



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**  
A DIVISION OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

**MS-630: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler Digital Collection, 1953-1996.**  
Series A: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1961-1996.

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Box  
13

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3

Reform/Conservative/Orthodox, 1985-1992.

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

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Send copy of the enclosed  
to Fogelman -

Blow Hershel -

The enclosed was sent to me.

Is it genuine? If it is, how  
{Lemaun Hashem} can ~~heretics~~  
{LEMAUN HASHIM}

"heretics" be encompassed in  
keal yisrael?

Be well -

From the desk of:



RABBI DANIEL B. SYME

I thought the attached  
might be of interest to you.

Fogelman

In about a week  
(after he  
receives my  
note)

Thank you  
I'll write to  
you

Res. — 617-752-5791

By the Grace of G-D

Tel. — 617-755-0718  
752-0904

*Handwritten: Hershel Fogelman for Alex*  
RABBI HERSHEL FOGELMAN

22 Newton Avenue  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01602

Dean  
Yeshiva Achei Tmimim

Rabbi  
Chabad Synagogue  
Tifereth Israel Sons of  
Jacob

30 Cheshvan, 5747  
December 2, 1986

Dear Alex;

I received your letter and due to the schedule and wedding preparations, was unable to respond sooner.

Reread the letter once again, my dear Alex, and you will see that there is no mention in the letter about laymen or Rabbi's being heretics, G-d forbid.

The Rebbe speaks about the doctrines, the philosophies, the movements and their direction as being heretic, not the people.

As a matter of fact, I already clarified this point in my past correspondence with you.

The view about Jews is based on a ruling of the Rambam "Hilchos Gerushin Chapter 2" who considers all Jews, even the rebellious ones, as true believers. The same Rambam, however, has decreed differently as the Rebbe *points out* regarding the movements. We are dealing with two separate issues, one refers to people and the other to ideologies.

Alex, you must believe and understand that the Rebbe's love and concern for every Jew, irrespective of the label he or she wears, whether Orthodox, Reform or Conservative, is boundless.

At the same time the movements that are predicated on rejecting Torah Min Hashoyam, etc, are, according to Jewish Law, in the class that the Rebbe is referring to in the letter.

We have *plz* which is binding on Jews eternally and you cannot expect recognition of movements who have divorced themselves from the *plz*



(2)

Therefore, Alex, when the Rebbe speaks in his letter about "heretics" it does not refer to any Jew, but to certain philosophies and life styles.

I really want to visit with you and hopefully resolve some of these issues.

I am looking forward to seeing you and Rhea at my daughters wedding on December 14 at the Marriot in Boston. We sent you an invitation under seperate cover with a true desire of sharing this *דבר* together and with a fervent *דבר* for nachas in your *דבר*

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Hershel Fogelman

P.S. Enclosed is a copy of my letter which you may have seen printed in the Jerusalem Post on this question.

Secondly, I want to again reaffirm what was so obvious when you attended the "Farbregen," and that is; the genuine warmth that radiated from the Rebbe to you and Joshua. It is a lasting *דבר* that is there.

*דבר* *דבר*

HF/be  
enc

R.O.C

December 10, 1986  
8 Kislev 5747

Rabbi Hershel Fogelman  
22 Newton Avenue  
Worcester, MA 01602

Dear Hershel:

Thank you for your letter. It comes as no surprise. I expected you to draw the distinction between individuals and movements. Unfortunately, the rabbi's letter refers to heretics -- and not to heretical movements or ideologies. Heretics are people -- in this case Jews who hold ideas which Orthodoxy deems heretical. You know full well what tradition has to say about heretics -- they can scarcely be included in the embrace of Klal Yisrael. And those who read such words can only feel themselves as excluded. Chachameem Hizaharu B'divrechem.

I'm sorry that Rhea and I will miss your daughter's wedding, we'll be in Israel. I will, as I told you, offer a special prayer at the Kotel.

Be well, Mazal tov.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

October 27, 1986  
24 Tishrei 5747

Rabbi Hershel Fogelman  
22 Newton Avenue  
Worcester, MA 01602

Dear Hershel:

Forgive the delay in thanking you for the honeycake. I much appreciate your thoughtfulness and the sweetness of your gift and the friendship it bespeaks. Rhea and I are grateful for your kindness.

Let me also take this opportunity to wish you a G'mar Tov may the year be blessed with good health, happiness and fulfillment.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

November 14, 1986  
12 Heshvan 5747

Rabbi Hershel Fogelman  
22 Newton Avenue  
Worcester, MA 01602

Dear Hershel:

The enclosed was sent to me. Is it genuine? If  
it is, how, (lema-an hashem) can "heretics" be  
encompassed in Klal Yisrael?

Be well.

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

קול קורא - ומחלה נאמנה - אהרן שיהא  
 שבת - נ.ל. - יסעור הרגלים - יסעור הרגלים

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON  
 Lubavitch  
 770 Eastern Parkway  
 Brooklyn 13, N. Y.  
 HYacinth 3-9250

לשם  
 של  
 נבדל

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן  
 ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקווי  
 ברוקלין, נ.י.



By the Grace of G-d  
 15th of Tammuz, 5719  
 Brooklyn, N. Y.

In reply to your inquiry as to whether or not there has been any change in my stand toward the affiliation of orthodox Rabbis or synagogues with the New York Board of Rabbis or Synagogue Council -

I wish to assure you that there has not been, nor could there be, any change in my stand on this vital and far-reaching question.

My considered opinion, as I have reiterated it on several occasions privately and publicly, is based on the undisputable Halachic decision formulated by Rambam (Hilechot Teshuvah 3:8), according to which the doctrines and ideology of the Conservative and Reform movements can only be classed in the category of heretical movements which have plagued our people at one time or another, only to disappear again, having no basis in our everlasting Torah, Toras Emes, Toras Chaim.

I have clearly stated my view that membership in the New York Board of Rabbis, or Synagogue Council of America, or similar religious bodies, strikes deeply at the roots of true Judaism. Such membership cannot escape the logical inference that the Conservative and Reform movements are recognized by the orthodox members of the said bodies as belonging within the fold of true Judaism, differing only in degree or in minor details; whereas in truth these movements deny the very basis of true Judaism. Protestations to the contrary can only be regarded as empty words, refuted by actions.

May G-d enlighten the eyes of those that still waver on this vital question, to remedy the situation without delay. I hope and pray that everyone, both Rabbi and layman, will use his utmost influence in that direction.

With blessing,

M. M. Schneerson  
 M. M. SCHNEERSON

לכבוד  
 הרבנים  
 הרבנים  
 הרבנים

## READERS' LETTERS

### 'ALL JEWS ARE INHERENTLY BELIEVERS'

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post  
Sir. - It is with a sense of urgency that I feel a compulsion to correct an erroneous impression falsely conveyed by those who should know better.

In recent months, articles and statements have appeared accusing the orthodox Tora community, and more particularly Lubavitcher, that they view Reform and Conservative Jews as being less than Jewish, or not really Jewish. Rabbis from pulpits and leaders of movements continue with the bombardment that the "Orthodox" think we are not Jewish. Whether this is a ploy to arouse the masses to battle is difficult to ascertain. In any case, innocent laymen, and in some cases spiritual leaders are left wondering as to this position.

It is, therefore, incumbent once and for all, to set the record straight irrespective of issues. While it is axiomatic that Jews with regard to observance and behaviour are guided and bound by the God-given Tora, Gemara, *Shulhan Aruch*, etc., it is however the same *Shulhan Aruch* that provides the Halacha as to how one views a Jew.

The Rambam-Maimonides, codifier of Jewish law, in the second chapter of "*Hilchot Gerushin*," clearly states that even a Jew who rebels against the Halacha is considered not only a Jew, but a believer in the innermost portion of his *neshama*. It is on this basis that the Rambam draws a halachic conclusion that even in those areas where one's wilful consent is needed, such

as in certain cases of divorce, *korbanot*, etc., and the Beit Din forces him to comply, it is predicated on the principle that he is inherently a believer, and wants to fulfil the will of God.

Therefore, not only dare we not exclude any Jew from *Klal Yisrael*, but further, all Jews according to Maimonides, irrespective of their religious orientation, are considered halachically *ma'aminim b'nei ma'aminim* - believers, children of believers, whose deeds, *mitzvot* and transgressions, are considered by God in the same context as those of observant Jews.

*Emuna* belief is inherent in every Jew. In the words of the Rambam only his evil inclination forces him to act rebelliously. One can quote hundreds of passages attesting to this axiom. We must, therefore, set the record straight that we are all truly one as Jews.

I do not, at this time, wish to enter into the many complex issues that divide Jews because, to quote the famous American expression, "what unites us is far greater than what divides us."

If you, therefore, hear a speaker or read an article, whether from the left or the right, creating an illusion or distortion about this subject, you should know that he or she is either ignorant or malicious. The unity and love of our people as a collective, and more so with regard to the individual, is the priority of priorities.

Rabbi HERSHEL FOGELMAN  
Worcester, Mass.



Thank you for your letter. Your  
letter comes as no surprise. I  
expected you to draw the distinction  
between individuals + movements.

Unfortunately the Rabbinic letter  
refers to heretics - & not to  
heretical movements or ideologies.

Heretics are people -- in this case  
Jews who hold ideas which the  
~~Rabbi~~ R. Hodesky deems heretical.

You know full well what position  
has to say about heretics --  
they can scarcely be included  
in the embrace of K'lal Yisrael.  
And those who read such words can  
only feel themselves as excluded.

CAACHAMERET HIZAHARU B'DIVRECHERET.

SOMAY I MISSED your daughter's wedding.  
I will, as I told you, offer a special  
prayer at the KOTEL.

January 7, 1986  
26 Tevet 5746

Rabbi Martin Siegel  
Columbia Jewish Congregation  
The Meeting House  
Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, MD 21045

Dear Martin:

Thank you for your eagerness to be of help. Let me make some further random comments concerning the issue which you raised:

To begin with, I must take exception to the manner in which you designate the Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities, calling the former traditional and the latter "assimilated." Do you really mean to use that adjective for Conservatism and Reform? We are, after all, a major bulwark against assimilation. I do believe that "Orthodox" and "non-Orthodox" are far happier designations.

Further, I do not believe that the "rift" between our respective communities is as serious as all that. There is a good deal of cooperation between both groups in areas of common endeavor. As a case in point: Moshe Sherer of the Aguda and I are often together at the State Department and at the White House and in those settings he refers to me as "Rabbi" Schindler. Louis Bernstein and I nine times out of ten are on the same side on the Sochnut Executive. We disagree when we disagree, but that which unites us is far greater than that which divides us.

You also ought to know that there is a good deal more dialogue between the various branches of Judaism than is generally known. Thus, for example, the presidents and directors representing the three major Rabbinic organizations meet with each other regularly and at great length.

I agree, of course, that this effort ought to be extended and we will be doing more of that in the future on a national leadership level and especially on a lay level. I intend to see to it that the Resolution which was adopted at the Los Angeles Biennial encouraging this kind of outreach between the Orthodox and Conservative and Reform movements will not become a dead letter.



Rabbi Martin Siegel  
January 7, 1986  
Page -2-

Part of the problem we are facing is that the Orthodox community is not at all monistic and united within itself. As a matter of fact, it seems to me that the schism within Orthodoxy is far greater than the so-called schism between the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox. It may surprise you to learn, in that context, that it is the Orthodox toward the center of the spectrum who are urging us to be more forceful with the representatives of the radical right, particularly vs. the Lubavitcher.

I wish you well with your efforts toward arranging a dialogue with Lubavitch. On several occasions in the past I have declared myself ready to meet with anyone at any place. Leaders of our congregations who said that they have friends who in turn were "very close to the Rebbe" were embarrassed when they learned their Lubavitch acquaintances were Bhadchonim who could not deliver the bride.

But whether you succeed or not, this much you ought to relay to your contacts in the Lubavitch movement: nothing is more destructive of Jewish unity than the effort to change the Law of Return. This will lead to the virtual alienation of the overwhelming majority of America's Jews (and, I suspect, many others in the world as well).

Everyone knows that Lubavitch is the sole driving force in the effort to change that Law and nothing pains me more than to see its professed devotion to Klal Yisroel so besmirched and violated by its deeds. It is reflective of the sinat chinam which brought about the destruction of the Temple.

Again, my thanks for your interest.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

# **Columbia Jewish Congregation**

The Meeting House  
Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, Md. 21045

January 2, 1986

Rabbi Alex Schindler  
U.A.H.C.  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex,

I am grateful for your prompt and generous reply to my letter concerning your quote about the Lubavitch in the New York Times.

I gave the material you sent me to a friend of mine who is very close to the Rebbe. However, the matter has raised some deep concerns which I would like to share with you.

Essentially we are looking at a new situation in which the traditional and assimilated communities are changing their relationship with each other.

From what I hear in the traditional community, you have become for them the prime spokesman for the non-traditional point of view. How you handle that responsibility will have a lasting impact on the future of this crucial relationship.

While the matter is sensitive and difficult this may be a time in which a model of cooperation between the movements can be undertaken.

Some of the things that might be done include open public dialogues between traditional and assimilated Jews; use of traditional teachers

# **Columbia Jewish Congregation**

The Meeting House  
Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, Md. 21045

in assimilated religious schools; and a dialogue instead of confrontation on the issue of Who is a Jew?

I have floated these suggestions to the Lubavitch group and they are interested.

I hope that you will be interested in considering this matter further.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Martin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rabbi Martin Siegel

RMS/sgr

*Please keep  
list + send out  
as they come  
in.*

November 15, 1985

Rabbi Martin Siegel  
Columbia Jewish Congregation  
The Meeting House  
Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, MD 21045

Dear Martin:

A long time ago I learned never to rely on newspapers reports of meetings and/or speeches, unless the full text is provided. For your information, the New York Times reported on one paragraph of my address and that was taken out of context and perverted my meaning.

The enclosed copy of the November 4 JTA Bulletin has a report which is much truer to the spirit of my address than was the accounting extracted by the Times' writer.

Just as soon as we receive reprints of my address I will have a copy sent to you so you can read the full speech.

With warmest regards and all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

11/18  
Encl.

# Columbia Jewish Congregation

The Meeting House  
Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, Md. 21045

November 11, 1985

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

Dear Alex,

Your address to the UAHC Biennial as reported in the New York Times contained a profound inherent contradiction.

On one hand you are severely attacking traditional Jewish groups, on the other you are attacking them for fostering Jewish disunity by attacking you.

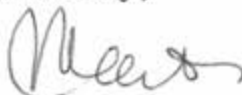
I was attracted to the Reform Movement because I thought it was a place where there was a respect for diversity especially for tradition.

In these times of increasing institutional antagonism I think you could make an historic contribution by fostering those attempts that <sup>are</sup> being made to join assimilated and traditional Jews in ways that will benefit both.

There are a number of such efforts that I am aware of which could be fertile grounds for new direction for Reform, if it does not wish to become an Orthodoxy of its own.

If you wish to pursue this matter further please get in touch with me.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Martin Siegel

RMS/sgr

*Don't think  
never rely on a  
Newspaper report  
for your information -  
that paragraph was from one  
of my meetings.  
The enclosed  
clipping from  
the JTA  
as other  
letters.*

R/10/e

January 13, 1986  
3 Shevat 5746

Rabbi Hershel Fogelman  
22 Newton Avenue  
Worcester, MA 01602

Dear Hershel:

I am really surprised that you think me guilty of drawing an analogy between Lubavitch and Mengele's behavior. After all, you know my background. Yitz Greenberg, who knows me far less well, insists in his letter to the Baltimore Jewish Times that I was misconstrued. You really should have drawn that same conclusion. Curiously enough, you did not even include a copy of the paper in question - and I cannot even react to its text.

What I did say ~~and~~ have said repeatedly is that those who stood at Auschwitz's gates did not ask what kind of Jews passed before them - were they Zionist, Bundist, Orthodox, Reform? They killed as all, including those accepted as Jews only by non-Orthodox rabbis. Israel was created as a haven for all who are potentially victimized because of their Jewishness and that therefore the effort to be more selective before Jerusalem's gates is unacceptable, indeed morally reprehensible.

I stand by that statement, it is a statement of fact, and anyone who reads any kind of analogy into it is guilty of a gross misrepresentation.

I have told you before that I deem Chabad's persistent endeavors to change the Law of Return a tragic, even historic mistake. Nothing in modern Jewish life is more destructive of our unity. It reflects not a devotion to Ahavat Yisrael but rather sinat chinam. This is not the kind of all loving, all embracing Hassidism which my father, z.k., taught me to admire, indeed to revere.

Needless to say, you have my warm good wishes on the occasion of your family's several simchat.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Irving Greenberg  
Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky

h-rc



Res. — 617-752-5791

By the Grace of G-D

Tel. — 617-755-0718  
752-0904

RABBI HERSHEL FOGELMAN

22 Newton Avenue  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01602

Dean  
Yeshiva Achei Tmimim

Rabbi  
Chabad Synagogue  
Tifereth Israel Sons of  
Jacob



19 Teves, 5746  
December 31, 1985

Dear Alex:

I was in N.Y. last week at the occasion of some family simchas, and had opportunity to bump into my friend, Rabbi Krinsky. By the way, I am the recipient of a few Mazeltovs; my son Levi Yitzchok is a *MA*, my son Shmuel had a little boy and my daughter Basya had a little girl.

Rabbi Krinsky showed me the article that appeared in the Baltimore Jewish Times. I must tell you, Alex, I was grieved by the analogy of Mengele *וְהָיָה כְּמֵנְגֶלֶ* and --- etc. How can a Jewish mouth utter such vilification in so frivolous and irresponsible a manner. Where is also the intellectual honesty to continually misrepresent the obvious that, G-d forbid, Lubavitch distinguishes between Jew and Jew, when you know that the opposite is true.

*על גילדוֹר.* I am not entering now into a discussion or dialogue about Reform, etc. What is, however, becoming apparent is that all the accusations that are being hurled against chasidim - whose genuine love and concern for me and you, mine and your family, and a million other you's and their families - that they are prejudiced, G-d forbid, against Reform Jews, has now become the by-line of those who call themselves Reform, and who are drawing the line between Jew and Jew. One should be mindful of the saying of the Sages *פְּרָטִים מֵאֵין מֵאֵין פְּרָטִים*. The accusations are fabrications- *פְּרָטִים מֵאֵין מֵאֵין פְּרָטִים*. Beyond all this, how can a Jew defile the memory of *פְּרָטִים מֵאֵין מֵאֵין פְּרָטִים* who perished at the hands of the Mengeles, with such diatribe. How shameful!

Believe me Alex! I write this not with *לֵב נֶאֱכָל* but with pain within me and disillusionment in you. I, therefore, conclude that you never said that, and that you were misquoted.

I must give Itzy Greenberg credit for immediately refuting and distancing himself from such Jewish anti semitism. Enclosed, is the letter that Itzy Greenberg sent to Rabbi Krinsky and the letter to the Baltimore Times, wherein he comes to the same conclusion about you. I call on you to remove from the pages of your history such a *פְּרָטִים מֵאֵין מֵאֵין פְּרָטִים*

May we help <sup>הלוי</sup> to bring about true <sup>אמת</sup> of Jews, which is inherent  
in our <sup>נשמה</sup>, by searching into ourselves as the <sup>הייליקער ר' אהרן</sup>  
<sup>הויזערס</sup> said <sup>שנאם אדומה אדומה וזהו חסידות</sup>

The Farbrengen of <sup>אדומה</sup> January 20, 1986, 9:30 p.m. is coming up,  
which is the Yartzeit of the previous Rebbe, and the day when the  
Rebbe <sup>אדומה</sup> assumed his leadership 36 years ago. It is a good time  
<sup>זיך אנהאנדלען</sup> with the <sup>הייליקער ר' אהרן</sup> of so magnificent a <sup>צדק</sup>

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  






CLAL

The National Jewish  
Center for Learning  
And Leadership

December 24, 1985

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky  
Lubavitcher Movement  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Rabbi Krinsky,

A Baltimore Jewish Times article improperly and without basis associates me with a criticism of Lubavitch based on a morally wrong analogy to Mengele's behavior.

I repudiate this analogy as without basis and have asked for a clear disclaimer by the paper. (Please see enclosed letter.)

I ask you to convey my deep regrets to all Lubavitchers for so wrong an analogy and to assure you and them that I am no way in agreement or even associated with that analogy.

Sincerely yours,

Irving Greenberg

IG:vjo  
encl.



CLAL

The National Jewish  
Center for Learning  
And Leadership

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Chairman  
Rabbi Irving Greenberg  
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Harvey Arfa  
Secretary  
Paul Jeser  
Exec. Vice President  
Dr. David Elcott  
Program Director

December 24, 1985

To the Editor  
c/o Mr. Sherwood Kohn  
Baltimore Jewish Times  
2104 North Charles Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

To the Editor:

My position on the Luvavitcher movement is that it is a very positive force in Jewish life which is also wrong in pushing the who is a Jew issue and which must beware lest its success lead to excess. Your story (in Baltimore Jewish Times, December 20, 1985), reverses my tone and wrongly makes my views sound like a negative judgement. I don't like this, but hope that the movement will understand, in the spirit of "Faithful are the wounds (criticisms) of a friend" (Proverbs 27,6).

However, all this pales into insignificance in the face of a grievous misrepresentation in the article. You print an extended quote in the name of Rabbi Alexander Schindler, followed by the statement, "Rabbi Greenberg agrees." This is utterly without basis. (See p. 56, righthand column.)

That statement was never read to me, and I do not agree to it. Indeed, I strongly disagree.

My agreement consists of the fact that I believe the "who is a Jew" controversy is deeply divisive. I do not agree that "All their [Lubavitchers'] good is undone by this madness"--as indeed other quotes from me in the same article make this clear.

Most of all, I feel a deep revulsion by the implication that I agree with the next sentence in which an analogy is drawn with "Mengele, making selections." Knowing Alexander Schindler as I do, I find it unimaginable that he would use such an analogy. Surely he must have been misconstrued.

As a matter of principle, no Jew should ever draw analogies between Nazis' (Mengele's!) behavior and what Jews do. The Holocaust is not another metaphor. It is a horrifying fact, so monstrous that one should draw any analogy from it with great


restraint. Never should such an analogy be drawn or applied to a holy community like the Lubavitcher Hasidim.

For decades, I have wrestled with the implications of this terrible event of the Holocaust. Never have I been associated with so grievous a use of the concept. I request that you publish this statement as prominently as you did the article.

Sincerely yours,

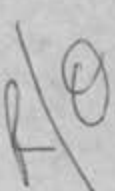
Irving Greenberg

IG:vjo

  
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

October 29, 1986  
26 Tishrei 5747

Rabbi Daniel B. Syme

  
Please keep Dan Freeland apprised of our decisions concerning Fred Pomerantz: what we intend to do; what the limits of our involvement are, etc.

I spoke to him only briefly and he has some information which you ought to glean from him. Apparently the Temple has already responded to the lawyer. Find out exactly what and who - was it personally for Pomerantz, or for the Board or for both.

From the desk of:



RABBI DANIEL B. SYME

*I thought the attached  
might be of interest to you.*

*Butler*

BENNETT J. WASSERMAN

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

COUNSELOR AT LAW

ONE UNIVERSITY PLAZA

HACKENSACK, NJ 07601

(201) 488-1222

•CERTIFIED CIVIL TRIAL ATTORNEY•  
MEMBER, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK,  
& PENNSYLVANIA BAR

October 14, 1986

Rabbi Fredric S. Pomerantz  
Temple Beth El of Northern Valley  
221 Schraalenberg Road  
Closter, NJ 07624

Dear Rabbi Pomerantz:

I represent Friends of Lubavitch of Bergen County and have been consulted by that organization in connection with a blatantly malicious and false statement made by you in a letter published in the Bergen Jewish News on October 9, 1986.

In pertinent part, that libelous statement is:

"...I reinforce the attention called to the duplicity -- whereby funds raised here in Bergen County, through the organization known as Friends of Lubavitch or Chabad, are used in Israel as part of an ongoing lobbying campaign in the Knesset (parliament) and for a massive public relations blitz to pass laws that might ultimately exclude 90 percent of American Jewry from qualification for citizenship under Israel's Law of Return.

"If funds for Friends of Lubavitch or Chabad went only for cards and flowers for the ill, or other Mitzvot that engendered wholeness and love, there would be no issue here to join."

\*\*\*

Page Two  
October 14, 1986  
Rabbi Fredric S. Pomerantz

"...here in Bergen County ... funds given to Friends of Lubavitch (Chabad) are not merely used for lovely local activities, rather, they are also channeled to political warchests to intensify internal strife which could ultimately deny the legitimacy of the majority of American's Jews. (Contribute -- if you wish this goal.)"

The foregoing statements are false, libelous and are intentionally aimed at damaging Friends of Lubavitch of Bergen County in connection with its activities and fund-raising efforts.

Under New Jersey law, such malicious and false statements intended to ridicule and do harm to an organization which suffers a loss of good will and confidence of its constituents, is libelous and can serve as the basis of legal action against the person making the statements. Mosler v. Whelan, 28 N.J. 397.

I am persuaded that your causing the publication of such libelous statements in the Bergen Jewish News, an organ aimed at and read by the Jewish community of Bergen County, was designed to intentionally strike Friends of Lubavitch squarely in its pocketbook and to disgrace its fine reputation among its constituents.

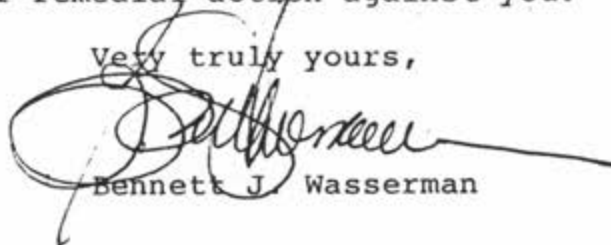
If you have any evidence to show that your scandalous statements are indeed true, then I hereby demand, on behalf of my client, that you furnish me with such evidence immediately. If, on the other hand, you are unable to substantiate these outrageous, defamatory remarks, then my client will expect a public retraction and apology signed by you.

Page Three  
October 14, 1986  
Rabbi Fredric S. Pomerantz

Although we can discuss the manner in which the retraction and apology must appear, my client will accept nothing less than a statement as prominent as the libelous letter that you signed as Rabbi of your Temple.

We will expect this public retraction and apology within the next two weeks before we take any further remedial action against you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bennett J. Wasserman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bennett J. Wasserman

BJW:dly

cc: Friends of Lubavitch of Bergen County, Inc.

Certified Mail; RRR No. 694 950 371



*Papa/Pinto*

✓

October 4, 1989  
5 Tishri 5750

Mr. Laurence A. Weinstein  
Post Office Box 4326  
Madison, WI 53711

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Thank you for your gracious words of appreciation for my address at the 50th Anniversary celebration of Temple Beth El. I appreciate your having written.

I am also glad that we had a chance to chat and I thank you for enclosing your file on Chabad. I shall read it with care and share it with others concerned. As per your note, I shall also share your letter with the editor of Reform Judaism for possible publication.

Let me take this opportunity to extend to you and all your loved ones warm good wishes for a sweet and happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

TO ERIC AND ARON --- Am sending file to Eric and please share with Aron -- have made cc of Weinstein letter for AHM since he suggested possible use of letter in RJ.

LAURENCE A. WEINSTEIN

OFFICE  
POST OFFICE BOX 4326  
MADISON, WI 53711  
608/271-1234

RESIDENCE  
4417 FOX BLUFF LANE  
MIDDLETON, WI 53562  
608/233-5104

September 28, 1989

Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
President of UAHC  
838 5th Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I enjoyed very much your talk at the 50th Anniversary Banquet of Beth El. As you may know, I served as Temple President for four years, the longest stint of any President. The Chapel was built during my Presidency.

You will recall that I mentioned the article that appeared in Reform Judaism, which dealt with Chabad.

I am enclosing a copy of the file.

The article states that financial information is not available. I have no idea how the author of the article attempted to get information about local funding. I got it with a telephone call. Enclosed is a letter from the local Chabad Rabbi. He makes it clear that all funds donated to the local Chabad stay in Madison. That is their national policy. As a matter of fact, the central office subsidizes the local Chabad to the tune of about \$6,000 per year.

Now comes the Artza booklet. Among the charges made is that Chabad opposes UJA. Enclosed is a letter on that subject as well.

What is going on? I am disgusted with the "hatchet job" that UAHC is engaged in. Jews don't have to make pogroms on other Jews. There are plenty of volunteers around.

UAHC owes an obligation to its readers to make it perfectly clear that there is a difference between the activities of Chabad in Israel, conducted by the national organization, and the activities of the local Chabad. To blur this issue, as has been done, is a cheap shot at best. For shame.

Very truly yours,

enclosure

*Admiration  
of which  
tell him I'm  
referring article*

*To Ric  
+ AHV*

*You asked for an article for  
Reform Judaism  
you can use this letter.*

*Law*

## Yehuda Lev

October 2, 1986

Daniel Syme  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Dan,

I enclose the offending column and the two letters in response, the longer of which was published as a letter to the editor by the Journal.

The publisher of the Journal, Richard Volpert, who is a very successful attorney and a friend of Marshall Grossman, is certain that Chabad is intent upon suing the newspaper and was waiting until the end of their Telethon before bringing the matter to court. He says that the points at issue are the reference to Jews being approached by Chabad rabbis (unnumbered but between 7 and 8) and 8. He has shown the letter to his people who are specialists on litigation and they say that there are no grounds for damages. Howard Friedman, a senior partner in Loeb and Loeb and recently national president of the American Jewish Committee also gave it to some of his people specializing in litigation and they agreed that it would not hold up in court.

My impression is the following: The Journal, while nominally independent, is financed by the local Federation. Neither Chabad nor the Federation want to be seen fighting each other in public. Furthermore, Chabad knows that a law suit will mean opening its books to public scrutiny. Therefore, Grossman is using the threat of a suit to try and pressure the paper to drop the column. The paper is not all that committed to the column which many regard as a pain in the neck. (This week's column comments unfavorably on federation's labor policies.) I suspect that the paper will publish a retraction and an apology and insist that I sign it with them. When I refuse then the column is dropped and no more is said. Everyone is satisfied.

My recourse is to convince the paper that even if they do this, they will end up in court with a public fight because I will counter-sue, charging loss of income and whatever else attorneys can think of. I am talking with the ACLU which is interested in the case and is not subject to the constraints that might cause other Jewish organizations to hesitate taking on Chabad. But if they do not take the case, then I must organize a national legal defense fund, find some people willing to take it on pro bono, and make a nationwide issue of it. I have talked with Leibl Fein, an old friend from U of Chicago days and hope to meet with Dave Gordis who I worked with for many years at the University of Judaism. I am meeting with the AJ Congress people here to are also interested.

Do you know of any specific instances in which Chabad caused wills to be changed in

daniel syme      yehuda lev

-2-

their favor, or in other ways carried on activities which are counter to their announced program of Ahavat Israel? Are there people I should be in touch with (I have already talked with Arthur Lelyveld) who might be able to help me build a case?

If you want to reach me at home, the number is (818) 352-7145. The Journal office number is (213) 738-7778.

My home address is 7938 Hillrose Street, Sunland, CA 91040.

Have a peaceful holiday and let me know if ideas or names occur to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Yehuda Lev', followed by a long horizontal flourish line extending to the right.

Yehuda Lev



## Another Look at Chabad: The Darker Side of *Abavat Yisrael*

By Yehuda Lev



West Coast as a result of the activities and drive of its director, Rabbi Shlomo Cunin.

The writer takes me to task for, among other things, not having seen Chabad in action and not appreciating the warmth and compassion that its followers bring to Jewish observance and to the Jewish community. He cites a number of programs they sponsor and the way in which they celebrate holidays as examples of these characteristics. He concludes with a warning that without the kind of men and women who comprise Chabad, "Jewish traditions, culture and history will die."

I have had one personal encounter with Chabad and it was all that our reader could have wished for. Some years ago my daughter, at an out-of-town university, could not be reached by telephone. I called the Chabad rabbi on the campus, a man who I knew through mutual friends. He dropped whatever it was that he was doing, drove out to her apartment and was able to report back to me that the problem was an unpaid telephone bill. That kind of willingness to put themselves out for other Jews is characteristic of all of the campus Chabad rabbis of whom I have heard and is, in large measure, responsible for their deserved reputation as selfless, caring, compassionate individuals.

But Chabad is a cult. Anyone who reads Liz Harris' gripping and revelatory new book *Holy Days*, her New Yorker reporting on the life of a Chabad family in Brooklyn, will recognize the characteristics of a cult: alienation from the non-Jewish world and deliberate separation from the rest of Jewry (except as objects for proselytizing); idolizing of a charismatic leader (the rebbe); the consciousness of being a "pure flame," the preservation of which makes it possible for the entire religion to survive; the reliance on a sacred text (the *Tanach*); and perhaps most fundamental of all, the certainty that one has been "born again" by entering this new life, that all that preceded it must be rejected.

This leads, inevitably, to an attitude of "us against the world" and enables its followers to adopt a lifestyle that was developed in the 18th century as a response to problems that faced the Jewish communities of eastern Europe.

To many other Jews, Chabad is, like the Amish and the Shakers, picturesque, quaint, "a bit of the old country," but as a way of life for Jews in 20th century America, it is more than impractical, it is destructive.

*"Some years ago my daughter, at an out-of-town university, could not be reached by telephone. I called the Chabad rabbi on the campus. He dropped whatever he was doing, drove out to her apartment and reported back to me that the problem was an unpaid telephone bill."*

It is destructive for a number of reasons. Some of them embodied in the ideology of the movement, others in how it dictates that Jews should live according to its definition of Jewish law. Chabad is a male world; the women who live in it may be very satisfied with their lot (Harris' book indicates that they are), but not many others would want to live in it. In this day and age we cannot afford to lose the vitality and impetus that participating women bring to the Jewish community. It is a narrow world in which the *goyim* are despised and non-Orthodox Jews disparaged. (Ask some day what Chabad schools teach their children about non-Orthodox Jewry.) It is a reactionary world; its leaders direct the fight in Israel to delegitimize Conservative and Reform Jewry and keep Ethiopian Jewish children out of their schools until they "convert" while here they join fundamentalist Protestants in attempts to federally fund private schools and to introduce prayer into the public schools. It is an intellectually stifled world: no one can grow up in America and become a mature, involved citizen, without

access to the interplay of ideas and the clash of rival philosophies, without a solid educational base in Western culture. In the God-riven world of Chabad there is no place for the values of Western democracy or the study of Western thought, all of which are replaced by the mystical, pseudo-historical, religious cant of the rebbe Sorbonne graduate though he is.

Yet with all of this, a number of our non-Orthodox, even secular Jews, are attracted to Chabad, not to join the movement but to contribute money or in other ways to support it. For this there are three principal reasons.

The first group consists of those whose children were rescued from cults or drugs by Chabad rabbis. A parent faced with the loss of a child to any of the dark forces that threaten our youth, will turn to any savior. So would I, so would you. For the rescue of those children we should be grateful to Chabad.

The second group comprises Jews who are approached by Chabad rabbis as they face their final moments. The number of last-minute wills and bequests to Chabad causes is a subject of much discussion in the Jewish community.

Finally, we are a people ridden by guilt. Chabad does exceptionally well in the following sequence of thoughts.

"My grandfather was a good Jew and he looked like that, payot, beard, long coat and all."

"Unfortunately, this being America, I can't be such a good Jew. But I remember how my grandfather looked and how he dressed and these guys look the same and dress the same."

"So if they need any money, I'll help them out. My grandfather would have done it."

One result of this is that Chabad raises much of its money from Conservative and Reform Jews and little if any from Orthodox Jews who are not in need of a guilt trip on this particular subject.

What happens to the money that Chabad raises? On this you hear all kinds of stories: one is that Rabbi Cunin has run the West Coast program into serious debt; another is that Chabad sends money to its institutions and political allies in Israel (although it does not raise its money for these reasons); still another is that it has been saved from financial ruin only because it has been left a large sum of money in a will that is now being contested. All of these stories are currently going the rounds of the community and each has its backers who will swear to its truth.

The fact is that no one really knows other

than those who run the enterprise. Chabad publishes no books. It conducts an annual telethon for money with which to rebuild its building in Westwood, which was destroyed by fire a few years ago. The building has apparently been rebuilt; the telethons continue. No figures are issued, no committee of local dignitaries stands forth to accept responsibility for the fact that the monies raised are being used for the purposes stated. California law does not require religious organizations to release their financial statements to the public and Chabad does not do so.

All this is within the law, but in view of Chabad's involvement in right-wing politics in Israel and its denigration of non-Orthodox branches within Judaism, not to mention its political positions in this country, one might hope for a more open stance with regard to its Jewish contributors if only to deflect criticism of the sort that is already widespread among Jews.

Our reader sees the Chabad rabbis as filled with compassion and love toward their fellow Jews. This is true, but only within certain very circumscribed limits. The fact of the matter is that the other side of Chabad, the intolerant, closed, medieval aspects of Chabad theology and practice, are too remote from our interests as Jews to warrant our support beyond the limited area of assisting them in their programs to save Jews from ideological and chemical abuse. And the real lesson in that is that our more respectable institutions must be given greater support so that they can better do the tasks that have to be done.

### POSTSCRIPT

When the Chabad rabbi reported to me on the condition of my daughter's telephone bill, I mailed his office a set of religious books as a thank you for his devotion and effort. He sent them back to me unopened, writing that to accept them from an enemy of Chabad would be inappropriate.

Since then, every time I have gone to hear a Chabad speaker, and every time a Chabad letter about something I have written has been published (including one which appeared in this newspaper a few weeks ago), there has been a reference made to the fact that I was the recipient of an act of generosity on the part of Chabad.

Even among the Chabad, nothing is for nothing. ■

*The views expressed in Yehuda Lev's column are his alone and are not necessarily those of The Jewish Journal.*

## LETTERS

### In defense of Chabad

Yehuda Lev's assessment of Chabad's role in the Jewish community was conceived in an irresponsible manner.

If he is as tolerant of all types of categories, why is it so difficult for him to understand the Chabad Orthodox ideology? I am sure that Lev considers himself to be something less than a theologian, less than the Chabad teachers and rabbis.

It is apparent that Lev has not seen Chabad in action or he is insensitive to its positive contributions to the Jewish, non-Jewish American and Canadian communities.

Chabad's activities are carried out to the community with warmth and love. I remember a few years ago watching the Chabad *halimudim* in a large truck with *freilach klezmer*, giving candelabras and candles for the Sabbath to

young women. These young Jewish women did not know what to do with the Sabbath candles — they were given instruction (without a large flashing Chabad sign), and a *mitzvah* occurred. Their own mom and dad forgot to teach them *Yiddiskeit*.

Hamukkah candles and menorahs were given out on another occasion by Chabad (without large identifying symbols) to the Jewish community.

Chabad was rejected about 15 years ago by the community in Vancouver; there were many revisionists like Lev. But today they have brought a true meaning to Jewish-Canadian life in Vancouver.

Why not give a formula full of nutrition to the "tree of life"? Many more branches in good health will grow and if there are a few branches that are weak, at least the tree will survive and be

admired for its beauty. Chabad allows the Jewish child, boy or girl, an opportunity to identify himself within his community with pride and knowledge and compassion toward all his neighbors.

If Lev has ever been to a Chabad affair he knows that the warmth penetrates from your soul into your bones; a natural high. I call it. No matter — Purim, Hanukkah, Pesach — there is love, compassion and happiness. What more can you ask for, Chaser Lev?

Lev may be *zer klug* but he doesn't have "horse sense." Sir, widen your scope of knowledge before "Thou spitst in thine own face!"

By the way, I admire Chabad and their community work with chemical addicts. Jews and non-Jews are accepted with warmth into its facilities as long as they accept the Chabad Orthodox

traditional processes.

One thing this community does not need is Lev's negative attitude towards Jewish life. I am not an Orthodox Jew, but I understand the need of Chabad. Without men and women like them these Jewish traditions, culture and history will die. May the good Lord give him wisdom.

Yosel Winstock  
Beverly Hills

### Balancing Act

The criticism directed toward your newspaper regarding Yehuda Lev's column is well deserved. Mr. Lev's "soft stance," particularly on Israeli issues, were well known in the Jewish community long before you chose to give him an exclusive editorial column. Lev's "Majority of One" column appeared in the University of Judaism's newspaper for years, plus in his own short-lived (and deservedly so)

newspaper. Why don't you allot equal space to someone like Dennis Prager, either in the same issue or alternating issues a la *Newsweek's* Meg Greenfield and George Will? I'll put up with Lev's head-in-the-sand column as long as I can read someone else who makes sense.

Skip Usen  
Santa Monica

I enjoy seeing how you are experimenting with changes to improve the paper. In response to people who do not like Yehuda Lev, your changes should include another writer like him, to shake up people, rather than to eliminate him. You will lose your image of independence if you drop the most visible symbol of your independence from the Federation.

Sol H. Marshall  
Van Nuys

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June 18, 1986

BY MESSENGER

OUR FILE NO.

LEON S. ALSCHULER\*  
MARSHALL B. GROSSMAN\*  
BURT PINES\*  
MELVYN B. FLIEGEL\*  
BRUCE WARNER\*  
GERALD B. KAGAN\*  
HENRY S. ZANDWILL\*  
FRANK KAPLAN\*  
MICHAEL J. BRILL\*  
KAREN KAPLOWITZ\*  
ROBERT A. SHLAGHTER\*  
ROBERT B. OWENS\*  
WILLIAM S. SMALL\*  
SANDRA J. CHAN\*  
MORTON R. FIELD  
PAUL H. ROCHMES  
LINDA GACH RAY  
LAWRENCE W. BERGER  
LINDA SUTTON  
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MICHAEL A. SHERMAN  
GAIL GORDON  
HOWARD G. SCHAEFER  
MICHAEL L. CYPER  
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DAVID M. LEON  
KIM ROBERT MAEROWITZ  
JOHN A. SCHWIMMER  
JOAN A. WOLFF  
ANDREW D. FRIEDMAN†  
SANDRA SLON  
DEBRA A. STEGURA  
DALE J. GOLDSMITH  
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Letters to the Editor  
Jewish Journal  
Jewish Publications, Inc.  
3660 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Gentlemen:

The Jewish Journal provides its most prominent space each issue to Yehuda Lev. Why? His writings are frequently divisive and lack objectivity. Lev formerly wrote for Israel Today. On February 12, 1981, Ted Kanner, Executive Vice-President of the Jewish Federation Council, rebuked Lev in a letter to that newspaper. Kanner wrote "These columns ... are distorted and frequently contain unfounded criticisms of the Federation [and are] a disservice to the broad Jewish community." And now Lev launches his vicious assaults from the pages of the Federation financed newspaper!

Lev's recent attack on Chabad is nothing new. It reappears every year or so without regard for the facts. In an effort to appear objective and reasonable to his readers, Lev begins his attack this time with the story of a Chabad good deed. Lev reports that he was unable to reach his daughter at college in San Diego, so he turned to the Chabad rabbi on campus who reported back that the problem was an unpaid telephone bill. Some years earlier (Israel Today, April 9, 1981) Lev described the incident in words closer to the truth. Then Lev wrote of his family member at a

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university needing "assistance quickly" and the response of the Chabad rabbi and his wife was such that "the crisis was averted". Concern for the privacy of the daughter precludes description of the crisis. Suffice it to say it was not an unpaid phone bill. For that he could have called the phone company. The Chabad rabbi he turned to that Sunday was not even his own rabbi, but rather a spiritual leader of what he now dismisses as a "cult". Chabad responded to Lev's appeal for help even though Lev had criticised Chabad in an article as recently as one month before he called the rabbi.

In 1979, when Chabad reached out to the Iranian Jews fleeing Iran and settling in Los Angeles, Lev wrote: "The Chabad are bringing Iranian children into their schools; is it a fund raising gimmick or is there a real need for such refugees?" (Israel Today, August 17, 1979).

In 1980, after Rabbi Cunin and several Yeshiva students were arrested by Hollywood police officers for praying too loud and Rabbi Cunin was rendered unconscious by a choke hold, Lev immediately accused Rabbi Cunin of provoking the arrests and of "irresponsible behaviour" (Israel Today, March 28, 1980). Police Chief Gates saw it differently and issued a formal apology for the arrests, brutality and anti-Semitic conduct of the officers in question. An officer in charge later resigned from the department in disgrace.

Over the years the response from Chabad has been restrained, but Lev has now gone too far. He has libeled Chabad in the most scurrilous fashion. His recent column, forged from the fictionalized and trivialized account of his own daughter's personal crisis, of which Chabad has never spoken, is a series of outright deceptions:

Letters to the Editor  
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1. Chabad is accused by Lev of being a cult. Those in the community, such as myself, who support Chabad are hardly cultists. Chabad is an active partner in the Federation's Task Force on Cults and is in the forefront of efforts on college campuses to rescue young Jews without adequate Jewish identity, from the ravages of cults. Its activities are headed by Dr. Stephen Bailey of the Chabad Mental Health Program and Rabbi Shlomo Schwartz. Jewish Family Service regularly refers people to Chabad for assistance.

2. According to Lev, Chabad is an "intellectually stifled world" in which "there is no place for the values of Western democracy or the study of Western thought". Chabad's schools and colleges enjoy full accreditation. They combine Jewish studies with the values of Western democracy and Western thought, including respect for the truth.

3. Chabad is said by Lev to "despise the goyim". I have never heard that term in Chabad circles. Moreover, Chabad's Drug Program, Crisis Intervention, Emergency Food and Shelter for the Homeless programs are all nonsectarian.

4. Chabad is viciously accused of relying for its funding by having its rabbis approach people on their death beds. Unfortunately for Chabad, the number of bequests it has received in California during its twenty years of service can be counted on the fingers of one hand and those bequests have been prepared by respected independent counsel of the decedent's choice, and invariably without Chabad's prior knowledge. What moves a person to engage in such sick storytelling.

