was an overpowering one. She saw here what she knew only from descriptive Hebrew literature—the place where the Bible was born, the earth on which the Hebrew prophets walked, the centers where the great Jewish seers and sages taught the Talmud. And she also saw the pitiable conditions under which the Jewish people were living at that time. There was trachoma among the inhabitants and a high infant-mortality rate, as well as poor and ineffective standards of sanitation. She reflected about the fact that in the city of Baltimore and in dozens of Jewish communities the world over there were Jewish women who were interested in the

Zionist movement, who loved Palestine because of its association with Jewish traditions. But they were without a cause. Henrietta Szold gave them a cause; she founded Hadassah.

In 1912 she gathered some women together and formally established the organization with which her name will forever be identified in Jewish history. The motto of Hadassah, "The healing of the daughter of my people," was taken from the utterance of the prophet Jeremiah. Twenty-two years later, speaking at the laying of the cornerstone of the Rothschild Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus, Miss Szold recounted the steadfast aim of the organization she had founded and knit together so well:

In the life of the spirit there is no ending that is not a beginning. The activities of Hadassah have been and shall be of the spirit. The thought was that the Hadassah practical work was born of the Zionist recognition that the Jewish soul stands in need of healing which wells up for it from the soil that produced the prophets. The Hadassah women in America, while seeking spiritual healing in their Zionist faith, bestowed healing upon the land of their ideal and the people it harbors.

Henrietta Szold's guidance of Hadassah was motivated by a great spiritual impulse and buttressed by that Jewish scholarship which gives scope and breadth of vision to the organization. She bestowed upon Hadassah the same care and concern that marked her labors on behalf of other causes she had espoused earlier. She had been director of education of the Zionist movement in the United States and had taught many a Jew understanding of the necessity of working for the redemption of the Jewish soul through Zionism. Under her stimulus Hadassah was bound to be interested in Jewish culture if it were to meet her standards. Were she alive today she would undoubtedly rejoice in the ambitious undertaking of her followers in the field of adult education aimed at raising their spiritual sights. This aspect of "the healing of the daughter of my people" was as important in her eyes as the healing of the blind or as the great social-service programs of Hadassah in other fields.

In 1914 Miss Szold gave up her American residence to devote

herself entirely to work in Palestine. How well she succeeded is written in the achievements of Hadassah which she engineered and inspired. There was no limit to the hours she devoted to her dedicated labor of love. In 1912 when Hadassah was organized it undertook to provide one nurse trained in America for maternity service in Jerusalem. Since there were only one hundred and ninety-three members in the organization that year with dues aggregating a total of five hundred and forty-two dollars, the undertaking seemed well nigh impossible from a practical standpoint. But unexpected help came from Nathan Straus who told Miss Szold that he and his wife were planning a trip to Palestine and if Hadassah could raise the funds to maintain a nurse there he would provide the funds for her traveling expenses and himself pay for a second nurse. When the Straus family sailed for Palestine two nurses accompanied them. From the very outset these nurses were overburdened with work and hampered by lack of supplies. They sent appeals to America for layettes and soon sewing circles were being formed among Hadassah members everywhere. From such modest beginnings did the huge Hadassah supply bureau emerge.

Once started on its course, Hadassah made tremendous headway. Miss Szold's tireless labors bore rich fruit. It was not long before a Hadassah medical unit was on its way to Palestine. It consisted of forty-four people, including physicians, dentists, nurses and administrators who carried along ambulances, trucks, automobiles, drugs and medical instruments. In 1921 Hadassah opened Infant Welfare Stations. In 1924, barely a dozen years after its formation, it was operating its famous health centers. In 1925 it supported the Jewish National Fund land purchase in Palestine to the extent of almost a million dollars. And at this time it also instituted the hospital service—first in Jerusalem, then in other parts of the country. How necessary the Hadassah hospital was to the Jewish population of the country can be gathered from the fact that when Miss Szold first came to Palestine she discovered a "Jews'" hospital conducted as an evangelical missionary institution which first demanded the baptism of newly born Jewish babies before rendering help to the mothers in childbirth. Since few Jewish

mothers would accept such conditional services the death rate in childbirth among them was very high.

The practical embodiment of Henrietta Szold's dream can be seen everywhere in Israel today. She was always concerned with preventive work, and the intelligence she lent to social service programs made them models of their kind. Ralph Waldo Emerson once spoke of an institution as the lengthened shadow of an individual. To appreciate the Hadassah program in Israel is to know the architect who designed it. It is far in advance of most countries in the world.

She was now past seventy. She had successfully pioneered in health, sanitation and education among her own. She had earned the right to lay down her burdens and rest after having lived three full and rich lives. Forty-six of her years had been spent in the service of her people in America and Palestine. The Jewish Publication Society, the Zionist Organization of America and Hadassah bore the stamp of her personality. So did the entire Jewish community on the shores of the Mediterranean. She was so loved and respected there that she had been elected to the Palestine Executive as one of three in the land chosen to represent the Jewish people in direct dealings with the British mandatory government. Her responsibility lay in the field of education and health. It was a great honor and a deserved one; it was the first high and representative office to which a responsible Jewish body had ever elected a woman in all Jewish history.

Then came Hitler and the start of the greatest tragedy to befall the Jewish people in their long career on earth. Henrietta Szold saw clearly that the Hitlerite attack on the German Jews was not limited to Germany. She spelled out her new undertaking in these words:

When the Hitler regime in a single day destroyed the foundations of the German Jewish community built and fortified in the course of the generations, two voices were raised. One protested. The other proclaimed plans for rehabilitation. Among the latter, the constructive plans, none met with louder acclaim than that which provided for the withdrawal of the Jewish youth from the poisoned air of Germany. The proposal was not to provide a refuge,

but an opportunity, the opportunity to live untrammelled in the Jewish spirit and secure the education that is fit for a life of useful activity. Palestine alone, of all the countries of the world, offered such an opportunity in a measure at least approximately adequate to the need.

Miss Szold sounded the call for Youth Aliyah to Hadassah. The response is now firmly imbedded in Jewish history. The Youth Aliyah program is still continuing. In the early stages Miss Szold met every ship that bore Jewish children to their safe haven in Palestine. She supervised the details of sending the children to the kibbutzim (farm colonies), to the technical schools and to the vocations that would help them become future builders of the country. She had a two-fold aim, to give the young the benefit of Hebrew studies while affording them the skills necessary to work on the soil, or in industry, or in the professions. In her seventy-fourth year this wonderful woman threw herself into a new enterprise, the greatest in her career, and she did it with all the abandon of youth. To gain some idea of the importance of the task, it is sufficient to recall that in the early days of Hitlerism five hundred Jewish children from Germany were offered to American families for safe-keeping but not for adoption. Only a portion of these were accommodated in the great Jewish community in the United States. In the same period several thousand Jewish children were resettled in Palestine.

As the master builder, Henrietta Szold worked with human beings, saving the brands plucked from the fire, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and healing the sick. She was one of the great instruments of redemption. When she spoke at the opening of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus in 1925 she gave the world a picture of the Israel of the future that would be built on the foundation of Jewish ethics:

O foster mother, we petition you to load our children down, to fill them with the Jewish spirit. Send them back to us as exponents of righteousness and justice. Not dry as dust learning do we long for. We long for life. We long to know how to live in the Diaspora as it will and must be lived by the Jew in the homeland—wisely, justly, truly, beautifully and nobly. Make them yield up what is life-

giving; sublimate the experiences of a hundred generations of faith, thought, law, literature, action and suffering—yes suffering, too, since of poignant suffering there was much, and its purging fires may not be extinguished in our memory lest we forget and wax proud. Transmute in terms of Jewish living all that has happened to us in the lands of our sojourn, all the ideas which the centuries of events have engendered in us. Thus shall our sons and daughters become a blessing to us.

Henrietta Szold began her career in Jewish life in the service of immigrants. She ended her career in the same service. Between her first tender concerns for the poor Russian Jews of Baltimore when she was young in years to her last concern for the Jewish multitudes who came to the Jewish homeland from all corners of the earth, old worlds had died and new worlds were struggling to be born. But her principles and ideals were always steadfast. Each experience seemed to prepare her for a still greater challenge that lay ahead. During her colorful lifetime her people endured sorrows as no other people had endured them. They were the greatest sacrifice on the altar of the pagan cults of Fascism and Communism. Yet this woman of valor stood unflinching in the constant crisis that befell her own. She was the zealous symbol of redemption and healing in a time of madness and destruction. By a rare spirit, a brilliant mind and a selfless devotion to humanity she carved her immortality upon the heart of her people. Unnumbered thousands whom she lifted up to their dignity as children of God rise to call her blessed.

## AARON DAVID GORDON

THERE IS A FAMOUS English saying that the British victories in war were won on the playing fields of Eton and Harrow. There have been few playing fields in Israel since the first pioneers

returned there in the eighties of the last century. But there have been wonderful agricultural settlements. If it were possible to apply a proverb so peculiar to England to the Jewish state, it would not be incorrect to say that the victories of Israel in her War of Independence were won in those agricultural settlements. One of the great personalities in the life of Israel's early farmers was Aaron David Gordon. In the flourishing Kibbutz Degania, a show place among the farm collectives of Israel, is a plain stone building containing not only the symbols of agriculture in the country from the earliest pioneering days to the present, but also the surviving mementos of Gordon's personal life. Here, too, is Gordon's grave marked by the simple inscription "Man and Nature."

The kibbutz movement in Israel is an important index of the character of the country and its leadership. It is the spiritual home of many individuals who once worked on the soil in the collectives. Among these are Ben-Gurion, Sharett, Shazar, Golda Meir, Remez, Dov Hos, Shaul Meieroff, Ezra Deneen, Joseph Baratz, Eliyahu Golomb and a host of others too numerous to mention. It bred fighting warriors like Yigal Alon whose exploits during the War of Independence are almost legendary. It touched deeply the life of religious farmers known as the *Hapoel Hamizrachi*. And it was the training ground for many a stalwart city dweller.

Revered in the kibbutz movement by all is Aaron David Gordon—A. D. Gordon, as he is usually referred to—the remarkable man who resembled more the patriarch characteristic of the Diaspora Judaism than the Israeli farmer in love with nature. He was completely devoted to the idea that the salvation of the Jewish people lay in its affinity with the soil of their forebears in the land of Israel. It was work, he believed, that bound man to his neighbor and bound man to the universe and gave meaning to his existence. This is still the basic philosophy of the kibbutz life in Israel today.

Gordon came to Palestine when he was forty-eight years old. He had never engaged in any physical labor before. He was already the father of seven children, five of whom had died in infancy. His entire background rendered him unfit for the environment of a laborer struggling under primitive conditions

and subject to drought, poverty and malaria. Yet he was convinced, and he convinced others, that physical labor was the most important function of the Jew not only in Israel but throughout the world.

In a brief essay *The Dream of the Aliyah* Gordon argued that the healing of the Jewish social sickness of his time would be found in toil. The land was strange to him, he said. The only tie that bound him to the soil of his fathers was his knowledge that his soul, too, was as desolate as the land. But beneath the soil is an ember saved and hidden in a secret spot. When the Jew will utterly abandon the life that was created by others and give it up as completely as he gave up his land previously and come to Palestine to build a new life of his own, then the ember will be rekindled. The land cannot be revived without the Jewish spirit being revived.

A. D. Gordon started a new life when most people are thinking of retiring. His hands, which had wielded only a pen, took to the plow. This transplantation of the intellectual from the life of the Russian ghetto, this turn from the book to the orchard, is symbolic of the old-new land that is Israel. No country in the world can match this nation in scholar-farmers and scholar-laborers. America and Europe can number their "gentleman-farmers." But such farming is, at best, avocational. In Israel labor has been wedded to culture. That is why taxi drivers in Tel Aviv are different from those in New York or Chicago. The Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra finds its greatest response among the farmers of the collective settlements. So does the cast of the famous Habima theater. In the Tel Aviv art museum there are paintings and drawings by the children of the farmers who have interpreted their life on the soil in art form. Within the kibbutzim and moshavim—the less tightly knit communal farm centers—will be found many poets and prose writers whose work has inspired the people of the land and given them a sense of their destiny. In all this Aaron David Gordon had no small part. He had welded together the principles of the dignity of labor and the pride of learning. Himself the product of the varied culture patterns of Europe—he knew Russian, French, Hebrew and German and was well acquainted with the writings of the European philosophers—he could never

disassociate himself from the environment of the farm and forest that he knew as a child in Russia. His greatest love was nature; his greatest hope was that his people would return to nature.

The average tourist who is apt to cast a superficial eye on the land of Israel during a brief visit could learn a great deal from Gordon. He taught his people how to judge a country: It is through the vision and the spirit of people and not through their practical accomplishments. Those who returned to make the desert blossom as the rose knew what their hardship would be. But they found compensation in the knowledge that everything in the country was theirs and originated with them—the defects as well as satisfactions. Whereas Jews troubled abroad (he was referring specifically to the Jewish situation in eastern Europe at that time) found their troubles tasteless and to no purpose, in Palestine, though sufferings may be as bitter as gall, poisonous and even devastating, they have meaning and purpose. Songs of faith are not sung in vain. "A man living in Palestine who has accomplished something there," he said, "who has suffered because of something, even though he later becomes a failure and leaves the land, still leaves behind his vision, his suffering, his devotion. These remain to inspire others in days to come."

Joseph Baratz, whose name is synonymous with the Kibbutz Degania, tells us in his book *A Village by the Jordan* that A. D. Gordon was a perfectionist. The members of the kibbutz may have planted more trees than Gordon, but nobody planted them so neatly and beautifully. He worked in this consecrated spirit at everything, whether sweeping a room, or making a bed, or writing, or arranging the table at which he wrote in the early hours of the morning. He worked as one who literally finds salvation in his labors.

Gordon was not a socialist in the accepted sense of the term. Socialism in his time claimed that economic conditions accounted for all the evils of society. Gordon thought quite differently. He believed that by changing conditions men themselves could effect a change in their nature, since the evils in society are man-made and man could control his society if he wished to do so. The source of evil, he maintained, was within

the individual. Man must preserve the image of God within himself. Casting off the chains of an economic order is not an answer in a society where one faction is liable to displace another. The remedy might be worse than the disease. If people cast off their chains only to enslave others, then they themselves remain enslaved—slaves to power. This is why Gordon was never a member of the kibbutz, although he lived in it and was devoted to it. He would come and go, wandering from place to place. It was only in the last few years of his life that he decided to take up permanent residence in Degania.

Gordon's religious outlook was pantheistic. He held that nothing could make men happy unless they discovered the source of their well-being in their relationship to the universe and to nature. Man ought to be attracted to his fellow men and to be joined to them by the same power that holds everything in nature together. Labor is not productive until and unless it is spiritually productive; only then can it be a source of happiness and blessing. It is understandable that in accordance with such thoughts he should have considered Jewish life in exile as "parasite" existence. People in the Diaspora do not, by and large, work on the land. Nor have they a direct relationship to the soil. Nor do they exult in the seasons. He was extreme in his viewpoint and therefore tended to overlook much in the Jewish tradition which attunes the Jew to nature, elements like the blessing of the new moon and the loving devotion to nature that the dweller of the ghetto once manifested by adorning his synagogue with fruits and flowers at the Pentecost season and carrying the prized palm branch and citron at the Tabernacles season and reciting the beautiful One Hundred and Fourth Psalm "Bless the Lord, O My Soul" to mark the beginning of the winter period.

It is not likely that Gordon's writings will be treasured in days to come. They were the ecstatic reactions of an imaginative mind to the mountains and valleys of the land of Israel. His contemporaries like Baratz consider him a remarkable personality whose life left an indelible impress upon those with whom he came into contact. Gordon himself urged his readers not to trouble themselves about remembering his ideas. He felt that time would bypass them. Yet his influence remains as a

living force among the farm people of Israel. It is imbedded deep in the life of the kibbutzim. The redemption of the land and the hardy toil which accompanied that redemption in hundreds of settlements bear eloquent testimony to the abiding worth of his unique philosophy of labor. That philosophy is, in a sense, descriptive of the new type of Jew that has risen in the new state.

## MILTON STEINBERG

THREE TRAITS DISTINGUISHED Milton Steinberg among the rabbis. They were humanity, sanity and urbanity. Combined with great erudition they produced an extraordinarily sensitive and brilliant personality that left a deep impress upon his time. The rabbinic literature, of which he was master, speaks of the human being as a musical instrument. When touched by the hand of God melody issues from him. There comes a time when the instrument crumbles into dust, but the song endures. The qualities of Milton Steinberg's mind survive in his writings and are likely to influence Jewish life in America for a long time to come. His humanity gave to the world a sense of compassion which is sorely needed in our day. His sanity lent clarity and cogency to his reasoning. And his urbanity conferred upon his expression a persuasiveness and appeal that his voice once conveyed to his auditors. This is why so much of his personality shines through his recorded thought. He wrote with simplicity, but the very simplicity was disarming. Behind it were marshaled the fruits of concentrated scholarship that acknowledged authorities in his field might have envied. He knew the classical languages of antiquity and his comparative studies of Greek, Latin and Hebrew were evident in his works. He could easily have won distinction in the academic world, but he chose the active rabbinate for his profession. He was, therefore, the rabbi par excellence in every sense of the term—the "rabbi's rabbi" as he was known among his colleagues. No

matter what subject he offered from the pulpit or platform it was eagerly anticipated. An article or book from his pen was considered required reading by the cognoscenti. Not many were able to match the influence which this young rabbi wielded. He was respected and loved, respected as a scholar and original thinker and loved as a friend, as a warm, radiant personality with a lively sense of humor, an outgoing disposition, an un-failing cheerfulness, a gentle sympathy and an unswerving loyalty to the causes he espoused.

When his humanity welled over he was able to communicate to a magnificent degree his feelings of sorrow and indignation at wrongs wantonly committed in the social order. This was demonstrated in his speech "When I think of Seraye," which he delivered at a fund-raising plea on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal. It cut like a searing flame into the hearts of those who heard it. The reduction of his oral utterance to print did not diminish its effectiveness. Published in the posthumous volume of sermons and addresses it still stirs the emotions deeply. Something of the burning magic of his oral speech remains in this essay. He tells the story of Seraye (Seirijai), the town in Lithuania where his father was born, where the murderous Nazis wreaked their senseless wrath upon innocent men, women and children. In language reminiscent of the Bible which he loved, he speculated about the handful of Jews who might have escaped slaughter. They haunted him. He could not explain to himself by what merit he was alive and they, the survivors whose eyes had beheld horrors sufficient to destroy all reason, were left homeless, naked, hungry, cold and tormented by their terrible memories. "Sometimes," he said,

when I think of Seraye, I want to hurl harsh words at God, that terrible saying of Abraham: "Shall the judge of the whole earth not do justice," that soul-searing inquiry of the prophet:

"Thou, too pure of eyes to behold evil,  
Thou that canst not look on oppression,  
Wherefore hast thou looked on when  
men did treachery  
And did hold Thy peace when the wicked  
swallowed up the righteous?"

In another of his addresses, called *A Pity for the Living*, in which there is evident the maturing of his thinking and his transvaluation of values, he tells how there was a time when he was bedazzled by intellectual attainments, when he rated a man's head higher than his heart, the philosopher above the saint. In those days a professor, whom he admired above all others, attracted him because of his brilliance and his learning. That was all that seemed to matter. But he noted the change in his thinking. He still revered a great mind, but he learned to revere a great heart more. He discovered of what monstrosities the merciless intellect can be capable. But he discovered more—that he was less the Hellenist he used to be and more the Jew. For a Jew, if he be truly a Jew, is compassionate.

The presentation of Archibald MacLeish's version of the biblical account of Job on the New York stage inevitably invites comparison with other interpretations of this magnificent drama. Those familiar with Milton Steinberg's essay on the subject called *God and the World's End* which he wrote for the *Journal of Religion* when in his early twenties, can appreciate the inadequacy of MacLeish's handling of the ancient problem of good and evil. In the light of Steinberg's profound delineation of the philosophical values advanced by Greek and Hebrew thinking of the time of Job, MacLeish's treatment of the riddle appears shallow. Where he concludes his theme with the suggestion that we light a flame in our hearts to guide us and, in essence, leaves Satan the victor on the field of battle, Steinberg ventures further in search of an answer to the age-old question. He asks how in the presence of the vast misery of mankind, the slaughter of innocents, the staggering stupidity and the irrationality of human behavior, the victims of brutality and lust and the complacent tolerance of the scheme of things toward all these, it is possible to believe in God. It is an old and tragic paradox that is presented by the Book of Job. Are we trapped in an impasse or is there a way out? If there is an exit, says Steinberg, it certainly does not consist in rejecting the God idea, for that would lead us from the frying pan into the fire. If in the light of the theistic scheme we have our difficulties with evil, we shall have even more trouble with the atheistic case, for we shall be compelled to explain how

the blind working of matter and energy shall have produced a rational world, how the purposiveness of animals and men shall have evolved out of cosmic pointlessness, how human freedom and intelligence come from brute mechanical necessity. There is a causal relationship between belief and behavior. On this assumption inferences of greater significance follow. Theological insights are revealed in their true and vital relevance to human welfare, and it becomes obvious that "in dealing with the crucial issues of our generation, we shall have to do more than remake political structures, recast economic processes and reorder educational procedures, indispensable as these might be." For this world, he maintained, would never know peace, internal or international, until all men have faith in man's significance, learn to respect the human personality, choose the rule of co-operation, follow the morality of insight and find fulfilment in the achievement of good for all. But one cannot have ethical attitudes of this kind by wishful thinking. One must first make certain affirmations concerning life. From this follows affirmation of the universe. And ultimately man must make affirmation concerning God.

Those desiring authentic knowledge of the Jewish religion will find the most incisive and succinct expression of the meaning of it in Steinberg's little book called *Basic Judaism*. In an astonishing condensation of a very large subject he managed to convey in a slender volume of less than two hundred pages the full flavor of a four-thousand-year-old religion and the significance of its basic beliefs and customs. It was his purpose to write a brief essay that would inform all manner of people—the believing Jews who could find it a "lucid and orderly formulation of their faith," the indifferent or non-professing Jews groping to find validity for their status, the non-Jews curious about their Jewish neighbors and desirous of obtaining an objective evaluation of Judaism, and those whose knowledge of this ancient faith is distorted by ignorance and prejudice. In concise terms he interpreted for the reader the various concepts of the Jewish religion. The idea of salvation, for example, which looms so large in Christian thinking, has an altogether different meaning in Judaism. Deftly popularizing his scholarship, Steinberg noted the difference. Salvation in Judaism is

man's victory over his limitations—ignorance or insensitivity. It is his conquest of sinfulness, of the evils resident within him—pride, selfishness, hate, lust, cynicism, the deliberate rejection of goodness and truth. Against these God stands as savior. The very awareness of God is a saving power which helps man to emancipate himself from the restraints that frustrate him, from the wickedness that corrupts him from within.

One of the commonly misunderstood notions about Judaism is the place that the law occupies in its tradition. Christian critics of the Jewish religion have often contrasted the spiritual character of their faith with what they call the dry, rigid, hide-bound, stultifying legal religion of the Jews. Cutting through the mass of recondite studies in Jewish law, Steinberg sketched in a few simple sentences the purpose, the function and the value of law as a preservative of the ethics of the Jewish faith over the millennia. He pointed out that Jews are more than members of a religious communion, that they are also associates in a common historic adventure in ethical living. The only way that ethics can be effective is through laws. "If they be personal," he said, "they must be translated into habits and disciplines. If they be social they must be incorporated into institutions, folkways and law. Otherwise their cogency and content will evaporate and they will be left in the end, empty vessels."

Many of the divisions in modern Jewish life stem from overt emphasis upon particularism or universalism in Jewish thinking. In his *Basic Judaism* Milton Steinberg reconciled the two attitudes by demonstrating that Judaism has always given equal importance to both. Judaism is the particularistic faith of a particular people, "but the people and the faith alike are consecrated to the most comprehensive of ideals." Particularism is necessary to give concreteness to universalism and universalism saves the particular attitude from turning into static parochialism.

Jews have been preoccupied with anti-Semitism for a long time. By and large, they are still very much concerned with it. But few of them are aware of the effects of anti-Semitism upon their own personal lives. Steinberg was one of the first to call attention to the fact that Jews, in their effort to remove the

external causes of prejudices directed against them, have overlooked their own part in the social order. One of the dangers of anti-Semitism, he noted, lies in what it does to the Jew as a human being in its effect on his morale and his self-respect. He warned that the problem of what can be done about anti-Semitism and how Jews should face it is subordinate to the truth Jews have overlooked—that anti-Semitism is not a matter of body, property or privilege alone, but that it touches and affects disastrously the soul of the Jew. Formerly the Jew found compensation in the deep enjoyment of his ancient traditions. Today his Jewishness may deprive him of privileges without affording him adequate compensations such as his fathers knew when denied their ordinary civil rights. He offered one solution to anti-Semitism that is all too seldom taken into account by those concerned with Jewish defense: more Judaism. This would give the individual Jew a sense of self-respect and a capacity to enjoy his status despite his handicaps. It would also give him a sense of conviction about the worthwhile character of his Jewish status. Such values are necessary to any meaningful survival, and they can be developed only through the knowledge of the Jewish heritage. Appreciation of the meaning of being a Jew cannot be had through wishful thinking; it must be cultivated through dedicated study and through participation in Jewish practices and enterprises.

Steinberg saw the Jewish problem not alone in terms of defending Jewish rights, but also in the context of the Jewish heritage which the modern Jew can abandon only at peril to his normal life and behavior. He developed this thesis to a considerable extent in his book *A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem*. Here he raised the question which every intelligent Jew must meet at some time or other: Is the game worth the candle? His answer is worthy of consideration by all who are heirs to the great Jewish tradition:

Succinctly put, it is this: the career of Jewry will be adjudged as one cherishes ideas and ideals, or alternatively condemns them. The Jews, to be sure, have suffered mightily, but they have achieved mightily as well. Now if insights, outlooks, aspirations and dreams are held of slight account, then Jews throughout the centuries have been

making a bad bargain. But if the adventures of the intellect and the questings of the heart are taken for the chiefest glories of human existence, then, in the words of an ancient epigram, losses are swallowed up in gains. . . .

To this then does the issue of the game and the candle resolve itself. Jewish life has in the past been eminently worth its price. Its value in the present and future depends on the use which modern Jews make of it. If they are so minded, they can neglect its content and potentialities and so render it undeserving of the least exertion. Or they can, if they will it, make the game so meaningful to themselves and all the world as to compensate, and more, for all the candles that have been consumed and shall yet be kindled in its playing.

Milton Steinberg was a man of faith in a world skeptical of inherited beliefs. He knew the evils that men had wrought in the name of faith in days gone by, as he knew the persuasive arguments of rationalism which challenged the traditional concepts of religion. Yet he held to his trust in God in the manner of his fathers. He saw faith as an intellectual process as well as an emotional necessity in modern life. He affirmed that theological beliefs can survive the same disciplines to which scientific beliefs are subjected. In a remarkable paper which he read at a convention of his rabbinical colleagues shortly before his death, a paper which he termed *The Theologies of the Hour*, he utilized all the resources of his brilliant mind to establish his position. It was, indeed, an epoch-making evaluation not alone of Judaism, but all religious thinking challenged by the scientific theories of our times. He had earlier parted company with the Reconstructionist conception of God by declaring that he was not ready to content himself "with half a loaf of the divine when, with greater effort, a full loaf is available—particularly in view of the fact that the half loaf is not adequate either to satisfy man's intellectual curiosity or to sustain properly the vitality of his moral life." But Steinberg's faith was not a leap in the dark. It was hard-won and wrought on the anvil of travail. He was too well schooled and disciplined in the philosophies of history to arrive at conclusions not bridled by the reins of logic. He saw (as was noted in his keen appraisal

of the riddle of good and evil posed in the Book of Job) that one of the gravest blunders committed by theologians in the past was their quest of an absolute demonstration of the God-reality and that they were destined to fail because they strained the limits of the powers of logic. He preferred to operate in the realm of the inductive and, because of his great skill in the use of philosophic tools, he still remains the teacher of the modern Jew. His few books, including his only novel *As a Driven Leaf*, although written for popular instruction, bear the hallmark of the profundity which comes only from the careful sifting of an extraordinary amount of knowledge gained in many fields of study. The faith of such an individual woven with intense industry from such rich patterns of the cultured mind he possessed, could not but excite and inspire others. Those who do not know his writings have much to learn in Jewish and worldly wisdom. Those who return to them will find new stimulus in the intellectual and moral challenge that emanated from his wonderful mind and heart.

### III. ISRAEL



## ISRAEL'S NOT-SO-SECRET WEAPON

And the Philistine came nearer and nearer unto David; and the man that bore the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance. And the Philistine cursed David by his god. And the Philistine said to David: "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field." Then said David to the Philistine: "Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel Whom thou hast taunted." I Samuel 17:41-45

THERE ARE MANY people, Jews and non-Jews alike, who speculate apprehensively about the future existence of Israel, hemmed in as she is by implacable Arab forces, threatened by the Soviet empire, looked at askance by many peoples of the West and held in some disfavor by the United Nations. Israel does not have a single defensive military pact to give her protective assurance in case of attack. She has relatively few supporters in the councils of the nations. She has not impressed the world with her invulnerability.

Such speculation about the security of Israel, based purely on military capacity or political sagacity to resist attacks against her territory, does not account for her strength. If her people are successful in their struggles it is because they possess a power that is not found in war colleges or in the chancelleries of the nations. It is a spiritual power—something that David Ben-Gurion, Israel's prime minister, calls "morale." Like the stripling David before Goliath, Israel's armament is no match

for Russian military equipment on her borders. Her political position has never been secure despite the fact that she was born with the blessings of two-thirds of the United Nations. She has relatively few material resources that she can use for bargaining purposes.

When Joseph Alsop, a noted journalist, sought to discover the secret of Israel's strength in the face of isolation and danger he found it in the Bible. He was emphatic in his view that the biblical spirit prevalent in the land of Israel must be considered as a cardinal political fact in the Middle East and that to ignore it is to misjudge Israel completely and to nurture false hopes concerning her position and her future. Elaborating on his observation he called attention to the fact that the great dangers, the unremitting enmity, the many powerful forces that these Israelis have had to overcome in order to gain and transform their land, have given them a deep sense of living purpose. "It is plainer than a dozen pikestaffs," he added, "that all the millions of the European Rothschilds and American Jewry, and all the Balfour declarations and MacDonalld letters, and U. S. maneuvers of President Truman, would have gone for nothing, would have produced no serious result without this Israeli purpose."

The strength of Israel's spirit inspired by the Bible is seen in every aspect of the country's life. It was magnificently displayed in the mobilization for the military action in the Sinai desert. It was not a professional army that went there to strike first in defense of their homes before the Arabs or the Russians or both could strike. It included many civilians who one day were in the offices and shops, on their farms and on their roads, and who, twenty-four hours later, were parachuting down near the Suez Canal or cleaning out fedayeen gangs at Raffa. They were not exhilarated by the prospects of war. Unlike the Egyptians they carried no orders to kill others with utmost brutality. Nor were they under any illusions about the immediate hours that lay before them, the probable toll of dead and wounded that would be exacted from every battalion. But they were willing to risk the dangers for the things they held dear—freedom, and the chance to live out their lives peacefully and creatively.

