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"The Meaning of Judaism in a Cosmic Sense." 8 July 1989.

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"THE MEANING OF JUDAISM IN A COSMIC SENSE"

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
TO THE

WEXNER HERITAGE FOUNDATION

SUMMER INSTITUTE

ASPEN, COLORADO

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א'י' שבת א'י' בקר 'אשר עש': אינא כמאמר אלהא דבאר;
 אינא אלהא ד'אשר עשה' מאדא אלהא עשה, 'אשר עשה' ד'אשר עשה' מכל
 מאדא אלהא עשה; אינא אלהא אלהא אלהא אלהא אלהא, ב' ד'
 עשה מכל מאדא, אשר עשה אלהא אלהא.

"AND IT WAS EVENING, AND IT WAS MORNING, THE SIXTH DAY; AND
 THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH AND ALL THEIR HOSTS WERE COMPLETED; AND
 THE LORD FINISHED BY THE SEVENTH DAY ALL THE WORK WHICH HE HAD
 DONE, AND HE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL THE WORK HE HAD
 DONE, AND HE SANCTIFIED THE SEVENTH DAY, FOR ON IT HE RESTED FROM
 ALL HIS WORK, WHICH THE LORD HAD CREATED AND DONE."

SO SAY WE EVERY SABBATH EVE BEFORE WE BLESS THE WINE, AND IN
 THUS HALLOWING THE SABBATH, WE ARE REALLY HALLOWING THE CREATION
 OF THE UNIVERSE, WHICH ULTIMATELY PLACED YOU AND ME ON THIS EARTH.
 CREATION -- HOW DID IT HAPPEN? THERE ARE STORIES IN THE BOOK OF
 GENESIS WHICH OUR FATHERS SANG AROUND THE CAMPFIRES IN THE WIND-
 WHIPPED JUDEAN DESERT AND THE SOFT SAMARIAN MOUNTAINS, IN THE WILDER-
 NESS OF SINAI AND THE ROLLING HILLS OF MOAB; THE SHEPHERDS SANG AND
 THE WARRIORS AND THE WEAVERS AND THE TILLERS, AS THEY TOLD THE ANCIENT
 POEMS AND SAGAS WHICH HAD COME DOWN THROUGH ALL THE CENTURIES FROM
 THEIR FATHERS WHO BROUGHT THE STORIES OF HOW THE ONE AND ONLY GOD --
 EL SHADDAI, ADONAY TSEVAOT -- HAD CREATED THE EARTH AND MAN AND BEASTS
 AND FLOWERS OUT OF THE CHAOS OF NOTHINGNESS. THESE HEBREWS OF OLD
 WERE GIANTS OF MIND AND SOUL, FOR THEY WRESTLED WITH THE FACT OF THEIR

EXISTENCE, AND CAME TO PERCEIVE, AS NO OTHER CONTEMPORARY DID, THAT THE FORCE WHICH CREATED THEM WAS NOT IN A STONE OR A TREE, NOT IN THUNDER OR THE SUN, NOT IN FIRE OR THE WIND, NOT IN A BULL OR A CAT, BUT RATHER IN A UNITY OF ALL FORCES AND ALL POWERS WHICH WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR LIFE AND NATURE. THIS UNITY THEY CALLED GOD, NOT GODS, AND THEN SPENT A THOUSAND YEARS TRYING TO DEFINE THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THAT GOD AND TO THEIR FELLOW HUMANS. THE HEBREW SAGA OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD FULFILLED MAN'S NEED TO UNDERSTAND HIMSELF AND HIS ENVIRONMENT.

THERE IS ANOTHER STORY OF CREATION WHICH TELLS OF A HUGE EXPLOSION 20 BILLION YEARS AGO THAT SENT GASSES SWIRLING THROUGH EMPTINESS, ENERGY DRIVING ATOMS TO AND FRO IN THE BLACKNESS, DUST CLINGING TO MOTE OF DUST, MAGNETISM AND GRAVITY PULLING THROUGH THE SPACES WITHOUT END, FOREVER AND EVER, OVER BILLIONS AND BILLIONS OF YEARS UNTIL GALAXIES AND CONSTELLATIONS AND STAR SYSTEMS SLOWLY FORMED. BECAUSE OF THE INCREDIBLE DISTANCES OF TIME AND SPACE, THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING AS YET WHETHER WE ARE ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE -- BUT IT IS ALREADY REASONABLY CLEAR THAT WE ARE ALONE IN OUR LITTLE CORNER. THIS TINY PLANET HAS BEEN SPEEDING, TRAPPED IN ITS ORBIT FOR MORE THAN 4 BILLION YEARS, AND DURING MOST OF THIS TIME, THE SPACESHIP WE CALL EARTH WAS FORMING ITSELF, CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE AND WATER AND CONTINENTS AND MINERALS AND FINALLY LIFE. ONLY A FEW HOURS AGO THE DINOSAURS CAME AND WENT (THEY DIED OUT ABOUT 60 MILLION YEARS AGO) -- AND ONLY A FEW SECONDS AGO A MAN-LIKE CREATURE APPEARED (ABOUT $\frac{1}{2}$ MILLION YEARS AGO) -- AND ONLY A MILLISECOND AGO, FULLY-DEVELOPED MAN INVENTED WRITING (JUST 5,000 YEARS AGO) AND HISTORY BEGAN. THE HUMAN BEING FINALLY BECAME IMMORTAL, BECAUSE AT LAST HE COULD PRESERVE KNOWLEDGE BY WRITING IT DOWN AND IT WOULD ENDURE BEYOND

HIS DEATH, PASSED ON TO NOURISH FUTURE GENERATIONS. AMONG THE VERY FIRST HISTORIC MEN WERE THE HEBREW TRIBES -- AND OF ALL MEN WHO STOOD AT THE BEGINNING, WE ARE THE OLDEST SURVIVORS. ALL OTHERS HAVE PERISHED OR METAMORPHOSED.

IN THIS INSIGNIFICANT SPECK OF SPACE CALLED THE SOLAR SYSTEM TUCKED INTO THE EDGE OF A MINOR GALAXY CALLED THE MILKY WAY, THERE ENDLESSLY SPINS THIS TINY PLANET, 800 TIMES SMALLER THAN SATURN, 1,000 TIMES SMALLER THAN JUPITER, THE ONLY PLANET POSSESSED OF LIFE. WE ARE ALONE, AT LEAST UNTIL WE REACH OTHER STAR SYSTEMS, AND IN OUR LONELINESS ON THIS SPACESHIP EARTH, WE THINK OF THE MIRACLE OF DUST AND GASSES AND CHEMICALS CULMINATING IN MAN. IT IS ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE TO REALIZE THAT AFTER MAN PASSED THROUGH ALL HIS MILLIONS OF YEARS OF EVOLUTIONARY STAGES OF PRE-HISTORY AND FINALLY REACHED THE HISTORIC PRESENT, OF ALL THE TRIBES AND NATIONS WHO WERE FORMED AND STRUGGLED AND DISSOLVED, WE, THE HEBREWS ARE ^{ONE OF} THE OLDEST, IN TERMS OF BEING DIRECT DESCENDANTS OF OUR ANCESTORS, SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE, LIVING IN THE SAME LAND. WHO ARE WE? WHERE DO WE FIT IN THE SCHEME OF PURPOSE?

WHERE ARE WE -- HEBREWS, JEWS, ISRAELITES -- GOING?

NOT LONG AGO, LAND WAS COVERED WITH ICE, BUT FINALLY THE LONG AGE OF ICE EASED ITS GRIP -- BEGAN TO RETREAT NORTHWARD -- AND WARMING WINDS SWEEPED ACROSS SOUTHWESTERN ASIA, CARRYING SEEDS OF WILD WHEAT AND BARLEY. SMALL BANDS OF HUNTERS ROAMED THE STEPPES AND HILLS STALKING DEER, GAZELLES, WILD SHEEP AND GOATS -- SEARCHING FOR WHATEVER SUSTENANCE NATURE COULD PROVIDE. THEY DIFFERED LITTLE FROM THEIR HOMINOID PREDECESSORS WHO HAD WANDERED OVER PARTS OF AFRICA AND ASIA FOR TWO OR THREE MILLION YEARS. THE TIME WAS JUST YESTERDAY, ABOUT 10,000 B.C. AND AS

THE ICE RETREATED ONE OF THE GREAT REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES WAS ABOUT TO OCCUR. MAN WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE FROM A FOOD-GATHERER TO FOOD-PRODUCER FROM HUNTER TO FARMER; FROM NOMAD TO SETTLER. BUILDING SETTLEMENTS, STAYING IN ONE PLACE, WAITING FOR THE CROPS TO MATURE WOULD LIBERATE HIM FROM ETERNAL WANDERING AND OPEN THE FUTURE OF CIVILIZATION. ^{one of} THE FIRST SETTLERS WERE CALLED NATUFIANS AND THEIR HOME WAS IN THE CAVES OF THE CARMEL RANGE, SOUTH OF HAIFA. "ABEL WAS A KEEPER OF SHEEP AND CAIN A TILLER OF THE GROUND," SAYS THE BIBLE. NEITHER ONE WAS A WANDERING HUNTER. BY 8,000 B.C. BESIDE A SPRING NEAR THE DEAD SEA, THE FIRST TOWN TOOK ROOT. STONE WALLS AND A TOWER 30 FT. HIGH PROTECTED A POPULATION OF ABOUT 2,500 SOULS IN THIS TOWN CALLED JERICHO -- ~~JUST A FEW MILES FROM HERE~~ -- THE OLDEST CONTINUOUS INHABITED SITE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

FOOD WAS GROWN BEYOND THE NEEDS OF THE MOMENT AND STORED FOR THE FUTURE. THUS MAN COULD TURN AND LOOK AT THE WORLD AROUND HIM, BEGIN TO FASHION TOOLS, THEN ARTIFACTS, THEN COOKING UTENSILS AND CLOTHING AND BUILDINGS AND ORNAMENTS AND RELIGIOUS OBJECTS -- AND THE MARCH OF CIVILIZATION WAS BEGUN.

