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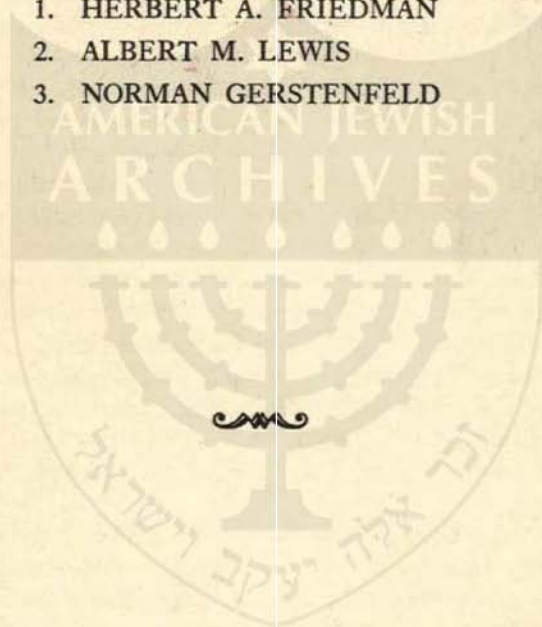
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TAKING STOCK OF OUR SEMINARIES

1. HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN
2. ALBERT M. LEWIS
3. NORMAN GERSTENFELD



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TAKING STOCK OF OUR SEMINARIES

HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

On the larger issues, the training offered me at the JIR was adequate to meet the realities of the rabbinate. There was developed in me a sense of service to our people, an abiding conviction concerning the value of our heritage, a love of our ideals, and a knowledge of their importance in the struggle toward a fuller civilization. Thus, the spiritual arms and armament were provided for a career dedicated to the preservation of Judaism.

On the smaller issues, of course, there were inadequacies of preparation, particularly with regard to sacerdotal functions. No one ever taught me how to conduct a funeral or a wedding, and I had to learn these performances painfully. Learning how to comfort the mourner or counsel the perplexed came only after harrowing errors had been committed. I would have appreciated being guided through the Rabbi's Manual, so that I might have been less *gauche*. But these, after all, are only mechanical matters, and the apprentice soon learns the skill of his craft. In the main, the spirit was enthused and the mind opened at the Institute, which was the primary function.

Today, instead of dealing with a multitude of small matters which might justifiably occupy attention as we seek to take stock of our seminaries, I would rather project one large problem for our consideration. The single most important task of our liberal seminaries today is to fashion a type of Judaism which will serve as a basis for the preservation of our cultural and religious heritage here in America. And if the schools can produce rabbis who are capable of shaping and molding such a future, then they may be forgiven for sending us forth as novices in the art of *Chupah Kiddushin*.

On all sides we hear much talk about this matter of building an

American Judaism — a Judaism which shall be strong and vigorous, pulsating with activity and creativity, attracting to it the masses of young and old, and providing them with a social philosophy, a cultural heritage, and a religious faith.

The more talk we hear about the necessity of strengthening the foundations of Judaism in this country for the future, the more are we vaguely worried about the quality of our own inner resources, and somewhat awed by the enormity of the challenge. Can we create here in America, where the outside pressures are minimal, that kind of Judaism whose achievements and satisfactions will be strong enough to keep future generations cemented by the centrifugal force of inner compulsion to remain Jewish? Babylonia did it — so did Spain. What about us?

I believe firmly that we too can do it. With full appreciation for that Jewish integrity of spirit which our fathers brought to these shores from Europe, I am not willing to concede that without the constant hypodermic of migration from abroad, we here are doomed to death. Nor am I prepared to say that our cultural and religious forms of Judaism will have to rely upon the injections we will receive from a brilliantly flourishing Israel. And thirdly, in spite of the growing secularization of general American life, and in the face of a neo-orthodox tendency in Protestantism seeking to combat this secularization — in spite of both of these trends, which might be construed as antagonistic to the growth of a free and liberal religion, I believe Judaism can successfully take root in this soil and produce another Golden Age similar to anything we have enjoyed in our magnificent past.

I think, however, that this can be done only by building a united Judaism, one not plagued by division into sects. We must concentrate on the fabrication of a kind of Judaism which most American Jews seem to want. Our people are looking for a combination of liberalism and warmth; a joining of emancipation with the color, vividness, and pageantry of older forms; an amalgamation of modern methods, which appeal to the mind, with ancient ceremonialisms which satisfy the emotions.

You are all aware of what I am describing. It is that most excellent combination of a liberal approach to Jewish law, coupled

with the retention of those forms and ceremonies dear to the hearts of our people. At first it was thought that relaxing the rigidity of inflexible law would be sufficient to entice the masses to the Reform movement. But unfortunately, this relaxation was accompanied by a wholesale negation of all the colorful and positive rituals. It is a truism to say that early Reform was too cold and negative, too intellectual and non-emotional.

So the Sabbath Kiddush has returned and Bar Mitzvah is here to stay. Songs are sung and Atorahs are worn. Chanukah has become important and the tapers are kindled. Everyone of us here is familiar with that trend. We add, experiment, bring back, or refashion as many of the ceremonies and rituals as we can which involve participation on the part of the individual worshipper and which can be made meaningful for today. We find that our people come back for more.

In an organizational sense, the creation of this kind of Liberal Judaism, warm with observance, has been urged as a merger between the Reform and Conservative wings. Nothing in the suggestions to date, incidentally, would exclude a willing orthodoxy. Two years ago (November, 1948), at the last biennial of the UAHC in Boston, Rabbi James G. Heller sent up a trial balloon regarding such a consolidation. And a few months ago (October, 1949) at the exercises marking the opening of the 75th year of the HUC, Rabbi Morris Lieberman brought up the matter again. He said, "The differences between Conservatism and Reform are only chronological, quantitative and personal, not ideological . . . These differences become less and less important as time goes on . . . It is fervently to be hoped that these two movements will appreciate their identity of philosophy and objective and will establish between themselves the most intimate liaison, looking even to ultimate merger. In the cooperation and union of these two great forces lies the future of American Judaism. And here too is the organizational basis for the realization of Isaac Mayer Wise's complete vision of a united American Jewish community, with a uniform minhag America which is liberal Judaism."

It is interesting that Isaac M. Wise's name should be brought into the discussion. Through careful research, we are becoming

increasingly aware of his real intentions. Rabbi Heller, writing the centenary volume of the Isaac M. Wise Temple, said this: "As early as 1848, Dr. Wise had sent out an appeal from Albany calling upon all congregations, orthodox or reform, to come together for the formation of a union, so that Judaism might be strengthened in the United States. The union was to be an association of *all* Jewish congregations, of all shades of opinion in the United States. It is well to note that in the name of the HUC and the UAHC, Wise and his co-workers carefully refrained from introducing any term that might denominate these institutions as exclusively reform."

We are all familiar with the effort Wise made in 1885 to call a conference which would unite American Judaism. Rabbi David Philipson in his biographical pamphlet of Wise concluded the story in these words: "The Cleveland Conference, which aimed to unite all wings, was wrecked on the rock of compromise. (Wise's concessions on the Talmud) called forth strong protests from the radical reform congregations, notably Emanuel of New York and Har Sinai of Baltimore. David Einhorn, rabbi of the latter congregation, was particularly bitter against the Cleveland compromises. Isaac Lesser (the leader of the orthodox contingent) was not satisfied either with the outcome of the deliberations, which were of too progressive a tendency for him, despite the concessions on the Talmud. Wise and his confreres were thus belabored by the extremists both among the reformers and the orthodox.

Wise was greatly discouraged. The hope for union in American Jewry was the star that had led him on. For the sake of that union, he was willing to meet all others half way. 'American Judaism, free, progressive, and enlightened, united, respected — this was my ideal' Wise said. For him union in Israel was the paramount consideration. He indulged the dream that if only the various elements could be brought together in one organization, the reform principle must ultimately triumph. And to secure that organization he felt that all must sacrifice something, reformers as well as orthodox.

Later he recognized the futility of his hopes for union of all Israel and bent his energies towards a consolidation of the progressive forces. The Cleveland Conference proved abortive as far as the larger hope was concerned."

But because the Cleveland Conference was abortive does not mean that the idea is dead, nor that it is invalid. I am convinced more than ever that we will rapidly be developing a climate in America wherein the idea can blossom, and it should be the responsibility of our liberal rabbinical seminary to train men for this type of future leadership.

A great reality of the American rabbinate today is the increasing degree of cooperation between colleagues in the same city of different views. In our community of Denver, there exists a perfectly handsome relationship between three men, which, I must say, has been fostered deliberately. It is no mere accident. I believed firmly in Stephen Wise's concept of *Klal Yisrael*, and set about to create an atmosphere of comradeship, which has ripened into genuine friendship with the other rabbis, and which has matured, incidentally, for the greater gain of the entire community. The three of us serve harmoniously as the co-chairmen of our local Federation Campaign. This is by no means unique. I notice that Rabbi Jacob Tothschild serves as chairman of the Atlanta campaign together with his orthodox colleague. Failure to mention other examples indicates simply lack of information on my part. I am certain the situation is duplicated in many places.

It is inherent in the scope and purpose of our rabbinical seminary that this should be the case. The JIR, for example, was organized *specifically* to meet the need of training an American rabbi, unlabelled and non-dogmatic. The solemn intent of Stephen Wise reads in part as follows: "The JIR, liberal in spirit, does not commit its teachers and students to any special interpretation of Judaism. The different constructions of Judaism and Jewish life, orthodox, conservative, liberal, are expounded to the students in courses given by men representing different points of view. Each member of the teaching staff is free to seek and state the truth as he sees it, and in the same way every student is free."

Just as this was in the scope and purpose of the JIR, so was it within the concept of the HUC. And now that the two schools are conjoined into one, this same motif is maintained. The statement of purpose of the merger, dated August 18, 1948, declares: "The HUC and the JIR resolve to unite for the strengthening and advance-

ment of Judaism in America and throughout the world. The right to serve the Jewish people in its *entirety* (Klal Yisrael) with freedom for faculty and students alike, is axiomatic."

In taking stock of our seminaries, we can perform the greatest service by reminding the administrations, the boards, and the faculties, that a great dream lies dormant, a vision which can be brought to reality if supplied with the proper nourishment. Realizing that it was within the intent of the two Wises to create a common American Judaism, and understanding the full historic import of building such a form, let the liberal seminaries dedicate themselves most seriously to the training of rabbis who will be capable of planting the seed in every community of this land, of protecting the new plant from the hot breath of the prejudiced on both sides who would destroy it, and of serving by precept and example so that all Jews will recognize that here at last is being created something for which the people have been yearning.

Faculties must be convinced that union, or at least union within diversity, is the form of Judaism of the future, and they must communicate that conviction in all their teachings. Old shibboleths will disappear — and the new generation of rabbis will transcend petty and party labels. The synagogues will slowly fill again. We will not have to wail about the laymen dominating Jewish life, and the future of the faith will be made more secure. Common educational standards will be created and we will not all cry about the Jewishly illiterate. Judaism in every aspect — religious, communal, educational and personal — will be strengthened in this union.

At the close of this anniversary period of 75 years, let the College-Institute set forth firmly on the path of the future. For the prize is great — nothing less than the salvation of American Judaism. Maurice Samuel wrote recently: "An American Judaism, organically interwoven with this country, as European Judaism was with Europe, is yet to be born — and every great regional Jewry (Babylonian, Spanish, European) has needed centuries for its growth." That may be — and yet it is certainly time to begin!

Noblesse oblige! As the oldest religious seminary in America, and as the one first espousing the liberal form which holds the

greatest promise for the future, let us not bankrupt that future by a stubborn insistence upon labels, but let us instead show the way for any such combinations or mergers as may provide the native-born American Jew the kind of Judaism he wants and will at the same time inspire him to participate in the creation of a great and noble Jewish epoch in America worthy of our numbers, our resources, and our position in the history of the Jewish people.



"TAKING STOCK OF OUR SEMINARIES"

ALBERT M. LEWIS

The invitation asking me to take part in this symposium, stated, and I quote, "... , "Taking Stock of Our Seminaries" will try to answer, among others, the following questions:

1. What are the present realities in the Reform rabbinate?
2. What *should* be the objectives?
3. Is the present rabbinical training adequate for these realities and objectives?" (End of quote) (Letter from Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, dated Jan. 30, 1950.)

Our answers to these questions are bound to be subjective. In our thinking we will draw upon our personal experience. Whatever narrowness may result from this will be somewhat overcome through the diversity of background of the speakers.

The questions above, as framed by Rabbi Bernstein, are provocative. Firstly, as to the present realities of the Reform rabbinate, the majority of us will agree that the picture is not good. The outstanding fault seems to lie in the necessary ubiquity of the Reform Rabbi's activities. I know of no other profession or skill in the whole range of human society where one man is called upon to be so many things to so many different people. Success in the rabbinate will often depend upon the number of meetings a Rabbi can attend in one evening, the number of people he can see in one day, the number of phone calls he can make in one hour and the number of congregational activities he can juggle in one week. Such frenzied activity can only tend in the direction of shallowness. Perhaps as we decry the "surface Judaism" of the American Jew, we ought to take a strong look in the mirror of our own faith. Are we diluted by our congregations, or possibly, do we dilute our

congregations by the tapwater Judaism we are content to dispense without a thought to the conservation of our own resources, let alone the replenishment of those resources? Time will not permit me to belabor further this aspect of the reality of the Reform rabbinate. I am content to let the matter rest here, because each of us is as conscious of this professional tragedy as the next one. We know the end result well enough. We become dilettantes in Judaism as well as nearly every other branch of human knowledge. We have no time for ourselves and for our families. We, who preach the idyll of the Jewish home, turn our own dwellings into hatracks with a mezuzah on the hanger. Now, as to what *should* be the objectives of the Reform rabbinate, I should like to list just four goals with a word of explanation regarding each of them.

