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Outreach [Southwest council], 1979-1986.

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RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

*Outreach  
SW Council*

May 28, 1986  
19 Iyar 5746

Kim-Juan Watts  
3012 Glen Rae  
Austin, Texas 78702

Dear Kim-Juan:

Your letter of May 21 reached our office during Rabbi Schindler's absence from the office. As he is not due back for some weeks, I take the liberty of responding in his behalf.

I am sharing your letter with Rabbi Lawrence Jackofsky, director of the UAHC Southwest Council office in Dallas. He will seek to contact you, to chat with you and possibly to suggest some books for you to read. He will also try to find a rabbi in your area with whom you might have a face-to-face talk about your quest for a religion meaningful to you. I know rabbi Jakofsky will do his best to aid you.

With every good wish and warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller  
Assistant to the President

cc: Rabbi Lawrence Jackofsky

May 28, 1986  
19 Iyar 5746

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With every good wish and warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller  
Assistant to the President

cc: Rabbi Lawrence Jackofsky

May 21, 1986

Dear Rabbi Schindler

My name is Kim-Juan Watts, I'm 26 years old, separated, and black. The reason I'm writing you is because I'm very confused about my life and belief and religion. I have a great and wonderful family, my parents let me grow up with my own way of religion, they didn't want to force religion on any of us kids. The thing is I never took to one, I'm not baptized and I don't go to church.

I've been around a lot of religions my family alone has Baptist, Church of Christ, Catholic, Jehovah Witness, Methodist, and Seventh Day Adventist. That's all in my immediate and married family. I'm all of these religions I just can't get into it. I mean every time you go to church you should feel good and continue to feel good all week long. Rabbi, please help me, I really don't know what to do, I'm lost.

Yours sincerely,  
Kim-Juan Watts

Kim-Juan Watts  
3012 Glen Rae  
Austin, Texas 78702



*Outreach SW*

January 16, 1986  
6 Shevat 5746

Ms. Terry Lyons  
204 East 17th  
Stuttgart, AR 72160

Dear Ms. Lyons:

As Rabbi Schindler is out of the city and not expected to return for some time, I take the liberty of responding to your letter of January 9.

We have many materials which have been published by our Outreach Commission but rather than merely forward printed materials to you, I feel it best to put you in contact with a Rabbi who can assist you in planning a course of study. In checking the map, it appears that the closest community to Stuttgart with a Reform congregation and rabbi is Little Rock. I have spoken of you to Rabbi Elijah Palnick of Congregation B'nai Israel, 3700 Rodney Parham Road, Little Rock, AR 72212 (501-225-9700) and he will be pleased to seek to be of assistance to you. I am taking the liberty of sharing your letter with him and I do hope that you will contact him. He is a warm and caring person and I know you will find him eager to aid you in your quest to learn more about Judaism and the conversion process.

In addition, I am sharing a copy of your letter with Rabbi Susan Harris, Outreach Coordinator for the UAHC's Southwest Council, the region which includes Arkansas. She will undoubtedly be able to provide informational materials for you. Rabbi Harris is based in Baton Rouge so I felt it best to put you in touch with Rabbi Palnick but I am certain Rabbi Harris will also want to communicate with you and should her travels take her to your area perhaps there will be an opportunity for the two of you to meet.

If this office can be of any further service please do not hesitate to contact me. You are, however, in good hands when you are in communication with Rabbis Palnick and Harris.

With every good wish and kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller  
Assistant to the President

cc: Rabbi Susan Harris  
Rabbi Elijah Palnick

Jerry Lyons  
204 E. 17th  
Stuttgart, AR 72160

1-9-86

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I am a twenty-five year old female who was raised Protestant. After much deliberation, I have decided to convert to Judaism. Unfortunately, there is no synagogue where I live, and my only source of information is the library.

I would appreciate any information you can give me on the aspects of conversion - holy days, dietary laws, and the actual conversion, etc.

I don't know if your organization can help me, but I really don't know where else to turn. Any information you can give me will be greatly appreciated. My address is 204 E. 17th, Stuttgart, AR 72160. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jerry Lyons



איחוד  
ליהדות  
מתקדמת  
באמריקה

## Memo

FROM \_\_\_\_\_

Susan Harris

10212 No. Magna Carta

Baton Rouge, La 70815

504-925-4095

zeta



*Outreach*  
*S.W.*

✓

April 30, 1985

Ms. Patricia Chambers-Durand  
704 Bergerie Street  
New Iberia, LA 70560

Dear Ms. Chambers-Durand:

I have just received your letter of April 26 and hasten to reply. I was pleased to learn of your interest in the study of Judaism and thank you for sharing with me some details of your search for more knowledge about the Jewish faith and the Jewish people.

I much regret that you have not always received a response to your inquiries. Needless to note, it is difficult to have a steady flow of give and take when there is no permanent rabbi in your community. There are some Reform rabbis in fairly close communities but not knowing the names of those with whom you have been in touch I feel it best not to make a specific recommendation at this time. I have talked with the UAHC regional director in Dallas, Rabbi Lawrence Jackofsky. He has no record of having received either a letter or a telephone call from you. It may be that you directed your inquiry to an old address for his office moved not too long ago. Should you wish to contact him directly, the proper address for his office is 13777 N. Central Expressway, Suite 411, Dallas, Texas 75243. The telephone number is 214-699-0656. I am also sharing your letter and my response with Rabbi Jackofsky so that he will have all of the information at hand and he will also seek to contact you.

As a matter of fact, we have just learned that the young rabbi ~~coordinating~~ Outreach in our Pennsylvania office will be moving to Louisiana and Rabbi Susan Harris will be taking up responsibilities with our Southwest Council in the area of Outreach. She has not moved to Louisiana as yet, I believe she will be located in Baton Rouge, but just as soon as she is on the scene Rabbi Jackofsky will be in contact with her about your interest in Judaism. In the meantime, be assured that Rabbi Jackofsky will do his utmost to be of assistance to you in your search.

