



## Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

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

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

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

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Untitled sermons (at Temple Beth Torah), 1952-1954.





According to the American Jewish Handbook there are to-day about 5,200,000 Jews in the United States. This seemingly bold statement, however, needs a great deal of qualification. Are there 5,200,000 properly Jews? Or are there <sup>over</sup> 5,200,000 men and women who do not deny such an identity? Or is the merely some label arbitrarily attached to all those who come of Jewish stock. Strangely, and wonderfully, here in America it is not the government with its decennial census which makes such an arbitrary assumption - but it is no official division of citizens according to <sup>their</sup> religion together - but <sup>the division is made by</sup> rather the ~~the~~ demographic of national Jewish organizations with their various statistical exhibits. How much smaller than 5,200,000 is the actual number of 'willing' Jews is a matter of conjecture. This much we know; that slightly less than 3,000,000 men, women, and children are affiliated in one degree or another with synagogues or Jewish schools and that perhaps another half million can be counted on to contribute to Jewish causes. So unless we accept the Nazi hypothesis about the uniqueness and undistinctness of Jewish genes and blood cells, we must admit, in all fairness, that the actual Jewish community at the present moment probably numbers only slightly more than 4,000,000 souls.

6. If the group, one fact can be stated without equivocation, in America the Jewish community is economically and politically the most fortunate contribution of Judaism in the field of Jewish life in all of our 3,000 year history.



A similar inter-penetration can be seen on the political front. Not so many years ago there were - with the exception of the small and well integrated German Jewish community - a Jewish vote. If open immigration was opposed. If anti-discriminatory legislation was proposed. If social justice ~~the~~ policies were advocated. Jewish support could be rallied to a particularist, usually Democratic, candidate. Economic and social self interest as well, let us hope, as the prophetic teaching of our faith made this so. Hitler and Revision fractions revealed for obvious reasons the basic identity of interest in our group. But already a change could be seen. No longer did the advocates of embargo and of boycott; of opening the doors of America - justify that of securing a home in social work and social work only. Samuel Taft was as helpful in securing American support for Daniel and Samuel Lehman.

The economic advances, increased social integration, educational  
fraternization, and closer cooperation brought Jews into the ranks of  
both national parties and <sup>all</sup> ethnic groups. Jewish membership varied  
differently than in unassimilated Jews. The Jewish League noted difficulties  
in the Jewish electorate. It became increasingly difficult to deliver  
to Jewish voters and even candidates, members of the party, found that they  
had to have other qualifications before they were elected. Now the  
Democrat a few could be members of the House. Now the Republican  
a few could be Solicitor General and head of the Atomic Energy Commission.  
No longer was Jewish affiliation a barrier to political ambitions  
in other than Jewish areas. There is a Jewish Senator from a new  
England state with less than 4% <sup>of Jewish</sup> population. A young Jewish friend of  
mine was elected last year State Senator from Haverhill  
Massachusetts where his religious brethren could vote across with  
less than 1% of the vote. Again this has now happened before  
our long history. Oh, there have always been Jewish courtiers and  
diplomats - but they were the faithful representatives of the  
Jewish community - rarely representatives of the whole community.  
Only present day France can claim to have achieved the same  
measure of political liberalization.

Culturally, too, the present is event-filled and the future sanguine. The Jewish Theatre has rapidly disappeared in America to be replaced by a steady stream of talented co-religionist ~~advancing~~<sup>advancing</sup> onto the general stage. And I know no religion label except when a man like



Culturally, also, the interpenetration of Jewish men and women into the various disciplines is fairly complete. There is really very little which might be labelled 'Jewish culture' besides rabbinic studies and synagogue art, songs. The Jewish Theatre has been rapidly displaced as its stars have moved from the East Side to Broadway and as the language barrier to which it clung broke down. Neither the actor nor the artist nor the musician is segregated in America by any religious labelling. Even when Jewish subject matter is introduced into art forms - music, plays, etc. it is not done to cater to a particular audience nor does he have a popularity and acclaim for so long. It was not a Jewish Culture Society but a profit-seeking legitimate New York Production Group which staged last year the fall stone of Sholem Aleichem. A Jewish author wrote his novel, The Circle Mystery, with a Jewish hero and it became not an apology for the Jewish community but ~~the~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> World Novel of the last ~~before~~ World Conflict. What I am saying is that the Jewish artist, painter, actor, author, sculptor, architect, creative intellectual contributor to the American civilization and is deemed not unworthy of speaking or representing basic American values and ideals. His art is Jewish only in so far as he has derived inspiration from a Jewish spiritual matrix, ~~among other things he is not Jewish~~

What I am saying is that in the last two decades or so the Jew has made significant progress in crossing the invisible yet all important divide which separates the American Jew from the Jewish American. It is the difference between <sup>not only</sup> being politically accepted and feeling psychologically ~~accepted~~ at home. In so doing we are embarking on a unique experiment in Jewish history. In effect we are admitting that Jewish identification must be on a 'voluntary' basis and that many of the artificial survival mechanisms which can follow attracted the stress and strain of the long unprincipled centuries are no longer necessary to us.

Emile Durkheim suggests on such function when he writes: "Science is fragmentary and incomplete: it advances but slowly and is never finished; but life cannot wait. The theories which are destined to make men live and act are therefore obliged to pass science and complete it prematurely." Primitive business and atom-orientated have seen only known a segment of our world's basic dimension. The examination of known facts will organize a few of the inevitable questions which arise as men face life. In order to understand his role which needs to answer the answers which still reveal science, he needs to feel related to his universe. Religion's complete the picture. Their theology deals with the scientifically unsoundable. They answer: How the world came into being - How communication was born? What happens after death. They intend knowledge and answers. Their way of life leads men to act on these assumptions. In simple terms Durkheim sees religion as man's attempt to bring meaning into the world which surrounds him. Religion's rigid because men can not tolerate a world of question marks and incompleteness.

~~The noted American philosopher William James suggest another function of religion. He defines it "as the feelings, act, and experiences of individual man in their solidarity." In a sense he explains how men come to see these ideas of India Durkheim spoke.~~



John Dewey, so called American philosopher, and educationist  
a similar note but in perhaps a more suggestive way. He had "The  
rel. attitude is a sense of the possibilities of destiny and devotion  
to the cause of those possibilities." Nothing Pankajin answer  
but full - devotion - the values so revealed. It is important  
to emphasize this dual rel of religion "belief" and "loyalty" or  
"works". Because it is the devotion which separates rel. from phil.  
Philosophy asks the same ultimate question. Philosophy goes beyond  
the facts of science. But unlike rel philosophy does not command  
devotion and practice.

Religion then is a system of belief by which a group of people  
approach the ultimate problem of man <sup>loyalty with</sup> and the system of practice  
by which the group symbolize that ideal coupled with a  
way of life by which they endeavor their devotion to the basic values  
which their belief express. Or simply Religion is man's search for  
the ultimate meaning of life and his commitment to those values which  
he considers express his ultimate meaning.

We have not the time here and now but I believe that all the  
disparate rites and dogmas and ritual which can be found in the  
primitive and in latter day religions can be explained in terms of  
these functions of all religions.

We have described religion as a cultural phenomenon - we must  
remember. We can try then to understand it. But it is well to remember  
that ~~cultural~~ answers & values of the major religions were  
forged by ind. men and that rel. is the living out of the ind.  
individual internalizing his traditions.

William James once described the rel. attitude "as the feeling  
and experience of the ind. in their solidarity." James heard God  
plea for justice alone tending his sheep in the forest of Tabor.  
Elijah found God in "a still small voice" of converse alone

in a desert refuge on a mountain. Buddha meditated silently and found the "Great Enlightenment" ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> when he had returned life felt and became a holy man. John the Baptist found the new life in the wilderness by the Dead Sea.

What stress of the founder of the great rel. is true value of their disciples. Religion is a <sup>no more than another</sup> ~~supernatural~~ set of environmental pressures unless the believer takes them to heart & commits himself to their values. When man commits themselves they fall <sup>near the ind. spiritual</sup> ~~to the~~ and is something of a total other degree than the usual

Having defined religion by its functions, we are faced with a difficult problem. There seems to be systems of belief which we do not normally consider as religious which yet <sup>must</sup> ~~are~~ all the requirements of such definition. Nazi nationalism, for instance had a set of ultimate answers, a definite code of practice & way of life based on ~~these~~ convictions. There were symbols, acts of faith, ~~group~~ group organizations, liturgy, ritual, all the usual paraphernalia of religion. The same can be said of Communism. Marxian dialectics express its world view, the party gives it religious meaning & it is its law, Lenin is its Moses, the manifesto its scriptures, on May Day its Holy Holiday. It even had its communist martyrs. Not long ago Arthur Koestler & group of ex C.P. members of their experience in an interesting book of confession called "The God That Failed". The title is itself significant. Here were men who had been bewildered by the confusion of modern society & needing a new and a clearer pattern of commitment all that a rel. might do.

2) How shall we judge?

1) most difficult of all areas of rel. speculation. Those who believe in revelation - simply by submitting a faith open or no mind that res.

2) Of course, however, belief that truth comes "not only from the command of a deity but from the structure of our & seen - our everyday" - then we must judge the moral rel. against our personal standard of values

(A) Does it encourage piety & study & does it demand it merits to new knowledge?

(B) Does it ~~promote~~ <sup>encourage</sup> the full development of ind. talent & freedom of it?

(C) Does it turn man's attention to the problems of his life - or help him merely to evade them

(D) Does it promote justice and peace and encourage social relations

(E) Is it humane in its moral code

(F) Does it encourage the responsibility of freedom rather than the obligation of authority

(G) Does it appeal to man through fear or through hope.

not enough to give us comfort & consolation - Religion has been the cause of almost as much hatred & harm as gentleness & good.

Importantly to do with to man's morality - to judge rather



This year the five million Jews living in the US are celebrating their tercentenary year which marks the 300th anniversary of the first settlement of men and women of our faith on the North American continent. Some of you may have seen and heard on your television sets the speech which President Eisenhower gave ~~about~~<sup>some</sup> three weeks ago at the National Tercentenary banquet in New York City. Each major community is also preparing a series of commemorative events of more local interest. Some of you attended the special services which were held at KAM ~~Temple~~<sup>Temple</sup> in October and I understand that early next year a special cantata written by the famous San Francisco composer and conductor Darius Milhaud dealing with the theme of Jewish settlement in this country will be presented at the Civic Theatre, and, further, it is also hoped that Mrs Anita Leibson will have her new History of the Jews in Chicago finished in time for spring publication.

These events will highlight our celebration. They will help us express and acknowledge to our nation the gratitude which we feel. Never before has a segment of Israel's world dispersed household been able to look back on such ~~a~~ <sup>a prolonged</sup> ~~an undisturbed and unbroken~~ period of undiminished prosperity and liberty--three centuries during which our rights and opportunities grew and ~~broadened~~ never diminished. Under the life giving warmth of this democracy we have been able to forget <sup>at least</sup> some of more deep seated cultural ~~errors~~ <sup>ills</sup> ~~and inaccuracies~~ <sup>ills</sup>. Life has become fuller--less inse-

[illegible]

when I visited the beautiful Touro synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island. This white <sup>clap-</sup>board building is the oldest synagogue structure in the US having been completed in 1768. It has been declared a national shrine.

