



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

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Speeches, 1979-1980.

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such as this one from a man of 47 who lives in Montana:

"Having lost 'my faith,' I did not turn immediately to Judaism. I began to study *many* world religions . . . and always I found myself going back to Judaism. To my mind it seems so far in the history of man to be *the* approach that best reconciles all the multi-faceted sides of man — the physical, the spiritual, the intellectual, the social. The needs of the individual, the needs of a gregarious being. The striving for justice, and mercy and the 'good life,' the striving for *mitzva* . . . this seems to hold the answer for me . . . I want to become a Jew in some formal way. I am already a Jew in my heart."

Can you show me a more meaningful and moving appreciation of Judaism in our own literature?

Some of the letters come from simple people, who, despite rejection and discouragement, are determined to persist in their quest. A woman in an Idaho town writes:

"I recently contacted the synagogue in my town. It has no rabbi. I was referred to a man who might be able to convert to Judaism. When I called this man, he informed me that they really didn't condone conversion, and he said that he couldn't help me, and gave me another number to call. He wished me good luck and hung up the phone as if I was selling the black plague. I called the other number. I got almost the same treatment, almost as if he was frightened of me. He told me that I would lose my friends and my family if I was to become Jewish. I told him that if this was part of me being converted, then so be it."

How can we not reach out to such people? How can we fail to give help to those who sincerely wish to enter our ranks? I hold with Hayim Greenberg, the gifted Yiddish essayist, who once wrote: "I think that a people which believes that its religion is an expression of eternal truth is duty bound to proselytize: it must not monopolize the truth for itself, but should spread it among others."

Hence I hope that you will accept the Outreach Task Force Report. Those who come to us have a just claim on our attention. And we have much, so much to offer. Judaism celebrates life, not death. It teaches free will, not surrender of body and soul to another human being. The Jew prays directly to God, not through an intermediary who stands between him and his God. Judaism is a religion of hope and not of despair. It insists that man and society are perfectable. In a word, we have an enormous amount of wisdom and experience to offer this troubled world and we Jews ought to be proud to speak about it, frankly, freely, and with dignity.

* * *

In this context, and through the President's Message Committee, I wish to place one other important matter before you. I would like you to initiate a decision-making process — led by the CCAR, but involving our entire movement — which will culminate in the validation of Jewish lineage through the paternal, and not just the maternal line. The status of Jew should be conferred on any child, either of whose parents is Jewish, provided they both agree to raise their child Jewishly, and do so. To put the matter somewhat differently, I want the child's rearing and being and, ultimately, his self-definition to be on a par with genealogical factors in determining Jewishness.

Once again, as in the case of the outreach program, I do not propose something startlingly new to Reform Jewish thought. *Ich will mich nicht mit fremden Federn schmuecken*; I will not adorn myself with someone else's plumage. This matter has been raised several times before — most recently and cogently in Professor Mihaly's letter to Dr. Freehof, privately circulated. Unhappily, the issue has never been resolved and it is high time that we do so. A failure to act is the equivalent of action. If

we do nothing now — in the face of everything that is going on about us — we will still act, yet act wrongly.

Adherence to the matrilineal principle confronts us with a dreadful anomaly: the offspring of a mixed marriage, whether reared as a Jew or not, no matter, is automatically a Jew, so long as the mother is Jewish; but if the mother isn't, the offspring must ultimately undergo formal conversion, even if he was raised as a Jew and lived in an intensely Jewish home. This is nonsensical, absurd! Surely the father counts for something when we affix his child's religious identity!

A tradition spanning millennia should not be altered lightly. I agree. We must have a reverence for so time-honored a usage. Yet those circumstances which gave birth to that usage simply no longer obtain. It reflects a polygamous society in which the children of the various wives lived with their mother; but we no longer live in such a society — in conformity with Jewish law. The matrilineal tradition was reinforced by brutal persecution, when Jewish women were impregnated by force, ruthlessly raped, and a compassionate law permitted them to rear their children Jewishly, though they could not know just who the father was. But such a persecution is not rampant still. Moreover, that millennial tradition itself provides ample justification for a paternal as well as a maternal yardstick. It invokes the God of our *fathers* in prayer. It rules that we be summoned to the Torah by our *father's* name. It reminds us that we live by *zechut avot*, by the merit of our fathers. Indeed, in matters of inheritance, and some aspects of genealogy, only the paternal line is held relevant; for instance, whether one is a *kohen* or a *levi* depends on the father's priestly claim and not the mother's. Thus does tradition offer a way to heal itself.

Agreed, also, that we must always be restrained by a reverence for the sensitivities of *K'lal Yisrael*. This is why I recommend that we proceed not unilaterally, but if at all possible, in co-operation with the Conservative movement. By all means, let us join hands in this. And let us not forget, that together we speak for the predominant plurality of Diaspora Jewry. *We are the K'lal.*

Please don't shrug this matter off as an academic issue. It is of the gravest moment to us. What we do or fail to do will affect us profoundly. Remember that the intermarriage rate is approaching forty per cent, and that the preponderant majority of such marriages involves Jewish men. *Their* right to determine the religious character of their children must also be secured. Here, then, is still another way to make certain that our grandchildren will be Jews, that they will remain a part of our community and share the destiny of the people Israel.

* * *

This people Israel. A recurrently and much afflicted race. In every continent, or so it seems, Jewish communities are embattled . . . Russia . . . Iran . . . Ethiopia . . . Argentina . . . Turn where you will, *s'iz schwer zu zayn a yid!* Because we are strong and live in freedom, we are duty-bound to lift our voices in their behalf, to help them where we can. I append a number of resolutions to which you can add your own commentary.

A brief word about Israel, though. It must be spoken. I cannot keep my silence here. The pain and the peril persists — ironically so, for momentous events have transpired since last we convened. The Camp David agreements were signed; a peace between Israel and Egypt has been concluded; and both signatory nations seem determined to make the peace work, to add to the skeleton of their written compact the sinews of common economic endeavor, and the flesh and blood of human contact. And still, the peril persists.

Its source is not far to seek. It is the oil cartel and her multinational minions, the damage which their greed inflicts on the peoples of the world, and the pernicious delusion which springs from it: that if Israel will only yield to Arab demands, be they just or not, price stability will return and the

IRS
JULES
RELIGIOUS
IRS.
PETER WEL
JULES BROTHMAN
FAT CH. POWER
A THOUSAND THANKS
MRS. SUL
THAT SERVES OF
BEST BIRTH
SERVING

It is a privilege which I greatly appreciate to participate in the joyous ~~celebration~~ and yet solemn ceremonies of this hour

I speak not only for the UAHC,

for that flourishing family of congregations of which we are all a part

~~But~~ I speak for our movement in its entirety

in all of its segments each bearing its own proud acronym

the UAHC and the CCAR

the NCTS and NCTB and NCTY

NATA and NATE and the ACC

We all of us rejoice and tightly so

for this moment bodes well for our future.

The four campuses of HUC-JIR are linked by a common name and purpose.

And yet each of the schools has ^{evolved} ~~developed~~ its own special character and worth.

THUS, FOR ME AT LEAST

(The NY School, ~~for me at least~~, has always been a symbol of Reform Judaism's

~~distinctive quality~~ determination to reach out to ^{world Jewry} ~~the Jewish community~~

to be linked to ^{WORLD JEWRY} ~~the Jewish people~~

to be a part and parcel of that proud people which bears the surname Israel

And how could it be otherwise ✓ 17

After all, this school was founded and given shape by our ^{people's} ~~generation's~~ most

passionate spokesman

Stephen Wise, of blessed memory]

and those who learned from him walked in his way.

For this reason, and many others as well, the NY School ^(WAS) ~~remains~~ a most precious

component of our seminary ^{complex} ~~complex~~

And now at long last it has been ^{garbed} ~~cut~~ in an outer garment which is cut to the greatness of its inner spirit.

p2.
The new building is altogether beautiful to see

The design is imaginative; the construction nearly flawless.

It provides a setting conducive to study and teaching.

It is the kind of academic home to which we can bring our constituency with pride.

Our thanks are due to all who labored to make this impossible dream come true.

Many have been recognized, the names of all have been recorded.

But special recognition is due to Fred and Jules

In striking combination they constituted that force which drove this project to its

happy conclusion p2

Jules Backman's will is awesome to behold p3

Fred Gottschalk's charm is impossible to resist.

The two of you have reason to be pleased and proud

And we have reason to be beholden to you.

EXPECTATION

Obviously we offer the prayerful hope that this school will be true to the

lofty ideals which it enshrines

the preservation of Torah

its pursuit in a spirit of free inquiry

the resolve to relate ~~that~~ Torah to the great issues of our time.

I hope that the school will ^{also} ~~continue to~~ be true to the more particular ~~nature~~ message

of our religious community, ^{to the} ~~the~~ reform component,

~~to the reform component of our~~ which was equally a part of that legacy which this

school's founder gave to us

for whatever Stephen Wise did was built on the reality of his identity as a reform rabbi
as a proud exponent of the principles of Reform Judaism

Surely no one will accuse me of being a non-traditionalist.

I respect massora.

I incline to the motive.

Still and all, I sometimes fear that ~~in~~ our eagerness to embrace the Jewish

Sometimes people leads us to ~~be~~ indiscriminating in our re-acceptance of past practices

And that, at times, we still suffer from the delusion

- born of our erstwhile minority status -

that by becoming more adaptive in our practices,

more halachically conforming, if you will

we will reduce hostility and gain a greater acceptance for Reform Judaism

all over the world, and especially in Israel.

Adaptive change is alien to the spirit of reform

It substitutes political for religious judgments and thus does violence to our

essential nature.

Why should we ape beliefs and practices which we have long ago rejected as antithetical to our deepest values

It will not avail us. *politicians* ORTHODOXY WILL ACCEPT CAN ACCEPT NOTHING BUT FULL SURRENDER

And if we become sycophants

truckling for favor by pretending to be what we are not

we will not deserve to win acceptance

from orthodoxy or ~~anyone~~ anyone else.

Why Why do we still think so little of ourselves

and romanticize others and the past

Why do we persist in judging the best of orthodoxy against the worst of reform.

Yes orthodoxy is rich and meaningful and beautiful in many ways.

But it has its aberrations too:

fanatics who paint swastikas on Brooklyn synagogues to protest ~~the birth of~~ against Israel

or who shout "anti-semitic" when a Rabbi Bernard Bergman is sent to jail for gouging the elderly

or who risk a delicate *press* ~~govt~~ coalition in Israel with their fixation of the sanctity of sand

We have nothing to be ~~shamed~~ of, we Reform Jews and we can walk with head held high
Where a political orthodoxy prevails stale repression, fossilized tradition
and ethical corruption often hold sway
but where reform is free to challenge
to compel thought
to affirm the power of Jewish ethics
to press against the crust of habit
there can be found new energy and a new vitality.

May the New York School ~~indeed~~ indeed we all of us maintain a balance
between the universal and the particular in this more restricted world of Jewry
as well

ever reaching out to the totality of Israel
but keeping faith with that devotion to creative change which has been the
~~secret~~ secret of our continuity and the source of our strength.

Then will the celebration of this hour be not for present use nor for present
, delight alone, but they will be forever
then the time will come when the wood and stone and mortar of our beautiful new
school will be held sacred ~~because~~ because our hands have touched them
and future generation ~~will say~~

reholding the beauty and the worthy substance of them
will say

See, this our parents built for us.

Ken Yehi Ratzon

4/6/79.
vayp
Ongepatchket

It is a privilege which I greatly appreciate to be here

in this august university community with its world wide reputation for excellence
and to share this platform with Benjamin Hooks

the distinguished President of the NAACP

I respect Ben Hooks much...

he has a reputation for integrity and fairness

his has been a responsible voice in our community

he seeks to heal, not to polarize

to bring justice to his people, but not at the expense of the rights of others

And ^{for all} for this I salute him.

It is a like aspiration which brings me here.

And those who are looking for a knock-down drag-out battle will be frustrated.

Differences in view will undoubtedly emerge from this dialogue

But the purpose of thier expression is to bring understanding

and to find a common ground for united action.

~~There~~ Roger Wilkins recently declared that there was one band of decency and

honor in America -- the Jews and blacks.

I mean to restore that band to its wholeness, ^{I want} to strengthen it.

I intend to approach our subject by answering 3 questions which were recently posed to

a like panel and which can well serve as framework for our discussion

First, is the black Jewish confrontation real or has it been concocted

either by the media or by institutional leaders of both groups.

Secondly, is there some common ground on which both groups can take their stand

And finall, just what is the relation between this struggle and the real seats of
power in our community.

The first question can be answered quite simply

Two communities which were at one time fully united
have, in fact, become estranged

Serious differences in view on important issues developed

Intergroup communication was interrupted

But there was no serious confrontation, *no open rift*,
untill the media, impelled by the Andy Young resignation, entered the fray
pinned the bum rap of his firing on the Jewish community
and thus brought ~~the~~ simmering disagreement to the boiling point
of open confrontation.

Let's set the record straight!

The Jewish community did not call for Andy Young's resignation

I know of only

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

p. 5

§ Still, the perception persists
that the Israeli government went out of its way to embarrass a black man
and that the American Jewish community successfully forced young's ouster.

§ The sources of this slander merit careful probing
as do the reasons for its dissemination.

§ The media must accept at least a portion of the blame.

On the day that
When Young revealed his clandestine meetings with Terzi.

The New York Post hit the streets with the shrieking banner headline:

FIRE HIM...NXX JEWS OUTRAGED...

Few read on, alas, for if they had they would have discovered that the
lead story failed to substantiate the paper's inflammatory caption.

Many Jews were quoted...all of them were outraged by the deed...

only one turned against Young himself.

I myself failed to make the papers that day

possibly because I refused to heed the reporter's ^{insistence} demand that

I take a stronger stance.

"Don't you think that young should be fired" he ^{demand} insisted

Even at 1:30 in the morning I knew better than to say YES.

§ Be that as it may, on the morrow came the screeching headline

and on the day thereafter the front page of the P0st was reproduced

on the front page of the Amsterdam news

and the battle of the ethnics was on.

§ Just to add insult to injury,

some days thereafter a black leader turned to me and offered the P0st's

journalistic muggings as ultimate proof of Jewish complicity

"Of course the Jews did Young in...The P0st is a Jewish newspaper, isn't it?"

So He said, neglecting to remember

He neglected to remember that the post is published by murdoch
and that murdoch is a wasp from australia

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The media's meddling however whole harmfull exacerbating the struggle
had something to build on.

Two communities once bound to each other had drifted apart

The unity was genuine, let there be no mistaking that

As Andy Young himself said: it was the backbone of the labor movement, the
civil rights struggle, and the Anti-Vietnam campaign.

Nor was the Jewish support for the black struggle given in any "patrohizing manne"
as some have asserted

nor only when it was in the Jewish interested to do so.

What personal interest did Micky Schwerner and Andy Goodman serve which put them
into a bloody Mississippi grave ?

Those Jews who worked and marched and went to jail and died in the
civil rights struggle

remembered the pogroms in Russia

and the holocaust

and all the dying that is so constant in Israel

and because they remembered all this, they ,ade the black struggle a part of their lives.

Yet this gen uine unity did not hold.

Why?

Issue bcame more complex and they were of a nature to disagree which led honorable men and women
issues like busing and affirmative action
to disagree not on the need to ~~need~~ to eradicate the evil

but on the means which should be employed to overcome them

~~There~~ There was a second reason, I believe, why this estnagment took place.

Largely at the request of the black leadership, Jews disengaged themselves from
civil rights struggle

10 1968
~~They~~ey Charmichael and others said: work in your own communities...we want to run our own
organIZATIONS.

When this was said to us, it hurt, but we understood and withdrew.

Yet this withdrawal, though benefitting the struggle for equal rights in other ways hurt in this:

it led to that break in communications to which I referred.

I often wonder whether some of our more perplexing problems might not have yielded to a common solution had we maintained the interlocking nature of our relationship.

To begin with, the ~~view on affirmative~~ approach on affirmative action of the Jewish community is not as monistic as is sometimes suspected

DeFunis

Nor is, I believe the black community wedded to a particular solution.

After all, the word quota is exactly a pleasing word to blacks

They too have been quoaded to death in many realms of American economic life.

This is why I am convinced that the re-establishment of our lines of communication must be our first concern as we go about the task of ~~refashioning our~~ rebuilding our common ground

Having said what I said,

I must confess that the Jewish Community of America does not feel as ~~strongly~~ deeply
about the ^{of poverty} problem ^{as} does the black community

Oh Yes, there are Jewish poor in our larger cities

more than is suspected, especially by the black community which considers the
Jew all powerful and rich

And ironically enough, these Jewish poor complain that their poverty is ignored
that all of the federal funding is going to the blacks and the Puerto Rican/

But let us admit it, for most American Jews poverty is an academic issue
which we consider with some detachment

We see the balancing factors,

the scarcity of funds

the danger of inflation.

Here and there some of us may feel something of an economic pinch.

But for millions of Americans this is a catastrophe which engulfs them now

For them this is no academic matter

hunger hollows the cheek

need deadens the eye

beggary bends the neck

and then there is the contempt, the shame, the loss of faith in the self.

Hunger also persuades to evil

and thus it is that we have piled up social dynamite in our cities

and precious human resources are gone to waste.

Joblessness is not a black agenda. It is an American a Human agenda.

Joblessness is also a Jewish agenda -- as is every other domestic ill which
saps the strength of our society.

Jewishness must never be defined only in parochial terms.

We must see the saving of the world as the necessary pre-condition of our own
salvation.

To put the matter slightly differently, and more in the context of our dialogue, some how we Jews will have to appreciate that affirmative action is as precious to blacks as Israel is to Jews.

Which leads me full square to the second question

(and let me assure you that my answer to the remaining questions will be much briefer than was my answer to the first).

There is a common ground on which both groups can take their stand than which united the black and Jewish communities of America is infinitely greater than that which divides us.

Every conceivable study of the attitudes of various American groupings attests that blacks and Jews are closest to each other in their conception of America's ~~needs~~ domestic need.

Most recently, in the aftermath of the Andy Young affair a study ~~of black and Jewish legis~~ ~~of the voting record~~ of black and Jews in congress demonstrated that their voting record was virtually identical.

This, incidentally Ben, is why we Jews were so appalled when your leadership statement pinned almost every conceivable ill afflicting the black community at the door of Jews. Are we really the enemy?

Are we the burners of crosses and swastikas on the lawns of this land?

Are we Jews really a part of that power structure

which has done so little to reduce poverty and ignorance and illness?

Did Jews legislate regressive social policies and demeaning welfare systems?

Are we perhaps responsible for those cruel national priorities which place a premium on missiles over human lives

No and over again No.

We are not that enemy.

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We are not enemies at all.

We were and should remain allies.

For that which united us is infinitely greater than those issues which divide us.

