

C-7431 to C-7432 Transcriptions

Wexner Heritage Foundation. Boardroom discussion. 8 July 1994.

FRIEDMAN: Who just walked in? [Kathenbaum?], you're on the wrong side of the table here. (laughter)

M1: That's correct.

M2: He shifted over to the right. Your left, but our right.

FRIEDMAN: [Auzer?], where -- oh, Mitch is here. (laughter)
Weiner, Weinerman, Weiner -- which is it? Weiner?

M2: It's Weinerman.

FRIEDMAN: Weinerman. Steve (inaudible) -- Steve gave you a good send-off, Weinerman.

M2: Oh, that's nice. Nice.

FRIEDMAN: Yeah. He spoke nice things about you.

(laughter)[00:01:00] Where are we? Where are we? Where are we? We're done --

M1: We're at vision.

FRIEDMAN: We're at vision. Vision is the most important thing of all.

M3: Which Israeli leaders have vision?

FRIEDMAN: Israeli leaders?

M3: Yeah.

FRIEDMAN: OK.

M3: Did Golda Meir?

M1: You want to hear the tape of Ben-Gurion (inaudible; overlapping dialogue). (laughter)

FRIEDMAN: He gotcha. He gotcha.

F1: I hate this part.

M1: I do too. But (inaudible).

M3: Well, you should've paid attention last year.

M4: No, no, the new guys.

FRIEDMAN: Golda had no vision. Golda was an apparatchik. Every day's work, day's work, day's work, work day by day by day by day by day. She was grandma to the whole nation. She was dearly beloved by the administration in America. They thought she was ev-- the president, he thought she was [00:02:00] fabulous. And so she did a perfect PR for the country.

M4: Which president?

M1: Meir. Oh, which president? (inaudible)

FRIEDMAN: When she was president? Carter. When she was prime minister, it was Carter, wasn't it? So -- but vision? No. No long-term vision. I mean, she slugged away, slogging away, every day, every day, every day. Present tier of leaders -- vision. Present tier -- vision. The one with the longest vision over the longest period of time is Peres.

He's the intellectual. He reads the books. He thinks in very large scale. His whole mind, now, is set on -- he's past the peace process already, in his head. Because that's inevitable, irreversible, and that's going. [00:03:00]

Wrinkles here and there you got to iron out. How you going to have pay compensation for some people who want to move out of the settlements? Aren't you -- that's not policy-making stuff. That's not big stuff. That's daily husbandry, daily husbandry.

M5: The civil war, I guess, would be a little bit more.

FRIEDMAN: Civil war? That's a major matter. But that's not on the books.

M4: So when you're saying he's beyond that, where is he thinking?

FRIEDMAN: He's thinking in terms of Middle East region from the Mediterranean, over to the Indian Ocean.

M4: Economically especially?

FRIEDMAN: Everything, always. Economically. Technologically. You got to share water. You got to share desalination of water. You got to share nuclear energy. Oil will run out in the Gulf inside of a half a century. That's about all that's left. [00:04:00] You got to think ahead of that, beyond that. You got to think in terms of democracy. There isn't a

single Arab country that knows how to practice democracy, not a one. You've got some feudal states, run by kings, dynasty, two, three hundred years. That's Saudi Arabia. That's the biggest, the richest, Saudi Arabia. Jordan. Beside monarchies, you've got dictatorships. That's Iraq. That's Syria. There's no democracy any place. Egypt isn't a democracy. Egypt has got a parliament, and it calls its leader "president," so it seems that that should be -- nothing doing. Egypt is a country run by a bureaucracy. Egypt by about 10 years into this next century -- let's say 15 years [00:05:00] from now, Egypt will be hitting 100 million people. A hundred million.

M3: Doubly (inaudible).

FRIEDMAN: Doubly. Living on a little tiny strip of land on both sides of the Nile River, the rest of it *blank* desert. Huge desert. A hundred million people, you think it's a democratic country, it's got a president and a parliament, everybody votes -- nothing doing. You got to think of how to get democracy introduced into the region. You got to reduce Islamic fundamentalism. You'll hear this afternoon, from [Ghassemi?] -- or [Kazemi?], as I call him, but I think the Arabic is Ghassemi -- who's going to talk about modernism and moderation. I forget how it's titled. If you

got a program... What is his title? Versus fundamentalism.

[00:06:00]

M3: "Internal Struggle and Militancy."

FRIEDMAN: Oh. Internal struggle inside the Arab world is between militant fundamentalists, on the one hand, and moderate modernists, on the other hand. And he's at Preston, because he's not comfortable with the topic. He says, "I can't do the fundamentalists. I can't describe their position accurately. I hate them like poison!"

M5: He's a Shiite?

FRIEDMAN: No, I think he's a Sunni. I'm not sure. I don't think he's a Shiite.

M4: But is -- where's he from? He's from (inaudible)?

FRIEDMAN: Where's he from? I think he's Persian, originally.

M4: Yeah, he's Persian. I would've given him a 90% chance of being a Shiite, right?

M5: That's all we have is Shiites.

FRIEDMAN: Ask him.

M5: It's like having only --

M4: Yeah, we didn't ask him that in class yesterday.

M5: Litvaks or something.

M6: The Sunnis won't talk to you.

FRIEDMAN: Anyway, anyway, I said [Farid?], you do your best you can to be objective, and you give us the picture of the fundamentalists as they [00:07:00] see it. Try to represent them. You're an academician. You can always see both sides of a story. So he says, "All right, you want me to do it, I'll do it. But that ain't where my sympathy is." So anyhow, you'll judge him. You'll hear him this afternoon.

M2: What about the next tier?

M3: Yeah, exactly.

M2: The up and coming leaders? Who's...

FRIEDMAN: Up and coming leaders where?

M2: In Israel.

M3: In Israel.

M2: On the --

M3: Vision.

F1: OK, what about the (inaudible)?

FRIEDMAN: Vision?

M3: Yeah. Vision among the up and coming leaders.

FRIEDMAN: No, I don't see anybody.

M3: Who? No one?

FRIEDMAN: I don't see anybody. Let me think for a minute. Let me think.

F1: No, but that's interesting you say that, because with the...

FRIEDMAN: Let me think for a minute. You're forcing me when you say come down a tier.

M4: Well, Netanyahu, Begin...

FRIEDMAN: Oh, Netanyahu, no.

M4: Begin? Who else?

FRIEDMAN: Benny Begin?

M5: Yeah, Benny Begin.

FRIEDMAN: No, come on, he's a geologist. (laughter)

M1: What about this fellow who's now leading the *Histradut*? What's his name? Ramon?

FRIEDMAN: Haim Ramon.

M1: Ramon, yeah.

FRIEDMAN: Haim Ramon. Haim Ramon. [00:08:00] No. I think he is - - he is a younger Rabin, with much more of a thrust and a commitment toward the peacemaking process, which Rabin came to only late. See, when Rabin settled his feud with Peres, which had been going on for 20 years...

M5: When did they settle this? They settled this?

FRIEDMAN: Oh, come on. They settled it when Oslo started. About 18 months ago. I mean, you couldn't do Oslo without the prime minister's approval, for God's sake.

M5: Did you see the one-upmanship that was -- I mean, God, when they both shook hands with Arafat, and then Peres was saying, in the speech, he says, "When we shook hands -- when Rabin shook hands with Arafat, Rabin chirps in, he says, 'Don't forget, you also shook hands with him.'"

FRIEDMAN: Sure. Peres wasn't criticizing. [00:09:00]

M5: No, I know that, but it was like he wanted to make sure that with all the attention, that the Israeli public makes sure that both of them shook hands.

FRIEDMAN: Well, that's the point. The Israeli public has been well aware for 20 years that these two guys fight with each other inside the Labor party. Weaken each other, by that kind of internal fight. And they settled it. They made the [*simchah?*], which is an Arabic word for "shalom." A blood feud -- when you settle a blood feud. Because Peres quarterbacked the whole operation from Oslo on. Uri Savir, who went up there, and Yossi Beilin, who went up there, those guys were all Peres subordinates, younger men. And -- but they couldn't have done it without Rabin's approval. And that meant that Rabin had to give in sort of and agree with Peres that at whatever risk, [00:10:00] Israel has just got to get off the track of periodic wars. Periodic wars get you nowhere. It doesn't get the Arabs anywhere.

They try to keep destroying Israel by war and they can't do it.

But Israel staying on the war track inhibits growth, inhibits economic growth, makes it harder to take in constant waves of immigrants. Israel needs the immigrants. We Jews in this world are in a numbers game. You're here in Salt Lake City. There are only a few thousand Mormons left in Salt Lake City. There are *millions* of Mormons around the world. There are more Mormons in the world than Jews. Way more. It's a joke, you know. We used to conduct ourselves with an eye on the numbers. At the time of the Roman Empire, in the first century, [00:11:00] the whole Roman Empire, going from Spain, Gibraltar, all the way over to [Scythia?], which is what they used to call India, [background whispering] -- big Roman world. Ten percent of the entire population in the Roman world were Jews. All over the place! [Anna?] told you, what is today Turkey, Crete, Greece, Macedonia, Italy, Gaul -- which is today France -- all the way over to England! And the whole North African thing. Egypt, Cyrenaica, Tripoli, what is now today Libya, Algeria, Morocco, all loaded with Jews!

We were on a big missionary kick. Like the Mormons are today. Mormons running around the world, two nice, clean-cut young men come [00:12:00] to your door and they want to make you a Mormon. We backed off of that. That gave Christianity a chance to grow. Because Christianity had to grow only among Jews! That's where it started. You know, the *shlichim* come from Judaea, Jews. They go to Jewish synagogues in all of these cities, loaded with Jews, every one of these big cities. Carthage, you name it. Thessaly, Corinth, what is today Athens, Rome itself. And who are they talking to? They go to shul and talk to the Jews. And they say, "Hey. Yoshke, from Nazareth. He's the Messiah." It's like today. Schneerson is the Messiah. So who are you preaching that? You can't preach that to the goyim. So you preach it to the Jews. And some Jews buy it, some Jews don't buy it. The ones who [00:13:00] don't buy it, they stay behind, they say, "Ach! False Messiah. False Messiah. Shabbetai Tzvi. False Messiah." They won't buy it. Other Jews buy it.

So because there were so many Jews available around the whole Mediterranean Basin, you had a large market of people to talk to. That's how Christianity was able to get a

foothold. It took a hundred years, then 200, and finally it cracked in the third century, 300s, 330, exact year. The emperor of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, headquarters Constantinople, Istanbul today, he bought it. Bingo. The emperor buys it, everybody is automatically converted, instantaneously, at that moment.

M5: His wife converted.

FRIEDMAN: The what?

M5: His wife converted.

FRIEDMAN: His wife converted. Isn't that usually the case?

M6: Quick sell.