It is a structure beautiful in its simplicity as well as its memories. But if you befriend the beadle he will open up two doors directly below the pulpit which <sup>mosque</sup> ~~open on~~ an escape tunnel which <sup>which led directly to a</sup> ~~leads to a~~ building across the street. By 1768 Jews had been in Newport for some 20 years. There had been little discrimination. Yet their cultural memories lead them to <sup>put it beside with the ghetto families</sup> ~~build this~~ means of escape. We, today, the heirs of three <sup>of freedom</sup> centuries have tossed aside such fears. We feel, we know ourselves to be members-partners in our society and we are the more normal for it.

Truly we have much to be grateful for and as we pause to offer our humble thanks we should direct them also to those legions of men and women of our own people who <sup>were enthralled by</sup> ~~captured~~ the mission and vision of the American dream and put their talents, minds, and sinews <sup>to work in</sup> ~~into~~ its service. Men and women who have given to America good for good, returned blessing for blessing-Scientists: Einstein, Max Planck, Statemen Benjamin, Baruch, jurists Brandeis, Cardozo, -our artists and musicians, our businessmen and labor leaders, our scholars and social pioneers, our religious teachers and our medical people, yes even our comedians and writers who taught America so much about laughter and tears.

America spelt salvation to our forefathers and it is not surprising that once <sup>here</sup> ~~there~~ they espoused democracy and liberty <sup>with an eager, unshakable</sup> ~~as they would~~ renewed for a religious faith. This American dream must be ever broadened and bettered and you will find our coreligionists in the forefront of most of the struggles for freedom and equality of opportunity- in the struggle for the rights of labor and of women, for better health standards and better schools, for slum clearance and a free press, <sup>for</sup> and full minority rights, for social security and Fair Employment Practice Commissions. This is all not in the least surprising. As early as 1820 a famous American Jewish doctor Joseph He la Motte addressed a rededication service for his synagogue in Savannah <sup>Georgia</sup> with these words about his fellow Jews. 'Our people saw in prospective what would probably be our lot. They wanted



for liberty! Starved through the long centuries for such an opportunity Now that it was theirs they would see that the promise of the future was realized in fullest measure. In the area of the advancement of human rights consequently American Jewry occupies a distinguished place. And, I might add, parathetically, that this wanting for liberty, this dream of great expectations, explains in part <sup>at least</sup> how some of our brethren came to flirt with and espouse causes now labelled subversive. These were often young zealous, impatient, indiscriminating, immature men and women who forgot America's <sup>many</sup> real blessings and saw only its areas of still unfulfilled promise and our irritatingly slow manner of evolutionary growth. Unwilling or psychologically unable to bide their time and work patiently and pragmatically they became converts to glorious day dreams which had never to be tested by reality. They <sup>hoped passionately</sup> ~~were passionately~~ for the good and the glorious and so became impatient with the everyday and the real.

I have been wondering for some time now if in the last decade or so we have not perhaps become lax in this concern for the development of the American promise. I acknowledge that concern with the ongoing growth of ever freer and more equitable institutions of government has not been a popular cause since the second world war. There has been a concerted effort to equate loyalty with conformity rather than with devotion to the best interests of the nation whether this demands changes in the status quo or not. Some have been silenced by fear. But I am more concerned with those who have made no attempt to serve their fellow citizens. That group which takes its rights and privileges for granted. Men who seem to spend their lives amassing and banking the American dream, taking its future out of circulation, spending little if nothing on communal and charitable projects. Men and women who live wholly self contained lives without thought to service on <sup>civic</sup> ~~community~~ committees and on projects <sup>more purpose in it</sup> ~~which would~~ benefit the whole group. People who use a community's schools and churches and parks and art institutes and museums and roads and police and fire protection, and do little more than pay their taxes and do that

grudgingly. Until the flush days of this century this had never been so especially among our people. We are noted <sup>as being</sup> ~~a~~ civic minded. The ghetto despite its poverty had the most developed <sup>communal</sup> ~~social~~ service organization of any community until modern times. We see its results in our denominational social service agencies and hospitals which for a long time were the models <sup>which other states & dupes built</sup> ~~along which others built~~.

But today I am afraid that there is a group among us who think only of themselves, who consider charity an unpleasant burden and civic participation an unthinkable bore. Yet it is a simple fact that a democracy can not grow - indeed it can not long survive - if its citizens are not constantly replenishing its treasury with freewill gifts from their ~~hands~~ <sup>minds</sup> and pockets and talents. Probably the clearest example of this is the sad plight of our school system which was left unhelped for several generations and now finds itself without sufficient teachers, buildings, standards, status, <sup>and without</sup> ~~yes~~ <sup>and when such an institution is unaided</sup> ~~hope.~~ <sup>where of course of our society begins to unravel -</sup> <sup>partially educated children being limited to</sup> <sup>a further educational course.</sup>

It is also true that <sup>if</sup> the poor can dream, <sup>illness</sup> ~~source~~ it will be the minorities who will suffer first. So perhaps more than any others they have a stake in that dream. Can some of our people have forgotten already how the depression and tensions of the thirties spawned Messrs Coughlan and Pelley and Smith and Winrod and <sup>Such</sup> ~~the~~ ilk whose followers reached a well into the millions. Can they not see how the tensions of today's political crises (<sup>even without the added tension of</sup> ~~undoubtedly~~ <sup>unhindered</sup> ~~fortunately~~ <sup>if</sup> ~~any~~ large scale economic regression) has still <sup>allowed</sup> ~~brought certain tensions and feelings to~~ <sup>be experienced; even as we can</sup> ~~hated to~~ <sup>Two years ago the McCarran Walters Act and the Refugee Relief Act</sup> <sup>continued</sup> ~~a~~ <sup>was a purely</sup> ~~designed~~ <sup>designed</sup> to keep from these shores those who had suffered most from Hitler's persecutions. There have been several ~~near~~ <sup>some</sup> overtones of anti-semitism in ~~many~~ <sup>of</sup> the security ~~checks~~ <sup>rules</sup>. There has been an attempt, aborted fortunately, but labelled during the last congress Senate Joint Resolution 87 to amend the Const. to read "according to the authority and laws of Jesus Christ." Less provincially the KKK has been reorganized, "American Patriot groups are

5.  
*Chicago has lost* and *the situation of the Park*  
again coming into being, Trumbull Park, ~~at~~ <sup>all</sup>. All I am saying is  
that there are demagogues in our society ready to take advantage of  
every misfortune to the "American dream" that the fishing in muddied  
watters will not be to our benefit, that therefore we should concern  
ourselves always with the common good for <sup>their</sup> ~~their~~ lies the great promise  
of our future.

///  
There is no reason for despair not even for pessimism. America  
fortunately possess an immense reservoir of good will. Less vocal and  
strident than its hostiles of discord but no less real But there is every  
reason, I believe, to use this tercentenary as an occasion for intro-  
spection: Have I done all I could for my community and nation and for  
the many public and private institutions which make for its greatness?  
This thought it seems to me should be uppermost in our minds.

And the answer—the answer is that there is always something more  
that we could have done. Here the history of the first settlers may be  
instructive. When the bark St. Charles landed its 23 recently robbed  
passengers on a New Amsterdam warren, it could hardly be claimed that  
they were met with open arms. Their two leaders were immediately clapp-  
ed into prison and the town council under Peter Stuyvesant, famed for  
his wooden leg lost no time dispatching the following letter to his  
superiors:

The Jews that have arrived here would nearly all like to  
remain but learning that they (with their customary usury  
and deceitful trading with the Christians) were very repugnant  
to the inferior magistrates, as well as to the people having the  
most affection for you, the Deacons also fearing that owing  
to their present indigence they might become a charge in the  
coming winter, we have, for the benefit of this weak and newly  
developing place and the land in general, deemed it useful to  
require them in a friendly way to depart; praying also most seri-  
ously in this connection, for ourselves as also for the general  
community of your worship, that the deceitful race—such hateful  
enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ—be not allowed  
to further infest and trouble this new colony to the detraction  
of your worship and the dissatisfaction of your most affectionate  
subjects.

One could hardly call this an auspicious beginning/ Even when the Dutch



West India company countermanded Stuvesant's expulsion order, this governor allowed the first settlers to remain only under the stipulations that they were not to engage in retail trade or practice a handicraft or bear arms in defense of the colony, or trade with the local Indian tribes or own land or meet for public worship. What impressed me always with the history of this affair is that these 23 people did not accept all this unprotestingly but claimed like all burghers their right to enjoy equal rights! They fought Stuvesant in the courts, <sup>with petition addressed</sup> in ~~letters written~~ to his superiors, by going ahead and cooperating with the community and making many friends until in just a few years they had removed the bulk of these restrictions.

Jacob Bar Simson <sup>Adm. Lex</sup> and ~~the~~ friends served democracy well by fight in for it-So did so many of our ancestors in this land (as they had throughout Jewish history) So ~~was~~ we never shrug off the crusaders' mantle Our future <sup>our</sup> lives our hopes depend on it. <sup>from the fact that we have to have a wonderful strength</sup>

Let me close by quoting a Methodist Bishop William C. Martin currently president of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America- a man whom I had the privilege of inviting to dedicate an ark which we build at the Navy chapel in Japan

Even a hasty analysis of the society which has been built in America during the past three centuries reveals the outstanding contribution of the Jews. Disproportionate to their numbers, varied in its forms, their contribution is conspicuous in science, commerce, culture social welfare ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ and politics. It is especially notable in respect to the development of a dynamic and creative free society which is the greatest achievement of this nation

To which I can only add Amen, May this generation accept its responsibilities and its challenges when I believe the sixcentenary celebration will be as joyous and hopeful <sup>as we anxiously anticipate</sup> as one ~~as ours has been~~ <sup>the fact</sup> that we will all have been better people for such service.

[c.1955]

Beth Torah has affiliated itself from the very first with what we know as the reform or liberal wing of American Jewish life. Organizationally, ideationally, spiritually this commitment has had great effect on our organizational life-and will continue to do so-For the answer it gives to the question: How can <sup>we</sup> ~~I~~ lead a meaningful helpful Jewish life? is in large measure our answer and the point of view with which we are building this congregation.

Reform Judaism now numbers some 600,000 men women and children in the United States affiliated with some 495 synagogue units. So it has enrolled in its ranks about 1 out of every 2 American Jews whether these be synagogues or not. Reform in America has a long and proud history which goes back to the middle decades of the 19th century. Since that day its standards have pretty well called the tune in American Jewish life, its rabbinic and lay leadership has been preeminent, and its organizations important community factors. Reform was the first group to organize nationally: its three national bodies its seminary, its congregational union, and its rabbinic conference all date from the 1870's and antedate their conservative and orthodox <sup>units and</sup> ~~conferences~~ by some thirty years. These organizations: The Hebrew Union College, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis are all still with us today and still important adjuncts and aids to our congregational life-surely it would be well if we understood their role and function.

The Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is an excellent rabbinic school with an impossible name. The name results from a forced marriage after the last war between Rabbi Stephen S. Wise's New York City seminary which was bankrupt and without leadership and the older Cincinnati based Hebrew Union College which felt that the continued existence of what had become a second rate school affected the whole standard of professional competence in the American rabbinate. They are today one-and I am sure the name will soon be revised. A young man spends six years at the college being

FOOT 8A



introduced to the mystery and the mastery of Jewish history, theology, and philosophy-as well as to those areas of the more modern disciplines of educational and pastoral psychology, sociology which may be of use to him in the mystery. In the realm of American seminaries HUC ranks at the first rank-on a par with Union, Meadville and others.