Which brings us smack dab to our final question:

What is the relation between this struggle and the real seats of power in our community?

well
We make it easier for them to do what they want to do,
and what they want to do is inimical to our common purposes.

I ride a commuter train in and out each day, the estwhule NY NHAVEN

~~I live in a well-heeled community~~ Many a well heeled coporation executive rides on
that train.

We've established an easy going relationship, a kind of camaraderie
which extends to the train but stops whe- ~~it~~ we get off
either for work or to go to our dispearte homes.

I asked them in the midst of all of this holllabaloo.

Tell me what are you guys really saying about all of this balck Jewish business in
your locker rooms, and they told me.

We're lauching up our sleeves. Let them be at each others throats.
That'll keep them off our backs.

There we have it...and what a strange mirror image.

Both blacks and Jews see themselves as beleaguered, threatened, vulnerable.

Each see the other as powerful.

Turth is, each of us has some limited power.

But is is ~~mshmellow~~ mickey mouse and mshmellow compared to the power of those
forces who delight in having us as each others throats.

There were some po.itical forces that wanted that, and I wish I had the time

to develop my thesis along these lines.

SUFFICE TO SAY I'M CONVINCED ADMINIS^T HAD FOR SOME
TIME CONTEMPLATED

Be that as it may, the ploy worked well.

We were suckered into squaring off against each other.

~~We have~~ blacks against Jews and Jews against blacks

and we allowed ourselves to be distracted from the stark reality

that the administration which let Andy Young go

has also failed blacks and Jews and all who believe

in economic justice and compassion for the poor.

Let no one misunderstand me to have taken some kind of Anti American stance here.

Far from it.

This is a great land, a bounteous land, a land of infinite endowment.

It is great precisely because it allows, nay enjoins us, to ~~take~~

criticize its workings, to re-structure it, to refashion it in the image of
our ideals.

I believe in the perfectability of our society.

I am moved by the conviction that the best way of attaining this goal

is to have blacks and Jews stand together

for when one minority is oppressed, the other will soon follow.

Leonard Fein, the editor of a Jewish monthly ~~xx~~ not long ago wrote these memorable lines.

"it would have been nice...back when we were all singing 'we shall overcome'together
if we had managed to sing just a ~~little~~ bit louder
loud enough to make the walls of injustice tumble down
We didn't, they wouldn't have.
So now, a decade later, when instead of singing we've begun to shout.
You want to see who can shout the louder. Does that help?"

I think it doesn't help.

And I think we have to get on with our business of working together.

Presidential
Address

Toronto

1981

1979

CELEBRATING OUR FAITH



אֵיחָד לַיְהוּדִים מִתְקַדֶּמֶת בְּאַמֶּרִיקָה

CREATING OUR FUTURE

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS • NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS

PRESIDENTIAL SERMON

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

THE FIRST WORDS which come to my lips at this sacred moment, are words of praise and gratitude for our Chairman. This will be the last Biennial to be led by our dear friend Matthew Ross. He has served the Union selflessly for five and one-half years and now he will be stepping down. His tenure was unprecedented in its span and quality alike. He has been an extraordinary leader, winning the affection and regard of a wide constituency in our movement.

I am aware of the fact that Matt's personal views have at times been at variance with mine and with those of the Union. Yet he has been scrupulously fair and supportive, recognizing the needs of the movement as a whole, subordinating his own judgments to the right of the majority to determine its own course. I always had absolute confidence in Matt's wisdom and integrity. Often we did not even consult with one another before or even after a meeting, knowing that we would always be in full harmony.

Matt, in behalf of the Union, I want to present you with this Torah Scroll of the *Megillot* and the Prophets for your home. It is a rare scroll, most precious — as you were precious to us. Notice the silver finials, the *yad* and the especially-woven Torah cover. I am delighted to give you this beautiful gift with my own personal affection, and with the admiration and affection and respect of every member of our vast family. Long life and good health, to you Matt, to your gracious Mildred, and to all you love.

It is good to be here in Toronto for this 55th General Assembly of the Union. The last time we convened here was in 1957. It was the first Biennial I attended as a young rabbi, the first to which I brought my then, and now still young and lovely wife Rhea. This is a place, then, endeared to me by memory and by affection.

In the intervening years, Toronto has become an even more beautiful city — if that is possible. Its people are even more gracious and forthcoming — if that is possible. Its Jewish community — and, indeed, the Reform Jewish community of Canada — has grown in strength and dedication. We who are privileged to breathe the free air of the North American continent are blessed beyond words to come together to counsel and to worship together.

On behalf of those of us who have crossed over our peaceful and open borders, I want to express my thanks to the people of Toronto and Canada for the warmth of your welcome and the generosity of your hospitality.

Twenty-two years ago the Union was led by Maurice N. Eisendrath. Indeed, earlier in his rabbinic career, he had served as the rabbi of Holy Blossom Temple. Toronto was his communal home. Yesterday, lay and professional leaders of the Union joined Rita Eisendrath at his graveside where we spoke still another tribute in his memory. He has not been forgotten. The Union remains as his lasting, living memorial.

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Maurice left us a rich legacy and we have enlarged it. Look about you and see! This is the largest Jewish assemblage on this continent. We are here, 4000 strong, men and women, young and old. We represent some 750 congregations on this continent, and their number is increasing. The largest percentage of Jewish children attending Jewish religious schools in America today are enrolled in Reform Religious schools. They are taught by professional teachers who are banded

together in the National Federation of Temple Educators, which now marks its 25th anniversary and which every year has raised its professional and pedagogic standards. We have over a thousand Reform rabbis, men and women both, and well over one million congregants whom they serve. We have scholars and academies of learning second to none in the world.

Look about you and see — and at this Biennial we shall celebrate — how the Reform movement has managed to raise up vigorous new generations. Our Youth movement is now 40 years old. It is our proudest creation, our most precious possession. From its ranks have come our rabbis and teachers and leaders — gifted, devoted all. Wherever I go, I find NFTY alumni — here, in Israel, all over the world — strengthening our synagogues, serving our people. We salute the members and leaders of NFTY on this occasions, and especially Sam Cook who was the guiding creative spirit of NFTY during its formative years.

There are those who say that Reform Judaism has become brittle, that it has outlived its vitality and usefulness. What a fatuity! What nonsense! A movement which has the inner strength to regenerate its own leadership is not brittle but lives! Let those who belittle us come here and see. Let them come here and feel this vibrancy, our sense of renewal, of Jewish authenticity, our sense of Jewish involvement and creativity.

Come to think of it, let them stay where they are, these detractors. Let them scribble their pseudo-scientific studies for their pseudo-Judaic Commentaries. We are not about to collapse under *such* a weight.

* * *

Much the same need be said again to the Orthodox establishment of Israel and their minions here who continue their ceaseless quest to undermine our legitimacy as a movement within Judaism.

I don't know how many of you have read the opinion of Jerusalem's Chief Rabbinate this past fall, to the effect that those Jews who listen to the shofar in a Conservative or a Reform Synagogue have *not* fulfilled the mitzvah which bids us to hearken to the shofar's sound. In other words, a Jew who attended a Rosh Hashanah service at one of our synagogues and in fact *did* hear the shofar blasts should better have stayed away, for contrary to all laws of physics and commonsense, he did not really hear the shofar. *Gottenyu!*

In a like vein, a pre-eminent American halachic authority, Rabbi Moses Feinstein, recently ruled that when a Reform or a Conservative Jew has an aliyah, "his blessing is not a blessing;" whereas when an Orthodox Jew approaches the Torah, though he regularly violate the Sabbath, "his blessing *is* a blessing." And why? Because, according to Rabbi Feinstein, the latter though a sinner, believes in God, whilst the Reform or Conservative Jew does not. What chutzpah! What arrogance! What brazenness! To presume to know just which rites and prayers are or are not acceptable to the *ribono shel olam*; to claim the clairvoyance to look into a man's soul and to judge his feelings for God!

The Orthodox Rabbinate's judgments are reflective of the essential *irrelevance* of that which concerns them. Some of their recent disputes have centered upon a single liturgical phrase, whether it should or should not be recited on Tishah Be-Av. They solve the problem of a child born of an intermarriage both of whose parents want him to be Jewish and therefore raised him to be a Jew, by consigning him to *mamzerut*, to bastardy. Meanwhile, they have never found a solution to alleviate the plight of the *agunah*, and she remains doomed to lasting widowhood. And of course, they have had precious little to say concerning the hungry and the disadvantaged, and those many other pressing social issues whose resolution largely will determine whether Israel will or will not in fact be a state that is Jewish.

Thus does the Orthodox Establishment march resolutely backwards into the past. Is there any

wonder that it has failed to attract more than 15% of Israeli Jews; and that — with certain notable exceptions — Orthodoxy on the American scene is crumbling?

The judgments of the Jerusalem rabbinate are manifestly destructive of Jewish unity. They read out of the Jewish fold four-fifths of the world's Jews. And then these very judges turn around and accuse *us* of not being sufficiently heedful of the *klal*, knowing full well that we are pledged to peoplehood and pluralism, that we, and we only, accept all segments of the Jewish people without questioning their authenticity. What hypocrisy! What a mockery of justice! What a perversion of morality and of truth!

You will understand that I am not speaking against Orthodoxy as such. Rather I am denouncing a politicized Orthodox Establishment which is interested only in power, which seeks to exclude rather than include, which has little or no conception of, and even less interest in the real problem of Jews as we approach this new century.

I denounce an encrusted Orthodox Establishment which — so our master and teacher Eugene Mihaly reminds us — has “resisted and, with rare exception, fanatically fought every creative impulse and movement in modern Jewish life;” from the Haskalah to the renaissance of the Hebrew tongue; from Hassidism to liturgical reform to Zionism. Yes, Zionism too, for the State of Israel “was and is today given only grudging and *post facto* acquiescence by the leading Halachic authorities, the *poske ha-dor*.”

It is *this* Orthodox Establishment which we must resist with a greater vigor, especially in Israel. We cannot be content any longer merely to ward off those recurring efforts to reduce our status there still further by amending the Law of Return. We must move ahead, toward that full equality which is our entitlement as Jews, by challenging inhibiting laws and restrictive procedures, and by pressing for the passage of remedial legislation.

Two members of the Union's Israel staff, Rabbis Skirball and Levine, have indicated their readiness to risk the dangers inherent in such a challenge — indictment and imprisonment are a likely consequence. I, therefore, call on this General Assembly to support the appropriate ARZA resolution, and to strengthen it by authorizing the expenditure of any funds and resources required for such a judicial test of Reform rabbinic rights in Israel. Our movement will no longer be intimidated by the refusal of the Israeli Orthodox Establishment to recognize the qualifications of our Reform Rabbis. We shall fight them up to the Israeli Supreme Court if necessary. No matter how long it takes, we intend to prevail.

Nor ought we seek to flatter ourselves into the good graces of this establishment, by becoming more adaptive in our religious practices, more halachically conforming, if you will. It is but an illusory quest. There is no accommodation in their arena. Only surrender will gain acceptance.

I do not argue now against our greater traditionalism. As Reform Jews, though free to choose, we have an obligation to the past. I myself respect *massorah* as you know, and I incline to the emotive. I specifically favor *milah* and *tevilah* for conversion; but I favor them for their intrinsic worth as initiatory rites, and not because their observance might or might not make us more acceptable to others. Adaptive change is alien to the spirit of Reform. It substitutes political for religious judgments and thus does violence to our essential nature.

Let us not become sycophants, truckling for favor by becoming what we are not, it will not avail us. We will only demean ourselves and lose our distinctive character. Our fathers did not forge Reform Judaism to have us trade it in for a tinsel imitation of Orthodoxy. We owe halachah a vote, not a veto — as Jerry Malino so felicitously put it. And we owe ourselves that self respect and integrity which holds fast to our finest values and most cherished beliefs.

Let us stop romanticizing Orthodoxy, ever comparing their best with our worst. Yes, Orthodoxy is rich and beautiful and meaningful in many ways. But it has its blemishes too. Orthodoxy in practice is also fanatics hurling stones on fellow Jews; Orthodoxy in practice is also the placement of full page ads in the New York Times to defame the Jewish State; politicized Orthodoxy is also Gush Emunim proliferating settlements in defiance of Israeli law. Orthodox ✓

No, my friends, theirs is not the way to preserve Judaism. Judaism has survived best when pluralism is the rhythm of Jewish society. Where Orthodoxy alone prevails, stale repression, fossilized tradition and ethical corruption often hold sway. This is the danger in Israel, and in many parts of the world. Where Reform is free to challenge, to compel thought, to affirm the power of Jewish ethics, to throw change against the rusted fortresses of pilpulism and habit — there can be found new energy, new life, healthy competition, and a new vitality.

IN MY EVENT
NEED

Our self-confidence receives support from an unexpected source. The Conservative movement just released a study which was designed to help her leaders resolve the issue of expanding synagogue rights for women and the question of women's ordination. The findings of this survey strikingly confirm what a prominent *orthodox* demographer concluded only three years ago: that Reform Judaism perforce will emerge as the overwhelmingly dominant synagogue movement on the American scene. Orthodoxy's mass strength was confined to the first generation of American Jews; Conservatism gives evidence of being an essentially second-generation American Jewish phenomenon; the future clearly belongs to Reform.

These findings of their own study confront Conservative leaders with a Hobson's choice: they can respond to the inclination of their more traditional and also more faithful members by turning inward toward Orthodoxy and resisting change; or they can open up and reach out, in which case Conservatism competes with Reform on its most solid ground, and runs the risk of becoming indistinguishable from it. I know what my vote would be: don't turn inward, reach out, join hands with us — nothing else makes sense!

Be that as it may, this study holds its lesson for Reform as well: we prosper best when we are true to our essential principles of openness and responsible change.

One of these principles which we affirm with pride is the equality of men and women in the religious life. We have made substantial progress in this realm, bringing our grasp ever closer to the reach. Currently, one out of every four temple presidents is a woman. Women educators and administrators and cantors have gained full acceptance. For seven years now, we have been ordaining women as well as men to serve as Rabbis. They have been well received and they serve us exceedingly well.

Obstacles to their advancement persist, however. Old stereotypes don't die as fast as all that. Thus our Director of Placement informs us that there are some congregations who refuse even to interview women rabbis. This is an outrage, a grievous wrong! Unless we open our pulpits to women and remove all obstacles to their advancement, their ordination is but a *symbolic* recognition of women as full and responsible Jews.

There is some urgency in this matter. In the spring of 1980, we shall see an additional eight women ordained as Rabbis, making their total number thirty-one. I urge you therefore to carry this message back to your Temples, for discussion and for action, and I ask you to instruct our Joint Placement commission to review our procedures so that all Rabbis will receive identical consideration. Let us make certain that the Union family of congregations will be and remain an Equal Opportunity Employer.

* * *

Now, my friends, a year ago I proposed to our Board of Trustees a multifaceted Outreach Project which many of you have been studying in recent months.

I do not intend here to describe the details about that Project. We will be devoting a session of our Biennial to the subject during which the distinguished chairman of the special Task Force, Mr. David Belin, will report on the deliberations of his group. Suffice it to say now that my call was not limited to a wider reach for the unchurched. I also emphasized the need to open our hearts more unreservedly to those who have already accepted Judaism, recognizing them as authentic in their Jewish identity; and I urged that we make a special effort to draw into our communal life the non-Jewish spouses of mixed marriages, because they are already a part of our community through marriage — our children love them, have chosen them as their life-mates — and in the hope that they themselves will choose to be Jews or at least be persuaded to rear their children as Jews.

Our proposals unleashed a flood of mail and telephone calls. The secular press and the Anglo-Jewish press, television and radio — all of them seized upon the story, at times distorting and sensationalizing, more often than not, responsible and supportive.

Those of you who have read the full text of my proposals know that the suggestion about winning proselytes to Judaism was — and still is — circumspect and low-key. I flatly ruled our travelling religious circuses and street corner soap boxes. It is an affront to God and to Judaism to think that we might ever resort to the despicable methods of coercion and bribery and brainwashing used by some of the infamous cults today.

The response has been overwhelmingly favorable. Support came even from the more traditionally inclined within Judaism. Yeshiva University Vice-President, Israel Miller, told me that he and others had initiated a like effort within Orthodoxy some decades ago. Harold Shulweis, pre-eminent among Conservative rabbis — and we are pleased that he graces us with his presence here tonight — enjoined me to make the outreach effort trans-denominational, not to limit it just to the Reform Jewish community; and, of course, I agree with him. I received not a few letters from South America, whose Jewish communities face a problem not unlike ours, and hence, they were intrigued by my ideas.

Only in Israel was there a puzzlement. Israelis can scarcely be expected to understand a response to problems so peculiar to world Jewry. One Israeli journalist asked me whether I envisaged the possibility of proselytizing among Arabs — and I felt compelled to remind him that those seventy souls which Abraham is extolled, in the *Tanach*, for winning in Haran, were neither White nor Saxon nor Protestant.

Not only officialdom responded. *Amcho* did too! The mail and phone calls from Jews reveal a deep undercurrent of hurt and pain to which no agency, to the best of my knowledge, has even begun to respond. All the statistics in the world about the skyrocketing rate of mixed marriages do not begin to tell us about the degree of heartache felt among Jewish parents and children who have been estranged from one another and have yet to cease from weeping.

The mail from non-Jews too betrays an intensity of feeling. When I proposed that we reach out to them I had no precise way to measure the magnitude — and the poignancy — of their need. Let Edie Miller, my faithful Assistant, show you our files . . . they are filled full to bursting with letters from non-Jews of all ages and stations in life, who very movingly describe their search for religious meaning. They plead: "Where can we go to become a Jew? What books shall we read? Whom can we talk to? Where can we find a rabbi who will listen to us?" Sometimes their letters are profound,

such as this one from a man of 47 who lives in Montana:

"Having lost 'my faith,' I did not turn immediately to Judaism. I began to study *many* world religions . . . and always I found myself going back to Judaism. To my mind it seems so far in the history of man to be *the* approach that best reconciles all the multi-faceted sides of man — the physical, the spiritual, the intellectual, the social. The needs of the individual, the needs of a gregarious being. The striving for justice, and mercy and the 'good life,' the striving for *mitzva* . . . this seems to hold the answer for me . . . I want to become a Jew in some formal way. I am already a Jew in my heart."

Can you show me a more meaningful and moving appreciation of Judaism in our own literature?

Some of the letters come from simple people, who, despite rejection and discouragement, are determined to persist in their quest. A woman in an Idaho town writes:

"I recently contacted the synagogue in my town. It has no rabbi. I was referred to a man who might be able to convert to Judaism. When I called this man, he informed me that they really didn't condone conversion, and he said that he couldn't help me, and gave me another number to call. He wished me good luck and hung up the phone as if I was selling the black plague. I called the other number. I got almost the same treatment, almost as if he was frightened of me. He told me that I would lose my friends and my family if I was to become Jewish. I told him that if this was part of me being converted, then so be it."

