

**DENOMINATIONAL JUDAISM IN AMERICA:
A PLURALISTIC APPROACH**

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May 2003

CURRICULUM RATIONALE

“Consensus-seeking community leaders...seem to regret the existence of competing religious ideologies, as if contentious religious debate is a destructive force that adds to Jewish strife and disarray. They do not understand that Jews are the most variegated people on earth, and that religious differences define us—and make us stronger. Jewish pluralism is a blessing, not a curse. For every Shammai we need a Hillel, for every Litvak a Hasid, for every Orthodox Jew, a Liberal Jew.” Rabbi Eric H. Yoffee, Reform Judaism, Spring 2001

The article from which this quote was taken is called *False Prophets*. It is a response to the growing popularity among leading American Jewish figures to promote an age of post-denominationalism, a time when Jews do not label their Jewish affiliation as Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, or Reconstructionist. Post-denominational Judaism would see all Jews as part of a *klal yisrael* (community of Israel) that promotes one generally agreed upon way of expressing Judaism. Rabbi Yoffee’s article reminds us that disregarding denominations, their history, ideologies, and functions is to disregard and “demean” the way American Jews relate to Judaism.¹

The course outlined in this curriculum guide is intended to provide a means of positively embracing the importance of denominational Judaism in the United States and to foster belief in *klal yisrael* as a truly pluralistic community of Israel. It will focus on understanding the role of each of the four major denominations in American Judaism (Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist) through the lenses of religious practice, religious authority, and history. Four major understandings serve as the basis for this curriculum guide:

¹ Rabbi Eric H. Yoffee, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, *False Prophets*, Reform Judaism, Spring 2001, vol. 9, no. 3, page 22.

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- ◆ **Denominational Judaism continues to allow for Jews of varying cultural backgrounds, sociological needs, and levels of ritual observance to access some form of organized Jewish life.**
- ◆ **Each denomination differs in its relationship with sacred Jewish texts and in the degree of authority it gives the texts.**
- ◆ **The Jewish denominations are not static. They develop in response to one another and to the progression of humanity.**
- ◆ **Denominational Judaism adds to the richness of American Jewish life and strengthens *klal yisrael* in America and around the world.**

This guide is designed for use with high school students in a supplementary school setting. Jewish demographic studies have repeatedly shown that it is this population of students that will most likely supply the leadership for the Jewish community in the future. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Jewish supplementary schools to prepare these students to respond to the needs of the varied Jewish communities they will serve. Students must have a textured understanding of the denominations they will encounter. In addition, as Jewish adults, all of these students will be dealing with the challenges of a potential move towards post-denominational Judaism.

Identity formation is the major internal struggle of teenagers. Therefore, it would be negligent not to use a course of this nature also as a way for students to question and affirm their Jewish identities and to learn where they fit in the spectrum of Jewish denominations. While this is not the primary intent of this curriculum, recognition of the struggle of identity formation facing these students will affect the contents of this guide.

Another fundamental understanding that affects this curriculum guide is that one cannot truly understand a subject without seeing it comparatively. This guide includes opportunities to understand each denomination as it understands itself as well as how it is viewed by the other

denominations. Additionally, this guide will explicitly draw out the relationships between the denominations and how they have affected denominational development in the United States. This comparative element blended with the examination of the denominations through the three lenses (religious practice, religious authority, and history) and the engagement of the identity struggle students are facing will enable a dynamic and comprehensive learning experience.

THE GUIDE AT A GLANCE

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students should leave this course with the following understandings:

- ◇ Denominational Judaism continues to allow for Jews of varying cultural backgrounds, sociological needs, and levels of ritual observance to access some form of organized Jewish life.
- ◇ Each denomination differs in its relationship with sacred Jewish texts and in the degree of authority it gives the texts.
- ◇ The Jewish denominations are not static. They develop in response to one another and to the progression of humanity.
- ◇ Denominational Judaism adds to the richness of American Jewish life and strengthens *klal yisrael* in America and around the world.

GOALS

This course is designed to:

- ◇ Help students understand the typical religious practice associated with each denomination.
- ◇ Help students differentiate between the denominations by understanding each denomination's distinct relationship with Jewish text as a source of religious authority.
- ◇ Explore the influences on the development of denominational Judaism.
- ◇ Help students develop a comparative understanding of each denomination.
- ◇ Build in students a layered understanding of each denomination.
- ◇ Develop the understanding that denominational Judaism works to meet the needs of the Jewish community.
- ◇ Foster a belief in *klal yisrael* as a truly pluralistic community of Israel.
- ◇ Encourage students to feel positively about denominational Judaism.

UNITS

This curriculum guide is divided into the six units:

- ◆ UNIT ONE Doing Jewish: The Day-to-Day Practice of Judaism in Each Denomination
page 2
- ◆ UNIT TWO Who Says?: Where Authority Lies in Each Denomination page 12
- ◆ UNIT THREE Denominational Development: How the Movements Have Changed Over
Time page 19
- ◆ UNIT FOUR Responsive Judaism: Meeting the Needs of Jews page 26
- ◆ UNIT FIVE Klal Yisrael: Strengthening Community through Pluralism page 33

SYMBOL KEY

- ◆ Enduring Understanding ◆ Goal ◆ Unit

✍ **NOTES TO THE TEACHER**

Notes to the teacher will appear throughout each unit. These notes will go beyond the stated formal goals to convey the intent of the unit and to provide some suggestions for implementation.

✋ **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

These activities can be used to meet the goals stated above. Most of the resources needed for these are provided at the end of each unit as indicated in the activity description. As the heading indicates, these are only suggested activities. They can be modified or replaced with other activities if the included activities do not fit with a particular educational setting.

✍ **MEMORABLE MOMENTS**

These three special activities are designed to take students beyond the classroom, to leave a lasting impression, and to really drive home the goals of the unit. They are more involved and usually require some advance preparation to be successful. In order to properly plan look at what is required before beginning the curriculum.

PLAN AHEAD

The following activities require advance preparation to book speakers, gather resources, create props, or set dates. The teacher will need to carefully look at them several weeks before starting to teach this curriculum.

- ✓ Living Judaism.....to book speakers and set dates
- ✦ Sources of Authority.....to book speaker, find location and set dates
- ✦ Making It Relevant.....to gather resources
- ✓ Family Interview.....to set dates
- ✦ Historic Personalities.....to gather resources and props
- ✓ Judaism's Grocery Store.....to set date, book room, and create props
- ✦ Understanding *Klal Yisrael*.....to gather resources
- ✦ Jews and Jews vs. Jews and Others.....to gather resources

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ALL RESOURCE MATERIALS ARE LOCATED IN THE BACK OF THE CURRICULUM GUIDE

UNIT ONE

◆ UNIT ONE

DOING JEWISH:
THE DAY-TO-DAY PRACTICE OF JUDAISM IN EACH DENOMINATION

Students should exit this unit with the following enduring understanding:

- ◆ **Denominational Judaism continues to allow for Jews of varying cultural backgrounds, sociological needs, and levels of ritual observance to access some form of organized Jewish life.**

This unit will:

- ◆ **Help students understand the typical religious practice associated with each denomination.**
- ◆ Help students develop a comparative understanding of each Jewish denomination.
- ◆ Build in students a layered understanding of each Jewish denomination.

✍ I taught a Comparative Judaism course to five different classes of 10th graders in a Reform supplementary school setting during the two years prior to writing this curriculum guide. I learned well that to hook my students I had to quickly disprove and continuously challenge their preconceived notions of what it meant to be a Reform, Conservative or Orthodox Jew.

Most shocking to my students was the notion that religious practice alone does not place a Jew within a particular movement. For instance, a Jew may keep strictly kosher and still be part of the Reform Movement. I repeatedly heard that Reform Jews “do” less, Orthodox Jews “do” more, and Conservative Jews “do” somewhere in-between. By “do,” I came to understand my students meant activities such as studying Torah, learning Hebrew, celebrating Shabbat and other holidays, keeping kosher, wearing ritual garments, and praying.

By finding ways of challenging their preconceptions, they were jolted out of apathy and catapulted into the content of the course. Some students paid attention because they were surprised to find out things weren’t as they assumed and others because they couldn’t wait to disprove what I had said and prove their original understanding of the movements. Regardless, they were present from then on.

Teaching or understanding the denominations in a hierarchical way works against the goals of this curriculum.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The resources and suggested learning activities for this unit deal specifically with three areas: the celebration of **Shabbat**, the role of **women**, and the practice of **kashrut**.

These topics were chosen for multiple reasons. First, choosing specific topic areas limits the scope of study to a manageable amount. Second, most Jews who have attended any amount of religious schooling have already achieved some familiarity with and judgement on these three areas.

Lastly, these particular topics not only sharply illustrate the diversity that exists in ritual practice but also highlight the intersection between history, ideology and practice. These topics may be revisited in the subsequent units to form a mini spiral curriculum, allowing students to build on what they've already learned regarding these areas to help them achieve the layered understanding desired and stated as one of the curricular goals.

To extend this unit or to make a better match with a school's overall curriculum additional topics may be chosen such as the celebration of festival holidays, marriage, or the issues of homosexuality, intermarriage, or patrilinear descent.

Introductory Activity

As a class, list as many Jewish religious practices as possible and record them on a blackboard or whiteboard and on a piece of paper. **Keep this list for use in an activity in Unit Four.** Encourage students to list beliefs such as egalitarianism in terms of practice (e.g. men and women sit together while praying, women may read from a Torah scroll, women count for a minyan, or women may become rabbis and cantors). Also be sure to breakdown broad practices such as celebrating Shabbat in more detail (e.g. go to services, eat with family, refrain from normal activities like work).

Break into small groups. Provide each group with a bunch of blank strips of paper. Have them write each practice listed onto one strip of paper (one practice per strip).

The groups should then make four columns of the practices. The practices they associate with Orthodox Judaism should go in one column, Conservative Judaism

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in another, and Reform in yet another. The final column should contain the things all Jews do or believe.

The teacher should then walk around the groups pointing out which practices are in the wrong place and asking the students to reconsider. Give the students a few chances to place everything correctly.

After a few opportunities to reconsider have been given, go to each group again and rearrange their strips in the correct way. Students will be surprised at the results.

Close the activity by asking the students to come up with the reasons this arrangement of the strips is the correct one. Use this opportunity to lead the students into the unit.

✍ There is no reading materials or other informational resources for this activity. The activity depends upon the teacher's and students' familiarity with the subject matter. Most Jews not part of the Reconstructionist Movement have little knowledge of Reconstructionist practice. For this reason, Reconstructionist Judaism is not included.

Reconstructionist Judaism can certainly be added when the activity is being used with students more familiar with its practices.

Charting the Issues


Using the “Charting the Issues” worksheet, and Unit 1 resource materials provided, have students work in small groups to learn what each denomination believes about kashrut, Shabbat, and the role of women.

The resource materials should be copied and collated by subject.

A Shabbat station, Women station, and Kashrut station can be established around the room so the groups can rotate through or groups can work simultaneously on the same topic.

The chart should be filled in to keep a record of what each movement believes and how the movements compare on each subject. The chart may be completed in one session or more.

Class discussions may follow each topic or serve as the conclusion of the entire activity.

 The idea behind this exercise is to gain understanding of each denomination by looking at different views on each issue as opposed to examining one denomination at a time. **It is also important to process the chart vertically, creating a multi-issue picture of each denomination.** Going through the chart in both directions allows students two different headings under which to file the information in their memories.

Students may need the most assistance discerning typical practice from ideal practice.

✦ Match the Jew to the Synagogue

Included in the this unit's resource materials are character descriptions of four Jews. As an introductory learning activity, have students read the descriptions and assign them a synagogue (Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Orthodox) to which they are best suited.

The character descriptions are created so that the denominational identity is hard to discern. Being able to correctly assign each Jew will depend on the students' knowledge of denominational ideology, instead of stereotypes. For instance, all three characters may celebrate Shabbat weekly but how their celebration of Shabbat is phrased will provide the clue necessary for correct assignment.

✍ It is hoped that students will have difficulty correctly assigning the characters. Most students will assume they can easily distinguish between Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox Jews based on appearance and observance levels. This way of distinguishing amongst Jews plays into stereotypes. The unexpected difficulty of this activity should help to hook the students on the content of this curriculum. It should also begin to open their minds to the reasoning behind religious practice and to role ideology plays in determining a person's denominational identification.

To add to the difficulty of the task, the Orthodox representative will not be depicted as a Hasid but as a Modern Orthodox Jew.

It is important to ask, "Why do you think that kind of synagogue would be the best fit?" By answering this question, students should begin to understand that different synagogues serve different needs Jews have.

Community Dialogue

Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group a denomination and give time for them to study the relevant material on that denomination's practice of Shabbat and Kashrut and its view on the role of women (resource material provided at the end of this chapter).

After they have worked in their groups to learn the positions of the denomination they are assigned to represent, re-divide the class into groups of four with one representative from each of the previous groups.

There should now be a Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox representative in each group.

Present the class with the following scenario:

You are all chosen representatives from your communities. You have been asked to jointly teach a class on Judaism to participants in an interfaith dialogue. Specifically, you have been asked to teach about the role of the women in Judaism but they would also like you to address the reasons for having different Jewish denominations and what some of the differences are among them.

Instruct the students to stay in character (Reform Jew, Conservative Jew, Reconstructionist Jew or Orthodox Jew) and, using the provided materials, to prepare a presentation on the Jewish view on the role of women that they are all comfortable with. Let the students know before they begin that they will need to extrapolate from the materials to adequately prepare for the second part of the presentation, regarding the major Jewish denominations.

Presentations may be shared orally or may be written for the teacher to evaluate. This activity would not be complete without a chance for students to debrief with one another. A brief and direct closing discussion would be an appropriate close.

Some possible discussion questions:

- ? Was it impossible to find common ground at any time during this activity?
- ? When was compromise easily reached?
- ? Do you feel you were able to confidently represent each denomination?
- ? When in character, were you ever arguing for a position with which you personally disagree? Was that difficult? Upsetting?
- ? Now that you have learned about the denominations and have experienced this exercise, are you in favor or against Judaism having denominations?
- ? Are there certain issues you think all Jews should agree upon?
Which? Why?
- ? Are there benefits to having different opinions within a religion?

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✍ The process of preparing the presentations will be more interesting than the presentations themselves. Look to see if students are able to adequately represent their denomination and how each student reacts, when in character, to the pressures of compromise.

Teachers may find the following questions helpful to consider in preparation for the concluding discussion and/or as an assessment of the learning that has taken place:

- ? How were the denominations presented, as equally valid groups or will they be presented in a hierarchical format?
- ? Was an ideal or realistic representation put forth?
- ? Were the students able to articulate a need for denominations or were they anxious to get rid of the divisions?

This activity may be done with the other two issues as well. The issue of gender was chosen because it is most likely to cause difficulty in reaching compromise and may therefore prevent the students from reaching consensus too easily.

Issues of ritual practice are much more flexible in the more progressive denominations. While there is a possibility that Reform and Conservative Jews may be comfortable saying that Jews keep kosher or observe Shabbat as Orthodox Jews do, it would be much more difficult for them to agree with the Orthodox stance on women.

It is important that consensus is not reached too easily, if at all, in order to illustrate the differences among the denominations and to force students to recognize that some of those differences are very important.

Students often don't understand that people can get along, interact, and even respect each other despite having major ideological differences. This activity is designed to bring to them this adult concept.

Preparing for the Future- A Resource Activity

Years from now, either in college or in adulthood, their own curiosity or the queries of others, will force students to confront more questions regarding Jewish practice. This activity is designed to prepare students for this inevitability. Its purpose is to help students feel confident and comfortable finding Jewish answers to their questions.

Select a wide variety of Jewish resource books from the list provided and any others you may know. Display these books in room that also has Internet accessibility. Photocopy the list of Jewish websites and place it next to the computer. You may also want to provide enough copies for every student to take home both the list of websites and the book titles. Encourage the students to share this information with their parents.

Take a few moments at the beginning to very briefly introduce the books and Web sites and to set up a rotation for the computer(s).

Have the students work individually or in pairs to dig out of these resources information on the variety of Jewish practice in areas not yet covered (e.g. celebration of festivals, intermarriage, burial, bar mitzvah, tzedakah). Students should be able to draw comparisons between the denominations regarding their particular topic. Have the students share what they have learned with the class through posters, charts, or oral presentation.

To insure that students are exposed to an adequate number of resources, set minimums (e.g. Students must use 4 books and 3 websites in their research.) and have them cite their sources.

Memorable Moment

Living Judaism

Bring the material to life by providing students with the opportunity to meet people who exemplify the ideals of each denomination. Have representatives from each movement share why they belong to that denomination, how they experience Kashrut and Shabbat, why they do what they do Jewishly, and what they believe the role of women is, will be and should be.

Ahead of the semester's start, contact local Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox synagogues. Ask the Rabbi, Executive Director or Educator for the names of a knowledgeable lay leaders that may be available to come speak with your class. The specific information to be covered could be predetermined or left up to the students to define through their questions.

There are many possible ways to organize these visits.

- ✦ All three could serve as panelists during one discussion.
- ✦ Your class may take a field trip to the synagogues and meet with the representatives there.
- ✦ Each lay leader may occupy an entire class period.
- ✦ You may be able to convince the lay leaders to allow small groups of students to rotate through their homes for a more intimate discussion (allowing every student to meet each representative).
- ✦ Visits may occur just once or you may want to set up a preliminary meeting at the end of this unit and then conclude the entire curriculum with an in-depth panel discussion.

After the students have met with the lay leaders, time should be set aside for debriefing. In some format (essay, letter of thanks, or discussion), students must have the opportunity to process what they learned, how they felt about the interactions, how the meetings fit with what they learned in class, and what they will carry with them.

In person meetings with members of each denomination are vitally important for the achievement this curriculum's goals. We all know from our own experiences that when we meet "the other," we not only increase our understanding of them but also of ourselves. Speaking face-to-face with real Jews who live their lives and Judaism differently from one another, either in harmony or discord with our way, increases the likelihood that students will see each way of being Jewish as valid. It works to strengthen the greater community of Israel, *klal yisrael*, by

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increasing our understanding of each other and showing “the other” that we want to learn, understand, and be exposed to their way and reasoning.

It is also important that the students are not just exposed to the rabbis of these denominations. Part of the rationale for this curriculum is that the students will become the lay leaders of tomorrow. It is invaluable for them to see knowledgeable, active synagogue volunteers and to imagine that they could someday fill that role.

UNIT TWO

◇ UNIT TWO

WHO SAYS?:
WHERE AUTHORITY LIES IN EACH DENOMINATION

Students should exit this unit with the following enduring understanding:

- ◇ **Each denomination differs in its relationship with sacred Jewish texts and in the degree of authority it gives the texts.**

This unit will:

- ◇ Help students differentiate between the denominations by understanding each denomination's distinct relationship with Jewish text as a source of religious authority.
- ◇ Help students develop a comparative understanding of each Jewish denomination.
- ◇ Build in students a layered understanding of each Jewish denomination.

✎ One of the Notes to the Teacher in the first unit revealed the language students often use to describe the differences between the denominations (Reform Jews “do” less, Orthodox Jews “do” more, etc...). An aim of Unit One was to help the students understand what “do” means and that “doing” not only varies among denominations but also within them.

This unit will further explore the meaning of “do,” but with a different aim. Throughout Unit Two, students should be trying to determine why the difference in “doing” exists.

Ask leaders of the denominations how each differs from the others and their answer will focus on one pivotal biblical event, the giving of the Torah to Moses at Mt. Sinai. Did God give Moses the Torah directly? Did God inspire the Torah to be written? Was this story constructed at a much later time to build divine authority into the text and convince people to follow the rules? The answers to these questions reveal a lot but not all about the various relationships between the denominations and Jewish text.

Each denomination's view on the divinity of Jewish text directly affects how that denomination “does” Judaism. The students must understand these views and their implications in order to understand the denominations.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

✦ Sources of Authority

- ✍ This unit asks the students to understand the role of authority in Judaism. The fundamental differences between the denominations are in how they relate to sacred texts and the degree of authority each gives the texts.

This activity is designed to make sure the students have some familiarity with these texts before they begin evaluating the complexities of the Jews' relationship to them.

This activity requires advance preparation if bringing in someone very knowledgeable in Jewish texts to lead it.

Hold the class in the synagogue library. If the synagogue does not have an extensive library, either take a field trip to one that does or ask the rabbi to bring in a wide array of the texts you would like the students to examine.

Have the teacher, the principal, the rabbi, or a knowledgeable lay leader introduce the students to the Tanakh, Talmud, Shulchan Aruch, books of commentary, etc. Introduce the students to some of the leading commentators such as Rashi, Rambam, Ibn Ezra, and Ramban. Be sure to also introduce the students to modern Responsa and Torah commentary.

Answer the following questions for each book:

- ? What is contained in each book?
- ? When were these texts written and who wrote them?
- ? What languages are they printed in?
- ? What is the layout? How can they be navigated?

In pairs (Studying in chevruta, which is literally translated as with a friend, is a traditional way to study text.) let the students choose different kinds of text which they will examine on their own.

In addition, have the pairs use the Jewish Encyclopedia or Encyclopedia Judaica, which should already be in the library, to read some background on the type of text they are learning. For example, if they choose to read a section from an English translation of Talmud, have them also read the entries for Talmud and for the particular section of Talmud from which they are studying. If they choose to study from the Torah, have them also investigate what the encyclopedia says about Torah and about the particular book of Torah from which they have chosen to read.

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Give the students an opportunity to say which type of text they explored and what they learned about that type of text (e.g. Talmud).

After sharing what they have learned, have the activity leader (the teacher, principal, rabbi, or lay leader) guide them through a concluding discussion/lecture based on the following questions.

- ? Are these texts for us to use? How would we use them?
- ? Is there a right way to understand these texts?
- ? What is the relationship between God and these texts?
- ? Based on what has already been learned about the denominations, how do you think each relates to these texts?
- ? Where can this information be accessed on-line?



These questions will probably be a bit beyond the students' knowledge level and ability. That is okay. Asking the students to make educated guesses when answering will also open their minds and increase their curiosity to hear the answer. Be careful not to let the guessing go on too long, the students may start to feel they failed this activity in some way.

After the discussion leader provides answers to all these questions, more questions may be asked of the students to gauge their understanding, comprehension and synthesis of the information provided.

This discussion serves both to bring closure to this activity and to provide an entry point into the next activity and the rest of the unit. The rest of the unit will focus more intently on discovering the differences in the denominations' relationship to text.

With Help From My Friends

- ✎ The purpose of this unit to help students gain a full understanding of how each denomination relates to Jewish texts.

In the last activity, the students had a chance to familiarize themselves with the variety of Jewish texts. This activity is designed to delve deeper into the views of each denomination regarding the role of those texts.

Open this activity with by explaining that Jews do not understand or read text independently. As they saw in the last activity, either through teachers, commentary or translation, Jews get help from others when studying text. Each person may agree or disagree with past opinion, but these opinions always inform the present reading.

Create space for four stations around the room. Let each station will represent one of the denominations.

At each station, have a large piece of poster board.

Gather the readings for this unit that describe each denomination's describing the position on the authority of text. Affix the readings for each denomination to the poster board at that denomination's station. Center the readings on the board, leaving a border of several inches all the way around them.

- ✎ Laminating the poster board and readings will protect them for reuse.

Divide the students into pairs or small groups. Supply each pair or group with a pack of Post-It notes, sheets of paper, and a pen or pencil. Each pair or group should have a different color of Post-Its.

- ✎ Having a dictionary available to each of the groups will help this activity move along more smoothly and allow the students to work independently.

Make sure that at least one group is at each station at the start of the rotation. As the students move through the stations, they should accomplish three things.

First, they should read and understand the materials.

Second, they should leave helpful notes (using the Post-Its) on the board. These notes are meant to help the succeeding groups understand the reading materials when they come to that station. Groups may choose to leave notes as to the definition of unfamiliar words, hints to the location of critical information, questions about the information contained in the readings, notes as to how one


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denomination compares with another, or anything else they think would be helpful to their peers.

Third, every student should write a concise explanation of how each denomination relates to text as a source of religious authority.

At the end, allow each group to revisit each station to benefit from the notes left by the other groups.

Close this activity with a discussion of what they learned about the denominations. Be sure to draw clear comparisons.

 Built into this activity is a way for students to take part in and experience the Jewish traditions group study and using the commentary of others to enlighten one's understanding of text.

This method also makes going through the materials easier and faster as time is always a consideration for supplementary school sessions.

Making It Relevant

- ✍ There are three major reasons for this activity. First, this is a great way to teach students how they can uncover Jewish opinions on issues they will or are facing. Second, students have an opportunity to see what makes an opinion a Jewish opinion. Last, students learn the difference between the denominations with regard to the degree they allow the traditional textual sources to inform their stances on issues.

As a class, decide on a few current or classic issues in Judaism that are of concern to them (e.g. tattooing, piercing, kashrut, interfaith marriage, homosexuality, observance of Shabbat, who is a Jew).

In groups, pairs, or individually, assign students to the topics.

Provide a variety of resources for the students to investigate what Jewish texts have to say on these subjects. A list of potential resources is provided with the rest of the resources from this unit. If possible, allow students to access the Internet for this assignment.

- ✍ Experience using the Internet to find Jewish answers to their questions is invaluable. If students know they can easily find out what Judaism has to say, they are more likely to actually seek out this information before making decisions.

After a period of investigation, have the students write or present a summary of the variety of opinions that exist on the subject in Judaism. The summary should address the following points:

- each denominations stance on the subject
- the basis for each denominations' the stance
- texts, if any, cited in the information on this issue
- the degree to which the opinions expressed in Jewish texts influence the denominations' stance
- the clear differences between the denominations

- ✍ It is possible to include an individual element to this process. The students could write about which opinion they most agree with or how their opinion is different from any they have learned about. The problem with doing this is that it shifts some authority to the individual. In some movements this is perfectly acceptable and, in others, it is not.

✦ Quotes

✍ Along with either of the previous activities, this mini-activity can be used as a quick means of assessment.

Either by handing the students a copy or by writing them on the board, give the students the page of quotes provided in resources for this unit, but do so without giving the names and denominations associated with each quote.

Have the students decide on the quote(s) that best represents each denomination's belief.

As the correct answers are revealed, discuss how each quote represents that denomination's beliefs.

UNIT THREE

◆ UNIT THREE

DENOMINATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
HOW THE MOVEMENTS HAVE CHANGED OVER TIME

Students should exit this unit with the following enduring understanding:

- ◆ **The Jewish denominations are not static. They develop in response to one another and to the progression of humanity.**

This unit will:

- ◆ **Explore the influences on the development of denominational Judaism.**
- ◆ **Help students develop a comparative understanding of each Jewish denomination.**
- ◆ **Build in students a layered understanding of each Jewish denomination.**

- ✍ The first three units have established that denominational Judaism exists because it serves a Jewish people that are varied in opinions about what Judaism is and how Judaism should be practiced. Unit Four will provide further support for what has already been learned and an anchor for what will come in the following units.

The examination of the history of each denomination in Judaism provides a deeper layer of reasoning for the development of the American Jewish denominations. It gives support for the differences in belief and practice among the Jews in America. It also helps to explain the necessity of and the good that comes from denominational Judaism. It is this last result that will help with the transition into the concluding units which focus on the strength denominationalism brings to both Judaism and Jews.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

✦ Creating a Class Timeline

Cover the longest wall of the classroom with butcher paper. Toward the top of the paper, draw a timeline starting from 1800 CE through the current year.

Make copies of the resources for this unit for each student in the class. Have the students study the information in order to determine the most significant events or developments in each denomination's history.

Provide the students with strips of paper in four different colors. Assign each denomination to one of the four colors. Record the date and a brief description of the significant events or developments for each denomination on paper of the appropriate color and affix the papers in chronological order to the timeline.

This activity will likely take at least two class sessions. Consider a goal of covering the history of two denominations each class session.

Leave the timeline displayed until the conclusion of this unit.

✍ Think about an interesting approach to this activity ahead of time. One suggestion is to first gain an understanding of what the denominations "looked" like at the time of their founding. Then, jump ahead to the most current understanding of each denomination.

Let the students know that you have to figure out how each denomination got from point A, so to speak, to point B. As they go through the information, constantly challenge them to guess what the long-term result of each significant event will be. As you move closer to present day, start challenging them to predict future changes in the denominations, particularly for the years in the future when they will have kids in the congregational schools.

There is a lot of information to process. Proceeding slowly, with a lot of energy and enthusiasm will help make this activity more meaningful. It is also helpful to ask a lot of questions in order to assess student comprehension. The cause and effect relationships in history can be as hard to understand sometimes as difficult math or science concepts. Remember that just because the information is written in English doesn't mean students will understand it easily and frustration can lead to disinterest and boredom.

✦ The Comic Side

- ✍ These pages will not only provide some review of the history they have already learned, but will also give some insight into other aspects of the American Jewish experience that should also be added to the timeline.

Photocopy the pages from Stan Mack's comic book of Jewish history that pertain to the development of the denominations and to American Jewish history. A copy of these pages is provided in resources for this unit.

As the class moves through these pages, focus on the drawings than the words. Draw out important dates and events as well as trends.

Add any new information, including the trends, to the timeline to add context to the denominational history already portrayed.

- ✍ There are three trends readily noticeable: assimilation, anti-Semitism, and renewed interest in Jewish life.

It is very important to address themes on the class timeline. Themes tie events together. While dates and details of events will always remain elusive to many students, historical themes will not. Students will usually be able to remember the general historical motifs, why they occurred and in what general chronological order.

Memorable Moment-- Family Interview

Give the students the opportunity make history personal by discovering their own family's Jewish history.

For this memorable activity, assign students to interview at least three of their Jewish relatives from older generations. If possible, the oldest Jewish family member should be interviewed. Interviews are best when they can be done in person but telephone or email interviews might be necessary.

The aims of the interviews are to:

- Find out how the family's Jewish practice has changed over time.
- Discover the point in time the family joined the denomination with which their current synagogue is affiliated and which other denominations they had ever been a part of.
- Understand the current variances in Jewish practice and affiliation that exist within their family.
- Discern the impact assimilation, anti-Semitism and historic events had on their family's participation in Jewish life.
- Uncover the ideal way these three family members would like Judaism to be part of their family life.

At the beginning of Unit Four, have the students use some class time to determine which three family members they will interview and to draft their interview questions. The teacher should make sure the questions will adequately address each of the five aims listed above.

Give the students up to three weeks to complete the interviews. Encourage them to document the interviews through transcription, videotape or on a cassette tape. Assure them that one day these interviews will be cherished family documents.

After the interviews are complete and recorded in some way, have the students transfer the information they obtained and their personal reactions to it into a creative, 10-15 minute oral presentation for their class. They may choose to use Power Point, posters, slides, a family timeline, or any other creative, visual means of conveying the information. Before the student presentations begin, give them some class time to try to fit their family's experience into the class timeline. Ask them to include this comparison somewhere in their oral presentation.

One way to insure the high quality presentations is to create a special showcase for them such as a *Premier Night*. Invite parents and temple

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board members as well as friends and make the event as big and fancy as the school as possible.

✍ The Family Interview activity will be memorable for the students for many reasons. The actual interview process, seeing how their families' history fits into world history, the presentation of the information will all form an unforgettable experience for the students. However, there is another important reason for this activity.

So far in the curriculum, there have been few opportunities for the students to insert themselves into the material. All students, especially teenagers, need to be able to make the material they are learning relevant to them. Otherwise, it becomes unimportant and just another school task that can be forgotten as soon as it is completed.

It is particularly crucial for the students' Jewish education to be made relevant. This activity will not only allow each individual student to focus on himself/herself for a while but will also allow him/her to place himself/herself right in the middle of Jewish history. Hopefully, the student will then feel that learning about Jewish history is learning about his/her own history.

Timeline Comparison Activity

When the development of all four denominations and important events from American history are all represented on the timeline, have the students analyze the timeline for the following:

- Similarities in the development of the four denominations
- Differences in the development of the four denominations
- The major changes in each denomination over time
- How do/don't they correspond to the trends that were discerned from the comic pages

Like the *Charting the Issues* activity in Unit One, here it is also important to give the students a variety of ways to learn this information. Whenever there is learning material is dense, it is important to provide the students with as many ways as possible to file the information in their heads.


While this may be unnecessarily repetitive for a few students, for most it will be helpful.

This activity also provides a way to relearn the information after the break of the Family Interview project.

Historic Personalities

Another way to view history is by learned about the people who made it. Provided in the resources for this unit is biographical information for the people most associated with the beginnings of each denomination. Also included is information on current leaders of each movement.

These people are: Isaac Meyer Wise (Reform), David Ellenson (Reform) Samson Raphael Hirsch (Orthodox), David Hartman (Orthodox), Solomon Schechter (Conservative), Elliot Dorff (Conservative), Mordecai Kaplan (Reconstructionist), and Dan Ehrendrantz (Reconstructionist).

 The information for the current leaders is mostly in the form of speeches or articles they have written. Students can blend this information into a new speech or simply deliver a speech that is already provided in their own words and style.


Divide the class into groups and assign each group one of the leaders. Give them time to become familiar with their leader.

Each group should choose one group member to “become” their assigned leader.

Each group assigned to one of the founders should write a convincing and even impassioned speech as to why that denomination should be started and supported and how it will serve the whole of the Jewish people.

The groups assigned to a modern leader should also write a speech. Their speech should also be animated and convincing but should address why the denomination is moving in the direction it is and, again, why it is good for the Jewish people. Allow all of the leaders time to make their speeches and take a class vote on which leader was most charismatic and convincing.

End the activity with a discussion that compares the beginning of the denominations with how they at present.

