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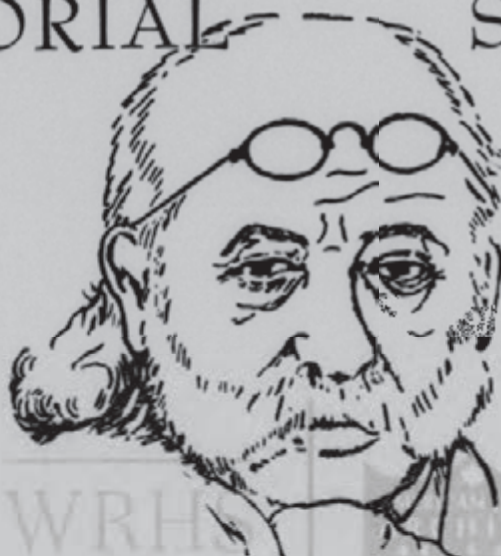
Hebrew Union College, 1950.

Founder's Day Address
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I. M. WISE
MEMORIAL — SABBATH



IN HONOR OF THE 133RD ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

March 28-29, 1952

Nison 2-3, 5712

PROGRAM MATERIAL

issued by the

COMMISSION ON SYNAGOGUE ACTIVITIES

A project of

THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

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COMMISSION ON SYNAGOGUE ACTIVITIES

Alexander Frieder, Chairman

Rabbi Jacob D. Schwarz, Director

A Project of
THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
New York 21, N. Y.


ISAAC M. WISE MEMORIAL SABBATH

Since its inception more than ten years ago, the observance of Isaac M. Wise Memorial Sabbath has become an established and accepted part of the cycle of events in Reform congregations throughout the nation. It serves a definite purpose in our congregational life -- a link with the past which points up the ideals and principles upon which Reform Judaism was founded and built, a regular reminder to us who live today of our responsibilities and obligations as Reform Jews.

The observance of Isaac M. Wise Memorial Sabbath takes many forms in the nearly 450 congregations affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which he founded. It has become customary in many areas for rabbis to observe Isaac M. Wise Memorial Sabbath by exchanging pulpits with other members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. In general, special services are held on Friday evening or Saturday commemorating the event, and celebrations are held in Religious school assemblies.

The following pages contain the customary aids for the observance of the occasion, which this year marks the 133rd anniversary of Rabbi Wise's birth.



 *Isidore J. Lipman*
Associate Director
Commission on Synagogue Activities

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ISAAC MAYER WISE

Biographical Sketch

Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise was born in Steingrub, Bohemia, on March 29, 1819. His education began in the village school, and continued in schools at Durmaul, Jenikau, and Prague. He studied at the Universities of Prague and Vienna. The Beth Din of Prague ordained him when Rabbi Wise was twenty-three years of age. He was elected as spiritual leader of the congregation at Radnitz in Bohemia. His period of service there was difficult. He was in constant conflict with the governmental authorities, for even then Isaac Mayer Wise was politically as well as religiously a liberal and a firm believer in the philosophy of democracy. It soon became clear that Europe was no place for him to live and work, so he decided to move with his family to the New World.

Rabbi Wise arrived in New York in 1846, and was shortly thereafter elected as rabbi of Beth El Congregation, Albany, New York. In 1854 he was called to the pulpit of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Cincinnati, which he served until his death. It is now known as the Isaac M. Wise Temple.

From the beginning of his life in America, Rabbi Wise dreamed of organizing American Jewry into one united, strong body. He founded "The Israelite," a weekly newspaper, to publicize his views and to voice his call for united action by American Jewry. He dreamed, too, of an American seminary to train American rabbis for American pulpits.

In 1873, the first of his dreams began to come true when he organized the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Two years later, in 1875, under the aegis of the Union, the Hebrew Union College came into being. Rabbi Wise was both president and teacher at the College, and retained his post until his death.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis was called into being by Isaac M. Wise in 1889, and the three institutions of Reform Judaism -- or as he always called it, "Progressive Judaism" -- were firmly established as living monuments to his genius.

Rabbi Wise lived until March 26, 1900, long enough to see the results of his dreams flourish and become strong. Until his final illness, he contributed constantly and energetically to their growth.

Isaac M. Wise's life and work show a deep concern for the basic ideals of Judaism and for their value to humanity as well as to Jews. He understood well the times in which he lived, times of optimism and liberalism and the spread of democracy, and he looked to the future with hope and courage. He had firm faith in a broadly conceived Judaism, which could contribute much to the general welfare of mankind. He wrote: "Whenever religious observances and the just demands of civilized society exclude each other, the former have lost their power; for religion was taught for the purpose to live therein and not to die therein; our religion makes us active members of civilized society; hence we must give full satisfaction to its just demands." By action, not by words alone, Rabbi Wise throughout his life exemplified his belief that the Jew must be a citizen in the fullest sense of the word and a constant contributor to the realization of liberal ideals.



A RITUAL

for Isaac M. Wise Sabbath

by Rabbi Joseph R. Narot

(To be inserted in the regular Sabbath evening or morning service)

RABBI: O God, we thank Thee for this hour of Isaac M. Wise Sabbath and for the inspiring thoughts it evokes. We thank Thee for his having lived and contributed so much to American Israel. As we pay tribute here to the founder of our liberal, progressive and dynamic expression of our faith, many synagogues in our great land are giving him similar tribute. He labored heroically and those labors were not in vain. He strove prophetically and his striving has yielded abundant fruit for the sustenance of our souls. Emerging from a world of bigotry, ignorance and superstition, Isaac Mayer Wise dedicated his career to a new world of brotherhood, knowledge and faith in Thee, our Father. As we think of some of his utterances now, we are moved anew to revere his name and memory.

"Those who are no warriors have the special and solemn duty in war to prepare for peace."

CONGREGATION: "Let us forward the well-being of all institutions that teach the arts of peace, that civilize and humanize."

R.: "Justice and humanity are the two criteria of civilization."

C.: "The Jew must be no stranger where a fellow Jew lives; let all men learn from us the lesson of fraternity."

R.: "Judaism and progress, Judaism and freedom, Judaism and light are all identical."

C.: "We are always servants, not of any fixed domineering school of thought, but of Judaism alone."

R.: "You are required to instruct the ignorant, enlighten the erring, protect the weak, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and give shelter to the homeless."

C.: "He who harvests in time will have plenty, but the indolent will beg his bread."

CONGREGATION AND RABBI: "The wandering Jew will wander on till the end of woe and misery has come, till the earth shall be one holy land, every city a Jerusalem, every house a temple, every table an altar, every parent a priest, and God the only God. Then the curtain will drop on the drama of the wandering Jew. Then a good morning will have risen upon the world."

R.: We are grateful for these words laden with meaning for our day as they were for his. Grant us, O God, his unsurpassed loyalty to Judaism that we may not shrink from living by its tenets fully. Give us of his burning devotion to the ideals of social justice, truth and fraternity, that we may always abide by them loyally. May his vision continue to be our beacon light. May we learn to emulate ever more zealously his determination to foster a living Judaism and a peaceful world. Amen.



THE ETERNAL LIGHT
Chapter 321

"ISAAC M. WISE"
by
Morton Wishengrad

These excerpts are from Chapter 321 of The Eternal Light, broadcast over the National Broadcasting Company's network on November 4, 1951, as a tribute to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations on the occasion of the dedication of the Berg Memorial, the House of Living Judaism. We use them with the kind permission of The Eternal Light and of the author.

* * * * *

VOICE: The year is 1899. Sir Moses Ezekiel, the internationally celebrated sculptor, has come to a Cincinnati suburb to carve a likeness of the stormy petrel of American Judaism. It is spring, and a bird is singing, but for Isaac Mayer Wise, it is winter -- the eightieth year of his turbulent life.

(Music: Up and take out with birds briefly -- fade far to B.G.)

EZEKIEL: This shouldn't take much longer, Rabbi Wise -- you're not tired, are you?

WISE: Don't be so all-fired solicitous, young man, I'm not used to it.

EZEKIEL: So I gathered. A bit more to the left, please. Hold it, please.

WISE (snorts): Young man, you're a nuisance.

EZEKIEL: Am I? Would you mind wearing your spectacles?

WISE: I certainly would. Besides, I lost them.

EZEKIEL: No, they're in the same place, Rabbi Wise -- on your forehead.

WISE: Well, that's where they belong. You sculp me just as I am, young man, and don't try to make me venerable. Nothing venerable about me.

EZEKIEL: You're rather pleased with yourself, aren't you?

WISE (chuckling): If you can reach eighty and make as much trouble as I did, you'd be pleased with yourself.

EZEKIEL: I dare say. Tell me if the pose tires you. (Pause)
You all right?

WISE: Of course I'm all right. Just thinking. You go right ahead and fiddle with the clay.

(Birds up -- bring in adlib below)

(Music: A Stream of Consciousness. Theme and down)

WISE: Being old -- it's like a state of suspended convalescence -- just sitting -- the satisfaction with small things -- a little bird singing -- the sun on your cheek -- the feel of your own pulse -- it's good -- just sitting and being pleased with the smell of April -- not worrying about December -- that is good -- and thinking -- a little town in Bohemia -- such a long time ago -- 1845 -- 1845 in the Bohemian town of Radnitz -- (Music fading) -- and the Burgomaster saying --

(Door slams)

BURGO: Sit down, Rabbi.

WISE: Thank you, Herr Burgomaster, I'll stand.

BURGO: As you prefer. Your name is Isaac Mayer Wise, isn't it?

WISE: Yes, Herr Burgomaster.

BURGO: I understand that last week one Joseph Dorfmann and one Abigail Steinschneider came to you.

WISE: They did.

BURGO: You married them?

WISE: I did.

BURGO: Let me refresh your memory, Rabbi. No rabbi in Bohemia may perform marriages without our permission.

WISE: My apologies, Herr Burgomaster.

BURGO: Sir, I object to your tone.

WISE: That makes us equal, Your Excellency. I object to your law.

BURGO: Nevertheless, you will obey the law.

WISE: Some laws are a crime, Your Excellency. Their execution is a felony.

BURGO: Careful, Rabbi. I didn't make the law. But I carry it out. Impress that little fact on your mind. The Jewish population is going to remain stationary, do you hear? No one marries until there is a vacancy. And a vacancy occurs when someone dies and I certify that a vacancy exists.

WISE: Is that all, Herr Burgomaster?

BURGO: Yes, that's all for now. We've got our eye on you, Rabbi. For a lot of things, my friend. No more marriage services, my friend; that's a warning.

(Music: Bridge)

WISE: Place the ring on her forefinger -- no, the right hand -- yes -- say after me -- Behold --

BRIDEGROOM: Behold --

WISE: Thou art consecrated unto me by this ring --

BRIDEGROOM: Thou art consecrated unto me by this ring --

WISE: According to the Law of Moses and of Israel --

BRIDEGROOM: According to the Law of Moses and of Israel --

(Off mike whistle -- Repeat a bit closer)

WISE: Don't be alarmed.

(Whistle again)

WISE (softly and calmly): Apparently, we are to have uninvited guests. There is a door in the back.

BRIDEGROOM: Are we married, Rabbi?

WISE: Yes -- The ceremony is over.

(Whistle again)

WISE: Don't hurry as you leave. Don't be afraid. They are the criminals -- not we -- now go and God bless you.

(Music: Bridge and take out with)

(Knocking on door)

WISE (calmly): Come in, Herr Burgomaster.

(Door opens -- footsteps)

BURGO: Where are they? (Pause) Rabbi, I said where are they?

(Pause)

WISE: You're too late, Herr Burgomaster.

BURGO (snorting): That's a pity.

WISE: Yes -- a pity that is true -- and very true that it's a pity.

BURGO: Hm? Well -- tell me their names.

WISE: No, Your Excellency.

BURGO: You refuse?

WISE: I do.

(Footsteps going off)

BURGO (moving off): I'm not going to arrest you. Oh, no, Rabbi, not for this. When I get you, it's going to be for something good.

WISE: I appreciate the compliment.

BURGO (off): Not at all, Rabbi. Not at all. Wait a minute!

(Footsteps slowly returning)

BURGO (casually, moving on): I've forgotten something. Yes, tomorrow is the Emperor Ferdinand's birthday. You will preach the customary sermon of congratulation?

WISE: Yes, of course, Your Excellency. (Pause) Why not come yourself?

BURGO: A very good idea, Rabbi.

WISE: Then I shall take special pains with the sermon.

BURGO: No doubt, Rabbi -- no doubt.

(Music: Bridge)

WISE (projecting quietly -- slight echo): My text is Jeremiah, Chapter 34, verse 17. (Pause) "Thus saith the Lord: Ye have not hearkened unto Me, to proclaim liberty, every man to his brother and every man to his neighbor; behold I proclaim for you a liberty, saith the Lord, unto the sword, unto the pestilence and unto the famine; and I will make you a horror unto all the kingdoms of the earth." (Pause)

Members of the congregation, the gown is getting threadbare, the gilding wears off from the wooden idol, the priests desert the altar. Add shame to blasphemy, add folly to falsehood, contradict humanity and praise the Emperor Ferdinand on his birthday. (Pause) Europe is an aching sore, a bleeding wound, a blasting stigma. The nations are a flock of sheep, a herd of cattle belonging to the tyrant -- Let us pray for our noble and virtuous Emperor Ferdinand. Put a man in a chair, set a cap on his head, place a scepter in his hand, worship him, slaughter one another at his command. (Pause)

(Footsteps coming on -- take plenty of time)

BURGO (sweetly): Eloquent sermon, Rabbi.