How can we not reach out to such people? How can we fail to give help to those who sincerely wish to enter our ranks? I hold with Hayim Greenberg, the gifted Yiddish essayist, who once wrote: "I think that a people which believes that its religion is an expression of eternal truth is duty bound to proselytize: it must not monopolize the truth for itself, but should spread it among others."

Hence I hope that you will accept the Outreach Task Force Report. Those who come to us have a just claim on our attention. And we have **much**, so much to offer. Judaism celebrates life, not death. It teaches free will, not surrender of body and soul to another human being. The Jew prays directly to God, not through an intermediary who stands between him and his God. Judaism is a religion of hope and not of despair. It insists that man and society are perfectable. In a word, we have an enormous amount of wisdom and experience to offer this troubled world and we Jews ought to be proud to speak about it, frankly, freely, and with dignity.

* * *

In this context, and through the President's Message Committee, I wish to place one other important matter before you. I would like you to initiate a decision-making process — led by the CCAR, but involving our entire movement — which will culminate in the validation of Jewish lineage through the paternal, and not just the maternal line. The status of Jew should be conferred on any child, either of whose parents is Jewish, provided they both agree to raise their child Jewishly, and do so. To put the matter somewhat differently, I want the child's rearing and being and, ultimately, his self-definition to be on a par with genealogical factors in determining Jewishness.

Once again, as in the case of the outreach program, I do not propose something startlingly new to Reform Jewish thought. *Ich will mich nicht mit fremden Federn schmuecken*; I will not adorn myself with someone else's plumage. This matter has been raised several times before — most recently and cogently in Professor Mihaly's letter to Dr. Freehof, privately circulated. Unhappily, the issue has never been resolved and it is high time that we do so. A failure to act is the equivalent of action. If

we do nothing now — in the face of everything that is going on about us — we will still act, yet act wrongly.

Adherence to the matrilineal principle confronts us with a dreadful anomaly: the offspring of a mixed marriage, whether reared as a Jew or not, no matter, is automatically a Jew, so long as the mother is Jewish; but if the mother isn't, the offspring must ultimately undergo formal conversion, even if he was raised as a Jew and lived in an intensely Jewish home. This is nonsensical, absurd! Surely the father counts for something when we affix his child's religious identity!

A tradition spanning millennia should not be altered lightly. I agree. We must have a reverence for so time-honored a usage. Yet those circumstances which gave birth to that usage simply no longer obtain. It reflects a polygamous society in which the children of the various wives lived with their mother; but we no longer live in such a society — in conformity with Jewish law. The matrilineal tradition was reinforced by brutal persecution, when Jewish women were impregnated by force, ruthlessly raped, and a compassionate law permitted them to rear their children Jewishly, though they could not know just who the father was. But such a persecution is not rampant still. Moreover, that millennial tradition itself provides ample justification for a paternal as well as a maternal yardstick. It invokes the God of our *fathers* in prayer. It rules that we be summoned to the Torah by our *father's* name. It reminds us that we live by *zechut avot*, by the merit of our fathers. Indeed, in matters of inheritance, and some aspects of genealogy, only the paternal line is held relevant; for instance, whether one is a *kohen* or a *levi* depends on the father's priestly claim and not the mother's. Thus does tradition offer a way to heal itself.

Agreed, also, that we must always be restrained by a reverence for the sensitivities of *K'lal Yisrael*. This is why I recommend that we proceed not unilaterally, but if at all possible, in co-operation with the Conservative movement. By all means, let us join hands in this. And let us not forget, that together we speak for the predominant plurality of Diaspora Jewry. *We are the K'lal.*

Please don't shrug this matter off as an academic issue. It is of the gravest moment to us. What we do or fail to do will affect us profoundly. Remember that the intermarriage rate is approaching forty per cent, and that the preponderant majority of such marriages involves Jewish men. *Their* right to determine the religious character of their children must also be secured. Here, then, is still another way to make certain that our grandchildren will be Jews, that they will remain a part of our community and share the destiny of the people Israel.

* * *

This people Israel. A recurrently and much afflicted race. In every continent, or so it seems, Jewish communities are embattled . . . Russia . . . Iran . . . Ethiopia . . . Argentina . . . Turn where you will, *s'iz schwer zu zayn a yid!* Because we are strong and live in freedom, we are duty-bound to lift our voices in their behalf, to help them where we can. I append a number of resolutions to which you can add your own commentary.

A brief word about Israel, though. It must be spoken. I cannot keep my silence here. The pain and the peril persists — ironically so, for momentous events have transpired since last we convened. The Camp David agreements were signed; a peace between Israel and Egypt has been concluded; and both signatory nations seem determined to make the peace work, to add to the skeleton of their written compact the sinews of common economic endeavor, and the flesh and blood of human contact. And still, the peril persists.

Its source is not far to seek. It is the oil cartel and her multinational minions, the damage which their greed inflicts on the peoples of the world, and the pernicious delusion which springs from it: that if Israel will only yield to Arab demands, be they just or not, price stability will return and the

oil shortage will vanish like smoke. “. . . a comprehensive peace settlement (in the Middle East) means a return to stable oil prices . . . the Arabs must . . . forsake the oil weapon in return for Israel's withdrawal . . .” — quote, unquote, Mr. Connally. What claptrap! What noxious prattle! Is there anyone above the age of 11 who really believes that the OPEC nations will willingly reduce the price of oil, when the demand is at an all-time high, and the supply continuously diminishing? Is there anyone above the age of 50, remembering Munich, who still thinks that the extortionist's price knows its limits? When Britain threw Czechoslovakia to Hitler's wolves, their appetite was but whetted for more. And now America, tragically, must relearn this bitter lesson under the guns of Khomeini's goons.

Obviously we are concerned about the crisis in Iran. Our hearts and prayers go out to the hostages and their families. We are most admiring, also, of that restraint and sensitivity with which President Carter leads America in these trying days. We should say so, collectively and publicly!

But having said so, let us add also the prayerful hope that once these dreadful events are past, America will reassess its policies, seeing that blackmail does not cease once one payment is made. After the first, there is another and another, always.

The Canadian government too requires such a reminder — at least so it appears to an outsider. I said as much to the Honorable Mr. Starfield when he saw me on his recent and still to be completed mission. There have been disturbing developments here of late: a truckling to the PLO, irresolution in the anti-boycot sphere. And yet this land is far less vulnerable, so much better provided to resist economic extortion.

Neither America nor Canada nor any of the nations of the free world can save themselves by selling Israel down the river. They can save themselves only by a resolute effort to gain energy independence.

* * *

OPEC avarice yielded poison harvest in still another place — in America and in the midst of those who were our one-time close allies. The precipitous rise in the cost of oil quickened unemployment and inflation and stirred anti-semitism in some segments of the black community, which, in the wake of the Young resignation, was given open, blatant expression.

So, at a meeting of the nation's black leadership, the Jews were blamed for doing Young in. A bitter litany of grievances was levelled against us; every ill conceivable afflicting the black community was laid at our door. And past Jewish contributions to the struggle for civil liberties were belittled and besmirched. What calumny! What a damnable distortion of the truth!

Jewish support for the black struggle was not given in a “patronizing” manner as was asserted, nor only when it was in our “interest to do so.” Just what selfish interest did Mickey Schwerner and Andy Goodman serve, when they ended in their blood-soaked Mississippi grave? Those Jews who worked and marched and went to jail and died in the civil rights struggle remembered the progroms in Russia and the holocaust and the dying that is so constant in Israel — and because they remembered all this, they made the black struggle a part of their lives.

True, not every American Jew agrees with blacks on every issue. Still, our conception of America's domestic need is closer to the vision of the black community than that of any other segment of our society. Then why dump on us? Are *we* the enemy? Are we the burners of crosses and swastikas on America's lawns? Are we Jews really a part of that power structure which has done so little to reduce poverty and ignorance and illness? Did Jews legislate regressive social policies and demeaning welfare systems? And are we, perhaps, responsible for those cruel national

priorities which place premium on missiles over human life? No, and over again No! We are not that enemy.

As for the black leaders' endorsement of PLO terrorism, these embraces were sickeningly obscene. They revealed a moral callousness. They betrayed the dreams of King — his ideal of non-violence — and made a mockery of his martyrdom.

Thus was the damage done, and an old alliance irreparably harmed. It may be reforged, but never on the same basis, and only with those who regard anti-semitism as despicable as racism.

* * *

But having said what we have just said, let us confess that we too have sinned. Anti-black sentiment is not exactly alien to Jews; and it was blatantly expressed during this crisis. Let us confess also that all this rhetoric and our misplaced anxieties have given many of us excuse to abandon the fight; to turn away from the real anguish of blacks and other minorities; to turn inward and away from the world, and to fend only for ourselves.

We cannot allow this to happen. Why? Because we are Jews — and our history has taught us that we are safest in a land which is most nearly free and equal. Because we are Jews — and our faith enjoins us to hold fast to our vision of the good, to struggle for its attainment though we suffer defeat.

And so we resolve with an even greater determination to pursue our quest for a better society and world. On Sunday morning, Al Vorspan, will sound our summons in this sphere. He is the Union's conscience, and mine as well. And so there is no need for me to detail our religious action agenda, tonight. Suffice it to say, that I am pledged to advance this agenda fully. Allow me, however, to identify myself with *two* of its items by making the briefest of references to them.

Imprimis, on Cambodia. The tragedy of its people stirs us to the depths — the massacre of innocents, a massive starvation which threatens their extinction. As Jews, we cannot close our eyes to another holocaust, and we must do what we can, to feed the hungry and to ease the pain.

My second comment regards arms control. I assign our efforts here the highest of priorities, because I deem the unchecked proliferation of arms to be the gravest, most imminent threat to human survival.

It is a madness which shatters the mind, when the arsenal of overkill weapons is so large that America's land and sea-based missiles can destroy 150 Russian cities 50 times each. It is a madness when the combined nuclear arsenals of the superpowers have the destructive capacity to target three tons of TNT on each and every one of the four billion human beings on earth. It is a madness when we have enough deadly nerve agents to kill 100 billion people, that is to say, to wipe out the world's population not once, but 30 times over.

And when the United States, that bounteous land, is first among the countries of the world in military spending, but only 15th in literacy, and 16th in doctor-patient ratio and 18th in life expectancy and 19th in infant mortality . . . That, too, my friends, is a sad and cruel madness.

These are but two of many tasks which summon our energies in our striving to better the quality of human life. Is all this too much to ask? Can we Jews really rise above our own sorrow to sense the sorrow of others? Can those eternally rejected by mankind nonetheless retain their faith in man?

We have no other choice. It is our God-given task. For we Jews are not just another ethnic group or pressure bloc. Our survival was for a spiritual purpose which persists and gives meaning to our collective perseverance. If, in order to survive, we must say a fare-thee-well to the world and turn our back on humankind, if we must emulate the violence and callousness and hatred of our

enemies, why, then, our collective survival is not worth a tinker's damn.

What is a Jew? Today's Torah portion defines us with that very name which God Himself gave to Jacob after his all-night encounter with the angel:

"Your name shall be called no longer Jacob but Israel for you have striven before God with men, and you prevailed."

In its literal meaning, therefore, an Israelite — a Jew — is a person who struggles with men for the ideals which are His.

What, then, is a Jew? We have no better answer than this: We who bear Israel's name have forever been struggling for the sake of God. Our name defines us, it has irrevocably shaped our character and destiny.

Let us therefore be Jews, ever deepening our self-awareness, growing in knowledge and understanding. Let us be Jews who love their people with an abounding love and who care for them wherever they are in need. But let us also be among those Jews who keenly sense that they are Israelites, the sons and daughters of Jacob, and thereby invested with a sacred task: to be a goad to the conscience of humanity and a blessing to all humankind.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
55TH UAHG GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. I ask this General Assembly to express the appreciation of our entire Movement to our Chairman, Matthew H. Ross, for his unprecedented five and one-half years of caring and creative leadership.

2. The National Association of Temple Educators currently marks its 25th Anniversary. Over the years, this affiliate has made manifold contributions toward the advancement of Jewish Education, ever raising its professional and pedagogical standards. I call on this General Assembly to congratulate NATE on this occasion and to encourage its members in their important work.

3. The National Federation of Temple Youth is our proudest creation, our most precious possession. NFTY has enabled the Reform Movement to raise up vigorous new generations. From its ranks have come our rabbis, teachers and leaders, strengthening our synagogues, serving our people.

I call upon this General Assembly to salute Rabbi Samuel Cook, its guiding spirit during NFTY's formative years, even as we salute all members and leaders of NFTY on the happy occasion of its 40th anniversary.

4. I call upon this General Assembly to adopt the resolution on Israel submitted to this assembly by ARZA, as well as the resolution submitted by ARZA on the subject of religious rights in Israel. I urge the General Assembly to strengthen that resolution by encouraging the Union Board to provide all means necessary for a judicial test of Reform rabbis' rights before the Israeli courts.

5. I call upon this General Assembly to direct the Joint Commission on Placement immediately to review, and if necessary, revise all its policies and procedures in order to assure equal consideration of women rabbis by congregations utilizing the Commission's services. I call upon this Biennial also to sensitize our wider constituency to the urgent need of creating full acceptance of those of our women who have chosen to become teachers of Torah.

6. I urge this General Assembly to affirm the resolution on Outreach passed by the UAHG Board of Trustees in December, 1978 and to continue the program of the Task Force mandated by that resolution. I further call on the congregations of the Union to make this effort in all of its aspects a part of their own synagogue programming.

7. I call upon this General Assembly to initiate a decision-making process — under the leadership of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and in co-operation with the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and, if possible also, the Conservative Movement — which will lead to a validation of Jewish lineage through the paternal and not just the maternal line, thus conferring the status of Jew on all children, either of whose parents is Jewish, provided that both agree to raise the children as Jews.

8. I call on this General Assembly to urge our congregations and congregants to extend the hand

of support and love to Soviet Jews who freely choose to live in the United States or Canada. Their physical integration, however, does not suffice. We must make certain also that they are fully integrated into the lives of our congregations and communities so that they and their children will in fact live as Jews.

9. Troubled by the persistent reports of anti-Jewish discrimination in Argentina and responding to the urgent request of our rabbis there, I call on this General Assembly to support the appointment of a Commission of Conscience whose task it will be to go to Argentina, to visit with families of missing Jews, to visit prisons and penal institutions, and to gather all pertinent information which will enable us to undertake appropriate action.

10. We are deeply concerned about the crisis in Iran. Lives are threatened. Consular sanctity has been violated. The danger of a wider war looms. I call on this Assembly to express our solidarity with those held captive; to commend President Carter for his admirably restrained handling of this catastrophe; to summon the United Nations and its member states to act with greater strength and clarity; and to urge the American administration to reassess, thereafter, its Middle East and world policies in the light of those dangerous realities evident in the Islamic resurgence with its anti-American, anti-West manifestations.

11. The UAHC Board of Trustees, in June 1978, expressed our profound horror at the massacre of innocent persons then underway in Cambodia. The tragedy of Cambodia has been deepened by massive starvation which now threatens the extinction of the Cambodian people.

As Jews, we refuse to close our eyes to another holocaust. We must continue to work together with that worthy company of peoples committed to human life.

I urge that the Union, its congregations and congregants, intensify our every effort, financial and moral, to feed the hungry and to ameliorate the famine in Cambodia.

SERMON BY RABBI SCHINDLER

NEW YORK FEDERATION ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES

My first words are words of gratitude to Rabbi Sobel for allowing me to occupy this distinguished pulpit. It is a pulpit made distinguished primarily by the men who occupied it and the man who occupies it now. A word of gratitude is due also to the leaders of Temple Emanu-El, for hosting the convention of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues. This temple has been a bright and shining star in the firmament of our religious community. Its contributions toward the advancement of our world are many and meritorious and today we witness still another act of kindness.

Despite my feelings of regard to Rabbi Sobel, I must take some exception to an introduction which was overly kind. I don't believe that you're going to take it too seriously because all of you who are members of this congregation, any congregation for that matter, know that rabbis are prone to hyperbole and one has to learn how to take what we in the trade refer to as a rabbinic discount. I accept his words of praise only as an ideal, an aspiration of what I should be and assuredly not what I am nor as reflective of that which I have really achieved.

It is good to be in the presence of so many leaders of the Reform Jewish community: leaders of our regional board, of our national board, men and women to whose lives I feel bound in kinship and to whom I am exceedingly grateful. I am happy also that there are many rabbis in our midst. I appreciate their presence and especially their forbearance, for you ought to know that as far as rabbis are concerned, preaching is very much like charity: it is far better to give than to receive. It takes great patience to sit there and listen to another rabbi, knowing all the while that you can do so much better yourself. And this is manifestly true in this case. By all rights I should be in their place, listening to them, learning from them. I draw great strength from their companionship and because of their encouragement.

Now Rabbi Gertman, for whose superb leadership of our region we are all exceedingly grateful, enjoined me not to speak about Israel today, but rather to stick to the theme of this convention: An Agenda for the Synagogue. The focus of this convention's concern is a solutely proper. Understandable though the reality may be, there is an over-preoccupation with Israel on the American Jewish scene -- in our thinking, in our doing, in our feeling -- often, too often, to the neglect of those of our own institutions which are equally important in the struggle to secure the creative continuity of the Jewish people.

Now you might say to me, "We expect to hear this from you; after all, you're the leader of the synagogue movement, and you have to speak as you do." Well, don't listen to me. Listen to the former head of the State of Israel, Golda Meir. The incident at which she spoke those words I am about to quote occurred in the aftermath of the Yom Kipur War. A handful of American Jewish leaders went to Israel to express our solidarity with that embattled land in its time of bitterness. On the last day of our mission we assembled for a supper in that beautiful Chagall Hall of the Knesset. We bade our farewell to the prime minister. Golda Meir was a bent and broken woman even then. Her eyes were bloodshot, her shoulders stooped. Later on I learned that she had been meeting that day with parents of soldiers missing in action; parents, wives who did not know whether their husbands, children were alive or captured or dead. And when she turned to us to speak her final farewell this is what she said and I have never forgotten: "I bid you farewell; I thank you for coming here. I ask you to return to your communities. But I am not going to ask you to send us more money because I know you know our need for it and you will send us what you can. I'm not going to ask you to give us more political support because I know you know our need for that too and you will do what you must. I ask you to return to your communities and to strengthen your synagogues and schools because," and these were her very words, "because the struggle for Jewish survival is fought not only along the frontiers of Israel but in every Jewish school and in every house of prayer of our world."

Golda Meir was right, of course. Jewish history bears out the truth of her contention. In times when we had our own land, and even more in those times when we were but wanderers in many places, the synagogue was always the magic ingredient of Judaism's wondrous endurance -- the synagogue and its schools. It was our home when we had no other home; our land while we were forced to be wanderers all over the globe. The synagogue enabled us to speak the proud language of our faith even when we were forced to voice the babble of many peoples. Beaten down and crushed by tyrants' rage, our fathers came into the synagogue and there they could breathe free. Within its sacred walls they could straighten their backs and hold their heads high and feel themselves to be as indeed they were, princes of God, proud scions of God's people.