The College provides the Reform movement with its rabbis. It also has taken on a variety of other functions. It provides an opportunity for graduate research leading up to the PhD degree in Jewish studies, it has always some dozen or so Christian fellows enrolled who want to get a first hand knowledge of Jewish thought, It runs today a School of Jewish education in New and Cincinnati which aims at producing a crop of competent Sunday school supervisors and teachers--and its newest creation is a school of sacred music in NYC which is designed to ~~xxxxxxx~~ help meet the increasing number of requests from member congregations for cantor-choir directors.

The College is headed today by Dr. Nelson Glueck, a world famous rabbi archaeologist, It has an enrollment of some 120 rabbinic students, and it all in all doing a most creditable job. Its job is to train the specialists which Reform Jewish life demands and to put into their hands ever more ~~refined techniques of operation designed to meet the problems of their day~~ *the use of the* standards, training, research these are its pillars.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations on the other hand has an entirely different area of operations. From its badly named headquarters- The House of Living Judaism, in New York City it has the task of meeting all ~~those needs~~ which are required by each individual congregation ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~, but which alone cannot be supplied by some parent unit. Thus it is the Union which develops, tests, publishes and disseminates educational material-visual aides, texts curriculum guides for the use of the member congregations. It is a clearing house for all information about new experiments being conducted by its various constituents. It provides new congregations with advice gained from the combined experience of its 55 members. It brings laymen and rabbis together to discuss the future orderly growth of the reform movement.

It is currently engaged in youth work-maintaining three such ~~XXXXX~~ year round camps as the one you may have heard of at Occonomowoc-for the express purpose of giving young people and their parents an opportunity for a more intensive period of Jewish education and discussion. Its Nifty which is broken down into <sup>regional</sup> units hopes especially in the small towns to increase the number of Jewish contacts a young teen ager may have and thus make it possible for that child to have a more rounded social life.

The Union is also the parent body of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, and the Jewish Chatauque Society-the first of these is a very active organization of representatives from the various sisterhoods who seek to find ways to broaden the programs of their various affiliates by common exchange of ideas and planning. The NFB is a not too successful Men's Club group with the same aims but not the same interest, and the Chatauque Society is a clearing house which sees to it that Xmas, etc. institutes and programs which seek the services of a rabbi are served.

Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath is the executive director of this organization-which maintains branch offices in our town as well as in certain others. Since its intention is to serve all congregations-all congregations support it by setting aside a stipulated portion of their dues for this purpose-and it is a worthwhile one indeed.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis is a professional body whose purpose is to discuss problems of Jewish theology, organizational life to express the spirit of the rabbis on issues of national policy, to develop and publish the PB and the H'mnal, to exchange ideas on standards and disciplines, to see to it that the changing quotas of the services are met, and generally to provide once a year the convention atmosphere of good fellowship-so you think you have troubles with your congregation-you should see mine. It is a highly responsible group which has when all has been said taken many forthright and courageous stands on issues of national importance and a body whose decisions are not without weight and importance.

These are the national bodies which support and advise the various congregational units which are affiliated with them-It should be remembered however that they are suasive not authoritative. That one of the principles basic to reform Jewish life is the autonomy of each congregation-and that if we are to define reform Judaism we must do much more than describe the programs and accomplishments of these three groups. We must discover for instance what joins Sinai and Beth Am together in one movement and yet separates Beth Am and Anshe Emeth. We can readily see that the answer lies not in congregational composition-the old German Eastern European differentiation has disappeared-nor does it lie in any uniformity of ritual- It lies however, I believe in the stress which reform is willing whatever its modus operandi to place on the answers to these four questions:

The first question is this: How much weight shall we ascribe to tradition? Generally, reform will answer none unless traditional beliefs, practices, beliefs and customs still have positive spiritual meaning to men and women in our day and age. Three principles follow from this fact which reform accepts but which conservative Judaism temporizes with: The first is this We will discard what is outmoded-



(c. 1955)

Judaism is not a dark somber religion which looks askance at the pleasures of the world. We might cite in this connection the words of a brilliant teacher and essayist, Jesus ben Sirach, who lived some 23 centuries ago. 'Defraud not thyself of the good day and let not the part of a good desire pass thee by, for there is no seeking of life's joys in the grave.' When men and women have worked hard and are fortunate enough to find the result of their labor successful, it is altogether fitting that they should rejoice together in 'the good day' which is theirs because of what their common effort has builded.

It is one of the interesting paradoxes of history that those cultures which are most ill at ease with the joys of living often evidence an excessiveness, a degree of self indulgence, which is not to be found among more moderate societies which see no particular virtue in unnecessary self denial. We might think of the frenetic, frenzied orgiastic rites of the flesh denying Greek mystery cults or of the sadistic delight in human suffering which characterized self controlled Rome and salvation seeking Spain.

An unknown Jewish poet wrote in his psalms many millenia ago 'serve the Lord in gladness, come before Him with singing.' Our people have always been encouraged to drink deeply and without guilt from the fount of life's joys. The only caution which was made was that they should avoid excess and the history of our people is singularly free from such excess.

Tonight it is our privilege to share together such a moment of inner happiness. We are in the position of parents who have nursed a youngster through a particularly difficult period of growth or convalescence and who now see that child romping in <sup>his</sup> full strength before them. It is a moment of pride and well being-and if we are understanding-of thanksgiving and humility.

We have guided our child, this congregation, through its infancy, its year 1, through one of its most critical periods; and all about us in its

well attended services,<sup>in its</sup> successful educational and social programs,<sup>in its</sup> satisfied membership we can see that our efforts have been crowned with success. All of us share tonight-in measure as we have given of our time and interest-in this moment of pride and satisfaction and humble gratitude which makes up Hanuah

They say that when a fine artist has completed a master work he has not only put his all onto his canvass, but he has himself been subtly changed by the beauty and meaning of that which he was seeking to portray. Our relationship with Beth Torah has not been a wholly one sided, ~~one~~. As we have invested in its growth our time and talent certain changes have taken place in our own lives. As our after service discussion sessions have shown time and again, we have many among us who are not ashamed to mention that their association with Beth Torah has made their lives richer and happier.

How many of us feel today more comfortable with our birth-right than we did a year ago. What was then simply a socially disabling and inconvenient burden has become an attractive and modern spiritual quest. Self hate has begun to give way to religious conviction. Any sense of social unease has been lost. Busy with our new work -always among our many new friends- we have just not had time for such self torment. "here many of us felt a vague queasiness about the intellectual standing of Judaism, we have now begun to feel pride in its reasonableness and in its enlightening and ennobling good sense. Nor is this pride narrow or based on highly theoretical casuistic contrast with other faiths; rather it is the pride which comes with a faith personally satisfactory rich in meaning, fresh in insight, modern in outlook.

I believe that we also feel somewhat more at peace with our neighbors because of Beth Torah. Religion plays an important role in our area's life. As we did last Thanksgiving, we can meet now on equal footing with other faiths--proud of our teachings and happy for what



their ~~faith~~<sup>Beligion</sup> means to them; as they are proud of their teachings and happy for what our faith means to us. No longer need we play the debasing role of the sycophant, cap in hand. United in our differences, men among men, we can all work for a healthier and stronger neighborhood. Indeed, the warm welcome which the churches extended to us, the constant help which they rendered us—opening their halls and their hearts—should silence the last argument of those who fear even in matters of religious conviction to be different.

I know that our days have been fuller because of Beth Torah and I am confident that they have been a bit more satisfying. We have learnt that we can increase the pleasure which we derive from our leisure hours when we broaden our social activity to include worthwhile projects. In our heart of hearts we will all admit that the routine of small talk and cards becomes tedious at times. Such a routine tends to limit us to a narrow circle of friends and to a narrow range of interests. Beth Torah has increased for all of us the number of our friends and brought us together with men and women who ~~was~~<sup>are</sup> extremely interesting because of their backgrounds and experiences ~~was~~<sup>are</sup> so totally different from our own. We have experienced the inner joy which comes from spending time in a worthwhile fashion. We have gained in self respect for so regulating our lives and we have gained in respect for our old friends because they too have shown capacity and interest in this work.

Besides these many blessings our year ~~has~~<sup>has</sup> helped each of us grow in depth—in character. We have experimented each in his own way, with the experience of prayer—honest and introspective—and though it may be still a new slightly strange discipline we know now at least that there are within ourselves and within our universe untapped sources of strength and understanding. We have thought through and been exposed to some of the life experiences and life suggestions which our common heritage has to

offer. We have found that we are not the first to face the many challenges life imposes on us -that there is much that can be learnt from the wisdom of the ages and much also from our friends and neighbors who like us are seeking to maintain certain standards in their homes and world. And as we learnt of their needs, our respect grew apace as did our friendship. This is the true meaning of brotherhood-helpfulness in the face of common problems.

Beth Torah-this experience in Jewish living which we have undertaken has made all this possible. Perhaps it would be better to say that the effort and planning which we put into our dream brought us these blessings. A synagogue is but the sum total of the interest of its members. A building rich in substance and size can yet be a hollow shell almost without meaning to the lives of its supporters. Here we have been most fortunate. Our goal from the first was a working, participant congregation. We would have nothing which was formalized ~~or not understood~~, nothing which we did not understand and could not feel a part of. Beth Torah was built to reflect not only the past but the <sup>our</sup> present and <sup>our children's</sup> future. Its pillars were to be understanding, participation, honesty of spiritual quest, and education. We recognized that we were setting for ourselves a difficult task but we had ~~understood~~ <sup>heard</sup> that God had given the Torah openly and in a tongue which that no group priestly or otherwise could claim that it was its special portion could be understood by all/and we felt that our house of the Torah, our Beth Torah, should be similarly democratic-that only in so being could it be effective.

"We wanted to come to grips in our synagogue with the problems which confronted us. We wanted honest answers to sincere questions. Prayer was to be more than a few lines read to us oratorically from a leather covered book. It must be fresh and express our own feelings and moods and so we spent time and some attention seeking to understand what these prayers were ~~and in our own faltering way add our own feelings~~ <sup>and in our own faltering way add our own feelings</sup> ~~and in our own faltering way add our own feelings~~ to the liturgy. Education was to be a partnership in growth together with our children. We could not see them being exposed to values and a tradition to which we were

apathetic. Belief was to be the product of honest search undertaken through discussion and study for we have resolved that Judaism must become ~~more~~ for us ~~than~~ <sup>not something superficial</sup> a way of life - a commitment - The ethics of the Bible we would seek to understand and bring out of the printed page into the fabric of our lives. Observance must become more than pagentry. It must be brought into the pattern of our daily lives - in our homes - and become laden with overtones of loyalty and love.

Of course we did not complete our task - indeed it is hardly begun and never completed. But we know now what the future demands of us. Not only new members but redoubled effort, not only a building but an everpresent awareness of what we are trying to build. As we grow, ~~and~~ we shall grow, in numbers; we must be always careful to grow equally in depth.

