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SCHINDLER

CINCINNATI SPEECH

I am delighted to be here, of course,  
at this Biennial, in this city, and especially in this  
impressive, awe inspiring Temple.

If you promise not to tell it in Gath or in the streets of Ashkelon,  
this Council is one of my favorite regions  
not just because I have been with you so often,  
but because its people are bracing to the spirit.

I have many good friends here and it is good to be reunited with them:  
my revered teachers  
my colleagues of the rabbinate,  
the lay leaders of this Region, guided as they are  
by its wise and able President, Bob Chaiken .  
He has led this Council with distinction and sensitivity  
and we are beholden to him.

Other members of our National Board are with us as well:

Nelson Cohen and Jack Kuhn  
Liz Linkon and Jaques Morris  
Ted Pellet and Mel Strassner

and Paul Uhlman, who is slated to become your next Present  
(Unless, of course, there is some kind of Palace revolt)

I am only sorry that I won't be able to be here for his election and  
installation, so let me say now how exceedingly fond I am of him  
and how appreciative I am of the many fine qualities of mind  
and spirit he brings to our endeavors,

Paul and Bob and the other Board members represent you exceedingly well  
in the very highest leadership councils of our Union.

They are the kind of lay leaders we dream to have,  
fashioned in the image of Judaism's noblest ideals.



In this context let me say how admiring I am of Steve Pinsky.  
He is intelligent, industrious, deeply devoted to his tasks..  
Whatever he undertakes to do he does exceedingly well.

I am glad to know him my colleague and it is with a great deal of  
pride that I will install him as the full time regional director  
of your council, at the conclusion of my commentary tonight.

It is good to be with all of you, of course,  
men and women from many places but of one faith  
bound together by a mutual sacred task.

We are here to learn from one another  
to share experiences and thoughts and feelings  
and this above all: to gain that inner strength which flows  
only from the companionship of kindred and aspiring souls.

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Now, Steve suggested that I devote my substantive comments  
to some of the challenges facing our religious community  
as we approach the turn of the millenium.

I am glad to heed him, of course,  
but I would like to do so in the framework of our celebrations  
of this past year during which world Jewry explored the  
contributions of Sepohardic Jewry,  
on the occasion of the 500th anniversary  
of our expulsion from Spain.

The experience of Spanish Jewry,  
at least in the beginning centuries of their golden age  
to some respect reflects our own.

They too felt the tension between continuity and community  
that we experience.

They too were called upon to live in two worlds,  
in the world of Jewish devotion and in the larger world  
of which they were a part.

It is a tension illuminated by the core beliefs  
of two of their foremost leaders,  
Yehuda Halevi and Moses Maimonides  
who lived in different centuries,  
though their debate was joined.

Yehuda Halevy -- at least so I was taught to understand him --  
was drawn essentially by the inner world of the Jew...

He felt his Jewishness intensely.

His feet were planted in the West,  
but his heart was always in the East  
and he ultimately chose to live there;  
indeed, legend has him crushed by a horseman's foot  
just as he reached Jerusalem  
though most scholars today believe that he died  
before he reached holy soil.

The great RamBam on the other hands was more of a synthesizer,  
who believed that we must learn to live in two worlds.

Yes, he was the codifier of Jewish Law, the yad chazakah  
but in his most illustrious and enduring work,  
the More Nevuchim, the Guide to the Peplexed,  
written in Arabic  
he sought to bring Judaism into harmony with the  
prevailing philosophies of his day.

We too experience this tension, do we not, this tug between two worlds  
and these are the questions which perplex us as modern Jews.  
:

How intimately a part of the society can we Jews be  
without losing our Jewish identity?

Yet how separate can the Jewish community remain without cutting itself  
off from that larger society of which we are a part?

If, for the sake of Jewish cohesion, we keep our children confined  
in a Jewish environment day in day out seven days a week,  
where will they learn to interact with other Americans?

But if, for the sake of interaction, we seek to immerse ourselves in the  
larger society,  
how will we be able to avoid being swallowed up by it,  
totally assimilated by that society?

These are the questions that limnm the vexing dilemma  
facing Ameican Jewry.

We are strained, stressed by the tension between liberty and community  
between the survival needs of our people  
and our need to interact with the community of which we are a part.

\* \* \*

It is a tension which is eased considerably by the fact that we live  
in a society which is pledged to the principle of pluralism.

Marginally noted, this is a principle of relatively recent vintage.  
But a generation ago -- certainly when I first came to these shores --  
America was conceived to be a "melting pot,"  
E pluribus unum - was the motto of the day - out of many one.  
The public school was seen as homogenizing agent,  
and diversity was muted if not discouraged  
on the ground that it might impair communal unity.

But in the 60s and 70s American social theory was transformed  
radically; it was a veritable metamorphosis.  
The differentiating characteristics of America's diverse  
cultural elements were acknowledged and began to be celebrated.  
Ethnic neighborhoods were rediscovered.  
Community control was pressed.  
Divergent ethnic groups began to insist on their own distinctiveness.  
Congress even passed an "Ethnic Heritage" law which would have been  
unthinkable but a generation earlier.

Many students and scholars of the period are convinced  
that this transformation of social theory  
was fuelled by the civil rights revolution.

Blacks eventually came to realize that behavior modification  
would not gain them that fuller acceptance for which they yearned.  
Their color simply would not wash off and Middle America  
simply would not look beyond or beneath that color.

Their blackness precluded them forever from being fully integrated  
fully mixed in the American melting pot melting pot.  
Somehow, room had to be made for those who would forever be "different"  
And so a new social vision had to be refined and its motto became:  
"black is beautiful."  
Soon, Poles and Irish and Italians and Swedes also became "beautiful"  
and quickly we too took up the refrain..  
and Jewish became beautiful as well.  
IN this sense we became the unintended beneficiaries of that very  
movement, the civil rights revolution, which we helped to spawn.  
By helping others, we helped ourselves.

Be that as it may, pluralism emerged as the dominant American  
social doctrine and remains so to this day.  
and we Jews have become its most fervent exponents,  
precisely because pluralism enables us  
to be a part of the larger society,  
and yet to stand apart from it.

\* \* \*

The tension between individual liberty and the needs of community  
which our convention theme underscores  
is further eased by our particular understanding of Judaism.

As Reform Jews we are fully prepared to recast tradition,  
refashion it in response to contemporary need knowledge.  
We conceive of Judaism as a dynamic and not a static faith.

Note, if you will, that this conception, in no ways,  
does violence to the Jewish tradition,  
for this is what Judaism always was, an ever changin faith,  
before it atrophied amid repressive encounters with Christendom,  
before it became encrusted by the codification process  
of our Dark Ages.

According to a well-known legend, when Moses wass allowed by God  
to visit the Academy of Rabbi Akiba who lived many centuries later,  
our Great Lawgiver did not recognize the newer Judaism as his own,  
he failed to understand the teachings that Akiba  
quoted in his, Moses's name.

This midrash means to teach us that the rabbis of old undestood Judaism  
to be an evolving faith, an ever changing faith,  
a continuously reforming religion, in the best sense of  
that adjective:

a religion not of obeisance, but of a dialogue tempered  
by a profound sense of responsibility,  
a religion in which halachah was not frozen like ice but  
a soluble substance to be mixed with human tears.

To put the matter succinctly, it is modern orthodox literalism  
that is inauthentic, that represents a fundamental break w/traditio

Be that as it may, we Reform Jews

do not deem sanctity synonymous with immutability.

We do not equate holiness with a rigid immobility.

For us, the Jewish tradition did not end in 17th Century Poland,  
but is an ever evolving faith.

Yes, Reform Judaism speaks to people in a language  
that the greatest number of American Jews will hear and understand.  
And this is precisely why Reform is the only burgeoning stream of  
American Judaism.

Our ranks are continuously swelling,  
even while there is a slow but steady erosion within Conservatism,  
and American Orthodoxy just about manages to hold its own.

The Union's just completed census establishes  
that we have grown by better than 30% in the last two decades.  
Over two hundred temples have been added to our roster since 1973  
and tens of thousands of families have joined our cumulative  
cumulative membership rolls since then.

We have emerged as the overwhelmingly predominant synagogue movement  
on the American Jewish scene.

And if Jewish sociologists are to be believed, our growth rate will  
accelerate even more during the years ahead, for their studies show  
that young adults, the coming generation of North-American Jews  
inclines to identify itself almost exclusively with Reform.

Our numeric burgeoning may well excite our ambitions,  
but it also challenges us:  
to make certain that this numeric growth will be attended  
by a commensurate growth in depth,  
that an ever increasing number of our congregants  
will see and seize Reform Judaism  
as a serious religious enterprise.

For if we don't, the enlargement of our numbers will be only transitory,  
and our congregants, both new and old,  
will enter our synagogues only as a place of temporary sojourn  
a service station for life-cycle rites  
and not as a permanent abode.

\* \* \*

How can we meet this challenge?

Well, in the first instance we must deepen the Jewish educational  
components of our temples,  
we must make Jewish study  
-- not for children, but for adults as well --  
a primary purpose of a congregation's striving.

Every aspect of the congregational program must be bent  
to serve this end,  
the bulk of its resources applied to it.

Only then will its center hold.

Jewish education is not limited to the classroom .

It must penetrate every other room and activity of

Temple's life:

from committee meetings to conversation within its halls  
from social events to the letters and bulletins we send out  
all should be seen and seized as means to further the  
Jewish educative process.



The Talmud proclaims that each day God regrets the creation  
of this world of ours,  
and each day a destroying angel is set forth to revert it all  
to chaos.

But when God sees young children studying the Torah,  
when God sees would-be-sages studying with their masters,  
the heavenly rage transforms to compassion,  
and the world once again, is spared.

This reprieve is earned not by prayer, mind you, not by deed,  
but by study, by the encounter with the text.

We must make torah study a primary focus of our congregational doing  
For only in this manner will we gain and retain the faithfulness  
of our congregants.

\* \* \*

But Torah study alone does not suffice for the need.

Thought and deed must be conjoined.

To be faithful to the inner world of the Jew

we must help our congregants by precept and example  
to bridge the distance between midrash and ma'aseh,  
between the mind and the hand.

Our congregants take their temple membership lightly  
because we, as the leaders of the synagogue,  
take our Judaism too lightly

We are not sufficiently disciplined in our observances.

As liberal Jews, we assert our autonomy, we insist on the right  
to choose.

But all too often we choose nothing at all,  
or choosing something we observe it only haphazardly.

We saunter in, we saunter through, we saunter out.

Moreover, as synagogue leaders we make few demands on our constituents  
beyond the financial.

And because we don't, we give substance to the perception  
that Reform Judaism is but a religion of convenience,  
that in Reform anything goes,  
that this is a place where easy answers are given and  
few if any questions asked,  
that we need do little if anything at all and we can still call  
ourselves Jews.

I know that I have spoken often of this matter before  
and I will continue to speak of it with Cato-like regularity  
though there is no need to elaborate  
Suffice it to say that to be a Jew in one's mind or heart  
is simply not enough.

The pure idea can serve only a few rare individuals  
theologians, philosophers if you will.

The truth -- to be felt by most of us - must put on a garb.  
There must be rite, legend, ceremony...visible form.

Only when we as synagogue leaders put on such a garb,  
will those who see us also see and seize on Reform Judaism  
as a serious and consequentially meaningful religious enterprise.

\* \* \*

Now, our religious community has burgeoned numerically,  
not only because we have made change our hallmark,  
but also because of our firm and fearless resolve  
to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

In the Book of Numbers, Parshat beha'alotecha our teacher Moses  
is reported to have proclaimed:

"Would that all the Lord's people were prophets."

All the Lord's people -- aye, says Reform Judaism!

All the Lord's people including women.

All the Lord's people -- including gay and lesbian Jews.

All the Lord's people, including families in all of their  
new constellations.

All the Lord's people, including the intermarried, and Jews-by-choice,  
yes, and the hearing-impaired and the wheelchair bound  
and the disabled in body and spirit.

Their needs are also numbered among our responsibilities,  
and their energies too need to be tapped.

This too is a grave and great challenge confronting us:

we must make our temple programming reflective of this diversity  
and fully responsive to it.

Let me focus if you will, on but one,

but the fastest growing of these diverse constituencies of ours:  
the intermarried and their children.

This will be my concluding if extended commentary on our subject.

My thoughts are prompted by the National Jewish Population Survey  
which so jolted and traumatized American Jewry.

You are familiar with the sobering facts:

Since 1985 there has been a dramatic increase  
in the rate of intermarriage -- which now exceeds 50%...  
that is to say one out of two of our children chooses a non-Jew  
as a life-mate.

In numeric terms, this means that as the year 5753 begins,  
no less than 600,000 American Jews are married to non-Jews.  
More serious still, there is a higher rate of conversion out of Judaism  
than in,

And only about one third of all the many children issuing from these  
interfaith marriages  
-- and there are over one million of them --  
are being reared as Jews.

Responding to this growing challenge as it developed over the past  
decades, the Reform movement launched a cluster of program  
which go by the name of Outreach.

You are fully familiar with our efforts in this realms  
and I am proud of them.

We do not allow this crisis to dispirit us.

We have seen and seized it rather as an opportunity  
to turn the threat of a serious drain on our numeric strength  
into a promising source for our enlargement.

I have no doubt that we embarked on the proper course,  
when we launched outreach now nearly thirteen years ago.

True enough, the statistics on intermarriage have scarcely improved over these years.

But we are not to be scapegoated for their ever rising rate.

Outreach was not designed to reverse the tide of intermarriage.

It was designed, rather, to retain the intermarried for Judaism, to gather and keep them within the fold.

We should be credited, therefore, for doing our share to staunch the bleeding and to infuse new blood into the body Jewish.

Note, if you will, that we are the only stream of Judaism on the American Jewish scene that is swelling in numbers.

There is one respect, however,

in which our outreach endeavor requires revision:

We need to intensify our efforts to gain converts, both before and after marriage.

We need to move away from the "neutral," non-proselyting stance that has hitherto informed our outreach effort, and our desire to welcome converts should be made explicit rather than only implicit in our work.

Please don't misunderstand me here:

I do not suggest that we somehow slow or even reverse our outreach programming,

or make the intermarried -- including their non-Jewish partners -- uncomfortable or unwelcome...chalilah v'chass heaven forbid.

But I do believe that we must make the non-Jewish partners of our children understand that we are not indifferent to them and that we are eager to embrace them as fuller members of our religious community.

When our colleague, Charles Sherman of Tulsa Oklahomo, made precisely such an appeal, during last year's Kol Nidre sermon, a half-score of the non Jewish spouses of his congregants came to him during the following weeks and began the more formal process of conversion.

When asked why they had not come before, they told Rabbi Sherman:

"Because nobody ever asked us to become Jewish."

Why don't we ask?

Why are we so hesitant?

Are we ashamed?

Must one really be a madman to choose Judaism?

Let us shuffle off our insecurities!

Let us recapture our self-esteem!

Let us demonstrate our confidence in those worths which our faith enshrines!

We need to affirm our Judaism frankly, freely, proudly,

and without fear that it will offend the non-Jewish spouses.

Quite the contrary, it can only enhance their regard for Judaism.

for if we lack in missionary zeal, they are bound to surmise that we have no message at all,

or, at any rate, that we do not prize it.

You might be interested to know in this context

that fully 10% of those who are enrolled in our Intro to Judaism courses throughout the land determine to become Jews even though they are not presently married or engaged to a Jew.

According to the recent National Jewish Population survey,  
hundreds convert to Judaism annually, men and women  
who choose their Judaism on religious grounds alone,  
who were reared in other religions or in none,  
whose thirst for a meaningful faith was quenched by Judaism.

Yes, people do choose Judaism on religious grounds alone.  
I don't know why so many Jews are surprised that this is so.  
They think that choosing to be Jewish is a symptom of some kind  
of abnormality.

Some years ago, the Union prepared a video tape of interview  
with several Jews-by-Choice.

Among them was a couple, neither of whom was born a Jew  
and who chose Judaism together.

When they were asked to relate what experience in the conversion process  
was most disturbing, most painful to them,  
John, the husband, answered:

"I was most troubled when my Jewish friends said to me:  
Are you crazy? You needed this, to become a Jew?  
And I began to wonder...if they don't know it's there,  
maybe it isn't there!"

"If they don't know it's there, maybe it isn't there."

Here is the essential challenge, for in lacking a mission  
we are suspect of also lacking the message.

But we do have a message, my friends.

Let us not doubt nor fail to proclaim it.

We have so very much to offer: Judaism celebrates life and not death.

It insists on the freedom and the capacity of the individual  
to determine his fate.

Judaism is a religion of hope and not of despair;  
it holds that society and humankind perfectible.

It allows, nay even encourages freedom of thought  
the right of the exploring mind to question tradition,  
yea even the justice of God.

Moreover, we offer something more than a disembodied faith system.

We are a people of faith, a caring community of Jews.

In other words, we have an enormous amount of wisdom and experience,  
of warmth and of love, to offer to this troubled world.

And we Jews ought to be proud to speak about it,  
frankly, freely, and with dignity.

Let us therefore reach out.

Let us be guided by the law which teaches us that the mizva of  
self-preservation exceeds all others in its consequence!

Let us not be among those who in their pain and confusion  
respond to the fear of self-extinction by declaring  
casualties before the fact;  
who respond to the suffering of the past by living in the past;  
who react to the long-drawn isolation of our people  
with an isolationism of their own.

And let us above all recall and act on those lofty passages  
from the Tenach and the Chazal, from Bible and Commentary  
that define Jewish "chosenness"



not as exclusive but as exemplary  
not as separatist but as representative  
not as closed but as open  
not as rejecting but as all-embracing and compassionate.

NAKEL MIHEYODCHA LI EVED, LEHAKEEM ET SHIVTEI YAAKOV

"It is too light a thing that thou shouldst be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the offspring of Israel  
I will also give thee for a light unto the nations.  
That my salvation may be unto the ends of the earth."

140th Anniversary  
Temple Ohev Sholom  
Harrisburg, Pa.

I thank you for your all too kind introduction, Jeffrey.

Wish my wife were with me...

she has a way of putting me in my proper place.

Although the best put down I ever received happened to me in Israel

(Yarmulke story)

Your hyperboles to the contrary notwithstanding,

I am grateful to you Jeffrey and I reciprocate your sentiments  
of regard with a full heart.

This is really the first time that I encountered Jeffrey,

but I heard a good many things concerning him,

all of them good,

and you have every reason to be pleased

that he is your spiritual leader.

I am happy that Chuck Mintz is here too.

Him I know well.

After all, we were school mates together,

and then colleagues on the Union staff

We made an agreement with each other, before I ascended the pulpit.

He said: "If you don't tell, I won't tell;" So I won't tell!

And yet there is precious little that I can tell you about him

that you do not know so much better yourself.

After all, your relationship spans the years.

It is cemented by tears of joy and of sorrow alike.

It is altogether remarkable what you have accomplished here.  
A rich and meaningful program in a beautiful sanctuary  
And a continuing reaching out from this place to the larger  
community of which you are a part.

You have every reason to be pleased and proud  
And we have every reason to praise your name.

140 years ago, then, this congregation was founded  
its physical and spiritual foundations laid.

140 years ago...

In the stillness of the night one can almost hear  
the rushing of the waves of time,  
their relentless pounding against eternity's shores.

140 years ago...

We can imagine how they felt, your fathers and your mothers  
the doubts that seized them  
the dreams that 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 childrens 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 yourf hands.

Too many in this bounteous land of ours are out of work and out of hope  
and they have lost the faith that this is a society that  
gives a damn for them.

Or consider what we do with our world --

how we take God's handiwork and despoil it,  
the sweet air He gave us to breathe  
and the fresh water with which he blessed us  
the fertile green which delights the eye.

Instead of scknowledging and making proper use of all these gifts,  
we poison them...

we tear apart the ozone...

we carbonize the oxygen

we acidify the refreshing rain...

Aye, the synagogue is needed to be a moral force in our lives.

It must ever remind us of those values which the world makes us forget.

For only if we emerge from this place as better human beings,

as better people

will our prayers have been answered.

\* \* \*

There is a second great purpose for which this sanctuary was built.

It was meant to be a communal home for the Jewish people,

the source of our strength to live as Jews.

Chayim Nachman Bialik called in the "mystic fount"

from which our forbears drew the fortitude

to face the vicissitudes of their lives as Jews.

In our own country the cause of social concord was scarcely served during the recent presidential campaign.

You all remember Buchanan's divisive speech:

The election, he said, "is about more than who gets what... it is about who we are."

But here's the rub: who you are is what Pat Buchanan says you should be. Distrust differences...Revile people who are gay...

Dismiss the aspirations of women.

Reduce the answers to the problems of our cities to force.

Let your fears and your hatred be your guide.

And, above all, invoke God's name to justify all this malice.

"There is a religious war going on in America," he asserted.

And if you agree with him you are blessed.

And if you don't you are damned.

Pat Robertson re-echoed these sentiments at the Convention,

and in a subsequent Iowa address waxed even more hyperbolic.

In a factious, eristic peroration he urged Iowans to defeat the equal rights amendment on the grounds that it

"encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians."  
[quote unquote]

As Anna Quindlen put it in her column: What? No cannibalism?

But having said all this, I can bring you the good news

that in America, at least, anti-Semitism per se,

as isolated from other manifestations of bigotry in our land has actually been marginalized.

But the synagogue must serve one more purpose still:

It must evoke a sense of the sacred.

It must enhance our capacity to respond with wonderment  
to the essential mystery of life.

I speak now of the numinous, of a consciousness of the holy...

Where wast Thou when the foundations of the earth were laid,  
When the morning stars sang together  
And the hosts of heaven shouted for joy?  
Hast Thou commanded the light?  
Hast thou entered the springs of the sea?  
Have the portals of death been opened unto thee?  
Take off thy shoes from off thy feet,  
for the place wheron thou standest, it is holy!

Alas, the voice from out of the whirlwind or from the burning bush  
finds but few listening ears in our time.

By and large in our day we are not given to amazement and to wonder  
as blandly we walk the way of life untouched by its essential magic

The temper of our times does not allow us to hear...

our proneness to consider as real only things perceived by the  
physical sense

things that can be touched and felt and measured and weighed  
and our tendency to ascribe a worth only to things that are of use  
that can be bought and sold, and are of practical worth.

But there is a world of reality which cannot be perceived  
by the physical senses alone

It is an invisible world if you will, but its force is often  
more intense than is the force of the world that is seen.

Aye, there is a world of reality

beyond those worlds perceived by the physical sense alone.

And altogether multitudinous are life's gifts that have no

practical worth but nonetheless are altogether wond'rous:

The earth's green covering of grass.

The blue serenity of sea and sky.

The song of day, the silent wonder of the night.

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 peacock's feathers to tickle one another  
while being oblivious to their essential charm."

Then do the words of prophecy 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 darkness

No, the human story simply cannot be told

without reference to that mystery and majesty that transcends  
all logic and reason.

Only those who open themselves to such a mystery

can transcend the grandeur and terror of their lives

without being blinded by life's grandeur

or crushed by its terror.

Only when we open ourselves to such a mystery,

will we find our Judaism to be a sustaining faith and not a  
dry-as-dust religion.

Then the time will come when the wood and the stone and the mortar  
of this sanctuary will be held sacred because your hands  
have touched them

And many years hence, men and women will behold the beauty and  
the worthy substance of them and they will say:

"See, this our fathers and our mothers built for uas."

ken yehi ratzon... thus may it be God's will.



AMS: Dvar Torah - UJA - December 1992

As is customary, I draw my text from the Torah portion of the week: parshat vayetze, which we will be reading this week.

The narrative is familiar to all of you...

it is one of the more memorable of passages in scripture, how Jacob leaves his father's home to journey to Haran.

Enroute, he rests for the night, lays his head on some stones to sleep and dreams his dream of the stairway reaching to the heavens with angels ascending and descending thereon.