 To bring a lot of energy and spirit to this activity, consider dividing the room in half and decorating one side in the style of the early 20th century and the other side in a contemporary style. Then, provide the students with costume materials such as hats, suit jackets, fake hair, etc... Also provide students with Jewish ritual objects such as tefillin, tallitot, kippot, and siddurim.

Another option would be to make this a two-week project and let the students bring in their own costumes. The class may even decide to have a costume contest in addition to their speech contest.

UNIT FOUR

◆ UNIT FOUR

RESPONSIVE JUDAISM:
MEETING THE NEEDS OF JEWS

Students should exit this unit with the following enduring understanding:

- ◆ **Denominational Judaism continues to allow for Jews of varying cultural backgrounds, sociological needs, and levels of ritual observance to access some form of organized Jewish life.**

This unit will:

- ◆ **Develop the understanding that denominational Judaism works to meet the needs of the Jewish community.**
 - ◆ **Encourage students to feel positively about denominational Judaism.**
 - ◆ **Help students develop a comparative understanding of each Jewish denomination.**
 - ◆ **Foster a belief in klal yisrael as a truly pluralistic community of Israel.**
- ✍ Similarly to the Family Interview activity, this unit allows for students to engage the content on a much more personal level.

On the surface, the activities contained in this unit seem disproportionately focused on the needs of “other” Jews than those of the students actually doing the learning. To an extent this is true. The activities require that much more time is spent analyzing all the possible needs of Jews and how the denominations work to meet those needs than it does asking the students what their Jewish needs are and how their denomination meets their needs.

There are two reasons for this. First and most obviously is that a major goal of this curriculum is for students to understand the different denominations. That cannot be achieved if students do not have a sense of who belongs to which denomination and why. Second, while teenagers often think they thoroughly know themselves, their needs, their wants, and the role that they want Judaism to play in their life, it is often not the case.

Teens, like most people, need exposure to a variety of thoughts, ideas, ways of living, beliefs, and values before they can really know themselves. Such exposure brings about a comparative understanding of who they are, how they live, what they need, and what they want. Spending so much time understanding others provides many opportunities for the students to better understand themselves.

Listen to the students’ side comments and conversations for evidence that this reflection is taking place. Critical or curious remarks such as “Why would they need that?”, “That’s not important to me.”, “People really want that?”, “Why is that a Jewish thing?”, and “I am the same way.”, show they are reflecting on the information in a helpful way.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

✦ The Jewish Homeland

- ✍ Israel is central to Jews and Judaism. Meaningful learning about Israel should occur in each year of a school's curriculum. While these are not major understandings of this curriculum, it is a fundamental belief of this curriculum's author and many Jewish educators.

An Israel-centered activity occurs at this point in the curriculum for the following reasons:

- This unit signals a shift in the curriculum from learning academic information about the denominations to the more emotional subject matter of being one community of Israel.
- All of the denominations agree that Israel's existence meets a central need of all Jews. Therefore, it is a great point of comparison for how the denominations can meet similar needs of Jews in very different ways.
- Including Israel in a unit about the needs of the Jewish people reinforces Israel's centrality. It also increases the possibility that students will see a relationship with Israel as one of their Jewish needs and part of their Jewish identity.

Start this activity with a discussion of all the reasons Israel has been and is important for the Jewish people. Ask students if they have ever been to Israel, what their experience was, what their feelings were, and if they hope to return. Ask students who haven't yet been to Israel, if they want to go and why. The teacher should feel free to share personal thoughts about Israel.

As the discussion moves on, list any reasons given for Israel's importance on the board.

Bring this part of the discussion to a conclusion by making the following two points:

- There are many reasons for Israel's importance. Not everyone agrees on each reason.
- Despite differences in reasons, Jews around the world agree to support Israel.

- ✍ It is important to include everything that is mentioned as a reason for Israel's importance. Everyone does not have to agree on the reasons. Doing this helps to demonstrate that Jews don't have to agree on how or why to support Israel, but that all Jews should support Israel.

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Move from this discussion into the investigation of what each denomination has to say about Israel.

Provide students with the resources that explain each denomination's views regarding Israel. Read through the information together.

Be sure to discuss any questions or surprises but focus on comparing the views. The following questions are helpful for this discussion.

- ? How do the denominations differ in the language they use to refer to Israel? What do these differences signify?
- ? What are the reasons each gives for Israel's importance? How and why do they differ?
- ? Were any of the reasons for Israel's importance that the class came up with not part of the reasons given by the denominations? Which?

Next, provide the students with information regarding the variety of Israel experiences or trips each denomination offers its students.

Using what they have already learned about the denominations, have the students evaluate the trips to see if they match the beliefs of the denominations about Israel and if they meet the needs of the denominations participants.

To conclude, have students prepare either a TV commercial, written ad, or brochure publicizing the trips in a way that would most appeal to the intended audience.

4 Defining Jewish Needs

Hold a class brainstorming session to generate a list of needs that Jews have. Direct the students to not only think about their Jewish needs but the needs of every possible kind of Jew. Appoint a class secretary to record all of the responses.

Divide the board or a large piece of butcher paper into four columns. Title each column with the name of one of the denominations.

As the secretary reads aloud the items from the list, have the class decide which denomination is able to meet that particular Jewish need. Some needs might be met by more than one or all of the denominations. Have the secretary make notations on the list as to which denominations the needs are assigned. **Keep this list for use in the Judaism's Grocery Store activity later in this unit.**

Divide the class into four groups, one group per denomination. Then assign every student within each group a few of the needs that could be addressed by their denomination.

Print outs of organizational, synagogue, and school Websites are included as part of the resources for this unit. These organizations are affiliated with specific denominations. Distribute the appropriate pages to each group.

Have the students make their way through the Websites to determine which organizations meet the needs they have been assigned.

Conclude the activity with a discussion that includes the following questions.

- ? Were you able to find an organization to meet each need that you were assigned? If not, what needs were left unmet?
- ? Which organizations associated with your denomination met the greatest number of needs? Describe those organizations for the class.
- ? Overall, do you think Judaism does a good job of meeting the needs of Jews?
- ? Do any of these meet your needs? Which would you participate in?

✦ Role Playing for the Future

Divide the class into six groups. Give each group a scenario of a problem that may affect them in the future. Six sample scenarios are provided. You may use them, change them, or create some from scratch.

After each group understands their scenario, they should write four solutions to the problem, one solution representing each denomination. In other words, they should solve the problem according to how they believe an Orthodox Jew, a Conservative Jew, a Reform Jew, and a Reconstructionist Jew would handle it.

When they are finished determining four appropriate solutions, ask the students to figure out what their personal response would be.

Each group should report to the other groups about their scenario, the possible ways of handling it, and how they personally would handle it. After each group reports out, ask if anyone else has a different way they would solve the situation.

✍ High school students want everyone to be accepted. They have a need for all opinions to be correct and safe from judgement. Most often, their first response to any of these scenarios will be that whatever the character wants to do is okay and there are no limits to what is appropriate Jewishly. Behind this is a desire for their opinions and lifestyle choices to be accepted without scrutiny and judgement.

With understanding, teachers must push students past students' initial responses and challenge any defensive answers.

Additionally, these scenarios might strike painful or sensitive chords with students depending on their family situation. Teachers should always try to be sympathetic to this and attempt to move the situation away from the present and into the future.

⚡ Memorable Moment

Judaism's Grocery Store

This activity will use the lists from *Defining Jewish Needs* activity of this unit and the introductory activity from Unit Two.

Before the day of this activity, collect small boxes, cans of food, or other small objects that are easy to cover and to transport. Cover the items in construction paper so that their original packaging cannot be seen.

Look at your lists. Make sure no items are repeated. Change the language of the list items to make them into nouns. Divide the new list of nouns into groups according to the denomination in which you would find them (Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, All). Create other groups if you feel it is necessary.

Assign each group a color. Using those colors, create labels for each item. Make enough labels for each student in the class to have each item plus four more labels per item. Place all the labels for each single item on one of the covered cans and boxes. Be sure not to tell the students what the colors mean.

Book a large room in the synagogue, like the social hall. Decorate to make it appear like a grocery store. Place all the items along tables as though they were on the store shelves.

When the students arrive, explain that they are now in Judaism's Grocery Store where every Jew can find everything and anything he/she wants for their Jewish life. Instruct them that the items do not cost anything but they must limit their shopping spree to 10 items.

Give them a limited amount of time to peruse the shelves. Then, hand them a blank sheet of paper. Send them back through the aisles to collect the ten labels representing the ten items that best represent their **ideal** Jewish life.

✍ Looking at their ideal Jewish life instead of their actual Jewish life opens students to how their Jewish life could possibly be more meaningful and better meet their personal needs. They may not be ready to make the necessary changes to commit to their ideal Jewish life at this point, especially if their ideals differ from their parents' ideas. However, working in the ideal can point them in a direction for the future.

Most people do not live their ideal lives in any respect. Instead, they spend their lives working towards coming ever closer to that ideal. People are directed by their ideals and are driven to go further to reach what they still have not accomplished.

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Consider how wonderful it would be if each of the Jewish students in the class spent their lives really trying to live their ideals, especially their Jewish ideals. Until students are encouraged to determine what their ideals are, they will not know what to work towards.

After they are all done collecting their labels, have them write their names on their papers and put them aside.


For the second round, divide the students into four groups and assign each group a denomination. Working as a group, have them go back through the shelves selecting the ten items they think would be most important to an ideal Jew in that particular denomination.

Regroup and have each group share which items they chose for their denomination and why.

Reveal your color coding system with the class and discuss whether or not their selections matched what was pre-selected for each denomination.

Next, each student should retrieve his/her personal grocery list. Using the color system, have the students analyze their lists to see if there was a particular denomination with which their ideal Jewish life fits.

Close this activity with a discussion. First, get the students' reactions to the activity and what it revealed. Then, ask them if they think there could or should be one kind of Judaism. Ask them to list the negatives and positives of having one form of Judaism for everyone.

 It is important to end this closing conversation on positive note so students will leave thinking favorably about denominationalism. For example, end the conversation with the reassertion of the fact that denominationalism allows for more people to be actively involved in Judaism rather than by restating the possible negative that denominationalism means that Jews are divided.

UNIT FIVE

◆ UNIT FIVE

KLAL YISRAEL:
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY THROUGH PLURALISM

Students should exit this unit with the following enduring understanding:

- ◆ **Denominational Judaism adds to the richness of American Jewish life and strengthens *klal yisrael* in America and around the world.**

This unit will:

- ◆ **Foster a belief in *klal yisrael* as a truly pluralistic community of Israel.**
- ◆ **Encourage students to feel positively about denominational Judaism.**

✎ Teenagers are the first to claim that everyone is different and the same at once. At any given moment, teenagers can alternate between passionately arguing that individual differences should be accepted without judgement and that every human being is the same and should be held to the same standards. Their extreme arguments protect them as they claim their independence and sort out their beliefs, their values, and their interests.


As teens mature, they will hopefully temper their extreme positions and refine their understanding of this complex truth of humanity. People are different and the same at once but that does not give license to selfishness, irresponsibility, living a life without obligation, or freedom from judgement.

This is the essence of this curriculum and this unit in particular. It is the beauty of the concept of *klal Yisrael*. Jews are responsible for living in their own time. Simultaneously, they are also responsible for finding their place in more than 5000 years of Jewish history and for understanding their role in the continuation of the Jewish people.

Jews truly behave like a family. Vicious in-fighting sometimes occurs between groups of Jews. But, at the same time there is intense dissent and debate, there is also unity. The activities in this unit are designed to draw out this paradox. After four units of comparison between the denominations, this unit steps back to take a broader view of Jews, to help students step out of their individual worlds and to connect to the worldwide community of Jews.


 SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES


 Understanding *Klal Yisrael*

 So far, students of this curriculum have spent a lot of time to investigating the different and defined groups of Jews that exist. They have examined their own thoughts, needs, and beliefs to see where they might fit into the four distinct worlds of the denominations.

In sharp contrast, this activity challenges them to look at what all Jews share. Jews are part of a history, a people, and religious tradition that is much bigger than they are. This connection is sacred and should be taught as such.

Prayerbooks are universally understood to be sacred. Learning about the nature of *klal Yisrael* and the gifts and obligations that come with being part of this family from the prayerbook helps to convey this sacredness to students.


 Gather enough prayerbooks from the synagogue's sanctuary for each student to have his/her own or ask that students bring a prayerbook from home for this particular class session.

 It is important to use actual book. Photocopied pages from a prayerbook do not work to convey the sense of sacredness, timelessness, and connection that is meant to be part of this activity and unit.

Opening the prayerbooks to the service that is most familiar to the students (i.e. Shabbat evening or morning services), give the students a few minutes to reacquaint themselves with the prayers.

Instruct the students to search through the prayers (not additional readings) for references to the Jewish people. Have each student record the words used, either in Hebrew or English, to refer to the Jewish people (e.g. House of Israel, Children of Israel, Israel, Your people) and the frequency with which each term is used. Allow enough time for the students to generate a substantial list. Consider having the students start looking at different points in the service in order to cover more prayers.

Make a list on the board of the four or five terms for the Jewish people that have the highest frequency.


 Divide the class in the same number of groups as terms. Assign each group to a different term.

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Send the groups back into the prayerbook to look for all the occurrences of the term assigned to them. As they investigate, ask them to look at the context of the term's usage and the overall meaning of the prayers in which they find the term.

Have the students prepare to report what they have learned to the other groups by writing a definition for their term that addresses the following:

- Who is this term describing?
- What are the characteristics given to the person or people described by this term?
- When is this term used? In what context?
- Are you personally addressed by this term?

 No matter how modern the styling of the prayerbook may be, students know that the contents are ancient. Given the span of time the prayers and prayer-structure have existed, it is amazing that the prayerbooks have undergone so little change. Even without knowing liturgical history, students sense this. By using prayerbooks in learning, they are instantly tied to the Jewish past, present and future.

After the definitions are shared, introduce the students to the term *klal Yisrael* (the community or society of Israel).

Initiate a discussion based on the following questions:

- ? Do the terms that we studied in our prayerbooks address *klal Yisrael*?
- ? What or who is included in *klal Yisrael*?
- ? Are you part of *klal Yisrael*?
- ? Do you think of yourself as part of *klal Yisrael*?
- ? What does it mean to be a part of *klal Yisrael*?
- ? In what ways do you show that you are part of *klal Yisrael*?

End the session by having each student their feelings about concept *klal Yisrael* on index cards. They may choose to write a definition, how they are a part of, how they feel about, further questions they have regarding the term, or any combination of these. **Save the cards for use at the end of the curriculum.**

Who is a Jew?

On the board, write the sentence,

“Someone is Jewish only if he/she is born of a woman who is herself Jewish by birth or has converted into the Jewish religion or if he/she has personally gone through conversion himself/herself.”

Ask the students whether they agree or disagree with this sentence and why. To stir emotions and engage the class, challenge every response and reason given even if you end up contradicting yourself.

In most supplementary schools around the country, the issues of intermarriage or conversion personally touch many students. Teachers cannot possibly be aware of all the religious identity issues and sensitivities in each student’s life. Therefore, it is crucial to constantly frame this activity as an intellectual exercise and to remember that in this unit *klal Yisrael* is being promoted above all else.

Call a time out from the debate and tell the students that the statement written on the board is no longer an opinion but a law. Set the scene as the close of a trial testing the legitimacy of the law.

Divide the class into two groups. Provide each student with a copy of the information on the question of Jewish identity provided in the resources for this unit.

Assign one group to be the prosecuting attorneys claiming that this law is unjust and does not serve the interest of the Jewish people. The other group is the defense team, claiming that the law is just, right and in the best interest of all Jews.

Both groups have all the same preparation materials with which to prepare closing arguments. In preparing their remarks, they should take into careful consideration the points the other side is likely to make and build in a rebuttal of those points.

If possible, arrange ahead of time for someone else to come in and serve as judge. If not, the teacher should serve as the judge.

Have the students prepare their closing arguments and choose one or two people to present their case before the judge. As in an actual courtroom, the prosecution should present first.

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Once the arguments are made, the judge should rule only as to who had the better argument and not as to the merit of the law. Regarding the law itself, the judge should pose a challenge to the students. The judge can recognize that he/she understands the law does not fit satisfactorily for every Jew's notion of Jewish peoplehood and of the Jewish religion. The judge should make some sort of proclamation that he/she feels there should be standards for inclusion in the Jewish religion, he/she will leave the determination of those standards to each group of Jews.

Using the same resource materials as earlier in this exercise, the class should then take some time to write a 2-3 sentence "ruling" as to what each denomination uses to determine who is a Jew and to give the students a chance to respond to the judge's ruling.

- ✍ By allowing each denomination to rule according to their needs and standards and by having the judge accept all of the rulings, the notion of denominationalism as a means to promote *klal Yisrael* is supported.

✦ Jews and Jews vs. Jews and Others

- ✍ This activity is meant to raise emotions and exemplify how Jews behave like a family. It is designed to draw out internal discord as it simultaneously builds (or at least points out) greater unity among all Jews.

Before class, collect newspaper clippings, magazine articles or other written sources that demonstrate disagreement between different groups of Jews. In addition, collect some written sources that demonstrate a range of non-Jewish views and attitudes towards Jews and Judaism. It is particularly useful to find articles from non-Jewish sources that address the same issues in Judaism as the articles from Jewish sources.

Start by sharing with the students the sources demonstrating disagreement among Jews. Ask them what they think of this sort of in-fighting or disagreement and whether it shows weakness or strength among the Jewish people.

Next, share with them the articles from non-Jewish sources. Ask for their responses to those articles.

- ✍ These articles do not have to be negative in their orientation to or understanding of Judaism.

Discuss in what ways their reactions to each group of articles differ and explore with them why this is so.

- ✍ It may be helpful to draw a comparison between a person criticizing his/her brother or sister and a person witnessing someone else criticize his/her brother or sister.

Close the activity by bringing the discussion around to the following points:

- Jews consider themselves to be part of a worldwide Jewish family.
- In general, people tolerate criticism, fighting, or disagreement from within their own family better than they do when it comes from someone unrelated.
- If we understand Jews to all be part of the same family, we also need to understand that the large Jewish family is going to behave very similarly to our individual families. It also means that, in order to survive and succeed, we need to support our large Jewish family in a similar fashion to how we support our individual families.

Defining Pluralism

A stated goal of this curriculum is to build the understanding of *klal Yisrael* as a truly, pluralistic community of Israel. However, pluralism is an often misused and misunderstood term.

To put in American terms, pluralism is much more the notion of a “tossed salad” than a “melting pot.” This is an insufficient understanding, however, because the elements of a tossed salad have nothing shared to hold them together. Tossed salads lack a structure, base and framework.

A pluralistic community is not a community with completely unrelated groups tolerantly living side by side. It is a community of small groups that are allowed to be autonomous while existing in and contributing to a larger civilization or society.

This activity allows students to internalize this significant, but often overlooked, difference.

Give the students the definition worksheet included in the resources for this unit. of pluralism. Work as a class to understand the definition of pluralism but have each student complete the worksheet individually.

Have students share their definitions of Jewish pluralism. By either selecting an outstanding definition written by a student, combining good parts of several student definitions, or writing a class definition, decide on a definition of Jewish pluralism that everyone in the class agrees with.

After the definition is agreed upon, engage the class in a discussion as to whether or not pluralism exists within the American Jewish community and whether or not it **should** exist.

This is a different way of having the discussion of whether or not there should be one type of Judaism. If they agree that a pluralistic society is an ideal, they should agree with denominationalism as an ideal for the Jewish world or society.

Klal Yisrael Talmud Page

Before the start of the class session, select a nice, large piece of poster board. In the center of the board, write the words *klal Yisrael* in English or in Hebrew.

At the start of class, redistribute the index cards the students turned in after the *klal Yisrael* activity from the start of the unit. Give the students the opportunity to reread their cards.

Hold a very brief discussion to refresh their memories of the points made during that activity (the *klal Yisrael* activity) and to recap the topics they've addressed and discussions they've had since.

Provide fresh index cards and nice pens for each student. Have each student use what they wrote previously and what they have since learned to compose a short piece of commentary on the words *klal Yisrael*.

After each student has finished his/her card, ask for volunteers to add the voices of each denomination to the page by writing what Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox Judaism has to say about *klal Yisrael*. Before adding these four cards to the board, share what is written on them and receive approval from the class.

Arrange the index cards around the edges of the poster board. Then, let the students decorate the poster board.

Display the poster board as prominently as possible on the synagogue grounds so that other may see the students' work.

If this course will be taught from year to year, build a collection of these boards that can be displayed in the synagogue at appropriate times.

✍ This activity is a great way to close the curriculum because it combines the voices of the denominations and the individual students for the purposes of creating a shared understanding of *klal Yisrael*.

By having the students to define *klal Yisrael* from the perspectives of each denomination, they are challenged to use the factual knowledge they have gained throughout the curriculum. However, by asking them to apply this knowledge to a concept that is more emotional in nature than factual (*klal Yisrael*), the final emphasis of the curriculum is on the intangible connection they have made to the material and the Jewish people.

Intermingling the cards stating the denominational perspectives with the cards expressing the students personal understandings of *klal Yisrael*

Denominational Judaism in America: A Pluralistic Approach

works to further emphasize the belief that the community of Israel should be a pluralistic one.

Taking time to make the display aesthetically appealing and placing the finished product so it can be publicly viewed communicates to the students that their learning and their opinions are valid and valued.

EXPANDING THE CURRICULUM

EXPANDING THE CURRICULUM

✦ Holidays

Holiday celebrations often seem to disrupt the flow of a curriculum. To avoid this, consider using each holiday as another opportunity to teach more about religious practice differences between the denominations.

✦ Current Events

There are always points in the year when it is impossible and unadvisable to keep current event news out of the classroom. Use these teachable moments to highlight how the denominations respond differently to such events. It may often be possible to use the issue of textual authority by seeing if and how press statements by the Orthodox Union, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, United Synagogue, and Jewish Reconstructionist Federation refer to textual sources.

RESOURCE LIST

RESOURCE LIST

Reform Internet Resources

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion	www.huc.edu
Union of American Hebrew Congregations	www.uahc.org
North American Federation of Temple Youth	www.nfty.org
Central Conference of American Rabbis	www.ccarnet.org
Reform Judaism	www.rj.org
Reform Day Schools	www.pardesdayschools.org
National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods	www.nftb.org
Women of Reform Judaism	www.rj.org/wrj
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism	www.rac.org
ARZA- Reform Zionist Association	www.arza.org
ARZA World	www.arzaworld.com

Orthodox Internet Resources

www.ou.org	This site has links to all the major Orthodox organizations and associations.
Yeshiva University	www.yu.edu

Conservative Internet Resources

Jewish Theological Seminary of American University of Judaism	www.jtsa.edu
Rabbinical Assembly	www.uj.edu
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism	www.ra.org
United Synagogue Youth	www.uscj.org
Camp Ramah	www.usy.org
Mercaz USA- Cons. Zionist Association	www.campramah.org
Women's League for Conservative Judaism	www.mercazusa.org
Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs	www.wlcj.org
	www.fjmc.org

Reconstructionist Internet Resources

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation	www.jrf.org
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College	www.rrc.edu
Noar Hadash	www.noarhadash.org

The Book of Jewish Life

By Louis Jacobs

Berhrman House, Inc. 1984

Encyclopedia Judaica- CD-ROM Edition 1997

Exploring Judaism: A Reconstructionist Approach

By Rebecca T. Alpert and Jacob J. Staub

The Reconstructionist Press 2000

Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat

By Mark Dov Shapiro

CCAR Press 19991

A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice

By Isaac Klein

The Jewish Theological Seminary of America 1992

Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice

By Mark Washofsky

UAHC Press 2001

Jewish People, Jewish Thought: The Jewish Experience in History

By Robert M. Seltzer

Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc 1980

The Many Faces of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform

By Gilbert Rosenthal

Berhrman House 1978

The Story of the Jews: A 4,000-Year Adventure

By Stan Mack

Jewish Lights Publishing 2001

To Pray as a Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service

By Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin

BasicBooks 1980

CHARTING THE ISSUES

**CHARTING THE ISSUES - Write what each denomination
thinks of each issue.**

	REFORM	CONSERVATIVE	ORTHODOX	RECONSTRUCTIONIST
<u>KASHRUT</u>				
<u>WOMEN</u>				
<u>SHABBAT</u>				

SHABBAT- ORTHODOX



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Why the Sabbath?

There is a miracle in Shabbos.

Even if you have never felt it yourself, it is there. It is one of the most important ingredients of Jewish survival.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Jew has survived two thousand years of persecution and humiliation largely because he had the Sabbath. It was one factor that not only made him survive, but kept him alive, both spiritually and morally. 1

Without the Sabbath, the Jew would have vanished. It has been said that as much as the Jew has kept Shabbos, so has Shabbos kept the Jew.

As long as Judaism exists as a vibrant, vital force, the Sabbath is its most outstanding ritual practice.

In order to understand this, you would have to experience a true traditional Shabbos. You would see a change take place, almost like magic. Take the poorest Jew, the most wretched person, and the Sabbath transforms him, as if by a miracle into a man of dignity and pride. He might be a beggar all week long, but on this one day, he is a true king.

There are hundreds of thousands of Jews who keep the Sabbath, with the number growing every year. To understand what Shabbos means, you must live it with them.

I remember once spending Shabbos with a poor working man in Williamsburg. He was a simple but pious man who did not have very much in the way of worldly goods. Seeing his cramped, dreary apartment, you might have pitied him, but at his Shabbos table, he sat like a king.

He made a remark that has remained with me all these years. "I pity people who don't keep Shabbos. I really pity them. They don't know what they are missing. They have no idea at all."

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There is a Sabbath prayer that reads. "Rejoice in your kingdom, you who keep the Sabbath." The miracle of Shabbos is the kingdom of every Jew.

There is a miracle in the Sabbath.

Let us look into it more deeply.

The Primary Ritual

Two of the major parts of Judaism are the ethical and the ritual.

We can all understand the importance of the ethical laws of Judaism. None of us have any difficulty comprehending why the Torah tells us not to kill and steal, or why we must not shame or hurt another person.

On the other hand, Judaism contains many ritual laws, rules that strengthen man's relationship with G-d. These include the holidays, the Kashrus laws, and such things as Tallis, Tefillin and the Mezuzah. It is, in large part, these rituals that separate Judaism from all other ethical systems.

Among the many rituals of Judaism, we find one prime ritual that stands above the rest.

That is Shabbos - the *Jewish* Sabbath.

More than Rosh HaShanah, more than Yom Kippur, more than keeping Kosher or attending services, the Sabbath is the one ritual that marks the Jew.

It is the only ritual mentioned in the Ten Commandments.

Think about it for a moment. Of all the many rituals of Judaism, only one is mentioned in the Ten Commandments.

Many people claim that, to be a "good Jew", one need only observe the Ten Commandments. But if you do not keep the Sabbath, then you are only keeping nine of them.

At this point, the question must be forming in your mind, "But why? What is so special about the Sabbath? Why does it merit a place in the Ten Commandments? Why is it so important?"

The question becomes even stronger when we realize that, in ancient times, when Jews administered their own system of Justice, when capital punishment was administered, violating the Sabbath was a major crime, punishable, in extreme circumstances, by death.

The Torah openly states (Ex. 31:14), "You shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you; any one who profanes it shall be put to death. For whoever

does any work on that day shall be cut off from his people."

Put to death ... Cut off from his people ... Very strong terms indeed. But why?

In Torah law, we find that the penalty for violating the Sabbath was to be stoned to death, the worst possible form of execution. The Sabbath violator was put in the same category as the person who betrays his faith and his people. ²

Jewish law treats one who does not keep the Sabbath as one who abandons Judaism for another religion.

The Talmud flatly states, "Breaking the Sabbath is like worshipping idols." ³

In many respects, one who willingly and flagrantly does not keep the Sabbath is no longer considered part of the Jewish community. ^{4,5}

But why should this be so?

One way of understanding it can be grasped by studying those authorities who take a more lenient view. They write that in modern times, one may extend to a Sabbath violator the privileges of being a Jew, for a very interesting reason. They state that no one would violate the Sabbath if he truly understood its meaning. Therefore, unless we have contrary evidence, we assume that a person violating the Sabbath is doing so out of ignorance, and therefore we treat him with sympathy and understanding rather than harshness.

All this highlights one point: *The Sabbath is the most important institution of Judaism.* It is the primary ritual, the very touchstone of our faith.

Not only is the Sabbath the only ritual appearing in the Ten Commandments, but it is also repeated more often in the Torah than any other commandment.

Our great prophets hardly ever mentioned any ritual. Their task was to admonish Israel with regard to faith and morality. But still, they placed a great emphasis on the Sabbath. ⁶

Throughout the Talmud, the Midrash, and the other great classical Jewish writings, we find that the Sabbath has a most central place in Jewish thought.

Classical Judaism does not recognize such divisions as Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. There were basically only two kinds of Jews, The Sabbath Observer (*Shomer Shabbos*), and the Sabbath Violator (*MeChallel Shabbos*).

There is absolutely no question that the Sabbath plays a most central role in Judaism. But we are still left with our original questions.

How does the Shabbos create such an atmosphere?

Why is it so important?

What makes it so central to Judaism?

Why is a person who violates the Sabbath counted as an apostate?

What is the real meaning of the Shabbos?

A Day of Rest?

Most of us think that we understand the Sabbath. It seems very simple. It is nice to have a day of rest, especially if one works hard all week. Everyone needs a day of rest, both for physical renewal and for spiritual relaxation.

Many of us hold on to this simple notion. We feel that the Sabbath was given as a day of rest for the weary worker. But this notion would imply that if we do not feel particularly tired, there is no need to keep the Sabbath at all, in fact, all too many of us use this as an excuse not to keep Shabbos.

But this simple "Day of Rest" explanation of Shabbos is really very weak—and the more we examine it, the weaker it becomes. In fact, it fails to explain any of the questions we have just raised.

It may be nice to have a day of rest, but why should it have such an important place in Judaism?

Why is it so central to our tradition?

The Ten Commandments are fundamental to Judaism. They contain some of its most important religious principles and ethical concepts. How did a mere "day of rest" sneak in?

If you are not tired on Shabbos, why is it so important to rest? Why not just take a day off whenever you do get tired instead?

If we look into the Ten Commandments themselves, it becomes even more puzzling. The first Commandment tells us to believe in G-d. The second confirms G-d's unity and warns against idol worship. The third cautions us to respect G-d, and not use His name lightly. If one truly believes in G-d, then He is to be respected.

The very next commandment tells us to keep the Sabbath.

Somehow, it seems to be out of place.

The first three commandments deal with our most basic concepts of G-d. Why does the Sabbath immediately follow? What does a mere "day of rest" have to do with our most basic beliefs?

The mystery deepens when we look at the text of the Commandment of Sabbath. As it appears in the Book of Exodus (20:8-11), it reads:

Remember the Sabbath day
to keep it holy.
Six days shall you work
and do all your tasks.
But the seventh day is a Sabbath
unto the L-rd your G-d.
You shall do no manner of work...

For in six days,
G-d made heaven, earth and sea
and all that is in them,
and He rested on the seventh day.
Therefore, G-d blessed the Sabbath day
and made it holy.

The Commandment calls Shabbos, "a Sabbath unto the L-rd." Exactly what does this mean?

The Commandment also tells us that our Sabbath is supposed to symbolize G-d's rest on the seventh day of creation. Why is this important enough to be mentioned in the Commandment?

The Ten Commandments appear twice in the Torah, once in the Book of Exodus, and once in Deuteronomy.

If we look at the version in Deuteronomy, the question becomes still more difficult. Here the Commandment reads (Deut. 5:12-15):

Observe the Sabbath day
and keep it holy
as G-d commanded you...
And you shall remember
that you were a slave in Egypt
and G-d took you out
with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.
Therefore, G-d commanded you
to keep the Sabbath day.

In this version of the Commandment, an entirely different reason is given for the Sabbath.

Here we find that the Sabbath is meant to recall the Exodus rather than Creation.

What is the connection between the two?

What does the Sabbath have to do with the Exodus?

If we say that the Sabbath is merely a "day of rest" and a time to relax after a week's work, how can we even begin to understand these things?

The truth is that we can't, and if we really want to gain a real understanding of the Shabbos, we must re-examine the most basic ideas of Judaism.

A Question of Belief

Judaism begins and ends with G-d.

It is essentially a way of life that brings man to G-d.

One who denies G-d, rejects the very basis of Judaism, and is totally cut off from it.

All this may seem very fundamental and obvious, but it is one thing to say that you believe, and it is another to understand exactly what you believe.

Suppose a person were to say, "I believe in G-d." Suppose that in the very next breath, he were to point to a statue and say, "This is the G-d I believe in!"

Such a person would be an idolator. He certainly does not believe in G-d, much less so in a Jewish sense. What he believes in is idolatry, not G-d.

We know that G-d is not a statue. But what is He?

This is a very difficult and complex question to discuss, but we do have certain concepts about G-d which form a fundamental part of all of Jewish tradition and teaching.

G-d is as real as anything else in the world.

He is One and unique.

He is absolutely incorporeal, having neither body, shape nor form.

Anyone who says that he believes in G-d but denies these truths, is fooling himself. He may say that he believes in G-d, but what he really has done is to set up an idol and called it G-d. ⁷

Let us clarify this point with an example.

You are standing in a room with Mr. Jones. You make a statement: "Mr. Smith is indeed absent," you point to Mr. Jones and say, "This is Mr. Smith."

Saying that Mr. Jones is Mr. Smith does not make it so; neither does saying that Mr. Jones is G-d make it so.

If you say that you believe in G-d, but do not believe that He is as real as you or I, or that He is One, then you really do not believe in G-d, at least, not the Jewish concept of G-d. You are really speaking of something else.

But how do we, as Jews, define G-d?

We find the answer in the very first verse of the Torah. It says:

"In the beginning, G-d created the Heaven and the Earth."

