



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1960-1991

Box 45, Folder 2, Schulweiss, Harold M., 1977.



Valley Beth Shalom

15739 VENTURA BOULEVARD
ENCINO, CALIFORNIA 91436

Harold M. Schulweis

Rabbi

August 9, 1977

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
156 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Marc:

Enclosed is a log of our recent exploratory visits in Rome and Cairo. As I told you on the telephone, the proposal for an ecumenical prayer for peace to coincide hopefully with the opening of the Geneva Conference was endorsed both by the Grand Imam Abdul Halim Mahoud and Pope Shemuda III. Dr. George Grose, the president of the Academy for Jewish, Christian and Islamic Studies, has contacted the World Council of Churches soliciting their endorsement and formulation of a prayer, and we have contacted the office of Cardinal Timothy Manning to appeal to the Vatican for such a prayer.

Marc, help us find their counterparts within our faith community. Is the American Jewish Committee Committee the right organ or is there an international body which we may address? Would the Chief Rabbinate in Israel be the proper source?

I also spoke to you about the forthcoming visit of the movie and television personality, Samir Sabri, in September or October. His presence affords us an unusual opportunity to create a substantive and symbolic cultural and artistic exchange between Egyptian and Israeli artists. I have contact here with Robert Redford and some other celebrities, but more critical would be the presence and participation of a sensitive Israeli artist, e.g., Topol, who would be willing to engage in a non-political dialogue with his Egyptian colleague on the priority of peace in the Middle East and the artistic commonalities they share.

Sabri, in our last conversation and in his interviewing capacity on the Cairo television program, exhibited considerable moral courage and a positive concern for creating an atmosphere of peace in the Middle East. I believe him

August 9, 1977

to be a loyal but enlightened Egyptian citizen with close contacts with Mr. Sadat. He exhibited deep respect for Judaism, Jews and Israel, and a profound desire to end the stances of belligerence which he ascribed in large measure to Mr. Nasser. Why should we wait for cultural and artistic exchanges after the peace negotiations when they are needed now to create an ambience of trust before the politicians sit down for their encounter.

Despite my initial apprehension and natural suspicions before entering Egypt, I now feel that a Jewish presence in that country was helpful and ought to be encouraged further. My meetings with religious and political leaders were not polemical. I did not come to make debater's points, but I did have an opportunity to emphasize the moral and theological kinship of the religions of the Book and to stress the deep desire of Israel for peace. I had occasion to underline the Biblical and historical basis for the inter-dependence of people and Jewish faith, e.g., Judaism and Zionism, and draw analogies to the rule of "ummah" in Islamic civilization. No miracles were accomplished but I believe some small breakthroughs were made. If dialogue requires courage, trialogue requires a tripling of perseverance.

Frankly, Marc, I became involved in this program because I feared the exclusion of the Jewish presence in the trialogue. I was afraid that it would end up as a Muslim-Christian dialogue and that would do Jews, Judaism and Israel little good. My feeling now is that the idea and its potentialities are too important for it to rest only upon the involvement of an individual rabbi for whom it remains an important avocation but hardly a central concern. For this kind of venture, institutionalization of some kind is indispensable. What do you think of the notion of the local American Jewish Committee chapter, with your blessing, sponsoring such a Center or Academy and thereby assuring the representation of Jewish interests. As you know, the trialogue has been going on for the last few years and with me only the last year. But it has enabled us to penetrate church, synagogue and mosque audiences and campuses for whom the idea of such a triadic relationship is both novel and encouraging. It's no small thing these days to stand side by side a Muslim imam before a college audience which includes bewildered Arab students.

I look forward to your counsel and help in these matters. With warmest wishes to the family,

Cordially,



Harold M. Schulweis
Rabbi

Enclosures 2

Interfaith Trio Plan Day of Prayer for Mideast Talks

An unusual trio of a Protestant minister, a Jewish rabbi and a Moslem imam hope to inspire a worldwide, multifaith day of prayer to coincide with the October opening of the Geneva conference on the Middle East.

The three Los Angeles clergy met twice last week in Egypt with Grand Imam Abdel Halim Mahmoud, rector of Cairo's Al-Azhar University and widely recognized in the Islamic world as an authority on Moslem scriptures and law.