I am pleased that you took the opportunity to write to me after having read about me and the UAHC in Newsweek. I trust that you have received the books you ordered in good time and order.



Ms. Patricia Chambers-Durand  
April 30, 1985  
Page two

If I can be of any further help to you, please do not hesitate to contact me once again.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Lawrence I. Jackofsky

26 April 1985

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I would like your help on a matter which is very important to me.

I am a Christian (Episcopalian) by background, but I am interested in one day possibly converting to Judaism because I am in doubt of one of the central tenets of Christianity, that of Jesus' divinity.

I have studied Judaism on my own for about 6 months and have attended services at the local temple for over two months. I feel very comfortable with that.

Rabbi, I have so many questions that have not been answered in my readings.

I have contacted two suggested Rabbis and one student Rabbi and I have received no reply from any of them.

The local temple does not have a Rabbi on staff but has a student Rabbi who will end her tenure next month (she comes once a month).

Please help me to find someone with whom I can correspond and who can answer my questions.

I am very serious about my interest, but I feel I cannot make an intelligent choice about conversion unless my knowledge is greater than it is now (about Judaism).

The temple I attend is a Reform temple.

I contacted a <sup>U.A.H.C.</sup> Regional director Rabbi  
in Dallas, Texas (no reply), <sup>and</sup> a Rabbi in a  
nearby city (no reply).

If you can recommend someone who will  
correspond with me and answer my questions  
I would appreciate it.

I get very depressed at times because I  
feel the people (Rabbis) I have contacted do not  
take me seriously and I don't know how to  
prove otherwise. (that I am serious).

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Chambers-Durand  
704 Bergerie St.  
New Iberia, LA 70560  
318/364-5746

P.S. I found your name in a recent article in  
Newsweek. Since I have ordered several books  
through the U.A.H.C., I knew the address  
and the fact it is the Reform branch.



# Fine Art Photography

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*Outreach*

DR. WM. E. WALLNER  
P. O. BOX 1632  
1005 EVERGREEN ROAD  
WRIGHTWOOD, CALIF. 92397  
PHONE (714) 249-6765

Rabbi Hillel Cohn  
3512 "E" Street  
San Bernardino, Calif. 92405

April 6, 1982

Dear Rabbi Cohn,

Since you want to bring me in contact with two other Rabbis, I thought I better give you a testimonial of my intention.

I always felt that I am a Jew, and my search for my identity was not in vain. The fact however is, that I want to return where I actually belong. My turning to Judaism is not based upon any advantages, on the contrary, I might suffer persecution from my former colleagues, but to me this is not of importance. I am proud to say that I do not believe blindly in Judaism. For me, the teaching of Judaism is truth, and therefore different from the God of Christian theology. The Old Testament concept of God moved me deeply and concerned me as something which could not be imitated or imagined. I sincerely believe that Judaism is the only religion which can uplift humanity from the chaos of total destruction.

The change in my religious and theological opinion of the value of monotheism resulted from my reading of Achad Haam. Through him I saw Judaism in an entirely different light from the way the Christian world had taught it to me.

As a former executive and teacher, of the Lutheran Church at large, I never faltered to instruct my students about the truth I found in Judaism, and strongly rejected Christian Theology of Jesus being the Messiah - God; but one never knows whether one is confronted with ignoramuses who do not know the most elementary basic principles of their own church, or whether they fall into the category of people who willfully discredit an acknowledged truth. But what can one do with such people? They have been brain-washed for almost 2,000 years.

Today Christianity is so confused and has no answer to solve present day problems. I do believe that the Jews with their God given gifts are the only people to restore true religion and look into a better tomorrow.



- 2 -

Rabbi Hillel Cohn

April 6, 1982

I am sure there will come a time when Gentiles will look up toward Judaism and accept the Jewish faith, if only all the other sore spots disappear which make the Jews seem foreign and secretive people. This is my conviction and it is based on biblical truth and experiences.

I often stressed in my lectures the historical facts and structure, like Christianity, cannot bring about a new development because of an artificial and hearsay arrangement, such as the trinity based upon Greco-Roman mythology, which will eventually be driven asunder by the advance of time, as if divided by a keystone. I believe, that today we already arrived at such a time, and Judaism should take up the opportunity to rescue humanity.

Cordially yours,

*W. E. Wallner*

William E. Wallner

2970

encl.

William E. Wallner is of Austrian ancestry and was born in Teschen, Silesia, now Poland. He studied at the Erzherzog Albrecht College in Teschen, the Military Academy of Cracow, Poland, the University of Breslau, Germany, now Poland, King's College, London, and Charles University Prague, Czechoslovakia. After his postgraduate studies and ordination he made his doctorates in philosophy and theology.

During his time in Prague, from 1931 to 1939, he was pastor of the largest Lutheran congregation, and professor of comparative religion and church history. He was also a member of the Board of Education and many cultural organizations of the city of Prague.

While saving hundreds of Jewish victims from Nazi concentration camps, he had a narrow escape from Prague. As a reserve officer he joined the Polish Armed Forces, and served as Protestant Chaplain General during World War II with the Polish Armed Forces in exile under British command until 1948.

During his time in England he has been honored by King George V. as "Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society" for topographical work which was used during World War II. As a linguist of Germanic and Slavonic languages he rendered valuable services to both, the British and Polish governments during that period.

In December 1948, Wallner received a special call of the National Lutheran Council to come to the USA. He first served as educational field representative, traveling throughout the nation, lecturing in seminaries, colleges and churches.

In his activities as a pastor and professor, he wrote many publications, like for instance: "The Reformation in the Dukedom of Silesia under the rulers of the Piasts", and many essays on theology, philosophy and history.