BY THE YEAR 5,000 B.C. THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION HAD SPREAD EASTWARD TO THE TIGRIS-EUPHRATES VALLEY AND THERE ANOTHER GREAT INNOVATION SHAPED THE FUTURE: WATER WAS DIRECTED FROM THE NATURAL CHANNELS OF THE WIDE RIVERS INTO A VAST IRRIGATION NETWORK WHICH GAVE RISE TO THE FIRST GREAT EMPIRE OF HUMAN HISTORY -- SUMER. ITS FERTILE SOIL BORE GREAT CITIES, UR, FROM WHICH ABRAHAM'S FAMILY SPRANG, AND BABYLON AND MANY OTHER POPULOUS CITY-STATES THAT FORMED THE WORLD'S OLDEST CIVILIZATION.

TOWNS PROLIFERATED, THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM SPREAD, KINGS EMERGED, TRADE ROUTES OPENED, SHIPS RANGED UP THE RIVERS, WOOL WAS WOVEN, FRUITS AND VEGETABLES WERE TRADED; POTTERY WAS FIRED; WARS WERE FOUGHT EVERY SPRING.

IN ANOTHER RIVER VALLEY TO THE WEST, THE NILE, THE SAME PATTERN WAS EMERGING -- AND MEN SWARMED OUT OF THE DRY SAHARA INTO THE LUSHNESS OF THE NILE VALLEY TO BECOME THE FORERUNNERS OF THE FANTASTIC EGYPTIAN DYNASTIES SOON TO BE BORN.

FOR TWO MILLENIA, DURING THE PERIODS KNOWN AS NEOLITHIC AND CHALCHOLITHIC, THE TWO RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATIONS GREW AND FLOURISHED, BUT HAD LITTLE CONTACT OR INFLUENCE, ONE UPON ANOTHER.

SUDDENLY, AROUND THE YEAR 3,000 B.C., THE SINGLE MOST EXPLOSIVE FACT IN MAN'S HISTORY OCCURRED, AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT AS THE TAMING OF FIRE -- PERHAPS MORE SO: THE INVENTION OF A SYSTEM OF WRITING BY WHICH TO RECORD EVENTS, TRANSACTIONS, PLANS. THIS IS THE TRUE BEGINNING OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT AND IT TOOK PLACE ONLY 5,000 YEARS AGO. (IS IT CONCEIVABLE? FOR HALF A MILLION YEARS A HUMANOID FIGURE IN NATURE'S EVOLUTIONARY SCALE HAD ROAMED THE EARTH, AND ONLY 5,000 YEARS AGO DID HE LEAP TO PUT HIS THOUGHTS DOWN IN SYMBOLS SO THAT HE COULD COMMUNICATE ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE BEYOND HIS OWN MORTALITY.)

THE EVENT OCCURRED SIMULTANEOUSLY IN SUMERIA AND IN EGYPT. IN SUMERIA IT WAS A CUNEIFORM SCRIPT -- I.E., TRIANGULAR WEDGE-SHAPED SIGNS IMPRINTED INTO SOFT CLAY TABLETS, OR CARVED INTO STONE, AND A NUMERICAL SYSTEM BASED ON 60 WHICH PERSISTS UNTIL TODAY IN OUR SYSTEM OF SECONDS AND MINUTES. IN EGYPT IT WAS PICTURES, CALLED HIEROGLYPHS, DRAWN ON PAPYRUS, OR CARVED INTO STONE. WHAT A FANTASTIC COINCIDENCE THAT MAN'S LEAP FORWARD SHOULD TAKE PLACE FROM THESE TWO WIDELY SEPARATE CRADLES OF CIVILIZATION AT EXACTLY THE SAME TIME. THE INVENTION OF AN ALPHABET WAS TO WAIT ANOTHER 1500 YEARS, WHEN THE PHOENICIANS CREATED A SERIES OF LETTERS, REPLICATED LATER IN THE HEBREW AND GREEK ALPHABETS, WHICH FORMED WORDS -- THUS REPLACING THE CLUMSY WEDGES AND PICTURES, TRANSFORMING WRITING INTO A SIMPLIFIED AND UNIVERSALLY AVAILABLE SKILL.

THINK OF HOW NEAR WE HUMANS ARE TO OUR HISTORIC BEGINNINGS. EVERY CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT OF MODERN MAN HAS BEEN CONCEIVED AND EXECUTED AND TRANSMITTED IN THIS MERE BLINK OF FIVE MILLENIA -- ALL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES, GOVERNMENT AND LAW, ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING, EMPIRES AND ARMIES, CITIES AND MACHINES, POEMS AND RELIGIONS -- ALL, ALL ARE ONLY 5,000 YEARS OLD. IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO MIGHTILY, THIS NEAR TO OUR BEGINNINGS, HOW FAR ARE WE FROM OUR TRUE POTENTIALITIES? WHAT WILL MAN HAVE DONE 5,000 YEARS FROM NOW? WHAT PROFOUND CONQUESTS OF TIME AND AND SPACE AND MIND AND BODY WILL HAVE TAKEN HIM TO WHAT ABSOLUTELY INCONCEIVABLE HEIGHTS OF CREATIVITY?

THE RETREAT OF THE ICE WAS ONLY 12 MILLENIA AGO, AND OF THE 5,000 YEARS THAT MAN MAY BE SAID TO HAVE A WRITTEN HISTORY, THE HEBREW TRIBES HAVE BEEN ON THE STAGE FOR ALMOST FOUR THOUSAND. THE OTHER ORIGINAL PLAYERS HAVE LONG SINCE DISAPPEARED. THIRTY EGYPTIAN DYNASTIES ARE RECORDED, THEN THE PHAROAHS SLOWLY DWINDLED IN POWER AND SIGNIFICANCE. THE SUMERIANS AND AKKADIANS AND BABYLONIANS AND ASSYRIANS HAVE LONG SINCE BLOWN TO DUST. WE ARE STILL HERE. WHAT MAGIC LIES IN US? WHAT SECRET SUSTAINS US? WHO ARE WE? WHY ARE WE HERE? IS IT PURE ACCIDENT- OR WERE WE CHOSEN FOR SOME PURPOSE?

THE SECRET OF OUR SURVIVAL LIES IN THE SENSE OF SELECTION. REVELATION AND CHOSEN-NESS ARE THE HALLMARKS OF OUR DESTINY. EITHER GOD CHOSE US OR WE CHOSE HIM. PERHAPS THAT IS SAYING THE SAME THING. AND IF THE CONCEPT OF GOD IS AN UNCOMFORTABLE ONE FOR POST-HIROSHIMA AND POST-AUSCHWITZ MAN, THEN TRANSLATE IT INTO THE PHRASE "HISTORICAL DESTINY". IF YOU CANNOT BELIEVE THAT WE WERE CHOSEN BY GOD, THEN PERHAPS YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT THE HEBREWS, BY THEIR OWN FLASH OF GENIUS INSIGHT, CHOSE TO BELIEVE IN A MORAL UNIVERSE, AND BY THIS INSIGHT WERE SUPERIOR TO ALL

OTHERS WHO ACCEPTED BLIND DETERMINISM AS THE FATE OF MAN. ANCIENT MAN WAS AFRAID OF HIS GODS AND TRIED TO PLACATE THEM WITH ALL MANNER OF SACRIFICES AND GIFTS. ONLY HEBREW MAN SPOKE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, MORAL CONDUCT, ETHICAL IMPERATIVE. THE HIGHEST DUTY WAS TO BE CONCERNED WITH THE WELFARE OF ONE'S FELLOW HUMAN, EVEN MORE SO THAN ONE'S OBLIGATIONS TO THE LORD.

WHEN THE PROPHET ISAIAH POSED THE QUESTION -- WHAT SORT OF WORSHIP DOES GOD REALLY WANT? - HE OFFERED GOD'S OWN ANSWER -- "THIS IS THE SACRIFICE THAT I DESIRE: THAT YOU LOOSE THE FETTERS OF INJUSTICE, BREAK EVERY YOKE AND SET FREE THOSE THAT ARE CRUSHED...THAT YOU SHARE YOUR FOOD WITH THE STARVING AND BRING THE HOMELESS POOR INTO YOUR OWN HOMES, COVER THE NAKED AND NOT IGNORE THE NEEDS OF YOUR OWN KIN." THE PASSAGE IS SO BASIC TO THE JEWISH RELIGION THAT IT IS READ ON THE HOLIES DAY OF THE YEAR -- YOM KIPPUR.

THUS, THE HEBREW PEOPLE, LIVING AT A TIME OF BRUTALITY, SAVAGERY, TORTURE, LIVING AT A TIME WHEN HUGE EMPIRES WERE FORGED ON PILES OF CORPSES, LIVING AT A TIME WHEN THE GODS WERE INDIFFERENT TO MAN'S FATE, CAME TO UNDERSTAND THE UNIVERSE QUITE DIFFERENTLY AND DEFINED IT AS A PLACE WHERE MAN'S GREATEST GOOD WAS TO ACHIEVE A SENSE OF MORAL RIGHTEONESS, AND THAT MAN COULD DO SO. BELIEF IN MAN'S GOODNESS, HIS ABILITY TO OVERCOME THE EVIL SIDE OF HIS NATURE, IS CARDINAL IN HEBREW THOUGHT.

