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Religion in present day Jewish life, 1939.

*in The World  
Crisis of Jewish  
Survival*

THE REDISCOVERY OF JUDAISM

*address at Union of American  
Hebrew Congregations, Cincinnati*

*1939*

Many factors have tended to make religion of secondary importance in the life of our people.

Religion, generally, has been pushed into a subordinate position in the Western World. Science has steadily divested it of many of its franchises. The satisfaction which men experienced in the increase of power, wealth and material well-being, yielded by science, placed the latter upon the pedestal which was formerly occupied by religion, whose gifts were now less prized and sought after. Science successfully refuted many pronouncements which were made by religion in its sacred texts concerning the universe, nature and man. This cast suspicion upon much else in religion. The separation of church and state, the growth in civil authority and the contraction of ecclesiastical authority, the secularization of education and, in the realm of speculative thought, the divorce of philosophy from theology -- all these were both cause and effect of the diminishing importance of religion in modern society.

Other forms of loyalty clamored for supremacy, - nation, country, race, class. Each of these derived its sanctions and mandates from sources other than religion, and proceeded to construct systems of thought with little or no reference to it.

The Jewish people left the ghettos of the Western World at a time when these secular movements were unfolding. The world from which the Jews emerged was thoroughly pervaded by religion. It had been thus pervaded for centuries. Every phase and activity of life was bound by its discipline. Nevertheless, the Jews yielded to the new temper of the age

as readily as any other people. In some countries they not only caught up with the new secular mood of the Western World but outdistanced it in dogmatic ardor and intensity.

There transpired among the Jewries of the Western and Eastern Europe not only reform movements designed to revamp their religious ideas and practices, to "modernize" them and to bring them into consonance with the new outlook of Europe, but also strong centrifugal movements away from Judaism altogether -- movements of flight, not towards other faiths so much -- these latter flights were dictated, as a rule, by careerism and social escalade -- but towards religious negativism and indifference, expressed in non-affiliation with the synagogue and in a renunciation of the entire religious regimen of Judaism.

This flight from Judaism was also motivated by strong political and economic considerations. Throughout the 19th century, Jews struggled for emancipation. They reached out after complete equality. They believed that their distinctive religion and its beliefs and traditional way of life segregated them and disadvantaged them among men. They further believed that by surrendering them they would succeed in acquiring those rights and privileges which other people possessed. This political and economic motif behind the flight complex was soon rationalized into a system of thought, conveniently neutral and agnostic, which discounted religion generally and proclaimed that the scientific progress of mankind had finally outstripped religion, and that while religion may still have a certain

usefulness for the young, the poor and the unenlightened, cultured and prosperous folks can get along very well without it. All religious and racial differences were certain to be merged very soon in a common brotherhood of men, dedicated to the life of pure reason. The mighty accents of the American and French Revolutions and the other up-surgings political struggles of the century reverberated through all this hopeful and wishful thinking. Thus Enlightenment and Emancipation were the Pied-Piper whose music beguiled many Jews away from their ancient loyalties and spiritual securities.

The wealthy and the well-placed Jews especially pampered themselves with these comforting notions. The richer they became and the more important positions they occupied, the less need they had for religion. The upper classes which succeeded in reaching, if not the center, then at least the periphery of the non-Jewish world, were most supercilious in their attitude towards Judaism. When men are prosperous they find it easy to dispense with God -- especially with a Jewish God...

Fortunately not all Jews were of the same mind. Many refused to exchange spiritual treasures for material advantage. They saw neither the need nor the wisdom of it. They were of the opinion that if freedom and equality are to come to all men, they should come also to the Jews as a matter of right, as a restoration of that which belongs to them and to all men as a natural endowment, and not in payment for unwarranted sacrifices of religious convictions, a distinctive culture and an historic

way of life. They furthermore suspected that the new millennium might turn out to be quite as much of a mirage as many others in the long past of Israel, and, on the basis of past experiences, they feared that should another such reaction in their political and economic fortunes set in, Jews would find themselves spiritually shattered, homeless and utterly bereft, unless they had the secured sanctuaries of Jewish life and faith into which to retreat for refuge and solace. Many other Jews, out of force of habit or because of the strong appeal of ancient ties and memories, remained constant. So that Judaism was not lost.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, wide and ominous cracks appeared in the beautiful facade of European Enlightenment and Emancipation. Startling eruptions of violent anti-Semitism occurred, at one time or another, in nearly every country in Western Europe. Medievalism raised its ugly head over and over again, either as a Magyar blood libel or a Germanic literary pogrom or a Gaelic "cause célèbre" or an outright Slavic slaughter of Jews. The rains sadly disfigured the wall "daubed with white plaster", and the foundations thereof were uncovered.

Some Jews were quick to read these warning signs. They returned to their faith and their people as if to a shelter from a gathering storm. Others, however, persisted in their hypnosis, discounted these evidences of an underlying menace and blithely proceeded on their way. In the generation before the World War, Judaism in Western Europe touched bottom, and it languished also among vast sections of Jewry in the United States.

Then came the World War which unleashed all the furies. Who can number the high hopes of mankind which perished upon its battlefields? What was apparently won, was actually sunk and lost in their bloody bogs -- freedom, democracy, the self-determination of peoples, the rights of minorities and the vision of an international order based upon law, justice and peace. Out of ten million graves of the needlessly slain, there arose the dread ghosts of hatred, of national and racial passions, of arrogance and vindictiveness, of widespread want and bitter class struggle, and a dread stampede towards force, violence and terror as life's sole technique. These ghosts are dancing today their "danse macabre" in the hearts of men and nations. Civilization is plunging into darkness and chaos. A paganism far more crass and cruel than that of antiquity is engulfing the whole Western World.

For the Jewish people, the World War and its aftermath spelled Golgotha! A quarter of a century of mounting disasters and calamities culminating in the unprecedented horrors of recent years. Great Jewish communities, rich in history, culture and achievement, among whom the dream of a free, enlightened and tolerant humanity was most ardently cherished, have been plunged into Hell. Gone for them are Enlightenment and Emancipation. Gone are the dreams of the great and gracious days, the dreams of human brotherhood and equality. Gone for their sons and daughters are the beckoning horizons of great careers and great service. Gone are the shelter and security. Gone, even, the scant and tenuous

security of the ghetto! Into exile, broken, stripped and impoverished, they must go, even as their forefathers before them, who knew neither Enlightenment nor Emancipation. From country and homes where they had known dignity, honor, power and wealth, Jews, in their mounting legions, must now wander forth, bewildered and disillusioned into a bewildered and disillusioned world.

For the world, generally, stands today bewildered and disillusioned. The strong and sure foundations upon which it had builded its life have been rudely shaken. That high optimism which fed upon truly remarkable achievements in every scientific field has vanished. Marvelous had been the vistas which opened up before the eyes of men in the preceding century. Men could dream then and men did dream, unabashed, of a glorious and uninterrupted progress for mankind, of an unending conquest of nature, and of building, in a world of abundance, a civilization free from all poverty, ignorance and war. "In the nineteenth century," wrote Victor Hugo, "war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, hatred will be dead, frontiers will be dead, royalty will be dead, dogmas will be dead, man will begin to live!" But here we are in the twentieth century, and war is not dead, the scaffold is not dead, hatred is not dead, frontiers are not dead, royalty is not dead, dogmas are not dead, and man is beginning to die... The vista which stretches before our generation today ends at the edge of a wilderness.

For twenty-five years now, men have lived in a world of mounting hate, intolerance, and bigotry, of revolutions, invasions, wars, the rise

and fall of empires, and amidst the slaughter of millions of their kind. Great peoples have destroyed their liberties and enslaved themselves. Millions of men cower today in terrorized submissiveness. The wealth of nations is being drained in war and in preparation for wars which will also drain the lives of their people. The mind of man, trained and sharpened by generations of scientific education, is now applied to the perfection of the war technique. So that the discoveries which science records in our day in such great numbers no longer fill the hearts of men with pride or enthusiasm. They suspect that these things will not contribute either to their happiness or security. The human spirit stands today frightened, weighted down with apocalyptic foreboding, as if awaiting the crash of doom.

The thoughtful among men have accordingly begun to search earnestly for a road away from disaster. They are seeking desperately hard to rediscover that vision which was somehow lost amidst the brilliant pageantry of scientific achievement in the last century, to the hurt and sorrow of the world. They understand now what the wise men of the earth have always known: that increased knowledge does not necessarily mean increased goodness or happiness, that facts are not in themselves blessings, that "truth can make us mad as well as free," that the prolongation of human life, is not the same as the improvement of human life, that the acceleration of a process does not always insure a finer product, that change does not necessarily spell progress, and that democracy, as Lecky

pointed out a half century ago, may often destroy liberty. (W. E. Lecky, "Democracy and Liberty" I. P. 256 ff) They realize now that the fault is not with science or education or democracy, as such, but with the interpretation which men have put upon them, with the omnipotence and autonomy which they have ascribed to them and with their failure to understand that science, education and democracy are means and not ends in themselves.

What has been tragically missing in our civilization is the compelling and unifying faith in the great human goals which religion, and religion alone, has set for mankind, and towards the attainment of which science, education and democracy should contribute, if they are to fulfill their chief function. Mankind lost sight of these goals. Therefore human progress today has no clear direction. Good material and good tools are not enough for the builder. He must have a plan. Every true sanctuary of man, the Temple, the Ka'ba or the earthly Jerusalem must be modelled after a celestial archetype. To build a noble and enduring society, it is not enough to have wealth and knowledge. Mankind must be possessed of the architectural plan, and that only the spiritual vision of man has designed. It must also have the will and loyalty to follow that plan. That the moral sense of man alone provides. Without faith in God, the reality of the spiritual vision as well as the moral sense in man are quickly denied and rejected in the world.

Thoughtful men have also rediscovered the truth that faith in God is the strongest bulwark of a free society. Human freedom began when

men became conscious that over and above society and nature there is a God who created them, who breathed His spirit into them, who fashioned them in His likeness, and that they are, therefore, possessed of intrinsic and independent significance and are endowed, as individuals, with original and irrevocable rights and authority. When in the long past men challenged the authority of kings or magistrates or restrictive customs or traditions and all "the brutal solidarity of ancient times," they did it in the name of some higher mandate derived from the spirit of God within them, in the name of some moral sanction which emanated from their relationship to God. Men became free when they acknowledged a higher authority than that of state, class, system or ruler. Fundamentally the eternal struggle has always been between autocracy and theocracy in their broadest implications. Modern Nazi "steely, authoritative romanticism" (Goebbels' phrase) is but another expression of the old autocratic principle eternally at war with the principle of spiritual, disciplined freedom in man.

Friends of democracy have somehow forgotten the religious origin of the whole democratic dogma in the modern world. They have forgotten that political freedom came to the Western World as a result of a long struggle for religious freedom and not vice versa. This struggle received its impetus not from organized religion, to be sure, that is to say from of deeply religious folk the church, but from the faith/in the dynamics of religion, in revelation, and from a deliberate return to prophetic traditions and sanctions. Every

great revolution in Christian thought was a return to the prophetic traditions of Israel. They drew their inspiration from the moral passion of Biblical Judaism, for Judaism fashioned God not in the Caesar-image of an imperial ruler, nor in the Aristotelian-image of an ultimate philosophical principle, nor as the cult-image of a priestly hierarchy, but as "the personification of moral energy." (See Whitehead, "Process and Reality", New York (1929) P. 520) And every important social and economic movement in Western Europe in the last few centuries was inspired by this Judaic-Christian ethical idealism. "On the whole, therefore, it is very probable that the energetic, even revolutionary, efforts of this century to transform the form of society in favor of the down-trodden masses are very intimately connected with the New Testament ideas, (which, because of their origin and content, are also, of course, Old Testament ideas) although the champion of these efforts feel themselves bound in other respects to oppose what is now-a-days called Christianity". (Lange, "History of Materialism", New York (1925) II Sec. 4 P. 271)

Modern democracy was born in the struggle for religious freedom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Protestant Reformation was not merely a reformation in the realm of doctrine and ritual and a repudiation of the authority of Papacy and the hierarchical system of the Church. It was much more than that. The early leaders of the Protestant Movement did not themselves fully appreciate the forces which they represented. They were confused, and at times very inconsistent. They

did not grasp fully what was happening in the mind and heart of the world. What actually was happening was a new determined upreaching on the part of men in the Western World for spiritual liberty, for the emancipation of man from the straight-jacket of Tradition and System. Luther, when still a revolutionary, proclaimed that "human authority might be resisted when its mandates conflicted with the 'Word of God'". Suddenly on all sides one heard again the magic phrase, the "Word of God". A new authority surged back into the life of the world -- the authority of direct revelation which was available to all.

The demand for spiritual liberty soon expressed itself in demands for other forms of liberty. Peasant revolts followed. Political and economic rights were demanded by humble people. By what authority? They had no authority. They had no human law to which they could appeal. In whose name did they speak? In the same name and by the same authority as the ancient prophets of Israel presumed to challenge the kings, noblemen and the powerfully rich of their day. They spoke in the name of God, in the name of a revelation from God! All men were equal because God made all men equal. The things which they demanded were the things which the Bible, the revealed Word of God, conceded to them, and to all men. The social revolutions of the sixteenth century which were quenched in the blood of a hundred thousand peasants received their inspiration from religion and revelation.

"The social revolution was conceived under a theologic guise as

the "Millennial Kingdom", the "Restitution of All Things", the "Reign of the Saints", and in cognate phrases...It was under the dominance of this attitude of mind that the conviction of the imminence of the promised millennial reign seized such vast numbers of the poor working-population of Western Europe during those early years of the fourth decade of the 16th century. In such wise did the disinherited classes of that age envisage their social revindication." (E. B. Bay, "Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists," (1903) P. 388-9)

"The full thunder-cloud of the Hebrew prophets, stealing over a world in negative stagnation, waked the sleeping lightnings of the soul, and for a while streaked the atmosphere of history with fearful portents... The downtrodden serfs of Franconia had not long heard the glad tidings from Wittneberg, ere they began to draw parallels between themselves and the old Israel when the desert had been passed...The earth was the Lords, and the army of the saints was come to take it...The time of jubilee was come, when every believer should have his field of heritage... Throughout the great movement which in the third decade of the sixteenth century spread insurrection from the Breisgau to Saxony, the peasants were animated with the belief that the Gospel, armed with the sword of Joshua, was to subjugate the world, and that all the conditions of property, of law, of civil administration, under which secular communities exist, were to be superseded by institutions conformed to a divine model." (James Martineau - "Studies of Christianity" (London, 1890) P. 341-3)

The quintessence of the spiritual idealism of the Protestant Reformation, which later on affected the life of the American people, lay with the various Anabaptist sects which sprang up in the wake of the Reformation. Some of these sects were hundreds of years ahead of their time. They believed in the absolute moral responsibility of the individual, in his inherent spiritual sovereignty, and in the right of private judgment in matters of religion. They held that the duty of the state was only to protect the good and to punish the evil, and beyond that the state itself was evil. The state had no right to circumscribe the freedom of the individual. These sects were the first to demand absolute dis-establishment -- the separation of church and state. They were the first to preach universal toleration and freedom of worship. They maintained that all property belonged to God. Some of them like the early Christians practised voluntary communism, which is a very different thing from the secular, involuntary communism of our day - in fact, its violent negation in everything but surface similarity.

Thus, out of victories won for religious freedom on the battlefields of the spirit, there stemmed other victories for man's political, economic and social freedom. The absolutism of king and state was first curbed by the religious spirit of man demanding at the point of revolution the right, not of universal suffrage or better living conditions, but the right to worship God as it saw fit.

These doctrines of the Anabaptists were carried over to Holland and England, and then to the American Colonies. The Founding Fathers of

our country adopted many of the doctrines of these religious "fanatics". When they wrote into the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness", they were giving political expression to seminal religious Anabaptist doctrines. When they countered the claim of the Divine Right of Kings with the claim of the Divine Right of People to resist the tyranny of kings, when they proclaimed that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God, when they engraved upon the Liberty Bell the Biblical proclamation: "And Thou shalt proclaim freedom throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof", or when they placed on the first seal of the new-born republic of the United States the figure of Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, they were marshalling religious truth, religious authority and religious tradition to underwrite and sanction their political revolution.

Struggles for human freedom, uninspired by a living faith in God, often led mankind to disaster. In recent years, Russia attempted to build a free and happy society without God. It succeeded only in forging a dictatorship and an enslaved society. Fascist and Nazi states in Europe also sought to build happier, socialized communities on the basis of a Godless materialism. They succeeded only in effecting, with the aid of rubber truncheons and concentration camps, a brutally regimented and terrorized society. The "new" orders which these Godless revolutionary movements achieved were only variant forms of older despotisms. Though

they pride themselves on being young and dynamic, they are so only in the sense of being immature, raw, untempered and cruel. A society achieves real renewal only through inner spiritual renewal. If freedom is ever to speak again everywhere, its speech, to quote Heine, will have to be Biblical.

The soldiers of Cromwell marched into battle singing Psalms. For three centuries the spirit of Cromwell and of his Puritan hosts has molded the free life of the English peoples. Roger Williams established the first free society in the New World in the name of a God of Freedom, whose faithful minister he was. The spirit of Roger Williams has permeated the free life of this nation to this very day. The American Revolution kindled its torches at the flame of a religious dogma that men were created by God to be free and equal. The long protracted struggle in this country to emancipate the slaves received its powerful momentum not from economics, or from any materialistic conception of history, but from deep religious convictions, which revolted against the enslavement of human beings who were children of God, and which saw in the Civil War a divine retribution for the sins which the nation committed against the black man, and which heard in the tramp of men marching to battle the footsteps of God. "His truth is marching on!"...

Democracy shrivels when its religious source dries up. An early and friendly critic of American democracy, DeTocqueville, has cautioned it: "Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot."

Why do all present-day enemies of human liberties persecute religion,

even though in Nazi and Fascist lands they sometimes come to terms with clericalism which is <sup>a</sup>/totally different thing? Because religion in its spiritual essence is their death warrant. They see in Judaism and in its offspring, Christianity, the last unwearied watchmen over the ramparts of human liberties, who must be destroyed before their own freedom-annihilating materialistic revolutions can be firmly established. Thus, fundamentally, it is not the Jews whom the Fascist dictators wish to drive out of Europe, but Judaism, that entire complex of ethical and spiritual ideas rooted in the principle of the sacredness of human personality, the worth of the individual, and the transcendent moral law which are at the very heart of the Judaeo-Christian civilization which they wish to supplant.

Dictators hold man in contempt. Hitler called the masses "eine Hammelherde von Hohlköpfen". Otto Strasser, a close collaborator of Hitler in the early days of the Nazi movement, declares that Hitler surrounds himself with depraved and vicious accomplices because they confirm his profound conviction that man is essentially vile. "From this conviction I will never depart...Man is congenitally evil. He can only be controlled by force. To govern him, everything is permissible. You must lie, betray, even kill when policy demands it." ("Hitler and I" - Boston, 1940, P. 75)

Herman Rauschning, from his intimate knowledge and observation both of the Nazi movement and its Fuehrer, makes this summary: "It may be said in general that at the back of the whole tactics and method of propaganda of National Socialism there is a complete contempt of humanity: the whole system is based on taking men as they are and pandering to their weakness

and their bestiality. Such is its universal recipe. National Socialism banks on human sloth and timidity - just as much in the case of the intellectuals, the middle classes, and the old ruling classes, as with the masses...The exploitation of envy and ill-will, of the lowest human instincts, the sowing of dissension between opponents, and the appeal to their ignoble qualities and notorious weaknesses have thus far unfailingly helped National Socialism to success, incidentally destroying the basis of a general sense of morality which was weak enough to begin with." (The Revolution of Nihilism - New York, 1939, P. 46-47)

Dictators are anti-Semitic because they know or sense that liberty is Semitic in origin and character. "Democracy," declared Hitler, "is fundamentally Jewish, not Germanic". The so-called Aryan must trace his political traditions back to the oriental despotisms and King-worship of ancient Persia and to the caste system of India. Even the Greeks had no strong consistent democratic tradition. Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle opposed the democratic form of government. Aristotle actually defended slavery. "The Greek political thinkers do not recognize, or do not make proper allowance for the rights and responsibilities of the individual soul. Just as they failed to distinguish between Nationality and Government, so they failed also to distinguish between Conscience and Public duty...Their work was vitiated by their failure to realize the extent and urgency of the claim of the individual soul. Men must be spiritually free before they can co-operate politically on the highest

terms." (A. E. Zimmern in the "Legacy of Greece", P. 330-31) But the Semite of the desert, from whom Israel is descended, neither knew nor tolerated any despotism. The democratic motif runs like a golden thread through the whole political, social, economic and religious history of Israel from the earliest nomadic period unto the present. (See my "Democratic Impulse in Jewish History" (1928) passim) See also Professor Lods, "Israel" (1932) P. 195. On the struggle "between the Arab race which loves liberty and the Persian race accustomed to slavish submission within Islam", see Dozy, quoted in R.A. Nicholson's "A Literary History of the Arabs", (1930) P. 214, and P. 256. See also T. E. Lawrence, "Revolt in the Desert" P. 50: "Among the Arabs there were no distinctions, traditional or natural, except the unconscious power given a famous sheikh by virtue of his accomplishments; and they taught once that no man could be their leader except he ate the ranks' food, wore their clothes, lived level with them, and yet appeared better in himself."

