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REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON REFORM PRACTICE
RABBI MORTON M. BERMAN, CHAIRMAN

UAHC Biennial
Cleveland
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The last General Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which met in Boston in November, 1948 adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the Assembly requests the incoming Executive Board to proceed with a thorough study of the advisability of formulating a general code of Jewish faith and practice and that a report be rendered at the next General Assembly."

Behind this resolution and the study that flowed from it are fifteen years of especially dedicated formal effort to determine the proper place of ritual practice in Reform Jewish life. This effort has been accompanied by equally dedicated labor on the part of a Joint Committee on Ceremonies and by individual congregations and their rabbis to increase the measure of ritual practice in congregation and home.

The study reveals wide spread and increasing acceptance by congregations and their members of ritual practice and ceremonial observance. It demonstrates that Reform Judaism is determinedly engaged in helping to meet a fundamental need of every human being for symbolism and ceremonialism in his religious life. It provides striking evidence that our movement has undertaken to correct a most costly error made by the early anti-ritualistic Reformers who were earnestly intent upon emphasizing ethical and religious principles and righteous conduct but looked upon "the ceremonial system to be a trivializing of the noble teaching of Judaism...and the deep learning involved in the study of it...as a wastage of intellectual capacity, and an alienation from the broader culture in the modern world." This apt characterization of the attitude of the primarily anti-ritualistic Reformers was made by Dr. Solomon B. Frechhof in a brilliant address before the 1950 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

The error on the part of the early Reform Movement led to the elimination of many practices. Opposed as the Movement was to ritualism, it was obvious that it was not minded to reconstruct any of the practices or to provide substitutes for them on the basis of the needs of the people in consonance with the changed conditions under which Jews lived. The early builders of our Movement failed to recognize that man cannot live by reason alone, that he needs to sate his emotional hunger for the poetry and beauty, for the mysticism and drama which are to be found in meaningful symbolism and ceremonialism. Those who dispensed with ritualism did not perceive that religious practices and observances are means for the fortification of the Jew's faith and for the stimulation of his will to serve God and do His commandments. They were indifferent to the importance of the act as well as of the word to a full religious life. They were unaware of the role that ritualism plays in helping a Jew to find identification with his group and self-fulfillment in his personal life.

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Our study demonstrates that a new attitude pervades our Movement with respect to the significance of ritual and ceremonial observance. It is now generally recognized that these disciplines have the power to re-store in the Jew a sense of kinship with God, because they are reminders of the providential role that He filled in His people's life throughout the ages; that they help the Jew to relive his history which has always been a vital source of support for his faith and a bulwark for his self-respect; that they instill in the Jew faith in despair, as they did for his fathers, and strengthen him to triumph psychologically and spiritually over every defeat.

It has become clearer to us also that ritual practices and ceremonial observances give the Jew a sense of rootage in his people's past, but they also fill him with a fortifying sense of union with all other Jews of our time who engage in these practices. George Foot Moore, in his great work on Judaism, pointed out that the worship in which Jews everywhere participated and the observances universally shared by them were bonds which always united them. The feeling of inseparable relationship with our past and our present which can be nurtured by the use of our symbols, our ritual practices and ceremonial observances, is a necessary condition for the survival of the Jewish people and its inheritance.

As Dr. Freehof pointed out in the address previously cited, it is not easy to explain adequately why Reform Judaism has moved toward ritual and ceremony, but what he said there appears to be a most satisfactory explanation: "Perhaps there has been a general shift in world atmosphere from classicism to romanticism and so in the English Episcopal Church there has been a shift from Protestantism to a sort of ritual Catholicism, the drama without the doctrine. But with us there has been another element which tended to bring anti-ritualistic Reform back into the ritual mood. The Zionist movement, the new interest in Chassidism, and a number of similar factors have added a folk-feeling to our theology. We began to be interested not, as hitherto, only in Judaism, but also in Jewishness. The old Biblical emphasis of world messianism and daily social justice no longer seem to satisfy the home feeling, the folk feeling, the sense of Jewish personality...The place which the Commission of Social Justice occupied in the center of Conference interest is now occupied by the Committee on Ceremonies, and there are yearnings for new Shulchan Aruchs, codes of religious observances."

The Joint Committee on Ceremonies was the result of official action taken by both the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1937. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations had taken cognizance of the need of some special undertaking to encourage ritual practice and observance at its Biennial General Assembly at New Orleans on January, 1937, and had expressed its awareness of this need in a resolution adopted at the Biennial Assembly:

"WHEREAS, Reform Jewish Worship has allowed many symbols, customs, etc., of traditional Jewish Worship to fall into disuse; and

"WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Convention that many of these forms should be reintroduced:

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That this Convention recommend to its constituent congregations, and to all Reform Jewish Congregations, that into its Sabbath Services be put, and made a part thereof, traditional symbols, ceremonies, and customs, such as the use of only Jewish music, the use of a Cantor with a Choir where practicable; the use of only Jewish Singers, where practicable and possible; a genuine attempt to use children's Choirs with a cantor, where adult Choirs cannot be had; the singing or recitation of the Kiddush; the actual participation in every Service by laymen; the singing of traditional Jewish hymns by the Congregation, and such traditional observances as are wise, practicable, and expedient in each Congregation."

Later that year, May, 1937, the Central Conference at its Columbus meeting had adopted its Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism which supplanted the Pittsburgh platform upon which anti-ritualism had principally rested. Among other things, the Guiding Principles stressed most emphatically the need of ritual disciplines: "To deepen the spiritual life of our people, we must cultivate the traditional habit of communion with God through prayer in both home and Synagogue. Judaism as a way of life requires in addition to its moral and spiritual demands, the preservation of the Sabbath, festivals, and Holy Days, retention and development of such customs, symbols and ceremonies as possess inspirational value, the cultivation of distinctive forms of religious art and music and the use of Hebrew, together with the vernacular, in our worship and instruction."

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Thereupon, the Joint Committee on Ceremonies/formally organized. It had had its beginnings in a sub-committee of the Commission on Synagogue Activities and had begun its work before the New Orleans General Assembly. This Committee has a magnificent record of achievement in furthering the restoration of worth while old practices, giving them new form wherever necessary to make them consonant with our times, and of creating new practices wherever the need for them has been felt.

Acting on the principle which guides all of our congregations that they are free to choose what they shall practice in their synagogues and urge as practice in the home, many congregations followed the recommendations of the Union and the Conference for increased ritual and ceremonial participation. The result has been, as our study proves, a considerable variety of practices and distinct variations in the practices themselves. This has produced the charge that anarchy exists in a large measure in the Reform Movement in relation to this matter. The survey indicates in general terms that at one extreme there are thirty and more congregations which share in traditional practices such as two days on Rosh Hashanah and the major festivals, Passover for eight days, Simchath Torah as an additional day instead of being combined with the eighth day of Shemini-Atzereth, Kariah or tearing of garments for the dead, observance of dietary laws, circumcision as a requirement for conversion, the denial of the right to women to be counted as part of a minyan, etc.

At the other extreme are about a dozen congregations which have completely resisted any restoration or innovation in practice. But it should be noted that this group represents less than one-twentieth of the congregations reporting. The remaining two hundred and forty-odd congregations out of the total of two hundred and fifty-five which

responded have moved toward increased ritualism, and have thus helped to create the picture of a growing movement toward what resembles traditional Judaism.

The exercise of voluntary choice in the matter of practice has produced a highly varying pattern. The description of the situation in our congregations with regard to ritual and ceremonial practice which I gave in my Central Conference lecture at Chicago, in 1946, still obtains. It reveals among other things that "a rabbi serving a congregation on one corner is called Orthodox though he follows the recommendations of the Conference on ceremonies and customs and the rabbi serving a congregation two squares away, continues to bear the title of Reform though he takes no heed of them. This is regarded by many as an unhealthy condition which can only continue to confuse our congregants and make them feel that we ourselves do not understand what Liberal Judaism demands of us.

This condition evoked an appeal to action by Dr. Maurice N. Eisenrath, President of the Union, at the Biennial General Assembly held in Boston, November, 1948. In his Presidential Report, Dr. Eisenrath stressed the "need of some formulation of that for which we stand and that which characterizes the conduct of the adherents to our cause. Always in the past I have been in strenuous disagreement with this persistent clamor for some such code which might ever so slightly inhibit the free spirit which is indeed the essence of our liberal faith. Wider experience, however, and a frank appraisal of the actual state of affairs within the hundreds of congregations which I have personally visited, have convinced me that what we now have is nothing even remotely resembling liberty. Rather is it unrestrained license, and to permit such complete lack of any semblance of religious discipline to go unabated will soon cause our movement to degenerate into nothing short of self-destructive anarchy. Only such a movement, it seems to me, as hows to at least a minimum code of practice, which demands at least a modicum of observance, in ceremonial as well as in social and moral conduct, will possess that authority and effectiveness necessary to withstand the spiritual chaos of our time. As the World Union has placed high upon its agenda this problem regarding the adoption or continued repudiation of such a Code of Practice, so I would urge this Biennial to request its incoming Executive Board to proceed with a thorough study of this question as to "what are we, what is our power," wherein lies our strength to survive, what is the essence of our Liberal Jewish faith and practice and to bring its recommendations to the next Biennial Assembly of the Union."

In response to the President's appeal, the resolution quoted at the beginning of the report calling for the creation of a Committee to study the problem was adopted by the General Assembly. In compliance with the resolution, the President of the Union and the Chairman of the Board appointed a committee of thirty-six laymen and rabbis to arrange for this study. This Committee met at Atlantic City, December 3, 1949. After considerable discussion, it limited its scope to a consideration of the problem of practice and excluded the problem of faith as envisaged by the resolution, reserving the latter problem for later study. The Committee overwhelmingly determined not to recommend the preparation of a code at this time, but resolved instead as a first step to make a study of the extent and character of practice in Reform congregations and homes. In coming to the latter decision, it was of

of the mind that such a survey would in itself be helpful to congregations to inform them as to what is now being done in the matter of practice. The survey would also help to provide a basis for any formulation that would later follow whether in the form of a guide or of a code, if that was the ultimate decision of the Union and Conference.

In accordance with the decision of the Committee, the chairman was authorized to name a sub-committee of three to prepare a questionnaire on Jewish practice in Synagogue and home to be mailed to the four hundred and more congregations of the Union. The questionnaire prepared by the sub-committee submitted questions to the congregations under these principal headings: Ceremonies in connection with Birth; with Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation; with Marriage and Divorce; with Death and Mourning; with the Synagogue; with Sabbath Observance; with Home Services for Sabbath; Holidays and Week-days; with Dietary Observance; with Holy Days; with Major Festivals; with Fast Days; with Minor Festivals; and with Special Added Days of Celebration.

Two Hundred and fifty-five congregations responded either through their rabbis or their presidents. The tabulated results of the questionnaire were submitted to a second meeting of the Committee in New York on June 24, 1950. At that meeting it was pointed out that while complete reliability could be placed on the replies to those questions where rabbis and presidents were competent to answer by virtue of their immediate knowledge of what was practiced in the synagogue and by the rabbi himself, less reliability could be laid on the answers by rabbis and presidents to those questions which involved home or private practice by laymen. It was, therefore, resolved that further study should be made in this area by securing the aid of laymen themselves.

Happily, the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods through its president, Mr. Herbert Kaufman, has offered the assistance of members of the local brotherhoods in collecting data on home and private practice by laymen. Our Committee has accepted this offer of assistance and we shall thus have the brotherhoods' aid in rounding out the picture of Reform Jewish practice. A sub-committee of Rabbi James G. Heller, Rabbi Louis I. Egelson, and the chairman, will cooperate with the brotherhoods in preparing an additional questionnaire which will bring to the Committee information on not only what practice our lay people actually engage in, but what their attitudes, interests, and desires are in this whole matter. Nevertheless, the information that the Committee has thus far secured represents a reliable response to about ninety per cent of the three hundred and eighty-two questions that were asked. It is clear from the data at hand that there is widespread and increasing acceptance in the Reform Movement of ritual and ceremonial practice. As previously indicated it takes the character of old practices that have been retained, of old ones that have been given new meaning or new form, and of new ones that have been created to serve the contemporary needs and outlooks of our people. Many congregations are making use of these practices in varying numbers, and only a very small number of congregations still resist change.

Obviously the tabulations reported here must be limited. However, the sample summations that follow will suggest the character and variety of Reform practice, as well as the confusion and disorder. It should be noted that where overlapping figures appear, the reader must keep

in mind that often not one uniform practice, but two or more variations of or occasions for the practice are employed in a single congregation.*

BIRTH AND NAMING:

While 1/2 of the congregations (126) reporting replied that their members use a Mohel, 9/10 of the congregations (227) indicated that a surgeon is either often or exclusively used. However, when a surgeon is used, an equal number of congregations (227) reported that the rabbi is present at the rite to bless and name the child. This would indicate a definite eagerness on the part of the congregations not to permit circumcision to become what it was once in danger of becoming, merely a secular practice. Other trends of interest in connection with birth are revealed by a number of additional replies. 1/5 of the congregations (57) reported that the rite of Pidyon ha-Bon (the rite of redemption of the first born) is usually performed among their congregants. 1/2 of the congregations (126) have introduced the innovation of blessing and naming male children at the Saturday service after birth, while 7/10 (168) do so at a Friday evening service. 9/10 of the congregations (231) bless and name new-born girls at either the Saturday morning or Friday evening service, the Friday evening practice being strictly an innovation of Reform.

BAR MITZVAH AND CONFIRMATION:

✓ All but six of the congregations (249) reported Confirmation services for their children, but 9/10 (222) replied that they also conduct Bar Mitzvah services for their boys at thirteen, and more than 1/4 of them (64) conduct Bat Mitzvah services for their girls. 3/5 of the congregations (147) conduct their Bar Mitzvah services on Saturday and nearly 1/2 (113) on Friday evening, the Friday evening Bar Mitzvah service representing a complete innovation in Jewish life. More than 2/5 of the congregations (111) permit their boys to wear the Tallith during this service, and 1/3 (81) permit them to wear skull caps.

The age of Confirmation varies among our congregations. Less than 1/10 (15) of those reporting permit Confirmation at thirteen, 3/10 (81) at fourteen, 7/10 (171) at fifteen, and 2/5 (114) at an age above fifteen. Again the reader is reminded that these overlapping figures suggest variation in the practice in the congregations accounting for the apparent discrepancies. The day of the Confirmation Service also varies among congregations and the day itself differs in some congregations from year to year. 1/2 (124) reported holding Confirmation on Shabuoth day, 2/5 (93) on Shabuoth eve, 2/5 (104) on the Sunday nearest Shabuoth, and a very small number occasionally on the Friday evening before Shabuoth. Over 3/10 of the congregations (88) have introduced a special Consecration Service for children on the Sabbath eve before Confirmation day. In 2/5 of the congregations (106) children wear robes for the Confirmation service, another Reform innovation.

* PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FRACTIONS USED IN THE REPORT OF THE TABULATIONS ARE APPROXIMATED TO THE NEAREST REASONABLE FRACTION. THE NUMBERS IN PARENTHESES REPRESENT THE NUMBER OF AFFIRMATIVE REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONS THAT WERE PUT TO THE CONGREGATIONS.

MARRIAGE:

Definite traditional trends appear in connection with the marriage ceremony. If asked, 4/5 of the rabbis (201) will permit the use of a Huppah, more than 4/5 (215) will wear a hat, 9/10 (230) will permit the wedding party to wear hats and 4/5 (214) will permit the breaking of the glass.

Only 1/5 (52) of our rabbis will perform an unconditional mixed-marriage. 9/10 (224) of the congregations require a formal course of study by the non-Jew before conversion, and an equal number require an examination of the candidate as to the subject matter and as to his or her sincerity.

DIVORCE:

While there has been no change indicated in the attitude of Reform toward validity of the civil divorce, nevertheless it must be noted that 3/5 (152) will help to arrange for a Get (a ritual divorce) through an orthodox rabbi if asked to do so. More than 1/4 (64) refuse to marry members of other congregations whose rabbis have declined to perform the ceremony themselves because no Get was secured.

DEATH AND MOURNING:

A wide variety of practice in connection with death and mourning is revealed in the replies to our Committee. 2/5 (96) of the congregations permit a non-Jew to be buried in their cemeteries, but 7/10 (169) will permit an unconverted non-Jewish spouse to be buried there. Only 1/4 (64) permit a Jew converted to Christianity to be buried in their cemeteries. 5/10 (83) grant a Christian Scientist that privilege. Only 1/6 (38) will permit Christian ministers to officiate in their cemeteries, but 2/5 (116) of the rabbis will share with a Christian minister in a funeral service outside their cemeteries. 9/10 of the congregations (223) permit cremation, there being no obvious change in the established Reform practice here.

In connection with the immediate mourning period following the death (Shiva) 1/5 (50) still observe such a period for seven days; 3/5 (168) do so for three days and 5/10 (73) for one day. 4/5 (209) count women as part of the minyan for the prayers on Shiva. In 7/10 (175) of the congregations a memorial light is lit during the mourning period, and 4/5 (205) do so on the Yahrzeit (anniversary of the death. Of this latter number, 2/5 (106) use the special service prepared by the Joint Committee on Ceremonies. In 1/2 (122), the Hebrew date is still retained for the Yahrzeit, but 4/5 (198) employ the general date, indicating that here too there is mixed practice. Many congregations have restored special congregational memorial services in addition to the universal observance of Yizkor on Yom Kippur. 2/5 (105) have such a service on Shemini Atzereth, 7/10 (167) on Passover, and 3/10 (67) on Shabuoth. The large number on Passover is due, for the most part, to the inclusion of a memorial service in the Newly Revised Prayer Book. 1/2 of the congregations (127) encourage the recital of Kaddish for twelve months (This is a Reform practice). On the other hand, more than 7/10 (187) acknowledge that Kaddish is recited by their members for eleven months and in 7/10 the whole congregation stands for the Kaddish, a Reform practice. The period before a tombstone is set varies in congregations from a month to a year, with 1/2 (133)

indicating a year's wait.

THE SYNAGOGUE:

With the exception of six major congregations and one small one, all congregations worship either on Friday evening or Saturday morning or at both times. All but five congregations use the Union Prayer Book. In four out of five (210) the rabbis wear robes, in two out of five (110) they wear the Tallith or Atoro, and in 1/5 (46) they wear skull caps. 3/10 (72) congregations have a Cantor, who officiates on the pulpit. In 3/10 (69) congregations the organist is Jewish, in 7/10 (179) the choir is all Jewish. Nine out of ten (223) of the congregations count women as part of the minyan, and all but eleven permit them to read the service.

Congregational participation in the service as recommended at New Orleans in 1937 has been broadly accepted by many congregations. In 3/5 of the congregations (166) the congregants join in singing the responses of the Borechu, the Sh'ma, etc. In 9/10 (230) congregational singing is a general practice. In 7/10 (180) all the congregants stand for the Kaddish. In 9/10 (230) names of those who passed away are read on the Sabbath either at the Friday evening service or Saturday.

TORAH READING:

1/2 of the congregations (117), in their eagerness to permit as many congregants as possible to hear the Torah read, have introduced the Torah reading at the Friday evening service, but 3/5 (135) still read the Torah during the Saturday service. 1/4 (61) read the Torah on the festival evenings, which is another innovation, and 4/5 (196) do so at the festival morning service. 1/2 of the congregations (132) permit their women to share in taking out the Torah, but only 3/10 (75) invite their women to make the blessings before and after the Torah reading.

The Friday evening service has become the principal service in the Reform Movement with all but seven (248) holding them on that night. 3/5 of the congregations conduct Sabbath morning services, (140), and only seven hold Sunday services, but five of these worship also on Friday eve or Saturday morning, leaving but two which worship on Sunday alone. The exclusive Sunday service appears to be on its way out. This prospect would have delighted the heart of the great founder of our Movement, Isaac Mayer Wise, who had opposed so vigorously, but futilely, the introduction of the Sunday Service, and pleased my own revered teacher Stephen S. Wise who some ten years ago abandoned the Sunday service with no feeling of regret, except perhaps for the regret that he had permitted himself to lose so much of value in Jewish worship by using Sunday for his principal service. Many practices have been introduced in Reform congregations at the Friday evening service. 7/10 of the congregations (176) light Sabbath candles at the Service. More than 4/5 (215) recite the Kiddush. 1/2 (117) read the Torah at the Friday evening service. More than 4/5 (210) have an Oneg Shabbat at the Friday evening service, and 1/2 (112) arrange for a discussion during the gathering that follows the service. Special services for children on the Sabbath are held by 3/5 (150) of the congregations.

HOME PRACTICES:

Our present tabulations reflect mainly what the rabbis recommend as practice in the homes of their congregants. As previously indicated, substantiation by further study will give a more definite picture of what is done in the home. Nevertheless, the almost universal emphasis which rabbis are placing upon ritual and ceremonial in the home represents a most important trend. We have the following figures indicating how extensive that emphasis is: nearly all (245) urge lighting of candles on the Sabbath, and on the Holy Days and festivals (238); reciting Kiddush on the Sabbath eve (242) and on Rosh Hashana and the festivals (227); making mozi on the Sabbath and the holidays (235); and on the week days (203); on the saying of grace on the Sabbath and holidays (190); on the use of challoth on the Sabbath and festivals (185). Other figures indicate that 1/2 of the rabbis (124) recommend the practice of dipping bread in the honey on Rosh Hashana and Sukkoth; on offering morning prayers on week-days, 2/5 (106); and on evening prayers also 2/5 (99). 7/10 recommend a special ceremony at the dedication of a new home (178); and 7/10 (174) urge that a Mezuzah be affixed to the outer door post of the home. Some very interesting results were obtained in relation to dietary laws. 1/6 (39) urge the observance of all dietary laws; 1/6 (39) urge refraining from eating shell fish; and 3/10 (73) urge refraining from eating pork.

ROSH HASHANAH AND YOM KIPPUR:

An innovation in Reform is the practice of holding two services in sequence on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur; 1/5 (50) do so on Rosh Hashanah eve and Yom Kippur eve. 1/10 on Rosh Hashanah day and 1/10 on Yom Kippur day (25). The Shofar either in natural state or with a mouth piece has found extensive use once again in Reform congregations, largely due to the introduction of the mouth piece. 9/10 (224) use the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The singing of Kol Nidre has also been restored in all but 16 of the congregations reporting (239). Children's services play a large part in the High Holy Day observance, with 3/5 (151) holding them on Rosh Hashanah and 4/5 (198) holding them on Yom Kippur. 4/5 (199) of the rabbis reported that they urge their members to fast on Yom Kippur. This is another matter that will be checked by the NFTB survey. But the fact that 1/2 (110) of the congregations have no recess on Yom Kippur, thus providing for no "lunch period" might suggest that more people are fasting now than in previous years.

MAJOR FESTIVALS:

These festivals have taken on renewed significance as revealed by our study. While 1/5 (57) of the congregations conduct an early service on the eve of Sukkoth, 7/10 (163) hold such a service after dinner. 4/5 (214) have such a service on the first day of Sukkoth, and the last day is observed by 7/10 (184). 4/5 (207) of our congregations have combined Shomini Atzereth and Simchath Torah observances, but 1/8 (31) still observe these days separately.

3/10 (74) congregations build Sukkoth on their lawns. More than 7/10 (189) build them on the pulpit. The Lulab and the Esrog once again have their place in increasing measure, with 7/10 (189) of the congregations using them during the Sukkoth service, and more than 1/2 (139) making the special blessing over them. 2/5 (109) hold memorial services on the last day, Shomini Atzereth - Simchath Torah. The Simchath Torah service has also witnessed the increase of traditional practice with 3/5 (154) of the congregations participating in the Hakofoth (procession of Torah) on the eve of the festival, and 3/10 (72) on the day itself. Four out of five (205) have retained the practice of reading in sequence the closing verses of Deuteronomy and the opening verses of Genesis. 3/5 (145) have introduced the ceremony of having the grandfather, father and son share in the Torah reading, and 7/10 (185) hold a consecration service for children in the school on either the eve or day of Shomini Atzereth-Simchath Torah. This is another of the Reform innovations.

PESACH:

4/5 (214) congregations observe Passover for seven days, and 1/20 (12) for eight days. 3/5 (144) hold an early service on Passover eve. 4/5 (205) hold a service on the first day and 4/5 (195) on the last day. A memorial service is held in 3/5 of the congregations (161) on the last day. 19/20 of the congregations (232) recommend home Seders and 1/5 (49) urge them for two nights. 1/2 (133) have a congregational Seder on the first night and 3/10 (87) on the second night. 4/5 (203) have a model Seder for the children. 4/5 (195) urge their members not to eat Kometz.

SHABUOTH:

Shabuoth is observed in 9/10 (223) congregations for one day. 1/5 (53) have an early evening service on the eve of Shabuoth and 3/5 (142) conduct a service after dinner. 1/2 (112) have a confirmation service on Shabuoth day; 3/10 (78) on Shabuoth eve. 1/4 (62) conduct a memorial service on Shabuoth day.

THE MINOR FESTIVALS:

A special Hanukkah service is held on the first night of the Feast of Lights by 1/5 (49) of the congregations and by 9/10 (234) on a Friday evening service during the Hanukkah week. In 7/10 (168) of the congregations a pageant of lights has been introduced. 1/2 (126) of the congregations arrange a special Hannukkah congregational dinner. All of the rabbis urge the observance of the lighting of lights for eight days in the home with exchange of gifts and games.

Nearly all hold special children's services in the school with gifts for the children.

Hanisha Oser Be-Shobat has also found a place in Reform congregations of our day. 1/4 (62) of the congregations have a special service in connection with this celebration. 1/2 (128) arrange special programs in the school and 1/2 (126) encourage gifts to the Jewish National Fund for the planting of trees in Israel.

• Purim eve has now become a special occasion for celebration in 1/2 of our congregations (120). 3/5 (157) celebrate Purim on the Friday eve closest to the festival. In celebration of the festival 3/5 (163) use the Union Abridged Megillah (Scroll of Esther) and 1/6 (43) use the Traditional Megillah. 3/10 (81) permit the use of graggers at their service. Nearly all congregations (231) have a special children's service and four out of five (206) have a children's carnival. 1/2 (117) arrange carnivals for the congregation.

SPECIAL ADDED CELEBRATIONS:

Many new celebrations have been added to our calendar. Among them are Brotherhood Week observed by 9/10 (219) of our congregations; Thanksgiving by 4/5 (190); Race Sabbath by 1/2 (122); Lincoln's birthday by 1/2 (117); Washington's birthday by 3/5 (143); Isaac Mayer Wise's birthday by 7/10 (184); Stephen S. Wise' birthday by more than 1/5 (61); Armistice Day (Shabbath Shekolim) by 1/2 (114); Mother's Day (Shabbat Ovos) by 1/2 (129); Thanksgiving on the Friday closest to it (Shabbat Todah) by 1/2 (116); and Shabbath Shekolim by 1/5 (40). Special services have been prepared for these four last occasions by the Joint Committee on Ceremonies. Israel's birthday on May 14, or the fifth of Iyar, namely the day of the founding of the Jewish State, is celebrated by 1/2 (120) of the congregations. A special service has also been arranged for the installation of officers and board members and has been used by 1/2 of the congregations (138)

Through the partial presentation of the tabulations which have been given above one may get a picture of the extent, character and variety of current Reform practice. It is obvious that we have moved a great distance toward ritual practice and observance, bringing us closer to tradition, but it must be underlined that we have not accepted tradition blindly. We have restored those practices which are meaningful for our day, reconstructed those which required adaptation in consonance with the spirit of our times, and created others which serve our contemporary needs. In this process of moving toward ritual practice and observance it was only natural that some congregations should have moved more rapidly than others.

This voluntary system of taking what one congregation feels that it needs and of rejecting that which it feels it does not need could not produce a pattern of uniformity of practice. But though there is definitely no uniformity, there appears to be essential unity of purpose in the practices that are now being employed. Their purpose is to provide a means of identification with the group, of securing the feeling of at-homeness in Judaism, and of self-fulfillment of the individual, of satisfying his spiritual and esthetic needs. There are many who decry the lack of uniformity in practice as anarchy and call for some order in the life of the congregations and in the homes. Others regard the absence of uniformity as a necessary and desirable consequence of the freedom which Liberal Jews hold to be the foundation upon which their religion rests and an ineluctable product of the principle of development which permits no crystallization of thought or practice in Reform Jewish life. The movement itself will have to make the decision whether it is to codify ritual or whether it will content itself with the preparation of a guide which will indicate what practices are desirable and how they may be performed to fulfil the purpose just described. Our Committee is itself charged not to make

any specific recommendation until the delegates themselves have had their opportunity to discuss this problem fully and to determine what course shall be adopted that may help to insure the survival of our people and its faith and, at the same time guarantee to each of us our fullest development as Jewish personalities.



April 29, 1953

Rabbi Louis Egelson
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York 21, New York

Dear Louis:

I know how busy you must be winding up all of the debris usually left over from a Bi-ennial, but I wonder if I might impose upon you to the extent of asking for a transcript of the remarks made by Mrs. May in re the education program of the Union.