WISE: Glad you like it, Your Excellency. Uh -- I'm not quite finished.

BURGO (sweetly): No, I think that will do, don't you?

WISE: Perhaps you're right.

BURGO: Let's not keep the governor waiting.

WISE: The governor?

BURGO: Yes, of course, Rabbi. He's most anxious to speak with you.

WISE: I see, Herr Burgomaster. By all means, we mustn't keep the governor waiting.

BURGO: Just what I think. All right, Rabbi, let's go.

(Music: Bridge)

GOVERNOR: You admit these charges?

WISE: I do, Governor.

GOVERNOR: Also that you have performed marriages against our expressed injunction?

WISE: I have.

GOVERNOR: My dear man, I suggest a change of atmosphere for you. The climate of Bohemia may become rather -- shall we say -- suffocating?

WISE: If Your Excellency has no objection, my family and I will migrate to America.

GOVERNOR: Do that, my dear Rabbi -- do it -- uh -- quickly.
Yes -- in your case, the quicker the better.

(Music: Bridge of Stream of Consciousness theme and down,
Birds adlib under)

WISE: The timeless pattern -- pilgrimage to freedom. The ocean
luminous with the wet footprints of exiles who had gone
before -- winds steering westward to the American earth --
where no man gnaws the dead bones of past centuries -- a
place for new beginnings -- where men can write their
names upon the stars and not upon tombstones -- a
place to learn new words and a new language -- and to
stand in a free pulpit and open an American Constitution
and see in every line the Law of Moses, the Code of Israel
-- (Pause) So many years ago -- my first American pulpit
-- the call to the Albany Congregation -- (Music out)

(Voices briefly)

ONE: Rabbi Wise, before we decide to engage you, we'd like you
to make something clear.

TWO: I want him to make a lot of things clear.

WISE: What is it?

ONE: We hear you believe in some kind of reform.

TWO: That's what we heard.

WISE: I do.

TWO: Is that so? What kind of reform, Rabbi?

WISE: I'll try to state it simply. Only that portion of Judaism
which will and must become the common good of all men is
religion to me.

TWO: Is that so? Go on, we're listening.

WISE: Do you want a speech?

TWO: No, no -- just tell us what you believe.

WISE: All right, Mr. Schmidt. I believe that Judaism does not
insist on dogmas.

TWO: Yes -- what makes a religious Jew?

WISE: His deeds -- not his creed. (Pause)

ONE: Schmidt -- what do you think?

TWO: I'm still listening.

WISE: There's a section in the Talmud where God is imagined to exclaim, "I would rather they had forgotten Me and had observed My Law." (Pause)

ONE: Schmidt, what can we lose? He quotes Talmud.

TWO: Hmm -- That's a fact -- well -- Rabbi Wise -- you've got a congregation.

(Music: Bridge)

(Door slams)

TWO: Rabbi Wise, this is too much.

WISE: Now what's the trouble? But sit down first. (Pause)

TWO: Rabbi Wise, I want to know if this is true?

ONE: So do I.

WISE: Is what true?

TWO: My wife tells me that you are preparing my daughter -- a girl -- for Confirmation.

WISE: Yes, I am, Mr. Schmidt. She's a bright girl and she's going to be confirmed on Pentecost.

ONE: In our synagogue?

WISE: Yes, do you see anything wrong?

TWO: Anything wrong? It's not done. It's never been done -- bar mitzvahs are for boys -- not for girls.

ONE: It's absolutely unheard of.

WISE: Is it?

ONE: Absolutely. Rabbi Wise, you're not going to disgrace this synagogue with these crazy innovations.

WISE: Tell me, when Moses brought the women of Israel to Mount Sinai, were you disgraced?

ONE: You can't justify this thing.

WISE: I think America justifies it. Women are not second-class citizens. Go back and read your Bible -- Chachmos noshim bonso veiso -- It is the wisdom of the woman that builds the home. (Pause)

ONE: Schmidt, what do you say?

TWO: Hmm -- I don't know.

WISE: I believe in a living Judaism. Legalism isn't religion -- mysticism isn't religion --

ONE: No?

WISE: No -- religion -- Judaism -- for me, it's the fear of the Lord and the love of man. I've tried to introduce reform in other places. I've been mocked, and scorned, and reviled. But I have faith in America -- Some day the mockers and the scorers and revilers will admit they are wrong. They will accept the Confirmation of girls. This is a small thing, perhaps -- but they will come to it.

TWO: Rabbi Wise -- you ought to go out and found a college of rabbis.

WISE: Would it surprise you, Mr. Schmidt, if I say that I've been thinking of nothing else?

TWO: Rabbi Wise, nothing you say surprises me.

(They laugh again)

(Music: Bridge to narrative theme and down -- birds adlib under)

WISE: Perhaps the desire to reform the world is a sickness -- it's hard to say -- some men do no more than they must -- traditions can be accepted but they must also be made -- that was a hard lesson to learn -- a harder lesson to teach -- Then the time came to teach it elsewhere -- a call from Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Cincinnati -- a call from the American West -- the place of new beginning.

(Music: Out)

BLACKMAN: Rabbi Wise, that's a fine little magazine you publish.

WISE: Thank you, Blackman.

BLACKMAN: You can do a powerful lot of good with it -- don't spoil it.

WISE: Mr. Blackman, if you want to tell me something, why not tell me?

BLACKMAN: All right -- this editorial -- did you write it?

WISE: You know I did.

BLACKMAN: Hmm (Reading) "This country has disavowed every connection with any church. Nothing is more disgusting than the combination of religion and politics."

WISE: Come to the point, Mr. Blackman -- I wrote that -- what's objectionable about it?

BLACKMAN: Why'd you write it?

WISE: You know why. It's an attack against the Know-Nothing Party.

BLACKMAN: That's what I thought. Rabbi, take some advice. Leave the Know-Nothing Party strictly alone.

WISE: I can't, Mr. Blackman.

BLACKMAN: Why can't you?

WISE: Because they're attacking Catholics and Negroes.

BLACKMAN: You're a Jew -- it's no skin off your back.

WISE: Mr. Blackman, for eighteen centuries Israel was at fault for too great love of God -- and perhaps the enemies of Israel were at fault for too little love of their neighbor. But this is America. The foundations are different here. They must be defended.

BLACKMAN: It's not your job to defend them.

WISE: What kind of an American do you think I am? Do you see a Chinese wall around the Constitution? When the Constitution is attacked, I'm going to retaliate.

BLACKMAN: What are you going to do?

WISE: I'm calling a special meeting of the congregation. I'm asking every Christian and Jew in Cincinnati to come. You might also, Mr. Blackman. Might do you some good.

(Music: Bridge to Stream of Consciousness theme and down. Birds adlib under)

WISE: The old sickness -- bigotry and sectarianism -- and in America -- it hurts so much in other places -- in America so much more -- for this is the beacon light of nations -- and yet every generation must fight its own evil -- and build against it -- and every man must build in his own way --

(Music: Out)

ONE (voices briefly): If you gentlemen have no objection, I'll turn the meeting over to Rabbi Wise, (Voices down) The floor is yours, Rabbi. (Pause)

WISE: You gentlemen look rather pained.

TWO: We're wondering how much you expect from us. (Laughter)

WISE: Do you think I like doing this?

THREE: From what we've heard, you do it mighty well -- whether you like it or not. (Laughter)

WISE: I hate it. I live on a railroad. I go from city to city. I -- I beg. I come here. Why? Do I want anything of you? Nothing. Why must I be your servant, your slave; your beggar, your scapegoat? (Pause) That's all I am. I'm a beast of burden to myself -- I'm switched by the storm on the mountains -- I'm getting old and weary and almost tired of life -- Yet I must come here and speak. A man can't rebel against his conscience any more than he can rebel against God. You and I cannot separate ourselves from our people. We cannot be faithless to our religion. I'm here to plead for a holy cause. I am asking you to help me build a college for the training of rabbis. I think a portion of the history of America depends on your answer.

(Music: Montage theme and down)

ONE: It isn't much, Rabbi Wise -- but it's all we can afford.

WISE: Thank you, Jonas -- That's enough for six classrooms.

(Music: Up and down)

TWO: Will you accept this, Rabbi Wise?

WISE: With all my heart. You've just given us half of a library.

(Music: Up and down)

THREE: I'd like to enroll as a rabbinical student.

WISE: Glad to have you.

THREE: I'm glad to come.

(Music: Up and down)

FOUR: Nervous, Rabbi?

WISE: What for? The first commencement of the Hebrew Union College -- I've never been happier in my life.

CANTOR: (Up with music and fade far to B.G.)

EZEKIEL: Rabbi -- Rabbi -- you can rest now.

WISE: What's that?

EZEKIEL: I said you can rest. (Laughing) Remember me, I'm the sculptor.

WISE: Oh!

EZEKIEL: Have you been thinking?

WISE: Yes. Remembering.

EZEKIEL: Why don't you come in now, Rabbi Wise? Come in and lie down.

WISE: No -- you go in, young man. I'll sit here. When a man is eighty, sitting is good enough -- time enough to sleep.

EZEKIEL (moving off): Don't stay too long.

WISE: As long as I'm allowed, young man.

EZEKIEL (further off): I'll bring you a blanket.

WISE: No, young man -- don't bother. I'm warm enough -- it's spring -- there's a good smell from the ground -- the birds are back -- and someone's singing -- I'm warm enough.

CANTOR: (Up to finish)

* * * * *

Excerpts from the
 F O U N D E R ' S D A Y A D D R E S S

by
 DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER
 The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio
 delivered at the

Hebrew Union College
 Cincinnati, Ohio

March 12th, 1950

In establishing the Hebrew Union College seventy-five years ago, Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise made a major contribution to the preservation of Judaism in the United States. No Jewish community in any part of the world has ever survived which relied exclusively on philanthropy and on places of worship, and which did not sink its roots deep into the nourishing soil of Jewish learning and scholarship. Judaism is an adult religion for mature men and women, and it calls for the deepest of insights and for the most profound and continuous study. It is not only when a Jerusalem is destroyed that a Jamnia must be built; but the builders of Jerusalem must likewise plan for a Jamnia.

Isaac Mayer Wise had the clear vision to see this. "Judaism is not a faith," he wrote in 1858, "a mere belief in certain doctrines, nor is it a compendium of observances; it is a divine science, a body of knowledge. Therefore, we say, Reform must begin with the spreading of light, more light, as much light, indeed, as the age can bear. Instruction, more instruction, as much of it as the intellect is capable of receiving."

Dr. Wise realized early that if a strong Judaism was to be built in the New World, it must be founded upon learning, upon a learned rabbinate and a learned laity. He was remarkably little concerned throughout his long life with eleemosynary projects, not because he did not recognize their importance, but because he knew that Jews being what they are, rachamonim b'nai rachamonim, "merciful children of merciful ones," would not ignore such projects, while they might very easily come to ignore the most fundamental project in Jewish life, and the most important factor in its survival, Talmud Torah, "the study and teaching of the Torah."

In the matter of priority which should be given to Jewish learning in the American Jewish community, Dr. Wise's hopes, I am afraid, have not been realized. Because of it, American Jewish life today ominously lacks balance. It has over-concentrated on philanthropic institutions as against religious institutions, and

on religious institutions as against schools and academies for the training of our youth and our leaders in the faith, language and literature of their people. The indifference of Jewish laymen increases as he passes from the social agency to the synagogue to the school. In the long run this practice of putting first things last, so alien to the historic attitude of our people, might well prove disastrous to American Judaism. "My people is destroyed for want of knowledge," warned the prophet Hosea.

The recent reestablishment of the State of Israel makes even more imperative the strengthening of our religious institutions -- synagogues, schools and academies in the Diaspora. The hope of national restoration which was a potent factor in Jewish survival throughout the ages must, in its realization, be compensated for by an intensification of the purely religious and cultural agencies of Jewish life. It is clear that a considerable part of the Jewish people -- perhaps a majority -- will continue to live outside of Israel in the indeterminate future. It is to the interest, not alone of the State of Israel, which will have to draw replenishment and economic and political support from the Diaspora reservoir for years to come, but of the Jewish people as a whole and of Judaism, the noblest creation of the Jewish people and its supreme gift to mankind, that Diaspora Jewry should remain vital, vigorous and spiritually sound. All talk, however, patriotically motivated, which derogates Diaspora Jewry or altogether writes it off, is meaningless and harmful in the extreme.