"For all that goes amiss in our life," declared Philo, "is the work of inequality, and all that keeps its due order is of equality, which in the universe as a whole is most properly called the cosmos, in cities and states is democracy, the most law-abiding and best of constitutions, in bodies is health and in souls virtuous conduct." Democracy was of the very pattern of creation. (Philo, De Spec. Leg. IV 237) Philo was opposed to ochlocracy, mob rule, and was not hostile to kingship, but within that form of government he called for basic social equality, rejecting all types of tyranny and absolutism. (See E. R. Goodenough "The Politics

of Philo Judaeus", New Haven, (1938) P. 88 ff).

Thus thoughtful men are coming to understand that mankind's way back to freedom is the way which leads forward to God.

In the same way, and even more earnestly, are thoughtful Jews reaching out today for the religious vision of Jewish life. For ours is a double measure of disillusionment and a double measure of misfortune. More than any other people do we require today the everlasting arms of a great religious conviction to sustain us.

To thoughtful Jews it is becoming increasingly clear that there are no substitutes in Jewish life for religion. Neither philanthropy nor culture nor nationalism is adequate for the stress and challenge of our lives. All these interests can and must find their rightful place within the generous pattern of Judaism. But the pattern must be Judaism, the Judaism of the Torah, the synagogue and the prayer book, the Judaism of the priest, the prophet, the saint, the mystic and the rabbi, the Judaism which speaks of God, and the worship of God, and the commandments of God and the quest of God. Most eloquently did Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, in his "Misillat Yesharim" define Judaism in terms to which every classic teacher of Israel, I am sure, would have subscribed:

"We thus see that the chief function of man in this world is to keep the commandments, to worship God, and to withstand trial. The pleasures of this world should be only the means of affording that contentment and serenity which enables man to apply his mind to the

fulfillments of the task before him. All of man's strivings should be directed toward the Creator, blessed be He. A man should have no other purpose in whatever he does, be it great or small, than to draw nigh to God and to break down all separating walls, that is, all things of a material nature, between himself and his Master, so that he may be drawn to God as iron to a magnet. He should pursue everything that might prove helpful to such nearness, and avoid everything that is liable to prevent it, as he would avoid fire. In the words of the Psalmist, 'My soul cleaveth to Thee; Thy right hand upholdeth me fast' (Ps. 63:9). Since man came into the world only for the end of achieving nearness to God, he should prevent his soul from being held captive by the things which hinder the realization of that end." (Mesillat Yesharim, Trans. M.M. Kaplan, Philadelphia (1936), P. 17-18).

Our leaders would do well to understand this. Our people, and more especially our youth, require, now that Jewish life has entered again upon an age of persecution and martyrdom, more than the example of generosity towards our unfortunate brothers overseas, ~~of~~ a valiant defense of Jewish rights at home. They require the example of the practice of Judaism, as Luzzatto defined it: "to keep the commandments, to worship God and to withstand trial" -- the example of religious discipline, piety and sacrificial loyalty. These leaders must help us to rebuild our inner world, now that our outer world is beginning to crumble again.

There have been many false prophets of "ersatz" Judaism in our

midst who have frequently misled our people. There were those professional social-workers for example, who announced that a full complement of scientifically administered hospitals and orphanages and other social agencies was a sufficient "vade mecum" for the Jewish people, and that the synagogue and the religious school were quite unnecessary. At best they were to be tolerated only as a concession to those who still take such things seriously, and in order not to create unpleasant friction in the community. Such social workers had many ready adherents among our would-be assimilated and rich Jews.

There were certain Jewish educators who resented the intrusion of religion in their ultra-scientific curricula. Judaism, they said, was not a religion, but a way of life -- that is to say, their way of life, which of course, was non-religious and anti-religious. Jewish education should, according to them, not be religious at all, only nationalistic and linguistic. At best the religious note might be smuggled in, but only as a concession to old-timers and cranks who do not know any better.

There were those Jewish spokesmen who offered Jewish nationalism as a substitute for Judaism, forgetting nationalism as such, unredeemed by a moral vision and responsibility, has sadly fragmentized our world, provincialized its peoples and is driving nations madly from one disaster to another; forgetting, further, that there is a widely-felt and widely-answered need for religion and religious institutions even among peoples whose national life is already fully established who are in their own lands and are possessed of a rich national culture. Amos, Isaiah and

Jeremiah felt the need to preach religion -- God and obedience to God's moral law -- to their people even though Israel was established as a nation in its own land and spoke its own language. It is not possible to brush aside the spiritual needs of the Jews in the diaspora, and their problems of survival as Jews in lands outside of Palestine, where most Jews will continue to live, merely by talking long, loud and enticingly about Palestine. The upbuilding of a Jewish national home in Palestine is one great, urgent and historically inescapable task of Jewry. The upbuilding of Jewish religious life in America and elsewhere throughout the world, inclusive of Palestine, is another. One is no substitute for the other. One is not opposed to the other.

Again there were other Jews who advised their people that Judaism could well be laid aside, now that the proletarian Messiah has appeared in the land of the Slav, riding upon a droshky, and the Kingdom of Heaven was near at hand.

These latter shared the amazingly dogmatic romanticism abroad in the world, in the years following the World War, born out of the "Maranatha" complex, out of excessive messianic expectations in the fields of politics and economics, which tended to make the classic ideals and standards of religion appear old indeed, in fact, antiquated. This phenomenon happened before. The nineteenth century believed that the laboratory would yield all truth. The early twentieth century believed that the machine would achieve all good. Both hopes have proved vain but ere life exposed their vanity, they had a way of making the old codes and convictions of historic

religions look outworn and slightly ridiculous. But they are not outworn. They are not old. They are not young. They are eternal. And they are unsensational, quite as unsensational as a mathematical formula, quite like the mathematical formulae to which physicists are now attempting to reduce this whole complex and exciting universe of ours.

Among them were certain Jewish intellectuals who after a prolonged excursion in various literary fields in the non-Jewish world, returned ~~to-day~~ from their stratosphere of eminence to diagnose with clinical subtlety and prescribe for Israel. Adorned with the halo of the returned prodigal and loudly acclaimed by a grateful people, they disported themselves in a most lively fashion upon the American Jewish scene. Their technique was distinctive and almost unvarying. They began by denying categorically that there was anything alive in contemporary Jewry. That set them up at once as very objective and courageous, and their non-Jewish friends were especially delighted with such exhibitions of racial self-flagellation. They brushed aside contemptuously all that had gone on before and that was going on in the many Jewish movements for religion, education, literature, communal organization, or Zionism, all the experimentation and earnest wrestling of hosts of thoughtful men and women who were daily engaged in the problems not of "why" Jews should survive, but "how". Blandly, they wrote all this off as either worthless or misguided. They were flippant about all contemporary Jewish leadership. This exalted them of course above the commonplace and cleared the decks for their own bid for leadership and their own epochal pronouncements. With

great gusto they catalogued all the shortcomings of the Jewish people, but they made sure never to include themselves in the category of those condemned. They never said our decadence, our failures or our backslidings... Another device was to simplify and idealize the Jewish past, but give the present the brutally realistic low-down. This gave their utterances a prophetic flavor as well as an air of learning, albeit of an unusual and startling quality. They reserved their best scorn for the idea of the religious mission of Israel. They showed how utterly absurd, even insolent such a notion was. But when they finally came to offer their own solution and to present their own reason for Jewish survival, they smuggled in a little Jewish mission all of their own. The Jew must still be persecuted and must still die for a good cause. Only this time the good cause must not be the code of social justice and humanitarian idealism of the prophets and the rabbis, but the communism of Karl Marx, or the pet economic system of some other economic theorist...

All these false prophets have had their clamorous hour among us. But their hour is over. Thoughtful Jews are turning to the sure and classic highways of Jewish life and thought. We are not likely to be beguiled again, at least the men of this generation, by these prophets and their alien teachings.

Humanity has sickened of its Godless civilization. Because the spiritual interpretation of human destiny was allowed to languish, other interpretations have come to life and are now driving mankind mad. For when God is dethroned, His throne does not remain empty for long. Some false god, some Wotan, Moloch, Mammon or Mars soon occupies it. In

place of piety, reverence, humility, compassion, self-sacrifice, other qualities -- insolence, cruelty, aggression and combativeness --are now extolled. Because men have rejected the ideal of the sanctification of human life under God, they now have a world in which human life is held cheap, in which the stature of the individual has been reduced, his rights usurped by the state, his labor looked upon as a commodity and his life just a statistical item. Because men have ignored the sovereignty of God's Moral Law, they have a world in which men, parties and governments have set themselves up above all law. Where there is no longer the Law of God, there ensues the law of the Duce, the Fuehrer, or the Commissar, before which all men must tremble.

Now that lights are going out everywhere in the world, men are turning again to the Light of God. By that light men will find their way to a kingdom of just human values, achieved through just human methods. They will no longer seek freedom through slavery, justice through class-struggle, abundance through confiscation, knowledge through the burning of books, or unity through blood-purges and liquidations.

Jews can do no less. Jews will do no less. We sense an incoming tide of faith among our people, a faith charged in some instances with deep mysticism. It should not surprise us and it would be in keeping with similar moments in our past history, if our age should witness a strong mystic movement among our people. Such mystic movements followed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the close of the 15th

century and the appalling disasters which overtook Polish Jewry in the 17th century. The present-day expulsions of the Jews from Germany and Austria, the tragic experiences of myriads of refugees, the dismal plight of war-ravaged Jewish communities throughout Eastern Europe, the stress under which Israel finds itself everywhere, coupled with the distressed mood of mankind generally, may give rise to a strong mystic movement which will express itself in religion and literature and in personal habits of thought and conduct.

In a sense, the problem of the survival of Judaism is much simpler in our day than at any time in the past. Our leaders need no longer expend the energy which was expended during the last century to persuade Jews to remain Jews. The doors of escape from Jewish destiny have been shut. The choice confronting intelligent Jews today is a very simple one. They have realized that God has not placed the shears of destiny -- to be, or not to be -- in their own hands. Forces which they have not summoned are driving all would-be escapists back upon their people. Somehow there has always been an element of unavoidable compulsion, of the inevitable, in Jewish experience. It is the "Be'al Korcha" element, the quality of shunless destiny. It was under such compulsion, the Rabbis declared, that our forefathers accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai... "And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say: We will the be ~~as~~ nations, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone<sup>E</sup>. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with mighty hand, and with an out-

stretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I be king over you... And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bonds of the covenant.'"

The choice today is not between survival and extinction, but between doom and destiny, between burden and mission. Shall we live our Jewish lives greatly or meanly? Shall Jews walk "darkling to their doom" or advance confidently and exultingly to their destiny along the eternal road which stretches from Ur of the Chaldees to the distant messianic lands of "Acharit Ha-Hamim" - The End of Days? Shall we quarrel with our fate and beat helpless hands against the unyielding bars of circumstances or shall we, by a miracle of faith, remembering that "stone walls do not a prison make" cease to be the unwilling prisoners of circumstance, and, in the service of God and of God in man, become magnificently free?

"The slave of God -- he alone is truly free". Our choice today is between the yoke of earthly kingdoms, which is grievously hard to bear, and the yoke of the Kingdom of God, which makes all other yokes easy to bear.

What hands shall weave the loom of our future years? Our own hands, tender and skillful, drawing the golden strands from our own treasuries of wisdom, piety, passion and dreams, which all the goodly folk from Abraham to our own day have stored for us, or shall alien hands, rude and unsympathetic, weave the web of our destiny and that of our children?

Now that many doors are closing, should we not open wide to our

children the doors leading to the treasure-troves of their own people's spiritual and intellectual wealth, for their future sustenance, solace and pride? The days ahead will be hard days for them. Until the world completes this latest stage of its economic transformation and steadies itself again, after a long, violent period of readjustment, Jews, because they are everywhere an exposed minority, easily blamed and easily victimized, will be hammered on the anvil of every world event. The days ahead will be hard days for our children, <sup>but</sup> they need not be ignoble or unrewarding days. Give them their total heritage -- the copious bounty of Judaism -- the Torah, the synagogue, the prayer book, the noble literature and the beautiful language of their people. Give them the millennial companionship of their kinsmen and their kinsmen's heroic faith and dreams and their matchless saga and they will be matched with their great hour. They will then come to understand what it is in our heritage that has kept us alive; what it is that laid waste the paganism of the ancient world and now finds itself again in mortal combat with another paganism which it is also destined to destroy; what it is that makes their people the brunt of attack whenever privilege, power and reaction make a major onslaught on the precious hopes of mankind, and why the ancient ideals of their people are forever the battle-cries of upstruggling humanity. They will then come to understand that it is not because we are weak or unworthy that barbarous governments have vowed to destroy us, but because we are strong, and they fear us. Not us, but the faith which is in us, the torch which is in our hearts and the passion which is in our blood for the prophetic mandates of our Jewish heritage, for justice, freedom, brotherhood and peace, for the vision of Ir Ha-Tzedek, Kirya Ne'emanah, -- the City of Justice, the City of and peace, for the vision of Ir Ha-Tzedek, Kirya Ne'emanah, -- the City of/

Faith -- in place of the Ir Ha-Damin -- the City of Blood -- build<sup>t</sup> upon the pride of blood and upon glory drenched in the blood of the conquered, the despoiled and the slain. The reckless adventurers of Power, who have put all ethics, all science and all religion in the service of a design for Power, who have made all ethics relative to tribal temperament and national interests and only Power absolute, who have forced upon civilian life the discipline, the dumb obedience, the drill, the barrack room, the court martial, the censor, the espionage system, the whole code, complex and outlook of the military, and by so doing, have destroyed civilian life completely, these present-day heirs of the tradition of Ishmael, the Pere Adam -- the Wild Man -- "whose hand is against every man and every man's hand is against him," these heirs of the tradition of Esau, the Hairy Man, the Ish Tsayid, who sees life only as the hunter sees the hunted, and who delights "to live by his sword", -- these abhor and dread the tradition of Jacob, the "Ish Tam", -- the man seeking perfection through rational and moral pursuits, "Yoshev Ohalim", content to live in the peaceful tents of work and study, devoted to the greatness of morals instead of the morals of greatness...

And understanding this -- and understanding further that they must now become the active trustees of this classic tradition of civilization, not merely "vague half-believers of our casual creeds", -- they will, along with all other men of good will, feel themselves challenged. They will not be ashamed or cast down. They will face their world without fear or apology. They will not seek the world's approval -- only God's.

They will not be afraid of hostile voices -- only of their own voice when silenced in fear. The insolence and naked impudicity of the heathens who rage will never humiliate them. Only their own apostasy, back-sliding and fear can humiliate them. They will try to be worthy of their great hour of testing!

For each young heart will say: I stood with Abraham in his lonely vigil and read the destiny of my people in the stars. With Isaac I built the altar of a patriarch's stern faith and ultimate sacrifice. At Jabbok's ford I learned to wrestle through the night with the dark angel of despair and to wrest a blessing at the break of dawn. With Joseph I dreamt the dream of sheaves and stars and climbed the steps from the dungeons's pit to a prince's throne. I wandered with Moses, an alien prince among an alien people. Unshod, I knelt with him before the vision in the wilderness, and from within the inextinguishable fires of God I heard the Voice summoning to duty and freedom. I saw the lightnings and the clouds and heard the thunder roll around Mt. Sinai, and witnessed the ever-lasting covenant between my people and its God. I learned how to suffer and hunger in long and weary marches to reach a promised land. I was with Joshua fighting at Gibeon, and with Deborah by the waters of Megiddo, when the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. I stood with the blind Samson in his agony, and heard the wild cry of his desperate courage as he pulled down the temple over the Philistines. I heard Samuel admonish his people to remain free, and not to reject God by enslaving themselves to a king. I listened to the harp of the

shepherd king, David, and saw the great king bow before the righteous wrath of the prophet, and before the majesty of the overarching Law of God. I prayed with Solomon in the Temple which he dedicated as a House of Prayer for all peoples, and I learned of a God Whom Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain, and Whose compassion extendeth to all, even to the stranger who cometh out of a far country.

I marched with the resolute band of the prophets who came to destroy old worlds and to build new ones. I shuddered at the wrath of their spirit as they lashed out against oppression and injustice, against false gods and gilded idols, against blind leaders and lying prophets. I warmed at their infinite compassion for the weak, the denied, and the wronged. From them I learned the nature of Mission and what a raging fire within one's bosom an unfulfilled mandate of God may become.

I wandered with my people by the slow-moving rivers of Babylon, and I heard their oath of deathless loyalty "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning." I entered their humble and improvised synagogues, and I discovered that prayer and devout study are beautiful, and as acceptable to God as the sacrifices of the priests in the Temple, and the songs of the Levites.

I returned from captivity, and standing with those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, I learned how a people can build upon ruins. I sat with the sages and scribes who piously taught and interpreted the word of God, and molded a people's reverence for its spirit enshrined in a timeless Book. I moved among the mountains of Judea, pulling down the heathen altars, with the lion-hearted sons of Maccabees. I saw the miracle of a

single cruse of spiritual oil inexhaustibly illumine the rededicated temple of their faith. I was a companion of the gentle Hillel who revealed to me the whole of the Law in the single kernel of neighborly love; and of Akiba who knew how to inspire a revolution, defy an empire and die a martyr.

And then into the long dark exile I wandered with my people, into many lands over which cross and crescent reigned, and I walked with them the weary highways of the world. I was with them when they drank deep out of the bitter chalice of pain, humiliation, cruelty, and hate. But never did I fail to sense the stress of their imperious vision, their pride of a great past, their hope of a greater future, their superb courage, their unflinching faith. Philosophers, poets and saints never failed them in the lands of their dispersion, and the light of their Torah was never extinguished.

And then I saw the night lift and the dawn break; and into a reborn world, drenched with a new light of freedom and justice, I marched with them exaltingly. I heard the shackles fall from off their limbs. I saw the radiance of their emancipated minds and hearts. I beheld them, mounting as one eagles' wings, rising to bless the world with matchless gifts of heart and mind in every field of human creation.

And now I see the night descend again, and into the dark and the storm my people are wandering forth again. Shall I leave them now? Can I leave them now? Shall I part company with this immortal band? They have become too dear and precious to me. The urgency of their pilgrimage

is now coursing through my own blood too. Their beckoning is now the shrine of my quest also. Like unto the first pilgrim, out of Ur of the Chaldees, I, too, seized by the hand of God, am listening to the Divine summons: "Get thee out of thy country and from thy father's house unto a land which I will show thee...and I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing..."



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FACE PAGE

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From an Address, "Religion in Present-Day Jewish Life,"  
Biennial Convention,  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations,  
January 17, 1939

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RELIGION IN PRESENT-DAY JEWISH LIFE

Address delivered at the <sup>thirty-sixth</sup> ~~XXIV~~  
 Biennial Convention, U.A.H.C.,  
 Cincinnati, January 17, 1939.

