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MS-4850: Daniel Jeremy Silver Papers, 1972-1993.
Series 2: Subject Files, 1956-1993, undated.

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154

Central Conference of American Rabbis, Committee on
Particularism, correspondence and reports, 1974-1975.

October 30, 1974

Rabbi Robert I. Kahn
Congregation Emanu El
1500 Sunset Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77005

Dear Bob:

Here is my understanding of the conclusions of Tuesday's meeting.

It was agreed that there ought to be a Task Force or committee on Jewish Survival. Its immediate purpose would be to encourage reflection and discussion of the various theological issues implicit in Jewish survival. The Task Force was to organize a symposium, or symposia, where elements of this theme could be raised. Such meetings and the papers presented would be a first step towards our purpose of encouraging thought and discussion of the theme of Jewish particularism (which liberal Jewish theology has tended to sidestep). We will examine such themes as the reality of the Judeo-Christian tradition, assumptions about the melting pot, chosen people concept, particularism in a messianic age, particularism in a tragic age, etc.

The symposium would be held at the New York school and, hopefully, in conjunction with it. Papers would be distributed through the Conference Journal or other mailings. During the calendar year 1975-76 regional meetings of the Conference would be encouraged to deal with this theme. A list of men prepared to discuss the issue and of background readiness will be prepared.

The Task Force will monitor ongoing research in the area of contemporary attitudes towards Jewish survival by the Institute of Jewish Policy Planning and Research etc. and make such material available. If possible it would suggest to colleagues language and approach which may be helpful in tying our youth more closely to our future.

A second step would be to work with the Program Committee for the '76 or '77 Conference so that this theme in all its breadth (practical, sociological and theological) could be debated.

Rabbi Robert I. Kahn

October 30, 1974

Our purpose is rabbinic: to grow in understanding and awareness so that our teaching, preaching and educational administration will reflect a more consistent understanding on our parts to the issues of survival - so that we can chart our special way between the poles of an extreme universalism and an extreme particularism.

On a practical level you will want to appoint this Task Force and give it a budget. If I am to be its chairman permit me to suggest a small working group so that meetings are not too time-consuming or expensive. We are after consequence not concensus. As I indicated in my presentation I would not want Reines, Petuchowsky, Mihaly, Borowitz or Brichto on the Task Force or the same folk who did not produce a new platform. They have made their impact. On the other hand Michael Myer or Larry Hoffman might be useful. If possible the Task Force should include some of the more thoughtful, theologically oriented younger men.

It is already late to plan a symposium this academic year, but ~~certainly~~ ~~ought to~~ ~~certainly~~ to meet in planning session in order to organize a conference for next fall.

It was good seeing you yesterday.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

cc: Joseph Glaser

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) AG 9-2811

Office of the President
Rabbi Robert I. Kahn
1500 Sunset Blvd., Houston, Tex. 77005

November 19, 1974

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Dan:

Thanks very much for your full and detailed letter. I think we are on the same wave length.

You mention Mike Meyer or Larry Hoffman. Previous notes included men like Norbert Samuelson, Abe Kaplan, Dick Israel. I do not know if Saul Besser is theologically oriented, he does have ideas.

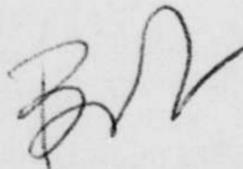
I would be inclined to let you choose your own group, say four or five and yourself, and go to work.

As to budget, Joe and I put our heads together and came up with \$2,000. Will this get you started?

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Best personal wishes.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Robert I. Kahn

RIK/sss

Good to see you!
Bernie Martin said yes

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*Ex-officio



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40 WEST 68th STREET • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023
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November 21, 1974

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Rabbi Silver:

I enjoyed meeting you at the recent CCAR Board meeting, and was excited to hear of your projected seminar on the Theology of Jewish Identity.

As I mentioned to you, in passing, we at the New York School have been discussing a similar project. Our title was going to be the Philosophy of Jewish Peoplehood, and our plans included inviting a variety of noted scholars to deliver papers and elicit responses.

You mentioned that you hoped to utilize our facilities here, and indeed, we would be most happy to accommodate you. Since our projects apparently overlap, it would seem advisable for us to know more precisely what you envision, so that we may avoid duplication.

Please let me know what your plans include and how we might be of help to you. I personally am very interested in what you have to say, and would like to do what I can to assure your success.

Sincerely,

Lawrence A. Hoffman, Rabbi
Professor of Liturgy and
Related Literature

LH: jk

December 4, 1974

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College - JIR
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Rabbi Hoffman:

Item one, let's get over the formality. I'll be Daniel and you will be either Lawrence or Larry. Which?

I am grateful for your letter of November 21. I have the option of appointing the committee on particularism and I would like to have you serve with me. This will give us a chance to coordinate our seminars, perhaps to amalgamate them.

I am leary of talking about papers and authors now because I do not want to seem as if these issues have been foreclosed. What I would rather do is to hold a committee meeting in New York in February. Our committee will be a small one and we should be able to work with dispatch. I hope you will join us and on that assumption are you available for a meeting on Monday February 3, Monday February 17 or Tuesday February 11?

Send me a note as to membership and preference of dates. As soon as a date is confirmed I will remind everyone as to time and place and we can begin circulating suggestions.

Happy Chanukah!

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

cc: Chas Thompson

December 6, 1974

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 E. 55th St.
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

I have been asked by Bob Kahn to chair a CCAR committee whose purpose is to encourage thought and discussion on the "why's" of Jewish survival. We still have no name, but essentially we are mandated to organize a symposium or two on the theology of particularism and to stimulate colleagues to do some hard thinking about the rationale and mandate of Jewish survival.

We have no particular ideological axe to grind and no platform to write. The committee emerges out of feelings shared by a large number of colleagues that liberal Judaism historically has come down too heavily on the side of universalism with the result that in our preaching, teaching, liturgy, schools, we emit a message which validates humanity but not necessarily Jewish survival.

I am writing this letter in the hope that you will join our small working group. Our immediate purpose is to plan a seminar at the New York School during the academic year of 1975-76 and followup programs, papers and speakers for regional meetings of the CCAR during 1976. In principle the Conference has agreed to devote the 1976 or 1977 Conference to this theme.

I think we can make a significant contribution to our movement. We are not mandated to develop a denominational position paper, but simply to get thinking started. We are not going to take surveys or solve sociological problems, but to act on the assumption that rabbis read and think and that we do have some consequence.

[Dec 6, 1974]

Would you indicate to me your willingness to join this committee? We plan an organizing meeting in New York in February. Are the following available: February 3, February 11 or February 17? Do you have any preference among them? I will try to work out what is best for everyone.

With best personal wishes and a Happy Chanukkah I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 6, 1974

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
45 E. Hartsdale Ave.
Hartsdale, N. Y. 10530

Dear Peter:

I have been asked by Bob Kahn to chair a CCAR committee whose purpose is to encourage thought and discussion on the "why's" of Jewish survival. We still have no name, but essentially we are mandated to organize a symposium or two on the theology of particularism and to stimulate colleagues to do some hard thinking about the rationale and mandate of Jewish survival.

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With best personal wishes and a Happy Chanukkah I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 6, 1974

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Washington Hebrew Congregation
3935 Macomb St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Josh:

I have been asked by Bob Kahn to chair a CCAR committee whose purpose is to encourage thought and discussion on the "why's" of Jewish survival. We still have no name, but essentially we are mandated to organize a symposium or two on the theology of particularism and to stimulate colleagues to do some hard thinking about the rationale and mandate of Jewish survival.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 6, 1974

Rabbi Bruce Warshal
Temple Beth Emeth
2420 Mershon Drive
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

Dear Bruce:

I have been asked by Bob Kahn to chair a CCAR committee whose purpose is to encourage thought and discussion on the "why's" of Jewish survival. We still have no name, but essentially we are mandated to organize a symposium or two on the theology of particularism and to stimulate colleagues to do some hard thinking about the rationale and mandate of Jewish survival.

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With best personal wishes and a Happy Chanukkah I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

WASHINGTON HEBREW CONGREGATION
Massachusetts Avenue and Macomb Street, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016

JOSHUA O. HABERMAN, D. H. L.
Senior Rabbi

December 11, 1974

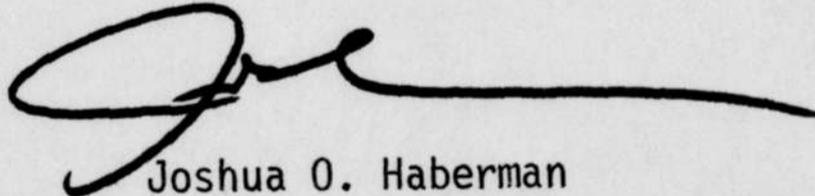
Dear Danny,

I accept your invitation to work with you on the CCAR committee on the "Why's of Jewish Survival." I believe the kind of ideological and theological repair work which this committee's task would involve is greatly needed and I would be challenged by it.

Of the three dates you have mentioned, the only open date for me would be Tuesday, February 11th. In fact, it is an excellent date and I hope we can all agree on it.

Best Hanukkah greetings and all that is good.

As ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Joshua O. Haberman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joshua O. Haberman

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106



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(212) 873-0200

December 12, 1974

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Daniel:

First, thank you for your suggestion to get over the formality. Please call me Larry. Frankly, I would have assumed that you would feel free to use my first name. I, however, raised in a "traditionalist school" which advocates showing respect for those I consider my teachers, just naturally addressed you more formally.

I appreciated your quick response. As it happens the committee in charge of our Colloquium seems to be moving away from the original topic and is now tentatively planning seminars on topics which have no direct bearing on that which you are investigating. If these tentative plans are formalized there will be no fear of overlapping our two projects. This, in no way, however, alters either my personal interest in your project nor the College's willingness to host it or help it along in any way you see fit. I would hope therefore that the final seminars at which your committee arrives will be held here in any event; hopefully in the academic year 1975-76 during our Centennial celebrations.

I should be delighted to join your committee and I thank you for the invitation. I am available on both Monday, February 3 and Tuesday, February 11. Please let me know which date you select.

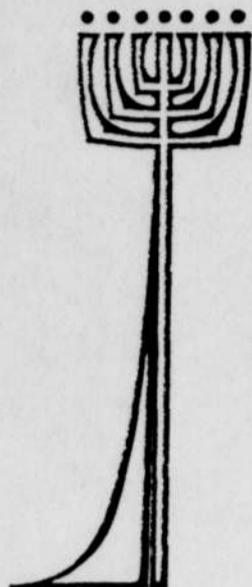
Happy Chanukkah! I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Lawrence A. Hoffman

LH:jk

RABBI SHELDON ZIMMERMAN



CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE
123 EAST 55TH STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

December 16, 1974
2 Tevet 5735

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Dan,

I will be delighted to join the Committee.

Best day for me is February 17th; next best
February 11th and February 3rd is impossible.

Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Sheldon Zimmerman
Rabbi

SZ:ld

קהלת בית אמת
TEMPLE BETH EMETH

2309 PACKARD ROAD
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104
TELEPHONE (313) 665-4744

BRUCE S. WARSHAL, RABBI
2420 MERSHON DRIVE
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48103
TELEPHONE 665-0065

STEPHEN R. YOUNG, PRESIDENT
2930 PEBBLE CREEK ROAD
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104
TELEPHONE 971-1365

December 17, 1974

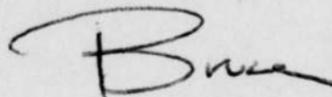
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Daniel,

I am more than delighted to serve on the CCAR committee mandated to encourage discussion on the "why's" of Jewish survival.

February 17 is my best date. February 3 is not bad. February 11 is an atrocious date for me, but I will rearrange my schedule if that is the best date for the others involved.

Sincerely,



Bruce S. Warshal

BSW:ss

WOODLANDS COMMUNITY TEMPLE

50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607
(914) LY 2-7070

RABBI PETER RUBINSTEIN

December 20, 1974

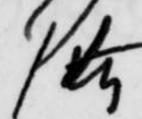
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Daniel:

Thanks very much for your note of December 6th.
I would be very glad to serve on your committee. The
two Monday dates would be my preference for a meeting.
I would appreciate it if you could confirm the time as
soon as possible so that I might be able to prevent
a schedule conflict.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Cordially,



Peter J. Rubinstein, Rabbi

PJR/jm

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Larry:

The problem of arranging the dates with our pock-marked rabbinic calendars turned out to be an incredibly difficult one. Four of the five on the Committee indicated that Monday, February 17, is an acceptable date. We will meet in the offices of the Conference at one o'clock. Our business should be finished by the late afternoon.

The major item on the agenda is to plan for a series of papers on the issue of a theology of particularism. I would like you to do some preliminary thinking as to specific topics which ought to be covered. These might include analysis of various modern thinkers from this perspective, an historical study of particularism and survival themes in our preaching and curriculum etc. We will build on these ideas.

With all good wishes for the new year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal
Temple Beth Emeth
2909 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Dear Bruce:

The problem of arranging the dates with our pock-marked rabbinic calendars turned out to be an incredibly difficult one. Four of the five on the Committee indicated that Monday, February 17, is an acceptable date. We will meet in the offices of the Conference at one o'clock. Our business should be finished by the late afternoon.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. and Macomb St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Josh:

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Josh, you are the only exception. I hope you can rearrange your calendar and be with us. In any case, in scheduling the next meeting you get preference.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607

Dear Peter:

The problem of arranging the dates with our pock-marked rabbinic calendars turned out to be an incredibly difficult one. Four of the five on the Committee indicated that Monday, February 17, is an acceptable date. We will meet in the offices of the Conference at one o'clock. Our business should be finished by the late afternoon.

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With all good wishes for the new year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 East 55th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

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With all good wishes for the new year I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

December 26, 1974

Rabbi Joseph Glaser
Central Conference of American Rabbis
790 Madison Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021

Dear Joe:

In the hope that you can be with us I am scheduling the meeting of the CCAR committee on particularism for Monday, February 17 at one o'clock, hopefully in your office. Is that okay? Can you be with us?