THIS IDEA BURNED IN ABRAHAM, WHO LEFT THE RIVER VALLEY OF HIS BIRTH, CAME ACROSS THE CLEANSING DESERT, BROKE WITH HIS PAST BY BREAKING HIS FATHER'S HOUSEHOLD IDOLS, AND TURNED TO THE NEW LAND WHICH WOULD BE THE HOLY GROUND OF HIS PEOPLE DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY. THE TIME WAS 1,750 B.C.E. FOR FIVE HUNDRED YEARS HE AND HIS SONS AND THEIR SONS STRUGGLED TO SHAPE THEIR IDEAS AND VALUES, FALLING INTO SLAVERY IN EGYPT

THE EGYPT OF DARK TOMBS BURIED DEEP INTO HEAVY MAUSOLEUMS OF STONE CALLED PYRAMIDS, ^{THE HEBREWS} ~~UNTIL THEY~~ SUDDENLY SPRANG FORTH INTO FREEDOM, LED BY MOSES TO THAT BLINDING ENCOUNTER AT THE MOUNTAIN WHICH SHAPED THEM INTO THE GOD-INTOXICATED NATION WHICH WAS DESTINED TO TEACH MORALITY TO THE WORLD.

WHEN THE COMMANDMENTS OF MORALITY WERE ENGRAVED ON THE STONES IN THAT 13TH CENTURY B.C.E., WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE REST OF THE WORLD? MONGOLS FROM SIBERIA, THE ANCESTORS OF THE INDIANS, WERE EXTERMINATING BISON IN THE WESTERN PLAINS OF AMERICA AND DRESSING IN THEIR SKINS; PICTS AND DRUIDS ON THE ENGLISH ISLAND WERE PAINTING THEMSELVES BLUE AND BUILDING STONE FORMATIONS TO WORSHIP THE SUN; GERMANIC TRIBES IN NORTHERN EUROPE HUDDLED IN CAVES; ROMAN AND GREEK CULTURE WAS NOT TO BE BORN FOR YET HUNDREDS OF YEARS; THE CHINESE HAD INVENTED PAPER BUT CONFUCIUS WASN'T TO BE BORN FOR ANOTHER 800 YEARS. MOSES AND THE HEBREWS WERE ALSO A ROUGH-LOOKING, ROUGH-SPEAKING TRIBE, BUT THEY WERE INFUSED WITH AN INCREDIBLE SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG, AND BELIEVED THAT THEIR ACTUAL PHYSICAL SUCCESS OR FAILURE, IN CROPS, IN WAR, IN WEALTH AND IN HEALTH WOULD DEPEND ON OBEYING GOD'S WORD WHICH DEMANDED JUSTICE TO BE DONE BY ALL MEN TO ALL MEN. THE HEBREWS INVENTED MORALITY -- AND THUS PROPOSED AN ETHICAL UNIVERSE IN WHICH THE POOREST AND MEANEST MAN COULD HOPE TO LIVE OUT HIS LIFE UNAFRAID. IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE BURST OF GENIUS -- REPRESENTING DOWN TO THIS DAY THE RAISON D'ETRE OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE. JUSTICE, JUSTICE SHALT THOU PURSUE, SAID ISAIAH. -- AND IF YOU WERE ASKED TO SUM UP JUDAISM IN ONLY ONE WORD, THAT'S THE WORD: JUSTICE.

OUT THERE IN THE BURNING SINAI DESERT, THE NATION WAS BORN AND IN TURN GAVE BIRTH. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT MORE THAN 600,000 MEN OVER THE AGE OF 21 WENT FORTH FROM EGYPT IN THE EXODUS, TOGETHER WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR FLOCKS. THIS WOULD HAVE MEANT AN OBVIOUSLY IMPOSSIBLE HORDE OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE. BEN GURION, WHO STUDIED THE BIBLE ALMOST

EVERY DAY OF HIS LIFE, AND WHO KNEW THE OASES OF THE DESERT INTIMATELY, BELIEVED THAT THE TRUE NUMBER WAS 600 MEN -- WHICH MEANT THE TOTAL POPULATION WAS ONLY A FEW THOUSAND. THAT MAKES MORE SENSE. WATER WAS SIMPLY NOT AVAILABLE FOR MORE. WHAT A MIRACLE THAT WE ARE HERE TODAY FROM SUCH A TINY BEGINNING.

WHEN MOSES DIED AFTER THE 40 YEARS OF WANDERING, JOSHUA TOOK THE HANDFUL OF WARRIORS, CROSSED THE JORDAN, CONQUERED JERICO IN 1200 B.C. (TROY FELL TO THE GREEKS THE SAME YEAR) AND THE TWELVE TRIBES BEGAN TO SUBDUE THE REST OF THE PROMISED LAND AND SETTLE IN . THE PHYSICAL STRUGGLE CONTINUED FOR 200 YEARS, AS DID ALSO THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE MONOTHEISM THEY HAD LEARNED FROM MOSES AND THE IDOL WORSHIP OF THE CANAANITES AMONG WHOM THEY WERE SETTLING. IT WAS A FIERCE STRUGGLE GRADUALLY THE PHYSICAL VICTORY WAS WON, AND UNDER THE KINGS DAVID AND SOLOMON, ISRAEL REACHED HER GREATEST TERRITORIAL GLORY (ALTHOUGH STILL ONLY A SPECK ON THE MAP BETWEEN THE MAMMOTH EMPIRES OF EGYPT AND ASSYRIA ON BOTH SIDES OF HER). ALSO GRADUALLY THE SPIRITUAL VICTORY WAS WON, AS THE GREAT PROPHETS ISAIAH AND AMOS AND MICAH ESTABLISHED THE ETHICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CODES WHICH PREVAILED OVER THE ORGIES AND IMMORALITIES OF THE MANY CANAANITE BAALIM ON THE HIGH PLACES.

THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT, THE MONARCHY FLOURISHED, CIVIL WAR DIVIDED THE KINGDOM, THE TORAH WAS WRITTEN, A VISION WAS ESTABLISHED -- AND THEN THE WHOLE EDIFICE CRASHED UNDER AN ASSYRIAN ATTACK WHICH TOOK TEN TRIBES OFF INTO A LOST CAPTIVITY AND A LITTLE MORE THAN A 100 YEARS LATER, A BABYLONIAN ATTACK WHICH DESTROYED THE FIRST TEMPLE, IN 586 B.C.E.

WITH HELP FROM THE PERSIAN KING CYRUS, AND MOTIVATED BY THE SURVIVAL INSTINCT WHICH IS THE HALLMARK OF OUR PEOPLE, A FEW HUNDRED STRAGGLED BACK TO REBUILD THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE. IT WAS HARD --

TOOK A LONG TIME -- STONE UPON STONE. THEN A CONQUEST BY THE GREEK SUCCESSORS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT LAID THE JEWS LOW AGAIN; RESCUE CAME FOR A SPELL IN THE FORM OF THE MACCABEEAN HEROES WHO SUCCESSFULLY DEFIED THE GREEKS; AND FINALLY SUBJUGATION ONCE AGAIN, TOTAL, COMPLETE THIS TIME TO THE UNBEATABLE POWER OF THE ROMAN LEGIONS, WHO DESTROYED THE SECOND TEMPLE, IN 70 C.E., BURNED THE CITY TO THE GROUND AND SOWED IT WITH SALT SO THAT IT SHOULD NEVER RISE AGAIN.

THE WANDERING JEW WENT FORTH INTO THE WORLD AGAIN IN A WIDESPREAD DISPERSION WHICH WAS TO LAST ALMOST 2,000 YEARS, RIGHT DOWN TO OUR OWN CENTURY. BROKEN, IMPOVERISHED, DISHEARTENED, CARRYING NO BAGGAGE EXCEPT THE BIBLE AND THE BOOKS OF THE LAW, CALLED MISHNA, THEY SCATTERED AS FAR WESTWARD ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN AS GIBRALTAR, NORTHWARD UP INTO ASIA MINOR, AND EASTWARD TO BABYLONIA. THE GREATEST COMMUNITY DEVELOPED THERE, AND FOR ALMOST A MILLENIUM THE CENTER OF GRAVITY OF THE JEWISH WORLD LAY IN TWO ACADEMIES IN WHAT IS TODAY IRAQ, WHERE THE TALMUD WAS GRADUALLY WRITTEN DOWN, THOUSANDS OF PAGES DURING HUNDREDS OF YEARS.

AS THE BABYLONIAN COMMUNITY BEGAN TO DWINDLE IN POWER AND SIGNIFICANCE AROUND THE YEAR 900, THE CENTER OF JEWISH LIFE SHIFTED THOUSANDS OF MILES WESTWARD TO SPAIN, AND FOR THE NEXT 500 YEARS WE ENJOYED A GOLDEN AGE IN WHICH POETRY, MEDICINE, PHILOSOPHY AND MATHEMATICS FLOURISHED. IT WAS A BRILLIANT ERA, YET IT CAME TO AN END, FOR WE WERE CAUGHT IN THE FIERCE STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM. WHEN THE FINAL BATTLE WAS FOUGHT IN GRANADA IN 1492, KING FERDINAND AND QUEEN ISABELLA DROVE THE MOSLEMS OFF THE SPANISH PENINSULA, BACK INTO NORTH AFRICA FROM WHENCE THEY HAD COME, AND TWO MONTHS LATER EXPELLED THE JEWS AS WELL. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, SAILING TO THE NEW WORLD IN AUGUST OF THAT YEAR, NOTED IN HIS DIARY THE WEEPING AND WAILING COMING FROM THE JEWISH REFUGEE BOATS IN THE HARBOR OF CADIZ.