Here we have a definition of G-d. 8

G-d is the Creator of all things.

He is the One who brought all things into existence.

This has some very important implications.

As creator of all things, G-d must be both greater than all creation and distinct from it. Therefore, we, as Jews, reject the philosophy of pantheism.

As creator, G-d's existence cannot depend on any of his creatures. Our definition therefore rejects any concept of G-d as an abstract ethical force or social convention. 9

If a person says that he believes in G-d, but does not believe that He is Creator, then he does not really believe in the Jewish concept of G-d.

But there is another point in our belief in G-d.

Some people think that G-d created the world and then forgot about it. They may claim to believe in G-d, and even admit to some abstract Creator, but they insist, at the same time, that his existence has no bearing on their lives. To them, G-d is a remote philosophical abstraction.

We see G-d as much more than this.

When G-d introduced Himself in the Ten Commandments, He said (Ex. 20:2), "I am the L-rd your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt,

from the house of bondage. "

G-d was telling us that He is involved in the affairs of man and has a profound interest in what we do. 10

G-d Himself gave the Exodus as an example. It was here that the entire Jewish people experienced G-d. To them, G-d was no mere abstraction. They saw His deeds to such an extent that they were actually able to point and say, "This is my G-d." 11

Here again, one who does not accept G-d's involvement and interest in the affairs of men cannot be said to believe in the Jewish concept of G-d. He is violating the first of the Ten Commandments.

In the light of these concepts, we can now understand the significance of the Sabbath. 12

Faith requires more than mere lip service. It must also involve action in the form of our steadfast adherence to G-d's will. The Hebrew word for faith is Emunah. It comes from the same root as Uman —a craftsman. Faith cannot be separated from Action. But, by what act in particular do we demonstrate our belief in G-d as Creator? The answer now becomes obvious.

The one ritual that does this is the observance of the Sabbath. It is the confirmation of our belief in G-d as the Creator of all things.

We now understand what the Talmud means when it says that one who does not keep the Sabbath is like an idol worshipper. Violation of the Sabbath is an implicit denial of faith in G-d, the Creator.

We can also understand why the Sabbath violator is considered outside the Jewish community. Judaism exists as a community striving toward G-d. One who denies G-d as we know Him, cuts himself off from his community.

For the Jew, belief in G-d is more than a mere creed or catechism. It is the basis of all meaning in life, for if the world does not have a creator, then what possible meaning can there be in existence! Man becomes nothing more than a complex physiochemical process, no more important than an ant or a grain of sand. Morality becomes a matter of convenience, or "might makes right". It is the belief in G-d that gives life purpose and meaning. It is also what gives us a standard of right and wrong. If we know that G-d created the world, and did so for a purpose, then we also realize that everything that furthers this purpose is "good," and everything that runs counter to this purpose is "evil."

The essence of Judaism is purpose and morality. One who does not actively believe in G-d as creator of the universe, divorces himself from these two most basic values. He therefore, casts himself outside of

Judaism is unique in that G-d spoke to an entire people, three million people at the same time, who saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears. That one historic, traumatic experience is the solid bedrock of Jewish faith.

The Exodus not only made us uniquely aware of G-d, but it also showed Him profoundly involved in the affairs of man.

The impact of the Exodus remained imprinted on the Jewish mind throughout our history. We saw every persecuter as Pharaoh, with G-d standing on the sidelines ready to repeat the miracle of the Exodus. We were thus able to withstand a long, gloomy exile.

We usually associate the Exodus with Passover. But it is just as intimately connected with the Sabbath.

One of the important miracles of the Exodus was that of the Manna.

For forty years, some three million people were literally fed by a miracle. This miracle, a lesson for the ages, dramatically demonstrates G-d's involvement, in the day to day life of each one of us.

In order that the Jews not forget that it was a miracle, the Manna was presented in a most unique way. It only appeared six days a week, but was absent on the Sabbath. The miracle of the Manna paralleled the miracle of Creation.

When Moses told the Jews about the forthcoming Manna, he said (Ex. 16:26), "You shall gather it for six days, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there shall be none."

This also answers another important question. How do we know which day was the Sabbath? Who counted it from the time of Creation?

The answer is that G-d Himself revealed the exact day of the Sabbath in giving the Manna. ¹⁴

Thus, the Torah says (Ex. 16:29), "See, G-d has given you the Sabbath. Therefore, He gives you two days' food every sixth day ... let no man go out on the seventh day."

From then on, for over three thousand years from the Exodus until our own day, the Sabbath has been faithfully kept.

We recall the Exodus and the miracle of the Manna every time we celebrate the Shabbos.

The two Challahs on the Shabbos table represent the double portion of Manna that fell each Friday. ¹⁵

The Sabbath tablecloth represents the dew that covered the ground before the Manna fell. The Challah cover is the dew covering the Manna to protect it. ¹⁶

During the entire period of the Exodus, we lived with a unique intimacy with G-d.

The Torah says (Deut. 8:3), "G-d fed you with Manna that neither you nor your fathers had known —to teach you that man does not survive by bread alone, but lives by every word that comes from the mouth of G-d."

On the Sabbath, we seek to revive and deeply feel this close relationship with G-d, and live by the Word.

Why The Sabbath

Sabbath Rest

Sabbath Work

The Thirty Nine Categories

A Taste of Light

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Footnotes:

1 *Kuzari* 2:34, 3:10. Cf. Abarbanel on *Moreh Nevuchim* 2:31.

2 *Sanhedrin* 7:4 (55a).

3 *Eruvin* 69b, *Chulin* 5a; *Yad Shabbos* 30:15.

4 See *Yoreh Deah* 2:5, 119:7.

5 *Pri Megadim*, *Eshel Avraham* 55:4, *Mishneh Berurah* 55:46.

6 *Isa.* 56:1, 58:13, *Jer.* 17:21, *Ezek.* 20:23, *Neh.* 13:15.

7 See *Kesef Mishneh*, *Lechem Mishneh*, on *Yad*, *Tshuvah* 3:7.

8 *Emunos VeDeyos* 1:1, *Yad*, *Yesodey HaTorah* 1:1,5.

9 *Yad*, *loc. cit.* 1:4, *Nimukey Mahari and loc. Cf. Radak* on *Jer.* 10:10, *Yerushalmi*, *Berachos* 1:5 (9b), *VaYikra Rabbah* 26:1.

10 *Ramban ad loc.*, *Sefer HaChinuch* 25. Cf. *Kazari* 1:1, 2.

11 *Ex.* 15:2.

12 See *Moreh Nevuchim* 2:31, 3:32, 3:41; *Sefer HaChinuch* 32, *Ibn Ezra*, *Bachya* on *Ex.* 20:8, *Ramban* on *Deut* 5:15, *Menoras HaMaor* 159, *Akedas Yitzchok* 4:55; *Sh'nei Luchos HaBris*, *loc. cit.* 2:10b. Cf. *Mechilta* on *Ex.* 31:14.

13 *Moreh Nevuchim* 2:35.

14 *Kuzari* 1:85, Cf. *Mechilta* on *Ex* 20:11, *Berashis Rabbah* 11.2, *Rashi* on *Gen.* 2:3, *Tiferes Yisroel* (Maharal) 40.

15 *Ex.* 16:22; *Berachos* 39b, *Shabbos* 117b.

16 *Ex.* 16:13, *Um.* 11:9; *Tosefos*, *Pesachim* 100b
"SheAin," *Turey Zahav (Taz)*, *Orech Chaim* 271:12.

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Shabbat Overview

The "Aseret HaDibrot," the "Ten Commandments," are documented twice in the Five Books of Moses, once in Shemot (20, 2-17) and once in Devarim (5, 6-18), when Moshe is reviewing the Jewish experience in the Desert. In general, the two texts are nearly identical. However, with respect to the Commandment relating to Shabbat, there are crucial differences, as follows:

"Remember the day of Shabbat, to keep it holy. Pursue all your labor for six days, and do all your "Melachah" (the term "Melachah" to be defined in Item 3, below). But the seventh day is Shabbat to the L-rd your G-d; On it you may do no "Melachah," neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor the stranger who is within your gates. **For in six days G-d made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is within it; And he rested on the seventh day;** Therefore, G-d did bless the day of Shabbat and He made it holy." (Shemot 19: 8-11; the Shabbat Command as recorded in the Shemot version of the Ten Commandments)

"Guard the Day of Shabbat to keep it holy, as the L-rd your G-d has commanded. Pursue all your labor for six days, and do all your "Melachah." But the seventh day is Shabbat for the L-rd your G-d; Do no "Melachah" - not you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox or donkey or any of your cattle, nor the stranger who resides within your gates, in order that your male and female servants shall rest, as you rest. **And you shall remember that you were a slave in the Land of Egypt, and the L-rd your G-d took you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm;** Therefore, did the L-rd your G-d command you to observe the Day of Shabbat." (Devarim 5: 12-15; the Shabbat Command as recorded in the Devarim version of the Ten Commandments.

Of course, it is extremely unusual, at first glance, that there should be **any variation** here. But the Midrash explains that, somehow, G-d uttered both versions at once, something that a creature of flesh and blood could not do, to teach both of the themes of Shabbat, namely, the Creation and the Exodus. Another aspect of the dual utterance of "Remember the Day of Shabbat" and "Guard the Day of Shabbat" is that Shabbat has a dual nature - positive and negative, affirmation and withdrawal, as discussed below:

- The special quality of the Day of Shabbat is based on the concept of the holiness of time. The Shabbat is that one day out of seven that was charged with holiness, by the holy Creator of time.
- Shabbat has a double theme, the significance of each of which is developed in the paragraphs below. One is to commemorate the Creation of the universe by G-d in six "days," and his "rest" from his "Melachah", and that it was for that reason that He blessed the seventh day and made it holy - Shemot version. The other is to commemorate the Exodus, that awesome event in which the L-rd took the Jewish People out of Egypt; that we should remember that we ourselves were slaves in Egypt, and that G-d Himself redeemed us with a "strong hand and an outstretched arm."
- On Shabbat, the Jew withdraws from the performance of "Melachah." All categories of "Melachah" represent purposeful, creative interactions with nature. In the case of Man, this refers to his interaction with his environment, whereby he exerts mastery and control over nature, as in fact he was commanded to do by G-d. Our purpose in this is to express our belief and to testify that G-d is the Creator of the Universe, and is the source, on an ongoing basis, of all creative forces within it.
- Shabbat testifies to the dignity of labor and the basic equality of all human beings. The Torah commands "Six days shall you labor;" - all of you! No exceptions! Yet, all members of the household, all classes of society, from the king to the servant; even the animals, are to be provided with a "Day of Rest."
- One of the central themes of Shabbat, as seen in the Devarim version of the "Aseret HaDibros," the Ten Commandments, is to remember the Exodus. This unique event in history demonstrated the **continuing involvement of G-d with His Creation**, His fierce opposition to slavery and all abuse of power, and His concern for justice.
- Throughout the centuries and millenia of Jewish History, oppressors of the Jews realized that a major key to Jewish survival was observance of the Shabbat; therefore, it was outlawed; sometimes punishable by death. Conversely, the Shabbat raised the Jews far above their enemies; for the Jews, in acting to carry out G-d's command, were acting in accord with their human potential, while their enemies, in attempting to suppress this observance and in their desire to strip the Jews of their human dignity, descended to the level of the beasts.

- The Shabbat Table is compared with the Altar in the Temple. Shabbat is the Day of "Quality Time," the Day of Delight, of "Menuchah" or Tranquility, to be spent with one's family, with one's self, with one's Maker, and with the Torah.

The Holiness of Time

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The Holiness of Time

"Kedusha," or "holiness," is a central concept in "Yahadut," the Hebrew name for Judaism. This is because all holiness which manifests itself in various aspects of the Creation, in actuality or in potential, stems ultimately from G-d, the Creator, the Holy King of the Universe.

Why do we call G-d the holy king?

Part of the reason is that His Torah is entirely opposed to the abuse of power, and He, Himself, is described in terms very foreign from our conception of a flesh-and-blood king?

"Rabbi Yochanan said, 'Wherever you find mention of the greatness of the Holy One, Blessed Be He, there you will also find mention of his humility. This phenomenon is written in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and stated a third time in the Sacred Writings.'

"It is written in the Torah, 'For Hashem, your G-d, is the G-d of heavenly forces, the Master of masters, the great, mighty and awesome G-d, Who shows no favoritism and accepts no bribe' (Devarim 10:17). "And afterwards it is written, 'He performs justice for the orphan and the widow, and loves the stranger, to give him food and clothing. (Devarim 10:18)"

What aspects of Creation can assume levels of holiness?

Some are the following:

- Nations - The Bible describes the People of Israel as a "Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation." But how does a nation attain holiness? The answer is as it is written, "in order that you remember and do all of My commandments, then you will be holy unto Your G-d."

- Individual Human Beings - By following the life style advocated by G-d "And you shall do that which is proper and good in the eyes of Hashem," the Jew is commanded to "Be holy" and "to create holiness in himself, for I, the L-rd, your G-d, Am Holy."

- Languages: the Hebrew Language is considered a "holy language" because of its intrinsic characteristics, for example, the total absence from its vocabulary of words of profanity, and also because of the way

the Jewish People is commanded to use language, "Shemirat HaLashon," "Guarding the Tongue" against slander, gossip, etc.

- Place - The Land of Israel is more holy than all other lands; the most holy city in the Land is Yerushalayim; the holiest part of Yerushalayim is the Temple Mount; the holiest part of the Temple is the Holy of Holies; the holiest place in the Holy of Holies is the point centered above the Ark, between the Kruvim, from which emanates the Voice of G-d.

Time - The Creator, Who is Eternal and not bound by Time, "Who ruled before any creature came into existence" and "After everything will cease to exist, He alone will rule, in Awesomeness" ("Adon Olam," from the "Siddur," the Prayer Book of the Jewish People), created a sequence of Time (possibly, but not necessarily, beginning with the postulated Big Bang):

"And there was evening and there was morning, One Day... And there was evening and there was morning, the Second Day, ..., the Fifth Day, the Sixth Day." The Creation of the Universe was a project of Six "Days."

The Seventh Day, the Shabbat, was invested with holiness by G-d, the Holy Creator, "And the L-rd blessed the Seventh Day and made it holy, for on it He withdrew from all His 'Melachah,' by which the L-rd had created (the world), and made (it) ready for development."

How can the individual Jew experience this holiness and, to some extent, contribute to it?

The individual Jew can celebrate the Shabbat by refraining from his creative interactions with the environment and by experiencing the Day as a Day of "Oneg," "pleasure and delight" and "Menuchah," "tranquility." The Prophet Yeshayahu, Isaiah, describes the desired program for the Jew on Shabbat.

"If you restrain, because of the Shabbat, your feet, refrain from accomplishing your own needs on my holy day; if you proclaim the Day of Shabbat "a delight," the holy one of Hashem "honored one," and you honor it by not pursuing your own ends, from seeking your needs or discussing the forbidden; then you shall be granted pleasure with Hashem, and I shall mount you astride the heights of the world, and provide you with the heritage of your forefather Jacob - for the mouth of Hashem has spoken. (Yeshayahu 58:13-14)" (Not a bad promise!)

Part of the "Oneg" are the "Seudot Shabbat," the Festive Meals of Shabbat, which begin with the recitation of "Kiddush," the Sanctification Prayer.

The Evening Kiddush contains the description of Shabbat as "the first to be called holy," which grouping includes Shabbat and the Holidays, the difference being that Shabbat was invested with holiness by G- d,

whereas the Holidays are invested with holiness by Man, according to the Laws of the Torah (particularly in the Classical Period of Jewish History, when the Temple stood, and the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court, declared "Rashei Chodoshim, the Beginnings of Months, based on the testimony of witnesses concerning their sightings of the New Moon).

In the "Minchah," "Afternoon Prayer," on Shabbat, there is included our hope that Hashem was satisfied with our Shabbat behavior:

"Our G-d and G-d of our forefathers, may You be pleased with our rest. Sanctify us with Your commandments and grant us our share in Your Torah; satisfy us from Your goodness and gladden us with your salvation, and purify our heart to serve You sincerely. O Hashem, our G-d, with love and favor grant us Your holy Shabbat as a heritage, and may Israel, the sanctifiers of Your Name, rest on them ("them" is to include the Time of the Mashiach, for Shabbat is said to be "reminiscent of the World-to-Come"). Blessed are You, Hashem, Who sanctifies the Shabbat."

Erev Shabbat

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Erev Shabbat - The Eve of Shabbat

Yom HaShishi - The Sixth "Day"

Just as the human being needs a transition, a distinction, or "havdalah," between "kodesh," that which is holy, and that which is "chol," or profane, so does he need a transition when he steps up from the level of the profane to that of the holy. When one speaks of the Holy Shabbat, that transition is provided by Erev Shabbat, the Eve of Shabbat. What occurred on the first Erev Shabbat? Let us look at the Bible, where that event is described.

"...And Hashem said, 'Let us make Man in our image and in our form, and let them rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky, and over the cattle and over all creatures that are above the earth, and over all things that creep upon the earth.' And the L-rd created Man in His image; He created him in the image of G-d; male and female did He create them..."

"...And G-d saw all that He had done, and behold it was **very good**; and it was evening and it was morning; the Sixth "Day."

Thus, "Maaseh Bereshit," the Creation of the Universe, was completed by the end of the "Sixth Day." On that fateful "Day," Adam and Chavah were given the first "command," and it was almost immediately "violated." They were punished by being removed from Gan Eden. When darkness fell, Adam and Chavah despaired. When the sun came up on the First Shabbat, they realized that their "teshuvah," their repentance, was accepted; they exulted, and sang "A Song for the Day of Shabbat," "It is good to thank Hashem and to sing praise to Your Name, O Exalted One; to relate Your kindness in the dawn, and Your faithfulness in the nights."

To return to our time, let us follow the preparations for the Shabbat as described by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan Z"L ("Zichrono Livrachah" - "May his memory be for a blessing"), in his work, "Sabbath Day of Eternity," published by NCSY ("National Conference of Synagogue Youth," the Youth Division of the Orthodox Union).

Note that Rabbi Kaplan uses "**Shabbos**" where we use "**Shabbat**." This is a relatively minor matter of "havara," or "pronunciation." In Eretz Yisrael, the "**Havara Sepharadi**," the Sephardic pronunciation, which pronounces the word "**Shabbat**," is used. In the Diaspora, in general, though in some places in the Diaspora (outside of Eretz Yisrael (the Land

of Israel)), this is beginning to change, the Ashkenazic (West and North European) pronunciation is used, which **spells and pronounces** the word as "**Shabbos.**"

"... Shabbos must also be a do-it-yourself project. In order to really feel the Shabbos, you cannot wait for it to come to you. You must get into it. The Torah tells us (Shemos 31:16) ' to make the Shabbos.'" Every person must make his own Shabbos. You must prepare yourself and get into the mood. Only then will you be able to feel its true significance, for Shabbos is not an intellectual exercise. If it were, meditating about it would be enough. We might provide explanations, but true understanding only comes from doing and feeling."

"In a way, Shabbos is like (being in) love. You can talk about love for the rest of your life, but if you have never experienced it, you will never understand it. Once you have been in love though, no further discussion is necessary."

"Shabbos is a bond of love between ourselves and G-d."

"To understand it, you must experience it."

"Do it Yourself"

"The Shabbos mood begins with its preparation. The Commandment says, "Remember the Shabbos Day to keep it holy." Our sages teach us that in order to truly keep it holy, we must remember it all week long and prepare for it. If you see something you will enjoy on Shabbos, by all means set it aside for use on Shabbos. (Beitza 15b)"

"The preparations for Shabbos reach their peak on Friday afternoon. You then direct most of your activities towards Shabbos. Recall the lesson of our Sages, "He who prepares on Friday, will eat on Shabbos." (Avodah Zara 3a) Anticipate it as you would an important visitor. After all, Shabbos is the Queen of all Creation." (Shabbos 119a)"

"Eat lightly on Friday afternoon. Work up an appetite for the Shabbos meal."

"Make sure that you will have the tastiest possible food for Shabbos. If possible, do something to help prepare the meal. Make sure that everything will be just right for the Shabbos Queen."

"Clean up your room and tidy your belongings. Put away all weekday things. Prepare your surroundings to reflect the Shabbos mood. "

"Take a relaxing bath or shower. Cleanse your mind and soul along with your body."

"Put on your best clothes. Dress as if for an important occasion. If

possible, have special Shabbos clothing set aside."

"Many of our "Tzadikim," "pious people" have the custom of reading the "Shir HaShirim" ("Song of Songs") just before Shabbos. It is the most beautiful love poem ever written, telling of the love between G-d and His people. Read it if you have time, and try to feel this love."

"Prepare the table for the Shabbos meal. Cover it with a fine white tablecloth. Set it with your best china and silver in honor of the Queen."

"Set aside two "Challahs," the "Lechem Mishneh" of Shabbos (symbolizing the double portion of mahn, the miraculous food which fell from heaven for the Jewish People while they were in the desert, regarding which twice as much fell on Friday because the Jewish People were not allowed to gather the mahn on Shabbos), and cover them with a clean napkin or special cover.

Prepare the wine for Kiddush along with a special goblet set aside as a Kiddush cup. If possible, try to have a silver one."

"Hadlakat Nerot," - Lighting of Shabbat Candles

At 18-20 minutes before sunset, Shabbat candles are lit in the home. Although in most households, the candles are lit by wives and mothers, if a woman or **even a man**, is living alone, she or he is obligated to light candles in their home.

In most cases of a "brachah," or blessing, being recited on the performance of a "Mitzvah", a Commandment, the blessing is recited first, followed by the performance of the Mitzvah. Examples are the reading of Megilat Esther on Purim, where the blessing "al Mikra Megilah," "on the Reading of the Megilah," **precedes** the Reading of the Megilah, and the blessing "al Netilat Lulav," "on the bundling of the Lulav and the Esrog, the Hadassah and the Aravah," recited on Sukkot, **before** the Mitzvah, their bundling and moving in all six directions, is performed.

However, in the case of Shabbat candles, the woman lights the candles first, and then pronounces the blessing, because once she has pronounced the blessing, she has accepted the Shabbat restrictions upon herself, and would not be able afterwards to light the candles.

Thus, after lighting the candles, the woman covers her eyes and recites the blessing,

"Baruch atah Adon-y, Elo-einu Melech HaOlam,
Asher Kidshanu B'Mitzvotav V'Tzivanu Lehadlik Ner shel Shabbat"

"Blessed are You, our G-d, King of the Universe,
Who Has Commanded us to kindle the Light of Shabbat"

While the woman covers her eyes, she prays for the welfare of her family. The lighting of the Shabbat candles is a moment of great significance, for it is now that the holiness of Shabbat descends upon the home. Of course, by nightfall, Shabbat will have arrived, in any case, for it does not depend on the actions of Man. But, by ushering in the Shabbat before its automatic arrival, the woman demonstrates her eagerness, and the eagerness of her family, for closeness to Hashem.

Usually, the husband sets up the candles in the "Menorah," or candle-holder. This allows him to have some participation in this beautiful Mitzvah. In doing something for his wife, the husband is also enhancing "Shalom Bayit," the peaceful atmosphere in the home.

The Concept of "Melachah"

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body is prepared for burial according to Jewish law by being washed and dressed in plain linen wrappings by a special Holy Burial Society, then placed in a simple coffin. Mourners tear their garments as a sign of grief (this is called *keriah*), observe seven days of mourning during which they do no work (the seven-day period is called *shivah*, from the Hebrew word for "seven"), and go to no entertainments. They recite the *Kaddish* prayer daily for eleven months if the deceased is a parent or thirty days for other relatives or for a mate.

Affixed to the doorposts of every Orthodox Jewish home is a *mezuzah*, a small box containing passages from the Torah, to remind the family that the home must be filled with Jewishness. Males cover their heads at all times with a skull cap (in Yiddish, *yarmulke*; in Hebrew, *kippah*) or hat as a sign of respect for God; married women cover their hair with a kerchief or wig as a sign of modesty. Men are required to pray three times daily and wear a prayer shawl (*talit*) and phylacteries (*tefillin*) each morning. Every Orthodox Jew tries to study the Torah daily. Orthodox Jews eat only kosher food, never mix milk and meat, are careful not to eat bread or other products prepared with leavening during Passover, and recite a blessing before and after each meal. The Orthodox woman is expected to maintain a kosher home, light Sabbath and festival candles, and go to the ritual bath (*mikveh*) after each menstrual period.

The Orthodox are careful to observe the Sabbath and festivals in every way. They will not work, write, smoke, ride, or carry even a handkerchief out of their homes on the Sabbath, nor will they use radio, television, or lights on that day. They build a *sukkah* at home on the festival of Sukkot, fast on Yom Kippur and other holy fast days, eat only foods that are kosher for *Pesah* during Passover, and observe all the other rituals for each holy day of the year.

Orthodox Jews will pray only in an Orthodox shul. The shul is designed so that men and women sit separately with a partition or curtain (*mehitzah*) between them so that they will not distract members of the opposite sex. The service is almost entirely in Hebrew, although the more modern synagogues have added some English prayers and an English sermon by the rabbi. The traditional prayerbook (*Siddur*) is the only one used, and no changes or additions to the prayers are allowed. Musical instruments and choirs with female singers are never allowed at Sabbath or holy day services.

The Orthodox are strict about not changing the prayer services or any of the prayers. They believe that those who have altered these things have often adopted Christian ways such as mixed seating, organs, and mixed choirs, and that these are signs of assimilation. They feel that the traditional prayers are beautiful as they stand and that it is arrogant and improper to change them. And even if they do not totally accept certain ideas in the *Siddur* such as the resurrection of the dead or Heaven and Hell, they are not prepared to drop

SHABBAT- REFORM

3

Sabbath and Holiday Observance

Shabbat

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. (Gen. 2:3)

Remember [*zakhor*] the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (Exod. 20:8)

Observe [*shamor*] the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (Deut. 5:12)

If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your affairs on My holy day; if you call the Sabbath "delight" [*oneg*], God's holy day "honored" [*mekhubad*]; and if you honor it and go not your own ways, nor look to your affairs, nor strike bargains; then you can delight in God. (Isa. 58:13-14)

Shabbat Observance and Reform Judaism. The Jewish Sabbath has been called an "island of holy time in a sea of secular activity." This is a powerful and apt metaphor, but it remains a metaphor, an inexact comparison. Unlike a true island, which is formed by an act of nature, Shabbat is a human construction. It becomes holy in our lives as a result of our own creative endeavor. According to our tradition, we sanctify Shabbat by means of actions that correspond to four separate *mitzvot*. We remember the Sabbath through our liturgy, by the words we say and sing that distinguish this day from all others. We observe the Sabbath by refraining from doing "work" on that day. And we honor and delight in the Sabbath through the foods we eat, the clothes we wear, and the special ends to which we devote the hours of the day that would otherwise be given over to work and the pursuit of material gain. In fulfilling these *mitzvot*, tradition teaches that we build a fence in time, setting

Shabbat apart from the other days so that we may experience a kind of life that is wholly different, a "foretaste of the World-to-Come." It is an exercise in "the art of living as it expresses itself through Shabbat."

How do Reform Jews experience Shabbat? As with every other aspect of Jewish religious life, Reform thought on the subject of Sabbath observance is the product of a long and continuing process of historical development. The one constant feature of this process has been change. Each generation of Reform Jews has arrived at its own conception or conceptions of the nature of Shabbat and of its meaning in our lives. The same shall undoubtedly be true for generations yet to come. This book attempts to summarize the current state of Reform Jewish thinking about the observance of Shabbat, particularly as this thinking is expressed in Reform responsa and in the movement's major works devoted to the subject: *A Shabbat Manual*, *Gates of the Seasons*, and *Shaarei Shabbat (Gates of Shabbat)*. These books have emerged out of an effort by the Central Conference of American Rabbis to "create old/new opportunities for Jewish living." That effort reflected an increasingly positive appraisal of the role of religious discipline in Reform Jewish life and the conviction that "the recovery of Shabbat observance" is an item of pressing significance on the Reform Jewish agenda. While the idea of *mitzvah*, of commandment, is deeply problematic in Reform theology, these writings hold that a life of Jewish authenticity—a pattern of living composed of acts that "a Jew ought to do in response to God and to the tradition of our people"—is "inexorably bound up with Shabbat observance." Put differently, no matter how "Reform" our Judaism, it would be Jewishly unthinkable without the *mitzvot* of Shabbat.

Shabbat at Home

Preparation. It is a *mitzvah* to prepare for Shabbat. By "preparation," the Rabbis meant those activities which of necessity must be carried out before Shabbat arrives, activities which help to make the day a special one and to create an atmosphere of serenity and Shabbat peace. These include: cleaning the house and adorning it with flowers, setting the table, and shopping for and cooking the meal. The Sabbath is a particularly appropriate opportunity to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *hakhnasat orchim*, welcoming guests into our homes, especially newcomers in the community and others who are alone. The final moments before the

beginning of Shabbat are an especially appropriate time for the giving of *tzedakah* (donations to the needy).

Kindling the Shabbat Lights (Hadlakat Hanerot). It is a *mitzvah* to begin the observance of Shabbat with the lighting of candles. The Rabbis ordained this practice as a means of fulfilling the requirements of *havod* and *oneg*, to honor and delight in the Sabbath, so that we welcome the Shabbat and eat our meal in an atmosphere of festivity, peace, and light. For this reason, the Shabbat candles should be large enough to insure that they will continue to burn until the meal is over. It also marks the formal beginning of Shabbat, after which none of the activities defined as "work" (*melakhah*) may be performed.

In traditional Judaism, the *mitzvah* of lighting the candles is considered the special responsibility of women, since they tended to be at home preparing the meal for the onset of Shabbat. Nonetheless, men are also required to light the candles and to recite the appropriate blessing if no woman is present to perform the *mitzvah*.

When does Shabbat begin? Technically, Shabbat starts at the onset of "night" on Friday, but precisely when does that moment occur? The uncertainties over this question led to the establishment of a requirement "to add from the weekday to the holy day," that is, to begin Shabbat sometime before nightfall on Friday and to end it sometime after nightfall on Saturday. How *much* to add is the subject of a long and involved rabbinic dispute; thus, the times listed in Jewish calendars for candle-lighting and for the end of Shabbat depend largely upon local custom. The most widespread practice in traditional communities is to light the candles at approximately eighteen minutes before sunset on Friday and to end Shabbat at about one hour after sunset on Saturday.

According to the rabbinic sources, we light *one* Shabbat lamp (*ner*). The widespread custom, however, is to kindle two lamps or candles, one corresponding to *zakhor*, "remember the Sabbath day" (Exod. 20:8), and the other to *shamor*, "observe the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:12). It is customary in some communities to light more than two lamps or candles; some families kindle a light for each member of the household. The one who kindles the Shabbat lights recites the following blessing:

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kidshanu
bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel shabbat.*

construction of the holiest of structures and therefore, too, over virtually every sort of productive human endeavor. Over the centuries, the details pertaining to these categories have been expanded to include activities that were certainly never contemplated by the authors of the biblical and early rabbinic sources. In addition, the Rabbis enacted numerous rules of their own—"fences around the Torah"—which forbid a host of activities that, while not technically defined as "work," seemed in their eyes to merit prohibition as safeguards of the holiness of Shabbat. This system has been studied, commented upon, and developed through the centuries, and it constitutes today a massive and complex subject in the curriculum of Jewish law.

Reform Attitudes. Reform Judaism also holds that Shabbat is a day of rest and that work should be avoided. It takes with the utmost seriousness the tradition's requirement that Shabbat be a day of "rest," set apart from all others not only through ritual activity but also through the abstention from "work," those weekday activities which interfere with the establishment of "an island of holiness in time." At the same time, Reform Judaism has departed from the strict traditional definitions of "rest" and "work" because it does not believe that these represent the final word on Jewish practice. Just as the rabbinic Sages developed their definitions on the basis of understandings rooted in their own environment, so do contemporary Jews continue to arrive at conceptions of *menuchah* and *melakhah* that reflect the needs of their own time, place, and circumstances. As adherents of a movement that cherishes religious freedom, Reform Jews will respond to the demands of Shabbat in many different ways. For this reason, the observance of Shabbat in Reform Judaism—the definition of "rest" and "work"—will vary widely from person to person and from community to community.

At the same time, the freedom to create new forms of Sabbath observance is accompanied by an important caveat. As *Gates of the Seasons* puts it: "In creating a contemporary approach to Shabbat, Reform Jews do not function in a vacuum. Although we may depart from ancient practices, we live with a sense of responsibility to the continuum of Jewish experience." When the Reform Jew considers a question of Shabbat observance, he or she should begin with a thoughtful and careful consideration of traditional styles and standards, seeking "to maintain as much as possible our connections with the best of the Jewish past." Our creativity is restrained and guided by our desire to express

Thinking in Terms of Mitzvah/Commandment for Reform Jews

Just as the various aspects of Shabbat have their own background, this guidebook for Shabbat also has a history. It follows the publication of two other volumes by the Reform rabbinate, each of which also stressed the significance of Jewish practice. The first, *Shaarei Mitzvah/Gates of Mitzvah*, presented the life cycle; the second, *Shaarei Mo-eid/Gates of the Seasons*, took up the subject of observing the Jewish holidays.

All three of these books were preceded in 1972 by the text on which this volume is modeled, *A Shabbat Manual*. That book was edited by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut and was noteworthy because it was the first publication of the Central Conference of American Rabbis devoted to the observance of Shabbat in terms of mitzvah/commandment.

Such an approach toward Jewish practice was novel and even controversial at the time because Reform Judaism has always allowed individual Jews freedom in shaping their own Jewish lives. The *Shabbat Manual* maintained, however, that in addition to the need for autonomy in Jewish decision-making, there also ought to be some sense of discipline among Reform Jews.

