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"Judaism: The Hope of the World." Yom Kippur sermon. October
1954.

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"JUDAISM - THE HOPE OF THE WORLD."

We come on this pregnant day to this grand and glorious place with expectancy in our hearts and with a yearning in our souls. We seek the grand theme, for the mood is solemn. The message today could speak of personal growth and maturity - each person's individual striving toward the stars. It could equally well speak of collective striving toward the highest philosophical question - who are we, what is our role, what is the meaning of our existence as Jews.

This Yom Kippur I prefer the latter, for it is the natural corollary of the idea I started to develop on Rosh Hashonah. You will recall that I spoke then about the kind of Judaism we could have in America in the future, and the paradoxes we would be obliged to solve in order to attain that goal. But all the hard work is justified only if there exists an utter conviction about its worth-whileness.

Let the thesis for today be then the question of Judaism's importance and relevancy in the modern world. ^{holding less.} When the great figures of Protestantism gathered from all over the globe this past summer at Northwestern, their theme was "Christ - The Hope of the World" and they analyzed its details with fervor. Without engaging in polemics, it occurs to me that an equivalent phrase "Judaism - The Hope of the World" deserves at least equal attention. Christians

say that a belief in Christ as the Saviour is the best hope for confused mankind. If you can accept this, you can find peace in this world and salvation in the next. This message ^{they say,} is applicable to everyone, and they seek with sincerity to bring its benefits to the uninstructed through missions of world-wide proportions. What message does Judaism have for the whole wide world?

One of the great mystics of our day, Professor Abraham Heschel, has coined this sentence: "We are the most challenged people under the sun. Our existence is either superfluous or indispensable to the world; it is either tragic or holy to be a Jew." Is all the suffering for naught? Is our history really a meaningless routine of constant suffering without rhyme or reason? Was the skin stripped from Akiba's quivering body in a Roman arena just as a senseless act? Did the martyrs go to their death in the hideous blood-bath of the Crusades for nothing? Did the furnaces roar in the 20th century in a ghastly echo of stupidity? ^(and we have forgotten so soon) Or is there something so transcendental about the purpose of the Jewish religion as to make all pain and torture simply a shadow on Plato's cave, with the true reality eventually to emerge out of the mists of time? Is Jewish life pure and unadulterated suffering - or is there some most high and holy purpose for which we live and die?

Many of our people have felt, at all times in our long existence, that it was simply tragic and meaningless. There were those who

never understood why we were singled out for persecution. There were always those who were sickened by the brutality. There were some who were afraid of the personal consequences for themselves and their children. Pain is real and the human mind resists it. He who runs from it and seeks refuge is not to be condemned. Those who were unable to contemplate living their whole lives under a cloud of hatred sought escape through assimilation, conversion, disappearance.

There were others who were not so much afraid of the pain and the blood as they were depressed by the feeling that there was no sense in special Jewish identity. There were always those intellectuals who were convinced that Judaism had nothing special to offer any longer, that world culture was superior, and that only a stubborn obstinacy stood in the way of a merger with the great outside currents of human endeavor.

In ancient days, there was once a man by the name of Elisha ben Abuyah. He lived in Palestine in the days of the Talmud and felt that the enormous achievements of the Greek-speaking world around him offered more answers for a man seeking pure reason than did the narrowly confined regulations of Jewish law. He left his land and his faith to search far and wide in the Hellenistic world for answers. He dabbled in the learning of the Greeks, thinking that

there was much superior in this broad culture of art and reason and logic. At the end of a long life, he found himself unsatisfied, *unfulfilled*, for he learned the lesson that life cannot be built upon a foundation only of mathematics and philosophy. Life demands also acts of faith, and so at the end he made the circle complete as he came back to Judaism. He began the long walk home, to try to end his life upon a combination of faith and reason, Jewish religion and Greek science, which might provide a compounded answer to his tremendous yearnings.

The Jews in Spain in the 14th century who accepted Baptism in preference to the stake were afraid of the pain and persecution. Elisha ben Abuyah ran from the faith of his fathers because he saw broader horizons. Of both these categories we have ample examples and many witnesses. These are the people who felt it was tragic to be a Jew, or incomplete to be a Jew and they sought ways out.

There is a second group, a middle group, who felt that there was no answer to this cosmic question in terms of black or white. They were not sure whether it was tragic or holy to be a Jew and they sought to accomodate themselves to both these possibilities. One such was a man of the 19th century. His name was Judah Leib Gordon. He lived in a Lithuanian ghetto. He saw squalor, darkness, poverty, oppression, and he also saw spiritual slavery in the hearts

and minds of his fellow Jews. He set out to enlighten the masses and to arouse them to a realization of the importance of general education. He tried to get the Jews to throw off the shackles of mediavalism and to join their fellow countrymen of Lithuania in learning the native language of the place and adopting modern manners and modes of life. He coined a phrase which has become famous. He said,

ביתא דיהודא דאורייתא דאורייתא דאורייתא

"Be a Jew at home and be a man abroad." By this he meant that Judaism was something private and personal, to be practiced at home, but not to be manifested outside. One could live within the framework of Jewish ritual and ceremonial observance within the confines of one's own tent and family. But on the sidewalks and streets of the world one was to make every conscious effort to adjust, to integrate, to assimilate with the total environment. Be a Jew only at home. On the street, be a man - that is a Russian, or a Frenchman, or an Englishman, interpenetrating the life of other Russians, Frenchmen, or Englishmen, finding common phases for mutual conduct or action, minimizing the differences. His advice was one of compromise and expediency. Such a formula possesses its own inner limitations and obviously proves to be inadequate or offers no guidance capable of long and sustained effort.

those number we seek constantly to enlarge

Now let me speak of a third group, those few who truly understand the inner crucial significance of this question and who have come to the conclusion that Judaism is not meaningless misery, nor an outdated system devoid of inspiration, but that it has as holy a purpose as can be conceived by man.

