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

Series III: The Temple Tifereth-Israel, 1946-1993, undated.

Sub-series B: Sermons, 1950-1989, undated.

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On Jewish Survival; The Synagogue: Does It Have a Future?;  
Purim; Monotheism; Redemption; Teach Me to Pray, 1989.



# The Temple Bulletin



Vol. LXXV, No. 15

March 12, 1989



## On Jewish Survival

*Daniel Jeremy Silver*

February 12, 1989

**W**hy be a Jew? I have a two-word response: Why not? Everyone must have an identity. We are shaped by and belong to one or several reference groups. No one is just himself. I can name many labels less noble and many religious cultures less inspiring and less colorful than ours.

I have been a child and I am a parent and I can testify that a Jewish home and the Jewish world can be an emotionally secure and culturally exciting environment. So why not be a Jew?

Such reasoning may satisfy a sixty-year old who has enjoyed his Jewish experience and has come to terms with himself, but it cannot satisfy a restless eighteen-year old who is eager to discover for himself who he is and what life is all about. At eighteen or twenty no one wants to settle for the life of his parents. A young adult wants to try the high road, not follow an often trod path. He wants the best, not just the familiar.

I have certain convictions about how to approach the identity problem. I think it is wise to put them up front, as the saying goes.

Self-awareness is a mixed blessing. The child is comfortable as he is; the adult talks nervously of a need to find himself. In the ancient world where change occurred at a snail's pace, philosophers taught that nothing new

appears under the sun; and most folk agreed. History's sign was a serpent with its tail in its mouth, an endless circle. People knew who they were, where they fitted into their community, and what values and skills to teach their children. Classic literature like the Bible or Homer's Epics was generally written in the third person and described wars and adventures rather than an individual's interior life. A settled society focuses its imagination on events rather than on emotions.

Our ancestors rarely questioned the fitness of the familiar ways and customs of their birth community. David or Odysseus struggled to do his duty rather than to know himself. Personal feelings were not special enough

to be interesting.

Our world is a quite different place. Ties that they took for granted have become for us problematic. Our literature tends to be an exploration of private feelings. We are keenly aware of our individuality, less likely to be submissive to authority and more likely to be anxious about ourselves.

A Jew was a Jew and that was the whole of it. The outside world knew us as Jews. The Jewish domestic world provided a tightly woven web of custom and commandments which shaped their routines, gave a particular color to their personalities, and provided the structure of their communal life. Education was parochial. Relationships were regulated by re-

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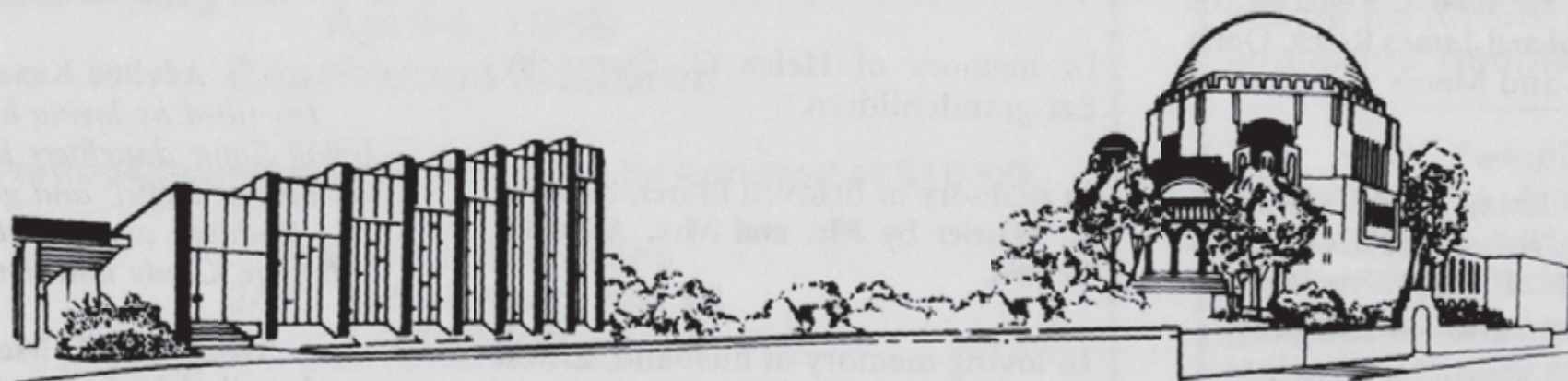
Sunday Morning Services The Branch 10:30a.m.

March 12, 1989  
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver  
"Purim"  
Megillah Reading



March 19, 1989  
Rabbi Rosette Barron Haim  
"Purim: The Id Set Free"  
Special Purim Music

Friday Evening Services, The Temple 5:30p.m.





## Hunger Fund Contributions Feed Thousands

Dear Rabbi Silver:

On behalf of the Hunger Task Force, I want to thank you for your contribution of \$10,000 during the 1988 holiday season. In November and December the 21 hunger centers provided food for nearly 120,000 individuals and half were children.

Since September of last year the hunger centers have faced the loss of more than half of free U.S.D.A. foods and experienced a 19% reduction in federal funds earmarked for food. It is clear that without your gift the three day supplies would have been reduced or many families turned away.

As you know, the numbers of people seeking help continue at unprecedented high levels and the program is forced to turn to Greater Clevelanders now more than ever to meet these drastic cuts and maintain the food supply. In 1989 we will lose another portion of Emergency Food and Shelter funds as Congress reduces grants to meet the federal deficit ceiling. In Cuyahoga County where two of every five people live on incomes below the poverty level it is clear the hunger will continue to plague our community.

In the face of these circumstances we are very fortunate to have the support of a congregation such as yours that is concerned about hunger. Again, thank you for your most generous contribution.

Sincerely,  
Dana Irribarren  
Director  
Hunger Task Force

Contributions to The Temple Hunger Fund are appreciated and can be sent to The Temple.

IF YOU KNOW  
SOMEONE  
WHO NEEDS HELP  
CALL  
HEBREW FREE LOAN  
771-7349

## TEFTY Active in Social Action and Service Projects

The Temple's rapidly growing Youth Group is off to a wonderful year. In January, we held an executive board meeting to organize the group to work more effectively.

The youth group will be selling Malley Chocolates as our fund raiser. Half of what we earn will go to subsidize Mitzvah Corp. This is a unique camping experience which sponsors kids from the inner city to a local camp that is staffed by TEFTY and the other NELFTY youth groups in Cleveland. We hope you will plan to buy your chocolates from us.

TEFTY is also becoming active with several social action projects at The Temple. You have probably already noticed our special basket to collect canned and dried food goods

for people dependent upon the Hunger Centers. We would greatly appreciate your participation in this important venture for us and for the community.

Several group members also attended a conference in Buffalo, and enjoyed being with other Youth Group members from the region during this winter kallah. We also hosted a lovely Family Sabbath Service on March 10 which was followed by an Oneg Shabbat. It was a creative service with inspiring music.

If you or someone you know in 9-12th grade would like to get involved with The Temple Youth Group, please contact Rabbi Haim, 831-3233. Our next meeting will be **Monday March 27, 1989 at 5:30 p.m. at The Branch.**

### On Jewish Survival

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religious tradition. You were married under a *huppah*. When a son was born there was a *bris*. When a parent died you sat *shivah*. Belonging to the Jewish people was not only a fact of life but the determinative fact of their lives; not only inevitable but proclaimed a blessing.

Perhaps our deepest fear, next to the fear of loneliness, is that we may be wasting our energies and days in misguided pursuits. His myths reassured the Jew that he was doing what he should be doing. God had given his ancestors full and clear instructions about right and wrong. Because God had made known His commandments, the Jew's life was graced by the peace of mind which comes from confidence in the direction of one's efforts and from that buoyancy of spirit which derives from being sure that God is in control and that all will turn out right in the end. Few could have described just how obedience to God's instructions would bring about their redemption or hasten the millennium, but they knew it would. The Messiah would be one of theirs; *Dayenu*, that was enough for them.

I use myth to describe a story that is among the most precious possessions of a society because it explains the mysteries and meaning of life. A myth is true because it is believed, and believed to be significant. Philosophy dissects truth through analysis. Myths express the truths which defy analysis.

Myth animates truth, and so is an effective way to express assumptions about value, wisdom and purpose.

Since they were confident that they knew God's instructions and that these were, in fact, the familiar norms of their world, Jews rarely wondered whether they should remain part of the community of Israel. Except under duress, no one deliberately takes the wrong road. If their role included special and demanding obligations, these were accepted as proof that God really cared. One of the ways parents show children that they care is by being strict with them. God cared for Israel.

Any change of identity required apostasy. Over the centuries some converted under threat, while others could not resist the economic and social opportunities which were reserved to the religious majority; but conversion was rarely a matter of sincere conviction. There was little that was spiritually compelling in the way the dominant religions presented themselves. A gospel of love might be taught in the churches, but the Jew associated the cross with the crusader's lance and with pastors who, during Holy Week, exhorted their flock to attack the Christ killers. The sword of Islam was equally ferocious.

Our situation is quite other. There are bridges across the religious divide. We share the privilege of citizenship in a pluralistic society. The

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## On Jewish Survival

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old rhetoric can still be heard, "Only if you join us will you be saved" or "God doesn't hear the prayers of Jews;" but most folk, certainly most Jews, think of other religions as complementary ways to spiritual growth. There is a social comity in our communities which the medieval Jew could not have imagined.

The self-confident and self-validating assumptions with which rabbinic culture insulated the Jew and with which church teachings isolated the Christian are no longer accepted uncritically; indeed, they are daily brought into question by the freedom of our social lives. Children of all faiths mix and mingle in school, sports, and society. Lifelong affiliation is no longer inevitable or necessarily applauded. As he grows up, almost every young person will ask at some point, "Why remain a . . . ?"

