



Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

MS-4850: Daniel Jeremy Silver Papers, 1972-1993.

Series II: Subject Files, 1956-1993, undated.

Reel
12

Box
5

Folder
154b

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

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

Dear Josh:

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Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

May 5, 1975

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

Dear Peter:

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

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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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

The Temple

UNIVERSITY CIRCLE AT SILVER PARK • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106 • 791-7755
BRANCH: 26000 SHAKER BLVD. • BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122 • 831-3233

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

Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel
Congregation Emanu-El
One E. 65th St.
New York, New York
10021

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



26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Jack Bemporad
Temple Emanu-El
8500 Hillcrest
Dallas, Texas
75225

Rabbi Jonathan M. Brown
Reform Temple
Ohev Sholom
2345 N. Front St.
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

17110

26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Manuel Rose
Beth Israel
1931 N. W. Flanders St.
Portland, Oregon
97209



26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Joseph Levenson
Temple B'Nai Israel
4901 Pennsylvania Ave.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
73112

Rabbi Dudley Weinberg
Emanu El-B'ne
Jeshurun
2419 E. Kenwood Blvd.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53211

Rabbi Jay R. Brickman
Temple Sinai
8223 No. Port
Washington Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53217



26000¹ SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Harry B. Pastor
Shalom
7630 N. Santa Monica
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53217

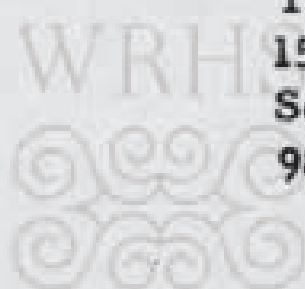
The Temple

26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi David Jacobson
Temple Beth El
211 Belknap Place
San Antonio, Texas
78212

BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Earl S. Starr
Temple DeHirsch
1511 E. Pike St.
Seattle, Washington
98122



Rabbi Arnold G. Fink
Beth El Hebrew
3830 Seminary Road
Alexandria, Virginia
22304

26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

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

BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Hyman J. Schachtel
Temple Beth Israel
5600 N. Braeswood
Houston, Texas
77035



Randall M. Falk, Rabbi
The Temple
Ohabei Sholom
5015 Harding Road
Nashville, Tennessee
37205

The Temple

26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Saul P. Besser
Temple Shalom
11211 Preston Road
Dallas, Texas
75230

Rabbi James A. Wax
Temple Israel
1255 Poplar
Memphis, Tennessee
38104



Rabbi Lloyd R. Goldman
Mizpah
McCallie & Fairview
Chattanooga, Tennessee
37403

26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Edward L. Cohn
Kahal Kadosh
Beth Elohim
86 Hasell St.
Charleston, South Carolina
29401

26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122



Rabbi Michael A. Oppenheimer
Tree of Life
P.O. Box 5632
Columbia, South Carolina
29205

26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman
Temple Beth El
70 Orchard Ave.
Providence, Rhode Island
6

26000 SHAKER BOULEVARD
BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122

Rabbi David H. Wice
Rodeph Shalom
615 N. Broad St.
Philadelphia Pa
19123

Rabbi Alan G. Weitzman
Temple Oheb Shalom
13th & Perkiomen Aven
Reading, Pennsylvania
19602

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

June 10, 1975

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Woodlands Community Temple
50 Worthington Road
White Plains, New York 10607

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DJS:mp

THE EIGHTY-SIXTH

GET BACK

NOTE

note - cost. Room

Parker B

Annual Convention



WRHS

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. FALL 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. Cohen,
Benjamin Kelson

Report of the Treasurer James A. Wax

Report of the Financial Secretary Harold Silver

Report of the Recording Secretary Wolli Kaeltter

Placement Report Malcolm H. Stern,
David Jacobson

Rabbinical Pension Board Morton Applebaum

Rabbinic Tenure and Security Bruce Warshal

Rabbinic Population Charles A. Krolloff

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 Schulweis

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 Opticns 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

Alexander Schindler

Greetings from the World Union

David Wice

Greetings from South Africa

Anthony D. Holz

Greetings from South America

Henry Sobel

Greetings from the Rabbinical Assembly

Mordecai Waxman

Report of Liturgy Committee

A. Stanley Dreyfus

Report of Nominations Committee

Paul Gorin

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 SESSIONHALL OF MIRRORS

Introduction of the new PresidentRobert 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 Zions PARLOR A
Judah Cahn N '39	Norman Mirsky	Leo Wolkow PARLOR G
Joshua Haberman C '45	Alexander Guttmann	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 SESSION *HALL 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 Israel *Dr. Michael Langer*

Special Message *Joshua Siskin*

1:30 P.M.

HALL OF MIRRORS

BUSINESS SESSION

Resolutions *Hillel 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 KAEHLER

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 Mershon Road~~
~~Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103~~

*Touro Synagogue
1501 General Pichey 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 CCAR 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

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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.

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 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.

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.