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

790 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) AG 9-2811

Office of the Executive Vice President

December 30, 1974

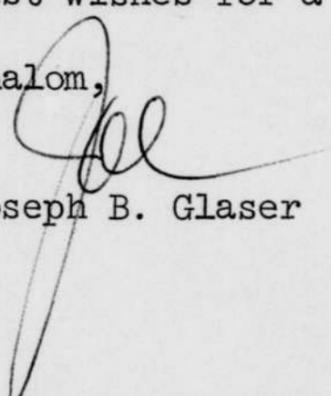
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Daniel:

This office will be closed on February 17 - it's Washington's Birth-day. Try another day.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy and prosperous 1975.

Shalom,


Joseph B. Glaser

JBG/sss

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KAPLAN -

UNLAMENTABLES OF JEWISH
CIVIL - AS GESTALT

Fackenheim - Posthumous
victory

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in what sense does it
provide a meaningful identity,
What are model for
Jewish education

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JL Cauden ^{HASKALAH} - 50TS PAGE

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AND A MAN ABROAD"

AT IT UNKTO

Boken

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NEW JEWEL STATE WOULD

SHOW CORPORATE VALUE

NOT AS JEW ^{AW GALE?}
COULD NOT

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1) Address to rabbis

2) History ↔ Theology

"Judaism with wings"

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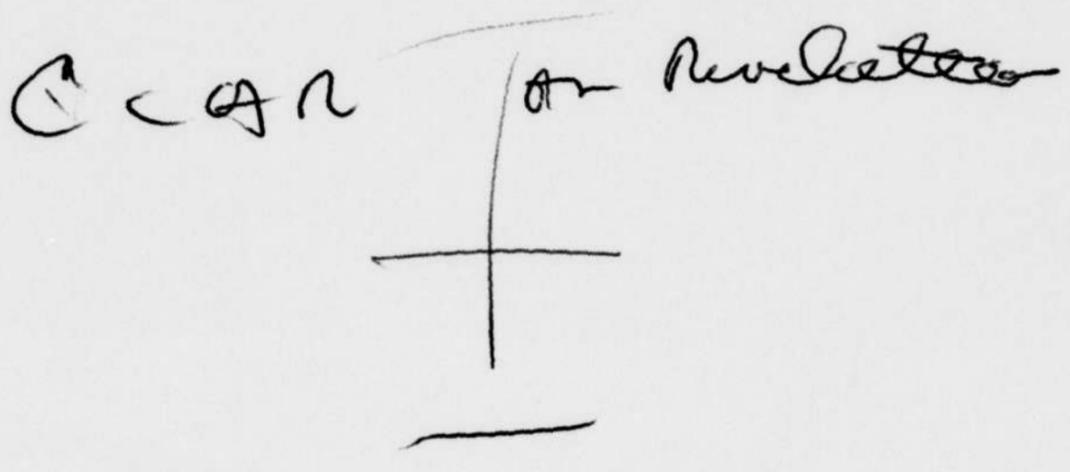
INSTITUTIONS — PATTERNS FIGURES



Benedict Barber —

Where he sees evidence

here —



I Where are we

Cancelled X

~~Advisory~~ Campers - Hummel *

| | |
|---------|----|
| Letters | XX |
| Securus | XX |

off

II What problems arise in presenting a specific piece
people [not ideas but comment]

comment?

III In what sense does present piece comment present
a meaningful advisory

IV Theological Review - John to Gary / Belief

Kyle / Fulmer

Joshua Haberman

~~V What is needed?~~

Fulmer

VI How is the awareness present comment needed /
many bodies

Science

1) Theologues

- Current -
- Revelation -
- Ethical - Value -
- measures - []
- Missions -

2 Count ⁷ 613
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Model Role

2) - Standards - Intellectual

- Relig Needs - Comp
- As well as the fact concerning people
- recovered identity
- America - Social
- skill - SCC's - Harvard

3) Sociological

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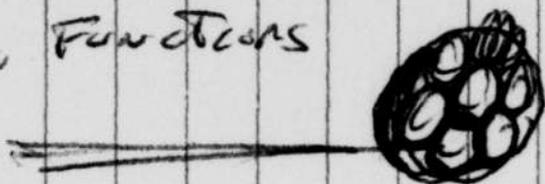
What do we need
 about?

What part is in
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Why people of the have
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Now that we have -
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add no
Curriculum
Liturgy pp. 10-15
Sermons
educ Functions



Theological D.F.F.

Ethical distinctiveness

Zionism (

How does Jewish community

provide model for

Ethnicity
Identity

Covenant Theology



Towards a Theology of SURVIVAL

1) REF AND THE POST
MESSIANIC AGE

2) THE NARROW OF
FREEDOM

3) THE THINGS WE SAY

4) ~~THE~~ RITUALS AND LITURGY
OF UNIVERSE

PUTTING US BACK

5) WHAT GOD DIFFERS

WASHINGTON HEBREW CONGREGATION

Massachusetts Avenue and Macomb Street, N.W.

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20016

JOSHUA O. HABERMAN, D. H. L.

Senior Rabbi

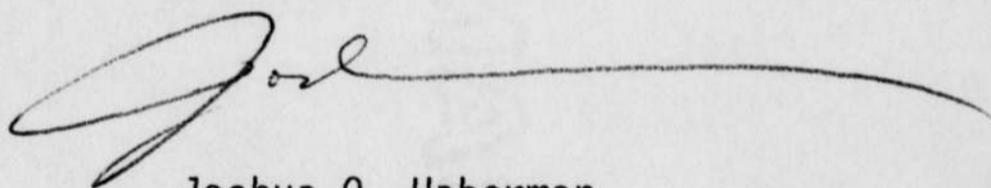
January 2, 1975

Dear Danny,

In spite of schedule problems, I shall do all I can to attend the meeting which you have called for Monday, February 17th, at the CCAR office in New York at one o'clock. In any event, you can count on my very interested participation even if I should be unable to be there.

Best greetings from house to house.

As ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Josh', followed by a long horizontal flourish line.

Joshua O. Haberman

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

January 7, 1975

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 East 55th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

Our meeting is scheduled for 1 P. M. Monday, February 17, in the offices of the National Foundation For Jewish Culture which is on the fourth floor of the Chanin Building at 42nd and Lexington. In case you need the telephone number it is 490-2280. The CCAR office will be closed that day so we have made this move.

In preparation for this meeting I am enclosing a letter which I sent to Bob Kahn that served as the basis of approval by the Conference Board. In order to wrap your mind about some of the issues I would suggest the following readings:

W. Gunther Plaut, The Growth of Reform Judaism, p. 144-152, 165-177

J. L. Talmon, The Unique and the Universal, p. 64-90

Arthur Cohen, Arguments and Doctrines, p. 252-286

Jacob Neusner, Understanding Jewish Theology, p. 240-248

and

the April 17, 1967 issue of the Congress Bi-Weekly which is devoted entirely to the theme of "The Nature of Jewish Distinctiveness."

Obviously we will be involved in the issues of messianism, election, covenant and mission and in their various ways these articles deal with these themes. Rereading Kaplan with his emphasis on the unique quality of Jewish civilization may also be helpful.

With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp Encl.

January 7, 1975

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Larry:

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Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp Encl.

January 7, 1975

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

January 7, 1974

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. & Macomb St. , N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp Encl.

January 7, 1975

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal
Temple Beth Emeth
2909 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Dear Bruce:

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and

The April 17, 1987 issue of the Congress Bi-Weekly which is devoted entirely to the theme of "The Nature of Jewish Distinctiveness."

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With all good wishes I remain

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp Encl.



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
Cincinnati • New York • Los Angeles • Jerusalem

40 WEST 68th STREET • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023
(212) 873-0200

January 16, 1975

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Daniel:

I tried phoning you today, but you were out of town. This letter should reach you, therefore, as fast as a phone call.

I am sorry to say that I will now have to decline membership on your committee. I have been "saddled" with the chairmanship of the Faculty Centennial Committee for the New York School; though Dr. Orlinsky is my Associate Chairman, he will be on Sabbatical, thus leaving the bulk of many details to my care. I am afraid I simply will not have the time to devote to serious discussions on Jewish Particularism. I do hope you can understand my dilemma. The Centennial Committee Chairmanship is not really optional. On the other hand, I am anxious to have the New York Symposium take place some time next year, perhaps in early Spring, during our Centennial Year. I should appreciate your determining a few alternative dates, so that we can clear our calendar for you.

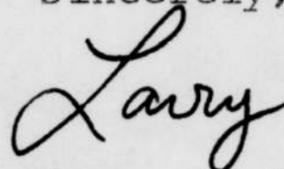
I have just returned from the California School, where I spoke with Mike Signer. Mike is a brilliant guy, about to receive his Ph.D. in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto and recently appointed as a faculty member at HUC. He expressed some interest in your committee and I told him

[Jan 16, 1975]

I would pass his name on to you without reservation.
Perhaps he can take my place.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding symposium
dates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry".

Lawrence A. Hoffman

LH: jk

January 20, 1975

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Larry:

Some word of our work has gotten out and I have been receiving material which men feel might be of interest.

From time to time I will make a selection which seems to me to be representative and may be useful. Enclosed please find two such pieces.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

January 20, 1975

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 East 55th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

January 20, 1975

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mj

Encl.

January 20, 1975

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. & Macomb St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Josh:

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

January 20, 1975

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal

~~Temple Beth Emeth~~

~~2909 Packard Road~~ 2420 *Murston Rd*

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 3

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

January 21, 1975

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman
Hebrew Union College
40 West 68th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Larry:

I received your letter of January 16 and would like to try and talk you out of retiring from the committee before we get going. It is a matter of organization and one or two meetings and I think your advice will be invaluable. Please see if you won't reconsider.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

February 18, 1975

Rabbi Joseph Glaser
Central Conference of American Rabbis
790 Madison Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021

Dear Joe:

Enclosed please find my expenses for the first meeting of our new committee.

It was a good meeting. I will send you a copy of the follow-up letter I sent to each member for your file. This ought to keep you abreast.

Incidentally, please delete Lawrence Hoffman from the committee. He finds that he cannot work with us due to the press of the college centennial.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

Encl.

February 10, 1975

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. & Macomb St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Josh:

I think we accomplished a good bit yesterday. I particularly appreciated that you came having read much of the suggested bibliography and with notes. We got to know each other and to reveal enough of our personal biases so that we will know what each is really saying and why. It was our decision to delay planning a symposium until after we meet again during the CCAR Conference this June. To make that meeting useful each of us has agreed to do a specific paper which will line out one area in the state of affairs in re "Jewish Survival."

Sheldon Zimmerman and I will review the stated positions and actual practice of our movement. I will deal with liturgy and the pulpit; he, school curriculum, youth work and the camps. We want to know what has been done and what kind of signals have been given out. Peter Rubinstein will deal with the American Jewish community; how it looks at itself and what kind of meaningful Jewish identity it encourages. Hopefully, he will raise the question of the existence and quality of modern Jewish pattern figures. Who are the people who "Jew" visibly and effectively? Joshua Haberman will review the major theologians of the modern period insofar as their thought dealt with Jewish uniqueness, the essence of Judaism, where Judaism differs etc. Bruce Warshal will look at his congregation and at himself and frame as accurately as he can the questions that are being asked and the kinds of answers which are being listened to.

As soon as the Conference is scheduled I will ask Joe Glaser for a time and a room. I will keep in mind that most of you prefer to meet early in the week.

Three conclusions seemed to emerge. We want to inform ourselves better as to the state of the art before we plunge ahead. Most of us feel that our congregations have accepted the priority of Jewish survival more readily than some of our colleagues. Finally, we felt that the materials we commission should be appropriate for intelligent laymen as well as our colleagues.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Joe Glaser and Bob Kahn so that they can keep abreast. Thanks again.

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DJS:mp

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DJS:mp

February 10, 1975

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal
2420 Mershon Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

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Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

קהילת בית אמת

TEMPLE BETH EMETH

2309 PACKARD ROAD

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104

TELEPHONE (313) 665-4744

BRUCE S. WARSHAL, RABBI

2420 MERSHON DRIVE

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48103

TELEPHONE 665-0065

STEPHEN R. YOUNG, PRESIDENT

2930 PEBBLE CREEK ROAD

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104

TELEPHONE 971-1365

May 23, 1975

The Theological Task Force
Daniel Jeremy Silver, Chairman
Joshua Haberman
Sheldon Zimmerman
Peter Rubinstein
Joseph Glaser, CCAR, Exec. V.P.

Gentlemen:

My personal charge emanating from our last meeting was to look at my congregation and myself and frame as accurately as I could the questions that are being asked and the kinds of answers that are being listened to. This is relevant to Jewish survival for I believe that Temple Beth Emeth in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is one of those seminal congregations that should be studied to show us where we can expect to be in the next generation for better or worse. I say this because the congregation reflects the trends and in many cases the insoluble problems of American society. It is located in a college town amidst a highly marginal Jewish community (only 400 of 1000 families affiliated). It is interested in religion not only on a cultural level, but insists upon intellectual reflection as to the meaning of Judaism and how this relates to the congregation and to personal belief.

Three questions, or more broadly stated, three areas of interest, are of paramount importance to my congregation:

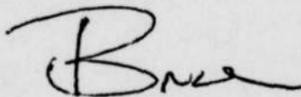
1. Can we believe in revelation as expressed in the Sinaitic tradition?
2. What do we do with the Chosen People concept? If I had a nickel every time this question was asked of me, I would not be a millionaire, but for sure I would be able to afford a good meal at the Maisonette during the conference.
3. How does Judaism accept converts? Are they equal to natural-born Jews? Does Judaism have a philosophy concerning conversion?

The Theological Task Force
Daniel Jeremy Silver, Chairman
Joshua Haberman
Sheldon Zimmerman
Peter Rubinstein
Joseph Glaser, CCAR, Exec. V.P.
May 23, 1975
Page 2

I had intended to write the "king of answers which are being listened to" for these three areas. I do admit that this was ambitious; but due to the pressures of time, especially involved in my move to New Orleans, I have written a paper on question number two only. Enclosed please find a copy of that paper for your perusal before our meeting in Cincinnati.

I look forward to reading your papers and to the ensuing discussion.