If we keep this ever in mind, the future will be as filled with moments of pride and joy and accomplishment as was our year 1. Since our first service a year and a half ago the honesty and sincerity of your interest has made us grow from strength to strength. We have enjoyed a program which has never known failure but to the contrary has always exceeded expectation. Summer, New Years, whatever the competition, we have never failed to hold services nor have they ever been badly attended. We have learnt much in the art of working together and a truly amazing number of <sup>you</sup> ~~our members~~ have been actively involved. Think of it, in the last five days 57 people have given over 170 hours of their time during some 6 meetings ~~the~~ work connected with our synagogue. Think of our wonderful staff of volunteer teachers who have given every Sunday to our <sup>School</sup> ~~people~~ and of the countless number of others who have spent time and effort on special projects for the children. But the whole story of our activity will be unfolded later - I mean only to point up the self-evident truth that you are our strength and our future and that the meaning Beth Torah will have for your lives depends on the interest and ~~honest~~ <sup>unselfish</sup> approach which you bring.





God--in the One God who is the moral personality of our universe--which alone gives meaning and validity to all of our communal activities, to all of our defense agencies, to all of our civic institutions. We need to expend <sup>at least</sup> the same energy and effort in our search for God and for religious insight that we expend in planning brotherhood functions and charity campaigns.

God is the foundation on which all else rests. He is the source of Judaism's vitality and of its moral force. A Jewish community which is not steeped in religious belief is a body without a heart. It is an empty lifeless shell, an anachronism which has no legitimate reason to survive. Jewish life must again focus on religious concerns and on our personal search for God and for spiritual understanding. We must learn again the vital importance of taking God into our hearts.

How does man come to God? Men come to God in many ways. A poem written by a philosopher and teacher of medieval Spain, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, testifies ~~to many~~ ways ~~in~~ which I, too, have been led to believe in God.

"Three things conspired together in mine eyes to bring the remembrance of God ever before me, and I possess them as faithful witnesses. ~~Thus~~ Thy heavens, oh God, for whose sake I ~~recall~~ Thy name; the earth I live on that ~~prouds~~ <sup>wholes</sup> my thoughts with its history ~~which~~ recalls He who made me more than I am; and the musings of my heart when I look deep within."

The grandeur and splendor of our world and ~~in~~ of our universe have led many to acknowledge <sup>God</sup>. Many have become sensitive to the visible presence of God by observing the magnitude and orderly symmetry of the spheres. Who has gazed at the vastness we call the sky, dotted with uncountable wonders--worlds larger and perhaps more beautiful than our <sup>own</sup>

separated by distances we cannot measure, and not felt awed and humbled, and not felt that some all-wise being had so planned it. I stand always in awe of the beauty of our world. I stand ~~always~~ in awe of the glories of the sunset, of the surging of the tides, of the profuse coloring of the forest. When I see such beauty I cannot but reverently acknowledge a master hand. <sup>A</sup> I am awed by the over-whelming dimensions of our world, by the expanding infinity which is our universe, by the span of the heavens and by the sweep of the earth and sea. When I take these proportions to heart I cannot but reverently affirm the all-powerful who alone created it.

I am awed by the precision <sup>with</sup> which each part fits into the larger whole. - by the orderliness of the stars in their heavenly courses and by the symmetry of the <sup>minute</sup> ~~finest~~ <sup>particulate</sup> ~~units~~ of the atom. Each goes its appointed way and performs its appointed task. Each is a necessary part of the total whole. The worlds which astronomy and physics have made known to men make me humble before He who so made it. It is as the Psalmist sang long ago, "Together the Heavens declared the glory of God and the firmament reveals His ~~amazing~~ handiwork".

One of the difficulties many of us have in becoming aware of God is that there is too little of silence and of quiet; too little opportunity for observation and for contemplation in our lives. We live so frenetically that we do not take ~~the~~ time to appreciate or understand the world about us. ~~Earth~~ Earth and sky exist only as a taken-for-granted backdrop <sup>to</sup> ~~for~~ our daily routines.

To find God we must learn to disengage ourselves ~~at times~~ from these worldly pre-occupations. We must learn to observe the world about us with understanding eyes -- with eyes which are open to its beauty, to its majesty and to its meaning. When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He ordered His great leader to take off his shoes before he approached for he was about to step on holy ground. The whole earth is holy ground and we need to periodically strip ourselves of work-week habits and of customary practices <sup>if</sup> we are to <sup>realize the God intended nature of</sup> ~~see with understanding and appreciate~~ all that lies before us.



The beauty and order of nature is open for all to see. It is a matter of cultivating and training our minds. We must learn to respond to the presence of true beauty. When the great Cathedral of Florence was being built the masons discarded every piece of marble whose grain and shape did not meet their arbitrary specifications. The stone was thrown into the wast heap. It took the trained eye of a great artist to realize that the irregular shape and lines of one of these stones could be fashioned into a statue beyond compare <sup>Take a</sup> ~~for it was~~ Michaelangelo <sup>who</sup> turned a bit of discarded marble into the world famous statue of David. Training our eyes to be aware of nature's grandeur is simply a matter of ~~taking~~ <sup>of nature</sup> ~~time~~ -- of learning not to be so wrapped up in our own thoughts that we have no time for the world about us. It is important that we so train ourselves <sup>for</sup> /only when we pause and consider the grandeur and the order and the majesty of all that is beyond ourselves, the riddle of the spheres and the riddle of the atom -- the might of the spheres and the might of the atom -- the orderliness of the spheres and the orderliness of the atom -- only then will we sense that our world is not a product of chance and that its ~~intricate~~ precision has been ordered by a power that is all-wise and who has might beyond our imagination.

Gabirol pointed to a <sup>way</sup> by which men have been brought to ~~know~~ <sup>know</sup>ed -- the study of the Book of Life and the observation of the ways of men. Look closely at nature and you will see marvelous orderliness. There is no animal, however humble, who has not some necessary part to play in nature's plan. Each species has learned to live cooperatively and has developed the necessary skills for survival. ~~Among the animals we see each day the miracles of new life, of growth, of love, yes, even of struggle.~~

Look at man -- look closely -- and become aware of the glorious saga of <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ slow and tortuous but none-the-less ascended progress from beast to man -- from animality to humanity. I can only wonder at man's proven capacity to transcend himself. The ape has remained an ape. The supposedly ape-like man has become thinker and prophet and artist and craftsman. He has learned to work cooperatively,

to love unselfishly, to live creatively, to think deep thoughts and has even managed to unravel some of nature's mysteries. I cannot but believe that all this was so planned — planned by a master mind.

Look at man — ~~look closely~~ and observe the many acts of sacrificial love, of freely offered aid. Observe the ~~help~~ <sup>help</sup> and the comfort which men extend to ~~their~~ <sup>other</sup> fellows. Watch the dedicated healer or the consecrated leader ~~serving~~ <sup>spending his</sup> his days in the cause of mankind. At such moments, in such men, you will see a brief flaming of the divine spark which is in each of us. You will become conscious of the potentiality with which God has filled us. You will become conscious of the God who asks only that we fulfill ourselves.

Is it not then as an ancient Rabbi once put it — that if you would find God you must look for the foot prints of the sons of men and there you will find ample testimony of his being.

Now there is a third way — an inner way. The witness that we ourselves afford. We can see God if we look closely at ourselves — at the intricate and wonderful construction of our bodies, at the miraculous capacity of our minds, at the manifold levels of our emotions. These are the gifts of a just and kind God. We sense also, when we look within, the promptings of our God. It is He, we feel, ~~who~~ commands us to be careful always of the dignity of our person. It is He who bids us to be ~~conscious~~ <sup>aware</sup> of our moral obligations. It is He who would have us develop strength of ~~our~~ character. It is He who has planted within us our ability to give and to receive love and our feeling of kinship with men of good will everywhere. When we look within we cannot but feel that we somehow reflect the God who made us. ~~the God who implanted in us the spark of his own divinity~~ <sup>Must not the love and the creativity — the sense of higher and common brotherhood — our awareness of duty — our awareness that we bear within a spark of the Divine?</sup> ~~Do not all these feelings make us aware of He who implanted them within us and He who created us?~~

When I consider all that I am and all that I can be I cannot help but sense that this is so because some wise and powerful being so willed it. Is this not what the prophet Elijah discovered when seeking to find God? He <sup>found</sup> finds him not in the powerful winds, nor in the shattering earth-quake, nor in the all-consuming fire, nor in any other manifestation of nature's power, but only in the voice of great stillness. We must look within and when we do we will learn not only much about ourselves but much about our God. Truly, as the Psalmist says, "O Lord, I am wonderously made -- a testimony of Thy being".

Men come to God in many ways, mystic and realist, poet and prophet. Each will make his own way to God and each will find God in another of his manifestations. God is everywhere and we, each of us, will see Him through another of His creations. But the God that we see is one - whole and indivisible - though we may see Him in his many aspects we must always remember his unity. <sup>the moral personality of an</sup> God is one and He is good, <sup>indeed</sup> ~~God is one and He is good~~ for all that we know of life and of our world is good. That God is good is suggested to us by one of our most familiar Bible stories. Moses, like every man who has ever lived, was anxious to know more about God and finally, we are told, asked God directly to reveal himself. God's answer is interesting. He tells Moses to go up on to a rocky mountain. To hide his face in the cleft of a rock -- to turn his back on any display of His magnificence, and only while Moses was so turned away God spoke to him words which contain all that we can, I believe, ever know of God.

I am, He said, - I am existence -- I am the Lord, merciful and gracious, long suffering, ever true, abundant in goodness and in truth. Such is our God <sup>He</sup> who is the universe and more. / He is ~~wholly~~ wholly concerned with the welfare of man. ~~The reality of God is our assurance that there is meaning and purpose in life, that we are not wasting our efforts in vain pursuits.~~ Our God is the call to the fuller life. He is the mentor who has placed in us a spark of His own Divinity. A spark which permits us to think and to plan and to build and to fulfill our talents and He is the summons so to do.

I believe that only as we affirm such a God does the confusion which we call life take on any meaning. Man, civilization, beauty, creativity, love, even war



and evil, all that we have and are, can be understood, only in the context of a power greater than our own who has given us life for a purpose and who will see that our best efforts are not expended in vain.

Yom Kippur is the heart of our religious year. God is the heart of our faith. Let us during this period of prayer again take our God to heart.



## ROSH HASHANAH SERVICE

Almost every society has celebrated a New Year's day. Each year some day was arbitrarily chosen to mark both the end and the recommencement of nature's unending cycle. The New Year as a calendar necessity is universal. As the stopping and starting point of the Jewish calendar year, there is nothing to distinguish Rosh Hashanah from other similar occasions.

Yet Rosh Hashanah is different. It ~~is~~<sup>has</sup> always been. We need only compare the mood of the secular New Year with tonight's solemnity and high purpose. The former is a holiday, gay and full of good cheer. Rosh Hashanah is a holy day, sober in purpose and pregnant with significance. At the very beginning of Jewish history our ancestors somehow transformed the New Year's festivities into a high-toned festival, a holy day which has now for over 3,000 years brought inspiration and understanding to millions of our fellow-worshippers.

