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THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE TO AMERICAN JEWRY

by

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

January 23, 1994

For almost a half-century, living through six wars, countless terrorist raids, innumerable political crises based on threats of war, and huge military budgets, the State of Israel has flourished magnificently. She has grown in population and economy, expanded in diplomatic relations with more than one hundred nations including the Vatican, and maintained the solid friendship of the United States from the very beginning.

During this incredible maturing of its national sovereignty Israel has enjoyed almost unmitigated support from the Jewish world. Every time war has erupted, adrenaline flowed fiercely through the system of Diaspora Jewry, and the concern for Israel manifested itself more quickly and sharply than before.

Now Israel is embarked on a new path, which, though paved with risk and uncertainty, is preferable to the old road which led so often to war. And now it is very hard for people, in Israel and throughout the entire Jewish world, to adjust to peace when they have grown so accustomed to war. Somehow we all must learn how to become as excited about the prospects for peace as we did when the shells and bombs fell on the land. Will the adrenaline flow as strongly when the sound of the turtle-dove is heard in the land?

William James, the great American philosopher and

psychologist, wrote a book in 1902 entitled "The Varieties of Religious Experience." He probed human instincts and behaviour, and concluded that men loved war. "The beauty of war is that it is so congruous with ordinary human nature. Ancestral evolution has made us all potential warriors. The most barbaric tendencies come to life in war. The fact remains that war is a school of strenuous life and heroism.....What we now need to discover in the social realm is the moral equivalent of war; something heroic that will speak to men as universally as war does, and yet will be as compatible with their spiritual selves as war has proved itself to be."

Can peace become the moral equivalent of war? Can peace become a form of human conduct which will yield similar pleasures without being murderous, destructive and immoral?

Today we Jews are being given an opportunity to test this question. For more than 100 years war has raged in the Holy Land between Arabs and Jews. Are we willing to face the challenges of peace and risk as much for peace as we have always done for war?

Heroism in the search for peace can be, should be, as heart-quickenning as military kinds of heroism. Heroism in pursuit of peace requires the nobility of soul which can overcome hatred, the coolness of intellect which can grasp the benefits, the thrill of compromise which solves sticky obstacles, the breadth of vision which glimpses the far future. Heroes who possess these characteristics and utilize them artfully for the good of their people are much more valuable than other kinds of heroes who wield

their swords successfully. The sword is indispensable when one is attacked, but after that...?

Heroism in the pursuit of peace demands the courage of risk-taking, which is exactly what Rabin and Peres have decided to do. And now listen to the key words in the last few sentences: far vision, intellect, compromise, risk, courage - are these not the very words we use in describing the key attributes of leadership conduct? If Israel's leadership displays these characteristics, should American Jewish leadership be far behind?

I see five major challenges to American Jewry which must be faced, analyzed and conquered, just as war must be conquered and a new type of leader-hero must give us the moral equivalent so eagerly desired.

1. American Jews must have patience - not expect overnight miracles. History does not work that way. Negotiating steps are slow and painful. Meanwhile acts of terror and murder continue. Remember that these acts cannot destroy Israel. They can only harm individuals.

2. American Jews must realize that peace will be financially costly. There is a price to be paid for peace.

3. American Jews must maintain a high level of support for Israel in the area of the Administration and Congress; as well as in the arena of public opinion. This will be particularly

relevant concerning Syria and the Golan.

4. American Jews must do everything possible to strengthen the Palestinian economy. Nothing guarantees peace more than full bellies and good schools. These require physical infrastructure and an expanding GDP.

5. American Jews must face the probability of a Palestinian state.

- a. Do not be misled by the argument regarding "security". All treaties are backed up by the Israel Defense Force, which is very strong.
- b. Do not be confused by conflicting opinions on the subject of relinquishing land.

I should like to elaborate on each of these points.

1. PATIENCE

A. War comes suddenly - peace comes slowly. Israel makes peace with its enemies, not its friends. It is hard to sit with enemies, to bargain, to negotiate. When they become stubborn and make demands, you get angry and feel like shooting them, as they shot you over many many decades. When they change tactics, and beg and wheedle and whine about how poor and underprivileged they are and how you the victor must be compassionate and flexible, you

feel like spitting at them for their stupidity at not having accepted peace long ago instead of wasting a half-century and scores of thousands of lives.

But you can neither shoot nor spit. You, who have wanted peace from the beginning, who have accepted every partition plan proposed, either by the various British Royal Commissions, or by the UN, or by individual nations acting as intermediaries - you must now sit patiently negotiating every detail because your enemy has finally accepted the fact that he cannot destroy you in war, so at last he must now accept whatever quarter-loaf or eighth-loaf will be the result, instead of the full half-loaf he could have had 50 years ago.

You must sit patiently, holding firm to certain points, compromising on others, and running, as Rabin and Peres have been doing, in one of the most remarkable displays in modern diplomatic history, from Norway to America to Morocco, from Oslo again to Paris to Cairo, never losing temper. The two top leaders have outdone themselves, to maintain momentum, to display to their own people an earnestness of conviction which has sustained the morale of a worried Israeli public.

The very doggedness and persistence of the top leaders in their pursuit of an agreement has a calming effect on the public. The opposition to the peace process is raucous and strident, provocative and dangerous, for murder by one side begets murder by the other, and as the atmosphere becomes more poisonous, their very objective of aborting the peace process may slowly

occur. But the hopeful sign is that the bulk of the population is silent. This silence - acquiescence - is a vote of support to the leadership. Most Israelis are either "cautiously optimistic or hopefully pessimistic", said a recent article in Sh'ma. I personally am optimistic concerning the outcome. We simply must stay the course.

B. The PLO is shabby, disillusioned, internally divided, financially weak and cannot even set up a mechanism by which to receive the \$2 billion dollars committed by the U.S. and other powers, including Israel, to the reconstruction of Gaza and Jericho. To add to the confusion, the King of Jordan has accused Arafat of reneging on an agreement he made to use the central bank of Jordan as a clearing house for the financial aid waiting to come in from abroad. Local Palestinian leaders are deserting the PLO but cannot get themselves organized as negotiating partners with Israel. If the Palestinians cannot control the street or the murderous terrorism by fundamentalist Muslims, the Israeli public might lose faith in the Rabin-Peres position. A strong showing of support by U.S. Jewry would be very helpful at such a moment.

The government of Israel is intensely committed to the peace process, yet is equally intense in guarding its security interests. On December 12, 1993 Rabin and Arafat met in Cairo, one day before the date set for the start of Israeli troop withdrawal, to make another effort to find agreement on the three main outstanding problems. These were:

1. Control of the border crossing points from Gaza to Egypt and from Jericho to Jordan.
2. The exact number and locations of the Israeli troops to be left behind in Gaza to protect Israeli settlements there.
3. The exact size of the area to be designated as the Jericho District.

Arafat pleaded, with tears in his eyes, "Mr. Prime Minister, help me. I am in trouble. You know that, so please help me and try to understand my position." Rabin was willing to take political risks, but was very careful concerning military risks, and was adamant on the matter of border control. Rabin explained over and over that he wanted to make a deal, but would not leave the borders solely to the Palestinians without Israeli police and army to examine who was going in and out. Arafat insisted the PLO had to manifest its sovereignty and Rabin insisted that Israel had to guard its security. The meeting ended in stalemate and Rabin allowed the crucial date to pass without agreement. This strong position enheartened the Israeli public.

A few days later a delegation of 30 Jewish parliamentarians from 20 different countries (only one American among them) was received for a briefing. When the meeting concluded, a Canadian MP said he was impressed "by the courage and even serenity" of Rabin and Peres in the face of these severe political challenges. Serenity - what a lovely word to hear, in the face of TV showing Arab murders and Israeli retaliations. How good it is to hear that the two leaders are quiet and confident, not

afraid to continue working on the three sticking points. If the leaders do not panic, the Israeli populace will not. And if American Jews maintain a strong posture behind the government, Israeli Jews will be further fortified.

2. PEACE WILL BE COSTLY.

The first thought is that peace, if successfully negotiated and implemented, will result in a great saving, for Israel's defense budget could then be substantially reduced. The second thought, more sober and reflective, is that the transitional and intermediate stages will increase costs, at least temporarily. Without entering elaborate detail, just think of the extra costs involved in performing the following functions:

A. Redeployment of troops

- Moving tanks and artillery
- Building new warehouses
- Moving headquarters and barracks
- Building roads to all new locations
- Laying new communications links

B. Training of Palestinian police

- Fundamentalist Muslims, opponents of peace, must be kept under control, and the Palestinian police are to be responsible for law and order. Israel is helping to

train and equip them with light arms, armored vehicles, uniforms, supplies. Israel police must also be available with extra manpower to assist them, if necessary.

C. Re-opening Israel to Arab labor, especially from Gaza

- This will involve higher security costs for screening.
- There may be subsequent unemployment among new immigrants, causing higher welfare costs.

D. Helping the Arabs prepare for Self-Government

- Providing equipment for elections
- Supplying many experts to assist
- Supplying manpower and equipment in organizing many governmental departments for education, health, tax-collecting, etc

The bottom line of the financial matter is that both the Jews of the U.S. and their government must understand the cost of peace and remain prepared to assist. The Jews must continue and even increase their annual aid in all forms - UJA, Bonds, business investments - because, quite aside from the peace costs, the Russian and other migration will continue at the rate of 75,000 per year and the Operation Exodus special campaign will conclude in

1994.

The Congress seems to understand this, for Rep. Lee Hamilton, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee said recently he had "no doubt" Congress would support President Clinton's pledge to maintain foreign aid to Israel at the 3 billion dollar level for 1994-5. That is good news, for the conventional wisdom was that Israel's foreign aid would be cut in the next fiscal year.

3. POLITICAL SUPPORT CRUCIAL RE: SYRIA AND GOLAN

There is active discussion among those involved in the behind-the-scenes negotiations between Israel and Syria concerning a proposal for U.S. troops to be located on the Golan Heights as a security buffer. This has not been discussed openly in Congress, but Rep. Hamilton said he would support the idea if the parties asked for it. President Clinton committed troops to Somalia, without any major protest from the American public, because TV pictures of fly-specked babies with starvation-bloated stomachs won American sympathies. Would American public opinion be as favorable toward a U.S. peacekeeping force on the Golan? Perhaps it would, if the proper groundwork were laid throughout governmental and media channels. American Jewish support, at least, would have to be rock-solid.

4. STRENGTHENING PALESTINIAN ECONOMY

Everything which Israel does to help develop growth and independence in the Palestinian economy will eventually benefit Israel itself. As their economy expands and individual material standards improve, the Palestinian people will gradually realize that they have a tangible self-interest in peace. As this perception takes hold, joint ventures will be established between Israeli and Palestinian entities. And this will lead to Israeli connections, through third parties, and later directly, with companies in Arab countries further afield, even out to the emirates in the Gulf, and lastly to Saudi Arabia itself. From there the line will stretch to the farthestmost part of the Moslem world in the Far East - Indonesia, Malaysia, India and others.

We heard from Phil Rosen this morning of a recent trip he made through Saudia Arabia and the Gulf. That trip was made with the active cooperation of the Saudi Embassy in Washington. Doors were opened to major business and political figures in the Arab world. All key persons said, for publication, that they would not dissolve the Arab boycott. The same figures said, in private, they would be interested in joining any business deal with Israel in which they could make real profit.

Remember the line in Robert Frost's poem - "good fences make good neighbors"? Well - good business relations will make the best neighbors, for when every party benefits, no one will wish to violate the peace. Good fences, set up along borders, will

not be electrified and fortified. They will be fences along which neighbors will gossip peacefully, as suburban householders often do. American Jewish businessmen, lawyers, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists can be of great help in the whole process, and should accept this challenge of peace with alacrity.

5. A PALESTINIAN STATE

The strongest argument invoked against the peace process is the charge that it will lead sooner, rather than later, to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State which would dedicate itself to Israel's destruction. The strongest challenge we face is to accept, without fear or prejudice, that such a state may indeed take shape during the five years that the interim arrangement will mature into the final settlement.

The argument hammered at world Jewry for the 14 years of the Begin and Shamir administrations was based on the code-word security. This word implied that a Palestinian state would create great danger for Israel: continuous bombardment, not by some small guerilla group, but now by a sovereign country with heavy arms; actual invasion by large field armies of other Arab states which would be invited in through the front door by Israel's newest and nearest neighbor; take-over of small Palestine by an Iranian-backed fundamentalist army, etc., etc. Sharon waved his maps to prove that the border of the Palestinian state would be only nine miles from the Mediterranean, thus able to cut Israel in

half. Palestinian SA-7 shoulder-held missiles could be brought close enough to Ben Gurion airport to shoot down every plane landing or taking off. The kernel of the argument was that the tiniest territorial compromise would inevitably lead to the largest - a full-fledged sovereign country whose simple existence constituted a fatal risk to Israel's security.

The argument was persuasive to some, and even those not persuaded, at least felt they must be silent, because whenever an Israeli politician talked of jeopardy to security, American Jews felt they must not argue since it would not be their sons and daughters who would have to fight the next war.

For the past year and a half a new government has changed goals and is pursuing a peace-with-prosperity policy, which declares that the best way to avoid the next war is to make peace. Failure to come to an arrangement with the Palestinian people will lead to an escalated intifada; then a full-scale underground resistance movement, blowing-up bridges, power stations, water pipe-lines, military headquarters; and finally a constant barrage against civilian targets, shops, office buildings, accompanied by daily assassination attempts on high-level political and military persons.

What I have just described were and are the standard tactics of any underground movement seeking its own freedom and independence - the Irish in Belfast and London; the blacks in South Africa; the European nations occupied for years by the Nazis; the Jews under the British Mandate 50 years ago. A frustrated, enraged,

disappointed Palestinian people, under a new younger charismatic leader, and heated-up by the preaching of fiery religious leaders, will utilize all these tactics against the hated Israeli occupiers. Failure to make peace will result in this type of scenario which can continue for decades and be far more dangerous for Israel than the potential threats attributable to a small Palestinian state.

Another argument often cited by opponents of the peace process is the religious statement that every inch of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), which may ultimately provide some of the territory for the State of Palestine, was promised by God to Abram, and therefore must be held by Jews as sacred terrain for all time to come. This doctrine has inspired its believers to amazing acts of hardship, such as the gradual building of Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, and such as the settlers living in trailers and tents on barren rocky hillsides in tiny groups until little villages sprouted. Their feelings were impassioned and their ideology was tied to the themes of redemption and obedience to the word of Torah.

The biblical passage most often quoted in support of this position is Genesis 15:18, which reads: "God made a covenant with Abram, saying 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the Egyptian River as far as the Great River, the Euphrates.'" There is some difference of opinion as to the definition of the Egyptian River. Some say it means the Nile. Others, including the Book of Numbers 34:5, say it refers to the Wadi El Arish in the Gaza Strip. The Tanach, incidentally, has five different

conceptions of what constituted the Land of Israel: Canaan, as promised to the Patriarchs; Canaan plus the territory conquered by Moses (Transjordan); Canaan as conquered by Joshua; the land of actual settlement subsequent to Joshua; and the kingdoms of David and Solomon, which did not reach the Euphrates but did go beyond Damascus.

Very senior rabbinical personalities in the orthodox world are themselves not in agreement on the issue of surrendering land in order to achieve peace. Former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren fiercely defends the position of not giving up one inch. Former Sephardi Chief Rabbi Yosef Ovadia holds that land may be given up if this will save even one life in war. He invokes the doctrine of pikuach nefesh, and the oldest Ashkenazi seer in Israel, Rabbi Eliezer Schach, agrees with him. What is the ordinary person to believe? The point is clearly moot. Perhaps a precedent will help.

In the Tanach there is the story of King Solomon building the Temple with the help of a friendly king in the north (what is now Lebanon) who supplied him lavishly with necessary materials. 1 Kings 9:11 tells us: "Hiram, King of Tyre, had supplied Solomon with all the timber, both cedar and pine, and all the gold that he desired, and King Solomon gave Hiram 20 cities in the Land of Galilee." Well, these lands were certainly in the territory which God had promised to Abram and his descendants forever, but Solomon had no compunctions about giving them away in order to build a house for God. The story ends, by the way, with

Hiram paying a visit to the Galilee, inspecting the cities and rejecting them because of their poor quality.

If the State of Palestine is ever born in a process which eliminates war, let us hope that its villages will be of good quality, its people prosperous, living like good neighbors behind good fences, and that this condition will be the forerunner of a regional Middle East peace in which a new Golden Age can flower between Israeli and Arab, between Muslim and Jew. If a Palestinian state will unlock such a future, then its birth will have been justified, and need not be feared.

CONCLUSION

The rewards of peace can stir our hearts and imaginations. Think ahead, near term, about the balance of your Jewish lives. Think ahead, long term, about the balance of your children's Jewish lives. With love for Israel motivating you, make your choices concerning these challenges. If you are not moved to work hard, while remaining patient; to work skillfully around every roadblock, while remaining serene; to work with passion, while keeping cool; if you are not so motivated, then history will pass you by, and American Jewry will have played no role in shaping the future. The Israelis will have to do it by themselves.

Knowing you, I cannot imagine this. Rather do I see you grasping the nettlesome challenges, one by one, massaging them, manipulating them, forcing them to yield to the intensity of your

desire. My generation played a role in the first half-century of Israel's life, but the second half-century will be more important, for your generation will either see peace breaking out all over, or you will see a long grey period of unremitting struggle. You hold that second half-century in your hands. Run with the decades, let your adrenaline run you, and be careful with the egg you hold. Don't let it fall and break.



*Joseph Slitkar name at Yale and
Heschel make both schools equal.*

**Heschel School Rally - 7 December, 1993
Remarks by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman**

DECEMBER 7 - PEARL HARBOR - "DAY OF INFAMY"

Today we have gathered to rename it

December 7 - DAY OF HESCHEL'S GROWTH

Abraham Heschel died 20 years ago this month, but his personality will be remembered and his words studied far into the centuries ahead. He was a passionate humanist, embracing all causes in which justice was sought; and he was a devout Jew whose main search was to understand how the human being and God related to each other. This man was the exemplar par excellence of the twin streams which characterize Judaism - the universalism which prompted him to enter the struggle for every human's civil rights, and the particularism which caused him to focus on one people called chosen, not superior, but chosen for a unique relationship with the Chooser.

You did well to name your school for this warm-hearted genius, and thus to set him up as the finest role model. If every child who passed through this school were to learn Heschel's ideas and to emulate Heschel's conduct, you, the founders would have made an incredible contribution to the strengthening of the fiber of the whole Jewish people. Your graduates and their descendants would represent the flesh and bone keeping Judaism alive and vigorous in the decades ahead.

