MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series A: Writings and Addresses. 1947-1991

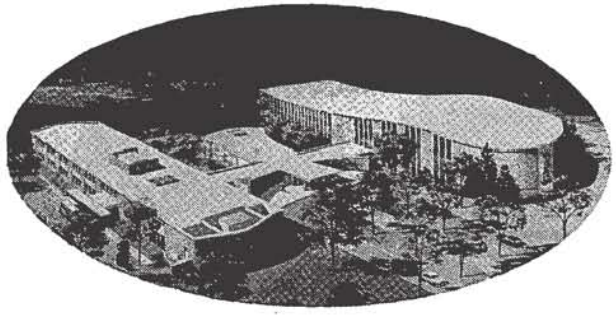
Box 3, Folder 10, "Rabbinic Leadership in an Age of Moral Crisis", 28 November 1976.

3101 Clifton Ave, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220
(513) 221-1875 phone, (513) 221-7812 fax
americanjewisharchives.org

761128

ADDRESSES
at the Installation of
MAURICE S. CORSON
as
RABBI OF CHIZUK AMUNO CONGREGATION
7 Kislev 5737
November 28, 1976

Warmest regards
Maurice Corson



ADDRESSES
at the Installation of
MAURICE S. CORSON
as
RABBI OF CHIZUK AMUNO CONGREGATION
7 Kislev 5737
November 28, 1976

CHIZUK AMUNO CONGREGATION
8100 STEVENSON ROAD
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21208

HENRY O. SHOR
PRESIDENT

Dear Member:

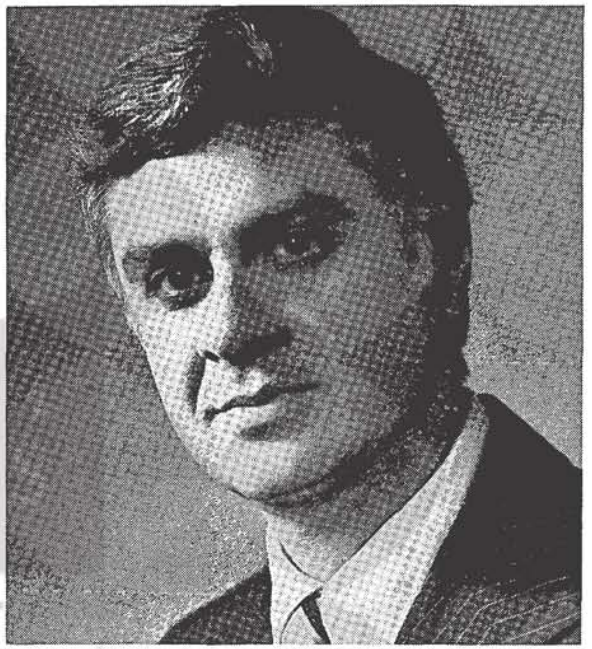
November 28, 1976 marked another milestone in the history of the Chizuk Amuno Congregation - the installation of the fifth Rabbi in our 106 year proud history. Rabbi Maurice S. Corson was installed as Rabbi in a formal sanctuary service as the culmination of an entire weekend of commemoration.

To mark this historic event, we have reproduced the addresses of Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, Rabbi Sidney Greenberg and Rabbi Maurice S. Corson. It is being mailed to the congregation as the gift of several benefactors who have requested to remain anonymous.

We are proud to send this memento to you and extend to those who made it possible our deep appreciation.

Sincerely yours,

HENRY O. SHOR
President

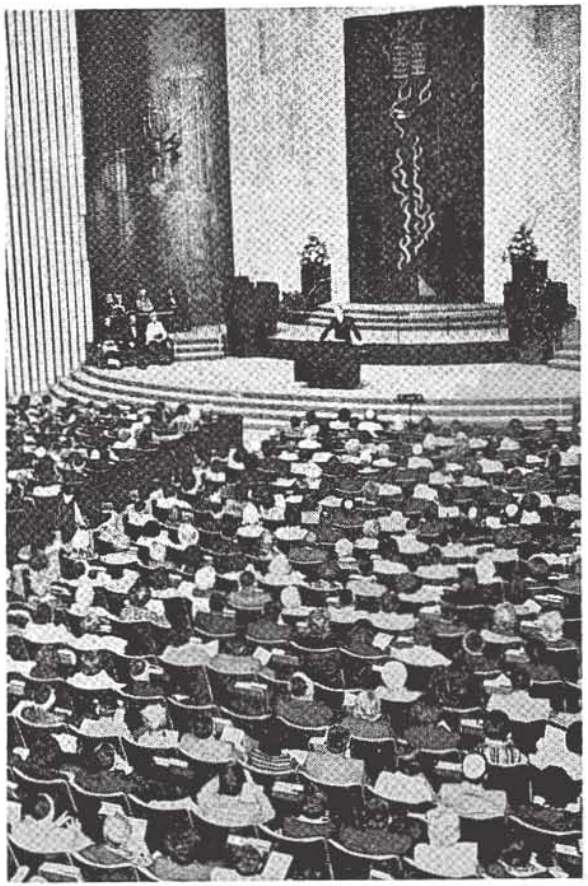


RABBI MAURICE S. CORSON

Rabbi Corson is a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He graduated from the University of Cincinnati, where he majored in Philosophy and received his Bachelor of Arts degree. Following a year of study at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, he entered the Jewish Theological Seminary of America from which he was ordained in 1960, receiving a Master of Hebrew Letters degree. Rabbi Corson has served as Rabbi of Seattle's Herzl Conservative Congregation, where he also was Visiting Professor of Religion at Seattle Pacific College and as Rabbi of Beth Judah Congregation in Ventnor, New Jersey. Prior to his election as Senior Rabbi of Chizuk Amuno Congregation in June 1976 at the 106th Annual Meeting of the Congregation, he was Director of Interreligious and International Programming of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia and the Rabbi of Temple Israel of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania.