This transformation was accomplished in earliest biblical times. Nowhere in the Bible do we read of a New Year feast which is carnival in spirit and carefree in temper. Rosh Hashanah from earliest time was out of wholly different cloth. This is indicated to us by the two names by which the New Year's day is most often designated in the Bible. It is often called a , a day of remembrance, a day set aside for a thorough-going review of the progress which we have made in meaningful and mature living. It is a suggested occasion for a yearly personal inventory, an opportunity to give ourselves an honest report on the care with which we have managed our lives.

The milestone occasions of each year - birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and the like often inspire us to take stock. They offer us a convenient vantage point from which to assess the past and plan for the future. Rosh Hashanah ~~is~~<sup>has</sup> an advantage which is unique to itself, which it does not share with any other occasion. For the Rosh Hashanah challenges us to judge ourselves by another's eye. It is not only a matter of what we think of ourselves, but of what God would judge us to be. You will remember the mythology with which our fore-fathers encompassed the meaning of

this hour. They pictured God familiarly as sitting behind a heavenly tribunal on which was placed a simple balanced scale. One pan of this scale was white. Into it were placed our assets, the evidence which we had given in life of integrity, kindness, courage, and love. Opposite was a black pan. Here were put our weaknesses, our bad habits, our mistakes, our cruelties. We watched with God as the scale was set free and the pans began to balance. The side to which it settled indicated the final summation of our lives.

Substituting modern concepts for this ancient poetry, Rosh Hashanah is unique because it demands from us a report on our character which is both complete and unbiased. No fact is to be overlooked, no information is to be left out, despite our desire to protect our self-pride. We must admit to the ignoble and to the weak and to the willful, as much as we pride ourselves on the strong, the good, and the true. We must judge ourselves not as we want to see ourselves nor as others see us but as God sees us. He judges by one standard only. He judges only whether our achievements have equalled our potential. At college we were ranked against our classmates. We were also ranked against what the college believed to be our potential, based on past grades and intelligence tests. Some of us in our freshman year rated highly in comparison to our classmates, but were nevertheless called in by the dean because we were doing work below the standard expected of us. So it is in life; many of us have earned the respect of our communities. Yet who among us would be so presumptuous as to feel that he could not have done more, that his talents could not have been used more understandingly, that his life could not have been used more profitably and that he could have given more of himself to noble and worth-while causes.

In life there is no such thing as a rank index and no dean. There is no one to call us in when we are not doing the type of work of which we are capable. We must be our own dean. Rosh Hashanah affords us a yearly opportunity to judge ourselves against ourselves. As we humbly evaluate the findings, for who can but be humble



when we realize how much we left undone and how much we did badly, we come to realize what new habits we must cultivate, what new disciplines we must adopt, what new standards we must accept. Out of this self-realization there is hopefully born determined resolution, the sure promise that we will put into practice the plans which come to mind tonight. As a \_\_\_\_\_ Rosh Hashanah offers us an opportunity to judge ourselves honestly, that we may become the complete person that we want and ought to be.

I spoke of two terms by which the Bible designates Rosh Hashanah. We have spoken of Rosh Hashanah as a day of remembrance. It is also called a \_\_\_\_\_, a day of summoning. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the call blown by the shofar in ancient Israel to summon our forefathers from their farms and their work-benches to defend their land and their people.

It is the call to cooperative action for the general good. When in modern times we still blow this ancient instrument it is as a symbol to all who hear it to put aside whenever necessary their personal preoccupations and to undertake the common task of securing liberty and economic opportunity for all men. Whenever the forces of bigotry or brutality or cruelty threaten, the shofar sounds and reminds us of our higher duty, of the obligations we owe to our country and to mankind. For this year it will sound in a world at peace. There are no enemy troops threatening the gates. Yet its call is no less insistent. It is a summons to enroll ourselves with all groups who are attempting to reduce human suffering and increase human opportunity. It is the call which summons us to be concerned with human values, with the rights of all men to his place under the sun, his right to vote or to be educated, to live where he wants to, to consider himself in all things the equal in rights of his fellow-man. It is the demand that peace and prosperity do not lead us to complacency and that we use God's rich blessings to help the underprivileged and nourish the underfed, to instruct the illiterate and to free the enslaved. All men are not sharing equally in today's prosperity. The shofar

reminds us that we must seek for them and with them the one world of peace and opportunity which was the vision of the ancient prophets.



The story of Noah and the Flood would make a fitting story for a child B. or middle spectacle. It is vivid and dramatic and is painted on a vast canvas with bold strokes. There is color and human interest in its drama, yet it is not overloaded with sophisticated psychology, it substitutes which Hollywood is so eager to avoid.

Briefly, the story tells of a most wicked generation somewhere far back in the hazy days of human history. These men and women are concerned only with pampering themselves and satisfying their passions. No one is concerned <sup>with</sup> the ~~other~~ helping hand to his neighbor. Men breed greedily and graze, selfishly and selflessly. Man had not yet brought himself up out of the jungle. Finally, God can no longer bear the sight of such impossible and unimproved wickedness. He decides to, as it were, begin creation again. Only the few upright and honest people will be saved from some all encompassing destruction that He will bring upon the world. Perhaps such a story will breed a better type of man.

So, like Noah, God searches the world for men of good character and strong spiritual strength. He stopped in and was in that ark, but only one such man can be found - Noah. He will be set apart and saved. So God commands Noah to build an ark of gopher wood sufficiently large to house not only his own family but also at least a pair of all living animals. Noah could not but his instruction. The ark is planned, framed, and made seaworthy. The animals are brought aboard. First the even-numbered, then the odd-numbered, then the humans to open up and a mighty storm to rise. It rained for 40 days & 40 nights. Beneath flooded, steel-pipes boomed up. Cans were flooded, the deck bowed. But while on rain floods the water did not crest and then abate. It rose higher by hour covering, first the lowlands, then the tops of the tallest buildings, finally even the peaks of the highest mountains. <sup>He</sup> ~~There~~ were no more to be seen. No life could survive. All perished except Noah and his family and the animals who are his houseguests. The ark floats on the flood for many days. After 40 days the storm subsides and the sun for the first time breaks through the clouds. Slowly the water begins to recede. But no land is yet visible. Noah opens a porthole and despatches a dove to scout out the situation and report back what he finds. The messenger ~~not return~~. Perhaps he has found a single log or branch floating



in the water and prefer the open air to the stuffy atmosphere of the ark.

A small person. Mould herself to and out under a coat. The Lord is done. The dove with her and which boat can find no dry land. They wait another week. The dove flies out again. A few hours pass. This time she returns with a message of hope - a budding green olive branch is clamped tightly in her beak. All now know that long night is almost over and that now they will be able to leave the ark, startle their dogs, and resume their normal lives.

Finally, the ark itself comes to rest on solid earth. At the shore of a large mountain - mt Ararat. The doors are opened. The young people sit down and lift up their hearts again over the face of the earth. Noah's first act is to offer up a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for his deliverance. God in turn promises Noah never again to demand such painful and awful sacrifices of man. No flood - a deluge of the magnitude which ever again be inflicted on man by God. As a sign of God's promise God places his most beautiful rainbow in the heaven - that man may know when his ships cloud over and storm threatens that a quick and sure will be brought to the storm and tomorrow the sun again will shine and life will be a more pleasant prospect.

The Noah story is written on a grand scale and its <sup>held</sup> message is gripping even to the sophisticated reader of our twentieth century.

Why did the religious leaders and literary scholars of our time so well include this story in the Bible?

Some women because it records what actually happened. Not so long ago some professors and students of Wheaton College outfitted an expedition to explore the mythic highland of central Turkey. Mt. Ararat lies among these mythic peaks. They expected to find on its slopes timber and burn from the ark itself. They set out to prove the story of the Flood was of Jewish history.

They returned empty handed. Their expedition had been foredoomed to failure. Noah's world was an ark that never sailed except on the seas of an <sup>eternal</sup> creative imagination.

Why then is this story told?

All ~~the~~ people of the Near East have among their ~~first~~ <sup>most</sup> treasured memories a story of a great disaster proportion. These probably

all have led to some annihilation of civilized population which  
accompanied the break-up of the glacial of the last ice age which  
had covered so much of the temperate zone of Europe, Asia & N.  
America.

It is not peculiar that Babylonian mythology tells an older and roughly  
similar version of this catastrophe. One of the great lords of the Babel  
paradise, Ellil, becomes enraged at the wickedness of certain city because  
they have neglected to sacrifice on his altar. He determines to destroy this  
city with a flood. Another god, Ea, seeks to convince his high priest. He sends  
messengers the messenger of death to his favorite mortal UT-NAPISTIM and  
convinces him to prepare for the flood by building a sea-worthy vessel.  
The rains come but not before UT-NAPISTIM has had aboard his ship  
all of his family, garden to work the soil and stock, and animals of every  
kind. Ea, himself, closes the ark's door and makes sure that all is  
water-tight. A storm, beyond human imagination, rages for 6 days. It  
is so devastating that all life was destroyed and even the gods became  
terrified at the fury that Ellil had unleashed and which he was now  
powerless to end. But on the 7th day to everyone's relief the storm  
abates. A calm reigns and UT-NAPISTIM's ship floats quietly on the  
face of the water. Within 24 hours what appears to be an island appears.  
It is really a mountain top. Finally, the ship goes aground on a  
high plateau. UT-Napishthin waits another 7 days and then sends  
out a bird to see if the earth is habitable again. The dove returns in  
much later a swallow is sent. It returns. Finally, the raven is  
despatched. It does not return. It has found sufficient vegetation to  
live on in the wild. UT-NAPISTIM takes this as a signal that  
it is a proper time to leave the ark and take up the venture  
of life on earth again. He descends and offers a sacrifice to the gods.  
Ellil was pacified and gives finally that UT-NAPISTIM and his  
wife descend the blessing of life eternal and so they are carried  
off up to the heavens to live with the gods.

## Striding Similitude - ~~Common~~ <sup>Shared</sup> Historical Monuments

There has been a flood over some areas of the world that when they had seemed itself on the people's conscience. But the actual fact of the story went back as myths not as actual history. The ancient writers of all sort were interested more in developing religion or culture ideas than in delineating actual hist. fact. You have only to read Homer or Thucydides of a war or later dates to be reminded of the fact. They had no records - no statistics - statistics were - there were few historical documents. The bulk of religious story was more imag. than the bulk of historical fact.

Now it's all been said.

The Bible writers' knew that it had not said.

Why then did they write the story and include it in our Bible. To explain the troubled world and to provide that a greater good would come again through such destruction. That is part of the story.

The rest is that it gave them a magnificent vehicle to prove their faith in the Bible. This was a familiar story. It could be heard around the camp fire of all the neighbors. But not the spiritual difference.

There are not many words but one

In the Bible story, God knew the great things because he is momentarily ruled the wrong way. It is a spot and decision. The people of this city had been under such the sacrifice.

In the Jewish story God is very not because of the fact of the attendance but because as the Bible puts it - "because the world was filled with violence" with murder and sin and thieving and all manner of moral wickedness. God punished the wicked world not as a righteous world. God saves in honest and upright men and a priest in a family. It is the ethical relation of the people as expressed in a simple and long understood way.



It is a dramatic way of expressing for popular consumption what the prophet Isaiah said to King "Come to do evil, learn to do well."

Now in the Bible story about God and humanity. He waited 120 years from the time he told Noah to build his ark till the moment he opened up the heavens. The ark stood all this time as a dramatic appeal to that generation to turn aside the evil of their way. It was only after they had been warned and still did not heed that the building was necessary.