Sincerely



Bruce S. Warshal

THE COVENANT--THE LEAP OF HUTZPAH

Bruce S. Warshal

I

Jewish tradition has recognized two covenants between man and God. The first covenant in time, in the sense of biblical chronology, was God's covenant with Noah (Gen. 9). Upon this foundation Talmudic Judaism enunciated the seven Noachide laws expressing God's basic relationship to all mankind. The second covenant recognized by the tradition is God's special relationship to the Jewish people through his promises to the patriarchs, culminating in the Sinaitic revelation. However, the tradition fails to distinguish yet a third covenant, one which clearly emerges from the second, proclaiming a different relationship between God and the Jewish people; in fact, a covenant which is not a factual covenant but uses covenant language to establish a new theology. This third covenant will be discussed herein in Part III; but to fully understand the radical approach of this third covenant, the nature of the concept of covenant must be reviewed (Part II). Finally in Part IV, we will discuss the kind of covenant that we as progressive Jews must choose, which entails the basic question of the value of the covenant in contemporary Jewish theology.

II

We have so emphasized the lofty word covenant that we forget that it means merely contract. It is a word that is still found in standard contract forms: "the party of the first part and the party of the second part do hereby covenant, contract and agree, to wit:" After this introduction the lawyer inserts the price to be paid and/or the service to be rendered. What we forget is that God was the party of the first part rendering a service to the Jewish people and demanding payment in return, in that particular contract, payment in kind, i.e. payment in services. Our covenant was not a lofty concept, but rather it was a practical business arrangement. To understand this, three points of

law that are common to all legal systems must be discussed.

First, to have a valid contract or covenant you must have a quid pro quo, a this for that. There must be consideration, which is a legal term indicating that each party must provide a service or money in return for the other party's service or money. If there is no consideration, if one party is offering while the other is not offering in return, but is merely receiving, then we have not a contract, but a gift. If A promises a gift to B and then changes his mind, B cannot hold A to his promise, for B promised nothing in return. He does not have a contract on which to sue. In the case of God and the Jews there was a valid contract, a covenant, which clearly spelled out obligations to both parties. The Torah is replete with this contract. God as the party of the first part will cause the Jewish people to prosper, will give it a land of milk and honey, will make it a father of a multitude of nations and will protect it from its enemies. The people of Israel, as the party of the second part, will repay God by acting as a nation of priests, by following God's laws, by not killing, by honoring father and mother, by adhering to the 613 commandments incumbent upon the people. There is no gift here. The contract is evident. Both sides understand their obligations.

Legal point number two: To have a valid contract there must be equality of bargaining. If A holds a gun to B's head and forces him to sign a contract, such contract will not be enforced by the courts, for B was under duress, and surely did not have equal bargaining power to formulate the terms and obligations of such contract. Another more common example may illustrate this point. The courts will not hold a minor to his contract. It is felt that a minor, because of his tender age, by definition does not have equal bargaining power with an adult. It takes an adult to contract with an adult.

But what does it take to contract with God? Where is, or how can there be, equal bargaining power with God? Do we then have a valid covenant or contract? We have all heard of the

leap of faith (if I may borrow a Protestant phrase), but such leap was always present in Judaism. Few people realized that inherent in the covenant or contract, is another leap. I call it the leap of hutzpah, and this concept is a Jewish gift to the world.

The hutzpah is inherent in a contract with God, not a gift from God, mind you, but a contract with obligations on both sides. With heart and mind full of hutzpah, the people who wrote the Torah pulled themselves up to confront God as equals, to strike a bargain, to write a contract, to put God and his obligations down on paper as well as putting the people Israel and its obligations on the printed line.

It may be protested that a reading of the Torah clearly indicates that those who wrote it understood that man was subservient to and not the equal of God. This is absolutely true, but more important, throwing Aristotelian logic aside (after all, this precedes Aristotle by 600 years), by ignoring the contradiction, or by merely not seeing such contradiction, the writers also proclaimed the worth of the people to confront God as equal, to strike a bargain with the Almighty.

This leap of hutzpah tells us something about the ancient Jewish concept of the worth of man. An inherently evil man in no way could gain the stature needed to write the contract with God. Although the word contract is less lofty than covenant, the idea inherent in contract, the equality of bargaining with equal contractual obligations, raises mankind to a truly lofty position. Likewise, man's self-image inherent in the leap, requires of him to act with Godly attributes, to meet his contractual obligations. How much more rewarding is this concept of man and his responsibilities than assuming that all is a gift of God, leaving mankind to receive, even to emulate, but without the dignity of knowing that it is an equal party to mutual obligation.

Legal point number three: A covenant or contract by its

nature is capable of being broken or cancelled by either party to such contract. It can be mutually dissolved, or more important to our discussion, if one party does not meet its obligations, does not render its service to the other party, the second party in turn is not obliged to fulfill its promise, its obligations to the contract. This was eminently clear to the ancient Jews, to the writers of the Torah. If you follow my laws, God proclaims, then I meet my obligations to you, but if the people Israel does not meet its contractual obligations, does "not observe all these commandments...If you break my covenant" (Lev. 26:14,15) then "I will spurn you." (Lev. 26:30). God will no longer feel the need to fulfill his obligations under the contract.

This is precisely what the pre-exilic literary prophets, what First Isaiah, Micah, Amos, and Hosea were saying. You, the people Israel, are sinning. You are oppressing the poor. You are distorting justice. You are not meeting ritual obligations under the covenant. The result of this breach of contract could only be that God would forsake the Jewish people. The prophets did not take for granted God's largesse. They understood the conditional nature of the relationship. They predicted that God would destroy the people, for it was clear to them that the people had defaulted on the contract.

The test of true prophecy was met. The destruction came. The northern empire (Israel) fell in 621 B.C.E. and the southern nation (Judah) collapsed in 586 B.C.E., the Temple in ruins and the people in Babylonian exile. It would appear that the file was closed, the contract negated, the chosen people were no longer chosen.

III

Enters a new historical concept promulgated by the post-exilic prophets. They proclaim that Israel still possesses a covenant with God, that such contract is a brit olam, an eternal covenant, and Israel's obligations under such covenant or contract

is to spread monotheism, to be an Or Le-goyim--a light unto the nations, to use Second Isaiah's terminology.

The very words brit olam, an eternal, never-ending contract or covenant, is a contradiction in terms. A contract by its nature must be conditional on the two parties fulfilling their obligations. A brit to be a brit, a covenant to be covenant or contract can never be never-ending, incapable of being cancelled. An eternal covenant is a logical impossibility. It becomes in its nature a gift, an irreversible gift.

It is true, as mentioned above, that the ancient Jew did not necessarily follow logical constructs; but if we as modern Jews are to relate to our heritage we must confront this impossibility. This is not to say that logical constructs should necessarily govern religion. There must be room for a healthy belief in the irrational, in the sense of faith predominating over reason. There must also be recognition that two irreconcilable religious thoughts can be holistically internalized within one human being. But the distinction in the brit olam, the eternal contract, is that we have a contradiction within one religious concept, that the concept itself stands confused. It is one thing to profess a faith in a whole ideatum even if unprovable by rational thought or to internalize two irreconcilable positions, but it is quite another thing to profess a faith in a concept that is not whole, that carries internal confusion.

The notion of the brit olam as a new covenant, as changing God's relationship to the Jewish people, is not manifest because the post-exilic prophets did their work so well. Rather than inventing new terminology, they borrowed the very words brit olam from Torah, while changing the basic meaning of that phrase.¹

¹To say that the post-exilic prophets "borrowed" the terminology of Torah may connote that Leviticus and Numbers predate the post-exilic prophets, which is not my intent. The dating of these books is not within the scope of this paper. (See The Shaping of Jewish History, Ellis Rivkin, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971, Chapter II). The important point is that the post-exilic prophets built upon an existing Torah tradition, which at their time is at least firmly rooted in Genesis and Deuteronomy.

It is exceedingly significant that the confusing phrase brit olam should be noted for its absence in Torah. If Numbers and Leviticus are contemporaneous with the post-exilic prophets (see Footnote 1) we are left with only five references to that phrase, four in Genesis and one in Exodus. Leviticus and Numbers contribute three more references. All of these must be discussed in order to appreciate the fine craftsmanship of the post-exilic prophets.

The context of Leviticus 24:8 is the establishment of Aaronide priestly power: "With each row you shall place pure frankincense, which is to be a token offering for the bread, as an offering by fire to the Lord. He [Aaron in the Tent of Meeting] shall arrange them before the Lord regularly every Sabbath day--it is a commitment for all time [brit olam] on the part of the Israelites." Here we have the establishment of the obligations and, of course, the power of Aaron and his sons, emanating from their functions in the Temple ritual. The brit olam that is present is not the concept of an eternal covenant as expressed by the post-exilic prophets (later to be discussed in this paper) but is in its most crass expression a declaration of inherited power to continue generation after generation. To be sure, in some sense there is an eternal, never-ending, not-capable-of-being-broken, nature to this arrangement; but the focus is not on the covenant, on the relationship between God and the people Israel. There are two other Aaronide cultic references using the term brit olam. Numbers 18:19 refers to an everlasting salt offering, which has reference to Leviticus 2:13, prescribing that salt must be mixed with all meal offerings. Numbers 25:13 refers to a brit kehunot olam--a pact of priesthood forever, again referring to priestly empire building.

Exodus 31:16 states: "The Israelite people shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout the generations as a covenant for all time" (brit olam). The context is clear that there is the hope that Israel's fidelity to God would never end. What is not stated here is the reverse, that God would be bound forever to the people. A hope of fidelity cannot be construed

into an eternal covenant, no matter the terminology brit olam.

This brings us to the four remaining references that can not be dismissed so easily. Clearly in Genesis 9:16 there is an eternal promise binding God's actions forever. God promises to Noah and his sons that never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. God sets the rainbow in the clouds as a visual reminder of his "everlasting covenant" (brit olam). Whether it was wise to use such a confusing phrase at this point is open to question. Whether this and the remaining three references are later inserts is also open to question; but what cannot be questioned is that there is an eternal promise by God, whether that promise constitutes a contract or no. But note that the promise is made to mankind, not to Jews; that this particular promise forms the basis of the Noachide laws, not the Sinaitic covenant. It was always disjunctive and never conjunctive with the establishment of the brit, of the concept of the chosen people.

The final three references are in Genesis, Chapter 17, verses 7, 13 and 19. It can be argued that even though the phrase brit olam is used here, there is actual consideration on behalf of the people, that consideration being the requirement to express the covenant through the ritual of circumcision; yet that is certainly far less than the requirements of the contract as generally understood, binding the Jewish people to a voluminous set of obligations. The very fact that these three references are clustered within twelve verses of one another, while the phrase brit olam nowhere else appears in Genesis except for the Noah reference and appears not once in Deuteronomy, opens us to speculation as to how they found their way into the text. Another curiosity is that the entire seventeenth chapter of Genesis, which encompasses only the circumcision requirements and stories, could be dropped with the narrative text of the book proceeding smoothly from chapter sixteen to chapter eighteen. We can speculate on this cluster of three references, but this also would be out of the scope of this paper.

Without speculation we can conclude that although the phrase brit olam is occasionally used in Torah, there is nowhere in evidence the kind of full-blown concept of eternal covenant, later expressed in terms of Or Le-goyim or Israel's mission. Before the post-exilic prophets, when the term brit is used, the tradition referred to a conditional contract with God, inherent within it all of the conditions of contract law discussed previously in Part II. If this were not the case, the pre-exilic prophets would be unintelligible. Their forecasts of doom and destruction, their admonitions to the Jews, their reminders of obligations unmet, all foreclose on the possibility of any continued, let alone any unbreakable or eternal, contract with God. The genius of the post-exilic prophets is that they were able to breathe just such a concept into Judaism so smoothly that to this very day biblical scholars see the distinction between a quid pro quo contract and an eternally binding relationship, but they do not see this as the specific contribution of the post-exilic prophets.

Moshe Weinfeld in an otherwise outstanding article in the Encyclopedia Judaica (Vol. 5, pp. 1011-1022) exemplifies the conventional wisdom. He makes the distinction between obligatory and promissory covenants, the latter obligating God but not man. He continues, "Even when Israel sins and is to be severely punished, God intervenes to help because He 'will not break his covenant' (Lev. 26:44)." If we read Leviticus 26 (Parashah Bechukotai) this is not the sense of the passage. Very clearly God spells out the rewards if Israel follows his commandments and the dire punishment that almost destroys the people if it does not follow the commandments. Then twice, in verses 40 and 43 the text speaks of the people atoning--then and only then does it say that God will not break His covenant. In essence we have a chastised people committing itself anew to a true bi-lateral contract. Weinfeld makes reference to Abraham (Gen. 17, 19) and to David (II Sam. 7) as further examples of one-way "promissory" contracts. The Abraham promises were culminated in the true Sinaitic brit and

become subsumed in the obligations thereunto, while the David promises were analogous to the Aaronide priestly material previously discussed. They do not reflect the relationship of the people Israel to God.

Why do highly competent biblical scholars insist upon reading a post-exilic phenomenon into a pre-exilic environment, thereby practically destroying the efficacy of the message of the pre-exilic prophets? The reason is obvious: Jewish tradition did its job too well. The post-exilic prophets had to save a raison d'etre for the people. Afterwards the tradition could not admit to the "contribution" of these prophets without putting their entire construct in jeopardy. The tradition had to proclaim that the mission of Israel to act as a light to the nations (to speed monotheism), that the brit olam, the eternal covenant, expressed God's will in its earliest manifestation. This new mission itself is explicable, in the process of being written into a pre-existing contract we arrive at the inexplicable concept of the eternal contract.²

We should not assume that the eternal contract sprang full-blown out of the rubble of the exile. Rather it took time to develop, wending its way through time from Jeremiah to Ezekiel to its complete formulation in Second Isaiah.

The brit olam is referred to in Jeremiah 50:5, 32:40, and 31:31. This last reference is set immediately before the fall of King Zedekiah when Jeremiah clearly saw the destruction of Judah:

²Weinfeld does reinforce the contract analysis in Section II as applied to our covenant with God when, relying on work of G. Mendenhall, he shows that the brit with God is patterned after Hittite treaties and commercial pacts. He also shows that the golden calf incident signified the breaking of a contract: "Indeed, the term for cancelling a contract in Babylonian legal literature is 'to break the tablet' (tuppan hepū)." Of course, the contract was made a second time. The Jewish genius was applying these existing contract formulas between man and God, what I call the leap of hutzpah. Weinfeld comments: "The idea of a covenant between a deity and a people is unknown from other religions and cultures."

