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Personal Relationships in a Time of Crisis
Parshas Toledoth.

According to Voltaire, brilliant French philosopher and master of satire, the only thing left to do in a disordered world is to forsake it and dig in one's own garden. At least, this is the opinion he brought forth from the lips of Candide, most illustrious of his creations. There may be some, no doubt, who will agree with him and call his dictum sound advice. Others among us may fain to disagree. Be that as it may, the matter is hardly worth disputing, since, whether sound or otherwise, it is advice that simply cannot be taken.

Human beings cannot withdraw from the world. They cannot live their lives as though there were nothing of life beyond themselves that they need be troubled with. If they confine themselves to their garden, the world will invade their garden. Sooner or later, the very problems they seek to avoid and ~~to~~ take no part in trying to solve will wash away their barricades and engulf them. There are no ivory towers, no havens of retreat, no islands of refuge where the modern individual can live in isolated splendor. Wherever he goes, the issues of the age ^{will} overtake him and make their relentless demands.

Not only do these issues make claim on our time ^{and attention}. Their temper affects our personal relationships as well. The climate of the outer world inevitably is reflected in the inner world. In times of peace and relative prosperity, the bond uniting husband and wife, parent and child, friend and friend, usually is strong and secure. In times of crisis, these bonds are weakened and often break. Thus it is, that divorce and juvenile delinquency are ~~the~~ concomitants of social discord; a troubled society brings trouble into the lives of families and friends.

The process of this impact is not difficult to trace. To begin with, in times of stress, people are worried about what goes on in the world and worried people, even as sick people, are inclined to be unduly

unduly sensitive and demanding in their personal relationships. They are prone to visit their resentment especially on those they love, as if love gave them that privilege, and they rely on their loved ones for love's sake to bear it.

Moreover, in times of crisis, there is an overall weakening of social values - war, for instance, cheapens ~~the worth of~~ life not only ^{on} ~~on the~~ fields of battle, but everywhere - and consequently the values of the home are undermined as well. Invariably all sorts of doubts creep in. Is there anything whatever worth it? The world outside seems to be pulling apart: can the inner world be held together? In the outer world everyone seems to be only for himself: is it really any different in the home?

It is here, surely, that we need to stop and give ourselves a chance to think the matter through. After all, personal relationships are the foundationstones on which society is built. Their erosion spells inevitable doom. ~~If we countenance their crumbling we deny~~ ^{we destroy} all hope for a better order. ^{But} We need not ^{Countenance the decay} ~~surely~~, for ^{alone and while} the destiny of these relationships is in our hands, ~~in our hands only~~. Our voice may be weak in the council of nations; it is all powerful in the circle of family and friends. In short, while we cannot keep the world from our garden, we certainly need not permit ~~it~~ ^{the world} to destroy its precious plants.

^{That is why} As Jews, we do well therefore, ^{As we well know and as perhaps our devot} every once in a while, to reconsider ^{those} virtues which the authors of our faith have always deemed vital in the relationship 'bein odom l'chaveiro' between man and man.

Truth is one of these virtues: the wisdom to withhold nothing that should be revealed, the capacity to speak with the courage of one's convictions. The rabbis of the Talmud were unrestrained in their exaltation of this quality. "Truth is one of the three pillars on which the world rests,"

taught Rabbon Shimon ben Gamliel. "It is the very seal of God," added Rabbi Chanina. And a third sage pointed out that the Hebrew word for truth 'emes' is composed of the first, the middle and the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet - the alef, the mem, and the tav - and this, not by sheer chance, but only to teach us that truth is the beginning the middle and the end of all things.

Candor is an indispensable ingredient of the human approach. Friendship cannot survive without it, nor can a family. Our Torah portion, read a moment ago, underscores this need, with its reminder that it was an untruth, a lie in the matter of the birthright which forced ^{my father} Jacob into exile and a life time of toil and travail. As a matter of fact, rabbinic lore has made Jacob a symbol of our people and Esau the prototype of Israel's enemies, so that, in accordance with rabbinic thinking it is no exaggeration to say that the martyrology of our people can be traced, in its inception, to a lie, ^{a violation of the law of truth}

The highest law that a husband and wife, a parent and child, a friend and friend can learn is to live with each other is a spirit of utter frankness. To conceal what the other has a right to know is to erect barriers which separate; deception damages the relationship that should unite and enfold the intimate circle. Two people may and will differ on many important matters - but they cannot conceal the truth from each other and practice deception without ^{doing much} violating the sanctity of their relationship.

Truth, then, is the first pillar of our personal relationships, and the handmaiden of truth is respect which, as its root denotes for it comes from the latin verb respicere, meaning 'to look at', involves the ability to see the partner of a relationship as he is. It involves the willingness to recognize his individuality, to cherish it, to permit it to unfold in its own peculiar way.

Thus seen and understood, the concept of respect implies foremost the absence of exploitation. We cannot hope to establish or maintain a bond with others if we seek them for some ulterior motive. The man who selects his friends for their use alone, for social or economic advantage, say, is quickly found out and denied the response of sympathetic understanding which selfless friendship alone evokes.

The ideal of respect - 'kibbud hab'rijous' our fathers called it, the ^{rec-}~~hon-~~
^{dering} of honor to God's creatures - precludes also all tendency to dominate. There is no room for the authoritarian approach in the circle of family and friend. Unfortunately, there are too many who follow its course: husbands who seek to dominate their wives, wives who are unduly possessive, or parents who go totalitarian with their children, who want them to do certain things or live in a certain manner, not for any good reason but simply because they say so or ^{they} think so. Among such people are often those who consider themselves good liberals in their political thinking. Yet if the problems of the outer world are to be resolved on the side of freedom, freedom must prevail in the inner world, ^{as well}.

Somehow we must come to understand that separate persons are always separate persons, distinctive individuals with minds that can meet with other minds but cannot be absorbed or merged. Nothing is achieved by the attempt to dominate. Browbeating can never cure dissension. What must be sought is patient, reasonable attitudes, honesty and fairness in discussion and, if necessary - and quite often it may be necessary - agreement to differ. Even a married couple is composed of two people with two minds and two wills, and in spite of the words of the marriage ceremony, these two will not in all respects be one. Marriage at its best, is the ^{blend}~~union~~ of two individuals on the basis of the preservation of each individuality, so that the two may move through life much like two independent melodies which rise and fall and blend with one another to form the harmony of wondrous music.

The last and perhaps the most important ingredient of firm personal relationships is a sense of responsibility, the willingness to answer the needs, expressed and unexpressed, of another human being. To be responsible means to be able and ready to respond. Jonah did not feel responsible to the inhabitants of Niniveh. He, like Cain could ask: Am I my brother's keeper. The loving person responds. The life of his brother is not his brother's business alone, but his own as well.

There are many Hebrew terms which approach a definition of this virtue: Ahavo, love, is one; rachameem, compassion, is another. Moreover, it is a virtue which finds varying expression, depending on the nature of the relationship. Between parents and child it refers most often to the care for physical needs and for mental development. Between friend and friend it speaks primarily of psychic needs. In the love between husband and wife it involves a response to all these and more, to the total human personality. But whatever ^{the term + whose} the particular application, responsibility, compassion, love all involve not just feeling but doing. They describe not so much a state of being, but an act of giving.

In truth, we cannot conceive of one without the other, of responsibility without care, of compassion without extended help. Love is not love without an active concern for the life and growth of that which we love. When seen in this light, and contrary to the conviction of most young people, the moment of wedlock is never the culmination of love; it is only the beginning and only a possibility for the building of love. Love before marriage is a feeling, a romantic sentiment, at best; only after the marriage can it be translated into a doing for one another and thus attain to its truer nature.

These then are the threads which go into the making of the bond uniting family and friend: truth, respect, responsibility. These are the virtues we must nurture if we want to preserve our personal relationships against the winds of the world which are blowing harshly upon us.

Some weeks ago, I chanced to tell a story to the young people of our religious school which has its application here also. It is about a king who lived many centuries ago but who was endowed with a very curious mind and one day he determined to know if people lived on the moon. It occurred to him that if a loud enough noise were ~~made~~ sent up from the earth, it might be heard on the moon and its people, if there were any, would give answer. Orders went out throughout the kingdom, instructing all people to gather in their village squares and at the appointed signal to give a mighty shout. The ^{proper selected} ~~appointed~~ day arrived: all subjects were ^{men women & children} assembled. The signal was given, and lo and behold - there was utter silence - every one had remained silent because he wanted to hear the great sound himself.

Some of the finest things in the world are left undone, because we wait for others to do them. Some of the finest relationships in the world are destroyed because we take our cue from others allowing the standards of a time of crisis to affect our closer circle.

We needn't ^{to} surely. ^{And if we do, who knows} ~~On the contrary,~~ ^{may} we can even reverse the process, and instead of allowing the outer world to invade our personal lives, we can make our personal lives invade the outer world. Our more immediate problems, if mastered will make us stronger and wiser to deal with all other problems. The inwardness of our lives can provide the moral reinforcement needed by society. Yes, if we attain to it, the flame that burns in our homes, kindled by our friendships and our loves, can be carried with us wherever we go, lighting the way before us, warming the desolation of the world.

^{Give us enough such men & enough such women}
Grant us this, O God, and the impossible will yet be possible.

Amen.

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Please make it short, Rabbi!
The Role of the Sermon in the Service

Courtesy, politeness, a friendly manner, while not a cardinal virtue in life, still tends to make man's life on earth so much more palatable and pleasant. A friendly countenance or comment costs nothing - yet it is mankind's best adornment, more beautiful than costly garments or precious gems. "אֵלֶיךָ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לֵאמֹר" - 'Greet every man cheerfully,' taught the Tannah, Shammai; and another author of the Mishna equates 'd e r e c h e r e t z' with 't a l m u d t o r a h', making good manners the indispensable pre-requisite to the attainment of knowledge and wisdom.

This emphasis on considerate behavior finds curious confirmation in our Torah portion for today. Our scriptural selection portrays that happy moment in the life of Abraham when a heavenly messenger promises ~~the aged~~ ~~rejoice~~ the birth of a son. Sarah, ~~rejoices~~, exhibiting a talent which was to be inherited by generations of her daughters, manages to eavesdrop and ~~overhear~~ the conversation. Her reaction is not too confident; she merely laughs, saying: "After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my Lord being old also?" In the very next verse, God asks Abraham: "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, will I of a surety bear a child who am old!" Rabbinic commentators were quick to notice that while Sarah had, in fact, referred both to her own advanced age as well as to the extreme age of her husband, God only mentioned the reference to herself, to wit, 'why did Sarah laugh, saying: shall I bear a child, I, I only, who am old?' God was clearly guilty of a half-truth - but only, ~~as~~ ~~was~~ ~~in~~ order not to give cause for quarrel between husband and wife. ~~for surely Abraham would have been angry had he heard that Sarah considered him old. The rabbis conclude that~~ Half-truths, or ~~white~~ white lies are permitted provided their intent is to ~~preserve~~ spare the feelings of a fellow human being.

In describing the mutual regard that obtains between a rabbi and his congregation, the terms courtesy and consideration can certainly be applied, for kindness rules all aspects of this relationships, all areas, that is, except one, the pulpit, the weekly sermon, where sensibilities and civilities are frequently forgotten. In the sound and fury of his reprimands, the rabbi all too often bares his claws, and after he has had his say, he growls like a mother lion in defending the offspring of his mind, misbegotten as that offspring might have been. As for the congregation, too many of its members don't even await a sermons delivery but greet the rabbi with the ~~k~~ unkindest, most unreasonable request of them all: Please, Rabbi, make it short, will you! Have you ever heard of an actor who was asked to cut the lines of ^{his} ~~a~~ play, or a musician, and a mediocre one at that who ~~was~~ ^{is} asked to play less and not more, to skip some movements in a ~~symphony~~ ^{sonata}. But even a Piatigorsky of the Pulpit is asked to be brief, and, I suppose, can count himself lucky not to have a modern day Benjamin Franklin sardonically remark: "None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing."

Not always was the sermon in such low repute. At one time it played a central role in the life and the growth of the Jewish Community. One need only regard the ~~hundreds-of~~ thousand upon thousand sermons collected in hundreds upon hundreds of volumes which make up the vast mass of literature known as the Midrash to sense the significance of the sermon in the religious life of our fathers.

The sermon, incidentally, represents the unique contribution of the Jew to world religion. While the founders and leaders of various religions gave occasional public addresses, there is no evidence of such addresses as part of a regular religious service prior to the development of the synagogue. But once the sermon was established, it spread far and wide and was eagerly accepted by Christianity and Islam.

The birth of preaching was a bi-product of the general tide of democratic liberalism which swept through Jewish life in the days of the second commonwealth. It was a part of the movement which meant to wrest religion from the stranglehold of the monarchists and the priests. The prophets and teachers of Israel wanted to create ^(in the literal sense of the word, a kingdom of priests & a holy people) an entire nation in which everyone, from the humblest workingman to ~~the most learned~~ ~~scholar or~~ the most munificent philanthropist would achieve a knowledge of God. ~~They wanted Israel to be, in the literal sense of the word, a kingdom of priests and a holy people.~~ The Synagogue became the institution which broke the power of the centralized priesthood by establishing a minor sanctuary, a people's temple in every town and hamlet of Israel. And the synagogue sermon was the instrument which gave religion to the people.

If every one was to be a priest, then everyone had to learn God's word and its meaning. Therefore the Scripture was read in every synagogue and at every service; it was translated into the vernacular (during the days of the Second Temple the Jewish people spoke Aramaic and not Hebrew); ⁺ after the literal translation, the scriptural passage was interpreted and the interpretation developed into the sermon. Through the reading and translation of Scripture the people gained a knowledge of Law; and through the interpretations they learned how the Law was to be applied in the give and take of their personal lives.

This double purpose of the original sermon points to the role the sermon ought to play in our day. A sermon is to instruct - and it is ^{meant} to improve; it must educate and ^{it must} edify.

A sermon is meant to give knowledge of Torah. In Judaism study has been lifted to the level of a religious principle - Talmud Torah Keneged Kulon - ^{Study of the Law supersedes all other religious instruction.} ~~There is no such thing as a Jew, uninformed of his Jewish heritage is no Jew.~~ And a sermon which does not add at least one single is no sermon.

4 used the Bible.

It might be noted, marginally, that the very reading of the scripture as part of the service ~~has~~ long ago, marked a revolution in the religious life of man. At one time, the sacred books of religions were the exclusive ^{possession} ~~protection~~ of priests and scribes. Not so in Judaism. A Jew, uninformed of his Jewish heritage is simply ^{not} a Jew. And a sermon which ~~does~~ does not add to the Jewish knowledge of the congregation, a sermon which merely re-echoes the daily press or ^{the writings} popular pundits, is no sermon.

However, a good sermon must do more than impart ^{knowledge} ~~it must~~ ~~show how that knowledge is to be applied in life.~~ A preacher is not just a teacher; ^{so is a} ~~and a sermon is~~ more than a lecture. A good sermon aims beyond the mind; ^{it seeks to} ~~and touches~~ the heart and the soul of the worshipper. It ~~aims~~ intends to transform religious truth into the moral fibre of man. And it purposes to answer the doubts and the yearnings of the human soul.

Here the preacher faces his most difficult task ^{for one} ~~who~~ can fathom the needs of the soul; ^{A wit overprinted out that} ~~and who dare set himself as the arbiter of man's deeds.~~ ^{Conception is a thing, only made like a man who speaks on the roof of a temple building who offers medicine to dip from of deep} ~~If preaching were only teaching it would be easy.~~ ^{holiness} ^{sermons} ~~not just an~~ ^{is more} ~~than an~~ intellectual exercise. It demands the best self, the soul of the preacher. Words which aim at the heart must come from the heart. Words of reproof ^{especially} are not easy either; ^{who} ~~who~~ dare set himself as the arbiter of men's deeds. ^{Every} ~~Every~~ preacher knows too well that the failings he sees in other stir his soul also. ^{And} ^{if the} ^{offered by} Feeble ~~is~~ comfort ^{is} the admirable observation that preachers are "like torches - a light to others, waste and destruction to themselves."

Such is the purpose of the sermon, such was its power, such can its power be, if good preachers be found - and if men be found who will listen with a understnd heart. Not always is the failure of ~~a~~ sermon the fault of the preacher; sometimes the listeners ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~to blame,~~

For one, congregations often expect too much; it is impossible to be stirred by every sermon; even the ultra modern scientifically designed machines of an automobile factory produce an occasional lemon, - why not extend the same courtesy to a preacher, frail human that he is. Again, congregations often expect the wrong thing. They come, not to be enlightened, but to be entertained; they judge the sermon by its garb and not its body, looking for the emphatic gesture or flashy phrase rather than the truth of the message. A sermon is not meant to enetrtain; an entertaining, scinitllating sermon may lead people to praise the preacher, but a good sermon will lead people to praise God. In other words, people who listen to a sermon ^{ought to remember that they} constitute not an audience but a congregation.

Finally, so many people receive little from a sermon because they are not prepared to receive much. Our fathers were thoroughly conversant with the subject matter presented to them by the preacher. Moreover, they prepared themselves for every sermon, by reading and rereading the Torah portion of the week. When the preacher announced his text, they knew the text already and were eagerly awaiting the new insights the preacher would provide, ~~to something that was known to them.~~ The sermon topics are still announced, well in advance.