In 1953 he settled in Los Angeles and became Area Secretary of the National Lutheran Council for the West Coast, his last position before his retirement.

After his conviction and leaning toward Judaism, he could not proceed with his teaching the way prescribed by the Lutheran Church, and asked for resignation. His resignation was rejected because of his past valuable work for the Lutheran Church at large, and he was advised by his superiors to take leave from call. This happened seven years before his actual retirement.

Even though he showed a disinterest in the Church, he has been constantly approached to offer voluntary services for the Church.

Besides his professional work, he is also interested in art, which became his hobby, and now his new profession. Since his retirement, he lives in Wrightwood, and has been able to pursue his artistic talents. In the photographic world he has become known through his unique portraits and character studies. Although a self-taught photographer, he is lecturing to many professionals. His pictorial work achieved the highest awards in International Salon Exhibits all over the world, and his photography is being used for educational material and illustrations in numerous publications. Some of his artwork has been acquired by art schools, museums and university libraries.

### Other information

Approximately 77 years of age;

Discovered two years ago from a brother who was dying that his parents were, in fact, Jewish;

Has a good command of Hebrew & Jewish customs.

Had a heart by-pass operation a few years ago.



*Outreach Council  
S.W.*

October 5, 1982

Mr. Malcolm Steinberg  
216 Claiborne Way  
San Antonio, TX 78209

Dear Mal:

It was good hearing from you. I appreciate your having shared your thoughts with me, even as I am certain Rabbi Stahl was grateful for your comments.

There are schools of thought in regard to reactions of mixed married couples to the matter of rabbis officiating or refusing to officiate at their marriage ceremonies. Does a yes bring the closer association of the couple with the Jewish community? Does a no push them away from the community? I maintain the answer is in how the rabbi says yes or no to a request to officiate. But, Mal, in reality it is really just a guess on all our parts. We should seek to obtain proper information for once and for all.

To that end, the UAHC and its Task Force on Outreach is determined to undertake a scientific research survey which will provide a response to that weighty question. We are setting up the mechanics at this very time and the study will soon be underway. All of us are very eager to have the results of this survey.

With warm good wishes for the New Year to you and all your dear ones,,  
I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Samuel Stahl



Malcolm Steinberg  
216 Claiborne Way  
San Antonio TX 78209  
August 29, 1982

I'll sign up here  
because a one page response  
is enough...and I'm going to  
keep doing my bit though  
having four children confirm-  
ed at the Temple will be  
difficult for me to duplic-  
ate....shalom!

*Nal*

Schindler\*

Dear Rabbi ~~Shindler~~, and Rabbi Stahl:

This letter has been a long time a-typing. It started  
(now its Sept. 4) shortly after your visit\* to San Antonio to speak  
to a financially able group about support for operation outreach or  
a similarly named effort to welcome new members to our Jewish religion.  
Splendid! A book, 'Choosing Judaism' published by the Union was distrib-  
uted. Splendid! An attendee whose two sons both married non Jews, who  
hadn't read it loaned it to me. It's a great ~~step~~ forward. Bravo!!

Where am I coming from? Rabbi Shindler, you and I had a good talk  
and walk over a decade ago as you sought a shirt in New Orleans dur-  
ing a recess of Southwestern Regional meeting of the UAHC. At 56 I re-  
main active in the Jewish Community. Married to a non Jew, who left  
Methodism before we met, we have four children all religious school  
and confirmants at Temple Beth El. I've served on the Temple Board  
for seven years, chaired the adult education, and religious action  
Committees at the Temple and was a candidate for Temple president  
but lost at one big annual meeting vote. I continue to work in the  
Jewish community organizations...

To get back to the San Antonio visit of yours the comments indicated  
a lot of concern to say the least, not with the hope for an outreach  
but what isn't being done as far as those attending the meeting could  
perceive. We all need to improve. Marriages between Jews and non Jews  
are not going to stop because a rabbi won't marry them, or counsels  
them not to marry. Whwnth.. read that as, when they get there to him  
or her, its too late for that kind of talk. I'm glad I didn't know  
of that problem when my wife and I were married by her Uncle Ernest  
a Methodist minister.

First suggestion then is start off that opportunity positively. If  
a couple where one is Jewish wants a Rabbi to marry them do it. Leaves  
two people at least feeling good about it rather than just one feeling  
self righteous.

September 19

L'shono tova...and Rabbi Stahl your service last Friday eveing the  
first night of ~~Rosh Hashavah~~ was beautiful.... to move ahead with  
my thoughtd. At marrying time the couple is going to get married,  
and a positive response is a lot better than a negative one. Then  
there's the reception into the community for any new member be they  
recent affiliates or folks just moving to town. Welcome them. Have  
them wear a red ribbon in their lapels, urge congregants to make a  
special effort to say hello, give them a greeting, make them feel that  
we glad they've joined us. Kassoff's book addresses staff problems  
well. I've heard ten and fifteen year Temple members complain about  
being in the hospital two or three weeks without a visit from anyone  
representing or being a Temple staff person. Then lets work on our  
vocabulary. Married to a non Jew I get tired of people telling jokes  
about Goys. I don't care about non Jews telling them about Yids, and  
Jewboys, either. As teachers I urge you work to wipe out the dues  
structure that determines whether someone is or isn't a Temple member.  
After seven years on the Temple Board I know what the finacial problems  
are but if the Christians can run their churches without a paid up  
dues paying member so can we..and as for tickets to high holiday services  
you can guess I know there's a better solution to the problem than that..

*Outreach*  
*S.W. Coover*  
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

August 24, 1982

Rabbi Lennard Thafel and Lydia Kukoff

Rabbi Sanford Seltzer; Rabbi Daniel B. Syme; Rabbi Leonard A. Schoolman

I cannot make an extra budgetary grant for the registry project. It will have to be a part of the Capital Gifts effort. If we can get some cash from Bernie or David, we might be able to go ahead later this year.

