

MS-630: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler Digital Collection, 1961-1996. Series A: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1961-1996.

Box Folder 12 4b

Patrilineal Committee, 1982-1994.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the American Jewish Archives website.



April 29, 1986 20 Nisan 5746

Mr. Leonard Fein MOMENT 462 Boyleston Street Boston, MA 02116

Dear Lenny:

I really have no innovative ideas as to how the pro-Patrilineal position can be articulated. All I can tell you is that when we have a chance to make our case the sheer logic of it all persuades the audience and esperially if the audience is composed of those who are not institutionally committed. Interestingly enough, this applies to Israelis as well.

Maybe you should not present this as a Reform versus the rest of the world issue. You might invite a number of people across the line who are for it on an individual level, including Reform leaders such as me and then some Conservative leaders such as Kelman, Shkulweis, Gerson Goben (Kelman tells me he is for Patrilineal, although at the CLAL Conference he made sounds that were totally otherwise, but that may be his institutional voice rather than the voice of his zonoziction).

I thank that a Panel idea is not bad, or a series of like questions addressed to three or four individuals.

You may recall the JUDAISM volume devoted to this issue. It will give you s some ideas for participants but in all fairness, that issue, whatever it is, should not presibt a divided view since prior issues of MOMENT were the bed to the 'yesh omrim' (from my perspective).

L hope you have been enjoying a sweet and Kosher Pesach.

Sincerely,

Emanuel Congregation

5959 Sheridan Road at Thorndale Avenue Chicago 60660

HERMAN E. SCHAALMAN Robbi

April 26, 1984

MEMORANDUM

TO:

PATRILINEAL COMMITTEE

FROM:

RABBI HERMAN E. SCHAALMAN

I made the mistake of not adding the name of the author of the recently proposed resolution. It is Philip Bentley.

Some of you have already indicated that you think this resolution is either premature or redundant or both. A recommendation will be made to have that resolution transferred to our Committee for disposition.

I will keep you informed of any developments.

HES:sgk

Emanuel Congregation

5959 Sheridan Road at Thorndale Avenue Chicago 60660

HERMAN E. SCHAALMAN

April 24, 1984

Dear Alex:

In reply to your question, the resolution was submitted by Philip Bentley. It got to me by way of Joe Glaser who apparently had a copy of it. As far as I know, it has been transferred to the CCAR Resolutions Committee.

I concur with your conclusions and will contact the Chairman of the Resolutions Committee, letting him know my own feelings in this matter as well as yours.

We had a very beautiful Pesach and assume that you did too. I look forward to seeing you probably in Washington.

In the meantime, every good wish,

Cordially,

Herman E. Schaalman Rabbi

We want peend

Much

HES:sgk

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

ce P.H.

Pohle

February 8, 1984

Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman Emanuel Congregation 5959 Sheridan Road Chicago, Illinos 60660

Dear Herman:

AMERICAN IEWISH

Just a note to let you know that I approve of the current wording endorsed by the Committee for numbers 5a to 5b, and 7a to 7b. You have my vote for approval and distribution of the statement.

Best regards from house to house.

Sincerely,

Palmla

February 8, 1984

Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman Emanuel Congregation 5959 Sheridan Road Chicago, Illinds 60660

Dear Herman:

Just a note to let you know that I approve of the current wording endorsed by the Committee for numbers 5a to 5b, and 7a to 7b. You have my vote for approval and distribution of the statement.

Best regards from house to house.

Sincerely,

February 8, 1984

Rabbi Samuel R. Weinstein Hebrew Benevolent Congregation 1589 Peachtree Street Atlanta, GA 30367

Dear Sam:

Al Vorspan was kind enough to share with me your wonderful response to Rabbi Emanuel Feldman. I write to express my admiration of the superb response you provided to his condemnation of Reform Judaism on the patrilineal issue. You were great!

With thanks and with all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Pakula

August 4, 1994 27 Av 5754

Ms. Evelyn Wilcock 22 Luttrell Avenue London SW15 6PF England

Dear Ms. Wilcock:

While I received your note of July 29 when I was in London, the brevity of my visit and the press of meetings precluded making contacting with you. I do hope you understand my situation and thus forgive this very late response.

On my return to New York I found the various materials you were kind enough to share. I very much appreciate your thoughtfulness and have reviewed your words with care.

The passion you feel for your subject matter is evident in your writings. I do note, however, that you appear to be reacting to the stronger social stigma which obtains in Great Britain, rather than the situation here in the United States.

Be that as it may, you should know that I plan to share your materials with others in our community who are deeply involved in all aspects of Outreach, most especially in regard to patrilineality.

For your perusal, I enclose herewith the Spring 1994 edition of REFORM JUDAISM and call your particular attention to the cover story on Page 10. I am certain it will interest you. Note also the item on the 15 year old from Memphis, a child of an intermarriage, who chose to affirm her Jewishness at her Bat Mitzvah. As Reform Jews we are firm believers in choice and that attains as well in regard to Jewishly educated patrilineal Jews, be it via our Introduction to Judaism Classes for those who have had but a marginal Jewish education or a conversion ceremony for those who choose that formality.

Ms. Evelyn Wilcock August 4, 1994 Page -2-

As to your comments on Outreach workers who have chosen Judaism, on the contrary, we have found they can be superb teachers for adult children of intermarriages. We do have to raise the consciousness of our constituents to the particular problems of this group and provide creative models for handling such an educational process. We are working towards that goal.

Again, thank you for sharing your writings and your concerns. I am deeply grateful for your interest and your input.

With every good wish for the coming New year, I am Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212)249-0100

July 28, 1994 20 Av 5754

Mrs. Rosita Rosenberg Union of Liberal & Progressive Synagogues Montagu Centre 21 Maple Street London W1P 6DS England

Dear Rosita:

I, too, enjoyed meeting you. Though we encountered each other before, this is really the first time that we had a chance to chat and I was much impressed by your ideas and your ability to articulate them.

I am glad that you are moving toward a unified position on the patrilineal issue. From every point of view, a united approach is better than a public or even a smoldering internal dispute.

I spoke to Don Day as promised. Hopefully, he will be able to be of help. Certainly from an ideological point of view he is committed to the patrilineal approach, although as President of the World Union, he is, to some extent, circumscribed by the view of his constituency, foremost among them, MARAM.

Again, my thanks for giving me the opportunity to get to know you all better.

Hopefully we will encounter each other again in the not too distant future.

Cordially,

It see to be the bell on the war lase to The west of the west of the property 29 Pur 1994 Dear Kessi Schindler, Thankips for your letter. I would 12 welcome Jon 18 Landon and 12 thanks you for coming , for meeting the Kelbis. I would have loved & have met you myself ever as I sory have no contact address, I can giving this 18 Reliai an sun If you did have a moneut to spare, I can be available on friday 1 July till 5.30 pm and Then again from I widay evening onwards. Between there thing we shall be in Manchester being entertained by

the fenily of my daughter's france prior 12 their wedding on July 18th (in the hiseral Synapsyne you will not doubt be glad 18 anow ruce it confirms the confidence will which you include us in the community.) The phase number in Marchester is 061 969 5245.

You will find copies of some of my work on Unidore of get back - it just nicked you when you left. I hope it will intorest you.

I am so gled you are here and hope you will leve an enjoyable + constructive visits

Your sincerely

Krehyn Wilcock.

april 29,1991 from Simcha Abeles Friedman Mar Robli Schindler My wife and I traveled to Honde sorter This year, stopping It of models on the way. I was pleased to see in phone directories that there were religious services in such places as Forence, S.C. for example. Only the Beform morement had any contact there. my grandfathy, "'s, Kay Simche ables, had ordination from Hurgary. It pours me quetly ther fore, that a couse who was nomed for him are ourced recently, I don't care what your Rette, Robbi Schnerson, Dans. I'm Jewish and my son is Jewish. " my cowning wife is NOT Jewish.) a Roform Robbi morned them about 8 years ago. to pain is gived ogain because of the merriage 2 our Cousin's son next Surlay, Dray 5th to a gentile woman. His trother in also engaged to many a gertil woman. Sian Roth: Schirdler, de you hold their cheldren of these warneges on Junish? If not, Should a Kefarm Roll: have operformed the marriages ... Hove we come so for . - through pagrams and holocousts - to throw If the teachings of the yours truly, TORAH? - We need Moshiach! Simole Thedman 138 Montgomy SA Brooklyn 1122 Enclosm: - (P.S.f.)

april 29, 6991 from Simcha Abeles Friedman PS. Dear Kabbi Scherdler, W is almost Lag B'Ome When remember that even > 215 17 does to cause the, didn't show each other proper respect... my heart aches for the pain of all markind try especially for our young Jewish adults - sono and daughters of our holy ting in heaven - who are throwing If the crowns and robes of news to intermiry ... The lineage of las in has to be pure no less the laneage of Joech, Breet our yother. Les us follow the Toral; by us lead other sons and daughters of Just in following ther Torch. Yours truly, awardee, Freedoms towalch Classrom Terchero Melal. · Orjator 9 Sewish games Which head Value,





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212)249-0100

July 29, 1994 21 Av 5754

Rabbi William Wolff Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue 6 Lansdowne Road Hove, BN3 1FF England

Dear William: A MER CAN ENGE

I received your letter in England just prior to my departure and of course when I returned to the States an avalanche of letters and other matters to be considered poured over me. Before long, I had to be off again on several shorter journeys.

I write you this note merely to assure you that your letter was not ignored. I read it with a good deal of care and I thank you for the information which it provides.

Hopefully, we will have a chance to meet with one another in the not too distant future.

Cordially,

Jabulanas

January 26, 1987 25 Tevet 5747

Rabbi Harry A. Manhoff Congregation Beth David 2932 Augusta Street San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Harry:

While I don't get the JEWISH HERITAGE, Lenny Thal was good enough to send me your open letter which appeared on Manuary 2, 1987/ I am pleased that he did so for it is a wonderful letter, indeed it is excellent!

I write to commend you and to express my appreciation for your taking time to respond to Rabbi Eliezrie. You did so with sensitivity, kindness and friendship. I hope your words were received in the spirit in which you wrote them.

With every good wish and warm regards, I am

Sincerely,





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212)249-0100

Jahrehural

October 13, 1992 16 Tishri 5753

Egon Mayer, Ph.D.
Center for Jewish Studies
Graduate Center City University of New York
33 West 42nd St.
New York, NY 10036

Dear Egon: A.V

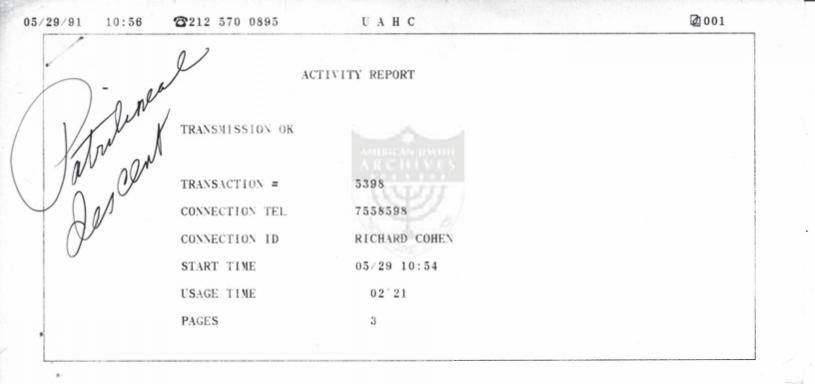
Thank you for your spirited defence of my claims concerning the acceptance of patrilineality. I hope the editors of the Jewish Week - who often exhibit an anti-Reform bias - have the decency to print it.

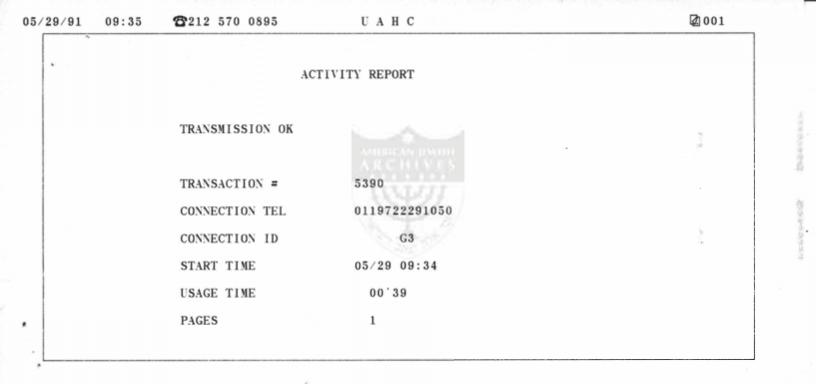
Once again, let me tell you how very good it was to have you at our various meetings several weeks ago. You always teach me a great deal.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely

brusalan Xepat Gershorn Boren Q. 2-291.023. H) 2.7/6.398





June 2, 1992 1 Sivan 5752 Geoffrey D. Paul 130 Dwight Place

Englewood, NJ 07631

Dear Geoffrey:

I read your article on "Redefining the Boundaries of Who is a Jew." Richard Cohen faxed it to me and I am absolutely delighted with it. I much appreciate your capturing the essence of my thought.

As an aside and off the record, it may interest you that raised this issue at a recent meeting of the Memorial Foundation which, as you know, is headed by your former chief rabbi. The Orthodox, of course, pounced on me, even Lord Jacobovitz slapped me on the wrist for, "introducing a note of dissent into our discussions."

After the meeting, however, quite a number of people came up to me and said, you know, we agree with you. Among them was the present head of the British Board of Deputies, a judge. Marginally noted, he is one of the better lay leaders that you have had of recent vintage. He too, said to me after some brief discussion: "Here is one Orthodox Jew who is fully in harmony with your approach that it is better to include than to exclude.

Anyway, thanks.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Richard Cohen



From the study of RABBI KENNETH J. WEISS, D.H.L.

Imforwarding the enclosed to It's born opened I did not notice it was addressed to you.



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

May 13, 1991 29 Iyar 5751

Mr. Simcha Abeles Friedman: 638 Montgomery Street Brooklyn, NY 11225

Dear Simcha:

Unfortunately, you are not correct. In the Bible, only the patrilineal line is followed, the matrilineal was substituted many centuries later. Just as one example: How does one become a Kohen or Levi - only if the father is such. If it is good enough for passing down the status of priesthood, why not the status of Jewishness?

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

may 8, 1991 from Simcha Abeles Friedman

Mor Roth Schundler, Thank you so much for your detailed suply to my letter recently. It's much

appreciated.

as you know, Rabbi Schindler, a gen is not just a person who deades to

learn the Bible ... a proper conversion, et .. makes a "person" a Jew . a Jewish DNP)

is a God - given DID, and responsebility.

Our Torol does not advocate patrilinal descent. We cannot change Torsh low, as you

well know, Dir. Changing Bod-guen Torok laws, because

it seems expedient - leads to more and more compromises and more charges until the

Torch becomes just another book .. choose

to follow it if you will ... Unfortunately, the conservation and

Reform movements have aided and "encourged" assemblation, I'm sorry

to say, dear Rubh Scherdler. We desparable, need Moshock! yours truly

Simche freedman Enclosesper -

from Simcha Abeles Friedman

The enclosed 'L'Chain features

my wife who heads a group of

ladio, who visit Riker's Island

to bring some Jewish values

to Jawish in makes there.

The enclosed Bringing Mosherid'

will provide some quotations which

will be useful, I hope, in your

sorganizational pulpit, dear Rabli

Simila Truck



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

VIA FAX

May 29, 1991 16 Sivan 5751

TO: GERSHOM GORENBERG

Thanks for faxing the edited text. I approve of the final form. One reminder, however, in paragraph four which starts "The Reform decisions..." I would request that you either underline or italicize the last words: so long as the children were raised as Jews.

In response to your questions:

1/ The figures on acceptance of the patrilineal decision are based on a survey made by a prominent Jewish sociologist, Stephen Cohen, which was extensively reported on in the New York Times some months ago.

2/ By all means push the date back and make it 2000 years, that is to say, begin the paragraph by saying "True, for the past 2000 years or so Jewish identity..." although scholars are really not certain when the change from patrilineal to matrilineal in fact took place.

Warm regards, to Ze'ev too.

1/92 Do Duck Cother

August 8, 1984

Dr. Robert Gordis JUDAISM 15 East 84th Street New York, NY 10028

Dear Bob:

Enclosed herewith is my response to the paper by Shaye J.D. Cohen. I trust the timing is all right and that you will have no problem in regard to publication dates.

Recently I ran into Jacobovitz and he asked if I knew who the other contributions would come from. Since I don't have that information, I would be grateful if you would see that the information is shared with him.

If the Symposium works out, and I trust it will, I will want to have additional copies for distribution to the Board of Trustees of the UAHC and I hope that can be arranged. As a matter of fact, this might provide a grand opportunity for a promotion of JUDAISM among our leadership. I would be more than happy to discuss this with you.

With every good wish add kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

August 8, 1984 Dr. Robert Gordis JUDAISM 15 East 84th Street New York, NY 10028 Dear Bob: Enclosed herewith is my response to the paper by Shaye J.D. Cohen. I trust the timing is all right and that you will have no problem in regard to publication dates. Recently I ran into Jacobovitz and he asked if I knew who the other contributions would come from. Since I don't have that information, I would be grateful if you would see that the information is shared with him. If the Symposium works out, and I trust it will, I will want to have additional copies for distribution to the Board of Trusteee of the UAHC and I hope that can be arranged. As a matter of fact, this might provide a g#and opportunity for a promotion of JUDAISM among our leadership. I would be more than happy to discuss this with you. With every good wish add kindest greetings, I am Sincerely. Alexander M. Schindler Encl.

I'm grateful to the two of you for the outline and information you gave me which will be of great assistance to me in responding to the article by Shaye J.D. Cohen on "The Matrilineal Principle in Historical Perspective." I am deeply grateful to both of you.

Warm regards.

Due Soft

We acknowledge with thanks your manuscript entitled,

As soon as we have had the opportunity of examining it, we shall communicate with you.

Dr. Robert Gordis, Editor Br. Ruth B. Waxman, Managing Editor



UAHC.

838 Fill Aug. New York, W. P. 10021



COPY

June 2, 1992 1 Sivan 5752

J.P. Morris 15 Latches Lane Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

Dear Mr. Morris:

I have been travelling for the last few weeks, and returned to a mountain of mail on my desk. Thus, in response to your letter and query of May 25th, rather than give a detailed response in this letter, I enclose a copy of a speech which I delivered in 1986 at a CLAL Conference on Jewish Unity. You may be interested in the entire speech, but call your particular attention to my comments on patrilineality which begin on page 11. I do believe that you will find these comments to be of interest.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely

BRINGING MOSHIACH

ARCHIVES

7 Iyar, 5751

published by:

Bais Chana Alumni Association 819 Montgomery Street Brooklyn, New York (718) 756-7352

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

This booklet has been compiled in response to the Rebbe, Shlita's urgent message that the coming of Moshiach depends upon our increased conscientiousness in learning Torah and in the performance of Mitzvos. It contains sources and references for the coming of Moshiach, from TaNaCH, Talmud and Chassidus.