WE SCATTERED AGAIN, THIS TIME LIKE POPCORN, TO MANY DIFFERENT PLACES: MOROCCO, HOLLAND, ITALY, TURKEY, BUT ONCE AGAIN IN THE MYSTERIOUS PATTERN OF OUR HISTORY, BY WHICH A LARGE COMMUNITY BEGAN TO FORM IN ANOTHER PLACE WHILE ELSEWHERE A PREVIOUS COMMUNITY WAS DISINTEGRATING, NEW FUTURE WAS DEVELOPING IN POLAND AND RUSSIA. AND HERE AGAIN FOR THE NEXT HUNDREDS OF YEARS WE THRIVED, IN PHYSICAL POVERTY AND PERSECUTION, YET IN A SPIRITUAL SPLENDOUR OF SORTS, SHIVERING IN THE COLD WINDS OF ADVERSITY, YET WARMED BY THE GLOW OF THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE STUDY-CHAMBER AND THE SABBATH CANDLES AND THE TIGHTLY HUDDLED FAMILY LIFE.

THE EVENTS OF THE CENTURIES WERE MARKED BY INCREDIBLE PERSECUTION FROM WITHOUT AND AN IRON RESISTANCE FROM WITHIN. MOSLEM FANATICS RAM-PAGED ACROSS THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF NORTH AFRICA IN THE FLUSH OF THEIR MISSIONIZING ZEAL IN THE 8TH AND 9TH CENTURIES; CRUSADERS IN HEAVY ARMOR BURNED JEWS ALIVE IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES IN THE RHINE RIVER VALLEY IN THE 12TH CENTURY; SPANISH INQUISITION BISHOPS CARRYING THE CROSS TORTURED MARRANO JEWS IN TOWN SQUARES IN THE 13 CENTURY; DRUNKEN RUSSIAN COSSACKS ON HUGE HORSES SLASHED THEIR WHISTLING SABERS INTO SOFT FLESH DURING POGROMS OF THE 16TH AND 17TH; ON AND ON WENT THE ENDLESS MINDLESS COLD-BLOODED PIOUS SLAUGHTER. YET ON AND ON WENT THE JEWISH PEOPLE, STUBBORNLY REFUSING TO DIE. THE HISTORIAN ARNOLD TOYNBEE WHO SAID WE HAD DIED A LONG TIME AGO, AND THAT WE ARE TODAY ONLY A "FOSSIL OF AN ANCIENT SYRIAN CIVILIZATION" OBVIOUSLY NEVER ^{REALLY KNEW} ~~READ~~ OUR HISTORY. WE TOOK THE BLOWS STOLIDLY, POURED COPIOUS BLOOD, MOVED ON FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY, ALWAYS RETAINING PRIDE IN OUR TRADITION, FAITH IN OURSELVES, AND TEACHING OUR HERITAGE TO EACH NEW GENERATION OF CHILDREN AS SOMETHING WORTH PRESERVING NO MATTER THE PRICE. THE TWO ^{ENGINES} ~~WEAPONS~~ OF OUR SURVIVAL WERE EMIGRATION AND EDUCATION.

A PEOPLE DIES AS A RESULT OF CONQUEST FROM WITHOUT OR WEARINESS

FROM WITHIN -- A LACK OF FAITH -- A LOSS OF BELIEF IN ITS DESTINY. ROME FELL, NOT TO THE SUPERIOR WEAPONS OF THE GERMAN INVADERS FROM THE NORTH -- BUT BECAUSE ROME HAD GROWN WEARY, DECADENT, CORRUPT, CYNICAL AND HAD LOST FAITH IN ITSELF. CONVERSELY, WE JEWS WERE ALWAYS CONQUERED FROM THE OUTSIDE BY SUPERIOR FORCE OF ARMS, BUT THIS NEVER CAUSED OUR DEFEAT, SINCE WE RETAINED THE INNER CONVICTION OF OUR CHOSEN DESTINY -- TO SURVIVE AND GIVE LIVING TESTIMONY TO OUR FAITH IN MAN AND HIS MORAL UNIVERSE. HOW OBSTINATE TO BELIEVE IN MAN, WHEN MEN OF ALL NATIONS AND IDEOLOGIES WERE BUSY HACKING US TO PIECES. THIS IS THE BRILLIANCE OF OUR EXISTENCE.

THE FINAL MIGRATIONS HAVE BEEN THOSE OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIE ONCE AGAIN WITH THAT MYSTERIOUS FORESHADOWING OF HISTORY WHICH HAS OCCURRED SO OFTEN OUR GRANDFATHERS BEGAN TO MOVE FROM EASTERN AND CENTR EUROPE, IN THE MIDDLE AND LATER 19TH CENTURY, TOWARD AMERICA IN THEIR MILLIONS AND TOWARD PALESTINE IN THEIR FEW THOUSANDS, ALMOST AS THOUGH THEY SENSED THAT NEW CENTERS WOULD HAVE TO BE BUILT UP TO REPLACE THOSE WHICH WOULD LATER BE DESTROYED. IT WAS NOT A CONSCIOUS, PLANNED OPERATION BUT RATHER AN INSTINCTIVE YEARNING TOWARD SAFETY AND SURVIVAL

BY THE TIME THE HOLOCAUST DESCENDED WITH ITS SEARING FIRE AND CHOKING GAS TO BURN OUT THE SIX MILLION IN POLAND AND RUSSIA AND AUSTRI AND ALMOST ALL OF EUROPE, AMERICA AND PALESTINE HAD ARISEN AS NEW STRONGHOLDS.

WE JEWS BURNED IN THE HEAT OF A THOUSAND OVENS -- AND THE WORLD WAS COLD. WE GAGGED IN THE GAS OF A THOUSAND CHAMBERS -- AND THE WORLD WAS SILENT. A MILLION BULLETS THUDDERED INTO INERT FLESH UNTIL IT WAS NO NOVELTY AND A THOUSAND BULL-DOZERS HEAVED THE FROZEN, STARVED AND MANGLED BODIES INTO GAPING HOLES IN THE EXHAUSTED EARTH. THE SOIL

COULD NOT SHRIEK IN PROTEST. IT COULD ONLY ACCEPT AND SWALLOW THE AWFUL REFUSE. THE SMOKE DISSOLVED IN THE SKY. THE ASHES WERE SCATTERED ON THE WINDS. THE BONES DISAPPEARED -- AND WHEN THE WHOLE HIDEOUS MESS WAS OVER -- MANKIND WAS INDICTED FOREVER. THE MARK OF CAIN WAS BURNED INTO THE BROW, NOT ONLY OF JACK-BOOTED NAZIS WHO WERE THE ACTIVE CRIMINALS, BUT OF EVERY SINGLE HUMAN BEING ON EARTH WHO HAD FAILED TO PROTEST.

NOTHING LIKE THIS HAS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE IN THE ENTIRE RECORDED HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE. THE HUMAN ANIMAL IS A FIGHTING ANIMAL -- WORSE THAN ABSOLUTELY ANY OTHER -- AND THE RIVERS OF BLOOD SPILT IN WAR, OVER LAND OR GOLD OR RELIGION OR TRADE, SPILT THROUGH TORTURE AND INQUISITION AND GLADIATORIAL COMBAT, SPILT THROUGH HATRED AND GREED AND FEAR AND PRIDE, HAVE BEEN FAR GREATER THAN ALL THE RIVERS OF WATER ON ALL THE CONTINENTS. BUT, NEVER IN ALL THE FANTASTIC EPISODES WHICH HAVE MARKED MAN'S INCREDIBLE EAGERNESS TO HARM HIS BROTHER, HAS THERE BEEN ONE TO MATCH THE MURDER OF THE JEWS IN THE MID-20TH CENTURY.

ONE HOPES THIS MAY BE THE END OF THE WANDERINGS. THE PESSIMISTS SAY THAT THERE IS NO SAFETY ANYWHERE. EVEN THE PRECIOUS DEMOCRACY OF AMERICA WILL ONE DAY SHATTER, AND WE JEWS WILL BE ETERNALLY DOOMED TO WANDER. OTHERS, MYSELF AMONG THEM, FEEL THAT THE SUCCESSFUL RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THIRD JEWISH COMMONWEALTH IN THE FORM OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL, AND THE TIGHT LINKS WHICH THAT STATE HAS WITH THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND AMERICAN JEWS HAVE RADICALLY ALTERED THE COURSE OF HISTORY. IF THE STATE OF ISRAEL GROWS LARGER AND STRONGER AND SAFER; IF THE TIES BETWEEN AMERICAN JEWRY AND ISRAEL GROW DEEPER IN EVERY WAY; IF THE GOVERNMENTS OF AMERICA AND ISRAEL REMAIN COMMITTED TO A HIGHER DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY IN A WORLD WHERE THE NUMBER OF DEMOCRACIES GROWS SMALLER EACH YEAR, SO THAT THESE TWO NATIONS, AT LEAST, APPRECIATE

EACH OTHER MORE AND MORE, THEN PERHAPS THE AGES OF PERSECUTION AND MIGRATIONS ARE INDEED FINISHED AND THE WANDERING JEW WILL COME TO REST.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ALL OUR HISTORY, WE ^{Now} HAVE TWO POWERFUL CENTER OF JEWISH LIFE, NOT ONE. BY THE END OF THIS CENTURY, IN A SHORT 20 YEARS, THE JEWISH POPULATIONS OF ISRAEL AND THE U.S. WILL BE EQUAL AT ABOUT 5½ MILLION; OR PERHAPS THE ISRAELI WILL BE LARGER, DEPENDING ON THE INROADS OF ASSIMILATION IN AMERICA. AT ANY RATE, EACH WILL BE STRONG ENOUGH TO ADD SUPPORT TO THE OTHER. EVEN TODAY, IT IS NOT A ONE-WAY STREET. AMERICAN AND DIASPORA JEWS GIVE MATERIAL SUPPORT -- BUT ISRAEL GIVES BACK PRIDE TO EVERY JEW IN THE WORLD. LATER, ISRAEL MAY BE ABLE TO GIVE EVEN MORE THAN PRIDE, SHOULD IT EVER BE NECESSARY, JUST AS SHE GIVES CITIZENSHIP TODAY TO JEWS STILL INSIDE THE SOVIET UNION.