I like the idea of a regional test with which we can then go national once the kinks are worked out.

But I envision a registry which is somewhat broader than the mixed-married. All inter-marriages as well as conversions ought to be a part of it and it ought to be computerized.



איחוד  
ליהדות  
מתקדמת  
באמריקה

# Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
13107 VENTURA BOULEVARD, NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA. 91604 (213) 872-3550/(213) 986-5720

## PACIFIC SOUTHWEST COUNCIL

Rabbi Lennard R. Thal  
Director

August 20, 1982

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
UAHC  
838 5th Ave.  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Alex,

Sometime ago we discussed the desirability of a registry of mixed-married couples on a nationwide basis. We are ready to move with a pilot program in Los Angeles which could then serve as a model for the rest of the country. The proposal is enclosed. It will require an extra budgeting allocation of \$7,500 for one year.

We have someone who is willing to undertake the responsibility at once and who, in our opinion, is most qualified. We apologize for not including this in the regular budgetary process but the transition in staff and the absence of a truly qualified person up until now caused a delay. We hope you will be able to allocate the funds required. Perhaps this pilot project could be made part of the capital gifts campaign effort under Outreach.

Please let us know your decision so that we will know how to proceed.

We look forward to seeing you in Los Angeles.

Chairman  
Donald S. Day

President  
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

OFFICERS 1981-1983  
Council President  
Allan B. Goldman

Vice Presidents  
Hannah Cahn  
Edward London  
Jerome Pastor  
Myron Rosenthal  
Carole Sherman  
Evely Shlensky

Fondly,

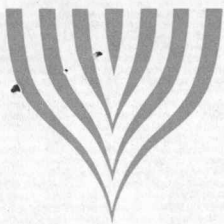
*Lennard R. Thal* (dv)  
Lennard R. Thal

*Lydia Kukoff* (dv)  
Lydia Kukoff

LRT/LK/dv

Enclosure: Proposal





איחוד  
ליהדות  
מתקדמת  
באמריקה

# Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
13107 VENTURA BOULEVARD, NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA. 91604 (213) 872-3550/(213) 986-5720

## PACIFIC SOUTHWEST COUNCIL

Rabbi Lennard R. Thal  
Director

### PROPOSAL FOR A REGISTRAR OF MIXED MARRIED COUPLES

#### PACIFIC SOUTHWEST COUNCIL

#### I. BACKGROUND

A major component of the UAHC Outreach Program is an active attempt to bring mixed married couples into synagogue life. Success in this effort may result in conversion to Judaism by the non-Jewish partners. Whether or not conversion occurs, such efforts would certainly increase the possibility that the children of these couples will be reared as Jews.

In order to involve mixed married couples in Jewish life, however, we must first identify them. The fact is that a relatively small number of such couples join synagogues. The overwhelming majority marry, then disappear into a religious "no man's land", unaffiliated with any religious institution. To the best of our knowledge, the only lists or records of such couples would be in the hands of officiating rabbis and judges (and then only if they are careful about record keeping). If we are to have a chance at reaching these couples, we must do so within a short time of their marriage. Therefore we submit this proposal.

#### II. POSITION

Registrar of Mixed-Married Couples in the Pacific Southwest Council.

#### III. SALARY

\$7,500

#### IV. HOURS

15 hours per week, September through August

#### V. DUTIES

A. Meet personally with officiating rabbis and judges to inform them of the registry program and to ask their cooperation.

B. Follow through on a regular basis with phone calls to rabbis and judges to gather current names to add to registry.

C. Develop a basic information form for mixed married couples to fill out and send to the UAHC regional office.

D. Based on the information on the basic form, the registrar could then contact couples either by phone or in person. As a result the information gained during the interview, the basic form would be augmented and we would have a fuller idea of the needs of this couple. The registrar could then work with the regional Outreach Coordinator to determine which couples might be particularly interested in a specific kind of programming.

E. Participate in all phases of the planning of the pilot program for mixed marrieds. (Described elsewhere) scheduled to begin in October, 1982, in Los Angeles.

F. Attend one of the sections of the class (8 weeks)

*Chairman*  
Donald S. Day

*President*  
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

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Hannah Cahn  
Edward London  
Jerome Pastor  
Myron Rosenthal  
Carole Sherman  
Evely Shlensky



*Outreach*

November 16, 1981

Rabbi Murray Blackman  
Temple Sinai  
6227 St. Charles Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70118

Dear Murray:

It was thoughtful of you to share Israel Benyehovah's Bar Mitzvah sermonette with me. It is a beautiful and moving address and has within it a very important message for all of us. So often we tend to forget our responsibilities!

Yes, this sermonette is a confirmation of the very positive thrust of our Outreach program. You should know, too, that we have done a videotape with four Jews-by-Choice and while I viewed the rough-cut "in the process" tape, I believe it also gives testimony to the importance and impact of our Outreach efforts. As I watch the development of the program and the newcomers in our midst, I realize more and more that we are gaining a wealth of talent, a group of dedicated and devoted Jews who seek to enrich and enhance their own knowledge and in the process they awaken a new awareness in born Jews.

With thanks and fondest regards from house to house, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Daniel B. Syme

**RABBI MURRAY BLACKMAN, Ph.D., D.D.**

TEMPLE SINAI  
6227 ST. CHARLES AVENUE  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA  
70118

November 12, 1981

Rabbi Alexandler Schindler  
Rabbi Daniel Syme  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex and Dan:

I thought it best to address this to you jointly since both of you have been involved in the Outreach and Jews by Choice development.

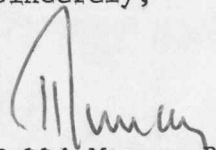
Enclosed are copies of a sermonette given by a member of our congregation, Israel Benyehovah.