As a general resolution from this evening — to help bring Moshiach, NOW — we would like to ask everyone present to learn through this booklet, preferably with someone else who was not here tonight. Included is a list of other references (far from exhaustive), should anyone wish to learn more on the topic.

In the merit of learning about Moshiach, may we instill in our hearts and minds the fervent desire for Moshiach, thereby bringing Moshiach, NOW.

Bais Chana Alumni Association

ז' אייר תשנ"א April 21, 1991

I. PART ONE - HINTS TO MOSHIACH FROM THE TORAH

A. The reality of the coming of Moshiach has been present since man's creation. Beginning with creation and continuing throughout Chumash (and N'ach) there are P'sukim which hint at this reality. The following are some examples:

MAN'S CREATION

ויצר ה' אלקים את האדם עפר מן האדמה (בראשית ב;ז) כש"י: שתי יצירות. יצירה לעולם הזה ויצירה לתחיית המתים.

And G-d formed man (from) dust of the earth... (Gen. 2:7)
Rashi: [Why are there 2 yuds in the word "Vayyizar" when usually there is but one?] (G-d made) two "formations" (one) formation for this world and (one) formation for when the dead would be brought back to life.

B. Leaving this golus is compared to our leaving Egypt. In fact, in the account of Moshe and B'nai Yisroel singing praises after the splitting of the Red Sea, there is another hint to Moshiach.

LEAVING EGYPT

אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל את השירה הזאת לה' (שמות טו;א) כש"ר: ...מדרשו, אמרו רז"ל מכאן לתחיית המתים מן התורה.

Then Moshe and B'nai Yisroel will sing this song to G-d (Ex. 15:1)

Rashi: [Why is the verb "to sing" in future tense when they sang it then?] Medrash: Our Rabbis said, from here there is a hint from the Torah of the resurrection of the dead (and at that time Moshe and B'nai Yisroel will again sing praises to H-shem). C. The last major event mentioned in the Torah is B'nai Yisroel's preparations for entering the land of Israel. Here too there is a hint of the world to come.

למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה אשר נשבע ה' לאבותכם לתת להם (דברים יא;כא) רש": 'לתת לכם' אין כתיב כאן אלא 'לתת להם' מכאן מצינו למדים תחיית המתים מן התורה.

In order that your days and the days of your children will be lengthened on the land that G-d promised to your fathers to give to them. (Deu. 11:21)

Rashi: "To give to you" is not written here, but rather, "to give to them" (i.e. "your fathers"). From here we learn of the resurrection of the dead from the Torah.

II. PART TWO – DESCRIPTION OF MOSHIACH AND HIS ACTIONS

The Rambam (Maimonides) takes this reality of Moshiach one step further – not only by quoting p'sukim as proving Moshiach's reality, but also by describing Moshiach and his accomplishments.

פרק אחד עשר

א המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד לישנה לממשלה הראשונה, ובונה המקדש ומקבץ נדחי ישראל. וחוזרין כל המשפטים בימיו כשהיו מקודם. מקריבין קרבנות ועושין שמיטין ויובלות ככל־ מצותה האמורה בתורה. וכל מי שאינו מאמין בו, או מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו – לא בשאר נביאים בלבד הוא כופר, אלא בתורה ובמשה רבינו. שהרי התורה העידה עליו, שנאמר: ושב ה' אלקיך את שבותך ורחמך ושב וקבצך וגו' אם־יהיה נדחך בקצה השמים וגו' והביאך ה' ואלו הדברים המפורשים בתורה, הם כוללים כל הדברים שנאמרו על ידי כל הנביאים. אף בפרשת בלעם נאמר ושם נבא בשני המשיחים: במשיח הראשון שהוא דוד שהושיע את ישראל מיד צריהם, ובמשיח האחרון שעומד מבניו שמושעי את ישראל [באחרונה]. ושם הוא אומר: אראנו ולא עתה - זה דוד; אשורנו ולא קרוב - זה מלך המשיח; דרך כוכב מיעקב - זה דוד; וקם שבט מישראל - זה מלך המשיח; ומחץ פאתי מואב – זה דוד, וכן הוא אומר: ויך את מואב וימדדם בחבל; וקרקר כל בני שת – זה המלך המשיח, שנאמר בו: ומשלו מים עד ים; והיה אדום ירשה - זה דוד, שנאמר: ותהי אדום לדוד לעבדים וגו': והיה ירשה וגו' – זה המלך המשיח, שנאמר: ועלו מושיעים בהר ציון וגו'.

ב אף בערי מקלט הוא אומר: ואם ירחיב ה' אלקיך את גבלך [וגו'] ויספת לך עוד שלש ערים וגו' ומעולם לא היה דבר זה, ולא צוה הקב"ה לתוהו. אבל בדברי הנביאים אין הדבר צריך ראיה, שכל הספרים מלאים בדבר זה.

ג ואל יעלה על דעתך שהמלך המשיח צריך לעשות אותות ומופתים ומחדש דברים בעולם או מחיה מתים וכיוצא בדברים אלו – אין הדבר כך, שהרי רבי עקיבא חכם גדול מחכמי משנה היה, והוא היה נושא כליו של בן כוזיבא המלך, והוא היה אומר עליו שהוא המלך המשיח עד שנהרג בעונות. כיון שנהרג – נודע להם שאינו, ולא שאלו ממנו חכמים לא אות ולא מופת. ועיקר הדברים ככה הם: שהתורה הזאת חקיה ומשפטיה לעולם ולעולמי עולמים, ואין מוסיפין עליהם ולא גורעין מהם.

ד ואם יעמוד מלן מבית דוד הוגה בתורה ועוסק במצות כדוד אביו, כפי תורה שבכתב ושבעל פה, ויכוף כל ישראל לילן בה ולחזק בדקה וילחם מלחמות ה' – הרי זה בחזקת שהוא משיח. אם עשה והצליח ובנה מקדש במקומו וקבץ נדחי ישראל – הרי זה משיח בודאי, ויתקן את העולם כולו לעבוד את ה' ביחד, שנאמר: כי אז אהפך על עמים שפה ברורה לקרוא כולם בשם ה' ולעבדו שכם אחד.

(ואם לא הצליח עד כה, או נהרג, בידוע שאינו זה שהבטיחה עליו תורה, והרי הוא ככל מלכי בית דוד השלמים והכשרים, שמתו. ולא העמידו הקב"ה אלא לנסות בו רבים, שנאמר: ומן המשכילים יכשלו, לצרוף בהם, ולברר וללבן עד עת קץ, כי עוד למועד.

Code, Governments

(Yad, Melachim)

11:1 The Messiah will be a king who will restore the kingdom of David to its original state. He will rebuild the Temple (Bais HaMikdash), and gather together all Jews, no matter where they are scattered.

All the laws of the Torah will be fulfilled as they were originally. The sacrificial system as well as the practices of the Sabbatical Year (Shemita) and the Jubilee (Yovel) will all be

restored. We will then be able to once again observe all the commandments of the Torah.

A person who does not believe in the Messiah, or does not await his coming, denies the most essential teachings of the prophets. Beyond that, he also denies the teachings of both Moses and the Torah.

The Torah itself testifies to the Messianic promise when it says (Deuteronomy 30:3-5), "G-d will restore your fortunes, have mercy on you, and gather you [again from all the countries where He has scattered you]. If He were to banish you to the ends of the heavens [the L-rd your G-d will gather you, and bring you, and bring you from there]. The L-rd your G-d will bring you [to the land that your fathers occupied. You will occupy it again, and He will make you even more prosperous and numerous than your fathers]." This passage in the Torah includes everything that was predicted by all the prophets [regarding the Messiah].

In the account of Baalam, we likewise find a prophecy regarding the two Messiahs (or anointed ones). The first one was King David, who liberated the Jews from all their initial oppressors. The second is his descendant, the Messiah, who will liberate all Jews in the end.

This is his prophecy (Numbers 24:17):

"I see him but not now" - King David.

"I behold him, but not near" the Messiah.

"A star shall come forth from Jacob" - King David.

"A scepter shall arise from Israel" - the Messiah.

"He shall smite the squadrons of Moab" - King David.

We thus find that he (2 Samuel 8:2), "smote Moab and measured them with a rope."

"He shall break down the sons of Seth" - the Messiah. We thus find that (Zechariah 9:10), "his rule shall be from sea to sea."

"Edom shall be his conquest" - King David. It is thus written (2 Samuel 8:14), "all Edom became servants to David."

"And Seir, his enemy, shall be his tribute" - the Messiah. It is thus foretold (Obadiah 1:21), "Saviors shall come up on

Mount Zion [and judge the mount of Esau, and the kingdom shall become that of G-d]."

11:2 We find further evidence [in the Torah] from the commandment concerning the Cities of Refuge Arey Miklat). [The Torah thus says Deuteronomy 19:8,9), "When G-d enlarges your borders...and you shall add three cities." This never took place, but it is certain that G-d would not give a commandment in vain. [We therefore see that this will have to take place in the Messianic Age].

We do not have to bring any proof, however, that the prophets speak of the Messiah, since all their writings are full of this concept.

11:3 Do not think that the Messiah will have to perform signs and miracles. He will not necessarily change the course of nature, bring the dead back to life, or anything else like that.

We thus find that Rabbi Akiba, the greatest sage of the Mishnah, was willing to accept Ben Kosiba as the Messiah, at least until he was killed because of his sins. It was only when he was killed that they realized that they had been wrong and he was not the true Messiah.

We see, however, that the sages did not ask for any sign or miracle.

The main thing, however, [is that the Messiah will not change our religion in any way]. The Torah that we now have, with all its laws and commandments, will remain the same forever. Nothing will be added to it nor subtracted from it.

11:4 We may assume that an individual is the Messiah if he fulfills the following conditions:

He must be a ruler, from the house of David, immersed in the Torah and its commandments like David his ancestor. He must also follow both the Written and the Oral Torah, lead all Jews back to the Torah, strengthen the observance of its laws, and fight G-d's battles. If one fulfills these conditions, then we may assume that he is the Messiah.

If he does this successfully, and then rebuilds the Temple (Bais HaMikdash) on its original site and gathers all the dispersed Jews, then we may be certain that he is the Messiah.

He will then perfect the entire world and bring all men to serve G-d in unity. It has thus been predicted (Zephania 3:9), "I will then give all peoples a pure tongue, that they may call in the name of G-d, and all serve Him in one manner."

(Maimonides Principles, Rambam, Laws of Kings 11:1-4)

III. PART THREE – BELIEF IN MOSHIACH AND YEARNING FOR HIS ARRIVAL

A. Knowing that Moshiach exists is not enough. We must believe that he is coming, and coming soon; we must yearn and pray for his arrival. The Rambam makes this clear in his 13 Principles of Faith, one of which (#12) is quoted below:

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה בביאת המשיח, ואף על פי שיתמהמה עם כל זה אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא ("ג עיקרי אמונה).

I believe with a complete faith in the coming of Moshiach, even though he may delay, nevertheless I will await and search for him everyday.

(13 Principles of Faith)

B. The Rambam also explains in his Mishnah Torah that Jews throughout the ages have always wanted, prayed for and desired Moshiach's arrival. This would enable all to devote themselves to learning Torah and knowing H-shem.

ד לא נתאוו החמים והנביאים ימות המשיח, לא כדי שישלטו על כל העולם, ולא כדי שירדו בגוים, ולא כדי שינשאו אותם העמים, ולא כדי לאכול ולשתות ולשמוח – אלא כדי שיהיו פנויין בתורה וחכמתה; ולא יהיה להם נוגש ומבטל – כדי שיזכו לחיי העולם הבא, כמו שבארנו בהלכות תשובה.

ה ובאותו הזמן לא יהיה שם לא רעב ולא מלחמה, ולא קנאה ותחרות

— שהטובה תהיה מושפעת הרבה וכל המעדנים מצויין כעפר. ולא
יהיה עסק כל העולם אלא לדעת את ה' בלבד. ולפיכך יהיו כל ישראל
חכמים גדולים ויודעים דברים הסתומים וישיגו דעת בוראם כפי כח
האדם, שנאמר: כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים.

נשלמו הלכות מלכים והחיבור כולו, ברוך שאמר והיה העולם בפרטו ובכללו. 12:4 Our sages and prophets did not long for the Messianic Age in order that they might rule the world and dominate the gentiles. They did not desire that the nations should honor them, or that they should be able to eat, drink and be merry.

They only wanted one thing, and that was to be free to involve themselves in the Torah and its wisdom. They wanted nothing to disturb or distract them, in order that they should be able to strive to become worthy of life in the World to Come. This has already been discussed in my code of Repentance.

12:5 In the Messianic Age, there will be neither war nor famine. Jealousy or competition will cease to exist, for all things will be most plentiful, and all sorts of delicacies will be as common as dust.

The main occupation of humanity will only be to know G-d. The Jews will therefore become great sages, know many hidden things, and achieve the greatest understanding of G-d possible for a mortal human being. The Prophet thus predicted (Isaiah 11:9), "The earthy shall be full of the knowledge of G-d, as the waters cover the sea."

(Maimonides Principles, Rambam, Laws of Kings 12:4-5)

C. Jews of the past are not the only ones required to desire Moshiach. We need to yearn and pray for his immediate arrival as well. The most obvious way in which we do this is in our daily prayers. Three times a day we ask of H-shem:

ולירושלים עירך ברחמים תשוב ותשכון בתוכה כאשר דברת, וכסא דוד עבדך מהרה בתוכה תכין, ובנה אותה בקרוב בימינו בנין עולם.

(שמונה עשרה)

18

Return in mercy to Jerusalem Your city and dwell therein as you have promised; speedily establish therein the throne of David your servant, and rebuild it, soon in our days, as an everlasting edifice.

(English Siddur, The Amidah)

את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה תצמיח וקרנו תרום בישועתך כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום (שמונה עשרה)

Speedily cause the scion of David, Your servant to flourish, and increase his power by your salvation, for we hope for Your salvation all day.

(English Siddur, the Amidah)

D. The Radak, a commentator on the N'ach, explains why a plague broke out during King David's times: because the people did not yearn for Moshiach and the building of the Bais HaMikdash.

רד"ק: ובדרש, כל האלפים האלה שנפלו בימי דוד לא נפלו אלא על־ידי
שלא תבעו בית המקדש. והרי דברים קל וחמר, ומה אם אלו
שלא היה בימיהם ולא חרב בימיהם נפלו על שלא תבעו אותו, אנו שהיה
בימינו וחרב בימינו על אחת כמה וכמה. לפיכך התקינו זקנים ונביאים
ליטע בפיהם של ישראל להיות מתפללים שלשה פעמים בכל יום השב
שכינתך ומלכותך לציון וסדר עבודתך לירושלים אכי"ר סלה.

(שמואל'ב כד;כה).

And the Midrash, all of these thousands who fell in the days of David fell because they did not demand the Bais HaMikdash. And this is a kal v'chomer, they, in whose day (the Bais HaMikdash) was not (yet built) and it was not destroyed fell because they did not demand it, we, in whose day it was and it was destroyed how much more so (must we demand it). Therefore, (our) sages and prophets enacted that we should pray three times a day to return Your Presence and Your kingdom to Zion, and Your Service to Jerusalem. Amen, may it be His Will, Selah.

E. The Rebbe Shlita takes our requirement to want and pray for Moshiach one step further by saying that the very wanting of Moshiach is considered a merit which will bring his arrival faster. בעמדנו בימים אלו, אשר הובטחנו שיהיו ויהפכו לששון ולשמחה... בביאת משיחנו.

ו(בנוסח הידוע) אע"פ שיתמהמה עם כ"ז אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא, וכמש"נ אם יתמהמה חכה לו.

- יהי רצון שיהי' כ"ז במהרה בימינו בקרוב ממש.

וע"פ המובא בכ"מ יש לומר, אשר על ידי שמחכים לו, זה עצמו מקדים ביאת המשיח, ואלקים יעשה למחכה לו.

שהרי עי"ז מוסיפים ב"זכר", ובמילא מגדילים ומקדימים את המסובב – ה"אחישנה".

ויש עוד להוסיף בזה ע"פ פירוש חז"ל: למחכה לו אינון דדחקין למלה דחכמתא ודייקין לה ומחכאן לה למנדע ברירא ואשתמודע למאריהון.

שמשתדלים ומתייגעים לברר אמתית מלה דחכמתא עד שיודעין את בוראן ע"י שמתגברים על החושך, החושך מבפנים (בשכל או בהרגש הלב) או מבחוץ (העלם והסתר העולם) – לבטלו, ועוד יותר – להפכו למסייע, ועד דאתהפכא חשוכא לנהורא, ואלקים יעשה

- שיהפכו הימים האלו לששון ולשמחה (בביאת משיח צדקנו).

ומיסוד דתנו השנים עשר – ביאת משיח – ליסוד השלשה עשר ומיסוד דתנו השנים עשר – ביאת משיח – החיית המתים. והרי היום – הוא יום הסתלקותו של האריז"ל החי.

שיקויים היעוד אשר תחיינה העצמות האלה, כל בית ישראל המה, ע"י אשר יתן ה' רוחו בהם וחיו.

ויקויים היעוד – יחיו מתיך, הקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר, וקהל גדול ישובו הנה, כי כה אמר ה' רנו ליעקב שמחה, והפכתי אבלם לששון – נאום ה'.

(ממכתב ה' מנ"א, תשכ"ה)

In our standing in these days, which were promised to us that they will be changed over to joyous and happy [days] with the coming of our Moshiach.

And (in the well known wording) "Even though he may delay, nevertheless I will await and search for him every day", as it says, if he tarries, wait and search for him.

It should be His will that all this will be speedily in our days, actually.

And according to what is brought down in various places, one can say, that through waiting and searching for him, this itself bring closer the coming of Brownie and Francisco and Franc

Because through adding to the "merits" [the possuk says if we merit than Moshiach will come sooner] than we automatically expatiate and bring closer the result – the "sooner" (of Moshiach's arrival).

And one can add to this [idea] through an explanation of a saying of our sages: "To search for him: those who pressure themselves [to understand something] in chochmah, and they are exacting in it and search for it to understand clearly, and to comprehend its complete illumination:

When we try to exert ourselves to clearly know the truth of something – through mastering the darkness, the inner darkness (in intellect or in feelings of the heart) or outer [darkness] (the hiddeness and darkness of the world) – to nullify it, or moreover – to change it [to become] a help, to [the extent] that darkness is changed over into light, then H-shem will make – that these days will be changed over to joy – happiness (with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkainu.