Why not give some thought to the theme before coming to the synagogue. Why not read the Torah portion of the week in advance, to look for a text that would seem appropriate and meaningful to you. Increased knowledge might well obviate the most common charge levelled against preachers or lexturer, to wit, that they speak over the audience's head. A similar complaint lodged against a professor of philosophy elicited the following reply: gentlemen, I talk to where your heads ought to be, not to were they are.

We have assayed the role of the sermon in the synagogal service. Much more could be said of course, but certainly the title of our discourse precludes a lengthier treatment. We have found that a good sermon aims to fulfill a double task, to ~~apply to the~~ inform and to inspire, to apply the timeless lessons of the past to the timely needs of the hour and its men. We have also discovered that good sermons ^{not only} require good preaching, but ^{also} beyond that good listening.

A sermon can have great effect upon the lives of men and nations - the enemies of freedom recognized ^{seek} its potentialities by silencing the pulpit wherever they ~~appear~~ ^{seek} to dominate the minds of men. Sermons can give hope to the despondent, and light to those who sit in darkness. Sermons can bring happiness into the lives of men and women. Sermons represent the sole remaining vehicle for the Oral Law in our time. ^{They are the} ~~It is the~~ one instrument which ^{fulfill} ~~preserves~~ ^{has} prophecy and ^{holds out the} assurance of continued revelation.

Having said all this, ~~and~~ having set these lofty goals, I ought to step from this pulpit never to preach again. And yet why not continue. ^{What is wrong with leaving it} ~~Why not have~~ the reach exceed the grasp. We take comfort in the familiar Midrash which speaks of a king who lost a precious pearl. Does he not recover it by means of a two-cent candle?

Amen.

RELIGION AND EDUCATION: A JEWISH VIEW

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
National Director of Education
Union of American Hebrew Congregations -
Central Conference of American Rabbis

The American Jewish community's approach to the complex of problems encompassed by the title "Religion and Education" can best be understood as the effect of an interplay of inner and outer forces, of the ideal and the real, of Jewish theology and Jewish history; it is the product of a people's faith shaped on the anvil of its experience.

The monism which characterizes Judaism - its steadfast insistence of God's unity and its attendant unitary conception of human nature - clearly calls for the most comprehensive possible understanding of education's role, for the summary dismissal of any effort to compartmentalize it into well-defined, only thinly related segments labelled "secular" and "sacred." On the other hand, the life experience of Jews - their persecution in lands where church and state were one, the whiplash of anti-semitism which they and their children were made to feel in state-religion oriented schools - have made them espouse the ideal of the 'secular' public school and, thus, to qualify the concept of education which flows from their faith.

In this manner, Jews stand in the vanguard of the struggle to maintain the principle of separation wherever Church and State meet on the American scene; they resist the intrusion of denominational instruction and observances in the public classroom even as they oppose, with vigor, the assignment of public funds to church established schools. At the same time, their essentially religious world view leads them to understand that not all religious concerns can be excized from the public school curriculum, that every system of education worthy of the name must strive to awaken awareness of life's spiritual dimension and foster devotion to the values which emanate therefrom. American Jews are confident that the public school can serve these ends without invoking the sectarian symbols and sanctions of institutional religion, without transmitting the teaching and forms even of those great faiths from which our spiritual and moral values are ultimately derived.

Judaism's View of Education

Because it is one of the oldest religions of mankind - its adherents scattered through all the world, their faith challenged by many varied winds of thought - Judaism, understandably enough, is not a simple faith. It is, rather, a complex system of life and thought, embracing many points of view and distinctive only in its totality, in the singular integration of diverse details. There is, thus, no single Jewish philosophy of education; the religious literature of the Jew sounds many variations on the theme. Still, a leitmotif can be perceived among the descants, allowing us to speak of a Jewish view of teaching and of learning.

Central to this view is Judaism's concept of man which holds his nature to be a blending of body and soul, of matter and of spirit. Man is made of the dust, yet there is something in him which has its source in the divine and enables him to achieve communion with it. Because he was fashioned in the image of God, he can encounter God, if only he seek Him. "Man is not cut off and isolated from the universe, but a part of it. Somehow he can reach out and understand it. Man may be limited and small, but he can grow toward God because something in him corresponds to God."¹ The realization of this potentiality latent within him, the attainment of communion with the divine, constitutes man's essential task; it is the infinite duty which has been laid on finite human life.

Education is a principle means for life's fulfillment; "a man needs to study, so that he may become himself."² The unlearned man can never be pious; he may will to find God, but he does not know the way; he perceives the design but he lacks the tools and has failed to master the craft. Learning is the key to the universe; man becomes God-like, holy as God is holy, only as he grows in the knowledge of His world and Word.

Education is a means, not the end. Though prizing knowledge above all earthly possessions, Judaism ascribes no worth to study for study's sake alone. "He who has knowledge of the Torah but no fear of God, is like the keeper of a treasury who has the inner keys, but not the outer keys. He cannot enter."³ The goal of learning is the refinement of a sensitivity to the divine; the beginning and the end of wisdom is the fear of heaven.

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1. Eugene B. Borowitz, Philosophies of Education, ed. Philip H. Phenix (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1963), p. 87.
 2. Ibid., p. 88
 3. Sabbath, 31b

Judaism's conception of human nature is unitary. Its dualism, such as it is, is not rigidly drawn. It speaks of body and of soul but sees them bound in indissoluble union. Certainly the body is not burdened with all sin, nor is the soul given credit for all virtue.

To what may this be compared? To a king who owned a beautiful orchard which contained splendid figs. Now, he appointed two watchmen therein, one lame and the other blind. One day the lame man said to the blind, "I see beautiful figs in the orchard. Come and take me upon thy shoulder, that we may procure and eat them." So the lame bestrode the blind, procured and ate them. Some time after, the owner of the orchard came and inquired of them, "Where are those beautiful figs?" The lame man replied, "Have I then feet to walk with?" The blind man replied, "Have I then eyes to see with?" What did he do? He placed the lame upon the blind and judged them together. So will the Holy One, blessed be He, return the soul to the body and judge them as one.⁴

Man is not a loose federation of two or even three separate states - body, mind, spirit - but, rather, is he a composite of these correlative principles of being.

The implications of this conception for the understanding of education's task is clear. Its function is all-encompassing. It cannot be divided in any manner or restricted in any fashion. One cannot refine the competence of mind while oblivious to the needs and potentialities of body or blind to the values and final purposes which are born of man's spirit. The development of the total man is every teacher's concern; all life is education's proper province.

Judaism's reluctance to ascribe a final duality to human nature extends to the nature of man's universe. Here too, no artificial divisions are made, no realms sequestered from the horizons of inquiry which a man can properly pursue. "There is no not-holy, there is only that which has not been hallowed, which has not yet been redeemed to its holiness."⁵

4. Sanhedrin, 91a-b

5. Martin Buber, Hasidism (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1948), p. 135.

The history of the Jew reveals no parallel to the warfare of theology with science which mars the history of Christendom. Scientific inquiry was usually encouraged and given free reign. As one example, a twelfth century curriculum sets the following order of studies: reading, writing, Torah, Mishnah, Hebrew grammar, poetry, Talmud, philosophy of religion, logic, arithmetic, geometry, optics, astronomy, music, mechanics, medicine, and lastly, meta-physics.⁶ The array of Jewish scholars who coupled knowledge of Jewish law and lore with equal competence in the sciences is impressive; the leading contributors to the development of Jewish theology invariably ranked among the foremost scientists of their day. Moses ben Maimon (usually called Maimonides) offers classic proof; he was Talmudist and philosopher, astronomer and physician; his mastery of rabbinics was sufficiently great to have future generations of Jews designate him as a "second Moses;" his philosophical writings, seeking to harmonize Judaism and Aristotelianism, reveal an equally excellent grasp of Greek thought; and his scientific works - two volumes on poisons and their antidotes, a book on sexual intercourse, essays on asthma, on hemorrhoids, on hygiene, and a commentary on the aphorisms of Hyppocrates - were consequential enough to merit translation and re-publication throughout the eight centuries since they were first written, most recently in English, by Johns Hopkins University, on the occasion of a Maimonides anniversary.

6. Joseph ben Judah ibn Aknin, Cure of Souls (12 Century), chapter 27. Ibn Aknin's criteria for successful teaching may interest the modern reader; The teacher must have complete command of the subject he wishes to transmit, he must carry out in his own life the principles he wishes to inculcate in his pupils; he must exact no pay for his teaching; he must look upon his pupils as if they were his own sons; he must train his pupils to lead an ethical life; he must not be impatient but come to his pupils with a happy countenance; and he must teach his pupils according to the range of their intellectual capacities.

The study of nature is not inimical to the pursuit of the religious life - so teaches Judaism; it is a pillar on which the life of faith rests; God can be known only through its free and unrestricted service.⁷ The student of science ought never be hindered in his quest by theological pre-suppositions; the "Torah is not a code that compels us to believe in falsehoods."⁸ A contradiction between the teachings of Judaism and the findings of science can only be apparent, never real, and calls for the careful re-evaluation of both. Either may be at fault - tradition misunderstood or scientific method poorly applied - and if the conclusions of science prove correct, tradition must yield the point and modify its understanding of the Word.

Nothing which serves to expand the adventurous horizon of man's mind should be excluded from consideration in the life-long educative process. The science, the wisdom, the skills of the world are as significant to man as are the teachings of tradition. They all of them are necessary if he is to fulfill the purpose inherent in life.

That purpose must be served. If it is not, knowledge - whatever be its kind - is vain; "the end of the matter, all having been heard: revere God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."⁹ It is in this spirit, that the modern Jew voices his prayer:

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7. Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed, Part I, Chap. 55. Cf. Sabbath, 75a.
 8. Levi ben Gerson (Gersonides) in The Wars of the Lord, quoted by W. Gunther Plaut, Judaism and the Scientific Spirit (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1962), p. 6. His book offers a superb exposition of the problem under discussion.
 9. Ecclesiastes 12:13

O Lord, open our eyes, that we may see and welcome all truth, whether shining from the annals of ancient revelations or reaching us through the seers of our own time; for Thou hidest not thy light from any generation of Thy children that yearn for Thee and seek Thy guidance.¹⁰

When thy speak these lines, at their weekly Sabbath services, and when they translate into their lives as they hopefully do, the ideal implicit in them, Jews keep alive the ancient prophet's dream - a dream superbly characteristic of Judaism's view of learning-which envisages man's future as a time when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea."¹¹

Faith Tempered by Experience

This then is the compelling religious conception which governs Judaism's approach to education: Study is a never-ending task in life, a vital means for its fulfillment; all realms of knowledge, not just religious disciplines, but the sciences of man and nature too, and the humanities, are encompassed by this mandate; and all learning must be made to serve the end of faith, this end alone, the principal object of being--to help the I encounter the Eternal Thou.

It is a conception which still holds sway for Jews, at least for those who define their Jewishness primarily in religious terms. Its modification, to which we alluded in the introduction, is not one of substance, but one of detail, and it applies, in the main, to American Jews whose recent history witnessed their mass migration from central Europe to America.

10. Union Prayer Book, Part I (Cincinnati: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1940), p.34

11. Isaiah, 11:9

Jews were made to suffer grievously in the lands of their origin; their existence was in continuous jeopardy, their religious life severely circumscribed. Invariably, their persecution was most relentless where Luther's dictum-cuius regio eius religio -- determined the relation between church and state, where rulers told the ruled how to worship God and priests told rulers how to execute State affairs. By the time Jews came to these shores in substantial numbers, the alliance between Protestant dissent and secular humanism had yielded its richest fruit; the principle of religious freedom was well established and the concept of voluntariness in matters of faith had become a corner-stone of American law. Here Jews found safety; here they found freedom in a measure rarely matched in the two thousand years of their wandering. Little wonder that they attributed their liberties primarily to the principle of separation, and that they are boldy zealous in its defense!

The sharp and comforting contrast between the old and the new was strikingly manifested in the realm of public education. { In Europe, only a handful of Jewish children were granted admission to government established school; the lucky few who were thus chosen had to make a payment of blood for their privilege; they were subjected to stinging indignities, insulted and assaulted, to remind them of their inferiority, to make them appreciate the gracious gift bestowed. [Whatever their ultimate purpose - the state was hardly guiltless, after all, state-appointed teachers condoned or even encouraged such incidents -] these expressions of anti-Semitism invariably were cloaked in the garment of religious bigotry, given occasion by class prayers (always alluding to the crucifixion), by school observances of festivals (Easter was ever a propitious time to resuscitate the blood libel), and

by the caustic commentaries of teachers in interpreting the Biblical text. Not so, in America! Here the Jewish immigrant found governmental schools whose doors were opened wide to welcome his children, whose teachers and administrators accorded them treatment fully equal to that extended to all other students. Again, the American Jew attributed his blessing primarily to the principle of separation, to the circumstance that the American public school had been divested of those denominational dimensions that so distressed him and his children elsewhere.

Thus it was, that American Jews became champions of the 'secular' public school, learning to reverence it as a "precious gift to be passionately protected and preserved."¹² Indeed, they would be remiss, totally lacking in human virtue, were ^{we} they to offer a lesser degree of appreciation.

Here we confront the modern-day modification of Judaism's traditional approach to learning. Today's American Jews recognize the worth of disjoining the educational process, conceding the possibility of its departmentalization. They isolate sectarian instruction from general education, limiting the scope of public education by withholding the former from its concern.

The modification is modest indeed. It involves a peripheral change, not an alteration in essence. It constitutes a division of labor, as it were, and not a dichotomy of final purposes. The goals of education, public and private, remain the same. The public school can well serve religion's ultimate concerns without also teaching religion in any formal sense.¹³

12. Leo Pfeffer, Creeds in Competition (New York: Harper & Bros., 1958), p.60.

13. Eugene B. Borowitz, op. cit., p. 93. Also, Anson Phelps Stokes and Leo Pfeffer, Church and State in the United States (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) p. 355.

THESE THEN ARE THE REASONS OF LOGIC + EXPERIENCE WHICH LEAD
Maintaining the Wall -- Religious Observances

American Judaism offers substantial, unaccustomed unanimity in its approach to the many issues affecting the adjustment of church and state in the realm of public education. The response is uniform and unequivocal, always applying the principle enunciated by the highest court, "separation means separation, not something less."

Every ritual expression of religion in the public elementary and high schools is rejected on this basis, from the recitation of prayers to the devotional reading of the Bible, from the singing of sacred songs to the observance of sectarian festivals, not excluding joint religious celebrations.'

WE OPPOSE ~~RELIGIOUS~~ READING EVEN WHEN IT IS NOW DONE

Long before the Supreme Court rendered its decision in the Engel v. Vitale case, American Jews asserted that state laws requiring or permitting the recitation of prayers are wholly inconsistent with the Establishment Clause - even when these prayers are chosen for their "non-denominational" quality or composed with this intent in mind.¹⁴ Moreover to be true to its essential nature, prayers must be personal, particular, passionate; it cannot be neutral or detached. Here, Jews share fully the view of Tillich who holds the "unspecified affirmation of God" to be "irrelevant," a "rhetorical-political abuse" of religion in its finest sense.¹⁵

14. Jews never acquiesced in lower court rulings which held the Lord's Prayer to be "non-denominational." Although the words, when taken literally, are not at variance with Jewish teaching, sacred usage over many centuries by Christians have made this prayer wholly Christian. As such, it violates the conscience of the Jew. The Lord to which the prayer's title refers is not God as Jews conceive of Him, but Jesus of the Christian tradition. Indeed, the words are the words of Jesus drawn verbatim from the Gospels.

15. Pau Tillich, The Courage to Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), pp. 182-184.

Politicians, dictators, and other people who wish to use rhetoric to make an impression on their audience like to use God in this (unspecified) sense. It produces the feeling in their listeners that the speaker is serious and morally trustworthy. This is especially successful if they can brand their foes as atheistic.

The rote recitation of 'neutral' prayers holds forth no hope for the attainment of a meaningful religious experience; it is form without substance, an empty gesture bereft of spiritual significance. Nor can such recitation, without further comment by the teacher or discussion by the class, be seen to serve the ends of character education; the expectation that the mechanical mouthing of prayer formulas will steel the moral fibre of the student runs counter to reason, counter to evidence, counter to all accepted theories of learning.

What is true for 'neutral' prayer is true for non-denomination Bible reading - not when the Book is studied as part of a great literature course, but when it is ordered as a daily exercise in religious devotion. Such Bible reading virtually constitutes compulsory attendance at a religious service. Jews fear, further, that in this manner, Christological ideas at variance with the Jewish understanding of the Bible will be transmitted to their children.¹⁶ The Bible is not a non-religious book; and the hypothesis that it is a "non-denominational" book must similarly be put to serious question.

Theological differences among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews have necessitated each group authorizing its own translation of the Bible. These theological differences resulted in frequent and prolonged controversies in the 19th century, when in numerous instances Catholics asked the courts to ban the reading of the King James Bible and when even Protestant groups fought among themselves as to which denominational translation should be declared nondenominational.¹⁷

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16. Why the Bible Should Not be Read in the Public Schools, pamphlet issued by the Central Conference of American Rabbis.
 17. Statement of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism to the Senate Judiciary Committee, on October 3, 1962, opposing several resolutions which sought to modify the first amendment. Submitted by Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch

Again, as in the ^{case}~~use~~ of prayer, the hurried, perfunctary recitation of tests, can never further, but only retards, the advancement of either religion or moral education.

Jewish opposition to school observance of holy days, particularly its celebrations of Christmas and Easter - the singing of carols, the presentation of nativity and crucifixion plays, the display on school property of manger scenes - has been a cause of considerable community tension and of serious interreligious misunderstanding. Hopefully, the preceding paragraphs have helped to clarify the issue somewhat, by showing that a consistent application of the principle of separation makes this opposition mandatory.