They also met with Coptic Pope Shenouda III, a recent Los Angeles visitor and patriarch for Coptic Christians in Egypt and abroad.

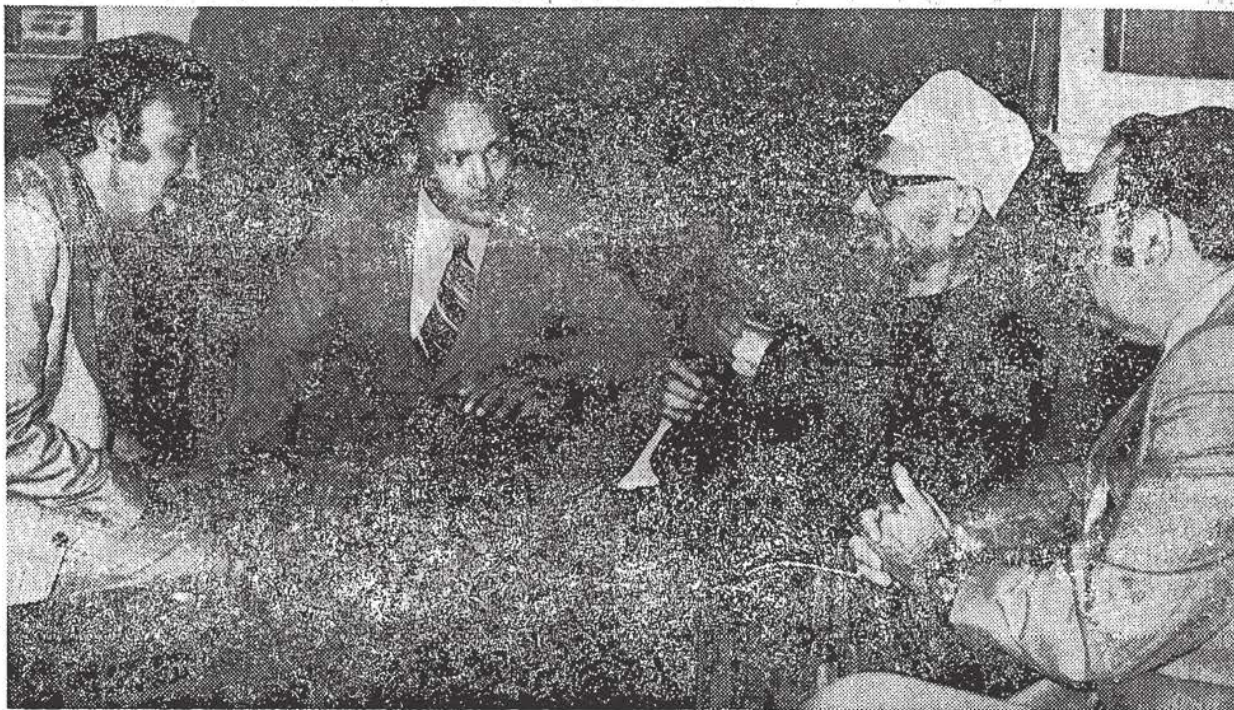
Both religious leaders endorsed the prayer idea, which was being pursued with U.S. Christian and Jewish agencies this week.

Obtaining cooperation on prayers for peace in the Middle East would have symbolic importance, according to trio member Rabbi Harold Schulweis of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino. This is particularly so because of the common Western view that religious differences are a major cause of divisiveness in the Middle East.

The Southern California trio also included the Rev. George Grose, a Presbyterian, and Imam A. Muhsin el-Biali, former spiritual leader of the Islamic Center of Southern California.

Grose, onetime chaplain at Whittier College, initiated the three-faith "trialogue" in 1971 in hopes of furthering interfaith understanding. Representatives of the three faiths engage in frank discussions of their beliefs before interested groups.

Bolstered by foundation support, the group—formally known as the Academy of Judaic, Christian and Islamic Studies—has engaged in spiri-



PEACE MISSION—Grand Imam Abdel Halim Mahmoud, in black robe, meets with interfaith trio, from left, Imam A. Muhsin el-Biali, the Rev. George Grose and Rabbi Harold Schulweis.

tual diplomacy in recent years with visits to the Vatican and the World Council of Churches.