And from the 12th Principle [of Maimonides we will go immediately] to the 13th Principle, the resurrection of the dead... and the promise will be kept – "the ones lying in the earth will wake up and rejoice," and "a great congregation will return here because thus says H-shem, Yaakov rejoice, and I will change their mourning to joy – says H-shem."

(Likkutei Sichos XII, pgs. 292-293)

F. We can believe that Moshiach is coming now, today. The following story is from the Gemara:

אמר לי' אימת אתי משיח, אמר לי' זיל שיילי' לדידי'... אמר לי' שלום עליך רבי ומורי אמר לי' שלום עליך בר ליואי, אמר לי' לאימת אתי מר, א"ל היום ... הכי אמר לך "היום אם בקולו תשמער"

((סנהדרין צח;א).

He said to him, "When is Moshiach coming?" He said to him go ask him (Moshiach). He said to him (Moshiach) "Hello my teacher and master", He (Moshiach) said to him "Hello son of Liyoi". He said to him, "When is my master coming?" He said to him "Today"... Like it says: Today if you listen to His (H-shem's) voice.

(Sanhedrin 98:1)

May it be His will that Mosbiach will come today, actually!

FOR FURTHER READING

I. P'sukim concerning Moshiach coming in the Torah:

- 1) Gen. 1:1
- 2) Gen, 49:10 Rashi
- 3) Num. 24-17 Ramban (Nachmanides)
- 4) Num. 24:19 Rashi
- 5) Num. 24:40-43 Ramban
- 6) Deut. 32:39 Kli Yakar
- 7) Psalms 84:5 Sanhedrin 9:2

II. Prophecies concerning Moshiach's arrival:

- 1) Yeshayahu ch. 2, 10:32-11, 21, 26, 60
- 2) Yirmiyahu ch. 31
- Yechezkel ch. 36

III. Gemarah

Sanhedrin 88-90

IV.

- 1) Yalkut Shimoni on Yeshayahu 60:1, Remez 599
- 2) Zohar on Parshas Va'eira 31b-32a

V. Many Sichos and Ma'amarim from our Rebbeim:

THE REBBE'S NINETIETH YEAR בס"ד

11111 The Weekly Publication for every Jewish Person

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson נ"ע נוסד תוך ימי השלושים

LIVING WITH THE



This week we read two Torah portions, Behar and Bechukotai. Behar begins with the words "And G-d spoke to Moshe on Mount Sinai...and the land shall keep a Shabbat-Shmittato G-d." The commentator Rashi asks: "What does the subject of Shmitta have to do with Mount Sinai? Were not all of the commandments given at Sinai?" He then explains: "Just as all the details and minutiae of the laws of shmitta were given at Sinai, so were all the details and specifications of the other commandments given at Sinai."

Since the Torah has chosen the commandment of shmitta to illustrate that all the details of the other commandments were given at Sinai, this mitzva must express the Jewish approach to life in general.

A Jew is enjoined: "Six years shall you sow your field and ...prune your vineyard." A Jew must conduct himself and his affairs according to the laws of nature; one must plant and toil in order to eat. A Jew is not required to retreat from the world and sequester himself only in learning Torah and praying; on the contrary, he must fully participate in life.

At the same time, the Torah commands that every seventh year the Jew must abandon the land and allow it to have a Sabbath, and devote himself to learning, praying, and worshipping G-d. He then asks, "What will we eat during the seventh year, if we don't sow and reap our grain?" The Torah answers: "And I will command My blessing to be on you during the sixth year, and the land will produce enough grain to last for three years." Here the Jew is being asked to rely solely on G-d and not on natural law for his sustenance.

But, how can we be required to conduct ourselves according to the laws of nature, and in the same breath, be asked to refrain from doing things the natural way and rely on the supernatural? By synthesizing both approaches to life. We must do everything humanly possible according to natural law, at the same time believing in the supernatural power of G-d and His ability to sustain and help us.

The shmitta approach can be brought into every Jew's daily life. The "six years of work" emphasize the obligation we have to elevate the mundane, physical world by imbuing it with holiness through our actions. The "shmitta year" allows us to recognize that despite all of man's accomplishments, we are ultimately dependent upon the will of G-d for our sustenance and well-being, and that trust in man and nature is misplaced. Once in every seven years we sever ourselves from the natural world and rely solely on G-d. A Jew draws spiritual strength from the shmitta year, rededicating himself to the knowledge that our task is not to be subservient to nature, but rather to rule over the natural world and imbue it with holiness.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

MOTHER'S DAY IS EVERY DAY

Have you heard the one about how many Jewish mothers it takes to change a light bulb? "That's O.K.," the Jewish mother says, "I'll sit in the dark."

This is our modern-day stereotype of the Jewish mother--self-sacrificing, a bit of a martyr and a little manipulative. And, your therapist might add, responsible for all your problems.

Though martyrdom and manipulation are not traits that we want to emulate, what about self-sacrifice and selflessness--two qualities that have been getting a lot of bad press over the last couple of decades?

Most of us would not be where we are today had it not been for our mothers' selflessness: waking up at all hours of the night, nursing us back to health when we were sick, putting their own needs and desires on hold in order to help fulfill ours. True, dear old mom might remind us of these things a little more often than we'd like to hear, but our mothers deserve our recognition, and more, for their self-sacrifice.

In fact, they deserve limitless appreciation and recognition. According to Jewish tradition, our debt of acknowledgment toward our parents can never be repaid. The commandment to show honor toward another is mentioned in the Torah only concerning our parents and G-d. The Torah does not even command us to honor a king or sage! The reason for the commandment to "Honor your father and your mother" is the fact that our parents were partners with G-d in giving life to us, though Mom probably had more sleepless nights from us than either of the others two partners.

Where would the Jewish people be

without the self-sacrifice of countless Jewish women throughout the ages?

Jewish tradition teaches that it was because of the self-sacrifice and righteousness of the women that the entire Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt. When Pharaoh enslaved the Jews, the men refused to have more children. "Why bring children into the world to be slaves and suffer like us?" they asked.

The Jewish women, however, though shouldering the same burden of slavery and suffering as their husbands, purposely sought out ways to endear themselves to their spouses. They were responsible for



the birth of a new generation, a generation fit to be redeemed. The women reasoned, "True, our children will suffer hardships like us, but, soon G-d will fulfill His promise to them and deliver them out of the land of Egypt."

In every generation, whenever all seemed hopeless, it was the righteous, self-sacrificing Jewish mothers who inspired their families and communities to have faith and look toward better times.

We shouldn't just set aside one day a year to honor mothers. We should remember them every day--it's a mitzva!



ILICE OF

JEWISH WOMEN BEHIND BARS



Feygah Sarah Friedman and her husband,

by Hilary Bluestein

Three years ago, Feygah Sarah Friedman, a vibrant woman who lives with her husband in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, went to a very special Purim party; it took place at a prison, and the party-goers were Jewish inmates. Since then, Mrs. Friedman has been coordinating a weekly program for visiting women prisoners.

When Rabbi Shmuel Spritzer and his wife Shterna, who started the program, invited Mrs. Friedman to the prison, she was glad to get involved with a project that would be both personally fulfilling and had already proven itself as being positive for the Jewish women she would encounter.

Most of the women Mrs. Friedman meets have no knowledge of Judaism. She teaches them Torah and Chasidic philosophy, and discusses with them Jewish holidays and what it is to be a Jewish woman. Although, perhaps, some of these women will spend the rest of their lives in and out of prison, the time spent with Mrs. Friedman and the other Lubavitcher volunteers changes their lives by giving them a sense of meaning and uniqueness-the awareness of the Jewish heritage which binds them together.

The Jewish women are in prison for various crimes: drug-related felonies, armed robbery,

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fraud and even murder. Mrs. Friedman remembers a dramatic moment when she asked one of the inmates for her mother's name and the woman ran out of the room crying. Later she found out the women was being tried in a case regarding her mother's death.

People such as Feygah Sarah Friedman provide one of the only forms of rehabilitation available in prison. But even Mrs. Friedman admits she has to turn herself off when the responsibility gets to be too much, and even the legal system isn't helping out.

For instance, when the women are released from Riker's Island, a correctional facility off the coast of Queens, N.Y., they get three dollars and a bus ride to the subway station.

With few rehabilitation programs on the inside and no money or place to go when they get out of prison, most of the women end up returning to the lifestyle they had before they were in prison. Eventually they return to prison again. And again.

Mrs. Friedman doesn't go into the prison with any preconceived expectation that the women will totally turn their lives around and commit themselves to Torah. But, she believes that even the smallest change these women make in their lives is a tremendous victory both for them and their Jewish identity.

One woman, who had been in prison more than once, ended up in the hospital the last time she was out. She had returned, once again, to drugs. She was found in the street with no belongings: no purse, no wallet, nothing... except the prayer book that Mrs. Friedman had given her.

Mrs. Friedman also spoke of one young woman from the Bronx, whose Hebrew name is Yankela. She had become very close with Yankela who was transferred from Riker's Island to Bedford. a state penitentiary in upstate New York.

Yankela got out of prison, went back to drugs, and soon Mrs. Friedman saw her back at Riker's. "Her face was no longer the face of the young girl I had seen one and a half years before. It was already the face of a woman who may spend her whole life in and out of prison, and it broke my heart. If there had been a place for her to go when she got out...maybe it would have been different for her."

When Yankela was in Bedford, she sent Mrs. Friedman a Chanuka card and signed it, "your friend Yankela." Mrs Friedman was very touched that she had asserted her Jewish identity by calling herself by her Hebrew name.

"This is a very satisfying form of tzedakah (charity), when you give of your own time and your own energy," says Mrs. Friedman. "Being there and helping these women can give a sense of doing something beautiful and important for people who would otherwise never get this enrichment," said Feygah Sarah Friedman.

When they are together with the general prison population, they feel special because of their Jewishness. "We help create a sense of community, a sense of Jewish love," Mrs. Fried-

"And," she adds, "if any of my friends from the prisons are reading this I say 'hi' and I hope everything is well."

LUBAVITCH INTERNATIONAL

The latest issue of Lubavitch International, a semi-annual magazine packed with news from the Chabad-Lubavitch global network, is hot off the presses. This new issue contains reports on the building of new Chabad Centers in New City, New York, Tulsa, Oklahoma and Phoenix, Arizona; new Lubavitch centers in Cordoba, Salzburg and Annapolis; an article about Chabadwork at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor; the story of Chabad's humble beginnings in Italy thirty years ago and it's network of centers and activities today. To receive Lubavitch International write to: Lubavitch International, 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213.

VISITING CHABAD



Congressman James Scheuer recently visited the Chabad House in Great Neck, Long Island, to learn about the Chabad activities in his

Congressional District. Pictured (I. to r.) are Congressman Scheuer, Chabad Director Rabbi Yossi Geisinsky, and Chairman of the Board Philip Machnikoff.

WE COME WITHOUT LABELS

A weekend Shabbaton entitled "We Come Without Labels" is being sponsored by the Lubavitch Youth Organization on May 24-26. Open to singles, couples and families regardless of affiliation, background, or Jewish observance, the weekendwill explore the theme of Jewish Unity. Accommodations are available with families in the Lubavitcher community of Crown Heightsor at the Crown Palace Hotel. For more information about this special weekend call the Lubavitch Youth Organization at (718) 953-1000.



The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe, shlita.

INSIGHTS

MT. SINAI AND SHMITTA?

by Rabbi Berel Bell

The laws regarding the Sabbatical year (Shmitta) are presented in the Torah in great detail. But there is something puzzling about the Torah's presentation of this commandment.

The Torah writes that this mitzva was given at "Mt. Sinai." But since all the commandments were given at Mt. Sinai, why does it say so specifically here?

Rashi explains that this comes to teach us that all the commandments and all their details were actually given at Mt. Sinai.

But this explanation is not totally satisfying: why does the Torah convey this lesson specifically by the mitzva of Shmitta rather than by some other mitzva?

Dual Goal

We can understand this by first examining the text of the blessing said before performing a mitzva: "Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to..."

The blessing has two clearly distinguishable parts. The first part is identical regardless of which mitzva is being performed, and stresses the idea that G-d has given us the commandments. The end of the blessing changes according to the mitzva: "to eat matza," "to hear the shofar" and so on.

In other words, the end of the blessing stresses the action which is to be done. The beginning of the blessing stresses the fact that the action is commanded by G-d.

These two sections correspond to two of the functions of mitzvot: to connect the person to G-d and to purify the world. The end of the blessing stresses the actual action, which helps purify the world and transform it into a holy place. The beginning of the blessing emphasizes that by performing the mitzva we unite ourselves with G-d.

Details, Details

We can discern two similar categories in

the end of the blessing itself, i.e., in the actual mitzva. First of all, we have the mitzva, in general, to eat matza, for example. Then we have the various details associated with the mitzva: one must eat a certain amount, in a certain time, the matza must be made a certain way, etc.

Here too, the details stress the actual action, for without knowing the detailed regulations, one cannot fulfill the mitzva. The mitzva, in general, places more stress on the fact that this is one of the ways of connecting oneself with G-d.

In summary, we have three dimensions in mitzvot. There is the idea of mitzvot in general, the specific mitzva (without the details) and the details of the specific mitzva. The first two dimensions primarily address a person's connection with G-d, and the last one, with the purification of the world.

Something Doesn't Seem To Fit

At the Revelation on Mt. Sinai, the Jewish people felt their unity with G-d more than at any other time in history. At that moment of intense revelation, we were elevated beyond all worldly boundaries and concerns.

At such a time, it would seem somewhat inappropriate to address the details of the mitzvot. Since the details are associated with the purification of the world, one might think they would be better addressed at a later time.

The mitzva of Shmitta would seem to be a particularly incongruous subject, as Shmitta was: a) going to take effect only many years later, b) far away from Mt. Sinai, in the Land of Israel, and c) associated with working the land, a seemingly unholy endeavor.

It was for this reason that G-d discussed the details of the laws at Mt. Sinai, and taught us this fact in the mitzva of Shmitta. Once we know that even the details of Shmitta were discussed at Mt. Sinai, it is obvious that all the details of all the mitzvot were given there as well.

And why were the details given at such a holy gathering? Because this is the way that one connects with G-d--through fulfilling the details of the mitzvot. It is not enough to try to "connect" with Him in a general way; G-d's desire is that we purify the world through doing the mitzvot in all their details.

How important is the commandment of honoring one's parents?

"Honoring" and "fearing" one's mother and father is a positive commandment of primary importance. The honor and fear due to parents is equal to that due to G-d. The Torah even equates the two in the matter of penalties for violation. However, if one's parents tell him to transgress a commandment, he should not obey them.

CUSTOMS CORNER

from the Brector

I his Shabbat we bless the new month of Sivan, the month in which the holiday of Shavuot falls. In addition, we read two Torah portions, the second one beginning with G-d's words, "If you follow in my statites..." These words can be directly related to the upcoming holiday of Shavuot, the festival on which we celebrate receiving the Torah.

Interestingly, the Talmud interprets the first word, "If" ("im" in Hebrew) as a plea, an appeal, as it were, from G-d for us to follow the mitzvot which he has commanded us.

But, the Talmud also tells us, that G-d never imposes unreasonable or impossible obligations upon His creatures. Therefore, not only is G-d beseeching us to keep His Torah, he is also conferring upon us the ability to follow and uphold all of the Torah's commandments.

For us, this year, the lesson is clear. In preparation for receiving the Torah on Shavuot, we are assured by G-d (as we are every year and, in fact, each day) that we have the strength and ability to observe the Torah that we will be receiving.

But drawing on that G-d-given ability can, of course, be a very difficult job. So, to give us incentive, G-d promises us a reward, too: "I will give you rains in their season." This is woth a material and spiritual reward: for rain connotes blessing in material matters and also refers to the Torah which we will learn when Moshiach comes.

May each and every one of us merit to draw on the strength and ability G-d has promised us, to allow us to fulfill our fullest potential. Then we will truly be prepared to receive the Torah anew on Shavuot and ultimately learn Torah together with Moshiach.



IYAR

TODAY IS...

The command "You shall rebuke" is preceded by "You shall not hate your brother," for this is a precondition for the rebuke. The Torah continues, "...and you shall not ascribe sin to him," for if the rebuke was ineffectual, you are certainly the one responsible, for yours were not words coming from the heart.

Showed Belman

L'Chaim

It Happened ONCE



In the time of King Solomon there lived in the land of Israel a poor widow and her children. Their home was a wretched, tumble-down shack, and their sustenance was sparse and hard to come by. But the widow managed to keep spirits high and their poor existence was marked by the great joy they took in the simplest pleasures of life.

The widow and her children tended a small garden outside their little house and were able to harvest some meager vegetables, but their main meal consisted of the bread that the woman baked every day. For each day, she went to the fields and there gathered the wheat stalks which, according to the dictates of Jewish law, were reserved for the indigent; she then ground them into flour and baked it into three loaves.

One might think that a woman in these circumstances would jealously guard her hard-won food, but such was not the way of this woman. She was quite unusual, in that her greatest pleasure was performing the mitzva of receiving guests, and so, it was her daily custom to give away two of her three loaves of bread to people even poorer than herself.

One day, the widow had followed her usual routine and was removing the fragrant loaves from the oven with her hungry children standing around her in happy expectation. As the bread was cooling, a man knocked at the widow's door. He was a local beggar, well known to the good woman. As usual, he left her small hut with an entire loaf of fresh bread under his arm--food to quell his hunger a whole day.

Shortly after, the old beggar was followed by a woman, another frequent recipient. She, too, left with a whole loaf of bread in hand, blessing her benefactors.

Finally the children gathered around the table as their mother took a knife to divide the third loaf amongst them. Their anticipation as well as their hunger had peaked; how delicious it smelled!

But just at that moment there was another knock at their door. They opened it to see an emaciated young boy standing at the threshold. He had been directed to their door by one of the woman's customary "patrons," knowing that she would see to his needs. When she heard that he hadn't eaten in days, she gave him the last loaf of bread. To her disappointed children, she quietly said that she would get more grain and bake more bread.

The widow again headed to the fields where she picked some stalks from the corners reserved for the poor. She was headed home with her sack of wheat when, all of a sudden, a great gust of wind tore the sack from her hand and carried it off far into the air. This was too much for the exhausted woman to bear; she sat down on a tree stump and wept. How could she return to her starving children empty-handed?

Instead, she decided to go to the palace of King Solomon. His throne room was open to all of his subjects and he, the wisest of men, would surely have an answer for her. She entered the sumptuous palace and soon stood in a cavernous hall. Before her in the distance sat King Solomon, and he beckoned her to approach. She walked steadily toward the great king, emboldened by her pain. When she stood before him she related her whole story, leaving no detail untold.

As she reached the end of her tale, three merchants approached the king, carrying a heavy chest. And they, too, were eager to tell their tale. The leader of the three began: "We were sailing far out at sea, when a

sudden, violent storm arose. Our ship sprung a leak, quickly filled with water and was in danger of sinking. We began to pray to G-d to save us, and we made a vow that if we were allowed to come to dry land, we would give half of our treasure to charity. Praise be to G-d, we were saved, and now we are here to fulfill our vow.