The Arab threats of liquidation and the ominous warnings of the Kremlin about the future existence of the State of Israel were not taken lightly by the Israelis. They knew what to expect of Arab mercies as they measured the lot of their immigrant brothers who had come to them from Arab countries and as they witnessed the fortunes of the Egyptian Jews. They knew, too, the Communist persecutions of Jews under Stalin and under Khrushchev, and they found enough Russian arms in the Sinai peninsula to convince them that the Soviet rulers were bitter enemies. But a letter a young Israeli housewife wrote at the time of the Sinai campaign in 1956 typified the national state of mind in times of crisis. During the Suez mobilization she said:

We are all kind of exhausted emotionally by the tremendous experiences and physically by a *hamsin* (sultry weather) of the past days. You know about the fuel shortage. No more than one bulb of sixty watts in a home at one time, no vacuum cleaning, no ironing, no electric cooking or baking. The lowly primus and the stinky *ptiliya* have been raised to the most important position in the modern Israeli household. But there is no grumbling. There are no complaints. There is only a general atmosphere of elation and discipline . . .

Shortly after the action in the Gaza strip the Israeli press carried a letter to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion written by Moshe Elmer, a member of a farm settlement, Mishmar-HaEmek. This letter, illustrative of the exalted spirit of the Bible, deserves a place among the classic examples of spiritual creations alongside such communications as the celebrated letter that Abraham Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Bixby after one of the battles of the Civil War. Only this letter came not from the head of a nation, but from a humble citizen who expressed the feelings of the average Israeli in moving language:

I am one of the one hundred and fifty fathers whose children fell in action recently. My son, my only son Yair, fell in battle at Raffa on the first of November. He was twenty years old.

I wish to tell you that with all the heavy burdens and pain I carry in my heart at the loss of the very light of my

life, my one and only child, I have no bitterness and present no claims whatsoever. What is more important, believe me, is that had my son known in advance the fate which awaited him he would not for a moment have altered the path in which he walked and fought.

You, Mr. Ben-Gurion, on whose shoulders destiny has placed the heavy responsibility for our nation, you who have to make the decisions which also carry with them the life and death decrees for our children, you, whose heart aches and bleeds for every sapling which is cut down, it is you who should be comforted. It is you who are in need of consolation not less than us, the fathers and mothers of the lost children. I shall consider it rewarding for me if my words will in any way help lighten the heavy burden on your heart and give you encouragement and strength.

In his reply the grateful prime minister told Moshe Elmer that he did not know if many fathers in many nations would have written in such vein. It is the same prime minister who has repeatedly told foreign correspondents: "You say I am not logical; only fools look for logic in history. And I tell you whatever power they may bring against us, Israel will not falter or submit." It is not surprising, therefore, that his peculiar type of investment in the Israeli nation should yield letters like those of Mr. Elmer. Such an intangible force as the letter displays may be difficult for individuals in the American State Department, or the American Council for Judaism, or the Security Council of the United Nations, or the Kremlin to understand. But they would be tragically mistaken and would seriously jeopardize the world's chances for peace if they acted on the assumption that Israel's days are numbered. By courage and resolution surely not exceeded in modern times, Israel's people have warned the world that their nation is here to stay. They want peace, but not at any price. They have waited a decade since the armistice agreements at Rhodes and have known only cold war, boycott, raids, blockade and threats in return for their signature on those agreements. They are prepared to wait another decade, two decades if necessary to achieve a genuine peace. In the meantime they are determined to maintain their territorial integrity and their national life.

What is going on in the land of Israel today is not limited to the people of the country. It is, in the truest sense, an activity that is related to people everywhere. Because the Bible is such a deep influence in the building of the values by which they live, it follows of necessity that the spirit of Israel is greater than her economic and social achievements, or her military efficiency, or her political astuteness. There is a constant link between the past and the present that is everywhere manifest in the land. Every mountain, valley and stream bears enduring meaning for the inhabitants. Every archaeological discovery in the Palestinian earth, rich in memories of bygone civilizations, offers illumination for their pathways.

A young general in the Israeli army, Yigal Yadin, its former brilliant chief of staff and one of the outstanding archaeologists in the world, recently related an account of his excavations at the site of the ancient biblical city of Hazor in the northern part of the country, which Joshua had conquered. In the year 732 before the Christian era, in the days of the last kings of Israel, an invader destroyed the city. This marked the beginning of the end of the northern kingdom of Israel some 2,700 years ago. While they were digging they came across a fortress of that period. The floor of one of the rooms was covered with a layer of ashes three feet deep. In the ashes were utensils that the ancient dwellers had apparently abandoned in their hasty retreat. The soldier-archaeologist said that as he walked into that room he had a sense of history, not of thousands of years separating him from that event, but only one day. He concluded that if his ancient forbears had possessed the resolution of the modern Israelis and had not abandoned their dwellings so precipitately the whole course of history might have been different.

Time and history have given the present dwellers of the land of Israel a power that survives the sword and stands them in good stead in their contemporary trials. As the young David spoke to Goliath, so do they of the young state speak to the nations: "Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to thee in the name of the armies of Israel whom thou hast taunted."

## SERMONS IN STONES

THE LAND OF ISRAEL has always lent itself to Jewish fancy. Since time immemorial, sages and teachers have pointed out the lessons that men can glean from its old landmarks. Its trees and fruits, its hills and valleys, its personalities and its humble artisans have been the subject of many tales and allegories. The land and its people still have the power to impress those who take the time to look beneath the busy everyday life that is characteristic of contemporary Israel. History always touches some phase of current existence in that old-new atmosphere bearing the marks of ancient Hebrew prophecy. The little children of the country learn their geography from the Hebrew Bible. Readers of the daily newspapers constantly find reference to the old familiar names that tie the modern residents of the land so securely to their past and give them root and substance. Of the hundreds of fascinating sights that make Israel unique among the present day tourist areas of the world, two are especially noteworthy because they give living reality to Shakespeare's lines in *As You Like It*:

Sweet are the uses of adversity  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;  
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

In the community of Naharea in Israel is a large textile factory known as Moeller-Dee, equipped to produce the yarns necessary for the manufacture of much of Israel's clothing. In a large room filled with remnants of useless, discarded cloth, abandoned pieces from army uniforms, is a machine with sharp-toothed combs that pulls these remnants apart and re-

duces them to cotton fluff. The fluff is then respun into new yarn. There is a startling parallel between the restored remnants of clothing and the restored human beings who constitute so much of the population of Israel today. There is a verse that pious Jews have recited for centuries on their religious New Year's Day. It is from the Song of Unity composed by a twelfth-century German rabbi, Judah the Pious, and it reads:

*Evneh Mizbayach b'shivron libi.* (I will build me an altar from the broken fragments of my heart.)

It is not too difficult to find the broken pieces of Israel's heart in the country. They are in the reception centers, the colonies, the cities, the fields and the factories. They are in the Negev and in Galilee. They have been gathered from all parts of the earth—from Yemen and Rumania, from Morocco and China, from Iran and Czechoslovakia. Their lives are being rewoven into the fabric of Israel. In this tiny democratic island in an ocean of feudalism, the restored fragments of Israel's broken heart walk with heads high and with dignity re-established.

The Negev is a tremendous expanse of rock, ridge and dried-up wadi. It is bare and desolate. The ancient children of Israel must certainly have welcomed heavenly help in lieu of irrigation to obtain the food necessary for their sustenance in this wilderness after they left the slave-pits of Egypt. Traversing the path from Elath on the Gulf of 'Aqaba to Beersheba through the Negev along the road followed by the six hundred thousand Jews who entered the Promised Land so many centuries ago, it is difficult to envisage it as a country of milk and honey. But the efforts of the new generation of the children of Israel in the wilderness show that they mean to make the land fruitful by every bit of ingenuity that the human mind can devise. The noted archaeologist Dr. Nelson Glueck in his fascinating book *Rivers of the Negev* has pointed out how the ancient dwellers of this region were able to cultivate it. The Israeli geophysicists can be seen everywhere searching for water. The farmers have established experimental stations to test agricultural possibilities. The ancient mines of Solomon have been reopened and copper is being mined in them. The first steps of the prodigious

undertaking to make the desert blossom has been made. But the Negev is hundreds of miles in length. Its challenge is formidable enough to defy ordinary men. But the inhabitants of present-day Israel are no ordinary men. They have dreams to sustain their limited resources. What labor has already been performed may be only a prelude to the penetration of that forbidding desert, but the dreamer does not think so.

In Alfred Noyes' poem *Watchers of the Skies* is related the story of the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe—upon which the late Justice Benjamin Cardozo based his stirring essay *Values*. In this poem we find a clue to the determination of the toilers of the Negev. Tycho Brahe had, with the support of the Danish king, been patiently charting the heavens for twenty-five years. But a new king arose who knew not the astronomer. He was surrounded by courtiers who begrudged the expenditure of royal funds for the upkeep of the astronomer's observatory. The monarch dispatched messengers to investigate the work of Tycho Brahe. They were shown the charts and tables and other astronomical data representative of his labors. But they looked at them with disdain. "Is that all?" they asked. The poet offers this answer:

"In the time to come,"  
Said Tycho Brahe, "perhaps a hundred years,  
Perhaps a thousand, when our own poor names  
Are quite forgotten, and our kingdoms dust,  
On one sure certain day, the torch-bearers  
Will, at some point of contact, see a light  
Moving upon this chaos. Though our eyes  
Be shut for ever in iron sleep,  
Their eyes shall see the kingdom of the law,  
Our undiscovered cosmos. . . .  
We are like men that hear  
Disjointed notes of some supernal choir.  
Year after year, we patiently record  
All we can gather. In that far-off time,  
A people that we have not known shall hear them,  
Moving like music to a single end."

Jewish history has no terminal point. Its roots are in dim antiquity, and its future is not bounded by time. "Perhaps a

hundred years, perhaps a thousand." They waited two thousand years to return and assume the mantle of nationhood. Must their impatience to restore the centuries-old desert be couched in terms of a day or a year? At the Yuval Gad pipe factory near Beersheba they are manufacturing seventy-two inch cement and steel pipe at the rate of about three miles of pipe per week for the irrigation of the Negev. The executives of this enterprise are reported to have signed a contract with the Government to complete pipe laying of the entire stretch of the desert from Beersheba to Elath in fifteen years. In this fast-moving world fifteen years is a very long time indeed, but they do not consider time as a great hazard in their plans. Their refrain is "year after year we patiently record all we can gather."

In time of social sickness and political upheaval Jews have cause to wonder whether they will ever be free from the burdens that have encompassed them during the past two thousand years. It has been a long span from the first leave-taking of Israel in the days of Titus Vespasian and Hadrian to Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948. Jewish troubles in the Diaspora have never ended. They have recurred over and over again in the same lands. The shocking wave of anti-Semitism behind Russia's iron curtain in recent times recalls how succinctly the great Hebrew poet Bialik expressed the story of Russian intolerance of Jewish life. When the Soviets first came to power he was asked his opinion regarding the change in government in Russia and the prospects for better times for his people. He said that for centuries the Russian Bear had been lying on his right side; now he had turned over on his left side. Only recently the prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, speaking of the tragic position of the Jew in eastern Europe, placed the issue in the same historical perspective:

In its long wanderings on the stage of world history during four thousand years, our nation has been continuously faced with manifestations of hatred and hostility, slanders and accusations, persecutions and torture, destruction and butchery. But it has never lost its spirit, has never faltered; its faith has never been shattered.

“Exempt from public haunt,” said Shakespeare, there is an atmosphere where it is possible to find “sermons in stones and good in everything.” There is a great demonstration of heroism and nobility of purpose to be seen in a cotton-spinning factory in Israel where the redeemed pieces of abandoned cotton cloth are emblematic of the redeemed pieces of abandoned humanity dotting the landscape of the country. There is still another great demonstration of indomitable will and prophetic idealism to be seen in the slow, determined penetration of a stark desert. And if the visions of men outlast their time, who is there to say that Israel will not transform its broken remnants into strong, healthy human beings, torchbearers of the fire lit by their ancestors in that same area so many centuries ago when their prophets walked the same earth? And who is there to say that Israel’s stubborn rock and desert will not eventually yield to the demands of those who strive to conquer in the name of justice and peace?

## THE ARABS

IN THE DAYS OF the late lamented League of Nations there was a story current in Geneva about the French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand and the German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann. They were engaged in conversation when the British Foreign Minister Austen Chamberlain happened to pass by. He heard them laughing and inquired as to the cause. “Oh,” said Briand, “it’s Stresemann again. He just keeps on asking me at every turn when the war-guilt clause will be taken out of the Versailles Treaty. I suggested to him that we might let the matter rest for the present and leave it to a future generation to decide on this matter. He wished to know what the future would decide, and I told him that I did not know what it would decide, but that I knew what it would not decide—that Belgium had invaded Germany!”

The life of the State of Israel continues in the shadow of the Arab invasion of Jewish Palestine in 1948 and the subsequent

tragedies that make the Middle East a powder keg today. Surrounding Israel are hostile Arab nations and hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees uprooted because of that invasion. Peace in this area of the world, around which much of the structure of Western defenses are built, is essential to world stability. The Eisenhower doctrine was issued for this purpose. The tripartite declaration of England, France and the United States of 1950 in support of the existing borders in this region was designed toward the same end. But peace is far from a reality, and the military budgets of the small nations in the Middle East attest to this fact.

Many plans have been advanced for stabilizing the area. Most seem to cluster about the assumption that Israel is the crux of the Middle East situation. If she would consent to return to the 1947 borders originally outlined by the United Nations, if she would agree to the return of the hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees now on her borders, if she would put an end to immigration of Jews from all parts of the world, if she would calm the Arab fears of expansionist ambitions, then perhaps it might be possible to establish a permanent peace in the Middle East.

But even if Israel were to accept all these conditions, it is highly doubtful that their fulfilment would produce the hoped-for peace. If the Arabs are apprehensive about Israel, Israel is no less apprehensive about the Arabs. The attitude of the Arabs from the very beginning of the life of the State of Israel has hardly been conducive to peace. First they invaded Israel with the intention of driving the Jews into the sea. Failing this, they signed armistice agreements at Rhodes which they have consistently violated. They then sought, by blockade of Israel shipping, by refusing to issue visas for entry into their own lands to those foreigners who wished also to visit Israel, by economic boycott of foreign firms dealing with Israel and by armed fedayeen raids, to disrupt the daily life of the young republic. They imported vast quantities of military equipment from Soviet Russia with a view to wiping Israel off the map. They maintained an unceasing barrage of propaganda on their radios and in their newspapers, promising a "second round" and the avenging of their earlier defeat. And they resisted every effort

at mediation with Israel to implement the expectations of the armistice agreements. A news item in *The New York Times* in September 1958 did not bring any greater assurance to the Israelis. It read:

A new United Arab Republic postage stamp released today features a map of the United Arab Republic including the territory of Israel. The map covers an area from Egypt through mandated Palestine and Syria with the Arab word for Palestine, "Falastin," printed over Israeli territory.

Israel has found little evidence to warrant the belief that any concessions on her part would do any good at this time. The prevailing Arab attitude toward her was summed up by Dr. Edward Atiyah in a Penguin Book published in 1955 entitled *The Arabs*. There the author says:

The question may be asked, What do the Arabs hope to achieve by this policy of boycotting and isolating Israel? To this question there are two answers: one on the emotional and unreasoning level, at which, however, many human actions are decided; the other, on the level of calculated policy. The first is that the Arabs' attitude towards Israel is now one of implacable hate. By boycotting Israel, the Arabs satisfy to a certain extent their desire for revenge, their sense of outrage at what has been done to them. The second is a profound hope that in the course of time their refusal to have anything to do with Israel will cause the isolated state to wilt and perish. . . .

Those who believe that this attitude of the Arabs can be altered, that real peace and co-operation can be brought about between Israel and the Arab countries are, on the evidence available at present and as far as it is possible to prognosticate, indulging in wishful fancies.

A remarkable exception to the extreme attitude of Arab leaders vis-à-vis Israel is the point of view of Dr. Charles Malik, one time foreign minister of Lebanon and later the president of the United Nations Assembly. In the July 1956 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, he made it quite clear that his conscience is pricked by the general Arab assumption that the opinions of mankind could tolerate the destruction of Israel. His comment is worth recalling:

Israel is a great mystery. You are not dealing with political issues only. There are profoundly theological dimensions to the mystery. But whatever the aspect under which the situation is viewed, the Near East can never be the same again after the rise of Israel. The present political reaction is only the first spontaneous, and, to that extent, superficial reaction to this new and strange fact. In the maturation of their reaction, when they wake up sufficiently to what has really happened, and when they take in its total meaning, the Arabs will, in their wonder, react down far deeper levels of their existence. They will undergo a profound transformation. . . .

Israel has for some years played a secondary role in the Middle East drama. There are three factors that are of far greater importance than the Arab-Israel relationship in the maintenance of stability in this region. One is Arab nationalism. A second is the cold war which brought Russia into the Middle East via Egypt. And a third is the United Nations, the temporarily forgotten last best hope for peace in the Middle East as well as in other centers of the world. For the United Nations' forces still stationed in Gaza and on the Gulf of 'Aqaba have prevented open skirmishes. And United Nations funds and personnel still sustain the Arab refugees. The Arab-Israel conflict has become subordinated to these larger issues.

There were rivalries among Arabs that kept the Middle East in turmoil long before Israel appeared on the scene. These rivalries still exist. They have been dangerously accentuated by Gamal Abdul Nasser's dream of an empire extending from Libya to the Persian Gulf. This dream has brought about the United Arab Republic, which has, in turn, produced rival Arab blocs in Jordan and Iraq. Few are aware of Nasser's book *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution* in which the details of his empire are sketched. It is a solidly populated Arab empire that he envisages. Israel is a foreign substance that must be removed. In the light of his grandiose plans the postage stamp of the United Arab Republic referred to above takes on greater significance.

Events in Lebanon and other Arab countries have served to emphasize the seriousness of the rivalries among Arabs. The

anti-Nasser forces may continue to condemn Israel, as they have done in the past, but they are now in position to see that it is not Israel, but the Cairo-Damascus-Yemen axis that is endangering their peace and threatening their freedom. Former President Camille Chamoun of Lebanon held only one news conference in his entire term of office. In it he formally accused the United Arab Republic of massively interfering with the life of his people, and he added:

The issue at stake is the existence of Lebanon as a free country in the Near East in which Moslem and Christian can live together in peace and concord, a country able to determine its own independent course of freedom.

The cold war has overshadowed the position of both the Jews and the Arabs in the Middle East. Nasser's visit to Moscow was further indication, if more were needed, of the solid position that the Communists now hold in this important area, and of the mischief they can create to the discomfiture of the West. Both the Jews and the Arabs are now pawns on a great chessboard; the moves are being made in Moscow and in Washington. And the West seems to be paying a heavy price for past failures in these ancient lands. The lament of an Israeli over the situation might well be echoed in Arab circles. He said that it was the misfortune of his people to be caught between two great powers—one, Russia, having no heart, and the other, America, having no head.

In our delicately balanced world order of today no people can suffer loss of freedom and independence without injury to the United Nations. The United Nations stands to lose most by the destruction of any constituted government now functioning in the Middle East—especially Israel, because Israel is the child of the United Nations. In the cold-war atmosphere that has prevailed in the United Nations during the past decade, Western timidity in the face of Arab threats and Arab refusal to deal with Israel has set the stage for many of the present difficulties in the Middle East. The problem confronting Western statesmen today is not only to keep the peace in that part of the world, but to save the United Nations as well. The world body has been progressively weakened since its decision to create

the State of Israel was openly flouted by the Arabs. Kashmir, Korea, South Africa, Germany and Hungary are symbols of its struggles against the anarchy of the times. NATO, SEATO, Baghdad and Bandung have served as its rivals to point to the disunity rather than the unity among the nations. It is failure to honor agreements in this body, rather than the agreements themselves, which underlies the chaos in the Middle East.

The moral and political character of the Arab peoples is now at stake in the current struggles going on, as well as in their attitude toward Israel. Between publicly declared extremist statements by Arab leaders and the reflective concern of the former Lebanese foreign minister for the welfare of the entire region is a wide gulf that has to be bridged. The Arab will to peace and the Arab acceptance of Israel within the framework of the Middle East complex constitute the base upon which all other problems concerning Israel revolve.

Israel cannot discuss Arab refugees as a precondition to peace because she has no assurance of what will happen afterward, and she cannot make any commitment without chart or compass pointing to her future. To do so would invite destruction. Nor can she discuss changes in her borders in an atmosphere of ill will, revenge and "another round of war." Negotiations are drawn-out affairs and require a setting that does not at present exist in the Middle East. The cold war has laid a heavy hand on this part of the world and both Israel and the Arabs are its victims. The Russian mischief has proved attractive to Arabs now bent on courses of action that can lead only to greater instability and unrest. Israel has no choice but to defend herself as best she can while waiting for a better day.

## RELIGION IN THE STATE OF ISRAEL

ANY CONSIDERATION OF events in Israel and the attitude of the American Jew toward these events must take into account four

factors. These are: the history of the labor movement in Israel which conditions the thinking of labor sympathizers toward religion as well as toward economics and politics; the emergence of the independent state whose government functions through a coalition that includes the religious bloc; the tidal wave of immigrants which has linked Israel financially, socially and spiritually with Diaspora Jewry; and the capacity of the American Jew to play an influential role in the development of the life of the state.

The history of the labor party in Israel is tied to rebellion in eastern Europe against traditional Jewish religious patterns. The pioneers who came to Israel in the closing years of the last century and the early years of the twentieth century were primarily secularistic in their thinking. They saw no need for theology or for religious practices in the working out of their program for a good life. They were not concerned with religious interpretations of their daily habit patterns. Their attitude was influenced by many of the social theories of the nineteenth century. The religion against which they rebelled did not seem to them to offer the social gospel they were seeking. Though that gospel was contained in Judaism they did not search for it, or they did not discover it. Religion appeared to them as a set of traditions wrapped in piety—too passive for any effective help in time of need. They therefore excluded it from their program. While they never went to the length of the Marxists in considering it an opiate of the people they, nevertheless, regarded it only as a minor force in the establishment of their Utopia. Themselves the rich products of the teachings contained in the very religion they eschewed—witness such individuals as Ben-Gurion, Sharett, Remez, Shazar, Katznelson, Borochoy, Dov Hos, Golomb and a host of others—they omitted the forms of religion in the building of their community. A study of the biographies of such men indicates a keen appreciation of Hebrew literature and culture, but little or no attachment to the practices, rituals, ceremonies and theistic authority associated with the religion of the Jewish people. They might perhaps challenge the charge that they are not religious. They would point to patterns of religious living which they advocate through group folkways, agricultural festival observances, cele-

bration of Hanukkah, Purim and the like. But by the standards of religion which include synagogue association, prayer, ethical discipline, ritual and custom as prescribed by traditional Judaism, such observances could be classified as more pagan than religious. By these standards most of the people of the State of Israel are not religious.

But the walls of the mind are not unbreachable. In the kibbutzim can be found parents of the young settlers who have arrived from many parts of the world in recent years. These parents hold close their Jewish religious beliefs and practices. They maintain kashrut and observe holy days and festivals. The children of these parents may be indifferent to such forms, but the grandchildren are affected by the religious attitudes and observance they see. They have found fascination in the customs of Judaism unknown to their parents or abandoned by them. Kindling of the Sabbath lights, for example, is not unique in the collective settlements peopled by radicals. The younger settlers may rationalize this recently instituted custom. But religion barred at the door often comes in through the window, as it were. In addition, there are thousands of people in Israel in all walks of life who would accept a dignified, modern religion if offered one. That they are not offered it is not necessarily the fault of the Orthodox Jewish community, the only religious community in Israel of any consequence. It is due to the fact that modern religion as it is known in Jewish life in America has not paid much attention to Israel's needs in the decades preceding the creation of the new state. For some time now the labor organization known as the Mapai party, the largest political party in the land, has been aware of the need of imparting something of the traditional higher spirit of the Jewish religion to the holidays for the benefit of the non-religious community. Yet the harsh realities of daily living and the fact that people are preoccupied with the building of the new state and making room for more and more immigrants are uppermost in their minds. Indeed, they claim that they are putting religion into practice in its most dramatic form, the *pidyon shevuyim*, the redeeming of the captives. It is impossible to understand the problem that hovers over Israel without realizing the pressures in the country occasioned by the War

of Independence, economic stringency and immigration. To absorb immigrants, to defend one's country in military service, to sacrifice without stint, to make room for newcomers from every corner of the earth—all this is considered religion even if the Israelis do not manifest the attitudes characteristic of religion nor show conformity to religious practices as we know them.

The emergence of the state brought the matter of religion sharply into focus. The largest single party, the Mapai, did not receive a sufficient number of votes in the election to constitute a majority able to govern, in accordance with European parliamentary rules. It therefore sought alliance with the extreme leftist group, the Mapam, in order to create the necessary majority. The Mapam refused to join with it because of Mapam's insistence upon a foreign policy closer to eastern European governments than to the West. The Mapai was then forced to turn to the religious bloc for support. It is an uneasy coalition, but it is the best that could be produced from the tangle of politics left in Israel when the British withdrew from their mandate in 1948. There are other groups beside the Mapam group that are not included in the cabinet of the Government. The Herut—the Revisionist freedom party of extreme nationalists—and the small Communist group are among these.

The Mapai, which represents by far the largest number in Israel, is not interested in religion per se, nor is it concerned about the religious habits of the religious bloc. It is interested in its politics. To gain political support it has had to pay a price. Part of that price is observable to the casual visitor to Israel today. Buses do not run in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv on the Sabbath. The army follows a kosher diet. Religious education is afforded immigrants in accordance with the wishes of the religious bloc. Civil marriages are forbidden. Religious marriage and divorce can be obtained only through the sanction of the Chief Rabbi's office. But the inconsistencies that follow the religious stamp in some of the phases of the life of the body politic are great enough to show the difficulties of enforcement among the people who are not primarily religious in their life and thinking. If the religious bloc were to gain control of the government it would be faced with a condition not unlike that

which prevailed in America in the time of the Prohibition Law. Its decrees would be unbeyed, or violated by subterfuge. The majority of the people in Israel consider the religious bloc as nothing more than a political party fanatically devoted to the cause of its particular kind of religion—rigid Orthodoxy. They do not sympathize with the coercive laws passed at the insistence of this bloc. They accept most grudgingly the fact that buses do not run on the Sabbath when they have the opportunity to travel and to enjoy leisure. They are not enamored of the dietary limitations imposed on them. They are not happy with the fact that only a religious ceremony of marriage can be performed—and an Orthodox one at that! These observations are important in estimating the power of religion in Israel and the possibilities of establishing a Jewish theocracy there. There are many handicaps that accrue to a religious group turned political. The American commission which visited Israel under the aegis of the Rabbinical Assembly of America pointedly referred to this fact when it reported:

The reduction of religion to a question of party politics has had and will continue to have some very detrimental consequences for the cause of religion. It has deepened the antagonism of the anti-religious elements against them. The people in Israel are highly sensitive and intelligent, and they will not be won back to religion through State action. If they are to be reached at all, it would have to be through a continued restatement of the vitality of the religious idea and its continuing relevance to our time. It is one thing to expect the State to show respect, in its official actions, for the sanctities of Judaism. It is quite another thing to depend on it to legislate for religious observances.

That the religious elements in Israel and in the Diaspora do not have things their own way can be seen in the reluctance of government bureaus to acquiesce in all of their demands. One of the reasons why the Constitution has not been ratified may well be the fact that Ben-Gurion's Mapai party is waiting for modifications in the demands of the religious bloc, the elimination of religious clauses, and is hesitant in codifying a system that would not be completely democratic in its civil scope. Another straw in the wind can be noted from a cablegram which

Ben-Gurion sent to the Orthodox religious group in America when it had demanded religious education in the immigration camps. He advised this group that the most effective means of influencing the path to be taken by the State of Israel and to strengthen a particular movement in the state is to settle in Israel.

It is no secret that the religious bloc has been chafing under the restrictions which it feels are placed upon it. It has long been aware of the clash between its aims and the aims of the other political groups. It forecasts a revolt. H. A. Goodman, the political secretary of the Agudath Israel, one of the strong elements of the religious bloc, expressed this thought by predicting that the government in power in Israel fears the defection of the religious bloc with all the repercussions on the Jewish and world scenes. Unless there is a complete reorientation of the powers-that-be in Israel, it is inevitable that the religious bloc will rebel against the government and that it will win the ensuing struggle.

The socialists and other non-religious groups in Israel thus find themselves between the cross fires of religionists of every shade. A change in the picture is necessary. But it is doubtful if it will be along the lines hoped for by the extreme Agudath Israel segment of the religious bloc. The clock will not be turned back. The modifications will, in all likelihood, be along liberal lines.

Immigration is bound to affect the religious future of the country. The matter cannot yet be assessed because the immigrants are being absorbed into the economy, into the army and into the political life of the nation. European immigration will most likely be from Communist-dominated lands, and those brought up under Communist regimes are hardly likely to be very religious in outlook. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the immigrants from such countries as Yemen, Iraq, Morocco, Tunis, Algeria and Iran are likely to be very religious Jews. For the most part they are young people. Old age is not the privilege of many who live under the feudal standards determined by Arab dictators. These younger immigrants may or may not become fanatical supporters of Orthodoxy in Israel. The possibilities of their modifying their reli-

gious attachments cannot be excluded. They are bound to come under the influence of the secularists; and the radicals may, in turn, be touched by the religious influence of the new immigrants. The effects of the new life in Israel and its changed tempo may produce among the new immigrants from the East a religious pattern closer to liberal lines than the kind they have known in Arab lands. One cannot overlook changes caused by propinquity. The American environment has certainly affected the religious outlook and practice of even the most devout Jews who came from western Europe. Similarly the life in the new state is bound to have its effect upon radical and religionist alike, whose roots lie in distant lands.

It cannot be denied that the liberal Jewish elements in America have cause for concern over the religious situation in Israel today. There is, as has been noted, no provision for civil marriage and divorce. There is scant due given any religious group outside the Orthodox wing. Religious courts determine all cases of domestic relations. All this needs correction and will undoubtedly be corrected in time. But to demand changes from London or New York or other quarters outside Israel is to be unrealistic. What Ben-Gurion cabled to the Orthodox religious group in America might well apply to all other religious associations.

Mr. Ben-Gurion's view is understandable, if not logical. Israel happens to be the concern of the Jewish people throughout the world. The residents of Israel look to the American Jewish community in particular for funds to help them in the upbuilding of their country. There are no liberal religious members of farm colonies in Israel. There are no liberal rabbis who have relinquished their posts abroad to come to live in Israel and to carry on their religious labors there. There is no Reform or Conservative Jewish movement in the country at present. Most of the people in Israel have no conception of Judaism other than the Orthodox kind.

There is need of more religion in Israel. The secular movements have not produced the kind of Jews who can perpetuate the living ideal of Judaism. Secularism is not the aim and goal of the Jewish people; it never has been. The late Professor Joseph Klausner expressed anxiety over a situation which has

been the concern of many conventions of Jewish religious bodies in this and other lands in recent years. Some years ago in an article titled "Israel Where Art Thou Going?" in the newspaper *Haboker* he observed the dangers arising from lack of religious motivation in Israel's life. He, like many abroad, asked the question: "Have our prophets spoken, our sages taught and our poets sung for 'Hebrew-speaking gentiles?'" But it is interesting to note that he raised the question on behalf of Orthodox Jewry and not on behalf of more liberal elements in the Diaspora. In spite of his plea, Orthodoxy has continued to leave untouched the vast numbers of the country's population.

It is indeed regrettable that the religious bloc in Israel—the group controlled by the Orthodox authorities whose executive powers seem vested mostly in the Chief Rabbi—does not show greater understanding, tolerance and sympathy to more liberal-minded religious elements as well as to the secular groups who have rebelled against its strictures. Their religion is not one that will convert the multitudes. Their politics are not such as to endear them to the populace. But before the liberals in other lands turn their gaze upon Israel they ought to observe the effects of Orthodoxy in their own lands. Since 1775 the people of America have known blue laws that favor the thinking of specific religious groups at the expense of others. Many of these blue laws are still on the statute books of some of the states of the Union. People have been patient in working to change these laws. Similar patience will have to be shown to the people of Israel who have performed many wonders in the short span of their independence. If the people of Israel, the majority of whom are not in sympathy with a religious control that is exclusive in its demands, are willing to bide their time in solving their many difficulties, can Jews residing outside of Israel do less?