I would like this just as quickly as possible because I am using it in the preparation of a paper which I am to give at the forthcoming meeting of the G.C.A.R.

With all good wishes and looking forward to seeing you soon, I am

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Herbert Friedman

HAF/ms

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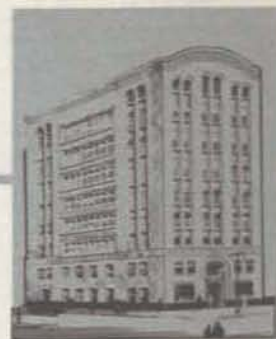
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May 8, 1953

Rabbi Herbert Friedman
Temple Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun
2419 E. Kenwood Blvd.
Milwaukee 11, Wisconsin

Dear Herbert:

I am sorry that your letter of April 29 was delayed.

I am sending you herewith by air mail, special delivery, a copy of the remarks made by Mrs. May at the Convention of the Union.

With best wishes and looking forward to seeing you real soon, I am

Cordially yours,

Louis L. Rosen
Administrative Secretary

LE:MK
Encl.

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE BROTHERHOODS

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS
THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE YOUTH

Statement by Mrs. Albert J. May, Monday evening, April 20 at the
Joint Meeting.

Mrs. Albert J. May:

I have been thrilled and excited by tonight's panel and I felt that I owe it to Dr. Brickner and to those who spoke, to make a statement about how my father felt about Hebrew, not that I feel that every child is capable of learning Hebrew anymore than every child is capable of learning higher calculus - but I do feel that the fundamentals of Hebrew are so beautifully organized for our children today, that to deprive them of the right to know that language seems to me to be cavilling about our religious faith.

I lived in Isaac M. Wise's home. I am his daughter. I never remember a day when some of the things that I have been reading in the literature of today, out of context, were true of what my father thought. My father was a religious Jew. To him everything in the Talmud and the writings of the Fathers, and anything that was published in Hebrew was sacred. He taught us that at his knee. He loved everything that was vital to Judaism, and those who dare to demean his life by challenging his statements, out of context each time, do his memory a disservice. When they come to my desk, I am so thoroughly moved that I am glad of the opportunity here to say that were Isaac Mayer Wise here today he would rejoice in the development of the Reform Movement and he would say to you: God bless you all - but do not forget that you are Jews from beginning to end! (The Convention arose and cheered and applauded vigorously.)

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

Address Delivered at the Biennial Convention
of the
UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
New York City, April 21, 1953

By Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

The rabbis say that when Jacob summoned his sons and said, "Gather yourselves together and I will tell you what shall befall you in the days to come," the spirit of prophecy departed from him.

No one can foretell a people's future ... no one can know whose hand will draw the threads of the future on the loom of time or what the pattern will be. Fifty years ago no one could have foreseen the practical disappearance of European Jewry. One hundred sixty years ago no one could have foretold that in the U. S. there would arise the largest Jewish Community in history. At best we can project our hopes on the basis of our present knowledge and draw reasonable inferences from perceptible trends. The question to which I would like to address myself is, can we think hopefully of the next century as Jews, as Americans, as members of the human family? I believe that we can. I believe that we have every right to do so, though we cannot be dogmatic about it; for progress is neither guaranteed nor automatic; nor can we ignore the fact that time and again the unforeseen and unpredictable in history have upset all man's most careful calculations.

I believe that the age in which we live is a great age and that we are moving towards an even greater age. I believe that our present age is one of the greatest in human history. I had occasion recently to address the American College of Physicians on the subject, "American Leadership in the World Today", and I expressed the thought that we are too near our times properly to appraise them. One requires distance in order to see great objects in their proper perspective. We ourselves are too much involved in the turmoil, the fears, and the conflicts of our day to see objectively the amazing new pattern of life which is emerging.

Many people are quick to describe our age as materialistic, as lacking in idealism, in aim and purpose, an age of breakdown and disintegration.

There are very few people who see this age of ours as a great age. I am persuaded that it is a truly great age. Historic events, great in amplitude and consequence, are coming to pass in our day. I am not thinking at the moment of the new worlds which science is continually disclosing, the new insights into the nature of matter and energy, the new sources of power and wealth, the new methods of production, distribution, transportation and communication. I am not referring to the amazing progress in the medical sciences which has so markedly improved the health of the human race and increased the average length of life, nor to the marvels of engineering and the miracles of construction.

In characterizing our age as great, I am thinking in terms of social progress and welfare, in terms of human advancement and civilization. More is being done in our day for the improvement of the conditions of the common man, for the raising of his standard of living, his health, his education, and for his protection against the disabilities of sickness, unemployment and old age, than in any generation, than in any five generations in the past. Never were more determined efforts being made to bring about a fairer sharing of the wealth that is produced and a better way of life for all.

Never have the submerged races and peoples of the earth risen as they have risen in our day to demand and to achieve, as they have to a large measure achieved, freedom and self-determination. Within the last seven years one-fourth of the earth's population - more than five hundred million non-self-governing people - have obtained their political freedom. Imperialism and colonialism are in their death-throes. Backward peoples are pressing forward into the light of a new day, and the exploitation of the dark races of the earth is rapidly drawing to a close.

What we are witnessing in our day, if we have eyes not only to see things, but to see into the heart of things, is not social disintegration, but a radical new reintegration of humanity, a profound change in the social evolution of man, a change not free, of course, from dangers - for there is no progress without danger - but one of boundless and immeasurable potentialities.

I do not wish to overdraw the picture. I am not suggesting that our age is approaching idyllic perfection, or that the millenium is just around the corner.

The important thing to consider is not whether we are on the eve of the millenium, but whether the major trends of our age are in the direction of the hoped-for good society, or away from it. Is our age trying to eradicate poverty and illiteracy and to raise the standard of living of people, regardless of race or color or creed? Is it trying to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of peoples to national freedom and independence? Is it trying to organize the world for peace and for international cooperation? I believe that in all these major trends, our age has given welcome evidence of great determination and of considerable progress. It is moving purposefully in the right direction - the abolition of war, the reduction of poverty, and the elimination of racial inequality. These are the three major trends of our century, and they are the major trends both in the East and the West, in the Communist as well as in the non-Communist world. What is tearing these worlds apart is a difference not of ideology or objective, but of method.

Ours is a great age, and I believe we are entering into an ever greater age. The wave of the future, the true direction of man's pilgrimage and destiny may be, from time to time, thwarted and opposed, dammed up, as it were, and obstructed, drawn off and retarded, but it cannot be permanently estopped.

In our day this moral forward thrust of man has encountered the stubborn and insolent resistance of materialism, of Nazism, of Fascism and of Communist dictatorship. These have violently resisted the spiritual aspirations which constitute mankind's wave of the future. They put shackles on man, even when they promised him larger freedoms. They divided and stratified men, even when they prated about a classless society. They fomented war even when they preached peace. But the on-moving tides of man's spirit, fathoms deep and irresistible have now swept over the shattered ruins of some of these sinister aberrations and dark conspiracies of the rebels against light - though they have not as yet entirely obliterated them. And the tides are now whirling around the bastions of the remaining dictatorships of

the earth. They will surely succumb. They cannot, in the long run, win in the contest for man's heart and man's loyalties. Man has struggled through the long, weary centuries to free himself from the bondage of nature. He will not voluntarily and for long submit to the bondage of man. Neither dictatorship nor racialism nor statism nor militarism can or will command the fortunes of the human race. They represent the sunk wreckage of the past which the storms of our day have dredged up again from the bottom of their buried depths and have set them afloat again dangerously along the ship lanes of the world.

The coming age will be a great age for America. The next hundred years at least seem likely to be known, I believe, as the "American Century," in the same sense as the 19th century was "The Century of Great Britain." Destiny has singled out our beloved country, the foremost democracy on earth, to give leadership to the world and to lead mankind out of the grave social, political and economic predicament in which it finds itself. I believe that American leadership will prove itself equal to the challenge, if it will take counsel of faith and not of fear, and if it will be guided by the prophetic insights and the wide perspectives of the Founding Fathers of this Republic.

I believe that our age will find the formula of toleration which will enable the many evolving and the fluid forms of capitalism and socialism to work out their destinies in the one world in which we live. They may be irreconcilable in theory; they need not be in practice.

America will lead in finding the way. The way is not that of a global armament race which will impoverish the peoples of the earth - ourselves included - and end as such races always end - in the catastrophe of war. The way is rather that of conference, of courageous diplomacy, of giving urgent leadership in the United Nations to a program of speedy and balanced reduction of armament and help to the backward peoples of the earth.

To this kind of leadership the world will respond; a leadership which does not wait on the occasion but makes it, which is prepared to take calculated risks for

peace, which is eager for negotiation and conference to settle all issues which endanger the peace of the world; a leadership which exerts sincere and unremitting pressure for limitation of armaments and the lifting of the crushing military burdens from the backs of the peoples of the earth; a leadership which aggressively plans for world-wide cooperation to help and guide the backward and impoverished peoples to higher levels of agricultural and industrial development, of well-being, health and education; a leadership which seeks the liberation of all dominated, colonial peoples and extends friendly help to them in adjusting themselves to their new way of life; this kind of leadership, which is not dictation, which is not imposed by our wealth and power, which is not enmeshed and hampered by commitments to the imperial interests of colonial empires and which flows naturally from the head-waters of our great liberal traditions and history, is sure to re-ignite the hopes of the world.

I believe that the American people will earnestly strive to be worthy of the challenge and opportunities of the American Century.

And I believe, too, that it will be a great age for American Jewry if the catastrophe of war does not shatter its security and life. As a minority, we are helpless against the ravages of hate and demagoguery which war and economic depressions unleash.

But given peace and economic stability, the American Jewish community will move forward and develop. It will expand its cultural and religious life and institutions, and will make worthy contributions to the total life of America. The last 300 years are warrant for it. Our beginnings here were humble - as were the beginnings of all peoples who came to these shores. Steadily through the years, and more rapidly in the last three-quarters of a century, our numbers increased and we shared eagerly and gratefully in the growing and evolving life of America. Our people became in outlook, in confidence, in hopefulness, true children of the New World, and in service and devotion, loyal and proud citizens of the United States. They served it patriotically in peace and in war. They

made creditable contributions to its material prosperity, to its political and social progress, its democratic institutions, to labor and industry, to its arts, science, literature and music. They supported generously all the philanthropic and social agencies and institutions of their communities - Jewish and non-Jewish alike. They have been not an unworthy or unimportant part of the colorful, unique and noble mosaic pattern which is America.

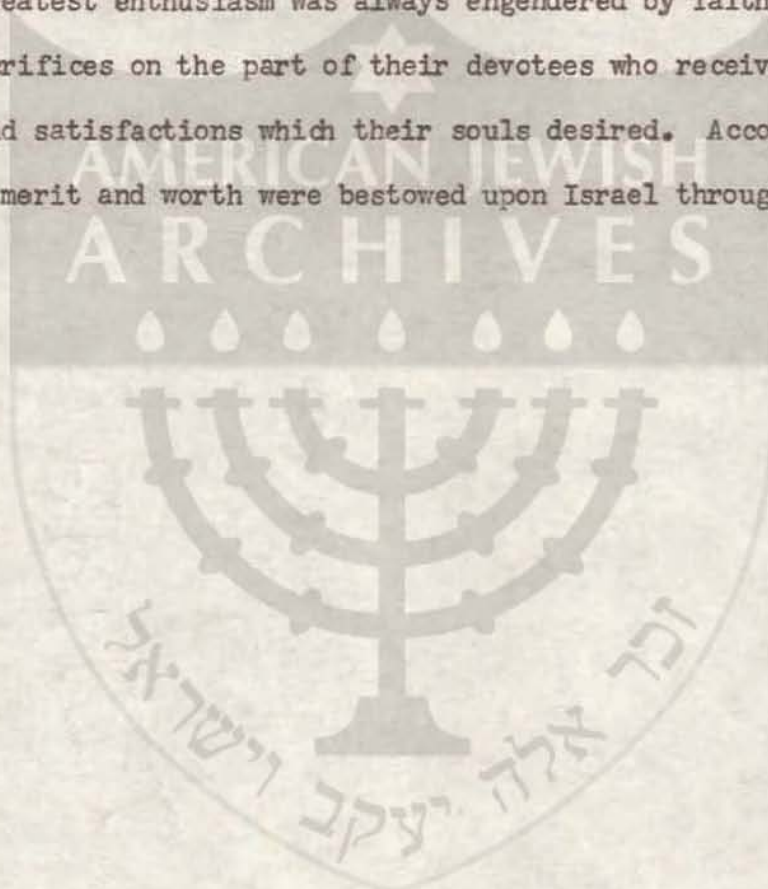
Nor have they ignored or forgotten their own religious heritage. They remained faithful to it. Upon the shores of the new land they build their synagogues, their schools and their institutions of learning and philanthropy which have always embodied the ethical ideals and the way of life of our people. They did not isolate themselves from the lot of their fellow-Jews in other parts of the world. They remained bound to them in fraternal solitude. They helped them in their need; They came to their defense when attacked. They poured out their generosity when tragedy overtook them. They rallied to the task of building the State of Israel when the historic moment arrived, and they have undergirded it with their support and unflagging interest since then.

If the American Jews of the coming decades will carry on uninterruptedly and with wisdom and discrimination, putting first things first, and accentuating the positive and indispensable enterprises of Jewish life, they will make the numerically largest Jewish community in the world also one of the greatest in terms of faith, culture and scholarship. We are in the growth-stage of our history here, "a fruitful bough by a spring." Religion is likely to become more and not less a vital part of the American culture, as science frees itself more and more from its mechanistic incantations and dogmas and as democracy is compelled in its struggle for survival against materialistic forms of dictatorship to return more and more to its spiritual origins and sanctions. American Judaism will not find itself in a religiously negative environment and it will react accordingly.

What may endanger our Jewish future here is not conscious escapism or deliberate assimilationist tendencies such as characterized Jewish communities elsewhere

and at other times. Rather, a too facile adaptability, an unconscious drift and a carefree relaxation of all disciplines - not out of conviction but out of sheer indifference - such as belonging to synagogues but not attending them, or sending children to schools which are so limited as to time that they cannot really give them an adequate Jewish education, or in very many instances, not giving them any instruction at all, or emptying our homes of all Jewish content.

No religion is worth its salt which does not make great demands upon its adherents. The greatest enthusiasm was always engendered by faiths which called for the greatest sacrifices on the part of their devotees who received in return great compensations and satisfactions which their souls desired. According to our tradition, increased merit and worth were bestowed upon Israel through the very abundance of the



(next page)

commandments which were given to it. Too many of our people want an easy-going religion, one which does not interfere with their leisure, their sleep, or their television, which calls for no study and no observance, which does not challenge or disturb them, a religion without any spiritual travail, without any stab of thought or conscience, without any sacrifices, the religion of a self-pampering people. No religion has ever survived in that kind of an emotional and intellectual vacuum; Judaism least of all.