King Solomon heard them out, and responded by telling them to return to their ship, look for the hole in the boards, and bring him whatever they would find.

They left and returned sometime later carrying a piece of material, very wet, but unmistakably a sack. The King turned to the widow who had been instructed to wait and said, "You see, it was your sack of grain that stopped the leak in their ship. This chest of gold belongs to you. Because you always helped others, G-d has helped you. Now, go home to your children in peace."

Back at the house, the hungry children waited and worried. When their mother arrived their concern turned first to relief and then to joy, as she related her wondrous experience. As she served them a festive meal, she quietly promised to honor the mitzva of receiving guests in a manner equal to her new circumstance. And her following of poor also had ample reason to celebrate and bless her forever after.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

When you come into the land which I am giving to you, then shall the land keep a Shabbat to G-d (Lev. 25:2)

Shabbat is not only the prized "possession" of the Jews. The Jewish land also has a Shabbat. The same way that a Jewish servant serves his master for six years and goes free in the seventh, so does the land work and produce for the Jew for six years, reverting to its true Master on the seventh. The value of the Holy Land is not limited to how much she can produce agriculturally; the Land of Israel has an independent value and worth. During the *Shmitta* year we honor that essential value. (Rabbi Yitzchak Breur)

For the Children of Israel are my servants (Lev 25:55)

The Jews are called both "servants" and "children" of G-d. Each term reflects the nature of the Jew's relationship with G-d. As far as the body is concerned, a Jew is G-d's servant. One must accept the yoke of Heaven as a servant must accept the will of his master and be totally subservient to him. But our souls serve G-d only through love, as a son serves his beloved father. (Sefer Hamaamarim Kuntreisim)

And the earth shall yield her produce (Lev. 26:4)

There was once a group of merchants whose business was shipping and exporting grain all over the world. They came to Rabbi Yaakov of Radzimin and complained: "Rebbe, this year we are all going to become poorer. There is simply an excess of grain, and it will only fetch an extremely low-selling price--we're practically giving the stuff away for free. Why, it costs us more to export the grain than the price we can charge for it. We're afraid that we're going to lose all our money!"

The Rebbe answered with a smile: "The same G-d who can sustain the poor during years of famine and high prices can certainly sustain the rich during times of abundance and low prices!" (Sichot Chulin)

CANDLE LIGHTING

NY Metro Area 7:41 p.m. Torah portions: Behar & Bechukofai Ethics of the Fathers: Ch. 5 Blessing of the new month: Sivan Shabbat ends 8:48 p.m.

Dedicated

In Honor of the Wedding of TAMMY AND MICHAEL SIMON

MEMORANDUM

From

Rabbis Phil Hiat & Bernard Zlotowitz

Date June 1, 1982

To

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

Copies

Subject

Patrilineal Descent

As the <u>halachah</u> stands today regarding "inter marriage", the child of a Jewish mother and non Jewish father is Jewish: whereas in the reverse situation - a child of a non Jewish mother and Jewish father is not Jewish. The rule is based on the principle that the child follows the status of the mother:

However, e Jewish law of determining the status of the child on the basis of the mother's religion is a rabbinic innovation and does not follow biblical practise or observance. A careful study of the Bible points up unmistakeably that the child followed the status of the father and rarely the mother.

Rebekah, later to become the wife of Isaac, was the daughter of Bethuel, "the son of Milcah, the wife of Nachor, Abraham's brother." (Gen. 24:15. 6f. Gen. 24:24,47). Bethuel's wife's name is unknown to us. We can safely assume that she was a heathen. Rebekah herself in mentioning her lineage does not mention her mother but only her father (Gen. 24:24,47). Note also that though she mentions her patrilineal descent for herself she emphasizes both the matrilineal and patrilineal descent of her father: "And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore unto Nachor." (Gen. 24:24); and "...And she said, the daughter of Bethuel, Nachor's son, whom Milcah bore unto him..." (Gen. 24:47).



Rachel's lineage is traced through her father, Laban."...
when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's
brother,..." (Gen. 29:10). The mention of "his mother's
brother" is certainly in order as that would be an important frame of reference. Who the mother is, is not known.

Pharaoh gives Joseph "Asenath daughter of Poti-phera, priest of On" for a wife. (Gen. 41:45). Asenath bore Joseph two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim: "Before the years of famine came Joseph became the father of two sons, whom Asenath daughter of Poti-phera, a priest of On, bore to him ... Manasseh ... Ephraim." (Gen. 45:50-52). Both parents are mentioned. The heathen status of Asenath is reaffirmed. She is the daugther of the priest of On. She was certainly not a Jewess. Yet her children are so reckoned. Unto this day the male children of Israel are blessed so that they be like Ephraim and Manasseh. According to James Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, p. 528b Asenath is the "daughter of one of the most important dignitaries of the realm, the priest of the great national temple of the Sun at On or Heliopolis, seven miles NE of Modern Cairo." What could be more avoda zoradik than this?

Moses marries Zipporah, a Midianitess, the daughter of the priest of Midian (Ex. 2:16, 21). She bears him two sons: Gershom and Eliezer (Ex. 2:22, 18:2-6; I Chron. 23:15-17). Zipporah is certainly not Jewish but her children and descendants are so considered, so much so that when Jonathan, the son of Gershom, and his descendants set up for themselves graven images it was looked upon with such horror by later generations that in Judges 18:30 a nun was suspended above the text to have Moseh read Menasheh in order not to attribute to the descendants of Moses idolatrous practises.

Samson asked his parents to get him a certain Philistine girl for his wife (Judg. 14:2). Gideon's concubine bore him a son whom he named Abimelech (Judg. 8:31). Scholars claim that the concubine was a Canaanitess (IDB, vol. K-Q, p. 281 b). Who is to argue that Abimelech was not a Jew after the Bible singles Abimelech out by name, the only one of the 70 sons fathered by Gideon (Judg. 8:30). Solomon himself married foreign women in defiance of the biblical command forbidding marriages with the seven Canaanite nations (Deut. 7:1-4; IK 11:1-6, Neh. 13:26). Are we to assume that the children of Solomon from foreign wives were not Jewish? Of course not. Rehoboam; s mother was an Ammonites5 by the name of Naamah (IK 14:21) and yet he ascends the throne upon his father's death. Ahaziah, the son of Ahab and Jezebel, a foreigner, succeeds his father on the throne of Israel (IK22:40). Though his mother, Jezebel is an idolatress, Ahaziah must have been considered a Jew. Sanballat, the governor Samaria at the time of Nehemiah and his bitterest enemy, gives his daughter in marriage to a grandson of the High Priest (Neh. 13:28) for which Nehemiah banishes him. Whether Nehemiah exiled the young man for marrying a foreign woman or because his emnity for Sanballat was so great is open to question. However, scholars are agreed that Sanballat worshipped God. Did this make him Jewish? If it did, and since we do not know who the mother is we may conclude from this episode that it is not the mother who is crucial in determining status, but the father.

Furthermore, the genealogical tables in the Bible are overwhelmingly patrilineal e.g. Genesis, Chapters 5, 10, 11; I Chron Chapters 23 ff. Thus from the biblical account (until the time of Ezra) we may properly conclude that descent and status is determined through the male line. It was Ezra and Nehemiah who undertook to change this by issuing a series of decrees banishing foreign wives and their children. By foreign women they meant not only the seven Canaanite nations forbidden in the Torah, but Ammonites, Moabites and Egyptians as well (Ezra 9:1. See also Neh. 13:23-30).

It should be noted at this point that the law prohibiting intermarriage in Dt. 7:1ff with the Canaanite nations applied to both males and females: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter shalt thou not give unto his son, and his duaghter shalt thou not take unto thy son." (Dt. 7:3). This law, prohibited fathers from giving their daughters in marriage to any of the sons of the Canaanite nations or taking any of their daughters for their sons because they would be led into idolatry (Dt. 7:4). In other words, if we are to interpret these words properly, the offspring of such marriages are not Jewish so long as one of the parents is not Jewish. However, we know from the data above that this was a law respected in theory, but not in practice and the children were considered Jewish regardless of the non-Jewishness of one of the parents. Ezra and Nehemiah interpreted the text by defining the Jewishness of a child on the basis of the mother's status (Otherwise, why drive out

the foreign wives and not the foreign husbands?), which the Mishnah reinforced. The Book of Ruth gives us an insight into the changes wrought by Ezra and Nehemiah. According to scholars, the Book of Ruth was written as a polemic against Ezra's decrees to cast out "foreign wives" and deliberately predated to the period of the Judges. The author(s) of the Book of Ruth contended that had Jews not been permitted to marry non-Israelite women, a David would never have been born. David is a descendant of Ruth, a Moabitess woman, and Boaz. If we accept this thesis advanced by scholars, then it is logical to assume that during the "reign" of Ezra and Nehemiah a transition took place in attitude and practice that matrilineal descent be the determining factor as to the status of the child: if the mother was Jewish, the child was also Jewish. (This new decree, however, did not affect the social status of the child, i.e. the priestly, levitic or Israelite designation -- which still followed that of the father -- provided the mother was a Jewess.) The probable reason for the new attitude and laws promulgated by Ezra and Nehemiah during the post Exilic period was to preserve the purity of the kehuna which is shortly afterwards expanded to include the Israelite people. This position is reinforced by the Talmud.

The Mishna in Kiddushin (3:12) develops the progression from patrilineal to matrilineal:

The first part of the Mishna points up patrilineal descent as a means of preserving the purity of the kehuna:

"If the betrothal was valid and no transgression befell (by reason of the marriage) the standing of the offspring follows that of the male (parent). Such is the case when a woman that is a daughter of a priest, a levite, or an Israelite is married to a priest, a levite or an Israelite."

(Note. Danby's translation of the Mishna is used throughout).

Having established the social status of the child through patrilineal descent, the same Mishna introduces another or new concept if there is a transgresion, though the marriage is valid and at the same time still maintaining patrilineal descent under special circumstances:

"If the betrothal was valid but transgression befell (by reason of the marriage) the standing of the offspring follows that of the blemished party. Such is the case when a widow is married to a High Priest, or a divorced woman or one that had performed <a href="https://doi.org/10.1001/journal.org/10.1001/

The latter part of the Mishnah is even more specific in developing the law of matrilineal descent regarding both social and religious status:

"If her betrothal with this man was not valid, but her betrothal with others would be valid, the offspring is bastard. Such is the case when a man has connexion with any of the forbidden degrees prescribed in the Law. If her betrothal with this man was not valid, and her betrothal with others would also not be valid, the offspring is of her own standing. This is the case when the offspring is by a bondwoman or gentile woman."

The Gemara in elucidating on the meaning, "If her betrothal with this man was not valid..." establishes a principle on justifying matrilineal descent:

"If her betrothal with this man was not valid... How do we know (it of) a Canaanitish bondmaid? Said R. Huna, Scripture teaches, 'Abide you here with (fy) the ass, it is a people (fo) like to an ass. We have thus found that kiddushin with her is invalid: how do we know that the issue takes her status? -- Because Scripture says, the wife and her children shall be her master's. How do we know (it of a freeborn) gentile woman? -- Scripture says, neither shall you make marriages with them. How do we know that her issue bears her status? -- R. Johanan said on the authority of R. Simeon b. Yohai, Because Scripture says, for he will turn away your son from following me: Your son by an Israelite woman is called your son, but your son by a heathen is not called your son. Rabina said: This proves that your daughter's son by a heathen is called your son.

Shall we say that Rabina holds that if a heathen or a (non-Jewish) slave cohabits with a Jewess the issue is a <u>mamzer</u>. (No). Granted that he is not (regarded as) fit he is not a mamzer either, but merely stigmatised as unfit." (Kidd, 68a & 69b. The above is from the Soncino translation).

Thus according to this gemara the term "Your son" in Deut. 7:4 is to be understood as "your grandson." If this be the case we may conclude that if a child is born of a non Jewish mother, the child is therefore Jewish. However in the case of a grandchild born from a non Jewish woman, the child would not be Jewish. Such a conclusion would be misleading for the intent of this gemara is to validate the Jewishness of the children of the biblical heroes. E.g. Joseph, Moses, Solomon, etc. by skipping a generation to preserve the Jewish people. However since in subsequest generations there will always be a grandmother it therefore precludes that a child of a non Jewish mother but Jewish father is Jewish. This is the logical conclusion of the gemara. CONCLUSION:

Originally patrilineal descent determined the status of the child. At a certain juncture in history, Ezra and Nehemiah made a decision to determine the status of the child in accordance with matrilineal descent. This decision was upheld by the Mishnah.

The Gemara accepted the law of the Mishnah with but one proviso.

It skipped one generation in the case of the biblical personalities in order not to make it appear that the great heroes of the Bible who married foreign wives had children were not Jewish. Thereafter,

matrilineal descent was to be the operative law. Since in every generation there are grandparents the interpretation of "your son" to mean "your grandson" applied to every generation. However, since we have established the legitimacy of patrilineal descent as the basis for lineage in the Bible and the rabbinic shift to matrilineal in order to preserve the kehuna and later expanded to include the total people of Israel, we are certainly on very legitimate grounds to justify the Jewishness of children on the basis of either parent being Jewish.

12/1/86

BEYOND PATRILINEALITY

from a mg

Alfred North Whitehead identified the concept of "simple location" as fallacy which lay at the foundation of the 17th Century scheme of nature. To illustrate this fallacy, in his words, "to say that a piece of matter has simple location means that in expressing its spatiotemporal relations, it is adequate to state that it is where it is, in a definite region of space, and throughout a definite finite duration of time. This, apart from any essential reference to the relations of that bit of matter to other regions of space and to other durations of time." It occurs to me that much of the inner turmoil and confusion within the Conservative movement is generated by its own version of "simple location." In our case, it centers on a fixation with a too narrow and restrictive form of halachah. argued that if we only strengthen our halachic spine--declare unambiguously our halachic demands, and enforce their observance, the vitality of our movement and the fidelity of our constituency would be assured. The concreteness of the p'sak (rabbinic judgement), responds to the presenting question of the people. Theology, sociology, morality, psychology are, at best, peripheral elements irrelevant to the prescribed halachah. Concerns over the teleology of law are subjective and only detract from unambiguous and definitive judgements. So, the weakness of our movement, it is argued, is in its vacillation towards halachah, torn as it is between disciples of halachah and disciples of aggadah, or even worse, between rabbinic nomians and rabbinic anti-nomians.

Such an analysis of our condition, I suggest, mislocates the source of our malaise. Whitehead called it an instance of "misplaced concreteness." For

the heart of the issue is not whether or not we favor halachah, any more than it is whether or not we believe in divine revelation. The significant issue is what kind of halachah, or what kind of revelation is meant. Our weakness is not that we have too little but too small a vision of halachah. A larger view of halachah would include questions of the halachah's intent; to whom or what is the halachah accountable; what is the proper scope of halachah's domain, and what is included and what is excluded from the halachic process. These are issues that ought to be investigated and debated. But they are not being debated within our movement.

What we have in place of deliberation is "voting." There is excitement and the beguiling appearance of activity engendered by voting halachic resolutions up or down: But voting is not doing. Declarations do not alter situations. The kind of situations that give rise to the hard questions, including patrilineality, confronting us are too complex to be solved by a showing of hands, or by voting yes or no on approbations or proscriptions of committees on laws and standards.

There is a halachah voting mentality which manages to avoid the real crisis in our Jewish lives, and seduces us into believing that by voting alone the crisis is met, and the people persuaded.

The recent R.A. vote on patrilineality seems a fair illustration of the dangers of "simple location" and "misplaced concreteness." Why was I frustrated with what was touted to be a critical session on a crucial issue? Was it because of the outcome of the vote? Would I have been happier were the result of the outcome in favor of patrilineality?

Decidedly not. What was disconcerting about the deliberations was the fact that no deliberations took place. What was painfully evident was not what was said or was done, but precisely what was not said and what was not done--the scandal of repeated major omissions.

The R.A. protocol is symptomatic of a peculiar mentality towards the role of halachah in our time. How odd that a powerful significant movement confronting a halachic issue of status definition should be presented to rabbis for vote without a single prepared paper or the issuance of a tshuvah before, during or after a vote. A preliminary five or ten minutes extemporaneous presentation, followed by a line of impromptu speakers limited to two minutes each, can hardly be considered a serious debate on an issue of such moment qnd complexity - an issue which we are told affects the status of thousands of Jews, the unity of our people, and our institutional and personal relationships with our counterpart religious colleagues and movements. To my knowledge, until this day, no conservative rabbinic journal or rabbinic papers had been distributed for conservative rabbinate to study. The journal Judaism, edited by our learned and prolific colleague Robert Gordis, devoted an issue to the issue of patrilineal descent., The magazine is by no means reflection conservative rabbinic thinking - sponsored by the American Jewish Congress and 'much of its content dealt with responses to the speculative rationale for the change to matrilineal descent by a distinguished seminary scholar, Professor Shaye Cohen, who properly disavowed any claim that his scholarly hypotheses are grounds for "halachah l'maaseh."

The toughness of the resolution would be enough. But it was further complexified by the entanglement of sanctions directed against the

Conservative Seminary's ordained rabbis, who, without fear of sanctions might act contrary to the majority vote. Such intimidating sanctions—to be administered by an entity ironically entitled Va'ad Hakavod—hardly create an atmosphere of thoughtful discussion.