I am sure you have all heard of Rabbi Leo Baeck, formerly of Berlin, one of the true saints of our generation. He is more than 80 now, lives in London and travels occasionally in the United States to give lectures. He has seen the complete destruction of his Temple, his people, his old fatherland. A man of his age is not likely to be a blind chauvinist. A man who has lived through the concentration camp at Theresienstadt is not likely to possess an unquestioning mind. A man who was the Rabbi of a congregation in Germany, which country was ripe with intermarriage and assimilation, is not likely to have eyes closed to the realities of Jewish survival. This man is wise, in knowledge and in experience. His is not a shrill nor superficial voice. He writes out of the depth and weightiness of a tremendous life experience. Leo Baeck is one of ^{those} the few who believes that Jewish life is holy, has meaning for Jews, and above all else, has meaning for the entire human race. Listen to the words from his wonderful ^{glorious} book "The Essence of Judaism":

"Judaism has never abandoned the claim to be the world religion."

Were it not replete with the consciousness of this idea, its whole history would seem petty and even incomprehensible. Only by that claim does it gain its heroic character. To suffer for the sake of a narrow idea of limited importance can be seen as little more than honorable obstinacy. Only when a conviction has far-reaching greatness and its defenders are aware of its sublimity, is it heroic for man to live for it alone. By having preserved and still preserving its old spiritual possessions, Judaism maintains its unshakable belief that it is guarding the religion of all humanity. For the prophets who created the idea of a world religion, Israel's life was no isolated experience but an essential factor in life of all nations."

The holiness of the Jew lies then in the fact that his special qualities of spirit constitute a gift from which the whole world can benefit. The world today stands very much in need of Jewish spirit.

The President goes to church almost every Sunday. What is he seeking? He went to the meeting of the World Council of Churches at Evanston this summer, and, speaking as a private citizen, he told the world what he was seeking. He said, "The goal should be nothing short of inviting every single person in every single country in the world who believes in the power of a Supreme Being to join in

Leaver

Is this an act of a political gesture?

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a mighty, simultaneous, intense act of faith."

The President of the United States is seeking an intense mighty act of faith on the part of all the people of the world as an answer to the question of survival and safety. He is ^{just as} afraid of atomic warfare. ^{as are you & I} He knows ^{better than we} that it can pulverize and destroy mankind. The greatest need in the world today is to discover some gigantic power within man capable of controlling the ^{gigantic power of the} bomb. The President is seeking to find the spiritual strength to conquer the bomb before it destroys us all. Where can he find this? He looks for it in the hearts of every single human being on earth who believes in a Supreme Being. The strength comes only when men are capable of rising above greed, pride, fear - when they are determined to live by love and faith, not conquest.

The Jews have the greatest spiritual strength in the world. "Not by might nor by power," said the prophet, "but by my spirit." And the spirit of faith has sustained the Jew against bombs for centuries. That bomb which threatens to destroy the whole world is the same as the bomb which has often threatened to destroy the Jew. The world now stands on the brink of the same experience of horror with which the Jew is so often familiar. Destruction stares the world in the face and somehow from within itself it must find a great reservoir of faith which will enable it to outlast the present horror. This is so familiar to us. How often have we stood

on the brink of horror and how often have we had to sum up from within ourselves the reservoir of strength with which to meet the onslaught.

Is it not most important that the Jew try to share with the world the secret of the spiritual strength which has saved him again and again? And if we do teach our secret to the world, does not this then mean that our existence is not tragic but is holy of holies, most holy?

What is the secret? The secret of the faith of the Jew, which has enabled him to withstand all shocks and strains, is to be found in five simple tenets of his theology.

First, we have the belief that God exists. This is no mere verbiage. Job cried out in the pain of all his anguish and was happy when God answered him from out of the whirlwind. He was happy because he knew that he was not alone, ~~in his pain~~. Men cannot stand to be alone in this vast and impersonal universe. But it is not enough simply to know that there is a God. This God must be close and warm and vibrant and, to the Jew, he was so close as to be called partner. God and man goaded each other on to ever greater effort. God too would be lonely if he did not have man - peopling his universe. This is an enormous source of human strength, warmth, and comfort.

Secondly, we believe that in the exercising of this partnership, God and man use the tapestry of history. History is the handmaiden,

the midwife by which the human race marks its progress. We do not believe, as Toynbee ^{or Spengler} suggests, that civilizations live and die without inching forward, however slowly, toward the goals we call Messianic. We cannot accept the blind and mechanistic view of life, for we see all about us the evolution of life forms to ever higher stages. Man is not an accident, nor is history a crazy-quilt tapestry of meaningless jigsaws. If God and man are partners, then they work out the destiny of their aspiration, on the fields of history, which fields may well be bloodied but are not sterile.