Rabbi Corson is the fifth Rabbi in the history of Chizuk Amuno. He succeeds Rabbi Emeritus Israel M. Goldman who has served the Congregation for the past 28 years.

761128



Dr. Simon Greenberg, Vice Chancellor, Jewish Theological Seminary, extending Seminary greetings at Installation Service.

Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum

Rabbi Maurice S. Corson

Albert D. Chernin, Executive Vice Chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, extending congratulations.

Rabbis Tannenbaum, Corson and Greenberg following Rabbi Tannenbaum's address to Brotherhood Forum on Sunday morning, November 28, 1976 preceding formal installation in main Sanctuary.

RABBINIC LEADERSHIP IN AN AGE OF MORAL CRISIS

Address by

RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM
Director, Department of Inter-religious Affairs
American Jewish Committee

Sunday Morning Brotherhood
Breakfast Forum
Sunday, November 28, 1976

What a genuine, personal privilege — and beyond that — a deep personal pleasure to be with you this morning to take part in this magnificent and richly deserved tribute to a long-time friend and colleague: Rabbi Maurice Corson!

It is always good to come home, to touch base. I have had occasion during the course of the recent Presidential campaign to be in rather intimate connection with Governor Jimmy Carter — now President Elect — and the members of his staff, mainly about Jewish concerns. It occurred to me as we were talking that Baltimore, Maryland, is to me what Plains, Georgia, is to Carter. This is really home for me — *my* roots. In the audience I see members of my family and many people with whom I grew up. There is a sense of confirmation in my coming home to this community and this great congregation. The other day, I heard an account of a man who had gone through an emotional crisis and someone commented: "Well, he has a 'nonentity' crisis!" Roots in a family and in a community (which is an extended family) strengthen one's feeling of being at home and oriented anywhere in the world.

Why do institutions like Chizuk Amuno require social rituals? Why do people need such moments in the life of a community? More important: what is the relevance of this occasion to what is happening in the life of our people and in general society today? Does it have meaning, or is it simply a reason to get together for another breakfast?

I would like to suggest a meaning which should not be taken for granted. This meaning goes beyond the simple conventions of introducing Rabbi and congregation. It is found in the spiritual, moral and human crises of the past two or three years.

On November second — Election Day — an entire nation went on record regarding what it really cared about, what really concerned it. The first thing Americans have been concerned about is the issue of the economy — concern about recession, inflation, unemployment. But do you

know the second thing Americans care about most, once they have taken care of their pocketbook concerns? Public morality! Every public opinion poll demonstrated that. Americans had reached the point of disgust over the growth of immorality on almost every level of American society. Watergate — the President of the United States implicated in deceit and lying, manipulation of the media, withholding information; and Vietnam — the same kind of manipulation of American consciousness — telling Americans they were not going to bomb and then bombing Cambodia the very same day! Corporate bribery — the Lockheed scandal — buying governments! The Japanese government may fall because corporate business in America set out to buy the highest officials in government to sell their products. The Prince of the Netherlands helps sell Lockheed airplanes in return for $1 million for his personal princely pocket! Congressmen pandering to prostitutes and junketing to Moscow. And now, South Korea! There is not a level of American life which has not become rampant with corruption, immorality and — worst of all — conformity to the public immorality. In this society, my friends, no one in a position of public office escapes this deep, pervasive sense of distrust. The decline in confidence is epidemic.

Ironically, the United States is still the greatest free nation in the world. It has provided the greatest material wealth in human history and still is the preserver of the greatest freedoms and liberties in the world. Yet, precisely because this democracy carries so much of the weight of the world's liberties on its shoulders, the threat of immorality must be faced with candor and honesty and not swept under the rug. You can have the best Constitution, the most explicit Bill of Rights, but unless there is a moral will on the part of the people — a basic commitment to fundamental decencies and morality — this society will not endure any more than Rome.

When the Public Agenda Foundation recently undertook one of its latest polls on the attitude of the American people toward their government officials, they discovered that trust in American public leaders declined from 76% in 1964 to 33% in 1976. A poll by Yankelovitch declared that 83% of the voters in the United States no longer trust their leaders.

My friends, that is why this election campaign in the United States was so strange. How do you think a man virtually unknown twenty-two months ago — a peanut farmer from Plains, Georgia — had such a meteoric rise and became the President of the greatest nation in the world? What was the basis of his appeal? "Trust me! I will tell you no lies." President Ford, toward the middle of the campaign, seeing how Americans were responding, began to say, "I will give you peace, prosperity and trust." He went beyond that: "Trust is not something you ask for; you must earn it." Both major political parties of the greatest nation in the world were addressing the millions of Americans fed up with being treated as if they were fools. Voters began to say, "We elect you into office and you act as though there were no moral accountability! Multi-national corporations behave as if there were no ethical accountability to anybody in the world!"

"If you are going to make billions of dollars," I heard the President of one of America's major banks say at a meeting more than a year ago, "you

know there's an awful lot of money to be made in the Arab nations. Saudi Arabia alone this year will have $60 billion. There will be $90 billion in Kuwait and the other OPEC governments. We want the little State of Israel to live, but if it becomes an obstacle to America's economic development, it may be that little state will have to go down the drain." (I literally had to do everything in my power to contain myself from saying: "What kind of moral obscenity or what kind of God do you think you are that you can play with human lives to make people and unmake people?")