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Clearly Jeremiah's new covenant goes beyond the traditional commentators' belief that he is signifying that God can be worshipped even in Babylonia, that the Lord is not tied only to the land of Israel. Jeremiah understands the original contract to be broken because Judah did not keep its side of the contract. This must be the interpretation in light of the earlier chapters of Jeremiah where he shares the tenor of the pre-exilic prophetic tradition. Jeremiah understood his contract law. He hedges by putting God's word within their hearts, implying that it will not be a one-way relationship, that the people Israel will meet their obligations. Finally it is significant that Jeremiah proclaims this brit chadeshah, this new testament, echoing the classic words of the original brit, "you will be my people and I will be your God" (Lev. 26:12, Deut. 29:12).

Ezekiel finds it equally difficult to enunciate a theological rationale for the continued interest by God in the people, that crucial concern that Ezekiel knows must be manifest for the sake of the very existence of Israel. Throughout chapter 16, God compares Israel to Sodom and Samaria and then inexplicably in verse 60 promises an eternal covenant. In chapter 37 Ezekiel has the famous vision of the dry bones regathered and twice in that chapter (verses 23 and 27) echoes the original covenant-- and they shall be my people and I will be their God. Ezekiel

tries hard to maintain the old covenant. He makes no explicit reference, as does Jeremiah, to a new contract. He also presents no philosophical rationale for this covenant, new or old. Although writing after Jeremiah, philosophically he does not progress even to Jeremiah's position, let alone beyond that point. We must wait approximately 40 more years for Second Isaiah to enunciate this new concept with thorough philosophical underpinnings. Second Isaiah becomes the theologian of the eternal covenant.

Second Isaiah 66:19 explains why the people Israel are in exile: "They shall declare my glory among the nations." Here we have a definite break with the pre-exilic prophecy that exile shall come as an inexorable outgrowth of the sins of the people. In 42:6 Second Isaiah continues this theme by proclaiming that the people Israel shall act as a light to the nations. He then weds his new concept linguistically with the pre-existing brit by a peculiar formulation: Vetencha L'brit Am--I have set you for a covenant of the people, or as the Revised Standard Version translates it: I have given you as a covenant to the people. The change of the preposition of to to in context can be justified, but most important for our consideration, it highlights the difficulty of making sense of the whole phrase. Once again, dropping the fancy word covenant and replacing it with its synonym contract, we can see the difficulty: I have given you as a contract (of or to) the people. What is a contract of or to the people? It is relatively meaningless. Isaiah solves this problem elsewhere by expressing the joining of these two concepts (the brit and the mission of Israel) by utilizing the phrase brit olam, an eternal contract.³ Thus we have the complete expression of what can only be classified as a third

³Isaiah 55:3, 61:8. There is one reference in First Isaiah (24:5) of the people breaking the everlasting covenant, which is of little importance. There is little chance that it is authentically First Isaiah. Never does a pre-exilic prophet use this phrase. One can argue that here we have a commingling of the two books. Another explanation is found in the generally acknowledged fact that chapters 24 through 27 are of a later period and not attributable to First Isaiah.

covenant in Jewish tradition.

IV

It is important for us to recognize the eternal covenant as a concept distinct from the original tentative contract previously expressed in Jewish history and as a concept that changes Israel's relationship with God. Once this is recognized we can understand the important historical role that this played in literally saving the Jewish people; but then we must return to the needs of contemporary Judaism and ask whether the brit olam can play a constructive role.

One can argue with great plausibility that some form of covenant with God is vital to Jewish survival, be that covenant in a literary form or understood in a literal sense. The question is: Which covenant?

The difficulty with Isaiah's brit olam is that if we have an eternal contract, then the people Israel can never lose its relationship to God, even if it were to renege on its half of the contract, if we can still use that term, "contract". This may be very comforting religion, but is it good religion? The genius of the original contract is that in its leap of hutzpah, it drew mankind if only for a moment up to God's stature and then demanded of it standards of conduct equal to that stature, all the while reinforcing that demand with the clear understanding that Israel's special relationship with God is temporary, requiring each generation to renew it through its conduct. It is this glorious demand upon the people that is lost in Second Isaiah's reconstruction.

It is our challenge today, if we Jews are to see ourselves as unique in any religious sense, not to discard the concept of the chosen people, of having a special covenant with God; but of reaffirming that contract in its original sense before its distortion by Second Isaiah. It is our challenge to become original, basic Jews, with obligations to God, receiving in return a sense of special relationship to Him. By this I do not

mean a return to Orthodoxy, but a return to serious commitment to the covenant. It is not important whether that present relationship rests upon an actual happening, a contract signed and sealed at Sinai at an historical point in time, or whether that contract is a literary construct, the product of genius and of visionaries. We can feel the personal obligations of that contract on us in either case.

The challenge for us today is to spell out in particulars as one would clearly write any contract, on the one side what we expect of God, or alternatively stated, what we expect our belief in God will do for us, and on the other side, what obligations we have, and services we must render, to fulfill our half of the contract.

Out of the inherent insecure and temporary nature of a true covenant must come belief and a definition of moral conduct, for that is the major ingredient of the service that we must render God to fulfill the covenant. It is time that we begin to give some serious attention to our contractual obligations. It is time for a new leap of hutzpah.

May 5, 1975

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal
2420 Mershon Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

Dear Bruce:

All of us are under pressure at this time of the year, but I need to remind you that we agreed to meet at the Conference and that each of us undertook certain assignments. Joe Glaser will assign us a room on Monday, June 16. Our meeting will begin at 10 A. M. and run through mid-afternoon. I don't have the room number yet, but I will get it to you.

Briefly, Sheldon Zimmerman and I will review the stated positions and actual practice of our movement. I will deal with liturgy and the pulpit; he, school curriculum, youth work and the camps. We want to know what has been done and what kind of signals have been given out. Peter Rubinstein will deal with the American Jewish community; how it looks at itself and what kind of meaningful Jewish identity it encourages. Hopefully, he will raise the question of the existence and quality of modern Jewish pattern figures. Who are the people who "Jew" visibly and effectively? Joshua Haberman will review the major theologians of the modern period insofar as their thought dealt with Jewish uniqueness, the essence of Judaism, where Judaism differs etc. Bruce Warshal will look at his congregation and at himself and frame as accurately as he can the questions that are being asked and the kinds of answers which are being listened to.

If there are any questions drop me a line.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

May 5, 1975

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. & Macomb St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

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DJS:mp

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Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607

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DJS:mp

May 5, 1975

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 East 55th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

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DJS:mp

The Temple

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DANIEL JEREMY SILVER - RABBI

MAX ROTH
STUART GELLER
Associate Rabbis

LEO S. BAMBERGER
Executive Secretary

May 27, 1975

Rabbi Jack Spiro
Beth Ahabah
1111 W. Franklin St.
Richmond, Virginia
23220

Dear Rabbi Spiro:

The Conference has asked me to chair a committee on the theology of Jewish identity which translates to mean that we seek to analyse the signals our movement is sending out about the value(s) of being Jewish, about am segulah and the obligation of being and remaining Jewish. The committee is now studying and doing some background work and I have undertaken to analyse Confirmation programs, confirmand speeches, confirmation cantatas, confirmation vows and the Rabbi's charge in order to analyse what was conveyed on that special day. We do not intend to be critical of anyone's confirmation service and/or message, but we want to get a feeling for the vibrations our congregations are sending out.

Would you be kind enough to send me any or all of the following insofar as they are available for 1975:

1. This year's Confirmation program.
2. A copy of the speeches given by confirmands and/or cantata in which they participated.
3. The confirmation vow if any .
4. A type script of your sermon and/or charge to the class.

I appreciate your help. Could you send this material along so that it is in hand before the Conference where we hope to have a long session.

Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS/rgm

Our 125th Anniversary Year

26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

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Congregation Emanu-El
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New York, New York
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Rabbi Jack Spiro
Beth Ahabah
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Richmond, Virginia
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Rabbi Jack Bemporad
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Rabbi Jonathan M. Brown
Reform Temple
Ohev Sholom
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Rabbi Dudley Weinberg
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Rabbi Jay R. Brickman
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Rabbi David Jacobson
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Rabbi Arnold G. Fink
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Rabbi Robert I. Kahn
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Temple Beth Israel
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Rabbi James A. Wax
Temple Israel
1255 Poplar
Memphis, Tennessee
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Rabbi Lloyd R. Goldman
Mizpah
McCallie & Fairview
Chattanooga, Tennessee
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Rabbi Edward L. Cohn
Kahal Kadosh
Beth Elohim
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Charleston, South Carolina
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26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
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Rabbi Michael A. Oppenheimer
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Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman
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70 Orchard Ave.
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Rabbi David H. Wice
Rodeph Shalom
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Rabbi Alan G. Weitzman
Temple Oheb Shalom
13th & Perkiomen Aven
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BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Arnold M. Shevlin
Temple B'nai B'rith
of Wilkes-Barre
408 Wyoming Ave.
Wilkes-Barre - Pa
18704

Rabbi Bertram W. Korn
Reform Keneseth Israel
Old York Road and Township Line
Elkins Park, Pennsylvania
19117

June 10, 1975

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. & Macomb St. , N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Josh:

The CCAR Committee on A Theology of Particularism will meet at 9:15 A. M. Monday morning, June 16, in a niche off the Continental Room of the Netherlands-Hilton Hotel. We will have lunch in Parlor B and remain there until we complete our work, hopefully by mid-afternoon. I look forward to seeing you then.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

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New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

The CCAR Committee on A Theology of Particularism will meet at 9:15 A. M. Monday morning, June 16, in a niche off the Continental Room of the Netherlands-Hilton Hotel. We will have lunch in Parlor B and remain there until we complete our work, hopefully by mid-afternoon. I look forward to seeing you then.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

THE EIGHTY-SIXTH

GET BACK

NOTE

Mike - cont. Room

Parker B

Annual Convention



CENTRAL CONFERENCE
of
AMERICAN RABBIS

WRITE About

Book in

NOTES

Netherland-Hilton Hotel

Cincinnati, Ohio

Sunday, June 15 through Thursday, June 19
1975-5735

Program

SUNDAY, JUNE 15

1:30 P.M.

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD JULEP ROOM

8:30 P.M.

CENTENARY SERVICE AT THE PLUM STREET TEMPLE

Processional

Invocation Lewis M. Barth

Worship Service A. Stanley Dreyfus
Jack Gottlieb

Participants Albert Goldman, Harold Hahn, Donald Splansky

Celebrating One Hundred Years Robert I. Kahn

The College - History and Responsibility Alfred Gottschalk

The Program Arthur J. Lelyveld

Azkarah Leon Feuer

In Memoriam: Sidney Ballon, Aryeh Lev, Charles Mantinband,
Myron Meyer, Max Nussbaum, Samuel Perlman, Max
Schenk, Nathaniel Share, Jacob Weinstein

Guest Cantors: Cantor Barbara Herman
Cantor Harold Orbach

Benediction Alexander M. Schindler

MONDAY, JUNE 16

8:30 A.M. HALL OF MIRRORS

Shaharit

LEADER, Bernard S. Frank
HAZAN, Z. David Levy

9:00 A.M. MEETINGS OF OPEN COMMITTEES

Art and Literature CONTINENTAL ROOM

Chaplaincy PARLOR B

Church and State PARLOR E

Continuing Education PARLOR F

Conversion PARLOR C

Family Life PARLOR M

Future of the Rabbinate PARLOR G

Jewish Organizations PARLOR D

Israel Commission PALM ROOM

Jews in Arab Lands SOUTH HALL

Justice and Peace PARLOR I

Liturgy and Worship PARLOR H

Reform Jewish Practice PARLOR L

Religious Education PARLOR O

Retirement PARLOR A

Soviet Jewry HALL OF MIRRORS

Unaffiliated HALL OF MIRRORS

Varieties of Rabbinic Experience PARLOR N

Youth SOUTH HALL

12:15 P.M.

ISRAEL BONDS LUNCHEON CONTINENTAL ROOM

Guest Speaker: H.E. Shaul Ramati,
The Ambassador of the State of Israel to Japan

1:30 P.M.

HALL OF MIRRORS

BUSINESS SESSION

President's Report Robert I. Kahn

Appointment of Committee on Committees

Executive Vice President Joseph B. Glaser

Conferring of Life Honorary Memberships Beryl D. Cohon,
Benjamin Kelson

Report of the Treasurer James A. Wax

Report of the Financial Secretary Harold Silver

Report of the Recording Secretary Wolli Kaelter

Placement Report Malcolm H. Stern,
David Jacobson

Rabbinical Pension Board Morton Applebaum

Rabbinic Tenure and Security Bruce Warshal

Rabbinic Population Charles A. Kroloff

Resolutions Hillel Cohn

2:30 P.M. SPOUSES' PROGRAM

HALL OF MIRRORS

The Rabbi's Spouse and Jewish Communal Life

4:15 P.M. SPOUSES' PROGRAM

A Discussion of *Widow: Loss and Renewal in the widowed,*
separated and divorced PARLOR N

Going Back to School and Work PARLOR O

Mincha

LEADER, Donald Gluckman
HAZAN, Robert Kravitz

8:30 P.M.