Thirdly, we believe that ethics and morality, the good life, the decent treatment of man by man, social justice, are the truest goals which must ever be sought by us. Just as the plant turns its leaf outward reaching toward the sun, so do we Jews turn our spirits outward reaching toward the sun of justice and truth and mercy and peace. We could not long abide if we believed these goals unattainable. We could not long endure the outrages which have been visited upon us, *leave in* if we did not believe that these too would some day pass as man thrusts his way ever upward and ever forward toward the goals which shall surely someday be achieved. Our whole existence is oriented toward the conviction that morality will conquer and that man will someday reach the full maturity of a peaceful co-existence with his fellowman. We could not live eternally in a world in which evil was bound to reign.

^{very}
The proof of this is that those who desire evil cannot long live with us. In the very efforts of evil men to destroy us, do we see the strength of the role we play. Why are we attacked? Because of our long noses? Nonsense! Because our very presence is a galling reminder of civilization to those who would unleash barbarism . Hitler understood that we must be obliterated if his conception of human life was to prevail. He had to destroy us if he were to saddle the world with the rule of brutality. He left behind a conversation which has been recorded by Herman Rauschnig, once an intimate, later an opponent. Rauschnig tells this story, which is to me the most valid reason for the continued survival of the Jewish people and the Jewish ethic. He writes:

"At an intimate gathering in Berlin shortly after the National Socialists' rise to power, I heard Hitler reveal himself. Hitler was making a murderous assault on every form of higher human culture. Hitler said, 'Historically speaking, the Christian religion is nothing but a Jewish sect. It has always been and it will always remain just that, as long as it will exist.'

He continued fanatically, "There is much more behind this . It is not merely a question of Christianity and Judaism, we are fighting against the most ancient curse that humanity has brought upon itself. We are fighting against the perversion of our soundest instincts.

Ah, the god of the deserts, that crazy, stupid, vengeful Asiatic despot with his power to make law! That slave-keeper's whip! That devilish "Thou shalt, thou shalt!" and that stupid "Thou shalt not!" It has got to get out of our blood, that curse from Mt. Sinai! That poison with which both Jews and Christians have spoiled the free wonderful instincts of man and lowered them to the level of dog-like fright."

Goebbels interrupted, "Honor thy father and thy mother?" "No!" "Every boy revolts and hates his father and must do so to start his own life. This is an immortal law of nature."

Hitler's voice sounded loudly in the small room, "Thou shalt not steal? Wrong! All life is theft."

"I am the Lord, thy God! Who? That Asiatic tyrant? No! The day shall come when I shall hold up against these ten commandments the tables of a new law. This is what we are fighting against: The curse of so-called morals. Against the so-called ten commandments, against them we are fighting."

Yes - Hitler knew that if he were to impose upon the world his concept of the super-race ruling the weak, then he must destroy Judaism, and with it its daughter sect Christianity, for only then could he release the fierce and barbaric spirit which Jewish civilizing ethic had attempted to hold in abeyance since Sinai. We should certainly be as aware of our own role as our enemies have always been.

Fourthly, we believe that evil is not the inevitable fate of man. We reject the notion that man is basically a beast and cannot raise himself up above his own lowest instincts. We cannot believe that he is forever doomed to wallow in the mire of ugliness, short-sightedness, suicide and murder. We believe he has a potential of living but a little lower than the angels and we seek with all the power at our command to evoke from man conduct which is becoming in the sight of the Lord. *You have all lived like angels as well as devils.* *believe man* *the highest* ~~For~~ We know he is capable of such conduct and we do not foreordain him to the chains of his own evil nature which shall forever keep him low. We believe he can be free and that as he seeks to soar high, he will bring up the level of the whole human race with him.

Fifth and lastly, we believe that freedom is indispensable as a pre-requisite for life upon this earth. We do not render unto Caesar what is Caesar's when we believe Caesar is wrong. At long, long last our Christian brethen have found the courage to repudiate this ancient doctrine. At the great Council of Churches Meeting in Evanston this summer they attacked the problem of racial discrimination with great vigor. They finally said that racial discrimination is not only "an unutterable offense against God" but where it is the law of the land (as, for instance, in South Africa) true Christians may properly "feel bound to disobey such law." Jews have always disobeyed the laws of tyranny and injustice and cruelty

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and evil, even where such disobedience brought them into conflict with the powers of Church and State. Freedom is indispensable and even when government, the highest authority on earth, would seek to abridge it, this is not to be permitted.

And so we return to the root question. Is Jewish existence tragic or is it holy? I say it is holy. It is never holier than on this day when we can understand the grand themes which parade before our eyes through prayer and music. And I say that if this is so, we have no right to keep these values hidden. It is inadequate to suggest that we should be Jews at home but that abroad we should be like all other men. We should be Jews abroad to spread this word, to give this faith, to offer this message to the world which stands now in such paralyzed hypnosis before impending doom.

We believe in God.

We believe in history as progress.

We believe that social justice is the goal of man's efforts.

We believe that man is good not evil.

