

C-7446 Transcription

Fine, Leon and Mayer Abramovitz. Lecture at Tel Aviv University.

[Israel]. Undated.

General Aharon Doron:

-- UJA (inaudible) and so on. And they said "you know? These people to whom you want to talk, they're not on our lists. We can't get them for you." And I always have trouble meeting people in whom I was very much interested. And you know in Israel usually just the same thing happens. You meet people for whom I have the highest regards, but they have already emotional ties to Israel. And I think the big difference between anything they did so far [01:00] in the relationship between Israel and Jews abroad, and what is supposed to be -- my opinion -- the future link, the big difference is that so far we could count on an existing emotional relationship based on actually and essentially the same background. I would say that people thirty years ago in Israel of all ages, and those living at the same time ago, they were essentially the same. And I could very well imagine somebody in Jerusalem on a night reciting the sentence the next year, "Baruch shalom, [02:00] sh'ma ba buruch shalom."

And yet he would actually think about his father's home back in the diaspora, where this sentence has been said just the same as

it would come into the mind of a Jew being in Poland, in Germany, or in the United States. Without even knowing the same language, if it was here Hebrew and there English, they had the same feeling, the same ideas, the same tradition. Today I would say we could be -- and sometimes we are -- worlds apart. Because you had [Ruth?] in the United States. And the people here, over 50%, are youngsters born in this country. [03:00] And of the other 50%? Fifty percent again did not come from countries which you would understand easily their intelligence. And I think, therefore, to establish a closer relationship between the younger generations within the Jewry is a must.

You know the drive now at this young university, for the first time this year, we started a foreign students program. We hesitated doing it because we felt before that we were not yet ripe for it. But today, because of this reason, we decided that it is a must for every Jewish institution in this country; every Jewish educational institution to bring over [04:00] Jewish youngsters from abroad. There's no need to hide it -- Even if it means sometimes that we cannot accept all the Israeli applicants for placement at university. Even then, sometimes -- I have learned it the hard way in the army -- you have to allocate priorities. This is a priority. This is a priority. More than that.

I don't believe that by just reading newspapers, or once a year going to a UJA meeting, we really can build a united Jewry; united meaning that one understands the other. [05:00] Not more than that. But I believe that if someone spends a year here studying, or a year here working, he will come back home -- or, first of all he may stay, that's certainly good, but even if he doesn't -- he comes back home with a completely different understanding. He will know for his whole life what Israel means, what the Israeli youngsters look like, what life in Israel is in reality. And more than that, he will be linked to Judaism and Israel forever. He will come home with at least some knowledge in Hebrew, and he will keep it for his whole life, for him and probably for his children. [06:00] That makes all the difference. (inaudible) We believe -- I said I welcome you, I hope you will be here again next year, be it for four weeks -- and yet I believe we should not do just with four weeks. Because then, mostly you see the rosy sides of life; very difficult to go and see the small details which make life sometimes difficult for people. It is just natural that one would like to show you the brighter side of life, the achievements. (inaudible) and you should know them, and the reason for them. And it is therefore that I say, if [07:00] you can, come not only for four weeks. Come for a longer time, and

learn to know Israel the way it is really, and establish personal contacts, personal ties with people and families in this country. Because in the final end, there is no sense in talking about a relationship between Israel and the United States, Israeli Jewry and the American Jewry, if you have no personal ties to it. If it depends only on you like the idea, you make some money, you make talk, you may go to a meeting, it's not enough. If we are one people, there must be ties to it. Personal ties, people who you know and who you can point out and say "this is somebody I know there." [1:2:00] It is not just something else about which one can talk without any real feeling and Jewry relation.

But it is because of this aspect of it that I came to the university. And I think you should know about it just as well. This is a young university, one reason that I picked out to come here and work here, and not grow up anywhere else. You have been told, I guess, the university is about ten years, four years, four and a half years in this location, and about eight thousand students today, more to come, more problems to come, more difficulties to come, I guess. And yet I think that there should be more universities in the country. If we want to become [09:00], to maintain or to become, let's say, a modern people and a modern country. You cannot do without it. Times have

changed, even in this country. And if thirty years ago the farmer, the settler, and the soldier, sometimes later they will be accepted heroes of Israel. Today it's a farmer still, the soldier still, but then there is more to it today. The scientist; he is just as well an accepted Jew, and we need him in this country. If we don't want to become a backward country, if we want modern industry; we must have people who know how to run it, how to build it, how to develop it. If we want to stay independent, we must have people [10:00] capable to keep us independent.

And one would be completely wrong to assume that this is guaranteed because Jews have been regarded by everybody in the world as being a people or the people of the book, which means on one side the Bible and the other side the people who know to read and to write and to study. It is by no means guaranteed. We have, at this moment only about -- I'm not talking about universities, take high schools -- we have about, what, 30% percent of the younger generation graduating from high school? Thirty percent in the United States you have graduating from colleges. And if you take the Jewish younger generation, 70% of them are graduating from college. If you are not making [11:00] a specific effort, we will not be the people of the book, not be the people of reading, not be the people who is able to do

research, development, writing, and certainly we will not be the cultural center for Jewry. Something which it must be if we are not or haven't been one for all the years.

This has been the main idea behind everything: to establish a growing country and a state which could serve as a cultural center for Jews all over, and in addition to make it possible for everyone who wants to come rest a necessity to come, to come and live a fruitful life. While one may be for a time being guaranteed by [12:00] people who just do the work; the other one, the cultural center, is not guaranteed unless we make an effort to give everybody of our younger generation the possibility to keep up education. If we succeed in doing this, by building a greater network of universities, then we will also have more space for youngsters from abroad to come, to study, to mix with the Israelis. And I believe that there can be no greater importance given to this point. And I would say that; if the mission of my generation has been to create the homeland, to make it possible for more people to come; [13:00] the mission of the younger generation will be to use the created opportunity for establishing a meeting ground for Jewish youngsters all over the world, and to establish and to renew the personal, emotional ties between Jews in Israel and Jews abroad.

I wish you a very nice and fruitful stay in Israel, and a good journey home.