What is clearly indicated today is the setting in motion of the liveliest possible spiritual and cultural intercommunications and interactions between Israel and the Diaspora, similar to that which existed during periods of the second Commonwealth. The Zionist political program has now been achieved. It was unfortunate that so much of the energies of Reform Judaism and of some of its most distinguished leaders was diverted and spent in opposing it. Even the genius of Isaac M. Wise -- proud, militant and uncompromising Jew that he was -- faltered in this instance. One can readily understand the reason why. Dr. Wise lived in "fair, well-spoken days," at a time when human hopes ran high. He could not foresee -- as indeed very few did foresee -- that the new century which he was facing would open a "purple testament of bleeding war." He could not surmise the political, economic and spiritual collapse of Europe not many years after his passing, the breakdown of democracy, the rise of Fascist and Communist dictatorship, the resurgence of paganism, and the gas chambers where millions of his people would be done to death. And being unable to foresee it, he could not conceive that any normal person could believe that Jews would leave "the great nations of culture, power and abundant prosperity in which we form an integral element to form a ridiculous miniature state in dried-up Palestine."

In America Dr. Wise saw not alone the fulfillment of what he called Mosaic ethics, but the great opportunity for Judaism to use this country as a base for the propagation of Judaism as the universal religion of mankind. He was persuaded that the triumph of Judaism was not far off. He entertained not the least doubt that "before this century will close, the essence of Judaism would be the religion of the great majority of all the intelligent men in the country." In such an environment of pleasant freedom and in such a climate of high Messianic expectancy, it is not to be wondered at that Dr. Wise was extremely impatient with "those who wanted to establish a Jewish state in Palestine," and declared them to be "pessimists who despaired of human reason, the progress of humanity and the solidarity of mankind." It was, of course, most fortunate that these pessimists who may have despaired of reason, progress and the solidarity of mankind appearing in sufficient time to save them and their people from extermination, did not commit the graver sin of despairing of themselves. All the maledictions of the *toch'cho*, "the catalogue of curses" (Deut. 28), did indeed come true in our day -- all but one -- *v'lo ta'amin b'chayecho*, "thou shalt not believe in thine own life." They did believe in their own lives, in their own powers, their own destiny -- and believing, they toiled, fought and triumphed.

But now life has closed this controversy for all Jews except for those frustrated few who delight *crambem recoquere* -- "to re-cook stale cabbage." The principle of progress in Judaism in no way contradicts the historic necessity of the Jewish people for national restoration which was always a basic tenet of historic Judaism. All the prophets of Israel were patriots, and they were all "political." They, however, wanted Israel to be different within the family of nations, an *am s'gulo*, "a distinctive people," distinctive in its spiritual caste, in its ethical conduct, in its faith and idealism.

The ultimate objectives both of Herzl and Ahad Ha-am were the same, though in practical life they frequently clashed. Herzl was impressed primarily with the physical and political problem of the Golum, and sought a political solution for it in the creation of a Jewish state. Ahad Ha-am saw the spiritual problem of the Golum in terms of the threatened cultural and spiritual disintegration of our people, and he sought a solution for it in the creation of a spiritual and cultural center for our people in Palestine. It was fortunate that the sound political vision and program of Theodor Herzl governed the course of the movement until the State was established. A premature overemphasis of the concept of a spiritual or cultural center would have found the Jewish people unprepared for the final political and military struggle without which the ingathering of myriads of our people could not have been accomplished. But Herzl's political triumph now paves the way for the vision which was Ahad Ha-am's -- that of the radiating center in a reconstituted Jewish state which would also serve as a unifying influence for world Jewry.

The Jewish communities of the Diaspora will look eagerly for all stimulating influences which might emanate from Israel. But Diaspora Jewry need not remain a mere passive recipient of outside cultural influences. It can become, as indeed so often in the past it did become, creative in its own right, wherever the religion, language and literature of the Jewish people were fostered.

In 1909, Ahad Ha-am wrote in the Hashiloah: "It is necessary to improve and deepen our life as a people to the utmost possible degree in the Diaspora and, at the same time, to seek the complete and perfect solution beyond the Diaspora, in Palestine." This is a good program for Jewish survival from here on. Israel and the Diaspora should remain interdependent, spiritually inseparable, though politically separate and apart. Both should be helped to become strong and creative. The establishment of the State of Israel has contributed a large measure of dignity and confidence to Jewish life. It, therefore, has brightened the prospects for a spiritual renaissance among our people. Upon surer foundations the world Jewish community of tomorrow, inside and outside of Israel, may be able to build a more affirmative religious life and recapture perhaps that revolutionary religious leadership which twice in the past molded the civilization of mankind.

The restoration of the State of Israel has in no way revoked the spiritual mandates or altered the religious destiny of our people. "Let no one imagine," declared Maimonides, basing himself on the Talmudic authority of Rabbi Samuel, "that the coming of the Messiah will alter anything in the accustomed order of the world," *elo olam k'minhogo noheg*. The world will go on exactly as before. The only significant difference will be the removal of the yoke of oppression from the shoulders of our people, *shibud malchuyos bil'vad*, and the Jewish people will be free to devote themselves uninterruptedly to the Torah. The restoration of the State of Israel with its tremendous psychological implications has freed our people from the spirit of depression and forlornness, the fears and the confusions of the long, weary, and homeless centuries. It is now possible, if so we will, to move forward on our appointed tasks as a covenanted people with a new heart and a new song.

Isaac Mayer Wise's vision of a liberal, courageous, militant Judaism, unafraid to proclaim itself as the true universal religion of mankind, can now come into its own. Wise was admirable in his championing of Judaism. He was fearless in his criticism of Christian orthodox dogmas, both Catholic and Protestant, and of the whole Christian mythology. In this regard he was in the classic tradition of Profiat Duran, Yom Tov Lipmann and Isaac Troki, and in this regard he has had few important followers in the American Reform rabbinate. Unlike many of his later disciples, when Wise spoke of a universal religion, he meant Judaism,

and when he spoke of the mission of Israel, he meant just that -- to convert the world to his faith. When in 1874 he made another one of his powerful appeals for that which was closest to his heart -- the establishment of the College -- he declared, "We unfurl the banner of Judaism as the light of the nations.... Judaism and progress, Judaism and moral freedom, Judaism and liberality, light and unity are identical." He did not make overtures for a theologic truce, and he did not suggest that since religion was, after all, only a matter of personal taste, everyone could well afford to be broad-minded and latitudinarian about it. ✓

He even dared to qualify the slogan, "American first and then Israelites." It was one of those commonplaces which he could accept only with due modification. "If Congress would enact laws, imposing upon the citizens atheism, or upon the Jew the Christian dogma, I would be an Israelite first, and in rebellion against my country, whatever means I would select to have that law or laws revoked.... As things stand now, I am also an Israelite first and a citizen then, because my duties as a man and an Israelite are continual, almost without interruption, while my duties as a citizen are but temporary and periodical. I am a loyal citizen because it does not prevent me from being an Israelite according to my convictions." Through the Hebrew Union College, Dr. Wise and his eminent successors in office and the distinguished scholars who have labored here have, for three-quarters of a century carried on the basic tasks of "Progressive" Judaism, a term which Dr. Wise preferred to "Reform" Judaism. They carried on the task by stressing essential Judaism, and the importance of the Jewish scholarship.

The re-forming of the external accoutrements and ritual practices of our ancient faith loomed very large and very important in Wise's day. It was, so to speak, a mitzvas a-se she'haz'man g'romo, "a positive command required by the occasion," but that work is fairly well accomplished now. There is really very little left to reform. Judaism has now been "modernized and streamlined" to suit the most radical and the most fastidious of tastes. However, it is doubtful whether the modernization of Judaism has made our people more spiritual or more pious. Certainly it has not filled our temples with devout worshippers who should come there, b'rogesh, as the Psalmist said, in throngs or in ecstasy or eagerly, whichever way you translate, b'rogesh. Nor has it filled our schools with youth thirsting for Jewish knowledge.

Our task in the days to come; I am persuaded, will be much more difficult than in Wise's day. For, after all is said and done, it was not too difficult a task to urge upon Jews in the New World to abandon certain antiquated and burdensome religious customs. Some, of course, did resist, but the many did it quite readily, even when unbidden and uncoaxed. Today, however, our tasks are much more difficult. We must make stern demands upon our people if Judaism is to survive. Today it is no longer a

MISSING PAGE (S)



FROM HEAVEN'S HEIGHTS THE THUNDER PEALS

by
Isaac Mayer Wise

(This hymn can be found in the Union Hymnal, #142, page 150)

From heaven's heights the thunder peals, the trumpets
 sound with might;
In storm and clouds the Lord reveals the glory of His light.
The Lord of Hosts proclaims His Word, to man He speaks,
 Creation's Lord.

The idols reel, their temples shake, despotic powers rebound;
With awe the mountain summits quake, before the awful sound.
From Horeb's height descends the Word, to man He speaks,
 Creation's Lord.

Let Judah's harp intone His praise, our Father's glory sing;
For truth and light, for heavenly grace, revealed by
 God our King.
Extol His name in one accord, to man He speaks,
 Creation's Lord.

ISAAC M. WISE SPEAKS TO US

The quotations which follow are taken from the various writings of Rabbi Isaac M. Wise -- from his "Reminiscences," from the pages of "The Israelite" and from similar sources. They have been arranged under three headings: On Judaism, On American Jewish Community Life, and On the Good Life. To each quotation is added a pertinent Biblical verse. A few suggestions are included regarding the application of Rabbi Wise's teachings to our own day and its problems.

These significant quotations can be used in various ways:

1. Choral reading in the upper grades of the religious school
2. A group sermon on Isaac M. Wise Sabbath
3. The basis for a speech or sermon on the importance of Isaac M. Wise as a teacher in Israel
4. A litany or similar ritual

--E. J. L.

I. On Judaism

A. On Prayer

Bible: What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man of all Thy people Israel, who shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house; then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart Thou knowest -- for Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.... Kings 8:38,39.

ON PRAYER

Wise: Whoever prays devoutly, confidently and hopefully to the eternal God worships Him. By his prayer he gives honor and glory to God, improves, elevates, enlightens and sanctifies himself.... Such prayer, which comes warmly from the heart, poured out of the sufferer's afflicted soul, in his own artless words, like that of Mother Hannah, in the sanctuary of Shiloh, produces a wonderful effect on the poor afflicted soul. It alleviates his pain or grief. Although he cannot tell with certainty that the Lord will send relief, he hopes and this hope is a healing balm distilled into the wounds of the heart. Such is human nature; if an afflicted, mourning, hapless man can cry out or weep away his affliction he feels relieved. And much more, he feels consoled, he can pour out his misery in the ear of a dear, sympathetic friend. Prayer has the same effect upon him, only so much more intensely as the Lord before whom he prays is the most merciful Friend. He sees the tears, hears the sighs, feels the sufferer's pains and can send relief and consolation, the hope for which

is balm of Gilead. Prayer, like pain, grief and sickness, converts and sanctifies the petitioner. As from his sickbed, he rises from his prayer a better man, and is conscious thereof. He feels himself improved, enlightened and sanctified as does the penitent sinner when he has confessed his sins before God -- and this confession is no more than a prayer for atonement. --"The American Israelite," March 2, 1899.

B. The Religious Imprint

Bible: Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy.
--Lev. 19:2.

THE RELIGIOUS IMPRINT

Wise: The Jew always was chiefly a religious man. Religion was his main mental vocation. Whatever he learned and adopted of the nations among whom he lived, he recast and recoinced to bear the characteristic imprint of his religion. The spiritual idea is the predominant force in the Hebrew mind. When he ceases to be a Jew by religion, he loses all his other characteristics. --"The American Israelite," April 29, 1881.

C. Religion and Morals

Bible: See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments.... I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you mayest live, thou and thy seed;... --Deut. 30:15,16,19.

RELIGION AND MORALS

Wise: Man's happiness and the perfection of his nature depend on the purity of his motives and the righteousness of his doings. Like love for God, man must learn to love the true, the good and the beautiful for their own sake, and to abhor falsehood, wickedness and impurity as being abominable in themselves. Thus man becomes Godlike. Religion based upon falsehood is superstition, and superstition is the progenitor of fanaticism, injustice and impurity. As you forsake God, so will He forsake you; as you desert truth and reason, so will they abandon you. Man cannot worship God and feast with the devil. But the pagans did. Religion and morals were with them two different factors. Morals appeared to them as a social compact and a political necessity. The pious among them were no better by the fact of religion than the frivolous. The idea of holiness as a form of religious worship is of Mosaic origin. --"Life and Selected Writings."

D. We Need Ceremonies

Bible: It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. --Lev. 23:14b.

Bring no more vain oblations; It is an offering of abomination unto Me;

New Moon and Sabbath, the holding of convocations --
I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly.
Wash you, make you clean, Put away the evil of your doings

From before Mine eyes,
Cease to do evil; Learn to do well;
Seek justice, relieve the oppressed,
Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.
--Isa. 1:13,16,17.

WE NEED CEREMONIES

Wise; We need only these ceremonies which in the consciousness of our age have the meaning and signification of worship and elevate the soul to God, or which unite us to a religious community all over the world. We must have ceremonies, to be sure. We must have outward signs and tokens to unite us into one religious community. Therefore, we choose the best and most useful. --"The Israelite," February 24, 1860.