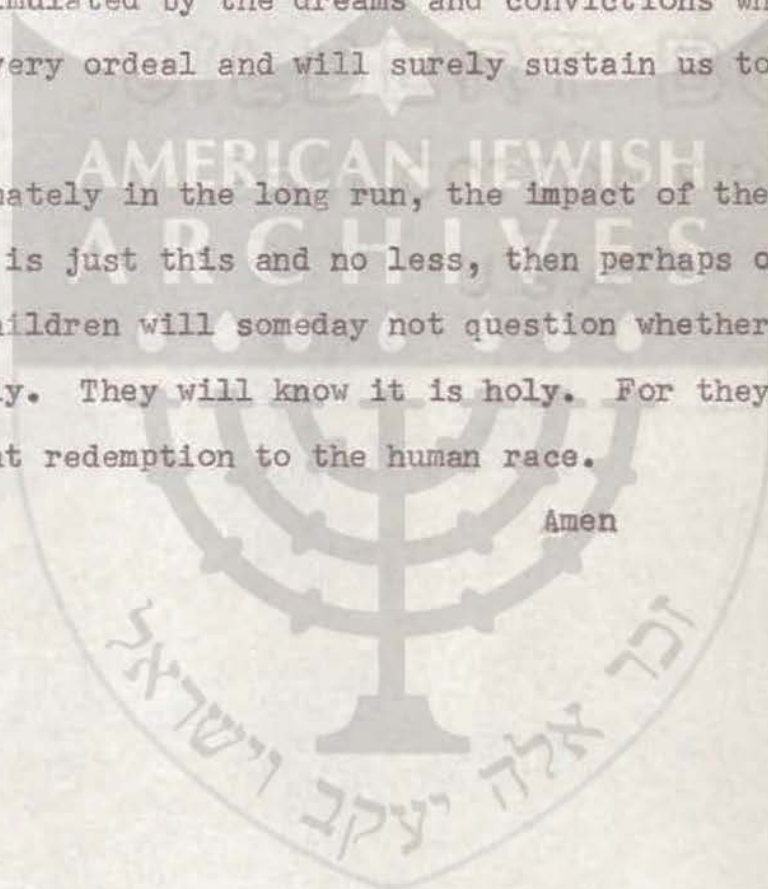
We believe that rebellion against tyranny is indispensable.

These beliefs have as much explosive power as any atomic engine. They provide sufficient fuel and power to energize the entire human race.

This Jewish message, this holy, this imperishable message which has sustained our body and soul through centuries of travail, can give to America the faith our president seeks and it can give to all mankind the calm confidence which will enable the world to avoid the path of total calamity. Nation need not lock sword with nation in a blind fury of fear, hatreds, and frustrations, if men's souls are stimulated by the dreams and convictions which have carried us through every ordeal and will surely sustain us to the end of time.

If ultimately in the long run, the impact of the Jewish religion upon mankind is just this and no less, then perhaps our children's children's children will someday not question whether our faith is tragic or holy. They will know it is holy. For they will see that it has brought redemption to the human race.

Amen



ה'תרס"ד י"ג אדר א'

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AMERICAN JEWISH
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Be a Jew at home -
and a man abroad.

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~~1892, 1894~~

J. L. Gordon - lived in Lithuania - ~~was~~ saw
squalor, darkness, poverty, oppression without and spiritual
slavery within. He set out to enlighten the masses
and rouse them to a realization of the importance of
general education and the dignity of labor as contrasted
with their exclusive addiction to fossilized nationalism.
He tried to get the Jews to throw off the shackles
of mediocrity and to join their fellow-countrymen
in learning the native language of the place, and
adopt modern manners and modes of life - in short
to be "a man on the street and a Jew in the
house."

Gordon realized later that much harm was
being done by this nihilism. This throwing off of all
old forms. He could sense that a gulf was developing
between the past & the present. He lamented actually.

"And our children, the coming generation,
From childhood, alas, are strangers to our nation -
Oh, how my heart for them doth bleed!
Farther & faster they are ever drifting,
Who knows how far they will be shifting?
Maybe till whence they can never recede."

There was one Maskeit whom assimilation did
not attract nor reformation mislead - Smolenkin.

To him Haskalah was not merely acquaintance
with general culture or even its requisition. It was the
realization of one's individuality as a Jew and a man.
Gordon's advice to be a Jew at home and a man abroad,
found little favor in his estimation, for Haskalah meant
the evolution of a Jewish man *sui generis*.

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To the members of Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun:

One of our members, deeply impressed by the beauty, strength and truth of Rabbi Friedman's recent Yom Kippur sermon, managed to secure a transcript of it for himself. Now, believing that our members would welcome and treasure the possession of such an exemplary and characteristic memento, he has had an adequate quantity printed and has supplied us with enough copies so that we can mail them to our entire membership. Concurring with his views as we do, we are most happy to send you this, and suggest that, should you desire an extra copy same can be had if you apply immediately.

Yours most cordially,

THE TEMPLE MEN'S CLUB

Sermon — Yom Kippur — 1954

"Judaism—The Hope of the World"

We come on this pregnant day to this grand and glorious place with expectancy in our hearts and with yearning in our souls. We seek the grand theme, for the mood is solemn. The message today could speak of personal growth and maturity — each person's individual striving toward the stars. It could equally well speak of collective striving towards the answer to the highest philosophical question — who are we, what is our role, what is the meaning of our existence as Jews.

This Yom Kippur I prefer the latter, for it is the natural corollary of the idea I started to develop on Rosh Hashonah. You will recall that I spoke then about the kind of Judaism we could have in America in the future, and the paradoxes we would be obliged to solve in order to attain that goal. But all the hard work is justified only if there exists an utter conviction about its worthwhileness.