(applause)

SPEAKER:

Thank you, General Doron. I told you before that we've been out for about five weeks more. We've been to many meetings, we've heard many speeches, we've worked hard, we're tired. This afternoon, this group was not tired, I think [14:00] they all felt like I do. I was deeply moved. I'm sure they were by your very stirring appeal to strengthen the bonds between American Jewish youth and Israeli youth.

(break in audio)

-- Abramowitz of Miami Beach, but we're not listening to him as a Rabbi today. We're listening to him as a friend.

(break in audio)

-- I knew there; and on my last visit a couple of years ago on the eve of the Israeli Emergency Fund of 1967, which was shortly before the war broke up, when I came down with Minister of

Finance Pinchas Sapir; that Abramovitz was a pillar of strength. And in this case, he wasn't a rabbi who was afraid to squeeze his congregants. He brought them up, and he worked hard at the suite, and he helped us immensely in the fulfillment of Mr. Sapir's mission. He is now taking the leave of absence for a while [15:00], if you haven't left Miami for good. Or maybe you should, hopefully, he is here as the special assistant to the President for American Matters. Rabbi Abramowitz.

Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz:

General Doron, and my dear friends, I'm going to speak four minutes. If you clock me when I tell you to start, at that time I'll finish in four minutes, all right? I want you to know that I've been a rabbi for 17 years in Miami, and I'm willing to forget the 17 years for the 17 day experience I've been having thus far in Tel Aviv University. In one word, as we say in Israel today, it's נסיון. And if you don't know Hebrew, I can tell you that the Hebrew word for נסיון is fantastic. It is a kind of experience that I would not in any way trade, [16:00] whether it is to get the accolades of the American Jewish community or even the UJA. And I say to you I saw Sam, he and I pulled a fast squeeze play, he says "Squeeze, I had a little Jew coming to the fountain of the hotel to meet Sapir, and I only want him to meet Sapir, by the way," -- this is a true story. So

I knew that the man had just bought a bond for ten thousand dollars, and my job was to get that bond over like fast. And before the poor man knew what was happening between Sam and me, this man parted with ten thousand dollars and it was within thirty seconds -- I want you to know Sam -- he has yet to speak to me again. (laughter) But all these wonderful experiences I've had I would gladly trade for the experience that I've been having here.

It began last December when Doctor Weiss, the genius of this university, came with one ingenious idea. I knew (inaudible) how important the University is for Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv now [17:00] gives the name to the university. Within five years, I guarantee you, Tel Aviv City will be known by the magnificence of Tel Aviv University. They'll say "oh, that's the city where University is in." Because this is what is happening to Tel Aviv University: it is the highest, a point of view, caliber of studies; a point of view the kind of progress and education that is being made daily, and of course a point of view that within five years we'll have forty thousand students here. That's right, forty thousand students. Now, when Doctor Weiss came to my [habish?], we had bets amongst ourselves. One professor said "if we get 50 students," -- I think you're the one that lost the bet, right? -
- "If we have 50 students, it'd be a lot." And then someone said

"a hundred students is maximum." And then Doctor Weiss said "we need 200. And, by the way, we've got 200." To be exact, what is it today, around about 180 some odd? [18:00] (inaudible)

I got to tell you, [Allen?], and now you start typing, right? Now, I want to tell you the uniqueness of this program, of bringing freshman and other types of students to come and to spend one year of study. When we spoke to them we were shocked. Do you know the majority of students of Allen's start year type right here, spending year round their freshman student year? Allen, stand up, let them see you. Stand up, Allen. I don't know Allen, but I do know the other 20 who came here. Thank you, Allen. I want you to know something. (laughter) Allen, settle down, thank you.

Most, and I mean most in terms of like 90% of 180, are non-science, non-committed, didn't know a thing. I always yell, but that's how I feel about [19:00] Israel. I want to make them come. I can tell you what made them come. When we announced at the high school guidance office that we want to make a presentation about Tel Aviv University, every American kid came down to hear the story. and they came because of the adventure of living in a foreign land, and they came because deep in the recesses of their hearts, whether you like it or not, whether

you admit it or not, there is the -- in Yiddish we call it the [vokh?] -- the spark, the something, called Jewish, called Israel, called tradition. I don't know, call it Fiddler on the Roof, whatever you want to call it. And coming to Israel for that one year, the kid knows that spark.

Now at here, this university has created a lot of problems in this program. How many applications do you think we get, take a guess. [20:00] Each year, thousands of our students, how many classifiers do we have applications of incoming freshmen? Someone take a guess, please.

___: 1,500.

Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz:

You say 1,500? Any other bids?

___: 3,000.

Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz:

Five thousand freshmen have already applied. How do many do you think will be rejected? Three thousand will be rejected. You know why? Because there just aren't facilities, I'm in a pinch (inaudible) of the facilities are the professors. And the

resentment of the American student has begun by saying "well how did the Israeli born get in to study?" Some of the Israel people said a very interesting thing. "You Americans want to come here? Go build a university yourself here, and bring the American students." I close by saying to you as follows: in a sense, [21:00] the money given to the UJA, direct to Tel Aviv, builds this university. And so if, I know General Doron will be the first one to admit, that it is the cooperative venture of American Jews with enterprise that has built this university. And now let's spread forth in saying it is the cooperative venture of Israeli students and American students that will further the real mission that is Tel Aviv University. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER:

Thanks very much. You're a man of your word, at the point we started clocking you it was exactly four minutes.

Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz:

Oh, you timed it, huh?

SPEAKER:

I time every speaker, but this is a habit. It's nothing personal. But thank you very much, you can see now why Rabbi

Abramowitz's congregation in Miami Beach is the liveliest [22:00] place for sermons. I've been there. And we appreciate very much what he's told us, and we wish him the greatest success in developing his program of bringing American students here for at least a year, for that trial year.

(break in audio)

-- a speaker, it is only right that we hear from the representative of the student body of this university, to tell us something about student life, and maybe even problems. He is with us at length today, and I want to call on [Eli Schochet?]. Excuse me, Elie Schochet, is that right? Elie's an American.