The three joined about 8,000 others for a papal audience in Rome July 13 and were invited to lecture on Radio Vatican, which they did the same day.

The three also appeared together on a popular Egyptian television program during their visit to Cairo.

"I felt it was quite a penetration into a society in which religion plays an important role," the Los Angeles rabbi said.

The grand imam was "cool" at the start of the trio's first visit, Grose and Schulweis said, but was remarkably friendly by the second visit.

If the presence of a rabbi in the grand imam's office and on Cairo television was unusual, so were El-Biali's visits to the Coptic Pope and a Coptic church. Both were firsts for the Egyptian-born-and-educated El-Biali. Coptic Christians constitute less than 10% of the population of Egypt.

THE ACADEMY OF JUDAIC, CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC STUDIES

RABBI DR. HAROLD SCHULWEIS; REV. DR. GEORGE GROSE;
DR. A. MUHSIN EL-BIALI

Rome. July 11, 1977. Monsignor John Fleming. North American College.

July 12. Sergio Cardinal Pignedoli. Optimistic about dialogue (Secretariat for non-Christians).

Monsignor Charles Moeller, Vice President, Secretariat for Christian Unity and Chairman of the Commission on the Jewish People.

July 13. Papal Audience. Lectured over Radio Vatican. Ambassador to Italy from Arab Republic of Egypt grants visas.

Cairo. July 16, 1977. Worship at Adly Street Synagogue. Conference with Bishop Samuel, Coptic Orthodox Church.

July 17, 1977. Worship at St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church, Zamalek. Father Joseph.

July 18. Audience with the Grand Imam, Dr. Abdel Halim Mahmoud, Rector of Al-Azhar University. The Grand Imam is the final authority on the Kuran, the Sunnah and Shariah for the 400 million Muslims throughout the world - both Sunni and Shiite. Dr. Schulweis proposed exchange of religious scholars between Al-Azhar and both Christian and Jewish seminaries in the United States. The Grand Imam will ponder it. Dr. Grose invited His Eminence to come to the United States.

July 20. Conference with Dr. Abdul Moneim El-Sawi, Minister of Information and Cultural Affairs, and Mr. Abdul Gawwad, Director of Middle East News Agency.

July 21. Second audience with the Grand Imam who endorses Dr. Grose's proposal that the religious communities in the US - Churches, Synagogues and Mosques - call their people to prayer for the duration of the pending Geneva Conference. The Grand Imam agreed to send the draft of a prayer to Dr. Grose. July 22. Attended Omar Makra Mosque, Garden City, Cairo for Salat.

Audience with Pope Shenuda III, Patriarch of Cairo. He speaks of emphasizing the commonalities. He endorses prayer proposal: "I can give orders to all our churches in Egypt, Sudan, Europe and America to have this day as a day of prayer." Agreed to send prayer.

Guests of Samir Sabri, Egyptian movie star, on his TV program, "International Club." Sabri: "You are working beyond politics. Even after a political settlement such work as yours will reduce the hatred and heal the spiritual wounds." Samir Sabri has been invited to the US by Washington. He is coming in September or October this year.

788-6000
872-1360



Valley Beth Shalom

15739 VENTURA BOULEVARD
ENCINO, CALIFORNIA 91436

Harold M. Schulweis

Rabbi

August 18, 1977

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
156 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Marc:

The enclosed is a report of my recent experience in Cairo and Rome about which we had occasion to speak. I think it would be wise to draw this to the attention of the American Jewish community. I would be most appreciative to gain some reactions to this report.

Yours for a peaceful new year,

Cordially,

Harold M. Schulweis
Rabbi

HMS:std
Enclosure

TRIALOGUE IN CAIRO

Three of us, a Moslem imam, a Presbyterian minister and I, a rabbi, have returned from an intensive 10-day visit in Egypt, during which we met with a number of key Egyptian religious and political figures. The implications of those meetings far exceed our original intention to promote inter-religious trialogue among the three monotheistic traditions. The experience confirms the values in the power of the word in meeting and the potentiality for religion to help prepare the ground for peaceful co-existence. It suggests alternate ways for Jews and non-Jews, within and without Israel, to effect the climatic change essential to political negotiation in the Middle East.