In the Islamic world social and religious conditions remain as parochial as they were in medieval Europe. Those few Jews who remain in places like Morocco and Tunisia exist on tolerance and are subject to a wide variety of social restrictions. In the Soviet Union where "Jew" is a passport designation, atheism a party dogma, and Zionism has been seen as a crime, government policy determines the identity issue.

In Israel the identity problem is also quite different in nature than here. A young Israeli speaks Hebrew, learns Jewish history in school, never worries that the Hebrew University will schedule registration on Yom Kippur and lives under political tensions which create distance and suspicion between him and his Arab neighbors.

In the American diaspora options exist: one can be active in a congregation or Hillel chapter, sit at the feet of a guru, hitch one's destiny to a back-to-the-soil communitarian experiment, join an anarchist cell or the Jewish Defense League or the Jewish Peace Fellowship—separately or sequentially.

Many seem to believe that questions of identity represent entirely private commitments without social or family consequence. We like to think of ourselves as autonomous and self-reliant. I would argue that questions of identity cannot be disentangled from political or social considerations. A non-observant Jew or a Jew who practices TM, or even one who converts to

Christianity, may find, to his surprise, that he continues to be seen as a Jew by friends, neighbors and employers. Even in the aftermath of the Holocaust which shocked many non-Jews into a recognition of their participation in genteel prejudice, being Jewish was rarely allowed to be a matter purely of private conscience. I've yet to meet a college admissions officer who couldn't tell me how many Jews there are in an entering class or a senior executive who didn't know which of his top assistants was Jewish.

*I believe Judaism to be a helpful, and I would even say inspired, tradition, but I've never met anyone who became a more involved and active Jew because someone successfully debated the tradition's comparative merit.*

I believe Judaism to be a helpful, and I would even say inspired, tradition, but I've never met anyone who became a more involved and active Jew because someone successfully debated the tradition's comparative merit.

Questions cluster around personal issues: Can living as a Jew be an ennobling and healing experience; and does the world-wide community of Jews play a consequential role in what a traditional thinker would call God's plans and we would call civilization?

In terms of pure logic, there is no unassailable rationale for Jewish survival. A similar dismissing statement can be made for any religious tradition. There is no totally convincing argument why a Jew ought to remain a Jew; or, a Christian a Christian, or a Communist a Communist. Survival is a given, not a demonstrable argument. Life establishes its own right to be. I am because I am. I have an inalienable right to be what I am or wish to be. The Jewish people is, because Jews are.

Some Jews simply respect and love their parents; for them affiliation is a continuation of family. Some Jews are determined to be Jews to spite those who are determined to destroy the Jews. Emil Fackenheim has written that since the Holocaust an eleventh commandment exists: You shall not give to Hitler a posthumous victory. Others are moved to be active out of a deep emotional response to the State of

Israel, not simply because it is theirs, but because Israel represents a triumph of the human spirit. Mankind can be brutalized, yet the human spirit is indomitable. The victims of the Holocaust built a state.

Jews gave Europe and civilization its Bible and its vision of social justice. Islam derived its unitarian theology and its patterns of worship from the Torah tradition. In the 12th century Jews translated much of the literary and philosophic legacy of Greece from Arabic and Syriac into the languages of Europe. In the 15th and 16th centuries Jews taught Protestant Europe to read the Bible in its original Hebrew and to value the careful study of scripture. In the 19th century Jewish social thought stimulated many of the political reformers who set about establishing a classless social order. This small community has been remarkably creative, but abstract discussions of Jewish contributions to civilization, however historically interesting are not personally compelling.

We must determine the consequences for us of active involvement in Jewish life. What can/does being Jewish mean? Will I be a better person for it? What can I find in Judaism which allows me to grow, to become, to transcend my limitations?

Many are troubled by the seeming lack of initiative involved in continuing in inherited ways. I often repeat the obvious: That what is different is not necessarily better and that, in any case, we cannot jump out of our souls. In determining the future, talents and force of will are important, but, to a surprising degree, we become what we become because of the place in which we find ourselves and the influences which bear upon us.

I am what I am because of my family, because of the schooling that was available to me, because of the social context in which I grew up, because I had a Jewish home and a Jewish education. I am not a carbon copy of my parents. Part of my identity is given, but my mature identity is an achievement. As I took these experiences into myself and tried to understand them I found that I was not only encouraged to be part of a long-lived, historic and courageous people, but that my life had taken on a satisfying shape and that I had gained a sense of purpose and confidence in my plans.

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## Contributions to Temple Funds

**H. SHAN CARRAN MEMORIAL FUND**  
In memory of **Eva Feldman**, mother of **Seymour Feldman**, by **Betty Carran**.

**RICHARD ALAN FISHEL HONOR KEY FUND**  
In memory of **Bertha Grossman** by **Lillian Cannon**.

**FLORAL FUND**  
In honor of 100th Birthday of **Aaron Schwartz** by **Lois and Dr. Herbert Weiss**.  
In memory of **Herbert Schmith** by **Betty Schmith**.  
In memory of **Leo H. Schlang** by **Mr. and Mrs. Elliott Schlang** and children.

**FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS (FORMERLY SENIORS)**  
In honor of Continued Recovery of **Marcella Koerner** by **Nancy and Albert Pickus**.  
In memory of father, **Louis D. Kendis**, by **Mildred K. Englander**.  
In memory of **Hilda Tomarkin Israel** by **Evelyn and Saul Eisenberg**.  
In memory of **Leo Kohl** by **Bess and Dr. Howard Steiner**.  
Gift: **Ruth Brooker**

**MYRTLE WAINTRUP GIVELBER FUND**  
In Admiration of **Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver** by **Myer Givelber**.  
In memory of **Sam Givelber** by **Myer Givelber**.  
In memory of **Al and Alice Goodman** by **Myer Givelber**.

**SARA R. LEVIN AND WILBERT J. LEVIN SPECIAL PURPOSE FUND**  
In honor of Birthday of **Robert Levin** by **Wilbert J. Levin**.  
In memory of **Meyer Gordon** by **Wilbert J. Levin**.  
In memory of Birthday of **Irwin S. Duchon** by **Wilbert J. Levin**.  
In memory of **Albert A. Levin** by **Wilbert J. Levin**.

**RICKY LEVINE MEMORIAL FUND**  
In memory of Beloved Mother **Freda G. Engelman** by **Phyllis and Allan Levine**.

**LIBRARY FUND**  
In honor of 85th Birthday of **Rabbi Melbourne Harris** by **Rose B. Glass**.  
In memory of **Edith and Leonard Labowitch** by **Lilyan and Herbert Lane**.  
In memory of **Sherman D. Cahn** and **Wilton Cahn** by **Betsy and Harry Goodfriend**.  
In memory of **Minnie Schultz** and **Sarah Rivchun** by **Hirsh and Dorothy Rivitz**.

**JUDITH MEYERS MEMORIAL FUND**  
In memory of **Ruth Anne Berkey** by **Dorothy and Milton Meyers**.

**CLAIRE AND STANLEY MORGENSTERN MUSIC FUND**  
In honor of 60th Birthday of **Marty Arsham** by **Jan and Mitch Kursh**.

**ABBA HILLEL AND VIRGINIA H. SILVER CHARITABLE AND EDUCATIONAL FUND**  
In honor of **Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver** with Belated Birthday Wishes by **Judy and Dr. Marvin Dorfman**.  
In honor of Special Birthday of **Joe Marg** by **Sadie Simon**.  
In memory of **Hilda Tomarkin Israel** by **Bess and Dr. Howard Steiner**.  
In memory of **Dorothy Pasch Steiner** by **Bess and Dr. Howard Steiner**.

**DR. SIDNEY AND RUTH WEISMAN FUND**  
In memory of **Helene Kaufman** by **Ruth Weisman**.  
In memory of **Dr. Sidney Weisman** by **Ruth Weisman**.

## On Jewish Survival continued from page 9

So I have concluded that the value of Judaism for the individual and the reason for the survival of the Jewish people is that it allows us to shape our lives within a grand, rich and wise religious civilization.

I believe in the far mystery. I believe that the survival of the Jewish people is of consequence to the world. I believe that God endowed Jewish history with significance. How else explain our continuing significance to civilization?

I do not know how the tomorrows of Jewish history will affect the world, or even if, but I know that our past has ennobled many. I believe that because of my exposure to this tradition, its wisdom and its humanity, I have been helped to grow into a sensitive and responsible human being. I cannot but believe that a tradition whose effects can be so beneficial will not still make important contributions to the unfolding of the human spirit. ■

### Donations to Temple Tribute Funds

Thanks to the generosity of so many of our congregants, we have enjoyed steady growth in the variety and financial strength of our Tribute Funds. This has enabled The Temple to develop and maintain extensive enrichment programs to benefit congregants of all ages and varied interests. We appreciate your support.

If you are interested in contributing to existing funds, please use the form below. If you are interested in establishing a new Tribute Fund or Endowment Fund in honor of or in memory of a beloved relative or friend, please contact Merrill Gross, 791-7755

#### Tribute Fund & Endowment Fund Contribution Form

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
Occasion \_\_\_\_\_  
In memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
Please inform \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Donation sent by \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Specific fund \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
Occasion \_\_\_\_\_  
In memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
Please inform \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Donation sent by \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Specific fund \_\_\_\_\_



# The Temple Bulletin



Vol. LXXV, No. 16 March 26, 1989



## The Synagogue: Does It Have a Future?

Daniel Jeremy Silver

February 26, 1989

There are several theories about the origin of the synagogue. One posits that the synagogue developed during the Babylonian exile, sixth century BCE, when the Judeans were forced from their land. The Temple was destroyed, and the Jews had to re-

create their faith without a central shrine. During the exile the Judeans may have developed the habit of coming together on festivals to read from the Holy Law.

A second theory derives the synagogue from a custom called *Ma'*

*madot*, which required every community to send delegates twice a year to The Temple in Jerusalem. They brought gifts and assisted at the sacrifices. Presumably, the custom developed that the hometown folk would come together and recite the same psalms and sing the same hymns which their delegates were singing in Jerusalem.