Such behavior leads to the amorality bordering on immorality which exists in society when everything becomes possible. Therefore, what we are about here today, the installation of a Rabbi — Jewish leader and teacher — and the mobilization of the congregation to return to its fundamental roots as a Jewish community, is not a parochial, isolated event. It is, as our Rabbis would declare, "Echad hadevarim ha-omdim b'rumo ha-olam" — "one of the concerns that stands at the height of the world's agenda." And that is no hyperbole!

One of the greatest living Jewish Talmudic scholars, Professor E. Urbach — who teaches at the Hebrew University and has written a very great study on the Chazal (the Rabbinic sages) — described the role of the Chacham, the Hebrew sage, religious and intellectual teacher. The Chacham was the guide and mentor of his people. After going through all the material of the Talmudic Rabbinic literature, he describes the eponym — the clearest embodiment of a Rabbi and Jewish teacher and leader at the height of the Hasmonean ascendancy — Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach. Shimon ben Shetach was the towering figure in the life of the Jewish people at that time not because he was a member of a hierarchy; in fact, he was a flax dresser. He earned his living by manual labor as did many of the other great Rabbis of that time. His impress on history grew out of the fact that his authority rested foremost on his knowledge of Torah; that is, he had mastered Jewish tradition and was devoted to the life of the mind and spirit. His rootedness in Torah gave him authority by virtue of his own person. He earned his authority on the basis of what he stood for, what he knew, and the wisdom that he incorporated. It was not ascribed authority. It was not given to him or voted to him. He won it; he earned it; and that's the most lasting kind of authority any leader can achieve.

I want to take a moment to tell you about the conference of the Roman Catholic hierarchy which took place in Detroit two weeks ago and which I attended as a Jewish observer. It was called the "Call to Action Conference" and heralded as an historic meeting — as indeed it was! Eighteen hundred laymen and professionals — experts in international law, human rights, economic, domestic conerns as well as on the life of the Church, liturgy, the role of women, etc. — met to discuss the "democratization of the church." They were becoming Judaized! One of the most dramatic developments was that every knowledgeable and informed lay person who spoke was listened to with the same derech eretz (respect) as any Bishop. If a Bishop spoke sensibly or intelligently, wisely or perceptively, he received applause. But if he stood up and said something remote, not touching the life of the people, he was either treated with indifference or a polite, casual wave away from the microphone. Bishops began to understand what it meant to earn authority on the basis of personal intellectual stand-

ing and achievement and not to elicit loyalty solely because of a title possessed. That, of course, is an ancient Jewish institution which is carried on in the life and person of Rabbis even today.

Secondly, according to Professor Urbach, a distinctive feature of the Rabbi and the Jewish leader is the attitude of Shimon ben Shetach toward kings and rich people. This attitude is determined solely by their (royalty's) *moral* behavior. There is a beautiful account of how the king is brought into court, and Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach compels the king to stand up and declare he will give testimony in truth, just as the poorest peasant was required to declare. The king refused, at first, because he was above the law.

Shimon ben Shetach, who became the norm for Jewish leadership, carried out a relentless struggle against public corruption on every level of life, whenever and wherever he saw it, even in the Sanhedrin. He insisted that no judge who ever swore falsely be allowed to hold a chair of justice in the court. That is not a remote idea today.

Current scandals demonstrate the need for tradition to be integrated into everyday life. Recently, Orthodox Rabbis were implicated in a nursing home scandal in New York. This is a striking example of what happens when the link is broken between being religious and being ethical. Tradition must proceed not as a cover for corruption, but rather as an outer reflection of an inner devotion to an ethical heritage. That, my friends, is what I believe the Conservative Movement has stood for.

I was going through Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's book, THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, preparing to preside at the funeral of Louis Cohen, the former President of CBS. I read Heschel's question: "How can one be Jewish without loving, caring or having a passion for justice, truth and integrity in one's whole life?" That is what the Rabbinate — in the person of Rabbi Corson and others who uphold that banner — stands for. That tradition goes back to Shimon ben Shetach and the origins of the Chacham, the Jewish leader at his best and noblest.

Finally, Shimon ben Shetach was responsible for setting up the first educational system. Children should be sent to school; adults must be educated because "an ignorant man cannot be a pious person and an ignoramus cannot be sin-fearing."

In American politics and American culture, we have begun to recognize that our salvation as a people is not going to come from bureaucracies. It is not going to come from bigger and better organizations, much as they are needed to produce the wealth and basic material needs of society. Big government, big business, big labor, big religion and universities are not going to give us our meaning for existence or our basic value orientation without which life will not have meaning.

Robert Heilbroner's study, "Inquest on the Human Prospect," describes an America which has had unparalleled wealth, unparalleled material growth — an American people better off than any people in human history. And yet, he says, when you come down to the basics of human existence today, there is a malaise of civilization. You find, as you go around talking to people all over America, that, after they have their nice homes, two cars in the garage, swimming pools and the two vacations

a year, the ultimate questions are still there to be coped with: "What is the real meaning and purpose of my life?" "What do I do with the days I have before me?" "How do I use them humanly, beyond simply gathering material benefits?"

Those ultimate questions are our questions. We have been the custodians of Torah since Exodus and Sinai. It is our tradition which has been the carrier of the fundamental meaning of the value of every human life. Every human life — built in the Sacred Image — is of infinite worth and infinite preciousness. We are custodians of a tradition which said individuals are not atomized, fragmented persons living in a world of rugged individualism caring only for themselves. Our tradition created a conception of "mamlechet kohanim v'goy kadosh" "ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and holy people" (Exodus 19:6). Once we became a covenant people at Sinai, the sense of Jewish peoplehood, of mutual responsibility, of carrying out a messianic task to bring justice and healing and redemption in the world, has been the Jewish contribution to civilization.