What was true in the past, most assuredly is true for today and for tomorrow. The synagogue is still the only institution which is capable of assuring the creative continuity of the Jewish people. Who, when all is said and done, is responsible for teaching our children to be Jews, if not the synagogue? Who will assure that there will be a Jewishly educated, Jewishly committed generation two decades hence? Who will produce the teachers and the rabbis and the scholars for that generation? Who will assure our other communal and national Jewish organizations a reservoir of Jews on whom they will be able to draw for their support and their membership a score years hence? Indeed,

who will provide the State of Israel itself with a continuing pool of understanding Jews? The answer, of course, in every case is the synagogue. It has to be the synagogue -- the synagogues and those camps and seminaries and multitudinous educational endeavours that our synagogues sustain.

Now if the synagogue is to retain its vitality, if it is to fulfill its function, if it is to complete these sacred tasks, it cannot remain static. It has to renew itself even as it has over the ages. It must respond to the temper and the times. Let me speak briefly of three changes which I deem essential in this regard, one in form and the other thematic in nature.

As regards a change in form, (perhaps that term is not entirely appropriate because it involves people but it does involve internal structure as we will see), the synagogue of today must aim, must make its first priority, to attain the maximum involvement of the temple constituency in its work. As I move about the country, I see synagogues which live and I see synagogues which are but museums, memorials to a past which now is dead. And when I look for that magic ingredient which makes for life in the synagogue, invariably I find that the temple's vitality is in direct proportion to the number of members who participate in the temple's life and who are brought into the decision-making process of the congregation, not just on an administrative level, that is the least important, but in substantive areas as well.

How can this involvement be attained? In the first instance by breaking the barrier between the pulpit and the pew, by de-professionalizing our religious life. There is nothing in our tradition which reserves certain roles to rabbis, to the professional leaders of the congregation, indispensable as they are to the life of the congregation.

Let me give you one classic example of what I have in mind. When I was a young man, an assistant rabbi in Worcester, Massachusetts, we determined to establish a daily worship service. Many of our members were from traditional homes; they wanted to say kaddish for their parents. Yet when they came to the Orthodox synagogue, they were embarrassed, the service was entirely strange to them. Besides, there is a daily worship service in the Union Prayer Book and we felt that it ought to be used. And so we planned a daily service. And at that time, Rabbi Klein, my senior colleague, made two vital and wise decisions. First, he said that even though Reform does not demand a minyan of ten for public worship services, "I think we ought to insist on it, because a mourner requires a community. He cannot gain comfort from only two or three mourners." And so we prevailed on the Brotherhood to supply us with what we called

a corps of "minyanares," people who were prepared to come to daily worship services, on a particular day of the month for a particular period of the year. And then Rabbi Klein made his second decision. He said, "Alex, you and I will be worshipers; we will not lead the service itself, we will sit in the congregation. The lay leaders, the men and women themselves will read the service. On Mondays and Thursdays they will read from the Torah and on Sunday morning they will teach a lesson from the Torah."

I returned to Worcester some years ago and chanced to walk in on a daily worship service. There were 150 people there, over half of them not mourners. And the leader of the minyanaires turned to me and said, "Do you know that I have a waiting list of five months for people who are eager to participate. I have groups that are studying Hebrew so that they can read from the Torah because they have a greater chance of participating if they know Hebrew; I have a long list of people begging me to call them because they are prepared to be last minute substitutes." This is but one example of how people want to be involved.

As our Conservative colleague Harold Schulweis once reminded us, it may be true that rabbis have sonorous voices, that such phrases as "Vouchsafe unto us, O God" are better pronounced by a professional. But, if it is not so well pronounced, believe me, my friends, it is equally, if not more acceptable to the ears of God.

How else can congregational involvement be attained? By making the inner organization of the temple more pliant, more responsive to diverse human needs rather than to traditional categories of being. Item: in a midwestern congregation a group of forty men and women spend an entire year preparing the weekly Friday evening liturgy, writing portions of it themselves, gathering other portions from anthologies. Item: a far western congregation in California has a family religious school; at least one parent is expected to attend school at the very same time as the child, attending classes on a different level, teaching within the classes. Item: a southwestern congregation formed a Havurah for single parents, not to give them an opportunity to meet partners, but to celebrate the holidays together, the Sabbath, and the festivals in the home, in order to provide the children of single parents with an image of a father and a mother as part of one total family which is necessary and customary for the fullest celebration of the Jewish festivals. After all, what is a Pesach without a mother and a father? What is a Sabbath without a father to make the kiddush and the mother to light the candles? This is what I mean by meeting human needs, creating communities involving people. And if you think that this last is an unusual problem, I just learned of a congregation, forty percent of whose members are single parents!

How else can we involve the synagogue, people in the synagogue, how else can a synagogue gain the fullest possible involvement of its members? By fulfilling in reality that principle which Reform Judaism affirmed well over a hundred years ago but to which, alas, it gave only lip service over much of that time. I refer to the granting of full equality in the religious life to the women of our congregation. Now we have made much progress here to be sure, especially when it comes to our lay leadership. Wherever I go I find that women are taking their full place in congregational life. They are not relegated to the kitchen, to the social function, to the unseen support of the youth program or the religious school. Our seminary has invested cantors, has ordained rabbis who are women. But their acceptance by the congregation has not yet been attained.

Within the next three or four years our seminaries will graduate some fifteen to twenty women rabbis and ordain them. And unless there is a drastic change in the mood of our congregations they will be relegated to serve in ancillary positions. But they were trained to be rabbis and they have the right to serve in that capacity for which they were trained: to be rabbis in the ordinary sense of that term, congregational rabbis in the full meaning of the word. And there must be equal rights here too. I was told (this may amuse you but it is not amusing) that the other day, a congregational delegation came to Rabbi Malcolm Stern who is the placement director of The Central Conference of American Rabbis and said that, "We are prepared to take a woman rabbi provided of course we can have her at something over a half of that which would be required for her fellow male graduates."

Be that as it may, this is why I am proud to let you know, and this is a particular concern to members of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues of which all of us are a part, whether we are delegates to this convention or not, I am proud to let you know that the Union intends to engage Karen Fox as Assistant Director of our New York Federation of Reform Synagogues following her ordination this June. I am absolutely confident that she will meet if not exceed those high standards which have been set by her rabbinic predecessors, even as I hope that she will be well received by the congregations of this region, not because she is some oddity but because she is what she is: a rabbi in Israel, fully qualified to serve as such.

Now to move on to some of the thematic reemphases which I deem essential to make the synagogue more vital, let me speak briefly of two matters. The first relates to the need to make the synagogue once again just a little bit more relevant to the problems of the present day, to fling open its doors to the concerns of our community and the world. There has been entirely too much of an inward drawing during the past years, a turning away from the world,

a digging exclusively in our own garden. To some extent, I am afraid, that this inward drawing is but a re-birth of an insecurity which I had hoped the American Jewish generation had outgrown a long time ago, but which is showing its symptoms once again.

People say we have our own urgent needs. People say, "Let's forget about the others for a little while: the blacks, the poor, this business of bussing; let's worry about ourselves for a change." But they also say, a little more quietly perhaps, "Let's remember who we are and how few we are and let us be silent. Let us avoid taking a stand on issues about which the American people are divided, lest the wrath of the opposition be channeled against the Jews. Let us retain the good will of the majority at all costs, accept its convictions whatever they may be." In other words, we are to be the leading conformists on the American scene, and this my friends, despite the magnificent and heroic record of non-conformity of our ancestors throughout the ages.

Our fathers were non-conformists, let there be no mistake about that.. They were non-conformists because they knew it is Judaism's task not to win public favor for Jews but rather to win public acceptance of its noble principles. Judaism seeks first the applause of God and the commendation of history. It cannot compromise on its basic principles for the sake of good will. If our ancestors had consulted P.R. experts in their day, they would have been told they could indeed win the good will of the majority by abandoning their religious heritage, their belief in God, their adherence to the second commandment which states, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Now our fathers did not court ill will. They did not relish living in ghettos, being exiled periodically, seeing their sons and daughters burned at the stake. But they refused to buy good will at the expense of their deep-felt ethical and religious convictions. For them they lived and if need be for them they died.

Far the worst even when it comes to our Jewish concerns. I'm beginning to find manifestations of a like insecurity because we are beginning to be subject to attack as Jews. There are those in our midst who urge us even with regard to Israel to keep a low profile. Who enjoin us to be heard and seen as little as possible lest we incur the wrath of the mighty.

Well, my friends, we reject this counsel. Shtadlanut has seen the end of its day; quiet personal diplomacy has brought us nothing but betrayal and grief; look at the thirties and see. No longer will we allow ourselves to be beguiled by the blandishments of those who sit in places of power. Nor will we be intimidated by them. We will not commit the sin of silence a second time in the same generation.

How strange a change. Yesterday they berated us, when was it, forty years ago, for allowing ourselves to be led like lambs to the slaughter. They mocked us for allowing ourselves to do so. Today they want us to behave like good little lambs. Well, my friends, these lambs are going to do a little bleating along the way. As a matter of fact, we won't be lambs, we will be lions, the roaring lions of Judah.

And we will speak the truth as we see it, when promises are broken we will say so. When we see a wrong we will call it a wrong wherever it is committed. When undue pressures are exerted on Israel we will say that undue pressures are exerted on Israel. When we sense that our country is selling out its promises and ideals for petro-dollars, we will say so; whatever it is we will call it by its honest name and not justify it on the basis that it is something else.

Away with the counsel of timidity! Away with the caution of cowardice! Away with those who would flatter themselves into the good graces of the powerful! Away with those who have no convictions! Away with those who beg for good will and toady for favor. Who are we? We are Americans with our roots deep in the soil of this land. We are also Jews. We reject, most utterly do we reject, the concept of protective mimicry. We shall stand for the right as God gives us to see that right, stand for it when it is popular and pray for the strength to stand for it when it is not. We shall champion the concept of equal opportunity for all peoples, whether a public referendum on the subject would endorse or reject such a proposition. We are not chameleons who constantly change color to suit majority opinion. We hold great truths and we champion great principles and we shall stand by these principles and express them, give voice to them, with a boldness of truth, with a courage of our convictions. And with the heroism of soldiers on the field of battle.

Let no one interpret my words to mean that we should desert the inner life of the temple, the teaching of Torah, the devotion of Israel to the Jewish people everywhere, of our belief in God: these elements are the very core of our being. But we cannot sustain these elements in shells of splendid isolation. We can sustain and transmit them only when we expose them to the winds of challenge which come from without.

The silent synagogue denies its past; that magnificent and heroic record of nonconformity of our people through the ages. The silent synagogue destroys its future, her children will not follow her, they will turn away from us if we fail to speak up for justice and for peace, those issues which are at the core of their concern. To live, the synagogue must speak; to have the right to live it must remain what it was meant to be, an agency for good, a force which rebukes the evil of our lives.

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And last, but not least (I have spoken too long, but this point cannot be omitted), there is another thematic emphasis which I deem essential for the revitalization of the synagogue today, if it is to be a synagogue for tomorrow. And that is a determined effort to abandon our hyper-rationalism and to move ever closer to a greater appreciation of the non-rational; not the irrational, but the nonrational. Leo Baeck taught us that both the rational and nonrational are essential pathways along the road of our quest for God. This too is demanded by the spirit of our times. Reason is no longer enthroned as the salvation of mankind. An ever-increasing number of people have come to the recognition that the future of mankind cannot be entrusted wholly to the mind-scape of scientific rationality; that as the spirit within us withers so that everything we build about us, that when all is said and done the future of mankind rests on the future of soul.

We are still hyperrational in our approach; we are logical positivists in the main. We regard as real only that which can be communicated by the physical senses, which can be seen and tasted and felt and weighed, measured. Or we are pragmatists valuing only that which is of use, which is of practical worth.

And yet, my friends, there is a realm of reality beyond that realm perceived by the physical senses alone. And some, some among us are blessed with the capacity to perceive that realm: to one man, for instance, a primrose by a river's bank, a yellow primrose it is to him and nothing more. Another man has a clearer vision and so he sees tongues in trees, books in running brooks, and God in everything. Who of these two has a fuller vision of reality as it really is? The physicist can tell us that water is composed of two parts hydrogen and one part of oxygen; that is a scientific fact. But is this all we can say about water -- is this the sum and substance of its essence? Shakespeare, as we heard, read books in brooks, and Israel, sweet singer, found abiding faith by still and stilling waters. Surely, their discoveries are as real and as meaningful as are the technical formulae of the laboratory with all of its measuring instruments. The newer discoveries of biology and psychology can tell us a great deal about man: we can describe a person in terms of cells and chromosomes; we can pierce his nature with the x-ray machine; we can measure his behavior by tests and analyze his actions by means of certain psychic laws, but all this tells us is really very little about the human being. To know more we must turn from fact to feeling, from intellect to imagination, from the rational to the nonrational. Then, and then only do we begin to understand man's capacity to think, his ability to feel, his willingness to sacrifice.

Aye, there is a world of reality which goes beyond the material, and multitudinous also are life's gifts which are of little practical worth, but which as blessings are altogether wondrous:

the earth's green covering of grass, the blue serenity of sea and sky, the song of day, the silent wonders of the night, the petals on the grass, and wings in the air.

Oh how flat, how narrow our world is when we measure its gifts by their usefulness alone, when, in Rilke's happy simile, we take a hold of peacocks' feathers to tickle one another while being oblivious to their intrinsic charm. Then do the words of prophesy apply to us: they have eyes but they do not see, they have ears but they do not hear, they do not know, they do not understand, they walk in silence.

Modern man, no less than our forebears, requires such a sense of the nonrational, the sense of wonder and of awe. Outer innovation is not sufficient for the needs. The accumulation of knowledge is not enough. The human story simply cannot be told without reverence for that mystery and that majesty which transcends all logic and reason. Only humble men who know this truth can confront the grandeur and the terror of their lives without being blinded by life's grandeur or crushed by its fearsome terror.

AVODAH-KAVANAH -- religious exaltation and religious action. A consciousness of the holy and the mandate that mankind measure its means by moral aspiration. These are the ideals which are enshrined in the synagogue, not in its outer form but in its inner substance; in the prayers we voice, in the songs we sing, in the rites we celebrate. It is this twofold ideal which requires a renewing.

And then, then the synagogue will be again what it has always been for our people: a source of strength for life; the magic ingredient of Israel's wondrous endurance. Amen.

(END OF RABBI SCHINDLER'S SERMON)

REMARKS BY RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Interreligious Convocation for SALT

September 12, 1979

Washington, D. C.

It is a privilege which I greatly appreciate to stand before this assemblage of religious leaders and to give voice to our common convictions and concerns. I speak for Judaism. This is not the first time that a Jew, a son of Israel, offers public testimony on the critical need for arms control.

VECHITETU CHARBOTAM LE-ITIM VECHANITOTEHEM LEMAZMEROT

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

Isaiah's words echo down through the centuries. They were intoned by countless generations yearning for peace, even as they were ignored by those who rule the destiny of nations!

Historians teach us that in the millenia of recorded human history we can find no more than 128 years, all told, when there was no war in some place on this earth of ours. 128 years of peace....5000 years of war....5000 years of maimed bodies and burned flesh, of widows' tears and broken spirits and the whole dark butchery without a soul!

We, of our generation, ignore Isaiah's admonition at infinitely greater peril than did our forebears. They risked only individual lives; we risk humankind in its totality. Nuclear power has given us the capacity to destroy human life and to make the whole world uninhabitable. This is the fundamental issue at stake in the current debate; this the ultimate purpose of the SALT process: to reverse the arms race; to reduce the risk of fatal human error; to avert the necessity to make life and death decisions about humankind in but a fleeting few minutes. It is a purpose which the SALT debate has thus far failed to clarify, for it has focussed primarily technical details, confounding us with its complex concern for missile counts and warhead sizes and first strike capabilities and counterforce weapons. These concerns are weighty, to be sure, and merit consideration. But they are not the heart of the matter.

If the truth be told, the SALT II agreement itself does not really advance the cause of disarmament or arms control. It is but an agreement for a more acceptable arms management. Still, we endorse it, not because it is so worthy of itself, but rather because the failure to ratify it is the far greater evil, and we will not be satisfied until SALT II is followed in short order by SALT III and IV and the elimination of nuclear weapons is finally achieved.

The moral purpose of SALT is further perverted by the promise to increase military spending by 3-5% a year above inflation in payment for its ratification. Somehow the logic eludes me....to achieve a reduction in weapons you must increase the production of weapons. Such reasoning is too subtle for this Talmud-trained mind. And is our country's safety really secured by such a means? Experience teaches otherwise.

Increased military spending perforce means decreased spending for health care and housing and educational opportunities, and for that welfare assistance which provides a minimally decent standard of living to all. The inevitable consequence of such a course is the creation of a sub-class, an underclass, of Americans, out of jobs and out of hope, filled with frustration and with despair. Intergroup tensions flare; the soul and spirit of the land is drained. No country which erodes its internal strength in such a manner can long endure, no matter how large its military budget nor how great its military might!

The logic of linking SALT II ratification to a resolution of the present Cuban crisis also eludes me. Either SALT II is good for America, or it is not. If it is good for America, as I firmly believe it is, what purpose do we serve when we deny endorsement. We punish not the Russians, but ourselves!

Now I realize full well that these sentiments may be morally sound, but are politically naive. Trade-offs are the trademark of successful politics. The ability to conclude a compromise is the very essence of effective diplomacy. But, as religious leaders, we are allowed the luxury of political naivete, even while we bear the burden of being morally stern. Drawing on the wellsprings of faith, we must remind ourselves and others of those values which the world too often makes us forget. We have to hold up a mirror, as it were, so that we can see ourselves for what we really are.

There is a pertinent tale told in the literature of the Jewish people, a parable attributed to Reb Nachman, the Bratslaver Tsaddik. It is a tale about a country completely isolated from the rest of the world by surrounding mountains, and about its people ruled by a surpassingly wise king. One year, come harvest time, this people came to their king with the dreadful news that those who had eaten of the new harvest turned stark raving mad. "What shall we do, o king," they cried out, "if we don't eat the new wheat, we will starve to death, but if we eat it, we will go mad!" The king considered this fearsome dilemma for some days and finally, with heavy heart, rendered this judgement, and this is what he said:

"Since there is no other food available, we must eat of the new harvest, but let us at least remember that we are mad."

In this world of ours, which reduces the whole of human relationships to a calculus of force, we may have no other recourse but to balance force with force. But let us at least know that we are mad.

