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SOME SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS IN ADULT EDUCATION
CONDUCTED AT TEMPLE EMANUEL, DENVER, COLORADO

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

Delivered at C.C.A.R., Cincinnati, 10 June 1950

I am happy to have the opportunity to report this afternoon to this Oneg Shabbat of the Central Conference of American Rabbis some of the experiments we have conducted at Temple Emanuel in Denver along the lines of adult education. I am certain that the experiments are in no way novel, for each of you has undertaken similar projects. The value of this short paper is simply to substantiate on the basis of actual experience over a period of several years, the basic premise most of us hold that our people are eager to participate in programs which are educational and informative. I am convinced that those pessimists who say that adult education is impossible are completely wrong. I should like to cite briefly the three lines of adult education along which we have worked.

I. Annual Lecture Series

Each year, for several years, we have conducted a mid-winter series of lectures. I have come to the conclusion that four lectures, conducted on successive Friday evenings, have a very healthy effect upon the congregation. These lectures are woven around a central theme, and can be enjoyed in sequence, or can be taken singly. We have determined that the month of February is the best time for this, since there are no holidays which occur during that month, and therefore the Series does not have to be interrupted for any special holiday observance.

At first there were some objections, because of the fact that February is the month that is traditionally employed for various types of inter-faith services. I have no use for these monotonous and platitudinous inter-faith meetings, which, in my judgment, produce no positive value, and are often times actually harmful in terms of destroying inner Jewish dignity. Therefore, I have decided to ignore them, and we devote the month of February to Jewish education on a positive note instead of perfunctory and valueless inter-faith services on a negative note.

We print a brochure, copies of which are attached, and give it wide circulation in the Congregation through one or two general mailings. By now this mid-winter lecture series has become an institution and the attendance increases considerably, as people receive these brochures and anticipate the lectures. One year we did a series of three on Jewish literature, discussing the Prophetic literature, the Talmud, and the Prayerbook. Another year we did a series called "Four Portraits of Jewish Genius," discussing Judah Halevi, Moses Maimonides, Sabbatai Zevi, and the Baal Shem Tov. This past winter we selected the theme "The Greatest Men Who Ever Lived," and gave four lectures on Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

As the members of the congregation enter the Temple, they are handed one of the printed brochures by the ushers in the foyer, and through the very succinct program notes contained therein, the congregants are able to see the outline of the lecture as they listen. I am convinced that this is one of the most successful methods of imparting factual information to

our people which we could possibly develop. Year by year, these lectures have a cumulative effect, so that the congregants can learn history and literature, biography and folklore, law and legend.

II. Institute of Jewish Studies

We have just concluded the operation of a most successful season with our Adult Institute. This Institute was conducted along rather formal lines, with classes, textbook, quizzes. A brochure was issued calling attention to the Institute, copy of which is attached. As can be seen, the classes were held every other Wednesday evening for nine months. There were two periods of instruction during the evening, from 8:00 to 8:50, and from 9:00 to 9:50. There was a third period during the evening, from 9:50 to 10:30, which was devoted to various projects such as an occasional social hour, an occasional assembly program, discussions between individual students and members of the faculty, and the opportunity of borrowing books from the Temple Library, which was opened on the Institute evenings. There were three courses offered each of the two periods, which gave the students an opportunity to choose two courses out of six. Courses given were the usual basic subjects, such as the Torah, the Writings, Hebrew, a History course up to the end of the Second Commonwealth, and a course in Theology and Practices of Liberal Judaism.

No charge was made for attendance at the Institute, and by decision of the Board of Directors of the Temple, the classes were open to all members of the Jewish community of Denver. There were approximately 100 people who attended these classes quite consistently throughout the year. The initial registration was about 150, but after a few weeks it dropped to 100 and remained there for the balance of the season. Those who came were most enthusiastic about the material which was presented to them. The courses were in the form of lectures, with a few minutes for questions at the end of each class period. In making plans for the operation of the Institute for the coming year, we have taken into consideration the enthusiastic requests of the students, and will hold the Institute every Wednesday night, instead of bi-weekly. We will eventually develop plans for granting certificates of achievement to those who complete a certain prescribed minimum number of courses.

III. Use of Pulpit for Adult Education

There are some men who are great preachers and who are capable of inspiring their congregations to heights of emotional and religious enthusiasm. For such men, the pulpit on Friday evening or Saturday morning is an instrument designed for religious elevation. Others, whose ability to deliver sermons of great exhortation is limited, may very well find that the greatest use to which they can devote the pulpit is to make of it an instrument for the education of their people. Periodically throughout the year, quite apart from the specific lecture series described above, I preach sermons which might be more appropriately described as informative talks. I do this deliberately, so that throughout the year my people may have a sprinkling of educational material. Looking through the list of sermon subjects for

the season just completed, 1949-50, I find that several of my sermons were purely educational in spirit and in content. I offer the following as illustrative:

- A. "Is Reading the Bible So Difficult?" This was a sermon devoted to a discussion of techniques and methods of using Bible commentaries, for the ordinary reader of the Bible. I suggested the use of the Hertz Commentaries and the book "Pathways Through the Bible" by Mortimer Cohen. I explained to the Congregation how the ordinary reader of the Bible is quite legitimately confused by much of the Holy Scripture and that these two simple aids would go far toward making clear the inspiration of Holy Writ. The sermon was a talk which might very well have been given to Confirmation Class students.
- B. "What Is the Mogen David?" This sermon was a description of Prof. G. Sholom's findings in regard to the history of this Jewish symbol. It was a factual, informative lecture which condensed Sholom's findings. There was no attempt made to spiritualize the symbol or suggest its inspirational values. The lecture was simply to inform the people as to when the symbol was first used, what it represented, how it developed into what it is today, and other relevant historical data.
- C. "The Fight In the Warsaw Ghetto - Passover 1943" - This sermon was a dispassionate account of what happened in those closing days of the ghetto experience. Again no attempt was made to sermonize, in the sense of drawing morals or lessons. I felt that it was necessary for the people to know the basic facts of the story, which they did not seem to be familiar with, before any inspirational message could be drawn. In future years, I will be able to indulge in homiletics, now that the educational foundation has been established.
- D. "Pirke Aboth - Sayings of the Fathers" - This sermon was devoted to a description of these few chapters, with selected examples of the type of sayings which the tractate contains. Rather than simply preach on the glory of our Jewish literature, which sermon theme always leaves the listener rather vague as to exactly what is so glorious, I decided that a solid classroom-type description of this short tractate would be much more beneficial. I therefore explained who the authors were, when it was written, what the background of it was, and when we read it.

We rabbis are prone always to complain about the Jewish illiteracy of our constituents. There is no substitute for hard work. If we wish our people to be Jewishly educated, we must attack this problem on every possible front. The three methods which have been suggested here are among the more obvious. I am certain that there are other techniques and other projects which could be developed to achieve this objective.

It is useless to wail and complain, without sitting down to the hard work of planning programs which are designed to educate our constituencies. With the proper ingenuity and skill, and with the proper persuasive power, the rabbi who will take the trouble to develop a carefully-thought-through adult educational program, can usually enjoy the assistance of his Board, his Brotherhood, and his Sisterhood in the effort to implement those programs he designs. We consider adult education one of the most important things that we do in Temple Emanuel, and we intend to concentrate upon it ever increasingly in the future.



Dr. Max Nussbaum
Rabbi

August 5, 1952

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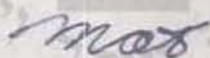
Dear Herbert:

Herewith enclosed you will find a copy
of my paper delivered at the Central Conference
of American Rabbis as you requested.

I hope that you like it and that it will
be of some use to you.

With every best wish,

Cordially yours,



Dr. Max Nussbaum, Rabbi

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June, 1952

ERETZ YISRAEL, GALUT AND CHUTZ LA'ARETZ,
IN THEIR HISTORIC SETTINGS

by Dr. Max Nussbaum

The whole of Jewish existence throughout the centuries can be summed up in the two terms of "Eretz Yisrael" on the one hand, and "Galut" on the other. The pendulum of Jewish history has always swung between these two extreme positions. It pointed toward the first in our ancient history, and it turned toward the latter after the year 70 of our Common Era. With the establishment of the State of Israel, the Fourteenth of May, 1948, the historic pendulum has recovered its old position. As we are privileged to live in this age when history turned a full circle, the present is an opportune time to re-examine the conception of Eretz Yisrael and Galut against the background of their historic settings. From such analysis one might learn many a lesson for our own generation, and receive many an answer to our present-day controversies. It might help us to a deeper evaluation of the historic significance of the State of Israel, to a more thorough understanding of our own position here, and to a greater insight into the relationship that ought to exist between the two hemispheres of Jewish life in our own time.

I

I am commencing this paper with an analysis of the term "Eretz Yisrael". This audience of learned colleagues does not need an elaborate treatment of this aspect of our discussion. It is merely a restatement of known facts, in order to clarify its meaning.

From the early dawn of our history, when God commanded Abraham to get out of his country into the land of Canaan, the Bible lavishly bestows upon that Mediterranean strip of land an almost interminable number of titles of honor: Genesis calls it "Eretz Haivrim",

the land of the Hebrews (40:15), but Samuel knows it already by the name of "Eretz Yisrael" (I, 13:19) As far back as the initial period of the Prophetic Movement, Hosea awards it the highest epithet of "Eretz Adonai" (9:3), and as a result, Palestine is "Eretz chemdah, nachalat tzvi, tzivot goyim" (3:19) -- a pleasant land, the goodliest heritage of the nations -- to Jeremiah, just before the Exile; it is "admat Yisrael" (7:2), and "Eretz hachaim" (26:20), to Ezekiel, early in the Exile; and "Admat hakodesh" (2:16) to Zachariah, at the end of the Exile. Much later in Joel, God Himself, as it were, refers to Palestine as "Artzi", My Land. (4:2)

These Biblical names in themselves already indicate the uniqueness of Palestine. It is a land with a special character: not only promised to a people, but wedded to God. The Land of Canaan is called the "Land of the Hebrews" in order to become the "Land of Israel"; in turn, this land, which is "a pleasant and goodly heritage", develops into the "Land of the Lord", and achieves the distinction of holiness. The uniqueness of Palestine consists then of the fact that it is simultaneously both the "Land of Israel" and "the Land of God". He wonder then, that very often the Bible, not to speak of the Midrashic and Talmudic literature, considers this exceptional character of the Land so self-evident, that it hardly goes to the trouble of attaching the word "Yisrael" to its name. The Torah calls it "Haaretz", the Land par excellence, knowing full well that ^{his} it is the best way to underscore its particular character and distinguish it from all other countries.