FRIEDMAN: (laughs) [00:14:00] So what I'm saying is our numbers game is terribly important. Terribly important. We had 18 million Jews worldwide, before the Holocaust. We wound up with 12. Fifty years ago. In 50 years, we're back up to 13. That's all we are. It takes you 50 years to grow a million people more than you are. And, I believe, myself -- and you know me. I'm not cynical. I'm hard-driving, but that's based on optimism. I'm an idealist. I'm an optimist. Always have been. So this is me telling you that if anybody says, "You got six million Jews in the United States," no way. Probably the number is [00:15:00] much closer -- and when I say Jews, I mean people who care about being Jews. They're

members of something, or they give some dough to something. Or, when you have a telephone poll, and you say, "Do you observe a Passover in your house?" and 75% of the people say they do. So that 75% you count in as a practicing Jew. I don't care they don't give a nickel to anything. They're having a Seder. There is something in their head that tells them they're... I think, by that kind of a count, we're probably around four million, in the United States. All right? So that means we ain't 13 million in the world. We're 11 million in the world. So we're dropping. Not even holding our own. Not even making a one million gain in 50 years. [00:16:00]

So if you talk about Egypt coming up to be a hundred million, (laughs) and -- so that's why Rabin got on the track of peace, and saying, "We simply have to cut a deal here. If we have to compromise on territory, we will." Because always, from the beginning of Zionism, a hundred years ago, there were always two strains of thought about Zionism. Beginning with Theodor Herzl. And continuing on down to Chaim Weizmann. And then Weizmann to Ben-Gurion. On down the line. That stream of what's called Labor Zionism, just -- that's its name, historically -- always was in

favor of a compromise. Half the cake is better than none. Three-quarters of the cake, if you can get it. But you have to deal. You have to compromise.

United Nations, in 1947, drew a map [00:17:00] of a compromise splitting Palestine, this part for an Arab state, this part for a Jewish state. Chaim Weizmann got Truman to increase the part that was for the Jewish state, because there were some people in the State Department who wanted to take off the Negev and give that to the Arabs. And Truman called the guy up at the UN, the American delegate, and said, "I want the Negev in on the Jewish side! Change the map. And that's a direct order from me, the president." And he did that after Weisman convinced him. But always compromise, always splitting, all the way down. The Peel Commission -- every commission from England that came, 1936, 1923, didn't matter. They kept coming. They kept making reports and surveys. They always recommended how to split it up, a little more this way, a little more that way. The Jews always said yes. The Zionist movement, the Jewish agency, [00:18:00] always said yes. The Arabs always said no.

Now. There's a second strain of Zionist thought, way back from the beginning, way back to Jabotinsky, which says, "Nothin' doin', no compromise, all or nothing." And their logo was a fist, holding in the fist a rifle, and one end of the rifle is in the Mediterranean, and the other end of the rifle is over into what is today Iraq. OK? The Euphrates River. And the Hebrew word is "Rak kach," which means "Only thus." I mean, that's it. No compromise. We want to go from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. That stream of thought is characterized in modern Israel in the Likud, the right wing, the Shamir-Begin [00:19:00] whatever you want to describe it, it's that line. And that's got historic base, as far back as Jabotinsky.

So you have two distinct philosophies in the Zionist movement. And Rabin, who was prime minister once before, don't forget -- he was prime minister from 1974 to 1977 -- and then Labor lost the election.

M5: He was kicked out.

FRIEDMAN: What?

M5: He was kicked out. For the check business.

FRIEDMAN: No, that was nothing. He wasn't kicked out.

M4: Nothing?

M5: Nothing? I thought it was (inaudible).

FRIEDMAN: No.

M4: So did I.

FRIEDMAN: He didn't lose office. He lost the election in '74.

His wife had a \$2000 checking account in the bank in Washington, DC.

M4: It was against the law, though.

FRIEDMAN: Which was, according to Israeli law at that time, illegal. So of course there was a to-do and a newspaper story and a scandal. There was no [00:20:00] commission of inquiry. There was no --

M4: No, no, no, no.

FRIEDMAN: -- he wasn't removed from office. He simply lost the election --

M4: But it cost him --

FRIEDMAN: -- a year later.

M4: -- didn't it?

FRIEDMAN: Well, at the time when he was ambassador for several years in Washington, he had a checking account! (laughs)
How can you live in America without a checking...

M4: I'm not critical of (inaudible; overlapping dialogue).

FRIEDMAN: No! So nobody in Israel paid a heck of a lot of attention to it. In other words, it did not interfere with

his career. But when Labor lost the election, he was out of office. And Begin came in. The...

M5: You know how they found out about the checking account?

FRIEDMAN: No idea.

M5: She paid by check, and it was a small purchase. So the shop owner, instead of cashing the check, had it on display on his wall. (laughter) It was, like, an Israeli store (inaudible; overlapping dialogue).

FRIEDMAN: Yeah, it's like when you open a bar, the first guy who buys a drink --

F1: You (inaudible) the dollar.

FRIEDMAN: -- pays you, you put the dollar...

M5: That's exactly what happened.

FRIEDMAN: Yeah. OK. [00:21:00] Rabin didn't do much in that first term. I didn't list him as a man of vision. In his second term, now, when he came in, in -- when was it? When did (inaudible) -- Labor won the election in...

M4: Ninety-one, was it?

FRIEDMAN: How long were they in office?

F1: Ninety-two.

M4: Ninety-two? Or '91.

F1: It was '92.

FRIEDMAN: I think '91. So now...

M3: The same year as our presidential elections.

M4: I know, but was it -- I thought it was '91...

F1: No, it was June of '92.

FRIEDMAN: Whatever.

M3: The same year as our presidential elections.

FRIEDMAN: Rabin, by that time had come to the conclusion -- hard for him to do so. The guy was, after all, 38 years a soldier, in uniform. Got up to be chief of staff. And his whole psychology, and his whole orientation, [00:22:00] was try to defend every piece of soil. You can't give up an inch. It's not that he took the Jabotinsky line. But he was basing himself on military considerations, which is all he knew. But by the time he became prime minister second round, now, he realized, "Hey, listen, we can't go on like this." And in the last two budgets, he, the prime minister, has cut the defense budget in Israel by hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars. And I have to take my hat off to him. Because it's not easy to change one's mind after a whole life. But, he did, and so with Peres pushing it, and Rabin agreeing to it, you had the progress onto a different track now. And then the visionary, Peres, jumps far ahead of that [00:23:00] into the future. And Peres is 71, I think, just about. Rabin's about 71 or -2.

The tier below them, the tier below them, you haven't got -
- Haim Ramon, the guy -- the young Laborite, he's 42 or -3,
politically, pulled off a miracle. There's a Labor man from
the time he's a kid, one of the rising stars in the Labor
Party, and undoubtedly would have reached the cabinet by
himself. And did, and Rabin put him in the cabinet, because
Rabin likes him. And made him Minister of Health. Ramon saw
[00:24:00] his political chance. Now, this is for you to
realize, think like leaders. But the first thing I put down
was, "A leader has to be a politician." Ramon, Minister of
Health, tried to find the opening of how he could make a
great important jump forward, fast.

One of the things that's rotten inside the Israel system is
the healthcare. You think it's only in the United States.
The healthcare system in Israel is based upon compulsory
membership withholding on your paycheck for paying dues in
the labor union, in the *Histradut*. Doesn't matter whether
you're a member of the Labor Party or not. There are over a
million laborers in Israel, members of the healthcare
system, called *Kupat Holim Clalit*, because there are
several *Kupat Holim* [00:25:00] organizations in Israel.

"Clalit" means the *Histradut* one. That's the most membership, over a million. And it's rotten. It's not that anybody's stealing money. It's not that kind of corruption. It's so heavily bureaucratized. It's got a couple of hundred thousand clerks. It's the way unemployment in Israel is hidden. "The guy's working! He's working; he's a clerk." What's he doing? You got three clerks for every one you really need. So everybody is underworking, but drawing a full salary. So the overhead expenses go out of line. Healthcare goes crazy wild. The bureaucrat who's in charge of it, a man by the name of Haberfeld, everybody in the country hates him. So when the *Histradut* had an election, Haim Ramon suddenly says, "I'm quitting as Minister of Health in the government." And he quit. [00:26:00] And a couple days later, he announced that he's a candidate to be the general secretary of the *Kupat Holim*, and the general secretary of the whole *Histradut*. And he's going to clean up the health fund. Well, when a guy goes out with that appeal, it didn't take four weeks, and bingo, he knocked out of office this guy Haberfeld who'd been in the job 25 years. In four weeks, this 44-year-old kid zooms to the top. Fine. And he's trying to clean up the healthcare costs of the country.

So now, everybody says, election of '96, two years from now, Ramon, who has left the Labor Party -- he resigned from the cabinet, [00:27:00] he resigned from the Labor Party. So now he's a free agent. Ramon may form a new political party. The elections in 1996 are supposed to be based on reform system, that every voter gets two ballots. For the first time in 50 years of Israel history, you can vote directly for the prime minister. In parenthesis, there's a huge effort on now to repeal that bill. Don't take me into that complication. But both sides, Labor and Likud, want that bill repealed. Rabin wants it repealed, because he doesn't want any Likud candidate to come out of left field. Nor now does he want any ex-Laborite, namely Mr. Haim Ramon, to form a new political party and come out of left field and [00:28:00] chop into the Labor vote. So the politicians are now saying, "No, we don't really want to let the public vote directly for the prime minister. No, no, let's go back to the old system. Let the public vote for the party." The new reform was that the voter would get two ballots. One direct election for a prime minister, and one for a party, whichever party choice he...

M4: Why doesn't Likud want it? You said both parties don't want it?

FRIEDMAN: Because Likud hasn't got a candidate.

M4: Oh, I thought they did.

FRIEDMAN: General widespread dissatisfaction in Likud with Netanyahu. Sharon is a --

M4: It caught on.

FRIEDMAN: -- you know, blowhard, and nobody pays any attention to him seriously anymore. What's his name --

M1: The geologist...

FRIEDMAN: -- Levy is really --

M4: He's not popular, is he?

FRIEDMAN: -- [Sauersor?] --

M5: Levy?

FRIEDMAN: -- popular -- Moshe Arens [00:29:00] withdrew himself from politics permanently, two years ago. Who else did you say?

M3: (inaudible)

FRIEDMAN: No, no. Not serious candidate. No, no. No charisma, nothing -- terrible on the platform. Can't get public -- in spite of his name.

M5: What about Olmert? Like, Ehud Olmert?

FRIEDMAN: No, Olmert's a big phony. Everybody in Israel knows it. Big, big blowhard. I mean, he's a less-good version of Sharon. Sharon at least has the military credentials of a long life of service. And whatever else you think of him politically, he did help save Israel's life in the '67 war and the '73 war. Olmert's got nothing. Olmert was a newspaper journalist, and then he's a lawyer, and -- all you got to do is [00:30:00] see him in action with an Israeli crowd one or two times, and you know that there's no substance inside the man. He's a minor politician. I mean, mayor, OK. Mayor of Jerusalem surprised everybody, but it's only because Teddy was 83 years old or whatever he was. Teddy couldn't hold anymore. The last Knesset did indeed vote that our system has to be reformed. Nineteen ninety-six, everybody's going to get two ballots. The effort to repeal that law is going on now. And there'll be efforts continuing -- it's two years till the next election.