Number one, let us help make the Rabbi a *student* of Judaism through his full lifetime. Of course, there are some of our colleagues who have established notable reputations for themselves as Jewish scholars. Unfortunately, they are only a "saving remnant" of the rabbinate let alone of the whole of Jewry. We, as a group, are expected to be the "sh'or yashuv." There is no stronger indictment of our lack of learning than the pitifully few volumes that have been authored by our members. Regard for a moment how long we have dillied and dallied with the publication of a Journal of the CCAR. It is indicative to me of our inability to produce the fruits of learning. I say "We" in all of this.

Number two, let us help make the rabbi a good pedagog and school administrator. It is considered axiomatic in Jewish life that the rabbi is a teacher with an adequate knowledge of how to teach. Few of us, indeed, are possessed of that knowledge. Again, the products of our religious schools can be called before us for evidence of the paucity of our backgrounds and the insufficiency of our trainings. Their ignorance is the result of our inability to properly project Judaism through the medium of the classroom.

Some few of us were fortunate enough to have had the advantage of studying under Professor Abraham N. Franzblau at the College. He left in 1939 and until the other day when the vacancy was filled, the chair of education was obviously considered too unimportant to fill.

Number three, let us help make the rabbi as able an administrator as he can be in relation to his congregation. Let him be schooled in the art of developing the human resources with which he is surrounded. It is in this sense that I use the term "administrator." Too many Temples have already been turned into what may properly be called "one-man medicine shows." A youngster recently described a movie palace as a "pop corn stand with a show inside." A slight twist to say that a Reform Temple is a Rabbi's office with a congregation *outside* is to apply the illustration to our situation. Our houses of worship are being denuded of worshippers, because we deprive our congregants of their right not only to participate in the life of the Temple but actually to *become* the life of the Temple.

Number four, let us help give the rabbi a basic knowledge of Christianity with particular reference to the religious dynamics that motivate our Christian neighbors. We are called upon again and again to speak to Christian groups and we do it without realizing that if we are to be effective at all our words and ideas must fit into the context of *their* religious teaching and experience. A thought, a phrase attached to an allusion or illustration from the New Testament automatically establishes a bond for the Christian superior to any substitution from the Old Testament. How many of us have the background or knowledge from which to draw such material? If we wonder why so much of our labor in the field of inter-faith relations goes to nought, let us remember that we rarely touch the Christian at the point of his greatest emotional response — his own religious experience.

From this brief listing and comment on the four objectives of the Reform rabbinate that seem desirable, I should like to proceed directly to the problems of implementation. I do not see the present rabbinical training as fully adequate for either the realities or the objectives of the rabbinate.

Too much is left to chance and circumstance. Studies at the College are conducted on a basis that seems almost unreal. A student may graduate from the College with the feeling that the rabbinate will be what *he* — and he alone — makes of it. Schooling and career are dominated by a "sink or swim" philosophy. The swim-

mers, the successful rabbis are so because by predilection, personality and other indefinable characteristics they are born "rabbis." Knowing the right people is also helpful. The sinkers, the unsuccessful rabbis are so only because they lack these personal and innate characteristics.

I do not agree that a career in the rabbinate need be as haphazard as this. It seems to me that a good Jew, any good Jew, can become a good rabbi. Only let the realities and the objectives be taken into consideration, and let the Seminaries make provision to train men within the framework of this knowledge, and the improvement in the general level of the rabbinate will be immediately manifest.

Let us consider objective and implementation together to see how training will dovetail with reality.

Firstly, in order to help make the rabbi a student of Judaism I would suggest that the Board of Governors of our combined seminary grant the graduating students a provisional certificate as a rabbi. I am not interested in what other degrees they may receive. The right to be ordained as a rabbi should be reserved until the graduate has completed a minimum of two years of satisfactory scholarship *in absentia* — while he is serving as rabbi of a congregation. The discipline of those two years of additional study while in the active rabbinate will salvage the majority of our men for Jewish scholarship. At the very beginning of their ministry, they will learn to organize and conserve their time for study. It is a lesson which will become a lifelong habit. One very desirable by-product of this procedure will be to give our men a chance to think the rabbinate over. The very act of ordination has a much more powerful effect upon our careers than the conferring of a degree. The graduate who clutches a "Yo'reh, Yo'reh; Ya'din, Ya'din" in his hand often feels irrevocably committed to the rabbinate though he distills nothing but bitterness from his ministry. Now the door is left open and the men who have gained no satisfaction in those two years will turn their talents and their training to more satisfying careers in Jewish life.

Secondly, in order to help make the rabbi a good pedagog and school administrator, I would give the seminary student the greatest possible opportunity to actually practise these functions. I would suggest that the seminary consider the establishment of two model

religious schools, one in New York and one in Cincinnati. These schools should provide for week-day as well as sabbath instruction. The students should actually teach and administer these schools under the supervision of a professor of education. These schools should boldly experiment in pedagogical technique and method. A suitable periodical should publish their findings with reference to Jewish education, and do it now.

Dr. Julian Morgenstern was in Los Angeles this spring and I had an opportunity to discuss with him several of the points that I have raised in this paper. He commended this idea in particular and informed me that 25 years ago the Hebrew Union College had begun and almost completed negotiations with the Council of Jewish Women in Cincinnati to take over the religious school the Council was then conducting. The negotiations broke down because Dr. Slonimsky, the then professor of education left the College and no one was appointed to fill the vacancy.

It is common knowledge that any teachers' college worthy of the name has established a teacher's training school on the grounds of the college to give its students an opportunity to gain the type of training I am suggesting.

Thirdly, in order to help make the rabbi as able an administrator as possible with reference to his congregation I would suggest that it become a policy with the seminary to provide an opportunity for all students to meet with Jewish lay groups. Every student who holds a bi-weekly position should meet with the Board of Directors of that Congregation. If the bi-weekly is to serve the purpose of preparing the student for a career in the rabbinate, it should encompass, if only in miniature, the whole range of rabbinical-lay relationships. This would include the planning of a calendar of Temple activities the financing of that program, the integration of the Temple program into that of the Jewish and general community.

In this respect we have much to learn from the Jewish Center movement. Today, nearly every Center worker has a good command of the fundamentals of group dynamics, and that knowledge is used to generate the enthusiastic participation of the non-professionals.

Fourthly, in order to give the rabbi a basic knowledge of Chris-

tianity, I would suggest that the seminary appoint a professor of Christianity. This may be a bold step for a Jewish seminary, but we cannot afford to ignore the realities of our present situation. Here in the United States the Jew is no longer isolated in a ghetto. He lives in friendly communication with his Christian neighbors. The rabbi of today is face to face with the problem of not only interpreting Judaism to the Christian, but Christianity to the Jew. The rabbi must lead the way in creating the most favorable rapprochement between these two groups in American life. In this connection let me further suggest the advisability of securing one of the Christian ministers who has been studying at the Hebrew Union College to fill this post at the seminary. Certainly, his combined background in Christianity and Judaism will admirably fit him for this responsibility.

Here are the objectives and the techniques of achievement as I see them. No attempt has been made to cover the whole range of rabbinical life. Four areas have been plotted that are regarded as major fields of work. The rabbi who finds his training has helped make him adequate to handle these fields, will feel confident and satisfied as he approaches the other facets of his career.

TAKING STOCK OF OUR SEMINARIES

NORMAN GERSTENFELD

My vision of the future of our Seminary is based on my philosophy as an American of the Jewish faith. I ask your kind indulgence as I state a few affirmations and observations as preface to my suggestions. As Americans by birth or adoption, we are part of the freest country on the face of the earth. If religion is the witness of the righteous relation of man to man then there is nothing more profoundly religious than our bonds as citizens of this great land. Here is a young country that has blazed a trail across the face of the earth. From groups of disinherited immigrants of the old world, there has grown a country like nothing that has been witnessed in the ages of man. The entire ancient Roman Empire could fill into the banks of the Mississippi valley; and the distance from London to Moscow is less than from New York to Kansas.

But, our America is big not only in the vast physical area of its continental sweep but in its tremendous influence for blessing on the entire world. When America was born the aristocrats of the old world with few exceptions scoffed and scorned. They called its democracy the lawlessness of mob rule; its culture the boasting vulgarity of trivial inferiors; and its religious freedom the unprincipled anarchy of the spiritually untutored akin to atheism. They saw in the frontiersman the rude terrorist; its statesmen the demagogues of the market place; and its people the dregs of the earth.

In the slings and arrows of these sneering aristocrats, scorning young America, we recognize the fear they had of its inescapable influence on the old world. It was a French statesman who said three months after the Declaration of Independence that "the

freedom of the American colonies will mean the total revolution of Europe to America." It was to lead at once to the move for Parliamentary reform in England. 1776 in America was soon to be followed by the 1789 revolution in France. In the 19th century every step taken for freedom in the old world was inspired by the example of the American community.

In its brief history — for our American Constitution is only 162 years old — a mere moment in the annals of historic time — but in these few years America has transformed the whole trend of the world by its very existence. From America has come a new vision of democratic government as a workable society of free men. From America has come an economic revolution. We are responsible for the mass-production methods of modern industrialism that makes possible a new frontier of prosperity for man. From America has come the ferment of an age of invention unparalleled in human history — devices to reduce labor, devices to create new human power beyond the comprehension of ancient man. From America has come what may still be the world's intellectual revolution as we produced thinkers who said that instead of using ancient words and all kinds of abstract ideas unrelated to human experience, let us test our thinking in its relation to the truth of our lives; for a true thought must be a plan of action and the meaning of an idea is in its consequence. From America has come a spiritual revolution. It strengthened the ancient Hebraic belief in the perfectability of man; in the promise of the future of man; in the ability of the creative good in man to make this world into a new Heaven.

Thus, in the 19th century, when Malthus across the sea, and his many disciples, were preaching that the poverty of the old world was due to its overpopulation, at that very time America was telling the old world that when men are free they can solve every problem — for men are precious, and in their souls there is the divine spark that can transform every difficulty into new creative opportunity, if they face the future with free minds and in the spirit of righteous brotherhood.

Thus, America has grown to become the freest country on the face of the earth today. It has become the homeland of the world's oppressed in the 19th century and the arsenal and shrine of freedom

in the first half of the 20th century. In the years that lie ahead, the entire world depends upon the leadership of this great America. To be part of the American tradition is to be a partner on the greatest experiment in human righteousness the world has ever seen. Whatever may be its defects — and we have many — for everything human is imperfect — here is the tremendous truth of our age: that in this land, that is full of sunlight and whose free flag is full of stars, we are accomplishing one of the profoundest miracles of human history. There is no greater religious challenge to any man than to treasure these spiritual sources of our strength and then to dedicate our lives so that the righteous influence of our blessed land shall fulfill its divine mission in the mystery of God's time.

There is the calm of a tense waiting across the face of the earth, as if the whole world was awaiting the judgment of its fate. Will the old world have the true humility to see the error of its ways? Will America not become arrogant in its pride but mindful of its own temptations now gird its loins for the spiritual tasks that a rendezvous with destiny has brought? We cannot escape the challenge. The world will be dragged down into the vortex of ancient tragic evils unless it is lifted up by the virtues that gave our land its blessing. Much will depend on other nations but everything depends upon the people of America — whether with brave minds and stout hearts we will now be true to the rock from which we were hewn and the fountain from which we sprang.

As Americans of the Jewish faith we have an especially profound challenge. The very principles of tyranny and superstition, of amoral cynicism and immoral defeatism, that Israel has denied through the ages have been denied in the foundations of our land. The very ethical principles that in the face of historic adversity we have ever affirmed, have become the corner stone of America. Let not repetition and misquotation dull the truth that "it was Hebraic mortar that was the cement of American Democracy." There is, therefore, no land today on the face of the earth where a faithful Jew can feel as spiritually at home. If there is any place where we are *not* in exile it is in America. This land is in so many ways the fulfillment of the dream of the ancient Hebrew Prophets

and the promise of the noblest souls of our faith. There is a special challenge that rests upon us when we recognize that, by a mysterious destiny within our own life time, world Jewry has become completely transformed. One generation ago the majority of Jewish children of the world were born into Yiddish speaking homes. Today the majority of the Jewish children of the world speak English from their mother's knee. It means that we Americans of the Jewish faith are the heirs of the Jewish tradition of the ages, and upon our shoulders rests the leadership of the Jewish faith. We are the greatest Jewish community in the world and the freest in all the pages of historic time and what we make of the mission of the faith of Sinai in this good land will determine, to paraphrase Lincoln, whether we nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope on earth.