The fact that Palestine is both the "Land of God" and the "Land of Israel" leads in our Tradition to the two-fold principle of "Kedushat Ha'arets", the special holiness with which the Land is imbued and which derives its essence from the Shekinah that dwells

in the Land ^{from} and Israel that dwells on it. As far as the first is concerned, namely, "Kedushat Hashekinah", Palestine, which the Bible calls "Nachlat Adonai"³ is, according to the Midrash, so beloved by God that He chose it for Himself when He distributed the earth, in the same way as He selected Israel for Himself when He created the nations. Having done so, God added, "May Israel which is My possession, inherit the Land which is My portion"⁴. So holy indeed is this Land, that the Shekinah reveals itself there exclusively.⁵ And when some of the Sages wondered how Ezekiel could have become a Prophet though living in Babylon, the answer was that this only happened because God revealed Himself to Ezekiel already in Palestine prior to the time of the Exile.⁶ In addition, says our Jewish Tradition, Ezekiel's Book wasn't written by the Prophet in Exile, but by the Great Assembly in Palestine.⁷

Yes, so deep-rooted was the conception of the Holiness of the Land in the minds of the Rabbis, that they were motivated to make the provocative statement that "whosoever lives in the Land of Israel is considered as having God, and whosoever lives outside, is considered as if he has no God."⁸

There is no more touching description of Kedushat Hashekinah and none that sums it up better than the image projected by Deuteronomy "A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord are always on it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year". (11:12) Because of all that has been said, "the Land of Israel is holier than all other lands"⁹; it is a place of Torah because even "the air of Eretz Yisrael makes people wise"¹⁰; and it is a place of wisdom because "ten measures of wisdom descended upon the earth; nine went to Palestine and one to the rest of the world".¹¹

Occupying this lofty position because of "Kedushat Hashekinah", it is not astonishing to see our Tradition put so much emphasis upon the

Commandment of "Yeshivat Eretz Yisrael"; the settling on the Land. This was, of course, done for reasons of security. Thus, when the Bible says, "Ye shall dwell in this Land safely",¹² says the Midrash, "In this Land you will live in safety; you will not live in safety outside the Land".¹³ But more than that, and overshadowing the reasons of security, is the conception of holiness: it is the settling on the Land by the People of Israel from which the country derives its second holiness, called "Kedushat Yisrael". Taking the cue from the Bible, "Ye shall possess the Land and dwell therein",¹⁴ the Rabbis not only elevated the idea of Yeshivat Eretz Yisrael to a Commandment, but one which outweighs all others. Says the Midrash, "Living in the Land of Israel outweighs all other Commandments in the Torah".¹⁵

And the Rabbis meant every word of it. They first made unprecedented concessions in the execution of the law. Thus, "whoever buys a house in Palestine may write his contract even on Shabbat".¹⁶ This apparently was not too difficult to conceive of, for they declared that, if one lived in Palestine, one could not commit any sins. As the Talmud says, "Whosoever lives in Eretz Yisrael finds himself without sin",¹⁷ because it is written in Isaiah that "The people that dwell therein have been forgiven their iniquities". (33:24) Not alone is one free from sin, which is only a negative achievement, but the simple fact of spending one's life in the Holy Land guarantees one a place in the world to come. More than that, it isn't even a matter of living there permanently, but "whosoever walks four yards in the Land of Israel is assured of the world to come".¹⁸

The picture is now clearly discernible. The principle of "Kedushat Yisrael" brings with it remarkable advantages: concessions in the observance of the law, forgiveness for sins, the fulfillment of all the Commandments, and the assurance of a place in the world to come.

The Rabbis apparently had some difficulty with these sweeping statements when they encountered the words of Ezekiel, "When the House of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their own doings". (36:17) They solved the problem by interpreting the Prophetic words in the opposite direction: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, says, 'I wish my children were with me in the Land of Israel, even if they defile it'.¹⁹"

The influence of this two-fold Holiness of the Land, "Kedushat Hashekinah" and "Kedushat Yisrael", goes even beyond the boundaries of race and creed. Says the Talmud, "Even a Canaanite maid who lives in the Land of Israel is assured of a place in the world to come"²⁰. And this is not all. For even the people who did not live in Palestine, but only came there to die, enjoyed the privilege of forgiveness for their sins. Interpreting the Bible, "And he makes expiation for the Land of his people"²¹, the Rabbis say, "because they are buried in the Land of Israel, and a plot of soil covers them, their sins are forgiven"²². The reason for this challenging statement is given in another place, "Whosoever is buried in the Land of Israel, is as if he were buried under the altar."²³ If one is mindful of the importance our Tradition attaches to one's birth in Palestine -- attributing for instance the presence of the Shekinah in Jerusalem to the fact that Benjamin was native born²⁴ -- one fully comprehends that the two-fold principle of holiness actually covers the whole of human existence from the cradle to the grave.

To sum it up, Eretz Yisrael is not only a geographical name for the territory of an ancient people, but a title of honor that spells uniqueness and conveys the idea of holiness, which, in turn, derives its essence from the immanence of the Shekinah ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ the ~~one~~ ^{one} hand, and the settlement by the people of Israel on the ~~other~~ ^{other} land. More than that,

Eretz Yisrael is a conception of bliss standing for all the high ideals that make for happiness in national life, and justice for society as a whole. There is a spiritual quality about the image of our Rabbis projecting the "Jerusalem of below" into a "Jerusalem of above". There is something deeply touching ⁱⁿ ~~about~~ the interpretation which the Jerusalem Talmud gives to the words of the Psalmist, "Jerusalem, that art builded as a city that is compact together", ²⁵ by saying that the Psalmist had ²⁶ in mind, "A city that fosters the companionship of all of Israel". And it does not happen by chance that, throughout even the centuries of our dispersion, the name Jerusalem was bestowed upon great centers of Jewish learning -- Vilna, for instance, was called the "Jerusalem of Lithuania" -- in order to indicate that every place from which the Word of God comes forth is a replica of the ancient City of David. All the dreams of Prophets and Kings, all the aspirations of Sages and Teachers, and all the hopes of untold generations of Jews for the future of our people as it ought to be, can easily be summed up in the two words of "Eretz Yisrael".

And this is not only an ancient conception but one that has remained prevalent in the minds of our people throughout the centuries to this very day. In a discussion of this subject in the recently published Talmudic Encyclopedia which quotes from dozens of authorities -- including the Ramban, the Chafam Sofer and the late Rabbi Kook -- the author gives his summary in the following words: "The holiness of the Land...and its superior qualities both for the living and dead -- has not changed in any direction, neither in the time of the Babylonian Exile nor in the Diaspora of our own days -- it is an eternal holiness till the end of days. It Hasn't changed and will never change." ²⁷

II

The extreme opposite of "Eretz Yisrael" is the term "Galut". As if to parallel the Commandment of "Yeshivat Eretz Yisrael" which "outweighs all other Commandments in the Torah" quoted above, the Midrash sums up the conception of "Galut" by saying, "Heavy is the Galut, for it outweighs everything else."²⁸ meaning it is heavier than all the curses of the Tochochah. Under this heading, the word Galut is used in different ways. To the Author of the Book of Judges, the words "Ad yom gelot ha'arets" (18:30) mean that the land became bare of its inhabitants. Jeremiah uses it in the same vein when he employs the words of "At gelot Yerushalaim" (1:3). More frequently, however, Galut means the compulsory banishment from the original homeland to a strange territory and the suffering which this tragedy entailed. The examples for this conception are literally innumerable, and they can be found even throughout the Bible.²⁹

It is interesting to note that already our ancient literature went beyond the conception of "Galut" merely as desolation of the land and the captivity of the people. It knew already of the spiritual suffering of the Jew who lived among Gentiles, in addition to the physical persecution. Thus, the Midrash in commenting on the words of the Book of Lamentation, "Galta Yehuda" (Judah was driven into exile) asks the obvious question whether non-Jewish nations were not from time to time driven into captivity. To this, the Midrash gives the following answer, "Even if they go into exile, their exile is not Galut; Gentiles who eat each other's bread and drink each other's wine, cannot be considered as living in Galut, but for Israel, which does not break bread with the non-Jewish world, and does not drink from its wine -- dispersion is Galut."³⁰ This shows that our Rabbis were very well aware of all the psychological implications in the minority-majority relationships,

which we have begun to understand only in our generation with the help of the Social Sciences.

And again, no ancient, or for this matter, no modern source surpasses the description of Galut in the Tochacha of Deuteronomy. Here one finds all the real horrors of Jewish history which we usually associate with Galut, formulated in words of awful power. One will have to look far and wide for a parallel to the following Biblical words: "And the Lord will scatter thee among all peoples from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth... There, among these nations thou shalt have no repose, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot; for the Lord will give thee there a trembling heart and a failing of eyes and languishing of soul. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day and thou shalt have no assurance of thy life. In the morning, thou shalt say, 'Would it were even!'; and at even thou wilt say 'Would it were morning!', for the fear of thy heart that thou shalt fear and the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see"³¹. Those of us who have come through Hitler's holocaust cannot read these words without shuddering. The psychological image of Galut which the Bible projects in these few lines is unsurpassed in the literature of Western civilization.