The synagogues in Israel are not yet equipped to meet the challenge inherent in the government of this new dynamic state. The people in Israel are not yet aware of the potentialities of religion in their daily lives. Before a favorable climate can prevail for the nurturing of a Jewish Zion in the religious sense of the word we must create adequate means of channeling the

thinking of Israel along religious lines. Here liberal elements in Judaism have the same opportunities as do the Orthodox. They must establish liberal synagogues staffed by rabbis who are close to the aspirations and ideals of the Israelis, who can share their labors as well as their dreams. Liberal Jewish movements might well emulate the devotion of the religious labor Zionists who combine their modern social outlook and their orthodox religious practices to a remarkable degree. They can apply their sense of social justice to Israel and seek there to perform among their own what they often find difficult to perform among others in the various countries of the world. Perhaps Israel is waiting for this type of program. The life and religion of Israel will ultimately be determined by those who live there and not by the resolutions and demands and demonstrations of Jews in the Diaspora.

## ON DEFINING A JEW

THE DEBATE IN Israel's parliament on the subject "What is a Jew?" points to the importance of semantics in defining the Jewish way of life. Ever since the Emancipation almost two hundred years ago, the question has agitated the Jewish world. The Haskallah (rationalist) movement, which produced Reform Judaism in the West and Zionism in the East, radically changed many of the processes of traditional Jewish thinking. The results of that change are still felt. The secular-religious differences in Israel are only one aspect of the change. Diaspora Jewish life has been no less affected. Modern traditional synagogue life and activity, for example, bears little resemblance to the kind shown by the Jews of Russia a century ago.

The question that came before Israel's parliament rose as a result of the issue of identity cards given to all the inhabitants of Israel with a space for "religion and nationality"—in Hebrew the words read "ethnic group or race." In the first years of Israel's statehood the preoccupation with the war for survival

and the absorption of immigrants permitted little thought of such matters as population origins. But the differences between the secularist and the religious elements became more pronounced in time. The former group substituted modern political slogans and ideas for traditional beliefs. Israel is, to all intents and purposes, a secular state, and the issue between the two forces was drawn by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion when he declared in the course of the debate that the Government did not take upon itself the decision as to who was a religious Jew, but who was a national Jew. In other words, he maintained that no *halacha* (religious law) was involved, only *chok* (legislation in the secular sense).

The debate in Israel's parliament had its repercussions in every part of the Jewish world, and raised a question never before argued in Jewish life: What constitutes a Jew? The issues resulting from the posing of this question left more unanswered than answered. As the *London Jewish Chronicle* put it in July 1958:

It must not be overlooked that the State of Israel has other citizens besides Jews—Christians and Mohammedans and, no doubt, a number professing no faith. Can you speak of a “national Christian” as well as a “religious Christian,” a “national Moslem” as well as a “religious Moslem”? Citizens of all creeds or none in Israel may, of course, correctly be described as Israelis by nationality. What is to be the difference, then, between an Israeli and a “national Jew”? Are the terms “Jew” and “Israeli” to be interchangeable? If a “national Jew” is simply an “Israeli Jew” then the problem persists of what is a Jew.

Such a debate as took place in Israel's parliament on the question could not have occurred in any other parliament in the world. The minister of the interior advanced a criterion of judgment which, it was hoped, would be satisfactory to all the elements of the population, the religious, the free thinkers, the progressives and the conservatives, for the sake of peace. He offered a tripartite formula for classifying the Jewish population to please all, but which, in reality, pleased none. It called for identifying Jewish nationalists who are religious, Jewish nationalists who are not religious and “made” or adopted Jews

—those who are not Jews and do not wish to convert according to Orthodox Jewish laws and customs, but who wish to be nationalist Jews.

This arbitrary classification is the result of a confusion in semantics. The religionists, who opposed the debate in the first place, were quite correct in saying that it was not the question “What is a Jew?” but “Who is a Jew?” that merited consideration. There is a great difference between these two definitions. The question “What is a Jew?” is debatable only within the confines of the Jewish religion. The registration regulations belong to the secular field, as they would in any national unit containing a variety of personal faiths and attitudes toward life. The problem that arose because of the government’s trespassing into private domains in Israel is whether a person not a Jew could be given the status of one just for the asking. This is what the minister of the interior’s identity-card regulations called for. The wide reverberations of such a decision that were felt both in Israel and in the Diaspora were clear enough indication to Israeli authorities that their premise was based on a wrong understanding of what is a Jew. It also threatened to inject unnecessarily a fortuitous dispute between religionists and secularists in the country.

Many individuals and congregations throughout the Jewish world not particularly known for their Orthodoxy or their concern about the progress of religion in Israel have considered as arbitrary and whimsical a decision to recognize a person as Jewish by the mere declaration of such desire without any manifestation of his willingness to make the slightest effort to live as a Jew in accordance with the time-honored traditions of the Jewish people. It is one thing to acquire citizenship; it is quite another thing to be given the sanctity of a tradition without earning it. One is an inherent right accruing to the individual in a democratic society. The other can be granted only at the sufferance of the group privileged to define its terms of membership. The Law of Return has given the newcomer to Israel greater privileges than newcomers receive in other countries. It has automatically conferred citizenship upon him with his setting foot on the soil of the country. But if one who is not born a Jew wishes to become a Jew, there is a condition to be

met: It is proper proselytization defined by religious authorities. One may differ with regard to the degree of allegiance asked as the price of Jewish identity, but he cannot logically dispute the essential basis of that identity.

Furthermore, the Knesset debate is a corollary of a much larger problem than the issue of an identity card in Israel. The late Professor Simon Rawidowicz, noted Hebrew philosopher and writer, left an imposing book on the subject of the Jew shortly before his untimely death. It was published posthumously under the title *Babylon and Jerusalem*, and it gives us an interesting insight into the care which this sensitive scholar exercised in dealing with the term "Jew." Those familiar with Dr. Rawidowicz' views know how impatient he was with the offhand definition of a Jew in terms advanced by the Israeli minister of the interior. His conception of a Jew bears direct relationship to the arguments that have been raging among the Jewish people since the subject was first brought up in Israel.

The gist of Rawidowicz' philosophical thesis lies in his distinction between Jerusalem as an early symbol of Jewish nationalism—the heroic, mythical emblem of a people—and Babylon the great center of Jewish learning that produced the famous Talmud perpetuating the Jewish spirit of the Diaspora which kept the Jewish people alive throughout the centuries. This spirit was the strength and mainstay of the Jews during the millennia when they were without a homeland, when Jerusalem was only a distant messianic hope.

Today Babylon and Jerusalem represent the two parts of the Jewish people that are complementary and necessary to make up the organic whole. The events of 1948 brought Jerusalem back as a reality and made it the driving force in the life of the Jews. Consequently a new type of Jew has emerged in Israel. Babylon—the creative Diaspora character of the Jewish people—has been submerged and underestimated. Zionism's use of the Bible has not been in keeping with the traditional Diaspora pattern; it has been used in Israel to awaken national consciousness and to advance political aims. Israel's youth, reflecting the teachings of Jerusalem as an early concept of nationalism, is largely pagan in its outlook when seen in the light

of the Diaspora spirit. It glorifies the nation and overlooks the religious power in the building of the nobler society.

Rawidowicz' views have been dealt with at some length here because they challenge the supremacy of the role of Israel in the life of world Jewry so frequently enunciated by Ben-Gurion and others. He even protested the choice of the name "Israel" for the new state. He was a Zionist of long standing and deeply attached to the concept of Jewish nationalism. But he feared that statehood might produce a too-easy-going type of Jew unaware of his past and indifferent to the remarkable Diaspora experience which gave his forefathers the capacity to survive time, place and circumstance, and to lay the foundations of the new commonwealth of Israel. He was concerned about a definition of a Jew that was not based merely on physical grounds—citizenship, formal declaration, etc. He objected to the distinction so often advanced both in Israel and abroad between the Jews dwelling in their homeland and those dwelling beyond. He maintained that they are one, and only when they are linked together can they truly fulfil Theodor Herzl's conception of one people and Ahad Haam's notion of Israel as the spiritual center of the Jewish world.

Dr. Rawidowicz' fears have been substantiated by no less a person than Israel's prime minister. When David Ben-Gurion spoke to the Hadassah Women's Convention in Jerusalem in 1958, he insisted that religion is no longer and has not been for decades a bond uniting and consolidating all Jews. Specifically dealing with the American Jewish community he cited the decline of the Yiddish language and the fact that most American Jews speak English as evidence supporting his thesis. He added:

Synagogue and Temple attendance in the United States is chiefly formal. Only a small proportion of the people who attend the synagogue are familiar with the six hundred and thirteen commandments of the Jewish faith. Assimilation has developed to the extent that ninety per cent of America's younger generation does not know anything about Judaism. Never was such a great Jewish community in danger of gentle extinction as American Jewry today. If this great historic miracle had not taken place in our

time and the State of Israel had not arisen, the majority of the Jews of the United States would have been left without any bonds to Judaism.

Mr. Ben-Gurion's remarks leave little room for creative Diaspora Jewish life. He completely negates the Diaspora as an influence in Jewish life today. He conceives of the non-Israeli Jewish role as helping immigration to Israel, an attachment to the sources of Judaism, a knowledge of the Hebrew language and literature, an over-all knowledge of the Bible in the original and local support of Israel in its struggle for existence. He firmly believes that America and world Jewry will not be able to survive without an intimate link with Israel, but he says nothing whatsoever about Israel's survival in the absence of adequate links with Diaspora Jewry.

The ultimate logic of such thinking is illustrated by Israelis who, estranged from their religious heritage, tend to regard themselves as nationalists rather than as members of the world Jewish community. The Israeli Ministry of Education, noting such tendencies, has felt the need of introducing into the secular schools a special course called "Jewish Consciousness" to help bridge the widening gulf between Israeli and Diaspora Jewish life. The young in Israel have been alienated from their people abroad. The new program of study, designed to teach Israelis their links with Jewish tradition, stresses the unbroken continuity of the history of the Jewish people and seeks to help them to be part of an age-old community rather than an isolated unit whose life is unrelated to the centuries preceding them.

It is significant too that it is the Mapai party, the prime minister's secular party, that has sponsored this course of study. Members of the Israeli youth delegation to the Moscow Youth Festival discovered the need of links with the Diaspora in order to communicate with Russian Jewry. The lesson they learned was not lost upon the Mapai organization which instituted the courses dealing with Jewish consciousness.

The government and the Israeli parliament can legitimately judge concerning the national status of the inhabitants of the country. This has nothing to do with race or creed, however. They can establish the qualifications for citizenship and declare

who is a resident and who is an alien. They can define the rights and duties of citizens and residents of Israel. But they are hardly competent to pass judgment on what constitutes a Jew. This question is imbedded in centuries of Jewish life and belongs as much to the Diaspora as it does to the State of Israel. It is the historic Jewish experience that weighs most heavily in an answer to this question. No formula limited to the physical or national aspect of existence can adequately define a Jew. This truth was perhaps never expressed more eloquently than in the words of the great labor Zionist, the late beloved and erudite Hayim Greenberg in *The Inner Eye*:

Jews have for many centuries lived more in time than in space. Jewish culture was not geographical. The galut (Diaspora) was perhaps the only example in history of an extra-territorial civilization. Undoubtedly a civilization without a soil of its own, without territorial bounds is, from many angles, an abnormal phenomenon. But the Jews were successful in sublimating this abnormality. They brought something with them into exile which I might compare, if I were a poet, with Father Jacob's ladder which requires no more space than a ladder needs for its support in order to reach heaven.

## RICHER THAN THE ROTHSCHILDS

ON A BRIGHT October afternoon the cornerstone of Israel's new parliament building was laid by Mrs. James de Rothschild as she uttered the Hebrew words: "As I lay the first stone of the Knesset, let us turn to God and pray 'that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day.'" Behind this act lay a magnificent chapter in the story of the House of Rothschild.

High among the mountains of Galilee, overlooking the town of Zikhron Ya'aqov between the Mediterranean and the hills of Ephraim, is the memorial to Baron Edmond de Rothschild who is known as "the father of the Jewish community of Palestine." It is a magnificently landscaped area of some fifteen hundred

dunams (quarter acres) of land. The burial place of Edmond de Rothschild is cut into a mountain. Near the entrance is a large marble slab on which is carved a map of Israel showing the towns and villages and settlements which were started or supported by the benefactions of this remarkable man.

There are famous names on that map, names like Rosh Pinna and Rishon le Zion, Petah Tiqva and Zikhron Ya'akov, Hedera and Rehovot and dozens of others that constitute the heart of Israel's countryside. The baron is estimated to have expended more than five million pounds aiding existing settlements and establishing new ones. He was not an ordinary philanthropist in the accepted sense of the word. He was close to his brethren and he loved Zion. Secure and wealthy in France, he, nonetheless, longed for the redemption of the ancient Jewish homeland and wished to see on its reclaimed soil a large community of proud, independent agriculturists, free politically and advanced socially. After some years of personal association with the development and growth of the settlements of Israel, he transferred the administration of the colonies he had helped establish to PICA, the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association. The name PICA has been synonymous with the progress of the land of Israel.

In the summer of 1957 PICA closed its books. James de Rothschild, son of the baron, wrote a letter to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, in which he made the announcement of this move and presented the remaining assets of the organization to the Government of Israel for the purpose of building a home for its parliament. He died within a fortnight after he had written this letter, and it was forwarded by his widow to Mr. Ben-Gurion. It is a moving document, fully in keeping with the traditional spirit of the moral and humane character of the philanthropy so typical of the Rothschild family. It reads:

My dear Mr. Prime Minister:

My father began his colonization in Israel 75 years ago. The work which was thus begun has been continued to this day. When in 1924 my father set up the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association—PICA—he assigned to it the task of colonizing all his land holdings. It fell to me to preside over PICA since its inception.

In the years that followed, the marshes were drained, the rocky hills and barren wastes were turned into fertile soil. All these were then colonized by PICA. Today there is no cultivable land left to PICA for further colonization. The task set to PICA has been fulfilled.

I have reached the conclusion that with the completion of its task the right course would be to terminate the activities of PICA instead of complicating the work which is done now on a far larger scale by the national institutions. I look upon the termination of PICA as a mark of fulfilment. I would like to underline this by a special act of identification with the aspirations of Israel and her people. We intend to provide the sum of six million pounds for the construction of the new Knesset building in Jerusalem which I understand it is proposed to set up. Let the new Knesset building become a symbol in the eyes of all men of the permanence of the State of Israel. With that done, PICA will withdraw from the scene of Israel in the knowledge that the work which was begun seventy-five years ago is being carried on by the State and the people supported by world Jewry. With this letter I want to inform you of my decision. I do not intend with this letter to take leave of you or of Israel. My interest in the development of Israel is abiding. Even if PICA must cease to operate I shall remain as close to you as I have always been. Your cares will be my cares and your happiness will be my happiness.

The legend "rich as the Rothschilds" has a unique connotation in Jewish life. Unlike wealth in other noted families, the Rothschild wealth has been looked upon as belonging in a sense to all the Jewish people. How else can one find meaning in those remarkable stories of the paupers and schnorrers (beggars) who made journeys to the Rothschilds and who always seemed to obtain audiences with them in order that they could explain their peculiar problems personally? In the Jewish tradition, the rich have never been above the moral and political level of the humble even when their wealth removed them socially from the masses.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the Rothschild wealth has always been linked with the public good. One Rothschild helped England to defeat Napoleon. Another helped Disraeli acquire the shares of the Suez Canal for Great Britain. A third,

the grandson of the first Jewish member of the House of Commons, was the recipient of the letter containing the famous Balfour Declaration. A fourth, Baron Edmond de Rothschild, was the chief architect in the upbuilding of the land of Israel. And a fifth, James de Rothschild, gave Israel its parliament building.

The House of Rothschild has written a fascinating story in Jewish annals. The story is not limited to the field of finance. In spite of the romantic details associated with its wealth, it cannot be forgotten that the city of London elected a Rothschild—Lionel—as the first Jewish member of parliament. In 1885 Lionel's son Nathaniel was the first Jew to enter the House of Lords. About these two Rothschilds raged the famous battle of the oaths in English history. All oaths of English public officials retained the formula of the Christian faith. The situation evoked Macaulay's celebrated essay *Civil Disabilities of the Jews*. The Rothschilds would not compromise their Jewish dignity. They refused public office until they could take an oath in keeping with their Jewish tradition. They were thus the pioneers in breaking through the encrusted prejudices of centuries and making it possible for their people to take their rightful place in the western world.

In a dramatic series of events that characterized the Zionist movement during the past half century the Rothschild name has appeared time and again. Its association with the emergence of the redeemed land on the shores of the Mediterranean has been a direct and influential one. Through the munificence of Baron Edmond de Rothschild over fifty Jewish settlements came into being in Palestine.

Unusual as has been the career of the House of Rothschild, so has been the quality of its philanthropy. Its members were always inclined to use their financial power for the good of others. Its benefactions have invariably borne a personal stamp. Unlike other wealthy Jews the Rothschilds did not forget their own. Typical of their philosophy is the way PICA was dissolved by James de Rothschild. He linked the end of one adventure with the beginning of another. The famous name is deeply woven into the strands of Zionist history, and it brings forth grateful memories whenever it is mentioned because it is for-

ever associated with redeemed deserts and redeemed human beings. Now it is destined to be connected with the building where the new laws of a growing nation will be formulated. The Rothschild memorial in Zikhron Ya'aqov tells of the generous uses of wealth in days past. The new Rothschild memorial in Jerusalem is linked with the future life of the nation. Both are striking reminders that wealth can be and often is put to noble use.

One of the famous Rothschild anecdotes deals with the poor Hebrew teacher who always consoled himself for not being as rich as the Rothschilds by the boast that if he were, he would be richer, for he could then give Hebrew lessons in spare time, which Rothschild could not do. This story is, incidentally, only partially true, for Mayer Amschel, the founder of the banking house, was originally designated by his father for the rabbinate.

But there is something in the poor Hebrew teacher's fancy that has assumed reality only in the light of the Rothschild benefactions. The millions of Jews already aided by the Rothschild largess in the land of Israel and the untold numbers who will be redeemed as a result will one day be richer than the Rothschilds. They will possess in addition to their corporate wealth, equal to or exceeding the fortune of the great banking family, the spiritual wealth accruing from their capacity to give Hebrew lessons to their children and to the world—lessons representative of democracy and morality and justice and peace enshrined in the unbroken Jewish tradition of the centuries.

## TEL AVIV

DURING THE LAST war a cousin of President Eisenhower, a prominent eye doctor in an eastern city of the United States, was attached to the American military forces of the Near East. There was an American rest camp established at Tel Aviv, and he was sent there with other American army officers for rest and rehabilitation. He reported that never in his experience had he seen so beautiful a city as Tel Aviv. He was simply charmed by its cleanliness, its order, its industry and its people.

Many Jews might differ from this estimate as they compare the city to Jerusalem or to Haifa. Yet the observation of a stranger is worthy of note. Dr. Eisenhower discovered a city of character. And because of its character the cleanliness and order and industry appeared different to him, unlike those of other cities he had known.

To have character a city must be born of a vision and dedicated to a goal greater than expediency. Most cities are conceived in haste. There are only a few cities in the world that bear the stamp of resolute purpose—Rome, Athens, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Washington being classic examples of such. Tel Aviv represents a similar purpose in Israel. Its beginnings are associated with the dreams of a few residents of old Jaffa who grew weary of oriental crowding, oriental smells and oriental diseases so typical of cities in the Middle East. They gathered on an empty, sandy beach a few miles distant and vowed to build there a city to match their aspirations. It would be a place gleaming with the brighter colorations of modern life. It would fit the needs of their time. It would be commodious enough to care for the industrial energies of a people transplanted from the West to the East. And it would be a distinctive blend of the best of Europe and the best in the Orient. How well their vision became reality can be seen in its architectural patterns which reflect less the grandeur of the builder than they do the dream of the idealist. The buildings are distinctive, but they are subordinated to the quality of the contents they house. The people of Tel Aviv care more for the fine arts and culture, for the values of justice and peace than for imposing external evidences of physical life.

In many American cities the cultural and ethical elements are secondary to the practical necessities. The pioneers who established those cities were primarily interested in improving their physical lot. The centers of population were chosen because of their natural convenience. Therefore, we usually find them situated on the banks of rivers, or on ocean fronts, or at the edge of lakes. It is not so with Tel Aviv. There were no natural inducements on the site the founders chose for their future home. The flat, sandy beach of the Mediterranean was not particularly inviting. A good harbor was wanting. The

convenient river was lacking. The crossroads of the country were at a distance. But they were not thinking of commerce and industry. They were perhaps stimulated in their desire to build on the seashore because of the poor summer climate that prevailed in Jaffa. But they desired something more than comfort in the summertime. They wished for a center for the radiation of energies imprisoned in the ghettos of Europe. They dreamed of a place where they might create anew the life of a people hidden so long in prayerbooks and other ethical literature. And they vowed in their hearts that here, on this unpromising stretch of sand, they would set up the symbol of the new Israel. The city would not be in competition with Jerusalem the holy city, or with Haifa the beautiful city crowned by Mount Carmel. They could not change history or topography. They would just add another chapter to Jewish history. That chapter, Tel Aviv, embraces much that is modern Israel.

What is most striking about Tel Aviv is not its bustle and its energy, but the spirit that is inherent in its daily life. That spirit represents the aspiration of the immigrant seeking a new life in a new land in consonance with the Jewish ideals of righteousness and peace. The search after those ideals is to be noted in its culture patterns. There are more bookstores in this city in proportion to its population than in any other city on earth. There are three times as many daily newspapers published in Tel Aviv as in New York. There is a greater thirst for art and music to express the quest after the good and peaceful life than in other centers of population. Its gaiety is mingled with the sophistication born of devotion to the ethics of Judaism. It is this quality that gives Tel Aviv its unique character. Planned originally as a home for cultured, discriminating families, it remained true to the purposes of the founders while it assumed the enormous burdens that were heaped upon it in consequence of the uprooted Jewish life in other areas of the world. Its overcrowding, its inadequacies in housing, its impoverished planning are characteristics of the life of the new State of Israel. But its original dream of being a center of Hebrew culture is so deeply rooted in its streets and buildings that it softens the look of the city to a great degree.

When the Hebrew University was opened on Mount Scopus

in 1925, Lord Balfour, who was sitting on the platform next to Nahum Sokolow, asked Dr. Sokolow, "Tell me, what does the city of Tel Aviv live on?" "With your permission, Lord Balfour," answered Sokolow, "I shall follow the Jewish custom and answer you with another question: What does the city of London live on?" "London? Why, it has a tremendous 'hinterland'—the whole of the British empire," Balfour exclaimed. "And Tel Aviv," said Sokolow, "has a 'hinterfolk!'"

Tel Aviv has meant much to Israel in its half century of life. It meant Jewish labor that built it brick by brick. It became, as the late David Remez said, a small-scale Jewish state before there was a Jewish state—a symbol of the future. In it are enshrined enduring memories. The State of Israel was proclaimed there. The first parliamentary sessions were held there. The first year of Israel's free government was carried on there. It is the one all-Jewish city in the world and, typical of the Jewish people, it symbolizes the spiritual teachings by which nations have survived in past days and will continue to survive in the future.

## THE GREAT REDEMPTION

AN AGE OF SUFFERING often brings heroic adventures in its train. This is eminently true of our age which has known terrible upheavals and witnessed sorrow on a scale never experienced before.

Of all the heroic adventures of our time none can match the remarkable undertaking of the United Jewish Appeal. The record of this unique organization stands as a shining example of man's compassion amidst barbarism, cynicism and moral decay. The massiveness of its operation is in striking contrast with the tiny fragment of the earth's population which finances and directs its endeavor. It is without a parallel in modern life.

The story of the United Jewish Appeal can never be completely told. Its manifold labors can never be adequately de-

scribed. There are too many facets of its proceedings, too many by-products of the merciful acts which it originates to be captured and contained in a single essay. Only the highlights of this multi-philanthropic organization can be touched upon here.

The heroes of the adventure that is the United Jewish Appeal dwell upon two continents. They cannot be counted. They are the unnumbered thousands of American Jews who, year after year, assume responsibility for their handicapped brethren in far-flung places of the world and who, by their generosity, redeem them from oppression and bring them to new havens where they can renew their lives, find new opportunities and dwell in accordance with the dictates of their conscience. And they are the unnumbered thousands in the land of Israel who constantly make room for new immigrants and reshape their destinies while transforming their own desert soil into productive and life-sustaining verdure.

The American Jews remembered that six million of their people perished during the dark years of the Nazi madness over Europe. They bore the reflected pain of this unprecedented calamity and, in their freedom, acted in the tradition of their fathers as "the merciful, the children of the merciful." They opened their hearts and gave of their substance as no other people have given to correct the social ills that had beset the Jews of other lands. The degree of their largess helped make the humanitarian effort known as the United Jewish Appeal one of the great sagas of redemption in the history of mankind.

A most unusual aspect of the response of the hosts of American Jews to the enormous challenges of our era lay in the fact that they came to the aid of a people of whose previous existence they had virtually no knowledge. It is through the United Jewish Appeal that the occidental Jew discovered the oriental Jew and learned of his plight in Arab countries after the rebirth of the State of Israel. It was because of this same organization that Jews behind the iron curtain were able to take advantage of periodic opportunities for immigration afforded them by heads of Communist governments.

If one wished to discover the power behind the annual fund

raising drives of the United Jewish Appeal in more than five thousand communities in the United States he would not find it in the efficiency of those directing and administering them, nor in the persuasiveness of the speakers who address the meetings. He would perceive it in the collective conscience of American Jewry concretized in this organic structure which collects the funds so freely and generously contributed and makes them available to its agencies for redemption, rehabilitation and relief—the Joint Distribution Committee, the Jewish Agency, the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA) and the United Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). Each of these agencies is a prismatic reflection of the heart of the American Jew represented by the United Jewish Appeal.

The Jews of Israel constitute an extraordinary national community in the modern world because they are governed by the Law of Return. This law is part and parcel of Israel's Declaration of Independence and a prime *raison d'être* for the existence of the state. The humanitarian character of the law may be discerned from the following words in the Declaration: "The State of Israel will be open to the immigration of all Jews from the countries of their dispersion." It offers more than political status to any Jew who comes to Israel; it gives him also the inherent right to return to his homeland. The Israelis might have delayed enacting such a law because at the time of its promulgation they were engaged in a war for survival and needed time to recover from the grievous wounds they had suffered and to establish themselves more securely as a nation. But they knew that if they denied entrance to their harassed brethren abroad there might be a wave of suicides from Shanghai to Tripoli. They opened their doors and shared their scarcities with the multitude which came on the transports provided by the United Jewish Appeal. It was a fantastic display of courage to take in thousands upon thousands of new immigrants while fighting a war against heavy odds, and the Israelis proved by this act that their idealism exceeded their practical sense of security. When a St. Louis businessman visited Israel during the height of this great immigration he was asked by the late president, Dr. Chaim Weiz-

mann, to describe what he had found to be the most interesting sight he had witnessed in Israel. His answer was a glowing tribute to the great redemption of our century. He said that what impressed him most was a large Hebrew sign hanging at the port of Haifa in greeting to the shiploads of immigrants coming from afar. It read: *Shomair ach anochi.* (I am my brother's keeper.)

The United Jewish Appeal functions in many countries. It has constantly been faced with the problem of sustaining Jews who, because of abnormal conditions, are prevented from living in peace, security and comfort. In North Africa, for example, they live under the shadow of fear, as they do in all Moslem countries. In Iran the problem they face is one of crushing, demoralizing poverty. In eastern European countries it is a combination of ingrained anti-Semitism and the inability of Jews to adjust to Communism. The processes of rehabilitation follow the pattern that is the hallmark of the United Jewish Appeal. Among the Jews in backward countries health must be restored to those who are undernourished and debilitated, the techniques of hygiene introduced to those who are totally unaware of them, and trades taught to the unskilled to help them rebuild their lives in an advanced industrial community. The care thus given to the poor, the undernourished and the undeveloped Jewish people is warm and personal. It is humanitarian in the highest sense of the word. By virtue of this care in the countries of their origin the Jews living in the depressed areas of the world are prepared to migrate anywhere, with confidence that they will be able to adapt themselves to changed conditions. If the dedicated personnel of the United Jewish Appeal could record their deeds of the past decade they would give the world the most moving story of rescue operations known to men.

It is in Israel that the results of the great redemption can be seen at their best. If this country presents an exciting experiment in democracy today it is in no small part due to the United Jewish Appeal which has provided the funds to build the means by which countless numbers of human beings have been carried from every part of the world to the shores of the Mediterranean. The act of setting Jews on the free soil of

Israel does not complete the story of their integration. There is still another act in the drama. It involves permanence in their absorption into the life of Israel. They must be given education, housing, job opportunities and other means of living adequately and usefully. Only when such necessary elements are provided can the great redemption be concluded and normalcy be restored to those who had been living under abnormal conditions. From some lost village at the foot of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, hundreds of miles in the interior of that North African country, to the Beisan farming section of Israel, is a long journey covering many places and marked by carefully planned steps. Children gathered in immigrant camps near Casablanca have had to be taught the first rudiments of twentieth-century civilization—to take a shower bath, use a toothbrush, become accustomed to a bed, eat with proper utensils. They have had to be transported to Marseilles, to learn Hebrew as well as farming in the French countryside. They have had to be taken by ship to Haifa and, finally, to be moved to their permanent quarters where they could find houses furnished with minimum necessities of life and friendly instructors to help them on the way. It is highly doubtful whether any effort at establishing human rights and opportunities can approach that of the great redemption conducted by the United Jewish Appeal in recent years. The fruit of this magnificent undertaking ripens quickly in Israel. The Moroccan Jew is enabled to make the transition from the fifteenth to the twentieth century in a comparatively short time, and, in doing so, he has shed the characteristics of the downtrodden and oppressed human being and assumed the mantle of spiritual dignity in his Israeli citizenship.

Immigrants to Israel from behind the iron curtain have had different obstacles to hurdle. Many had been living in ghost communities which have been brutally denuded of their Jewish population, and the vestiges of the communities reminded them of the death and destruction of loved ones, friends and homes. It is this fact that lies behind the eagerness of these people to leave their domiciles. They find their memories painful and their social isolation burdensome. The funds of the United Jewish Appeal give them the means of improving their

lot. They are transported by rail to Vienna and, after remaining there a short time, they travel on to Italian ports from whence they embark for Israel. The physical adjustments they must make are not very great ones for they come from industrially developed areas. But the psychological and spiritual barriers they face are of considerable consequence to them. They must learn to breathe the air of freedom. Unlike the Jews from Arab countries, who may have linked their altered status in Israel with the fulfilment of the messianic dream, East European Jews view it as an adjustment to a new economy, a different political system and a Jewish atmosphere which they had not known in their residence behind the iron curtain. Many of them had been waiting with intense longing for the chance to join their fellow Jews in Israel. They are more sophisticated, more realistic in their approach to their new situations. It is difficult for those who take their liberties for granted to imagine that others can be excited about such an intangible thing as freedom. An apt illustration of the feelings of East European Jews may be found in the story of an Israeli citizen who boarded a ship at Naples. The ship was carrying Rumanian Jewish immigrants to Israel. He noticed a man standing on a table addressing a group of immigrants. When he came close enough to hear what was being said he was astounded to discover that the speaker was bitterly denouncing the Israeli prime minister and his cabinet. He took the speaker aside and asked him, "Friend, what part of Israel do you come from? You seem very disgruntled about the Government." When the speaker informed him that he was himself an immigrant coming to settle in Israel, the Israeli was indignant. "How," he asked, "can you do such a thing? Here you are, coming to a country which is giving you your life, your freedom and your opportunity, and before you even set foot on its soil you criticize its prime minister." "Listen," the immigrant replied, "do you know what it means to be able to criticize a prime minister without landing in jail?"