EVENING SESSION HALL OF MIRRORS

"Changing Models of the Synagogue and of the Rabbi's Role"
Alexander Schindler, Chairman; Rav Soloff, Harold Schulweiss

TUESDAY, JUNE 17

8:45 A.M. Buses to Hebrew Union College campus

9:30 A.M. CLASSROOM TORAH SESSIONS AT HUC

COURSE

ROOM NUMBER

"The Assertive Jew: New Texts on Jewish-Christian
Relations"--Michael Signor 7

"A 'blatt Gemara'--Study with the Expert"--Ben Zion Wacholder 12

"Afterlife in the Bible: A New Theory"--Chanan Brichto 2

"Current Options in Jewish Theology"--Eugene Borowitz 8/9

"The Changing Role of the Rabbi, from Medieval Times
to Today"--Ellis Rivkin Sisterhood Dorm,
Lounge C/D

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| "Apostasy"--Samuel Sandmel | 3 |
| "Unconventional Theologies in Medieval Piyyutim"-- Jakob Petuchowski | 10 |
| "The Holocaust in the Light of Responsa Literature"-- Alexander Guttman | 11 |
| "Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites!"--Michael Cook | Sisterhood Dorm Lounge B |
| "Law and Society in the Bible in the Ancient Near East"-- Samuel Greengus | Sisterhood Dorm, Lounge A |
| "Problems in American Jewish Identity"--Norman Mirsky | 4 |
| "Nahum, Habakuk, and Zephania"--David Weisberg | 5 |
| "Classical Hebrew and Israeli Hebrew: A Comparison"-- Werner Weinberg | 1 |
| "New Concepts and Sources in Music for the American Congregation"--Bonia Shur | B-23 |

9:30 A.M. SPOUSES' PROGRAM

Bloch Auditorium

Feminism and Jewish Feminism

11:30 A.M.

FORMAL REDEDICATION OF THE RECONSTRUCTED COLLEGE CHAPEL

Chanan Brichto, Uri Herscher, Alfred Gottschalk

Music Program by Bonia Shur

12:15 P.M.

Tour of campus
Buffet Luncheon
Buses back to the hotel

2:30 P.M.

PAVILLON CAPRICE

BUSINESS SESSION

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Greetings from the UAHC | <i>Alexander Schindler</i> |
| Greetings from the World Union | <i>David Wice</i> |
| Greetings from South Africa | <i>Anthony D. Holz</i> |
| Greetings from South America | <i>Henry Sobel</i> |
| Greetings from the Rabbinical Assembly | <i>Mordecai Waxman</i> |
| Report of Liturgy Committee | <i>A. Stanley Dreyfus</i> |
| Report of Nominations Committee | <i>Paul Gorin</i> |

ELECTIONS

Resolutions

2:30 P.M. SPOUSES' PROGRAM

Bus tour of Cincinnati
Sherry Hour at Taft Museum

Mincha

*LEADER, Matthew Derby
HAZAN, Laszlo Berkowitz*

8:00 P.M.

EVENING SESSION HALL OF MIRRORS

Introduction of the new President Robert I. Kahn

8:30 P.M.

“Preparation for the Rabbinate--Yesterday and Tomorrow”

Chairman: Sheldon Blank
Panel: Meyer Heller, '50
Alan Sokobin, '55
Max Hausen, '50
Richard Levy, '64
Sally Preisand, '72

Experiential Snaring Groups

| <u>LEADER</u> | <u>FACULTY</u> | | <u>RECORDER</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| David Shor C '37 | Samuel Sandmel | Richard Zionts | PARLOR A |
| Judah Cahn N '39 | Norman Mirsky | Leo Wolkow | PARLOR G |
| Joshua Haberman C '45 | Alexander Guttman | Leonard Winograd | PARLOR H |
| Alfred Goodman, N '45 | Kenneth Ehrlich | Morton Kaplan | PARLOR I |
| Louis Frishman C '52 | Leonard Kravitz | David M. Zielonka | PARLOR E + F |
| Arnold Shevlin N '50 | Stanley Chyet | Hirshel Jaffe | PARLOR L |
| Isaac Neuman C '60 | Steven Passamaneck | Robert Benjamin | PARLOR M |
| Edwin Soslow N '64 | Edward Goldman | Allen Freehling | PARLOR N |
| Raymond Zwerin C '64 | Sylvan Schwartzman | Terry Bard | PARLOR O |
| Bruce S. Block C '69 | Michael Cook | Philip Aronson | PARLOR C + D |

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

8:30 A.M.

HALL OF MIRRORS

Shanarit

LEADER, David Lefkowitz, Jr.
HAZAN, Howard Greenstein

9:00 A.M. Continuation of Torah Sessions

| <u>COURSE</u> | <u>ROOM</u> |
|--|--------------------|
| “The Assertive Jew” | PARLOR A |
| “A blatt Gemara” | PARLOR B |
| “Afterlife in the Bible” | PARLOR F |
| “Current Options in Jewish Theology” | SOUTH EXHIBIT HALL |
| “Changing Role of the Rabbi” | PARLOR L |
| “Apostasy” | PARLOR H |
| “Unconventional Theologies in Medieval Piyyutim” | PARLOR I |
| “The Holocaust in Responsa Literature” | PALM ROOM |
| “Scribes and Pharisees” | PARLOR M |
| “Law and Society in the Bible” | PARLOR D |
| “American Jewish Identity” | PARLOR N |
| “Nahum, Habakuk and Zephania” | PARLOR O |
| “Concepts and Sources in Music” | CONTINENTAL ROOM |
| “Classical Hebrew and Israeli Hebrew” | JULEP ROOM |

9:00 A.M. SPOUSES' PROGRAM
A. "The Rabbi's Family in a Small Town"HALL OF MIRRORS
B. "Tax Laws and the Clergy" PARLOR G

10:00 A.M. SPOUSES' PROGRAM
A. "Genetics: Tay-Sachs, etc." HALL OF MIRRORS
B. "Is There a 'Jewish' Art?" PARLOR G

11:00 A.M.
BUSINESS SESSIONHALL OF MIRRORS

Jewish Organizations David Polish
Commission on Education - A multi-media presentation
Daniel Syme, Abraham Segal, Ralph Davis

Resolutions

1:00 P.M. PAVILLON CAPRICE
HUC-JIR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON
Presiding: Alvan Rudin
Address: Alfred Gottschalk
Presentation of distinguished alumnus of the year awards to:
Alfred J. Feldman
Jacob Philip Rudin

8:00 P.M.
EVENING SESSION HALL OF MIRRORS

Maariv LEADER, Jonathan Eichhorn
HAZAN, Albert Plotkin

"Religious Discipline and Liberal Judaism"
Chairman: Bernard Martin
Papers: W. Gunther Plaut
Eugene Mihaly
Response: Jack Stern

THURSDAY, JUNE 19

8:30 A.M. HALL OF MIRRORS

Shaharit LEADER, Adam Fisher
HAZAN, Lewis Littman

9:00 A.M. Continuation of Torah Sessions (Same Rooms)

9:00 A.M. SPOUSES' PROGRAM HALL OF MIRRORS

Discussion group on contemporary American/Jewish Literature

Evaluation of Spouses' Program

11:00 A. M. BUSINESS SESSION HALL OF MIRRORS

Greetings from Israel
Introduction Leon Kronish
Youth Programs in IsraelDr. Michael Langer
Special Message Joshua Siskin

1:30 P.M. HALL OF MIRRORS

BUSINESS SESSION

ResolutionsHillel Cohn

Constitutional Amendment

Mincha

LEADER, Edward L. Cohn
HAZAN, Wolli Kaelter

7:00 P.M.

EVENING SESSION HALL OF MIRRORS

DINNER TRIBUTE TO MALCOLM STERN:
AN EVENING OF FUN AND NOSTALGIA

Jacob R. Marcus, Master of Ceremonies
Tribute, David Jacobson
Presentation, Abram Vossen Goodman
Response, Malcolm H. Stern

"A Potpourri of Purim Plays" -- Honoring our teachers
on the occasion of the College's Centennial
Samuel Sandmel, Coordinator

Concluding Benediction and Adjournment

FRIDAY, JUNE 20

9:00 A.M.

JULEP ROOM

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

OFFICERS
1974-1975

HONORARY PRESIDENT
JULIAN MORGENSTERN

PRESIDENT
ROBERT I. KAHN

VICE PRESIDENT
ARTHUR J. LELYVELD

TREASURER
JAMES A. WAX

RECORDING SECRETARY
WOLLI KAEALTER

FINANCIAL SECRETARY
HAROLD S. SILVER

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
JOSEPH B. GLASER

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT EMERITUS
SIDNEY L. REGNER

EXECUTIVE BOARD

1973-1975

Howard Bogot
Samuel Broude
Alfred Friedman
Hillel Gamoran
Harold Krantzler

Daniel Polish
David Polish
Emanuel Rose
Harry Roth
Selig Salkowitz

1974-1976

Herbert Baumgard
Alan Bregman
Israel Dresner
Paul Gorin

Lawrence Hoffman
Richard Israel
Elijah Palnick
Michael Stroh

Arnold Task

Ex Officio

Alfred Gottschalk
Richard G. Hirsch

Alexander M. Schindler
Malcolm H. Stern

Moses Cyrus Weiler

WOODLANDS COMMUNITY TEMPLE

50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607
(914) LY 2-7070

RABBI PETER RUBINSTEIN

June 11, 1975
2 Tammuz 5735

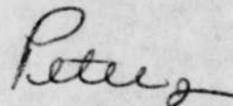
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Daniel:

My travel plans to Cincinnati have changed and I now plan to fly in early Monday morning arriving at 9:46 A.M. I will take a cab directly to the meeting and hope to be there on time. I may be a few minutes late, but please know that I will be there as soon as I can.

I look forward to seeing you.

Cordially,



Peter J. Rubinstein, Rabbi

PJR/jm

The Task Force of Jewish Identity held an organizational meeting in February and a second meeting at the Conference. Our mandate is to encourage a re-examination of the "whys" of Jewish identity, the "oughts" of Jewish survival, by our colleagues. There is a shared feeling among many that liberal Judaism traditionally has emphasized the universal themes at the expense of the particular. We want to know if this is true. We want to investigate whether our attitudes are being translated effectively to our congregants.

Our first problem is one of description. There are many impressions abroad about the thrust of liberal Jewish thought but little hard information. At our first meeting Committee members undertook to prepare descriptive studies on such various areas as Confirmation services, school curricula and the pulpit to see what signals were being flown. Drafts of these presentations were presented in June and our hope is that these studies will find their way to our colleagues through the CCAR Journal, mimeographed releases and symposia at regional conferences.

We have no ideological axe to grind. We are not attempting to write a platform. Our task is one of theological consciousness-raising. We are in the initial stages of planning a conference which will deal with the theology of chosenness and Jewish Survival.

July 23, 1975

Rabbi Bruce S. Warshal
~~2420 Mershea Road~~
~~Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103~~

*Touro Synagogue
1501 General Pershing Ave
New Orleans, La.*

Dear Bruce:

Forgive my delay in summing up our June meeting. I am head over heels in a mortgage reduction drive and the other things which keep a congregation going.

I am pleased to report that the piece on Confirmation has been redone and submitted to the CGAR Journal. I have also written a brief summary of our activities for inclusion in the Conference Yearbook. A copy of it is enclosed.

I would like to know how each of you is proceeding with your assignments. Josh, you said something about mailing to us the theological material which you had prepared. Shelly and Peter were going to tape a lay-rabbinic conference. I am wondering how that project is proceeding. If you have material that you want to circulate I will be happy to xerox it and get it out for you. In the meantime, I am trying to formulate a list of people who could provide the intellectual content of our proposed colloquium. I will have some suggestions in the mail by the end of the summer.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

July 24, 1975

Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein
Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, N. Y. 10607

Dear Peter:

Forgive my delay in summing up our June meeting. I am head over heels in a mortgage reduction drive and the other things which keep a congregation going.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

July 24, 1975

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman
Massachusetts Ave. & Macomb St. , N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Josh:

Forgive my delay in summing up our June meeting. I am head over heels in a mortgage reduction drive and the other things which keep a congregation going.

I am pleased to report that the piece on Confirmation has been redone and submitted to the CCAR Journal. I have also written a brief summary of our activities for inclusion in the Conference Yearbook. A copy of it is enclosed.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

July 24, 1975

Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman
Central Synagogue
123 East 55th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Shelly:

Forgive my delay in summing up our June meeting. I am head over heels in a mortgage reduction drive and the other things which keep a congregation going.

I am pleased to report that the piece on Confirmation has been redone and submitted to the CCAR Journal. I have also written a brief summary of our activities for inclusion in the Conference Yearbook. A copy of it is enclosed.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp
Encl.

WASHINGTON HEBREW CONGREGATION

Massachusetts Avenue and Macomb Street, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016

JOSHUA O. HABERMAN, D. H. L.
Senior Rabbi

September 4, 1975

Dear Danny,

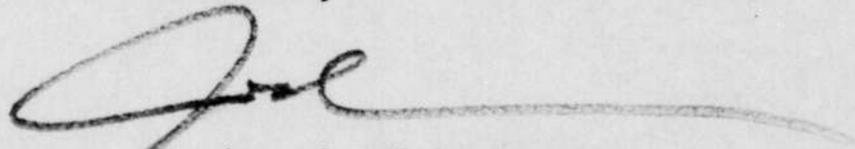
I found your letter of July 24th on my recent return from Jerusalem. Many thanks also for the reprints of your articles which I very greatly appreciated.

I still intend to write a brief analysis of various theological approaches to Jewish ethnicity in major Jewish theologians of the 19th century. I don't want to be bound by a deadline but shall give it priority at the earliest opportunity.

I had an extremely exciting and productive month in Jerusalem. It was great to see our three grandchildren and to participate in the installation of my son-in-law, Mayer Perelmuter, as the new Rabbi of the Reform congregation in Ramat Gan, where he is replacing Tuvia Ben-Chorin. I also did some translating from the writings of Salomon Ludwig Steinheim, an intellectual giant among our 19th century theologians who, unfortunately, has remained virtually unknown in the English-speaking world, perhaps because none of his work has ever been translated.

I hope to be in touch with you soon again. Meanwhile, warmest greetings and best wishes for the New Year from house to house.

As ever,



Joshua O. Haberman

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

January, 1973

Please return to A.I.L.