During our stay in Egypt, we were granted two private audiences with the Grand Imam and Rector of Cairo's Al-Azhar University, Abdul Halim Mahmoud, recognized in the Islamic world--Sunni and Shiite--as the leading authority on Moslem scripture and law.

We met privately and at length with Pope Shenouda III, Patriarch of Cairo and Pope of Alexandria of the Coptic Orthodox Church. During those meetings more than pro forma exchanges of inter-faith good will took place.

Our stay in Egypt was not limited to private meetings. We were interviewed for some two hours by a distinguished journalist for the Arab Rose Elyosof newspaper and appeared on national Egyptian television. The latter program was shown on prime time (Sunday, July 24, channel 5) as a segment in the popular talk show "International Club," hosted by Samir Sabri, Egypt's well known movie and television celebrity. Our segment, originally scheduled for 15 minutes, lasted close to an hour. Prior to that appearance,

we met privately with Abdul Moneim el-Sawy, President Sadat's Minister of Culture and Information, with whom I engaged in an open and heated discussion.

Origins

A word about how this all came about. A year ago I was, at the recommendation of a Jewish professor of law at Loyola, approached by Dr. A. Muhsin el-Biali, a citizen of Egypt, spiritual leader for Moslems on the West Coast of the United States, to join him and Dr. George B. Grose, a Presbyterian minister, in an inter-religious dialogue. Dr. Grose was originator and founder of this dialogue which sought to deepen the relationship between the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and to lecture on the religious and moral foundations of the three faiths before religious and secular audiences.

I accepted their invitation because I have long felt that the waning inter-religious dialogue since the late 60's was a serious detriment to Jewish and humanitarian interests. Additionally, I cherished the notion of establishing a relationship with a Moslem leader, particularly one who had publicly condemned the terrorist massacre in Munich. None of us was blind to the theoretic possibilities which such inter-religious dialogues may contribute toward peace in the Middle East.

Out of our mutual interests and joint encounters grew a friendship and a resolve to bring our work to the attention of spiritual leaders in the Vatican and the Middle East. While the Egyptian government would not allow el-Biali to come to Israel, that would not prevent our going to Egypt to confer with Islamic and Coptic leaders.

Gaining Entrance into Egypt

Arrangements for our Rome and Cairo meetings were made by Drs. Grose and el-Biali. We were to meet in Rome and then together fly to Cairo. Dr. el-Biali first flew home to Egypt, and I to Israel to visit my children at Kibbutz Beit Hashittah and to see my newborn sabra grandson, Yonathan. Upon arriving in Rome, we received an urgent telex from our Moslem colleague advising us to cancel our plans to come to Egypt and to proceed with our business in Rome. The cable, originating in Egypt, offered no explanation for this postponement but in Rome we read of bombings that had taken place in Ataba Square, the site of one of Cairo's main bus stations, and that an extremist Moslem sect, Takfeer el-Hejira, had kidnapped and later assassinated the Egyptian Minister of Religious Endowment, Mohammed Hussein Zahabi. We surmised that el-Biali was concerned for our safety and that the introduction of Jewish and Christian theologians in Egypt at this time could be used by orthodox Moslems as evidence of Sadat's unorthodoxy.

In Rome, Dr. Grose and I concluded our meetings with the affable president of the Secretariat for non-Christian Relations, Cardinal Pignedoli who, while encouraging our three-way religious dialogue, expressed reservations as to its immediate feasibility. He referred to his own experiences with the thin line which separates religion from politics in the Middle East. Our discussion with Monsignor Moeller of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity yielded similar caution. Catholic-Jewish relations were clearly far more advanced than relationship of either group with Islam.

Unable to contact el-Biali who was somewhere in Egypt for further information, Dr. Grose and I decided to gain visas for Egypt on our own. I had relied upon Dr. el-Biali to wave the wand for my entry. We approached the Egyptian Embassy in Rome and were told to fill out the visa applications which included such items of information as religion, profession and purpose of visit. I filled out the visa, indicated that I was Jewish and a rabbi. My passport witnessed to my prior visits to the State of Israel. While Dr. Grose's visa application was immediately approved, the secretary looked at my application, then at me and then again at the application form as if to test her sense of congruence. She suggested we see the Egyptian consul, Shadia Shoukry, who examining the application broke out in smiles of incredulity and judged my application as "impossible." We both explained the nature of our visit, Dr. Grose offering testimony to my character and benevolent intention. We insisted that we speak to the Egyptian Ambassador. While Consul Shoukry could not arrange such a meeting at short notice, she offered to speak with him herself. She picked up the telephone, engaged him in an intense Arabic conversation and finally announced that the Ambassador authorized the granting of a visa. The normal fee and required photograph were waived and the next morning we flew from Rome to Cairo.