5. Lev says that "Chabad publishes no [financial statements].... No figures are issued." In fact, Chabad's books are open to its contributors and to government agencies extending grants,



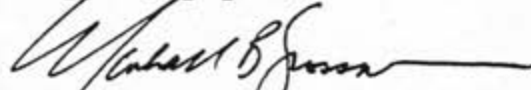
Letters to the Editor  
June 18, 1986  
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and Chabad's financial statements have been given as requested to the Jewish Community Foundation. The Foundation funded various Chabad programs and Chabad accounts for funds as required.

6. Lev accuses Chabad of conducting an annual telethon to rebuild Chabad House in Westwood, even though it has been rebuilt. The telethon makes it clear that the fundraising since the rebuilding of Chabad House is for the broad range of Chabad's ongoing social service agenda.

The Jewish Journal has a responsibility to ensure a degree of accuracy in its pages. Instead, it prominently features a columnist with a previously criticized record of distortion and divisiveness. For ten years he has mindlessly assailed Chabad, even when turning to Chabad at a time of family need. But this time he has carried his attack too far. His most recent column promises great financial damage to the good work of Chabad. What does the Jewish Journal intend to do about it?

Very truly yours,



Marshall B. Grossman

MBG:vg  
cc:  
Yehuda Lev  
Ted Kanner  
Stanley Hirsh  
By Messenger

LEON S. ALSCHULER\*  
 MARSHALL B. GROSSMAN\*  
 BURT PINES\*  
 MELVYN S. FUEGEL\*  
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June 18, 1986

OUR FILE NO.

BY MESSENGER

Jewish Journal  
 Jewish Publications, Inc.  
 3660 Wilshire Boulevard  
 Los Angeles, CA 90010

Att: Richard S. Volpert

Dear Dick:

It does not give me pleasure to write this letter. But Chabad is not about to sit idly by and permit its good works to be jeopardized by a vicious libel which reaches every corner of the community with the benefit of financing provided by United Jewish Fund dollars.

Reference is made to the article about Chabad by Yehuda Lev which appeared in the June 6 edition of the Jewish Journal ("the article"). We write as legal counsel to Chabad.

The article is false, scurrilous and libelous of Chabad in numerous respects. Among the more egregious defamatory statements are the following:

1. "Chabad is a cult".
2. "(A)s a way of life for Jews in 20th Century America [Chabad] is more than impractical, it is destructive."

3. "Chabad is a male world".

4. "[Chabad] is a narrow world in which the goyim are despised and non-Orthodox Jews disparaged."

5. [Chabad] is an intellectually stifled world".

6. "In the God-riven world of Chabad there is no place for the values of Western democracy or the study of Western thought...."

7. [A] number of our non-Orthodox, even secular Jews, are attracted to Chabad ... to contribute money.... For this there are three principal reasons.

...

The second group comprises Jews who are approached by Chabad rabbis as they face their final moments."

8. "Chabad publishes no books.... No figures are issued."

9. "[Chabad] conducts an annual telethon for money with which to rebuild its building in Westwood, which was destroyed by fire a few years ago. The building has already been rebuilt; the telethons continue."

10. "The fact of the matter is that the other side of Chabad, the intolerant, closed, mid-evil aspects of Chabad theology and practice are too remote from our interest as Jews to warrant our support beyond the limited area of assisting them in their programs to save Jews from ideological and chemical abuse, and the real lesson in that is that our more respectable institutions must be given greater support so that they can better do

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Page 3

the tasks that have to be done."

Pursuant to California Code §48a(1), Chabad hereby demands that the statements set forth above be corrected and retracted. This demand shall be read in conjunction with my letter of this date to Letters to the Editor of the Jewish Journal. Please believe me that unless a full and complete retraction and correction is published in substantially as conspicuous a manner as the libelous statements were published, a libel action will be filed and tried. In any event a lawsuit for Interference with Prospective Economic Advantage will be filed and tried.

Very truly yours,



Marshall B. Grossman

MBG:vg  
cc:  
Yehuda Lev  
Ted Kanner  
Stanley Hirsh  
By Messenger

Reform C

April 21, 1986  
12 Nisan 5746

Rabbi Hershel Fogelman  
22 Newton Avenue  
Worcester, MA 01602

Dear Hershel:

Please note the enclosed. Is this an expression of the Ahavat Yisrael for which orthodoxy claims credit? I could cry!.

Have a sweet Pesach.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Contested  
Am 8 Home

April 21, 1986  
12 Nisan 5746

Mr. Jacob Hiatt  
20 Woodhaven Road  
Worcester, Mass 01609

Dear Jack:

The enclosed letter is self explanatory. Were you aware of this situation? Did you know anything about what transpired? Is there anything to be done to tame Gold?..

Rhea and I join in sending you our love and our best wishes for a sweet and happy Passover.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



*Held for Fr  
and guest*

*me  
as of 4/18*

April 10th 1986  
1 Nisan 5746

Rabbi Joseph Gold  
Congregation Shaarei Torah  
835 Pleasant Street  
Worcester, MA 01602

Dear Joe:

The enclosed was sent to me. Before I do anything about it, I would like to have your view as to what transpired. If I do not hear from you I will assume, alas, that the unthinkable actually happened.

Greetings,

Alexander M. Schindler

*Enclosed  
Letter of  
only*



April 10, 1986  
1 Nisan 5746

Cantor Sheri E. Blum  
Temple Emanuel  
May & Chandler Streets  
Worcester, MA 01602

Dear Cantor Blum:

Just a note to advise that your letter of April 4 reached our office as Rabbi Schindler was leaving for the Toronto meetings of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Needless to note, he was deeply distressed by the events which transpired in Worcester and he is grateful to you for sharing the details with him.

Rabbi Schindler asked me to find out from you if anything has been done in the community in protest of what happened. Any information you can share in this connection will be very much appreciated. Rabbi Schindler will, of course, be in contact with you when he returns to his desk next week.

With thanks and kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller  
Assistant to the President

*Sharon Tuck  
635 Pleasant St  
Worcester, MA 01602*

# TEMPLE EMANUEL

April 4, 1986

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

We had a very unfortunate incident here in Worcester which I believe you should know about. It is our policy, when there are funerals which involve relatives of members from our synagogue, that one of our clergy always attends the funeral. There was a funeral today for Cindy Mankovitz, age 28, who died of cancer. Her parents are members of Shaarai Torah, Rabbi Joseph Gold's synagogue (Orthodox). Rabbi Gold was officiating at the funeral. The sister of the deceased is a member of our congregation. Her husband was converted here at Temple Emanuel last year and their wedding was here as well. I was the person on the Temple Emanuel staff who was asked to be the representative from the Temple at the funeral.

What occurred at the Perlman Funeral Home I can hardly find words to express. I walked into the Rabbis' reception room where I found Rabbi Joseph Gold berating Mr. & Mrs. Mankovitz, the parents of the deceased, together with Robin and Courtney Polissack, the sister and brother-in-law of the deceased. Rabbi Gold was screaming at them, "How could I have not know this before now." When I asked what the problem was, it seemed that Mrs. Mankovitz, the mother of the deceased, had been converted by you at Temple Emanuel thirty years ago. Rabbi Gold did not know of this fact until five minutes before the funeral started. He started yelling that all the people in the room were Pseudo-Jews, and how dare they do this to him. He said that if he officiated at this funeral, he would be breaking every Jewish law and God's law. He said that all Jews had the right to know that when they are buried in the ground that they would not be forced to lie next to some "goy".

At that point, Mr. Mankovitz asked me if one of our Rabbis would bury their daughter. I said, "of course," and offered to call one at the Temple. At that point Rabbi Gold said, "No, no, I'll do the funeral even though you all know I am breaking every Jewish law. What do you expect from a Rabbi who calls Orthodox Jews Nazis" (meaning Rabbi Schindler).

RABBI STANLEY M. DAVIDS

RABBI ALAN M. ULLMAN

CANTOR SHERI E. BLUM

RABBI JOSEPH KLEIN, EMERITUS

HAROLD PRESS, F.T.A.  
Administrator

MICHAEL D. SLEEPER  
President

INA MASON  
Vice President,  
Administration & Finance

ALAN S. YOFFIE  
Vice President,  
Education & Program

HELENE FREED  
Vice President,  
Projects & Properties

JUDY LEVINE  
Vice President,  
Auxiliary Organizations

BERNARD SCHULTZ  
Treasurer

JUDITH ROBBINS  
Secretary

---

A Member of the Union of  
American Hebrew Congregations

# TEMPLE EMANUEL

Page 2

For the past thirty years this couple has belonged to Shaarai Torah. Mr. Mankovitz asked, "Don't we have cemetery rights being members of Shaarai Torah?" Rabbi Gold said "No, Not if you're not Jewish. You don't have any rights at all. I think this is all the fault of Perlman's for not telling me that you were all Pseudo-Jews."

Needless to say, the family was hysterical, not only just having lost a 28 year old daughter in their family, but being berated by Rabbi Gold. I mentioned to Rabbi Gold that I had done funerals in every single Jewish cemetery in Worcester that had involved some sort of person from a Reform Conversion. He said that it was impossible as it was against all the rules of the cemeteries. He said he was going to instigate a search of the records of every single person buried in all of the cemeteries and "Dig up the non-Jewish bodies like they did in Israel". Needless to say, it was a very emotional and upsetting moment. Rabbi Gold did indeed do the funeral, but only after he had berated the family to this extent. I want you to know that this happened here in Worcester.

Sincerely,



Cantor Sheri E. Blum

SEB/sel

RABBI STANLEY M. DAVIDS

RABBI ALAN M. ULLMAN

CANTOR SHERI E. BLUM

RABBI JOSEPH KLEIN, EMERITUS

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Secretary

---

A Member of the Union of  
American Hebrew Congregations

R.O.C.

February 7, 1986  
28 Shevat 5746

Rabbi Martin Siegel  
Columbia Jewish Congregation  
The Meeting House  
Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, Maryland 21045

Dear Martin:

Thank you for your letter of January 28th. I, too, am pained at the prospect of a rift within the Jewish people. But every bit of evidence indicates that Lubavitch has thusfar determined to exacerbate rather than to ease the current tensions.

It is not only the rebbe who is concerned about the future unity of the Jewish people. Every caring Jew, myself included, wishes to preserve mutual respect and dignity among us. What Chabad has done, however, is to define that Jewish unity as valid only if achieved on their terms. They have eschewed dialogue in favor of power politics, and thus moved the critical issue of personal status beyond the Jewish community into the Knesset.

Jewish history has taught us that such tactics are rarely successful. The use of political power did not enable the Sadducees to stifle the Pharisees, the Mitnagdim to squelch the Chasidim, or European Orthodoxy to stop the rise of Reform Judaism.

There was tension, even violence. But ultimately, where the leaders fought and refused to dialogue, the issue was ultimately resolved by the Jewish people themselves. The cost, though, was high indeed, a loss of precious time and energy and a blow to Jewish morale.

As I write this letter, the Knesset has once again voted to retain the current Law of Return by a vote of 61 - 47. Under Israeli law, it cannot be brought to the Assembly again for a minimum of six months. This means that we have a real opportunity to sit and begin to dialogue on a wide range of issues of a common concern without distraction.



Rabbi Martin Siegel  
February 7, 1986  
Page two

It would be a positive step were Lubavitch to indicate its willingness to join in that community dialogue, which would undoubtedly result in some common agreements, but also some issues on which we must agree to disagree in a spirit of mutual respect.

I would be interested to learn of any ideas which might contribute to this end. Thank you again for taking time to share your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

February 5, 1986  
26 Shevat 5746

Rabbi Daniel B. Syme

Danny, please note the enclosed and let me have your suggested response. If you have questions about this, Edie can give you some of the background of prior correspondence. Thanks.



# Columbia Jewish Congregation

The Meeting House  
Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, Md. 21045

January 28, 1986

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

Dear Alex:

I appreciate your thoughtful response to the concerns expressed in my letter. After further discussion with the Lubovitch people I know I am even more concerned than I was before that a major and potentially irreconcilable rift within the Jewish people is almost inevitable.

It seems to me that if we don't take steps at this time to move towards some degree of mutual respect, before long it will be too late.

First, some of the barriers. My Lubovitch contacts tell me that the Rebbe is not seeing anyone at the moment because of his age and is upset concerning the grandson of the Friedecker Rebbe.

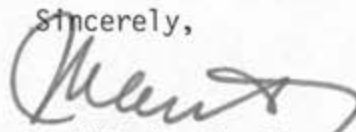
His position, as you probably know, is that they are interested in the future unity of the Jewish people and that is why they are fighting so hard on this issue of the Law of Return. While the Agudah people may be more polite to you and meet with you in the political and social context, they are more likely to write off all of us who are outside strict Halakah than Lubovitch. This is one of the reasons why a relationship with Lubovitch reform is so crucial. They are the one orthodox group that truly wants to be in touch with our constituency. In addition, because of their great energy they represent a strong force in the Jewish world. This is why I think that a relationship with the reform movement both on the national and local levels will be most helpful. It would lay the groundwork for cooperation in which the energy and knowledge of the Lubovitch movement could be harnessed to enhance the depth and Jewish commitment of those in reform. They say they are open to this and I am just hoping that a structure can be put in place that can encourage this cooperation and give us some direction.

As you know, Lubovitch is highly decentralized organizationally. They are united through the Rebbe ideologically. If the UAHC could send out signals that it seeks our cooperation with Lubovitch, the potential sin of radical Jewish separation could be replaced by valuable cooperation. I would be happy

to talk to my Lubovitch friends further concerning methods and means of developing this.

I think we have an opportunity to grasp the moment in a way that will bless our descendents. I hope we take it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Martin Siegel', with a stylized, flowing script.

Rabbit Martin Siegel

MS:ejd

DRAFT FROM A.M.S.

*Proven -  
Give me  
a copy  
please*

Rabbi Martin Siegel  
Columbia Jewish Congregation  
The Meeting House  
Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, Maryland 21045

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/next page, please/

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Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler.

# MEMORANDUM

From Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

February 5, 1986  
Date 26 Shevat 5746

To Rabbi Daniel B. Syme

Copies

Subject

Danny, please note the enclosed and let me have your suggested response. If you have questions about this, Edie can give you some of the background of prior correspondence. Thanks.

Alot  
Draft Response  
attached

D.



# Columbia Jewish Congregation

The Meeting House  
Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, Md. 21045

January 28, 1986

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

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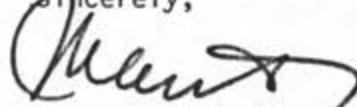
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Martin Siegel', with a stylized, flowing script.

Rabbit Martin Siegel

MS:ejd

*Draft*

*perfectly OK*

February 26, 1992  
22 Adar 1 5752

Mr. Milton L. Brown  
P.O. Box 8011  
Mobile, AL 36608

Dear Mr. Brown:

As you know, your letter of February 10 awaited my return from Israel for response. You have posed questions which cannot be answered with simplicity for there are too many aspects of the situation to be addressed.

You may not be aware of the fact that in Conservative Judaism there are now at least two distinct streams of thought. One is quite traditional in approach and could well be likened to modern Orthodoxy. For the more liberal Conservative congregations, you are correct, there are many similarities with Reform practice. There are even those who say that Conservative Judaism may well split some day and merge with either the Reform or Orthodox movements. That, however, is not anything foreseen as occurring in the near future.

The response to the question of Who Is a Jew differs not merely between Israel and America, but hinges upon the stream of Judaism with which one is associated. Of course, in Israel, even our Progressive/Liberal congregations and rabbis must abide by the laws of the State albeit they are trying to gain full recognition and rights through the court system. I believe my remarks at a 1986 CLAL Conference will interest you, most especially that section wherein I discuss fully the Reform view of patrilineality.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

February 26, 1992  
22 Adar 1 5752

Mr. Milton L. Brown  
P.O. Box 8011  
Mobile, AL 36608

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With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

COPY

February 18, 1992  
14 Adar I 5752

Mr. Milton L. Brown  
P.O. Box 8011  
Mobile, AL 36608

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your February 10 letter to Rabbi Schindler. He is out of the country and not due back at his desk until the end of the month.

The questions you have posed are not simple. I will search our files to ascertain if there is any printed material that I am able to share with you even prior to Rabbi Schindler's return. I will get back to you as soon as possible with some reading material.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller  
Assistant to the President

# MILTON L. BROWN

P.O. BOX 8011 MOBILE, ALABAMA, 36608  
OFFICE PHONE: 205-343-3124  
HOME PHONE: 205-344-4250

February 10, 1992

Dr. Alexander Schindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 5th Avenue  
New York, New York 10021-7064

Dear Dr. Shindler:

In our congregation, there is spirited discussion as to the contemporary differences between Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform.

It is the opinion of some that little difference remains between Conservative and Reform, so much so, in fact, that there seems to be little reason to maintain two separate identities.

Would you please address this, as I am certain it is not a unique question? If you have information previously published, I would appreciate it. Please address the issue of "who is a Jew," particularly as is the case in America as opposed to the State of Isreal.

Sincerely,

Milton L. Brown

*Milton L. Brown*  
Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim  
MLB/pg

Transcribed and signed in Mr. Brown's absence.

2/11/90  
Orr

cc: ABC  
M.M.  
3/11

## JUDAISM

The political power of Orthodox Judaism in the State of Israel, which brought down a government in 1990, underlined the growing influence of Orthodoxy within world Jewry. But while many identified, as the sole authentic representation of the Torah, the forms of Orthodoxy that reject contemporary culture and mores, another kind of Orthodoxy found its voice as well. This was the Orthodoxy that maintains Jews can and should live fully in accord with the Torah and also entirely within the framework of modern life.

Tensions within Orthodoxy concerned the value of a secular education. The rejectionists, called *haredim*—those who fear the Lord—value only the study of the canonical books of Judaism. Other Orthodox leadership was represented by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, who in a major address reported in the *Jewish Week* of Dec. 7, 1989, stated, "Science and philosophy are crucial tools necessary to understand and love God. A person who has never been inspired by gentile poetry or literature concludes that non-Jews have nothing worth saying; this makes you insular."

A second voice of Western Orthodoxy, Rabbi Stanley Wagner of Denver, Colo., called on Orthodox and Conservative Judaism to cooperate in working out a program of conversion to Judaism acceptable to both traditions. Wagner aimed at a joint conversion board involving all movements, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist. The rites of the law of Judaism would be observed; e.g., circumcision and baptism of male converts, baptism of females. The program advocated by Rabbi Wagner found a positive response in the Conservative United Synagogue of America.

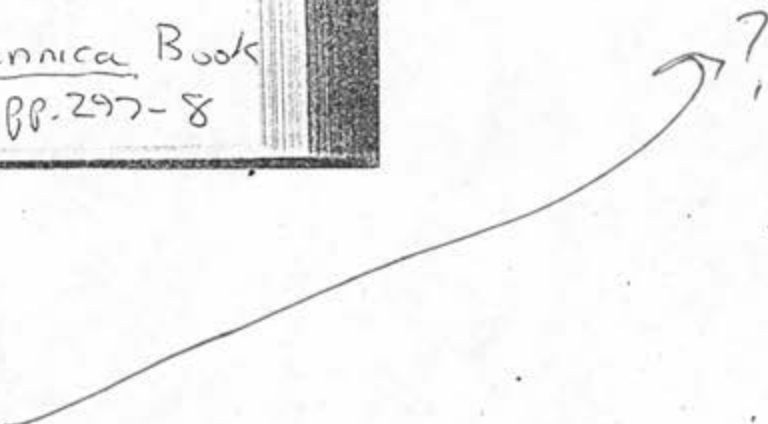
Yet a third voice of Orthodoxy attained considerable hearing during the year. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, translator of the Talmud of Babylonia into Hebrew, inaugurated the English-language edition. The first volume, published by Random House, gained wide attention and enjoyed a positive critical reception. Steinsaltz presents the Talmud of Babylonia in such a way that it can be studied line by line, much as it is studied in the original Aramaic and Hebrew. A bit of text is set in the middle of the page, and around it are arrayed various commentaries. Steinsaltz was widely praised for affording access to the Torah's wisdom in the conduct of the everyday and the here and now.

An optimistic reading of the state of Reform Judaism was presented by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform Judaic movement in the U.S. As evidence of how "Reform has always been on the cutting edge of Jewish life," Schindler cited, among other factors, Reform's outreach to converts; its acceptance of the children of Jewish fathers, not only of Jewish mothers, as Jewish; the ordination of women as rabbis and cantors; and the full participation of women in religious life. Women now numbered half of the presidents of all Reform temples in the U.S. and were well received in the Reform rabbinate. Schindler stressed that while Reform Judaism wished to cooperate with other Judaisms, it was not prepared to concede that others were more legitimate or authentic.

The state of the rabbinate, by contrast, formed a source of concern. A study of role-related stress and the clergy found that rabbis suffer "a considerably higher level of demoralization than is true for the general population." Writing in the *Jewish Advocate* of March 1, 1990, Judith Antonelli, citing a study by clinical psychologist Leslie Freedman, noted that "the chronic distress of the rabbis he sampled [was] greater than that of residents of Three Mile Island in the immediate aftermath of the nuclear accident."

Further evidence of as yet unresolved problems affecting Judaism derived from Arthur Hertzberg, professor of religion at Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H., in his *The Jews in America*. Hertzberg maintained that Jewish identity in America is shallow and unlikely to survive the openness of American society, a cooling of feelings toward Israel, and a lack of true Jewish learning among the great majority of American Jews. "We are now in a process of polarization, of a small minority of intensely caring Jews and a majority of 85% more or less adrift. And the only way it is going to be stopped is by Jewish seriousness, which therefore means that Jewish country clubs and the Chanukah bush [in place of the Christmas tree] are not going to save us." With anti-Semitism no longer "the containing force it once was," Hertzberg went on, "Jewish identity is no longer defended even by invoking the Holocaust." (JACOB NEUSNER)

1991 Britannica Book  
of the Year pp. 297-8





*Reform Orthodox*

April 18, 1990  
23 Nisan 5750

Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
192 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Dear Joe:

I, too, didn't have the patience to read it as a whole, but I scanned it enough to glean its essence. The title itself gives you some idea of what the article is about. "Reform Wants To Be More Jewish - Is This True Repentance Or A New Deception"

The article is obviously written from the Orthodox point of view and in essence it reports about the spate of articles that have been appearing in various publications which speak of our thrust toward a greater traditionalism and toward a more intense Jewish expression. The author of the article obviously denigrates these efforts and admonishes the readers not to trust Reform rabbis under any circumstances. ("We do not trust the Reform rabbis . . . and there is no reason why we should trust them").

Nonetheless, the author takes heart in the greater quest for spirituality and sees it as an opportunity for Orthodoxy, holding forth the promise that an ever greater number of Reform Jews will turn to Orthodoxy and to Orthodox institutions.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

# ווען רעפארמער ווילן זיין מער אידן — איז עס תשובה אָדער אַ נייע פאַרפירערניש?

• פון אחי שמשון רפאל

לענדער וואו זי האט זיך פארנעמעט, איז גוט באקאנט. זי האט געפירט צו אַסימילאַציע און שמד. אַ גאָר גרויסער טייל פון צווייטן און דריטן דור רעפארמער, זענען פאַרלירן געוואָרן פון אידישן פּאָלק; טאַטאָל פאַרשוואונדן. ניט פאַראַן קיין סטאַטיסטיקס, אָבער ס'איז ידוע, אַז גאָר ווייניק פון די היינטיקע רעפארמער זענען אייניקלעך אָדער אור־אייניקלעך פון די אַמאָליקע רעפארמער. דער גרעסטער טייל פון די היינטיקע רעפארמער אידן אין אַמעריקע, זענען קינדער פון מורח־איידיאָפּעאישע עלטערן, וועמען די רעפארמ־אידעאלאָגיע האט מיטגעריסן ווייל זי האט זיי אָנגעבאַטן אַ "דזשודאאיזם" וואָס איז גאָר ווייניק פאַרפליכטענדיג; אַ רעליגיע אָן עול מלכות שמים. למעשה פאַסירט מיט רוב קינדער פון די היינטיקע רעפארמער, דאָס זעלבע וואָס ס'האָט פאַסירט מיט די אַמאָליקע. זיי פאַרשוואונדן פון אידישן האָרזאָנט. און אפשר איז דאָס איינע פון די פאַקטאָרן, וואָס האט מיט זיך געברענגט דעם איצטיקן אויפברויח אין דער רעפארמ־מחנה.

פאַקטיש האָבן שוין אין דער פאַרגאַנגענהייט אַ צאָל ערנסטערע רעפארמ־פירער זענען געווען וואוהין די רעפארמ־פאַרפירט זייערע אידן. געווען דעריבער אַזעלכע, וואָס האָבן שוין מיט יאָרן צוריק גערופן צו אַ געוויסע רעוויזיע אין דער רעפארמ־רעליגיע און אַ שטיקל צוריקער צו דער אידישער מסורה. אָבער צופיל מוט האָבן זיי ניט געקענט אויפברענגען צו מאַכן וועלכן ס'איז ראַדיקאַלן שריט. אויך די באַזאָרגטע רעפארמ־פירער האָבן זיך געשראַקן פאַר געוואַלטע "אַפּוויגן" פון די רעפארמיסטישע פּרעזיפּן. און אַזוי איז די רעפארמ־באַוועגונג ביז אין די שפּעטערע דרייסיקער יאָרן געגאַנגען איר אַלטן וועג פון דערווייטערונג פון אַלע עיקרי דת משה וישראל.

אין איינציקער ראַדיקאַלער אַפּוויג פון רעפארמ־אידן אַ טייל רעפארמ־קרייזן געקומען נאָך היטלער'ס פאַרפּעסטיגן זיך ביי דער מאַכט. און דאָס איז געווען אַ באַצוג צו אַרץ־ישראל. אַ צאָל פירנדע רעפארמ־ראַביי'ס אין אַמעריקע, אַנטוויסט פון דעם אַמאָליקן רעפארמיסטישן גלויבן אַז "בערלין קען זיין ירושלים", און אַז די "גאולה איז שוין דאָ", זענען געוואָרן "ציוניסטן"...

נאָכדעם אָבער ווי דער רעפארמיסטישער ציוניזם, האט קיים געהאַט וועלכע ס'איז עכט אידישע וואַרצלען פון אמונה, איז דער דאָזיקער ציוניזם געווען אַ דורכאויס וועלטליכער. ער האט ניט געהאַט וועלכע ס'איז שייכות מיט דער אַלטער בענקשאַפט פאַר ציון וירושלים. למעשה, האט אויך דער דאָזיקער ציוניזם ניט שטאַרק באַרירט די רעפארמ־מאַסן אין אַמעריקע. ס'טיפּן ווייז'ס און אבא הלל סילווער'ס ציוניזם, ווי דער ציוניזם פון אַ צאָל אנדערע רעפארמער, איז פאַקטיש געווען מער אַן אויסדרוק פון ס'מפּאַטיע פאַר די אייראָפּעאישע אידן, פאַר וועלכע מען האט באַדאַרפּט זוכן אַ נייע הויס. דערפאַר בלייבט אויך דער פאַקט, אַז פאַר פילע יאָרן איז די רעפארמ־באַוועגונג אַלס אַזעלכע געבליבן ווייט פון ציוניזם.

דאָס איז ניט פיל אנדערש געוואָרן אפילו אין די ערשטע יאָרן נאָך דער גרינדונג פון דער אידישער מדינה. די איינציקע אידישע־פּאַסיקאַציע פון רעפארמ־מיטן ציוניזם, איז געווען אַ פילאַנטראָפּישע. אַ טייל רעפארמ־אידן איז אַרץ־ישראל געוואָרן ס'מפּאַטיש, אָבער דאָך ניט ווײַער... דערצו זענען אַ סך אנדערע רעפארמ־אידן כפירוש געבליבן אַנטאַגאָניסטיש צום ציוניזם, און זייערע קאַלעגן וואָס האָבן אַרויסגעוויזן ס'מפּאַטיע צום ציוניזם, כאַטראַכט ווי פאַרעטער פון דער רעפארמ־אידעאלאָגיע.

אַ דערנענטערונג צום ציוניזם מצד דער רעפארמ־באַוועגונג, איז ערשט געקומען מיט אַ צען יאָר צוריק, ווען די רעפארמ־באַוועגונג אין אַמעריקע האט גענומען שונעל גיין באַרג־אַראָפּ. די רעפארמ־פירער זענענדיג ווי די מיטגלידערשאַפט־זייערע נעמט פאַלן און די טעמפלען פוסטעווען, האָבן זיי באַשלאָסן צו זוכן, אַזוי צו זאָגן, "נייע טעריטאָריע". זיי האָבן אויך געזוכט פאַר זייערע מיטגלידער, אויסגעליידיקטע פון יעדער אידישער לחלוחית, נייע פּאָליטישע אישוס און אַ נייעם געזעלשאַפטיקן אַקטיוויזם. און זיי האָבן עס געפונען אין ציוניזם.

און אַזוי האט עס פאַסירט, אַז די רעפארמ־באַוועגונג, וואָס איז פאַר אַזויפיל יאָרן געווען פיינטליך צום ציוניזם, און געבליבן פאַסיוו צו די ציוניסטישע אַספּיראַציעס אפילו נאָך דער אַנטשטיאונג פון דער אידישער מדינה, איז שטאַמאַל געוואָרן ציוניסטיש. ווי מיר זען האט זיך אויך דאָס אויסגעצאָלט אין פּאָליטישער מאַכט. ס'איז זיי אפילו געלונגען צו ווערן די רעגירונג פון דער ציוניסטישער רעפובליק ווי פון דער ערשטער טויזנט יאָר.

אומבאַמערקט און אומבאַקאַנט פאַר אונזער היימישער אידישער וועלט, איז עס שוין היינט אַן אומבאַשטרייבטער פאַקט:

בעת די פירער פון דער אידישער רעפארמ־באַוועגונג פאַרמעסטן זיך צו אַ באַנייטער אָפּענסיווע קעגן דער מסורה־דיק־אויטענטישער אידישקייט, און בעת עס געלונגט זיי דאָ און דאָרט אפילו צו דעראַבערן געוויסע פּאָזיציעס (ווי, למשל, זייערע לעצטע דערפאלגן אין די מועצות דתיות אין ישראל), טומעלט זיך און עס ווערט זיך אין דער רעפארמ־באַוועגונג גופא.

ווי מיר ווערן געוואויער, גייט אָן אין דער לעצטער צייט אין גאָר אַסך רעפארמ־קרייזן, וואָס מען קען באַצייכענען ווי אַ רעוואָלט קעגן רעפארמ־אַמאָליקע "אמת־ן" און אידעאישע פּרעזיפּן פון רעפארמ־ווערן אָפּגעוואָרפן. פיל רעפארמ־אידן דערוועקן זיך צו אַן עכט אידישער בענקשאַפט און באַוואוסטזיניקייט. עס ציט זיי צו אויטענטישער אידישקייט.

"רעפארמ־דזשודאאיזם באַוועגט זיך אין דער ריכטונג פון רוחניות", זאָגט אונז אַ גרויסער העדליין אין דער וואַכנשריפט "דזשואיש־וואָרלד" וואָס דירעקטאָר איז לאַנג איילאנד. און ווען אפילו דער אַרטיקל "באַוואָרנט זיך", אַז דאָס "געשעט אין לאַנגזאַמע שריט און אין אַן אייגנאַרטיקן וועג", דערציילט עס זייער אַ סך וועגן גאָר וועזענליכע שינויים אין פיל רעפארמ־קרייזן.

בכל אופן, געפינען מיר אין דעם וואָס פאַסירט איצט צווישן אַ היבשע צאָל פון רעפארמ־אידן, אַ גאָר שטאַרקע מרידה קעגן אַסך פון דעם וואָס די רעפארמער האָבן געפערדיקט פאַר העכער 150 יאָר. אַ סך רעפארמער זענען מודה, אַז פיל פון דעם וואָס די "טאַטעס פון רעפארמ־האָבן געפערדיקט און איינגעפירט, איז געווען פאַלש און אַ פאַטאַלער טעות.

דער שרייבער פון אַרטיקל ווייזט אָן, אַז ווען די רעפארמ־באַוועגונג איז געשאַפן געוואָרן אין 19טן יאָרהונדערט, איז זי געגאַנגען אין איין ריכטונג: צו ווערן וואָס גויאישער. דעם עמאַנציפירטן איד האט די רעפארמ־באַדאַרפט העלפן דאָס קענען זיך אַנשליסן אין דער וועלט... מיט דער רעפארמ־האָבן זיי געוואָלט קריגן אַ פאַספּאָרט צו דער ניט־אידישער וועלט; אָדער ווי זיי האָבן עס אָנגערופן: זיך באַפרייען פון אידישן געטאָ... דערפאַר האָבן זיי זיך אָפּגעזאָגט פון די מצוות מעשיות וואָס מאַכן אידן פאַר אַ באַזונדער פּאָלק. דאָס ביטל אידישקייט וואָס זיי האָבן נאָך געוואָלט אויפהאַלטן האָבן זיי איינגעפאַסט אין אַ גויאישער ראָם. אין ערשטער ריי האָבן זיי די סינאָגאָגע געמאַכט ענליך צו די קירכעס.

מיט העכער הונדערט יאָר צוריק אין 1885 — דערציילט אונז דער שרייבער פון אַרטיקל — זענען די אַמעריקאַנער רעפארמער געגאַנגען פיל ווייטער ווי זייערע דייטשע פּאַרגייער. זיי האָבן ביי זייער קאַנסערוועטן אין פּיטסבורג אָפּציעל אָפּגעוואָרפן כמעט אַלע מצוות וואָס "פאַסן ניט אַריין צו די נאַרמען און עסטעטיקט פון די מאָדערנער ציווילעזאַציעס", און וואָס אַ טייל (ווי למשל, די דינים פון כשרות) זענען אַ "שטער פאַר די מאָדערנע גייסטיקע דערהויבנקייט"...

אין "גער טרועריק־באַרימטער פּיטסבורגער־פלאַטפאָרמע איז אויך דאָס אידנטום פּראָקלאַמירט געוואָרן ווי אַ רעליגיע, און ניט חלילה "ווי אַ פּאָלק". בכלל איז אויך די אמונה אין ג-ט און אַוודאי איז דער תורה פאַרוואַסערט און פאַרנעפלט געוואָרן. נאָכדעם ווי מען האט אָפּגעוואָרפן אַלעס וואָס דער "שכל לאַזט ניט דערקלערן"... אויפ'ן דאָזיקן יסוד איז די תורה און דער אידישער דת, רעזירט געוואָרן צו א.ג. "אידישער עטיק"...

אינע פון די יסודות פון רעפארמ־אידן נאָטירליך געווען דער גלויבן פון די ערשטע רעפארמער אין "פּראָגרעס" און אין דעם "הומאַניזם" וואָס האט לכאורה באַהערשט אַ טייל פון דער גויאישער וועלט אין אָפּפאַנג פון 19טן יאָרהונדערט. דאָס האט געפירט אויך צו ברייטערע אידישע רעכט אין אַ צאָל לענדער. און די רעפארמ־דערנענטערונג צו די גוים, — האָבן די ערשטע רעפארמער פאַרזיכערט — וועט דאָס שטאַרקן. עס וועט ברענגען אַ סוף צו דער "אידישער אידעאלאָגיע" און די טויזנטערקע שנאה צו אידן. בקיצור: אַ "אידישע גאולה"...

אַ טייל רעפארמער האָבן פאַקטיש געגלויבט, אַז די אידישע גאולה איז שוין געקומען. און אַזוי האָבן זיי פון זייער קאַלענדאַר אויסגעשטריכן ניט נאָר דעם תשעה באב, נאָר אויך די תפילות פאַר שיבת ציון. די טויזנטערקע אידישע בענקשאַפט פאַר גאולה און אַרץ־ישראל האָבן זיי פאַרדאַמט אַלס "פאַרדאַט" קעגן דער טרייער בידערגשאַפט פון אידן אין די לענדער וואו זיי וואוינען. וואס די רעפארמ־באַוועגונג האט באדייט פאר מאסן טויזנטער אידן איז די

מינט עס אָבער אויך עפעס פאַרן "גייסט" פון דער רעפּאָרט באַוועגונג? למעשה, גאַרניט מיט גאַרניט! זענען, למשל, די רעפּאָרט-מאַסן אידעאיש נענטער געוואָרן צום ציוניזם און צו מדינת ישראל? געפונען זיך צווישן די וואָס זענען היינט עולה קיין ישראל מער רעפּאָרט-אידן ווי אין די אַמאָליקע יאָרן? פאַרן היינט מער רעפּאָרט-יונגטליכע שטודירן קיין ישראל? דער ענטפער איז בפירוש אַ נעגאַטיווער.

אינטערעסאַנט, נאָר אין אַ בוך וואָס לעצטנס דערשינען פון אַ יונגען רעפּאָרט-ראַביי דאַניעל סיס, וואָס טראָגט דעם נאָמען "פאַרוואָס איך בין אַ רעפּאָרט-איד", געפינט איר זייער ווייניק וועגן ציוניזם אָדער מדינת ישראל. דער מחבר אין זיין בוך ציילט אייך אויס אַלע "זכותים" און פאַרדינסטן פון דער רעפּאָרט-באַוועגונג. ער דערציילט אייך וואָס די רעפּאָרטער האָבן געטאָן פאַר "ציוויל-רעכט", פאַר דער פרייהייט צו אַבאָרטן און ענליכע נאָבעלע צילן... דער ציוניזם און מדינת ישראל פאַרנעמט אַ גאָר קליינעם אָרט. צום שלום, וואו דער מחבר באַקענט אייך מיט זיין רעפּאָרטיסטישן "אני מאמין", ווערט ציוניזם, און מדינת ישראל אפילו נישט דערמאָנט.

עס לאָזט זיך בכן זאָגן, אַז דער נייער רעפּאָרטיסטישער ציוניזם, האָט ווייניק וואָס צו טאָן מיט דעם ציון-אידעאַל און מיט דעם צענטראַלן אָרט וואָס ארץ-ישראל דאַרף, לויטן ציוניזם, פאַרנעמען אין אידישן באַוואוסטזיין. דער רעפּאָרט-ציוניזם איז פאַקטיש בלויז אַן אָקט פון פאַליטישן אַקטיוויזם מצד די פירער פון רעפּאָרט נישט צו פאַרלירן זייער השפעה אין אידישן לעבן. די נשמה און דאָס האַרץ פון די רעפּאָרטער איז נאָך אַלץ געבליבן ווייט אַוועק פון ארץ ישראל.

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## פרידער אידן, ענטפערט

### אויפן רוף

## פון ירושלים עיר הקודש!

ענטפערט אויפן רוף פון די גרעסטע רביים, רבנים און ראשי ישיבות שליט"א. אין די איצטיקע טעג פון ערב-פסח, ווען אידן זיינען מקיים די גרויסע מצוה פון מעות חיטין, קמחא דפסחא, צדקה לעניים, איז אַ פאסיקע צייט אויסצושטרעקן אַ האַנט פון הילף דעם גרעסטן און הייליקן מוסד

## קופת רבי מאיר בעל הנס

### פולר פולין ירושלים

פאַרגעסט נישט אין די טויזנטער נויטבאַדערפטיקע, צווישען זיי גרויסע פאַמיליעס פון חשוב'ע תלמידי חכמים, וואָס זיינען אָנגעוויזען אויף דער שטיצע פון די ברייט-פאַרצווייגטע אינסטיטוציעס פון קופת רמבע"ן כולל פולין, וועלכע איז געגרינדעט געוואָרן דורך די באַרימטע צדיקים פון פולין. אין די טעג פון ערב פסח זיינען די באַדערפענישן פון "קופת רמבע"ן נאָך גרעסער, ווייל טאָג און נאָכט האַלט זי אין איין אַרישטיקען מעות חיטין און קמחא דפסחא צו די נויטבאַדערפטיקע משפחות.

אין זכות פון דער גרויסער מצוה און אין זכות פון ר' מאיר בעל הנס ז"ע, וועט השי"ת דערהערן אייערע בקשות, איר זאָלט האָבן פיל נחת, געזונט און גליק, מיר ווינטשן אייך אַ כשר'ן און פריילעכן פסח פאַר אייער גאָנצער משפחה.

## שיקט אייער הילף צו -

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לאַמיר אָנגיין מיט דער טראַדיציאָנעלער צדקה פון אונזערע עלטערן און אור-עלטערן אין פארלוין פון לאנגע דורות. נעמט אריין אַ פושקע פון קופת רבי מאיר בעל הנס אין אייער היים. דערמיט וועט איר העלפן די אַרעמע אידן אין ירושלים



אויב די רעפּאָרטער פרובירן זיך צו ראַטעווען, אָדער גאָר צו פאַה טאָרקן זייער השפעה און מאַכט אין אידישן לעבן דורך דער ציוניסטישער באַוועגונג, איז עס נישט אַ ספק, אַז מיר תורה-אידן דאַרפן דאָס באַקעמפן מיט אַלע אונזערע כוחות. מיר דאַרפן זיך קעגנשטעלן אַט די אַלע פּראַווען נישט בלויז בכדי צו באַשיצן דעם אידישן ישוב אין הייליקן לאַנד, נאָר אויך בכדי צו באַשיצן דאָס גאַנצע וועלט-אידינטום פון די סכנות וואָס די רעפּאָרט טראָגט מיט זיך פאַרן ווייטערן קיום און המשך פון כלל ישראל.

אין דאָזיקן זיין דאַרפן מיר אויך נישט מיד ווערן פון ווייטער אָנהאַלטן אונזער קעגנערשאַפט קעגן יעדער אַרטאָדאָקסישער מיטאַרבעט מיט רעפּאָרטער אין געמישטע "דעליגיעזע קערפערשאַפטן". יעדער מיטאַרבעט וואָס גיט אפילו אומדירעקטע אַנערקענונג צו רעפּאָרט אַלס לעגטימען אויסדרוק פון דת משה וישראל, איז גע'אסערט' געוואָרן פון אַלע גדולי ישראל פון אונזער דור, און אויך מיר פאַרשטיין, אַז דאָס איז פול מיט סכנות.

פון דער אַנדערער זייט אָבער דאַרפן מיר פאַרט נישט פאַרמאָגן אונזערע אויגן צו דעם גייסטיקן געראַנגעל וואָס גייט אָן (אומבאַמערקט פון אונז, ווי שוין געזאָגט) אינערהאַלב דער רעפּאָרט מחנה. אין דעם רעפּאָרט-לאַגער גייען אָן אַ ריי רעוואָלוציאָנערע אַנטוויקלונגען, וואָס פאַרדינען אונזער פולע אויפמערקזאַמקייט.

אַ טעג זענען דאָ אַ פאַר פאַקטן: רעפּאָרט ראַביי אין טאָראָנטאָ דוד מאַרמור האָט מיט צוויי יאָר צוריק גענומען רופן די מיטגלידער פון זיין "האָלי בלאַסאָם טעמפלע" צו טראָגן יאַרמולקעס און טליתים ביים דאָווענען. ער האָט דערקלערט: "מיר האָבן מער נישט קיין נחיצות צו זיין אַנדערש פון די אַרטאָדאָקסן און מיר דאַרפן אויך נישט זיין גלייך מיט די קריסטן ביי אונזערע חפילות. אויב מיר מיינען ערנסט צו זיין אַ טייל פון אידישן פאַלק, קען עס זיך נישט אויסדרוקן בלויז אין "פאגד" רעזינג", נאָר ס'מוז אויך קומען צום אויסדרוק אין סימבאָלישע מעשים".

ראַביי מאַרמור אין טאָראָנטאָ, איז נישט אַליין. לויט ווי מיר לייענען אין דעם אויבנדערמאָנטן "דזשוואיש דזשורנאַל", קען מען היינט טרעפן אין די מערסטע רעפּאָרט-סינאָגאָגעס אַ צאָל אידן — דער פּראָצענט-זאָץ איז נישט איבעראַל דער זעלבער — מיט יאַרמולקעס און טליתים, אַ זאָך וואָס איז אַמאָל געווען "אסור" אין רוב רעפּאָרט-טעמפלען... דאָס באַנייען פון טראַדיציעס בלייבט נישט שטיין ביי די טויערן פון די טעמפלען. דאָס אָפהיטן שבת-ליכט צינדן ביז דאָס פּראַווען סוכות ווערט איצט אַקטיוו געלערנט און דערמוטיקט אין פיל טעמפלען.

דער שרייבער פון באַריכט לערן יודעלזאָן, באַוואָרנט זיך, אַז נישט אַלע רעפּאָרט-אידן האָבן שוין דערהערט דעם מעסעדזש... אַ סך (זיכער די מערסטע, א.ש.ר.) באַנוגענען זיך דורך זייער צוגעהערקייט צו רעפּאָרט מיט בלויז "אַראָפּוואָרפן" זייערע קינדער אין דער סאַנדרע-סקול... זיי באַטראַכטן די רעפּאָרט-באַוועגונג נאָך אַלץ אַלס די בעסטע אָרעס פון מינימאַליסטער אידישקייט... אָבער דער שרייבער פון אַרטיקל ציטירט אַ סך שטימען פון רעפּאָרטער וועלכע פאַדערן כסדר מער אידישקייט.

דער קאַרעספּאָנדענט ציטירט, למשל ראַביי דניאל פרידלענדער, דירעקטאָר פון ניר-דזשורניל רעפּאָרט קאָנגרעגיישאָנס וועלכער דערציילט, אַז בערך 20 פּראָצענט פון די רעפּאָרט אידן זוכן צו זיין "שעפערש-אַקטיוו"; זיי זוכן פאַרשידענע פאַרמען פון רחניות, זיי זוכן מקיים זיין געוויסע מצוות און ווילן אַלעס וויסן. זיי זאָגן, אַז "אידישקייט איז אינטערעסאַנט" און זיי ווילן לערנען מער און מער. אדעלמאן ציטירט דאָ אויך אַ געוויסן גראַפיקער און אַן אַרכיטעקט, וועלכער זאָגט, אַז "פאַר הונדערט יאָר האָבן מיר פאַרלוירן די טראַדיציאָנעלע מקורות. אָבער איצט ווילן מיר זיי צוריק..."