WE STARTED WITH ABRAHAM, ALMOST 4,000 YEARS AGO ON THE BANK OF THE EUPHRATES AND HAVE ARRIVED TODAY AT THE BANK OF THE HUDSON AND THE MISSISSIPPI, THE SEINE AND THE VOLGA, AND, ABOVE ALL, THE JORDAN. YOU, EACH ONE OF YOU, HAS BEEN PART OF THIS VAST TREK. THIS UNBELIEVABLE PAGEANT IS YOURS. KNOW FROM WHENCE YOU HAVE COME; KNOW BEFORE WHOM YOU STAND; THEN YOU WILL KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING.

WE SURVIVED, AND THIS IN ITSELF IS A GREAT VIRTUE, BUT MERE SURVIVAL IS THE MARK OF MANY SPECIES. WHAT WAS ACHIEVED; WHAT WAS OUTSTANDING, DURING OUR SURVIVAL FOR WHICH WE FOUGHT SO TENACIOUSLY; WHAT VALIDATES OUR CLAIM TO UNIQUENESS? THE RECORD YIELDS AN AWESOME AFFIRMATION:

1. WE INVENTED MONOTHEISM, LEADING MANKIND OUT OF ITS PRIMITIVISM
2. WE SPAWNED TWO OTHER GREAT RELIGIONS, WITHDRAWING, PERHAPS INCORRECTLY, FROM MISSIONIZING OUR OWN, AND YET OFFERING ALTERNATIVE MODELS TO HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS.
3. WE INVESTED A CERTAIN LAND WITH HOLINESS -- AND SO ISRAEL IS CALLED TODAY, THE HOLY LAND TO ALL THREE GREAT FAITHS.

4. WE CREATED A HOLY BOOK IN A HOLY LANGUAGE -- AND BOTH ARE ALIVE TODAY, A CENTRAL SOURCE OF INSPIRATION TO MUCH OF THE HUMAN RACE.
5. WE LINKED ETHICS IN HUMAN BEHAVIOR TO GOD -- AND THUS CREATED THE MORAL FORCE UPON WHICH THE WESTERN WORLD IS FOUNDED. TRUE THE GREEKS GAVE ART AND PHILOSOPHY -- THE ROMANS GAVE ROADS AND GOVERNMENTAL ADMINISTRATION -- BUT OF ALL THE CONTRIBUTION JUSTICE AND MORALITY ARE THE HIGHEST.
6. WE CONCEIVED THE IDEA THAT ALL MEN ARE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW, WHICH IS THE BASIS OF THE POLITICAL DEMOCRACY OF THE WEST TODAY. NOT EVEN THE KING WAS ABOVE THE LAW, THUNDERED THE PROPHET NATHAN TO KING DAVID, ORDERING HIM TO RULE THE PEOPLE WITH A COPY OF THE TORAH ON HIS LAP.
7. WE BECAME THE CIVILIZING PARENT OF THE WESTERN WORLD, FOR WHICH WE EARNED ITS DEEP HATRED; JUST AS FREUD TAUGHT THAT CHILDREN HATE THEIR PARENTS WHO TRY TO CURB THE NATURAL ANIMAL-LIKE INSTINCTS OF THE VERY YOUNG BY TELLING THEM WHAT THEY MAY AND MUST NOT DO. THERE IS AN EXCRUCIATING BALANCE OF LOVE AND REBELLION BETWEEN CHILD AND PARENT. THE SAME IS THE CASE BETWEEN THE JEW WHO REPRESENTS SUPER-EGO, CONSCIENCE, AND THE OTHERS WHOSE ID AND EGO WISHES TO FLOURISH UNIMPEDED. EVERY MAN LIVES IN TENSION WITH HIS CONSCIENCE -- I.E., HIS JEW.

ON THIS POINT, THERE ARE TWO OBSERVATIONS TO BE MADE, WHICH, IF PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD, EXPLAIN MUCH OF THE WORLD'S CONDUCT TOWARD US, AND OBLIQUELY GIVE US AN INSIGHT INTO OUR REAL ROLE.

A METHODIST MINISTER, STANLEY HIGH, AN EDITOR OF READERS' DIGEST, ONCE SAID TO ME THAT THE REASON WE JEWS WERE PERSECUTED WAS NOT BECAUSE

WE HAD ALLEDGEDLY KILLED CHRIST, BUT RATHER BECAUSE WE HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO HIM. WHAT A FLASH OF TRUTH! BY GIVING BIRTH TO CHRIST WE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPOSITION OF MORAL STANDARDS UPON AN OTHERWISE AMORAL SOCIETY RESULTING FROM THE SPREAD OF HIS ESSENTIALLY JEWISH TEACHINGS THROUGH THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD OF THE FIRST FEW CENTURIES. CHRIST (I.E., WE) SAID THAT MURDER WAS WRONG, SLAVERY WAS WRONG, EXPLOITATION OF THE POOR AND THE ORPHAN AND THE WIDOW WAS WRONG, WORSHIP OF CAESAR WAS WRONG. AND SO DOWN THE CENTURIES THE CIVILIZING PRESSURES WERE RESISTED BY PEOPLE WHO PREFERRED TO LIVE BY BARBARIC STANDARDS AND DEEPLY HATED, IN A PSYCHOANALYTIC SENSE, THE FATHER FIGURE WHO IMPOSED MORAL CONDUCT.

THE SECOND OBSERVATION STEMS FROM A PERCEPTION OF ADOLF HITLER'S MOTIVATIONS. TO BUILD HIS THOUSAND YEAR REICH, AND TO BASE IT ON THE TEUTONIC GODS OF ODIN AND WOTAN, SO ADMIRERD IN THE WAGNERIAN OPERAS HE SO ADORED -- TO MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR HIS FORM OF BARBARISM -- HE WAS OBLIGED TO WIPE OUT CHRISTIANITY, BUT IN ORDER TO DO SO, HAD TO DESTROY JUDAISM FIRST. WE ARE THE GERMINAL SEED FROM WHICH ALL GOODNESS FLOWS AND THEREFORE WE HAD TO BE DESCRIBED AS THE ENEMY OF ALL TRUE GERMANIC VALUES. THE JEWISH CHRIST TAUGHT THAT THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH. BUT THIS WAS EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE OF GERMANIC NIETSCHEAN DOCTRINE THAT THE SUPERMAN SHALL RULE. THE JEWISH CHRIST TAUGHT THAT MAN SHOULD TURN HIS OTHER CHEEK -- (GENTLE JESUS, MEEK & MILD, -- READ THE WORDS OF THE HYMN) -- AND HITLER HAD TO UPROOT THIS IN ORDER TO REPLACE IT WITH THE DOCTRINE THAT POWER BELONGS TO THE STRONG. THE JEWISH BIBLE TAUGHT THAT A MAN SHOULD HONOR HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, BUT HITLER TAUGHT HIS YOUTH TO SPY ON THEIR PARENTS AND REPORT THEM TO THE GESTAPO FOR ANY DISLOYALTY.

THERE IS TRUTH, OF COURSE, IN THE COMMON ANALYSIS THAT HITLER NEEDED A SCAPEGOAT TO OFFER TO THE FRUSTRATED DEFEATED GERMAN PEOPLE, AND THAT THE MANY-CENTURIES OLD ANTI-SEMITISM IN GERMANY MADE THE JEWS AN EASY MARK. BESIDES THEY WERE PROMINENT, VISIBLE, AND A TEMPTING PREY TO BE LOOTED. BUT WHY BURN THEIR BOOKS AND THEIR SYNAGOGUES? THE ANSWER LIES IN HITLER'S OFT-STATED DOCTRINE THAT THE JEWS WERE LIKE RATS WHO CARRIED A PLAGUE CALLED THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION AND MUST THEREFORE BE EXTERMINATED. THUS IN A WEIRD PERVERTED WAY HERE WAS TESTIMONY ONCE AGAIN TO THE TRANSCENDENTAL ROLE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AS A FORCE FOR MORAL GOODNESS. HIS INSANE NEED TO WIPE US OUT WAS EVEN STRONGER THAN HIS DESIRE TO WIN THE WAR, AND HE ULTIMATELY LOST BOTH. THE WESTERN DEMOCRATIC WORLD BEAT BACK HIS ASSAULT AND THE JEWISH WORLD EMERGED, ALBEIT GRAVELY WOUNDED, RENEWED AND REINVIGORATED TODAY THROUGH ITS CREATION OF THE SOVEREIGN STATE OF ISRAEL.

SO, THE STORY HAS UNFOLDED. THIS PEOPLE HAS SURVIVED -- A MOST ANCIENT PEOPLE -- A GENIUS PEOPLE -- A CREATIVE, ARTISTIC PEOPLE -- A PEOPLE SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND THE UNIVERSE, EVEN UNTO EINSTEIN, AND TO TOUCH GOD, AS DID YEHUDA. HALEVI.