The Rabbis considered the Galut such a heavy and crushing burden that they found only one way of explaining it: punishment for sins. The idea found in our ancient Prayer Book, "Because of our sins, we were exiled from our Land", pervades the whole of Midrashic and Talmudic literature. Say the Rabbis, "Galut only comes into the world because of the neglect of the Commandments"³², or "because of the sin of adultery"³³, or "because of idolatry"³⁴. This interpretation of Galut apparently left an indelible imprint upon the memory of our people, because, throughout the centuries of Jewish life, we find the rather

strange and fascinating institution of "Tikum Hagalut", or in its Yiddish expression, "Gaulus Auprichten": In order to expiate one's sins and do penitence, one takes upon one's self the curse of personal exile. The Talmud already knows of that when it tells the story of Rabba who goes for this purpose to Rome.³⁵ In subsequent centuries, we find the Gaon of Vilna practicing "Tikum Galut", by going incognito through the villages and towns in Poland in order to inflict suffering upon himself. All this has to do with the principle stated above. In the same way as Galut is punishment for sins, it also makes for expiation of sins.³⁶

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In citing the three definitions of Galut -- desolation of the Land, captivity of the people, and spiritual and psychological suffering -- we have by far not exhausted the variety of its meanings in our ancient Tradition. Frequently, the Talmud uses the word "Galut" only in the sense of dispersion without the corollary stigma of depravity. For example, the Talmud tells the story of Rabbi Gamliel, who sat on the steps of the Temple mount, and next to him stood Yochanon Sofer, the secretary of the Sanhedrin. Rabbi Gamliel dictated three letters in the form of three circulars, one to our brothers in the Galil, the second to our brethren in the south, and the third to our brothers in the dispersion of Babylon and all other Galuyot of Israel. In these letters, he announced to all parts of the Jewish people wherever they lived, that that particular year was a leap year.³⁷ In this story, as in many others, Galut simply means Jewish communities in other countries of dispersion. Similarly, whenever the Talmud uses the word Galut in connection with legislation, it simply means Jewish communities living outside Eretz Yisrael. As, for instance, when the Talmud speaks of "Shenay yamim tovim shel galuyot", it merely refers to the second holiday observed by Jews outside of Palestine.³⁸

There is even more to it. In spite of the general leit motif that the Galut outweighs all other curses in the Tochacha, there are statements by the Rabbis, which indicate that sometimes they looked upon the Galut even as an advantage in the battle for Jewish survival. Commenting on the words of the Book of Judges, "Tsitkot Persono Biyisrael" (5:11) the Talmud says, "God bestowed a favor upon Israel in spreading them among the nations." ³⁹ And Rashi adds significantly that this is so "because the nations cannot destroy them all together simultaneously". The same page of the Talmud has the famous statement "that the Holy One, Blessed be He would not have forced Israel into Exile among the nations, were it not for the purpose of attaching converts to them." There are many similar statements, but the ones quoted above will suffice for our discussion.

The question arises; How are these contradictory definitions of Galut explainable? What is the motivating idea behind this shifting from one extreme to the other?

In order to answer these questions, one has to remember first that the word Galut covered a very large territory. Originally, it referred to the forcible ejection from Palestine into strange lands. Later on when our people lived spread all over the world, Galut did not mean exile, but as stated above, simply dispersion. It is in this vein that the political head of the community in Babylon was called "Resh Galuta". After the destruction of the first Temple, Jews in Babylon were living in "Exile", because they were driven there by Nebuchadnezzar. But, after the destruction of the second Temple, they chose to settle there on their own volition, because of the critical situation in Palestine. The same thing happened after the revolt of Bar Kochba, when Babylon became the new home of the Jews because they ^{fled} ran away from Roman persecution. Resh Galuta wasn't ^{not} then, the name ~~of~~

^{for}
~~the man who was~~ the leader of Jews in a land of misery, but the head of an autonomous Kehillah in Babylon. All this means that the word "Galut" was used, rather ambiguously, to cover two types of Diaspora: one for forced exile, and the other for voluntary dispersion. The Rabbis felt the distinction between the two, though they used the same word, and although Galut is always Galut, there is a difference in shading, in degree though not in principle, and this might explain some of the friendlier statements of the Rabbis toward the same phenomenon of Galut, which basically, they considered the worst tragedy in the existence of our people.

There is a second, and maybe even more important reason for this discrepancy of opinion, as far as the word Galut is concerned. It has to do with the character of the dispersion, and the quality of the Exiles, as measured by the climate of freedom on the one hand, and by the religious and cultural productivity of their respective Jewish communities on the other. Under this aspect too, it is interesting to look upon the Galut of Babylon.

Already from some indirect remarks of the Bible, one can assume that the ancient community lived a rich and full life in Babylon, otherwise Ezra and Nehemiah couldn't have been products of that generation. From the sixth chapter in Zachariah, we learn that even before the time of Ezra, namely in the period of Zerubabel, Jews in Babylon used to send gold and silver to Jerusalem for the building of the Temple. From Zachariah, we learn of a delegation from Babylon that came to Jerusalem bringing gifts to enhance the Temple. The Prophet hoped that many more would come and do the same: "and they that are far off shall come and build in the Temple of the Lord." (6:16) This impression of Jewish life in Babylon was verified in 1897, through the archeological discovery, by the expedition of the University of

Pennsylvania, of the Murashu Texts, excavated at the ancient city of Hippiar in central Babylonia. From these cuneiform tablets, we learn that the economic situation of the Jews in Babylon was favorable, that they owned land and possessed capital, and that many, not only Nehemiah, were in the service of the government. We also learn that there were no barriers between Babylonians, Persians and Jews; that under Persian rule, Jews were free citizens, occupying high social and economic positions, and that this was probably the reason why many of them stayed in Babylon in spite of the permission to return. But with that, Jerusalem still remained the Holy City, and Palestine, the Holy Land. They sent money and gifts in order to maintain the Temple, were deeply interested in the welfare of the Land, and wanted to see religion grow and develop.

Obviously then, this positive character of Galut loomed differently in the minds of the Rabbis than the persecutions in their own times. Galut was still a curse and a tragedy for the nation, but the fact that the Jewish community in Babylon developed freely, made the Rabbis look upon it with friendlier eyes. The same is true with regard to the quality of the Exiles. If they remembered their Bible well, the Rabbis even knew that they were not creating any precedents. Similar sentiments were expressed by Prophets prior to their time.

When Yehoyachin, the King of Judah, was exiled in 597 with a royal court and officers of the State, a new middle class group in Jerusalem inherited their power. The new lords began to look down upon the Exiles, saying that, because of their sins, was the Galut imposed upon the entire people. Jeremiah protests against this accusation in his famous vision of the two baskets of figs, in which he says that God, Himself, as it were, is on the side of the Exiles against those who stayed on the Land. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Like

these good figs, so will I regard the captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for good. And I will set Mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart." (24:5-6-7)

On the other hand, Jeremiah turns to the Judeans who remained in the Holy Land, and says in the Name of God, "I will even make them a horror among all the kingdoms of the earth for evil; a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them." (24:9) The Prophet here acknowledges that the quality of the people in Exile was higher than of the population that stayed on in the Holy Land, but remained obdurate and spiritually deaf. Ezekiel speaks in the same vein and considers the exiled Jews in Babylon of a higher human type than those who stayed on in Judea. He, too, protests against the attitude of the Judeans who say "Unto us is this Land given as a possession" (11:15) And he says in the Name of God about the Exiles, "Although I have removed them far off among the nations, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet have I been to them as a little Sanctuary in the countries where they are come." (11:16) Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, then, were here of the same opinion, and, contrary to what might be expected, considered the Galut superior to the Judean population. It is because of this, that Jeremiah went even as far as to prepare the Jewish community in Babylon for their ultimate adjustment to their new homeland. Thus, in his famous message which he sent to Babylon, he admonished them, saying, "Build ye houses, and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and

and multiply ye there, and be not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace."
(29:5-7)

It is clear that the Prophets looked upon Galut with as much disfavor as did the Rabbis in subsequent centuries. But the quality of the Exiled motivated them to treat the Babylonian Jewish community as an exception to the rule.

History repeats itself after the destruction of Jerusalem when, again, the newly rich were exiled, and only the poor population was left on the soil of Palestine. Again, those who remained said, "Unto us is this land given as a possession", and again Ezekiel protests against that attitude and threatens them with destruction. Ezekiel analysed the situation correctly. He saw that in the rebuilding of Palestine, the Jews of Babylon would play the major role and that they would be brought back to the Land for the very same purpose of rebuilding it. (36:24)

Subsequent history proved his point. The spiritual hegemony, not only during the Exile, but in the later period of reconstruction belonged to the Jews of Babylon. The Rabbis, of course, needless to say, were aware both of the attitude of the Prophets, and of the unique quality of the Galut of Babylon. And from a historic viewpoint, they were right, because the Galut of Babylon, though lasting no more than half a century, made the deepest impact upon the development of Judaism. It not only raised our people to a higher spiritual level, but caused a basic change in its outlook on life.