We cannot prove either theory. What matters is that the institution of  
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## Author Belva Plain Guest for April 7th First Friday

Best selling author Belva Plain will be the guest for April 7th First Friday at 8:15 p.m. in the Temple Branch. Ms. Plain is the author of six internationally acclaimed best selling



novels: *Evergreen*, *The Golden Cup*, *Tapestry*, *Random Winds*, *Eden Burning*, *Crescent City*, and is about to release her newest novel *Blessings*.

Beginning her career as a novelist at the age of 59, when she wrote *Evergreen*, Ms. Plain has been called by the *New York Times*, "the queen of family saga writers." Her sensitive hand writes about the values we cherish, the emotions we feel, and the standards by which we live. In her books she has created a group of characters for her readers to know, admire and love.

Aside from writing, Ms. Plain enjoys spending her days with her three children and six grandchildren and is an avid animal lover. Ms. Plain will address the topic of "The Development and Characters with Jewish Sensibilities." Her visit is sponsored by the Adrienne Meldon Ratner Memorial Fund.

As usual, First Friday programs are free and open to the public, but reservations are necessary. Call the Temple Branch, 831-3233.

Sunday Morning Services  
At The Branch 10:30a.m.  
Coffee Hour 9:30a.m.

March 26, 1989  
Rabbi  
Daniel Jeremy Silver  
"Monotheism"

April 2, 1989  
Dr. Martin Gilbert  
"Churchill and the Jews"

Friday Evening Services  
The Temple 5:30p.m.





## The Synagogue: Does It Have a Future?

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the synagogue is 2500 years old, and over those 25 centuries has been the cradle of our faith.

I would like this morning to look at the present version of the synagogue in the light of Jewish needs.

My first observation is that, by itself, institutional change cannot guarantee the success of the Jewish religious enterprise. The congregation must *want* the synagogue to succeed. You can consider yourself a Jew simply by appearing on a congregation's membership roster, but that's not what I mean by Judaism. Faith is a personal commitment. It cannot be handed down. It must be struggled for. It must be earned. The first step is necessarily yours. *You* must volunteer to take part in the Jewish religious enterprise.

Judaism has never believed in vicarious belief. No institution can substitute for personal faith. Yet, many seem to define their Judaism simply as belonging to a synagogue: paying membership dues, sending children to religious school, having the rabbi solemnize a marriage, occasionally attending on the holidays. They say: "What more can be asked of me?"

Those who so define Jewish religious life ultimately discover that their faith is not satisfying. It's bland. It's superficial.

It's too bad this attitude is so widespread. Rarely have the balanced judgements of Judaism and its high spiritual and ethical disciplines been more urgently needed. These are times full of change. We have more opportunity than ever before, more freedom—and more nervous breakdowns.

What is required of us? By whom? What is the way that we should go? How can we achieve peace of mind? Happiness? All of us are troubled by these questions. What was certain a generation ago is no longer certain. We find ourselves constantly changing direction. It's precisely the business of faith to help us to develop answers to questions of value and of meaning.

Scripture never says: "Join a congregation and gain a faith." It says: "Seek ye me and live." *You*, personally,

seek God. How do we seek God? By searching for Him: by admitting the shadows and sunshines of life, the anguish and the love, the fear and the hope, by seeking meaning.

We call ourselves the children of Israel. How did we get the name? Israel, of course, is Jacob's other name, the name he earned by wrestling the long night with the angel, his conscience, and was not overcome. If we call ourselves the children of Israel, then we must accept life in its rawness, accept reality with all of its quixotic nature. We must not assume that life is other than it really is, serious, sometimes brutal, sometimes cruel, always short, demanding of us strength and vision.

The first step in the reconstruction of the synagogue is a confession that each member must make: "I need to understand. I want to know. I am a seeker." This means putting aside the pretense that I have nothing to learn. It is the recognition that I have everything to learn. I need to know how to feel, how to be passionate, how to be involved.

What happens when the serious and the sensitive do come to the synagogue? Is the modern American synagogue ready to support their search for faith? I doubt it. Much that occupies the typical American synagogue must be classified as a "spinning of wheels"—seeking solace rather than spiritual meaning, the gentle word rather than the living word. How much of what happens is tangential to the religious enterprise—and how much is central?

Reform was the faith of those 19th century Jews who felt that there was greatness in the tradition and meaning, but who were no longer satisfied by parochial community attitudes. They sought to cut away the underbrush so the tall trees, the central themes of Judaism, might emerge for all to see. Reform was the creation of those who recognized that the synagogue was the filter through which each generation addresses the ancient message of Judaism.

It is well to remember that Moses did not receive the *Union Prayer Book*

or *The Gates of Prayer* at Mt. Sinai and that Aaron did not dictate to Israel a religious school curriculum which all Jewish schools must follow. What Moses had were commandments, the *Mitzvot*, and what every generation of Jews has had is the responsibility of taking these commandments and translating them into terms which you and I can understand and make effective in our lives.

Let's ask ourselves; what is the real purpose of a synagogue?

A synagogue exists in order to support anyone who seeks holiness, *kedusha*. Judaism has a particular definition of *kedusha*. Holiness is not an exuberant pietism, or midnight vigils, fasting, or lacerations of the flesh. Holiness is not closing ourselves away from the world. Holiness is not even to live a life of worship and prayer.

Holiness is a spiritual discipline and a moral self-discipline. It is an understanding of the ethical commandments and insight into what is significant in life—and what is trivial, tinsel, trash.

The book of Leviticus defines what is holy:

"Love thy neighbor as thyself."  
"Honor thy father and thy mother."  
"Revere the Lord thy God."  
"Remove the stumbling block from before the blind."  
"Do not bear a grudge."  
"Do not seek vengeance."  
"Speak truth and never falsehood."

*Kedusha* is a way of life sanctioned by ethical concerns, and by the understanding which the individual brings to his search. All that takes place in a synagogue should be conducive to making us understand how we can become *kadosh*, holy.

Why do we worship regularly? Because it is a constant caution against the humdrum, the base, and the vulgar, which might divert us from our concern with *kedusha*.

Why is there a congregation? Because holiness is not something one can achieve alone. We need the cooperation of family and friends. Worship, study, and congregation are the tra-

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## The Synagogue: Does It Have a Future?

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ditional collective terms which describe synagogue life.

Does the modern synagogue really help us find *kedusha*? There is beauty to our ritual. There are discussions of moral values in our schools. The proper words are spoken. But how often do we touch the living flesh? There is too much that is peripheral.

The test of worship is not its theological correctness but its vitality. Does it touch me? Does it change me? In what ways? The proof of faith lies not in logic but in life. Is it effective? Can it be a catalyst to change my inner being? Does it move people to act better than they might otherwise? What does it do for me?

Compare the synagogue of the shtetl with the modern synagogue—a little room, Jews come in the morning for worship or for Talmud study, and three times a day for public worship. Occasionally there would be a great fight over some shtetl policy. At its best, it was a place of learning and worship by people who truly cared. It was a place of wrestling with life. It was a center of communal life. But the shtetl was self-enclosed and parochial.

19th century reform recognized that we were part of a larger world and we needed to know how to relate to that world. We sought to bring the modern world's aesthetics—its music, its beauty—into the synagogue. We sought to explain our faith as much to those outside the synagogue walls as to ourselves. We sought to make ourselves respected and respectable. The 19th century was the age of humanism, of emancipation and optimism, and we Reform Jews sought to be reasonable and sweet and understanding in all that we said and did.

But you and I live after Auschwitz. Confidence has been bled from our lives. Our spirits are emotionally darker than those of our ancestors a hundred years ago. We are no longer conditioned to be optimistic, for we have learned that hate is not easily eradicated, that sweet reason does not necessarily change the ways in which men govern their lives or bring justice to their societies.

What will the synagogue be like a generation from now? I believe that synagogues will be larger, but that

groups within the synagogue will be smaller, more intimate. Many more will speak. Our contacts will be more intimate. The synagogue will be a place where people come and rub

*We must study our tradition so that we draw from it insights which deal with the confusions of our day, which tell us not so much what is right politically or necessary economically but how we fill each day with grace and meaning.*

elbows, not pass silently through revolving doors. The groups within the synagogue will be groups to whom we can relate, as people to people. The one thing you and I must learn is how to be human, and we can learn that only as we meet with other humans and share intimacy with them. That means we will have real contact with people beyond the narrow, nuclear units of which we are a part. We come here for friendship and the support that friendship brings. We come here for learning, to share experience and insight. We come here to meet with those whose life experience is similar to ours and whose hopes parallel ours.

Tomorrow's synagogue will have to provide a variety of opportunities for such meetings. There will be more dance, more singing, more movement, less concern with decorum, more with awareness, sensitivity, and congregation.

It will not be easy. Changes will demand flexibility from all of us. It's easy to be happy with familiar ways, less so with changes. But I am confident that men and women are turning to faith with a greater sense of urgency.

Over the past years, in universities and informal meetings, hundreds of young Jews have taken courses in mysticism. Why? Because they didn't find enough life, enough warmth, enough depth, in the worship presented to them in their synagogues. And they felt the need for quiet and warmth, the experience of true worship. What is true of worship and true of meeting is also true of learning. We must study our tradition so that we draw from it insights which deal with the con-

fusions of our day, which tell us not so much what is right politically or necessary economically but how we fill each day with grace and meaning.

More and more we turn to the synagogue to support our identity as Jews. That identity is threatened in the Soviet Union. It is threatened in the Middle East. At the very least it is threatened here by affluence and ease.

We turn to the synagogue for support, for encouragement, for the grace which inspires life—the values which Jews have always found in their synagogues.

The next years will be changeful years, exciting years, revolutionary years, years in which we will need a vital faith. If we don't find such a faith, our young people will turn increasingly to other sources of spiritual insight and to other ideologies for support. I would far rather have them here. What we have to teach is humane. It is full of love, full of respect for each other and for all humanity, full of dignity and nobility. ■

### New High Holy Day Prayer Books Available

Though the High Holy Days are still some time away, the new High Holy Day prayer books, *The Gates of Repentance* are here. The prayer books can be purchased for \$13 per copy from the Main Temple by contacting Carole Flanik, 791-7755, or the Branch by contacting Martha Tripi, 831-3233 and from the Gift Center on Sunday mornings.