A DISTINCTIVE VALUE-STANCE

Arthur Lelyveld

connected ✓

Essay prepared for UATC memorial
volume to honor Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath;
(12/74)

"What need is there to be Jewish?" is not a question that was asked by our great-grandfathers. They took their identity for granted as they took for granted the special role which that identity imposed upon them. It was their obligation to study Torah and to live by its demands in order to perfect the world into the image of God's Kingship. This was no more to be questioned than the regularity of the natural order was to be questioned. Indeed, they said in response to a peculiarity in a verse from Zechariah, "Just as the world could not exist without the four winds, so the world could not exist without Israel." *

That sense of being necessary to the world has now been lost by multitudes of Jews. By some it is offered as a reason for defection from the Jewish people, while ^{for} others it is an argument for secular nationalism. A generation ago, it was a debating point favored by some Zionist theoreticians in combatting what was then characterized as the "mission theory" of Reform Judaism. Mission for what? they asked. Love, justice, peace, concern for fellow-man were commonly held "Western humanistic values." Prophetic Judaism, they said, is informed by

* Ta'anith, 3b

A DISTINCTIVE VALUE-STANCE

-2-

values that have become universal. They needed no reason to survive as a Jew. That was the natural right of a normal human being to be himself. The same point of view is expressed today by the secular, pragmatic Jew whose sense of identity is strong and who feels under no compulsion to justify it.

The other side of the coin is the response of young Jews, reputedly not few in number, who use the alleged absence of a functional or instrumental reason for Jewishness as a rationale for their indifference to it. Indeed, reflecting on this phenomenon, Martin Buber* held that the query, "Why remain Jewish?" is the most serious question we have to ask. The question was serious to Buber not because he himself had any doubt about the importance to mankind of what he called "the total inherited 'ought' of the group of which I am a part" but because so many were asking it. His own academic colleagues at the Hebrew University were debating the question, "He-od y'hudim anachnu? -- Are we still Jews?" and among those whose answer was negative "the inherited 'ought'" was in jeopardy.

The question of whether or not there are distinctive Jewish values which make our survival imperative is therefore a serious correlative question. Buber held that we would be able to hold our youth only if "there is present the content and meaning of an experience for the fulfilment and realization of which, the life of the Jewish person in its essentially Jewish aspects is preferable to and

more worthy than any alternative form of life." He added that the youth of the

*In an address at the Hebrew University in 1953 on the occasion of his receiving an honorary degree. See Maurice Friedman, Congress Bi-Weekly, XXXIV:8, April 17, 1967 p. 18. See also The Reconstructionist, XIX:10, June 26, 1953, p. 29

A DISTINCTIVE VALUE-STANCE

Diaspora Jewish communities "finds no spiritual satisfaction in the slogan 'A nation lives for the sake of living and for that only'...rather, they wish everyone of them to feel the values inherent in living as a responsible person."⁹

The question is also serious for its own sake and because of the need for clarity; not because a rationally convincing demonstration of our uniqueness will necessarily win back those who are parting from us. Acceptance or rejection of self has roots that are not usually reached by logical discourse - but since persuasion and gentle argumentation have been known to open the door to more profound insights, a proper defense of the conviction that we are needed by mankind and that in fact we are the bearer of particular Jewish gifts may have some measure of usefulness.

We ought, therefore, to return the challenge and ask whether we can legitimately speak of 'Western humanistic values.' Even if values were merely words, or 'value-terms', their identity in different cultures would be doubtful. 'Love' and 'liebe' and 'amour' are not wholly interchangeable vocables and 'Jesus loves me' signalizes an outlook entirely different from 'Ahavat olam bet Yisrael am-cha sheyts -- with everlasting love hast Thou loved the house of Israel, Thy people, in that Thou hast taught us Torah and commandments, statutes and ordinances' -- for God's love in Judaism is always closely tied to God's

demands upon us.^{**} Because the word 'love' has had this special meaning among others in Jewish thought, ^{non-Jews have} it has rarely been properly understood ^{the way it functions} as a divine attribute ^{EDM} by non-Jews. Like the love of father and son it has signified that

*Loc. cit. p.30

**cf Deuteronomy VI:2ff

A DISTINCTIVE VALUE-STANCE

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obedience which results from a relationship of respect and affection and it does not evoke that Christian image of 'The Law' which means the kind of authority that engenders repression and denial. ¶ The fact that values are not words is borne out by the fact that even today we can say 'peace' when there is no peace, that we can talk of love and reconciliation even as we drop ~~our~~ our bombs on innocent civilians. Our values are evidenced in what we do, not in what we say. Our values are shared when we find allies in practical programs of action.

We misuse the word 'value' when as in a plea to "remain true to our highest values" we make it appear to be synonymous with the word 'ideal'. Values are the complex factors that determine our judgements, the choices we make and the objectives we pursue. "Justice" is not a value; our values will determine what we mean when we say "justice" and will effectively shape our behavior with respect to "justice".

To define value as arising out of self-interest, as that which satisfies a want or a need is to ignore the search for normative values and to court moral anarchy. Normative values arise out of what Henry Margenau calls a sense of "antecedent command", out of the propulsive power of the "ought" rather than out of the desire to satisfy a 'want'. *

Such normative value is a group-phenomenon generated within the historic experience of persisting communities which achieve, refine and recurrently renew their commitments in a continuity of dedicated search. All the high religions of mankind might be included in this category and each has been the source of normative value. But to a Jew who knows his history and traditions the sense

* See Margenau's essay in New Knowledge of Human Values, ed. Abraham Maslow. N.Y. Harper. 1959. p. 42.

A DISTINCTIVE VALUE-STANCE

-5-

of a distinctive career of stubborn dedication in our own people must arise with impressive power. For almost four thousand years we have sought to define and fulfill a covenant task which is related to nothing smaller than the obligation "to perfect the world into the Kingship of God". In that millennial effort we have developed a complex of inhibitions, compulsions, enthusiasms and abhorrences which characterize us as a group and add up to a distinctive value-stance.

"Stance" is essentially a physical term. It is most commonly used in the terminology of sport: stance is the way a batter or a golfer places his feet and positions his body. Related to the Italian "stanze" it has also meant a stopping-place, a station or position. Here I use it to mean the psychological or spiritual position in which we receive or approach that which is presented to us. Just as a golfer's stance will determine the direction his ball will take, whether he will hook or slice or hit it down the middle, so one's mental or characterological stance will determine one's consequent action. The value-stance will determine the nature of one's value-choices.

The use of the term 'stance' contains more than an analogy. Contemporary psychologists have been exploring the way in which physical and even muscular reactions affect emotional reactions. A 'motor attitude akin to posture' precedes the feeling or complex of feeling which then conditions consequent actions. First, we tense our muscles and assume an aggressive or defensive stance, and then we feel "anger" or "fear". * Similarly, responses that may be labeled emotive or valuational or cultural proceed from a posture that has been conditioned by experience or early environmental influence. This is the kind of stance we refer to when we speak of a 'disposition' - as when we would

*See Nina Bull, The Attitude Theory of Emotion, New York, 1951. This description of the order of human responses finds support in its particular manifestation in Jewish thought, as evidenced by the dynamic nature of the Hebrew language whose basic roots are found in verbs connoting action. See Thorleif Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek. Phil: Westminster Press, 1960. p. 27f. This expresses a mode of thinking illustrated, Boman says, by "the praying Orthodox Jew" (ibid. p. 205) who prays with all his "bones". (Ps 55:10)

A DISTINCTIVE VALUE-STANCE

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say, 'He has a disposition to receive all men cheerfully.' Even the adjectives we use reflect the imagery, and possibly more than imagery, of 'stance'. We speak, for example, of individuals who are 'open', receptive to whatever may come their way, in contrast to those who are 'closed off', bound up in themselves and unresponsive to others.

Generations of Jewish experience have developed a distinctive value-stance that exists independently of the value-terms used to describe it. The value-terms, however, play a crucial role. In giving linguistic expression to a value-stance which is itself the end-product of group experience, they help shape the stance, give it continuity, and facilitate its transmission to succeeding generations. The words or the concepts are, Max ^{Kadushin} Kadushin has told us 'Indeterminate' and 'incompletely defined. This is an inevitable consequence of the fact that the values which they seek to evoke will be actualized only in the responses of individual members of the group. Kadushin speaks of a value-pattern or value-complex which is 'organismic' in nature and bears the 'imprint of personality'.** The terms, which Kadushin calls 'value-concepts' are ancillary to the personality, itself evoked by the stance. As Kadushin puts it, 'The value-concept is often imbedded in its concretizations, whether in speech or action, and there is no need for the conceptual term to serve as label.'

This conclusion is verified again and again in experience. There are Jews, for example -- as there are Christians within the variety of value-stances which

*The Rabbinic Mind. New York. The Jewish Theological Seminary of America. 1952, p2ff
**Op. Cit. pp 28, 119, 131

Kind of stance we refer to when we speak of a 'disposition' -- as when we would

Kind 5011, The Attitude Theory of Gestalt, New York, 1951

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that word evokes -- who have forgotten or who have never known the value-terms and yet who display the stance in greater or in lesser degree. I met young Jews in the civil rights movement who had never heard of the "tsela elohim" or of "Kiddush ha-chaim" but who were in Mississippi in numbers far greater than could have been projected from percentage population figures or other statistical factors. The majority of them rejected the synagogue and Jewish organizational life and they in most cases were unaware of the relevance of the Jewish value-tradition to what they were doing. They came out of homes in which the forms and symbols which we associate with abiding Jewishness were absent, but in which a revulsion to the humiliation or mistreatment of other human beings was present. The value-stance, even if attenuated, persisted into the third generation.

Without reference to the value-terms we are able to describe certain forms of conduct as 'unjewish', or to say 'This is not what a Jew does'. An anecdote about Walter Rathenau has him telling Albert Einstein, "if a Jew tells you he hunts with pleasure, he lies or he has ceased to be a Jew". This statement is not vitiated by the fact that we can today "boast" of an increase in the number of Jewish hunters just as we can point to an increase in the number of Jewish alcoholics. If Jews hunt, it is part of the process of acculturation. If they hunt 'with pleasure' they are in this respect completely acculturated. Cock-fighting and bear-baiting which were considered amusements in the neighboring Gentile world were repulsive to Jews. Those who have been its victims know how easily bigotry in certain culture-groups may move from hatred to violent assault. But even bigoted Jews are aware of the 'unjewish' quality of violence.* It is 'not Jewish' even when it is Jews who practice it. I once witnessed a street

*"Ancient HENZOGS with their psalms and their shawls and beads would never have touched a
* Violence was for the goy," says Saul Bellow's hero in HENZOG.
(Fairfax Post-Zionist, p 349f.)*

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fight between two North African Jews in Jerusalem and heard an Israeli friend who described himself as 'non-religious' and who presumably rejected the shtetl image of the Jew, describe the conduct of the street-brawlers as 'not Jewish'.

Not every Jew who recoils from bloodshed has heard of "sh'fichut damim" but his abhorrence is part of a stance to which he need not give verbal or even conscious expression. Nor is it necessary that Jews who are repelled by a bull-fight or a bloody fist-fight know the value-term tse-er baale chaim, a feeling into the pain of living creatures, or the concept of rachmimut, that special kind of compassion which describes the Jewish response.

It is significant that each of the Hebrew terms I have just used must be rendered into English by an incomplete circumlocution. This is the "indeterminacy" of which Kadushin speaks. The words are 'multisignitive'.* All words that deal with value or relationship are what Susanne Langer calls "charged symbols", in itself an apt expression for these words are charged in the same way an electric battery is charged; they are filled by experience in the dynamic history of usage with layer upon layer of associations.** And each word in each language builds its own associations. This is why Kadosh is not 'holy', as Mitzvah is not 'command' and derech eretz is not 'good manners.'. The word 'holy' evokes associations that are Christian and Anglo-Saxon: praying hands, church, Gothic vaulting, black gams, quiet, cult-objects. The word Kadosh in contrast brings to mind the word kiddush with its aura of joy and its relationship to kiddush hashem

*The term is introduced by Philip Wheelwright in his important work The Burning Fountain (Univ. of Indiana Press: 1954) who distinguishes -- meaningfully for our thesis -- between "expressive" or "depth" language and "steno-language". Steno-language is essential to discourse that deals with facts or process. Values can be expressed only in depth language.)

**For Dr. Langer it is only these "charged symbols" that deserve to be called "true language" which only begins "when sound keeps its reference beyond the situation of its instinctive utterance." See Philosophy in a New Key, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942, Chap. V, "Language", p. 103ff.

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and Kiddush ha-chaim which can only mean falling life with the Divine Presence as it is found in harmonious relationship.* The distinctiveness of the word is heightened, not reduced, by the fact that it retains its older and even its more primitive layers of meaning. There is still something of separation, cult and tabu in the word kedosh but its transformation from an untouchable awesome power into a universal Presence evoked by righteousness and respect for life ** is what gives the term its special character and makes it impossible to find an exact equivalent vocable for it in any other tongue. Since the insight that such words are "charged symbols" is valid for all languages, the Italian proverb is inevitably correct: ~~XXXXXXXX~~ "Traductor! traidor! -- translators are traitors."

Thus language, in itself inescapably distinctive, plays a crucial role in the religio-cultural continuum in which a distinctive value-stance is both generated and transmitted. The Jewish continuum is rich in such cluster-words originating in Hebrew and preserved in their Hebrew forms in every jargon that Jews have spoken. In Judaeo-Spanish as well as in Yiddish the words for human relationships and for value-concepts are almost invariably by preference and tradition the original Hebrew terms. To the extent that the distinctive language continuity is lost in contemporary American English or in contemporary Israeli Hebrew, the distinctive value-stance must eventually be weakened. It may persist environmentally for a generation or two but without the re-enforcement provided by the "charged symbols" its future would be in doubt.

The late Hayim Greenberg expressed this thought with characteristic per-

* See the writer's Atheism is Dead, N.Y. World Publishing Co., 1968. Chapter IX, p129ff
p-129ff.