Chaim Schauss, in three remarkable articles on the subject of "Galut and Eretz Yisrael" in the magazine, "Die Zukunft", rightly calls our attention to the magnificent contribution that the Galut of Babylon

has made to the survival of Judaism. One has to compare, he says, the Jews and Judeans at the time of the First Kingdom to the time of the second Temple, in order to understand what the Galut of Babylon did for us. In the Second Book of Kings (16) we learn that King Achaz ordered the building of an Assyrian altar in the Sanctuary^a, a replica of an altar that he had seen in Damascus, and this his order was carried out without protest. Nobody was shocked. Compare this to a similar order for a Greek altar by Antiochus Epiphanes and observe that the Book of Daniel calls it "shikutz meshoman" which means the "detestible thing that causes appallment". (11:31; 12:11) A guerrilla war was started, and it ended in the struggle of the Maccabees. One has to remember also the resistance of the Jews when Pontius Pilate ordered the raising of an image of Caesar in the Sanctuary. Jews offered their lives in resistance. The contrast is evident, and Ezekiel was right in saying that "the Jews who returned from Babylon will have a new spirit and a new heart". (36:26)

Yes, the Galut of Babylon is rather unique in the history of mankind. With all other nations, exile is doom, but in our history, Babylon reinforced the national strength of our people and rejuvenated its creative power. The most amazing feature is the fact that this wasn't even a voluntary Galut, like the one in the time of the Talmud, but one in which a people was forcibly ejected from its land and driven to another. And it was in Babylon that Jews freed themselves from all the heathen elements in their religious observance. It was of all places, in Babylon, that some of our most important commandments grew in their religious significance, as for instance, the Brith Milah, and the Shabbat, which became a day of prayer and of learning, and a Holy Day. (Not only this, but apparently some of the important laws were kept only in Babylon and not in Palestine. The Shabbat was the market

day in Jerusalem, and we remember from the Book of Nehemiah, that he, Nehemiah had to impose upon the Jews of Judea the conception of the Shabbat that had, in the meantime, been developed in Babylon. (13:10-32)) It was in Babylon that the Synagogue was born, and the Prayer Book, and the Prayer System. Finally, it was in Babylon that universalism and ethical monotheism were proclaimed by the religious philosophy of ⁴²Isaiah II.

To sum it up, a Galut like the one of Babylon -- in spite of the fact that living in exile was considered a national catastrophe -- had a rather high rating in the minds of both Prophets and Rabbis because of the two reasons analysed above: First, the Jews in Babylon enjoyed almost complete freedom of action; secondly, the Jewish community was of high human quality and was exceedingly productive in culture and religion. This is why one will, again and again, find statements in Midrashic and Talmudic literature which consider the Galut of Babylon in a most friendly light.

III

We have spoken up to now of the two terms prevalent in our Tradition, namely "Eretz Yisrael" and "Galut". Our Midrashic and Talmudic literature knows, however, of a third term, namely "Chutz La'arets". It is sometimes used interchangeably with the word "Galut", yet in many places, it has only a territorial connotation, meaning neither Exile nor Dispersion, but simply lands and communities outside the geographical boundaries of Palestine. Thus, when the Mishnah speaks of "Payrot Chutz La'arets"⁴³ that were brought to Eretz Yisrael and were subject to the law of Chalah -- it is obvious that the Mishnah refers here simply to fruits imported from foreign countries.

The term, Chutz La'arets, is similar to the one of "Medinat Hayam", referring to all lands neighboring on Palestine which can be

reached by boat only. In commenting on the discussion in the Talmud with reference to a "Get" that is brought from "Medinat Hayam", Rashi adds significantly, that "the whole of Chutz La'arets is called Medinat Hayam, with the exception of Babylon" which is Chutz La'arets only.

Rashi's remark here is motivated not just by geography.

Babylon -- in the so-called second Diaspora of Babylon in Talmudic times -- is very often referred to as Chutz La'arets par excellence. As such, it is sometimes even given almost the equivalent status of the Holy Land itself. The reason for it again, is the principle of Quality. Babylon, in Talmudic times, was a center of learning. Oft times when the study of Torah was interrupted in Palestine proper, it flourished in Babylon. There, the Talmud tells us, the Jews studied Torah unhindered and unafraid in the open market places called "Shukay de Rabanan" which means Rabbinical streets or Rabbinical centers. It is true that Palestine maintained its superiority because of historical tradition, and because of the "Beth din Hagadal" in Jerusalem. It is true that Palestine regulated the holidays of the year, and when once the Resh Galuta refused to accept the decision of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi, delegates were sent to Babylon telling him that it was an outrageous audacity to gainsay the Nasi and the Sages of the Holy Land. It is also true that the delegates, in order to show the edge of superiority that Palestine held, turned to the people with the question, "Is it written in the Torah that from Babylon will go forth the Law?" and the people, thus challenged, replied, "No, the Law will go forth from Zion." Still with all that, Torah did go forth from Babylon too, and the two centers were in reciprocal relationship. Rab and Shemuoyl went to Babylon; Hillel came from Babylon, and so did Rabbi Chiyah and his sons, and the Talmud testifies "that they returned the Torah to its ancient place of dignity, as did Hillel in his time."

So sincere was the recognition of Babylon as a great center of learning, that in a discussion of the problem of Gittin, the Talmud says, "As far as Babylon is concerned, Rab says it is equal to Palestine in connection with Gittin, and Samuel says it is only equal to Chutz La'aretz", ⁴⁸ which means, that Rab at least, was of the opinion that the Jews in Babylon were learned enough to know as much about the laws of Divorce as did the Jews in Palestine. And this is not all. Because of the spiritual quality of Babylon, it was a land favored to such a point, that Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi discouraged the immigration of Babylonian scholars to Israel. In commenting on Jeremiah, "They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be..." (27:22), Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi said, "Whoever emigrates from Babylon to the land of Israel violates one of the positive Commandments." ⁴⁹ This was indeed a unique and unparalleled compliment to any land outside the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael. It is a conception of Chutz La'aretz at its highest.

You should not conclude from all that has been said, that Babylon's unique position within the frame of Chutz La'aretz, was only intellectual in nature. Regarding the moral conception of "Purity of family life" the Talmud testifies that Babylon not only preserved this ethical principle better than any other country of dispersion, but that it even overshadowed the Holy Land proper, because "Ezra made Babylon ⁵⁰ as clean as white flour." The Talmud even goes so far in complimenting Babylonian Jewry on its morality in living, that it says "all the lands are 'Eesah' ^{COMPARED} with reference to Eretz Yisrael; and Eretz Yisrael proper is 'Eesah' ^{COMPARED} with reference to Babylon." ⁵¹ Now, "Eesah" means a mixed family suspected of containing alien elements. So high an opinion, then, did the Rabbis have of Babylonian Jewry that they put it on the top of the list, thus giving it priority even over the Holy Land itself.

There was, next to the intellectual and moral status, a

third reason for the high position that the second Diaspora of Babylon occupied, namely, one of psychological nature. As I mentioned previously, the Rabbis had a deep understanding, not only of the physical and spiritual, but also of the psychological implications of Galut. And here, too, they felt that Babylon was rather unique. This statement is so important that I would like to give it to you in full.

The Talmud in commenting on Isaiah's verse, "Bring My sons from far and My daughters from the end of the earth", (43:6) has this to say: "'Bring My sons from far' means the Exiles of Babylon who enjoyed peace of mind, as do sons; and 'My daughters from the end of the earth' means the exiles of other lands who have no peace of mind, as do daughters"⁵². Rashi adds to this significantly, that boys have usually more peace of mind than girls, and that "the Children of Israel in Babylon do not have to suffer the yoke of government, as do exiles in other lands." The Rabbis then were aware of the distinction between the Chutz La'aretz of the Babylon of their time and the Galut of other lands for intellectual, moral and psychological reasons. This explains the unique position that Babylon occupied in the teachings of the Rabbis. And this high opinion of Babylon apparently reached its unexpected climax when the Talmud itself stated in simple and candid words, that it was forbidden to emigrate from Babylon to other lands because "whoever lives in Babylon is as if he would live in Eretz Yisrael."⁵³

I believe that in the whole history of our Tradition, this has never been said of any other place on the entire globe. And Babylon -- even in its first, but surely in its second Diaspora -- apparently deserved this accolade, because it gave to its Jewish citizens, freedom and peace of mind, and allowed for their cultural growth and religious

creativity. And though the Rabbis used the word "Galut" interchangeably with "Chutz La'arets", even with reference to the Babylon of the Talmudic period, we know today that it was only a facon de parler, and that the difference between Babylon on the one hand, and a real Galut on the other, was very much in their minds. Says the Talmud, "The Holy One, Blessed be He, knew very well that Israel could not bear cruel decrees -- this is why He exiled them to Babylon; and even to Babylon he sent them only because its language was close to the tongue of the Torah." Rashi comments on this statement, "So that the Torah should not be forgotten in Israel." We do not go astray by assuming then that our ancient tradition knew well how to operate with the term "Chutz La'arets" as a middle line between the two extremes of "Eretz Yisrael" and "Galut".

IV

If, against the historical setting of these three terms -- Eretz Yisrael, Galut, and Chutz La'arets -- the question would be asked, "What is America?", I would answer unhesitatingly, "America is Chutz La'arets."

There is a story told of Shmarya Levin in connection with his visit to California on behalf of the Zionist movement. He delivered one of his famous addresses in one of the largest halls in Los Angeles, pounding sway at the inferior position of the Galut in Jewish life. After the meeting, a reception was held for the speaker of the evening in one of the loveliest estates in the Hollywood hills overlooking the city. Shmarya Levin stood on the balcony enjoying the view when the host approached him with the question, "Dr. Levin, how do you like California?" To which, Shmarya Levin replied without a moment's hesitation, in fluent Yiddish, "Es is take a Gaulus -- aber a gebenchter Gaulus". Shmarya Levin's definition of California as a "gebenchter Gaulus" comes very close to my conception of Chutz La'arets applied to the United States

of America.

I have, as do all of you, a deep affection for this beloved land of ours, but in historical terms, it is obviously not Eretz Yisrael. I do not believe that one acquires faith in God simply by living here, or that one achieves "Olom Haba" when one walks four inches on the boulevards of our cities, or on the dust roads of our prairies. It does not have the Kedusha that comes from God's calling it Artsi, or from Israel's calling it Eretz Yisrael. In short, I do not believe that the living on this soil by itself "outweighs all the Commandments of the Torah."

On the other hand, it is not Galut in the sense of Exile, because none of our parents were forced to come here. They were forced to fããã other continents and assembled here in what one might call a voluntary dispersion. Here, they built their homes, and all of us consider America our home to this very day. It would be unfair to call this settlement "Galut", because then you would have to test it against all the statements made about this term in the course of centuries. Would anyone seriously say that America is a Galut that "outweighs in its burden all the curses of the Tochacha?" Could it compare to the physical persecution and spiritual suffering, or even to the psychological difficulties of the Jewish communities in Russia, Poland and Rumania in the time of the pogroms? Is life here such that it could be considered "punishment for sins"? If so, sinning has paid off rather handsomely.