M4: So is Ramon a visionary or is he a good politician?

FRIEDMAN: I think he's a good politician. I think that's all he is. I think that's all he is. Of the two possibilities, two possibilities in the younger tier are two guys. One is a man by the name of Ephraim Sneh. And you [00:31:00] have to

remember that name. Ephraim Sneh is a brigadier general, one star. Very good service in the army. He was the military administrator of the West Bank for several years. (background conversation) He was military administrator, in uniform. The Arabs liked him because he's warm, he's compassionate. I knew his father quite well. His father, Moshe Sneh, was a Communist. The social idealism that burns in Ephraim Sneh's heart comes out of the socialist doctrines that he learned from his father about the little man, the small man, you got to worry about everybody, all the people are equal. And that's one thing, the military career. Second, he's a medical doctor by profession. And, you know, they wanted him to be the head of the Tel Hashomer Hospital, [00:32:00] and he said no. But he's a good doctor. And thirdly, he's a liberal Social Democrat. Which is always a favorable position. But believes in capitalism. Would tear apart the socialistic system that still dominates in Israel. Israel is the last Bolshevik country on the planet. Seventy -- 93% of the land is owned by the government. Electric company's owned by the government. The water company's owned by the government. The two ports are owned by the government. Airline, owned by the government. Sea shipping line, owned by the

government. Potash fertilizer, the whole 106 large companies are all government-owned companies. [00:33:00] Tough society.

M5: Telephone company.

FRIEDMAN: Telephone company. So they've been talking about privatization. Sell it off. And the Tel Aviv stock market is a booming stock market.

M5: It was.

FRIEDMAN: Well, it had a dip. It'll come up again. I mean, in terms of recruiting capital, for expansion, business expansion, businessmen go to the market and find capital. You couldn't do that 10 years ago in Israel. So sure, the market takes a dip -- people in Israel are wildly speculative in the way they buy stocks. The prices of stocks jump, you know. Here, the Dow Jones up 2 points, down 21 points. There the market jumps are in hundreds of points, overnight. So you really got to be a crapshooter to play in the market in Israel. But a legitimate business that wants to go out and capitalize its expansion finds ready capital. [00:34:00] So that's a good thing. Ephraim Sneh, I think, is a visionary. He is now seated in the government. Rabin took him in because he's -- again, like Haim Ramon, he's one of Rabin's protégés, let's say. And

Rabin just put him in the cabinet. I don't remember the portfolio. Maybe it was health. When Ramon quit as Minister of Health, maybe he put in Dr. Sneh as a Minister of Health. I think that's what it was. That's one guy.

And the other guy is a fellow who's not in the cabinet, but he will be, I think the next one to be put in. And that's a guy by the name of [Avram?] Burg. Avram Burg...

M5: Oh, he's the son of Burg.

FRIEDMAN: That's right. B-U-R-G. He's the son of Yosef Burg, who is an old-line Mizrahi [00:35:00] -- that's modern Orthodox, not *haredi*, black hat way off on the right. And has been, for 39 years, in the cabinet.

M5: He's dead. He's dead.

FRIEDMAN: No, no, no. He's not dead. No, no, no, no.

M5: [Paul?] is not dead?

FRIEDMAN: He's got to be 80-something years old.

M2: Paul has got to be (inaudible).

FRIEDMAN: He's what?

M3: He's now the executive director from Yad Vashem and (inaudible) Yad Vashem (inaudible).

FRIEDMAN: Well, no, he wouldn't be executive director, no. Chairman of the board.

M3: Chairman of the board, yeah.

FRIEDMAN: Yeah, OK. That's possible. Old-line modern Orthodox.

Great storyteller. Jokes without end! If you invite Burg to speak, and you say, "You got 30 minutes," 20 minutes he'll tell jokes. And 10 minutes, he'll say what he wants to say, the essence of what he wants to say. And he'll get off the platform. Avram is his son. Avram is [00:36:00] anti-religious. This is a natural rejection of his father.

(background conversation) What?

M5: His father was the Minister of Religion, or Interior.

FRIEDMAN: Most of the time.

M5: Yeah. (inaudible)

FRIEDMAN: Either Religion or Interior. Those were the posts that the Mizrahi held from the beginning. Ben-Gurion, who was an atheist -- I mean, total and complete, and you couldn't catch him dead in shul, except if there was some...

M5: Except if he was dead.

FRIEDMAN: No, except if there's some official meeting, and he's got to go. So he put on his working clothes, which he called -- striped pants and top hat and a tie -- and he would go to whatever was the official meeting. I remember once there was an official Israel government ceremony of some sort in the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue on

Central Park West. And he had to go. That's all. So he got dressed up like this. And [00:37:00] he went, and he sat in the synagogue. And when he came out, he got in the limousine, and he went to go to leave. He said, "Boy, I'm always uncomfortable in these places. I'm always uncomfortable in *these places*." Wow, come on. Nineteenth-century old-line Socialist atheist. That typifies.

M6: Burg spoke at the Washington conference UJA. He was at the Washington conference.

FRIEDMAN: Which Burg? Father or the son?

M6: Son.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, Avram. Where did he speak?

M6: UJA Washington conference. I'm almost positive.

FRIEDMAN: In March, this year?

M6: I'm pretty sure. It's ringing a bell to me.

FRIEDMAN: OK.

M6: I'm pretty sure.

FRIEDMAN: Very personable.

M6: They debated, I'm pretty sure. The Likud/Labor. Does it ring a bell?

F1: It does, yeah.

M6: Pretty sure he spoke.

FRIEDMAN: Well, watch Burg...

M6: If it's who I'm thinking of, it was great.

FRIEDMAN: Burg's a comer. And I would say -- you know, I think [00:38:00] Burg also -- he's too young yet, and I haven't seen any demonstrations, but I got a intuitive feeling that you might be talking about another man of vision. You might.

So those are the only two possibilities I see on the Labor side. Sneh and Burg. On the -- and Ramon, I think, but I'm not sure. I'd be tempted to classify him as a good, smart, practicing politician.

M3: What about the fellow -- what's his name -- Itamar Rabinovich?

M1: Rabinovich.

FRIEDMAN: Present ambassador.

M3: Yeah.

FRIEDMAN: No. Itamar Rabinovich is a marvelous ambassador because he's got two things going for him. First of all, he is a hugely competent academic, and he is the number one expert inside Israel on Syria. That's his specialty. He knows Syria. [00:39:00] He's been the head of the Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University for a long time. And the Dayan -- Moshe Dayan Center -- studies -- so you got two

good think tanks in Israel. One is the Strategic -- that was a general by the name of [Aharon?] Yariv. Arale Yariv was the head -- he just died recently -- Center for Strategic Studies. That's militarily oriented. Dayan Center is politically oriented, to study the political makeup, the political personalities. Dayan Center has a file, biographical file, with photograph and personal data, on 10,000 Arab politicians in 21 Arab countries. Anybody who comes into power in any Arab country, Dayan Center pulls the file out on the guy, ships it over to the prime minister's office. Right away all the cabinet in Israel [00:40:00] knows who the hell is this new Minister of War in the government of Yemen or Oman or what -- OK. That's the Dayan Center. That's a trained academic -- and he was the head of it for a long time, Itamar. That's a trained academic who knows how to use the research capability for political purposes of Israel's security. So he's got that. And everybody in Washington, in the American administration, knows that. So whenever the state department has got a question about Syria, their own experts on Syria aren't as good as Itamar. And they call him for his advice. It's a great compliment.

The second thing he's got, a very soft, laid back, laid back, almost British English -- he's not nervous, he's not an American Type A personality. [00:41:00] (laughter) And Washington loves that. And every other ambassador of every country -- a hundred ambassadors posted in the city of Washington. Algeria, Nigeria, [Cigeria?]. (laughter) You've got, you know, the names -- [Laduga?], (laughter) capital of Chad, I think.

F1: His composure serves him well with the media. And (inaudible; overlapping dialogue)...

FRIEDMAN: Yes. And his English is --

F1: And his English is --

FRIEDMAN: -- perfect.

F1: -- is perfect. And he's...

FRIEDMAN: See, that's a great servant of the state of Israel, but he's not a visionary.

M2: (inaudible) Abba Eban, in terms of presentation?

FRIEDMAN: No, Abba Eban is a pure visionary.

M2: No, but in terms of presentation.

FRIEDMAN: In terms of presentation, not as good, but way up there.

F1: But you (inaudible) because he has a -- the British...

FRIEDMAN: How'd we get off on this?

M4: You were talking about visionaries. You were up to Likud visionaries.

FRIEDMAN: Oh. Yeah, right. We were supposed to talk about visionaries today. [00:42:00] (laughter) Who are the visionaries in the American Jewish establishment, here in the United States? Establishment.

M4: Wexnerites.

FRIEDMAN: Who?

M4: Wexnerites.

FRIEDMAN: Wexner's a visionary.

F1: (inaudible)

FRIEDMAN: No question. Absolutely. There is nobody in a hundred years of organized American Jewish communal life. I told you, we're here in the country -- we Jews are in a country 350 years. Pretty soon it'll be 400 years, longer than the Golden Age of Spain. But we've only had a large establishment since the Russian/Polish infiltration at the end of the nineteenth century --

M5: Infiltration.

FRIEDMAN: -- a hundred years ago.

M5: Another military word. (inaudible)

FRIEDMAN: That's what it is. Can't help it. That's what it is.

M5: I thought it was called an immigration! (laughter)

FRIEDMAN: Well, yeah, immigration. Listen --

F1: You're right. [00:43:00]

FRIEDMAN: -- immigration is such a nondescriptive word. I mean, an immigrant is a guy -- you've got a picture -- comes on a ship, gets off at Ellis Island. Gets his name changed by some American immigration officer who can't pronounce his name. And [Podolsky?] becomes something else, and, you know -- that's an immigrant. "Infiltration" describes a different thing. A guy comes off that boat, and in 20 years he doesn't live down on the Lower East Side anymore. He's got a half a million dollars, and he's living up there on Central Park West. And his kids are living in million-dollar houses in Scarsdale. In two quick generations. So that's infiltration. That's upward mobility. That's flowing in -- when the Jews of this country now [00:44:00] hold 10% of the seats in the Congress, and we are two and a half percent of the population, the rest of the population says, "That's infiltration!"

M5: Most of them don't know. (inaudible)

FRIEDMAN: They don't know it. You know, I have found that out. But you know why they don't know it? I ride a lot on airplanes, obviously. And you sit next to somebody who's a nudnik. And I'm trying to read, and he sees what I'm

reading, and so he's got some Jewish thing. So he starts talking to me. And then I plotz, because I'm going to lose all my time. (laughter) So first thing that he's doing, he's saying, "What is that book? (inaudible)." "Israel, *Jewish Life In the Sixteenth Century [sic]*." So he says, "Oh, you're reading something of serious Jewish interest. I assume you're Jewish." It happens to me -- I'm tempted to say, "What, [00:45:00] I don't look Jewish? What's a (inaudible)?" (laughter)

So he -- and one of the first questions that he comes around to is, "The Jewish people have really made it in this country. You know, the blacks haven't made it. The Koreans are trying. The Asiatics are creeping up fast. They're smart as hell. They're the new Jews." So I say, "Yeah. We're talking clichés, conventional wisdom. Everybody knows this." But then he begins to get to the heart of the matter. He says, "There really must be a lot more Jews in this country than we think. Because otherwise they wouldn't have that much -- you wouldn't see them everywhere. You wouldn't feel their presence." So I say, "Well, I don't know if there's a lot more than you think. What do you think? How many you think?" He says, "Well,

there's got to be at least, what? Twenty percent of the population?"