Let the thesis for today be then the question of Judaism's importance and relevancy in the modern world — nothing less. When the great figures of Protestantism gathered from all over the globe this past summer at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, their theme was "Christ — The Hope of the World" and they analyzed its details with fervor. Without engaging in polemics, it occurs to me that an equivalent phrase "Judaism — The Hope of the World" deserves at least equal attention. Christians say that a belief in Christ as the Saviour is the best hope for confused mankind. If you can accept this, you can find peace in this world and salvation in the next. This message, they say, is applicable to everyone, and they seek with sincerity to bring its benefits to the uninstructed through missions of world-wide proportions. What message does Judaism have for the whole wide world?

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RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

Of Temple Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun

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Is it not most important that the Jew try to share with the world the secret of the spiritual strength which has saved him again and again? And if we do teach our secret to the world, does not this then mean that our existence is not tragic but is holy of holies, most holy?

What is the secret? The secret of the faith of the Jew, which has enabled him to withstand all shocks and strains, is to be found in five simple tenets of his theology.

First, we have the belief that God exists. This is no mere verbiage. Job cried out in the pain of all his anguish and was happy when God answered him from out of the whirlwind. He was happy because he knew that he was not alone. Men cannot stand to be alone in this vast and impersonal universe. But it is not enough simply to know that there is a God. This God must be close and warm and vibrant and, to the Jew, he was so close as to be called partner. God and man goaded each other on to ever greater effort. God too would be lonely if he did not have man — peopling his universe. This is an enormous source of human strength, warmth, and comfort.

Secondly, we believe that in the exercising of this partnership, God and man use the tapestry of history. History is the handmaiden, the midwife by which the human race marks its progress. We do not believe, as Toynbee or Spengler suggest, that civilizations live and die without inching forward, however slowly, toward the goals we call Messianic. We cannot accept the blind and mechanistic view of life, for we see all about us the evolution of life forms to ever higher stages. Man is not an accident, nor is history a crazy-quilt tapestry of meaningless jigsaws. If God and man are partners, then they work out the destiny of their aspiration, on the fields of history, which fields may well be bloodied but are not sterile.

Thirdly, we believe that ethics and morality, the good life, the decent treatment of man by man, social justice, are the truest goals which must ever be sought by us. Just as the plant turns its leaf outward reaching toward the sun, so do we Jews turn our spirits outward reach-

ing toward the sun of justice and truth and mercy and peace. We could not long abide if we believed these goals unattainable. We could not long endure the outrages which have been visited upon us, if we did not believe that these too would some day pass as man thrusts his way ever upward and ever forward toward the goals which shall surely some day be achieved. Our whole existence is oriented toward the conviction that morality will conquer and that man will someday reach the full maturity of a peaceful co-existence with his fellowman. We could not live eternally in a world in which evil was bound to reign.

The very proof of this is that those who desire evil cannot long live with us. In the very efforts of evil men to destroy us, do we see the strength of the role we play. Why are we attacked? Because of our long noses? Nonsense! Because our very presence is a galling reminder of civilization to those who would unleash barbarism. Hitler understood that we must be obliterated if his conception of human life was to prevail. He had to destroy us if he were to saddle the world with the rule of brutality. He left behind a conversation which has been recorded by Herman Rauschning, once an intimate, later an opponent. Rauschning tells this story, which is to me the most valid reason for the continued survival of the Jewish people and the Jewish ethic. He writes:

"At an intimate gathering in Berlin shortly after the National Socialists' rise to power, I heard Hitler reveal himself. Hitler was making a murderous assault on every form of higher human culture. Hitler said, 'Historically speaking, the Christian religion is nothing but a Jewish sect. It has always been and it will always remain just that, as long as it will exist.'

He continued fanatically "There is much more behind this. It is not merely a question of Christianity and Judaism, we are fighting against the most ancient curse that humanity has brought upon itself. We are fighting against the perversion of our soundest instincts. Ah, the god of the deserts, that crazy, stupid, vengeful Asiatic despot with his power to make law! That slave-keeper's whip! That devilish 'Thou shalt, thou shalt!' and that stupid 'Thou shalt not!' It has got to get out of our blood, that curse from Mt. Sinai! That poison with which both Jews and Christians have spoiled the free wonderful instincts of man and lowered them to the level of dog-like fright."

Goebbels interrupted, "Honor thy father and thy mother?" "No!" "Every boy revolts and hates his father and must do so to start his own life. This is an immortal law of nature."

Hitler's voice sounded loudly in the small room, "Thou shalt not steal? Wrong! All life is theft."

"I am the Lord, thy God! Who? That Asiatic tyrant? No! The day shall come when I shall hold up against these ten commandments the tables of a new law. This is what we are fighting against: The curse of so-called morals. Against the so-called ten commandments, against them we are fighting."

Yes — Hitler knew that if he were to impose upon the world his concept of the super-race ruling the weak, then he must destroy Judaism, and with it its daughter sect Christianity, for only then could he release the fierce and barbaric spirit which Jewish civilizing ethic had attempted to hold in abeyance since Sinai. We should certainly be as aware of our own role as our enemies have always been.