Christmas and Easter are, after all, religious holidays in the specific sense of the term; they are sectarian, denominational festivals. They celebrate the birth and death of Jesus who is the founder of the Christian faith. The nativity scene is a hallowed symbol of Christ's birth. Christmas pageants are representations in word and dance of profoundly religious, Christian ideas. And Christmas carols derive from the music of the church; their words have origin in its sacred liturgy.

Manifestly, Christmas and Easter are not national or cultural holidays, and thoughtful Christians should be as offended as are Jews by the effort to obscure or to diminish the theological content of their celebration.

The fact that Christmas music is mixed with such other "holiday" music as "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth" in no way changes the situation. . . If Christmas is a holy day of great religious importance, Christians should be the first to rebel against its vulgarization in the public schools. Indeed, many sensitive Christians have joined in the campaign to "Put Christ Back into Christmas."

But it is with a sense of sadness that we observe how very few Christians have seriously objected to the cheapening of their sacred day.¹⁸

In a sense, Jews long for the restoration of at least some of the stern standards of colonial New England whose Puritans prohibited the public celebration of Christmas, who barred all "pomp and pagan revelry" in the observance of the day, insisting that it be marked in conduct with a solemnity befitting Christianity's most holy hour.

The attempt to assuage Jewish sensitivity by instituting joint holiday observances fails in the desired effect. ~~Then~~ American Jews are particularly discomfited by the Christmas-Chanukah union which, principle aside, gives currency to a grave misunderstanding of their faith when it equates a relatively minor festival of Judaism with a feast of the greatest moment to Christendom. The springtime twin-observance is only slightly more appealing; Easter and Passover hardly strike a heavenly harmony of theme. But what is infinitely more important, a principle is at stake, and principle will not be compromised. Joint observances of religious holidays in public school are no less a breach of the American ideal than are the celebrations of a single faith.

Religious Education and the School Curriculum

The problem of religious instruction in the public school is vexing in its perplexity, more intricate by far than are the issues of religious observance. Its ramifications are many and well-entangled, forming a Gordian knot which, so the better part of valor dictates, cannot be cut in a single bold stroke, but must be unravelled with infinite patience and care.

18. Marvin Braiterman, Religion and the Public Schools (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1958), pp. 25, 26.

Two possible approaches, both extreme, can readily be rejected and require no lengthy elaboration. Sectarian indoctrination on public school premises clearly constitutes a breaching of the wall; indeed, it was ruled to be so by the Court in the historic McCollum case. The opposite alternative, the elimination of all religious concerns from general school teaching, is neither desirable nor feasible of fulfillment; one simply cannot teach without transmitting some religious data; one cannot convey a full understanding of contemporary culture without, in the very least, recognizing religion's role in the making of its essential elements - its music, literature, and art, its morals and its law. This view, too, is supported by Court opinion; in the Schempp-Murray majority decision, Justice Clark took pains to point out that the banning of devotional Bible reading and the injunction against the recitation of the Lord's Prayer do not by any means import that the study of the Bible for its "literary and historic qualities" or the study of religion "when presented objectively. . . as part of a secular program of education" constitute a violation of the First Amendment.

But the objective transmission of religion's historic contribution to civilization hardly qualifies as religious teaching. Can religion itself be taught in the public school - its tenets and its values - without partiality, without the substitution of indoctrination for learning? This is the question that yields no ready answer and continues to trouble the waters of inter-group relations on the American scene.

A number of proposals have been put forward, in recent years, which aim to allow the teaching of religious tenets without doing violence to the principle of separation. They build on the assumption that there are fundamental principles of faith which all religions share, which can be isolated, organized in unit form, and then transmitted as the common, non-denominational core of faith.

American Jews do not embrace such efforts with a full heart. They agree, of course, that a common core exists, that the great religions of the world do indeed hold many views in common, allowing for full cooperation between them. Jews doubt, however, that these tenets can be isolated from the context of the religious current without destroying their essential nature and without vitiating all that is spiritually meaningful in every faith. Religious ideas and their forms are inseparably intertwined; both are sanctified by faith. The moment they are separated, form loses its essence and the idea is robbed of its force.

Phrasing and style become supremely important and indeed matters of conscience, as is evidenced by the fact that churches differ not as to the content of the Lord's Prayer, but as to its wording. There is not a single thought in that prayer to which a devout Jew could take exception. Yet it is for him a Christian prayer which Jewish tradition and his own religious sensitivity enjoin him from reciting. It is only a person emancipated from religious tradition who speaks of forms as the "externals" of religion. How meaningful then can a common core of belief be that does not have the support of a tradition which includes symbols, memories, powerful emotional associations.¹⁹

More than this, once an idea is abstracted from one form and is cast into another form, the idea itself undergoes substantive change. When the principles of a faith are isolated from their tradition and combined with other principles similarly extracted, something entirely new emerges. This, doubtless, is what the American Council on Education had in mind when it criticized the common denominator plan on the ground that it might "easily lead to a new sect - a public school sect - which would take its place alongside the existing faiths and compete with them."²⁰ Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch, in his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee makes this pertinent and incisive comment:

Public school sponsorship of non-denominational religious exercise (and teaching) potentially establishes a new major faith - "public school religion." For a brief but a significant time during the school day, the school becomes a

19. Rabbi Morris Adler, "Religion and Public Education: A Rationale," in the Journal of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, April 1955.

20. American Council on Education Studies (April, 1947), Vol. XI, No. 26, p. 19

house of worship, the teacher becomes a religious leader, the class becomes a congregation, and the members of the school board are enshrined as founders of the new faith. How are the ritual, theology, and spiritual heritage of the "new public school religion" determined? Through divine revelation and interpretation by theologians? No, by public boards, commissions and courts, elected or appointed through the secular, political process.

Still another, more practical matter must be considered. Once such a common core curriculum is actually developed²¹, how can we be certain that teachers will transmit this teaching without partiality toward their own religious commitment? Are we reasonable to expect them to suppress their own deep devotions and commitments? More important, by far, and assuming, for the moment, that the impossible is possible, just what religious values would such objectivity in teaching yield? Proper religious instruction calls not for objective detachment, but for passionate involvement. "There is no more ineffective way of teaching religion than to give an "objective" account of religious history. For this means robbing history of the inner meaning and the specific elements of faith and truth."²²

These arguments manifestly mitigate against all non-denominational or inter-denominational religious education plans advanced thus far. This is the considered view of the American Jewish Community on the subject:

We are opposed to (all) attempts by the public elementary and secondary schools . . . to teach about the doctrines of religion. Without passing on the question whether or not such teaching is inconsistent with the principle of separation of church and state, we believe that factual, objective and impartial teaching about the doctrines of religion is an unattainable objective. Any attempt to introduce such teaching into the

21. An unlikely happenstance. Agreement is difficult to reach. In New York City, for instance, representatives of the Protestant Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese and the Board of Rabbis met for many months of painstaking study only to conclude that agreement was hopeless.

22. Reinhold Niebuhr, quoted by Rabbi Morris Adler, op. cit.

public schools poses the great threat of pressures on school personnel from sectarian groups and compromises the impartiality of teaching and the integrity of the public school educational system. Our opposition to such teaching rests on these grounds.²³

If religious doctrines cannot be taught, what of moral and spiritual values, can they be drawn from the matrix of religion which brought them to be and kept alive without continuing dependence on their source?

Here, American Judaism voices a somewhat more optimistic view.

Insofar as the teaching of "spiritual values" may be understood to signify religious teaching, this must remain, as it has been, the responsibility of the home, the church, and the synagogue. Insofar as it is understood to signify the teaching of morality, ethics, and good citizenship, a deep commitment to such values has been successfully inculcated by our public schools in successive generations of Americans. The public school must continue to share responsibility for fostering a commitment to these moral values, without presenting or teaching any sectarian sources or sanctions for such values.²⁴

This mandate is not easy to fulfill. It requires the delicate disjoining of the educative process which, as indicated, historic Judaism did not deem possible - the abstraction of the ideal from its original form, the separation of ethical values from their life-giving tradition. Modern American Judaism encourages this departmentalization only because of its profound regard for the 'secular' public school, because of the school's proven ability to transmit religious values apart from denominational doctrine and without sectarian bias.

To be sure, spiritual and moral values cannot forever be maintained without reference to their source; faith is the necessary condition of their continuance; they gain their fullest dimension only when they are woven into the tapestry of a rich religious life. That is why Judaism insists on an intensive program

23. Safeguarding Religious Liberty, Position Paper issued by the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations Advisory Council through its Joint Advisory Committee (October, 1962), p. 7.

24. Ibid., pp. 4, 7.

of religious instruction in the synagogue²⁵ and on the development of meaningful religious life-patterns in the home.

Be that as it may, the public school cannot be enjoined from transmitting ethical and moral concepts, religious though their origin is. To begin with, these concepts cement our democracy; they form the faith of this land; their preservation is vital toward the fulfillment of the American dream. Moreover, were we to keep our schools from fostering moral values, we would deprive them of their reason for being and then we might as well give up the enterprise of public education. A school which does not seek the moral development of its students is no school at all; all education worthy of the name is essentially education of character.

An Aid to Religion and a Challenge:

What has been said, concerning the proper goals of public education, should serve to refute the charge that our schools are "Godless," "atheist," and "anti-religious," that they create, of necessity, an antagonism to faith and institutional religion. On the contrary, the spirit of religion, though not its forms, can animate the atmosphere with which the school surrounds its students. And in this atmosphere our children can grow, intellectually and spiritually, precisely in a manner in which we as religious people want them to grow.

25. It might be noted, in this connection, that the Zorach decision did not end the Jewish community's unfavorable response to the released and dismissed time programs. The following objections are usually offered: such plans threaten the principle of separation; the amount of religious instruction which can be given is negligible; more often than not, school authorities put pressure on students to attend religious school classes; those who refuse to be 'released' are rarely if ever given meaningful general instruction; they serve to emphasize religious differences in a public arena, indeed, Jewish children at times attend Christian classes for fear of disclosing their religious differences.

When the Jewish community espouses the cause of the 'secular' public school, it does not use the adjective in its philosophical meaning. Our determined opposition to doctrinal instruction extends with equal force to the dogmas of scientific naturalism. We do not want the school to teach our children that reality is limited to the 'seen,' ~~or~~ ^{that} empirical science and logic are the only proper tools in man's quest for knowledge. We do not want the school to teach our children that spiritual values are 'purely subjective,' ~~or~~ ^{that} religion is thus but a branch of psychology, revealing the vagaries of man's mind and the caprices of his emotional life, no more. Even as the teacher is debarred from teaching principles which pre-suppose the acceptance of religious doctrines, so is he debarred from teaching principles which pre-suppose the acceptance of anti-religious doctrines.

'Secular,' as the Jewish community applies the word to the public school, means not 'irreligious' but 'non-denominational', 'non-sectarian,' intended for pupils of all religious persuasion, and even for those whose parents affirm no faith. What it means is that the state - enjoined by law from establishing any one religion - without endeavoring to provide for all education but leaving many of its essential aspects to church and home, undertakes to give moral and mental training and instruction in secular subjects of consequence to all future citizens - the entire process being conducted in an "atmosphere of social idealism."²⁶

Jewish opposition to doctrinal instruction in the public classroom rises in no small measure from the fear that such teaching, in seeking to meet the conflicting demands of competing religious groups, will not further but hinder the advance of religion. 'We urge a broad interpretation of the first amendment, precisely because

26. Stokes and Pfeffer, op. cit., p. 355

we want religion. If we were truly secularists, we would encourage such things as non-denominational prayer in the public schools as a tool by which to make life and faith less sacred, less passionate. . . the worst thing that could happen to the churches and the synagogues would be to . . . (develop, in the public school) a religion which would consist of a set of meaningless, watered-down, non-sectarian platitudes."²⁷

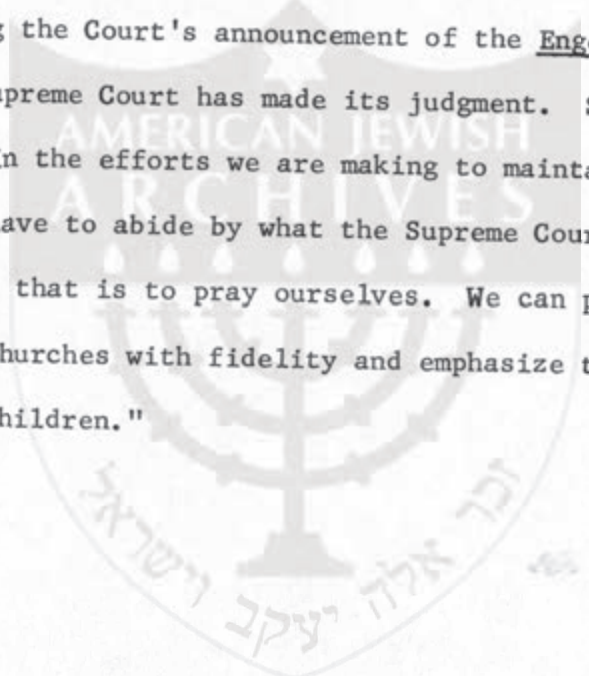
Thus the problem of religious education can never be solved by shifting the burden of responsibility for its advancement from church to public education.²⁸ It will be solved only when church and synagogue recognize their full and final responsibility in this realm and take the matter of religious education much more seriously than they have in the past.

When organized religion spends more for religious education than for its choirs; when it plans its program of religious education with the fervor with which it promotes evangelistic campaigns; when it is more proud of its schools than of the size of its congregation or the beauty of its architecture; when it selects ministers of education with the same care it chooses its preachers and when it invests its attempts at educating the young with the importance it ascribes to its weekly Sabbath service - then shall it have begun to cope with the problems of religious education.²⁹

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27. Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, in testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, May 12, 1964.
28. In their classic study of Judaism's approach to the major social issues of our time, Albert Vorspan and Eugene J. Lipman suggest that the church's dissatisfaction with its own religious education efforts is responsible for pressures urging the regionizing of the public school. See their Justice and Judaism (New York: U.A.H.C., 1959), pp. 51, 52
29. Rabbi Morris Adler, op. cit.

In this manner, the public school both aids and challenges the religions of America in their quest to transmit the heritage of faith. It aids the synagogue and church by fostering a devotion to the values which they share. It offers them challenge, by imposing on them the duty to transmit the doctrinal beliefs and practices which give these values sanction

President John F. Kennedy perceived this challenge and expressed it well when, immediately following the Court's announcement of the Engel v. Vitale ruling, he declared: "The Supreme Court has made its judgment. Some will disagree and others will agree. In the efforts we are making to maintain our constitutional principles, we will have to abide by what the Supreme Court says. We have a very easy remedy here, and that is to pray ourselves. We can pray a good deal more at home and attend our churches with fidelity and emphasize the true meaning of prayer in the lives of our children."



Welcome to your Father's House, all you who seek peace in the midst of life's struggle, all you who yearn for rest and refreshment of soul from the turmoil of existence. This holiest of days offers healing to each bruised heart - it holds out to each of us the sweetest of gifts: God's love and blessing.

How full of awe is this place - truly this is the place of God!
How full of awe is this hour - this is the hour of our Lord! Once again we stand at the parting of two eternities - an endless past, and an endless future before us, the yesterday and the tomorrow. Once again we feel the relentless onward rushing of time - another year is gone...another year begins. Once again the shrill, sharp sounds of the shofar shake us from our complacency:

T e k i o h T e r u o h T e k i o h

Awake ye sleepers, awake from your sleep! Awake ye dreamers, awake from your dream! Ponder your deeds...and ponder also that season follows season...after spring comes the summer and maturity...and then autumn...and the leaves fall...~~and the pages on our calendars fall even as the leaves fall...~~and who dare say: what doest Thou, O God?

Tekioh, Teruah, Tekioh - the long unbroken tone, then the broken, stacatto sounds, and then again an even longer unbroken tone. Each of these calls has a meaning - and in the Book of Numbers we are given ^{their} a clear interpretation:

אֶת־הַשּׁוֹפָר וְהַבָּצִלְעָן וְהַחֲזָקָה וְהַקֶּשֶׁף וְהַחֲזָקָה וְהַקֶּשֶׁף
"On the day of your rejoicing and your festivals
ye shall sound a Tekiah... but

אֶת־הַשּׁוֹפָר וְהַבָּצִלְעָן וְהַחֲזָקָה וְהַקֶּשֶׁף וְהַחֲזָקָה וְהַקֶּשֶׁף
"when war comes to your land and an enemy oppresses
you, you shall sound a Teruah...the broken sound."

The Tekiah denotes happiness and joy. The Teruah represents sadness and sorrow, wailing and lamentation.

Tekioh, Teruoh, Tekioh, joy, sorrow, sadness, gladness...are not these the very emotions which fill our inmost being on this sacred day. Our first impulse is one of joy: Rosh Haschono is a festive occasion, and we gather ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ a festive mood, eager to thank God for the many, many blessings with which our lives are crowned.

All too quickly though, our festive mood changes to one of solemnity and sorrow. For we look about us and see that not a few of our dear ones are ^{no longer} ~~not~~ with us. So many loved ones have not reached this day and we weep when we remember the warmth of their real presence.