Cairo Interviews

In Egypt, Dr. Grose and I stayed at the Hilton Hotel overlooking the Nile. Two Egyptian plainclothesmen wearing revolvers were stationed near the elevator of our hotel floor and kept 24-hour duty throughout our stay.

We made contact with our Moslem colleague who arranged our first meeting with the Grand Imam. The rector of Al-Azhar received us politely and ordered tea and coffee to be brought in. He fingered his string of 99 beads, each bead corresponding to another attribute of Allah, and noted the neglect and even distortion of Islamic tradition in the West. Through Dr. el-Biali, who served as our interpreter, I proposed a reciprocal exchange of scholars to overcome the ignorance and misconceptions of our traditions. Could not Islamic ulemmas offer courses at Jewish and Christian seminaries and, reciprocally, could not Jewish and Christian theologians offer courses in their respective traditions at Islamic seminaries such as Al-Azhar. While Dr. Mahmoud agreed to sending Islamic scholars to the United States, he could see no purpose in arranging reciprocation. From his perception, Islam already accepts Judaism and Christianity, Moses and Jesus, and both traditions are taught at Al-Azhar. I asked him who it was that was teaching Judaism, and he answered that the instructor was an Islamic faculty member. I respectfully pointed out that for the same reasons that he was not satisfied with non-Islamic scholars teaching the Koran and Islamic theology, I would personally question the wisdom of having the Bible and Judaism taught through Islamic eyes. Dr. Grose, speaking for Christianity, agreed that scholarship aside, it lacked the authenticity which comes from the exposition by an identified believer.

Dr. Mahmoud offered the observation that as a student at the Sorbonne he had heard lectures on Judaism from Jewish instructors who did not present Judaism in the best light. In short he advised that Judaism, taught by Al-Azhar scholars, would be better off in Islamic hands. I suggested that there must be Muslim scholars

whose reading of Islam he would find objectionable, but that, at any rate, those teachers of Judaism sent to Egypt would be qualified and selected by their Jewish counterparts. While the Grand Imam agreed to take the proposal under consideration, his answers were grounded in the classic Islamic position which views the Koran as offering the corrected version of Old and New Testament history. As Dr. el-Biali put it, the Koran was the "last edition." I argued that the claims of Judaism as "the first edition" or the Koran as "the last edition" were not pertinent to our intention of overcoming the ignorance which veils us from each other. Such exchanges would preclude theological one-upmanship or conversionary design. Dr. Mahmoud laughed out loud at the mention of conversion. I suspect that he had Christian missionary movements in the Middle East in mind and was quite sensitive to their conversionary zeal in Moslem countries.

Several days later at our second meeting with the Grand Imam our discussions were more relaxed. We were greeted as old friends. Dr. Grose proposed that leaders of the three traditions proclaim days of prayers for peace to coincide with the Geneva Conference. Dr. Mahmoud agreed to my suggestion that he compose a prayer for peace to be added to the others, an ecumenical act which would encourage the negotiators in their search for peace.

At a separate meeting, The Coptic Pope Shenouda III accepted both proposals for theological exchange and the prayer for peace in the Middle East. The Patriarch of Cairo cautioned that initially the exchange should be limited to theologians and only later to students and that at least in the beginning the congruent elements of our faiths be stressed. He indicated that his caution derived

from personal experience. On the wall of Pope Shenouda's impressive study was a framed inscription of Arabic calligraphy. I asked the patriarch its meaning and he explained that it was a verse from Isaiah, "Blessed by Egypt." I admired the beauty of the script but observed that the enframed verse was incomplete. Missing were two concluding parts: "And Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance." Pope Shenouda good humoredly pointed to the wall and replied, "You see, it was such a small frame." He embraced and kissed each of us.