The concern was that without some counterbalance to the autonomy of the individual, Reform Judaism could be fragmented into as many divisions as there were individual Jews. Each Jew could make Shabbat as he or she wished without any sense of commonality or even minimum observance. "Mitzvah" was the word used in the *Shabbat Manual* to signal that Reform Jews needed to reassess their attitudes toward radical freedom in the area of Jewish practice. By using the word "mitzvah," the *Shabbat Manual* asked Reform Jews to begin thinking about their Jewish observances in terms of commandment or obligation.

Rabbi Plaut wrote, "Mitzvah is what a Jew ought to do in response to God and to the tradition of our people." The *Shabbat Manual* listed a full regimen of Shabbat observances, calling them mitzvot, and Rabbi Plaut commented, "It is suggested that you make a permanent decision to apply the principles of this catalogue of mitzvot to your life. You may do this for yourself alone, or together with your family, or as a member of a group of like-minded Jews who seek such a commitment."

Shabbat Becomes a Mitzvah

Almost two decades later the invitation to observe Shabbat remains a challenge for Reform Jews. That is why this book was created. It was designed to allow Reform Jews the fullest opportunity to ask questions, explore Shabbat, and find a path through "the gates of Shabbat." The hope was that if Reform Jews had a text which helped them encounter the beauty and joy of Shabbat, they would embrace Shabbat as a necessity in their lives. In other words, *Shabbat would become a mitzvah for Reform Jews.*

When all is said and done, the commitment to Shabbat which raises it to the level of a mitzvah may not yet be what you feel. If you have just begun to discover Shabbat, that is not surprising. You are probably still trying to integrate the many facets of Shabbat into your life, and that process takes time and patience.

On the other hand, even those who are accustomed to Shabbat may not find it easy to use the term mitzvah/commandment when it comes to describing their practice. As moderns, most of us are very hesitant when it comes to accepting any notion of external authority or regimen.

Nevertheless, Jews have used the term mitzvah/commandment for centuries in describing the obligation they felt to live their lives Jewishly. Jews have followed mitzvot not solely out of compulsion but because living Jewishly provided an inner source of fulfillment and joy.

In regard to Shabbat, this guide attempts to communicate these positive feelings of satisfaction and pride. Hopefully, your experience of Shabbat will add a dimension of sanctity to your life that nothing else can replace. When that happens, *you ought to begin to feel commanded to observe Shabbat because you would not want to do anything but that.* At that time what you do will not only strengthen you as a Jew, but also strengthen the Jewish people.

We now turn to two brief discussions of mitzvot followed by a recapitulation of all the possibilities for Shabbat described in this guide. This time around, the possibilities of Shabbat are presented in terms of mitzvah. Our goal is to communicate the belief that being a Jew has to mean at least the attempt to make Shabbat a part of our lives.

In Conclusion

More than Israel has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept Israel.
Ahad Haam, 19th century

This book began with an invitation to explore a variety of ways for making Shabbat a part of your life.

At this point in your reading, you can probably sense how beneficial your embracing Shabbat as described in this guide could be for the Jewish people. As Ahad Haam put it, to the extent that "Israel keeps Shabbat," the Jewish community does become stronger. The more we connect as a group to Judaism in general, and Shabbat in particular, the more vibrant our community can be.

At the same time, Shabbat is not something a Jew observes only because it benefits others. Shabbat is something a Jew can celebrate because it does so much on a personal level for the Jew who takes it seriously.

Especially for Jews in search of ways to express themselves Jewishly, Shabbat provides a marvelous opportunity. It allows those who follow it to give real substance to their individual identity as Jews.

When you observe Shabbat, you are able to go beyond merely talking about Judaism in theory. You encounter it in reality. You literally drink the wine, smell the spices, and study the Torah portion of the week. By observing Shabbat, you experience what the words shalom/peace, menucha/rest, and kedusha/holiness mean. Once a week you allow yourself to come in contact with the actual practices and values that have distinguished Jewish life for centuries. On the seventh day, you truly feel Jewish because Shabbat is the great day of the week set aside for Jewish identification and affirmation.


The irony is that if this guide succeeds in providing an entry point into Shabbat, it may also accomplish something else. Because Shabbat can open the gate to an altogether fuller Jewish life, this guide may prepare you to go beyond Shabbat and into the practices and values of Judaism that obtain every day of the year.

Finding Shabbat can help you ground yourself more intensely and positively as a Jew. It can help you understand this phrase from the prayerbook, that resonates with the joy Jews have always felt about Shabbat and Judaism—

אֲשֶׁר־יָבִיב! מַה טוֹב חֶלְקֵנוּ, וּמַה נְעִים גּוּרְלָנוּ, וּמַה יָפָה יְרֻשָׁתֵנוּ!

How happy we are! How good is our portion, how pleasant our lot, how beautiful our heritage!

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Why Shabbat?

Why Shabbat? It is our oasis in time, a day when we leave the rat race behind, ignoring business concerns, household tasks, e-mail and a myriad of other irritants of everyday life. It is a gift from God to us, allowing us to enjoy a special day with our families and friends -- those who are most important to us. In Yiddish we are "*mahen Shabbos*" — "making *Shabbat*." Important occasions in our lives don't just happen by themselves; we prepare for them. We, as Jews, "make" our own *Shabbat*, converting it from a Friday night and Saturday to a *yom kadosh*, a holy day. We prepare for it, welcome it, and celebrate its special sacred character -- then we can recognize the preciousness of the day God gave us. Our homes' *Shabbat* is a different experience because of our personal investment.

The central position of *Shabbat* in Judaism is articulated throughout the Torah:

- The very first entity in all of Torah to be called holy is *Shabbat*.
- As God completed the creation of heaven and earth, the final creation was *Shabbat*: "On the seventh day God finished the work which He had been doing, and He ceased [rested] on the seventh day from all the work which He had done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation which He had done." [Genesis 2:2-3 *The New JPS Translation*]
- "It shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased from work and was refreshed." [Exodus 31:17 *The New JPS Translation*] When we celebrate *Shabbat* as a day of rest, we commemorate God's creation.
- *Shabbat* is the only commandment among the Ten Commandments dealing with a holy day, *Shabbat's* preeminence emphasizes its centrality in Jewish life. There are two versions of the commandment. In Exodus we are commanded, "*Zahor* (remember) the Sabbath day and keep it holy," [Exodus 20:8 *The New JPS Translation*] and in Deuteronomy we are commanded, "*Shamor* (observe) the Sabbath day and keep it holy." [Deuteronomy 5:12 *The New JPS Translation*] These two verses teach us that it is not enough to identify *Shabbat* as important; we must observe *Shabbat* and with its *mitzvot*.

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- In the commandment in Deuteronomy the reason given for not doing any work on *Shabbat* is: "Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day." [Deuteronomy 5:15 *The New JPS Translation*] Rather than being slaves to our daily work, we proclaim our freedom with *Shabbat*, putting the daily work aside, and treating ourselves as free, taking care of ourselves with prayer, study, relaxation, good food and visiting with family and friends.

We translate these ideas of rest and freedom into our celebration of *Shabbat*. During the week we control the world -- creating, building, destroying and maintaining. By resting on the seventh day, we acknowledge that we do not own our world. Our world is God's domain. This is a day for looking at what God has created and lent to us for our enjoyment. By setting aside one day for *Shabbat*, we also proclaim our freedom from daily obligations, commitments, worries and concerns. Rather than thinking of *Shabbat* as a day when we can't do things, we declare that one day of the week is for our own re"Jew"venation. Now we can concentrate on creating *Shabbat* -- a *yom kadosh*, a sacred day. For generations, *Shabbat* has been considered a major component of Judaism by practically every Jew. It has provided an element of continuity throughout the years. Our goal is to invite participants to learn more about *Shabbat*, discovering the joy and enrichment that the gift of *Shabbat* brings.

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7 Entry Steps to Enriching Shabbat

(Not in hierarchical order)



- **Light candles every Friday evening.**

This action delineates the official beginning of *Shabbat*. Even if one lights the candles and does nothing else, there is a recognition that a special day has started.

- **Have a *Shabbat* meal with family / friends.**

Traditionally, one difference between *Shabbat* and the rest of the week has been the additional meal. In the Talmud (Bavli, *Shabbat* 11 7b) we find that although other days have two meals, *Shabbat* is to have three: Friday night, Saturday *kiddush*, or lunch, and *Seudah Shlishit*, the third meal. This is different from eating three times in one day. Each meal adds a different dimension to *Shabbat*. Friday night revolves around the evening meal. Saturday afternoon's meal starts the afternoon period of enjoyment and relaxation. *Seudah Shlishit* reminds us of the special "something extra" nature of *Shabbat*. Sharing a *Shabbat* meal with family and/or friends increases the "specialness" of each meal.

- **Include a table ritual at your *Shabbat* meal**

(*kiddush*, *motzi*, *birkat hamazon*, *z'mirot*, Torah talk)

Like all Jewish holidays, *Shabbat* starts in the home. As important as community is, we rightfully place ourselves and our loved ones as most important. Therefore it makes sense that the *Shabbat* meal as a *Shabbat* experience in our home should be a high priority. Each table ritual one does at a *Shabbat* meal adds meaning to the meal and reminds us that the meal itself is an important part of *Shabbat*.

- **Go to services Friday night and/or Saturday morning.**

Judaism is a communal religion. Although our holidays all start in the home, Jews pray to together, and 10 Jewish adults, a *minyan*, are necessary for certain prayers and reading the Torah. The synagogue is the Jewish community's center for prayer, study and social activities, providing a communal identity and spirit that carries over into our prayers. When we pray in a communal setting we derive strength and support from each other.

- **Study Torah at home on *Shabbat* with family or friends.**

Rabbi Meir says, "Everyone who studies *Torah lishmah* [Torah for its own

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sake] earns many rewards. Moreover, the entire world is made worthy on his account." [Pirke Avot 6:1] As opposed to other subjects, studying Torah is uniquely Jewish, giving us both an historical perspective of Judaism and a basis for *mitzvot*, sacred deeds. It is study and engaging in interpretation of Torah that gives us a greater clarity in our own understanding, thereby making Judaism more meaningful.

▪ **Sing *z'mirot*, *Shabbat* songs, at the *Shabbat* table.**

Z'mirot is actually short for "*z'mirot shel Shabbat*," the Ashkenazic term referring to religious songs sung during and directly after *Shabbat* meals. Most of them were written between the 10th and 17th centuries in Hebrew or Aramaic. The Sephardim refer to these songs as *pizmonim*. The practice of singing *z'mirot* has been an established part of *Shabbat* observance since the Middle Ages. It remains one of the most important spiritual components of the *Shabbat* home experience. Singing adds a special joy to our meals, adding to the joy of *Shabbat*.

▪ **Give *tzedakah* just before *Shabbat* and set the *Shabbat* evening table in a special way.**

Friday, before *Shabbat*, we move into our separate world of *Shabbat* - a world of rest, relaxation and appreciation for God's creations. We show our appreciation by helping others who are in need. We therefore are sure to deposit some of our money into the *tzedakah box* before lighting the candles. We set the *Shabbat* table in a special way in order to bring extra beauty, to the table, emphasizing that exceptional and distinctive feeling that only *Shabbat* can bring. These actions also represent our final preparation for *Shabbat*- putting aside our physical and financial possessions, and concentrating on the beauty of *Shabbat*.

of skilled work" (B. *Bet.* 13b; B. *San.* 62b). Based on this they also
 וכל המעשה המעשה—“Whoever performs an act of destruction is not
 (B. *Shab.* 106a). A complete analysis of the thirty-nine categories,
 with their derivatives, can be found in *The Sabbath* by I. Grunfeld (pp.

Actually, the list of prohibited labors reflects the activities required by
 economy of the day, such as work in the field (plowing, sowing, reaping,
 sowing, etc.), preparation of food (grinding, kneading, baking, slaughter-
 hunting), and preparation of clothing (sheep-shearing, dyeing, spinning,

Professor Meyer Waxman tries to find an underlying principle behind
 a large number of Sabbath prohibitions. “It is quite evident that in
 setting these ordinances the Rabbis had an eye rather to the spirit than to
 the letter of the law, for some of these quasi-labors, such as buying and sell-
 ing, violate the very intention of the Sabbath, which is to rest from all oc-
 cupation aiming at material benefit or pursuit or gain. In regard to riding or
 driving, modern conditions undoubtedly invalidate the original reason for
 the prohibition, yet it is still observed and with justice, for once traveling is
 permitted on the Sabbath, it becomes difficult to draw the line between a
 journey for pure pleasure and one for the pursuit of gain. An institution like
 the Sabbath which aims at the elevation of human life cannot allow devia-
 tions based on subjective distinctions” (Waxman, *Handbook of Judaism*, p.

A definition of work which would be appropriate to our day and provide
 a contemporary rationale for all the prohibitions has been attempted by
 many writers on the subject. Basically they all refer back to the one given by
 Samson Raphael Hirsch (*Horeb*, pp. 64 f.), whose explanation has been
 followed by such extremely Orthodox thinkers as Rabbi Chayim (Eduard)
 Grunfeld (*Menuhah Nekhonah*, p. 16) and Dayan Dr. Grunfeld of London
 (*The Sabbath*, pp. 16–17), and at the opposite pole by Professor Mordecai
 Kaplan (*Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 444).

Dayan Grunfeld paraphrases the passage from Samson Raphael Hirsch
 as follows: “In arriving at his interpretation of ‘*melakhah*,’ Rabbi S. R.
 Grunfeld starts with the basic idea that the Sabbath testifies to God as the
 creator of heaven and earth and all they contain. Man, however, is
 engaged in a constant struggle to gain mastery over God’s creation, to bring
 it under his control. By the use of his God-given intelligence, skill and
 strength, he has in large measure succeeded in this. He is thus constantly in
 danger of forgetting his own creaturehood—his utter and complete

dependence on the Lord for all things. He tends to forget that the very powers he uses in his conquest of nature are derived from his Creator, in whose service his life and work should be conducted. . . .

"We renounce on this day every exercise of intelligent, purposeful control of natural objects and forces, we cease from every act of human power in order to proclaim God as the source of all power. By refraining from human creating, the Jew pays silent homage to the Creator" (*The Sabbath*, pp. 16 ff.).

On this basis Dayan Grunfeld defines a *melakhah* as "an act that shows man's mastery over the world by the constructive exercise of his intelligence and skill" (*ibid.*, p. 19).

Professor Kaplan summarizes the thought in this fashion: "In the light of those explanations, the function of the Sabbath is to prohibit man from engaging in work which in any way alters the environment, so that he should not delude himself into the belief that he is complete master of his destiny" (*Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 444).

Professor Heschel expresses the same thought. "He who wants to enter the holiness of the day must first lay down the profanity of clattering commerce, of being yoked to toil. He must go away from the screech of dissonant days, from the nervousness and fury of acquisitiveness and the betrayal in embezzling his own life. He must say farewell to manual work and learn to understand that the world has already been created and will survive without the help of man. Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul. The world has our hands, but our soul belongs to Someone Else. Six days a week we seek to dominate the world, on the seventh day we try to dominate the self" (*The Sabbath*, p. 13).

With this as a background we shall treat several areas of Sabbath rest, concentrating on those most relevant to contemporary life.

The most comprehensive statement regarding the prohibition of work on the Sabbath would be that one should not perform his usual range of weekday activities. Isaiah said:

If thou turn away thy foot because of the Sabbath,
From pursuing thy business on my holy day;
And call the Sabbath a delight,
And the holy of the Lord honorable;
And shalt honor it, not doing thy wonted ways,
Nor pursuing thy business, nor speaking thereof . . . [Isa. 58:13]

THE SABBATH

from all manner of work carried on during the week. It was only later that the sages of the Halakhah gave a clear definition of work, establishing the framework of thirty-nine categories of biblically prohibited work (Albeck, *Shishah Sidrei Mishnah, Seder Mo'ed*, p. 10). Thus the regulations of *shevut* were systematic expressions of earlier practices developed by the people as a means of sanctifying the Sabbath.

Whenever a mitzvah or a public need is involved, the prohibitions of *shevut* are waived (*O.H.* 306:1).

We should add that the whole area of *shevut* has to be mapped out anew because the reason for the *gezeirot* and the nature of *'uvdin dehol* have changed. What was in the spirit of the Sabbath a generation ago may not be considered so today. For example, buying on credit, provided price was not discussed, was not considered a violation of the Sabbath (*O.H.* 232:4), but we would not be willing to consider it so today when credit buying is so common. Some *gezeirot* are no longer applicable. Thus the Mishnah forbids clapping and dancing on Sabbaths and festivals because of the possibility that one of the musical instruments might break and someone would repair it (*M. Bet.* 5:2), but Tosafot (*B. Bet.* 30a, s.v. *תן אין מטמאין*) permit these activities since in their day people were not skilled in making musical instruments. The doctrine that a *gezeirah* still stands even if the reason for instituting it has ceased is untenable as a general principle. However, if a practice is deeply rooted and stable, we are usually able to find new meaning in it for our day.

4. Traveling

Traveling on the Sabbath is another of the most frequent violations of the Sabbath. Even comparatively observant people have found the ban on traveling hard to abide by. They therefore rationalize that inasmuch as the reason given in the Talmud—lest the traveler, in need of a switch to guide or prod his animal, cut a twig from a tree (*B. Bet.* 36b)—does not apply to modern conditions, the entire prohibition falls by the wayside. Actually, modern conditions present many more violations of the Sabbath than were possible in the era of horse-drawn vehicles.

Most modern travel is by car. It is often claimed that driving requires less effort than walking, but, in fact, it is easy to find halakhic reasons to avoid driving on the Sabbath. First, there is the prohibition against creating fire. Even according to the opinion that electricity is not fire, actual fire is

created in the engine of a car. (The argument that combustion was not included in the prohibition is not convincing; see Adler et al., "Responsum on the Sabbath," pp. 130 f.) Furthermore, if the *gezeirah* of "lest one cut off a switch from a tree" sounded far-fetched in ancient times, there are very good reasons for such *gezeirot* today. When driving a car, there is always the possibility of needing to buy gas, and the chance of a flat tire or other necessary repairs. Traveling beyond the city limits also involves *אסור תחומים* (see below).

The Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, in its celebrated resolution on travel on the Sabbath, has made one exception to this rule. Under the conditions of our day, many congregants live far from the synagogue and cannot attend services unless they ride. For many of these people, attendance at services is their only contact with religious life and practically their only awareness of the sanctity of the Sabbath. Hence it was ruled: "As we have already indicated, participation in public service on the Sabbath is in the light of modern conditions to be regarded as a great *mitzvah*, since it is indispensable to the preservation of the religious life of American Jewry. Therefore it is our considered opinion that the positive value involved in the participation in public worship on the Sabbath outweighs the negative value of refraining from riding in an automobile" (Waxman, *Tradition and Change*, p. 370; Adler et al., "Responsum on the Sabbath," p. 132).

This resolution was passed by a majority opinion of the Law Committee with a sizable minority opposed. But the decision must not be understood as outright permission to travel to the synagogue. The case presents a conflict between two values—not riding on the Sabbath and participating in public worship—and we must each opt for one or the other of them. Our fathers, and many of us today, would opt not to ride. We can understand the feelings of those who opt for public worship because of the changed conditions under which we live. Yet we must not construe this option as a general *heter*, but rather as applying to individual cases where a choice must be made. Every other alternative must be exhausted first. (See David Novak, *Law and Theology in Judaism*, pp. 21–30.)

In regard to traveling by ship, if the vessel departs on a weekday, even on Friday, and is definitely to be enroute on the Sabbath, it is permitted to go aboard and to travel. The ruling that such a trip is permitted only *לדבר מצוה*, "for the purpose of (fulfilling) a commandment," has been construed by Rabbeinu Tam to include practically all trips, even those for business and social purposes (Tur, *O.H.* 248; *O.H.* 248:1).

If the ship is to depart on the Sabbath, one should arrange to board and be settled (הקדים והקדים) before the advent of the Sabbath. Once this is done, one may leave the boat and re-enter on the Sabbath provided no other violation of the Sabbath is involved (*O.H.* 248:3, Rama ad loc.).

If the ship docks at a port on its journey, the passengers may disembark and visit within the *tehum shabbat* (see below, Sabbath Boundaries), again provided that no other violation is involved (*O.H.* 404:1).

5. Fire, Electric Lights, and Automatic Devices

The prohibition of kindling fire on the Sabbath (*Exod.* 35:3) is one of the thirty-nine categories of forbidden work. It affects any activity that involves the initiation, transferring, or prolongation of combustion.

The question has arisen today whether the use of electricity—specifically, the turning on of an electric light—is included in this general prohibition. A responsum of the Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, approved by majority opinion, concluded that electricity is not a form of fire (Adler et al., "Responsum on the Sabbath," p. 129; Neulander, "The Use of Electricity on the Sabbath," p. 167). The difficulties with this decision are not only halakhic. In common parlance we certainly associate electricity with fire because it is used for the same purposes as fire: illumination, heating, cooking, and burning. The empirical argument that the use of electric lights adds to the joy of the Sabbath is too subjective. The use of other forms of electricity will be discussed separately below.

This leads us to the subject of automation. People who refrain from switching on electric lights on the Sabbath have used electric timers that turn lights on and off automatically.

Forms of automation existed long before the introduction of electricity. Examples are an alarm clock that was set before the advent of the Sabbath (*O.H.* 338:3), a winepress that worked automatically (*B. Shab.* 18a), and the setting of traps or nets to capture animals or fish on the Sabbath (*O.H.* 352:1). The analogy is obvious. Any work that proceeds automatically is permitted, provided the machinery was set in motion before the Sabbath.

6. Preparation of Food

By the preparation of food we mean making raw food edible by the use

of heat, i.e., by some form of cooking. This prohibition is independent of the prohibition against making fire. Thus, cooking on the Sabbath is prohibited even if the fire was lit and the food was put on the fire before the advent of the Sabbath. All food that is to be consumed on the Sabbath must be already cooked and water must be already boiled when the Sabbath begins, though these may remain on the fire throughout the Sabbath (*O.H.* 254:2-3). The term *cooked* in this context implies that the food should be minimally edible—*מאכל קצת מבושל*—at the beginning of the Sabbath.

The rabbis were cautious about permitting us to warm food on the Sabbath because the dividing line between warming and cooking is not always recognizable. Further, there is the fear that warming will lead inadvertently to tampering with the fire. The following are the rules regarding the warming of food:

1. Solids may be warmed under all circumstances (*O.H.* 318:15).
2. Liquids which are not entirely cold may be warmed (Rama, *ibid.*).
3. Liquids which are entirely cold may be warmed over a low fire which will not make the liquid too hot or bring it once again to a boil (*ibid.*; see also *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, sec. 35).
4. In all these cases the fire itself must be covered to serve as a reminder lest we tamper with it (*Hayyei Adam*, *Klal* 20, sec. 12; *O.H.* 253:3 in *M.A.*, sec. 31).

One should, therefore, cover the fire with a tin plate (*blech*) to prevent any tampering with the fire and to keep the flame low enough to prevent boiling. Modern appliances that regulate the heat so that it can be kept at a low temperature at all times are a great help in this respect.*

7. Treatment of the Sick

Since the rabbis had a high regard for human life and happiness, they applied the words *וְחַיִּי בָהֶם*—"and live by them" (*Lev.* 18:5)—to many areas of religion. The greatest application was in the area of treating the sick on the Sabbath, where they established the principle of *שְׂמירת חַיִּים* (B. *Yoma* 85a; *Shab.* 132a)—"the saving of life waives any restrictions due to the Sabbath." This applies not only to cases where the saving of a life is definitely involved, but also where there is only a suspicion that this may be the case—*שְׂמירת חַיִּים* (M. *Yoma* 8:6).

Thus, all medical treatment is permitted on the Sabbath. The old distinc-

* See Supplement, Shabbat and Yom Tov, no. 1, p. 530.

of *נפול*, danger to life, and *נפול*, possible danger to life, have been given a new meaning by medical science. What was once considered harmless is now often known to be potentially serious if not treated immediately (*O.H.* 328:47 in *Mishnah Berurah*, n. 47). Hence, we should follow the recommendation of the physician in all cases.

The rabbis warned that in the case of medical treatment one should not follow the suggestion *כל המפסיק טובא עלי' ברכה* ("whoever is more scrupulous, may blessing be upon him"), urging that in such a case it is a mitzvah to violate the Sabbath, and the more zealous one is, the better (*O.H.* 328:2). They even stated that a sick person may be compelled to accept treatment, and unwillingness to accept treatment is a foolish kind of piety (*ibid.* in

This obviously does not include a routine physical checkup which could be done on another day.

Giving birth has always been considered by the rabbis to be similar to a case of *נפול*, a dangerous illness, and they permitted everything necessary for the comfort of the mother (*O.H.* 330:1).

Sports and Amusements

We must distinguish between commercialized sports and amusements and activities one indulges in for personal enjoyment. Commercialized sports and amusements are obviously not recommended because of the many violations of the Sabbath that are involved.

Individual sports and amusements in themselves, where no other violation of the Sabbath is involved, are permissible. Thus ball-playing in a private domain, or anywhere that carrying is allowed, is permissible (*Rama O.H.* 308:45). Gymnastics is also permitted (*O.H.* 301:2). Bathing in a private domain is permitted (*O.H.* 326:7, *Mishnah Berurah*, n. 24); in an open place it is also permitted but with some restrictions, i.e., one should dry oneself before fully leaving the water (*O.H.* 326:7). Swimming has been forbidden lest one be tempted to make an aid to swimming (*לפי*). This concern is not relevant today.

The only caution here is that one should avoid participating in such activities to the point of overexertion and fatigue, which would make the act contrary to the spirit of the Sabbath.

In the case of social amusements that may take place at home or in the synagogue, we can only suggest the following as a guide: "The Sabbath is a

sacred day and there are certain kinds of enjoyment which by their very nature, are out of harmony with its inherent holiness. Participation in them on the Sabbath is like a sudden intrusion of a shrill street organ on a beautiful melody sung by a lovely voice.

"It is difficult, almost impossible, to lay down a definite rule on this point to say, 'This sort of amusement is allowable, that sort, improper on the Sabbath.' The matter must be left to the individual conscience; to each person's sense of what is seemly" (Joseph, *Judaism as Creed and Life*, p. 208).

As an illustration, we would suggest that playing poker on the Sabbath even without money, would be considered unseemly; playing chess would not. Attending a poetry reading would be permissible; going to a wrestling match would not.

9. A Gentile Working for a Jew

The law states explicitly as a general principle that we may not ask a non-Jew to do anything on the Sabbath that we may not do ourselves (Maimonides, *Hil. Shabbat* 24:4). Because of the exceptions to this rule, the institution of the "Shabbes-goy" came into being. The exceptions are in the following cases:

1. Illness or other emergencies
2. Lighting a fire in cold weather
3. To relieve an animal in pain
4. Where the act is done by a non-Jew for his own purpose even though a Jew may benefit (*B. Shab.* 122b)

These exceptions have been stretched to the point that some Sabbath observers have non-Jews to do every manner of work around the house that is usually forbidden. The general idea of a Shabbes-goy is repugnant, however, and in most cases it has become unnecessary because of modern automatic devices.

However, the problem still remains relevant in the field of business and industry. May a Jew use a suit made for him by a non-Jewish tailor on the Sabbath? May a non-Jewish partner of a business or industrial establishment work on the Sabbath? May a non-Jewish contractor doing a construction job for a Jew work on the Sabbath?

3. Beyond city limits one may walk two thousand cubits—about three quarters of a mile (*O.H.* 398:5). This is the *tehum shabbat*, or Sabbath boundary.
4. Obviously, when it is a matter of *שם מצוה* one is permitted to go beyond the *tehum shabbat*. A doctor, midwife, policeman, or fireman who is called for an emergency is in this category.

When, for the sake of a mitzvah, one has to go beyond the *tehum shabbat*, but not more than another *tehum*, we have the device of the *'eruv*. Since we count the place where one eats as a dwelling place, one should put the minimum equivalent of two meals at the end of the *tehum* before the advent of the Sabbath. Thereafter one is permitted to walk beyond this point another two thousand cubits on the Sabbath. The Talmud gives an example of the kind of mitzvah for which one may make such an *'eruv*. A sage is to appear in some town beyond the *tehum*; a person who wants to listen to his discourse may make an *'eruv* (*B. Eruv.* 37b).

11. Electrical Appliances

The question of using an elevator on the Sabbath has arisen in connection with modern multi-storied apartment houses. Two problems are involved, since pressing the button usually turns on a light and also sets machinery in motion. The latter problem exists even for those who have no objection to turning on lights. According to the responsum of Rabbi Neulander (but not according to the opinion of the other respondents on the question), the solution is to use the elevator only when it is already being used by a non-Jew (*Ouziel, Mishpetei Uziel*, 1:226-30).

An automatic clock may be set in advance to light a stove to warm food on the Sabbath if there is no other violation in regard to warming or cooking on the Sabbath (*Maharam Schick, O.H.* 157).

It is permissible to use a microphone on the Sabbath if it was turned on before the Sabbath, or if it is used in some other manner that does not involve a violation of the Sabbath (*Grünfeld, Maharshag*, 2:118, in the view of the questioner).

The question of appliances which use electricity generated by dry cells (batteries) requires further study.

Conclusion

The importance of the Sabbath cannot be overestimated. It was Aha Ha'am who said that more than the Jew kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath kept the Jew. The change from the daily routine to that of the Sabbath is accomplished by refraining from the types of work that characterize our weekday activities. That alone, however, does not make the Sabbath, for one could comply with the prohibitions by sleeping through the Sabbath day; they simply provide the matrix for the activities that bring about the sacredness of the Sabbath.

The most important activities for the sanctification of the day are prayer and study. The uplift that the Sabbath gave the Jew even in the darkest days of persecution and oppression saved him from being brutalized. The Sabbath enabled the Jew to retain his dignity and his hope for a better world. This is why the millennium was called *Yom Kippur*, for it is these spiritual activities that bring out the best in man. Without the fanfare of organization, the Sabbath also embodied a system of adult education and provided for the moral training of the community. It is a tested institution which modern man in search of his soul would be wise to adopt.

This volume is a guide to Jewish law written in the style of a compendium. The compiler received in 1960 the honor of the title of Honorary Doctor of Theology from the University of Toronto. The purpose of this volume is to provide laymen with a reference work in Jewish Law. Rabbi Klein, the author of this volume, is a well-known halakic scholar and a member of the Rabbinical Council of America.

The many topics discussed in this volume (Bible, Talmud, etc.) are fully referenced. The topics covered might be of interest to anyone who wishes to observe the laws governing divorce, birth control, organ transplantation, and many others. The discussions are relevant to the current issues of Jewish Law and State.

Rabbi Joel Roth has written extensively on Jewish Law. This volume is based on his research and is a valuable contribution to the study of Jewish Law.

board for the non-Jewish parents of a congregant who has converted to Judaism.

13. The CJLS encourages the use of the names of both the father and the mother in identifying an individual for ritual purposes.

14. If a child is improperly circumcised and the parents refuse to have *haṭafat dam berit*, the child should not be named in the synagogue or by the rabbi.

15. No dichotomy should be made between a ceremony of any rite of passage and a reception held in its honor. When the ceremonies connected with these rites are performed in direct violation of our standards regarding the determination of Jewish identity, the receptions may not be held in Conservative synagogues.

16. The CJLS is divided on the question of whether a minor may read from the Torah. Some hold that a minor may, and others that the minor should not. All agree that a minor may recite the Maṣṣir and the Haṭarah. The fact that a minor may be entitled to read from the Torah does not imply that a Bar/Bat mitwah can be arranged to take place prior to attaining legal majority.

17. It is the sentiment of the Law Committee that the traditional annual Torah reading cycle in which the Torah is read in its entirety every year is preferable to any validated triennial cycle. Where a triennial cycle is used, however, the CJLS urges all Conservative congregations to utilize the system devised by Rabbi Richard Eisenberg. The correct Torah readings on that system are listed in the United Synagogue wall calendar together with the annual Torah reading system. The traditional haṭarot of the annual system should be used with the triennial system.

Shabbat and Yom Tov

1. The CJLS has validated more than one view on the question of preparation, warming, and serving of foods on Shabbat. The views can be found detailed in the *Proceedings of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Conservative Movement, 1980-85*, pp. 229-237.

2. Photography is prohibited on Shabbat as a violation of both the law and the spirit of the day. The prohibition applies even when the photographer is

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**SHABBAT-
RECONSTRUCTIONIST**

of our sacred texts in order to engage in intergenerational dialogue with the wisdom of those who have come before us. We recite traditional blessings that open us up to daily wonders that we might otherwise overlook, and we pray the words of the Siddur to structure our experiences of God. Most of all, because we are committed to community, we find the Presence of God in one another, in our mutual support and caring, in the sparks of insight generated in our Torah study, in the way our voices join in prayer and celebration, and in the ways that we work for *tikkun olam* (to make this world a better place).

The Spirituality of Shabbat

Jewish time is lived, first and foremost, from Shabbat to Shabbat. The Shabbat was a radical innovation in ancient Israel, a declaration that we can be freed from the inexorable march of time, freed from the lunar and solar calendar, freed from social and economic inequities, free to stop, to relax, to relinquish our obsessions, to admit that life goes on even if we are not minding the store or ploughing the field. Implicitly embedded in the observance of Shabbat, therefore, is an approach to life that reflects many central Jewish values.

The ancient Israelites who celebrated Shabbat could not have known how important it would be for those of us who live in the twenty-first century. What an idea! That there is the beat of another drummer, so soft that it is all but inaudible in the din of our daily lives, yet so powerful that if we align ourselves with its rhythm, our entire lives can be sanctified by it.