It is a great virtue in our people that they are generous in heart--charitable and responsive to all human need and suffering. It is a noble tradition of Israel and a byproduct of a religion which, foremost among all the religions of mankind, made charity and lovingkindness central in its code of human conduct. But Judaism is much more charity, and the charitable impulse alone will not preserve our faith and our people. "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall mediate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success." No Jewish community ever survived for long which did not cultivate Jewish learning and study and which did not cultivate the prescribed way of Jewish life, at least in its essentials.

It is not enough to pay lip service to religion. This is now very fashionable and patriotic, and highly endorsed politically in democratic countries as part of the over-all strategy in the cold war. But religion is not political strategy. It is a man's humble way to God. It is intended primarily not for others but for one's self. It is a personal quest and a consecration. It is a form of voluntary bondage for freedom's sake, a self-imposed discipline for greater spiritual efficiency. We must work at our religion to have it work for us.

It is not even enough for Jews to erect beautiful synagogues and centers. They are necessary and important -- and when we build them, it is only proper that their architecture should embody beauty and utility. But edifices have meaning only if within their precincts men and women are inspired and instructed in the ways of

personal piety, religious study and the quest of God and the good life. This is the true measure of their success. They are then the living shrines of a living faith. Otherwise they are only sad memorials to a glory that is departing, and to dying embers upon forsaken altars.

What we should fear most in the rise of a generation of prosperous Jews who have no spiritual anchorage, or the growth of a generation of clever, restless Jews of quick ferment and high voltage, rooted in no religious tradition, reverent of no moral code, ignorant of all Jewish learning and held to social responsibility by no inner spiritual restraint, who will range and bluster all over the American scene from literature and art to politics and government and will commit their fellow Jews in the eyes of the American people. Such floating mines are a danger to any people but especially to a minority group.

If American Jewry of tomorrow will restore what has become peripheral in our life, to the center again-- the synagogue, the school, the academy and the religious disciplines of Judaism--if it will recapture the wisdom of our ancient teachers who admonished us "Talmud Torah kneged kulom" -- the study of the Torah outweighs all other commandments for it leads directly to them all -- then American Jewry is destined to enjoy a resplendent century of spiritual growth in this gracious land.

The lay leaders of American Jewry have really not settled on the true nature of the American Jewish community, what they believe it to be, what they want it to be. Somewhere there is a confusing and stultifying inner contradiction. They contend that it is a religious community, always has been and must so remain, but they act as if it were a secular community whose chief, if not exclusive, concern, is philanthropy and defense strategy. Their national organizations, their national publications, their national convocations, their energies and their budgets are only remotely related to religion.

The scope of the American synagogue may broaden in the years to come. It will respond to new initiatives. It may make new adjustments to meet new needs and will profit from new insights. It may come to include, as indeed it already has in some instances, psychiatry and other forms of guidance and helpfulness. It may gain in unity as the sharp edges of denominational distinctions are worn away by time although I fail to see the advantage of bringing everybody under one umbrella. Its idiom and emphasis may change but the core of its faith, I am sure, will remain unchanged, for it is timeless and changeless -- the belief that there is a God indwelling in all nature, and yet transcending it, near to man in all his needs and yet beyond man's comprehension; that man is fashioned out of the earth but is nevertheless made in the spiritual image of God; that bound as he is by his physical and mental limitations, he is nevertheless unbounded in his moral aspirations and is free to determine his own spiritual progress; that both body and soul are of God and that the whole of man -- body, mind and soul -- is sacred; that all men are equal in their essential humanity, and that there is but one moral law for all; that life is good and is a gracious gift of God; and that the evil which exists in the world can, in large measure, be overcome and in the overcoming of it lies the very meaning and adventure of human life; that progress is real even if not uninterrupted; that a golden age of universal justice, brotherhood and peace awaits the human race and can be hastened by the efforts of the human race and that man's spiritual concern should be primarily with life this side of the grave since "the hidden things belong to God but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children."

With such a faith we can spread wide our adventuring sails and plow resolutely into the surge and thunder of our unpredictable Odyssey, confident that our high hopes will, from time to time, find their blessed anchorage in some harbor of our hearts' desire.

We owe it to ourselves and to our people, we Jews of America, the most favored and fortunate of all world Jewry, to take over the glory and burden of our heritage now that the Jewish communities of Europe no longer exist as vital and creative centers. All through the 19th Century we were the hinterland of European Jewry. Today we are the heartland of the entire Jewish Diaspora. Ours is now the mandate, the challenge and the opportunity. Who knows whether we have not come to our high estate just for such a time as this!

A great century also awaits the newly-established State of Israel, whose fifth anniversary is being celebrated this week. Here, too, I build my hope on a continuing peace. Given peace, the amazing energy of its people which has so miraculously transformed that country in a few years will continue unabated, for it is the stored-up energy and hopes of centuries. Already close to a million and a half Jews live in Israel and it seems destined to become, next to the United States, the largest center of Jews in the world, and its most important cultural center. Many grave problems confront the new state -- political, economic and social -- but knowing their drive and dynamism, their pride and devotion, I am confident that they will solve them -- with our help and the assistance of their fellow-Jews throughout the world .

And if history is any guide Israel will not remain just another small Levantine state on the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean. Greatness will come from it -- cultural, spiritual, scientific -- as greatness came from that little land^{once} before. Disraeli wrote somewhere: "All great things have been done by little nations." This certainly holds true of Judea and Greece. It would be surprising indeed if the returnings sons and daughters of our people, many of them so generously dowered with talent and some with genius, so eager for expression, so long suppressed, so determined to vindicate themselves and their people and reply with greatness of mind and spirit to the aspersions and cruelty of their persecutors, will not produce in course of time, in the exciting and stimulating environment

of Eretz Israel, where every history-mantled hill and valley speaks of ancient glory and of the imperishable achievements of their ancestors -- things of beauty, truth and insight, rare and precious, which will again astound the world.

We shall eagerly watch and earnestly pray for the progress of Israel. We shall continue our cooperation with it in every way. We can give much to it. It can, and has already, given much to us. It has much to learn and so have we. It will have much to teach us, and so will we. Its people will have need of Judaism and of its religious disciplines as much as we. Nationalism is no substitute for religion whether for the people of Israel, or the United States, or any other people.

And so, I build my prospects for the coming century on hope and greatness. It will not be a century of full serenity. It will not be all Utopia, and our professional anti-defamationists and public relationists will still find much work to do, for the age of universal good-will probably will not be fully consummated in the next one hundred years. But it can be a glorious century for humanity, for America, and for our people and our faith, if we try to make it so. There is no determinism in human history. Man's spiritual as well as his intellectual progress is conditioned by man's own initiative and strength of purpose. The most common word in the ethical passages of Scriptures is the word "IM" - "if." "If you return, O Israel, if you do not waver...then nations will bless themselves in you..." "If you will hearken unto my voice..." "If you will obey my commandments..." Man alone must give the answer. The tools are here. The opportunities are great; the rewards are many. The Kingdom of God awaits only faithful and resolute men to build it.

THE SURVEY OF CURRENT REFORM PRACTICE BY LAYMEN

(Discussed Against a Background of Rabbinical Attitudes and Practices)

by RABBI MORTON M. BERMAN, CHAIRMAN
Committee on Reform Practice of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Delivered at 42nd General Assembly,
April 22, 1953

Brotherhood Survey Confirms Earlier Findings

The Survey of Current Reform Practice conducted by the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods corroborates the findings of the survey on this subject authorized by the 1948 Biennial of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and carried out in 1950 by its Committee on Reform Practice. The Brotherhood survey supports the conclusion reported at the 1950 Biennial that there is a "widespread and increasing acceptance by congregations and their members of ritual practice and ceremonial observance."

The Brotherhood survey confirms the observation made in 1950 that "Reform Judaism is determinedly engaged in helping to meet a fundamental need of every human being for symbolism and ceremonialism," and "for the poetry and beauty, for the mysticism and drama" which these provide for the satisfaction of man's emotional hunger. It confirms, too, the very important view expressed in 1950 that the disciplines of ritual and ceremony strengthen the Jew's "sense of kinship with God, because they are reminders of the providential role that He filled in His people's life throughout the ages; that they help the Jew to relive his history," the knowledge of "which has always been a vital source of his faith and a bulwark for his self respect;" that they fortify the Jews' sense of rootage in his people's past, strengthen his ties with his people everywhere and thus reinforce his loyalties to its ideals and aspirations.

The present survey demonstrates no less than the earlier one that in order adequately to meet the need for rite, ceremony and observance in liberal Jewish life, laymen as well as rabbis are eager not only to restore old practices but to modify them and even to create new ones, if reason, human need, and current conditions of Jewish life require them.

No Sectional Reform Judaism

The Brotherhood survey differs in a number of respects from that of the Union undertaking. Whereas the Union questionnaire was sent out to only rabbis and presidents of congregations, and it must be pointed out that nearly all replies in 1950 came from rabbis, the Brotherhood's questions were directed to a wide sampling of laymen as well as to the rabbis serving the more than 450 Union congregations. More than 1200 laymen responded and their replies have been collated upon the basis of sectional divisions representing the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Northwest and Southwest sections of the country. It may be reported here that the breakdown of the responses on a sectional basis produced no substantial evidence that the practice of liberal Judaism varies sharply from one section of the country to another. There are some variations in degree and emphasis, particularly in the Southeast, but these variations are not sufficiently great to suggest that more than one kind of practice exists in American Reform Judaism.

Information on Home Practice Provided

The responses of the laymen to the Brotherhood questionnaire provide us, for the first time, with dependable information about practice in their homes. Whatever the Union survey of 1950 told us on the subject of home practice among laymen could only have been surmised on the basis of how much encouragement the rabbis reported

that they gave to their laymen to engage in such practice and to what degree the rabbis felt their people were responding to such encouragement. But any conclusion on this matter could only have been regarded as a rough approximation. The Brotherhood Survey fills in that lack in our information about laymen's practice at home.

The Survey informs us that many more laymen than are generally believed do practice Jewish rites and ceremonies at home. While no comparative statistics exist to indicate whether these practices are on the increase, there is enough other evidence available to justify the conclusion that such practices are growing in number. Such evidence is to be found in the reports of scores of rabbis who have made it a point to take note of the institution of more ritual and ceremonial practice in the homes of their members, in the increasing number of classes for adults organized to study ritual and ceremonial observances, in the widespread introduction of demonstrations of festival observances, in the strikingly large increase in the sale of ceremonial objects for home use, and, of course, in the expanding emphasis on instruction in ritual practice and ceremonial observance for children in schools connected with Union congregations. All these point to wider acceptance and more extensive practice in the homes along the lines of the new trends.

Opportunity Provided to Compare Rabbinical and Lay Attitudes and Practices

The opportunity is afforded also for the first time by the Brotherhood Survey to compare the attitudes, practices and desires of laymen with those of the rabbis on the subject under discussion. 200 rabbis replied to the Brotherhood's questionnaire. Their responses, which, if they vary at all from those made to the same questions asked in 1950 do so only in the greater degree of support which they give to the acceptance of the new trends. Both sets of replies provide ample data to help us know not only the extent of practice in Reform congregations and in the homes of the rabbis themselves, but also help us to determine the measure of agreement with the laymen on the subjects of the need for and the extent of ritual and ceremonial practice and of the desirability of a code or guide to aid congregations and their members to carry out most effectively such practice.

Here it may be reported, and it will be more specifically demonstrated later, that there is no wide gap separating laymen and rabbis in their eagerness for the acceptance of the new trends. The comparison leads to the rejection of the view that the interest in the new trends is exclusively rabbinical as some have asserted. This is a movement in which laymen and rabbis share with genuine enthusiasm, which is extensive in both groups, although not equal as is readily understandable. There is a wide area of agreement, for example, in the matter of practice in the synagogue. While it must be noted that rabbis are far more devoted to practice in the home, there are a goodly number of laymen who engage in such practice, and it is our conviction that this is a growing number for reasons previously cited. There are, for instance, areas such as those covering birth, marriage and death where laymen appear to be equally, and even more, ready for the retention of old customs and rites, the adoption of modified ones, and the use of recent innovations.

Laymen and Rabbis Express Desire for More Practice

29% of the laymen feel that there ought to be more of ritual and ceremonial practices in their congregations as against 11% who feel that there ought to be less. To be sure, 51% of the rabbis, or about 20% more than the number of laymen, are not satisfied with the rate of increase in such practices as against only 4% of the rabbis who would like to see less. The differential of 20% between the rabbis' interest and that of the laymen should be understandable in the light of the leadership in this kind of movement which we have a right to expect from the rabbis. What is significant is that the number of laymen who desire an increase in practice is three times that of the laymen who wish for less.

For More Uniformity in Practice

Only a differential of 10% separates the number of laymen from that of the rabbis who feel that there ought to be more uniformity in practice in both congregations and homes, 57% of the laymen and 67% of the rabbis calling for more uniformity. More laymen (35%) than rabbis (28%) would accept an authoritative code to help achieve some order in the now highly varied types of practice among our congregations and their members. However, an almost equal number of laymen and rabbis, specifically 85% of the former and 89% of the latter, indicated that they would be satisfied with a guide to help them select on a voluntary basis the practices they may desire for synagogue and home.

Former Conference Presidents Oppose Code

Opposition to a code has been fully expressed in letters of recent date from a number of former presidents of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, whose counsel was sought on this subject. Among them were Rabbis Solomon B. Freehof, Abraham J. Feldman, James G. Heller, Emil W. Leipziger and Jacob R. Marcus. This report will include at its close the statements by these distinguished authorities on Reform Judaism.

The Movement In New Trends Is Not a Return to Orthodoxy

The strong opposition to the adoption of an authoritative code is one of the significant proofs that the acceptance of ritual and ceremonial practice cannot be regarded as a return to orthodoxy. What we witness here is a voluntary undertaking on the part of congregations led by laymen and rabbis to meet the needs of people for symbolism and ceremonialism as part of religious experience. We see in the new trends the exercise of the basic Reform principle of the right to change, to go back, if need be, as well as forward, if the needs of the people, the times and the conditions of life require such change. The unorthodoxy of the current movement is clearly manifest in the modifications of practices and ceremonies and the innovations which Reform congregations and individuals permit themselves in order to achieve the most meaningful kind of symbolism and ceremonialism.