Zionism and Judaism

With Mr. Rizk, the Egyptian journalist of Rose Elyosof and with Dr. Sawy, the Minister of Culture and Information, with Mr. Sabri, the television host, the question of the distinction between Zionism and Judaism repeatedly arose. I tried to explain the inter-relationship as analagous to that between Islamic theology and the importance of "ummah" or peoplehood. Islam and Judaism are more than religious ideologies and ritual practices. They are wholistic expressions of civilizations which embrace the economic, political and social well being of Dar al-Islam and Beit Yisrael. It should not be difficult for Moslems to appreciate the Abrahamic covenant of God and land and people. In this sense, Zionism was not born a century ago but has its roots in the Biblical promise to the father of many peoples.

With Dr. el-Sawy, the Minister of Culture and Information, the exchange was sharper, more political. The discussion took place in the presence of my two colleagues and Mohammed Abdul Jawwad, director of the Middle East News Agency. For Dr. Sawy Zionism was an alien, European intrusion which dispossessed the native Arabs

of Palestine. To every historical event legitimizing the Jewish state I made mention, he replied by asking rhetorically by what right Lord Balfour had to declare a Jewish homeland, or by what right did the League of Nations mandate the land to Great Britain, or by what right did the United Nations ordain the partitioning of Palestine. With the way things were going, we were at loggerheads.

The argumentation seemed endless and unproductive. My colleagues indicated some unease. I explained to Dr. Sawy I had not come to make debater's points and that clearly historical events were differently interpreted and weighted by us. I told Dr. Sawy that my interest now was not in arguing over what occurred in 1917 but in exploring what we can do in 1977. What does he propose to be done now, given the incontrovertible fact of Israel's presence and the terrifying possibility of a fifth war. As quickly as the conversation shifted from past claims and counter-claims to the pragmatics of the present and future, Dr. Sawy's tone changed as well. "Why should we spill our children's blood? Our economy is drained by the preparations for war. Why do we need such wars?" I assured the Minister that having just come from Israel I heard his precise sentiments expressed by Israelis. "I know my people and I know how deep is their desire for peace here and now." "Then let them give back the land," he answered. I spoke about Egyptian fears and Israeli fears. The Libyan-Egyptian outbreak had been announced that morning by President Sadat, and Dr. Sawy was sensitive to border threats. I asked him "Would you counsel a country to deal with terrorists or to give them sovereign status in your midst knowing their hostility towards your existence? Would you not be apprehensive over Libyan or Soviet influence in such a

dependent state?" He replied that granting autonomy and power to govern makes even extremists responsible leaders. In a lighter mood, I told him that taking such risks was obviously easier for Egypt than for Israel.

One brief observation is appropriate here. From cab-drivers and store-keepers to cabinet ministers, all received my expression of Israel's desire for peace and the recognition of her fears and needs for security with marked interest. Intentions for peace and Israel's concerns for its own security, so obvious to us, were heard as novel revelations by Egyptians who perceive Israel as an awesomely competent military power with expansionist appetites. We must not lend ourselves to such caricaturing. I left such meetings convinced that power is a necessary prerequisite for dialogue but barely sufficient for the making of peace. Words are important and expression of concern for security and peace ought not be dismissed as rhetoric or feared lest they be taken as signs of weakness.

The Television Program

The television studios were located in a sandbagged government building, guarded by soldiers. The television crew at channel 5 was intently interested in this program. There was more than the novelty of firstness in this audio-visual presentation of three religious leaders sitting side by side, without conversionary or triumphalist airs. In a society raised on the notion of Islam's supremacy and singular truth such a pluralistic presence based on mutual respect was not a prosaic event in Egypt. We each spoke of our similarities and differences and the need to understand the other. Our moderator perceived us as a-political spiritual

statesmen. I praised President Sadat's statement earlier that week addressed to the Islamic Societies Conference which stressed that Islam is a religion of tolerance, commended Sadat for his statements that week which foresaw full diplomatic recognition of Israel and cultural exchange with Israel. Emphasizing Israel's desire for peace, I quoted in Hebrew and English Isaiah's prophetic prayer, "In that day shall Israel be the third Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth."