אין ווייטערן טייל פון זיין באַריכט דערציילט אונז דער שרייבער וועגן רעפּאָרט-קורסן און סעמינאַרן ביי וועלכע רעפּאָרט-אידן ווילן לערנען וועגן עכטע אידישע מקורות, אידישע הלכות-דעות און אויך פּראַקטישע הלכות. איינער פון אַט די סעמינאַרן האָט פאַרעפנטליכט אַ "רוף צו התחייבות" אין וועלכן עס ווערט געזאָגט צור, אַנדערן:

"קיינמאַל פריער איז אין דער רעפּאָרט-באַוועגונג געווען אַ גרעסערע אַפּעקטיוו צו רחניות-דיקע דימענסיעס און אַ שטאַרקער רצון צו לעבן אַ פול אידיש לעבן, צו קענען און מיטלעבן אַ פאַרבונדענקייט מיט ג-ט... דזשודאאיזם איז באַזירט אויף אונזער פאַרבונדונג מיטן איינציקן ג-ט... מיר דאַרפן קולטיווירן (פלעגן) אין אונז אַליין אין אונזערע קינדער אַ גרעסערע חוש פון ג-ט'ס דאָ זיין... מיר דאַרפן אַנטדעקן די דיסציפלין פון טעגליכן יחידושן דאָווענען (באַמערקונג: אין די רעפּאָרט-טעמפלען זענען דאָך נישט פאַראַן קיין טעגליכע מניינים. — א.ש.ר.) און באַטראַכטן דאָס לערנען פון תורה אַלס טעגליכע באַשעפטיקונג... מיר האָבן די פליכט דורך אינפאַרמירן און פאַראַנטוואָרטליכן אויסוואַל צו אַדאַפטירן מצוות און זיי צו מאַכן אַ טייל פון אונזער לעבן... אַזעלכע עלעמענטן ווי טלית, כיפה און כשרות קען פאַרטיפן און שטאַרקן די אמונה פון רעפּאָרט-אידן וואָס קלויבן עס אויס... כדאי אויך צו לייענען דעם פּאָלגענדן ווייטערן טייל פון אויבנדערמאָנטן נייעם רעפּאָרטיסטישן רוף:

"אַלס רעפּאָרט-אידן זענען מיר שטענדיק געווען טריי צו די עטישע אידעאַלן פון דער תורה, אָבער היינט צו טאָג בענקען אַ סך פון אונז פאַר מער

*Orthodox  
Reform  
Conservative*

October 6, 1988  
25 Tishri 5749

Dr., Carl Sagan  
Cornell University  
Center for Radiophysics  
and Space Research  
Space Sciences Building  
Ithaca, NY 14853-6801

Dear Dr. Sagan:

I sent copies of the Harkabi article to a number of my Orthodox friends, among them, Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, president of Bar Ilan University, whom I encountered on the street. He told me the counter-voice within Orthodoxy should and will be heard.

I also sent the paper to Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits, Chief Rabbi of England. He had seen the paper earlier and sent me his response which I am sharing with you for its particular interest.

With warm greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.





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

August 30, 1988  
17 Elul 5748

Dr. Carl Sagan  
Cornell University  
Center of Radiophysics and  
Space Research  
Space Sciences Building  
Ithaca, NY 14853-6801

Dear Dr. Sagan:

It is difficult for me to give an off the cuff reaction to Harkabi's paper. His thesis is complex and I am not certain that I am in the best position to evaluate it.

I do not live in Israel, as you know, and my judgments are tempered by what I experience here. And here, Orthodoxy is numerically insignificant. Most American Jews identify themselves as Conservative or Reform or Reconstructionist, or they do not identify themselves with any synagogue movement. American Judaism, therefore, is given its definition by Jewish religious liberalism, especially when it comes to those issues which involve the larger community and world of which we are a part.

Israel is another matter, of course. And while, numerically, Orthodoxy there is not much stronger than it is here (I speak now of numeric rather than of political strength), most Israelis though not religiously observant, nonetheless, identify themselves as "Orthodox" in the sense that the synagogue they don't attend is Orthodox. They know of no other, and for them Judaism may well be defined by what an established and politicized Orthodoxy has to say.

I say "may be defined," because not all of Israel's traditionalists belong to the camp of the political right. For instance, Professor Uhrbach of Hebrew University, the foremost Talmudic scholar of our generation and personally observant, has been a life-long and vocal critic of right wing extremism. Nor is he alone. The Peace-Now movement counts many Orthodox Jews among its members. Harkabi makes no reference to them. Perhaps he considers them of insufficient weight to counter the in-

Dr. Carl Sagan  
August 30, 1988  
Page 2

fluence of the chief-rabbinate. He may well be right, but I am not certain.

Moreover, is Judaism given its definition solely or even primarily by what the Israel rabbinate has to say? Judaism, after all, is not coterminous with the boundaries of the Jewish State. Most religiously identified Jews live outside of Israel, most Orthodox Jews even, and few of them accept either the legal or the religious authority of the two chief rabbis -- never mind their moral suasion, for let me add to Harkabi's sad and sorry listing of quotations what the Sephardi Chief Rabbi recently said about the Palestinians: "We lifted them out of the dirt and they aren't even grateful." Brrrrr....

Can what the Israeli rabbis say, can anyone's statements, really bring about a transmutation of Judaism? Here is where the matter of the transcendent enters our conversation, I suppose. But whatever the degree of their belief, all can agree that the image of Judaism is besmirched by what these "rabbis" are saying. It is an image which will be further fixed by what the Israelis finally resolve to do. And insofar as the words of the Israeli chief-rabbinate influence a climate of opinion which has its impact on policy, they must be countered from as many quarters and as forcefully as can be.

As you can see, I, too, find Harkabi's paper "disturbing and enlightening." Certainly, it is thought-provoking. And for this reason, I am grateful to you for calling it to my attention.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



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Laboratory for Planetary Studies

12 August 1988

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I have recently come upon the enclosed disturbing, as well as enlightening, article by Yehoshafat Harkabi called "Judaism: A Call for Change." I believe Harkabi is the former chief of Israeli military intelligence. Having concluded that a self-righteous unwillingness to accept responsibility for past malefactions is central to the deadly embrace between the United States and the Soviet Union (see enclosed article, "The Common Enemy"), Harkabi's argument strikes a resonant chord in me, but I would be most grateful for your insight into and advice on Harkabi's article.

With many thanks and best wishes,

Cordially,



Carl Sagan

CS:nbs  
Encs. (2)

Thank you - vaguely aware -

How to counter - liberal's heart of gold -

showing it w/ liberal method

Eric Topol  
Norman Lane  
Jacobowitz  
Two Greenberg  
Re: Tanspan - challenge to liberal -

30  
FAX No. 383 4934

28th September 1987

Professor Y Harkabi

St Antony's College  
Oxford

Dear Professor Harkabi

Having now met you personally and shared a provocative symposium with you, I read the two articles you left me with particular interest. You asked me for my comments, and I gladly offer you some.

In the piece on The Fateful Choices Before Israel you write as a master - an insider with insight. To me your arguments are solid and your conclusions inescapable. Dealing with themes on which you are clearly a leading expert, you carry both weight and conviction in your advocacy of policies which, admittedly, have always appealed to me (including your criticism of America's failure to criticise Israel!) I claim no particular competence in politics or strategy. But even as a layman in these matters I feel entitled to support what I deem to be eminently reasonable.

By contrast, your article on Judaism (and your presentation at Yakar) struck me as that of an outsider who rationalises his disengagement from religious loyalties by rejecting the totality because some particulars are disagreeable. Notwithstanding your disclaimer that you "may supply antisemites with powerful ammunition against the Jews", it is precisely the characteristic of antisemites that they judge and condemn all Jews for the faults of some.

Although the balance of competence on Judaism is presumably in my favour, I will not here detail assumptions, quotations and comparisons which I believe you make fallaciously, resulting in utterly misleading conclusions. Thus, I already indicated to you how false was the analogy between burning the New Testament by Jews and the Talmud for Jews. Equally facile is your outrage at denying an admittedly non-Jewish woman burial rights in a Jewish cemetery because her son served in the Israeli army. I may not

agree with the methods used or even the action taken. But the whole argument is demolished once you allow objective criteria of religious status to be emotively coloured by entirely extraneous circumstances. I could cite some other examples clearly betraying unfamiliarity with the sources, prejudice in interpreting them, and hostility against those living by them.

But that is not my main critique here. You argue that of all the "divisive" issues, "the ferocious bickerings" and "bitter hatred" menacing Israel "the most threatening problem" is the rift between Jews and gentiles, in particular as promoted by some religious observers and teachings. This assessment appears utterly unreasoned, indeed preposterous to me.

The widespread disdain for non-Jews is certainly a pronounced feature in Jewish life today, and I have often criticised it (as you will have seen in my book). But I find it is by no means confined to religious Jews; it is hardly less prevalent among secular Israelis. In both cases this attitude of contempt, so alien to classic Jewish teachings, is no doubt a direct consequence of the gentile betrayal of Jews culminating in the Holocaust and further accentuated by Israel's loneliness among the nations, whether Christian, Moslem or Communist.

More generally, when the majority of the United Nations condemn Zionism as racism, there is surely little relevance in the rulings of R. Ovadia Yossef or the rantings of Meir Kahane as a menace to Israel's future and its relations with the world community. Equally illogical, to my mind, is your plea that we ought to take to task not the person who quotes, but his quotations and sources - in other words, to revise the teachings of Judaism to comply with the world's idea of humanism. You might with equal justice demand that Zionism be amended because some have branded it as racist (probably with greater justice, judging by the Declaration of Independence).

In this debate I call you an outsider. If you would assert your allegiance to Jewish religious imperatives in general; if you would acknowledge the contribution of a Jewish religious discipline to the elimination of crime and vice (there are no religious drug addicts, and I understand there is no police station in Bnei Brak); if you would acknowledge the immense damage done to Israeli morale and Jewish unity by depriving two-thirds of Israel's children of the birthright to their spiritual heritage by religious instruction; if you would hail religious leadership for its phenomenal success in regenerating intensive Jewish learning and living, turning the strictly-religious section into the only growth element within our people, especially after this element suffered the severest devastation in the Holocaust; if, in other words, you would recognise the light as well as the shade, and therefore count yourself in as a proud bearer of our faith and its commitments - then I would accept, or argue out, your strictures as coming from within. But

somehow I feel your judgements on religious values and their defects are blatantly selective and unbalanced. With your obvious erudition and perspicacity I cannot believe that you are not yourself conscious of this.

A final point on demography which appears to be your most critical factor determining Israel's choices. I acknowledge the growing disparity in the numerical strength of Jews and Arabs. I too have constantly drawn attention to this, as you will see in my book. But ultimately, I am convinced, the demographic trends within our own people will prove even more decisive in shaping our future. I enclose an item I wrote on this a couple of years ago in Midstream. It is amazing that our professional statisticians and demographers are only now beginning to awaken to this writing on the wall. The intensively-religious element, most of them non-Zionists (and not super-nationalists, as you claim), is already well on the way to becoming the majority of identifying Jews inside and outside Israel by an amazing process of regeneration. I suspect that in due course (probably less than two decades) this element, not overly concerned with the trappings of sovereignty, will come to terms with the Arabs in a manner which neither you nor I will either endorse or even believe possible. At least that is where I see the most urgent need for realism - all the rest may prove to be empty speculation.

I further enclose some material, including writings of mine, on the Jewish attitude to the treatment of non-Jews. These statements certainly represent authentic main-line teachings, rather more representative than the off-beat opinions you quote.

Anyhow, all these polemics do not detract from my genuine interest in your stimulating views and your courageous expression of them. I only hope they can be modified to accommodate a more objective evaluation of the lessons to be drawn from Judaism and Jewish history on the indispensable role of our spiritual legacy in securing the Jewish future and, in vindicating our survival as Jews.

With warm personal greetings and renewed best wishes for the New Year, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

Sir Immanuel Jakobovits  
Chief Rabbi

Enclosures



MIZRACHI-HAPOEL HAMIZRACHI • מזרחי-הפועל המזרחי

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September 29, 1988

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

Dear Alex,

Thanks for sending me Harkavy's article. I respect him for his intelligence, expertise and I share his concerns even if I can't see any sign that the PLO can sit down and negotiate.

There are all kinds of extremists and extreme positions within Orthodoxy. There are messianic tendencies. Yet Rabbi Shach is violently opposed to Lubavitch and is as dovish as one can be without yielding Israel to the Arabs. The religious Sephardim who follow Ovadiah Yosef are no different than Shach. Yet these are the ones who can be militantly and outspokenly anti-Christian. No respected Orthodox rabbinic authority has ever given any credence to what Kahane says or does and none will give him any credence. Harkavy obviously has his own axe to grind and to lump him together with Rabbi Waldenberg is intellectually inexcusable.

He may be a military intelligence expert but he's not a scholar on halachic matters. If he approaches intelligence the way he has written this article, I would hope that Israelis would not rely on his evaluations. One would have to see the entire statement or responsa of Rabbi Waldenberg or Rabbi Yosef before coming to any judgment on what was said, not an excerpted sentence or paragraph. There are immediately three possibilities in such a responsa. It could be a decision to be acted upon, a theoretical decision, and a decision which shouldn't be applied. He has as much right to be involved in halachic issues as we do in his specialty.

There is very substantial material on a ger toshav and their regrets and privileges in a Jewish state. Any competent posek would have to consider the consequences to Jews in Arab or in Christian countries. There are dangerous messianic tendencies within the Orthodox community, there are very narrow and restrictive religious





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Chairman of the Board

Rabbi Alexander Schindler

September 29, 1988 2.

leaders, but there is no authoritative Orthodox position or even thinking on the issues Harkavy raises. We take issue with them.

We are putting our hopes in Mumad, the Religious Zionist alternate list. If that list does well, it can shape up the entire Religious Zionist camp and give it the courage to stand up to the right. I've had direct confrontations with Shaki. Let me know if you read Hebrew and I'll forward some material to you.

That's the only route to go. The Orthodox right couldn't care less if it were criticized by Reform or liberal circles. They'd consider such comments as vindication. Kahane would be grateful for the publicity.

A gutten quitel.

Louis Bernstein



*Defor Orth  
Conser.*

September 14, 1988  
3 Tishri 5749

TO: Rabbi Emanuel Rackman

Is Harkabi's thesis correct -- and if so, how can  
all this be countered?

I would appreciate your counsel.

Warm regards.

*ailed  
9/21*

September 14, 1988  
3 Tishri 5749

TO: Rabbi Louis Bernstein

Is Harkabi's thesis correct -- and if so, how can all  
this be countered?

I would appreciate your counsel.

Warm regards.

September 14, 1988  
3 Tishri 5749

TO: Rabbi Irving Greenberg

Is Harkabi's thesis correct -- and if so, how can all  
this be countered?

I would appreciate your counsel.

Warm regards.

September 14, 1988  
3 Tishri 5749

TO: Rabbi ~~I~~ Israel Miller

Is Harkabi's thesis correct -- and if so, how can  
~~was~~ this be countered?

I would appreciate ylor counsel.

Warm regards.

Yehoshafat Harkabi

## Judaism: A Call For Change

Grave problems beset Jewish religious life, engendering tensions and dissensions such as: the rift between the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform streams, whereby the Jewish religion has become a divisive force; the ferocious bickerings between the different segments within Orthodoxy; the cleavage between the religious and the secular sectors in Israel. All these issues are perilous. However, the most threatening problem lies elsewhere - in the new developments within the Jewish religion, which may adversely affect the relations between Jews and gentiles and gravely impair the stature of the Jewish religion in the world. I adore Judaism and worry that it may suffer a grave setback. It is a nightmare to contemplate that the Jewish religion that hitherto has bolstered Jewish existence may become detrimental to it.

In all religions there are components of hostility against other religions. Happily, in the Jewish religion these elements were for a long period kept under control or suppressed, as Jews living precariously in foreign countries did not allow these components to emerge. In Israel, this inhibitory factor waned, especially after the victory in 1967, which was interpreted as brought about by divine intervention, portending a change in history towards Jewish ascendancy. It waned further after the Likud victory of 1977, as some religious circles were heartened by the idea of Jewish might, a central tenet in the Jabotinsky-Begin ideology. Manifestations of hostility against gentiles have recently surfaced among these circles, who make no bones about expressing them blatantly.

I find myself enmeshed in a harrowing dilemma. Citing examples of such anti-gentile manifestations might supply antisemites with ammunition against the Jews, their religion and against Israel. However, if one wishes to combat these trends, and especially to prevent their burgeoning and spreading, there is no escape from exposing them. One cannot fight against an object without identifying it. I shall disclose no secrets. All my examples are taken from the media.



The Israeli Chief Rabbi, Mordekhai Eliahu, has forbidden Jews in Israel to sell flats to gentiles, "even one flat" (*Haaretz*, 17 Jan. 1986). I do not dispute the Halakhic validity of his authoritative ruling (probably from "Lo tehanem", Deuteronomy 7:2; as Maimonides explained not to make their sojourn permanent, *Hilkhot Avodah Zarah VeHukot Hagoim*, Ch. 10:4). However, the Rabbi shows complete insensitivity to the problem of reciprocity. Why then should gentiles in their countries sell real estate to Jews? A failure to understand that Jews cannot arrogate to themselves privileges which they do not recognize as valid for others, appears in Israel too frequently.

In response to a query, former Chief Rabbi, Ovadia Yoseph, ruled that a Jew happening to possess the New and Old Testaments bound together should tear them apart and burn the new Testament (*Haaretz*, 23 Oct. 1979). A military Rabbi ordered the burning of a copy of the New Testament found in the library of his base (*Maariv*, 14 June 1985). Subsequently, the affair was discussed in the Knesset Foreign Affairs Committee (*Maariv*, 5 July 1985). One wonders if Rabbis understand that such enactments give retroactive legitimization to the burning of the Talmud by Christians. Can we allow ourselves to go back to the worst aberrations of the Middle Ages?

In recent Jewish religious writings Christians are frequently denigrated as "Ovdei Avodah Zarah" ("pagans"), falling back on the authority of Maimonides who in his original writings – not those tampered with by medieval censorship – explicitly depicted Christians as pagans, because of the Trinity, whereas he released Moslems from the ignominy of paganism. In Hebrew "Avodah Zarah" is a term of abhorrence, much more so than is conveyed in the parallel term of "paganism". The Catholic Church in the spirit of ecumenism has made some effort to purge its prayer books from invectives against the Jews; should Jews revile Christianity? Furthermore, naming a religion or people as "Avodah Zarah" has, according to the law, practical consequences. According to Maimonides, "Avodah Zarah", its worshippers and their institutions of worship have to be destroyed in any area coming under Jewish control (*Hilkhot Avodah Zarah VeHukot Hagoim*, Ch. 7:1). Similar ruling applies to the other parallel denomination "Stars Worshippers" ("Akum" which serves as well a code name for gentiles). The front is specifically widened to encompass many Africans and Asians.



Calling for the expulsion of non-Jews from Israel is not an eccentricity of Rabbi Meir Kahane, for in religious pronouncements it is stressed that only a "Ger Toshav", a gentile who fulfills the seven precepts of the Sons of Noah, can live in a Jewish state. Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg, the recipient of the prestigious Israel Prize in Judaic Studies for 1976, declared: "I support the application of the *Halakha* that a gentile ("Goi") should not live in Jerusalem; in order to apply the *Halakha* correctly, we would have to expel all Goyim from Jerusalem and purify it completely" (quoted by Professor Amnon Rubinstein in his book *From Herzl to Gush Emunim and Back*, Schocken, 1980, p. 123, based on *Haaretz*, 9 May 1976). In a discussion on the Mormon University at the Knesset, no less a person than Avraham Shapira, Chairman of the Financial Committee, complained: "Jesus is allowed to come back to Jerusalem" (*Haaretz*, 11 Dec. 1985). Should Israel exclude Christians from Jerusalem or even express such an intention? Utterings like these cannot fail to attract attention in Rome. Hebrew is not an esoteric language and Israeli newspapers are read by non-Jews. The Vatican, representing hundreds of millions of believers, might still have a say when the political settlement of Jerusalem is negotiated.

The remains of a woman, born a Christian, who lived most of her life as a Jewess, married to a Jew, though she had not been officially converted, and whose son served in the Israeli Army as a Jew and Israeli, were dug up and removed from a Jewish cemetery in Rishon LeZion. The perpetrators of this crime were duly punished by an Israeli court. Released after a few months of imprisonment, they were given a public reception in Shabbat Square in Jerusalem. In their defense, the claim was made – supported by the local Rabbis of Rishon LeZion and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel – that a Christian, as "Oved Avodah Zarah", cannot be buried with Jews, just "as an evil doer ("Rasha") cannot be buried with a righteous man ("Tzaddik") (Rabbi Zemer's articles in *Davar*, 3 April 1984, and in *Haaretz*, 19 April 1984, and the text of the verdict of the local Rabbis confirmed by the Israeli Chief Rabbinate). This case presented a conflict between the laws of the Israeli state and Jewish religious laws. Religious circles claimed that the religious laws should prevail, as "divine law is above human law". The implication is far-reaching, as it means that religious Jews throughout the world cannot be fully subservient to the laws of their country. True, the problem of relationship between religious laws and civil laws arises in other religions. However, in Christianity it was at-

tenuated by the principle of separation between Church and State, and in Islam (except present Iran) the subservience of the religious authorities to the lay authorities has become firmly established as an historical practice. It is significant that the old doctrine "*Dina deMalkhuta Dina*" – "The law of the kingdom is a law", was not invoked in the Rishon LeZion case, as its application is circumscribed. If dead Jews and one dead Christian cannot be neighbours in a cemetery, how can Jews and Christians reside together when still alive? Will Jewish religious spokesmen be allowed, unopposed, to undermine the possibility of Jews living in Christian countries?

When we studied the Bible and read the divine command to destroy the Amalekites, most of us probably considered it as an archaic episode of bygone primitive times having no relevance to the present. However, Rabbinical circles resurrect it as pertinent to our times. They cite Maimonides who included the destruction of the Amalekites as one of the three highest priority precepts that Jews have to carry out when returning to a Jewish state (*Hilkhot Melakhim*, Ch. 1:1, based on *Sanhedrin*, 20b). Thus, it becomes a precept for the future, not only the past. So long as the Amalekites are not annihilated, God's throne is defective (*Midrash Tanhumah*, Tetze), as cited by Rabbi Israel Hess, the then campus Rabbi of Bar Ilan University, who also specified that the Arabs (Palestinians) are the present day Amalekites (ominously his article was entitled: "The Genocide Commandment in the Torah", *Bat Kol*, 26 Feb. 1980, reported by Amnon Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, it is even mentioned in a publication in English of the Kaplan Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town). He is by no means a solitary voice. Thus, the Amalekites become an algebraic notation which each generation may decide whom it fits. Even if the explicit identification of the Palestinians as Amalekites comes from a minority, it should annoy and disturb us. Religious circles do not understand that by making the destruction of a people, like the Amalekites, not an event of antiquity, but a standing recurring religious order, they present the Jewish religion as genocidal. If this resurrection of the issue of the Amalekites were to continue, it could change the general attitude to the Holocaust, inasmuch as associative analogies might be drawn. Even the apologetic contention that only the Messiah will identify the Amalekites to be destroyed, is unacceptable, as it implies that a human group, men, women, their children and flock, deserves total annihilation.

I sympathize with our forefathers who, in their suffering of all kinds of persecutions and discriminations, found solace in specifying the measures that would be imposed on non-Jews once there was a Jewish state. In many cases they simply copied the discriminations to which they were subjected themselves. Such expressions of hostility may have had for them cathartic effects; indulging in writing what they could not practice. It was the anguished vengeance of the helpless. They envisaged the re-establishment of a Jewish state only after the coming of the Messiah, who would usher in the era "when the hand of Israel prevails over the nations of the world". Furthermore, they did not worry how such doctrines might affect Jews in the Diaspora, as they considered that the ingathering of the Jews into the Jewish State would be total. Thus, all those enactments against gentiles were utopian, meant to be carried out, not in historical circumstances, but in an extra-historical era, eschatologically. What was excusable from them is no longer tolerable from us.

We are faced now with a completely new situation: a Jewish state was established without the labours and the mediation of a Messiah, in circumstances in which the hand of Israel does not prevail over the nations of the world and most Jews live outside the Jewish state. Some people reproach the founding fathers of Zionism for an oversight in not considering the Arab Palestinian problem, which is not completely true. It seems that of much greater significance was their lack of comprehension concerning the twofold problem the Jewish religion would produce for the Jewish state and, moreso, the Jewish state would produce for the Jewish religion. However, extreme orthodox Jewish circles understood the Halakhic complications Jewish statehood would create, and thus opposed Zionism adamantly.

On the other hand, the Zionist religious circles who maintained that a Jewish non-Messianic state is feasible, failed in their reaction to the challenges to the Jewish religion presented by the establishment of a Jewish state. Rabbi Maimon (Fishman) understood the quandary and proposed to convene a "Sanhedrin", a gathering of distinguished Rabbis to examine the new situation and enact the necessary laws and changes. His proposal was rejected. Today, even anti-Zionist Orthodoxy that does not recognize the legitimacy of Israel's statehood for whom it is the incarnation of blasphemy, demands that Jewish laws be applied in it, particularly on the Shabbat. The Zionist religious circles follow suit. Furthermore, religious circles which

had previously maintained moderate political positions or were even anti-Zionist, became the spearhead of extreme nationalist positions, in particular against the Arabs. Jewish religious precepts are evoked to proscribe any step towards territorial concession and a compromise with the Arabs. Thus the Jewish religion constitutes an impediment in the formation of a reasonable Israeli policy.

Maimonides, when he ruled that in the Jewish state a non-Jew should not be appointed to any public position – even the most junior one of controlling channels of water for irrigation (*Hilkhot Melakhim*, Ch. 1:4) – probably considered such discrimination as hypothetical until the Messiah comes. It did not dawn upon him that the chairman of the Tel Aviv great synagogue would invoke him as an authority to oppose the appointing of an Arab to be Deputy Minister of Education of the Jewish state (*Haaretz*, 30 Oct. 1986). Furthermore, can we admit, even on principle, that the Messiah will launch, not an era of justice and equality, but a dark age of racial discrimination? Is this the Jewish ideal?

We find ourselves in a grave predicament. True, expressions of hostility and discriminatory enactments existed earlier, but until now they were theoretical. Recently, their status changed as vitality has been infused into them by reference to them and the demand that such laws should be applied here and now. Thus, they have been actualized and made concrete. We can no longer shrug our shoulders and underrate the hostile precepts on the pretext that they represent only a minority. As these expressions of hostility accumulate our enemies will not fail to use them against us. It is irresponsibly optimistic to think otherwise. They are all in the public domain. Rabbi Kahane publishes his writings in English. He has the merit of offering a mirror for us to see ourselves. One of the worst things our enemies have done to us is that as a result of their outrages, many among us have become habituated to criticize others, forgetting the need to examine and criticize ourselves.

Furthermore, in one central version, "Chosen People" does not imply a potentiality that will come about by our arduous efforts, but an accomplished fact. Such an approach suited, strange as it seems, the secular nationalistic ethos of the Jabotinsky school which in its turn encouraged the new religious developments. The affinity, political and ideological, between the Likud and the main religious parties and groups is more than accidental.



Religion is influenced by an external factor such as the political climate of opinion. During the period when pragmatic realistic political attitudes of Weizmann - Ben-Gurion - Labour prevailed, religion kept the hostile component submerged. That was the achievement of the religious moderates like the Mizrahi. Once the climate of opinion changed during 1967-1977, the hostile elements in religion surfaced with their political corollaries on the issues of the West Bank and annexation. Thus a wide segment of Israeli population, because of its traditionalist inclinations, could be enlisted to support the policy of annexation, and unversed in the Revisionist ideology, it adopted some of its core values. Jews with collective memory of oppression, especially from backward countries, could be swayed by the idea of ethnocentric power, once they felt they could afford it. Unfortunately political leadership did not rise to restrain such a tendency and counsel reasonableness. Some leaders capitalized on such proclivities to get into power.

I suspect that the new developments in the Jewish religion constitute an unprecedented transmutation of great significance. As these changes occur before our eyes we may fail to appreciate how revolutionary they are. What has surfaced cannot again be mechanically submerged.

The religious radicals who support these religious trends understand their significance. Thus they are haunted by forebodings of the crisis in the position of the Jews and their religion that these changes will bring, or the havoc they will wreak in the relationship between Jews and the world. The rise in expectations of the imminent coming of the Messiah, calling this period the "beginning of redemption", Habad slogan "Messiah now", "Messiah Mamash", the intensive study of the laws of sacrifice as if the Temple is due to start operating, the weaving of clothes for the priests in a Jerusalem Yeshivah, are all symptoms of the premonition of our being in the throes of a crisis from which only a Messiah can deliver. Before, the Messiah was a hope, a yearning; now he becomes a necessity.

Excessive reliance on the impending coming of the Messiah, which traditionally has been severely proscribed, is already producing a reaction within Zionist religious circles apprehensive of the results of disappointment and disillusionment. They thus demand to wait patiently. But then Zionism and the Jewish state are not precursors of the Messiah's coming and are devoid of religious significance. Some of

Correct  
It so, how  
to count?

the Zionist religious radicals even in Gush Emunim already show an inclination to fall back on the position of separation between history and theology, propounded in its strict form by Neturei Karta. This trend is already manifest in their mode of dressing which is commonly labelled as "blackening", drawing near the Haredi attire. However it is doubtful if the Neturei Karta solution can be generalized in appealing to large numbers. Finding peace in their fold can suit only a small minority.

The trend towards religious extremism and hostility is not merely an Israeli phenomenon. Jewish centres of Orthodoxy in the Diaspora, particularly in the United States, serve as their source of inspiration and financial support, including financial contributions given to them perhaps unwittingly by secular Jews who are unaware what they help to build up.

The big question is: What is to be done? The gravity of the situation demands radical treatment. Instead, we witness palliatives. For instance, because Rabbi Kahane's stark policy prescriptions are derived from religious precepts, strong strictures were levelled against Rabbi Kahane by some moderate religious circles. However, what is needed is not taking to task the person who quotes, but coming to grips with his quotations from the most venerated sources. Apparently, he does not distort his sources; he only turns for support to the ugly strain in Judaism, and in this he is not alone. So long as the doctrines expressed in these quotations and enshrined in our books are not disowned, they continue constituting organic tenets of the Jewish religion.

There are in Judaism admirable warm expressions of great humanism and of delicate perceptive moral insights. We can be very proud of the humane wisdom and sensitivity of our Sages. However, citing such humanistic expressions does not obviate the other elements of hostility and discrimination against non-Jews. On the contrary, paradoxical as it may appear, it reinforces them, for by depicting Judaism in its entirety as humanistic, the non-humanistic elements can remain uncondemned and are thereby legitimized; co-existence between the ugly and the upright is sanctioned, to the benefit of the ugly.

Presenting the Jewish religion as humanistic is not enough to make it so. We have to make it humanistic, by discarding those elements which are not. Beside the moral historical merit of such an



operation, it is required as a pre-emptive measure, as eventually these negative doctrines will be thrown in our faces.

One should beware of false exegesis which may also signify deficient mastery of the sources. For instance, the humanity of Judaism has been advanced by liberal Rabbis who brandish sayings such as: "Do not do to your friend what you do not wish should be done to you", "Love your friend as yourself" ("Love thy neighbour" in the Christian parallel). Orthodox Rabbis claim that the expression "friend" in the Talmud refers to a Jewish friend. They too contradict the demand to be kind to aliens – as "Ger," claiming that it means "Ger Tzedek", a proselyte to Judaism. I do not dispute their erudition and that theirs is probably the correct interpretation. I am not in a position to judge. I feel great affinity to our Sages and love reading them. I want to warn against the use of false argumentation, be it with the best intentions, and the propagation of counterfeited versions which orthodox Rabbis may rebut.

We are burdened with an onerous heritage of mixed baggage. It is only natural that sediments of a negative nature would have accumulated owing to the circumstances of our tragic history. We must discard these embarrassing elements, first and foremost the doctrine that the difference between Jews and non-Jews is ontological (i.e. that Jews and non-Jews are different species), which has even spilled over into the liturgy of the Havdalah, in the claim that Jews differ from gentiles qualitatively, in their essence, as between day and night, the sacred and the profane. Can we countenance such instructions, derivative from this basic doctrine, and found in the most authoritative sources (Maimonides, Turim, Shulhan-Aruch) that a Jewish doctor should not heal a non-Jew, or that a Jew should not help a non-Jew falling into a well; or that the murder of a non-Jew by a Jew is not answerable in an ordinary court of law, but only before the Almighty? This last doctrine was claimed recently when the members of the Jewish terrorist underground were brought to justice. According to Rabbi Shakh, the leader of the Lithuanian Yeshivot and the mentor of "Shas" in his book *Avi Ezer*, (*Haaretz*, 1 July 1987) a Jew may take the law into his own hands and without ado kill a non-Jew who contravenes any of the seven precepts of the Sons of Noah.

Two dispensation clauses which were previously used to mitigate these precepts can no longer serve us. First, that Jews can make exception to these precepts "for the sake of peace" (*Darkhei Shalom*), or in

order not to arouse "hostility" (*Eiva*), which means disobeying them, not because such deeds are wrong in themselves, but for the sake of expediency; as such acts might invite hostile reaction which may be harmful to Jews. Second, the traditional claim that all these restrictive regulations should not apply now, but only during the "era when the hand of Israel prevails over the nations of the world." Thus, the contents of these precepts and regulations are approved, the only problem being one of timing; present circumstances are not opportune, and therefore, their application is only to be deferred.

Expressions of hostility towards gentiles and the religious extreme positions on Israel's foreign affairs, stem from the same body of religious doctrines. They are basically two facets of the same substratum: one, on the social level in the attitudes towards gentiles, and the other, on the political level in the relations between Israel and its neighbouring Arabs. Actually, the component of hostility on the social level is more basic and conditions the newly contrived political positions.

For instance, Dr. Mordechai Nisan (lecturer in the Overseas Students' School of the Hebrew University), uses asymmetrical discrimination in the Jewish Halakhah "to show the relevance of the Halakhic material to the present circumstances between Jews and Arabs in Eretz Israel" (*The Jewish State and the Arab Problem*, Tel-Aviv, Hadar Publishing House, 1986, p. 147). He exemplifies this asymmetry by laws such as: There is no need for compensation in case an ox owned by a Jew gores an ox owned by a gentile, whereas there is need for compensation in the opposite case (*Hilkhot Nizkei Mammon*, Ch. 8:5). An article lost by a Jew should be returned but not one lost by a gentile (*Hilkhot Gzeilah VeAvedah*, ch. 11). Dr. Nisan justifies these discriminations on the grounds of "cultural differences" (*Ibid*). Dr. Nisan claims that these discriminatory laws should now be transposed from the private to the political domain. Thus, Palestinian political demands have no standing and are summarily rejected and so is any need for a compromise with them. The West Bank should be annexed by Israel forthright, and the ensuing demographic problem be solved by a "transfer" of the Arabs to other countries. (*Ibid*, p. 124).

The position of politically moderate Orthodox circles who do their best to propound religious argumentations for a political dovish position will founder, so long as they do not concomitantly modify the more basic religious positions on the social level of hostility to-

wards gentiles. They are caught in an inconsistency that explains their ineffectiveness. Their opposition to the use of religion as underpinning for political radicalization regarding the occupied territories and the Palestinians is vitiated by their failure to deal with the religious elements of hostility and discrimination against gentiles. Many simply prefer to ignore these elements.

Some religious moderates pin their hopes on "reinterpretation" as means of disposing elegantly of the embarrassing components in our heritage, by changing their meaning. They should be congratulated and encouraged. Where such benign versions exist, they should be given all prominence. However, many texts are not so malleable, rather their basic, traditional and literal meaning ("Pshat") supports the extremists' interpretation. For instance, can Maimonides' proscribing the appointment of a gentile to any official post in a Jewish state be reinterpreted that he "really" intended to call for the adoption of a benevolent policy of enlisting gentiles in the Jewish administration? Explaining away these negative precepts by casuistry arguing that their straightforward and explicit meaning is not their intent, cannot conjure them out of existence. If remedying our predicament can be achieved by reinterpretation why do our moderates tarry? In the meantime the expectancy of miraculous relief by reinterpretation allows for delay and indifference which aggravate the situation.

Let the modern moderates beware of posing as Latter-Day Sages. The Sages could allow themselves to advance flagrant reinterpretations such as the famous example that "An eye for an eye" really meant "Money compensations for an eye". They presented their innovations as old tradition already received on Mount Sinai and eventually succeeded in suppressing opposition to their rulings. Paradoxically, in order to make leeway for their innovations they narrowed the scope for future attempts to emulate them. Reinterpretation requires tacit consensus which is impossible to attain in times of dissension as the present, and thus the new version is bound to be challenged and ridiculed. Plastering cosmetically over the negative components will produce a transparent glaze which will only bring on the moderates the charge of hypocrisy. Innovation is not only a supplement, but entails the painful negation of the outmoded, the passé. It cannot be always achieved by an indirect approach of relying on a process of subliminal metamorphosis, or of a spontaneous evolution, but requires time and again head-on confrontation. The

changes required cannot be made without a high cost, perhaps a serious crisis.

The main means of disposing of hard core texts is by the contention of "historical relativity", as evoked by Rabbi Menahem Hameiri (1249-1316), when he reversed Maimonides' position on the paganism of Christianity. Historical relativity is not slighting our forebears, but on the contrary, explaining why their choice, which was called for in their circumstances, has lapsed. Historical relativity is not imputing new meaning, but an act of jettisoning flotsam, called for when it jeopardizes remaining afloat. It is predicated on living in history and acknowledging the relevance of its exigencies. Jews living among Christians could not afford to treat Christianity as did the Jews living among Moslems. For those indulging in a Messianic mood the imperatives of history seem flippant; the Messiah will soon rescue them from all troubles.

The claim that Judaism had to be modernized to suit the contemporary world, and thus reformed, is not convincing. Modernity means greater compatibility with present-day fashions. Who says that they are good? Why should Judaism, at whose centre is the idea of God rather than man, not make painful demands? However, weeding out growths which have accumulated and have deformed and disfigured the religion is a much better cause. That should become the main item on the agenda of the debate with Orthodoxy. Progressive Rabbis should challenge Orthodoxy on this score. All other controversies and goals should be secondary. Let Orthodoxy or parts in it assume the stance of defending these negative elements like those I have cited. Their position will be much more difficult, perhaps untenable. Most Jews will rebel against their leadership if these Rabbis persist in adhering to them. But in order to start such a debate one has to be ready to divulge and specify these elements, with all the embarrassment involved and the qualms that such a step may serve our enemies. Eventually, these elements will have to be determined by scholars of high reputation and standing in Judaic Studies.

Other religions have similar problems with their fundamentalists, and their negative components. They too must deliberate how to deal with them. It may temporarily take the pressure from us, and provide the necessary time for the required changes in our own religion. The rise of fundamentalism is a world wide phenomenon, but it is a mistake to regard it as a continuous, endless trend. The present



preoccupation of other religions with their own problems will one day abate and they will then be in a position to look at others, including us.

The Christian world is inhibited in its dealings with the Jewish people and religion by its own history, recently by the role of the Catholic church and other churches as spectators of the Holocaust, failing to oppose it. Acknowledging their failures, the Christian leaders may eventually overcome these inhibitions and then they may turn and present their demands from us. The urge to assuage their discomfort and redress a balance may also serve as a motivating factor in the desire to point out that we too have our blemishes. Such a *démarche* may become devastating for us. For many Jews, the disclosure of our negative doctrines and precepts by foreigners may come as a shocking surprise, as they are not aware of the existence of such elements in Judaism. It may subvert their allegiance to the Jewish religion and people. Let us now take steps to forestall such a possibility. Charity begins at home. We have to set our house in order, not only because of external criticism but for our own sake. There is a great difference between disowning those negative doctrines and precepts by our own initiative, by exertion from within, and doing it under duress, coerced by external pressures. Part of Orthodoxy may be responsive to the need of changes and make important contributions towards them. Let those who refuse and continue cherishing these doctrines stand alone.

Demonstrating to Orthodoxy that some of its versions are liable to raise general opprobrium may facilitate the achievement of a *modus vivendi* between it and the other streams in contemporary Judaism, and between the religious and the secular sectors in Israel. Only thus can some unity, be restored to the Jewish people. Only thus can we avert a crisis in Judaism without relying on the coming of the Messiah, and alleviate the blow to the Jewish religion when the political position of annexation of Judea and Samaria supported by religion comes to grief. Only thus will Judaism be reinforced and strengthened. Self criticism and making the necessary changes can become a source of elation and pride in our ability to face up to the challenges. Only thus we shall rise to be a Choice People ("Am Muvhar"). Only by assuming a critical stance can we identify ourselves with the totality of Jewish history, with all the currents and undercurrents in Judaism, with its history and counter-history.

Personally, I have learnt that I can associate myself with the predicament and dilemmas of the Zealots and Bar-Kokhba by being critical of their tragic feats. We shall remain Jews by self-criticism; blinkers can benefit only a tiny minority.

Undoubtedly, what I suggest is very difficult. The complications of introducing changes in a religion that sanctions the principle "no addition and no deduction" ("ein gor'in veein mosifin") are momentous. Nevertheless, Rabbis did venture to introduce important changes when they judged them of dire necessity. The choice before us is between bad and worse. It will be painful to achieve the necessary changes; not to make them may prove more harmful for our status in the world and our collective integrity.

We need a worldwide debate among our people on these fateful issues. I do not come to impose a line but only to propose one for consideration. I shudder to think of what may become the image of Judaism if the necessary changes are not made. We shall soon face a moment of truth. What is at stake is not only Israel following unrealistic policies but the whole stature of the Jewish people, our religion and culture and their relationship with the world. Considering the gravity of the dangers, even excessive circumspection is preferable to carefree heedlessness. "Al kol tzara shelo tavo al hazibur matri'in". Warning against a calamity, even of small probability, is mandatory. Moreso, if its probability is considerable.

(This is a revised and enlarged version of  
a presentation to the Council of Reform and  
Liberal Rabbis at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue  
in London on 26th May, 1987.)



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March 6, 1986  
25 Adar 1 5746

David H. Harmon, Esq.  
299 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Harmon:

It was thoughtful of you to share with me a copy of your fine letter to Rabbi Hyman Levine. Needless to say, I share your sentiments fully and I admire the manner in which you express them.

With thanks and kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

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Bayside, New York 11360

Dear Rabbi:

I have spent moments of anguish after reading the front page of the Times, Friday February 28th, of the "Split widens on a Basic Issue, WHAT IS A JEW?"

As a Jew I ask myself, how could such a thing come to pass? We have such a minimum of Jews, yet the respective sects seem to take manifold steps to lacerate the numbers and potentially reduce the numbers to oblivion. The orthodox refuse to recognize anyone except those who accept their traditional tenets; close their minds to any advanced thinking; condemn the rights of the "Gay" and would like to see them relegated to nothingness. I personally have no love for them but they are entitled to live since they too are descendents of G-D; and with the general narrowness of the thinking of the Orthodox, and refusing and failing to open their thinking to any other Jewish branch, a declaration of war has ensued. When and where will this end?

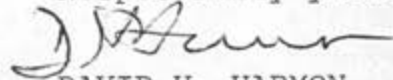
As an attorney, I am accustomed to living daily with compromises, acceptance of views and their concomitants. Yet, we have a group of Jewish leaders entering into a hand to hand fight and deciding the fate of so many millions of Jews like me who look forward to the perpetuation of Judaism and not to its demise. Why is it so difficult to understand one another? From my knowledge, the Conservatives look forward to compromise as do the Reform. The leaders know very well that changes are required in order to keep many Jews in the fold. Yet the orthodox simply say "it's all or nothing". They have the right to their opinions as do others. They can simply keep their followers in the fold, dictate to them as to the rules, and if the members feel not inclined to accept them, they can join another sect. But why should the Orthodox tell me how to think or what to believe with the penalty of

virtual excommunication? We now talk of 10% dictating to 90%. It's incredible. It goes totally beyond anything smacking of reasonableness. I am not taking the Orthodox to task but from experiences, I believe they are not sufficiently openminded in order to cement the relationship among the various religious Jewish groups. Imagine, indication that marriage among the different groups may not be acceptable. Hence, if my conservative son were to marry either a reform or conservative daughter, may not be deemed a Jewish marriage. I cannot believe what I have read. I imagine myself in some other generation or century and watch with horror the end of Judaism, which we all love so much.

Hopefully, some arbitrator will come into being and bang a few heads and let Jew live with Jew; Jew respect Jew: Jew Love Jew and all Jews integrated into a dream of tolerance, acceptance, understanding and most of all, for the perpetuation of the entire Jewish people.

I am thus forwarding this letter to many of the leaders without attempting to eliminating any of them. But frankly, I don't know to whom to write. I am sure that all of us shall in the future welcome any and all comments and communications.

Respectfully yours,



DAVID H. HARMON

CC: Union of Orthodox Rabbis  
235 East Broadway  
New York, NY.

Jewish Community Relations Council  
Of New York  
111 West 40th Street

The Rabbinical Assembly  
3080 Broadway  
New York, NY

Union of American Hebrew  
Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY

# NEWS

FROM THE

# COMMITTEE



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, APRIL 22...A leading Orthodox scholar argues, in a booklet just published by the American Jewish Committee, that the rejection by Orthodox Rabbinic judges of all marriages at which Reform or Conservative rabbis officiate is "legally unjustified."

In the essay, titled "Unity in Judaism," Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits asserts that "all that is needed for a marriage to be legally binding is the espousal of an unmarried Jewess and unmarried Jew in the presence of two witnesses." In our time, he adds, "there exists, in the overwhelming majority of cases, no problem regarding the qualification of witnesses."

Explaining why the AJC has published the booklet, Yehuda Rosenman, director of its Jewish Communal Affairs Department, states: "The current debate to amend the Law of Return could split the Jewish community irreparably because the very issue of Jewishness is at stake. As a communal body composed of Jews from all of the denominations, the AJC stands above the battle and hopes to cool off the situation," to increase civility and respectful communication among all Jewish religious groups.