God appears to him in this dream and blesses him in almost the identical words with which God had blessed Abraham before:

"your seed will be as numerous as the dust of the earth... and all the families of the earth will be blessed by you."

God promises continuity to the children of Jacob surnamed Israel, but he also sets their task: to be a blessing to humankind.

It is a task which is increasingly difficult to fulfill nowadays as the events of the world incline us to turn inward, to care for ourselves alone.

Look about you and see:

from the Urals to the Ozarks the toxic waters of racism are rising ethnicity is running amok, everyone is out only for himself, so why should we care a fig about others.

Our sense of self-centeredness is further fuelled by the knowledge that anti-Semitism is the customary consequence, indeed, the most common and virulent manifestation of that unreasoned hatred which finds so many expressions in our world. Thus it always was, and thus it is in our day.

Some months ago, Marvin Lender and I  
attended an international conference on Anti-Semitism  
an the attending delegates reported a global rise  
of that age-old great hatred.  
They spoke of wide spread denials of the holocaust,  
of the refurbished iconization of erstwhile Hitler puppets  
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and of the proliferation of facist and extremist parties  
in many places.

All over Europe, so they reported, Jewish cemeteries  
have been desecrated, synagoges defaced,  
acts of violence perpetrated, even murder,  
several such incidents recorded every single day now.  
In Germany, rightist acts of violence have had a five-fold increase  
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Indeed, a recent poll showed that over 30%  
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In other words, the victims are now to be deemed guilty  
and not the murderers.  
-- and all this, only one generation ofter Auschwitz.

Little wonder, then, that there is a tendency among Jews to turn inward  
and re-echoing the sentiments of Israel's radical right to say:  
Everyone is against us.  
We are surrounded by enemies, so what's the use.  
Let's dig in our own garden...  
Let's go it alone...no one else will fend for us.

But this simply is not so...Our history gives lie to this contention.  
We Jews never achieved freedoms by ourselves alone.  
We always had friends, allies, decent people who championed our cause.  
We broke out of the ghetto walls only because many other enlightened  
forces in Europe amplified and fought to realize  
our demands for equal status.

We would not have achieved the high state we presently enjoy  
here in this land were it not for the Bill of Rights,  
which was neither crafted nor realized by Jews.  
And the State of Israel would not have been established  
had not a majority of the world's peoples recognized the  
moral rightness of our cause

Our history drives home this lesson, over and again.

Separatism is bad for Jews ...

We need friends in order to prevail.

But we cannot gain or retain such friends if we fend for ourselves  
alone.

If we do not feel the pain of others, they will not feel our pain.  
If we stand aloof from their causes and concerns,  
we can scarcely expect them to stand at our side.

But far more important than this consideration of an enlightened self-interest, is the awareness of our solemn duty as Jews to care not just for our fellow Jews but for all of human kind.

Even so does our Torah portion remind us: Be a blessing!

We Jews are not just another ethnic group or another pressure bloc.

Our survival in the past has been for a higher purpose,

and our survival must continue to have meaning today.

If we kiss the world good-bye and separate ourselves from humankind

our survival -- and the struggle to maintain it -- is valueless.

To be a Jew is to be something more a surviving endangered species.

To be a Jew is to be a goad to the conscience of humankind,

to bear a heart of flesh and blood and not of stone...

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 and Jacob thousands of years ago,

is to be part of a great and enduring people, YES,

but also to be a blessing to all human kind."

As is customary, I draw my ~~text~~ from the Torah portion of the week: parshat Vayetze, which we will be reading this week.

HP The narrative is familiar to all of you...

it is one of the more memorable of passages in scripture, how Jacob leaves his father's home to journey to Haran.

Enroute, he rests for the night, lays his head on some stones to sleep and dreams his dream of the stairway reaching to the heavens with angels ascending and descending thereon.

God appears to him in this dream and blesses him in almost the identical words with which God had blessed Abaraham before:

"your seed will be as numerous as the dust of the earth... and all the families of the earth will be blessed by you."

God promises continuity to the children of Jacob surnamed Israel, but he also sets their task: to be a blessing to humankind.

HP It is a task which is increasingly difficult to fulfill nowadays as the events of the world incline us to turn inward, to care for ourselves alone.

Look about you and see:

from the Urals to the Ozarks the toxic waters of racism are rising ethnicity is running amok, everyone is out only for himself, so why should we care a fig about others.

Our sense of self-centeredness is further fuelled by the knowledge that anti-Semitism is the customary consequence, indeed, the most common and virulent manifestation of that unreasoned hatred which finds so many expressions in our world.

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# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

New York Federation  
of Reform Synagogues

50th Assembly of Delegates

Kutsher's Country Club  
November 7, 1992



## **Presidential Address**

**Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler**

**NYFRS Assembly of Delegates, November 7, 1992**

It is good to be with all of you, men and women from many places but of one faith bound together by a mutual sacred task. We are here to learn from one another to share experiences and thoughts and feelings and this above all: to gain that inner strength which flows only from the companionship of kindred and aspiring souls.

\* \* \*

You do well to mark the 50th Anniversary of this Assembly, for you have accomplished much in the half century of your collective being. This Federation was born in a time of great trial for our people. Your first assembly was held in the Spring of 1942... not long after that infamous Wansee conference at which the masters of the master race resolved to put an end to us, to execute our final solution. Your founding delegates did not know yet of our enemies' full and formal resolve to extirpate the Jews. But they did know or at least sense that the axes were lifted and the pyres piled high for the burning. And so they saw the formation of this Federation as an act of spiritual resistance against the ruthless and barbarous forces of Nazism.

This Federation's accomplishments over the years fully justified these hopes. The founders and those who continued their work even unto this generation to build new congregations, to unify them, and thereby to buttress our synagogues and to burnish our faith. Think only of the Eisner Camp, that most precious and effective vehicle for the transmission of Judaism at our command. Look and see: it has helped us to reproduce our membership and leadership and it continues to secure our future.

reached Jerusalem. The great RamBam on the other hand insisted that we must learn to live in two worlds. Yes, he was the codifier of Jewish Law too, but in his most illustrious and enduring work, the More Nevuchim, the Guide to the Perplexed, he sought to bring Judaism into harmony with the prevailing philosophy of his day.

We too experience this tension, do we not, this tug between two worlds: How intimately a part of the society can we Jews be without losing our Jewish identity? Yet how separate can the Jewish community remain without cutting itself off from that larger society of which we are a part?

If, for the sake of Jewish cohesion, we keep our children confined in a Jewish environment, day in day out, seven days a week, where will they learn to interact with other Americans? But if, for the sake of interaction, we seek to immerse ourselves in the larger society, how will we be able to avoid being swallowed up by it, totally assimilated by that society?

These are the questions that limn the perplexing dilemma facing American Jewry. We are strained, stressed by the tension between liberty and community, between the survival needs of our people and our need to interact with the community of which we are a part.

\* \* \*

It is a tension which is eased considerably by the fact that we live in a society which is pledged to the principle of pluralism.

Marginally noted, this is a principle of relatively recent vintage. But a generation ago — certainly when I first came to these shores — America was conceived to be a "melting pot," E pluribus unum —was the motto of the day - out of many one. The public school was seen as homogenizing agent, and diversity was muted, if not

\* \* \*

The tension between individual liberty and the needs of community which our convention theme underscores is further eased by our particular understanding of Judaism.

As Reform Jews we are fully prepared to recast tradition, refashion it in response to contemporary need knowledge. We conceive of Judaism as a dynamic and not a static faith.

Note, if you will, that this conception, in no way, does violence to the Jewish tradition, for this is what Judaism always was, an ever changing faith, before it atrophied amid repressive encounters with Christendom, before it became encrusted by the codification process of our Dark Ages.

According to a well-known legend, when Moses was allowed by the Holy One, Blessed be He, to visit the Academy of Rabbi Akiba who lived many centuries later, our Great Lawgiver did not recognize the newer Judaism as his own, he failed to understand the teachings that Akiba quoted in his, Moses's name.

This midrash means to teach us that the rabbis of old understood Judaism to be an evolving faith, an ever changing faith, a continuously reforming religion, in the best sense of that adjective: a religion not of obeisance, but of a dialogue tempered by a profound sense of responsibility, a religion in which halachah was not frozen like ice but a soluble substance to be mixed with human tears.

To put the matter succinctly, it is modern orthodox literalism that is unauthentic, that represents a fundamental break with tradition. Reform Judaism, in its ideal conception, is palpably truer to that tradition.

We in Reform do not deem sanctity synonymous with immutability. We do not equate holiness with a rigid immobility. For us, the Jewish tradition did not end in

Well, in the first instance, we must deepen the Jewish educational components of our temples, we must make Jewish study -- not for children, but for adults as well -- a primary purpose of a congregation's striving. Every aspect of the congregational program must be bent to serve this end, the bulk of its resources applied to it. Only then will its center hold.

In this context, I have a modest proposal to make; I have made it before, I believe, but no one, to my knowledge has taken me up on it: Why not take a leaf from the Lubavitcher Chassidim. [After all, we have taken abuse from them, we might as well learn from them too]. They have refined the tradition of "daf yomi" which enjoins each Jew to study some page of the Talmud each day. They rather select a particular page, from the Talmud or from Chassidic literature, which becomes the assignment of the day, as it were, and which is studied on the very same day by every Lubavitcher Chassid in the world. This custom serves not only as a stimulus to study, but as a unifying force as well.

In similar manner, why not let each synagogue choose a passage from the Bible, from the Torah portion perhaps, which then is studied during that week, not only in the classrooms or interpreted from the pulpit, but also at every Temple function and every committee meeting in the form of a d'var torah by an individual or in informal group discussion, perhaps even by families in congregants' homes.

Admittedly, this is a modest suggestion.

But I believe that it would energize the congregation's educative process and make it more cohesive. It would help us to understand, and act on the understanding that Jewish education is not limited to the classroom, that it must penetrate every other room and activity of Temple's life: from committee meetings to conversation within its

place where easy answers are given and few if any questions asked, that we need do little if anything at all and we can still call ourselves Jews.

I know that I have spoken often of this matter before, and I will continue to speak of it with Cato-like regularity, though there is no need to elaborate.

Suffice it to say, that to be a Jew in one's mind or heart is simply not enough. The pure idea can serve only a few rare individuals, theologians, philosophers if you will.

The truth -- to be felt by most of us-- must put on a garb.

There must be rite, legend, ceremony...visible form.

Only when we as synagogue leaders put on such a garb, will those who see us also see and seize on Reform Judaism as a serious and consequentially meaningful religious enterprise.

\* \* \*

Now, our religious community has burgeoned numerically, not only because we have made change our hallmark, but also because of our firm and fearless resolve to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

In the Book of Numbers, Parshat beha'alotecha our teacher Moses is reported to have proclaimed: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets."

All the Lord's people -- aye, says Reform Judaism!

All the Lord's people including women.

All the Lord's people -- including gay and lesbian Jews.

All the Lord's people, including families in all of their new constellations.

All the Lord's people, including the intermarried, and Jews-by-choice, yes, and the hearing-impaired, and the wheelchair bound, and the disabled in body and spirit.

Their needs are also numbered among our responsibilities, and their energies too need



But we are not to be scapegoated for their ever rising rate. Outreach was not designed to reverse the tide of intermarriage. It was designed, rather, to retain the intermarried for Judaism, to gather and keep them within the fold. We should be credited, therefore, for doing our share to staunch the bleeding and to infuse new blood into the body Jewish. Note, if you will, that we are the only stream of Judaism on the American Jewish scene that is swelling in numbers.

There is one respect, however, in which our Outreach endeavor requires revision: We need to intensify our efforts to gain converts, both before and after marriage.

All studies agree that conversionary marriages are infinitely more stable Jewishly and in every other way; These couples lead more palpably Jewish lives, and their children receive a sounder Jewish rearing.

And so we need to move away from the "neutral," non-proselyting stance that has hitherto informed our Outreach effort, and our desire to welcome converts should be made explicit rather than only implicit in our work.

Everyone must be involved in this effort, if it is to succeed, rabbis, cantors, educators, lay leaders, and above all parents. We must lose no opportunity to persuade our children either to marry Jews or to urge their non-Jewish partners to opt for Judaism.

Please don't misunderstand me here: I do not suggest that we somehow slow or even reverse our Outreach programming, or make the intermarried -- including their non-Jewish partners -- uncomfortable or unwelcome...God forbid! But I do believe that we must make the non-Jewish partners of our children understand that we are not indifferent to them and that we are eager to embrace them as fuller members of our

faith was quenched by Judaism.

Yes, people do choose Judaism on religious grounds alone. I don't know why so many Jews are surprised that this is so. They think that choosing to be Jewish is a symptom of some kind of abnormality.

Some years ago, the Union prepared a video tape of interviews with several Jews-by-Choice. Among them was a couple, neither of whom was born a Jew and who chose Judaism together. When they were asked to relate what experience in the conversion process was most disturbing, most painful to them, John, the husband, answered: "I was most troubled when my Jewish friends said to me: Are you crazy? You needed this, to become a Jew? And I began to wonder...if they don't know it's there, maybe it isn't there!"

"If they don't know it's there, maybe it isn't there."

Here is the essential challenge, for in lacking a mission we are suspect of also lacking the message.

But we do have a message, my friends. Let us not doubt nor fail to proclaim it. We have so very much to offer: Judaism celebrates life and not death. It insists on the freedom and the capacity of the individual to determine his fate. Judaism is a religion of hope and not of despair; it holds society and humankind perfectible. It allows, nay, even encourages freedom of thought, the right of the exploring mind to question tradition, yea, even the justice of God. Moreover, we offer something more than a disembodied faith system. We are a people of faith, a caring community of Jews. In other words, we have an enormous amount of wisdom and experience, of warmth and of love to offer to this troubled world. And we Jews ought to be proud to speak about it, frankly, freely, and with dignity.



Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler's Introduction of Jesse Jackson  
U.A.H.C. Board Meeting

Ritz Carlton Hotel, Palm Beach, Florida  
December 12, 1992

(Introductory . . . greetings to Board . . . . telling them how important their contribution to our work is. . . . Thanks to their efforts, our movement has burgeoned.. . . etc. Then:)

Those decisions which we have collectively reached at our semi annual meetings have also made a difference. They have given new direction to our movement and left their lasting mark. Outreach, Religious Commitment, Yad Tikvah, the renewal of intergroup coalitions - - all these, and other programmatic themes were first sounded at our board meetings and they have become dominant in the symphony of the Union's work.

The subject before us this morning is also of considerable consequence, for we will be focusing on the problem of America's cities. Surely this is one of the most critical of issues facing our nation, and the leaders of Reform Judaism's Social Action Commission have resolved to place this matter high on our agenda.

Our tradition enjoins us to make such a commitment. "seek the peace of the city in which you live . . . for only in its peace will you find peace . . . ," Thundered Jeremiah. Commenting on this scriptural passage, a Talmudic master bade us "never to pray in a house where there are no windows." Let the windows of your sanctuaries be kept open, he added, so that humanity's weeping will always be heard by those who worship within.

There is much weeping out there in the world, is there not, especially in the inner cities of our land. The millions who live there are the victims of violence, they all of them are -- a violence whose impact may not be as immediate as are riots in the streets, and yet are just as fatal. I speak of the violence that poisons relations between people because their skin has a different color. I speak of the violence that destroys children by hunger, and by schools with no books, and homes with no heat. I speak of the violence that robs the jobless of their sense of self worth and stifles all their hope.

It is this slow acting, but no less lethal, violence which our society needs to confront. For if we don't, why then the violence of the streets will erupt with a growing frequency and destructiveness. It will rage not just in Los Angeles, but also in Palm Springs, not just in Crown Heights, but also in Shaker Heights. "Seek the peace of the city in which you live, for only in its peace will you find peace."

As a religious community it is our clear obligation to help in this realm, to do what we can, and to prod the leaders of our nation to address the pain and frustration and bitterness that are destroying the lives of millions. We have invited the Reverend Jesse Jackson to help us find the way to do so because he feels this pain more deeply than many others, and he has labored mightily to allay it. We invited him for one more reason still: because we are convinced that the alliance between Blacks and Jews in America is quintessential for our common purposes, and we, on our part, are determined to re-forge this alliance. Our speaker, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, was active in the glory days of the Black/Jewish alliance which we now so nostalgically recall. As a Martin Luther King aide, he was a key player in that coalition of decency in which Blacks and Jews were such indispensable partners. But times and events have led us to

view him as having contributed to those tensions that now divide our communities, even as he has the unique potential to be a bridge between us.

This changing perception comes as no news to him. He hears our complaints wherever and whenever he encounters us in the public arena. Little purpose is served in rehearsing the litany of these complaints. The wounds will never heal if we keep on re-opening them. We can't remain mired in the past, but must move forward.

Jesse Jackson, on his part, has certainly endeavored to do so, but honesty compels us to admit that we, on our part, have failed to respond to, or even acknowledge his many efforts to repair the breach.

He has been speaking of "secure borders" for Israel and he forcefully supported the Camp David Accords, and all the approaches embodied in it.

He confronted Gorbachev in Geneva on the issue of Soviet Jewry.

He was ready to travel to Syria to intercede for the Israeli MIA's . Indeed, during the past year, he was tireless in his efforts to gain freedom for Syrian Jewry - - and he made no fanfare about it. He did it because it was right.

To protest the Bitburg obscenity, he visited concentration camps and since then he has spoken eloquently on the unique meaning of the Holocaust.

In Brussels, earlier this year, at an International Conference on Anti-Semitism, he delivered a powerful speech aimed clearly at a reconciliation with the Jewish community. I was there, and heard

his impassioned plea. He praised Zionism as a "liberation movement" and called on Jews and Blacks to renew their joint fight against racism.

Since then, and even before, he repeatedly delivered this self same message of reconciliation with Cato-like regularity and intensity and not just to Jewish audiences, but whenever and wherever he speaks, and especially to his own people even when there is not a single Jew among his listeners.

All of this and more is widely reported by the Black media. But it is scarcely mentioned in the Jewish or Israeli press. His many efforts to reach out to us were too often met with suspicion and silence.

But justice demands otherwise. Let us, therefore, enter into today's dialogue openly, sensitively, and candidly. Let us not nurse our wounds and translate every difference into a grievance, every controversy into combat, every disagreement into a bloodletting. Jews can't afford it, Blacks can't afford it. America and the world can't afford it. Only our common enemies, the enemies of freedom, rejoice when Blacks and Jews square off against each other.

We live at a time when racial and religious and ethnic differences are growing, when "ethnic cleansing" is ravaging the former Yugoslavia, and xenophobia fuels violence against foreigners in Germany. When gypsies are hounded in Eastern Europe, and the fires of homophobia and racism are stoked for political gain in our own land.

In such an hour, we must look beyond the hurts and grievances of the past. Blacks and Jews need each other not only because we have common enemies, but because of our common dreams. Together, we share a vision of a just and open and generous society.

together we identify with the weak and the stranger. Together we hold that it is the foremost task of government to achieve social, economic and political justice.

Our speaker is an eloquent spokesman for our shared vision, a man who has done much to make it a reality. He is the most widely acknowledged leader of America's Black community, a staunch defender of his people's rights and dignity. But more, transcending race, he has earned the respect of millions of Americans as a leader of political, intellectual and moral power on the great and vexing issues of our time. I present to you.

1992

Save this

REMARKS BY RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER  
AT OUR SYNAGOGUE-FEDERATION RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Let me begin by asserting that I consider the alliance between the synagogue community and the Federation community essential in our common quest to achieve Jewish continuity.

It will come as no surprise to anyone that I regard the synagogue as the pivotal institution in Jewish life. It was that historically and it continues to be that today. It is the indispensable element of our people's survival.

Consider this if you will:

Who is responsible for teaching our children to be Jews? The synagogue - our financially pressed, overburdened, short staffed synagogues! Who will assure that there will be a Jewishly educated, Jewishly committed, generation 20 years from now? Who will provide the teachers and the rabbis and the scholars for that generation? Who will assure those many other communal and national Jewish organizations a reservoir of Jews on which they will be able to draw for their membership a score years hence? Who will provide the State of Israel with a continuing corps of understanding Jews? The answer in every case, of course, is the synagogue. It has to be the synagogue - the synagogue and those camps and seminaries and the multitude of educational efforts that they sustain.

The synagogue is where Jews are made, where the individual soul and the community are joined. It is the place where modernity and eternity cross fertilize, where the seeds of the Jewish identity are sown. All other institutions in Jewish life are created by Jews. Only the synagogue creates Jews, child by child, family, by family, minyan by minyan.

The Federation's own National Jewish Population Study - which so shocked our community - reveals how much more deeply committed synagogue affiliated Jews are than those who belong to no congregation. Their attachment to Israel is more intense, their attitude toward intermarriage is more wholesome from a communal point of view, their Jewish feelings are so much more impassioned.

And this above all, synagogue affiliated Jews are infinitely more likely to assume the mantle of Jewish communal leadership. A recent broad based AJC study establishes that the overwhelming proportion of American Jewish leaders are, in fact, synagogue affiliated, that they attend worship service with a measure of regularity, that their children are involved in Jewish youth groups and summer camps and that a goodly portion even attend day schools - - all far higher than the national average of all Jews. Let there be no doubt about it; it is the synagogue affiliated Jews who consistently emerge as the guardians of the Jewish future.



I conclude from all this that the Federation-Synagogue partnership concerning which we speak, is not only a desideratum, but a necessity and that we must bend every effort to achieve it. The Federations have the material resources, synagogues have the human resources, and both are needed to secure our future.

Why hasn't this partnership been achieved before? Possibly because the Federation community was primarily engaged in the task of community building and as such saw the synagogue community with its diverse interpretations of Judaism as a divisive force.

Thus, for example, much Federation support went into CLAL, whose primary task it is to secure communal cohesion. Yet I, for one, do not see Jewish unity as a serious problem confronting American Jews. Our disputations, such as they are, are almost solely limited to the professional class - - rabbi versus rabbi - - and have not truly inflamed the passions of our people. Jewish unity is not really a problem; Jewish continuity is!

If the Federations want to assure Jewish continuity, therefore, they can best do so by supporting specific synagogue programs, even at the risk of enduring some of our inter-denominational frays. Such frays are simply the price paid for our passion and that very passion is vital to the success of our efforts. It is this subjective passion, and only this passion, which can make Judaism come to life in the hearts of our children.



Why be fearful of this passion and therefore resort to the "lowest common denominator Judaism" of too many communal schools, community centers and camps and Israel adventures? Why invest in a pale version of what the synagogue movements have already built? Why not instead offer Federation scholarships for synagogue camps and Israel trips and Outreach programs, and other suitable points of Jewish connection - - allowing each family to choose its affiliation, in the trust that affiliation per se means empowerment for the Jewish community as a whole.

Synagogue leaders, on the other hand, were hesitant to enter into a partnership with Federations because they did not like to be accountable for anyone else. I reject this notion categorically. We ought not to be afraid of "accountability" because in the final analysis we have to be accountable to ourselves. If the application of this principle results in the attainment of higher standards and the more effective distribution of available resources - - as it is bound to do - - then we ought to embrace it.

The notion of a partnership assumes a shared financial responsibility and we must be fully prepared to meet it. Synagogues must bear their fair share of the costs involved in Federation supported projects, and they must be accountable for the expenditure of funds as well as the quality of the programs

these funds sustain - - albeit such standards of excellence should be jointly established with full respect for the integrity of each of the religious streams.

I welcome Federation's resolve to make Jewish education central to its mission. Still, I must confess that I am somewhat disturbed by the initial directions taken by community inspired funds for education (e.g. the Mandell Commission, the Pincus Fund) which place a premium on day school education and see it as the primary, if not the sole guarantor of Jewish continuity.