It is not the will of God that dictates what the Reform Jew shall practice, as Orthodoxy holds that God's will does for its adherents, but what the Reform Jew feels his will to serve God justifies him in doing. The Reform Jew feels himself free to choose what he shall practice because it will bring him nearer to God and his people, and thus be a better Jew. The Orthodox Jew feels, also, that he can come nearer to God and his people, and thus be a better Jew, but the Orthodox Jew is not free to choose what he shall practice; he knows only that he is commanded by God to perform His mitzvot. Reform is a religion of choice, predicated on what its adherents feel God may require of them and often shaped by the influences of history and their associations with the total life of their people. Orthodoxy is a religion of Divine command, the acceptance of a law and a tradition which for its adherents have their roots in the Written and Oral Law which they believe came from God.

A Guide Preferred

The wide variety of practice in Reform congregations and the numerous modifications of old rite and custom and the many new innovations unrelated to tradition suggest how deep-rooted are both the principles of choice and change which are not permitted to Orthodoxy. It is felt that a guide will help to

reduce what is regarded by many as anarchy in Reform because of the wide variety of practices and the countless variations in the practices themselves. It is felt, further, that a guide used on a voluntary basis will help to bring about some reasonable order without crystallization of the practices in a new kind of orthodoxy, destroying the principles of choice and change. A guide, it is also maintained, will meet the fundamental need to make possible more intelligent choice of practices, wider understanding of their meaning, and more effective performance based upon the tested and tried experience of congregations and their members. A guide is the preference of 86% of the laymen and 89% of the rabbis, together with their most representative leaders who expressed themselves directly on this matter.

Survey Sought Answers to New Questions

Before we move to an analysis of specific replies to the questionnaire, it must be pointed out that the current survey went far beyond that of the Union in other matters than those already indicated. It sought answers on a number of questions not at all raised in the 1950 survey, among them, listed not in the order of their importance but as we find them in the questionnaire:

- (1) extent of synagogue attendance
- (2) preference for a day of worship
- (3) dancing after services in the synagogue
- (4) the use of the Christmas tree and hanging of the Christmas stocking
- (5) participation by the rabbi in national Jewish and local non-Jewish causes
- (6) relative importance of the sermon, prayer service, and music in service.
- (7) the size of congregations
- (8) instruction in Hebrew for children
- (9) extension of time for religious education
- (10) Jewish parochial schools
- (11) on lay ownership of Jewish books in the home

On Circumcision

We turn now to an examination of the responses with a view not only to indicate the laymen's attitudes toward and participation in ritual and ceremonial practice but at the same time, where possible, to compare them with the attitudes and practices of the rabbis.

While only 12% of the rabbis responded that they would employ only a mohel for circumcision, 17% of the laymen said they would do so. On the other hand only 43% of the laymen said that they would insist upon a rabbi being present if a surgeon was employed in contrast with 85% of the rabbis who felt that a rabbi ought to be invited to conduct a service in connection with the rite. In 1950, 93% of the rabbis indicated their readiness to be present if called upon to do so in the conviction that a service would help to preserve the spiritual aspects of the rite.

Naming of Children

Rabbis have made up for the loss of the opportunity to preserve the rite of circumcision as a religious experience by providing increased opportunity for naming children at a Sabbath service. Thus we find that not only girls are named in great numbers on a Sabbath following birth but boys, the naming of boys being an innovation to compensate for loss of the opportunity of Brith Milah or the ceremony in connection with circumcision. 91% of the rabbis reported this practice, and it had the approval of 73% of the laymen and 99% of the rabbis. In connection with naming a child for a living person, 45% of the laymen looked upon the practice with favor and 55% of the rabbis also expressed themselves favorably.

Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation

Bar Mitzvah is today practiced in congregations served by 92% of the rabbis who responded to the questionnaire. This represents an increase of 4% since 1950. 77% of the laymen answered that they believed in Bar Mitzvah. This number is 11% less than that of the rabbis (88%). 41% of the laymen endorsed the ceremony of Bas Mitzvah. This new rite is practiced in 35% of the congregations on which the rabbis reported. This represents an increase of 9% since 1950. Bas Mitzvah has the approval of 62% of the rabbis.

46% of the rabbis reported that the Bar Mitzvah wears a talith for the ceremony, and almost the same percentage of laymen (45%) endorsed the practice. 30% of the rabbis replied that boys wear hats during the ceremony, and 21% of the laymen indicated that they would want their sons to do so for Bar Mitzvah.

It was clear from the responses by the laymen that they did not look upon confirmation as displaced by Bar Mitzvah. Both laymen and rabbis were concerned with raising the age of confirmation. 44% of the laymen expressed a preference for the age of 15; 15% for age 16; and 4% for 17. 52% of the rabbis thought age 15 was proper; 40% preferred age 16; and 2% suggested age 17. As for the day of confirmation 40% of the laymen indicated a preference for Shabuoth day, though presently it is practiced on that day in 67% of the congregations as reported by the rabbis. 10% of the rabbis (67%) now conducting confirmation services on Shabuoth expressed a preference for another time, principally on Shabuoth eve. The laymen's choices for another time were in this descending order, Sunday (33%), Friday eve (15%) and Eve of Shabuoth (12%). The rabbis' choices were Eve of Shabuoth (22%), Sunday (9%), Friday eve (2%). If we add the number desiring Eve of Shabuoth (12%) to that of Shabuoth day (40%) we arrive at a total figure of 52% of the laymen indicating for some time on Shabuoth. The rabbis show a total of 79% interested in some time on Shabuoth (Eve of Shabuoth, 22%, and Shabuoth day 57%). Actually 9% more rabbis (67%) conduct confirmation on Shabuoth day in 1953 than did in 1950, when only 58% of the rabbis reported holding confirmation on that day.

On Marriage

Laymen appeared to be more eager about some traditional practices in connection with weddings than are the rabbis. 24% of the laymen or 4 times the number of rabbis (6%) would insist upon a Chuppah for a wedding ceremony. 16% of the laymen would ask for a hat to be worn at the ceremony as against 9% of the rabbis, and 40% of the laymen would

ask that a glass be broken, while only 20% of the rabbis would expect it to be done. In 1950, 90% of the rabbis indicated that they were ready to accept a request to officiate at a wedding where Chuppah, wearing of a hat and breaking of a glass were required, thus demonstrating the rabbis' readiness to meet the needs of their people.

Both laymen and rabbis prefer that the wedding be held in the synagogue or home instead of at a public place. The laymen expressed that preference by indicating that 56% of them prefer the synagogue; 29%, the home; and 15%, a public place. The rabbis expressed their preferences with 70% naming the synagogue; 25%, the home; and only 5%, a public place. These figures bear out the increasing movement on the part of rabbis of all groups in a number of communities to refrain from performance of wedding ceremonies if held in hotels, public halls, etc.

Laymen showed far less regard for the observance of the Sabbath than did the rabbis in connection with a question asking them to indicate their attitude toward holding weddings on the Sabbath before sundown, 35% of the laymen saying they would permit it, while only 4% of the rabbis agreed. The rabbis' figure for 1953 is 2% less than in 1950 (6%). Almost the same figures hold for the conduct of a funeral on Sabbath before sundown, 31% of the laymen and 4% of the rabbis answering that they would permit it. In 1950, 6% of the rabbis said they would sanction it.

On Divorce

4% of the laymen and 7% of the rabbis believe that a religious divorce is necessary in addition to a civil divorce. In 1950, there were no rabbis who took that position.

On Mixed Marriage and Inter-marriage

In the matter of mixed marriage, namely, that of a Jew to an unconverted Christian, laymen showed considerably less opposition than the rabbis. 53% of the laymen and 87% of the rabbis were opposed to mixed marriages. In 1950, 9% less rabbis were opposed (78%). Curiously only 84% of the laymen would sanction an inter-marriage if the Gentile was converted, while 99% of the rabbis indicated they would sanction it.

On Death

When practices in connection with death are considered, we note that 60% of the laymen and 86% of the rabbis favor holding Minyan services for the dead. 28% of the laymen favor holding these services for a week, whereas only 16% of the rabbis would favor holding them for that period of time. 41% of the rabbis or about the same number of laymen (40%) prefer one day; 43% of the rabbis or 11% more than the number of laymen (32%) prefer three days. 30% of the laymen and 26% of the rabbis practice Shiva for seven days. Half of the laymen (50%) and 78% of the rabbis believe in saying Kaddish for their dead for eleven months. 59% of the laymen believe it should be said weekly as against 93% of the rabbis. An almost equal number of the laymen (29%) and rabbis (28%) believe in doing so daily. 13% of the laymen cover their mirrors in case of a death of one of the members of the family, but only 2% of the rabbis do so. More rabbis (77%) light a memorial

light during the period of mourning than do the laymen (58%), and more rabbis (80%) light one on the Yahrzeit than the laymen (71%). More laymen (12%) than rabbis (7%) practice K'riah or tearing of garments, at a funeral. 52% of the laymen and 69% of the rabbis believe in cremation. Thus it may be seen that in a number of practices in connection with death as in the case of birth and marriage, laymen hold on more rigidly to traditional practice than do the rabbis.

Attendance at Worship

The tabulations on synagogue attendance at worship produced by the survey provide, for the first time, some highly interesting responses. 32% of the laymen reported attending every Sabbath. 30% of the laymen reported once a month, and 26% of the laymen replied "seldom", and 12% indicated that they attended only on High Holy Days. 99% of the rabbis, or an increase of 4% over 1950, reported conducting services on Friday evening. Only 1% reported a Sunday morning service. 59% of the rabbis conduct Sabbath morning services, an increase of 3% over 1950. 8% less laymen indicated a preference for Friday eve than now worship at that time. That 8% would prefer, apparently, as the figure suggests, to worship on Sunday, and so would 6% of the rabbis instead of the 1% who now conduct services on Sunday. This minute percentage now preferring Sunday does not suggest in the light of the current facts already reported any movement back to Sunday worship. What it may suggest is that rabbis and laymen dissatisfied with current attendances at their synagogues might like to try their chances with Sunday services. It is not difficult to predict that the Sunday service will not come back in American Reform Judaism.

Synagogue Practices

The use of the robe by the rabbi has increased 9% since 1950. 93% of the rabbis now wear a robe, and 88% of the laymen give their approval. 60% now wear either a Talith or a stole, a gain of 16% over 1950, and 27% wear a hat, an increase of 9% over 1950. 61% of the laymen and 67% of the rabbis express approval of these practices.

The number of cantors has increased according to the report of the rabbis. 34% of the congregations now have them, an increase of 4% over 1950 (30%). 64% of the laymen would like a cantor in their synagogues and 83% of the rabbis indicated the same desire.

An increase is also indicated in the number of congregations that light candles at the Friday evening service. 85% of the rabbis report that practice, a gain of 14% over 1950. 90% of the laymen and an equal number of rabbis (90%) like that practice. 89% of the rabbis report that the Kiddush is also sung in their synagogues, a gain of 1% over 1950. 88% of the laymen and 96% of the rabbis like this practice also.

58% of the rabbis report a Torah service on Friday evening, a non-traditional practice. This is an increase of 9% over 1950 (49%). 77% of the laymen and 83% of the rabbis would approve of the institution of the Torah service on Friday evening. The number of women asked to assist in the service in the congregations has increased by 32% since 1950. 82% of the rabbis reported that they now invite women to assist in the service while only 50% did so in 1950. This too is a non-traditional practice. 72% of the laymen expressed their approval. Only 21% of the rabbis report that women are called up to share

in the reading of the Torah, but 37% of the laymen and 68% of the rabbis approve of the practice.

Dancing After the Friday Evening Service

It is difficult to judge whether the figures on dancing in the synagogue after the Friday evening service suggest a trend in that direction. Only 10% of the rabbis report that that practice is now present in their congregations. However an equal number of laymen (40%) and rabbis (42%) indicate that they would permit dancing in the synagogue after the Sabbath service.

Home and Private Practice

10% of the laymen indicated that they do not work on the Sabbath. Whether this can be accounted for by religious reasons was not made clear. 82% of the laymen responded that they smoke on the Sabbath as against 62% of the rabbis who do so.

In the matter of practices in the home the rabbis are far more concerned with their performance than the laymen but there are a considerable number of responses by laymen in connection with a number of these practices. It is our conclusion previously stated that these practices are on the increase among laymen. 59% of the laymen light candles in the home on Sabbath. 26% of the laymen make Kiddush, while only 18% of them make a Motzi, and a mere 4% say grace after meals. In all these matters more than 90% and in some instances 100% of the rabbis engage in these practices as would be expected. A relatively low number for both laymen and rabbis say a morning prayer upon awakening. Only 7% of the laymen and 45% of the rabbis offer such a prayer. A considerably larger percentage pray at night before retiring, namely 33% of the laymen and 63% of the rabbis. In the matter of phylacteries only 2% of the laymen and 4% of the rabbis use them.

Dietary Laws

8% of the laymen and 10% of the rabbis observe dietary laws in the home. Nevertheless over 20% of the rabbis and laymen will not permit the mixing of meat and milk at meals (79% of the laymen and 78% of the rabbis reporting that they do mix milk and meat at meals). 24% of the laymen and 62% of the rabbis refrain from the eating of pork. While in the matter of refraining from eating of shellfish only 8% of the laymen and 27% of the rabbis answered that they refrain from eating shellfish.

On the Observance of the Holidays

52% of the laymen and 93% of the rabbis fast on Yom Kippur. An equal percentage of laymen (94%) and rabbis (93%) prefer the traditional Shofar on Rosh Hashanah. 3% of the laymen and 17% of the rabbis have an outdoor Sukkah at home to celebrate the Sukkoth Festival.

On Passover

74% of the laymen, or 20% less than the rabbis (94%), have a Seder on Passover. 79% of these laymen do so only on the first night and 21% have an additional Seder on the second night. 32% of the rabbis report a preference for a congregational Seder on the first night. It is interesting to note that the practice in 1950 was 56%, suggesting that more congregations are now eager to keep the first night free for their families to celebrate at home. 68% of the rabbis recommend that the congregational seder should be held on the second night. On the other hand, the laymen prefer by a percentage of 54% that the congregational Seder be held on the first night.

Laymen are more eager to observe Passover for a longer period than the rabbis. 34% of the laymen reported that they observe Passover for 8 days whereas only 11% of the rabbis keep the festival for that length of time. A difference of only 6% is to be found between the number of laymen (93%) and that of the rabbis (99%) who eat Matzah during the Passover week. However when it comes to eating bread during Passover, 59% of the laymen do so during Passover while only 8% of the rabbis.

On Hannukah

81% of the laymen indicated that they light lights on Hanukkah, and 90% of them do so for 8 days. 49% of the laymen answered that they arranged games for their children on Hanukkah, and 75% exchanged gifts. Here too in the matter of Hannukkah observance from 90 to 100% of the rabbis engaged in these varied practices.