The last step in the great redemption generally is taken in the permanent place where the immigrant settles. On American soil the United Jewish Appeal funds have been instrumental in the rehabilitation of those coming from afar, and the grateful immigrants have returned to their new country a large measure

of riches through their happy and useful lives. In Israel the proportion of such returns has been much greater because of the size of the migration to that country. Like the Jewish people of America the Israelis assume great responsibility for the development of the newcomers. In fact, part of their taxes are devoted to the integration into the economy and into the body politic of the immigrants who come from every section of the globe. The Israeli army is more than a defense arm of the nation; it is also a language and citizenship training center. The experienced farmers of the collective settlements volunteer to live among those newly settled on the land and to teach them how to cultivate the soil. The workers in industry do not begrudge the incoming people the opportunity to share available jobs. Those in the professions help their new colleagues to find outlets for their capacities in law, medicine and the arts. The schools quickly integrate the children of the immigrants into the ways of the country. Public projects are constantly initiated to give every manner of employment to those who must be economically self-sustaining before they can be free.

The endless stream of human beings set on the road to freedom by the United Jewish Appeal has endowed the State of Israel with a new heart and a new spirit. During the Sinai campaign—participated in by many relatively new immigrants—an officer was inspecting a unit of Jews who had come from Iraq. He asked one of the soldiers how he felt on the eve of invasion and in the face of unknown dangers. The Iraqi Jew replied: "I have been in Israel two years. I live in a border settlement, and life is hard. I am not happy at the prospect of going to war. But if my little son who is now a year old will be able to live in freedom in years to come, it is all worth while."

Many examples abound in Israel of a redeemed humanity on a redeemed soil, effected through United Jewish Appeal funds. These funds had been used to pay for the transportation of the immigrant, maintain him in transit, guide him in finding employment, provide him with shelter, feed him and sustain him while he was securing a position, teach him the language of the country, provide him with the tools of his trade, prepare the soil for him, build his home, and give him medical service.

This humanitarianism helps make Israel unique among the nations of the world since we do not see it manifest to such a degree in any other country on earth. It is the contributions of the United Jewish Appeal that make it possible for Israel to assume in such a remarkable manner the role of "my brother's keeper" in her relationship to the new immigrants. In other countries the immigrants must generally fend for themselves.

One cannot travel anywhere in the Jewish state without witnessing the end results of the great redemption. In the Yuval Gad pipe factory near Beersheba where they manufacture seventy-two inch pipes to irrigate the great waste spaces and make their deserts blossom as in ancient days, the best electric welder is a bearded Yemenite Jew who was borne to Israel "on the wings of eagles," as he termed the airplane furnished by the United Jewish Appeal which flew him from a country enshrouded in feudal darkness to a highly industrialized land.

Between Tel Aviv and Haifa is the town of Hedera where there is located the tire factory which supplies the truck tires for the entire country. The operations of this factory revolve around a single worker in charge of the machine which places the rubber onto the fabric. The operator of this machine is a young Moroccan Jew who had never been near an automobile in his native land. He was among those rescued by the United Jewish Appeal from abject poverty, disease and an early grave.

In one of the great scientific centers of Israel are many brilliant scholars whose researches have contributed much to the development of the young country. One of these was expelled from Hitler Germany and helped by the United Jewish Appeal to find a new home among his own people. After his achievements had gained him wide recognition an American scientific institute invited him to join its staff. It would have been to his economic advantage to do so, but he declined, saying that when Hitler had driven him out of the land of his birth and made him a displaced person only the Jewish people had helped him find sanctuary, and since they had redeemed him he belonged to them and would remain with them.

In one of the *Ulpan* schools for the study of the Hebrew language located near Tel Aviv a man was devoting eight hours a day as a student in the company of a group ranging from

sixteen to sixty-five in age. He had been one of the important officials of a Communist government and a professor in a state university. He, too, was part of the great redemption. Despite his high position and fame, he could not free himself from the ugly specter of anti-Semitism which dogged his footsteps as it had dogged those of his fathers before him. In time of crisis he discovered that he was regarded less the Communist and more the Jew. He gave up his titles and his offices and came back to his own in the land of Israel. The United Jewish Appeal played a part in his return, as it did in the cases of thousands of intellectuals and skilled workers who had been separated from their people and their ancestral faith for many years, only to find themselves under the painful necessity of establishing new foundations for their lives after they had considered themselves integrated and secure in their East European environment.

The principle upon which the United Jewish Appeal was founded and from which it has drawn its inspiration throughout the years is not new. It was known in ancient Jewish life as *pidyon shivuyim* (the redemption of the captive) and was considered the highest form of philanthropy. Captivity assumes many forms and shapes in our modern world. In some backward lands Jews may be said to be virtual servants of those in power. In other areas they may be economically depressed and live in fear of the future. And in still other countries they may be the surviving remnants of the Nazi holocaust—those who, like the characters in the Book of Job, have escaped alone to tell the story of the tragedy that befell their own. There is no precedent in the long history of the Jewish people for the magnitude of the sorrow and misery that the tides of fate heaped upon the children of Israel in the twentieth century. Vision and compassion were necessary to cope with the great problems which they created. The United Jewish Appeal utilized these exalted human qualities to the full to arouse the more fortunate Jews in lands of freedom and to set into motion the great redemption that is still going on. Renewed life everywhere has been the result. Its accomplishment is truly one of the wonders of our age.

## IV. PROBLEMS



## THE CORROSION OF ASSIMILATION

IN 1929 Walter Lippmann wrote a significant book called *A Preface to Morals*, in which he referred to the "acids of modernity" that have cut so deeply into established traditional patterns of the past. American Jews have in recent years felt the effects of such acids. As the world has changed, the American Jew has changed—only more so. One of the subtler effects of assimilation is the loss of the inner identity of the individual. This is often noted in the disparity between belief and practice, the lack of intensity of one's feelings about things highly valued by his fathers and by the superficial attachment to a cause. These are characteristic of American Jews in relation even to their comparatively recent past. They would of course deny any inward corrosion, and heatedly refute charges of assimilation by pointing proudly to the emblems of their Jewishness: their beautiful synagogues and community centers bustling with activity, their generous financial support of the State of Israel, their maintenance of philanthropic institutions and their acquisition of Jewish objects of art. But these constitute only external manifestations of Jewish identity. They constitute important bits of evidence of Jewish life. They do not and cannot compensate for the absence of internal evidence of Jewish values, the spirit that gives meaning, direction and purpose to individual and group living. Without it the institutions are husks. Critics of the American Jewish scene are not altogether wrong when they sense the shallowness of its contemporary life. The synagogues are there, they say, but where is the piety? The schools are filled, but where is the Jewish knowledge? More books on Jewish subjects are being printed than ever before, but where are the readers? The State of Israel has celebrated its tenth anniversary, but where are the Zionists?

The process of assimilation is slow and insidious. It separates

the Jew from his instinctive love and choice of the Jewish ways of life and keeps him from knowing and understanding them so that he may better meet the Bible command, "Thou shalt speak of them when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up."

In defining assimilation *Webster's New World Dictionary* best illustrates its meaning by a reference to phonetics, calling it "the process whereby a sound, influenced by a contiguous or neighboring sound, tends to become like it in position and type of articulation . . ." In daily life the Jew of the western world has tended more and more to sound like his neighbor. Not only is his hand the hand of Esau, but even the voice has lost much of the quality of the voice of Jacob. The influence of his environment enters his home, conditions his thinking and corrupts his Jewish tradition. An ancient midrash tells us that the children of Israel were deemed worthy of redemption from the land of Egypt because they did not forget their language. Under the pressures of assimilation Jews have been forgetting a common tongue. There has been a steady decline of Yiddish, a progressive disappearance of distinctively Hebrew phrases that used to be on the lips of their fathers, a loss of Hebrew liturgics that formerly linked their synagogue with the market place and the home. It is not surprising, therefore, to find a noted Yiddish writer like Aaron Zeitlin observing in his eulogy of the great Israeli poet, the late David Shimonowitz, that when a gifted Jew dies today his death marks not only the passing of a generation, but many generations of Jewish existence represented by the spiritual characteristics of a unique civilization developed in eastern Europe. Not sixty or seventy years disappear with the end of such an individual, he says, but hundreds of years. It is the end not of one period, but many periods. The Jews who follow him will be different.

Those exposed to the processes of assimilation are seldom aware of any corrosion which consumes their past associations and warps their present responsibilities toward their tradition. For this reason many American Jews have found it difficult to shoulder obligations deemed necessary by a past generation and have often tended to follow the pathway of least resistance. They have admired the color and warmth of other religions

without taking the time or the trouble to examine their own. They have shown resentment when their spiritual leaders have expressed concern over religious programs in the public schools that are associated with Christian holy days. They have incorporated enough of the life of the general community into their own homes so as to neutralize the effects of their own tradition. Thus, lacking sufficient inspiration to continue their heritage and gaining insufficient stimulus from the heritage of others, they live in the manner of "twilight children," as the great Hebrew poet Bialik once designated such individuals.

Assimilation has its effect upon Zionism, too. American Jews are far more disposed to share Israel's economic problems than her spiritual ones. The decline in membership ranks of the Zionist Organization of America since the establishment of the State of Israel is not due primarily to the sympathies of members of this organization with any political party in Israel, as some suppose, but to the withdrawal of American Jewry from direct foreign associations. American Jews follow the course of their neighbors. America was to a great extent isolationist in its thinking. Herzlian Zionism considers the Jews the world over as one people regardless of their location. This is the viewpoint of the Israelis today. But American Jews have some decided reservations about this conception of the Jewish people. The debates on this subject at World Zionist Congresses are too pointed to be easily forgotten. When the late Stephen S. Wise declared on one occasion that he had been an American for a little more than six decades and a Jew for four thousand years his statement was not greeted with universal acclaim by American Jews. When for the first time in American Jewish history a conference was convened to represent the many million Jews on these shores, it foundered on the rock of Zionism. When Henry Byroade, serving in the American State Department, gratuitously advised American Jews to mind their own business and let the Jews of Israel live as Levantines in the Middle East, the American Jewish opposition was more emotional than ideational. When Israel invaded the Sinai peninsula and thereby evoked the opposition of official Washington, American Jews were confused and worried about their larger relations to their fellow Jews abroad. They are still poles apart from the defini-

tions of Zionism advanced by Ben-Gurion and other Israelis today.

How can the American Jew cope with the corrosion of assimilation which warps his soul while leaving his body intact? By recognizing the need of education as the base of his endeavors. Many American Jews seem to have placed the cart before the horse by building beautiful structures and performing good deeds abroad without first learning the purpose of their program. The foundation of all Jewish endeavor has always been knowledge, for only through knowledge can the individual Jew ever know the reasons for his group consciousness, group association and group identity. If the average Jew were asked why he contributes to Jewish causes, why he belongs to Jewish organizations, why he helps build the structures devoted to Jewish causes, he would find it difficult to answer the questions. European Zionists like Weizmann, Sokolow, Levin, and a host of others came from communities where Jewish roots were deep and centuries old. American Zionists of the later days have not been well enough versed in Jewish history or literature to sense the spirit of the movement. The State of Israel is as much a living idea as it is a physical entity. It is the idea that gives inner identity and creates commitment to a cause. American Jews will have to discover the living idea behind their activities before they can hope to have closer association with their traditions and obtain greater inspiration from their religion.

A second means of coping with assimilation is intensification of effort rather than diffusion of it. It may be that the perimeter of Jewish activity is too large at present to enable the average Jew to observe the Jewish goals in sharp relief. We need more thought and less activity, more study and fewer meetings. Those struggling with the problem of Jewish education may find the answer in contracted and intensified fields of endeavor. Dr. Salo Baron, noted Jewish social historian, furthered this reasoning in his appeal for more quality in Jewish living when he addressed the National Jewish Federation and Welfare Fund representatives in 1955. He expressed the opinion:

**If American Jewry turns from quantity to quality, if it builds its communal coexistence less upon the quantitative**

criteria of financial success, statistically measurable memberships or school attendance, and costly and outwardly impressive buildings and institutions, and devotes more attention to the cultivation of the genuinely creative personality and of the substantive and enduring values in religion and culture, the new type of American Jewry will be a cause of pride and satisfaction. To put it bluntly, if someone were to guarantee that in the next generation American Jews will truly harbor one hundred first-rate scholars; one hundred first-rate writers and artists; one hundred first-rate rabbis; one hundred first-rate communal executives; and one hundred first-rate lay leaders—the total number would not exceed five hundred persons, a negligible and statistically hardly recognizable segment of the Jewish population—one could look forward confidently to American Judaism's reaching new heights of achievement.

## OUR MISSING INTELLECTUALS

IF THERE IS ONE puzzling and discouraging note in contemporary Jewish religious life in America, it is to be found in the attitude of the intellectuals. They are missing from the lists of those battling for Jewish rights and those seeking to advance the Jewish way of life through the institutions dedicated to these purposes. There are thousands of gifted and accomplished individuals within the Jewish fold. They neither deny nor affirm their Jewish connections. They stand on the side lines, aloof from the main stream of Jewish activity. They are not affiliated with any Jewish organization, nor do they assume any responsibility for the course of Jewish events. They do not occupy posts of leadership. They are marginal individuals who desire their children to remain Jews. For Hitler's lessons have not been lost on them. Although many of them are appreciative of the spiritual contributions of their people to western civilization, that appreciation is diluted by their failure to find positive convictions to sustain their origins and their association with their fellow Jews in the modern

world. The explanations they offer for their deflection from active Jewish life are oftentimes personal evaluations of a group heritage conditioned by negative childhood experiences. Some have distaste for the type of leadership in Jewish life. Others are merely indifferent. But nature does not tolerate a vacuum in any sphere of existence. It is no accident that keen minds which have not peered sufficiently into the prophetic writings of the Jewish people in their search for social justice have in days past gone to Marx and Engels and other philosophers for instruction. Nor is it surprising to find Jewish intellectuals in liberal Christian and modern ethical movements. These have had slight contact with the sources of their religious and literary heritage. But the largest number of intellectuals, who contribute nothing of their effort to any field of social endeavor, deprive the Jewish community of a tremendous potential for good. It is these who hold our interest.

Jewish intellectuals are not generally found in the synagogues despite the fact that the synagogue constitutes the one stable element in organized Jewish community life in America today. Within its walls are reinterpreted the teaching of the prophets, the scholars and the sages who have left their influence upon the generations of Jewish life. It still offers the means of cultivating the literary and aesthetic values that men prize today. Many a Jewish intellectual is utterly unaware of this fact.

The church is more fortunate than the synagogue in our contemporary world. Many Christian intellectuals have learned to take advantage of the spiritual institutions bequeathed them by their fathers. Great numbers have been seeking the Holy Grail and have found personal stability in the process. They have challenged the thinking of their clergy from within the church and have proved to be an important instrument in revitalizing religion to enable it to meet better the problems of the day. The Catholic and Protestant church bodies are stronger because their intellectuals can find religious sanction within them for their social program. But the prejudices of Jewish intellectuals against their religious association is notably apparent in such fields as Jewish social work and Jewish education. Jewish social workers found revelation in the potential

spiritual dynamite revealed to them some years ago in the courses on the social aspects of Judaism prepared for them by Rabbi Maurice Pekarsky and Dr. Abraham Duker.

Steady association with the synagogue could give our intellectuals a sense of purpose in their Jewish attachments, a sense of history in the upbringing of their children and a sense of heightened loyalty to the many worthy causes in contemporary Jewish life that call for their guidance and support. The presence of the intellectual in the synagogue could be a tremendous challenge to the rabbinate which frequently struggles against great odds to make Judaism a vital force in the modern world. His devotion to the center of Jewish ideals could elevate the standards of the institution designed to make men more sensitive to social justice, decency and peace.

Nothing has stirred Jewish life more in modern times than the rebirth of the State of Israel. This historic act is not only an answer to the Jewish prayers of the centuries, but also some token compensation for the terrible losses of Jewish life sustained in the Hitler era. Jewish heroism in successfully defeating the attacks of the Arab nations and the determined efforts of the young state to give sanctuary to Jews deprived of their rights abroad, have won for Israel the admiration of a great segment of American Christian opinion. Yet the Jewish intellectuals, by and large, have been outside the Zionist ranks. Their sympathy, if it exists, has not assumed concrete form. It is interesting in this connection to note how the Arab attacks on the State of Israel and the activities of the Zionists generally have engaged the passionate concern of Arab intellectuals. These have invariably been the leaders among their people in presenting the Arab cause before the world. They have been in the forefront of debates on the subject in the halls of the universities and on the lecture platforms of our country. No Jewish intellectuals in great numbers have come forward to plead the cause of the State of Israel in a corresponding manner. It is no small thing to be part of an exciting new world that is redeeming lost life and opening vistas never before known to the Jewish people.

The Hillel Foundations on the campuses of American universities are famous for their accomplishments in integrating

Jewish life into the college environment and giving the Jewish students a sense of the dignity of their heritage. But the Jewish intellectuals in academic life give relatively little support to these foundations. Their interest and influence are often channeled in other directions. Up to comparatively recent times the Hillel directors have had to struggle alone in their effort to teach and to uphold Jewish values on the campus. The Jewish intellectuals have yet to assume the role in this field which they are capable of exercising. Our social order has long ago demonstrated the truth that great loyalty brings great respect, that indifference and aloofness engender disrespect toward a person and his origins.

Jewish home life has stood the test of the centuries. The Jew has been noted for his family loyalty—an important factor in Israel's survival. Yet there are many Jewish intellectuals who speak in derogatory fashion of their early Jewish environment after having strayed from it and found nothing to replace the values they have forsaken. Many of the best-selling novels of our time have been written by Jewish intellectuals who seem to have despised their birthright. They have known but one side of the coin and have expressed a wry distaste for what they have experienced in Jewish life in their younger days. Rabbi Morris Adler in reviewing Alfred Kazin's *A Walker in the City* in *Opinion* magazine—citing Kazin's views as but one intellectual who has expressed himself negatively concerning his Jewish childhood—noted that a person without a basic past is without a supportable present. He pointed out how much those unaesthetic Jewish immigrants, of whom Kazin spoke so disparagingly in his book, contributed to American life and culture:

The Declaration of Independence was inscribed on the parchment of their hearts and minds long before they came here. Indeed, they lived in America long before they reached its shores. These peddlers, tailors and little shopkeepers were no less heroic than the pioneers celebrated in American history, for did they not cross frontiers and open new settlements? Their pushcarts were their covered wagons. The hard-working, unkempt, eternally worried women of Brownsville were daughters of a revolution no

less significant than that in which their genteel sisters of the *beyond* glorified.

The study of Torah turned synagogues into universities and Harvard had no higher intellectual standards and traditions. The Sabbath was no less an achievement than the assembly line or the jet plane. The simple man of faith and integrity of Brownsville was an artistic creation by a culture comparable to the most beautiful painting by a western artist. Below Brownsville's surface of smells, insecurities, squalors, fears, there were inspired deeps and no American Jew comes fully into his own as a personality, as an artist, indeed as an American, until he has gathered the hidden wealth of his people's tradition.

There is much in Jewish life that might repel the intellectual. The race is not always to the swift; direction is not always in the hands of the talented among his people. To the politics of the community there can be added the smugness of the leadership and the lack of cultural values inherent in those in position of authority. But all these may be only the growing pains making a better community. It is inconceivable that such a tradition as the Jewish heritage could endure unbroken for centuries without the strength to surmount periodic aberrations in its structure. The justice pleaded for by the prophets of Israel centuries ago is still the justice sought in our time. The peace compounded of quietness and confidence in the human endeavor is still a desperate necessity today. Reverence for life is still recognized as an indispensable aim in a society that holds human worth so cheaply today. These challenges are the concerns of all men. The Jewish intellectual can no more evade them than the next person without imperiling his social order.

Many years ago there appeared in a short-lived American journal an article by A. Eustace Haydon, professor of comparative religion at the University of Chicago. It was called *The Intellectuals and Religion*. He spoke of Leonid Andreyev's short story *Lazarus*, how those who looked into the eyes of the resurrected figure were overwhelmed by the vastness of the task of building a better world order and the pathos of human frailty struggling to achieve the desired goal. A building was

just completed and already it was in ruins. A child was just born and already funeral candles were lit for its finished life on earth. And mankind trembled dismayed before the infinite. Two figures rose to meet the challenge. One was a powerful king who saw the greatness of the spirit of man, cast aside his kingly robes and went out among his people to observe in their simple joys and bitter sorrows how they lived. The other was a sculptor who destroyed the works that men had acclaimed and took an ugly and misshapen piece of clay and, in one corner of it, he projected a wonderful butterfly poised for flight.

Surrounding the intellectuals, Dr. Haydon continued, are the ugly and misshapen pieces of clay—human beings without insight or vision. Let them not scorn these pieces of clay. Let them rather project their own dream on them.

The Jewish people who have cultivated the intellect as no other people on earth have done, are at the present time in need of their intellectuals. In the measure that they respond to that need will the intellectuals confer boons upon their own people and blessings upon themselves in turn.

## REVIVAL WITHOUT RELIGION

THERE IS MUCH TALK these days about a religious revival in American Jewish life. It seems to be substantiated by such external evidence as well-attended synagogue services, large Sunday and midweek school enrollments, the burgeoning day schools, the imposing new religious edifices that dot the national landscape and the books on religious themes that attain the best-seller lists. But if we were to look behind this façade we might discover little of genuine religion in the accepted sense of the term.

There are certain signs by which religiosity may be known in Jewish life. These have been established by centuries of tradition. They include piety, prayer, study, observance, discipline, reverence, language usage, atmosphere, etc. Since such elements are largely lacking, Jewish activities, which are centered more

and more in the synagogues in modern times, are not indicative of a genuine religious revival. The character of these activities has been subject to considerable analysis in recent years. Books like Mordecai Kaplan's *The Future of the American Jew* and others shed some interesting light on their meaning and their value. In general there is agreement that the religious pattern that emerges with the third generation of Jewish community life in America is characteristically American, reflecting a far-reaching accommodation of Jewish tradition to American reality. This accommodation marks all religious groups in Jewish life, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. The differences between the wings of Judaism are subordinate ones. There is a notable convergence of the three groups in American Judaism in everything except their institutional affiliations and loyalties.

It is the American reality that has conditioned the present-day revival of interest in things Jewish and left it undefined and unrelated to the Jewish thinking of the past. Activity that is without direction and without a goal may have only a relative value and may be meaningless. Mordecai Kaplan, one of the keenest observers of the American Jewish scene, has not been impressed with the depth of much of contemporary Jewish religious endeavor. He has assessed the "back to the synagogue" movement as a movement with the back toward the synagogue and the front away. The present religious upsurge is, in his opinion, a slight one and nostalgic in content. It has not filled the religious vacuum, which continues to exist.

Despite the ceaseless building of synagogues and the growing affiliation of Jews with their religious institutions, Jewish leaders are, on the whole, far from convinced that a religious revival is taking place. Many, like Dr. Kaplan, have warned us not to mistake activity for robustness in Jewish religious life. Personalities so far apart in their thinking as Britain's chief rabbi, Dr. Israel Brodie, and Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, are in agreement on this point. Speaking as an authoritative Orthodox Jewish leader, Dr. Brodie told an American Jewish audience that the Orthodox Judaism he had in mind was not much in evidence in this country. He was thinking, he said, of religion as a way of life

and not as an incidental activity. To live this life calls for the consecration of the intellect, the refinement and discipline of the instincts. Such a religion demands much more than American Jews are prepared to give to it. It also offers much more than they are prepared to take from it.

Dr. Goldmann, speaking from the Zionist viewpoint, bluntly warned that American Jewry is assimilating at a rapid pace, that the United States generally is not conducive to minority cultures but is a melting pot, that Jewish life here, despite all the plethora of activities, organizations and fund raising, is little more than a beautiful façade lacking substance and depth of spiritual values, and that he saw no guarantee that the majority of the younger generation of American Jews will retain their identity and continue Jewish life even as it exists today.

It is not the severity of these criticisms that is important. It is rather the emphasis they place on the danger of mistaking a truncated Jewish life for the whole. For all its dynamism, American Judaism is surface Judaism. There is hardly any carry-over from the busy centers of Jewish activity to the home, the market place and the general world. Solutions predicated on the restoration on American shores of an East European environment that once flourished among our immigrant fathers are unrealistic. Yet it would be equally unrealistic to confuse the partial Judaism we now possess with the desirable whole. The direction of present-day Jewish religious activity gives little indication that American religious leaders have, by and large, come to grips with the problem. The answer to the challenges facing the Jewish community does not lie in more buildings and larger crowds, but in the quality of what is offered in those buildings and in the Jewish sensibilities of the crowds.

Nor can the situation be remedied by an increase of ceremonies and more lavish functions. Our unbalanced religious life has already produced some extraordinary forms of observance which a Yiddish writer has called "industries." He has designated such industries as the bar mitzvah, kashrut, marriage and yizkor practices. No doubt there are other "industries" that could be added to his list. There is, for example, the "hotel resort" brand of Judaism currently in vogue in the

New York area. Its popularity arises from the increasing tendency among Jews to observe their sacred holy days and festivals at the seashore and mountain resorts where special cantors, choirs and rabbis are engaged as attractions to vie with sports, entertainment and dance programs.

Rabbis who have had to deal with the "revival" in Jewish religious life know well that there is a wide gulf between the occasional religious observance in the synagogue and the individual's awareness of the capacity of Judaism to enrich his daily life and to give it meaning. To the rabbi's credit, it must be said that he has shouldered the heavy burden of transferring religious emphasis from a collective undertaking to an individual experience in Jewish life as it has always been in the past. This he has sought to do through the medium of study classes, by raising the standards of education in his institution and by using his pulpit as a means of Jewish instruction. But we are only at the beginning of the genuine revival that must be undertaken in American Jewish life if the religious values which sustained our people for thousands of years are to have any great significance for American Jews.

Jewish educators have for some years been faced with a dilemma. On the one hand Jewish parents are concerned about an adequate Jewish training for their children. On the other hand the disintegrating character of American Judaism and the type of home influence which they offer to their young bear little or no relationship to the programs of Jewish content to which their children are exposed in the synagogue and in the school. A study from *Commentary* magazine called *American Jewry—Past and Future* by Herbert Gans, a sociologist, presents the situation in these stark terms:

Jewish educators whose concern is to insure the survival of Jewish culture and of Jewish religious institutions that perpetuate traditional Judaism appear to be committed to an endeavor that is of little importance to parents and even less concern to the children. . . . Their difficulties stem from the fact that they are attempting to persuade a third generation to accept and internalize the patterns of a traditional Judaism which the parents who are the major in-

fluences in the child's cultural attachments gave up when they were children.

The general American environment has affected the religious life of the non-Jews in equal measure. Secularization is not limited to any particular denomination. Bishop James A. Pike, head of the Episcopal Diocese of California, brought to light an interesting contrast between yesterday's world and the world of our time when he spoke at the ninetieth anniversary of the Riverdale Episcopal Church in New York City. In 1865, he said, in the closing months of the Civil War, when the church was organized in Riverdale, only fifteen per cent of the population of the country was affiliated with church life. But of the eighty-five per cent outside a church, an overwhelming majority was imbued with religious instincts and sentiments that carried over into their homes and into their daily life. Today, according to *The Yearbook of American Churches*, some sixty-three per cent of the American population (this figure, incidentally, includes all five and one-half million Jews in the United States) are linked with churches and synagogues. But relatively few of the church-affiliated are religious-minded or religiously motivated in their daily activities.

There is a sharp distinction to be drawn between Judaism as a religion and the types of Jewishness that are often mistaken for religiosity today. One blends the sacred and the secular in living and does not limit religion to irregular or occasional observances. The other may be nothing more than a sentimental attachment to the objects of Jewish culture, a feeling that may have no deep or lasting significance. Judaism has always been known as a way of life characterized by a conscious sense of the sanctity of daily acts. The ceremonies and observances were dedicated to that sanctity. American Jews who regard their religion as a convenient appendage to their secular lives, who isolate their observances from faith and reverence, who confuse Jewish identification with a philosophy of life which involves few demands and few commitments, may hail the announcement of a Jewish religious revival. But they are in reality describing something else—the will of the American Jewish community to continue its existence and its iden-

tity. The direction and character of that existence and identity are yet to be determined.

The cultivation of abiding human values and association with things spiritual are the only standards by which a religious revival can be judged. There must exist adequate answers to such questions as: How do religious activities affect the personality of the individual? Do they instill reverence? Do they invoke a desire to widen Jewish and world horizons? Do they make a person more than a mere "joiner"? Do they renew a man's days? Do they develop character and fortify the individual to face adversity bravely? Do they give him courage to stand by his people? Do they arouse a thirst for Jewish knowledge?

The magnificent synagogue buildings and the bustling activities are symbols of quantitative Judaism arising from the surface values of people. A genuine religious revival awaits a better knowledge and understanding of the Jewish way of life and a deeper devotion to Judaism that will inspire offerings of the heart to match those of a generous purse.

## THE KEY TO JEWISH SURVIVAL

AMERICAN JEWRY'S GREATEST problem is the adult's ignorance of Jewish values. In recent years the Jewish community has built magnificent facilities for the cultivation of those values. But it has not succeeded in making the institutions attract the adults. Jewish houses of worship suffer from what is now a chronic illness—sparse attendance except on the high holy days, prayerless Jews and Jews of low religious vitality. Jewish education is generally limited to the young, and a good many of the young are not educated in the faith of their fathers. The recreational programs which include adult forums are skimpy in Jewish content. Such adult Jewish education courses as are offered are attended by small numbers. Synagogues which boast of large budgets for the Hebrew school or the Sunday school

classes allocate little or nothing for the training of the Jewish adults.

We have not yet created the means of reaching the hearts and minds of our people in order to make them aware of the greatness of their heritage and to give them the will to live Jewishly, as well as the stimulus to pursue their culture. The American Jew is spiritually homeless. Despite the existence of the remarkable Jewish Publication Society, the average Jew does not read Jewish books. His synagogue does not leave him reverent. His conversations on Jewish themes are generally limited to such subjects as anti-Semitism and events concerning the State of Israel. The instruction of the child is left to the professional teacher, without benefit of parents. A few ceremonies, a few holidays, a few culinary enjoyments reminiscent of childhood, a few words of a limited Hebrew or Yiddish vocabulary—this constitutes the sum total of the Jewishness of the average American Jew.

Philip Klutznick, former international president of B'nai B'rith, a great organization in Jewish life, recognized this state of affairs when he warned that the American Jews, as a community, are in danger of losing their personality through the widespread apathy that now exists toward things Jewish. Mr. Klutznick's statement was made at the time of the launching of B'nai B'rith's ambitious large-scale program of adult Jewish education through its institutes of study in various parts of the country. This venture may well have far-reaching results in time to come. But the venture must be judged for what it is—a sheer beginning. The classes are relatively small ones. The time for study is limited. The habit patterns of the students are not likely to be radically altered by a few days of exposure to Jewish learning and the stimulation of informed Jewish guides.

It is the daily occupation or preoccupation that counts in the long run. And every segment of Jewish leadership will, in the future, have to pay increasing attention to adult Jewish education if the American Jewish community is to have a solid base. Jewish consciousness is the key to Jewish survival. The vital meanings embodied in the historical Jewish experiences must be concretized in the Jewish institutions if such institu-

tions are to play a significant part in the life of American Jews. It is the consciousness of his ties to the past that creates in the Jew the incentive to maintain a pattern of Jewish life. Where there is no such consciousness there is no Jewish life worthy of the name.