In an age of twenty-four-hour supermarkets, of a global village in which events transpire even when we are asleep and we awaken already in need of catching up, there is no greater gift than Shabbat. Shabbat means no work. Budgeted, inviolable time to sit at leisure

with family and friends. Time for a nap, for a walk without a destination. Communities of individuals who stop together to pray and study and sing and eat.

Enicing, but easier said than done. Those of us who have lived

in Israel may yearn for a society in which everything closes down by mid-afternoon Friday, enabling us to shop and cook and breathe deeply in preparation. Traditionally, you don't rush home from a busy day to Shabbat. You start preparing on Wednesday or Thursday, cleaning the house and quieting the mind so that when you light the Shabbat candles, you are truly prepared to welcome the Sabbath Queen.

Few of us are so lucky. Our "villages" do not close down on Jewish time. Moreover, the idyllic image of Shabbat rests on the assumption that someone stays at home to make Shabbat for the rest of us. Even if we manage to leave work a bit early on Friday afternoon so that we arrive home by sunset, it is unlikely that our day will have been spent cultivating a consciousness of Shabbat or that the table will have been set for our arrival.

In addition, many of us have never experienced a full day of Shabbat. Without that experience, the twenty-five hours may appear onerous with all of its traditional prohibitions. Shabbat may be inviting, but how do we learn to rest? What is attractive about doing nothing?

Reconstructionists address this as an incremental challenge. Observing part of Shabbat is worthwhile in itself. There are many points of entry. Resting on Shabbat is not doing nothing. In the silence, as we cover our eyes to bless the Shabbat candles, there is a window of connection—with our loved ones (whether they are still with us or not), with the Source of Creation. Or sharing a cup of kiddush wine around the table, we are reminded of what is most important

work abates, and we remember why life is worth living. When joining in community to sing and chant the Shabbat *tefillot* (prayers) and discuss the Torah portion, we find ourselves transported to a sacred realm. We do not frown upon such nontraditional modes of Shabbat rest as gardening or going to a museum. We do not demand of ourselves and one another that Shabbat observance be all or nothing. But as we deepen our experience of rest and renewal, each in our own way and at our own pace, the *Havdalah* ceremony on Saturday evening becomes a powerful punctuation of our week, serving to distinguish between sacred and profane time.

The Rhythm of the Calendar

As we move through the seasons of the Jewish year, our lives can take on the resonance of its cycles. Too often, Jews move briskly into the celebration of a holiday, forgetting the attendant preparation that can deepen their experience. Reconstructionists seek to remedy that situation, opening up ever expanding experiences of sacred Jewish time.

It is in the lull of August that the month of Elul comes, initiating the period of *teshuvah* (return) and *heshbon hanefesh* (self-examination) that precedes the High Holy Days. It is in this period that Jews traditionally take stock of the year gone by, working to repair relationships and noting the direction of their own lives. The shofar is to be blown each morning, awakening us to the challenge. *Selihot* (prayers for forgiveness) are recited throughout the month, and the period culminates in the *Selihot* service on the Saturday evening preceding Rosh Hashanah. Those who involve themselves in this process may become more acclimated to the teaching that *teshuvah* is an ongoing enterprise, even for the most righteous, and that Jewish living includes a serious ethical and introspective component, a discipline to be cultivated year-round.

KASHRUT- ORTHODOX

Kashrut

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Kashrut: Jewish Dietary Laws

Level: Intermediate

Kashrut is the body of Jewish law dealing with what foods we can and cannot eat and how those foods must be prepared and eaten. "Kashrut" comes from the Hebrew root Kaf-Shin-Resh, meaning fit, proper or correct. It is the same root as the more commonly known word "kosher," which describes food that meets these standards. The word "kosher" can also be used, and often is used, to describe ritual objects that are made in accordance with Jewish law and are fit for ritual use.

There is no such thing as "kosher-style" food. Kosher is not a style of cooking. Chinese food can be kosher if it is prepared in accordance with Jewish law, and there are many fine kosher Chinese restaurants in Philadelphia and New York. Traditional Ashkenazic [Jewish foods](#) like [knishes](#), [bagels](#), [blintzes](#), and [matzah ball soup](#) can all be non-kosher if not prepared in accordance with Jewish law. When a restaurant calls itself "kosher-style," it usually means that the restaurant serves these traditional Jewish foods, and it almost invariably means that the food is not actually kosher.

Food that is not kosher is commonly referred to as treyf (lit. torn, from the commandment not to eat animals that have been torn by other animals).

Why Do We Observe the Laws of Kashrut?

Many modern Jews think that the laws of kashrut are simply primitive health regulations that have become obsolete with modern methods of food preparation. There is no question that some of the dietary laws have some beneficial health effects. For example, the laws regarding kosher slaughter are so sanitary that kosher butchers and slaughterhouses have been exempted from many USDA regulations.

However, health is not the only reason for Jewish dietary laws. Many of the laws of kashrut have no known connection with health. To the best of our modern scientific knowledge, there is no reason why camel or rabbit meat (both treyf) is any less healthy than cow or goat meat. In addition, some of the health benefits to be derived from kashrut were not made obsolete by the refrigerator. For example, there is some evidence that eating meat and dairy together interferes with digestion, and no modern food preparation technique reproduces the health benefit of the kosher law of eating them separately.

In recent years, several secular sources that have seriously looked into this matter have acknowledged that health does not explain these prohibitions. Some have suggested that the prohibitions are instead derived from environmental considerations. For example, a camel (which is not kosher) is more useful as a beast of burden than as a source of food. In the Middle Eastern climate, the pig consumes a quantity of food that is disproportional to its value as a food source. But again, these are not reasons that come from Jewish tradition.

The short answer to why Jews observe these laws is: because the Torah says so. The Torah does not specify any reason for these laws, and for a Torah-observant, traditional Jew, there is no need for any other reason. Some have suggested that the laws of kashrut fall into the category of "chukkim," laws for which there is no reason. We show our obedience to G-d by following these laws even though we do not know the reason. Others, however, have tried to ascertain G-d's reason for imposing these laws.

In his book "To Be a Jew" (an excellent resource on traditional Judaism), Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin suggests that the dietary laws are designed as a call to holiness. The ability to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, pure and defiled, the sacred and the profane, is very important in Judaism. Imposing rules on what you can and cannot eat ingrains that kind of self control, requiring us to learn to control even our most basic, primal instincts.

Donin also points out that the laws of kashrut elevate the simple act of eating into a religious ritual. The Jewish dinner table is often compared to the Temple altar in rabbinic literature. A Jew who observes the laws of kashrut cannot eat a meal without being reminded of the fact that he is a Jew,

How Difficult is it to Keep Kosher?

People who do not keep kosher often tell me how difficult it is. Actually, keeping kosher is not particularly difficult in and of itself; what makes it difficult to keep kosher is the fact that the rest of the world does not do so.

As we shall see below, the basic underlying rules are fairly simple. If you buy your meat at a kosher butcher and buy only kosher certified products at the market, the only thing you need to think about is the separation of meat and dairy.

Keeping kosher only becomes difficult when you try to eat in a non-kosher restaurant, or at the home of a person who does not keep kosher. In those situations, your lack of knowledge about your host's ingredients and the food preparation techniques make it very difficult to keep kosher. Some commentators have pointed out, however, that this may well have been part of what G-d had in mind: to make it more difficult for us to socialize with those who do not share our religion.

General Rules

Although the details of kashrut are extensive, the laws all derive from a few fairly simple, straightforward rules:

1. Certain animals may not be eaten at all. This restriction includes the flesh, organs, eggs and milk of the forbidden animals.
2. Of the animals that may be eaten, the birds and mammals must be killed in accordance with Jewish law.
3. All blood must be drained from the meat or broiled out of it before it is eaten.
4. Certain parts of permitted animals may not be eaten.
5. Meat (the flesh of birds and mammals) cannot be eaten with dairy. Fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables and grains can be eaten with either meat or dairy. (According to some views, fish may not be eaten with meat).
6. Utensils that have come into contact with meat may not be used with dairy, and vice versa. Utensils that have come into contact with non-kosher food may not be used with kosher food. This applies only where the contact occurred while the food was hot.

7. Grape products made by non-Jews may not be eaten.

The Details

Animals that may not be eaten

Of the "beasts of the earth" (which basically refers to land mammals with the exception of swarming rodents), you may eat any animal that has cloven hooves and chews its cud. Lev. 11:3; Deut. 14:6. Any land mammal that does not have both of these qualities is forbidden. The Torah specifies that the camel, the rock badger, the hare and the pig are not kosher because each lacks one of these two qualifications. Sheep, cattle, goats and deer are kosher.

Of the things that are in the waters, you may eat anything that has fins and scales. Lev. 11:9; Deut. 14:9. Thus, shellfish such as lobsters, oysters, shrimp, clams and crabs are all forbidden. Fish like tuna, carp, salmon and herring are all permitted.

For birds, the criteria is less clear. The Torah lists forbidden birds (Lev. 11:13-19; Deut. 14:11-18), but does not specify why these particular birds are forbidden. All of the birds on the list are birds of prey or scavengers, thus the rabbis inferred that this was the basis for the distinction. Other birds are permitted, such as chicken, geese, ducks and turkeys.

Of the "winged swarming things" (winged insects), a few are specifically permitted (Lev. 11:22), but the Sages are no longer certain which ones they are, so all have been forbidden.

Rodents, reptiles, amphibians, and insects (except as mentioned above) are all forbidden. Lev. 11:29-30, 42-43.

Some authorities require a post-mortem examination of the lungs of cattle, to determine whether the lungs are free from adhesions. If the lungs are free from such adhesions, the animal is deemed "glatt" (that is, "smooth"). In certain circumstances, an animal can be kosher without being glatt; however, the stringency of keeping "glatt kosher" has become increasingly common in recent years.

As mentioned above, any product derived from these forbidden animals, such as their milk, eggs, fat, or organs, also cannot be eaten. Rennet, an enzyme used to harden cheese, is often obtained from non-kosher animals, thus kosher hard cheese can be difficult to find.

Kosher slaughtering

The mammals and birds that may be eaten must be slaughtered in accordance with Jewish law. (Deut. 12:21). We may not eat animals that died of natural causes (Deut. 14:21) or that were killed by other animals. In addition, the animal must have no disease or flaws in the organs at the time of slaughter. These restrictions do not apply to fish; only to the flocks and herds (Num. 11:22).

Ritual slaughter is known as shechitah, and the person who performs the slaughter is called a shochet, both from the Hebrew root Shin-Chet-Tav, meaning to destroy or kill. The method of slaughter is a quick, deep stroke across the throat with a perfectly sharp blade with no nicks or unevenness. This method is painless, causes unconsciousness within two seconds, and is widely recognized as the most humane method of slaughter possible.

Another advantage of shechitah is that ensures rapid, complete draining of blood, which is also necessary to render the meat kosher.

The shochet is not simply a butcher; he must be a pious man, well-trained in Jewish law, particularly as it relates to kashrut. In smaller, more remote communities, the rabbi and the shochet were often the same person.

Draining of Blood

The Torah prohibits consumption of blood. Lev. 7:26-27; Lev. 17:10-14. This is the only dietary law that has a reason specified in Torah: we do not eat blood because the life of the animal is contained in the blood. This applies only to the blood of birds and mammals, not to fish blood. Thus, it is necessary to remove all blood from the flesh of kosher animals.

The first step in this process occurs at the time of slaughter. As discussed above, shechitah allows for rapid draining of most of the blood.

The remaining blood must be removed, either by broiling or soaking and salting. Liver may only be kashered by the broiling method, because it has so much blood in it and such complex blood vessels. This final process must be completed within 72 hours after slaughter, and before the meat is frozen or ground. Most butchers and all frozen food vendors take care of the soaking and salting for you, but you should always check this when you are buying someplace you are unfamiliar with.

An egg that contains a blood spot may not be eaten. This isn't very common, but I find them once in a while. It is a good idea to break an egg into a container and check it before you put it into a heated pan, because if you put a blood-stained egg into a heated pan, the pan becomes non-kosher.

Forbidden Fats and Nerves

The sciatic nerve and its adjoining blood vessels may not be eaten. The process of removing this nerve is time consuming and not cost-effective, so most American slaughterers simply sell the hind quarters to non-kosher butchers.

A certain kind of fat, known as chelev, which surrounds the vital organs and the liver, may not be eaten. Kosher butchers remove this. Modern scientists have found biochemical differences between this type of fat and the permissible fat around the muscles and under the skin.

Separation of Meat and Dairy

On three separate occasions, the Torah tells us not to "boil a kid in its mother's milk." (Ex. 23:19; Ex. 34:26; Deut. 14:21). The Oral Torah explains that this passage prohibits eating meat and dairy together. The rabbis extended this prohibition to include not eating milk and poultry together. In addition, the Talmud prohibits cooking meat and fish together or serving them on the same plates, because it is considered to be unhealthy. It is, however, permissible to eat fish and dairy together, and it is quite common. It is also permissible to eat dairy and eggs together.

This separation includes not only the foods themselves, but the utensils, pots and pans with which they are cooked, the plates and flatware from which they are eaten, the dishwashers or dishpans in which they are cleaned, and the towels on which they are dried. A kosher household will have at least two sets of pots, pans and dishes:

one for meat and one for dairy. See Utensils below for more details.

One must wait a significant amount of time between eating meat and dairy. Opinions differ, and vary from three to six hours. This is because fatty residues and meat particles tend to cling to the mouth. From dairy to meat, however, one need only rinse one's mouth and eat a neutral solid like bread, unless the dairy product in question is also of a type that tends to stick in the mouth.

The Yiddish words fleishig (meat), milchig (dairy) and pareve (neutral) are commonly used to describe food or utensils that fall into one of those categories.

Note that even the smallest quantity of dairy (or meat) in something renders it entirely dairy (or meat) for purposes of kashrut. For example, most margarines are dairy for kosher purposes, because they contain a small quantity of whey or other dairy products to give it a dairy-like taste. Animal fat is considered meat for purposes of kashrut. You should read the ingredients very carefully, even if the product is kosher-certified.

Utensils

Utensils (pots, pans, plates, flatware, etc., etc.) must also be kosher. A utensil picks up the kosher "status" (meat, dairy, pareve, or treyf) of the food that is cooked in it or eaten off of it, and transmits that status back to the next food that is cooked in it or eaten off of it. Thus, if you cook chicken soup in a saucepan, the pan becomes meat. If you thereafter use the same saucepan to heat up some warm milk, the fleishig status of the pan is transmitted to the milk, and the milchig status of the milk is transmitted to the pan, making both the pan and the milk a forbidden mixture.

Kosher status can be transmitted from the food to the utensil or from the utensil to the food only in the presence of heat, thus if you are eating cold food in a non-kosher establishment, the condition of the plates is not an issue. Likewise, you could use the same knife to slice cold cuts and cheese, as long as you clean it in between, but this is not really a recommended procedure, because it increases the likelihood of mistakes.

Stove tops and sinks routinely become non-kosher utensils, because they routinely come in contact with both meat and dairy in the presence of heat. It is necessary, therefore, to use dishpans when cleaning dishes (don't soak them directly in the sink) and to use separate spoon rests and trivets when putting things down on the stove top.

Dishwashers are a kashrut problem. If you are going to use a dishwasher in a kosher home, you either need to have separate dish racks or you need to run the dishwasher in between meat and dairy loads.

You should use separate towels and pot holders for meat and dairy. Routine laundering kashers such items, so you can simply launder them between using them for meat and dairy.

Certain kinds of utensils can be "kashered" if you make a mistake and use it with both meat and dairy. Consult a rabbi for guidance if this situation occurs.

Grape Products

The restrictions on grape products derive from the laws against using products of

idolatry. Wine was commonly used in the rituals of all ancient religions, and wine was routinely sanctified for pagan purposes while it was being processed. For this reason, use of wines and other grape products made by non-Jews was prohibited. (Whole grapes are not a problem, nor are whole grapes in fruit cocktail).

For the most part, this rule only affects wine and grape juice. This becomes a concern with many fruit drinks or fruit-flavored drinks, which are often sweetened with grape juice. You may also notice that some baking powders are not kosher, because baking powder is sometimes made with cream of tartar, a by-product of wine making.

Kashrut Certification

The task of keeping kosher is greatly simplified by widespread kashrut certification. Products that have been certified as kosher are labeled with a mark called a hekhsher (from the same Hebrew root as the word "kosher") that ordinarily identifies the rabbi or organization that certified the product. Approximately 3/4 of all prepackaged foods have some kind of kosher certification, and most major brands have reliable Orthodox certification.

The symbols at right are all widely-accepted hekhshers commonly found on products throughout the United States. These symbols are registered trademarks of kosher certification organizations, and cannot be placed on a food label without the organization's permission. Click the symbols to visit the websites of these organizations. With a little practice, it is very easy to spot these hekhshers on food labels, usually near the product name, occasionally near the list of ingredients. There are many other certifications available, of varying degrees of strictness.



The most controversial certification is the K, a plain letter K found on products asserted to be kosher. A letter of the alphabet cannot be trademarked, so any manufacturer can put a K on a product. For example, Jell-O brand gelatin puts a K on its product, even though every reliable Orthodox authority agrees that Jell-O is not kosher. Most other kosher certification marks are trademarked and cannot be used without the permission of the certifying organization. The certifying organization assures you that the product is kosher according to their standards, but standards vary.

It is becoming increasingly common for kosher certifying organizations to indicate whether the product is fleishig (meat), milchig (dairy) or pareve (neutral). If the product is dairy, it will frequently have a D or the word Dairy next to the kashrut symbol. If it is meat, the word Meat or an M may appear near the symbol. If it is pareve, the word Pareve (or Parev) may appear near the symbol (Not a P! That means kosher for Passover!). If no such clarification appears, you should read the ingredient list carefully to determine whether the product is meat, dairy or pareve.

Kosher certification organizations charge manufacturers a small fee for kosher certification. This fee covers the expenses of researching the ingredients in the product and inspecting the facilities used to manufacture the product. There are some who have complained that these certification costs increase the cost of the products to non-Jewish, non-kosher consumers; however, the actual cost of such certification is so small relative to the overall cost of production that most manufacturers cannot even calculate it. The cost is more than justified by the increase in sales it produces: although observant Jews are only a small fragment of

the marketplace, kosher certification is also relied upon by many Muslims (see <http://www.muslimconsumergroup.com/hfs.htm>), vegetarians (although this is not fool-proof; dairy and parev foods may contain eggs or fish; but if it isn't kosher, it probably isn't vegetarian), some Seventh Day Adventists, as well as many other people who simply think that kosher products are cleaner, healthier or better than non-kosher products.

Do All Jews Keep Kosher?

About 25% to 30% of Jews in America keep kosher to one extent or another. This includes the vast majority of people who identify themselves as Orthodox, as well as many Conservative and Reconstructionist Jews and some Reform Jews.

However, the standards that are observed vary substantially from one person to another. According to the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), only about 17% of Jewish families eat kosher meat all the time. See Table 28. Others keep kosher more strictly some times than others.

The strictest people will eat only foods that have reliable Orthodox kosher certification, eating only glatt-kosher certified meats and specially certified dairy products. They will not eat cooked food in a restaurant unless the restaurant has reliable Orthodox certification, and they are unlikely to accept an invitation to dinner from anyone who is not known to share their high standards.

Others are more lenient. Some will "ingredients read," accepting grocery store items that do not contain any identifiably non-kosher ingredients. Some will eat cooked food in a restaurant or a non-kosher home, as long as the meal is either vegetarian or uses only kosher meat and no dairy products. Some will eat non-kosher meat in restaurants, but only if the meat comes from a kosher animal and is not served with dairy products. Many of these more lenient people keep stricter standards in their homes than they do in restaurants or in other people's homes.

As rabbi/humorist Jack Moline noted, "Everyone who keeps kosher will tell you that his version is the only correct version. Everyone else is either a fanatic or a heretic." (Growing Up Jewish, 1987). There is a lot of truth in this humorous observation. I have no doubt that I will receive mail calling me a heretic for even acknowledging the existence of lower standards.

Kosher Links

You can find more information about kashrut at the websites of major kosher certification organizations.

The Orthodox Union, which is responsible for "OU" certification, has some excellent information on its website, including a kosher primer, an explanation of their kosher policy, a philosophical discussion about "thinking kosher" and a questions and answers section. (Please note: the "Judaism 101" listed on some of their pages is not this website and has no connection with this website).

The Star-K Kosher Certification organization also has an excellent website. The wonderful thing about Star-K is, they give you an incredible amount of detail about the research that they put into determining whether a product is kosher. They tell you what products may be used without kosher certification, and they explain why such products can or cannot be used without kosher certification, giving complete detail about the research that went into making their determination. It also has

articles about kashering appliances, and other useful information.

KosherQuest has a searchable database of kosher products as well as an extensive list of reliable kosher symbols and other interesting things.

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How do I know it's Kosher?

An OU Kosher Primer

I. Introduction:

The Hebrew word kosher means fit or proper as it relates to dietary (kosher) laws. It means that a given product is permitted and acceptable.

The sources for the laws of kashruth are of Biblical origin and expounded in Rabbinic legislation, through which the Rabbis interpreted, or added preventative measures to the Biblical regulations. These laws are codified in the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law), and are discussed in the ancient, medieval, and contemporary writings of the Rabbis.

The laws of kashruth are complex and extensive. The intention of this guide is to acquaint the reader with some of the fundamentals of kashruth and provide an insight into their practical application. Given the complex nature of the laws of kashruth, one should consult an Orthodox Rabbi when a question involving kashruth arises.

Though an ancillary hygienic benefit has been attributed to the observance of kashruth, their ultimate purpose and rationale is simply to conform to the Divine Will as expressed in the Torah.

Not too long ago, most food products were made in the family kitchen, or in a small factory or store in the community. It was easy to inquire if the product in question was reliably kosher. If rabbinical supervision was required, it was attended to by the rabbi of the community, who was known to all. Today, industrialization, transcontinental shipping and mass production have created a situation where most of the foods we eat are treated, processed, cooked, canned or boxed commercially in industrial settings which are likely to be located hundreds or thousands of miles away from home. Furthermore, it is often impossible to tell from the label what ingredients or processes have actually been used. This last assumption is based on the following facts:

A. The law does not always require listing ingredients or all ingredients used, especially when used in relatively small amounts or in amounts less than the law requires to be listed on the package.

B. The consumer has no way of knowing if the ingredients listed are derived from non-kosher animals or other non-kosher sources, or if the machinery used was not kosher because it was also used to process non-kosher products.

C. The technical name of the ingredients printed on the label may not be adequate to inform the consumer of what is

actually being used, and if it is or is not kosher. (See Guide to Common Food Ingredients)

D. The use of general ingredient terms such as 'spices', 'flavors', is as good as no information at all.

Because we all have the tendency to take for granted that certain products are kosher even if they do not carry reliable kashruth supervision, the consumer is urged to be mindful that:

A. Because of the complicated and intricate nature of food production, foods which we consider "obviously kosher" may not be kosher at all, and may require rabbinic supervision and approval.

B. Some ingredients which we might believe are simple, such as 'chocolate flavor' might be made up of over 30 separate ingredients.

C. Before eating ask yourself, "Is There a Kashruth Problem?"

II. KOSHER AND NON-KOSHER MEAT, POULTRY, AND FISH

A. Meat:

The Torah (Leviticus Chapter 11) lists the characteristics of permitted mammals and fish, and enumerates the forbidden fowl. The only mammals permitted are those which chew their cud (ruminants) and are cloven hoofed.

B. Poultry:

The Torah does not enumerate specific characteristics to distinguish permitted from forbidden birds. Instead, it enumerates 24 forbidden species of fowl. The Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law) states that we may eat only those birds for which there is an established tradition that the bird is kosher. In the United States, the only poultry prepared for the kosher market are chicken, turkey, duck and goose.

C. Fish:

The Torah establishes two criteria in determining kosher fish. They must have fins and scales (cycloid and ctenoid). All shellfish are prohibited. Unlike meat and poultry, fish requires no special preparation. One, however, should not eat fish with meat. Filleted or ground fish should not be purchased unless one is assured that it comes from a kosher fish. Processed and smoked fish products require rabbinic supervision, as do all processed foods.

III. KOSHER SLAUGHTERING

The processing of kosher meats and poultry requires that the animal be slaughtered in the manner prescribed by the Torah (Shechita).

A. Shechita:

Only a trained kosher slaughterer (shochet) whose piety and expertise have been attested to by rabbinic authorities is qualified to slaughter an animal. The trachea and esophagus of the animal are severed with a special razor-sharp, perfectly smooth blade causing instantaneous death with no pain to the animal.

B. Bedika:

After the animal has been properly slaughtered, a trained inspector (bodek) inspects the internal organs for any physiological abnormalities that may render the animal non-kosher (treif). The lungs, in particular, must be examined to determine that there are no adhesions (sirchot) which may be indicative of a puncture in the lungs. If an adhesion is found, the bodek must examine it carefully to determine its kashruth status.

C. Glatt Kosher:

Though not all adhesions will necessarily render an animal treif, some Jewish communities or individuals only eat of an animal that has been found to be free of all adhesions. "Glatt" literally means smooth, indicating that the meat comes from an animal whose lungs have been found to be free of all adhesions. Of late, "Glatt Kosher" is used more broadly as a consumer phrase meaning kosher without question.

D. Nikkur:

There are special cutting procedures for beef, veal and lamb, called "Nikkur" in Hebrew. Many blood vessels, nerves, and lobes of fat are forbidden and must be removed; a costly and time-consuming procedure.

E. Koshering:

The Torah forbids the eating of the blood of an animal. The two methods of extracting blood from meat are salting and broiling. Meat once ground cannot be made kosher, nor may meat be placed in hot water before it has been "koshered".

1. Salting:

The meat must first be soaked for a half hour in cool (not ice) water in a utensil designated only for that purpose. After allowing for excess water to drip off, the meat is thoroughly salted so that the entire surface is covered with salt. Only coarse salt should be used. In processing poultry, both the inside and outside of the slaughtered bird must be salted. All inside sections must be removed before the koshering process begins. Each part must be soaked and salted separately. If the meat had been sliced with a knife during the salting process, the surface of the cut must be soaked and salted as well. The salted meat is then left for an hour on an inclined or perforated surface to allow the blood to flow down freely. The cavity of the poultry should be placed open side down. After the salting, the meat must be thoroughly soaked and washed to remove all salt.

W.DOT KNOW IT'S KOSHER? -- AN OU KOSHER CERTIFICATE

According to rabbinic law, meat must be koshered within 72 hours after slaughter so as not to permit the blood to congeal. If meat has been thoroughly soaked or rinsed, an additional seventy-two hours is granted for the salting process.

2. Broiling:

An alternate means of "koshering" meat is through broiling. Liver may only be koshered through broiling, because of the preponderance of blood in it. Both the liver and meat must first be thoroughly washed to remove all surface blood. They are then salted slightly on all sides. Subsequently, they are broiled on a perforated grate over an open fire which draws out the internal blood. The liver must be broiled on both sides until the outer surface appears to be dry and brown. In addition, when koshering a liver, slits must be made in the liver prior to broiling. After broiling, they are rinsed off. Separate utensils should be used for the koshering of liver.

F. The Kosher Butcher:

Koshering and nikkur are usually the responsibility of the kosher butcher who must be a trained and reliable professional, as well as a man of integrity. In addition, the store must be under strict kashruth supervision.

G. Packaging:

From the time of slaughter, kosher meat and poultry must be properly tagged and labeled until it reaches the consumer. This requirement dictates that rabbinic supervision be maintained until the meat reaches the consumer. In the processing of meat, a metal tag called a plumba, bearing the kosher certification, serves as an identifying seal.

H. Caterers, Restaurants, Resorts:

Caterers, restaurants, and hotels should be supervised by a reputable Orthodox Rabbinic authority.

It cannot be assumed that kashruth is maintained simply because a kosher impression is created by an advertisement or by a statement, "we serve a kosher clientele." Too often, 'vegetarian' or 'dairy' restaurants are assumed to be kosher and beyond the need for supervision. Unfortunately, this is a prevalent misconception. For example, sea squab and sturgeon are non-kosher fish popular in many such eateries. Fish, baked goods, cheese, shortening, oil, eggs, margarine, dressings, and condiments are among the many foodstuffs requiring supervision in 'vegetarian' and 'dairy' restaurants. Even those food items that are kosher in their raw states, could be rendered non-kosher when prepared on equipment used for non-kosher food. In these restaurants, as in all other food serving establishments, reputable kashruth supervision is the best guarantee of kashruth.

IV. MEAT AND MILK IN THE KOSHER KITCHEN

VII. . The Torah forbids cooking meat and milk together in any form, eating such cooked products, or deriving benefit from them. As a safeguard, the Rabbis extended this prohibition to disallow the eating of

meat and dairy products at the same meal or preparing them on the same utensils. One must wait up to six hours after eating meat products before any dairy products may be eaten. However, meat may be eaten following dairy products with the one exception of hard cheese (6 months old or more), which also requires a six hour interval. Prior to eating meat after dairy, one must eat a solid food and the mouth must be rinsed.

A. Utensils:

The kosher kitchen must have two separate sets of utensils, one for meat and poultry and the other for dairy foods. There must be separate, distinct sets of pots, pans, plates and silverware.

B. Washing Dishes:

In a sink used for both meat and milk dishes and products, dishes and utensils must be placed or washed on a rack. Separate racks are to be used for meat and dairy use.

V. EGGS:

The eggs or animal by-product of non-kosher birds or fish are not kosher. Caviar, therefore, must come from a kosher fish and this requires reliable supervision. Eggs of kosher fowl which contain a bloodspot must be discarded, and therefore eggs should be checked before use. Commercial egg products also require supervision.

VI. BAKERIES, BAKED GOODS, BREADS, ROLLS, PASTRIES AND BAGELS

A. Shortening and Oils:

The display of the label has undergone strict changes due to government regulations. Not only must the label specify the type of shortening, i.e. vegetable or animal, but it must declare the actual source as well. Thus, it is commonplace to mention cottonseed oil, lard, coconut oil, and the like. The result of this explicit label display is that the consumer can easily detect what is blatantly non-kosher. However, the kosher status of a product containing vegetable shortening of any type can only be verified by reliable kosher certification. The reason for this is that manufacturers of vegetable shortening often process animal fats on common equipment. The vegetable product may be a pure one, however, halachically it is rendered non-kosher due to its being processed on non-kosher equipment.

B. Emulsifiers:

Emulsifiers are complex substances that are used in all types of food production. They can perform a number of critical functions, among them allowing incompatible ingredients to mix together. These materials are listed on the ingredient label as polysorbates, mono and diglycerides, sorbitan monostearate, etc. These products are produced from both animal and vegetable sources and thus require careful supervision and controls. The special qualities of these

products (acting as surfactants and making oil and water soluble) enable them to be invaluable basic components in many food items, such as margarine, shortenings, cream fillings, toppings, coffee creamers, whiteners, prepared cake mixes, donuts, and puddings. It must be emphasized that ice cream, frozen desserts, instant mashed potatoes, peanut butter, snack-pack foods, and many breakfast cereals also contain di-glycerides and, therefore, require kashruth certification. A product whose ingredient panel lists 'emulsifiers' or 'emulsifier added' indicates the use of glycerides and requires kashruth certification. Many chocolates and candies contain such glyceride emulsifiers.

C. Breads, Rolls, Challah, Bagels, and Bialys:

These basic household staples present several kashruth problems and require kashruth certification.

1. The "Taking" of Challah:

The Torah requires that a portion of every batter of dough prepared for baking be set aside as 'Challah'. The Challah portion taken may be of any size and is to be burned. This ritual is obligatory only when the dough is of Jewish ownership and is made from the flour of five grains: wheat, oats, rye, spelt, and barley. When the flour used is a blend with other types of flour, e.g. corn, rice, etc., a Rabbinic authority is to be consulted.

2. If this mitzvah (commandment) has not been performed in the bakery, it may be performed in the home by placing all the baked goods in one room, breaking open all sealed packaged material, and removing and burning a small piece from one of the loaves. When some of the loaves are a combination of the five aforementioned grains challah must then be taken from each type of loaf. When one bakes at home and has used a minimum of 2 lbs. 10 oz. of flour in the making of dough, challah is to be taken from the dough before baking. In this case, a blessing is not recited.

When a minimum of 4 lbs. 15 1/3 oz. of flour is used, the blessing is recited before performing the Mitzvah.

3. Many breads are made with oils and shortenings. Basic ingredients of specially prepared dough mixes and dough conditioners are shortenings and di-glycerides. In bakeries, pans and troughs in which the dough is placed to rise, are coated with grease or divider oils which may be non-kosher. These oils often do not appear on the label; only specially prepared kosher pan grease may be used.

4. Dairy Breads:

It is Rabbinically prohibited to bake bread with dairy ingredients. Since bread is frequently eaten at all meals, the Rabbis were concerned that one might inadvertently eat dairy bread with a meat meal. There are two exceptions-if the bread is baked in an unusual shape or design indicating that it is dairy, or if the loaf is so small that it would be consumed at one meal.

D. Cake, Pastries, & Doughnuts:

These products should be considered non-kosher unless certified kosher. The shortenings and other ingredients universally used in the manufacture of these items require expert supervision. Lard-based shortenings are often used in pie and other crust preparations because of lard's unique flaking quality.

E. Fillings and Cremes:

All fillings, cremes, and fudge bases must be certified kosher because they may contain fats, emulsifiers, and gelatin stabilizers.

F. Flavors:

A critical sector of the food industry is manufacturers of flavors. Flavors, whether artificial or natural, are components of nearly every product. Flavor production is highly complex and uses raw materials from every imaginable source. In addition, the flavor industry utilizes grape and wine derived ingredients in a wide array of products. For this reason, any product containing flavors requires strict supervision and control.