Popular legend over embellished this and present call of our religion to become better than we are. It speaks of Noah planting a forest where he ~~first~~ told him to build the ark. This was not so strange, but when his inland neighbors asked him what the building would be for - a new house - a new barn - Noah would tell them of ~~the~~ <sup>the new</sup> building, an ark. Why? Then Noah would tell them of the flood with which they only scoffed and would not listen to his warning to repent as that bad night might surprise them. Years passed. The time matured. Noah continued to urge them to repent. But still they scoffed. In fact Noah delayed until, the time as long as he could and eyed the trees, large the means of all to give the people mountains to burn to deal with them. It was all to no avail. But God in the Jewish story did not wait long.

The Jews had not for a ~~invisible~~ God. There is a second ought to be out of the religious vocabulary. The Bible never demands that we fear God. It says as to some God not fear him.

? ?? } King James  
, 1671

Story of Moses, however, that is known for his argument with God already

owning people. ~~embellished~~ <sup>embellished</sup> after religiously illustrated to the Jews of that

All these little to make stay ~~illustrated~~ <sup>illustrated</sup> to the Jews of that day in a popular, challenging, dramatic form. It is any



Since the discovery of writing men have turned to the written word when they wanted to express their ~~deepest~~ <sup>deepest</sup> thoughts, their ~~finest~~ <sup>finest</sup> research, their innermost feelings and their ~~most basic~~ <sup>deepest</sup> emotions. The printed page gives to men a much larger audience than ~~could ever list~~ <sup>the spoken word</sup> to their ~~thoughts~~. It carries ideas across boundaries and centuries and gives to the fortunate few what measure of immortality can be achieved in this world.

Into books men have poured most of what they knew and felt about this life and hence from books we can immeasurably increase our understanding of life.

Of course, not every volume is important or meaningful. <sup>IT IS ASSUMED THAT</sup> more trash and ~~pornography~~ <sup>TRIVIA</sup> is printed <sup>each year</sup> than works of merit. But since any ~~important~~ <sup>important</sup> work must be read with discrimination, <sup>and a reader knows how to find his way around a book</sup> so our ~~choice of reading~~ <sup>choice of reading</sup> should be discriminative. (We would be wasting our time if like the chauffeur, Fairchild, in the stage version of Sabrina Fair we had spent our waking hours pouring over five thousand volumes without understanding a one, better ~~one work thoroughly digested than twenty scanned without understanding~~

Books have played a great role in the life of our people. We have in fact been called the ~~people of the book~~ <sup>people of the book</sup>. Indeed, you could write an adequate history of ~~our people~~ <sup>our people</sup> ~~divided chapter wise into the~~ <sup>based on the books</sup> ~~headed by the names of these books~~ into which the best of our thinking was poured and which in turn conditioned all our later ~~development~~ <sup>growth</sup>. We would, of course, begin with the Bible, then the Talmud, then the Midrash and the Prayerbook, then the law codes and in more modern times the scientific ~~nationalism~~ <sup>RESEARCH</sup> of the Haskalah and the land centered Alt Neu Land literature of the Zionist movement-culminating in that burst of Jewish creativity which we are experiencing in this ~~great~~ <sup>great</sup> land of ours.

It is expected of the rabbi when Jewish Book Month rolls around <sup>as it has again</sup> to discourse on how much book learning meant to our fathers. <sup>That he point up</sup> the reverence they afforded the printed word, the reverence with which they poured over the texts, <sup>he</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>pointing up the discipline</sup> this discipline <sup>infused</sup> brought



into a Jewry always on the verge of <sup>despair and death</sup> ~~moving and suffering~~. There is usually ~~then~~ a nostalgic tone <sup>to give an address - the feeling would be</sup> ~~of would that it were so today in his~~ <sup>at present the day.</sup> address. I would contend that it is so today. Last year in America more titles of special Jewish interest were published in English alone than perhaps in any other year of all our history. <sup>[some 300 new volumes]</sup> When you add to this the tremendous production <sup>which pour forth</sup> ~~of titles~~ from the Hebrew presses, <sup>in Israel</sup> I can not escape the feeling that we are in the midst of a Jewish cultural renaissance of undreamt of proportions.

Furthuremore many of these volumes were of real value. I would be the last to prize any work merely because it treats a Jewish person sympathetically. I think we have outgrown the stage where we felt called upon to give rave notices to every artist or author who touches our people without anger. That Marc Chagall or Ben Shanon <sup>as</sup> artists of the first <sup>rank</sup> ~~water~~ follows from their technique and genius ~~and their for their~~ <sup>but</sup> not because they present in some of their canvasses bearded rabbis or Jewish book shops. Every singer is <sup>not</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>includes Eli Eli</sup> ~~not~~ in his concert repertoire nor would say the Caine Mutiny have been any less powerful if the lawyer's name had been Jones instead of Greenblatt.

When I speak of <sup>Jewish</sup> books of some merit I refer only to those which come to grips artistically and content wise with some basic aspect of our life as a religious people or of our thought as the bearers of a particular life-outlook. These need not all be addressed to us the adult non-specialist reader. Last year some 80 volumes of children's material was published of which well over half is both usable and educational sound. Then too the scholar was treated <sup>to the publication of a wide range of research</sup> ~~to two new approaches to American~~ <sup>material on Jewish history</sup> ~~on Jewish history~~, three collections of research papers on a variety of <sup>phil. hist. and a historical research</sup> ~~themes, at least a half dozen first rate critical translations of basic~~ <sup>works, several additional translations and commentaries of Biblical</sup> ~~books, and at least one excellent approach to the Jewish Festivals~~ <sup>from the insights of modern archeological and anthropological research</sup>

I ~~only~~ mention these to give you some idea of the scope of <sup>his</sup> work being done. Scholarship and vitality has not passed from Israel. Books are being written whose pages will affect Jewish thought for many years - ~~at the same time~~ <sup>have not</sup> ~~nor have~~ our thinkers failed to contribute many works of general interest; though we are not specifically concerned with such at <sup>this</sup> time. Rather, I would invite your attention to two volumes written in a non technical vein for such reader's as you and I - two volumes which if pursued will add to the knowledge of our past traditions and <sup>to our own era</sup> of the direction that Jewish thought is taking today.

The first title comes from the literary genre 'Biography'. It is a brilliant recounting of the life and thought of one of Jewry's most versatile son's Don Issac Abravanel. Abravanel is one of those rare people who have a talent which borders on genius in many fields and who consequently lead lives whose accomplishments almost tax our credulity. In his seventy one years which cover the period between 1437 and 1508 <sup>ABRAVANEL</sup> ~~Abraham~~ was driven out of various countries four times. Three times he had his wealth confiscated. He spent many weary months travelling the world highways looking for <sup>a</sup> ~~new~~ refuges. Yet though of a persecuted people, he served during this time as chief fiscal agent <sup>to</sup> monarchs of four different countries and the council of state of the republic of Venice. Born in Portugal to an aristocratic family, he built the family fortune to ~~the~~ point of first rank in <sup>his native</sup> ~~the~~ country until he was driven out when the ~~strong~~ barons turned against the king whom he served. He fled overland to Spain and within the year was the chief purveyor to the troops of Ferdinand and Isabelle in their struggle to free their country of the moors. His money helped finance Columbus's expedition and so important was he to the state that when the expulsion decree of 1492 was signed both the king and queen offered to stand as his sponsors if he would convert. But Abravanel refused and chose exile <sup>along with</sup> ~~with~~ his people. He fled to the Kingdom

of Naples leaving behind most of his wealth but again righted himself and found a place in the king's inner councils. Naples fell before France and Abarbanel again was a wanderer until he was able to settle in the republic of Venice where though old he was intrusted by the famous council often with the negotiating of their most important mercantile and political treaties. Here he died and received state honors. Such a history alone makes exciting reading. He knew the great and near great, Columbus, Ponce de Leon, Savonarola. There were many dramatic moments in his life. The back <sup>fruitless</sup> flight from Portugal. The life long struggle to gain back a grand daughter who had been kidnapped by the Church and baptised. It was Abarbanel who made the last dramatic plea to Ferdinand and Isabella on behalf of the once so proud Spanish Jewish Community. ~~These, of course, make good reading.~~

But Abarbanel is important to us also because he was a towering figure in the field of Jewish scholarship. In this crowded lifetime, he still found time to write some fourteen volumes of philosophy, history, biblical commentary, and messianic speculation. ~~Which~~ Books which show a high degree of competency and skill and which exerted tremendous influence on all Jewish thought down to the emancipation.

Abarbanel possibly more than any other man was responsible for moving Jewish thought and practice away from the rationalistic worldly channels into which it had been turned by the great medieval philosopher Maimonides, Ibn Gabirol and <sup>and their disciples</sup> Gersonides and back to a more mystical, salvationistic approach. Having lived through the greatest anti-Jewish pogroms of all Jewish history <sup>subsequent</sup> till his day—the expulsion of 1492 and the Inquisition—it is not surprising the Abarbanel should not look too hopefully towards the future if it depended on man's own efforts. Sensing the need for a religion which could <sup>bind</sup> ~~knit~~ man's wounds and buoy ~~their~~ hopes, he turned Jewish thought towards the promise of the speedy coming of the Messiah. This to him was the central <sup>affirmation</sup> ~~promise~~ of Judaism and alone the beacon which made it possi-



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ble to lead out one's life in this unfriendly world. From Abarbanel  
it is an easy step to the false messiah's of the 16th century among  
whom we number Sabbatei Zvi. The return of astrology and amulets to  
Jewish life dates from this time as does the first anti-rationalistic  
strands which culminated in that popular evangelical revival of the 17th  
century which we call Chassidism. Even in our own day we have seen some  
results of that feeling in a group of extremely pious men who objected  
to any attempts to create a homeland in Israel for the displaced because  
this was the Messiah's-God's work not man's.

Abarbanel <sup>redefined</sup> ~~closed~~ Judaism so it gave man <sup>an supernatural</sup> hope. But it was a tragically  
hoped dream, of course, to frustration, and a hope which plunged men's  
minds into the bottomless caverns of cabalistic and messianic speculations  
where they should have been worrying where their next meal was coming  
from.

The struggle between religion viewed as the promise of God <sup>and religious mission</sup> and the  
promise of man goes on in our own day. Perhaps the tragic results of  
Abarbanel's teachings may help us answer the question of how we will  
approach religion-whether we seek from it challenge or comfort, ethical  
mandates, or emotional experiences.

That this struggle is still with us was highlighted ~~for all of us~~  
this summer when the World Council of Churches of Christ meeting in  
Evaston chose as its topic 'Christ, the Hope of the World'. They meant  
by this the belief that Christ will come again and redeem this world from  
its own inability <sup>and insufficiency - alone - as it is powerless to better his world</sup> ~~to work out any better life~~, Time and ~~time~~ <sup>at times</sup> again, the  
European prelates silenced the voices of the more liberal Americans who  
argued that at this time when there was so much to be done in this world-  
the church should be concerned with its social gospel rather than with its  
second coming. For these Europeans had seen the hell on earth of two  
world wars - they could see only evil abroad and little redemptiveness -  
God not man <sup>as man will</sup> ~~alone~~ can affect salvation. Let man therefore look inward &

and prepare his soul for that great day.