**The Matza is the bread of poverty that our ancestors ate.  
Let all who are hungry come and eat!  
Let all who are in need share in the hope of Passover!  
This year we all are slaves,  
Next year may we all be free.**

**We renew our commitment to help all who are hungry around the world, so that next year we all may be free by making contributions to The Temple Hunger Fund.**



# The Temple Bulletin



Vol. LXXV, No. 17 April 9, 1989



## PURIM

Daniel Jeremy Silver

March 12, 1989

Judaism and Christianity differ in their views of the Bible. Christianity considers the Bible a single unit. When you go into a Protestant church, you usually see two pulpits on the altar. One is called a lectionary. A large pulpit bible sits on it and from it the Bible is read during services. The Protestants assume that the Bible is a coherent unity, and Protestant thinkers are tempted to write about Old Testament theology. Their assumption is that one can write a single coherent theology of this Biblical literature.

No book is displayed in the synagogue. The Torah itself is not visible. The scroll in the ark is not the whole Bible but the text of only five books of the Bible, the five books of Moses. At services, we take out the Torah and read a portion of it. Each book has its own history and special degree of significance.

The Torah is our constitution: it represents the revelation. The Psalms represent the great hymns sung during services at the Second Temple. The prophets present our highest ethical thoughts. Wisdom writings present the collective literature of our sages. We find value in all the Biblical books, but we do not attest that these books are all of equal value. No one in the synagogue has ever claimed that the Bible

represents a single consistent and coherent understanding of life. There are different philosophies in the Bible. Each of these philosophies reflects individual attitudes about nature, God, and God's relations with man and creation.

We will soon read from the *Megillah*. The word *megillah* means scroll. Originally, all of the books of the Bible appeared in this scroll form. It was only in the late Roman period that folio editions—that is, collected texts—of the 39 books of the Bible began to appear. Earlier, they were published separately.

One of the most fascinating studies is to try to understand how these particular 39 books were chosen from a much larger Judean library. By the 5th century BCE, the Torah—the five books of Moses—had taken their present form. They had begun to be accepted as Judaism's constitution, the covenant. Over the next half a millennium, an informal consensus emerged as to which books were to be included, and which books would not be, in the Bible.

As far as we know, no votes were taken on whether to include or exclude the scroll of Esther. This was debated for over 500 years, and as late as the second century of our era, just 2700

years ago, one of the patriarchs of Babylonian Judaism, Samuel, was still declaring that Esther was not worthy of being part of the Biblical canon.

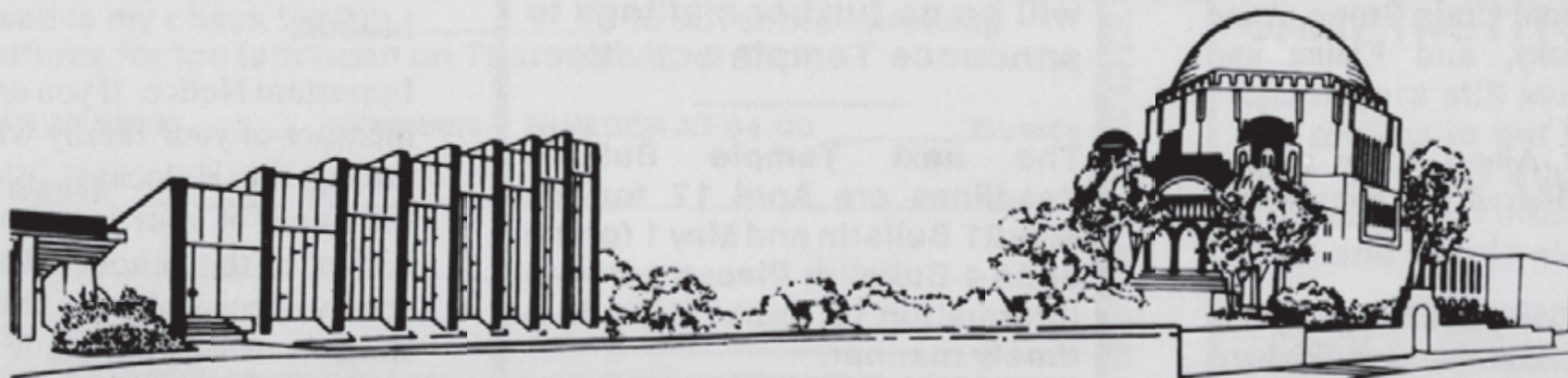
A striking confirmation of this came to light during the excavations at the Dead Sea caves. In the library there, at Qumran, fragments of every book of the Bible were found—save one. Thirty-eight of the thirty-nine  
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Sunday Morning Services  
At The Branch 10:30a.m.  
Coffee Hour 9:30a.m.

April 9, 1989  
**TYA CREATIVE SERVICE**  
Dr. Karel Kovnat  
Scott Siegel  
"A Conversation Between  
the Generations: Maintaining  
the Bond to our Heritage"

April 16, 1989  
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver  
"Redemption"

Friday Evening Services  
The Temple 5:30p.m.





## Purim

*continued from page 1*

books were found. The only exception was the book of Esther. There is no indication that Esther was considered "Biblical" by those who lived in Qumran from about the second century BCE down to the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 of our era.

What was there about the scroll of Esther that made some people want to exclude it from the Bible? We don't really know. There have been many guesses. One suggests Esther didn't win easy acceptance because it's so tolerant of intermarriage. King Ahasuerus may have been a good catch, but for a lovely Jewish maiden, even the emperor of Persia was tref.

Others argue that the book of Esther may have come under fire because of its tolerance of ritual laxity. There is no indication that once she became Queen, Esther kept a kosher palace.

Others point to the immodesty of Esther's behavior. What nice Jewish girl would enter the Miss Shushan contest of 400 BC and be ogled by men?

All these objections are true, but I doubt that any were deemed valid. The book of Ruth treats intermarriage very positively, and no objections were raised to its inclusion in the Bible. Ruth is a convert who becomes the great-grandmother of King David. The book of Daniel is included, though Daniel lived in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, and no concern is expressed that he might not have been fastidious about what he ate.

And as far as the Playboy magazine attitude goes, which is so much a part of Esther, well—Solomon had a large harem, and the Bible in no way discounts his wisdom or his quality.

There are two reasons why the book of Esther was not easily accepted into the Biblical canon. One is formal, technical, and the other is substantive—and therefore more relevant to us.

The technical reason has to do with the authorization of Purim. According to the scripture, God mandated a specific list of holy days: the Sabbath, the new moon, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and the pilgrimage festivals: Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot. The Torah warns that Jews are not to add or subtract from this list

of holy days. The Jewish people celebrated other holidays—among them Hanukah and Purim—but never declared these were mandated by God. If including the Book of Esther in the Bible might make people assume that God had gone back on his word, then they had to add a detail to the Purim

*"At times we believe that if we work diligently, doors will open and we will be rewarded. Later we discover this isn't quite the way it works..."*

story: that its observance was the result of a decision by Esther and Mordecai. Mordecai and Esther decided that all the Jews of Persia should commemorate the day when they had ease from their enemies, and when sorrow gave way to gladness.

The Book of Esther presents a tale of palace intrigue and coincidence. In this story the movement of events is determined by the ambitions of individuals. There is no statement in Esther that God controls history or that our faithfulness to the covenant determines our fate. Yet this is basic Jewish philosophy in most other books of the Bible. Most Biblical material is written out of a belief in divine providence: God in His grace chose Israel, brought Israel from slavery into freedom, from freedom into the Promised Land. Once Israel comes to Sinai, the nation is bound to the Covenant: "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat of the fruit of the land. If you are disobedient and rebel, you shall be destroyed by the sword."

Biblical history assumes that what happens to us is a direct consequence of our goodness or wilfulness: "as you sow, so shall you reap."

Why was the generation of Noah destroyed? Because God saw violence throughout the world.

Why was Noah saved? Because he was the one upright and righteous man in an evil generation.

Why was Jonah sent to preach the destruction of Nineveh? Because the city deserved its reputation for evil.

Why did God repent of the decision? Because the people repented and turned away from the evil of their ways

and implored God for forgiveness. And He forgave them.

Much of the Bible is a series of vignettes on the theme that we are judged by God. If we live up to the commandments, God rewards us, keeps us secure in our land, establishes peace for us and prosperity. When we sin, we bring on our own misfortune.

Why are the Jews condemned to death in the book of Esther? Not because they are declared to be sinful or wicked, nor because their generation of Persian Jews was worse than earlier generations. They were condemned simply because the Grand Vizier, Haman, felt himself humiliated. He had been forced to show honor to Mordecai the Jew, the very honor he had assumed was reserved for him. Haman became embittered and determined to wreak his vengeance not only on Mordecai but on all Mordecai's people. So the Jews are to be punished not by God but by fate, chance, bad luck, a bad man's bad temper. It is not a question of deserved punishment. And why are the Jews redeemed? Not because they repent and change their ways but because the Queen and a courtier, Esther and Mordecai, create a successful strategy. They succeed in unmasking Haman so that the King takes away from him the authority under which he planned to kill Persia's Jews.

What we have in the book of Esther then is a history quite different in character from other Biblical histories. Esther emphasizes the mystery of fate. God cares for us without regard for our acts. True, deliverance will come to the Jew, but it is not clear why. We are not assumed to be in control of our destiny.

This attitude toward our future differs from the attitudes expressed in other books of the Bible. In the Psalms you find words of confidence: If you are good and faithful, God in turn will be faithful. "I have been a young man and now I am an old man and I have never seen a righteous man forsaken by God." Yet, in the same Bible, Job protests that he suffers not for any sins of his own but because God chose to test him—a very different view.