A map of the world reveals that the Western bulge of Africa looks like the Gulf of Mexico. Geologists tell us that the rock formation of the Western Coast of the old world is like the Eastern Coast of the new; and they conclude that at one time they were joined together but ages ago great terrestrial forces separated them so that vast oceans were to surround the new world. It is my faith that in the dim past, before the memory of man, God set aside this new world for a special purpose in human history. It was left empty and distant from the old world so that at a certain time, men would come here and grow into the noblest vision of righteous freedom; and when the world, by advance of its power, will have contracted into a small community — when the oceans will no more shield and the distance will have gone forever, by that time the new world will have grown strong enough to serve a sacred mission of divine freedom for all the children of men.

Even as America has no alternative but to move forward from its early isolation to world participation; so we, the oldest Jewish Seminary in America, have no alternative but to take the same highroad of destiny.

All modern Jewish Seminaries were started in the 19th century, after the spirit of 1776 and 1789 and the arms of Napoleon had made possible a new step in human freedom. Metz 1824, Padua 1827 and Breslau 1854; but the old world Seminaries were soon flooded by tides of reaction with which they had to compromise. It was the

little HUC, started 75 years ago in the queen city on the banks of the Ohio, in what was then the frontier of the West, and serving only a few newly formed Southern and Western communities: it is here that the boldest vision of a forward-looking liberal Judaism was affirmed. Isaac Mayer Wise, Kaufmann Kohler and Julian Morgenstern were the three giants who built a growing Seminary leading a growing Reform Judaism. Even though I would avoid reference to living personalities, may I say here that history will some day give a true evaluation of the non-melodramatic but profoundly constructive leadership of our beloved Dr. Morgenstern, who is responsible for so much that is intellectually liberal, institutionally strong and spiritually healthy in our College. Then came the mighty Stephen Wise, an eloquent latter-day Bathkol, aware of the unorganized newly arrived Jewish masses of our Eastern cities and their oppressed brothers in an old world in travail, demanding and creating a liberal Seminary in New York that would serve the unaffiliated without inflicting divisive absolutes he felt may now be obsolete. Then came the fusion. If there is not to be confusion there must be a division of function to face the challenge and to fit the facts of our future.

Let us remember that when two years ago the HUC and JIR agreed to become one, its stated purpose was "to strengthen and advance Judaism in America and throughout the world. The right to serve the Jewish people in its entirety (Klal Yisroel)." In terms of the realities and practical objectives of American Reform Judaism there is, therefore, the immediate necessity for a bold refocusing of our united Seminary toward new areas of spiritual service that now beckon ahead.

It is fortunate that our Seminary is now located in both New York and Cincinnati. In Cincinnati we come closer to the American frontier that molded American Reform Judaism. We must do a great deal more to develop our American Jewish Archives and our comparative American studies so that we will see more clearly our place in the developing American civilization. In New York, on the other hand, we have the largest religiously unaffiliated Jewish settlement in the world. Only in New York can we train the teachers for its new religious schools and the musicians for the new

services the Union is set to create. New York would also be an ideal place to develop the new skills of pastoral psychiatry and group therapy, for not only are here found some of the most advanced institutions and gifted men in the field but here, in the steel-ribbed canyons of the mammoth city, we approach "the megalopolis that is necropolis" and can find in more extreme form the rootless man of the modern wasteland from whom we can diagnose more clearly some of the spiritual plagues of tomorrow's industrial society. If we are to influence the American community we must better understand America's past and America's problems today. The location of the Seminary in both Cincinnati and New York will help our able faculty to further blaze the trail in the knowledge and service to the American community.

In order to match the needs of our age I plead for a further decentralization of our Seminary. I recommend that a major segment of its elementary department be moved to Jerusalem. Our School there should perhaps be in the form of a great Bible Academy to teach the scientific scholarship of the Bible, as well as courses in Hebrew, Biblical and Middle-East history, archaeology and Biblical commentaries. The School should have a Synagog, with a ritual conforming to the customs of American Reform Judaism, a Temple of American Liberal Judaism in the Holy City. The School would also be a hostel for its students and scholarly visitors. Such a School will vastly improve the linguistic skills, the historic perspective and the scholarly insight of our students. It will also in a friendly way greatly influence the Israeli community, raising the prestige of Liberal Judaism and strengthening the trend toward a democratic philosophy of religious differences and the separation of church and state. In a thousand ways it will help to quicken the scholarship and to challenge the profoundest thinking of a new generation of the faith of Israel in one of the most crucial areas of the old world.

I envisage one more step for our Seminary if we are to help bring God's healing to this hate torn world. It is the formation of an Academy of Religious Understanding in Jerusalem. The world needs the love that is mutual understanding and human sympathy. Without that reciprocal insight religion divides mankind instead of

leading us forward toward a just and peaceful world. The Bible is the bridge between the Jewish, Christian and Moslem traditions and is the source of the religious axioms believed self evident by the founding fathers of American freedom. This Academy would gather the great minds and hearts of the traditions of human faith, whatever may be their creed or rites, in the spirit of the friendly understanding that is the essence of human love and in a series of Conferences and Institutes, through the spoken and written word, will reach out across the face of the earth. It will bring new light into historic darkness, new love where there was once illwill, and new hope for the future of man.

I believe this is the mission of the Hebrew Union College for such a time as this. It is the Faith of Israel's answer to the cold war of the corroding conscience of a world being dragged by old fears into a new Caesarism. We are at one of the great turning points in the road of history. As our Sedrah reminds us: let us not view the road ahead like grasshoppers. If we are to reach a new world of promise now is the time for greatness.



Rabbi Friedman Urges All-Embracing Judaism To Reverse Trend Toward Irreligion in America

By Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
Temple Emanuel



Rabbi Friedman fleet upon the miracle of the re-establishment of Israel and the even greater miracle of the saving of 285,000 Jewish lives. Recent decades have been gloomy, with reports only of Jewish murders. The past few years have altered history, and

we witnessed rescue and resettlement instead. As a result of this, we look forward to 5710 with great joy and anticipation, in which even further gains can

More Greetings in Yom Kippur Issue

If you neglected to send in your New Year greeting for the Rosh Hashonah edition of the Intermountain Jewish News, you still have an opportunity to wish your friends a Happy New Year in our Yom Kippur issue next week. Call TA. 3271. Personal greetings are \$2.

be made, and past accomplishments consolidated.

I would not consider for a moment expressing any thoughts which might dilute the first breath of pleasure we have felt since Hitler's evil ascendancy. But I think it is typically Jewish that even in the midst of acclaim and rejoicing, we should turn our thoughts to serious matters, as we appraise the problems of the year ahead.

See Editorial Back Page

In the space of this article, I can merely outline the nature of these problems, set up the agenda as it were—and have the elaboration, the exposition, the sugges-

tions of remedies to future sermons from the pulpit or editorials from the press. As the year unfolds, perhaps there will be opportunities to deal with these problems in public forums and discussion groups.

STRENGTHEN FAITH

I would suggest, first, that it is not too early to begin to con-
(Continued on Page 43)

Rabbis to Discuss Friedman Next Week

The Intermountain Jewish News invited Rabbis Morris Margolies, S. Shapiro, Shlomo Twerski and Joel Zion to participate in a symposium on Rabbi Friedman's controversial proposal in our Yom Kippur edition next Thursday

Mile-High View

By ROBERT S. GAMZEY



RABBI Friedman's Minhag America—a bold proposal for a universal synagogue embracing all Jews—may have met a chilly reception among his rabbinical friends in Denver. But to Rabbi-Professor Solomon Simonson, the Friedman idea is already becoming a reality in America, and is destined to dominate Jewish life in the United States within ten years.

Dr. Simonson, who left his dual capacity as assistant professor of speech at the University of Denver and weekend rabbi at Pueblo to become head of the speech department at the newly-created State University



of New York, evinced keen interest in Rabbi Friedman's controversial Rosh Hashonah message in the Intermountain Jewish News.

"We have Herb Friedman's Minhag America now, though we don't recognize it," declared the onetime schoolmate of Rabbi Laderman at the Chicago Hebrew Theological Seminary.

★ ★ ★

EXPLAINING that Minhag America means a distinctive religious life spontaneously developing out of the soil and spirit of a country, Rabbi Simonson pointed to the following AMERICAN Jewish religious innovations which Orthodoxy, Conservatism and Reform have borrowed from each other and now use in common:

- Congregational singing introduced by Young Israel, orthodox youth.

- Late Friday evening services and sermons where men and women sit together, a Conservative innovation copied by Orthodox and Reform.

- Confirmation exercises inaugurated by Reform Judaism, and adopted by Conservative synagogues and also by orthodox under the name of "graduation."

- Lox and bagel breakfast—prayer service on Sunday mornings.

- Has Mitzvah.

- Growing use of English in services and sermons.

- More beauty in the service.

The the younger generation

may take these religious innovations for granted, they constitute a new pattern of synagogue and temple procedure evolved only in the past 25 years, Dr. Simonson pointed out. In another ten years, he predicted, you will barely be able to distinguish Orthodoxy, Conservatism and Reform from each other, and in our lifetime we will see Rabbi Friedman's universal synagogue prevalent in Jewish life.

He will be glad to see it. . . . "100% Orthodoxy with its all-or-nothing credo, and extreme Reform should be put aside."

★ ★ ★

AN ORTHODOX RABBI himself, Dr. Simonson believes the shape of the universal synagogue to come will be a bigger and stronger conservative middle-ground Judaism, with Reconstructionism coming forth within the Conservative movement to dominate it as it already does in Chicago and a few other large communities. Rabbi Simonson regrets the Reconstructionist advance because the Mordecai Kaplan school of a religious civilization questions Divine Revelation of the Torah.

As an observant orthodox Jew, Rabbi Simonson honestly and mournfully looks at what he calls the "chaotic" state of Kashruth and Sabbath in America. Everyone seems to have set individual rules. Some keep kosher homes and eat anything downtown. Others draw the line at forbidden pork products, or shrimp or lobster. Many make only a pretense at a kosher home, drawing the line at buying non-kosher meat. Every housewife apparently sets her own standards.

As for the observance of the Sabbath, it's pitiful, Professor Simonson notes. Business and jobs have made the Jewish Sabbath almost meaningless, and even many who rest on Saturday are unable to resist the lure of football and other attractions.

"The Sabbath should be a day of beauty, relaxation and spiritual communion with God," he declared.

★ ★ ★

QUESTIONED about the latest tempest over Ben Gurion,

Rabbi Friedman Advocates End To Religious Cleavages in Judaism

(Continued from Page 1)

sider the whole problem of strengthening American Jews in their religious faith. Most of our good leaders have worked hard and diligently in Jewish causes of a secular nature—The Zionist movement, the UJA, the B'nai

B'rith—all of which was and is proper and necessary. But sole preoccupation with these endeavors can result in the growth of a generation of leaders not concerned with religion and the synagogue. Jews without religious faith are a paradox hitherto unknown in our history.

IGNORANCE RAMPANT

Secondly, it seems to me that in the years ahead we must work as never before to overcome the ignorance of American Jews. This ignorance is not due to apathy on the part of the masses. I think Jews are willing to learn. I would place the blame rather on the leaders, educators, rabbis and their techniques. Somehow

we have not yet discovered the means and methods of bringing the gorgeous heritage of our history to the 20th century American Jew. When we do so, I am certain the people will come in great numbers and will be able to enrich the lives of our folk by adding the wealth of Jewish culture to American culture.

Lastly, we must begin to concentrate on what I consider to be the most important problem of all—the conscious and deliberate creation of a "Minhag America," an American pattern of Judaism which can attract all Jews to its standard, and which, ultimately, is the only way we will be able to rescue Jews for Judaism in this country. I am convinced it will have to be a liberal and modern pattern, but it will somehow have to retain all the warmth and fervor of ritual and ceremony.

"MINHAG AMERICA"

Some feeble steps have been made in this direction. The Association of Jewish chaplains has stated the thesis that since Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis were able to resolve their differences, in ritual and even to some extent in belief while in uniform, that great benefit should somehow be carried over into civilian life. Or an individual rabbi here and there resigns from a sectarian rabbinical body and attempts to work for k'lal Yisroel.

This is the greatest problem of all facing us next year and for every future year here in America. Just as the Mediterranean Jews fashioned for themselves a Minhag Sephardic, and north European Jews developed a Minhag Ashkenaz—a set of habits, customs, laws, traditions which the respective groups clung to, so must we on this continent develop a Minhag America—a common denominator of Jewish living, which will transcend old labels of Conservative, Orthodox, Reform and will replace our cleavages with a harmonious union.

JUDAISM'S FUTURE

Only in this fashion will Judaism flourish and expand in the U. S. Only under the benevolent canopy of such a liberal, but all-embracing Judaism, will Jews remain deeply loyal to their faith.

This was the vision and dream of Stephen S. Wise. With this were we, his students, imbued. If we succeed in implementing in the second half of the 20th century, what he formulated in vision during the first half, we will have gone far to preserve Israel and Torah for the worship of God.

May these be our consecrated tasks as we face the year 5710.



Rabbi Friedman's Proposal

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN'S message on the front page is worthy of serious discussion.

The frank, outspoken Temple Emanuel spiritual leader has come out four-square for what he calls a Minhag America, "a common denominator of Jewish living, which will transcend old labels of Conservative, Orthodox, Reform and will replace our cleavages with a harmonious union."

Deploring the religious apathy and widespread ignorance of Jewish history, customs and values among our people, Rabbi Friedman declares, "Only in this fashion will Judaism flourish and expand in the United States. Only under the benevolent canopy of such a liberal, all-embracing Judaism, will Jews remain deeply loyal to their faith."