Elie Schochet:

(inaudible) in Tel Aviv University, I will give you a good advice: simply to carry out to learn for the university. [23:00] I myself, I belong to the young generation of the Israeli society. And last war I fight for the paratroops to deliver the old city and the well-aimed war. I and my friends decided that we may memorize our friends that did not return from the battlefield only by keeping the victory. And we can keep the victory only by concentration of the Jewish people in Israel. We decided to establish groups of absorption and make a direct

connection, as General Doron say, personal ties with groups of the young Jewry in the United States. [24:00] We, the young people of the Israeli society, believe. And we are sure that, between East and West, my home is West. And my home is in Israeli, and I want you to know that Israel may be not only country for you, but also a home.

(applause)

SPEAKER:

I want to thank you, Elie, for your inspiring words. Though short, I think they were very moving, I think they epitomize what this is all about. General Doron, I think with this kind of student body, the future of Israel is quite secure. And we American Jewish students who want, certainly in the years to come, more and more [25:00] to cooperate with these students and with this younger generation of Israel. I think we're all going back greatly inspired by what we've heard this afternoon from you and from the others, and we want to thank you for it now. With your permission, may we ask some questions for a few minutes? Are there any questions? Buddy, this is Buddy [Milan ?] of Leominster.

Buddy Milan:

This is directed to the Rabbi. How does a student in the United States go about applying to the university, either here in Tel Aviv, or Technion, or Hebrew University? How do you go about applying?

Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz:

Applications are made directly to the American Friends of Tel Aviv University, it's something like 41 East 41st Street. Just a second. The application is espoused if you are or you are not a high school graduate, you forward your transcript of the high school records to this particular office with the SATs, and admissions [26:00] committee -- puts all of the other necessary documents -- an admissions committee then informs you within 30 days accepted or not. Number two, if you are a sophomore student this coming year, and you want to come under a special junior program, then the same application is made, you forward your college records to this university. Hold it, I don't want you guys in mine, I'll get to it. (laughter) And the admissions committee will decide upon your qualifications, yes or no. If you are not a junior student, you want a one year student, then you want a sophomore or a senior -- we have now one with seniors -- we're going to mandate our colleges based on his senior work that he's doing now here at Tel Aviv University.

This is a fantastic first, I mean for any educational institution; never happened before. Now, I want to tell you how Tel Aviv University judges your application. And this is Professor [Yoav Henis?], when I met General Doron I realized what the [27:00] uniqueness of this is with (inaudible). At first, we all worried about SATs. You know our score, and we worried about what percentile you're in in your class. And we worried about the kinds of Cs or Bs or -- God forbid -- Ds that you make. This university doesn't give a danged about your marks. That's been (inaudible; background noise) problem now with this guy named General Doron. There are kids that want to come back next year to their own universities. But we need course winning marks to indicate the kind of progress they're making. Now listen, the most important thing for admissions at Tel Aviv University, is that somebody who knows you in the educational field, a professor, a guidance instructor, three recommendations who'll say "George Shmeorge is a student and such-and-such school has a potential for adjusting for growth for scholarship for learning. Those [28:00] kind of personal recommendations weigh quite heavily to the applications and admissibility of a student.

So they really judge you -- don't misunderstand me, the university stands extremely high scholastically -- but they

judge you on your personal commitment and readiness to adjust. Now, technically speaking, you take one year at the university. If you want to return to the university of your choice, the record is sent from this university to the university in America. We have yet to experience where the Dean would say "we cannot accept you." The top university of seven thousand universities, we accept the accreditation. That's kind of a long answer to a short question.

SPEAKER:

[29:00] Are there any more questions?

Q1:

It's a quick question, I wanted to know if the school depends upon funds from the United States. Does it not?

Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz:

I'll answer part of it, and I'll have General Doron follow me, all right?

Q1:

All right, the next part of that question is does the government of Israel help in any way?

Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz:

General Doron will answer that question, too, so instead you're going to get two answers, all right? Now, you ladies and gentlemen know what the cost of education is in America. I bet you if I asked a few here, we'd get average cost per student here between three and four thousand a year. Right or wrong? The cost to your parents. (audience murmurs agreement) all right? I'm talking about room and board, and dormitories, and things. [30:00] Tel Aviv University has made this offer to American students. For eighteen hundred dollars, one thousand eight hundred dollars, you receive: all the dormitory facilities, one meal a day -- and this is the big meal, the lunch meal. You receive dormitory, tuition, and board -- that one meal a day for eighteen hundred dollars plus getting you there, and flying you back. One thousand eight hundred dollars. I think from that point of view it's a fantastic bargain. (audio fades, inaudible)

(overlapping dialogue from audience) What would you lose?

General Aharon Doron:

You would lose, you are quite right. We would lose unless, boom, the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency would subsidize the program to some extent. [31:00] But even so I think that if you deduct the fare for New York-Tel Aviv-New York, and you leave

then about twelve hundred dollars for a year or eleven and a half months, and it does include whatever Rabbi Abramowitz said, and in addition to it a lot of cultural activities and trips in the country; I think that it is a relatively low payed if you compare it with any place anywhere. In addition to it, if somebody of those present here or some of your friends will inquire about it, I would say that lack of funds, tough as it is in this country and at this university for Israel is, lack of [32:00] funds will not be a reason not to be accepted at Tel Aviv University. Not for an Israeli, and not for any student abroad. If there is a student capable and willing to do his studies here, we will find the funds if he hasn't.

(break in audio)

SPEAKER:

I think there was another part to the question, about how the general funds for operating the university are raised, is that right? What part do you get from the United States, capital and operating, and the government of Israel, and other sources.

General Aharon Doron:

Already I omitted to talk about the university being sure that you have been told so much about so many institutions, and

everyone has told that their funds are just not there, not available. [33:00] I would like first one point about the university. Tel Aviv University, not only has it been growing so far, but it is bound, or doomed, or whatever you call it, to grow. The reason is that it is located in the center of the population. And more than that, as far as the student body is concerned, I don't think that we are really competing with Jerusalem. We may want to compete in standards, but we are not competing about the same student. And the reason is that, despite the fact the distance between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem is only about, what, 60 miles or 50 miles, it is not commuting distance. It is not commuting distance. If you live in Tel Aviv and you want to study in Jerusalem, either you live there, or if you [34:00] don't live there, at least you have to forget about one thing: you can not be working at the same time. At Tel Aviv University, 50% of our students are at least part time workers who would never be able to do their studies in Jerusalem. For them it is either Tel Aviv, or not to study. And this is the ratio behind having your residence at this place. There were a lot of discussions before, in addition to the points I made before about education in general and the necessity of the education in the country, but there were a lot discussions about having or not having the university, what size of university, what kind of university. It is a fact that, without Tel Aviv

University, 50% of the eight thousand would not be able to attend University at all.