E. The Idea of the Sabbath

Bible: If thou turn away thy foot because of the sabbath,
From pursuing thy business on My holy day;
And call the sabbath a delight.
And the holy of the Lord Honourable;
And shalt honour it, not doing thy wonted ways,
Nor pursuing thy business, nor speaking thereof
Then shalt thou delight myself in the Lord,
And I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth
And I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father;
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

THE JEWISH IDEA OF THE SABBATH

Wise: The Jews understood the words of the prophet, "And thou shalt call the Sabbath a delight" to mean, distinguishing it by better clothes, better food, domestic peace and happiness, better home comforts, the house changed into a temple, more light, the tables covered in white, and all things about the house to correspond. Added to this, were prayers, domestic and public worship, the reading of good books or attendance at lectures, the nap after dinner, and the walk over field and meadow. Their idea of a Sabbath was a very pleasant one. Mirth and piety were happily blended, and both sanctified the Sabbath. --"The Israelite," February 14, 1873.

F. Jewish Education

Bible: And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. --Deut. 6:6,7.

LOVE OF LEARNING IN ISRAEL

Wise: God protected the remnant of Israel so they could stand forth of divine and eternal truth and bring the glad tidings of salvation to all the children of God. The means used by Providence in reaching this end was the love of learning and research which God inculcated into the heart of the chosen people. When the darkness of night covered the nations, there was light and learning among our fathers. In the Middle Ages, that period of priestcraft, inquisitions, fathomless ignorance and superstition, the Israelites were not only the merchants and bankers of the world, but the physicians, scribes, philosophers and mathematicians.

The fiercest enemies of this persecuted people were obliged to secure their services. No blows could prostrate them, for knowledge is power. This love of learning and research preserved not only ourselves, but also our religion, which by its sublime nature requires minds developed and refined by the mental process of study. To rekindle in the hearts of our brethren, the sacred flame which so long distinguished Israel, the love of learning and research, requires the cooperation of all our brethren. --"The Israelite," February 8, 1856.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious instruction is the first and principal means to bring about a successful reorganization of the synagogue. Judaism is not a faith, a mere belief in certain doctrines, nor is it a compendium of observances; it is a divine science, a knowledge. Therefore we say, Reform must begin with the spreading of light, more light, as much light, indeed, as the eye can bear. Instruction, more instruction, as much of it as the intellect is capable of receiving. --"The Israelite," October 29, 1858.

The student's combat is in his studies, and his triumphs in his learning. You are making war upon ignorance, and the more courageously and efficiently you do it, the more glorious will be your victory.... Judaism must be studied in the products of the Hebrew mind, and these are preserved in Israel's great literature. As little as one can possess an adequate knowledge of a country without surveying it, so little can one form a correct idea of Jewish history, ethics, metaphysics and theology without any intimate acquaintance with the original sources in which the Hebrew mind has actualized itself. As for the scientist, no object of nature is without interest, so, for us, not a line of Jewish literature is without significance.

II. On American Jewish Community Life

A. Organization Demands Persistence

This paragraph was written when Rabbi Wise was trying to organize the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. It could have been written during the lifetime of the American Jewish Conference, or today as our national Jewish organizations wrestle with the MacIver Report and its implications.

Bible: ... let the Lord, I pray Thee, go in the midst of us; for it is a stiffnecked people.... --Ex. 34:9.

Wise: Once more, only from another source and in a different form, a proposition for a congregational conference will be before the congregations. Thus the matter will come up for discussion once more and not go to sleep by reason of inactivity. Projects of this nature, to move the masses to undertake some great enterprise, must be reagitated as often as they are defeated, so that they remain alive in the public mind until they are realized. Defeated once, or defeated ten times, it makes no difference; if you are right, try it again; and remember, large masses are heavy and cannot be moved suddenly. --"The Israelite," February 14, 1873.

B. Advice to Rabbis

Bible: And he [Elijah] said: "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away." --I Kings 19:10.

ADVICE TO RABBIS

Wise: Elevate the mass of the people to the summit of a spiritual conception of our religion, but do not leave them so far behind in your hasty progress toward perfection. Always keep your post, not only as a minister of a congregation, but as a servant of Israel's cause and faith. Never be discouraged by the roar of opposition, the thunder of accusation, the cry of heresy, or the misunderstanding of thousands. The heartfelt desire to do the largest amount of good inspires a leader with activity, consistency and perseverance. This, and nothing short of this, is necessary to cement the union of Israel. --"The Israelite," February 8, 1856.

C. Americans and Jews

The fraudulent question of "dual loyalty" is still being raised by a few among us. Isaac Mayer Wise is looked to by these few Jews as a believer in the thesis that Jews should be "Americans of Jewish origin." Rabbi Wise's real views follow.

Bible: And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. --Jer. 29:7.

AMERICANS AND JEWS

Wise: The phrase, "We must be Americans first, Jews afterwards," which so many of our colleagues are so fond of using, is a mere string of words without real meaning, sound without sense. The system of Government prevailing in the United States, and the Jewish religion, are both built upon the same rock of Old Testament, the Mosaic Legislation. The religious and civil duties of the Jewish-American, can never, by any possibility, conflict. What makes for the highest interests of the American State is precisely what the Jewish religion teaches. --"The American Israelite," November 9, 1896.

If Congress would enact laws, imposing upon the citizens atheism, or upon the Jew the Christian dogma, I would be an Israelite first, and in rebellion against my country, whatever means I would select to have that law or laws revoked.... As things stand now, I am also an Israelite first and a citizen then because my duties as a man and an Israelite are continual, almost without interruption, while my duties as a citizen are but temporary and periodical. I am a loyal citizen because it does not prevent me from being an Israelite according to my convictions.

III. On the Good Life

A. In Time of War Prepare for Peace

Bible: Depart from evil, and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it. --Ps. 34:15.

IN THE TIME OF WAR PREPARE FOR PEACE

Wise: Those who are no warriors have the special and solemn duty in war to prepare for peace. Let us support and forward the well-being of all institutions that teach the arts of peace, that civilize and humanize, that counteract barbarism, guard and preserve the interests of humanity, and invigorate the nerves of civilization and let us strive to redouble their activity and energy after the war.

The institutions of which we are speaking are the governments based on the inviolable principle of popular liberty; the laws resting on the foundation of absolute justice; the religion built upon the rock of everlasting truth and pointing to God, righteousness, salvation and universal redemption.... We need all the institutions that contribute to man's happiness and the progress of humanity. Now more than ever they should be fostered with doubled and trebled care; it should be every man's special

business to support and elevate them. Not all of us are, not all can be heroes, and God forbid that the martial spirit seize all and overrule all. We consider it our duty in war to prepare for peace. --"The Israelite," May 20, 1864.

B. Justice to All

Bible: Have we not all one father?
Hath not one God created us? --Mal. 2:10.

JUSTICE TO ALL

Wise: Human happiness is the golden fruit of human perfection -- not the perfection of one individual or one class, but the perfection of the entire human family. Freedom without equality is a false conception. It is self-evident that justice is the inseparable companion of freedom -- justice to all persons, opinions, beliefs. Before we can think of love, charity, benevolence, or any intellectual or moral exercise of freedom which we call virtue, we must necessarily be just to all. -- Sermons by American Rabbis, Chicago, 1896.

C. On Giving a Dog a Bad Name

Witch hunt and character assassination are not new phenomena on the American scene. If we substitute the word "Communist" for "Socialist," "anarchist," or "nihilist," and shift the scene of Dr. Wise's statement from Europe to the United States, without doubt -- he speaks to us.

Bible: Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother;
Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.
These things hast thou done, and should I have kept silence?
Thou hadst thought that I was altogether such a one as thyself;
But I will reprove thee, and set the cause before thine eyes. -- Ps. 50:20,21.

ON GIVING A DOG A BAD NAME

Wise: The old plan of giving a dog a bad name if you want to hang him is very much in vogue in European politics today. "Socialist" has a bad sound in European ears and anarchist or nihilist are still worse, therefore these terms are applied not only to those who profess the doctrines taught by the exponents of these parties but, on the continent, to every liberal.

... "Socialist" is a very bad name to call a man or a party in Europe, just as "abolitionist" was all over the United States within the memory of half of those now living.
--"The American Israelite," July 13, 1899.

D. Working for a Living

Bible: Behold that which I have seen: it is good, yea, it is comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy pleasure for all his labour, wherein he laboureth under the sun, all the days of his life which God hath given him; for this is his portion. -- Eccles. 5:17.

WORKING FOR A LIVING

Wise: We can and do sympathize with every man who earns a livelihood by labor, and much more with those who do not earn it in spite of their exertions and sacrifices. It can not be ignored that there is a large number of people in this country who work hard for a scanty living, and many others who are condemned to suffer and to neglect their families; and all that in a land of superabundance in all productions of the field and the mine, and in years of bountiful harvest with plenty for all and surplus for many. There is a dissonance in the social order, it cannot be denied. If, with all the liberties and privileges enjoyed, a man's labor supports him not, while others live on incomes from \$10,000 to \$250,000 a year and more, there must be something wrong. --"The American Israelite," June 28, 1878.

E. I Was Very Rich

Bible: A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, And loving favour rather than silver and gold.
-- Prov. 22:1.

I WAS VERY RICH

Wise: I had no fortune, but yet I was very rich; for I had very many warm friends, a wife and four children, much self-reliance, and a firm faith in God and the truth. A dreaming optimist and idealist, such as I always was, requires no more than this to be happy. He who lives for love requires no gold. What need has he of precious stones for whom truth and progress are the highest good? The materialist can not comprehend, nor can the cold-blooded realists understand this; and yet there is but one source of bliss on earth; namely, the self-contentment of a loving, investigating, striving spirit, which is always dwelling on the heights of idealism and optimism. --"Reminiscences," by Isaac M. Wise.

F. I'm Too Busy

Bible: Behold in the day of your fast ye pursue your business, And exact all your labours. -- Isa. 58:3b.

"I'M TOO BUSY"

Wise: A merchant sat at his office desk; various letters were spread before him; his whole being was absorbed in the intricacies of his business. A zealous friend of mankind entered the office.

"Mr. Brown, I want to interest you in a benevolent cause," said the good man.

The merchant cut him short by replying, "You must excuse me, but really I am too busy at present to do anything."

"When shall I call again?"

"I cannot tell. I am very busy. I am busy every day. Excuse me, Sir. I wish you good morning."

Then, bowing the intruder out of his office, he returned to his papers. The merchant had frequently repulsed the friends of humanity in this manner. No matter what was their object, he was always too busy to listen to their claims. He had even told his minister that he was too busy for anything but to make money.

One morning a very disagreeable stranger stepped very softly to his side, laying a cold moist hand upon his brow, and saying, "Go home with me." The merchant laid down his pen; his head grew dizzy; he felt faint and sick. He left the counting room, went home and retired to his bed chamber. His new unwelcome visitor had followed him and now took his place at his bedside, whispering ever and anon, "You must go with me." A cold chill settled on the merchant's heart. Dim spectres of ships and lands floated before his excited mind. His pulse beat was slower; his heart throbbed heavily, thick films gathered over his eyes; his tongue refused to speak. Then the merchant knew the name of his visitor was Death!

All other claimants on his attention except the friends of mammon, had always found a quick dismissal in the magic phrase, "I am too busy." Humanity, mercy, religion, had alike begged his influence, means and attention in vain. But when death came, his excuse was powerless; he was compelled to have leisure to die. Let us beware how we make ourselves "too busy" to secure life's great purpose. When the excuse rises to our lips, and we are about to say we are too busy to do good, let us remember that we cannot be too busy to die. --"The Israelite."

FOUNDERS' DAY ADDRESS, HEBREW UNION COLLEGE

CINCINNATI, OHIO, MARCH 25, 1950

By Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio

In establishing the Hebrew Union College 75 years ago, Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise made a major contribution to the preservation of Judaism in the United States. No Jewish community in any part of the world has ever survived which relied exclusively on philanthropy and on places of worship, and which did not sink its roots deep into the nourishing soil of Jewish learning and scholarship. Judaism is an adult religion for mature men and women, and it calls for the deepest of insights and for the most profound and continuous study. It is more than a faith and a code of conduct. It is the intellectual quest of God; and what the best minds and the most inspired souls in the unique and bold religious enterprise called Judaism have had to say, and the records of their spiritual experiences constitute not only the priceless treasures of Judaism, but its indispensable means of survival.

It is not only when a Jerusalem is destroyed that a Jamnia must be built; but the builders of Jerusalem must likewise plan for a Jamnia. King David is represented in our tradition, not only as ^{the} a conqueror and builder of Jerusalem, but as a devoted teacher who instructs and inspires many pupils, and it ^{was} ~~is~~ because of his zeal in the study and the propagation of the Torah that David received the kingdom.

Isaac Mayer Wise had the clear vision to see this. "Judaism is not a faith," he wrote in 1858, "a mere belief in certain doctrines, nor is it a compendium of observances; it is a divine science, a body of knowledge. Therefore, we say, Reform must begin with the spreading of light, more light, as much light, indeed, as the age can bear. Instruction, more instruction, as much of it as the intellect is capable of receiving."