** See Isaiah VI: 2ff

ceptiveness, at the same time that he correctly distinguished between designative and expressive language when he said, "...a Jew who carries all the plants in Israel in Hebrew, or call all the parts of a tractor or some other complicated machine by their correct designations (in new Hebrew coinages) possesses one qualification for useful service in the State of Israel... But if he does not know to their deepest sounding and in their context of spiritual tensions such Hebrew expressions as mitzvah, everah, Gouleh, tikkun, tum'ah, taharah, yirah, shayah, tsedakah, hesed, masirut nefesh, kiddush ha-Shem, d'vekut, teshuvah, he cannot carry a part in that choir that gives voice, consciously or not, to what I have called 'the Jewish melody!' These, he adds, are the 'powers that build a Jewish personality.' *

These are the "untranslatables" and the list of them can be extended to include some of even greater importance that are today still part of the vocabulary of non-aculturated Jews. We can begin by adding such cluster-words as

*Hayim Greenberg Anthology, ed. by Marie Syrkin. Detroit, Wayne State Univ. Press. 1968. p. 178

Rahmanut or rahamim is another cluster-word that is invariably short-changed in translation. It means much more than 'mercy' or 'compassion'. Related in its origin to the word 'reham', 'womb', it carries within its various forms a feeling of that yearning tenderness that characterizes a mother's relationship to her new-born child. Rahamim is compassion plus love; it is the source of forgiveness and of understanding. We have delighted through many centuries in calling ourselves 'rahamim b'ne rahmanim', practitioners of rahamim who are the children of practitioners of rahamim. The same relationship of tender parental love is imbedded in the fact that rahamim is regarded as one of the attributes of God; His justice is tempered by the fact that errant man is His own child.

The quality of rahamim is associated by the Talmud (Yebamot 79a) with the quality of bayy'shanut, a kind of modest restraint, and of being a gamel hesed, one who performs acts of lovingkindness. These, we are told, are the qualities for which "the seed of Israel is renowned."^{*}

Even rendering the word hesed as "lovingkindness" as does an injustice to a term which is richly complex, a true cluster-word. It, too, is an attribute of God (Exodus 34:6) distinguished from rahamim but linked with it in a manner that takes its original basic meaning of faithfulness in a covenant relationship and infuses it with compassion and a sense of intimate reciprocity. Hesed is something you do to someone or keep with someone and it elicits a sense of love or kindness combined with integrity. (Genesis 24:49, 32:11; 11 Samuel 9:3))

^{*}See Hebrew Ethical Wills, ed. Israel Abrahams. Philadelphia Jewish Publications Society of America, 1948, Vol II p.227

"In Hosea," says Nelson Glueck, "hesed is a lofty concept, highly refined in the heart of the prophet... The word hesed signifies man's readiness for mutual aid stemming from a pure love of humanity..."

The new note in Hosea is his conviction that in the midst of his anger God may be smitten with love and compassion. Hosea pictures God as taking back his erring wife (Israel) and saying, "I will betroth you unto Me forever... In hesed and in rahamim ... and you ^{shall} (intimately) know the Lord." (Hos. 11:21)

Hesed, therefore, from Hosea on includes that layer of meaning expressed as faithful, reciprocal, compassionate love. In its developed sense, it participates in the characteristics of what Christian tradition calls "grace". But it can be present in human relationships as well, conditioning the individual's ability to respond. In this aspect, hesed represents a stance that makes possible what Buber came to call "dialogue". It is the major ingredient of fulfilled relationship in those two aspects of man's ^{RESPONSE} responsibility that embrace the Jewish sense of responsibility: beyn adam l'chavairo, between man and his fellowman, where it is expressed in g'milut chasadim, freely offered acts of lovingkindness; and beyn adam la-makon, between man and God, where it is found in the loving, reciprocal faithfulness of the Covenant.

Another influential "untranslatable" has its origin in a pun. In the Bible, derech comes from a root meaning "to tread" or "to journey" and its basic connotation is "way" in the sense of direction. The phrase "derech kol ha-aretz" signifies the natural lot of all men (e.g. death, Joshua 23:14) or the normal

manner of men (e.g. sexual activity, Genesis 19:31). The two-word phrase derech eretz occurs in the Biblical assertion that God did not lead the children of Israel out of Egypt "by way of the land of the Philistines" (Exodus 13:17) but this phrase is homiletically interpreted by the rabbis to mean that God did not conduct himself in the normal or usual way -- k'derech kol ha-aretz -- with respect to the Israelites (Midrash Rabba ed. loc.) Derech eretz in its post-Biblical usage comes to mean that which is generally done; then, later, that which is conventionally or properly done, namely, simple good manner^s such as inquiring after the welfare of one's hostess (T. Baba Metzia 87a), minding the propriety of one's speech, eating and dressing decently. Ultimately, however, derech eretz comes to contain a significant part of the total Jewish value-stance, a constellation of ideas which have their foundation in an attitude toward others the chief quality of which may be described as "sensitivity". Here, too, there is an almost physical counterpart, a posture evoked by the term which signifies reverence for all life and openness to its possibilities. Derech Eretz is more than "respect" - it involves a deep consideration of one's fellow-man's feelings such as should be evoked by encounter with "the Image of God" in man. Therefore, it means not only appropriate demeanor to parents and teachers and consideration for one's spouse, but also an attitude which shows consideration for all men, receives them with cheerfulness, puts their needs ahead of one's own and recognizes that the shaming or humiliation of anyone is the most heinous departure from derech eretz.

One additional example of an analytic approach that can be applied to hundreds

of value-terms* is in what we may learn by studying the most popular of Hebrew words, shalom. Unlike the English word 'peace' it does not mean absence of conflict or undisturbed quiet. It has a much more positive ring. From its root meaning it connotes wholeness or soundness or health. Just as the contemporary Israeli says, "How are you?" by inquiring "What is your shalom?" so Joseph asked his brothers (Genesis 43:27) "Is your father shalom?" and the Psalmist complains, "There is no shalom in my bones." (Psa.38:4) What the word refers to in these contexts is the total welfare of the individual. Indeed, in what seems paradoxical to us, David inquiring as to how a battle is going asks about "the shalom of the war"!

Shalom is a positive state in which harmony is found in soundness of relationship. It is achieved through Torah, God's teachings, all of whose paths are shalom; it is achieved through ts'daka, righteous action, the result of which is shalom. (Prov. 3:17; Isaiah 32:17) Therefore, we are enjoined to be "lovers of shalom and pursuers of shalom" (Avot 1, 12), seeking it at home and pursuing it elsewhere (B'midbar Rabba XIX,27, citing Psalm 34:14). It is the greatest of blessings, since it contains all other blessings within it and therefore is the "seal" of the priestly benediction (Numers 6:26).

The building of healthy, harmonious relationships expressed in shalom is the highest of human values. Even truth may be sacrificed to insure shalom. The tradition gives several quaint illustrations for this contention: Joseph's

*On K'dusha see the writer's "Atheism is Dead", pp131-137, and on mitzva, ibid pp164-170 - World Publishing, New York, 1968

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brothers make up out of whole cloth the story that Jacob had commanded them to tell Joseph that he should forgive the wrong they had done him (Genesis 50:16f) ^{; Devarim Rabba 5:15} but this is condoned mip'ney darchey shalom, for the sake of peace; more dramatic, in that even God bends the truth a little mip'ney darchey shalom, ^{is this incident, --} when He tells Abraham that Sarah laughed at the prophecy that she would bear a child because she thought that she was too old, when what she had just said was that Abraham was also too old (Genesis 18:cf verse 12 with verse 13. and B'nesht H'resh Rabba: 48:18 ad loc.; Devarim Rabba V, 15)

These are more than quaint. They give us an insight into that value-relativism that informs rabbinic casuistry and marks the Jewish value-stance. Values in the limited capacity for judgement which is man's lot must often conflict one with another. We may project the idea of absolute values but in our terrestrial dealings the value-terms are inevitably marked by what ^{Max Kadushin} ~~Justice~~ has called "Indeterminacy". Truth and peace conflict and a choice must be made; rahamim conflicts with justice to create such tensions that we may even imagine the Master of the Universe being torn between them, praying (sic!) "May my rahamim be victorious over my quality of din (strict justice)." (Berachot 7a) Indeed, one perceptive ^{stage} reads ^{the} ~~that~~ famous question which Abraham puts to God, as a declarative statement: "The Judge of all the earth shall not do justice" for if He did, the world would be unable to stand. (Genesis 18:25 and B'nesht H'resh Rabba ^{49:9} ad. loc.) It may be said, then, that all rabbinic ethics is "situational" for every case and problem must be considered in itself with all its complexity and conflicting values which must be weighed. ^{*} The Jewish value-stance is marked then by a certain flexibility which flows not from a rejection of norms but from a recognition that values which have the character of absolutes function with differing ^{Emphases} ~~emphasis~~ in differing circumstances.

* The Talmud (Shabbat 10a, Sanhedrin 7a) praises judges who render a "true judgement in its truth (l'amito)". Commentators have interpreted the seemingly superfluous "l'amito" to mean that every judgement must take into consideration the situation, i.e. "the time and the place".

Perspective determines not only appearance but also time and structure in the physical world; perspective also creates a kind of value-relativity. This insight is deeply related to the special Jewish gift for paradox: Akiba's "Everything is foreseen, and yet there is freedom..."; and Hillel's "If I am not for myself, who will be for me; but if I am for myself alone what am I?" are but two examples of a host of responses to the reality of "life as it is lived" where, Martin Buber has taught us, the unity of the contraries is encountered again and again. We must walk the "narrow ridge" in many of the value-areas into which we must venture: between personal authenticity and irresponsible individualism; between a relationship of integrity to the truth as we experience it and an absolutism that becomes rigid and doctrinaire.

Admittedly, then, this introduces an element of uncertainty - but why should the spiritual world be less uncertain than the physical? We can affirm that there are absolute values that make a claim upon us, fashion our stance and give us some anchorage for our ideals as we make our choices, without claiming that we fully comprehend those absolutes or understand how they function. There are physical laws that govern the behavior of particles but they have not been fully explicated or understood.

It is, however, this very "indeterminacy" that leads me to opt for a concept of value-stance. Our decision-making is not rigidly foreordained but the manner in which we approach our problem-situations, the nature of our response to our fellows, and the seriousness with which we take the demands made upon us by Ultimate Reality add up to a total ethical posture which is distinctively Jewish. Those demands, or to use Henry Margenau's term, "value-commands", do have the character of absolutes. The indeterminacy is present in our own fallible capacity to make judgements in complex human situations where values seem to be in conflict. This is where the entire gestalt takes charge and where the Jew who is still

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responsive to it is guided by rahamim, derech eretz and that word precious in its Yiddish incarnation, yosher, a striving for a balanced and respectful decision as part of the quest for shalom.

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MORE

The idea of value-stance also mitigates the problem of validation which besets modern value-philosophy. The Jewish stance is ^{Shaped} shaped by a self-image which in turn is defined by covenant 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not'. The 'mitzvot' are the 'value-commands' and validation is found in experiencing the rightness of the responses, re-enforcing the self-image and the stance which it engenders. Validation in this context cannot mean determining whether the 'values' are objectively 'true' or 'correct' nor can it mean determining that they 'work'. Indeed, if we are to judge by practical results or physical security they often failed to work. In the millennial experience of the Jewish people, the stance has brought suffering or led those who portray it to the brink of despair as often as it has given them a sense of worth and a conviction of role. The stance has been moulded and confirmed by emunah: Jewish persistence in viewing themselves as under a covenant which left them no alternative. The Jewish stance is thus undergirded by a set of beliefs about the nature of the universe and the Jew's role in it that has made it possible for him to say, in the most incredibly difficult circumstances, 'Ashrenu! Mah tov belkenu!-- We are happy! How good our portion is!'

The fact that beliefs eventuate in a value-stance which leads to action helps us understand why beliefs are frequently crucial determinants in social or historical processes. They are not 'like the whistle on the locomotive' just unimportant by-products of other mechanisms. Rather, they generate the steam in the boiler.

Stated in another way, the quantitative factors of life are conditioned and modified by qualitative factors that do not lend themselves to measurement and analysis. For this reason, the word 'value' has become a symbol of a

deeply felt human need and the focus of a concentrated resuce-operation in the field of value-philosophy. But neither the effort to find an empirical foundation for value, nor the attempt to give mathematical expression to the value that inheres in the way in which something "fulfills its own concept" are promising avenues of thought, for the ultimate determinants of value are human choice, and human action. These are motivated by capricious preference or they are shaped by perennially renewed commitment to an authority beyond self. Theories of value that are grounded in "interest" or in "harmonious happiness" beg the major questions such as "is the interest worthy of being satisfied?" or, "is there a commitment to 'harmony' as a significant value-objective?". Preferences and interests must compete with other preferences and other interests. Only in the phenomenon of the historic group, ~~the~~ ~~people~~ which achieves, refines and continually renews its commitments are normative values possessing authority identifiable as part of a total stance.

In the language of Judaism, this group commitment takes the form of people and covenant. The Jewish people claims a continuous experience of more than three thousand years of consciousness of history and of its role in that history. It has handed that consciousness from generation to generation through rituals, folklore, customs, traditions, literature, and, above all the charged symbols and cluster-words of language - specifically, the Hebrew language. In that process, it has evolved central attitudes and concepts and placed them in a rich context of ever-multiplying associations which have been captured in the cluster-words.

This "progressive experience of the group" is the very heart of the process in which values are generated. Our acceptance of certain ends as good is conditioned by social intercourse. In order to produce value-judgements

which are meaningful or ~~are~~ effectively related to ideal ends, the individual must come into possession of an educated capacity to discriminate based on the values of the group. This can be illustrated by analogy with the educated palate of the wine-taster whose connoisseurship is founded on tradition and inherited experience. In the arts, too, discrimination is founded on inherited conceptions and standards. Even if it is a rebellious taste, it rebels only in a context provided by the past. Ethical discrimination likewise grows out of the ethical judgements and experiences of the group. The group passes on its "inherited ought", evolves a shared loyalty to ideals that have the force of absolutes and then supports them by forms and by verbal expression.

The Jewish value-stance we have described -- compounded of openness to others and to ideas, a sense that life has supreme value and must be approached with respect and concern, an abhorrence of bloodshed as the ultimate act of disrespect, a response to others that combines active love with compassion, a feeling for equity or fairness and a search for whole and healthy relationships between individual human beings as well as between groups and nations -- has exhibited a remarkable consistency from the prophetic age twenty-seven hundred years ago up to the threshold of modern times. It is normative in the prophetic-Pharisaic-rabbinic tradition from Micah's "do justly, choose lovingkindness and walk with restraint" to Martin Buber's "indwelling of the Present Being" when two say "thou" to one another. The stance is relatively unchanged. Refined and even involuted it is still a response to the enduring worth of the other whom we confront.