The speed of the R.A. vote-taking evidenced an ad hoc public reaction to the initiate of the Reform movement. In my judgement, it was more a political than a halachic response. What else should one properly expect? I, for one, would expect:

- a) That the issue should have enjoyed, at least, a sustained planned discussion during the three day R.A. conference with the presentation of papers pro and con; and, that a specific invitation be extended to the rabbinic leaders of the Reform movement who initiated the proposal.
- b) I would expect at a Rabbinic Convention that the consideration would be given to the present and future role of institutional pluralism. How is the Conservative movement to relate to the Reform movement, its leaders, ordaining institutions and its laity of over one million Jews? How do we within the ethos of pluralism to relate to their rabbinic decisions? Are we to relate to their decisions in the manner that the Orthodox rabbinate relates to our own innovations?...e.g., the permissability of marriage between Kohanim and divorcees, Kohanim and proselytes, the ordination of women? Have we not repeatedly been accused with the same arguments that our innovative halachah threatens Jewish unity and runs counter to practical halachah? Do we commit the same "genetic fallacy" towards reform proposals that Orthodoxy continually exercises towards our own? Do we dismiss, without argument, the intrinsic

merits of the Reform argument because they are not bound by our understanding of the halachah in the fashion that our Orthodox brethren dismiss our religious proposals and ritual supervision because in their view, our proposals do not live up to their halachic standards of orthodoxy and orthopraxy? Of this nothing was spoken.

c) I would expect that before the vote, we consider our role in rejecting patrilineality descended children and grandchildren who are regarded as Jews by temples and rabbis and Jewish institutions. Are we rabbis of the Conservative movement prepared to embarrass involved Jews who come to join our synagogue or ask us to be married - and who may be patrilineally descended. Are we ourselves prepared to serve inquisitorial agents adding to the registry of "sefer yuchasin"? I have witnessed the humiliation of those long identified Jews recognized as such by the Jewish lay community who are told that they must submit to conversion because their fathers alone were Jews. No matter how tactfully we explain our position, many leave our studies hurt, out of a deeply felt insult. We know to what unusual lengths did our sages go to avoid shaming the other--from the introduction of Baalei K'riah, to eating and drinking the food and drink of the Am Ha-aretz during the three pilgrimage festivals, to rabbinic counsel not to search the geneology that would reveal that someone was a mamzer. Parenthetically, I have discussed with mixed couples (he Jewish, she non-Jewish) how a rabbinic ruling accepting their child as Jewish would affect their own attitudes. Simply put, would the acceptance by the rabbinic community of the child as Jewish tend to encourage the mother's conversion to Judaism or discourage it? Would it tend to encourage the parents (Jewish father) to raise their child Jewishly or discourage it? The responses I receive indicate that rabbinic acceptance of the child as Jewish would encourage a deeper commitment to

Judaism itself. Sociologists Mayer and Sheingold report that a significant percentage of those spouses choosing Judaism do so after the wedding and after the birth of children. The door to conversion is not closed even to the mixed married. But, these, of course, are empirical matters and an important area for investigation. But to my mind they are not irrelevant to our halachic judgement.

In a recent paper, Robert Gordis has argued that halachah and sociology are not mortal foes. "Sociology supplies the data which halachah must examine in order to determine what steps should or should not be taken to meet a new situation."

d) I would expect of our movement to have more to say on this issue than "yes" or "no." Had we no other wisdom to offer than the rush to vote "no" to the Reform resolution? Could we have offered a "tertium aliquid," proposed a "Katuv Ha-Shlilshi" to moderate the Orthodox and Reform impasse? Surely there must be some advantage in walking the middle road of tradition and change.

Despite the catastrophic rhetoric, at no time in the history of the reform movement is its leadership more prepared to accept traditional ritual consonent with halachah than today. There are conspicuous loop-holes for adaptive concessions in the very formulation of the Reform resolution-e.g., "presumptive Jewishness" and those activities of overt Jewish identity. But voting is impatient of transaction.

e) I would expect that we have arranged for rabbinic meetings, without the glare of print, between our representatives and theirs, for the

purpose of deliberation, negotiation, adaptation, compromise. Or, do we respond to Reform with the same triadic negations of Orthodoxy: No meeting, no discussion, no negotiations? How sad that there exists no inter-denomination instrument for consolation, deliberation, even information between Conservative movement; that our information on the proposals of our religious counterparts comes to us ex post-facto from the revelations of the op-ed section of the New York Times.

f) Above all, I would expect of our movement a greater respect for our Reform religious counterparts. Respect - "respicere" - to look again: After all, we are dealing with serious rabbinic colleagues of a major religious movement, responding to serious demographic erosions, e.g., low fertility rate, out-marriage, assimilation; with rabbis who seek ways to spread the Jewish net wider so that tens of thousands of potential Jews slip through the large loopholes of rabbinic definition. Their motivations are as honorable as ours. By their expanded definition they mean to hold a claim over the children of a Jewish father, to minimize losses to the gentile community. Is that intent so removed from what may plausibly lie beneath the matrilineal principle? Whatever the speculative etiology of the principle of matrilineal descent may be, and we are in the dark here, At seems apparent that, our sages were quite lenient in allowing children of gentile fathers and Jewish mothers to be considered Jews and not dismissed as gentiles or unmarriageable "mamzerim", as the Wishrat ruled. Moreover, this Jewish status so liberally conferred upon child, antecedent and independent to any theological or ritual test, suggests that such leniency was not unrelated to the sage's concern for the survival of our people. Why did the Rabbis of the Talmud not opt for "double or nothing" -- insist that both father and mother must be Jewish?

Whether such conjectures are right or wrong, whether the vote was right or wrong, it seems to me that there were and are alternatives to the haste and glamour of a vote. But alternatives require painstaking patience, on-going deliberation and a broader conception of the halachic process. In contrast, the halachic vote is fast, definite, and over. Read the resolution. Count the hands. The session is closed "sine die."

The halachic vote in our movement has taken the place of deliberation. It has become an exercise of denominational power, not of persuasion. That politic will continue to erroneously divide us and distance us from each other and our real and potential constituency.

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If we mean to be a relevant halachic movement, neither a pale reflection of orthodoxy or reform, we have to expand the role of halachah in a persuasive fashion and raise its credibility in the eyes of our constituency and in our own eyes. And this can be done by enlarging the halachic process so that it enters into the spiritual and emotional lives of our people and offers them Jewish wisdom.

Who is our constituency and how do they see us function halachicly? Halachah is encountered by our laity through the rites of passage—in birth and "brith," in adolescence and bar mitzvah, in marriage and the wedding, in divorce and the "get," in death and funeral. They see our rabbinic energies and talents concentrated on the halachah of the rite, not on the process of the passage. They see halachah dealing with the concrete and technical issue of the "milah," more than with the way in which "covenant" is to be lived; with the writing of the "ketubah," the rites of the

wedding, not the spiritual passage from single to married status; with prescriptions and proscriptions of the funeral and "shivah," not with the emotional and religious dynamic of grieving and mourning; with the "Tevilah" and "brith" of conversion, not with attention to the making of a Jew and the experience indispensable for his religious and ethnic identification. In short, rite and passage have been bifurcated and halachah given over to the rite alone. Riteless passage are countered with passageless rites. The rite is concrete, specific, objective, impersonal and thereby halachah gains its reputation as mechanical and legalistic. As experienced by the laity, rabbinic concern is not with the how and meaning of the passage but with the how of performing ritual acts. From that view, the rite is "the simple location" of the halachic mind. This "misplaced concreteness" of the rite deflects from the larger issues of the passage and trivializes the majesty of halachah. The bifurcation must be joined halachically.

Let me illustrate. My orthodox colleagues argue that the patrilineal issue is far less serious a concern, from the halachic view, than the marriage of Jews without a "get." For patrilineal children, the halachah offers one available remedy: Conversion. Forget for the moment "whose conversion" would be recognized by contemporary orthodoxy. But for the progeny of a remarried parent without the benefit of a "get," there is no halachic remedy. The stigma of the "mamzer" is tragic and calls for repair.

What has prevented the Conservative movement, on halachic and moral grounds from issuing a Takkanah calling for the abolition of the category of "mamzer" in accordance with the ethics of Ezekiel 18: "the sons should not bear the inequity of the father with him" - and the moral sentiment of the

midrash which admits the oppressiveness of the law and the "tears of the oppressed" because of the law. In the poignant midrash God declares: "It is for Me to comfort them." Has God no allies among us?

My Reform colleagues find the civil divorce adequate and find little advantage in the procedures of the Beth Din for attaining the Jewish divorce. They find the "get" superfluous, expensive, mechanical and embarrassing. This is not a Reform response alone. The lay people I have convinced to attain a "get" rarely report the experience as religiously meaningful or helpful. To the contrary, for them, the "get" procedure is concerned with the proper legal formulations of the twelve lines written on parchment by a scribe (sofer) in the presence of qualified witnesses. They experience the dissolution of marriage as a passageless rite, not unlike the scene from "Hester Street." This is no critique of the rite but a plea for broadening its province. Consider what has been left out of the halachic process of the "get" and what can be included. The Beth Din has had nothing to say to the couple coping with the trauma of dissolution. No Jewish wisdom is imparted to the troubled participants by the Beth Din. What does the rabbinic tribunal communicate to the severed couple concerning the ethics of separation and the parental responsibility towards the frightened children-children torn apart by the need to perform heartrending "parent-dectomies," the need to choose one parent over the other? What help as the halachic process of Jewish divorce offered the grass-root rabbis who witness the vindictive acrimony between the former mates and present parents at B'nai Mitzvah? Who shall be invited, who shall receive an aliyah, who shall give the reception? Who shall rejoice and who will be rejected?

None of this is addressed by the Beth Din which, to most jews, represent the quintessence act of the traditional halachic process. Is that wisdom to be transmitted elsewhere, by others, outside the experience of halachah?

Is halachah then to remain impersonal, pro forma, emotionally irrelevant to the lives of the family precariously balanced between holding on and letting go?

An expanded notion of halachah, in the instance of divorce, would include mandatory, personal meetings, rabbis with caring, trained representatives of Judaism, counseling the ethics and security to their child, providing connection with the pained and confused parents and children whose need is for spiritual guidance and direction and all considered indispensable elements of the halachic way. We who bemoan the emptiness of riteless passages must not settle for passageless rites that belittle the majesty of the halachah.

We may, of course, dismiss healing processes and ethical counseling as "aggadic," "extra-halachic." We may argue that this kind of caring is not within our halachic jurisdiction. We may send Jews in trouble elsewhere - and they may well go elsewhere. But we must understand how such bifurcation of rite and passage of halachah and healing is negatively experienced by the laity and by the rabbi as well. A larger view of the function and purpose of halachah may well entail the enlargement of the Beth Din, encouraging rabbis (Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionists) who are not trained to execute the legal details of the "get," to nevertheless play a vital, rabbinical role in dealing with the

passage of dissolution. Coincidental to its therapeutic role, the opening of the horizons of halachah may provide a way for establishments as ecumenical Beth Din, along the line of Denver Beth Din.

In my private conversations, I have found that such enlargement of the halachic process is greeted enthusiastically by Reform colleagues who see the Jewish "chidush" in such a procedure. There are creative ways to alleviate the moral scandal of "mamzeruth" without deligitimizing the reform, conservative and reconstructionist rabbinate by nullifying the validity of their marriage officiation.

The Conservative movement has a great contribution to make in forming a halachic community, but only if it persuades the community of the wisdom and ethics of religious law and enlarges the horizons of the four cubits of law. This is a plea for more, not less halachah. Halachah has to do more, not less. "Halachah" and "halichah" are not homiletic puns. Halachah must be exercised to meet the needs of our lay constituency.

To those who wonder if such rabbinic involvement in these so-called "secular areas" are the proper function of the rabbinate, I would refer to the classim exchange of the Amoraim. When Rabbi Huna asked his son Rabbah why he does not attend lectures of Rabbi Hisda, Rabbah explained that Rabbi Hisda treats only of secular matters such as hygiene. Rabbi Huna responded "he deals with matters of health and you call them secular discourses. All the more reason for going to him (T. Shabbat 82a). I think Rabbi Huna's response was right and relevant.

We have conceded too much to the secular world and narrowed too much of the halachic arena. The halachic process must regain its holistic approach to the guidance of a Jew. The rites of passage that punctuate the critical stages of our lives beg for halachic wisdom and morality. Precisely the types of issues which occupy the intellect and insight of the Erik Eriksons, Daniel Levinsons and Roger Goulds belong to us: The "virtues" of a growing self, the need for basic trust, the wisdom to balance the disharmonious of self, the need for commitment, the health in compassion and the blessings of generativity must be incorporated in the seminary training of the rabbi and in his congregational practice.

More is at stake than the vote on patrilineality. A great movement, grappling with the issues of tradition and modernity is challenged to synthesize halachah and aggadah, law and healing, rite and passage.

foremost to non-Jewish spouses and children of mixed marriages already in our congregations.

We are grateful to David Belin, chairman of the task force, for his commitment, sensitivity, and devotion.

Sheldon Zimmerman, Chair, CCAR Delegation

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PATRILINEAL DESCENT ON THE STATUS OF CHILDREN OF MIXED MARRIAGES

I. PRESENTATION

Peter S. Knobel

The Committee on Patrilineal Descent is chaired by Herman Schaalman and composed of the following members: Stanley Dreyfus, Joseph Edelheit, Jerome Folkman, Albert Friedlander, Joseph Glaser, Alfred Gottschalk, Joshua O. Haberman, Walter Jacob, Samuel Karff, Peter Knobel, Julius Kravetz, Leonard Kravitz, Jerome Malino, W. Gunther Plaut, Alexander Schindler, Robert Seltzer, Max Shapiro, Daniel Silver, Ben Zion Wacholder, and Isaiah Zeldin.

The committee has held numerous meetings over a three-year period and the report has been redrafted many times. The committee benefitted from the previous work that had been accomplished by the Gerut Committee as well as from extensive comments from many colleagues, both here and abroad.

The purpose of the document is to deal with a situation peculiar to our community, namely, to establish the Jewish status of the children of mixed marriage in the particular setting of the Reform Jewish community in North America. While we recognize that what we do here will have an impact on other communities, there are many historical examples of rabbinic pronouncements designed to address the specific situation of individual Jewish communities. It should be further emphasized that we are offering guidance to our colleagues on how we believe the problem should be resolved, specifically for those who come to us for help, but as is the case with all such CCAR resolutions, individual rabbis will have to make determinations in individual cases.

Although we will be voting on the operative paragraph only, the report stands as a whole—it details the historical situation, the Halacha, and past positions of the Conference. It is important to note that the problem with which we are dealing '3 not new but grows out of the same historic conditions which gave birth to the Reform Movement, and as the report makes clear, this is not the first time that we have attempted to clarify our position on the Jewish status of the children of a mixed marriage. The chidush of

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this report is that we now believe that we can no longer assume, as the Halacha does, that biological descent alone is sufficient for the child of a Jewish mother and insufficient in the case of the child of a Jewish father; also, that the continued presence of the non-Jewish family in the case of mixed marriages requires that the additional step of the performance of appropriate and timely public and formal acts is necessary to affirm the intention of the parents and the child to indicate their commitment to the Jewishness of the child. The present report recognizes that both birth and the performance of mitzvot are necessary in all cases.

In response to those who would argue that the effect of this resolution is to make non-Jews of those whom the Halacha would recognize as Jews, we can only say that the Halacha is based on sociological assumptions which no longer obtain, namely, that the woman would return to her people and her offspring would be part of the Jewish community. It is now equally likely that the child of a Jewish mother or a Jewish father will be raised as a Jew or a non-Jew. Therefore, intention as actualized through action is necessary.

Another issue which has been raised is that the adoption of this report will lead to a weakening of our position on mixed marriage. I can only say that the committee believes this to be based on faulty assumptions. Our refusal to officiate at mixed marriages is not based on the halachic status of the children of such marriages, for if it were, we would be willing to perform them in the case where the mother is Jewish. Our opposition is based on the inappropriateness of such ceremonies and their effect on the viability and vitality of the Jewish community. Our concern is not lechatechila but bedi-avad.

While our adoption of this report may cause us some difficulty with our Orthodox and Conservative colleagues, I believe many will greet it with understanding, if not agreement. It is clear that those who differ from us need no new excuses. We do not seek confrontation for its own sake; rather we act within a framework in which we can ultimately promote Jewish survival by responding to the legitimate needs of our community.

The present resolution extends current CCAR practice. It will also strengthen the hand of the rabbinate to insist that parents who wish their children to be considered Jews must take positive steps in that direction and help children of mixed marriages with establishing Jewish identities and take their rightful place within the Jewish people.

This report is a major step forward for us and the Jewish people and represents the type of innovation which has made the Reform Movement a positive force for Jewish survival.

I move the adoption of this report.

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II. STATEMENT OF MARAM

Preceding the discussion, Rabbi Moses Cyrus Weiler (MARAM's Honorary Life Chairman) was permitted, by vote of the convention, to read the following statement on behalf of MARAM, the Israel Council of Progressive Rabbis:

Members of MARAM have had an opportunity to review the latest document of December 23, 1982, prepared by the Patrilineal Committee. We share with you the recognition that it is the duty of responsible leadership to make every effort to secure the identity of the Jewish people and to establish a process for facilitating formal identification for those who wish to consider themselves and be considered by others as Jews. In our wrestling with this problem we have tried to maintain a world-wide perspective, both in terms of the interdependence of Progressive Jewish communities throughout the world and in terms of the interdependence of the Reform Jewish community and Kelal Yisrael.

The document declares its purpose to be: "To establish the Jewish status of the children of mixed marriages in the Reform Jewish community of North America." However, the actions of the CCAR cannot be limited by geographical boundaries. In matters of Ishut, the policies and acts of the American rabbinate affect not only American Reform Jews but World Jewry. Nor can the issue be limited to the status of children of mixed marriages, for the patrilineal position will inevitably affect other issues. It may weaken the motivation for conversion among non-Jewish spouses and other potential converts. Furthermore, we are fearful that the proposed resolution will lead to an erosion of the CCAR position against mixed marriage and will further undermine the capacity of our colleagues to refuse to officiate at such ceremonies.

The committee's statement posits as the basis of our contemporary dilemma the Emancipation Era. It quotes from our colleague, Robert Seltzer: "The result of Emancipation was to make Jewish identity a private commitment rather than a legal status, leaving it a complex mix of destiny and choice." It should be noted that in the same paragraph Seltzer points to the consequence: the reduction of Jews to "a religious denomination only." However, the historical developments of the post-Emancipation era, particularly of the 20th century--the regeneration of Jewish ethnicity, the trauma of the Holocaust, and the emergence of the State of Israel--resulted in the reinjection of the peoplehood dimension within Reform Judaism. If we affirm that we are an integral part of the Jewish people, we cannot limit our horizons to the Reform Movement in North America alone. The adoption of a CCAR resolution has ramifications for the entire Jewish people. Whether we so intend or not, the term "Jewish status" is inseparable from the term "legal status" and goes far beyond "private commitment." Even though the motivation is to

resolve a pressing problem for our American movement, in effect we legislate for the entire Jewish people. The recognition that the Reform rabbi serves in these matters as an agent of the entire Jewish people imposes on us an obligation to give serious consideration to the positions of other Jews and to their potential reaction to our acts and judgments. This is a price we should be willing to pay for the privilege of belonging to the Jewish people and for maintaining unity wherever possible both within the Reform family and within Kelal Yisrael.

The statement now includes a recognition of the necessity for "appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people." That being the case, why does the document not mention the most time-honored, sanctified "formal act of identification," namely conversion? Certainly, in the case of an infant, conversion is in tradition a simple process and can be certified by the granting of a certificate which will bind the child in a "formal act" to Jewishness which would be considered acceptable by both the State of Israel and Conservative Judaism. The proposed formulation might result not only in the alienation of the State of Israel and the Conservative Movement, but will not be acceptable and recognized by major sections of the Progressive Movement in the world.

