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"What is Our Future as American Jews?" 2003.

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### **Study: Inter-marriage still rising**

Homes of intermarried American Jews soon will outnumber purely Jewish households if high intermarriage rates keep pace, a new report suggests.

A study out this week by the New York-based Jewish Outreach Institute says that intermarriages have climbed above 33 percent since the mid-1960s, meaning that the ratio of intermarried households to Jewish households is rising.

With intermarriage estimates since 1990 ranging between 40 percent and 52 percent, the report says, the ratio of intermarried homes to in-married homes runs between 4:3 and 2:1. The institute, which promotes outreach to unaffiliated and intermarried Jews, says there is hope for Jewish survival because an estimated 30 percent of interfaith families raise their children as Jews, an amount that the institute believes could be increased to 50 percent.

(1)  
We are a glorious and  
significant people. ~~Some~~ many  
~~the~~ others, in our past  
who have tried so often to  
destroy us, have themselves become  
the detritus of history. Our  
strength ~~in the past~~ <sup>over the</sup> centuries lay not  
in battalions or grand navies.  
Our weapons were our beliefs in  
our origin, our mission, and  
the bonds which united us as tightly  
as a family.

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We came in our numbers to this free  
and welcoming continent,  
struggled to strike roots and have, in the  
main succeeded brilliantly. Receiving  
freedom which allowed us to flourish, we  
made our contributions to the arts and  
sciences of this democracy, the economy  
and the governance.

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Now we are in danger not from some  
malvolent enemy, <sup>in this precious democracy</sup> but from our own  
inattention to the rules and rituals which  
sustained us throughout the millennia of our  
existence.

So many of us <sup>we</sup> are today our own worst villains. We have forgotten our history - Some few of us are struggling to teach our children and have only a feeble hold on our own young adults, so many of whom seek their happiness in marriage outside of Abraham's tribe. (2)

Assimilation into this succulent society, with all its temptations, opportunities and rewards, makes huge inroads into our thin ranks. Assimilation in itself is not evil - ~~and~~ so many benefits await in the wide world of America - a good education, a ~~good~~ career, the ability to contribute to the ~~betterment~~ improvement betterment of ~~the~~ fellow-citizens, a comfortable home and many luxuries.

But assimilation is evil - For our future when it results in people simply surrendering their identity as proud and practicing Jews.

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Our ranks are thin to begin with. We are 5 million in these United States living among 300 million. Danger lies ahead. If the number drifts away continues, we may very well become another chapter in the history of previous Diasporas which disappeared. The only

difference will be that this time it will <sup>(3)</sup>  
be our fault - not something we can blame on  
~~attributed to~~ some dictator or King.

We must create a huge protective  
shield to embrace the next two  
generations, to shape for them an identity  
based upon the wonders of which have  
marked the 1000 years of our existence,  
and hope that the result will be  
a resounding sense of PRIDE in their  
heritage and a determination  
to add ~~to~~ their contributions to  
the making the world a better  
place for all mankind.

If the adults of today respond  
to the <sup>creation</sup> ~~creation~~ of a huge educational  
structure to embrace <sup>all</sup> the 3-year-olds  
up to the 23-year olds, we will  
succeed <sup>and flourish in</sup> ~~in a~~ ~~future~~ ~~operation~~.

If there is no response, we shall  
disappear. Then  
America will suffer  
Israel will suffer

And history will judge us as blind  
and selfish.

Feb. 4, 03  
~~F~~ HAF

## WHAT IS OUR FUTURE AS AMERICAN JEWS?

### An elegy or a eulogy

We are a glorious and significant people. Many others, who have tried so often in the past to destroy us, have themselves become the detritus of history. Our strength over the centuries lay not in vast battalions or grand navies. Our weapons were our beliefs, our mission and the bonds which united us tightly as a family.

We came in our numbers to this free and welcoming continent, struggled to strike roots and have, in the main, succeeded brilliantly. Receiving freedom which allowed us to flourish, we made our contributions to this democracy, in the arts and sciences, the economy and the governance.

Now we are in danger, not from some malevolent enemy in this precious land, but from our own inattention to the rules and rituals which sustained us through the millennia of our existence. We are today our own worst enemy. So many of us have forgotten our history - some few of us are struggling to teach our children. We have only a feeble hold on our own young adults, so many of whom seek their happiness outside of Abraham's tribe.

Assimilation into this ~~sum~~ succulent society, with all its temptations, opportunities and rewards, makes huge inroads into our thin ranks. Assimilation in itself is not evil - so many benefits await in the wide world of America - a good education, a career,

the ability to contribute to the betterment of fellow citizens, a comfortable home and many luxuries.

But assimilation is evil for our future when it results in people simply surrendering their identity as proud and practicing Jews, calling themselves simply Americans. Our ranks are few to begin with. We are 5 million in these United States living among 300 million. Danger lies ahead. If the number drifting away continues, we may very well become another chapter in the history of other Diasporas which disappeared. The only difference will be that this time it will be our own doing, our own fault - not something we can blame on some dictator or King or hostile religion.

We must create a huge protective shield to embrace the next two generations, to shape for them an identity based upon the wanderings which have marked the 4000 years of our existence, and hope that the result will be a resounding sense of PRIDE in their heritage and a determination to add their contributions to making the world a better place for all mankind.

If the adults of today respond to the creation of a huge educational structure to embrace all the 3-year olds up to the 23-year olds, we will succeed and flourish.

If there is no response to the challenge, we shall disappear. Then - America will suffer, Israel will suffer - and history will judge us as blind and selfish.

Signed, Rabbi Herbert A. Friedma

February, 2003

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We must create a huge protective shield of education to embrace the next two generations, to shape for them an identity based upon the wonders which have marked the 4000 years of our existence, and hope that the result will be a resounding sense of PRIDE in their heritage and a determination to add their contributions to making the world a better place for all mankind.

If the adults of today respond to the creation of this educational structure to embrace all the 3-year olds up to the 23-year olds, we will succeed and flourish.

If there is no response to the challenge, we shall disappear. Then – America will suffer, Israel will suffer – and history will judge us as blind and selfish.

Signed, Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman