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Selichot 1979

Sat. Night Sept 15

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WHO SHALL ASCEND THE MOUNTAIN?

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman

Selichot, 1971
Saturday Night, September 11, 1971

We have gathered here close to the hour of midnight, at a point in time which belongs neither to the day that is ending nor yet to the day about to begin. It is indeterminate time, a ^{hour}~~moment~~ of transition. This is the function of this service: a service of transition, of mental preparation for a drastic shift in outlook and mood in which we try to move to a higher plateau of spirituality as we begin ^{our climb} the ascent to the high peaks of the sacred: Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur.

Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord?

And who shall stand in His holy place?

When driving up a steep hill, you must shift gears. Similarly, when aspiring to a higher spiritual level, your thinking must undergo a change. The change in our mental attitude which is required of us is suggested in a scene from a play I saw on Broadway a few years ago: The hero suddenly becomes aware of his own responsibility and guilt for the troubles in which he finds himself, loses his poise and, in a distraught state of mind runs out of the house and plants himself on a street corner. There, he turns to various passers by with the same three words:

"I am sorry," -- and to his utter surprise he finds that everybody takes him seriously and is ^{ready to accept his} ~~glad to hear him apologize~~ as though he really owed them an apology.

"O, that's quite all right," says a distinguished gentleman as he passes on.

"I didn't mind it at all," replies a lady.

And a man with a dog accepts the apology for his pet; *turning to the dog he says:*

"Well, Puffer, you're no longer angry at that nice man who said 'sorry', are you, Puffer?"

The point of the scene needs stressing: How quickly we imagine ourselves to be the victims of an offense. How easily we assume others to be blameworthy and ourselves entitled to apologies.

The object of the High Holy Days is to reverse this mentality, to make us think of ourselves not as victims but as culprits, not as the offended but as the offenders, not as those sinned against but as sinners. In plain words, the object of the High Holy Days is to make us conscious of evil which we must eradicate, not ~~only~~ elsewhere, but within ourselves. ~~This leads us to the spiritual gear shift which we must accomplish tonight.~~ Evil would be simple to eradicate if it were found in only a few perverse characters. What makes it so enormously difficult to deal with is the presence of evil in all of us.

A Hassidic teacher made a comment on the standard abbreviation for the Hebrew word for God. It consists of two little "yods," two little dots side by side. Said this teacher:

"This monogram of God, two dots side by side, symbolizes the truth that ~~whenever~~ two people live side by side with equal love and respect, God is present among them" -- ~~which is another way of saying~~ that the very power of the Almighty is needed to ^{maintain} ~~achieve~~ such a relationship of mutuality.

Do you realize what the implications of this comment are? They are devastating with reference to human nature. The implications are that it takes the very presence of God to sustain a long-lasting relationship of love and respect.

Why can't people just get along naturally? What perversity in our nature corrupts so quickly beautiful, loving attitudes between people?

-3-

Make no mistake about it: One of the most difficult achievements in life is the maintenance of a relationship of undisturbed mutual respect, trust and love between two persons. Great moral and spiritual resources are required, ~~from within and without~~, in order to prevent the decay of our relationships, in order to keep us from despising our fellow man, from exploiting and degrading him. Just watch two children of the same family at play: how long do they remain kind and considerate of each other? Within minutes there is a scream, an attempt of one to get the better of the other, even violence.

How long do husband wife remain tender and mutually respectful-- days? Hours?

The persistent disturbances and conflicts in inter-personal relationships are the major human problem today, yesterday and always. Consider the first three and best known stories in the Bible: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel and Noah and the Flood. No sooner do Adam and Eve accept one another as companions when they practice deception on each other. Cain, having an entire world to divide with Abel, still envies his brother's portion and so murders him. Noah is found to be the only righteous person in a generation of evil doers.

What does the Bible assume in all of these ancient myths except that men are sinful and that evil is deeply rooted in them--and this insight, my friends, is not a myth but a fact.

Yet ~~Judaism is~~ ^{we are} hopeful. What justifies our optimism? The plain fact that there is something in us that reacts to evil, that notes its presence and arouses the will to overcome it.

Grammarians tell us that we live in 3 dimensions of time;
The Present, The Past, & the Future.

The true Jew lives in a 4th dimension — the world of the ought-to-be.
The object of this midnight service, or of the entire High Holy Day observance, is to intensify our awareness of the gap between what is and what ought to be.

" " we are " " we ought to become

Eric Segal spectacular best-seller ^{of a few years ago - entitled} LOVE STORY, defines love as "never having to say sorry again" which is the greater love: A love that would gloss over offence and moral wrong, that would ~~stifle~~ ^{separate moral judgments} ~~feelings~~ with sexual & sentimental intoxication — or a love which wants the beloved to grow, improve and overcome evil.

Clearly, the beginning of all moral growth is our willingness to say sorry.

But let us add quickly: the psychology of ~~is~~ ^{is} saying sorry is still far from volitional repentance.

But —

We know from experience that apologies don't settle very much. It is not enough for the offender to ask again for the good will of the other person whom he has deeply hurt by insult, by betrayal, by breach of trust, by neglect, by deception, by exploitation. It is not enough that we say after causing great torment: "Pardon me," — *in Hebrew:* "Seliha." There must be a change - a drastic change within the offender, to raise the hope of genuine reconciliation. This can only be accomplished by the second step in the process of moral regeneration which is described by the Hebrew term of "Teshuvah."

2. Return

Teshuvah means literally "return," ~~a drastic change, a turning away from sin, rejecting the corrupt and returning to a state of integrity.~~ Teshuvah means ~~a disavowal of a certain part of ourselves,~~ an inner separation. It means the giving up of wrongful desire, the suppression and eradication of the lust to which we yielded in moral weakness, even the giving up of deeply rooted habits and addictions. Teshuvah ~~means a genuine removal of the wrong to which we have become attached.~~ This may involve a far reaching removal of ourselves from a corrupting environment or relationship. It may mean the termination of a degrading association. It is not enough that we condemn ~~in our hearts or by word of mouth the~~ wrongdoing ~~in which we were involved.~~ We must resolve to separate ourselves completely from it in our business and occupational practices/in our personal relationships.

3. Renewal

The third and highest step in the process of moral regeneration is expressed in A beautiful prayer uttered by the congregation especially during the High Holy Days following the closing of the ark after the Torah reading: states our ^{highest} goal

וְשׁוּבוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְחַדְשֵׁנוּ כְּיָמֵינוּ
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~~RETURN US, O LORD,~~ RENEW OUR DAYS AS OF OLD. It expresses the aspiration for renewal. Birth is a one-time event but rebirth can happen any time. Birth is a destiny imposed upon us by our progenitors, but rebirth is an act of our own doing. We can reshape our character in the image of the ideal which we profess.

This night marks our re-entry into the arena of the struggle for moral rehabilitation and self elevation.

Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord?

Who shall stand in His holy place?

Jewish tradition proposes that the Jew ~~is to~~ approach the High Holy Days not in a gloomy mood but with joy and cheerfulness. The undercurrent of joy which is to permeate the High Holy Day season is symbolized by changing the Torah covers to the festive color of white. Let

This desire for change

us not only change the velvet covers of our Torah, but our very hearts as we attempt once again the high and lofty moral escalation

of which we are capable, lifting ourselves up from the first step of regret to the ^{second} ~~highest~~ step of a genuine turning away from ~~every~~ ^{אֲשֶׁר} wrong-doing to the very highest level of self renewal in complete atonement.

אֲשֶׁר

Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord?

AND WHO shall stand in His holy place?

May each of us feel the pull of this question and yield to it.

AMEN

WHO SHALL ASCEND THE MOUNTAIN?

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
SELICHOT
Saturday Night, September 15, 1979

We have gathered here close to the hour of midnight, at a point in time which belongs neither to the day that is ending nor yet to the day about to begin. It is indeterminate time, an hour of transition. This is the function of this service: a service of transition, of mental preparation for a drastic shift in outlook and mood in which we try to move to a higher plateau of spirituality as we begin our climb to the high peaks of the sacred: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

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This desire for change is symbolized by changing the Torah covers to the festive color of white. Let us not only change the velvet covers of our Torah, but our very hearts as we attempt once again the moral escalation of which we are capable, lifting ourselves up from the first step of regret to the second step of a genuine turning away from wrongdoing to the very highest level of self renewal in complete atonement.

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AMEN

THE NEW JEW

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
Rosh Hashanah Eve
September 21, 1979

1st Draft
Not given -

We welcome with joyous hearts the many new members who, for the first time, are joining with us in the celebration of Rosh Hashanah and we extend fraternal greetings to those thousands of men, women and youth who have been with us throughout the years. We cannot forget those loved ones who are no longer seated alongside of us. And yet, we're comforted this night by a sublime sense of spiritual unity in which we feel the presence of all the generations of our people.

After completing 35 years in the rabbinate, the last ten as your rabbi, I must confess to you that I am still far from relaxed on this night. I worry twice. First about what I should say -- and afterwards, about what I should have said. How shall I put to you the mixed prevailing mood about these times? Optimistic generalizations have a hollow sound against the realities of the decade which is now coming to an end. It will not go down in history as one of our cheerful decades. It brought us the agony of Vietnam, Watergate, the Yom Kippur War, the energy crisis and an unmanageable inflation. On July 16 President Carter emerged from his long silence at Camp David to tell us that there was something more worrisome than the oil crunch: a national malaise of the spirit, a general loss of confidence. What can we do? asked the president.

If we were to answer him tonight we would say, "Mr. President, no doubt there is a problem but it's not confidence that we have run out of but oil and patience and leadership equal to the task."

We, Jews, are not depressed. We are disappointed and we are angry and I'll tell you why. Being Jewish we remember this year as the 40th anniversary of the most evil year in history -- 1939. We Jews were then the boat people, floating from ocean to ocean -- and no one cared. It was the year of the world's moral bankruptcy. It was the year when Nazi Germany, after concluding a friendship pact with the Soviet Union, began World War II with the devastation of Poland; when nothing seemed to stop the Nazi conquest of the world and when the holocaust began in earnest.

That year, the greatest living poet in the English language, W. H. Auden, wrote these lines:

As the clever hopes expire
Of a low, dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends our September night.

Why are we Jews not depressed or in despair on this September night 40 years later? Because we have been through infinitely worse. We're stronger today because, as Friedrich Nietzsche said,

"We take unto ourselves the strength of that which we have overcome."

As we look toward the future, I think of the story about the woman who was addicted to soap operas. Her husband came home one night and asked, "What's new?"

"Well," replied the wife, "Jennie had an abortion; Sam's business went bankrupt; Laura's husband ran away with a belly dancer; little Johnnie is in jail for smoking pot; Grandfather Adams' house burnt down and Sis won't be able to graduate from public school because she's expecting a baby."

"That's incredible!" said the husband. "What's the program called?"

"Life Can Be Beautiful," replied the wife.

In spite of everything, we still believe that life can be beautiful. This is particularly true of the Jewish condition at this time in history. For the first time in decades we see the possibilities of a more secure, more beautiful life than any of us ever dreamt possible. So, -- we begin with the proverbial beginning of many a good story: "We have the good news and we have the bad news. . ."

First, the bad news. All of us were jolted, and some of us are still in somewhat of a state of shock, by the surprise attack upon our people ~~by~~ the organized black leadership of the United States following Andrew Young's resignation as the U. S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

The Young affair was an eye-opener on three things:

The temper of the black community.

The intensity of black-Jewish tension -- or is it residual antisemitism?

The maturity of the American Jew

Why was there such an outcry on the part of professional black leadership in reaction to Andy Young's resignation? No other ethnic group protested the dismissal of their representatives in the government. Italian Americans were undisturbed by Califano's departure as Secretary of HEW. No Kaddish was recited by Jews for their half brothers, Schlesinger and Blumenthal. Why were black leaders so enraged when Andy Young had to go? We can understand it psychologically. Blacks in high visible positions of prestige are still a rarity. Mainly for this reason, they took the loss of Andy Young, mistakenly, as a setback, an insult and humiliation for all blacks. As a matter of fact, Andy Young himself never charged racism as the reason for his resignation. It seems to me that more experience with high political office will enable blacks in the future to take in their stride the rise and fall of some of their leaders in national politics. That's the name of the game. The more ethnic minority people get to the top, the more of them are likely to fall from it. This is true of all career politicians regardless of race and creed.

Much more difficult to understand is the swift turning of the Andy Young affair into a black-Jewish rift. What possessed the entire spectrum of black leadership to whip up a media blizzard of anti-Jewish charges? It was a solid front of racial solidarity. With the sole exception of the venerable old Bayard Rustin, no black leader voiced dissent from the declaration read out aloud by Julian Bond. What were its main points?

1. A clear notice to us that blacks don't want to be seen as junior partners of their former Jewish civil rights struggle allies. They would henceforth speak with their own voice on all domestic and international issues including the Middle East. We are still baffled by the vehemence of this point because, to our knowledge, no Jew ever stopped any black from saying anything he wanted to say on any subject.

2. The second point was a final severance from Jewish patronage. The statement read by Julian Bond suggested that the old black-Jewish coalition was based on opportunism:

"It is also clear that Jewish organizations and leadership have done so when it is in their perceived interest to do so, as do we."

The point of this somewhat cynical statement was: Blacks don't owe a special debt to Jews. Blacks and Jews helped each other in the past because it was to the advantage of both.

Blacks may wish to forget what the Jews have done for their cause out of genuine idealism, but we cannot forget it. We shall wonder for some time to come what perceived self interest motivated Julius Rosenwald to build virtually single handedly the first decent public school systems throughout the south for the benefit of black children? What perceived self interest made hundreds of rabbis and Jewish college youth risk arrest and beatings in sit-ins for the integration of southern airports and public facilities? What perceived self interest drew young men, Andy Goodman and Micky Schwerner, to Mississippi where they were both beaten to

What perceived self interest inspired Golda Meir in 1948, at a time when Israel needed every penny it could get for survival, to stand up in front of a UJA Campaign Appeal meeting in Dallas, Texas and, before pleading on behalf of her own people, she challenged her audience with this question:

"Who among you is involved in the civil rights struggle?"

She could have anticipated that half the audience would walk out, as indeed they did, but Golda Meir wanted to make the point at all costs where her people stood in regard to social justice.

Why are blacks so eager to forget all this? What is behind the drastic change of attitude by black organizational leadership toward the American Jew?

I do not see it as a resurgence of classic antisemitism, but rather as an outbreak of ethnic rivalry which is not uncommon in a pluralistic society. As long as blacks were at the bottom of the heap they grasped every helping hand. Now, they have risen considerably on the socio-economic and political scale -- and, feeling more equal with us, they perceive us now as rivals. They want a larger share of power and they want it fast. Jews stand in their way on two counts:

Firstly because we are opposed to a preferential quota system which would speed the flow of blacks into a larger share of the economy, but, according to our view, do so with unfair means.

Secondly, some black leaders are being wooed by Arabs with enormous clout. James Farmer of CORE, discussed recently on television a commitment of 40 million dollars to CORE by Arab

oil kingdoms. Other black leaders evidently also hope for Arab support in excess of what former Jewish friends could do. They are ready to march to the tune of a different drummer.

How did the Jewish community react to all this? I believe American Jews responded with great self restraint, wisdom and dignity. We refused to engage in a shouting match with provocative black leaders. We refused to yield to paranoid fears of antisemitism. We kept our poise and our principles as we reaffirmed a lasting commitment to social justice, to civil rights, to fair and equal opportunity -- but also clearly and firmly stood up for our own people. We reaffirmed our absolute opposition to any dealings with the PLO as long as that terror organization seeks to destroy Israel.

The American Jew is neither weak nor cowardly. He is the new Jew who will fight for his rights. Nineteen centuries of persecution, climaxed by the holocaust, have taught us that powerlessness is shame and degradation. He who lies prostrate, dependent on the good will of passers-by, may be pitied by some but is despised by most. Much too long we, a people without a land of our own, were prostrate among the nations, vilified and kicked by all who pleased to abuse us. It was this condition of powerlessness which turned us into Zionists.

We agree completely that Arabs should have a homeland. They have not one -- they have more than 20 such homelands. They may fulfill their need for self determination as Arabs in any of

these wealthy and powerful lands. Jews have only one land to govern as a majority, only one land to assert their national identity, only one land to show what we can do as a nation.

What we did in Israel remains a monumental miracle. Which modern tourist, Jew or gentile, enchanted by Israel's fertile fields and forests, gleaming cities and flowering gardens, would recognize this land of milk and honey in Mark Twain's vivid description of Palestine in the year 1869, prior to Jewish colonization:

"Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince. . . It is a hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land. . . . Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that withered its fields and fettered its energies. . . . Palestine is desolate and unlovely."

(Mark Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, 1st Ed. P. 606-8)

Palestine would still be the inhospitable wilderness Arabs made of it in their long centuries of fitful occupation, were it not for the Jews who bought it and rebuilt it inch by inch. Israel is ours by every historic and moral right. We answer all the propagandists of the PLO with Jonathan Swift's comment:

"Whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow on a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than a whole race of politicians put together."

Being a sensitive and compassionate people, we Jews take very seriously any disturbance or any injury to any Jew or Jewish community. But, we must not overdo the recital of Jewish woes lest we take from it a totally distorted perspective of Jewish life such as did the poet Heinrich Heine who, exasperated by bad Jewish news, exclaimed: "Judaism is not a religion. It is a misfortune."

We reject this tragic view of history. It does not fit the facts of most periods of our past and it certainly does not fit the facts of Jewish life today. Judaism is a privilege which has at times been costly. I would like you to walk out of this Sanctuary tonight feeling good and proud as Jews, not on the basis of propaganda but on the basis of truth -- which brings us to the good news we would share with one another tonight.

First of all, the world Jewish situation today is vastly improved over last year. The year 1979 saw a dramatic breakthrough in Russian-Jewish immigration. We cannot give you specific figures. Suffice it to say that it is breaking all previous records, a major victory for the Jewish people and the power of public opinion which not even the Soviet Union could ignore.

Secondly, regardless of the scheming and screaming of the PLO, the peace talks between Israel and Egypt are moving forward irreversibly and we must not be less optimistic than Sadat who sees a glorious future for both countries and eventually for the entire Middle East.

Thirdly, we should breathe a mighty sigh of relief that the destruction of some 50,000 Iranian Jews has been averted. World Jewry's ability to mobilize public opinion throughout the world has no doubt been a factor in restraining the fanatical regime of Khoumeni from carrying out extremely threatening intentions.

Fourthly, not inappropriate on our list of good news from abroad this year was the downfall of that cannibalistic buffoon of Uganda, Idi Amin, with whom we, too, have a score to settle.

Even more significant than the good news from abroad is the good news here at home. It is now no longer wishful thinking but a verifiable fact that American Jewry has achieved a new and higher status such as was undreamt of even 20 years ago. We now enjoy close to the highest level of recognition, prosperity, influence and esteem given to any of the various ethnic and religious groups in America. What is the evidence? I would like to point to two indicators as to where we stand in the public eye.

Who do you think described the Jews in the following words?

"I respect them because it is difficult to remain a strict Jew in today's society.... they are industrious people, very intelligent...they're not only closely knit, but more than willing to help each other....They have known pain and suffering. They are proud of a long heritage, great determination....a refusal to be subdued... They have a close knit family structure. Often

exclusive and suspicious of people whose background is other than Jewish, they are intellectual, perceptive....they are always trying to better themselves but at times pushy..... As believers in the Old Testament but not the New, they're still waiting for the saviour. They have family unity, closeness, ritual..... They're intelligent, clever, doctors and lawyers."

This profile of the American Jew is not the work of one author but of thousands. It is the perception of a cross section of public opinion by the dean of America's opinion pollsters, the Gallup Poll. In its published summary of the public image of the various religious communities in America, Jews, believe it or not, are rated favorably on a level comparable to that of Presbyterians and Episcopalians, and in some respects even higher than that .

A second indicator of the highly favorable new status of Jews in America is their newly won political prominence. None of the seven senators and 22 congressmen of the Jewish faith now serving in Congress have suggested that their Jewishness was a handicap in their political career. Some, on the contrary, have pointed to it as an advantage.

It has been said that Henry Kissinger could get any office in America except the presidency because of a constitutional bar against foreign-born citizens with respect to the highest office. He recently delighted an audience with some remarks about his political future:

"Though foreign-born, my chances are pretty good for the top job in this country. True, the constitution bars me from being elected President. But, I discovered that there is no American law preventing me from becoming emperor."

The serious side to Kissinger's joke is the fact that according to all public opinion polls, a qualified Jew could indeed become President and, there are no doubt Jews who have gained enough self confidence to think about it. Halberstam's recent novel, "The Wanting of Levine," the story of a Jewish president of the United States, may move from fiction to reality within our lifetime.

One would have to be blind not to realize that we live in a new era of Jewish history, the era of the new Jew, who is highly visible, who asserts his distinctiveness with pride and enjoys an unprecedented sense of security due to a basically friendly environment. I suggest these three points of evidence.

1. The explosion of Jewish studies on the American campus. Typical is the 15 million dollar campaign for the Jewish Studies Department at Harvard University, the half million dollar challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to the University of Maryland's Center for Jewish Studies and literally tens of thousands of Jewish study programs in hundreds of departments of Judaic Studies throughout America.

2. We are witnessing a remarkable emotional identification of the American public with the holocaust. Some two hundred million people throughout the world, nearly half of them Americans, viewed the holocaust TV series and were profoundly moved. President Jimmy Carter reacted sensitively to the feelings of the public by creating a Presidential Holocaust Commission, an unprecedented expression of national compassion and solidarity. Even more significant has been the grass root response throughout the nation by the leading churches of various faiths that have begun sponsoring holocaust memorial services. All this cannot bring back our six million slain in the holocaust but it comforts us to know that our non-Jewish fellow citizens have begun to care.

3. The third point of evidence for the radically new status of Jews within the American stream is the positive gentile interest in the ethnic peculiarity of the Jew. In one single week, here in the Washington area, a local Protestant church produced the play, "Diary of Anna Frank," while a Catholic church presented "Fiddler on the Roof." The general popularity of the Yiddish novelist, Isaac Bashevis Singer, whose stories of traditional East European life fascinate millions of Jewish and non-Jewish readers, is not an isolated incident. Another landmark in the new freedom of the Jew to be himself, even with his most bizarre peculiarities, is the motion picture comedy, "The Frisco Kid." Never mind that it is of perhaps inferior quality. We should not ignore its message.

The hero of this movie farce is a young Orthodox Russian rabbi attired in his black caftan and black broad rimmed hat, with tassels of his fringed undergarment showing. This model of the old fashioned Yeshiva is shown in a number of hilarious encounters with Western gunmen and cowboys. Thirty or forty years ago, this type would have provoked antisemitic catcalls with Jews in the audience crawling under their seats in embarrassment. Today, it is remarkable to observe the audience react with good natured laughter, rather enjoying the incongruous connection of a Yiddish accented yeshiva bocher with Western cowboys and Indians.

The bottom line is: We've come a long way from degradation to honor, from timidity to confidence, from rejection to acceptance, from poor peddler to prestigious political office.

The story is told about a young Jewish man who came to America at the turn of the century. One of the first things he did upon arrival was to join a synagogue. Soon thereafter he was elected President of his congregation. When he wrote to his mother, who was still in Europe, he couldn't help but brag, "Ich bin president." (I am the president.)

His mother did not know what the word "president" meant so she went to ask a neighbor who informed her that a president is the head of a country. The mother was extremely impressed but nevertheless wrote her son the following message. "Now that you are president, - "hob rachmones of Yidden--" (Have pity on the Jews!)

A wondrous historical providence has appointed American Jewry the guardian of our people. Like Joseph, the provider, who as governor of Egypt saved his family in Israel from famine, so we, American Jews, are today again Israel's strength and stay. No American Jew must be silent in the political struggle in which Israel's just right for survival is being challenged by Arabs floating on top of immense oil wells. We may not be able to match their money but we have the better case and, I believe, we have the friendship of America's great majority.

No American Jew, however modest his means, must exclude himself from the privilege of helping his brother Jews financially through the United Jewish Appeal gift and the Israel bond loan he is capable of making.

Finally, American Jewry's secret of success is their high morale and effective unity. We must keep informed as Jews and react as a united people. To the Palestinian who told us, "I asked my son what he wanted for his birthday and he said a sub-machine gun to fight Israel," -- we answer, We still rely on the sacred book, on law and on justice.

AMEN

There is a certain magic about this night, the 1st of the New Year: the vast number who crowd our sanctuary and a sense of the spiritual presence of all the generations of our people. All over the world Jews feel it as we do.

THE NEW JEW

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
Rosh Hashanah Eve
Friday, September 21, 1979

It is ~~exactly~~ ^{now} ten years ~~ago~~ ^{came to serve our Congregation} that I ~~began my service to~~
~~Washington Hebrew Congregation,~~ a decade which began happily
for me when the then very young part-time rabbi, Joseph P.
Weinberg, decided to stay with me in the full service of
our Congregation. ~~It has become an association unique in~~
~~the American rabbinate, not merely because of its long dura-~~
~~tion, but because of the depth and integrity of our~~
~~relationship. More will be said about this next Friday~~

night when Maxine and I ~~shall~~ ^{say} also ~~bid~~ farewell to you before
leaving on our Sabbatical. ~~in the years that passed.~~ ^{wonderful colleagues have joined our professional staff}
The Jewish New Year of 5740 overlaps the ending of the
decade of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's. This
moment, therefore, conveys to us an especially acute sense of
the passage of time which gives relevance to the sentence in
Ecclesiastes,

"One generation passeth away and another
generation cometh

The sun also riseth and the sun goeth down."

(Ecc. 1.4-5)

The Biblical sage did not merely repeat the same thought
in different words. He remarked about two different chains of
events. First, there is the mere passage of time. The sequel

*you. Most of you are no longer just members, but friends. Your joys have become ours and we have
grieved with you
in your sorrows.
I am happy to greet
the many new members
on this their first
Rosh Hashanah and look
forward to getting
to know every one of
you.*

of sunrise and sunset, of seasons, years or decades may be observed simply as calendar events. True historical meaning, however, is not in the mere flow of time but in the change of people. The succession of generations suggests this historical change:

"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh."

New people, a new era, new problems, new opportunities, new challenges! Are we facing merely a new decade, or will it also be a new era? If so, what is it that is ending and what is it that is beginning?

What is ending in the history of the world is a decade of tremendous growth of population, from three and a half to nearly four and a half billion, a decade of the accumulation of vast power, nuclear and economic, -- our own industrial production jumped 50% during that decade -- but also what is ending is an era of unimaginable waste of lives and resources. For us Americans it has been an often frustrating and embittered decade in which the American colossus suffered unaccustomed humiliation at home and abroad. It was the decade of Vietnam, of Watergate, of the energy crisis and runaway inflation. On balance, we feel less secure at the end of this decade than we were at its beginning. The UN is in shambles and some horrendous political upheaval seems not only possible but -- what is there to stop it? We live with the rivers of world tension near the flood stage and the dams of security in danger of breaking.

News

Great opportunities have gone to waste for the world and for America largely because of inadequate leadership. On July 16, President Carter emerged from his long silence at Camp David to tell us that there was something more worrisome than the oil crunch -- a national malaise of the spirit, a general loss of confidence. What can we do, asked the president. If we were to answer tonight, we would say: Mr. President, no doubt there is a problem but it's not confidence that we have run out of but oil and patience and leadership equal to the task. Ours is an age of giant power and pigmy leadership. In describing a time of chaos, the rabbis declared

"The leaders of the generation act like dogs." One commentator points out that while it is true that a dog runs before his master, every so often he turns around to make sure that he's going where his owner is heading. So our leaders go in front of us, but instead of offering courageous and intelligent guidance, they keep their ears tuned to the television set and their eyes glued to the popularity polls in order to decide the course of action. (R. Gordis, "Leave a Little to God" p. 67-68)

Despite all the anxieties which we share with the world, we Jews are not despairing and I'll tell you why. We remember this year of 1979 so soon to end as the 40th anniversary of the most evil year in history -- 1939. We Jews were then the boat people, floating from ocean to ocean, and no one cared.

It was the year of the world's moral bankruptcy. It was the year when the homeland of the socialist dream, the Soviet Union, concluded a friendship pact with Nazi Germany, when World War II began with the devastation of Poland, when nothing seemed to stop the Nazi conquest of the world and the holocaust unfolded its dreadful scenario.

That year of 1939, the greatest living poet in the English language, W. H. Auden, wrote these lines

As the clever hopes expire
Of a low, dishonest decade...
The unmentionable odor of death
Offends our September night.

Why are we Jews not in despair on this September night, 40 years later? In the first place, because we have been through infinitely worse. We're stronger today, as Friedrich Nietzsche said, because,

"We take unto ourselves the strength of that which we have overcome."

But, there is another reason why we are not in a state of despair. We are no longer the same kind of people. Once again we are witnessing that mysterious transformation of the Jew to which Ezekiel testified in his time:

"I give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you." (Ezek. 36.26)

A new Jew has emerged -- especially here in the United States. His profile now includes 3 characteristics formerly nonexistent or exceptional:

1. The new American Jew is comparatively calm and well poised. He is the first fearless Jew in 2,000 years.
2. He has unprecedented self confidence.
3. He has made a psychological breakthrough in regard to his self acceptance.

1. The Fearlessness of the New Jew

The Andrew Young affair was an eye opener on three things:

The new temper of black leadership;

The intensity of black-Jewish tension;

The point we want to stress: ^{tonight} a new kind of Jewish response.

Why was there such an outcry on the part of professional black leadership in reaction to Andy Young's resignation? No other ethnic group protested a dismissal of their representatives in the government. Italian Americans were undisturbed by Califano's departure as Secretary of HEW. No Kaddish was recited by Jews for their half brothers, Schlesinger and Blumenthal. Why were black leaders so enraged when Andy Young had to go? We must understand it psychologically. Blacks in high visible positions of prestige are still a rarity. Mainly for this reason, they took the loss of Andy Young, mistakenly, as a setback, an insult and humiliation for all blacks.

There is a lesson in the incident that should not be lost on us. Blacks want more recognition in national and international affairs. They want to be heard by the policy makers of the nation. They want a larger share of prestige by being part of top policy decision making. They have pride; they want to be visible. Black political leaders, even if we do not agree with them on certain issues, must be treated with the same high respect we would show other political leaders of distinction. I think it is a mistake if Menachem Begin, as has been reported, decides to snub Congressman Walter Fauntroy on his current trip to the Middle East and Israel. The intangibles of honor, pride and prestige are clearly high priority items with our black fellow citizens. Certainly 25 million blacks represent a power in the United States not to be trifled with.

In the light of all this, we can understand or even sympathize with black anguish over the departure of Andrew Young. But, we cannot accept the turning of their anger to an anger against Jews. We cannot accept the injection of anti-Jewish bigotry by some black leaders and the failure of others to repudiate it. We were pained to hear again the libelous myth about Jewish merchants and landlords exploiting poor blacks when everybody knows that virtually all Jews have fled the black ghettos long ago in fear of crime and violence. Some day, monuments will be erected in honor of heroic and humanitarian Jewish merchants such as Washington's

Mews

Mews

Mortimer Lebowitz who stubbornly stayed behind to operate his retail stores which had been burned down and looted again and again.

Two weeks ago, Lebowitz astonished our community when he re-opened his Southeastern store only one hour late after it had been vandalized and looted again. **His** was the first store in Washington where blacks and whites could share the same fitting room. Lebowitz worked to influence white business leaders to hire blacks for other than menial jobs. He was president of the Urban League; he marched with Martin Luther King in Montgomery, Alabama. If Lebowitz is an exploiter, black ghettos would be blessed to have more of that kind. Most remarkable, however, was Lebowitz' calm reaction to the latest devastation.

"I have to tell myself that it's not directed against me. I've got to understand the social history that causes these problems and, thirdly, I have to strive for the solution of these problems."

I wish Lebowitz were here so that I could pin a medal on his chest. In fact, all American Jewry deserve a medal for the amazingly calm, restrained and dignified reaction to the black surprise attack upon them following the Andrew Young affair. This is the first and most noticeable characteristic

of the new American Jew. He no longer panics so easily. He is unafraid.

Much to their credit, American Jewish leaders refused to engage in a shouting match with black leaders. We refused to yield to paranoic fears of antisemitism. We held no emergency and no noisy protest meetings. We kept our poise and our principles as we reaffirmed a lasting commitment to social justice, to civil rights, to fair and equal opportunity. But, we also clearly and firmly stood up for our own people. We reaffirmed absolute opposition to any dealings with the PLO as long as that terror organization seeks to destroy Israel.

The new American Jew is neither weak nor silent. He's the new Jew who will fight for his right and for his people. Nineteen centuries of persecution, climaxed by the holocaust, have taught us that powerlessness is shame and degradation. He who lies prostrate, dependent on the good will of passers-by, will be pitied by few and despised by most. Much too long, we, a people without a land of our own, were prostrate among the nations, vilified and kicked by all who pleased to abuse us. It was this condition of pwoerlessness which turned us into Zionists.

We agree completely that Arabs should have a homeland. They have not one -- they have more than 20! They can fulfill their need for self determination as Arabs in any of those

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wealthy and powerful Arab lands. Jews have only one land to govern as a majority, only one land to assert their national identity, only one land to show what we can do as a nation.

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What we did in Israel remains a monumental miracle. Which modern tourist, Jew or gentile, is not enchanted by Israel's fertile fields and forests, gleaming cities and flowering gardens?

We do not necessarily agree with every wrinkle of Israeli politics. We may question, for example, the wisdom, as do many Israelis, of various provocative measures at this super-sensitive point in time, such as the setting up of new Jewish ~~Jewish~~ settlements in Arab territories and the untimely announcement of an open season on land purchases on the West Bank. (Which Jew with any sense would invest in land on the West Bank at this time?)

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Yet, these aberrations are minor compared to Israel's basic case. Palestine would still be the inhospitable wilderness ARabs made of it in their long centuries of fitful occupation, were it not for the Jews who bought it and rebuilt it, inch by inch. The land was not conquered but built by Jews. Jews are there by international right, recognized by the League of Nations and by the United Nations. The tragic Arab-Israel conflict was never of Israel's own choosing but forced upon her in four wars, each of which began with an Arab attempt to wipe out the State and drive the Jews into the sea. Israel is ours by every historic and moral right.

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So much the more are we pained by the bad press Israel has been getting. We're troubled that the great powers see only the mote in Israel's eye but not the beam in their own eyes. (Mat. 7.4) Would the USSR return the parts of Finland, Poland, and the Baltic States she occupied? Would the USA return Texas and California to Mexico? How quickly they excoriate Israel's most minute offense yet ignore the nobility and generosity of Israel's return of huge areas conquered in war.

Sometimes I think that the only place where the Jew will find justice in this world is in the dictionary. How else can we explain why Israel is so quickly condemned as being intransigent but not Yasir Arafat who, seeing the triple handshake of Sadat, Begin and Jimmy Carter, exclaimed, "I would chop off their hands."

We fear that Israel cannot get a fair hearing in the court of public opinion in any case as long as Arab oil billionaires use their black gold as the carrot and the stick, buying influence with tempting concessions or threatening reprisals if resisted. By their own admission, black leaders are now being wooed by ARabs with enormous clout. James Farmer of CORE discussed recently on television a commitment of 40 million dollars to CORE by Arab oil kingdoms. Other black leaders also hope for Arab support beyond what former Jewish

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friends could do.] They and other ^{former} fair weather friends of Israel are now ready to march to the tune of a different drummer.

2. The Self Confidence of the New Jew

Yet, we are confident and this is the second characteristic of the New Jew: his new political self confidence! Not only our problems but also our resources have grown.

It is no longer wishful thinking, but a verifiable fact that American Jewry has achieved a new and higher ^{status} ~~standard~~ such as was undreamt of even ten years ago. We now enjoy close to the highest level of recognition, prosperity and respect given to any of the ethnic and religious groups in America. What is the evidence? I would like to point to two indicators as to where we stand in the public eye.

Who do you think described the Jews in the following words:

"I respect them because it is difficult to remain a strict Jew in today's society -- they're industrious, very intelligent...they are not only closely knit, but more than willing to help each other....they have known pain and suffering. They're proud of a long heritage, great determination...a refusal to be subdued...they have a close knit family structure...they're intellectual, perceptive...they're always trying to better themselves but at times pushy...they have family unity, closeness, ritual...they are ~~intelligent~~, clever."

This profile of the American Jew is not the work of one author but of thousands. It is a ^{composite} ~~summary~~ of the perceptions of the Jew by a cross section of the American people as gathered by the Gallup Poll. In its 1978 summary of the public image of the various religious communities in America, Jews are rated favorably on a level comparable to that of Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

*Story told by
Phil Donahue*

Closely related to this new respect for the American Jew is his newly won political prominence. None of the seven senators and 22 congressmen of the Jewish faith has suggested that their Jewishness was a handicap in their political career. Some, on the contrary, have pointed to it as an advantage.

It has been said that Henry Kissinger could get any office except the presidency. He recently delighted an audience with some remarks about his political future:

"Though foreign born, my chances are pretty good for the top job in this country. True, the Constitution bars me from being elected President. But, I discovered that there's no American law preventing me from becoming Emperor."

The serious side to Kissinger's joke is the fact that according to the latest Gallup Poll, 82% would vote for a qualified Jew as President, with 6% having no opinion and only 12% opposed. Certainly there are Jews in politics with

enough self confidence to think about it. Halberstam's recent novel, "The Wanting of Levine," the story of a Jewish President of the United States, may move from fiction to reality in the next decade.

3. The Self Acceptance of the American Jew

One would have to be blind not to ^{see} realize that we live in a new era of Jewish history, the era of the New Jew who is, in the first place, unafraid and secondly, feels secure enough and self confident to hold his own with anyone in the USA. To these new characteristics we now add a third: the new Jew has made a psychological breakthrough. He has lost his inhibitions. He no longer minds being different. He has achieved a remarkable degree of self acceptance. To the extent that he is different, he asserts his distinctiveness openly and with pride. A most recent illustration of this development is the release of the motion picture comedy "The Frisco Kid." Never mind that it is of perhaps inferior quality. We ~~w~~ould not ignore its message. The hero of this movie-farce is a young Orthodox Russian rabbi, attired in his black caftan and black broad-brimmed hat, with ^{ritual} tassels of his fringed undergarment showing. This model of the old fashioned yeshiva is shown in a number of hilarious encounters with Western gunmen and cowboys. Thirty or forty years ago this type would have provoked antisemitic catcalls, with Jews

in the audience craling under their seats in embarrassment. Today, the audience reacts with good natured laughter, rather enjoying the incongruous connection of a Yiddish-accented yeshiva bochur with Western cowboys and Indians.

This is possible only because of the basically positive gentile interest in the ethnic peculiarity of the Jew. In one single week, here in Washington, a local Protestant church produced the play, "Diary of Anna Frank" while a Catholic church presented "Fiddler on the Roof." In line with it is the huge popularity of the Yiddish novelist, Isaac Bashevis Singer, whose stories of traditional East European life fascinate millions of Jewish and non-Jewish readers.

The bottom line is: we've come a long way from degradation to honor, from timidity to confidence, from poor peddler to high political office, from rejection to acceptance. We have been greatly blessed and in addition to these gracious blessings, God has given us one more: He ^{has} given us a new heart and put a new spirit within us. He made us the New Jew.

Summary - Appeal

A wondrous historical Providence has appointed American Jewry the patron and guardian of our people. Like Joseph, the provider, who saved his people as governor of Egypt,

-- so we, American Jews, are today the main pillar of Israel's strength and stay. No American Jew must be silent in the political struggle in which Israel's just right for survival is being challenged. No American Jew, however modest his means, must exclude himself from the privilege of helping his brother Jews, financially. Each of us must be proud to give to the United Jewish Appeal and make the Israel-Bond loan which he's capable of making.

Finally, we must keep informed as Jews and know our heritage, the source of our unity and dignity as a people.

A Palestinian told a reporter:

"I asked my son what he wanted for his birthday and he said a sub-machine gun to fight Israel."

Which Jew would not answer: "I prefer to call my son to the Torah on his birthday and commit him to a life of justice."

The story is told about a young Jewish man who came to America at the turn of the century. One of the first things he did upon arrival was to join a synagogue. Soon thereafter, he was elected President of his Congregation. When he wrote to his mother, who was still in Europe, he couldn't help but brag, "Ich bin President." -- I am the President!

His mother did not know what the word "president" meant so she went to ask a neighbor who informed her that the president is the head of a country. The mother was extremely impressed but nevertheless wrote her son the following message:

please

Now that you are president, ("hob rachomes of Yidden") -- have mercy on the Jews!

~~We say so to the new Jew who has emerged in this mighty land: "Have mercy on the Jews."~~

~~We say so to our fair minded and good hearted fellow citizens: "Have mercy on the Jews."~~

~~And we say so to the free world who witnessed the destruction of one third of our people: "Have mercy on the Jews!"~~

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
AMEN

*Think of yourself as the recipient of this mother's message:
Your people needs you - and you are the only
one in a position to help!*

*Remember - the will to live is animal
the will to let live is human
the will to help live, is divine!*

(Hardeez: Kaplan)

Amen

As Given

THE NEW JEW

by Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman, Rosh Hashanah Eve
Friday, Sept. 21, 1979

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Washington Hebrew Congregation
Rosh Hashanah Eve
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New people, a new era, new problems, new opportunities, new challenges! Are we facing merely a new decade, or will it also be a new era? If so, what is it that is ending and what is it that is beginning?

What is ending in the history of the world is a decade of tremendous growth of population, from three and a half to nearly four and a half billion, a decade of the accumulation of vast power, nuclear and economic, -- our own industrial production jumped 50% during that decade -- but also what is ending is an era of unimaginable waste of lives and resources. For us Americans it has been an often frustrating and embittered decade in which the American colossus suffered unaccustomed humiliation at home and abroad. It was the decade of Vietnam, of Watergate, of the energy crisis and runaway inflation. On balance, we feel less secure at the end of this decade than we were at its beginning. The UN is in shambles and some horrendous political upheaval seems not only possible but -- what is there to stop it? We live, with the rivers of world tension near the flood stage and the dams of security in danger of breaking.

Great opportunities have gone to waste for the world and for American largely because of inadequate leadership. On July 16, President Carter emerged from his long silence at Camp David to tell us that there was something more worrisome than the oil crunch -- a national malaise of the spirit, a general loss of confidence. What can we do, asked the president. If we were to answer tonight, we would say: Mr. President, no doubt there is a problem but it's not confidence that we have run out of but oil and patience and leadership equal to the task. Ours is an age of giant power and pigmy leadership. In describing a time of chaos, the rabbis declared

"The leaders of the generation act like dogs." One commentator points out that while it is true that a dog runs before his master, every so often he turns around to make sure that he's going where his owner is heading. So our leaders go in front of us, but instead of offering courageous and intelligent guidance, they keep their ears tuned to the television set and their eyes glued to the popularity polls in order to decide the course of action. (R. Gordis, "Leave a Little to God" p. 67-68)

Despite all the anxieties which we share with the world, we Jews are not despairing and ^{may I suggest to} ~~will~~ tell you, why. We remember this year of 1979, so soon to end, as the 40th anniversary of the most evil year in history -- 1939. We Jews were then the boat people, floating from ocean to ocean, and no one cared.

It was the year of the world's moral bankruptcy. It was the year when the homeland of the socialist dream, the Soviet Union, concluded a friendship pact with Nazi Germany, when World War II began with the devastation of Poland, when nothing seemed to stop the Nazi conquest of the world and the holocaust unfolded its dreadful scenario.

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Start here

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Why was there such an outcry on the part of professional black leadership in reaction to Andy Young's resignation? No other

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Cont. p. 8

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Two weeks ago, Lebowitz astonished our community when he re-opened his Southeastern store only one hour late after it had been vandalized and looted again. **HIS** was the first store in Washington where blacks and whites could share the same fitting room. Lebowitz worked to influence white business leaders to hire blacks for other than menial jobs. He was president of the Urban League; he marched with Martin Luther King in Montgomery, Alabama. If Lebowitz is an exploiter, black ghettos would be blessed to have more of that kind. Most remarkable, however, was Lebowitz' calm reaction to the latest devastation.

"I have to tell myself that it's not directed against me. I've got to understand the social history that causes these problems and, thirdly, I have to strive for the solution of these problems."

I wish Lebowitz were here so that I could pin a medal on his chest. In fact, all American Jewry deserve a medal for the amazingly calm, restrained and dignified reaction to the black surprise attack upon them following the Andrew Young affair. This is the first and most noticeable characteristic

of the new Jew. He no longer panics so easily. He is unafraid.

Out. ↓

Much to their credit, American Jewish leaders refused to engage in a shouting match with black leaders. We refused to yield to paranoid fears of antisemitism. We held no emergency and no noisy protest meetings. We kept our poise and our principles as we reaffirmed a lasting commitment to social justice, to civil rights, to fair and equal opportunity. But, we also clearly and firmly stood up for our own people. We reaffirmed absolute opposition to any dealings with the PLO as long as that terror organization seeks to destroy Israel.

The ~~new~~ American Jew is neither weak nor silent. He's the new Jew who will fight for his right and for his people. Nineteen centuries of persecution, climaxed by the holocaust, have taught us that powerlessness is shame and degradation. He who lies prostrate, dependent on the good will of passers-by, will be pitied by few and despised by most. Much too long, we, a people without a land of our own, were prostrate among the nations, vilified and kicked by all who pleased to abuse us. It was this condition of pwoerlessness which turned us into Zionists.

We agree completely that Arabs should have a homeland. They have not one -- they have more than 20! They can fulfill their need for self determination as Arabs in any of those

wealthy and powerful Arab lands. Jews have only one land to govern as a majority, only one land to assert their national identity, only one land to show what we can do as a nation.

What we did in Israel remains a monumental miracle. Which modern tourist, Jew or gentile, is not enchanted by Israel's fertile fields and forests, gleaming cities and flowering gardens?

We do not necessarily agree with every wrinkle of Israeli politics. We may question, for example, the wisdom, as do many Israelis, of various provocative measures at this super-sensitive point in time, such as the setting up of new Jewish settlements in Arab territories and the untimely announcement of an open season on land purchases on the West Bank. [Which Jew with any sense would invest in land on the West Bank at this time?]

Yet, these aberrations are minor compared to Israel's basic case. Palestine would still be the inhospitable wilderness ARabs made of it in their long centuries of fitful occupation, were it not for the Jews who bought it and rebuilt it, inch by inch. The land was not conquered but built by Jews. Jews are there by international right, recognized by the League of Nations and by the United Nations. The tragic Arab-Israel conflict was never of Israel's own choosing but forced upon her in four wars, each of which began with an Arab attempt to wipe out the State and drive the Jews into the sea. Israel is ours by every historic and moral right.

So much the more are we pained by the bad press Israel has been getting. We're troubled that the great powers see only the mote in Israel's eye but not the beam in their own eyes. (Mat. 7.4) Would the USSR return the parts of Finland, Poland, and the Baltic States she occupied? Would the USA return Texas and California to Mexico? How quickly they excoriate Israel's most minute offense yet ignore the nobility and generosity of Israel's return of huge areas conquered in war.

Sometimes I think that the only place where the Jew will find justice in this world is in the dictionary. How else can we explain why Israel is so quickly condemned as being intransigent but not Yasir Arafat who, seeing the triple handshake of Sadat, Begin and Jimmy Carter, exclaimed, "I would chop off their hands."

We fear that Israel cannot get a fair hearing in the court of public opinion in any case as long as Arab oil billionaires use their black gold ^{like} ~~as~~ the carrot and the stick, buying influence with tempting concessions or threatening reprisals if resisted. By their own admission, black leaders are now being wooed by ARabs with enormous clout. James Farmer of CORE discussed recently on television a commitment of 40 million dollars to CORE by Arab oil kingdoms. Other black leaders also hope for Arab support beyond what former Jewish

friends could do. They and other ~~former~~ friends of Israel are now ready to march to the tune of a different drummer.

2. The Self Confidence of the New Jew

Yet, we are confident, and this is the second characteristic of the New Jew: his new political self-confidence! Not only our problems but also our resources have grown.

~~It is no longer wishful thinking, but a verifiable fact~~
~~that~~ American Jewry has achieved a new and higher ^{status} standard such as was undreamt of even ten years ago. We now enjoy close to the highest level of recognition, prosperity and respect given to any of the ethnic and religious groups in America: ~~What is the evidence? I would like to point to two indicators as to where we stand in the public eye.~~

Who do you think described the Jews in the following words:

"I respect them because it is difficult to remain a strict Jew in today's society -- they're industrious, very intelligent...they are not only closely knit, but more than willing to help each other....they have known pain and suffering. They're proud of a long heritage, great determination...a refusal to be subdued...they have a close knit family structure...they're intellectual, perceptive...they're always trying to better themselves but at times pushy...they have family unity, closeness, ritual...they are intelligent, clever."

Type

This profile of the American Jew is not the work of one author but of thousands. It is a ^{composite} of the perceptions of the Jew by a cross section of the American people as gathered by the Gallup Poll. In its 1978 summary of the public image of the various religious communities in America, Jews are rated favorably, on a level comparable to that of Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

Story of young man of mixed mar. age 25% Jewish 75% Episc. - chose Judaism. Why He's the social climber in our family

Closely related to this new respect for the American Jew is his newly won political prominence. None of the seven senators and 22 congressmen of the Jewish faith has suggested that their Jewishness was a handicap in their political career. Some, on the contrary, have pointed to it as an advantage.

It has been said that Henry Kissinger could get any office except the presidency. He recently delighted an audience with some remarks about his political future:

"Though foreign born, my chances are pretty good for the top job in this country. True, the Constitution bars me from being elected President. But, I discovered that there's no American law preventing me from becoming Emperor."

The serious side to Kissinger's joke is the fact that according to the latest Gallup Poll, 82% would vote for a qualified Jew as President, with 6% having no opinion and only 12% opposed. Certainly there are Jews in politics with

enough self confidence to think about it. Halberstam's recent novel, "The Wanting of Levine," the story of a Jewish President of the United States, may move from fiction to reality in the next decade.

3. The Self Acceptance of the American Jew

One would have to be blind not to ^{see} that we live in a new era of Jewish history, the era of the New Jew who is, in the first place, unafraid and secondly, feels secure enough and self confident to hold his own with anyone (in the USA.) To these new characteristics we now add a third: the new Jew has made a psychological breakthrough. He has lost his inhibitions. He no longer minds being different. He has achieved a remarkable degree of self acceptance. ~~To the extent that he is different,~~ he asserts his distinctiveness openly and with pride. A most recent illustration ~~of this development~~ is the release of the motion picture comedy "The Frisco Kid." Never mind that it is of perhaps inferior quality. We should not ignore its message. The hero of this movie farce is a young Orthodox Russian rabbi, attired in his black caftan and black broad-brimmed hat, with ^{ritual} tassels of his fringed undergarment showing. This model of the old fashioned yeshiva is shown in a number of hilarious encounters with Western gunmen and cowboys. Thirty or forty years ago this type would have provoked antisemitic catcalls, with Jews

in the audience ^W ~~cr~~ ^Aling under their seats in embarrassment. Today, the audience reacts with good natured laughter, rather enjoying the incongruous connection of a Yiddish-accented yeshiva bochur with Western cowboys and Indians.

This is possible only because of the basically positive gentile interest in the ethnic peculiarity of the Jew. In one single week, here in Washington, a local Protestant church produced the play, "Diary of Anna Frank" while a Catholic church presented "Fiddler on the Roof." In line with it is the huge popularity of the Yiddish novelist, Isaac Bashevis Singer, whose stories of traditional East European life fascinate millions of Jewish and non-Jewish readers.

~~Philip Donahue show this week on Why Goyim Choose Judaism is indicative of surprise of interest in Judaism.~~

The bottom line is: we've come a long way from degradation to honor, from timidity to confidence, from poor peddler to high political office, from rejection to acceptance. We have been greatly blessed and in addition to these gracious blessings, God has given us one more: He ^{has} ~~gave~~ us a new heart and put a new spirit within us. He made us the New Jew.

Summary - Appeal

What I have said of American Jewry is true of every Jewish Community in the English speaking world and I am sure - of Australia Jewry

A wondrous historical Providence has appointed (American Jewry) ^{as} the patron and guardian of our people. Like Joseph, the provider, who saved his people as governor of Egypt,

Insert p 14

Gentile persecution with the Jews has changed
In the past it was largely shaped by fear &
Satanic fantasy — which produced hate & contempt.

The ingredients of bigotry have been replaced
by curiosity mixed with ^{awe &} a devotion for
the mystery of Jewish survival.

In a world situation in which every human being
feels threatened by nuclear extinction, by the possibility
of homelessness ~~being~~ — all have come to see themselves
as candidates for a holocaust and as potential
refugees — the best people — in a world so
dramatically in seance — they want to
know how the Jews made it!

-- so we, (American Jews), are today the main pillar of Israel's strength and stay. (No American Jew) must be silent in the political struggle in which Israel's just right for survival is being challenged. (No American Jew), however modest his means, must exclude himself from the privilege of helping his brother Jews, financially. (Each of us must be proud to give to the United Jewish Appeal and make the Israel-Bond loan which he's capable of making,)

Finally, we must keep informed as Jews and know our heritage, the source of our unity and dignity as a people.

A Palestinian told a reporter:

"I asked my son what he wanted for his birthday and he said a sub-machine gun to fight Israel."

Which Jew would not answer: "I ~~prefer~~ ^{hope} to call my son to the Torah on his birthday and commit him to a life of justice."

The story is told about a young Jewish man who came to America at the turn of the century. One of the first things he did upon arrival was to join a synagogue. Soon thereafter, he was elected President of his Congregation. When he wrote to his mother, who was still in Europe, he couldn't help but brag, "Ich bin President." -- I am the President!

His mother did not know what the word "president" meant so she went to ask a neighbor who informed her that the president is the head of a country. The mother was extremely impressed but nevertheless wrote her son the following message:

⊗ A historic shift of power to the Far East is now taking place. Similar to the shift of power from Europe to America that began 2 centuries ago. Your continent may become the new gateway to Far East and the possible development of ANTARCTICA.

and support generously the Synag. and all other Jewish institutions which keep our heritage alive. In any event, your lot has fallen in a pleasant place of freedom & prosperity. You may well experience a fantastic growth of population & power & the continuity of Judaism as Jewish people may some day depend on our Jews down here in Denver.

Son, Now that you are ^{the} president, ("hob rachomes of Yidden") -- have ^{please} mercy on the Jews!

We say so to the new Jew who has emerged in this mighty land: "Have mercy on the Jews."

We say so to our fair minded and good hearted fellow citizens: "Have mercy on the Jews."

And we say so to the free world who witnessed the destruction of one third of our people: "Have mercy on the Jews!"

AMEN

Consider

~~Think~~ of yourself as the recipient of this mother's message:

Your people needs you - and you are the only one in a position to help!

Remember: "The will to live is animal

The will to let live is human

The will to help live is divine!"

(Mordchai Kaplan)

Amen

THE NEW JEW

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
Rosh Hashanah Eve
Friday, September 21, 1979

There is a certain magic about this night, the first of the New Year -- the vast number who crowd our Sanctuary and a sense of the spiritual presence of over 100 generations of our people. All over the world, Jews feel as we do tonight. It is ten years now that I came to serve our Congregation, a decade which began happily for me when the then very young, still part-time rabbi, Joseph Weinberg, decided to stay with me in the full service of our Congregation. Ours is a unique kind of relationship - but more about that next Friday evening when Maxine and I shall say farewell to you before leaving on our Sabbatical. I've been blessed with wonderful colleagues who have joined our professional staff in the years that have passed. Above all, we have come to know you. Most of you are no longer just members of the Congregation but friends. Your joys have become our joys and we have grieved with you in your sorrows. I am happy to greet and welcome into our midst tonight so many new members who are celebrating Rosh Hashanah for the first time with the Washington Hebrew Congregation and we all look forward to getting to know you - each and every one of you.

The Jewish New Year of 5740, which begins this night, overlaps the ending of the decade of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's. This moment, therefore, conveys to us an especially acute sense of the passage of time which gives relevance to the sentence in Ecclesiastes,

"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh. The sun also riseth and the sun goeth down."
(Ecc. 1.4-5)

The Biblical sage did not merely repeat the same thought in different words. He remarked about two different chains of events. First, there is the mere passage of time. The sequel of sunrise and sunset, of seasons, of years, of decades may be observed simply as calendar events. But true historical meaning is not in the mere flow of time but in the change of people, the succession of generations, and therefore he said,

"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh."

New people, a new era, new problems, new opportunities, new challenges! Are we facing merely a new decade or will it also be a new era? If so, what is it that is ending and what is it that is beginning?

What is ending in the history of the world is a decade of tremendous growth of population, from three and a half to nearly four and a half billion, a decade of the accumulation of vast power, nuclear and economic -- our own industrial production has risen 50% during this decade -- but also what is ending is an era of unimaginable waste of lives and of resources. For us Americans it has often been a frustrating and embittered decade in which the American colossus suffered unaccustomed humiliation and defeat at home and abroad. It was the decade of Vietnam, of Watergate, of the energy crisis and now of runaway inflation. On balance, I suppose we shall all agree that we feel less secure at the end of this decade than we did ten years ago. The United Nations is in shambles and some horrendous political upheaval seems not only possible but - what is there to stop it? We live with the rivers of world tension near the flood stage and the dams of security are in danger of breaking.

Despite all of these anxieties in the world today which we share with all mankind, we Jews are not despairing. May I suggest why. We remember this year of 1979, so soon to end, as the 40th anniversary of the most evil year in history - the year 1939. We Jews were then the boat people of the world, floating from ocean to ocean, and nobody cared. It was the year of the world's moral bankruptcy. It was the year when the homeland of the socialist dream, the Soviet Union, made a friendship pact with Nazi Germany, when World War II began with the devastation of Poland and it looked as though Hitler would conquer the world when the holocaust unfolded its dreadful scenario.

That year of 1939, the greatest living poet in the English language, W. H. Auden, wrote these lines:

As the clever hopes expire
Of a low, dishonest decade. . .
The unmentionable odor of death
Offends our September night.

Why are we Jews not in despair on this September night, 40 years later? In the first place, because we have been through infinitely worse. We're stronger today, as Friedrich Nietzsche said, because,

"We take unto ourselves the strength of that
which we have overcome."

But there is another reason why we are not in a state of panic or despair. We are no longer the same kind of people we were. Once

again we are witnessing that mysterious transformation that has occurred from time to time in the character and makeup of the Jew to which Ezekiel, the prophet, testified when he said,

"I give you a new heart and I put a new spirit within you."

(Ezek. 36.26)

A new Jew has emerged -- especially here in the United States. His profile now includes three characteristics formerly nonexistent or exceptional:

First of all, the new American Jew is comparatively calm and well poised. He is the first fearless Jew in nearly 2,000 years.

Secondly, he has unprecedented self confidence and ambition.

Thirdly, he has made a psychological breakthrough in regard to his self acceptance.

1. The Fearlessness of the New Jew

The Andrew Young affair was an eye opener on three things: the new temper of Black leadership; the intensity of Black-Jewish tension and the point we want to stress tonight - it also showed a new kind of a Jewish response to crisis.

Why was there such an outcry on the part of professional Black leadership in reaction to Andy Young's resignation? No other ethnic group seemed to care very much about the dismissal of their representatives. Italian-Americans were undisturbed by Califano's departure as Secretary of HEW. And no Kaddish was recited by Jews for their half brothers, Schlesinger and Blumethal. Why were Black leaders so enraged when Andy Young had to go? I think we must understand this psychologically. Blacks in high visible positions of prestige are still a rarity. Mainly for this reason they took the loss of Andy Young, mistakenly I think, as a setback, as an insult, as a slap, as a humiliation for all the Blacks.

But there is a lesson to be learned in the incident that should not be lost upon us. Blacks do want more recognition in national and international affairs. They want to be heard by the policy makers of the nation. They want a larger share of prestige by being part of top policy decision making. They have pride; they want to be visible. Black political leaders, even if we do not agree with them on certain issues, ought therefore to be treated by us with the same high respect we would show other political leaders of distinction. They are hyper-sensitive

And therefore I think it really was a mistake if Menachem Begin, as has been reported, decided to snub Congressman Walter Fauntroy on his current trip to the Middle East and Israel. The intangibles of honor, of pride and prestige are now clearly high priority items with our black fellow citizens. Certainly 25 million Blacks are a power in the United States not to be trifled with.

In the light of all this, we can understand -- we can even sympathize with Black anguish over the departure of Andy Young. But, we cannot accept the turning of their anger to an anger against Jews. We cannot accept the injection of anti-Jewish bigotry by some Black leaders and the failure of others to repudiate it. We were pained -- we were disappointed -- we were anguished to hear again the libelous myth of Jewish merchants and landlords exploiting poor Blacks when everybody knows that virtually all Jews have long ago fled the Black ghetto in fear of their lives and their safety - in fear of crime and violence. Some day monuments will be erected in honor of heroic and humanitarian Jewish merchants such as Washington's Mortimer Lebowitz who stubbornly stayed behind to operate his retail stores which had been burned down and looted again and again.

Only two weeks ago, Lebowitz astonished our community when he re-opened his Southeast store only one hour late after it had been vandalized and looted again. His was the first store in Washington where Blacks and Whites could share the same fitting room. His was one of the first stores to specialize in inexpensive merchandise at fair prices for Blacks. Lebowitz worked to influence white business leaders to hire Blacks for other than menial jobs. He was president of the Urban League; he marched with Martin Luther King in Montgomery, Alabama. If Lebowitz is an exploiter, Black ghettos would be blessed to have more of that kind. Most remarkable, however, was Lebowitz' calm reaction to the latest devastation. He said,

"I have to tell myself that it's not directed again me. I've got to understand the social history that causes these problems and, thirdly, I have to strive for the solution of these problems."

Could there be a more civilized, understanding, sensitive and courageous statement than that? I wish Lebowitz were here tonight so that I could pin a medal on his chest. In fact, all American Jewry deserve a medal for their amazingly calm, restrained and dignified reactin to the Black surprise assault upon us following the Andrew Young resignation. This is the first and the most noticeable characteristic of the new Jew. He no longer panics so easily. He is unafraid.

Much to their credit, American Jewish leaders refused to engage in shouting matches with leaders. We refused to yield to paranoic fears of antisemitism. We held no emergency, no noisy protest meetings. We kept our poise and we kept our principles as we reaffirmed a lasting commitment to social justice, to civil rights, to fair and equal opportunity. But, we also clearly and firmly stood up for our own people. We reaffirmed absolute opposition to any kind of deal with the PLO as long as that terror organization seeks to destroy Israel and does not even want to recognize its existence.

The American Jew - the new Jew - is neither weak nor silent. He has stopped bowing and scraping. He is the new Jew who will fight for his right and for his people. Nineteen centuries of persecution, climaxed by the holocaust, have taught us that powerlessness is shame and degradation. He who lies prostrate, dependent on the good will of passers-by, will be pitied by few and despised by most. Much too long, we, a people without a land of our own, were prostrate among the nations, vilified and kicked by all who pleased to abuse us. It was this condition of powerlessness which turned us into Zionists.

We agree completely that Arabs should also have a homeland. They have not one -- they have 20! They can fulfill their need for self determination as Arabs in any of those very rich Arab oil nations and their vassals and those supported by them. Jews have only one land to govern as a majority, only one land to assert their national identity, only one land to show what we can do as a nation.

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We do not necessarily agree with every wrinkle of Israeli politics. We may question, for example, the wisdom, as do many Israelis, of various provocative measures at this super-sensitive point in time, such as the setting up of new Jewish settlements in the occupied territories or the untimely announcement of an open season on Arab land purchases.

Yet, these aberrations of judgment are minor compared to Israel's basic case. Palestine would still be the inhospitable wilderness Arabs made of it in their long centuries of fitful occupation were it not for the Jews who bought the land and settled it and built it up and fertilized it inch by inch. The land was not conquered. It was built by Jews. Jews are there by international right, recognized by the League of Nations,

confirmed by the United Nations. The tragic Arab-Israeli conflict was never of Israel's own choosing but was forced upon her in four wars, each of which began with a blatant Arab attempt to wipe out Israel and drive the Jews into the sea. Israel is ours by every historic and moral right.

So much the more are we pained and troubled tonight by the bad press that Israel has been getting these days. We're troubled that the great powers can only see the mote in Israel's eye but not the beam in their own eyes. (Mat. 7.4) Would, for example, the Soviet Union think of returning the parts of Finland, Poland and the Baltic States she occupied? Would, for example, the United States return Texas and California to Mexico? How quickly they excoriate Israel's most minute offense yet ignore the nobility and the generosity of Israel's return of huge areas conquered in war.

Sometimes I think that the only place where the Jew will find justice in this world is in the dictionary. How else can we explain why Israel is so quickly condemned as being intransigent and militant but not Yasir Arafat who, seeing the triple handshake of Sadat, Begin and Jimmy Carter, exclaimed, "I would chop off their hands."

We fear that Israel cannot get a fair hearing in the court of world opinion in any case as long as Arab oil billionaires use their black gold like the carrot and the stick, buying influence with tempting concessions and bribes or threatening reprisals when refused and invoking that oil embargo. By their own admission, black leaders are now being wooed by Arabs with enormous clout. James Farmer of CORE, an organization built with Jewish support and manpower to begin with, recently discussed on television a commitment of 40 million dollars to CORE by Arab oil kingdoms. Other black leaders also hope for Arab support far in excess of what Jews could ever give. They and other former friends of Israel are now ready to march to the tune of a different drummer.

2. The Self Confidence of the New Jew

And yet we are confident, and this is the second characteristic of the new Jew -- his new political self confidence! Not only our problems but also our resources and our stature has grown.

It is no longer wishful thinking but a fact that American Jewry has achieved a new and higher status such as was undreamt of even ten years ago. We now enjoy close to the highest level of recognition, prosperity and respect given to any of the ethnic

or religious communities in this pluralistic country of ours. And what is the evidence? I would like to point to many indicators but I shall select just two as to where we stand in the public eye. I wonder if you can guess the author of the following statement describing the Jews in these words:

I respect them because it is difficult to remain a strict Jew in today's society -- they are industrious, very intelligent--they are not only closely knit but more than willing to help each other--they have known pain and suffering--they're proud of a long heritage--great determination--a refusal to be subdued--they have a close knit family structure--they're intellectual, perceptive--they always try to better themselves but at times pushy--they have family unity, closeness, ritual--they are intelligent, clever.

Who do you think wrote it? This profile of the American Jew is not the work of one author but of thousands. It is a composite of the perceptions of the Jew by a cross section of American people as gathered by the latest Gallup Poll. In its 1978 summary of the public image of the various religious communities in America, Jews are rated favorably, on a level comparable to that of Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

And Phil Donahue, on his interesting show a few days ago, "Why They Convert to Judaism," a remarkable indication of certain trends in America, told the story of a young Episcopalian who was 25% Jewish and 75% Episcopalian - of a mixed marriage background -and then surprised his family when in his mid 20's he decided to switch from Episcopalian and convert and be a Jew. The Episcopalian branch of the family concluded that he was the social climber in their group.

Closely related to this new respect for the American Jew is his his newly won political prominence. None of the seven senators and 22 congressmen of the Jewish faith suggested that their Jewishness was a handicap. In fact to the contrary, some pointed out that it was an advantage.

It has been said that Henry Kissinger could get any office - any office he wants in this country - except the presidency. And he recently delighted an audience with some remarks about his own political future. He said,

"Though foreign born, my chances are pretty good for the top job in this country. True, the Constitution bars me from being elected President but I've discovered that there's no American law preventing me from becoming emperor."

The serious side to Kissinger's joke is the fact that according to the latest Gallup Poll, 82% would vote for a qualified Jew running for President, with 6% having no opinion, only 12% being opposed on principle. And there must be Jews in our country today that are seriously thinking about it. Halberstam's recent novel, "The Wanting of Levine," the story of a Jewish president of the United States, may move from fiction to reality in this coming decade.

3. The Self Acceptance of the American Jew

One would have to be blind not to see that we live in a new era of Jewish history, the era of the new Jew who is, in the first place, unafraid and secondly, feels secure enough and self confident enough and ambitious enough to hold his own with anyone in this country. But to these new characteristics we now add a third: the new Jew has made a psychological breakthrough. He has suddenly lost his inhibitions. He no longer minds being different. He has achieved a remarkable degree of self acceptance and to the extent that he is different he asserts his distinctiveness with pride and with emphasis. A most recent illustration of this development is the release of the motion picture comedy, "The Frisco Kid." Never mind that it is perhaps a movie farce of a poorer quality. But we should not ignore its message. The hero of this farce is a young Orthodox Russian rabbi, attired in his black caftan and black broad-rimmed hat with ritual tassels of his fringed undergarment showing over his belt. He is a typical fashion model of the old yeshiva and he's shown in a number of hilarious encounters with Western gunmen and cowboys. I tell you, friends, thirty or forty years ago this type would have been impossible. It would have provoked antisemitic catcalls with Jews literally crawling under their seats in embarrassment. But today, the audience reacts with good natured laughter, rather enjoying the incongruous connection of a Yiddish-accented yeshiva bochur with Western cowboys and Indians.

Now how is this possible? This is possible only because of the basically positive gentile interest in the ethnic peculiarity of the Jew. In one single week here in Washington alone, a Protestant church produced the "Diary of Anna Frank" and a Catholic church "Fiddler on the Roof." In line with this is the huge popularity of the Yiddish novelist, Isaac Bashevis Singer, whose stories of Jewish East European life fascinate millions of Jewish and gentile readers.

The bottom line of all this is: we've come a long way from degradation to honor, from timidity to confidence, from poor peddler to high political office, from rejection to acceptance.

We've been greatly blessed and in addition to these gracious blessings, God has given us one more. He has given us a new heart and He's put a new spirit into us. He has made us the new Jew.

Summary - Appeal

A wondrous historical Providence has appointed this new Jew - the American Jew - the patron and guardian of our people. Like Joseph, the provider, in ancient Egypt, who saved his people, so we, American Jews today, are the main pillar of Israel's strength and stay. No American Jew must be silent in the political struggle that is now being waged in which Israel's just right for survival is being challenged. No American Jew, however modest his means, must exclude himself from the privilege of helping his brother Jews. Each of us must be proud to give to the United Jewish Appeal - proud to make the Israel Bond loan of which he is capable. And finally, we Jews ought to know what we stand for, what we are and what we have been. Each of you must remember that you do not only represent us American Jews of today. You represent, each, 4,000 years of Jewish existence and these 4,000 years must not be a blank to your mind. We must keep informed. We must know our heritage -- the source of our unity, the source of our survival strength, the source of our dignity as a people.

A Palestinian told a reporter, "I asked my son what he wanted for his birthday and he said a sub-machine gun to fight the Israelis."

Which Jew, if asked the same question, would not answer, "I'd like my son to be called to the Torah on his birthday and I'd like to commit him to a life of integrity and justice."

The story is told about a young Jewish man who came to America at the turn of the century. One of the first things that he did upon arrival was to join a synagogue. Soon thereafter, to his surprise, he was elected president of the Congregation. And when he wrote to his mother, who was still in Europe, he just couldn't help but brag in Yiddish, "Ich bin President -- I am the President!"

His mother did not know what the word "president" meant so she went to ask a neighbor who informed her that the president is the head of the country. The mother was extremely surprised and impressed -- "my son, the President of the United States?"

And so she immediately wrote him a letter which ended with the following message. "Dear Son. I pray, I beg you -- now that you are the president, please have mercy on the Jews!"

Consider yourself the recipient of this mother's message. Your people needs you and you are the only one in the world in a position to help.

Remember - the will to live is animal. The will to let live is human. The will to help live is divine!
(Mordecai Kaplan)

AMEN



THE RING OF BLESSING

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
Family Service Sermonette on
Yom Kippur, 1979

There once was a poor Jewish farmer who plowed his fields with a sickly looking horse. He was very poor and often hungry -- and so was his horse.

One day a stranger passed by at noontime. The farmer was about to leave for lunch and so he asked the stranger to come to his home and share what little food he had. The stranger was very grateful and just as he was about to leave, he said to the farmer, "I want to thank you for your kindness and hospitality. There is a treasure laid aside for you."

The farmer was so stunned he didn't know what to say and as the stranger left, he ran after him and begged him to tell him more. The stranger said, "Walk until you reach the forest and there you will find an oak tree. Cut down the oak tree and you will find a treasure."

The farmer believed the stranger, ran back to his home, got an axe and, after three days journey, found the forest; then he found the oak tree; he cut down the tree and a bird nest fell to the ground. He was sorry that this happened and noticed that two of the birds' eggs were broken and a white fledgeling bird sat in the nest with a black ring in his beak. The bird dropped the ring into the nest and miraculously began to talk.

"This is a magic ring. If you turn it on your finger and make a wish, that wish will be immediately fulfilled."

With these words, the bird flew away and the farmer picked up the ring. He was very excited and could not wait to return home and tell his poor wife all about it. Toward the evening he arrived in a small town and saw a goldsmith standing in front of his store. The farmer showed this black ring to the goldsmith.

"Have you ever seen such a ring?"

The goldsmith became curious and said, "What's so special about it?"

The farmer answered, "If I turn it around and make a wish I can have anything I want."

The goldsmith said, "How do you know? Have you ever tried it? But, it's really none of my business. I see that you have travelled a long way. I have an empty room. Would you like to stay overnight?"

The farmer was really very tired and was glad to accept the invitation of the goldsmith. As soon as he lay down he was asleep. Meanwhile, the goldsmith was not only curious but very greedy. Softly he walked over to the farmer's bed, saw the ring and gently removed it from his finger. Then he hurried into his workshop and made a perfect imitation of the ring, went back to the farmer's bed and quietly slipped the imitation ring on the farmer's finger. The farmer was so fast asleep he didn't stir at all while all this happened.

The next morning, the farmer thanked the goldsmith for his hospitality and went on his way, not knowing that he was wearing an imitation ring.

As soon as he had left, the goldsmith locked himself up in his house, went into a big room, touched the ring, turned it around

and made the wish that the room be filled with gold. Immediately, pieces of gold began to rain down on him from the ceiling, striking his head and filling up the room very quickly. Suddenly, the greedy goldsmith realized that these pieces of gold were rising higher and higher up to his neck and he couldn't stop it. His hand and the ring were already buried under a mountain of coins. He couldn't reach it. There was nothing he could do and so the goldsmith choked to death, buried under the gold he had wished for himself.

When the farmer returned home, he told his wife all about his adventure, not realizing that the ring had been stolen and that all he had was an imitation ring. Immediately the wife suggested that he wish a cow since they had none. But, the farmer refused and explained,

"We can always buy a cow. Let us work hard for a year and see if we can do it ourselves."

After a year, they had enough money to buy a cow, a new horse and a carriage. Now his wife said, "We have done well this year; we have everything except enough land. Why don't you use your ring and let us get more land."

Again her husband refused. He said, "Let us save the ring for some other time. Now that I have a horse and a cow I think I can make our land produce more grain by our own efforts."

So, they worked harder and had plenty. It was the same way each year. Every time the farmer or his wife wanted something and thought they might use the ring, they changed their minds and instead worked harder to achieve it by their own efforts.

As the years passed, the farmer and his wife grew very rich and in time almost forgot about the ring. Forty years passed this way; the couple grew old and, one night, both of them died.

The children and grandchildren stood around the bedside mourning and before burying the old couple someone took a closer look at the farmer and noticed the black ring on his finger and wanted to remove it. But, the oldest son said, "I remember father always wore it. Mother must have given it to him. Let him be buried with it."

So the farmer was buried with his ring and all his life he never knew that it was an imitation. But everything he had wanted he got without ever having to use magic.

Do I believe in magic? Yes, I do. I believe in the magic of work, in the magic of love, in the magic of sacrifice. Really, we don't need miracles to accomplish the things that are important to do. Our own good work will make it possible for us to achieve all the things we need to live a good life.

AMEN

MISJUDGMENTS

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
KOL NIDRE

Sunday Evening, September 30, 1979

There is much stress on togetherness tonight. The huge crowd, the universal sharing of this experience by Jews throughout the world, even the language of our prayerbook. It is "we" and "us" throughout.

And yet there is no day in the year which makes us feel so alone. We are deeply conscious of our own private life. Each one is alone in the midst of the crowd, making his *בוודאי יאמן*, his soul's self-assessment. Alone we must each visit the innermost sanctuary of our heart, to see ourself in the true mirror of our conscience. Father, mother, husband, wife, sister, brother, lover, friend -- do not hear that silent inner voice which reveals to us our confidential report card. That voice must now be whispering to us in the words of Isaiah to be absolutely honest in our self evaluation:

"Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil
That change darkness into light and light into darkness
That change bitter into sweet and sweet into bitter.
(Isaiah 5.20)

~~How easy it is to deceive ourself in tonight's self assessment, to confess failure when, in reality, we have had success and congratulate ourselves on success which, in fact, turns out to be failure:~~

~~"Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil."~~

I should like to point out tonight three common misjudgments which distort our self image and our self appraisal.

1. The Misjudgment of Perfectionism

The first of these three misjudgments is the misjudgment of perfectionism. We cling to the belief that the human being was designed for perfection. How we suffer as parents when our children are less than perfect in appearance, health and personality! How we torment them and ourselves, when their performance falls short of perfection! How cruel we can be in criticizing imperfections in a spouse! How crushed when, at last, we recognize the lack of perfection in ourself.

Can you imagine the heartache you and I could be spared if only we took seriously the flat, unconditional Biblical judgment, stated not once, not twice, but three times:

"There is no man that sinneth not."

(I Kings 8.46, 2 Chr 6.36, Eccl. 7.20)

The confessions on Yom Kippur are not optional but mandatory because our sinfulness is taken for granted. There can be no exception. Even the most accomplished, the most pious, the most righteous somehow falls short of moral and spiritual perfection.

In the lobby of the U. N., official guides point to a huge Persian carpet of magnificent design. "Is it perfect?" someone asks. "No," replies the guide. "As a matter of fact, a flaw has been purposely woven into it to highlight the truth that nothing human can be perfect."

This viewpoint has profound moral consequences. It should greatly facilitate conciliation. As I must forgive myself for falling short of standards of perfection, so must I, in principle, be ready to forgive others. But, we must go further. We must forgive God for creating us less than perfect. Could it be that God had a special reason for allowing us to develop, each with some defect of his own?

There is a profound message for tonight in an illustrated fable for children and adults entitled "The Missing Piece" by Shel Silverstein. It is the story of a disc that wasn't happy because its perfect roundness was marred by a missing piece, like a small section cut out of a pie. So, the disgruntled disc sets off in search of its missing piece. Being slightly handicapped because of the missing piece, it rolls slowly

over, in a hobbling sort of way, stopping here or there to smell a flower, passing some insects and being overtaken by others. On the way, the disc makes contact and conversation with various objects until one day it encounters a section of a circle that fits exactly into its own cut. It's the missing piece.

Joyfully the disc exclaims, "It fits, it fits perfectly, at last, at last!"

And now, being complete, the disc rolls away, faster than ever before. It whizzes through life, so fast that it can no longer stop to talk to a worm or smell a flower or develop a relationship with anyone. The disc, in its new perfection, becomes depressed -- and one day deliberately drops off the missing piece to become again a somewhat defective but much happier disc. What's the moral of the story?

Our limitations are the things that make us reach out for relationships with others. Can you imagine living with a person so perfect that he never needs you? Isn't it logical that he who does not need you does not want you either?

Our limitations drive us into each other's arms as friends and lovers. The deeper source of love is not my admiration for you but my need of you and your need of me. *We love, because we need each other.*

Did God as Creator do a bungling job by making us so imperfect? On the contrary, it seems to me that it was God's higher

wisdom that shaped each of us with our peculiar imperfections so that we might be interdependent and find higher fulfillment by complementing each other and by trying to satisfy one another's needs.

If our imperfections may be doing us more good than harm, I now would like to suggest that the pursuit of perfection may be doing us more harm than good. I'm guided by the proverb,

"The perfect is the enemy of the good."

I think of men and women who tie their destinies to a star and in the process forfeit some pretty good possibilities here on earth. Many a marriage would be happier if both partners could settle gratefully for the good they now have instead of embittering each other with unattainable perfectionist expectations. Does anyone know the number of single persons who live to regret the rejection of a loving, worthy partner in favor of the impossible dream? And who knows the statistics of marriages that split ^{because} of exaggerated expectations, or because a fantasy image of the perfect lover or spouse prevented one or the other from appreciating the good qualities in the one they married?

"The perfect is the enemy of the good!"

This rule has its social and political relevance. Many promising societies have been overturned, and replaced by far worse, through ^{messianic ideologies and} perfectionist movements which rejected moderate but realizable reform in favor of the never-never-land of perfection.

Is not a similar fallacy hampering the Arab-Israel search for peace?

Fanatics on both sides are playing a tragic game of win or lose all. Israelis, weary and impatient after four wars, now want maximum security based on firm control of the West Bank.

Palestinians, in fanatical opposition to any Israeli presence whatever, have decreed the death penalty for Arabs who sell land to Jews and have stepped up the maiming and murder which vicitimized 3,600 persons during the last ten years.

The perfect solution, from the Israeli point of view, would be a cooperative Arab minority accepting some sort of local autonomy within a Jewish state. From the Palestinian point of view, the perfect solution would be a fully independent Arab state and the dismantling of Israel.

Neither model of "perfection" is possible. Yet, in the stubborn pursuit of each, the prospect of a less satisfactory but more practical solution is being frittered away by both sides.

The perfect is the enemy of the good.

2. The Misjudgment of Interruptions

There is another grave misjudgment by which we mix up failure and success, good and evil. Among the poems by Coleridge there is one which he started with the title "Kubla Khan." He never finished it. Nobody, including the poet, could come up with a proper ending. The reason he never finished it was that he was interrupted. Someone knocked on his door when the poem was taking shape in his mind and the whole idea was knocked completely out of his head. Coleridge himself tells about it. He was inspired. The whole outline of the poem was in his mind and he was writing it down feverishly when, unfortunately, he was called out by a man from Porlock, on some sort of business, and detained one hour. When he returned to his desk, the rest of the poem had evaporated from his mind. Literary critics have wondered ever since what the poet might have said had he not been interrupted.

Who was that man from Porlock who barged in on the poet? Was he a friend? Did he do anything for him? We only know what the poet lost, not what he gained as a result of that interruption.

There must be men and women sitting here tonight who cannot forgive others or even themselves for an unintended change in the course of their life. They keep thinking of the opportunities they lost; they imagine their life might be so much richer or fulfilling if only they had not been diverted from their original plan.

What most people don't realize is that the same interruption which frustrates our intention, may also bring us new, undreamed of opportunities. Allow me to give you a very personal illustration. I was a young rabbi on the way to inspect the first pulpit offered to me in a small Pennsylvania town. It could be reached only with a change of trains in Buffalo and I remember how I huffed and puffed when we missed our connection and had to stay over in Buffalo the better part of the day. Trying to make the best of the situation, I decided to use the time to visit the large local Reform temple. To make the story short, I never left Buffalo. After meeting with the distinguished senior rabbi of that congregation, I was surprised to learn of an opening for an assistant rabbi right in that congregation and I was even more surprised by the invitation to take this extremely attractive job -- which led to the five most decisive years of my development in the rabbinate.

For me personally, the man from Porlock, barging in on my plans and turning me around from what I was going to do, has more than once been a Godsend. In my professional life, interruptions by telephone calls and drop-in visitors are a daily experience. I used to resent them bitterly. I no longer do because so many of these intrusions, while shutting one door, have opened other doors of opportunity to learn and to serve.

No event can be properly appraised on the day it happens. It cannot be judged good or evil until time has passed and all the consequences of the event have unfolded. Do not too hastily deplore the unscheduled happenings that interrupt your plan and re-direct your life.

"Woe unto them that call the good evil and the evil good,
That mistake the light as darkness and darkness as light,
That change sweet into bitter and bitter into sweet."

3. The Obsession With Completion

One more misjudgment is responsible for downgrading many a life, including your own. It is our habit of measuring everything by a clearly visible successful conclusion. Some of us have a real obsession about leaving things unfinished. You all know about the wife of Lot who turned into a salt pillar when, on her flight from Sodom and Gemorrha she stopped and looked back upon the destroyed cities. What made her stop and look back? I tell you what: I think she remembered the dishes she had left in the sink or some other such unfinished trivia.

Why do we have this compulsion about bringing everything to a neat, perfect conclusion?

The greatest modern Hebrew poet, Haim Nachman Bialik, once wrote a short rhyme to serve as his epitaph:

There lived a man and he is no more,
And the song of his life was silenced in the middle,
Too bad; he had yet one song more
And now that song is lost forever, forever lost.

It is a beautiful poem and yet I'm surprised by its *stress on the obvious*.
Is there a person who leaves this world without taking with him "yet
one song more," yet some work unfinished? The human condition is
notorious in its open-endedness. Each of us is an unfinished
symphony. Why lacerate ourselves with unnecessary feelings of
inferiority and guilt because our ideals, projects, good
intentions and good works remain unfinished? Our concentration *on final results*
on the "bottom line" is a trap for miscalculating the value of
our work in life.

To begin with, some of our most important work is like the
olive tree that won't grow fruit until 20 years after its
planting. Parents, for example, should not expect too soon to
see in their children the fruit of their sacrifice, effort and
love. When shall we know how well we succeed? Where's the bottom
line to our job as parents? The answer is, never!

We can never really complete the job of raising and
influencing our children. You're never finished being a parent.
Your most important impact upon the child may be in older age,
on your deathbed or in the mystery of memory when you're gone.
The good you have done may not be fully measurable until your
children have, themselves, become old men and women. Therefore,
you have no right to judge yourself as a parent by your so-called

"finished" product because the product is unfinished as long as you are around.

Some of us wonder about our work in life. So many dreams unfulfilled, so many goals unrealized! How important is it all? Who will remember?

I'd like to answer with the reply wise old Bernie Baruch, confidential adviser of many presidents, gave on his 94th birthday. Surrounded by reporters at his park bench in Central Park where he held court, Bernie Baruch answered many questions. The question that got the most attention, with everyone falling silent to hear the answer was,

Who do you think, Mr. Baruch, was the greatest man on earth?"

Reporters strained their ears, pencils poised, to catch the name of someone eminent or mighty. Mr. Baruch's reply was,

"The fellow that does his job every day. The mother who has children and gets up and gets the breakfast out, and keeps them clean and sends them off to school. The unknown soldier. Millions of men."

The kind of greatness Bernie Baruch called attention to is what we're talking about-- going on with your job in spite of all of the headaches and heartaches -- clinging to your task -- not quitting on your responsibilities -- doing what you must before the final score comes in -- persisting, whether or not you can finish the job.

If I could rewrite the list of sins which we confess on Yom Kippur, I would put in the confession, "What miserable quitters we are! How soon we get tired fighting. How often we waste energy feeling sorry for ourselves instead of getting on with the job."

Paul Harvey said, "Some day I hope to enjoy enough of what the world calls success so that somebody will ask me, what's the secret of success? I shall say simply this. I get up when I fall down."

Please remember this. We do not fail. We simply give up trying.

Appeal

Our job in life is not to be perfect .

our job is not necessarily to reach the goal we have set for ourselves .

our job is not even to finish the job .

Our job is to keep trying, striving, retracing our steps when we've gone astray, repenting our wrong doing and renewing our effort for improvement.

Our task is ^{ethical} persistence not perfection, as Rabbi Tarphon said:

אִם יָצֵאתָ מִן הַמִּצְוָה לֹא יִשְׁפָּט בְּךָ אֱלֹהִים
וְאִם לֹא יָצֵאתָ מִן הַמִּצְוָה לֹא יִשְׁפָּט בְּךָ אֱלֹהִים

It is not incumbent on you to complete the task,

but neither are you free to desist from it altogether. Amen.

(Abot 2:21)

~~FIRST DRAFT~~

MISJUDGMENTS

By Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
Kol Nidre
Sunday Evening, September 30, 1979

There is much stress on togetherness tonight. The huge crowd, the universal sharing of this experience by Jews throughout the world, even the language of our prayerbook. It is "we" and "us" throughout.

We confess our sins not in the first person singular but in the plural, together, to acknowledge our interdependence, our social responsibility, our shared destiny. The shame of one Jew shames us all and, in his elevation, we all stand taller.

And yet there is no day in the year which ^{makes us feel} instills in ~~us as much of~~ ^{so alone.} a sense of solitude. We are deeply conscious

of our own private life. Each one is alone in the midst of the crowd, ^{making his G-d's plan his soul's self-assessment} ~~each of us confronts God as~~ a single person, conscious

of the separateness of his own soul, his own destiny. Alone we enter this world. Alone we ~~leave~~ pass out of it. Alone we

must each visit the innermost sanctuary of our heart, to see ourself in the true mirror of our conscience. Father, mother, husband, wife, sister, brother, lover, friend -- do not hear

that silent inner voice which ^{reveals} ~~issues~~ to us our confidential report card. That voice must now ^{be whispering to} us in the words of Isaiah to be ^{absolutely honest} ~~careful~~ in our self-evaluation: ~~to beware of~~

~~misjudgment:~~

" Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil
That change darkness into light and light into darkness
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(Isaiah 5.20)

How easy it is to deceive ourself in tonight's self assessment,
to confess failure ~~where deeper insight would credit us for~~ ^{when, in reality, we have failed} success
and congratulate ourselves on success which, in fact, turns out to
be failure:

"Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil."

I would like ^{to} point out tonight three common misjudgments which
tragically distort our self image and our self appraisal.

1. The Misjudgment of Perfectionism

The first of these three misjudgments is the misjudgment of
perfectionism. ~~Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary~~ ^{is overwhelming, yet}
We cling to the belief that the human being was designed for
perfection. How we suffer as parents when our children are less
than perfect in appearance, health and personality! How we
torment them and ourselves, when their performance falls short
of perfection! How cruel we can be in criticizing imperfections
in a spouse! How crushed when, at last, we recognize the lack
of perfection in ourself.

Can you imagine the heartache you and I could be spared if
only we took seriously the flat, unconditional Biblical judgment,
stated not once, not twice, but three times:

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Fanatics on both sides are playing a tragic game of win or lose all. Israelis, weary and impatient after four wars, now want maximum security based on firm control of the West Bank.

Palestinians, in fanatical opposition to any Israeli presence whatever, have decreed the death penalty for Arabs who sell land to Jews and have stepped up the maiming and murder which victimized 3,600 persons during the last ten years.

The perfect solution, from the Israeli point of view, would be a cooperative Arab minority accepting some sort of local autonomy within a Jewish state. The perfect solution from the Palestinian point of view would be a fully independent Arab state *and whose creation would mean the dismantling* of Israel.

Neither model of perfection is possible. Yet, in the stubborn pursuit of each, the prospect of a less satisfactory but more practical solution is being frittered away by both sides.

The perfect is the enemy of the good.

~~For Israelis and Palestinians, both exasperated and drained by the long struggle, the perfect solution -- if unattainable -- is evil.~~

"Woe to them that call evil good and good evil."

~~Generally, we view frustration of a personal plan as a loss, even a disaster.~~ What most people don't realize is that the same interruption which frustrates our intention, may also bring us new, undreamed of opportunities. Allow me to give you a very personal illustration. I was a ~~very~~ young rabbi on the way to inspect the first pulpit offered to me in a small Pennsylvania town. It could be reached only with a change of trains in Buffalo and I remember how I huffed and puffed when we missed our connection and had to stay over in Buffalo the better part of the day. Trying to make the best of the situation, I decided to use the time to visit the large local Reform temple. To make the story short, I never left Buffalo. After meeting with the distinguished senior rabbi of that congregation, I was surprised to learn of an opening for an assistant rabbi right in that congregation and I was even more surprised by the invitation to take this extremely attractive job -- which led to the five most decisive years of my development in the rabbinate.

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finished product because the product is unfinished as long as you are around. Go by Rabbi Tarphon's rule:

"It is not incumbent upon you to complete the task, but neither are you free to desist from it altogether."

(Abot 2.21)

Some of us wonder about our work in life. So many dreams unfulfilled, so many goals unrealized! How important is it all? Who will remember? ~~A handful of the famous of each generation are remembered for a century or more and even they less and less so. But, what about us, the large mass of people? What's the bottom line of our significance?~~

I'd like to answer with the reply wise old Bernie Baruch, confidential adviser of many presidents, gave on his 94th birthday. Surrounded by reporters at his park bench in Central Park where he held court, Bernie Baruch answered many questions. The question that got the most attention with everyone falling silent to hear the answer was,

"Who do you think, Mr. Baruch, was the greatest man on earth?"