I have had the privilege of working with Rabbi Corson, who has made significant contributions to the field of community relations and interreligious understanding. He has sought to interpret Jewish concerns related to Israel, Soviet Jewry and anti-Semitism. He has stood out against the General Browns and the Spiro Agnews of this country who find it convenient to say unthinkable things. He has been a comrade in arms, in the front lines of interpreting and strengthening Jewish security and Jewish solidarity. Above all, his importance to me has been his continuous quest to embody the best and the highest of Jewish tradition, to be among those who have sought to link themselves with the great tradition of Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach and the Rabbinic sages of the past and to link their fate and their destiny with the fate and destiny of their own people. In his own personal and professional life, he has fought against the split between what it means to be religious and what it means to be a moral, ethical, responsible human being — and today, that is the most precious commodity that one can seek in any leader of the community. It is, in fact, that rarest of Jewish and democratic commodities.

It is essential that we establish models for our young people in which Judaism is not just a kind of nostalgia, but is the cutting edge of the human condition — the center of the meaning of human existence. This can only happen through individual persons like Rabbi Corson. As Jews remain true to their tradition, they will stand for the essential qualities which have transformed life in the past for all mankind. From the days of Sinai and Exodus, when even human life was considered meaningless, we have affirmed that human life is of infinite worth.

I am convinced, as we confront a world fed up with the meretricious, the cheap, the manipulative, the amoral — and increasingly threatened by nuclear proliferation and the arms race — that mankind is yearning for leadership and a sense of moral purpose. Judaism, the Jewish people and the Rabbi who heads this congregation must find a way if there is to be a victory in this struggle. H.G. Wells once said that civilization and human survival ultimately is a race between moral education and catastrophe. For your having the wisdom and insight to choose an examplar such as

Rabbi Maurice Corson to embody that quest and that struggle in this congregation and community, you are to be congratulated. I ask, together with you, God's blessing on him, his lovely wife, his family and above all, His blessings on all Israel and all mankind.

WHAT SHOULD A RABBI BE?

Installation Address by

RABBI SIDNEY GREENBERG
Rabbi Temple Sinai
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Sunday, November 28, 1976

Dear Friends of my dear friends, Rabbi and Ruth Corson:

Thank you, Madame Chairlady, for that most gracious and exceedingly generous introduction. I so very much missed my parents when I heard you talk like that. My father would have loved it. My mother would have believed it.

I am delighted that my wife is in the audience so she could hear the general esteem in which I am so universally held, because I believe most men must leave home to hear a woman speak of them as they deserve.

And I want all the good people in this very impressive congregation in this magnificent sanctuary to know that not only is my wife in the congregation tonight, but also my Aunt Minnie, my cousins Leonard and Flo Jed, my cousins Sara Lee and Dr. Abe Horowitz, and also a few members of my own congregation whom I brought along just for this purpose. I say that to you, and I won't tell you where they are sitting, in order to spare you the embarrassment suffered by another listener in another congregation. When the rabbi droned on and on, this visitor to the congregation finally could not keep himself from exclaiming: "That's the worst sermon I ever heard!" An indignant woman alongside of him said to him in a voice that was equally audible: "Sir, do you know who I am?" "No," he said, "who are you?" "I am that rabbi's wife," she said. Turning a deep crimson he said to her: "Do you know who I am?" "No," she answered. "Thank God," he whispered and fled.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to know that it is exactly thirty-four years since I was last invited to speak in Baltimore. You can well imagine what an impression I made, and the uncontrollable anxiety of Baltimore to invite me back. But it was indeed in 1942, very shortly after I came to Temple Sinai that I received a letter from a program chairman of one branch of Hadassah here in this city, inviting me to participate in a lecture series and she sent along the names of the other participants. I recognized those names. They were names of Jews with high visibility on the American Jewish scene. I wrote back to her telling her that I was quite persuaded that the letter was meant for Dr. Simon Greenberg, who at that time was the Rabbi of Har Zion Congregation in Philadelphia and my former teacher at the Seminary in homiletics. I did not tell her in the

letter that I had already begun to receive his mail. I got his bills from Gimbels. And I said, "Would you please write to Dr. Simon Greenberg directly." She wrote back to me, saying, "No, it wasn't Dr. Simon Greenberg we wanted, it was Sidney Greenberg we were asking for; and as a matter of fact we ought to tell you that it was Dr. Simon Greenberg who recommended you."

It was war time, gasoline was rationed (the old-timers among us will remember). We took the Penn Railroad. Hilda joined me because we wanted to see Tanta Minnie, and so we went to have a family reunion. At the train we were met by a delegation of the Hadassah ladies and they took us to lunch. During lunch I noticed that the woman sitting opposite me had a very, very troubled look. Finally she mustered up what must have been for her extraordinary courage, and she said: "You know, Dr. Greenberg, you don't look like your picture." Saying that, she proceeded to unfold a copy of the front page of "Der Americaner." Anybody here remember the Yiddish publication "Der Americaner"? Raise your hand. You don't remember it? Oh, for heaven's sakes. It was a weekly and as luck would have it, by the most remarkable of coincidence, that particular weekly isue had Dr. Simon Greenberg's picture boldly covering the whole front page. I proceeded to explain to her why I didn't look like my picture. After lunch, there came the moment of truth when I had to stand before the Hadassah ladies. And, being so acutely mindful of the encounter at the lunch table, I told them that I suspected that many had come expecting to hear Dr. *Simon* Greenberg, and instead they were going to be treated to this anonymous student whose diploma was still a little wet. I confessed that I had no comfort for them but perhaps they might be somewhat consoled in the knowledge that another community had once suffered a similar disappointment. And I told them of the little church in Virginia which had on its bulletin board in very bold letters, "Annual Strawberry Festival", and then below in small print, "On account of the depression, prunes will be served."