We weep because we miss them. We weep also because there is so much we want to say to them and so much we want to do for them and we cannot because they are not here. ~~It is~~ ^{It is} frightening to realize how careless we often are with those who are most precious to us. Children disregarding their parents, parents their children, brothers their brother, husband and wife indifferent to each other - until calamity strikes, and then we cry and beat our breasts. ^{+ say} chotonu...we have sinned...we did not mean to say that ^{+ to you}...we did not mean to speak harshly ^{we did not mean to deal falsely}...we do love thee...but there is none to heed ^{there is}...and none to heed.

Oh, if we could only learn to forbear and to speak softly. If we could only remember that whatever we do now and whatever we say now will be lived over at some future time in memory. No tear has ever been spilled ^{though} for too much love shown, ^{for} ~~and~~ too much kindness expended. A great many tears have been shed for having dealt too harshly, with too much severity. The rabbis of old had a saying that one ought to live each day as if it were ones last day on earth, to which we fervently add: ^{live with you dear one,} live with your brother as if it were his last day on earth.

The shofar changes its tone. The Tekuah of sadness becomess the ~~tekuh~~ of gladness. Many are not with us, to be sure. But the best of their lives is with us. Their kind deeds, the beautiful words they spoke are ~~treasured~~^S in our hearts - silent secrets ~~in~~^{within us bringing} our hearts, comfort~~ing~~, and consol~~ing~~^{ation}. And after all, we are here, ~~+~~ in good health, surrounded by many of our friends and we join with them in the fervent ~~prayer~~^{benediction} of thanks: Boruch, she-he-chi-yonu ve-ki-je-mo-nu ve-hi-gi-yo-nu laz-man hazeh Praise be Thou O Lord Our God, who hast kept us ~~in~~ life and hast sustained us and hast brought to this hour.

And so the shofar sounds, with its insistent voice, like the hammer-blows of fate, again and again, Tekioh, Teruah, Tekioh, joy, sadness, ~~laughter~~ joy, ~~gladness~~ weeping, and again laughter. Is this not the pattern of our personal lives, the pattern of the life of every man? We began~~d~~ our year with a Tekio ~~with~~⁵ hope, with firm resolutions for self-improvement, for self-betterment. We were aware of our many endowments; minds to know, eyes to see, hands to build, hearts to touch with pity. We were aware of these gifts and we meant to use them ~~for~~^{for} good ~~advantage~~.

Now the day of judgement has come again and we are called upon to review the past year of our life, with its successes and its failures, its hopes and disappointments, its achievements and its barrenness, its conquests and its surrenders. ~~And~~ the Tekuah note fills our hearts when we have to admit that there were more of the latter than the former, more failures than successes, more surrenders than conquests, when in our Cheshbon hanefesh we have to recognize our failure to make the best of our endowments, ^{when we have to admit} the extent to which we have fallen short of the ideals we set for ourselves. Our tradition frequently compares life to a book ^{a book} in which ~~man~~^{we mean} ~~wants~~ to write one thing, yet write another. Surely this is the most humiliating moment in our lives - when we compare what we have written with what we wanted to write.

But again the shofar changes its call to a Tekiah bidding us to look more to the future than to the past, pleading with us not to permit the thought of past failure to depress us as much as ^{we allow} hope for future victory ^{to} should enthuse us. Tikku Bachodesh Shofar - Blow the horn at the new ~~year~~ ^{year}---proclaims our scripture--to which the rabbis add - tikku shofar lehischadshus - blow the shofar for renewal--blow the shofar to proclaim a new spirit, a new heart, new hope -- this is the central message of the New Year Day -- life ^(Life is not one straight line beginning at one point & ending at another) has many beginning -- one can always start anew -- one can always make another beginning -- Hamechadesh bechol yom tomid ma-asey bereshis - God ^(Himself, we are told) renews daily the work of creation.

"Why should man while living worry over ~~xxxx~~ his failings of which he is the controlling master" - insists our tradition. ^{Mend your errors & they will become warnings, incentives for growth & nobler striving} Life moves on. Abide not moaning amidst the ruins of the past, ~~but live~~ ^{Forward} is the clarion call of the shofar! Leave the failings ^{to} of the past. ^{your duty} Begin anew. Hamechadesh ^{under a new beginning} bechol yom tomid ma-asey bereshis - ^{that has before you} God also renews daily the work of creation.

Tekio - Teruah - Tekioh. Joy, sadness, joy. Is not this the whole history of our people, with its lights and its shadows, its triumphs and its tragedies. Our story began with a Tekioh - we all know the glories of Israel's past; and we all know also how our Tekioh was ^{broken into a Teruah: the Temple was destroyed and exile was followed by expulsion and terror, persecution and massacre, destruction and grim death.}

But the Teruah was not the final sound for our people, we know this also. We of this generation ^{have been} are privileged to hear the ^{giving of a new spirit} new sound. the sound of a new Tekioh. The State of Israel has been established in our day - who would have thought this possible only ten years ago it still seems like a dream -- the tear stained prayers of a thousand years finally answered -- the downtrodden, the beaten the crushed finally permitted to breathe anew.

And we here in America are inaugurating a new century, our fourth century of life in the land of the free.

I do not want to dwell too long on the general - I am anxious to let the sermon of this morning remain a personal matter but who can refrain from commenting on this signal event in our history.

Right here, also, is an appropriate ^{moment} ~~event~~ for a personal confession.

^{A year ago} I left the protecting walls of the seminary ~~a year ago~~, and in my youthful exuberance ~~and ignorance~~ ^{went out into} I ~~came~~ to the community. Surely my early sermons ^{reflected this spirit} ready to recriminate and to reproach. After one year ~~here~~ I know better - for I found here a vital community, a warm community, a community busily sowing the seeds of its ~~and~~ self-perpetuation. I found here a community whose members were capable of rising to ~~the lofty~~ ^{the} heights of love and of generosity which are a challenge confronted them.

What is true here is true everywhere in our land. Let no one ^{therefore} slur the American Jewish Community, for so what it accomplished. It was the American Jewish community which ⁱⁿ ~~absorbed~~ the short span of seventy years ^{absorbed} nearly 5 000 000 Jews who would otherwise have perished in the death camps of Europe. It was the American Jewish Community, composed of those very immigrants of whom we spoke, which lavished its help on Jews of other lands with a generosity unprecedented in the history of ^{even in the history of our people} ~~my~~ people. It was the American Jewish Community which through its financial ~~and~~ political support made possible the most remarkable event in all recent history, the creation of the state of Israel. Surely this American Jewish Community is worth of our praises and prayers, is deserving of God's blessing for many more centuries of creative endeavor.

Tekiah, Teruah, Tekiah...we have heard these calls...heard them re-echo in our personal lives and in the lives of our people and our community. We wait for one more sound...a sound for which we have striven and wept and bled...we wait for the Tekiah Gedolah... the great Tekiah which will herald that age when all hatred will cease and men everywhere will ~~live~~ live together as brothers.

§ Is this too much to hope for, to ~~xxxx~~ wait for, to work for?

I do not think so, for I hold in my hands a little medallion, a little copper coin. It was fashioned over two thousand years ago when the Roman legion first entered the holy land. Some seven hundred years after this medallion was coined, the mighty Roman empire tumbled from its great height, beaten and crushed, never to rise again. On the face of this coin, the following words are inscribed: Judea est perdita...Judea is destroyed, the Jewish people is demolished for ever more. Here I am, two thousand years later, a rabbi in ~~an~~ Israel, heralding the beginning of still another year of Jewish life a year, which we hope and pray will spell the beginning of another golden Age in Jewry, the Golden Age of American Jewry.

Amen.

Sept. 1955 Rosh Hashonah - 1955

Rosh Hashonoh

Once again we are assembled in our synagogues on this great Judgment Day. Once again we have entered the courtyard of the Almighty, seeking our people, our God, yearning to find ourselves. For many centuries, back to the dim dawn of our history, this day has summoned us to stand up and be counted before the throne of God. Once again, we ^{have} responded, as did our fathers in countless generations.

How strange the power of this awesome day! What ^{magic} ~~power~~ does it wield? What force is it, what all-pervading, all-absorbing power compels the response of those who cannot be touched at any other time!

Perhaps it is that sacred spark within us all longing to find its Source, for surely there comes a moment in the life of every man when he must reach beyond himself and his day-by-day existence, when, like parched earth, he thirsts for the dew of heaven, when, filled to the (loathing) with earthly pleasures, over-weary of earthly struggles, he ^{hungers} ~~strives~~ for something higher, loftier, for the word of God, for the godly itself. Our Days of Awe answer this need in man - hence their irresistible power. For a brief hour, at least, we are lifted above ourselves, above the human, all-too human, which holds us apart, and we stand united in the knowledge that we are all the children of One God, al members of one people, all brothers of one faith and one destiny, (albeit) that common destiny is often one of pain and degradation.

There is another force which binds us on this day. It is an inner force, undiminished through the years, untouched by the experiences of our years. It is our longing for life, our will to live no matter what expressed in that most fervent of holiday prayers:

זָכוּרנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַי וְלִפְנֵי סֵפֶר הַחַיּוֹת
"Remember us unto life, O King, who delightest in life,
and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Thy sake, O God
of life."

Remember us unto life! Here, my friends, is one prayer that is genuine - the prayer for life - made genuine by the poignant awareness of this hour which bids us look about and remember those who lived but live no more. It is a prayer made real by the stark and ever more pressing realization of our own inevitable end. Time's [?](fatal) wings do ever forward fly...and every day we live is a day we die.

The determination to live is the law of life, standing firm, like a rock at sea, unmoved by the seething waves of fate. To be sure, there are times when, buffeted about by the ill winds of fortune and the evil doings of our fellowmen, we think our zest for life (to ^{be} have) waned; but no sooner does the pressure lessen, and our ^{love}(impetus) for life surges forth anew, mightier than e'er before. The horizons of our fortune may darken, one ray of hope is enough, gives us enough strength to herald the ^{sun}~~day~~. The affirmation of life is the passion of our soul. Of this we seem certain: being is better than non-being, life better than death, no matter what, now matter how cruel the blows of life itself.

There is no life without ~~ad~~versity. Man is born in pain and lives to experience much pain. The year now past has taught this truth to each of us in one form or another: some among us stood ~~by~~ the fresh graves of dear ones, others faced dangers, dread disease, some were bent by need, others by debt, some were ravaged by the waters of a violent flood, others torn by the pangs of (writhing) conscience. For some the cause of anguish was real enough, others were beset by fears of what might be, by the dread born of morbid imagination.

Nor will the ^{coming}~~new~~ year be free of pain. There is no panacea, no all healing wonderdrug for all life's ills. There ^{can be}~~is~~ no heaven on earth though there be peace on earth.

We know this also, know it well...

And still we ask for life, devoutly, fervently "זכרנו לחיים ה' אלהינו" - Remember us unto life, O Thou who delightest in life." We ask for ~~life~~ in obedience to an inner voice, ask for it because we are Jews whose religion, more than any other, has set life's affirmation as man's noblest task. ~~אמר~~ "Choose ye life" enjoins the Torah, the ~~אורח חיים~~ the Law of Life. Judaism teaches that while man is not born to suffer, neither is he on earth merely to seek joy. Judaism sees life a duty - and its worth, not in the balance of pleasure over pain, but ⁱⁿ what a man does with his brief span on earth.

There is a second part to our prayer ~~אמר~~ "inscribe us in the book of life." This is not, as one might ordinarily assume, a poetic ^{restatement} ~~repetition~~ of the opening phrase, "remember us unto life." Life alone, a bare existing, ^{a mere being} is the gift of all living creatures, of animals as well; but only man can have a book of life. ^{Indeed} ~~The emptiness of merely~~ ^{a book recording his use of life} ~~living devoid of doing which satisfies the beast would be unbearable for man, more insufferable by far than any other pain.~~ That is why we ask not only for life, but even more fervently for a book of life, a book in which we will not only be inscribed but into which we ourselves ^{can} ~~may~~ write with the finger of our industry, with the work of our hands, with the stylus of our labor; a book ^{which} ~~whose pages~~ will not be empty when we are summoned before the throne of God but ^{white pages} ~~which~~ will reveal the traces of our existence by recording not alone what we enjoyed and how we suffered, but ^{also} how we labored and what we achieved.

It is the writing of this book which transforms the animal into ^{the} man, which gives meaning, value, purpose to our ^{existence. It is labor which} ~~lives. A new~~ ^{pages are} ~~pages~~ opened ^{open} ~~for us~~ by the hand of God every year, nay every morning of our lives.

~~And every year, every morning, the hand of God opens for us a new page in the book of life, a page in which we may write the record of our existence, of our joys and sorrows, of our labors and achievements.~~

וְהָיָה כְּסֵדֶיךָ

Not all books of life are equal in length - some have many pages, others, alas, all too few - ~~the book of life is not a book of many pages, some personal and some of life with others~~ But fortunately, it is not the span, but rather the content that determines life's worth. The Rabbis of the Talmud who searched the scriptural text most carefully, noticed that in the passage read as the Torah portion on Rosh Hashono the word ^{זָקֵן} meaning "age" appears for the very first time in all of Scripture. ^{וַאֲבְרָהָם זָקֵן} "And Abraham grew old and advanced in years." Building a strange and fantastic legend on this fact they proclaimed: ^{לֹא הָיָה זָקֵן} "There was no old age until Abraham's time." At first glance this appears an absurd notion. Does not the Bible itself record the many years allotted to and ^{Adam} ~~Abraham~~ and to a Methuselah? How can we conceive of men living without growing old? And yet, behind this legend, quaint and exotic, our rabbi's convey a profound truth. They tell us ^{the truth} that a person may live without growing old, that life and maturity are not just a matter of years. Some ^{men can} ~~only can~~ capture eternity in the span of a fleeting hour, for others a life of many years spells no more than early death.

Here, when all is said and done, we have come upon the central theme of Rosh Hashono, ^{upon} the ringing challenge of this holy hour, which bids us search our souls and ~~looker truthfully~~ face without ~~self~~ deception that most agonizing of all questions: Where art thou, man? Where are you in your world? So many years and days of those allotted to you have passed and how far have you gotten in the world? Are you all that you might have been, all you could have been?

We spoke of life as the attribute common to animal and man alike, and of the book of life which marks man created in the image of God. Man, the animal, or man the near-god - how is it with us? The catalytic agent which transforms man from one to the other is the spirit of the divine which was breathed into him. To the extent that that spirit is active ~~the spirit is active~~

^{Man} ~~he~~ approaches to that exalted state which holds him ^{but} "little lower than the angels." to the extent that it is dead within him he becomes the brute. An eternal struggle goes on within man between these two opposing forces, one dragging him down ^{into the mire} ~~to the level of a beast~~, the other lifting him up among the stars. 2

To what extent does that struggle take place within us, and who has the victory? To what extent do higher things occupy our mind? What striving is there after the development of our spiritual potentialities of the capacities of our souls? How many of us read or think or discuss? ^{How many of us give way to our God given impulse of} How many of us try consciously to improve ourselves? To how many of us has life become merely a matter of making as much money as possible in order to indulge ourselves as much as possible? In how many of us is the spark of the divine moribund, at the brink of extinction?

Blessed the man who can honestly say: Yes, I have risen to the level of my potentialities, I have done my best. Woe unto us who can only beat our breasts and groan: Chotonu, We have sinned. Woe unto us who are filled with the reproach of wasted days and lost opportunities, with the regret of the years which the locusts have eaten, of time that flies and cannot be recaptured.

^{Today is the birthday of the Jewish People} And so, we sit in solemn assembly and pray not only for life but ^{even more} ~~also~~ for a book of life. ^{דברנו וזכרנו ונאמר ונזכר} A new year is dawning. One part of our lives is gone, another page has been turned, a page covered with writing or blank as we willed. ^{it} But a new year is dawning, and a new page is before us.

May it record a life of ^{fulfilled} ~~fulfilled~~ opportunity, of ^{fulfilled} ~~actualized~~ potentiality, so that, when ^{in the inevitable course of time} the final page is turned it ^{will} ~~will not have to be said of~~ us: ^{How wonderful how wonderful} ~~What a pity~~ ^{here is another flower that has never unfolded its buds.}

How wonderful how ^{beautiful} ~~beautiful~~ a life vehicle like a flower has ^{finally} ~~finally~~ unfolded to bloom. Amen

"Restore us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be restored, renew our days as of old."

ROSH HASHONAH 5718

There is a difference between one and another hour of life in their authority and subsequent effect. There are hours of gaiety and cheer, when our mood is merry and our spirit light. And there are other hours, fewer by far than the first and all the more real and precious for their depth, when life reaches beneath the surface and touches the soul - moments of trial, moments of faith - when we confront some profound abyss of experience, and the deep within us seeks an answering deep.

Of such a weight and nature is this twilight hour of the vanishing year which summons us to the House of God for prayer and for meditation.

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterfalls...

The psalmist's words come as close as any to expressing the solemnity which stirs within us at a time like this when, in the stillness of the hour, we hear the rushing of the waves of time, their relentless pounding against eternity's shores, when, pausing for a brief moment at a turning in life's flow, we leave the familiar waters of the past and fearfully prepare to enter the current ahead, those waters of tomorrow, whose depths are unfathomed, whose course is yet to be charted.