Now, about the [35:00] money. Our operating budget in the year '68, '69 is forty million Israeli pounds, which is about 11 or 12 million dollars. Out of this forty million, approximately 68% come from public sources. The major part, the Israeli government, and the small part about 8% from the Tel Aviv Municipality. Though they pay a relatively low price for having Tel Aviv University called Tel Aviv University. But altogether it's 68%. Ten additional percent is the income from tuition fee. An Israeli student, or any [36:00] student, pays 740 pounds tuition. Actually, it's only 740 for all kinds of student organizations, sports, all kinds of taxes. This is a very low tuition you pay. As a matter of fact, tuition in the university is about half the amount you pay in high school. But as I said before, there are scholarships available, and we will do everything in our power that -- should there be a student, or a potential student, a candidate, an applicant who has no means [37:00] or only part of the means -- we will do everything in our power to get him into the university, and to give him the money not only for the studies but even some of the money to live by.

So this leaves us with about 20% deficit. And if you ask me what I am doing all day long, and all year long, I am looking for the 20%, and it's very hard to find. Very hard to find. Usually, we close out the year and we still have the deficit. In addition to it, the development budget of the university this year amounts to let's say 25 million Israeli pounds, Out of which at least half of the money is cash outlay. [38:00] I mean you can build and have credit given to you by the construction company to a certain extent, but 50% of your program you'll have pay for it. If you pay for what you do now or you pay for what you did last year, it means about 12 and a half million pounds to pay for a 25 million program this year. We have a phase one development program of just over 100 million Israeli pounds, and so far we have paid out 65 million pounds and 35 more to go.

Usually I'm asked if such an opportunity -- an you are not worried, you are talking about deficit, you are talking about 12 and a half million money outlay -- but you will have to ask the other [39:00] part as well the as the other 50%. I'm going about it, and I don't sleep very well because of that, and actually I've been in such a situation that should feel responsible for it, one should run away. The only compensation I have -- and I would invite you to join me -- is at five o'clock. This is the busiest hour at the university to go in the new buildings, which

have been graded -- almost all of them within my time here, not because of me but during my time here -- go at this time into these buildings and see thousands of students come, study, heavy about their studies, and then you forget about money and that's the best thing to do. It clarifies the feeling for everyone.

SPEAKER:

Any more questions? General Doron, I want to thank [40:00] you for a very, very deep, thrilling, interesting afternoon. It was a great pleasure to be here, to enjoy this lunch with you and the students, and to be guided around by charming ladies. It's a great pleasure. As I said before, we got the message. Don't worry, sleep at night, I never heard of a university going bankrupt of Israel. We in the United States also work from deficit to deficit, you know. We say we never raise enough to do the whole job. It's an ongoing job, and we're going back to the United States with a feeling that every one of us has a share in seeing that this job is carried out fully and perfectly to its ultimate. We thank you very much.

General Aharon Doron:

Thank you.

(applause)

Mr. Abramson:

Boys, we'll have a few more here in another five minutes I guess. I'm sorry about the situation, at least if we had benches it wouldn't be so bad. We were promised a special room, [Doto Kohm?] made arrangements with the management, but the desk clerk on duty now can find no trace of any arrangement for a special room, and he did promise me a room for 8:30 tonight. I came out and tried to get it for eight o'clock a few minutes ago, and he said you can't have it till nine o'clock now.

So I gave up and we came down here. Mr. Kaiser that was supposed to be with us tonight is not well. We asked Mr. Fine, who was to have spoken to us the first night we arrived as you recall, who is well, whether he would do it. He's a nice [42:00] guy, and didn't feel he was taking second choice. As a matter of fact, he was our first choice, and we were trying to find a suitable opportunity for him to come here and speak with us for a few minutes.

Mr. Fine is an American, he's been here since 1961 I believe. Is that right? He practiced at the New York Bar for some years, then came here. He's a member of the Israeli Bar, had a great

deal of experience with various problems, including some of the problems facing the youth of this country. Last year he made a tour of the United States -- it was this year wasn't it? This spring? -- under our Hillel University Program. He visited about a dozen campuses in the United States, speaking mostly but not exclusively about the problems or the life of an American in Israel, the problems of adjustment, the opportunities for Americans. So he's very [43:00] knowledgeable, and he's unusual in the sense that he's a -- are you an ex-American? Well, you're an American -- who's been living in Israel for a number of years. I believe they recognize dual nationality in this country, although not in our own.

So he's in a particularly good position to tell us about what living in a country like this means for an American, and what the problems of adjustment are if there are any problems. I'll ask him to say a few words, and then we can throw the questions at him.

Leon Fine:

Well, thank you very much Mr. [Abramson?]. If you could, fellas, I'd appreciate if you could try to get in a little because I'm sure I'm going to be horse very soon. I'm really very glad to meet with you, I'm very much an American, or former American, as

you can tell from my -- it's not a button down. You know, in America I guess I had a hang-up about being Jewish, and when I [44:00] came here I found to my great surprise, as many of you discovered, we are known as Anglo Saxons, or in Hebrew, אַנגל־סאָקסאָן.

So here I am an אַנגל־סאָקסאָן as you are because we are in a country which is, some people claim, very racial in the sense that we are all conscious this one is a Yekke and that one is a Romanesca, and the third fellow is a Franc. Now we're all Jews, and very much aware of it, which may or may not be a good thing. I've been here, as you know, for seven years. And don't ask my why I came, although what I'd like to do tonight is talk very very briefly, and try to be as honest as I can in spite of Mr. Abramson and the tape recorder, and because I have the chance just to sense that perhaps some of you might feel that they're maybe trying to show you certain things and hide other things, and there's image sort of, and you are the leadership and have to --

M:

-- with this kind of problem, lots of world, wherever you may be. And it's definitely worthwhile to notice, and to hear my [45:00] explanation, and even to remember to a certain extent.