The book of Deuteronomy centers on the assumption that if we are faith-

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## LUNCH WITH THE RABBI

Don't miss this opportunity for conversation with  
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Sponsored by the TMC - Open to all Temple members  
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Downtown gatherings are  
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J. Norman Stark  
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696-2390

### May 2, UPTOWN

Uptown gatherings are held  
at the Beachwood Sheraton.

R.S.V.P.: Don Evans  
2403 Belvoir Blvd., 44118  
752-4400

Cost for the lunch is \$10.00

## Mazal Tov to our B'nai Mitzvah



Photo by Janine Sor

Mazal tov to Joshua Mayers, son of  
Ruth and Dr. Doug Mayers.  
Bar Mitzvah April 29, 1989.

## Purim

*continued from page 8*

ful to the covenant, we will be secure in our land. But the cynic Ecclesiastes wonders "what profit hath man of all that he labors under the sun?"

I suggest that these two attitudes toward history—neither of them provable, obviously—are characteristics of our human attitudes toward life. At times we believe that if we work diligently, doors will open and we will be rewarded. Later we discover this isn't quite the way it works—that sometimes we work very hard and achieve, and sometimes we work with equal diligence yet doors are shut in our face. Sometimes as we consider the strange concatenations of history, it seems as if we do, in fact, get our just desserts. And other times we see the wicked end up successful, and the good abused.

The Bible is not a single coherent document. It expresses different attitudes taken by different people toward history and toward life itself. That we find all these attitudes in the Bible is one of the reasons Biblical literature has survived.

Why did they finally accept Esther as part of the canon? Here, again, I would suggest there are two reasons: one is historical, the other theological.

The historical reason has to do with the nature of the holiday of Purim. You'll recall that there was a Northern Kingdom called Israel and a Southern Kingdom called Judah. In 722 BCE, the Assyrians came down, overwhelmed the Northern Kingdom and took its leadership into exile. You have here the beginning of the myth of

the lost ten tribes. Several centuries later, in 597 and 586 BCE, another enemy arose. The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, destroyed The Temple, and took the leaders of the remaining tribes into exile. These exiles were settled in and around the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, in what is today called Iraq, the land that the Bible called Persia. Late in the 6th century BCE, the Persians allowed Jews to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild The Temple. Some returned. The majority, however, chose to remain in the diaspora. For the next four or five centuries, this Persian diaspora was the wealthiest and most powerful center of Jewish life. That center, like our own, had an annual UJA campaign which raised money for the repair of the walls of Jerusalem and for human services in the city. At some point, Purim, in origin a Persian Jewish holiday, became central in Jewish life. Such was the importance of this Persian center that its special holiday became an accepted holy day to all Jews.

There may be another reason for the decision to include Esther that has to do with the national drama that Purim commemorates. Because of Haman's power to act on his anger, all Jews were to be killed. When Mordecai hears that Haman's writ of genocide has been published, he writes a note to Esther, in which he says: "Think not that you will escape the fate of your people in the King's palace. Think not that because you are Queen, Haman doesn't know that you're Jewish and that you will escape..." Consider, rather, that you have come to this

estate not because you were the most beautiful woman in the kingdom but so you could play a specific role in God's plans. Consider what you can do... See what your role should be in the succor of your people."

The lesson is that the rich and powerful Jews of the diaspora must not separate their well-being from that of the ordinary Jew—an important moral lesson. But more important still is the assumption behind this story—that God's ways are mysterious. God redeems, but we are not clear on what terms He redeems or why He redeems. We all sense that we have a place in God's scheme. We have a place in God's scheme if we but use the chance, the office, the opportunity, wisely.

You and I are not courtiers or queens. Still, we have our role, not only in the deliverance of our people but in the upbuilding of civilization. This sense of purpose, which somehow reflects a mysterious divine plan, is one which I think we can accept, even though we may have great doubts that there is any moral balance between acts and their recompense.

On Purim then, when we talk of survival, we pray not only for physical survival but that we may become active agents of redemption. Perhaps we have come to this place as part of some scheme of God's. If we could only recognize how we can reach out to help save the Jewish people, we will have fulfilled our purpose, and then truly will we have rest from our enemies, sorrow will give way to gladness. ■





## Monotheism

Daniel Jeremy Silver

March 26, 1989

If you read through an early New England catechism, you may find this couplet: "How odd that God the Jews should choose." In their innocent arrogance, the writers believed they could have chosen far more appropriate bearers for God's teachings.

It might have surprised these Yankees to know that 2000 years earlier, the rabbis had puzzled the same oddity. How was it, among all the mighty empires of the world, that our fathers were chosen to be the bearers of God's light?

The rabbis answered that it was precisely because we were the least. God did not wish His laws of truth and peace to be imposed by the sword. As a mighty nation imposes its will, even laws of gentleness and kindness are subverted as they are imposed.

Let's reverse the jingle. How odd the Jews, one God should choose. How was it that our fathers came to the vision of the one, all-embracing, spiritual power? Monotheism, the belief in one God, seems to us a most natural idea. It is, after all, now shared by all the peoples of Western civilization and is embodied in the teachings of the great faiths of the West.

Our science demands some such unitary explanation of the universe. Our science insists there are simple, over-arching laws which bind all nature together, that there is some single force of energy by which the universe is bound as one. Monotheism seems to be an elemental requirement of life.

It did not seem so to our ancestors. When they looked about them, the world they saw seemed to be made up of separate parts. Here was the moon, moving across the night sky. Later, the sun came on a different orbit. Each star had its own ellipse. There was the stream that bubbled up out of a seemingly bottomless source. There was the wind and no man knew from where it came. Our fathers assumed naturally that in each of the great natural forces dwelt some power, a god, which directed its destiny.

What was it that bound together the sun, the moon, the stars, and the brook? Precious little. Since there was

no apparent similarity between them, each must be directed by its own deity. Common sense, 3000 years ago, demanded a polytheistic explanation of life.

How odd, then, the Jews one God should choose. What allowed our fathers to make the conceptual leap, to see that behind all the many elements of nature, there was, metaphorically, one hand and one wisdom?

We do not know. Some explain that our people were bedouin shepherds who lived close to the empty spaces and therefore clearly saw the unrolling cycles of nature. But how explain that of all bedouins, only our fathers, the Hebrews, abandoned polytheism? How explain that they abandoned it in favor of a single, creative principle?

Some argue that as desert folk, we avoided the pretensions associated with various gods. When one country conquered another, it destroyed the defeated gods or reduced them to a subordinate place in the new pantheon. Watching these changes, our fathers smiled to themselves and came to understand that behind all gods, there was only One.

Others suggest that our fathers watched a young Pharaoh, Akhenaton, destroy all the statues in the temples of Egypt save that of his patron god, Atun. They saw Egypt's other gods—Ra, Isis, Anubis—could not protect their priests and sanctuaries. And our fathers came to understand that there was only a single, all-powerful god, a One.

But why was this lesson lost on all the other peoples of antiquity?

The Bible explains simply: God had revealed His essence, His oneness, to Moses at Sinai. Frankly, we have no better explanation. Somewhere in the spiritual genius which marked our people, a man—it may have been Moses, we know not exactly—reached out with his mind into the darkness and touched the vision of the one God.

Science did not demand it. Indeed, science argued against it. Reason did not demand it. Indeed, reasonable men of the day argued against it. So,

how odd the Jews one God should choose.

God is, and God is one. Our fathers offered their prayers only to the one God, the unique God, the God who had created all. This is the fundamental religious postulate of our people. The Lord, He is God and there are no other gods. No angels and demons, no archangels and no Satans, no people of the night, no spirits which fly in the moonlight, no voices which call from the grave.

Twice each day our fathers left off ploughing and stopped herding sheep and spoke the simple watchword: "The Lord is One." The phrase is written high above our ark. It is the climactic formula of our worship. It is the ultimate affirmation spoken by the Jew before he dies: "Shema Yisroel, Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."

There is a God. Life is not a chance chemical explosion or a hapless endurance contest. There is purpose and promise to life. God is the guarantor that it all has meaning.

Life is a blessing. God is. God is one.

Sometimes people who ought to know better say that Judaism has no dogma. Those who find belief embarrassing might wish so. Certainly, many find theology awkward. Certainly we have never affirmed a catechism. We have no parallel to the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, or the Westminster Confession. But we do have fundamental doctrine: The Lord is One.

Some may be shocked by our fathers' uncompromising attacks on idols and idol worship. We live in an age of good will. We reach out to join with others in common enterprise. Ecumenicism is our watchword. We are eager for cooperation. But in our Bible, we see people determined to "obliterate the foreign gods." The high places must be torn down, stone by stone, and ploughed under. Sacred groves must be cut down, their timber used for firewood. Foreign gods were vanity, shameful and worse. There could be no accommodation between the people of the one God and those



who worship many gods. Our ancestors would have been surprised to hear some of their descendants argue: "It matters not what you believe, so long as you believe." "It matters not how you worship so long as you worship."

It did matter if you worshipped the fire god Maloch, whose worship required children to pass through fire to satisfy him.

It did matter if you offered allegiance to one of the great fertility cults of Canaan. You offered it at a shrine which was scandalous for its orgiastic rites.

It matters whether you offer your loyalty to the god of a master race and shout "Seig Heil." Worship of a master race leads to war, to grinding the poor and weak under an iron boot.

It does matter what you believe. Worship may be modest and high-minded, or it can be vulgar and depraved. Outrageous beliefs lead to outrageous actions.

The worship of the one God permits only one war: the war against want, against injustice, against hate, and against cruelty.

Belief itself is not a virtue. Belief is simply attachment to some idea, to some hope. What if you are attached to a base idea, or a corrupt hope? Perversions, cruelty, and bloodletting can be demanded by powerful beliefs.

Understanding this, we can understand why our fathers were at war with all forms of idolatry.

Judaism has never broken heads with people who simply would not see our particular way, or would not join in our particular liturgy.

Monotheism was not a matter of theology. It was a matter of humanity.