Coming from such a significant figure in Denver Jewish life as the rabbi of Temple Emanuel, the Friedman proposal cannot be shrugged off as "another New Year message."

We suggest serious discussion of his idea, at B'nai B'rith, Zionist, synagogue, Men's clubs and sisterhood, Council of Jewish Women, and other organization meetings. Let program chairmen invite rabbis of the three cleavages in Jewish life to debate this issue in public forums at which the laymen can express themselves, too. Let us hear from our readers in the letters to the editors column.

Let us face the facts that after the forthcoming High Holiday season, religious life usually fails to touch the rank and file of our people. Let us therefore give this problem of a developing IRRELIGIOUS American Jewry our attention.

We suggest that one of the first things we can do about it, besides discussing the problem, is to attend the Jewish Community Centers' splendid series of popular lectures by Denver rabbis on "Great Books of Hebrew Literature" every Monday night starting Oct. 31.

Let's first learn of the glories of our religious faith, and then do something about propagating it among our own people.

OPPOSES ^{2 Nov 49} MINHAG

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman's Rosh Hashonah proposal for a Minhag America—a universal synagogue to embrace Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism—was rejected with a word of praise by Rabbi Manual Laderman at his opening Friday evening lecture at the Hebrew Educational Alliance.

Rabbi Friedman's proposal, said Rabbi Laderman who did not refer to him by name, is good in that it recognizes that Jewish religious life in America is in a sad state in every camp. Attendance at services is disappointing in all synagogues, whether Reform, Conservative or Orthodox.

The solution, however, lies not in changing the outward forms or even changing the customs of Jewish life, said Dr. Laderman, but in eradicating ignorance of Judaism and lack of faith.

"We need faith, not forms," he said, "soul not services, repentance not reformation. We are a secularized generation who don't recognize the need for religious expression. The need of American Judaism is conviction, certitude, a sense of awe of creation and the wonder of life and humility of the spirit."

Analyzing the so-called universal synagogue, Dr. Laderman opposed it on the grounds that it would be a straight-jacket of religion. Instead of a least common denominator of Judaism, he expressed preferment for a maximum religious life. He said that under the present division, the individual can seek the kind of religious life which appeals to him, instead of being regimented in a denial of religious liberty.

"This proposal," Dr. Laderman declared, "would ghettoize American Judaism by making it a special brand of Judaism, it would cut it off from its past, separate it from the present, and play havoc with its future."

A public debate on Minhag America is planned between Rabbis Friedman, Laderman and Kauvar with Bob Gamzey as moderator under the sponsorship of the National Council of Jewish Women.

October 6, 1949

d is a fool."

Kauvar Opposes Universal Shul

During New Year services, Rabbi C. H. Kauvar referred to Rabbi Herbert Friedman's proposal in the Intermountain Jewish News for an all-embracing universal synagogue. The BMH leader said the idea is not a good one. What is needed instead, he said, is a Jewish Judaism, a minhag to which all Jews can turn to. Rabbi Kauvar said Judaism already is universal, and is too broad to be confined.

He recalled that the first Reform prayer book was called "Minhag America" to separate it from Orthodoxy. Because of this precedent, the use of the term Minhag America for a universal synagogue is unfortunate, he said.

Rabbi Friedman Carries Fight for Religious Merger to National Parley

Cincinnati, Ohio.—Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman of Denver's Temple Emanuel carried his campaign for a Minhag America—a union of Reform, Orthodoxy and Conservative Judaism—to the national scene here this weekend in a major address at the 61st annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

In an eloquent plea for an educational program at the combined Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion which would train rabbis who would bring about a merger of Jewish religious forces in America, the young former army chaplain stated:



The single most important task of our liberal seminaries today is to fashion a type of Judaism which will serve as a basis for the preservation of our cultural and religious heritage here in America.

As we cease to enjoy the inspirations brought to us in the past from European Jewish sources, we will be forced increasingly to depend upon our own creativity.

NEW APPROACH

The pattern of American Judaism will have to be such as to satisfy the needs of native-born generations in the future. Classical Reform, of the 1885 version, obviously is insufficient. The old orthodoxy is equally inadequate. It appears that our people want a liberal approach, in respect to Jewish law, combined with a warm and colorful array of rituals and ceremonials.

The fabricating of such a combination contemplates liaison, even leading to merger between Reform and Conservative forces. Suggestions for such a merger have been forthcoming already from Rabbis James Heller and Morris Lieberman, as well as others. And there is nothing in the suggestions which would exclude a willing orthodoxy.

Whether this comes to pass in the reasonably near future or not, it is a course of eventual action which our seminaries should keep clearly in mind. Administrations, boards and faculties should never forget the fact that both Isaac Mayer Wise and Stephen S. Wise contemplated one united American Jewry and Judaism—along the lines of a liberal and progressive, yet warmly emotional pattern.

At the close of this anniversary period of 75 years, let the College-Institute set forth firmly on the path of the future. For the prize is great—nothing less than

the creation of a noble Jewish epoch in America, built upon learning and dignity, worthy of our numbers, our resources, and our position in the history of the Jewish people.

NEW GOLDEN AGE

I believe we can create in America that kind of Judaism whose achievements and satisfactions will be strong enough to keep future generations cemented by the centrifugal force of inner compulsion to remain Jewish.

I believe Judaism can successfully take root in this soil and produce another Golden Age similar to anything we have enjoyed in our magnificent past.

I think, however, that this can be done only by building a united Judaism, one not plagued by division into sects. We must concentrate on the fabrication of a kind of Judaism which most American Jews seem to want. Our people are looking for a combination of liberalism and warmth; a joining of emancipation with the color, vividness, and

pageantry of older forms; an amalgamation of modern methods, which appeal to the mind, with ancient ceremonialisms which satisfy the emotions.

So the Sabbath Kiddush has returned and Bar Mitzvah is here to stay. Songs are sung and Atoahs are worn. Chanukah has become important and the tapers are kindled.

DENVER UNITY

A great reality of the American rabbinate today is the increasing degree of cooperation between colleagues in the same city of different views. In our community of Denver, there exists a perfectly handsome relationship between three men, which, I must say, has been fostered deliberately. It is no mere accident. I believed firmly in Stephen Wise's concept of Klal Yisrael, and set about to create an atmosphere of comradeship, which has ripened into genuine friendship for the other rabbis, and which has matured, incidentally, for the greater gain of the entire community. The three of us serve harmoniously as the co-chairmen of our local Federation Campaign.

As the oldest religious semi-

nary in America, and as the one first espousing the liberal form which holds the greatest promise for the future, let us not bankrupt that future by a stubborn insistence upon labels, but let us instead show the way for any such combinations or mergers as may provide the native-born American Jew the kind of Judaism he wants and will at the same time inspire him to participate in the creation of a great and noble Jewish epoch in America worthy of our numbers, our resources, and our position in the history of the Jewish people.

Rabbis President Hits Religion In Schools

"The attempt to utilize the public school to further denominational religion is but one more phase of the attempt to use the power of the State to control conscience," said Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, president of the Reform Rabbinates.

Dr. Marcus recommended that the CCAR "denounce the injustice that now prevails in the land of Israel, whereby some Reform Rabbis are denied complete religious equity."



Reform Institute Springs Surprise; Asks CCAR Provide Ritual Guide

National Jewish Post

CINCINNATI—Pressure within the U. S. Reform rabbinate for some kind of formulation of Reform ritual practice led this week to a formal recommendation by an Institute on Reform Jewish Theology, calling for a guide to ritual observance.

The three-day Institute, held last week, slated seven round tables with only one concerned with Reform practices. The only specific recommendation to emerge from the meeting, however, was the proposal for a guide.

The word "guide" was carefully chosen to avoid any appearance that the 74 members present were contemplating any kind of Shulchan Aruch for Reform. The Shulchan Aruch is the basic code of behavior for Orthodox Jews throughout the world.

WHO IS SPOKESMAN?

The development was considered particularly significant in view of the refusal of another Reform committee to deal with the issue. That committee, headed by Rabbi Morton Berman of Chicago, announced earlier this month that it was postponing "for the time being" any plans for formulation of a code. It was set up by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, congregational body of the U. S. Reform movement. (NJP, March 10).

The members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the U. S. Reform rabbinical organization, took part in three days of plenary sessions and round tables, under the general chairmanship of Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman of St. Louis.

The round tables covered God, prayer, immortality, the mission of Israel, the soul, revelation and Reform Jewish practice.

THE RESOLUTION

The Reform rabbis, at the concluding session, recommended that the CCAR formulate a guide for ceremonial practice in Reform Judaism, with this resolution:

"The Round Table on Reform Jewish practice recognized the need to establish norms for Jewish observance. At the same time it upholds the liberal tradition of Reform Judaism, which is opposed to authoritarianism and coercion."

The resolution then cited a statement of guiding principles on Reform practice adopted by the CCAR at Columbus, Ohio, in 1937, which became known as the Columbus platform in its complete break with anti-Zionism. The statement cited was "Judaism as a way of life requires, in addition to its moral and spiritual demands, the preservation of the Sabbath, Festivals and Holy Days, the retention and development of such customs, symbols and ceremonials as possess inspirational value."

The resolution adopted last



RABBI ISSERMAN
Pressure is Mounting

week by the institute contended that "in the view of the Round Table on Reform Jewish practice, the implementation of the above statement requires the formulation of a guide for ceremonial practice in Reform Judaism."

WHAT IS NEEDED

"This guide would provide information concerning prevailing customs, offer standards and criteria for the evaluation of ritual observance, and suggests their creative development. This guide should also present the historical sources of its proposals."

"We therefore urge the Institute on Theology to recommend that the Central Conference of American Rabbis formulate such a guide."

On the impact of Israel, the institute also approved a statement that "The resuscitated State of Israel, whose spiritual potentialities seem unlimited, presents an important challenge and unique opportunity to Reform Judaism."

STRICTLY ADVISORY

Rabbi Isserman said that at the start of the Institute, it was emphasized that the findings would be a guide reflecting the views of the majority of the Institute participants and not in any sense binding on the CCAR.

Rabbi Isserman also disclosed that the participants were unable to complete the Institute schedule and that they decided to reconvene the Institute at the Hebrew Union College here in December "in order that these explorations may be continued and the final conclusions be made public."

The need for a codification of the practices of Reform Judaism

was emphasized by Rabbi Lou H. Silberman, Jr., of Temple Israel, Omaha, at one of the plenary sessions.

He asserted that one of the "tragedies" of Reform Judaism "has been its eagerness to deal with everything; thus allowing itself to be pushed into a denying or negating position."

"Our desire is not, nor can it ever be the creation of a new Orthodoxy out of Reform," he said. "On the other hand, we cannot stand idly by and allow every vagary and whim to assume the status of sanctioned practice simply because there is no way to say no."

The issue came up almost immediately at the opening of the Institute, when Rabbi Isserman acknowledged the existence of "sharp differences of opinion" on the problem.

Friedman's Minhag America Already Here, Shapiro Regrets

By Rabbi Salman Shmuel Shapiro

In replying to the Editor's request to comment on the proposals of Rabbi Herbert Friedman for the creation of a Minhag America paralleling Minhag Ashkenaz and Minhag Sephardic thru the founding of a liberal, harmonious, all-embracing Judaism transcending all labels of current fractional Judaism, one becomes flabbergasted at so incongruous a conception by my good friend.

It is fantastic that one bright morning, orthodoxy shall willy-nilly declare itself obsolete, cast off its habits and shake off the Talmud to unite with the teachings of those whose upbringing, environment and training estranged them from the sources of inspired G-d given Judaism.

A Minhag signifies a custom which springs up spontaneously by the masses who cling staunchly to it, as kaddish for the mourners, and Yiskor on oty Days. But Rabbi Friedman, do not worry. There IS a Minhag United States already!

YISKOR RUSH

On the last day of Holy Days, the masses throng to the shuls at 10:30 a. m. to recite Yiskor. A half hour later, there is hardly a minyon left to end the prayers. The autos are speeding away with horns a-blowing. That is Minhag America.

Or observe this panorama. The Bar Mitzvah lad arrives in shul splendidly attired. Under one arm, he carries the new tallis in a paper-bag. Under his other arm, he holds the new siddur nicely wrapped. He is escorted by his parents wearing flowers. The shul towers like a queen above all the automobiles parked around it like a retinue. That's Minhag America.

Yeshivas and rabbinical seminaries are training simply professional wage-earners. Where are the idealists—the sons of the prophets—who could resign all terrestrial gains and soar up to celestial bliss, carrying the multitude with him?

Let wandering idealists be free of material needs, let them travel at communal expense. Lectures should be delivered regularly about Jewish topics: "What is the Talmud? What are the merits of

the codifiers, the prophets? Who are the great leaders who brought us to this day of the reestablishment of Israel?"

This, according to my understanding, could and should be done.

JEWISH
LIVES



A Program to Enhance Jewish Life in America

MINHAG AMERICA—Rabbi Herbert Friedman's stimulating proposal for an all-embracing Judaism to reverse the trend toward irreligion among American Jewry—will be debated again by the leaders of the Denver rabbinate next Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. at Temple Emanuel under the joint auspices of the National Council of Jewish Women, and the sisterhoods of the Alliance, B.M.H. and Emanuel.