This is not to say that I am opposed to full time Jewish education. Quite the contrary, those of you who are a part of our own religious community know that I have been the fervent exponent of day schools and I take pride in the fact that we have now a budding chain of such schools all over the land. Full-time Jewish education is absolutely essential to the attainment of an educated leadership.

Just the same, I regard the informal education endeavors of our youth groups and our camps of equal, if not of greater worth. Indeed, as I travel from community to community - which I do not unlike Satan, wandering to and fro across this land - I find evidence of the importance of experiential education. Wherever I go, I hear people saying to me "I became a rabbi, or I became an

educator, or I became the Cantor, or I **became** the community leader, or I made certain that my children have a Jewish education even though I entered into intermarriage because I attended one of the Union's camps - that experience was a turning point in my life." This should be no surprise, for you see in the informal setting of our camps, we have not only more time for instruction, but we can also create the kind of environment which is reflective of our ideals, of our very best. In this manner we can reach not only the minds of our charges, but also their hearts. We can plant the seeds of Jewish devotion within them and in this manner make Judaism come to life in their souls. We can make it true for them, truer than mere preachment, truer than vague recollection, much truer indeed than pride in a heritage which is mere hearsay and not a true possession.

There is absolutely no evidence that those who enjoy full time Jewish schooling are immune to alienation. Indeed, the National Jewish Population Study shows that a dramatic increase in the intermarriage rate of those whose Jewish education was received primarily in a Jewish day school, rising from 18% in first marriages to 29% in second marriages in the last 10 years. Alas, the type of Jewish education one receives has no statistically significant impact on the rate of intermarriage. Indeed, the doyen, the spiritual leadership of modern mainline Orthodoxy, in a Hadoar interview some years ago - **Harav Soloveitchek** declared, "my Orthodox colleagues may criticize me for saying this, but insofar as the plague of intermarriage is concerned which has not

passed over the houses of the Orthodox, I am afraid we will have do what the Reformers are doing, albeit in an Orthodox context." In other words, full time education doesn't inure us to the problems we modern Jews face in having to live in two worlds, and I, for one, place equal, if not greater, worth on the effectiveness of informal education in our common quest to secure Jewish continuity.

Unfortunately, I could not be with you this morning and so I don't know everything that was discussed, but I see that Barry Shrage is here today, spoke earlier, and he likely repeated what he said to our Board some time ago, to wit: "In this evolving partnership, we ought not to use a scattershot approach, but establish clear priorities." As far as I am concerned, they are the following:

1. Early childhood education -- day camps, nursery schools, day care centers, and the like. Ignatius Loyola's dictum still applies: "Give me a child before the age of 6 and you can have him for the rest of his life." You can't put leaven in the dough once it comes out of the oven. There is no doubt about it, early life experiences are essential in the development of Jewish identity.

2. Jewish camping - and let me repeat in this context what I said earlier, that passion is an important ingredient for the effectiveness in securing Jewish continuity. I am told that

Federation sponsored community camps are not doing so well and I have a strong suspicion that this is so because they are lacking in an intensive Jewish component. That component passionately conveyed is ever present in our synagogue's camps, and that is why the Union's camps are filled to the overflowing.

Unfortunately, camps are not cheap and scholarship funds would be of immense value. There is no reason why this kind of valuable Jewish educational experiences should be the possession only of those who can afford it.

3. Israel experiences. Here too, I want to note that not all of these programs are of equal worth. Here too, there is a need for careful planning for a focusing on the Jewish education component. Not all Israel trips are of equal worth. Some are merely tours, insufficiently staffed with qualified guides who understand what we are about.

4. Outreach to the intermarried. The NJP survey mandates a cooperative endeavor in this realm and we in the Reform movement have developed an expertise in it. Let us face the facts: The factors leading to intermarriage are so many and persuasive that even our best efforts in the realm of education are not going to prevent intermarriage. Again, I believe in Jewish education. I believe in expending our resources to implant Jewish identity. Still, we have to deal with the reality that our best efforts do not suffice, nor do those of the other branches of Judaism. It

is an open society and intermarriage is the sting which comes to us with the honey of our freedom. More than ever before, our young people go to school and work and live alongside non-Jews. Ultimately, many determine to choose them as life partners - - not to escape from being Jews, but simply because they have fallen in love.

Shall we abandon these people? Shall we sit shiva over them? We of the Reform movement have resolved not to do so. Though persisting in our rejection of intermarriage, we refuse to reject the intermarried. On the contrary, we have resolved to love them all the more. We do everything we humanly can to draw them closer to us. We try to involve them in Jewish life and in the life of our community in the hope of bringing the non-Jewish partner to Judaism, or at least to make certain that the children issuing from these marriages, our children and their children's children in turn, will in fact be reared as Jews and share the destiny of the Jewish people.

These, then, are some of the priorities which I see for our common venture.

Let me conclude as I began, by reasserting my conviction that the partnership between the synagogue and Federation communities is not only desirable, but essential. I am confident that once we engage in a joint creative and diligent effort, we will bring to

new heights our 3000 year old identity as a religious-national culture, united in our commitment to the land of Israel and the people of Israel, and the Torah of Israel - - united in our dreams, our fate, and our faith.

Schindler: Sharon Kleinbaum Installation  
Congregation Beth Simchat Torah  
September 11, 1992

I am grateful for your warm introduction, Irving

It is good to be here and to participate in your communal simcha.

In these ceremonies which mark the installation  
of Sharon Kleinbaum as your first full-time Rabbi.

This is a joyous occasion, to be sure,

but is also a moment filled with trembling awe,  
a moment fraught with far-reaching consequence  
for rabbi and congregation alike.



P Sharon is no stranger to me, as you may know.

We were colleagues on the Union staff.

She was the Director of Congregational Relations of Reform Judaism's

Religious Action Center in Washington,

for the past several years,

and even before that served us in various capacities

both here and in Israel,

and she served us exceedingly well.

P We will miss her greatly, for her gifts of the spirit are rich.

She is blessed with a first rate mind and cultivates it assiduously;

few of her peers are so well and widely read.

She is a gifted teacher, well able to transmit her ideas and ideals

in the written and the spoken word.

Her integrity is unbending, enabling her to teach also

not just by precept but by example, by the manner of her life..

She is a natural leader, spurring others to follow her way,

not by demanding or commanding, but with a quiet strength.

And this above all, she is essentially decent, humane, caring;

harboring a soul-felt fellow feeling

for all forms of human existence.

P I am told that it took you nearly two years to screen the candidates  
for this post and to make your selection.

You did not labor in vain -- the treasure is well worth the effort.

You are fortunate to have found Sharon Kleinbaum,

to have her now as your spiritual leader.

D But, then, Sharon too is fortunate,  
for by all accounts this congregation is also a find,  
rare and remarkable in its complexion.

You do not expect your rabbi to serve as surrogate for your  
religious aspirations,  
to pray for you, to study for you,  
to perform Judaism's rites in your stead  
You give force to these aspirations yourself,  
by participating fully in the religious life.

B You are unique in one other respect as well,  
in that you embrace in your community all streams of  
contemporary Judaism:  
orthodox, conservative, reconstructionist, reform  
they all find their place in your communal home.  
You understand and act upon the understanding that those words  
which denote our divergent approaches to Judaism are  
but adjectives and that the unifying noun is Jew.

Woz mir zeinen senned mir ober yidn zennen mir...  
What ever we may be, we may be, but this above all,  
we are Jews.

H In this respect too, Sharon, given the diversity of her background  
and experience, is uniquely prepared to serve you.

She comes from a traditional home,  
received her religious schooling in a conservative synagogue  
attended the Reconstructionist seminary  
and served Reform Jewish institutions.

It is almost as if her service to this community was pre-ordained.

R We have a perfect match, here, an ideal nuptial bond,  
uniting as it does an unusual rabbi with a unique congregation.  
All we need do is to express the prayerful hope  
that the beautiful promise of this installation hour  
will indeed be fulfilled, during the months and years ahead.

R And if my installation message must have its cohortative aspects,  
then let it be this:  
Let this congregation value its admirably gifted new rabbi,  
ever drawing from her that which she is capable of giving.  
And may you, Sharon, together with those you love,  
give your utmost to the sons and daughters of  
this holy congregation,  
knowing with full assurance that they will respond  
to the best, whenever the best is given and demanded.

\* \* \*

R Now, an occasion such as this should not be devoted to 'inyanei, d'yoma,  
to matters of temporal concern,  
especially during these days before our holiest season  
when our souls, like the trees of autumn, prepare for new growth  
by discarding the weight of the past year.

R But our Jewish season of renewal is paralleled this year  
by the American presidential campaign,  
the excesses of which compel me to turn my remarks  
at least briefly to the political sphere.

R I refer now especially to the reshaping of the concept of 'family values' by the Buchanan-Robertson axis of the Republican party, a concept substantially embraced by the incumbent administration in its effort to win re-election.

You remember Buchanan's abhorrent convention speech, and Pat Robertson inflammatory peroration during which he opined that the Equal Rights amendment "encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians."

(Quote unquote)  
AS ANN BUCHANAN PUT IT THE OTHER DAY: "WHAT, NO CANNIBALISM?"

R The 'values' the Buchanans of our world hold forth as 'family values' are nothing short of their transvaluation, their debasement, their perversion!

Their 'values' seek to cover up pain, to hide poverty, to wish away heartbreak in our land.

Their 'values' are "values" of a Disneyland America that wears a smile-button as its badge and declares as alien any one whose countenance suggests a more subtle emotion.

Their 'values' have been proffered throughout American history as codewords for racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny and xenophobia, and this year a not so new twist, homophobia, Gay people have come to the fore as the demon, the alien, the scapegoat.

R More ominous than the vulgarity of Buchanan and Robertson is the sickening silence of our country's elected leaders, who should have repudiated these rantings at once as polarizing, inflammatory, incitements to violence. Their silence shames them, and threatens the liberties of all Americans.

R We cannot condone all this...not as Americans,  
and especially not as Jews,  
certainly not as historically conscious Jews,  
for we have seen it all before:

...seen the effort to drive us into hiding,  
or make us alien because we are different.

...seen the effort to shatter the rainbow of culture and creed,  
race and gender, and sexual preference that spans the sky

...seen the effort to define all men and women by a single aspect  
of their being

so that it is the Jew, the black, the gay, the lesbian, the  
foreigner that identifies us,

rather than the whole human being who, like all human beings,  
was made in the Divine Image.

Aye, we have seen it all before!

U No, we cannot condone it, because we are a community  
that understands true family values as a quest, not a dogma:  
a quest to build new relationships that offer love, pride,  
self-respect;  
a quest to conceive and bear or adopt children against all odds;  
a quest to bring dignity to our dying loved ones,  
despite the discrimination that pursues them even to their  
deathbeds if not beyond;  
a quest to bring understanding to our families,  
despite the temptation to keep on hiding  
and thereby to deny the integrity of selfhood.

R I use the plural pronoun "we" based on a simple fact,  
a fact that any Jewish child with a crayon can tell you:  
that the star of David contains within it the triangle.  
Based on that essential geometry, all of us who are assembled  
here this night, are indeed one community, one people,  
bound to one another by indissoluble bonds of kinship.

H As the new year comes and we pray for the renewal of our days and ways,  
let us pray also that America will renew its covenant  
with the best and not the worst in its heritage  
as our country turns toward its new beginning.

\* \* \*

H But let me return to the leitmotif of my installation message  
to the less temporal and more enduring themes  
befitting this awe-filled hour in which the sons and daughters  
of Bet Simchat Torah enter into a covenant with  
with their new rabbi.

H The tasks facing Sharon Kleinbaum are many and consequential.  
And the first of these assuredly is to strengthen and sustain  
that institution which has been entrusted to her care.  
This is her first and foremost task:  
to strengthen the synagogue,  
to sustain it as the pivotal institution in Jewish life.

H The synagogue is precisely that:  
the magic ingredient of Judaism's wondrous endurance.  
It is the indispensable element of our people's survival.

P Consider this, if you will.

Who is responsible for teaching our children to be Jews?

The synagogue -- our financially pressed, over-burdened, short-staffed synagogues!

Who will assure that there will be a Jewishly educated, Jewishly committed generation twenty years from now?

Who will provide the teachers and the rabbis and the scholars for that generation?

Who will assure those many other communal and national Jewish organizations a reservoir of Jews on which they will be able to draw for their membership a score years hence?

Who will provide the State of Israel with a continuing corps of understanding Jews?

The answer in every case, of course is the synagogue.

It has to be the synagogue -- the synagogue and those camps and seminaries and multitudinous educational efforts that they sustain.

H The synagogue is where Jews are made, where the individual soul and the community are joined.

It is the place where modernity and eternity cross-fertilize, where the seeds of the Jewish identity are sown.

All other institutions in Jewish life are created by Jews.

Only the synagogue creates Jews -- child by child, family by family, minyan by minyan.

\* \* \*



P But the synagogue will be a force for continuity only so long as  
it is true to its essential mission, and that is to enable  
the individual Jew to pursue the quest for God.

P It is a quest we dare not eschew.

It is, when all is said and done, the life-task of the Jew.

It is our mission, our historic calling,

"Who is a Jew" - asked Leo Baeck - "He is someone who experiences  
himself in the direction of God...He is a human being who directs  
himself toward God in such a way that no part of his life is  
without this center, without this contact..."

To pursue the quest for God, to strive to know God, to seek to serve God,

-- this is the duty that defines us as the covenant people.

P This process begins when we open ourselves to experience the holy.

We cannot sense the grandeur of nature if we look at a sunrise  
through sleepy eyes.

We cannot expect a worship service to stir you to the depths of our  
being if we approach it only causally in a commonplace manner.

There is a prior need for kavanah, for an intention,  
a conscious determination to be so stirred.

P Perhaps our reluctance to open ourselves to the experience of the holy  
is impeded by that overly rigid mind-set of modernity  
which insists that all postulates be demonstrable  
and experienced by the senses.

P It is a mindset which is mystified by that paradox  
in Jewish theological thought which holds  
that God, though unknowable, nonetheless makes Himself known.



God is wholly other -- we are taught.

He is completely different from us.

He cannot be grasped by ordinary modes of thought and perception.

We cannot, should not even conjure up His image.

We must not describe Him, or, following Maimonides,

we can describe Him only by means of negations,

by saying what He is not.

And attributes ascribed to God by Biblical poets are but metaphor.

P But at the same time we are taught that though unknowable,

God reveals Himself in countless ways.

So Moses was told atop Sinai when he stood in the cleft of the rock:

"Thou canst not see My face,

but I will make all my goodness pass before Thee."

Even so can we behold God's goodness "in the realm of nature

and in the varied experiences of our lives."

P You remember those heaven soaring words of our liturgy:

"When justice burns like a flaming fire within us...  
when love evokes willing sacrifice from us...when,  
to the last full measure of selfless devotion,  
we proclaim our belief in the ultimate triumph of truth  
and righteousness...then (does God) you live within our hearts  
and we behold (His) presence."

Unknowable, yet known...how enigmatic...how paradoxical...

P Yet strangely enough, modern science ~~of~~ whose teachings we accept

with greater ease than we do the teachings of faith,

nonetheless confronts us with a like seeming paradox.

R Chemists, for instance, routinely accept the reality of certain gases  
by their effect alone, even though these gases themselves  
have never been isolated or seen.

Physicists, in their endeavor to study the nature of matter,  
developed a device called a cloud chamber.

Cloud chambers allow the observer to see paths traced by particles  
resulting from nuclear reactions.

The actual particles, however, remain unobservable.

They have never been seen, might never be seen,  
with naked eye or instruments however well-refined.

Here too then, a leap of faith is required,  
a scientific leap of faith, if you will,  
to acknowledge the existence of a particle that can be  
known only through its traces.

R Unknowable, yet known through its traces.  
Invisible, but real, nonetheless.

R This paradox may account for much of our present-day reluctance  
to reclaim and proclaim our spiritual identity as Jews.  
Like the rest of humankind, we are creatures in bondage to our eyes.  
Only seeing is believing, we say; only the visible is fact.  
We also tend to value primarily things that are of use,  
that have their practical application,  
that can be measured and weighed and, above all, bought and sold.

R But the invisible world has a reality all its own,  
and its force may well be more intense than is the force  
of the world that is seen.

Consider the world of the invisible, if you will:

P Ideas, for example. They are impalpable. No one can see or seize them.  
Yet ideas can seize us and they hold the power to transform our lives.

P Ideals too are of such a kind.

They are are intangible, yet what is life without them?

Take truth from a school and you reduce it to a rubble of red bricks.

Take religion from a sanctuary, and it becomes an ordinary auditorium.

Take justice from the far-flung round of human endeavor,  
and civilization reverts into a jungle.

H Music is such invisible force, every form of art is that:

dance, sculpture, painting, architecture,

-- "music in space." Schelling called them.

They may be discernible in outer form but not in their innermost essence

The sources and nature of art are a mystery even to those who create it.

Yet art has the power to heal us.

It can make the spirit soar,

for art is spirit from the realm of the unseen,

conveyed by means of matter.

H Ah, and then there is love which is also an invisible force.

We can see its expressions, to be sure: the caress, the kiss.

But no one has ever seen love itself.

It certainly cannot be anatomized, or schematized,

or reduced to clearly identifiable elements.

Yet how powerful a force love is!

It can evoke our willing sacrifice, inspire us to the noblest of deeds.

P Aye, there is a world of reality  
beyond those worlds perceived by the physical sense alone.

And altogether multitudinous are life's gifts that have no  
practical worth but nonetheless are altogether wond'rous:

The earth's green covering of grass.  
The blue serenity of sea and sky.  
The song of day, the silent wonder of the night.  
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 peacock's feathers to tickle one another  
while being oblivious to their essential charm."

Then do the words of prophecy 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 darkness

R No, the human story simply cannot be told  
without reference to that mystery and majesty that transcends  
all logic and reason.

Only those who open themselves to such a mystery  
can transcend the grandeur and terror of their lives  
without being blinded by life's grandeur  
or crushed by its terror.

R Only when we open ourselves to such a mystery,  
will we find our Judaism to be a sustaining faith and not a  
dry-as-dust religion.

R And it is precisely this kind of faith that we so desperately need.  
for while routine religion suffices to sustain our lighter hours,  
once life runs out into its depths  
why, then, we need a different faith.

When death takes those we love,  
when our children slip through our arms,  
when dread disease makes waste our strength,  
when we think or even say  
now I have reached the bottom of the morass  
now I can sink no deeper  
...and yet we sink deeper

Why, then, we need a deeper faith.

Then we need the kind of faith that led the Psalmist to exclaim

gami ki elech begey tsalmoves lo iro ro ki ato imodi  
"Yea, thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of  
death, I will fear no evil, for Thou, Thou art with me."

R This then is two-fold mandate inherent in this hour  
To strengthen the synagogue in its outer form,  
to buttress it materially,  
but also to make certain that this will always be a place  
in which men and women can find the companionship of kindred  
and aspiring souls in their quest for God.

P It is in the hope that he will enable us to fulfill this two-fold  
mandate that we offer to Sharon K. our blessings and our prayers..

We call on God to bless you, Sharon, as our teachers once blessed us, and their teachers once blessed them; for you and we and they are linked in an unbroken chain from Sinai until now. Know then with what love we charge you: to go forth into the world, to sing the Jewish song of centuries, and to tell the endless tale of an endless people called to service.

Love the people whom you meet no less than you love God, for every single soul reflect the glory of its Maker, and every man and woman may be someone you can touch, with the healing hand of wisdom, or an aged prophetic echo of our past. Build a life that is a mirror in which others see reflected the will to reach heaven, and be what God intended.

Assume your new tasks, then, and raise up students in Torah, the Torah that is God's blueprint for creation, that some day you may know the joy that we do, as we give you our blessing.

④ Please come to the open ark, Sharon,

and as I ask God's blessing on you,

I would like you to be joined by the past presidents of this congregation, those who have led its sons and daughters so devotedly and effectively for so many years.



Schindler: Sharon Kleinbaum Installation  
Congregation Beth Simchat Torah  
September 11, 1992

I am grateful for your warm introduction, Irving  
albeit I am embarrassed by its extravagance...  
at least the better part of me is embarrassed,  
though my ego isn't...

Yet there is no danger that my ego will be overly inflated  
by words such as these.

My wife is always with me and she is both capable and always willing  
to put me in my proper place.

Good as she is in deflating my ego, she was outdone by a young  
chassidic boy whom I encountered near the Western Wall  
in Jerusalem some years ago...

A few among you have probably heard me tell this story...

it is my favorite and I like retelling it:

(Yarmulke Story)

Extravagant though your words were, Irving, I am nonetheless grateful  
for the graciousness of your reception.

It is good to be here and to participate in your communal simcha  
in these ceremonies which mark the installation  
of Sharon Kleinbaum as your first full-time Rabbi.

This is a joyous occasion, to be sure,  
but it is also moment filled with trembling awe,  
a moment fraught with far-reaching consequence  
for rabbi and congregation alike.

Sharon is no stranger to me, as you may know.

We were colleagues on the Union staff.

She was the Director of Congregational Relations of Reform Judaism's

Religious Action Center in Washington,

for the past several years,

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She is a natural leader, spurring others to follow her way,

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harboring a soul-felt fellow feeling

for all forms of human existence.

I am told that it took you nearly two years to screen the candidates

for this post and to make your selection.

You did not labor in vain -- the treasure is well worth the effort.

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to have her now as your spiritual leader.



But, then, Sharon too is fortunate,  
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rare and remarkable in its complexion.  
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religious aspirations,  
to pray for you, to study for you,  
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You give force to these aspirations yourself,  
by participating fully in the religious life.

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in that you embrace in your community all streams of  
contemporary Judaism:  
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In this respect too, Sharon, given the diversity of her background  
and experience, is uniquely prepared to serve you.  
She comes from a traditional home,  
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attended the Reconstructionist seminary  
and served Reform Jewish institutions.  
It is almost as if her service to this community was pre-ordained.

We have a perfect match, here, an ideal nuptial bond,  
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All we need do is to express the prayerful hope  
that the beautiful promise of this installation hour  
will indeed be fulfilled, during the months and years ahead.

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to matters of temporal concern,  
especially during these days before our holiest season  
when our souls, like the trees of autumn, prepare for new growth  
by discarding the weight of the past year.

But our Jewish season of renewal is paralleled this year  
by the American presidential campaign,  
the excesses of which compel me to turn my remarks  
at least briefly to the political sphere.

I refer now especially to the reshaping of the concept of 'family values' by the Buchanan-Robertson axis of the Republican party, a concept substantially embraced by the incumbent administration in its effort to win re-election.

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Gay people have come to the fore as the demon, the alien, the scapegoat.

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and especially not as Jews,  
certainly not as historically conscious Jews,  
for we have seen it all before:

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self-respect;  
a quest to conceive and bear or adopt children against all odds;  
a quest to bring dignity to our dying loved ones,  
despite the discrimination that pursues them even to their  
deathbeds if not beyond;  
a quest to bring understanding to our families,  
despite the temptation to keep on hiding  
and thereby to deny the integrity of selfhood.

I use the plural pronoun "we" based on a simple fact,  
a fact that any Jewish child with a crayon can tell you:  
that the star of David contains within it the triangle.  
Based on that essential geometry, all of us who are assembled  
here this night, are indeed one community, one people,  
bound to one another by indissoluble bonds of kinship.

As the new year comes and we pray for the renewal of our days and ways,  
let us pray also that America will renew its covenant  
with the best and not the worst in its heritage  
as our country turns toward its new beginning.

\* \* \*

But let me return to the leitmotif of my installation message  
to the less temporal and more enduring themes  
befitting this awe-filled hour in which the sons and daughters  
of Bet Simchat Torah enter into a covenant with  
with their new rabbi.

The tasks facing Sharon Kleinbaum are many and consequential.  
And the first of these assuredly is to strengthen and sustain  
that institution which has been entrusted to her care.  
This is her first and foremost task:

to strengthen the synagogue,  
to sustain it as the pivotal institution in Jewish life.