We believe that the committee's document requires a fuller exploration of Jewish tradition. The document presents as the only rationale for matrimonial descent "the fact that the woman with her child had no recourse but to return to her own people." The centrality and sensitivity of this subject warrant explicit reference to the historical and halachic foundation of matrilineal descent. We should take cognizance of other scholarly and traditional rationales for matrilineal descent: the crisis over pagan wives; persistent periods of persecution; rape of Jewish women; and historic negative attitudes toward non-Jews.

The authors of the document determine, apparently rightly, that "in a vast majority of these cases the non-Jewish extended family is likely to be a functioning part of the child's world, and may be decisive in shaping the life of the child." It is the continuing influence of the non-Jewish extended family life which gives added strength to our call to the CCAR to refrain from acting on the basis of intuition or assumptions, but to initiate a comprehensive sociological study of Jewish identity among the progeny of mixed marriage couples. A hasty decision, before studying the matter in depth, will have irreparable consequence.

We, therefore, urge a mcre thorough study before adopting a change in policy so fundamental to Jewish continuity.

The world movements of Conservative and Reform Judaism have for years struggled successfully to prevent the amendment of the Law of Return which would invalidate conversions performed by non-Orthodox rabbis abroad. As of now, the State of Israel and its secular institutions recognize Reform converts as Jews in every

respect. However, the proposed CCAR resolution, which abandons the requirement of Giyur (conversion), would result in a situation whereby persons recognized by our movement in America as Jews would not, even under the present law, be recognized by the State of Israel as Jews. Furthermore, the resolution will undoubtedly weaken the determination of those forces in the State of Israel who stand with us in opposition to amending the Law of Return. It is one thing for us to demand that the State of Israel recognize, as it now does, conversions performed by all religious movements abroad: it is quite another thing to expect the State to recognize as a Jew someone who has not been converted at all. Our continuing concern is not motivated by political expediency. We know that the Orthodox establishment and the Chief Rabbinate may never recognize the religious acts performed by us as authentic. However, the State of Israel and the majority of Jews in the State have recognized our authenticity. In discussions which we have had with members of the Knesset and leading political figures we have been warned that passage of the resolution may well serve as a pretext for those who, until now, have supported our position, to change their vote. We believe that an amendment to the Law of Return invalidating conversions performed by Conservative and Reform rabbis abroad will prove extremely deleterious to Israel-Diaspora relations.

The document is at times ambiguous and obfuscating. The reader of the operative clause of the document will still be unclear as to the phrase "establishing the Jewish status." Is its purpose to confer Jewish identity on those who until now have not been considered Jews, or is it to strengthen the Jewish identity of those who already are considered Jews by virtue of birth? Moreover, is its intention to declare that persons born of a Jewish mother who are recognized as Jews even by the ultra-Orthodox Aguda should now be considered non-Jews unless they have performed "appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and People"?

We therefore recommend that the resolution be set aside for further consideration rather than that a statement be adopted which is subject to conflicting interpretation.

It would be precipitous to deviate from a time-honored tradition without a more thoroughgoing examination of the traditional sources, the sociological impact, and the internal and external consequences.

III. DISCUSSION

Alexander Schindler: I rise to support the resolution which was offered, and I should tell you that I am primarily interested in that portion of it which provides for the full equality of men and

women insofar as geneaology is a factor in determining Jewishness. I support this motion for three essential reasons.

To begin with, I think it is vital for us as Reform Jews always to say what we believe and to assert what we do--to be honest, never to pretend, to be always proud to proclaim what we in fact practice. If we disagree with this resolution, let us offer a resolution recommending that we alter our practices. But so long as this practice is virtually universally accepted, let us say what we are and proclaim what we do.

Secondly, I am moved by the desire to speak up in order to help those fathers who wish to maintain the Jewishness of their children. I speak of those fathers where an intermarriage has taken place and where eventually a divorce occurs. If we are silent, the hitherto normative position of Judaism holds sway and could be invoked by the courts. In fact, it has on several occasions. The right of fathers to determine the religious character of their children must be protected.

And finally and most important of all: I am moved by the deep feelings of the many children of intermarriages who-barring a forthright declaration on our part that they are fully Jewish-are bound to feel that somehow they are less than Jewish.

Many principals and teachers and rabbis have spoken to me concerning that. Within five years, fully 50 percent of the children in our religious schools will be issuing from such marriages. Let us not make some of these children feel that they are somehow less Jewish.

As for those who fear that the Law of Return will be changed because of what we propose—my friends, the Law of Return may indeed by changed, but those changes are due to political facts on the Israeli scene; they will never be affected by what we do or fail to do right here. The pressures for the law's change come from the Lubavitcher, and the Lubavitcher will never accept us; he will accept only one thing—full surrender. We have a right to be accepted in Israel, fully and completely, but we have a right to be accepted for what we are and not for what we pretend to be or what others want us to be.

Ari Mark Cartun: I am speaking for the ad hoc committee which is opposed to the resolution.

We are opposed to the recommended resolution for the following reasons. It has the effect of disenfranchising the Jewish mother. Where traditional Jewish law recognizes the child of a Jewish mother as automatically Jewish, this new resolution makes such status dubious until the proper ceremonial participation of the child in Jewish life.

Since there is no way for a child in a mixed marriage to be Jewish by birth and the proper participation in quasi-sacramental acts is substituted, the resolution suggests that Judaism may be construed as a confessional rather than a birth community. The

position of the proposed resolution is that in mixed marriage neither parent can establish the Jewish status of the child through birth. Since in today's world there is no guarantee that even the child of two Jewish parents will in fact be raised as a Jew, logic would demand that even in the case of two Jewish parents participation in such life-cycle ceremonies should be required.

This resolution would result in a confusion rather than clarification of Jewish status. The criteria for Jewish status in the resolution are so vague that there will be several simultaneous lists of who is a Jew among our own movement.

A revision of the 1909 position in the Rabbi's Manual should bring increased clarification, not increased confusion. In such a crucial area as personal status, a position of the CCAR should be as clear and definitive as possible, otherwise it could result in individuals being more confused about their identity and thus do actual harm. It will turn Reform Judaism into a sect, creating born Jews recognized only by us and possibly born Jews recognized by everybody but us. It will undermine our movement in the rest of the world, especially in Israel. The CCAR is now an international movement by its own choice, and we must take account of the international ramifications of any position we take. This resolution will give pitchon peh to the Israeli Orthodoxy to change the Law of Return. They will be able to argue that Reform Judaism has created this schism through the definition of one who is a born Jew.

For all these reasons we recommend the rejection of this motion and a return to the position of 1909, which in 74 years has not created one unsolvable problem. We are dealing here with the most critical and sensitive issue—personal status. The resolution presupposes that the 1909 position has resulted in much hardship and many unsolvable problems, but this is not the case.

This resolution, we fear, will create more problems than it solves, result in serious internal differences within our movement, and undermine the position of non-American members of the CCAR. When dealing with personal status, caution is warranted. We believe that our best course of action is to remain within the position of 1909, which has stood the test of time and proven its workability.

Rav Soloff: I wish to propose an amendment. My apologies for not having done so in advance in writing, but this amendment represents a new conclusion in my own thinking reached only during the early hours of this morning.

Attorney Fallon pointed out the anomaly of a CCAR position which would deny Jewish status for lack of educational ritual to the child of a Jewish mother, a child who would be considered a Jew by both Halacha and the laws of Medinat Yisrael.

I am further concerned that the original challenge of patrilineal descent is being perverted into a series of prescriptions for ritual acts and <u>mitzvot</u>, so that the issue of descent is lost from view. This might be misunderstood as a move toward a confessional definition of Jewish identity.

Therefore, while I entirely agree with the descriptive language [of the report], I believe that the following sentence should be added after the word "Therefore" [in the operative paragraph of the report]:

The CCAR declares that the child of one Jewish parent shall henceforth be under the same presumption of Jewish descent as the child of two Jewish parents.

Let me confess that this is—in part, at least—a reversal of the position I tried to express last year, because this blunt wording does presume that all, and not just a fair share, of the children of mixed marriages are Jews whenever their guardian or they themselves so choose, as described in the report. There is no way to untie the Gordian Knot; it must be cut through so that we have an initial premise on which to base claims in the absence of any parental decision or in case of conflict between parents regarding the status of their children. I see no other way to deal with the issue of patrilineal descent.

Rav Soloff's motion to amend was seconded.

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Bruce Goldwasser: In speaking against the amendment, I am also speaking against the entire process of delineating a situation which has been dealt with for 74 years in a very carefully vague way by our Rabbi's Manual. And because we are dealing with the question of interfaith marriage, I would like to invoke a short secular agada. Many years ago, when I was in the hills of West Virginia, I learned the proverb, "If it ain't break, don't fix it." And that's exactly the way I feel about the statement in the Rabbi's Manual.

The wording that has been invoked in the amendment, I believe, will act as if it were Halacha, which does not exist in our movement. Our movement is not bound by Halacha. I think the wording is too specific, and I am arguing in favor of the positive obfuscation that will allow individual Reform rabbis to function, as we have been for 74 years. I think that any substitution, whether it be this amendment or anything else, for what we have in the Manual sows the seeds of doing damage that we have not yet even imagined to our relationship with Kelal Yisrael and to our functioning as autonomous Reform rabbis.

Herman Schaalman: Let me only indicate--for the sake of the record--that the best information I have is that we are talking about the 1947, not the 1909, statement [in the Rabbi's Manual].

Neil Kominsky: I would like to thank Rav Soloff for having come up with a very good solution to what was to me the only

significant problem in the patrilineal resolution. I think our task in approaching this question is as far as possible to open doors, not to close them.

We are not in the business of trying to define as a Jew anybody who does not consider himself or herself as a Jew, regardless of their descent. We are not going out on the street "chapping" people; we are talking about a situation which occurs only when an individual approaches a rabbi wishing to be designated as a Jew. Under those circumstances, I think, it behooves us—in our interest regarding the future of the Jewish people and in the interest of the people involved—to be as mekelim as possible on both sides.

I think that to try to lay down specific standards of Jewish upbringing without which a person might not be recognized as a Jew, is again to deny the fact that there are a great many of our people who are fully of Jewish blood, but certainly of no Jewish practice whatever, and who do not have that difficulty.

I think Rav's wording does that job beautifully—it puts all individuals with one Jewish parent or two Jewish parents on an equal footing, so that when any individual approaches us we have a door open and we can say, "Yes, you are a part of us and we are glad to have you."

Michael Remson: Point of information. It is my understanding that Rav added his sentence before the last two parts [of the operative paragraph], but did not eliminate those two parts. If there is equal presumption of Jewishness, then what is the force of the following sentence, i.e., "The Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people"? That means to me that there is not the same presumption, and I would like clarification of that.

Herman Schaalman: I do believe that your point is well taken in pointing out that the amendment as offered might create an ambiguity both in the place in which it is put and with the language that follows. However, the chair is not in a position to clear up that point of information. I think we will take it into consideration as part of the total proposal that has been made.

Michael Stroh: Judaism has existed for 4,000 years. We have on the floor two diametrically opposed suggestions: one—to disenfranchise Jewish mothers and leave the Jewish father exactly as he was, in the old position; second—to enfranchise the Jewish father and to leave the Jewish mother in the exact position she was before. These are diameterically opposed. We have also those people who are opposed to both suggestions. I think it should be clear that this is an issue on which the CCAR itself is very divided. Anything we decide is going to leave a great portion of

our own membership in opposition and unhappiness. It is not true that a decision of this gravity has to be decided immediately. We have 4,000 years behind us. This afternoon will not make or break the Jewish religion or people. We have time to consider this. I recommend to the Conference and to my colleagues that on an issue this divisive we pause. This is not the time to make any decision. We should remain with the status quo and continue to study it as long as we really feel is necessary.

Sheldon Zimmerman: I rise to speak for the amendment, and I am grateful to Rav Soloff for having worded it and created it for us. It does not conflict with the latter part of this committee's report, for there is a difference between "presumption" and "establishment." We presume the child's Jewishness, which is later established through acts of positive identification. That is what we do now; and if Alex Schindler is calling us to honesty, that's the honest stance of the Reform Movement today.

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In addition, I would like to inform this body that this is also the intent of the vast majority of those on the Task Force on Outreach, which has discussed this and which has patiently waited for this body to act. It is time to be daring, it is time to be bold. No longer shall they say in Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth have been set on edge." Once and for all: children of at least one Jewish parent are presumed to be Jewish; let us then establish their Jewishness through education and positive acts of identification. That's what we do; that's what the vast majority of Reform rabbis do. I am not going to tell kids in my religious school, "Hey, kid, you're not Jewish because you haven't had your Bar Mitzvah yet." That's nonsense. I presume your Jewishness; we establish it thorough Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation.

Let us be honest, let us be daring, let us be authentic to our call as Reform Jews.

Jerome Malino: I would like to speak against the amendment and by implication on behalf of the resolution that has been presented.

Rav Soloff's amendment has one thing to recommend it. It removes the absurdity of drawing a distinction between the child of a Jewish mother and the child of a Jewish father. I think that under other geographical, psychological, and historical circumstances, it would have been fine. But I think it's some centuries late. It ignores completely those psychological and sociological elements that are alluded to in the resolution originally presented that have changed the whole relationship of child to parent where there is a mixed marriage. I think that is it absurd at this point to ignore those sociological and psychological implications, as this amendment does, and therefore I speak against it.

What are we uneasy about--being machmirim? We have been condemned over and over again because we have taken the easy way out

or have seemed to take the easy way out. If there is a <u>safek</u> about the Jewishness of a child who has one non-Jewish parent, then it applies equally and the <u>safek</u> has to be resolved.

And we are doing it in precisely the way it ought to be done:

echad bapeh ve-echad balev. To suggest that we go on with the same

precise obscurity that the language of our Manual has, is to fail to

meet our responsibilities as rabbis in today's world.

A last comment: we had plenty of nourishment yesterday morning and this morning, pointing out the cataclysmic changes that have taken place in the Jewish family. To go on doing things exactly as we did them, even 30 or 40 years ago, is to ignore the realities of life.

Rav Soloff's motion to amend the report was put to a vote and passed.

Lawrence Colton: I would like to offer an additional amendment--to change the language [of the second sentence in the operative paragraph] to read as follows:

The offspring of any mixed marriage is encouraged to participate in appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people. The performance of these mitzvot serves to confirm those who participate in them--both parent and child--to Jewish life.

I do so with one idea in mind. I want to be able to deal with a young child, who, before Bar Mitzvah, questions whether he is a "Chanuka" or a "Christmas" (i.e., the child who comes home and says, "Momma, am I a 'Chanuka' or a 'Christmas'?"). This is a pressing problem for those of us who deal with young children when their parents are both Jewish. How much more so in the case of a mixed marriage. To have to wait until Bar Mitzvah does not answer what that child is up to that point. I believe the distinction between "presumption" and "establishment" is dangerous.

Lawrence Colton's motion to amend was seconded.

Eric Wisnia: I speak against the change in wording. The wording of the original amendment which says, "The Jewish status... is established..." is necessary.

I feel a little guilty in that I began much of these proceedings back in 1975 when I presented to the CCAR Committee on Gerut my original proposal to equate the offspring of a Jewish father with that of a Jewish mother. My intention was originally, and still remains, to discourage intermarriage. I feel that intermarriage is not a positive force. I fear that by changing the wording we will be saying that there is nothing that is required of

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the child of a mixed marriage; we will be saying that by virtue of bloodline, this child is a Jew.

I will not accept the child as Jewish who does not profess Judaism. I do not accept Brother Daniel (Oswald Rufeisen)--who is a Catholic priest born of a Jewish mother--as a Jew.

The intent of the resolution of the CCAR Committee on Gerut (which requires that the Jewishness of the child of a mixed marriage be established by participation in Jewish life) is to say that one must identify as a Jew and live as a Jew specifically in the case of a mixed marriage, because there is a blemished situation. Therefore, I feel that changing the wording is most detrimental, for it will then say that nothing is required of the child of a mixed marriage except the fact that he has Jewish blood. In my opinion, this is agreeing with Adolph Hitler that if one of your great grandparents is Jewish—as long as it is the right one—you are a Jew.

Lawrence Colton's motion to amend the report was put to a vote and lost.

Roland Gittelsohn: I would like to speak to the single point raised by Moshe Weiler. I do not presume to speak on behalf of all members of ARZA, though I am confident that this would represent a very substantial majority of the views of the leadership of ARZA. With great affection and respect for Moshe Weiler and great concern and understanding for the problems faced by the members of MARAM, I believe this is an instance in which we must recognize the need for religious pluralism within our own Central Conference of American Rabbis. I do not believe that we can speak on behalf of MARAM or force them to our view, but neither do I believe that they have the right to shackle us if our majority judgment is what I hope it will be, i.e., in favor of the resolution before us. The argument for Kelal Yisrael--if it is valid in this instance--would also be persuasive that we must accept kashrut from an authoritarian, not a selective, point of view; that we must accept being Shomerei Shabbat in the most literal traditional sense of the word; that we must accept the Orthodox status of the aguna; that we must accept the thoroughly unacceptable halachic view toward the nida and sexual ethics generally; that we must abolish mixed seating in our synagogues. And I submit to you that even if we were to do all of these things, we would accomplish only one objective: we would destroy the integrity of Reform Judaism, but we would be no more acceptable to the Orthodox authorities than we are now. I believe in Kelal Yisrael, but I have reluctantly, sadly, come to the conclusion that when our Orthodox brethren use the term Kelal Yisrael, they mean that it is valid only if we agree with them and abide by all of their rulings. That's their interpretation of Kelal Yisrael. My understanding of Reform Judaism is that we begin with utmost respect for Halacha, that we must have good reason to reject any part of

Halacha, but when we, as the result of much study, are convinced that the requirements of modern society, psychology, ethics, etc., 'conflict with a particular point in Halacha, we reject that point. And on this basis I strongly urge the adoption of the original resolution.

Karen Soria: I am pleasantly surprised at the number of people here who have evidenced that they are aware that there are Reform rabbis in other countries—not only in Israel, but in South Africa and Australia. The situation there is very different, and if we are going to talk about Kelal Yisrael, let's talk about Kelal Yisrael among Reform rabbis. There is a responsibility that this community here has to Reform rabbis in other countries. It's easy to forget—looking around this room—that there are a few out there.

More than that: I think we forget (and we shouldn't, after having heard the speaker of this morning) that the other responsibility is towards those children that are born of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother. Those children are told, "Don't worry, you're Jewish," and then they meet a nice Jewish boy or girl and they are told, "You are not Jewish." Let's be honest with them. We are not being fair to them; we are deceiving those people; we are being cruelly unfair to them.

I am against this resolution.

Gunther Plaut: A point of information. I think I have a sense of the way in which many of you will vote, but I would like to ask Peter Knobel and the committee whether, when we vote, we do not in fact vote on the operative clause in the context of the entire statement. Do we?

Herman Schaalman: We do so.