I will let his remarks speak for him. Israel is a Black Jew converted by me who has been involved deeply in the life of the congregation in the last few years. The Bar Mitzvah opportunity was one which capped off his own personal development and search. I was very moved by his remarks and the whole relationship with him which developed during the months when he was preparing for the occasion.

If you need any sort of confirmation of the thrust of the Union's program, then I think this sort of thing is that testimonial.

Best personal wishes.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Murray Blackman

MB/ms

enc.

MY BARMITZVAH

ISRAEL BENYEHOVAH 1981 - 5742

What has brought me to this very special day? What has inspired me, motivated me, to become a son of the commandment, which Bar Mitzvah means in the Hebrew Language? It was my study of the Hebrew language. It was my search for roots through Abraham, through the Little Hebrew Children, through Noah, through Adam and Eve, it was my search through God. From early childhood and possibly from birth I was developing this oneness in God.

The early 1970's stands-out as a very significant time to link with this very special moment. I had come to a possible conclusion, in my mind, that when God did bring to reality his kingdom on earth, then just possible, Hebrew would be that universal language. I began listening to records of the Hebrew language, studying in the Synagogues in California, teaching my wife and children the Hebrew alef-bet; the alphabet. From my on and off again studies of Hebrew, I began to read history books of the Jewish people, to follow closely the events in the State of Israel and I began to speak up for the State of Israel's right to exist in peace.

People would ask me if I was Jewish and I would say no, I am a Jewish sympathizer. This line of reasoning went on for a year or so. Then one day without having a formal conversion I admitted to myself that I was indeed a Jew, a Hebrew child, linked with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and part of the covenant. Judaism seemed so natural for me.

Although at the time I did not attend synagogue services, every High Holyday season I felt motivated to attend the services. I knew I needed to be in temple somewhere. I remember buying a book of Israeli and Jewish songs. My wife Jane, my children Katina and Coree and I would sit around the table and sing Hebrew songs like "Eliyahu Hanovi" which in English means, "Elisha the Prophet", "Hatikvah," the Israeli National Anthem, translates as, "the Hope", "Havenu Shalom A'Leychem", the peace greeting song.

In 1978, I moved my family to New Orleans, and once again as the High Holyday season began, the urge came upon me to attend the services. I called and received an appointment with Rabbi Blackman and talked about my interest in Judaism and possible conversion. The Rabbi suggested I visit other synagogues in New Orleans, to be sure converting was what I wanted to do. I knew it was, but I did as he suggested anyway.



I didn't get back with the Rabbi right away, but I did resume my study of the Hebrew language at the Jewish Community Center. While there I heard about a special program entitled, "Jews by Choice", being held at Temple Sinai. I attended and enrolled in the conversion class Rabbi Blackman and Rabbi Soifer were conducting. After completing the class I again spoke with the Rabbi about converting. He asked when would I like to convert. Without hesitation I said, "now".

Bar Mitzvah for boys and Bat Mitzvah for girls, is the time when the person moves to adulthood, ready to accept responsibility as an adult. Jokingly, my wife has informed me that when I complete my Bar Mitzvah that I too must accept full responsibility for my actions as an adult. And, becoming an adult in the Jewish teaching I intend to do just that.

The Torah portion I read to you today tells of responsibility. Our ancestors had responsibility in following God's Commandments. They were not to make any covenants with the inhabitants of the land which God had promised to them. They were to destroy all traces of the inhabitants' religion. They were to keep the feast of Unleavened Bread, the feast of Shavu'ot and the feast of Ingathering. As well as the responsibility to observe the 7th day as a day of rest and other commandments. How relevant are these commandments to us today?

Were these commandments only for our ancestors to follow? A guide line for them to live by, and a story for us to tell to our children? Or, are the commandments binding on their offspring, namely us? In the beginning of the Torah portion where the Torah speaks of the Lord as being merciful, gracious, forgiving sins abundant in goodness and truth; The Rabbis call these the thirteen attributes of God. If, by chance, God is still long-suffering and keeping mercy for thousands of generations, possibly we have the same responsibility as our ancestors, that is, to be keeping God's commandments or, at least trying and asking for forgiveness when we fail.

In our day, we have the responsibility to speak out against injustices inflicted upon others because of race, because of religion, because of economic conditions, because of sex. We have the responsibility to speak out against all injustices that are inflicted upon others for any and all reasons. The responsibility is ours. Just as it is our responsibility to help support Aliya Immigration programs for Russian Jews, also, it is our responsibility to speak out for the Aliya Immigration of the Falasha Beta Israel Jews of Ethiopia that they may also be free.

If I might paraphrase a statement by Nei Moller, in reference to the Holocaust.

"First they came for the Blacks - I was not Black, so I said nothing:

Then they came for the Jew - I was not a Jew so I said nothing:

Next they came for the Catholic - I was not Catholic, so I said nothing:

Then they came for me, but there was no one left to say anything:

Never let it be recalled in our memories, that we neglected our responsibility, to God or mankind and failed to speak-up.

I would like to give praise to God for allowing me to reach this season.

Bless Rabbi Blackman and Rabbi Soifer for their untiring energy in making my Bar Mitzvah a very enriching experience.

A blessing to my wife and children for their being patient with my impatience.

A blessing for Ellen Cleary for encouraging me to have a Bar Mitzvah.

God bless my family and friends for attending my Bar Mitzvah.

And finally God send a very special blessing for the congregation of Temple Sinai for your acceptance of me and my efforts.

AMEN

*Outreach*

*St. West*

February 24, 1981

Rabbi Harry K. Danziger  
Temple Israel  
1376 East Massey Road  
Memphis, Tn. 38138

Dear Harry:

Thank you for your beautiful letter of February 19 in regard to Lydia Kukoff's recent visit to Memphis. She is a rare and special human being and the work she is doing in Outreach is a very important aspect of our program. I do indeed shep nachas when I receive such gratifying letters of commendation such as yours. I am grateful to you for taking the time to write and to share your most positive reaction to our Outreach program.