M3: (inaudible) say the same thing about...

FRIEDMAN: What?

M3: I had somebody say the same thing to me [00:46:00] two weeks ago.

FRIEDMAN: Somebody said the same thing.

M3: (inaudible; overlapping dialogue) I'm talking to, and I said, "What percentage?" Exact same answer. Twenty, 25%.

M5: You hear 40%, even.

FRIEDMAN: So what are we talking about? You're talking about 20 per--

M5: (inaudible) the Johnny Carson show, and three out of four people there are Jewish, you know? (laughter) You get that (inaudible).

FRIEDMAN: But in real terms, 20% would be 50 million Jews in this country.

M5: But they don't know what they're saying, so they don't think of that.

FRIEDMAN: No, they *do* know what they're saying! That's what they're saying. That's their per--

M5: (inaudible)

FRIEDMAN: What?

M5: Ron had a good point.

FRIEDMAN: What'd he say?

M5: He said maybe your statistics are off. (laughter)

M3: Maybe they're right.

FRIEDMAN: (inaudible)

M5: They're all classic Jews.

FRIEDMAN: It feels like we got 50 million Jews in this country.

And we probably have 4. But that's an incredible, incredible compliment. Now, other people are worried about the fact that that could cause anti-Semitism.

M5: Just to mention, [00:47:00] take a look at the lawyers representing OJ Simpson. (inaudible; overlapping dialogue)

M2: ... Jewish names...

F1: Well, and all the advisors, and all the experts, and everybody they have (inaudible; overlapping dialogue)...

FRIEDMAN: OK. Kindela. Let's get back to... The track is, out of all these 50 million Jews in the United States --

M5: (inaudible) the media.

FRIEDMAN: -- tell me who, in your judgment, is a man or a woman of vision.

M5: Herb Friedman.

FRIEDMAN: Yeah, but I'm almost off the scene. Come on -- age can't beat biology. Yeah, I'm one. But I'm not a national

personality. There are a quarter of a million people in this country who know me, know my name, know my face.

People come up to me all the time. "I was on a mission with you in 1959." I say, "Amazing. I don't remember."

(laughter) What am I going to say?

M5: You're going to say, "Of course I remember!"

FRIEDMAN: "Of course I remember you, sure." (laughter) I could say that. [00:48:00] But...

M3: "We went to Masada."

FRIEDMAN: Yeah, right. If you added up all the speeches I have made -- listen. I have spoken to the total population of the town of Lincoln, Nebraska, twice in my life. Not once. Anybody here ever been to Lincoln, Nebraska? What are you doing there?

M3: I was there (inaudible). And when there's a football game, you don't see anybody on the streets. They have a stadium. A huge stadium.

F1: I can think of a couple people that I consider visionaries, but not in terms of impact. They're Jewish, but they're not in terms of impact of the Jewish community.

FRIEDMAN: Oh! That's a different story. OK.

F1: Exactly. And I think that says something.

FRIEDMAN: That doesn't help us.

F1: Right. That's the point, it...

M2: You would have said (inaudible), wouldn't you?

M5: I would've, yeah.

M2: In terms of a visionary? Perhaps not one you agree with,
(inaudible) visionary.

FRIEDMAN: Well, I would say...

M2: All the things that were in that book...

FRIEDMAN: Yeah. In terms of... [00:49:00]

M5: There's no argument. He was the most well-known Jew...

FRIEDMAN: Well known, but that --

M5: For what he accomplished.

FRIEDMAN: -- I'm hesitating in terms of trying to formulate in my own mind, if I ask myself, what was Schneerson's vision. And I think the only thing I could say is his vision was to create a large organization which could persuade people to perform more *mitzvot* than they are performing now. That's his vision. Did he accomplish his vision?

M6: Well, wait a minute. Why do you presume that? How about necessitating and revitalizing an institution that already was there, that he pulled from the ashes?

FRIEDMAN: That's not vision.

F1: That's leadership.

FRIEDMAN: That's not vision.

M4: I think [00:50:00] what he did --

F1: That's outreach.

M4: -- at grassroots levels in establishing organizations throughout the United States -- and the world -- for outreach purposes. Which sounds nicer to me than what you said.

FRIEDMAN: Well, I don't know what "outreach" means. I think "outreach" means, to me, to try to get more people to be, to act, to think, and to practice according to the *mitzvot* of Judaism.

M4: As I said, I think it's just a -- it sounds nicer to me than what you said.

FRIEDMAN: Fine, I got no objection. I don't like "outreach" because to me it's a kind of -- what I call a "blah, blah" word. It's too vague. It's too bureaucratic. It's not defined.

M4: It's not as clinical-sounding is what you're saying.

FRIEDMAN: It's not as clinical. And I think his vision was reached. He achieved his vision in the sense of reaching, I would say, several hundred thousand people. Now, that's already big numbers.

F1: But you know what makes him --

FRIEDMAN: Real big numbers.

F1: -- but what makes him a visionary is that he saw a void.
The idea was that, you know, to be a visionary versus a
leader, you have to see a need.

FRIEDMAN: OK.

F1: I mean...

FRIEDMAN: He saw [00:51:00] a need and he was able...

M4: He changed a whole way of looking at things by a Hasidic
sect. I mean, traditionally, these people have always been
very inward-looking and protectionist of their realm, in
order not to lose what they have. And he looked at it
exactly the reverse way -- which, I think, was his vision.
He said, "No, we've got to do it by going out. That's not
going to make us weaker. It's going to make us stronger." I
mean, I'm not a great sell or anything, but I...

FRIEDMAN: Separate the word "vision" from "goal."

M5: Goal?

M4: From goal?

FRIEDMAN: Goal. A goal.

F1: A goal is something you have in front of you, that you can
specifically address here and now. And a vision is
something that...

M5: You're coming up with goals.

FRIEDMAN: Vision is something that goes --

F1: It's out there.

FRIEDMAN: -- far out.

F1: Exactly.

FRIEDMAN: Farther out than we normally think. A vision goes out a hundred years. A vision goes out 50 years. Moses Hess [00:52:00] wrote a book in 1860 called *Rome and Jerusalem*. *Rome and Jerusalem*. What was he saying? Eighteen sixty-two, it was. What happened in 1862? Garibaldi created Italy, out of a whole series of provinces, which separate, all different, and he welded them together into a nation. The modern nation of Italy was born in 1862. Moses Hess wrote a book at that same time, saying, "If Rome could do it --" -- Rome is a metaphor for an Italian leader, Garibaldi and Mazzini, Cavour, there were a whole bunch of them -- "-- if the Italians could do it to create a nation, why can't we Jews do it to recreate a nation? All they had was Rome. We have Jerusalem." So the title of his book is *Rome and Jerusalem*. Eighteen sixty-two. [00:53:00] So that's a vision. That's a visionary. He's throwing his mind a hundred years into the future. What did Herzl say? In 1897, weird, that word...

M5: (inaudible) signs of...

FRIEDMAN: What did he say?

M5: (inaudible) [Hebrew], "If you will it, it is no legend."

FRIEDMAN: But he said something more important than that.

M5: "It is no dream" or something?

M3: "It is no dream," yeah.

FRIEDMAN: No. No. No. The Zionist congress, which he convened, by the power of his personality, was 1897, in Basel, Switzerland. And he wrote in his diary...

M5: Oh, "Today I have found that the Jewish state..."

FRIEDMAN: No. "Today..." Yes. "Today I have found that the Jewish..." Now finish the sentence.

M5: (inaudible)

FRIEDMAN: "And in 50 years we shall see it." Eighteen ninety-seven, 1947, United Nations, November the 29th. Incredible. [00:54:00] Incredible. Now, sure, it's rhetoric. How the hell did he know? He's not a fortune-teller. He's not a stargazer. But -- so it was really by coincidence. Eighteen ninety-seven hit 1947, and the UN vote for partition. But, what he was saying was, when he said "50 years," "In the near-term future," if we want to use modern bureaucratic language. "In the near-term future, we shall see it." OK. Bingo.

M5: What about Rabbi Riskin?

M4: Sure.

FRIEDMAN: Shlomo Riskin?

M5: Yeah.

FRIEDMAN: Shlomo Riskin is a great politician. Shlomo...

M5: He seems to have a vision. When he takes off from here and goes to (inaudible)...

FRIEDMAN: Well, so he made aliyah. He had a vision -- I would say, OK, yes, in a certain sense. Because he's been at -- he's been planning this thing for, like, about 25 years. "Yeah, I want to bring with me from Lincoln Square Synagogue a whole bunch of people to make aliyah [00:55:00] because we Americans, if we live there, we're going to improve the country. And, of course, the figures are all exaggerated; therefore, they're unclear. I don't know how many families he brought with him. But I would bet -- I would bet that he brought a hundred families with him. And that was enough muscle to get the government of Israel to throw the dough in. The government owned the land already. Put the dough in and build the houses. Individual people then bought the houses, so the government gets some of its money back. But the infrastructure -- you know, water, gas, electricity, sewers, the whole business, the government put up. I would say that's a vision, to say, "Yeah, I want to build a little town in Israel, a [krau?] village. And I'm

going to do it." And he did it. Yeah, I think so. I think so. Is it the greatest vision in the world? No. [00:56:00] But is it a vision? Yeah, I think it is. I think so.

M6: In the course of the reading, I came across a quote that said -- I just found my notes -- "Looking toward a target is foresight. And looking toward a goal is vision." That's the difference between "target" and "goal."

FRIEDMAN: Got it. That's why, when I think about Schneerson, I think in terms of a goal. That's really what I think of. Not a vision.

M6: Goal or target?

M5: You said goal. A goal...

M6: You just said that looking toward the target --

FRIEDMAN: Target.

M6: -- is foresight.

FRIEDMAN: Yeah.

M6: And looking toward the goal is vision.

FRIEDMAN: Well, maybe. Vision is larger than goal. Vision goes past goal. And, you know, right now I think that the Schneerson phenomenon, the Lubavitch phenomenon, or the [Shetora?] phenomenon, is just that. It's a goal that was set. [00:57:00] I think that goal has been achieved. If you already are affecting three-quarters of a million people,

which I think is approximately what the total world orbit is of that movement, then you got a good shot! Now, you see, the *vision* thing came when the split occurred inside of the Lubavitch, in regard to whether he was or was not the *moshiach*. And some people said he was, and I don't want to go into the whole business of what [Guttman?] and Krinsky and -- internal fights inside of movements are foreordained. If you start creating a movement, then you're going to have internal fights inside it. But the jump from goal to vision was declaration of him as messiah. And then immediately splitting where some part of your following says, [00:58:00] "Come on. He's not the messiah. Krinsky says he's not. He's not the messiah, and I'm closer to him than anybody else. And I know. And he never said anything like that. He never alleged anything like that. And it's just a mistake in tactics. You shouldn't do it." I mean, you know the fight that raged there, at 770.