Behold, the sea of time, unceasing in its surge, wave succeeding wave, it swells and there is no holding its flow. Day adds unto day, week to week, the years vanish, and who dare say: what doest Thou, O Lord? Twelve full moons have passed since last we stood here for judgment. Our prayers for a year of life were answered, praised be His Holy Name! But alas, not all our pleas were heard with equal favor, for many loved ones are here no more; they have reached their horizon and are gone out of sight... that is our mortal lot in life...and yet they live, - within us; their best is with us, when we remember, as we do on this Remembrance Day, their thoughts, their deed of lovingkindness - tender treasures in the heart, consoling, sustaining, comforting. Thus is love triumphant over death. The spirit of man soars high, untouched by the billows of man's spirit, untouched by time - here is a truth which gives meaning to the message of this day, the message of life's renewal. Man's body may be bound to the seasons. Their passing leaves wounds which will not heal. The flesh cannot be born anew. Not so the soul of man. His inner force can be rebred, his inner being reborn. The 'new heart' and the 'new spirit' are an ever-recurring miracle of life.

It is to the realization of such a miracle in each of us that this great holy day is dedicated. Here is the burden of its plea, the essence of its hope, the beauty of its promise: that a new beginning is possible for every life. Each movement of the Rosh Hashonah symphony unfolds the theme of renewal: the music sings its song, the shofar shouts its demands, the prayers give voice to our longing. Renew our days, renew our days as of old...

Foremost is our yearning for the renewal of life alone, our plea for still another year of being. Grant life and health, O Lord, to loved ones, and to us.

We pray this, though we know that life is not unmingled in its blessing. Its cup runs bitter as well as sweet. The world gives us not only

the pleasant things that we seek, but also the horrible and cruel things in infinite variety from which we shrink.

Who among us has not been stunned by the tragedy of life touching too close to its loveliness: a little child, beautiful today, crippled tomorrow... a man, strong and confident one day and then crumbling like a house of sand built by children on the shore when the tides of destiny flow in... plenty and poverty... righteousness and rottenness... beautiful homes and hospital wards... the laughter of children, and then their weeping at the graveside of a parent.

There is no life without such cruel contrasts, and yet we pray for it, assured that being is better than non-being, life better than death, no matter what its demands. Our mood finds expression in a tale of bitter-sweet humor told in the literature of our people about a humble laborer who walked along his toilsome road with shoulders bent, weighed down by a heavy burden on his back. Utterly spent, despairing of the future, he cast his bundle to the ground and called on God to redeem him from misery, to take his life. When lo and behold, the angel of death appeared and asked: "Did you call me, son of man?" "I did," was the laborer's frightened reply. "I need some help. Please help me place this burden back on my shoulders!" In such a manner do we choose life, no matter how weary the weight of the world. We live not as we wish, but as we can.

To be sure now, we desire greater gifts, as wealth. We all want the good things of life: the vigor of health, the comfort of wealth, the warmth of love, the inspiration of beauty. But if these joys cannot be had without the penalty of equal sorrow, we seek them both and pray for strength to face the dark with dignity. "Man is not born to suffer," taught our sages. "But neither is he on earth merely to seek joy. The worth of his life is measured, not by the balance of pleasure over pain, but by what he does with what he finds on earth."

And thus we pray, thought not without trembling - a haunting refrain gives voice to our longing... Our yearning for still another year of life.

But even as we ask for life, we know that it is more than life that we need. Mere physical existence does not satisfy us; it is not an end in itself; alone, it does not justify ~~us-it-is-not-an-end-in-itself~~ our striving. In addition, we require a sense of worthwhileness in being, born of a purpose which gives reason to the struggle for existence. That is why we pray, not only for the renewal of our days, but also for the renewal of our ways, for the renewal of our dedication to those ideals which ennoble life with meaning.

We all cherish such ideals. Off in a distance, we see a vision of what life ought to be, of what we mean it to be. We never altogether abandon such a dream. But somehow or other in life our vision becomes obscured and we lose the way to its attainment. The Swedish novelist, Strindberg, once compared life to an orchestra, an orchestra "which always tunes up, but never begins to play." Sometimes we are like that - instrument in hand, wondrousome music before us, but we don't break into song.

If there is a sadness in our backward glance, here it is: The music we wanted to play, but never did... The life we meant to live, but didn't...

That cause we almost made our own - but we could have been defeated, we could have been ridiculed, or perhaps we preferred the comforts of ease - and so we didn't follow our vision... that spirit of unselfishness with which we hoped to meet our fellow man - but then we met the world, and reeling with the fever of its contests we said: the strong alone survive - and failed to conquer our selfishness... or take the love with which we sought to bind our married life - but love has its price and we might have had to pay it, in constancy, devotion, sacrifice - instead we yielded to the lure of passion, and we lost our love.

How poignant it is that we come so close to the loveliness of life and fail to grasp it... not just in its larger avenues, but in our day by day experiences also, when lesser virtues elude our hold: gratitude unspoken... forgiveness withheld... goodness restrained... love unfulfilled. Music within us - but not a sound beyond our lips.

The reasons for our failure are not too far to seek. Indolence is one, our proneness for delay another, the weakness of the flesh a third; but over and above all, our passion for conformity, our mania to follow the multitude. How can we do good, when others do evil, we say. How can we be honest in a world dishonest in its every real... how tender love to people who know only hate?

The world is too much with us - a warring, grating, confounding world. We must away - where there is distance and altitude, sky and horizon. That is why we welcome this day of days, these precious hours of worship, which turn us from the world without to the world within and help us recover direction. Here we are reminded of the values the world makes us forget. Here we regain our vision of the good, for here we listen to words of Torah... Torah, the sum of all ideals which give worth to life. That is why our fathers called the Torah a 'tree of life' and the passage in which they spoke of it as such is juxtaposed to our text in prayer: we pray whenever we turn to the ark. "It is a tree of life to them that hold fast to it," and then we add: "Renew our days as of old." The renewal of ideals gives meaning to the renewal of life.

Still another longing impels our worship. It is our quest for the renewal of faith, for the rebirth of belief in God.

We don't mean formal, institutional religion now, not creed, not ritual, nor even worship. We mean, rather, an inner spirit, an inner force, a reliance which sustains, a power which transforms... the kind of faith that sustained our fathers in ages past... the kind of faith which brought them hope in exile, patience in adversity... the faith which gave them strength to bear relentless toil and endlessly to suffer and endure...

Yea, even the faith which gave countless martyrs of our people the fortitude to meet grim death with joy, and bare the neck to every sharpened blade and lifted ax; or, pyres ascending, leap into the flames and saint-like die with the 'sh'ma Israel' on their lips.

Oh, how empty, how shallow our own faith is compared to this. We have our synagogues, to be sure, and we attend them. We cherish the principles of our religion and pray the world would keep them. We recognize our ties to Klal Yisroel and support our brethren wherever they may be. We even believe in God, many of us do, in an intellectual sort of way, and so we call

ourselves Jews. But something is missing, my friends, something that makes the difference between formal and conventional religion and its vital transforming reality. That something our father discovered, and we need discover it too.

We need to desperately, for while routine religion suffices to sustain our lighter hours, when life runs out into its depths, we need a deeper faith... when death takes those we love, when children slip through our arms... when dread disease makes waste of our strength... when we say or think: now we have touched the bottom of the sea, now we can go no deeper, and yet we go deeper... then we need a different kind of faith, then we need the kind of faith that moved the Psalmist to proclaim: "Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

And thus we pray most fervently.
Restore us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be restored... renew our days as of old.

Such then is the purpose of this great holy day. "Renewal" is its banner, the renewal of our ideals... the renewal of life... the rebirth of faith.



"1161 2261 2116 3 1161"
lost in with thee, O Lord & we
shall be restored, renewed days as gold"

Rosh Hashono 5718

There is a difference between one and another hour of life in their authority and subsequent effect. There are hours of gaiety and cheer, when our mood is merry and our spirit light. And there ~~are~~ other hours, fewer by far than the first and all the more real and precious for their depth, when life reaches beneath the surface and touches the soul - moments of trial, moments of faith - when we confront some profound abyss of experience, and the deep within us seeks an answering deep.

Of such a weight and nature is this twilight hour of the vanishing year which summons us to the House of God for prayer and for meditation.

אֲדָמָה עֲלֵה לְעֵץ חַיִּים
Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy
waterfalls...

The psalmist's words come as close as any to expressing the solemnity which stirs within us at a time like this when, in the stillness of the hour, we hear the rushing of the waves of time, their relentless pounding against eternity's shores, when, pausing for a brief moment at a turning in life's ^{flow} stream, we leave the familiar waters of the past and fearfully prepare to enter the current ahead, ^{those waters of time now} a current whose deeps are unfathomed, whose course is yet to be charted.

Behold, the sea of time, unceasing in its surge, wave succeeding wave it swells and there is no holding its flow. Day adds unto day, week to week, the years vanish, and who dare say: what doest Thou, O Lord? Twelve full moons have passed since last we stood here for judgment. Our prayers for a year of life were answered, praised be His Holy Name! But alas, not all our pleas were heard with equal favor, ^{for many} ~~There are~~ loved ones ~~who are here no~~ more; ^{they} ~~who~~ have reached their horizon and are gone out of sight. ^{What is our lot will be... And yet} And yet they live, - within us; their best is with us, when we remember, as we do on this Remembrance Day, their thoughts, their words, their deeds of lovingkindness - tender treasures in the heart, comforting, consoling, sustaining. Thus is love triumphant over death. The spirit of man soars high, ^{untouched by} ~~above~~ the billows of time.

Man's spirit untouched by time - here is a truth which gives meaning to the message of this day, the message of life's renewal. Man's body may be bound to the seasons. Their passing leaves wounds which will not heal. The flesh can not be born anew. ~~But~~ Not so the soul of man. His inner force can be restored, his inner being ~~can be~~ reborn. The 'new heart' and the 'new spirit' are an ever recurring miracle of life.

It is to the realization of such a miracle in each of us that this great holy day is dedicated. Here is the burden of its plea, the essence of its hope, the beauty of its promise: that a new beginning is possible for life. ^{look} Every movement of the Rosh Hashono symphony ^{unfolds} ~~ascends~~ to the theme of renewal: The music sings its song, the shofar shouts its demands, the prayers give voice to our longing. ~~וְיִשְׁכַּח וְיִשְׁכַּח וְיִשְׁכַּח וְיִשְׁכַּח~~ Renew our days, renew our days as of old...

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We pray this, though we know that life is not unmingled ^{in blessing} ~~joy~~. Its cup runs bitter as well as sweet. The world gives us not only the pleasant things that we seek, but also the horrible and cruel things in infinite variety from which we shrink.

Who among us has not been stunned by the tragedy of life ^{touching} ~~smuggling~~ too close to its loveliness: a little child, beautiful today, crippled tomorrow... a man, strong and confident one day and then crumbling like a house of sand built by children on the shore when the tides of destiny ^{flow} ~~roll~~ in... plenty and poverty... righteousness and rottenness... beautiful homes and ^{hospital wards} ~~insane asylums~~... the laughter of children, and then their weeping at the graveside of a parent.

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^{To be sure now, we} ~~We live, not as we wish, but as we can.~~ ^{as well} Our desire is for greater gifts, ~~to be sure.~~ We all want the good things of life: the vigor of health, the comfort of wealth, the warmth of ^{love} ~~beauty~~, the inspiration of beauty. But if these joys cannot be had without the ~~equal~~ ^{equal} penalty of ^{equal} sorrow, we seek them both and pray for strength to face the dark with dignity. "Man is not born to suffer," ^{taught our sages} ~~our fathers~~ taught. "But neither ~~is~~ he on earth merely to seek joy. The worth of his life is measured, not by the balance of pleasure over pain, but by what he does with what he finds on earth."

^{And thus we pray, though not without trembling} ~~And thus we pray~~ ^{אָפּוּ יְיָ, עֲלֵנוּ, יְיָ, עֲלֵנוּ} - a haunting refrain gives voice to our longing... ~~we pray for the renewal of our days.~~ ^{our yearning for still another year of life.}

But even as we ask for life, we know that it is more than life that we need. ^{mere} Physical existence ~~alone~~ does not satisfy us; it is not an end in itself; alone, it does not justify our striving. ^{In addition} We require a sense of worthwhileness in being, born of a purpose which gives reason to ^{the} ~~our~~ ^{for its sake} struggle. That is why we pray, not only for the renewal of our days, but also for the renewal of our ways, for the renewal of our dedication to those ideals which ennoble life with meaning.

We all cherish such ideals. Off in a distance, we see vision of what ^aought to be, of what we mean ^{it} to be. We never altogether abandon ^{these} ~~these~~ ^{life} dreams. But somehow or other in life our vision becomes obscured and we lose the way to ^{us} ~~their~~ attainment. The Swedish novelist, Strindberg once compared life to an orchestra, an orchestra "which always tunes up, but never begins to play." Sometimes we are like that - instrument in hand, wonder-some music before us, but we don't break into song.

If there is a sadness in our backward glance, here it is:

The music we wanted to play, but never did...The life we meant to live, but didn't...

That cause we almost made our own - but we could have been defeated, we could have been ridiculed, or perhaps we preferred the comforts of ease - and so we didn't follow our vision...

that spirit of unselfishness with which we hoped to meet our fellow man - but then we met the world, and reeling with the fever of its contests we said: the strong alone survive - and failed to conquer our selfishness... or take the love with which we sought to bind our married life - but love has its price and we might have had to pay it, in constancy, devotion, sacrifice - instead we yielded to the lure of passion, and ^{we} ~~lost~~ our love.

How poignant it is that we come so close to the loveliness of life and fail to grasp it...not just in its larger avenues, but in our day by day experiences also, when lesser virtues elude our hold: gratitude unspoken...forgiveness withheld...goodness restrained...love unfulfilled.

MUSIC within us - but not a sound beyond our lips
~~Why? Why do we do it? Why do we stifle our impulse for good?~~

^{are} Yes, the faith which gave ~~Israel's~~ ^{of our people the} countless martyrs to fortitude to meet grim death with joy, and bare the neck to every sharpened blade and lifted ax: or, pyres ascending, leap into the flames and saintlike die with the 'shema' ^{Asheah} on their lips.

Oh, how empty, how shallow our own faith is compared to this. We have our synagogues, to be sure, and we attend them. We cherish the principles of our ^{religion} ~~faith~~ and pray the world would keep them. We recognize our ties to Klal Yisroel and support our brethren wherever they may be. We even believe in God, many of us do, in an intellectual sort of way, and so we call ourselves Jews. But something is missing, my friends, ~~something~~ ^{something} that makes the difference between formal and conventional religion and its vital transforming reality. That something our fathers discovered, and we need discover it too.

We need to desperately, for while routine religion suffices to sustain our lighter hours, when life runs out into its depths, we need a deeper faith ~~for support~~...when death takes those we love, when children slip through our arms...when dread disease makes waste of our strength...when we say ~~and think~~ ^{and think}: now ~~we~~ ^{we} have touched the bottom of the sea, now ~~we~~ ^{we} can go no deeper, and yet we go deeper...then we need a different kind of faith, the we need the kind of faith that moved the Psalmist ^{to proclaim} ~~when he~~ ^{said:} ~~Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.~~ ^{Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.}

And thus we pray ^{with} ~~for~~ fervently. ^{וְיָשׁוּבָנוּ אֲדֹנָי} Restore us unto Thee, O Lord and we shall be restored...renew our days as of old.

Such then is the purpose of this great holy day. "Renewal" is its banner the renewal of our ideals...the renewal of life...the rebirth of faith.

אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְנוּ
 Our father our King, inscribe us for blessing
 in the book of life...

With this fervent prayer on our lips and in our hearts, we prepare to greet the New Year, prepare to lift the curtain of our future beneath whose impenetrable veil lies all that tomorrow may bring. Grant life and health and happiness, O God - this is our earnest plea. We can hear it from the lips of parents who seek God's grace for their children; we can read it in the eyes of children who need their aging parents near just a little longer; we sense it in the tender kiss with which a husband greets his loved one on this New Year's day; we can feel it in the ~~hand~~clasp of every faithful friend. Grant life and health and happiness, O God. This is the devout prayer of a rabbi, who stands in the pulpit before his God, blending his petitions with those of his people to send a sacred song of supplication to Him who is enthroned on high.

Once again we are assembled in the courtyards of the Almighty heeding His summons to judgment. Again the shrill sharp blasts of the shofar shake us from our complacency with their demand for a 'cheshbon-hanefesh' for a reckoning of the soul, for honest self-appraisal. Again we are confronted with life's towering challenge: Where art thou, man? Where are you in your world. So many days and years of those allotted to you have passed and how far have you gotten in your world? Are you all that you could have been, all that you might have been?

The hour of our judgment is essentially a humbling one. In the eddy of emotions swirling within us now - sorrow and joy, hope and doubt, confidence and despair, following each other in rapid and relentless succession, - this surely is our dominant mood, humility, ^{in the first place} a ~~humility tempered by shame~~. It is a humility born of the painful awareness of our transience, a ~~shame engendered by the recognition of the pitiful impotence of vaunted~~ human power and achievement.

The Day of Remembrance reminds us of life's evanescence and we are humbled.

Tulow

How quickly the year has passed. It seems only yesterday that we were gathered here, a full year before us, each of its months a meadow of hope, each day a lovely flower blossoming on that ~~meadow~~^{field}. We were happy and confident then, as we looked ahead, giving no thought to the years ultimate conclusion. But leaves fall and flowers fade and the ~~years~~^{months} glide silently by, reckoning little of our clocks and calendars and their petty markings of times and seasons. Our days are as a shadow that passeth away, they are speedily gone, they fly away...