On Christmas in the Jewish Home

21% of the laymen said that they had a Christmas tree in their homes. Only one rabbi reported the same practice in his home. Though only 21% of the laymen said that they use a Christmas tree, 54% of the laymen indicated that they are not opposed to the practice (33% presumably approving for others but not for themselves). 81% of the rabbis also said that they were opposed to the Christmas tree in Jewish homes, although as already indicated only one reported that he did so. 34% of the laymen and 3% of the rabbis hang up Christmas stockings for their children. In the light of the new trends we can only explain the use of the Christmas practices in some Jewish homes as part of the inevitable acculturation process which goes on in a community where a dominant culture has its effect. We have no comparative figures to show whether the number of users of Christmas trees and stockings has decreased in recent years. It may be assumed however that in view of the increasing emphasis on Hanukkah practices that there has been a decrease in the Christmas practices.

On Social Affairs on Friday Nights

Reasons for low attendance at Friday evening services in some congregations are suggested by the replies to the question: "Do you believe in social affairs outside the synagogue on Friday nights?" 57% of the laymen and 9% of the rabbis answered affirmatively to this question. 64% of the laymen and 11% of the rabbis gave their approval to dinners on Friday nights. 49% of the laymen and 2% of the rabbis approved of card playing on Friday nights. 52% of the laymen and 5% of the rabbis endorsed dancing outside of the synagogue on Friday nights.

Attitude Toward the Rabbi

That nearly all laymen want their rabbis to pay personal attention to them is evidenced by the fact that 97% responded "yes" to the question: "Do you want the rabbi to visit your home at times of sorrow or joy?" 94% of the laymen would like the rabbi to visit them socially. However, only 69% of the laymen would expect the rabbi's wife to accompany the rabbi. Incidentally, even less rabbis (53%) want their wives to do so.

The attitude of laymen toward the rabbi's participation in activities outside of the synagogue is shown by responses to the questions: "Do you regard it as a function of the rabbi to represent you in national Jewish causes or in local non-Jewish causes?" 75% of the laymen approve of the rabbis' participation in national Jewish affairs and 67% of them approve in local non-Jewish causes. On the same questions over 90% of the rabbis approved of their own participation in both areas of activity.

What is Most Important in the Service

48% of the laymen consider prayer as the most important part of the service. 58% of the rabbis concur. The sermon holds second place in importance for both laymen and rabbis though the rabbis are 11% less in agreement with the laymen on the value of the sermon, the percentages being 34% for the laymen and 23% for the rabbis. Music ranks third in importance, an equal percentage of 18% for both laymen and rabbis.

Size of the Congregation

Again laymen (68%) and rabbis (78%) share the view that congregations should be medium size. 23% of the laymen feel that the congregation should be large as against 10% of the rabbis who have to serve them. 9% of the laymen like small congregations and 12% of the rabbis also favor them.

Hebrew Education

74% of the laymen want Hebrew education for their children. This represents a response which is 23% less than that of the rabbis (97%). When we consider the lack of emphasis on Hebrew education in previous decades we cannot fail to be impressed by the demand of 74% of the Reform laymen for it. Equally significant is the fact that while half of the laymen (51%) would be satisfied with instruction in Hebrew one day a week for their children, 34% of the laymen believe in such instruction being given twice a week and 15% more often than twice a week. Only 18% of the rabbis think once a week is adequate. 50% of the rabbis would like to offer it twice a week and 32% of them more often than twice a week.

Religious Education

All rabbis and all but 12 individual laymen want religious instruction for their children. While 67% of the laymen appear to be satisfied with instruction on just one day a week, only 18% of the rabbis approve of that limited time. 22% of the laymen would like two days and 35% of the rabbis approve. 8% of the laymen hold that three days is desirable and four times as many rabbis (33%) approve of

three days. 3% of the laymen think that their children should have four days, but 14% of the rabbis consider that period of time a desideratum. Less than 10% of the laymen (9%) believe in Jewish parochial or day schools. 18% of the rabbis would consent to them.

There are some very interesting responses on the subject of religious education at home. However only 761 laymen responded to the question on that subject. Of these, 76% of them said that they provide such education at home and 24% said that it is given by teachers. 83% of the rabbis give such instruction at home and only 17% of the rabbis invite teachers to do so.

On Jewish Books

The limited number of Jewish books in laymen's homes would not suggest a wide interest in Jewish cultural matters. 25% of the laymen admitted to the possession of 25 to 50 Jewish books; 66% of them had less than 25; and only 9% had more than 50 books. 56% of the laymen informed us that they had a Hebrew Bible in the home; 93%, an English Bible; and 96%, a prayer book.

Who Responded

97% of the laymen who responded to the Brotherhood Survey were members of Reform Jewish congregations. This point is made in the light of the fact that there are many brotherhoods which include Orthodox and Conservative members. A number of the respondents hold dual memberships. 5% of the laymen hold them in Orthodox congregations and 11% in Conservative.

The Issue Before Us

There is no question from a study of the responses of the laymen and the rabbis that there is a vital need for guidance in the matter of Reform Jewish practice. Actually that desire has been expressed, as already indicated, by 85% of the laymen and 89% of the rabbis. This figure does not include some possible overlapping that might add to these percentages when we consider that 35% of the laymen and 28% of the rabbis indicated that they would accept a code. Our movement, however, cannot, and I believe will not, accept a code which is inconsistent with the history, principles and spirit of the liberal Jewish movement. To destroy the right of choice and the principle of change in the Reform movement would be to turn the Reform movement into a new Orthodoxy for which we have no eagerness at all. All this has been previously discussed in the earlier portions of the paper and will be further amplified in the appended statements of former Presidents of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The Brotherhood survey no less than the Union survey of 1951 make inevitable a guide for our movement, voluntary in character and capable of change, which will help our congregations and their laymen to practice ritual and ceremonial more intelligently, meaningfully and more effectively.

The Committee Proposes

The Committee on Reform Practice of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations has given its consideration to the matter of issuing a guide. However the Committee feels strongly that it may be too early to begin the preparation of a guide. I quote the sense of the dis-

cussion at its meeting on March 25, 1953: "A guide would have to be based on generally accepted practices. We are not yet in a position to recommend such practices. The process of experimentation must be continued and encouraged."

The sense of the meeting was further incorporated in the recommendations which we now offer you:

- #1) "The Committee on Reform Jewish Practice be authorized to continue its work.
- #2) "The Committee proceed to interpret the results of the survey and place them in a proper setting in relation to the history of Reform Judaism.
- #3) "It prepare proposals for a Guide."



Appendix

Statement of Dr. Solomon B. Freehof

"I am opposed to any code of practice published by the Central Conference or by the Union or by any official Jewish body in our Reform movement. The only exception to this are the regulations with regard to marriage and inter-marriage since in these matters we have to define clearly our relationship to the state. It is for that reason that I participated as chairman in the writing of the Conference Report on Marriage and Inter-marriage. The report has been adopted by the Conference and is in use. But as for a general code covering the field of Jewish practice such as permitted or forbidden foods, how much work is allowable on the Sabbath, etc., etc., it is my firm conviction that such a code should not be written by any official Jewish body. My reasons are as follows:

1. "It is contrary to the spirit of history to do so. We have never had in Jewish history any code of practice published by an association of rabbis or of congregations. We have had great and powerful organizations of congregations as for example of the Council of the Four Lands in Sixteenth Century, Poland. This Council made a few specific regulations to meet specific problems but it carefully refrained from issuing any general code. All our codes in the history of Orthodox Judaism were written by individuals: Isaac Alfasi, Maimonides, Jacob ben Asher, Joseph Karo, Mordecai Jaffe, etc. The reason reaches deeply into the spirit of our history. Every code involves decision as to which of the past traditions are valid and which are not. No official organization has ever presumed to make that decision (which would then be officially authoritative) but individual Jewish scholars have decided on their own personal authority and responsibility. Then the code appears as an individual's achievement; not as an official mandate. Every code written by an individual then took its chance in the forum of Jewish thought. They were commented upon, modified, debated. Some were rejected entirely after a generation like the great code of Mordecai Jaffe (the Levush). Others were not accepted until they were greatly modified but each appeared as the opinion of the individual for discussion and debate.

"If any member of our Conference is eager to have a code of practice let him follow the wise precedent of Jewish tradition and write one himself as all our predecessors have done. Let him take a chance with the Jewish public. Someone will then write another code; someone will comment on it; and so one might develop over the years as acceptable. But we must never, so it seems to me, make an official code published by an organization. This is contrary to our history and our historic mood.

"Never in our strictest days of regulation did any official organization presume to decide by authority what Jewish practice is. This is the clear lesson of Jewish history. We Reform Jews should be at least as free as our predecessors.

2. "A code of practice is contrary to our Reform philosophy. All the codes in the past were based on the philosophy that they are expressive of the will of God, revealed on Sinai in the Written and the Oral law. Therefore, rituals and ceremonies being God's will could be presented by the individual scholar before the individual reader as his God-given duty. We emphatically do not believe that. We have selected in recent years certain Jewish ceremonies which we deem helpful. Some of them we even observe contrary to Jewish law as lighting candles after sunset on Friday night. We observe them however from the esthetic, emotional and psychological point of view. When they cease to appeal to us as helpful we will drop them as fast as we have picked them up. To claim that these ceremonies are the will of God (which we would be claiming in effect, if we put them into a code) is contrary to our modern belief and destroys our ability to experiment which is the essential mood of Reform.

3. "A code of practice will be a divisive force in present Jewish life.

Jewish Orthodoxy has achieved a friendliness to us; it has taken two generations to do it, and it is a valuable state of mind for the American Jewish community. To the Orthodox we are Jews who are not very observant; but they have never relegated us into a separate sect broken away from Jewry as were the Samaritans and the Karaites. There are many reasons for this unity. After many years of cooperation with the Orthodox rabbis in the writing of law for the Armed Forces I am convinced that one of the reasons is that we have never officially made a Shulchan Aruch of our own, thereby officially abolishing three quarters of Jewish ceremonial which, by omitting, we would declare are not the will of God. In other words, a code would be an open attack on more observant groups of Judaism by officially declaring that that which we do not include is no longer God's will or never was God's will, and that the Orthodox are deluding themselves by their loyalties. It is unnecessary to make an official statement severing ourselves from them just at a time when we are achieving comradely relations.

"Thus I have three reasons which are convincing at least to me why none of our official Reform bodies should publish a code. The first is based upon the history of Jewish law which shows that every code was published by an individual scholar on his own to take its chance on the forum of Jewish opinion. The second is based upon our own Reform Jewish theology that we do not consider such ceremonies as God-given and, therefore, should not be put in a code paralleling the Orthodox codes which describe what their authors consider to be the will of God. Third, I base my objection on my reading of present-day Jewish sentiment that the publishing of a separate Shulchan Aruch of our own would seem in the eyes of our more observant brethren to be a declaration of religious separateness proclaiming ourselves at last to be as a separate sect."

Statement of Dr. Abraham J. Feldman

"This is in reply to your letter of February 23. In the matter of "code" vs. "guide", I will line up very emphatically on the side of "guide". I am opposed to the establishment of a "code" on several grounds.

"a. It is contrary to the spirit of Reform Judaism. Codes are crystallizations and when the code is no longer acceptable then you have the creation of a new sectary. The glory of Reform is in its fluidity, and I would strenuously oppose any effort to freeze Reform Judaism.

"b. Since no code could be universally accepted by Reform Jews and would not, the only achievement of a code would be to split our Movement and to create another bitter controversy such as we had a few years ago. This must be avoided."

Statement of Dr. James G. Heller

"I am still strongly of the opinion that, for many reasons, we do not need and should not have a code of practice. This derives from my view of the whole nature of the Reform Movement, and the undesirability of attempting to crystallize it."

Statement of Dr. Emil W. Leipziger

"Regarding your inquiry anent my position with reference to code and guide for Reform Practice, let me say that I strongly favor the idea of a Practice which rises out of the living experience of the people, and is not imposed by fiat.

"For Reform Judaism to develop a Shulchan Aruch of its own is to deny its fundamental belief in the rightness of change."

Statement of Dr. Jacob R. Marcus

"I have always been in favor of a guide to Reform Jewish Practice. I believe we should know what our co-religionists in the American liberal movement are doing, and also what our Orthodox brethren are practicing. The principles of our faith do not impose upon us any obligation for the observance of ceremonials. Practically all of our rites are of a purely voluntary character. Nevertheless we observe and practice them because of their aesthetic value, because they make us better human beings, and because they tie us more closely to the larger body of Jewry to whom we are devoted."

Statement by Mrs. Albert J. May,
Monday night, April 20 at the Joint Meeting
Biennial Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Mrs. Albert J. May:

I have been thrilled and excited by tonight's panel and I felt that I owe it to Mrs. Dalsheimer and the distinguished panelists to make a statement about how my father felt about Hebrew. Not that I feel that every child is capable of learning Hebrew anymore than every child is capable of learning higher calculus - but I do feel that the fundamentals of Hebrew teaching are so beautifully organized for our children today, that to deprive them of the right to know that language seems to me to be cavilling about our religious faith.

I lived in Isaac M. Wise's home. I am his daughter. I do not remember that some of the things that I have been reading in publications of today were true of what my father thought. My father was a religious Jew. To him everything in the Talmud and the writings of the Fathers, and anything that was published in Hebrew was sacred. He taught us by precept and example. He loved everything that was vital to Judaism, and those who dare to demean his life by challenging his statements, usually out of context, do his memory a disservice. When these many publications come to my desk, I am so thoroughly moved that I am glad of the opportunity here to say I believe that were Isaac Mayer Wise here today he would rejoice in the development of the Reform Movement and he would say to you: God bless you all - but do not forget that you are Jews from now and always.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE



Affirming, and in order to implement, the action of this Assembly on the President's Message taken at its meeting on April 21, 1953, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations offers its good services for the purpose of promoting peace and harmony between the NCRAC and the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai B'rith, and further offers to help in devising a basis of cooperation among all Jewish community relations agencies.

* * * * *

II

GENOCIDE

WHEREAS, the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of Genocide outlaws the destruction of national, religious, racial and ethnic groups and has been unanimously approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations and already ratified by forty-one national parliaments, which represent a total population of one billion human beings

WHEREAS, a Special Sub-committee of the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee has recommended ratification of this Convention

WHEREAS, the Convention represents the highest ideals of prophetic religion and human brotherhood and undertakes to prevent human tragedies and destruction such as have occurred throughout history and brought great sufferings to our generation

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, assembled at its 42nd biennial convention in New York City on April, 1953

Hereby urges the President of the United States and the Senate to hasten ratification of the Genocide Convention so that the United States of America may uphold the American tradition of moral leadership in the world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, to the presiding officer of the Senate, and to the Chairmen of those Senate Committees charged with the consideration of this subject.