The Council-Sisterhoods symposium on Minhag America once again focuses the attention of Denver's Jewish community on one of the basic problems of American Jewry: the failure of the synagogue to attract the masses of our people except during the High Holydays and certain social functions.

Coincident with the Minhag debate, the current 15th anniversary issue of the Reconstructionist Magazine offers a comprehensive "Program for Jewish Life Today." Because the Reconstructionists' analysis of Judaism in 1950 and their recommendations for the future of Jewish life are timed fortuitously with the Minhag America discussions in Denver, we believe we can render our readers a real educational service and a background for the Minhag debate by devoting our editorial page this issue to a summary of "A Program for Jew-

ish Life Today."

The Reconstructionist editors emphasize that "A Program for Jewish Life Today" is not exclusively a product of the Mordecai Kaplan school which spawned the Reconstructionist movement. To the contrary, the program was thought out by a series of meetings of many minds not committed to Reconstructionism, and represents a consensus of diverse elements in Jewish life.

What motivated leading Jewish thinkers to present this program at this time? "Our times call for a new emphasis on Jewish unity," explain the editors of The Reconstructionist. "The great centers of Jewish population and culture in Europe have been destroyed. Jews by the hundreds of thousands have been forced to migrate and adjust themselves to new surroundings. Above all, the establishment of the State of Israel has created new opportunities and new problems. It is therefore urgently necessary to help Jews identify the cultural and spiritual elements that unite them. That is what the following Program for Jewish Life Today endeavors to do."

The momentous fact of Israel's rebirth with its revolutionary impact upon every Jew in the world affords

Jewry unlimited opportunities for growth, development, and gaining a new collective and individual faith and confidence in themselves as Jews. There are, however, dangers inherent in the creation of the new Jewish State. These are dangers that the accepted political separation of the State of Israel from Diaspora Zionist bodies will be carried to the undesired extreme of severing the spiritual and cultural ties that should unite all Jewry.

The Program for Jewish Life Today offers a basis for uniting the maximum possible number of Jews, even those with opposing attitudes toward Jewish tradition. "All elements in Jewry should find participation in this program possible, except those who see no need for perpetuating Judaism and those who are opposed, in principle, to co-operating in communal endeavors with Jews who differ from them in religious doctrine."

"The unity of the Jewish people can no longer be based on uniformity of belief and practice. It must be based on common interests, common historical memories and a sense of common destiny."

The program conferees emphasize the historical
(CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE)

A Program to Enhance Jewish Life in America



By ROBERT S. GAMZEY

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

transformation of Jewish life in the past century since Emancipation broke down the walls of the ghetto where orthodox Judaism reigned supreme and enlisted the unqualified devotion of the entire Kehilla.

"But wherever Jews have attained civic rights and share the political, economic and cultural interests of their neighbors, they have found it harder to live as Jews," states the Program. "They still suffer from various forms of discrimination and prejudice, which tempt them to deny their Jewish identity. The confidence of many Jews in the validity of their religious tradition has been shaken by the impact of modern thought; they lack the compensatory satisfactions which their forebears derived from Jewish life. . . . The modern Jew thus needs a rationale for his Judaism. He needs an idea of Judaism that would enable him to recognize its abiding religious and cultural values. Only thus will he be able to satisfy his psychological need for self-acceptance as a Jew. By accepting himself as a Jew he is entitled to live as an American without fear or frustration.

"JUDAISM SHOULD BE VIEWED AS THE CIVILIZATION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE . . . which originally lived in Eretz Israel and which has maintained an uninterrupted existence to our day. Jewish peoplehood is based on historical continuity, language, literature and art, laws, mores and folkways, and attains its consummation in religion. A religion is that aspect of a civilization which is concerned with enhancing the value of human life for the individual, the group and mankind. A religion fosters faith in God as the Source of the ideals of a civilization and hallows the objects, persons and institutions that embody these ideals."

Unites Jewish Survivalists

This conception of Judaism opens the door to uniting all Jews who want to see Judaism survive and who are broadminded enough not to exclude those who do not see eye-to-eye with them. Even those who deny the validity or importance of faith in God deprive themselves of many benefits to be derived from participating in the religious civilization of the Jewish people, but as long as they respond with reverence to some of the hallowed elements of Jewish civilization, or desire the embodiment of ethical ideals in Jewish life, their secularism cannot be regarded as a total repudiation of Jewish religion. They can still contribute to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization.

Clarifying the generally-accepted political separation of Israel and Diaspora as necessary and desirable, the Program emphasizes that all world Jewries constitute one individual people, bound together by common participation in Judaism, their religious civilization which treasures spiritual and ethical values above merely political goals. Because the unity of the Jewish people thruout the world should be maintained, American Jews should continue to help in the upbuilding of Israel, and seek the freedom, security and social and spiritual welfare of Jewry everywhere.

Denver—A Good Community

Turning to the Jewish community, the Program for Jewish Life envisions that kind of communal organization which we are developing in Denver to satisfy the needs of every element for the fullest expression of their religious, educational, Zionist, cultural, leisure-time, recreational, health, welfare, civic defense, relief and philanthropic needs.

Recognizing that each community must build its own institutions to meet its peculiar needs, the Program, in our opinion, is being fulfilled in Denver.

The newly-expanded Allied Jewish Community Council is giving expression to the desires of all the Jewish people to help determine the policies and programs of the overall communal organization. The newly-enlarged Jewish Community Centers movement, with the B'nai B'rith building as the locale for an east side branch, will soon be able to foster and co-ordinate all-city Jewish cultural and recreational activities for all age groups. The Jewish Family and Children's Service, another recent development, is not only handling the relief and rehabilitation of new Americans entering our community, but also providing professional, sympathetic and helpful guidance and assistance to those in need of help on their personal, family and marital problems. The major congregations, Temple Emanuel, B.M.H. and Hebrew Alliance, are going beyond the holding of religious services to make the synagogue a year-around, day-by-day center of Jewish life. Thru manifold activities of men's clubs, sisterhoods, youth groups, young people's organizations and even nurseries, the congregations in Denver are making Judaism the religious civilization which the Reconstructionists define. This trend was climaxed in the stupendous Purim carnivals Sunday. The rabbis, as we mentioned last week, are cementing communal unity by taking the leadership in helping to solve the critical Rose Hospital problem which requires united communal action thru the Allied Campaign.

Every Jewish Need Filled in Denver

Denver Jewry can truly be proud of its national institutions as well. The JCRS, NJH, NHJC, Ex-Patients' Home are known thruout the land and are supported by American Jewry to whom Denver is synonymous with Health and Life-Saving. Locally, we have built the gorgeous Rose Hospital and the Beth Israel Home for the Aged, the prides of any community. The Beth Israel

hospital has for more than a quarter-century served the sick and needy of all faiths, while providing kosher food and a Jewish atmosphere for those who desire it.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith serves, fortunately without competition, in defending the Jewish name, building goodwill, activating high ethical standards and fighting discrimination against any and all racial and religious groups.

B'nai B'rith and the National Council of Jewish Women stand over and above all religious and ideological schisms in the Jewish community to unify Jews and provide them with common meeting grounds for service to mankind.

The cause of Israel Re-Born has been advocated successfully by all shades of the Zionist movement whose obsolete party system is firmly established in Denver. The main job of assisting in the monumental task of resettling a quarter-million homeless Jews in Israel a year is being borne by the highly-organized, highly-respected and widely-supported Allied Jewish Campaign which raises funds for Palestine thru the UJA, and also for more than a hundred other local, national and worldwide Jewish charitable, welfare, educational and religious-training causes.

We say to the conferees who sent us the Program for Jewish Life Today that while Denver's communal organization is by no means ideal, it now compares favorably with the best in the country and, stirred into action every week by informative Intermountain Jewish News, Denver Jewry takes second place to no other community in the intensity of its Jewish life and the constructive aid it gives to all worthwhile causes.

Local Autonomy vs. National Rule

We believe Denver's Jewish community has advanced far toward the Program's goal of "availing themselves of the Jewish spiritual heritage for the personal self-fulfillment of their members as well as for the perpetuation and creativity of the Jewish people as a whole."

We agree with the Program's recommendation that "national Jewish organizations with local branches should take cognizance of the need of communal unity and should encourage their branches to participate in the establishment of local organic communities." We would go beyond this recommendation to advise local adherents to national organizations to assert a greater degree of independence from New York directors and directives, and exercise more grass-roots judgment on the local level to veto or modify New York commands when necessary.

Common Ground on Religion

In striving for a common ground on the ticklish subject of the Jewish religion, the Program states, in substance:

Jewish religion should give Jews the power to retain, in all the vicissitudes of fortune, an unimpaired faith in the sacredness of life. It should encourage them to make Jewish communal life contribute to the enhancement of life's worth for themselves and others.

To that end it should foster faith in God as the Power that makes for the fulfillment of man's destiny to become fully human. Jewish sages thought of God as the Source and Guarantor of ethical values—mercy, justice, honesty and self-control. We must interpret those beliefs in accordance with the knowledge of our times. The differences in ways of thinking about God will not impair the essential unity of Jewish religion, as long as Jews serve God by endeavoring to hallow Jewish life.

Traditional forms of Jewish ritual observance should be retained, even if their original meaning is no longer valid, provided they have acquired new and valid meanings for us thru reinterpretation. Those traditional forms, however, which have no valid meaning for us and do not lend themselves to reinterpretation need to be modified or replaced by others. Such changes should not be imposed by communal or organizational pressure on those who are not convinced of their need.

New forms of observance giving expression to newly felt needs should be introduced into the ritual of the synagogue and the home.

The synagogue and the home should activate the religious character of the Jewish community.

In addition to religion, the synagogue should concern itself with developing Jewish fellowship and Jewish culture.

Jewish Education for Young, Old

The study of Torah, the sacred literature of the Jewish people, has always been regarded as a primary religious obligation of the Jew, and the teaching of Torah as the most important function of the synagogue, transcending even that of worship.

For the modern Jew, no less than for his forebears, they are invaluable for giving meaning, purpose and direction to the life of the Jewish people and for helping the individual Jew to live his life at its best.

Every Jewish institution, especially the synagogue, should endeavor to stimulate Jews to pursue the study of problems affecting human relations with a view to their own spiritual growth and the improvement of the world in which they live.

To transmit the rich cultural heritage of Judaism to future generations, provision must be made for a Jewish educational program beginning with early childhood. Such a program should provide for scientific research into the Jewish past. It should help Jews to interpret their tradition in terms relevant to contemporary life.

Responsibility of the Community

Jewish education should prepare American Jews for intelligent participation in the upbuilding of Jewish life both in Israel and in the Diaspora. It should encourage the study and use of the Hebrew language as a means of maintaining the continuity of Jewish life, the cul-

tural influence of the Jewish community in Israel, and the unity of the Jewish people thruout the world.

To make an adequate Jewish education available to every Jewish child is the responsibility of the entire Jewish community and not exclusively that of the parents or of the congregation.

The Jewish community should endeavor to establish a complete system of Jewish education to supplement and parallel the general education which the child receives in the public school system. Beginning with the nursery school for children too young to be admitted to the public school, Jewish education should take them thru elementary and high school and, wherever possible, thru a higher institution of collegiate standing.

In addition to maintaining schools and a teaching profession, the community should undertake informal educational projects for Jews of all ages thru camps, clubs, classes and institutes.

Moreover, efforts should be made to make a specific Jewish contribution to the culture of America by having courses in the Hebrew language and literature and in the history of the Jewish people included as accredited subjects in the curricula of public high schools, colleges and universities.

Jewish Culture and Art

Jewish life should be made more beautiful and interesting thru art. Music, drama, the dance, literature, architecture, painting and sculpture—all can and should be utilized to express and enhance the values experienced in living as Jews.

The Jewish spirit should be discernible in the interior decoration of the Jewish home. Objects used in Jewish ritual, such as the mezuzah, the Sabbath candlesticks, the seder plate, and the menorah, should be rendered as beautiful as artistic love can make them. Books, recordings, pictures dealing with Jewish themes, should give character and distinction to the home.

Religious ritual should be enriched by expressive music and dramatic pageantry.

Every effort should be made to interest Jewish artists in Jewish life and to make it possible for them to employ some of their talent for the artistic expression of their Jewish interests. Art libraries and museums should be established in Jewish institutions, festivals of Jewish music and dance should be arranged, and Jewish artistic talent should be encouraged thru fellowships and scholarships.

Judaism and Social Justice

Judaism as a religious civilization calls for the application of ethical principles and spiritual values to all human relations.

To help in the achievement of a just social order, Jews should:

1. Strive for a more equitable distribution of economic goods and services.
2. Combat discrimination.
3. Urge adequate education and health and welfare program, for the benefit of all.
4. Preserve individual rights to freedom of speech, worship, press and assembly.
5. Espouse the cause of world peace and human rights for support of the United Nations.

For a Golden Age of Judaism

In summarizing the foregoing Program for Jewish Life Today for our readers, we do not imply our embracing of the Reconstructionist program, or its advocacy for Denver. Many of the Reconstructionist writings of Prof. Kaplan, the founder of the movement, and his brilliant rabbinical disciples are intriguing and deeply interesting. But there is no point in pushing the Reconstructionist philosophy in Denver where the Alliance, B.M.H. and Temple are making such marked strides toward creating a Jewish civilization around their houses of worship.