The synagogue is precisely that:  
the magic ingredient of Judaism's wondrous endurance.  
It is the indispensable element of our people's survival.

Consider this, if you will.

Who is responsible for teaching our children to be Jews?

The synagogue -- our financially pressed, over-burdened, short-staffed synagogues!

Who will assure that there will be a Jewishly educated, Jewishly committed generation twenty years from now?

Who will provide the teachers and the rabbis and the scholars for that generation?

Who will assure those many other communal and national Jewish organizations a reservoir of Jews on which they will be able to draw for their membership a score years hence?

Who will provide the State of Israel with a continuing corps of understanding Jews?

The answer in every case, of course is the synagogue.

It has to be the synagogue -- the synagogue and those camps and seminaries and multitudinous educational efforts that they sustain.

The synagogue is where Jews are made, where the individual soul and the community are joined.

It is the place where modernity and eternity cross-fertilize, where the seeds of the Jewish identity are sown.

All other institutions in Jewish life are created by Jews.

Only the synagogue creates Jews -- child by child, family by family, minyan by minyan.

\* \* \*



But the synagogue will be a force for continuity only so long as  
it is true to its essential mission, and that is to enable  
the individual Jew to pursue the quest for God.

It is a quest we dare not eschew.

It is, when all is said and done, the life-task of the Jew.

It is our mission, our historic calling,

"Who is a Jew" - asked Leo Baeck - "He is someone who experiences  
himself in the direction of God...He is a human being who directs  
himself toward God in such a way that no part of his life is  
without this center, without this contact..."

To pursue the quest for God, to strive to know God, to seek to serve God,  
-- this is the duty that defines us as the covenant people.

This process begins when we open ourselves to experience the holy.  
We cannot sense the grandeur of nature if we look at a sunrise  
through sleepy eyes.

We cannot expect a worship service to stir you to the depths of our  
being if we approach it only causally in a commonplace manner.  
There is a prior need for kavanah, for an intention,  
a conscious determination to be so stirred.

Perhaps our reluctance to open ourselves to the experience of the holy  
is impeded by that overly rigid mind-set of modernity  
which insists that all postulates be demonstrable  
and experienced by the senses.

It is a mindset which is mystified by that paradox  
in Jewish theological thought which holds  
that God, though unknowable, nonetheless makes Himself known.

God is wholly other -- we are taught.

He is completely different from us.

He cannot be grasped by ordinary modes of thought and perception.

We cannot, should not even conjure up His image.

We must not describe Him, or, following Maimonides,

we can describe Him only by means of negations,

by saying what He is not.

And attributes ascribed to God by Biblical poets are but metaphor.

But at the same time we are taught that though unknowable,

God reveals Himself in countless ways.

So Moses was told atop Sinai when he stood in the cleft of the rock:

"Thou canst not see My face,

but I will make all my goodness pass before Thee."

Even so can we behold God's goodness "in the realm of nature

and in the varied experiences of our lives."

You remember those heaven soaring words of our liturgy:

"When justice burns like a flaming fire within us...  
when love evokes willing sacrifice from us...when,  
to the last full measure of selfless devotion,  
we proclaim our belief in the ultimate triumph of truth  
and righteousness...then (does God) you live within our hearts  
and we behold (His) presence."

Unknowable, yet known...how enigmatic...how paradoxical...

Yet strangely enough, modern science of whose teachings we accept

with greater ease than we do the teachings of faith,

nonetheless confronts us with a like seeming paradox.



Chemists, for instance, routinely accept the reality of certain gases by their effect alone, even though these gases themselves have never been isolated or seen.

Physicists, in their endeavor to study the nature of matter, developed a device called a cloud chamber.

Cloud chambers allow the observer to see paths traced by particles resulting from nuclear reactions.

The actual particles, however, remain unobservable.

They have never been seen, might never be seen, with naked eye or instruments however well-refined.

Here too then, a leap of faith is required, a scientific leap of faith, if you will, to acknowledge the existence of a particle that can be known only through its traces.

Unknowable, yet known through its traces.

Invisible, but real, nonetheless.

This paradox may account for much of our present-day reluctance to reclaim and proclaim our spiritual identity as Jews.

Like the rest of humankind, we are creatures in bondage to our eyes.

Only seeing is believing, we say; only the visible is fact.

We also tend to value primarily things that are of use, that have their practical application, that can be measured and weighed and, above all, bought and sold.

But the invisible world has a reality all its own, and its force may well be more intense than is the force of the world that is seen.

Consider the world of the invisible, if you will:

Ideas, for example. They are impalpable. No one can see or seize them. Yet ideas can seize us and they hold the power to transform our lives.

Ideals too are of such a kind.

They are are intangible, yet what is life without them?

Take truth from a school and you reduce it to a rubble of red bricks.  
Take religion from a sanctuary, and it becomes an ordinary auditorium.  
Take justice from the far-flung round of human endeavor,  
and civilization reverts into a jungle.

Music is such invisible force, every form of art is that:

dance, sculpture, painting, architecture,  
-- "music in space." Schelling called them.

They may be discernible in outer form but not in their innermost essence  
The sources and nature of art are a mystery even to those who create it.  
Yet art has the power to heal us.

It can make the spirit soar,

for art is spirit from the realm of the unseen,  
conveyed by means of matter.

Ah, and then there is love which is also an invisible force.

We can see its expressions, to be sure: the caress, the kiss.

But no one has ever seen love itself.

It certainly cannot be anatomized, or schematized,  
or reduced to clearly identifiable elements.

Yet how powerful a force love is!

It can evoke our willing sacrifice, inspire us to the noblest of deeds.

Aye, there is a world of reality

beyond those worlds perceived by the physical sense alone.

And altogether multitudinous are life's gifts that have no

practical worth but nonetheless are altogether wond'rous:

The earth's green covering of grass.

The blue serenity of sea and sky.

The song of day, the silent wonder of the night.

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 peacock's feathers to tickle one another  
while being oblivious to their essential charm."

Then do the words of prophecy 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 darkness

No, the human story simply cannot be told

without reference to that mystery and majesty that transcends  
all logic and reason.

Only those who open themselves to such a mystery

can transcend the grandeur and terror of their lives

without being blinded by life's grandeur

or crushed by its terror.

Only when we open ourselves to such a mystery,

will we find our Judaism to be a sustaining faith and not a  
dry-as-dust religion.



And it is precisely this kind of faith that we so desperately need.  
for while routine religion suffices to sustain our lighter hours,  
once life runs out into its depths

why, then, we need a different faith.

When death takes those we love,

when our children slip through our arms,

when dread disease makes waste our strength,

when we think or even say

now I have reached the bottom of the morass

now I can sink no deeper

...and yet we sink deeper

Why, then, we need a deeper faith.

Then we need the kind of faith that led the Psalmist to exclaim

gami ki elech begey tsalmoves lo iro ro ki ato imodi  
"Yea, thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of  
death, I will fear no evil, for Thou, Thou art with me."

This then is two-fold mandate inherent in this hour

To strengthen the synagogue in its outer form,

to buttress it materially,

but also to make certain that this will always be a place

in which men and women can find the companionship of kindred

and aspiring souls in their quest for God.

It is in the hope that he will enable us to fulfill this two-fold

mandate that we offer to Sharon K. our blessings and our prayers..

We call on God to bless you, Sharon, as our teachers once blessed us, and their teachers once blessed them; for you and we and they are linked in an unbroken chain from Sinai until now. Know then with what love we charge you: to go forth into the world, to sing the Jewish song of centuries, and to tell the endless tale of an endless people called to service.

Love the people whom you meet no less than you love God, for every single soul reflect the glory of its Maker, and every man and woman may be someone you can touch, with the healing hand of wisdom, or an aged prophetic echo of our past. Build a life that is a mirror in which others see reflected the will to reach heaven, and be what God intended.

Assume your new tasks, then, and raise up students in Torah, the Torah that is God's blueprint for creation, that some day you may know the joy that we do, as we give you our blessing.

Please come to the open ark, Sharon,

and as I ask God's blessing on you,

I would like you to be joined by the past presidents of this congregation, those who have led its sons and daughters so devotedly and effectively for so many years.

DEDICATION  
OF THE  
WILLIAM AND LOTTIE DANIEL DEPARTMENT OF OUTREACH

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

UAHC House of Living Judaism  
New York, NY  
Sunday, 9/20/92

It is a privilege which I greatly appreciate, to be here and to speak at this singular event which marks the naming of our Outreach Department in honor of William and Lottie Daniel.

Outreach is a most significant aspect of our work as a religious community. Indeed, it has become one of the pillars on which the UAHC rests, joining our Departments of Education and Worship and Religious Action as one of the corner stones of our doing, nationally, regionally and locally.

I want to thank all of you who are assembled here today for participating in the work of this Commission. What you undertake to do, behold, it is exceedingly good, it is a holy work.

Outreach will be an essential aspect of our doing for many years to come. The rate of intermarriage will scarcely decrease, indeed, the widely publicized National Jewish Population Survey indicates a dramatic increase in that rate - - to 52% with a higher conversion out of Judaism than conversions in, and, alas, only a third of the children of interfaith marriages are being reared as Jews.

Let me note at once that all this does not mean that our Outreach program is ineffective or flawed in its conception - quite the opposite. We are not to be scapegoated for the high rate of

intermarriage. Outreach was not designed to reverse the tide of intermarriage, it was designed, rather, to retain the intermarried for Judaism, to guard and to keep them within the fold. We should be credited therefore, with doing our share to staunch the bleeding and to infuse new blood into the Jewish body. Note, if you will, that we are the only stream of Judaism on the American Jewish scene that is swelling in numbers.

And so Outreach will continue to be an essential element of our program and this is why I am deeply grateful to Bill Daniel for securing the future of our work. As you know, he has made a testamentary pledge of two million dollars to secure the future of this program, and as an expression of our gratitude to him, we have determined to name our Outreach Department in his and Lottie's honor.

By adding their names, we elevate the image of our efforts in this realm, for Bill's and Lottie's lives embody the loftiest ideals of the Jewish people.

A native of Hamburg, Bill fled Nazi Germany in the 1930's, and made a new life on these shores. He came here virtually penniless, but in short order he rose to prominence in the world of business and finance. He sits as President and Chairman of the Board of the Behr Iron and Steel Corporation, and he became a widely recognized and honored leader of his industry.



In the early 70's, he and Lottie lived for some years in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and since 1975, they have made Santa Barbara, California their home.

Wherever Bill lived, he served the Jewish community. In Rockford, he was President of Temple Beth-El and also founded and led the Rockford Jewish Community Council. In Santa Fe he chaired the United Jewish Appeal drive and in Santa Barbara he is one of the mainstays of Congregation B'nai B'rith.

Bill also took his place on the national and international Jewish scene. He serves on the Union's Board of Trustees and several of its key committees and he is also a member of the Board of Governors of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and was a major factor in creating our beautiful new synagogue in Tel Aviv appropriately named Beit Daniel. This is a veritable jewel in the crown of our Israel Movement.

But Bill did not limit his concern to the Jewish community. He understood full well that we Jews must never be content to dig only in our own garden, that we have an obligation to the larger community in which we live.

Thus, he was a Trustee of Rockford College, and later on of St. John's University of New Mexico. In Santa Barbara he continues to be active in civic affairs, serving as the Commissioner of its Juvenile Crime Prevention Commission.

Both Bill and Lottie have a well refined sense of beauty. Before fire destroyed their home, they had a valuable art collection which reflected their exquisite taste. For a time, Bill served as a Trustee of New Mexico's renowned Museum of Fine Arts.

Bill is an avid equestrian, he rides the hills of Santa Barbara regularly, at times accompanied by Evelyn Shlensky, the Chairman of our Social Action Commission. He obviously delights in nature's charms: the sweeping vales, the woods, the verdant meadows and the purling streams.

Above all, Bill has a keen sense of the ethical, of what is right and wrong. He believes that we Jews must live in such a way that all of those who see us will say of us that the prophets of Israel and their ideals of morality and justice live in these people.

In a word, he is what our forbears described as "zaidene neshome", a soul as precious as fine silk.

I have been speaking of Bill, but of course I mean Lottie too. She has been his soul mate these many years, a full and supportive partner in all of his quests. I regret that she could not be with us this day, but we think of her with affection even as we evoke her name.

My friends, you know very well how much Outreach means to me personally. I have often said that if I want to be remembered for one achievement as President of the Union, it is the institutionalization of the Outreach endeavor.

Well, I am exceedingly pleased and proud that this work, so important to me, will be graced and enhanced by the Daniel name.

I dedicate this Department in Bill and Lottie's honor with the prayerful hope that they will be granted many more years of life and health and creative endeavor.

Alexander M. Schindler

Eulogy: Herman Snyder  
September 8, 1992

With heavy hearts we gather here this day  
to bid farewell to a friend,  
to take our final leave of Herman Snyder  
who meant so very much to all of us.

Holy halls that usually reverberate with festive songs of praise,  
today they are filled with the plaintive strains of sorrow,  
for a chord is loosed  
the silver chain is broken  
tender ties of love and friendship have been torn asunder  
by relentless death.

This sanctuary has lost its pride and its crown.  
Its very soul has been lacerated.  
Its heart aches with an unspeakable pain.

To be sure now, Herman lived a long and full life.  
He was granted more than those three score years and ten  
that destiny alots even to the strongest among us.  
Moreover, it was a productive life,  
magnificently rich in accomplishment.

Still, his dying is not easy to accept, is it?  
He was such a valuable human being.  
The feeling persists that he had much more to give  
and we to receive.  
And so we mourn and stand bereft.

There is precious little that we can say by way of comfort  
to Adele, to her children, to their spouses and their children,

Words provide scant balm for wounds as grievous as is theirs.  
Still, we can offer them that 'chatzi nechama',

that measure of consolation that comes with the knowledge  
that they do not sorrow alone.

Many others feel an aching emptiness this day.

-- look about you and see -- a community mourns --  
and I count myself in this companionship of sorrow.

I too am bereft;

I too will miss Herman's presence  
and feel the want of his tireless care.

My instinct tells me not to be overly mournful in my comments today,  
not to evoke sorrow here, but rather happier memories,  
not to make this a solemn service of remembrance  
but rather a celebration of Herman's life.

I feel that this is precisely what Herman would want  
his final tribute to be.

He was too life affirming to have this hour  
dampened and darkened by dirge, by somber strains of sorrow

Still, we cannot fully repress our sadness and only radiate cheer.  
Our sense of loss is too great...deepened as it is by the  
greatness of that gift that was taken from us.

Tears too are a fitting tribute to Herman,  
for what are tears, when all is said and done,  
if not remembered smiles.



Herman was a most capable rabbi whose influence extended far beyond  
these holy halls or even the boundaries of this community.

He served the entire Reform Jewish world  
with faithfulness and devotion.

Indeed he was a proud Jew who saw Reform Judaism as the primary means  
to achieve the creative continuity of the Jewish people.

No aspect of our doing, regionally or nationally,  
was untouched by his creative genius.

He spoke at our conventions,  
he taught in our camps,  
he labored on countless committees and commissions,  
he served in our national leadership councils.

The state and the well-being of the rabbinate was his special concern,  
and sensing his great care,  
his colleagues, never an easy lot to please,  
elected him to high office over and over again.

He was an effective preacher and teacher.

His mind was keen to the end.

Only a year or so ago, he wrote several insightful articles  
which were published and widely read.

In a word, whatever Herman undertook to do, he did with all his might,  
ever offering those rich gifts of mind and spirit  
with which he was so well endowed.

His many attainments notwithstanding,

Herman was essentially a humble man.

He did not bloat with pride, or brook any pretense.

He always stood by his convictions, resolutely pledged to attain them  
refusing to swerve from them either to please a friend  
or to appease an enemy.

He was also an exceedingly gentle man.

never strident, always restrained.

I never heard him lift his voice in anger or impatience.

He held strong conviction, as I have said.

he knew what he wanted, what he wanted others to be.

But he never bullied.

He preferred to persuade.

He taught <sup>PRIMARILY</sup> not by precept but rather by example.

Humility, patience, simplicity, truth

-- these elements combined in him in wondrous harmony  
which was altogether beautiful to hear, to see, to feel.

This above all, Herman genuinely cared for people...

His reach in this regard was wide

-- his compassion was boundless, his love seamless.

He understood needs of his people.

He shared their joy and He walked with them when they suffered,  
yea even into the valley of death,

and then felt their sorrow as his own.

Aye, he understood their anguish well,  
for he himself was schooled in suffering,  
his own heart had been lacerated when he and Adele  
were made to endure that most cruel of all fates,  
the death of Joe, their son.

Obviously, the greatest measure of Herman's care was given  
to those who stood nearest to him:  
the members of his family and foremost  
his two daughters, Julie and Jane, their spouses,  
and their children, his grandchildren  
-- they were the very jewels of his crown.

When you saw Herman with them, you saw him at his finest:  
listening to them with patience and care,  
giving them encouragement, sound advice,  
always wearing his heart on his sleeve.

He reared his children exceedingly well.  
He never compelled their life's course.  
He gave them the freedom to develop as they chose.  
Still, he gave an inner structure to their lives  
by imbuing them with the daily disciplines of our tradition  
-- the Sabbaths and Festivals and life cycle rites of Judaism --  
which enabled them to gain their moorings,  
to feel their rootage, to sanctify their space and time.

He liked what they eventually became.  
Indeed, he gloried in their attainments.  
And of course he felt their love.



And he adored Adele, as she loved him.  
She was the true companion of his life and soul.  
Together they walked the way of life,  
    these fifty-eight years  
    drinking from its one cup  
    -- when it ran bitter, when it ran sweet --  
    giving true meaning to the words:  
        husband, wife, and marriage.

Master teacher, master preacher, a many-sided intellect  
    -- that was Herman Snyder  
    and this, above all, a model, an image-ideal,  
        the "observed of all observers."

He taught us not only as books enable but by example.  
And when adversity beset him, he faced it with courage and  
    with faith, even with gentle humor.  
And thus he taught us, not only how to live,  
    but how to suffer and, finally, how to die.

In all truth, a bright and shining star has been torn  
    from the firmament of our lives,  
    and our lives are the darker because of it.  
Yet his memory can brighten our way as did his life.  
the nishmato tserurah bitsror hachayim

It is good to be in this place, to be a part of this companionship. Here we can listen to the harmony of Jewish life in its fullness, with its many variations blending in harmony. Indeed, our Congress is an arena in which world Jewry can function effectively. It is a mighty stream in which the many currents of Jewish life converge.

As chairman, it is my task to set the theme and to introduce the speaker. In setting the theme of this session, it is important to reassert what we heard last night in several versions, that anti-Semitism is not an isolated disease. It has its tragically unique dimensions, yet it is not totally unrelated to other maladies afflicting humankind; it is one most virulent manifestation of that unreasoned hatred which finds divergent expressions in our world: - the 'ethnic cleansing' that is ravaging Sarajevo - the xenophobia that fuels violence against immigrants in Austria and West Germany - Gypsies threatened in Eastern Europe - A Pat Buchanan whose presidential campaign was unruffled by the snide anti-Semitism of the candidate himself - a former imperial grand wizard of the Klu Klux Klan garnering a majority of white votes in Louisiana.

From the Urals to the Ozarks, so it seems, the toxic waters of racism are rising, and a common effort is required to stem the blood soaked tide. The victims of this unreasoned hatred are all dependent on one another. If we do not stand united, we will surely fall. In our most recent past, Blacks and Jews came together in the recognition of a shared fate. We recoiled again the stench of bigotry and resolved to resist it together. Together we forged a Black-Jewish alliance that demanded racial justice, an end to discrimination at lunch counters and in the voting booth, in public schools and public accommodations. Together we changed the course of American history.

It is tempting to dwell on those earlier days, when our quotient of mutual pain was far higher than our quotient of mutual distrust. Nostalgia is comforting, it eases the spirit does is it not?

Certainly it is more comforting to remember the quality of leadership offered by a Bayard Rustin, than to attend to the words of a Farrakahn or Jeffries.

Surely it is more inspiriting to recall the sight of a Martin Luther King flanked by Rabbis Abraham Joshua Heschel and Maurice Eisendrath, walking at the head of tens of thousands of civil rights marchers, than it is to think about the death of a Yankel Rosenbaum and the cries of "Hitler was right" in Crown Heights.

But nostalgia goes lighter on our Jewish consciences too, let us admit it, for it is easier to remember that we Jews had everything to gain from toppling the barricades of discrimination in America than it is to confront the fact that our gains have wedded to many of us to the status quo in which we care more about tranquility shattered than justice denied.

It is easier on our conscience to recall brave Jewish participation at the frontlines of the civil rights movement than it is to confess our failure effectively to challenge the Reagan-Bush policy of urban neglect.

Aye, it is easier to make an equation between Black-Jewish suffering based on our burning memories, than it is to reckon with the truth of the vast difference today between American Jewish empowerment and material well-being on the one hand and the ongoing disempowerment and poverty endured by black Americans on the other.

Our speaker, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, was active in the glory days of the Black-Jewish alliance which we now so nostalgically recall, and as a Martin Luther King aide he was a key player in that coalition of decency in which Blacks and Jews were such indispensable partners. But times and events have led us to view him as having contributed to those tensions that now divide our communities, even as he has a unique potential to be a bridge between us.

This changing perception comes as no news to him. He hears our complaints wherever and whenever he encounters us in the public arena. Little purpose will be served in rehearsing the litany of our complaints. He knows them. We know them. The wounds will never heal if we keep on re-opening them. There is a need for a new beginning. We can't remain mired in the past but must move forward.

Jesse Jackson, on his part, has certainly endeavored to do so but honesty compels us to admit that we on our part have failed to respond to or even acknowledge his efforts over the past six years to repair the breach.

He has been speaking of 'secure borders' for Israel, and he has openly supported the Camp David accords and all the approaches embodied in it.

He confronted Gorbachev in Geneva on the issue of Soviet Jewry.

He was ready to travel to Syria to intercede for the Israeli MIA's. Indeed during the past months he was tireless in his efforts to gain freedom for Syrian Jews --and he made no fanfare about it. He did it because it was right.

To protest the Bitburg obscenity, he visited concentration camps and since then he has spoken eloquently on the unique meaning of the Holocaust.

He has repeatedly denounced the singling out of Israel for obloquy because of its trade with South Africa.

He has consistently called for improved relations with the Jewish community, telling coalitional leaders that Blacks and Jews must play a key role in any joint effort to rebuild America's cities.

Most significantly so, he has stood his ground against those in his own community who accuse him of selling out because of these things.

All of this and more was widely reported by the black media. But it was scarcely mentioned in the Jewish or Israeli press. His many efforts to reach out to us were ignored and met with suspicion and silence.

Justice demands otherwise. Let us therefore enter into today's dialogue openly, sensitively, and candidly. Let us not nurse our wounds and translate difference into a grievance. Let us not turn every controversy into combat, every disagreement into a bloodletting. Jews can't afford it. Blacks can't afford it. America and the world can't afford it. Only our common enemies, the enemies of freedom, rejoice when Blacks and Jews square off against each other.

We meet today on the very edge of a historic turning point -  
- in Europe, in Israel, in America, in the world. At such a moment, we must look beyond the hurts and grievances to the desperate needs we share for tikkun olam, for the repairing of our fractured world!

This above all, let us remember that our commonalities exceed our differences by far. For you see, the fear of common enemies does not mark the boundary of our necessary alliance. In addition to our common nightmares, we Blacks and Jews dream common dreams. We share a vision of a just and open and generous society. We agree that it is the foremost task of governments to protect the weak and the stranger, to achieve social and economic and political justice. We are both committed to the need for change, in our country, in the world. We see our common dream not in the valley of the status quo, but on Martin Luther King's mountain top.