I am also grateful for your comments about my role in bringing the problem to the attention of our constituency. We are making much progress, thanks to the activities of the Task Force on Reform Jewish Outreach, and the manner in which they have faced their responsibilities. The very positive program we have created is due to the dedication and devotion of every member of the Task Force.

I am especially delighted to learn that Temple Israel is about to undertake some special programming in Outreach for members of the congregation who are Jews by choice. This is a very, very important undertaking and if there is anything any of us can do to be of assistance, you know we stand ready to help you. With the programs Lydia has been doing on Outreach, we have developed a core of facilitators who are articulate and understanding of the problem. Many of them, in addition to Lydia, can render sound guidance and counsel in preparing for Temple Israel's program.

Rhea and I join in sending fondest regards to you and Jeanne and all good wishes.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

*acss  
DWB  
LK*





February 19, 1981

Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N. Y. 10021

Dear Alex:

I just have to write to you to tell you that you can shep immense nachas from your founding of the Outreach Program. I know that you find it gratifying in many ways, and I want to add to one for you. We had the pleasure at Temple Israel of having Lydia Kukoff as guest speaker on Friday night, February 6, and Lydia then did a workshop on Saturday morning, February 7, primarily for those who were new to Judaism either as converts or as the spouses of Jewish partners. She made an immense impact, and we are about to take a quantum jump forward in what we as a congregation do for those who enter Judaism as adults.

I am sure I don't have to tell you that Lydia's combination of Yiddishkeit, Torah, and personality are rare, but the message she brings is one that is lasting and will bring about real results. You were the "first cause" of this whole thing in making it happen with your courageous call several years ago, and we at Temple Israel have extra reason now to thank you for it. Keep up the good work!

Jeanne joins me in sending all our best to you and Rhea. I hope we'll have the chance to see you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Harry K. Danziger

HKD/ps

cc: DSD

*Outreach*

**B'NAI ZION CONGREGATION**

175 SOUTHFIELD ROAD  
SHREVEPORT, LA. 71105

*cc to Lydia -*

RICHARD A. ZIONTS, M.A.H.L.  
RABBI

March 9, 1981

DAVID LEFKOWITZ, JR., TH.D., D.D.  
RABBI EMERITUS

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

Everyone that I've heard from was very complimentary of your remarks at the Federation Dinner Sunday night. The enthusiastic interest of the Temples board the next morning was apparent and especially remarkable at such an early hour. We all truly appreciated the opportunity to visit together.

As soon as I got back to the office I set up a lunch date with Richard and Lil Lassen to look into implimenting an outreach program for Shreveport. Richard says we have a real need and I understand Lil was very effective in developing the program for New Orleans. We'll keep you posted on the progress we make.

I'm sorry I didn't get to say good-bye after our meeting. I got stopped to discuss some Temple business and by the time I got free you had apparently gone to your room to pick up your luggage, but I did want to thank you again for sharing your experiences concerning problems that face our community.

Sincerely,

*Abry*

Abry S. Cahn, Jr.  
President

ASC:lb

cc: Rabbi Lawrence I. Jackofsky

*Lydia - F/H  
Lil moved to Shreveport  
from N.O.  
A.S.*

*Outreach*

January 27, 1981

Ms. Ruby Kantor  
P.O. Box 11424  
Fort Worth, TX. 76109

Dear Ms. Kantor:

It was thoughtful of you to write and share with me your comments and appreciation of the recent Outreach week-end for "Jews by Choice" held in Houston. I am grateful for your having done so.

The reaction to these week-ends, which are being held in many areas of our country, has been uniformly positive. Needless to note, that is a source of deep gratification to all of us involved. We hope to continue to the program and it is also our desire to have congregations undertake similar programs in their own communities. The need is great. The results we have seen so far are exceedingly positive.

I am pleased that you are planning to meet with Rabbi Schur to discuss the possibility of an Outreach program at Beth-El Congregation. From your letter, I suspect that you have the talents and ability to facilitate such a program and I hope that you know the resources of our Outreach Program staff and members are available to you for any assistance you may require in planning the program.

With repeated thanks and all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



cc 1080  
35  
JANUARY 22, 1981

TO: RABBI ALEXANDER SCHLINDER  
% U.A.H.C.  
838 FIFTH AVE.  
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK 10021

FROM: RUBY KANTOR  
P.O. BOX 11424  
FORT WORTH, TX. 76109

DEAR RABBI,

THIS PAST WEEK-END (JAN.16-18) IN HOUSTON, TX. AT TEMPLE EMANU EL I HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO ATTEND AN OUTREACH PROGRAM SPONSERED BY THE U.A.H.C. FOR THE "JEWS BY CHOICE".

IT WAS A MOST STIMULATING AND EXCITING MEETING THAT I HAVE EVER HAD THE CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN. I MUST SAY THAT I LIKED THE CONCEPT OF ONLY THE "JEWS BY CHOICE" IN ATTENDANCE. I DID NOT CARE FOR THE VISITORS THAT SAT IN ON THE SESSIONS. IT DID RESTRAIN MY REMARKS AND CURTAILED MY VERBALIZING AT WILL. PERHAPS MY POSITION IN DISTRICT #22 MADE ME AWARE THAT MY REMARKS WERE OF A PRIVATE NATURE AND I DID NOT CARE TO HAVE OTHERS KNOW ABOUT THEM. I WAS DELIGHTED TO SHARE WITH OTHERS THERE WHO WERE IN THE SAME POSITION THAT I WAS IN.