YOU ARE THIS PEOPLE. YOU ARE AN UPPER MIDDLE-CLASS JEW ~~FROM~~ ~~NEW YORK~~, OR MARRIED TO ONE. YOU PLAY BRIDGE AND BACKGAMMON, TENNIS AND THE STOCK MARKET. YOU SEE ALL THE PLAYS AND READ ALL THE BOOKS. YOU ARE WIDELY TRAVELLED AND SUPER-SOPHISTICATED, YOU ARE BLASE ~~NEW YORKERS~~ ^{Americans} OF THE 20TH CENTURY -- AND YET YOU ARE 40 CENTURIES OLD.

YOU ARE A SHEPHERD IN ABRAHAM'S TRIBE.

YOU ARE A HEBREW SOLDIER IN DAVID'S ARMY.

YOU ARE A REFUGEE WEEPING BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON.

YOU ARE A POET IN SPAIN'S GOLDEN AGE.

YOU ARE A SELLER OF HERRING IN A POLISH SHTETL.

YOU ARE A NOBEL PRIZE WINNER IN MATHEMATICS OR MEDICINE.

YOU ARE ANNE FRANK WHOM THE NAZIS MURDERED.
YOU ARE A FREE HEBREW SABRA IN ISRAEL TODAY.

YOU ARE THIS PEOPLE AND YOU HAVE A DEEP UNAVOIDABLE RESPONSIBILITY TO IT. YOU ARE LEADERS AND CANNOT SHIRK YOUR DUTY. NAY, YOU MUST ACCEPT IT PROUDLY AND HAPPILY.

YOU ARE THIS PEOPLE AND YOU MUST PROTECT IT WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT AND POWER. YOU MUST TEACH ITS VALUES TO YOUR CHILDREN. YOU MUST LEARN ITS LANGUAGE -- HEBREW. YOU MUST BUILD ITS LAND-- ISRAEL. YOU MUST EXPAND ITS COMMUNITIES ^{IN THE DIASPORA.} ~~NEW YORK.~~ ^{CHILDREN} YOU MUST RESCUE ITS ~~SONS~~ IN DANGER -- RUSSIANS OR ANY OTHER.

AND YOU MUST DO ALL THIS OUT OF THE KNOWLEDGE THAT YOUR SONS IN THE FUTURE WILL JUDGE YOUR DEVOTION TO THE TRADITION OF THE PAST BY THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF YOUR DEEDS, NOT YOUR WORDS. YOU WILL PROTECT YOUR HERITAGE AND IT WILL PROTECT YOU. THE VALUE OF JUDAISM TO YOU IS THAT IT GIVES YOU AN IDENTITY -- AND PROVIDES A MEANING TO YOUR LIFE, BECAUSE IT LINKS YOU TO AN IDEAL GREATER THAN YOURSELF. THE VALUE OF JUDAISM TO THE WORLD IS THAT OF THE GREATEST CIVILIZING MORAL FORCE MAN HAS EVER KNOWN. THUS YOU ARE PART OF SOMETHING WHICH GIVES VALUE TO YOU AND TO THE WHOLE WORLD. WHAT MORE CAN ANY ONE MAN OR PEOPLE DESIRE?

YOU ARE ALL OF THIS. YOU ARE NOBLE -- OBLIGATED -- ELEVATED -- COMMANDED TO STRUGGLE AND TO SUFFER -- ABOVE ALL, TO WITNESS. THROUGH YOU THIS PEOPLE WILL LIVE FOREVER -- AS LONG AS THIS PLANET SPINS -- AND SOON ^{you} WILL SHOOT OFF INTO SPACE TO FIND OTHER MEN TO WHOM ^A TO TEACH OUR MESSAGE. YOU ARE TOUCHED WITH ETERNAL GREATNESS -- AS A MADMAN IS TOUCHED BY HIS DREAM -- AND THROUGH YOU, GOD, TORAH, & ISRAEL WILL BE ETERNAL.

MAY YOU LIVE FOREVER.

8:15-10:15 AM

Monday, July 3

Tuesday, July 4

Wednesday, July 5

Thursday, July 6

Friday, July 7

Instructor:
Prof. Michael Chernick
Subject:
Mishnah and Modernity

Tradition and Change
in Mishnaic Thought

Mishnah's Ethics:
The Business World

Lovers and Rivals I:
Israel-Diaspora Relation-
ships in Mishnah

Lovers and Rivals II:
Men, Women and Mishnaic
Law

Mishnah's Messages for
Communal Leaders

Instructor:
Dr. Yitz Greenberg
Subject:
The Dynamics of Covenant

Life and Freedom: God's
Role and the Human Role
in History

On Becoming Human: The
Role of Jewish Tradition

The Destruction of
the Temple: Rabbis
Renew the Covenant

Holocaust and Israel:
The Age of Voluntary
Covenant

Power and Freedom:
How to Live Covenantally
in the Third Era of
Jewish History

Instructor:
Rabbi Danny Landes
Subject: Mystics
Who Make Sense

The Mystical Ethics of
16th century Safed:
imitatio dei and
Tikkun Olam

The Maharal of Prague's
political program vs.
Shabbatai Zvi's
Redemption through Sin

Hassidism: The Messianic
significance of the
Zaddik (the Hassidic
Rebbe) and the power of
Kavanah (intention)

Rabbi Kook's Zionism
as Mysticism

The mystical teachings
of Heschel and
Soloveitchik

Instructor:
Dr. Shalom Paul
Subject: The Genesis
of Genesis

Genesis, Chapter 1
Abraham's curriculum
study at the U. of M.

Genesis, Chapter 1
Evolution of Revolution:
The "Darwinism" of
Antiquity

Genesis, 2-3
A Garden of Eden:
Myth and Reality

Genesis, 6:4-9:17
The flood stories:
Sources, resources
and discourses

Genesis, 11
Tower of Babel:
Parody and Satire.
Can man conquer heaven?

Instructor:
Rabbi Jonathan Porath
Subject: Rabbinic
Responsa from the
Holocaust, Israel &
America

Holocaust Responsa:
Questions the Victims
Asked (Part I)

Holocaust Responsa:
Questions the Victims
Asked (Part II)

World War II US Army
Responsa: Being Jewish
in a Non-Jewish World

Modern Israeli Responsa:
The Dilemma of Jewish
Power

Contemporary American
Responsa: Questions of
Jewishness in the
Modern World

Instructor:
Rabbi Shlomo Riskin
Subject: Holidays

Shabbat -- Its Meaning
for the Modern Age

Pesach -- A Study of the
Haggadah and the Jewish
Concept of Freedom

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur
and Sukkot -- Is a person
supposed to escape from or
to revel in the world
around him/her?

Shavuot -- God's
Revelation and it's
significance for us
today

Purim, Hanukah and Yom
Ha'atzmaut
Are their miracles
post-bible?

Instructor:
Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld
Subject: American
Jewish Literature

From the Old World to
the New: The Immigrant
Experience

Being Jewish in America:
at Home or on the
Margins?

A Jew in Love: New
Passions and Old
Loyalties

Assimilation or Return?
Attitudes Toward
'The Other'

The Future: Holding
Together or Falling
Apart?

Instructor:
Dr. Sidney Schwarz
Subject: Public Policy
and Jewish Values

Economic Justice

The Environment

Refugees and Sanctuary

Nuclear Arms

Human Rights

Instructor:
Dr. Haim Shaked
Subject: The Arab
States in the Middle
East

The Middle East/Arab
World as a geopolitical
entity

The Islamic Heritage

Arab nationalism and
Arab regimes

Conflict and Coopera-
tion in the Middle East/
Arab world

Scenarios for Arab-
Israeli relations

Instructor:
Rabbi Levi Weisman-Kelman
Subject: The Shabbat &
Holiday Prayers

a. Standing before the
King: the Shabbat
Amidah
b. Creation, Revelation &
Redemption: Shabbat Amidah

The Additional
"Sacrifice": The Amidah
for Shabbat

Seasons and Sacrifices:
The Festival Amidah

Universalism and
Particularism: High
Holiday Amidah

The Table Rituals:
Shabbat and Holidays
at Home

Instructor:
General Aharon Yariv
Subject: Current Israeli
Security Issues

The West Bank's
Strategic Importance

The terrorist threat
inside Israel; and
The next Arab-Israeli
war scenario

The Intifada and the
ground combat team's
elements

~~Israeli air power in~~
~~the 21st century~~
Scenarios of future
Arab-Israeli wars

Israel's military
posture -- 1989

10:45-12:45 PM

Monday, July 3

Tuesday, July 4

Wednesday, July 5

Thursday, July 6

Friday, July 7

Instructor:
Rabbi Herbert Friedman
Subject: A Half-Century of Fire & Glory

Holocaust: A Uniquely Jewish Event

Three Years of Uncertainty and Struggle -- 1945-1948

The Wars of Israel are One War

Building and Strengthening the State

U.S. Jewry During this Half-Century

Instructor:
Dr. Reuven Kimelman
Subject: "Who is a Jew?"
Five Responses to Modernity

Is Judaism more than ethical monotheism?

Is Judaism more than revelation?

Is Judaism more than history and peoplehood?

Is Judaism more than a way of life?