It is with this understanding that we will listen to our speaker. He is an eloquent spokesman for our shared vision, a man who has done much to make it a reality. He is the most widely acknowledged leader of America's Black community, a staunch defender of his people's rights and dignity. But more, transcending race, he has earned the respect of millions of other Americans, as a leader of political, intellectual and moral power on the great and vexing issues of our time.

I present to you, the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
Introduction of Jesse Jackson  
World Jewish Congress  
Brussels, Belgium  
July 7, 1992

EULOGIES FOR DR. MAURY LEIBOVITZ

By

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

and

Albert Vorspan

Greenwich Reform Temple  
Greenwich, Connecticut

June 3, 1992

## OPENING REMARKS

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

With heavy hearts we gather here to say farewell to Maury Leibovitz who meant so very much to all of us, whose care sustained us, whose zest for life inspired us, whose buoyancy and spiritedness filled our own days and lives with laughter and with love. It is altogether fitting and proper that our words of final tribute be spoken in this place. After all, this is Maury's synagogue. This is where he was stirred to the depths of his being when a cello - - his favorite instrument - - intoned the Kol Nidre's solemn strains.

Perhaps more to the point, Maury was a man of radiant faith, not in the conventional conception of the word, to be sure, but in a much more profound sense: I speak of that faith which is the inverse of despair, the faith in our direction, our justice, our future the faith in the ability of the Jew, nay of every human being, to endure the struggle and to prevail.

Our hearts go out to McLeod and Brian and Joshua and Shaun. They feel the loss most keenly, yet there is precious little that we can say to them. Words bring but scant comfort at a time like this. But perhaps the knowledge that there are others who share their sorrow will bring them at least a chatzi nechama, a half measure of consolation. There are many such others who mourn today, and I count myself in this companionship of sorrow. I, too, am bereft; I, too, will miss Maury's presence and feel the want of his tireless care.

No, words do not come easy at a time like this, they never, ever do. How can one encapsulate a man's life in just a few words. His attainments, his passions, his dread and his dreams, these



cannot be embodied in mere language, and certainly in Maury's case, they were too grand for that. Still, we must give voice to our feeling. So at this service of remembrance, we will hear from one of Maury's fellow craftsmen, the artist, LeRoy Nieman. Then some tender lines of remembrance written by his son Josh, but giving voice to the feelings of Brian and Shaun as well; those three sons whom Maury loved with an abounding love, in whose accomplishments he took such extraordinary pride, a poem recited by Brian, and finally, after a brief cello interlude, we will hear a more extensive eulogy by Maury's cousin and constant friend, Al Vorspan.

Maury's life, in so very many ways, was a constant quest for the sacred, for spirituality. He was haunted by a hunger for the holy. He always responded with wonderment to the essential mystery of life. Unlike most of humankind, Maury was not a creature in bondage to his eyes, among those who insist that only seeing is believing, that only the visible is fact. He sought, rather, to penetrate the world of the unseen. He recognized that the invisible world has a reality all its own, and that its force may well be more intense than is the force of the world that is seen. This, in a sense, is what his love of art in every form was all about: music, dance, painting, sculpture, landscape architecture. He fathomed and felt their power to heal us, to make the spirit soar. He understood that art is spirit from the realm of the unseen, conveyed by means of matter.

So it is altogether fitting and proper that take leave of Maury within these holy halls. And what a difficult leave-taking it is. He was such a rare and precious human being. His death leaves us all bereft. It diminishes our strength. A star has been torn from the firmament of our lives, and our lives are the darker because of it.

Eulogy by Albert Vorspan

Maury always wanted me to speak here at Rabbi Lennick's temple so he could see me without having to travel so far. Well, I don't think this is exactly what either of us had in mind.

Maury and I grew up together in St. Paul, Minnesota. We were first cousins, along with Ruth Parkhouse and Leonard Cohen, who are with us today. Maury became one of my very dearest friends in all the world. Shirley and I had grown so close to Maury and McLeod and the boys that the void, for us, as for you, is aching and vast.

Maury was perhaps the most extraordinary person I ever knew. I personally could never quite go with Maury in his faith in the transmigration of the human soul. I am still not convinced in general, but about Maury himself I have absolutely no doubt. There is no conceivable way that fierce energy, that powerful consciousness, that driving force of nature could possibly be stilled or even dimmed. His lust for life, his invincible will, his reverence for the life of the spirit, must transcend all barriers. He is probably already out there organizing a Special Seder for the elderly, or painting another canvas, or checking on the progress of the gardens, organizing a reunion of family members, saying Alla Kalla and certainly doing a review of this event. I can almost hear him: "Al, don't dwell on the negatives." And even if that is a sentimental conceit, conjured up to comfort us in our sorrows, at the very least Maury Leibovitz will be present within us caring and speaking and roaring with laughter in our memories; and those memories will resonate in our hearts, for the rest of our days.

Maury not only taught us about the art of living -- fully, and passionately -- but he even taught us about dying. For the past 18 months, he was living on borrowed time. He knew it. It would have been natural to retreat from life, to focus all energies on personal survival, to idle the motor. Not Maury. He and his beloved McLeod plunged into plans to enhance their Greenwich home with wondrous and resplendent gardens. He gave of himself to JASA and last month inspired 175 seniors at a special Passover Seder he funded, revving up their tired motors with his own youthful power, even though he was older than many of them, exhorting them to shout with him in chorus: Live with dignity, live with joy! He practiced what he preached, to the last moment.

A creator and benefactor of the UAHC Committee on Substance Abuse, he presided over one of the most exhilarating conferences any of us ever attended -a Colloquium on Substance Abuse and Judaism, on

a golden day at his home last month. While some of us there talked about techniques of recovery, Maury was the rabbi, whose own life was the sermon, searching in Jewish traditions for the spiritual meaning of recovery and renewal.

For me, a stick-in-the mud who stayed in one job for 40 years, the number of varied careers of Maury Leibovitz is awe-inspiring. A tremendously successful certified public accountant, as a young man with his own burgeoning firm in Beverly Hills, he apparently got bored with success, feeling, in the words of his friend and teacher, Dr Perry London: "that accounting was the source of a good living but it was not necessarily enough to live for." So he went to Zurich and became a Jungian psychologist, with its ceaseless search for meaning. Coming back to California - he gained admission to Graduate school, despite some official resistance that at the age of 46 he was too old for a PhD. He graduated with all A's and all honors in January, 1968.

Then in 1972, he went to Knoedler and started still another major career. And if running a leading art gallery in New York City were not challenging enough, he recently began painting on his own. He painted with zest and boldness. The day before he died, while Carole Anne and Carlos, were planting the new garden, Maury sat on a chair like a Toscanini, orchestrating everything, calling out: "more blue! more yellow!" That evening he painted his last canvas - describing it as his best work. He left us on a high. So many careers, so prolific, so creative. A Renaissance man. Indestructible.

I know some of the things that made Maury so unique a person. His life was colored by memories of an impoverished childhood, where he lost his father at an early age, and where he and his newspaper route had to help support a struggling family. He transmuted that experience into becoming, with cousin Ruthie, the galvanizing force that held our far-ranging Swidelsky family-circle together, with its many re-unions, usually with Maury presiding and cheer-leading.

With his immediate family, his sons, Brian, Josh and Shaun - he was bonded so deeply that he was in constant telephone conversation with each of them. Mutual love, raucous humor, and simple delight and pride, joined them all at the hip. When that feisty crew which then included Mark olav ha-shalom, toured China together, it must have been the most tumultuous event since the original Gang of Four! Brian says he was the emperor, we were the princes.

To quote Perry again "Maury early found out that poor is not good for you. But he found out, too, that Jewish is also not so good for you if your people are homeless and despised and others are trying to kill them. He recovered from poverty, but never from

Jewishness, which has been a major motif of his life." It took 3000 years to make a Jew like Maury, and that imprint is eternal.

Did you ever know somebody who walked down the street, passed a senior citizens facility, and strolled in and said what do you need, maybe I can teach, how can I help? From that came his involvement with JASA, his sponsorship of the remarkable Legacy program to validate the lives of older people, and his sponsorship of the Mayerhoff Institute.

Did you ever know anybody who intervened so positively in so many lives? As one example of so many, in a letter dated May 8, Marc Kaminsky thanked him for enabling him to complete the work of the late Barbara Mayerhoff, the superb anthropologist. Marc wrote:

"If, many years from now, in some Legacies Project of the future, I am asked 'to tell a story of something that happened that changed the direction of your life,' I will speak of you ... and how ... you entered my life and opened the gates to a more useful life for me."

Maury took delight in meeting people, greeting strangers on the beach or at the next table at the restaurant, and ending up with new friends. He met Armand Hammer at such a restaurant encounter. When he visited us in Hillsdale, he took a walk on our country road, and passed our taciturn neighboring farmers who are notorious for their non-communicativeness. We watched, astonished, as he said, "Hi there, I'm Maury Leibovitz. How long have you been farming? Where did your parents come from? How can you tell one cow from the other? Do they have names?" They did and Maury ended up on the side of the road, in an engaging conversation with four farmers and seven cows. "You should have your neighbors over for lox and bagels," he instructed us. We will.

Maury had the money and the opportunity to rest on his laurels. To Maury, that would not be resting but rusting. He preferred to pour out his energies, to share his blessings and good fortune. He embodied the Passover theme: "to know the hearts of the stranger."

But despite all this, Maury had more than his share of grief. I know of few people since Job who have suffered the anguish and the tragedy which Maury endured. To bury two children goes beyond human suffering. Jewish tradition says only a person whose heart has been broken can be a whole person. Maury transformed his suffering into personal growth and deeper compassion for others. A less thoughtful or more selfish person would have hugged his pain to his bosom and told the world to kiss off. Not Maury. He triumphed, defying the laws of gravity. He injected sparkle and laughter and

mid-summer festivities and touches of color and elegance and spontaneity into the lives of each of us. With the tender love and devotion lavished upon him by Carole Anne and the excitement of family gatherings with his beloved sons, and the unique support system provided by Carlos and Louisa, who became a warm part of the family network, and the embracing friendship of all of us, Maury seemed to give and to experience more happiness in the last years of his life than ever before.

The blanket of roses covering Maury is McLeod's personal gift of love; but the years they shared was the greatest gift of all, a work of art. He looked out the window Sunday morning, surveyed the newly-planted garden and said to Carole Anne, "What a beautiful view! A beautiful day!"

Each of us in this room had been enriched because Maury touched our lives with beauty and joy. His memory will be a blessing and a glorious garden forever.

Closing Comments  
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

Nitparda hachavila . . . a cord is loosed, the silver chain is broken, tender ties of love and friendship have been torn asunder by relentless death. Let me confess, or rather assert with a pride, that I go along much further than does Al with Maury's faith in the transmigration of the human soul. This, or other concepts of immortality, may not be demonstrable by sensory experience. Nonetheless, we can hold them to be true and valid from inferential evidence. If those rich gifts of mind and spirit with which Maury was endowed all end at the grave, God is a terrible wastrel. To have given so much and to destroy it all is an irrational act. The universe is too orderly for that. And so I believe with the great Chassidic master, Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, that "death is only a matter of going from one room to another, and ultimately to the most beautiful room of all."

Both Al and I fully, fervently agree, of course, that our deeds on earth weave a pattern that is timeless. Our parents live on through us, and we will live on through our children. The institutions we build endure, and we will endure through them. Shakespeare was wrong; the good is not interred with our bones. The beauty that we fashion cannot be dimmed by death. The love we give in life lives on long after we are gone, to bless the lives of others. When Chanayo 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?" He replied: "I see the parchment burning, but the letters of the Law, they soar on high."

And so it is with Maury. His eyes may have dimmed, they have, alas, his hands are withered, but that which they created in beauty and goodness and truth, lives on for all time to come.



Beyond the immortality of the deed, there is the immortality of memory. Ki ahava aza mivmavet - love is stronger than death. It endures. It can bridge that fearsome chasm which separates the living from the dead. Even as we think of Maury, the sense of his continuing presence is greater than the knowledge of his death. So long as we live he, too, shall live, for he is now a part of us as we remember him.

Maury assuredly believed in that. Whenever there was an experience which he treasured and shared with others he was wont to say: "Freeze this moment in your memory . . . remember it always." There are many such moments imbedded in our memories, as we say Shalom to Maury . . . a 'shalom' which means not just good-bye, but hello as well; it is not a final parting but merely a momentary farewell until soul touches soul once again.

150th ANNIVERSARY FRIDAY  
CONGREGATION OHABEI SHALOM

SERMON BY RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

Brookline, Massachusetts  
May 29, 1992

I am grateful for your warm introduction Emily, albeit I am embarrassed by its extravagance, at least the better part of me is embarrassed. I hope you know that I reciprocate your sentiments of affection and regard with a full heart.

I like your rabbi, I admire those rich gifts of mind and spirit she brings to her endeavors: intelligence, imagination, industry, and above all her menshlichkeit, her essential humanity. Surely it is this quality above all others - - the great warmth of her human approach - - which has enabled her to take a congregation that has been buffeted by adverse demographic forces for many years and breathe into it the breath of new life which promises to restore it to its former glory.

I am glad that Rabbi Paul Menitoff, the Union's regional director is here as well as Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn. Their presence here tonight, as indeed does mine, symbolizes that your anniversary is of significance not just to the sons and daughters of Ohabei Shalom, but to our nation-wide family of congregations too.

When you were founded, we were but a small religious community, we Reform Jews, a handful of Temples, several thousand families scattered throughout the land. Today, we are a mighty movement, over 860 Temples strong, a vital, vibrant religious community whose strength ultimately derives from this very place.

Over the years, you have sustained us not only materially, but by providing us with a strong leadership, both lay and professional, and in virtually every aspect of our doing. I will never forget Clay Kudish of your congregation, who was elected to one of the highest offices our movement has to offer; and I am glad that Liz

is with us tonight; and then there is Alex Zimmer, spirited singer of synagogue song, who has done so much to lift the level of Reform Judaism's musical liturgical literacy. Cantor Solomon too, is a creative talent and we expect much from him. Then of course, there was, and is, Albert Goldstein. His name is written large in the annals of Reform Judaism. He was and remains a bright and shining star in the firmament of our religious community. Yes, this moment is of meaning not just for you, but for all of us. You are a strong and precious link in that golden chain of faith which binds us one unto another in sacred union.

It is altogether remarkable what you have accomplished here. Your magnificent sanctuary. Your rich and meaningful program always at the cutting edge, and the continuing reaching out from this place to the larger community of which you are a part. You have every reason to be pleased and proud, and we have every reason to praise your name.

150 years ago, then, this congregation was founded, its physical and spiritual foundations laid. 150 years ago. In the stillness of the night one can almost hear the rushing of the waves of time, their relentless pounding against eternity's shores. 150 years ago. We can imagine how they felt, your fathers and your mothers, the doubts that seized them, the dreams that 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.

What you do here in sustaining this congregation is of critical

consequence for our people. The synagogue quite simply is the heartland, the vital center of Judaism. All other Jewish institutions mobilize and utilize Jews in behalf of the community, only the synagogue creates Jews. It is in the synagogue where the individual soul and the community are joined. it is in the synagogue where modernity and eternity cross-fertilize, where the seeds of the Jewish future are sown. It is the synagogue where the covenant is recreated and renewed in every generation. It is our task to buttress this bastion of our creative continuity and we can do so best when we make certain that its program will be true to those purposes for which this sanctuary was built and which it presumably enshrines.

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The first of these assuredly is to help us in our quest for God, to evoke our sense of the sacred, to enhance our capacity to respond with wonderment to the essential mystery of life. there is a great yearning for such inwardness in our day. A pervasive hunger for the holy. An ever increasing number of people are experiencing a void in their inner lives and are longing for something of more during worth. We all of us can feel it, can we not? Reason has been dethroned from its pedestal as the ultimate source of salvation. Science is no longer seen as the saving grace of humankind. People everywhere are beginning to sense that the future of humankind cannot be entrusted to the mindscape of a scientific rationality; that as the spirit within us withers, so does everything we build about us; that in the final analysis, the state of the single soul is the state of the universe.

We have come to recognize the wisdom of Chesterton's counsel:

"The trouble when people stop believing in God  
is not that they thereafter believe in nothing;  
it is because thereafter they believe in everything."

The realm of the absolute is never empty, (so taught our teacher Gene Mihaly). The void is too easily filled with false gods of an unbridled ethnocentrism, of racial chauvinism, of anthropopatheism, the arrogant assumption that we are God, that we humans are all powerful.

"Only God is God," we proclaim seven times over at the conclusion of our Yom Kippur liturgy. "Adonai Hu Haelohim - - God is God, there is none else." This is the historic witness of the Jew which rejects every form of idol and commits us - - and our synagogues - - to the eternal quest.

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There is a second great purpose for which this sanctuary was built. It was meant to be a communal home for the Jewish people, the source of our strength to live as Jews. Chaim Nachman Bialik expressed this thought most poignantly in words which merit to be rehearsed on an occasion such as this.

"Im yeshet nafhecha lada-at" he wrote, "if thou wouldst know."

"If thou wouldst know the mystic fount  
from whence thy forbears drew the strength and fortitude  
to meet grim death with joy and bare the neck  
to every sharpened blade and lifted axe  
and saintlike die with shema visrael on their lips.

If thou wouldst know the mystic fount  
from whence thy wretched brethren drew in evil days  
divine condolence, patience, fealty,



and iron strength to bear relentless toil  
with shoulders stooped to bear a loathsome life  
and endlessly to suffer and endure.

If thou wouldst know the mother merciful  
who saved her lost sons tears with eagerness  
and steadied lovingly his faltering steps.

If thou wouldst know, O humble brother mine,  
go to the House of Prayer  
Thy heart will tell thee then  
that thy feet tread the marge of our life fount  
that thine eyes view the treasure of our soul."

It is a purpose that the synagogue must continue to fulfill, for as we look at the not so distant horizons of Jewish life, many a danger cloud can be perceived, and we will need the synagogue as a source of strength for the struggle to secure collective continuity.

Many people think or even say that we Jews are overly sensitive, even paranoid on the subject of our safety. Yet where will we find reassurance? How can we feel at ease when recent studies report a global rise in anti-Semitism. Denials of the Holocaust, the refurbished iconization of erstwhile Hitler puppets such as Antonescu in Romania and Father Tizo in Slovakia, the proliferation of neo-fascist and extremist right wing parties in every corner of the globe, a Mussolini running for office on her grandfather's platform in Italy and carrying the day! All over Europe, Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated, synagogues defaced, acts of violence, even murder, several such incidents recorded every single day now - - and all this only one generation after Auschwitz.

How can we feel secure when a recent poll showed that 30% of the Germans of today believe that Jews and not the Nazis are in no small measure to blame for the Holocaust, because of what they

did or failed to do. The victims are now deemed guilty and not the killers. How are our fears allayed when even in our own country anti-Semitic incidents have seen an alarming rise during the year just past. When a David Duke, who wears a swastika as a halo if not a breastplate, nonetheless gathers a majority of the white votes in Louisiana's senatorial election. Or when a Pat Buchanan, whom even Bill Buckley has assessed to have indulged in anti-Semitic rhetoric, stumps our economically troubled America inciting passions of xenophobia and selfishness and yet nets one-third of the Republican Primary vote. Aye, or when the presidential pulpit is abused to impugn our political influence, and the Secretary of State is said to have muttered unmentionable words about us.

Nor are our fears allayed by the trauma of having the public classrooms and college campuses, those erstwhile primary unifying forces in our land, become a combat zone for competing interests battling over multi-culturalism, by having the Martin Luther Kings and Bayard Rustins supplanted by purveyors of hate like Sharpton and Jeffries, or by the fact that our country's failure fully to implement the civil rights revolution particularly in the economic sphere is producing an explosive African-American nihilism, with no small portion of anti-Semitism for fuel.

So we will need the synagogue as a source of strength for our collective continuity. Within the sheltering walls of this Temple you will have to find that inner force that flows only from the companionship of fellow Jews.

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There is one last great purpose which this synagogue must ever strive to fulfill. It is this purpose, above all others, which your forbears had in mind when they called this Temple Ohabei Shalom, for it is the foremost task of a synagogue to remind us of those values that the world inclines us forget. The doors of this Temple must always be open wide, so that those who require sanctuary will feel free to enter. Its windows must never be shut so tight that humanity's weeping will go unheard.

There is much weeping out there, in the world, especially in the inner cities of our land. I just returned from Los Angeles, a city battered by the destructiveness of but three weeks ago. This destructiveness, this frenzy, was the outcome of lives beaten down by police batons and jackboots, yes; but it was also the consequence of those heavy, hammer-like blows that long predate the outrages against Rodney King: the unrelenting blows of unemployment enveloping whole neighborhoods; the unrelenting blows of failure and neglect and addiction, and suspicion, and racism, all of them spawning despair . . . the unrelenting blows of a rampant violence within urban ghettos, whites against blacks, blacks against Koreans, and most often blacks against their very own. These blows are as harsh and as evident as anything shown on that 81-second videotape with which America must now reckon. Eric Fromm was discerning when he wrote: "destructiveness is the outcome of un-lived lives."

As a religious community it is clearly our obligation, and we have done so, to condemn the action of those who protested the King verdict through lawlessness and violence in the streets. Shooting and beating innocent bystanders, setting fires to buildings and cars and looting stores is not a solution to injustice. It is not an answer to police brutality. It is not a way out of poverty and despair. An unbridled mob is the voice of madness, not the voice of the people.

But at the same time, it is our solemn duty to insist that there be an extensive national program for aid to the cities that will address the pain and the frustration and bitterness that are destroying the lives of the many millions who live there. They, too, are the victims of violence, as I have said, a violence whose impact may not be as immediate as are firebombs in the street, and yet they are just as fatal. I speak of the violence that poisons relations between people, because their skin has different colors. I speak of the violence that destroys children by hunger and by schools with no books and homes with no heat. I speak of the violence that robs the jobless of their sense of self-worth, that stifles all their hope. It is this slower-acting but no less lethal violence which our society needs to confront.

For if we don't, why then, the violence of the streets will erupt with a growing frequency and destructiveness. It will erupt not just in the inner cities, but in suburbia too, not just in Crown Heights, but also in Shaker Heights, not just in Brooklyn, but also in Brookline.

This above all, then, we must resist with persistence any tendency in the Jewish community to turn inward, to be concerned only with the safety of our own people. No, we cannot, will not, allow these dreadful events, nor that resurgent world-wide anti-Semitism of which I spoke, to frighten us into a reactive isolationism, to lead us to say: "everyone else is out for himself, so let's dig in our own garden, no one else will fend for us." Separatism is bad for Jews. We need friends to prevail, now as in the past.

Statistics tell us that soon we may be less than 2% of the population. Yet we have battles to wage - - on behalf of Israel,

and Soviet Jewry, and the separation of church and state. How, pray tell, can a mere 2% wage and win these battles without allies. But we will not find or retain allies, if we focus only on our own interests and show but scant regard for needs of others. But far more important than this consideration of an enlightened self-interest, is the awareness of our solemn duty as Jews to care not just for our fellow Jews, but for all of human kind.

"It is too light a thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the offspring of Israel. I will also give thee for a light unto the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to loosen the fetters of the bound, to bring to the light of day those who dwell in darkness."

We Jews are not just another ethnic group or another pressure bloc. Our survival in the past has been for a higher purpose, and our survival must continue to have meaning today. If we kiss the world good-bye and separate ourselves from humankind our survival - - and the struggle to maintain it - - is valueless. To be a Jew is to be something more than a surviving endangered species. To be a Jew is to be a goad to the conscience of humankind, to bear a heart of flesh and blood and not of stone. To be a Jew is to be part of the civilizing and humanizing forces of the universe. To be a Jew is to defy despair though the Messiah tarry. To be a Jew, as God told Abraham thousands of years ago, is to be part of a great and enduring people, YES, but also to be a blessing to all human kind.