No, America is neither Eretz Yisrael nor Galut, but it has all the characteristics of Chutz La'aretz, so nobly exemplified by the second voluntary dispersion of Babylon. Here, there is freedom, high economic and social position, intellectual leadership, and to a large degree, peace of mind. There is surely the opportunity of participating in the upbuilding of the Land of Israel, and of furthering its

development and its growth, and it augurs well for making this America of ours into a cultural center. If we could develop this Republic into a center of Torah, one could indeed speak with Jeremiah's words and say to American Jewry, "Build ye houses, and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them... And multiply ye there, and be not diminished. And seek the peace of the city... and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." (29:5-7)

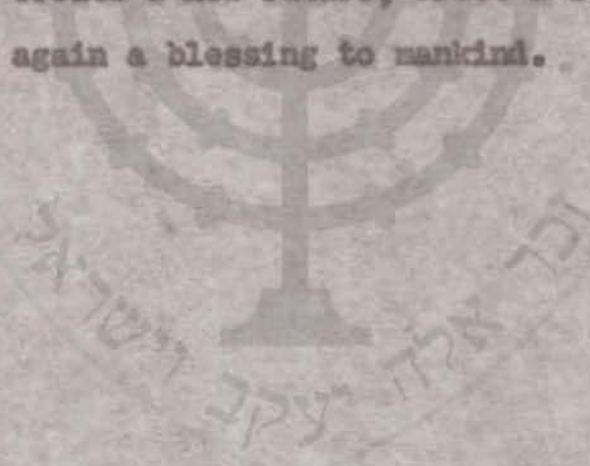
We are living in a time in which Galut, in the real sense of the word, will soon come to an end. When the Galut is liquidated, what will remain for us in future generations, is Eretz Yisrael on the one hand, and Chutz La'aretz on the other. There is no reason why there should not be a two-way passage between the two centers of Jewish existence. And by saying "two-way passage" I do not mean the sending of money from the one end, and the receiving of spiritual values from the other, but also an exchange in the eternal verities of Judaism, with as many American Ezras and Hillels, and with as many Israeli Rabs and Shemueyls as is feasible, in order "to return the Torah to its ancient place of dignity". There is no reason why this great American Jewry of ours should not leave as deep an imprint on our people as did Babylon with its religious and cultural productivity in centuries gone by. If Jewish history in the past should in any way serve as a model for our and our children's future -- Israeli and American Jewry will have to function in a complementary relationship to each other, as the only way of translating the spiritual conception of K'lal Yisrael into a tangible reality.

There is a remarkable speech by Dr. Leo Baeck, delivered in the form of a Presidential Address at the Eighth International Conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, which was held in London, during July of 1949. Discussing the role of the new State

of Israel, Dr. Baeck has this to say, "The old soil has today become a center. Jewish life in its totality, the K'lal Yisrael, has very rarely been a circle, that is to say a formation with only one center, only one focus of strength; it has mostly been an ellipse, a formation determined by two focusses; two centers. Nearly always it has been like that. ...In the old days there ~~was~~^{WERE} the Northern and Southern realms in Palestine, later Palestine and Babylon, later the Sephardic and Ashkenazic phases of culture, later Western Europe and Eastern Europe, and nowadays the Western world and the State of Israel. ~~iii~~ ...Today the two centers are: the Jewish life in the land of Israel and the Jewish life in the Western world. Or to make it distinct in another way also: the weights on the scales are different today and differently distributed from what they were before. The weight of Europe has become slighter in the scales of total Jewish life; the two big weights are now America and Palestine, and a new equilibrium must be obtained, a clear, just, reasonable balance is to be kept in view... And the joint task of this generation and of the following, the task which may be the great opportunity given to our movement, is to bring about and to safeguard the fight and clear connection, the living and healthy relationship between these two spheres, decisively to bear both in mind, to help that they may give one another and receive one from the other their best, that they may both together, neither of them without the other, bring it about in our world which has passed through revolutions, that our Judaism shows its religious strength, its moral force and proves having its place within mankind, its place among the religions, doing its part that the earth be prepared for God's Kingdom."

This statement by the great leader of our Reform Movement should serve as a Shulchan Aruch for all of us. Israel today is a

State, and we are not. They are politically independent, and we are citizens of another land. But above the new State in the Middle East and the Jewish people here, towers the immortal name of "Israel" which has always meant to our people much more than the ethnic connotation of "Yehudim", because the term "Israel" has consistently proclaimed the spiritual quality of our people in its attachment to God, as indicated by the "Ael" in its name. And this alone is the essence of the stuff of which we are made. While we are not a political part of Israel, the Israelis are a part of our Jewish people, a section of which lives here on this soil. All of us together then are bound to each other by the historic name of "Israel". It is the name of the young Jewish State, and simultaneously the title of honor of American Jewry. Taking the name seriously, we, the State of Israel and American Israel can create a new future, erect a structure for Jewish survival and become again a blessing to mankind.



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Joshua Trachtenberg

Of making reports from Israel there is no end, a modern Kohelet might well exclaim in exasperation. Every two-week tourist returns an expert, eager to discourse at length on every aspect of Israel's manifold achievements and problems. I envy the two-week tourist; he need have no qualms about his reports. He has opportunity to observe no more than the most thrilling manifestations of Israel's rebirth; inspired by his experience he can recount with new-found eloquence and heightened enthusiasm the marvels of the new state. Lucky fellow! He has heard, of course, and perhaps has seen, too, that all is not milk and honey in the promised land, but his conscience need not ~~transfix~~ prick him if he relegates these dark rumors to a footnote and expatiates with buoyant and infectious optimism on the wonders which unfolded before him at every step.

I am not in such a happy situation. It was my privilege to spend the months of November, 1951, to March, 1952, in Israel on assignment from the Central Conference, the Union and the Alumni Association to make a survey of their religious situation and of the possibilities of developing a program of liberal Judaism there. That this was a real and very much appreciated privilege I need not assure you. What the hurried tourist sees I saw and experienced too, and in far greater detail, of course. I lived in the cities and in settlements of all types, old and new; I visited immigrant camps and ma'abarot; I inspected factories and farms, schools and quarries and drainage projects; I talked intimately and frankly with hundreds of people, gnarled veterans of the second aliyah and tattered immigrants shuffling with eager expectancy from a gangplank to the firm concrete of the Haifa dock, government officials, taxi drivers, technicians and unskilled laborers, university professors and school children. Everywhere and from everyone I absorbed the ineffable vigor and enthusiasm and hope that distinguish the infant state. Here is something truly new under the sun. No vanity of vanities is this triumphant homecoming of the exiles, this first sprouting of green in the parched soil of the Negev and the stony hills of Galilee, these sprawling factories and institutes of science and of academic learning, this intermingling and merging of the dark-skinned and the fair, the many-tongued

children of Israel in a democratic society on its ancient soil. To witness, even if only for a few months, this stirring realization of our ageless dream was an experience for which I am deeply and forever grateful.

It would be gratifying to be able to continue in this vein. I ~~am~~ saw and learned enough to hold forth endlessly on the ~~wonders of Israel~~ ^{accomplishments of the past few years.} But of these I surely need not tell you; at most I could add only a note to what you know already, from your own observation or from the reports of other enthusiasts. You need no confirmation from me of facts that are being steadily more impressively demonstrated. Honesty and the specific aim of my mission require me to disclose the impressions of another sort which a closer and more extended study imposed on me. I was not, like the lucky tourist, privileged to see only the glowing externals. I was forced to witness also the more intimate aspects of life and thought in Israel today. If what I have to tell you disqualifies me, for the present at any rate, as a speaker for the UJA and the Bond Drive, it is nonetheless what you have a right to know and what I hope every Jew would want to know and to concern himself with. I am not revealing any secrets, for many, many thoughtful and sensitive Israelis are deeply disturbed and increasingly articulate on this score. Nor, I am sure, would any of you interpret my remarks as idle or malicious criticism. We, who are deeply devoted to the cause of Israel, not only the state of Israel but of Klal Yisrael, have a special responsibility to comprehend the totality of Israeli life, the hidden as well as therevealed, to ask searching questions about fundamentals; we must seek to understand proximate causes so that our interest may be sympathetic and helpful, and having uncovered the truth, distasteful though it may sometimes be, to exert our utmost energies wherever they may be best utilized to help Israel correct its ills. There are far too many Jews who resent an honest, objective account of conditions in Israel as though it were blasphemy. We know well enough that no society is without blemish; it would be blasphemous indeed to demand a miracle of perfection from the infant state of Israel, sore beset as it is by pressing difficulties of every description. It is because we believe in the perfectibility of man and in the efficacy of our Jewish faith in urging him on toward that goal that we can not only face the imperfections of a Jewish state with sympathetic understanding, but also in confidence and faith help the Jewish state attain its highest ideals, in the course of time.

We have heard much of crises in Israel; its brief history has been an uninterrupted succession of crises, political, military, economic, financial; we must expect crisis upon crisis for years to come, for Israel cannot be built in a day, nor in a decade. As Israel meets its problems squarely, with patience, hard labor and self-sacrifice, we can count on it to conquer them slowly and painfully, one by one. But there is one problem, or related group of problems, which constitutes also no less than a crisis, a festering sore contaminating the life and the future of Israel, to which, in the bitterly trying economic plight of today and in the prevailing social and political circumstances, no concerted public attention is paid nor serious remedial measures undertaken. When Professor Ernst Simon raised the question last fall, Are there still Jews in Israel? he broached no bizarre, nor merely academic debating point, but put his finger on the fundamental, continuing and unalleviated crisis in the life of Israel. A better formulation of the question was probably that of Professor ~~Max~~ Joseph Klausner, Is there a future for Judaism in Israel? This particular discussion aroused little public response, but the question itself is paramount in the earnest self-searching, and in the bitter condemnation of the rapidly deteriorating moral and spiritual climate of the country, which one encounters everywhere. There is grim humor indeed in the "crack" that went the rounds this winter, revealing not only the misery of insufficient food and clothing and heat and housing, of dollars and raw materials and equipment and specialists, but also, and even harder to "take," of a gnawing consciousness of vanishing ideals, of cancerously spreading public immorality, of a leaking morale that mocks itself bitterly to keep its spirits up. Why is Israel like a potato? everyone was asking. Because, went the answer, es ligt in der erd -- und es yakst! Israel still laughs, but mit yashcherkes.