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III

BIENNIAL WORKSHOPS

WHEREAS, many delegates come to the Biennial from long distances with the hope and expectation of receiving valuable suggestions for the best interests of their temples, only to find but a limited time allotted to this purpose, with far greater time spent on business meetings and discussions, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in future Biennials a major portion of the time be allocated to the workshops -- which best serve the interests of the delegates.

RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations calls upon its Executive Board and the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion to appoint a joint commission to study and develop ways and means for the stable financing of the budgetary requirements of these Institutions of our Movement so that both will be provided with the funds so vitally needed for their respective programs upon a basis which will permit them to carry on their programs unhampered by the constant necessity for emergency appeals.

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V

RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the national, non-sectarian program, Religion In American Life, offers an unprecedented coverage and concentration of national advertising in support of religion and religious institutions; and

WHEREAS, the program has developed into a comprehensive and intensive movement to strengthen the place of religion in the community and the nation; and

WHEREAS, the contributions of American business and the advertising industry through the program have resulted in concrete benefits to individual churches and synagogues in hundreds of communities throughout the country;

THEREFORE WE HEREBY RESOLVE to extend vigorous support of the program, Religion In American Life, and to urge every religious leader to participate in the organization of a responsible and effective local Religion In American Life committee in his community.

* * * * *

VI

SYNAGOGUE ARCHITECTS CONSULTANT PANEL

WHEREAS, we have been gratified and excited by the intensive program of building activity which has been sweeping through our congregations, both new and old, resulting in many magnificent edifices in which we and our children may glorify God through the fullest and most beautiful expressions of Judaism, and

WHEREAS, a group of distinguished architects have self-sacrificingly and devotedly given of their talents and their time to counsel our congregations and to guide them in the construction of technically sound and esthetically beautiful synagogues, a service rendered at the cost of widespread travel and inconvenience, without thought of remuneration or reward,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS IN CONVENTION ASSEMBLED,

VI (Cont'd)

That the fervent gratitude of this Biennial Assembly be extended to the Synagogue Architects Consultant Panel for their brilliant and conscientious contribution to our movement in the past, with the hope that their wisdom and skill will continue to be available to our congregations as they build Houses of God which will exemplify a perfect synthesis of the finest in our spiritual heritage with the noblest technological concepts of architectural practice, and that a copy of this resolution of thanks be forwarded to Mr. Harry Prince, founder and chairman of the panel, for transmittal to the panel.

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VII

IMMIGRATION LAW

WHEREAS, the highest traditions of Jewish and American life affirm the moral worth of every man regardless of race, religion, or national origin, and

WHEREAS, the United States has been the "Mother of Exiles" and the haven of the oppressed throughout history, and

WHEREAS, the fabric of our democracy has been woven out of the love and loyalty of peoples of diverse backgrounds,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS IN CONVENTION ASSEMBLED,

That we condemn those provisions of the McCarran-Walter Immigration Law that contain national origins quotas, threats to the security of foreign-born citizens, and those other violations of the essentials of democracy, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we applaud our President for his opposition to this law, which he characterized as "thoroughly undemocratic in its nature;" and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Congress of the United States to amend the McCarran-Walter Immigration Law in such manner as to reaffirm America's position as the defender of the free human spirit by enacting democratic and workable immigration legislation.

* * * * *

VIII

FREEDOM OF THE PULPIT

WHEREAS, since the beginning of Jewish History, the teachers of our faith from the prophets of the Bible to the Rabbi today have regarded the precepts of Judaism as ideals which must be applied directly to the daily life of society, and

VIII (Cont'd)

WHEREAS, the principle of the freedom of the pulpit is consonant with the essential democracy of our faith as well as of our nation

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS IN CONVENTION ASSEMBLED

That we affirm the inherent right of the Rabbis of our congregations to express freely their views and their interpretations of Jewish doctrines in the light of contemporary life. We proclaim equally the right of the congregant to dissent from the views articulated from the pulpit.

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IX

PUBLIC EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the foundations of American democracy have been buttressed by the historic loyalty of the great body of our public school teachers, and our society has benefited greatly through our traditional practices of freedom of inquiry and thought in all the educational disciplines,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in convention assembled denounced irresponsible attacks on our public school systems by exaggerating the small number of subversive teachers out of all proportion to the true facts, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That, while boards of education should not employ or retain in our public schools Communist or subversive teachers, misuse of investigative procedures should not be countenanced. Whether conducted by legislative committees or school boards, investigations in our public schools should be conducted in a spirit of fair play, solely as a search for the truth and without abuse of the constitutional rights of the witnesses.

* * * * *

XI

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND NATIONAL SECURITY

We recognize the continuing danger to America and world freedom and, above all, to religious freedom, from the forces of Communism. Constant vigilance is needed to guard against these dangers. We support efforts to guard our liberties against subversion, through proper governmental agencies and due process of law. Yet we recognize that wrong methods of meeting the Communist menace can and do undermine our civil and spiritual liberties. The whipping up of hysterical fears and the irresponsible attacks upon individuals who are not given an adequate opportunity to defend themselves -- procedures that have occurred in recent years -- must be condemned as un-American and dangerous.

In the spirit of the resolution based upon the recommendation of the President about civil and religious freedom and adopted by this Convention on Tuesday, April 21, 1953, we recommend that the President of the United States be respectfully requested to appoint a Presidential Commission of outstanding citizens representative of the broadest possible cross-section of American life to study the best ways of protecting our nation from Communist danger without at the same time subverting our traditional American freedom; and that this Commission be charged with the responsibility of recommending such safeguards as it may deem necessary in the conduct of lawful investigations by national and state legislative bodies.

42nd Biennial Assembly
April 19-23, 1953



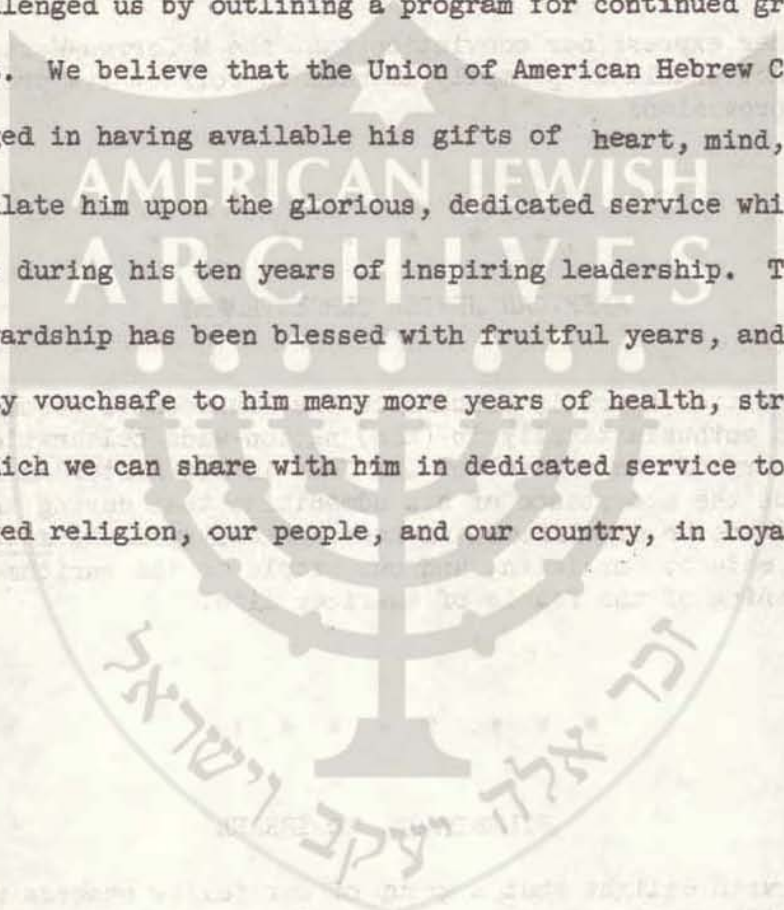
Resolutions of the Committee on President's Message

Note: Although the remarks by the President in his message indicated a course of action with respect to Reform Jewish practices, no action on this subject was taken by this Committee for the reason that it will be adequately covered by the present Union Committee dealing with that subject, and will be presented to this Convention by its Chairman.



PREAMBLE

The Committee on President's Message felt privileged to give careful and detailed study to the stimulating and comprehensive message which our President, Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, has given to this Assembly. Once again, as in previous years, he has enriched us by his vision of the scope and goal of our great religious Movement. He has challenged us by outlining a program for continued growth and development. We believe that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations is privileged in having available his gifts of heart, mind, and soul. We congratulate him upon the glorious, dedicated service which he has given to us during his ten years of inspiring leadership. This decade of his stewardship has been blessed with fruitful years, and we pray that God may vouchsafe to him many more years of health, strength, and vigor in which we can share with him in dedicated service to the cause of our sacred religion, our people, and our country, in loyalty to our God.



We recognize the continuing danger to America and world freedom, and above all to religious freedom, from the forces of Communism. Constant vigilance is needed to guard against these dangers. We support efforts to guard our liberties against subversion, through proper governmental agencies and due process of law. Yet we recognize that wrong methods of meeting the Communist menace can and do undermine our civil and spiritual liberties. The whipping up of hysterical fears and the irresponsible attacks upon individuals who are not given an adequate opportunity to defend themselves - procedures that have occurred in recent years - must be condemned as un-American and dangerous.

We further express our conviction that the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act should be promptly amended to correct its present discriminatory provisions.

AMERICAN JEWISH
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ARCHIVES
AMERICAN JEWISH TRICENTENARY

II

This committee heartily concurs in the President's recommendation that "we join enthusiastically in (the) nation-wide celebration" of the Tercentenary of the arrival of the Jews in New Amsterdam in 1654, and recommends the acceptance of his admonition that during this celebration there be significant emphasis placed upon the spiritual contribution made by our faith, and our people to the enrichment and the strengthening of the fabric of American life.

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III

PILGRIMAGE TO ISRAEL

We note with delight that a group of our fellow members are setting out within a few days upon a Pilgrimage to the land made sacred by the contributions of the spirit, and by the messages and hopes voiced by the great teachers of our religion. This is the land of our Fathers, the cradle of our faith, whence came the Torah and the Word of the Lord. In accordance with the President's suggestion, we authorize them, in our behalf, to congratulate the people of Israel upon the 5th Anniversary of its independence, and upon the heroic spirit and the valor with which it has met and is continuing to meet the challenges of an independent nation. We further authorize these, our modern Pilgrims to the Land of Israel, to convey to the people of Israel our "solemn pledge" that "in this dark hour of encirclement, of ever more foreboding encroachment, and of religious as well as physical need" we shall continue to make available to them "the utmost of our material and spiritual aid."

Our President has dealt with the essential activities in which the Union is presently engaged, and has indicated the need for expansion and extension.

He has underscored the importance of Adult Jewish Education. Since only well-informed, Jewishly mature adults can best perform the tasks of modern Jewish living, we heartily endorse this emphasis.

Our President has further called attention to the inspiring developments within our National Youth Movement. The Camp Program of NFTY which the Union is sponsoring, while still in its beginnings, has already revealed exciting possibilities. We share his enthusiasm and fully support his plea to enlarge and intensify the Youth Program.

We join our President in applauding the accomplishments of those directly responsible for our publication AMERICAN JUDAISM the quality of which has improved notably. We recognize the necessity of providing adequate resources for this work. We are confident that, with proper financial support, AMERICAN JUDAISM will become a forum for the expression of the finest thinking in Liberal circles.

We take pride, likewise, in the radio broadcasting in which our Union has engaged, and in the high quality of the programs presented. We share with our President the hope that this activity can be enlarged, and that we can enter substantially into the important field of television.

It is obvious that all of these essential activities can be carried on adequately only if substantial funds are made available for them. We earnestly endorse the plea which our President has made in this regard. All of the applause and praise which we can give him and his co-workers will be little more than a gesture unless we provide them with the means of doing the work they want to do and which we want them to do.

* * * * *

We are impressed with the President's statement on the experiences with Adult Retreats which were undertaken by our members in Chicago and elsewhere. We recommend approval of his recommendation that a National Commission be appointed to encourage a program of activity through Adult Retreats to the end that worship, Jewish study, and Congregational activity be enriched in tone and quality.

We recognize that our Union has grown both in members and in number of congregations to the point where it is advisable, for efficiency of operation and closer cooperation with our far-flung constituency, that more regional offices be established throughout the country and existing ones be strengthened.

* * * * *

We rejoice in the remarkable growth of new congregations and their affiliation with our Movement. Aware that many of the new congregations organized by young people need financial aid in the form of loans we urge that the Union explore every conceivable means of achieving the goal of a "permanent foundation" of a million dollars through the expansion of the present Adolph Rosenberg Synagogue Building Loan Fund, and through other means.

ARCHIVES

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We applaud the fine effort made by the NFTB in stimulating increased participation in religious services. We approve the undertaking by our Commission on Synagogue Activities of a serious study of the whole problem of worship and prayer in the contemporary world, to the end that "we may meet the spiritual needs of our time, thereby bringing new strength and vitality to the contemporary Synagogue."

* * * * *

We acclaim the magnificent work of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in educating rabbis for the American and world scene. Its alumni now serve congregations in many lands. We note with appreciation the expansion of its activities. Its library is one of the great collections of Jewish books of our time. Its newly established American Jewish Archives is preserving American Jewish historical documents. Its fellowships for Christian scholars are making for a better understanding of Judaism in church circles. Its museum is safeguarding for posterity ancient manuscripts and rare ceremonial objects. Its faculty is a company of Jewish scholars of world-renown. Its president, Dr. Nelson Glueck, is devoting himself to his sacred task with understanding and with dedication. For this institution of learning we appeal for continued and increased generous support, so that, through it, Judaism will remain a vital force, and Jews will continue to love and to rejoice in their spiritual heritage.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, from the time of its conception in the mind of our founder, Isaac Mayer Wise has identified itself with the totality of Jewish life. Long before there were other agencies defending Jewish rights, our Union had established its Board of Delegates and protected Jewish interests in all areas of life. This has been our position through the years, and it continues to be our position in recognition of the historic solidarity of the whole household of Israel. In pursuance of this traditional position of our Union we encourage our President to represent us in the main current of Jewish life procedures to be defined by the Executive Board.

Your Committee concurs in the President's report dealing with the NCRAC. We realize the importance of NCRAC in our country, and in particular our membership in it. Our Executive Board has already approved our participation in the NCRAC, and we note with satisfaction the commendation accorded us in the MacIver Report.