If Ra, the great god of Egypt, created man, then the Egyptian was of the master race. If Marduk, the great god of the Babylonians, created man, then they were the master race. Idolatry inevitably separated men into races and nations. Idolatry set race against race and nation against nation. It consecrated the class system. Racism thrives in the soil of idolatry. Even the greatest pagan philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, never freed themselves of the conceits of race. To these men, the slave was a living tool, subhuman, barbarian, a lesser breed without the law.

What is justice in an idolatrous world? Justice is pleasure for the well-born and the whip for the slave.

What is peace in an idolatrous world? Peace must inevitably be the conquest of the people who worship gods other than yours. The idolatrous world was a fragmented world. It saw

only the privilege of one's own caste. Idolatry precludes the notion of a single humanity.

So our fathers warred with idolatry because it led to racism, to society divided between free and slave. It legitimized arrogant privileges some men enjoyed at the expense of others. Idolatry destroyed man's balance, the principle of moderation. God is one, the one God who is served best by the moral life.

For the polytheist, there is a god of life and a god of death. The Egyptians centered their worship on the god of death and literally buried their national wealth beneath monuments and pyramids. They put into the sand not only their mummies, but their labor, schools, hospitals, roads, irrigation—all that might have lifted the burden of slavery and of abjectness from the mass of their people, all that might have spurred progress.

Canaan's ritual centered on an agricultural cult—the worship of the Baalim or gods of fertility. Theirs was the myth that the great god of the sky mated each year with Mother Earth and out of this mating came the next year's harvest—an impressive myth. But Baal worshippers at their shrines imitated the symbolic mating of the gods. How many shrines of antiquity became synonymous with drunken revelry?

Israel viewed God as a moral being, the guarantor that there is a moral principle in the universe. Israel warred with idolatry because idolatry was at war with morality.

In what does God's morality consist? I am the Lord, a God of Mercy and a God of Righteousness. God is the ultimate principle of justice, decency, maturity, of righteousness.

So much for history. What of our own day? Men no longer raise stone shrines on hilltops or plant sacred groves for sacred dances. Men no longer make curious images to place within the holy places of sanctuaries. We make no more idols.

Or do we? What are those little plastic figures on the dashboards of cars? Innocent, certainly, unless the car's driver is convinced that these deities protect when the foot is heavy on the accelerator pedal. Surely, the charms you wear about your neck are only relics of a superstitious past—are they not also signposts on the road to idolatry?

What of the deity of the white skin—the racist god? What of the deities of race, of pride of birth and pride of place? We are scandalized

that the ancients should offer human sacrifice to their gods. I put to you that each decade we offer greater sacrifice to the gods of national ambition and greed.

Does not each of us have our own private set of idols? Have we not projected into the heavens a rather indulgent deity who forgives us our foibles, applauds our trivial accomplishments, and does not rebuke us for neglecting the needs of others?

We no longer construct altars of stone or idols of wood, but we do worship ideologies and we do at times assume that what the state demands must be granted. We have enshrined our privilege. We seek divine reassurance that what we have is rightfully granted to us and what another lacks is simply his bad luck. In the year 63 BCE the emperor Pompeii marched into Jerusalem at the head of Roman legions. He was a pagan, and an inquisitive man who had been surprised to hear that Jews worshiped an invisible God. He was convinced that the Temple's holy of holies must have a cult object. A man of action, he brushed aside tact and taste to satisfy his curiosity. Pompeii entered the holy of holies, and found it to be an empty room.

Our sanctuaries are empty and yet they are full. They are full with the knowledge of the one God, the God who is the God of all. The God we know is in and of and yet beyond the spiritual underpinning of the universe.

We have never put images in our holy of holies, but many of us have put images into our private sanctuaries.

The rabbis asked: "Why is it only one man—Adam—was created?"

They answered: "That none might say, *my* ancestor was created first and I have a first claim on God."

They answered: "That none might say, *my* ancestor was created a free man, your ancestors were created slaves, mine to rule, yours to obey."

Why was only one man created? That all should be able to say: "That man is my brother."

There is the same law, one law, for the stranger and for the home-born. I must be as considerate with those of other groups as I am with my own. My responsibilities extend as widely as do God's.

One creator. One creation. One humanity. One moral law.

Thank God the Jews one God did choose. ■





# Redemption

Daniel Jeremy Silver

April 16, 1989

In the 9th pre-Christian century there arose in Israel a majestic figure, Eliahu Hanavi, Elijah the Prophet, or as he is introduced to us in Scripture, Elijah the Tishbite of those who settled in Gilead. Such was the impress of his mysterious and magnificent presence that he became a legend, a legend in his own time and for all times. You and I, children of a more realistic age, will set a place for him at our Seder table. During the meal we will open the door that Elijah may know that he is eagerly awaited. We are eager to welcome this fierce-eyed prophet as a guest at our festival of freedom.

How is it that this man who fearlessly spoke the word of God became the patron saint of home and family? How did he become the acclaimed herald of the Messiah?

Piety played its part, but Elijah seems to be a Promethean being whose eye burns with an inner fire and whose voice seems to come directly from the heavens. He is one of the rare men who impresses his age as being drawn in larger than human terms—the visible conscience of his time.

How did Elijah, the man, become Elijah the legend?

We cannot unravel this mystery. The facts are lost to history. But this much we do know: that the legend of Elijah was quickly born. Elijah apparently is a real character of Biblical history who quite early in Biblical times becomes legendary.

The prophet Malachi predicts that Elijah will return in the end of days. Malachi says Elijah will turn the hearts of the children to the parents and the hearts of the parents to the children, and there will be amity in the home and understanding between the generations. Malachi further says that God will send Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of Redemption.

The editors of the Bible took this last promise literally. The promise of

redemption appears often in our literature. Elijah will appear. He is not the Messiah, but he is the herald of the Messiah. When he comes, people will know that the time of release from tyranny and homelessness is at hand, that Israel's redemption is here.

You can see the image of Elijah, bestride a white donkey, symbol of the Messiah, in medieval illuminated *haggadot*. He is mounted for his entrance into Jerusalem. The shofar, the horn of redemption, is held high in his hand. He speaks the climactic words: "Behold peace has been proclaimed unto the world."

In the Book of Kings, Elijah is already veiled in legend. This is passing strange, for the Bible is a uniquely human book. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, are pictured as ordinary human beings cut from the same cloth as we are. Their wisdom and their triumphs and their follies are the same kind of wisdom, triumph and folly of which we are capable.

Elijah is an exception. When Elijah first appears, he is already the wonder worker, the faith healer, the larger-than-life conscience of his age. Elijah does not grow and mature as other men do. He appears full-blown. He is from the beginning the spokesman of God, and the forerunner of the Messiah.

Moses dies, as all men must. Elijah is translated, alive, into the heavens. He and his disciple Elisha were walking and talking, when suddenly a chariot of fire appears, and Elijah is taken away, up into the heavens, by a whirlwind.

Elijah leaves us no teaching. We are not encouraged to emulate him. The Bible recognizes his distinction and impresses us with his spirit. It is that spirit which I should like to examine this morning. I propose to do so by asking a question: How is it that this holy man and this holiday—Pesach—are joined? In the Bible Elijah has nothing to do with Passover.

Why, then, on Seder night do we open our door for Elijah? Why do we prepare a place for him at our table? To understand this connection, we must understand the Passover. Passover celebrates the Exodus from Egypt. We were slaves and the Lord Our God delivered us with a mighty hand. Seder night, when we raise the matzah, we say: "This is the bread of affliction, which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt... let all who are hungry come and eat, let all who are in want come and celebrate the Passover with us. May it be thy will, O Lord our God, to free all men from subjugation and enslavement. Next year at this season, may the whole household of Israel be free." The union of a holy man and the Passover holiday was a natural union. Passover celebrates freedom and consecrates hope. Elijah personifies freedom and hope.

The Bible tells us that the first Passover was a night of anxiety. Would the Lord redeem Israel? Often over the centuries we have wondered if the Lord would give Israel some reason to hope. Would God calm the mob raging through the ghetto on Easter Sunday? Many a time, men looked around eagerly to discover where Elijah the prophet might be.

But what of us, we who no longer believe that Elijah will appear at our door? Why do we continue the ritual of setting a place for Elijah at our table?

We, too, need to take hope into our hearts. It is hard to have faith and confidence in the future when missiles ready to destroy the world cruise above us, when there is violence in the streets and bitterness between peoples and nations. Yet we need to hold on to hope. We need to reconsecrate ourselves to the cause of freedom. We need to welcome into our hearts the hope which keeps us steadfast. Without hope we turn away from community responsibility and turn in on

(continued on page 8)



## Redemption (continued)

ourselves. With hope, we assume our responsibilities and set out to serve God and man.

Hope can logically be dismissed as unreasonable. The best laid plans of men oft go astray. But it is equally true that despite countless setbacks, men have pulled themselves out of the primal mire and clawed their way up the ladder of civilization. It is hard to prove that there can be a time when every man can sit under his vine... and under his fig tree and none will make him afraid. Much argues against it, but God argues for this vision, history argues for it, and Elijah argues for it.

The Bible presents Elijah as a miracle worker in the service of God. Elijah becomes the monitor of King Ahab, who worshiped the God of Israel but also worshiped other gods. The Israelites who followed Ahab did as he did. Elijah calls down punishment upon a disobedient generation: "As the Lord liveth before whom I stand, there shall be no more dew or rain all these years until I will it." At his word the heavens shut tight. For three years no rain falls upon the land. The nation blames Elijah and he flees east of the Jordan. There God hides Elijah in a cave and provides shelter and sustenance for him. A stream that normally flows for only a week or two in the rainy season now flows year-round. Birds airlift his food.

Legend embroidered Elijah's miracle—working powers. He becomes a divinely sent angel, who time and again saves Israel in moments of great danger.

Here is a Talmudic tale of Elijah's miraculous powers: A sage, Alazar, was imprisoned on false charges by the Persians. They spirited him to a city miles from his home where there would be no witnesses to defend him. But Elijah appears and testifies and Alazar is proved innocent.