MANY factors have tended to make religion of secondary importance in the life of our people.

Religion, generally, has been pushed into a subordinate position in the Western World. Science has steadily divested it of many of its franchises. The satisfactions which men <sup>have derived from</sup> ~~experienced in~~ the increase of power, wealth, and material well-being, <sup>brought about</sup> ~~yielded~~ by science, placed the ~~latter~~ upon the pedestal which was formerly occupied by religion, whose gifts were now less prized and sought after. Science successfully refuted many pronouncements which were made by religion in its sacred texts concerning the universe, nature and man. This cast suspicion upon much else in religion. The separation of church and state, the growth ~~in~~ civil authority and the contraction of ecclesiastical authority, the secularization of education, and, in the realm of speculative thought, the divorce of philosophy from theology—all these were both cause and effect of the diminishing importance of religion in modern society.

Other forms of loyalty clamored for supremacy, nation, country, race, class. Each of these derived its sanctions and mandates from sources other than religion, and proceeded to construct systems of thought with little or no reference to it.

The Jewish people left the ghettos of the Western World at a time when these secular movements were unfolding. The world from which the Jews emerged was thoroughly pervaded by religion. It had been thus pervaded for centuries. Every phase and activity of life was bound by its discipline. Nevertheless, the Jews yielded to the new temper of the age as readily as any other people. In some countries they not only caught up with the new secular mood of the Western World but outdistanced it in dogmatic ardor and intensity.

There transpired among the Jewries of Western and Eastern Europe not only reform movements designed to revamp their religious ideas and practices, to "modernize" them and to bring them into consonance with the new outlook of Europe, but also strong centrifugal movements away from Judaism altogether—movements of flight, not towards other faiths so much—these latter flights were dictated, as a rule, by anticlericalism and social escape—but towards religious negativism and indifference, expressed in non-affiliation with the synagogue and in a renunciation of the entire religious regimen of Judaism.

This flight from Judaism was also motivated by strong political and economic considerations. Throughout the ~~19th~~ century, Jews struggled for emancipation. They reached out after complete equality. They believed that their distinctive religious beliefs and traditional way of life segregated them and disadvantaged them among men. They further believed that by surrendering ~~them~~ they would succeed in acquiring those rights and privileges which other peoples possessed. This political and economic motif behind the flight complex was soon rationalized into a system of thought, conveniently neutral and agnostic, which discounted religion generally and proclaimed that the scientific progress of mankind had finally outstripped religion.

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and that while religion <sup>might</sup> ~~may~~ still have a certain usefulness for the young, the poor and the unenlightened, cultured and prosperous folk ~~can~~ get along very well without it. All religious and racial differences were certain to be merged very soon in a common brotherhood of men, dedicated to the life of pure reason. The mighty accents of the American and French Revolutions and the other up-surgings political struggles of the century reverberated through all this hopeful and wishful thinking. Thus Enlightenment and Emancipation were the Pied Piper whose music beguiled many Jews away from their ancient loyalties and spiritual securities.

The wealthy and the well-placed Jews especially pampered themselves with these comforting notions. The richer they became and the more important positions they occupied, the less need they had for religion. The upper classes, which succeeded in reaching, if not the center, then at least the periphery of the non-Jewish world, were most supercilious in their attitude towards Judaism. When men are prosperous they find it easy to dispense with God, especially with a Jewish God.

Fortunately not all Jews were of the same mind. Many refused to exchange spiritual treasures for material advantage. They saw neither the need nor the wisdom of it. They were of the opinion that if freedom and equality are to come to all men, they should come also to the Jews as a matter of right, as a restoration of that which belongs to them and to all men as a natural endowment, and not in payment for unwarranted sacrifices of religious convictions, a distinctive culture, and a historic way of life. They furthermore suspected that the new millennium might turn out to be quite as much of a mirage as many others in the long past of Israel, and, on the basis of past experiences, they feared that should another such reaction in their political and economic fortunes set in, Jews would find themselves spiritually shattered, homeless and utterly bereft, unless they had the secured sanctuaries of Jewish life and faith into which to retreat for refuge and solace. Many other Jews, out of force of habit or because of the strong appeal of ancient ties and memories, remained constant. So ~~that~~ Judaism was not lost.

Throughout the ~~19th~~ and the early ~~20th~~ centuries, wide and ominous cracks appeared in the beautiful facade of European Enlightenment and Emancipation. Startling eruptions of violent anti-Semitism occurred, at one time or another, in nearly every country of Western Europe. Medievalism raised its ugly head over and over again, either as a Magyar blood libel or a Germanic literary pogrom or a Gaelic "cause célèbre" or an outright Slavic slaughter of Jews. The rains sadly disfigured the wall "daubed with whited plaster," and the foundations thereof were uncovered.

Some Jews were quick to read these warning signs. They returned to their faith and their people as ~~to~~ a shelter from a gathering storm. Others, however, persisted in their hypnosis, discounted these evidences of an underlying menace, and blithely proceeded on their way. In the generation before the World War, Judaism in Western Europe touched bottom, and it languished also among vast sections of Jewry in the United States.

Then came the World War which unleashed all the furies. Who can number the high hopes of mankind which perished upon its battlefields? What was apparently won, was actually sunk and lost in their bloody bogs—freedom, democracy, the self-determination of peoples, the rights of minorities, and the vision of an international order based upon law, justice, and peace. Out of the ten million graves of the need-

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lessly slain, there arose the dread ghosts of hatred, of national and racial passions, of arrogance and vindictiveness, of widespread want and bitter class struggle, and of a dread stampede towards force, violence, and terror as life's sole technique. These ghosts are dancing today their "dance macabre" in the hearts of men and nations. Civilization is plunging into darkness and chaos. A paganism far more crass and cruel than that of antiquity is engulfing the whole Western World.

For the Jewish people, the World War and its aftermath spelled Golgotha! A quarter of a century of mounting disasters and calamities culminating in the unprecedented horrors of recent months. Great Jewish communities, rich in history, culture, and achievement, among whom the dream of a free, enlightened and tolerant humanity was most ardently cherished, have been plunged into Hell. Gone for them are Enlightenment and Emancipation. Gone are the dreams of human brotherhood and equality. Gone are the beckoning horizons of great careers and great service. Gone are all shelter and all security. Gone, even, the scant and tenuous security of the ghetto! Into exile, broken, stripped, and impoverished, they must go, even as their forefathers before them, who knew neither Enlightenment nor Emancipation. From countries and homes where they had known dignity, honor, power, and wealth, Jews, in their mounting legions, must now wander forth, bewildered and disillusioned into a bewildered and disillusioned world.

For the world, generally, stands today bewildered and disillusioned. The strong and sure foundations upon which it had builded its life have been rudely shaken. That high optimism which fed upon truly remarkable achievements in every scientific field has vanished. Marvelous had been the vistas which opened up before the eyes of men in the preceding century. Men could dream then and men did dream, unabashed, of a glorious and uninterrupted progress for mankind, of an unending conquest of nature, and of building, in a world of abundance, a civilization free from all poverty, ignorance, and war. "In the nineteenth century," wrote Victor Hugo, "war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, hatred will be dead, frontiers will be dead, royalty will be dead, dogmas will be dead, man will begin to live!" But here we are in the twentieth century, and war is not dead, the scaffold is not dead, hatred is not dead, frontiers are not dead, royalty is not dead, dogmas are not dead, and man is beginning to die. The vista which stretches before our generation today ends at the edge of a wilderness. For twenty-five years now, men have lived in a world of mounting hate, intolerance, and bigotry, of revolutions, invasions, wars, of the rise and fall of empires, and amidst the slaughter of millions of their kind. Great peoples have destroyed their liberties and enslaved themselves. Millions of men cower today in terrorized submissiveness. The wealth of nations is being drained in preparation for wars which will also drain the lives of their people. The mind of man, trained and sharpened by generations of scientific education, is now applied to the perfection of the war technique. So that the discoveries which science records in our day in such great numbers no longer fill the hearts of men with pride or enthusiasm. They suspect that these things will not contribute either to their happiness or security, or to greater decency in the world. The human spirit stands today frightened, weighted down with apocalyptic foreboding, as if awaiting the crash of doom.

The thoughtful among men have accordingly begun to search earnestly for some way of salvation—a road away from disaster. They are seeking desperately hard to

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rediscover that vision which was somehow lost amidst the brilliant pageantry of scientific achievement in the last century, to the hurt and sorrow of the world. They understand now what the wise men of the earth have always known: that increased knowledge does not necessarily mean increased goodness or happiness, that facts are not in themselves blessings, that "truth can make us mad as well as free," that the prolongation of human life is not the same as the improvement of human life, that the acceleration of a process does not always insure a finer product, and that change does not necessarily spell progress. They realize now that the fault is not with science or education or democracy, as such, but with the interpretation which men put on them, with the omnipotence and autonomy which they ascribed to them, and with their failure to understand that science, education and democracy are means and not ends in themselves.

What has been tragically missing in our civilization has been the compelling and coordinating belief in the great human goals which religion, and religion alone, has set for mankind, and towards the attainment of which science, education, and democracy must contribute, if they are to fulfill their sole function. Mankind lost sight of these goals. Therefore human progress today has no clear direction. Good material and good tools are not enough for the builder. He must have a plan. To build a noble and enduring society, it is not enough to have wealth and intellect. Mankind must be possessed of the architectural plan, which the spiritual vision of man designed, and it must have the will and loyalty to follow that plan. That will and loyalty only the moral sense of man can provide. Without faith in God, the reality of spiritual vision as well as the sanctions of morality are quickly denied and rejected in the world.

Mankind's way of salvation is the way which leads back or forward to God.

In the same way, and even more earnestly, are thoughtful Jews reaching out today for the religious vision of Jewish life. For ours is a double measure of disillusionment and a double measure of misfortune. More than any other people do we require today the everlasting arms of a great religious conviction to sustain us.

To thoughtful Jews it is becoming increasingly clear that there are no substitutes in Jewish life for religion. Neither philanthropy nor culture nor nationalism is adequate for the stress and challenge of our lives. All these interests can and must find their rightful place within the generous pattern of Judaism. But the pattern must be Judaism, the Judaism of the Torah, the synagogue and the prayer book; the Judaism of the priest, the prophet, the saint, the mystic, and the rabbi; the Judaism which speaks of God, and the worship of God, and the commandments of God and the quest of God. Most eloquently did Moses Haryim Luzzatto, in his "Misillat Yesharim" — the Path of the Upright — define Judaism in terms to which every classic teacher of Israel, I am sure, would have subscribed:

"We thus see that the chief function of man in this world is to keep the commandments, to worship God, and to withstand trial. The pleasures of this world should be only the means of affording that contentment and serenity which enables man to apply his mind to the fulfillment of the task before him. All of man's strivings should be directed toward the Creator, blessed be He. A man should have no other purpose in whatever he does, be it great or small, than to draw nigh to God and to break down all separating walls, that is, all things of a material nature; be-

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extract

Gal. 119

Chayyim

10/179  
Book

Extract

tween himself and his Master, so that he may be drawn to God as iron to a magnet. He should pursue everything that might prove helpful to such nearness, and avoid everything that is liable to prevent it, as he would avoid fire. In the words of the Psalmist, "My soul cleaveth to Thee; Thy right hand upholdeth me fast" (Ps. 63:9). Since man came into the world only for the end of achieving nearness to God, he should prevent his soul from being held captive by the things which hinder the realization of that end."

Our leaders would do well to understand this. Our people, and more especially our youth, require Now that Jewish life is entering again upon an age of persecution and martyrdom, more than the example of generosity towards our unfortunate brothers overseas, and more than the example of a valiant defense of Jewish rights at home. They require the example of the practice of Judaism, as Luzzatto defined it: "to keep the commandments, to worship God, and to withstand trial" — the example of religious discipline, piety, and sacrificial loyalty. These leaders must help us to rebuild our inner world, now that our outer worlds are beginning to crumble again.

There have been many false prophets of "ersatz" Judaism in our midst who have frequently misled our people. There were those professional social workers who announced that a full complement of scientifically administered hospitals and orphanages and other social agencies was a sufficient "vade mecum" for the Jewish people, and that the synagogue and the religious school were quite unnecessary. At best they were to be tolerated only as a concession to those who still take such things seriously, and in order not to create unpleasant friction in the community. Such social workers had many ready adherents among our would-be assimilated and rich Jews.

There were certain Jewish educators who resented the intrusion of religion in their ultra-scientific curricula. Judaism, they said, was not a religion, but a way of life — that is to say, *their* way of life, which, of course, was non-religious or anti-religious. Jewish education should, therefore, not be religious at all, only nationalistic and linguistic. At best the religious note might be smuggled in, but only as a concession to oldtimers and cranks who don't know any better.

There were those Jewish spokesmen who offered Jewish nationalism as a substitute for Judaism, forgetting nationalism as such, unredeemed by a moral vision and responsibility, has sadly fragmentized our world, provincialized its peoples, and is driving nations madly from one disaster to another; forgetting, further, that there is a widely felt and widely answered need for religion and religious institutions even among peoples whose national life is already fully established in their own lands and who are possessed of a rich national culture. Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah felt the need to preach religion — God and obedience to God's moral law — to their people even though they were established as a nation in their own land and spoke their own language. It is not possible to brush aside the spiritual needs of Jews in the diaspora, and their problems of survival as Jews in lands outside of Palestine, where most Jews will continue to live, merely by talking long, loud, and enticingly about Palestine. The upbuilding of a Jewish national home in Palestine is one great, urgent, and historically inescapable task of Jewry. The upbuilding of Jewish religious life in America and elsewhere throughout the world, inclusive of Palestine, is another. One is no substitute for the other. One is not opposed to the other.

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All these false prophets have had their clamorous hour among us. But their hour is over. Thoughtful Jews are turning to the sure and classic highways of Jewish life and thought. We are not likely to be beguiled again, at least the men of this generation, by these prophets and their alien teachings.

Humanity has sickened of its Godless civilization. Because the spiritual interpretation of human destiny was allowed to languish, other interpretations have come to life and are now driving mankind mad. For when God is dethroned, His throne does not remain vacant for long. Some false god, some Wotan, Moloch, Mammon, or Mars, soon occupies it. Because the ideal of the Imitation of God was banished from the hearts of men, the imitation of some Satan is now the ideal. In place of piety, reverence, humility, compassion, self-sacrifice, other qualities—insolence, cruelty, aggression and combativeness—are now extolled. Because men have rejected the ideal of the sanctification of human life under God, they now have a world in which human life is cheap, in which the stature of the individual has been reduced, his rights usurped by the state, his labor a commodity, and his life just a statistical item. Because the world rejected God, it rejected also Man, fashioned in the image of God, possessed of a sacred and inviolable personality, endowed by His Creator with certain inalienable rights. Because men have ignored the sovereignty of God's moral Law, they have a world in which men, parties, and governments have set themselves up above all law. Where there is no longer the Law of God, there ensues the law of the Duce, the Fuehrer, or the Commissar, before which all men must tremble.

gal 120

Now that lights are going out everywhere in the world, men are turning to the Light of God.

fifteenth  
seventeenth

Jews can do no less. Jews will do no less. I sense an incoming tide of faith among our people, a faith charged in some instances with deep mysticism. It should not surprise us and it would be in keeping with similar moments in our past history, for our age should witness a strong mystic movement among our people. Such mystic movements followed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the close of the 15th century and the appalling disasters which overtook Polish Jewry in the 17th century. The present-day expulsions of the Jews from Germany and Austria, the dismal plight of Jews throughout Eastern Europe, the stress under which Israel finds itself everywhere, coupled with the distressed mood of mankind generally, may give rise to a strong mystic movement which will express itself in religion, literature, and art and in personal habits of thought and conduct.

Bent Rand

In a sense, the problem of the survival of Judaism is much simpler in our day than at any time in the past. Our leaders need no longer expend the energy which was expended during the last century to persuade Jews to remain Jews. The doors of escape from Jewish destiny have been shut. The choice confronting intelligent Jews today is a very simple one. They have realized that God has not placed the shears of destiny—to be, or not to be—in their hands. Forces which they have not summoned are driving all would-be escapists back upon their people. Somehow there has always been an element of unavoidable compulsion, of the inevitable, in Jewish experience. It is the "Ba'al Korrha" element, the quality of shunless destiny. It was under such compulsion, the Rabbis declared, that our forefathers accepted the Torah

at Mount Sinai. "And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say: 'We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.' As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I be king over you. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bonds of the covenant."

The choice today is not between survival and extinction, but between doom and destiny, between burden and mission. Shall we live our Jewish lives greatly or meanly? Shall Jews walk "darkling to their doom" or advance confidently and exultingly to their destiny along the eternal road which stretches from Ur of the Chaldees to the distant messianic lands of *Acharit Ha-yamim*? Shall we quarrel with our fate and beat helpless hands against the unyielding bars of circumstances or shall we, by a miracle of faith, remembering that "stone walls do not a prison make," cease to be the unwilling prisoners of circumstance, and in the service of God and of God in man, become magnificently free?

"The slave of God—he alone is truly free." Our choice today is between the "Ol Malkut" and the "Ol Malkut Shamayim"—between the yoke of earthly kingdoms, which is grievously hard to bear, and the yoke of the Kingdom of God, which makes all other yokes easy to bear.

What hands shall weave the loom of our future years? Our *own* hands, tender and skillful, drawing the golden strands from our own treasures of wisdom, piety, passion and dreams, which all the goodly folk from Abraham to our own day have stored for us; or shall alien hands, rude and unsympathetic, weave the web of the destiny of ourselves and our children?

Now that many doors are closing, should we not open wide to our children the doors leading to the treasure-troves of their own people's spiritual and intellectual wealth, for their future sustenance, inspiration, solace and pride? The days ahead will be hard days for them. Until the world completes the latest stage in its economic transformation and steadies itself again, after a long, violent period of readjustment, Jews, because they are everywhere an exposed minority, easily blamed and easily victimized, will be hammered on the anvil of every world event. The days ahead will be hard days for our children, but they need not be ignoble or unrewarding days. Give them their total heritage—the copious bounty of Judaism—the Torah, the synagogue, the prayer book, the noble literature and the beautiful language of their people. Give them the millennial companionship of their kinsmen and their kinsmen's heroic faith and dreams and their matchless saga, and they will be matched with their great hour. They will then come to understand what it is in our heritage that has kept us alive; what it is that laid waste the paganism of the ancient world and now finds itself again in mortal combat with another paganism which it is also destined to destroy; what it is that makes their people the brunt of attack whenever privilege, power, and reaction make a major onslaught on the precious hopes of mankind, and why the ancient ideals of their people are forever the battle-cries of upstruggling humanity. They will then come to understand that it is not because we are weak or unworthy that barbarous governments have vowed to destroy us, but because we are strong, and they fear us. Not us, but the faith which is in us, the torch which is in our hearts and the passion which is in our blood for the prophetic mandates of our Jewish heritage, for justice, freedom, brotherhood, and

gal. 121

peace, for the vision of Ir Ha-Tzedek, Kiryah Ne'emanah, the City of Justice, the City of Faith, in place of the Ir Ha-damim, the City of Blood, built upon the pride of blood and upon glory drenched in the blood of the conquered, the despoiled, and the slain. These reckless adventurers of Power, who have put all ethics, all science, and all religion in the service of a design for Power, who have made all ethics relative to tribal temperament and national interests ~~and only Power, absolute, who~~ have forced upon civilian life the discipline, the dumb obedience, the drill, the ~~rack room, the court-martial, the censor, the espionage system, the whole code, complex, and outlook of the military, and, by so doing, have destroyed civilian life completely;~~ these present-day heirs of the tradition of Ishmael, ~~the "Pere Adam," the~~ Wild Man, "whose hand is against every man and every man's hand is against him," these heirs of the traditions of Esau, the Hairy Man, the "Ish Tzayid," who sees life only as the hunter sees the hunted, and who delights "to live by his sword," ~~these~~ abhor and dread the tradition of Jacob, the "Ish Tam," the man seeking perfection through rational and moral pursuits, "Yoshev Ohalim," content to live in the peaceful tents of work and study, devoted to the greatness of morals instead of the morals of greatness...

And understanding this—and understanding further that they must now become the active trustees of this classic tradition of civilization—they will, along with all other men of good will, feel themselves challenged. They will not be ashamed or cast down. They will face their world without fear or apology. They will not seek the world's approval—only God's. They will not be afraid of hostile voices—only of their own voice when silenced in fear. The insolence and naked impudicity of the heathens who rage will never humiliate them, only their own apostasy, backsliding and fear. They will try to be worthy of their great hour of testing!

END  
HER

For each young heart will say: I stood with Abraham in his lonely vigil and read the destiny of my people in the stars. With Isaac I built the altar of a patriarch's stern faith and ultimate sacrifice. At Jabbok's ford I learned to wrestle through the night with the dark angel of despair and to wrest a blessing at the break of dawn. With Joseph I dreamt the dream of sheaves and stars and climbed the steps from a dungeon's pit to a prince's throne. I wandered with Moses, an alien prince among an alien people. Unshod, I knelt with him before a vision in the wilderness, and from within the inextinguishable fires of God I heard the Voice summoning to duty and freedom. I saw the lightnings and the clouds, and heard the thunder roll around Mt. Sinai, and witnessed the everlasting covenant between my people and its God. I learned how to suffer and hunger in long and weary marches to reach a promised land. I was with Joshua fighting at Gibeon, and with Deborah by the waters of Megiddo, when the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. I stood with the blind Samson in his agony, and heard the wild cry of his desperate courage as he pulled down the temple over the Philistines. I heard Samuel admonish his people to remain free, and not to reject God by enslaving themselves to a king. I listened to the harp of the shepherd king, David, and saw the great king cowering before the righteous wrath of the prophet, and bowing in contrition before the majesty of the overarching Law of God. I prayed with Solomon in the Temple which he dedicated as a House of Prayer for all peoples, and I learned of a God Whom Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain, and Whose compassion extendeth to all, even to the

cut

cut

Religion in Present - Day  
Jewish Life  
1-17-39

HMM 186  
(Sermon 520.1)

Many factors have tended to make religion of secondary importance in the life of our people.

Religion, generally, has been pushed into a subordinate position in the Western World. Science has steadily divested it of many of its franchises. The satisfactions which men experienced in the increase of power, wealth and material well-being, yielded by science, placed the latter upon the pedestal which was formerly occupied by religion, whose gifts were now less prized and sought after. Science successfully refuted many pronouncements <sup>which were made by religion in</sup> ~~its~~ sacred texts <sup>of religion</sup> concerning the universe, nature and man. This <sup>cast suspicion upon much else in religion.</sup> ~~caused religion to lose much of its~~

The separation of church and state, the growth ~~in the functions~~ in civil authority and the contraction of ecclesiastical authority, the secularization of education and, in the realm of speculative thought, the divorce of philosophy from theology - all these were both cause and effect of the diminishing importance of religion in modern society.

Other forms of loyalty clamored for supremacy, nation, country, race, class. Each of these derived its sanctions and mandates from sources other than religion, and proceeded to construct systems of thought with little or no reference to it.

The Jewish people left the ghettos of the Western World at a time when these secular movements were unfolding. The world from which the Jews emerged was thoroughly pervaded by religion. It had been thus pervaded for centuries. Every phase and activity of life was bound by its discipline. Nevertheless, the Jews yielded to the new temper of the age as readily as any other people. In some countries they not only caught up with the new secular mood of the Western World but out-distanced it in dogmatic ardor and intensity.

There transpired among the Jewries of Western and Eastern Europe not only reform movements designed to revamp their religious ideas and practices, to

"modernize" them and to bring them into consonance with the new outlook of Europe, but also strong centrifugal movements away from Judaism altogether - movements of flight, not towards other faiths so much - these latter flights were dictated, as a rule, by careerism and social escalade - but towards religious negativism and indifference, expressed in non-affiliation with the synagogue and in a renunciation of the entire religious regimen of Judaism.

This flight from Judaism was also motivated by strong political and economic considerations. Throughout the 19th century, Jews struggled for emancipation. They reached out after complete equality. They believed that their distinctive religious beliefs and traditional ~~customs~~ and way of life segregated them and disadvantaged them among men. They further believed that by surrendering them they would succeed in acquiring the rights and privileges which other peoples possessed. This political and economic motif behind the flight complex was soon rationalized into a system of thought, conveniently neutral and agnostic, which discounted religion generally and proclaimed that the scientific progress of mankind had finally outstript religion and that while religion may still have a certain usefulness for the young, the poor and the unenlightened, cultured and prosperous folk can get along very well without it. All religious and racial differences were certain to be merged very soon in a common brotherhood of men, dedicated to the ~~unadulterated~~ life of pure reason. The mighty accents of the American and French Revolutions and the other up-surgings political struggles of the century reverberated through all this hopeful and wishful thinking. Thus Enlightenment and Emancipation were the Pied-Piper whose music beguiled many Jews away from their ancient loyalties and spiritual securities.

The wealthy and the well-placed Jews especially pampered themselves with these comforting notions. The richer they became and the more important positions they occupied, the less need they had for religion. The upper classes

which succeeded in reaching, if not the center, then at least the periphery of the non-Jewish world, were most supercilious in their attitude towards Judaism. When men are prosperous they find it easy to dispense with God - especially with a Jewish God.

Fortunately not all Jews were of the same mind. Many refused to exchange spiritual treasures for material advantages. They saw neither the need nor the wisdom of it. They were of the opinion that if freedom and equality are to come to all men, they should come also to the Jews as a matter of right, as a restoration of that which belongs to them and to all men as a natural endowment, and not in payment for unwarranted sacrifices of religious convictions, a distinctive culture and an historic way of life. They furthermore suspected that the new millennium might turn out to be quite as much of a mirage as many others in the long past of Israel, ~~had been~~ and, on the basis of past experiences, they feared that should another such reaction in their political and economic fortunes set in, Jews would find themselves spiritually shattered, homeless and utterly bereft, unless they had <sup>the</sup> secured sanctuaries of Jewish life and faith into which to retreat for refuge and solace. Many other Jews, out of force of habit or because of the strong appeal of ancient ties and memories, remained constant. So that Judaism was not lost.

Throughout the 19th and the early 20th centuries, wide and ominous cracks appeared in the beautiful facade of European Enlightenment and Emancipation. Startling eruptions of violent anti-Semitism occurred, at one time or another, in nearly every country of Western Europe. Medievalism raised its ugly head over and over again, either as a Magyar blood libel or a Germanic literary pogrom or a Gaelic 'cause celebre' or an outright Slavic slaughter of Jews. The rains sadly disfigured the wall "daubed with whited plaster", and the foundations thereof were uncovered....

Some Jews were quick to read these warning signs. They returned to their faith and their people as if to a shelter from a gathering storm. Others, however, persisted in their hypnosis, discounted these evidences of an underlying menace and blithely proceeded on their way. In the generation before the World War, Judaism in Western Europe touched bottom, and it languished also among vast sections of Jewry in the United States.

Then came the World War which unleashed all the furies. Who can number the high hopes of mankind which perished upon its battlefields? What was apparently won, was actually sunk and lost in their bloody bogs - freedom, democracy, the self-determination of peoples, the rights of minorities and the vision of an international order based upon law, justice and peace. Out of the ten million graves of the needlessly slain, there arose the dread ghosts of hatred, of national and racial passions, of arrogance and vindictiveness, of wide-spread want and bitter class struggle, and of a dread stampede towards force, violence and terror as life's sole technique. These ghosts are dancing today their "danse macabre" in the hearts of men and nations. Civilization is plunging into darkness and chaos. A paganism far more crass and cruel than that of antiquity is engulfing the whole Western World.

For the Jewish people, the World War and its aftermath spelled Golgotha! A quarter of a century of mounting disasters and calamities culminating in the unprecedented horrors of recent months. Great Jewish communities, rich in history, culture and achievement, among whom the dream of a free, enlightened and tolerant humanity was most ardently cherished, have been plunged into Hell. Gone for them are Enlightenment and Emancipation. Gone are the dreams of human brotherhood and equality. Gone are the beckoning horizons of great careers and great service. Gone are all shelter and all security. Gone, Qven, the scant and tenuous security of the ghetto! Into exile, broken, stripped and impoverished, they must go, even as their forefathers before them, who knew neither Enlightenment

nor Emancipation. From countries and homes where they had known dignity, honor, power and wealth, Jews, in their mounting legions, must now wander forth, bewildered and disillusioned into a bewildered and disillusioned world.

For the world, generally, stands today bewildered and disillusioned. The strong and sure foundations upon which it had builded its life have been rudely shaken. That high optimism which fed upon truly remarkable achievements in every scientific field has vanished. Marvelous had been the vistas which opened up before the eyes of men in the preceding century. Men could dream then and men did dream, unabashed, of a glorious and uninterrupted progress for mankind, of an unending conquest of nature, and of building, in a world of abundance, a civilization free from all poverty, ignorance and war. "In the nineteenth century", wrote Victor Hugo, war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, hatred will be dead, frontiers will be dead, royalty will be dead, dogmas will be dead, man will begin to live!" But here we are in the twentieth century, and war is not dead, the scaffold is not dead, hatred is not dead, frontiers are not dead, royalty is not dead, dogmas are not dead, and man is beginning to die. The vista which stretches before our generation today ends at the edge of a wilderness. For twenty-five years now, men have lived in a world of mounting hate, intolerance, and bigotry, of revolutions, invasions, wars, of the rise and fall of empires, and amidst the slaughter of millions of their kind. Great peoples have destroyed their liberties and enslaved themselves. Millions of men cower today in terrorized submissiveness. The wealth of nations is being drained in preparation for wars which will also drain the lives of their people. The mind of man, trained and sharpened by generations of scientific education, is now applied to the perfection of the war technique. So that the discoveries which science records in our day in such great numbers no longer fill the hearts of men with pride or enthusiasm. They suspect that these things will not contribute either to their happiness or security, or to greater decency in the world. The human spirit stands today frightened, weighted down with apocalyptic foreboding, as if awaiting the crash of doom.

The thoughtful among men have accordingly begun to search earnestly for some way of salvation - a road away from disaster. They are seeking desperately hard to rediscover that vision which was somehow lost amidst the brilliant pageantry of scientific achievement in the last century, to the hurt and sorrow

of the world. They understand now what the wise men of the earth have always known: that increased knowledge does not necessarily mean increased goodness or happiness, that facts are not in themselves blessings, that "truth can make us mad as well as free", that the prolongation of human life is not the same as the improvement of human life, that the acceleration of a process does not always insure a finer product and that change does not necessarily spell progress. They realize now that the fault is not with science or education or democracy, as such, but with the interpretation which men put on them, with the omnipotence and autonomy which they ascribed to them, and with their failure to understand that science, education and democracy are means and not ends in themselves.

What has been tragically missing in our civilization has been the compelling and coordinating belief in the great human goals which religion, and religion alone, has set for mankind, and towards the attainment of which science, education and democracy must contribute, if they are to fulfil their sole function. Mankind lost sight of these goals. Therefore human ~~people~~<sup>progress</sup> today has no clear direction. Good material and good tools are not enough for the builder. He must have a plan. To build a noble and enduring society, it is not enough to have wealth and intellect. Mankind must be possessed of the architectural plan, which the spiritual vision of men designed, and it must have the will and loyalty to follow that plan. ~~That~~ only the moral sense of man can provide. Without faith in God, the reality of spiritual vision as well as the sanctions of morality are quickly denied and rejected in the world.

Mankind's way of salvation is the way which leads back or forward to God.

In the same way, and even more earnestly, are thoughtful Jews reaching out today for the religious vision of Jewish life. For ours is a double measure of disillusionment and a double measure of misfortune. More than any other people do we require today the everlasting arms of a great religious conviction to sustain us.

To thoughtful Jews it is becoming increasingly clear that there are no substitutes in Jewish life for religion. Neither philanthropy nor culture nor nationalism is adequate for the stress and challenge of our lives. All these interests can and must find their rightful place within the generous pattern of Judaism. But the pattern must be Judaism, the Judaism of the Torah, the synagogue and the prayer book, the Judaism of the priest, the prophet, the saint, the mystic and the rabbi, the Judaism which speaks of God, and the worship of God, and the commandments of God and the quest of God. // Most eloquently did Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, in his "Misillat Yesharim" - the Path of the Upright - define Judaism in terms to which every classic teacher of Israel, I am sure, <sup>would</sup> have subscribed:

"We thus see that the chief function of man in this world is to keep the commandments, to worship God, and to withstand trial. The pleasures of this world should be only the means of affording that contentment and serenity which enables man to apply his mind to the fulfillment of the task before him. All of man's strivings should be directed toward the Creator, blessed be He. A man should have no other purpose in whatever he does, be it great or small, than to draw nigh to God and to break down all separating walls, that is, all things of a material nature, between himself and his Master, so that he may be drawn to God as iron to a magnet. He should pursue everything that might prove helpful to such nearness, and avoid everything that is liable to prevent it, as he would avoid fire. In the words of the Psalmist, 'My soul cleaveth to Thee; Thy right hand upholdeth me fast' (Ps. 63.9). Since man came into the world only for the end of achieving nearness to God, he should prevent his soul from being held captive by the things which hinder the realization of that end."

Our leaders would do well to understand this. Our people, and more especially our youth, require, now that Jewish life is entering again <sup>upon</sup> an age of persecution and martyrdom, more than the example of generosity towards our unfortunate brothers overseas, and more than the example of a

valiant defense of Jewish rights at home. They require the example of the practice of Judaism, as Luzzatto defined it; "to keep the commandments, to worship God and to withstand trial" - the example of religious discipline, piety and sacrificial loyalty. These leaders must help us to rebuild our inner world, now that our outer world is beginning to crumble again. (p. 10)

There have been many false prophets of "ersatz" Judaism in our midst who have frequently misled our people. There were those professional social-workers who announced that a full complement of scientifically administered hospitals and orphanages and other social agencies was a sufficient "vade mecum" for the Jewish people, and that the synagogue and the religious school were quite unnecessary. At best they were to be tolerated only as a concession to those who still take such things seriously, and in order not to create unpleasant friction in the community. Such social-workers had many ready adherents among our would-be assimilated and rich Jews.

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Palestine, where most Jews will continue to live, merely by talking long, loud and enticingly about Palestine. The upbuilding of a Jewish national home in Palestine is one great, <sup>urgent</sup> ~~imperious~~ and historically inescapable task of Jewry. The upbuilding of Jewish religious life in America and elsewhere throughout the world, inclusive of Palestine, is another. One is no substitute for the other. One is not opposed to the other.

Again there were other Jews who advised their people that Judaism can well be laid aside, now that the proletarian Messiah has already appeared in the land of the Slav, riding upon a droschka, and the Kingdom of Heaven was near at hand.

All these false prophets have had their clamorous hour among us. But their hour is over. Thoughtful Jews are turning to the sure and classic highways of Jewish life and thought. We are not likely to be beguiled again, at least the men of this generation, by these prophets and their alien teachings.

Humanity has sickened of its Godless civilization. Because the spiritual interpretation of human destiny was allowed to languish, other interpretations have come to life and are now driving mankind mad. For when God is dethroned, his throne does not remain vacant for long. Some false god, some <sup>Mammon</sup> ~~Moloch~~, or Mars <sup>some</sup> occupies it. Because the ideal of the Imitation of God was banished from the hearts of men, the imitation of some ~~saturn~~ <sup>evil</sup> is now the ideal. In place of piety, reverence, humility, compassion, self-sacrifice, other qualities - insolence, cruelty, aggression and combativeness are now extolled. Because men have rejected the ideal of the sanctification of human life under God, they now have a world in which human life is cheap, in which the stature of the individual has been reduced, his rights usurped by the state, his labor a commodity and his life <sup>just</sup> ~~only~~ a statistical item. Because the world rejected ~~God~~ <sup>Man</sup>, it rejected also ~~the concept of man~~ <sup>fashioned</sup> ~~formed~~ in the image of God, possessed of a sacred and inviolable personality, endowed by His Creator with

certain inalienable rights. Because men have ignored the sovereignty of God's moral Law, they have a world in which men, parties and governments have set themselves up above all law. Where there is no longer the Law of God, there ensues the law of <sup>the</sup> Duce, <sup>the</sup> Feuhrer, or <sup>the</sup> Commissar before which all men must tremble.

Now that lights are going out everywhere in the world, men ~~are~~ <sup>are turning</sup> ~~need~~ <sup>to</sup> for the Light of God.

Jews can do no less. <sup>Jews</sup> will do no less. I sense an incoming tide of faith among our people, a faith charged in some instances with deep mysticism. It <sup>Should</sup> ~~would~~ not surprise us and it would be in keeping with similar moments in our past history, if our age should witness a strong mystic movement among our people. Such mystic movements followed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the close of the 15th century and the appalling disasters which overtook Polish Jewry in the 17th century. The <sup>present-day</sup> ~~expulsion~~ of the Jews from Germany and Austria, the dismal plight of Jews throughout Eastern Europe, ~~and~~ the stress under which Israel finds itself everywhere, coupled with the distressed mood of mankind generally, may give rise to a strong mystic movement ~~among our people~~, which will express itself in religion, literature and art and in personal habits of thought and conduct.

In a sense, the problem of the survival of Judaism is much simpler in our day than at any time in the past. Our leaders need no longer expend the energy which was expended during the last century to persuade Jews to remain Jews. The doors of escape from <sup>J</sup>ewish destiny have been shut. The choice confronting intelligent Jews today is a very simple one. They have realized that God has not placed the shears of destiny - to be, or not to be - in their hands. Forces which they have not summoned are driving all would-be escapists back upon their

people. Somehow there has always been an element of unavoidable compulsion <sup>of the inevitable</sup> in Jewish <sup>experience</sup> ~~life~~. It is the "Ba'al Korcha" element, the quality of shunless destiny. It was under such compulsion, the Rabbis declared, that our forefathers accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai.... "And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say: 'We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I be king over you.... And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bonds of the covenant.'"

The choice today is not between survival and extinction, but between doom and destiny, between burden and mission. Shall we live our Jewish lives greatly or meanly? Shall Jews walk "darkling to their doom" or advance confidently and exultingly to their destiny along the eternal road which stretches from Ur of the Chaldees to the distant messianic lands of "Acharit Ha-yamim"? Shall we quarrel with our fate and beat helpless hands against the unyielding bars of circumstances or shall we, <sup>remembering that "stone walls do not a prison make"</sup> by a miracle of faith, cease to be the unwilling prisoners of circumstance, and, in the service of God, <sup>and of in man,</sup> ~~the~~ God, become magnificently free? <sup>MSB 732/107 3 326</sup> "The slave of God- he alone is truly free." Our choice today is between the "Ol Malkut" and the "Ol Malkut Shemayim" - between the yoke of earthly kingdoms, which is grievously hard to bear, and the yoke of the Kingdom of God, which makes all other yokes easy to bear.

What hands shall weave the loom of our future years? Our own hands, tender and skillful, drawing the golden strands from our own treasures of wisdom, piety, passion and dreams, which all the goodly folk from Abraham to our own day <sup>have</sup> stored for us, or shall alien hands, rude and unsympathetic, weave the web of the destiny of ourselves and our children?