Rabbi Berkovits cites two great Jewish authorities, Rabba and Maimonides, arguing that witnesses are to be judged according to their integrity regardless of their formal level of religious observance. In an important ruling 40 years ago, which was subsequently overturned, the Israeli Chief Rabbinate had arrived at the same opinion. Therefore, Rabbi Berkovits continues, "It would be a monstrous act of injustice to declare hundreds of thousands of non-observant Jews to be untrustworthy witnesses" when significant rabbinic courts have ruled oppositely.

Concerning Reform and Conservative conversions where converts automatically take on a modified degree of ritual obligation, Rabbi Berkovits adduces a ruling of Maimonides, stating that ex post facto, such conversions are legal if the immersion or circumcision took place before authentic witnesses.

NOTE: For a review copy of "Unity in Judaism," write to Morton Yarmon, American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022.

.....more

Howard I. Friedman, President; Theodore Ellenoff, Chair, Board of Governors; Alfred H. Moses, Chair, National Executive Council; Robert S. Jacobs, Chair, Board of Trustees.

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On a less esoteric level, Dr. Berkovits exhorts the various religious groups to try every possible avenue to facilitate communication, saying: "Disrespect toward fellow Jews violates the unity of destiny that has its origin in the covenant between God and Israel."

Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits was educated at the Orthodox Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin and taught philosophy at the Hebrew Theological College in Skokie. He is the author of many books on Jewish thought and law, including the award-winning Not in Heaven: The Nature and Function of Halakha. He now resides in Israel.

The American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. Founded in 1906, it combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people everywhere.

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*Ally = Gore Rackman*  
*pluch*

Orthodox as equally to blame as secularists who seize every opportunity to denounce Jewish tradition because of what they see as excesses by the Orthodox in Israel.

Rackman said that Jewish tradition does not place a premium on excessive zeal or fanaticism and he was critical of people in Israel who value holy land but place no value on the Jewish state. "Doubt," he said, is "a part of the human situation. Because we are human there is always a margin for error in everything we do. Doubt is an essential part of faith." Those whose minds harbor no doubt, Rabbi Rackman said, are acting against the traditions of the faith. He cited Rabbi Meir Kahane as an example of one who admits of no doubts about the correctness of his views. Kahane, said Rackman, takes his stands on Torah against those of every other rabbi, and his interpretations of Jewish teachings have no halachic validity.

"The ways of Torah are the ways of love, not of coercion," Rackman said.

Rackman said that recent attempts to conduct joint programs among rabbis of the major branches of Judaism have failed because of the intransigence of some of the extreme Orthodox rabbis. In the 1950s, he said, a joint Beth Din (Jewish religious court) was planned and details were worked out by some of the most respected rabbis of the Conservative and Orthodox movements. The intention was to make it possible for both branches to unite on the definition and administration of Jewish family law. When the time came to implement the plan, the heads of some of the religious schools in the United States pulled the rug out from under it. Rackman said that he hopes the

plan can be reborn.

The Bar Ilan president outlined a number of suggestions that he said would lead to a lessening of tension among the various branches of Judaism. The first is that non-Orthodox rabbis should stop telling their congregations that the Orthodox do not recognize them as Jews. The Orthodox do not recognize Conser-

vative or Reform converts as Jews but this, said Rackman, is not the same as delegitimizing those branches of Judaism and it should not be misrepresented.

Rackman suggested that Orthodox rabbis stop saying that they love all Jews and the real enemy is non-Orthodox rabbis. Such a

*Continued on Page 9*

APRIL 18-APRIL 24

## LOS ANGELES

*Continued from Page 8*

position is counter-productive and keeps the branches apart.

Tackling the controversial subject of the role of women in Orthodoxy, Rackman said that the

real problem is not whose conversion is legitimate but the increasing possibility that children from marriages involving non-Jewish women (by Orthodox definition) will be illegitimate. Jews cannot dispense with Jewish divorces, he warned or in a few years there will be large numbers of people who, unwittingly, will want to marry Jews and dis-

cover that, as *mamzerim*, they are not permitted to do so. Jewish family law must be respected, said Rackman and we have to find ways to deal with this problem.

Finally, he suggested, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews must work together to develop a program about Israel. The Jewish state, he emphasized, must have a Jewish character and discussing this will open lines of communication that will make cooperation on other matters easier.

## Two Judaisms

An appeal to rabbis of all branches of Judaism to bridge the growing chasm that threatens to make two Judaisms out of one, was made in Los Angeles this week by Rabbi Emmanuel Rackman, president of Bar Ilan University in Israel.

Speaking to audiences at Sinai Temple and Valley Beth Shalom under the auspices of the University of Judaism, Rackman said that in the last few years the lack of mutual respect separating Orthodoxy from the other branches of Judaism has "reached dangerous proportions." He described himself as a member of an informal group of "15 or 20 modern Orthodox rabbis" who share his point of view and he castigated extremists among the



# MEMORANDUM

From Rabbi Daniel B. Syme

Date Oct. 8, 1986

To Rabbi Eric Yoffie, Rabbi Bernard Zlotowitz, Rabbi Allen Kaplan  
Copies Rabbi Philip Hiat, Mr. Al Vorspan, Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

Subject

I enclose a letter from Yehuda Lev, a columnist for the Jewish Journal of Los Angeles.

As you will see from the materials attached, Lev has been threatened with a libel suit by Chabad for an article. They really just want a retraction - and Lev's head.

To be absolutely honest, I believe that Lev has climbed way too far out on a limb with statements he cannot possibly substantiate in a legal sense.

Still, I'd like to help him if we can. Therefore, I'd appreciate if you would read the materials, then send me:

1. Documents or published articles that might help.
2. Names, addresses and phone numbers of people Lev might speak to.

Please let me have whatever you can by October 21st.

Thanks.

*Also, I have  
no aid to offer -  
except on the  
allevial yrsoel issue  
which is so narrowly defined  
by them that it excludes  
almost everyone*



Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

אחדות  
הקהילות  
העבריות  
האמריקאיות

FROM: Richard Cohen

Nov. 13, 1986

TO: 1. Al Vorspan, UAHC

2. Rabbi Schindler

3. *[Signature]*

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

Please return ( )  
Your action ( )  
Your files ( )  
For your info ( )  
Let's discuss ( )

Remarks:

SENT ON 11/24/86

To Cindy  
also Mel MERIANS



## THE SECULAR-ORTHODOX FRONT HEATS UP

(Press Summary -- November 3, 1986)

There is broad agreement in Israel that friction between the Orthodox Jewish minority -- especially the ultra-Orthodox -- and the secular Jewish majority has supplanted the rifts between Israelis of different ethnic origins as the major source of societal tension in the second half of the 1980s.

Earlier this year, there was a budding political crisis around the insistence of the ultra-Orthodox on pushing through legislation to amend the Law of Return to define "Jew" in such a way as to deny recognition to conversions performed by Conservative and Reform rabbis. In mid-summer, there was a spate of arson attacks on over 100 bus stop shelters, allegedly perpetrated by ultra-Orthodox zealots. Militant secularists responded by causing sacrilegious damage to the contents of an Orthodox synagogue and a yeshiva. And throughout the year there has been friction in various localities over the granting of municipal authorization to secular cultural activities held on the Sabbath.

On the evening of October 31, a new Reform congregation in Jerusalem's Baka neighborhood held its Simchat Torah celebrations with the traditional hakafot ceremony in which congregants -- both men and women -- danced around the synagogue with Torah scrolls. In the middle of the festivities, outsiders led by the neighborhood's Orthodox rabbi burst in, tried to grab the Torah scrolls and verbally abused the Reform worshippers with calls of "whores" and "Why don't you get out and go back to America?"

The incident provoked inflammatory reactions from both sides of the fence. Sephardi Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu, in condoning the outsiders' "protest," went on to declare on Israel Radio that "there is no freedom of worship" for Jews in Israel. Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek, on the other hand, declared that he would exert all his influence to help in funding the building of a permanent synagogue for the Reform congregation, which currently meets in a community center. Such a step would constitute a radical departure from the Israeli practice of harrassing non-Orthodox groups in their attempts to establish their own synagogues.

By mid-week the Orthodox and Reform rabbis of Baka had shaken hands and made up in a traditional Middle Eastern sulha (reconciliation ceremony). But the incident promised to add to the list of altercations between the Orthodox, non-Orthodox and secular populations throughout the country, especially in Jerusalem, where the growing assertiveness of the ultra-Orthodox is at its height.

Arye Bender, writing in Ma'ariv (Oct. 31), quotes former Ashkenazi chief rabbi Shlomo Goren, who is considered to be one of the most liberal voices in the Orthodox camp, as saying in an interview: "In a free, democratic state, it is clear that one can't give up the freedom of worship. But when men come and pretend to be rabbis, and intend to supplant Judaism, though they themselves do not even honor one of the [613] commandments, that is a scandal. They [the Reform] are against the brit mila [circumcision of male children]. They perform marriages between Jews and non-Jews in joint ceremonies with priests in churches. They are blurring all Jewish frameworks...So how can such people come and claim freedom of worship?"

"I have no arguments with the members of the Reform movement," Rabbi Goren continued, "but only with their rabbis who desecrate religion when they violate everything that Moses has established for us. I am ready to grant them freedom of worship on condition that they declare that they do not represent the Jewish religion."

Rabbi Goren concluded: "Judaism demands that a Jew keep at least one of the commandments. If at least they would make aliya and come to Israel; but they don't. Those few of them who have come are simply seeking trouble. Soon they'll be sending women rabbis here to lure souls, just like the Mormons." The latter reference is to the Orthodox opposition to the building of the Mormon Church-affiliated Brigham Young University center in Jerusalem, which was a major issue in contention until it receded several months ago.

In the same article, Bender also included excerpts of his interview of Rabbi Abergil, the Orthodox rabbi who disrupted the Reform Simchat Torah service. This is Rabbi Abergil's version of the incident:

"I was on my way home from conducting services in my synagogue before a congregation of 600 worshippers when I was called to witness what was going on in the community center. I was in shock when I saw the Reform service. I saw things that violate the halacha [Jewish law]: semi-nude boys and girls dancing with the Torah. It hurt me very much, and I had no alternative but to castigate them in a fatherly way...But what could I do, since they refused to listen?

"If I had known that they were 'pure' Reformists, I wouldn't have gone in. But quite often I've seen boys there with their kippot [skullcaps] and prayer shawls, and I thought they were one of us -- Oriental Jews. I didn't know that Reformists use kippot and talitot [prayer shawls].

"I hope that peace will now be restored to the neighborhood. I don't think that anyone from among the haredim [ultra-Orthodox] will hold it against me that I called on all our neighborhood people to respect each other's beliefs. This isn't Geula or Mea Shearim [haredi neighborhoods in Jerusalem]. I have friends among all, including those who smoke and drive on the Sabbath."

Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman, whose Reform Simchat Torah service was interrupted by Rabbi Abergil, was ordained as a Conservative rabbi at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, having earlier attended an American "modern Orthodox" yeshiva. Bender quotes Weiman-Kelman as saying that he does not want the incident removed from the public agenda:

"At the local level, the problem has been solved by Rabbi Abergil's apology and his promise not to interfere with our activities. But we now have a perfect opportunity to raise before the public the issue of freedom of worship [among Jews] in Israel. The problem is not Rabbi Abergil, but rather that of the Orthodox monopoly over Judaism in Israel, and the fact that they refuse to recognize us as Jews. They even claim that we are Christians."

Bender concludes: "Next week, the new and magnificent campus of the [Reform] Hebrew Union College will be dedicated in Jerusalem. From the point of view of the Reform leaders, the timing of the incident in Baka couldn't have been better. The public-relations firm which the movement hired to publicize the event made haste to magnify the Baka incident out of its local context and turn it into a national issue."

The Jerusalem Post, in its editorial of October 27, writes in response to Rabbi Eliahu's statement that there should be no freedom of worship for Jews in Israel:

"We have news for the Rishon Lezion [Sephardi chief rabbi]. If there is truly no freedom of worship -- for Jews, that is -- that is only because the law providing for it is being flagrantly violated to appease the Orthodox rabbinical establishment. The right of the Reform movement to conduct services its own way -- without, for one thing, the benefit of a mehitza [divider] separating women from men -- was ringingly affirmed, unanimously, by a three-judge panel of the High Court of Justice [the Israeli Supreme Court] a full 24 years ago.

"The case involved the refusal of the Kfar Shmaryahu local council to rent a municipal hall to a Reform group for religious services. The fear of public disturbances was given by the council as the reason. In the end, the council was enjoined by the High Court, citing Israel's Declaration of Independence, not to practice discrimination against Reform Jews. That decision is the law of the land.



"That Rabbi Eliahu should wave it away is not entirely surprising. Israel's Orthodoxy, undergoing...a creeping process of haredization, considers itself the only authentic expression of Judaism, and would rather see Jews go wholly secular than pray and practice in a manner not sanctioned by the hallowed tradition. No less regrettable is the fact that the new religious affairs minister, the National Religious Party's Zevulun Hammer, even in voicing disapproval of anti-Reform violence, could only counsel the faithful to try persuasion in showing fellow Jews the 'proper' way to serve God."

Yehoshua Bitzur writes in Ma'ariv (Oct. 31): "In his call for a campaign to insure freedom of worship in Israel, Rabbi Weiman-Kelman is bursting through an open door. Who in Israel is denying freedom of worship to members of any religion? It is doubtful whether there is another state in the world that guards that freedom as meticulously as Israel does for the variety of religions which exist here. If there was a regrettable lapse in Baka, in regard to Jews, there was a hasty apology made in order to close that incident.

"The intention is apparently to conduct the Reform campaign around principles. The leader of the Reform movement in Israel, Rabbi [Richard] Hirsch, claimed this week that 3000 members were organized in Reform congregations in Israel. On the assumption that he was not exaggerating, there are 20 Reform congregations and 30 Conservative ones, compared with 7,000 synagogues which are not so much Orthodox as representative of the cross-section of the traditional communities which have always made up Jewry in Israel and throughout the Diaspora. All the others have been marginal.

"To use a political analogy, one could say that neither Conservatives nor the Reform have made it through the minimal threshold and have not succeeded in attracting even one percent of [Israeli] Jewish worshippers. [In order for an Israeli political party to win seats in the Knesset, it must obtain a minimum of one percent of the popular vote.]

"The reason for that is clear. There has never been any Reform [movement] among the Oriental communities, even if individuals among them may go to some Reform synagogue or other. But even among the Ashkenazim, when a secular person does finally go to a synagogue, even if only on Yom Kippur, he chooses to go to the sort of synagogue his grandfather prayed in or one in which his father made his bar-mitzvah. The average secular Israeli does not need anyone to translate the Hebrew prayers for him, nor does he need the help of the rabbi to find his place in the prayerbook, nor is he aching to have his wife sit next to him in synagogue and possibly even be called up to the Torah reading. For him the synagogue is not a social club.



"The claim of the Reform movement to speak for the majority of American Jewry is misleading. It is regrettable that over half of American Jews are not affiliated with any congregation whatsoever, and of the rest, the Conservatives, not Reform, constitute the biggest movement. The truth is that the Reform movement is the last stop before total assimilation. But Israel's Jews are not faced with any such threat, with the possible exception of becoming estranged from tradition. That is why they have not been attracted by the style of Reform."

Yosef Goell, political commentator for The Jerusalem Post writes (Nov. 2): "The media last week focused on the Baka incident, but the really important news from the religious-secular front, in the sense of its implication for the immediate future, came from two other directions: the decision of the Rambam government hospital and the Ministry of Health to disregard the rabbinate entirely in rushing to carry out Israel's first -- and now, second -- liver transplant operations; and the growing demand from various sources for the inclusion of women in religious bodies which were heretofore the exclusive domain of men."

"A joint committee of doctors and rabbis has been dithering over the problem of organ transplants for some time now as a result of the insistence of leading rabbis that despite the overriding halachic principle of pikuah nefesh -- the need to save a life -- organ transplants from just-deceased 'donors' were halachically taboo, because of differing definitions of death used by the rabbinate and by the medical community."

"This is not the first time such rabbinical opposition on medical problems has become a public issue. Such rabbinical opposition has been the major factor in delaying any progress on Hadassah Hospital's determination to go ahead with heart transplants, for which it has been medically prepared for some time. The same rabbinical opposition was the only factor several years ago in preventing Hadassah Hospital from maintaining a skin bank, when it became a matter of life and death to maintain one when skin burns turned out to be such a tragic problem in the Lebanese war."

"The lesson to be learned, and one that should be taken to heart by all other institutions in all fields, is that choosing to give in to the rabbis who insist on being mired in their medieval 'knowledge' can only result in second-rate medicine. Ironically, there is good reason to believe that the ultra-Orthodox, who have recently evinced a very sophisticated concern for only the best in medicine where their own health is concerned, will turn their backs on a second-rate Hadassah, which will have fallen to such a level because of an exaggerated concern for the opinion of the rabbis."

"The storm that blew up a few weeks ago around the news that the Negev township of Yeroham had elected a woman, albeit an observant woman, Leah Shakdiel, to its religious council, continues to gather force. There is now a determined move to include women in the electoral body that is to elect the Tel Aviv chief rabbi. It would seem that some elements in the Liberal Party have determined to join Labor, Shinui and the [other] parties of the left in making an issue of the traditional exclusion of women from any say in even the most marginal of religious issues.

"This new, highly welcome development comes on the heels of a simmering revolt on the part of a vociferous minority of religious women against the anti-female biases evinced by so many rabbinical courts in cases of divorce and child custody. There is simply no getting around the fact that, even more than is the case with many other religions, Orthodox Judaism is and has always been an extremely male-centered religion. For all the respect that is accorded by Jewish traditional culture to women as mothers and homemakers, it will take a major revolution to win for women a greater -- not to say an equal -- role in the ritual aspects of the Jewish religion as practiced by the Orthodox rabbinate and establishment.

"Non-Orthodox religious frameworks have not succeeded in taking off so far in Israel. For the vast majority of Israelis, Orthodoxy has been so repugnant, and the lures of secular modernity so attractive, that they have rejected any ideas of looking elsewhere for religious fulfillment.

"It may well be that non-Orthodox religious congregations may get their big chance to make such a breakthrough around the issue of women in religion. If the rabbinate continues its insistence on the virtual relegation of women to non-existence, women may find themselves in the forefront of a drive for the greater popularization of non-Orthodox religious frameworks."

(Edited by Harry Milkman)

Roe

March 4, 1987  
3 Adar 5747

Ms. Jan B. Cohen  
1293 Bernadette Lane  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Your letter of February 16 awaited me on my return from meetings in Israel. This is my first opportunity to respond and I hope you will forgive the delay.

It was good of you to share your thoughts and concerns with me. I could give you a long response, stating my own position. However, I believe it will be made clear for you in Pages 11 through 15 of the enclosed pamphlet. I do commend to you a reading of the entire paper with special attention to the pages noted. This was a paper which I delivered at a CLAL Conference on Jewish Unity and I believe it will interest you.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

1293 Bernadette Lane  
Atlanta, Ga. 30329  
February 16, 1987

Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
New York Federation of Reform Synagogues  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I am a 36 year old woman and am an orthodox Jew. Allow me to explain the purpose of this letter.

I grew up in a small Alabama town, Jasper, quite famous for its hospitality to the young student Rabbis who would come every year from Hebrew Union College. I grew up strongly Jewish and devoutly reform, thanks to an incredibly close-knit community of some twenty-five or so magnificent families--some of whom were in fact, my own family. And although my sense of Jewish identity was strong, my Jewish education and that of my peers in Jasper and in the surrounding communities (even Birmingham) was pathetically weak. This unfortunate fact was made known to me during my college days when I attended Yom Kippur services at Hillel and was devastated to discover that I could not comprehend any part of the service. It was a conservative service which I had never observed, and I left both abashed and furious at my ignorance. After all, how could such a devout Jewess as myself feel so totally out of place in a synagogue surrounded by fellow Jews? The discomfort of that situation so plagued me that I never again returned to the Hillel House. And during my entire college career spanning the normal four years, I attended Temple services at a reform Temple only three times. But I was not abnormal. I knew of no one who attended any type of Jewish service whatsoever except on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, and even then, many did not. Judaism for all of us had become a childhood memory--now we were past that and on to bigger and better things: marijuana, permissiveness, and Hare Krishna. American college campuses swayed with the sights, sounds, and smells of noxious influences, and America's Jewish kids lost a part of their souls. I know, because I was there.

I graduated college Magna Cum Laude in fine arts, and although still an ignoramus in Jewish studies, I was not at all concerned. No one else knew anything either, and quite frankly, we didn't care. We believed in the State of Israel, and we "felt" Jewish-- what else could have possibly been necessary to equip us as concerned Jews and Americans in the adult world?



A couple of years later, I married my college sweetheart-- a nice Jewish boy much to my mother's delight. But my marriage began like a mixed marriage. He wanted kosher-- I did not; he wanted conservative-- I, of course, did not. We ended up conservative, but not kosher, and ironically, thus began my long and circuitous voyage to orthodox Judaism. I slowly began to feel comfortable with the conservative service, and after some reading and subsequent understanding of the subject, the decision was made to keep kosher. Once again I felt that I had been "duped" by the well-meaning Rabbis who came to my little town. Kashruth was not a matter of USDA approved meat and sanitary conditions and therefore no longer necessary; it was a matter of Kedusha-- a holy connection between the Jew and his or her God. The magnanimity of the concept overwhelmed me. I distinctly remember weeping at the joy of having "discovered" that first inkling of spirituality. I was on to something big.

It was also at this time of my own heightened spiritual awareness that I noticed the beginnings of spiritual dissolution of my beloved little town. Out of the seven Jewish girls who were in the age group three to four years older than I, five had married non-Jews, none of whom ever converted. And my dear cousin who was more like a sister to me than my own sisters married her Christian high school sweetheart. My heart was broken. Coming home to our community Passover seder became a mockery. It was our custom for all who attended the seder to have a part in telling the story of the Redemption. It was not the place of these non-Jewish men to speak of that great miracle; it was not their miracle; it did not belong to them; and their place was not with us. If you detect resentment on my part, I was not alone. The parents of these girls inwardly but visibly mourned their daughters' marriages. It was, and still is, a tragedy. Out of the six grandchildren of my paternal grandparents, only two married Jews. Of the other four non-Jewish spouses, none converted to Judaism.

So what is the point of all this? It is not to indict reform Judaism although something clearly is amiss in its educational process. It is rather to point out a fallacy-- the fallacy of patrilineal descent-- which now exists in the minds of the leadership of the Reform movement.

In most of the cases of intermarriage stated above, the marriage concerned Jewish women married to non-Jewish men.

Therefore, the halacha clearly recognizes that the off-spring of these marriages are Jewish. And even if one disregards the halacha, logic mandates the religion of the child to emanate from the mother due to a basic Jewish concept and practice: a Jewish mother creates a Jewish home. It is in fact the much maligned Jewish mother, supposedly responsible for all of our neuroses and psychoses, who has throughout the past 4000 or so years of Jewish history kept us Jewish. It is our mother, Sarah, who could see the deleterious influence Ishmael would have on Isaac, and thus convinced Abraham to send both mother and child away, and it is Rebecca who saw that only Jacob, not Esau, could become the father of the Jewish people. It is thus through the acts of these two righteous women that the Jewish people exists today. Sarah and Rebecca in a sense gave us the possibility of being Jewish, and it is the concerned Jewish mother today who keeps us that way. A non-Jewish mother cannot pass on a heritage and a nationhood that is not hers.

Let me give you a specific example. Some months ago, one of my aforementioned cousins--married to a Catholic girl--came to visit. I had not seen him in ten years, and my family's life-style changes, i.e., orthodox, intrigued him. He observed my ten year old son daven, inspected our small but growing Jewish library, and I detected a melancholia come over him. He explained: "You know, my children are being brought up Jewish, but they'll never really be Jewish. I mean, Kelly (not her real name) is really trying-- she reads and she's trying to understand, but she's a devout Catholic--goes to Mass on Sundays and everything-- and some things are real hard for her. And let's face it-- the kids are with her almost all the time-- she's raising them. I feel as strongly Jewish as she does Catholic, and although we knew this when we got married, it didn't concern us until we had kids. It's a real problem. At some point the kids will just have to decide on their own what they want to do." I think this needs no further explanation.

I am sure, Rabbi, that you have received by now many hundreds of letters and statements from far more prolific and eloquent writers than I. Therefore, I am sure that you understand what an impossible situation this has become for the orthodox community. Even if there were not specific references in the Torah ( which there are) designating matrilineal descent, some four thousand years of Jewish practice and time-honored tradition certainly ought to be worthy of having become Jewish law. Twenty or so years of the epidemical tragedy of inter-marriage should not.



*Reform / Orthodox*

March 24, 1988  
6 Nisan 5748

Dr. Norman Lamm, President  
Yeshiva University  
2540 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10033

Dear Dr. Lamm:

Bravo in regard to this morning's New York Times report!  
This is the kind of voice that I have been longing to hear!  
You represent the kind of Orthodoxy I was taught to revere!

I wish you much success in your efforts. If ever there is a  
time when the center of our community has to hold it is now.

Respectfully,

Alexander M. Schindler

*abs  
ey  
at*



cc  
CJR  
mkc  
6/8/87

From the Study of

*Rabbi Aaron M. Wise*

May 19, 1987

Dear Leonard,

Here is ~~the~~<sup>a</sup> copy of the address I gave at the Rabbinical Assembly Conference in Palm Springs last January. As I recall, I promised to send you a copy. Many copies were also distributed at the National Convention of our Assembly in Atlanta at the end of March.

Thank you for the time you spent with me, and the information you gave me about the U.A.H.C. Warm personal regards.  
As ever,

*Aaron*

**adaf arl el**

5540 Laurel Canyon Boulevard  
North Hollywood, California

RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE

PALM SPRINGS      JAN. 5, 1987

Address by Rabbi Aaron M. Wise

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Our colleague, Kass Abelson, has given us a centennial message that should have been the central theme of our Conference. Every one of our sessions should have been devoted to the issues he presented and every one of our colleagues should have responded. While celebrating this hundredth anniversary of the Seminary we should focus our attention on our future; what's going to happen with Conservative Judaism tomorrow and all the tomorrows that will follow.

Next year, 1988, I will celebrate my Golden Anniversary as a rabbi. I was ordained at the Seminary in June 1938. So I have witnessed almost half of this century we are celebrating. Forty of those years I have spent here in California, participating in the growth of our Conservative Movement from its earliest years, at my own congregation, Adat Ari El and throughout the Jewish community of Los Angeles. So I have some perspective from which to judge what has happened here and what is happening to Conservative Judaism generally.

The great growth of our movement took place in the post-war years, the 1950's and the 1960's. That was when second-generation American Jews, brought up in the homes of immigrant parents, who had been given a sentimental attachment to Jewish tradition but who rejected the rules and restrictions of Orthodoxy, found Conservative Judaism to be the answer to their Jewish needs. In the 1950's and 1960's our congregations multiplied in suburbia, and our membership-rosters grew from year to year. We were the happy compromise between Orthodoxy and Reform, and we emerged into first place in the league of American synagogue Judaism.

But things have changed. We are no longer growing in the way we did. The third generation and the fourth generation of American Jews are not attracted to our congregations the way their parents were. We have become aware of serious weaknesses in our movement that cast a dark shadow over our future.

At this time of the Seminary's centennial, we need to grapple with the serious weaknesses of our Conservative Movement.

First of all, our structural weakness. We are far behind the Reform Movement when it comes to organization and structure. There is so much we can learn from them.

To begin with, let us take the role of the head of Conservative Judaism. During this past year, Dr. Ismar Schorsch became the titular head of Conservative Judaism. I have no question about his qualities as scholar. From all that I have heard, he has a fine reputation as a historian of European Jewry. But in what way does that qualify him to be the leader and spokesman for Conservative Judaism in the year 1987? Has he ever served as a congregational Rabbi? Does he really know the burning issues of American Jewish life on ground level -what is happening with our families, in our synagogues, in our Jewish communities? Has he demonstrated imagination, creativity and a fully qualified leadership in dealing with the problems that threaten our future?

Contrast that with the way Rabbi Alexander Schindler speaks for the Reform Movement. He served five years as a congregational rabbi, he worked 5 years directing their Department of Education, he demonstrated in so many ways his talents as a leader long before he was chosen as the President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Alfred Gottschalk may be the President of the Hebrew Union College, the head of a faculty of scholars, but that does not confer upon him the role of spokesman for the Reform Movement.

Of course, the history of Conservative Judaism is quite different from theirs. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations from the very beginning was the founding organization of Reform. The Seminary has been the founding organization of our Movement.

But the time has come to restructure Conservative Judaism. Just as major corporations in the industrial and financial world find it necessary to change their structure of operations to meet the challenge of their competitors...so must we re-think our system and change what must be changed.

We have a collection of national organizations which have been functioning like separate fingers of a hand. There is the Seminary... the Rabbinical Assembly...the United Synagogue of America...the Cantors Assembly... the Women's League...the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs... the Educators' Assembly...the National Association of Synagogue Administrators. We cannot even call what we have a "network", because they have not functioned in more than a superficial way as an integrated structure, working, planning, moving together. We do not begin to compare with the effectiveness of the Reform Movement, which has achieved far better integration and cooperation of their organizations.

I have discussed this problem with a number of our colleagues, and they agree with me that we must create a Council for Conservative Judaism which would include the top-bracket officials of all our national organizations. It should be this Council, not a Seminary Board of Directors, who should select that individual who will serve as the head of our Movement.

That individual should be a rabbi, with a number of years of good experience in congregational life, a rabbi who has won the respect and admiration of his colleagues and co-workers by his creative qualities of leadership in synagogue organization and programing, by his powers of expression as a speaker and a writer, by his dedication to the Conservative Movement, its philosophy and its future.

That individual should be chosen not for an honorary position for a year or two. This must be a professional appointment, that will require of such a rabbi the full responsibility of working with the Council of Conservative Judaism to develop the program which would integrate our collection of organizations and turn them into a network that would focus on the problems of our synagogues and create the programs to meet these problems intelligently and effectively.

As I see it, some of the serious problems we face are as follows: the failure of our synagogue schools to produce committed Jewish adults; all the thorny afflictions of the contemporary Jewish family... mixed marriage, divorce, broken homes, etc.; the challenge of our low-birth rate which threatens to reduce our numbers so that we will



become an even smaller minority on the American scene;... the spiritual attrition of our young people on the university campus;...our Movement's ineffectiveness on the issues of social action on our national front;... our failure to achieve enfranchisement in the State of Israel.

There are other areas of deep concern that demand our attention and a program of action. If we examine in depth what is happening in American Jewish life, we have an agenda that will demand the best of our talents.

But the most serious issue is our lack of definition as a religious movement within the body of Judaism. We need to articulate the basic beliefs we hold and the basic discipline of Jewish life which we call upon our people to follow.

Conservative Judaism has long suffered from a lack of definition, both in our basic philosophy and in the way of life we want our people to follow. How many of our members and their families have a basic commitment to Conservative Judaism that grows out of a deep religious conviction? How many Baalei Teshuvah have we produced who have been turned on to Conservative Judaism as the answer to their spiritual needs?

As a Movement, we pledged allegiance to Halakhah, but how many of our lay-leaders, how many families in our congregations, exemplify that commitment in their homes and their daily lives? We have taken that collective failure of Conservative Judaism for granted. Rabbis are expected to serve as the living models of Conservative Judaism, but that has not inspired the great majority of their congregants to follow suit.

This gives our movement a real stamp of failure. No religious community can survive unless its communicants are truly committed to the truths that it teaches. In what way can the average Conservative Jew be considered a committed Jew?

Yes, we will spend time in our conventions hearing reports of the Commission on Jewish Law and Standards. We will be debating the issues of Women-Rabbis and Patrilineal descent. We will be fighting in Israel to establish our authority as interpreters and custodians of Halakhah. But the million and more Jews we represent do not back

us up with a deep loyalty to the Halakhic tradition.

The Shulhan Arukh of the sixteenth century has remained our primary text of reference to Halakhic living. But we have not invested our time and energy in updating the Shulhan Arukh, in producing a "Prepared Table" for the late twentieth century, that, would serve as the discipline of Jewish life for those who look up to us as their religious leaders.

Nor have we given our people any real grasp of the basic beliefs we share as Conservative Jews. Yes, we have had Conservative theologians and philosophers who have written papers and books about the God-idea, but in the main, they have been talking to themselves. In what way has the individual member of our congregations been given a concept of God that could express his faith and his conviction?

The RAMBAM gave his contemporaries the thirteen Ani Maamins to help clarify for them the essentials of Jewish belief. The world Jewish community did not accept his thirteen principles of the faith as central to their system of life. But those were practicing Jews, who differed from the RAMBAM in the philosophy of Jewish life which they followed.

Most of our generation of Conservative Jews is living in a spiritual vacuum. In fact, one can describe the key to Conservative Judaism for most of our people as the question-mark.

That is why it is so important for our Movement to develop a Creed of beliefs and a Code of Practices which will serve our congregations and their members as a basic guide to Conservative Judaism.

Unless we move in that direction, we are destined to witness the continued decline of our Movement. Our growth over the past 100 years has been the result of historical circumstances which will not be repeated. That fact should challenge us to move in the directions I have outlined.

Unless we can repair the flat-tires of our Movement, we have no future. Then there is a great question in my mind whether Conservative Judaism will live to celebrate the next centennial in the year 2086.

I do not want to end on a note of deep pessimism. We are still a major movement of American Jewry. We have created much we can be proud of...in our synagogues, in our day schools, in our sisterhoods, in our youth groups, in our Camps Ramah, etc. But we have not come to grips with our core-weaknesses. We have been afflicted by what I call "soloism", the belief that every individual rabbi, every single synagogue, every one of our national organizations can cope with the problems that really face us all. But that isn't true. The Mishkan was built by the contributions of all the people, and the Sanctuary of Conservative Judaism can be built only when we all work together to achieve the goals we share.

We all know the expression: 'an l'kol 'an l'kol  
"I have gained wisdom from all my teachers". We must be willing to learn from Reform Judaism, from Orthodoxy, from Chabad, from Aish Ha-Torah...from any Movement that has been an effective instrument of Jewish life. We must be ready to work together with our colleagues, with our synagogue-leaders, with our national organizations, with all the instruments created by Conservative Judaism over the past century.

I am confident that with intelligent planning, with commitment to our spiritual values, we can take these instruments and turn them into an orchestra which will produce the music of living Judaism, for our generation and for future generations of our people, here in America, in the land of Israel and around the world, in the decades and centuries to come.

## FROM THE RABBI

Dear Friends,

As you know, there has been a great deal of tension and fragmentation in the Jewish community lately. Because of the polarization that has taken place, the presidents of the three major rabbinical organizations in the United States issued the following statement appealing to the entire Jewish community for a sense of unity.



### STATEMENT ON JEWISH UNITY

"You are One and Your name is One; and who is like Your people Israel, one nation on earth." Thus do Jews affirm their commitment to the One God and to the unity of the People of Israel.

But are the words of this prayer true today, at least with regard to the People of Israel? Are we Jews — Orthodox, Conservative and Reform — still one people or have the bonds of unity been torn asunder?

Recent events and strident statements reported in the media appear to highlight the differences in religious belief and practice that divide us rather than unite us. How do we express our distress over the polarization of the "people Israel, one nation on earth?"

We are Jews by virtue of the Covenant, or Covenants, that God made with our ancestors and with us. There are, in fact, two Convenants: one a Covenant of Fate, the other a Covenant of Faith.

The Covenant of Fate is our history and destiny. We have a common past, shared experiences. We have suffered together at the hands of tyrants from Pharaoh to Hitler, who made no distinction between Jews whether they were Orthodox, Conservative or Reform, whether religious or secular, whether Zionist, non-Zionist or anti-Zionist, whether committed or assimilated. The tragedies in our history have been inflicted upon us by others whether our destiny will also be imposed upon us by others or will result from our loving concern for each other, we shall always be united in a Covenant of Fate.

The Covenant of Faith involves our understanding of and commitment to God and Torah. Our understanding of this Covenant tends at times to produce differences of opinion, even deep divisions within the People of Israel. Notwithstanding these real differences, there is nothing that prevents us from dialogue and cooperation on matters of mutual concern.

Together we pray that our joint endeavors in these areas of Jewish life will develop friendship and trust and hasten the day when "God will be One and His name One" and His people Israel will truly be "one nation on earth."

From: Kassel Abelson, President, Rabbinical Assembly; Milton Polin, President, Rabbinical Council of America; Jack Stern, President, Central Conference of American Rabbis.

*Abraham J. Heschel*



R.A.C. • RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 259-0100

March 23, 1987  
22 Adar 5747

Mr. Joseph Brender  
10-14 Waterloo Street  
Katies  
Sorry-Hills  
Sydney, Australia

Dear Joe:

I hope you received my telegram by now. But, in further substantiation of my approach to the problem, I would appreciate it if you were to read the enclosed speech which I delivered before Orthodox, Reform and Conservative leaders at a CLAL Conference held in Princeton, N.J. about a year ago. I refer particularly to pages 10 to 15 where I set forth my position on Outreach and the matter of patrilineal descent.

I do not expect to convert you to my views, but at least you ought to understand the reasons for my approach.

Incidentally, a recent interview in HADOAR quoted Ha Rav Soloveitchik, the foremost intellectual leader of mainline Orthodoxy in the United States, in a statement which he, himself, described as revolutionary and which would surely draw the ire of his more traditional colleagues. This is what he said:

"Regarding the plague of intermarriage, from which the Orthodox have not been saved, it is necessary to do what the Reform Jews are doing - with, of course, an Orthodox content."

I do hope that our paths will cross once again one of these days. It has been too long since we had an opportunity to sit together and chat. I remember with fondness the pleasant evening spent in your home.

With warm regards from house to house, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

ccg:  
b: Rabbi Brian Fox



March 23, 1987  
22 Adar 5747

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10-14 Waterloo Street  
Katie's  
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Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

I SUPPORT RABBI FOX'S

EFFORTS TO <sup>DRAG</sup> BRING IN

THE CHILDREN OF MIXED MARRIAGES  
INTO JEWISH LIFE -

JOSEPH BRENDER.

KATIS #10 - #14

WARRLOO ST

SORRY - HILLS SIDE

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To The Editor  
Miami Herald  
1 Herald Square  
Miami, Florida

Dear Sir;

Adon Taft, your religious editor, a usual  
gave a balanced, informed, insightful report on a hot  
issue which is dividing the Jewish community: patril  
descent or can a father's faith determine the religious  
identity of a child.

I have tried to put the issue in simplest and  
most concrete terms: As a conservative Jew, sup  
of center, I would be happy if one of my grandchildren was  
a graduate of the L.A. Stephen Wise Day School. All  
of Reform Judaism, I am certain their home would  
be a "good Jewish household". However, I would be  
sad to have to research the faith of the father  
of the boy or girl before rejoicing in my grandchild's  
decision.

The tragedy of it all, hinted at by one of the  
Rabbis in the Taft column, is that the solution is  
so simple: if parents - including a kindly Christian  
mother - agree to raise their child as a Jew over

Dear Alex  
See especially  
last sentence  
Wasserman  
12/12/8

it is so simple, at this early age, for the youngster to go through the traditional rite of conversion.

However, an even greater tragedy - and cruelty of the Reform's action which has divided the Jewish people as never before in 2000 years - is this: a child of a Christian mother, raised as a Jew, rejoicing in it, falls in love with one of my grandchildren, only to discover that he or she isn't a Jew! The Talmud says: "By being forthright and firm initially, one is being kind and constructive in the long run."

A new development is reported by Taft, which I never read before: the League, with the Reform ranks, to reevaluate the matter. As Pres-Emeritus of the Jewish Theological Seminary and former Professor on its faculty, I extend this public invitation - to myself: Nothing would make me happier than the opportunity to address the Reform Union of American Hebrew Congregations at their conventions <sup>on this issue.</sup> I will even pay my own expenses, no matter where they are meeting!

Sincerely,  
Samuel Hild

BERNARD MANDELBAUM  
5900 NORTHWEST 44TH ST., #604  
LAUDERHILL, FLORIDA 33319



Rabbi Alexander Schneider  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 - 5<sup>TH</sup> Ave  
N.Y.C.



*Rupa/On*

November 4, 1986  
2 Heshvan 5747

Mrs. William Rudner  
4654 Hemlock Lane  
Memphis, TN 38117

Dear Jocelyn:

It was thoughtful of you to send me the article on Rabbi Emanuel Feldman which appeared in the Memphis Hebrew Watchman. I appreciate your doing so, for it is helpful to be kept apprised of some of the comments in other sectors of the Jewish community.

I am glad that you have returned home safely and I hope that all is well with you and Bill. Rhea joins me in sending fond regards to you both and we look forward to seeing you at the December Board meeting.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Alfred - Thank you very much Oct. 31 -

Thought you got back  
interested in this article,  
and might want to write a  
letter to the Editor. In case  
you do, it's: Hebrew Watchman,  
P.O. Box 241183, Memphis, TN,  
38124-1183 -

See you in December!  
Love, Jocelyn.

## Expert On Orthodox Judaism Presents Stimulating Talk For Baron Hirsch Audience

By Barry Markowitz

The Orthodox movement, though experiencing a resurgence, has failed to attract non-Orthodox Jews who are seeking authenticity because Orthodoxy has confused "Jewish observance with Jewish religiosity," Rabbi Emanuel Feldman suggested in a lecture at Baron Hirsch East Wednesday, October 8.

Rabbi Feldman spoke as part of a lecture exchange in which Rabbi Rafael G. Grossman of Baron Hirsch delivered an October 9 address at Rabbi Feldman's Beth Jacob Congregation in Atlanta.

Though the American Jewish community is one of the most prosperous in history, it is free to practice Judaism as it wishes and Orthodoxy is on the ascendancy, Rabbi Feldman contended. "American Jewry, with the exception of Orthodoxy, is all but spiritually bankrupt...and the Orthodox still have a long way to go," he said.



Rabbi Emanuel Feldman

While more Jews are keeping kosher and obeying the laws of mikvah (ritual purification), there is also more intermarriage and more assimilation than ever before. There is more advanced Torah learning but also more Jewish illiteracy than ever, he asserted.

Rabbi Feldman blamed a mixed marriage rate of over 50 percent on "a profound lack of learning and education."

"Without learning there is no passion, no commitment, no reason not to drop out," he said.

A recent survey of college-age Jewish students found that 65 percent saw no harm in marrying out of the faith, he fretted.

Rabbi Feldman criticized "the almost comic efforts of the non-Orthodox Jewish community with gimmicks like patrilineal descent".

"Patrilineal descent is a violation of Jewish law which gains thou-

doesn't make it so," he added.

Such efforts create "a scene of utter chaos and madness," Rabbi Feldman said, fearing tragic consequences for the future of Jewish life.

Contending that 45 percent of Reform rabbis will not hesitate to officiate at mixed marriages and suggesting that 20 percent admit not believing in one God, Rabbi Feldman worried that "We may not have a future if we're not careful with what Jewish life is presenting."

In the midst of this, Orthodox Judaism is "strong, vibrant and dynamic," he stated.

The intermarriage rate is low and the birthrate is high among the Orthodox. There has been a resurgence in commitment and "teshuvah"—a return to Judaism.

"If things are so good, why are they so bad?"

"Can we take comfort Orthodoxy is growing and the rest of the community is falling by the wayside,"

he asked.

"For every one who comes back, we lose 50."

"With the world yearning for authenticity, there is no reason that we should not have conquered the American Jewish community, he insisted.

"If the non-Orthodox, to say the least, have distorted Jewish life and halacha, we as Orthodox are guilty of our own Orthodox brand of distortion...we have confused Jewish observance with Jewish religiosity," he said.

Orthodoxy has not realized the performance of mitzvahs and they are not an end in themselves but are intended "to create a spiritual, holy, sacred individual and community," Rabbi Feldman said.

It is possible to observe the Sabbath and keep kosher and not be a religious Jew...to be an observant and a secular Jew at the same time, he said, suggesting that some adopt the worst of society by going to a nightclub with a floor show but

wearing a yarmulka or visiting a "kosher disco which is closed on shabbos."

"It is possible to act kosher and think trait," he said.

American Orthodox Jews want a "kosher cheeseburger" in their lives and give the same importance to the values of the general society and to Torah, the rabbi stated.

"It can't be done...Only Torah values are genuine."

"Through prayer and mitzvot, God allows us to touch him and become Godly...if the Orthodox can become truly religious, we can have an impact on the Jewish community," he said.

If not, the Orthodox risk being remembered by history as "a flash in the pan," he said.

"With God's help, life has more meaning and serenity which people will want to emulate and Orthodox Judaism will be what it is destined to be, God's Torah, manifested in Jewish life," concluded Rabbi Feldman.



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

March 4, 1987  
3 Adar 5747

Rabbi Moshe Sherer, President  
Agudath Israel of America  
84 William Street  
New York, New York 10038

Dear Moshe:

Please forgive this belated reply to your letter of January 5. I have been traveling quite a lot in recent months. Indeed, I returned from several weeks in Israel only a few days ago. It was simply impossible for me to devote the necessary attention to a reply until just now.

I am afraid that the "evidence" you cite in your letter is really not more than an iota. The clipping from the American Examiner of April 9, 1978 is nearly nine years old, and Rabbi Balfour Brickner, who is quoted in that story, has not been the director of our Interreligious Affairs Commission for nearly that length of time. As you know, some years ago he left the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to become the rabbi of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue. Many of us (myself included) were embarrassed by his foolish statement quoted in the 1978 story which you submitted as "evidence." In any case, we were not responsible for his statement then and we certainly cannot be held as responsible for it now. Really, you must offer something stronger than that. I am certain that I could find equally preposterous statements from officers of the Agudath Israel of America, but I would not think of holding you or the Agudath movement to be bound by them or even agreeing with them -- especially if the spokesman cited had left your movement some years ago. We should judge each other by our aspirations, not our failings.