VII. DAIRY PRODUCTS

A. Cholov Yisroel:

A Rabbinic law requires that there be supervision during the milking process to ensure that the source of the milk is from a kosher animal. Following the opinion of many rabbinic authorities, OU policy considers that in the United States, the Department of Agriculture's regulations and controls are sufficiently stringent to ensure that only cow's milk is sold commercially. These Government requirements fulfill the Rabbinical requirement for supervision.

B. Cheese:

All cheeses require kashruth certification, including hard cheeses (Swiss, cheddar, etc.) and soft cheeses (cottage, farmer, pot, and cream cheese). Rennet, processed from the stomachs of unweaned calves, is used in the production of cheese as a curdling and coagulating ingredient, and is also used in the production of sour cream, buttermilk, and some varieties of yogurt and yogurt-type desserts. The issue of a non-kosher coagulant renders the product non-kosher.

C. Cheese and dairy products made under OU supervision are processed with kosher approved animal or microbial rennet. Kosher animal rennet is derived from the stomachs of kosher slaughtered calves and is specially prepared for use in kosher cheese production. Microbial rennet is derived solely from vegetable and plant sources and is produced under OU certification.

D. Sherbets:

According to government standards, any product labeled 'sherbet' or 'fruit sherbet' must contain milk and is, therefore, not pareve. Water ices should not be considered pareve unless endorsed OU pareve on the label.

E. Margarine:

Margarine contains oils and glycerides and, therefore, requires rabbinic certification. Margarine often contains up to 12% dairy ingredients. Unless the margarine is marked pareve, it should be considered dairy.

VIII. NATURAL AND HEALTH FOODS

With the proliferation of natural and health food products in the United States, some clarification is in order with regards to their kashruth status. It should be noted that many of these products are natural but nevertheless non-kosher. Products containing pure vegetable oils could be problematic as many oil manufacturers produce animal tallow on the same equipment. Natural flavors could contain polysorbates, grape derivatives, beaver extracts, etc., all of which are natural but require supervision or are non-kosher.

Even if a product is sold in a natural or health food store, it requires supervision if it contains questionable ingredients.

IX. WINES AND GRAPE PRODUCTS

All grape wines or brandies must be prepared under strict Orthodox Rabbinic supervision. Once the wine has been cooked, no restrictions are attached to its handling.

Grape jam is often produced from grape pulp and grape juice and may not be used. OU-certified grape jam is produced from ground whole grapes. The juice is neither extracted from, or added to, the product. This is not a wine product and its use is permitted.

Grape jelly is produced from grape juice and can be used only when produced from kosher grape juice under proper supervision.

Natural and artificial grape flavors may not be used unless kosher endorsed. Many grape flavors contain natural grape extracts and are labeled artificial or imitation because other flavoring additives are used in the formula.

Liqueurs, even though not possessing a wine base, nevertheless require supervision because of the flavorings used in these products.

X: TRAVELING KOSHER

For the businessman or tourist traveling across the United States, kosher certified products are available almost everywhere, even in the smallest groceries in the most remote towns. However, it is much more difficult to obtain reliably kosher certified products in most foreign countries. A traveler bringing along frozen (T.V.) dinners which must be reheated in a

non-kosher oven, must completely cover the frozen package with two layers of aluminum foil. If a microwave will be utilized then the food must also be double wrapped.

When traveling by plane, train or ship kosher meals should be ordered in advance. These meals are also heated in non-kosher ovens. The employees of the carrier are instructed to heat these meals in the same manner that they were received; totally wrapped in double foil with the caterer's seal and the Rabbinic certification seal intact. The traveler can ascertain by the intact seals that the dinners have not been tampered. Any dinner which is not properly sealed should not be eaten. The kosher certification only applies to the food in the sealed package.

Any other food (rolls, wines or liqueurs, cheeses, and coffee creamers or snacks) served loose by the carrier are not included in the kosher endorsement.

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KASHRUT- REFORM

pected to show to those who brought us into the world, raised us, and taught us would seem to require no less. Yet there are times, say the authorities, when a child is physically or emotionally incapable of providing the proper care and supervision for the parent, and in those situations the child is permitted to hire others to provide that care. This is certainly the case today, when complex and specialized treatment regimens far beyond the ability of the family are prescribed for the aged and infirm. The best that can be said, perhaps, is that in every case of this nature the children should carefully examine their own motives. If they are certain that their intended course of action is not undertaken out of selfish desires but rather truly for the good of the parent, then that action adheres to the standards of honor and reverence.

Kashrut and Reform Judaism

Many Reform Jews observe certain traditional dietary disciplines as part of their attempt to establish a Jewish home and life style. Each Jewish family should study *kashrut* and consider whether it may enhance the sanctity of their home.

The above statement taken from *Gates of Mitzvah* represents a revolution in the religious thought of North American Reform Judaism. Through most of its history the Reform movement has been closely identified with the rejection of *kashrut*, the traditional Jewish dietary laws. In 1885, the framers of the Pittsburgh Platform stated this position in no uncertain terms:

We hold that all such Mosaic and Rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas altogether foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

Although both the Columbus Platform of 1937 and the Centenary Perspective of 1976 take a more positive stance toward ceremonial observance than does their predecessor, neither mentions the dietary laws at all, let alone favorably. None of this meant that Reform Jews were somehow forbidden to "keep kosher" or that no Reform Jews ever chose to do so. It implied, however, that in the eyes of Reform Judaism the observance of the dietary laws was at best irrelevant to a proper conception of liberal Jewish religious life. Reform Jewish leaders and thinkers

were, when not openly hostile, at least supremely indifferent to the entire issue. This indifference is reflected in the fact that out of nearly 1100 published Reform responsa we find only one *teshuvah* which deals with a substantive matter of *kashrut* and that Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof's comprehensive *Reform Jewish Practice* does not refer to the subject at all. At no time prior to 1979 did any official Reform rabbinic document suggest that Reform Jews ought to think positively about the observance of *kashrut* or consider adopting it into their religious lives.

Gates of Mitzvah effectively reverses this trend. The book marks the first time that an "official" American Reform movement publication has looked favorably upon *kashrut* as a religious option. With the publication of *Gates of Mitzvah*, it is no longer the movement's official position that the dietary laws offer no spiritual meaning to today's Reform Jew. This means that while some Reform Jews will continue to find nothing of value in the observance of *kashrut*, those who do are encouraged to adopt it as a *mitzvah* which enhances the sanctity of the home.

What accounts for this change to a more positive attitude? It stems, first and foremost, from an acknowledgment of historical and religious fact: *kashrut* has been a basic element of Judaism for too long for Reform Jews—as Jews—to ignore. Put differently, we have come to recognize that Reform practice does not exist in isolation from historical Jewish religious experience, nor does it trace its roots exclusively to the European Enlightenment of the late-eighteenth century. If Reform Judaism has done away with certain aspects of traditional observance, it does not declare its independence from tradition itself. Reform religious expression takes shape rather within the broader context of historical *Jewish* religious life, and the centrality of *kashrut* to Jewish religious life can hardly be overstated. Since biblical times, the Jews have recognized a very real religious dimension to the preparation and consumption of food; the Jewish response to God's call has always included a dietary regimen. Through the discipline of *kashrut*, Jews have traditionally imposed sanctity upon the most elemental human necessity, transforming the physical act of eating into a symbolic sacrifice to God. As Jews, we are part of that tradition, that historical continuity, and this implies that the traditional Jewish sense of the holy is not foreign to us. It no longer makes sense to declare, by dint of "reason" or "enlightenment," that the dietary laws *cannot* be a source of spiritual fulfillment to the Reform Jew. On the contrary: it is more reasonable for a movement

which sees itself as an authentic expression of Jewish religiosity to urge its members to think about *kashrut* as an authentic mode of Jewish observance and to consider the value of bringing its practice into their homes and lives.

There are any number of compelling "reasons" that might motivate a Reform Jew to adopt *kashrut*. Some of these are: 1) identification with the contemporary and historical Jewish religious experience; 2) the authority of the religious tradition itself, both biblical and rabbinic; 3) a desire to have a home in which any Jew might feel free to eat; 4) a desire to place limits upon one's diet as an expression of ethical responsibility toward nature.

For Reform Jews, the decision to choose *kashrut* as a mode of religious life is not an "all or nothing" option. The dietary laws involve several major rubrics: the abstention from "forbidden species" of meat, such as pork and shellfish and products made from those species; the separation of meat and dairy products; the consumption of kosher meat, that is, meat slaughtered and prepared according to ritual requirements. Reform Jews may decide to observe all of these practices, some of them, or even none of them. They may decide to observe them at all times or only when dining at home. Some Reform Jews believe that a vegetarian diet, based upon a refusal to slaughter animals for food, sanctifies their lives by showing reverence for nature.

Again, the choice is up to the individual or the household. Because *kashrut* can mean different things to different Reform Jews, and because no consensus has yet emerged within the movement as to the "best" decision a Reform Jew can make about it, the level of dietary observance is largely a matter of personal rather than communal decision. This state of affairs may or may not change in the future. One thing, though, can be said with certainty: the question of *kashrut* is no longer irrelevant to the discussion of Reform Jewish religious life.

Death and Mourning

The Torah commands us to mourn when our relatives die.
(Maimonides, *Yad, Avel* 1:1)

The above statement is a controversial one. The Bible contains no explicit statement that "thou shalt mourn," the literature of Talmud and Midrash never derives such an obligation from a biblical verse.

**KASHRUT-
CONSERVATIVE**

XXI. The Dietary Laws (I) Shehitah

I. Introduction

The dietary laws loom large in Jewish life. They are referred to many times in the Torah apart from the full chapter devoted to them in Leviticus (Lev. 11) and part of a chapter in Deuteronomy (Deut. 14:4-21). They are elaborated in the Talmud in a large treatise, *Hullin*, which deals with them almost exclusively. In the post-talmudic literature, they are discussed in every code, the *Tur* and the *Shulhan 'Arukh* both devoting over a third of one section, *Yoreh De'ah*, to this codification.

Efforts have been made to give a rationale for the dietary laws. The most persistent—hailing back to Maimonides (*Guide* 3:48)—is that they were originally hygienic measures. Thus, Maimonides says: "I maintain that the food forbidden by the law is unwholesome. There is nothing among the forbidden foods whose injurious character is doubted except pork and fat. But also in these cases is the doubt unjustified" (*Guide* 3:48). Today, this explanation is often given by those who wish to discard the dietary laws on the grounds that we can achieve the same health measures by other means.

The inadequacy of the medical rationale was pointed out by Isaac Abarbanel: "God forbid that I should believe that the reason for forbidden foods is medicinal! For were it so, the Book of God's Law would be in the same class as any of the minor brief medical books. . . . Furthermore, our own eyes see that people who eat pork and insects and such . . . are well and alive and healthy at this very day. . . . Moreover, there are more dangerous animals . . . which are not mentioned at all in the list of prohibited ones. And there are many poisonous herbs known to physicians which the Torah does not mention at all. All of which points to the conclusion that the Law of God did not come to heal bodies and seek their material welfare but to seek the health of the soul and cure its illness" (Abarbanel on Leviticus, quoted in Cohn, *Royal Table*, p. 17).

it is usually suggested that the laws have some connection with holiness. Thus we read in Leviticus: "I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourself, and be holy; for I am holy. . . . For I am the Lord that brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44-45). This is repeated in Deuteronomy: "for thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 14:21).

The Torah regards the dietary laws as a discipline in holiness, a spiritual discipline imposed on a biological activity. The tension between wanton physical appetites and the endeavors of the spirit was traditionally explained as the struggle between *shen* *ya'*, the good inclination, and *ya'* *ya'*, the evil inclination—the two forces that contend with each other for mastery of the soul.

To transpose this into a modern key, it is the struggle between our higher self and our lower self, between the animal in us and the urge to strive upwards, which is part of the process of evolution. The arena of struggle in this evolutionary process is biological. All these appetites remain in the realm of the physical. Religion strives to lift them out of the merely physical into the realm of the spirit.

To illustrate: Eating is one of the important functions of life. It begins as a biological act, a means of satisfying hunger. When we invite a friend for dinner, a new dimension is added to eating; it becomes a social act. It helps to cement friendship. When a meal takes place in connection with *ya'* *ya'* *ya'*, the joy of observance of a commandment, it becomes a solemn act that helps add significance to an occasion. On the Sabbath, or even more, on Pesah at the Seder, eating becomes a religious act, an act of worship, with the table becoming an altar of God.

Religion thus raises the biological act into the dimension of the holy. Hence the connection in the Torah between the dietary laws and holiness. Rabbi Samuel H. Dresner suggests that the dietary laws have as their purpose the teaching of reverence for life. He says: "Human consumption of meat, which means the taking of animal life, has constantly posed a religious problem to Judaism, even when it has accepted the necessity of it. The Rabbinic of the Talmud were aware of the distinction between man's ideal and his real condition, regarding food" (Dresner and Siegel, *Jewish Dietary Laws*, p. 24). Since it was felt that man must eat meat, the act was surrounded with regulations which would prevent him from being brutalized and instead would cause him to develop reverence for life. Rabbi Dresner continues: "We are permitted to eat meat, but we must learn to have reverence for the

life we take. It is part of the process of hallowing which Kashrut proclaims. *Reverence for Life*, teaching an awareness of what we are about when we engage in the simple act of eating flesh, is the constant lesson of the laws of Kashrut" (ibid., p. 27).

This would explain the purpose of the dietary laws as a whole. There are additional reasons which apply to parts of the laws to one specific practice. We shall mention them in the appropriate sections below.

2. Permitted Creatures and Animals

In Leviticus 11:2, the Torah enumerates the identifying marks of the animals we may and may not eat, and in Deuteronomy 14:4 it lists the names of the permitted animals; among the domesticated animals, these include cattle, sheep, goats (buffalo, yak), and among the undomesticated animals, the deer family, i.e., stag, moose, hart, elk (antelope, gazelle, eland).

In the case of *חיות* ("beasts," i.e., undomesticated animals), the rabbis added a number of other distinguishing marks: forked horns or, failing that, horns that are circular in cross-section, composed of layers rather than of solid bone, and with certain deep indentations near the base (B. Hul. 59a f.).

These distinguishing marks become necessary when it is not certain whether a particular species of beast is one of those enumerated in the Bible. No such identification is required for beasts that are listed in the Bible (Y.D. 80:2). Furthermore, certain laws that apply to cattle do not apply to beasts, and vice-versa. The fat of clean beasts, for example, may be eaten, while certain fats of cattle may not be eaten (B. Hul. 59b; Y.D. 80:1,5,6). Also, the blood resulting from the slaughter of beasts must be covered with earth or with something similar (Lev. 17:13).

3. Clean and Unclean Fowl

The Torah does not prescribe any identifying marks for birds; instead, it enumerates the species that are forbidden—a total of twenty-four according to the reckoning in the Talmud (B. Hul. 63b). The implication is that those not listed are permitted. The rabbis of the Talmud, however, deduced four distinguishing marks of birds that are permitted. A permitted bird has a crop; the sac in the gizzard can be peeled off; it has an extra toe—i.e., in ad-

receives the support of six or more members of the Committee becomes an official position of the Conservative Movement. Thus, it is not at all unusual for the CJLS to validate two or three positions on a single subject.

Decisions of the Law Committee do not replace the authority of the local Rabbinic authority, the *mara d'atra*. Rather, local rabbis usually take their guidance from the validated positions of the Law Committee, by choosing the position that they find most compelling and convincing. The result of this procedure is what is called halakhic pluralism. That is, one congregation, guided by its rabbi's decision, will adopt the position of one of the validated *teshuvot*, while another congregation, guided by its rabbi's decision, will adopt another of the validated *teshuvot*. Regarding that issue, then, the two congregations will have different practices.

What follows is a summary of decisions of the Law Committee since the publication of Rabbi Klein's book. The decisions are listed by topics, and, when relevant, we shall note when multiple options have been adopted by the CJLS.

Kashrut

1. The concept of דבר חדש (*davar hadash*—"a new substance") is invoked in the laws of kashrut to indicate that a substance is considered sufficiently changed that its origin no longer affects its kashrut status. A דבר חדש is a new compound formed by the breaking of old chemical bonds, and the forming of new bonds. Extracts which can be easily reconstituted into the original materials are *not* new compounds, and are not considered דבר חדש. Chemical additives which meet this criterion do not affect the kashrut status of food products to which they have been added.
2. Mono- and di-glycerides, whatever their origin, are kosher and pareve.
3. Pepsin falls under the category of דבר חדש and is therefore kosher.
4. Because of the use of dairy or non-kosher substances as fining agents in the processing of wine, it is preferable that only rabbinically certified wines be served in the home, at the synagogue, and at communal events. There is, however, basis for the view that considers the forbidden substances in the fining agents nullified, and wines fined with unkosher or dairy substances are not categorically unkosher or dairy. Where situations make it unfeasible or impossible to refrain from drinking them, one who drinks them is not drinking unkosher wine. If one uses such wines in one's home, it does not

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by themselves. And the standards are established not on high, but by community members who discuss traditional teachings and then decide how to live their lives. People do the right thing not because they are commanded to do so, but rather because they are influenced by and feel responsible to other members of the community.

Communities are able to set standards when they also function as support systems. Parents struggling with adolescents, children of aging parents, people undergoing divorce, members in need of legal advice, individuals seeking friends with whom to celebrate Shabbat and holidays, sick people in need of company or transportation—in these and countless other ways, Reconstructionists seek to support one another within a Jewish communal context. There is more to Jewish civilization than study and prayer. And it is only when Jews extend themselves to and are assisted by fellow members in various aspects of their lives that the power of community becomes fully manifest.

The connection between theology and ethics also figures in the Reconstructionist equation. If God is portrayed exclusively with masculine imagery, for example, it is inevitable that this will affect the different ways that the believer values, and therefore treats, men and women. If God is believed to be dictatorial, or quick to anger, then that will have implications for those who believe that we are created in God's image. Every aspect of a Reconstructionist community—its liturgy, its school curricula, its by-laws and operating procedures—is subject to Rabbi Kaplan's pragmatic touchstone: How does it promote ethical values?

Kashrut and Eco-Kashrut

Jews in the modern era have often marked their break with tradition by abandoning the practice of *kashrut*. Once halakhah is no

is a civilization, then the way you eat is a central component of your life as a Jew. We eat all the time, so *how* we eat necessarily conditions our values and perspectives.

To be sure, not all of the practices that Reconstructionists call “kosher” would be affirmed by halakhic Jews. As discussed above in chapter 4, the ways that Reconstructionists keep kosher vary widely. For many, vegetarianism is the way they practice *kashrut*. Some eat only meat that is kosher, and others refrain from eating non-kosher animals but eat meat that has not been slaughtered ritually. Some eat only food that is *certified* as kosher, and others make their own decisions by checking ingredients on labels.

Most feel strongly that, no matter what their home practice is, they respect others’ differing approaches and do not allow *kashrut* to be a barrier to eating with others. This is because for Reconstructionists, keeping kosher is not about *obeying* a divine commandment, but is rather a means of sanctifying their lives—a value that must be balanced with other values, such as creating community. Thus, while individuals have limits about what they will and won’t eat, they make every effort to shape their eating habits in ways that affirm the value of diversity.

In recent years, the increasingly popular Reconstructionist observance of *kashrut* has often incorporated vegetarianism and eating in ecologically responsible ways. Until recently, many modern Jews explored their observance of *kashrut* as a way of promoting good

and eating only food that has been raised in an ecologically concerned way. Many avoid food products that are produced and/or preserved with chemicals that damage eco-systems. Some also consider avoiding the use of paper and plastic products as part of keeping kosher.

What all Reconstructionist communities share in common is a respect for *kashrut* and thus a commitment to a kosher communal kitchen in which all members can eat. That generally means that dairy food with kosher ingredients prepared by members even in non-kosher homes is welcomed. Dietary laws are not used as exclusionary devices.

In the Reconstructionist observance of *kashrut*, we care not only about *what* we eat but *how* we eat. We seek to cultivate an awareness of our blessings, utilizing *berakhot* (traditional blessings) that sanctify the meal and slow us down to appreciate our bounty and notice its tastes and textures. We recite the *Birkat Hamazon* after the meal to express our thanks, and there are many different forms of these blessings that Reconstructionists have created to do so. Eating is a religious act, and it is also a political act, especially in today’s consumer economy. We seek to take responsibility to distinguish between our wants and needs, to care about what is healthful for us as individuals and for the world as a whole.

As we do so, *kashrut* links us with our ancestors’ transformation of the table into a sacred altar. Their blessings infuse consciousness.

As we adopt their customs, we are linked to them, reminded of their values. And to their concerns, we add our own.

It is the rare individual whose Jewish life involves only prayer or ritual or study or ethical living or communal organizing or social action. There are very few "pure" spiritual types. The lives of Reconstructionist Jews are each deepened through involvement in many aspects of Jewish civilization. It is, however, in the definition of Judaism as a religious civilization that Reconstructionists come to see that communities are enriched by the diverse interests and commitments of their members, and that all manifestations of Jewish life have a legitimate place within a Jewish community.

Reconstructionist Exploration of Dietary Law

"Kosher Consciousness" and Jewish Identity

Richard Hirsh

When I was growing up, Sunday morning breakfast at our home always included bacon. Seders routinely featured sliced bread alongside the matzah. As we lived just down the block from a Chinese restaurant, pork and shellfish (however diced and disguised) frequently found their way to our table. It is fair to say that my family of origin was lacking in kosher consciousness!

As is true of many Jews who did not grow up to the rhythms of ritual observance, I eventually made my way into the realm of kashrut as an adult. Kashrut came along with the discovery of shabbat, prayer, tallit, tefillin, lulav, sukkah, and a host of other mitzvot that were not a part of my early years.

The encounter with kashrut in college was complex. I was able to master the fundamentals fairly quickly. Pork and shellfish were out. The blending of meat and milk was no longer an option. I was able to grasp the implications of this regarding cheeseburgers, but it took a while longer to decipher the nuances of dairy derivatives in food that had the appearance of neutrality ("parve").

But "kosher meat" — that took a long time to figure out! The market near my home clearly stated: "Kosher and Non-Kosher foods served." With a combination of sincerity, naiveté and ignorance, I asked the man at the meat counter for the "kosher meat." With a combination of entrepreneurial ease and a salesman's eye for opportunity, he promptly served up two pounds of steak that in retrospect I am certain never saw salt nor water nor shohet (ritual slaughterer) before appearing in the refrigerated case.

Eventually, thanks to *The Jewish Catalogue*, a group of friendly Hillel students, and a tolerant if somewhat perplexed Orthodox Hillel rabbi, I was able to embrace the details and dynamics of kashrut in their entirety.

As a communal and personal discipline, kashrut became an opportunity to invest the daily activity of eating with a dimension of holiness. Whether accomplished through words of blessing, the style of preparation of the food, the types of cookery used, or the kinds of foods served, kashrut became an important daily affirmation of identity and values. Far from being the "pot-and-pan-theism" with which it is often regarded by critics, kashrut emerged in my life as a vehicle for spiritual and bodily renewal.

I was enticed by the meaning inherent in the surrender of former favorite foods. A verse from *The God of Daniel S.*, an introduction to Reconstructionism written by Rabbi Alan Miller, resonated strongly:

" . . . He had simply woken up one day to find that he could no longer eat with impunity an animal whose flesh his ancestors had resisted eating to the point of death."

The separation of meat and dairy foods, the disturbing proximity between symbols of life and death, carried a similarly powerful association. Though I did not choose to observe all the stringencies associated with the absolute separation of these products, the avoidance of serving food that was obviously meat with food that was obviously dairy became an opportunity for honoring the boundaries of life and death.

Upon entering marriage, we established a home in which, for the first time for generations in our families, two sets of cookery were kept, one for dairy and one for meat. So stringent were we in those days that we did not use the dishwasher in our apartment because it had only one set of racks!

Upon entering the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1976, I was faced with the conundrum of where to eat lunch. The old RRC building resided on a desolate stretch of Broad Street in a formerly upscale area of Philadelphia. The nearest eatery, a lone business on an otherwise boarded-up street, was hardly kosher! We students would meander up, ask for tuna or cheese, pick off the scraps of meat left over from the slicing machine, and do the best we could. (We did delight in telling people that it was the only restaurant in the area under "rabbinical supervision.") Similarly, debates attended on the "fish fillet" at the nearby McDonald's, which occupied the space where a prestigious Conservative synagogue had once resided, giving the restaurant a residual aura of acceptance.

One evening, during a discussion at my student congregation regarding kashrut, someone asked me the following question: If it could be proved that other methods of slaughtering meat are less painful than the kosher requirements of shehita (ritual slaughter), would I refuse kosher meat and buy the other meat instead?

I was caught short by this question, because it represented the age-old debate regarding the mitzvot: does one comply because "God commands," or does one search for the "taamei hamitzvot," the "reasons for the commandments," in order to decide what benefit derives from observance? As I had always argued that tzaar baalei hayyim, the traditional Jewish concern not to cause pain to living beings, was an essential reason for keeping kosher, I had to begin to struggle with where the "break-point" is for kashrut: Where does the observance become meaningful, and where does it become a burden, and why. I was also forced to wrestle with the obligations I had to other Jews to support institutions — in this case, the kosher butcher — upon which they relied for their observance, even if I was uncertain as to my endorsement of the process.

In sorting out a respectful but voluntary commitment to kashrut, Reconstructionism was an enormous asset. Because it does not represent an "either-or" approach, but allows for and encourages people to find a place on the spectrum of observance, it was possible to begin to sort out where kashrut worked and where it did not.

Mordecai Kaplan's teaching that the ritual commandments are folkways designed to effect identification with the Jewish people led to an understanding that kashrut can be observed in some areas but not others, without inconsistency. As long as the level of observance supports and strengthens identification with the Jewish people, it is a functionally appropriate level of observance.

Thus, after several years of strict cookware separation, our family

decided that keeping two sets of dishes diminished rather than enhanced our commitment to kashrut. With the arrival of our first child, and the concomitant pervasiveness of things dairy, the benefits of this choice became, for us, self-evident.

We have in our family therefore established an adaptation of kashrut which seems to me an acceptable Reconstructionist principle: We are concerned and cautious about what we eat but not the dishes on which we eat it or the pots in which it is cooked. This guideline enables us to eat comfortably in any restaurant or home.

Over the years, we have truncated the time one customarily waits after a meat meal before having dairy. Most Ashkenazim wait between three and six hours. While we cannot claim Dutch ancestry, we figure if Dutch Jews can settle for 30 minutes, so can we.

Eating outside our home, we find we are more lenient these days about the degree of kashrut we require, although I prefer that meat and poultry brought into the home be from a kosher market. The prohibition on pork and shellfish, and the overt mingling of dairy and meat (what many call "Biblical kashrut") remain fundamental categories to which we are committed. From a Reconstructionist perspective, these areas seem so essential to our identification with our history and our people as to be "commanded."

As the years move on, so have our patterns of observance. My daughter demonstrates a preference for vegetarianism, which I share, and consequently our consumption of meat has declined. I find the Jewish Edenic-Messianic vision of vegetarianism compelling. Although legend teaches that we will all feast on Leviathan meat in the world to come, I expect I'll just ask for fruit instead.

In recent years, three aspects of kashrut have become particularly engaging.

The first is "eco-kashrut", in which the fitness of food is measured not only by compliance with biblical regulations but by consideration of ethical- ecological-economic issues. Food which is grown under conditions of oppression is ripe for rejection; overly-packaged and environmentally insensitive products seem indulgent; foods full of empty calories, cholesterol, fats and sugars do nothing to promote health and eviscerate the image of the Divine in which we are created.

The second area of interest is the cycle of blessings which accompany eating in Judaism. I collect these under the heading of "kashrut" although halahically they come under the category of blessings and prayer. The point here is that our attitude towards eating itself should be a dimension of kashrut. For several years I have not begun a meal or snack with-out the appropriate blessing, and the customary sprinkling of salt on bread. The rigorous and lengthy Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals), enjoyable at the shabbat table, is a burden during the week; an abbreviated prayer of gratitude, or a moment of silent appreciation before leaving the table, seems more effective.

The third area of contemporary kashrut which engages me is how, and how much, we eat. The accelerated pace of life has obliterated the time set aside for meals. "Grazing," a contemporary sociological term for how people eat "on the street" from carts and takeout fast food shops, seems to me antithetical to the dignity Judaism confers on human beings. We wash hands, bless, sit and eat and bless again precisely because we are not animals who simply eat out of hunger. As Kaplan

said, we should eat to live, not live to eat.

A corollary concern is how much we eat. Americans lead the world in the undistinguished category of being overweight, with the attendant effect on our health (and health-care systems). Jewish events, including *seudot shel mitzvah* (meals following a celebration) should exemplify modesty: portions should be kept in proportion!

In the recent survey of members of Reconstructionist communities, many were surprised to discover that 34 percent reported that they observed kashrut. Of course, since the question was not specific, a wide range of patterns is represented in the affirmative response. (Some joke that for some Reconstructionists, "keeping kosher" means not using Styrofoam!)

I assess the information differently. What the statistic says to me is that 34 percent of Reconstructionists identify kashrut, however defined, as a category of meaning for their Jewish lives. This testifies to the validity of Kaplan's insight that ritual binds us to our people and supports identity. It also suggests that the daily disciplines relating to food remain opportunities for Jews of all backgrounds to establish some level of kashrut.

Kashrut is a traditional category of meaning whose details often obscure the spiritual power which inheres in observance. Whether beginning with the simple act of saying a blessing over food, or restricting Biblically prohibited foods, or avoiding meat and milk, or setting up a fully kosher kitchen, Reconstructionist Jews should be able to find a level where comfort and meaning intersect to further the growth of our Jewish spirits and of our Jewish bodies.

**From the Summer, 1998 issue of the JRF Quarterly *Reconstructionism Today*.
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The Role of Women

Level: Intermediate

The role of women in traditional Judaism has been grossly misrepresented and misunderstood. The position of women is not nearly as lowly as many modern people think; in fact, the position of women in halakhah (Jewish Law) that dates back to the biblical period is in many ways better than the position of women under American civil law as recently as a century ago. Most of the important feminist leaders of the 20th century (Gloria Steinem, for example) are Jewish women, and some commentators have suggested that this is no coincidence: the respect accorded to women in Jewish tradition was a part of their ethnic culture.



In traditional Judaism, women are for the most part seen as separate but equal. Women's obligations and responsibilities are different from men's, but no less important (in fact, in some ways, women's responsibilities are considered more important, as we shall see).

The equality of men and women begins at the highest possible level: G-d. In Judaism, unlike Christianity, G-d has never been viewed as exclusively male or masculine. Judaism has always maintained that G-d has both masculine and feminine qualities. As one rabbi explained it to me, G-d has no body, no genitalia, therefore the very idea that G-d is male or female is patently absurd. We refer to G-d using masculine terms simply for convenience's sake, because Hebrew has no neutral gender; G-d is no more male than a table is.

Both man and woman were created in the image of G-d. According to most Jewish scholars, "man" was created in Gen. 1:27 with dual gender, and was later separated into male and female.

According to traditional Judaism, women are endowed with a greater degree of "binah" (intuition, understanding, intelligence) than men. The rabbis inferred this from the fact that woman was "built" (Gen. 2:22) rather than "formed" (Gen. 2:7), and the Hebrew root of "build" has the same consonants as the word "binah." It has been said that the matriarchs (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah) were superior to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) in prophesy. Women did not participate in the idolatry regarding the Golden Calf. See Rosh Chodesh below. Some traditional sources suggest that women are closer to G-d's ideal than men.

Women have held positions of respect in Judaism since biblical times. Miriam is considered one of the liberators of the Children of Israel, along with her brothers Moses and Aaron. One of the Judges (Deborah) was a woman. Seven of the 55 prophets of the Bible were women.

The Ten Commandments require respect for both mother and father. Note that the father comes first in Ex. 20:12, but the mother comes first in Lev. 19:3, and many

traditional sources point out that this reversal is intended to show that both parents are equally entitled to honor and reverence.

There were many learned women of note. The Talmud and later rabbinical writings speak of the wisdom of Berurya, the wife of Rabbi Meir. In several instances, her opinions on halakhah (Jewish Law) were accepted over those of her male contemporaries. In the ketubah (marriage contract) of Rabbi Akiba's son, the wife is obligated to teach the husband Torah! Many rabbis over the centuries have been known to consult their wives on matters of Jewish law relating to the woman's role, such as laws of kashrut and women's cycles. The wife of a rabbi is referred to as a rebbetzin, practically a title of her own, which should give some idea of her significance in Jewish life.

There can be no doubt, however, that the Talmud also has many negative things to say about women. Various rabbis at various times describe women as lazy, jealous, vain and gluttonous, prone to gossip and particularly prone to the occult and witchcraft. Men are repeatedly advised against associating with women, although this is usually because of man's lust as it is because of any shortcoming in women. It is worth noting that the Talmud also has negative things to say about men, frequently describing men as particularly prone to lust and forbidden sexual desires.

Women are discouraged from pursuing higher education or religious pursuits, but this seems to be primarily because women who engage in such pursuits might neglect their primary duties as wives and mothers. The rabbis are not concerned that women are not spiritual enough; rather, they are concerned that women might become too spiritually devoted.

The rights of women in traditional Judaism are much greater than they were in the rest of Western civilization until this century. Women had the right to buy, sell, and own property, and make their own contracts, rights which women in Western countries (including America) did not have until about 100 years ago. In fact, Proverbs 31:10-31, which is read at Jewish weddings, speaks repeatedly of business acumen as a trait to be prized in women (v. 11, 13, 16, and 18 especially).

Women have the right to be consulted with regard to their marriage. Marital sex is regarded as the woman's right, and not the man's. Men do not have the right to beat or mistreat their wives, a right that was recognized by law in many Western countries until a few hundred years ago. In cases of rape, a woman is generally presumed not to have consented to the intercourse, even if she enjoyed it, even if she consented after the sexual act began and declined a rescue! This is in sharp contrast to American society, where even today rape victims often have to overcome public suspicion that they "asked for it" or "wanted it." Traditional Judaism recognizes that forced sexual relations within the context of marriage are rape and are not permitted; in many states in America, rape within marriage is still not a criminal act.