Now that many doors are closing, should we not open wide to our children the doors leading to the treasure-troves of their own people's spiritual and

intellectual wealth, for their future sustenance, inspiration, solace and pride? The days ahead will be hard days for them. <sup>it</sup> Until the world completes ~~the~~ latest stage in <sup>its</sup> economic transformation and <sup>after a long, violent period of readjustment</sup> steadies itself again, Jews, because they are everywhere an exposed minority, easily blamed and easily victimized, will be hammered on the anvil of every world event. The days ahead will be hard ~~times~~ <sup>days</sup> for our children, but they need not be ignoble or unrewarding days. Give them their total heritage - the copious bounty of Judaism - the Torah, the synagogue, the prayer-book, the noble literature and the beautiful language of their people. Give them the millennial companionship of their kinsmen and their kinsmen's heroic faith and dreams and their matchless saga <sup>(and they will, matched with their great hero)</sup>. They will then come to understand what it is in our heritage that has kept us alive; what it is that laid waste the paganism of the ancient world and now finds itself again in mortal combat with another paganism which it is also destined to destroy; what it is that makes their people the brunt of attack whenever privilege, power and reaction make a major onslaught on the precious hopes of mankind, and why the ancient ideals of their people are forever the battle-cries of up-struggling humanity. They will then come to understand that it is not because we are weak or unworthy that barbarous governments have vowed to destroy us, but because we are strong, and they fear us. Not us, but the faith which is in us, the torch which is in our hearts and the passion which is in our blood for the prophetic mandates of our Jewish heritage, for justice, freedom, brotherhood and peace, for the vision of <sup>עיר אמת</sup> <sup>עיר צדקה</sup> <sup>עיר שלום</sup>, the City of Justice, the <sup>City</sup> ~~Metropolis~~ of Faith, in place of the <sup>עיר של דם</sup> <sup>עיר של כבוד</sup>, the City of Blood, built upon the pride of blood and upon glory drenched in the blood of the conquered; the despoiled and the slain, <sup>from that devotion to</sup> ~~in a word, for the greatness of morals as against the morals of great-~~ness. These reckless adventurers of Power, who have put all ethics, all science and all religion in the service of a design for Power, who have made <sup>all</sup> ~~of~~ ethics

relative to tribal temperament and national interests and only Power, absolute, who have forced upon civilian life the discipline, the dumb obedience, the drill, the barrack room, the court martial, the censor, the espionage system, the whole code, complex and outlook of the military, and, by so doing, have destroyed civilian life completely, these present-day heirs of the tradition of Ishmael - the "Pere Adam", the Wild Man, "whose hand is against every man and every man's hand is against him", these heirs of the traditions of Esau, the Hairy Man, the "Ish Tzayid", who sees life only as the hunter sees the hunted, and who delights "to live by his sword", ~~these abhor and dread the tradition of Jacob, delights "to live by his sword"~~, - these abhor and dread the tradition of Jacob, the "Ish Tam," the man seeking perfection through rational and moral pursuits, "Yoshev Ohalim", content to live in the peaceful tents of work and study, devoted to the greatness of morals instead of the morals of greatness....

And understanding this - and understanding further that they must now become the active trustees of this classic tradition of civilization - they will, along with all other men <sup>of</sup> good will, feel themselves challenged. They will not be ashamed or cast down. They will face their world without fear or apology. They will not seek the world's approval - only God's. They will not be afraid of hostile voices - only of their own voice when silenced in fear. The insolence and naked impudicity of the heathens who rage will never humiliate them, only their own apostasy, back-sliding and fear. They will try to be worthy of their great hour of testing!

For each young heart will say: I stood with Abraham in his lonely vigil and read the destiny of my people in the stars. With Isaac I built the altar of a patriarch's stern faith and ultimate sacrifice. At Jabbok's ford I learned to wrestle thru the night with the dark angel of despair and to wrest a blessing at the break of dawn. With Joseph I dreamt the dream of sheaves and stars and climbed the steps from a dungeon's pit to a prince's throne. I wandered with Moses, an alien prince among an alien people. Unshod, I knelt with him before a vision in the wilderness,

and from within the inextinguishable fires of God I heard the inexorable Voice summoning to duty and freedom. I saw the lightnings and the clouds, and heard the thunder roll around Mt. Sinai, and witnessed the everlasting covenant between my people and its God. I learned how to suffer and hunger in long and weary marches to reach a promised land. I was with Joshua fighting at Gideon, and with Deborah by the waters of Megiddo, when the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. I stood with the blind Samson in his agony, and heard the wild cry of his desperate courage as he pulled down the temple over the Phillistines. I heard Samuel admonish his people to remain free, and not to reject God by enslaving themselves to a king. I listened to the harp of the shepherd king, David, and saw the great king cowering before the righteous wrath of the prophet, and bowing in contrition before the majesty of the overarching Law of God. I prayed with Solomon in the Temple which he dedicated as a House of Prayer for all peoples, and I learned of a God Whom Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain, and whose compassion ~~extendeth~~<sup>reaches</sup> to all, even to the stranger who cometh out of a far country.

I marched with the resolute band of the prophets who came to destroy old worlds and to build new ones. I shuddered at the wrath of their spirit as they lashed out against oppression and injustice, against false Gods and gilded idols, against blind leaders and lying prophets. I warmed at their infinite compassion for the weak, the denied, and the wronged. From them I learned the nature of Mission and what a raging fire within one's bosom and unfulfilled ~~commission~~<sup>mission</sup> of God may become.

I wandered with my people by the slow-moving rivers of Babylon, and I heard their oath of deathless loyalty "If I forget Thee, O Jerusalem, <sup>may</sup> my right hand forget her cunning". I entered their humble and improvised synagogues, and I discovered that prayer and devout study are beautiful, and as acceptable to God as the sacrifices of the priests in the Temple, and the songs of the Levites.

I returned from captivity, and standing with those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, I learned how a people can build upon ruins. I sat with the sages and scribes

who piously taught and interpreted the word of God, and molded a people's reverence for its spirit enshrined in a timeless Book. I moved among the mountains of Judea, pulling down the heathen altars, with the lion-hearted sons of the Maccabees. I saw the miracle of a single cruse of spiritual oil inexhaustibly illumine the rededicated temple of their faith. I was the companion of the gentle Hillel who revealed to me the whole of the Law in the single kernel of neighborly love; and of Akiba who knew how to inspire a revolution, defy an empire and die a martyr.

And then into the long dark exile I wandered with my people, into many lands over which cross and crescent reigned, and I walked with them <sup>the</sup> weary highways of the world. I was with them when they drank deep out of the bitter chalice of pain, humiliation, cruelty, and hate. But never did I fail to sense the stress of their imperious vision, their pride of a great past, their hope of a greater future, their superb courage, their unflinching faith. Philosophers, poets and saints never failed them in the lands of their dispersion, and the light of their Torah was never extinguished.

And then I saw the night lift and the dawn break; and into a reborn world, drenched with a new light of freedom and justice, I marched with them exaltingly. I heard the shackles fall from off their limbs. I saw the radiance of their emancipated minds and hearts. I beheld them, mounting as on eagles' wings, rising to bless the world with matchless gifts of heart and mind in every field of human creation.

And now I see the night descend again, and into the dark and the storm my people are wandering forth again. Shall I leave them now? Can I leave them now? Shall I part company with this immortal band? They have become too dear and precious to me. The urgency of their pilgrimage is now coursing thru my own blood too. Their beckoning shrine is now the shrine of my quest also. Like unto the first pilgrim, out of Ur of the Chaldees, I, too, seized by the hand of God, am listening to the Divine summons: "Get thee out of thy country,...and from thy father's house, unto a land which I will show thee...and I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing..."

## RELIGION IN PRESENT-DAY JEWISH LIFE

By

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Mankind, generally, stands today bewildered and disillusioned. The strong and sure foundations upon which it had builded its life have been rudely shaken. That high optimism which fed upon truly remarkable achievements in every scientific field has vanished. Marvelous had been the vistas which opened up before men in the preceding century. Men could dream then and men did dream, unabashed, of a glorious and uninterrupted progress for mankind, of an unending conquest of nature, and of building, in a world of abundance, a civilization free from all poverty, ignorance and war. But the vista which stretches before our generation ends at the edge of a wilderness. For twenty-five years now, men have lived in a world of mounting hate, intolerance and bigotry, of revolutions, invasions, wars, of the rise and fall of empires, and amidst the slaughter of millions of their kind. Great peoples have destroyed their liberties and enslaved themselves. Millions of men cower today in terrorized submissiveness. The wealth of nations is being drained in preparation for war which will also drain their lives. The mind of man, trained and sharpened by generations of scientific education, is now applied to the perfection of the war technique. So that the many discoveries which science records in our day no longer fill men with pride or enthusiasm. They suspect that these things will not contribute to their happiness, or security, or to greater decency in the world. The human spirit stands today frightened, weighted down with apocalyptic foreboding, as if awaiting the crash of doom.

The thoughtful among men have accordingly begun to search earnestly for the way of salvation - a road away from disaster. They are seeking desperately hard to rediscover that vision which was somehow lost amidst the brilliant pageantry of scientific achievement in the last century, to the hurt and sorrow

of the world. They understand now what the wise men of the earth have always known: that increased knowledge does not necessarily mean increased goodness or happiness, that facts are not in themselves blessings, that "truth can make us mad as well as free", that the prolongation of human life is not the same as the improvement of human life, that the acceleration of a process does not always insure a finer product and that change does not necessarily spell progress. They realize now that the fault is not with science or education or democracy, as such, but with the interpretation which men put on them, with the omnipotence and autonomy which they ascribed to them, and with their failure to understand that science, education and democracy are means and not ends in themselves.

What has been tragically missing in our civilization has been the compelling and all-determining belief in the great human goals which religion, and religion alone, has set for mankind, and towards the attainment of which science, education and democracy must contribute. That, in fact, is their sole function. Mankind has lost sight of these goals. It has, therefore, no clear direction. Good material and good tools are not enough for the builder. He must have a plan. To build a noble and enduring society, it is not enough to have wealth and intellect. Mankind must be possessed of the architectural design which the spiritual vision of man has drawn, and it must have the will and faithfulness to follow that design which only the moral sense of man can provide. Without faith in God, the spiritual vision as well as moral authority are quickly denied and rejected.

Mankind's way of salvation is the way which leads back to God.

In the same way, and even more earnestly, are thoughtful Jews reaching out to-day for the religious vision of Jewish life. For ours is a double measure of disillusionment and a double measure of misfortune. More than any other people do we require today the everlasting arms of a great religious conviction to sustain us.

To these thoughtful Jews it is becoming increasingly clear that there are no substitutes in Jewish life for religion. Neither philanthropy nor culture nor nationalism is adequate for the stress and challenge of our lives. All these interests can and must find their rightful place within the generous pattern of Judaism. But the pattern must be Judaism, the Judaism of the Torah, the synagogue and the prayer book, the Judaism of the priest, the prophet, the saint, the mystic and the rabbi, the Judaism which speaks of God, and the ~~xxxx~~ worship of God, and the commandments of God and the quest of God.

Our leaders would do well to understand this. Our people, and more especially our youth, require today even more than the example of generosity towards our unfortunate brothers overseas, even more than the example of a valiant defense of Jewish rights at home, the example of the practice of Judaism, as Luzzatto defined it: "to keep the commandments, to worship God and to withstand all trial".

Humanity has sickened of its Godless civilization. Because the spiritual interpretation of human destiny was allowed to languish, other interpretations have come to life and are now driving mankind mad. For when God is dethroned, his throne does not remain vacant for long. Some false god, some Wotan, Meloch or Mars occupies it. Because the ideal of the imitation of God was banished from the hearts of men, the imitation of some devil is now the ideal. In place of piety, reverence, humility, compassion, self-sacrifice, other qualities - insolence, cruelty, aggression and combativeness are being extolled. Because men have rejected the ideal of the sanctification of human life under God, they now have a world in which human life is cheap, in which the stature of the individual has been reduced, his rights usurped by the state, his labor a commodity and his life only a statistical item. Because the world rejected God, it rejected also the concept of man as formed in the image of God, possessed of a sacred and inviolable personality, endowed by

by His Creator with certain inalienable rights. Because men have ignored the sovereignty of God's moral Law, they have a world in which men, parties and governments have set themselves up above all law. Where there is no longer the Law of God, there ensues the law of a Duce, a Fuehrer, or a Commissar before which all men must tremble.

Now that lights are going out everywhere in the world, men see the need for the Light of God.

Jews can do no less - will do no less. I sense an incoming tide of faith among our people, a faith charged in some instances with deep mysticism. It would not surprise us and it would be in keeping with similar moments in our past history, if our age should witness a strong mystic movement among our people. Such mystic movements followed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the close of the 15th<sup>century</sup> and the appalling disasters which overtook Polish Jewry in the 17th century. The expulsion of the Jews from Germany and Austria, the dismal plight of Jews throughout Eastern Europe and the stress under which Israel finds itself everywhere, coupled with the distressed mood of mankind generally, may give rise to a strong mystic movement among our people, which will express itself in religion, literature and art and in personal habits of thought and conduct.

1/ Many factors - secondary importance - Rel. generally - subordinate pos. - West. World

Sc. has steadily diverted it - many franchises - Satanic pedestal - gifts less frequent

Sc. successfully refuted - paranormalists - untrue - rather cast suspicion

Separation of Church - State - secularization of Edw. - diminished

Other forms of loyalty - nation - country - race - class superseded

2/ J. people left shattered at a time - sec. world upside

Had been thoroughly permeated by Rel. - its disability

yielded to tempter of age - worldly - avidly - intensity

Transferred - not only "reflexes" were - modernized

moments of flight - dictated by careers - social

escalade - R. Indifference - non-affiliation - re-

nunciation of older rel. reg. men

3/ Recked out for complete equality - distur. way of life

segregated - conveniently neutral + agnostic

Rationalized - Rel. is now good only - All rel. diff

now to be merged - brotherhood - unity accents

Enlightenment - Piled Piper - Repacked away - laying

Sp. secures

4/ Healthy well-placed 9p. powerful- encephalic notes  
Richer they become - less used for all.  
when men are first - find it easy - disperse fast - few for

5/ Thrust 19-20 c - wide & numerous cracks - peaks  
starting eruption of violent Auras - most countries  
Black & white - little power - always appear  
Slavic power  
Some speak to mind - other disconnected evidence  
of underlying menace - battle proceeded - many  
in series. below was just touched to them

6/ World War - unborn all the Jews - who can number  
the high types - Out of 101% slaves - short  
'dawn unbreak' - a program and cross  
For J. people = Golgotha - Great J. movements  
Same as Eulypator, Fenore - Shells & Yellow Body  
" " Shelter & security - scant & stern  
into exile - broken - beheaded & skulls. with a  
beheaded & darkness used -

7/ World generally - High optimism - Vistas -

{ In 19C. man will be dead - scaffold - hanged - crucified -  
royalty - dogmas - man will begin to live!  
Break down + Break out

8/ Thro'ful was - road away from darkness - Reborn. The Vision  
understand now - increased knowledge - goddess - heffer  
Facts - blessings; truth - mad; change - figures

What has been looking - faith is great human goals  
which R. alone - lost goals - lost direction

Man Plan = sp. defining it.  
will - moral sense activities it

without god - Reality sp. vision - moral sense  
are greatly denied + rejected

9/ Faith in god is strongest bulwark of Free Society  
It was freedom began - on talara - god who created  
possessed of indep. + culture significance  
an inter - original + unmovable right

Challenged authority - past - higher authority sp. god

10/ Try to see Pub. opinion sp. demon. dogma in world

Pol. freedom comes as result - struggle for rel. freedom (4)  
Protes. Ref. - Prophetic trad. of Israel - 16-17c  
Sp. Liberty - emanc. of man from tyrant. power  
of Tradition & System -

Other forms of Liberty - peasant revolts - in name  
of God - all men were equal - preached in  
blood - 100,000 peasant -

Anabaptist sects - right of private judgment  
- living taking power of state - in Separation -  
freedom of universal toleration

From Holland - England - all colonies  
Declaration of Independence - "we hold -

Liberty Bell - marshalled rel. Smith for profane

11) Dem. struggles when the rel. saves day up.  
"Despotism may govern without faith - but liberty cannot  
live

12) And in same manner, that for Jews - marking out  
for men is a double wrong - disillusionment - suspicion  
Now we require everything from men & R  
No subtilty - Philanthropy - age of persecution &  
warfare

"ersatz" Judaism - perpetual road - writer (5)  
secular & educators - few naturalists - common  
have had their damnable hour

13/ Humanity has not been - Godless Analytical  
9th - dethroned -  
Sovereignty of mind has - repeated - & the  
Now that rights - kept & lost.

14/ Jews can do us less -  
Now that many does an evening - few does to the  
known - church - were - fresh  
Days ahead - need not be ignoble - unending  
give them Kevlar - match-less saga  
will feel less challenged -  
They will not seek world's opponent only gods

RELIGION  
*in Present-Day Jewish Life*

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# RELIGION

## *in Present-Day Jewish Life*

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MANY factors have tended to make religion of secondary importance in the life of our people.

Religion, generally, has been pushed into a subordinate position in the Western World. Science has steadily divested it of many of its franchises. The satisfactions which men experienced in the increase of power, wealth and material well-being, yielded by science, placed the latter upon the pedestal which was formerly occupied by religion, whose gifts were now less prized and sought after. Science successfully refuted many pronouncements which were made by religion in its sacred texts concerning the universe, nature and man. This cast suspicion upon much else in religion. The separation of church and state, the growth in civil authority and the contraction of ecclesiastical authority, the secularization of education and, in the realm of speculative thought, the divorce of philosophy from theology—all these were both cause and effect of the diminishing importance of religion in modern society.

Other forms of loyalty clamored for supremacy, nation, country, race, class. Each of these derived its sanctions and mandates from sources other than religion, and proceeded to construct systems of thought with little or no reference to it.

The Jewish people left the ghettos of the Western World at a time when these secular movements were unfolding. The world from which the Jews emerged was thoroughly pervaded by religion. It had been thus pervaded for centuries. Every phase and activity of life was bound by its discipline. Nevertheless, the Jews yielded to the new temper of the age as readily as any other people. In some countries they not only caught up with the new secular mood of the Western World but out-distanced it in dogmatic ardor and intensity.

There transpired among the Jewries of Western and Eastern Europe not only reform movements designed to revamp their religious ideas and practices, to "modernize" them and to bring them into consonance with the new outlook of Europe, but also strong centrifugal movements away from Judaism altogether—movements of flight, not towards other faiths so much—these latter flights were dictated, as a rule, by careerism and social escalade—but towards religious negativism and indifference, expressed in non-affiliation with the synagogue and in a renunciation of the entire religious regimen of Judaism.

This flight from Judaism was also motivated by strong political and economic considerations. Throughout the 19th century, Jews struggled for emancipation. They reached out after complete equality. They believed that their distinctive religious beliefs and traditional way of life segregated them and disadvantaged them among men. They further believed that by surrendering them they would succeed in acquiring those rights and privileges which other peoples possessed. This political and economic motif behind the flight complex was soon rationalized into a system of thought, conveniently neutral and agnostic, which discounted religion generally and proclaimed that the scientific progress of mankind had finally outstripped religion

and that while religion may still have a certain usefulness for the young, the poor and the unenlightened, cultured and prosperous folk can get along very well without it. All religious and racial differences were certain to be merged very soon in a common brotherhood of men, dedicated to the life of pure reason. The mighty accents of the American and French Revolutions and the other up-surgings political struggles of the century reverberated through all this hopeful and wishful thinking. Thus Enlightenment and Emancipation were the Pied-Piper whose music beguiled many Jews away from their ancient loyalties and spiritual securities.

The wealthy and the well-placed Jews especially pampered themselves with these comforting notions. The richer they became and the more important positions they occupied, the less need they had for religion. The upper classes which succeeded in reaching, if not the center, then at least the periphery of the non-Jewish world, were most supercilious in their attitude towards Judaism. When men are prosperous they find it easy to dispense with God—especially with a Jewish God.

Fortunately not all Jews were of the same mind. Many refused to exchange spiritual treasures for material advantage. They saw neither the need nor the wisdom of it. They were of the opinion that if freedom and equality are to come to all men, they should come also to the Jews as a matter of right, as a restoration of that which belongs to them and to all men as a natural endowment, and not in payment for unwarranted sacrifices of religious convictions, a distinctive culture and an historic way of life. They furthermore suspected that the new millennium might turn out to be quite as much of a mirage as many others in the long past of Israel, and, on the basis of past experiences, they feared that should another such reaction in their political and economic fortunes set in, Jews would find themselves spiritually shattered, homeless and utterly bereft, unless they had the secured sanctuaries of Jewish life and faith into which to retreat for refuge and solace. Many other Jews, out of force of habit or because of the strong appeal of ancient ties and memories, remained constant. So that Judaism was not lost.