The ignorant adult American Jew presents many obstacles to the institutions designed to promote and further Jewish life. He joins a congregation without subscribing to its philosophy or its program and is thus more often a spiritual liability than an asset. He supports Jewish education for his young without realizing that this education may often be negated by an adult indifference which follows the path of least resistance. He affiliates with a great many Jewish organizations which absorb the time and leisure that he might apply to his own personal studies and devotions, and he thus abdicates a position of authority over those to whom he is obligated spiritually.

Adult Jewish education programs are still in their infancy. For some years the Conservative synagogues have sponsored the National Academy for Adult Jewish Studies. But their quarterly journal indicates the slow rate of progress in this field, and the limited budget available for the development of its programs. A number of rabbis have organized periodic "retreats" for contemplation, study and prayer. But the infrequency of these gatherings has placed limitations upon their effectiveness. Maurice Weinstein of Charlotte, North Carolina, who might be termed the father of the B'nai B'rith Institutes of Adult Jewish Education, envisions a greater scope and influence for this movement than do others presently engaged in it. He sees time set aside in the future in the regularly scheduled lodge meetings for some type of Jewish study, as well as the publication of paperback Jewish classics circulated widely at low cost as a means of stimulating interest in the Jewish heritage. All this holds promise for revitalizing Jewish life in days to come. But unless the qualities contained in the term "Jewishness" can reach through to a larger number of apathetic Jews there will be little change in the present situation. It is, after all, the attitude toward Jewish life and values held by the average Jew that is important. Most Jews have been educated in recent years to contribute handsomely of their wealth

and time to the United Jewish Appeal and other causes. They have yet to be educated to the awareness of the principle *Talmud Torah k'neged kulam* (Jewish education is a paramount need in Jewish life). The recent tercentenary celebration of American Jewry indicated quite clearly that the pocket of the American Jew has been successfully invaded for three centuries. The fourth century may have to be spent in invading the Jewish mind with the knowledge of its own culture, and helping to bring to the Jew the inspiration and enjoyment to be found in daily Jewish living.

Adult Jewish education means more than familiarity with a few Jewish classics. It means more than acquaintance with religious teachings and practices, although these have been very important factors in adult Jewish life in the past and remain so today. It means the creation of a complete Jewish personality. In his essay *The Jewish Rabbinic Student*, the late Professor Louis Ginzberg revealed to us the secret of Jewish survival. "In the olden times," he said, "the opinion prevailed that the fathers were to be educated first, and then the children, not in reverse order." The purpose of Jewish education has always been to produce a cultured person in every sense of the term, secular as well as religious, to whom nothing Jewish can be alien. In our study of Jewish culture we can learn that Torah is not only law, but also an expression for the aggregate of Jewish teachings. It covers every field of culture—history, poetry, ethics, philosophy, folklore, holidays, ceremonies, etc. Through an adult awareness of the power of Jewish education American Jews can take the first step in an undertaking that was considered an adventure by their fathers who had little patience with the *am haaretz* (the ignoramus).

A good deal of time and energy has been spent in the education of our children. Temples and synagogues have instituted at great cost programs calculated to stimulate the child's interest in Jewish life past and present. Many an adult, carrying unpleasant memories of earlier childhood associations with Judaism, is inclined to consider himself lost to Jewish culture. Some means must be found to bring him closer to his heritage and to give him the benefit of the sustaining elements of his tradition.

In recent years there have been published some interesting studies of Hellenistic Jewry, especially that of the ancient Jewish community in Alexandria. Dr. Cecil Roth, the noted English Jewish historian, took occasion in one of his essays to note the parallels in the Jewish life of ancient Alexandria and Jewish life in contemporary America. Jewish consciousness died in Alexandria almost two thousand years ago. It was overcome by the Hellenistic culture of the large community. The Jews had built magnificent synagogues and had translated their Hebrew writings into Greek. They had a high degree of organized life. But they failed to keep alive the purpose of their Jewish existence as they became more and more assimilated into their environment. As the Jewish memories grew fainter, the incentive to celebrate their festivals and solemn days grew weaker; the dramatic ceremonies of their faith began to lose their meaning. The comparisons with American Jewish life today are somewhat ominous. Jewish survival is not guaranteed automatically by virtue of the splendid new buildings and the many thriving organizations. There must be the will to be Jewish and the capacity to translate that will into Jewish institutions that will be fountains of the spirit. There will also have to be respect for Jewish teachers who transmit the culture of the generations to the young and to the old.

The survival potential of Judaism is not in a book nor in an institution. It is not in an organization. It lies in the quality of the attachment to Jewish values, in dedication to the cause of survival. It lies in the souls of human beings.

It is a heartening sign that Jews are becoming increasingly aware of the need of educated Jewish adults who can inspire their young to take full advantage of the opportunities for learning now afforded them, whose Jewishness will be reflected in the qualities of the mind and the spirit. In the endeavor to cultivate the American Jewish personality anew and to give it a consciousness of its historic importance in the world, we can re-create a positive manner of Jewish living and thus endow our institutions with the warmth and devotion that will better insure the survival of the historic Jewish faith that has meant so much to our fathers and that still has a great lesson to teach our world.

## CHARITY IN THREE LANGUAGES

THERE ARE THREE distinct connotations of the word "charity." They stem from different languages and vary in emphasis in accordance with the meaning conveyed by those languages. In the Latin the word "caritas" means benevolence, good will and help that is extended to the poor and the needy. The English word "charity," derived from the Latin, suggests the image of one in a fortunate position in life conferring largess upon another who is less fortunate. Used in its simplest sense it is almsgiving by one on a higher rung of the economic ladder to one who is lower. In its wider implication it connotes the exercise of superior virtue by the individual. In neither sense, however, is the equality of donor and recipient implied.

Philanthropy, coming from the Greek word *philanthropia* (love for mankind), is the spirit of good will toward one's fellow men as exemplified in efforts to promote the social welfare by extending relief to the needy and improving the social order generally. It is impersonal. Like charity, it is offered voluntarily by those who are touched by the plight of others. The common notion of a philanthropist is that of a person who has first accumulated much of the world's goods and afterwards chooses or is prevailed upon to give of his bounty for the benefit of others. Only distantly are the feelings of the recipients involved.

The Hebrew word for charity is *zedakah* (righteousness). It is a term of categorical imperative. The holiness code of the Book of Leviticus prescribes: "Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor favor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor." There is no distinction between the giver and the beneficiary because they are born equal. One never knows what the accidents of fortune will bring. One day they can lift a man to health, fame and fortune. Another day they can lower him to sickness, poverty and oblivion.

Dr. Solomon Schechter, in his famous *Studies in Judaism*, has left us his notes of lectures on Jewish philanthropy that he delivered to his students in the last years of his life. Sketchy as they are, they give us a remarkable insight into the nature of the Jewish attitude toward the less fortunate in life. Charity, according to Jewish teaching, means taking pains to spare as much as possible the feelings of the poor. The rabbis emphasized the significance of the Bible passage: "Happy is he who *considereth* the poor." The manner of giving charity is as important as the act of giving.

Charity has always been governed in Jewish life by custom and law. The much maligned religion of law which has so often been deprecated in our western civilization has proved to be a great force in keeping awake the social conscience of its Jewish adherents. Law can be a force superior to volition because it sets all individuals on an equal plane of responsibility. In ancient times the gleaner was not to gather his harvest complete, but was to leave a corner of the field for the poor and the stranger. In later times there was incorporated in Jewish communal life the principle of *hachnasath orchim* (hospitality to strangers), the dowering of poor brides and the performance of like deeds in the spirit of love of fellow men.

Those who wonder whether love can be legislated might be interested in two underlying principles that have always governed Jewish charity. One is that God is the owner of all of our possessions. We are only the trustees of the property we own. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," says the Psalmist. The rabbis commented on the saying with the observation, "If thou hast given charity thou hast not given of thine own, but of His."

The second principle is that all men are brothers and equal in the sight of God. It is interesting to note how frequently the Bible refers to the poor and the unfortunate as brothers. Repeatedly we find it in such statements as "if thy brother be waxen poor," "that thy brother may live with thee," "nor shut thy hand from thy needy brother." In Jewish thinking the poor are not isolated from the well-to-do in the body politic. They are a link in the chain of social organization, and their insufficiency may threaten the health and the peace of the entire

community. This is what gives *zedakah* such significance. It does not call for voluntary effort on the part of the few, but makes its claim on everyone. Rabbinic literature affords us an interesting example of this fact. Rabbi Tarfon was a wealthy man, but he did not give sufficiently to charity. Rabbi Akiba asked him for a large sum with which to purchase a village which would offer Tarfon a handsome return on his investment. But when he received the money he distributed it to the poor. When Rabbi Tarfon asked for the deed to the village, Akiba opened the Psalter and read to him: "He hath scattered abroad; he hath given to the needy; his righteousness endureth forever." He told Tarfon to observe the fruit of his investment in the form of slum clearance, comfort and happiness enjoyed by people formerly in want. Jewish charity emphasizes the psychological consequences of poverty as well as the physical ones. "The poor man is as the dead man," say the rabbis. His influence is negligible, his opinions are ignored, his dignity is seriously impaired, his social position leaves him low in his own eyes. They therefore pleaded his cause eloquently: "Let the honor of thy neighbor be as dear to thee as thine own."

For many years Jewish philanthropy in America has tended to follow the Latin and Greek conceptions rather than the traditionally Jewish idea. Efficient and scientific as our communal institutions have been in carrying out their remarkable programs, able and resourceful as the social workers have demonstrated themselves to be, generous as the Jewish contributors have proved themselves in response to appeals for financial aid on behalf of the poor and the underprivileged, the gulf between those in need of help and those rendering help has been a wide one. Few donors today have adequate awareness of the problems created by poverty which brings in its train broken homes, juvenile delinquency, vulgarity, ignorance, crime and a host of other difficulties that plague our social order and affect directly the lives of the well-to-do in our large centers of population. Officials of our institutions supported by philanthropic funds often tend to consider themselves as "case workers," and the people whom they serve as "cases." This can only result in an impersonal approach to human beings who are treated clinically.

Where charity is divorced from its original Jewish meaning, conflicts may follow. Where the heads of our philanthropic institutions show indifference to traditional Jewish customs and practices they may find apathy, if not hostility, to their programs. Until comparatively recent times our philanthropic institutions were estranged from the Jewish masses. The Long Island hospital dispute only highlighted a psychological impasse of long duration. The issue of kosher food in the hospital revolved essentially about the consideration for the feelings of others. It is easier for a non-practicing Jew or a gentile to eat kosher food than for an observing Jew to eat non-kosher food. The arguments originally advanced by hospital authorities were logical and they were cogent—all in accordance with the best in Greek thinking. But they were not psychological in accordance with the best in Jewish thinking. *Zedakah* demands consideration of all the elements of the population, giver as well as beneficiary, observant as well as non-observant religionists. By ignoring or overlooking the religious sentiments prevailing in a community, administrators of philanthropic institutions may needlessly alienate valuable supporters of their programs.

It cannot be forgotten that Jewish charity is not basically a secular undertaking. It is a religious one. As such it cannot be divorced from the sum total of Jewish living. Social workers must possess a knowledge of Jewish history and Jewish religious traditions as well as knowledge of their own field. They cannot isolate themselves from Jewish thinking and expect to fulfil their functions adequately. Those desiring employment in Jewish philanthropic institutions ought to be encouraged to take courses in the social history of the Jewish people and know Jewish customs and traditions. In addition they should be sympathetic to those traditions. They might find the cooperation of authorities in other areas of Jewish life of invaluable aid to them in their judgments. Rabbis, too, could benefit immeasurably in their communal endeavors by becoming more keenly aware of the significance and the need of philanthropically supported Jewish institutions in the larger centers of Jewry throughout the country. For forty-seven years the late Dr. Sidney Goldstein, under the inspiration of Stephen S. Wise, presided over the social-service department of New York's Free

Synagogue and correlated its work with the synagogue's program of religious activities. Dr. Goldstein's death did not lessen the need for wide cooperation between the various institutions that make up the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and the allied institutions in Jewish life concerned with the moral and spiritual health as well as the physical welfare of the Jewish people. Candidates for directorships on boards of philanthropic institutions ought to be chosen as much for their knowledge of the life of the larger community as for their achievements in business, industry or the professions. Children of our religious schools ought to be taken on field trips to the centers administered by our philanthropic institutions. Our Federations ought to call upon every Jewish resource to help translate their programs into value and purpose in the minds and hearts of the people who help finance them. But first they must dedicate themselves more fully to the Jewish life which their fund raising obligates them to serve. Unless they appreciate the meaning of *zedakah* and make it their business to understand the historic manner in which Jewish charity has been practiced throughout the centuries, they will move farther away from the Jewish masses and they will find it harder to obtain their funds from those who demand Jewishness as well as social service in our Jewish institutions.

To its credit the New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies has sensed the difficulties inherent in activity divorced from Judaism. Some years ago it established the office of religious adviser and appointed Rabbi Isaac Trainin to head this department. It was an indication that social work agencies were becoming more conscious of the needs of religious Jewry and were prepared to reappraise their roles as agencies functioning under Jewish auspices and devoted primarily to serving the Jewish people. By virtue of the efforts of this religious department the first steps in the direction of Jewish emphasis upon philanthropic activity were undertaken. More hospitals, day camps and homes for the aged offered kosher food for those who sought it. Greater note was taken of Jewish traditions in all the institutions. Community centers which used to present programs barren of Jewish content began offering Jewish artists and lecturers at their forums. Social workers whose knowledge

of the Jewish past was poor began to attend seminars on Jewish culture and the Jewish religion. A special unit was even established for the purpose of dealing with the *hasidic* Jews in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. Efforts were initiated on a large scale to familiarize the rabbis of metropolitan New York with the various problems confronting the Federation which affected the general welfare of the great Jewish community. Fully developed, these plans can be of inestimable importance in bringing about a better integrated American Jewish community.

Legend has it that the twenty-three Jews who were reluctantly admitted to New Amsterdam by Peter Stuyvesant promised the wooden-legged Dutch governor of the colony that was to become New York that Jews would never permit their own to be dependent upon the charity of others on these shores. For over three centuries their successors have faithfully abided by that sentiment. But their capacity to fulfil this determination has been progressively weakened by lack of Jewish knowledge and the distance between donor and beneficiary. Restoration of the Jewish concept of charity will bring greater support to our Federations of Jewish Philanthropy throughout the country and prove a blessing to American Jews in days to come.

## THE FUNCTION OF THE RABBI

JEWISH TRADITION DEFINES the function of the rabbi. It is to teach and to interpret Judaism. This is the basis of his profession, the goal of his seminary training and the standard of his qualification set by his ordination. But the modern world has laid great obstacles in his path as he seeks to pursue his primary function. He may find himself less the teacher and more the organizer, less the interpreter and more the public relations executive in the following of his calling. He is often burdened with the problems of an age unsympathetic to his traditions. He is seldom the beneficiary of its boons. In a time of super-organization in our social life, he finds himself in competition with representatives of organizations that vie for the time and

interest of his people. In some communities it is not unusual for Jews to belong to several congregations and to attend none, thus bestowing their indifference impartially on religion in general and on their own sect in particular. In others the secular organizations, with their by-products of social, fund-raising and other aims, impinge upon his functions. The American environment, as it is now constituted, tends to weaken the rabbi's influence as it makes more difficult his task of interpreting Judaism. One has only to think of the newspaper, the automobile, the radio, the television and the innumerable scheduled social activities among the distractions of the day to realize the struggle the rabbi must undergo in his endeavor to help his people to see their world clearly and to see it whole. The modern Jewish spiritual leader, caught between the Scylla of Jewish tradition which he is committed to uphold, and the Charybdis of modern living, has been losing ground steadily, the brave declarations of rabbinical spokesmen to the contrary notwithstanding. He may whistle in the dark by lauding the announcement that the Bible and the Talmud have now replaced Zionism as a link between Israel and the Diaspora while he overlooks the actual religious state of the Jewish people today. Not many of his own congregants would be able to define the word "Talmud," let alone indicate any knowledge of its contents. Nor does he consider at that moment how little his own special training in Jewish studies is utilized in the performance of tasks that were formerly assigned to laymen in Jewish life.

In an interesting essay on the history of the rabbinate which Dr. Robert Gordis contributed to a volume of studies commemorating the sixtieth birthday of Dr. Israel Goldstein, *Two Generations in Perspective*, there is unfolded the changing character of the rabbinate in recent decades. In this essay we learn that the rabbinate has undergone at least five major phases reflective of the many-sided character of Jewish history and Jewish life. Dr. Gordis describes the stages as: the talmudic era when the term "rabbi" was never used in the professional sense; the medieval period when the rabbis received very modest salaries; the pre-modern age when there functioned the "Rav," whose duties were few—mostly to judge and to be the

arbiter on ritual questions; the post-emancipation period when the challenges of Christianity, the problems of anti-Semitism and other new developments had to be met; and the contemporary period in which there has been almost a complete reversal of the time-honored function, where, instead of the rabbi assuming the role of the scholar and the teacher with few peripheral functions, his scholarship took on secondary importance and his peripheral functions assumed a place of primary significance. Dr. Gordis stated:

Once a *brith milah* (circumcision) was performed by a *mohel* with no other "clergyman" needed; a *pidyon haben* (redemption of the first born) required only a first-born male child, the father and a *kohen* (descendant of a priestly family) in the presence of a quorum; a bar mitzvah was called to the Torah immediately after his thirteenth birthday, even on a Monday or Thursday morning, with no attendant pomp or circumstance; a wedding could be solemnized by any Jew who knew the ritual; a funeral was conducted by the family and friends of the departed who conducted the order of service themselves. Today all these *rites de passage*, especially of the bar mitzvah, the wedding and the funeral as well as the unveiling of the monument approximately a year later have become rabbinical functions. Undoubtedly the example of the Protestant minister and the Catholic priest has not been without influence. Even more potent in encouraging the process has been the widespread ignorance among the Jewish laity.

The character of the rabbinical functions of today has been conditioned to no small extent by the conception of the rabbi held by many Jewish people. They tend to look upon him as Christians look upon their minister or priest—as a religious functionary. This attitude, as Dr. Gordis has shown, represents a transformation of the rabbi's role that is a violent distortion of the Jewish tradition.

Formerly there was no conflict between the rabbi's private study and his public utterance because the life of the Jewish people was regulated by the law code of which he was the interpreter. Today the average American rabbi is faced with

a conflict because of popular demand for pulpit subjects that bear little relevance to Bible, Talmud or law codes of the past. Every Friday morning *The New York Times* advertises the sermon topics of many of the rabbis of leading congregations in New York. These topics constitute an interesting commentary on contemporary rabbinical life and interests. In one recent issue of this newspaper almost a third of the listed sermon subjects advertised dealt with the psychiatrist Smiley Blanton and his book *Love or Perish*. The average American rabbi finds little call among the Jewish laity for information that will send him to his traditional Hebrew literature for consultation.

It is not entirely the rabbi's fault that his role as a Jewish teacher and interpreter is persistently lessened. People simply do not come to him with questions of ritual as did their grandparents. They do not clamor for the Jewish word. The psychological gulf between the rabbi and the laity is a fairly wide one because of elementary differences in interests. The difficulties under which rabbis are forced to operate in bridging the gulf usually work to their disadvantage. Gresham's law operates in the religious field as it does in the economic field: The standards of Jewish life are lowered by the pressures of the Jewish laity, as good currency is driven out of circulation by inferior. Torah may mean one thing to the rabbi. It may and often does mean something else to the lay members of the congregation. A disheartening number of Jewish people consider Torah today to be nothing more than a ceremony devoid of the godly imperative that can give it life and meaning. When Abraham Joshua Heschel, professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, addressed the Central Conference of American Rabbis a few years ago he warned of the dangers in reducing the Jewish religion to a mere ceremonial observance. He said:

Since when has aesthetics become supreme authority in matters of religion? Customs, ceremonies are fine, enchanting, playful. But is Judaism a religion of play? What is the authentic origin of these terms customs and ceremonies? I must confess I have difficulty in translating "ceremonial" into Hebrew. Customs, *minhagim*, have given us a lot of trouble in the past. *Minhagim* have often stultified Jewish life. According to Rabenu Tam the word

*minhag* consists of the same four letters as the word *gehinom* (hell).

Dr. Heschel's warning is not limited to any one wing of Judaism. It applies equally to all religious sections, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. The cult of the ceremony is seen in all its garishness in every aspect of Jewish life today, especially at bar mitzvahs, weddings and funerals. It has lately entered the realm of private enterprise. The Jewish hotel resorts now offer "religion" as one of the attractions on Jewish high holy days and festivals as part of a general program which includes sports, dancing and Broadway entertainment. The Hebrew chants of celebrated cantors engaged for special occasions can more properly be considered entertainment rather than prayer when they are sung in such an atmosphere.

The function of the rabbi cannot be divorced from the religious life of the people. If that life be deep, his service can be in keeping with his training and his calling. If it be shallow, as it is today in spite of the claims about the revival of religion in our land, then his function is forced to follow the form prevalent in the community. With every will in the world to remain true to the purpose of his ordination, the rabbi cannot easily make his own Hebrew studies meet a pattern of life devoid of knowledge and appreciation of the Jewish books he reads. It is a noteworthy fact that even the late Stephen S. Wise, greatest of American rabbis, left little or no impress of the Jewish religious tradition upon his congregation. His Jewish causes were legion and some, like the American Jewish Congress, still bear the marks of his character and his idealism. But even if his synagogue throughout most of his active ministry had not been located in Carnegie Hall, and even if his services had not been conducted on Sunday mornings, it is doubtful whether the rapidly changing conditions of American life would have offered him the soil to prepare an adequate Judaism for his followers. True, he was a Reform rabbi, but he was revered by the masses, and these included Orthodox and Conservative Jews in large numbers. The magnificent social-service program which Wise incorporated into the Free Synagogue is better remembered today than his religious pro-

gram. This raises the interesting question as to whether the rabbinical training limited to the traditional task of teaching and interpreting Judaism is sufficient to enable the modern rabbi to function adequately on behalf of a minority religious group drawn fairly close to the Christian modes of life and thought in the western world. Two answers to the question, both negative, have been advanced by leading Jewish thinkers in recent times, one by Dr. Horace M. Kallen and the other by Dr. Mordecai Kaplan.

Thirty-five years ago Professor Kallen in an article called *Can Judaism Survive in the United States?* prophetically discerned the inadequacies in rabbinical strength necessary to meet the perplexities of modern life. The article was published in *The Menorah Journal* and was not very well received in the Jewish community. But time has vindicated many of his points of view concerning the growing gulf between the traditional rabbinical goals and the superficialities that pass for Judaism in our time. He felt that it is unrealistic to assume that Jews will return to the Judaism of yesterday. On the contrary, he maintained that Judaism will have to follow the Jews wherever they are, and seek by the techniques of the age to appeal to them to live Jewishly in order to realize the fullest and richest life. It is the art of persuasion that is lacking in the rabbinate, and the fault lies in the seminaries that train the rabbis. He analyzed the curricula of our theological institutions and found them wanting in the courses that can equip the rabbi to cope with the Jewish problems peculiar to our era. He said that historical Judaism can be preserved as a continuous current in life and not as a deadly antiquity only by training the rabbi for that purpose. The rabbinical schools must pay less attention to the past and more attention to the Judaism of the present. As he saw it, the ostensible function of the rabbis now trained in the seminaries would be that of "curators of archaeological possessions or hereditary habits and formulae against the attrition of the forces of modernity." Improvement of the situation might come through recognition of the fact that it is much more important for the rabbis to know the last hundred years of Jewish history than the first thousand, for causes lose

their significance in proportion to the remoteness from their effects.

Dr. Kallen's article, written in 1925, is still rewarding reading for those who mistake a plethora of activities in our synagogues for signs of the return to Judaism by the Jewish people. But he is a secularist, and his criticism of present-day rabbinical training methods and the capacity of the rabbi to cope with modern Jewish problems unfortunately does not consider sufficiently the rabbi's primary function that distinguishes him from teachers in other Jewish fields—the exposition and interpretation of a four-thousand-year-old tradition. Before he can present Judaism in this or any other age he must know it as completely as possible.

Dr. Kaplan does not repeat Professor Kallen's mistake. But he, nonetheless, shares Dr. Kallen's views that knowledge of Judaism is not enough to enable the modern rabbi to meet the problems of our age. In his volume *The Future of the American Jew* he discusses the advisability of establishing in the United States a university of Judaism where Jewish leaders can be trained to serve well the Jewish needs of the present. He, too, feels that while knowledge of the Jewish past and expertness in the interpretation of the great texts of our tradition are basic to the training of the rabbi, he must nowadays be equipped with adequate knowledge about human nature in the individual and in society. He must know how to resolve inner conflicts that are part of the mentality of minority groups. All this, he says, implies the services of far larger faculties than our rabbinical seminaries and teacher-training schools have been in a position to secure. It is questionable whether rabbis and teachers whose training is limited to a knowledge of the past and who are unaware of modern techniques in the understanding and management of human affairs are fit spiritual leaders of our day.

Rabbis, who have themselves undertaken an analysis of their status, have invariably turned apologists for their cause. They have tended to see their world subjectively and to assume that there is nothing basically lacking in their capacity to meet the challenges of their time. But their functions have undergone such great modification since Dr. Kallen first made his critical

survey of the curricula of the rabbinical seminaries that many rabbis are now aware of the additions to their Hebraic studies they must possess in order to cope with the problems that confront them. They now operate in a profoundly disturbed world of individual and social tensions. They also deal with a type of Jewish family life that has suffered inroads unknown in the past, where parents struggle to give their children a good Jewish education but where the adults possess no corresponding knowledge to match their children. Rabbis know that they must find the means of tying Judaism to the daily-life habits of their people and that the effort must take into consideration the newer challenges to religion that have arisen everywhere. The seminaries, too, are aware of the changes in Jewish living that must be taken into account in the planning of their curricula. They have added courses in psychiatry, comparative religion, etc. But when all is said and done, the fact remains that the rabbi is the interpreter of a four-thousand-year-old Jewish tradition. Take this function from him and his other functions become meaningless, for he then operates in a realm of fossils. Dr. Kallen is correct when he says that the forms of Judaism can survive without life "out of deference to the past, out of a sort of ancestral piety, of the same memorial kind that evokes the annual *kaddish* (memorial prayer) and keeps a grave neat and trim and covered with flowers."

The rabbi of today is confronted with a dilemma that will not be resolved by curricular changes in the rabbinical seminaries, nor in the acquisition of new knowledge and new techniques. How much can the rabbi carry of the past and the present in his make-up? Would it not be better to be one person—the Jewish teacher and the interpreter of the best that has been thought and written by the Jewish people—than to be many persons performing a host of variegated activities? Why must he carry equipment that properly belongs to the social worker and the psychiatrist, the advertising man and the public relations expert? Why must he dissipate his energies and spread them so thin that he can speak only superficially and unconvincingly of the tradition he knows best? Perhaps he may be forgiven if he wonders now and then whether Professor Kaplan or Professor Kallen have followed the logic of

their argument to its ultimate conclusion. He remembers the parable of the fox and the fishes related in the Talmud.

Pappus ben Judah had advised the Jews to submit to the Romans. He said to Rabbi Akiba: "Dost thou not fear the fate that is before thee? Would it not be better to give up the teaching of the law and thus save thy life?" "I will tell thee a fable," Akiba answered. "A fox was once observing many fish in great fear at the bottom of the water. 'Why are you so frightened?' the fox asked. 'Men,' replied the fishes, 'are spreading nets in the stream to catch us, and we are trying to escape.' 'I will tell you what to do,' the fox counseled. 'Go yonder upon the rocks, where the men cannot catch you, and let us dwell together as one people, as my fathers dwelt with your fathers.' 'Are you indeed the fox,' exclaimed the fishes, 'who is esteemed the most clever of all animals? You must certainly be the most stupid, if you give such advice. Water is our native element, and if we are in danger here, how much greater will be our risk if we leave it.' "

The function of a spiritual leader has never been an easy one in any age. Time can bypass many customs and observances, but it invariably pays its tribute to the qualities of the spirit that do not change. The values of Judaism are the same today as they were in the days of the prophets of old. They are dedicated to one fixed aim: the building of a better social order on earth under the reign of one God everywhere. To be worthy of his calling the rabbi cannot deviate from the task of bringing this Jewish message to his people.

## LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

THE NOTED ANGLO-JEWISH historian Cecil Roth is the author of an intriguing piece on the role that languages have played in the survival of Jewish culture. He dealt with five distinct language epochs in the Jewish experience. First there was the Hebrew-speaking period when our Bible was written. Then followed the Greek language era characterized by such writers

as Philo and Josephus. This, in turn, was succeeded by the Aramaic-speaking period represented by the monumental Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud. (The *kaddish* prayer which Jewish people still recite today in all lands is Aramaic.) Then followed the Arabic language, the tongue of Maimonides and Yehudah Halevi and other intellectual giants of the golden age of Jewish learning. After that came the period when the Jews lived in Christian countries and spoke in southern Europe an admixture of Spanish and Hebrew known as Ladino, and a Judeo-German language in northern and eastern Europe known as Yiddish. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Yiddish was the most universally used language among Jews since they lost their Hebrew language in ancient Palestine.

Two tragic factors in our time have contributed to the decline of the Yiddish language. One is the decimation of Jewish life in eastern Europe. The six millions who were lost to the Jewish people represented the heart of the Yiddish-speaking population of the world. The second factor is the Soviet Government's suppression of the language in the attempt to assimilate its Jewish population and to extirpate Jewish culture. The consequences of those two blows suffered by the Yiddish language in recent years have been far-reaching. In eastern Europe Yiddish was indigenous to Jewish life. In other lands of the Diaspora, it has had to compete with other languages. Because of this competition it has been fighting a losing battle in its struggle for survival.

A sixth language period of major proportions—English—is now emerging in Jewish life. Because of the numerical preponderance of English-speaking Jews in the world today, the English language assumes a quantitative importance comparable to that of Yiddish a century ago. Almost seven million Jews speak this language now, probably the greatest number of Jews to have spoken a single language in Jewish history. It is fairly certain that Jewish cultural life in the Diaspora will increasingly depend upon the interest and efforts of English-speaking Jews. There are no signs on the horizon of any great cultural activity among those in the Diaspora outside the English-speaking orbit.

The State of Israel is, of course, in an independent and

unique position, free of Diaspora pressures in the development of Jewish culture patterns. Hebrew has been revived there. It is not in competition with any other language among Jews. It occupies the dominant role in the expression of Jewish life and purpose. It is the language of the street and the schoolroom. The prime minister, Mr. Ben-Gurion, could in consideration of this fact say with justifiable pride that while the peoples of the countries surrounding Israel know nothing of the language spoken by their ancient forbears, the Jews of Israel speak the same language their ancestors spoke three thousand years earlier.

What is the promise of Jewish cultural advancement in the English language? The answer depends to a considerable extent on how seriously English-speaking Jewry will consider the importance of the Jewish historical experience in days to come. This experience has shown time and again that language per se is not necessarily a barrier against the development of a rich Jewish culture. The Jews have lost one language after another, yet they have managed to keep intact their *shalsholet hakabala*—their “chain of Jewish tradition.” Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Arabic and Yiddish in succession all bear eloquent testimony of the links in this chain forged in different countries over the centuries. Even the German language of the past century contributed to the development of a notable group of scholars known as the *Jüdische Wissenschaft* school. But English-speaking Jewry has yet to leave its mark on Jewish history. There are not many writers of the talent of Israel Zangwill, Joseph Jacobs and Solomon Schechter who can express the Jewish ideal in classical English. The Soncino Bible, Talmud, Midrash and Zohar translations constitute perhaps the outstanding publishing accomplishment in the Anglo-Jewish world. But it must be borne in mind that the scholars who have made these rich contributions toward the advancement of Jewish lore were, for the most part, rooted in other languages. They merely prove that solid achievement is possible in any language providing there is cultural soil for the growth and development of Jewish values. If there is to be a renaissance of Jewish learning in the English-speaking world there will first have to be a more learned, more articulate, more pro-

fessing and more committed Jewry than is now evident among the Jewish millions who use the English language.