Reconstructionism, we believe, is ideal for a new community synagogue-center which seeks to enroll the unaffiliated, the unattached and the unreligious Jews.

As to the theological arguments of the Kaplanists, we are not equipped to judge. As to the secular aspects of Reconstructionism's crusade for "giving unity of purpose and structure to Jewish life," we find ourselves generally in agreement.

In conclusion, let us re-emphasize that the Program for Jewish Life is not exclusively a product of Reconstructionism, but stems from a broader basis of Jewish thinking. It is a program for Jewish life, not for Reconstructionism. It presents a working basis for:

1. Reorganizing the American Jewish community.
2. Fostering those elements that make Jewish life worthwhile.
3. Indicating the direction which must be taken to make Jewish life creative.

We endorse the suggestion of The Reconstructionist magazine that the Jewish community give this Program more than a cursory reading and like the Minhag America proposal of which this Program is part and parcel, it should be discussed and debated before Denver organizational meetings.

Let us put our best minds to work on how to achieve the fullest measure of co-operation by Jews of different schools of thought in insuring the perpetuation and enhancement of Judaism—a Minhag America to create a Golden Age of Judaism in the United States.

INTERMOUNTAIN JEWISH NEWS

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THE PROPOSAL FOR A MINHAG AMERICA
Friday evening, November 11, 1949

Americans overseas always asking what's new at home.
This is my first non-travelogue type of speech at home.

THE PROPOSAL

- 1) American Judaism is fragmentized
 - 2) American Jews face many problems because of Sabbath, eating out, Gentile environment, etc.
 - 3) Am Jews don't know Hebrew
 - 4) Amer Jews have already made certain changes
 - a) Friday night services
 - b) English sermons
 - c) Social Hour
 - d) greater participation by women
 - 5) Army chaplains developed a kind of common denominator Judaism
 - 6) Every age had its MINHAG
- We need a Minhag which will unite all American Jews into one great universal synagogue
- Ashkenaz Sefarad

b) Reform Temples are not filled to overflowing in the Friday evening and Saturday services- as empty as orthodox synagogues despite all their concession to the new spirit

PROPOSAL THEREFORE SHOWS: a) confession of failure by Reform Jud
b) not changes of practices, elimination of ceremonies are
root of problem.

II HISTORY OF CHANGES IN SYNAGOGUE SADDUCEES KARAISM REFORM

first two have disappeared, while traditional Judaism perpetuated
itself- would indicate that history has not favored variations from
NORMATIVE JUDAISM

III USE OF WORD MINHAG IS A MISNOMER

Every other Minhag accepted 2 bases of Judaism:

- 1) AUTHORITY OF THE TORAH
- 2) EXISTENCE OF AN AUTHENTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE TORAH

The proposal is based on an eclectic-selektiv approach to Torah

and a voluntaristic attitude to interpretation

HIGGER - Electricity
eg-difference between Minhag Ashkenaz and Sefarad

- a) BORUCH SHEOMAR first or HODU
- b) Hallel on first night of Pesach
- c) Hakofos on Shemini Atzeres
- d) LESHEM YICHUD

minor variants-but basic remained- **THE WORD MINHAG MEANS CUSTOM NOT FUNDAMENTAL**

the proposal would approach Torah as changeable, non-eternal,
and yet would clothe itself in the mantle of word Torah

IV

Rebuttal point

JUDAISM IS A UNIVERSAL RELIGION- in two dimensions -time and space

Politically we have separate loyalties, American, Israel, French, etc

Religiously we are international

eg I was in 16 countries, and could pray in every one

This proposal would GHETTOIZE AMERICA JUDAISM- make it a
special brand of Judaism-cut it off from its past, separate it from
the present, and In my opinion, play havoc with its future.

Curious, it stems from SS Wise and a principle which he loved to call KLAL YISROEL. But it would destroy KLAL YISROEL, BY separating American Judaism from rest of religious Jewry

WE ARE A WORLD RELIGION, NOT AN AMERICAN SECT

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

V REGIMENTATION OF RELIGION

It proposes a denial of religious liberty

I believe that in America every Jew has right to seek out the religious expression which suits him

Our doors are open to every Jew-100% observant, or any other number so long as he accepts the idea that, no matter what he does, and feels he must do, the correct Jewish way is that which is inspired by the Torah, and guided by the interpretation of the Torah

Our problem is ~~ignoran~~ two-fold

1) Ignorance-

eg-when break glass at a church wedding

2) LACK OF FAITH

FAITH not FORMS

SOUL not SERVICES

REPENTANCE not REFORMATION

We are a secularized generation who don't recognize the need for religious expression- we do G-d a favor in not shaming zich

not PRAYERFUL, ~~EXERCISING~~, G-D MINDED, FAITH SEEKING

Our salvation is not new techniques-it is the prophet Ezekiel 11:19
VENOSATI LOHEM LAIV ECHOD VERUACH CHADASHA VEHAISARTI LAIV HAIVEN MIBESORO

~~SENSE~~ CONVICTI N, CERTITUDE-SENSE OF AWE OF CREATION, WONDER OF LIFE

HUMILITY OF SPIRIT- THESE ARE THE NEED OF AMERICAN JUDAISM

*not too many 11/3 or as orthodox
too few
wedding issue - Conservative*

How can the
problem of backsliding
be handled?


I simply proceed from a
fact, that non-observance
is on the increase?

How do you stop it?

The approach of easy
things has not helped.

Reform does not
replenish itself.
Why, then, do the
Orthodox boys leave
Orthodoxy? What
are the inequalities
of Orthodoxy?

Can't call
self Minhag -
perhaps so.

Difference between
us is not from
R or O approach -
but rather how to
stop the trend toward
secularism.

Could pray in all
synagogues. I want people to pray.

Rebbe L wants
Maximum Jewish
life - for whom? -
for minimum number
of people who will
follow O in the future.

Martyrs are
Shearit ha-Pletah.

1) Ignorance

2) Lack of faith



COOPERATION BETWEEN REFORM, CONSERVATIVE AND ORTHODOX JEWS IN U.S. IS PROPOSED

DALLAS, March 2. (JTA) -- Greater cooperation between Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Jews in America, without compromise of individual principles, was urged at the biennial convention of the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods here. The proposal was placed before the 400 delegates of Reform Temple brotherhoods from all parts of the U.S. and Canada by Barnett Lieberman, of Philadelphia, president of the Conservative laymen's group--the National Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs.

To carry out the proposal, Mr. Lieberman suggested the formation of a Men's Club Council of America as a consultative body, comprised of the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, the National Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs and the Federation of Orthodox Men's Clubs. He also recommended joint support of the work of the Jewish Chautauqua Society, the national educational project of the Reform Temple Brotherhoods.

"I can see no reason why we cannot join together in the work of the Jewish Chautauqua Society," he said. "In recent years we learned that a great deal of anti-Semitism was due to lack of knowledge and understanding of Jews and Judaism on the part of the non-Jew. I believe that the more information concerning Jews and Judaism which we make available to the college students, the better will be the attitude of the American non-Jew toward us."

Amplifying his plea for more cooperation between Jew and Jew, Mr. Lieberman stated: "Time and the experiences of the Jewish people during the past quarter century have drawn the various sects of American Jews closer together. The differences between us are now primarily personal ones and can be respected by everyone without compromising one's own principles." He suggested "three large areas in which the Reform and Conservative Brotherhoods can cooperate for the benefit of American Jewry:"

"1. In the field of higher Jewish learning: We must support all efforts to maintain and enlarge the work of the recognized schools and seminaries of higher Jewish learning and encourage our American Jewish youth to enter into these fields. We, the laymen of the Men's Clubs, should educate the Jewish community to the importance of financially supporting the great American institutions of Jewish learning, in addition to contributing to overseas relief. Every Jew in this country will benefit if we can develop better-informed and better-trained Jewish leaders,

"2. In the field of Jewish adult education: We no longer should allow the rabbis to be the sole repositories of Jewish learning. Every Jewish layman must have a sound Jewish education if he is to be an intelligent American citizen. Leading educators have come to realize that American democracy has deep roots in our Hebrew culture. We of the Brotherhoods, by use of the most modern techniques and by personal example, can make adult learning more fashionable and popular.

"3. In the field of Jewish communal life: Working together, we must see to it that synagogue attendance and religious practices are encouraged. Today, in the atmosphere of free and democratic America, the Jews can develop a Golden Age for themselves which will be their contribution to a greater America and world peace."

MINHAG AMERICA

What I Mean by A Universal Synagogue

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

1. We are coming out of the crisis period of the last twenty years. During this time we have been preoccupied with international problems of a social or political nature. We have been worrying about saving Jewish bodies, etc.

2. We can now begin to think more about spiritual matters and the saving of Jewish souls in America which is the largest Jewish center in the world. I am interested in increasing the extent of religious observances.

3. What form is our Judaism going to take in the future?

4. There ~~is~~ are a series of premises that we can begin with:

A. That Jews are more interested in their religion today than they were 50 years ago.

B. That as a result of no substantial migration from Europe, we are having two or three generations of American born Jews who want a more modern form of their religion.

C. While they want it modern, they still want it to be within the framework of tradition.

5. Therefore, whatever the rabbis say or don't say, Jewish lay-people are going to create their own form. This has always been the case in Jewish life.

6. I would like to suggest that the rabbis take a hand in the shaping of the religion of the future and not just follow along the sentiments of the people.

7. I think we should begin to think about creating a synagogue and a form of religious observance which will strike a common denominator for most of the Jews of the country.

8. It must be liberal, because I think that is the tendency of the future, but will have to keep within tradition, as far as possible.

9. Rabbi Heller at the last biennial of the Union in Boston suggested a possible merger between Reform and Conservative, and Rabbi Lieberman in a recent speech at the College in Cincinnati said the same thing. That may be the way to begin. I don't know.

10. I would like to suggest some sort of a meeting or conference on a national level among the rabbinical leaders of America to see if they can agree on some sort of a common set of practices.

11. The synagogue has a wonderful opportunity to capture the loyalty of the people. We have always been "a kingdom of priests and a holy people." We are not invaded yet by any atheistic materialistic ideology. In order to prevent exactly that from occurring which has occurred within the ranks of the Protestant church, we have to take advantage of the interest our people feel in the synagogue and reshape it for them so that in the future in America we can develop one strong all-embracing House of Prayer that will attract more and more and more people to it.

CONGREGATION HABONIM JEWISH CENTER

1122 EAST 53RD STREET

CHICAGO 15, ILLINOIS

STUDY OF THE RABBI

March 8th, 1950.

PHONE MUSEUM 4-3344

Rabbi Herbert Friedman
Temple Emauel
East 16th Ave. at Pearl
Denver, Colo.

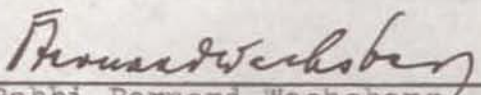
Dear Colleague:

Through the I.J.N. I followed with interest some of the discussions on the Minhag America as proposed by you. While reading and discussing the enclosed article certain similarities to your proposals became evident.

Although it is most likely that you have already read this article I thought of sending it to you just the same - just in case. It might contain some thought provoking ideas to help in your surveys and discussions.

With kindest personal regards and best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,


Rabbi Bernard Wechsberg

Wg./O

MINHAG AMERICA

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Minhag America

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1-12-50 copy to:

Rabbi Kauvar
Rabbi Laderman
Rabbi Zion

Move for 'Universal Synagog' Launched by New Jewish Group

By the Churchgoer.

PATERSON, N. J., Nov. 28.—A new Jewish nondemoninational congregation, endeavoring to follow traditions of the faith and at the same time to eliminate the many sectarian aspects which have characterized it in recent years, has been founded in this city.

The new congregation, named Beth-El, is seeking "to create a new note in the religious life of the Jewish people," according to Rabbi Reuben Kaufman, spiritual director. Rabbi Kaufman, aided by a group of Paterson residents, founded the new group.

Before forming the Beth-El congregation the rabbi had served in Paterson Temple Emanuel for twenty years until his retirement in 1948.

NATIONWIDE TREND SOUGHT.

Beth-El congregation heads a movement which it is hoped will become nationwide—a program to do away with sectarianism in Jewish religious life in favor of a "universal synagog."

There is no radical departure from present-day beliefs, Rabbi Kaufman stated, but rather the promotion of a movement intended to follow "traditional Jewish religion which had its inception even before the reform movement within the church in 1800."

By the establishment of this new nondenominational congregation, Rabbi Kaufman hopes to eliminate many of the differences of opinion presently existing in connection with the form the Jewish religion should take.

Jews are in need of a "reorientation of religious philosophies," Kaufman said, which would eliminate the various labels of "orthodoxy, reform, conservatism and others."

LOCAL CUSTOMS MINOR.

There are, of course, minor local customs which exist among Jews in all parts of the world, Rabbi Kaufman stated, but a down-to-earth review of conditions will reveal that there are no issues of such a serious character that they warrant separation of Jewish congregations into sects.

"This tendency can only lead to one action—the creation of confusion and chaos in the minds of people as to what is, or is not, Jewish practice and Jewish law," said Rabbi Kaufman.

Terminology of religion, which has developed during long exile, must give way to understandings

which are universally acceptable to Jews throughout the world, said the noted teacher.