It is a madness when the arsenal of overkill weapons is so large that our land and sea based missiles can destroy 150 Russian cities 50 times each....It is a madness when the combined nuclear arsenals of the superpowers have the destructive capacity to target three tons of TNT on each and every one of the four billion human beings alive on earth....It is a madness when we have enough deadly nerve agents to kill 100 billion people, that is to say to wipe out the world's population not once, but 30 times over.

And when the United States, this bounteous land of ours, is the first among the countries of the world in military spending, and first in military sales, but we are only number 15 in literacy and 16 in doctor-patient ration and 18 in life expectancy and 19 in infant mortality....that, my friends, is a sad and cruel madness.

And so we are here, my colleagues, to see ourselves as we really are, to be reminded of those values which the world too often makes us forget.

We are here to enjoin those entrusted with the leadership of our land to help us advance toward that ideal, Isaiah's ideal, if only by one tiny step.

And we are here, above all, to gain that inner strength which flows only from the companionship of kindred and aspiring souls, and thereby to increase in faith, for the supreme creative function of the human mind, faith which cries YES in defiance of a thousand voices crying NO, which hopes where others despair, which loves where others hate, which persists in hearing the still small voice of peace even in the midst of the howling shrieks of war....Aye, that faith which by a magic all its own raises all things out of their native dust and exalts them to the empyrean of lasting worth.

Thank you Rabbi David for your gracious introduction

and for inviting me to occupy this pulpit tonight.

Thanks to all of you for coming to share our family's simcha.

Your presence makes our joy doubly gladdening.

In fact, all of you are a part of our family

at least I consider you as such

your caring love has sustained me over the years and

helped me to pass through many a difficult moment in my life.

Whatever I may have achieved in Jewish life, I achieved in no small measure

because of you

I am lastingly grateful to you

I consider you my kin.

It is a kinship sealed by tears of joy and sorrow alike.

My sister and I properly honor our mother,

She gave us life twice

once when she brought us into this world

and the second time when she and she alone rescued us from the

deadly winds of the holocaust

She deserves to be honored within these holy halls

for in her life she has exhibited many of the ideals which are

enshrined here

a respect for intellect and learning

integrity

11/16
Worcester

the conviction that a human being was given free will

that he holds the power to shape his destiny.

Jews are also meant to be a stiff necked people

my mother assuredly is that, ^{oy} is she determined.

She is a proud Jewess

in the best tradition of her forbears^{ed}

fiercely proud of the fact that she is a daughter of Israel.

Many of you will remember that most dramatic manifestation of her

Jewish loyalties

when in 1979 she was one of the highjack victims of two planes

taken to a desert strip near Amman and ultimately blown up

how she readily identified herself as a Jew,

^{has led} ~~has led~~ her Palestinian captors with a hebrew greeting

entered into disputation with them

and when one of her young travelling companions urged her

to assume a lower Jewish profile she replied:

"Listen, young lady, with the name of Levy you have nothing to hide."

These words epitomize her Jewish being

and justify this communal honor.

Now the rabbis of old had a saying that an occasion such as this

should not be

devoted to words of praise alone

Mere sentiment melts away, the thought,

Whilts some truth spoken remains engraved upon the mind forever.

In casting about for an appropriate theme,

I finally determined to speak about the

Andy Young affair - in retrospect and prospect

and this for two reasons.

Imprimis some of you were at Clark University last Tuesday night

Because of inclement weather I got there late

Ben Hooks never made it and

I got to the Auditorium at 11:00 p.m. and miraculously enough

there were still about a hundred students in the hall

to listen to my lecture....

but most of you are saner than college students

and so I want to make it up to you,

although my treatment of the subject will take a substantially

different turn.

The second reason why I choose this subject is the fact that

it touches upon themes which are essential to our being

First, the duty to come to the defense of our people

And second, the concomitant obligation to open our hearts

to the larger world

Never to permit our ears to be deaf to the cries of anguish

Which ring without and rend the world.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Wmcs

Thank you Rabbi Davids for your gracious introduction

and for inviting me to occupy this pulpit ^{trigul} ~~this night~~

Thanks to all of you for coming to share our family's simcha.

Your presence makes our joy doubly gladdening.

In fact, all of you ^{are} are part of our family

at least I consider you as such

your caring love has sustained me over ^{the years and} ~~and again~~

helped me to pass through many a difficult moment in my life.

~~Our relationship, our kinship is sealed by tears of joy and sorrow alike~~

Whatever I may have achieved in Jewish life, I achieved in no small measure
because of you

I am lastingly grateful to you

I consider you my kin.

It is a kinship sealed by tears of joy and sorrow alike.

My sister and I ^{properly} properly honor our ~~mother~~ mother, ^{and properly so}

She gave us life twice

once when she brought us into this world

and the second time when she and she alone rescued us from ^{deadly hands} ~~Nazi~~ ^{the cold hands}

^{of the Holocaust} ~~Germany~~

She deserves to be honored within these holy halls

for in her life she has exhibited many of the ideals which are

enshrined ~~within this place~~ here

a respect for intellect and learning

integrity

the conviction that a human being was given ~~the~~ free will

^{that he holds the} ~~the~~ power to shape ^{his} ~~its~~ destiny.

FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Jews are also meant to be a stiff-necked people

my mother assuredly is that, oy is she determined.

She IS a proud Jewess

in the best tradition of her forbears

fiercely proud of the fact that she is a daughter of Israel.

Манухохуоихакехбамххакхуиххх

Many of you will remember that most dramatic manifestation of her

.....Jewish loyalties

when in 1970 she was one of the hijack victims of two planes

taken to a desert strip near Amman and ultimately blown up

how she readily identified herself as a Jew

handed her captors with a Hebrew greeting
spoke Hebrew greeted and bade farewell to her captors with a Shalom
entered into discussion with them
argued with her Palestinian captors, bade them farewell with a Shalom

and when one of her young travelling companions urged her

to assume a lower Jewish profile she replied:

"Listen, young lady, with the name of Levy you have nothing to hide."

These words epitomize her Jewish being

and justify this communal honor.

Now the rabbis of old had a saying that an occasion such as this should not be

devoted to words of praise alone

Mere sentimaent melts away, the taght,

whilts some truth spoken remains engraved upkn the mind forever.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

In casting about for an appropriate theme,

I finally determined to speak about the

And, young affair - in retrospect and prospect
and this for two reasons.

Imprimis some of you were at Clark University last ^{Tuesday} Monday night

Because of inclement weather I got there very
~~and had to leave long before I got there.~~

Ben Hooks never made it. *and*

to arrive
I got ~~there~~ at 11:00 p.m. and miraculously enough

there were still about a hundred students in the hall
to listen to my lecture...

but most of you are saner than college students

and so I want to make it up to you,

although my treatment of the subject will take a substantially
different *turn* ~~term~~.

The second reason why I chose this subject is that fact

that it touches upon themes which are essential to our ~~being~~ ^{being} collective

~~and which this synagogue embodies being.~~

~~the need to be a fortress~~

first
the duty to come to the defense of our people

+ second
~~as well as~~ the concomitant obligation to open our hearts

to the larger world

never to permit our ears to be deaf to the cries of anguish

~~which are heard by all who suffer in this world.~~
raised

which ring without a word the world

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Central Synagogue Speech

11/2
myc
p. D.

It is a privilege which I greatly appreciate to be here and to participate
in the joyous and yet solemn ceremonies of this hour
which marks the 140th Anniversary of Central Synagogue
and to bring you the greetings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations
that far-flung and flourishing family of congregations of which
you are a cherished part

It is altogether fitting and proper that I be here
because the lives of Central Synagogue and of the Union have been
inextricably intertwined

You joined the Union in its infancy
Isaac Meyer Wise, the Master Builder of Reform Judaism on these Shores
dedicated this magnificent sanctuary in which we worship

His son, Jonah B. Wise, served this congregation for decades.

And your lay leadership provided the Union not just ample material
support

but ^{abundant} abounding gifts of heart and mind and spirit.

The present generation is no exception.

Mathew Ross currently serves as the Chairman of our national Board

He has held this post for an unprecedented 5 year period.

He has won the affection and respect of our far flung constituency.

He has made remarkable contributions toward the evolution of our program

He is the image ideal of the Reform Jew

His words and deeds reflect our highest aspirations.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

p. 1

A few weeks hence he will conclude his ^{very} years of service

^{one} He regrets this more than do I

He has been a true companion of the spirit,

a worthy friend

I feel bound to him as David was to Jonathan.

At our Bleanial in Toronto I will ~~affix to this the xxxxxxxxxx~~

give voice to the sentiments of our movement.

Since many of you will be unable to attend,

I want to tell you a secret.

At that time, I expect to present him with a scroll

from the Mount Nebo collection

appropriate adorned with finials, a yad and a spanking new

cover which is in the process of completion

The scroll contains the five megollot and all our Haftaret

~~and xxxxxxxxxx~~ It is an appropriate gift, we think,

Because his life has been a life of Torah in word and in deed.

We hope that it will grace his and Mildred's home for many, many years

Even as he has graced our movement these many years.

~~This is an awesome moment, is it not, this anniversary moment.~~

In the stillness of the night we can almost hear the rushing of the waves of
time

their relentless pounding against eternity's shores.

140 years of being.

We can imagine how they felt, your mothers and your fathers

the doubts which seized them

the hopes which stirred them on.

Well they conquered doubt and built

and they built well

with wisdom and with strength

and so did those who followed after them

their children and their children's children

even unto this day.

These holy halls are their memorial

even as they are a tribute to those who continue their work.

Blessed be their memory

altogether blessed be the work of your hands.

Now the rabbis of old had a saying that a moment such as this

should not be devoted to words of praise alone

though many here are worthy of it

Sentiment melts away, taught the rabbis,

Only a truth taught remains engraved upon the mind forever.

In searching about for an appropriate topic,

I finally determined to address myself to the
conflagration which has been raging in our community of late
to the disputation between blacks and Jews
its cause and consequences.

At first flush this may seem to be a theme which clashed with
the mood of this anniversary moment.

And yet it goes to the heart of the ~~first~~ ⁷ matter which this synagogue is
~~for this is what~~ ^{all about} a synagogue is all about.
~~it is meant to~~
~~a synagogue which must be a sanctuary for the Jew~~
~~his fortress~~

his means of defense

Yet it
but a synagogue whose doors must ever be ~~wide open~~ ^{open wide} to the world

So that the Jews within will be able to ~~hear~~ ^{+ respond} the cries of anguish ~~without~~

~~which send the world out there, send~~ ^{bring the}

which ring in their ears & send ~~the word~~ ^{the word}

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

LET US BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING AND BEGIN BY
Our over-arching unity was given dramatic illustration by the Andy Young

affair on which I want to focus this morning.

It began in New York, at the United Nations -- or did it --
continued in
it involved Israel

Ultimately it had its impact on every American Jew.

FIRST

To begin with, I suppose, we ought to set the record straight:

The American Jewish community did not call for Andy Young's resignation.

I know of only a single Jewish leader who did so

that was his right.

None others did
But all the rest did not.

More to the point, the major umbrella groups who speak for the Jewish
community on these matters - while criticizing Young's PLO contacts -
carefully refrained from calling for his ouster.

We foresaw the consequences of such a demand and wanted to avert them.

Nor did the State of Israel demand young's resignation. ^{ouster} ~~REMOVED~~

The Begin
Her government filed a formal protest

decrying the State Department's failure to abide by its solemn pledges
not to negotiate the PLO until the PLO abjures its goal of
destroying Israel.

Such a protest was entirely proper and Andy Young's color ^{was irrelevant} had nothing
to do with it.

It would have been just as proper had Andy Young been white or yellow
or Moslem or even Jew.

It was improper for him to traffic with the PLO

and the government of Israel had every right to say so.

§ Still, the perception persists
that the Israeli government went out of its way to embarrass a black man
and that the American Jewish community successfully forced young's ouster.

§ The sources of this slander merit careful probing
as do the reasons for its dissemination.

§ The media must accept at least a portion of the blame.

On the day that

When Young revealed his clandestine meetings with Terzi.

The New York Post hit the streets with the shrieking banner headline:

FIRE HIM...XXX JEWS OUTRAGED...

Few read on, alas, for if they had they would have discovered that the
lead story failed to substantiate the paper's inflammatory caption.

Many Jews were quoted...all of them were outraged by the deed...

only one turned against Young himself.

I myself failed to make the papers that day

possibly because I refused to heed the reporter's ^{insistence} demand that

I take a stronger stance.

"Don't you think that young should be fired" he ^{demanded} insisted

Even at 1:30 in the morning I knew better than to say YES.

§ Be that as it may, on the morrow came the screeching headline
and on the day thereafter the front page of the PPost was reproduced
on the front page of the Amsterdam news
and the battle of the ethnics was on.

§ Just to add insult to injury,
some days thereafter a black leader turned to me and offered the PPost's
journalistic muggings as ultimate proof of Jewish complicity

"Of course the Jews did Young in...The PPost is a Jewish newspaper, isn't it?"

So He said, neglecting to remember

He neglected to remember that the post is published by Murdoch

§ There was a second source fuelling racial and religious discord.

It was the Carter administration.

§ The words do not come ^{EASILY} lightly, but the evidence compels them:

a white house briefing insinuates that the Jews are really to blame...

and the president ^{himself kept} remains silent even while he knows

that he alone made the decision to fire young

and that this decision was not influenced by a single solitary Jew.

§ Let us not forget that Young's troubles with his ^{superiors} boss began long before the Terzi meeting.

The intelligence community had come to question his 'reliability.'

The State Department had adjudged him a chronic embarrassment,

an unguided missile

a kind of loose cannon ball rolling 'round the diplomatic chambers

and causing damage everywhere.

There were rumors months ago - during that dramatic cabinet reshuffle -

that Young would be let go

President Carter was reliably reported to have reamed ^{him} Young out

for his many sins of commission and omission

~~As PRESIDENT~~
But ~~he~~ did not force the issue then, fearing the political reaction of the black community.

§ When the PLO story broke, a new and unexpected opportunity presented itself.

Now a political liability could be unloaded and others burdened with the blame.

Young could be fired and the anger of the black community deflected

-- from the administration and against the Jews.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

P. 7

5 Are these the rantings of a mind over-burdened with the painful knowledge
of Jewish experience?

JUDGE FOR YOURSELF

Listen to what happened at the White House briefing which came on the
heels of youngs resignation

I ^{Cite} quote now the words of the NBC corresponded as reported to ~~the~~ a
nationwide ^{TV} audience ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ that fateful night.

"There is great sadness here that so worthy a member of
our government ~~can~~ ^{is} no longer ^{allowed to} serve his nation. A high ranking
White House spokesman expressed the fear that this forced resignation
(note if you will - 'forced' resignation) that this forced-
resignation will further exacerbate the already strained
relations between black and Jews. He added 'these Jews will not
be satisfied until the President himself jumps off the cliff to
prove that he is devoted to Israel.' "

2 (Note: ~~forced~~) ^{he} On the following morning President ~~Robert~~ ^{Mississippi} commenced his ~~revers~~ journey...

He sailed down the river and above the battle in detached neutrality.

One might have thought that as a democrat presumably running for re-election
he would have had a strong interest in trying to ease tension between
two groups vital to the Democratic coalition,

One might have thought that as president he would have a strong interest in
pay a sacred obligation

to prevent poisonous racial and religious discord.

But the days went by, and the passions spread, and ~~the~~ ^{he} President ~~canter~~
kept his silence.

AND ^{FOR FORTY LONG} DAYS HE ^{KEPT} ~~KEEPS~~ HIS SILENCE

~~What a tragic re-enactment of a drama whose consequences ~~we~~ we Jews have
witnessed all too often in our troubled history...~~

~~What a beautiful scenario for removing pressure and saving the black vote~~

~~What a sad re-staging of an age-old ^{play} ~~dangerous~~ drama!~~

§ What a beautiful scenario for removing the pressure and saving the black vote.

(SARCASM) It was not the President who wanted to remove the highest ranking
black leader in the administration

no! It was the Jewish community!

that hidden, amorphous 'power structure' which always proves to be
such a useful enemy.

§ ~~This~~ ^{Then} is the dangerous ^{Age old} drama which ^{was re-enacted for us} ~~we were forced to see~~
for the first time here in this land:

an american administration exploiting anti-semitism for political purposes...

This is what the Andy Young affair ~~is~~ all about.

§ The play worked well, too well, in fact.

The blacks lashed out against the Jews and the Jews reacted in kind.

§ At a meeting of the nation's black leadership the Jews were blamed for
doing Young in.

A bitter litany of grievances was levelled against us;

every ill conceivable afflicting the black community was laid on our door.

And past Jewish contribution to the struggle for civil liberties

^{were belittled}
~~was belittled~~ and besmirched.

§ What an outrage!

What a damnable distortion of the truth!

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

p. 9

Jewish support for the black struggle was not given in a "patronizing" manner
as was asserted
nor only when it was in our "interest to do so."

Those ^{WHO} Jews worked and marched and ^{went to} were jailed and died in the civil rights
~~struggle~~ ^{the} movement, remembered the pogroms of Russia
and the Holocaust

and the dying that is so constant in Israel
and because they remembered ^{all this} they made the black struggle a part of their lives

^{Some} American Jews may not agree with the blacks on such issues as busing
or affirmative action

Still our conception of America's domestic need is ~~xxxx~~ closer to the
vision of the black community than that of any other segment of our
society.

Then why dump on us.

Are we the enemy.

Are ~~Jew~~ we the burners of crosses and swastikas on the lawns of this land?

Are we Jews really a part of that power structure

which has done so little to reduce poverty and ignorance and illness/

Did Jews legislate regressive social policies and demeaning
welfare systems?

^{Ann} Are ^{PERHAPS} we responsible for ~~xxx~~ those cruel national priorities which place
a premium on missiles over human life?

No and over and again No.

We are not that enemy.

^{leaders} As for the Black endorsement of PLO terrorism,

^{these} such affirmations are sickeningly obscene.

they reveal a moral callousness.

they betray the dream of Martin Luther King -- his ideal of non-violence ~

and make a mockery of his martyrdom

5 Thus it is that the Black leaders have allowed themselves to be
entrapped into squaring off against the Jews
They have allowed themselves to be distracted from the stark reality
that the administration which let Andrew Young go
has also failed blacks and Jews and all who believe
in economic justice and compassion for the poor.

6 But having said what we said, let us admit also
~~especially on this Rosh Hashono day --~~
that we are in like danger of being entrapped.
that we will allow old rhetoric and misplaced anxieties to turn ourselves inward
~~FROM~~
and away the real anguish of blacks and other minorities
that we will close the door to the world and seek to fend only for ourselves.

7 We dare not allow this to happen,
if only for our sake...

OUR History has taught us that the Jew is secure only in a land which is truly free
which offers the fullest measure of opportunity to all its citizens
to men and women of very race and creed
and all degrees of wealth and education in the sight of God.