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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,

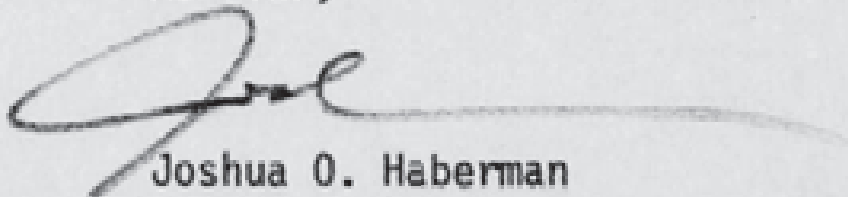
I found your letter of July 24th on my recent return from Jerusalem. Many thanks also for the reprints of your articles which I very greatly appreciated.

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-men were commonly held "Western humanistic values." Prophetic Judaism, they said, is informed by

* Ta'anith, 3b

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, "Ha-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 El-Weekly, XXIV:8, April 17, 1967 p. 18. See also The Reconstructionist XIX:10, June 26, 1953, p. 29

A DISTINCTIVE VALUE-STANCE

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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."*

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 known² 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 "Ahevat olam bet Yisrael an-cha ahavta -- 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 ^{by non-Jews}. Like the love of father and son it has signified that

*Loc. cit. p.30

**cf Deuteronomy VI:2ff

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. ⁹The 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 ¹⁰our 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 ¹¹our judgments, 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.

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 "stanza" 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^s 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 denoting 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)

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, 113, 131

that of stance we refer to when we speak of a disposition -- as when we should

Winnicott, The Self and the Unconscious, New York, 1951

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 "tselma 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 Hengozs with their psalms and their shawls and beads would never have touched a
 *Violence was for the goy," says Saul Bellow's hero in Hengoz.
 (Farrell Quest edition, p 349f.)

A DISTINCTIVE VALUE-STANCE

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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 tsar-er boale chaim, a feeling into the pain of living creatures, or the concept of rachmanut, 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 gowns, 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.

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 kadosh 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~~ "Traduttore! traditor! -- 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, pp. 129ff.

** See Isaiah VI: 2ff

captiveness, at the same time that he correctly distinguished between designative and expressive language when he said, "...a Jew who can name 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 nitzvah, avrah, gouleh, tikkun, tum'ah, taharah, yirah, shvayeh, 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-acculturated 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

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words -- emunah, akshanut, derech-eretz, talmud-torah, tsedek, emet, shalom, b'recha, nishpat -- all of which demand elucidation and provide the details for a profile of the Jewish value-stance.

Emunah is a word that clearly illustrates the nature of the "untranslatable". It is usually and most inadequately rendered by the English word "faith" whose associations set it against "reason" as an antonym. But an understanding of the Hebrew term must begin with the fact that it comes from a root meaning "to be firm". Thus when Aaron and Hur upheld Moses' arms when the Israelites fought against the Amalekites at ^{Raphidim} Raphidim, Moses' hands were emunah until the setting of the sun (Exodus 17:12). Its basic connotation is firmness or stead-fastness. It does not signify belief without evidence or without foundation. Emunah means persistence in affirmation. Emunah is a divine attribute, too -- which would be a contradiction in terms if it meant "faith" in the sense of "trust": God's emunah is shown in what God does (Psalm 33:4); it means stability, that which cannot be moved (e.g. Isaiah 33:6). Therefore, to translate Habakkuk 11:4 as "the righteous man shall live by his faith" is to call forth the Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Christian associations of the word "faith". He shall live by his emunah, his persistence and his firmness. There is a kind of blessed stubbornness about the Jewish people which makes the modern term akshanut a word that is not wholly pejorative. There is something admirable about a stiff-necked people which holds firmly to its vision of the future, stubbornly committed to its covenant task. This was the akshanut of the martyrs of the Warsaw ghetto who went to their death chanting the Maimonidean words "Ani na-emin be-emunah sh'lanah: I affirm with complete firmness ... in spite of everything, I affirm it."

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 'raham', '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 havy'shanut, a kind of modest restraint, and of being a gadol hamed, 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 hamed 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. Hamed 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 Publication 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} ~~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'chavero, between man and his fellowman, where it is expressed in g'milut chesedim, freely offered acts of lovingkindness; and beyn adam la-makom, 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

* HOSEA IN THE BIBLE p. 56 ff, p. 57

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/such as inquiring after the welfare of one's hostess (T.Baba Metzia 83a), 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-men'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 (Numbers 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 "Atholism is Dead", pp131-137, and on mitzva, ibid pp164-170 - World Publishing, New York, 1968

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) ^{; D'varim Rabba 5:15} but this is condoned nip'ney darchey shalom, for the sake of peace; more dramatic, in that even God bends the truth a little nip'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'rushit} Hid'ash Rabba: 48:18 ad loc.; D'varim 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} ~~Max Kadushin~~ 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 ^{sage} 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'rushit} Hid'ash 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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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, ~~which~~ ^{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 ~~ar~~/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 ~~some-what 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 ~~amunah~~ 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 11.) 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.