There is no question that in traditional Judaism, the primary role of a woman is as wife and mother, keeper of the household. However, Judaism has great respect for the importance of that role and the spiritual influence that the woman has over her family. The Talmud says that when a pious man marries a wicked woman, the man becomes wicked, but when a wicked man marries a pious woman, the man becomes pious. Women are exempted from all positive commandments ("thou shalt" as opposed to "thou shalt not") that are time-related (that is, commandments that must be performed at a specific time of the day or year), because the woman's duties as wife and mother are so important that they cannot be postponed to fulfill a commandment. After all, a woman cannot be expected to just drop a crying baby when the time comes to perform a commandment.

It is this exemption from certain commandments that has led to the greatest misunderstanding of the role of women in Judaism. First, many people make the mistake of thinking that this exemption is a prohibition. On the contrary, although women are not obligated to perform time-based positive commandments, they are generally permitted to observe such commandments if they choose. Second, because this exemption diminishes the role of women in the synagogue, many people perceive that women have no role in Jewish religious life. This misconception derives from the mistaken assumption that Jewish religious life revolves around the synagogue. It does not; it revolves around the home, where the woman's role is every bit as important as the man's.

Women's Mitzvot: Nerot, Challah and Niddah

In Jewish tradition, there are three mitzvot (commandments) that are reserved for women: nerot (lighting candles), challah (separating a portion of dough), and niddah (ritual immersion after the end of a woman's menstrual period). If a woman is present who can perform these mitzvot, the privilege of fulfilling the mitzvah is reserved for the woman. Two of these mitzvot can be performed by a man if no woman is present. The third, for reasons of biology, is limited to the woman. All of these mitzvot are related to the home and the family, areas where the woman is primarily responsible.

The first of these women's mitzvot is nerot (literally, "lights") or hadlakat ha-ner (literally, "lighting the lights"), that is, the privilege of lighting candles to mark the beginning of the shabbat or a holiday. The lighting of candles officially marks the beginning of sacred time for the home; once candles are lit, any restrictions or observances of the holiday are in effect. The lighting of candles is a rabbinical mitzvah, rather than a mitzvah from the Torah. See Halakhah: Jewish Law for an explanation of the distinction.

The second woman's mitzvah is challah, that is, the privilege of separating a portion of dough from bread before baking it. This commandment comes from Num. 15:20, where we are commanded to set aside a portion of dough for the kohein. This commandment is only in full effect in Israel; however, the rabbis determined that Jews throughout the world should be reminded of this mitzvah by separating a piece of dough before baking it and burning the dough. You may have noticed that on boxes of matzah at Pesach, there is usually a notation that says "Challah Has Been Taken," which means that this mitzvah has been fulfilled for the matzah. Note that this has little to do with the traditional shabbat bread, which is also called "challah." See Jewish Food: Challah for more information about the shabbat bread.

The third woman's mitzvah is the obligation to immerse herself in a mikvah (ritual bath) after the end of her menstrual period. The Torah prohibits sexual intercourse during a woman's menstrual period. This ritual immersion marks the end of that period of separation and the resumption of the couple's sexual activities. For more information about this practice, see Kosher Sex: Niddah.

Some sources point out that the name Chanah is an acronym of the names of these three mitzvot (Challah, Niddah, and Hadlakat HaNer). In the Bible, Chanah was the mother of Samuel and a prophetess. She is considered in Jewish tradition to be a role model for women.

Women's Holiday: Rosh Chodesh

Rosh Chodesh, the first day of each month, is a minor festival. There is a custom

that women do not work on Rosh Chodesh. A midrash teaches that each of the Kosn Chodeshim was originally intended to represent the one of the twelve tribes of Israel, just as the three major festivals (Pesach, Sukkot and Shavu'ot) each represent one of the three patriarchs. However, because of the sin of the Golden Calf, the holiday was taken away from the men and given to women, as a reward for the women's refusal to participate in the construction of the Golden Calf.

How do we know that women didn't participate in the Golden Calf incident? The midrash notes that Exodus 32 says that "the people" came to Aaron and asked him to make an idol. Aaron told them to get the golden rings from their wives and their sons and their daughters. Note that the biblical verse doesn't say anything about "the people" getting the rings from their husbands, only from wives and sons and daughters, from which we can infer that "the people" in question were the men. Then Ex. 32:3 says that "the people" broke off the golden rings that were in *their* ears. The bible does not say that they got the gold from their wives and sons and daughters; rather, it says that "the people" (i.e., the same people) gave their own gold. The midrash explains that the men went back to their wives and the wives refused to give their gold to the creation of an idol. As a reward for this, the women were given the holiday that was intended to represent the tribes.

The Role of Women in the Synagogue

To understand the limited role of women in synagogue life, it is important to understand the nature of commandments in Judaism and the separation of men and women.

Judaism recognizes that it is mankind's nature to rebel against authority; thus, one who does something because he is commanded to is regarded with greater merit than one who does something because he chooses to. The person who refrains from pork because it is a commandment has more merit than the person who refrains from pork because he doesn't like the taste. In addition, the commandments, burdens, obligations, that were given to the Jewish people are regarded as a privilege, and the more commandments one is obliged to observe, the more privileged one is.

Because women are not obligated to perform certain commandments, their observance of those commandments does not "count" for group purposes. Thus, a woman's voluntary attendance at daily worship services does not count toward a minyan (the 10 people necessary to recite certain prayers), a woman's voluntary recitation of certain prayers does not count on behalf of the group (thus women cannot lead services), and a woman's voluntary reading from the Torah does not count towards the community's obligation to read from the Torah.

In addition, because women are not obligated to perform as many commandments as men are, women are regarded as less privileged. It is in this light that one must understand the man's prayer thanking G-d for "not making me a woman." The prayer does not indicate that it is bad to be a woman, but only that men are fortunate to be privileged to have more obligations. The corresponding women's prayer, thanking G-d for making me "according to his will," is not a statement of resignation to a lower status (hardly an appropriate sentiment for prayer!) On the contrary, this prayer should be understood as thanking G-d for giving women greater binah, for making women closer to G-d's idea of spiritual perfection, and for all the joys of being a woman generally.

The second thing that must be understood is the separation of men and women during prayer.



According to Jewish Law, men and women must be separated during prayer, usually by a wall or curtain called a mechitzah or by placing women in a second floor balcony. There are two reasons for this: first, your mind is supposed to be on prayer, not on the pretty girl praying near you. Second, many pagan religious ceremonies at the time Judaism was founded involved sexual activity and orgies, and the separation prevents or at least discourages this.

The combination of this exemption from certain commandments and this separation often has the result that women have an inferior place in the synagogue. Woman's obligations in the home (which are the reason why women are exempt from time-based commandments like formal prayer services) often keep them away from synagogue. In several synagogues that I have attended, the women's section is poorly climate controlled, and women cannot see (sometimes can't even hear!) what's going on in the men's section, where the services are being led. Women are not obligated by Jewish law to attend formal religious services, and cannot participate in many aspects of the services (traditional Jewish services have a very high degree of "audience participation" -- and I'm not just talking about community readings, I'm talking about actively taking part in running the service).

But as I said before, this restriction on participation in synagogue life does not mean that women are excluded the Jewish religion, because the Jewish religion is not just something that happens in synagogue. Judaism is something that permeates every aspect of your life, every thing that you do, from the time you wake up in the morning to the time you go to bed, from what you eat and how you dress to how you conduct business. Prayer services are only a small, though important, part of the Jewish religion.

Lilith

Lilith is a character who appears in passing in the Talmud and in rabbinical folklore. She is a figure of evil, a female demon who seduces men and threatens babies and women in childbirth. She is described as having long hair and wings (Erub. 100b; Nid. 24b). It is said that she seizes men who sleep in a house alone, like a succubus (Shab. 151b). She is also mentioned in midrashim and kabbalistic works, in which she is considered to be the mother of demons. Her name probably comes from the Hebrew word for night (laila). She is similar to and probably based on a pagan demon named Lulu or Lilu that appears in Gilgamesh and other Sumerian and Babylonian folklore.

In recent years, some women have tried to reinvent Lilith, turning her into a role model for women who do not accept male domination or a rival goddess to the traditions that they think are too male-biased. For example, a number of female musical artists participated a concert tour called "Lilith Fair" a few years ago, and the name "Lilith" was clearly chosen to represent female empowerment.

This revisionist view of Lilith is based primarily on a medieval work called the Alphabet of Ben Sira, the significance of which has been widely misinterpreted and overrated. The story of Lilith in Ben Sira claims that Lilith was the first wife of Adam. Lilith insisted on being on top when they were having sexual intercourse, claiming that she was Adam's equal. For this reason, Adam rejected the uppity Lilith, and Lilith was replaced with the more submissive second spouse, Eve. The complete story is presented here.

Many modern commentators have pounced on this story, claiming that it comes from the Talmud and reflects the traditional rabbinical understanding of the roles of

men and women. Feminists reject the negative characterization of Lilith's actions in this story, and make Lilith out to be a hero who was demonized by male-chauvinist rabbis who did not want women to have any sexual power.

However, it is important to note that the Alphabet of Ben Sira is not a traditional rabbinical Jewish source. It is not part of the Talmud, nor is it considered to be a midrash. It is not entirely certain what Ben Sira is, but it appears to be a satire or parody, possibly even an antisemitic one. It tells many stories about biblical characters envisioned in non-traditional, often unflattering ways, often with slapstick humor at the expense of traditional heroes. See this [critique](#) of the use of Ben Sira to turn Lilith into a feminist hero.

To treat The Alphabet of Ben Sira as a reflection of traditional Jewish thought is like treating Cervantes' Don Quixote as an accurate depiction of chivalry, or Mel Brooks' Blazing Saddles as a documentary of the American West.

Links for Further Reading

[Project Genesis](#) offers an online course on [Women in Judaism](#), covering subjects such as equality between men and women in Judaism, faith, prayer, relationships, and feminine intuition.

[Kresel's Korner](#), written by an Orthodox woman, addresses many of the questions that people have about the role of women in Orthodoxy. Kresel is an intelligent, well-educated woman who responds to many feminist critiques of Orthodoxy and illustrates a very different kind of female empowerment.

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from a low stand in front of the ark to signify humility in God's presence.) Maimonides states that the bimah should be in the middle of the synagogue. At the beginning of the last century, some Reform synagogues placed the bimah at the ark end of the synagogue. This departure from tradition was severely criticized by the Orthodox on the grounds that it copied Christian churches where the altar is at the east end. However, Rabbi Joseph Caro, the author of the *Shulhan Arukh*, stated as long ago as the sixteenth century that the only reason for the bimah to be in the center of the synagogue is so that everyone can hear the reading of the Torah. Consequently, he rules, in smaller synagogues, where one can hear very well wherever the bimah is situated, it can be placed at one end of the synagogue, which may even be preferable aesthetically. Sermons used to be preached from the bimah, but nowadays there is sometimes a special pulpit for preaching.

Other Features of the Synagogue

The Talmud advises that prayer be recited in a house that has windows. This has been interpreted symbolically as meaning that the prayers should not be narrowly confined to the house but should move outwards, as it were, in concern for others and their needs. There is a later tradition that advises that a synagogue have twelve windows, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. This has been understood to mean that there is more than one way to God, each tribe having its own window to Heaven. Orthodox synagogues are built either with a special gallery for women or with a *meḥitzah*, "division," between men and women. The archaeological evidence from ancient ruins of synagogues does not suggest that anything like this existed in ancient synagogues. Nevertheless, it has been the traditional practice to have a separate compartment for women, known as the *ezrat nashim*, "the court of the women," after the court of that name in Temple times. Conservative and Reform synagogues see no point in having this division today, when in other areas of life the sexes mingle freely.



While some synagogues have a special section for women, others have done away with all such divisions and even have women rabbis.

Question 8.4: What is the Orthodox view of the role of women in Judaism?

Answer: The role of women in Orthodox Jewish life, like the role of men, is a complex and dynamic product of the myriad components of life. In Orthodox Jewish thought, religious observance encompasses a broad spectrum of areas including but not limited to observance of the Sabbath and dietary laws, contemplation, social interaction, personal development, business practice and charity. The role of the Jewish woman involves all of these areas as well as many others. These general components of the role of the Jewish woman are constant throughout history. However, the particular manifestations of these components differ from era to era and person to person. Jewish law does not regulate every detail of life, but provides a basic structure within which each person may express their own personality. Throughout the centuries, the occupations of wife and mother have been primary vehicles of religious expression and duty for Jewish women. Indeed, throughout history, the vast majority of women of all cultures and religions have focused their energies on these roles. While debated throughout contemporary society as to the origin and benefit of these roles for women, it is widely recognized throughout the Orthodox Jewish world that the roles of wife and mother afford tremendous opportunity for spiritual expression and growth. Home-life in Orthodox Judaism is a rich world of familial love, nurturing of others, prayer, intellect, and communal festivity. One could argue that it is a far more interesting and spiritually satisfying world than the corporate work-environment. Nevertheless, contrary to popular belief, women are not forbidden to hold jobs. Again, Torah law does not micro-manage people's lives. Torah philosophy does emphasize that occupations for material acquisition be secondary to higher religious activities such as family-life, prayer, and charity, but this principle applies to men as well as to women. According to many classical Torah authorities, women are not required to get married. A woman could find a place in Orthodox Judaism without involvement in the roles of wife and mother. Nevertheless, the vast majority of Orthodox Jewish women in our times find these roles central to their divine service. The exact degree of centrality and manner of expression will differ from woman to woman. But it is recognized in Torah thought in general that dedication to others is a virtue. Family-life is an ideal setting for such dedication since the personal lives of family members overlap in myriad ways. Thus, the role of the Jewish woman is not easily defined, as it will assume different forms as each woman develops herself in accordance with the general parameters of Jewish law and philosophy. Many, when looking at this issue, have trouble reconciling it with egalitarian positions where women

are viewed as having equal rights. When exploring the Orthodox view, there is an important distinction to be made: rights vs. obligations. Traditional Judaism looks at actions in terms of duties and obligations, not the modern socio-political notions of rights. Thus, in Traditional Judaism, men and women have different duties and obligations; the question of rights never arises. You can find more on this subject in the book *Male and Female He Created Them* from Targum/Feldheim.

Another dichotomy built into the nature of man is gender: As in all premodern societies, rabbinic Judaism sharply distinguished between the social and religious roles of the man and the woman. The halakhic principle was that "The observance of all the positive ordinances [those that require performance of an act] that depend on the time of the year is

incumbent on men but not on women, and the observance of all the positive ordinances that do not depend on the time of the year is incumbent both on men and on women." With a few exceptions, "The observance of all the negative ordinances [prohibitions], whether they depend on the time of year or not, is incumbent both on men and women" ((Mishnah Kiddushin 1:7). Women are also not required to fulfil ordinances that depend on a given time of day or to study Torah. Rabbi Joshua taught that a man is to say each day: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God . . . who has not made me a pagan . . . who has not made me a woman . . . and who has not made me a brutish man (B. T. Menahot 43b), a statement jarring to the modern reader but in its original context an expression of gratitude for being able to take on the yoke of the commandments that others cannot assume. The woman's responsibility was the home and the care of the children, and her special religious commandments were related to that domain. The intense seriousness of Torah study predisposed Jose ben Johanan to warn against "gossip with womankind" (Pirkei Avot 1:5), just as R. Simeon warned against interrupting one's study to admire a beautiful tree (Pirkei Avot 3:7). Inasmuch as sexuality was considered an aspect of the *yetzer ha-ra*, women were a source of temptation, an attitude that reflects an age in which ascetic tendencies were prevalent among the religious of all traditions. However, sexuality within proper bounds and for the sake of procreation was considered necessary for the fulfilled life: "R. Tanhum stated in the name of R. Hanilai, "Any man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness. . . . Concerning a man who loves his wife as himself, who honors her more than himself, who guides his sons and daughters in the right path and arranges for them to be married near the period of their puberty, Scripture says, 'And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace'" (Job 5:24; B.T. Yevamot 62b). Apart from the halakhic matters mentioned above, men and women have the same basic and obligatory

body is prepared for burial according to Jewish law by being washed and dressed in plain linen wrappings by a special Holy Burial Society, then placed in a simple coffin. Mourners tear their garments as a sign of grief (this is called *keriah*), observe seven days of mourning during which they do no work (the seven-day period is called *shivah*, from the Hebrew word for "seven"), and go to no entertainments. They recite the *Kaddish* prayer daily for eleven months if the deceased is a parent or thirty days for other relatives or for a mate.

Affixed to the doorposts of every Orthodox Jewish home is a *mezuzah*, a small box containing passages from the Torah, to remind the family that the home must be filled with Jewishness. Males cover their heads at all times with a skull cap (in Yiddish, *yarmulke*; in Hebrew, *kippah*) or hat as a sign of respect for God; married women cover their hair with a kerchief or wig as a sign of modesty. Men are required to pray three times daily and wear a prayer shawl (*talit*) and phylacteries (*tefillin*) each morning. Every Orthodox Jew tries to study the Torah daily. Orthodox Jews eat only kosher food, never mix milk and meat, are careful not to eat bread or other products prepared with leavening during Passover, and recite a blessing before and after each meal. The Orthodox woman is expected to maintain a kosher home, light Sabbath and festival candles, and go to the ritual bath (*mikveh*) after each menstrual period.

The Orthodox are careful to observe the Sabbath and festivals in every way. They will not work, write, smoke, ride, or carry even a handkerchief out of their homes on the Sabbath, nor will they use radio, television, or lights on that day. They build a *sukkah* at home on the festival of Sukkot, fast on Yom Kippur and other holy fast days, eat only foods that are kosher for *Pesah* during Passover, and observe all the other rituals for each holy day of the year.

Orthodox Jews will pray only in an Orthodox shul. The shul is designed so that men and women sit separately with a partition or curtain (*mehitzah*) between them so that they will not distract members of the opposite sex. The service is almost entirely in Hebrew, although the more modern synagogues have added some English prayers and an English sermon by the rabbi. The traditional prayerbook (*Siddur*) is the only one used, and no changes or additions to the prayers are allowed. Musical instruments and choirs with female singers are never allowed at Sabbath or holy day services.

The Orthodox are strict about not changing the prayer services or any of the prayers. They believe that those who have altered these things have often adopted Christian ways such as mixed seating, organs, and mixed choirs, and that these are signs of assimilation. They feel that the traditional prayers are beautiful as they stand and that it is arrogant and improper to change them. And even if they do not totally accept certain ideas in the *Siddur* such as the resurrection of the dead or Heaven and Hell, they are not prepared to drop

these ideas.

In other ways, however, some modern Orthodox congregations have adopted new patterns. They have sometimes become synagogue-centers with clubs, youth programs, and athletic activities; and most Orthodox rabbis preach in English on subjects of current interest. In every other respect, Orthodox services today are almost the same as they were in Europe a century ago.

Women have almost no role in synagogue worship in the Orthodox movement, and while most seem content with this, some women have been asking for greater opportunities to participate in worship. As a result, some Orthodox shuls have created a sort of Bat Mitzvah ceremony for girls even though this is a change in tradition. Women have also made demands in other areas of Jewish life. For example, under traditional law a woman cannot inherit if there are males in the family, nor can she be a witness in a court case. And there is a law that says that women cannot issue divorces but can only hope that the men will agree to issue a *get*. Some Orthodox women want these laws changed. And while few changes have taken place thus far, the winds of women's liberation are blowing in Orthodox Judaism as they are in all religions.

Finally, the Orthodox Jew is expected to conduct his business and professional life according to Jewish law and ethics. In fact, one of the four sections of the *Shulhan Aruch* is concerned with business practice. Truly pious Jews must not cheat or steal or lie; their word must be their bond. They may not lend money at interest; they must pay workers on time; they may not cheat a boss; they must not short-change a customer or give false weight of goods; they must give charity to the poor and help the sick and aged. While most Orthodox Jews do respect these ethical laws, others stress the ritual commandments and neglect the ethical. But Orthodoxy does demand that a Jew observe *all* mitzvot equally and so it teaches that ethical rules are always as important as rituals.

The life of an Orthodox Jew is a demanding one and requires great commitment and sacrifice. The essence of Orthodox Judaism is observance of the mitzvot, and the truly Orthodox Jew devotes a lifetime to the service of God, the study of the Torah, and the keeping of God's law.

The Morning Blessings—Birkhot HaShahar

sleep is removed from the eyes. These are all possible because of God's loving kindness. They are all reasons to be thankful.

The last blessing in the series is longer than all the rest. It thanks God "for removing sleep from my eyes," thereby associating it with the act of washing one's face in the morning. But it goes on to make several heartfelt requests:

May it be Thy will, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, that we become accustomed to walk in the way of Thy Torah, and to cling to Thy precepts. Lead us not into sin or transgression and iniquity, or into temptation or disgrace; let not the impulse toward evil rule over us; keep us far from evil men and worthless companions; and help us cling to the impulse toward good and to good deeds. Bend our will to Thine. Give us this day and every day grace, favor, and mercy—in Thy sight and in the sight of all men, and bestow upon us Thy loving kindness. Blessed art Thou, Lord, who bestows loving kindness upon his people Israel.

(Berakhot 60b)

These are all requests of a spiritual and social nature. There is an awareness here of the challenges and temptations that await people in their daily struggle for advancement and fulfillment. So we begin each day with a plea to God that He help us stay on the right path, and regard His doing so as an act of loving kindness.

THE THREE BLESSINGS OF "WHO HAS NOT MADE ME"

The attitude of the Talmudic sages to women is best reflected in such statements as: "The Holy One, blessed be He, gave a greater measure of understanding to woman than to man" (Niddah 45b); "A man, to know peace in his home, should honor his wife even more than his own self" (Yevamot 62b); "God's love is not like that of the human being; for Him the son and the daughter are equal." The status of the Jewish woman, though more circumscribed than that of the Jewish male, was historically always higher and more privileged than that of her non-Jewish counterpart.

How then does one explain the inclusion into the daily prayer book of a blessing that has been the source of much controversy and misunderstanding, and that offends many Jewish women? The blessing in question has its origin in the teaching of a Talmudic sage, Rabbi Judah: "a person should recite the following three blessings each day." The conclusions of these blessings are:

who has not made me a non-Jew (*shelo asani goy*)

who has not made me an ignorant person (*shelo asani boor*)

who has not made me a woman (*shelo asani ishah*)

(Tosefta Berakhot, Vilna Shas 61a)

Rabbi Judah's statement clearly states that the reason for the third blessing is "Because women are not required to observe [all] the mitzvot."

The blessing which thanks God "for not having made me a boor" (an ignorant person) was rejected by the sages and it never became part of the liturgy. The reason given for suggesting this blessing is that "an ignorant person cannot be a sin-fearing person." Since an ignorant person does not know Torah and does not know what is permitted and what is forbidden, he obviously does not keep all the mitzvot. Rashi explains the rejection: The blessings make sense when speaking of a non-Jew or of a woman, inasmuch as they are not halakhically obligated to keep all or some of the commandments; but an ignorant man is still *obligated* to keep all the commandments; he is *not exempt* from their observance (Rashi, Menahot 43b). A blessing which thanks God "for not having made me a slave" (*shelo asani aved*) was substituted instead.

The common denominator of all three conditions: being a non-Jew, a slave, and a woman—is their halakhic exemption from observing all or some of the mitzvot. A Jewish woman is exempt from most religious duties that have to be carried out at fixed times.* It is not so much that one gives thanks for not being a woman, but rather that one is grateful for the obligation to observe *all* religious rites.

* The exceptions include the following biblical and rabbinic mitzvot: reciting or hearing Kiddush and Havdalah; eating matzah on the first night of Passover; listening to the reading of the Megillah on Purim; lighting candles on Hanukkah and on the Sabbath; drinking four cups of wine at the Passover seder; and rejoicing in the festivals.

them immediately after *Asher Yatzar*, *Elohai Neshamah*, and *Nishama la-sekhvi v'nah*, we establish a unit acknowledging the way we were created.

In the Sephardic rite, however, this point was not found sufficiently compelling. And since these three blessings are not part of the series of morning blessings prescribed in the Talmud for saying upon arising, they were inserted toward the end of the series.

THE WOMAN'S BLESSING

Sometime after the Geonic period, it became customary for women to substitute *she-asani kirtzono* ("who has made me according to His will"), for the "male" blessing.*

Some may interpret this blessing as a grudging resignation to a lesser state, or as the acceptance of one's fate. But Rabbi Aaron Soloveitchik, a leading contemporary Talmudic scholar, views it as a blessing that affirms woman's innate superiority over man. It is God's wish, he says, that human beings achieve the Divine qualities of compassion and mercy. Woman is naturally closer to that level of perfection than is man. She was given the gift of mercy and compassion. Is not God Himself addressed as *Rahum*, the Compassionate One? And is not *rehem*, the Hebrew word for womb (the part of the body that more than any other distinguishes woman from man and symbolizes her essence) a form of the same word that means compassion? A woman can therefore proudly claim to have been fashioned "according to His will."

Man, on the other hand, cannot make the same claim. Although given the gift of power and strength to conquer the earth and subdue it, man lacks the natural qualities by which he may achieve the spiritual ideal. He starts with a baser nature than does woman, and is therefore in need of greater refinement. Since mitzvot are seen as a means

* Converts to Judaism, male or female, do not say *shelo asani goy* ("who has not made me a non-Jew"). Instead, they say (m.) *she'asani ger* or (f.) *she'asani giyoret* ("who has made me a proselyte").

TO PRAY AS A JEW

The duty to light candles for the Sabbath and to have them burning in one's dwelling place falls equally on men and women. In a family setting, the carrying out of this mitzvah is the woman's responsibility. Because she is normally found at home and involved in the work of the house, it is easier for her to meet this obligation (Maim. Hil. Shabbat 5:3). If there is no woman at home to light the candles, it becomes the man's responsibility to do so.

To be on the safe side, Sabbath candles are lit twenty minutes before sundown. Sundown is the actual deadline. The kindling of a fire thereafter, even for Sabbath candles, is forbidden.

Since the recitation of the blessing means the immediate acceptance of the Sabbath for the woman lighting the candles (see pp. 256-257), the usual practice of reciting the berakhah before performing the mitzvah is reversed in this instance. First the candles are lit, then the blessing is said (OH 263:5 Rema).

The moments after the blessing have become sanctified to most Jewish women as a time to add a personal prayer, in the quiet privacy shared by her lips and her heart.

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WOMEN- REFORM

CCAR Responsa

A Woman as a Scribe

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She'elah

Almost two years ago, our synagogue hired a Torah scribe to clean and repair a *sefer torah* which had been rescued from the Nazis. Several of us had the opportunity to help clean the Torah and "letter" it by placing our hand over the scribe's as he wrote, thus fulfilling the commandment for every Jew to write a Torah. I became fascinated and deeply moved by this work. The feeling of standing in front of the open Torah, of sensing the spirit of the original scribe, of the generations before me who rejoiced and wept in its presence, is a powerful one. I so love this feeling of being connected to God and to my people through the Torah that I would like to learn how to be a scribe in my own right, if that is possible. I already have art and calligraphy backgrounds, and I am deeply committed to this.

Could you please reply to me in the form of a responsum on the subject of women participating in the scribal arts? If you have particular advice as to a course of study, I would appreciate hearing that, too. (Julietta Ackerman, Goldens Bridge, NY)

Teshuvah

Many of us, upon reading this question, can readily identify with your experience. We too can remember how we felt when we stood before the open *sefer torah* and sensed for the first time the power and significance of this scroll in our lives, in the way in which we define who we are. And for good reason. Jewish tradition regards the study of Torah as the means by which we discover God's will, how we are to live so as to sanctify the divine name. The world, we are taught, exists for the sake of three things, one of which is Torah.¹ And the study of Torah is equivalent to the performance of all the other commandments.² The Torah and the study of Torah are, therefore, the quintessential Jewish religious acts. Little wonder, then, that a child marks the occasion of reaching religious majority by being called to the Torah, for it is through participation in the life of Torah that one learns most truly just what it means to grow as a Jewish adult, to be a Jew.

The Traditional Prohibition.

Yet the fact remains that Torah as an intellectual and spiritual discipline has traditionally been reserved to males. Let us take, for example, your own experience of "fulfilling the commandment for every Jew to write a Torah", a commandment derived from Deuteronomy 31:19, "therefore, write down this poem and teach it to Israel."³ The author of the *Sefer Hachinukh*, an important medieval work, uses exalted language to describe the purpose of this *mitzvah*.⁴ "God instructed that each Jew should have a *sefer torah* readily available to study...in order to learn to revere God and to understand God's commandments, which are more precious to us than gold...". But the phrase "each Jew" is severely qualified: "This commandment is practiced in every community and in every age⁵ by males, who are

obligated to study the Torah and therefore to write it, and not by females."

Women, in other words, are exempt from the commandment to write a Torah scroll because they are also exempt from *talmud torah*, the requirement to study Torah. The source of this exemption is a *midrash*, a rabbinic legal interpretation of Deuteronomy 11:19: "you shall teach (My words) to *beneikhem*." This Hebrew word is the second person inflection of *banim*, which means either "children" or "sons", and according to the rules of Hebrew grammar it can be rendered correctly as either "your children" or "your sons". The *midrash* seizes upon the latter alternative: *beneikhem* means your sons and excludes your daughters. Hence, a father need not teach Torah to his daughter, nor is she required to study it on her own.⁶ Since a woman is exempt from the commandment to study Torah, the rabbis deduce through the interpretive principle of *simukhin*, which draws comparisons between adjacent Torah verses or subjects, that she is also exempt from the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*.⁷ And--once again through the principle of *simukhin*--if she is exempt from the requirement to wear *tefillin*, she is not qualified to write them, or to write *mezuzot* or Torah scrolls.⁸ As Maimonides puts it: "Torah scrolls, *tefillin*, or *mezuzah* parchments that are written by a woman are unfit for use (*pesulin*) and should be stored away."⁹ Thus does the tradition disqualify women from serving as scribes.

Critique of the Traditional View.

The position we have just described, which is the consensus view of the *halakhah*, is not immune to critique. We would argue that the traditional prohibition, though strictly observed in the Orthodox community, is flawed as a matter of Jewish law. We note, first of all, that the rule which disqualifies women from serving as scribes rests upon a thoroughly arbitrary reading of the Torah. The *midrash* on Deuteronomy 11:19 which interprets *beneikhem* as "your sons" rather than as "your children" could just as easily and correctly have chosen the alternate translation. Indeed, the *halakhah* often does read *banim* and its various inflections as "children", undistinguished by gender.¹⁰ This more inclusive reading is even adopted when the subject under discussion is a matter of ritual observance, where we would expect the rabbis to draw a distinction between men and women. A case in point is Numbers 15:38, which states: "speak to *benei yisrael* (sons/children of Israel) and tell them to make fringes (*tzitzit*) on the corners of their garments". The Talmud cites this wording to prove that only Jews (*benei yisrael*) and not Gentiles are permitted to make the ritual fringes.¹¹ Note that the text reads the phrase *benei yisrael* as "children", rather than "sons" of Israel; accordingly, most halakhists rule that Jewish women, no less than Jewish men, are qualified to make *tzitzit*.¹² In other words, nothing prevents the rabbis from reading the Hebrew *banim* as "children" rather than "sons", including males and females alike within the terms of a *mitzvah*. They are not compelled, therefore, to interpret Deuteronomy 11:19 so as to exempt women from the *mitzvah* of Torah study and, by extension, from *tefillin* and from serving as scribes.

Why then *did* the rabbis of the Talmud adopt that restrictive interpretation? Clearly, the sages of late antiquity did not possess what we would call an "enlightened" view of the female mind and character. They believed it inappropriate and even dangerous for women to occupy themselves with the study of Torah. Thus, although women were not absolutely forbidden to study and even received a certain merit for doing so, "the Sages command that a father *not* teach Torah to his daughter, for most women are not intellectually suited to learn. Rather, due to their lack of intelligence, they are liable to interpret the words of Torah in vain and foolish ways. As the Sages teach us: 'if one teaches his daughter Torah, it is as though he teaches her obscenity.'¹³ This attitude, though not the only one represented in talmudic literature, is of a piece with other rabbinic statements concerning women¹⁴ and, as the codes indicate, it is the accepted *halakhah* regarding women and Torah study. Given this intellectual and cultural reality, it is no surprise that the rabbis chose to read Deuteronomy 11:19 in the way that they do.

In our age, it is hardly necessary to state that the rabbinic view of women's mental capacity does not correspond with the facts. We reject that view, therefore, not because it is politically incorrect but because it is false. And since it is *demonstrably* false, since it contradicts our own intellectual and cultural reality, one need not be a Reform Jew to recognize its falsehood. Indeed, leading traditional scholars have acknowledged that women are no less capable of learning than are men and that the rabbinic conception of female intelligence does not fit the "woman of today".¹⁵ This is important, because the exclusion of women from the *mitzvah* of Torah study was justified largely on the basis of their supposed intellectual inadequacies. In the absence of this conception, the rabbis would not have ruled Torah study off-limits to women. And in a time when the evidence of our eyes so clearly demonstrates the collapse of that conception, no justification exists for rabbis, Orthodox or otherwise, to maintain the restrictive interpretation of Deuteronomy 11:19 which denies to women the opportunity to participate as equals in this *mitzvah*.¹⁶

The View of Reform Judaism.