We have always been in the forefront in interfaith work, and it is our duty to continue it. We are happy to welcome in this field the cooperation of the United Synagogue of America and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations. We heartily approve our President's desire to bring together in genuine unity the disunited household of American Jewry; and in that same spirit we recommend that this body confirm the conciliatory resolution of our Executive Board adopted at its meeting of October 18/19, 1952, as follows:

"The Union of American Hebrew Congregations endorses the majority decision taken at the NCRAC Plenum in Atlantic City on September 6th and pledges its wholehearted support of the NCRAC.

"The UAHC has viewed with gratification the endeavors of the NCRAC since its creation in 1944. The UAHC recognizes that the NCRAC has not been able to implement all of its charter obligations and all the hopes of its founders, particularly in the areas of evaluation of program and elimination of duplication. The UAHC, nonetheless, commends the NCRAC and the national and local agencies which have labored, in so many instances, cooperatively and zealously in its behalf for its numerous and noteworthy achievements in the field of community relations. American Jewry has been incalculably benefited by the presence and activities of the NCRAC.

"The UAHC is eager that the NCRAC continue its work with vigor, mobilizing the full potential and resources of American Jewish life. In the field of community relations it is incumbent upon all elements in the American Jewish community to stand side by side and in a spirit of comraderie and mutual trust, coordinate and concentrate our efforts.

"In the spirit of darkay sholom and in the interests of our people who stand to lose by our disagreement but reap rich rewards from our joint and combined endeavors, the UAHC urges the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League

of the B'nai B'rith to return to the NCRAC so that in concord we may proceed with the vital and pressing tasks that so need our unified, full and unflagging strength in the field of Jewish community relations."

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XI

COMMISSION ON SOCIAL ACTION

In his final recommendation the President urged that the recently reconstituted Joint Commission of the Union and the Conference on Social Action be granted adequate funds, and urged also that in each local congregation there be established a committee on social action.

Your Committee approves this recommendation of the President in the spirit in which he urged it--that "the worship of God must be transmuted into the work of God."

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES



זכור אתה יישוב ארצך
אשר יקב ישראל

Workshop Syllabus

April 19 and 20, 1953

NEW TRENDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

1. What do you consider some of the greatest difficulties in achieving an adequate Jewish education for children? How may these be overcome? Is time allotted for Jewish education a factor? Is Teacher Training a factor? If so, what can we do about these?
2. What is being done to extend the time devoted to Jewish religious education in our schools?
3. To what extent do extra-curricular activities such as junior choir, dramatics, arts-crafts, contribute to the Jewish educational program? In what ways can attendance at a summer day camp or country camp be utilized for Jewish religious education?
4. Do you consider our present school system adequate for the training of Reform Jewish leadership? If not, why not? What should we do to improve it? Is our present school system adequate for the training of the average Jewish man or woman?
5. What can be done to develop favorable attitudes (a) to the Jewish religious school? (b) to Judaism? (c) to the local Jewish community? (d) to the national and the world Jewish community?
6. What is the so-called unit approach to education? Can the average teacher get good results with this approach?
7. Are there enough records, filmstrips, and motion pictures of Jewish interest available to warrant the purchase by religious schools of the necessary basic equipment? Are these machines easily operated, or do they require handling by experts? Are there any machines which combine the projection of filmstrips and slides?
8. Is the presentation of filmstrips suitable for Assembly purposes?
9. Can religious schools, particularly those in smaller communities, manage their audio-visual programs by renting machines or borrowing them from the Public Schools or other community agencies?
10. How can the average Sunday School teacher prepare adequately for a lesson in which audio-visual materials are used?
11. What are the plans of the Commission on Jewish Education as regards production of filmstrips, motion pictures, and records?

References

- Gamoran, Emanuel, The Commission on Jewish Education: Thirtieth Anniversary, THE JEWISH TEACHER, Vol. XXI, No. 1, November, 1952
- Golub, Jacob S., and Leo Honor, Some Guiding Principles for the Curriculum of the Jewish School of Tomorrow, JEWISH EDUCATION, Vol. 4, No. 3, October-December, 1932
- Grand, Samuel, First Steps in Audio-Visual Education in the Jewish Religious School, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1952

The Audio-Visual Review, American Association for Jewish Education

Workshop Syllabus

April 19 and 20, 1953

YEAR 'ROUND PROGRAMMING FOR YOUTH

I. AIMS:

- a) What do you want from your Youth Group's programs?
- b) What do your Youth want to get from the Group's programs?

II. The ART of Programming:

- a) What factors should go into the programs designed to fit the specific needs of your Temple's youth?
- b) Are your Congregation's resources sufficient to match your Youth's needs? If not, how can you tailor your resources to fit a basic youth program?

III. PROGRAM AREAS (religious, study, social):

- a) What are practical and rewarding PROJECTS for your Temple Youth?
- b) What can outdoor camps offer to your Youth members?
- c) What are the youth materials and services which you can procure from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations YOUTH DEPARTMENT (National Federation of Temple Youth)?

References:

"Basic Programming" (Article in NFTY Youth Leader Magazine, Spring, 1948 issue)

"101 Program Ideas" (Article in YOUTH LEADER, March, 1951 issue)

"Project Ideas for Temple Youth" (Article in YOUTH LEADER, Spring, 1952 issue)

"Trial by NFTY" (YOUTH LEADER, Fall, 1952 issue)

NFTY MITZVAH Program KIT (YOUTH LEADER, Spring 1953 issue)

(If these YOUTH LEADER issues are not available in your Temple Library, reprints will be sent you of all these articles for \$1.00).

Workshop Syllabus

April 19 and 20, 1953

THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE COMMUNITY

I. HOW DOES THE SYNAGOGUE RELATE ITSELF TO THE COMMUNITY?

- (1) Through service to the community - the general community - the Jewish community
- (2) Through public expression - from the pulpit - by resolution of the Congregation, or affiliated bodies.

- a-Does the rabbi speak for the Congregation?
- b-Should affiliated bodies of the Congregation take independent action, without Congregational approval?
- c-How does the Congregation participate in Community Council programs?

(3) Synagogue Publicity

- a-The Temple bulletin - its format, content and proper use.
- b-Public press. Advertising the Synagogue and its services...do we use these media effectively?
- c-Radio and television.
- d-Direct mail.

II. THE SYNAGOGUE IN THE FIELD OF INTERFAITH ACTIVITY.

- (1) Its preeminence in dealing with other religious bodies.
- (2) Types of interfaith activities. Institutes for the clergy - for church leaders - for religious school teachers. Religious school pupil visits to Temples.
- (3) The use of exhibits - art - book exhibits and music festivals to tell the story of Judaism to non-Jews.
- (4) The use of literature - Popular Studies of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations - pamphlets on Reform Judaism - descriptive folders telling the story of the local Congregations.
- (5) Joint services for Thanksgiving, patriotic and public occasions.

III. THE SYNAGOGUE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- (1) How far should the Synagogue go in the attempt to improve social and economic conditions in the community?
- (2) Should the Synagogue limit its efforts to public expression?
- (3) The social action group of the Synagogue for study and action upon social, economic conditions.
- (4) Cooperation with churches, non-Synagogue and non-church groups for social action.

Workshop Syllabus

April 19 and 20, 1953

THE FUNCTIONAL SYNAGOGUE: ACCENT ON WORSHIP AND STUDY

SESSION I.

I. Introduction: What is a Functional Synagogue?

A. General definition:

1. Activity for all age groups
2. Activity for all manner of Jewish interest and concern
3. Positive and powerful influence on living patterns of members
4. Positive and powerful influence on community life
5. Assumption of proper role in national Reform movement and Jewish life in general

B. Evaluation of Reform temples in U.S. today in terms of this definition

References:

- Schwarz, Jacob D. - The Synagogue in Modern Jewish Life, pp. 61-71
Feldman, Abraham - The Changing Function of the Synagogue and the Rabbi, Reform Judaism, HUC Press, 1949, pp. 206-220

II. Accent on Worship in our Temples

A. Do we accent worship sufficiently today?

1. With our adults
2. With our children

B. Are we succeeding with our program of worship?

1. What constitutes success? Temple and home
2. Are we succeeding? Temple and home

C. What assistance does the UAHC offer in the field of worship?

1. Ceremonies
2. Ceremonial objects - temple and home
3. Home observance material
4. Research

D. What further assistance is needed? In what direction should we go in our accent on worship?

References:

- Schwarz, Jacob D. -- Reform Jewish Practice. Reform Judaism, HUC Press, 1949, pp. 221-249. (Separate reprint available from UAHC, free.)
Freehof, Solomon B. - Reform Judaism and Prayer. Reform Judaism, pp. 81-106
Pilchik, Ely E. ---Variations in Synagogue Worship. UAHC, 1953. (Mimeo. Available free from Director of Synagogue Activities.)
Doppelt, Fred. A. ---Articles on Prayer and the Jewish Prayerbook in Synagogue Service Bulletin, 1940-41.
Isserman, Fred. M. - Worship as Drama. SSB, Nov., 1951.
Opher, Ahron ----- Experiments in Ritual. SSB, 1951-52.

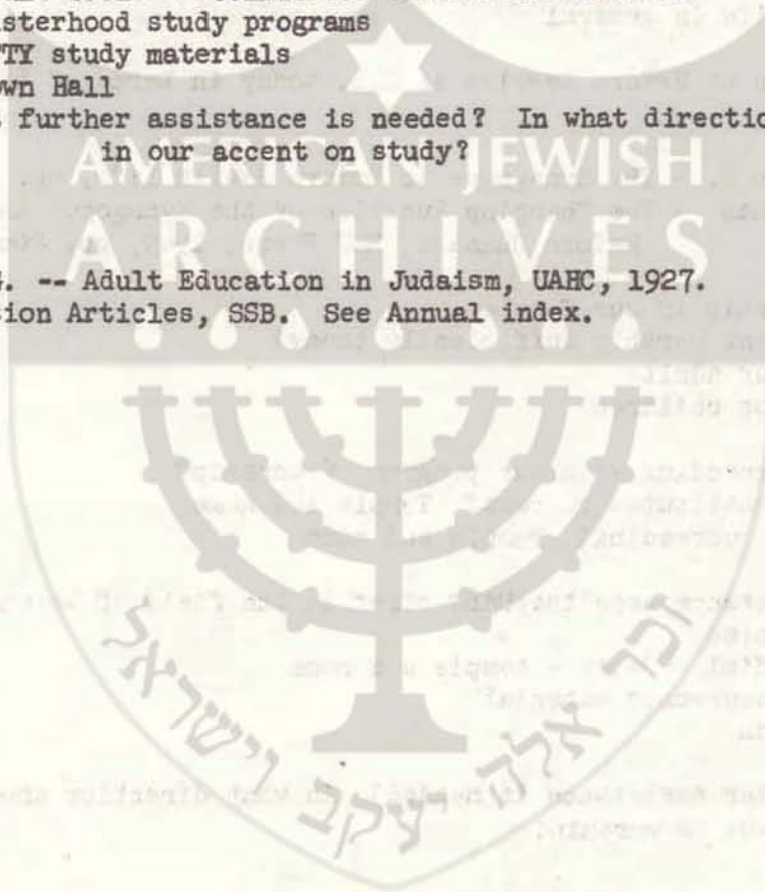
(more)

SESSION II.

- I. Introduction: Recapitulation on the Functional Synagogue
- II. Accent on study in our Temples
 - A. Limit discussion to adult education -- other panel on children
 - B. What had been the pattern of adult education until recent years?
 1. Minimum -- study groups
 2. Little emphasis on home libraries and study
 - C. Recent developments
 1. Increase in study activity
 2. Fellowship, retreats, etc.
 3. Adult Sunday Schools
 - D. What assistance does the UAHC offer in the field of study?
 1. Adult books -- Commission on Jewish Education
 2. Sisterhood study programs
 3. NFTY study materials
 4. Town Hall
 - E. What further assistance is needed? In what direction should we go in our accent on study?

References:

- Enelow, H. G. -- Adult Education in Judaism, UAHC, 1927.
Adult Education Articles, SSB. See Annual index.



Workshop Syllabus

April 19, 1953

NEWER TRENDS IN TEMPLE FINANCING

1. OFFICE PRODECURES

- (a) What are the newer methods in billing, bookkeeping and accounting in the efficient Temple offices?
- (b) What are the essential office equipment and machinery to efficiently operate the financial aspect of the Temple?
- (c) What is the minimum staff essential to conduct the practical functions of the Synagogue?

2. BUDGET

- (a) How is the budget prepared and by whom? Are there monthly audits and budgetary reports of progress?
- (b) Is there a departmental breakdown of income and expenses?
- (c) What are the important sources of income? What is the ideal relationship of membership income to total receipts?
- (d) What is a fair membership fee and what advantages should it afford?
- (e) What is the ratio of departmental expenditures to the overall budget?
- (f) Whose responsibility is it to guarantee the budgetary needs of the Congregation -- the Board, the staff or the membership?
- (g) What are the newest techniques in raising funds and exploiting various sources of income?

3. FINANCIAL SECURITY

- (a) What are the latest trends in Endowment and Foundation Funds in public and private institutions?
- (b) Methods now in operation in the Temple field in establishing reserves for future contingencies.
- (c) What are the best sources and methods to establish a Temple Foundation or Endowment Fund?
- (d) What should be the responsibility of the individual Temple to secure the U.A.H.C. and College program as an important aspect of its local work?

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- I HEREBY BEQUEATH, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, New York, 1948
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"Matching a Deficit with Dues" THE SYNAGOGUE,
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"Quarterly Dues Statements" in THE SYNAGOGUE,
September, 1942
- LEACH, WILLIAM H. Church Finance, Cokesbury Press, Nashville, 1928
- McKEOWN, BOYD M. Achieving Results in Church Finance, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, Nashville, 1942
- PIERCE, LYMAN L. How to Raise Money, Harper & Bros. New York, 1932
- SCHWARZ, JACOB D. Financial Security for the Synagogue, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Cincinnati, 1935

TELEGRAM

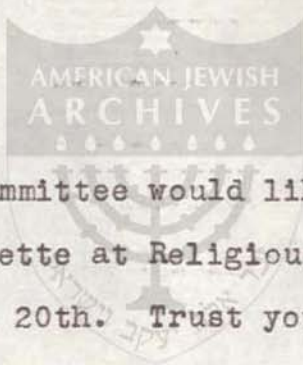
April 9, 1953
3:40 p.m.

New York City

Dear Herbert:

Program Committee would like you to give
8 minute sermonette at Religious Service,
Monday evening, 20th. Trust you can accept.
Please wire me.

Louis A. Egelson



Direct Wire sent 4/10/53 - 3:10 p.m.

Rabbi Louis Egelson
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y.

Happy accept invitation sermonette, Monday,
April 20. Had baby girl this morning.

Regards,

Herbert A. Friedman