Some of the tales of Elijah are tales of daring-do. Some are humble, home-ly tales. The Talmud tells us a sage named Ravi had a terrible toothache which lasted for 13 years. Obviously, he needed a good dentist but none was available. Fortunately, Elijah came to Ravi in the guise of a fellow sage and asked after Ravi's health. Ravi complained of his toothache. Elijah touched the painful molars and the pain was eased. So grateful was Ravi

that the next day he brought all of his wealth to his fellow sage—Rav Hiya—who was astonished by this generosity. Hiya denied he had visited Ravi or healed him. Ravi's faith was so great that he presented Hiya all his wealth. Jewish literature has an ethical bent, and most of the miracle tales about Elijah have a moral. During the days of the Roman persecution a certain Jew, Ula, heard that he was to be imprisoned. He fled to Lydda. There he hid in the house of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi. The Roman CIA learned where he was hiding and summoned Joshua to headquarters. He was told: Ula must appear in six hours or the entire Jewish quarter will be razed and all its inhabitants killed. Rabbi Joshua entreated Ula, who finally agreed to turn himself in. At the last moment before Ula's execution, Elijah came down and covered Ula with his mantle, hiding him from the Romans and allowing him to escape. But the story does not end here. Elijah appears to Rabbi Joshua and protests against his cooperation with the Romans. "What could I do?" Joshua responds. "The Romans are all powerful. They demanded his arrest. Is it not written in our law that a man must give himself over to the secular authorities if his life can guarantee the life of an entire community?" Yes, that is the law, Elijah agrees, but is there not a higher law? Were there not other possibilities? You might have offered yourself as a hostage.

Elijah is the patron saint of those in need. He is Israel's knight who succors those in distress. But he is not only a savior of individuals. He is the nation's savior. It is he who will come at the end of days and announce the Messiah.

The Kabbalists of Palestine believed the Sabbath was a foretaste of Messianic times. Each week when the Sabbath was turning again into the work day, they sought to summon Elijah that he might save them from returning to the bitterness of daily life. Their song became one of the most beloved folk tunes of our people: *Elijah, Elijah the prophet, Elijah of Gilead, Elijah, Elijah, Elijah.*

On Seder night we will place on our tables a fifth cup—the cup of Elijah—in hopeful expectation of the Messianic age. This cup was often in the shape of a stag. We have one in our

Temple Museum. The cup invokes the promise of the Song of Songs: "Behold my beloved, behold he comes bounding up the hills, skipping on the mountains. My beloved is as a gazelle or a young stag. Behold my beloved speaks. He says unto me, Arise my fair one and come away, . . . for lo the winter is past, the rains are over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing is at hand."

Elijah is an incarnation of hope: Do not despair, O Israel. However black the night, there will be a new dawn. However mighty the tyrant, your shackles will be broken.

Have we still need of this ancient hope? We have. Though we moderns are proud of our technology, we have not mastered the anger, greed and violence that roil within. Twentieth-century men have built some institutions of decency, of learning and healing, but also Dachau and the Gulag, and we spend trillions on weapons which can destroy the world. We need the spirit of hope.

Elijah personifies a Jewish hope. He is the zealous guardian of the covenant, who urges: place your hope in God. He represents the urgency to serve God, and to serve God alone. We trust in charms and incantations. We trust in a leader but fail to see his feet of clay. We trust in our community but fail to serve it. We should trust only God as the source of goodness and truth. He alone is worthy of our hope. God alone sustains.

There is a hope which folds its hands and sits back to wait for a miracle. There is a hope which is a challenge, a demand, a command. That is the hope which Elijah personifies.

One of the Elijah stories that may be historical tells of a certain Naboth, a hard-working vintner. His fine orchard was next to royal lands, and Ahab the King and Jezebel his queen coveted Naboth's land. He refused to sell it, for he wanted it to stay in his family.

So the royal couple falsely accused him of treason. He was convicted on perjured evidence and executed. By the law of ancient Israel, the land and property of anyone convicted of treason reverted to the Crown. We are shown the King and Queen happily walking on their new land, when sud-

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## Temple Receives Lisbon Bible



*Mr. Monroe Worth displays the lovely Lisbon Bible received by The Temple on the occasion of his birthday.*

The Temple Library and Museum are most fortunate to be the recipients of a most beautiful facsimile of the Lisbon Bible given in honor of the 80th birthday of Mr. Monroe Worth by members of his loving family.

This pentateuch is one of the finest reproductions of an illuminated medieval manuscript. The original was handwritten and decorated in stunning colors by the scribe Samuel in Portugal in 1482. The original was acquired by the British Library in 1882.

This is a most meaningful way of honoring Mr. Worth in a traditional Jewish manner. This gift will be enjoyed and appreciated by Temple members and visitors for many years to come.

## Redemption (continued)

denly an angry Elijah confronts them. This is Elijah, the real man. He could be killed if the King simply snapped his fingers and ordered a guard to spear the prophet. Elijah is fearless in the cause of God and justice. He thunders at the King: "Wilt thou kill, and also take possession?" There is a higher law than your law and that is the law of God. "In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, there they will lick thine."

This is a man with the courage of his convictions.

There are some who say that hope is deceiving, that we clutch it to make life easier. Nothing could be further from the truth. The cynic or pessimist has a far easier time of it. He can turn away from life, withdraw from the struggle, intellectualize. But the man who is burdened with hope knows responsibility. He cannot escape the prod, the goad that tells him to be up and doing, to serve the Lord. As long as there is injustice in the community, grapple with it.

As long as there is prejudice in the community, seek to be a bearer of light.

As long as men are turned against each other, seek to be a harbinger of peace.

Each of us has within the capacity to extend the arm of friendship to the forlorn and a shoulder of patience to the distraught. Each of us can bring love to the disturbed, help to those in need. We bear on our shoulders the

responsibilities of the community. We can be and, indeed, are God's agents of salvation. And our work need not be in the headlines or among the mighty. We need not be strong or well-known or powerful to do the work of Elijah. Does not each of us have the capacity to lighten someone's burden? And in lightening that burden, do we not free him of pain, anguish and fear? In lightening that burden, are we not Elijah, who personifies freedom? And, therefore, are we not God's agents of salvation?

Elijah the Prophet—welcome him into your homes and your hearts on this Passover. ■

### \*Reminder\*

The Temple Bulletin is your primary vehicle of information about Temple activities. Please remember to post the Bulletin calendar in a prominent place in your home and to r.s.v.p. to the activities you would like to attend. There will be no further mailings to announce Temple activities.

The next Temple Bulletin deadlines are May 28 for the July 2 Bulletin and June 25 for the August 6 Bulletin. Please get your information to Rabbi Haim in a timely manner.

## Temple Family Simchas Mazal tov to . . .



Albert Amster, Anne Angart, Arthur D. Arnson, Ruth B. Cahn, Iris G. Curtis, Mildred Davidson, Rose Guren, Monroe M. Worth on the occasion of their special birthdays.

Terrie and Michael Schumann, parents of Jennifer Leigh who was born on April 19, 1989.

If you would like to share your family simcha with The Temple, please call or write to The Bulletin, 26000 Shaker Blvd., 44122 or 831-3233.

## HUNGER FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

Florence August  
Ruth and Sylvester Brown  
Susan and Bernard Goodman  
Barbara and Dr. Layton Kest  
Toby Lewis  
Dr. Harry Morris  
Lawrence Rubin  
Sylvia Samuels  
Rose and Gilbert Schwartz  
Ruth and Jules Vinney  
Dorothy and Sam Zipp

Total on April 14, 1989: \$19,505

## ADULT HEBREW CLASS

Begins June 13

If you've always wanted to learn to read the Hebrew of the prayer book, then this class is for you. The class will meet for eight weeks on Tuesdays from 11:00 a.m. to noon at The Branch. Contact Rabbi Haim 831-3233. Limited enrollment.

Dates class will meet: June 13, June 20, June 27, July 11, July 18, July 25, August 1 and August 8.





## TEACH ME TO PRAY

Daniel J. Silver

May 7, 1989

When I am asked: What are the disciplines by which a believing Jew is bound? What are the activities which a believing Jew must engage in?—I answer with a proverb written over 2200 years ago by Simon the Just and recorded in our *Mishnah*: "The good life depends upon three types of activity: upon *Torah* (which is learning); upon *Avodah* (which is worship); and upon *Gemilute Hasidim* (which is proper conduct), the right way of comporting ourselves."

The love of *Torah*, my friends, has led our people to build schools and classrooms in addition to our synagogues. Judaism holds human reason sacred, and prefers a mature faith founded in deliberation to an immature faith based on uninformed enthusiasm. The way of *Torah* is an absorption of the accumulated wisdom of the ages and the struggle to apply these teachings to the many problems which disturb our lives.

The rabbis have waged a centuries-long war against ignorance of all kinds. Ignorance breeds fear, and fear breeds folly. Our religious leaders knew full well that intolerance, fanaticism, and bigotry are the offspring of any religion which is more enthusiastic than enlightened.

*Gemilute Hasidim*, proper conduct, led our people to establish a network of social service and social welfare agencies prepared to cope with every human need: burial of the dead, care for the sick, support for the indigent student, advice of all types. These and many other social services were and are offered in the Jewish community. *Gemilute Hasidim* also refers to personal probity, to honesty and strength of character. Our public professions must be proved by our work on behalf of the common good.

*Avodah*, worship, is the third of the disciplines at the heart of Jewish life. *Avodah* means literally, "sacrifice." It referred to the sacrifices brought to The Temple in Jerusalem.

These sacrifices symbolized our

fathers' love for their God, their loyalty to their faith, their gratitude for God's bounty, their hope for God's sustaining support. We have transformed sacrifice into prayer. We have made this transformation using the ancient religious calendar and inspirational Psalms of The Temple. The spirit of *Avodah* is the means through which we express our love of God and our loyalty to Him. And *Avodah* is the means through which God encourages us to continue the struggle for a better life.