Throughout the 19th and the early 20th centuries, wide and ominous cracks appeared in the beautiful facade of European Enlightenment and Emancipation. Startling eruptions of violent anti-Semitism occurred, at one time or another, in nearly every country of Western Europe. Medievalism raised its ugly head over and over again, either as a Magyar blood libel or a Germanic literary pogrom or a Gaelic "cause celebre" or an outright Slavic slaughter of Jews. The rains sadly disfigured the wall "daubed with whited plaster," and the foundations thereof were uncovered.

Some Jews were quick to read these warning signs. They returned to their faith and their people as if to a shelter from a gathering storm. Others, however, persisted in their hypnosis, discounted these evidences of an underlying menace and blithely proceeded on their way. In the generation before the World War, Judaism in Western Europe touched bottom, and it languished also among vast sections of Jewry in the United States.

Then came the World War which unleashed all the furies. Who can number the high hopes of mankind which perished upon its battlefields? What was apparently won, was actually sunk and lost in their bloody bogs—freedom, democracy, the self-determination of peoples, the rights of minorities and the vision of an international order based upon law, justice and peace. Out of the ten million graves of the need-

lessly slain, there arose the dread ghosts of hatred, of national and racial passions, of arrogance and vindictiveness, of widespread want and bitter class struggle, and of a dread stampede towards force, violence and terror as life's sole technique. These ghosts are dancing today their "dance macabre" in the hearts of men and nations. Civilization is plunging into darkness and chaos. A paganism far more crass and cruel than that of antiquity is engulfing the whole Western World.

For the Jewish people, the World War and its aftermath spelled Golgotha! A quarter of a century of mounting disasters and calamities culminating in the unprecedented horrors of recent months. Great Jewish communities, rich in history, culture and achievement, among whom the dream of a free, enlightened and tolerant humanity was most ardently cherished, have been plunged into Hell. Gone for them are Enlightenment and Emancipation. Gone are the dreams of human brotherhood and equality. Gone are the beckoning horizons of great careers and great service. Gone are all shelter and all security. Gone, even, the scant and tenuous security of the ghetto! Into exile, broken, stripped and impoverished, they must go, even as their forefathers before them, who knew neither Enlightenment nor Emancipation. From countries and homes where they had known dignity, honor, power and wealth, Jews, in their mounting legions, must now wander forth, bewildered and disillusioned into a bewildered and disillusioned world.

For the world, generally, stands today bewildered and disillusioned. The strong and sure foundations upon which it had builded its life have been rudely shaken. That high optimism which fed upon truly remarkable achievements in every scientific field has vanished. Marvelous had been the vistas which opened up before the eyes of men in the preceding century. Men could dream then and men did dream, unabashed, of a glorious and uninterrupted progress for mankind, of an unending conquest of nature, and of building, in a world of abundance, a civilization free from all poverty, ignorance and war. "In the nineteenth century", wrote Victor Hugo, "war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, hatred will be dead, frontiers will be dead, royalty will be dead, dogmas will be dead, man will begin to *live*!" But here we are in the twentieth century, and war is not dead, the scaffold is not dead, hatred is not dead, frontiers are not dead, royalty is not dead, dogmas are not dead, and man is beginning to *die*. The vista which stretches before our generation today ends at the edge of a wilderness. For twenty-five years now, men have lived in a world of mounting hate, intolerance, and bigotry, of revolutions, invasions, wars, of the rise and fall of empires, and amidst the slaughter of millions of their kind. Great peoples have destroyed their liberties and enslaved themselves. Millions of men cower today in terrorized submissiveness. The wealth of nations is being drained in preparation for wars which will also drain the lives of their people. The mind of man, trained and sharpened by generations of scientific education, is now applied to the perfection of the war technique. So that the discoveries which science records in our day in such great numbers no longer fill the hearts of men with pride or enthusiasm. They suspect that these things will not contribute either to their happiness or security, or to greater decency in the world. The human spirit stands today frightened, weighted down with apocalyptic foreboding, as if awaiting the crash of doom.

The thoughtful among men have accordingly begun to search earnestly for some way of salvation—a road away from disaster. They are seeking desperately hard to

rediscover that vision which was somehow lost amidst the brilliant pageantry of scientific achievement in the last century, to the hurt and sorrow of the world. They understand now what the wise men of the earth have always known: that increased knowledge does not necessarily mean increased goodness or happiness, that facts are not in themselves blessings, that "truth can make us mad as well as free," that the prolongation of human life is not the same as the improvement of human life, that the acceleration of a process does not always insure a finer product and that change does not necessarily spell progress. They realize now that the fault is not with science or education or democracy, as such, but with the interpretation which men put on them, with the omnipotence and autonomy which they ascribed to them, and with their failure to understand that science, education and democracy are means and not ends in themselves.

What has been tragically missing in our civilization has been the compelling and coordinating belief in the great human goals which religion, and religion alone, has set for mankind, and towards the attainment of which science, education and democracy must contribute, if they are to fulfill their sole function. Mankind lost sight of these goals. Therefore human progress today has no clear direction. Good material and good tools are not enough for the builder. He must have a plan. To build a noble and enduring society, it is not enough to have wealth and intellect. Mankind must be possessed of the architectural plan, which the spiritual vision of man designed, and it must have the will and loyalty to follow that plan. That will and loyalty only the moral sense of man can provide. Without faith in God, the reality of spiritual vision as well as the sanctions of morality are quickly denied and rejected in the world.

Mankind's way of salvation is the way which leads back or forward to God.

In the same way, and even more earnestly, are thoughtful Jews reaching out today for the religious vision of Jewish life. For ours is a double measure of disillusionment and a double measure of misfortune. More than any other people do we require today the everlasting arms of a great religious conviction to sustain us.

To thoughtful Jews it is becoming increasingly clear that there are no substitutes in Jewish life for religion. Neither philanthropy nor culture nor nationalism is adequate for the stress and challenge of our lives. All these interests can and must find their rightful place within the generous pattern of Judaism. But the pattern must be Judaism, the Judaism of the Torah, the synagogue and the prayer book, the Judaism of the priest, the prophet, the saint, the mystic and the rabbi, the Judaism which speaks of God, and the worship of God, and the commandments of God and the quest of God. Most eloquently did Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, in his "Misillat Yesharim"—the Path of the Upright—define Judaism in terms to which every classic teacher of Israel, I am sure, would have subscribed:

"We thus see that the chief function of man in this world is to keep the commandments, to worship God, and to withstand trial. The pleasures of this world should be only the means of affording that contentment and serenity which enables man to apply his mind to the fulfillment of the task before him. All of man's strivings should be directed toward the Creator, blessed be He. A man should have no other purpose in whatever he does, be it great or small, than to draw nigh to God and to break down all separating walls, that is, all things of a material nature, be-

tween himself and his Master, so that he may be drawn to God as iron to a magnet. He should pursue everything that might prove helpful to such nearness, and avoid everything that is liable to prevent it, as he would avoid fire. In the words of the Psalmist, 'My soul cleaveth to Thee; Thy right hand upholdeth me fast' (Ps. 63:9). Since man came into the world only for the end of achieving nearness to God, he should prevent his soul from being held captive by the things which hinder the realization of that end."

Our leaders would do well to understand this. Our people, and more especially our youth, require, now that Jewish life is entering again upon an age of persecution and martyrdom, more than the example of generosity towards our unfortunate brothers overseas, and more than the example of a valiant defense of Jewish rights at home. They require the example of the practice of Judaism, as Luzzatto defined it: "to keep the commandments, to worship God and to withstand trial"—the example of religious discipline, piety and sacrificial loyalty. These leaders must help us to rebuild our inner world, now that our outer worlds are beginning to crumble again.

There have been many false prophets of "ersatz" Judaism in our midst who have frequently misled our people. There were those professional social-workers who announced that a full complement of scientifically administered hospitals and orphanages and other social agencies was a sufficient "vade mecum" for the Jewish people, and that the synagogue and the religious school were quite unnecessary. At best they were to be tolerated only as a concession to those who still take such things seriously, and in order not to create unpleasant friction in the community. Such social-workers had many ready adherents among our would-be assimilated and rich Jews.

There were certain Jewish educators who resented the intrusion of religion in their ultra-scientific curricula. Judaism, they said, was not a religion, but a way of life—that is to say, *their* way of life, which of course, was non-religious or anti-religious. Jewish education should, therefore, not be religious at all, only nationalistic and linguistic. At best the religious note might be smuggled in, but only as a concession to old-timers and cranks who don't know any better.

There were those Jewish spokesmen who offered Jewish nationalism as a substitute for Judaism, forgetting nationalism as such, unredeemed by a moral vision and responsibility, has sadly fragmentized our world, provincialized its peoples and is driving nations madly from one disaster to another; forgetting, further, that there is a widely-felt and widely answered need for religion and religious institutions even among peoples, whose national life is already fully established in their own lands and who are possessed of a rich national culture. Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah felt the need to preach religion—God and obedience to God's moral law—to their people even though they were established as a nation in their own land and spoke their own language. It is not possible to brush aside the spiritual needs of Jews in the diaspora, and their problems of survival as Jews in lands outside of Palestine, where most Jews will continue to live, merely by talking long, loud and enticingly about Palestine. The upbuilding of a Jewish national home in Palestine is one great, urgent and historically inescapable task of Jewry. The upbuilding of Jewish religious life in America and elsewhere throughout the world, inclusive of Palestine, is another. One is no substitute for the other. One is not opposed to the other.

Again there were other Jews who advised their people that Judaism can well be

laid aside, now that the proletarian Messiah has already appeared in the land of the Slav, riding upon a droshky, and the Kingdom of Heaven was near at hand.

All these false prophets have had their clamorous hour among us. But their hour is over. Thoughtful Jews are turning to the sure and classic highways of Jewish life and thought. We are not likely to be beguiled again, at least the men of this generation, by these prophets and their alien teachings.

Humanity has sickened of its Godless civilization. Because the spiritual interpretation of human destiny was allowed to languish, other interpretations have come to life and are now driving mankind mad. For when God is dethroned, His throne does not remain vacant for long. Some false god, some Wotan, Moloch, Mammon or Mars soon occupies it. Because the ideal of the Imitation of God was banished from the hearts of men, the imitation of some Satan is now the ideal. In place of piety, reverence, humility, compassion, self-sacrifice, other qualities—insolence, cruelty, aggression and combativeness are now extolled. Because men have rejected the ideal of the sanctification of human life under God, they now have a world in which human life is cheap, in which the stature of the individual has been reduced, his rights usurped by the state, his labor a commodity and his life just a statistical item. Because the world rejected God, it rejected also Man, fashioned in the image of God, possessed of a sacred and inviolable personality, endowed by His Creator with certain inalienable rights. Because men have ignored the sovereignty of God's moral Law, they have a world in which men, parties and governments have set themselves up above all law. Where there is no longer the Law of God, there ensues the law of the Duce, the Fuehrer, or the Commissar before which all men must tremble.

Now that lights are going out everywhere in the world, men are turning to the Light of God.

Jews can do no less. Jews will do no less. I sense an incoming tide of faith among our people, a faith charged in some instances with deep mysticism. It should not surprise us and it would be in keeping with similar moments in our past history, if our age should witness a strong mystic movement among our people. Such mystic movements followed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the close of the 15th century and the appalling disasters which overtook Polish Jewry in the 17th century. The present-day expulsions of the Jews from Germany and Austria, the dismal plight of Jews throughout Eastern Europe, the stress under which Israel finds itself everywhere, coupled with the distressed mood of mankind generally, may give rise to a strong mystic movement which will express itself in religion, literature and art and in personal habits of thought and conduct.

In a sense, the problem of the survival of Judaism is much simpler in our day than at any time in the past. Our leaders need no longer expend the energy which was expended during the last century to persuade Jews to remain Jews. The doors of escape from Jewish destiny have been shut. The choice confronting intelligent Jews today is a very simple one. They have realized that God has not placed the shears of destiny—to be, or not to be—in their hands. Forces which they have not summoned are driving all would-be escapists back upon their people. Somehow there has always been an element of unavoidable compulsion, of the inevitable, in Jewish experience. It is the "Ba'al Korch'a" element, the quality of shunless destiny. It was under such compulsion, the Rabbis declared, that our forefathers accepted the Torah

at Mount Sinai . . . "And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say: 'We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I be king over you . . . And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bonds of the covenant.'"

The choice today is not between survival and extinction, but between doom and destiny, between burden and mission. Shall we live our Jewish lives greatly or meanly? Shall Jews walk "darkling to their doom" or advance confidently and exultingly to their destiny along the eternal road which stretches from Ur of the Chaldees to the distant messianic lands of "Acharit Ha-yamim"? Shall we quarrel with our fate and beat helpless hands against the unyielding bars of circumstances or shall we, by a miracle of faith, remembering that "stone walls do not a prison make" cease to be the unwilling prisoners of circumstance, and in the service of God, and of God in man, become magnificently free?

"The slave of God—he alone is truly free." Our choice today is between the "Ol Malkut" and the "Ol Malkut Shamayim"—between the yoke of earthly kingdoms, which is grievously hard to bear, and the yoke of the Kingdom of God, which makes all other yokes easy to bear.

What hands shall weave the loom of our future years? Our *own* hands, tender and skillful, drawing the golden strands from our own treasures of wisdom, piety, passion and dreams, which all the goodly folk from Abraham to our own day have stored for us, or shall alien hands, rude and unsympathetic, weave the web of the destiny of ourselves and our children?

Now that many doors are closing, should we not open wide to our children the doors leading to the treasure-troves of their own people's spiritual and intellectual wealth, for their future sustenance, inspiration, solace and pride? The days ahead will be hard days for them. Until the world completes the latest stage in its economic transformation and steadies itself again, after a long, violent period of readjustment, Jews, because they are everywhere an exposed minority, easily blamed and easily victimized, will be hammered on the anvil of every world event. The days ahead will be hard days for our children, but they need not be ignoble or unrewarding days. Give them their total heritage—the copious bounty of Judaism—the Torah, the synagogue, the prayer book, the noble literature and the beautiful language of their people. Give them the millennial companionship of their kinsmen and their kinsmen's heroic faith and dreams and their matchless saga and they will be matched with their great hour. They will then come to understand what it is in our heritage that has kept us alive; what it is that laid waste the paganism of the ancient world and now finds itself again in mortal combat with another paganism which it is also destined to destroy; what it is that makes their people the brunt of attack whenever privilege, power and reaction make a major onslaught on the precious hopes of mankind, and why the ancient ideals of their people are forever the battle-cries of upstruggling humanity. They will then come to understand that it is not because we are weak or unworthy that barbarous governments have vowed to destroy us, but because we are strong, and they fear us. Not us, but the faith which is in us, the torch which is in our hearts and the passion which is in our blood for the prophetic mandates of our Jewish heritage, for justice, freedom, brotherhood and

peace, for the vision of Ir Ha-Tzedek, Kiryah Ne'emanah, the City of Justice, the City of Faith, in place of the Ir Ha-damim, the City of Blood, built upon the pride of blood and upon glory drenched in the blood of the conquered, the despoiled and the slain. These reckless adventurers of Power, who have put all ethics, all science and all religion in the service of a design for Power, who have made all ethics relative to tribal temperament and national interests and only Power, absolute, who have forced upon civilian life the discipline, the dumb obedience, the drill, the barrack room, the court martial, the censor, the espionage system, the whole code, complex and outlook of the military, and, by so doing, have destroyed civilian life completely, these present-day heirs of the tradition of Ishmael—the "Pere Adam," the Wild Man, "whose hand is against every man and every man's hand is against him," these heirs of the traditions of Esau, the Hairy Man, the "Ish Tzayid," who sees life only as the hunter sees the hunted, and who delights "to live by his sword,"—these abhor and dread the tradition of Jacob, the "Ish Tam," the man seeking perfection through rational and moral pursuits, "Yoshev Ohalm," content to live in the peaceful tents of work and study, devoted to the greatness of morals instead of the morals of greatness . . .

And understanding this—and understanding further that they must now become the active trustees of this classic tradition of civilization—they will, along with all other men of good will, feel themselves challenged. They will not be ashamed or cast down. They will face their world without fear or apology. They will not seek the world's approval—only God's. They will not be afraid of hostile voices—only of their own voice when silenced in fear. The insolence and naked impudicity of the heathens who rage will never humiliate them, only their own apostasy, back-sliding and fear. They will try to be worthy of their great hour of testing!

For each young heart will say: I stood with Abraham in his lonely vigil and read the destiny of my people in the stars. With Isaac I built the altar of a patriarch's stern faith and ultimate sacrifice. At Jabbok's ford I learned to wrestle through the night with the dark angel of despair and to wrest a blessing at the break of dawn. With Joseph I dreamt the dream of sheaves and stars and climbed the steps from a dungeon's pit to a prince's throne. I wandered with Moses, an alien prince among an alien people. Unshod, I knelt with him before a vision in the wilderness, and from within the inextinguishable fires of God I heard the Voice summoning to duty and freedom. I saw the lightnings and the clouds, and heard the thunder roll around Mt. Sinai, and witnessed the everlasting covenant between my people and its God. I learned how to suffer and hunger in long and weary marches to reach a promised land. I was with Joshua fighting at Gibeon, and with Deborah by the waters of Megiddo, when the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. I stood with the blind Samson in his agony, and heard the wild cry of his desperate courage as he pulled down the temple over the Philistines. I heard Samuel admonish his people to remain free, and not to reject God by enslaving themselves to a king. I listened to the harp of the shepherd king, David, and saw the great king cowering before the righteous wrath of the prophet, and bowing in contrition before the majesty of the overarching Law of God. I prayed with Solomon in the Temple which he dedicated as a House of Prayer for all peoples, and I learned of a God Whom Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain, and Whose compassion extendeth to all, even to the

stranger who cometh out of a far country.

I marched with the resolute band of the prophets who came to destroy old worlds and to build new ones. I shuddered at the wrath of their spirit as they lashed out against oppression and injustice, against false gods and gilded idols, against blind leaders and lying prophets. I warmed at their infinite compassion for the weak, the denied, and the wronged. From them I learned the nature of Mission and what a raging fire within one's bosom and unfulfilled mandate of God may become.

I wandered with my people by the slow-moving rivers of Babylon, and I heard their oath of deathless loyalty "If I forget Thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning." I entered their humble and improvised synagogues, and I discovered that prayer and devout study are beautiful, and as acceptable to God as the sacrifices of the priests in the Temple, and the songs of the Levites.

I returned from captivity, and standing with those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, I learned how a people can build upon ruins. I sat with the sages and scribes who piously taught and interpreted the word of God, and molded a people's reverence for its spirit ensarined in a timeless Book. I moved among the mountains of Judea, pulling down the heathen altars, with the lion-hearted sons of the Maccabees. I saw the miracle of a single cruse of spiritual oil inexhaustibly illumine the rededicated temple of their faith. I was the companion of the gentle Hillel who revealed to me the whole of the Law in the single kernel of neighborly love; and of Akiba who knew how to inspire a revolution, defy an empire and die a martyr.

And then into the long dark exile I wandered with my people, into many lands over which cross and crescent reigned, and I walked with them the weary highways of the world. I was with them when they drank deep out of the bitter chalice of pain, humiliation, cruelty, and hate. But never did I fail to sense the stress of their imperious vision, their pride of a great past, their hope of a greater future, their superb courage, their unflinching faith. Philosophers, poets and saints never failed them in the lands of their dispersion, and the light of their Torah was never extinguished.

And then I saw the night lift and the dawn break; and into a reborn world, drenched with a new light of freedom and justice, I marched with them exaltingly. I heard the shackles fall from off their limbs. I saw the radiance of their emancipated minds and hearts. I beheld them, mounting as on eagles' wings, rising to bless the world with matchless gifts of heart and mind in every field of human creation.

And now I see the night descend again, and into the dark and the storm my people are wandering forth again. Shall I leave them now? *Can* I leave them now? Shall I part company with this immortal band? They have become too dear and precious to me. The urgency of their pilgrimage is now coursing thru my own blood too. Their beckoning shrine is now the shrine of my quest also. Like unto the first pilgrim, out of Ur of the Chaldees, I, too, seized by the hand of God, am listening to the Divine summons: "Get thee out of thy country . . . and from thy father's house, unto a land which I will show thee . . . and I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing . . ."