Do not misunderstand me. As a visitor, a Zionist (a Labor Zionist, at that) and a rabbi, I could still see clearly the forest which was obscured for so many Israelis by the trees which blocked their vision. I could not myself subscribe for an instant to the despair I heard expressed on every side in the private confidences of people from every walk of life. This was "gripping," of course, a salutary letting off of steam; but it was more than that, too. I must report these things to you as I found them. The great hope for the future of Israel lies in the determination of

its people to achieve more than the material trappings of political statehood. And because they miss today ^{sense of} the spiritual exaltation that accompanied the creation of the yishuv and the birth of the state they grieve and agonize not just over the lack of meat — it is the sheerest libel to ascribe their searing mutual and self-criticism to material wants alone; I heard much less talk about meat than about morality — they grieve for the yet unborn Zion of their visionary expectations. After all, they are Jews.

The ubiquitous black market, economically inevitable perhaps at a time when materials are in short supply and purchasing power is abundant, has sapped the principles of even the most upright. It has debauched virtually every home. I recall vividly the anguish with which decent people confessed their helplessness against its moral ravishings. Whether it be true or not, the suspicion is universal that public and even governmental agencies have been guilty of black market dealings. Even a number of kibbutzim, only a few, but still kibbutzim, the ideal type of halutz society, have been convicted of black marketing. Currency speculation, at least while the value of the pound was grossly inflated, was rife; virtually everyone who could was dabbling in foreign exchange, to a greater or lesser ~~degree~~ ^{extent}; public officials admitted, in private, of course, that they were evading financial regulations in their handling of remittances from America, for the benefit of their agencies — but breaking the law, nonetheless. There are criminal elements in Israel, as elsewhere, who were reaping this illicit harvest with glee. But the distress of honest people trapped in this inescapable net of lawlessness produced an all-pervading pall of guilt. On top of this was the galling humiliation of being forced to depend on "charity" from America, contributions and grants-in-aid and loans and bond sales, bundles of clothing and food packages and scrip, all lumped together as demeaning "charity." I have not studied the "letters to the editor" in the press of all the countries dependent nowadays on American aid for their security and even their precarious stability, but I warrant that all this correspondence put together would not reveal the amount and passion of self-flagellation over this dependency expressed unremittingly in the press of tiny Israel. The ^{fact} ~~knowledge~~ that a good part of the bundles and packages and scrip was known to make its way into the black market did not, of course, diminish the shame of needing them.

The inundation by new immigrants untouched by halutz ideals, and the shifting of values unleashed by new economic and social patterns since the establishment of the state have seriously diminished the influence of the settlement movements in the spiritual life of the country. Where formerly the kibbutz dominated the tone of life, fixing its ideal social and moral goal at the high level of co-operation and self-abnegation for the common good, today the prevailing mood is determined by the rapid ~~urban~~ urbanization and competitive industrialization of recent years. The kibbutznik is widely ~~is~~ regarded as an anachronism, and recruitment for kibbutzim has fallen far behind the unprecedented increase in population. Halutz aliyah from outside and recruits from "bourgeois" urban families of older vintage are woefully inadequate to man the new posts that must be set up to conquer the still extensive and inhospitable wilderness. In the cities it is ~~widely~~ ^{generally} acknowledged that kibbutzniks, in the older settlements, at any rate, lead a life of comparative "luxury"; yet even this inducement does not suffice to attract would-be halutzim, and every kibbutz suffers from a shortage of hands. Moreover, considerable numbers of settlers, old as well as new, have succumbed to the flesh-pots and left their kibbutzim for the cities in recent years. Indeed, so far has the appeal of halutzit weakened that young people must now be hired at weekly wages to settle some of the newer Negev outposts, and applicants for this hazardous and hard pioneering are not easily found.

In the kibbutzim the yearning for "comforts" and the trend toward mechanization, excused on the ground that these improvements — long needed as they are — will attract volunteers from the cities, have produced an incipient type of profit capitalism, which in practice renders the advancement of the individual kibbutz a more immediate goal than national service. At a time when extensive agricultural expansion is badly needed many kibbutzim tie up their manpower in enlarged industrial plants ~~because~~ because there is more money in that, and often leave their own crops to rot unharvested. The necessity of absorbing large numbers of immigrants has led to the hiring of outside labor, very much, be it said, to the displeasure of the kibbutz federations. But reluctant "exploitation of labor" has undoubtedly weakened the fiber of kibbutz idealism. The

~~political~~ political strife which has ripped through many kibbutzim this past year, stirring up enmities among old comrades and severing families and long-
~~standing~~ standing relationships.

established communities has gravely weakened not only the kibbutz movement but its hold on the popular imagination.

One detects in the moshav movement too something of the same deterioration of ideals. The older, prosperous settlements exude an air of smugness and self-satisfaction strikingly at variance with the tense mood of the country; the popularity of the moshav in the last few years appears to reflect private economic motivations much more strongly than the co-operative ~~greek~~ ideal. The profit distribution scandal which has besmirched the bus co-operatives has cast a dark cloud over the entire co-operative movement in industry and transportation.

I have dwelt at length on these developments because they reflect the weakening of one of the ⁷¹primary spiritual forces in the making of Israel. This force is by no means moribund, and will yet, we may hope, re-assert itself strongly. But, at the moment, it has suffered a serious setback. The decline of the halutz spirit and of the co-operative ideal has had a marked effect on the atmosphere of the country. Unwarranted though they may well be in most instances, suspicions are freely voiced concerning the integrity and disinterestedness of Histadrut officials and agencies, of party leaders and institutions, of public bodies of all descriptions and their bureaucracies. The air is polluted with ugly talk of graft and rackets and protektzia. Everywhere one encounters distrust, bitterness, recrimination. There are those, of course, who welcome this development and maintain that the kibbutz will soon become a historical curiosity, that the state has no need for these unique settlement forms which evolved in response to the different conditions of the past. That is certainly a debatable proposition, but if it should prove correct and the ideal conception of the co-operative movement languish as a social force, then it must be replaced by some other & equally powerful spiritual motivation in the life of the community. And if the co-op ~~movement~~ ideal is to be revived it can only be through the restoration in some form, not necessarily, of course, the original, of the spiritual roots which nourished it. The direct relation of halutzism and the kibbutz to the spirit in which the ~~the~~ ~~re~~ community functions is an irrefutable indication that this is not an economic or political or sociological problem exclusively.

The moral impact of the large-scale immigration from Moslem lands has until now been far from wholesome. The hostility and contempt of large sections of the older community and of the recent immigrants from Europe for the shechorim is as manifest as it is distressing. There is a tendency, with which we are all too familiar here, to rationalize what we can only describe as color prejudice, bolstered as it is by the inferior social and cultural status of these immigrants, with mean aspersions on their morality, their intelligence, their industriousness, their absorptability into the body politic. I can testify from my own deeply interested observations, limited though they were of necessity, that such insinuations are for the most part unjustified. Nor can there be any doubt, in my judgment, that this outbreak of color prejudice is ~~not~~ ephemeral; the social dynamics of the new state and the innate decency of the community will soon erase it. But for the present it exists, a poison spear piercing the ~~heart of the~~ vision of brotherly unity. How deeply it has penetrated was shockingly revealed when one of the great leaders of the kibbutz movement, in a moment of confidence, blandly smeared the entire eastern aliyah with the taunt that it is nothing but the "scum of the oriental ghettos."

On the part of these immigrants themselves there is a pathetic eagerness to assimilate to the Ashkenazic community. They shed their native culture, their traditional Jewish pattern of living, which we had been led to believe was so firmly rooted, with alarming alacrity. Officials of Hapole Hamizrachi admitted to me that if these eastern Jews are not enrolled in the party immediately on their arrival and helped to preserve their religious tradition, it evaporates in a matter of months, impressed as they are in the camps and in the country by different ways and different standards. No wonder that in not a few instances their moral underpinnings give way along with their cultural and religious supports. These eastern edot give the impression of being, momentarily at least, adrift. Nor is the atmosphere in the country such, at present, as to proffer them new sources of inner security and strength.

When we turn to the situation of the youth similar glaring problems with marked spiritual overtones force themselves upon us. More than once teachers confided to me their alarm over the impact of the prevailing moral climate upon their charges. Unceasing conversation at home about the black market, currency deals, bundles from America, with their undisguised

implications of ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ guilt and shame, have rendered many youngsters tense and nervous, a prey to adult anxieties and to the creeping infiltration of confessedly unworthy standards. That their uneasiness has a substantial basis in an inadequate diet and in the hectic pace of public and private life contributes, of course, to a warping of character and personality which may have ~~grave~~ ~~unhappily~~ effects in later years. Extra-curricular activities, except for the scouts, are dominated by the political parties, which enlist a large majority of the school children in their "movements" and utilize after-school hikes and meetings and parties for purposes of indoctrination. The sharp spirit of partisanship, so acutely noticeable in public affairs (and so widely and helplessly ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ deprecated), already characterizes the social activities and relationships of the youngsters. The potentially injurious effect of the mere or "trend" system of schools is dramatically illustrated in the ma'abarot where the parties vie for the affiliation of bewildered newcomers and their children, and the children themselves are fenced off in compounds during school hours, according to the political complexion of the school they attend. We may appreciate further how this situation plays on adult morality when we learn, as I discovered on the best authority, that it is impossible to secure an accurate census of the school population, since the competing school officials systematically pad their rolls in order to increase their subventions from the government.