Fourthly, we believe that evil is not the inevitable fate of man. We reject the notion that man is basically

a beast and cannot raise himself up above his own lowest instincts. We cannot believe that he is forever doomed to wallow in the mire of ugliness, shortsightedness, suicide and murder. We believe he has a potential of living but a little lower than the angels and we seek with all the power at our command to evoke from man conduct which is becoming in the sight of the Lord. You have all lived like angels as well as devils. We believe man is capable of the highest conduct and we do not foreordain him to the chains of his own evil nature which shall forever keep him low. We believe he can be free and that as he seeks to soar high, he will bring up the level of the whole human race with him.

Fifth and lastly, we believe that freedom is indispensable as a pre-requisite for life upon this earth. We do not render unto Caesar what is Caesar's when we believe Caesar is wrong. At long, long last our Christian brethren have found the courage to repudiate this ancient doctrine. At the great Council of Churches meeting in Evanston this summer they attacked the problem of racial discrimination with great vigor. They finally said that racial discrimination is not only "an unutterable offense against God" but where it is the law of the land (as, for instance, in South Africa) true Christians may properly "feel bound to disobey such law." Jews have always disobeyed the laws of tyranny and injustice and cruelty and evil, even where such disobedience brought them into conflict with the powers of Church and State. Freedom is indispensable and even when government, the highest authority on earth, would seek to abridge it, this is not to be permitted.

And so we return to the root question. Is Jewish existence tragic or is it holy? I say it is holy. It is never holier than on this day when we can understand the grand themes which parade before our eyes through prayer and music. And I say that if this is so, we have no right to keep these values hidden. It is inadequate to suggest that we should be Jews at home but that abroad we should be like all other men. We should be Jews abroad to spread this word, to give this faith, to offer this message to the world which stands now in such paralyzed hypnosis before impending doom.

We believe in God.

We believe in history as progress.

We believe that social justice is the goal of man's efforts.

We believe that man is good not evil.

We believe that rebellion against tyranny is indispensable.

These beliefs have as much explosive power as any atomic engine. They provide sufficient fuel and power to energize the entire human race.

This Jewish message, this holy, this imperishable message which has sustained our body and soul through centuries of travail, can give to America the faith our president seeks and it can give to all mankind the calm confidence which will enable the world to avoid the path of total calamity. Nation need not lock sword with nation in a blind fury of fear, hatreds, and frustrations, if men's souls are stimulated by the dreams and convictions which have carried us through every ordeal and will surely sustain us to the end of time.

If ultimately in the long run, the impact of the Jewish religion upon mankind is just this and no less, then perhaps our children's children's children will some day not question whether our faith is tragic or holy. They will know it is holy. For they will see that it has brought redemption to the human race. Amen.



Rabbi Herbert Friedman
3431 North Lake Drive
Milwaukee, Wis

Dear Rabbi Friedman,

Because I know
how busy you are, and
I hesitate to intrude
on your few leisure
moments, I am using
this means of telling
you how profound
and inspiring were
your sermons both
on the New Year and
Yom Kippur. I am

anxious to discuss
the former with you.

With every wish for
happiness in the coming
year for you and your
family, I am,

Sincerely,
Clare F. Newman





WIS. JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Rabbi Herbert Kiedwan
3431 No. Lake Drive
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Dear Rabbi -

I just wanted to wish you, Elaine and your family a very happy New Year.

I don't stop during the holidays, as Sy has been ill & in the hospital and I've been busy going back and forth.

I also wanted you to know the comfort I feel on your Yekkeu listening to your sermon. With this warming for

Sy, I'm very grateful and
my trust in God is
even greater than before.

Both Dorey and Janice
want to be remembered.

Sincerely,
Lea Karsen
~~Saturday~~

LRK

BELLE BORTIN RUPPA



My dear Rabbi Friedman,

Friday, Oct. 8th.

Let me add my word
of thanks for the wonderful sermon
we heard you deliver Thursday morning.
It was inspirational and I found
a purpose for my humble existence
on this good earth.

May, God give you and your
loved ones good health and a long
life, to continue doing the wonderful
things for us Jews.

You shall succeed in making
an understanding Jew out of this
humble Grandma!

Cordially yours,
Belle

RUPPA & BORTIN

JOHN RUPPA
BELLE BORTIN RUPPA

ATTORNEYS AT LAW
4790 NORTH LAKE DRIVE
MILWAUKEE 11, WIS.

WOODRUFF 2-9227

October 8, 1954.

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman,
Temple Eman-El B'ne Jeshurun,
2419 E. Kenwood Boulevard,
Milwaukee 11, Wisconsin.

Dear Herbert:-

Now that its "noch Ne'ilah" and we're returning to our normal routine, I hope you won't mind this brief imposition on your time. Belle and I missed the 'early' Rosh Hashonah morning services (and came at 11 A.M), but we were Johnnies on the spot yesterday morning and consider ourselves mighty fortunate in that we were able to listen to and enjoy your most excellent and inspiring sermon. Frankly, sincerely and without equivocation, it was the very best of its kind we have ever heard -- and would like to hear, again and again.

While I have been told that you do not write out your sermons or attempt to commit them to memory, it is my impression that you do occasionally have some recorded -- to enable the ailing and bedridden to hear them, and if so, I would like to re-listen to this particular sermon. In fact, I'd like to sponsor the printing of a sizeable batch of this sermon, so that others might derive knowledge and inspiration therefrom. Anything you can suggest along the above lines will be greatly appreciated.