Ladies and gentlemen of Chizuk Amuno, tonight you are getting the whole fruit salad! And I have come to tell you, dear friends, that in my opinion you have chosen yourself a peach of a Rabbi! And I hope, if you will forgive just pursuing this a little further, that together you are going to make a very good pear."

Ladies and gentlemen, throughout the day many well-deserved references have been made to Ruth, who has impressive credentials of her own. I think that when I install my good friend, I install my good friend's wife, too. I have been a Rabbi too long not to know that there is no other profession, no other calling, no other vocation in which the mate of the professional is as deeply immersed emotionally and physically and in every other way as is the Rabbi's wife. We weren't in Philadelphia very long before someone in our congregation, noticing the spectacular contribution that my Rebbitzen made to the life and to the welfare and to the complexion of the congregation, said to her: "You know, Hilda, there ought to be a special place in heaven for a Rebbitzen like you." And with true loyalty she protested: "Oh, no," she said, "I would rather go with Rabbi."

In the year 1841, dear friends, exactly 125 years ago, the Jewish

Kulturverein of Berlin at the suggestion of the towering scholar of the day, Leopold Zunz, offered a prize for the best essay on the subject: "Vas Var, Vas Ist, and Vas Zol Der Rabbiner Zein? What was the Rabbi, What is the Rabbi, What should the Rabbi be?" That prize was never awarded. No essay was ever deemed good enough to win the prize. I don't know why. I can only speculate with you that there must have been an extraordinary amount of confusion in the minds of the people as to what a Rabbi should really be. And I venture to suggest that the intervening 125 years have done absolutely nothing to clarify the ambiguity inherent in the Rabbi's position; because the Rabbinate, dear friends, makes contradictory and frequently conflicting demands of a Rabbi. He must maintain distance without losing contact. He must give criticism without losing his love for his people. He must take criticism without losing self-control. He must listen to praise, frequently unearned, without losing his self-doubt. He must be pleasant and pleasing without losing his integrity. He must be faithful to the past without losing a sensitivity to the needs of the present. He must engage in godly work without losing a humbling awareness that he is only human.

What should the Rabbi be? Well it depends on when you are asked that question. When you are sick, you want him to be a pastor. When you are bereaved, you want him to be a comforter. When you are confused, you want him to be a counselor. When you come to services, you want him to be a gifted orator — with an electronics degree, and turn you on. When you have a problem with a child, you sometimes want him to be a magician.

In fact, dear friends, I once drew up a list of the endless demands made upon the Rabbi, the bewildering multiplicity of roles he is asked to play, and enormous complexity of the functions he is expected to perform. Indeed you can go through the alphabet from A to Z and for each letter of that alphabet you will find some vital aspect of the modern Rabbi's work. Would you like to hear such an acrostic?

A — he should be an after dinner speaker and administrator.
B — he should be a benedictor and a Bar and Bat Mitzvah specialist.
C — a counselor and a comforter.
D — a director of activities and a dahviner.
E — an educator and a eulogizer.
F — a friend and a fund raiser.
G — a guide and a go-getter and a good will ambassador.
H — a hospital visitor, a helper, and a handshaker.
I — an invoker and an idealist.
J — a judge and a jolly good fellow.
K — a Kashrut authority and a kissing cousin.
L — a leader and a lecturer.
M — a morale booster, a marrier and a master of ceremonies.
N — a nice guy, and a name rememberer.
O — an orator, an organizer.
P — a pastor, a preacher and a psychologist.
Q — a quiet listener and a quick thinker.
R — a regular fellow and, incidentally, a Rabbi.
S — a scholar and a spiritual advisor.
T — a talmudist and a teacher.

U — an unveiler of monuments and plaques.
V — a visitor and a visionary.
W — a writer and a well wisher.
X — an Xecutive and an Xpert.
Y — he should be a youth worker and a youth molder, and
Z — he should be a zoins vee a zeluchs.

In an age of specialization, dear friends, the Rabbi is the last of the general practitioners, and what is more, he still makes house calls. Amidst all these diverse, harrassing, exhausting and impossible demands, what then should the Rabbi be?

Ladies and gentlemen, may I suggest a one word answer to this question. The Rabbi should be himself. Your Rabbi should be permitted to establish his own priorities according to his own inner lights, according o his understanding of how he can best serve you, according to his own gifts and your own needs. A Rabbi should not be measured against the dimensions of his predecessor. Rabbi Goldman's unique spiritual leadership was made possible because he was permitted to be Rabbi Goldman. Let Rabbi Corson be Rabbi Corson. Let him be himself, for it was as himself that you selected him from among the many candidates whom you might have called to this prestigious pulpit. What kind of a Rabbi do you want? You want a Rabbi who is a person, not a shadow; a voice, not an echo; an original, not a carbon copy.

Early critics of the impressionistic school of painting frequently took a dim view of Renoir's works. They compared him with the first impressionistic master, Monet, and their verdict was that Renoir was not as good an impressionist, as true an impressionist as was Monet. It was only later when they became a little more sophisticated that they understood that Renoir was not good Monet, but he was great Renoir. His impressionistic painting was fully as valid on his own terms as was the painting of his illustrious predecessor. Subsequent events and judgments have thunderously attested to the greatness of Renoir.