## The Rediscovery of Judaism

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW

CONGREGATION - BIENNIAL

I

1939

**M**ANY factors have tended to make religion of secondary importance in the life of our people.

Religion, generally, has been pushed into a subordinate position in the Western World. Science has steadily divested it of many of its franchises. The satisfaction which men experienced in the increase of power, wealth and material well-being, yielded by science, placed the latter upon the pedestal which was formerly occupied by religion, whose gifts were now less prized and sought after. Science successfully refuted many theologico-cosmological pronouncements which were made by religion in its sacred texts. This cast suspicion upon much else in religion. The separation of church and state, the growth in civil authority and the contraction of ecclesiastical authority, the secularization of education and, in the realm of speculative thought, the divorce of philosophy from theology—all these were both cause and effect of the diminishing importance of religion in modern society.

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Other forms of loyalty clamored for supremacy—nation, country, race, class. Each of these derived its sanctions and mandates from sources other than religion, and proceeded to construct systems of thought with little or no reference to it.

The Jewish people left the ghettos of the Western World at a time when these secular movements were unfolding. The world from which the Jews emerged was thoroughly pervaded by religion. It had been thus pervaded for centuries. Every phase and activity of life was bound by its discipline. Nevertheless, the Jews yielded to the new temper of the age as readily as any other people. In some countries they not only caught up with the new secular mood of the Western World but outdistanced it in dogmatic ardor and intensity.

There transpired among the Jewries of Western and Eastern Europe not only reform movements designed to revamp their religious ideas and practices, to "modernize" them and to bring them into consonance with the new outlook of Europe, but also strong centrifugal movements away from Judaism altogether—movements of flight, not towards other faiths so much—for these latter flights were dictated, as a rule, by careerism and social escalade,—but towards religious negativism and indifference, expressed in nonaffiliation with the synagogue and in a renunciation of the entire religious regimen of Judaism.

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This flight from Judaism was also motivated by strong political and economic considerations. Throughout the nineteenth century, Jews struggled for emancipation. They reached out after complete equality. They believed that their distinctive religion and its beliefs and traditional way of life segregated them and disadvantaged them among men. They further believed that by surrendering them they would succeed in acquiring those rights and privileges which other people possessed. This political and economic motif behind the flight complex was soon rationalized into a system of thought, conveniently neutral and agnostic, which discounted religion generally and proclaimed that the scientific progress of mankind had finally outstripped religion, and that although religion might still have a certain usefulness for the young, the poor and the unenlightened, cultured and prosperous folks could get along very well without it. All religious and racial differences were certain to be merged very soon in a common brotherhood of men, dedicated to the life of pure reason. The mighty accents of the American and French Revolutions and the other upsurging political struggles of the century reverberated through all this hopeful and wishful thinking. Thus Enlightenment and Emancipation were the Pied Piper whose music beguiled many Jews away from their ancient loyalties and spiritual securities.

The wealthy and the well-placed Jews espe-

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cially pampered themselves with these comforting notions. The richer they became and the more important positions they occupied, the less need they had for religion. The upper classes which succeeded in reaching, if not the center, then at least the periphery of the non-Jewish world, were most supercilious in their attitude towards Judaism. When men are prosperous they find it easy to dispense with God — especially with a Jewish God. . . .

Fortunately not all Jews were of the same mind. Many refused to exchange spiritual treasures for material advantage. They saw neither the need nor the wisdom of it. They were of the opinion that if freedom and equality were to come to all men, they should come also to the Jews as a matter of right, as a restoration of that which belonged to them and to all men as a natural endowment, and not in payment for unwarranted sacrifices of religious convictions, a distinctive culture and an historic way of life. They furthermore suspected that the new millennium might turn out to be quite as much of a mirage as many others in the long past of Israel and, on the basis of past experiences, they feared that should another such reaction in their political and economic fortunes set in, Jews would find themselves spiritually shattered, homeless and utterly bereft, unless they had the secured sanctuaries of Jewish life and faith into which to retreat for refuge and solace. Many

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other Jews, out of force of habit or because of the strong appeal of ancient ties and memories, remained constant. So that Judaism was not lost.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, wide and ominous cracks appeared in the beautiful facade of European Enlightenment and Emancipation. Startling eruptions of violent anti-Semitism occurred, at one time or another, in nearly every country in Western Europe. Medievalism raised its ugly head over and over again, either as a Magyar blood libel or a Germanic literary pogrom or a Gaelic "cause célèbre" or an outright Slavic slaughter of Jews. The rains sadly disfigured the wall "daubed with whited plaster," and the foundations thereof were uncovered.

Some Jews were quick to read these warning signs. They returned to their faith and their people as if to a shelter from a gathering storm. Others, however, persisted in their hypnosis, discounted these evidences of an underlying menace and blithely proceeded on their way. In the generation before the World War, Judaism in Western Europe touched bottom, and it languished also among vast sections of Jewry in the United States.

Then came the World War which unleashed all the furies. Who can number the high hopes of mankind which perished upon its battlefields? What was apparently won, was actually sunk and lost in their bloody bogs—freedom, democracy, the self-determination of peoples, the rights of

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minorities and the vision of an international order based upon law, justice and peace. Out of ten million graves of the needlessly slain, there arose the dread ghosts of hatred, of national and racial passions, of arrogance and vindictiveness, of widespread want and bitter class struggle, and a dread stampede towards force, violence and terror as life's sole technique. These ghosts are dancing to-day their "danse macabre" in the hearts of men and nations. Civilization is plunging into darkness and chaos. A paganism far more crass and cruel than that of antiquity is engulfing the whole Western World. We are witnessing the tragic dissolution of the whole European synthesis.

For the Jewish people, the World War and its aftermath spelled Golgotha! A quarter of a century of mounting disasters and calamities culminated in the unprecedented horrors of recent years. Great Jewish communities, rich in history, culture and achievement, among whom the dream of a free, enlightened and tolerant humanity was most ardently cherished, have been plunged into Hell. Gone for them are Enlightenment and Emancipation. Gone are the dreams of the great and gracious days, the dreams of human brotherhood and equality. Gone for their sons and daughters are the beckoning horizons of great careers and great service. Gone are the shelter and security. Gone, even, the scant and tenuous security of the ghetto! Into exile, broken, stripped and impover-

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ished, they must go, even as their forefathers before them, who knew neither Enlightenment nor Emancipation. From country and homes where they had known dignity, honor, power and wealth, Jews in their mounting legions, must now wander forth, bewildered and disillusioned into a bewildered and disillusioned world.

For the world, generally, stands today bewildered and disillusioned. The strong and sure foundations upon which it had builded its life have been rudely shaken. That high optimism which fed upon truly remarkable achievements in every scientific field has vanished. Marvelous had been the vistas which opened up before the eyes of men in the preceding century. Men could dream then and men did dream, unabashed, of a glorious and uninterrupted progress for mankind, of an unending conquest of nature, and of building, in a world of abundance, a civilization free from all poverty, ignorance and war. "In the nineteenth century," wrote Victor Hugo, "war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, hatred will be dead, frontiers will be dead, royalty will be dead, dogmas will be dead, man will begin to *live*!" But here we are in the twentieth century, and war is not dead, the scaffold is not dead, hatred is not dead, frontiers are not dead, royalty is not dead, dogmas are not dead, and man is beginning to *die*. . . . The vista which stretches before our generation today ends at the edge of a wilderness.

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For twenty-five years now, men have lived in a world of mounting hate, intolerance, and bigotry, of revolutions, invasions, wars, the rise and fall of empires, and amidst the slaughter of millions of their kind. Great peoples have destroyed their liberties and enslaved themselves. Millions of men cower today in terrorized submissiveness. The wealth of nations is being drained by war and by preparation for wars which will also drain the lives of their people. The mind of man, trained and sharpened by generations of scientific education, is now applied to the perfection of the war technique. So that the discoveries which science records in our day in such great numbers no longer fill the hearts of men with pride or enthusiasm. They suspect that these things will not contribute either to their happiness or security. The human spirit stands today frightened, weighted down with apocalyptic foreboding, as if awaiting the crash of doom.

## II

The thoughtful among men have accordingly begun to search earnestly for the *via salutis*, the road away from disaster. They are seeking desperately hard to rediscover that vision which was somehow lost amidst the brilliant pageantry of scientific achievement in the last century, to the

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hurt and sorrow of the world. They understand now what the wise men of the earth have always known: that increased knowledge does not necessarily mean increased goodness or happiness, that facts are not in themselves blessings, that "truth can make us mad as well as free," that the prolongation of human life is not the same as the improvement of human life, that the acceleration of a process does not always insure a finer product, that change does not necessarily spell progress, and that democracy, as Lecky pointed out a half century ago, may often destroy liberty.<sup>1</sup> They realize now that the fault is not with science or education or democracy, as such, but with the interpretation which men have put upon them, with the omnipotence and autonomy which they have ascribed to them and with their failure to understand that science, education and democracy are means and not ends in themselves.

What has been tragically missing in our civilization is the compelling and unifying faith in the great human goals which religion, and religion alone, has set for mankind, and towards the attainment of which science, education and democracy should contribute, if they are to fulfill their chief function. Mankind lost sight of these goals. Therefore human progress today has no clear direction. Good material and good tools are not enough for the builder. He must have a plan.

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, I, pp. 256 ff.

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Every true sanctuary of man, the Temple, the Ka'ba or the earthly Jerusalem must be modelled after a celestial archetype. To build a noble and enduring society, it is not enough to have wealth and knowledge. Mankind must be possessed of the architectural plan, and that, only the spiritual vision of man has designed. It must also have the will and loyalty to follow that plan. That the moral sense of man alone provides. Without faith in God, the reality of the spiritual vision as well as the moral sense in man are quickly denied and rejected in the world.

Thoughtful men have also rediscovered the truth that faith in God is the strongest bulwark of a free society. Human freedom began when men became conscious that over and above society and nature there is a God who created them, who breathed His spirit into them, who fashioned them in His likeness, and that they are, therefore, possessed of intrinsic and independent significance and are endowed, as individuals, with original and irrevocable rights and authority. When in the long past men challenged the authority of kings or magistrates or restrictive customs and traditions, they did so in the name of some higher mandate derived from the spirit of God within them, in the name of some moral sanction which emanated from their relationship to God. Men became free when they acknowledged a higher authority than that of state, class, system or ruler. Fundamentally

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the eternal struggle has always been between autocracy and theocracy in their broadest implications. Modern Nazi "steely, authoritative romanticism" (Goebbels' phrase) is but another expression of the old autocratic principle eternally at war with the principle of spiritual, disciplined freedom in man.

Friends of democracy have somehow forgotten the religious origin of the whole democratic dogma in the modern world. They have forgotten that political freedom came to the Western World as a result of a long struggle for religious freedom and not vice versa. This struggle received its impetus not from organized religion, to be sure, that is to say from the church, but from the faith of deeply religious folk in the dynamics of religion, in revelation, and from a deliberate return to prophetic traditions and sanctions. Every great revolution in Christian thought was a return to the prophetic traditions of Israel. They drew their inspiration from the moral passion of Biblical Judaism, for Judaism fashioned God not in the Caesar-image of an imperial ruler, nor in the Aristotelian-image of an ultimate philosophical principle, nor as the cult-image of a priestly hierarchy, but as "the personification of moral energy."<sup>2</sup> Every important social and economic movement in Western Europe in the last few centuries was inspired by this Judaeo-Christian ethical idealism.

<sup>2</sup> See Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York, 1929), p. 520.

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"On the whole, therefore, it is very probable that the energetic, even revolutionary, efforts of this century to transform the form of society in favor of the down-trodden masses are very intimately connected with the New Testament ideas [which, because of their origin and content, are also, of course, Old Testament ideas], although the champions of these efforts feel themselves bound in other respects to oppose what is now-a-days called Christianity."<sup>3</sup>

Modern democracy was born in the struggle for religious freedom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Protestant Reformation was not merely a reformation in the realm of doctrine and ritual and a repudiation of the authority of Papacy and the hierarchical system of the Church. It was much more than that. The early leaders of the Protestant Movement did not themselves fully appreciate the forces which they represented. They were confused, and at times very inconsistent. They did not grasp fully what was happening in the mind and heart of the world. What actually was happening was a new determined upreaching on the part of men in the Western World for spiritual liberty, for the emancipation of man from the strait jacket of Tradition and System. Luther, when still a revolutionary, proclaimed that "human authority might be resisted when

<sup>3</sup> Lange, *History of Materialism* (New York, 1925), II, Sec. 4, p. 271.

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its mandates conflicted with the 'Word of God.' " Suddenly on all sides one heard again the magic phrase, the "Word of God." A new authority surged back into the life of the world—the authority of direct revelation which was available to all.

The demand for spiritual liberty soon expressed itself in demands for other forms of liberty. Peasant revolts followed. Political and economic rights were demanded by humble people. By what authority? They had no authority. They had no human law to which they could appeal. In whose name did they speak? In the same name and by the same authority as the ancient prophets of Israel presumed to challenge the kings, the noblemen and the powerfully rich of their day. They spoke in the name of God, in the name of a revelation from God! All men were equal because God made all men equal. The things which they demanded were the things which the Bible, the revealed Word of God, conceded to them, and to all men. The social revolutions of the sixteenth century which were quenched in the blood of a hundred thousand peasants received their inspiration from religion and revelation.

"The social revolution was conceived under a theologic guise as the 'Millennial Kingdom,' the 'Restitution of All Things,' the 'Reign of the Saints,' and in cognate phrases. . . . It was under the dominance of this attitude of mind that the conviction of the imminence of the promised mil-

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lennial reign seized such vast numbers of the poor working-population of Western Europe during those early years of the fourth decade of the 16th century. In such wise did the disinherited classes of that age envisage their social revindication." <sup>4</sup>

"The full thunder-cloud of the Hebrew prophets, stealing over a world in negative stagnation, waked the sleeping lightnings of the soul, and for a while streaked the atmosphere of history with fearful portents. . . . The downtrodden serfs of Franconia had not long heard the glad tidings from Wittenberg, ere they began to draw parallels between themselves and the old Israel when the desert had been passed. . . . The earth was the Lords, and the army of the saints was come to take it. . . . The time of jubilee was come, when every believer should have his field of heritage. . . . Throughout the great movement which in the third decade of the sixteenth century spread insurrection from the Breisgau to Saxony, the peasants were animated with the belief that the Gospel, armed with the sword of Joshua, was to subjugate the world, and that all the conditions of property, of law, of civil administration, under which secular communities exist, were to be superseded by institutions conformed to a divine model." <sup>5</sup>

The quintessence of the spiritual idealism of the

<sup>4</sup> E. B. Bay, *Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists* (London, 1903), pp. 388-9.

<sup>5</sup> James Martineau, *Studies of Christianity* (London, 1890), pp. 341-3.

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Protestant Reformation, which later on affected the life of the American people, lay with the various Anabaptist sects which sprang up in the wake of the Reformation. Some of these sects were hundreds of years ahead of their time. They believed in the absolute moral responsibility of the individual, in his inherent spiritual sovereignty, and in the right of private judgment in matters of religion. They held that the duty of the state was only to protect the good and to punish the evil, and beyond that the state itself was evil. The state had no right to circumscribe the freedom of the individual. These sects were the first to demand absolute disestablishment—the separation of church and state. They were the first to preach universal toleration and freedom of worship. They maintained that all property belonged to God. Some of them like the early Christians practised voluntary communism, which is a very different thing from the secular, involuntary communism of our day—in fact, its violent negation in everything but surface similarity.

Thus, out of victories won for religious freedom on the battlefields of the spirit, there stemmed other victories for man's political, economic and social freedom. The absolutism of king and state was first curbed by the religious spirit of man demanding at the point of revolution the right, not of universal suffrage or of better living conditions, but the right to worship God as it saw fit.

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These doctrines of the Anabaptists were carried over to Holland and England, and then to the American Colonies. The Founding Fathers of our country adopted many of the doctrines of these religious "fanatics." When they wrote into the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness," they were giving political expression to seminal religious Anabaptist doctrines. When they countered the claim of the Divine Right of Kings with the claim of the Divine Right of People to resist the tyranny of kings, when they proclaimed that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God, when they engraved upon the Liberty Bell the Biblical proclamation: "And Thou shalt proclaim freedom throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," or when they placed on the first seal of the newborn republic of the United States the figure of Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, they were marshalling religious truth, religious authority and religious tradition to underwrite and sanction their political revolution.

Struggles for human freedom, uninspired by a living faith in God, often lead mankind to disaster. In recent years, Russia attempted to build a free and happy society without God. It succeeded only in forging a dictatorship and an enslaved society.

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Fascist and Nazi states in Europe also sought to build happier, socialized communities on the basis of a Godless materialism. They succeeded only in effecting, with the aid of rubber truncheons and concentration camps, a brutally regimented and terrorized society. The "new" orders which these Godless revolutionary movements achieved were only variant forms of older despotisms. Though they pride themselves on being young and dynamic, they are so only in the sense of being immature, raw, untempered and cruel. A society achieves real renewal only through inner spiritual renewal. If freedom is ever to speak again everywhere, its speech, to quote Heine, will have to be Biblical.

The soldiers of Cromwell marched into battle singing Psalms. For three centuries the spirit of Cromwell and of his Puritan hosts has molded the free life of the English peoples. Roger Williams established the first free society in the New World in the name of a God of Freedom, whose faithful minister he was. The spirit of Roger Williams has permeated the free life of this nation to this very day. The American Revolution kindled its torches at the flame of a religious dogma that men were created by God to be free and equal. The long protracted struggle in this country to emancipate the slaves received its powerful momentum not from economics, or from any materialistic conception of history, but from deep religious convictions.

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which revolted against the enslavement of human beings who were children of God, and which saw in the Civil War a divine retribution for the sins which the nation committed against the black man, and which heard in the tramp of men marching to battle the footsteps of God—"His truth is marching on!" . . .

Democracy shrivels when its religious source dries up. An early and friendly critic of American democracy, De Tocqueville, had cautioned it: "Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot."

Why do all present-day enemies of human liberties persecute religion, even though in Nazi and Fascist lands they sometimes come to terms with clericalism which is a totally different thing? Because religion in its spiritual essence is their death warrant. They see in Judaism and in its offspring, Christianity, the last unwearied watchmen over the ramparts of human liberties, who must be destroyed before their own freedom-annihilating materialistic revolutions can be firmly established. Thus, fundamentally, it is not the Jews whom the Fascist dictators wish to drive out of Europe, but Judaism, that entire complex of ethical and spiritual ideas rooted in the principle of the sacredness of human personality, the worth of the individual, and the transcendent moral law which are at the very heart of the Judaeo-Christian civilization which they wish to supplant.

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Dictators hold man in contempt. Hitler called the masses "eine Hammelherde von Hohlköpfen." Otto Strasser, a close collaborator of Hitler in the early days of the Nazi movement, declares that Hitler surrounds himself with depraved and vicious accomplices because they confirm his profound conviction that man is essentially vile. "From this conviction I will never depart . . . Man is congenitally evil. He can only be controlled by force. To govern him, everything is permissible. You must lie, betray, even kill when policy demands it." \*

Hermann Rauschning, from his intimate knowledge and observation both of the Nazi movement and its Fuehrer, makes this summary: "It may be said in general that at the back of the whole tactics and method of propaganda of National Socialism there is a complete contempt of humanity: the whole system is based on taking men as they are and pandering to their weakness and their bestiality. Such is its universal recipe. National Socialism banks on human sloth and timidity—just as much in the case of the intellectuals, the middle classes, and the old ruling classes, as with the masses. . . . The exploitation of envy and ill-will, of the lowest human instincts, the sowing of dissension between opponents, and the appeal to their ignoble qualities and notorious weaknesses have thus far unfailingly helped Na-

\* Otto Strasser, *Hitler and I* (Boston, 1940), p. 75.