We are going to see three categories of people. The well-aged, who are still able to take care of themselves, and who are active and busy. And then you are going to see the infirm aged, who also need semi help. And then what you are seeing right now as the nursing cases; people who need 24 hours around the clock help. But as what I said before, and which is perfectly too old for this element of aged, which is by the way the most expensive of all of them because they have to be taken care 24 hours around the clock. They have to have outside help because, many of the things that the others are able to do, they are unable to do for themselves. But one of the important thing is that here we, too, say: First of all, up and about. Even in the winter. Enjoy the fresh air. Because when they would be lying around in bed, that would have been a very, very difficult condition [46:00], and developing all kinds of problems; medical problems which, to undo them or to heal them, would have taken much much better.

In this regard, I would like to mention that, thank God, we are blessed with nine months of sunshine, or nine months of more or less this kind of weather. Our people are able to spend nine months out of doors, rather than in bed. And this prevents all kinds of problems, medical problems. And as you see, they are doing whatever they can do in using their muscles. Because, what

we say, disregards the disability, and concentrate on what is left. Because someone can be blind, so what? There are the tips of the use of the finger, use it. Somebody may be half paralyzed, but which means there are some things they can use then, while using it. Incontinency, senility, anything and everything that is occurring at this age and at this time, we have it -- you name it and we have it -- but what we say is we are still taking advantage of the positive [47:00] side. And if you would have seen, you see, if people don't have any families, the way you know that it's existing all over the world except with us here, when people work with them, and visit them, and be with them, and show them some kind of recognition; who knows our people, who recognizes them? And this is, boys, a great drawback and a difficult thing when you consider these are human beings in every and full extent of it.

But I would like you to observe here is really the occupation. So they are now tired, we have arrived a little bit late, so they are tired because they can only do -- some of them -- one hour of work, half an hour of work, or two hours of work. So this is, here, a very important part of their life.

(break in audio)

You, as young people, take an interest that you have effectively come out to see their work, to see them. This is a great [48:00] thing. When you look at them, and you see the different work, what they are doing, many of them have learned that at this age right here, because again and again and again and again there is so much that can be and should be taken out from amongst the aged. Because, for the few hours that the people are occupied, it doesn't permit them to think and think. Should they continue? Is it worthwhile to continue? Do I have pains here? Do I have pains there? Should I run to see the physician? Et cetera, et cetera. And as you see there's a mental concentration because they have to think also what they are doing. They have to count, they have to (inaudible), they have to (inaudible), they are doing some weaving, et cetera, et cetera. So this is two things achieved: the prevention of deterioration of mind and matter.

Also in connection with that, many of them, in addition to the work that you see them doing here, may be busy [49:00] and active in different other things. One could be in helping out with the infirm. Because those who can't eat, themselves, who is feeding them? It is not always a young nurse. It is some of those aged, who have been trained to do that. One of them, in some instances, she is responsible for feeding of eight or ten or twelve people. Or somebody's blind. Who would be leading if

the mental capacity of the blind person is such that they can understand, it would be unkind and a pity to leave them sit and do nothing. So it's one of the other aged who would come and fix them up, who would come and read to them, who would come and spend some time with them. In other words, we have tried to establish a family life.

Now, for everything our aged do, they earn a small pocket money, which vanish in every instance. So one that works in the garden and helps in the garden, or the ones that [50:00] work in the kitchen and helps with the cooking, or the people who are doing this kind of work; whatever they do, the earn a small pocket money for a number of reasons. First of all, to encourage the work. First of all to do the movements that we want. And as you know -- I'm repeating what I said before about it's important enough for you not to forget it, and that's the only reason why I am repeating it -- this is the only thing that can make them want to continue. This is the only thing which has a purpose tomorrow. And here, in this instance, for whatever has a (inaudible; coughing) they earn, they are free to dispose with it what they want. Nobody has to tell them what you want to do. They can buy their own cigarettes, their own stamps, their own soft drink. They could even buy, as they are sometimes invited to outside to somebody, they don't have to be the charity case.

They can buy a little gift and bring it with them as a present and do something for somebody else, too.

And if you look closely of them [51:00] I see Jewish tragedy. Jewish tragedy is right buried in these faces. And I think, if you leave that institution later, if you forget everything else about Israel, and now I'm speaking again as an Israeli, I couldn't care less. But the faces of these aged, and their smiles, this is one thing you should not forget. Because your parents, in all the communities, have helped us to do this wonderful program and this wonderful job that we are still doing. And in the back, speaking about the health we are receiving, right up there is his picture, is the late Mrs. Frieda Schiff Warburg. As you were already told on the bus, she is the late mother of Eddie Warburg, UJA National Chairman, and JDC President at one time. How about [52:00] that? We cannot and will not forget the wonderful, the real wonderful help that for many years had received from the Warburg family. And that's why, on her 80th birthday, when Mrs. Warburg was 80 years old, this home -- which is the only one from the many institutions that JDC is having in Israel -- is named after her.

Now look around, see some of the work before we continue. By the way, I want you to see that guide two is totally blind because

he was so badly beaten up by the Germans in one of the camps. He is sitting right next to you.

TRANSLATOR: This little group of four people, three from Romania and this lady is from Hungary. [Ketschka?] Transylvania?

F1: No. [53:00]

TRANSLATOR: No? Diamaros?

F1: No.

TRANSLATOR: Budapest?

F1: Budapest.

TRANSLATOR: She's real Hungarian, she says. The others are Romanian. This man whose name is Baruch Moshe [Vauss?] is 54 years of age, and in 1940 he was drafted for slave labor by Antonescu the Romanian dictator, and sent to dig fortifications under the Germans. Because of mistreatment, lack of food, et cetera, he lost his sight. And then after the war he came here, he managed to survive. The others are from Bukovina, which was part of Romania, now part of Russia.

M2: Ask them about some of their reactions here. [54:00]

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: When he came here in 1951, he went work in a factory which was operated by [Maiben?] They made something for washing floors, I don't quite understand what it is,

[55:00] maybe a mop, I don't understand the word. When they closed down the factory they ended up here.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: He has a, only a brother and daughter.

M2: What does he enjoy about living here?