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"The fellow that does his job every day. The mother who has children and gets up and gets the breakfast out, and keeps them clean and sends them off to school. The unknown soldier. Millions of men."

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

by Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman, Yom Kippur, Oct. 1, 1979

We are a confused and perplexed generation. We cannot understand the enormous gap between our technological progress and moral retardation. We are powerful, yet we are insecure. We have more wealth than any other age, yet we are worried and full of anxiety. Real and potential war is always with us, --hot war, cold war, the threat of war, and the fear of war. Atomic arsenals are bulging with enough weapons for the over-kill, enough to destroy all life on earth, many times over. Soon, many small nations will join the atomic club. (Even the making of the bigger hydrogen bomb is no longer a secret.....We have a world full of knowledge yet sadly lacking in wisdom. It is a complicated world in which our children must grow up.)

By what formula, system or pattern can the world be put together unified and secure?

A Japanese mother entered a toy-shop. The salesman showed her a certain do-it-yourself/^{mechanical}toy for her 4 year old son. She tinkered a while with it but couldn't make it work. "This toy is much too complicated for my child," she said. "I think it's not suitable for a young child."

The salesman answered: "On the contrary, madam, this toy will help your child become better adjusted to life. Whichever way the child puts it together, it will come out wrong."

Many have come to feel that way about the world situation. Every political reform or new social system creates more problem than it solves. [Colonialism was no good; but independence has hardly been an improvement for many new nations. Capitalism has grave defects, but communism is no panacea. We had an ineffective League of Nations; now we have the U.N. which should be renamed the Divided Nations. Whatever we do seems to come out wrong.]

The persistence of our problems argues for a persistent cause, which ~~apparently~~ remains untouched by political and social change. (The predicament of man) ^{It} is man himself, ^{his nature, his uncultured} The problem is not so much in our circumstances and environment--- the problem is within us. Not enough attention has been given to the high priority of treating human nature, the moral texture of man as the ultimate cause for his rise or fall. What is the matter with us human beings?

evangelical
drives,
boosted
by reality
drawn
from
morality

The Bible deals with this question virtually from its first page. It telescopes the evolution of the human species, omitting altogether man's early animal stage, his savage past, and slow rise to full intelligence. Instead, the Bible presents the first human pair, Adam and Eve, as a civilized couple. They are introduced to us, not foraging in the jungle, not hiding in caves, like animals, on the slopes of mountains, but walking about, safely and securely, in a beautiful garden; the Garden of E. clearly is a symbol of cultivation and civilization. It is a place of order, design and aesthetic beauty.

How do Adam and Eve take to the opportunity for security and plenty? They waste it. Why?

The Bible's answer is implied in a double tragedy reported in the first few chapters of Genesis. First, is the rebellion against God by A. & E. Then, comes an act of violence against a fellow human being by Cain, oldest son of A. & E. The first deed, being against God, is sin. The second deed, being against man, is a crime.

Judaism and Christianity, stress each a different aspect of the human tragedy. The basic doctrine of the Christian church is derived from the first tragedy, Adam's sin against God, the defiant assertion of his own will, to be a law unto himself, the sin of disobedience.

Judaism, on the other hand, stresses Cain's crime against his brother, A^del, the first recorded murder in history. Christianity dealing primarily with the sin of man against God, (original sin!) has become chiefly a theology. But, J^udaism, dealing above all with the crime of man against man, has turned its major attention to man's ethical problem. In keeping with our strong ethical emphasis, Judaism insists that on Y^om Kippur God will forgive our sins against Him. But, our crime against a fellowman can never be forgiven until we make restitution and win reconciliation with our fellowman.

The tragedy of Cain and Abel, the pain of human conflict, the abuse and hurt which we suffer and mete out to others, make repentance and atonement relevant to our day-by day life.

The central problem of human relationship is stated in that brief, dramatic dialogue: God asks Cain, after the crime: "Where is thy brother?" and Cain answers mockingly: "Am I my brother's keeper?" This brief dialogue raises the basic question in ethics: Where is our brother, our fellowman in relationship to me? Is he only family? What of the so-called "stranger"? Is he only the one who is near or also he who is far? Is the distress of others my business? Did the English philosopher

David Hume, tell the truth when he said: ~~Most of us would prefer~~
man kind would not bother a person as much as
the destruction of ~~a whole nation to~~ the loss of his own little
finger? ✓ In our heart of hearts, do we see in the troubles
of others a mere nuisance, an intrusion, upon our own self-
centered little world? Am I my brother's keeper is the key
question for human welfare. The way we answer ^{it} determines what
kind of life, what kind of family, what kind of nation, what
kind of world we shall have. //

The sciences of psychology and psychiatry have underscored
crucial importance
the ~~importance~~ of our response to others, for our own development.
We may classify people according to the degree of their response
to the question: Am I my brother's keeper?

One of our major psych. problems is the eternal dilemma between
wanting someone's love and refusing being tied down by the
responsibilities and demands the relationship imposes upon us.

How often do we enwrap ourselves within a protective cocoon
of insensitivity? We say: I don't want to get involved.

Is not this, too, a restatement of the making question: Am I MY
BROTHER'S KEEPER?

REpentance, atonement is only lip-service till we recapture
the ethical sensitivity that impels me to become my brother's
keeper. There is hardly anything else to atone for except
our callous indifference, our failure to respond to the need
of others, our refusal to be involved.

Has there been a deterioration of human character and sensitivity?
Older people are usually pessimistic about human nature.

They speak of the good old days. They believe that people are
getting worse instead of better, is this true? Are people better

or worse than a generation or two ago?

I don't believe anyone can prove it either way, however, it would be safe to say that with respect to certain human characteristics, we are better,-----and with respect to others, worse.

I wonder if you share my impression that our ^{current} generation is better in the sense of being more tolerant, more open-minded, about various kinds of behavior, less prone to blame and condemn people for thinking and acting differently from our own standards. If the severity and restrictiveness of some of our grand-parents may be called a fault, then possibly we might consider our modern day permissiveness something of a virtue.

Yet, whatever our improvement, we have deteriorated in other ways. E.G., a generation ago, few people would live on a standard they could not afford. Now, our whole economy is based on a vastly inflated credit system. Far surpassing our enormous national debt is the stupendous private debt accumulated by the nation, and most of all by our younger families. If sudden repayment were demanded, nearly every person alive in the USA would have to declare bankruptcy.

Economists may differ among themselves whether this is good or bad for the economy; our concern is the moral side of the problem. What is the ethics of consuming what you have never earned? and perhaps will never pay for? The universal rule is "Live it up." It is the reenactment of the Bibl. sin "Eat, drink for tomorrow we die." What has happened to responsibility? Who will pay our debts?

We are willing to grant that people are more tolerant today, more accepting of deviant behavior-----could it be that this tolerance is actually indifference, unconcern, not caring enough to want to change and correct that of which we disapprove? Could it be that at least part of our tolerance is a general decline of responsibility for ourselves and for others? Could it be that we hardly care what will happen tomorrow and to those who will follow us? If so, then we have lost the basic cement which holds the moral personality together, the solid sense of personal responsibility. The great danger of this loss of personal responsibility is not only the squandering of our private resources, but such personal irresponsibility becomes quickly social irresponsibility. If we care little for our own future, we shall care even less for the well-being of others. Indeed, we repeat almost daily the sarcastic answer of Cain to God, turning Biblical speech, the mocking question, Am I my brother's keeper? into the colloquial statement "I couldn't care less, I couldn't care less."

We are passionate defenders of the Bill of rights which enshrines every individual liberty and privilege, but want to know nothing of the yet to be written bill of responsibilities. E.G. we want free speech, the freedom to portray violence, to peddle pornography, or to excite hatred unrestrained by that sense of personal responsibility which would take into consideration the effect of my word upon the lives of others. They couldn't care less.

I can hear objections: why downgrade the sensitivity and responsibility of our modern generation. Are we not doing so much more for the poor? Have we not developed a social welfare system unequalled in history? Don't we pay more taxes than any generation of the past? How can anyone say that we lack in social responsibility and sensitivity? that we are less our brother's keeper than were our parents and grandparents?

If the prophet Isaiah now stood in this pulpit and preached to you the sermon which we read as our Haftarah this morning, about the need to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and shelter the homeless, would you not answer Isaiah: "Calm yourself, we've got the HEW, Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Foodstamps, Aid to Depend. children,-----we have all the programs necessary to take care of the underprivileged. We have the Welfare State! Indeed, social welfare is one of the crowning achievements of the modern nation state. No one would want to abolish this support system. No one dare deny its value. Yet, it falls short. It gives the indigent everything except the human bond of sympathy and love. It is all so impersonal, computerized check-writing transactions. We have abdicated our task as our brother's keeper. We have ~~turned~~ turned it all over to the state and to the agencies. WE pay our taxes --and write a few checks to private agencies, like the United Way or the UJS,----but we don't want to be bothered with individual cases, we don't want to be involved in their troubles on a one-to-one basis.....

For the shriveling up of our sensitivity, for our declining interest in human beings, we need to atone this day.

What is the prescription for the recovery of compassion and the renewal of sensitivity?

Liberal Judaism's modern prophet, Rabbi Leo Baeck suggested that we constantly keep in mind 3 questions:

1. Who is the most important person you will meet?

The one you encounter next!

2. What is the most important thing to do?

How you treat that person. How you speak to him and how you act toward him.

3. Which is the most important time? This very moment.

All 3 questions essentially boil down to one:

Do I recognize in the next person I meet, my brother, calling out unto me? Am I willing to respond?

The problems of the world will not be resolved merely by political and economic reform on a global scale but by changing the individual human being, the way we are and the way we relate to each other as persons.

A man was busily working at his desk while his little boy was ~~sitting~~ on the floor restless and bored. So he kept asking a whole bunch of questions distracting his father from his work. Trying to keep the little boy busy, the father picked up a magazine, and spotted a map of the world on one of its pages. He tore out the page and said to the boy: Now, I'll cut up this map in little pieces and let's see how long it will take you to put it together again. Confident that this game would give him at least an hour of peace and quiet, the father did as he said, and the boy went to work on the puzzle. Only minutes later, however, the little boy exclaimed; *I'm finished*

The amazed father looked down and, sure enough, there was the map of the world: HOW did you do it so fast?

Simple, answered the boy. ^{Before} when you cut up this ~~map~~ map, I saw on the other side (of the page) the picture of a man-----and if you put the man together ~~properly~~, the world will come out alright!

This is the focus Yom Kippur should give to our concerns. The problems of the world hinge upon the way we put together each human being. External, material progress is meaningless without inner character growth. The world will never hold together, if ~~you~~ human beings are not put together right, morally and spiritually:

We are all blind
Until we see,
That in the human plan
Nothing is worth the making
Unless it makes the man.

Why build these cities glorious
If man unbuilt goes?
In vain we build the world
Unless the builder
Also grows. Amen.

Sept 1, 1979

SATURDAY MORNING - SERVICE 1

PB

- Prelude RB 25, 26, 2P 42
- Open: Ma Tovu - Coopersmith
- 301 Bar'chu Adler 15
- 303 Sh'ma US 291
- 305 Mi Chamocha Adler 15
- 308 Kedusha - Barber III
- 309 V'Shamru - HUC
- 313 Silent Prayer/May Words Wurman
- 442 Seu Sh'arim
- 443 Torah Sh'ma
- V'zot HaTorah
- 446 Baruch Shenatan MS
- Hodo
- Eyts Chayim
- Sermon
- 617 Adoration Aleynu
- Bayom Hahu MS
- Close: Eyn Kelohenu

~~Handwritten notes~~
 G. H. Liberman ^{in face of} for perfection
 Kel Noche - not fulfilling potential

Bishuk's poem

There was a man

whose presence
is an unforgotten
Symphony

Don't blame yourself
for not achieving
the goal - only for not
trying ^{social problems}
Israel

High Holy Days

Nov 1978

Shedding Illusions in Life 1979

① Falling of Elshubert

② The Perfect is enemy of good.
The tyranny of perfectionist standards - y. happiness is only to
be found when human failure

③ The Need for Separation - for letting go
Don't hang on to everything: pile up of junk -
hang on to obsolete notions, self images, worthless goals
the littlest of faith Let go & let God: Don't become consumed
by spasmodic

④ No interruptions, please - in your hold
on yourself!
No distractions
The Man from Polesch

I know that I was doing something
wrong when my 3 yr old son bursted
of some one else's hand - I'd be
brush off "leave me alone I'm
working" - would not let him
in before with his extreme play of time
I was imitating me
& my intolerance of interruptions

The Polish insistence on your per se
Lesson Submission - keep yourself open to new possibilities
L. ex: Y. Tzish of Berdichev's rebuke to busy me

Let me go I'm pursuing my business
- Why run after you business? Maybe it is running
after you - and all you should do is stand
still for a while so that the opportunity may catch
up with you

Stand still - i.e. the spiritual pause
Let things catch up with you!
Rest & (mentally)

Henry Stimson

See 2N 111 211 111 3:dec Reel - end p. 170

Story of very rich man who would not respond
to beggar's plea for meal - then
is impoverished and must suffer same
condition



R. H. Simon

For 'New Jew'
Topical talk
Start page 5

Add ① Phil Dunham

Show with

Alex Schneider

Sept 18 on

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
Conversations to Unders

② Would you vote
for Jew As Presid.

10:20 - 30

10

15

35 - 50

Family Service Story

The birds who would not carry
their wings

The difficulties you ^{try to} escape from
later become your wings on
which you soar to greater heights