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tional Socialism to success, incidentally destroying the basis of a general sense of morality which was weak enough to begin with." "

Dictators are anti-Semitic because they know or sense that liberty is Semitic in origin and character. "Democracy," declared Hitler, "is fundamentally Jewish, not Germanic." The so-called Aryan must trace his political traditions back to the oriental despotisms and King-worship of ancient Persia and to the caste system of India. Even the Greeks had no strong consistent democratic tradition. Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle opposed the democratic form of government. Aristotle actually defended slavery. "The Greek political thinkers do not recognize, or do not make proper allowance for the rights and responsibilities of the individual soul. Just as they failed to distinguish between Nationality and Government, so they failed also to distinguish between Conscience and Public duty . . . Their work was vitiated by their failure to realize the extent and urgency of the claim of the individual soul. Men must be spiritually free before they can co-operate politically on the highest terms." \* But the Semite of the desert, from whom Israel is descended, neither knew nor tolerated any despotism. The democratic motif runs like a golden thread through the whole political, social, economic and religious history of Israel from the

\* Hermann Rauschning, *The Revolution of Nihilism* (New York, 1939), pp. 46-7.

\* A. E. Zimmern, *Legacy of Greece* (Oxford, 1922), pp. 330-31.

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earliest nomadic period unto the present.<sup>9</sup> "Among the Arabs there were no distinctions, traditional or natural, except the unconscious power given a famous sheikh by virtue of his accomplishments; and they taught me that no man could be their leader except he ate the ranks' food, wore their clothes, lived level with them, and yet appeared better in himself."<sup>10</sup>

"For all that goes amiss in our life," declared Philo, "is the work of inequality, and all that keeps its due order is of equality, which in the universe as a whole is most properly called the cosmos, in cities and states is democracy, the most law-abiding and best of constitutions, in bodies is health and in souls virtuous conduct." Democracy was thus of the very pattern of creation.<sup>11</sup> Philo was opposed to ochlocracy, mob rule, and was not hostile to kingship, but within that form of government he called for basic social equality, rejecting all types of tyranny and absolutism.<sup>12</sup>

Thoughtful men are coming to understand that mankind's way back to freedom is the way which leads forward to God.

<sup>9</sup> See my *Democratic Propulse in Jewish History* (New York, 1928), *passim*. See also Professor Lods' *Israël* (New York, 1932), p. 195. On the struggle "between the Arab race which loves liberty and the Persian race accustomed to slavish submission within Islam," see Dozy, as quoted in R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 214 and 256.

<sup>10</sup> T. E. Lawrence, *Revolt in the Desert* (New York, 1927), p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> Philo, *De Spec. Leg.* IV, 237.

<sup>12</sup> See E. R. Goodenough, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus* (New Haven, 1938), pp. 86 ff.

### III

In the same way, and even more earnestly, are thoughtful Jews reaching out today for the religious vision of Jewish life. For ours is a double measure of disillusionment and a double measure of misfortune. More than any other people do we require today the everlasting arms of a great religious conviction to sustain us.

To thoughtful Jews it is becoming increasingly clear that there are no substitutes in Jewish life for religion. Neither philanthropy nor culture nor nationalism is adequate for the stress and challenge of our lives. All these interests can and must find their rightful place within the generous pattern of Judaism. But the pattern must be Judaism, the Judaism of the Torah, the synagogue and the prayer book, the Judaism of the priest, the prophet, the saint, the mystic and the rabbi, the Judaism which speaks of God, and the worship of God, and the commandments of God and the quest of God. Most eloquently did Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, in his *Mesillat Yesharim*, define Judaism in terms to which every classic teacher of Israel, I am sure, would have subscribed:

"We thus see that the chief function of man in this world is to keep the commandments, to worship God, and to withstand trial. The pleasures of this world should be only the means of afford-

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ing that contentment and serenity which enable man to apply his mind to the fulfillments of the task before him. All of man's strivings should be directed toward the Creator, blessed be He. A man should have no other purpose in whatever he does, be it great or small, than to draw nigh to God and to break down all separating walls, that is, all things of a material nature, between himself and his Master, so that he may be drawn to God as iron to a magnet. He should pursue everything that might prove helpful to such nearness, and avoid everything that is liable to prevent it, as he would avoid fire. In the words of the Psalmist, 'My soul cleaveth to Thee; Thy right hand upholdeth me fast' (Ps. 63:9). Since man came into the world only for the end of achieving nearness to God, he should prevent his soul from being held captive by the things which hinder the realization of that end."<sup>13</sup>

Our leaders would do well to understand this. Our people, and more especially our youth, require, now that Jewish life has entered again upon an age of persecution and martyrdom, more than the example of generosity towards our unfortunate brothers overseas, and a valiant defense of Jewish rights at home. They require the example of the practice of Judaism, as Luzzatto defined it: "to keep the commandments, to worship God and

<sup>13</sup> *Meillat Yesharim*, trans. M. M. Kaplan (Philadelphia, 1936), pp. 17-18.

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to withstand trial"—the example of religious discipline, piety and sacrificial loyalty. These leaders must help us to rebuild our inner world, now that our outer worlds are beginning to crumble again.

There have been many false prophets of "Ersatz" Judaism in our midst who have frequently misled our people. There were those professional social-workers for example, who announced that a full complement of scientifically administered hospitals and orphanages and other social agencies was a sufficient "vade mecum" for the Jewish people, and that the synagogue and the religious school were quite unnecessary. At best they were to be tolerated only as a concession to those who still take such things seriously, and in order not to create unpleasant friction in the community. Such social workers had many ready adherents among our would-be assimilated and rich Jews.

There were certain Jewish educators who resented the intrusion of religion in their ultra-scientific curricula. Judaism, they said, was not a religion, but a way of life—that is to say, *their* way of life, which of course, was non-religious or anti-religious. Jewish education should, according to them, not be religious at all, only nationalistic and linguistic. At best the religious note might be smuggled in, but only as a concession to old-timers and cranks who do not know any better.

There were those Jewish spokesmen who offered Jewish nationalism as a substitute for Judaism.

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forgetting that nationalism as such, unredeemed by a moral vision and responsibility, has sadly fragmentized our world, provincialized its peoples and is driving nations madly from one disaster to another; forgetting, further, that there is a widely-felt and widely-answered need for religion and religious institutions even among peoples whose national life is already fully established, who are in their own lands and who are possessed of a rich national culture. Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah felt the need to preach religion—God and obedience to God's moral law—to their people even though Israel in their day was established as a nation in its own land and spoke its own language. It is not possible to brush aside the spiritual needs of the Jews in the Diaspora, and their problems of survival as Jews in lands outside of Palestine, where most Jews will continue to live, merely by talking long, loud and enticingly about Palestine. The upbuilding of a Jewish national home in Palestine is one great, urgent and historically inescapable task of Jewry. The upbuilding of Jewish religious life in America and elsewhere throughout the world, inclusive of Palestine, is another. One is no substitute for the other. One is not opposed to the other.

Again there were other Jews who advised their people that Judaism could well be laid aside, now that the proletarian Messiah had appeared in the

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land of the Slav, riding upon a drosbky, and the Kingdom of Heaven was near at hand.

These latter shared the amazingly dogmatic romanticism abroad in the world, in the years following the World War, born out of a "Mar-anatha" complex, out of excessive messianic expectations in the fields of politics and economics, which tended to make the classic ideals and standards of religion appear old indeed, in fact, antiquated. This phenomenon occurred before. The nineteenth century believed that the laboratory would yield all truth. The early twentieth century believed that the machine would yield all good. Both hopes proved vain, but ere life exposed their vanity, they had a way of making the old codes and convictions of historic religions look outworn and slightly ridiculous. But they are not outworn. They are not old. They are not young. They are eternal. And they are unsensational, quite as unsensational as a mathematical formula, quite like the mathematical formulae to which physicists are now attempting to reduce this whole complex and exciting universe of ours.

Among them were certain Jewish intellectuals who after a prolonged excursion in various literary fields in the non-Jewish world, returned from their stratosphere of eminence to diagnose with clinical subtlety the ailments of Israel and to prescribe for it. Adorned with the halo of the returned prodigal and loudly acclaimed by a grateful

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people, they disported themselves in a most lively fashion upon the American Jewish scene. Their technique was distinctive and almost unvarying. They began by denying categorically that there was anything alive in contemporary Jewry. That set them up at once as very objective and courageous, and their non-Jewish friends were especially delighted with such exhibitions of racial self-flagellation. They brushed aside contemptuously all that had gone on before and that was going on in the many Jewish movements for religion, education, literature, communal organization, or Zionism, all the experimentation and earnest wrestling of many thoughtful men and women who were daily engaged in the problems not of "*why*" Jews should survive, but "*how*." Blandly, they wrote all this off as either worthless or misguided. They were flippant about all contemporary Jewish leadership. This exalted them of course above the commonplace and cleared the decks for their own bid for leadership and their own epochal pronouncements. With great gusto they catalogued all the shortcomings of the Jewish people, but they made sure never to include themselves in the category of those condemned. They never said *our* decadence, *our* failures or *our* backslidings . . . . Another device was to simplify and idealize the Jewish past, but to give the present the brutally realistic low-down. This gave their utterances a prophetic flavor as well as an air of

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learning, albeit of an unusual and startling quality. They reserved their best scorn for the idea of a religious mission for Israel. They showed how utterly absurd, even insolent, such a notion was. But when they finally came to offer their own solution and to present their own reason for Jewish survival, they smuggled in a little Jewish mission all of their own. The Jew must still be persecuted and must still die for a good cause. Only this time the good cause must not be the code of social justice and idealism of the prophets and the rabbis, but the communism of Karl Marx, or the pet economic system of some other economic theorist! . . .

All these false prophets have had their clamorous hour among us. But their hour is over. Thoughtful Jews are turning to the sure and classic highways of Jewish life and thought. We are not likely to be beguiled again, at least the men of this generation, by these prophets and their alien teachings.

Humanity has sickened of its Godless civilization. Because the spiritual interpretation of human destiny was allowed to languish, other interpretations have come to life and are now driving mankind mad. For when God is dethroned, His throne does not remain empty for long. Some false god, some Wotan, Moloch, Mammon or Mars soon occupies it. In place of piety, reverence, humility, compassion, self-sacrifice, other qualities—in-

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solence, cruelty, aggression and combativeness—come to be extolled. Because men rejected the ideal of the sanctification of human life under God, they now have a world in which human life is held cheap, in which the stature of the individual has been reduced, his rights usurped by the state, his labor looked upon as a commodity and his life just a statistical item. Because men ignored the sovereignty of God's Moral Law, they now have a world in which men, parties and governments have set themselves up above all law. Where there is no longer the Law of God, there ensues the law of the Duce, the Fuehrer, or the Commissar, before which all men must tremble.

Now that lights are going out everywhere in the world, men are turning again to the Light of God. By that light men will find their way to a kingdom of just human values, achieved through just human methods. They will no longer seek freedom through slavery, justice through class-struggle, abundance through confiscation, knowledge through the burning of books, or unity through blood-purges and liquidation.

Jews can do no less. Jews will do no less. We sense an incoming tide of faith among our people, a faith charged in some instances with deep mysticism. It should not surprise us and it would be in keeping with similar moments in our past history, if our age should witness a strong mystic movement among our people. Such mystic move-

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ments followed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the close of the fifteenth century and the appalling disasters which overtook Polish Jewry in the seventeenth century. The present-day expulsions of the Jews, the tragic experiences of myriads of refugees, the dismal plight of war-ravaged Jewish communities throughout Eastern Europe, the stress under which Israel finds itself everywhere, coupled with the distressed mood of mankind generally, may give rise to a strong mystic movement which will express itself in religion and literature and in personal habits of thought and conduct.

In a sense, the problem of the survival of Judaism is much simpler in our day than at any time in the past. Our leaders need no longer expend the energy which was expended during the last century to persuade Jews to remain Jews. The doors of escape from Jewish destiny have been shut. The choice confronting intelligent Jews today is a very simple one. They have realized that God has not placed the shears of destiny—to be, or not to be—in their own hands. Forces which they have not summoned are driving all would-be escapists back upon their people. Somehow there has always been an element of unavoidable compulsion, of the inevitable, in Jewish experience. It is the "Be'al Korcha" element, the quality of shunless destiny. It was under such compulsion, the Rabbis declared, that our forefathers accepted the Torah at

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Mount Sinai . . . "And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say: 'We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.' As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I be king over you . . . And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bonds of the covenant."

The choice today is not between survival and extinction, but between doom and destiny, between burden and mission. Shall we live our Jewish lives greatly or meanly? Shall Jews walk "darkling to their doom" or advance confidently and exultingly to their destiny along the eternal road which stretches from Ur of the Chaldees to the distant messianic lands of "Acharit Ha-Yamim"—The End of Days? Shall we quarrel with our fate and beat helpless hands against the unyielding bars of circumstances or shall we, by a miracle of faith, remembering that "stone walls do not a prison make" cease to be the unwilling prisoners of circumstance, and, in the service of God and of God in man, become magnificently free?

"The Slave of God—he alone is truly free." Our choice today is between the yoke of earthly kingdoms, which is grievously hard to bear, and the yoke of the Kingdom of God, which makes all other yokes easy to bear.

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What hands shall weave the loom of our future years? Our own hands, tender and skillful, drawing the golden strands from our own treasuries of wisdom, piety, passion and dreams, which all the goodly folk from Abraham to our own day have stored for us, or shall alien hands, rude and unsympathetic, weave the web of our destiny and that of our children?

Now that many doors are closing, should we not open wide to our children the doors leading to the treasure-troves of their own people's spiritual and intellectual wealth, for their future sustenance, solace and pride? The days ahead will be hard days for them. Until the world completes this latest stage of its economic transformation and steadies itself again, after a long, violent period of readjustment, Jews, because they are everywhere an exposed minority, easily blamed and easily victimized, will be hammered on the anvil of every world event. The days ahead will be hard days for our children, but they need not be ignoble or unrewarding days. Give them their total heritage—the copious bounty of Judaism—the Torah, the synagogue, the prayer book, the noble literature and the beautiful language of their people. Give them the millennial companionship of their kinsmen and their kinsmen's heroic faith and dreams and their matchless saga, and they will be matched with their great hour. They will then come to understand what it is in our heritage that

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has kept us alive; what it is that laid waste the paganism of the ancient world and now finds itself again in mortal combat with another paganism which it is also destined to destroy; what it is that makes their people the brunt of attack whenever privilege, power and reaction make a major onslaught on the precious hopes of mankind, and why the ancient ideals of their people are forever the battle cries of upstruggling humanity. They will then come to understand that it is not because we are weak or unworthy that barbarous governments have vowed to destroy us, but because we are strong, and they fear us. They do not fear us, but the faith which is in us, the torch which is in our hearts and the passion which is in our blood for the prophetic mandates of our Jewish heritage, for justice, freedom, brotherhood and peace, for the vision of Ir Ha-Tzedek, Kirya Ne'emanah—the City of Justice, the City of Faith, in place of the Ir Ha-Damim—the City of Blood, built upon the pride of blood and upon glory drenched in the blood of the conquered, the despoiled and the slain. The reckless adventurers of Power, who have put all ethics, all science and all religion in the service of a design for Power, who have made all ethics relative to tribal temperament and national interests and only Power absolute, who have forced upon civilian life the discipline, the dumb obedience, the drill, the barrack room, the court martial, the censor, the espionage system, the

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whole code, complex and outlook of the military, and by so doing, have destroyed civilian life completely, these present-day heirs of the tradition of Ishmael, the Pere Adam—the Wild Man—"whose hand is against every man and every man's hand is against him" these heirs of the tradition of Esau, the Hairy Man, the Ish Tzayid, who sees life only as the hunter sees the hunted, and who delights "to live by his sword"—these abhor and dread the tradition of Jacob, the "Ish Tam"—the man seeking perfection through rational and moral pursuits, "Yoshev Ohalim," content to live in the peaceful tents of work and study, devoted to the greatness of morals instead of the morals of greatness . . .

And understanding this—and understanding further that they must now become the active trustees of this classic tradition of civilization, not merely "vague half-believers of our casual creeds"—they will, along with all other men of good will, feel themselves challenged. They will not be ashamed or cast down. They will face their world without fear or apology. They will not seek the world's approval—only God's. They will not be afraid of hostile voices—only of their own voice when silenced in fear. The insolence and naked impudicity of the heathens who rage will never humiliate them. Only their own apostasy, backsliding and fear can humiliate them. They will try to be worthy of their great hour of testing!

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For each young heart will say: I stood with Abraham in his lonely vigil and read the destiny of my people in the stars. With Isaac I built the altar of a patriarch's stern faith and ultimate sacrifice. At Jabbok's ford I learned to wrestle through the night with the dark angel of despair and to wrest a blessing at the break of dawn. With Joseph I dreamt the dream of sheaves and stars and climbed the steps from the dungeon's pit to a prince's throne. I wandered with Moses, an alien prince among an alien people. Unshod, I knelt with him before the vision in the wilderness, and from within the inextinguishable fires of God I heard the Voice summoning to duty and freedom. I saw the lightnings and the clouds and heard the thunder roll around Mt. Sinai, and witnessed the everlasting covenant between my people and its God. I learned how to suffer and hunger in long and weary marches to reach a promised land. I was with Joshua fighting at Gibeon, and with Deborah by the waters of Megiddo, when the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. I stood with the blind Samson in his agony, and heard the wild cry of his desperate courage as he pulled down the temple over the Philistines. I heard Samuel admonish his people to remain free, and not to reject God by enslaving themselves to a king. I listened to the harp of the shepherd king, David, and saw the great king bow before the righteous wrath of the prophet, and before the majesty of the over-

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arching Law of God. I prayed with Solomon in the Temple which he dedicated as a House of Prayer for all peoples, and I learned of a God Whom Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain, and Whose compassion extendeth to all, even to the stranger who cometh out of a far country.

I marched with the resolute band of the prophets who came to destroy old worlds and to build new ones. I shuddered at the wrath of their spirit as they lashed out against oppression and injustice, against false gods and gilded idols, against blind leaders and lying prophets. I warmed at their infinite compassion for the weak, the denied, and the wronged. From them I learned the nature of mission and what a raging fire within one's bosom an unfulfilled mandate of God may become.

I wandered with my people by the slow-moving rivers of Babylon, and I heard their oath of deathless loyalty "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning." I entered their humble and improvised synagogues, and I discovered that prayer and devout study are beautiful, and as acceptable to God as the sacrifices of the priests in the Temple, and the songs of the Levites.

I returned from captivity, and standing with those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, I learned how a people can build upon ruins. I sat with the sages and scribes who piously taught and inter-

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preted the word of God, and molded a people's reverence for its spirit enshrined in a timeless Book. I moved among the mountains of Judea, pulling down the heathen altars, with the lion-hearted sons of Maccabees. I saw the miracle of a single cruse of spiritual oil inexhaustibly illumine the rededicated temple of their faith. I was a companion of the gentle Hillel who revealed to me the whole of the Law in the single kernel of neighborly love; and of Akiba who knew how to inspire a revolution, defy an empire and die a martyr.

And then into the long dark exile I wandered with my people, into many lands over which cross and crescent reigned, and I walked with them the weary highways of the world. I was with them when they drank deep out of the bitter chalice of pain, humiliation, and hate. But never did I fail to sense the stress of their imperious vision, their pride of a great past, their hope of a greater future, their superb courage, their unflinching faith. Philosophers, poets and saints never failed them in the lands of their dispersion, and the light of their Torah was never extinguished.

And then I saw the night lift and the dawn break; and into a reborn world, drenched with a new light of freedom and justice, I marched with them exaltingly. I heard the shackles fall from off their limbs. I saw the radiance of their emancipated minds and hearts. I beheld them, mounting as on

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eagles' wings, rising to bless the world with matchless gifts of heart and mind in every field of human creation.

And now I see the night descend again, and into the dark and the storm my people are wandering forth again. Shall I leave them now? Can I leave them now? Shall I part company with this immortal band? They have become too dear and precious to me. The urgency of their pilgrimage is now coursing through my own blood. Their beckoning shrine is now also the shrine of my quest. Like unto the first pilgrim, out of Ur of the Chaldees, I, too, seized by the hand of God, am listening to the Divine summons: "Get thee out of thy country and from thy father's house into a land which I will show thee . . . and I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing" . . .