Rabbi Corson will serve you most humanly, most compassionately, most wisely and most effectively if he is permitted to be himself. If he is permitted to be himself, he will grow to be more than himself. "Everything in the world," wrote Boris Pasternak, "must excell itself to be itself." He will grow because this is the uniqueness of each of us as human beings, dear friends. We have an almost infinite capacity for growing provided we have the feeling of being needed — as we are, being supported — as we are, being loved — as we are. Faith makes all things possible. Love makes all things easy.

In the Sidra of this week which we began to read yesterday at Mincha, the Torah tells us that Jacob served seven years for his Rachel, but the Torah tells us in Jacob's eyes they were like a few days. All the toil and all the sacrifice of seven long years were like a few days because he loved her — as she was.

The Rabbi more than anyone else, dear friends, is driven by his own inner coercions, knows that he must grow. The Rabbi is keenly sensitive to the Torah's verdict of the Patriarch Isaac that was read on his pulpit

yesterday morning. The Torah says of Isaac "vayigdal ha-ish, the man grew, he grew great, vayaylech haloch vigadol, he continued to grow, ad kee gadal m'od, until he was exceedingly great." The Rabbi knows, and nobody has to tell him, that for others, reading and studying may be electives in their university of life; for him these are required courses. He knows better than anyone else that only the ego can grow without nourishment. So he needs time to study, time to reflect, time to touch intimately and regularly the living sources of a living faith, so that in whatever capacity he serves you, he serves you with his maximum power, his maximum dedication and the maximum resources of mind and heart and an overflowing spirit. Let him be himself and he will bring to you all the riches and all the promise that you correctly discerned in him when you honored him, and you honored yourselves by asking him to be the Rabbi of this congregation.

And if I install the Rabbi and the Rebbitzen I think I ought to take just a moment to install the congregation. Remember "Rabbi" is a correlative word; which means when you hear "Rabbi" you expect "congregation." He cannot be a Rabbi in a vacuum. I say to you, his congregants, be true to yourselves, your highest selves, your most Jewish selves, your most committed, most dedicated selves, your most loyal selves. These are days, dear friends, when we cannot afford the luxury of being casual Jews. Casual Jews too easily become Jewish casualties. May each of you dedicate your best self to Chizuk Amuno, which as you know literally means the "strengthening of the faith." Hazak, hazak vinit-hazaik, be strong, be strong, and for God's sake strengthen one another.

I would like to conclude, dear friends, (and this ought to be happy tidings), by recalling to my very dear friend, whose coming to you has enriched Baltimore and impoverished Philadelphia, the story of Wilhelmina, the Queen of the Netherlands. She ascended to the throne when she was a little girl. In her first royal appearance on the balcony of her palace at Amsterdam, she stared with a small child's wonder at all her cheering subjects. She turned to the Queen Regent and she asked, "Momma, do all these people belong to me?" "No, my child," she was told, "it is you who belong to all these people." Dear friends, now you belong to each other. May you be good to each other, and for each other, and may you elicit the best from each other. May a gracious God be good to all of you so that by bringing the best of yourselves and the best of your Rabbi's self together you may go on to strengthen the faith, to strengthen the hopes of the Jewish people, so that those who one day will sit in your seat will have a stronger Amuno because it passed through you. Thank you very much.

PRIORITIES FOR OUR FUTURE

Address by

Rabbi Maurice S. Corson

Sunday, November 28, 1976

"Praised are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has blessed us with life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this season."

Dear friends, how can I thank everyone who has helped make this installation weekend possible. So many people have done so much — have spent so many hours — and given of their time and talents. I could not possibly thank each of them individually.

I do, however, want to publicly express my profound appreciation to the Officers of Chizuk Amuno, the Installation Committee and the Synagogue staff. Each has my sincere thanks for making this weekend so very meaningful.

I must also acknowledge my heartfelt gratitude to each participant in this program whose presence has helped add lustre to this evening, and to all those nearest and dearest to me who have traveled from as far away as Omaha, Nebraska, and Cincinnati, Ohio, to be with me tonight. And what words can convey how I feel about the members of my former congregations, Beth Judah of Ventnor, New Jersey, and Temple Israel of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, who have come to honor me by their presence?

To all my colleagues and friends, old and new, I want you to know that a heart full of love and gratitude will never forget this evening. I thank you wholesale, but my gratitude is retail.

There are some people, however, whom I must mention individually. First, are my beloved parents of blessed memory. It was they who gave me life. My father was a quiet man whose basic decency and goodness made everyone who knew him love him. My mother was my confidante and counselor. For her, there was no goal too lofty for her son to achieve. My youthful uncertainties were more than matched by her exaggerated estimate of my abilities and brilliance. The apple of her eye, she was and remains an indelible force in my life. How they would have gloried in this ceremony. How proud they would have been!

Finally, for the past twenty-one years I have been blessed with a wife who understood my secret dreams and never permitted me to depart from pursuing them. My life companion has also been my best friend. To my daughters, Rishona and Aliza, I want to say thanks for handling with such grace and understanding the sometimes difficult job of being the Rabbi's daughters.

As I stand before you tonight so pregnant with promise, many memories flood my mind. I recall a boy barely twelve shocking his parents with the announcement that he wanted to be a Rabbi. I recall my Rabbi's response, when Rabbi Morris Goodblatt told me: "Corson, you'll never be a Rabbi." No doubt he intended his words as a kind of negative motivation. I recall sitting on the porch of the Salviah Hotel in Jerusalem in 1954 with Rabbi Sidney Greenberg and discussing my applying to the Jewish Theological Seminary. I recall a night in 1961 when Rabbi Simon Greenberg installed me in my first pulpit in suburban Los Angeles, California. The events of this evening were many years in the making and numerous were the people who contributed to bringing it to fruition.