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These, then, are the purposes for which this sanctuary was built and whose pursuit alone justifies the effort to assure its survival. This synagogue must be a force for good in human life, a source of strength for the Jewish people. It must be a place where men and women can find the companionship of kindred and aspiring souls in their quest for God. Pursue these purposes, these dreams, this quest! Then will the future of Ohabei Shalom be as glorious as was its past. Then also will the celebrations of this anniversary year be not for present use nor for present delight alone, but they will be forever. Then the time will come when the wood and the stone and the mortar of this sanctuary will be held sacred because your hands have touched them. And many years hence, men and women beholding the beauty and the worthy substance of them will say: "See, this our fathers and our mothers built for us."

Ken yehi ratzon . . . thus may it be God's will.



AN APPRECIATION OF MARK UVEELER, Z.L.

by

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

MEMORIAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

Madrid, Spain

May 1992

Now I come to the piece de resistance of this evening. It is a highlight of our entire Board Meeting: the naming of our special doctoral program in memory of Mark Uveeler, z.l.

Mark was the founding director of our Foundation. Indeed, the post of Executive Vice President was especially created for him. Ours is a force which he nourished. Ours is an influence which he primarily nurtured. We but build on those foundations which he established with so much loving care, and so we have ample reason to be grateful to him and to honor his good work by making certain that his name will forever be remembered in our midst.

Needless to say, he did not come to this post ex nihilio. Mark's Jewish commitments long preceded his appointment to the Foundation Post. Even in his younger years in Poland he was involved in Jewish affairs. He coordinated Poland's Jewish theatres, headed its union and was active in the labor movement. After he retired, he settled in Israel and rendered full time service on a fully voluntary basis to such vital institutions as Yad Vashem and Hebrew University.

But it is for his work in our Foundation that he will always be remembered. The reconstruction of destroyed Jewish communities, the rebirthing of the Jewish culture, the Jewish civilization which was ground to the dust by our Sonim, that was the central passion of his life, a passion which he then infused into that institution which was entrusted to his care.

Mark embodied qualities, excellences which are rarely, if ever, found in the same person. He had the soul of a poet and the

meticulousness of a corporate executive. He combined the fervor of the Eastern European Jew with the efficiency and self discipline of the Yeke.

He certainly was an honorable man. Mark cared about the truth as he perceived it. He refused to diverge from it, either to please a friend or to appease an enemy. Nor did he have any of the imperiousness, the contumely, the pompousness which others in high office too often assume. He was always cordial, approachable, unaffectedly kind.

I valued him above all for this: that he was ohav yisrael in the richest sense of that word. He loved all Jews, whatever their color or ethnic origin or ideological bent. He also relived their historic faith, not their religious faith so much, but rather that faith which is the inverse of despair which was infused into the very fibre of our being, "mixed with our blood" from our very beginnings, the faith in our direction, our justice, our future, the faith in the ability of the Jew to endure the struggle and to prevail.

In sum, he was a true hero, for he could always be counted on ethically, morally and humanly, and in this manner he became larger than himself. Aye, he was a great Jew. His name is vividly, indelibly etched on the pages of our people's history.

I was drawn to him from the moment I met him . . . not just because of his Jewishness and his abilities, but also for his *menshlichkeit*, the essential warmth of his human approach. He was intelligent, steadfast, a loyal friend. He was always a delight to be with, because he delighted so in life. He was there to share laughter, to engage in serious conversation or just to be with, for he was one of those singular people with whom one could be silent and still communicate.

I believe we chose a perfect instrument to honor Mark's memory by selecting from our many doctoral candidates the very best, to provide them with the largest possible grant our resources will permit and who will henceforth forever be known as the Mark Uveeler Scholarship.

Allow me to say just one more word: I kept speaking of Mark . . . when I spoke my words of praise. But I meant his lovely wife, Luba, too. She deserves to be honored in her own right, for she too is endowed with rare qualities of mind and spirit; she was Professor of Hebrew at Rutgers University; she authored a Hebrew text that is still widely used; she commands seven languages; she spends her time now helping the elderly and immigrants without recompense. But she was also Mark's ezer k'negdo, sharing his work and dream. Oh, how Mark loved her, with an abounding love. Together they walked the way of life, these many years. Drinking from its one cup, when it ran bitter, when it ran sweet. Giving true meaning to the words: husband, wife, and friend. In honoring Mark, we honor her as well.

Why don't you come forward, Luba, and receive those plaudits which are your due and above all, the due of the life-work of that man whom you loved and whom you helped to attain that greatness for which we have chosen to honor him.

INSTALLATION OF CHARLES J. ROTHSCHILD, JR.

AS

PRESIDENT, UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITY OF BERGEN COUNTY

May 4, 1992  
Temple Emeth  
Teaneck, NJ

Installing Officer:  
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

It is good to be here and to participate in these ceremonies which mark the installation of Chuck Rothschild as the President of the United Jewish Community of Bergen County. Chuck is a good friend of mine . . . you know that . . . I mean, why else would I brave the George Washington Bridge during rush hour to be here tonight.

Come to think of it, Jim Young was also a factor in my decision making process. I first encountered him when CJF sent him to Wilkes-Barre to help rescue that Jewish community after its disastrous flood. My respect for him was born then, and it has not diminished over the years.

You are fortunate to have such a team as your leaders, and since it is manifestly true that a community receives the kind of leadership which it deserves, these words of praise are not just for Chuck and Jim, but for all the members of this community.

The installation of Chuck Rothschild as the President of your Federation pleases me much. I like to think of his ascendance to this position as a harbinger of growth, even in these times of battened down budgets - - for the growth of which I speak is not merely in numbers and dollars, but in the cohesiveness of our efforts on behalf of Jewish continuity.

And this above all, synagogue affiliated Jews are infinitely more likely to assume the mantle of Jewish communal leadership. A recent broad-based AJC study established that the overwhelming proportion of American Jewish leaders are, in fact, synagogue affiliated, that they attend worship with a measure of regularity, that their children are involved in Jewish youth groups and summer camps and a goodly proportion even attend day schools - - all far higher than the national average of all Jews.



Let there be no doubt about it. It is the synagogue affiliated Jews who consistently emerge as the guardians of the Jewish future.

All this should not be surprising, though it flies in the face of conventional wisdom. After all, the synagogue is the heartland of Judaism. All other Jewish institutions mobilize and utilize Jews in behalf of the community . . . only the synagogue creates Jews. It is the House of Assembly which joins the individual soul to the community. It is the House of Worship where modernity and eternity cross-fertilize, where the seeds of the Jewish future are sown. It is the House of Study where the covenant is recreated and renewed in every generation.

During Chuck's years at the helm of the Reform movement, Reform Judaism experience a burst of such growth: numerically yes, but in our spiritual and organizational cohesiveness as well. The gap between the "real" world and the world of Jewish devotion was bridged to tens of thousands of families; Judaism became more pervasive in their daily lives, a seamless web of significance, concern, and identity.

The time is ripe for similar bonds to be established between our Jewish Federations and our synagogue movements: bonds of interdependence and mutual support. Our so-called secular and religious communities have been apart these decades in a cordial but distant relationship. This is not fully true here - but it is certainly true on a national level. The newer realities of American Jewry, however, indicate the need for building wide and strong bridges between these parallel streams of Jewish life.

These new realities are reflected in the Federation's own National Jewish Population study which reveals how much more

deeply committed synagogue affiliated Jews are than those who belong to no congregation. Their attachment to Israel is more intense; their attitude toward intermarriage more wholesome from a communal perspective; their Jewish feelings are so much more impassioned.

If Federation seeks to assure Jewish continuity, therefore, it can best do so by supporting specific synagogue programs even at the risk of enduring some of our interdenominational frays. Such frays are simply the price paid for our passion and that very passion is vital to the success of our efforts. It is this subjective passion, and only this passion which can make Judaism come to life in the hearts of our children.

Why be fearful of this passion then and therefore resort to the "lowest common denominator Judaism" of too many communal schools and camps and Israel adventures? Why invest in a pale version of what the synagogue movements have already built? Why not instead offer Federation scholarships for synagogue camps, and Israel trips and Outreach programs and other suitable points of Jewish connection, allowing each family to choose its affiliation, in trust that affiliation per se means empowerment for the Jewish community as a whole?

These and other beginning points of Federation involvement with synagogue life should stand high on the agenda of leaders such as Chuck Rothschild, leaders who stand in both worlds. Through their creative and diligent efforts, I am confident that we will bring to new heights our 3000 year old identity as a religious-national culture, united in our commitment to the land of Israel, and the people of Israel and the Torah of Israel -- united in our dreams, our fate, our faith.

If you can help us along this way, Chuck, to a greater cohesiveness as a community, why then when the end of your tenure as President arrives, we will be able to look back on this moment of your installation and say: behold, what we did then, it was exceedingly good.

Please step forward Chuck, and let the members of this congregation and community rise, as we give you our blessing.

RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER'S BOARD SERMON  
TEMPLE ISRAEL  
Minneapolis

May 15, 1992

I am grateful for your warm introduction, albeit I am embarrassed by its extravagance. . . at least the better part of me is embarrassed. The truth of the matter is that I don't like introductions. As a matter of fact, generally speaking, as I travel around the country, I don't even introduce myself as a rabbi. This is not to say that I am ashamed that I am a rabbi, but when you tell people that you are a rabbi, they tend to ask you the same questions or they complain about their rabbi . . . and who wants that? So I developed a kind of protective response. When people ask me what I do, I make up a profession at the spur of the moment . . . and that tends to be quite challenging, especially when I choose a profession my travel companions know something about.

Extravagant though your words were, Chuck, I am nonetheless grateful for the graciousness of your reception. Surely you know that your sentiments of regard and affection are reciprocated with a full heart. As some of you may know, Rabbi Mintz was once a member of the Union's staff, and later on in his rabbinic career, I was his assistant. I helped him out during the High Holydays when he held the senior post at Union Temple in Brooklyn. You are fortunate to have him as your interim rabbi.

This is not the first time that I occupy this pulpit. Over the years of my ministry, I have come here often; have come to know many members of this great congregation and many are now my very good friends. I dare not even specify lest I exclude, but let me acknowledge by name at least Lois Rose, who currently serves in our highest leadership councils. . . and does so exceedingly well. Burton Joseph has distinguished himself as a member of our College-Institute Board and has made signal contributions toward the advancement of our mutual sacred cause. They are the kind of lay leaders we dream to have, fashioned in the image of Judaism's highest ideals. Max Shapiro was a school mate of mine, and I

continue to value him as a friend.

So I do not feel a stranger here. This is a place endeared to me by memory and by affection. I am exceedingly grateful to the leaders of this congregation for inviting our National Board to this their communal home for Shabbat dinner and worship. We came here to be in closer contact with the members of our congregational family, to hear from you, to learn from you, but also to give you an opportunity to get to know us just a little bit better.

The UAHC is the oldest institution of its kind in North America. It was established 120 years ago, by Isaac Meyer Wise, who charged us with a three fold task:

1. To enlarge the Reform movement by establishing new congregations here and throughout the world.
2. To give our movement ideological and programmatic cohesion, enabling our member congregation to determine those directions which we then jointly pursue.
3. And, lastly and foremost, to furnish our member congregations with resources required for their effective functioning, but which they alone cannot provide.

The Union has been true to this mission. Under its aegis, the Reform Jewish community has emerged as the predominant synagogue movement on the American Jewish scene. We number 856 congregations now, and our cumulative rolls have long since passed the million member mark. We are a burgeoning, blossoming movement, crackling with creativity. Our manner of summoning Jews to Judaism is affirmative and contemporary, based on far more than a 'survival' consciousness.



The largest percentage of children attending Jewish religious schools in America are enrolled in Reform religious schools. We have a youth and camping movement which serves tens of thousands of young people every year and of which we are justly proud because its ranks continue to provide us with our rabbis and teachers and leaders for the present and the future. We are the largest publishers of Jewish text books on the American scene. In your pews you will find one of our proudest creations, our Torah Commentary.

Our Ida and Howard Wilkoff Department of Synagogue Management provides an amplitude of resources to facilitate the temples' administrative and fiscal tasks. Our innovative and nurturing Outreach ventures have transformed the mindscape of the American Jewry and brought the issue of intermarriage out of the house of mourning and into the house of study - - indeed, into the house of prayer itself.

We maintain a Religious Action Center in Washington, a veritable beehive of activity, and the vortex of a network of coalitions through which we endeavor to express our religious convictions in the national arena. We even sustain a considerable overseas program, especially in Israel, where we conduct extensive youth activities and where, over the years, we settled two kibbutzim - - Lotan joining Yahel in the Aravah - - and one Mitzpeh in the Galil.

Further, we spawned a half-score affiliates - - NFTS and NFTB, NATA and NATE, and the ACC and PARDES and ARZA - - most of them major organizations in their own right . . . serving the needs of our professional leadership or of a particular interest of groupings within our family of congregations.

Time does not allow my commentary to encompass the Union's endeavors. It is only prismatic. It reflects only a few

surfaces of our multifaceted doing, only some of our numerous, endless efforts seeking to strengthen our member congregations.

Indeed, here is the goal of all our striving on a national level, as it is your goal on a community level: to buttress the synagogue, and to sustain it as the pivotal institution in Jewish life. For this is precisely what the synagogue was and continues to be: the mainstay of our collective continuity, the indispensable element of our people's survival.

\* \* \* \* \*

Would that everyone in the Jewish community were to recognize it as such. I refer now particularly to the relatively low rung which synagogues hold on our larger community's philanthropic scale. American Jews who presently provide an extraordinarily generous stream of funds to Israel and to communal agencies, as they properly should; the saving of life must be our first concern. But, by and large, the synagogues and their supportive institutions are left to languish in limbo. They are given no priority at all on the scale of Jewish communal philanthropic endeavor.

Yet who is responsible for teaching our children to be Jews? The synagogue - - our financially pressed, over-burdened, short-staffed synagogues? Who will assure that there will be a Jewishly educated, Jewishly committed generation twenty years from now? Who will provide the teachers and the rabbis and the scholars for that generation? Who will assure those many other communal and national Jewish organizations a reservoir of Jews on which they will be able to draw for their membership a score years hence? Who will provide the State of Israel with a continuing corps of understanding Jews? The answer in every case, of course, is the synagogue. It has to be the synagogue -

- the synagogue and those camps and seminaries and multitudinous educational efforts that they sustain. The synagogue is where Jews are made, where the individual soul and the community are joined. It is the place where modernity and eternity cross-fertilize, where the seeds of the Jewish identity are sown. All other institutions in Jewish life are created by Jews. Only the synagogue creates Jews - - - child by child, family by family, minyan by minyan.

\* \* \* \* \*

But the synagogue is a force for continuity only so long as it is true to its essential mission, and that is to enable the individual Jew to pursue the quest for God. It is a quest we dare not eschew. It is, when all is said and done, the life-task of the Jew. It is our mission, our historic calling.

"Who is a Jew" - asked Leo Baeck - "He is someone who experiences himself in the direction of God . . . He is a human being who directs himself toward God in such a way that no part of his life is without this center, without this contact. . . "

"Others may get along without God," - added Martin Buber - "But if a Jew should attempt such a course he shall perish at his own hand. If the Jew stops believing in the might of God's spirit & himself as its artisan on earth, his existence will come to a speedy and inglorious end."

To pursue the quest for God, to strive to know Him, to seek to serve Him - - this is the duty that defines us as the covenant people.

This process begins when we open ourselves to experience the holy. We cannot sense the grandeur of nature if we look at a

sunrise through sleepy eyes. we cannot expect a worship service to stir us to the depths of our being if we approach it only casually in a commonplace manner. There is a prior need for kavanah, for an intention, a conscious determination to be so stirred.

Perhaps our reluctance to open ourselves to the experience of the holy is impeded by that overly rigid mindset of modernity which insists that all postulates be demonstrable and experienced by the senses. It is a mindset which is mystified by that paradox in

Jewish theological thought which holds that God, though unknowable, nonetheless makes Himself known. God is wholly other - - we are taught. He is completely different from us. He cannot be grasped by ordinary modes of thought and perception. We cannot, should not even conjure up His image. We must not describe Him, or , following Maimonides, we can describe Him only by means of negations, by saying what He is not. Attributes ascribed to God by Biblical poets are but metaphor.

But at the same time, we are taught that though unknowable, God reveals Himself in countless ways. So Moses was told atop Sinai when he stood in the cleft of the rock:

"Thou canst not see My face, but I will make all my goodness pass before thee."

Even so can we behold God's goodness "in the realm of nature and in the varied experiences of our lives." You remember those heaven soaring words of our liturgy:

"When justice burns like a flaming fire within us. . . when love evokes willing sacrifice from us. . . when, to the last full measure of selfless devotion, we proclaim our belief in the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness . . . then (does God) You live within our hearts and we behold (His) presence."

Unknowable, yet known . . . how enigmatic . . . how paradoxical.

Yet strangely enough, modern science, of whose teachings we accept with greater ease than we do the teaching of faith, nonetheless confronts us with a like seeming paradox. Chemists accept the reality of certain gases by their effect alone, even though these gases themselves have never been isolated or seen. Physicists, in their endeavor to study the nature of matter, developed a device called a cloud chamber. Cloud chambers allow the observer to see paths traced by particles resulting from nuclear reactions. The actual particles, however, remain unobservable. They have never been seen, might never be seen with the naked eye or instruments however well refined. Here too then, a leap of faith is required, a scientific leap of faith, if you will, to acknowledge the existence of a particle that can be known only through its traces. Unknowable, yet known through its traces. Invisible, but real, nonetheless.

This paradox may account for much of our present-day reluctance to reclaim and proclaim our spiritual identity as Jews. Like the rest of humankind, we are creatures in bondage to our eyes. Only seeing is believing, we say; only the visible is fact. We also tend to value primarily things that are of use, that have their practical application, that can be measured and weighed and, above all, bought and sold.

But the invisible world has a reality all its own, and its force may well be more intense than is the force of the world that is seen. Consider the world of the invisible, if you will.

Ideas, for example: they are impalpable; no one can see or seize them. Yet ideas can seize us and they hold the power to transform our lives. Ideals, too, are of such a kind. They are intangible, yet what is life without them? Take truth from a school and you reduce it to a rubble of red bricks. Take religion from a sanctuary, and it becomes an ordinary auditorium.

Take justice from the far-flung round of human endeavor, and civilization reverts into a jungle.

Music is such an invisible force, every form of art is that: dance, sculpture, painting, architecture, - - "music in space," Schelling called them. They may be discernible in outer form, but not in their innermost essence. The sources and nature of art are a mystery even to those who create it. Yet art has the power to heal us . . . it can make the spirit soar, for art is spirit from the realm of the unseen, conveyed by means of matter.

Ah, and then there is love which is also an invisible force. We can see its expressions, to be sure: the caress, the kiss, but no one has ever seen love itself. It certainly cannot be anatomized, or schematized, or reduced to clearly identifiable elements. Yet how powerful a force love is! It can evoke our willing sacrifice, inspire us to the noblest of deeds.

Aye, there is a world of reality beyond those worlds perceived by the physical sense alone. And altogether multitudinous are life's gifts that have no practical worth but nonetheless are altogether wondrous:

The earth's green covering of grass.

The blue serenity of sea and sky.

The song of day, the silent wonder of the night.

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 peacock's feathers to tickle one another while being oblivious to their essential charm."



Then do the words of prophecy 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 darkness.

No, the human story simply cannot be told without reference to that mystery and majesty that transcends all logic and reason. Only those who open themselves to such a mystery can transcend the grandeur and terror of their lives without being blinded by life's grandeur or crushed by its terror. Only when we open ourselves to such a mystery, will we find our Judaism to be a sustaining faith and not a dry-as-dust religion. It is precisely this kind of faith that we so desperately need. For while routine religion suffices to sustain our lighter hours, once life runs out into its depths, why then we need a different faith. When death takes those we love, when our children slip through our arms, when dread disease lays waste our strength, when we think or even say, now I have reached the bottom of the morass, now I can sink no deeper . . . and yet we sink deeper, why then, we need a deeper faith. Then we need the kind of faith that led the Psalmist to exclaim:

gami ki elech begey tsalmoves lo iro ro ki ato imodi

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou, Thou art with me."

This, then, is the two-fold task which summons us: as individual congregations and in our collectivity, our Union: to strengthen the synagogue in its outer form, to buttress it materially, but also to make certain that this will always be a place in which men and women can find the companionship of kindred and aspiring souls in their quest for God. May we be true to this task. Then

will we gain the kind of faith that sustains us, that lifts us above the mundane and the dry-as-dust, and we will be able to claim the name Reform Jew with just and confident pride.

RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER  
REMARKS CONCERNING THE LOS ANGELES RIOTS

UAHC Board Meeting  
Minneapolis, MN  
May, 1992

Because it was determined quite recently that I share with you my thoughts concerning the recent problems in Los Angeles, I really did not have the time required for a well reasoned and polished presentation. I don't like to speak extemporaneously, spontaneously. I don't even like to listen to extemporaneous talks. Spontaneous speeches are seldom worth the paper they are written on. Accordingly, my talk tonight will not be a well burnished speech, but rather a running commentary, a compressed summary of my reactions to those dreadful events that transpired in Los Angeles but two weeks ago. Esther Saritsky actually set that theme for us in her deeply moving d'var Torah this morning. She said that all of us are rabbis and then went on to prove it. I would have been proud to have written and delivered such a speech. Kol ha-kavod, Esther . . . you were and are wonderful.

Now let me begin my own commentary with a quotation from Erich Fromm: "Destructiveness," he wrote, "destructiveness is the outcome of unlived lives." The destructiveness that beset Los Angeles was the outcome of lives beaten down by police batons and jackboots, yes; but it was also the consequence of those heavy, hammer-like blows that long predate the outrages against Rodney King: the unrelenting blows of unemployment enveloping whole neighborhoods; the unrelenting blows of failure and neglect and addiction, and suspicion, and racism. The unrelenting blows of a rampant violence within urban ghettos, whites against blacks, blacks against Koreans, and most often blacks against their very own. These blows are as harsh and as evident as anything shown on that 81 second videotape with which America must now reckon. Eric Fromm was prescient, foreseeing even as he was discerning when he wrote: "Destructiveness is the outcome of unlived lives."

Now, the President's men place the blame for these riots on the welfare programs generated by Democrats in the 60's and the 70's.

What cynicism this! What hypocrisy! Republicans bear an equal if not a greater share of the burden and the blame. There simply is no denying it. The economic policies conceived and effected by President Reagan were flagrantly unjust. They helped the rich at the expense of the poor. They widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots in our land. Indeed, that gap has become a yawning chasm. A recent study sponsored by the administration itself shows that 1% of the population has an accumulated wealth greater than that of all other Americans. 1% of our fellow citizens have more money than the rest of us put together. Tax cuts advantaged primarily the wealthy. The defense budget bloated, the national debt soared, only entitlements were slashed: welfare benefits, food stamp programs, aid to families with dependent children, medicaid, education and student assistance, preventive medicine programs, legal aid - - all and more fell to the axe of the supply siders, those exponents of the plutocratic theory which holds that when you give more money to the rich, it will quickly trickle down to the poor. Well, it didn't and it never will! Reaganomics proved to be a gift to the wealthy, nothing other. It tightened this nation's belt around the necks of the poor.

Now I do not suggest that the welfare programs that were truncated or eliminated were all of them of equal worth. Nor do I say that they are inviolable, that they are sacred. But these programs filled human needs - - and human needs are sacred. To millions of the disadvantaged in our society, the programs that fell victim to Reaganomics gave hope, opportunity and, indeed, life itself. They offered a chance to share in the American dream and in the bounty of God's earth; they provided a safety net, ensured survival, and proffered the prospect of betterment. And that is what any government, especially the American government is supposed to be all about.