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: He's here since May and currently they're trying to find some place for him to work. Because he's able bodied, he's simply blind and they haven't placed him yet. Maybe this is something we should discuss with them, what they do with abled bodied. See he worked in the factory which was closed down.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

[56:00]

TRANSLATOR: He says it cost him 15 pounds a month to come here. He earns nothing. He's tried to get some financial arrangement, hasn't succeeded. I don't know what the situation is regarding this man. I think we'll have to leave now.

(break in audio)

TRANSLATOR: -- Academy in St. Petersburg, this is Mr. Greenburg. Greenberg his current says Nahum Greenberg Painting and Sculpture Teacher, born in Jerusalem.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

[57:00]

TRANSLATOR: He ate pierogi, I guess you'd call them. Or
blintzes, which fed Tolstoy.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: He's from Odessa.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: There's a man that comes here. He was in the war of
1905, he calls it 04, but I guess 04 and 05 -- remember the
war with Russia. Yes, the Russo-Japanese war.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: He is now 94 years of --

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

[58:00]

TRANSLATOR: He will be 94. Now since nine and four are thirteen,
he considers he's going to be Bar Mitzvahed.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: This is Albert Levin. Albert Levin of Cleveland!

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: He studied art in Russland in St. Petersburg.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: This is a remarkable old man. Look at this cork
board he's got here. [59:00] Here is the certificate,
unfortunately I can't read Russian. It's signed by the
czar.

M2: Ask him what it says.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: He has the medals, and...

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: 1913, and this is from the Salut a St. Petersburg.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: Yes, this is Mr. Albert Levin from Cleveland.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: He told Mr. Levin that all Americans are liars, that they're... He did send them the books that he promised

[1:00:00]

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

M2: Jesus Christ. (laughing)

TRANSLATOR: I'm sorry, please erase that from the tape.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: Some fellow came here, and he bought it from the synagogue, and he said "I'll tell them to make some Matzah flour instead of plaster."

M2: How long's he been here?

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

[1:01:00]

TRANSLATOR: He lived in China for a long time.

(discussion between Translator and Vauss)

TRANSLATOR: Thank you.

M:

Judaism preaches tolerance from the point of view of saying all men are equal. Widows and orphans have to be taken care of. No man should gather so much property that he puts house next to house so that there's no land left in between. In other words, don't be a hog, save something for somebody else. It's tolerant in regard to women. It's tolerant in regard to many things. It's even tolerant in regard to letting another man believe what he wants to believe. It's a tolerant [1:02:00] religion in a sense that it doesn't insist that this is the credo, and if you don't believe it, we'll hang you. There's never been an inquisition by Jews against Jews, like there is by Catholics against Catholics who don't believe the right thing. As a matter of fact, Jews never could quite agree on what they did believe. Maimonides said the Jewish religion could be reduced to 13 principles that you're supposed to believe. Someone came after him, Nahmanides, who said nah, it isn't 13, it's only 3. If you believe these three things, that's enough.

Jews were very tolerant on what they considered to be the basic essence of their own religious belief. But that's Judaism being tolerant as a religion. Judaism being [1:03:00] tolerant as a

religion to its own followers doesn't mean all religions are tolerant to each other. Now the orthodox have one intolerant attitude, and that's toward the state having been created by men rather than by the Messiah. According to the strictly orthodox believe, this state of Israel should be reconstituted only in the final days of the Messiah, not before. And who the hell does Chaim Weizmann think he is? And who the hell does Ben-Gurion think he is? To try to reconstitute the state before the Messiah came?

That's the one thing they're intolerant about. And I'll never forget, as long [1:04:00] as I live, one night that I was talking to some Hasidim of a famous Rabbi from Poland, from Ger -- G E R. These groups are known by the names of the towns from which the Rabbi came. Ger is the town he came from, he's called the Gerer -- G E R E R -- the Gerer Rebbe. The Gerer Rebbe has a lot of Hasidim. In Jerusalem, many thousands. I went one night, on the night of Selichot. That's a prayer that you say at midnight, a month before Rosh Hashanah to begin to put yourself in the mood to purify yourself and cleanse yourself. And you begin at midnight, and every night for 30 days at midnight you say prayers of penitence, asking God to forgive you for all of the dirty filthy evil thoughts in your head, and all of the dirty evil deeds that you've done. You've got to cleanse

yourself, so you come to Rosh Hashanah [1:05:00] clean. And it's called Selichot, which means penitence.

On the first night of Selichot, which is about sometime in August, the end of August, a month before Rosh Hashanah; I went there to the place of the Gerer Rebbe at midnight. And he didn't come, he deliberately waits till one, two, three o'clock because he wants to get everybody in the big mood of expecting him. He gets a moral high, and the atmosphere gets tense. (laughter) So at midnight when I came, it was still a little bit early. I run into a bunch of these Hasidim standing in the courtyard, and they're dressed in their long black coats, and in their big heavy Russian boots, or Polish boots -- this costume is derived from Poland in the 18th century, it's 200 years old, they don't change it -- and we start having a conversation. I decide really [1:06:00] to try to find out what they think, and I ask them about the State of Israel, as a state. And one of them goes (spits). This is in the city of Jerusalem, in the Holy City of Jerusalem. So I say woah. So he says (spits three times). Just like you do in front of a church, you spit three times when you pass a church. So then he starts saying that this is evil, that the city is full of desecrators of the Sabbath, haters of God, fornicators, evil men, and the cars run on the Shabbat, [1:07:00] and they are going to continue to throw the stones,

and everything that's going wrong here is because men created this place. Not God. So I asked him the 64 dollar question: what would he really prefer to do, and he said he really would prefer to live לש ינשה דצב; on the other side of the Jordan. Namely, among the Arabs. And at that point I was ready to haul off and let him have it.

Q:

Why did he come to Israel?

M:

Well he's coming here waiting on the Messiah to come, and you in your lousy short pants are going around making a stink hole out of this place. You're making it irreligious, you're making it rotten, you're making it secular, you're gaudyish. He came here waiting for God, for the Messiah to come to reconstitute Israel.

[1:08:00]

Q2:

He's got a long wait.