HOWEVER, THE FREE FEELINGS AND THE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS WERE MOST WELCOMED. WE ALL HAD THE CHANCE OF CONVEYING OUR INNERMOST FEELINGS WHEN EVER WE WANTED TO. IT WAS AND STILL IS AN EXCEPTIONAL WEEK-END THAT I SHALL NEVER FORGET. NOT ONLY DID WE SHARE VENTED EMOTIONS BUT FRIENDSHIPS DEVELOPED THAT I SHALL ALWAYS TREASURE.

I WAS GREATLY IN FAVOR OF NAMING THE "CONVERSIONS" CLASSES TO THE "INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM" CLASS. SO THAT IN THE RENAMING PROCESS WHOMEVER SO DESIRES MAY ATTEND FOR WHAT EVER REASON, SHOULD IT BE FOR CONVERSION OR TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR JEWISH HERITAGE. I ALSO LIKED THE NEW WORDING OF "JEWS BY CHOICE". THIS CERTAINLY HAS A MORE DIGNIFIED WAY OF IDENTIFYING A PERSON WHO IS JEWISH AND CERTAINLY ONE WHO HAS CHOSEN TO BE SO.

I DO SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE U.A.H.C. WILL CONTINUE WITH THIS PROGRAM FOR THE FUTURE. I DO FEEL THAT IT IS A MUST, NOT ONLY TO RETAIN OUR MEMBERS BUT TO EDUCATE AND ACCEPT THEM FOR WHAT THEY ARE. JEWS.

I MUST COMMEND YOU FOR THE THREE VERY, VERY CAPABLE PEOPLE THAT YOU SENT DOWN TO THE DEEP SOUTH FOR THIS PROGRAM. LYDIA KUKOFF WAS WARM AND GRACIOUS. SHE MADE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US FEEL AT HOME. RABBI DANIEL SYME WAS EQUALLY AS KIND AND FRIENDLY. HE ENCOURAGED US TO OUR HIGHEST POTENTIAL. HOWARD LAIBSON TAUGHT US MARVELOUS HEBREW SONGS AND MADE US FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE.

I HAVE MADE AN APPOINTMENT WITH MY RABBI (ROBERT J. SCHUR) TO SEE IF PERHAPS SOME PROGRAM OF THIS MANNER CAN BE STARTED IN FORT WORTH, TX.

WE ARE TOLD THAT ON SHABBAT WE ARE GIVEN TWO SOULS --- I CAME AWAY FROM THIS SESSION NOT WITH TWO BUT THREE SOULS.

RUBY

cc/  
LYDIA KUKOFF

*Overhead*

RABBI DAVID S. GOLDSTEIN  
TOURO SYNAGOGUE  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70175

*Answer*

5 May, 1980

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex,

Dan Syme's visit here was truly ambassadorial on many levels, primarily in terms of the extraordinary talents and insights he shared with our religious school leadership. It hardly seems possible that he was able to provide us with so much of real substance in so necessarily brief a time span. His contribution was invaluable.

Then, our conversations regarding the June 6-8 New Orleans Outreach weekend for gerei tzedek. I am personally committed to such an undertaking; it is long overdue. And, my own enthusiasm was but intensified by Dan's dedication to this project. He effectively got the ball rolling, and I feel confident that the weekend will be a tremendous success.

And, of course, there is that special intangible - namely putting our best foot forward with ongoing UAHC presence and influence in the "heartland". Dan certainly represents the very best we have, and all of us at Touro are grateful that the Southwest Council made his visit possible.

Warm personal regards from Shannie and myself to you and Rhea.

Cordially,

*David*  
David S. Goldstein

DSG/mdg

cc: Mr. J. M. Cohn, President  
Mr. Donald R. Mintz, Vice President  
Rabbi Larry Jackofsky

*Out Reach*

May 5, 1980

Rabbi Roy A. Walter  
Congregation Emanu El  
1500 Sunset Boulevard  
Houston, Texas 77005

Dear Roy:

Many thanks for sharing with me the reaction to Lydia's presentation at Emanu El. She is very exciting and whenever and wherever she appears there is a magnificent response. It is my hope that we will be able to utilize her and others like her in programs across the country. And I can tell you that we already have people from various sections of the country who will be able to share experiences in congregations and move them to respond and seek to work with the new Jews and non-Jewish spouses in their midst. This is obviously an idea whose time has come and I believe important advances will be made in the days ahead.

Your suggestion regarding a meeting in Houston has been noted and I will share it with Danny Syme and Sandy Seltzer.

I especially want to express my appreciation to you for your gracious offer to seek out some angels to help finance the program. You are a prince! All of us of the Union will be beholden to you if you can help us gain financial support. We are deeply grateful for your eagerness to try to help, it is an indication of your support and concern.

With love to you and Linda, in which Rhea joins me, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler





Congregation Emanu El  
1500 Sunset Boulevard  
Houston, Texas 77005  
(713) 529-5771

15 Iyar 5740  
May 1, 1980

Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
UAHC  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex,

I want to share an exciting event with you. Lydia Kukoff came to Emanu El three weeks ago at my invitation to speak at Friday night services. Her speech was essentially the same as her presentation at the Biennial.

Alex, the response was superb. She awakened a feeling on the part of the listeners that can only be called electric excitement. Out of her visit has come a deeper understanding of what it means to be a stranger, and a group of people anxious to help "newcomers" feel welcome.

Even more profoundly, a searching has begun among many who heard her to find the feelings Lydia talked about: the excitement of being Jewish, a sense of longing for something spiritual, a strong desire to find others with whom to explore. I think a weekend in or near Houston such as the one in New York would be extremely successful.

Danny Syme has contacted me about the money he's trying to raise for Project Outreach. I heartily endorse the project and am going to try and find an angel or two. In addition, I hope whatever budgeting the Union is planning goes through. Each time he returns, Larry Sachnowitz is more and more excited.

Alex, if there is some way to get Lydia's message into more pulpits, I feel the project will succeed even more completely. I know she's only one person, but somehow what she's saying is not limited to her. There must be others, too. And there must be programs that can be developed as well.