Every good school must have as its goal and bounden duty three broad objectives: the transmitting of facts, which is a purely didactic approach; the establishing of a logical process of thinking so that the pupils can engage in research and discover answers for themselves, which is the cognitive approach; and finally the formation of a system of values, of what is important, what is right and wrong, which is the approach of shaping character.

These are all very clear and accepted in theory, but often not carried out in practice. Take the first point. Facts are transmitted through reading. This is the one basic indispensable skill. If this is not acquired early, certainly by the third grade, the pupil will remain deprived throughout all future years of education and life itself will be infinitely less rich. Of course there are other techniques - story telling by the teacher, audio-visual aids, maps, drawings, etc.

But I shall never forget a visit to my grandson's classroom, when he was in pre-K, at the age of 4, and the subject of the morning was the rain forest. That lesson was incredible. The complexity of the rain forest was described by the pupils and its ecosystem hinted at - its location in Brazil was the beginning of a world geography lesson; the walls were decorated with large drawings of trees, vines, undergrowth; and there was a special table with many books which

the children were encouraged to try to read aloud to the class. These were 4 year olds. Facts, facts, facts and already basic reading.

The second goal, achieving cognitive thought, so that the student learns to be more self-reliant, using logic as a means of finding answers to problems, is more difficult - but must be patiently and diligently insisted upon. When pupils are pushed and assisted to find the answer for themselves, that process becomes the gateway through which they will walk rapidly to greater achievements which will lead to greater personal satisfaction which will lead to greater hunger to learn even more and more.

The third goal is the matter of values, and I can think of nothing more absurd then the phrase "value-free education." If there was ever an oxymoron, this is it. Education without reference to values

equals sterility. There can be no civilization if there are not standards. The sense of what is right and what is wrong is absolutely basic to a society which hopes to prosper. One of the reasons for much of the lawlessness and violence so prevalent today is, of course, to be found in poverty, joblessness, broken families and other social ills. But another reason, equally culpable, is that so many young people receive no moral instruction in their formative years. Isn't it absurd that in many school districts there is actually a direct order to teachers that they shall not express their own opinions to students on matters of morals and ethics.

Nat Hentoff of the Village Voice some years ago wrote the story of an actual episode in a Teaneck, N.J. high school, when a young woman found a purse containing \$1000 and turned it in to the office. A student advisory council of 15 students discussed the matter and decided that she had been foolish to do that. When

they asked the guidance counsellor what he thought, he said he believed she had done the right thing, but "he would not try to force his values on them." What a shame! What a lost opportunity! How would the 15 ever develop into honest, decent citizens. Where would the world be today if Moses had demurred at the critical moment and refused to climb the mountain.

In addition to the above general secular goals of education which the Heschel School must pursue, there are the special goals which the Jewish school must also maintain in the forefront of its curriculum. A Jewish school must address the Jewish heritage, in its broadest definition. What is the value, the worthwhileness of the Jewish heritage to its own people and to the whole civilized world? How a Jewish school deals with this fundamental question is the measure of its effectiveness in our struggle for the future.

I dislike the word continuity, because it has become an over-used buzz-word which produces yet another task force or study commission resulting in more paper and less action. In America today we witness the open visible erosion of the body politic of the Jewish people. With an acceleration that is actually measurable we see the core community of caring and committed Jews growing smaller and smaller as tens of thousands of our young adults drop off in an entropic process of not caring. They are not in open revolt. They simply don't care enough about Jewish history, religion or literature (how many have actually read through one book in the Bible) to commit themselves to marry other Jews, study a bit about Judaism, or spend a semester in Israel learning about our roots as a people. They simply don't think these subjects are of much importance. They do think of themselves as Americans with some vague notion of a Jewish identity far in their background but not meaning much to them now. Ignorance of Judaism,

accompanied by the wide acceptance granted by America has swept them up into the anonymity of the melting pot. They have forsaken the cultural pluralism of possessing two identities - Jewish and American - and have become mono-cultural Americans only.

The Jewish school of today must combat this ignorance or American Jewry will not have a tomorrow. The purpose of the Heschel School must be to give the student several specific parcels of fact and ideology as follows:

1. The long story of the Hebrew people from whom he/she springs
2. The literature (Bible, Midrash, some Talmud, codes, modern thought) which expresses the values and ideals of that people.
3. The land of Israel, which is the womb of that people.

4. The relationship between that people and the God who chose it a millennia ago.

If the school succeeds in transmitting these packages of information and creating the concomitant positive attitudes toward this data, then potentially every young man and woman graduates with the desire to protect and preserve that heritage which has become by then part of his and her very identity.

Parenthetically, let me say the obvious, that the home and synagogue have the same responsibility in shaping the young person's Jewish identity. But tonight we speak of the school, thus omitting, but not overlooking, the role of parents and rabbis.

The doubts and uncertainties about the identity crisis most always crystallize in a single question with many forms - why be Jewish?

What does it mean? Why bother? And the answers they receive are not always clear.

Let me offer my summary. Why be Jewish?

1. Because Judaism conceived and offered to the world the notion of one God, creator of nature, the human being and a moral code which taught right from wrong.

2. Because Judaism then gave to the human free will, to choose between good and evil. Thus humans determine their own fate, and have no one to blame or credit except themselves. How wonderful.

3. Because Judaism then emphasized justice as the key to establishing the equality of all people and races.

4. Because Judaism invented democracy, requiring that even the king was subject to the rule of the law - the Torah.

5. Because Judaism gave the human race a reason for its very existence, gave a purpose for life on this earth, namely, the improvement of society, the shaping of a perfect world - and named this long-term goal the messianic era, thereby endowing humanity with plenty of time to achieve it.

6. Thus, in one rubric, Judaism gave to civilization the idea of God, morality, free will, justice, democracy and a purpose to every human life - i.e., the constant betterment of society, so that no one on earth should be hungry or endangered. Then we can truly say that the Messiah has arrived.

That's quite an answer to the simple question, isn't it?

I began by congratulating you for having founded this school. Now you must complete the task of acquiring, renovating and endowing with many millions the two buildings comprising the lower and middle schools, with their future population of 450, then you will be ready to work on the high school, whose planning you must begin now. And so I end, with the challenge that you set your sights on that future jewel in your crown - that wonderful upper school with 600 students, beautiful brilliant students, the crown jewels of American Jewry who will grow into an adulthood wearing their two identities with dignity and pride. That is your challenge. Seize it. Do it with power and fullness - then look at the work of your hands, rest and be satisfied.

Memo

FROM

FRANCINE FRIEDMAN

9-22-88

Dear Natan,

Ltr sent as above
one have been mailed to
all Westport airports w/
the exceptions of Miami
& Houston.

Should you receive
calls regarding the
letter, you will want
to have a copy handy!
So, here it is PTO →

Please share w/ your
Colleagues. i: Jeanne,
Amy. Felicia & new person -

Thank you.

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVE



September 19, 1988

Dear

As a close friend of Herb and Francine Friedman, I am prompted to write on the occasion of Herb's upcoming 70th birthday.

While Herb is alive and kicking, and can take deserved pleasure in the recognition of his life's work, Francine and his close friends would very much like to see appropriate tribute paid to his 45 years of unstinting and selfless service to the Jewish people at large and Israel in particular.

Last June, Herb celebrated the 50th reunion of his graduation from Yale. During the coming year he will participate in the ground-breaking for the first permanent home of Yale's Hillel Foundation, which will house a library in Herb's name. \$500,000 is needed to make it happen.

What makes this project so special is that Jim Ponet, the Director and Chaplain of Yale Hillel, feels certain he'll "find one more Herb Friedman in that crowd" of thousands of Jewish students who pass through Yale. That's a fine thought, considering how much one Herb has already accomplished.

Francine would happily write out the check for \$500,000 herself. Lacking such resources, she has turned to some of Herb's friends, who have pledged from \$10 to \$50,000.

If you would like to participate in this worthwhile project, your (tax-deductible) check should be made out to Yale Hillel and sent to Francine Friedman, 500 East 77 Street, Apt. 2519, New York, N.Y. 10162.

I sincerely hope that you will give this matter your utmost consideration. It behooves Herb's admirable accent on education of leadership that his life's achievement be celebrated by a library servicing outstanding Jewish kids.

With best wishes for a sweet and healthy year, and looking forward to seeing you in one of the Wexner Heritage Foundation Seminars.

Sincerely,

Haim Shaked

Francine Friedman

500 East 77th Street
New York, NY 10162

October 3, 1988

Dear Natan,

First of all, \$120.00 is hardly
"small change". (and what a lovely touch
to make the check out for that particular
amount :)

Second of all, it's cheeks like yours,
given with such affection and
admiration for Herb, that give the
project its real heart & soul.

I am very, very grateful to you
for your contribution, and Herb is
truly & deeply touched by the sentiment.

Love to you both,
Francine

"THE CROWN OF A GOOD NAME"

Sermon Given at Battell Memorial Chapel

by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

During 50th Class Reunion at Yale University

June 5, 1988

Dear friends, brothers and sisters in the membership of this blessed university:

At a memorial service such as this, we gather to pay those tributes to the dead which civilized conduct commands. And we do so with full and loving heart, allowing memory to play its calculus across time and space as we seek to recall the smiling face or robust body or clever mind of some dearly beloved friend now gone.

Yet the more important truth is that exactly at the moment when we dwell on thoughts of death, our stronger urge is to ponder the significance of life. Death will come - each of us knows this, even though the fact remains forever an abstraction and an unreality - but its mystery will never be revealed. Therefore it profits not to invest great time or energy seeking to unveil its essence. Rather does it make more sense, at the very instant when the angel's wings stir the air, to turn instead to the mystery of life and seek to pierce its inner meaning, to see what it is all about, to search its lines and shadows, to discover what is truly important about living. What are the values? What should be the goals? How can one find happiness?

Legendary King Solomon's answer to these riddles is recorded in the Book of Proverbs 3:13-18

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that obtaineth understanding.

For the merchandise of it is better than the
merchandise of silver,

And the gain thereof than fine gold.

Wisdom is more precious than rubies;
And all the things thou canst desire are not to be
compared unto her.

Length of days is in her right hand
In her left hand are riches and honor.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her,
And happy is every one that holdeth her fast."

And so you have it, clear and simple: rubies are precious and gold is fine, but wisdom brings happiness and the fruit of understanding offers pleasantness and peace.

What is the sense of devoting one's life to acquisitions and possessions and fatter and fatter wallets and hedonism, when it is inevitable that the flame of appetite will gradually flicker out, so that there are no longer any desires to be satisfied, and suddenly all the possessions become an irritating clutter, revealing themselves as incapable of providing pleasure. Many very acquisitive people find, toward the end of their days, as much joy in divesting and simplifying their lives as they did in the beginning when they were acquiring.

No - Ecclesiastes (5:14) tells us the truth which his wisdom discovered:

"He must depart - just as he came.

As he came out of his mother's womb, so must he depart at last, naked as he came.

He can take nothing of his wealth to carry with him."

What is this wisdom, so highly touted, and yet so ill-defined? Science and technology is the main wisdom of this century. Do we mean that? I think not. Literature, belles lettres, and faith in the inevitability of human progress was the main wisdom of the previous century. Do we mean that? I think not.

Tolstoy said (in War and Peace): "The highest wisdom has but one science - the science of the whole - the science of explaining the whole creation and man's place in it."

That is the real secret to penetrate - how to orient oneself, set a compass, prepare a path, find one's place and live with a purpose which will illuminate the daily struggle and give it a glow so that one rises in the morning and thanks God for the gift of life because it is good and worthwhile. Any person who can awaken with a smile and a feeling of wanting to kiss the morning will have a peaceful heart all day long, no matter how tough or tense that day's struggle might be.

What really counts? Money is important - it is fuel - makes things happen, but it is transient. Wisdom is more important - it gives a sense of goal and place and balance. Also it lasts longer. But there is one other attribute, probably the most important, for it endures beyond the grave - and that is, a good name.

Ecclesiastes says: (7:1)

"A good name is better than precious oil

And the day of death than the day of one's birth"

Rabbi Levi explained that sentence in the Midrash to the Book of Exodus:

"This can be compared to two seagoing ships. One of them is leaving the harbor, and the other is entering the harbor. Everybody is celebrating the departing ship, but only a few are rejoicing at the ship that is arriving.

A wise man, seeing this, says: "One should have expected the opposite. People should not celebrate the

departing ship. Who knows what is still ahead of it, whether it will sail through calm or stormy seas, and what winds it will have to face? One should rather rejoice over the ship that is entering the harbor, because it has safely returned from its voyage."

So, now we are coming close to the truest essence of life, the reason for existence, the answer to those who cynically say nothing is important, or that life is simply a constant chaos with no meaning whatsoever, and we humans are simply drifting flakes in a cosmic snowstorm.

The effort it takes to earn a good name is the real meaning of life, and the reason for wanting a good name is because that is the only way to conquer death. A good name is one's immortality.

There is a tractate in the Talmud entitled in Hebrew Pirke Avot - "The Ethics of the Fathers". It contains the aphorisms of 60 Sages who lived between 300 BC and 200 AD. I will read it first in Hebrew, for that classical tongue was once common currency on this campus. The Baccalaureate sermons given during the first eleven years of President Ezra Stile's tenure were given in Hebrew, and all the students were expected to understand. Things are slightly different today.

רק' שמעון / אחד : ולמה בגד'ם דער, בגד' מלכה,
בגד' בדאני, אבגד' מלכה; אבגד' ער טאג מלכה זאג' דין

Pirke Avot 4:13

Rabbi Simeon says:

"There are three crowns -

The crown of Torah

The crown of priesthood

The crown of sovereignty

But the crown of a good name transcends them all."

Torah represents learning; the priesthood represents service to God and man; and sovereignty represents power. A good name surpasses them all for it involves attaining the respect of society through good deeds and a right attitude. Nobility of soul and spirit matter more than any other attribute.

All of us have come to a time when we understand life's equation. Deep satisfaction comes from work and its accomplishments; family and its happiness; good health and its comforts so that our later years are not afflicted by pain or degrading disabilities. Hopefully most of us have achieved the first two and still enjoy the third. Lastly, perhaps most important, is the feeling that flows from having made the world a slightly better place than we found.

And so, having made some money, acquired some wisdom, and earned your good name, so that others will think of you at

some future memorial service such as this, there is one final thing to do.

Start to write a document which is called an ethical will. Leave something more to your children and grandchildren than your material assets. Leave your spiritual message to them. Force yourself to formulate, to craft, to find the words, to distill and synthesize everything you have learned through a long rich life. Your heirs will cherish this heritage more than anything else you give them, for in such a document you will be giving them yourself - your values, your sense of right and wrong, your dreams, your fondest memories.

There are other voices which will try to tell them different things. Lord Bertrand Russell will say to them: "Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark." Let your ethical will refute his black cynicism. Let your bright and shining idealism prevail instead.

Give your successors the definitions of what an educated person should know, of how a civilized person should act, of what constitutes goodness and kindness. Give them a sense of purpose and maturity. Give them a vision for life - to sustain them on their path. Give them all the inspiration you can muster - for what every human being needs the most is something in which to believe, some rock, some ideal, some standard.

With reverence and respect for those no longer with us,
we turn our faces to the future generations and pledge to them
our earnest help as they seek to achieve their own ^{כתר} crown
Their own crown of a good name.

Amen.



Orthodox Jewish couples—both partners—accept it as a given. Rarely, if ever, does one hear of an argument between husband and wife over the support of the spouses' parents. Middle-aged children will often take their parents into their own homes, or have them live nearby. Or, if elderly parents go into nursing homes, they will not be abandoned there. When I see women in the community taking their mothers to luncheons which they themselves would not otherwise go to, or men taking their fathers to the morning minyan, it always gives me pause for thought.

HEBREW ETHICAL WILLS

Today, most people write wills to leave their worldly goods. No responsible parent would leave the matter to the state. But worldly goods are not the most important possession we can leave behind us. Jewish tradition recognized that moral example and personal values are a more significant legacy and, therefore, the custom of writing Hebrew ethical wills developed.

Not a single one among us can be sure we will have an opportunity to say to our children all that we wish to say. When a child reaches Bar or Bat Mitzvah or marries and the parent's heart is full of emotion and pride, and we understand our priorities in life with a special clarity, that seems as good a time as any to write an ethical will. Once you have done it, you will revise it many times, hopefully over the next sixty to eighty years. To some extent, changes in circumstance—yours and your children's—will affect the content and emphases of your legacy.

There is no standard form to a Hebrew ethical will, and thus there is great personal leeway. Though entitled "Hebrew," an ethical will can be written in any language. In it, you should discuss those things that are closest to your heart, as well as what you have learned about the eternal values of life. Try to think of what would make you proud of your children as mature adults and as members of the Jewish community. You should mention whatever virtues are important to you, and not be worried that you are imposing impossible demands on your children. This is, after all, a legacy and not a commandment. It serves as a direction for their lives, not an order. Nor should you be worried that

something that is important to you is objectively trivial and therefore not of sufficient weight to be included in a will of this nature. In some of the classical Hebrew ethical wills of the medieval period, we find that parents admonished their children to be strict about personal cleanliness or to be impeccable about their sexual behavior or not to gossip.

A man I knew wrote an ethical will to his children after his second daughter had married. He died some fifty years after he wrote the first will, and he changed it a few times, leaving three or four older versions in his safe-deposit box. His children commented that four things had never changed: "If I die before Mama, call her every day, and visit her once a week. She always took care of you. . . ." "Give one tenth of your earnings to tzedakah. This will be more of a hardship to you the wealthier you become, but you'll manage. . . ." "Observe Shabbos, and teach your own children to do the same. This is what kept our family so close. . . ." "Try to give other people the benefit of the doubt. . . ."

Writing an ethical will is not an easy thing to do, in part because it forces you to confront and understand your own values in life. However, you should not be intimidated at putting it all down on paper. The most important ethical legacy is the living example you have given them all your life. This will only serve to confirm.

Earlier, I said being a traditional Jewish parent is both the hardest and the easiest thing in the world. But I didn't say this: it also is the best.

HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN LUNCH DATES FOUR CITIES

So far HAF has seen the following students at lunch:

Detroit

Peter Alter
Marcy Feldman
Michael Feldman
Cheryl Guyer
Sharon Hart
Sally Krugel
Solomon Lachman
Andrew Zack

Milwaukee

Stanley Jaspan
Randy Klein
Sally Peltz

Minneapolis

Marcia Cohodes
Mari Forbush
David Goldsteen
Harlee Goldsteen
Jerry Ingber
Neil Meyer
Joni Sussman
Barry Werner

Pittsburgh

Scott Apter
Bill Berkowitz
Robin Bernstein
Stephen Halpern
Larry Hurwitz
James Rudolph
Linda Rudolph
William Rudolph
Charles Saul
Karen Shapira
Louis Weiss



Francine Friedman

P.O. Box 487
New York, NY 10021

Wed.

Nathan:

Sorry I kept the tapes this long. I didn't finish listening to all of them.

Keep it listened together on the way to Hampshire College.

My opinion — You were very, very good. From the start you involved the group; you knew all their names —

You really know your material, and you come across as interested in it — and very precise.

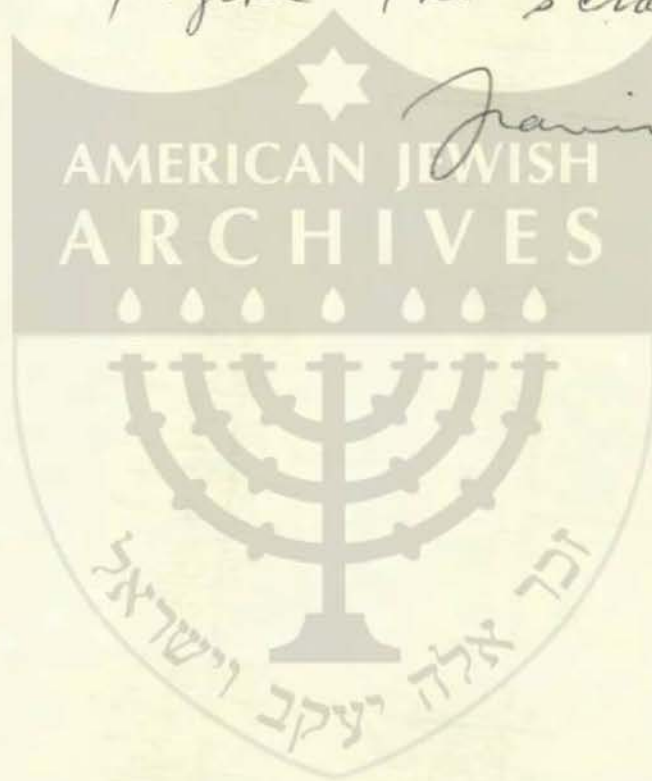
I enjoyed listening — altho the quality of the tape is not uniformly good.

Congratulations — I learned something and was very impressed.

PTO →

Perhaps I can borrow them
again & finish writing at a
later date.

Forgive the scrawl—





Congregation Emanuel

Sixteenth Avenue and Pearl Street

Denver 5, Colorado



Telephone Keystone 7018

June 11, 1947.

NL
Dear Member:

Pursuant to your Board's new policy of keeping the Congregation advised of all important developments, we are happy to inform you that your Temple has just been highly honored.

WE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO LEND OUR RABBI TO THE NATION!

Early Monday morning I was awakened by a telephone call as follows

This is Henry Morgenthau calling you from New York. Your Rabbi delivered a talk here last night and it created a sensation. It was the most stirring appeal that has been made here for many years. We would like the permission of your Congregation to have him travel with me during the remainder of the month of June for the relief of the destitute millions overseas. Will you lend him to the nation until July 1st?"

I, of course, told him that such permission would have to come from our Ritual Committee. After discussing the matter with them, it was unanimously decided to grant the request with the understanding that he would fulfill his engagement in Denver to address our people on June 17th. Mr. Morgenthau agreed, and said that he expected to be here with him.

Arrangements have been made with the reform Rabbis of Colorado Springs and Pueblo to serve our congregants in case of need during the remainder of this month.

You, your family and friends are urged to attend the mass-meeting next Tuesday evening, June 17th, 8 o'clock, East High Auditorium and hear this vital message of our beloved Rabbi and pay tribute to Mr. Morgenthau, the most highly honored Jew in American history.

The Allied Jewish Council advises us that there will be no solicitation of funds.

Sincerely yours,

Louis C. Isaacson
Louis C. Isaacson
President

P.S. Enclosed find copy of telegram of appreciation from Mr. Morgenthau.



THE WOODLANDS INN

MEMO

TO : HAF

FROM : NL

DATE : 2/13/90

PAGE # : DMS

1. I DEPOSITED YOUR CHECKS TODAY AS REQUESTED. I EMPHASIZED THAT IT CLEAR W/IN 2 DAYS. IT SHOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM.
2. I SPOKE TO ARI WEISS TODAY - RE: SCHARANSKY'S APPEARANCE AT OUR SUMMER INSTITUTE. FOR THE FIRST TIME, I SENSED A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD US. TELLING HIM ABOUT WHAT TRANSPIRED OVER THE WEEKEND HELPED. SO DID THE REALIZATION THAT CONNECTING TO LES WAS WORTHWHILE. WE'LL KNOW MORE BY NEXT WEEK, MONDAY. I MADE CLEAR THAT I WOULD FLY TO SEE HIM PERSONALLY IF THAT WAS NECESSARY. I HAVE A POSITIVE "FEELING" THIS TIME.
3. WILLIAMS IS STARTING TO SHOW OUR OFFICE TO PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS. HOPEFULLY, ONE OF THEM WILL BITE. THEY SEEM SERIOUS ABOUT THEIR WORK.
(⁶WILLIAMS)
4. WHAT'S THIS ABOUT YOU'RE RETURNING NEXT WEEK? I HOPE YOU ARE WELL. PLEASE ADVISE.
5. I AM GOING AHEAD W/ A CLASS IN MINNEAPOLIS ON FEB. 28TH ENTITLED "PIDYON SHVUYIM II: THE CHALLENGE OF OPERATION EXODUS". I'M DOING IT AS MUCH FOR ME AS FOR THEM - I.E. I WANT TO TEST MY ABILITY TO INTEGRATE WHAT I'VE TAUGHT IN THE ABSTRACT W/ THE CONCRETE CHALLENGES OF TODAY. THE VIDEO OF HARRIS + YOU WILL BE PART OF MY PRESENTATION. THE STUDENTS ARE VERY EXCITED.



THE WOODLANDS INN

PAGE TWO

6. I'VE STARTED TO MAKE INQUIRIES ABOUT A PROSPECTIVE TRIP TO THE USSR FOR MYSELF. I'M SHOOTING FOR MID-MARCH - AFTER I FINISH MY "HAGGADAH" CLASSES, & BEFORE WE START DEBRIEFING THE ALUMNI. I'LL KEEP YOU POSTED AS I MAKE PROGRESS.

7. I'LL SEND THIS MEMO IN THE EXPRESS-MAIL PAK WHICH JULIA IS SENDING OUT TODAY. I'LL BE IN TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY) & BE IN BALTIMORE ON THURSDAY w/ RAMIE INSPECTING THE PROSPECTIVE SEMINAR SITE (GEVARTER'S BOARD ROOM). I'LL BE CALLING-IN A COUPLE OF TIMES IF YOU NEED TO REACH ME.

8. YOU SHOULD FEEL GREAT ABOUT THE WEEKEND & THE ROLES YOU PLAYED THROUGHOUT. YOU DREW RAVES FROM ALL CORNERS. I JUST HOPE YOU DIDN'T "OVERDO IT".

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. LET ME KNOW IF I CAN BE OF HELP.

7

PS - THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOTE OF CONFIDENCE PUBLICLY (SUNDAY) AND PRIVATELY (FRIDAY). IT MEANS A GREAT DEAL TO ME.

Young Leadership Cabinet Alumni

Mayflower Hotel

Washington, D.C.

Sunday, March 15, 1992

MAJOR GOALS FOR THE CENTURY AHEAD

Mr. Chairman, dear friends,

This is an emotional moment for me. When you love someone, you give them everything you have, and you expect the same in return.

I have loved you collectively from the moment of your birth more than 30 years ago; have poured into you inspiration and education; have laid upon you many a challenge. Some of you responded more than others, but again, collectively, you have been a magnificent force on behalf of folk and faith, and every organization in the entire Jewish world has copied your name and model.

So - I come today, once again, to put before you what I conceive to be the major goals for the century ahead, knowing that you have the necessary time left in your lives to take giant steps toward the achievement of these goals. This is perhaps my

last call to arms, spoken in the firm belief that you will rise to battle as you always have.

Rabbi Irving Greenberg, in a recent speech at Brandeis University said: "There is now the serious possibility of a golden age for the American Jewish community... that possibility exists, at least, if Jewish leadership responds, and if both democracy and capitalism persevere. Under these circumstances, a new and great era of Jewish history could now unfold".

I agree with the optimism implicit in his formulation. I believe that both democracy and capitalism will persevere in the U.S. Therefore, the only uncertainty lies in the nature of Jewish leadership's response. Most of you are third generation born in this country, and many are even fourth generation. You have the advantage of a secure rootedness in your American identity, plus the invaluable strengthening of your Jewish identity through exposure to Israel and the Holocaust, the two defining influences of this century. Your grandparents struggled through their immigrant experience here, speaking and thinking with the accents of the shtetl, while modernizing their religious habits, and gradually lessening their fears of the Gentile. Your parents, breathing a bit easier, could look beyond their immediate personal needs, and build the institutions of a Jewish polity - the synagogues, centers, federations and all others, while pouring major support into the Zionist state, which was

their emotional response to the monstrous genocide in Europe.

Now your turn has come, and you are the first generation truly capable of peering into the century ahead, with no overburdening challenges from the past, no psychological insecurities, no fear of your minority status in this country, no crushing unfinished agenda. You are the sons and daughters of a proud heritage, with 3 1/2 centuries of unbroken existence on this continent and 3 1/2 millennia of continuity behind that. Your mission to improve the world for the benefit of all humanity must always include the improvement of your own people as well.

Accepting a burden begins with defining it - getting your arms around it - lifting its weight and size - gauging your strength against its resistance. Your generation has the freedom, the power and the affluence to assume any tasks, goals, challenges you visualize on the horizon - and to do so with the sure knowledge that if you raise your children properly they will complete anything you pass on to them unfinished. You are the bridge generation that will take the immigrants of the 19th century into a golden age of the 21st, if you assess the tasks correctly and mobilize your responses strongly enough.

Here are the major tasks of the century ahead, as I see them, gathered under three rubrics of peoplehood, nationhood and religion. These represent areas of work, themselves subdivided

into specific goals.

I. PEOPLEHOOD

A. Reverse the course of the headlong rush toward self-destruction among American Jewry, and to a lesser extent also, among other Jewries in the western world. The very permissiveness of the freedom we so cherish in the U.S., compounded by indifference toward Judaism and assimilation into the majority secular culture, both of which tendencies stem from almost total ignorance of the history, literature, language, philosophy and religion of the Jewish people, have resulted in a sky-rocketing rate of intermarriage that is moving with the speed of locusts sweeping across a field and destroying everything in their path.

Fear of this phenomenon has spread rapidly because the plethora of articles, speeches, conferences and media references to the subject has reached all ears. Most of you have already heard so much that the very word "intermarriage" has become dulled by repetition, and you tend to tune the subject out. But that does not result in its disappearance.

Have you heard any remedies? Parents submit, sometimes heavy-heartedly, but no longer sit shiva, as though their child had died. Other parents put pressure on the rabbi to perform the

marriage ceremony because they want at least that touch of Jewish authenticity, and most rabbis, even among the Reform don't want to do it. Still other parents demand that their rabbi co-officiate with a Christian clergyman. And all of this is accompanied by the plea that the Jewish partner be not further driven away as a result of rabbinical rejection. It is a terrifying dilemma for most rabbis.

The only remedial suggestion for adults who do intermarry is for the Jewish community to develop a clear policy regarding conversion. Mikvehs must be created by all 4 denominations since the Orthodox, who are usually in control of the only or most desirable mikveh in town, are increasingly refusing to make "their" mikveh available for non-Orthodox conversions. A vigorous outreach policy must be practiced in synagogues and all other communal institutions, welcoming the converts and their children. Synagogue membership must be graciously offered to converts, or even to non-converted spouses who themselves do not wish to offend their families by an act of conversion, but who are very willing to have their children brought up and educated as Jews. Converts should be counted as full members of a minyan, called to the Torah for aliyot, bless the candles from the pulpit on a Friday evening.

All this refers to adults who have taken the plunge. Preventive work must begin much earlier, when Jewish children are

in their teens, in high school and most particularly during the college years. Great skill and ingenuity must be invested in Bar and Bat mitzvah classes, confirmation classes, summer camps and youth groups to explain the value of preserving the Jewish heritage and not destroying it by reckless behavior. We inoculate our children with various serums to protect them against deadly diseases. A run-away epidemic of intermarriage is a deadly disease.

The college campus is a desert barren of widespread or significant Jewish influence. With the exception of the work being done by a small number of charismatic rabbis (and even these are seriously under-funded) there is almost no programming widely attracting the almost half million Jewish college youth presently enrolled on American campuses. How shocking! The B'nai B'rith Hillel system exists in name, but that's about all. The once-powerful organization has increased in age and decreased in virility. The UJA and the organized Jewish federations of America must nourish and fertilize the campuses of America. There is no domestic program more important. A radical approach is necessary.

Student activists themselves have been crying for attention for almost 25 years. As far back as 1969 at the General Assembly of the CJF in Boston, student leaders sought a hearing for their message that they were being neglected and warned that their

abandonment by the establishment would result in dire consequences. Their prophecy was correct, for one of the factors leading to the tidal wave of intermarriage today has been the lack of a large-scale effort to create a strong sense of Jewish identity and loyalty among that most impressionable age group.

In 1989, at the GA in Cincinnati, twenty years later, the student leaders were still demanding the right to address the plenary session. It was granted. Their spokesman pleaded eloquently for financial and moral support. His battle-cry was "Let our people go...to Israel on student programs", and he announced the formation of the Student Struggle for North American Jewry, to fight assimilation on the campus. Theirs was a take-off on the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, which was so effective.

What has been the result of all this knocking on the doors of the adult community? In the words of Josef Abramowitz, the now aging student leader, "We felt we had scored a major victory. Yet looking back on it, what did Jewish students really gain besides a platform for ten minutes? Communal leaders didn't change the order of allocations; they didn't invite us to sit on their boards."

The Baltimore Jewish Times, a fine weekly newspaper, reporting on the GA held in Baltimore a few months ago, ended its

article quoting Abramowitz: "The words are as applicable today as they were in Boston in 1969. The difference is that in Baltimore in 1991 there are fewer of us left to repeat them. And next year there will be even fewer."

And you, in this audience, exactly the parents most involved, both for the future of your children and the entire Jewish population, must interject your concern in a powerful manner to the federation hierarchy in your town.

Forget about the argument, sometimes offered, that even where there is a Hillel House, most kids don't go there. Creative programming will reach widely. Don't think conventionally. Invent new ways to get their attention. This college age population is close to marriage. This is exactly the right time to give deep thought and innovation to the whole question of investing serious money and organization in the struggle against assimilation among the college population. The abandonment of Jewish students must cease.

Working backward, from adults to young adult students, to teenagers, we come down to the elementary school and here there is no need to elaborate. All the research shows that a parochial school education provides the first and most effective foundation of a strong Jewish identity. In addition, a knowledge base is built into the child's memory which lasts well up into young

adulthood. There is simply no comparison between a Day School education and a 1, 2, or 3-day supplementary few hours, both as to content and mood.

There are two arguments often given by parents against sending their children to day school, even after admitting that a much stronger Jewish consciousness will be developed: one is the expense (several thousand dollars per year, per child - and what if you have three kids?) and the second is the mediocre quality of most Day Schools. It is exactly valid arguments such as these which must be countered by equally valid solutions. Firstly, Day School tuition must be completely free for those who cannot afford it, and minimal (a few hundred dollars per family) for everyone else. The community must fund its school system - and this takes serious attention to careful planning and new ideas. And secondly, the Jewish Day Schools in your towns must be as good as the best Country Day School, whether private or church-based. That should be your model - a lovely grassy campus, plenty of athletic fields, highest level of secular studies so the graduates can gain admission to the finest universities in the nation, and full integration of the Jewish and secular subjects (French at 8 a.m., Hebrew at 9, Math at 10, Bible at 11, etc.). This school must include pre-K to 12, carefully divided into lower, middle and upper divisions.

B. Provide an infrastructure for the Jews who will remain in the former Soviet Republics, whose sense of Jewish consciousness was awakened in 1967, whose activists started a flood of emigration, a half-million of whom have already left, mainly for Israel, and some to the U.S., with more than that number still to come, but whose residual population will be sizable and alert to their Jewish identity. Do we leave them alone, or do we help them develop organized communities with all the necessities? This million of Jews will either be drawn in - if there is an interesting, functioning group of cultural, social, religious and educational foci to attract them; or they will drift away after a time and lose their sense of uniqueness as quickly as they gained it. There is no doubt as to what our response must be. It may take a quarter century, but it is a miraculous opportunity to strengthen the global Jewish peoplehood. If 2000 communities were destroyed in the Shoah, perhaps we can build 200 new ones in the former Soviet Union which never existed before. It will be one of the glories of your generation, a piece of your golden age if you take this on and succeed.

C. Assist French Jewry, nearly three-quarters of a million, the fourth largest in the world, to turn itself into a modern, organized, Jewish community, pro-Israel and linked to the rest of the Jewish world. French Jewry is layered. Its cross section would show an ancient element, hundred of years in

residence, thoroughly cross-pollinated with Catholic spouses. By now this group is not large in number, but still very large in influence. Many of the older and most prestigious institutions, such as the Consistoire, are still dominated by this ancient regime. The second layer consists of East European Jews who migrated to France between the two world wars in this 20th century, bringing with them a strong tradition and a Zionist orientation. They are to be found today in the ranks of the Israel-oriented organizations. The third layer is Northern African, largely Moroccan and Algerian Jews, who arrived in France in the late 1950's and 60's. They are still adjusting, many still struggling toward financial security. Some of their leaders are working toward a relationship with the earlier layer of Ashkenazim, and a very few are even challenging the Rothschilds for top leadership positions.

I am not certain that the methods, protocols and forms of organization which the American Jewish community has developed in the past century are the very best that the human mind could create, but I am sure that the French community could advance in many areas through an arrangement of exchange. American Jewish communal leadership knows almost nothing about French Jewry. Study missions do not often go there - the French do not come here to learn our experience. Aside from the JDC, which has worked productively in France for a half-century, some few American organizations maintain skeleton staffs which report back

to New York, but do not influence the character of or stimulate the growth of French communal life.