M:

Sure, he doesn't care, and you loused it up. And everybody like you. And he started to let me have it, and I started to let him

have it. And we were in one hell of a fight. And there was a big gang beginning to gather, and it really looked threatening, and I'm not kidding. Because they were starting to mumble "[epicolas?]," which means, I don't know how you translate it; which means somebody who turns or converts. Not a faithful Jew, traitor. And what saved the whole situation, he showed up exactly. You could hear him from about two, three blocks away coming, pounding his boots on the cobblestones. And then just like you hear [1:09:00] wind whistling through the wheat, rustles, you could hear the whispering of the people from two, three blocks away; saying in Yiddish -- they won't speak Hebrew -- "di rikhter kumt," here comes the Judge. The Rabbi is coming, the Rabbi is coming. "Di rikhter kumt, di rikhter kumt, di rikhter kumt." And the boots are pounding on the cobblestones, and when he comes swinging around the corner and he's got ten guys around him, that's called his court. And they hit into the central yard here where there are, by now, a couple thousand people waiting. And they see him, and he's quite a figure of a man; he has a long, big red beard. And then they're like "rbi hat kumen!" He's here! He's here. And just like you get a Shekinah, a [1:10:00] holy mood in the place, the spirit of God has arrived.

Now you look at that, and you say to yourself, "that is 18th century, Polish, Hassidic, enthusiasm, conviction, more powerful than anything I believe." I'm the first one to admit it, their religious convictions will carry them through anything; slaughter, death, they just won't lift a hand to fight for the state. But if the goyim wanted to go and cut their throats, that they're willing to do. It's this clear perverted obstinacy which has kept them alive, and yet which in today's Israel makes them an anachronism. Now somebody's out of step, and your question was "why are they out of step?" And the one thing that makes them out of [1:11:00] step is they are intolerant of anyone that interferes with the process of the Messiah coming. That's the bit.

Well, we go on building the country anyway, whether they like it or not. And sooner or later either they'll say the Messiah has done it, or they'll still be out of step five hundred years from now. Now I forget the second half of your question.

Q3:

Cultural versus religious state.

M:

Which? Oh, cultural versus religious state. That brings up your question over here of Jews being a religion, or a culture, or a nationality. Take yourselves. What are you? You are Americans by nationality. You are Jews by what? Culture? [1:12:00] Culture means language, do you know either one of the two Jewish languages, Hebrew or Yiddish? Culture means literature, do you know Jewish literature? Beginning with the Bible, how well do you know the Bible? How well do you know Jewish philosophy, poetry, shorts stories, novels, mysticism, essays? All of these things are written in both Hebrew and Yiddish, and by the way, moreover all now translated into English even.

Q4:

We're all experts on Leon Uris.

M:

All experts on Leon Uris, this is a form of Jewish literature. And, by the way, I don't demean it; any more than I demean Michener. A lot of people, all they know about Israel is what they learn from Exodus, or all they know about archeology is what they learn from the source. But that's better than knowing nothing. [1:13:00] So I'm back on the point: you are a Jew by virtue of what, culture? Well, do you know the language and literature of this culture? You know Middle English, Chaucerian

English, Beowulf. You know Shakespearian English, different from today. You know the language and the literature of the English culture. Do you know the language and literature of the Jewish culture? Are you therefore Jews culturally? You have to answer that for yourself. Somebody may say yes, somebody may say no. Be honest is all I ask.

So you call yourselves Jews, are you Jews culturally? Second thing: are you Jews religiously? Now in the United States you've got an option. [1:14:00] You can be religiously orthodox, or conservative, or reformed, or reconstructionist, and all those are legitimate options as a form of religious expression. So if you are authentically religious in any one of those forms, then you can say "well, I'm not really a Jew culturally, because I don't know much about the Jewish culture; but I am a Jew religiously. I have a form of religious belief, and I practice it." But supposing you don't do that. Supposing you're not a Jew either culturally, or you're not a Jew religiously. Then what are you? Then you're a Jew by virtue of what?

==:

Birth.

M:

Birth! Membership in the club. You're a member of the club, you didn't even ask to be made a member. Somebody else made you a member. You didn't ask to be circumcised. [1:15:00] You didn't exercise much choice about it at that tender age. (laughter) So somebody paid your membership dues, registered you in the club for life, made damn sure that it was recognizable for life by cutting it into your flesh, and say okay you're now a member of this club from the day you were born till the day you die, and you can't get out. You can't resign even. Because if you resign, and you go and convert, they'll call you for the rest of your life "that Christian Jew." Now, if you're not a Jew culturally, and you're not a Jew religiously, then you are a Jew by being a member of the club. But a member of the club is a very bad phrase, it's not very elegant. So what kind of an elegant phrase to we [1:16:00] use? We say you are a member of the Jewish People. The Jewish People. You are a Jew by virtue of being born into the Jewish People. All right?

Now you begin to get a very close shading between what's the difference between the Jewish People and the Jewish nationality. That already begins to be harder to define. Culture? Easy to define. Religion? Easy to define. People? How is that distinct from Nationality or nation-hood? See? So the Israeli says "I am an Israeli by nationality, I am a Jew by people-hood, and maybe

by culture because I know a lot about the Jewish culture, and maybe even by religion [1:17:00] because I might even practice that. So I am a total, and complete, and whole Jew. I got it both ways: I'm an Israeli by nationality, I'm a Jew by culture, religion, folklore, tradition, people-hood."

So that's why he says to you "you're an American by nationality, but you're a Jew by culture, religion, tradition, people-hood. What the hell, why don't you go the whole hog, and why don't you become a complete Jew, both sides, and why don't you come over here, and then you're not a split personality. You're not a Canadian by nationality -- you know, Canadian nationality, that's also got Eskimos, that's got Indians, that's got all kinds of funny tribes -- you're not a Canadian by nationality and Jew by culture or [1:18:00] religion. Why split yourself? Come here, make yourself a whole person again, integrated, then you are an Israeli Jewish, or a Jewish Israeli.

And that brings up the last question, which you didn't ask, Willie, and I don't know if you did, Al, but it's part of it. And that is what are you first? Are you an American first, or are you a Jew first? Now the Israeli says "I got no problem, doesn't matter a damn to me whether you call me an Israeli first

or a Jew first, or a Jew second and an Israeli first. It's the same thing.