But ~~is it~~^{does} really time ~~that~~^{really} flies, is it ~~time~~^{really} that passeth as a shadow? ~~Is not~~^{Is not} time ~~in~~ a concept of infinity? It was, a million years ago and will remain, a million years hence, unending and unchanging as space. Humanity may sink into nothingness, the stars in their heavens may cease to be, mighty, massive mountains may crumble into dust, but time will remain in its proud majesty, symbol of eternity. No, time does not pass. We pass ~~now~~. We who are born of dust are destined to return to dust in time and in a world which will lament us a day and forget us forever.

Mortals in immortal time are we, finite atoms of infinity. And though we live to be a hundred years, yea even by reason of strength a hundred and twenty, the highest span ~~of life~~ allotted to ~~man~~ man, what are these years in contrast with eternity. Are not a thousand years in God's sight as ^a yesterday when it is past, as a watch in the night, a grain of sand along the shore, a tiny drop in oceans vast, ~~unending~~...

Thus does the Day of Remembrance teach us to know life's brevity. In the stillness of this awesome hour we hear the rushing of the waves of time, we sense the sinking of the flood of past existence into the gaping abyss of eternity and we are humble.

The backward glance of one year humbles us also with its reminder of human frailty, of man's utter helplessness against ~~the adverse blows of~~^{relentless} fate.

Many of us learned this lesson in all too many ways in the months just past. Here and innocent baby was torn from the arms of loving parents; there a young wife with ~~her~~ little children was bereft of a loved one and provider; dread disease maimed one ~~man~~^{man}; ~~another~~^{man} was told that ~~he~~ had only a few months to live. The joy of life turned to aching grief... the burden of pain and misery heavier ~~grew~~^{grew} ~~month by month~~^{month by month} ~~day by day~~^{day by day}.

Against such tragedy we are all of us without recourse; no power on earth can stay the blows of destiny's iron hand. Though the rich man offer all his treasure and the man of power wield all the influence at his command, disease will not cease its ravagings, ^{nor} ~~and~~ the dead ~~will~~ ^{will} return to life. We are all ~~of~~ the witnesses or victims of endless anguish which finds us helpless. The Day of Remembrance teaches us this truth and we are humble~~ff~~.

Perhaps the most humiliating aspect of our self-appraisal is the recollection of defeat ~~in~~ an area where we might have been victorious: our moral losses, our failings and fumbings in the field of duty and responsibility. We are shamed when we compare what we wanted to be, what we could have been, nearly were, and then admit, without deception what we really are.

Someone once asked the Rabbi of Ger: "Why do people always weep when they read the prayer: Man is born of dust and unto dust he will return? If a man sprang from gold and turned to dust it would be proper to weep, but not if he returns whence he has come." The rabbi replied: "The origin of the world is dust, ^{and} ~~that~~ man has been placed in it that he may raise the dust to spirit. ^{But alas} ~~But alas~~ man always fails in the end, and everything crumbles into dust... ~~the process~~"

Dust raised to spirit. How many of us can honestly say that we have fulfilled ^{his} ~~our~~ task. We ~~have~~ ^{have} the ^{means, to be sure;} ~~precious~~ are our many endowments: minds to know truth, eyes to see beauty, ears attuned to harmony, hearts to stir with pity and to dream of justice and of a perfected world.

What have we done with these endowments? Where was the wine of life and the soft voice of its yearning? Where was the song of day and the silent wonder of the night? Where were spring and summer? The petals on the grass, the wings in the air? Where were they?

^{was the beauty + the dream} Where ~~were friendship love and beauty? All of them snared and reeled, snarled and tangled in the twists and turns of yard after yard of long thin paper tape, ticker tape, symbol of our lust and our greed.~~

~~Again the backward glance of our judgment hour fills us with humility and shame.~~

Again the backward glance of our judgment hour fills us with humility and shame. At last we realize that we contribute really very little to our world, that we receive from life more than we have power to give to life. As the years glide silently by they influence our course more than we can influence theirs. We are beggars at God's door and not bestowers.

~~But~~ ^{AND YET} humility is not ^{our} final emotion on this day. Even as the wail and rumble of the shofar's Teruah is resolved by the resonant cry of the final Tekiah, so is our feeling of humility ultimately redeemed by a sense of gratitude and faith. After all, transience and frailty and defeat do not give a complete summary of life's meaning - there is much permanence also, ~~and much~~ ⁺ strength and many a victory.

Upon the contrary, these very shadows give greater lustre to the light of our lives. Our awareness of life's brevity makes us more conscious of each precious day and hour we are allowed on earth. Our cognizance of human frailty, the pain we see or suffer increases our sense of thanks for our many blessings, for those countless gifts of life we take for granted, in wanton carelessness, until their loss again affirms their real worth.

To thank God for what we do have, for each gift he chooses to bestow - this surely is the ultimate mandate of our day, the lesson of our meditation. It is a lesson which was brought home to me with poignant force by a member of our community not long ago. Last year his son was stricken with polio; near death for many ~~years~~ ^{second in a row} months, he was left completely paralyzed. A month or so ago, the father stepped forth joyfully, his eyes overflowing with tears of gratitude. "Thank God," he exclaimed, "my son can move ^{some} the ^{toes} ~~of one of his feet~~ ^{why, we} ~~may~~ even be able to teach him how to use a typewriter with his ^{but} ~~hands~~."

^{What is our complaint, my friends + where is our gratitude?}
"Thank God, my son can move a toe... Oh God, how blind we often are to our good fortune, how ^{how} wantonly careless of our many blessings!
Beggars ~~expecting~~ at the door of the universe, it behooves us not to expect with ^{surely} ~~hungry~~ eyes ever more munificent gifts - more flowering, more fruitage, more gladsome quivers of the happy flesh. But rather it becomes us to pray with humble hearts that whatever be the gifts ^{bestowed} ~~granted us~~, they may stir within us an ever growing sense of wonder and of thanks.

As for the thought of our moral failings, our fumbings in the field of duty, these also need not leave us to humility and despair. Here ^{too} ~~also~~ the shadows serve to accentuate the lights and many a defeat is redeemed by victory. Who among us cannot lay claim to a noble thought, an encouraging word, or a deed of loving kindness which helped another along the way.

We remember also the lives we ^{nearly} ~~almost~~ lived - the visions we almost followed, the truths we almost spoke, the embattled self-centeredness we nearly conquered. And knowing how close we came to these ~~att~~ ideals, we know also that we can attain to them, that we can lead the lives we nearly lead, lives large and generous, bold and adventurous, ~~warm~~ lives great in the scope of their thought, warm with imagination, courageous in an act of faith,

magnanimous in forgiveness, smilingly victorious over setbacks and disasters. ~~the~~

Again, our ~~humility~~ is replaced by respect + hope. —

These ^{are} ~~are~~ the thoughts which move us as we gather in our synagogues and listen to the struggling blasts of the shofar herald the passing and the birth of ^{the} ~~a~~ year. Like the swelland the surge of the sea and like the thunder of the ^{heavenly} ~~skies~~, its echoes resound over our heads: first a wail, then a rumble, ~~at last~~ a victorious cry.

Our own lives speak to us. The stress and strain, the pain and passion of our days ring forth from each note of the ram's horn and fill us with humility and awe. Yet how jubilant are those final accents of the Tekiah, accents which foretell the ultimate glory of life, a life filled with joy and blessing, a life enhanced by the nobility of ^{human} ~~our~~ deeds. Is not this unique: Humility redeemed by faith, the sorrow of life transformed into the song of life.

As the year glides silently by, may the promise of that final tekiah be fulfilled in our lives. May we come to recognize the good with which our ^{days are} ~~life is~~ crowned, the many gifts which are ours in abundance, yea even in a greater measure than the sorrow with which we are afflicted; and may we in gratitude for all we have, heed the call to live, to live from the fulness of our hearts, to live as we might live.

Then will ^{his judgment} ~~the~~ prayer of ~~our day~~ also find fulfillment, and no matter how great or small the number ~~of our days on earth~~, we will have been inscribed for a life of blessing.

Amen

Wed. eve.

ל'ב' ח' ה'תש"ד
 ב'י'א' ל'ב' ח' ה'תש"ד

"Let us affirm the majesty and the holyness of this day, for it is one of awe and dread. On this day, O God, Thy dominion is exalted, and Thy throne of judgment is established..."

TO WESTPORT
 IN TIME FOR HX
 RETURN

I often wonder, my friends, whether anyone belonging to another religion or to none can realize the impressive solemnity which comes upon us at a time like this when, in the stillness of the night, we seem to hear the rushing of the waves of time, when, standing at a great milestone, at a passing, as it were, of two eternities, an endless past and an endless future before us, we bid a farewell in tears to all that was yesterday and fearfully prepare to lift the curtain of the future, which, beyond its impenetrable veil, carries all that tomorrow may bring. And, amidst the stillness and trembling awe is heard the voice of God on high, who says to each of us: "אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַקָּדוֹשׁ הַנּוֹרָא הַנּוֹרָא הַנּוֹרָא" The Lord who walketh before thee, shall ever be with thee. He will not forsake thee, be not dismayed."

Another year glides silently by and our soul regards its march in thoughtful contemplation. How fleeting are the days of our years...a wind passeth over them and they are gone. Life flows through our fingers like ^{so much} precious grain from a loosely fastened bag. It eludes our grasp. It eludes us often because we do not hold on fast enough, because in wanton carelessness we fail to greet each moment of existence with full awareness. It eludes us also, simply because such is its nature, such its law; ultimately, life calls us to ^{relinquish} ~~surrender~~ everything it brings. // Here is one of life's imponderables: we are asked to embrace the world even while we must surrender it; we are enjoined to greet each moment of existence with full awareness, even while we ^{are compelled} ~~have~~ to return life's gifts. One of the poets of the American Rabbinate, the late Milton Steinberg, pointed to this paradox in one of his most brilliant creations: man rises only to fall, he wrote, we receive countless blessing in life, only to relinquish them at last. The Rabbis of the Talmud put the matter in dramatic simplicity: ...אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַקָּדוֹשׁ הַנּוֹרָא הַנּוֹרָא הַנּוֹרָא

"A man comes into this world with his fist clenched...when he dies his hand is open."
We begin by grasping, ultimately we must surrender, and the art of living is to know,
when to hold fast and when to let go.

Surely, we ought to hold fast to life, for it is wonderful, full of a beauty and a
worth, full of a grandeur that break through every pore of God's own world. We
know that this is so, that life is passing wonderful, but all too often we recognize
this truth only in our backward glance, when we remember, as we do tonight, what
was and what is no more. Here is the real reason of the remorse which fills us at
this parting hour of the year. We remember a beauty that faded, a love which is no
more; but we remember also, and with far greater pain, that we did not see the beauty
when it flowered, that we failed to respond with love to love when it was tendered.

Wasted opportunities...neglected endowments...unappreciated blessings...beauty
which found us blind...heavenly harmonies unheard by our ears because they were filled
with the din and noise of our petty discords. These are the remembrances which bring
us to reproach. It is a poignant thing especially to realize how careless we often
are of life's most precious gift, the love of our loved ones: parents disregarding
their children, children their parents, brothers their brother, husband and wife
indifferent to each other, until calamity strikes and then we beat our breasts and cry:
yehon
chotonu, we have sinned...we did not mean to say this to you, we did not mean to deal
falsely, we did not mean to speak harshly, we do love thee...but there is none to
hear and there is none to heed.

How wantonly careless we often are of our blessings until it is too late. Like
birds whose beauty is concealed until their plumes are spread against the sky, our
blessings brighten only as they take their flight. Here surely is a needful lesson
brought by our meditation. Life is precious...it is ineffably dear...never be too busy
for the wonder and the awe of it. Be reverent before each dawning day, greet each hour,
seize each golden minute. Cling to life, with all your heart and soul and might. Hold
fast to life, while yet ye may.

How blind we often are to our good until it is too late:

Thornton Wilder makes this point in what has become a classic
of American Drama...Perhaps you remember it, the play Our Town
In this play a young woman

She chooses her 16th birthday and as she comes upon the scene
Momma Poppa

But nobody looks and nobody listens and all the business

Goodbye Momma, good by papa Grover's corners

clocks ticking

hot hot baths

newly ironed dresses

and lying down and getting up again...on earth

you are all...

Does anyone care?

Is not this the malady...we are blind, blind to so much of the
beauty of the world. We walk about on a cloud of ignorance,
travelling, we spend and waste time

The rabbis of the Talmud put the matter tersely:

ADAM BA' BA-OLAM BEYOBYEEM KEFUTZOT

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

We begin by grasping

ultimately we must surrender

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

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

full of a beauty and a worth,

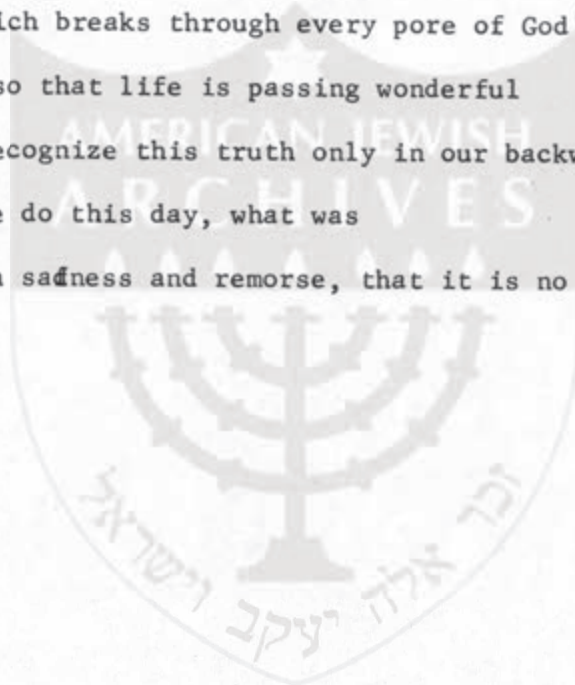
full of a grandeur which breaks through every pore of God's own world

We know that this is so that life is passing wonderful

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

when we remember, as we do this day, what was

and then realize, with a sadness and remorse, that it is no more.



That was Kivie but that was not the whole of him.

There were other elements which went into his making and defined his essence...
his children for whom he cared and in whose accomplishments he took so much pride
his grandchildren and his great grandchild, those jewels of his crown
and above all there was Emily
of all earthly goods his most precious
standing by his side
giving quiet assent to everything he did
bringing him grief only when she was not well or near
Emily, Kivie's wife: his love, his thought, his joy.

And now he is no more,
and because he was what he was and is no more we weep
Alas for those who are gone and whose like will not soon appear again
And yet our faith enjoins us not to mourn overly long, nor to live cloistered
behind the walls of an ill controlled grief
Never to tarry in the valley of weeping but to turn it rather into a place of
many springs.

In the midst of life's losses we are to think of life's gifts
in the midst of life's sorrows we should remember life's joys
in the midst of life's depair we must cling to life's undying hope.

Nor are these losses apart from these gifts.

These joys from these sorrows, these griefs from these hopes.

Our losses grow from our gifts -- whatever is given is taken.

Again, our hopes grow out of our very losses - whatever is taken, is in some
form given back again...

Our sorrows are but joys softened into the tenderness of aching recollection
and our tears, our tears are naught else than our remembered smiles.

But if our tears are naught more than our remembered smiles
let the soft remembrance of the smiles of our better days
glisten even through our tears
let our darkness never be so dark but that there shine through it the light of hope.
And let this hope not be the last refuge of the disconsolate
but rather a strong life-giving force bent upon enhancing human existence in all
of its manifestation.

Is not this what Kivie would have us do could lips now silent speak
to turn from death to life
to further causes he advances
to love the living whom he loved in life...
to smile, aye to "keep smiling" even through our tears.

Let us resolve to do so
then will we give substance to the promise inherent in our words
that the memory of the righteous is indeed for blessing.

Amen.

For all of the fine words that attend our most significant life ceremonies, there is, nearly always, a hand gesture that marks the actual moment of transformation and passage. At a wedding it is the exchange of rings. God help the photographer who fails to click the shutter at that moment! At a funeral it is the first handful, or spadeful, of dirt thrown upon the casket. Mourning truly begins with that gesture of finality. At a birth it is--or was, before the advent of new age birthing procedures--the slap on the behind that brings forth the newborn's first, gasping cry.

And at a college graduation? Only when the sheepskin is handed to you, followed by a handshake--only then will you all sigh and cheer and no longer secretly fear that some computer somewhere has made a mistake that will force you to repeat your English comp. course. Commencement has genuinely occurred when you walk the aisle back to your seat clutching the diploma in your hand.

I want to freeze that gesture for the next few minutes so that we can feel its full resonance. Specifically I want to share with you some of the parallels that I see between this moment of commencement, of beginning, in your lives and moments of commencement in the life of the human race. That may sound a bit grandiose to you--yet I would maintain that such an exploration is an essential quest of the religious life. Just as biologists tell us that "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny"--that the

individual human fetus, as it develops, goes through the stages of species evolution--so do our religious texts instruct us that the patterns of our individual lives reflect the cosmic whole; that the moments of our days are vessels of eternity; that we are, each of us, fashioned in God's image. The psalm with which I began, Psalm 90, supposedly authored by Moses, humbles us with its proclamation that in God's sight "a thousand years are like yesterday that has past." Yet in our sight, too, each moment, if paid full attention, can be an epoch.

"A man comes into the world with his hands clenched," says one of my favorite Jewish proverbs. "He dies with his hands open." Today you are entering the world with clenched hands, holding tight your diplomas. You are, in a sense, newborns. I know that thought may offend the sophisticates among you who feel that they have suffered enough term papers and final exams to last a lifetime. All of that, however, is but the birth canal through which you will now enter your careers and your independent, adult lives. Of course your fists are clenched: perhaps in reluctance to let go of these four years of campus life and the childhood that preceded them; perhaps in anticipation of the struggles to come in our predatory world. Your fists are clenched; that is a reflex of infancy.