While the Jewish masses of the talmudic era were not all equal to their rabbinic leaders in learning, they nonetheless appreciated the erudition and the effort that went into the making of the Babylonian Talmud, and they supported their scholars with their interest as well as their means. There were not many to measure up to the stature of a Maimonides, or an Elijah Vilna, or an Isaac Loeb Peretz who inspired the Yiddish reading masses with his stories and pictures of Jewish life, but there were many who were aware of the work of these gifted students of Jewish lore and who were deeply devoted to their ideas and ideals. Today there are all too few English-speaking Jews to share to any considerable extent in the creative endeavors of their scholars in all fields of endeavor. It is inconceivable that in an earlier age the labors of extraordinary scholars like Louis Ginzberg, Jacob Lauterbach and Saul Lieberman—to mention but a few who have contributed so significantly to the field of talmudic studies in the English language in recent years—could have passed unnoticed by the masses of the Jewish people.

We indulge in sheer wishful thinking when we assume that there is a renaissance of Jewish learning merely because a few gifted scholars produce notable works in our time. The books must first be read before there will be any signs of appreciation and pursuit of Jewish culture by the many. In recent times there have been published some interesting studies to indicate the lessons of past experiences in Diaspora Jewish life, particularly noteworthy among them being the parallels between the English-speaking Jewry of today and the Greek-speaking Jewry of two thousand years ago. These studies show that the efforts of the few scholars were not sufficient to insure the development of Jewish culture in a communal soil that was barren of Jewishness. Cecil Roth correctly observed that the great strength of Jewish cultural life in the past was not so much in the intellectual giants but in the existence of a cultural laity from whom these scholars emerged and who formed the background as well as the support of their activity. It is

that type of laity which is so conspicuously absent in the world about us today.

Jews in English-speaking lands can gain a valuable lesson from the cultural activity in the nascent State of Israel, which can reveal to them the manner in which Jewish culture patterns can flourish in the Diaspora. Success lies in the adequate use of language in the furtherance of Jewish thought and the Jewish spirit. The rebirth of the Hebrew language is perhaps as important as the rebirth of the State of Israel itself. Certainly the new Hebrew, which developed under the determined and almost singlehanded guidance of Eliezer ben Yehudah, opened up tremendous possibilities for creative endeavor in the advancement of the Jewish ideal, and the people of Israel have consistently applied their reborn Hebrew to the interpretation of their classical literature. It was this application of the language to the inherited culture patterns that could enable the late Dr. Chaim Weizmann to express the hope that the law might once more some day go forth from Jerusalem. It was the same phenomenon that has inspired the Israeli visions of a nobler life in the land of Israel. The potentials that reside in any language are incalculable. The fact that Hebrew biblical scholars like Yehezkel Kauffman, prose writers like Agnon and Hazaz and poets like Alterman, Shlonsky, Goldberg and Shimonovitch have a great popular following in Israel while writing in the Jewish spirit, is sufficient warrant for the belief that the culture of a people continues where there is the will to keep it alive and the soil in which it can grow.

While it is an historic fact that no language except Hebrew and Aramaic has been able to preserve Jewish creative endeavor in past centuries, the Jews of the English-speaking lands are now faced with the stark necessity of cultivating an atmosphere in which their inherited values can develop. The same problem has always confronted Diaspora Jews in past centuries and, as has been noted, they have always succeeded in cultivating the climate for the continuation of their culture regardless of the language they have used. English-speaking Jews will have no choice in days to come except to use the only language they know through which to channel their historic experience and to appreciate what has gone into the making of the modern

Jew. It is possible that many more Jewish individuals will know why they are Jews from reading Milton Steinberg's *Basic Judaism* than from the Hebrew and Yiddish texts which their grandfathers used. It is in this sense that the English language is destined to become an important vehicle for the transmission of the Jewish ideal to the Diaspora Jews of tomorrow. In spite of the heroic effort now being made to spread Hebrew among our young, it is doubtful whether English-speaking Jews generally will know sufficient Hebrew to handle the language with flexibility and ease in days to come.

There are three ways by which the English language can be utilized intensively to foster Jewish culture in our midst. One is to read more Jewish books of lasting worth published in this language. There is a great library of such literature available to serve as a medium of instruction and inspiration to the uninformed. In it there is to be found the creations of the greatest Jewish minds both past and present expressing themselves in the English language to those who cannot read any other. The list of books in this library includes the English translation of the Scriptures of the Jewish Publication Society, designed to uplift the daily life of the Jewish people here and abroad.

A second means by which the English language can be utilized is the creation of the soil for Jewish cultural growth in the encouragement of better Jewish writing through grants and subsidies. We have foundations that serve many useful causes in Jewish life today. None could serve a better purpose than that which would encourage gifted Jewish writers to expend their talents on the genuine in Jewish life. The Jewish fiction that has in recent years been on the national best-seller lists cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered writing cast in the Jewish spirit. It is only the spurious in the Jewish tradition drawn by master craftsmen who, while skilled in the art of writing English, have not necessarily displayed the best in the Jewish heritage. The series of articles that have recently appeared in the London *Jewish Chronicle* on the views of England's gifted Jewish writers, have shown an appalling indifference to Jewish values. One writer, Wolf Mankowitz, wrote: "I don't play any part in Jewish communal affairs.

I don't know what the Anglo-Jewish community is doing or what it is thinking. Its concept of religion is not mine. Its social life is of no interest to me . . ." Another, Peter Shaffer, wrote: "I think the last despairing call of culture is to its past. People say: 'Do you feel Jewish?' I have no idea what this question means. I would like to be thought of as Jewish by an anti-Semite, but I have no real definition of the word. Do I belong to a Jewish community? No, because all 'belonging' seems to me a very comfortable form of social solidarity . . ." If we are to have Jewish writing in English worthy of our historic experience we shall have to encourage our writers to concentrate on values that have sustained us for so many centuries.

A third way of harnessing the English language in the furtherance of Jewish culture would be the support of our Jewish institutions of learning from which will come the rabbis, teachers, scholars and communal leaders. Our attitude toward Jewish learning must be radically revised if we are to have the kind of revival that is so frequently spoken of in our day. A story illustrative of our contemporary indifference to Jewish learning deals with the generosity of the Jew who meets an old person on the street and contemplates that he might himself become old some day, perhaps in need of aid in his declining years. He therefore contributes generously to the support of homes for the aged. He meets a sick or deformed person, and it strikes him that he might himself be in need of medical care some day. So he contributes generously to the upkeep of hospitals. But it never occurs to him that he might some day be a Jewish scholar.

Before we consider the lessons of Jewish history that reveal only the Hebrew language as the true preservative of Jewish culture in ages past, we must realize the necessity of having something to preserve. The English language is, as we have seen, the medium of the expression of the largest segment of Jewish life in the world today, and the manner in which this segment builds the climate and cultivates the soil for Jewish values will, in the long run, determine the character of Jewish culture outside the State of Israel. Jewish concern should be as much for the preservation of culture as for the people. Where

culture goes, people soon follow. The Jewish people in the Diaspora will, in all likelihood, remain loyal Jews in the minimum sense of the word for a long time to come. They will continue to build synagogues, conduct meetings, raise funds and cope with physical emergencies. But there remains the possibility that they will be less and less devoted to their culture patterns unless they realize the challenges and the opportunities that lie before them in utilizing the English language in the furtherance of their great tradition. Unless they do so they will be lighting strange fires at their altars as did the ancient sons of Aaron. Of them the rabbis said that while their bodies remained healthy, their souls had perished.

## IS PIETY A LOST ART?

Is PIETY A LOST art? It would appear to be so in the light of the manner of our religious observance today. A dictionary defines the term "piety" as "habitual reverence for God, and a sense of religious obligation." Compared to our fathers, we have little of either. The renewal of interest in religion in our contemporary life is not accompanied by the piety necessary to true religion. Our food is generally consumed without benefit of grace. Our public prayer is, often as not, recited without the devoutness that once lent it sanctity. Private prayer is seldom indulged in. Our relationship to God is occasional and distant. Our sense of the godly is blunted. When sacred functions are held, their social aspects are more apparent than their religious ones. Our great holy days are approached as special events devoid of the soul preparation which they deserve.

It was not so in earlier days. Our fathers considered it unthinkable to break bread without the traditional *motzi*, the thanksgiving blessing, or to retire at night without the *Keriath Shema*, the bedtime prayer, or to start their day without the *Modeh Ani Lefonecho*, the prayer of gratitude for the return of the soul for another day. They approached their high holy days with reverence and awe, commencing a month in advance of the Jewish New Year to recite the penitential prayers at the

conclusion of the daily services and ending them with the blowing of the ram's horn. Being Jews was no part-time occasional experience for them. They developed through the disciplines of piety a remarkable strength of character which enabled them to withstand the terrible onslaughts of the centuries and to survive their vicissitudes with a heroism unmatched in history. The great Hebrew poet Hayyim Nahman Bialik has described this piety in his famous lines "If thou wouldst know":

If thou wouldst know the mystic fount from whence  
Thy stricken brethren crushed and overcome  
By hellish pains and fangs of scorpions,  
Drew patience, firmness, trust, and heaven's comfort,  
And iron might to bear relentless toil,  
With shoulders stooped to bear a loathsome life,  
And endlessly to suffer and endure; . . .

If thou wouldst know, O humble brother mine,—  
Go to the house of prayer grown old, decayed, . . .

This house is but a little spark, a remnant  
Saved by a miracle, from that great fire,  
Kept by thy fathers always on their altars.  
Who knows, perchance the torrents of their tears  
Ferried us safely, hither bringing us?  
Perchance with their prayers they asked us of the Lord,  
And in their deaths bequeathed to us a life,  
A life that will endure for evermore!

It would be idle to imagine that we can return to the ways of our fathers. We live in different times and different worlds. The very speed which marks contemporary life has robbed us of much of the capacity that our forefathers possessed to distinguish between the holy and the profane, the Sabbath and the weekday, the serious and the trivial, the permanent and the evanescent in religion. It is perhaps for this reason that our public worship lacks the religious depth that was characteristic of the Jews of another age and that our ceremonial observances carry more aesthetic charm than reverence in their wake. We are still following ancient forms in our religion; only the piety is absent. Dr. Abraham Joshua Heschel has noted that there is no worry on our part about the spiritual inadequacy

of that which admittedly should not be abandoned. There is no particular anxiety about the barrenness of our praying, the conventionality of our ceremonialism. He warned that while the problem that cries for solution is not everything or nothing, total or partial obedience to the ancient Jewish law and custom, authentic or forged, genuine or artificial observance, it is definitely the problem "whether we obey or whether we merely play with the word God."

There is a meaningful talmudic story that gives emphasis to Dr. Heschel's thesis. Rabbi Judah Hanasi, the celebrated compiler of the Mishna, was a good friend of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius, uncle of Marcus Aurelius. The rabbi once invited the emperor to a Jewish Sabbath dinner at his home. The emperor enjoyed the food so much that he asked the rabbi for the recipes. He then had his palace chefs prepare the same recipes and invited the rabbi to dinner on a weekday. When the food was served the emperor was disappointed. It lacked the savor which had delighted him in the rabbi's home. "I had these dishes prepared according to your recipes, rabbi," he said, "but they do not taste the same; something is missing." "It is the Sabbath that is missing," said the rabbi.

How can we regain something of the savor of Judaism in our religious experience? How can we create an atmosphere of reverence in our homes and synagogues in the spirit of our fathers? By a better understanding of the ideas of our religion. When people do not know why they pray, why they practice their ceremonies and customs, they cannot possibly discover the great values inherent in them. Only when they are aware of the meaning of their religion can they discern the relationship of their personal lives to the great universe of which they are only a small part. It is knowledge which helps to cultivate a necessary philosophy of religion, something which is so sadly lacking among the masses of people today. Since the American Jewish community relies upon the Jewish religion for its badge of identity, it is increasingly faced with the need of analyzing its religious status in order to be able to utilize it as an instrument of survival. It must find the road to piety so that Judaism may have more meaning in its life than it has today. To accomplish this end there is no better approach than the under-

rated and oft neglected prayer book which we have inherited from our fathers.

Recently there appeared an appealing and informative little book called *The Service of the Heart* by Evelyn Garfiel designed to help the average Jew learn the source, the purpose and the meaning of the Jewish prayers. It is not a translation of the prayer book, but a guide which traces the history and describes the religious values expressed in the prayers. No Jew who reads this attractively written volume with reasonable care will approach his synagogue lightly. The very definition of a synagogue offered by the author is arresting. It is not dependent upon a building. It may startle a good many modern Jews who are so proud of their magnificent edifices of worship to find the authentic Jewish view of the synagogue to be not a place at all, but people—worshippers. A *minyán*, ten Jews, anywhere constitutes a synagogue and can conduct a full service. Services can properly be conducted in a tent or a motion-picture theater or in someone's back yard if need be. But the pivotal requirement for a synagogue is not a consecrated spot on which a building is erected, but human beings gathered to pray.

The rabbis of the Talmud offer further help in understanding the significance of the relationship of the synagogue to the reverent heart of man. In commenting on the biblical injunction to build a sanctuary as a dwelling place of God they call attention to the wording of the command, "And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." They noted the remarkable fact that God dwells among people and not in a particular building. They dwelt upon the intimate association between God, the place of God and the human beings who worship God by pointing to the common Hebrew root for all three: God, *Shechinah* or divine presence; sanctuary, *mishkan*; and neighbor, *shochain*. Only people who are genuine neighbors can envisage God. Only those who envisage God can make of their meeting place a sanctuary. The *hasidim* in Jewish life used to sing a quaint Yiddish ditty reminiscent of this theme. "Where does God dwell?" they asked. "Where you let Him enter," they replied. "Where can He enter?" "In a dwelling that is clean."

It will surprise many who are unfamiliar with the Jewish liturgy to discover how much they can learn from the Hebrew prayer book about the Jewish philosophy of life and how effectively it can open the door to greater piety. Those who are disinterested in and bored with prayers and who consider the sermon the most important aspect of modern synagogue services, waste time in their Sabbath and other holy day observances. They remain unaware of the purpose of their presence in a synagogue. The object in celebrating a holy occasion is not limited only by the negative act of abstaining from work and transferring one's location from the market place to a building used for religious gatherings. It is to dedicate the time thus devoted on the particular day to the uplift of the spirit, to be sanctified by the experience. Our Hebrew liturgy was forged in the fires of human life, and it reflects the hopes and fears, the aspirations and the sorrows of human beings who related their short earthly span to the values that endure. Most of us who discount the importance of prayer may have wondered why our services are so poorly attended on days other than the great holy days of the religious calendar. It may be that our empty buildings are reflections of empty spiritual lives, devoid of piety. The author of *The Service of the Heart* referred to above, tells us how much a single prayer can teach our generation. The eighteenth benediction of the group of silent devotions known as the *Shemoneh Esrai* (Eighteen Benedictions) recited at all services, speaks of *nissim* (miracles). The modern Jew might not be able to make much of it, at first glance. But, as Dr. Garfiel explains:

Once again we express our gratitude to God for our very lives, for all "His *Nissim* [necessarily but incorrectly translated miracles] that are with us every day" . . . The term *Nissim* . . . does sometimes refer to what we call miracles, events which cannot be explained by natural law . . . the parting of the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to pass over dry shod and its equally miraculous flooding over when the Egyptians tried to follow them across.

But there is another sense, for which there is no equivalent in English, in which rabbinic Judaism uses the term *Nissim*. *Nissim* also refers to those normal events of our

daily lives in which God's providential care is evident. In the Midrash, are found examples of the "Nissim that are with us every day": A man recovers slowly from a serious illness; another walks in the woods and just escapes a poisonous snake that suddenly flees instead of striking him. And all of us, in an experience not at all catastrophic, get our daily bread; we live in a world that is full of the things we need for our comfort. In these things, the Rabbis saw the Hand of God, His "full, open and generous Hand," as they put it in the Grace after Meals. "Every day Thou doest *Nissim* and wonderful things for us and no man [even] knoweth [of them]," says a Midrash.

Dr. Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, noted contemporary Jewish writer and editor of *The Jewish Spectator*, has recently suggested that the high holy day services be turned into study sessions, allowing ten minutes for prayer at the opening and closing of the synagogue gatherings and inserting a lecture on some phase of Jewish life, with questions from the members of the congregation. This innovation, she believes, will be more meaningful and satisfying to those who come but twice or three times a year than the prayers of the holiday prayer books. But the innovation, if introduced universally, would not only destroy what little is left of the religious atmosphere of our synagogues, but would also make it impossible to restore to them the qualities that have made the Jewish people a people of the book who have taught the art of prayer and piety to the western world. One cannot cultivate piety through lectures. One can come to an appreciation of it only through a greater awareness of the relationship of his personal life to the larger world, to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It cannot be emphasized enough that piety is something more than lighting candles on the eve of the Sabbath, something more than a ritual observance or an intellectual exercise. It is a mood, a feeling which can be developed by the discipline which modern individuals have thus far been unwilling to exercise to any great extent. Dr. Rosmarin's plan merely offers an uninspiring, cold and ineffectual procedure in place of the unused potential now available. We ought not to abandon the service of the heart. If our prayer book now serves as nothing more than a

funnel for the passage of empty mechanical words from the lips of the occasional worshiper, it may be due to the fact that those who read it are unaware of its beauty and power. They do not read into it the history and hope and aspiration of people who drew from it strength to meet their difficulties. Nor do they recognize in its pages the utterances of inspired prophets, singers and sages who recorded their larger view of life and the universe in poetic prose. Until they do they will not find much inspiration in prayer. Limited in their horizons they will try to mold heaven to fit their own small earthly proportions. Their observances of holy days and ceremonies will be equally ineffective because they will not be harnessed to great ends and toward fuller understanding of their place in God's scheme of things. They will not know that they are fearfully and wonderfully made, as the Psalmist phrased it.

## DARWIN'S IMPACT ON JUDAISM

ONE HUNDRED YEARS have passed since the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. The world is fairly familiar with the book's impact on Christian religious thinking, but little note has been taken of its influence on Jewish religious thought.

In Christianity it led to doctrinal controversies of such tremendous proportions as to split churches into hostile factions. It turned classrooms into arenas of conflict and produced special enactments by state legislatures in America outlawing the teaching of evolution. More than any other book before or since, it caused people to question biblical interpretations and spurred the studies of Bible criticism.

Darwin presented evidence which he claimed showed that the various species of life in the world today have not been here in these shapes from the beginning, but had evolved from similar forms. This thesis was called evolution. It was not a new idea; the Greek philosopher Anaximander had advanced it thousands of years ago, and other philosophers had supported it in succeeding centuries. But Charles Darwin was the first to

back it with scientific evidence. He showed in *The Origin of Species* that the life we know had developed by a process of natural selection, that species which survive over the ages are those able to meet the demands of the environment. They are not here by design but by the survival of the fittest.

This theory struck hard at the traditional account of creation described in the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis. It challenged not only the biblical time sequence but also man's special status in the scheme of creation. For, according to the theory of evolution, man evolved from lower forms of life. Traditional religionists who had been accustomed to considering man as a creature "but little lower than the angels" were shocked and revolted by the Darwinian notion that man might be descended from the ape. The famous Scopes case of Dayton, Tennessee, in which Clarence Darrow was pitted against William Jennings Bryan a generation ago, was striking evidence of the intensity and bitterness of the strife engendered by the theory of evolution.

What was Darwin's impact on Judaism? It was not as profound as it was on Christianity because, unlike Christianity, Judaism is not a religion based on salvation by faith. But it was a serious impact, nevertheless. The Darwinian discoveries influenced the thinking of the Reform movement and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the course of the thinking of the Conservative movement in the nineteenth century. They undergird the philosophy of the Reconstructionist movement of our time. As for Orthodoxy, it was prompted into an even more uncompromising defense of the divine authority of the Bible.

Reform Judaism, the first of the modern Jewish religious movements to break with the traditional viewpoint, was deeply affected by Darwin's theory. It followed the thinking of one of its foremost leaders, Abraham Geiger, who declared that the worthwhile elements in Judaism are its universal principles of ethics, not its historical incidents. Geiger accepted only human reason as the source of authority. According to his view, the Jewish traditional law, *halacha*, in general and the Bible in particular, are the products of a long process of development. This attitude clashed with the Orthodox belief epitomized in the saying, "All that a diligent scholar was destined

to discover in the future was already revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai." Geiger held that Judaism could not be exempt from the law of evolution. He asserted that the Torah—the oral as well as the written law—far from having remained intact and unaltered throughout the centuries, had undergone change and transformation both as to the letter and the interpretation.

A noted disciple of Geiger, Kaufmann Kohler, onetime president of the Hebrew Union College and spokesman for Reform Judaism in the United States, enthusiastically supported this modernistic view of Judaism. In an essay written in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of Geiger's birth, he declared that a new century of research had dawned, the century of Darwin when people were beginning to reread the world's history and to see the Bible in an altogether different light. They were examining it like other human writing, under the microscope of critical analysis. Thus seen, the Bible turned out to be a book not dictated by God to Moses but the slow, steady growth of a nation's intellectual life, "the outcome of toiling centuries groping after light."

The Pittsburgh Platform of Reform Judaism, proclaimed in 1885, showed further evidence of the impact of Darwin on the movement. The following portion of the platform is generally as acceptable in Reform circles today as it was when first announced three quarters of a century ago:

We recognize in the Bible the record of the consecration of the Jewish people to its mission as priest of the One God, and value it as the most potent instrument of religious and moral instruction. We hold that the modern discoveries of scientific researches in the domains of nature and history are not antagonistic to the doctrines of Judaism, the Bible reflecting the primitive ideas of its own age and at times clothing its conception of divine providence and justice dealing with man in miraculous narratives.

Emil G. Hirsch, an outstanding leader in American Reform Judaism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and a strong advocate of Darwin's theory, lent his great influence toward the advancement of this view in religion. In a lecture he delivered before the Jewish Chautauqua Society in

1903, he stated that the opening chapters of Genesis, as poetry, are without peer in the literature of the world, but that the biblical imagery is robbed of its beauty when pressed into service to curb the curiosity of the scientific mind. Developing his theme, Hirsch went on to say that it is inconsequential to the religious consciousness of man what method is used to describe divinity, so long as it is not confused with history's unfolding process of life. Hirsch termed the religion of Judaism an evolution and stated that the Darwinian theory is no more to be dreaded by Jewish religionists than was Platonism by Philo and Aristotelianism by Maimonides.

Conservative Judaism, too, could not avoid the impact of Darwin even though its leadership did not go to the lengths of Reform in acknowledging the importance of his contribution. Zacharias Frankel, a founder and theoretician of the movement, demonstrated that the oral Torah had been frequently modified as a result of historical circumstances. The Conservative attitude toward research and discovery would hardly win the approval of Orthodoxy if judged by the opinion of one of its leading rabbis, Dr. Robert Gordis stated in his volume *Judaism for the Modern Age*. He said that in recent decades the phrase *Torah Misinai* (the Law of Sinai) has often been used, but this term, unlike a similar phrase *Torah min Hashamayim* (Torah from Heaven), does not occur anywhere in rabbinic literature except in the Ethics of the Fathers of the Talmud where the phrase is not a technical term but an article of faith. It is only in modern apologetics where the phrase begins to appear as synonymous with *Torah min Hashamayim*. It is then taken to mean the entire Torah, both written and oral considered as having been given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Such a dogma, he holds, means to pass judgment on a question which only historical and literary scholarship can legitimately decide and which, contrary to the widespread impression, is of no real consequence to religious faith.

Dr. Gordis has balanced this observation, however, by stating that, "The common core in all such views, and the irreducible minimum, is the belief that the Torah, which encompasses the ethical and ritual traditions of Israel, inaugurated at Sinai and carried forward through biblical, talmudic, and post-talmudic

times to our own day, is an emanation of God, a revelation of divine truth."

In a recently published volume bearing the significant title *Tradition and Change*, an account of the development of the Conservative movement, Mordecai Waxman, the editor, cautiously advances the idea that Conservative Judaism is by no means prepared to ignore modern thinking. He says that one of its principal emphases is that Judaism must be able to confront modern thought and research and assimilate it and harmonize it with itself or disprove it. This means in practice that biblical criticism as well as the scientific emphasis of the modern age and the various philosophies of the twentieth century have all found a receptive ear in the Conservative movement. There is a mood of awareness in this branch of Judaism that the developments of modern thought must be taken into consideration. But he states that Conservative Judaism "has, of course, not issued any formal statements which harmonize these patterns of thought with Judaism."

The most powerful impact of evolution on Judaism is to be seen in the Reconstructionist movement whose founder, guide and philosopher is Mordecai Kaplan. Dr. Kaplan minces no words in his rejection of the traditional supernatural concept of Judaism held by Orthodoxy. In the past centuries, when Jewish philosophers like Philo and Maimonides were confronted by challenges to traditional Jewish thinking, they resorted to the allegorical method of meeting them. This was the method by which the content of traditional Judaism was adjusted to contemporaneous thought. But it could be accepted only by those who considered the Bible to be a divinely revealed authority, a supernatural phenomenon. On such an assumption nothing in the Bible could be contrary to reason. The Orthodox believer merely considered contemporaneous thought as another form of divine revelation. Since language is used not only literally but metaphysically, it was possible to fit the Bible statements into any theory by a process of metaphorical interpretation.

It was thus a simple matter to explain the Bible text in such a manner as to reconcile it with a prevailing point of view no matter how anachronistic the literal text seemed to be. But the

allegorical method of reconciling the Bible with new discoveries ran into difficulties when the exact linguistic sciences began to be developed. The allegorical method denies the essential implication of evolution basic to modern thinking—the unfolding and growth from lower to higher forms. It denies the modern view that the Bible, for all its sublime teachings, contains many crude and primitive notions of highly doubtful moral value.

In his *Judaism as a Civilization*, the definitive exposition of the Reconstructionist movement, Dr. Kaplan boldly challenges the Orthodox traditional manner of interpreting the Bible. Unlike the majority of his Conservative colleagues, he accepts the implication of the scientific method of studying religious history and states that the reorientation which is essential to the survival of the Jewish religion cannot be effected merely by trying to harmonize the traditional teachings of religion with the results achieved by modern science. He feels that:

It calls for nothing less than an approach to the religious interpretation of life with the same unbiased empirical attitude as that which constitutes the spirit of science, that spirit which regards truth not as something absolute and final, but as an active process of the mind whereby error is gradually eliminated. A conflict between science and religion is possible only when we assume that our knowledge of God originates not from our understanding of the universe and of human life, but from some supernatural revelation which is entirely extraneous to the natural powers of the human mind.

Dr. Kaplan points out that although the previous attempts to re-evaluate the Jewish religion have been helpful, they are now of little value in reconstructing Judaism. While in the nineteenth century, a heroic effort to revive the allegorical method of interpreting Scriptures was made by the great exponent of Orthodoxy, Samson Raphael Hirsch, the result proved sterile because his method was in conflict with modern man's demand for historical truth. It denied the fact that crude ideas of life and society were intermingled with great ethical principles in the Bible. Terming this allegorical method "an act of jugglery," Dr. Kaplan calls for an entirely different

method compatible with the "evolutionary and historical conception of religion and based on the needs of the human spirit."

The conflicts in Judaism resulting from the Darwinian revolution have not ended. The search for authority continues in Reform and Conservative ranks to replace the authority which has been abandoned or suspended. The Reconstructionist group advances a "religion without supernaturalism"—the title of one of Dr. Kaplan's late works—relying on the natural powers of the human mind for authority. Only the Orthodox leadership acknowledges the Bible as the infallible source of authority in Jewish life. It considers the biblical doctrine of creation and the theory of evolution to be basically irreconcilable.

This point is stressed in considerable detail in Menahem M. Kasher's first volume of the *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*. Orthodoxy, in general, holds that the allegorical interpretation has always been supplemental to the literal interpretation of Scripture; it never took the place of the literal text of the Bible which stands eternal. In effect, once one denies the literal interpretation—the *pshat*—of the Bible, one denies the validity of Orthodoxy. A leading Orthodox spokesman in America, Dr. Samuel Belkin, president of Yeshiva University, states in his essay, *The Philosophy of Purpose*:

Philosophers of reason may question why and how God created the world. The Torah does not speculate on such matters. . . . It is not the origin of creation, but rather the purpose of creation that is important.

In similar vein, Dr. Isidore Epstein, principal of Jews' College, London, and a leading British authority on Orthodoxy, presents the Orthodox attitude toward evolution by stating that evolution is, after all, a process and a means of activity and not to be confused with the act of creation itself. In his book *The Faith of Judaism* he declares:

. . . [Evolution] is not concerned with the question of *who* created the world, but *how* it was created. All that the doctrine of creation insists on is that the world and all it contains is the product not of necessity, but of the free

will of God, and that it is completely dependent on His will—whether it came into existence as the result of an eternal creative activity, or through the slow process of millions of years, or, as the Biblical narrative presents it, in six days. Here, too, as in all matters of Jewish belief, the doctrine of creation is emphasised not because of the doctrine itself, but because of its tremendous practical consequences. *A rejection of the doctrine of creation would only lead to the rejection of the whole Torah. . . .* [italics mine]

World War II created a spiritual and moral vacuum in the United States and masses of people turned to religion in an effort to fill the void. In this “return to religion” there has been an unmistakable yearning for guidance in daily living. For many Jews, however, the fundamentalist approach based on an infallible book is secondary to the social impetus motivating their synagogue affiliation. They wish primarily to belong to a religious community and to provide religious education for their young.

There is a marked resurgence of religious interest in the land, but no clear evidence that the many thousands who are joining synagogues are concerned with the need of authority, even though they may be dimly aware that a less casual approach to religion might give them greater inspiration. It is not probable that they will eventually accept the authority of divine revelation for the folkways, the ceremonies and the customs they now observe. American Jews, educated according to modern theories of knowledge, accepting the validity of scientific discovery and showing the influence of the sweeping changes in the social order that have so profoundly affected inherited religious beliefs, will be prone to look for authority in places other than the traditional word of the Bible.

One cannot safely predict whether the future Judaism of the western world will be Orthodox, Conservative, Reform or Reconstructionist. These names are generally considered identification labels rather than doctrinal designations by the masses of synagogue affiliates today. But the impact of Darwin, as has been demonstrated in the philosophies of the new movements in Judaism that have come into being in the hundred years

since the publication of *The Origin of Species*, will have to be reckoned with; it may play a significant role in stamping the character of the Judaism that is to emerge from the conflicting attitudes of the present time.

## TRENDS IN REFORM JUDAISM

PERHAPS THE TIME has come for leaders of Reform Judaism to take a long hard look at the origins of the movement in Germany a century and a half ago and to take their bearing from the philosophy that brought it into being. It stemmed from Orthodox Judaism and was not far removed from the Jewish masses of that day. Its founders were scholars who never thought of their movement as a sect in Judaism. Its European beginnings, in the line of Jewish tradition, were intended primarily as adjustments to new worlds.