However, just to complicate one step further, this atheistic, irreligious, Mr. Ben-Gurion says "It does matter. And I am [1:19:00] not religious, but if you ask me am I a Jew first or am I an Israeli first, I give you my answer, clear as a bell: I am Israeli nationalist number one, I created this state, I built this army, I am the super nationalist. But if you ask me what I am first, I am a Jew first and I'm Israeli second." And that's the position he takes, and therefore he says, logically, he expects me to say "I am a Jew first and an American second." He expects Barren Rothschild to say he's a Jew first and a Frenchman second. He expects everybody in the world to put the Jew first, and the nationality -- whatever it happens to be -- second. And only if the nationality is Israeli, then there's less conflict between being a Jew and an Israeli. [1:20:00] That's his logic. Like to hear what you think about it.

Q5:

Why?

M:

Why does he say that? Because he says being a Jew is a quality, a special quality. And this irreligious man believe that the Jews are a very special people. He won't say God chose them to be the chosen people. All he says is, there's a Hebrew phrase, "am segula." That means "like a precious jewel." A special people, a precious people, a unique people, a different people, a people like no other people in the whole world. Now by the way, it so happens that I believe that too about the Jewish people. I believe that the Jewish people is absolutely unique, separate, different, special, with characteristics of its own, with possibilities of its [1:21:00] own, with potentialities of its own, quite different than any other people on the face of the earth.

He won't put it in religious terms, he won't say "the Jews are special because God chose them." That's what the religious Jew says: "ata bechartanu." "You chose us, oh God, from all the peoples on Earth. You chose us to make us your special people." So the religious Jew believes that this process of election, selection, came from God. Ben-Gurion doesn't believe that. What he said is "I believe it comes from history. I look at all the peoples in history; the Chinese, and the Hindus, and the Babylonians, and the Egyptians, and the Greeks, and the Romans; I look at them all. There is no people on the face of this Earth

in all the thousands of years of recorded [1:22:00] human history -- since men learned how to write, since he ceased being an animal and became a man who could think and create speech and write -- there's been no people like the Jewish people. And history made them what they are."

So he says "being a Jew is more important even than being an Israeli. But when the Jew comes back to the land in which he was born, and becomes the citizen of that land, and adopts the nationality of that land, and speaks the language of that land; all going back to four thousand years ago when it began, then he is really being a full Jew." So I believe that being a Jew is the most important thing in the world. And second, being an Israeli rather than being an American, or a Greek, or [1:23:00] a Turk, or a Swede, or a Bulgar, or a Chinaman; that's why he believes the Jew first.

Q6:

Doesn't that add credence to the Polish view that you're a disloyal faction of the country because you're a Jew?

M:

Yes sir, it does. Every country in the world that has had Jews living in it in any large numbers; and has never been able to

digest those Jews; has never been able to turn them into Poles, they always remain Jews; never been able to turn them into Russians, they always remain Jews; never been able to turn them into Americans, they always remain Jews. Aren't we distinctly Jews? You know damn well we are. We are also Americans, we understand baseball and chewing gum like everyone else.

Q6:

But [1:24:00] how does that affect our basic loyalties? The whole basis of the national state is based on it's a primary loyalty.

M:

All right, that's a correct point. As far as that's concerned, Jews have always been very very careful to observe the practice of loyalty to the host country which was giving them their citizenship or their nationality. We didn't go to Frankfurt, there wasn't one to show you in Munich so I couldn't have shown it to you, but if I had taken you to Frankfurt, in the Jewish cemetery, a great big sign.

Q7:

We saw it in East Berlin. You know, the ones that died in World War I.

M:

Oh, you saw it in East Berlin, fine. Now here you saw -- and the Nazis never destroyed such tablets, never -- you saw a sign that said "Jews were loyal to the fatherland." Loyal to the fatherland, [1:25:00] Germany in World War I. Jews were fighting on the side of Germany in World War I? Jews were fighting on the side of France, England, and America in World War I? Jews in the trenches undoubtedly shot and killed each other on opposite sides. They were paying their loyalty to the country of their citizenship.

They always did. Sometimes I think stupidly, but they always did. Jews paid their loyalty to every single country. To Rome! Jews who were citizens to Rome paid their loyalty to Rome. This whole problem of Josephus, we're not sure. He was a Jewish general, but when he became a Roman general, paid his loyalty to Rome, maybe even he was a traitor to the Jews, we're not sure. God problem has never occurred. Even when we pay our loyalty [1:26:00] to the country of our nationality in the greatest way we can -- not just by paying taxes but by giving our lives -- even then, the host majority group is not sure they understand us, or can feel friendly to us, they're not sure.

See I'm a funny guy. I don't look for anti-Semites under very bed. I don't believe in that, I really don't. I think that America today is as absolutely, magnificently clear of anti-Semitism as any country has been in the history of the human race. That's a fact. I think there are still pockets of anti-Semitism, so what the hell, Jews can't get up high in the banking world, or in the insurance companies, eh so what. They do fine, so we cracked that. The United States is as clean and clear and decent country [1:27:00] as Jews have ever lived in in their entire history. And I don't worry about anti-Semitism in America, and I don't think that every non-Jew looks at me behind my back and calls me "dirty Jew." I really don't, I really don't.

On the other hand, I know this perfectly well: two hundred million Americans have got five-and-a-half million Jews living in their midst, and they will be goddamned if they can understand us. With the best will in the world, they can't. The best will in the world. They want to. You'll never know how many non-Jews I've had come to me and say "will you explain this Jewish People to me? I really don't dig them. How many are there in America? Twenty million?" [1:28:00] Forty million?"

(laughter) I say five-and-a-half. They say it's impossible!

Everywhere you turn there's a Jew! The Jews are so visible,

there's so many of them! They want everything!" I say "no they don't." What do you Jews believe?

They're curious about us. They consider us something quite different. Now, don't misunderstand me, gentlemen. We are very much part of the fabric of America. America is a three-religion country, and everybody makes believe that all three religions are equal: Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. We all speak in those terms. But there are five million Jews, and there are forty million Catholics, and there are 160 million Protestants. So we really ain't all equal. And yet it appears to be that we are. [1:29:00] And we accept it as equals.

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