Judaism and pluralism: An Answer to the "Who is a Jew?" Question

Instructor:
Rabbi Irwin Kula
Subject: Toward the 21st century

Irving Greenberg: The Third Era

Yeshayahu Leibowitz: The Religious Significance of History

Eugene Borowitz: Signals of Transcendence

Michael Wyschograd: Corporeal Election

David Hartman: Realism and the Third Jewish Commonwealth

Instructor:
Dr. Shalom Paul
Subject: Five Problematic Books of the Bible

Esther -- Chs. 6-7
"The Wiles of Women"

Proverbs -- Chapter 31
"Women of Valor"

Song of Songs -- Chs. 3&5
"Dreams and Fantasies"

Koheleth -- Chs. 1-3
11:8-10 "Vanity of Vanities"

Job -- Chs. 38-40:6
"God's Answer from the Whirlwind"

Instructor:
Rabbi Jonathan Porath
Subject: Basic Judaism

Shared Time: The Jewish Calendar -- The Months, Weeks and Days of the Jewish Year

Common Experience: A Jewish Life from Birth to Death

Everyday Holiness: Making the Mundane Unique

Applied Ethics: Acting Jewishly Where it Counts

Collective Beliefs: The Faith and Aspirations of the Jewish People

Instructor:
Rabbi Shlomo Riskin
Subject: Talmud

Marriage, Love & Sex

Is there Pluralism in Jewish Law?

The Sabbath in the Talmud

Ethics in Halacha

"Who is a Jew"? in the Talmud

Instructor:
Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld
Subject: Literature of the Holocaust

Documents of Destruction

Ghettos and Camps

Survivors

The Obligation to Remember

The Future of Memory

Instructor:
Dr. Haim Shaked
Subject: Israel in the Middle East

Arab-Jewish relations -- an overview

Arab-Israeli balances and imbalances

Arab-Israeli violence -- a pattern!

Arab-Israeli cooperation -- a mirage?

The Superpowers and the Middle East/Arab World

Instructor:
Ms. Regina Stein
Subject: The Book of Numbers: Moses and Leadership

Aaron and Miriam: Sibling Rivalry or Palace Revolt?

The Spies: A Nation's Fear or a General's Failure?

Korach: Democracy in Action or Authority at Risk?

Balaam: Mad Magician or Prophet of God?

The Land: Prize or Punishment?

Instructor:
Mr. Gordon Zacks
Subject: Personal Experiences of Leadership

1948-1973
From a High-School Campaign to the Yom Kippur War

1973-1978
The Emerging of Political Consciousness: AIPAC & Egypt

1978-Present
The UJA Fight. A Deepening Involvement in Domestic Politics: George Bush

1981-Present
A Deepening Involvement in International Affairs: AWACS, Bitburg, etc.

The Future
1. Changing Relationships of Diaspora to Israel
2. Responsibility of Leaders to provide Quality Jewish Education

Instructors:
Mrs. Blu Greenberg
Rabbi Debra Cantor
Rabbi Rachel Cowan
Subject: Women and Jewish Law

The Status of Women in Halachic Judaism

Women and Prayer

Women, Learning and Leadership

Issues of Marriage and Divorce

Issues of Abortion

Yaniv

~~revised
version~~

FINAL
DRAFT

SCENARIO I

THE TWO MOSQUES AND WAR

1. A Gush Emunim underground terrorist cell blows up the Mosques of Omar and El Aksa at midnight. Their purpose is to reclaim the Temple Mount, rebuild the Temple and thus hasten the coming of the Messiah.
2. Arabs in East Jerusalem react immediately and violently, bringing out secret caches of arms, and start shooting Jews. The police cannot handle it. The army is called in. Street fighting escalates.
3. Within the hour, attacks start in the West Bank, against Jewish settlements; and in Gaza hundreds of thousands of enraged Arabs quickly overwhelm the few Jewish settlements nearby. The Army is now fighting on three fronts, as it were.
4. The Government is called into session. The Chief of Staff reports that Arab warplanes may be expected at first light, in the next few hours. He asks for permission to launch a pre-emptive strike immediately, on all Arab airfields, to destroy their planes on the ground.
5. The Government announces its horror and revulsion at the destruction of the Mosques, and orders the police and army to arrest all known leaders of the Gush.

- 2 a.m. in Jerusalem and
the evening before
6. It is now 7 p.m. in Washington and New York. The news breaks open on the evening news broadcasts. The President of the U.S. telephones the Prime Minister of Israel and asks for an explanation plus a statement of intent as to Israel's next immediate moves.
7. American Jewish leadership is in shock. American public opinion, including Jewish, congeals very quickly against Israel for "this outrageous act of religious fanaticism." The White House issues a statement calling upon Israel to apprehend the criminals; to exercise restraint in handling the Arabs; to refrain from military action; not to fire on Arab civilians; and immediately to initiate some diplomatic moves to mollify Arab world-wide opinion.
8. Jewish leaders from every community in America are called to an emergency meeting for the following morning, in Washington, D.C.
9. ^{Five hours later,} At midnight, New York time (7 a.m. in Israel) the news breaks that all-out war has started: Israel has destroyed 300 Arab aircraft on seven airfields; aerial dogfights are taking place in all the skies of the Middle East; four Israeli airfields have been bombed, as well as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, where damage is extensive. News commentators report rumors that missile exchanges

against major population centers will shortly begin.

10. At the Jewish leadership meeting the next day, what conclusions and actions would you recommend in order to:

- a. demonstrate condemnation for the original act
- b. rally U.S. Jewish opinion behind Israel
- c. persuade U.S. government not to uncouple from Israel



II

Hier

written by NL

FINAL

The Rise of The American Supremacy Party

~~Anti-Semitism Scenario for Aspen 1989~~

1

The date is November 9, 1994. America is in the fourth year of an economic recession/turned depression. Unemployment exceeds 10%. Inflation is running rampant. Interest rates are approaching 20%, luring Japanese investors. Taxes have reverted to pre-Reagan levels to make-up for the revenue shortfall of a depressed economy.

The nation's morale has sunk to an unprecedented low point, not only because of the economic morass, but because of the realization that America might never be able to recover sufficiently to compete against economically dominant Japan. The nations at the rim of the Pacific Basin have become America's permanent creditor and "big brother" -- keeping America from economic collapse in return for higher and higher interest rates and control of ever greater portions of American equity.

A social-backlash, which began in late '91, has picked up steam. People are frustrated, angry, seeking radical change and a suitable scapegoat. The American Supremacy Party (ASP), begun at the turn of the decade by a group of skinheads, Klan and Neo-Nazi members, has broadened its appeal to embrace the masses of unemployed and the black and Hispanic communities which have been most directly affected by the adverse economic situation. Coming almost out-of-nowhere, this fledgling party captures 6 Senate and 31 Congressional seats, plus numerous local offices in the '94 elections -- primarily in the South, Midwest and California.

The party's slogan is "American for Americans", by which they mean to exclude all Asians; their flag is a black cross superimposed over the Stars and Stripes, by which they mean to exclude all Jews -- the group they deem responsible for undermining America's strength through their endemic lust, greed and corruption.

Their platform is straightforward and simple: bring America back to its nativ~~istic~~^{ist}, Christian roots and America will return to its former greatness. To do this, the party advocates:

1. the boycott of all Jewish and Asian businesses and enterprises; the support, instead of all true Christian business ventures.
2. the expelling of Jewish and Asian students from the Universities (which "everyone knows" they have dominated via a nationwide conspiracy); the admission of Christian-true students ^{only} ~~only~~ in their stead.
3. the passage of laws prohibiting the marriage of true-Christians with Jews or Asians and,
4. the cutoff of trade with the countries of the Pacific Basin and the cutoff of trade and aid to Israel.

In addition, ~~True~~-Christian Americans are "urged" to identify themselves by displaying the party's flag prominently in front of their homes and businesses and by wearing an ASP armband to social functions.

Although the party does not publicly call for violence or vigilante action against Jews or Asians, an increasing number of violent incidents have occurred nationwide reportedly led by the skinhead troopers of the American Supremacy Party.

An added element in the national and Jewish nervousness is the trauma of an unconnected but relevant fact -- namely, the assassination of President Bush by a deranged South American drug dealer and the elevation of Vice-President Quayle to the Oval office. The press has made much of the fact that Quayle's grandparents, who exerted a strong influence on young Quayle, had close connections with the John Birch Society -- a group whose fundamental views were not so dissimilar from the ASP.

The North American network of Jewish Students has organized a group of young, armed Jews to protect the members of the Jewish Community. The ADL, AJC and AJCee ^{are} ~~is~~ challenging the constitutionality of this new political party and ^{have} ~~has~~ condemned the Armed Jewish Student Network for sinking to the levels of their enemies. The Conference of Presidents has appointed a special committee to study the rise of this party and to come back with recommendations within 90 days. Rabbi Meir Kahane is travelling across the length and breadth of the United States urging Jews to liquidate their assets and come on Aliyah "before it's too late".

Your community is in an uproar. As President of your Federation, you must decide what course of action to take and which group or individual to support. What course of action would you urge your community to take and why?

SCENARIO II - EDUCATION

WHO COMES FIRST: THE YOUNG OR THE OLD

~~A LOCAL COMMUNITY CONFLICT: SCHOOL VS. HOME FOR AGED~~

I. THE SCHOOL

- A. A 44-member blue ribbon "Commission on Jewish Education in North America" issues its report after two years of study (1988-1990). The report is totally devastating. While applauding the increasing acceptance of the basic belief that education is the only antidote to assimilation, the report contains the deepest criticism of the present Jewish educational system in the U.S. and Canada.

It provides shocking details on the small percentage of children receiving any form of Jewish education; the vast ignorance even of those youngsters who are enrolled; the low salaries and standards of the teachers in the system; the anemic curricula; the blurred attitudes of the students; the weak sense of Jewish identity and pride; the minimal amount of factual knowledge of Bible and history; the lack of familiarity with the Hebrew language.

B. The local Federation's long-range planning committee, which has spent a year searching for the key program which will enhance the sense of Jewish identity, is suddenly galvanized by the blue-ribbon report and a decision clicks into place: education is the key to identity and the committee will therefore concentrate on analyzing the community's overall educational system, from kindergarten to adult, looking for areas in which major improvements can be effectuated.