To accomplish this, the Jewish faith must work toward the universal establishment of a "universal synagog" suitable to all, rather than many individual, sectarian groups, he declared.



Isaiah Israel, Chicago
9 Nov 49

Broadcasts

Lewis W. Coren
Reporter

"SHALL REFORM, CONSERVATIVE AND ORTHODOX JEWRY CONVERGE?"

THEME OF CITY BROTHERHOODS' TOWN HALL

All members of the Brotherhood and their ladies are extended a cordial invitation to attend a Town Hall meeting under the auspices of the Chicago Conference of Temple Men's Clubs, to be held on Tuesday evening, November 29, at 8:15 P. M. at the Board of Jewish Education Building, 72 East Eleventh Street. Under the chairmanship of our own Past President Maurice Marcus, six members of Chicago Temple Brotherhoods will debate the query "Shall Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Jewry Converge?"

An evening of sparkling rhetoric and sociability is promised. Refreshments will be served. Tickets at \$1.00 may be secured through Maurice Marcus, BUTterfield 8-1100, or at the door on Tuesday, November 29.

Conservative, Reform Views Merging, Orthodoxy Fading Out

The answer seems to be yes to the question: are there signs in Dayton of a developing American Judaism?

Rabbi Jacob Agus is one of the leaders in the move to liberalize Conservative ritual and practice, and Rabbi Selwyn Ruslander is a Reform rabbi with very affirmative Jewish leanings. As a result, there probably will be little difference between the two wings of Judaism in Dayton in a very few years.

One trustworthy local observer said he had revised his estimate of the time from 25 years to five, after

noting the changes the Conservative movement is contemplating.

As for the future of Orthodoxy in Dayton, no one, not even the leadership is very optimistic. Very few families maintain the dietary laws. Saturday morning attendance at services, like everywhere else, is limited to the female of the species.

Hard-working and able Rabbi Benjamin Lapidus, the Orthodox leader, is outspoken and a firm believer not in counting noses, as an index of the vitality of Orthodoxy, but in the number of those who adhere

to the mitzvos. These, he says, are not too numerous, and he foresees little improvement in the immediate future. He is particularly disturbed by the paucity of Jews who are known as "shomer shabbos," those who observe the Sabbath day in all its particulars. Dayton, incidentally, has no mikveh.

What seems likely then is the gradual drawing together of Reform and Conservatism, at least in Dayton, and in time of the falling off of Orthodoxy by attrition, unless the present trend is reversed.

The Next Quotation is from Rabbi Leon Kronish, The Temple Beth Sholem (Miami Beach) Weekly Bulletin:

"For three-quarters of a century and perhaps more, an American-Jewish ritual has been in the process of evolving. Unfortunately, too often the word American has been either a mere camouflage for a transplanted European Judaism or else an excuse for an unrecognizable Jewish ritual. Yet, the need for an indigenous, genuine American-Jewish ritual has been sharpened by the fact that we have been rapidly becoming a more integrated and homeogeneous community. Despite the existence of sectarian religious institutions and organizational hierarchies, the real differences between the vast mass of Jews in this country are at a minimum. Here and there, progressive courageous leaders have recognized this truth and, irrespective of their sectarian affiliation, have attempted to create a dynamic American-Jewish ritual that would win the hearts of the masses."



Orthodox Leader Urges End to Religious Divisions

New York.—Dr. Israel Tabak, President of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America, asserted that Jewish sectarianism is already foreshadowing the doom of Jewish life in this country. "We American Jews should do away with the denominationalism which is dividing us more and more painfully", he added.

Dr. Tabak recommended the

establishment of a new type of synagogue in America—"a synagogue that will be called neither Orthodox, nor Conservative nor Reform—but Jewish—a non-denominational, non-sectarian Synagogue that will be patterned after the Synagogue of the State of Israel". "The Jewish masses are waiting for the establishment of such a Synagogue", Dr. Tabak

continued.

He said that American Jews are "confused and bewildered by the multiplicity of religious causes and institutions and by the divisiveness in Jewish ranks. "Now that there is one people of Israel, let there be one faith of Israel", he declared.

The President of the organization comprising almost 500 or-

dained Orthodox Rabbis in 40 States, expressed the belief that the competitive efforts in fund-raising for religious institutions, and the overlapping in the various campaigns for educational institutions are not only a great waste of effort and expense but are calculated seriously to jeopardize the future of Judaism in this country.

IJN

OCT 28, 49

RABBINICAL COUNCIL HEAD CALLS FOR U.S. SYNAGOGUE PATTERNED ON ISRAEL SYSTEM

NEW YORK, Oct. 19. (JTA) -- A recommendation that a new type of American synagogue, one that "will be neither Orthodox, Conservative nor Reform, but a non-denominational, non-sectarian synagogue that will be patterned after the synagogue in Israel," should be established in this country, was made here today by Rabbi Israel Tabak, president of the Synagogue Council of America.

Asserting at a public reception tendered him and 11 other Council members who recently returned from Israel that "American Jews are confused and bewildered by the multiplicity of religious causes and institutions and by the divisiveness in Jewish ranks," Dr. Tabak stated: "Now that there is one people of Israel, let there be one faith of Israel." American Jewry, he continued, "should do away with the denominationalism which is dividing us more and more painfully."

Rabbi Tabak also declared that the "competitive efforts in fund-raising for religious institutions, and the overlapping in the various campaigns for educational institutions, are not only a great waste of effort and expense, but are calculated seriously to jeopardize the future of Judaism in this country." Reporting that "Judaism in Israel is developing along new lines altogether," he said that studies are now being undertaken "to bring the ancient laws and traditions of Judaism into harmony with the new dynamic form of life which is now growing up in Israel."

Holiday Spirit Infects Non-Religious Elements in Israel; Rituals Modified

By ADA OREN

(Jewish Telegraphic Agency Correspondent)

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TEL AVIV—Observant Jews in Israel, as everywhere, preserve the traditional manner of celebrating Jewish holidays, and since Orthodox Jews in different countries sometimes practice somewhat divergent rites, holiday visits to the synagogues of the various landsmannschaften in such cities as Jerusalem are often very interesting.

But the fact that precisely those days which used to be hallowed are now considered mainly in terms of occasions for public meetings and all forms of secular entertainment by the non-Orthodox majority of Jews in Israel is giving rise to an entirely new situation in the history of Judaism, raising the problem of suitable Jewish holiday rites of spiritual value for non-religious members of the Jewish people.

ALTHOUGH THIS STATE of affairs affects the greater part of the local population in one form or another, it is being tackled systematically almost only by the small and highly organized kibbutzim. These settlers generally revive, to serve in place of prayer services, ancient festivities connected with the farmer's calendar which receded into oblivion in the generations of Ghetto dwellers, but can be adapted to modern needs.

Most prominent are the ceremonies of the cutting of the Omer on Passover Eve, Arbor Day on the 15th of Shevat, and the bringing of first fruits at Succoth, which have again become secular ceremonies of great emotional power and the last two of which, among other things, help educate Jewish youth to love of the land by suitable pageantry.

Purim parties, Hanukkah and Lag B'Omer, too, come natural to local holiday workers, and so do Oneg Shabbath meetings, while most kibbutzim consider it necessary to draw up for every Passover a special Haggada of their own which reminds listeners also of more recent deliverances of the Jewish people. These experiments have led even some extremely secularist settlements back to such traditional acts as the lighting of candles on all possible occasions. All children demand this when once they have had a chance to witness this act in a city home.

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THE PROBLEM of imparting something of the traditional "higher soul" to holidays in non-

religious Jewish working communities is now considered so urgent by their members that a special Histadrut seminary is held from time to time on this subject.

All in all, there exist now side by side, as a result of these divergencies, innumerable shades in the manner of spending work-free days and even High Holidays in Israel. While the world-wide custom of more than usually elaborate meals and trappings of the table and of inter-family visiting have remained a common feature in all sections of the Jewish population, two entirely different standards for the permeation of rest-days with spiritual inspiration are being offered at the same time by traditional Jewish Orthodoxy and the secular agricultural settlements.

The general run of town and village dwellers are far less zealous than either of these opposing groups, generally mixing several features from both sources in different proportions and sometimes drowning them all in general apathy engendered by work-weariness and a demand for creature comforts and "low-brow" entertainment. While the Orthodox and the common town attitudes are evident the world over, the experiments in secular spirituality now being carried through by many agricultural settlements in Israel and introduced into towns by their young pioneer reserves as a reaction against their former rejection of all emotionally tinged holiday observances, are probably unknown in most countries of the Western sphere of culture.

"THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE AND THE
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY"

address by
MORRIS LIEBERMAN

Rabbi, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

at
Exercises Marking the 75th Anniversary of the
Hebrew Union College

Cincinnati, Ohio - October 15, 1949



Boruch Atoh Adonoy, Elohamu Malech ho'olom, shehecheyonu, v'kiy'monu, v'higiyonu Lazman hazeh. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has kept us in life, sustained us and brought us to this day.

Beginning with these exercises ^{marking} the seventy-fifth year of its existence, the Hebrew Union College looks back with thanksgiving and pride upon three-quarters of a century of growth and achievement. Founded in 1875 by Isaac Mayer Wise, with a teaching staff of two -- himself and an assistant -- and with a student body of seventeen, it has expanded steadily in size and influence through difficult years, contributing significantly through its faculty and graduates to the enrichment of scholarship and to the strengthening of the religious and spiritual processes in the life of society, winning for itself a secure place in the tradition of Jewish learning and leadership that goes back to Nehardea, Sura and Pumbeditha, and Javneh.

Appropriate indeed for this diamond anniversary convocation would be the relating of the history of our institution, the oldest rabbinical seminary in the United States. It is a story of faith and vision, of resolution and consecrated labor. To its detailed narration might well be applied the observation of the Passover Haggadah, He who dwells at length upon it is accounted praiseworthy. We choose for our theme, however, not the past of the College but its future, discussing not what has been done, but what is to be done. This choice is motivated by the conviction that all that the College has wrought thus far is but preparation for accomplishment yet to come, for service so great in potentiality as to make the record of these seventy-five years -- noteworthy as it is -- but the preface to the greater history of our alma mater now to be written.

As symbol of this conviction we take the figure of Abraham, who only at this same age of seventy-five was summoned to undertake his real life's work. His earlier years, portrayed in the Midrash as a fruitful period of dawning understanding and widening experience, are passed over in the Bible without comment. The important part of his career began only when he was ready, after training and testing, to assume

his larger role and responsibilities. In this same perspective, without forgetting for an instant the devoted toil of all those who have given of themselves throughout the years, we would view the development of the College to this point. And for the future we covet the same imperative and incentive that motivated the patriarch -- v'heyai b'rochah -- "And be thou a blessing" -- for Israel and for mankind.

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The Hebrew Union College exists for a specific purpose -- the promulgation of the evolutionary, progressive interpretation of Judaism and the training of reform rabbis. Any consideration of it, therefore, must involve an analysis of the reform movement, of which the College is the seminal institution, and of the American Jewish community, which is the frame of reference within which the College operates. In these terms, while the validity of a philosophy is not to be determined by the number of its adherents, a proper criterion of the effectiveness of the College is the degree of acceptance of its point of view and leadership by American Jewry. Thus far, it must be admitted, the reform movement has not been distinguished by its rate of growth in proportion to the increase in size of the community. We are -- and always have been -- a small minority, numbering now only about five percent of the Jewish population. It is the thesis of this paper, however, that the evolution of American Jewry and Judaism is demonstrably in the direction which the College has pioneered for these seventy-five years, and that the American Jewish Community needs and is ready to accept -- as it never was able or willing to before -- the basic principles of reform and the guidance of reform's teachers.

This assertion rests upon three related propositions whose cumulative logic -- to the writer at least -- is most convincing.

The first proposition is that American Jewry is just coming of age in its own right and beginning to exhibit a characteristically American and innerly homogeneous aspect. Heretofore, despite our long history, going back as some would have it to the landing of Columbus, we have been a derivative, composite community, built up by successive waves of immigration, and with the immigrants at any one time

always in the majority. Increase from within, however, never matched the addition from abroad, and the outlook and attitude of the community was necessarily strongly and perhaps even dominantly influenced by old world values and conceptions. Only now — if even now — is the majority of Jews in America native born. Only now is the first generation of American Jews — products of the American scene and trained entirely in American institutions, religious and secular, coming to adulthood. Increasingly this generation is taking over control of the community, and increasingly will shape its form and direction in indigenous, independent terms.

As this American born generation develops, it is growing more and more homogeneous in composition. The old separations and antagonisms based upon the diverse geographical origins and varying arrival times of their parents are rapidly and happily becoming as meaningless as the more ancient division between priest, levite and Israelite. The social, economic and cultural differentials which formerly compartmentalized the community are dissolving in the equalization of opportunity which America affords. In the further maturation of this generation and its children is the physical basis for the fulfillment of Isaac Mayer Wise's vision of a united American Jewry. In his day and up to our own, this vision could only be a prophetic hope. Now it is an actuality to be vigorously exploited.

Our second proposition is that as this community becomes increasingly native, independent and homogeneous, it will more and more seek a religious rather than a nationalistic rationale. These concepts, whose general meaning is clear, are used with full awareness of the difficulty of their application to Jewish life and without making any judgment of value. Historically, as we all know, Judaism is an indissoluble fusion of religious and nationalistic elements. To be a Jew was at once to believe and to belong, and both aspects of relationship were equally and with complete unconsciousness taken for granted.