Dr. Wise realized early that if a strong Judaism was to be built in the new world, it must be founded upon learning, upon a learned rabbinate and a learned laity. He was remarkably little concerned throughout his long life with ~~the~~ eleemosynary projects, not because he did not recognize their importance, but because he knew that Jews being what

1 A
"merciful children of merciful sins"

they are, *הם ילדי חסד* would not ignore such projects, while they might very easily come to ignore the most fundamental project in Jewish life, and the most important factor in its survival, *הם ילדי חסד - the study and the teaching of the Torah*

On the occasion of the opening of the Hebrew Union College in 1875, addressing himself to his students, Dr. Wise declared: "The student's combat is in his studies, and his triumphs in his learning. You are making war upon ignorance, and the more courageously and efficiently you do it, the more glorious will be your victory..... Judaism must be studied in the products of the Hebrew mind, and these are preserved in Israel's great literature. As little as one can possess an adequate knowledge of a country without surveying it, so little can one form a correct idea of Jewish history, ethics, metaphysics and theology without an intimate acquaintance with the original sources in which the Hebrew mind has actualized itself. As for the scientist, no object of nature is without interest, so for us, not a line of Jewish literature is without significance."

In the matter of priority which should be given to Jewish learning in the American Jewish community, Dr. Wise's hopes, I am afraid, have not been realized. Because of it, American Jewish life today ominously lacks balance. It has over-concentrated on philanthropic institutions as against religious institutions, and on religious institutions as against schools and academies for the training of our youth and our leaders in the faith, language and literature of their people. The indifference of the Jewish layman increases as he passes from the social agency to the synagogue to the school. In the long run this practice of putting first things last, so alien to the historic attitude of our people, might well prove disastrous to American Judaism. "My people is destroyed for want of knowledge," warned the prophet Hosea.

The recent re-establishment of the State of Israel makes even more imperative the strengthening of our religious institutions - synagogues, schools and academies in the Diaspora. The hope of national restoration which was a potent factor in Jewish survival throughout the ages must, in its realization, be compensated for by an intensification of the purely religious and cultural agencies of Jewish life.

It is clear that a considerable part of the Jewish people - perhaps a majority - will continue to live outside of Israel in the indeterminate future. The Prime Minister of the State of Israel a few days ago predicted that there would probably be a Jewish population of 3,000,000 in Israel in the next 10 years, and spoke of 4 to 5 millions as the ultimate population of that country. There are more than that number of Jews today in the United States alone. It is to the interest not alone of the State of Israel, which will have to draw replenishment and economic and political support from the Diaspora reservoir for years to come, but of the Jewish people as a whole and of Judaism, the noblest creation of the Jewish people and its supreme gift to mankind that Diaspora Jewry should remain vital, vigorous and spiritually sound. All talk, however patriotically motivated, which derogates Diaspora Jewry or altogether writes it off, is meaningless and harmful in the extreme.

What our people possesses today of cultural and spiritual treasures is not exclusively the creation of the Jews of Palestine. The 4,000-year-old drama of the Jewish people was enacted on more than one world stage. Some of its principal actors, from Moses to Moses, never lived in Palestine. Even when there was a flourishing Jewish life in Palestine, there were also flourishing Jewish communities in other lands. Babylonian and Palestinian Jewry, for example, re-enforced and enriched one another, and both made significant if not comparable contributions to the sum total of Jewish life and thought.

What is clearly indicated today is the setting in motion of the liveliest possible spiritual and cultural intercommunication and interaction between Israel and the Diaspora, similar to that which existed during periods of the Second Commonwealth. The Zionist political program has now been achieved. It was unfortunate that so much of the energies of Reform Judaism and ^{of} some of its most distinguished leaders was diverted and spent in opposing it. Even the genius of Isaac M. Wise - proud, militant and uncompromising Jew that he was - faltered in this instance. One can readily understand the reason

why. Dr. Wise lived ^{in "fair, well-spoken days"} at a time when human hopes ran high. The very year in which he founded the Hebrew Union College, he wrote, "Before our very eyes the world moves onward into the golden age of redeemed humanity and the fraternal union of nations, as our prophets thousands of years ago predicted. We are fast approaching the universal democratic republic with civil and religious liberty cemented by the world's advanced intelligence. This century settles old accounts. It is progressive."

He could not foresee - as indeed very few did foresee - that the new century which he was facing would open a "purple testament of bleeding war". He could not surmise the political, economic and spiritual collapse of Europe not many years after his passing, the breakdown of democracy, the rise of Fascist and Communist dictatorship, the resurgence of paganism, and the gas chambers where millions of ^{his} people would be done to death.

And being unable to foresee it, he could not conceive that any normal person could believe that Jews would leave "the great nations of culture, power and abundant prosperity in which we form an integral element to form a ridiculous miniature state in dried-up Palestine".

Dr. Wise lived his creative years in America - free, prosperous, tolerant America. Early in his ^{Reminiscences} he reports the fact that he was "an enthusiast on the subjects of America and freedom". Those of you who have read his moving and penetrating essay on "Moses" will recall the ^{resonant strokes} ~~exalted~~, almost rhapsodic outburst towards the ^{end} ~~close~~ of the essay: "The loudest and mightiest of all sounded that one great and powerful word of the Almighty, freedom, freedom, freedom! Freedom sounded from Sinai; the mind is free, the spirit is free, Jehovah is the God of freedom; and now it re-echoes from ocean to ocean; the mind is free, the spirit is free, man is free; break the yoke, break the shackles; man is free."

In the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution Dr. Wise saw reflected the central Mosaic idea of a state and its citizens, and he was moved to declare that "the political side of the Bible is realized in the United States. We live in a perfectly Jewish state and under a Jewish government in the strictest sense of Moses."

In America Dr. Wise saw not alone the fulfillment of what he called Mosaic ethics, but the great opportunity for Judaism to use this country as a base for the propagation of Judaism as the universal religion of mankind. He was persuaded that the triumph of Judaism was not far off. He entertained not the least doubt that "before this century will close, the essence of Judaism would be the religion of the great majority of all the intelligent men in the country".

In such an environment of pleasant freedom and in such a climate of high Messianic expectancy, it is not to be wondered at that Dr. Wise was extremely impatient with "those who wanted to establish a Jewish state in Palestine" and declared them to be "pessimists who despaired of human reason, the progress of humanity and the solidarity of mankind".

It was, of course, most fortunate that these pessimists who may have despaired of reason, progress and the solidarity of mankind appearing in sufficient time to save them and their people from extermination, did not commit the graver sin of despairing of themselves. All the maledictions of the *the catalogue of curses (Deut. 28)* did indeed come true in our day - all *than those who do not believe in their own life* but one - *2112/11/11* They did believe in their own lives, their own powers, their own destiny - and believing, they *toiled* fought and triumphed.

But now life has closed the long debate which never should have *been opened* ~~begun~~. It is closed for all Jews except for those frustrated few who delight "crambem recoquere" - to re-cook stale cabbage. The principle of progress in Judaism in no way contradicts the historic necessity of the Jewish people for national restoration which was always a basic tenet of historic Judaism. All the prophets of Israel were patriots, and they were all "political". They, however, wanted Israel to be different within the family of nations, an *"a distinctive people"* *21120 p. 1* distinctive in its spiritual caste, in its ethical conduct, in its faith and idealism.

Similarly, the ideal of the mission of Israel was never alien to the best minds among the proponents of the Zionist ideal. It was never their dream to recreate just another Levantine nationality, *to increase the congeries of political states by one more.*

In fact, now that Theodore Herzl's political program has been triumphantly consummated and the work of state-building and the in-gathering of our people is proceeding apace, the restoration movement may now well move into ~~the~~ ^{its} spiritual and cultural orbit which was defined ~~for~~ ^{for} our day and which is identified with the name of another great Zionist, Ahad Ha-am. The ultimate objectives both of Herzl and Ahad Ha-am were the same though in practical life they frequently clashed. Herzl was impressed primarily with the physical and political problem of the Galut, and sought a political solution for it in the creation of a Jewish State. Ahad Ha-am saw the spiritual problem of the Galut in terms of the threatened cultural and spiritual disintegration of our people, and he sought a solution for it in the creation of a spiritual and cultural center for our people in Palestine.

It was fortunate that the sound political vision and program of Theodor Herzl governed the course of the movement until the State was established. A premature over-emphasis of the concept of a spiritual or cultural center would have found the Jewish people unprepared for the final political and military struggle without which the State could not have been established, and without which the in-gathering of myriads of our people could not have been accomplished. Ahad Ha-am discounted too much ~~of~~ the value of practical work in Palestine and of political and diplomatic action. He was too ~~skeptical~~ of the capacity of Palestine to absorb large masses of Jews and to absorb them quickly.

But Herzl's political triumph now paves the way for the vision which was Ahad Ha-am's - that of the radiating center in a reconstituted Jewish State which would also serve as a unifying influence for world Jewry. Ahad Ha-am did not believe that a total kibbutz galuyoth, a total in-gathering of all Jews, was feasible or necessary for the spiritual influence which a reconstituted Jewish State, true to the essential genius and character of historic Israel, could come to exercise in world Jewry.

The Jewish communities of the Diaspora will look eagerly for all stimulating influences which might emanate from Israel. But Diaspora Jewry need not remain a mere passive recipient of outside cultural influences. It can become as indeed so often in the past, it ~~frequently~~ did become, creative in its own right, whenever the religion, language and literature of the Jewish people were fostered.

In 1909 Ahad Ha-am wrote in the Hashiloah, "It is necessary to improve and deepen our life as a people to the utmost possible degree in the Diaspora and, at the same time, to seek the complete and perfect solution beyond the Diaspora, in Palestine."

This is a good program for Jewish survival from here on. Israel and the Diaspora should remain inter-dependent, spiritually inseparable, though politically separate and apart. Both should be helped to become strong and creative.

In the days of King Hezekiah, when the Jews of Jerusalem anticipated the siege of their city by the Assyrians, they built a tunnel from the Spring Gihon in the Valley of Jehosaphat to a reservoir called Siloah, in order to secure the water supply for the city. Some years ago an inscription was discovered not far from this pool of Siloah hewn in rock, written in ancient Hebrew characters and telling how the tunnel was hewn through the rocks in order to bring water to Jerusalem. It is the famous Siloam Inscription which is now in the museum of Istanbul. "This is the story of the tunnel," reads the inscription. "The axes of one group were opposite to those of the other. When they were but three cubits apart, it was possible for one to call to the other for there was a fissure in the rock to the right and to the left. On the day of the completion of the tunnel the diggers struck, facing one another, axes facing axes, and then the water flowed in the spring to the pool Siloah for a distance of 1200 cubits."

Moving from opposite directions but facing one another, axe facing axe, thus concertedly the Jews of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora should strike through the rocks of separation to build a two-way connecting spiritual and cultural conduit which will cause the waters of life and healing to flow uninterruptedly for the salvation of our entire people.

Was not this also the restoration vision of Zechariah, although limited to the concept of a one-way stream of influence? "It shall come to pass in that day that living waters shall go forth from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half toward the western sea.....And the Lord shall become King over all the earth. In that day the Lord shall be one and His name, one."

It is to be noted that the hour of the physical restoration ~~for~~^{of} Israel, or the eager hope for it, was always bound up with profound spiritual anticipations. It was to be an hour of regeneration, of spiritual renewal. Recall that exquisitely tender and compassionate prophesy of reconciliation and restoration in Chapter 31 of Jeremiah in which the prophet speaks of a new covenant which God will make with Israel at the glad, healing time, a stronger and an unduring covenant. "I will put my law within them and will write it on their hearts, and I shall be their God and they shall be my people." Another prophet of the restoration, Ezekiel, proclaims, "I will take you out of the nations and gather you from all lands. I will give you a new heart and will put within you a new spirit. You shall be my people and I will be your God." Deutero-Isaiah's heart rings with a "new song." Exaltingly he speaks of a new heaven and a new earth. In the hour of vindication Israel shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall determine, and Israel will be a glorious crown in the hand of the Lord, a royal diadem in the hand of your God."

Is there any reason why this great hour in our history, this present Messianic hour of vindication and salvation, should not lead to a resurgence of faith and should not become a summons for re-dedication and spiritual renewal for our people here, in Israel and throughout the world?

The establishment of the State of Israel has contributed a large measure of dignity and confidence to Jewish life. It, therefore, has brightened the prospects for a spiritual renaissance among our people. Upon surer foundations the world Jewish community of tomorrow, inside and outside of Israel, may be able to build a more affirmative religious life and re-capture perhaps that revolutionary religious leadership which twice in the past moulded the civilization of mankind.