M4: So we've gone beyond vision to hallucination, then.

(laughter)

FRIEDMAN: Hallucination kills vision. But listen, how did Shabbetai Tzvi end up? Converting to Islam!

M6: But isn't vision, though, seeing something that's attainable -- seeing something that you see as being

attainable, when the guy behind you says, "No, no,
(inaudible; overlapping dialogue)."

FRIEDMAN: Fine. I'll accept that.

M6: But it's got to be a goal that somehow is ultimately
attainable, or it's hallucination.

M2: Ted Turner.

F1: Yeah, Ted Turner flies in the face of the vision.

FRIEDMAN: Look at [00:59:00] that Roman five. Roman five, where
it says "Visionary." A, what's the first definition of
vision?

M4: Seeing things invisible.

FRIEDMAN: That's it. Just exactly what you just said.

M4: Do you have subtitles for number two?

FRIEDMAN: Subtitles for number two?

M4: What Toshiba Corporation says? I mean, it sounds like
something (inaudible).

M2: I didn't know Toshiba was Jewish.

FRIEDMAN: No, I found it in a brochure of the Toshiba
Corporation.

M6: It's Toshiba.

M2: Oh, OK.

FRIEDMAN: I think it's not a very great saying. I think it's a kind of dull saying. But I put it in anyway. Yeah, he was a baseball player and a [01:00:00]...

M5: Rabbi Friedman, whose vision was it to set up this kind of program? I mean, was...

FRIEDMAN: It was a combination of two visions, two separate visions, one by Mr. Wexner and one by myself. Mr. Wexner started to talk to me -- oh, I don't know. Let's see. Where are we now? We started -- the first program was September '85...

M5: Were you already working for Wexner in terms of...

FRIEDMAN: No, no, no.

F1: That's about nine years ago.

FRIEDMAN: I wasn't working. We're in our ninth year, right. So the conversation with him was, like, let's say, 10 years ago, or 11 years ago. Wexner said to me -- no, I was not working for him. No.

(break in audio)

FRIEDMAN: ... about nine years of association with the man, I've only asked him to do one thing, and that [01:01:00] was to put five million bucks into the Holocaust Museum in Washington. Never asked him for another thing. Never will.

Well, I shouldn't say I never will. I got an idea in mind.

(laughter)

F1: Might it have to do with day schools, by any chance?

FRIEDMAN: Yes, it might.

F1: Yeah, I figured it might. (laughs)

FRIEDMAN: Let's say 10 years ago. Round numbers. He was talking to me -- and that's why it's so visionary. "What can I do in America that will help improve the quality of Jewish life among a large number of people, and that will help guarantee that Jewish life in America will grow stronger and stronger?" That was the vision that he had. And he wanted to know how [01:02:00] to do it. He did not use vocabulary then, but he would have if it had been prevalent, such as, "How do I prevent the Jewish community in America committing suicide?" The Orthodox community, which has built a network of schools and has a defensive network of home ritual, and parents have knowledge, and kids learn the meaning of holidays, and kids learn the meaning of texts, if the school is very good -- the Orthodox Jewish community -- these were never his words, but this is what he was thinking -- "That will take care of itself." Number one.

Number two, "That will not spill over and spread and affect and change 80, 90% of the population of [01:03:00] America." That 80, 90% of America is in danger of disappearing, committing suicide, just by -- no gas chambers -- but the kids walking off into the sunset, that's all. They don't have any care about Judaism. They don't place any value on it. They don't know how to practice it. They don't really know what it means or anything. And they're away at college. And the gonads are running. And Suzy is sitting out there -- beautiful, nice, blonde girl. And she's willing. And why not? And then it isn't just only a question of winding up in bed, it's a question of winding up under a non-chuppah somewhere. (laughter) Bingo. And that's what was troubling him, see? [01:04:00] And -- so he had a vision. He was willing to try to do something about that, to prevent that. But how do you do it? So that was his vision.

M5: Because he also mentioned that, like -- in terms of the idea of thinking about this kind of thing, when he was asked to decide about ransoming Russian Jews, and he felt strongly that no one discussed it from a Jewish context at all, from (inaudible)...

FRIEDMAN: It wasn't ransoming Russian Jews. He was asked, over and over again -- he has been the largest contributor to the UJA, the largest in the United States of America and probably in the world, if you include (inaudible) in other countries -- for many years. And he has been asked, many times, to be the general chairman of the UJA. And he has always turned it down because he did not feel that his knowledge base was [01:05:00] adequate. He didn't feel that he knew enough to stand up in front of other people and tell them why they should do something. All right, he could stand up and tell them they ought to give more money. But if somebody said, "Why?" he couldn't answer that question. "Why bother to be Jewish?" You tell me, why it is important to be Jewish? Why is it of major importance to be Jewish? Why? What do you say to a 21-year-old kid who comes home and he says, "Hey, Pop, I'm going to marry Suzy." In the old days, a hundred years ago what he would get would be what's called a "[frosk?] *punim*," which means you would give him a crack on his cheek and say, "Because! That's why you can't marry Suzy." (laughs) Go tell that to a kid today. And if the kid said, [01:06:00] "Well, I'm going to do it anyway," then what did the father do? Sat shiva. You tell me, even in the most traditional Jewish families of

today, where there is already an intermarriage rate that's running, like, around 11, 12% in the Orthodox community, did you ever hear of anybody saying, "I'm going to sit shiva"?

M4: Yeah.

M5: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Did you --

M4: Not very frequently.

FRIEDMAN: -- do you know anybody who *did* it?

M5: Yeah.

M4: Yeah. But it didn't last that long.

M5: It was a *shvartza*, so, I don't know, maybe... (laughter)

M4: Well, I had the same situation, but -- same situation. The girl made the guy reconcile with his parents.

FRIEDMAN: God bless her.

M4: Yeah, no, she really had a lot of brains.

FRIEDMAN: So the point is, anyway, that was his vision. And the vision came out of the fact, "Well, if I am so willing, [01:07:00] willing, to give my money, and to worry about the future of the Jewish people, I'd like to try to do something. And have you got any ideas?" I mean, that's how it all began. I said, "Yeah, now I have a vision." My vision is different from his, in the sense that the way I

think all the time is how, in a practical way, to get something done. How to get something done.

So I said, "Leslie, listen, I got lots of ideas, but one of them, I think, is better than any one. And I have a vision of a situation where we will one day have, in every organized Jewish city in this country, a small cell of people who will be of this current modern generation, but who, for the first time [01:08:00] will have the knowledge that you feel you lack, which caused you to back away from taking leadership. Because you felt you didn't know enough, and you felt you couldn't stand out." And he has a phrase, which is, "A person who stands up and alleges to be a leader, but has nothing inside of himself," that person he calls "an empty suit." There's a suit. The suit is a nice, expensive suit. But it's empty inside. And I said, "My vision is that we can have in America a bunch of 40-year-olds who will know something about Judaism, much more than you do, and much more than your generation, and they will be a new generation of leadership. And they will take over the synagogues and the federations and the schools and the centers, and they will build all of those places into

active, functioning [01:09:00] Jewish perpetuation, and insisting upon a great educational system."

So he says, "Wow." He says, "You think that's doable?" I said, "Yeah, I absolutely think it's doable, depending upon how much dough you're willing to pour into it. Because the one thing that happens when somebody has a vision, they waste about -- a major portion, 50, 75% of their energy -- raising the money to make it happen. So if you don't have to waste your time doing that, and if there's plenty of dough, then you can create this situation of a new generation of different kind of leaders in America." He says, "You really think so?" And then we got into a (inaudible) argument about -- he said, "I don't know how you [01:10:00] can create leaders. Leaders are born. You can't make 'em. Leaders aren't made." And I said, "Sure. Every once in a while you get an Abraham Lincoln. Every once in a while you even get a [Moshe Avedin?]. But, you know, how many hundred years or a thousand years you want to wait for that to happen?" I said, "You got to take the human material of all of us ordinary people, flesh and blood, you got to find the best ones you can find among them, and you got to get 'em to sit down and learn

something. You can make leaders out of ordinary people if they are willing to sacrifice." And look at the sacrifice you people have made. Just think of the number of hours you've put into this. And just think of how little you know. But think of how much more that little is than anybody [01:11:00] else knows. So you're way ahead of the game; that is the whole Jewish people is way ahead of the game, by you becoming what you have become -- or are continually becoming.

M2: How many of us are there?

M4: Do you think --

M2: Do you know the numbers?

FRIEDMAN: Yeah, sure.

M4: -- do you think, then, that Les is not a leader?

FRIEDMAN: No, he's a leader. Any time that he...

M4: You described him as a visionary.

FRIEDMAN: He is a visionary. And he is also a leader of anything that he wants to take the time to lead. One of these years, he will surrender, and he will take the time to become the general chairman of the UJA. Because he doesn't show up at the biweekly seminars, but we send him the material, and when he's on a 12-hour flight to the Far East, he takes the books and he takes the tapes. His personal plane is a 727.

Well, he doesn't have 250 [01:12:00] passengers on it. He's got a big communications room on there. He's talking on that telephone three, four hours of that flight, all over the world. He's got factories in Taiwan and Korea and Sri Lanka and Mauritius and [Afula?]. And, I mean, he's got a - - he's the largest single retail specialist in America. He employs 100,000 people. He's got 4000 stores. And he's got a communications capability on that airplane of talking everywhere on it. But always he takes along the books and he looks at the lessons and he doesn't -- and he skims. And he looks at a tape, a videotape, or he listens. And I won't say that he's put in anywhere near the number of hours you've put in. But he is improving himself all the way through this process. And one fine year the UJA will come along and ask [01:13:00] him to be the chairman. And if he feels more confident about himself, he'll do it.

M5: So he's a future leader.

F1: No. I think we need to make a distinction. And I used, like, my Cleveland experience as an example. For example, the people that were selected in Cleveland, for the most part, are already leaders in the community. I think, you know, when you talk about these kinds of qualities -- I mean, now it's a question that you're imbuing those

leadership skills, either demonstrated or anticipated, with Jewish knowledge, so that now we can apply those same skills in a constructive way to, you know, enhance our own Jewish communities. So I'm not sure that I would -- I don't mean to argue with you, but I don't know if I would say this is quote -- you know, it's not really leadership training process, at least not how I envision it.

FRIEDMAN: I would make a small --

F1: I envision it as imbuing it.

FRIEDMAN: -- amendment. I would make a small amendment. The people whom we selected from Cleveland or Houston or Hartford, doesn't make any difference -- Atlanta -- are on the leadership track. That's all they are. There are very few of you who [01:14:00] are anywhere near the top level of leadership in your country. But you're absolutely on that track, or you wouldn't be here. Goodbye.