This feeling that religion deals primarily with the emotional awareness by man of God rather than with the blue print of the moral law which can lead to a better life for all-has in some measure rubbed off on <sup>J. S.</sup> ~~J. S.~~ <sup>J. S.</sup> ~~J. S.~~. This fact is highlighted by the second book I would call to your attention this evening-an appreciation of the Life and Thought of Franz Rosenzweig by Nahum Glatzer.

Like Abarbanel, Rosenzweig also ~~lead a life of~~ more than normally <sup>colorful life</sup> ~~color and interest~~. He was born into a wealthy liberal German Jewish family during the second last decade of the 19th century and was given the best education the continent could at that time provide. As you know Judaism was practiced with little more than condescension by many of these people and Rosenzweig's family was no exception. Judaism was of little meaning to him and he seriously considered converting to Christianity--not out of convenience but because he found that it could still move and affect many. At 25 Rosenzweig was preparing himself for this change when he decided to take one last look at his ancestral faith and went in October of 1913 to an orthodox synagogue in Berlin for the Yom Kippur services. Here the sight of the congregation <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ prayer and their real devotion somehow communicated himself to FR and he decided that such a Judaism would be more meaningful to him than Christianity ever could be. He began to study ~~the~~ <sup>his</sup> lore, when the war intervened and FR as a young soldier was sent to the Eastern Front. Here he came face to face with life's harshness and reality-death and pain-for the first time- Here he began to write the book Star Of Redemption which was to make him famous and to send it home chapter by chapter on postcards from the front. After the war R settled in Frankfurt to teach <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ new love <sup>at his own school</sup> but within two years a crippling disease which grew out of sclerosis attacked him and he lived out his last year teaching from his bedside, writing on a specially constructed typewriter which permitted him to write with the one good finger still under

his control. Naturally, the heroic mold of such a man captured men's loyalties-as his beautiful style did their minds-and he was one of the important figures in German Jewry xxx of his day as well as in the whole philosophic and scientific world.

Like Abarbanel, Rosenzweig felt that Judaism had too long ridden the cold uninspiring highway of modern optimistic liberalism. He felt that his experiences offered him little reason to feel that this optimism was either philosophically or ~~practically~~ <sup>spiritually</sup> justified. What Judaism offered men was not so much an awareness of what he could do to insure the future but an opportunity to make his otherwise impossible life meaningful by becoming aware of God in the present. Man should look ~~in~~ <sup>for</sup> religion not for instruction so much as for the warmth of faith. He should relearn to use in his religious exercises his emotions as ~~well as his reason~~. He should seek that moment when he realizes God in himself ~~and should~~ <sup>can even himself make</sup> ~~personal religious growth the less the effort of the mind~~ <sup>disengage himself to make this possible.</sup>

Can we accept such a faith? Certainly many of his structures ~~Reform Judaism, as our own day has acknowledged, has by reintroducing many actual~~ against a religion wholly of reason are well founded. But can Judaism be true to ~~xxxxxxx~~ its ancestral mission if it goes to the other extreme and emphasizes ~~the individual and his individual needs without also taking~~ <sup>unreason, the ecstatic life of faith, the purely emotional aspect</sup> ~~of prayer and belief~~ <sup>into account the needs of the group for the skills of the individual,</sup> If the basis of religion is irrational you open the door for all types of flights of fancy and superstition and worse you turn men's eyes away from ~~their~~ <sup>world</sup> salvation which can be effected ~~only by gaining the meat and~~ <sup>on earth for pie in the sky</sup> ~~which is pleasing to us on earth but would be indigestible even if it~~ <sup>is a pleasure to us on earth but would be indigestible even if it</sup> ~~vegetables which are of the earth rather than striving after simply the~~ <sup>is a pleasure to us on earth but would be indigestible even if it</sup> ~~ever even attained~~ <sup>pie in the sky which is seldom attained and never sufficient.</sup> The experience of Abarbanel ~~and his message~~ <sup>is lacking</sup> should ~~ration~~ <sup>capture</sup> us about modern unreason whether it be in the mouths of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Sartre, Kierkegaard, Neihbur or Rosenzweig.

~~And yet can we not say that this wonderful old tale is applicable;~~  
 Yet the tragedy of F.R. can act as a wonderful stimulant ~~you~~  
 to all your thinking - ~~that~~ <sup>if</sup> we remember always ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> even before  
 old Hasidic tales of . . .



A dispute was once brought before a learned rabbi. He heard the complainant's tale and the man was so persuasive that when he was finished the rabbi could not restrain saying, 'Yes you must be right.' The defendant of course protested maintaining that he had another version of the incident and certainly ~~was entitled to his defense~~ <sup>was entitled to his defense</sup> ~~was entitled to his defense~~ <sup>was entitled to his defense</sup> it told. The rabbi agreed and this man too spoke with irrefutable logic and having finished he turned to the rabbi who again said 'You too must be right!'. Of course, they both left in a huff and the rabbi's wife turned to her husband with a puzzled expression, 'But my dear is it not impossible that they both should be right.' The learned man thought for a minute and nodded 'Yes you too are right.'

In matters of faith there are many ways of achieving common ends. In many ways both Rosenzweig and for his day Abarbanel were right--and we would be right if during our leisure we would pick up these two volumes and drink deeply of the meaning and message that they bring.

May I give you some background before we seek to answer the philosophic questions. These five poems are called in English 'The Book of Lamentations' after their style and content. In Hebrew their name is simply *Kinah*, how. The reason for this is that it was the practice of the synagogue to title books simply by the word with which they rather than by some artificial phrase especially when the title gave some indication as to the contents. Thus Bereshit, Genesis etc.

The style of these lines is typically Near Eastern. For word strength and rhythm they are like rhymes. Four of the five are acrostic—that is each of its lines begins with a successive letter of the alphabet. This was an invaluable aid in memorization. The poems would not like only be on parchment in scrolls and on the lips of the people but also be written by the

Many complain about Judaism that though its ethic is noble and exalted, it has little to offer the individual in the realm of comfort and spiritual strength in hours of trial and tribulation. They compare the motherly care which other faiths dispense with its warmth and sure promise to our cold ethical imperatives. Now Judaism makes no bargains with truth simply to make life more bearable for its adherents, but I would suggest that if we pursue its minor keys (as is our purpose in these three lectures) we shall find real insight into the machinery of coping with sorrow and much help in this respect for our personal lives.

This is especially true of the little book of poems which we are going to discuss tonight. They tell no story but ~~xxx~~ as all good poetry seek to talk directly to our <sup>dearly</sup> emotions to awaken there the same feelings which move the writer. These poems are elegies, laments—they deal with sorrow and misfortune—let us see tonight how the author copes with calamity and whether his reactions to it are psychologically valid and useful for all of us.

May I give you some background before we seek to answer the philosophic question. These five poems are called in English 'The Book of Lamentations' after their style and content. In Hebrew their name is simply Eicha, how. The reason for this is that it was the practice of the synagogue to title books ~~simply~~ by the word with which they began rather than by some artificial phrase—especially when the first word gave some indication as to the contents. Thus Bereshit, shemos etc.

The style of these lines is typically Near Eastern—Poetry of word strength and stress rather than rhyme. Four of the five poems are acrostic—that is each of its lines begins with a succeeding letter of the alphabet. This was an invaluable aid in memorization and insured that the poems would not <sup>be written</sup> ~~live~~ only on some parchment in a library but <sup>live</sup> in the hearts and on the lips of the people repeated often to them by their

professional singers and balladeers. We by the way, still retain this practice by having these verses recited in the synagogue during the summer fast of Tisha be Av which commemorates the very disaster these lines are held to portray.

The five poems seek to express the mood of a man who finds himself surrounded <sup>by</sup> the ruins of his home and country. ~~with xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ There has been a catastrophic national disaster. An enemy occupies the land and has reduced the once proud cities of Judea to rubble and has imposed heavy penalties and burdens on all the inhabitants. Many have been imprisoned and exiled. All that the poet loved is simply no more. There is some doubt among Biblical scholars as to which defeat is being described but it is generally believed that it is the crowning blow of 586 BCE when Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian host devastated Judea, destroyed the Temple, and left the country in a comatose state from which she did not begin to reawaken for almost a century, and until some of the very exiles that <sup>were</sup> ~~year~~ carried away had returned and brought new life and strength to <sup>their</sup> ~~the~~ helpless bones.

Our tradition would also like to ascribe authorship of these verses to the great prophet Jeremiah who foresaw the disaster <sup>but</sup> and ~~who~~ though he found his people unwilling to change their policies before it was too late--<sup>and who</sup> nevertheless <sup>was constant in</sup> never lost his great love for <sup>Israel</sup> ~~them~~ and ~~who~~ indeed after the fall spent his few remaining years with them in exile seeking to soothe the hurt and give all new reason to hope. It would add to the stature of these lines if this were possible and also help us fill out our picture of this prophet of sorrow--but there are weighty reasons to doubt the ascription, <sup>Probably</sup> ~~and even~~ to hold that the five poems are not <sup>one</sup> ~~the~~ work of any one man but are a unity only by virtue of their thought and purpose. But these erudite discussions need not trouble us--what is important for our purposes is not to be sure of the exact time and place of



the events referred to, but <sup>to see and feel</sup> the book's universal truth.

Let me give you first a taste of the elegaic style of the whole book remember, however as I do that translation can not begin to do justice to the power of a poetic line.

How lonely sits the city once so crowded with people  
She has become like a widow, once so great among the nations  
She that was a princess among the cities has become a vassal.

The roads to Zion mourn without pilgrims to the feasts  
All her gates are desolate, her priests mourn  
Her maidens have been dragged off while she is left desolate

To what can I liken you, What can I compare with you, O daughter of  
Jerusalem

What can I liken to you, That I may comfort you, O virgin  
daughter of Zion

For your ruin is as vast as the sea, Who can heal you

All who pass along the road ~~map~~ their hands in derision  
they hiss and wag their heads at the daughters of Jerusalem  
'Is this the city that was called perfect in beauty, the joy of all  
all the earth'

The imagery throughout these five poems is as rich and moving as any in all literature. But what distinguishes this poetic lament is not only its artistry but its restraint—the spirit and faith that it manifests. Judea, the poet ~~one~~ lies in ruins. He himself is languishing in exile. Yet there is no wild uncontrolled despair, no pulling of hair, no reviling of God or the unkind fates, no bloodthirsty cry of vengeance on B<sup>a</sup>bylon, no feeling that all this <sup>is a terrible</sup> ~~was a~~ mistake that Judea was hounded and persecuted without warrant. No morbid expressions of self doubt and guilt. The poet ~~at no time loses~~ <sup>has no place</sup> ~~lost~~ control of his feelings. Nor does he ever lose touch with reality. There is honest grief openly avowed and expressed from the depths of a man's soul—yet nowhere does his grief make him less of a man or cause him to doubt his faith in God and in the fact that there is reason even for suffering. Consider with me if you will these lines which I believe are the most important in the whole work:

The thought of my affliction and bitterness is anguish and  
misery

I am indeed thinking of it and I am crushed in spirit  
But this I call to mind and so I have hope

That the mercies of the Lord never cease and his compassion  
never fails

They are fresh every morning, great is his faithfulness...