Exile made the mission of Israel impossible because the mission of a defeated people is automatically discredited. Exile was defeat for God as well as for Israel. The people of Israel ^{the prophets were convinced} brought exile upon themselves because of their sins, but in exile the name of the God of Israel was profaned because the Gentiles said that the God of Israel was helpless to save His own people. "When they arrived among the nations to which they came, they caused My Holy name to be profaned in that men said of them, these are the people of the Lord and yet, they had to go forth from His land." As long as they remained in exile, the glory and majesty of the Lord were contemned by the nations. The god of a defeated and conquered people has little to recommend Him. God, therefore, will redeem Israel, declared Ezekiel, and restore them to the land because he was grieved for His Holy name which the household of Israel has caused to be profaned among the nations to which they came. "It is not for your sake that I am about to act, O household of Israel, but for My Holy name.....When I restore my holiness ~~to~~ ⁱⁿ their sight through my dealings with you, the nations shall know that I am the Lord." No successful proselytizing for Jahweh among the nations was possible as long as the people of Israel were in exile. ~~When the cities of Judea will have been re-peopled, and the waste places re-built, then the nations shall know "that I, the Lord, have re-built the ruined cities and re-planted the desolate wastes". Then the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, will be honored among the nations.~~

~~Restoration and the vindication of the power of the God of Israel will make clear in the wilderness the way of the Lord and will make straight in the desert the highway for God.~~

One is reminded that the notable period of Jewish proselytizing activities in post-exile ^{ic} times languished and petered out with the final scattering of the people following the collapse of the Bar Kochba uprising and the Hadrianic persecutions.

The restoration of the State of Israel has in no way revoked the spiritual mandates or altered the religious destiny of our people. "Let no one imagine," declared Maimonides, basing himself on the Talmudic authority of Rabbi Samuel, "that the coming of the

Messiah will alter anything in the accustomed order of the world." *לכא עולם יהיה נא*

The world will go on exactly as before. The only significant difference will be the removal of the yoke of oppression from the shoulders of our people, *בש 2/2 א.כ.מ 9126,*

And the Jewish people will be free to devote themselves uninterruptedly to the Torah.

The restoration of the State of Israel with its tremendous psychological implications has freed our people from the spirit of depression and forlornness, the fears and the confusions of the long, weary and homeless centuries. It is now possible, if so we will, to move forward on our appointed tasks as a covenanted people with a new heart and a new song.

Isaac Mayer Wise's vision of a liberal, courageous, militant Judaism, unafraid to proclaim itself as the true universal religion of mankind, can now come into its own. Wise was admirable in his championing of Judaism. He was fearless in his criticism of Christian orthodox dogmas, both Catholic and Protestant, and of the whole Christian mythology. In this regard he was in the classic tradition of Profiat Duran, Yom Tob Lipman and Isaac Troki, and in this regard he has had few important followers in the American Reform rabbinate. Unlike many of his later disciples, when Wise spoke of a universal religion, he meant Judaism, and when he spoke of the mission of Israel, he meant just that - to convert the world to his faith. When in 1874 he made another one of his powerful appeals for that which was closest to his heart - the establishment of the College - he declared, "We unfurl the banner of Judaism as the light of the nationsJudaism and progress, Judaism and moral freedom, Judaism and liberality, light and unity are identical." He did not make overtures for a theologic truce, and he did not suggest that religion ^{being} ~~is~~ after all ^{only} a matter of birth or of personal taste, ~~and that,~~ ^{could also} ~~therefore,~~ everyone ~~can~~ afford to be ~~very~~ broadminded and latitudinarian about it. ^P He even dared to qualify the slogan "Americans first and then Israelites". It was one of those commonplaces which he could accept only with due modification. ~~If his government enacted laws or imposed duties contrary to his conviction of first principles in religion, he would be an Israelite first and would treat his country as being in a state of rebellion against him.~~ "If Congress would enact laws," he declared in 1872, "imposing

upon the citizens atheism, or upon the Jew the Christian dogma, I would be an Israelite first, and in rebellion against my country, whatever means I would select to have that law or laws revoked.... As things stand now, I am also an Israelite first and a citizen then, because my duties as a man and an Israelite are continual, almost without interruption, while my duties as a citizen are but temporary and periodical. I am a loyal citizen because it does not prevent me from being an Israelite according to my convictions."

~~Dr. Wise believed in the teaching of Hebrew to Jewish children. He was not afraid that it would orientalize or un-Americanize them. He ^{no} ~~insisted~~ ^{attempts to exclude} upon the inclusion of the teaching of Hebrew ^{from} ~~in~~ the curriculum of his Temple school. "The Hebrew language," he declared, "is and will remain as long as I live a main subject of the curriculum." Dr. Wise did not feel called upon to visit neighboring communities in order to encourage and congratulate separatist congregations which broke away from parent bodies because they did not wish their children to study Hebrew.~~

Dr. Wise was not intimidated by the Higher Biblical criticism which blossomed forth in his day. "Scientifically," he declared, "it does not stand as high as the old Talmud which had its fixed rules of interpretation, while the modern Talmud does not; no fixed laws of hermeneutics; it is still in its pilpulistic state. Kuenen, Wellhausen, Renan, Ewald or Smith are no more reliable authorities than the Jochanans, Gamaliels, Jehudas or Rabbina and Ashi." Like Rabbi Meir, he reserved the right to eat the kernel and to throw the shell away. He anticipated that a more mature scholarship and more especially, ^{the} future discoveries of Biblical archeological research, would undergird the authenticity of much that was being frivolously challenged, and would expose the tendentious activities of some of the Biblical critics of his day whose purpose seemed to be above all else to prove that the God of Israel was either borrowed or objectionable, that the institutions of Judaism were shop-lifted from some Babylonian or Egyptian emporium, that the great men of Israel were either myths, tribes or Aryans, and that that which was old in the Bible, was really recent and what was recent was inferior to the perfections of Christian teachings.

Dr. Wise was not taken in by this higher anti-Semitism, to use Dr. Schechter's phrase. He may have been too orthodox in his attitude toward Biblical criticism, relying too much on the ~~plenary inspiration~~ ^{up} ~~unimpeachable authority~~ of the Pentateuch which Higher Criticism endangered. He may have been faulty in his political evaluations. He may not have been a great systematic theologian or philosopher ~~or scholar~~, but he did understand the real essence and spirit of Judaism. He did believe in its invincible destiny. He did have the courage to defend and to champion it. He did have the surpassing love to dedicate his life to it. He did have the insight to seek its perpetuation through the spread of learning and the establishment of schools and a rabbinical seminary. He did possess a gift bordering on genius of organization, of overcoming opposition, of giving direction and unity to an inchoate and anarchic Jewish life in the new world. ^{Lies} Herein ~~is~~ his immortality.

Through the Hebrew Union College, Dr. Wise and his eminent successors in office and the distinguished scholars who have labored here have, for three-quarters of a century, carried on the basic tasks of "progressive Judaism", a term which Dr. Wise preferred to Reform Judaism. They carried on the tasks by stressing essential Judaism, and the importance of Jewish scholarship.

The re-forming of the external accoutrements and ritual practices of our ancient faith loomed very large and very important in Wise's day. It was, so to speak, a ^{positive command required by the reason} ~~but that work is fairly well accomplished now.~~ There is really very little left to reform. Judaism has now been "modernized" and "streamlined" to suit the most radical and the most fastidious of tastes. However, it is doubtful whether the modernization of Judaism has made our people more spiritual ~~or~~ more pious. Certainly it has not filled our temples with devout worshippers who should come there the Psalmist said, in throngs or in ecstasy or eagerly, whichever way you translate ~~the~~ ^{be-ragash} Nor has it filled our schools with youth thirsting for Jewish knowledge. ^{as} ^{be-ragash}

Our task in the days to come, I am persuaded, will be ^{much} more difficult than in Wise's day. For after all is said and done, it was not too difficult a task to urge upon Jews in the new world to abandon certain antiquated and burdensome religious customs. Some, of course, did resist, but the many did it quite readily, even when unbidden and uncoaxed. They were grateful for the official sanction which Reform Jewish leaders gave to a course of practice which they ^{had} already ~~had~~ adopted quite independently and without ^{first} consulting them. It seems that certain Conservative Jews are today asking for a similar official sanction from their leaders - or rather, that certain Conservative rabbis are seeking to thrust such official sanction upon a way of life which their Conservative flock had already adopted without waiting for authorization either from the ^{the Court on High} ~~the Court on High~~ or from any ^{a Court Below} ~~a Court Below~~ a way of life which differs not one whit from what their reform Jews had adopted as recently as 100 years ago.

Today, however, our tasks are ^{much} more difficult. We must make stern demands upon our people if Judaism is to survive. Great religions have always made great demands upon their devotees, and have called for tremendous commitments. Fashionable theosophies ^{may} offer a minimum of discipline and a maximum of peace of mind. Judaism has always offered man the ^{the burden of the Kingdom of God} ~~the burden of the Kingdom of God~~, a burden, however, which ^{lifts} ~~lifts~~ all other burdens from the human heart, ^{and} gives man's soul enfranchisement and the supreme satisfactions of life. The commandments of Judaism ^{to be sure} are not beyond the reach of man. They are not far off in ^{to} ~~heaven~~ or beyond the seas. They are very near. ^{"in this world and with the world to do it"} But they are not very easy.

^{Today} It is no longer a question ~~today~~ of more ceremonies or of less ceremonies, of going backward or of going forward in things external, but of going inward. It is upon the inwardness of Judaism, upon the intellectual quest of God through the time-honored techniques of Jewish religious life and learning and study, ^{through} and the disciplines of the devotional life and the ethical life that we shall have to concentrate in the days to come. It is with these heavy obligations that our laity must be confronted. It is no longer a question of the competitive values of orthodoxy, conservatism or reform. None

in the wood
gions are fac

Progressive Judaism from now on will have to think of progress not in terms of external reforms, but in terms of deepening and enriching classic Jewish concepts. It is the re-definition of essential doctrine, not in surface ritual reform, that the historic progressive motif in Judaism abides.

slavery, labor, family, stranger, brotherhood, peace.
 1831 Can not be. They were replacing the old wi
 They sank deeper shafts to mine new gold
 press by going inward. ~~What was pr~~ What was pr

Torah and which the times required, but the deepening of essential concepts of Judaism -
Talmud Torah, the disciplines of study, Torah Lishmah, Kiddush Ha-shem, ~~the noblest of all~~
the nobel ways of prayer, ^{the higher ranges of charity} the spiritual elevation of the Sabbath, the wider spiritual
scope of the synagogue, and how to train for a life of faith, how to be ^{"anum bi-yisro"} ~~ה' ייז' פ' י' ז' ב'~~
They were in the nobel and progressive tradition of ^{ה' ייז' פ' י' ז' ב'} uncovering
depth from ^{other} ~~outer~~ darkness, making transparent what ^{was} ~~is~~ opaque.

Medieval Jewish philosophy likewise contributed new definitions and new insights:—
the interplay of revelation and reason, the meaning of freedom in man and in God, and
how a confident life could be built for man in a world created and governed by an un-

Hith la habut

Hish tabshut Ha-Ne'efesh -

knowable and indescribable God. A medieval Jewish philosopher, Halevi, gave a profound and new definition to the concept of Jewish nationality.

Jewish mysticism, likewise, revealed new depths and new penetrations, more especially, in the field of probing the inner meaning of the sacred text. In its latest manifestation, in Chassidism, it gave us new concepts and new techniques.

the sacredness of joy in the practice of faith, and the importance of personality in spiritual leadership; the concept of the inspired guide, the Tzadik.

The progressive and permanent element in Reform Judaism was not the abandonment of certain outmoded and incongruous customs, but the substitution of scholarship for scholasticism, of liberty for authority, and the replenishment in modern terms of an ancient concept not yet fully grasped, the mission of Israel.

This is the kind of progress and spiritual adventure with which this great institution, its teachers, students and graduates will have to concern themselves in the days to come in a century wherein radicalism in science and radicalism in forms of social and economic organization and political authority are confronting the individual with radical new problems of adjustment, and religious and ethical traditions with their most serious challenge. There is no longer any nourishing food for the coming generations of Jews in any program of revision of surface customs and practices. If, however,

at the behest of a faith of boundless horizons, of a Torah of which it was said "Turn it and turn it, it is an ever new Torah" of a God who proclaimed "and of a tradition which gave primacy to study and scholarship, we are resolved to carry on, not catering to modernity, but questing renewal, not reaching out for discarded paraphernalia but for depth and inwardness, we shall serve the coming generations of our people sincerely and faithfully in the deepest reaches of their needs, and we shall remain true to an heroic and impregnable religious tradition which has had many noble and inspiring champions in the past, of which Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise was one and certainly not the least.

What is social justice to-day? Is the Jewish concept of p38 fully expressed in the evolving forms of socialism and communism and in their methods? Are these basic principles of human status, rights and freedoms endangered in them as in a capitalist society which religion must be on guard to defend? To what extent can the concentration of political power in the state in the name of social progress be sanctioned without completely submerging the individual whom God created?

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF AMERICAN JUDAISM

An address discussing the contributions of Dr. Isaac Meyer Wise, founder of the Hebrew Union College, in the light of history since his time.

Delivered at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, March 12, 1950.