The clipping you submit from the Jewish Advocate of Boston is, of course, a more serious matter. But here, if you will forgive me, I think you miss the point. If you had read Rabbi Menitoff's remarks with that measure of human sympathy and understanding that has endeared you to so many people in our community -- including many Reform Jews -- I think you would have found it to be what it was intended -- a brutally honest cri de coeur, a courageous admission of a condition that exists in Reform synagogues -- and (although Rabbi Menitoff was too polite to mention it) among Jews of many other denominational persuasions. That too many Reform Jews do not believe and find difficulty in praying I admit. That this condition is limited to members of Reform synagogues I vehemently deny; and I ask you to look into

Rabbi Moses Sherer  
March 4, 1987  
Page -3-

Reform does not reject change in Jewish practice, but we do insist that any such changes must be born of necessity and conviction. The patrilineal decision was a principled assertion of the equality of men and women and a response to the anguish of children who considered themselves Jewish but were pushed into a no-man's land between Christians and Jews. Please note further that the CCAR resolution adopting the patrilineal decision did not confer Jewishness automatically on any child of a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father, but required that the child be raised Jewishly and undergo certain Jewish rites of passage -- circumcision, Jewish education, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, etc. In this respect, we are machmirim; Reform is more rigorous in its requirements of its members than Jewish tradition, which automatically confers Jewishness on any child of any Jewish mother, regardless of the mother's or child's adherence (or lack of it) to our faith.

In any case, I believe that our disagreements -- Reform vs. Orthodoxy, for example -- have not truly inflamed the passions of the people. The greatest danger arising from our wranglings is not that the Orthodox refuse to recognize Reform conversions but rather that the great mass of unaffiliated Jews will be so put off by what they say that they will say, "A plague on all your houses."

Our problem, then, is to recognize that many of the differences between us are not likely to be resolved. Let us at least come to know and, hopefully, respect one another and cooperate with one another in the many areas of our common concern, e.g. Israel, Soviet Jewry, etc.

Words like Conservative, Orthodox, Reform are adjectives, not nouns. The noun is Jew. If we did not know that before, we know it now, in this generation that witnessed the Holocaust of our people. For the Shoah constitutes a lasting, impelling mandate for unity. Even as we were brothers and sisters in death, so must we remain brothers and sisters in life. In that spirit, I write to you and wish you well.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

\*

P.S. I just reread the clipping quoting Rabbi Brickner and the headline is indeed misleading. I suggest you also read it once again and note the comment "...such an action by a Reform rabbi is foolish, ludicrous and impossible. He would exclude himself." -- that's just the opposite of what the headline writer suggests. *Shelomo*



Rabbi Moshe Sherer  
March 4, 1987  
Page -2-

your own heart, and those of your fellow Agudath members, and ask: Who among us has not voiced doubt -- either aloud or in the silent reaches of the heart.

I do not deny that we are deeply concerned in the Reform movement with those in our synagogues who find it difficult to believe and difficult to pray. We are working on it; we are writing books for young people and for adults on how to find God and how to pray. I am neither ashamed nor embarrassed by this; I am proud of it! I pray only that other religious groups within our Jewish community would confront this issue among their members rather than keeping their heads in the sand.

You raise the question of the efforts by Reform Judaism to get a fair shake in allocations of funds for activities in Israel. I respectfully suggest that you have not confronted this issue in your reply, preferring instead to raise the issue of "academic freedom," which of course has no bearing whatsoever on the question. It is not a question of what the so-called "non-Zionist yeshivas" believe, but what they do. These institutions reject the Jewish State. At the same time, these same institutions and their supporters in the United States would deny to Reform-sponsored kibbutzim, schools, synagogues and other institutions their fair share of funding. At any rate, you ought to know that I was not at all involved either in the initiation or the execution of the effort to which you allude.

You raise the issue of patrilineal descent and charge that unless we abandon this principle the Reform movement "will be responsible for the historic act of cutting the Jewish people into two entities which cannot intermarry." I will not here go into the argument, with which I am sure you are familiar, that holds that patrilineal descent is an ancient and honorable tradition in the Jewish faith -- antedating, in fact, the relatively modern matrilineal principle. I do not believe that the Jewish people will be cut in two, any more than I believe that if women are permitted to serve as rabbis and as cantors, and if men and women are permitted to sit side by side, and if the synagogue accepts civil divorce -- in short, if we give halacha a vote but not a veto -- the Jewish people will be severed. Reform has been around for over 100 years now. I believe profoundly that Reform Judaism has prevented the loss of millions of our people to Christianity or to no religion at all. And that is so because Reform has demonstrated that Judaism is a living faith, not frozen in some time-frame of 18th century Poland, or 15th century Spain, or earlier Babylon or even Jerusalem. If ours is the living God, Judaism must be a living faith, one that people of this day and this age can find solace and inspiration in -- as our people have done through the ages.

March 4, 1987  
3 Adar 5747

Rabbi Moshe Sherer, President  
Agudath Israel of America  
84 William Street  
New York, New York 10038

Dear Moshe:

Please forgive this belated reply to your letter of January 5. I have been traveling quite a lot in recent months. Indeed, I ~~h~~ returned from several weeks in Israel only a few days ago. It was simply impossible for me to devote the necessary attention to a reply until just now.

I am afraid that the "evidence" you cite in your letter is really not more than an iota. The clipping from the American Examiner of April 9, 1978 is nearly nine years old, and Rabbi Balfour Brickner, who is quoted in that story, has not been the director of our Interreligious Affairs Commission for nearly that length of time. As you know, some years ago he left the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to become the rabbi of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue. Many of us (myself included) were embarrassed by his foolish statement quoted in the 1978 story which you submitted as "evidence." In any case, we were not responsible for his statement then and we certainly cannot be held as responsible for it now. Really, you must offer something stronger than that. I am certain that I could find equally preposterous statements from officers of the Agudath Israel of America, but I would not think of holding you or the Agudath movement to be bound by them or even agreeing with them -- especially if the spokesman cited had left your movement some years ago. We should judge each other by our aspirations, not our failings.

The clipping you submit from the Jewish Advocate of Boston is, of course, a more serious matter. But here, if you will forgive me, I think you miss the point. If you had read Rabbi Menitoff's remarks with that measure of human sympathy and understanding that has endeared you to so many people in our community -- including many Reform Jews -- I think you would have found it to be what it was intended -- a brutally honest cri de coeur, a courageous admission of a condition that exists in Reform synagogues -- and (although Rabbi Menitoff was too polite to mention it) among Jews of many other denominational persuasions. That too many Reform Jews do not believe and find difficulty in praying I admit. That this condition is limited to members of Reform synagogues I vehemently deny; and I ask you to look into

Rabbi Moshe Sherer  
March 4, 1987  
Page -2-

your own heart, and those of your fellow Agudath members, and ask: Who among us has not voiced doubt -- either aloud or in the silent reaches of the heart.

I do not deny that we are deeply concerned in the Reform movement with those in our synagogues who find it difficult to believe and difficult to pray. We are working on it; we are writing books for young people and for adults on how to find God and how to pray. I am neither ashamed nor embarrassed by this; I am proud of it! I pray only that other religious groups within our Jewish community would confront this issue among their members rather than keeping their heads in the sand.

You raise the question of the efforts by Reform Judaism to get a fair shake in allocations of funds for activities in Israel. I respectfully suggest that you have not confronted this issue in your reply, preferring instead to raise the issue of "academic freedom," which of course has no bearing whatsoever on the question. It is not a question of what the so-called "non-Zionist yeshivas" believe, but what they do. These institutions reject the Jewish State. At the same time, these same institutions and their supporters in the United States would deny to Reform-sponsored kibbutzim, schools and synagogues and other institutions their fair share of funding. At any rate, you ought to know that I was not at all involved either in the initiation or the execution of the effort to which you allude.

You raise the issue of patrilineal descent and charge that unless we abandon this principle the Reform movement "will be responsible for the historic act of cutting the Jewish people into two entities which cannot intermarry." I will not here go into the argument, with which I am sure you are familiar, that holds that patrilineal descent is an ancient and honorable tradition in the Jewish faith -- antedating, in fact, the relatively modern matrilineal principle. I do not believe that the Jewish people will be cut in two, any more than I believe that if women are permitted to serve as rabbis and as cantors, and if men and women are permitted to sit side by side, and if the synagogue accepts civil divorce -- in short, if we give halacha a vote but not a veto -- the Jewish people will be severed. Reform has been around for over 100 years now. I believe profoundly that Reform Judaism has prevented the loss of millions of our people to Christianity or to no religion at all. And that is so because Reform has demonstrated that Judaism is a living faith, not frozen in some time-frame of 18th century Poland, or 15th century Spain, or earlier Babylon or even Jerusalem. If ours is the living God, Judaism must be a living faith, one that people of this day and this age can find solace and inspiration in -- as our people have done through the ages.



Rabbi Moses Sherer  
March 4, 1987  
Page -3-

Reform does not reject change in Jewish practice, but we do insist that any such changes must be born of necessity and conviction. The patrilineal decision was a principled assertion of the equality of men and women and a response to the anguish of children who considered themselves Jewish but were pushed into a no-man's land between Christians and Jews. Please note further that the CCAR resolution adopting the patrilineal decision did not confer Jewishness automatically on any child of a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father, but required that the child be raised Jewishly and undergo certain Jewish rites of passage -- circumcision, Jewish education, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, etc. In this respect, we are machmirim; Reform is more rigorous in its requirements of its members than Jewish tradition, which automatically confers Jewishness on any child of any Jewish mother, regardless of the mother's or child's adherence (or lack of it) to our faith.

In any case, I believe that our disagreements -- Reform vs. Orthodoxy, for example -- have not truly inflamed the passions of the people. The greatest danger arising from our wranglings is not that the Orthodox refuse to recognize Reform conversions but rather that the great mass of unaffiliated Jews will be so put off by what they say that they will say, "A plague on all your houses."

Our problem, then, is to recognize that many of the differences between us are not likely to be resolved. Let us at least come to know, and, hopefully, respect one another and cooperate with one another in the many areas of our common concern, e.g. Israel, Soviet Jewry, etc.

Words like Conservative, Orthodox, a Reform are adjectives, not nouns. The noun is Jew. If we did not know that before, we know it now, in this generation that witnessed the Holocaust of our people. For the Shoah constitutes a lasting, impelling mandate for unity. Even as we were brothers and sisters in death, so must we remain brothers and sisters in life. In that spirit, I write to you and wish you well.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

P.S. I just reread the clipping quoting Rabbi Brickner and the headline is indeed misleading. I suggest you also read it once again and not the comment "...such an action by a Reform rabbi is foolish, ludicrous and impossible. He would exclude himself."

# Atheist Rabbis Linked to Low Reform Attendance

By Ben Gallob

A Boston-based Reform rabbinical executive has asserted his conviction that a key reason Reform synagogue sanctuaries are often sparsely attended for wor-

ship on the Sabbath is that "sizeable segments of the lay and rabbinic populations of Reform synagogues do not believe in God."

That evaluation was spelled out by Rabbi Paul Menitoff, regional director of the Northeast Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), the association of American Reform synagogues. Menitoff presented his analysis in a recent issue of the Journal of Reform Judaism.

Menitoff argued that no matter how active a Reform synagogue may be, worship services may not be well attended. He argued that "worship does not attract people; programs at services sometimes do: family nights; Sisterhood/Brotherhood Shabbats; teacher appreciation services; scholar-in-residence lectures; commissioned cantatas; social actions Shabbats — the list is endless."

He declared that in the Reform movement's "abundance of well-attended activities" there is a "dead spot" in most Reform synagogues — the sanctuary when it is being used for worship "for God's sake."

The Reform rabbi said that many Reform Jews can describe themselves as "Kaplanians," for Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism; or "Buberians," for Martin Buber, the theologian; or as naturalists or existentialists.

He declared that the God of such Jews, "created through mental gymnastics, is a theological construct, not a reality." He asserted that a sanctuary attended by Jews for whom God is "merely a mental mutation, and not a reality, is a sparsely populated place."

Special services and "gimmicks" in sanctuaries cannot be a substitute for God, Menitoff said. "Prayer is communicating with God — not thinking, not meditating with ourselves. God is the object, the recipient of prayer."

Contending that people "cannot pray to theological constructs," he declared that



Paul Menitoff

Jews know this, "at the very least, on an intuitive level. They therefore do other things on Friday nights and Saturday mornings. When God does not attend services, people stay at home."

Asserting that the problem of minimal attendance at worship services could be resolved, Menitoff said the first step was for Reform rabbis to "confront honestly the following questions: Do we really believe in God or are we fooling ourselves? Are we (rabbis) hiding behind theological constructs and rituals while ignoring the issue of God?"

He contended that rabbis avoid talking about God "because they either do not believe in God or they fear they will be considered as hopelessly naive and intellectually unsophisticated."

He added that Reform rabbis "who do not believe in God should leave congregational worship to those who do. To do less is dishonest. Rabbis who do not believe are not helping their people pray; they are at best directing a presentation."

## Brickner balks at expulsion of Jews for Jesus

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — The Reform movement in the United States should not exclude Reform rabbis if they became involved in the "Jews for Jesus" movement, according to Rabbi Balfour Brickner, director of the national department of interreligious affairs of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform).

Speaking as one of a panel of experts at the Brandeis-Bardin Forum on Contemporary Values, Rabbi Brickner said "I would not throw him out as a rabbi. I think such an action by a Reform rabbi is foolish, ludicrous and impossible. He would exclude himself."

Rabbi Brickner said that the Reform movement has rabbis who are atheists and agnostics, and even homosexuals. "Should we throw them out?" he asked. "Where would we stop?"



December 31, 1986  
29 Kislev 5747

Rabbi Moshe Sherer  
Agudath Israel  
5 Beekman Street  
New York, N.Y. 10038

Dear Colleague:

Some months ago we talked -- at the Regency Hotel and you suggested that we "cool" the mutually recriminating rhetoric. I earnestly tried to do so.

When I returned from Israel a day or so ago, the enclosed was called to my attention. Your words, if accurately quoted, certainly made no contribution toward that end. Do you have even an iota of evidence to support what you attribute to our spokespeople?

I don't mind, indeed, I expect to be opposed on issues on which we disagree -- but these kind of baseless irresponsible attacks are really unacceptable. I hope you will find a way of correcting them.

Cordially,

Alexander M. Schindler

bcc: Mr. Richard Cohen

# Battle brews over funds to anti-Zionist yeshivas

By STEWART AIN

Charges that the Reform movement has engaged in a conspiracy with the Jewish Agency to deny funding to yeshivas in Israel that don't recognize the State of Israel were heatedly denied last week by Rabbi Daniel Syme, vice president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

"The energies of the Reform movement are now directed solidly at obtaining a fair allocation from the Jewish Agency for the kibbutzim, schools, settlements and other programs established by the Reform movement for Reform Jews seeking roots in Israel," said Syme. "We have neither the inclination nor the time to enter into any kind of conspiracy against anybody, even anti-Zionist yeshivas."

Syme's comments to the *Jewish World* came in response to allegations by Rabbi Moshe Sherer, president of the Agudath Israel of America, that Reform rabbis have "formed a conspiracy with the leadership of the federations and the Jewish Agency."

He said the conspiracy was an attempt to "blackmail and bludgeon yeshivas in Israel into submission—if they dare consider themselves non-Zionists—to deny them the right of obtaining money from the Jewish charity funds and the Jewish Agency. And now, too, in the United States, this alliance of these so-called leaders is trying to influence the federations to even cut down on

grants to yeshivas."

Sherer's comments regarding the Reform movement were made at his organization's recent national convention. In his remarks, Sherer insisted that "politically-motivated Reform rabbis, because of their sway with those who hold the purse-strings of Jewish charity funds," should not be allowed to decide the fate and policies of yeshivas.

And he expressed confidence that once federation leaders learn the "truth about the role of yeshivas of all types as the primary guarantor of Jewish survival, they will not discriminate against any Torah institutions on the basis of attitudes towards Zionism."

A Reform spokesman, who asked for anonymity, felt that if the Jewish Agency has indeed terminated funding to non-Zionist yeshivas in Israel, "many Reform Jews would applaud that action."

Syme pointed out that these anti-Zionist yeshivas have for years been receiving Jewish communal funds even though they refuse to recognize the State of Israel.

"That fact—indeed the whole system by which the Jewish Agency supports institutions in Israel—should be carefully discussed by the entire community, including Orthodox spokesmen," Syme suggested. "We would welcome a discussion with Rabbi Sherer, and all movements of the Jewish people, of the principles that determine the allocation of such support."

Sherer spoke of Reform rabbis who, like pied pipers, lead "innocent, unwary" secular Jewish leaders "down a road of spiritual disaster." To illustrate, Sherer quoted the director of the UAHC's National Interreligious Affairs Department as saying that Reform rabbis who become involved with the "Jews for Jesus movement should not be excluded as Reform rabbis."

"And he went on to say, 'I would not throw him out as a rabbi; after all, the Reform movement has rabbis who are atheists and agnostics and homosexuals. Should we throw them out? Where would we stop?'"

## Denies Statement

The Reform spokesman rebutted Sherer's attack, pointing out that the director of the agency to whom Sherer referred is not a man but a woman, Annette Daum, and that she never made any such comments.

The spokesman was incensed by Sherer's comment that there are leaders of the American Jewish community today who "have no right to speak as Jewish leaders, especially those who dare speak in the name of *clal Yisroel*, when they personally married non-Jewish women."

The spokesman said that "such wild and irresponsible attacks that accuse without naming the target make no contribution to that calm and loving examination of the issues that should form the standard of discourse to which all rabbis and Jewish community leaders should seek to adhere." □

*See p. 11*

FROM: Richard Cohen

March 3, 1987

TO: 1. ALEX  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_

Please return ( )  
Your action ( )  
Your files ( )  
For your info ( )  
Let's discuss ( )

Remarks:

Here are some suggestions for a reply to Rabbi Sherer.

Dear Moshe:

Please forgive this belated reply to your letter of January 5. ~~As you may know,~~  
I have been traveling quite a <sup>lot</sup> ~~bit~~ in recent <sup>months, Indeed I</sup> ~~weeks~~, and have ~~just~~ returned from  
<sup>only a day ago.</sup> ~~several weeks in Israel.~~ It was simply impossible for me to devote the necessary  
attention to a reply until just now.

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of Reform synagogues I would vehemently deny; and I ask you to look into your own  
heart, and those of your fellow Agudath members, and ask: Who among us has not

voiced doubt -- either aloud or in the silent reaches of the heart. ~~It was Alfred Lord Tennyson, I believe, who wrote more than 100 years ago: "There lives more faith in honest doubt, / "Believe me, than in half the creeds."~~ You will tell me, correctly, that Maimonides said it better. Agreed!

I do not deny that we are deeply concerned in the Reform movement with those in our synagogues who find it difficult to believe and difficult to pray. We are working on it; we are writing books for young people and for adults on how to find God and how to pray. I am neither ashamed nor embarrassed by this; I am proud of it! I pray only that other religious groups within our Jewish community would confront this issue among their members rather than keeping their heads in the sand.

You raise the question of the efforts by Reform Judaism to get a fair shake in allocations of funds for activities in Israel. I respectfully suggest that you have not confronted this issue in your reply, preferring instead to raise the issue of "academic freedom," which of course has no bearing whatsoever on the question. It is not a question of what the so-called "non-Zionist yeshivas" believe but what they do. These institutions reject the Jewish state, denounce the Israeli flag, reject Israeli military service and yet insist that the Jewish world and the Jewish state support them, their students and their right to repudiate the Jewish state. At the same time, these same institutions and their supporters in the United States would deny to Reform-sponsored kibbutzism, schools, synagogues and other institutions their fair shake of funding. *AT ANY RATE, YOU OUGHT TO KNOW THAT I WAS NOT AT ALL INVOLVED EITHER IN THE INITIATION*

You raise the issue of patrilineal descent and charge that unless we abandon this principle the Reform movement "will be responsible for the historic act of cutting the Jewish people into two entities which cannot intermarry." I will not here go into the argument, with which I am sure you are familiar, that holds that patrilineal descent is an ancient and honorable tradition in the Jewish faith -- antedating, in fact, the relatively modern matrilineal principle. I do not believe that the Jewish people will be cut in two, any more than I believe that if women are permitted to serve as rabbis and as cantors, and if men and women are permitted to sit side by side, and if the synagogue accepts civil divorce -- in short, if

ON THE EXECUTION OF THE STATE TO DIRECT GOLD BRIDGE



we give halacha a vote but not a veto -- the Jewish people will be severed. Reform has been around for 100 years now. I believe profoundly that Reform Judaism has prevented the loss of millions of our people to Christianity or to no religion at all. And that is so because Reform has demonstrated that Judaism is a living faith, not frozen in some time-frame of 18th-century Poland, or 15th-century Spain, or earlier Babylon or even Jerusalem. If ours is the living God, Judaism must be a living faith, one that people of this day and this age can find solace and inspiration in -- as our people have done through the ages.

Reform does not reject change in Jewish practice, but we do insist that any such changes must be born of necessity and conviction. The patrilineal decision was a principled assertion of the equality of men and women and a response to the anguish of children who considered themselves Jewish but were pushed into a no-man's land between Christians and Jews. Please note further that the CCAR resolution adopting the patrilineal decision did not confer Jewishness automatically on any child of a non-Jewish mother and Jewish father, but required that the child be raised Jewishly and undergo certain Jewish rites of passage -- circumcision, Jewish education, bar mitzvah, etc. In this respect, <sup>we are Machmirim</sup> Reform is more rigorous in its requirements of its members than Jewish tradition, which automatically confers Jewishness on any child of any Jewish mother, regardless of the mother's or child's adherence (or lack of it) to our faith.

In any case, I believe that our disagreements -- Reform vs. Orthodoxy, for example -- have not truly inflamed the passions of the people. The greatest danger arising from our wranglings is not that the Orthodox refuse to recognize Reform conversions but rather that the great mass of unaffiliated Jews will be so put off by what they say that they will say "A plague on all your houses."

Our problem, then, is to recognize that many of the differences between us are not likely to be resolved. Let us at least come to know and, hopefully, respect one another, <sup>and cooperate with one another in the many areas</sup> ~~let us exchange ideas and pulpits, let us study together, let us~~ <sup>of our common concern, e.g. Israel, Soviet Jewry etc.</sup> ~~reason together, in the words of the prophet, and discuss ways and means of compromise to bring us together.~~

Words like Conservative, Orthodox, Reform and ~~secular~~ are adjectives, <sup>(not nouns.)</sup> The noun is Jew. If we did not know that before, we know it now, in this generation that witnessed the Holocaust of our people. For the Shoah constitutes a lasting, impelling mandate for unity. Even as we were brothers and sisters in death, so must we ever remain brothers and sisters in life. In that spirit, I write to you and wish you well.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

# MEMORANDUM

From Ms. Edith J. Miller

Date January 13, 1987  
12 Tevet 5747

To Mr. Richard Cohen

Copies

Subject

Please let Alex know how you would respond to the enclosed. He will want to answer when he comes back from his travels -- he says Israel, but he may mean California.

Thank you.

LA 1/13/87 - 1/21/87  
Israel 2/15 - 2/26/87 before wgs  
London after wgs  
Paris



Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100



7"03  
Office of the President  
*Get to the bottom  
he would answer  
will do so  
when I return  
from  
Israel*

4 Teves, 5747  
January 5, 1987

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

Dear Alex:

I want to acknowledge your letter of December 31 / 29  
Kislev.

I have more than "an iota of evidence" to support my  
quotation from a statement by a director of the National  
Interreligious Affairs Department of the UAHC. Enclosed is a  
photostat of a news story which appeared in the American  
Examiner, which was the predecessor of the Jewish Week.

In addition, I am enclosing a photostat of a story which  
appeared in the Boston Jewish Advocate, where an official of the  
UAHC, your own staff member, charges that "sizeable segments of  
the lay and rabbinic populations of Reform synagogues do not  
believe in G-d."

The new militancy of many within the Reform movement vis a  
vis the use of Federation funds is a matter of record. Indeed,  
the very article you sent me, while reporting the "heated denial"  
of your vice-president, quotes "a Reform spokesman" who applauds  
this anti-"non-Zionist yeshiva" campaign. Interestingly, this  
spokesman insisted on remaining anonymous; that silence itself  
speaks volumes about the credibility of your vice-president's  
denial of my charge.

The entire campaign to deny the Jewish charity dollar to  
"non-Zionist yeshivos" is a tactic beneath every criticism.  
Those same American proponents of this effort would shout blue  
murder if anyone would dare to infringe upon academic freedom in  
the United States, and deny funding to colleges whose students  
are either too liberal or too conservative.

Surely this anonymous "Reform spokesman" would never  
countenance denying Jewish communal funds to Hebrew University,  
for example, even though that institution has a large number of  
Jewish radical leftists and Arab extremists as students.

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
January 5, 1987  
Page Two

When I spoke with you some months ago about the rhetoric being utilized, I was referring to such outrageous epithets by Reform leaders against the Orthodox as "Khoumeinis" or being guilty of the "selekzie" process used by the Nazis during the Holocaust. This is not comparable to my portraying to our national convention the ludicrous position of Reform rabbis, many who do not even believe in G-d, promoting the denial of funding to yeshivos, the only guarantor of the continuation of G-d-subservience in the world.

I still feel that the situation in Jewish life has reached a point where, unless your group reverses its position on such issues as patrilineal descent, it will be responsible for the historic act of cutting the Jewish people into two entities which cannot intermarry.

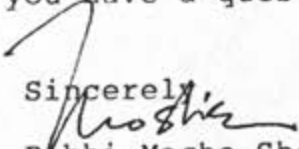
Moreover, I once again urge you, in the spirit of fairness and truth, to use your power in the Reform community to halt the campaign of disinformation being waged to libel Orthodox Jews as refusing to recognize Reform Jews as Jews. The most recent example of this vicious slander appears in the current issue of your publication Arza Newsletter (Winter 1987) which includes a message from the Arza president (Page 3) in which he states: "We shall not allow his kind (the Chief Rabbi) to deny that we are Jews."

You know very well that the Orthodox Jew considers his Reform brother-Jew as much a Jew as himself. The "denial" by the Orthodox relates solely to non-Jewish converts who, in our view, lack the proper credentials to be recognized as Jews. The continuation of this "scare campaign," which has won wide acceptance in Reform Jewish circles, inserts a bizarre false element into the current controversy unworthy of such a serious matter.

The religious situation in the Reform camp is deteriorating at such a rate that unless a man like yourself reverses this speeding train, we are heading for a split within the Jewish community of unprecedented magnitude. I hope that you will take strong action to prevent this historic tragedy before it is too late.

I appreciate your writing me when you have a question.  
Regards.

MS/dbj  
Enclosures

Sincerely,  
  
Rabbi Moshe Sherer  
President



# Atheist Rabbis Linked to Low Reform Attendance

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Paul Menitoff

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January 13, 1987  
12 Tevet 5747

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Agudath  
Israel  
of America

אגודת ישראל באמריקה

7"ב  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
*God to be honest  
he would answer  
will do so  
when I return  
from  
Israel*

4 Teves, 5747  
January 5, 1987

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In addition, I am enclosing a photostat of a story which  
appeared in the Boston Jewish Advocate, where an official of the  
UAHC, your own staff member, charges that "sizeable segments of  
the lay and rabbinic populations of Reform synagogues do not  
believe in G-d."

The new militancy of many within the Reform movement vis a  
vis the use of Federation funds is a matter of record. Indeed,  
the very article you sent me, while reporting the "heated denial"  
of your vice-president, quotes "a Reform spokesman" who applauds  
this anti-"non-Zionist yeshiva" campaign. Interestingly, this  
spokesman insisted on remaining anonymous; that silence itself  
speaks volumes about the credibility of your vice-president's  
denial of my charge.

The entire campaign to deny the Jewish charity dollar to  
"non-Zionist yeshivos" is a tactic beneath every criticism.  
Those same American proponents of this effort would shout blue  
murder if anyone would dare to infringe upon academic freedom in  
the United States, and deny funding to colleges whose students  
are either too liberal or too conservative.

Surely this anonymous "Reform spokesman" would never  
countenance denying Jewish communal funds to Hebrew University,  
for example, even though that institution has a large number of  
Jewish radical leftists and Arab extremists as students.

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
January 5, 1987  
Page Two

When I spoke with you some months ago about the rhetoric being utilized, I was referring to such outrageous epithets by Reform leaders against the Orthodox as "Khoumeinis" or being guilty of the "selekzie" process used by the Nazis during the Holocaust. This is not comparable to my portraying to our national convention the ludicrous position of Reform rabbis, many who do not even believe in G-d, promoting the denial of funding to yeshivos, the only guarantor of the continuation of G-d-subservience in the world.

I still feel that the situation in Jewish life has reached a point where, unless your group reverses its position on such issues as patrilineal descent, it will be responsible for the historic act of cutting the Jewish people into two entities which cannot intermarry.

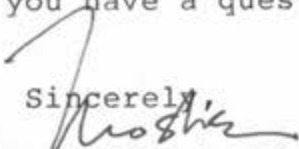
Moreover, I once again urge you, in the spirit of fairness and truth, to use your power in the Reform community to halt the campaign of disinformation being waged to libel Orthodox Jews as refusing to recognize Reform Jews as Jews. The most recent example of this vicious slander appears in the current issue of your publication Arza Newsletter (Winter 1987) which includes a message from the Arza president (Page 3) in which he states: "We shall not allow his kind (the Chief Rabbi) to deny that we are Jews."

You know very well that the Orthodox Jew considers his Reform brother-Jew as much a Jew as himself. The "denial" by the Orthodox relates solely to non-Jewish converts who, in our view, lack the proper credentials to be recognized as Jews. The continuation of this "scare campaign," which has won wide acceptance in Reform Jewish circles, inserts a bizarre false element into the current controversy unworthy of such a serious matter.

The religious situation in the Reform camp is deteriorating at such a rate that unless a man like yourself reverses this speeding train, we are heading for a split within the Jewish community of unprecedented magnitude. I hope that you will take strong action to prevent this historic tragedy before it is too late.

I appreciate your writing me when you have a question.  
Regards.

MS/dbj  
Enclosures

Sincerely,  
  
Rabbi Moshe Sherer  
President

A/c

April 22, 1986  
13 Nisan 5746

Dear Ken:

The copy of the 1910 Silver Anniversary edition of the "Yiddisches Tageblatt" is terrific. Many thanks for your thoughtfulness in sharing this with me, I thoroughly enjoyed reading the paper. The truth of the matter is, there really is nothing new under the sun!

I've sent a copy off to Walter Wurzburger and I am certain that he, too, will enjoy perusing these pages.

With thanks and fond good wishes to you and Jean for a very happy and sweet Passover, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Mr. L. Kenneth Rosett  
191 Albemarle Road  
White Plains, NY 10605



April 22, 1986  
13 Nisan 5746

Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger  
Congregation Shaaray Tefila  
Central and Lord Avenues  
Lawrence, NY 11559

Dear Walter:

It was a pleasure and a privilege to dialogue with you. I enjoyed the experience very much and I am most admiring of your presentation. You were wonderful.

The enclosed copy from The Jewish Daily News ("Yiddisches Tageblatt") may be of interest to you. Note the date -- March 20, 1910 - Adar II. The grandson of Sarasohn, publisher of the paper, is a member of the Union Board and he shared the copy with me. For the Silber Anniversary of the paper, Sarasohn propounded the question, "Is a Reconciliation Between Orthodoxy and Reform Possible?" He had a long sub-title which included.... "...and By What means Could it be brought about?" He also arranged for responses from Schiff, Kohler and Schechter. I thought you might enjoy perusing these pages. There really is nothing new under the sun!!

Have a sweet and happy Pessach. All good wishes,

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

L. KENNETH ROSETT  
191 ALBEMARLE ROAD  
WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK 10605

April 19, 1986

Dear Alex:

Thoroughly enjoyed your dialog with Rabbi Wurzbarger at the WUPJ meeting in Toronto last week.

But I did have a minor case of *dejas vu*! If you subtract about 75 years, you will get back to 1910. My grandfather, for the Silver Anniversary of his lead paper, THE JEWISH DAILY NEWS, propounded the question, "Is a Reconciliation Between Orthodoxy and Reform Possible? His subtitle included "... And By What Means Could It Be Brought About?"

Grandpa arranged a "troika", Jacob Schiff as a lay communal leader, Dr. Kaufman Kohler (note he did not use the term rabbi) for Reform and Prof. Solomon Schechter (still not the term rabbi) for Orthodoxy.

Copies of those articles are enclosed. Enjoy.

Sending an extra set. Will appreciate it if you will send it to Rabbi Wurzbarger, if you think it might interest him.

A Hag Someach to you and to yours for a Happy Pesach.

B'Shelom,

L. K. Rosett

enclosures

*Thank you  
profusely*

*Will send  
to WUPJ*

*Please  
do w  
covering  
note  
first 1*

*much  
enjoyed*

*Dialoging with  
him + I advised  
his presentation.*

# THE JEWISH DAILY NEWS

(“YIDDISCHES TAGEBLATT”)

VOLUME XXVI., No. 67. NEW YORK, SUNDAY, (ADAR II., 9), MARCH 20, 1910 PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

## IS A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ORTHODOXY AND REFORM POSSIBLE?

SILVER JUBILEE NUMBER

ONE HUNDRED  
PAGES

English Section

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Simultaneously with the growth of the Jewish community of the United States, problems have kept pace. Important problems, of peculiarly Jewish concern and confronting the Jewish community as a whole, have arisen, having their genesis in the complex and rapid growth of the community. Yet, despite the acuteness and gravity of these problems, no systematic, no statesmanlike efforts have been made to solve, or even to cope with them, owing to the lack of organization, owing to the absence of a common viewpoint.

Two great camps exist in American Israel. And these two camps represent almost diametrically opposing religious opinions, and owe their existence to this very difference of religious opinion. It has been well said that the only bond of union between these two camps, Orthodoxy and Reform, is the thin unifying thread of the belief in the Oneness of God. But this thread is as weak as it is thin, and lacks the power to bind Israel in a common bond of solidarity. Misunderstanding, suspicion, misrepresentation is entertained in the one camp as against the other. Meantime, the problems clamor for solution, and clamor in vain.

THE JEWISH DAILY NEWS has endeavored to ascertain from the leaders and captains of both great camps whether a reconciliation is possible; whether a community of interest cannot be created; whether the much-vaunted but, in truth, hardly existing and rapidly disappearing solidarity in Israel cannot be made a fact in America—a solidarity imperatively necessary for the good of Israel and Israel's future, and for the rendering to this country of the service that can be rendered best and by a people united for the preservation of its own best ideals.

With this in view, and as a service which this Silver Jubilee Number might render to American Jewry, the editors of THE JEWISH DAILY NEWS propounded to the leaders and captains of both great camps the following question:

"IS A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN REFORM AND ORTHODOXY POSSIBLE, AND BY WHAT MEANS COULD IT BE BROUGHT ABOUT?"

We have given to each full freedom to say what is in his heart and mind. We have asked of each to say only that which he believes to be the truth? In the main, the question has been discussed seriously, gravely, though some have stubbornly refused to yield their prejudice. We represent to the Jewish community of the United States the testimony of the leaders and captains. Whether from the wisdom and statesmanlike utterances contained in many of these letters will come an effort to unite the camps, for the good of Israel, depends upon the leaders not so much as upon the rank and file, upon the strong and staunch Jewish hearts enlisted under either one or the other standards, Orthodoxy and Reform.

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# JACOB H. SCHIFF FOR UNITY!



Calls Upon All to Unite for Preservation of  
Jewish Ideals and for Weal of America.

Orthodoxy Must Respect Those Whose Con-  
ception Is Liberal.

Reform Must Not Disdain Those Who  
Strictly Maintain Traditions of the Fathers.

Americanization Without Loss of Jewishness  
Work of "The Jewish Daily News."

*New York, January 21, 1910.*

Messrs. Sarason & Son, Publishers,  
JEWISH DAILY NEWS,  
185 East Broadway, City.

Dear Sirs:-

Having learned that your paper will shortly reach the twenty-fifth anniversary of its existence, I want to tender to you, as well as to your editors and other collaborators, my congratulations upon so auspicious an occasion.

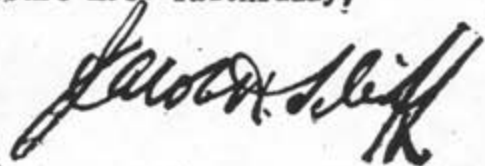
I well remember the time, a quarter of a century ago, not long after the great influx of our Russian co-religionists had set in, when your paper made its first appearance, and I think I am justified in expressing the opinion that the rapid Americanization of those who, raised under totally different conditions, than are prevailing here, have come in such large numbers to our shores, is in no small part due to the influence for good which your paper has exercised these twenty-five years. It is certainly no small service which those who have determined the policy of the Jewish Daily News have rendered, when they so shaped their paper, that through its influence, to a considerable extent, the larger number of our Russian co-religionists, who are now a part of this community, have become self-respecting American citizens without



losing the conservative Jewish principles under which they had grown up and which have developed in them ideals which, brought into daily life, form a most valuable asset to the citizenship of the country. Your paper has moreover understood it to inoculate, into the considerable portion of those of our townsmen, whom it more or less influences, the tolerance for the views of others, both religious and political, which is the first condition of good citizenship, and I feel the conviction is growing upon all classes of the Jewish people of this town, under whatever conditions of life they exist, that no unsurmountable difference need exist between the American Jew, whatever shade of religious views he may hold; that orthodoxy should have respect for those who have a more liberal conception of Jewish law and tradition, and that the so-called Reformed Jew should look without disdain upon those who continue to strictly maintain the traditions which have come to them from their fathers; that all can and should unite in the constructive work which needs to be done so imperatively if the Jew is to maintain his ideals within the body of the American people, of whom he is so rapidly becoming part and parcel, and to the weal of whom he need loyally contribute the best that is in him and in his faith.

Expressing, therefore, the hope upon the turning of so momentous a milestone in the existence of your paper that its influence for good may constantly grow, and wishing you every further success, I am,

Yours most faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jacob Schiff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

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## WORDS OF BOTH, WORDS OF LIVING GOD

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Dr. Kaufman  
Kohler Says the  
Issue Is as Old as  
Judaism Itself

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Bridging Gap  
Would Undermine  
Conviction and  
Faith in Both  
Camps

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### REFORM DOES NOT LEAD TO CHRISTIANITY

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(Specially written for the Silver Jubilee Number of the Jewish Daily News.)

Messrs. Sarasohn & Son, Publishers, "The Jewish Daily News.

Gentlemen: Accept my congratulations upon your silver anniversary. May your efforts towards the Americanization of the Jewish masses be crowned with still further success!

To your question I herewith offer the following reply:

Orthodoxy is a term borrowed from the Christian Church. The Letter or the Spirit, Stability or Progress? this is the issue. This issue is as old as Judaism itself, the secret of whose wondrous vitality lies in its latitude of beliefs. Like the stars in heaven, Judaism always had its centripetal and centrifugal forces; the one stood for the **preservation of the old**, the other

(Continued on Page Three.)

for progress. Israel was at all times divided into two camps. Ancient Israel had its house of Joseph and its house of Judah; the Second Temple its priestly Sadducees and its democratic Pharisees. The book of Koheleth indicates the influence of Hellenism, and the book of Daniel the austerity of the Hasidim party.

In Talmudic times we find the Shammaites and the Hillelites at variance with one another on many points, and at times their differences appeared very serious, nay, even dangerous. Still, we are told in the Talmud that a heavenly voice proclaimed both opinions to be "words of the living God," and both adhered to the Biblical maxim; "Love ye above all truth and peace." "Truth first, and afterwards peace!" is the Jewish maxim. Accordingly, during the middle ages we see the widest possible diversity of opinion between the Rationalists, beginning with Saadia Gaon and culminating in Maimonides, and the Mystics whose chief representative in the latter's time was Abraham ben David of Posquieres. Maimonides, to give a striking instance, declared him to be no Jew who believes that God has bodily qualities or attributes, such as the Cabbalists ascribed to Him, whereas Abraham ben David in his annotations to the latter's great Code (H. Teshubah III. 7) says: "Greater men than he have believed in such a God and are as good Jews as he." Maimonides had assimilated the philosophy of Aristotle as interpreted by the Moslem thinkers. Thus all men of progress in Judaism assimilated the prevailing ideas—the *Weltanschauung*—of their age and environment.

Reform Judaism is nothing else than Judaism harmonized with our own *Weltanschauung*. The same principles of evolution and growth which govern the physical world govern also the world of the spirit, and consequently, religion, too, is subject to the laws of historical growth and development. Accordingly, we behold in the Mosaic Law, with its sacrificial mode of worship one phase of Judaism, in the Rabbinical Law, with its ceremonialism, another, and in Reform or Progressive Judaism, which aims at a world religion in the spirit of the prophets, another necessary phase in the development of our faith. Far from destroying our ancestral heritage, the Reform principle has proved a saving power for all those who would otherwise have become estranged from our holy patrimony. Reform lays all the stress upon the essentials, the moral and spiritual truth of Judaism, and looks forward to the time of its becoming the uniting force of humanity; therefore, it accentuates its world-mission, the Messianic hope of Judaism.

The great majority of Jews brought up in the atmosphere of blind belief in authority, are as little capable of grasping the principles of Reform Judaism as the average medieval Jew could follow the flights of thought of a Maimonides or Ibn Gabirol. So they erroneously take Reform to be a stepping-stone to Christianity, while, as a matter of fact, it is its most outspoken and aggressive antagonist.

Every attempt towards bridging over the wide gap that exists between the adherents of traditional Judaism and the Reformers by way of compromise is apt to undermine the power of conviction and of faith in either camp. Instead of this, I think that the leaders of both camps should, like the pupils of Shammai and Hillel, foster mutual good-will and friendly feelings, recognizing the spirit of honesty and sincerity that prompts each to act and to live, or think, as his own heart, his religious consciousness prompts. Let the Reform Jew recognize that the authority of a hoary past bespeaks the highest regard for Orthodoxy, and, therefore, he owes reverence to the same as being the mother that begot and nurtured him. On the other hand, let the Orthodox Jew cease condemning, maligning and cursing Reform and Reformers, and become cognizant of the fact that even according to the Talmudic view "he is a veritable Jew who stands forth in the presence of his brethren as Israel's monotheistic truth"—H. Abodah Zarah 118a.

Let us strive in common, each in his own way, for truth, which is the seal of God, and, at the same time, never lose sight of the divine goal, which is peace, ever realizing that *Eleh ve eleh divre Elohim Hayim*: "The opinions of both battlers for truth are, when manfully uttered, words of the living God."

# DESIRE FOR RECONCILIATION GROWING



**Prof. Solomon  
Schechter Sees  
Trend In That  
Direction**

**Remnant Must  
Join Together Under  
Banner of  
Torah**

## SCHOLARLY LEADERS CAN WELD LAITY

(Specially written for the Silver Jubilee Number of the Jewish Daily News.)

The subject chosen by you, "The Possibility of a Reconciliation Between Reform and Orthodoxy," is very important and worthy of such an occasion as the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of your valuable paper. I assume that you do not expect me to treat the subject in any manner approaching completeness. Only a thorough study of the history of Jewish sects in the past, their aims and their ends, would enable us to gain a full knowledge and a proper understanding of the movements of our own time. For "innovations" are often mere repetitions, and "modernity" itself, after examining it closely, is sometimes found out to be a mere echo of some miscarried schism of the dark ages or even antiquity. But, even to speak only of the present, it would seem to me that a reconciliation between the two sections of the community is by no means a simple matter. The division has gone too far both in doctrine and in practice to dispose of the matter in an offhand way. I will illustrate this by one or two instances of recent date: Last November the Conference of American Rabbis held its convention in New York. A banquet was given to the rabbis at a Christian hotel, and many toasts were, on that solemn occasion, proposed to the success of Judaism in this country. This occurrence impressed one part of the community as tragic, if not tragi-comic, whilst the other part of the community perceived in it the triumph of modernity over the "pot and pan religion." I am certain that the majority of the

rabbis assembled there in no wise meant to give offense to their brethren of the "Bondage." They simply took it as a matter of course. But this does not alter the fact that the great majority of the Jews not belonging to the jurisdiction of the Conference of American Rabbis viewed this violation of the dietary laws with sorrow. To quote an instance of doctrine I will only refer to the Ninth of Ab: On this day, even in this country, hundreds and thousands of Jews gathered to their synagogues and read there the Scroll of Lamentations, following it up by the Elegies of the sweet singer of Israel, R. Jehudah Halevi, in his mournful strains over the destruction of the Holy Temple, the loss of Jewish independence and the banishments and expulsions following it. The day after one could read a notice in the paper given out by some leader of the opposite party, in which it was declared that in his congregation no service was held, as the Ninth of Ab is rather considered by him as a day of rejoicing, the consummation of Israel's mission commencing with the destruction of the Holy Temple and the termination of Israel's nationality. Any student, and even any layman, with religious common sense, can see from these two instances to what pass matters have come. Such excesses could be easily avoided, and they only tend to show that fanaticism and lack of considerateness, if not martyrdom, is not the exclusive possession of one party. Under these conditions I hardly see how a reconciliation is possible.

The only platform upon which we can meet at present seems to me to be that of philanthropy, where both sections of the community can work whole-heartedly without doing violence to their conscience. Perhaps, too, we may hope that in the course of time Jewish scholarship will grow up in this country, which will bring about a more uniform and less varying conceptions. Real Jewish learning has always impressed men with a respect for history, with a regard for the past, and has made him more cautious in his utterances, and more conservative in his judgment, and suspicious against all sectarian endeavor. This was achieved largely in Germany through the Wissenschaft School, and there is no reason why it should not happen again in America. The modern American laity that is free from fanaticism will follow soon enough their leaders in this direction. Indeed, among the laity, the desire for reconciliation is constantly gaining ground, and many gracious acts on their part have been done to bring about unity and harmony in American Israel. It requires but a deeper understanding of the situation on the part of the spiritual leaders to make this reconciliation effective and lasting. Attention must be directed to the community of Israel; appreciation, not to say respect and reverence, must be paid to the norm of Jewish thought and action; the high and holy purpose must be entertained to further Jewish unity and to maintain the honor of the Jewish name, both within ourselves and before the world; the remnant must draw nearer to each other in mutual trust, and faith and helpfulness; then, in the progress of time, and in the providence of God, the scattered members of the whole house of Israel may once more be joined together in organized union, and stand upon their feet a mighty army under the banner of the Torah. May your valuable paper be helpful in bringing about such a result.