Without being officious or paternalistic we have much to offer and should take the initiative, in the most tactful way, of developing a master plan, together with their leaders, for defining the areas in which we can be helpful.

It is mandatory that French Jewry, in this coming century, move expeditiously toward a much higher level of activity regarding education for its children, social services for its adults, and fund-raising for Israel. All this represents a heightened sense of Jewish identity and pride. If we help them now, perhaps they will be able to avoid the frightening intermarriage rates that plague us.

II. NATIONHOOD

Support of Israel in every imaginable form, has been one of the laudable achievements of the American Jewish community, or at least that 25% who really care and work at it. The support has welled-up from a deeply-felt love of the land and has requested nothing in return. The basic fact is that Israel, through its extraordinary performance in providing homes for millions of immigrants, while defending itself in six wars, achieving self-sufficiency in food and starting an amazing high-tech

potentiality, has provided a huge measure of pride to every Jew in the world. There could be no greater return than this.

And so, as we anticipate the celebration of Israel's jubilee, just two years before this century ends - we look forward naturally to the 21st century and try to anticipate the major tasks on her behalf. Everyone of us, since our actions have proven us to be among the most caring of the new carers, could probably make up the same list. Since that is so, there is no need for detailed description - just a listing, not necessarily in order of importance.

1. Helping the present and future absorption of the Russians, which may well take a decade. This will depend on an Israeli Government decision as to priorities. Right now it appears that expanding the settlements in the West Bank is #1 and creating jobs for the Russians is #2. If the Israel government fails in the absorption task, thus deterring further immigration from the ex-Soviet Union, history will charge it with criminal liability.

2. Develop a free-market economy, through encouraging investments which will create jobs. This will cause a steady rise in the GNP and GDP, which in turn raises the standard of living.

3. Encourage the government to hasten privatization. Selling the huge assets it possesses will provide a large cash infusion, plus continuous, additional tax revenue. More importantly, such a move will swing the economy toward a capitalistic free market, which will unleash the forces needed for real growth.

4. Find ways to dissociate religion from politics; emphasize the necessity for religious pluralism, otherwise the heavy-handed monopoly of right-wing Orthodoxy will continue to alienate the majority of Israelis and Diaspora Jews alike; and most importantly, try to establish religion as an ethical force in society, just as the Biblical prophets pleaded millennia ago. Some will say that this whole subject is an internal Israeli matter, but as we saw in December 1988, when the "Who is a Jew" matter was coming to a critical point of decision, every plane to Israel was loaded with Jews from the Diaspora coming to explain that this was not an internal Israeli matter. A definition was being forced which was perceived as affecting millions of Jews outside. And the outcry was so severe that the Israeli prime minister backed off from written promises he had made to the super-Orthodox parties. We should work hard, for Israel's benefit, to defuse this whole issue. Judaism is the religion of the entire Jewish people, and we should work on the problem before other crises blow up, as they surely will.

5. Reform the Electoral System

You all have read and heard enough about this. The clear fact is that coalition bargaining in order to form a governmental majority places unfair power in the hands of small parties. Paralysis is the result. A new election is called. The result of the next election in about 90 days will possibly be very close to the last one - the two large parties winning somewhere between 35 -40 seats each, and the remaining 40 divided up among a dozen small parties. Then the ugly pursuit begins all over again - excessive demands of cabinet seats plus money for favorite programs being made by parties which have only 2 or 3 parliamentary seats. But the prime minister desperately needs every vote, so he pays an extraordinary price, which is immediately raised by the next fellow with a few seats to sell. And on it goes. The separation of religion from politics will never occur until the electoral process is altered.

There are many proposals for reform. Let me not go into them. The basic principle I wish to put before you is that this is a task in which we have an interest, and we should devise a process by which our input is made known.

6. Making the Country more Attractive

There are two separate constituencies with a stake in making the country more attractive, and two very different definitions of the word "attractive."

One definition refers to the physical environment, and the other refers to the social environment, which includes the political and economic systems.

One constituency is the Israeli people, going on 5 million now, and possibly reaching six million by the end of the first decade of the next century. Regarding the physical environment, more and more Israeli citizens can be heard talking about the dirt, debris, garbage which blows across empty lots, piles up against fences, clutters the side of roads and is found in courtyards and entrance ways of almost every bloc of buildings. The country simply is not clean.

The disregard of cleanliness is probably linked to the lack of politeness, which is probably a factor in the fantastic rate of driving accidents, etc., etc. The core of unconcern, the lack of reaction to what they see all around them, leads to a curt rejoinder - "It's not my problem" or "let the municipality fix it," or "if you're so concerned, why don't you clean it up." If wars recede, and if I were the Minister of Defense, I would turn the army into the major weapon through which to teach citizen responsibility. Three years in the life of an impressionable, young adult should be enough time to inculcate a sense of responsibility toward civic cleanliness, personal politeness and safe driving.

The other constituency is Diaspora Jewry - for they are the challenge of the 21st century. The emerging migrations are almost finished, barring some unexpected danger to Jews in some isolated zone, which would be handled quickly as Israel has always done. Now is the time to look ahead to the mass of Jews in the free west and they must be attracted to come. For them, a more orderly Israel would indeed be more conducive.

No one is dissatisfied with Israeli political democracy - it is marvelous in so many respects: free speech, assembly and press -even in time of frequent war; a functioning court system, with immediate access to the Supreme Court itself, without going through a labyrinth of lower courts; a social welfare system for the weak, handicapped, unemployed. Almost the entire second and third worlds don't come close even in their dreams to the freedom and security which every Israeli takes for granted.

But here, with this potential pool of olim, the second definition of "attractive" is more critical. The economy must be decentralized; free competition must provide annual growth sufficient to handle the increase of population; parliamentarians must be responsible to the district which elects them; the government must avoid any system which might lead to its paralysis; and there must be civil marriage and divorce.

The dissatisfactions of the potential western oleh are voiced in regard to the items named above. But these are so fundamental as to be actual deterrents. And when there are additional minor irritations, such as a surly bureaucracy, working in crowded rooms; plus the language problem; plus frustrations with minor household repairs; plus, plus, plus - then the average American Jew who really loves Israel, enjoys visiting there, may even have relatives there (and the numbers who qualify in this category are scores of thousands - so it is a worthwhile pool to pursue) doesn't consider Aliyah as an actual reasonable possibility - but says, somewhat dreamily, the he will consider it after the kids are out of college, married and he and his wife might then think of retiring there. Of course, he probably won't and they wind up in Florida, Arizona or California.

The ideals of the Zionism I learned in my early teens, 60 years ago, were constructed on one simple foundation - that the Jewish people must build a nation in a country where all would be equal and would equally enjoy the necessities and luxuries of life, and which would also be a model of a just society that all mankind could emulate. These were my expectations right up the moment the State of Israel was born. And at the beginning, with the absorption of the first millions of needy immigrants, it seemed these expectations were being sensitively achieved. Today, things are different. We are disappointed. Political

considerations prevail above all else: west bank settlement takes precedence over Russian immigrant absorption; coalition deal-making, especially with the right-wing religious parties, takes precedence over breaking the religion-state nexus; governmental indecisiveness thwarts economic growth.

To make Israel more attractive economically, politically and socially should be one of the major objectives of our American Jewish community in the next quarter century - and the fact is that Israel herself will probably do most of the hard work toward that objective. We might only have to help with the cosmetics.

III. RELIGION

As a result of the Enlightenment and Emancipation which began two centuries ago, the two millennial grip which Judaism held on the Jewish people was lessened. During the 19th century, rapid changes especially in the natural sciences, created intellectual turmoil, social confusion and an unaccustomed permissiveness, as Jews reached out to the cultures and opportunities now opening to them. New organizational forms of the ancient religion resulted. The modern denominations of Reform, Orthodox and Conservative, in that order, were born. Other turbulent forces included the new scientific research into Judaism, the new Zionist movement and the huge waves of migrations to America which depleted the Central and Eastern

European heartland. All these convulsive changes altered previous mind-sets and patterns of ritual practice and synagogue attendance. In the hectic pursuit of a new, free life, with its thrust toward material advancement old habits of religious observance suffered. Within two generations, the hold of the Jewish religion on a great portion of the Jewish people weakened.

Then came the 20th century with its two catastrophic World Wars and the utterly inconceivable Shoah. This shook the faith of many in a God who could allow the slaughter of even more millions of human beings than He drowned in the Biblical flood. The thought began to grow that if mankind was evil, so might God also be evil - or dead - or never existent in the first place - or not all-powerful. A limited God became the most credible theological possibility, if one wished to avoid the ultimate rejection of atheism.

Thus - with weakened observance and diminished belief in God's power and presence - modern Jews have diminished their relationship to their religion. Synagogue membership remains high, for a variety of reasons, but is largely a dues-paying membership not a vigorously active one. There is a danger here. For religion was always one of the defining factors of our existence as a people. And if religion disappears from the daily life of Jews, the continuity of the peoplehood may be jeopardized. Instead of being allowed to wither and fossilize,

religion must be revitalized, reinvigorated as a factor and force in our communal existence.

This represents a tremendous challenge. Your generation will have to do it. Take part in the governance of the rabbinical seminaries: influence the selection of candidates for the rabbinate; help shape the curriculum so that the rabbis will better understand the laymen and the total communal structure. Take a creative role in changing the synagogue, so that it becomes an educational center instead of merely a praying and preaching place. This goal is not easy to accomplish, but its difficulty should not deter you from accepting the challenge. If you do not take part in this metamorphosis, I do not know who will.

And so we come to the end of this huge agenda regarding peoplehood, nationhood and religion which I have placed before you. It is so seminal, so determinative of the future of our faith and fellowship, so absolutely crucial, that you have the right to cry out and ask why I place such a burden upon you. The answer is quite simple. You were, are and will always remain a specially chosen group of men and women who accepted the proud designation of leadership. Such a title connotes obligations. You were selected to assume the highest order of duty and service and performance on behalf of your people, nation and faith. You

started out as young leaders, are now older, and will never escape from that role of responsibility.

I understand well that there are peaks and troughs in your ability to serve, your enthusiasm, your understanding of the complex issues at stake. And I understand that as the years roll on, there is bound to be some flagging, some lessening of tension, some boredom in the ranks even of leaders. But when all the challenges coalesce into one defining moment of history which is a clear crossroads toward success or failure, then all excuses must be put aside, and once again the fire bell clangs and the firepersons must respond.

This is such a moment. The future shape of Israel hangs in the balance - she either becomes a model of the great and glorious society which the Biblical prophets envisioned, or she becomes just another small state offering no particular inspiration for its own citizens or mankind. The future of millions of Russian Jews is at stake - they either are redeemed and successfully absorbed into the body politic of the renewed Jewish people, which rescues them personally and strengthens our whole people immeasurably, or they will drift back into the anonymous mass of the ex-Soviet republics and may be lost forever. And the future of our religion is at stake - it either assumes its place once again as a source of inspiration toward the making of a better world, or it withers away into the discard

and we Jews are left without a vision to guide us and an engine to drive us.

Create new instruments to deal with these goals. You will need several task forces to study the basic problems and determine courses of action:

1. A task force to create a superior parochial high school in your town.
2. A task force to create creative teen-age and young adult programs in your town.
3. A task force to create an inspiring center for Jewish life on the college campus in your town. Bnai Brith Hillel is bankrupt and defunct. They can't do it. Build a structure based on your local strength.

These three youth-oriented programs are part of the bulwark against the rampant raging force of intermarriage, which is overwhelming us.

Also:

4. A task force to re-invigorate and re-orient the synagogue as a source of adult education, for Jews by

birth and Jews by conversion, in which area we must work much more vigorously.

5. A task force on creating a communal infrastructure for ex-Soviet Jews who will remain in the Commonwealth of Independent States.
6. A task force on strengthening French Jewry, which is terra incognita, since we know very little about it, and it is the fourth largest member of our family.
7. Lastly, and most precious of all, a task force on how to impact the future of Israel, that precious vessel.

You must respond to the fire bell. And I know you can, because you have before, at previous crucial moments of war and great migrations and vast dangers. You know how to lead, to inspire others, to work with ingenuity and sweat and tirelessness. Once again, assume the harness, place the yoke upon your shoulders, report for duty. Challenge your elders, make revolutions, take over the authority. So long as these goals I lay before you are the worthy causes to which you pledge your lives, your honor and your fortune, they transcend all bureaucratic obstacles, they validate your impatience, they justify any revolution you wish to make in order to advance toward their fulfillment.

I have always believed in your capability to make history, since the day I created this movement - a third of a century ago, and I continue to believe that you will always rise and respond when you feel the invisible tug of history pulling at your conscience. To arms - ladies and gentlemen - the future is in your hands. God bless you all forever and ever.



JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Rabbi Max Arzt Memorial Dinner

June 16, 1993

"THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT: A QUESTION OF WILL"

by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

Chancellor Schorsh, Chairman Wexner, honored faculty, colleagues, dear wife Francine and children, fellow Wexnerites from so many cities, ladies and gentlemen:

In the handsome invitation to this evening's dinner, there is a sentence describing Rabbi Mark Arzt in whose memory this award is given. It said, "He came to the Seminary to be a spokesman and to help raise funds. Throughout his fund-raising endeavors, he always remained a Rabbi and taught Torah wherever he travelled". This description comes uncommonly close to the course of my own life. Thus accepting this award in his name leaves me with a comfortable feeling.

May I express personal appreciation to the Chancellor and the Seminary for crossing denominational lines in their selection of an Honoree. Demonstrating the principle of Klal Yisrael is very important in today's religiously polarized world.

Leslie Wexner is bombarded with requests to chair communal endeavors. He has hands on responsibility for running the largest retail clothing chain in the United States. And now he is filled with the desire to spend as much time as possible with Abigail, his lovely new bride. In the face of all this, he stepped forward and volunteered to lead this dinner to success. I am grateful for the honor he has done me.

I should like to speak this evening on two subjects: my personal credo - so that you may know the religious and philosophical bases for my actions; and secondly, my fears and hopes for the future of the American Jewish community.

I believe in the uniqueness of the Jewish people. Even as we share the quality of human-ness with all others of the species homo sapiens, still we are quite different in so many ways. And if we were not different, we probably would have disappeared, as have all the others who started on the path of history when we did. You know the three elements of our uniqueness. First there is the covenantal nature of our birth as a nation, in which we were linked to a God and a moral code. Next, this was succeeded by the acceptance of an eternal destiny through the concept of redemption by a Messiah, in which a better world would be born for all humans to enjoy. How incredible! And lastly, there came the notion that the moral Covenant and the Messianic redemption must also be linked with a specific Land - a homeland-gained and lost, gained and lost - but the very yearning for which provided the strength to endure the passage of the centuries. Now the land is gained again, in our own

time, and we hope, for all time. How miraculous!

I believe in Judaism's gift to humanity. Alongside our uniqueness and separateness and particularity as a special people, we possess a quality of universalism in a measure which no other people or nation on earth, large or small, can claim. We are a people which truly believes in the equality of all persons; our sacred books stress that all human beings come from one God.

I believe the Diaspora is an integral part of the creative genius of the Jewish people, and our history offers plentiful proof of this thesis. The Diaspora has been a fruitful hinterland providing intellectual spark and charismatic personalities. The American Jewish future is cloudy, at the moment. But if it finds its way and maintains its Jewish identity in the midst of unprecedented freedom, there is the possibility that it will outstrip all previous Diaspora in terms of what it might achieve for Jewish creativity and continuity. So, here are the four seminal, simple beliefs that have directed my deeds and ruled my life, now in its eighth decade. The Chosenness of the Jewish people, its linkage to a Land, its Universal message for all mankind and the creativity of its ever-loyal Diaspora.

Turning to the Diaspora on this continent, we see American Jewry at the very height of its power, in all dimensions and aspects: unparalleled material affluence; unexcelled political influence; the highest level ever of education and professional skills in its population; a solid self-awareness and sense of responsibility in that portion of our people which cares; the strongest system of

communal organization we have ever enjoyed. Entrepreneurship and education have brought us to these heights.

Lest hubris bring us crashing down, we must quickly recognize and admit to several deadly weaknesses which are in striking contrast to the picture just painted: massive ignorance of our heritage, leading to wide-spread assimilation; and a lack of respect for our traditions and values, leading to increasing rates of intermarriage, which cause the eventual disappearance of multitudes of nominal Jews. These are plagues which kill, gaping holes in the hull below the water-line which can sink the ship.

We should be able to overcome these weaknesses but the key question is whether we have the will to do so. The damage done during the past half-century must be reversed, but this will never happen if we merely make speeches, hold conferences, appoint task forces and commission studies. All of that is simply bureaucratic busy-work. We do not need any more studies to tell us what we already know. We need strong remedial action on a scale no one has ever suggested. There are five basic action programs which we know will go a long way toward saving us. These programs will require billions and billions and billions of dollars.

1. A network of day schools must be built, going all the way to grade 12, with standards equal to the finest private schools in the country. Hundreds of such schools are required, beautiful to look at, with ample grounds for sports, laboratories, libraries, club rooms, and top-level teachers in both Hebraic and general studies. I do not mean to denigrate in any way the achievements by so

many sincere lay people and professionals who have labored for so many decades to build day schools, but all their work has produced a grand total of 66 Solomon Schechter schools, embracing 16,000 children in the entire U.S., with only a handful of these schools going beyond grade 8. The first Schechter high school in Manhattan was established at the Seminary just last year. Should we take comfort that at least this much has been created, or should we weep and be challenged to respond to the real need? A huge national effort must be organized and coordinated to construct hundreds of Jewish day schools of Andover and Exeter quality, sending forth annually tens of thousands of committed, eager, proud young men and women.

2. Day school tuition today represents a crippling cost for average middle class families and often the cost becomes the compelling fact in the decision not to enroll their children. More parents than you think do toy with the thought of day school because they know intuitively that this intense education will help solidify the Jewish shape, identity and character of their children. But they are daunted by the costs which run into the thousands per year, even at the pre-kindergarten level. Simply stated, tuition should be free, or at most, a small symbolic amount, and the heavy millions for maintaining the school system in every town should be borne by total community funding, backed up by a national fund which will ease the burden for smaller and weaker communities.

3. Young people must be sent to Israel for a whole year, once during their high school period and once again during their college careers to study and

experience Israel, learning the language and loving the land. Residency in Israel is not a magic bullet which will automatically make a practicing and knowledgeable Jew out of every student, but all authorities agree that Israel does exercise a most powerful impact on these impressionable young folk.