~~SELF INTEREST BORN OF OUR~~
~~BUT MORE THAN EXPERIENCE MOVES US TO SEEK THE PEACE~~
~~THIS ALSO IS WHAT OUR FAITH ENJOINS US TO DO~~
JUDAISM INSTRUCTS US TO DO SO ALSO
to hold fast to our vision of the good no matter what
OF THE COMMON
IN WHICH WE
LIVE

to retain our faith in a tomorrow AMH

to struggle for its coming though we are defeated over and again

to bear witness to the goodness of life

and to sanctify all those whose lives are songs in freedom's cause.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

p. 10

Is this too much to ask?

Can we really rise above our sorrows to sense the sorrow of others?

Can those eternally rejected by mankind nonetheless retain their faith in man?

We have no other choice.

This is what we Jews have always been challenged to do.

^{PRECISE}
And this is why it will always be difficult to be a Jew.

^{ONCE}
A rabbi taught

that no one can be human unless his heart has been broken.

Our Jewish hearts have been broken in every generation including this ours
and one meaning of our suffering is this:

we will not stand idly by the blood of our brothers (and sisters)

not our own blood

nor the blood of our fellow human being.

For we Jews are not just another ethnic group or another pressure bloc.

Our survival has been for a spiritual purpose ~~and our survival must have meaning for today~~
^{WHICH STILL PERSISTS + INVOLVES OUR LIFE W/MEANING}

^{MUST}
If, in order to survive we kiss the world good-bye,

† separate ourselves from humankind

if we must emulate the violence and callousness and hatred of our enemies

why then survival is not worth ^{our} ~~the candle~~ ^{a nigger's} down.

To be a Jew is to be something more than a survived and endangered species.

To be a Jew is to be a goad to conscience of mankind.

To be a Jew is to be part of the civilizing and humanizing force of the universe

To be a Jew is to defy despair though the Messiah tarry.

To be a Jew - as God told Abraham four thousand years ago -

is to be part of a great and enduring people

^{this:}
but also to be a blessing to all human kind..

This then is the two fold mandate enshrined in this sanctuary

ahavat yisrael and ahavat chessed

the love of the Jewish people

and the pursuit of mercy, the love of human kind

May you be true to these two fold mandate

then will the celebrations of this hour be not for present use

nor for present delight alone

but they will be forever

then the wood and these stones of this ~~sanctuary~~ magnificent sanctuary will

continue to be held sacred

~~because your hands have touched them~~

and future generations of our people will say

see: this our fathers built and maintained for us.

R.H.
5741
Koran Temple

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Once again we are assembled in the courtyards of the Almighty

Once again we hear his summons for judgment.

Again the shrill sharp shouts of the shofar shake us from our complacency
with their demand for a cheshban hanefesh,
for a self-reckoning of the soul.

This is the ninth or tenth year that I stand before you
^{at} during these high holyday services.

I don't remember precisely ~~the year~~ ^{my} when I began to make ~~this~~ ^{to Brooklyn} trek

But I do know that ~~during these~~ ^{those early years} in the first year or two

our twins did not accompany us.

they were too young -- mere infants.

^{well} During the year just past they marked their bar and bat mitzvah
thus entering, at least theoretically, their adulthood.

And so it must be ten years or ~~nearly that~~ ^{thereabouts} ^{we are} that I am here

And we Schindlers pray for many more

for it is good to be here

good to feel the warmth of your response

good to celebrate these days in what has become our communal home.

At the same time I must confess that ^{our} ~~my~~ joy in coming here is
not indited.

~~intertwined with~~
It is ~~also touched by dread~~ ^{it} dread.

^{perhaps} It is ~~because we have grown too close to you~~ -- we are a part of you
As we speed across the Bronx Whitestone Bridge we joyfully anticipate

the embracing of friends

But deep within us a contrary feeling gnaws

a feeling of dread, of fear

the fear of those empty places

of faces which can no longer be seen, which ~~must~~ ^{must} now be remembered.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Arthur Levitt -- no more

Donald Newman -- no more

Frank Brown, ^{EDWARD LEOPOLD} GERARDINE ISMAY, -- too many others.

Ah....Life is a puzzlment, a mystery.

It is filled with too many such contraditictions: LIFE + DEATH

joy and sorrow

anticipation and dread...

~~ixixix~~puzzlment.

It is a strange business, this human adventure of ours,

and the older a man gets the stranger it seems.

Everything about it is ^{mysterious} curious:

~~first~~ ^{first} birth

when a single cell carries over on its slender bridge

that ^{the} amazing weight of inherited possibilities

from generations long ago ^{OF ALL THE GENERATIONS PAST}

^{UNTIL} then finally death

when this mysteriously compounded organism dissolves into

its elements

And in between ^{birth} life and death, what a strange intermingling of

loveliness and tragedy:

a child beautiful today, disfigured by disease tomorrow.

a human being strong and powerfull one day

then crumbling like a castle of sand built by children long the shore

when the tides of destiny rolls in.

righteousness and rotteness...beautiful homes and insane asylums...

glorious creative work and desultory, destructive unemployment

the laughter of ^{many} children and 300 burned to death in the fiery crash of a plane

and plucked from the ashes two arms severed from their bodies.

--- the arms ^(ITS HAND) of a mother clasping tight the ^{HAND + ARM} arm of her child.

Here is ~~the~~ a symbol of the human problem in its epitome
clinging to one another at the moment of tearing apart
ultimately let go
holding fast to life, even while we know that we must ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~

One of the great poets of the American rabbinate, the late Milton Steinberg
points to this paradox in what is undoubtedly his most
brilliant cration

"We have to embrace the world, even while we must surrender it," he wrote
"We are enjoined to greet each moment of existence with full awareness
even while we know that ultimately we have to return life's every gift."
hand seize, hand even while it must loosen its hold
and the wisdom if life is to know
when to hold fast and when to let go.

Steiberg tells us that he had this insight at the moment when
he was allowed to leave the hospital following ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~
a serious illness which ultimately claimed his life
As he crossed the hospital's threshold, the sunlight greeted him
That's all there was to his experience:-

the sunlight greeted him
it suffused him with warmth
And yet it was a moment of revelation
For you see, when he looked about him to see whether anyone else
felt the joy of that moment
he saw to his dismay that no one, seemed to feel his joy.
There they walked - men, women and children,

in the glory of the golden flood
and there was none to give it heed
And then ~~he~~ remembered how often he had been indifferent to sunlight,
how often, preoccupied with petty or even mean concerns he had ignored it.

And he said to himself:
~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER -

Larchmont Speech

This is not the first time that I occupy this pulpit
or worship in this sanctuary

I feel very much at home here

and something more than the familiarity of this place strengthens my
sense of belonging.

The warmth of this congregation has much to do with it
as does the essential kindness of your rabbi.

I value his friendship much

even as we all value his many excellences as a rabbi and teacher.

I fully share the sentiments expressed by Matt Ross

We have reason to be grateful to the Blums for their considerable contributions
toward the advancement of our mutual sacred cause

The books which the Union published

and which will bear their name

will delight generations of ~~young~~ our children

even as they will deepen their Jewish commitments.

They are beautiful in appearance, admirable in their substance

Gift and donor are alike - equal in their excellence.

We thank the Blums -- institutionally and personally --

and we wish them and those they love

many years of life and health and creative endeavor.

I am thankful for one more reason still:

tonight I can function as any other rabbi and preach as the occasion demands.

Usually, my office compels me to address a specific, restricted theme

More often than not I am asked to speak on contemporary events.

Tonight Rabbi Poller has not thus contrained me

And he said to himself:

How precious is this light, yet how careless we are of it...

How precious how careless

How precious how careless...

This became the refrain of his all too brief remaining life.

It is a refrain which ought to ring within us too

always

every waking moment of our life...

How precious...how careless.....

Surely we ought to value life for it is wonderful

full of a beauty and a worth

full of a grandeur which breaks through every pore of God's own world

We know that this is so, that life is passing wonderful

But all too often we recognize this truth only in our backward glance

when we remember, as we do at this parting hour of the year

what was, what we possessed, and then we recognize that we have it no more.

Here is the real reason of the remorse which seizes us during these days of

awe, these days of our life's turning.

We remember a beauty that faded, a love which is no more.

But we remember also, and with far greater pain

that we did not see that beauty when it flowered

that we failed to respond with love to love when it was tendered.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

"Speak as the spirit moves you," he said.

And so I am free to strike a more spiritual note
in harmony with the festival of Shemini Atseres which we mark this day
and with the Yizkor service which we recited but a few minutes ago.

Shemini Atseres has never been the happiest of holidays.

at least not as far as I am concerned.

~~Afterxxxxxx~~ There is a sweetness about it to be sure,

but there is a sadness too

the sadness of parting

After all, this festival brings to an end the cycle of holidays which began
with Rosh Hashono

It is a feast of conclusions

a time for the leaving of the booth

The sadness within is deepened by a sadness in the world without

The melancholy spirit of autumn is in the air

clouds gather in the sky

and leaves are showing the tints of their imminent decay.

So it is and so it ever will be:

all grass must wither and all fairness of the earth must fade.

And thus another year has silently gone by

and our soul regards its march in thoughtful contemplation.

How fleeting are the days of our years...

a wind passeth over them and they are gone

Life flows through our fingers like so much grain. It eludes our grasp.

It eludes us often because we do not hold on fast enough,

~~because in want on carelessness we fail to greet each moment of existence~~

with full awareness

More often it eludes us simply because such is its nature such its law

ultimately life calls on us to renounce everything it brings.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Wasted opportunities...neglected endowments...unappreciated blessings
beauty which found us blind
heavenly harmonies unheard ~~HEARABLE~~ by our ears, because our ears were filled
with the din and noise of our petty discords
these are the remembrances which bring us to remorse

It is a poignant thing especially to realize how careless we often are of
life's most precious gift: the love of our loved ones
parents ignoring their children, children their parents, brothers their brother
husband and wife indifferant to each other
until calamity struck

and then we beat our breasts and cry CHOTONU we have sinned
we did not mean to say this to you
we did not mean to deal falsely
we did not mean to speak harsh ly
we do love thee

but there is none to hear and there is none to heed.

Thornton Wilder makes this point in what has become a classic of the American

Theater.
IT IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE PASSAGES AND I VAGUELY RECALL USING IT HERE
~~Perhaps you remember it...the play OUR TOWN ALBERT IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT~~
IT MERITS RESTATING... ~~PERHAPS YOU REMEMBER IT... IT COMES FROM THE PLAY~~
It is a play about a young woman who died in childbirth ~~and chooses to~~ ^{go back to}
The stagemanager allows her to return to earth for just one day

and she chooses her 13th birthday as the day which she wants to relive
But as she ^{goes} upon the scene she finds that everyone is just too busy to relish
the thrill of the moment

Mommy, Pappa...she cries out...let's look at one another while we can
But nobody looks and nobody listens
and all the business of life goes on.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Finally, she begs to be taken back to the world hereafter

But before she leaves, this is what she has to say:

Good bye mama, good-bye pappa...

11 1 GROVENS CORNERS
good bye to clocks ticking

and newly ironed dresses

and hot baths

and lying down and getting up again

on earth you are all too wonderfull for anyone to relaize you.

Tell me...she asks the stage-manager,,,does anyone on earth ever realize

life while he lives it, everyy, every minute

NO, replies he, ~~may~~ the poets and the saints, maybe they do some

and then she speaks her final words:

that's all human beings are...blind people.

Is not this the malady which afflicts us

We are blidn, blind to so much of thebeauty which obtains in the world

We walk about on a cloud of ignorance trampelling on the feelings of those
about us

We spend and waste time as though we had a million years to live, always at

the mercy of one self centered passion aft-er another

We are blind.

How wantonly caress we are of our blessings unto it is too late.

Like birds whose beauty is concealed until their plumes are spread against the
sky

our be^lssings brighten only as they take their flight.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Here surely is a needful lesson brought by our meditation

Life is precious...it is ineffably dear

Never be too busy for the wonder and the awe of it.

Be reverent before each dawning day

Greet each hour

seize each golden minute

Cling to life with all your heart and soul and might

Hold fast to life while yet you may.

Hold fast to life...but ~~xx~~ not so fast that you cannot let go.

This is the second side of life's ~~xxx~~ coin, the opposite pole of its paradox.

Learn how to relinquish, how to let go.

To live means to grow...

Growth involves not only the acquisition of ~~xxxx~~ something new

but invariably also the discarding of something old.

THE DEATH OF EACH

~~Every~~ new cell presupposes the death of the old self.

We human beings are not too eager to learn this lesson,

especially when we are young

for when we are young we think that the world is ours to command

that whatever we desire with the full force of our passionate being

will in fact be obtained

LIFE CONFRONTS US W/ ITS HARSH REALITIES
But sooner or later ~~destiny~~ lifts its iron ~~xxxxxxxx~~ fist and knocks on our door
poverty...illness...death... *the voice of Duty*

and suddenly we realize that no matter how beautiful may be the things we crave

life may nonetheless deny them

and no matter how surpassing may be life's blessings,

life nonetheless ordains their ultimate return.

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Here is one of life's ^{de}imponables:

we are asked to embrace the world even while we must surrender it

we are enjoined to greet each moment of existence with full awareness

even while we are compl-~~ed~~ to return life's gifts.

One of the poets of the American rabbinate, the late Milton Steinberg

pointed to this paradox in what is undoubtedly his most brilliant
creation.

"Man rises, only to fall," he wrote

"we receive countless blessings in life

but in the end we must relinquish them all."

The rabbis of the Talmud put the matter in dramatic simplicity

ODOM BO BO-OLAM BEYODAYIM KEFUTZOT

A man comes into this world with his fist clenched
but when he dies...his hand is open...

We begin by grasping, ultimately we must surrender

and that of living is to know when to hold fast and when to let go.

Burely we ought to hold fast to life, for it is wonderful

full of a beauty and a worth

full of a grandeur which breaks through every pore of God's own world

We know that this is so, that life is passing wonderful,

but all too often we recognize this truth only in our backward glance

when we remember, as we do tonight, what was and then recognize that it is no more

Here is the real reason of the remorse which fills us at those parting hours of the

year

We remember a beauty that faded, a love which is no more,

But we remember ^{also} and with far greater pain

that we did not see that beauty when it flowered

that we failed to respond with love to love when it was tendered

~~Will~~ Steinberg could not have held on to the sunlight forever,

no matter how hard he tried...

He could not have prevented the sun from setting...

He could not keep his own eyes from becoming satiated with the glory
of the day.

BUT it is not only the sunlight that must slip away --

our youth goes also, our years, our children, our senses, our lives

How does our Yom Kippur service put it?

Death finally ends the struggle
Grief and ~~death~~, success and failure -- all are ended.
Like a child falling asleep over our toys
We loosen our grip on all earthly possessions once death comes.

Life is never just a "being." ~~Its~~

It is always a becoming, a relentless flowing on.

It has its entrances and its exits, as Shakespeare put it

-- the infant becomes the boy, the boy the man --

and there simply is no turning back.

We are ~~all~~ all of us children of nature

chained to its inexorable laws of birth and growth and ultimate decay.

Sooner or later we all must face the death of our loved ones.

Sooner or later we too will hear that summons which comes from the
great beyond.

That summons is undeniable.

We may think that we are strong and durable.

We may boast of our power and glory in our wealth

But if the truth be told we are no stronger than that sukkah,
that booth which we will erect a few days hence

Our strength is no stronger than the strength of that booth
a few sticks in the ground...and improvised wall or two...a leaking roof
~~only~~ no shelter at all against the gusts of autumn
Only a temporary dwelling for use during seven days...
Or is it seven decades?

We are the sukkah, fragile and lacking in power.

ULTIMATELY - WE ~~WILL~~ WILL HAVE TO SURRENDER OURSELVES

MEMORANDUM

FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

MS GORTHS PUT IT "ENTSAGEN MUST DU... ENTSAGEN." RENOUNCE, RENOUNCE

DV MUST

When Rabbi Bunam, renowned chassidic master, was lying on his death bed

his wife wept bitterly

whereupon he reprimanded her saying:

Don't you know that all my life was given me, merely that I might

learn how to die

Life is the great teacher in the art of renouncing

to ~~heed~~ ^{deny} its mandate is to ~~heed~~ ^{deny} the inevitable.

To heed it is not only just and right...

It is the very gate of wisdom.

Now our meditation has confronted us with the two-fold demand of existence

and it is perplexing in its paradox

on the one hand we are enjoined to hold fast to life

on the other we are told: learn how to surrender

How can we do both and at the very same time?

More important, why should we do it?

Why should we fashion things of beauty and that beauty will ultimately be

destroyed

why should we give our hearts in love when those we love will ultimately

be drawn from our grasp?

This holy season which confronts us with life's paradox also offers its resolution

for ~~d~~ during these days we see our lives as through a window that opens on eternity

and then we see that though our flesh is finite the spirit born of flesh is

everlasting

that though our days on earth do end

our deeds... they weave a pattern that is timeless

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

The good we do on earth is not interred with our bones

The beauty that we fashioned cannot be dimmed by death

the love we give in life lives on long after we are gone to warm the lives
of other

Is there anyone of us here now this very moment who cannot quite literally
feel the tender touch of those who loved us, though they be gone

When Chanayon ben Teradyon noblest of Jewish martyrs was burned at the stake
wrapped in a scroll of the law

his pupils who witnessed his terrible agony cried out

our master, our teacher, what seest thou

and he replied: I see the parchment burning,

but the letters of the law, they soar on high

Even so it is with us

our ~~feels~~ ^{flashes} may perish

our fingers will wither

but that which they create -- in beauty and in goodness and in truth

that lives on for all time to come.

Our tradition holds that God in his mercy does not seal the book of life
after the Neilah service

he holds it open for some days longer...til hoashano rabbo

some say even till chanukah...

^{remin} TODAY... So

The gates are ~~still~~ open ~~then~~...and knowing that they are we ~~effexxx~~

open our hearts in devotion

many prayers pour from our lips...many supplications surge from our soul

but surely no prayer is more earnest and more incessant than our prayer for life

life warm and wonderful...life mysterious and marvelous...

MEMORANDUM
FROM ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

this heave of breath in the breast

this dance ^{and} ~~xxx~~ in the limbs

this song of ^{kind} ~~life~~ in the veins

this pain and this passion and this power

life ~~to~~ which we cling with all our hearts while yet we may

While the gates are still open then we pray

that we and our loved ones will be inscribed in the book of life

and that our lives will be filled

with those gifts which are of enduring worth

with much goodness and beauty and love.

ADDRESS

at

An Evening on Genocide

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations

B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation
University of Toronto

November 11, 1980

Let me begin by confessing to no small measure of embarrassment in addressing this subject as a U.S. citizen. After all, the United States is just about the only civilized country in the world which has not yet ratified the Genocide Convention.

How absurd this is, not just on substantive but on historic grounds. After all, it was the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Warren Austin, who, after his meeting with Lemkin, determined to make genocide a major U.S. concern in the U.N. And it was the United States which was among the first to sign this Convention once the General Assembly adopted it.