R.O. ✓

February 11, 1986  
2 Adar 5746

Mr. Ira Schorr  
131/7 Sanhedriah Murchevet  
Jerusalem, Israel 97707

Dear Mr. Schorr:

Your statement that the Conservative and Reform Movements "make no attempt to stop or prevent intermarriage" is a perversion of the truth and demonstrates that you do not have the vaguest idea of what we are about. You form your judgments on the basis of the slander that is levelled against us. That is certainly not in accordance with the biblical injunction which bids us:

I find your analogy to the Holocaust morally reprehensible. Surely you do not mean to suggest that these                      were killed for their sins.

Learn something about us -- what we are, what we teach, what we believe. Until then, little purpose can be served by our corresponding.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
c/o American Hebrew Congregat~~i~~ons  
Los Angeles, Cal.

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I hope this letter reaches you and you will find the time and inclination to read it and deign to answer it.

I have been wondering, when G-- gave the Toran to us, did He give four types, one for the Orthodox, one for the Reform, one for the Conservative and one for the secularists? What would happen if we Jews would adopt the life styles of each generation, what would we be today?

Who were the Hasmonians? Orthodox, Conservative, Reform or secular?

It seems to me we have not learned a lesson from the Holocaust. The Jews today follow the exact footsteps of the German Jew; inter-marriage, assimilation and conversion. Is that what the Reform and Conservative movemaent want? They make no attempt to stop ~~or~~ prevent inter-marriage.

It seems the secularists don't believe in CJ 4/ 738  
We Jews abrogate the laws of the Toran without compunction and with impunity. How long do you think we can go on doing this without retribution from on high?

Again I pray this letter reaches you and you will find the time to answer it.

Sincerely yours,

*Ira Schorr*  
Ira Schorr

131/7 Sanhedriah Murchevet  
Jerusalaem, Israel 97707

MRS. LILLIAN PREIS  
3216 HEALY AVENUE  
FAR ROCKAWAY, N.Y.  
11691



Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Ave  
NY NY 10021

28 Tevet 5746  
January 9, 1986

Mr. Arthur Guttman  
6109 Highbury Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6N 1Z2

Dear Arthur:

It was thoughtful of you to forward a copy of the Vancouver Jewish Western Bulletin to me. The only comment I will make on the editorial is that it was undoubtedly based on a press release or comment from someone rather than on the basis of the totality of my comments. Be that as it may, I will not dignify the column with a response.

Rhea and I, too, regret that you and Glenda were not at the Biennial. It was one of the best within memory. The program, the accommodations, the outstanding hospitality of the local community made for an absolutely superb few days. I hope we can maintain this standard for Chicago and I do hope that you can be with us in 87.

I'm glad that things are moving along nicely for you and I will tell Rhea that you now have a four-door car rather than the back seat of a VW Rabbit, this may sway her towards another visit to Vancouver.

We both join in sending you fondest regards and all good wishes for the New Year.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

**GUTTMAN SERVICES INC.**

6109 Highbury St.  
Vancouver, B.C. V6N 1Z2  
TELEPHONE: (604) 263-7156

December 31, 1985

Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
UAHC  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Alex,

Enclosed is a copy of the Vancouver Jewish Western Bulletin dated December 19th. There is an editorial on page 4 which will interest you. Attitudes surely are hard to change. The editor/publisher of the Bulletin is a former president of the orthodox congregation here and not what might be termed a progressive thinker when it comes to matters Judaic. The new Rabbi of the orthodox congregation, on the other hand, I understand has been most helpful and supportive (and that is a real change).

Glenda and I had hoped to be able to see you in Los Angeles at the biennial, but could not make it and had to forego that pleasure and also what I have heard was an excellent program. Needless to say we also missed seeing so many other people of whom we are so fond. Hopefully we will be at the next one. It is also very satisfying to know that the representatives from the Pacific Northwest region are such talented and wonderful people.

Our own congregation continues to make progress. I understand our former burned-out site has been sold; detailed plans for the new building have been almost completed; and construction should be starting within a matter of months.

By the way, my own work has been developing very nicely. Indeed it has been a bit of a struggle but worth it. One result is that no longer will we have to fit you and Rhea in the back seat of the VW Rabbit as we did in Seattle.. We now have a four-door car and it awaits your next visit with anticipation. As you know, EXPO 86 is in Vancouver next year. Is there any chance you may be able to come to visit?

One last thought: should it be felt that I might be able to be of any service to you or the movement, please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Best wishes for a year of health and success to all of you at 838,

Shalom,

  
Arthur Guttman

*Get to know with  
thoroughness - glad to hear  
choffy - OK  
he's miss him  
etc.*

R/O/c

22 Tevet 5746  
January 3, 1986

Arthur C. Silverman, Esq.  
645 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Silverman:

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter to Lou Bernstein.

I appreciate the openness and moderation of your remarks. I just want you to know that, your impressions to the contrary notwithstanding, I share them fully.

As a case in point, you ought to know that the Atlanta Resolution was not introduced "as an implicit criticism of the leadership of the UAHC." Quite the contrary, it was submitted with my encouragement and placed before our recent Biennial with my full hearted endorsement.

You ought to know further that I have never used strident voices against Orthodoxy per se. I have felt free to refuse the reckless and unfounded charges that have been levelled against us by a politicized Orthodoxy which is interested not so much in what is being done, but in who is doing it.

I enclose herewith a copy of the recent address I gave at our Biennial which will give you a clearer view of what I am about. Certainly you will see therein the full hearted endorsement I gave to the Atlanta Resolution. I am also confident that there are many things contained therein with which you will disagree, but then, at least, you will disagree with what I said not what others reported me as saying.

With every good wish, I am

Cordially,

Alexander M. Schindler



for top

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Member of K-S Atty  
(Lookster)                     

Close friend of  
Rackman & while  
not on Board

promised to raise  
\$ for her

ARTHUR C. SILVERMAN

645 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

December 23, 1985

Rabbi Louis Bernstein  
Rabbinical Council of America  
275 Seventh Avenue  
New York, New York 10001

Dear Rabbi.

I read with great interest your article in the December 13 issue of Philadelphia's Jewish Exponent.

It generally was a very effective article which well summarized the case for halachah as the determinant of status as a Jew. The Orthodox position was set forth in a dignified manner, generally free of invective.

I said "generally" because one could have done without the statements about Reform's alleged "plummeting birth rate" (untrue) and about Reform's "exaggerated claims to the contrary" (true). I think these were unnecessary jabs, irrelevant to the merits of the argument and, therefore, damaging to it. I well appreciate the intention to rebut some of the untruths asserted by some Reform leaders, but they have no monopoly on untruths or on confrontational tactics. Unfortunately, we Orthodox Jews are guilty of our own fair share of the same things.

In the same issue of the Exponent, I also read a rather detailed article (enclosed) about what occurred at the meeting in Jerusalem of the Presi-

See  
Try to find  
one who can

dents' Conference regarding Prime Minister Peres's proposal to freeze for ten years any legislative action to change the Law of Return. The Jewish Week and the JTA did not well report what had happened.

It was a disgrace and worse that the reactions of the various constituents of the Conference of Presidents had to erupt into competing and utterly improper press conferences and statements.

It is obvious that the press conference of the six or so Orthodox organizations came after and was intended as a response to the other seventeen organizations which had improperly gone public first. Yet, as erroneous as was the holding of the prior conference, it was wrong beyond peradventure for the Orthodox press conference to have been held, or, if held, to have gone beyond the narrow issue of the jurisdictional impropriety of the earlier press conference. The Orthodox members of the Conference had no business at their press conference taking the following public positions: (i) that Reform and Conservative Judaism are not entitled to insist upon recognition and legitimacy; (ii) that consideration of the Law of Return should not be postponed because it will increase assimilation (this position was reported by the JTA, not the Exponent).

I would respectfully suggest, Rabbi Bernstein, that there are many Orthodox Jews who fundamentally disagree with one or both of these positions. Many of these Orthodox Jews are members of Hadassah, the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, and other national Jewish organizations which participated in the first press conference. I would venture to say that there are many, many members of the six Orthodox organizations -- rabbis and laymen -- who oppose changing the Law of Return. There are many Orthodox Jews in Israel who fully support Prime Minister Peres's position.

I would say somewhat similar things to Rabbis Schindler and Stern as well, namely, that I believe that there are many, many Reform Jews who do not agree in the slightest with what is happening and has happened in the Reform movement that has indisputably led to the imminent fracture of the Jewish people. They, of course, deny the possibility of the result, but their knowledgeable constituents well know what is in store for the Jewish people as a result of certain positions taken by Reform Judaism if those positions are not soon changed.

A Reform congregation in Atlanta found it necessary a short time ago to put before the recent UAHC convention a resolution implicitly critical of the leadership of the UAHC and reaffirming the commitment to K'lal Yisrael of the Reform movement. The resolution called "for a dialogue with mutual respect among all branches of Judaism", and called "upon the lay and rabbinic leadership of all of the movements in Jewish life to undertake concrete steps to engender a constructive approach to many of the issues which we as Jews confront." This resolution was not dissimilar to the one passed last May by Orthodox congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in New York calling upon the Orthodox Union to develop "positive and productive relationships among the different branches of Judaism" and to reduce "destructive tensions and polarization between Jews with differing religious views", and noting that "cooperation among the congregational and rabbinic umbrella organizations of the principal denominations of Judaism" are "critically necessary for Klal Yisrael and the unity and survival of the State of Israel and the Jewish people."

I think that the leadership of our national Jewish groups -- which includes you and Sidney Kwestel, Rabbi Alexander Shapiro and Franklin Kreutzer, and Rabbis Alexander Schindler and Jack Stern, as well as others -- are simply not listening to their constituents or to the Jewish people on the subject of the importance of avoiding a



fracture. The leadership only listens to each other and responds to (or bickers with) each other. I would submit that the American leadership of religious Judaism -- all branches of it -- are letting the Jewish people down horribly and are abusing their positions of trust and leadership. Most Jews do not want to see the Jewish people split in two -- and, in that connection, they do not want public press conferences being held and confrontations occurring that will assist and encourage such a fracture.

It is time that the public recriminations cease between Orthodox and Liberal Judaism. It would be far more useful if all branches of Judaism quietly took up and acted upon Rabbi Haskel Lookstein's suggestions set forth in his recent inaugural address to the New York Board of Rabbis (enclosed). It would be far more useful if all the American lay and religious leaders of the various branches of Judaism and of key national organizations attended and constructively participated in the pioneering conference to be held in Princeton, New Jersey on March 16 and 17 and to be sponsored by CLAL, on the subject of "Will There Be One Jewish People by the Year 2000?" at which the opening address will be delivered by the President of Israel, Chaim Herzog, and the keynote address will be delivered by Elie Wiesel. Both are Traditional Jews who weep with angry tears at the polarization that is about to destroy the unity of our people. It would be productive if Yeshiva University, The Jewish Theological Seminary, and Hebrew Union College all took up the call for mutual dialogue and study which was added to the Atlanta congregation's resolution referred to above and then adopted by the entire UAHC at the recent convention (enclosed).

These are the efforts that, hopefully, will yield productive results, not the shouting matches and "shtochs" that are taking place on an almost daily basis among the so-called "leaders" of the

Rabbi Louis Bernstein

-5-

December 23, 1985

branches of American Judaism and of other Jewish  
communal organizations.

Very sincerely yours,



Arthur C. Silverman

ACS/pw

Enclosures: Exponent article, UAHC resolution,  
Lookstein speech

✓cc: Rabbi Alexander Schindler (Exponent article,  
Lookstein speech)  
Kenneth Bialkin, Esq. (Exponent article,  
Lookstein speech)

# Religious issue simmers

JERUSALEM — The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations is a body that lives by consensus. Comprised of 38 different groups, the Presidents' Conference continually searches for common denominators and avoids like the plague those issues it perceives as divisive.

## Analysis

Religious practice, however, is one of those divisive issues, and the ongoing effort by Israel's religious parties to change the Law of Return, due once more for Knesset debate next month, simmered just below the surface of the Conference's four-day mission to the Jewish state.

Occasionally, despite efforts by the chair to rule the matter out of order, it erupted into heated exchanges.

The Law of Return, adopted by the Knesset on July 5, 1950 — the 46th anniversary of the death of Theodor Herzl — provides that every Jew has the right to settle in the land of Israel. The problem, of course, is "Who is a Jew?"

According to the law, a Jew is anyone born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism. Since 1977, the religious parties in Israel, with the aid of many Orthodox groups in the United States, have been trying to insert the words "according to halachah" after "converted to Judaism."

Since those converted to Judaism by the Reform, Conservative or Reconstructionist movements have not been "converted according to halachah," they would not be considered Jewish in Israel. Non-Orthodox groups, therefore, strenuously oppose the change, and Conservative rabbis have formally voted to bar their pulpits to any Knesset member who supports it.

The presidents of the major American Reform and Conservative rabbinical and congregational bodies are members of the Presidents' Conference. It was only natural, therefore, that they would use the opportunity to meet with Israel's leadership to voice their position on this controversial matter. It was equally natural that the representatives of the equivalent Orthodox

(Continued on Page 88)

# U.S. Jewish leaders debate Law of Return

(Continued from Page 3)

groups would oppose them.

The issue surfaced early in the formal mission program.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres was the guest speaker at the opening breakfast and, in response to a question, declared that his Labor Party had not changed its opposition to the proposed change in the law. He then suggested a 10-year moratorium on any legislative action to change the Law of Return.

The next day at dinner, Deputy Premier and Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir was also asked about the issue. Maintaining that he was speaking to the group in his role of foreign minister, Shamir dodged the question.

The controversy erupted again later that same evening during a panel discussion on the relationship between Israel and American Jewry. Presidents Conference Chairman

Kenneth Bialkin, of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, strove to defuse the issue by saying that since there is no consensus on the matter, and since, in any event, the Presidents Conference only deals with the relationship between the government of Israel and the government of the United States, the discussion was out of order.

One of the panelists, Professor David Hartman of Hebrew University, an Orthodox rabbi, and several questioners insisted on raising it, however. In his formal presentation, Hartman insisted that it would be "tragic" if the "Who is a Jew?" issue were to be resolved through Knesset action.

"Do we really want an Israeli political society that limits the way in which Jews can approach God?" he asked.

When the controversy threatened to get somewhat boisterous during the question-and-answer period, Hartman remarked that it was encouraging to see American Jews get so excited over a religious issue.

The controversy continued throughout the conference as both sides called press conferences to present their points of view.

At the first press conference, the leaders of 17 organizations — whose constituencies, they said, "comprised the overwhelming majority of the organized Jewish community" — issued a joint declaration opposing any change in the Law of Return and supporting Peres' stance on the issue.

In addition to the representatives of the Reform and Conservative movements, leaders of the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith International and the ADL signed the declaration. Hadassah had earlier issued a separate statement opposing the change. The groups were careful, however, to stress they were not officially representing the Presidents Conference.

"The self-serving demand of one group of Jews that they be recognized as the sole interpreter of the Jewish religion — and specifically that their authority to determine the legitimacy of conversions performed outside Israel be spelled out in the secular law of Israel — is morally and religiously unacceptable to us," their statement said.

"It is contrary to the interests and welfare of world Jewry. The proposed change in the Law of Return will do harm to the principle of Jewish unity and jeopardize the sense of solidarity that binds the Jewish people everywhere to the State of Israel," it continued.

"The symbolic meaning" of the proposed change, said Rabbi Jack Stern, president of the Reform movement's Central Conference of American Rabbis, "is that Israel says to the non-Orthodox, 'We do not recognize the authenticity of your leaders and, therefore, of your Judaism.' Some of our people by now are saying, 'If I'm not authentic, how is my financial support authentic?'"

"This issue is beginning to interfere with our ability to maintain Israeli programming," added Franklin D. Kreutzer, president of the Conservative movement's United Synagogue of America. "We feel we have second-class status in Israel. We can't get land for our synagogues and other facilities."

Two hours later in the same room, leaders of several American Orthodox groups issued their own statement and held their own press conference. "The Reform and Conservative are misusing their presence in Israel as part of the Presidents Conference to give the impression that this is an issue before the Presidents Conference," said Rabbi Louis Bernstein, president of the Rabbinical Council of America.

"The Reform and Conservative are not really asking for a continuance of the status quo, but for recognition," he added. "This is closely connected with their demand for equal legal status with the Orthodox in Israel. If the Law of Return is changed, they know it will read them out."

The issue, the Orthodox spokesman said, is far greater than the wording of the Law of Return; the issue is the right of the non-Orthodox to change the halachic laws of divorce and conversion.

The Reform movement's adoption of patrilineal descent, its abolition of religious divorce and its changes in conversion procedure are creating a "tremendous problem" of Jews who, by Orthodox standards, are not really Jewish, the Orthodox spokesman added.

There is a distinct possibility, he said, that lists specifying who is and who is not a "kosher Jew" will be compiled in the near future.

Most observers here in Israel feel that while it might not pass the Knesset this session, the proposed change in the Law of Return will be an issue here for the foreseeable future. If the Presidents Conference mission was any indication, it appears that it will be an increasingly important issue in the American Jewish community as well. — David Gross

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

by RABBI HASKEL LOOKSTEIN

at ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NEW YORK BOARD OF RABBIS

Wednesday, December 18, 1985 - 11:00 A.M.

Dear Colleagues:

I am very grateful to all of you for this opportunity to serve the more than 1,000 rabbis who comprise the New York Board of Rabbis. I feel particularly privileged to follow in this office many distinguished rabbis from Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism who have served the cause of Jewish unity with distinction and self-sacrifice. I am particularly proud to follow directly my good friend and associate, Rabbi Morris Friedman, under whom I have been happy to work in the New York Board and in the Rabbinic Advisory Council of UJA-Federation here in this city.

My election to the New York Board of Rabbis, however, means something even more in a personal way. It means that I am assuming the same position which my father, Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein, of blessed memory, occupied exactly 43 years ago in this season of the year. It is not the only position of his which I am privileged to try to fill. I have followed him in Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun where he was Rabbi for 56 years, and as Principal of the Ramaz School which he founded in 1937 and which he lead as Principal until his passing six years ago.



But in the case of the New York Board of Rabbis, there is an historical analogy which bears special mention. My father was elected in 1942 because of a crisis which developed in the Jewish community and which was tearing that community apart. It was precisely at that time that American Jews first learned about the Final Solution when on November 24, 1942, the late Stephen S. Wise held a news conference which gave the details of Hitler's plan to murder all the Jews in Europe. He provided specific figures which told of the fact that already 2,000,000 Jews had been murdered in Poland and that 5,000,000 more who were under Nazi domination were threatened with annihilation.

At that critical juncture in Jewish history something else was happening which shook the Jewish community. A group of American Jews who were vigorously anti-Zionist in their orientation formed the American Council for Judaism. Nothing would stand in their way, including the need to rescue the Jews of Europe and the campaign to open the gates of Palestine. Its declared purpose was to make clear that Jews were only Americans of the Hebraic persuasion and that they had no other national or political loyalties which would compromise their total Americanism.

The regular order of procession in the New York Board of Jewish Ministers, as it was known then, called for the election

of Rabbi Hyman Schachtel as the next President of the Board. Rabbi Schachtel, a Reform Rabbi, was among the signers of the declaration which created the American Council for Judaism. Because of the divisiveness which that declaration created in the American Jewish community and out of regard for the larger issues of Jewish survival which were then so poignantly at stake, the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise lead a political revolt within the New York Board of Jewish Ministers and introduced my father's name as an alternative candidate for President of the Board although he was not in any way in line for that post. With Rabbi Wise as my father's campaign manager the outcome was a forgone conclusion. Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein was elected President by a vote of 62 to 11, and Rabbi Schachtel and his 11 supporters resigned from the Board.

It is therefore a special honor and privilege for me to serve in this position, not alone because my father served in it, but also because of why he was chosen - to unite the community and to be a symbol and an instrument of Jewish survival here and around the world.

It is somewhat in the light of that history that I would like to express my major concern to you as your new President.

In 1985, the Jewish people does not face a threat of physical annihilation like the one it faced in 1942. We do, however, confront another threat which is both serious and frightening. I am referring to the growing polarization that exists in the religious community both here and in Israel. So many of us are unable to speak to each other civilly. Religious rightists and leftists throw epithets at each other. The extremism that manifests itself on both sides threatens to isolate Jew from Jew and to rend the fabric of Jewish peoplehood so that we will no longer be one people.

From my own vantage point as part of centrist Orthodox Judaism, I am terrified at the prospect of such disunity. I believe fervently in the middle position. I believe in respect for varying opinions, which also includes respect for those who hold those opinions. I feel there must be a degree of moderation exercised by all of us in expressing our views and acting upon them.

Here in the New York Board of Rabbis, as in few other places, there is this mutual respect and love for each other. There is a degree of civility in our rhetoric and tolerance in the way in which we express our differing positions. But as I look out to the wider community I do not see this kind of coming together. On the contrary, looking at the Jewish religious community in America

I understand as never before the frightening words in the prayer of Sa'adia Gaon which we recite at the s'lichot service on the eve of Rosh Hashanah

אני עומד לבד אני עומד לבד אני עומד לבד  
אני עומד לבד אני עומד לבד אני עומד לבד  
אני עומד לבד אני עומד לבד אני עומד לבד

"I turn to the right and there is no support; to the left and there is no encouragement."

On my right I feel terribly alone. So many of my Orthodox colleagues are not ready to relate to my friends in the Conservative and Reform rabbinate except on broad communal issues. When it comes to religious matters they want no part of dialogue.

How many Orthodox colleagues are members of the New York Board of Rabbis. And of those who are, how many are active? Not many!

Last year, when Rabbi Alexander Schapiro, President of the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly, was invited to address the Rabbinical Council of America, I received a letter signed by many of my friends urging me to stay away from the RCA Convention as an act of protest. Why must I protest the presence of a Conservative colleague who reaches out to his Orthodox brothers in a gesture of peace and cooperation?

Not too long ago, in one community of this country, the UJA wanted to honor all of the rabbis in the community at the annual fund raising dinner in the hope that honoring the rabbis would bring out a large attendance of lay people. The leading Orthodox rabbi in that community, a man of great piety and knowledge, accepted the invitation with two qualifications: first, that the Orthodox rabbis be listed separately from the other rabbis and, second, that there be a separate dais for the Orthodox rabbis.

Why is such a posture necessary? Are we really afraid that participating together in joint ventures means giving endorsement to those with whom we may disagree? Nobody has asked us for our endorsement, nor is anyone interested in it. Individual communities give legitimacy to their own religious leaders. We of the Orthodox movement have no monopoly on granting or withholding legitimacy. No one has given us the right to judge the qualifications of others. Every Yom Kippur we pound our breasts and we ask forgiveness of God for the sin of p'lilut, which means the sin of passing judgment on others. Oh how sinful all of us are in that regard - Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. We are all so busy passing judgment on everybody else that we forget that it is only on ourselves that we have the right to pass judgment - indeed, the obligation to pass judgment three times a day when we stand before God in prayer - l'hitpallel.

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"I turn to the right and there is no support."

But, frankly, PNIO /SC/ Teneo  
there isn't much help from the left either. One of the foremost leaders of the Reform movement told a New York Times reporter last summer that there really is no purpose in intra-religious dialogue. We can talk about broad communal issues, he said, but when it comes to religious matters, "either you accept halakha or you are outside halakha. We have chosen to be outside." That statement, regrettably, mirrors the most extreme judgments and denunciations that come from the far right. Why must a respected leader take such a position which precludes meaningful discussion?

Of course, to be honest about it, the Reform movement has taken a turn recently which does represent a serious break with halakha. The patrilineal decision of three years ago threatens to tear us apart as a people irretrievably, because we will no longer have a common ground for agreement on who is Jewish and who is not. The seeds for this break were planted many years ago but the decision to formulate the policy as a public statement and, if you will, a public challenge, has driven a wedge between the left and the right that fosters polarization, anger, resentment, bitterness and divisiveness.

The result of our not talking to each other and the actions which have been taken by some religious leaders in America has created what Rabbi Reuven Bulka calls a coming cataclysm in the form of an expected schism between half the Jewish people in America and the other half which will preclude social relationships and intra-marriage between one group and another. The more traditional group will not recognize the Jewishness of hundreds of thousands of the less traditional group. Moreover, because of the position that Reform has taken in not requiring a religious divorce prior to the remarriage of someone who has been civilly divorced, there will be very large numbers of children born in second marriages who will be mamzerim and therefore ineligible for marriage with the more traditional segments of Jewish society.

What are we to do in response to the present rancor and bitterness and the coming schism which is unavoidable if steps to bring us together are not taken quickly? Shall we just sit back and let polarization run its course and see our community hopelessly divided? I, for one, am not prepared to sit back and watch this happen and I do not believe that my colleagues in the New York Board of Rabbis are prepared to do so either.

And so, I would like to make a proposal to you. I would like the new Administration of the New York Board of Rabbis to devote itself to placing ahavat Yisrael on the top of our list

of priorities. I would like to suggest that the strident tones of our rhetoric be lowered and that we seek to find those things that unite us rather than focus on the ideological differences which divide us. We are not going to solve our philosophical disputes in the near future. Perhaps we shall never solve them. But we do have concrete problems which affect our future as a people and which, if allowed to continue, will lead to a tragedy for which none of us ought to be responsible.

In focusing on concrete problems, I would urge my Orthodox colleagues to extend a hand of friendship and love to Conservative and Reform rabbis and not to be afraid to sit down with them in order to find acceptable solutions for our problems. The rabbis of groups with whom we differ are the recognized leaders of those groups and they must be approached with respect and regard, just as we want others to approach us. I submit that shalom bayit - peace in our collective home - is essential if we are to deal with critical issues. Moreover, the principle of kavod ha-briyot - the respect for every human being - surely transcends our individual Torah outlook which separates us from the philosophy of others.

With this kind of respect, regard and love for those with whom we reserve the right to disagree, but whose status as religious leaders we must accept, I would turn to my Reform and Conservative

colleagues and ask them to consider some concrete steps that will help to avert the catastrophe which looms on the horizon. Specifically, I would ask for three things.

1. A retreat from the recent public decision on the part of the Reform movement to recognize the children of all intermarriages - regardless of which spouse is Jewish - as being Jewish as long as the children are brought up as "Jews" and connected to the temple.

2. A readiness to explore methods to convert non-Jews to Judaism in a way which will be accepted by the Jewish people as a whole, including Orthodox Jews. I am sure that such methods exist. If we all have the same practical goal in mind - the survival of one Jewish people - and if we all will respect each other's sensibilities, we will find and implement those methods.

3. An agreement that every marriage between Jews which ends civilly must also end with the giving and receiving of a Jewish divorce which will be acceptable to the Jewish people as a whole. I recognize that my Reform colleagues, as a group, have not had such a requirement for some 80 years. I also recognize that this would entail some compromises on the make-up of the Bet Din for a get which would exclude many of my Conservative colleagues. I believe that these concerns, justifiable and fundamental as they

are, nevertheless have less importance than the tragedy which we are creating by our present, uncoordinated approach. The alternative is the creation of hundreds of thousands of mamzerim in the coming decades.

Forgive me for being so detailed in my proposals. What I have said is purely for the purpose of discussion, debate and analysis. I hope that at future meetings of the New York Board of Rabbis we can invite Jewish religious leaders with the broadest possible views who will articulate their own feelings about how to solve the critical problems which confront us. Perhaps we can create an atmosphere that will help the recognized rabbinic bodies of the major American groups to work out among themselves the necessary solutions. Surely, it is not the task of the New York Board of Rabbis to find the solutions. But in this group we may be able to help clear the air and foster the necessary rapport.

There is a lot of hatred out there in the Jewish world. It almost rivals in intensity the hatred of vicious anti-Semites who make no distinctions between the different branches of American Jews. When one of them, a clergyman no less, pronounced in Madison Square Garden less than two months ago that "God will put you in the ovens," he meant you and me and all of us.



The antidote to unnecessary hatred must be unconditional love. This must be the passion of the middle ground among our Jewish people. It must be more powerful than the passions on the right and on the left, where emotional commitment and passionate statements seem to develop more naturally. We must create our own passionate position - a position which says that we love all Jews, that we love Judaism, that we love the Jewish people, and that we are passionately committed to see that all of these survive in the future in health, in vigor and in peace. Thank you

January 2, 1986  
21 Tevet 5746

Mr. Irv Wengrow, President  
Troy Jewish Congregation  
3333 Coolidge  
Troy, MI 48084

Dear Mr. Wengrow:

David Hachen was kind enough to share with me a copy of the fine letter you wrote on "Inter-Factional In-Fighting" which was published by the Detroit Jewish News. It is a very good letter and I write to express my appreciation to you for writing as you did.

The tone of your letter is thoughtful and you make some very important points in regard to the term "observant." Well done!

With all good wishes and kindest greetings, I am

±±±Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

## Inter-Factional In-Fighting

This madness must end. Jew arguing with Jew, using the media as a battleground and adjectives as battleflags. First we have the now-infamous ad placed by an Orthodox group. Then Rabbi Schindler of the UAHC responds in his address to their convention which I attended. A local Orthodox rabbi takes issue calling Rabbi Schindler an "evil racist." Last week's Op-Ed called for unity yet the same issue contained "scathing attacks on Reform and Conservative Judaism" by the Agudath Israel of America rejecting the UAHC's K'lal Yisrael resolution that called for "dialogue with mutual respect among all branches of Judaism."

As Rabbi Schindler said, "Whatchutzpah, this! What arrogance! What desecration! To presume to know just which rites and prayers are and are not acceptable to the *ribono shel olam*; to claim the clairvoyance to look into the soul of another human being and judge his feelings for God!"

Why is it that Lutherans, with whom we share a building, will attend our services yet there are some Jews who refuse. This should not be. But the schism widens. One reason, and one I take great issue with, is the increasing use of the term "observant" as a synonym for Orthodox. I observe Judaism as a Reform Jew yet some would consider me non-observant by their definition. Our congregation takes great pride in our observances and our daily celebrations of our Jewish lives. No one who has been with us could possibly say we were "non-observants." I cannot accept this term and I refuse to do so. I am an observant Jew who happens to be affiliated with the Reform movement. Observance is a relative term, not an absolute, and it is not defined by one's affiliation.

I don't ask for the Orthodoxy's blessing, only their recognition that different perspectives can be valid. But to hear, they must first listen and that is what I ask. Let us at least agree to disagree. Again Rabbi Schindler — "... the Jewish world must know this: Reform is an adjective, it is not a noun. The noun is Jew."

The more adjectives separate us, the quieter becomes our voice.

Irv Wengrow  
President, The Troy Jewish Congregation

Send her a note Franky  
her for her letter in  
the Detroit Jewish News.

January 2, 1986  
21 Tevet 5746

Mr. Alexander Gottdiener  
801 North Broad Street  
Elizabeth, NJ 07208

Dear Mr. Gottdiener:

Thank you for your recent note and the various clippings you were kind enough to share.

As you can appreciate, my schedule is a very hectic one and I am certain Rabbi Shapiro is in the same situation. While it would be pleasant to meet with you and to chat, I really do not know what would come of such a get together. After all, the presidents and executive directors of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements meet on many occasions and discuss a multitude of concerns. We do talk with one another and it is not a matter of no dialogue between us. As a matter of fact, I will be taking part in a major symposium to be held in Princeton a few months hence and it is expected that there will also be representation from the Orthodox and Conservative movements.

With appreciation for your continued interest and with all good wishes,  
I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

From The Desk of:

Alex Gottdiener

Dec.27,1985

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

So many things are happening connected with Jewish survival that it is too much for my old fashioned way.

What would you say if I would suggest that the 3 Alexanders get together for lunch in a kosher place sometimes in January.

The (big 3) are, you, Rabbi A.M.Shapiro of South Orange and your humble servant Gottdiener, as my name implicates.

What about it ?

Cordially

Cc.  
Rabbi Shapiro

*Alex Gottdiener*

*Can you find  
out who he is?*



# Nation Today

## Conservative Reaffirm Matrilinealism

KIAMESHA LAKE, N.Y. — Rejecting the recently adopted stand of the Reform Movement to recognize either the father or the mother in establishing lines of Jewish descent, the lay leadership of the 850 Conservative Movement congregations on the North American Continent overwhelmingly voted a major Resolution affirming the traditional position that "status as a Jew is determined only by matrilineal descent, or by conversion according to Jewish Law." The action took place at the five-day Biennial Convention of the United Synagogue of America at the Concord Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, NY.

In adopting the Resolution, the delegates were aligning themselves with the position of the Rabbinical Assembly, international organization of the Rabbis of the Conservative Movement, which has unequivocally opposed the "drastic modification of universally accepted Jewish law" represented in the Reform action.

# Is Israel's Soul Imperiled?

## Yes, By Kahanism

By Thomas Smerling

WASHINGTON — Is Meir Kahane a serious threat to Israeli democracy? Or is he merely an ugly blemish?

Most Israeli analysts agree that the direct threat posed by Mr. Kahane's party, Kach, is limited. Mr. Kahane's politics are simply too repugnant and ultimately too un-Israeli to ever attract widespread support. Israel's new legislation against incitement to racism may succeed in barring Kach from future elections altogether.

The real danger, such Israelis say, comes not from Mr. Kahane or from his organization but from the extremist ideology he espouses.

Kahanism blends ultra-nationalism with fundamentalism, racism and legitimized violence. It casts aside democratic values in pursuit of its higher goals — first, annexation of the West Bank and Gaza ("Greater Israel"), then, institution of religious

## It's the tip of an iceberg

law (a "Torah state"). Its solution to the Palestinian problem is simple: Expel the Arabs from Israel.

Kahanism is greater than Kahane, and it extends far beyond Kach. Last April, a survey by the Van Leer Foundation in Jerusalem found 11 percent of Israeli high school students ready to vote for Kach, while 42 percent agreed with Mr. Kahane's views on Arabs. Shocked, the conservative daily Yediot Aharonot replicated the survey. Its conclusion: "Kahanism is gaining ground among the youth in all strata, all over the country, from all classes. It is turning into a real threat to the State of Israel."

Kach is the tip of a right-wing iceberg. Ehud Sprinzak of Hebrew University, who has studied Israeli extremist groups for 15 years, worries more about Gush Emunim — the "Bloc of the Faithful," responsible for much of the settlement of the West Bank — than about Kach. "The forces

Thomas Smerling is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

which reject even the peace agreement with Egypt are growing daily. They are well-organized and very determined. They think as Kahane does, but they say he talks too much. When asked about Kahane's plan to expel the Arabs, they answer: 'Things that may be done in 10 to 12 years should not be talked about openly today.'"

Israel's ultranationalist party Tehiya differs from Kach more in style than in substance. Its leader, Yuval Ne'eman, advocates "negotiating" the removal of 500,000 Arabs from the territories.

Likud's right wing combines such absolutism with power. Ariel Sharon, now Minister Without Portfolio, has proposed overthrowing King Hussein and establishing a Palestinian state in Jordan. Like Mr. Kahane, he insists that democracy must not be permitted to impede his brand of Zionism. Unlike Mr. Kahane, he conceivably could become Prime Minister.

Add to this list the religious parties and settler vigilantes, then consider Israel in 1986 — a prostrate economy with record-breaking unemployment; a relentless wave of indigenous terrorism; an army still recovering from the Lebanese trauma; continuing military occupation with its daily degradations; a political vacuum at the center. Such conditions can only fuel the search for scapegoats, strongmen and simple answers.

Even a modest tilt to the right could bring to power a radicalized right-wing coalition contemptuous of democracy. More insidiously, the entire political spectrum could be pulled rightward, leading to gradual erosion of democratic rights. Israeli civil libertarians are already troubled: They note that Israel's democracy is vigorous but vulnerable because it lacks a constitution or bill of rights.

Moderates recognize these dangers and are fighting back. A broad coalition is confronting Kach with legal challenges, counter-demonstrations and educational programs in the schools, army and media.

Are these measures adequate? Even those directly engaged in such efforts fear that unless conditions change, the battle against extremism may be lost — washed away by a tide of frustration.

Israel is in a state of flux. The old Labor consensus is dead; former Prime Minister Menachem Begin's counter-consensus is gone. A new order has not yet emerged. Some Israelis are struggling to solidify the center with pragmatic solutions while moving toward peace negotiations. Others are working feverishly to usher in their messianic visions of biblical redemption and Greater Israel. At stake is the soul — and perhaps the democracy — of the Jewish state. □

## Yes, by Liberal Jews

By Meir Kahane

JERUSALEM — As I review the year since 26,000 Israelis voted that I be their Knesset representative, I am overwhelmed, even as the polls show a dramatic increase in my strength, by the sheer magnitude of the frenzied hatred of the liberal-intellectual mob. Old witch-hunters never die. They return in the form of Israeli and American Jewish liberals, news media people, politicians, intellectuals, Reform rabbis and presidents of Jewish organizations.

"Racist," "fascist," "insane," were among the kinder epithets. All this, of course, from people who pride themselves on fair play and tolerance.

Why the eruption of such poisonous hate on the part of civilized types? Why McCarthyism in the Holy Land and in the United States Jewish community? The answer surely lies in the issues that I raise and, more importantly, in the incredible refusal of anyone to deal with them.

One: I have stated that there exists a clear and present danger of the Arabs of Israel becoming a majority through their naturally high birth rate and through the democratic rights granted by Israel's Declaration of Independence.

On the other hand, I have said, the State of Israel was created by Jews, Zionists, as the Jewish state, and this can mean by definition only one thing: a state with a guaranteed majority of Jews. Only this assures Jewish sovereignty, and Jews mastery over their own destiny. But if that is so, what does one do with Western democracy and its axiom of majority rule? The terribly painful question for the Jewish democrats is: Do Arabs have the democratic right to become a majority peacefully and then peacefully put an end to the Jewish state? Is there a basic contradiction between Zionism and Western democracy?

I have stated flatly that such a contradiction exists and that Jews must choose Judaism and Zionism over Western democracy. But is there a Jewish leader prepared to debate this calmly and rationally? No, for with my demand that a choice be made I have touched upon a most sensitive nerve in the modern, Westernized Jew who dearly wishes to believe there is no contradiction. Having shielded himself from the truth, he lashes out like some wounded animal in terror.

Two: What kind of liberal mind is so contemptuous of Arabs that it cannot understand that no Arabs can ever happily accept living in a country that is officially called the Jewish state; whose Law of Return applies to Jews only; whose national land can be rented to Jews alone; whose national anthem speaks of "the soul of a Jew yearning"; whose Independence Day celebrates Jewish victory and Arab defeat; whose very essence, down to the United Jewish Appeal, is Jewish? What kind of obtuse intellectual cannot understand that the Arab of what was once, in his mind, "Palestine," believes that the Jews of Israel are thieves?

And as the specter of Arab nationalism rages into regular attack, and bombs and grenades and knives take Jewish lives in the land that was supposed to be free of all the suffering of the exile, who among the opponents of "Kahanism" will answer the Jew who asks: Are we supposed to sit quietly and allow our enemies to sit with us, even as they murder us and grow into a majority? What insane servitude to "democracy" and "morality" compels us to commit national suicide?

Meir Kahane, a rabbi, is a member of the Kach Party in the Knesset.

ALEXANDER GOTTDIENER  
801 NORTH BROAD STREET  
ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY 07208  
(201) 353-4481

Dec.26,1985

Israel Today  
16661 Ventura Blvd.  
Encino,CA 91436

Re: My comments on your interview with Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin  
of Stephen S.Wise Temple in L.A.

Att. Ms.R.Zalis,Director of Israel Today

Dear Editor:

This is our response to your frontpage article "Begin: Razor Sharp and Alert" of your Dec.13,1985 issue:

We both attended the Israel Bond Convention of Nov,1982 as members of the New Jersey delegation. We had a tremendous time until that Saturday night on Nov.13th when the tragic news of Aliza Begin death forced the then P.M. Begin to return to Israel the same night without any public appearance.

\*hear To understand our grief and disappointment,we have to tell you that we attended for one and only reason, to see and\*Menachem Begin. There was no other reason because there are plenty of Bond Dinners in the NYC.area. Similarly when we got acquainted with members of the French delegation in the Century Plaza and asked them an obvious question: What made you come all the way from France to attend a Bond convention in L.A. ? Not surprisingly we got the same answer, to see and hear P.M.Begin. It did a lot of good to our morale.

Before we get to the point, we want to mention briefly an interesting episode: During the week of Nov.8,82 Mr.& Mrs.Roland E.Arnall and their friends invited the entire New Jersey and French delegations to a Dinner party in their private club. We really do not know if the Arnalls had some special reason to lump together these 2 delegations ? Maybe because my wife Rose speaks a fairly good French, but we all had the time of our life and we use this opportunity to thank publicly to the Arnalls and their friends for their gracious gesture. And now to the point:

1)Rabbi Zeldin, we wish and pray that former P.M.Begin would accept your invitation, come to L.A. and finish his interrupted mission of Nov.82. We pledge solemnly both to come and be there.We are sure many of those in attendance in 1982 would come again for a reunion. It sounds too good to be true.

2)Yes. He is supposed to speak first on Sat.night to a U.J.A (CJF) gathering at the Bonaventura Hotel, and on Sunday at the Israel Bond convention at the Century Plaza. (Literatura enclosed)marked # 1 and 2)

3)We agree and pray that Mr.Begin come back to public life. It would be nothing short of a miracle. The existence of Israel is an every day one.

4)Rabbi Zeldin, we see that you have great respect for the Orthodox. It is only natural. Which normal human being would turn against his or her parents or grandparents just to please some derailed liberals. Not even communist Russia succeeded doing it.

5)Judea and Samaria, liberals prefer to call "Occupied West Bank" Here we are on a collision course. It will not happen and must not happen. It is not we who will decide this grave question. The people of Israel, the  
Please turn to P 2



Israel Today, dated 12/26/85

Settlers, the Hesderniks and all those people who are willing to put their life on the line at any moments notice, will have the last word. All what we can do to pray and hope that they will make the right one. Many realize that it was a big mistake to give back the Sinai in view of the Arab nature: Cross and double cross. But it was an easier decision, Sinai never belonged to Israel. To give back any part of Judea, Samaria or the Golan would be tantamount to suicide.

6) Kahanism: I enclose an Editorial of the N.Y. Times of 12/20/85 by Knesset member Rabbi Meir Kahane in response to the question "Is Israel's Soul Imperiled ? by the superliberal Thomas Smerling who answered "Yes, by Kahanism. Rabbi Kahane answered, "Yes by Liberal Jews" (Marked #3)

The Times claims to be evenhanded, but we all know their real intentions.

You have not to agree with everything Kahane stands for, but if you are objective, you have to admit that there is a lot of truth in what he is saying, and the support he is getting shows that his ideas are popular with a large segment of the people in Israel.

Let me remind you that after W.W.II., millions of people have been exchanged without the slightest hitch in many parts of the world. Poles against German and others. Russia, the champion of the Arabs showed the way in the most ruthless fashion. Are the Arabs special ? 6 or 800,000 Sephardic Jews left Arab countries, leaving everything behind. Let the Arabs of Israel take their places and their properties.

Do you know when the Arabs massacred the Jewish population of Hebron in 1928 they have taken over their homes, and are still in possession of those homes until this very day. What kind of people are we to reward murderers ?

Didn't you notice when you walk the streets of the Old City of Jerusalem, the most choicest real estate properties are owned either by the Catholic Church or the Moslems. How did they acquired those properties ? Did they buy it legally from the Jews, or did they massacre first the Jewish population to take possession ? I leave the answer to your judgment.

7) This is our final comment on the question of denying financial support if Israel amends the "Law of Return" If the Knesset adopts the Orthodox version it wouldn't be an Amendment, it would be a Restoration of an ancient Jewish Law about 2000 years old.

Denying Israel financial help would hurt, but if you feel that your money keeps Israel going, all what we will tell you is the same what we said before to Rabbi Alexander Schindler when he voiced the same threat, quoting Queen Esther's uncle Mordechai (Megiloth Esther), the Hebrew text translated is: He said to Queen Esther, if you will deny help from your people, Almighty G-d will provide help for the Jewish people from other sources.

The sooner we realize that nobody can dictate Israel, and if you will try it it will backfire. They are smart enough to find the right solution. Agreed ?

  
Alex & Rose Gottdiener

Cc.

Roland E. Arnall, Agudath Israel of America, Leonard Diener, Elizabeth, N.J. Harold Jacobs, Pres. of Young Israel, Jewish Horizon, Jewish Press, Jewish Week Yechiel Kadishai, aide to Mr. Begin, Rabbi Kahane, Dr. Norman Lamm of Yeshiva University, Religious Zionists of America, Dr. Hillel Seidman of Allgemeine Journal, Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler of the Reform Movement, Rabbi Alexander M. Shapiro of the Conservatives, Rabbi Pinchas Teitz of the Jewish Educational Center, Professor Elie Wiesel of Boston University, Knesset member Rabbi E. Waldman of Kiryat Arba, Joseph Wilf, Hillside, N.J., Abe Zuckerman, Hillside, NJ and I. Zeldin of L.A. and Rabbi E. Rackman of Bar Ilan University.