F2: Goodbye.

FRIEDMAN: Take care. Hope everything's OK.

F2: Thank you.

FRIEDMAN: You're on the track. And you're motivated, and you'll stay on that track. And you'll keep going. And your skills will increase. Now, as far as leadership skills, that was an easy one for me to decide. Right back at the beginning,

10 years ago. I'm not here to teach you how to run a meeting, how to make a speech, how to organize a committee, how to raise a buck. If you haven't got all that in you, then you shouldn't be here to begin with. You don't need leadership skills. You should've learned that 10 years ago in your local Young Leadership -- I mean, I started the word, I invented the word. Every organization in America uses it. And sure! Your Young Leadership development [01:15:00] I started the national Young Leadership cabinet. And I told you, 1959, that's a long time ago. How far are we -- 35 years ago. So no, we do not teach leadership skills. What we're trying to do is give you the self-confidence of a lot of good Jewish knowledge, and motivation, and if anybody says to you, "Why be Jewish?" you've got a good shot at trying to formulate an answer. And he felt he didn't, 10 years ago, 20 years ago, when they asked him to be the UJA chairman. And he didn't want to stand up and be a phony.

So we put the two visions together. And I came to him with the design of this program, and we hammered it out between us, in many, many, many hours of meetings in July and August of [01:16:00] 1985. I went from New York to Columbus

every Sunday for six weeks. And six times six hours, seven hours, we spent in his house, he and I. And I told you, there's another guy in Columbus by the name of Gordon Zachs, who's a friend of his. The three of us sat there, and we hammered out this program. The details. The operating rules. How it would work. And back and forth. "Shall we teach leadership skills?" And Gordon says, "You've got to give these people education in public speaking. And you've got to hire a great --" -- what was the name of that guy who had a program...

M2: Carnegie?

M5: Carnegie.

F1: Dale Carnegie.

FRIEDMAN: Who?

M5: Carnegie.

FRIEDMAN: Dale Carnegie. Dale Carnegie. He says, "I don't need any Dale Carnegie. I don't have to turn these people into public platform speakers." These are people whose [01:17:00] communication skills have got to be verbal, oral, they've got to be intimate, personal, close, small group of 5 people, big group of 10 people. Best yet, one people at a time. That's the communication skills they have to have orally. Writing skills? You know what skills you

should have? I have a big argument inside my own staff and faculty on the matter of writing skills. This year, in the New York group, I asked everybody to write an essay of three or four pages -- first time in nine years we asked anybody to write anything -- on what they saw -- their picture of the future of the American Jewish community in the next quarter of a century. I just wanted them to start thinking ahead. Half of the people filled in the essays. If this were in an academic institution, I'd [01:18:00] flunk the other half. Because when you ask a student in a class to do something, the student's supposed to do it. The half of them who wrote in their papers -- and one lady gave me her paper today. She didn't give it to me two weeks ago -- but she had a reason. She gave the paper today.

Your writing skills leave something to be desired; let me tell you this. There isn't a single person in the 120 in New York, in the 41 in Cleveland, and in the 24 in Columbus. That's the population of the three current functioning groups. Not a single one of you can write grammatical English. Put it the other way. There isn't a single one of you who completed [01:19:00] a questionnaire at the beginning, two years ago, without a grammatical

error. Your spelling leaves something to be desired. Your grammar leaves something to be desired. Your ability to express yourself in writing leaves something to be desired. And that's because your generation does not write. Because largely, your generation no longer reads books. You read everything in short snippets. And because so much of the time of your children is spent in front of television. I don't know how much yours is. How many hours a week is a third-grader or fourth-grader in school?

M4: Yeshiva? Yeshiva?

FRIEDMAN: Yeshiva, or municipal school.

M5: How many hours?

FRIEDMAN: Thirty-something. [01:20:00] Yeah, that's fine.

Thirty, 38, 36. That's the rate. You know how many hours a week your kid is in front of the television set? I'll tell you what the official figure is. Twenty-seven.

M1: Not my kids.

M4: Not my kids.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, right! Thank God. Average. So if your kid is only in front of the television 10 hours a week --

M4: I'd say it's more like 5.

FRIEDMAN: Five hours a week --

M5: (inaudible)

M3: Some other kid --

FRIEDMAN: -- some other kid is in there 45 hours a week. Because if you've got an average of 27...

M5: We're not a big enough population to affect the averages.

FRIEDMAN: Come on. (laughter) Good boy, good boy. All right.

M5: I have a question with the essays. Are you going to send them back with comments?

M3: Corrections? Grammatical corrections? (laughter)

FRIEDMAN: It depends if I have time. The answer [01:21:00] is yes, if I have time. The answer's no, if I don't have time, and they'll just go into the archives. And when somebody -- oh yeah. It's a complete archive.

M5: I know one lawyer said that she didn't want to write the essay, because she doesn't write unless she gets paid 450 an hour.

FRIEDMAN: One lady said that?

M5: It was a joke. What?

FRIEDMAN: One woman said that?

M5: Yes. I think it was a joke.

FRIEDMAN: Well, I hope it was a joke.

M4: Not a good one, however.

FRIEDMAN: Not a very good one.

M5: I wish she was making. (laughter)

FRIEDMAN: If she said, "I'm not going to write the paper because I don't have time," I would be unhappy with that, but I would accept it. It's obviously logical.

Yes, there are archives, because there are lessons to be learned by some future PhD student who -- because this is a perfect PhD thesis for anybody in a department of Jewish studies at Duke or Stanford or Yale, any place. That's why I want the archives. It's for future people. My mind's always way out.

So let's get back to the main point. The main point that I wanted to get across to you is, in letter B, on that page -

M5: So we don't have too many visionaries in America.

FRIEDMAN: No. Uh-uh. So Wexner was undoubtedly one. In my own small way I think I am one. And then we came together, and that's the serendipity, that's the happiness of this venture. He has never stinted for a dime. I mean, you know that this thing costs millions of dollars every year, and we're doing it almost 10 years now. You know, you've got 30, 40, 50 million dollars invested in this thing

[01:23:00] already. And somebody who said -- I don't know who was it, do I know the numbers of -- sure, I know the numbers. You have graduate -- you have alumni. You have alumni. Everybody now is considered an alumnus. Who's in year two? You've got your... Yeah. Alumni is a shade over 500. Then you have currently studying in year two, year two, you have Cleveland and -- going into year two, you have Cleveland and Columbus. Somebody had this up. Cleveland is 42 and Columbus is 24. Then you have new cities that will start in September. You have -- Denver is [01:24:00] 22. You have Phoenix is 21. You have San Diego is 41. So it's 150.

F1: San Diego's how much?

FRIEDMAN: San Diego's 41. Two groups. So what's it? So the first number is 500 alumni, 150 current students is 650.

M6: Eighty-six first year, you have 66 second year.

M1: One forty-nine, Herb.

M6: And 500 alumni. So two years from now you'll have...

(laughter)

FRIEDMAN: Six fifty, right? I think we can take your word. All right. In October, right after the *chagim*, we'll start. And those three cities, [01:25:00] Denver, Phoenix, etc., are the class of '94-'95. That'll be year one for them. OK? So

they will become year two. And I have to start thinking of year one, for '95-'96. So I'm taking a look at Seattle. And I'm taking a look at San Francisco Bay area. And I'm taking a look at all the smaller places, like I got to decide if I want to go to Portland or not, or go to Vancouver or not. I mean, once I'm out there on the West Coast...

M2: Sacramento...

M5: Why are you avoiding Los Angeles?

M4: The obvious. (laughter)

FRIEDMAN: I'm avoiding Los Angeles because the city is the most dreadful mess in all of the United States. It's a horrible organized Jewish city. Terrible.

M4: (inaudible) (laughter)

FRIEDMAN: And I probably will have to go -- what?

M4: Oh, I would've [01:26:00] thought that that would've meant you would jump to get there.

FRIEDMAN: No. I cannot do anything in a culture, or in an environment, which itself is full of disintegration, deterioration. I could go in there and -- we had six groups in New York, 120? You 120 people are going to make one big difference in New York. I could put 220 people in Los Angeles, and they'd get lost. Town is a total mess.

M4: You mean because it's more fragmented?

FRIEDMAN: Oh, it's too complicated, and I don't want to take time to explain it. Just take it from me. I know that I'll get hammered and hammered, and I know that I'll have to probably wind up doing something in Los Angeles. But I sure ain't happy about it. And I'm going to surround it with an awful lot of tight conditions before I spend energy, faculty time, [01:27:00] money, and worry -- because I worry about these things like mad. We're a tiny staff. From myself to the telephone girl, we're eight people. That's all we are. And what's going on? I mean, the number of things that we try to manage all over the country. And I haven't talked to you about the year three and year four and year five kind of curriculum, because those people are all under the alumni figure. But they take work. Basically we have to help them shape the curriculum, we have to help them shape their budget -- they pay for it themselves. But they have to -- they need help in organizing it. We give them all the secretarial backup. They don't have to spend a dime on overhead. So there's a large supervisory problem involved in that, and we're only still the same eight people.

M3: Out of the groups, how many are [01:28:00] going on to years three, year four?

FRIEDMAN: Everybody. Everybody in the whole thing. we're now in 24 cities, all told. Everybody goes to year three. Most have gone to -- go to year four. Year five already is an exception. I mean, that's really where you get so addicted that you really love the studying, and you want to keep on going. So by that time, let's say the original group was 20 people, by the time you get to year five -- well, some have been added. Spouses who were before were spouses come in as members in year three, when they want to. And then some people who got left out by us, we didn't take them in -- because once we don't control the decision, and the group controls -- "Hey, I want to bring in Danny, and I want to bring in, you know, [Merrill?], and [01:29:00]..." So the group enlarges itself a little bit. Then, also, a few people drop out. Because they've had enough. I would say by the time you get to year five, the group is 15, 14, 13, and it comes to a natural end. Everything dies, OK?

M2: Even *M*A*S*H*.

FRIEDMAN: What?

M5: Even *M*A*S*H*.

M2: The television program.

FRIEDMAN: Even television programs, right. I would like you to look at B. Because B is the one that Wexner had when he put

the original question to me. What he said was, "I want to do something to try to strengthen American Jewish life, but I don't want to duplicate what anybody else is doing, and I want to do something which will really change..." "Seminal" means down to the roots of things. "I don't want to tinker, I don't want to do anything that anybody else is doing. Give me [01:30:00] something brand new, unique, non-duplicated, and that will be like roots that will give fruit."

OK. "Seminal." This means thinking of what will really change the future. This means having a sense of priorities. Distinguishing between the major and the minor. Realizing that all projects and programs are *not* equal in importance. Leaders should *not* work on everything, because this spreads them too thin. Vision involves the largest dreams, which usually take the longest time to bring into activity. Vision inevitably means taking risks, vision demands persistence, patience, and exquisite articulation. When you're trying to do something new, you have to be able [01:31:00] to describe it, portray it, in the *most* articulate and elegant way. Because that's how you capture the imagination of intelligent, educated people.