4. Every college campus in America with one hundred or more Jewish students resident thereon should have a Center for Jewish Life, a.k.a. Hillel House. The professional staff must include the very best of the fresh young rabbinical graduates, with older and seasoned rabbinical personnel added to those campuses whose Jewish population reaches into the thousands. There are more than 400,000 Jewish young men and women attending the colleges and universities of this country. They are just a few years away from marriage. The campus is the final place where we can battle for their hearts and minds. The campus is the field into which we should plow the most money, the best personnel, the most enticing and imaginative programs. Instead, we are investing here the least of all.

5. Summer camps are incubators which bear great fruit. Everyone knows this. Several good years spent at an excellent summer camp, during the ages 10-15, will plant seeds, of ideology, ritual practice, habit and some Hebrew language. The Camp Ramah system consisting of only 6 camps, accommodating at most 5,000 kids, was virtually sold-out last summer and this. Creating enough attractive summer camps for all the youngsters in every town must be an item on the agenda of the total community together with a national funding program. Cost to the family must be minimal.

Do you sense the drift? The national community of all Jews in the United States who care about the continuity of our people and its heritage must accept the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a multi-billion dollar overarching program, from day school through college, including camps and long stays in Israel. All this effort would be directed toward the goal of increasing the sense of respect, pride, even love, which our young people can be made to feel for their Jewish identity. The ultimate objective is to make it hard for them to toss away their heritage casually or thoughtlessly; instead, to make it easier for them to cherish their tradition. If they will have learned something about their Judaism, come to recognize its worth, and pledge themselves to its preservation for yet one more generation, then our future will be safer than it would now appear.

New national mechanisms will have to be designed. The Council of Jewish Federations is turning itself into a Parliamentary democracy, based on a Board of Delegates (2 from each community) which can rather quickly make decisions on a national basis which the majority of communities will accept. That is a giant step forward. New leaders can be mobilized. A national consensus shaped. A massive funding mechanism constructed.

The United Jewish Appeal is turning inward toward internal needs. The executive vice-president has issued a call for sending 100,000 American Jewish kids to Israel every summer. Another giant step. But we would need to build an infrastructure in Israel to absorb them.

Lastly, the congregations and rabbis of America, of all denominations, the most gigantically underutilized force in the Jewish arsenal, must step out of the four walls of their synagogues into the broader light of the total community. They are a resource, for initiating converts into the peoplehood of Israel; for building community schools; for providing heavy manpower for the huge communal tasks lying ahead; for lending their professional cadres to the public campaigns necessary to sell the idea to the entire Jewish population that the "learning deficit" from the past must be reduced by raising the "educational taxes" for the future.

The brittleness which once characterized congregational-federation relationships must be replaced by genuine cooperation and a sense that the goals of each partner are not separate and competitive. The destiny of each is linked with the fate of the other. I feel that a comprehension of this fact is beginning to stir.

Seminaries must teach the same truth to their students. A vigorous search must recruit candidates for the rabbinate who are already communally minded and their orientation during the years of rabbinical studies must include the option of careers in community service, as well as in the pulpit. The Chancellor's report at the recent Seminary Board meeting alluded to this concept. What a gain it would be in this struggle for continuity if executive directors possessed a strong background in Jewish learning in addition to social work or business administration.

Opinions of experts vary:

Arthur Hertzberg is pessimistic about our future in America.

Charles Silberman is optimistic.

Steven Cohen, the social scientist, entitled his recent book with a question:

"American Assimilation or Jewish Revival?" That means he's not sure.

Jacob Marcus, the 92 year-old dean of American Jewish historians, believes we are entering an American Golden Age.

I am not certain where we are going, but I do know that anything we set our mind to is possible, so I know where we could go if we wished.

This program for continuity demands an act of will of such dimensions as have not yet ever existed in the 3 1/2 centuries of our life in these United States. All this is doable because there is no limit to the talent and ability and financial resources within our constituency. We can become whatever we wish. We can become the strongest Diaspora which ever existed in all history, or we can be witness to our own extinction, within the next century.

Stephen Wise showed how the possession of a large vision itself created the characteristics which would guarantee its attainment.

"Vision," he said, "looks inward and becomes duty. Vision looks outward and becomes aspiration. Vision looks upward and becomes faith."

Prodded by a sense of duty, ennobled by a sense of aspiration, sustained by a sense of faith, our little lives can acquire a dimension of incredible strength. Each one of us can become a small nuclear engine, driving with enormous power toward the goal: a free people living in a safe prosperous Israel, and in a creatively Jewish proud Diaspora, sharing the fruits of a good society with all neighbors in a democratic peaceful world, working for the betterment of all humanity. We belong to a people bold enough to have conceived, at the ancient beginning of existence, an end-view of human history. How audacious of this small tribe to have articulated, so early on, the grandest vision for humanity's final destiny - the concept of a messianic age in which the human species would someday create a world based on its highest values. We should be fiercely proud of ourselves as sons and daughters of the people Israel.

So - this is your dream to have and to hold, to cherish and make real, to give to your children and grandchildren as the most precious gift in the world. Make it come true. Make it come true.

The Wexner Heritage Foundation

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(F) HAF

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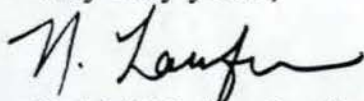
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(Rabbi) Nathan Laufer
President

~~Three~~
CHAPTER FORTY SEVEN

WHITHER AMERICAN JEWRY

At its 400th Anniversary in 2054

TO LIVE ON or TO DIE OUT ?

Aug. 21, '87
Corrected draft
(very few tiny errors remain)

F HAF

American Jewry today is in a state of self-diminishment. Large numbers of Jews are simply drifting away through a negative process of not living and thinking as Jews. They are living as single-identity persons (Americans only) instead of double-identity (American-Jewish). They don't know much about Judaism, nor practice its rituals and holidays, nor relate to Israel in any way - not even as tourists. They seem not to care, marry out and most don't even try to bring their mates and children in. This combination of ignorance, indifference and intermarriage leads to total assimilation and disappearance into the culture of the majority.

Everyone in the American Jewish establishment knows this is happening. The fund-raising system, UJA/CJF, knows it. The local federation system knows it. The synagogue system feels it. The national organizations suffer from it. Even far-off Israel knows it. The intellectuals

and writers have already produced their newest works on this fearsome subject. Alan Dershowitz's latest book is entitled "The Vanishing American Jew". Seymour M. Lipset and Earl Raab deal with the same subject under the title "Jews and the New American Scene". Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg recently wrote "The Jews in America - Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter". And Elihu Bergman, a Harvard demographer with a long view predicted in 1976 that the Jewish population of the United States in 2076 would consist of fewer than one million.

Bergman used 2076 as his benchmark, since that will be the 300th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. I prefer to use 2054 as my benchmark, since that will be the 400th anniversary of the landing of the first Jewish settlers on this continent. I accept his population estimate. It is shocking to realize that the Golden Age of American Judaism, which has produced the most powerful and successful Diaspora community in the entire 3700-year history of the Jewish people, may well be expiring at the time of its Fourth Century anniversary.

It is difficult for many casual readers of such a prediction to accept it, for they are witness to an affluent, educated, prominent group of Jews all around them and ask in bewilderment how anyone can predict such a future

for them. This confusion is understandable, for there does exist a paradox. The American Jewish polity today exhibits two faces, two facets, two definitions of itself. One face is strong, vigorous, thrusting forward to new creative heights in every field of human endeavor; while the other is weak, indecisive, stumbling toward a self-inflicted immolation. The second face is less obvious to the cursory observer.

The strong face has many features, herewith a few examples:

1. Departments of Jewish Studies are functioning in more than 200 American colleges and universities, registering tens of thousands of students, Jews and non-Jews alike. The largest of these departments, in terms of endowed chairs, books published annually, outside lecturers brought in, and students enrolled, exists in the very heartland of this country, the University of Indiana, of all places.

2. Nine Senators, 25 Congresspersons, two members of the Supreme Court, are Jewish.

3. A Reform Jewish day school in Los Angeles embraces more than 3000 students in grades K-12.

4. A Conservative synagogue in New York welcomes thousands of excited members in two overflow services every Sabbath

evening and morning in a great singing and dancing congregation, which meets in a nearby Methodist church because its own building is too small.

5. A fund-raising philanthropy, the UJA, was rated last year as the fourth largest public charity in the entire country, just behind the United Way and the Red Cross. This year it was ranked again in the top six.

6. National organizations have reached the number of 385, in varied fields of culture, education, community relations with other groups, overseas aid, Israel-related projects, religion and social welfare. In addition there are hundreds of Federations in cities across the entire country, which are linked to thousands of local agencies. It would appear that the small Jewish community, 1.8% of the total U.S. population, is thriving magnificently in its political, social, cultural, economic and religious affluence.

Yet the other face is equally impressive in its own negative tone:

1. The National Jewish Population Study of 1990 indicated that more than 50% of Jewish marriages in this country are exogamous, i.e., with non-Jewish partners.

2. Only 38% of the Jews in this country are members of synagogues at some point in their lives. Permanent life-long members form a much smaller percentage.

3. Only 25% contribute to Jewish charities.

4. The rate of ignorance of Judaism is incredibly high.

5. The number of children in Jewish day schools (not counting the Orthodox network) is incredibly low - a national total of 33,500.

6. The number of Jews who have ever visited Israel during the almost 50 years of its existence is between one-quarter and one-third of the total Jewish population.

7. The number of those who are considered "core" or "caring" Jews, participating in some or all aspects of the community's existence, is estimated at only 25%.

If the negative prediction of a constantly diminishing number of Jews, decade after decade during the coming half-century, does indeed prevail, there are very specific and serious practical results to be faced. One million Jews, scattered in small numbers throughout all the cities and towns where they are now to be found, will be physically unable to maintain the infrastructure necessary for communal existence. There will not be enough

people to support the institutions, the professional personnel, the annual budgets of the local and national agencies, to say nothing of the needs of Jews overseas. The total amount for all this runs into the billions of dollars every year. Almost all of this infrastructure - synagogues, federations, centers, schools, homes for elderly, and almost everything else one can think of - will gradually crumble as operations slowly cease because there is neither the money or the peoplepower to maintain them. Forget about JDC and ORT and all the Israeli universities and hospitals and museums and immigrant absorption centers. They will be the first to suffer. One million Jews out of a total American population which will easily reach 350 million by 2054-2076 will constitute such an insignificant factor as to accelerate even more rapidly the final process of disintegration. There will be no reason to hang on, and nothing on which to hang. The core group itself may well emigrate to more congenial Jewish surroundings such as Israel or the smaller Jewish communities in Canada, England, Australia or South Africa.

The Orthodox community believes that its observance of ritual, obedience to the ancient unchangeable code of law (halacha) and emphasis on a parochial school education of minimally 12 years for its youngsters will guarantee its survival, no matter what happens to the other 90% of the

American Jewish population. In a recent article in the Jewish Spectator entitled "American Jews: An Endangered Species?" this position was articulated very clearly in the opening question: "Is the Orthodox Jewish day school the magic bullet that will lead to Jewish survival?...Research indicates that a stronger commitment to a higher level of Jewish education and observance leads to a lower level of intermarriage (not more than 2%) and assimilation...Choosing ritual observance is likely to lead to Jewish education, which in turn is likely to lead to choosing a Jewish spouse, which is likely to lead to providing a stronger educational and ritual base for one's children, who then perpetuate the cycle."

This explanation may well be accurate for the Orthodox world, but does not describe the huge majority of non-Orthodox who have chosen alternative life-paths. There is validity, in the argument that the minimalist educational structure now prevailing for the great majority of Jewish children receiving any form of Jewish education is hopelessly inadequate and must be radically reshaped. There are faint signs that this point of view is beginning to be more widely accepted among the communal leadership.

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, who doubles as a brilliant scholar and a community leader, offers the following trenchant observation: "It is possible

in this new age of America to evaporate out of being Jewish without making a decision to be anything else. In fact, the drift of life in contemporary America is toward free association. The older generation of Jews still finds most of its friends among other Jews; the young do not. They remain 'proud to be Jews' but they are less and less likely to live their lives within the ethnic community."

Lipset-Raab acknowledge the problem but appear to be less apocalyptic. They admit the danger in these words: "Given the inexorably integrative forces of American society and the resultant parallel trends among Jews, it is reasonable to predict that the Jewish community as a whole will be severely reduced in numbers by the middle of the next century. The extent to which the remaining core will endure, or even possibly recoup, will depend on intrinsic factors....The religion-connected aspect of Jewish life provides the strongest deterrent to the swift or complete dissolution of American Jewry. It also is the most credible basis for the prediction that, while the Jewish community will be much reduced in size, it will not have disappeared and may even have reached some relatively stable plateau....'Fragile remnant' is a term Benjamin Disraeli applied to Jews in the 19th century. The remnant of American Jewry, both

the more devout and the fellow-travellers, will tend to be those who feel somehow connected to the religious core of their tribal identity....As a result, the remaining body of American Jewry may well be significantly less fragile than it is now. Yet, even that religious core cannot be durably nourished by isolationist remedies. The tribal dilemma in America is not to be solved for most Jews by requiring them to forego those exceptional qualities of American society that have so beneficently created that dilemma.”

Lipset-Raab seem to be fudging the question. They may be wrong in their hope that a connection with religion plus an attenuated tribal loyalty will be the ‘intrinsic’ factors keeping a diminished population Jewish, especially since they freely admit that Jews will not isolate themselves from a free, permissive and welcoming American society that will only become more so.

Dershowitz concluded there was only one weapon with which to fight the dissolution - a new kind of education. He dismissed several alternatives:

1. Religion is not the wave of the future for most young intellectuals.

Today’s American Jewish community is secular.

2. Israel is not Judaism's salvation. Most Jews want to remain where they are.

3. Jewish ethics cannot be transmitted to children without living a Jewish life (which most American Jews do not do).

4. Fund-raising and charity cannot ensure the Jewish future.

And then he revealed his singular solution - a Jewish educational system of a different kind.

"Jewish education today is controlled almost entirely by the religious component of Jewish life and has been one of the great failures of the American Jewish community....We will have to loosen the monopolistic hold that rabbis have over Jewish education so that we can compete effectively in the marketplace of ideas for the minds and hearts of our Jewish youth....We will have to educate our children differently, select our leaders differently, allocate our charitable giving differently - even define our very Jewishness differently. Jewish life will have to become less tribal, more open, more accepting of outsiders, and less defensive.

A new Jewish leadership must emerge to supplement the traditional rabbinic and political leadership of the Jewish people. Judaism has been led by Kings, priest, rabbis, politicians, and philanthropists (in various epochs).

Today a new leadership must be added to this pantheon of heroes. We need a leadership of Jewish educators who can address the pressing issue of Jewish illiteracy and ignorance. We need teachers who can inspire - who believe in Jewish education for its own sake - not for any other reason.

There should be Jewish schools which, like Quaker schools, are open to all who wish to learn about the Jewish way of life. These schools should be excellent educationally - why not the best? Some parents feel that they are compromising the secular education of their kids by sending them to Jewish schools. Some Jewish schools are very good, but none is at the very top of the academic ratings.

First and foremost we must educate ourselves in the most eclectic and welcoming manner. Every city and town with a Jewish population must plant many trees of Jewish knowledge extending into every Jewish home, school, synagogue, community center, and Havurah. There must be classes, discussion groups, study groups, lectures, videotapes, computer programs, books, book clubs, newsletters, and other mechanisms of Jewish learning...

The Judaism I am trying to defend and enhance is a Judaism of ideas, attitudes, skepticism, justice, compassion, argumentation and inclusiveness. That kind of Judaism can survive, indeed thrive, in an open and welcoming

world into which Jewish ideas can cast a beacon of light. That kind of Judaism does not depend on who is a Jew or whether one's father or mother is a Jew, or whether one is a "whole" Jew or a "half" Jew. That kind of Judaism is the power of Jewish ideas to educate, influence and repair the world. Every Jew who cares about our future must join in building the foundation for this new Judaism."

When all is said and done, it is not the books nor the authors who will decide the destiny of this Jewish community. Rather it is the great leaders and their powerful organizations who are accustomed to dealing with crises and shaping solutions, who contrive the action plans and carry them out, who lead the mass of Jews to understand a particular emergency in history and urge them to react in a certain manner. All the above is designated as leadership. One has a right to expect action. Instead there is a stunning silence. There is today a massive failure of leadership.

Oh yes - there is a plethora of meetings, an outpouring of resolutions, discussions ad nauseam of the "continuity" problem, and outcry of moanings, a restless formation of committees in every city in the country, all regurgitating the same data and repeating the pious statements that "education" is the solution. The very wording of resolutions passed by

every local task force on continuity sounds weirdly similar. And the culminating report of the National Continuity Commission of the Council of Jewish Federations, the result of a two-year effort, turned out to be an empty bladder of wind, over-wordy, and non-specific. Was this the mighty sword to mobilize the country? Both chair-persons, Marvin Lender and Shoshana Cardin, among our very best national leaders who have served diligently and successfully for many years on many projects, confessed to me their frustration in being unable to emerge with a strong re-vitalizing action program. What should have been a huge shofar-blast summoning the nation to support a plan of action, spelled out in detail, was a dull, pallid, bureaucratic failure.

As a bitter aside, let it be noted that during this very tense period, when great and urgent policy should have been formulated on a live-or-die question, the leaders of the two most important organizations whose duty it was to shape the future, spent their time tinkering over the administrative matters of "merger," or "partnership," one board or two, one executive director or two, in a nauseating display of irrelevancy.

Hebrew
Quote

fill in

Never has the Biblical sentence of Proverbs 29:18 been more relevant.

אם אין ראייה! /'סוף /'לעצ

“Where there is no vision, the people break loose or perish”

The present generation of leaders has failed so far to provide vision, and the people have broken loose. The end of the process must inevitably be to perish. A vision must be brought to reality by a plan of action. The UJA provided a vision (rescue the Jews fleeing from the Former Soviet Union), and named it Operation Exodus (which immediately resonated with the entire Jewish community), calibrated it to raise \$1 billion over a 5-year period 1990-95 (and succeeded brilliantly). That one sentence hardly describes the quantity of brainpower, the number of personnel, the involvement of all sorts of experts in the fields of communication, the logistics of speakers going all over the country, the mobilization of some of the richest Jews in the country. All of that is simply the execution of the vision and its plan. Without that there is nothing. And that vision plus action plan is missing today.