We must face the fact that this stance has been both distorted and attenuated by the pressures of the post-Emancipation world. Its residue is, however, present ~~as we said at the outset~~, even in the acculturated Jew, when he exhibits sensitivity

to the rights and the needs of others and recoils from anything that demeans or humiliates any human being.

Will that residue make possible a rebirth? Assuming that this total stance has merit and distinctive content which make it worthy of preservation, we must worry about its possible disappearance; for its survival is dependent upon several difficult conditional factors. Its preservation will require the continuing strength of Covenant-consciousness, defined as group continuity and persistence in group purpose. It is also dependent upon the survival of the value-terms themselves in linguistic usage both in colloquial speech and in literature. This posits the need for language-continuity that will preserve the value-terms in all their shifting contexts, their multiple associations in the literature of Israel, and their inherited folk-meanings: the cluster-words which define and preserve the value-stance. Those terms could well be lost in a modernized Hebrew; they could well be preserved in a new American Judaeo-English (which Cynthia Ozick sees aborning)*

Equally essential to the survival of the stance is the survival of a sense of role; a consciousness, however, reinterpreted, of Covenant -- of antecedent command and continuing dedication to an uncompleted task of highest universal importance. But about this, one may make no predictions other than to reflect once again on the perennially renewed ~~emunah~~ emunah of this remarkable people.

*See her 'America: Toward Yavneh'. Congress BI-Weekly. XXXVIII:2-3. February 26, 1971. RM Pp 46ff.

A RATIONALE FOR JEWISH CONTINUITY

Henry Cohen

Teachers, principals, parents and students need a rationale for Jewish Continuity. Students often ask, "Why do we have to learn all this stuff?" Too often we may respond; In a few more years you will understand the importance of Judaism. You don't know enough now but just hang in there and in the Confirmation year you will find out, then you'll know Why Judaism.

This is a question to which every educator should have his own answer but we also need to give our children an opportunity to arrive at their own answers. By this I mean we do not brainwash them or indoctrinate them into one particular rationale for Jewish existence. Rather one purpose of the curriculum should be to provide the children with that information and those experiences which would enable them to come up with their own rationale for Jewish continuity and hopefully a positive one. So what I thought I'd try to do this evening is to talk about some of the rationales that have been offered within contemporary Jewish thought and see if we can relate some of this to the Jewish religious school curriculum.

The most traditional rationale is the Covenant with God: God revealed the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai and the Israelites at that time were and all future generations of Israelites are bound by that covenant. By the terms of that covenant we should follow God's laws, and be a light unto the nations. I think that presented in its traditional form this is the least convincing rationale not only to children but to adults as well. So I'm not going to talk about the covenant now, but will come back to it later because I think it is a powerful idea if re-interpreted.

One category of rationales is what I would call ethnic reasons. The ethnic reasons are not often thought about as reasons because the more you feel you are part of the ethnic group, the more you feel Jewish, the less need you will have for a rationale. You won't even need to ask the question why be Jewish if you feel Jewish and if you feel part of the culture. Achad Ha-am once wrote that the Jewish people should not have to justify their existence. No other national ethnic group has to justify its existence. Why should the Jews have to? But what Achad Ha-am was assuming was a national will to live. This assumption is valid if the individuals are already part of a culture. Then they will have this will to live as the Israelis do. But our youngsters are not part of a national culture and they often feel very alienated from K'lal Yisrael and so they do need a rationale for Jewish existence.

Let's begin with some of the ethnic reasons. I once asked a non-religious Jewish sociologist why he came to services on High Holiday, and he answered, "Continuity with my roots." Our Jewishness is somehow part of ourselves. What are we? We are the sum total of our experiences and we all had some Jewish experiences. Now just how much these experiences have influenced our lives, this is debatable. I have a feeling that my attitudes toward alcohol,

God and blacks have something to do with my Jewishness. Whatever the magnitude of influence of our Jewish background may or may not have been, some influence there has been. Our Jewishness is in some sense a part of our being and if we cut ourselves off from our roots we somehow are amputating a part of ourselves. If you want to defend your own identity as a person, you will not deny your Jewishness.

Another rationale is that the Jewish people provides us with a sense of belonging. In an impersonal world we need a group to belong to that is larger than the family and is smaller than the metropolis. But why do we need the Jewish group particularly? Why do we have to get together in lodges, and Synagogues and Centers? Perhaps, because many of us feel more at home with Jews than with other people. With other Jews we share a common history, attitude, values. To test this rationale, ask yourself: During the October war where would you rather have been? In a Unitarian Church or in the Synagogue.

Another ethnic reason given for Jewish continuity is the Holocaust. Dr. Emil Fackenheim has said that after the Holocaust the Jewish people heard a 614th commandment: that if we should assimilate after what had happened, we should be giving Hitler a posthumous victory. We would be finishing the final solution and there was something almost defiant that arose within the Jewish community. We would not give into Hitler, by allowing the Jewish community to disappear. Elie Weisel has given another rationale based on the Holocaust. He says that as survivors, it is our obligation to continue as a Jewish community because only the Jews will preserve the memory of the Holocaust. College and High School history texts gloss over or omit the crime of genocide. The rest of the world would forget about it very quickly if it were not for the Jewish people. But the world must remember so that no such horror can happen again. Jews must survive, because mankind must be reminded of its darkest hour.

These ethnic reasons for Jewish continuity speak to people of our generation more than they speak to our children. How effective is it to talk about continuity with our roots to children who at their particular stage in life are opting for independence? Their concern is not for continuity or roots but being their own person regardless of their background. They will often say that we exaggerate the effect that Jewish experiences have had on them; that this effect is so negligible that it is not worth preserving. When we suggest that Jews need other Jews for a sense of belonging, they may laugh at us. They can find their sense of belonging in the youth culture. They don't need an all Jewish group to feel secure. And as for the Holocaust, it's ancient history! Once I was trying to help them to feel some kind of connection with what happened during the Holocaust, I said, "If it were not for the luck, just for the luck, of a boat that came to this country a number of years ago, your parents could have been in Auschwitz. It was just for the luck if your great-grandfather or grandfather had not taken that boat to America, you might not be alive." One youngster replied; "If it weren't for the luck of my mother meeting my father I wouldn't be alive. So what?" So what do we do about this?

No matter how negative the attitude may seem to be we certainly shouldn't give up on the ethnic dimension in Jewish education. We do need more imaginative methods of helping our children feel some connection with the Jewish people. Let me make a few brief suggestions. One I think is to avoid preachy teaching. I know that we want teachers that are "committed," but over and over again I have found that some teachers are so committed that they cannot tolerate negative opinions expressed in the classroom. And when the negative opinion was given they would come down pretty hard. They would really put the students down. Sometimes the more committed the teacher, the more difficult it is to get across commitment in the classroom. Last year we asked our students for their critique of the school and one of them, a 5th grader wrote: "Please give us some books that don't say that the Jews were always the greatest." Sometimes teachers and texts come on too strong.

How can we help students to feel a deeper sense of K'lal Yisrael? As you know, the answer is experience. The experience of a trip to Israel is worth at least 10 courses. A summer session at Camp Harlam is another example. But what can we do in our schools? One suggestion is correspondence between a school in Israel and some of our children. Another means of developing a sense of K'lal Yisrael is letters to Jews in the Soviet Union. If the congregation will adopt a Soviet family, students should be eager to correspond. As far as the Holocaust is concerned as you know, it is hard to relate to 6,000, 000 but you can relate to one. That is why the children are moved by the Anne Frank experience. It can be most effective to have as a speaker a survivor of the Holocaust. Regarding Israel, I've found it helpful to bring into the classroom Israeli critics of Israel: Israelis who are proud Israelis, but aren't afraid to criticize some aspects of the state. Our students are tired of glorification, but they really get involved with a critical discussion. This last Saturday we had an election. "Menachem Begin," "Shimon Peres," and "Meir Peal," presented three different points of view; the students asked questions and then they voted.

Whatever we may do, the ethnic rationale is not going to be sufficient for our youngsters. They are going to put less emphasis on it than their parents. So let's turn to another group of reasons which we could call ideological rationales. First, a word of caution. No abstract idea can provide a rationale. An idea is significant only to the extent that it becomes part of the individual's experience. So I will start with the idea and move to the experience.

The first ideological rationale that means a great deal to me, to many students too, is the freedom to search we find in Judaism, particularly in Reform Judaism. Our faith, I believe, is unique among religions in challenging its adherents to explore a wide variety of paths on their spiritual quests. I don't know of any other religion, where youngsters are enabled to study or be exposed to a traditional theistic approach, to finitism, to naturalism, to humanism, and to mysticism. I think this is great. The problem is that we often do not present these alternate ideologies to the youngsters until the Confirmation year. The first section of my text: Why Judaism? has as its

purpose: to enable the youngsters to explore Kaplan, Steinberg and Buber on their own level. But why should we wait until the Confirmation year? One reason we do wait is that our teachers aren't equipped to deal with the concepts, but I think our teachers even in the early grades, could be prepared. I provided our 3rd grade teacher, who is teaching Bible, a paper about God that conveys the notion that nobody knows what God is like. God is a mystery. He can't be seen. But there are two things that most people including Jews have thought about God. He has something to do with nature, and he has something to do with love. The two following paragraphs explore the different ways that people have thought about how God is connected with nature and about how he is connected with love, then the youngsters are encouraged to explore, to come to their own conclusions. The teachers should be sufficiently informed so that if a student says God is there when we love each other, the teacher might say, "A man named Martin Buber said something like that. The teacher should be able to place the student's spontaneous expressions into the framework of Judaism.

Another ideological rationale is what is too concisely spoken of as a high view of man. This is just a label for a cluster of concepts: the stress on life in this world, salvation according to deed, the rejection of original sin, and the view that man is born with a potential for either good or evil. Judaism emphasizes man's capacity to find the good within himself, in contrast to the fundamentalist Christian approach which emphasizes salvation through the grace of God for all who have the right creed. Some Jewish youngsters who have deep guilt feelings and who find their problems overwhelming with its instant salvation may be attracted to the Jesus cult. The Jewish approach is more human centered. It involves a willingness to admit errors. It involves very ruthless self-searching. It involves doing something that shows that we are sorry. It involves not repeating our mistakes, when we find ourselves in similar situations. If we have done our very best to move from teshuva (repentance) to tz'daka (right action,) then we need not feel burdened by guilt. But what has all this to do with curriculum? How can these ideas be translated into experience?

Our schools should provide the opportunity for our children to work through some of the problems they feel as real gut-problems. An 8th grade teacher whose course was "the meaning of the holidays," had the students work up their own "Al-chet." After they listed whatever they felt guilty about, the class spent the next month talking about what they considered their own shortcomings. If the school can create the atmosphere in which guilt feelings, (no matter how negative) can be expressed and worked through, this is one way of experiencing the Jewish view of man.

The ideological rationale that I am partial to in my classes concerns certain values that have been emphasized by Judaism: Values pertaining to family, to learning, to social justice, to peace, to protest against the conventional wisdom. I am not saying that Jews are inherently superior in their behavior in these areas. Nor will I claim that these values are unique to Judaism: they certainly are not. But I will maintain that the Jewish people because of their historic experience have put a particular emphasis on the values and have also developed a certain perspective; a way of viewing these areas of human experience. (See Why Judaism?, Unit III.) I'll mention just a couple of examples.

The Family. We know the stereotype of the classical Jewish family: the warm closely knit. We also know that the family can be too warm, too closely knit, in fact, stifling. Yet, with all of its shortcomings the warm and the close family does provide all-important security in the early years. Some psychologists say that's why there is a small percentage of Jewish psychotics, because the earliest needs of Jewish infants are amply met. The achievement orientation of the classical Jewish family can be an advantage. If this orientation doesn't make the child a neurotic, it can lead to long term satisfactions. Our youngsters should be given the opportunity of freely discussing family relationships in the setting of the school. For example, a unit on the changing role of the Jewish family should be in every Jewish curriculum. In the area of generational conflict, one teacher began by asking the youngsters, "What are the characteristics of a good parent?" That question led to role playing and a most successful unit. On the younger level before the children arrive at the rebellious age, we could do more in developing activities that children and parents can do together. Perhaps older children could help in developing a curriculum of games, using a map of Jewish history or the migration of the Jews all over the world.

Social Justice. The Jewish perspective here has to do with a particular motivation. We were strangers and in more lands than Egypt, so we should have a greater empathy of the oppressed. We should also have self-interest in protecting the rights of all minority groups and making sure that there is sufficient opportunity in the country so that there's little or no need for scapegoating. The rabbis had much to say about tzedakah. It is an obligation required by justice rather than a free-will offering. They also had something to say about how to resolve clashes between property rights and human rights. Surely we should integrate these insights into the appropriate courses. Perhaps a Social Action Committee made up of students could invite speakers, plan where the school could be doing forums and initiate activities.

Another rationale for Jewish continuity has to do with the Jewish symbols, the ceremonies that express our ideals. Our approach is neither Unitarian nor Quakerish, for we have a very, very rich tradition of symbols. I think that sometimes we make a mistake of not exploring the meaning of the symbols on more mature level with older students. Make clear the connection between Sukkot and ecology, between Purim and prejudice. A useful resource is There is a Season: A Value Approach to Jewish Holidays (Rocky Mt. Curriculum.)

Now to conclude, let me come back to the Covenant, not in its traditional form but as it might be re-interpreted in the light of the preceding rationales: If we could consider God as the source of all that we are, If God is the source of our being, has He not formed a biological and cultural link between parent and child; a link that we renounce only by renouncing part of ourselves? Has He not made us lonely human beings in need of the warmth of community life? Has He not confronted us with the ultimate questions of life and death and human offering, and do we not need spiritual freedom to come to terms with His universe? Judaism provides this freedom. Has He not given to the Jewish people a historic experience from which it can draw to move into the direction of love and learning and justice for all, and has He not created Man to celebrate life and we have so many ways of celebrating. If this be so then in a sense we are responding to a divine commandment when we refuse to die as a faith and as a people.