When I began thinking about a theme for my remarks to you, I turned to the name of the congregation. I asked myself why the unusual name *Chizuk Amuno*. Some of you may be surprised to learn that Chizuk Amuno was originally the name of a book.

In the sixteenth century a Karaite Jew named Isaac Ben Abraham Troki wrote a defense of Judaism called in Hebrew "Chizuk Amuno — Faith Strengthened." His book was prompted by the relentless efforts of overzealous missionaries desirous of winning Jewish souls. Against such an onslaught of misguided religious passion, the best defense was to prepare Jews to counter the arguments used by the missionaries. Troki believed that we must understand our faith in order to be loyal to it. In the United States in the early nineteenth century, the small Jewish community was the target of an intensive missionary campaign initiated by Protestant Evangelists. To bolster Jewish faith and loyalty Troki's book was translated into English and widely distributed.

By the 1870's American Jewry was being split asunder by the emergence of classical Reform Judaism. To the traditionalists, classical Reform was a betrayal of Jewish tradition and an imitation of Protestant Christianity. Hence, when Jonas Friedenwald and his four sons broke away from Baltimore Hebrew Congregation to hold Shabbat services at Exeter Hall on April 1, 1871, they chose a name for their new congregation that conveyed their purpose.

Chizuk Amuno from the beginning was destined to stand as a barrier to the casual discarding of sacred traditions — the elimination of Hebrew from the liturgy and the then popular spiritual amnesia that betrayed the age-old hope of our people for the restoration of Zion. Jonas Friedenwald and those who joined him knew in their heads and hearts that Judaism is more than a religious creed to be recited on Sabbaths and holidays. They knew that they and we are not merely Americans of the Mosaic persuasion. We are Jews — possessing a rich culture, language, faith, and linked to other Jews by a sacred history and destiny that is rooted in the soil of the land of Israel.

Each of the Rabbis of this congregation shared that conception of Judaism. Henry W. Schneeberger, the first native-born Rabbi to serve an American synagogue, Eugene Kohn, Adolph Coblenz and Israel Goldman, Yibadal L'chaim, — left an indelible legacy. Each strengthened our faith by affirming that Judaism is more than a faith — more than a list of dogmatic propositions to be denied or affirmed.

Thus, it is no accident that this congregation has been in the forefront of every national and local effort to strengthen our people and to perpetuate our heritage. In 1887 Chizuk Amuno joined in the establishment of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and in 1913 its lay and Rabbinic leaders participated in the founding assembly of the United Synagogue of America. For the objectives of Chizuk Amuno, the Jewish Theological Seminary and the United Synagogue were identical — "the preservation in America of the knowledge and practice of Historical Judaism."

While the congregation was committed to preserving Jewish ritual observance and loyalty to Jewish tradition, it did not identify with those who wanted to transplant the ghetto to Baltimore. The founders of Chizuk Amuno perceived no contradiction between an appreciation of secular learning and culture and traditional Judaism. The orientation endorsed by the Rabbis and congregation was that of "Positive Historical Judaism" or what later became known as Conservative Judaism. Jewish religious practices and beliefs were to be encouraged. Jewish isolationism and religious obscurantism were rejected.

Today the challenge that confronts our generation is the same — how can we strengthen Jewish commitment without walling off the rest of the world. Can we be faithful Jews and modern men and women at the same time?

The answer, I believe, lies in our ability to translate Jewish thought and learning into a new key. Indeed, Lincoln's words of 1862 have a special relevance to us today: "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. We must think anew. We must disenthrall ourselves."

First, we must rethink how to make Judaism truly our way of life. Today for too many it is merely a way of talking, not living. Judaism teaches that religion is action, not diction. Jewish tradition agrees with the prognosis that the feast of the sermon results in spiritual indigestion unless followed by religious exercise.

The saga of Jewish history has been fashioned by the relentless search for God and His Torah. Thus ethical monetheism is not merely one of the numerous articles of Jewish belief, but the very heart of the Jewish religion. For many Jews, however, belief in God has no effect on their lives or behavior. Like our belief that the world is round, it resembles what Samuel Coleridge called "a bed-ridden truth which lies asleep in the dormitories of our minds."

I recall one day when I was a Rabbinical student, Dr. Simon Greenberg asked our class what we meant by the word *God* when we used it. Dr. Greenberg has had hundreds of students since — I am sure he has forgotten the question or that I stood and offered an answer. I have not, however, forgotten the question or my answer. I had just read Mordecai M. Kaplan's "The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion." I responded by saying something approximating the following: "Belief in God means believing that the ideals we cherish are real not illusory, that justice, peace, brotherhood, compassion and honesty actually emerge out of the very structure of the universe and that to actualize these ideals in our personal life is to obey the voice of God within us. God," I said, "is the goad

that impels us to become better than we are — to become fully human." I believed that as a student at the Seminary and I believe it now!

But we need to give substance to more than our faith in God if we are to survive the challenge of modernity. We need to strengthen Jewish educational programs for young and old in our synagogue, community, colleges and universities and at the Jewish Theological Seminary. For today, even more than in the past, Hillel's insight applies, "An ignorant man cannot be sin-fearing and a man lacking instruction cannot be pious" (Avot 2:6).