Transplanted to American soil the movement took a radical turn. It was apotheosized in the Pittsburgh Platform. A gulf arose between its adherents and the masses of Jews, but the radicalism of the movement was not of an even temper. Isaac Mayer Wise's Reform Judaism showed little trace of the influence of the philosophies of the nineteenth century. Geiger, Einhorn, Kohler and Emil G. Hirsch, however, were deeply affected. Wise was far more interested in changing the legalistic structure of Judaism than its theology. The difference between his kind of Reform in Albany and Cincinnati and the kind established by Emil G. Hirsch in Chicago was a striking one. Hirsch's Sinai Temple originally had no ark in it, and no Torah. Services were held on Sundays (they still are). He was quoted in a volume of sermons compiled under the title *My Religion* as saying that he felt he had more in common with liberal Christians in his community than with Orthodox Jews. His Temple, among others, was the spiritual breeding ground for the so-called "classical" Reform thinking that motivates the present-day membership of the American Council for Judaism, noted for its deep hostility to Zionism and the wish to limit the Jewish experience to the field of religion. Such thinking

is characterized more by what it opposes than by what it espouses. Hirsch's Reform was a product of the nineteenth-century liberalism, articulate and productive of great civic good and expanded social reform, but it was not capable of keeping Judaism virile and intensive while adjusting it to changing worlds.

When Reform began revising its estimate of the movement in America it showed reluctance in changing its nineteenth-century pattern of thinking. Many discussions took place over the years in the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (the rabbinical and the lay bodies of the movement) regarding the desirability of change in outlook and direction, but whatever piecemeal changes were effected were related to practice, not to theory. It took almost fifty years before the Reform rabbinical stand on Zionism was altered from hostility to neutrality. The changes in practice evidently were more urgently called for. The new members of Reform congregations, increasingly drawn from East European backgrounds, were not satisfied with the colorless brand of nineteenth-century Judaism prevailing in their Temples. But there was no chart offered for new directions, and practices were undertaken without definition.

The battles within Reform Judaism over the past half century have centered about Zionism, the concept of the peoplehood of Israel, etc. Those battles are now over. Reform claims a membership of over a million Jews in the United States. In order to attract that number it had to jettison the radical thinking symbolized by many of its nineteenth-century leaders and to accommodate itself to the East European religious views from which it was formerly quite distant. Both the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations are strongly sympathetic to Zionism. The nineteenth-century mission idea is an unimportant issue. Reform's distance from the masses has been bridged, and its once exclusive ranks now admit all applicants, but there is no clear-cut set of principles to replace the Pittsburgh Platform which is no longer operative.

The program of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations for establishing new congregations in the New York area

glosses over any ideological differences between the sections of Jewry. It frankly appeals to all unaffiliated Jews regardless of background. The new congregations are nominally Reform in that they use the Union Prayer Book, have organs and mixed choirs and interpret Judaism liberally. But they are a far cry from the Reform congregations of an earlier day in the United States.

Reform Judaism seems to know what it does not want, but it has not yet spelled out what it does want. In the 1953 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rabbi Herbert Friedman spoke of goals for Reform Judaism and declared that according to answers received from a cross section of the membership of the Conference, it believes that the present trends of ceremonialism, pro-Israel sentiment and world Jewish identification should be intensified in the ranks of Reform. In the same Conference convention Abraham Shusterman revealed further evidence of the change in Reform thinking when he said:

Those centripetal forces in the life of every non-Orthodox religionist which already have made for the awareness of real kinship within our communities may, in the course of a few decades, make the terms "Reform" and "Conservative" virtually synonymous. We will be slow to acknowledge what the logic of events will force upon us. Just as loyal graduates of both Reform seminaries let sentiment stand in the way of efficiency, so the trend toward the unity of the disciples of Isaac M. Wise and Solomon Schechter will be retarded by the strong sentiment of those who are afraid that merger means submergence.

It is difficult to imagine that Isaac Mayer Wise and Solomon Schechter could elevate efficiency above ideology. One of Schechter's famous addresses was delivered at the Hebrew Union College, the Reform seminary in Cincinnati, at the invitation of Kaufmann Kohler, its president. It was significantly entitled "His Majesty's Opposition." He and the Reform leaders were poles apart in their thinking. Yet only a few decades later, members of the Reform rabbinic body could feel no essential difference between Reform and Conservative Judaism.

Quite recently two members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Frederic A. Doppelt and David Polish, issued *A Guide for Reform Jews*. It is a laudable undertaking, long overdue within the ranks of Reform. But it will take something more than the print on its pages to make it effective in Reform Jewish life. It is one thing to feel the need of guidance and authority to avoid chaos and drift; it is quite another thing to be bound by authority. Reform is moving in new directions, but its ultimate stage is not yet discernible. The Pittsburgh Platform was modified by the Columbus Platform which changed hostility to Zionism into non-opposition. The current struggles in Reform seem to point toward another platform, one linked in all eventuality with some code of authority that will standardize Reform thinking and practice and serve as a clearer guide than the many resolutions of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. This code may evolve despite the opposition of many rabbis who do not desire another hide-bound code similar to the Orthodox one. It would seem, however, that unless and until Reform discovers what it actually desires in place of the Pittsburgh Platform (which is no longer operative) and the Columbus Platform (which is ambiguous), it will not be able to give direction to its laity or to establish educational standards within its body. The rituals and ceremonies in Reform have not yet been adequately absorbed in the movement. They are not substitutes for a philosophy of purpose; they are merely evidences of struggle within the movement over the years. The physical changes in Reform have not been symbols of direction.

Judging from the discussions and resolutions emanating from lay and rabbinical conventions of Reform Judaism in recent years, it seems likely that the trend toward tradition will widen, that the theoretical interpretations of the movement will come closer to the thinking of the large body of Israel, that identification with world Jewry will be accentuated and that the State of Israel will play a part in inverse ratio to that which it played in Reform thinking half a century ago. Not only will the practices introduced in recent years remain, but their number will grow and thus emphasize even more sharply the differences between the present-day appearance of the movement and its

earlier stage. But interpretation of the practices will be needed. This may be supplied by a guide in time to come.

Reform eliminated kashruth, changed the liturgy, reinterpreted the customs of the Sabbath and the Festivals and abandoned many if not most of the Orthodox practices. Then it changed its course, virtually abandoning the Pittsburgh Platform, reintroducing in the prayer book sentiments sympathetic to Jewish nationalism and adding many traditional symbols formerly absent in its life. Much has been made of the external manifestations characterizing Reform's new look. There is the kiddush cup, the shofar, the *attarah*, the wedding certificate, the bar mitzvah ceremonies which point to the changed content in recent years. Laymen have believed from these symbols that the movement is becoming more Orthodox, but this is not so. Reform's problem is to find the means of penetrating more deeply the consciousness of its members so that they become religious Jews, not just active Jews. Without the necessary reverence and a strong religious belief the Reform activities lack strength.

Before any guide can seriously be considered as helpful and operative in the ranks of Reform, certain spadework will be necessary to enable the laity to understand the reasons for such a move. The rabbis will have to agree on the minimum standards. To do so it would be necessary to devote several of their annual conferences to discussions of this need and to publicize their deliberations sufficiently to acquaint the laity and to stimulate it toward a recognition of the importance of authority in Jewish life. The rabbinate cannot possibly hope for a wide acceptance of its decisions without adequately preparing its followers in the understanding of the purposes of any guide. This procedure was followed in the *Kallahs* of ancient times that served as means of formulating the governing principles of the Talmud. It can be helpful today in bringing the Jewish people to a realization of the necessity for discipline in chaotic Jewish religious life. If the Central Conference programs could give sufficient time to this one vital undertaking it might meet with a grateful response on the part of Jewish lay people. Protestants have shown the benefits that can result from rethinking their Christian beliefs over long periods, marked by

such gatherings as the Lambeth, Amsterdam and Evanston assemblies in recent years. Rabbis and laymen might also profit greatly through similar assemblies dedicated to an evaluation of the Jewish tradition in the light of changed conditions. Neither the Union of American Hebrew Congregations nor the Central Conference of American Rabbis has yet realized the potentialities of such joint investigations into Reform's theological position with a view toward establishing a rationale for the practices and ceremonies that are being added in such profusion each year. Authority should come not by virtue of questionnaires but by the dignity conferred by our time-honored institutions.

Despite its unclear identity today Reform Judaism occupies a favorable position in American Jewish life. It possesses unique advantages and opportunities in influencing the future determination of Judaism in the United States. It has a record of liberalism in thought and daring in action. It was farsighted in adjusting ancient Jewish traditions to contemporary life and making it easier for other wings of Judaism to modernize their forms and practices. It took the lead in giving women equality in the synagogue and is again advancing the idea of ordaining women rabbis. It pioneered in Jewish education, and the textbooks prepared by its Commission on Jewish Education are standard in the Jewish pedagogical field. It established dignity and decorum in the synagogue services and courageously met the need for experiment and innovation with fruitful changes. Because of its liberal position and its untrammelled capacity for action, Reform can assume leadership in the religious revival that is bound to occur. Whether it can capitalize on its position and move effectively to meet the challenging situations that lie ahead will depend upon its resolution in establishing principles for the guidance of its followers and inspiring them to advance its causes.

Reform Judaism is less cumbered by rigid tradition than are Orthodox and Conservative branches of the Jewish religion, but its advantage also presents it with a serious handicap: the lack of authority and law to give effectiveness to its program. How difficult its position is can be seen from the analysis of

Jewish tradition presented by the late Dr. Samuel S. Cohon in his volume *Judaism, A Way of Life*:

Taking a historical and pragmatic view of tradition, Reform Judaism cannot treat it as the sole basis of authority. Reason must function by its side to determine the path of duty. Instead of prescribing the norms of religion as absolutely binding Reform can only recommend values, standards and institutions on the ground that they have proved themselves spiritually efficacious in the life of the Jewish people. Unlike Orthodoxy it cannot appeal to supernatural sanctions for its claims, but only to the collective experience of the Jewish people and to the mind and conscience of the individual. From the standpoint of the masses this is obviously a defect; for it cannot exert a powerful effect upon their minds as did Orthodoxy. However, from the standpoint of spiritual integrity this is undoubtedly a greater asset. As it builds on solid foundations it may look forward to a future of usefulness.

Reform has a great future if it will return to its original European patterns and become once more a liberal current in Jewish tradition instead of remaining a trustee of a static program fixed decades ago and honored mostly in the breach today. It cannot hope to survive adequately by merely adding patchwork to its American foundation. It is the foundation itself that demands re-establishment. Today it follows practices that have not been fitted together into a pattern. The Orthodox and Conservative wings of Judaism, for all their criticism of the inadequacies of Reform, stand equally in need of defining their positions more clearly. All the religious groups in America are challenged to advance a philosophical base broad enough to fire the imagination of the masses of Jews and give new spiritual vitality to a great community in need of a new "*minhag* America," to borrow a phrase of Isaac Mayer Wise. "Great religions," said Solomon Schechter, "can live only on ideas and ideals, not on mere organization." American Jews will follow the religious association that can best exemplify this truth.

## V. ISSUES



## THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT

IT IS NOT OFTEN that a foreword to a book is more important than the book. This is true of Paul Hutchinson's foreword in Rabbi Elmer Berger's volume *A Partisan History of Judaism*. Hutchinson, who was the editor of *The Christian Century* at the time of his death, went far beyond Berger's anti-Zionist phobia to raise an issue that most Jews believed had ended with Hitler's obliteration of Jewish life and culture in Europe. It is the issue of assimilation coupled with a renewed attack upon cultural pluralism in America.

Rabbi Berger himself is more partisan than historian. In endeavoring to depict a religion without people, a *Judenrein* Judaism, he finds himself opposed by practically every authority, Jewish or Christian, who has ever written on the subject. He does not seem to mind his loneliness. "I have no patience with unity in Judaism," he writes; "I do not believe there is any such thing as a Jewish people . . . not even in Israel." He is undisturbed by the standard reference work on Reform Judaism by Dr. Kaufmann Kohler, onetime head of the seminary from which he was graduated. In this work Kohler flatly states that "religion and race form an inseparable whole in Judaism." Nor is he dismayed by Bernhard Felsenthal, an outstanding rabbinic authority on nineteenth-century Reform Judaism in America who was an associate of those who drew up the Pittsburgh Platform against Zionism. Felsenthal declared that "Judaism is the sum total of the manifestations of the distinctively Jewish national spirit." All wings of Judaism agree that a person born a Jew remains a Jew even though he be indifferent to the religious theories and practices of his religion. Only when he removes himself completely from his people does he cease to be a Jew; without the Jewish people there can be no Judaism.

Since Berger denies the existence of the Jewish people, it is not surprising that we find him declaring that Moses was no monotheist (thus denying to Moses even the due grudgingly given him by James H. Breasted in *The Dawn of Conscience* and Freud in *Moses and Monotheism*), that the prophets of Israel were not interested in the Jewish people as such, that the concept of the chosen people is nonsense, that Jesus improved on the ethics of Judaism by giving them the quality of love, that the ghetto is the breeding place of all the ills to which the modern Jew is heir, that the State of Israel may be necessary for the survival of Zionism, but not for the solution of the refugee problem or the survival of Judaism.

It is not Berger's uncorroborated statements which lend interest to this book, but the challenging inferences behind them. And if those inferences are obscured by Berger's excursions into fields where only scholars should wander, they are made amply clear in Paul Hutchinson's foreword of some half dozen pages. Here we are told that the American people have expected the melting pot to melt, that from the beginnings of America there has been implicit in the national thinking the view that minority cultures must be merged into the ways of the majority. Addressing himself to the Jews, Hutchinson says:

In the light of this historical development—plain enough, whether or not one regards it as justified or wise—I find it tragic to see so many of our Jewish citizens electing for an attempted separate existence within our American society. While they insist that the idea of a divided allegiance is as repugnant to them as to any of their neighbors, they nevertheless denounce the principle of cultural amalgamation, they proclaim that the focus of their emotional and spiritual longing is elsewhere, and they show themselves ready in the discharge of their duties as American citizens to subordinate all other considerations to the interests of a foreign nation. The very word "assimilation" has become a reproach on their lips. They insist that the melting pot must not be allowed to melt.

Attacks against minorities in America are not new. Nor are demands for assimilation of all cultures into a melting pot of recent origin. Many have harped on this theme in various keys

ranging from persuasion to threat. *The Christian Century* has been quite emotional on this subject for a long time. When Mordecai Kaplan's book *Judaism as a Civilization* was published many years ago, that journal volunteered to warn the Jews against the folly of what it termed "cultural fatalism." It noted darkly that fountains of tolerance will dry up in the Christian community unless Jews expose themselves more to the cultural contrasts which involve the exchange of spiritual goods. And then it added: "Any unassimilated element of the population is bound to have trouble because it is bound to make trouble." Such inflammatory statements are not representative of a responsible journal in a democratic society. If they were liable to injure the status of the Jew years ago, they can be more harmful now when men stand afraid before character assassins. It is always easier to attack a group than an individual.

It is only against the background of hostility to group life and values in America that the bitterly hostile attitude of *The Christian Century* and its editors toward Zionism becomes clear and intelligible. That attitude holds scant respect for any distinctive culture, be it Jewish, or Irish, or Scandinavian. However, it seems that the Jewish group is most often the concern of those who oppose cultural pluralism. They never define the kind of melting pot into which they wish the Jews to melt. They do not state clearly just what it is that the Jews are to receive in exchange for the inner values which they are asked to surrender. If it is American citizenship, they already possess that as a matter of inalienable right. If it is Christian fellowship, they need better evidence of the Christian desire to share such fellowship with them. If it is Rabbi Berger's brand of Judaism, they will have none of it.

There are many Christians who are unaware of the Jewish disillusionment with assimilation after the terrible experiences endured under Hitler. It is this disillusionment that has made the Jewish community in America all the more determined to preserve its own heritage. And it is precisely for this reason that the majority of American Jews are sympathetic to Zionism and the effort to rebuild in Israel the lives of those who suffered so much at the hands of their neighbors abroad.

Those who attack cultural pluralism in our country have missed the real issue in their pursuit after conformity. It is not security or peace for the minority that is involved. It is freedom—the right to think one's thoughts, to worship in accordance with the dictates of one's conscience, to be concerned about one's people here and elsewhere within the framework of the American Constitution and the American laws. It is the right to be different. Jews have always taken an interest in the welfare of their own people overseas with the approval of the American government and with the approval of their neighbors. *The Christian Century* has carried numerous articles bespeaking help for Christian Arabs, Chinese Christians and others throughout the world. It has protested against discrimination against Protestants in Spain and Italy. It has been in the forefront in the fight against the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican. And no one has risen to question the loyalty of the editors of *The Christian Century*. Americans of Irish extraction wear shamrocks on St. Patrick's Day and parade by the thousands on the streets of American cities while they carry Irish flags and sing Irish songs under the observation of millions of their fellow countrymen. Their devotion to Ireland is not considered injurious to the American way of life. Italians who gather to observe Columbus Day are not thought less patriotic because of this remembrance. Group observances and attachments have, as a matter of fact, enriched American life rather than detracted from it.

It was in defense of the right to be different that the Puritans came to these shores in the first instance, to find a home where they could live in accordance with their conscience. The Jewish people have already marked the three-hundredth anniversary of their settlement on American soil. To question their loyalty through inferences of the kind that Dr. Hutchinson and Rabbi Berger draw so lavishly from the thin air would appear ludicrous were these inferences published in more tranquil times. But they can cause unbounded mischief in the present climate of a society busy with loyalty reviews of its public servants and frightened enough by little patriots to jettison many of the spiritual values of its democratic ship of state. Jewish love of America is written deep in the annals of American history

with the blood of those who died to keep this nation free. Jews do not expect any more credit for their devotion to America than do Catholics or Protestants. Neither do they feel that they owe anyone an apology for their honest and honorable convictions. To speak of lawful interest of American Jewish citizens in their own people, their own culture and their fellow Jews in the State of Israel as "subordinating all other considerations to the interest of a foreign nation" is to stretch the limits of assimilation far beyond the meaning of the American Constitution as well as to offer gratuitous insult to Americans of the Jewish faith.

The Jewish people do not accept assimilation as an indispensable condition to good American citizenship. They prefer the viewpoint of Justice Brandeis who noted that multiple loyalties are objectionable only if they are inconsistent. They feel that they are better Jews and better Americans because of their wider interests.

If the American melting pot should ever melt completely as desired by the advocates of assimilation, it might do more harm than good to our country. The totalitarians have demonstrated what happens when differences in a nation are liquidated. Nothing remains as a barrier to centralized thought control. The life of America depends upon checks and balances, not alone in law, but also in religion, culture, art, literature and other pursuits stemming from the thinking of individuals and groups of varying ancestries and traditions. It is the process arising from differences that makes America unique. The motto "E pluribus unum," One out of many, does not exclude the many. Our problem is not to reduce the cultures in our midst, but to harmonize them. Thus far America has been dedicated to a great program in this direction. It has taken people from many nations and stocks, many religions and cultures, and out of the interrelated portions it has succeeded in producing a symphonic whole. It is anachronistic thinking to believe that one can eliminate the parts and yet retain our unique whole. The melting pot offers much less than its advocates claim for it.

## RABBIS AND GOOD WILL

THERE IS NO DOUBT that American rabbis are among the best agents of good will between Jews and Christians in the United States. They are generally well informed, personable and articulate. They are popular spokesmen for their people at such mixed gatherings as are arranged by service clubs, schools, patriotic societies, fraternal orders, churches and other groups. They have contributed much to the national brotherhood organization, The National Conference of Christians and Jews. They are considered eloquent speakers among the nation's clergy when they deliver addresses over the radio and television channels. They write persuasively and their books are known in many an American household. Not a few of them have made invaluable contributions to American social, political, cultural and literary life. But when they enter alien fields they invariably cause more misunderstanding than understanding, more harm than good, more confusion than enlightenment. Their motives may be of the best, but the results of their excursions are of doubtful value.

It is a strange compulsion that moves rabbis to embark on sermons dealing with the subject of Jesus and the Christian religion at Christmas and Easter seasons. Their topics belong to a Christian pulpit. No Christian clergyman seems to feel impelled to choose a Jewish holiday to launch a sermon paying tribute to Judaism while explaining why he cannot accept the total belief of the Jewish religion. But rabbis who cannot resist the temptation to wander off into Christian vineyards, labor under the mistaken assumption that their public declarations will change the basic religious thinking of their Christian neighbors. They will not.

It is easy to oversimplify deep-rooted meanings of religious ideas and beliefs. Efforts to create good will between religions

might produce better results if differences were frankly acknowledged. An interesting example of the ambiguity in public utterances of well-intentioned, idealistically motivated rabbis endeavoring to reconcile Jewish and Christian teachings may be seen in the following statement typical of many such utterances from Jewish pulpits during Christian holiday periods:

Did the Jews really reject Jesus? Of course, they did not. Why as a matter of fact the only ones who accepted him during his brief sojourn on earth were the Jews. . . . No one who has stood amid the crumbling ruins of the ancient synagogue at Capernaum on the shore of the Sea of Galilee where indubitably Jesus first learned the laws of Moses at the feet of his Jewish teachers and where he subsequently preached to the Jewish fishermen and tradesmen from Tiberias nearby, can fail to acknowledge that Jesus was a Jew among Jews, in no wise rejected by them—his kinsmen, blood of his blood, bone of his bones, spirit of his spirit, whose devoutly cherished Torah, or law, he had come not to destroy, but to fulfill.

No matter how carefully a Jew may present a discourse on Jesus he is bound to create some confusion in the mind of Christian audiences. The Jew looks at the founder of Christianity objectively. Christians regard Jesus subjectively. If Christianity means anything at all to its adherents it is because of the supernatural character of Jesus. No explanation by any non-Christian concerning the nature of the founder of Christianity can alter this fact. To the Christian, Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the God incarnate. Anything short of this conception will hardly prove satisfying to him. It is on this foundation that the religion stands. The Yiddish poet and columnist Jacob Glatstein quite correctly observed the fallacy of trying to separate Jesus the man from Jesus the Christ when he analyzed the above-mentioned seasonal talk. He asked:

What, exactly, does a rabbi mean by his deep concern for Christianity? All things considered, what is Christmas? The annual celebration of the birthday of Jesus—an event of vital religious significance. For, with the single exception of the Unitarians, Christians see in Christmas the fact that Jesus was born of a virgin mother and a holy spirit,

not as a human being, but as God. Stripped of all verbiage, this is the core of Christianity. Jesus is God in the Christian thinking.

But did the Jews accept Jesus? Not if we distinguish between the overwhelming majority who followed the rabbinic tradition in his lifetime and the handful who were his followers. No less an authority on the Talmud than Professor Jacob Z. Lauterbach has shown fairly conclusively that there were cardinal differences in the fundamental teachings of Jesus and the rabbis of his day. In his essay *The Talmud and the Gospels*, Dr. Lauterbach wrote:

Judaism and Christianity, like a mother and her daughter, have certain striking resemblances, though they are at the same time different in many important respects as well as in their general appearance and expression. They have very much in common and agree in some teachings, but they also differ radically in other fundamental respects, and disagree on many important questions such as the idea of the God conception, the belief in the future and the doctrine of salvation.

We must remember that most of the works of the New Testament at least in their original form were written *before the final breach between Judaism and Christianity* [*italics mine*]. And lest we forget, with all the resemblances between mother and daughter, Judaism and Christianity are not identical, but disagree in many fundamentals as well as minor differences.

In such conceptions as the idea of God, the respect for the Torah, the resistance to evil and faith in God's providence striking differences can be noted between the Jewish teachings and Christian dogma. Following are some illustrations of these differences:

*Attitude toward God:* Jesus is given the divine name "Lord," especially in the Gospels of Luke and John. He is called "the only begotten son of God," the son of God who shares the authority of the Father. As against such teachings, says Dr. Lauterbach, the Talmud emphasizes the pure monotheistic conception of God. All men are his children; He has no favorite

son. Only to God may prayers be made; one need not and should not, according to the Talmud (Berakot 13b), invoke the mediation even of the angel Gabriel or Michael. But Jesus claims to have the authority to forgive sins as the Father in Heaven does (Luke 5:24). He instructs his disciples to go out and "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . . ." (Matt. 28:19)

*Attitude toward the Sabbath:* When the Talmud says "The Sabbath is given to you, but you are not given to the Sabbath," it means only to imply that when human life is in danger the law of Sabbath is given to man to do whatever he wishes with it. Yet Jesus made his statement while defending his disciples who had gone into a field to pluck grain on a Sabbath day when they could have done so at any other time, since there was no emergency.

*Faith in God's providence:* Both the Jewish teachings and the teachings of Jesus express belief in God's providence, Dr. Lauterbach tells us. But in the application there is a fundamental difference. There is a beautiful parable in the Talmud which Jesus also employs in Matthew 6 to illustrate the belief that God provides for His creatures: "Did you ever see an animal or bird that had any trade as a carrier or a tailor or shopkeeper, and yet it is provided for without any sustained effort on its part. These animals are created in the service of man. Now I who am created to serve my master, should I not be all the more provided for without any effort? But I must have misbehaved in my conduct and for this reason I have forfeited my right of support and must labor and work for a living." Right here in the same passage in the Talmud the rabbis insist that a man must teach his son a trade or profession. One rabbi says: "Flay a carcass in the street rather than depend on another for a livelihood." The rabbis of the Talmud did not make saints of praying beggars, nor did they permit one to rely on miraculous cures. This is the Jewish idea of God's providence. In Christianity poverty became an ideal, a virtue, while the Talmud considers it a misfortune; a poor man, according to Jewish thinking, is as a dead man. Jesus taught: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than

for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25). The rabbis rejected this concept and encouraged sharing with the poor.

*Attitude toward one's enemy:* There is a profound difference between Jewish teaching and the teaching of Jesus on this point. The rabbis objected to the teaching "an eye for an eye" just as Jesus did. Long before his time, Dr. Lauterbach informs us, they had interpreted the law to mean compensation instead of retaliation, and when Jesus said, "You have heard it said 'an eye for an eye'" he could very easily have added, had he chosen to do so, "and you have also heard the interpretation of this law to mean compensation." But he is far from the Jewish teaching when he declares: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39). The rabbis stressed the law in the Torah which commanded the removal of evildoers in their midst, and Jews throughout the centuries have consistently held with them that it is ethically right to resist evil and to prevent it even with the use of force if necessary.

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver in his volume *Where Judaism Differed* pointedly refers to the gulf existing between the two religions in the interpretation of the command to love one's enemy. In his chapter "On Rejecting Treasures" he says:

But nowhere is the command given in the Bible to *love* one's enemy! This is contrary to human nature, and as such it is impossible of fulfillment. To require men to fulfill the impossible is to bring confusion and frustration into their spiritual lives and possibly to cause them to recoil in despair even from those duties which are capable of accomplishment. . . .

The Christian Gospels themselves demonstrate how impossible of fulfillment was Jesus' mandate to love one's enemy when, time and again, he, who was otherwise so tender and forgiving, is portrayed as denouncing the Scribes and Pharisees as "a brood of vipers" (Matt. 12:34), "blind fools" (Matt. 23:17), "hypocrites and serpents" (Matt. 23:13,15,23,33).

If controversy can arouse such bitterness in the most

idealistic of men, how can one expect ordinary mortals who are entangled and tossed about in the fierce conflicts and rivalries of daily existence to love their enemies?

The difficulty of accepting Jesus' teaching on non-resistance has been heavily underscored in recent years by statements of world Catholic and Protestant leaders sanctioning the use of force to prevent evil and upholding thereby the traditional Jewish point of view. In his annual Christmas message for 1956 the late Pope Pius XII stated:

Present-day conditions, which have no counterpart in the past, should be clear to everyone. There is no longer room for doubt concerning the aims and methods which rely on tanks, when these latter noisily crash over borders and sow death in order to force civilian peoples into a pattern of life they explicitly detest; when—destroying, as it were, the stages of possible negotiation and mediation—the threat of using atomic weapons is employed to gain certain demands, be they justified or not.

It is clear that in present circumstances there can be verified in a nation a situation, wherein, after every effort to avoid war has been expended in vain, war—for effective self-defense and with the hope of a favorable outcome against unjust attack—could not be considered unlawful.

If, therefore, a body representative of the people and a government—both having been chosen by free elections—in a moment of extreme danger decide, by legitimate instruments of internal and external policy, on defensive precautions, and carry out the plans which they consider necessary, they do not act immorally. Therefore a Catholic citizen cannot invoke his own conscience in order to refuse to serve and fulfill those duties the law imposes. . . .

Reinhold Niebuhr, a Protestant authority respected throughout the world, criticized the note of pacifism in recent international affairs in his statement:

We speak bravely of strengthening the United Nations and acting through the United Nations. But without a united western leadership the United Nations is threat-

ened with the fate of the old League of Nations . . . Perhaps this impotence is due to the American doctrine that force is ruled out in any and all circumstances. This allows the Communists to have their way by merely threatening force.

The history of American rabbinical adventures into Christian fields at special seasons of the Christian calendar has invariably shown that no matter how laudable the aim, how persuasive the reasoning, how firm the authority cited, the end result is failure. When the late Stephen S. Wise reviewed Professor Joseph Klausner's *Jesus* from his Carnegie Hall pulpit some three decades ago and expressed the idea that the Jews ought to claim Jesus for their own, he was met with some interesting reactions: Jewish protests and Christian invitations to undergo baptism. A loyal Christian thinks of Jesus as both God and man. He will not welcome Jewish efforts to alter this conception. Nor will the loyal Jew accept Jesus and his teaching in any context other than that which is Jewish in source and interpretation. Dr. Silver, in the volume already referred to, concluded his thesis by noting that unwillingness to recognize differences is no evidence of broadmindedness, and that to ignore those differences is to assume a similarity of doctrine and outlook which does not exist in the present. It is far better, he said, to look for ways of working together on the basis of forthright recognition of dissimilarities than on a fictitious assumption of identity.

## THE LOST INDIVIDUAL

IN THESE DAYS OF overorganized American Jewish community life, too little attention is given to the individual Jew. The multiple Jewish organizations have interfered with his leisure, fragmented his loyalties and narrowed his vision in their competition for his time, support and interest. The time has

come for American Jews to take stock of the organizational structures they have built so magnificently in recent years and to ask themselves whether the reduction of people to faceless followers of causes will insure the future support of their ambitious programs.

Under the pressures of organized Jewish living in America today all Jews look alike and are subject to the same campaign techniques, the same type of meetings and the same slogans. It is hard to tell the difference between an Orthodox, Conservative or Reform Jew, a member of the American Jewish Congress or of the American Jewish Committee, the Hadassah or the Pioneer Women. In spite of the semantics that serve as badge of their identification, the organizations appeal for the Jew's support in the same manner. They have blanketed the American scene so thoroughly that few Jews have escaped their notice. Their common denominator is fund raising, and this seems to unite them in the eyes of people more than the differences that divide them. Since they use similar techniques, they follow programs that are similar in nature. Their activities often tend to overlap, as was brought out in the MacIver report a few years ago.

The individual may find himself limited in his capacity to respond to all the appeals directed toward him, and the organizations may reach a point of diminishing returns because of the resistance of a population wearied by calls for help. This may be due primarily to the fact that the effects of organizational pressures are bound to seep into the individual's private life and affect his ability to think clearly and to judge his Jewish world adequately. The meetings he is incessantly called upon to attend rob him of the time needed to cultivate his Jewish spirit by reading, reflection and contemplation. The mail that clutters his desk deepens his confusion. The limited relationships with many organizations do not help him to a full understanding of the totality of Jewish life in the modern world. Nor do they reveal sufficiently his responsibilities to his people in areas other than their particular concerns. As a consequence the Jew is apt to get only a partial and imperfect understanding of the over-all picture of Jewish life and the many problems affecting it.

The most harmful aspect of this situation is the stultification of the judgment of the individual Jew. Under the tutelage of his organization he is in danger of becoming so parochial in his outlook that he may offer thousands for defense and not one cent for his religious and cultural heritage. He may tend to believe that money is the cure for all Jewish ills. And he is likely to accept uncritically the measures outlined by others for the solution of problems that he should deal with personally.