Nor do I deem the Democrats to be blameless in all of this. Democrats and Republicans both share a burden of guilt. Both political parties ignored the blight of the inner cities until violence erupted . . . only then did anyone react, alas. Both political parties contributed to this problem, because of their failure to speak with candor, their penchant for telling the voters what they think we like to hear, their ever readiness to distort the truth for political gain. As Senator Bradley so courageously put it the other day:

"Republicans have played the race card in a divisive way - - remember Willie Horton - - and Democrats have suffocated discussion of self-destructive behavior among minority groupings in a cloak of silence and denial. The result is that yet another generation has been lost. We cannot afford to wait longer. It is time for candor, time for truth, time for action."

As a religious community, of course, - - and we have said so publicly in a statement signed by our Chairman, - - we cannot condone the actions of those who protested the King verdict through lawlessness and violence in the streets. Shooting and beating innocent bystanders, setting fires to buildings and cars and looting stores is not a solution to injustice . . . it is not an answer to police brutality . . . it is not a way out of poverty and despair. An unbridled mob is the voice of madness, not the voice of the people. Mindless mayhem and murder degrade the entire nation. Worst of all, they claim the hapless and helpless as first and primary victims. That's what happened in Los Angeles, did it not? The ghetto dwellers suffered more than anyone else.

Unfortunately, the King verdict cannot be reversed. But there remains the recourse of lawful protest and the remedy of Federal



law. President Bush has urged our Justice Department to do just that, to institute legal action against the police officers involved for violating the civil rights of Rodney King. That is good and proper.

But above all, there is a burning need for a national program of assistance to our cities that will address the pain and the frustration and bitterness that are destroying the lives of the many millions who live there. They, too, are the victims of violence, as I have said. A violence whose impact is not as immediate as are explosions in the street; yet they are just as fatal. I speak of the violence that poisons relations between people because their skin has different colors. I speak of violence that destroys children by hunger and by schools with no books and homes with no heat. I speak of the violence that robs the jobless of their sense of self-worth, that stifles all their hope. It is this slower-acting but no less lethal violence which our society needs to confront. For if we don't, why then, the violence of the streets will erupt with a growing frequency and destructiveness. It will erupt not just in the inner cities, but in suburbia too, not just in Watts and Crown Heights, but also in Beverly Hills and Shaker Heights.

What impact do these events have on the American Jewish community? They well might intensify our already growing tendency to turn inward. When a people is beset by fear, the likely consequence is a reactive isolationism. "Everyone is out for himself," people think or even say, "so let's do the same . . . let's dig in our own garden, let's go it alone, no one else will fend for us."

I am glad, therefore, exceedingly proud of the fact that thus far at least, the Reform Jewish community has not yielded to the lure of an unbridled ethnocentrism. We determined, rather, to

reverse the insular preoccupation of American Jews, to bestir ourselves to a greater universalism, to recapture our lofty tradition which bids us care for the stranger in our midst and ever to seek the peace of the community in which we live.

By all reports, the Reform congregations of Los Angeles have played a leadership role in the effort to heal their community, collecting clothing and food, delivering them through the churches of the inner city. A Reform Rabbi, Harvey Fields, presently leads a commission in behalf of the entire Los Angeles Jewish community, which has established working ties with blacks and Korean and Hispanic communities, to see what else can be done to help them and to serve as a mediating force between these often hostile factions. David Saperstein and the speaker we wanted with us are both where we would want them to be: in Washington and participating in today's March to Save our Cities and to Save our Children.

Separatism is bad for Jews. We need friends to prevail, now as in the past. Statistics tell us that soon we may be less than 2% of the population. Yet we have battles to wage -- on behalf of Israel, Soviet Jewry, and the separation of church and state. How, pray tell, can a mere 2% wage and win these battles without allies. But we will not find or retain allies if we focus only on our own interests and show but scant regard for the needs of others.

But more important than this consideration of an enlightened self-interest, is the awareness of our solemn duty as Jews to care not just for our fellow Jews. but for all of humankind.

"It is too light a thing that thou shouldst be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the offspring of Israel. I will also give thee for a light unto the nations,

to open the eyes of the blind, to loosen the fetters of the bound, to bring to the light of day those who dwell in darkness."

We Jews are not just another ethnic group or another pressure bloc. Our survival in the past has been for a higher purpose, and our survival must continue to have meaning today. Al Vorspan once cleverly and movingly wrote:

"If, in order to survive I must become a bald-headed Meir Kahane . . . If , in order to survive I must kiss the world good-bye and separate myself from humankind . . . If I must emulate the violence, the callousness, the bigotry and narrowness of my opponents . . . then survival is not worth the candle for me."

He is absolutely right, of course.

"To be a Jew," he said, "is to be something more than a survived endangered species.

To be a Jew is to be a goad to the conscience of humankind, to bear a heart of flesh and blood and not of stone.

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 thousands of years ago, is to be part of a great and enduring people, YES, but also to be a blessing to all humankind."

to for ✓

Banquet of Celebration, Century Plaza Hotel, May 19, 1992

-- Alexander M. Schindler

Thank you for your gracious introduction, Janet.

I reciprocate your sentiments fully.

I admire your rich gifts of mind and spirit,  
adorned as they are by a sparkling wit.

When I say, as I often do, that the empowerment of women in Judaism  
has enriched us all,  
has brought a new creative energy to our people,  
it is a Janet Marder that I have in mind.

I am proud that she is my colleague and I value her as a friend.

Now, convention dictates that after dinner speakers begin their remarks  
with a joke, with some witty story which will put the  
audience into a happy frame of mind.

Alas, I have come here so often...and my meager stock of stories  
is virtually depleted...

I suppose there is no harm in repeating good stories.

Monty Hall once told me that he does it all the time

"At least half the audience hasn't heard the story before,"  
Monty said, "as for those who have, well I'm so good at  
telling stories that they laugh all over again."

I'm no Monty Hall, of course, no Jackie Mason.

I mean, if you want a Jackie Mason, pay for a Jackie Mason.

But let me try anyway...

just maybe most of you haven't heard this story before.

[pope...feather]

We owe special thanks are due to Mark and Peachy Levy  
who co-chaired this function...

We honored them last year...it was a lovely evening...

and they certainly haven't rested on their laurels since.  
Mark ascended to the presidency of this region.

He chaired a never-to-be-forgotten Union Biennial in Baltimore  
last November.

He is already deeply involved in planning for our next Biennial.

And Peachy was and is always at his side...his helpmeet in every way...  
beautiful in countenance and deed alike.

And now they both toiled faithfully to make this evening be.

Their harvest is rich indeed, more full-sheaved with every passing year.

I join Peachy in saluting our national leadership

-- JEAN ABARBANEL + ALAN BELINKOF + BERNIE BRISKIN  
BILL DANIEL, JAY GELLER, HARRY HELFT + ESTHER STARITSKY  
EVELYN SHLENSKY + MARK LEON

and Alan Goldman, of course, immediate Past Chairman of our Board  
and the Chairman of the College's Governors, Stanley Gold.

Their presence bespeaks the importance of this occasion

as well as their ever-readiness to advance our work.

Thank you all for coming here this night.

It is gracious of you to do so, to lend us your strength.

In return, I can give you the assurance that the cause

which your presence advances is exceedingly worthwhile.

\* \* \*

Now, our mood here, tonight, is not quite as light  
as it was last year at this event.

On that very eve, a year ago,  
the legendary rescue of Ethiopian Jewry commenced  
when over 14,000 of our endangered fellow Jews  
were rocketed from servitude to freedom  
in the span of three short days.

This was the first time in all of human history when blacks were  
taken from one continent to another not in chains but in love.

A year ago, too, the conflict in the Gulf  
had just reached its successful conclusion  
and a new world order was in the offing.

The hearts of Americans everywhere swelled with pride and hope.

Not so today, and surely not so in this community,  
battered as it has been by the destructiveness  
that beset this city only three weeks ago.

This destructiveness, this frenzy, was the outcome of lives beaten down  
by police batons and and jackboots, yes;

But it was also the consequence of ~~those~~ heavy, hammer-like blows  
that long predate the outrages against Rodney King:  
the unrelenting blows of unemployment  
enveloping whole neighborhoods;  
the unrelenting blows of failure and neglect and addiction,  
and suspicion, and racism,  
all of them spawning despair...



the unrelenting blows of a rampant violence within urban ghettos,  
whites against blacks, blacks against Koreans,  
and most often blacks against their very own...

These blows are as harsh and as evident as anything shown

on that 81-second videotape with which America must now reckon.

Eric Fromm was discerning when he wrote:

"Destructiveness is the outcome of unlived lives."

Under such circumstances of pain and crisis

we do not gather in a blithe and lightsome spirit.

Rather have we come together to affirm our community,

to gird ourselves to meet the challenges of faith,

challenges that extend to the streets of Los Angeles,

and well beyond.

For we American Jews have served as "thousand points of light"

in the American firmament

well before Peggy Noonan ever coined the phrase.

And we will continue to serve in such a manner

from the stable base of our united community,

into the 21st century and beyond. //

"Israel's rampart" -- this is how ~~the amorayim~~,

the rabbis of the Talmud, defined the word "community."

It is our bastion, our bulwark, our stronghold, they taught

*BUT THEN QUICKLY WARNED THAT*

~~"but this rampart, this bastion is too formidable~~

for anyone to buttress alone,"

Fortunately, for tonight's honorees, Terry and Lionel Bell,

they have each other.

Indeed, this couple has stood shoulder to shoulder,

bearing the burdens of Jewish communal leadership for over 40 years  
Their contributions to Reform Judaism are immeasurable.

not the least of which are the vital ties

that they have personally established

between our synagogue movement and Federation.

These ties are well exemplified by Terry's recent elevation

to the Presidency of the Jewish Federation Council

and Lionel's recently completed tenure

as President of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, where he has served

as leader and builder for nearly 60 years.

Nothing delights me more, in fact,

than to "share" the Bells with Federation, the JCCs Association,

the United Jewish Fund and the many other beneficiaries

of their talent and generosity.

For I see the wide spectrum of their concerns

to be the harbinger of a far greater communal cohesiveness

in our efforts to secure Jewish creative continuity.

The time is ripe for such a greater bonding,

for the intensification of ties between synagogues and federations,

~~with ties of ever greater interdependence and mutual support.~~

~~THERE IS AN URGENT NEED~~

~~The cordial distance that has hitherto marked relations~~

~~FOR A DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP~~

between the so-called "secular" and "religious" Jewish organization

~~must now yield to a new dynamic partnership.~~

It is a partnership rooted in the recognition that the synagogue,  
is very simply the heartland, the vital center of Judaism.  
All other Jewish institutions mobilize and utilize Jews in behalf of the  
community...only the synagogue creates Jews.  
It is in the synagogue where the individual soul and the community  
are joined.  
It is in the synagogue where modernity and eternity cross-fertilize,  
where the seeds of the Jewish future are sown.  
It is the synagogue where the covenant is recreated and renewed  
in every generation.

The Federation's own National Jewish Population Survey affirms  
what I am saying.

for it reveals how much more deeply committed synagogue affiliated  
Jews are than those who belong to no congregation.  
in their attachments to Israel...  
in their attitude towards intermarriage,  
in the strength of their Jewish commitments.  
and above all in their readiness to assume the mantle  
of Jewish communal leadership.

~~Most synagogue leaders, even the so-called "secular" Jewish  
organizations, the ADLs and AJCs and Federations  
do, in fact, belong to a congregation  
-- so the CJP study and parallel surveys attest.~~

They even attend worship services with a measure of regularity  
and make certain that their children receive good Jewish grounding  
sending them to synagogue schools and camps and  
~~educational missions to Israel~~

~~It is the synaggoggue affiliated Jews primarily who are prepared~~  
Terry and Lionel Bell are impressive exemplars of that <sup>KIND OF</sup> leadership,  
the kind that has bestowed upon Reform Judaism the distinction  
and the responsibility  
of being the most significant cultivator of North American  
Jewish life.

This is why we honor <sup>THEM</sup> but also because we genuinely like them  
They are warm and caring people, good friends.

a delight to be with, becuae they delight so in life.  
We love them not just for their excellences, but even for their foibles  
for they make them human.

Lionel: capable, proficient, meticulous in work and attire alike  
but too finicky when it comes to foods  
and as clumsy an athlete as I ever encountered.

Terry: energetic, self assured, well-informed in many spheres,  
<sup>A WELL REFINED SENSE OF THE BEAUTIFUL</sup>  
but also exceedingly strong in her views

As Lionel put it [so blame him not me, Terry]

↳ she is often in error but never in doubt.

-- but that's the stuff of which leadership is made.

I heard a delightful anecdote about their earlier encounters  
which understandably did not appear in the multi-media  
reveiw of their lives... <sup>BUT I WILL DARE TO TELL</sup> ~~so why am I telling it?~~

It seems that when they first met and after a quite a number of dates,  
Lionel turned to Terry and said:

"don't you think it's time that we go to bed?"

and Terry replied: "I'm not ready to get married"

So much for changin times...

Now, surely I need not tell you, that Terry and Lionel  
did not seek this public tribute.

They neither craved nor relish such open flattery.

They responded favorably to our pleadings

only because they saw this evening as a means of furthering  
a cause that has been central to their life of public service.

Those of you who were here last year, and the year before that,  
heard me talk about the Union's many-varied programs  
that purpose to serve this very end.

We are a burgeoning, blossoming movement, crackling with creativity.

Our manner of summoning Jews to Judaism is affirmative and  
contemporary, based on far more than a 'survival' consciousness.

We have a youth and camping movement which serves tens of thousands  
of young people every year and of which we are justly proud  
because its ranks continue to provide us with our rabbis  
and teacher and leaders for the present and the future.

Our department of synagogue management provides an amplitude of  
resources to facilitatet the temples' administrative and fiscal tas

Our innovative and nurturing outreach ventures

have trasformed the mindscape of the American Jewry  
and brought the issue of intermarriage out of the house  
of mourning and into the house of study

-- indeed, into the house of prayer itself.

THIS, INCIDENTALLY, IS THE PROGRAM ~~WHICH WILL BE~~  
THE NAMES 'BILL + LOTTE' DAMISE ~~WHO~~ WHO ARE SMITHS IN  
OUR WAY OF THANKING THEM FOR THEIR TESTIMONY  
of 2000 TO FOR.

We even sustain an considerable overseas program, especially in Israel,  
where we conduct extensive youth activities  
and where, over the years, we settled two kibbutzim  
-- Lotan joining Yahel in the Aravah -- and one Mitzpeh  
in the Galil.

All these and many more of our splendid activities  
are described in the brochure that is before you.  
You can read about them at your leisure.

The temper of our times, and those tragic events of which I spoke  
at the very beginning of my commentary  
-- the violence in our inner cities --  
impels me to focus for some moments  
on our extensive and intensive program of social action.

As many of you know,  
we maintain a Religious Action Center in Washington,  
It is a veritable beehive of activity, and the vortex of a network  
of coalitions through which we endeavor to express  
our religious convictions in the national arena.  
We encourage and provide a wide range of programmatic  
support for synagogal activities in this realm.  
We train temple professionals and lay leaders in this discipline.  
We provide our vast constituency with a stream of information  
concerning issues on the national agenda that demand our response.  
We bestir our congregants to political action, in the endeavor  
to weave the values of Judaism into fabric of this land.



Thus

In the present crisis, we <sup>have</sup> ~~obviously~~ condemned the action of those  
who protested the King verdict through lawlessness and violence  
in the streets

Shooting and beating innocent bystanders,  
setting fires to buildings and cars and looting stores  
is not a solution to injustice...  
it is not an answer to police brutality...  
it is not a way out of poverty and despair.

An unbridled mob is the voice of madness, not the voice of the people...

But at the same time, we <sup>are</sup> ~~insist~~ <sup>ing</sup> that there is an burning need  
for a national program of assistance to our cities...  
that will address the pain and the frustration and bitterness  
that are destroying the lives of the many millions  
who live there.

They too are the victims of violence, as I have said.

a violence whose impact is not a immediate as are  
explosions in the street. and yet they are just as fatal.

I speak of the violence that poisons relations between people,  
because their skin has different colors

I speak of the violence that destroys children by hunger  
and by schools with no books and homes with no heat...

I speak of the violence that robs the jobless of their sense of  
self-worth, that stifles all their hope.

It is this slower-acting but no less lethal violence which our  
society needs to confront.

For if we don't, why, then, the violence of the streets will erupt  
with a <sup>EVER</sup>growing frequency and destructiveness;

It will erupt not just in the inner cities but in suburbia too,  
not just in Watts and Crown Heights

but also in ~~the~~ Beverly Hills and Shaker Heights.

We intend to press for such a program, with every resource at hand,  
<sup>AND AT THE SAME TIME</sup>  
to resist with persistence any tendency in the Jewish community  
<sup>TO TURN INWARD</sup>  
to yield to the lure of an unbridled ethnocentrism.

to respond to these frightening events with a reactive isolationism

This is why I am so proud that the Reform congregations of LA have played  
leadership role in the effort to heal their community,  
collecting clothing and food,  
delivering them through the churches of the inner city.

Temple Israel of Hollywood deserves to be singled out  
for leadership in this realm as does Temple Isaiah.

And Harvey Fields, of Wilshire Avenue Temple leads  
your community-wide commission to spearhead the effort  
to establish working ties with the blacks and Korean  
and Hispanic communities, to see what else can be done to help them  
and to serve as a mediating force between these  
often hostile factions.

Aye, we intend to maintain this social action program with vigor.  
It is a solid wedge holding open the door of the Jewish conscience.  
It is an amplifier through which the voices of the prophets still echo,  
enjoining us to care for the stranger in our midst  
and ever to seek the peace of the community in which we live.

Seperatism is bad for Jews.

We need friends to prevail, now as in the past.

Statistics tell us that soon we may be less than 2% of he population.

Yet we have battles to wage

-- on behalf of Israel, and Soviet Jewry,

and the separation of church and state --

How, pray tell, can a mere 2% wage and win these battles without allies.

But we will not find or retain allies,

if we focus only on our won interests

and show but scant regard for needs of others.

But far more important than this consideration of an elightened

self-interest, is the awareness of our solemn duty as Jews

to care not just for our fellow Jews.

but for all of human kind.

"It is too light a thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise  
up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the offspring of Israel  
I will also give thee for a light unto the nations.  
to open the eyes of the blind, to loosen the fetters of the bound  
to bring to the light of daythose who dwell in darkness.

We Jews are not just another ethnic group or another pressure bloc.

Our survival in the past has been for a higher purpose,

and our survival must continue to have meaning today.

If we kiss the world good-bye and separate ourselves from humankind

our survival -- and the struggle to maintain it --

is valueless

AS AN VOISLAN ONCE SO BEAUTIFUL WROTE'.

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

To be a Jew is to be agoad to the conscience of humankind,

to bear a heart of flesh and blood and not of stone...

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 thousands of years ago,

is to be part of a great and eduring people, YES,

but also to be a blessing to all human kind."

It is because they are comitted to this grand conception of Judaism  
that we honor Terry and Lionel Bell.

As a symbol of our thankfulness, we present you with a gift...

It is this beautiful tzedakah box,

~~EXQUISITE~~ <sup>EXQUISITE</sup> crafted in ~~SILVER~~ <sup>EXQUISITE HEARTWOOD</sup> by the artists

It is an altogether fitting gift

for you have given of yourself

and what is infinitely more difficult,

you have inspired others to give.

Accordingly, the words inscribed thereon are also fitting.

"those who lead others to righteousness shall be as the stars forever"

Come, my friends, and receive the applause which you so richly deserve.

~~Interfaith Environmental Conference~~  
Joint Appeal by Religion and Science  
for the Environment  
May 11, 1992  
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

Some weeks ago, in this very city, a broad range of  
Jewish leaders gathered to launch a major effort seeking  
to involve the Jewish community in the national drive  
to protect the environment.

Several hundred leaders were in attendance,  
and every conceivable stream of Jewish life,  
religious as well as secular, was represented.

With a unanimity uncommon in our midst we agreed that  
the "ecological crisis hovers over our many other vital concerns"  
since the threat to the environment is global,  
endangering all human life.

Senator Lieberman set the theme succinctly and well:

"You don't have to be Jewish to be an environmentalist," he said,  
"but it is certainly consistent with the Jewish tradition,  
for Judaism is a faith which requires protection of the earth."

And so it is, for in our Bible we are reminded that verything we see

"the heavens and the earth and all that fills it --  
all these things are the outer garment of God..."

Enlarging on this Scriptural verse, a medieval commentator taught:

"When God created the first human beings,  
God led them around the garden of Eden and said:  
Look at my works!  
See how beautiful they are, how excellent!  
For your sake I created them all.  
See to it that you do not despoil and destroy My world;  
for if you do, there will be none to repair it."

Jews celebrate the Passover festival

by retelling the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

The accounting of the ten plagues is a dramatic element of  
that story.

You surely remember it:

Bloody, polluted waters.

A vast sudden increase in the number of pests and parasites.

Skin diseases and other lingering ailments.

Failed crops in a poisoned land.

Darkness that blackens the day.

A dying generation of children.

These are the plagues that devastated the land of Egypt.

The Biblical poet ascribes this devastation, this fearsome destruction  
of the laws of nature to the hands of a wrathful God.

Alas, we have learned over the past two decades, that our own  
technology when misapplied with Pharaonic arrogance,  
is perfectly capable of wreaking devastation

on a scale fully parallel to the plagues that afflicted Egypt

We have seen the water we drink and the air we breath poisoned  
by toxic chemicals.

We have seen our lakes made unlivable by acid rain.

We have seen our beaches turned into sewage dumps,  
and our dumps turned into disaster areas.

We have noted the extinction of one species of life each day.

We have seen the proliferation of radioactive wastes

that will continue to poison the earth for generations to come.



No, it isn't carelessness or callousness which makes us do all this!  
It is greed, that corrosive materialism of our time which  
we as religious leaders must join forces to counter!

The depletion of the rainforests and the daily extinction of still  
another species is not a function of the "human condition."  
It is the work of a specific peasant forced to slash and burn  
for want of his own land.

It is the work of a specific cattle rancher selling meat to the  
chains, those "fast food" spots that burgeon when a culture  
becomes too insanely pressured  
to take pause for a blessing before the meal.

The Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska,  
or the radioactive disaster zone of Hanford, Washington,  
or the proliferation of every form of cancer in our society,  
are not the "price of progress."

They are the price of profit,  
the price of corporate thinking about human values,  
the price of a materialism so corrosive that it can rupture an  
oil tanker's hull or a nuclear reactor's containment vessel.

And as was to be expected,  
the Exxon company followed up this disaster,  
by intensifying its opposition to laws requiring double-hulled  
tankers.

And the Bush administration sought a redefinition of the term  
"wetlands" to permit more exploitation of these nurseries of life.  
What a mockery this...what cynicism...what hypocrisy...

"One generation goes," we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes,

"and another generation comes...but the earth remains forever."

That is the Scriptural injunction most imperilled by our times,  
and hence most needful of protection.

The great Spanish Jewish philosopher and poet Solomon Ibn Gabirol  
tells this tale.

Two people were once fighting over a piece of land.

Each claimed ownership,

and each bolstered his claim with apparent proof.

After arguing for a long time,

they agreed to resolve their conflict by putting the case before a  
rabbi

but despite years of legal training

the rabbi could not reach a decision.

Both parties seemed to be right.

Finally the rabbi said,

"since I cannot decide to whom this land belongs,  
let's ask the land."

The rabbi put his ear to the ground, and after a moment stood up  
and said:

"My friends, the land says it belongs to neither of you --  
but that you belong to the land...

as it is written: the earth is the Lord's

The earth is the Lord's, and as religious leaders

we are resolved not to suffer its despoilation.

HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATIVE LECTURE

College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass.

RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

April 7, 1992

I am honored to be here at this justly renowned university and thereby to have my name linked with the other distinguished academicians and world leaders who spoke from this rostrum and on this occasion in years past.