This venture is unique. There is nothing like it in America. Nobody has ever tried it. It isn't that somebody else tried it and failed, and we try it and we're doing it better. No. This is unique. This is what -- the Latin phrase is the best one. "*Creatio ex nihilo*."

M3: Oh, "Created from nothing"?

FRIEDMAN: "The creation of something from nothing," OK? This is from blank sheet. And that's what makes it so great. The fact that he's going to pour all this money into it makes it possible. Are there other people in America [01:32:00] who --

M5: Actually, I was just going to...

FRIEDMAN: -- would spend this kind of money? Of course there are! Of course there are. He speculates every once in a while why it is that there's nobody else who's copying him.

(break in audio)

FRIEDMAN: ... duplications. In Minneapolis, there's a -- they asked me if I'd go up there and do a second group. And I said, "I can't do a second group until we've completed one round. It wouldn't be fair. I've got to make one round to every community in the country that is big enough to have the program." And Minneapolis said, "Well, OK, you don't

want to do a second group, that's fine." And they went to a foundation in town. This foundation is very rich. It's good. Throws in 400 grand a year into the federation drive every year in the local city, [01:33:00] Minneapolis. And so they said, "Well, OK, we'll do it. But, will you help us shape it? Will you give us all the paperwork, the questionnaire; will you come out and show us how to do the..." "Sure, sure, sure. We'll do all that." So Minneapolis is running its own program, duplicate program. Just in Minneapolis. God bless 'em. We get versions of this, and there -- in about -- oh, I would say, five or six cities, this program is going in, permanently, in the city. Not a national program. More or less -- they can't afford the big heavy stuff. I mean, you know what this thing costs -- this one, here, where we are. The Summer Institute. This is a big, heavy chunk of dough. [01:34:00] And there's not an awful lot of difference in terms of what it costs, between bringing you to Snowbird, Utah, or taking you to Jerusalem.

M4: Is that right?

FRIEDMAN: Yeah, that's right.

M4: Oh, I would've thought that Israel was more expensive.

FRIEDMAN: No, not -- yes, it is.

M3: We already have kosher. (laughter)

FRIEDMAN: More, but -- what'd he say?

M3: We already have kosher food in Israel. (laughter)

FRIEDMAN: That's one difference.

M4: No, but the accommodations have to be much more in Israel.

FRIEDMAN: Yes. The airfare is remarkably close. Not much difference in the airfare. Some small difference in the hotel...

M5: The airfare, how could it be close? I paid \$400 to get here.

M3: You can get to Israel for 600 bucks. Without a big group.

M6: Four hundred round trip?

M5: Yeah.

FRIEDMAN: You paid \$400 round-trip from New York to here?

M5: Yeah.

FRIEDMAN: I don't know who you bought it from.

M5: From you.

F1: From you.

M1: Cleveland was 383?. Cleveland. Cleveland was 383.

[01:35:00]

FRIEDMAN: OK. So...

M4: That was your rate.

FRIEDMAN: What?

M4: That was the Wexner rate.

FRIEDMAN: Yeah. OK. So...

M5: They didn't have good bargains this weekend, actually, because it was July 4th. So it wasn't (inaudible) -- you didn't benefit that way.

FRIEDMAN: She really got us a good rate, then. If she got it for us (inaudible).

M4: Oh yeah.

FRIEDMAN: Then we're going to come in under budget on this one. Good.

M4: And then Israel would have been, when bought normally, around 700, 800 round-trip?

FRIEDMAN: Yeah, again, it depends on how the international market goes, but we can sometimes do it for as little as 800. So the ticket cost twice as much.

M5: Last year it was 1000.

FRIEDMAN: What?

M5: I didn't go on the Wexner flight, but they said they'd give me about -- whatever -- for my spouse. A credit of a thousand dollars, because that's what they were paying. So it wasn't \$800, it was 1000.

FRIEDMAN: OK. To Israel.

M5: Yeah.

FRIEDMAN: All right.

M3: I think it's like [445,000?] for the (inaudible).

M5: It was a \$1,075 for this one. [01:36:00]

FRIEDMAN: Wound up 1075, yeah. At any rate, at any rate, we don't take you to Israel every year because we want to get you to Israel once in the two-year period. And we want to get you once away somewhere in a secluded place like this where the environment is gorgeous and where nature nourishes the soul, and where we have a complete separation. In Israel, you all have friends, you all have relatives. The New Yorkers remember last year in Israel, when I had to chastise you. Don't think it was easy. It wasn't easy. But I was fed up to here...

M5: It was a great experience. Great. I mean, all of us have been to Israel many -- almost all of us -- so many times. And this was so unbelievable.

FRIEDMAN: Right. Right. Right. So you may say, "Well, if it's not that much difference in cost, why don't we go to Israel every year?" [01:37:00] And the answer is, "No, we don't go to Israel every year." It takes a long time to build up the kind of program we did with the kind of people that we can get hold of, etc., etc.

So OK. But I would like you to remember that, when you are trying to concentrate on visionary things, that means that you have to let go of a lot of other things that you are doing, and you have to put it in perspective as to long-range permanent value of something, versus short-range immediate value of something where you're devoting time.

I'm not even talking about money. Just time. I say that you -- over and over again -- time is more crucial than -- your time is more crucial than money.

M5: Rabbi?

FRIEDMAN: Sir.

M5: I was just -- another person came to mind [01:38:00] that I think might qualify for visionary. I think it's Greenberg, what he tries to do. He doesn't have the budget and the resources, and that was a big problem. But I think the idea behind CLAL is very similar to your agenda.

FRIEDMAN: I suppose in a way the idea is. But the execution certainly isn't. And not because of the money. See, in CLAL, they want to set up a -- they go to a community, and they function also the same way around the focus of the federation. And they want to offer a CLAL study group. And anybody who wants to come in, comes in. That's number one. There are no criteria for admission, none.

M5: I don't think that's exactly...

FRIEDMAN: That is exactly accurate. Just look at what they
[01:39:00] put in writing.

M1: (inaudible) you want to go participate in one of their
courses...

FRIEDMAN: And the second thing is, there's no discipline about
attendance. You can go in, drop in, and if you then drop
out, and if you want to come back in a few weeks later, you
come back in. Now, that makes a substantial difference in
the attitude...

M5: Yeah. I'm sorry. Because, you know, when Les Wexner said
he's paying for these things because he wants to be able to
say, "You got to do it, you know? I paid for you to go to
Israel. You have a title to come in and..."

FRIEDMAN: You make a bargain.

M5: Right.

FRIEDMAN: You make a bargain.

M5: It's different with CLAL. That's part of the money problem,
also.

FRIEDMAN: No. It'd be no money problem. If they would go into
Atlanta, Georgia, and the community of Atlanta federation
or group of synagogues, whoever it is, hires them, and
says, "Set up a study program for us," they could make that

study program just as tight as we make this study program. They don't do it. And it's a difference in approach.

[01:40:00] Now, you may say it's a minor thing. I think it's a major thing. And I think it's one of the differences between what they can achieve in the long run and what we can achieve in the long run. Leave out all of the bells and whistles that we give you and that we spend on you. Just get down to the hardcore every two weeks, every two weeks, every two weeks, for two years. You're doing an incredible investment. You. You. The amount of time you're putting in. and reading the stuff, in addition, besides the -- just the four hours. Come on. I take my hat off to you. You're really doing something. And the harder it is -- and you don't realize this -- the more you will cherish it, as the years go on. And you will think back on it, and you will say, "I did a good thing." And your own self-pride. What you're entitled to. [01:41:00]

I wish Yitz would have organized himself that way. Yitz Greenberg is an authentic guru. A guru is somebody to whom you go, on top of a mountain somewhere, to be taught and to be inspired, and all the rest of your life you'll remember the effect he had on you. He's a guru. I'm not sure he's a

visionary. Because one of the things about being a visionary is you got to have a plan by which to try to carry out your vision. Yitz doesn't have plans. Yitz is not an administrative type of person. Yitz doesn't deal with the practicalities of things. That's not his strong suit.

M5: He's got people for that, though.

FRIEDMAN: Well, he doesn't, that's the problem. [01:42:00] In a nutshell. He's got Irwin Kula, who's a real good guy.

M5: Well, David Elcott runs it.

FRIEDMAN: David Elcott is this -- David Elcott is a faithful, loyal servant. David Elcott is a manager. David Elcott's a manager. Not even -- no, David Elcott's not a leader. Certainly not a visionary. There is only one Yitz Greenberg in America. He is an authentic guru. I wish, I wish he had a vision. And I wish -- because that would mean that he had some idea of how to try to achieve that vision.

M1: Does Irwin Kula have possibly the future kind of thing like that? What do you think of Irwin?

FRIEDMAN: Future what?

M1: Visionary kind of thing? (inaudible; overlapping dialogue)

FRIEDMAN: Yeah, he's got some fragmentary vision. Yeah, he does.

He has -- there's something [01:43:00] about that boy that's --

M3: He's pretty special.

FRIEDMAN: -- very charming, very special. He's an excellent teacher. We use him all the time. You know that.

M6: I hate to get off the topic, but I wouldn't want to have the session close without at least asking the question -- how do you select successors?

FRIEDMAN: How do you select...

M6: Successors? In other words, when do you reach the point where you say to yourself, "I don't know how much more I can do," or, "I don't know if I want to give it up because I'm having such a good time doing it," or "I don't know if this person behind me is as good a politician or as great a visionary," whatever. I mean, when -- how do you do -- how do you get the institution or the organization to do it?

FRIEDMAN: Well, there are two answers to that, because there are two theories about it. One theory is that the leader -- if you happen to be lucky enough that your leader is a visionary, [01:44:00] good. That's rare, that's wonderful, that's excellent, that cannot be duplicated. Forget it. Very rare combination of circumstances required in a human being to be a true visionary. And that's why it's so hard for us to name -- you can't name a long list of people. But

the leader, without being the visionary, there are two theories.

Number one, the incumbent leader, the man presently, or woman presently, in place, is responsible for finding the successor and preparing the successor and training the successor and bringing the successor up to speed. The other theory is, that's absolutely cockeyed, you can't load and burden the leader with the problem of training somebody else, because that takes a lot of energy. [01:45:00] It takes a lot of time. The only way I can answer you is in my own life, that's all. There are only two major instances where the question of succession, to me, comes up. One is what happened after all those years at the UJA. And the other is, I'm going to be 76 on my next birthday, so there will come a moment here when I will say, I'll become emeritus. So let's take those two examples.

In the UJA, I had a deputy. His name was -- is; he's retired. He's still living, active. His name is Irving Bernstein. I don't know whether anybody ever heard the name or anybody...

M5: Sure.

FRIEDMAN: What?

M5: Yeah.

FRIEDMAN: You did.

M5: Sure.

FRIEDMAN: OK. Irving Bernstein was my deputy for eight years.