Aside from four or five privately sponsored, non-partisan youth centers, poorly financed and staffed, there are virtually no organized facilities and guidance for teen-age activities outside the political movements. To hear groups of youngsters howling through the streets on Sabbath eve, for instance, and then to watch them herding outside the cafes at Sabbath's end, waiting for the doors to open and the dancing to begin, is to experience the pathos of a blue Sabbath, devoid of spiritual stimulation and of wholesome social activity. To witness, as I did, a dozen Chanukah mesibot, in kindergarten, school and adult assemblies, in the cities and in settlements, is to experience the stirring impact of a spontaneous national folk-festival -- but also to sense the dismaying spiritual vacuum of a Chanukah no longer clearly dedicated to the heroic struggle for religious freedom but commemorating instead the heroes of 1948 whose blood cemented the foundations of the state. Nes lo kara lanu, pach shemen lo matsanu,

runs the defiant refrain of this kind of Chanukah.

It was instructive that even in the kibbutzim, where the young people are most effectively integrated into the life of the community, there was a rumbling of discontent among the oldsters with the "spiritual emptiness" of the life of their youth. As one veteran of the second aliyah, a long-time leader of his commune, told me, "I became an apikoros at fourteen, but I was revolting against something which had already sunk its roots deeply and permanently in me; and when I became a halutz I was consciously electing a way of life which had definite spiritual values. But these fellows, they take everything for granted, they neither revolt against nor elect for anything. They're all right, good fellows, look how they handled themselves during the war, there must still be the old spark of idealism and self-sacrifice in our sabras. But somehow I can't help feeling they have no romance, no spiritual life. We've failed to carry across to them." There was not a little of the perennial grumbling of age over youth in all this, but it undoubtedly conveys a significant element of truth. Mapamniks explained to me the attraction of their ideology for the youth of the kibbutzim on the ground that young people seek a revolutionary ardor, an over-arching vision, which the Mapai has become too stodgy to supply, while in the ranks of the Mapai and elsewhere there is deep worry over this trend toward a doctrinaire Stalinism. The felt need to strengthen the influence of parents over children and to cement family ties has led several kibbutzim to relax the traditional pattern ^fof child rearing and to house the children with their parents; in a good number of other kibbutzim this has recently become a moot issue; and it is one of the causes for the growing popularity of the moshav shitufi, the in-between type of settlement, where the family is the basic unit although the meshek is operated communally.

This, in brief, for I have by no means exhausted my notes, is at least part of the complex of problems which reflect what we must consider a spiritual crisis for Israel. Over and above its very real economic and social problems, and impregnating them, is the issue of moral and religious commitment, of the conscious spiritual direction which Judaism as a "way of life" demands of a Jewish society. This is the crucial issue inherent in the very nature of Zionism and of a Jewish state. The youth of the state

and the extreme difficulty of its material problems do not excuse us nor its citizens from the duty of recognizing this particular crisis. Indeed, many of the "lay" leaders of the community, in and out of government and public agencies appear to be conscious of it and deeply disturbed by it. They attack it to the best of their meager ability, but peripherally and ineffectually, since they are engrossed by immediate economic and administrative concerns, and in any event cannot grapple through to its essence.

Paradoxically the official religious leadership appears to be oblivious to the manifest moral and spiritual needs of the people; it is dedicated to the preservation of a formal Orthodoxy and to its imposition upon an unwilling community by force majeure. If the Israeli rabbinate were suddenly to discover its true prophetic vocation, ~~to lay bare the wounds unmercifully and to heal them with the balm of moral exhortation and an abiding, sustaining faith,~~ one wonders if it still might not transform Judaism in Israel into a living force again. But the very thought is fantastic. Even if it had such a secret impulse its conception of Judaism would throttle the urge still-born. Nor, when we consider such an eventuality soberly for a moment, is it likely that the rabbinate could reach the people any longer. It has been shut up too long behind its stockade of formalisms to have any points of contact with the realities of Israeli life. It has neither the comprehension nor the capacity to make a dent upon the public conscience. It neither speaks to the people nor works with them. And its reliance upon political strategems to enforce its will has permanently alienated the deep democratic instincts of the community.

The spirit of the people of Israel is restive, self-critical, hungry for sustenance and guidance. They know that many things are wrong in their society and in their souls, though they cannot identify their malaise by its right name. Since Orthodoxy is the only form of religious expression for Jews in Israel today (there is not a single functioning non-Orthodox rabbi or congregation, despite what we have been hearing about three so-called liberal rabbis) the vast majority must perforce regard themselves as "non-religious." Last year the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research made a survey of attitudes to religious observance, the results of which, to my knowledge, have not yet been published. It disclosed a negative attitude on the part of no less than ninety percent of the entire

population. Outside the tiny minority of fanatically Orthodox there is seething resentment against the persistent interference of the religious bloc in private life and in public affairs. The religious parties are engaged in a futile and self-defeating campaign; their success in banning the import of non-kosher meat and thus decreasing the amount of meat available for consumption while raising its cost to the entire community, in making travel on the Sabbath more difficult and more expensive, and the like, has turned non-observance into a crusty distaste for all the ways and works of "religion."

The alienation of Orthodoxy from the actual social situation has fostered the impression that religion has nothing to do with or to say about the conditions of life. Most Israelis have not yet conceived of the possibility of giving expression to their religious needs in any other form than that to which they have been (conditioned negatively) by their experience in the Diaspora, in Palestine and in Israel. Most of them are so overwhelmed by the strenuous business of living from day to day that they have given no thought to the religious issues which confront them daily. But wherever I went the words "Reform rabbi" unleashed a flood of questions and a spate of discussion. Many were frankly incredulous at the discovery that one ~~could~~^{can} be a religious Jew and yet not Orthodox. Many equally frankly said, that's all right for America, but it won't go here. But nowhere did I encounter indifference. In all my conversations I sensed the idea of a liberal Judaism germinating in avid soil. One evening in Haifa I met several leaders of the youth division of one of the parties to discuss with them their political program. Our political discussion had to be postponed for another evening. No sooner did I confess to being a Reform rabbi than the talk turned to religion and there it remained until long after midnight. When we broke up their parting reaction was, if only we could have something like that here! In Jerusalem a number of University people told me, we want to be invited to the first meeting called to organize a liberal congregation. Such positive responses were not too frequent, but yet not so rare as to be insignificant. And more important was the undisguised though still skeptical interest of many to whom the idea was entirely new.

It would be preposterous to proclaim that Israel is "ready" for liberal Judaism. If anything, the fear of a bitter religious struggle alone is

enough to deter ^{many} ~~probably most~~ of those who might be interested from undertaking ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ an independent heterodox program. But there are already individuals and small groups here and there whose consciences demand that the risk be taken. Liberal or progressive Judaism has not been without its proponents in journals of opinion (see, for instance, J. L. Benor's articles, "Religion, the Jewish people and the state," in Beterem, August 1, 1951, and "What is Progressive Judaism?", ibid., December 1, 1951); in some quarters the idea is far from novel or frightening. Nor is the argument, widely heard, that a liberal religious establishment would promote disunity at a critical juncture when unity is so essential to the security of the country, tenable. There is no unity in Israel except on the fundamental issue of defending the state, which is a healthy democratic condition. When discordant political factions and economic philosophies wrangle violently for public favor, why should those who seek a revitalization of religion compromise their principles for the sake of a non-existent unity? There is even evidence that influential governmental circles would welcome an energetic liberal movement which could challenge the dominance of the Orthodox and help establish the democratic principles of freedom of conscience and the right to equality of all legitimate groups.

To clamor for equal rights for a non-existent liberal rabbinate and community at this point is wildly unrealistic. To demand "separation of church and state" while there is no synagogue body which disdains political ties and seeks only to reach the conscience of man is wholly irresponsible. The Knesset is not looking for trouble; it already has more than enough on its hands. It will not welcome the religious strife that the establishment of a courageous liberal community will inevitably entail. But, as more than one Knesset member assured me, though not without some trepidation at the implied consequence, Israel is a democratic state; the Knesset will follow the facts.

No, Israel is not ready for liberal Judaism. It must be helped to become ready. Given devoted, sensitive, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ inspiring leadership and guidance, given the patient, understanding and long-suffering example and exposition of liberalism as a revivifying religious force, Israel can be ~~ready~~ ready, and that speedily, too. But the leadership and example are not now available in Israel. I must tell you of a conversation I had with a

young man the day before I left Jerusalem. Trained at Jews' College, London, he had for a number of years served congregations in England as an Orthodox "reverend." After a spell in the DP camps of Europe, he had determined to bring his family to Israel and make his home there. Gradually a subtle change crept into his life: he found himself no longer laying tefillin, no longer attending synagogue services, no longer concerned about the minutiae of the taryag mitzvot. Imperceptibly life in Israel had provided substitutes for these formerly essential expressions of his Jewishness. But it had left a void. As a religious man he sought in vain for an outlet for his spiritual cravings. He yearned for the moral and social manifestation of his Judaism in the life around him. ("The rabbinate hasn't even seen fit," he remarked, "to mention the black market publicly.") He saw with dismay the religious vacuum which was sucking dry the spiritual instincts of his people. "America must help us," he said with deep feeling; "you have wrestled with this problem, you have the experience, the know-how, we need your help as badly in this as in all the areas where you have come to our aid." How often, and in how many places, talking about religion, I heard the devout wish, America must help us! And not only the wish, but the express challenge, where is the idealism of American rabbis!