Though he cause grief yet will he have compassion according to  
the abundance of his grace.

For he does not willingly afflict nor grieve mankind.

Who is there that can order anything into being when the Lord  
has not caused it.

Is it not by the decree of God that good and evil come  
Of what can living man complain, each one realizing his sins?

Let us, therefore, search and examine our ways and return to  
the Lord

Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God above

We have transgressed and rebelled and Thou hast as yet not pard-  
oned us.

As I understand these lines they express this mood. To begin with there  
is a deep abiding faith in God. This is religion's bedrock. ~~There is No~~  
<sup>is attempted</sup> answer readily available to the question that spring first to the mind  
<sup>No feasible explanation of</sup> of all who are hurt by life-How can God have permitted all this to occur  
To this question there never has been an adequate answer nor will there  
ever be. But the poets-Israel's, faith, is so sure of God and his goodness  
that in times of national disaster they question themselves and their  
shortcoming not God and his supposed failings. God does not willingly  
afflict nor grieve mankind. There must have been a reason-our rebellion  
from his moral law- our stiffneckedness- our lack of feelings of common  
decency and humanity.

~~insightxxxxxxx~~

~~xxxxxxx~~ to

When grief and hurt afflict the poet is saying Dwell only on it  
long enough to understand its extent-do not roll about in a morass of  
self pity. Do not seek to unravel the mysteries of life which even in  
your most possessed moments are too much for you.. But learn to use  
sorrow and hurt. In moments of pain turn the gaze ~~xxxxxx~~ inward-ask the  
question by <sup>why</sup> should a just God have brought this upon me? Does he wish  
to warn to me forsake ways of self pampering? Was I ever so true to His

requirements as to feel that God owes me anything better 'Of what can  
a living man compalin, each with his baggage of sins? 'Use sorrow. It  
deepens our awareness of ~~life~~ what is permanent, character spiritual  
strength, moral courage, and what vanity power, wealth, even health  
and security. Use sorrow to broaden your understanding of life's true  
allow grief to  
dimensions-do not ~~exhaust~~ overcome you.

Do you remember Goethe's famous lines which start 'Wer nie sien  
brod mit thranen ass-they express the same thought.

Who never ~~are~~ with tears his bread  
Nor through the sorrow laden hours  
Of night, sat weeping on his bed  
He knows you not, O Heavenly powers,

Judaism makes no attempt to explain misfortune-only to affirm that what  
seems wholly evil to us is part of God's purpose and thus can be used by  
us to our benefit if we have sufficient faith and courage, Thus prayer  
in times of extremis is called by the happy phrase 'Zidduk ha din' a  
justification of God's judgment. This is the prayer of the healthy mind  
who will not be broken by sorrow but will grow more mature through his  
experience.

This then is Judaism's advice. Express your grief fully and well.  
Do not keep it bottled up and corroding. But as you express your grief  
seek its deeper meaning-seek what it can teach you about life and use  
these insights to rebuild your being. ~~and positively reevaluate life~~  
That is the way that in time all grief will be assuaged for the merices  
of God never cease-they are fashioned anew every morning,  
~~this come about. What~~



For my text I take an opinion written by the late chief justice of the

⑥ United States Supreme Court, Oliver Wendell Holmes:

When men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached ~~xxxxxxxx~~ by free trade in ideas,

We take freedom of speech as axiomatic in our democracy. Yet who of us has not often wished that the obstinate and wilful who selfishly oppose programs of common benefit might not be silenced. This impatience with opposing ideas has characterized all societies and has led all such groupings of men to enact measures designed to protect cherished suppositions. That is why even in our democracy we are faced with unceasing pressures from certain quarters to legitimatize the ideas of the moment and to proscribe all dissidence from these points of view. Men are creatures of habit. The demands of those who would have us change these habits represent challenges to our powers of adaptation and understanding which we are not always capable of meeting.

Demands that the experimenters be silenced come especially during periods of great national tension such as we are experiencing at this time. The battle has once again been joined between the social critics and the socially conservative. I would address myself tonight to this battle as it has infected itself into the sphere of religion or at least in so far as it is now using religious terms to cloak its broader implications.

Let us take as our point of departure a change the Congress of the United States saw fit to make in the wording of the pledge of allegiance. In a moment of surprising religious fervour the Congress decided to amend this familiar text from its old phrasing:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

⑥ to this new wording:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

Why do I make an issue of this change? It seems innocuous enough. As a rabbi I certainly can have no misgivings about this insertion of God's name. ~~There~~.

It is also true that it is becoming increasingly important that we bear in mind that as a nation we are dedicated to a basic moral law—a law which has its roots in the Bible— a law which will not substitute ~~materialistic ends, freedom of opportunity for subservience to the state.~~ It is important that in this era of uncertainty we bear in mind at all times these moral principles on which our society is based. But what we must ask ourselves is whether this need to remember warrants such a change. Are not the religious foundations of our democracy so secure that they need not be verbalized in catechismic formulae. For you see adding this phrase into our declaration of political faith made it impossible for the atheist or the agnostic with sincerity and without hypocrisy to affirm along with his fellow citizens his faith in America's premises, principles and presuppositions. Was the change worth this price? Did we delete more than a phrase when we dropped the words 'one nation indivisible! For even if we disagree wholly with the theists position— as I do— must we not protect his right to dissent and prevent his being read out of the family of good citizens? Would not a wiser course have been to have let this change unmade following Mr Holmes's opinion that 'the ultimate good desired is best reached by the free trade of ideas!'

Let me pursue this a little further. Recently the Post Office of the United States issued a new air mail stamp which bears a beautiful reproduction of the Statue of liberty—the symbol of our American dream. You will remember I am sure the beautiful words which were chiseled into the pedestal of this statue:

Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp, cries she  
With silent lips. 'Give me your tired, your poor  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
Send them, the homeless tempest host to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the Golden door.

In these lines By Emma Lizerus are crystalized the American dream and the American hope—freedom, equality, liberty, concern with human personality unconcern with orthodoxy of belief or thought. Any of these lines would have been fitting

on this stamp. Yet what motto does it bear-simply the ~~word~~ <sup>word</sup> "In God we Trust!" True we trust in God. Most of us do at any rate. But again what of the skeptic and the atheist-do his doubts about the meaningfulness of our religious loyalties justify our bringing into question his political loyalties?

May I remind you again of Mr. Holmes's faith that the ultimate good desired is best reached by the free trade of ideas! Can we in any way justify our ~~freedom of expression~~ <sup>rights and feelings</sup> the rights and feelings of those who can not honestly profess what we affirm? I am concerned because I hold freedom of expression to be a successful basic prerequisite of democratic living. I am concerned also because I believe that these isolated cases represent a tendency on our parts more serious than the cases themselves might suggest. I am concerned because I also am a member of a minority. Jew and Christian can wit out scruple attest our new pledge of allegiance; but what of the wording that many of these same men sought to introduce into the constitution-the wording proposed by Joint Senate House Resolution #7 of the last Congress which would have inserted "according to the laws of Jesus Christ" wherever possible. I am concerned because success in these isolated cases has lead many in high places to begin speaking again of this country as Christian democracy. I am concerned because I see all about me the public school-bastion of our democratic life-attacked as inadequate because it can not provide our children with a secular education. Once a society begins to proscribe ideas or institutions in the name of religion there is no end to the horrors it can find. These ideas were reinforced the other day when I read this prose poem by Rabbi Albert Friedland of Fort Smith Arkansas

Do you know that we are a minority?

Of course you do.

Atheists are also a minority

We don't like atheists.

Why?

Because they don't believe in our God.

Because they make us feel less secure.

Because they are bad citizens.

Are they?

Congress thinks so. The new oath of allegiance excludes them.

Preachers think so. At least that's what they say all the time.

Can we prove it?



Sure.

Good old Aristotle and his syllogisms:

Communists don't believe in God.

Atheists don't believe in God.

Atheists are communists.

There it is.

Smile

Pity poor Tom Paine and Ingersoll. All the time they fought for a better America they were really subversive. They just didn't know. Were lucky we found out in time.

Now we can go to Temple and prove we are good Americans.

But I hope we don't come to temple for that reason.

Our Temple is a house of study

It is a house of prayer.

It is a house of assembly.

It is not a house of fear.

And we do not want forced converts

Or those who just want to conform.

Our religion gives us freedom to seek;

We do not think it proper or necessary for the state to approve of religion

State and religion don't mix.

They never have.

Here's something else:

Many Americans say;

Atheists are evil.

They don't believe in our God.

But we can deal with that minority!

Some day they may come to reason:

"Atheists don't accept our God.

Jews don't accept our God.

But we can deal....

(Foolish? How many statements have you heard this month that America is a Christian nation fighting atheists?)

Often, I think that atheists are a needed challenge to our minds and our faith.

Like Socrates, they act as gadflies.

Of course, Socrates was killed.

He was a minority of one in his time.

But then so are we a minority...

from time immemorial..

How shall we then consider atheism? Condemn it? Proscribe it? Refute it?

We do not agree with it, but that is a far step from proscription. First we must be

what we are attacking/ What is atheism? Coming from the Latin a theos it is a

word describing those who categorically deny the existence of any gods or god

They may base their affirmations on many philosophical systems: skepticism,

solipsism, materialism, positivism, behaviorism-they are united only in the

fact that they doubt the existence of the gods worshipped in their day.

Atheism is then the substitution of a non religious frame of reference

for a religious one. It is more an intellectual denial than a moral one. It is

rare that a sincere atheist violates what we would call basic moral principles

Indeed such a man may be a finer person than his religionist detractors. Hence we can not condemn atheism as a call to immorality. We should in all humility recognize that a spiritual and moral-hence a religious- frame of mind is compatible with disbelief in ordinary theistic affirmations. Indeed, it may be the spiritual sensitivity of a person which drives him from the church and the synagogue-for who would be so rash as to deny the intolerance, pettiness, anti-intellectualism, yes even spiritual indifference which has at times characterized these religious bodies.

The only religions which need fear the atheist are those which would take reason wholly out of their systems and would have men simply affirm that which they are taught. Systems which elevate the institution which clothes the spiritual above the spiritual which gives life and meaning to the institution. Among the members of such faiths, atheism will raise doubts which the church or synagogue may not want or <sup>may not be able</sup> to answer-against such a disturber force or be the only <sup>recourse</sup> ~~action~~. But fortunately our religion, and all reasonable-liberal faiths can meet the atheist on his own ground. We need not fear the doubts that he sows-because we take it as a basic postulate that only as a man wrestle with the problems of faith will he appreciate their meaning. Indeed, we may profit by his proddings, for it shakes us from complacency and makes us ever turn our eyes from the institution and its <sup>form</sup> ~~constitution~~ to basic religious problems.

There is an enemy against which religion should turn its wrath and anger but it travels not under the banner atheist but under the banner philistinism-the banner of the self seeking, of the willful, of the unconcerned. Here is our enemy-the man of ill will- whether he wears the sanctimonious cloak of affiliation or the renegade garb of skepticism. Let us unite to root out evil and its causes. Let us avoid the error of proscribing men of good will when there are so many of ill will about. Philistinism-the way of the boor, <sup>the way of the fool,</sup> the way of the self, the way of the intolerant, the way of the immoral-there lies our enemy-





add 11th-10 zu haderech This is not the way.

WRHS