What a pity it is that President Carter did not act with greater force during his years in office. Had he added political muscle to his verbal protestations the Convention would surely have gained the assent of the Senate. And then America would have been able to act with greater force in the council of nations - particularly in the process of implementing the Helsinki Accords. I am certain, incidentally, that in Madrid the credibility of the United States will be questioned precisely on this score.

Only inertia keeps the U.S. Senate from action. Most of the responsible public opposition has evaporated. And, as you know, the American Bar Association reversed its earlier opposition and became a treaty supporter.

There remains only the pressure of the radical right which fears among other things that this treaty would infringe on U.S. sovereignty. And, of course, this radical right is riding high in the wake of our recent elections.

It would appear, then, that the prospect for an early U.S. ratification of the Genocide Convention has dimmed. That, at least, is the conventional wisdom. I am not so certain on this score. Our election was a setback for liberalism but it does not herald its demise.

This election was more of a response to the economy than it was an ideological referendum. Personalities, too, came substantially into play, that is to say, Reagan did not win it as much as Carter lost it. The issues was not compassion but competence, or rather the lack of it in national affairs.

Conservative winds are blowing, to be sure. Yet it isn't fair to label every conservative of the tooth and claw variety. Indeed, Reagan's entire campaign was dedicated to refuting the charge that this breed of conservatism is devoid of compassion for the disadvantaged of the earth.

And so, I for one do not believe that this issue will remain in abeyance for 4 or even 8 years. And there is at least the possibility that the time will soon come when the U.S. will finally join the contracting nations of the genocide treaty.

Not that the millenia will have arrived then. After all, the treaty really lacks teeth. There is no real mechanism for its enforcement. True enough, signing countries are obliged to enact pertinent domestic legislation and the extradition of guilty parties is assumed. But the international criminal court projected in Article VI, remains precisely that, a projection, and not yet a reality.

Perhaps this is why the many violations which have occurred since the treaty's formulation and adoption have been substantially ignored by the world.

Now let me say at once, that I am incapable of fulfilling one aspect of my assignment. And that is the mandate "to avoid the particular and to hew to the universal." To give - as Gerry Fisher instructed me - "a philosophical generic overview of genocide" and to make no mention of the Holocaust.

I cannot do that. I am not some kind of disembodied "universal," who can speak with objectivity and dispassion. I am most decidedly a particular. I am a Jew who feels most passionately about his people.

Moreover, it must be remembered that the Genocide Convention grew out of the Holocaust. Indeed, some of the initial drafts were prepared in the offices of the Reform movement...And the author, Raphael Lemkin, was a survivor of the Holocaust, a Polish Jew whose entire family - barring only one brother - a family exceeding seventy souls, was extirpated by the Nazis. He himself considered the treaty a token of what he owed mankind for the victory over Hitler's juggernaut.

Nor is there any doubt that the unanimous adoption of this document reflected the world's resolution -- at that time, at least -- that the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten.

And so I can do no other than begin with the Holocaust. But having said that, there is little I can say. All we really have are memories, and silence and this maddening obsession to bear witness.

Our memories are haunting, hurting. They still make us stagger. The pavement sinks under the feet, the walls spin round, the world reels. We cannot stop it even if we would. We cannot pluck out the remembrance of the shoah from us, its anguish pierced too deep. The bitterness has eaten into our sinews, dissolved our flesh into festering sores, reduced the very spirit of our lives to sparkless, blackened ashes.

And our response to these all aching memories is silence. It must be that, it always will be - a silence. For our speech has been stifled by darkness, and our suffering is of a kind which has no tongue. The Martyrology of the Jew is one long stillness, an endless, silent scream reaching for the heavens - where God was silent, too.

And yet we must speak, for we are the spokesmen of the dead. It is our duty to be their witness. They struggled to survive, "not only to survive, but to testify."

Those who lived through and outlived this evil do not need to speak; the yellow badge is burned on their flesh for all to see. But their ranks are thinning; the generations come and go. Memory fades. And there are those who have determined to wipe its slate, to make it seem as if these things have never been.

And so we must speak and meet, and write however faltering our tongue and unavailing our speech.

And we begin and seal this task as did our fathers with words hallowed by the centuries of our martyrdom:

Yitgadal, v'yitkadash sh'mey rabba...

It has been ordained that this prayer be repeated six million times. People must never forget why this is so.

Suffering is often called a mystery. It is truer to speak of it as a revelation for it enables us to see what we often fail to see, to feel what the world inclines us not to heed.

The first of the truths which merges for this experience of anguish speaks to the Jew. It deepens the awareness of our essential unity as a people. This is the truth which fires our passion for Israel - the nation and the people alike.

As we were brothers and sisters in death, so do we resolve to be brothers and sisters in life. Wherever there is a Jewish community which is embattled, our help will be forthcoming. Wherever there is a single Jew in danger, in whatever continent or country or the remotest corner of our far-flung world, there will we find him. There will be reach out to him, offering our hand, our heart, our life.

Never more will it be said:

That we had eyes but did not see.

That we had ears but did not hear.

That we had mouths but that we failed to speak.

But there is a second truth which emerges from the experience of our anguish. Not just the awareness of our essential unity as Jews but that awareness which speaks to us of a common humanity. We are bound to one another, all human beings are, in an unbroken unity of pain.

We cannot deny this reality. True, the shoah is sui generis, unprecedented in its evil. There is a chasm, a yawning gulf of blood which separates this from all other cataclysms engulfing modern man. Still, it is only one road leading into the abyss of human evil.

Our age has many pathways sinking into this hell. Starvation in the midst of plenty. The Archipelagos of Russia. Torrents of death all over this earth.

A velt brennt brider nit nor unzer shtetle. There is a world which is ablaze, not just our village.

Actually, in this 20th century, the Jews were not the first victims of genocidal mania. The Armenians preceded them. The term was not yet coined, when they were massacred. But most assuredly the term applies, they were indeed victims of genocide, an "act committed with the intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group."

It is no coincidence that it was a Jew, Franz Werfel, who gave their martyrology its most poignant description (at least in the Western World). His Forty Days of Musa Dagh was the first novel I ever read and his accounting of the Armenian's plight seared my soul.

Nor did the genocidal mania abate after the U.N. adoption of the Convention. Since 1965 the following acts of genocide are written in blood on the pages of history (I almost said human history):

The Chinese in Indonesia when the Nationalists held sway.

The Ibors in Biafra by the Nigerians.

The Kurds by Iraq.

The Christian and Animist blacks in Sudan.

The Bengalis in Pakistan.

The Hutus in Burundi.

The Christians in Lebanon.

Tribal slaughter in Uganda.

And I must add to this roster, the several wars of aggression against Israel since 1948, because their intent assuredly was to drive the Israelis into the sea. The Covenant of the PLO is nothing less than a prescription for genocide.

I face another embarrassing question:

Why is our human compassion always only limited and partial?

Why is it that I had to do some research to get this listing of crimes against entire peoples?

Why is it that we who are assembled here today were probably unaware of at least some of this recent genocidal slaughter?

The philosopher, Walter Kaufmann of Princeton, has coined a useful phrase, "selective compassion," which is relevant to our theme. "It is surprising," he tells us, "how elective international compassion has been" since 1945. For instance, when the State of Punjab was partitioned between India and Pakistan, the Moslems of Pakistan "summarily ejected two and a half million Sikhs from their territory." They were literally forced out, "compelled to leave their lands, their homes, virtually all their possessions."

And what happened to these two and a half million Sikhs? Pakistan did not offer them any compensation. Neither did any of the other Moslem countries, nor the rest of the world. No United Nations Relief Fund was established. Nor did any world leader or any international forum insist that there can be no formal, lasting peace until the Sikhs are either reabsorbed into Pakistan or compensated by her.

"Compassion," continues the Princeton philosopher, "is influenced by fashion." One feels it for the West Bank Arabs, but not for the Arabs in most Arab countries who are far worse off in almost every way than are the Palestinian refugees. One certainly does not feel it for the Jews in Arab lands, nor for those Jews who were forced from Arab lands - and there are nearly one million of these. What a tragic commentary on human nature...compassion subject to the whim of fashion.

Why is it that we liberals are quick to denounce the excesses of the right -- as when the Chinese of Cambodia were slaughtered by the Nationalists. But we swallow twice before we acknowledge and denounce the excesses of the left, as for instance when in Cambodia the Communists ordered the evacuation of all cities within 24 hours and drove some four and a half million people, "infants and old, the hale and invalids, into the countryside at gunpoint to die of starvation or disease, or to scratch out a dubious living from the earth. And special care was taken to kill everyone who was literate or suspected of being so on the basis of such tell-tale evidence as the possession of a pair of eyeglasses." Four and a half million Cambodians slaughtered by the Communists.

Compassion subject to the whims of fashion. Aye, what a tragic commentary on human nature.

One other danger must be brought to focus in this context:

Nuclear Proliferation

For is it not genocide when all of human kind faces annihilation...

It is a warning which is not fashionable. I can hear the words. How Naive you are! Have you forgotten Afganistan? Everywhere the Soviet Union is taking advantage of opportunities for military expansion and you sing the song of disarmament? Why even Carter had his awakening - too late for him - when will you?

Now I realize full well that these sentiments may be morally sound. But as religious leaders, we are allowed the luxury of political naivete, even while we bear the burden of being morally stern. Drawing on the wellsprings of faith, we must remind ourselves and others of those values which the world too often makes us forget. We have to hold up the mirror, as it were, so that we can see ourselves for what we really are.

There is a pertinent tale told in the literature of the Jewish people, a parable attributed to Reb Nachman, the Bratslaver Tsaddik. It is a tale about a country completely isolated from the rest of the world by surrounding mountains, and about its people ruled by a surpassingly wise king. One year, come harvest time, this people came to their king with the dreadful news that those who had eaten of the new harvest turned stark, raving mad. "What shall we do, o king," they cried out, "if we don't eat the new wheat, we will starve to death, but if we eat it, we will go mad." The king considered this fearsome dilemma for some days and finally, with heavy heart, rendered this judgment, and this is what he said:

"Since there is no other food available, we must eat of the new harvest, but let us at least remember that we are mad."

In this world of ours, which reduces the whole of human relationships to a calculus of force, we may have no other recourse but to balance force with force. But let us at least know that we are mad.

It is a madness when the arsenal of overkill weapons is so large that our land and sea based missiles can destroy 150 Russian cities 50 times each...It is madness when the combined nuclear arsenals of the super-powers have the destructive capacity to target three tons of TNT on each and every one of the four billion human beings alive on earth... It is madness when we have enough deadly nerve agents to kill 100 billion people, that is to say to wipe out the world's population not once, but 30 times over.

And when the United States, this bounteous land of ours, is the first among the countries of the world in military spending, and first in military sales, but we are only number 15 in literacy and 16 in doctor-patient ratio and 18 in life expectancy and 19 in infant mortality... that, my friends, is a sad and cruel madness.

We are here not only to speak of human depravity, but also of human herosim. To honor the memory of those who fought and died in freedom's cause.

They bled that we might live in safety. If we slacken our efforts to serve humanity we will betray their herosim and their sacrifice will have been in vain.

If we stand by their ideals, resolutely pledged to defend them, then and only then do we vindicate their herosim and then they sleep in peace.

Their remembrance and example give us strength

To turn from death to life.

To love where other hate.

To hope when others despair.

To retain our belief in humankind

and the conviction that in spite of everthing

there is a meaning in life and in human history.

#

Report of the President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations

to the Board of Trustees

NOVEMBER 21, 1980
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



It is a joy to be here tonight in this beautiful and exciting city of San Francisco, to greet the members of Congregation Emanu-El and of Sherith Israel who have joined in worship, and to welcome the members of our Union Board who have come here from distant places. It is always a source of inspiration when Reform Jews from all over this bounteous continent of ours meet together and sing together and pray together. There is no sound more strengthening for the Jew than the sound of the Shema intoned by a thousand voices. We renew ourselves. We gather fresh spirit when we meet, when we join hearts and minds, to reason together, and to deliberate the welfare of our religious community and, indeed, the welfare of American and world Jewry. That sense of renewal is immeasurably heightened by our historic surroundings and by our presence in this magnificent place.

Because this service is an integral part of our semi-annual Board meeting, my message will be more in the nature of a presidential address than of a Sabbath sermon, which means—alas for you—that it will be more extended in time and in scope. I have no other choice. We meet too infrequently as a leadership community, and those issues which compel our concern are many and weighty. This is not to say that I will keynote every item of our crowded agenda. But I do want to say some things concerning the recent election. I want to discuss that new phenomenon on the American political scene, the new Christian majority, and the manner in which the Jewish community relates to it. Lastly, I want to sound some warnings concerning the rise of neo-Nazism the world over, and here too, that new anti-Semitism which has come to stain our national honor.

First, concerning the elections. It was a quandary, was it not? I do not recall the American Jewish community in quite so desperate an uncertainty. Reagan seemed better for Israel, but his domestic vision was flawed. Carter clearly lacked competence, but if not Carter, who? Our perplexity continued into the polling place, and the results reveal it. Among Jewish voters 45% chose Carter, 40% voted for Reagan, the balance for Anderson, and some Jews, undoubtedly, didn't pull the presidential lever at all.

This diffusion of electoral strength does not impair our place in the political process; it may well enhance it. In the past the Republicans felt that they had little chance to garner Jewish votes; and the Democrats took us for granted. This explains President Carter's aberrant conduct during the past year, his UN vote and the like; he felt that when push comes to shove we had nowhere else to go. He was wrong, and we are better off. We must never be in any party's pocket.

What does the election import for Israel? At first hearing, the news is good. Reagan speaks more clearly than Carter acted. He regards Israel as a strategic ally, not just a moral burden. He is opposed to dealing with the P.L.O. under any circumstances. He urges a tougher line against the Soviet penetration of the Middle East. Still, we remember that back in 1976, *candidate* Carter's words were just as sweet, and today we know that once President-elect Reagan is installed, there will be many pressures on him: to balance Israel with Saudi Arabia, to rally Islamic support against the Soviets, to bend to the oil-inspired anxieties of our western allies and Japan. And so we Jews had better maintain our critical vigilance and be prepared to speak with voices united and strong when we perceive as we undoubtedly will that Israel's security has been placed in jeopardy.

There are some people and things to which as a consequence of this election we can bid a not too sad farewell: President Carter and his capriciousness in foreign affairs; Brzezynski's flirtations with the P.L.O. and his quixotic, counter-productive quest for a comprehensive peace; McHenry, our Ambassador to the United Nations, who far from restraining, zestfully led the majority chorus in that citadel of slander, that sanctuary for liars and for hypocrites. We are well rid of all of these, and brother Billy, too. "Stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once!" But we paid a heavy price for this victory, such as it is. In the Executive branch we may be better off on balance. But in Congress, we lost some of our most devoted and skillful supporters; Bayh and Culver and Nelson and Magnuson. We face a Foreign Relations Committee without Church and Javits and Stone. And Strom Thurman has replaced Ted Kennedy as the chairman of the pivotal Senate Judiciary Committee.

With all that, I do not despair. I have a more balanced view of the election's impact on the domestic scene. And while I concede that liberals were devastated, I do not acknowledge that the liberal idea itself is dead. I certainly do not buy the contention of right-wing analysts who, in the exuberance of their victory are insisting that the vote earlier this month was a vote against compassion. Thus a conservative pundit on the morrow after the election declared: "Liberalism has failed. It is unnatural. It expects people to subordinate their concern for their families and for themselves to an attenuated compassion for remote strangers. You can't build society on a principle so contrary to human nature. Conservatism is coming out of the closet. Hail to the chief."

What nonsense all this! Compassion does not destroy society, and xenophobia is not a necessary ingredient of conservatism. Think of some of our Union's foremost leaders, life-long Republicans all, conservatives to the core and yet scarcely lacking in compassion. Emil Baar, without whom we would not have had a Religious Action Center. Irvin Fane of Kansas City, whose fair and forceful conduct in the chair secured our anti-Vietnam vote in early 1965. Sidney Cole, the builder of MUM, who always insisted that the Union's social action program be properly provided. They were conservatives all—and all were and are men of sensitivity and soul. We liberals are often too sanctimonious, entirely too aggrandizing in our self-perception. We think that we hold a patent on decency. We do not.

Nor do I believe that Reagan is a conservative of the tooth-and-claw kind. Indeed, his entire campaign was dedicated to refuting the charge that his breed of conservatism is devoid of compassion for the disadvantaged of our land. In any event, in order to govern he must move toward the center of the ideological spectrum. He must demonstrate that he is the leader of *all* the people and not just of those who voted for him. He simply will not be able to rule if he fails to take into account the needs and aspirations of the poor and the minorities who dominate America's cities.

The numbers simply do not sustain the boast that we had an ideological referendum. Add Anderson's 7% to Carter's 41; remember further that only 52% of all eligibles voted and you have a hard-rock conservative core of no more than 25% of the American people. Much the same was true on a local level. In nearly every single state where a U.S. Senate candidate important to liberals lost, that candidate ran far ahead of Carter. If the voters of Idaho, for instance, had not repudiated the President by 45%, Frank Church would not have lost the vote by one percent. And so it went. In sum, the election was fought not in the ideological but in the economic arena. It played primarily on personality, that is to say, Carter lost it more than Reagan won it. The issue was not compassion but competence, or rather the lack of it in national affairs.

And so I am not despairing. And I do not think that we had better head for the hills and hide in caves, although it doubtlessly is so that the coming years will summon us as Jews and as leaders of the synagogue to struggle with an even greater resolve for justice and for compassion. For this above all is what Judaism demands of us: that we be concerned for the stranger who dwells in the lower depths.

* * * * *

One of the more frightening by-products of our recent election is the emergence of a new and dangerous phenomenon on the American political scene, the Christian right. This, as most of you know, is a loose confederation of many radical right-wing organizations, some strictly sectarian, such as the Moral Majority, headed by Jerry Falwell and composed of evangelical fundamentalists . . . others of a more traditional political mold, such as Terry Dolan's National Conservative Political Action Committee.

This confederation has become a potent political force. The Moral Majority alone claims two million members, including 72,000 ministers, and they boast that they added no less than three and a half million new voters to the rolls. They use the most advanced technology to do their work. Guided by direct mail wizard, Richard Viguerie, they utilize a sophisticated, computerized list exceeding thirty million names. From the electronic pulpit of the television evangelists, they command a weekly audience of nearly forty million viewers. And the sums which they have consequently been able to raise for their political activities is staggering. Some estimate their war chest for the recent campaign, nationally and locally, to have reached one hundred million dollars.