In yesterday's mail we received the announcement concerning the Sunday evening dinner on November 7th in our Community Hall, where Abba Eban, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, will speak. Belle and I will be at Hot Springs, Arkansas, between Oct. 20th and Nov. 5th, to take the baths, I to try to get the kinks out of a stiff left shoulder, and my good wife, for a general all around rehabilitation -- and believe you me, we usually accomplish a satisfactory reintegration. We've arranged our personal affairs, made our reservations, etc. but we'll be back in time to be among the 300 present, but it doesn't seem likely that we'll be much help to Lawrence Katz or the steering committee.

Again expressing my heartfelt thanks for your fine, beautiful sermon on Yom Kippur morning, I am

Cordially yours,

JR:S

JOHN RUPPA

E. J. YOUNGERMAN
COUNSELLOR AT LAW

DALY 8-6164

*5174 Plankinton Bldg.
Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin*

October 8, 1954

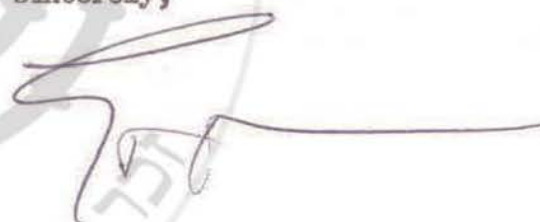
Dear Rabbi:

A letter under date of October 2nd from Joe E. Smith informed me that together with Hy Lewensohn, I was to consider some Tercentenary program for the Temple.

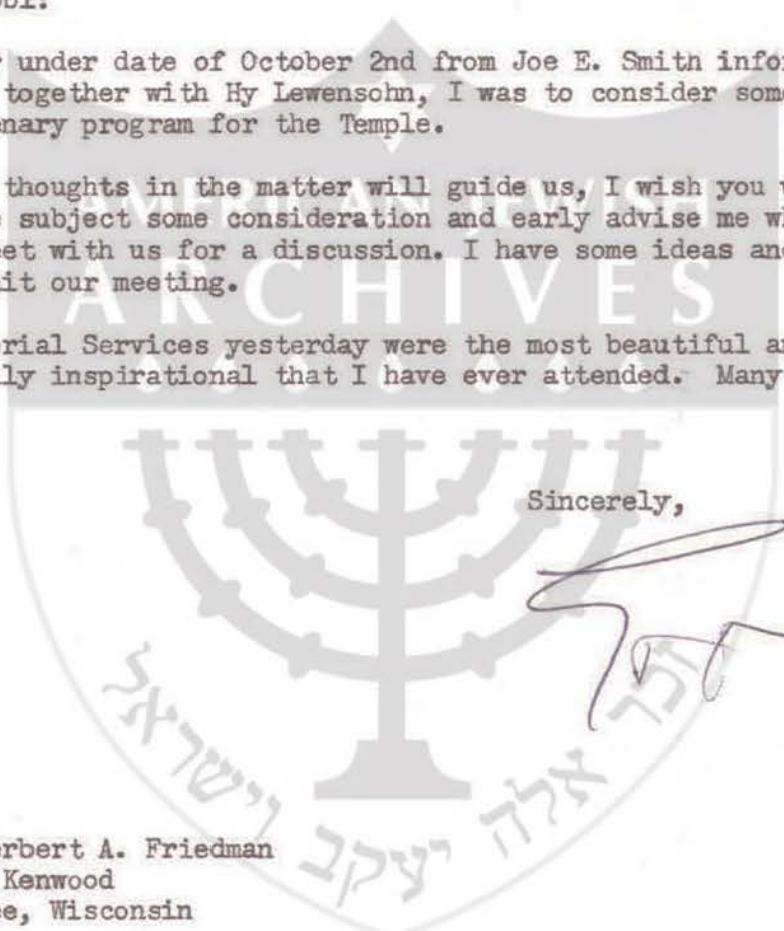
As your thoughts in the matter will guide us, I wish you would give the subject some consideration and early advise me when you could meet with us for a discussion. I have some ideas and they will await our meeting.

The Memorial Services yesterday were the most beautiful and personally inspirational that I have ever attended. Many thanks to you.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
2419 E. Kenwood
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN
TEMPLE EMANU-EL B'NE JESHURUN
2419 EAST KENWOOD BOULEVARD
MILWAUKEE 11, WISCONSIN

DATE 7 Oct 54

TO:

Mrs. Orfield called

sat numb throughout services
never so moved

200 men like me no Jew in America
would fail to be moved

Hirschbey married her - she has been member
of Temple 35 years - he was fine man,
but no comparisons to me

Keep giving us such wonderful services & inspiration.

HARRY A. KOVENOCK
ATTORNEY AT LAW
735 NORTH WATER STREET
828 FIRST WISCONSIN NAT'L BANK BUILDING
MILWAUKEE 2, WISCONSIN
TELEPHONE BROADWAY 1-3494

October 9, 1954.

Dear Rabbi Friedman:

Your Yom Kippur sermon was so stimulating that my mind has turned again and again to the implied question to which your points seemed an answer: "What is the raison d'etre for continuing as Jews?"

I put down on paper some lengthy answers in an attempt to be objective. Sociologically, the world and our country need a continuing minority group which incubates, conserves, and develops, beyond the standards of the majority, an evolving group of personal and social values. And psychologically the individual Jew needs the security of belonging to an ancient and ubiquitous brotherhood and sharing in its great traditions and the pride of being the bearer of great hopes for mankind.