Do Jews today still abide by these three disciplines? We have been most successful in the area of *Gemilute Hasidim*. We have built in our communities a network of social welfare agencies staffed by competent, trained specialists and prepared to deal with almost any emergency. Our communities maintain a high level of generous giving. We have succored our brothers in faith wherever they are in need.

Individual Jews have pioneered areas of communal social service and can be found at the head of the battle for civil liberties and the protection of human rights.

We can be extremely proud as Jews of our record in the discipline of *Gemilute Hasidim*.

What of the discipline of *Torah*—of learning? We fall short, but in certain aspects of *Torah* we have been successful. Many of our young people are eager to drink deeply at the fountain of learning.

We number less than three percent of the total population of the United States, yet our young people number more than ten percent of the college population.

Individual Jews have taken leading roles in all areas of research, science and education. But I am afraid that many Jews remain spiritually illiterate. Most religious education is limited to a few years of one-day-a-week Sunday School. All too often the interest we show toward secular learning isn't

matched by the learning available in the synagogue.

Some are working to rectify this lack. Across the country, synagogues sponsor adult education courses—in history, Hebrew, philosophy, current problems. This kind of intellectual exercise appeals to many Jewish adults. It is now possible for a young person to continue his studies in high school—such high schools as we at this Temple pioneered years ago—and in Hillel classes, college courses, and in forums and groups which individual temples sponsor.

We turn now to the discipline of *Avodah*, worship. Can we be as proud of our accomplishments in this field as we are in the field of conduct? Can we be as hopeful of the future as we are in the field of learning? Unfortunately, not. American Jewry is not known for regularity of attendance at worship service. I recently read of a poll taken among Jews that showed fewer than one-half of one percent follow a regimen of weekly prayer. It is strange that we seem to be returning to the hundred and one other activities of the synagogue, rather than to its central activity, to prayer.

Some congregations stimulate service attendance by special events, many extraneous to the discipline of prayer. Too often the service is endured for the sake of the lavish social hour which will follow it.

To know Jewish history is to find this situation both passing strange and passing sad. We are, after all, the people who created the most inspiring prayer book ever written—the Book of Psalms whose hymns are basic to the service of both the synagogue and the church. We are the people who created the form of worship observed by almost all religions throughout the Western world—spoken prayer, a silent meditation, reading from Scripture, and the sermon. We are the people who freed the worshiper from subjugation to a priesthood and

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**THE TEMPLE FRIENDS AND  
NEIGHBORS CLUB**  
(formerly Seniors)

presents

**A Musical Show and Dinner**

**Wednesday, July 12, 1989**

**"The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein"**

**by Jacques Offenbach**

**Performed by the OHIO LIGHT OPERA CO.  
at**

**The College of Wooster**

**Followed by Dinner at  
Lanning's Famous Gourmet Restaurant  
in Bath, Ohio**

**Time of Departure from the Branch: Noon**

**Time of Return to the Branch: 8:00 pm**

**The Temple Branch  
26000 Shaker Blvd.  
Beachwood, Ohio 44122**

**FAN CLUB SHOW AND DINNER**

**July 12, 1989**

**Number attending:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Members (\$35.00 each)**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Guests of Temple members (\$40.00 each)**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Includes transportation,  
ticket for show and dinner.**

**Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to F.A.N Club**

*Clip and Save* **The Temple Picnic June 15  
Raffle Ticket**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

*You must be present at the 6:00 p.m. drawing to win.*

**Teach Me To Pray**

*(continued from page 5)*

taught the worshiper to speak directly to God, not through an intermediary. In every century our people have created hymns and music, poems and prayers of great beauty.

Yet today's Jews find the language of prayer strange on their lips and the discipline of prayer alien to them. How strange; how sad. Judaism without worship is a body without a soul, flesh without heart.

Why has this happened? Why is it that our people, once so enthusiastic about prayer, so literate in prayer, so familiar with prayer, now find prayer to be an alien discipline?

One answer lies in the general situation of our civilization. As you look around at other religions, you find that they, too, are suffering a spiritual numbness. I think this is because many in the West have been supremely self-assured. Our insights into science, technology, and the social sciences led us to feel there was no world we could not conquer and no problem we could not solve. We did not pray to God because we felt we had little need of His support. We came to feel that we could control our destiny. We forgot how often the unexpected intrudes on life. The self-assured man cannot pray for he does not feel the need of prayer or of God. Prayer is born of human need—the simple man prays because he fears.

The man of understanding prays because he recognizes that behind life's pleasures there is brevity, disease, helplessness, and death. Man prays when he recognizes in the universe a power far beyond himself, a power to which he is wholly subservient. Man is not master of his fate but servant to his God.

Prayer is more than petition. I remember an observation by the American philosopher William James that all too many men pray to God as if they were calling a cosmic bellhop, that whenever they picked up the phone and dialed for room service, He would appear with their order. We have all been guilty of such prayer. We all know that much of what we pray for may not be for our good and that God sometimes blesses us by denying our appeals. We also know that God is fully aware of our needs before we utter them. Still, I believe we relieve tension through the articulation of prayer and are able to find hidden



resources which enable us to solve the problems which confront us.

I have prayed to God in need, but I did not pray for a miracle. I prayed for the support and encouragement which He might give me, and I have always felt rewarded by such prayer.

Jewish prayer is much more than petition, but if we deny the petitional aspects of prayer, we deny prayer its central role as a universal human phenomenon.

Prayer among our people is laudatory. It seeks to inspire us with knowledge of God's grandeur. The knowledge of the grandeur of God inspires our obligation to serve Him. Jewish prayer seeks to educate us in the way we should go and the faith in which we should believe. It seeks to inspire us and to challenge us to be up and to be doing in the service of the Lord.

I have found in the last few years that many desire to discuss the subject of prayer. I think the events of the last few decades made us aware that complete self-assurance is an unsuccessful human posture.

In this century we have gone through two horribly devastating world wars. We have seen acts of unbelievable human cruelty by so-called civilized nations. We have found ourselves prisoners of political maneuverings beyond our control. We have found ourselves prisoners of economic cycles in which we are helpless pawns. Many of us have found our lives too shallow to yield full happiness. So we are now more sober. Still confident, perhaps, but no longer supremely self-confident.

This sobering has led us to desire again the encouragement and comfort of prayer. More than one person has come to me with words like these: "Rabbi, I would like to learn how to pray." Most often, there is an explanation: "when I was young, I was never encouraged to pray." Or, "My parents didn't bring me to Temple often and they didn't go often themselves." But the people who tell me this say that when they feel the need to pray and come to the synagogue, they feel out of place. One said, "I was so busy trying to keep up with the service and do what others were doing that I had no chance for reflection or prayer."

When I originally tried to teach people to pray, I tried to explain the structure of our prayer service and the

meanings of its various parts. People were interested in what I had to teach, but I still hadn't answered their question. When they went to services, at my suggestion, they came away with a feeling of alienation. They tended to blame this on the service itself, not on their own lack of knowledge or practice. If they complained that the service was cold or repetitious or uninspiring, I tried honestly to see if their criticisms were valid. In all honesty, I must say that I cannot find validity in them. True, our services are not perfect. Nothing is. Yet the prayer book now in your hands is equal in beauty and inspiration to any that has ever existed. The music you hear at our services is as rich and more varied than any our people has sung throughout our history. The architecture and beauty of our Temple sanctuary has seldom been surpassed in all of our history.

Our ancestors most often prayed in dingy, unattractive rooms, following a long, almost endless service they didn't fully understand. Yet they prayed, they prayed honestly and lovingly. They found sustenance and encouragement in prayer.

Our difficulty with prayer will not be solved by a reformulation of the prayer service itself. What is required is a reform of the attitudes we bring to prayer and a consciousness of Him to whom we pray. The postures of prayer are veneration, awe, reverence, adoration. Do you bring these to the service: veneration? awe? reverence? adoration?

The problem of prayer is the problem of God. We come for prayer, yet we are uncertain of Him to whom we pray. God is a poetic vagary. He is a philosophic principle. We are not conscious of God's vital presence in our daily lives.

You cannot pray when you think that no one is listening. To learn to pray we must learn again to see God, to be conscious of His presence, to be aware of His concern. You must pray in the realization of the fullness of God's power and His concern for your needs.

In the synagogue where I had the privilege of conducting services as a chaplain, the motto over the ark was: "Know before whom you stand." When you ask me, "Rabbi, teach me to pray," that is the beginning of my response: Know before whom you stand.

So I must answer you by indirection, by trying to open your eyes to the presence and power of God about you and in you. We do not have far to go. God is near to us. He is in this hall. He is in the hearts and consciousness of all who brought open hearts and minds. He is in the hearts of all of you who came hoping for inspiration, promising to become better people, hoping to lead better lives. He is in this hall, whose beauty reflects the natural beauty of the world about us and the beauty created by men, which is a reflex of God's creative thought. God is in the music you heard here this morning, whose orderly majesty reflects the music of the spheres. God lies in the words of our prayer book, whose inspiration reveals the needs of all men. God lies in our hearts, calling us to do good, to be honest and upright, to dedicate ourselves to ends beyond personal need, to live lives of service—holy lives. ■

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### **Kim Gottlieb**

*(continued from page 7)*

however, the Jewish child will find their bonds are much stronger than they had realized or admitted and now see no alternative but to raise the children Jewish. When the couple has come to an understanding that is comfortable for them, it is important to make both sets of grandparents feel included and involved in the holidays and celebrations that will follow and not be threatened by the sight of a Christmas tree or a Menorah in their child's home.

It is easy to identify the complex issues that will affect an interfaith marriage. From the time a couple starts to date until the time their children leave their home, the journey is filled with potential time bombs that can explode and cause irreversible damage. By preparing ahead with soul-searching discussions and coming to terms with one's own religious and ethnic identity, these time bombs can be diffused and give birth to a strong religious family that is committed to its Jewishness with respect and knowledge of the other traditions. ■