*Thanks for sharing  
experience  
I expect to use her +  
offer our fully  
Thanks for help re \$15*

Rabbi Roy A. Walter

Page Two  
Rabbi Schindler

If I can be of help in any part of what is happening, I would be pleased to do so. Again, let me encourage you in expanding the project and its exposure.

Sincerely yours,

  
Rabbi Roy A. Walter

alr

February 16, 1979

Mr. J. D. Reynolds  
#83 Rankin Square Apartments  
3569 Old Brandon Road  
Pearl, MS. 39208

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

Ms. Edith Miller, Assistant to the President of the UAHC, shared with me the letter you sent to Rabbi Schindler, and the response from her to you.

Our office of the Southwest Council serves the State of Mississippi and therefore I am happy to be in touch with you concerning your inquiry regarding the Jewish Faith and information about courses available on Judaism. I note that Pearl, Mississippi is very close to Jackson. Since I am a great distance from where you are, I would like to suggest that you contact Rabbi Richard Birnholz of Beth Israel Congregation, 5315 Old Canton Road in Jackson. He is a knowledgeable person and would be able to discuss the matter of courses on Judaism with you.

If there is any way I can be of assistance, please do contact me. With every good wish,

Cordially,

Rabbi Lawrence Jackofsky  
Regional Director

LJ/b  
cc/Edith Miller  
Rabbi Richard Birnholz



February 16, 1979

Rabbi Richard Birnholz  
Beth Israel Congregation  
Box 12329  
Jackson, MS. 39211

Dear Richard:

I hope my referral was not presumptuous on my part.  
I think you could be of assistance to Mr. Reynolds.  
Please let me know.

I look forward to seeing you in Jackson, March 19.  
Regards to Donna.

Cordially,

Rabbi Lawrence Jackofsky  
Regional Director

LJ/b

*Outreach*

March 11, 1982

Mrs. Linda L. Wood  
Route 5  
P.O. Box 496  
McMinnville, TN 37110

Dear Mrs. Wood:

Our UAHC publication catalogue was sent to you but it did not have the prices. I am enclosing the price list for your information.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller  
Assistant to the President



March 9, 1982

Mrs. Linda L. Wood  
Route 5  
P.O. Box 496  
McMinnville, TN 37110

Dear Mrs. Wood:

We have your recent letter and it was good to hear from you. Let me assure you that we will seek to be of assistance to you in every way possible.

The UAHC has a number of regional offices throughout the country. In many of these regions we also have Outreach coordinators. Inasmuch as I do not know of the exact location of McMinnville, Tennessee, it would be helpful if you could tell me what large city you are near. Our Tennessee congregations, depending on geographical locale, are serviced by offices in St. Louis, Washington, Dallas and/or Miami, therefore it would help to know a bit more about the location of McMinnville.

In any event I am enclosing herewith a catalogue of UAHC publications. I will check off those which I feel would be helpful for you and your children in regard to answering questions about Judaism. Once I have a better idea of your location I can seek to put you in touch with either an Outreach coordinator or a rabbi in your area.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.



March 2, 1982  
Rt. 5, Box 496  
Mc Minnville, In.  
37110

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I want to convert to  
Jadaism. I have wanted to for the past  
17 years. Various brief conversations  
with several Rabbis over the past five  
years were not encouraging. Some weeks  
ago I caught part of a re-run of a Phil  
Donahue program and was encouraged by  
your outreaching attitude. Where do I  
start?

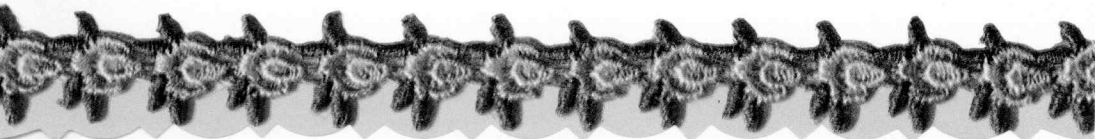
My family, husband, four  
children and mother live in Mc Minnville,  
In. We are 80 miles in any direction from  
a synagogue. Transportation is a real  
problem. I feel I will get neither help  
nor hindrance from my husband, Jimmy,  
who is, he says, an agnostic. For 17 years  
I have claimed to be a non-observant  
Jew. I read somewhere that the Israeli  
Supreme Court ruled "that anyone who

claims he is a Jew ... is a Jew." I've used this rationale to ease my conscious for lying to people about my religious convictions. I want to become an observant Jew.

What has finally precipitated my acting on this after 17 years? Several things these past 6 months have occurred: my daughters, Tina, age 12 and Tamala, age 10, after visiting overnight at a friend's house and attending church services, wanted to be baptized so they wouldn't go to hell and calling Jesus, God; my 14 year old son, Charles, asking why isn't Jesus the Messiah; my 16 year old, Geoff, saying loudly "There is no God" when what he is really wanting is God. Geoff has had his driver's license since September of 1981. He is allowed to drive the truck. While he and Charles were running an errand for me in late October, the truck battery

went dead. A man from a mile or so down the road, not too familiar with us, gave them a neighborly hand in getting the truck started. Then he gave my blonde-haired, blue-eyed sons the latest copy of the Ku Klux Klan youth newspaper! I have never hesitated to say "I'm Jewish" to anyone who asked nor have my children. On Halloween night some misguided and/or malicious youths, burnt a cross on my front lawn. My husband and sons were outraged, my girls stunned and a little fearful. But... then came the questions!

Sir, I must have something more to give them of Judaism than the Ten Commandments. Where can I obtain the materials to learn from and teach my children with? How do I go about converting? I fervently hope





that I have not waited too long, that I still have time to give my children the many answers to their questions about Judaism.

I am looking forward with great anticipation to your reply.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Linda L. Wood