FOUNDERS' DAY ADDRESS

BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER
(The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio) delivered
at the HEBREW UNION COLLEGE
Cincinnati, Ohio, MARCH 12TH, 1950



IN ESTABLISHING THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE 75 YEARS AGO, Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise made a major contribution to the preservation of Judaism in the United States. No Jewish community in any part of the world has ever survived which relied exclusively on philanthropy and on places of worship, and which did not sink its roots deep into the nourishing soil of Jewish learning and scholarship. Judaism is an adult religion for mature men and women, and it calls for the deepest of insights and for the most profound and continuous study. It is more than a faith and a code of conduct. It is the intellectual quest of God; and what the best minds and the most inspired souls in the unique and bold religious enterprise called Judaism have had to say, and the records of their spiritual experience constitute not only the priceless treasures of Judaism, but its indispensable means of survival.

It is not only when a Jerusalem is destroyed that a Jamnia must be built; but the builders of Jerusalem must likewise plan for a Jamnia. King David is represented in our tradition, not only as the conqueror and builder of Jerusalem, but as a devoted teacher who instructs and inspires many pupils. It was because of his zeal in the study and the propagation of the Torah that David received the kingdom.

Isaac Mayer Wise had the clear vision to see this. "Judaism is not a faith," he wrote in 1858, "a mere belief in certain doctrines, nor is it a compendium of observances; it is a divine science, a body of knowledge. Therefore, we say, Reform must begin with the spreading of light, more light, as much light, indeed, as the age can bear. Instruction, more instruction, as much of it as the intellect is capable of receiving."

Dr. Wise realized early that if a strong Judaism was to be built in the new world, it must be founded upon learning, upon a learned rabbinate and a learned laity. He was remarkably little concerned throughout his long life with eleemosynary projects, not because

he did not recognize their importance, but because he knew that Jews being what they are, *rahamanim b'nai rahamanim*, "merciful children of merciful ones," would not ignore such projects, while they might very easily come to ignore the most fundamental project in Jewish life, and the most important factor in its survival, *talmud Torah*, "the study and teaching of the Torah."

On the occasion of the opening of the Hebrew Union College in 1875, addressing himself to his students, Dr. Wise declared: "The student's combat is in his studies, and his triumphs in his learning. You are making war upon ignorance, and the more courageously and efficiently you do it, the more glorious will be your victory . . . Judaism must be studied in the products of the Hebrew mind, and these are preserved in Israel's great literature. As little as one can possess an adequate knowledge of a country without surveying it, so little can one form a correct idea of Jewish history, ethics, metaphysics and theology without an intimate acquaintance with the original sources in which the Hebrew mind has actualized itself. As for the scientist, no object of nature is without interest, so for us, not a line of Jewish literature is without significance."

In the matter of priority which should be given to Jewish learning in the American Jewish community, Dr. Wise's hopes, I am afraid, have not been realized. Because of it, American Jewish life today ominously lacks balance. It has over-concentrated on philanthropic institutions as against religious institutions, and on religious institutions as against schools and academies for the training of our youth and our leaders in the faith, language and literature of their people. The indifference of the Jewish laymen increases as he passes from the social agency to the synagogue to the school. In the long run this practice of putting first things last, so alien to the historic attitude of our people, might well prove disastrous to American Judaism. "My people is destroyed for want of knowledge," warned the prophet Hosea.

The recent re-establishment of the State of Israel makes even more imperative the strengthening of our religious institutions—synagogues, schools and academies in the Diaspora. The hope of national restoration which was a potent factor in Jewish survival throughout the ages must, in its realization, be compensated for by an intensification of the purely religious and cultural agencies of Jewish life.

It is clear that a considerable part of the Jewish people — perhaps a majority — will continue to live outside of Israel in the indeterminate future. The Prime Minister of the State of Israel a few days ago predicted that there would probably be a Jewish population of 3,000,000 in Israel in the next 10 years, and spoke of 4 to 5 millions as the ultimate population of that country. There are more than that number of Jews today in the United States alone. It is to the interest, not alone of the State of Israel, which will have to draw replenishment and economic and political support from the Diaspora reservoir for years to come, but of the Jewish people as a whole and of Judaism, the noblest creation of the Jewish people and its supreme gift to mankind, that Diaspora Jewry should remain vital, vigorous and spiritually sound. All talk, however patriotically motivated, which derogates Diaspora Jewry or altogether writes it off, is meaningless and harmful in the extreme.

What our people possesses today of cultural and spiritual treasures is not exclusively the creation of the Jews of Palestine. The 4,000-year-old drama of the Jewish people was enacted on more than one world stage. Some of its principal actors, from Moses to Moses, never lived in Palestine. Even when there was a flourishing Jewish life in Palestine, there were also flourishing Jewish communities in other lands. Babylonian and Palestinian Jewry, for example, re-enforced and enriched one another, and both made significant if not comparable contributions to the sum-total of Jewish life and thought.

What is clearly indicated today is the setting in motion of the liveliest possible spiritual and cultural intercommunications and interactions between Israel and the Diaspora, similar to that which existed during periods of the Second Commonwealth. The Zionist political program has now been achieved. It was unfortunate that so much of the energies of Reform Judaism and of some of its most distinguished leaders was diverted and spent in opposing it. Even the genius of Isaac M. Wise — proud, militant and uncompromising Jew that he was — faltered in this instance. One can readily understand the reason why. Dr. Wise lived in "fair, well-spoken days," at a time when human hopes ran high. The very year in which he founded the Hebrew Union College, he wrote, "Before our very eyes the world moves onward into the golden age of redeemed humanity and the fraternal union of nations, as our

prophets thousands of years ago predicted. We are fast approaching the universal democratic republic, with civil and religious liberty cemented by the world's advanced intelligence. This century settles old accounts. It is progressive."

He could not foresee—as indeed very few did foresee—that the new century which he was facing would open a "purple testament of bleeding war." He could not surmise the political, economic and spiritual collapse of Europe not many years after his passing, the breakdown of democracy, the rise of Fascist and Communist dictatorship, the resurgence of paganism, and the gas chambers where millions of his people would be done to death.

And being unable to foresee it, he could not conceive that any normal person could believe that Jews would leave "the great nations of culture, power and abundant prosperity in which we form an integral element to form a ridiculous miniature state in dried-up Palestine."

Dr. Wise lived his creative years in America—free, prosperous, tolerant America. Early in his *Reminiscences* he reports the fact that he was "an enthusiast on the subjects of America and freedom." Those of you who have read his moving and penetrating essay on *Moses* will recall the resonant strophes, the almost rhapsodic outburst towards the end of the essay: "The loudest and mightiest of all sounded that one great and powerful word of the Almighty, freedom, freedom, freedom! Freedom sounded from Sinai; the mind is free, the spirit is free, Jehovah is the God of freedom; and now it re-echoes from ocean to ocean; the mind is free, the spirit is free, man is free; break the yoke, break the shackles; man is free."

In the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, Dr. Wise saw reflected the central Mosaic idea of a state and its citizens, and he was moved to declare that "the political side of the Bible is realized in the United States. We live in a perfectly Jewish state and under a Jewish government in the strictest sense of Moses."

In America Dr. Wise saw not alone the fulfillment of what he called Mosaic ethics, but the great opportunity for Judaism to use this country as a base for the propagation of Judaism as the universal religion of mankind. He was persuaded that the triumph of Judaism was not far off. He entertained not the least doubt that "before this century will close, the essence of Judaism would

be the religion of the great majority of all the intelligent men in the country."

In such an environment of pleasant freedom and in such a climate of high Messianic expectancy, it is not to be wondered at that Dr. Wise was extremely impatient with "those who wanted to establish a Jewish state in Palestine," and declared them to be "pessimists who despaired of human reason, the progress of humanity and the solidarity of mankind."

It was, of course, most fortunate that these pessimists who may have despaired of reason, progress and the solidarity of mankind appearing in sufficient time to save them and their people from extermination, did not commit the graver sin of despairing of themselves. All the maledictions of the *tochayho*, "the catalogue of curses" (Deut. 28) did indeed come true in our day — all but one — *v'lo taamin b'hayyecha*, "thou shalt not believe in thine own life." They *did* believe in their own lives, in their own powers, their own destiny — and believing, they toiled, fought and triumphed.

But now life has closed the long debate which never should have been opened. It is closed for all Jews except for those frustrated few who delight *crambem recoquere* — to re-cook stale cabbage. The principle of progress in Judaism in no way contradicts the historic necessity of the Jewish people for national restoration which was always a basic tenet of historic Judaism. All the prophets of Israel were patriots, and they were all "political." They, however, wanted Israel to be different within the family of nations, an *am s'gulah*, "a distinctive people," distinctive in its spiritual caste, in its ethical conduct, in its faith and idealism.

Similarly, the ideal of the mission of Israel was never alien to the best minds among the proponents of the Zionist ideal. It was never their dream to recreate just another Levantine nationality, to increase the congeries of political states by one more.

In fact, now that Theodore Herzl's political program has been triumphantly consummated and the work of state-building and the in-gathering of our people is proceeding apace, the restoration movement may now well move into its spiritual and cultural orbit which was defined for our day and which is identified with the name of another great Zionist, Ahad-Ha-am. The ultimate objectives both of Herzl and Ahad-Ha-am were the same, though in practical life they frequently clashed. Herzl was impressed primarily with

the physical and political problem of the Galut, and sought a political solution for it in the creation of a Jewish State. Ahad Ha-am saw the spiritual problem of the Galut in terms of the threatened cultural and spiritual disintegration of our people, and he sought a solution for it in the creation of a spiritual and cultural center for our people in Palestine.

It was fortunate that the sound political vision and program of Theodore Herzl governed the course of the movement until the State was established. A premature over-emphasis of the concept of a spiritual or cultural center would have found the Jewish people unprepared for the final political and military struggle without which the State could not have been established, and without which the in-gathering of myriads of our people could not have been accomplished. Ahad Ha-am discounted too much the value of practical work in Palestine and of political and diplomatic action. He was too skeptical of the capacity of Palestine to absorb large masses of Jews and to absorb them quickly.

But Herzl's political triumph now paves the way for the vision which was Ahad Ha-am's—that of the radiating center in a reconstituted Jewish State which would also serve as a unifying influence for world Jewry. Ahad Ha-am did not believe that a total *kibbutz galuyoth*, "a total in-gathering of all Jews," was feasible or necessary for the spiritual influence which a reconstructed Jewish State, true to the essential genius and character of historic Israel, could come to exercise in world Jewry.

The Jewish communities of the Diaspora will look eagerly for all stimulating influences which might emanate from Israel. But Diaspora Jewry need not remain a mere passive recipient of outside cultural influences. It can become, as indeed so often in the past it did become, creative in its own right, wherever the religion, language and literature of the Jewish people were fostered.

In 1909 Ahad Ha-am wrote in the *Hashiloah*: "It is necessary to improve and deepen our life as a people to the utmost possible degree in the Diaspora and, at the same time, to seek the complete and perfect solution beyond the Diaspora, in Palestine."

This is a good program for Jewish survival from here on. Israel and the Diaspora should remain inter-dependent, spiritually inseparable, though politically separate and apart. Both should be helped to become strong and creative.

In the days of King Hezekiah, when the Jews of Jerusalem anticipated the siege of their city by the Assyrians, they built a tunnel from the Spring Gihon in the Valley of Jehoshaphat to a reservoir called Siloah, in order to secure the water supply for the city. Some years ago an inscription was discovered not far from this pool of Siloah hewn in rock, written in ancient Hebrew characters and telling how the tunnel was hewn through the rocks in order to bring water to Jerusalem. It is the famous Siloam Inscription which is now in the museum of Istanbul. "This is the story of the tunnel," reads the inscription. "The axes of one group were opposite to those of the other. When they were but three cubits apart, it was possible for one to call to the other, for there was a fissure in the rock to the right and to the left. On the day of the completion of the tunnel the diggers struck, facing one another, axe facing axe, and then the water flowed in the spring to the pool of Siloah for a distance of 1,200 cubits."

Moving from opposite directions but facing one another, axe facing axe, thus concertedly the Jews of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora should strike through the rocks of separation to build a two-way connecting spiritual and cultural conduit which will cause the waters of life and healing to flow uninterruptedly for the salvation of our entire people.

Was not this also the restoration vision of Zechariah, although limited to the concept of a one-way stream of influence? "It shall come to pass in that day that living waters shall go forth from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half toward the western sea . . . And the Lord shall become King over all the earth. In that day the Lord shall be one and His name, one."

It is to be noted that the hour of the physical restoration of Israel, or the eager hope for it, was always bound up with profound spiritual anticipations. It was to be an hour of regeneration, of spiritual renewal. Recall that exquisitely tender and compassionate prophecy of reconciliation and restoration in Chapter 31 of Jeremiah in which the prophet speaks of a new covenant which God will make with Israel at the glad, healing time, a stronger and an enduring covenant. "I will put my law within them and will write it on their hearts, and I shall be their God and they shall be my people." Another prophet of the restoration, Ezekiel, proclaims, "I will take you out of the nations and gather you from all lands.

I will give you a new heart and will put within you a new spirit. You shall be my people and I will be your God." Deutero-Isaiah's heart rings with a "new song." Exaltingly he speaks of "a new heaven and a new earth." In the hour of vindication Israel shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall determine, and Israel will be "a glorious crown in the hands of the Lord, a royal diadem in the hand of your God."