But when I got through writing down the abstract concepts, I realized that one's ultimate answer to the question depended on something beyond verbal demonstration; it depends on what value judgments one places on being a Jew, and this in turn is dependent on his own experiences and his emotional responses to those experiences. The rationale is the seal or label which we appropriately place upon the vessel according to the contents which we have placed therein. The contents of the vessel are determined by our experience and emotions. The rationale follows - it does not precede - the filling of the vessel of life with experience and emotional reactions to that experience.

And so ultimately the question of Jewish continuity will be determined here, as in other places and times, by the needs and experience of our people. The climate of opinion in American life -- the congeniality of the human environment to our individual values -- is the principal factor which has not only made for integration, which we like; it poses the threat of assimilation, - which means disintegration of our distinctiveness as a minority group and a dilution of those distinct qualities in a larger, undifferentiated human mass, until the minority ceases to be a recognizable entity. That we don't want. Nor would we have, if we could, Jewish enclaves living in separation like the Amish and Mennonite communities in Pennsylvania, or in ghetto-like settlements within our cities.

We would like, if we can attain it, a symbiosis of our American and our Jewish heritages; to be fully American and fully Jewish; to be fully aware and responsive to the best in the total civilization and the special one which contributes to the total.

Maybe an apt, although obviously incomplete analogy, would be to compare the American Jew to a college student who is majoring in one group of studies but also carrying another group in which he is minoring. Without stopping to argue which is the major and which the minor, it is obvious that our student has shown lack of interest, diligence and achievement in that group which relates to his Jewish life. The point of our question is whether he is going to drop that group altogether; whether there is any reason for him to carry them at all.

I return to the answer. The question whether the Jewish group will see value in survival as a distinct entity is parallel to the question whether the student will realize that the group of studies he has been neglecting are just as interesting, meaningful, vital, perhaps useful, as the other which he has been pursuing so assiduously. The answer in both probably depends on the experience in childhood and youth, the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction which he associates with the material which he is free to accept or reject. And what is the object of his study?

Specifically, - what emotions have been associated with being a Jew, what satisfactions or dissatisfactions cluster around the association from experiences in the home, the classroom, the playground, youth center, scout troop, summer camp, and later on the job in office and factory, or in leisure at the lodge, social club, pullman car, political meeting, and so on?

Of these the most important in determining the value the individual places on being a Jew, and in interpreting the appraisal made of him by non-Jews, is the emotional context of Jewishness in his early home life. How was Jewishness expressed by his parents; what did being Jewish mean to them and to his brothers and sisters in the home; and to his very young friends?

The subordination bordering on rejection of the Jewish heritage by large segments of our people in America, both the older settlers and the newer immigration, can be understood in the light of the intellectual, social and economic forces which played upon the lives of the respective groups. A bill of particulars is not necessary to prove the point; it is only too well known to students of Jewish life in America.

The more important point is the recognition, which has come, albeit belatedly, of the great void which exists in most Jewish homes with respect to events, occasions, ceremonies, interests, which make being Jewish meaningful to the child and cause him from an early age to identify himself deeply with both his own and family's tradition and with sharing a common tradition and interest with all other Jews; a void with respect to the ethical and moral values of his people, which he can understand at a later age, as these relate to questions of conduct with which he is faced personally; with which the family,

the community, and the nation are faced. I do not mean that the problems are not discussed, but that there is no body of Jewish teaching or experience which the parents have at their command to relate to living issues. Somewhere along the line the connection between the great teachings of Torah and Talmud and the crucial problems of current affairs had been broken and lost. (I will not undertake to say whether it was in Europe fumbling either with Higher Criticism in Germany or fumbling with Pilpul in Poland and Russia, or with socialism in both. Nor whether it was lost in America in the desperate struggle to Americanize, to become economically sufficient.)

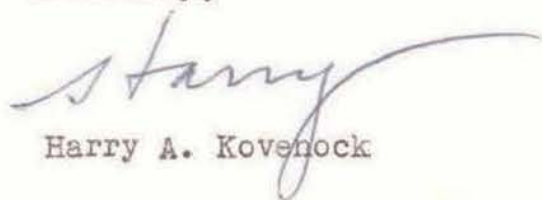
How to fill that void in the life of parent and child! This is the problem which challenges our teachers and intelligent laymen. We hope Jewish history will record this as the period of Counter-Disintegration. We are trying to revive and adapt the most aesthetic and pleasant of our old home customs and folkways; and in turn at religious school to arouse interest in the child which causes him to provoke mother and father to keep up with the child. We are trying at the same time to invest all Jewish activity with meaning for the enrichment and betterment of the individual and social life. (We are not simply trying to recapture folkways out of antiquarian interest, or to act out "The Way the Jewish People Lived". We are trying to make these signs, symbols, ceremonies, readings, studies meaningful in relation to the way we live now.)

Obviously the people who are doing these things for themselves and their child have answered for themselves the question with which we started, - Is there a reason for Jewish survival? They have answered it in the affirmative, and in the most significant way in which a question can be answered, - by action.

And may I say in conclusion, Rabbi, that the leadership which you are giving us here in Milwaukee is helping us as individual Jews to find the answer.

With good wishes for the New Year, I remain

Sincerely,



Harry A. Kovenock

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman,
3431 N. Lake Drive,
Milwaukee, Wis.