That reflex is considered by many scientists to be evidence of our evolution. One of the most outspoken humanists of our day, Dr. Carl Sagan, in his book The Dragons of Eden, speculates that the clutching reflex of babies is a holdover from the days when we were arboreal creatures, living in the treetops, when a timely clutching reflex in response to being startled may well have served to prevent a fatal fall. Most evolutionists at the

very least see significant connections between the development of our opposable thumbs and our high intelligence. Homo Sapiens, as we immodestly call ourselves--the Wise Man--is distinguished by an intelligence for tool-making, a harmony of brain and hand represented by our ability to grasp.

The Book of Genesis speaks of this human characteristic as well, but in a tone of warning, even of curse. Our fall from the Garden of Eden is sealed by God's curse upon Adam and Eve that they will have to labor, she in childbirth, he in agriculture. The curse for eating of the Tree of Knowledge--the fruit of which you have all been gnawing these four years--is a human hand that can, and must, grasp tools.

But what kind of curse is that, you might ask. Is it not our goal to become dextrous, to fashion our lives as we would like them to be? Does not the infant strain to be able to grasp, and hold, and use, the things of this world? Is that not what power is all about?

"Yes," I reply to you, "and go at it. Take a hold of life and squeeze every drop of experience and goodness from it. Don't allow our mass society to spoonfeed you and assign you a place. Find your own sustenance, and define your own place. Only be warned: the first act to arise from our clenched hands was Cain's act of murder. So beware the clenched hand, for it speaks not only of power, but of fear--a deadly combination."

Power and fear--power as antidote to fear--that is the psychological reality that motivates the clenching of our hands. To grasp an object brings new power to the infant, yes. But it also brings the recognition that the object is not a part of the self; that the self has boundaries, a beginning and--o, horrors!--an

end; that the self is separate, and alone, and naked, and dependent, and will have to cry and howl and clench those fists even tighter in order to survive. This, I believe, describes the inevitable, primal experience of growing up that recapitulates, in each of our lives, the fall from Eden, from blissful merger into painful individuation. I have no doubt that, for all of your joy this commencement day, as you are reborn into the world from the womb of this college you are bound once again to undergo that feeling of fall, exile and alienation.

Of course, we survive our falls from Eden, but not without cost. In the Bible it takes but one generation to internalize the exile and seal shut the gates of the soul. Whereas Adam, in a cry of joy to his God, can say of Eve, "This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," their son Cain is capable^{only} of asking the same God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Within one generation, the clenched hand has turned into a fist. Within one generation, humankind has forgotten how to open the hand, how to reach for another's hand. Within one generation, the "other," once seen as part of the self, has become a threat, something to be conquered or obliterated.

Still you may be asking, What has this Biblical exegesis to do with your graduation from Lafayette College?

Just this: that you not forget the second half of the gesture of commencement, the handshake. It is more than a congratulatory salute, much more. It is an offer of support, a reminder that you are not alone in your strivings, however solitary you may feel. It is a reminder to you to open your hands, each day, to other human beings, to give, to receive and to pray. It is a reminder to you to allow your hand, the hand that works, that creates,

that strikes, to have a sabbath.

Open your hand to give. Once upon a time, when the fabric of human community was not so torn by modern history's violent forces of displacement, giving was an act that was inextricably bound with one's sense of belonging. In Judaism we have the concept of tzedokah, which, feebly translated, means "charity." But the Jewish concept of charity is not of an individual act of kindness. Tzedokah is a communal obligation. One gives because one belongs to a community that has needs. One gives because it is unthinkable not to give.

Today, in America, it is becoming highly thinkable not to give. Community is a scarce commodity in our country. Though we are bonded by traditions of tolerance, these often translate into mutual indifference rather than creative interaction. Crisis or tragedies such as the space shuttle disaster seem the only ceremonies that we truly share, with the electronic media serving as our house of worship. Even our precious democracy is becoming fossilized; we are smugly apathetic and contentedly ignorant. And our lack of a social safety net--America ranks low in the industrial world in its caring for the elderly, the poor, the handicapped, the everyday citizen--breeds a sense of desperate necessity, a concern for our own well-being and little more.

Now, I am not here to give a political speech. Whatever your political views, whatever your belief system, whatever you might propose as the cure for the deep-seated alienation that plagues our country, I entreat you to give: to open your hand, and with it, your heart. I entreat you to search for that sense of belonging, which is more, far more, than a perch on the ladder of success. Don't allow our culture's "Have a nice day" smile to lull you into

believing that you're having a nice day. "Where there is too much," says a Yiddish folk proverb, "something is missing"--and in America there is too much of "Have a nice day." What is missing are the people who will bother to define what makes for a nice day--a defining that often demands nonconformity and sacrifice.

On the most personal level, such nonconformity might mean taking friendship seriously in an age when geographic and economic mobility have made our social roots shallow indeed. It might mean dealing with marriage as a sacrament, not an experiment, and parenting, as mothers and fathers, with the same vigor and commitment with which you pursue your careers. It might mean handling money as a tool rather than as a toy or, even worse, as a holy object. It might mean wearing your education as a skullcap and not a crown, as a garment of humility and not of pride, for what have these four years really gained for you but the knowledge of how little you know and the desire to know more?

Open your hand to receive. It has been said that the opposite of love is not hatred; the opposite of love is apathy. Likewise I say that giving and receiving are not opposites. Both are open-handed gestures of love; their opposite is indifference.

To my mind, being indifferent in America is a prodigious feat, for the panoply of cultural treasures, the rainbow of races and ethnicities and ideas, the sheer, creative force of our national enterprise, are as grand as a mountainful of wildflowers. Yet how little of this beauty we are ready to receive. How narrowly most of us perceive America's cultural spectrum. How confined we are by our so-called tastes. Even in this bicentennial year of the Statue of Liberty--a statue that was given a voice by a Jewish

woman, Emma Lazarus, author of the famous sonnet that declares to the world, "Give me your tired, your poor"--even in this year, Americans remain a peculiarly provincial people. We sunbathe on Caribbean beaches without being aware of the fecund Caribbean culture that has blossomed on America's own East Coast. We listen and dance to rock music without detecting the black blues and gospel sounds that echo within the top forty. We debate policy and assign tax dollars for Latin America without hearkening to Latin America's own voices, including a generation of the most dynamic novelists in our hemisphere.

We export Coca-Cola to China, Disneyland to France, jazz to Scandinavia, designer jeans to the USSR, MacDonald's hamburgers to just about everywhere--yet we view this as a one-way commerce. We fail to realize that our most precious resource of all--the American people--are indeed imported from every part of the world.

I spoke early in this sermon of worlds within worlds, of how individuals reflect the cosmos. The United States of America is such ~~is such~~ a miniature of the entire earth: not merely a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant corn belt, but also an African plain, an Asian mangrove forest, a Mideastern desert, a Caribbean island. It is our manifest destiny not to imprint our corporate logos on every continent, but to conduct ourselves as a proud community of immigrants, a cross-section of our contentious earth living in creative harmony under a superb body of law. America's role in the world should not be as policeman but as teacher; America's symbol in the world should not be a raised fist but the Statue of Liberty's "lamp beside the golden door." But in order to present that shining light to the rest of the world, we must first

look in the mirror and recognize our own diversity, our many faces.

That means each of us. I am not speaking here of an abstract patriotism; I am speaking of concrete citizenship. As Americans we have the opportunity and the calling to open our hands and receive gifts from dozens of cultures, races, religions and creeds. Yes, we need to focus, to specialize, to claim what is our own, in order to get on in life. You had to select a major subject in order to graduate from Lafayette, and if you go on to graduate school you will find yourself intensifying and narrowing your academic focus. Yet the progressive tendency in academia today is towards cross-disciplinary education, stressing knowledge as a component of philosophy rather than as a mere tool of power. Thus medical students are increasingly exposed to courses in ethics and other humanist disciplines; thus scientists in every field are becoming increasingly aware of the social implications of their work; thus anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and others in the social sciences find themselves more and more often in the same classrooms and lecture halls. Hands and minds are being joined, in academia and way beyond, to find wholistic solutions to what are very much the global problems confronting our species and our world. Hearts and voices are being joined in the prayer that concludes the 90th psalm: "Let the work of our hands prosper, O prosper the work of our hands."

"A man comes into the world with his hands clenched; he dies with his hand open." Perhaps we are, at last, learning to open our hands before being humbled by death, if only because, in this

nuclear age, we are perpetually humbled by death: by the spectre of the mushroom cloud, which rises up on the horizon of our lives like a giant fist, like Cain's fist at the altar of sacrifice. Perhaps we are at last learning to open our hands because we have seen the horrors that the clenched hand has wrought. Perhaps we are at the dawn of a time of true giving and receiving, of "Live Aid" in perpetuity--"We are the world, so let's start giving"--as our former senses of self, of boundary, of property, of nation, become obsolete in the face of the Great Equalizer. For "in the foxhole," as we used to say during World War II, "there are no atheists." Today the whole world is a foxhole, and there is no feeling, thinking human being who is not, in whatever way he or she finds suitable and conceivable, praying for the redemption of the human race.

"Bliss was it," wrote William Wordsworth in 1805, "in that dawn to be alive,/ But to be young was very Heaven." To have the strength in your hands to seize the time, to seize the world, to shape a destiny out of the clay beneath your feet; and to have the strength in your heart to sanctify time, to heal the world, to join your clay-stained hands together in prayer--these are the glories and virtues of this moment in your lives. "Almost everything that is great has been done by youth," said Benjamin Disraeli, Britain's great statesman. He understood that the hand opened in youthful love is far more potent than the hand that opens in aged surrender.

So I open my hands to you, welcoming you as my inheritors and as guardians of posterity. Mazel tov to you all, and God bless the work of your hands.

Schindler: Rosh Hashana
Union Temple, Brooklyn.
Rosh Hashana 5750

Once again, my friends we are gathered here at this turning hour
of the year.

Once again, the shrill sharp sounds of the shofar shake us from our
complacency with their demand for a cheshbon hanefesh
for a self-reckoning of the soul.

Once again, we respond as did our forbears through countless generations

How quickly the year has gone by.

Life is a mist...silvery...tremulous;

It appears for a time, then swiftly lifts
and all that is left is memory.

It is good to be here...to feel your presence...

to draw the strength which flows from this companionship.

Yet there is a sorrow intermingling with the joy of our renewed embrace.

Too many who were with us last year are here no more.

They have reached their horizon and are gone out of sight.

We miss them....We lament their passing...

But there is the solace

-- feeble at first but growing stronger in time --

which comes with the gift of memory..

"So long as we live they too shall live,

for they are now a part of us as we remember them."

Now, as those of you who have worshipped here over the years know,
I have made it my habit to devote at least one of my
two high holy day sermons each year to 'inyane d'yoma,'
to events of the day.

My sermon on Yom Kippur, God willing, will be of a more reflective
nature -- unless, of course, some other crisis erupts.

Today, I want to give you a Jewish perspective,
or rather my perspective, of three events
that affected the life of our people during the year just past:
the rescue of Russian Jewry, German Unification,
and, last but not least, the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

I begin with Russian Jewry, and in my musings concerning their
dramatic and massive exodus it occurred to me, that
in all of Jewish history, there have been no more than
ten or so dates that will be remembered as long as there are
Jews to remember them.

Most generations of Jews have lived and have died without ever
witnessing the decisive turns of Jewish history.

Yet within the lifetime of our generation,
those clouds parted not once but twice
and we have seen the turning with our own eyes.

First was the Kingdom of the Night, the Shoah.

Then was the rebirth of the Republic of Hope.

And now there is the Reunion,

the great homecoming of hundreds upon hundreds of thousands
of Jews from the Soviet Union.

For the Jews of Israel the new freedom means the renewal of a dream
that some had supposed was obsolete,
the chance to refresh the authentic purposes of the
Jewish national home.

There are 14 million refugees awash in the world.

Most of them have no place to go.

But the Soviet Jews do have an option.

They can go to Israel.

This is the purpose for which the state was created and which justifies
our every effort to secure its future..

For the Soviet Jews, the new freedom means at last the chance
to build a life far from the quickening curse of anti-Semitism.
Glasnost may have given a greater freedom to the Russian people;
but it also gave license to racists who now feel free to spew
their venom.

Glasnost may have opened the political process.

But after nearly a century of iron, tyrannical rule, there is no
political opposition in most of the Eastern European countries.

The only available challenge to the communist party comes from
enthnic groups: the Lithuanians, the Latvians, the Estonians,
and their like,
and all of them, without exception, have histories of endemic
Jew hatred.

In consequence the nature of the present immigration from Russia
is different from that of the 70s and 80s.

The earlier Soviet imigrants were positively motivated.

They were Zionists.

They wanted to be free to lead Jewish lives.

Today's aliyah is motivated by fright.

It is an escape from looming danger.

But freedom is not free.

To bring masses of Soviet Jews to Israel means to provide housing
schools, jobs.

That task is monumental.

60% of the new arrivals are professionals.

Among the first 100,000 to arrive were

- 150 world class scientists,
- 1,200 mathematicians and physicists
- 6,750 engineers of various kinds
- 1,300 nurses
- 3,000 doctors
- 1,320 dentists

How is Israel to absorb all these, and the 1/4 of a million Russian Jews
expected next year.

Her unemployment rate exceeded 10% even before the influx.

And how is Israel to fund all this absorption.

Fully 50% of its present operating budget is required
for debt service.

Plainly it is our task, as American Jews, to provide the resources that
will translate the dream of freedom into the reality of reunion.

It is unthinkable that the Jewish people will allow this glorious
opportunity to shrivel,
that we will allow ourselves to be remembered
as the generation that had history in its grasp
-- and then let go of it.

For that is what is here at stake:

together it has been given us to write a new chapter of Jewish
history,
to make possible a new beginning,
to bring new life to our people and our dream,
-- the dream of freedom, of peace, of home.

In this Book of Life, it is we who must inscribe our name.

* * *

A brief word about German unification.

About a week ago, a reporter from LeMonde called me from Paris,
to ask me how American Jews are reacting to these developments
and I told him that the response was mixed,
almost generational in its nature.

My mother, who lived through two world wars in her-life time
is certain that history is about to repeat itself,
that a reunited and economically powerfil Germany poses
threat to world peace.

My children, on the other hands, were struck by the the wonder of it all
relieved by the realization that the tearing down of the walls
spelt an end to the hazardous superpower confrontation.

I found myself, and still do, somewhere in the middle between these two views, even as I am of the middle generation.

Intellectually, I am able to accept the inevitability of German unification,

but emotionally I shuddered when I watched TV as the Berlin wall was torn down and I saw the German Parliamentarians in Bonn rising to a man to sing their German national anthem with zeal and zest.

The words were new, but the melody was old and I remembered the earlier version:

"Deutschland, Deutschland Ueber alles, ueber alles in der Welt."

Germany, Germany, supreme in all the world.

It is the singing of this song that made me shiver.

Still, I am somewhat relieved by the knowledge that the newly united Germany will not be neutral, that it will be firmly anchored in the European community, as well as in NATO.

Only that can provide restraint upon its power.

German or you see, neutralism would have been only the first stage of German nationalism.

WWII and the 45 years since then may have eliminated Germany's imperial urges;

yet left to itself, to its excitement about itself,

and to its almost chilling economic force,

Germany would almost certainly have recovered some of its previous pre-Adenauer notions about its manifest destiny.

History suggests that German power cannot be restrained by a balance of other powers.

That always led to war.

And there are, in any event, no other powers in Europe to act as balance

No, Europe itself must be the balance

But it cannot be that balance without its relationship to American power.

That is the critical point, and this is why I am satisfied that the united Germany will not be neutral but firmly anchored in the European community and NATO.

* * *

And now to the crisis in the Persian Gulf, and what a sharp reversal in mood it has been since last we were assembled.

Indeed, our Jewish year began with hope:

walls crumbled, as I have said;

the deadly clutch in which the superpowers were locked had loosened and the threat of a nuclear holocaust seemed to recede.

But only for a time.

The guns of August changed all that.

Their thunder reminded us that aggression still menaces humankind and that free nations must be ready to resist it.

If anything, the peril is greater than it was before the older world balance turned.

Saddam Hussein commands a powerful military machine.

His weaponry is replete with conventional and not-so-conventional arms and he has demonstrated his readiness to wield them.

The world simply will not be safe so long as Iraq has the kind of military arsenal that Hussein has built up.

Just think of what our quandary would be today had not Israel disrupted Iraq's quest for nuclear capability ten years ago.

The civilized world, led by the United States must, therefore, seek more than Hussein's withdrawal from Kuwait, or even his toppling from power.

It must do what it can to contain Iraq's terrifying military capability. That goal makes a diplomatic solution more remote, and the outbreak of war more likely.

Israel, of course, is at special risk.

Just as anti-Semitism was the cement that bound the Nazi conspiracy, so does the Iraqi leader seek to unite the Arab world with his anti-Israel rhetoric, his calls for a holy war.

Israel is further imperiled by the projected sale of American arms to Saudi Arabia -- 20 billion dollars of sophisticated weaponry -- a sale of unprecedented magnitude.

America asserts that it will not fuel the arms race, especially in the Middle East.

Does the Saudi arms sale serve such an end?

America has always promised Israel that it would maintain her qualitative edge.

How can it possibly do so after such a massive sale.