In March 1995, as Operation Exodus drew to a close, I proposed a vision and action plan to the UJA executive committee for the next historic

challenge facing the American Jewish community, namely rescue of our own youth. We helped rescue Russian Jewish youth - why not our own? That was the vision. Specifically, I suggested the UJA should raise 1/2 to 1 billion additional funds during the next five years to support the Israel Experience for all 15-25 year olds at community expense. All the evidence showed the value of the Israel Experience, when properly designed, toward the identity formation of young people. Thousands had returned filled with pride and a sense of commitment to the Judaism and to Israel. The program worked. I urged a huge national campaign which would shake up the entire UJA/Federation system into a missionary-like mood, devoted to the Judaizing of our own American kids. The UJA ignored it, without substituting any alternative vision to wake up a languid constituency, and without ever explaining to me the reasons for its rejection.

Everyone agrees that the best weapon we have with which to deflect the coming demise is education. But that is such a general term as to lapse into meaninglessness unless we define it into component educational strategies and goals.

If the national organizations, UJA and CJP, understood the deadly danger and mobilized all the strength they possessed in both money and

manpower, it might be possible to alter the course of this war of attrition and erosion which faces us. The American Jewish public, including its youth has always been galvanized by crisis and emergency. The verb galvanize is defined as "to rouse forcefully, especially by shock or excitement." If the top leadership, national and local, were to accept the premise that a possibly terminal illness is threatening our very existence, and if they called for a two-generation-long emergency program, in such terms as would shock the followership into a full realization of the danger, I'm convinced that the future could be altered.

In addition, the Federation system must join with the American synagogue system to engage in a thorough-going renovation, to fill the pews and classrooms with a new generation seeking Judaism. Such a total approach toward new programs, backed by all the necessary funds and the creative genius of the best lay, rabbinical and professional minds could well provide the knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment of a larger number of new members to work for the continued existence of this most powerful Jewish community outside of Israel.

Hundreds of schools must be built; thousands of talented teachers must be found, for children and adults alike. Tuition must be absolutely

} The
Program

token (even free). Every college campus on which more than one hundred Jewish students reside must have a fully-staffed Center for Jewish Life (a.k.a. Hillel) to provide constant stimulation. Every early teen-ager should be exposed to a Jewish summer camp for several summers of his/her life, again at a token cost. And every American Jewish youth should be saturated with an Experience in Israel, whether junior year in high school or college, at total communal expense. *Phin adult Et.*

The dimensions of such a program are so huge, so unprecedented, so demanding, so expensive, that it would be impossible for any person to remain unaffected by its scope. This is big enough to awaken everyone from the sleepy pace of today's communal activity. Fifteen billionaires could trigger off the fund raising and set the appropriate level; 150 federated communities, currently sitting on more than \$⁴~~3~~ billion of endowment or foundation funds which they have accumulated largely in the past twenty five years, could open those up to use as collateral to borrow ten times as much. I can visualize how the funds would be quickly gathered, to establish momentum for this vast educational enterprise. The reservoir of academics in all the hundreds of Departments of Jewish Studies in this country's

colleges and universities is large enough that teaching personnel could be immediately available for whatever was needed.

But let one point be very clear. The weakening or diminution or even withering away of the American Diaspora would not have a fatal effect on the continued existence of the Jewish people as a whole. A long look at Jewish history, studying the rise and fall of previous strong Diaspora entities in Babylonia, Egypt, Spain, Iran, Poland, to name a few, teaches us that, even as old locations erode, new seeds have earlier been planted in other lands and continents. These seeds grow and flourish to produce a new Jewish environment in time to absorb the wandering fugitives from their prior home-countries.

Should the spectacular American Diaspora come to a self-inflicted tragic end in the coming century, those remaining Jews, Orthodox and all others whose self-identity is strong enough to require a majorly Jewish environment, will fortuitously find a more populous Israel, strong and capable of welcoming them to a new home whose seeds had been planted two centuries earlier. Such is the magic of this hitherto unbreakable chain. The song "Am Yisrael Chai" (The People of Israel Lives) embodies the

conviction that the people, as a whole, is immortal, even if some of its limbs and branches wither and disappear, the people, as a whole, is immortal.

If its life in the U.S. can be invigorated and strengthened, there is no limit to the creative potential of a Jewishly-inspired total community, both for its own existence and for the larger world, including the possibility of aiding America itself to regain the moral values it so desperately seeks. The mission of the people of Israel to offer a vision of ethics and morality can only be fulfilled if that people continues to exist. Thus, the ability to overcome a mindless assimilation becomes the major task of the next two generations of American Jews. In an optimistic vein we can hope and pray that the leadership will understand, will respond to the challenge, will make the plans and mobilize the funds to spark the renewal and give birth to the renaissance.

The national organizations plus the thousands of synagogues must produce the electricity to galvanize the entire system. This can be done by crafting a ^① national set of long-term strategic goals, publicizing them, ^② blanketing the country with advertisements, videos, speakers, open forums, and ^③ using such slogans as to make perfectly clear that all of the components of the total battle plan are linked and interwoven to achieve one common

objective. We must educate every Jewish person we can reach with the desire to preserve Judaism and not drift away from it. And we must articulate the reasons in a persuasive manner. There are nine elements, or nine individual goals which form one complete mosaic designed to save our people and its faith-mission. Here is what is needed:

1. A widely expanded communal trans-denominational day school system covering K-8, - scores and scores to be added within the next decade. The schools must be good enough, modeled after the best private schools in every community, to be attractive to the most secular parents, or even to modern orthodox families. Annual tuition for the family must be \$100 per student. The total cost is a communal responsibility.

2. A high school system, covering grades 9-12, with strong Judaic curriculum and a secular curriculum of such quality as to secure admission to the finest universities in the country; plus exciting extra-curricular activities and a wide array of athletic facilities. Again, annual tuition must be \$100 per student. Total cost is communal. This

full network of one or more such high schools in every city must be up and running within the next 15 years.

3. Every college campus on which more than one hundred Jewish students reside must have a fully-staffed Center for Jewish Life (a.k.a. Hillel) to provide constant education and stimulation. Most campuses will require much more staff than they currently maintain, and most also require either new or renovated buildings. The timetable for that is immediate, for the flow of students arriving and leaving is in full force (approximately 400,00 Jewish students on 100-150 campuses at the present time).

4. An Israel Experience for American Jewish youth, providing a variety of different programs suitable for ages 15-25. The younger people would spend 4-8 weeks at a summer camp in Israel. Tenth graders could spend a whole year in an accredited high school in Israel, and receive credit at their home-town high school. College students could spend junior year at an Israeli university,

and also receive credit at their American college. Graduate students could spend two years in Israel working toward a master's degree. Many other designs can be drawn for in-between ages. All the research and evidence attest to the magic which Israel performs in identity-formation and the creating of a sense of pride in being Jewish. Here again, the cost, whatever the length of the program, is at communal expense, merely token \$100 to \$500 per family, so that everyone can participate. The communal expense is an investment in the young person, who adds to the civil defense of the whole body politic. An Israel Experience is not a trip, rather a method for getting under the skin of an impressionable youth in a more permanent manner.

5. A summer camp in the U.S. for every Jewish early teen-ager, from 10-15 years old. There are not very many excellent camps in the U.S. - excellent in the sense of having developed a skillful blend of Judaic influences with pleasurable recreational experiences. The Jewish

elements in the daily schedule must also be made enjoyable. The Reform movement runs nine camps and the Conservative movement six. Each of them should have 25-50. And the tuition should be \$100 for the summer.

6. For adults, a wide-spread duplication of the Wexner-type seminar program, which is the most serious adult education program in the country. Each seminar group meets for two years; 19 times during each year (bi-weekly from September to June); each session is four hours long; reading material in advance of each session varies from 50-75 pages; three summer institutes, held either in Israel or the Western Rockies, each seven days long. Membership is very selective. The Wexner staff culls from hundreds of nominations in a given city and chooses between 20-40 individuals in the 35-45 age range. So far, in the 12 years of its existence, 45 groups of approximately 20 persons each have been chosen in 30 cities. The students pay nothing. Mr. Leslie Wexner

pays all expenses. Every city in America, with either a small or medium-size Jewish population, should duplicate one or more such programs for those persons who are estimated to reach top leadership in the Federation, or in any major communal agency, or synagogue or center. Every community must assume the funding, or find its own local Leslie Wexner.

7. Family educators, who can help create in the home, a Jewish environment of holiday observance, song, stories, and all the historic knowledge behind the Sabbath and holidays. These skilled professionals are best employed by the synagogue system, and assigned to service new member families. One good project is to assemble a group of such families, 25-35 individuals, including children, and organize for them a family mission to Israel. Communal funds must be used to add such professionals to the synagogue staff.

8. A redesigning of synagogue programming to offer educational series in a manner which will attract more

than the small number now being reached. This is a large subject, which cannot be spelled out in a few sentences. But it does not involve brain surgery or rocket science. Well-intentioned rabbis and synagogue officers could come up with many suggestions, the very best of which are usually discarded because they cost too much. Again, it is a total communal responsibility, and if additional funds are required to supplement what the synagogue can provide out of its budget, so be it.

9. To welcome the intermarried in every conceivable fashion. I don't call a marriage between a Jewish person and a non-Jew who converts to Judaism an intermarriage. The convert is as the home born. All Jewish law and history attests to that fact. (The arguments of today relate to the credentials of the clergy performing the conversion. It's a sort of turf war - because even when non-orthodox clergy observe all 3 requirements of orthodox law - they still are considered suspect.) The sincerity and long

period of study often make the convert a more knowledgeable Jew than the one born a Jew.

When I speak of intermarriage, I am talking about a Jewish person and a non-Jewish person. Notice I am not saying "Christian." Many millions of people in America are not practicing Christians any longer. They are secular Americans. If a person says - I am a Methodist, that person is defining him/herself as a Christian. He/she attends a Methodist church, sings Methodist hymns, and accepts Methodist Theology. But a large segment of American citizens do not define themselves religiously.

Thus, many of these "intermarriages" involve American Jews who are marrying simply another American. And unfortunately the Jewish partner usually doesn't take any steps to bring in this neutral person, who is not a practicing Christian and therefore could be a candidate for entrance into the Jewish people. The Jewish partner who doesn't care enough to try to bring the other person in, allows the intermarriage to take the

couple out and, of course, their ultimate children as well. This becomes an all-American family, non-Jewish and non-Christian in their life-style. This is one of the factors leading to the loss in the general Jewish population. Every effort must be made to rescue the members of that family, in an honest, patient, wooing and welcoming. Make the non-Jew feel comfortable, wanted, at home in the synagogue, the center, the Federation, the social group, the vacation club, the bridge club, the mutual-fund club, the PTA, every possible structure where there is a niche into which to fit a new neighbor. If such a policy requires subsidies or funds for any particular reason, that is a communal responsibility and must be accepted as such.

Over and over, in the list of goals above, I have indicated that communal funds are indispensable. Most middle class parents simply cannot pay the current charges for day schools and high schools, no matter how much they might desire such an education for their children. There is no possible way of estimating total costs for all the above items. The only

figure that reasonable people could contemplate would run into the billions of dollars. There is nothing frightening about such a number. Our whole thesis is that life or death is at stake. we have used the word emergency to describe our present predicament. When such terms come into play, what meaning does money have? When an emergency occurs that could produce catastrophic results, society spends whatever it must, either to avert the catastrophe or repair the damage. Does anyone speak of money at the critical moment when action is mandatory? Providing education of the highest quality to all our youth is like transfusing blood to speed oxygen to the heart. It's just as simple as that. All education must be provided from communal funds, with any contribution from the family being calculated as purely nominal.

Where do we obtain all the communal money necessary - all the billions annually? The UJA and all the Federations together have to raise the banner of rescuing American Jewry so widely, urgently, compellingly, skillfully, constantly as to spread an umbrella over the entire organized Jewish community of such scale and magnitude and saturation as has never been seen before. The goal of the annual campaign must be pushed up into the billions. 75% of the Jews (that means millions of people, at this

moment) are not contributing one thin dime. They must be reached. 70% of the wealth of this nation is in the hands of widows. They must be reached. Communal property must be mortgaged. The billionaires must come forward, but in quantities they never dreamed of in earlier times. Great non-Jewish foundations must be approached for heavy money, and I predict a favorable reaction, for the intelligent leadership of those foundations will understand what a vacuum the possible loss and disappearance of this relative handful of talented people will mean to America. And beside all this is the nest egg which has been accumulating for the past quarter century or more in the endowment funds, or whatever they are called, of the country's Federations. That amount is already past the ⁴\$3 billion mark and constantly growing. Private individuals have deposited that money, taken their tax deductions, and now it is public money. The individuals have retained the right only to "recommend" to the governing body how their funds should be used. Why should those individuals not be solicited to "recommend" that some of their billions should be used for school tuitions or Israel Experience or anything else on the list? What governing body would refuse such a recommendation? None. Bottom line: I'm not really worried about where the money would

come from. My opinion is that the amount of money needed to do a proper job is available, and must simply be excavated. Worst case scenario would require using the endowment funds as collateral for borrowing. This would quickly put several additional billion at the disposal of the ~~of the~~ national master plan.

One other small money matter, namely the question of how it is to be allocated, once raised. Most of the usual allocations made by the UJA and the local Federations will have to be substantially altered. Israel must be informed openly and officially by the UJA that American Jewry is embarked on a long-range effort to save itself from self-destruction. After that, detailed discussions will take place with Israeli officials, as to their essential needs and how much can be supplied to them. I am certain the Israelis would understand and be cooperative. My opinion is based on a conversation I had with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in New York in November 1995. His closest aide Eitan Haber was present at that meeting. I asked Rabin how he would feel if the UJA took \$50 million off the top of the usual allocation to Israel and used it to finance an Israel Experience for 10,000 American Jewish kids. He asked how anyone could be certain that the money would actually be used for that purpose, and when I assured him

that the UJA would monitor the operation carefully, he agreed wholeheartedly because he understood the underlying motive. Sadly the project never took place. The same process must occur with all the local and national agencies normally accustomed to an allocation for their communal budgetary needs. They would have severe negotiations with the Federation as to how much they would be cut and how they would handle it.

The only other crucial question, after the money, is the element of will power. I speak to you now, the generation of leadership today, men and women in their 60's and 70's, who still remember their reactions to the Holocaust and the early years of Statehood, together with the younger generation in its 40's and 50's who have been acquiring some Jewish knowledge and sense what is at stake - do all of you, amounting to some tens of thousands in the entire country - do you feel the weight of history and are you ready to give the effort all your conviction, dedication and commitment? Is your will power fully energized? Act fast, even at the risk of making mistakes. Not to take action is the only unacceptable behavior.

There are cross-road moments in human history. We, the Jewish people, are standing at one now in our eternal mission to continue as witnesses to the covenant made at Sinai. Israel will grow during the

decades ahead in strength, security, prosperity, and international stature. Hopefully, she will also grow in idealism, social justice and equality for all her citizens. It would be tragic if the Diaspora withered as the mother-center prospered. Objectively, there is no need for this to happen. If the thin layer of leadership today, older and younger, understands the danger we face, fashions the preventive steps to take in the immediate future, works very determinedly to fight for change and against apathy and cynicism, then the rich, educated American Jewry which now exists in relative power, need not succumb. It's your call. If you go to work quickly, blessed with vigor and imagination, you may succeed brilliantly.

You and you alone will determine what happens to American Jewry and Judaism. You will continue to keep it alive one more generation by passing the torch to your children to continue it. Or you will cut it off right now by not preparing your children and the next generation will grow up ignorant and therefore easy prey. Eternal existence is decided anew every 40 years. When you talk about a people that's 3500 years old, just remember there is no such thing. There is a people which every 40 years must renew its claim to eternity. If you protect your heritage, it will protect you. The value of Judaism to you is that it gives you an identity and

provides a meaning to your life by linking you to an ideal greater than yourself. The value of Judaism to the whole 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 value to the whole world. What more can one man or one people desire?[?] You folks are especially selected and therefore you are obligated, you are elevated, you are commanded to struggle, perhaps to suffer. Above all to witness to the meaning of Judaism.

89 Through you this people will live forever.



HISTORY DEMANDS A CHANGE NOW

Re-designing American Jewish Communal Conduct
in Order Effectively to Address the Emergency of the Century Ahead

A proposal by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

I. EMERGENCY

In 1938, three major philanthropic organizations, after operating separately and competitively for years on problems of Jewish danger overseas, managed to overcome their hostilities, and in six weeks merged their fund-raising efforts. They swiftly created the United Jewish Appeal, which has confronted history for more than a half-century. The miracle of union instead of divisiveness occurred under the impact of a single onslaught known as Kristallnacht, the night of November 9-10, 1938. By January 1, 1939 the UJA campaign was launched. The situation was deemed to be an emergency - and the response was equally swift and powerful. The leaders of that era re-engineered all former processes in order to meet the new future.

Today, we face another emergency - not of Holocaust, not of war, but of a danger which, if allowed to rage unchecked and inadequately confronted, could end in similar results - the dwindling and weakening and gradual disappearance within the next two generations of another major Jewish community, our own, in North America. This emergency will not appear to be hitting us with the power of a massive murder-program, but the long-range effect could be the same, for we are in a period of mass suicide.

We must once again re-engineer the philanthropic and social structure of our community if we are to meet the present emergency of a steadily faltering and shrinking population in this wonderfully democratic and permissive America. Admittedly, a two-generation-long emergency does not secrete the same adrenaline as a 6-day war or an 18-day Yom Kippur war. Still, the

term "emergency" is valid. Most fortuitously, we are possessed of two very powerful instruments with which to fight, namely, the UJA and CJF, each with loyal followers, great resources, and the vision to appraise this historic time properly. It is to be hoped that they will not resist the re-engineering, rather that they will take the lead in it.

Re-engineering is a term which first appeared this year in the title of a book now on the best-seller list for the past 25 weeks, "Re-engineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution". The authors define the word (p.31):

"When someone asks us for a quick definition of business re-engineering, we say that it means 'starting over'. It doesn't mean tinkering with what already exists or making incremental changes that leave basic structures intact...It does mean abandoning long-established procedures and looking afresh at the work required to create a company's product or service and deliver value to the customer...Re-engineering a company means tossing aside old systems and starting over. It involves inventing a better way of doing work."

More formally (p. 32):

"Re-engineering is the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements."

Again (p. 49):

"We can do no better than to return to our original two-word definition for re-engineering: 'starting over'. Re-engineering is about beginning again with a clean sheet of paper. It is about rejecting the conventional wisdom and received assumptions of the past...It is about inventing new approaches that bear little or

no resemblance to those of previous eras...Re-engineering is the search for new models of organizing work. Tradition counts for nothing. Re-engineering is a new beginning."