# ISRAEL TODAY

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ALEXANDER GOTTDIENER  
801 N BROADSTREET  
ELIZABETH NJ 07208

Friday, December 13, 1985 Vol. 13, No. 205

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## Begin: 'Razor Sharp and Alert'

### Los Angeles Rabbi Tells Of Rare Private Meeting

*Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin founded Stephen S. Wise Temple, which has become the largest Jewish congregation in the West and the second largest in the world encompassing a nine building complex on an 18-acre Los Angeles mountain-top property and serving more than 2,500 families. Born in New York to an Orthodox, Zionist family, he was graduated from Brooklyn College and received his Masters and Rabbinic degrees from Hebrew Union College. Zeldin has served as president and active board member of many Jewish and academic organizations. He and his wife, Florence, an author of children's books, have two sons, an attorney in Berkeley and a professor at Hebrew Union College married to a woman Rabbi, one of the four Rabbis who serves his congregation. He has four grandchildren. Following are excerpts from an exclusive interview with Rosalie Zalis, Israel Today Director, National Politics.*

□ □ □  
● **ISRAEL TODAY:** To what do you attribute your ability to have built the world's second largest congregation and in so short a time?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** We happen to be located at the Jewish crossroads of Los Angeles. The spot where Stephen S. Wise Temple sits is the exact center of the Jewish population of California and one mile from the center of the state's general population. We have members both in the San Fernando Valley and the Westside. Those on the Westside, who are on the average 25 years older, generally have the finances and those in the Valley, the children; so my Westsiders pay for the education of my Valley people. As for me personally, I was born to a family of Maskilim, enlightened people, and although my father was very Orthodox, he was primarily a Hebraist. Before he married my mother he gave her a crash course in Hebrew. Only when she could speak Hebrew, did he marry her. My two brothers and I were raised bilingually. Only later when my grandfather was brought over from Russia did we learn Yiddish and become trilingual. So I was brought up in an Orthodox, Zionist and Hebrew cultural background.

(Continued on page 21)



# Zeldin on Kahane, Jackson, Farrakhan

(Continued from page 1)

It was interesting that I was named Isaiah and of the three sons, I became the Rabbi. My brothers though were both active in synagogue life. One was a president of a conservative synagogue and one of a reform synagogue.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** You recently returned from a visit to Israel where you had a rare private meeting with former Prime Minister Menachem Begin. What did you talk about?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** Essentially I invited him to come back to Los Angeles which would be good for our Jewish community and also important for him. Begin cutely asked me why, and I told him because it was here that his public life was interrupted when his wife, Aliza, died and he never gave his scheduled speech at an Israel Bond dinner. Begin corrected me saying, "I was supposed to give two speeches."

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** Is there a chance that Begin will come back to public life?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** Yes, perhaps not to public political life but certainly to public social life. His visit to his wife's grave on the second anniversary of her death was his first foray out of the confines of his home since last year. It was very difficult to arrange my visit because everyone said, "He's a recluse, he sees no one." It was only through sheer determination, perseverance and the help of his closest confidant, Yecheil Kadishai, that it happened.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** How about his health, the reports are that he suffers from Alzheimer's disease?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** I didn't detect it during the half-hour visit with him. Also in the room were his daughter and the Minister of Transportation Chaim Corfu and his wife, who live in the same building and bring him cookies every Saturday night to celebrate Motzei Shabbos. He did look a bit frail but he was razor sharp, as alert an individual as I've ever seen. For example, I said to him, "If you come to Los Angeles, I've arranged for Hebrew Union College to give you an honorary doctorate." And with a smile he replied, "To quote my friend Winston Churchill, 'I have more honorary doctorates than examinations I have passed.' Now you can't tell me such a person is suffering from Alzheimers and if so, it must be the very early stages. At the end of the interview, he stood and shook my hands; he was strong and virile."

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** Other than a possible trip to Los Angeles, what matters did you discuss with him?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** Jewish education. In the back of his mind was the Farrakhan affair but was afraid to go into it.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** Why?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** I was afraid to impose on his time. Since I was granted a limited visit, I needed to use it for my mission which was to invite him to Los Angeles. He was especially interested in our temple's schools which have over 2,000 children. Mrs. Corfu asked, "And they're all studying Hebrew?" Of course, of the 2,000, 500 are infant toddlers who don't even speak. So I did answer "yes" excusing it in my own mind because, although they can't really speak, they say the Hamotzi before eating food and are taught Hebrew holiday songs. During the discussion, my guide told Mr. Begin that the Israeli public still loves him. He responded, "How do you know that?" I believe he still feels rejected by the Israelis because of Lebanon. "You'll have to show me they still love me," continued Begin. And she replied, "Everybody loves you, everybody respects you even those who disagree with you politically." I think the same. Only in America, they gave Begin bad press; the superliberals called him a "dishonest person," they accused him of all kinds of trickery. They fail to understand that Begin is first an Orthodox Jew and as such his word is his bond. He has an integrity and honesty beyond what most American politicians have. Unfortunately, the press and superliberals — even the Jewish community — see him as a "heavy."

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** He certainly made greater concessions for peace than any other Israeli leader.

**RABBI ZELDIN:** True, and I don't think the Labor

Government could have done what he did in Sinai.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** Can the Labor Government do that with Jordan?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** Yes, I think they can do so now, but I don't know that Jordan wants to. The Israeli public is ready for a compromise solution if they can find someone to talk to but so far the Arabs have not been forthcoming. Part of their peace talk is of course a ploy to continue to receive American arms and assistance but I think there is the desire on the part of some Arabs to work out some type of political solution. The problem is that moderate Arabs who favor compromise with Israel are targets for assassination. Unfortunately, that's the Arab mentality.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** Though you skirted the subject of Farrakhan with Mr. Begin, what is your assessment of the damage done to Black-Jewish relations?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** The Black community is the only major community in the United States where anti-Semitism is growing. That's why rabbis in Los Angeles have revived Black-Jewish dialogue. Although it's only rumor, I heard that when Mayor Bradley went to Israel to try to recoup his losses within the Jewish community following the Farrakhan affair, Begin refused to see him. That's how strongly Begin felt about it. Sensing his strong feelings, I mailed Begin two articles from the *L.A. Times* and the *Herald*



RABBI ISAAH ZELDIN

*Examiner* stating that Stephen S. Wise Temple was the major protestant of the Mayor's behavior during Farrakhan's visit. Even after the mayor finally condemned Farrakhan, he did so in waffling terms saying "there were undercurrents of anti-Semitism." That's not true. There were blatant anti-Semitic statements there. I'm not sure the mayor will be able to recoup his losses.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** Should he?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** I don't know because he has been a good friend of the Jewish community and he is certainly one of the better of the blacks in Jewish affairs. He understands that he committed a grievous blunder. I recently took a survey of a very large class I teach and 50 percent said they would not vote for Bradley for Governor although 75 percent had voted for him in the last election. His campaign will also suffer because some who gave him money will not do so again.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** How do you view the rise of Kahanism in Israel?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** It's a dangerous phenomenon because it's the first time the Jews have produced extremists of the rude indiscriminate nature. We've always had supremacists but not extremists who even advocate bigotry. That Kahane is attractive to high school students is symptomatic of what's happening all over the world. The black militants are the young blacks. The Moslem militants are the young Moslems. The youngsters don't have the tolerance to work out solutions; they want the quick fix. The

"quick fix" people are the radicals, the bigots.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** But Kahane claims he's not a bigot, he doesn't hate Arabs but he's concerned they'll take over the Jewish state. What is the answer to the problem he raises?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** Farrakhan spent 10 minutes in Los Angeles denying his bigotry. Jesse Jackson says all the time, "Am I prejudiced, of course not?" The bigot is always the first to deny his bigotry. They all, Kahane and Farrakhan, talk about real problems but the answer cannot be a quick fix like in Kahane's case to evict a whole group of people. The ideal solution is one that has been worked out by university academics in Israel that has unfortunately received little publicity. Both Israel and Jordan would have equal leeway over the Arabs living in Judea and Samaria. The Arabs living there would vote in the Jordanian Parliament; the Jews for the Israeli Knesset. They would live together with each group having allegiance to its own country. Overall control over foreign affairs must be in Israel's hands until there is peace with her Arab neighbors. All other subjects — taxation, financing and water rights — are worked out jointly. That takes care of demography. If Arabs become more numerous who cares? They vote in Jordan. And Israel remains a democracy.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** It sounds like a nice solution but will the Arab world accept it?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** Who cares? This solution is not on the backs of another people.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** Why hasn't this solution been more openly advocated?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** Perhaps the Israelis see this as their solution when they eventually talk with the Arabs and don't want the Arabs to shoot it down prior to negotiations.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** Speaking of Jesse Jackson, how did you respond to his going to Geneva and pleading the case of Soviet Jewry?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** It was his right to go but who needs him? I don't want him as spokesman for oppressed Jews in the Soviet Union. It was an obvious ploy just prior to his announcement that he'll again seek the Presidency in 1988. His rainbow coalition turned out to be one color and a failure; he didn't even get the Chicano vote and he won't because he's another extremist. He cannot win a national election because he is a left winger. He is against the American position all over the world in addition to his positions on the Jewish issue.

Anyone who equates the taking and killing of innocent hostages, as on the Achillo Lauro, with the accidental killing of Arab women and children caused by a terrorist retaliation like the Tunis raid, is a bigot because in the first case, innocents are the targets and no regrets are expressed. In Israel's case, innocents were killed accidentally and regrets were expressed by Israel. And when Jackson, a Christian minister, can't make that distinction on morality, then he's an anti-Semite. I have no problem calling Jesse Jackson an anti-Semite.

● **ISRAEL TODAY:** Should Reform and Conservative Jews stop supporting Israel if the Orthodox Rabbinate continues to hold the power?

**RABBI ZELDIN:** Not if the Orthodox Rabbinate has its present sway but if that control begins to encroach on American Jewry then that's different.

Half of the Reform community and, I dare say, half the Conservative community will withhold its support of Israel — both financial and political. Israel is kept alive by the United States. That's why numbers of Jews are important. Without numbers, our influence on American policy dies and then Israel withers.

I am probably the most Zionist Rabbi in the Reform movement — certainly in Los Angeles — and if I tell you that if the Law of Return is amended, Israel will no longer get my support, you can imagine the falloff. No one likes to be called illegitimate and then asked for support. No one likes to be called a "mamzer," least of all me. But I don't think it will happen because Israel will not cut off its nose to spite its face.

*R. Schindler*

December 26, 1986  
14 Tevet 5746

The Honorable Rudolph E. Boschwitz  
Senator from Minnesota  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Rudy:

Just a few brief comments concerning your post-script on my recent letter:

a/ I, too, have been concerned about the battling between Orthodox and Reform. The truth of the matter is that the "rift" isn't anywhere near as great as it is bruited to be. Indeed, the rift within Orthodoxy is far more severe (we don't cut each other's beards off, do we?).

b/ I have never added to the vitriolic rhetoric. Indeed, I have gone out of my way to stress that I do not attack Orthodoxy as such but only a politicized Orthodoxy which excludes rather than includes. In order to help you to understand what I am about I enclose herewith a copy of my recent Biennial address (see pages 8-10).

c/ A didactic matter: It is not the Reformed rabbinate or Reformed Jewry but rather Reform in both cases. We consider ourselves to be continuing the process of development. The task is not complete, hence the briefer designation.

d/ I don't think you address more Jewish audiences than I do, unless you give more than 165 speeches during the year. That was my count for the last calendar year.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



December 26, 1986  
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Senator from Minnesota  
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Alexander M. Schindler



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

December 6, 1985

The Honorable Rudolph E. Boschwitz  
Senator from Minnesota  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Rudi:

As a member of the Board of the United Israel Appeal, I am aware of your efforts to gain government grants for our refugee absorption programs. Your help was crucial in effecting these allocations and I write merely to let you know how grateful we all are. Your support in these and so many other ways is profoundly appreciated.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Thanks, Rabbi  
I am most concerned about the battling between the Orthodox & Reformed Rabbinate which the Congregants have shown the good sense not to involve themselves - I am on the plane to Miami to address a Jewish audience; I suppose I address more of them than you - I never ask what kind of Jew they are & speak fervently of unity. Some Orthodox are mashugana but we shouldn't

Thank you for your response



Onto/Puf

December 4, 1985

Rabbi Stuart G. Weinblatt  
Temple Solel  
2901 Mitchellville Road  
Bowie, MD 20716

Dear Stuart:

Thank you for your lengthy letter and also for sending me a copy of your excellent sermon.

Unfortunately, there isn't much I can tell you that will help you. I, too, wasn't pleased with the K'lal Yisrael resolutions discussions. It was the most unsatisfactory of the debates on the various resolutions. The others were on a high level and very much to the point. This one wandered all over and conveyed the wrong impression.

There are only two things that you ought to know: First of all, I obviously cannot control the debate on the floor of the Biennial, that is full and free and we have to take our chances there. Democracy will have its say; ~~most~~ of the time it works out well, at other times it does not work out too satisfactorily.

Secondly, you ought to know that I do not participate in the meetings of the President's Message Committee, nor do I give them any kind of directions other than in my initial presentation, copies of which they receive and with which they work. This committee is free to alter, amend, reject, to do, in effect, what it wishes to do. As a matter of fact, I don't even present them with a draft of any kind of a resolution, I merely present them with my address, period. I don't know, therefore, what motivated them to delete the passage to which you refer in your letter. If you are really interested in pursuing this, you might write to Allan Goldman, who was chairman of our committee, and who may well remember precisely what transpired and why it transpired. I do vaguely recall that the committee took into account some of its discussions which took place on the floor on Sunday afternoon in preparing their revised version for Monday's Plenary Session.



Rabbi Stuart G. Weinblatt  
December 4, 1985  
Page two

As I recall it also, this was the one resolution on which the debate was conducted essentially by rabbis, I really don't recall too many layment or laywomen participating in the discussion on this issue. It is quite clear, that a substantial segment of our rabbinic constituency is aggrieved by the reckless and relentless attacks on Reform by the radical right within Orthodoxy and they gave expression to their feelings in making their comments on this resolution.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

P.S. Allan Goldman can be reached at 347 Conway, Los Angeles, California 90024. His telephone number is 213-556-8000.



# temple solel

2901 MITCHELLVILLE ROAD • BOWIE, MD • 20716 • 249-2424

November 26, 1985

Stuart G. Weinblatt  
Rabbi

Louis J. Cashdan

Rabbi Emeritus    Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
President, Union of American Hebrew  
Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Alex:

I just wanted to convey to you some of my concerns and frustrations over the consideration of the "K'lal Yisrael" resolution at the UAHC biennial in Los Angeles. It troubles me that the tone of discussion was not indicative of a spirit of reconciliation. I did not feel that the deliberations were conducted with a sense of "ahavat Yisrael." There seemed to be such a great fear of the possibility of making any accommodations and of even appearing to grant Orthodoxy any voice over our status that people reacted viscerally to what should have been a non-controversial resolution.

I found especially appalling the fact that a rabbi stood on the floor of the plenary session on Sunday and quoted a statement appearing in the New York Times by the head of the Orthodox movement which blamed Reform Judaism for the divisiveness of the Jewish people. Yet the following paragraph in which the same Orthodox leader indicated that the ad to which you referred in the Jewish Post and Opinion was not at all reflective of the Orthodox world was not mentioned. As a result, the rhetoric served the purpose of further inflaming the discussion by conveniently leaving out the conciliatory statement. This was extremely unfair and provocative, prejudicing the nature of the entire discussion. Why did this go unchallenged?

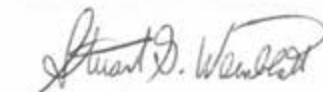
I am also most anxious to know why the final resolution merely calls for "dialogue with mutual respect" and calls upon... "all the movements in Jewish life to engender a constructive approach to many of the issues which we as Jews confront." The wording of the original resolution which called for us to "promote healing and strengthen cooperation" and to "lessen the tensions among us, and raise the level of understanding and cooperation among us," was deleted. Consequently, we are left with a resolution which basically calls for dialogue but does not see as the purpose of the dialogue the reduction of tensions among our people. When I took the floor to ask if the deletion was intentional, I was told it was. However, no reason for leaving out these important words was ever

given. The final resolution is one which calls for dialogue but contains so many qualifying clauses that it reflects the very stresses and strains, so detrimental to the Jewish people that the original resolution sought to ease and reduce.

Needless to say there were many very important issues that were considered at the biennial. While all are important, obviously some of the motions do not have a direct programmatic impact upon Jewish life, but are meant to state our position on various issues. This particular resolution, however, has a direct impact upon the way in which our movement is perceived, upon the way our leaders will conduct themselves in this matter, and the way in which members of reform congregations perceive the movement's position, and may guide their actions and thinking. In this light, it is extremely troubling and disturbing to think that such a resolution was enacted and speaks for American Reform Judaism. Your comments would be greatly appreciated.

Incidentally, I am enclosing a copy of a sermon which I delivered on Yom Kippur on this issue as well as a sermon which I delivered on Rosh Hashanah in which I make use of the midrash about the birds and wings, which you tell so beautifully, (and which is faithfully attributed to you). With best wishes for a Happy Chanukah and much continued success in all your holy efforts, I am,

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Stuart G. Weinblatt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stuart" being more prominent.

Stuart G. Weinblatt

Enclosures

Are We One?

A classical joke is told about a man, Samuel Berkowitz, who was alone on a desert island for a number of years. He had given up all hope of ever being discovered and had resigned himself to making the best of his situation. One day the pilot of an airplane which had wandered off-course spotted the man and the structures he had built, and a few days later, he was rescued. As Berkowitz was preparing to leave, a member of the rescue party asked him about the strange looking building he had built near his rather comfortable looking home.

Berkowitz, who was an observant Jew, told those who were escorting him off the island, "That's the synagogue I built." Everyone exclaimed how amazing and remarkable it was that he would build such a magnificent synagogue all by himself. Just as they were about to leave, someone saw another equally magnificent synagogue. When asked to explain why he would build two synagogues on such a small island where he was the only inhabitant, he responded, "One is the Shul where I daven, and the other is the one I wouldn't be caught dead in!"

While this joke has been around for quite some time, unfortunately, it takes on an especially poignant and tragic sense of relevance today.

Although we Jews have learned that we can never ignore the peril presented by prejudice and anti-semitism, and that we must remain on guard to thwart actions directed against Jews by non-Jews, the sad truth is that Jews say things about each other which can be as hateful as the diatribes of anti-semites. As a result, I am even more troubled by those actions against Jews which emanate from Jews. It is deeply troubling to me to look at the state of polarization and increased tensions between segments of the Jewish community today.

An advertisement in last week's Jewish Post and Opinion taken out by a group of Orthodox rabbis, the Agudas Harabonim, "warns not to pray in Reform or Conservative Temples." It goes on to say, "Every Jew must make every effort to find an Orthodox synagogue to pray in, and absolutely not to enter a Reform or Conservative Temple. If you do not have an Orthodox synagogue within walking distance then you should pray at home even on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur."

Ironically, the advertisement concluded with the words, "Wishing Klal Israel a Kesivah v'chasimah tovah." - "Wishing all the household of Israel that you may be sealed and inscribed for good life." It is the equivalent of someone signing a hate letter or a kidnappers' ransom note, or the like with the epitaph, "Have a nice day."

For what may be the first time since World War II, a bar mitzvah ceremony was recently held in Krakow, Poland. Unfortunately, 13-year-old Eric Strom's attempt to bring some joy to a dying Jewish community was marred by the apparent insensitivity of all sides in the dispute between the rabbi of his family's congregation, Emily Korzevick and the Orthodox community from America who insisted that she not officiate.

Conversions performed by conservative and reform rabbis are not accepted by Orthodox rabbis here or in Israel. Yet liberal rabbis who want to perform conversion *כפי' הנהגה*, according to Halacha are not allowed to use the mikveh in Baltimore and many other cities. Many communities, including Baltimore and Washington, have two rabbinic organizations - one for liberal rabbis and one for Orthodox.

Certain corners of the Orthodox world are afraid of even having any contact with Reform rabbis, and place in "herem" those who do. They seem so caught up in their own holiness and minutiae of ritual that they overlook basic Jewish ethics which remind us, *כפי' הנהגה* "all of Israel is responsible for one another," and of the importance of "ahavat Yisrael" - love of our fellow Jews.

The fanaticism is seen in North America as well as in Israel. The gap presented by intolerance is growing.

The fanaticism and distrust can take many forms. I am reminded of the Hasidic rabbi who passed away. A great meal was prepared for him in the heavens above. Before he partook of the meal, however, he first asked, "Who will be the mashgiach (supervisor of Kashrut)?" He was told "Hakadosh Baruch Hu -- The Holy One Blessed be He, will be the mashgiach." To which the rabbi replied, "Well, just to be safe, I still think I will have just a glass of water."

The litany of intolerance goes on. But it is not one-sided, and there is often justification for the Orthodox criticisms levelled against Reform Judaism.

I have heard all too many Reform rabbis rail against Orthodoxy with a passionate vehemence. As a defense mechanism, their hatred of the Orthodox movement leads them to bitterly condemn them whenever possible.

I was embarrassed last year when the Ambassador of Israel was verbally abused, mistreated, and even booed last year by reform rabbis at the Central Conference of American Rabbis convention when discussing issues of religious pluralism in Israel and the status of the Reform movement. He received this disrespect not at the hands of anti-semites or non-Jews, but from rabbis. He told me afterwards, "In all my years of public service, I have never been treated this way."

I once spoke with a member of a Reform Temple in Texas while waiting in an airport lounge. We got around to discussing Israel, religion, and so on. He told me, "My rabbi gets so upset that he can't perform marriages in Israel." I asked if he ever had any congregants want to get married there, or if anyone in Israel has ever wanted him to officiate. He told me, "No. But it makes me upset at the Orthodox for upsetting him." I do not believe it is our job as rabbis to make Jews upset with other Jews.



We simply cannot go on fighting in this manner. This is not what Judaism is all about. Somehow we need to tone down the rhetoric on all sides, and reaffirm the common ground on which we stand.

The Orthodox community is not as monolithic as some believe it to be. In February when I visited Israel, I went to Meah Shearim to purchase rimonim and a yad for our small Torah. I went to a shop where I had purchased some items once before, which is owned by a Hasidic couple. As a result of my visits, I have gotten to know the woman proprietor somewhat, and she knows that I am a Reform rabbi. We have talked about many things, including some of her experiences during the Holocaust. I was surprised, but moved when on my last visit she said to me about my work as a Reform rabbi, "You are doing a very important thing. It is good what you are doing. May God help you." This was an Orthodox woman speaking - in Meah Shearim!

Somehow, we need to develop a greater respect for each other. I am reminded of the question in the Talmud, "At what point may one begin to recite the morning prayers?" Different possibilities were suggested - after midnight, prior to dawn, or after dawn. The rabbis determined that the morning prayers should be recited "when there is enough light for a man to recognize his brother." What a beautiful insight! We cannot pray the morning prayers until we can see each other. Our religion is based upon the concept of caring for one another. We are commanded to love our fellow Jews, to have an appreciation for the concept of "Klal Yisrael," the community of Israel. Yet where is that love today?

Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, an Orthodox rabbi who is director of the National Jewish Resource Center is keenly aware of the problem. In a recent paper entitled "Will there be one Jewish people by the Year 2000?" he points out the parameters of the problem. Reform disregard for the Orthodox tradition in matters pertaining to conversion, patrilineal descent, the non-requirement for a get, and so on, may lead to a situation where "within two decades 15-20% of American Jewry will be socially and halachically separated from traditional Jews." He fears "a cycle of alienation, hostility, and withdrawal that will lead to a sundering of the Jewish people into two religions or two social groups, fundamentally divided and opposed to each other."

To me, this scenario is both frightening and horrifying, and one which we must seek to prevent. Are we, the post-Holocaust generation, doomed to preside over the demise of our people?

Rabbi Harold Schulweis writing in Moment magazine describes the present situation, "Jewish religious leaders and Jewish religious institutions are de facto delegitimized; their marriages are not marriages; their conversions are not conversions, their divorces are not divorces, their houses of worship are declared off limits... Growing in intensity, it now threatens to isolate important Jewish sub-communities."

The truth of the matter is that divisiveness has confronted our people many times in the past as well. There have always been various ways to interpret Torah and the Way of God. In the time of the Talmud, the great schools of Hillel and Shammai debated and disputed every point of law. Yet their sons and daughters could marry each other. And the Talmud tells us, *אלו ואלו דברי אלהים חיים* "These and these (referring to both schools of thought) are both words of the living God." The works of Maimonides, the great Jewish medieval scholar were disputed and burned by his opponents. In Europe, the mitnagdim and Hasidim argued fiercely. Let us not be idyllic or nostalgically portray a false past in which there was always harmony and unity among our people.

But the Talmud warns against this kind of visceral hatred. It tells us that Jerusalem fell, not because of the assault of the Romans, but because of *מלכות אדם* unfounded hatred by Jews of each other. How sophisticated of our sages to realize that the greatest threat to our people is not external, but internal. In this context, the intensity of today's disputes is especially troubling.

We should feel there is something special about our fellow Jews. We can't just discuss this notion in the abstract. We have to feel it, and live it. We can't proclaim "We Are One" for fundraising purposes, demonstrate together on behalf of Israel and Soviet Jews and then go back to our own self-imposed shtets of isolation.

Our strength comes from our unity and diversity, not from our narrow-minded rejection of each other. As a united community, we pulled together and rescued an ancient Jewish community through Operation Moses. Yet when we stand divided, as in the recent dispute over the necessity of t'villah for the Ethiopians, we look foolish.

I believe we need to take actions to heal the internal rift, even if they are painful and even if it requires compromise. There must be greater dialogue among the traditionalists and liberal movements. We start from the outset, recognizing that we cannot and will not agree on everything, or even on most issues, but hopefully we can come away with a greater understanding. We may come to realize that we are all seeking to fulfill our Divine Mission, that we are all struggling with attempting to grapple with God's demands on us and the pull of modernity, and finally, that we are each working desperately to perpetuate Judaism and the Jewish people. We fight the same battles against apathy and assimilation. We can strengthen each other and learn from each other.

When I travelled to Europe and Israel this past year as part of the UJA Rabbinic Cabinet, rabbis from all branches of Judaism travelled and studied together. One of the younger Orthodox rabbis spoke very movingly at the end of the trip about how much he had learned from his Reform and Conservative colleagues. We are so busy on a national level with inter-faith dialogues and services - we need to undertake the same kind of effort with our fellow Jews.

Rabbi Greenberg's National Jewish Resource Center has already established six groups around the country to work in this format. In talking about the branches of Judaism, he points out that, "Each group is strengthened by the greater effectiveness of the other. Each group should be building up the other, for its own sake as well as for the greater good of Klal Yisrael." Reform can learn from the Orthodox the meaningfulness of a life devoted to Torah. The Orthodox can learn from Reform the imperative of universalistic teachings in Judaism and of the importance of social action. The conservative movement can contribute its attempts to grapple with maintaining tradition while innovating in various areas, and so on.

It is reassuring to know that Rabbi Greenberg, an Orthodox rabbi writes:

"Delegitimization of the other denominations diverts each one from facing its own real issues. When the Orthodox totally deny Conservative and Reform, they can dismiss the women's question as something which has been raised by the non-Orthodox and therefore illegitimate. This distracts the Orthodox from facing the challenge of inequities in Halacha, such as in divorce, and from facing the fact that they have not fully incorporated 50% of the talent and religious potential of their community.

"When the Conservative and Reform define their own legitimacy by dismissing the Orthodox, they end up defining success as breaking with the rigidity of the past. Thus, for example, translating prayers into English is mistakenly believed to solve the problem of worship. They fail to face the fundamental problem of prayer, of modern man's difficulties with prayer, and of how we can pray out of power as we have prayed out of powerlessness.

"To solve their internal problems, each group needs the help and presence of the other."

An experiment in Denver worked extremely well for a number of years. The Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox rabbis all taught the same conversion program and certified each other's conversions. This meant that conversions performed by Reform rabbis had full legitimacy and standing in the Orthodox community! It required some give and take on the part of all involved. The Orthodox rabbis ceded on two critical points. They did not insist on the full level of kashrut or Sabbath observance. They did however, insist that the practices and their reasons be taught and encouraged, and that the individual converts agree to commit themselves to some level of observance of the dietary laws and the Sabbath.

For Reform rabbis, it meant giving up some autonomy. For the Orthodox, it meant recognizing that some would practice less than desired. Many Orthodox would not be willing to make such a sacrifice. But I know many Reform rabbis, including a number on the faculty of the Hebrew Union College who would also oppose any attempt to impose any standards as being contrary to the spirit of Reform Judaism.

Quite simply, militant denominationalism prevents some in both camps from working together.

If there is anything we can learn from the increasing polarization of the religious and secular communities in Israel, however, it is that we are on the same side - we agree that religion can and should play a role in the life of our people.

At the upcoming convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations a resolution will be considered which states that, "...there are stresses and strains within the Jewish community which threaten schisms among us, to the detriment of North America's Jewish community, and, indeed, world Jewry.

"To promote healing and strengthen cooperation, channels of communication must be expanded among the branches within Judaism..."

The resolution reaffirms the Reform movement's commitment to K'lal Y'Israel.

I will report back to you in November and let you know what happens to this resolution. But regardless of the outcome, it is incumbent upon us to act now, before we become too fragmented, and while we still are one, to heal the wounds.



Rabbi Stuart G. Weinblatt  
Temple Solel  
September 1985  
Rosh Hashana Morning

### USES AND ABUSES OF EXCUSES

A story is told about a poor man in a shtetl who repeatedly tried unsuccessfully to meet with the wealthiest merchant in the city. Tired of constantly being rebuffed, one day he stood outside the man's mansion and made a fuss. He shouted at the top of his lungs, "My family is starving to death, yet you refuse to see me." Finally the rich man reluctantly came out of his home and gave the poor man some money. "Here are thirty rubles," he said. "But I want to tell you if you had not created such a big fuss, I would have given you sixty rubles." The beggar replied indignantly, "My dear sir. You are a merchant, and I don't tell you how to run your business. I am a schnorrer, so please - don't give me any advice on how to do mine!"

The merchant, like so many of us hid behind an excuse to justify his reluctance to give tzedekah. Many times in our lives, we use excuses to hide our true feelings from others, and even from ourselves, to explain why we do not do things we know we should.

There are people who tell me, "Rabbi, I never go to synagogue. It's against my religion." Invariably they will offer any of a series of lame excuses, such as - "Our children are already grown" - as if to imply that Judaism can only be appreciated by juveniles, and that they no longer have any responsibility to help sustain the Jewish community. Or perhaps someone will say, "I don't come to synagogue anymore because the shul I grew up in [Fill in the blank] raised money on the holidays; didn't raise money on the holidays; had a rabbi I didn't like; had a rabbi I liked who "they got rid of;" and so on. Or perhaps someone will say, "I don't belong to a synagogue because everyone there is hypocritical." In one full swoop, they dismiss good, well-intentioned people who help sustain Jewish communal life. Sometimes I hear, "I don't have to go to synagogue to pray or feel Jewish. I feel Jewish in my heart." I am often tempted to respond, "Nu, and what about the rest of your body?" I could go on. Just like the individual in our story, the reasons given for not contributing to charity are also endless. Some people reason - "Well, all the UJA ever asks for is money, so I'm not giving them any." - obviously overlooking the many applications of these funds and the needy who depend on the assistance for their sustenance, and the numerous Jewish organizations supported by these donations. Or some may say, "I don't approve of this or that policy of the Israeli government." as their reason for not giving. The list of excuses is endless. But they are just that - excuses.

In a recent column about exercise, sports enthusiast, Sally Squires, cites and refutes the primary reasons people offer for not exercising. Among the excuses given are lack of time, boredom with exercise, and so on. Her point is equally applicable to any situation. We can use rationalization to make it seem as if we have a good solid reason for not doing something we are not interested in doing, anyway.



This morning we read the potent and gripping drama of Abraham and Isaac. As our sages point out, when Abraham received the call from God to sacrifice his son, he had any of a number of options. He could have challenged God and argued with him. Or he could have ignored the demand, and just pretend he didn't hear the command. He could have continued to carry on his affairs as if nothing had ever happened. Or he could have made an excuse of some sort. Perhaps he would have said, "I can't take my son to the mountain, because I am busy." Or he could have said as some of us do when shirking our responsibilities to our religion, "Isaac can't come because he has soccer practice tomorrow." But Abraham chose not to hide behind any excuse or rationalization. Rather, he went forward and proceeded on his journey. We learn from the example of the courage of Abraham and Isaac the importance of making difficult choices, of coming to terms with ourselves and of not blaming others or lame excuses for our own shortcomings.

Looking at another Biblical parable, we find that Adam tried to hide from God in the Garden of Eden by taking refuge behind a fig leaf. When asked by God about his eating the forbidden fruit, he set the precedent for later generations. He immediately blamed his wife. Not to be outdone, she in turn blamed the serpent. In this story, Adam and Eve were not willing to accept responsibility for their own actions and own up to what they had done. Significantly, God calls out to Adam, א"י "Where are you?" The rabbis point out that God, who is omniscient and omnipresent obviously knew where Adam was. Rather, the point of the question was that Adam had to honestly come to terms with his actions and its consequences. The rabbis teach that the question was really addressed to all generations, and for all time. In many respects, life is an ongoing struggle and attempt to respond to the question, א"י "Where are you?" Religion helps us along our way to find the answer.

Yet another Biblical story offers a similar message. When Cain has slain his brother, Abel, God asks the seemingly naive question, א"י "Where is Abel, your brother?" Cain answers somewhat feebly, א"י "Am I my brother's keeper?" Once again, an excuse is offered in which Cain tries to avoid honestly confronting the question God raised.

Herein lies the problem with excuses. It prevents us from evaluating whether what we have done is right or wrong and whether our actions and ways need to be corrected.

The High Holidays offer us the chance to confront our true selves and see who and what we are, to ask ourselves, "Where are We?" Are we our brother's keeper, and other poignant and penetrating queries into our psyche and conscience. Too often we are too quick to blame others for our circumstances and misfortunes. Yet I have seen people emerge from the depths of depression and adversity and make a difference in their life and in the life of others.

When I visited Israel in February I met a remarkable man, Menachem Perlmuter, the director of agricultural research for the Negev. He is one of those individuals who helped to make the desert bloom and who takes great pride in the strides Israel has made. He spoke to the Rabbinic

Cabinet of the UJA late in the afternoon, at a time when we were all exhausted. Yet he electrified us with his enthusiasm for Israel's accomplishments. He concluded his address by telling us that he is one of those Jews who has a number on his arm, having spent time in Aushwitz. He said, "I have seen in my own lifetime and with my own hands the prophecy of Ezekiel come true, in which dry bones and the valley of the dead was brought to life."

When I was working at the Religious Action Center a few years ago, I met a couple, Mr. & Mrs. Ken Nathanson who had suffered a tragic loss. Their 14 year old daughter had been killed by a drunk truck driver whose license had been revoked and reinstated a number of times. Devastated and overcome with grief, they wanted to channel their bitterness and anger into a positive outlet. Starting from nothing with absolutely no organizational or grassroots support, they set out to change the country's attitudes and the nation's laws so that convicted drunk drivers would not be treated so lightly. They wanted to make it more difficult for them to regain their license. As a direct result of their efforts, laws in almost every state have been revised and chapters of MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, have sprung up throughout America.

There are numerous other inspiring instances of people who refused to rely on excuses or to feel sorry for themselves. Not all of us can have as dramatic an impact upon others as these two examples. But the point is that only when we strip away the defense mechanisms we rely upon to prevent ourselves from honestly assessing our actions, can we help ourselves. A Yiddish proverb says it all - "People who can't dance say the musicians can't keep time." It is so easy to make excuses.

A story is told of a youngster who longingly looked at a mountain and said, "If I had the wings of an angel, I would fly to the top of that beautiful mountain." Then after thinking a little longer he thought, "I do not have wings, but I do have feet and legs with which to reach the top."

We should try to make the best of what we have and not be so busy worrying about what we don't have. Rabbi Alexander Schindler tells the story from the midrash that when God created the dove, the birds were troubled because he was created without wings. They complained to God, "We are awkward because we have no beaks to defend ourselves and no means of flight." So God gave them wings. But they came back a few days later and said, "We asked for something to enable us to defend ourselves and you have given us these wings which are so bulky and make it even more difficult to escape our attackers."

God replied, "Silly birds. Those wings are heavy on your back only because you do not use them. But if you use them, the skies will be yours to command as they will carry you in flight."

The analogy is made to our mitzvot. As Rabbi Schindler pointed out, they may seem to be a burden, but that is the case only if we do not use them. In reality they can lift us upwards towards the heavens - but only if we use them. At this Rosh Hashana, let us consider how we use the wings and tools God has given us.

Perhaps we do not spend as much time with our children as we know we should. We may claim to be so busy with our work that we don't have the time to spend with our spouse and family. Children are just as guilty - when they offer lame excuses for not cleaning their room, doing their homework, or extending kindness to their siblings.

Joseph Albo writes about elements of repentance in the Medieval classic, Sefer he-Ikkarim, "the elements of repentance by which a person may be cleansed of his iniquities and purified of his sin before God are correction of thought, speech and act. Correction of thought means that he should feel regret on account of his sins. Correction of speech signifies that he should confess his transgressions; while correction of act denotes that he should take it upon himself never again to return to his folly, but should do instead such acts as would indicate that the former were done in error and unintentionally....

"It is also clear...that self-excuse prevents repentance. For if a man thinks that excusing himself for his sin will avail him, he will never regret the doing of it, nor confess his sin. Such a one is called a man "who covers his transgressions, as Solomon says: He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper (Proverbs 28.13). Covering one's sin means to make something else responsible for one's sin..."

The trait that many found most distasteful during President Nixon's handling of the Watergate crisis which ultimately drove him from office was his inability to accept responsibility for the errors of his ways. He reassured us with those immortal words that rank alongside the Gettysburg Address, "I am not a crook." He constantly, and to this very day blamed others. Recent research reveals the inadequacies of President Kennedy, but he will always be fondly remembered, in part for his willingness to accept the blame for the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961.

Today is Yom Hadin. The Day of Judgement. May we judge ourselves openly and honestly. Today is Yom Hazikaron, the Day of Remembrance. May we remember to look into our souls.

As we reflect upon our lives on this new year, as God asks of each of us 2"IC "Where are you?" may we respond to God and to ourselves with integrity and conviction.

Ortho/K

November 26, 1985

Mr. Stanton C. Selbst  
148 Ralph Avenue  
White Plains, N.Y. 10606

Dear Mr. Selbst:

I appreciate your thoughtful note and the earnestness of your concern.

We do have some divergent ~~views~~ views concerning tactics. In order to get anyone to reach out to someone who has maligned him it is necessary to first acknowledge the ~~malignment~~ alignment and to regret it. Note if you will what Amos did (see his Chapter 1). First he identified himself with the pain of Isaac and only then did he berate Israel for its sins.

In any event, why should malignities go unanswered, false charges unrefuted? These violate any ~~sense~~ sense of justice even beyond the tactical considerations which are at stake.

With thanks and all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



STANTON C. SELBST  
148 RALPH AVENUE  
WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK 10606

Nov 20, 1985

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I was privileged to hear your comments tonight at the JCC and also to have read your speech at the recent VAHC Convention.

One of the many pressing issues of our times is the issue of Klal Yisrael. I know that you have obvious and sincere concern for it. However, I wonder if you do justice to this concern with your many "swipes" at Orthodoxy & Orthodox Rabbis. Differ we may; differ we will, but I believe you give a mixed signal to your audience with jokes and stories that seem to denigrate. Perhaps the total Orthodox establishment will never find a way to deal with non-Halachic Judaism, but we must find a way to deal with them, not for their sake, but for ours, lest the Temple be destroyed again because of the divisions in the Jewish Community. I trust you will consider this.

Respectfully yours,  
Stanton C. Selbst



## Special Report: UAHC General Assembly

# Schindler's War On Militant Orthodoxy

By Yehuda Lev

LOS ANGELES—Rabbi Alexander Schindler declared war on militant Jewish Orthodoxy and Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley tried to make peace with California's Jewish voters as 3,000 leaders of the Reform movement met last weekend in Los Angeles for the 58th General Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

In an atmosphere otherwise devoid of conflict, Schindler, president of the UAHC, denounced Orthodox leaders who "presume to know just which rites and prayers are and are not acceptable to the Almighty." He lashed out at several Orthodox leaders who published an advertisement in American-Jewish newspapers stating that Orthodox Jews should not attend High Holiday services rather than hear the sound of the shofar in Conservative or Reform synagogues.

Bradley, who has been at odds with the California Jewish leadership since he refused to speak out against Black Muslim preacher Louis Farrakhan before Farrakhan spoke in Los Angeles in September, came as close as a politician ever does to admitting that he made a mistake in judgment. In what would normally have been a routine convention greeting from the mayor of a host city, Bradley used the opportunity to tell the Jewish community that he regretted his assumption that Farrakhan would control his anti-Semitism during his Los Angeles appearance. Bradley is considering running for governor of California next year against George Deukminjian who narrowly defeated him in their last race.

Other significant developments at the General Assembly included:

- Approval by voice of a resolution asking all Reform congregations to treat with compassion the victims of AIDS and urging increased federal spending for research on the fatal disease;
- Encouragement of the development of Reform day schools while continuing to support public schools. The move toward increased support for day schools in the Reform movement had twice been defeated in earlier General Assemblies;
- An announcement that the Reform movement has replaced the Conservative movement as the branch of American Judaism with the largest number of adherents;
- A surprisingly mild resolution urging an expansion of avenues of communication among all branches of Judaism, which did not mention the problems with Orthodoxy stressed by Schindler;
- A demand that the Jewish Agency allocate \$20 million for Reform institutions in Israel during the next fiscal year and a total of \$88 million over the next five years;
- A request that Reform congregations place more stress on prayer and that the subject of prayer for Reform Jews be a major topic at the next biannual Assembly, to convene in Chicago in 1987.

Appearances by Abba Eban, Wolf Blitzer, Norman Lear and Joel Grey sparked a series of meetings and dinners at which little in the way of con-

troversy interfered with the normal routines of national Jewish assemblies.

### Jewish Agency Demand

The two measures adopted by the delegates that promise to have the most far reaching results are those concerned with day schools and financial demands on the Jewish Agency.

The day school issue is a recent development within the Reform movement, which has traditionally favored a strong public school system. Orthodoxy is the branch of Judaism most closely connected with day schools and only when busing became an issue in many American cities did interest in day schools begin to rise in the non-Orthodox communities.

In its resolution the UAHC rejected the possibility of accepting tuition tax credits for its schools. It adopted a program of teacher training and the preparation of program materials for Reform day schools. But the stress in the resolution was on support for the public schools, a move deemed necessary to gain the 2-1 majority in favor of the resolution that eventually resulted.



Rabbi Alexander Schindler

The demands being made on the Jewish Agency reflect a growing dissatisfaction within the Reform movement about the way in which religious institutions in Israel are allocated funds far in excess of those granted to their Reform and Conservative counterparts. Non-Orthodox elements in American Jewish life claim that the majority of funds raised through the United Jewish Appeal and transferred to the Jewish Agency come from non-Orthodox Jews who are subsidizing Orthodox institutions. The lines have become more clearly drawn since some Orthodox elements in Israel began urging changes in that country's "Law of Return" which would effectively disqualify non-Orthodox converts from inclusion in the ranks of the Jewish people.

The vote favoring the resolution is expected to enable Reform Jewish leaders who are members of the Jewish Agency's executive organs to increase their pressure for greater representation and increased influence.

The resolution on AIDS was brought to the floor by representatives of gay synagogues in San Francisco and Los Angeles. It proposes that the UAHC appoint a panel of medical experts to help it determine how to deal with the victims of AIDS in a compassionate and humane manner. Opposition to the resolution, which its sponsors expected to be significant, melted away after President Schindler personally sponsored the resolution in his opening address, thereby giving it the imprimatur of the UAHC leadership. □

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10

BARBARA R. MESSNER  
8 SURREY LANE  
GREAT NECK, NEW YORK 11023

*no further*

November 6, 1985

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York City

Der Rabbi Schindler:

In regard to your address in LA concerning the Orthodox Jewish leaders, as concerned, affiliated Reform Jews, we would like to say "right on". You said what needs to be said.

Sincerely,

*Barbara and Arnold Messner*  
Barbara and Arnold Messner



CLAL

The National Jewish  
Center for Learning  
And Leadership

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

October 3, 1985

o/r

cc: Eric  
return original  
to me

Dear Alex,

Herschel Blumberg  
Chairman  
Rabbi Irving Greenberg  
President  
Robert Loup  
Vice Chairman  
William Spier  
Treasurer  
Harvey Arfa  
Secretary  
Paul Jeser  
Exec. Vice President  
Dr. David Elcott  
Program Director

In June, you were kind enough to respond to my series of columns on, "Will There Be One Jewish People in the Year 2000?" I apologize for the long delay in responding to your letter, but for the past two months I have been away, trying to finish a book-length manuscript, and there has been no time for anything else. I appreciated our meeting.

The problem of divisiveness is a complicated one. I sense your own ambivalence, in that you have veered between suggesting that the problem is overstated and offering to sit down and work something out to avoid the split. Candidly, I think that's too easy, to say that there have been divisiveness and sectarianism in the past and that there will be no split. Over the course of history, there have been times when sectarianism led to fundamental splits in the Jewish people. They have tended to be times when the social dynamics, including marriage and personal status recognition, has broken down. That is the process I see happening right now, and why I sounded that alarm. As you know from reading my past work, I am not a gevald shreyer. This split is coming. It will take a major effort to prevent it.

You have every right to say that the Orthodox have been unyielding. I fully concede that the sweep to the right has created an atmosphere of hostility and of aggressiveness that makes it very difficult to have any sort of dialogue. Moreover, the moderates among the Orthodox are now terrorized, and reluctant to take any chances.

On the other hand, I think you have to face your responsibility in the matter. As I indicated, the patrilineal decision makes a lot of sense from an internal dynamics of Reform point of view, but it certainly is helping to create a situation in which those who are seeking a split in the Orthodox are strengthened and, equally important, the social dynamics become worse between the movements. I do not ask you to give up what you feel are the basic policy needs of the community that you represent. What I am suggesting is that every such step should automatically call forth a special effort in the other area. Let it be in the form of



a special attempt to go meet with the others; let it be in the form of an attempt to upgrade standards in areas that may be not only helpful to the movement but win over some of the more traditional elements. Thus, for example, your task force on standards of observance and Jewish education, I think, are excellent examples of the kind of thing that should be done. They need more publicity and more input from Orthodox people.