That challenge, I must say in all humility, is directed to us with justice. It is a unique, portentous challenge. Israel does not want, does not need American Reform Judaism. It possesses already far more natural, spontaneous media of Jewish self-identification than all our perfervid holiday celebrations and membership drives and fund campaigns provide for us. The child in the Israeli school, of whatever persuasion, learns more Tanach than, I humbly venture to say, some of us have absorbed in our seminaries. The intellectual, cultural, social interests of its people are more adequately provided for than are those of our own people by all our study circles, forums, book reviews, discussion groups. What Israel needs, and is unconsciously yearning for, is the Jewish religion, pure and simple, untrammelled by medieval ritualism and legalism, unhampered by the mood and the paraphernalia of galut self-justification, free from the mimicries of thinly-disguised assimilationism. Israel needs not Reform Judaism as we know it here, but its own indigenous, authentic re-statement of the eternal truths of our faith, in a vocabulary which can reach the hearts of the people, and in institutions of its own devising which can revolutionize

its spiritual life. We dare not presume to export reform to Israel. But we can, and I believe we must, if we are true to our love of Israel and our Jewish faith, extend every assistance to enable Israel to develop its own modern version of Judaism. We have been in the forefront of every effort to secure the material rebirth of Israel; can we liberal Jews of America, inextricably identified with the concept of an evolving, forever progressing Judaism, the religion of Israel, do less for Israel's spiritual resuscitation? To ask the question is to answer it. One can only wonder why we have waited so long to match our gladly-given material contributions with others that cut even closer to the line of our deepest interest in Israel. Far be it from us to suggest that in this sphere, at any rate, Israel cannot manage without us. Given the time and some surcease ^{from} ~~of~~ material pressures, she will undoubtedly map out her own course of religious progress unaided. But just as we elsewhere we can and will continue to lighten her burdens and speed her progress, so here we can offer our resources to expedite her spiritual development, while her institutions are not yet so petrified and her spirit not so callous as to fender inner growth so much the more difficult. Nor do I hesitate to suggest, indeed to foretell, that in the end we will be the debtors. A modern Judaism born out of the travail and aspiration of the free Jewish spirit, domiciled on its ancient soil, heir to the accumulated wisdom of West and East as of its own ageless experience, uttering anew without let or hindrance the undying prophetic truths in the new-born prophets' tongue -- what incalculable gain for us American Jews, and for all the world, from such a consummation! And how we shall rejoice to acknowledge our debt and to pour out our thanksgiving before the Almighty who will so have blessed us!

I might well conclude my report here. But my assignment was not alone to survey the religious scene so that I might regale you with my observations and impressions. I was charged also to bring back such recommendations as might seem appropriate to enable us to help Israel develop a program of liberal Judaism. Inured as we are to our American congregational pattern this part of my assignment may seem supererogatory. But of this ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ I have become convinced, as must be apparent to you by now: no mere transposition of our conventional congregational forms is

likely to suit the temper or needs of Israel. Whatever develops will have to grow slowly out of native soil. I do not know the formula, if indeed there be one. I can only urge that our thinking be not too conservative. We need the imagination to recognize that in a Jewish society our faith need not, should not be confined within synagogue walls. We must give it wings to penetrate every critical area in which we can be helpful. Our program must be designed not just to satisfy our ambitions, worthy as they are, but actually to aid Israel as only we can. A dynamic program with vision and dramatic quality could conceivably elicit the response we seek in Israel and here: in Israel, persuade the community of our utter seriousness and responsibility (Reform is still suspect for its past sins of assimilationism and anti-Zionism), and instil courage and strength in the pioneers without whom nothing can even begin; here, at home, fire the imagination of our congregations, stir in them a sense of responsibility, of partnership, yes, of pride in their privilege, without which any program must languish.

Now at last I can be brief. There is no need for me to persuade you of the desirability of all or of any of the proposals I set before you. In any event, they must be carefully weighed before it is determined whether they are feasible, and when and how they can be implemented. All I can say is that, in my judgment, these are Israel's sore needs which we can supply, for the sake of Israel's welfare and for the sake of a gradually broadening comprehension and acceptance of liberal Judaism. These suggestions are not, in fact, my own; I am rather transmitting them to you from Israelis who are as desirous of developing a program of liberal Judaism in Israel as we are.

1. Facilities and personnel for youth work in the cities; this is a self-evident need which requires no underscoring.
2. An educational and social work program in the ma'abarot and the new settlements; here is a strategic area in which whatever we do will be warmly welcomed, and can have seminal significance for the future.
3. A liberal religious zeman in the school system; whatever we think of the present educational set-up, the "trend" system will undoubtedly continue for some time to come. Israel is short of decent school facilities and qualified teachers. Even a modest school-building and teacher-training program geared to the liberal viewpoint could prove tremendously

effective.

4. Liberal settlement nuclei composed of groups of our own young people from our own congregations pioneering in Israel under their own rabbinic leadership. I know some of you are wondering, how fantastic can he get! I shall not debate this point, beyond reminding you of Israel's crying need for young American manpower, and our own strong desire to see liberal Judaism established as the way of life of a going community. The Orthodox kibbutzim and moshavim are undoubtedly the only fruits of Orthodoxy which are cherished by the entire people. I have encountered groups of American halutzim, by no means all from Reform homes, so distinctive in their thinking and relationships one might say, with a halutz rabbi to guide them they could create overnight the precedent-shattering pattern of a pioneering liberal community. Do we love Israel and our faith enough to attempt -- and to achieve -- the fantastic?
5. A pilot congregation of an experimental nature, under sensitive, perseverant, informed, dedicated American rabbinic guidance, which shall explore and painstakingly build up those institutional and ritual forms, as well as the theological, educational and social programs which will meet the need and embody the vision of the Jews of Israel.

This last proposal is no doubt the one that can be most expeditiously undertaken, and strategically it should perhaps be the first. But whatever we determine to do let us permit the results to talk for us. Nothing could be more harmful than a fanfare of publicity preceding the slow and delicate process of maturation during which it will be bound to appear that we had boasted in vain. Tactful and understanding as our efforts must be in Israel, so let our reserve and discretion be here.

As we are faithful to Israel and to Israel's God, this is a historic opportunity we dare not shirk.

REPORT ON CCAR INSTITUTE

IN ISRAEL - 1951

Given Thursday evening, June 12, 1951

Herbert A. Friedman

The CCAR Institute in Israel in the summer of 1951 was historic. It was the first group of American Rabbis to make a pilgrimage, for the sheer sake of study and inspiration. Its purpose was to help build, in the words of Philip S. Bernstein, a bridge of understanding between the two great Jewries of the free world.

Nineteen rabbis, members of this Conference, enjoying the prestige of the presence of our President among us, devoted almost five weeks of intensive effort to the study of Israel. They enjoyed a score of lectures, arranged in virtually every field of modern Israeli life. The highest authorities in religion, politics, military affairs, the press, the arts, economics and immigration, finance and industry, culture and health presented long and detailed analyses of life in the new state.

Not only in the formal classroom, but through the many individual appointments set up with cabinet members and university professors, rabbis and army officers, did our men come to see the full perspective.

No corner of the country escaped our interested gaze. Beyond the ancient Biblical limits did we penetrate. The traditional stretch from Dan to Beersheba is now superseded by the new extremes of Metulla, on the border of Lebanon, to Elath, on the gulf of the Red Sea. We found our way from the headwaters of the Jordan in the north to King

Solomon's copper mines in the south. From the pulsating cities and crowded highways to the raw simplicity of new little villages we wandered and wondered, absorbed and digested.

We asked Rav Maimon about the Sanhedrin, whose re-establishment he had proposed, and we asked the archeologists about the new Roman statues unearthed at Caesarea. Ashkelon is getting a new port and Megiddo a new farm. All this and so much more we saw and heard.

Life is poor and austere. Of this there is no sense in making many words. The immigrants labor on a huge government public-works program. This does not make for sound economy. Yet just as we learned in America in 1933 that men must be put to work, if the bread of idleness was not to destroy personality, so in Israel the wheels will slowly grind and the level of life will slowly rise, if we maintain for yet a few short years the full measure of gifts and loans. We saw the fierce intention of the people and their leaders to make the Negev look like the Sharon. UJA and Israel Bonds are still of prime necessity. And so we, as rabbis, returned to America, firmly resolved to stress this first and most important fact we learned.

Secondly, we saw that the spirit needed strengthening, as well as the economy. The spirit to conquer obstacles is there. The spirit to produce more and consume less is there. The spirit to welcome the weary and tempest-tossed is there. But the spirit of free religious exaltation must also be there. With the exception of the minority who still practice the full code, most of the people seem to draw upon the well-spring of all other sources for spiritual inspiration, rather than upon the fountain of high religious devotion. Perhaps this is

inevitable at the moment and perhaps also not undesirable. It may be that the powerful magic of strong nationalism and super-patriotism is necessary in order to sustain the incredible struggle for survival.

Yet even at the time when she is fighting for her very life economically, Israel must also remember the purpose of that life. She exists, by the word of the very men who were her midwives, not to display trappings of sovereignty, nor even solely as a life-saving device, but because the perennial and millennial objectives of the Jewish religion through the Jewish people are yet to be achieved. Prophets must speak again from Zion for mankind. No one wants just another nationalism.

Preferable would be a nation of Jews, with whom we on the outside, citizens of our own lands, can be in closest partnership, setting for itself the goals of the prophets, the ethical ideals and timeless values of social justice, the kingdom of God on earth. This kind of Judaism, in the land of Israel and without, imbued with a sense of destiny and universal purpose, is the only worthy carrier of our people's historic role.

It is a great thrill for the Israeli to see his flag flying over his president's house. But the high and noble sense of mission cannot come solely from pride in political independence. The spur of the ageless religious inspiration of Judaism must again and again be applied if Israel is to be more than just another state.

We learned that religious inspiration is lacking for those who have abrogated the rigid formalism of the past. No new form has been devised to house the free spirit, to attract the lonely searcher, to

welcome the rejector of the inflexible. Some feeble attempts have been made, but these so-called liberal congregations are really only European transplantations which have made some few experiments in minor changes. They are lacking in the high thrill.

The young people of Israel want to be thrilled and they are as susceptible in religion as in any other aspect of their lives. It was our common impression that were there to be created indigenously in Israel a free synagogue, wherein the great tocsin would be sounded of lofty moral idealism, unhampered by adherence to forms which the people have rejected in their personal living, the youth would flow to it gladly and happily. This is the second message with which we return.

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