In recent and contemporary Jewish life, however, for a variety of reasons, religion and nationality present themselves as opposed poles of Jewish being.

As the religious extreme is approached, emphasis is laid upon belief with corollary connotations of doctrinal and voluntary affiliation as the basis of group membership. As the nationalistic extreme is approached, emphasis is laid upon belonging, with ethnic and automatic affiliation as the basis of group membership. Now no community anywhere can ever locate itself entirely at either extreme without abandoning its claim to be Jewish and severing its ties to Jewish life. Even the purest definition of Jewish status in religious terms must recognize the supra-religious scope of our history and must acknowledge the extra-religious fellowship and destiny of Jews in the face of common problems. Conversely, even the most intense, secular Jewish nationalism must be modified by its possession of the Bible and our religious literature as the major content of its cultural heritage and by the celebration of Jewish holidays and customs, all essentially religious, as part of its folkways. Yet, somewhere along the line which stretches between these two poles, Jewish communities must place themselves in terms of their respective environment and experience. The development of the American Jewish community must inevitably be towards the religious pole.

Two reasons lead to this conclusion. The first is that this community, as a whole, is moving into a field of social force strikingly parallel to that which originally caused the dissociation of religion and nationality in Jewish life. This was the emancipation under the influence of the democratic, equalitarian ideas of the French revolution which held forth to the Jew — theoretically at least — full rights of citizenship in the country of his residence without requiring the renunciation of his religious allegiance. To this invitation there was eager response, and in the countries where emancipation was proclaimed, there began redefinition of the nature of Jewish identification, with a growing incompatibility felt between concepts of religion and nationality, and with a definite trend toward the former as the basis of Jewish life.

In those countries where emancipation did not obtain, Jewish life continued to be rooted equally in religious and nationalistic feeling, or in the breakdown of religious sentiment under the corrosion of modern thought, assumed a predominantly nationalistic character, as Chaim Weizmann's recent autobiography revealingly demonstrates. However, in all places where alternate nationality was offered, it was accepted - with a consequent internal revision of Jewish thought.

Recapitulating in remarkable degree the experience of a hundred and fifty years ago and subsequently of European Jewry, the American Jewish community in its numerically major aspect is just beginning to face the problem posed by emancipation and is just starting to consider systematically and consciously the role and place of Judaism and Jews in a democratic society where Judaism enjoys complete freedom and where Jews possess substantially equal economic, political and educational rights. For the majority of American Jews the full impact of emancipation is relatively new.

As we have noted before, ours is a community built up by immigration. The latest and incomparably the largest wave of this immigration came to America between 1890 and 1927, and constitutes by its very size the dominant element of the population. These new arrivals came from countries into which the doctrines -- and therefore the problems -- of emancipation had not penetrated. Reaching these shores, they settled in compact groups in the great urban centers, protected by sheer density against the readjustment required in the new environment, carrying on by habit and momentum, the pattern of Jewish life which had been brought from overseas. But now, as the older generation, with its generally pre-emancipation background and outlook is passing from the scene, and as the native-born generation, conditioned by American rearing, is beginning to mature, the issues and alternatives of emancipation are being thrust forward in a kind of delayed presentation. There can be no doubt about the direction to be followed as the conflict between religion and nationality as the basis of Jewish life in America begins to be understood. Not only is there the precedent of the earlier waves of immigration to indicate the choice that will be made, but this generation itself is too

firmly attached to American ideals and institutions not to claim wholeheartedly the privileges of citizenship.

The second reason leading to the conclusion that American Jewry will develop in religious rather than in nationalistic terms is the establishment of the state of Israel. It need not be said that the American Jewish community is deeply and permanently interested in Israel and will maintain the closest association with it. Not only do we bear a continuing responsibility for the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have found haven there, not only do we rejoice in and hope to benefit from the cultural flowering that it will promote, but we look for a further rich demonstration of the creativity of the Jewish spirit through the very nationalistic form which it assumes in Israel, a further gift of the Jewish genius to the enlightenment and progress of mankind. This we hope for, after present tensions and animosities are abated and current insecurity resolved, in the evolution of a new kind of nationalism, which shall not be chauvinism or imperialism, selfishness magnified by the power of government, entirely beyond the discipline of morality, but patriotism consonant with the highest teachings of Judaism, befitting a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, motivated not only by considerations of internal welfare but setting a new standard of international ethics ever mindful of the admonishment of the prophet,

"It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be My servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the offspring of Israel;
I will also give thee for a light of the nations,
That My salvation may be unto the ends of the earth".

We shall watch with confidence events in Israel, but we must recognize that one of the inevitable consequences of its founding will be the de-nationalization of the communities outside its borders. The state in being, offering residence and citizenship to all Jews who desire to go there, must irresistibly draw to itself like a magnet those who feel that nationalism is the optimum expression of Jewish life. Holding this view, there is now neither point nor need to their denying themselves the fullest realization of their convictions. By elimination, therefore, the American community will be left only with religionists as its interested constituents, this negative factor supplementing

the positive religious orientation that will result from the adjustment to the opportunities of emancipation. In both these developments is the psychological basis for the fulfillment of Isaac Mayer Wise's dream of a united American Jewish community and a uniform Minhag America.

We come now to our third proposition which is that as the American Jewish community evolves in religious terms, it will more and more seek a liberal interpretation of Judaism as the form of its faith. Orthodoxy, unless it were to change so radically as to be unrecognizable as such, cannot possibly attract or hold the rising generation and must decline in influence and following. Not theologically, sociologically or philosophically is it viable in the American scene. Its theology, based on fundamentalist ideas of revelation, will be rejected by modern-trained and scientifically educated minds. Its sociology of segregation will be unacceptable as American Jews increasingly integrate themselves and will seek, in the pursuit of their civic, economic, cultural and social aims, the closest collaboration with their non-Jewish neighbors, resisting every effort at ghettoization and parochialization -- whether from without or within -- as an abridgement of their rights as citizens. Finally, orthodoxy's philosophy of the Jewish people in exile will be repudiated by American Jews who do not consider themselves in Galuth, whose homeland is America, and who feel that this country offers unlimited opportunity for the satisfaction of their religious and Jewish needs.

The disintegration of orthodoxy in the American environment is already widely observable in the breakdown of traditional behavior in the personal lives of its nominal adherents. Even now the far greater number of these is orthodox not by conviction or conduct but by inheritance and inertia. Increasingly they must become aware of the incongruity between precept and practice and seek a definition of Judaism that will unify their lives and express their aspirations as American Jews.

This can only be in a formulation along the lines which reform has pioneered since its inception. Whether it be reform by name or conservative in any of its shadings is relatively unimportant. Once the wall of tradition has been breached,

there remains only non-orthodox or liberal Judaism. The differences between conservatism and reform are only chronological, quantitative and personal, not ideological. Conservative Judaism is two or three generations younger than reform, in some respects has been less drastic in its revision of orthodox custom and ritual, and is in general rooted in Eastern European rather than in Western European origins. These differences will become less and less important as time goes on and American Jewish life produces its second and third American born generation.

It is fervently to be hoped that these two movements will appreciate their identity of philosophy and objective and will establish between themselves the most intimate liaison, looking even to ultimate merger. The community cannot afford the drain of energy and expenditure for overlapping and duplicating institutions which do not embody real difference of principle. We cannot tolerate the meaningless denominationalism that plagues and paralyzes Protestantism. In the cooperation and union of these two great forces lies the future of American Judaism. And here too is the organizational basis for the realization of Isaac Mayer Wise's complete vision of a united American Jewish community, with a uniform Minhag America which is liberal Judaism.

Summarizing our discussion thus far, we have offered in support of the thesis that our College is standing at the gate of a vastly expanded field of service the following argument: that the American Jewish community, rapidly becoming indigenous, independent and homogeneous, will increasingly become religious in character, finding in liberal Judaism its spiritual philosophy.

This is a stirring prospect. Our community can be a truly great community. But let us note carefully the conditional form. It can be. We do not say that it necessarily will be.

It has enormous assets. It is the largest community in the world, numbering now almost 5,000,000 persons. It is the wealthiest in the world, reflecting the high economic standard of the American people as a whole. It is the most secure in all the world, firmly protected by American principles of democracy and religious freedom. With these extraordinary advantages in manpower, resources and security, there are hardly any

bounds to its growth.

Yet, for all this, the quality of its future in Jewish terms cannot be assumed and taken for granted. Many difficult questions must be answered. Can this community develop Jewishly without the replenishment of leadership and scholarship which immigration from abroad has previously brought? As we become native and independent, are our educational institutions, the roots of Jewish survival, deep enough to nourish and strong enough to sustain flourishing growth -- or are they so shallow and weak as to permit only scrub and stunted vegetation? Can this community move away from nationalistic emotions and motivations and yet produce the virile attitudes and allegiances necessary to resist the blandishments and pressures of assimilation? Does liberal Judaism have sufficient satisfaction, warmth, direction and definiteness for the building of a Jewish way of life that will be a broad highway of holiness and happiness or are we walking down a narrowing road whose end is extinction? Orthodoxy has manifested its survival value over the centuries. The staying power of liberal Judaism is as yet largely untested in the arena of history.

All these questions must cause us the gravest concern as we think about the future of the community. As we survey American life, we cannot be unmindful of the many who belong to that sect, described by Karl Shapiro in the October Commentary, who "are Jews by popular consent of the Judeo-Christian community and not by choice or ambition". These externally-compelled Jews are marginal to the community, and yet they exhibit in their individual lives the very specifications which we describe for the Jewish community of tomorrow -- they are native born, anti- or non-nationalist, and in distressing number, are affiliated with or have left reform congregations. If they, as individuals, foreshadow the character of the emerging community, then the prospect is indeed bleak and unpromising. Then the community will wither and perish, a sterile evolutionary form which simply did not succeed, leaving the on-going of Jewish life for other forms and other environments. To prove, however, that these do not portend the future, to show that American Jewish life -- independent, religious and liberal -- is

self-sustaining, self-recreating and fertile, is the challenge which we face.

In this demonstration the Hebrew Union College must play a decisive role. It must furnish in largest measure the intellectual and inspirational leadership required for the community's fulfillment. Its graduates must be the expositors of a program of Jewish living that will command the allegiance and devotion of the growing generation. On the individual level, these must be made to feel Judaism a prime asset in their equipment for life, precious, rewarding and meaningful. On the group level, they must be brought to understand it as joyful, prideful and purposeful association, making for enlarged accomplishment.

This is not an impossible objective. Judaism was this for our ancestors. They cherished it above all things, valued it more than life and fortune, suffered persecution, banishment and death for it — and accounted themselves blessed. It must approach this same significance for our people today — and it can — if we, as rabbis, possess the knowledge, the skill and the will to present its message effectively and convincingly.

Let it be understood that ours is not the task of creating ex nihilo. We are not the founders of a new religion, but the interpreters of an ancient and magnificently vital tradition. We draw on the inexhaustible treasures of Jewish thought and experience and proclaim their exalted and unique insights. Our function is to teach Judaism's timeless truths, adapted to modern conditions and made relevant to modern life, but essentially the same doctrine of God and man and society which has come down through the ages, the Torah of Israel in its broadest sense, which cannot fail to compel loyalty and love.

To say that we are teachers of Torah is at once to affirm our function and to limit it. While, in the old Latin expression, nothing human is alien to us, while we insist upon the co-extensiveness of Judaism with all life, no other interest must be permitted to overshadow our primary mandate. We are not psychiatrists, economists, marriage counsellors, public relations experts, commentators on current affairs, ambassadors of good will, diplomats, statesmen, civic reformers, literary

critics, fund-raisers or any other of the various specialists^s in public life. All such activities may be important and worthwhile, and we may constructively and for the benefit of the community engage in some of them. But they are not our *raison d'être*, must not distract us from our main purpose, and they are not in any combination a basis for Jewish survival.

In Torah alone is the life of our people and their length of days. This is the millennial lesson of our history. Who are they who have abandoned their people, the peripheral Jews — inverted Marranos in Salo Baron's pungent phrase? In all cases, those to whom Jewish knowledge, the source and cause of Jewish attachment, is foreign. And who are they who are firm in faith and purpose? Those who have been taught and who therefore possess the Jewish heritage. These are the eternal alternatives of Jewish destiny — to be an 'am si'ulah, through Torah gaining self-respect and life — or an 'am ha-aretz, condemned to self-rejection and death.

Inescapably, major responsibility for the choice that the community will make rests upon the College. Here are rabbis prepared for service. Here are the foundations laid for their learning. Here are their spirits alerted for duty. Demanding, therefore, the College must be and exacting in its requirements, stern and severe in its standards. "This is the way", says Rabbi Joshua ben Levi in *Aboth*, "that is becoming for the study of the Torah: a morsel of bread with salt thou must eat, and water by measure thou must drink; thou must sleep upon the ground and live a life of hardship while thou toilest in the Torah". This is the taskmaster the College must be — not in a physical sense — but in the rigor and discipline of its study. "If thou doest thus", Rabbi Joshua continues, "happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee". "Happy shalt thou be" — this is the rabbi, who will know satisfaction in his work. "And it shall be well with thee" — this is the American Jewish community.