Perhaps you can help me obtain funds for a more thorough and systematic dialogue among the groups. It is my conviction that if we can recruit a younger group of scholars from all three groups and build them now, over a period of years, the dynamics of the Orthodox response will change down the road. There is also the possibility of more systematic recruitment of lay dialogue among the movements. Each of this needs time and attention and a willingness to participate. I would even suggest the possibility of some Reform matching money, so that we would then have to get Conservative and Orthodox kick-in as well, and share this cost. But I think a major infusion of time and energy in this area is absolutely necessary.

Right now, I cannot deliver the Orthodox establishment to any serious dialogue that would involve give-and-take. However, we are trying to build both grassroots and somewhat higher level rabbinic networks that can begin to create a different dynamics and background atmosphere within Orthodoxy. I also think I can now get some significant lay people to participate. I can only promise you that as we work our way closer I will be glad to take you up on your genuine offer to sit down and to work at it. Let me say that we are looking for some dramatic or high-visibility actions that can dramatize the will to unity. One of them is the possibility of some public symposiums, with broad-gauged community sponsorship, in a number of major cities, in which leading figures of each of the movements might appear together to explore the possibilities of dialogue and of cooperation as well as of growing toward each other. Perhaps when we have one of sufficient stature and visibility to warrant your participation, you would consider participating in such a program. Perhaps you could indicate to me who you think the counterparts should be for a program of that level. May I add, also, that your indication to me that you would sit down seriously with a group is helpful. I don't want to say too much because I can't yet deliver, but I believe we are making slow but steady progress. In the interim, I think that if you in good conscience review the matter, you perhaps could see your way clear to recognizing that the problem is serious and to make clear in a consistent way that you do not underestimate the problem, even if it takes two to tango and you can't do anything about it for the moment.

Warmest best wishes for a good year.

Sincerely yours,



Irving Greenberg

P.S. Your idea of using the Biennial platform to call for increased dialogues (including lay people as well), is a good one.

IG:vjo

low

Ont / Rel / Schon  
Relt



United States Senate

To: Rabbi Schindler

I agree with your statement  
regarding the Bar Mitzvah  
in Cracow - when you came  
to D.C. I'll tell you of my father's  
experience as a judge in family -  
also my Rabbi in Minneapolis  
criticized the Orthodox over the  
High Holy Days in his sermon;  
I will tell him I object to that too!



Yours

*Excell*

Comments by AMS on Reform Bar Mitzva in Cracow Synagogue

The Bar Mitzva was an altogether beautiful idea:  
to bring a moment of joy to a dying community  
to demonstrate to all the world that the evil designs of our  
enemies came to nought, that the Jewish people lives.  
Unfortunately the beauty and sanctity of this moment was marred  
by orthodox extremists who resented the fact that  
Reform Jews were the celebrants.  
Their behavior was despicable...a chilul haschem  
shunting people from one synagogue to another  
tearing off talesim  
Don't these people have anything better to do than to fight  
their fellow Jews.  
What a perversion of history to claim a monopoly on Polish Jewry.  
The synagogue in which this service was held was dedicated  
as a Reform Temple in 1844.  
Polish Jewry was far from monistic.  
It embraced many different kinds of Jews.  
Among the Jews who lived and were butchered in Poland  
were not just orthodox Jews, but also reform Jews and  
non-religious and even anti-Religious Jews,  
and Zionists and non Zionists and even anti-Zionists.  
I suppose I ought to understand this kind of arrogance  
and intolerance  
orthodoxy has suffered a perceptuous decline over the  
past generations  
and intolerance is a sure sign of weakness  
Besides, the world as a whole has gone mad with fundamentalists  
why shouldn't we Jews have our ayatolas  
Let the Jewish world know this:  
Reform is an adjective it is not a noun.  
The noun is Jew  
And so we are Jews  
and we will not be read out of the Jewish fold:  
not in Israel, not in Europe,  
nor anywhere else on this earth.

*al x.y. d.  
made statement  
to Press*

corrected copy

September 24, 1985

Mr. Sheldon Engelmayer  
Editor  
The Jewish Week  
One Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10016

Dear Mr. Engelmayer:

Congratulations to David C. Gross for his signed editorial criticizing the Rabbinical Council of America for stating that a non-Orthodox bar mitzvah "would be a betrayal of Jewish history" and for assailing the action of a rabbi who tore a prayer shawl from the shoulders of Rabbi Emily Korzenick at the bar mitzvah in Cracow. The foul deed of the rabbi was indeed despicable, marring the beauty and sanctity of a beautiful idea: to bring a moment of joy to a dying community, to demonstrate to all the world that the evil designs of our enemies came to naught, that the Jewish people lives.

Even more serious, however, is the perversion of history of which the Rabbinical Council of America is guilty in claiming a monopoly on Polish Jewry for Orthodoxy. In fact, Polish Jewry was far from monistic. Among the Jews of Poland slaughtered by the Nazis were not only Orthodox Jews but also Reform Jews and non-religious Jews, Zionists and non-Zionists. Indeed, the Temple synagogue in which the Bar Mitzvah eventually took place was dedicated as a Reform synagogue in 1844, and Polish Jewish life was enriched by the contributions of many Reform rabbis.

I suppose one ought to understand this kind of arrogance and intolerance. Orthodoxy has suffered a precipitous decline in recent generations, and intolerance is a sure sign of weakness.

Let the Jewish world know this: Reform is an adjective, not a noun. The noun is Jew. And we are Jews. We will not be read out of the Jewish fold, not in Israel, not in Europe, nor anywhere on earth.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

bc: Richard Cohen

September 23, 1985

Mr. Sheldon Engelmayer  
Editor  
The Jewish Week  
One Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10016

Dear Mr. Engelmayer:

Congratulations to David C. Gross for his signed editorial criticizing the Rabbinical Council of America for stating that a non-Orthodox bar mitzvah "would be a betrayal of Jewish history" and for assailing the action of a rabbi who tore a prayer shawl from the shoulders of Rabbi Emily Korzenick at the bar mitzvah in Cracow. The foul deed of the rabbi was indeed despicable, marring the beauty and sanctity of a beautiful idea: to bring a moment of joy to a dying community, to demonstrate to all the world that the evil designs for our enemies came to nought, that the Jewish people lives.

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Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

bc: Richard Cohen

# The Cracow affair: A shocking spectacle

By DAVID C. GROSS

The joy that young Eric Strom brought to the aging and ancient Jewish community of Cracow by celebrating his bar mitzvah there was truly a mitzvah of the highest order. For 35 years, there had not been a similar celebration in Cracow, a city that once had a vast Jewish population and countless synagogues and yeshivot.

It is true, of course, that virtually all of Polish Jewry was strictly Orthodox, and it is understandable that some Orthodox Jews and rabbis would have looked askance at the fact that Eric's rabbi was a Reconstructionist and a woman.

In the scheme of things, however, did it really matter? The only thing that really counted was that an American Jewish youth was going to post-Nazi Poland to recite the traditional *haftarah* and to bring joy to a tiny group of elder-

ly Jews who would know that they, and Judaism itself, had not been obliterated in the Holocaust.

That is why it was shocking to read a statement issued by the Rabbinical Council of America, an Orthodox body, which said that the bar mitzvah, being non-Orthodox, "would be a betrayal of Jewish history."

What nonsense! And what a lack of sensitivity in these Days of Awe and soul-searching.

We wonder how many of the members of the Rabbinical Council really agreed with their leader's statement that holding a non-Orthodox bar mitzvah to bring a little *nachas* to a handful of aged Jews in post-Holocaust Poland was a "betrayal of Jewish history."

More importantly, the horrible spectacle—in full view of the world's media—of a rabbi tearing a prayer shawl off Rabbi Emily Korzenick was an unforgivable disgrace, a true *chilul Hashem*.

9/20/85



# Richard Cohen Associates

Advertising / Public Relations

30 East 60th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10022  
(212) 758-6969

September 20, 1985

Dear Alex,

David Gross, former editor (now editorial consultant) of The Jewish Week, wrote the attached signed editorial expressing his outrage at the statement that a non-Orthodox bar mitzvah in Cracow would be "a betrayal of Jewish history." I'd like to send the following letter (signed by you) to The Jewish Week:

Congratulations to David C. Gross for his signed editorial criticizing the Rabbinical Council of America for stating that a non-Orthodox bar mitzvah "would be a betrayal of Jewish history" and for assailing the action of a rabbi who tore a prayer shawl from the shoulders of Rabbi Emily Korzenick at the bar mitzvah in Cracow. The foul deed of the rabbi was indeed despicable, marring the beauty and sanctity of a beautiful idea: to bring a moment of joy to a dying community, to demonstrate to all the world that the evil designs of our enemies came to nought, that the Jewish people lives.

Even more serious, however, is the perversion of history of which the Rabbinical Council of America is guilty in claiming a monopoly on Polish Jewry for Orthodoxy. In fact, Polish Jewry was far from monistic. Among the Jews of Poland slaughtered by the Nazis were not only Orthodox Jews, but also Reform Jews and non-religious Jews, Zionists and non-Zionists. Indeed, the Temple synagogue in which the Bar Mitzvah eventually took place was dedicated as a Reform synaogue in 1844, and Polish Jewish life was enriched by the contributions of many Reform rabbis.

I suppose one ought to understand this kind of arrogance and intolerance. Orthodoxy has suffered a precipitous decline in recent generations, and intolerance is a sure sign of weakness.

Let the Jewish world know this: Reform is an adjective, not a noun. The noun is Jew. And we are Jews. We will not be read out of the Jewish fold, not in Israel, not in Europe, nor anywhere on earth.

I urge this letter because my guess is that The Jewish Week will not run your statement that we sent out last Friday; they were closed Monday and Tuesday for the Jewish holiday, and by this time the story is probably too stale for them. But a letter along these lines will, I think, be published.

If you do send it, please have a copy mailed to me.

Sincerely,

  
Richard Cohen

*Give Gross this letter - send it to Dick*

September 17, 1985

Mrs. Gladys G. Goldstein, President  
Temple Israel of New Rochelle  
1000 Pinebrook Boulevard  
New Rochelle, New York 10804

Dear Gladys:

Many thanks for sharing with me a copy of your fine letter to Rabbi Louis Bernstein of the Rabbinical Council of America. I appreciate your taking the time to write to him to express the distress of the families of Temple Israel regarding the situation at the recent Bar Mitzvah in Cracow.

There was a letter to the editor of the New York time from Rabbi Philip Hiat of the Union staff which appeared in the paper today. I trust you saw it. I also am pleased to enclose a statement on the subject which I made in response to a query from the press.

With warm regards and every good wish to you and your dear ones for a healthy and happy New Year, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

# Temple Israel of New Rochelle

1000 Pinebrook Boulevard • New Rochelle, NY 10804 • BEvery 5-1800

September 13, 1985

Rabbi Louis Bernstein, President  
The Rabbinical Council of America  
275 Seventh Avenue  
New York NY 10001

Dear Rabbi Bernstein:

On behalf of our congregation, may I express to you our sense of outrage at the unseemly controversy your organization created in Krakow last Shabbat.

In a country where millions of our fellow Jews died at the hands of those who made no distinction between Orthodox Jews and Jews who did not follow Orthodox ritual, the conflict you generated in the Krakow synagogue is in our opinion a sombre reminder that we have learned nothing from the Holocaust.

How unworthy we are of those who died to kindle before the eyes of the world a sterile divisiveness which diminishes our image and belittles our message of an eternal people. Those who had the courage to bring a Bar Mitzvah to a pitifully small and aged congregation should have been applauded for bearing hope to those beleaguered few who have somehow survived in Poland. Instead, they - and the whole world - were spectators at a kind of black comedy: a futile and eventually self-defeating struggle which the congregation rightly saw to be an intrusive irrelevancy.

The message of the Bar Mitzvah was rebirth and new hope. The message you tried to substitute was the message of Jewish disunity which has served us so ill in the past.

As Jews committed to the preservation of our people and our faith, we should walk together in dignity and abjure the internecine feuds which have been the counterpoint to our tragedies over the centuries.

Sincerely yours,

Gladys G. Goldstein  
President

GKG:rkz

*Send Rabbi  
copy of my statement*

9/12/85-  
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not in Israel, not in Europe,  
nor anywhere else on this earth.

# PHONE MEMO

TO AMS		DATE 8/15	TIME 3:39	AM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FROM M Danee Vardase		AREA CODE 714-9500		
OF Yitz Greenberg's Secretary		EXTENSION		
MESSAGE	He would like to meet you on September 12 or thereafter. He is on vacation till then.			
		SIGNED <i>[Signature]</i>		
PHONED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CALL BACK <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RETURNED CALL <input type="checkbox"/>	WANTS TO SEE YOU <input type="checkbox"/>	WILL CALL AGAIN <input type="checkbox"/>
		WAS IN <input type="checkbox"/>	URGENT <input type="checkbox"/>	

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9/18  
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No of books  
no other



R. Orth. C

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June 13, 1985

Rabbi Irving Greenberg  
National Jewish Resource Center  
421 7th Avenue  
New York, NY 10001

Dear Yitz:

I have been reading your recent columns with interest, as I always do. I refer now specifically to your leitmotif which speaks of an impending schism within Judaism and the Jewish people between the Orthodox and the Reform.

One of the palliatives you offer and you write and go about the country talking is dialogue, the need for Reform and Orthodox leaders to sit down and to talk and to see whether some common ground cannot be found.

Surely you know that at virtually every step along the way we have done that both as a Union of congregations and through the CCAR especially. All of these efforts have been abortive and we are convinced, of course, that the fault was not ours. There was always the willingness to give on our part but no bending at all on the Orthodox side, either because those who spoke to us were afraid of pressure from the Orthodox right or when the representatives of the Orthodox right were unwilling to make any kind of compromise or even, for that matter, to recognize our integrity as a movement within Judaism.

Nonetheless, I do want you to know that we always stand ready to enter such discussion at any time, in any place, on any subject. Surely you know me well enough to know that I am committed to retaining that unity which is essential to our continuance as a people.

Perhaps what I am really doing is throwing the ball into your court. Bring together those people who are willing to talk, people, moreover, who are in a position to commit the Orthodox establishment to a certain course and you will not find us wanting in response.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Cohen

cc: Leonard Fein & Eric Yoffie

June 13, 1985

Rabbi Irving Greenberg  
National Jewish Resource Center  
421 7th Avenue  
New York, NY 10001

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Alexander M. Schindler



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With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

Abraham M. Seltzer



838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

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FROM: RABBI ERIC H. YOFFIE

TO: RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER, RABBI DANIEL SYME

DATE: June 3, 1985

As I travel around the country and speak on the Law of Return, I often follow Irving Greenberg. Greenberg blames much of the crisis on us for our supposedly inadequate conversion procedures. In addition, however, he also says that the issue should serve as the basis for a serious dialogue between Reform and Orthodox Jews. In the absence of such a dialogue, he fears a schism in the Jewish people.

Greenberg makes some of these points in a pamphlet that he has recently written. (See enclosed JTA article.) When Leonard Fein spoke to us, he expressed similar concerns.

I think we should consider sending a small delegation to talk with Greenberg. Perhaps he would identify those elements in the Orthodox community that would be willing to engage in dialogue, and would help us get such a process going.

ARZA could undertake such an initiative on its own, but I believe that it would be more effective if it came from the Union, with ARZA participation. Your comments would be appreciated.

EHY:dg

Enclosure

*Eric Yoffie*

*Handled*



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Rabbi Howard Greenstein, Jacksonville, Fl.	Morris H. Schneider, Rockville Centre, N.Y.
Chloe W. Herzog, Baltimore, Md.	Ben Sherman, New York, N.Y.
Nathaniel Hess, Sands Point, N.Y.	Rabbi Merle E. Singer, Boca Raton, Fl.
Arthur Heyman, Atlanta, Ga.	Rabbi Alan M. Sokobin, Sylvania, Oh.
Beatrice Hollobow, Chicago, Il.	Rabbi Jeffrey B. Stiffman, St. Louis, Mo.
Dr. Charlene Hyde, Los Angeles, Ca.	Rabbi Barry Tabachnikoff, Miami, Fl.
Sylvia Jaffe, Needham, Ma.	Robert M. Taubman, Baltimore, Md.
Joanne Jahr, New York, N.Y.	Rabbi Roy Walter, Houston, Tx.
Zelda Kahn, Westfield, N.J.	Mitchell Warren, Madison, Wi.
Florence Katz, Chicago, Il.	Rabbi Ira S. Youdovin, St. Petersburg, Fl.
Laurence Kaufman, Evanston, Il.	Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel, Washington, D.C.

## RABBI FEARS IRREVOCABLE SPLIT BETWEEN ORTHODOX, LIBERAL JEWS

NEW YORK (JTA) -- A leading Orthodox rabbinical scholar has asserted that American Jewry is now on a course which, within decades, "will lead to a sundering of the Jewish people into two religious or two social groups."

Rabbi Irving Greenberg said the two groups would be fundamentally divided and that its adherents will be unwilling to marry each other. Rabbi Greenberg, president of the National Jewish Resource Center (NJRC), presented his evaluation in a new publication, "Will There be One Jewish People by the Year 2000?" issued by the NJRC.

Greenberg charged that such polarization was strategically, morally and theologically wrong, and he urged the development of "a systematic religious dialogue to confront and avert this impending crisis."

He described the dangerous issues leading to the threat as those which effect Jewish identity and personal status, citing the "Who is a Jew Controversy" and the so-called patrilineal identity descent proposal offered by the American Reform movement.

He estimated that the schism, if it occurs, will mean that by the year 2000, almost one fifth of American Jews could have their status as Jews contested by more traditional Jews, i.e., Orthodox Jews.

Greenberg blamed the "self-centeredness" of fundamental and liberal Jews for the escalation of this problem. He contended that each movement prefers to solve social and religious problems in ways most convenient and attractive to them-

selves, thereby, in effect, "writing off the concerns of the needs of the other denominations." He called that pattern "suicidal" because each group "needs and helps the presence of the others," adding that "the strengthening of each (Jewish) group is the best insurance for the survival of all groups."

## TEENAGERS VISIT ELDERLY IN QUEENS JEWISH Y PROGRAM

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Teenage volunteers of all races and religions visit homebound elderly residents, most of them Jews, in the Little Neck-Douglaston section of Queens in a year-old program described as the first of its kind in the borough.

The Intergenerational Escort program is a project of the Samuel Field YM-YWHA in Little Neck, a member agency of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies.

Currently, there are 20 senior citizens between the ages of 60 and 90 enrolled in the program and 24 young people, ranging in age from 13 to 20. The project cuts across religious, ethnic and cultural lines deliberately, according to Reva Tokayer, the program director. She said the participants usually find they have more in common than they realized and that their differences make for more interesting relationships.

In addition to the visits, which last from one to two hours, the volunteers escort the older persons on errands and do shopping for them when that is needed, Tokayer said.

Bella Schlanger, 88, looks forward to her weekly visits from two Korean high school students, Stella Bae, 18, and Wendy Min, 16. Schlanger, a widow, lives alone in a small apartment in Little Neck. She teaches the girls Yiddish phrases and songs from her native Austria and they tell her what high school is

Richard Cohen Associates / 30 East 60th Street / New York, NY 10022

→ Rabbi Schindler (mail)

*Thought this material might be  
of interest to you. Any comments  
would be most welcome.*

Richard Cohen

[212] 758-6969

*Interesting!*

*Rafel*  
*Orlino*

July 23, 1985

Rabbi A. Stanley Dreyfus  
Rabbinical Placement Commission  
21 East 40th Street  
New York, New York 10016

Dear Stanley:

Thank you for sending me copies of the West London Synagogue Review.

I presently plan to address myself to the Orthodox problem, taking Itz Greenberg's articles as my point of departure. That's my present thinking. I might change my mind tomorrow. In any event, I appreciate the information which you so helpfully provide for me.

Warm good wishes from house to house.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

*one copy*

# RABBINICAL PLACEMENT COMMISSION

Central Conference of American Rabbis / Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religion / Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
21 EAST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016 (212) 684-4990

July 22, 1985


Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Alex:

I am enclosing photo copies of two pages of the West London Synagogue Review. The first I think you will find deeply moving. The second is profoundly dismaying. Hugo Gryn and his colleagues at West London must have felt under very great pressure to reassure a number of uneasy congregants who were frightened by propaganda spewed out by certain ultra-Orthodox groups denying the validity of our marriages. No doubt such a crusade is already under way in Borough Park and Williamsburg, and in no great time it will be taken up by other Orthodox bodies. Should some notice of this be taken at the Biennial?

With kindest regards from house to house,

Yours sincerely,

  
A. Stanley Dreyfus

ASD;bf

Enc.

Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel, New York, NY, CHAIRMAN; Mr. Donald Bean, Philadelphia, PA, VICE CHAIRMAN; Mr. Michael A. Bamberger, New York, NY; Rabbi Herbert M. Baumgard, Miami, FL; Rabbi Sidney H. Brooks, Omaha, NE; Mr. Leonard A. Cohn, San Francisco, CA; Mr. Norman Gross, New York, NY; Rabbi Meyer Heller, Beverly Hills, CA; Prof. Robert L. Katz, Cincinnati, OH; Prof. Leonard S. Kravitz, New York, NY; Mrs. Lillian Maltzer, Huntington Woods, MI; Mr. L. Kenneth Rosett, White Plains, NY

DIRECTOR OF PLACEMENT: Rabbi A. Stanley Dreyfus

DIRECTOR EMERITUS: Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern



July 9, 1985

Mr. Alexander Gottdiender  
801 North Broad Street  
Elizabeth, New Jersey 07208

Dear Mr. Gottdiender:

No one is trying to avoid you, although I must confess that the tone of your letter borders on a kind of insolence or at least irrationality that does not customarily elicit a response.

While Ari Goldman did not quote me precisely, it is true that Reform does not operate under the framework of Halacha. We accord Halacha a vote but not veto, as do the Orthodox, and only the Orthodox.

I would venture to say that probably ninety percent of world Jewry shares the approach of the Reform Movement.

This is an approach which has been in effect for close to 200 years now and which has retained for the Jewish people hundreds and thousands if not millions of loyal souls who work for the creative continuity of our people, and have done exceedingly much to assure Jewish survival. It was, after all, not Orthodox Jewry that created the State of Israel in our time.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

9  
77

*for type*

ALEXANDER GOTTDIENER  
801 NORTH BROAD STREET  
ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY 07208  
(201) 353-4481

July 4th, 1985

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

Re: A N.Y. Times Report "Rabbinical Dialogue: 3 Branches of  
U.S. Judaism Talk of Differences" by Ari L. Goldman.

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

This is a follow-up of my Open Letter of 9/4/84 I wrote to you to no avail. Your Assistant, Ms. Edith J. Miller responded on 11/27/84 saying that you are away from your office and that was the end of it.

Well, one or more disappointments didn't make or break me. By avoiding any kind of response, you tried to pretend that there is no problem which is not the case. You probably concluded that an unknown fellow who had the nerve to write to a Rabbi Schindler, could be ignored without any consequences.

Sir, I have no intention to let those burning questions being swept under the rug. Yes, we both have plenty of problems. Reading an account of the captioned subject on 7/2/85, I can see problems are popping up in ever increasing numbers.

Presently I will confine myself to only one Statement you made and I quote: "We have chosen to be outside (the Halacha) Unquote.

I really do not know your background or if you ever attended a Yeshivah? But it is irrelevant. Still I assume that your Parents and their Parents were orthodox Jews, as were the Parents and Grandparents of most of your Congregants.

\*with Now, in such times when our people has million problems, and our last hope Israel is surrounded\* the deadliest enemies, instead of trying to be helpful and heal wounds, what did you try to accomplish with your inflammatory Statement?

Do you want to extricate yourself from your own Parents, deny them the respect every human being is obligated to adhere to? And the same time steering masses of Reform Jews to follow suit, thus violating a cardinal aspect of the "Ten Commandments" Kibud Av V'em Honor thy Father and thy Mother.

Anybody who ever studied Judaism must know the meaning of "Halacha" Our whole Torah, the Talmud are based on it. Are you denying our Sages, the Tanaim and the Amoraim, the basics of our Laws? Do you wish to become an outlaw and drag masses of others with you? Or are you bent to carry out the work and give a helping hand to the Missionaries? No, I cannot believe it. There is something very wrong I am unable to fathom.

Or are your followers so ignorant or brainwashed that they follow you blind folded?

Sir, I would like to believe that our decent G-d fearing Jewish community will recover from their shock and get organized to ~~get organized~~ and undo your un-G-dly attempt to destroy us.

Please turn to page 2.

ALEXANDER GOTTDIENER  
801 NORTH BROAD STREET  
ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY 07208  
(201) 353-4481

Letter to Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
Page 2 9/4/84

Like Mordechai, it is obvious to say, if you will deny help from Israel, Almighty will provide it from other sources. I rather not continue the subject further for my own reasons.

6) Many of the Liberal circles, and I do not know if you belong to the same group, are turning against President Reagan because of his proChurch actions, School prayers, anti abortion etc arguing that Church and State are separated.

How come that the same groups vis-a-vis Israel are taking just the opposite stand, demanding and interfering in a very critical and grave major religious issue which may become a matter of life or death for our people.

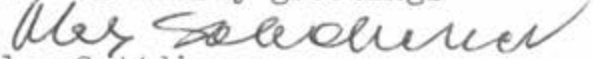
7) I will use an everyday custom to illustrate my point: Most of the U.J.A. or Israel Bond and similar affairs are serviced by an orthodox kosher caterer to make it possible to attend by any and all. It is a proven system and it works. Nobody ever objected to it. Well, we have many valid reasons to keep Israel orthodox kosher when our spiritual life and the future of our people is at stake.

I am afraid I overstepped the limits as far as space goes. Next time I have a few questions to Mr. Theodore Mann, head of American Jewish Congress.

It is a must that the heads of the 3 religious branches get together and iron out a solution. We simply cannot afford to start a war.

A happy and a healthy New Year to all.

With brotherly greetings

  
Alex Gottdiener

Cc.  
Agudath Israel of America  
Jewish Horizon  
Jewish Week  
Israel Today  
Rabbi Pinchas Teitz of Elizabeth, N.J.  
Commentary.

# Rabbinical Dialogue: 3 Branches of U.S. Judaism Talk of Differences

By ARI L. GOLDMAN

American rabbis, deeply divided on such basic issues as how to define Jewish lineage and whether to ordain women, are beginning to discuss theological differences together on a national level for the first time in decades.

One major effort to initiate these discussions took place in Minneapolis last week when the head of the Conservative rabbinate addressed more than 400 Reform rabbis at the annual meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

The Conservative leader, Rabbi Alexander M. Shapiro, asked the Reform group to reverse itself and return to the traditional standard that says Jewish lineage can be traced through the mother only. In 1983 the Reform rabbis voted that the children of Jewish mothers or fathers would be considered Jewish.

An Orthodox leader warned of deep divisions within American Judaism if there were no serious dialogue over differences among the three branches. The leader, Rabbi Irving Greenberg, president of the interdenominational National Jewish Resource Center, wrote in a recent column in *The Long Island Jewish World*, "Within decades, the Jewish people will be split apart into two mutually divided, hostile groups who are unable or unwilling to marry each other."

## Polite Stand on Differences

Rabbi Shapiro's Reform audience here was polite but not overly receptive to the proposal. "It would be better for Rabbi Shapiro to lead his movement into the future than ours into the past," said Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the association of Reform synagogues.

Rabbi Schindler, a chief sponsor of

the 1983 adoption of the liberalized standard on lineage, predicted that Conservative Judaism would follow the Reform lead in another decade. "It usually takes them about 10 years — like on the woman's issue," he said.

Rabbi Schindler was referring to a decision by the Conservative rabbinate earlier this year to accept women as rabbis. The Reform movement began ordaining women in 1972. The Orthodox continue to ordain only men.

Rabbi Schindler questioned the usefulness of dialogue on theological differences, saying it was more beneficial to discuss issues that united the Jewish community, such as support for Israel, Soviet Jewry, economic justice and improved Christian-Jewish relations.

"On theological problems," he said, "either you accept halacha or you are outside halacha. We have chosen to be outside."

## Traditional Jewish Law

Halacha is traditional Jewish law, such as kosher laws and Sabbath observance, that are embraced by the Orthodox as given by God for all time. The Conservatives believe that halacha, while still a guiding force, can change to serve modern needs.

For example, Conservatives permit people to ride to a synagogue in automobiles on the Sabbath while the Orthodox prohibit such travel. Reform Judaism believes that halacha is not relevant in modern times, although traditional practice, such as the lighting of Sabbath candles on Friday night, is valued.

Rabbi Schindler, the Reform leader, said he was not concerned about divisions that could result from the split over lineage standards.

"There have been many, many more deep-rooted cleavages than this in Jewish history," he said. "The Jewish world will remain whole. That which

unites us is much greater than that which divides us."

Rabbi Shapiro, the Conservative leader, also reached out for dialogue with the Orthodox in an appearance last month before the Rabbinical Council of America at its annual meeting in the Catskills. It was the first time in the 50-year history of the council that a non-Orthodox rabbi was allowed to address the assembly.

His reception there was cooler than the one here in Minneapolis before the Reform group. At the Catskills meeting, 5 of the 150 rabbis there walked out in protest.

Rabbi Shapiro appealed to the Orthodox to establish a joint rabbinical court, or beth din, that could rule on

matters of lineage, conversion and divorce for all American Jews.

A person can become a Jew simply by being born into a Jewish family. Judaism also accepts converts, although conversion standards differ within the three major branches.

Negotiations in the 1950's and 1960's aimed at establishing a joint beth din fell apart when the different branches could not come to terms on theological issues.

Rabbi Louis Bernstein, president of the Orthodox group, said he would study the beth din proposal but rejected another call by Rabbi Shapiro that the American Orthodox help the Conservative rabbinate gain recognition in Israel.

In Israel, religious matters are controlled by the Orthodox rabbinate. Conversions and divorces performed by the Conservative and Reform are not recognized.

One Reform leader who was receptive to the idea of increased dialogue on theological issues was Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser, executive vice president of the Reform rabbinical group.

Rabbi Glaser said he was willing to make concessions to the more traditional groups in order to realize the vision of one unified American Jewish community. "If I have to wear a yarmulke to do it, I'll do it," he said. "If I have to give up lobster, I'll do it, although that would hurt. But there has got to be a lot of give on their part, too."



"The days of thy life" indicates the days; "all the days of thy life" indicates that the nights are included. But the other Sages say: "The days of thy life" indicates the present world; "all the days of thy life" indicates that the times of the Messiah are included.

BLESSED IS THE All-Including, blessed is He who gave a Torah to his people, Israel. The Torah has spoken concerning four sons—one wise, and one wicked, and one simple, and one who wits not to ask.

What says the WISE SON?—"What are the testimonies and laws and behaviors, which the Lord, our God, has commanded you?" Do thou, then, tell him precisely the practices of the Passover: One does not break up the Passover ceremony by announcing: "To the aftermeal entertainment!"

What says the WICKED SON?—"Of what use is this service to you?" To you, and not to himself! By excluding himself from the Community, he has denied the Deity. Do thou, then, set his teeth on edge! Say to him: "This is on account of what the Lord did for me when I went forth from Egypt." For me, and not for him; had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.

חַיִּיהָ יְמֵי חַיִּיהָ—הַיָּמִים; כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּיהָ—הַלַּיְלֹת. וְחֻכָּמִים אוֹמְרִים: יְמֵי חַיִּיהָ—הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה; כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּיהָ—לְהַבְיֹא לִיְמוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ.

בָּרוּךְ הַמְּקוֹם, בָּרוּךְ הוּא. בָּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בָּרוּךְ הוּא. כְּגַד אַרְבָּעָה בָּנִים דִּבְרַת תּוֹרָה. אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שֹׂאִינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל.

חָכָם מַה הוּא אוֹמֵר?—מַה הַעֲדוֹת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם? וְאִי אִתָּה אָמַר לוֹ כִּהְלָכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מַפְטִירִין אַחֵר הַפֶּסַח אֲפִיקוֹמָן.

רָשָׁע מַה הוּא אוֹמֵר?—מַה הָעֲבָדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם? לָכֶם—וְלֹא לוֹ. וּלְפִי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכֶּלֶל, כִּפְּר בַּעֲקָר. וְאִי אִתָּה הִקְהָה אֶת שְׂנִי, וְאָמַר לוֹ, בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לִי—וְלֹא לוֹ. אֵלֹהֵי הַיָּה שֵׁם, לֹא הָיָה נִגָּל.



*Richard Cohen Associates*

PUBLIC RELATIONS COUNSEL

30 East 60th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10022

(212) PL 8-6969

May 24, 1985

Dear Alex,

Please note the latest attack by Young Israel -- this time on our Catholic-Jewish program.

In fact, the criticism is based on an error in The New York Times story, which Harold Jacobs picked up. The Times said that among the proposals adopted by the board was one to "hold joint classes and exchange teachers" with Catholics. My news release did not say that. What my story said (para. 5, page 1) was that there would be an "exchange of teachers and team-teaching by priests and rabbis in Catholic parochial and Jewish religious schools," which is correct. Where Ari got his misinterpretation from I don't know. I never said "joint classes."

In any case, I suggest that you write to Harold Jacobs and explain that The Times was wrong about "joint classes," which was never our intention. You will note that he also criticizes the teacher exchange; we have every right to defend that aspect of the program (and Jacobs to criticize it), but he should restrict his criticism to what we're doing, not what we are not doing.

I haven't seen any publicity on his release yet. If it does get published, I think we ought to issue a statement explaining our side of the story.

Sincerely,



Richard Cohen

P.S. If it gets serious, we could request a correction from The Times, although I would prefer not to embarrass Ari Goldman in this way with his bosses. Aside from this boo-boo, he did a splendid job and was most cooperative in doing the story on his day off.

✓

June 7, 1985

Mr. Harold M. Jacobs, President  
National Council of Young Israel  
3 West 16th Street  
New York, New York 10011

Dear Harold:

I saw your press release of May 21 which takes issue with the Union's stance on Catholic-Jewish relations. I am disappointed on two counts:

1/ You know well enough that newspaper reports are often skewed. IN this case, the New York Times was wrong. We did not suggest "joint classes." What we did agree to undertake was an "exchange of teachers and team-teaching by priests and rabbis in Catholic Parochial Schools ....." Can you really take issue with that? If you had only bothered to ask for a copy of our release or called my office before you let go with your blast you would have learned the truth.

2/ The second reason for my disappointment is really with the regularity with which you attack the Reform Movement and Reform Jews. Don't you have anything better to do than attack fellow Jews? Don't we Jews have enough enemies without being at each other's throats?

All this, of course, is an institutional and not a personal comment. You know that I hold you personally in high regard and great affection.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

News from . . .

**NATIONAL  
COUNCIL  
OF YOUNG  
ISRAEL**



3 WEST 16 STREET  
NEW YORK, NY 10011  
212-929-1525

Contact: Yaakov Kornreich

ב"ה

For Immediate Release: May 21, 1985

**YOUNG ISRAEL PRESIDENT CHALLENGES REFORM PROPOSAL  
FOR JOINT CLASSES WITH CHURCHES**

Harold M. Jacobs, the president of the Young Israel Orthodox synagogue movement, has challenged the proposal of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to its member Reform synagogues to "hold joint classes and exchange teachers in religious school programs" with local Catholic churches. The Young Israel leader characterized the recommendation of the UAHC board of trustees as "a step which could endanger the Jewish identity of many members of Reform congregations whose understanding of their own religious traditions is too limited to allow intelligent comparison with Catholicism."

While the Young Israel leader applauded the progress that has been made to encourage mutual respect and understanding between the Jewish and Catholic communities, and another Reform proposal that committed Jews and Catholics find effective ways to work together on common social concerns, he criticized the joint classes and teacher exchange proposal as "overstepping the clear theological lines which separate the two faith communities. We must not arouse the suspicion of non-Jews that we seek to proselytize those outside our faith, nor encourage them to missionize Jews within the precincts of our own synagogues. In a free society such as ours, there is ample opportunity for Jews and Catholics to satisfy their curiosities about one another's faith without trespassing the sanctity of our houses of worship or religious education."

Jacobs urged the Reform leadership, "to concentrate instead on providing a more adequate Jewish education for its members and children. Our rich Jewish religious heritage and practices have, for too long, been short-changed by the Reform movement, and the Jewish people today is paying the price for that neglect in the skyrocketing rates of assimilation and intermarriage."

The Young Israel leader concluded by observing that, "all faith communities in the highly secularized American culture of the 80's are faced with a substantial challenge in merely inculcating the principles of their own religion in their constituencies. Contrary to this proposal, we believe that the most effective means of encouraging mutual respect and co-operation between Jews and Christians would be for each to become inspired with a more profound belief and understanding of their own faiths."



איחוד  
ליהדות  
מתקדמת  
באמריקה

# Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100 CABLES: UNIONUAHC  
NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Richard Cohen  
(212) 758-6969  
or (212) 088-8042

NEW YORK, May 19 -- The leaders of Reform Judaism called on American Jews and Catholics today to join in a new and wide-ranging program aimed at promoting inter-religious understanding at the church and synagogue level.

The action by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations is believed to mark the first time a Jewish denomination has sought to bring together synagoge-members and church-goers in activities seeking to create better understanding of each other's beliefs.

The program was adopted by unanimous vote of 150 members of the UAHC board of trustees at its semi-annual meeting in the Grand Hyatt Hotel. In a resolution, the board urged the UAHC's 780 member-synagogues, composed of 1.3 million Jews, to undertake:

...Catholic-Jewish dialogues to explore the issues that divide as well as those that unite the two communities.

...The exchange of teachers and team-teaching by priests and rabbis in Catholic, Jewish and Jewish religious schools.

...Catholic-Jewish dialogue and joint action on nuclear disarmament, economic justice and other issues on which the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations have adopted parallel policy positions.

The resolution hailed the 20th anniversary of the issuance by the Second Vatican Council of "Nostra Aetate," which repudiated the charge of deicide against Jews and condemned anti-Semitism. But while welcoming the progress in Christian-Jewish relations since then, the UAHC trustees said:

## Ignorance at the Grass Roots

"The most effective efforts to eliminate mistrust and misunderstanding have taken place so far on the national and diocesan level, rather than in the local community.

...The people in the pews too often remain ignorant of the vast changes in the attitude of the Catholic Church toward the Jews, so that misunderstanding may still persist on the grass roots level."

The board also instructed UAHC's educational arm to prepare materials commemorating the 20th anniversary of Vatican II and "to assure that information regarding the changes in Catholicism since then is disseminated on a regular basis to congregations, religious educators and youth."

The Reform Jewish leaders acted after hearing from both Catholic and Jewish experts on interfaith relations and interfaith dialogue, and after Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the UAHC, told the meeting: "We do not say that all differences have been obliterated, for they have not, and tensions remain: the Vatican's failure to establish formal diplomatic relations with Israel, the Pope's meeting with Arafat, the Vatican's role during the Holocaust. But the deadly sting has been removed, and our differences are reduced to their proper proportion.

(more)



Schindler: 'Time for Affirmative Action'

"The need for understanding and reconciliation between Catholics and Jews is made even more urgent by the demands of economic justice and nuclear disarmament. The prophetic cry of peace with justice is part of a shared vision that impels us to work together.

"The basis for that cooperation was laid 20 years ago in 'Nostra Aetate,' which luminously transformed the way Catholics and Jews look at one another. Pope John XXIII did what President Reagan failed to do when he visited Bitburg: he recognized the past for what it was, and instead of absolving the Church he determined to transform it.

"But if Catholic dogma has been transformed, not enough Catholics have been -- and too few Jews are involved in dialogue. We can sit back and wait for it to happen, or we can take affirmative action to make it happen. I propose that we act, and I believe we will find a cooperative spirit and an eagerness to join with us, both in repairing the errors of the past and in building together a better world for tomorrow."

Rabbi Schindler cited the joint publication last month by the UAHC and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of "The Challenge of Shalom for Catholics and Jews," a discussion guide to the Bishops' 1983 pastoral letter on peace and war. He noted that the 97-page booklet also examines areas of agreement and divergence between Catholics and Jews on such issues as economic justice, capital punishment and abortion.

The guide was written by Eugene Fisher, executive secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference on Catholic Bishops, and Annette Daum, coordinator of the UAHC's department of interreligious affairs.

Father Flannery: 'Unparalleled -- or Faltering -- Progress?'

The Rev. Edward H. Flannery, author of "The Anguish of the Jews" and a pioneer in ecumenical efforts, told the Reform Jewish leaders that "against the backdrop of the near 2,000 years that preceded 'Nostra Aetate,' the progress we have made over the past two decades in interfaith understanding has been an unparalleled triumph in human relations.

"Looking at the past 20 years in the shorter run, however, they appear -- in light of the magnitude and urgency of the task before us -- as faltering and slothful."

On the issues of abortion and church-state relations, where Jews and Catholics generally have expressed opposing positions, Father Flannery declared:

"I do not consider these Jewish-Christian issues at all. Is not abortion a universal moral issue as pertinent to Muslims, Buddhists or secularists as to Jewish and Christian interests? And is not separation of church and state, as we argue it, a uniquely American political issue that does not apply to Israel, England, France and dozens of other countries?"

The Catholic ecumenist, who now serves as director of the Office of Continuing Education of the Clergy in the Diocese of Providence, R.I., continued:  
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"Anti-Semitism is the supreme challenge of the Jewish-Christian dialogue. That is because Christians generally are all but totally ignorant of what happened to Jews in Christian history and of the complicity of the church in the development of anti-Semitism -- the latter a page torn from our history books.

"From the widespread ignorance of the anti-Semitic record results an indifference not only to the problem of anti-Semitism but to the entire Jewish encounter. This indifference creates on the Christian side the chief obstacle to progress in our relations. At the same time, exposure to the magnitude and scandal of this record generates in every open-hearted Christian a sense of urgency vis-a-vis Jewish-Christian relations as nothing else can.

"On this 20th anniversary of 'Nostra Aetate,' let us acknowledge that though this precious document has been well promulgated by the Vatican and some national hierarchies, and followed up by other excellent documents, it has not been implemented in most dioceses, let alone parishes, pulpits and schools.

"And let us realize that until the complete and unvarnished record of Jewish persecution is inserted into our history books and classes, the resultant ignorance will continue to blur our perceptions of the anti-Semitic phenomenon and will condemn the Jewish-Christian encounter to a stunted growth."

Father Flannery said the "highest priority" should be given to "the painful and well-veiled fact that anti-Semitism is an all-but universal attribute of Christians. I hasten to add that Christian anti-Semitism is in decline and also weaker than the various non-Christian varieties of today.

"Yet if our dialogue is to thrive, greater effort must be made to acquaint the wider Christian audience with that page of history which Jews know so well and Christians ignore."

#### Israel as Litmus -Test

Father Flannery said the "litmus-test" of Jewish-Christian relations was the State of Israel. He told the Reform Jewish leaders:

"To Jews, Israel was and is central to their concerns and to their Judaism. To Christians it is a peripheral issue, laden with misunderstanding, often unwelcome in the dialogue, often seen as an illegitimate injection of politics into a dialogue that is religious in nature and purpose.

"This disparity of views on so vital an issue can only invite trouble for our interfaith efforts."

Father Flannery quoted a statement from the 1975 guidelines and suggestions for implementing "Nostra Aetate" issued by the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations With Jews, in which Catholics were encouraged to "strive to learn by what essential traits Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience."

Calling this "a cardinal principle of the Jewish-Christian dialogue," Father Flannery declared: "In ensuing discussions Jews defined not only themselves but Judaism itself as Zionist. Israel by this very fact became a religious and therefore  
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ecumenical matter, entitled to an unchallengeable place in the dialogue.

"To ask the loyal Jew to ignore or suppress this Zionist attachment or to keep it out of the interreligious dialogue is, in fine, to ask him/her to divest him/herself of Judaism. And to disfavor in any way the full discussion of Israel in dialogue obviously violates the first rule of dialogue: the right to self-definition.

"The full clarification of the historical, spiritual and theological bond joining the Jewish people to their land must remain an uppermost dialogical priority until achieved."

Rabbi Davidson: 'How Grateful Need We Be?'

Rabbi Jerome K. Davidson of Temple Beth El in Great Neck, chairman of the UAHC's committee on interreligious affairs, told a session of the week-end meeting that many Jews were skeptical of 'Nostra Aetate' when it was issued 20 years ago. A commonly-held view, he said, was: "It's about time. How grateful need we be for being told we have a right to exist?" He continued:

"But surely now we can see what potential this document held for a new era. Catholic textbooks have been purged of anti-Jewish material, anti-Semitic prayers have been removed from liturgy and seminaries are changing their teachings about Jews and Judaism. Catholic schools are incorporating the study of the history of modern Jews and Judaism into their curricula, including an understanding of the Holocaust as well as the role of Israel for the Jewish people.

"Rabbis and Jewish educators now frequently teach in Catholic seminaries and parochial schools. There can be little doubt that relations between Catholicism and Judaism hold the potential for being better than they have ever been."

But Rabbi Davidson was critical of the Jewish community's interreligious activity, asserting: "We have certainly not measured up to the opportunities of this new time. The baggage of suspicion and distrust of non-Jews which we carry around is nearly as weighty as ever. Clearly, 2,000 years of Christian-inspired oppression of Jews cannot and should not be forgotten overnight, even in 20 years. But we seem to prefer to live with our hurts than to seek the healing that might prepare a better era for the generations to come.

"It is an attitude we must learn to shake, just as we must abandon the anti-goyim mentality that isolates us from constructive relationships with the Christian community."

Rabbi Davidson said that "though Catholics and mainline Protestants have or are in the process of dramatically changing their theology toward Jews, most of us don't know it. Interreligious activity in America, such as it is, chiefly involve professionals who go to conferences and give learned papers. Most American Jews don't even know what's happening."