Gunther Plaut: If we do so, Mr. President, then is it not true, that the first sentence of this document must be taken into serious consideration? I will read it for you. "The purpose of this document [including the operative clause] is to establish the Jewish status of children of mixed marriages [apparently only] in the Reform Jewish community of North America." In other words, we are now dealing with Jewish children in North America, and only with Reform Jewish children. Is that the intent? I just want to know.

Herman Schaalman: That is the intent.

Gunther Plaut: If that's the intent, I think the members are to take this into consideration.

Jack Stern: I would like to propose an amendment. I propose that the sentences after the word "Therefore" [in the operative paragraph] read as follows:

The CCAR declares that the child of one Jewish parent is under the presumption of Jewish descent. This presumption of the Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is to be established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people.

The reason for the amendment is so that those reading this afresh will not have the benefit of Shelly Zimmerman's Rashi and because we must make clear in the text of the motion the connection between presumption and establishment.

Jack Stern's motion to amend was seconded and put to a vote. The motion was carried.

A motion to adopt the report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent, as amended, was made and seconded. The motion was carried.

IV. THE REPORT

Following is the final text of the Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent on the Status of Children of Mixed Marriages as adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis on March 15, 1983:

The purpose of this document is to establish the Jewish status of the children of mixed marriages in the Reform Jewish community of North America.

One of the most pressing human issues for the North American Jewish community is mixed marriage, with all its attendant implications. For our purpose, mixed marriage is defined as a union between a Jew and a non-Jew. A non-Jew who joins the Jewish people through conversion is recognized as a Jew in every respect. We deal here only with the Jewish identity of children born of a union in which one parent is Jewish and the other parent in non-Jewish.

This issue arises from the social forces set in motion by the Enlightenment and the Emancipation. They are the roots of our current struggle with mixed marriage. "Social change so drastic and far reaching could not but affect on several levels the psychology of being Jewish.... The result of Emancipation was to make Jewish identity a private commitment rather than a legal status, leaving it a complex mix of destiny and choice" (Robert Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, p. 544). Since the Napoleonic Assembly of Notables of 1806, the Jewish community has struggled with the tension between modernity and tradition. This tension is now a major challenge, and it is within this specific context that the Reform Movement chooses.

to respond. Wherever there is ground to do so, our response seeks to establish Jewish identity of the children of mixed marriages.

According to the Halacha as interpreted by traditional Jews over many centuries, the offspring of a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father is recognized as a Jew, while the offspring of a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father is considered a non-Jew. To become a Jew, the child of a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father must undergo conversion.

As a Reform community, the process of determining an appropriate response has taken us to an examination of the tradition, our own earlier responses, and the most current considerations. In doing so, we seek to be sensitive to the human dimensions of this issue.

Both the Biblical and the Rabbinical traditions take for granted that ordinarily the paternal line is decisive in the tracing of descent within the Jewish people. The Biblical genealogies in Genesis and elsewhere in the Bible attest to this point. In intertribal marriage in ancient Israel, paternal descent was decisive. Numbers 1:2, etc., says: "By their families, by their fathers' houses" (lemishpechotam leveit avotam), which for the Rabbis means, "The line [literally: 'family'] of the father is recognized; the line of the mother is not" (Mishpachat av keruya mishpacha; mishpachat em einah keruya mishpacha; Bava Batra 109b, Yevamot 54b; of. Yad, Nachalot 1.6).

In the Rabbinic tradition, this tradition remains in force. The offspring of a male Kohen who marries a Levite or Israelite is considered a Kohen, and the child of an Israelite who marries a Kohenet is an Israelite. Thus: yichus, lineage, regards the male line as absolutely dominant. This ruling is stated succinctly in Mishna Kiddushin 3.12 that when kiddushin (marriage) is licit and no transgression (ein avera) is involved, the line follows the father. Furthermore, the most important parental responsibility to teach Torah rested with the father (Kiddushin 29a; cf. Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De-a 245.1).

When, in the tradition, the marriage was considered not to be licit, the child of that marriage followed the status of the mother (Mishna Kiddushin 3.12, havalad kemotah). The decision of our ancestors thus to link the child inseparably to the mother, which makes the child of a Jewish mother Jewish and the child of a non-Jewish mother non-Jewish, regardless of the father, was based upon the fact that the woman with her child had no recourse but to return to her own people. A Jewish woman could not marry a non-Jewish man (cf. Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha-ezer 4.19, la tafsei kiddushin). A Jewish man could not marry a non-Jewish woman. The only recourse in Rabbinic law for the woman in either case was to return to her own community and people.

Since Emancipation, Jews have faced the problem of mixed marriage and the status of the offspring of mixed marriage. The

Reform Movement responded to the issue. In 1947 the CCAR adopted a proposal made by the Committee on Mixed Marriage and Intermarriage:

With regard to infants, the declaration of the parents to raise them as Jews shall be deemed sufficient for conversion. This could apply, for example, to adopted children. This decision is in line with the traditional procedure in which, according to the Talmud, the parents bring young children (the Talmud speaks of children earlier than the age of three) to be converted, and the Talmud comments that although an infant cannot give its consent, it is permissible to benefit somebody without his consent (or presence). On the same page the Talmud also speaks of a father bringing his children for conversion, and says that the children will be satisfied with the action of their father. If the parents therefore will make a declaration to the rabbi that it is their intention to raise the child as a Jew, the child may, for the sake of impressive formality, be recorded in the Cradle-Roll of the religious school and thus be considered converted.

Children of religious school age should likewise not be required to undergo a special ceremony of conversion but should receive instruction as regular students in the school. The ceremony of Confirmation at the end of the school course shall be considered in lieu of a conversion ceremony.

Children older than confirmation age should not be converted without their own consent. The Talmudic law likewise gives the child who is converted in infancy by the court the right to reject the conversion when it becomes of religious age. Therefore the child above religious school age, if he or she consents sincerely to conversion, should receive regular instruction for that purpose and be converted in the regular conversion ceremony. (CCAR Yearbook, Vol. 57)

This issue was again addressed in the 1961 edition of the Rabbi's Manual:

Jewish law recognizes a person as Jewish if his mother was Jewish, even though the father was not a Jew. One born of such mixed parentage may be admitted to membership in the synagogue and enter into a marital relationship with a Jew, provided he has not been reared in or formally admitted into some other faith. The child of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother, according to traditional law, is a Gentile; such a person would have to be formally converted in order to marry a Jew or become a synagogue member.

Reform Judaism, however, accepts such a child as Jewish without a formal conversion, if he attends a Jewish school and follows a course of studies leading to Confirmation. Such procedure is regarded as sufficient evidence that the parents

and the child himself intend that he shall live as a Jew. (Rabbi's Manual, p. 112)

We face today an unprecedented situation due to the changed conditions in which decisions concerning the status of the child of a mixed marrige are to be made.

There are tens of thousands of mixed marriages. In a vast majority of these cases the non-Jewish extended family is a functioning part of the child's world, and may be decisive in shaping the life of the child. It can no longer be assumed a priori, therefore, that the child of a Jewish mother will be Jewish any more than that the child of a non-Jewish mother will not be.

This leads us to the conclusion that the same requirements must be applied to establish the status of a child of a mixed marriage, regardless of whether the mother or the father is Jewish.

Therefore:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis declares that the child of one Jewish parent is under the presumption of Jewish descent. This presumption of the Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is to be established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people. The performance of these mitzvot serves to commit those who participate in them, both parent and child, to Jewish life.

Depending on circumstances, mitzvot leading toward a positive and exclusive Jewish identity will include entry into the covenant, acquisition of a Hebrew name, Torah study, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and Kabbalat Torah (Confirmation). For those beyond childhood claiming Jewish identity, other public acts or declarations may be added or substituted after consultation with their rabbi.

REPORT OF THE PLACEMENT COMMISSION

The activity of the Placement Commission is directed by an essential guiding principle. This is the principle of a balance that must continually be struck between, on the one hand, an orderly and equitable process that attends both to needs of congregations

According to the age or setting, parents should consult a rabbi to determine the specific mitzvot which are necessary.

²A full description of these and other <u>mitzvot</u> can be found in Shaarei Mitzvah.

and career aspirations of rabbis, and on the other hand, the preservation of an appropriate degree of autonomy for both congregations and rabbis. We submit panels to congregations with limited numbers of candidates, thus allowing a manageable interviewing process. The whole process of impanelment itself is conducted by the executive committee of the Commission, together with its director, always with an eye towards a maximum measure of fairness.

The very nature of this enterprise, however, is fraught with frustrations, which is perhaps the only ungratifying aspect of having served on the Commission. If 50 of our eligible colleagues expressed interest in a position, and that panel is limited to fifteen, the human arithmetic comes to 35 disappointed people. And when eventually one of those is chosen by a congregation and 14 are not (including some who, for whatever autonomous reasons of the congregation, are not even interviewed)—then disappointment becomes the order of the day.

I report to you then that the Placement Commission is continually seeking refinements of an imperfect process to make it become as fair and equitable as it can be—always keeping in mind that necessary balance between the need for a regulated procedure and the principle of autonomy, and always knowing that disappointment may be the order of the day.

I likewise report to you that all of these efforts toward balance and fairness would be unavailing without someone at the helm who by his philosophy is committed to the principle of balance and, perhaps more important, who by the quality of his character is a fair human being. I cannot sufficiently express our collective gratitude to Stanley Dreyfus, the fair one, for whom the position of Director of Placement is not a job, but a sacred, if sometimes painful, calling. The gratification of these years as chairman of your Commission has been, in greatest measure, the opportunity to serve at his side.

Together with the daily process of placement is the consideration by the Commission of newly emerging situations—new needs and new questions that call for new, sometimes experimental, answers. For example, when the need was recognized to educate and assist congregations in the procedure of their own interviewing and decision—making (at first, with an eye to equal consideration for all candidates regardless of sex, age, or marital status, but then with a larger eye to other factors in helping a congregation select a rabbi)—it was then that the system of Placement Assistance Teams was inaugurated.

I have reported in past years that a team is composed of rabbis and lay participants trained to assist congregations to ridentify some of their own needs and help guide them in the <u>Derech</u> <u>Erets</u> of interviewing. My progress report this year on Placement Assistance Teams is that the number of visits keeps increasing with approximately 16 having been made this year.

What invariably happens is that the initial weariness on the part of the congregation concerning what they fear may be an intrusion on their autonomy, turns out to be an enthusiastic expression of gratitude for the assistance which the team has rendered.

Another such project upon which we reported last year was the proposal for a career consultation program for rabbis who find themselves in a particular problem situation or who have begun to evidence a more extensive pattern of difficulty. Our report his year is that our beloved past president, Jerome Malino, has accepted the invitation to serve as coordinator of the project of career consultation. No one is more eminently qualified, by reason of experience and sechel and rachmanut, for such a key position in our

Just a few more Placement Commission explorations into newly emerging questions and concerns. Stanley has mentioned the phenomenon of two-career families, and the Commission is studying the connection between that phenomenon and the problem of filling pulpits in smaller communities where only limited opportunities are provided for the career of the non-rabbinic family member. Another issue concerns congregations that may, in their request for a panel, stipulate a rabbi who does or does not officiate at mixed marriages. The Commission has reaffirmed its position that such requests be disregarded, and the congregations are notified accordingly during the formation of the panel. The hope is that a congregation will interview and seriously consider all qualified candidates. Even though those congregations, during their interview, may make their own autonomous choices, the Commission and the Director of Placement do not accept officiating or not officiating in a mixed marriage as a matter of qualification.

As my term as chairman comes to an end and the leadership is assumed by Ronald Sobel, I wish to acknowledge again my gratitude to and admiration for Stanley. Thanks are also due to Bea Fox, who also cares; to Joe Glaser, who is ex-officio of everything, except he steers totally clear of the process of impanelment; to the entire CCAR staff; and finally, to the members of the Commission who represent our College, our Union, and our Conference. A wonderful thing happens at the meetings of the Commission, because in the course of the proceedings, one would be at a loss to identify who specifically represents College, Union, or Conference. The shared concern by laity and rabbis for the well-being of congregations and the well-being of rabbis and that ongoing attention to the delicate balance between procedure and autonomy, that spirit of cooperation and harmony, have a message to deliver to our entire movement. I thank you, my colleagues, for the opportunity of having served with you.

Jack Stern, Jr., Chair

Dear Rabbi Schindler:-

SEPH S. NUBLE

While the controversy continues - Patrilineal versus Matrilineal - I would like to submit an interesting comment by Rashi, who quotes the Talmud, regarding the identity of certain "slaves".

I am sending it to you because I have not seen it used in any articles regarding this issue. (Humbly, I do not claim to have read all the literature).

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Joseph S. Noble

5180 Copperleaf Circle

Delray Beach, FL 33445

but outside your borders.

Rashi - who came from "around you" to take wives from your country and had children. The child goes after the father and is not included in the command "to destroy the seven nations". You are permitted to acquire him as a slave. (check Kiddushin 67b).

Cohen - Soncino - Quoting Rashi - Who came to marry Canaanite women and have settles in your land. As children of such a marriage adopt the nationality of the father, they are not regarded as Canaanite and may be acquired as slaves.

Ton Ezra - who dwell in Eretz Canaan....all nations except the seven which had to be annihilated.

(The seven nations are mentioned in Deuteronomy 7:1)



717 Riverside Drive Salisbury, MD. 21801 January 24, 1985

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

Without going into the question of patrilineal descent I find Dr. Alexander Schindler's arithmetic highly defective, in his article "Facing the Realities of Intermarriage" (Judaism 34:1 Winter 1985). He is guilty of gross exaggeration.

In his attempt to give the single most important motive for Patrilineal Descent he suggests that intermarriage with non-Jewish women will result in a loss of four million Jews by the year 2000, and all this out of our present population of just under six million, in the United States alone."

How does he seek to prove his point? He suggests:

- 1) "A Jewish demographer estimates there is a total of 35,000 intermarriages annually. Of these two out of three involve a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman, and only one in four of these wives converts to Judaism."
- 2) "We can expect at least 35,000 children each year from intermarriages. Taking parents and children together -- as they must be considered, for the family is the basic unit of Jewish identity -- some 100,000 individuals are threatened with exile or alienation from the Jewish community."
- 3) "A hundred thousand souls up or down each year -- a swing of two million in a decade -- four million more-or-less Jews by the year 2000 -- and all of this out of our present population of just under six million in the United States alone."

Beginning with the first part of the statement. He speaks of 35,000 intermarriages annually. However, he states that only "two out of three involve a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman." This reduces the number to be considered, to two thirds of 35,000, which is less than 24,000. Then he further states that "one in four of these wives converts to Judaism". This further reduces the less than 24,000 by a quarter, leaving less than 18,000 -- half the number he suggested.

Continuing with his second part --"We can expect at feast 35,000 children each year from intermarriages, etc." The figures for those who are from non-Jewish mothers, should be revised to 18,000, as indicated above. Thus his statement that "some 100,000 are threatened by exile or alienation" should likewise be reduced to about half that number -- around 50,000.

In the third part of his statement he suggests "a hundred thousand souls each year -- a swing of two million in a decade". My arithmetic tells me ten times 100,000 is one million, not two million. When he suggests "four million by the year 2000", even using his figure of 100,000 a year, the total for fifteen years should be one and a half million -- NOT four million.

But, as I have pointed out, based on his own reckoning, the 100,000 per year should only be about half that number i.e. 50,000. This would be a half a million in a decade, and about 750,000 by the year 2000 -- a far cry from four million.

In reality, we know that many a Jewish man who marries a non-Jewish woman is not "threatened with exile or alienation from the Jewish community" as Dr. Schindler suggests. They are welcomed into Reform Congregations, and into many Conservative Congregations, and their non-Jewish, unconverted wives may even aspire to Sisterhood leadership in some Congregations.

It should also be noted that Rabbi Walter Jacob (in the same issue of Judaism, p. 52) states: "The vast majority of intermarried couples do intend to raise their children as Jews", so why the sudden urgency for Patrilineal Descent?

Sincerely yours,

Leah Schwartz

. Our das

January 20, 1987 19 Tevet 5747

Rabbi Eugene J. Lipman 3512 Woodbine Street Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Dear Gene:

Lest you think I instigated anything, I write to advise that James Besser of the Baltimore Jewish Times called me for a comment on your statement regarding patrilineal descent. I felt compelled to disagree with you.

Needless to say, the last thing I want is a public pissin' march with Gene Lipman. We need to talk. No doubt we do have some differences on this issue but let's deal with them directly and no through any media mishigas. Please call and let's make a date to get together when next you are in New York.

Rhea and I join in sending love to you and Essie.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

thank with the diale

RABBI EUGENE J. LIPMAN 3512 Woodbine Street Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

February 1, 1987

Telephone 301 652-2474

Dear Alex:

Many thanks for the Schulweis article. As always he is thoughtful, one of the most pluralistic rabbis I know, usually out in front of the rest of us--but not necessarily realistic for the present.

How fine it would be if any of the movements could quietly and deliberately consider the implications of some issue, beyond the voting and the posturing. But none of us does much of that, and I have stopped being annoyed with this reality. Harold's paper could serve as a valuable resource in a consideration of how we do our decision-making--but I won't hold my breath until it is used.

I have no concern at all regarding disagreements between thee and me on any issue. I've known since 1979 that I did not agree with you on patrilineality. I decided then to play no role in the debate, and I didn't. In my talk with Besser of the Baltimore Times, I differentiated between the CCAR position and my duty to explicate it wherever and whenever, and my right to a private opinion. Since you were asked, you had an obligation to express your difference of opinion. I know I am not after points; I am confident you aren't either. That noncompetitive stance will be mine on all issues. Baruch ha'shem, I'm past ambition, turf battles, the need for points.. I trust you are, too. I shall uphold CCAR policies for the next two years as faithfully as I know how to do, but I have no intention of wasting time enhancing theinstitutional image of the CCAR at anyone's expense -- and certainly not my own image. CCAR presidents come and go too fast for that kind of timewasting.

Genug. A PBS thing about Ingrid Bergman is coming on, and she has been my far-from-secret passion since 1945 when she was in a USO group in Czechoslovakia and I was their guide to Jewish DP camps and communities. Schindler, you can't compete!

Essie joins in best to you, Rhea and your gang.

1131377 Beer August 20, 1987 25 Av 5747

Ms. Barbara C. Rosenberg 219 Lombardy Sugar Land, Texas 77478

Dear Ms. Rosenberg:

In your response to your request for the statement on pattilineal descent let me note that formal adoption was never taken by the UAHC. The matter was placed before our rabbinic organization, the Central Conference of American Rabbis and they adopted the report on patrilineal descent in 1983.

For your information, I am enclosing herewith a copy of my remarks to the CCAR in 1982 in support of patrilineal descent. I am also enclosing the miaptes of the 1983 CCAR Conference held in New York City, at which the decision was adopted on patrilineal descent.