The shock waves emanating from the explosive CJF Population Study of 1990 have by now spread across this nation, Israel and probably the rest of the English-speaking world. There is hardly a Federation without a "continuity" committee; a national organization without a task force; a rabbi who has not preached once or more on various aspects of the subject; a Jewish newspaper or magazine which has not had one or several articles analyzing causes and predicting results.

The basic statistic of a 52% average intermarriage rate erupted with the force of a tsunami wave. And if that figure is the average, with New York at a probable 15% rate, there must be communities (in the western and southern sections of the U.S.) enjoying a 70-80% rate. Fear for the future has been consuming the attention of the national and local leaderships.

There are differences of opinion. Many say that the American Jewish community has only two generations (60 to 70 years) to redeem itself from an irreversible disappearance. A popular question has become "will your grandchild be Jewish?" Some say that the future is already foreordained, that it is too late to create the conditions necessary for continued survival. Others take the opposite position and cite many factors which illuminate the fundamental strength of the community.

My own position is that the "optimism" of this last position is fatuous, grounded more in wishful thinking than in persuasive data. Yes - we have hundreds of wonderful departments and programs of Jewish studies on American campuses where there simultaneously reside

hundreds of thousands of Jewish students, third-and-fourth-generation born in this country, most of whom do not take those wonderful courses. Many students are bereft of a strong sense of identity, are ignorant of Judaism's history and message, indifferent to Israel, and unconcerned with the dangers inherent in intermarriage.

On the other hand, I do not agree with the "pessimists" who shrug off the appeals to help in the fight against assimilation with the tired argument that it can't succeed, it's too late, the juggernaut possesses too much strength and momentum.

I choose to believe that there are remedies which can defeat or slow down the plague, and I urge that we quickly test their feasibility. Following below is my proposal for the re-design which history now demands, which must be put in place within the very few coming years, and which we do have the human power and institutional power to effectuate if we simply will it. The emergency exists - does our will?

Incidentally, for whatever it means, the leaders of Israel and the media, are lately taking a similar tack and in an unprecedented manner are speaking about the necessity of strengthening the sense of Jewish identity in the Diaspora. They sense that a weakened Jewish presence, particularly in the United States, will result in a weakening of support for Israel, and they are, therefore, urging remedial measures.

Shimon Peres, in his closing speech to the Jewish Agency Assembly some months ago (June) did not ask for increased campaigns or personal aliyah, as might have been expected, but concentrated on the continuity question. He said to the Diaspora delegates: "Your problem, let me be frank, is to keep your children Jewish. If we want something from you, number one, is to keep your children Jewish. You know we are divided in the question of who is a Jew.

Some say a Jew is a person whose parents or at least whose mother is Jewish. But others say a Jew is a person whose children and grandchildren are Jewish. We cannot change our parents, but we have to provide our children with a Jewish message and a Jewish identity." Yitshak Rabin spoke similarly in his famous speech on the White House lawn on September 13.

Just this month, Peres asked Uri Gordon of the Jewish Agency to head a new committee to prepare for a changing relationship between Israel and the Diaspora. Peres said, in his letter to Gordon, that a "significant transformation" of Diaspora Jewry is taking place and at the same time "Israeli society is distancing itself from the Diaspora." Is a new committee just tinkering, or is serious re-engineering being contemplated? Gordon says this is not business as usual. "I am talking of a new conception, a completely fresh look at the problem...without connection to the WZO or the Jewish Agency." Bravo - if he really means it.

Hirsh Goodman, editor of the "Jerusalem Report" wrote in September: "I suggested that perhaps the time has come to raise the (UJA) money directly for Jewish causes in the Diaspora...It has been proven that Jewish education is the best bulwark against (assimilation and intermarriage), but that the cost of Jewish education puts it beyond the reach of many American Jewish families.

Instead of sending the money to Israel where its impact is marginal, keep it in the Diaspora; instead of investing huge sums in the Jewish Agency's bureaucracy, put it into Jewish education and identity in countries where Jews are facing what can be considered cultural and religious genocide...

Surely the time has come to recognize that the tables should be turned; for us to recognize that the real threat to Jews is not in Israel, but in the Diaspora. The time has come to stop putting our money into bureaucracies (here) and start investing it in survival (there)."

II. REMEDIES, with Suggestions for Financing

A. DAY SCHOOLS IN UNITED STATES

1. Elementary - hundreds more communal schools are needed, for the largely non-orthodox population. The orthodox yeshiva network (Torah U'mesorah) indicates they have 560 schools. The conservative network (Solomon Schechter) claims 66 schools, with 16,000 students. The reform network has about 20 schools and is growing.
2. High Schools - at least 100 more are needed, of superior quality. Models must be Andover, Exeter. The secular curriculum must enable students to seek admission to the finest universities, and the Judaic curriculum must be equally high.
3. Financing
 - a) Go to the market. I tested the idea (with a key individual in a major Wall Street firm) of a \$3 billion bond issue, to be floated by a non-profit corporation whose board would include the most stellar names in the North American Jewish establishment. The funds raised would be used to buy land and build schools throughout the continent, in cooperation with local federations. These physical assets would constitute a type of collateral for the bonds. The individual thought it might be possible. The interest payable on the bonds might even be tax-exempt to the purchasers, since the product was a school. But the main factor influencing the flotation would be the income flow needed to pay the bond interest.

- b) Create a \$3 billion endowment fund, through the Wexner-Bronfman mega-group (30 persons at \$100 million each, payable over 10 years, sooner if possible). This endowment fund, properly invested, could earn enough to pay the bond interest; while the capital would be used (after 20-25 years) to redeem the bonds. In effect, this is a defeasance operation - \$3 billion bond issue - matched by a \$3 billion endowment fund.
- c) The non-profit corporation would obviously need to obtain 501-c-3 (or any similar) tax-exempt status from the IRS in order to enable the endowment fund to be amassed.
- d) Tuition income is an additional factor, but this would have to be kept at an absolute minimum for the average middle-class family. (e.g. \$1000 annually per child, instead of the present average of \$5-8000, which prevents many parents from even considering day school as an option). Local federations would tap their own endowment funds to provide maintenance support for the schools built in their cities.

B. PROGRAMS IN ISRAEL FOR HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS, AGES 15-25

1. Summer camps and other types of programs - 8 weeks.

Notes for all above: School buildings would have to be built; dormitories; other facilities; faculty recruited, and trained. A high school campus, Kfar Silver, near Ashkelon, might be available for purchase from ZOA. Also, other facilities could probably be found for

purchase.

2. Tenth and eleventh grade - one semester.
3. Year-in-Israel (any year) for college and graduate students - one or two years.
4. Financing -

- a) Use the amount normally sent by UJA to Jewish Agency - ca. \$300-350 million annually. Obtain approval from Prime Minister; phase Agency out over 3 year period. Take \$100 m. the first year, then \$200 m., then \$300 m. This amount would enable sending 20,000 young people in the very first year, plus 5 thousand kids to summer camps. Money would be left over to purchase and construct buildings.

Approximate Costs

\$5000 per student for year x 10,000 =	50 mill.
\$3500 per student for semester x 10,000 =	35 mill.
\$2500 per student for summer camp x 5,000 =	<u>12.5 mill.</u>
25,000 kids	Total 97.5 mill.

- b) Israel Bonds could be used for physical infrastructure, if Government approved. Thus, Government of Israel would be making a contribution to strengthening Diaspora. How is that for a switch? Or re-design.

C. HILLEL

1. Build a National Organization - based on local or regional responsibility for all Jewish college students in a given neighborhood.

2. Financing - UJA Young Leadership Cabinet members and alumni, and Wexner Heritage members and alumni to be given autonomy to raise capital and maintenance funds.

D. SUMMER CAMPS IN UNITED STATES

1. Create a National Organization - mobilizing all denominational religious bodies (congregational) into autonomous board. Camp programs to be pluralistic. Program goal - 200 camps for 50,000 kids.
2. Financing - UJA rabbinic cabinet, as core, plus local rabbis and congregational lay leaders to raise one large endowment fund, to subsidize tuition, plus any construction funds. National camp endowment fund makes grants to local camps, in order to keep tuition minimal.

E. FAMILY VILLAGES IN ISRAEL

1. See attached speech, which defines the purposes of such a village. One village to be built, with two more following, if successful.
2. Financing -
 - a) Experienced Builders (Albert Ratner) to be consulted for advice.
 - b) Self-financing for maintenance, through rental fees.
 - c) Israel Bonds participation for capital investment (ownership of physical properties could be in hands of an Israel Government company; management of village in hands of a United States company)

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

I. STRUCTURE

- a) I suggest that the non-profit corporation be called The Corporation for the Future. Its Board should be sub-divided into Committees with functional responsibility, as in Appendix A. The Corporation must obtain IRS approval.
- b) The Corporation floats the bond issue.
- c) The Corporation creates The Fund for the Future, to support the Bond issue.

II. DETAILS

Perhaps I have gone into too much detail, particularly regarding the financing suggestions, board committees and other matters. But I don't really think so, because I did not want this paper to be just another "inspirational" piece, filled with generalizations. I wanted to force the issue. Nothing has happened for a whole year, since The General Assembly of the CJF in November 1992, except for the appointment of a National Commission (I don't consider that as action, but just more stalling around.) No one has made concrete suggestions. So I decided I would, which will at least start debate. If my ideas are no good, they will be shot down, but then there is an obligation on the part of someone else to come up with something better or different. Let's get down to brass tacks.

I always think of a phrase attributed to the architect Mies van der Rohe - "God is in the details." That's why I love details.

III. Meeting with Rabin

He is speaking at the General Assembly in Montreal on the evening of November 18. I am asking Itamar Rabinovich to try to arrange an appointment with him, before or after that date. I want to sound him out - because in the long run, we will want and need the endorsement of both Rabin and Peres to this suggested program (or any amended version

thereof). So we might as well catch him now, and start him thinking about it. There are several elements in which he must take decisions:

- a) Government must pick up the slack caused by our financial withdrawal from Jewish Agency.
- b) Role of Bond organization will be determined by Finance Minister Shohat, who will be guided by Rabin.
- c) Peres already has strong opinions about Diaspora taking care of its own needs, but will want Rabin's backing - and then Peres can be a big help to us.

IV. School Advisers

- a) I would like to mobilize the expert advice of Ted Sizer (former Headmaster of Andover for 10 years) and Steve Kurtz (former Headmaster of Exeter for 15 years), both of whom I know. They can help us enormously on shaping the secular curriculum, sports, extra-curricular, and general rules of organization and management.
- b) I would also like to get the participation of Avraham Shapiro (former Headmaster of the Reali School in Haifa - the best private school in Israel, older than the State) to help shape the Judaic curriculum.

V. Various Routes

- a) Central authority (i.e. the Board of the Corporation for the Future) does everything, through its Committees.
- b) Central authority gives local Federations the freedom to do everything.
- c) Central authority requests local federations to provide the demographics (i.e. how many children for local camps; how many youth for Israel experiences; how many schools needed, etc. etc.) and then central authority plus local Federations

jointly decide everything.

- d) Number c) is obviously best, if we can avoid local ego and turf problems which always cause delays and compromises.

VI. Schedule

1. Write memorandum, including all specific suggestions.
2. Get green light from LHW.
3. Convene mega-group - to get their backing.
4. See as many members as possible, individually, before the group meets.
5. Small meetings with others:
UJA - Brian and Marvin and Joel Tauber
CJF - Marty and Goodman and Wishner and Cardin
In Israel - Rabin, Peres, Shohat, Mendel Kaplan, Dinitz
6. Then spread throughout the system, with CJF acting as Parliament - HAF to speak at 1994 quarterly and next GA.

1 November 1993

Attachments:

1. Speech given at JTS dinner, 16 June 1993
2. Speech given at Wexner Alumni Retreat 27 April 1991

Mega-program to be built by mega-dollars

7/21/97

(1)

by Herb Friedman
Notes for discussion with Wayne Feinstein

3

1. Negative prognosis re: future of American Jewry
Fewer than one million self-identifying Jews by third quarter 21st c.
Of these, approx. ^{1/2} will be orthodox, living inside their enclaves,
and 1/2 try to hold on to a crumbling infrastructure. Such a fate
must be averted, if at all possible.
2. ~~Strong~~^{strongest} efforts must be made to ^{create and} shape Jewish identity ^{in next two generations} through spreading
knowledge of our heritage, pride in its contribution to civilization, and
linkage with Israel.
3. List of major areas ^(see Mem Projects) in which to work: ~~see Mem~~
 - a. Elementary schools - hundreds
 - b. Summer camps - scores
 - c. Secondary schools - scores
 - d. College age - Hillel - hundreds
 - e. Israel Experience - all ages - hundreds of thousands
 - f. Higher ed. in Israel - thousands
 - g. Teacher's training college - three
 - h. adult ed. - a la Wexner - hundreds
 - i. Synagogue innovative programs - thousands
 - j. Russian immigrants - half-million
4. All programs must be continental in scope, ^{totally} communally funded, no
tuition to be charged for anything,
thousands of lay leaders involved in management via small groups,
with executive staff to be recruited from wide professional base.
Many billions will be required. No fund-raising necessary.
5. Funding to be secured from total communal assets in endowment
and similar funds. Annual campaigns not to be touched ^{to support work in} above list.

6. New national organization needed to supervise this mega-program. USA and CSF deal with annual campaign, as at present.

Suggestions:

7. a) one over-all chairman of international stature + one deputy.
 b) one CEO for finance (manage the money flow from the source to each project; (increase ^{available} money by leveraging through borrowing and/or floating bond issue)
 c) one CEO for ~~each~~ Project
 d) one CEO for liaison with Israel (not all projects will require Israel)

Members of
MEGA-GROUP
COULD BE
MOBILIZED
AS CEO'S

8. This top structure requires total of 4 persons. That's it. No enlargements. This is the policy-making body. Each of the CEOs in b) c) d) may create own ~~small~~ deputy and small executive group.

9. One name ^{*} must be invented for over-all effort. Individual project names must reflect its area of work.

10. Headquarters can be anywhere in U.S.

11. Entire effort must be imbued with urgent sense of timing. Every project must work with timetable - i.e. so many schools in so many months.

*

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MEMO: HERB'S BIO. FOLLOWS - WE DON'T HAVE A
"C.V." ON FILE, BUT THIS SHOULD DO THE TRICK.
GOOD TO TALK TO YOU.
Nathan

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
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BIOGRAPHICAL RESUME

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman, a former executive chairman of the national United Jewish Appeal for over 20 years, is an eminent authority on Jewish overseas needs and Israel's birth, growth and development.

Herbert A. Friedman was born in New Haven, Connecticut, USA, on September 25, 1918. His parents migrated to the United States from Vilna (father) and Riga (mother) in the 1890's. He graduated from Yale University (B.A.) in 1938; attended Columbia University Graduate School of Business Administration; graduated from the Jewish Institute of Religion with a degree M.H.L. (Master of Hebrew Literature) and ordained as Rabbi, in January 1944. This rabbinical seminary was unique in that its founder, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, attempted to create an environment where students from Orthodox and liberal backgrounds could study together, enjoying mutual respect for one another, in the pluralistic tradition of a united people. Friedman was awarded the degree of D.D. (hon.) by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, in 1969.

He served as chaplain (Captain), with the Ninth Infantry Division in Germany and after World War II spearheaded efforts to help Jewish survivors of the Nazi death camps. Later he served as assistant advisor on Jewish affairs to General Lucius D. Clay, commander of U.S. Occupation Forces in Germany. During that period, he was secretly recruited into the Haganah and worked in the illegal immigration operation called "Aliyah Bet". He was subsequently decorated by the State of Israel for that service.

He was one of the founders of the Israel Bond organization, invited by David Ben Gurion to the formation meeting in Jerusalem in September 1950. While serving congregations in Denver and Milwaukee between 1948-1955, he was chairman of the UJA speakers bureau. In 1955, he became the executive vice chairman of the UJA national campaign and executive chairman in 1970.

Throughout three decades he was present at critical moments in the life of Jewish communities in many countries: pogroms in Morocco in 1955; flight of Hungarian and Egyptian refugees in 1956; exodus from Rumania in 1957; studied conditions in Iran, Poland and Tunisia. Just before the outbreak of the Six-Day War in 1967, he was in Israel for talks with Jewish Agency and government leaders which resulted in the historic Israel Emergency Fund.

After his long career with the UJA, Rabbi Friedman and his family settled in Jerusalem in 1971.

He is known as an innovative thinker and doer. He created the UJA Young Leadership Cabinet, bringing together young men and women from all over the country and instilling within them a philosophy of Judaism and a sense of commitment. He developed the UJA Overseas Mission concept, which has escorted scores of thousands of American Jews to Israel, and many thousands to the Nazi camps in Poland, Austria and Germany.

He established the Israel Education Fund, which built high schools, libraries and kindergartens throughout the country; and initiated many of the methods and ideas now in general use in fundraising throughout the world. He has traveled to many communities in Europe, as well as Australia, South America and Canada, to help them with their fundraising.

Upon returning to the U.S. in 1978, Rabbi Friedman assumed the position of President of the American Friends of Tel Aviv University, and continued to serve the national UJA as a volunteer.

He was co-founder, in 1985, of the Wexner Heritage Foundation with Mr. Leslie Wexner, Chairman of The Limited, Inc. and served as its President for a decade. This foundation is dedicated to the education of leadership groups in Jewish communities throughout the United States and Canada, and has established its seminars thus far in 31 cities. He currently holds the position of Founding President Emeritus.

In 1999 his book, entitled "Roots of the Future" was published in Jerusalem by the Gefen Publishing House. It is a combination of memoir and autobiography.

Rabbi Friedman is married to the former Francine Bensley, and they are the parents of David and Charles. He has three children from a previous marriage, Daniel, Judith and Joan and four grandchildren, Deborah, Rachel, Benjamin and Elizabeth. He and his family reside in New York City.

August, 2000

HERBERT FRIEDMAN

6/2/01

NL

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Knowledgeable, inspirational and
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FOUNDER'S DAY

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - CINCINNATI

March 10, 1993

by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

STEPHEN S. WISE - THE GIANT OF HIS TIME

MORALIST, ZIONIST, PLURALIST

Mr. President, Honored faculty, colleagues, students, ladies and gentlemen. I am keenly aware of the rare privilege expressed by this invitation to offer The Founder's Day address, and thank you for the opportunity. There are two Wises, the memories of whom resonate this day, but only one of whom I had the exquisite pleasure of knowing well and close up. That was Stephen. Isaac is known to you, in this city, in this school, with much greater familiarity, and it would be an insult to your intelligence if I were to recite biographical material from books which most of you know far more intimately than I. Therefore, I shall deal exclusively with the man I knew in the flesh for many years, with the fervent hope that you will consider this no disrespect to the man whom I know only as a reflection of what others have written about him.