Is there any reason why this great hour in our history, this present Messianic hour of vindication and salvation, should not lead to a resurgence of faith and should not become a summons for rededication and spiritual renewal for our people here, in Israel and throughout the world?

The establishment of the State of Israel has contributed a large measure of dignity and confidence to Jewish life. It, therefore, has brightened the prospects for a spiritual renaissance among our people. Upon surer foundations the world Jewish community of tomorrow, inside and outside of Israel, may be able to build a more affirmative religious life and recapture perhaps that revolutionary religious leadership which twice in the past moulded the civilization of mankind.

Exile made the mission of Israel impossible because the mission of a defeated people is automatically discredited. Exile was defeat for God as well as for Israel. The people of Israel, the prophets were convinced, brought exile upon themselves because of their sins, but in exile the name of the God of Israel was profaned because the Gentiles said that the God of Israel was helpless to save His own people. "When they arrived among the nations to which they came, they caused My Holy name to be profaned in that men said of them, these are the people of the Lord and yet, they had to go forth from His land." As long as they remained in exile, the glory and majesty of the Lord were contemned by the nations. The god of a defeated and conquered people has little to recommend Him. God, therefore, will redeem Israel, declared Ezekiel, and restore them to the land because He was grieved for His Holy name which the household of Israel has caused to be profaned among the nations to which they came. "It is not for your sake that I am about to act, O household of Israel, but for My Holy name . . . When I restore my holiness in their sight through my dealings with you, the nations shall know that I am the Lord."

No successful proselytizing for Jahweh among the nations was possible as long as the people of Israel were in exile.

One is reminded that the notable period of Jewish proselytizing activities in post-exilic times languished and petered out with the final scattering of the people following the collapse of the Bar Kochba uprising and the Hadrianic persecutions.

The restoration of the State of Israel has in no way revoked the spiritual mandates or altered the religious destiny of our people. "Let no one imagine," declared Maimonides, basing himself on the Talmudic authority of Rabbi Samuel, "that the coming of the Messiah will alter anything in the accustomed order of the world." *ella olam k'minhago nohayg*. The world will go on exactly as before. The only significant difference will be the removal of the yoke of oppression from the shoulders of our people, *shibud malchuyoth bil'vad*, and the Jewish people will be free to devote themselves uninterruptedly to the Torah.

The restoration of the State of Israel with its tremendous psychological implications has freed our people from the spirit of depression and forlornness, the fears and the confusions of the long, weary and homeless centuries. It is now possible, if so we will, to move forward on our appointed tasks as a covenanted people with a new heart and a new song.

Isaac Mayer Wise's vision of a liberal, courageous, militant Judaism, unafraid to proclaim itself as the true universal religion of mankind, can now come into its own. Wise was admirable in his championing of Judaism. He was fearless in his criticism of Christian orthodox dogmas, both Catholic and Protestant, and of the whole Christian mythology. In this regard he was in the classic tradition of Profiat Duran, Yom Tob Lipman and Isaac Troki, and in this regard he has had few important followers in the American Reform rabbinate. Unlike many of his later disciples, when Wise spoke of a universal religion, he meant Judaism, and when he spoke of the mission of Israel, he meant just that—to convert the world to his faith. When in 1874 he made another one of his powerful appeals for that which was closest to his heart—the establishment of the College—he declared, "We unfurl the banner of Judaism as the light of the nations . . . Judaism and progress, Judaism and moral freedom, Judaism and liberality, light and unity are identical." He did not make overtures for a theologic truce, and

he did not suggest that since religion was, after all, only a matter of personal taste, everyone could well afford to be broadminded and latitudinarian about it.

He even dared to qualify the slogan, "Americans first and then Israelites." It was one of those commonplaces which he could accept only with due modification. "If Congress would enact laws," he declared in 1872, "imposing upon the citizens atheism, or upon the Jew the Christian dogma, I would be an Israelite first, and in rebellion against my country, whatever means I would select to have that law or laws revoked. . . . As things stand now, I am also an Israelite first and a citizen then, because my duties as a man and an Israelite are continual, almost without interruption, while my duties as a citizen are but temporary and periodical. I am a loyal citizen because it does not prevent me from being an Israelite according to my convictions."

Dr. Wise was not intimidated by the Higher Biblical criticism which blossomed forth in his day. "Scientifically," he declared, "it does not stand as high as the old Talmud, which had its fixed rules of interpretation, while the modern Talmud does not; no fixed laws of hermeneutics; it is still in its pilpulistic state. Kuenen, Welhausen, Renan, Ewald or Smith are no more reliable authorities than the Jochanans, Gamaliels, Jehudas or Rabbina and Ashi." Like Rabbi Meir, he reserved the right to eat the kernel and to throw away the shell. He anticipated that a more mature scholarship and, more especially, the future discoveries of Biblical archeological research, would undergird the authenticity of much that was being frivolously challenged, and would expose the tendentious activities of some of the Biblical critics of his day whose purpose seemed to be, above all else, to prove that the God of Israel was either borrowed or objectionable, that the institutions of Judaism were shop-lifted from some Babylonian or Egyptian emporium, that the great men of Israel were either myths, tribes or Aryans, and that that which was old in the Bible was really recent, and what was recent was inferior to the perfections of Christian teachings.

Dr. Wise was not taken in by this higher anti-Semitism, to use Dr. Schechter's phrase. He may have been too orthodox in his attitude toward Biblical criticism, relying too much in the formulation of his Reform theology upon the unimpeachable authority

of the Pentateuch which Higher Criticism endangered. He may have been faulty in his political evaluations. He may not have been a great systematic theologian or philosopher. But he *did* understand the real essence and spirit of Judaism. He did believe in its invincible destiny. He did have the courage to defend and to champion it. He did have the surpassing love to dedicate his life to it. He did have the insight to seek its perpetuation through the spread of learning and the establishment of schools and a rabbinical seminary. He did possess a gift, bordering on genius, of organization, of overcoming opposition, of giving direction and unity to an inchoate and anarchic Jewish life in the new world. Herein lies his immortality.

Through the Hebrew Union College, Dr. Wise and his eminent successors in office and the distinguished scholars who have labored here have, for three-quarters of a century, carried on the basic tasks of "progressive" Judaism, a term which Dr. Wise preferred to "reform" Judaism. They carried on the tasks by stressing essential Judaism, and the importance of Jewish scholarship.

The re-forming of the external accoutrements and ritual practices of our ancient faith loomed very large and very important in Wise's day. It was, so to speak, a *mitzvath asay she-ha-z'man g'ramah*, "a positive command required by the occasion," but that work is fairly well accomplished now. There is really very little left to reform. Judaism has now been "modernized" and "streamlined" to suit the most radical and the most fastidious of tastes. However, it is doubtful whether the modernization of Judaism has made our people more spiritual or more pious. Certainly it has not filled our temples with devout worshippers who should come there, *be-ragesh*, as the Psalmist said, in throngs or in ecstasy or eagerly, whichever way you translate *be-ragesh*. Nor has it filled our schools with youth thirsting for Jewish knowledge.

Our task in the days to come, I am persuaded, will be much more difficult than in Wise's day. For, after all is said and done, it was not too difficult a task to urge upon Jews in the new world to abandon certain antiquated and burdensome religious customs. Some, of course, did resist, but the many did it quite readily, even when unbidden and uncoaxed. They were grateful for the official sanction which Reform Jewish leaders gave to a course of practice which they had already adopted quite independently and without

first consulting them. It seems that certain Conservative Jews today are asking for a similar official sanction from their leaders—or rather, that certain Conservative rabbis are seeking to thrust such official sanction upon a way of life which their Conservative flock has already adopted without waiting for authorization either from the *y'shivah shel ma'lah*, "the Court on High," or from any *y'shivah, shel mattah*, "a court below"—a way of life which differs not one whit from what their reform fellow-Jews had adopted as recently as 100 years ago.

Today, however, our tasks are much more difficult. We must make stern demands upon our people if Judaism is to survive. Great religions have always made great demands upon their devotees, and have called for tremendous commitments. Fashionable theosophies may offer a minimum of discipline and a maximum of peace of mind. Judaism has always offered man the *ol malchuth shamayim*, "the burden of the Kingdom" of God, a burden, however, which lifts all other burdens from the human heart, and gives man's soul enfranchisement and the supreme satisfactions of life. The commandments of Judaism, to be sure, are not beyond the reach of man. They are not far off in heaven or beyond the seas. They are very near, *b'ficha u-vil'vav'cha laasoto*, "in thy mouth and in thy heart to do it." But they are not very easy!

Today it is no longer a question of more ceremonies or of less ceremonies, of going backward or of going forward in things external, but of going inward. It is upon the inwardness of Judaism, upon the intellectual quest of God through the time-honored techniques of Jewish religious life and learning and study, through the disciplines of the devotional life and the ethical life that we shall have to concentrate in the days to come. It is with these heavy obligations that our laity must be confronted. It is no longer a question of the competitive values of orthodoxy, conservatism or reform. None of them has scored any significant victories in our day for Judaism. Nor will any significant victories come about through any physical mergers or through any artificial combinations of administrative apparatus. This is not the way to meet a spiritual crisis; and it is a spiritual crisis of the gravest kind that Judaism and all spiritual religions in the world are facing today.

Progressive Judaism from now on will have to think of progress, not in terms of external reforms, but in terms of deepening and

enriching classic Jewish concepts. It is in the re-definition of essential doctrine, not in surface ritual reform, that the historic progressive motif in Judaism abides.

Prophetic Judaism gave new definitions to the concepts of God, people, temple, sacrifice, kingship, property, slavery, labor, family, stranger, brotherhood, peace. They are new definitions, all, *yashan mipnay hadash totziu*, "bring forth the old before the new." They were replacing the old with the new. They were making progress by going inward. They sank deeper shafts to mine new gold. What was progressive and therefore permanent in their contributions was not that they were "up to date" or responsive to the "state and inclination of their day," but that they went deeper and challenged the spirit of their age. They sought to inform, affect and alter it; for the spirit of no age ever attains to the spirit of God.

Rabbinic Judaism continued this process. What was progressive, and, therefore, permanent in their contribution were not the necessary "hedges" which they built around the Torah and which the times required, but the deepening of essential concepts of Judaism — Talmud Torah, the disciplines of study, Torah Lishmah, Kid-dush Ha-shem, Ye-surin shel A-havah, the noble ways of prayer, the higher ranges of charity, the spiritual evaluation of the Sabbath, the wider spiritual scope of the synagogue, and how to train for a life of faith, how to be *arum be-yirah*, "skilled in faith." They were in the noble and progressive tradition of *m'galeh amukoth mini hoshech*, "uncovering depth from utter darkness," making transparent what was opaque.

Medieval Jewish philosophy likewise contributed new definitions and new insights — the interplay of revelation and reason, the meaning of freedom in man and in God, and how a confident life could be built for man in a world created and governed by an unknowable and indescribable God. A medieval Jewish philosopher, Halevi, gave a profound and new definition to the concept of Jewish nationality.

Jewish mysticism, likewise, revealed new depths and new penetrations, more especially in the field of probing the inner meaning of the sacred text. In its latest manifestation, in Chassidism, it gave us new concepts and new techniques. *Hithla-habut*, "enthusiasm," *Hishtapchut Ha-nefesh*, "outpouring of one's soul," the sacredness of joy in the practice of faith, and the importance of

personality in spiritual leadership—the concept of the inspired guide, the Tzadik.

The progressive and permanent element in Reform Judaism was not the abandonment of certain outmoded and incongruous customs, but the substitution of scholarship for scholasticism, of liberty for authority, and the replenishment in modern terms of an ancient concept not yet fully grasped, the mission of Israel.

This is the kind of progress and spiritual adventure with which this great institution, its teachers, students and graduates will have to concern themselves in the days to come in a century wherein radicalism in science and radicalism in forms of social and economic organization and political authority are confronting the individual with radical new problems of adjustment, and religious and ethical traditions with their most serious challenge. What is social justice today? Is the Jewish concept of *tzedek*, "justice," fully expressed in the evolving forms of socialism and communism and in their methods? Are there basic principles of human status, rights and freedoms, endangered in them as in a capitalist society which religion must be on guard to defend? To what extent can the concentration of political power in the state in the name of social progress be sanctioned without completely submerging the individual whom God created *y'hidi*, "*one*, integrally *one*!"

There is no longer any nourishing food for the coming generations of Jews in any program of revision of surface customs and practices. If, however, at the behest of a faith of boundless horizons, of a Torah of which it was said *hafoch bah va-hafoch bah d'cholo bah*, "turn it and turn it over and over again, for everything is in it," of a God who proclaimed, *dir'shuni vi-h'yu*, "seek me and live," and of a tradition which gave primacy to study and scholarship, we are resolved to carry on, not catering to modernity, but questing renewal, not reaching out for discarded paraphernalia but for depth and inwardness, we shall serve the coming generations of our people sincerely and faithfully in the deepest reaches of their needs, and we shall remain true to an heroic and impregnable religious tradition which has had many noble and inspiring champions in the past, of which Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise was one and certainly not the least.