Their ideological banner is wide. They seek to Christianize America, to make this a republic ruled by Christ. Yet they give their religion a narrow definition. They are pro-family and pro-life. But they ignore and even oppose such religious principles as the stewardship of our resources, and care for the poor, and justice and peace; as a case in point, they are violently opposed to the U.S. ratification of the Genocide convention. High on their priorities also are some issues which are more political than moral and come straight from the right-wing lexicon: Government spending, the abrogation of the Taiwan security treaty, Panama Canal and the devaluation of the dollar.

Their means, even more than their goals, are troubling. They are scarcely democratic and threaten to destroy the fabric of our freedoms. They have tests of politico-religious purity; those who do not conform to their standards are labelled sinners, the disciples of Satan. They have their hit lists of candidates targeted for political oblivion, and slander is their favorite weapon for such assassinations; terms like 'pervert' and 'Communist' are liberally applied; in Idaho the word 'Zionist' was used in such a way, probably because a good deal of Arab monies were comingled with the funds used by the radical right, to destroy Senator Church. All in all, these evangelical ayatollahs re-create the atmosphere of the Fifties; it is McCarthyism reborn and wearing clerical robes.

My words fail to convey the full flavor of their political thrust. Listen to their words, then.

Jerry Falwell, founder and guiding spirit of the Moral Majority: "What we need is a return of the McCarthy era, where we register all Communists, stamp it on their foreheads and send them back to Russia."

James Robison, perhaps the nation's foremost TV evangelist: "I'm sick and tired hearing about all the radicals and the perverts and the liberals and the leftists and the Communists coming out of the closet. It's time for God's people to come out of the closet, out of the churches, and to change America."

Bailey Smith, President of the Southern Baptist Convention: "Why did God choose the Jews? I don't know why . . . I think they got funny looking noses myself. I don't know why He chose the Jews. That's God's business. Amen."

I suppose we cannot fault these evangelists on constitutional grounds. They have the right to speak out under the First Amendment as do we. Yet their means are manifestly a threat to the democratic process. And their goal for a Christian America is discordantly alien to the principle of diversity which has guided our nation since its founding. The issue is not church-state separation. The issue is political safety in a pluralistic community.

* * * * *

If all this is true, as it manifestly is, why does organized American Jewry continue its flirtation with the Christian right? We know the reasons of course. Most Jewish leaders are willing to forgive anyone anything so long as we hear a good word about Israel.

The fundamentalists have long been among Israel's staunchest supporters, and so we go to bed with them. Never mind that the new political evangelism is inherently undemocratic. Never mind that it may well be anti-Semitic. Their support for Israel remains firm. And so the Jabotinsky Foundation presents its award to Jerry Falwell. And the ADL offers its national platform to America's foremost TV evangelist. And JNF groves are named in honor of them both. It is madness—and suicidal as well.

How blind we are! We fail to see that one cannot be good for Israel when one is injurious to America and its Jews! We settle for the short-term gain and ignore the ultimate disaster! We make a pact with the devil for transient boon, even while we know or ought to know that in the end we serve *his* purposes!

After all, the deepest reasons for the support given to Israel by the evangelical fundamentalists are theologically self-serving. As *they* read Scripture, Jesus cannot return for the Second Coming until all the Jews are regrouped in the whole of their Biblical land and then are converted to Christianity. Only true believers can enter the gate of heaven. Devout Jews, if they refuse to accept Jesus, will not be permitted beyond those pearly gates. They will be buried beneath Mount Zion once the newer Israel replaces the old.

This is their apocalyptic vision in all its fullness: they seek our extinction as a particular people. Why then in heaven's name should we give them recognition? Have we lost all self-respect? We may have to meet them, talk to them, even deal with them. But surely we need not applaud them. When we do, it is a madness—and suicidal.

* * * * *

I said, a moment ago, that the new political evangelism just possibly is anti-Jewish. Let me be a bit more definitive: it is precisely that. Our history instructs us that fundamentalism and anti-Semitism invariably go hand in hand.

Surely it is no coincidence that the rise of right-wing Christian fundamentalism has been accompanied by the most serious outbreak of anti-Semitism in America since World War II. Don't misunderstand me. I do not say that the Jerry Falwells are deliberately fomenting anti-Jewish sentiments and violence. But I do say that their preachments have that inevitable effect. When ministers assert before thirty million parishioners that only one brand of politics has God's approval why, then, intolerance takes rootage. When the Moral Majority demands a Christian Bill of Rights and a prominent churchman adds that 'God Almighty does not hear the prayer of Jews,' there should be no surprise when synagogues are destroyed by arson and Jewish families are terrorized in their homes.

Aye, such preachments have their inevitable effect. They breed hatred against the Jew. Note, if you will, how very quickly Bailey Smith's first statement concerning the inefficacy of Jewish prayer was followed by his more recent pronouncement that we have 'funny looking noses.' His earlier comment may have been no more than classic Christian doctrine. But how shall we label his latter dictum? That's not fundamentalism. It's unadulterated anti-Semitism—Julius Streicher with an Oklahoma twang.

To be sure, now, the rantings of the Christian right cannot alone be held responsible for the contemporary violence against us. Worsening economic conditions are also responsible; this is the view of Henry Kissinger. The cosmetization of the P.L.O. is no help; one cannot legitimize terrorism in one part of the world without also giving it license everywhere else. Political considerations come into play, as they did when Carter pitted the blacks against the Jews in the aftermath of the Andy Young affair. And when the leaders of the Western World decided to woo the Arabs by condemning Israel at every turn, blackening her name without just cause, why, then, they diminished the stature of Jews everywhere and set them up to be the targets for violent attack.

Whatever the reasons, anti-Semitism is alive and kicking in this land. The number of reported incidents mounts daily. Synagogues are defaced, cemeteries desecrated, religious schools vandalized, slanderous leaflets are distributed, threatening telephone calls are made, and individuals have been pelted with rocks. So far there has been only property damage, and some minor injuries, no deaths, so far, thank God, in North America. Although we have reason to be anxious on this score, too, when we learn that the KKK has established paramilitary training grounds in six locations, one of them in Canada. I am convinced that the number of attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions is even greater than that which has been reported. Too many Jews write off such incidents as mere pranks, or hope that by denying them, they will somehow go away. They won't, and we might as well face up to it.

Don't misunderstand me. I do not suggest that we face some kind of holocaust, God forbid. We manifestly don't. All that I am saying is that the respite which we have had since World War II has come to its end. The memory of the holocaust is fading. The sense of guilt has waned. Hatred of the Jews is stirring once again, and we had best be ready.

Tomorrow night the Union Board will consider what we can do to counter those threats to Jewish security which are posed by the spreading episodes of overt anti-Semitism as well as in the growing impact of the Christian right. Among those several measures which I hope we will adopt are:

- the formation of a national task force trained to provide guidance to those of our congregations who are victimized by anti-Semitic violence and vandalism.
- the activation in our Religious Action Center of a Hot-Line for such emergency guidance and to monitor these episodes.
- the acquisition by the Union of at least one low-power TV station which will be linked via the cable system or like community stations into a national Jewish TV network enabling us to communicate instantly with our constituents and supporting our Jewish educational efforts as well.

We need not wage this struggle alone. And so I will recommend that we reach out to moderate Christian leaders and to civic leaders, to minority bodies and other groupings to form coalitions of decency against the chilling power of the radical right.

This is not a conflict which pits Jews against Christians. Indeed, most Christians, most main-line Protestants and Roman Catholics are as alarmed as we are about the growth of this so-called Christian right. They see it as but a perversion of their faith. The American people are with us too. Most Americans support the Equal Rights Amendment, gun control and the right of free choice in abortion. Most Americans oppose the conception of America as a Christian state. And most Americans I believe categorically reject the notion that God Almighty wants us to keep the Panama Canal and to build the neutron bomb.

The preponderant majority of Americans are also on our side in the war against the Great Hatred. They know that we Jews are the bellweathers of the civilized world. We might be the first to fall victim but others quickly follow: Catholics and gypsies and blacks and ethnics and political dissidents; in other words, all those who do not fit into the mold, who refuse to march goose-step in beat with the Fuehrer of the band. Thus anti-Semitism is something more than an issue of conscience. It is also a matter of civilization's survival.

In our search for allies, the Jewish community cannot seek one hundred percent ideological purity. We will disagree on the Middle East with the National Council of Churches, which just issued an unconscionable statement supporting the P.L.O., but we must work with them on free choice on abortion, on gun control, strategic arms limitation and a host of significant issues. We will disagree with the Roman Catholic Bishops on abortion and birth control, but we will give voice to a common concern on aid to refugees, world hunger and racial justice. We will disagree with Blacks on racial quotas, but we continue to share a vision of a compassionate society and can work together in support of national health insurance, youth employment, decent housing and similar programs. Be that as it may, we do have many allies in our struggle against the excesses of the radical right.

What has begun, in effect, is a struggle for the character and the soul of America. It will endure for many years, transcending the immediacies of politics and elections. It is a struggle, therefore, we ought need not fight alone. It must be waged by the entire American community, by interfaith and intergroup coalitions of decency speaking out together against bigotry and hate of every kind.

I am confident that we can hold America's political center—which must be the central goal of our communal striving—by reaching out to all these forces of which I spoke, marshalling their impulses for good.

But we must hold on to one another too, we Jews, for we are one and indivisible in death and life alike. *Atta echad, v'shimcha echad, umi k'amcha Yisrael goy echad ba'aret*. God is one and His name is one, and we His people of Israel are one, throughout the world.

And this above all: we must not despair. After all, we prevailed in times more perilous by far. We overcame our bitter yesterdays. We'll overcome our threatening tomorrows. And so against the schemings and the maledictions of our enemies we will extend our stake in this land. We will not yield. We will fight and gain the victory.

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

Resolution adopted by the
UAHC Board of Trustees

November 22, 1980
San Francisco, Ca.

We applaud the president of the Union for alerting us to important issues which are of great concern to us at this time.

The rise of extremism in some elements of American life—including episodes of anti-Semitism and the growing impact of the Radical Right—represents a clear and present danger to the tradition of American pluralism and a distortion of religious precepts in political life. The Reform Jewish movement has always had a commitment to the ethical values of Judaism and their relevance to contemporary society. This prophetic mandate assumes new urgency today because of the rise of extremism, both theological and political.

We see these developments as a threat to the fabric of American life, to a democratic society, to Jewish values and to the security of American Jewry. The great strength of America lies in its pluralistic nature with its respect for diversity of viewpoints, whether liberal or conservative, Christian, Jewish or any other.

Therefore, the Board of Trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves:

1/ To give high priority to a program of religious action to strengthen human rights and human dignity, thus serving not only a prophetic mission, but equally our own interests, for we Jews have a profound stake in maintaining an open, tolerant and compassionate society.

1/ To reach out to religious (Jewish and non-Jewish), civic and minority groups to form coalitions which will advance our mutual concerns.

3/ To urge our congregations to advance these goals through the strengthening of existing religious action committees or establishing such vital entities where none exist. We encourage all congregations to take advantage of the resources of our Washington Religious Action Center and urge individual congregants to keep informed of developing issues by subscribing to the CHAI/IMPACT information system.

4/ To establish a joint task force of the Commission on Social Action and the Commission on Synagogue Administration which will provide guidance and assistance to those congregations which experience incidents of violence and vandalism, and to provide guidance on preventive measures to all of our congregations.

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

VIDEO COMMUNICATION

Resolution adopted by the
UAHC Board of Trustees

November 22, 1980
San Francisco, Ca.

Technological developments and opportunities for increased communication create challenges never before open to our movement.

We urge the prompt development of a plan to intensify the utilization of video techniques (such as video cassettes and video discs) in Jewish education, and to create educational and general interest programming for broadcast and cable television facilities. The work already undertaken in this field by the Commission on Jewish Education is a valuable first step.

As part of broader perspectives to be funded by the forthcoming capital fund drive, we further urge the chairman to assign to an appropriate body—such as the Long Range Planning Committee—the responsibility of developing a systematic plan for UAHC video communications, possibly anchored in a low-power television station of our own.

12/26/80
Eulogy
Edith Samuel

ד'תש"ס
ד'תש"ס
ד'תש"ס

We are gathered here in this place
impelled by a common sorrow
summoned by the sad duty to speak a final farewell to Edith Samuel
who has been taken from us
great is our grief
bitter the anguish which afflicts our soul
for a cord is loosed...the silver chain is broken...
tender ties of friendship and of love have been torn asunder by relentless death.

Vainly do we look for words or thoughts of comfort.

We do not find them

Except perhaps in the knowledge that we share a destiny common to every human being

We are all strangers before God, sojourners as were our fathers and mothers

Scarcely ushered into life, we begin our journey to the grave

We moisten our morsel of bread with tears and with the sweat of ceaseless toil
and in the end our fondest hopes vanish in death.

Words do not come easy at a time like this

they never ever do

just how does one describe the life of a human being

encompass it in capsule form

her deeds...her dreams...her laughter...her love...
ESPECIALLY TRUE - RABBI MOURNS A NOT JUST FOR OTHERS
NOT JUST ANOTHER MAN'S FRIEND IS LOSE - HIS OWN FRIEND IS
Moreover, Edith Samuel was an ~~extraordinary~~ extra-ordinary human being

endowed with ~~altogether~~ ^{RARE} precious gifts of mind and ~~spirit~~ and heart.

Words cannot even begin to ~~capture~~ capture their scope and worth

They soared ^{far} beyond ~~the~~ ^{with} ~~earthbound~~ ^{into the expanse of lasting space.} nature of mere words.

Surely our sense of loss is so great

because our gift -- ^{in spirit} ~~in her~~ -- was so very great.

And now she is no more,
and because she was what she was and is no more we weep
weep over motionless form and unresponsive clay
weep because a star has been torn from the firmament of our lives
and our lives are the darker because of it.

And yet not all is gone,
love is stronger than death
it can bridge that span that fearsome chasm which separates the living from the dead.
the words she spoke
the beauty that she fashioned
the love she gave in life

these will warm and sustain us always
these precious endowments were never bound to her bodily frame
to the cells of her brain or the fibres of her great Jewish heart
they came from a spirit within her and beyond her
and this spirit lives on for everlasting blessing.

It is this spirit and the knowledge of its lasting nature
which alone can give us comfort
and the strength

to turn from the silence of the grave to the tasks of life
for this above all is what Edith would have us do, *could we*
to ~~reaffirm life~~ *TURN FROM DEATH TO LIFE*
TO REASSUME ITS DUTIES *the world*
to offer care to all who fill it, but especially to the sons and daughters of Israel

May we find the wisdom and the strength to do so.

Then will Edith's memory be for blessing

even as her life was a blessing.

עלמה יצאנו לה לארץ ישראל

Edith bore a proud name

She was the wife of Maurice Samuel - and she bore his name with pride.

He was a giant of our generation

and she above all others appreciated his full ^{or} worth.

She was fiercely devoted to him when he lived.

And when he died, ^{to him} her devotion did not abate.

With loving care she guarded his literary heritage

and ^{she} strove to preserve his thoughts and words
remarkable

- by editing his ~~thoughts and~~ conversations on the Bible with

Mark van Doren -- for future generations.

She did more than bask in the reflection of his glory.

She was greatly gifted herself.

~~It takes a great poet to appreciate a poet.~~ She knew how to use words.

She considered them sacred, insisting that they be ^{employed} used with ~~care~~ exaction.

And she was always true to that duty of their care which she imposed upon herself.

I remember her scouring for hours on end to find just the right ^{Adjective or noun,} word

to express an idea...to evoke emotion...to ~~stimulate~~ motivate deed...

and somehow, she always found that right word. . .

~~Aye...it takes a great poet to appreciate a poet.~~

She had a right to that name which she bore with so much pride..

Many of the great religious school texts which molded the

Jewish sensitivities of generations of ^{our} Jewish children

saw the light of day and had their impact

only because ^{Edith} ~~she~~ edited them.

They bear the name of others but they carry with them the imprint ^T of her soul.

4

As a great editor, she did something more than merely provide a proper garment of language for the ideas of others.

By her gentle yet persistent prodding, and probing for meaning, she gave shape to the ideas themselves.

Indeed, she ~~xx~~ carried these ideas within herself. /

She was a passionate Jewess,

a stubbornly-devoted daughter of her people.

The hurt of all Jews was her hurt, their victory was her gladness.

She was pledged to their continuance as God's ~~chosen~~ people,

and to ~~the~~ safety of that nation, Israel,,

to which our lives as Jews are pledged.

~~And so it was that she became a great teacher of our people~~

~~by editing the writing of others,~~

~~by writing herself,~~

~~by teaching~~

~~as well as with the skilled use of words ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ the manner of her life.~~

Keeping Posted is a stellar example

of this perfect union of word and thought, of form and substance.

which Edith mastered.

She was its founding and long-time editor.

It began as a currnet events magazine and culminated to be the core ^{core}

of the Union's mini-text program,

each issue devoted to an idea or a value central to the Jewish experience.

Lovingly ~~she~~ ~~thoughtfully, caringly, in caringly~~

she selected these ideas

chose the authors and the artists,

carefully culled their works

5
And then ^{she} ^{then} fashioned all of ~~these~~

with an artists skill and imagination
into a meaningful, beautiful whole.

Keeping Posted remains the most effective tool for the transmission of Judaism

at our generations command. *QUITE LITERALLY MILLIONS NOW*
It is the crown jewel of the Union's publ. program
It stands as her lasting memorial.

And thus it was that Edith Samuel became a great teacher of our people
by editing the writing of others
by writing herself
by teaching herself

through the skilled use of words and as well as the manner of her life.

DEATH LEAVES VOID
ONLY 30 - COUNTLESS OTHERS
Edyth was an artist of the Jewish soul.

She was also a feeling human being.

~~She loved her husband, cared for his well-being with constancy~~

~~She was a loving sister, to Pauline and Alex~~

~~and a good aunt~~

She laughed and cried and loved and was loved.

She was a good sister and aunt, to Pauline and Alex and their children.

She cared for her husband's offspring -- Eva and Chester and David -- ^{+ Alice}

whom she regarded as her very own.

~~She was~~ And in her relationship to Maurice - in life and death alike -

she gave true meaning to the words: wife, marriage, friend.

• She considered this ability a gift from her husband...

at least so she wrote in her editor's preface to In the Beginning Love

Nearly two years after their marriage -- she records --

Maurice gave her what he called a wedding gift:

'words in the air...'

'They are out there somewhere,' he said -- flinging up his arms to suggest the vastness of space --

'If you want to find them and set them down and start making books, let it be your project.'

She responded to the challenge and ^{captured}~~found~~ ~~respond~~ to those "words in the air"

~~and~~ she fashioned books of meaning and of beauty

And she became a poet of the Jewish ^{people}~~soul~~ in her own right

Many of the great religious school texts

which have ^{deepened}~~molded~~ the Jewish sensitivities of generations of our children --

saw the light of day and had their impact

only because Edith edited them.

They bear the name of ^{many authors}~~others~~,

but they carry within them the imprint of ^{Edith's}~~her~~ soul.