Eight years. Absolutely perfect number two man. I never groomed him to be a number one man because I didn't think he had the capabilities to be a number one man. I'm not talking about an enemy; this guy's a friend. And I'm not saying anything behind his back that I haven't said to him to his face. New York City UJA came to me and said, "Hey, we need a number one man, and we'd like to know if you don't mind if we could talk to Irving." I said, "Sure, you can talk to Irving, if you want to offer him the number one job." And they said, "Well, may we have your opinion about him?" And I said, "He's a great number two guy. But he won't be a number one [01:47:00] guy for you or for me." And the minute I finished that conversation, I called Irving in. And I said, "Hey, this is what I just said to the chairman of the New York search committee. So I didn't say anything to him behind your back." Irving said, "OK, that's fine, that's fair, that's honest."

New York didn't take him. He remained as my deputy. I then moved to Israel. And we lived in Israel eight years. During the course of that eight-year time, my arrangement with the UJA was that I would remain in charge and that I would make the policy decisions and that I would start the [01:48:00] execution of the policy decisions from Israel, and that I will do this in tight communication with Irving every single day. We would be in touch, from Jerusalem to New York. And about halfway through that time period, they decided, no -- they being the lay leaders -- they wanted the power to be in New York. And I said, "Fine, if that's what you want, fine. I resign." And they appointed Irving to be the number one man. He was not really greatly successful. He didn't advance the coffer. He didn't think of new things to do. He certainly was not a visionary. [01:49:00] And he wasn't a great, powerful, charismatic, number one leader of the biggest institution in America. And then they got another guy after him.

M5: Stanley Horowitz?

FRIEDMAN: Stanley Horowitz, right. And that ended in failure. Because he was certainly not a number one man type. And he came out of some executive dire-- Cleveland. He came out of Cleveland, didn't he? Yeah, right, right. And then they

have a third guy, and that's Brian Lurie, and he came out of San Francisco. And he's doing much better. And he does have some ideas, new ones. I would call him a good leader. I wouldn't call him a visionary, but I would call him an imaginative and [01:50:00] creative leader, OK?

So that's the succession in the UJA. Haphazard, two really not good men in the job. Not good -- and for the job. They're both good men. I mean, they don't beat their wives. But -- (laughter) and I think now, they've got a much better person. But an organization like that should be condemned for the process by which it ran for so many years with two inadequate persons.

M5: But whose fault is that? Is that the old lay leadership?

FRIEDMAN: Well, in this case, because I was off the scene, physically living in Israel, and organizationally off the scene because they did not want me to remain -- they didn't want the power center of the UJA to be in Israel.

[01:51:00] And I said, "What are you guys talking about power center? It's me, one assistant, and one secretary."

And I don't know what it was about it that made them uneasy.

Creativity comes out of here. And so long as you are able to write down what you think -- that's why writing skills are very important -- then you've got a fax machine, and you've got a telex machine, and you've got a telephone, and you've got an airplane, and you can be on the *moon* and be the creative person with creative ideas.

And I'll give you an example of what I mean by creative idea. I tried to persuade them -- the first wave of Russians came into Israel in the very early '70s. Seventy-one, '72. [01:52:00] And I said -- I started to build a concept of how to run the '72 campaign. And I said, "I will find -- in here, in Israel -- there are 40 cities in the United States. Thirty-nine cities. Where most of -- 95% of the Jewish population of this country lives. Thirty-nine cities. I want a Russian immigrant in every one of those 39 cities." Let's make it 40, for arithmetic. Forty cities. "I want a Russian immigrant, speaking good English, who is within 90 days of having come out of the Soviet Union and moved into Israel. And I want him in that city back in the United States for 90 days. That's all he should stay away from home. He's got to help get his family settled.

[01:53:00] For 90 days -- breakfast, lunch, tea, dinner,

drinks in the afternoon, schmooze at home in the evening -- I want every single -- every single -- giver in that city of over \$1000 to have a face-to-face contact with a brand-new Russian immigrant. And every 90 days I got to change that person, because he doesn't want to be away from home any longer, and I don't want him away from home any longer. He'll get corrupted if he sees American capitalism for too long." That's a bad joke.

M5: (inaudible)

FRIEDMAN: "So for every city I need --"

M2: But true.

FRIEDMAN: "-- for every city I need four such human beings to cover 12 months of the year. And there are 40 cities. So I need 160 people. Well, what's 160 people? I will find -- I'm living here in Israel. I will find 160 people who have [01:54:00] all of the qualities -- the charisma, the intelligence, the communications ability. The willingness to take this thing on. I will pay them well for their time. I got to ease the pain of being away from their wife and their kids, etc." And I thought it was a pretty damn good scheme. Because if I could put every single contributor above a thousand bucks in personal con-- you invite this guy home for lunch, you invite this guy for tea -- dinner,

breakfast -- this guy's going to work his tail off all day long. Never speaking at big meetings. I don't believe in that. But one by one by one, I can -- that's like saturation bombing. OK. And it was not some massive project. A hundred and sixty people. We can keep the flow going. The office back there, the transportation office...

M5: So what happened? Did they go?

FRIEDMAN: They [01:55:00] got scared, back in New York. "Oh, we can't handle this. Oh, geez, you're thinking too big." I'm not thinking too big. I'm not telling you that I'll dump a thousand Russians on you, and you won't know what to do with them. Get out of your conventional thinking, that you have to find speaking opportunities for them. No, forget it. It's just take out the membership list, roll it down by date, take them -- this guy is going to be -- Vladimir will do this and Alexander will...

M5: They didn't have to start off with 40 cities, either.

FRIEDMAN: Of course not.

M5: They could start off with two cities.

FRIEDMAN: Of course not. Of course not. They said, "This is too big a magnitude. Do us a favor. Send us four Russians, and we'll use them, and we'll send them around, making speeches. Bingo. Two different ways of thinking. Two

different ways of thinking. Well, we had a couple of episodes like that, and after a while I began to say, "Oh, boy. [01:56:00] If I were back there, I wouldn't ask anybody. If I were back there, I would ask somebody in Israel to find me the 160, and I know whom to ask. And I'll stay here in America and manage the damn thing."

M5: So what fell apart? Because (inaudible) didn't push it enough? He wasn't...

FRIEDMAN: He didn't want to tackle it. "I got too many other things to do. I got too much other stuff on my plate. You think I'm sitting here going to the movies? I'm busy." (laughs) "I know you're busy! But we got to do business in a different way." Hey. This is 1881, all over again. When the Russian Jews were coming into the United States at the rate of 100,000 a year. And that's what it was, between 1881, when that first pogrom started, and 1914, when World War I started and the German submarines were on the ocean, and there were no more refugee -- no more [01:57:00] immigrant ships coming. From 19-- from 1881 to 1914 is how many years? Eighty-one...

M3: Thirty-three.

FRIEDMAN: Thirty-three. So in 33 years, you had three million Jews landing in this country. That's what it was. It was

100,000 a year. For 33 years. Continuous-- I said, "We've got that same thing coming into Israel. This is the same kind of history, repeating itself, two generations later. You got..."

M6: But that was like a monster organization in which you were absent for the eight-year period, and it wasn't doing (inaudible). How do you do something like Wexner where it's smaller, and you're here, and (inaudible; overlapping dialogue) decision?

FRIEDMAN: Yeah. So now take the other example, what I call the successful example, where I have taken the responsibility, and I have trained good [01:58:00] old Nathan Laufer for eight years. And Nathan Laufer knows every single cell in my brain. He knows how I think. He knows how I make judgments. He knows what I would say yes to. He knows what I would say no to. He could do everything in the dark. He knows me that well, as to how I function. He has a magnificent relationship with the faculty. Every single faculty person treats him as an equal, and some of these guys have got PhD -- most of them have PhDs, and he doesn't. They treat him as an equal, and they take guidance from him. And I've watched it and watched it, and it's

perfect. This is not the same Nathan Laufer who came to work eight years ago.

M6: Did you do it from day one with (inaudible)? Did you...

FRIEDMAN: Day one I took a shot, based on my age. I couldn't gamble, you see. I couldn't spend three, four, five years with [01:59:00] somebody and be wrong, because I wouldn't have time -- another three, four, five years -- with somebody else. I mean, I'm going to be around for a long time, I hope. But I can't beat the clock. Listen, 76 is 76. And God gave me something, boy oh boy. To have the energy and the patience and the dreaming and the optimism and -- I mean, life has certainly not beat me down. I've had my problems. My God, who hasn't? I don't have an appendix and I don't have a gall bladder and I don't have a prostate, and I have two hernias, and I had a subdural hematoma, and I have angina. It doesn't bother me, I don't bother it. (laughter) If it doesn't work, take it out. (laughter) You know? I mean, I'm really very happy-go-lucky about it all. And I'm [02:00:00] so lucky. And I thank my God every day.

So -- but, but, I'm very realistic. You know me. That if I fail with Nathan, then I haven't got time to train another guy. But everything's been wonderful. And every day, from

now on, this program is safe. If I walk out, Nathan walks in, and Wexner has agreed to that now. And that's the way - - so we're protected. So that's the other model. The UJA was one model, and it ended up kind of the [to vavot?] for a number of years. This is a different model. I trained the guy. So if you've got the luxury, and if your nose tells you that you picked the right man, and if you give him authority and freedom, and if you tell him -- every single time that he makes a mistake, [02:01:00] you have to sit down and analyze with him what the mistake was and why did he make it and how did he fall into that trap, and he says, you know, "Why didn't I think of that before?" But then, pretty soon, he doesn't make any mistakes.

M2: It's like your children.

FRIEDMAN: Exactly. Exactly.

M5: You hope.

FRIEDMAN: Good relations with the students, good relations with the faculty, (background conversation) good relations with the (inaudible) Mr. Wexner. Good relations all the way down the line. All the skills. The only thing he doesn't have is -- simply because he hasn't lived as long as I have -- he doesn't have in his head the Rolodex of all the players. All the players in America. All the players in Israel. All

the players in Russia. We will have to go to Russia someday. All the players in England. We will have to go to England someday. He doesn't have -- he doesn't know all the [02:02:00] players whom I -- as I do -- all over the world. And all over the United States, more importantly. But OK, he'll get that. He'll get that. He's young. He's 30-- how old is he? Thirty-seven, I think? Something like that? And his kids are now growing up. He's got the triplets. The early days, [hev le le da?], that's behind him already. Kids are in school, have been -- pre-kindergarten -- so he's free -- just a little more free. More traveling. More traveling. He'll get around. He'll get to know a whole bunch of lay leaders in every city. That can only come with time. That isn't something I have to teach him. His ideological feelings are perfect. He's modern Orthodox. Modern and open-minded, but rich in [02:03:00] tradition, knowledge. Several years studying in Israel, in -- he told me which yeshiva. I forget. He's -- I mean, I don't come out of that background, as you know. And yet, in eight years, he and I haven't had one single argument in regard to ideology.

M5: He's from a black-hat background, (inaudible).

FRIEDMAN: He? He doesn't have a black-hat background.

M5: Yes, he does. (inaudible; overlapping dialogue)

FRIEDMAN: Well, then he overcame it.

M2: According to [Lauf's?] notes.

FRIEDMAN: Well, then he overcame it. Good for him. (laughter)

M5: (inaudible)

END OF AUDIO FILE