We also need to strengthen our bonds of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Israel, the U.S.S.R., and throughout the world. Even as of old so today, "Behold, here is a people living apart, not to be reckoned among the nations" (Numbers 23:9). Ours is a unique faith binding a people and a land. Yigal Allon, former Foreign Minister of Israel, was, therefore, quite accurate when he said: "Zionism is for us the modern expression of the ancient Jewish heritage — the revival of our ancient language and culture — the unrelenting effort to realize the national and universal vision of the prophets of Israel."

We need to strengthen the Jewish home through the observance of Jewish rituals, the reading of Jewish books and the adornment of Jewish ceremonial objects.

We need to strengthen our local Jewish community and its institutions through our participation and philanthropy. The word "Jew" is a correlative term. It implies a relationship to a people and a community. Hillel's admonition, "Al tifrosh min ha-tzibbur" (Avot 2:5), "Do not separate yourself from the community" and Samuel's injunction "Le-olam al yotzi adam et atzmo min ha-k'lal" — "one should never exclude himself from the group" are ethical imperatives reminding us of our communal responsibilities.

We need to strengthen the synagogue by making it responsive to the spiritual concerns of our age, by having it generate Jewish commitments that transcend its walls and foster the unity of Israel. The synagogue needs to rise above parochialism, pettiness and pride if it is to help stay the tide of alienation and the growing numbers of the unaffiliated.

We need to strengthen our relations with our Christian neighbors and dialogue with them on our differences as well as our shared commitments, for together we must help build a society that is loyal to our highest ideals and noblest aspirations.

We need to rekindle the Jewish passion for social justice. We are, and of right ought to be, in the forefront of the struggle for a more democratic society with equal opportunity, adequate housing, quality education, and meaningful employment for all Americans. Our faith in the sanctity of every individual — black or white, Jew or Gentile, is rooted in the first chapter of Genesis, buttressed by our memory of Egyptian bondage and tried in the crucible of suffering. From of old we were taught "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev 19:18), "Let justice roll down like the waters and righteousness like a might river" (Amos 5:24) and "Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17).

Finally, we need to strengthen our faith in each other and in mankind. If we believe that there is a spark of divinity in every man, and that God prefers cooperation to competition, righteousness rather than iniquity — then we must learn the art of living together in peace and become intolerant of injustice and cruelty.

These are the priorities that should occupy us as together we begin a new chapter in the history of Chizuk Amuno. As I accept the challenge these priorities imply, I do so with a firm belief in the timeless relevance of our heritage, sustained by three loves, "ahavat Yisrael," love of Israel, "ahavat Torah," love of Torah, and "ahavat Hashem," love of God. For me the most precious prayer in the Siddur is that which declares, "How goodly is our portion, how pleasant our lot, and how beautiful our heritage."

Accordingly, I believe that Judaism through each of us has a lasting contribution to make to America and mankind. In the words of my revered teacher of blessed memory, Abraham Joshua Heschel, "We are God's stake in human history, we are the dawn and the dusk, the challenge and the test. How strange to be a Jew and go astray on God's perilous errands."

I agree with William Faulkner that "man will not merely endure, he will prevail. He is immortal not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice." As William James said, "We and God have business with each other. And in that business our highest destiny is fulfilled."

In concluding, let me return to the heart of Judaism. The saintly Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev, from whom my wife is descended and who is a teacher of us all, once summoned his people together in the town square to make an announcement of vital importance. Shopkeepers grumbled as they closed their stores, housewives complained, people wondered what in the world could have gotten into their Rabbi that he should suddenly have asked for this town meeting. As the crowd gathered, the Rabbi slowly made his way and held up his hand to speak. The people were silent. "I have asked you to come here in order to tell you some great news that cannot be delayed. This is what I want to tell you. I want to announce to you that there is a God in the world." The people departed, chastened and humbled. They knew exactly what the Rabbi meant. They all talked about God — but they acted as if God were dead. Their deeds belied their belief in the existence of God. Levi Yitzhak had simply announced that there is a God in the world. His people understood.

Dear friends, this evening we have gathered together in this magnificent sanctuary to forge another link in the chain of Rabbinic leadership that began 106 years ago. May my last words to you tonight be those of Levi Yitzhak: "There is a God in this world." He is the power of compassion and conscience that summoned Abraham from Ur of Chaldees, who inspired our prophets and guided our sages and teachers. He is the "still small voice" within us and the order and mystery of life that surrounds us. May we ever be faithful witnesses to His law of righteousness and mercy and may our beloved Chizuk Amuno ever strengthen that faith.

Officers

Henry O. Shor, President
Sigi R. Strauss, First Vice President
Dr. Barry S. Lever, Vice President
Irwin M. Sussman, Vice President
Leonard Jed, Treasurer
Dr. Bernard J. Jandorf, Assistant Treasurer
Toba K. Rochberg, Secretary

Arrangements Committee

Toba K. Rochberg, Chairperson
Edna Crystal
Shirley Evans
Jackie Glassgold
Betty Golombek
Beverly Robinson
Cille Strauss

Synagogue Staff

Maurice S. Corson ..... Rabbi
Israel M. Goldman ..... Rabbi Emeritus
Abraham Salkov ..... Hazzan
Abba Josef Weisgal ..... Hazzan Emeritus
Saul Lilienstein ..... Choir Director
Louis Sternfield ..... Educational Director
Ginny Kamis ..... Youth Director
Yehuda Dickstein ..... Sexton
Stanley I. Minch ..... Executive Director
Jerome B. Cohen ..... Asso. Executive Director

Chizuk Amuno Congregation

Founded in 1871 • Affiliated with the United Synagogue of America

8100 Stevenson Road • Baltimore, Maryland 21208