And who is the guarantee that these technologically superior arms will not fall into more radical Arab hands than are the Saudis of today! It has happened before

- the AWACS sent to the Shah subsequently became available to Khumeini --
- American state-of-the art tanks and planes sold to Kuwait are now in the hands of Hussein's storm troopers.

Israel is at risk militarily, but there is also a diplomatic risk to the Jewish State now that the U.S. has access to bases in ME countries other than Israel.

Israel has been asked to keep a low profile, whilst America draws closer to other Arab states.

That conveys the notion to one and all that Israel is a hindrance and not a help, a burden rather than an asset.

That is a flawed analysis, to be sure.

But the present diplomatic constellation is scarcely favorable.

A weakening of US Israel ties could well ensue.

Either way, Israel stands to lose:

if America wins, it will be inclined to reward the cooperative Arab States...

but if America fails to win, that is to say, if it buys some face saving compromise, Israel will have to face Iraqi power by itself.

All these are long term dangers, of course.

From the more immediate perspective, some of the tension marring US Israel relations of late have been relieved.

Israel's intelligence proved more astute than our own.

Her widely ignored warnings about Iraq's aggressive designs
were validated,

even as was her strategic analysis that the Palestinian issue
cannot be resolved apart from a wider accord with the
Arab nations.

Here, incidentally, is the one shaft of light
in an otherwise gloomy sky:

that the menace of Iraqi militancy and the awareness of their
own vulnerability will impel some more of the Arab states
to join Egypt in reaching an understanding,
if not de jure then at least de facto, with Israel.

Logic and reason call for a regional alliance embracing the Saudis,
Jordan, Egypt, even Syria, and Israel

-- if only the Middle East were more amenable to logic and reason.
But the opportunity, the other side of the coin of crisis,
is indisputably there.

A requisite for such an accord is Israel's readiness to reach an
agreement with the Palestinians.

The Palestinian issue simply will not go away,
and the longer the strife persists,

the more intractable its resolution becomes.

I know full that the peace process once initiated will perforce
result in a territorial compromise.

Still, I favor it, not just on moral but also on more pragmatic grounds.

The maintaining of the status quo by force is dangerous
from a security point of view.

How can Israel possibly defend herself with a million and three-quarter
Arabs within her own borders.

Israeli Artabs, once the most patriotic of citizens have been
radicalized, and they will remain a timebomb inside Israel
so long as this issue is unresolved.

The enemy is in the land.

It is rather like a boat.

It is better to have the water outside the boat than in the boat.

The Westbank and Gaza are a danger to Israel only when they are inside
of Israel.

It is noteworthy to mention in this context that that infamous
double standard by which the world judges Israel is
operative once again.

Saddam Hussein sets the tune.

"How can the Western World insist that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait,
even while it countenance Israeli occupation of the Westbank."

So bellows Hussein, and, alas, the Pat Buchanans and Evans and Novaks
of America re-echo his absurd analogies.

It is an outrageous analogy.

The two situations are not at all alike.

Iraq invaded and raped Kuwait in a naked act of aggression.

Israel did not invade the Westbank in 1967.

Quite the contrary.

It pleaded with King Hussein to stay his hand,
but duped by Nasser, Jordan's legions invaded Israel and lost
the Westbank in consequence.

Israel's seizure of the Westbank is analogous rather to Poland's
occupation and annexation of German territories,
Germany invaded Poland in 39 as you will recall.
The Soviet army threw the Nazis back and in the process
Poland occupied a portion of East Germany..

Now, is anyone in the free world demanding that these territories
be retransferred to Germany?

Of course not! Quite the opposite is true!

Chancellor Kohl had to abjure any claims to those Polish-held
once German lands before the Allies would give him the green light
to unify the two Germanys.

Ah, the double standard,
but when confronted with this charge the world always says:
we expect so much more from Israel...
we hold it to a higher standard...

Unfortunately, it is a standard far higher than that to which
the rest of the world adheres and that includes the Western
civilized nations.

When the British were in charge of Palestine, entire villages were razed
more than 3000 Palestinians were killed
in 1939 alone over 109 were hanged....
and now Prime Minister Thatcher denounces Israel
for deporting political activists.

French conduct during the Algerian war was marked for its
indiscriminate violence and systematic use of torture.

And the Algerian rebels did not have it in their charter to conquer
France as do the Palestinians Israel.

Charles Krauthammer put it well

"The conscious deployment of a double standard
directed at the Jewish State and no other State in the world
the willingness to condemn the Jewish state for things
others are not condemned for
this is not a higher standard.
It is a discriminatory standard.
And discrimination against Jews has a name too.
The word for it is anti-Semitism."

All this, as we have already indicated, does not absolve us or
Israel from moral responsibility.

The Palestinian problem cannot be ignored.

The settlements policy requires strictest scrutiny from this
perspective.

And even understanding Israel's desperate need to defend herself
against terrorism,

we are under no obligation as American Jews to put our 'hechsher'
on excessive force applied to keep a restive Arab
population in check.

Aye. we still have a long ways to go before Israel becomes the
pattern of our ideal vision.

We know this...The Israelis know this too.

There are qualms and there are doubts, and many self-accusing lines
need to be spoken.

But we speak these line ourselves about ourselves.

Let the leaders of no other nations speak them, especially not the
leaders of the Arab world.

Let them be silent for all time to come.

Let them not dare to raise one hand in accusation.

Their hands are drenched in blood comingled with oil.

Come to think of it, let them do what they want.

We will continue to do what we have always done,

dreaming our dreams, laboring for their fulfillment.

We are not about to collapse under the weight of pernicious libel
or contemptible verbal abuse.

We have suffered far worse and survived.

And so against the schemings and the maledictions of our enemies,
we will extend our stake in Israel.

Yes, we Reform Jews too.

We will not yield.

We will stay.

And we will build.

Roy Rosenberg Testimonial
American Judaism @ An Evaluation

Italian Farmer Story - In Roy Rosenberg's case, of course, 'so big a da honk' is indicated. I am reminded of a story about a Young Priest - A rabbi called upon to speak at the testimonial to a colleague had best take this advice in its obverse, don't just shake your head, say VOWWWWWWW.

Needless to say, I am most proud and pleased to behold and to participate in the ^{joyous} exercises of this hour dedicated to the honor of a colleague. Though I am a stranger to most of you, I am a good friend of your beloved spiritual leader, impelled by the same motives, moved by the same thoughts and ideals, and a servant of the same Lord of Life before whom ~~we~~ ^{we} stand in awe and humble reverence this night and always.

You do well to honor Roy, not only for his sake but for your own. A community that honors its leaders honors itself. And you have chosen a fitting way of rendering that honor, by demonstrating your determination to maintain those institutions which produced a leader of his kind.

The Hebrew Union College produced Roy even as it molded me and every other rabbi serving the over five hundred congregations here in America and elsewhere. The brilliant scholars staffing our alma mater taught us what we know, influenced the processes of our thought and fanned the flame of our ideals. Our College has done as much as any other institution barring none toward the survival and revival of Judaism in our land.

This is not to say, of course, that Roy is entirely a product of the College. He ^{to it} came endowed with many fine talents, utilized his time diligently and hence emerged as an especially proud product. Surely I need not extol his virtues as a congregational leader; here you know him better than I. We, his schoolmates and colleagues, ^{know} respect him for his keen mind, his scholarly attainments, and his boundless devotion to our common spiritual heritage.

It was a custom of our fathers to invoke upon every male offspring the blessing: God make Thee as Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim and Manasseh, you will remember, were the two sons of Joseph, blessed by their grandfather Jacob just before his death. The Biblical commentators of our people tell us that the two sons of Joseph weren't at all alike, ^{first} they were of opposite natures. Ephraim was a scholarly sort, diligent, industrious in the study of ^{scripture} ~~the law~~. Manasseh was more worldly, a man thoroughly familiar ⁱⁿ with the thought and ways of the Egyptian people in whose midst he lived.

Jacob, who knew them, ^{who} surely knew their differences, blessed them both, and ~~praised~~ blessed us by saying, may you be like unto Ephraim and Manasseh, not Ephraim singly or Manasseh, but like unto both as if to say, may you have the qualities, the gifts of both; for both are indispensable to the Jew, especially to ^{a leader} ~~the Jew~~ of the Jewish people.

It is a blessing which has found happy fulfillment in your Rabbi. God has endowed him with the gifts of Ephraim and the gifts of Manasseh. He is primarily a student of the Torah, of Jewish tradition. But he is also steeped in modern culture, and, thoroughly familiar with modern ways, he ^{ably} can represent our people ^{+ its faith}. It is because he is such a unique combination of Ephraim ^{and} Manasseh, that his ministry promises to be such a blessed one! ^{add to all this, of course a gentle sense of humor + a spirit of genuine devotion + you have the measure of the man.}

To us, the celebrants, this occasion has a special significance. It enjoins us to emulate his ways. The rabbis ^{of the Old Testament} tell the story of a ~~king's~~ king's son who was ^{most} anxious that everyone should know that he was a prince. "My father," he once cried, "let the people know that I am a prince." "Would you have the people know that you are my son," answered the king, then don the regal robes and put on my kingly crown, and show the people with what grace and honor you wear them." Even so does this occasion speak to us. Would ^{you} share the glory of this hour, would ^{you} partake of the honor given to your rabbi, why then you must don the robe of service and wear the crown of the Torah so nobly born by him.

(In discussing the theme of my talk for tonight)
The chairman of your dinner arrangements committee asked me to give ^{my impressions} a young rabbi's impressions of the American Jewish community. I feel presumptuous to do so; my experience is far too limited to permit a considered evaluation. And yet my thought concerning your communal life has undergone ^{decided} ~~marked~~ changes since my ordination only three years ago, and I would like to share some of my observations with you.

I must begin with a personal confession. When I left the protecting walls of the seminary three years ago, I was filled with a sense of self righteousness and self power. Don Quixote-like, I mounted a white charger ready to do battle against the evils besetting Jewish communal life. In my youthful exuberance I came to the Worcester Jewish community ready to recriminate and to preach, and my early sermons certainly reflected this spirit. It did not take me too long to know better for I found a vital community, a warm community, a community busily sowing the seeds of its self perpetuation. I found a community whose members were capable of rising to lofty heights of love and generosity when a real challenge confronted them.

My supreme confidence in American Jewry's future ^{has} ~~was~~ bolstered especially by ^{my experience} ~~what~~ with the young people of our communities. I ~~have~~ ^{am} spend much of my time ^{in working w/ youth} on a local regional and national level ~~concerning youth~~ - all under the aegis of the National Federation of Temple Youth, a subsidiary organization of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Oh how I wish that each of you could come to our convales and institutes ~~and share the thrill of witnessing~~ the devotion and ~~the~~ creative skill of our young people. I would want you to listen to their lively discussions on serious subjects demanding rare insight. I would want you to share the warmth of fellowship engendered by their communal singing in the dining room or about a camp fire ~~circle~~. I would want you to join them in their devotions ⁱⁿ and listen to their own prayers ^{expressing their faith &} which speak of their dreams. Then you too would see visions, comforting visions of a future that is secure.

No, no one can slur the American Jewish community. It has done and is doing much to assure its self-perpetuation, a perpetuation which represents more than mere survival, a perpetuation which spells growth and ^{ever -} greater strength. ^{American Jewry have} ~~It has~~ done much also for world Jewry. It was the American Jewish community which, in a short span seventy years has absorbed nearly 5 000 000 Jews who would otherwise have perished in the death camps of Europe. It was the American Jewish community, composed of those very immigrants of whom we spoke, which lavished its help on Jews of other lands with a generosity unprecedented in the history of any people. It was the American Jewish community, which, through its financial and political support, made possible the most remarkable event in ^{recent} ~~modern~~ Jewish history, the creation of the State of Israel. Surely this American Jewish community is worthy of our praises and prayers, is deserving of God's blessing for many more years of creative endeavor.

If there is to be one discordant note in my evaluation of American Jewish life it is in the area of public relations, of our relation to the non-jewish community. I do not refer to the attitude of the non Jewish Community to the Jew - it is wholesome and good, and I speak as one who was old enough to sense the real attitude of the non-jew to the Jew in even pre Hitler Germany. My disappointment finds its root in the approach toward the non-jew of Jews themselves, manifested in their individual actions as well as in the methods employed by some of our communal relations organizations.

So may in our midst still believe that Jews should be heard and seen as little as possible. ^{They feel, for instance, that} ~~We are not to be~~ identified with any causes about which the American people in general are divided, lest we channel the wrath of the opposition against Jews.

They are overwhelmed by the thought that the Jews are a minority and that being so they must seek the good will of the majority, cater to its whims and accept its prejudices.

It has been suggested in some quarters ^{also} that good public relations for the Jews can be developed ~~by~~ through the same tactics employed by business firms in selling ^{their} ~~products~~ ^{gasoline} ~~products~~. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Unfortunately these business firms cultivate the friendship of the public in order to sell their product. As such they are unconcerned about spiritual principles. They are not the advocates of a religious philosophy. But Judaism is. Judaism's task is not to win public favor for Jews, but rather to win public acceptance of its noble teachings. Judaism seeks first the applause of God and the commendation of history. It cannot compromise on its basic beliefs for the sake of good public relations. If centuries ago our ancestors ~~had~~ ^{had} consulted public relations ~~experts~~ ^{experts} about how to win good will they would have been told that they could ~~win good will~~ ^{gain favor} by the abandonment of their religious heritage, of their faith in God, of their adherence to the second commandment which states that "thou shalt have no other Gods before me." Our fathers did not court ill will. They did not ~~relish~~ ^{relish} living in ghettos being ~~expelled~~ ^{expelled} periodically, seeing their sons and daughters burned at the stake. But they refused to buy good public relations at the expense of their religious convictions. For them they lived and if need be for them they died.

In actually of course, this ^{suggested} approach bears ill fruit, or at best no fruit at all. The non-Jew respects that Jew who is most firm in devotion to his faith ^(+ he will respect + despise the kowtow). When all is said and done the best public relations for Jews in the American scene can be achieved through Judaism. The best good will publication for Jews in America is the Bible. The best method of winning the applause of the American community is by filling regularly the shrine dedicated to the worship of the one God and by upholding and maintaining Judaism, that Judaism which has fashioned civilizations, that Judaism which ~~has given birth to~~ ^{has} produced the authors of the old and the new testament, that Judaism which gave birth to the synagogue, the church and the mosque. It is that Judaism which ^{won} ~~has~~ the applause of history.

If we are true to our tasks, we shall live to further great convictions about one God and one world and one humanity, about the equality of men of all races and of all nations and of all degrees of education in the ^{eyes} ~~sight~~ of God and in the sight of man. To this we must testify today on the American scene.

Away then with the council of timidity. Away with the caution of cowardice. Away with those who would flatter themselves into the good graces of the powerful. Away with those who have no convictions. Away with those who would beg for good will and toady for favor. Who are we? We are Americans ~~xxxx~~ with our roots deep in American soil. Children of a faith whose co-religionists were with Columbus when he discovered America, whose sons were with Washington at Valley Forge; who wore the uniforms of the blue and the grey, who died in Belleau Woods, at Guadalcanal, on the beaches of Sicily and the plains of France, and who until very recently were rotting in the putrid ^{prison} camps of North Korea. We are Americans. We elect to be Jews. We reject the suggestion of protective mimicry. We shall stand for the right as God gives us to see that right, stand for it when it is popular and pay for strength to stand for it when it is ~~xxx~~ unpopular. We shall champion brotherhood among ^{race, religion} ~~all nations, even with Russia~~, whether a public referendum ^{on the subject} would endorse or reject it. We are not chameleons who change color to suit majority opinion. We hold great truths and champion great principles, and we shall exercise our rights as full-fledged American citizens and ~~we shall~~ disseminate our faith with the boldness of conviction, with the courage of truth and with the heroism of soldiers on the field of battle.

Have I been too violent, too vehement, too outspoken. Should I have spoken more gently. But I remember the millions upon millions of Jews who went the way of martyrdom al kiddush hashem, for the sake of our faith. I remember the thousands upon thousands of Jewish young men who spilled their life's blood in many a war for America's freedom. I remember ^{especially} my own good friends Bill Levy and Herman Goldstein who ~~were~~ ^{were} torn to shreds at my side in Italy. They did not die that Jews in America should be ~~weak~~ ^{that there is something in their beliefs}. They died that all in our lands might have equal right. If, because of fear of ill will, we are timid about exercising these rights, then they died in vain. But if we exercise them to proclaim in to practice the faith in one God and in one humanity, then, and then only, do we vindicate their heroism and they sleep in peace.

This is my one disappointment and my one prayer as I look upon the American scene from the limited perspective of a fledgling rabbi. I am supremely confident in the future of American Jewry, in the future of our faith.. ^{All in all though}

^{Is} ~~Is~~ ^{an empty delusion a vision?} a vain hope? I do not think so, for I hold in my hands a little medallion, a copper coin. It was fashioned over two thousand years ago when the Roman legions first entered the holy land. Some seven hundred years after this medallion was coined the mighty Roman Empire tumbled from its great height, beaten and crushed, never to rise

again. On the face of this coin, the following words are inscribed: Judea est perditā.
Judea is destroyed. The Jewish people is demolished forever more. Here I ~~am~~ stand, two
thousand years later, I and mother Rabbi in Israel, facing a group of young and proud Jews
^{all} eager and determined to add ^{link} and her link to the golden chain of Judaism which binds us to the
past and will bind us to generations yet unborn. ~~message~~ May ~~it~~ be so. Amen.