Stephen Samuel Wise was a man shaped in the matrix of his time, as all of us are, but his time was more tumultuous than most and embraced the seminal events of this century - Zionism,

two World Wars, the Holocaust, the birth of Israel and the broadening of the Reform movement through the seminary he founded, and the kind of rabbinate he practiced. These events and movements were the stuff of his life - utterly consuming his prodigious energy. He was the leading American Jew of the first half of the 20th century - his name and deeds familiar to the entire Jewish population and a good part of the non-Jewish as well, throughout the entire United States. In an era of no airplanes, he travelled scores of thousands of miles each year by train. On that rainy day in April 1949, hundreds of porters and red caps marched from Grand Central Station to Carnegie Hall to attend his funeral, for they all knew and respected him.

The lives of Stephen and Isaac intersected only once, and only by correspondence at that. Stephen Wise, in the spring of 1892, as he prepared to graduate from Columbia, at the age of 18, was thinking of completing his rabbinical training. He had studied in the Semitics Department at Columbia with Richard Gottheil, son of Gustav Gottheil, the rabbi at Temple Emanu-El. And now he wrote to the aging Isaac Wise about the possibility of working under the direction of HUC faculty, but not in Cincinnati. He wanted to begin a doctorate at Columbia with Gottheil. Isaac Wise, at first suggested that the young man reverse the plan, but sensing resistance, reluctantly agreed to register Stephen Wise in absentia, and the faculty at the college began outlining work for him to undertake.

Following his father's counsel as to where he should study,

Wise opted for Europe, went to Vienna and began to work under the great Adolph Jellinek, the chief exponent of Wissenschaft des Judentums, from whom he received s'micha. He returned to the U.S. to become a junior rabbi at B'nai Jeshurun, then on Madison Avenue in New York.

Many years later, in 1915, when Wise was creating a Zionist movement in the United States, he encountered the strong anti-Zionism emanating from Cincinnati. He wanted to press an attack on Kaufman Kohler and David Phillipson, but Brandeis urged a more cautious policy. Wise agreed and cancelled a speaking engagement in Cincinnati saying that "Phillipson and men of his stamp must be left severely and contemptuously alone." A month later, in response to insistent demands, he rescheduled and spoke in a calm and friendly manner, stressing the need for unity. The outright hostility of the Reform leaders compared poorly to the conciliatory statements of Wise. Slowly the anti-Zionist crowd was isolated, and Brandeis' strategy was vindicated. These were Wise's only contacts with Cincinnati.

There are two chief biographers of Stephen Wise, both still living. The first is Dr. Carl Hermann Voss, a Christian minister whose background included Union Theological Seminary and the Yale Divinity School. He evolved into an incredibly devoted Zionist, worked alongside of Wise, wrote several books about him and also recorded in still another volume the life-long friendship between him and John Haynes Holmes, the then leading Protestant minister in New York. Voss, now in the 9th decade of life is a splendid

model of liberal Christianity in its most admirable form, still vigorous, charming and available for any who wish to plumb his encyclopedic knowledge of the life and times of Wise. The second biographer is a much younger man, Melvin Urofsky, professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, who has done an excellent research and written in a most engaging style. His volume, entitled "A Voice that Spoke for Justice", stresses most beautifully the classic integration of Judaism and Americanism which marked Wise's approach to public life. An enduring influence on Wise was the philosophy and personality of Brandeis who said of himself "my approach to Zionism was through Americanism...Zionism is essentially a movement of freedom, a movement to give the Jews more freedom."

When Wise was battling within the Reform movement to combat the charge that Zionism was dangerous and anti-American because of its dual-loyalty implications, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Brandeis to the Supreme Court. This enabled Wise gleefully to ask what David Phillipson, Samuel Schulman and others thought about the president naming a Zionist to the Court, a man they had denounced as un-American.

Zionism was the great fire in his life, born out of the passion generated through his contact with Herzl at the Second Congress in Basle in 1898. Although only 25 years old at the time, Wise was cited by Herzl as the foremost Zionist speaker in America. Such encomiums of course went to his leonine head, and during a long life on the public platform he attempted to prove

Herzl right. He created organizations by which to spread the message and labored through incredible minutiae of meetings, minutes, by-laws, personalities, egos - all the processes of political maneuvering required to obtain consensus and get some action started. First came the World Jewish Congress, later the American Jewish Congress, both of which he founded and funded, and over which he presided for decades. There was the Zionist Organization of America, and the United Palestine Appeal - and at one point, in 1936, he was simultaneously president of all four bodies. This was the period when he was the most pre-eminent Jew in America. And he did succeed in starting and sustaining the slow but inexorable acceptance by American Jewry of the need for and legitimacy of the movement toward Jewish statehood in Palestine. But the result of his struggles with the anti-Zionist Hebrew Union College led to another major burst of creativity.

He wrote to his wife Louise, almost every day of his life, and in a letter in 1909, he broached an idea: "Now, madam, please hold your breath while I tell you something. Why shouldn't I have a school for the training of Jewish ministers?....The practical experience, training and discipline they could get under me! I am just aflame with the idea and I will do it, and you'll help me and it will be blessed of God."

The idea lay dormant for eleven years, during which he became convinced he could not win over the CCAR or the HUC to his ideas. The one personal instrument Wise had at his disposal, was the Free Synagogue. This was born after his contretemps with

Louis Marshall, president of Temple Emanu-El, over the principle of freedom of the pulpit. Wise and Marshall were discussing the possibility of the former becoming the rabbi of the New York cathedral-synagogue.

Wise: "If I go to Emanu-El, the pulpit must be free while I preach therein.

Marshall: "Dr. Wise, I must say to you at once that such a condition cannot be complied with; the pulpit of Emanu-El has always been and is subject to and under the control of the board of trustees."

Wise exploded and there was a strong exchange with other trustees at the meeting. Some did not agree with the "Marshall Law" expressed in the inflexible position. Jacob Schiff called and asked Wise to come for a walk on Fifth Avenue. He said, "Of course they want to restrict your sermons, but you take it (the job) anyhow. After you're elected, tell them to go to hell - and I'll back you up."

Later that evening, Wise wrote an answer to Louis Marshall:

"Dear Sir: If your letter of December first be expressive of the thought of the trustees of Temple Emanu-El, I beg to say that no self-respecting minister of religion, in my opinion, could consider a call to a

pulpit which, in the language of your communication, shall always be subject to, and under the control of, the board of trustees. I am, yours very truly, Stephen S. Wise."

In that one sentence, Wise struck the clarion note, the clanging of the bell of emancipation, which liberated every one of us sitting in this synagogue, and enabled us in the decades since to practice our profession without fear of harassment or rebuke. We are free men today because of what he said and did then. We take this freedom for granted, as an inalienable right, but it was certainly not so until his sword flashed.

And so he created the Free synagogue - free in pulpit and pew - no dues, no assigned seats, no muzzling of speech. For 30 years the Free Synagogue had no home. Services were conducted in Carnegie Hall on Sunday morning, the only time the Hall had no concerts, and could be rented out. Between 1500 and 2000 persons attended every week to hear the music of his oratory and the thunder of his exhortations. What he said was always news on Monday morning's New York Times.

It was to the Free Synagogue board that he turned with his idea of creating an alternate seminary. At a special meeting in November 1920, the board gave its blessing to the plan. The discussion ranged around the concept of the rabbinate as a profession, akin to medicine and law, requiring a broad-based liberal education. At that time H.U.C. and the Jewish

Theological Seminary both accepted youths of thirteen or fourteen, who went through preparatory work before entering rabbinical studies. Wise believed that an adequate college education was a prerequisite, and the J.I.R. should be a professional graduate school.

Another consideration was that the new seminary should be pluralistic in approach (how advanced that thinking was three-quarters of a century ago) for both its students and faculty, embracing all denominations and ideologies. The first time I ever heard the phrase K'lal Yisrael was in my opening interview in the spring of 1940. Dr. Henry Slonimsky asked me if I knew how to dance, and Dr. Wise asked me if I was comfortable in a school where the differences between Orthodox, Conservative and Reform were relevant only insofar as one could learn something new from a fellow student who practiced Judaism differently from oneself. I remember years of sitting in class without a kipa, next to Usher Kirshblum, , who was destined to become a president of the Mizrachi Zionist organization. Neither he nor I suffered from different approaches to headgear, and each of us learned much from the other (I in the realm of texts, and he in English literature). There was a wonderful atmosphere of pluralism in the school.

A third basic premise was that the students had to participate in the social problems of their day, in order to understand the social justice precepts of Prophetic Judaism. Wise carried out this dictum to the very fullest throughout his

entire life. He worked with Holmes to break up the corrupt influence of Tammany Hall, a political machine which dominated New York City government. He backed the labor union movement, taking the side of the workers against the U.S. Steel Company in the great strike of 1921. He was a pacifist in World War I, and volunteered to work in a naval shipyard to prove both his patriotism and his opposition to bearing arms. He actively supported liberal and reform candidates for office and was found in every struggle for the rights of women and children and minorities. It was natural, therefore, that he should want to teach the future rabbi that practicing the social gospel would make it easier for them to preach it.

For many years he signed his letters as Acting President of the J.I.R. and tried hard to secure an internationally recognized scholar as President. He offered the post to Emil Hirsch of Chicago, who demurred because of age, as did the well-known English scholar Israel Abrahams, for the same reason. Wise really tried hard to persuade Mordecai Kaplan, many of whose views conformed to the basic philosophy of the JIR, to accept the presidency, but Kaplan feared that Henry Slonimsky, the Dean, and Chaim Tchernowitz, the revered Talmudist, were both opposed to his Reconstructionist ideas. After several years of talks, Wise finally realized that he himself would have to accept the title as well as the duties - and so it was until his death.

The faculty was brilliant, gathered from Europe as well as America, with Wise making trips abroad to convince scholars to

migrate to the United States. How fortuitous that this little school, almost inadvertently, saved the lives of many talented men, who would have perished a decade later in the fires of the Shoah, by offering them jobs and also finding positions in many other institutes and universities. Those who, at one time or another, taught at the JIR included Israel Abrahams, Salo Baron, Ismar Elbogen, Kaplan, Ralph Marcus, Julian Oberman, Guido Kisch, Shalom Spiegel, Harry Wolfson, David Yellin, John Tepfer, Harry Orlinsky, and many others.

As for the students, the highlight of their week was the Thursday session, listed in the catalogue as "Problems of the Ministry." With Wise in the chair and a dozen of us seated around a circular table, we expected to hear about conducting funerals or how to fight with a congregational board, but instead were treated to inside tidbits and episodes in Stephen Wise's chaotic public life. Out of his pocket would come the latest telegram he had sent to President Roosevelt, or the latest argument he had held with the American Jewish Committee which disagreed with absolutely everything he was doing to fight Hitler. We became privy to the broadest spectrum of Jewish concerns worldwide, and came away with his conception of what a rabbi should deal with outside the four walls of his synagogue. He focused, laser-like, on three subjects: The struggle for Jewish political independence; freedom from oppression everywhere, and the contribution Jewish thought and values could make to the betterment of society for all people.

He showed us the pain and frustration, as well as the glory, which accompanied these struggles. I shall never forget that moment in August 1942 when he pulled from his pocket Reigner's telegram which was the first formal charge accusing Hitler of intending to murder the entire Jewish population of Europe. And month after month, he continued to relate to us how Sumner Welles urged him not to publish the telegram until its information could be confirmed through Myron Taylor, the State Department representative at the Vatican. Permission finally came ten weeks later, with the statement to Wise that the United States government "can now confirm and justify your deepest fears." We learned from Wise that our deepest obligation was to fight, at whatever cost, for the creation of a Jewish state in order to protect the security of the Jewish people. We learned it through the burning passion of his eyes and voice - we learned it week after week from the manner in which he impacted our very souls by exposing his own to us, his beloved students.

Wise was 60 years old when he began the most important fight of his life - the battle against Hitler. This battle was fought on many fronts: first, against the Jewish leadership in Germany which assured him in the fall of 1932 that Hitler would never come to power and that attacks against Hitler would strengthen not weaken him, therefore, it was best simply to ignore him; and secondly, against the Jewish organizational leadership in the United States who were happy to accept that line and accused Wise of being a sensationalist and trouble-maker. Brandeis alone

stood with Wise and said publicly that all Jews must leave Germany immediately.

On January 30, 1933, Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated as President, and the same day Adolf Hitler was installed as Chancellor of the Third Reich. Wise immediately called for a national boycott of Germany and public rallies of protest. The American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, Jewish Labor Council and other organizations actively opposed Wise's call. The synagogues of America were silent. Wise and his American Jewish Congress organized a rally at Madison Square Garden a few weeks later, with 25,000 people inside and another 30,000 outside in the street. Governor Al Smith, Senator Robert Wagner, 2 Christian bishops, and other luminaries shouted their support.

During the next 6 1/2 years, until World War II broke out, the Jewish organizations continued to oppose; the Jews of America slowly woke up but took no major action, Hitler tightened the noose on German Jews while gobbling up Austria, Czechoslovakia, and armed himself for wider conquests. Wise was heartsick, despairing, alone. Breckenridge Long and the State Department were his chief opponents as he struggled to stimulate FDR to action. He had complete access to the President, and he had allies in Brandeis and Morgenthau, but he failed essentially. The President's closest advisers were telling Roosevelt that the mood of the country was isolationist, that coming out strongly on behalf of European Jewry would win him no friends or future elections, that America would have to stay out if indeed Hitler

was planning war, etc., etc. And in this emotional contest for FDR's ear, Wise lost.

It is ironic indeed that one of the attacks against Wise in later years, long after the fires at Aushwitz were banked, and the guilt-feelings of American Jewry swelled into a search for scapegoats, was the charge that he had not tried hard enough, that he was, in effect, a shtadlan, a court Jew who bowed to the wishes of his king. It is astonishing that no one less than Elie Wiesel, should have accused Wise thirty years later, in 1968, in these words:

"What did American Jews do to aid their brothers in Europe...By the time Stephen Wise (whom I consider a very great man and a very great Jew) talked with Sumner Welles, Wise already knew of Hitler's 'Final Solution.' Welles asked Wise not to reveal this information until it was proven conclusively true, and Wise consented. He gave no information to the press...How could he pledge secrecy when millions of lives were involved?...What happened after Rabbi Wise was released from his pledge? Not much. Not much at all. Did he and other Jewish leaders proclaim hunger strikes to the end? Did they organize daily marches to the White House? They should have shaken heaven and earth, echoing the agony of their doomed brothers; taken in by Roosevelt's personality, they in a way became accomplices to his inaction."

Such a "cri de coeur" is understandable, but to select as the target the one man who above all others struggled the earliest and the hardest to waken the conscience of Jews and non-Jews in America is unfair and inaccurate. Carl Voss and Melvin Urofsky both concluded that such charges cannot be justified, and we, the students, who saw him almost daily struggling with the problem, can offer our testimony as well. The villains of the piece were Jewish opposition, Jewish powerlessness, the nature of American society at the time, the State Department and the President.

When it was all over, in 1945, I had the unusual opportunity to experience at first hand the opinion in which Stephen Wise was held by survivors of the Shoah in Europe. I was a chaplain in Germany, assigned to the office of the Adviser on Jewish Affairs to the Commanding General. The adviser was Rabbi Philip Bernstein, fellow-graduate of JIR, and later President of the CCAR. He was a remarkable man - keen, friendly, soft-spoken, powerful in his simple explanations to the topmost army commanders of who the displaced persons were, what they had suffered, what hopes they had for a new future. By 1947, we had a quarter-million Jews in 64 camps in Germany and Austria. I had been recruited by Ben Gurion himself into the Haganah, and was working in Berlin (in American Army uniform) in the Mossad Aliyah Bet. Our team alone brought 100,000 Jews through that city into the American Zone of Germany. I knew those people, and they knew me. I learned their secrets, including their code language. I

heard them often using a word I did not understand - not in Hebrew or Yiddish. It was "stefanka". I sensed the root "stefan" - Stephen. A stefanka was an American dollar, the code word used in black-market dealings. When they wanted to coin a word which connoted America - the goldeneh medineh - they took the name of the one person they knew, who symbolized America and American Jews. To them, Stephen Wise represented the person who had done the most to save them and help them.

When Wise came to Germany in 1947 with a small delegation including Naham Goldmann and Jacob Blaustein, to visit the DP camps, he was greeted with tumultuous applause everywhere he went. They shouted his name - and clustered around him in their thousands. When General Lucius Clay gave a luncheon in his honor at Headquarters, Wise was seated at his right and Clay introduced Wise as the leader of American Jewry.

Incidentally, when Golda Myerson came to the United States from Palestine in spring 1948, to raise money for the Haganah, the code-word for one million dollars was - "a Stephen". There could be no higher accolade.

Abba Hillel Silver now took the stage - employing a fierce militancy which American Jews were eager to display. The entire focus was now on one target only - statehood. The dead were behind us - nothing could be done about that - but the future demanded that a place be created for our people where Jews could be in control of Jewish destiny. Wise was happy to see this proliferation of Zionist action, although not terribly pleased

that it was in Silver's hands.

The final regret of his life was that he was not privileged to set foot on the independent soil of the new state. Already the stomach cancer was beginning to sap strength, and every effort to make the trip to Israel was thwarted. The last big event was his 75th birthday on March 17, 1949. Twelve hundred people attended the dinner. President Harry Truman sent Wise one of the pens used to sign the de jure recognition of Israel, and praised him for his life-long fight for social justice based on religious principles. John Haynes Holmes wrote a poem for the occasion:

"The years have flown, God's hammer droops and drips,
And you are weary from the ceaseless fight.
But still the living coal burns on your lips.
And high the sword is pointed to the light."

Urofsky's final paragraph is a beautiful tribute:

"Wise slowly went to the rostrum, his hands shaking as he spread out his hand-written talk. It was unusual for him to do this, but he feared the emotions of the evening. Slowly and eloquently he listed his achievements, first among them Zionism, but he also spoke of all the work still unfinished...And then he raised his fist and shouted 'I'll fight. I'll fight', and the audience came roaring to its feet, the applause rolling on and on

as Wise stood there with tears in his eyes."

Four weeks later he died. We, his students, loved him with a love surpassing ordinary respect or even reverence, for he gave to us the fire from his own belly, and it burned in ours. He gave us vision, mission, a sense of purpose, so that we knew what to do with our lives. I think of him often, named my son for him, and thank him, for all he was and made of me.