The enthusiastic response of those in the crowded television studio was not feigned. Mr. Samir Sabri who conducted the hour-long interview with sensitivity was obviously moved. On camera he spoke of the need of people to transcend their political and military leaders in their cries for peace. "War," Talleyrand wrote, "is much too serious to be left to the generals."

On the evening of our departure from Egypt, Mr. Sabri came to our hotel to bid us farewell. He so clearly understood the potentialities of the tri-logic relationship that I proposed that he meet with his Israeli counterpart in the United States to speak not of "politics," but of their artistic interests and their concern for peace. He agreed to participate in such an exchange, expressed admiration for the talents of Topol, and was not averse to having such a conversation before the public media. He has been invited by the United States government and plans to be here in September or October.

Preliminary Assessments

What was accomplished by our trip? We signed no peace treaties and changed no borders. But there were breakthroughs and possibilities for future relationships which cannot be dismissed. On the basis of these experiences in Egypt, I feel encouraged to offer a number of proposals for Jewish consideration and reflection.

1. Religious and cultural exchanges need not wait for the political and military negotiations to be resolved. Such exchanges are needed now, antecedent to the diplomatic negotiations, needed to create some ambience of understanding and trust which ultimately is the prerequisite for political rapprochement. Meetings such as those we three experienced should be increased and wherever possible expanded to include other Arab states. I assume from our reception that the door to Egypt is not completely shut.

2. The time for direct encounters on political affairs may be unsuitable today, but religious dialogue may be more feasible. In an oblique fashion such theological interchanges may prepare the ground for other kinds of dialogue. Religion has gained an unsavory reputation as a divisive force in human relations. It may now have an opportunity to serve as a unifying instrument in a world whose secularity has produced no prouder record for reconciliation. We must not be bound by stereotypic thinking which precludes religion's functioning as a healing agency in a part of the world where tradition wields great power.

It is noteworthy that the National Council of Churches has recently set up a task force on Christian-Moslem relations whose purpose is to provide a Christian forum in which different approaches to Islam and Moslems can be explored and experienced. It is imperative that within and without Israel analagous Jewish bodies be organized for spiritual statesmanship. Israel is here to stay in the Middle East. Understanding and relating constructively to the community of Islam is essential for Israel's present and future co-existence with her neighbors.

3. For the moment, it may be that non-Israeli Jews have easier access to the political enemies of Israel than Israelis do. If so, Jews of the diaspora and their leaders ought to be encouraged to promote peace in the Middle East without interfering with the political and diplomatic politics of the State of Israel.

4. I do not know whether such a religious dialogue functions within the State of Israel today. I believe that there are within Israel's borders sensitive religious leaders of the three faiths who have the courage to begin such inter-religious explorations. I am convinced that among the Israeli youth there are Christians, Moslems and Jews who would welcome some common spiritual life experiences for the purpose of laying the foundations of peace.

5. There is a mind-set which is tempted to see all adversary relationships through the single lens of the holocaust. It is an understandable but precarious way of seeing the world. Not all enemies are cut from the same cloth. Sadat is not Khadafy. Not all foes are genociders; not every conflict needs conjure up the image of Auschwitz. Demonizing the enemy only serves to paralyze the energies which seek reconciliation. Cynicism freezes accumulated hatreds into immorality and discourages the imagination from discovering new ways towards peace. I have found that Santayana's aphorism that those who refuse to remember history are doomed to repeat it needs to be balanced. For those who see history alone may be doomed to repeat it. To see the past as the inevitable portent of the future is to deny the openness of the future. Where history is converted into eschatology, all efforts to overcome the past are foolhardy. For the sake of ourselves and our children we

cannot revert to the cynical wisdom which knows that "the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be."

What did we accomplish through these personal, a-political engagements? There is a power in meeting if only that sworn enemies catch a glimpse of the humanity of the other, even the vulnerability and injured pride of the other. Strength and security are no enemies of dialogue. The enemy must see the toughness of my armour but also that beneath it lies a heart which means peace. The rabbinic sages defined the true hero as "one who can change an enemy into a friend." Indispensible for such a task of heroism is the revelation that the enemy is a human being. At the conclusion of the Amidah prayer, Jews bow to the right and to the left as they recite the daily prayer for peace. A hasidic interpretation of those liturgical gestures explains that it means to encourage us to search high and low, in new places and old, for ways towards peace.