Another year's hard work produces a series of specific recommendations for all the various K-8 schools - day, afternoon, congregational, communal. These recommendations involve deep and serious changes in curriculum strengthening, salary improvements, management, parental involvement, etc. And the corner-stone of the whole program is a proposal to build a boarding school for grades 9-13, according to a plan developed by an American-Israeli educator.

The Boarding School plan is based on the construction of a high-quality Academy, similar to Andover, Exeter and the great public schools in England, in which a future leadership can be shaped. The student body would be international

and the languages of instruction would be dual - English and Hebrew.

Such a school might take 5 years or more to plan, fund, construct in stages, recruit students and teachers carefully, and shape the curriculum toward a completely integrated Jewish and secular course of study.

The proponents of this idea believe that one such school, if it really were to achieve the quality described above, would revolutionize the whole system. Many communities would envy it and duplicate it. Middle and primary schools would copy some of its features: small classes, better teachers, more demanding curriculum, etc. The entire level would rise.

The long-range committee concluded its work with a ringing affirmation to the Board of the Federation that this was the path to the future, for it was the only method by which to inculcate the students with a maximum Jewish education (including Hebrew, love for Israel, knowledge of history and religion, understanding of Bible and Mishna, a strong sense of Jewish values, and a commitment to work for the preservation of the community and the

people) and a maximum general education which would enable them to be admitted to the finest universities in the world.

II. THE HOME FOR AGED

- A. Simultaneous with the long-range planning committee, another local Federation committee had been dealing with a complex problem which had surfaced as the result of a recent tragic death in the Community Home for the Aged. The living alone, over-80, father of one of the prominent families in town had choked to death in his room on a hard crust of bread, which could easily have been dislodged and his life saved had there been someone near who could have performed the Heimlich maneuver.

It had been felt for some time that the Home, built 60 years earlier, was obsolete in many ways. There were no emergency call buttons for summoning aid; no medical orderlies permanently stationed on every floor; no ramps for wheelchairs; no modern fire prevention systems or alarms; and a host of other deficiencies. It was obvious that new structures should be built, incorporating all the new devices and ^{services}~~methods~~ which were available today. But the hesitation and constant

discussion over the funding question resulted in paralysis and nothing was done.

The death galvanized the town, and action followed swiftly. The Federation Committee on Aging summoned experts, and a completed plan was prepared for the Federation Board. The land was available on the large campus which the Federation had wisely acquired a decade earlier. The leading architectural firm offered, pro bono, a most attractive scheme, including high and low rises, cottages, a synagogue and recreation halls. All that was needed was formal Board approval, plus a fund-raising plan and construction could start. The ^{old man's} death, while tragic, reversed the previous paralysis.

III. THE CONFLICT

- A. As a result of very poor planning, both reports were presented at the same Federation Board meeting. This could easily have been avoided by an alert and politically sensitive director. Unfortunately, he did not check the agenda, or did not foresee the potential conflict.

The Long Range Planning Committee spoke first and presented its proposal by invoking the whole

weight of past history and Jewish future existence. Several members spoke about the responsibility of stemming the wave of assimilation leading to disappearance. Their words resonated with the call of the Biblical Prophets.

The Committee on Aged, shocked by the sudden realization that they were in an adversarial position, discarded its carefully prepared presentation, which had been crafted in a low-key fashion, based upon the premise that everyone understood a new facility was needed, and rebutted instead with passion and vigor, invoking the memory of the funeral which hundreds had attended, demanding that sanctity of life must take precedence over education of children.

The conflict was so shocking - the advocates of each position so vocal - that it was obvious no decision was possible that night. Threats were made involving withholding of contributions; tenets of Judaism were hurled, reminding everyone that a town without a school was a town without God; other tenets, rooted in the commandments to honor father and mother, were hurled back. It was like a verbal artillery duel. No previous

meeting had ever escalated so quickly and sharply into such a polarization. It was clear that something very deep was happening - perhaps it was the Freudian generational struggle. The community began to tear itself apart. Obviously, both projects could not be undertaken simultaneously. One would have to wait.

IV. The Resolution

- A. A small group of lawyers, accustomed to mediation, published its opinion that there were three possible ways to deal with the problems:
1. Defuse the tension by tabling the projects for a year, to allow a cooling-off period.
 2. Fix a date, preferably within 60 days, for a vote by the Board, allowing advocates on both sides to lobby as hard as they wished, in an effort to win a majority.
 3. Let the entire Jewish community decide, by means of a referendum, to be held within 6 months, which provides time to establish a set of rules - i.e. who may vote, how to phrase the questions, etc.
- B. What position do you personally take on the issue and which of the three methods of handling it would best implement your position?
- C. Do you have any different suggestions?

SCENARIO 4

WHO WILL BE THE JEWS?

The year is 1999. You live in the imaginary metropolis called Lahadam, located in the far west of the United States. This city experienced a major economic boom in the 80's and 90's which attracted a massive inflow of professionals -- many of them, Jewish. The intermarriage rate for people under the age of 35 averaged 65% in the past 2 decades. Approximately 45% of non-Jewish partners converted, 95% of them did so through the liberal movements. At the present rate of intermarriage and family formation, it has been statistically projected that by December 31, 1999, the majority of this Jewish community of Lahadam will consist of people who are accepted as Jews by the Reform, Reconstructionist, and Liberal wing of the Conservative movements, but are not accepted as Jews by the Orthodox and Traditional wing of the Conservative movement.

In 1997, seeing this eventuality coming, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) and the Union of Traditional Conservative Judaism (UTCJ) appeal to the Reform and Reconstructionist movements to refer all potential converts to the local Orthodox Beth Din for conversion according to halachah. Both the Reform and Reconstructionist movements reject this appeal as constituting unacceptable interference with their internal affairs and as violations of their fundamental tenets of

autonomy and egalitarianism.

Having their appeals rejected, the RCA (Orthodox) and UTCJ (Conservative) vote that as of January 1, 2000, Jews from Lahadam shall lose the presumption of being Jewish since the statistical majority of the community is not halachically Jewish. They rule that no Orthodox or Traditional Rabbi may perform a marriage for Jews from Lahadam without an exhaustive genealogical check to prove that they are Jewish by halachic standards (as interpreted by the Orthodox and Traditional movements). The Conservative movement splits on the issue -- the Traditional half siding with the Orthodox stand and the Liberal half aligning themselves with the Reform and Reconstructionist communities - who feel they are effectively being cast outside the camp of the Jewish people.

The national, international and local reaction to this impending communal split is vindictive and swift:

- 1) The non-Orthodox camp form a unified national coalition calling for complete withdrawal of community funding for Orthodox and Traditional institutions in the United States and in Israel and the de-facto segregation of the Orthodox and Traditional community.
- 2) The Chief Rabbis of Israel in support of the American Orthodox position, write an open letter to American Jews warning them that if conversion is not given over to the exclusive domain of the Orthodox Rabbinate, they will issue a ruling that any non-Orthodox individual from the United States wishing to immigrate or marry in Israel, will have to

go first through a conversion procedure under their supervision or prove conclusively that they are Jewish, as defined by Orthodox Halachah.

- 3) The Chairman of the National UJA, Mr. Amos Levtoy, in a panicky atmosphere, telephones the Executive Director of the Lahadam Federation and tells him that the entire national campaign is in danger of collapse because of the enormous resentment by major givers of all the denominations at the sequence of events taking place in Lahadam.
- 4) As the conflict escalates, local non-Orthodox Rabbis urge their congregants to withdraw their children from the community Hebrew Day school and enroll them instead in their own Congregational or like-minded denominational school. They condemn the Orthodox behavior as schismatic and sectarian following the tragic examples of the Karaites and Saducees of ancient times. They warn that history will hold the Orthodox responsible for any split in the Jewish people which results.

Local Orthodox Rabbinic leadership, enraged by the actions and rhetoric of their non-Orthodox counterparts, issue a halachic directive calling on their constituents to deal henceforth with non-Orthodox Jews on the assumption that they are not, in fact, Jewish, thus:

- (1) limiting social intercourse with them,
- (2) banning marriage with them,
- (3) denying them burial in the local, Orthodox-controlled, Jewish cemetery.

Meanwhile, committees of the various local agencies in town, such as the Jewish Children and Family Service, the JCC, the Old Age Home and The Jewish Hospital - not to mention the Federation - begin to find it impossible to conduct normal communal business because of the ugly mood resulting from the denominational polarization.

The alumni/ae members of the Lahadam Wexner Heritage Foundation seminar call an emergency one-day session to attempt to deal with this impending civil war. The following proposals are put on the table:

- 1) Allow - and even encourage - the denominational polarization to take place with all its fallout, so that a more honest - albeit fragmented - realignment can arise in its wake. Two distinct Jewish communities - one Traditional and one Liberal would then form.
- 2) Exercise their collective lay power -- in collaboration with other Wexner alumni around the United States -- to pressure the RCA and UTCJ to rescind their decision and to force the Liberal community to call off its retaliatory cut-off of Orthodox funding. These steps would at least restore the status quo ante.
- 3) Exercise their lay power to demand that the local rabbinic leadership of all denominations convene at a secluded site to hammer out a joint conversion standard and process. The role of the Wexner lay leaders at this "Camp David style"

conference, would be to prod their own respective Rabbis towards principled compromise, thus creating a breakthrough which could hopefully be a model for the rest of the country.

- 4) Start an international movement with appropriate Israeli and European counterpart groups to reconvene a "Sanhedrin" consisting of 71 leaders from all the denominations throughout Israel and The Diaspora, in order to attempt to realign Jewish life with Jewish law for the entire international Jewish community.

WHICH PROPOSAL OR VARIATION THEREOF, WOULD YOU VOTE FOR AND WHY?