How wonderful it was of Jacob Hiatt to endow this annual lectureship and to make possible the building of two University Library wings in memory of Joshua and Leah Hiatt and all the many other victims of the Holocaust. To be sure, now, this is not his only gift to this community. His many benefactions have made him legend here. Numerous institutions of human love carry his name. Hundreds, thousands of young people now have a future, were enabled to study, to grow in mind and spirit, thanks to his extensive and imaginative scholarship program.

Still, this particular event is probably closest to Jack's soul, for his own life experience has taught him that you cannot build a meaningful future if you fail to remember the past. Memory and hope are inextricably intertwined within him. After all, he himself is a survivor of that whirlwind of destruction which claimed his parents along with 6 million of their co-religionists as victims.

Jewish custom prescribes that Holocaust Remembrance Day be marked in the month of April . . . for it was in April that the Jews of

the Warsaw ghetto rose up against their oppressors with empty hands facing guns and tanks, the most lethal weapons of war. Come to think of it, though, this is a most unlikely time to mark so somber and melancholy an occasion. After all, April is the first full month of Spring, and Spring is the time "when the air is calm and pleasant," so Milton wrote, "and it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out and see her riches and partake in her rejoicing."

As individuals, we can well do that, we can go out into the public gardens and rejoice, roll up our sleeves to feel a little Springtime warmth; but as Jews rolled-up sleeves all too quickly remind us of those numbers tattooed on the arms of death camp inmates.

As individuals we can rejoice in April showers and breathtaking rainbows; but as Jews we cannot hear of "showers" without shuddering, nor view a rainbow without thinking of the Nazi killers who shattered its radiance, who took its colors and pinned them to our hearts: yellow for Jews . . . red for communists, brown for gypsies . . . pink for gays, and on and on through the spectrum of murdered souls.

As individuals we can hearken to the Song of Solomon:

"arise. . . my fair one, come away!"

But as Jews, we are mired in agonizing memories and cannot come away. We cannot see a meadow without thinking of mass graves. We cannot see a dancing butterfly without recalling the poem of a 12-year-old Jewish girl, an inmate of Theresienstadt, who said of her captivity that she "never saw another butterfly."

Oh, would that we could forget. But quick forgetting is not the reality of a people who lost one third of their number in half a decade; who lost one and one half million of their children in that time, little boys and girls, infants, innocent, guiltless all! Quick healing is not the reality of a people for whom nature itself was defiled by the Nazi murderers who sowed bones instead of seeds in the month of April!

And so we remember . . . memories continue to hurt and haunt us. They still make us stagger. The pavement sinks under the feet, the walls spin 'round, the world reels. We cannot pluck the remembrance of all this carnage 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 all these aching memories is silence. It must be that, it always will be that - - a silence. For our speech has been stifled by darkness and our suffering is of a



kind that has no tongue. The martyrology of the Jew is one long stillness, an endless silent scream reaching to 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 testify in their behalf ever to remind the world that it was not God, but brutal men, who brought darkness to the human soul.

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. People forget. And there are those who have determined to wipe its slate to make it seem as if these things had never been.

But these things have been. They really happened. Millions of God's children, perished through the cruelty of the aggressor, victims of demonic hate; the aged and young, the learned and unlettered - - all driven in multitudes along the road of pain and pitiless death. So we must speak - - and meet, and write - - however faltering our tongue and unavailing our speech. And we begin this task as did our forebears with words hallowed by centuries of our martyrdom:

"Yitgadal, vevitkadash sh'mev rabba . . . "

"Magnified and Sanctified be the Name of God"

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

\* \* \*

Are there any lessons to be gleaned from all this sorrow and sadness?

In a way I find it loathsome even to ask such a question, to speak of the "lessons" of genocide, for to do so is to attribute purpose to acts that were grotesquely purposeless, acts of naked savagery, of twisted paranoia and grim bureaucratic inhumaneness. And yet it is that very purposelessness, that monstrous human capacity to butcher without need, to wade through rivers of blood without so much as a redeeming sense of destination or direction which impels us to seek explanation, to scour us yet again with stinging memories.

Thus, we do infer certain lessons from the suffering we have endured; and by so doing, we convert the mystery of suffering into a revelation.

First and foremost we have learned to resist, at earliest warning, any and all threats to our community, to our people. "If I am not for myself," taught the Hebrew sage Hillel, "who will be for me?"

Wherever there is a single Jew in danger, in whatever country or continent or the remotest corner of our far flung world, there are we determined to find him, to 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.

"Never will we allow this to happen again!" This is the vital force which propelled the creation of the modern Jewish state, and which impels the Jews of the world to do everything humanly possible to secure its safety. This, the vital force which spurred the Israelis to legendary acts of heroism like Entebbe, or to the recent rescue, over one short week-end, of nearly 15,000 endangered Ethiopian Jews. And remember, this was the first time in human history when blacks were taken from one continent to another not in chains but in love.

"Never will we let it happen again!" That has become our motto. I suppose we Jews are overly sensitive, even paranoid, on the subject of our safety. Yet where will we find reassurance?

How can we feel at ease when recent studies report a global rise in anti-Semitism . . . denials of the Holocaust, the refurbished iconization of erstwhile Hitler puppets such as Antonescu in Romania and Tito in Slovakia . . . the proliferation of neo-fascist parties in many lands - - only yesterday a Mussolini was elected in Italy. Jewish cemeteries desecrated, synagogues defaced, acts of violence, even murder, several such incidents recorded every single day now - - and all this only one generation after Auschwitz.

How can we feel secure when a recent poll showed that over 30% of the Germans of today believe that Jews are ultimately to blame for the Holocaust, for what they did, or failed to do, in a word, that the victims and not the murderers are really guilty.

How are our fears allayed when even in our own country, yes, here too, anti-Semitic incidents have seen an alarming rise during the year just past . . . when a David Duke, who wears a swastika as a halo if not breastplate, nonetheless gathers a majority of the white votes in Louisiana's senatorial election. Or when a Pat Buchanan, who even Bill Buckley has assessed to have indulged in anti-Semitic rhetoric, stumps our economically troubled America inciting passions of xenophobia and selfishness and yet nets one-third of the Republican Primary vote. Aye, or when the presidential pulpit is abused to impugn our political influence,

and the Secretary of State is said to have muttered unmentionable words about us.

Nor are our fears allayed by the trauma of having the public classrooms and college campuses, those erstwhile unifying forces of our nation, become a combat zone for competing interests battling over multi-culturalism, by having the Martin Luther Kings and Bayard Rustins, those builders of bridges, supplanted by purveyors of hate like Sharpton and Jeffries, or by the fact that our country's failure fully to implement the civil rights revolution particularly in the economic sphere is producing an explosive African-American nihilism, with no small portion of anti-Semitism for fuel.

No, alas, our wounds are not merely of another era. Our wounds bleed anew. And so we are not likely to forget the first lesson of the Holocaust: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" We intend to deny Hitler a posthumous victory. We are, and we will continue to be. Survival: it is the best defense, the sole revenge, the only worthy response to those seek our destruction.

\* \* \*

There is a second truth which emerges from the experience of our anguish, and it is this: that we Jews are not alone to have been afflicted, that other people too have suffered grievous wrong, that we are bound to one another, all humans are, in an unbroken unity of pain.

We cannot deny this reality. True, the Holocaust is sui generis, unprecedented and unmatched in its evil. Nonetheless, it is but one of the many man-made roads that have led into the abyss of human iniquity. Our age has many pathways sinking into this hell: the archipelagos of Stalin's Russia, napalm scorched Vietnam, death squads in Latin America, and perhaps most damning of all, the pathway of hunger, of neglect and apathy, upon which 40,000 more corpses are strewn every single day of our lives.

I have been told that an international human rights association has determined that since the end of World War II there have been eleven other instances of race extermination which can properly be labelled as genocide. Think of the horrors of Cambodia, of Indochina's killing fields, think of Afghanistan and Ethiopia - - and on and on. Numerous indeed are the roads that lead into the hell of human depravity.

A Yiddish proverb encapsulates this truth:

"a velt brent brider nit nor unzer shtetl."



An entire world is aflame, not just our villages. What is needed, therefore, is a bucket brigade to save the world, and not just to douse the blazing roofs of our own hamlets.

This second lesson is infinitely more difficult to internalize than is the first. When a people is beset by fear, the likely consequence is a reactive isolationism, and it is precisely this malady that has afflicted too many of our fellow Jews. "We are surrounded by enemies," they say, "so what's the use? Let's dig in our own garden, let's go it alone. No one else will fend for us."

But this simply is not so. We did not achieve our freedoms alone. We broke out of the ghetto walls only because many other enlightened forces in Europe amplified and fought to realize our demands for equal status. We would not have achieved the high state we presently enjoy here in this land were it not for the Bill of Rights, which was neither crafted nor realized by Jews. And the State of Israel would not have been established had not a majority of the world's peoples recognized the moral rightness of our cause.

Separatism is bad for Jews . . . we need allies to prevail. But we will not find and retain them if we care only for ourselves.

The chassidic master, Moshe Leb Sassover taught:

A peasant helped me to understand the true meaning of love. I overheard him at an inn talking to his companion . . . He asked his friend: "Do you love me, Ivan?" And Ivan replied, "of course I do." And then the peasant asked: "And do you know what hurts me, Ivan." "No," replied he, "How can I possibly know that?" "Well, " concluded the peasant, "if you do not know what hurts me, how can you say that you love me?"

If we do not feel the pain of others, they will not feel our pain. If we stand aloof from their causes and concerns, we can scarcely expect them to stand at our side and we will not survive without the help of others.

But far more important than this consideration of an enlightened self-interest, is the awareness of our solemn duty as Jews to care not just for our fellow Jews, but for all of human kind. Even thus we read in Scripture:

"It is too light a thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the offspring of Israel, I will also give thee for a light unto the nations. That my salvation may be unto the ends of the earth."

We Jews are not just another ethnic group or another pressure bloc. Our survival in the past has been for a higher purpose, and our survival must continue to have meaning today.

Al Vorspan once cleverly and movingly wrote:

"If, in order to survive I must become a bald-headed Meir Kahane. If in order to survive I must kiss the world good-bye and separate myself from humankind. If I must emulate

the violence, the callousness the bigotry and narrowness of my opponents . . . then survival is not worth the candle for me."

But all this is true not just for Jews but for all groupings in our society - - racial, ethnic, religious - - and indeed for all the peoples of the earth. None of us lives alone . . . we interact with others: we depend on others always. The Jewish sage, Hillel, may have counselled: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" But then he quickly added: "But if I am only for myself, what am I?"

We simply dare not define our group identities in parochial terms alone, none of us should, whatever our race or creed. Was it not that very nearsightedness, and the arrogance that it bred, that led Germany to its feverish fantasies of a master race? Was it not precisely this parochialism run amok that led dictatorships to their barbaric sense of "national security?"

The philosopher, George Santayana, taught: "When you believe in absurdities, you can commit atrocities." Surely the commonest absurdity that human beings have believed is that of the superiority of individuals or groups over others. Surely, it is that absurdity which has led us into a century of savagery. Surely that selfsame absurdity now threatens to turn the whole globe into the charnel houses of Auschwitz.

Our survival depends upon our ability to develop an alternative understanding: the understanding that we are, each of us and all of us, like the sons and daughters of Noah emerging from the ark on Mount Ararat. We are, each of us and all of us, anxiously scanning the sky for the rainbow sign that appeared over Noah's ark, for the reassurance that a life of peace and growth and meaning can be ours. We are, each of us and all of us, confronting the challenge of God's rainbow: a challenge to recognize and act upon the awareness of our common humanity, to work together to ease the suffering of all peoples: to open the eyes of the blind, to bind the wounds of the afflicted, to loosen the fetters of the bound wherever they might be imprisoned.

For what is the rainbow, after all? It is every color of the earth combined into one great spectrum. It is mist, invisible, until light and liquid fashion it into visible, iridescent shape - - an arch that binds the world from horizon to horizon. It is a metaphor made physical. It is the earth's arbor. It is the arch of God.

All of us are primary color bands in the spectrum of suffering humanity. We must therefore hold our heads high, wear our colors, speak our languages, let ourselves be seen by all.

And when the gaze of humanity is upon us, we must bid them look

back in time and see the monstrosities that gave birth to our modernity. We must bid them to look into their own hearts and see the internal bleeding that is draining us of our very humanity. This above all, we must bid them look at one another, whatever be their nationality or color or creed, and say:

"You are the bone of my bone, the flesh of my flesh, for one God has created us all."

The universal and the particular are inextricably intertwined within us; we dare not deny the claims of either. If we repudiate our particular heritage for the sake of a greater humanity, we will inevitably betray humanity in the end. But if we repudiate humanity and serve only ourselves, we will betray those ideas and ideals which alone give meaning to our own people's survival.

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This, then, is the two-fold truth forged on the anvil of Jewish suffering, these the thoughts that stir within us as we recall with loving remembrance our martyrs, all those who perished through the cruelty of the oppressor. Not punished for any individual guilt, but indiscriminately, men and women . . . the

aged and the young . . . the learned and the simple . . . were driven in multitudes along the road of pain and pitiless death. They lie in nameless graves. Their places of everlasting sleep are not known to us. Yet we will not forget them. We take them into our hearts and give them a place beside the treasured memories of our own beloved.

May their remembrance give us the strength to turn from death to life, to love where others hate, to hope where others despair, to bring beauty to chaos and reason to the madness of our days. In a word, to speed the fulfillment of that promise of lasting life made by God to humankind when he arched his wondrous rainbow over Noah's ark - - in the springtime of human history.

REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF MENACHEM BEGIN  
PRESIDENTS' CONFERENCE HAZKARAH

MARCH 11, 1992  
6 ADAR II 5752

By: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler



Nitparda Hachavila

"The chain has been severed . . it is riven!"

These words, spoken by Rabbi Judah Hanaasi, when he was told of the death of his friend Antoninus, reverberate within us now. A cord is loosed . . . The silver chain is broken . . . Tender ties of love and friendship have been torn asunder by relentless death.

Menachem Begin was an altogether remarkable human being. History will rank him among our generation's foremost leaders. The many decades he spent in the underground and in the wastelands of political opposition did not blunt his ability to govern, indeed, they honed it. He left an imprint on Israel deeper than most of her Prime Ministers. And he achieved what eluded all others: a peace agreement with at least one of the Arab nations.

His death leaves us all bereft. It diminishes our strength. Truly a star has been torn from the firmament of our lives, and our lives are the darker because of it.

Unhappily Malcolm did not ask me to speak until just a few hours ago, so this will be by no means the kind of hesped I would want to give, no polished evaluation of Begin's life and work. I will speak, rather, words which flow from the heart, random personal reflections and reminiscences, some dabs of paint, as it were, with which a sharper and more vivid picture might some day be drawn.

Let me begin by saying that I valued Manachem Begin as a friend, and I am proud that he called me that, too. It was an unlikely friendship, to be sure - - Leibel Fein called us an Odd Couple - - after all, our political inclinations diverged rather sharply,

our religious inclinations too; he was a non observant traditionalist, I, a Reform Rabbi, with not a few radical ideas. It was a friendship fostered in the first instance by political necessity: how could I as Chairman of the Presidents' Conference fail to support the democratically elected Prime Minister of Israel? But over time that friendship blossomed and became strong enough to survive many a bitter dispute. We argued violently one night, till the early hours of the morning; it was during his second term when the Lebanese War took a disastrous turn. But before we parted we still embraced, and he generously said:

"all this has nothing to do with our more personal relationship . . . it is on a different, deeper plane, where soul touches soul."

And so I do more today than give voice to the complaints of others. I, too, am sorrow-stricken; my friend is no more.

Begin possessed qualities not often found in political leadership, alas. He was an honorable man. He cared about the truth as he perceived it. He refused to diverge from it, either to please a friend or to appease an enemy. There was no venality about him, none whatsoever. He could not be bought at any price. He lived simply - - in a small unpretentious two-room apartment - before he assumed office and after he left it. He had none of the imperiousness, the contumely, the arrogance which others in high office too often assume. He was always chivalrous, cordial, approachable, unaffectedly kind. He certainly was perseverant in the quest to achieve his vision of Israel's good. He followed that inner star relentlessly, risking everything in its pursuit. Even defeat did not sway him from his course. This quality above all others is what marked him the statesman, for it is only the statesman and never the politician who is willing to suffer political defeat in the pursuit of goals which may not be attainable in his lifetime.

Everyone assumes that in his retirement, as a virtual recluse, Begin was a "lonely, bitter, and depressed man." That simply is not so. I spoke to him often during those years, indeed just two weeks ago, on the day before that final seizure which ultimately claimed his life. There was none of that in his voice ever. When he left office, he may have been saddened, angry, frustrated - - but bitter, never! Whenever he met defeat, he withdrew within himself to take stock, to seek alternate avenues, to find a better way to fight. That was the pattern of his life.

Witness the equanimity with which he faced his more personal afflictions: Throughout his years in office he was beset by serious ailments. On the eve of his election he had a heart attack. He suffered other cardiac incidents while in office. He was in frequent pain. But there was never a complaint, neither against fate nor against man - - and the work went on.

I was drawn to him above all by this quality: He was an ohev yisrael in the richest sense of that word. He saw the state as a means to serve the Jewish people, not the people as mere servants of the state. He loved all Jews, whatever their color, ethnic origin, ideological stance or religious bent. Remember that it was he who defied the Orthodox establishment by insisting on the rescue of Ethiopian Jewry . . . "they consider themselves Jews, they live as Jews, they share the fate of our people . . . that is all that matters," he said, "let us free them and bring them home."

These are Jews, mind you, who trace their lineage by the paternal line, who are considered Jews because their fathers are Jewish though their mothers might not be. This was also the first time in human history that blacks were taken from one continent to another not in chains but in love. Manachem Begin effected that.

Aye, he loved his people and their land with an abounding love. He also relived their historic faith. Not their religious faith so much, but rather that faith which is the inverse of despair, which was infused into the very fibre of our being, "mixed with our blood" from our beginnings, the faith in our direction, our justice, our future, the faith in the ability of the Jew to endure the struggle and to prevail.

I suppose that Begin will forever be associated with the Camp David agreements. He brought peace to Israel, at last for a time, and on one front. Begin never received enough credit for that, Sadat reaped much of the glory. But Begin was the first to make a move . . . and I was with him when he made it.

It happened at the American Ambassador's 4th of July party, where Israel's leadership was wont to assemble. I stood near Begin when he suddenly turned to Yechiel Kadishai, his faithful friend, and said:

"Is the Roumanian Ambassador here? I want to talk to him." Kadishai found him and he and Begin wandered off for a brief chat.

Some weeks thereafter, I heard of Begin's projected visit to Roumania, the first country after America he was to visit. I wondered about that, but ultimately was able to make the link. He went to see Ceaurescu, Sadat's close friend, to assert the earnestness of his desire to seek accommodation with Egypt. A few months later, came that meeting between Dayan and Egypt's Foreign Minister in Morocco. Then came Sadat's dramatic visit to Jerusalem, and 16 months thereafter Camp David.

However cool that peace might have been, it held. It has

withstood much buffeting, Sadat's assassination, the Lebanese War, even Desert Storm. But it held . . . and it was Menachem Begin who took the first step towards peace.

Begin was not just the leader of a nation; he was above all a deeply feeling human being. He adored his children . . . Hassiah and Leah. . . and his son, Benjamin, in whose political success he took much pride - - the son seems to have inherited his father's integrity. But above all, did Menachem love his wife, Alizah, the companion of his life and soul. Oh how he loved her, with an abounding love. No diplomatic seating in Washington for him; he revised the protocol by insisting that his wife be seated at his side, always.

He once told me a tender story. My wife, Rhea, had asked him whether Alizah had suffered from asthma always or developed it only later on in life, to which he replied:

"When I first proposed to her, she said 'before I respond, I must tell you a secret: I have asthma,' whereupon I said to her: 'and before you respond, I must tell you a secret: the day will come when I will be arrested and jailed'."

And so, together they walked the way of life, drinking from its one cup, when it ran bitter, when it ran sweet, giving new meaning to the words: husband, wife, and marriage.

Now, I realize that I drew Begin larger than life. Omitting those failures and weaknesses to which he, no less than others, was prone. Our tradition enjoins us to do so, to omit a critical evaluation on an occasion such as this. Still, it would be a distortion of the man and a violation of that code of rigid honesty by which he lived were I to portray him as flawless, as a Tsaddik or even a malach. He was no angel, no saint - - just a man - - but what a man.

He lived the kind of life, many of us dream to live. A life large and generous, bold and adventurous, a life great in the scope of its desire, magnanimous in forgiveness, courageous as an act of faith, smilingly triumphant even in the face of set-back and disaster.

And so it is that Menachem Begin's death leaves us bereft. It has diminished our strength. Truly a star has been torn from the firmament of our lives, and our lives are the darker because of it.

T'hi nishmato tserura bitzror hachayim.



3/9-10  
West. De

Environment Conf 1992  
Speech

Joy, you requested a copy of my remarks...I spoke from notes... the first part is from my Biennial Address...the latter part is new... Still, it is fragmented, since I interpolated a lot. For what it's worth, here it is:

The human race's material reach is surely exceeding its spiritual grasp.  
is it not?

Consider how we live in relation to the world,  
to this planet earth,  
how we take God's handiwork and despoil it:  
the sweet air He gave us to breathe  
and the fresh water with which He blessed us  
the fertile green which delights the eye.

Instead of acknowledging and making proper use of all these gifts,  
we poison them..."we tear apart the ozone...  
we carbonize the oxygen...we acidify the refreshing rain."

No, it isn't carelessness or callousness which makes us do all this!  
It is greed, that corrosive materialism of our time which  
we must counter!

The depletion of the rainforests and the daily extinction of still  
another species is not a function of the "human condition."  
It is the work of a specific peasant forced to slash and burn  
for want of his own land.

It is the work of a specific cattle rancher selling meat to the  
chains,  
those "fast food" spots that burgeon when a culture becomes  
too insanely pressured  
to take pause for a blessing before the meal.



The Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska,  
or the radioactive disaster zone of Hanford, Washington,  
or the proliferation of every form of cancer in our society,  
are not the "price of progress."

They are the price of profit,  
the price of corporate thinking about human values,  
the price of a materialism so corrosive that it can rupture an  
oil tanker's hull or a nuclear reactor's containment vessel.

And now the Exxon company is following up this disaster,  
by intensifying its opposition to laws requiring double-hulled  
tankers.

And the Bush administration is seeking a redefinition of the term  
"wetlands" to permit more exploitation of these nurseries of life.  
What a mockery this...what cynicism...what hypocrisy...

"One generation goes," we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes,  
"and another generation comes...but the earth remains forever."  
That is the Scriptural injunction most imperilled by our times,  
and hence most needful of protection.

Not many weeks hence, we Jews will be celebrating Passover  
by retelling the story of the Exodus from Egypt.  
The accounting of the ten plagues is a dramatic element of  
that story. You remember it well.

Bloody, polluted waters. A vast sudden increase in the number of pests and parasites. Skin diseases and other lingering ailments. Failed crops in a poisoned land. Darkness that blackens the day.

A dying generation of children.

These are the plagues that devastated the land of Egypt.

The Biblical poet ascribes this devastation, this fearsome destruction of the laws of nature to the hands of the Almighty God.

Alas, we have learned over the past two decades, that our own technology when misapplied with Pharaonic arrogance, is perfectly capable of wreaking devastation on a scale parallel to the plagues that afflicted Egypt.

Let us as Jews utilize the memory of slavery in Egypt to fashion a Jewish response to the degradation of God's creation.

Let us as Jews remember that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof and that we are but stewards of what we possess.

Let us recognize that we Jews are not a breed apart, but share the fate of humankind.

This above all, let us remember that the place on which we stand, this planet earth, is holy and that therefore as Jews we must never countenance its despoilation.