The individual Jewish voice is heard less and less in the councils of organizations; it is the declaration of some elected or appointed head that establishes community policy. As a result, the human factor which is so important in our social life is increasingly subordinated and we find that the American Jewish community, comprising over five million Jews, is—to paraphrase Lord Bryce's famous aphorism about the Holy Roman Empire—neither American, nor Jewish, nor a community. A true community in the spirit of American democracy and in the Jewish tradition ought to bear the marks of the town hall debate, of decisions forged in the crucible of clashing viewpoints of dissenting minority opinions and stubborn avowals maintained by integrity of conscience. The average Jew is not in position to offer his opinion today; if he disagrees with organizational policies there are relatively few opportunities for him to express his objections.

American Jews have had an important part in the development of the State of Israel, yet their status is often considered by the Israelis to be nothing more than a "milch cow" instead of a deeply involved partner in a great enterprise. It is no defense of the Zionist organization to observe that neither the Israelis nor the officials of the American Jewish organizations involved in fund raising have troubled to draw the individual Jew closer to the breath-taking picture of the great immigration waves toward Israel and of Israel's transformation from a desert into a highly developed industrial and agricultural area in the Mediterranean world. The pitifully few film shorts and pamphlets issued year after year as standard campaign fare are no substitutes for the kind of communication that establishes firm relationships. Why could not some of the campaign expenditures go into an excitingly written book from which the indi-

vidual Jew could learn the philosophy that has made the United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Bond undertakings noble Jewish enterprises? Such a book could heighten the awareness of the individual Jew's part in that undertaking and enable him to feel pride in his share in renewing life and rebuilding a land. Why cannot his personal help to Israel be placed in its true setting, in keeping with the great tradition of his fathers in the redemption of the captives among his people?

There is need for a missionary effort of subtler and deeper proportions than the fund-raising speeches for which selected individuals are brought to communal gatherings. Relatively few people know the Israelis and their motivations in rebuilding a land after a lapse of two thousand years. A short visit to Israel will not yield much more than surface impressions. The many students from Israel who attend American universities and colleges could profitably be utilized to help American Jews toward a greater understanding of the relationships between the two largest communities of Jews in the free world today. There is more than fund raising that holds the American and Israeli Jewish communities together. It is their mutual interest in fostering individual ties that can bring the necessary spiritual bonds to ensure the continuity of the joint effort at maintaining Jewish dignity in the world. If Israelis think of American individual Jews as rich relatives only, they sadly misjudge the character of a people and weaken the generosity of the spirit that lies behind the material contributions to their cause. If American Jews think of Israelis only as charity patients in need of help they remain completely unaware of the resolution, the courage and the character that has made Israeli life a source of inspiration and admiration everywhere.

If we continue to neglect the individual Jew in our preoccupation with budgets, quotas and goals set by our national organizations, we may find that we have impaired the heart that makes fund raising possible. The mechanics of the campaigns may be steadily improved upon, but the purpose will appear ever more distant to the individual contributor. He will have less and less incentive to sacrifice for the causes that appeal for his help. If he continues to participate in communal efforts it may well be because of pressures and not be-

cause of personal interest. Our organizations may discover, if they have not already done so, that there are limits to the adding machine, the Comptometer, the typewriter, the card index and the telephone.

Our American Jewish community has been operating on the assumption that prosperity is the answer to all Jewish needs both here and abroad. Such a concept distorts Jewish history and tradition. It is the cultured, informed and sensitive Jew who will eventually be able to solve the problems that confront his people. The acquisition of these qualities cannot be gained en masse; they can be cultivated only in individual fashion. To overlook the individual human equation in our steadily growing organizational patterns is to weaken our Jewish structure and to permit it to become a victim of the curse of bigness.

Jewish life in this country was once marked by *landsmanschaften*, groups of people who had migrated here from the same town or village in Europe. They knew each other, and through personal relationships the groups were able to enhance the dignity of the individuals. Many of these associations have passed from the scene and have been absorbed into larger units. With their disappearance much more has been lost than their names and locations. A way of Jewish life has vanished. It was something that gave the individual self-respect in the knowledge that he was an important entity among his people. As with the *landsmanschaften* groups so with the religious institutions of yesterday. They, too, were composed of identifiable individuals who had knowledge of one another. Today the synagogues are, in the main, large bodies containing hundreds or thousands of members. Some rabbis, despairing of even knowing, let alone serving, so many, have expressed the opinion that congregations ought to be limited to no more than four hundred families.

The synagogues of all wings of Judaism have been organized into national associations which are involved in campaigns to support their activities. Joining a synagogue today is not a simple matter. The act is followed by appeals to join the auxiliary organizations—the sisterhood, the men's club, the youth group, the young married people, etc. And these auxiliaries are also organized into national associations. The National

Brotherhoods of the liberal synagogues have established such a variety of activities for their affiliates that it is hard to imagine where the individual could possibly find the time to take advantage of their program and still have the opportunity to worship regularly. Such lavish fare is offered by many organizations on the American scene today.

In former times charity was a personally handled matter. Today the philanthropic federations have taken over most of the functions that once were in the hands of individual Jews. Formerly the individual Jew performed religious duties and participated actively in religious functions. Today the rabbis take over many of the duties abandoned by the laity. The effort to build the land of Israel began as an individual responsibility and undertaking. People saved small coins, which they deposited in the blue and white boxes of the Jewish National Fund. These were found in thousands of Jewish homes. Today it is an organizational matter. The needs of the time have made such individual efforts difficult, if not impossible. The same needs have also affected many undertakings that could formerly be handled satisfactorily through individual effort.

No one with a sense of realism could possibly wish to turn the clock back. Organizations are here to stay. The corporate effort is the only way by which our pressing social problems can be met. But it ought to be borne in mind by those who glory in our organizations that the ants constitute the most perfect pattern of organized life known on earth. Human beings do not exist for the same purposes as the ants, in spite of King Solomon's admonition. Jewish organizations endure for the sake of advancing individual Jewish dignity in accordance with the teachings of a great faith. It is time that we considered what is happening to the individual in Jewish life and return to him his proper responsibilities. Only thus can we help humanize our organizations and make them more effective in meeting the many problems that face us.

## HOLINESS À LA HOLLYWOOD

THERE ARE AUTHENTIC details in the De Mille spectacle *The Ten Commandments*, but Jewish history, Jewish tradition and the Jewish way of life are not among them. This, despite the fact that the script-writers leaned on Josephus, Philo, the rabbi of the Jewish Community Library of Los Angeles, and others for information concerning the background of this great story. There is little question about the authentic reproduction of the beautiful Egyptian court attire after the excavated splendors yielded by the pyramids of the ancient Pharaohs, nor the scenes along the Nile (the picture was filmed in Egypt), nor of the majestic loneliness of the Sinai peninsula and of the Jebel Musa, the purported Mount Sinai of the Ten Commandments. But when Hollywood turns to the Bible it ought at least to live up to the dignity of the Bible and not seek to superimpose upon Scripture its own weird variety of history, theology and sex in the grand pagan manner.

It is jarring to the spirit of reverence to see Moses the man of God pawed over by the Egyptian queen Nefertiti when he is absorbed in his godly mission in Egypt to free the Hebrew slaves of Goshen. A romance between these two, begun on the screen when Moses is a prince in Egypt, is continued after the lawgiver has seen the vision of the burning bush and has become dedicated to God's will. The queen of Egypt manages to get into the historic act of deliverance and to vie with Moses at times. Thus, when Pharaoh does not yield to the pressure of the first of the plagues she summons Moses to her boudoir and tells him that it was not his unknown God that had saved him and his people from the wrath of Pharaoh, but her personal intervention with her husband. She hastens to the slave quarters to warn the wife of Moses to get her child out of the country and even provides transportation for this in order to

save him from Pharaoh's edict to kill Israel's first-born a second time. But when she pleads with Moses that he, in turn, repay the favor and plead with his unknown God to spare her first-born, Moses is helpless to intercede.

The interchange of visits between the royal palace of Pharaoh and the slave huts of the despised Hebrews in Goshen is startling. So is the Exodus that depicts a middle-aged Egyptian princess—who originally drew Moses from the Nile—leaving with the freed Hebrew slaves and being borne on a litter while they trudge in the desert sands. Among those who go into the desert toward freedom is the character Dathan, a renegade Hebrew, erstwhile governor of Goshen under Pharaoh, who does not know where he is going. So much for history.

There are a few theological details in the De Mille version which appear strange in the light of the Bible story of the Ten Commandments. When Moses returns from the mountain where God had spoken to him through the burning bush he tells Joshua: "And the word was God." This idea may be implicit in Philo and in Josephus. It is explicit in the opening sentence of the Gospel of John. The deep cavernous voice of God speaks in the "thee and thou" language of the King James version of the Bible while Moses carries on his part of the dialogue at the burning bush in the vernacular of modern times. The depiction of God as a large fireworks pinwheel is a primitive representation of divinity, and the thunderbolts hurled to carve out the Ten Commandments are reminiscent of Marc Connelly's play *The Green Pastures*.

The script-writers must surely have been aware of the true character of the unknown Jewish God and the voice at Sinai which spoke to the unborn generations as well as to those standing there and which so deeply stirred the imagination of the Jews that they transmuted their conception into prophecy that has not been matched in the annals of time. The crossing of the Red Sea is an interesting illustration of the point. The film version shows it in stark physical detail, a visual impression, the final word of the Jewish deity on the subject. But Jewish imagination, recorded in Hebrew folklore, interpreted the theme in a better manner. The ancient sages say that when

the angels undertook to rejoice at their salvation from the hands of Pharaoh, when they sang at the Red Sea, God rebuked them, saying: "What! my children [the Egyptians] are drowning and you rejoice?"

As for the sex contribution of Hollywood to this picture advertised as a great religious theme, it is everywhere—in the court of Pharaoh, in the slave pits of Goshen, in the tents of Jethro, in the revels about the golden calf and in the desert wanderings.

The advance notices of this spectacle raised high hopes and anticipations; unfortunately the film is something less. A writer in *The Christian Century* had this to say of it:

De Mille has made what purports to be the story of Moses drawn from Scripture. The liberties taken with the biblical narrative would be permissible if they contributed to an understanding of what the biblical narrative intends. They do not. However, it is not the changes in the storyline which constitute the film's most serious fault. A vital biblical faith does not quibble over literalistic minutiae. But it must object when the primary drive and thrust of a picture, its conception, idiom and style are in the direction exactly opposite from that of the Bible. Its net result is to sow confusion rather than faith. The De Mille God is imprisoned in the De Mille style, which means in the irrelevant minutiae of Egyptian culture and the costume director. He bears no resemblance to the Old Testament Lord of history. . . .

On the eve of the première of this picture in New York Mr. De Mille addressed a luncheon meeting attended by members of the clergy, the cast and motion-picture executives to explain his purpose in making the film. He expressed the belief that the Ten Commandments on the screen would do for our harassed generation what no other agency could do in bringing about a better social order. With all due respect to the gods of the Hollywood pantheon, it is submitted that no single motion picture can cure our social ills. Nor will it take the place of a cultivated philosophy of life calculated to discipline individuals and nations alike toward better conduct in their daily affairs.

There is too much indifference to life's higher values, too much materialism and selfishness to permit us the cozy assumption that all can be solved by audio-visual aids.

There is a fine phrase in Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous essay *Art*. Emerson speaks of a man who told him: "When I have been reading Homer all men look like giants." It will hardly be possible to say the same thing after witnessing De Mille's nearly four-hour interpretation of a timeless story. It will take more than a typical movie to teach a generation devoid of religious knowledge and faith to walk uprightly before God. If film directors wish to portray holiness they ought first to abandon the Hollywood brand of religion which permeates this ambitious undertaking from beginning to end.

## THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST CREDO

ALMOST A QUARTER of a century has passed since Mordecai Kaplan's *Judaism as a Civilization* was first published. It was destined to be a controversial book. It met with a curious mixture of puzzlement and hostility—puzzlement because it was not easy to grasp the depth of Dr. Kaplan's thinking, hostility because of the challenge the book presented. *The Christian Century*, a publication representative of a large segment of Protestant thinking in America, saw fit to warn Jews that pursuit of cultural pluralism as suggested in Kaplan's book might lead to increased anti-Semitism in this country. It was particularly displeased by the advocacy of a Jewish civilization in America—an imperium in imperio, as it were.

In Jewish circles the volume was greeted with mixed reactions. Only a minority accepted Dr. Kaplan's conclusions as valid. Many criticized his thesis as a secular one and regarded the Reconstructionist movement which he founded as an un-

satisfactory palliative of modern Jewish ills. Some Orthodox extremists among his opponents produced a spectacle rare in our times: They excommunicated the author and publicly burned the Reconstructionist prayer book. But thoughtful students of Jewish life knew that Dr. Kaplan could not be dismissed lightly as an influence on the American Jewish scene. He is undoubtedly the keenest and most thorough analyst of contemporary Jewish problems that we possess. His Reconstructionist movement has flowed into all areas of Jewish endeavor and has vitalized and given new meaning to Jewish values dormant or frozen.

Now Dr. Kaplan presents a new and enlarged edition of his work. It is based substantially on the early edition that has been out of print for many years, and it takes into account changes in Reform Jewish thinking, the altered pattern of Zionism, the inroads of materialism in current Jewish life, the challenges arising from the rebirth of the State of Israel, and the advancement of scientific thinking. But the main ideas that characterized the earlier work are restated here. Judaism is a religious civilization, not just a theology. It is a *tout ensemble* of all Jewish values, social, religious and esthetic. It is not limited to the synagogue, but finds its expression in the total Jewish community working in co-operation with the greater community in pursuance of the democratic way of life. Its program embraces every expression of Jewish endeavor—art, music, Hebrew literature, the upbuilding of Zion, the sharing of civic responsibilities in our democracy, the assimilation of the best in contemporary civilization to Jewish needs, etc. The Reconstructionist movement is indigenous to America because only the American environment offers Jews the unique opportunity of sharing in two civilizations—the American and the Jewish.

Such books as Dr. Kaplan has written between 1935 and this latest edition of *Judaism as a Civilization* would appear to be commentaries on the central theses outlined in this work, which is definitive of the movement.

It is one thing to analyze contemporary Jewish problems—Dr. Kaplan has no peer in the use of the scalpel to discover the heart of our difficulties. It is quite another thing to formulate

acceptable religious principles that will meet the challenges to full Jewish living in our age. Dr. Kaplan rejects supernaturalism and thus divorces his viewpoint from that of other sections of Jewish religious life. He regards ceremonies as folkways. He denies the concept of the chosen people. He views God as the highest human ideal. His practical program, outlined in the concluding chapter, calls for the organization of the *kehilla* (the community) rather than the synagogue as the basic unit in American Jewish life. This community should be inclusive, run democratically, and it should provide for Jewish education, Jewish philanthropy, support of Israel and religious institutions within it.

None will dispute Dr. Kaplan's remarkable capacity to detect the flaws in the Jewish social structure in America and his devotion to the task of correcting them. In his effort he has at his command great learning, a magnetic personality and powerful moral impulses. His ideas have been welcomed in many areas of contemporary Jewish life, and his writings have influenced rabbis in all camps. But it is doubtful that the hope he expresses in his foreword, that the reappearance of this volume "will help vindicate the Reconstructionist movement against those who charge that it is more secular than religious," will be realized.

Dr. Kaplan's prescriptions for Jewish living are compounded from the very socio-psychological ingredients that tend to crowd out the religious patterns which he values so highly, and to make of Judaism a stream too wide to cross without foundering. This is not to say that Judaism can overlook his warnings without risking the possibility of being bypassed by the swiftly moving contemporary world. It is true, as he says, that Judaism has been emptied of much of its significant content, as expressed in so many Jewish institutions today. But a large community is hardly likely to be more effective in touching the life of the Jewish individual than a smaller unit like the synagogue. Nor will the inclusion in that community of individuals who differ greatly in outlook and belief be conducive to effective labors in achieving the desirable ends.

In the last analysis it is the Jewish individual who has sought salvation. It is the individual who gave of himself in order to

make the Jewish community possible. Any religious approach that leans on the community instead of the cultivated individual for support is liable to function through a conformity that stifles and deadens full creative endeavor. It might be better for American Jews to improve the religious aspect of their total life than to try to meet frontally the whole series of difficulties and subsume them under a general community problem, as Dr. Kaplan suggests. If religion is the chief cornerstone of Judaism as a civilization it deserves preference above all others in the reconstruction of the Jewish society.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with Dr. Kaplan's point of view, one cannot but be stimulated and instructed by reading his volume. It stands as one of the truly important Jewish books written in our generation.

## PAINLESS CAUSES

A CAUSE, LIKE A man, is known by its character. That cause which demands commitment and is served in travail is likely to be sturdier and more meaningful than the painless cause which inflicts no hardship on its followers. There are many painless causes in America which are anemic because they are all things to all men; Jewish life contains its share of them. While the organizations established to further particular causes would hardly admit to their inadequacy, there is ample evidence of the fact that they are not strong or influential. The inadequacies may be found in the means that are used to advance their ends. The hand may be the hand of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob. And sometimes, *mirabile dictu*, the voice is also the voice of Esau. An astonishing example of this appeared one day in a Jewish journal devoted to the advancement of Zionism. It carried this curious announcement of purpose under the heading "No Questions":

During the first World War, at a large mass meeting, a famous Zionist leader promised the leaders of the anti-Zionists that if they joined the cause they would be asked no questions.

"You know what an advertisement about lost and found says," the speaker exclaimed; "no questions!" We ask you to return to the Jewish masses their sense of Jewish dignity. We promise no questions.

Our organization takes the same attitude. Whoever, as an American Jew, wishes to help Israel, whether he belonged to the Zionist movement or not, is welcome. No questions asked as to whether he is for or against this or that leader in Israel, whether he thinks the *Histadrut* is a good thing or a bad thing. We ask no questions about his political sympathies. Our group takes no stand on domestic Israeli issues. The pages of our journal are open to all shades of opinion about Israel's policies. No questions asked!

There is one difference between this expression of purpose that is common to so much of our organized life today and the claims advanced in other publications. It is candid in its espousal of a painless cause. It also illustrates the naïvete with which the editor approaches the problem of social dignity. This is not a prefabricated instinct that can be lost and found like some inanimate object. It is a painfully cultivated spirit. Where no questions are asked there is no democracy or association worth the name. It is in the conflict and the struggle that ideas take on coloration and character. For ideas, like men, can be known by their enemies, as well as by their friends. They cannot flourish in the desert soil of neutrality. It is difficult to imagine a strong and vital organization that would not question prospective adherents concerning the espousal of its principles. The American government serves as a ready example. He who wishes American citizenship must categorically answer specific questions before receiving his papers. There is no escaping the questions. One of them concerns the bearing of arms in defense of the country in time of war. Some few, like Dr. Douglas Clyde Macintosh, a noted professor of church history, who was a Canadian by birth, and who sought American citizenship, re-

fused to bear arms under any circumstances because of his support of the pacifist doctrine of the New Testament. He was denied American citizenship. If such a test were applied to individuals seeking membership in Jewish organizations the numbers might be smaller but the loyalties would be deeper. Membership in most Jewish groups may be had today on the mere payment of dues; no questions are asked. The causes make no great demands on their supporters and, in turn, receive halfhearted devotion as reward. Many Jewish organizations find it necessary to appoint "retention" committees to effect the return of great numbers of sheep that regularly stray from the fold.

The synagogue has lately become a symbol of a painless cause. Membership is predicated on the meeting of financial requirements. No questions are asked regarding fundamental beliefs and loyalties and the capacity to labor in the vineyard of the Lord. Payment of dues and assessment is all that is necessary. The social advantages oftentimes appear more attractive to the prospective member than the religious ones. Such an approach to religion is considerably at variance with the manner expected in earlier days. The Ethics of the Fathers of the Talmud gives us an evaluation of membership in Jewish religious life that has been standard for centuries: "This is the way that is becoming for the study of the Torah; a morsel of bread with salt thou must eat, and water by the measure thou must drink; thou must sleep upon the ground, and live a life of trouble the while thou toilest in the Torah. If thou doest this, happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee." In most instances association with the Torah is neither a discipline nor a challenge to the moral fiber of the individual Jew. Americans nowadays are generally identified with religion, and Jews join synagogues as Christians join churches. Dr. Morris Adler commented on this phenomenon in the quarterly *Jewish Heritage* and illustrated the painless cause of religion evidenced in synagogue affiliation. He said:

In America's pluralistic civilization one is expected to be identified with one of the three faiths. An American is normally a Protestant, a Catholic or a Jew. The Jew's

affiliation with his group is in conformity with the prevailing pattern today . . . To call this process a "revival" is to exaggerate its Jewish significance. The fact is that the internal life of the Jewish community is proceeding on a "business as usual" basis. American Jewry's top leadership indicates no deepened concern with cultural content or spiritual purposes . . . The agenda of highly publicized conventions and "extraordinary" conferences of large national Jewish organizations and movements are limited to public relations, fund raisings, occasional political questions and means of meeting increased budgets.

There is a marked absence of desire to question the course which many of our organizations follow. Consequently there is considerable uniformity in their operating techniques designed to serve the quantitative values of life rather than the qualitative ones. Success is gauged by numbers and opulence. Under such conditions it is difficult to establish any great difference between the organizations. They all equally lack the spiritual drive that makes a cause interesting as it makes it great. Character cannot be developed through casual associations with others. One of the great problems of our time is to eradicate man-made evils from the surface of the earth. People will not concern themselves overly much with this problem so long as they are encouraged to believe that money is the root of all good and is rather to be chosen than a good name. It is to the following of painless causes that much of our present-day Jewish stagnation can be traced. Where no questions are asked it is possible for anonymity to prevail. The individual is not burdened with such necessary corollaries of a cause as purpose, feeling and spirit.

*Atto chonain l'adam daath u'melamed l'enosh binah* ("Thou farest man with knowledge and teachest mortals understanding") runs the time-honored Hebrew daily prayer. This knowledge and understanding is based on reason. It is not a set of statistics. Reason emerges from the struggle of the mind challenged incessantly to choose a course of action. When an individual embraces a cause he ought to weigh his act and to decide to give to it of his heart and his mind as well as his purse. It is in this manner that he becomes a social being fit

to labor for the advancement of life in company with others. It is only as he shares completely in the aims and purposes of an organization that he benefits from it. An association that is devoid of reason is not likely to prove beneficial to the individual or the group.

What manner of Jewish personality may we expect that is compounded of neutrality, conformity and non-responsibility—that is, a faceless, colorless individual unidentified in the mass, of whom no questions are asked, of whom no advice is sought and no contribution valued beyond that of money? And what kind of organization is it that must rely on disinterested members who have joined it by chance and who leave it at the slightest pretext? In such an organization, dissent is liable to be considered treason, individuality an oddity and democracy a romantic soothing syrup to keep the members complacent. Jewish life is established on different foundations: on individual responsibility, sharing burdens equally, rebellion against autocracy, asking questions, on the realization that Jewish undertakings may be and often are painful causes as all great and enduring causes must be, and that the support of them may bring discomfort and discontentment, but that in spite of the handicaps accruing to the membership it is infinitely worth the effort and the cost.

## THE HIGH COST OF PREJUDICE

JOHN RICE WAS AN American soldier who died on the battlefield in Korea. He was awarded the Bronze Star, Infantry Badge with Star, and the Purple Heart posthumously. His widow asked the Army to ship her husband's body home. She arranged for his burial in Memorial Park Cemetery at Sioux City, Iowa, across the border from their home in Winnebago Reservation, Nebraska. She stood by the open grave in the

cemetery together with some Winnebagos from the Reservation and an Army officer sent from Omaha to blow taps. Just as the body was about to be lowered into the grave the cemetery director noticed the Winnebagos. He asked Mrs. Rice, who is not an Indian, to explain. Then he told her that her husband could not be buried in the cemetery because it was "restricted" to members of the Caucasian race.

Harry Clark was a Negro veteran of World War II. He and his family found themselves cramped in their Chicago quarters and sought to move to a Midwest suburb known as Cicero, Illinois. His plan to exercise his ordinary American privilege resulted in serious rioting in Cicero. The apartment building to which he was prepared to move was wrecked. The white families in the building were forced to flee for their lives. Mr. Clark's furniture was destroyed along with the furniture and fixtures of other tenants in the apartment building.

Louis Wechsler was a Jew and a war veteran who had bought a home in a large housing development in Pennsylvania known as Levittown. One day a Negro, William Meyers, purchased a home next door to the Wechslers. The white residents immediately made life uncomfortable for the Meyers family. Because Mr. Wechsler and his wife showed kindness to the Negroes next door, they too were attacked and annoyed incessantly.

Sing Shing was a former Chinese Nationalist intelligence officer who had fought on the Allied side in World War II. His wife was American-born. He moved into a white district in San Francisco and when he learned that some of his neighbors did not want him in the community he called for a vote of all the neighbors as to whether he should stay or leave. The neighbors voted against his living among them, and he left the community.

The dead veteran fared better than his living colleagues at the hands of his fellow Americans. He found a home in Arlington National Cemetery.

The four incidents involving an Indian, a Negro, a Jew and a Chinese in the United States teach us more than a hundred sermons of the dreadful cost of prejudice in the modern world, and the primary need of cultivating better the most precious

asset we possess—the human beings with whom we share our earth.

There is a vacuum in America in the area of human relations. Our religious institutions have not come to grips with prejudice. Our educational centers are not equipped to give our children a sense of the total community in which they live that they might better advance the welfare of the commonwealth. Americans are often enough aware of the differences that keep them apart. They have not yet become familiar with the similarities that tie them together. The organizations devoted to the difficult task of promoting brotherhood through education and co-operation are few in number. One of the oldest and perhaps best known is the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith which has ably and courageously fought the inroads of prejudice and bigotry on the American scene for almost half a century, and which has been a leader in many a struggle on behalf of the underdog to secure elementary rights. Another is the National Conference of Christians and Jews which has undertaken many pilot projects and experiments in the field of social behavior to help discover the causes of prejudice. A notable example of its work is the New Haven Neighborhood Project. Here a group of individuals who were representative of all races and creeds demonstrated the practice of harmonious living through a common nursery school, a parent-education program, a neighborhood council, a workshop offering radio plays, skits, movies, library and teaching aids, study groups on human relations, choral groups, and even a neighborhood cooking school. Through summer play-schools taking in all the children of the neighborhood, there was created the opportunity of developing racial and religious harmony before the encrusted prejudices could establish the patterns of human conduct so detrimental to good citizenship today. This experiment definitely proved that Negroes and whites, Jews and Christians, newcomers and old settlers, strangers and homeborn could share their community and love it in common.

Many Americans do not realize the price that a community pays for inadequate human relations. Social tensions can be equated economically as well as spiritually. Elmo Roper, well-known analyst of public opinion, estimates that racial and reli-

gious discrimination in American industry alone costs the nation thirty billion dollars annually. He bases his estimates on such factors as purchasing power denied minority groups by low wages and the cost of crime, delinquency and social maladjustment that can be traced directly to prejudice and discrimination. Evidence is available to show that prejudice has an adverse effect upon the productivity of workers because the animosities created by discriminatory practices tend to divert the worker's attention from his own job to watching and criticizing the other man's failures.

Some years ago the National Urban League released some interesting figures to illustrate the cost of prejudice in New York City. The price paid is seen in heavier taxes, loss of business and waste of effort and ability. Every city has some slum areas which make up as much as twenty per cent of the city's total area. The quickest and easiest way to remove slums is to make it possible for people who live in them to move out. When this is not only economically but racially impossible, then the greater community begins to make its costly payment: Forty-five per cent of the city's estimated police cost is allocated to the slum sections, and thirty-five per cent of the fire cost is traced to such areas. Fifty-five per cent of the delinquency cost of a community is also directly connected with the life of the underprivileged sections of the city. This is a public expenditure borne by people living in better areas of our urban centers.

Another surprising element in the economic penalties that arise from prejudice is the high slum rents. When people are hemmed in by discrimination and segregated in special parts of the city the rents rise like water behind a dam. This is due primarily to the law of supply and demand. When poor families must pay high rents they inevitably doom themselves to perpetual poverty. High rents mean that little is left for clothing, drugs, household goods, furniture, appliances, etc. They also mean lack of adequate sanitation and the difficulty of maintaining dignity in the daily life of the affected people. For its slum conditions the City of New York pays annually an additional cost of about fifty million dollars in support of added

fire and police protection as well as social service—a very high indirect tribute to prejudice.

In the political field the cost is infinitely greater. Prejudice does not stop at the national boundaries. International relations suffer because of spiritual blindness. Communists delight in pointing out to the colored populations of the world the results of prejudice against Negroes in the United States. The Cicero rioting against a single Negro family had its repercussions in faraway Morocco and in India. Exchange students from abroad quickly learn of our warped judgments through personal humiliations or through observing discriminatory practices in our midst. And, often as not, they return to their homes abroad with strong reservations about the character of American democracy. Dr. Channing Tobias, one of the outstanding Negro leaders in the United States, once said that the solution to the problems of Asia may be found in New York's Harlem.

The problem of prejudice is so deep-rooted that it must be met in the elementary areas of community life rather than in the advanced areas if there is to be any prospect of change in human behavior. Public meetings devoted to discussion of the problem have on the whole proved to be of doubtful value. The participants in such meetings are usually committed to the furtherance of good will. More effective programs like the New Haven Project of the National Conference of Christians and Jews can be helpful in teaching the commonness of the human enterprise. It is only when people live and work side by side in daily endeavors that they readily learn that race, religion and nationality constitute no obstacles to harmonious associations. Certain basic lessons are easily discernible among those who study the problems arising out of prejudice. One is that the disabilities of any single group in the body politic can be matched among other groups. The discomforts and hurts of the Jewish people, for example, are not unique. They can also be discovered among Catholics and Protestants. Another lesson that can be learned from observation is that people who are prejudiced against one group are liable to be prejudiced against many groups. The isolation resulting from ignorance or fear or both is fairly complete. Social and religious prejudices cannot be separated from the daily-life habits

of individuals; they result from the kind of upbringing people have had. Only as a community improves its outlook and its standards can these ills be eliminated. The cure for intolerance cannot be imposed from without; it must be developed from within.

The prevalence of intolerance in modern life points to the fact that democratic government has not yet achieved its full maturity. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were spent in winning freedom for majorities. The twentieth century may well have to be spent in extending that freedom to minorities.

When the Declaration of Rights was being discussed in the French Assembly in 1789 and again when, in 1793, the Jacobin Constitution was being elaborated, it was proposed that there be a declaration not only of the rights of man, but also of his obligations. The proposal was rejected. This was over one hundred and fifty years ago. The time has long passed when a declaration of the duties of man to man and nation to nation should have become a living part of the political and social structure of democracy. If a man has a right, he has a duty to correspond to that right. What is a right? A finished article manufactured from the raw material known as obligation. As love is the distilled essence of thoughtfulness, devotion, sacrifice and labor, so is a democratic right the product of appreciation, generosity of spirit, co-operation and personal contribution to the public welfare. There can be no basic lasting rights without corresponding obligations. We cannot count on our neighbors to practice democracy while we enjoy its benefits. If a man has the right to an education, he has the duty to grant the same right to others. If he has the right to build his home where he pleases, he has the duty to acknowledge another's right to do the same. If he has the right to the protection of the law, he has the corresponding duty to respect the law and to extend its benefits to all, impartially. If he has the right to live free of prejudice he has the duty of extending that right to others. If he has the right of protection against discrimination he must accept the duty of seeing to it that others are the beneficiaries of the same right.

A better world order will not come about by wishful thinking and pious declarations. It will not be automatically guar-

anted by the existence of laws on statute books. It will become living reality only if people become conscious of their responsibilities, only if they passionately and sincerely apply their labor and their intelligence to bring it about. It will be an accomplished fact in our social order when each person in society feels the sense of interdependence of human beings everywhere.