I trust this information will be helpful to you. With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

J. P. Morris
15 Latches Lane
Cherry Hill, N.J. 08003-2233

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler President of the Reform Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 5th Avenue New York, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I have been thinking of addressing myself to you ever since I read a book by Alan M. Dershowitz, and where a specific mention made about a subject matter that my wife, Gaby, and I have often discussed in the many happy years of our married life.

Just a little background on ourselves. Both of us were born in Germany but fortunately managed to get our of Berlin just shortly before Kristallnacht back in November 1938. Whe I left at the time in the company of my family, I had just turned 12. Both of my parents were Jewish. Both passed away several years ago.

In the case of my wife, Gaby, her Father was Jewish but her Mother is Lutheran.

Both of us think of ourselves as 100% Jewish. However while our two children are firm believers, they sometimes have expressed doubts as to their being Jewish because of my Mother in Law's Lutheran faith.

As I read a comment on this matter on page 182 of Alan M. Dershowitz's book, I felt reassured that our thinking is right and that yes, indeed, we are and will continue to rightly so know that we are Jewish.

May I ask you to please comment on this matter to us?

I sincerely hope that you will be so good and drop me a line.

Sincerely yours.

J. P. Morris

בתי הכנסת המאוחדים באמריקה The United Synagogue of America

The Association of Conservative Congregations

Rapaport House, 155 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010-6802 • (212) 533-7800 • FAX: (212) 353-9439

November 29, 1991

Rabbi Alexander Schindler President Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10021 Alan J. Tichnor International President 104 Country Club Road Newton Centre, MA 02159-3022 (617) 244-6146 FAX: (617) 969-1934

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

As you know your Movement's acceptance of the principle of Patrilineal Descent has caused a great deal of controversy within the Jewish community. As you also know, the Conservative Movement has consistently opposed any such radical change.

While we fully respect the autonomy of the Reform Movement, we consider any change in the definition of Jewish identity to transcend the jurisdiction of any one movement and rather view it as a matter of concern for the Jewish community as a whole. It was for precisely this reason that we have joined with you in protesting any change in the "Who is a Jew" legislation in Israel.

It is in this spirit that at our recent Biennial Convention, we passed the enclosed resolution and I respectfully ask that you consider taking appropriate measures.

Please feel free to call me or our Executive Vice President, Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein, if you would like to discuss this matter further.

We look forward to working with you and continuing the constructive relationship that has long existed between our movements.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Alan J. Tichnor

President



PATRILINEAL DESCENT

WHEREAS, the UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF AMERICA is committed to fostering working relationships between all Jews and among the various branches of Judaism; and

WHEREAS, the United Synagogue of America is committed to the unity of the Jewish people as manifested by the shared Jewish identity that embraces all Jews throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, the acceptance of patrilineal descent by the Reform and Reconstructionist Movements destroys the fabric of Jewish unity and affects marriage and family continuity in the entire Jewish community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF AMERICA reaffirms its position against patrilineal descent as a standard of the Conservative Movement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF AMERICA urges the Reform and Reconstructionist Movements to reconsider their position on patrilineal descent in order to preserve the unity of Klal Yisrael; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF AMERICA calls upon the leaders and Rabbis of the Conservative Movement to explain the issues involved in patrilineal descent to their congregants.

CC: MR. M. MERIANS

MR. R. COHEN

RAMETHAROLD SCHULWEIS



RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212)249-0100

Palveleneas

December 6, 1991 29 Kislev 5752

Alan J. Tichnor President United Synagogue of America Rapaport House 155 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10010

Dear Mr. Tichnor:

Thank you for sending me your Association's resolution on Patrilineal Descent. This comes as no news, since representatives of the press contacted me concerning this resolution weeks ago.

As I told them, and as I tell you now, we have no intention to take what you call "appropriate measures," by which you mean, I suppose, that we ought to initiate steps to reverse our decision on this issue.

There are several reasons why we will not do so and let me list them ad seriatim:

- a. The resolution on patrilineal descent is well rooted in Reform Jewish practice spanning decades. Our recent resolution merely made explicit what has been implicit in our work. Being so well rooted both in word and in practice, there isn't a fiddler's chance of our reversing it even if we were to seek to do so.
- b. Patrilineal descent is firmly rooted in the Jewish tradition as well. There is no serious student of the Tanach who does not recognize that in Biblical times the patrilineal principle ruled.

The genealogical tables of the Torah are exclusively patrilineal.

The Laws of Inheritance proscribed in the Torah insisted that properties be transmitted from generation to generation along the patrilineal lines; daughters were excluded, with one notable exception.

Perhaps more to the point, all the children of Jewish fathers and non Jewish mothers are deemed Jewish by the Torah.

In rabbinic literature, the patrilineal strain continues. People are called to the Torah in their father's name and not in their mother's name. We are told that we exist primarily because of the merit of our fathers. The status of the priesthood to this day is transmitted exclusively through the patrilineal line, that is to say, one can become a cohen or a levi only if one's father is Jewish and never if only one's mother is Jewish. If the patrilineal line is good enough to transmit the status of priesthood, then why in heaven's name isn't it good enough to transmit Jewishness.

- c. Studies undertaken in the course of the past several years, demonstrate that the preponderant majority of American Jews are accepting of the patrilineal principle some 85% in fact, including the overwhelming majority of Reform Jews, a substantial majority of the Conservative laity as well as even a not insignificant plurality of Conservative rabbis.
- d. There is increasing interest in the patrilineal principle in Israel, given the fact that so many of the male immigrants from the Soviet Union are married to non-Jewish women. The Jewish status of their children so far has not really been challenged by the Israeli Orthodox rabbinate.
- e. The Jewish lineage of the Ethiopian Jews is traced exclusively through the paternal line understandably enough, since their Jewishness is rooted in the Chamishe Chumshe Torah and they were divorced from the subsequent development of the Jewish world. Let me be more specific. As you probably know, there are some questions

concerning the Jewishness of many of the Ethiopian Jews who are applying for admission to Israel. The Jewish Agency will accept only those Ethiopian Jews who can establish that their <u>fathers</u> were Jewish and not those who trace their lineage only through their mothers. Moreover, the Orthodox rabbinate supports this decision.

For all of these reasons, and more - and I speak now primarily of the present urgent needs of the American Jewish community given the high rate of intermarriage - I will respond to your appeal by appealing to you to move your religious community in the direction which you urge us to reverse, and to do this for the sake of the greater good of the Jewish people as a whole.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



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

VIA FAX

May 29, 1991 16 Sivan 5751

TO: GERSHOM GORENBERG

Thanks for faxing the edited text. I approve of the final form. One reminder, however, in paragraph four which starts "The Reform decisions..." I would request that you either underline or italicize the last words: so long as the children were raised as Jews.

In response to your questions:

- 1/ The figures on acceptance of the patrilineal decision are based on a survey made by a prominent Jewish sociologist, Stephen Cohen, which was extensively reported on in the New York Times some months ago.
- 2/ By all means push the date back and make it 2000 years, that is to say, begin the paragraph by saying "True, for the past 2000 years or so Jewish identity..." although scholars are really not certain when the change from patrilineal to matrilineal in fact took place.

Warm regards, to Ze'ev too.



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

VIA FAX (4 Pages)

May 28, 1991 15 Sivan 5751

TO: Gershom Gorenberg Jerusalem Report

Enclosed my Op-Ed piece as requested. Please verify receipt by return FAX (212-570-0895).

Regards.

ARCHIVES



Union of Liberal & Progressive Synagogues

The Montagu Centre, 21 Maple Street, London W1P 6DS Tel: 071-580 1663 Fax: 071-436 4184

MIN/4/41

22 July 1994

Private and Confidential

Rabbi Alexander Schindler Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York New York 10021-7064

Dear Alex

RE: EUROPEAN BET DIN

I would like to thank you for the time you gave Rabbi Mark Solomon and me when we met at the Friedlanders on 1 July. We were both most appreciative that you took time out from your holiday to discuss our concerns, and in such a sympathetic manner.

I thought it might be helpful if I let you know the current situation. A new draft has been prepared by Rabbi Rodney Mariner which goes some considerable way to meeting ULPS concern, but not sufficiently to solve entirely the patrilineal issue, about which we feel so strongly. Our Rabbinic Conference has therefore now made some proposals for amendment in this area - and also in some others. We are hopeful that if these amendments can be accepted, ULPS can then give its agreement and support to an endeavour which would help the Jews and potential Jews of the former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries in a way which we feel is appropriate to the spirit and practice of Liberal Judaism.

We are also asking that the final ratification of the venture be dealt with in an open meeting of both Rabbinic and Lay Leaders at the European Region meeting here in October and not at a solely Rabbinic meeting. Our rabbis do not perceive this as a purely professional Rabbinic matter, but as one that should engage the concern of all who lead our Movements.

You kindly agreed that you would articulate the concern of the ULPS to the leadership of the World Union and we are very grateful for anything you can undertake in this area. Even if we are able to bring this particular issue to a satisfactory conclusion, it will have only been achieved as a result of enormous tenacity on the part of the British Liberal Rabbinate not to become sidelined in such an historic project. I personally believe that there is not sufficient appreciation outside Great Britain of the very real differences in principles, practice and style between the various sections of British and European Progressive Judaism. ULPS, as you know, is proud of its adherence to those same values that UAHC has.

Thanking you once again for your involvement

Yours sincerely

Mrs Rosita Rosenberg



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The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

28 St. John's Wood Road, London NW8 7HA Telephone 071-286 5181 From: Rabbi Helen Freeman

Rabbi Alex Schindler c/o Rabbi A H Friedlander Westminster Synagogue Rutland Gate Knightsbridge London SW7 1BX

29th June 1994

Dear Rabbi Schindler

I wanted to apologise to you for not being able to attend the informal meeting on Friday 1st July. I am particularly sorry not to be there as I am involved in the Outreach Programme of the ULPS and would have valued your input enormously.

I hope therefore you will allow me to convey my concerns to you in writing. The real crux of the matter is the setting up of the European Bet Din to deal with potential conversions and status cases in Eastern Europe.

I think that the World Union can do valuable work in this sphere to reintroduce people to a positive Jewish heritage that has been torn from them by many years of Communist rule.

However, if the ULPS rabbinate is to participate in such a Bet Din, our views on patrilineality need to be respected, and the status of individuals in Eastern Europe with one Jewish parent needs to be appropriately affirmed. This seems to be a vital point of principle, particularly as we are entirely in accordance with the UAHC, the largest constituent body of the World Union.

However, the European Bet Din as it has been promoted heretofore appears to have moved entirely and exclusively towards the position of the RSGB. It seems to me that as two constituent bodies of the World Union, we need to find some more successful way of respecting each others principles if we are to be able to work together.

You will appreciate that the news of the approach of the European Bet Din has caused great distress in Liberal congregations, which feel that our law on patrilineality and affirmation of status are a central tenet of Liberal Judaism. It is a particular concern to me as a rabbi involved in Outreach that we should contemplate making this retrograde step.

I therefore particularly appreciate the interest and concern that you are showing.

B'shalom

Rabbi Helen Freeman

BRIGHTON & HOVE PROGRESSIVE SYNAGOGUE

6 LANSDOWNE ROAD, HOVE, BN3 1FF TELEPHONE: BRIGHTON 737223

Minister: Rabbi William Wolff

28.6.1994

Dear RAbbi Schindler,

European Beth Din

I am one of those who have been closely involved in getting this scheme off the ground.

I did some work with a number of communities in Europe last year while I was in between full-time jobs here, and I became convinced of its need and its urgency.

I therefore moved the motion at the European Board meeting in Zurich at the end of last October urging the establishment of such a Beth Din. And I attended, at my own expense, all the meetings at which the present scheme was worked out under the leadership of Rabbi Mariner, to whose insight, courtesy and consideration I am grateful.

I do not claim paternity, nor was I the obstetrician that brought it to birth, only one of the midwives --- in this post-feminist age a male midwife is surely perfectly kosher.

I am satisfied that the blueprint now before us safeguards the patrilineal principle to which I feel bound. In our discussions we were particularly concerned to safeguard it, and did so by the provision which enables the Beth Din to issue certificates that "recognise status" as well as grant conversion. The recognition of status is available especially to those who have Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers.

Secondly the procedures as now drafted provide for participation by local communities in every session of the Beth Din. This is designed to ensure the acceptance by the local communities of those to whom status is granted. I, and no doubt others, regard this as a key and essential element of the scheme. I am sure we are all agreed that to grant status without hope of acceptance by the communities in which the applicants ultimately live is, mostly, a pointless exercise.

I believe the scheme now before us commands wide support in continental communities, is consistent with progressive ideology, and is above all an expression of Ahavat Yisrael. For it is a desperately needed service to so many now left in limbo, and it brings redress and justice to a situation that is now arbitrary chaotic and damaging to countless inviduals.

I hope the European Board will be able to see to it that this new European Beth Din will be functioning by the autumn at the latest.



Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS — CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

William & Lottie Daniel Department of Outreach

SERVING REFORM JUDAISM IN NORTH AMERICA

838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10021-7064 (212) 249-0100

July 12, 1994 4 Av 5754

MEMORANDUM

To: Rabbi Alexander Schindler

From: Dru Greenwood

Re: Evelyn Wilcock

As you can see, Edie sent me Evelyn's materials to read while you were away. I had met her a number of years ago and was impressed at that time by her focused energy. Obviously she's kept it up. Her passion comes through strongly even with the scholarly emphasis of her work.

A couple of comments: Evelyn seems to be reacting to a stronger social stigma in England than I believe is current here. Perhaps it's just because she's taking on the British Reform.

She advocates at one point for accepting patrilineal Jews where they are as Jews without asking any questions or establishing any kind of special programming (particularly not programming that's aimed at non-Jews who are choosing Judaism), but then later points out the need for each person to be given the space to explore and affirm Judaism as needed. My experience is that for some adult children of intermarriage who have been only marginally educated as Jews, the Intro course works fine. Some also want a ceremony of affirmation, whether it's a conversion ceremony or some variation thereof. We may have some potential problems in this area (see enclosed letter to RJ) with differing expectations and requirements on the part of rabbis and/or individuals with one Jewish parent. We modeled a wonderful resolution in the Spring RJ with the 15-year-old from Harry Danziger's congregation who affirmed her Jewishness with her bat mitzvah.

Chairperson I don't agree that Outreach workers who have converted can't do outreach to adult children of intermarriage. I do think it would Co-Chairperson helpful to raise up the voices of this constituency and model vice Chairperson ways of handling the situation. We have made some minimal Elizabeth Linkefforts in this direction on college campuses. There is also a man Parmela Waechhor on the Outreach Committee at Temple Israel in Minneapolis who is an Director Dru Greenwooddult child of intermarriage who was going to pursue programming for this group. Taste of Judaism may very well pick up some adult children of intermarriage too. I'd like to follow up with them to find out their experiences and see if we need to do more.

I'll be interested to hear about your meeting in England.

III FELFIX

Superb. August 4, 1994 27 Av 5754 Ms. Evelyn Wilcock 22 Luttrell Avenue

London SW15 6PF England

Dear Ms. Wilcock:

While I received your note of July 29 when I was in London, the brevity of my visit and the press of meetings precluded making contacting with you. I do hope you understand my situation and thus forgive this very late response.

On my return to New York I found the various materials you were kind enough to share. I very much appreciate your thoughtfulness and have reviewed your words with care.

The passion you feel for your subject matter is evident in your writings. I do note, however, that you appear to be reacting to the stronger social stigma which obtains in Great Britain, rather than the situation here in the United States.

Be that as it may, you should know that I plan to share your materials with others in our community who are deeply involved in all aspects of Outreach, most especially in regard to patrilineality.

For your perusal, I enclose herewith the Spring 1994 edition of REFORM JUDAISM and call your particular attention to the cover story on Page 10. I am certain it will interest you. Note also the item on the 15 year old from Memphis, a child of an intermarriage, who chose to affirm her Jewishness at her Bat Mitzvah. As Reform Jews we are firm believers in choice and that attains as well in regard to Jewishly educated patrilineal Jews, be it via our Introduction to Judaism Classes for those who have had but a marginal Jewish education or a conversion ceremony for those who choose that formality.

As to your comments on Outreach workers who have chosen Judaism, on the contrary, we have found they can be superb teachers for adult children of intermarriages. We do have to raise the consciousness of our constituents to the particular problems of this group and provide creative models for handling such an educational process. We are working towards that goal.

Again, thank you for sharing your writings and your concerns. I am deeply grateful for your interest and your input.



June 29, 1989

Rabbi Alexander Schindler Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Ave. New York, NY 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

The enclosed interview with Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk and the editorial it elicited contains an offer to withdraw patrilineal descent by Reform if Orthodoxy thus in return will authenticate Reform.

While the answer may be clear as to Orthodoxy's response, nevertheless this may be an opening that possibly could lead to actual discussions, if not negotiations.

We are asking a number of personages, including you of course, for their reactions, suggestions or ideas, and will incorporate them into a round-up account in a forthcoming issue.

Looking forward to hearing from you I am.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Cohen Publisher

mm encl. BERNARD CHIERT ATTORNEY AT LAW

1090 FURTH ROAD VALLEY STREAM, N.Y. 11581

516-791-5979

Leave the patricular seed for the patricular seed for

December 10,1990

Rabbi Abraham Shindler Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 5th AvenueNew York, New York

Dear Rabbi Shindler

This letter is written on the continuing controversy as to "Mi Yehudi". that is, whether the line of descent is Matrolinear or Patrolinear, or both.

I suggest that you have surrendered the high ground to the Orthodox and failed to adequately defend your philosophy with substantion as to its validity.

Matrolinear descent is a new philosophy dated to about the 15th or 16th centuries proclaimed by a Rabbi who produced a trachtate sentially misoginistic and who may have been reacting to the infidelities of his wife. Hence he revealed his inner thoughts about the parentage of his own children by throwing a cloud on the legitmacy of all Jewish children.

By this Philosophy-of Matrolinear descenthe attacks the character of all Jewish women including the characters of the mothers of Isreal, Sarah, Rachel and Rebecca. He makes of every Jewish woman a potential harlotand questions the honesty and integrity of all Jewishwomen. He makes of Abraham a potential cuckold.

I suggest that the next time the question comes to the fore that you aggressively point out the evil inherent in that approach.

Further in the Old Testament the line of descent is Patrolinear.

The line of Judah isdescended froam a union

BERNARD CHIERT ATTORNEY AT LAW 1090 FURTH ROAD VALLEY STREAM, N.Y. 11581

516-791-5979

between Judah and a caananitish woman.

Solomon had many non Israelite wives and children resulting therefrom and there is no indication that swuch children were under any disability.by reason of their parentage.

Was Bathsheba, Solomons mother an Iraelite?

Rehobothy, son of Solomon and an Ammonitish womanwas kind of Judea.

Under the law of the captured slave the women were after 30 days taken as wivesand the offspring of such women were never under any disability.

Respectfully submitted

Bernard Chiert