Reform Judaism dissents sharply from this prohibition. Our movement rejects any attempt to draw distinctions in ritual practice on the basis of gender. Over the years, we have worked to remove the barriers that deny women equal access to all avenues of Jewish religious expression, learning, and leadership. Women serve our communities as rabbis, cantors, and *mohalot* (performers of ritual circumcision); there is no reason to deny them, should they possess the requisite education and skills, the opportunity to function as *soferot setam*, writers of Torah scrolls, *tefillin*, and *mezuzot*.

Since this is a matter of religious principle for us, we would maintain our dissent even if it were impossible to argue cogently on textual grounds against the traditional prohibition. Why then do we make such an argument? Obviously, we do not expect that Orthodox authorities will change their position because of anything we say. We rather seek to demonstrate that, according to *halakhah* no less than on grounds of ethical principle, women ought to be obligated to study Torah and thus permitted to write sacred texts. Such to our mind is the most persuasive reading of the sources of Jewish law, one which Orthodox halakhists could adopt with halakhic integrity.

You, Ms. Ackerman, ought therefore to be able to serve the entire Jewish community, and not just its liberal segment, as a scribe. That some deny you this opportunity is the result of a prohibition which, as we have seen, flows from arbitrary textual interpretation and long-outdated psychology. This is a regrettable state of affairs which, we hope, will one day change. In the meantime, you should not let it hinder you from working toward your goal.

Your goal is, in fact, our goal as well. The Reform movement is deeply interested in training and producing *soferim/ot*, just as it produces rabbis, cantors, and other religious leaders.¹⁷ We also urge you to remember that as a scribe you will serve the community as a teacher of Torah as well as an inscriber of texts. A scribe, like a rabbi, embodies for other Jews the value of the study of Torah, the commandment that is equivalent to all the others combined. It is therefore incumbent upon the scribe, no less than upon the rabbi or other communal servants, to continue to study Torah with the greatest intensity of which he or she is capable. This study should include, at a minimum, a careful reading of the Torah itself, the weekly portions along with their *haftarot*, in the original Hebrew. In addition, you should learn the traditional *halakhot*, the laws concerning the writing of Torah scrolls, *tefillin*, and *mezuzot*. A good source for these is Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, which contains a section devoted to this subject.

You say that it is your dream to become a scribe. We say that you have every right to pursue that dream and to serve your people thereby. We pray that God grant you the energy, perseverance, and insight to

make your dream come true.

Notes

1. M. Avot 1:2. And see BT. Pesachim 68b: "were it not for the Torah, even heaven and the earth could not exist".
2. BT. Shabbat 127a.
3. BT. Sanhedrin 21b. See Yad, Hilkhot Sefer Torah 7:1: "that is to say, write for yourselves the Torah which contains this poem [in parashat Ha'azinu], for we write the Torah whole and not section by section."
4. Sefer Hachinukh, mitzvah 613.
5. i.e., it is not restricted to the land of Israel or to the days when the Temple was standing.
6. BT Kiddushin 29b; Yad, Hilkhot Talmud Torah 1:1; YD 246:6.
7. BT Kiddushin 34a. Since these two commandments are mentioned side by side (Deuteronomy 6:7-8 and 11:18-19), the rabbis learn that what is true of the one (women are exempt from Torah study) is true of the other (women are exempt from tefillin).
8. Since the commandment of mezuzah ("you shall write them on the doorposts of your house... Deuteronomy 6:9) is adjacent to the commandment of tefillin ("you shall bind them... Deuteronomy 6:8), what is true of "binding" (women are exempt) is true of "writing" as well; BT. Menachot 42b and BT Gitin 45b. In the version of this baraita which appears in the printed version of M. Soferim 1:13, "woman" is not mentioned among the list of those who are unfit to write a sefer torah. However, the Gaon of Vilna reads "woman" in his text of Soferim; moreover, the exclusion of women seems demanded by the very logic behind this rule ("whoever does not wear tefillin may not write them").
9. Yad, Hilkhot Tefillin 1:13; SA, OC 39:1; SA, YD 281:3. The Tur, YD 281, does not mention "woman" among those who are disqualified to write a Torah scroll. From this, some would learn that while a woman may not write tefillin she is permitted to write a sefer torah (Derishah ad loc.). But this is not the majority halakhic position (Siftei Kohen, SA, YD 281, # 6).
10. The Torah speaks of the Israelite community as benei yisrael, the "children" of Israel, a designation which almost always includes women as well as men. For example: according to all opinions the well-known statement in Leviticus 19:2 ("speak to benei yisrael and tell them: 'you shall be holy...") is addressed to the entire community and not merely to its sons.
11. BT. Menachot 42a.
12. Yad, Hilkhot Tzitzit 1:12. On the basis of BT Menachot 42a, Rambam prohibits Gentiles from making the fringes, and he does not include women within this prohibition. Tosafot, Menachot 42a, s.v. minayin and BT. Tosafot, Gittin 45b, s.v. kol; R. Asher, Hilkhot Tzitzit, # 13; SA, OC 14:1; Hagahot Maimoniot, Tzitzit 1, # 9. Some medieval authorities want to read benei yisrael in this verse as "sons of Israel", thereby disqualifying women as well as Gentiles from making tzitzit; see Hagahot Maimoniot ad loc. But theirs is definitely a minority opinion. Isserles, SA, OC 14:1, urges that tzitzit not be made by women, but his words are couched in the form of a prudent stringency and not as a statement that, according to the law, women are forbidden to make them.
13. Yad, Hilkhot Talmud Torah 1:13; see also SA, YD 246:6. The quotation is the dictum of R. Eliezer in M. Sotah 3:4. See also YT Sotah 3:4: "let the Torah's words be burned rather than given over to women."
14. E.g., "women are of unstable temperament" (BT. Shabbat 33b and Kiddushin 80b) and "women's sole wisdom lies in the spinning of yarn" (BT. Yoma 66b).
15. See Arukh Hashulchan, YD 246, # 19, and Torah Temimah, Deut. 11:19, # 48, end. And see, especially, R. Ben Zion Ouziel's description of "today's woman" in his Resp. Mishpetey Ouziel, v. 3, # 6, where counter to the orthodox rabbinic majority he rules in favor of female suffrage. Moreover, despite women's supposed mental inferiority, halakhists have long required them to study those aspects of Jewish law which apply directly to them. See Isserles, YD 246:6, and

Tosafot, BT. Sotah 22b, s.v. ben azai.

16. One cannot defend a refusal to remove the prohibition on the basis of "hallowed tradition." The halakhah allows contemporary rabbis to depart from the rulings of their predecessors when those rulings were based upon an observable reality that has changed since their day. See R. Eliezer Berkovits, *Hahalakhah: kochah vetafkidah* (Jerusalem, 1981), 48ff.
17. Ms. Ackerman was informed of the efforts by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to hold an institute for the teaching of scribal skills during the summer of 1996.

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CCAR Responsa***American Reform Responsa*****7. Ordination of Women as Rabbis****(Vol. XXXII, 1922, pp. 50-51)**

The discussion of the responsum, "Shall Women be Ordained as Rabbis?" was led by Rabbi Jacob Z. Lauterbach.

The following participated in the discussion: Rabbis Max Heller, Levinger, Witt, Weiss, Brickner, Charles S. Levi, Rauch, Englander, Abrams, Raisin, Baron, J.G. Heller, Cohon, Frisch, and Nathan Stern; Mrs. Frisch, Miss Baron, and Mrs. Berkowitz. The discussion was closed by Rabbi Lauterbach.

It was moved and adopted that the courtesy of the floor be extended to the wives of rabbis, in order to ascertain their views on this subject.

It was moved and adopted that the President appoint a committee to formulate a statement which shall express the sentiment that the Central Conference of American Rabbis has repeatedly made pronouncements urging the fullest measures of self-expression for woman, as well as the fullest utilization of her gifts, in the service of the Most High, and that it gratefully acknowledges the enrichment and enlargement of congregational life which has resulted therefrom.

Whatever may have been the specific legal status of the Jewish woman regarding certain religious function, her general position in Jewish religious life has ever been an exalted one. She has been the priestess in the home, and our sages have always recognized her as the preserver of Israel. In view of these Jewish teachings and in keeping with the spirit of our age and the traditions of our conference, we declare that woman cannot justly be denied the privilege of ordination.

Henry Cohen and Committee

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**WOMEN-
CONSERVATIVE**

investigating and formulating responses to the issues involved in end-stage care, including brain death, termination of life-support systems, and living wills. Two papers were submitted by the subcommittee to the entire CJLS, and both of them were approved by the CJLS overwhelmingly. Those papers were published in their entirety in *Conservative Judaism*, vol. 33, no. 3. Living wills/durable powers of attorney documents consonant with each of the approved papers are available from Conservative rabbis.

Women

The Committee on Jewish Law and standards issued a series of divided opinions on many women's issues, beginning in 1955. In that year, the Committee validated positions which allowed *'aliyyot* for women on an equal basis with men, *'aliyyot* for women only on special occasions, and no *'aliyyot* for women. In 1973, the Law Committee validated two positions regarding women in the *minyan*. One position allowed women to be counted, and the other position forbade it. In 1974, the CJLS issued divided decisions on women as prayer leader (cantors), some permitting and some forbidding, and on women as witnesses, some forbidding and others permitting.

In May 1977 the Rabbinical Assembly passed a resolution at its convention urging the Chancellor of the Seminary "to establish an interdisciplinary commission to study all aspects of the role of women as spiritual leaders in the Conservative Movement." The Chancellor appointed such a commission in October 1977. The Commission had fourteen members who "represented a wide array of disciplines, backgrounds, and geographical regions." The Commission met throughout 1978, and submitted its final report to the Chancellor and the Rabbinical Assembly in January 1979. The Report of the Commission was published in its entirety in *The Ordination of Women as Rabbis: Studies and Responsa*, edited by Professor Simon Greenberg, and published by the Seminary in 1988.

The Report of the Commission includes a majority view, of eleven of its members, urging that the Seminary ordain women and a minority view, of three of its members, urging against such a move. In the view of the majority, most of the halakhic concerns had already been met by the decisions of the CJLS to which we have already referred. The minority, on the other hand, pointed out that those decisions of the Law Committee were divided decisions, and that the views espoused by the majority report necessitated validating one view over the other equally validated view in each of the divided decisions.

In 1978 the Chancellor issued an invitation to the members of the faculty of the Seminary to write papers on the issue of the ordination of women for the consideration of the entire faculty. The papers (with the exception of one whose author would not permit its publication in the volume and one which was inadvertently omitted from the volume but published subsequently in *Conservative Judaism*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 49 to 58) were published in the Greenberg volume to which reference has already been made. In December 1979 the faculty voted to table the issue. In 1983 the matter was again put on the agenda of the faculty, and the faculty papers were again debated. In the final analysis, the faculty voted to admit women to the Rabbinical School of the Seminary, and the Chancellor appointed a subcommittee to determine the specifics for the implementation of the decision. The subcommittee, with the approval of the Chancellor, adopted the position of Rabbi Joel Roth as to the governance of the Rabbinical School. This position requires female candidates for entrance to the Rabbinical School to accept upon themselves equality of obligation for the positive, time-bound mitzvot from which they are traditionally exempt. This requirement, in turn, is predicated on the premise that such acceptance is a halakhic precondition to the ability of a woman to be counted toward the *minyan* and to serve as its prayer leader. This policy continues to govern the Rabbinical School, and only women who consider themselves obligated for prayer at the legally prescribed times are counted toward the *minyan* and lead it in prayer at the Seminary service. (In fact, there are two services at the Seminary. The other service does not count women at all toward the *minyan*, nor may they lead the community in prayer.)

The faculty papers were never subjected to a vote by the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards. The position of the Seminary reflects a view which is more restrictive than the permissive view of the CJLS, and more permissive than the restrictive view of the CJLS.

Shortly after ascending to the Chancellorship of the Seminary, the current Chancellor certified that the same position which governs the Rabbinical School meets all of the necessary halakhic requirements to admit women to the Cantorial School. As a result, the Chancellor admitted women to candidacy in the Cantorial School on the same grounds.

**WOMEN-
RECONSTRUCTIONIST**

accrues from centuries of practice. It can be generated when we are supported at pivotal moments by a community that gathers to mark the occasion through the use of traditional Jewish language and contemporary expressions of the heart.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah

Since late medieval times, the Jewish community has celebrated the bar mitzvah ceremony when boys reached the age of thirteen. In traditional communities, in which boys were educated Jewishly as a matter of course, the thirteen-year-old would be called up to the Torah for his first *aliyah*, a right reserved for adult men. Boys did not learn Torah-reading and service leading for this moment, because these skills were a part of their education from early childhood. Becoming a bar mitzvah signified that the boy was now permitted to display these skills in public.

No corresponding recognition or public ceremony existed for girls. This was the case for two reasons. First, the bar mitzvah ceremony took place during the Torah service. Since it had become the tradition that women were not eligible to be called up to the Torah, the ceremony would not have made sense. Second, the fact that a girl reached adulthood had significance in terms of her marriage-ability and a small number of other commandments related to holiday and home observance—but not for any other new role she would play in the performance of public rituals.

Had traditional Jewish society been interested in valuing or publicly celebrating the woman's role, a ceremony might have been developed around a girl's transition to puberty. Without this interest, it is not surprising that no such public celebration developed. If women, acting outside the public domain, developed private celebrations that too, is lost to us—the activities of women

were not of interest to the men who kept public records for posterity. For these reasons, Reconstructionists first instituted the now widely accepted ceremony of bar mitzvah. In Kaplan's era, bar mitzvah, which we take for granted, was unheard of. Long before, classical Reform Judaism had done away with the bar mitzvah ceremony. In Reform settings at that time, the Torah was not frequently read in public, and no one was called up to recite the Torah blessings. The traditionalists, on the other hand, had no notion that women's equality should be an issue within the context of Jewish life. In 1922, when Kaplan's eldest daughter Judith reached the age of twelve, it was decided that she would be called to the Torah during Shabbat services. The event went on with little fanfare, but it was indeed an historic occasion.

Kaplan created this event for his daughter because he was looking for ways to give the past a vote but not a veto. In this innovation, Kaplan retained the form and content of the traditional ceremony, simply broadening its meaning to include young women.

The same approach was later taken with regard to other inequities women faced in public Jewish ritual—being called to the Torah for an *aliyah*, being counted in a *minyán* (the ten who constitute a quorum for Jewish worship), and being counted as a witness for signing Jewish documents. These traditions are still meaningful, so there was no need to alter them radically; rather, there was a need to augment them by permitting women equal access to them, counting both women and men as part of the community that finds such actions meaningful. In Reconstructionist circles, women were taking this active role in ritual in the early 1950s, a generation before this became common elsewhere.

Today, thirteen-year-old girls and boys in Reconstructionist communities study together to become *bat* mitzvah, with no gender distinction. The issue that faces Reconstructionists along with all

Including Feminist Jews

Since its inception, Reconstructionist Judaism has been committed to equality for women. An examination of the steps Reconstructionist Judaism has taken throughout the twentieth century illustrates the early and fundamental Reconstructionist commitment to inclusivity.

Women's equality would not be an issue for us if we did not live in two civilizations; for it is in the secular civilization that changes in women's roles have been initiated. It was in the 1920s that the women's suffrage movement gained prominence, raising the issue of women's equality and personhood. Aware of this trend, Kaplan strongly advocated that Judaism keep up with those changes in perception, both from a pragmatic and a moral point of view: pragmatic, because many women would lose interest in Jewish life if they were excluded from it in the public realm; moral, because the equality of all persons is a value espoused by the democratic tradition that Kaplan wished to introduce into Jewish life in new and unprecedented ways.

Of course, that is not to say that the position of women in Jewish life was static prior to Kaplan's time. Throughout Jewish history women were subject to varying levels of economic, social, political, and religious disabilities. Most frequently, the status of women in Jewish life fluctuated with the status of women in those civilizations with which Jews came into contact.

The changes that have taken place in most recent times, however, are qualitatively different. For the first time, women themselves have sought to speak in their own voices, not allowing their roles and status to be defined for them by men. Kaplan foresaw that this would happen as early as 1946 when he urged the Jewish woman to "demand the equality due her as a right to which she is fully entitled."

An example of giving women equal access to roles that previously

rabbis. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College opened its doors in 1968. During its first year, a woman (Sandy Eisenberg Sasso) applied and was accepted to begin her studies the following fall. Significant numbers of others followed in her footsteps, and by the mid-1970s, half of each entering class at the RCC was female. Woman students have always been treated as equals by faculty, administration, and by male colleagues. The RCC has been in the vanguard in opening full-time faculty and administrative posts to women.

Will the presence of women performing traditionally male roles radically alter Judaism? On one level, the answer is no, or at least no more than any other measure that increases the number of people who are eligible to take active roles in Jewish life. Yet, in a deeper sense, women in public roles will make a profound difference. That a girl can now grow up assuming that she has a rightful, public place in the synagogue makes an enormous difference in the consciousness of children. And equality for women often leads to asking new questions. Women may also bring different sensibilities to Jewish life—making public such concerns as sexual harassment, domestic violence, family planning, child-rearing, and human sexuality. Women undoubtedly will also bring a greater awareness of "sexism"—how power gets divided within institutional structures, often to the disadvantage of women.

In this way, feminist consciousness goes beyond equality for women to raise other questions. It brings to the foreground the way Judaism has defined and limited people based on gender. From this perspective we begin to examine the role gender played in determining values and structures throughout Jewish history, leading us to new understandings and interpretations of the Jewish past.

Therefore we ask questions not only about women's roles, but about men's roles. We believe that just as women's roles have been broadened in contemporary society, men's roles must also be re-

examined. If women are to take a more active role in public expressions of Judaism, so men's roles in the home and family must be enhanced. Only in this way can people freely and equally express what it means to them to be Jewish.

From a feminist perspective, we concern ourselves with the conduct of all human relationships and include all people—restoring the ancient prophetic dream. This is the ultimate, if yet unrealized, potential of the changes which we began to initiate many years ago.

Inclusive Liturgical Changes

Feminist perspectives have influenced Reconstructionist approaches to liturgical change in order to make the experience of communal prayer more welcoming to people who have been marginalized. The English translations in Reconstructionist prayer books are gender neutral. If women and men are full and equal partners in the Jewish community, then there is no excuse for the use of masculine nouns and pronouns to signify all people, no reason not to mention the matriarchs with the patriarchs.

But Reconstructionists ask a deeper question: Why does Jewish liturgy always refer to God as He? Why are the vast majority of our metaphors for God—King, Shepherd, Father—set in male language? We have responded in several ways to this feminist challenge. The first possibility is to include feminine God language—to begin to refer to God also as She, Mother, strong and radiant Woman. This way has several advantages: It gives women an opportunity to experience themselves as made in the image of God. It broadens our conception of how God works in the world. It challenges us to be clear that our anthropomorphic images are just that—that God can fit comfortably into either of them, yet can't be contained by any. So God can be addressed



Yet there is another Reconstructionist approach to this question. Perhaps feminism has come to remind us that our metaphors cannot approximate our concept of God. Perhaps God is best addressed as Power or Process. If so, we might think, with Rabbi Harold Schulweis, about reformulating some of our prayers to read *Berukhah haElohim, Blessed is Godliness, or with the poet Marcia Falk, *Nevarkeh et Ein Ha-Hayyim, Let us bless the Source of Life.**

This does not imply that Reconstructionists reject the use of male God language. We recognize the mythic power and the metaphorical truth of the traditional liturgy. The language of our ancient prayers resonates in ways that transcend literal intellectual affirmation. Thus, it is possible for some to accept feminist insights, avoiding idolatrous attachment to a literal male image of God while retaining traditional prayer forms.

For others, it is also important to change the language of the traditional Hebrew words as well. Reconstructionist prayer books offer alternative names of God and forms for blessings. Some blessings provide gender-neutral metaphors for God; others, feminine metaphors. The challenge here is linguistic rather than theological. Unlike English, Hebrew does not have gender-neutral nouns and verbs, so that gender neutrality must be achieved by alternating masculine and feminine. To alternate the gender of the Hebrew text requires a sophisticated knowledge of Hebrew grammar, a skill that is beyond most worshippers, whose ability to translate the meaning of the Hebrew is limited. Thus, our prayer books do not vary Hebrew verb forms, but in groups where the meaning of the Hebrew can be understood, the gender of God is alternated in the Hebrew as well.

Including Gay Men and Lesbians

The feminist perspective about bringing in all marginalized people



**MATCHING THE JEW
TO THE SYNAGOGUE**

Jew #1

Each week Sara celebrates Shabbat. Since she was a little girl, it has been her favorite time of the week. The entire family would gather together for a huge dinner. They would sing their favorite Shabbat songs, laugh, tell stories and relax after a hard workweek. During the morning, she and some members of her family would study the Torah portion of the week. Sometimes they did this in synagogue and sometimes at home or in a local park.

Sara loved going to synagogue and chanting all the prayers she learned in Sunday school. Her favorite prayer was the Avot v'Imahot. She loved that her name was mentioned in the prayer.

Sara's love of Shabbat, singing prayers and studying Torah study led her to master the art of chanting Torah. She became a tutor for children studying to become bar or bat mitzvah. Later, she decided to train to become a service leader and fills in for the cantor whenever he cannot be at a service.

She, her husband, and two children live very close to her family so they can have the same kind of leisurely Shabbats she enjoyed as a child and attend the same synagogue.

Jew #2

Ben is about to graduate from college. He will soon start a full-time job as a teacher. He discovered his passion for teaching while working part-time as a Hebrew teacher at a local synagogue during college.

When Ben wasn't in class, studying or working, he spent a great deal of his time playing basketball and going to clubs to hear his favorite local bands play.

Ben's school is far away and while he always enjoyed school, he did miss some of the comforts of home. The more time he spent away from his family, the more he found himself adopting his parents' values and interests.

There was a presidential election in the fall of his sophomore year. He had previously shied away from politics because he parents were so politically involved but now he found himself joining the campus branch of AIPAC, a prominent Israel advocacy group, and seeking out information on presidential candidates who also strongly support Israel.

While away at college, Ben did something else he never thought he would. He sought out the Jewish traditions he was used to from his family. He attended services at Hillel, the Jewish organization on campus, on Shabbat and holidays. He often ate his meals there so he could have kosher food like his mom would make. He socialized with the other Hillel students and made life-long friends.

Ben has learned to appreciate the traditions with which he was raised. Although he doesn't think he will ever be strict in his observance of Jewish ritual, he knows that he wants to be in a community that values those kinds of traditions.

Jew #3

Avi loves being Jewish. He loves the culture, the history, and the traditions. Avi has always been active in every part of Jewish life. He keeps kosher and celebrates Shabbat every single week. As a service to his synagogue, he runs a Torah study group. He is also part of a volunteer committee working to write a new prayer book that not only alters the English translation of prayers to egalitarian but also renders the Hebrew gender-neutral as well.

Professionally, Avi is an author. He is also a talented musician. His last book allowed him to combine both of these interests. It retold Jewish history by examining the development of Jewish music.

He married the rabbi of his small, intimate synagogue. Together, they lead the synagogue's youth group and spend summer's working at a Jewish overnight camp.

They would love to move to Israel permanently and feel it would be great to live in a Jewish country where they can express their Jewishness in every aspect of their lives. They hope to make the move sometime in the next few years. To prepare, they are both working hard to master the Hebrew language and to save a lot of money.

Jew #4

It is Shabbat and Debbie and her family are on their way to synagogue. Debbie loves going to the synagogue. It is like going to visit their extended family each week. Everyone at the shul knows one another. It is cozy and secure.

Just outside the synagogue, she meets up with the other girls from her school. When it is time for services to begin, they race inside to make sure they get their regular seats in the section. Some of the girls spend their time talking and gossiping but Debbie loves to get lost in the prayers. She follows them word for word, swaying back and forth as she reads. She uses the same prayer book that her mother used as a little girl. Some of the pages are torn but she can still read all of the Hebrew on each page.

After services and the kiddush, she and her mother walk home very quickly to prepare the table for Shabbat lunch. When everyone else has arrived, they sit down and her father leads them in the blessings. They eat and eat and discuss plans for Debbie's twin-brother's upcoming bar mitzvah.

Debbie loves everything about Shabbat. She looks forward to turning off the TV, putting away her homework and focusing on family and friends. No cooking. No writing. No work of any kind. Shabbat lets Debbie catch her breath from the busyness of the rest of the week.

● ANSWERS TO MATCH THE JEW ACTIVITY

Reform= #1

Orthodox= Jew #4

Conservative= Jew #2

Reconstructionist= #3



**AUTHORITY-
ORTHODOX**

ories which the Jew relives in moments of worship.

A redefinition of faith and revelation are issues common to Judaism and Christianity, but there are theological concerns that are definitely Jewish, especially the religious status of Jewish law and peoplehood. The position of Jewish theologians on the halakhah is the main issue where denominational lines between Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform are still determinative. The Orthodox insist on the absolute centrality of religious law as interpreted by authentic halakhic methods according to a consensus of the leading talmudic authorities. The Conservatives take a more creative approach, allowing for deliberate changes and reinterpret-



Watercolor depicting the consecration of the synagogue of Cleve in the Rhineland, c. 1820. (Courtesy of the Leo Boeck Institute, New York.)

lived periodical devoted to Jewish historical scholarship, the first of several such journals that were to make nineteenth-century Germany a major center of modern Jewish *Wissenschaft*. The editor, Leopold Zunz, was to become one of the greatest Jewish researchers. Despite its limited impact, the legacy of the *Verein* pointed to two crucial assumptions of the next phase of Jewish intellectual life in Germany: first, that Judaism could recover its true character by being raised to the level of rigorous *Wissenschaft*; second, that Judaism was the unfolding of a fundamental religious principle placing its imprint on every form and aspect of the Jewish spirit. The conviction that Judaism could be understood as an organic unity developing out of an essential and comprehensive idea was very much the impact of the philosopher Hegel, then at the height of his influence in Germany. With the revival of Jewish religious thought in the 1830s, the Hegelian approach inspired several quite different interpretations of Judaism.

The Neo-Orthodoxy of Samson Raphael Hirsch

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the term *Orthodox* had come into general use for those who maintained, contrary to the Re-

formers, that the entire written and oral Torah, as interpreted by the continuous chain of rabbinic authorities since ancient times, was divinely revealed and immutable. In particular, for the Orthodox, the Shulhan Arukh—the sixteenth-century code of religious law compiled by Joseph Caro—together with its commentaries and the later decisions of duly qualified rabbis, constituted a fixed and binding standard for proper Jewish practice. (Because of the centrality of religious action in rabbinic Judaism, some scholars suggest that the term *orthopraxy*, correct practice, would be more descriptive than *orthodoxy*, correct doctrine.) Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the bulk of German Jews and their rabbis remained traditionally observant, in contrast to the rather small Reform stratum described in the previous section. The first German rabbi to become an eloquent champion of modern Orthodoxy against Reform was Samson Raphael Hirsch.

Hirsch was born in Hamburg in 1808, of an enlightened but traditionally observant family. Hirsch's ancestors had lived in that part of Germany for ten generations; a grandfather and an uncle were admirers of Moses Mendelssohn. Hirsch's father, a businessman, rejected the Hamburg temple, but was sympathetic to the moderate Haskalah, especially to the value of a modern secular education. Samson Raphael Hirsch was sent to a German grammar school, a classical high school (*gymnasium*), and the University of Bonn. During the one year he spent in Bonn, Hirsch came into close and friendly contact with Abraham Geiger, a future leader of Reform Judaism; Hirsch and Geiger organized a Jewish oratorical society, perhaps with their future careers in the rabbinate in mind. In 1830, at the age of twenty-two, Hirsch became chief rabbi (*landesrabbiner*, a government-supported position) of the Duchy of Oldenburg. In 1836 he published *The Nineteen Letters on Judaism*, a book that had considerable impact on young German Jews in search of religious faith. The following year appeared *Horeb: A Philosophy of Jewish Laws and Observances*, the first part of a comprehensive theology of Judaism and its duties, which he never completed. After occupying several rabbinic positions in northwest Germany and then in Moravia in the Austrian empire, in 1851 Hirsch settled permanently in Frankfurt-on-Main as the spiritual leader of a group opposed to the influence of Reform Judaism in that large and important Jewish center. In addition to his Orthodox congregation, Hirsch established a modern Orthodox Jewish school, founded and edited a monthly in which he published articles on Jewish education and current issues, and wrote commentaries to the Pentateuch and the Psalms. Hirsch was far from being a traditional rabbi of the old type: He was not a great talmudic scholar; he wrote his works in fluent and impeccable German; he admired the classic German writers, especially the poet and dramatist Friedrich Schiller. (Schiller represented, for

AUTHORITY- REFORM



What is Reform Judaism?

This statement was adapted from the pamphlet entitled "What We Believe... What We Do..." prepared in 1993 by CCAR President Rabbi Simeon J. Maslin. More recent statements about Reform Judaism can be found in "A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism" adopted by the CCAR in 1999, in "Why Be Reform?" by UAHC President Eric H. Yoffie, and in a letter from the leaders of our Movement, that appeared in the Spring 1997 issue of *Reform Judaism* magazine.

WHAT DO REFORM JEWS BELIEVE? WHAT DO REFORM JEWS DO?

If anyone were to attempt to answer these two questions authoritatively for all Reform Jews, that person's answers would have to be false. Why? Because one of the **guiding principles of Reform Judaism is the autonomy of the individual**. A Reform Jew has the right to decide whether to subscribe to this particular belief or to that particular practice.

But there is a historic body of beliefs and practices that is recognized as Jewish. We Jews have survived centuries of exile and persecution as well as centuries of unparalleled spiritual and intellectual creativity because we have always thought of ourselves as a **people created "in the image of God," dedicated to tikkun olam – the improvement of the world**. And the particular beliefs and practices that have traditionally identified us as Jews have enabled us not only to survive creatively but to connect with the God "who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment."

We Reform Jews are heirs to a vast body of beliefs and practices embodied in TORAH and the other Jewish sacred writings. We differ from more ritually observant Jews because we recognize that our sacred heritage has evolved and adapted over the centuries and that it must continue to do so. And we also recognize that if Judaism were not capable of evolution, of REFORM, it could not survive.

Reform Judaism accepts and encourages pluralism. Judaism has never demanded uniformity of belief or practice. But we must never forget that whether we are Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Orthodox, we are all an essential part of K'lal Yisrael – the worldwide community of Jewry.

All Jews have an obligation to study the traditions that have been entrusted to us and to observe those mitzvot – those sacred and time-hallowed acts – that have meaning for us today and that can ennoble our lives, as well as those of our families and communities. It is our mitzvot that put us in touch with Abraham and Sarah; with Moses, Hillel, and the Jews of fifth-century Babylonia, twelfth-century Spain, and eighteenth-century Poland; and with the Jews of twentieth-century Auschwitz, Israel, the former Soviet Union, and our neighboring town.



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Eugene Borowitz (b. 1924), one of the major Reform exponents of Jewish existentialism, has suggested that these, at present, incompatible views of halakhah can be subsumed under the overarching biblical conception of covenant. For Borowitz, the primary commitment is the wish to serve God as a member of the people. Even though a Jew may feel that traditional patterns require revision or innovation, the bond that unites him to all Jews is far greater than the disputes separating him from the Orthodox. For Borowitz, the covenantal situation provides a key to interpreting and integrating the universalistic and the folk elements of Jewish identity, because covenant embraces both God and Israel as responsible agents, holding in equilibrium God's demands and Israel's needs, humanitarian duties to the world at large and particular obligations to the people. Even apart from the covenant theology espoused by Borowitz and others, however, Jewish religious thought in recent decades has insisted on the religious importance of *klal Yisrael* (the whole of the people of Israel), in place of the more apologetic and defensive universalism that was the

expresses its highest commitments through deed, through actions intended to sanctify our world and ourselves, then the language of *halakhah*, the language of its religious practice, is the language of Torah. If we Reform Jews regard ourselves as students of Torah and our religious practices as part of that tradition, then we, too, must continue to take part in the conversation of *halakhah*, learning and speaking the language in which the tradition creates our practices, gives them shape, and bequeaths them to us.

On Reform Responsa

Halakhah is therefore a heritage that belongs to us as it belongs to all Israel. Its continued vitality in Reform Judaism links us to the religious expressions of other Jews, uniting us with them as part of a community whose history spans many countries and many generations. This does not mean, however, that rabbinic law and its literature function for us in exactly the same way as they function for other Jews. Just as we have our own particular experience as a modern Jewish religious movement, so do we have our own unique approach to *halakhah* which emerges from that experience.

Let us look for a moment at Reform responsa, our own version of the "questions and answers" literature that rabbis have been composing for centuries. In some important respects, Reform responsa are quite similar to those of other rabbis. They are, as we noted, halakhic documents, learned answers to questions Jews ask, written in the mode of traditional Jewish legal reasoning. Yet Reform responsa differ from other rabbinic responsa in significant ways. Some of the more obvious and important differences can be listed here.

First and foremost, Reform responsa are not "authoritative": the answers they reach are in no way binding or obligatory upon those who ask the questions, upon other Reform Jews, or upon the movement as a whole. Our responsa do not claim this sort of authority because, however important it may be to the definition of our religious practice, we do not regard *halakhah* as a process which yields mandatory conclusions. In Reform Judaism, religious decisions are arrived at by individuals or communities who take into account all the factors that seem relevant to them and then choose accordingly. Decisions are not imposed upon individuals or communities "from the outside," whether by

rabbis or lay leaders. Thus, our responsa writers have always described their work as "advisory," emphasizing the right of its readers to reject or to modify the answers as they see fit.

To say that our responsa are not "authoritative" does not mean, of course, that we are neutral or impartial as to the decisions our people ultimately reach. Far from it: the very purpose of a responsum is to recommend a particular decision to the consideration of the person or persons who ask the question. As noted above, a responsum is essentially an *argument*, a reasoned attempt to justify one particular course of action, out of two or more plausible alternatives, as the best possible reading of the Jewish legal tradition on the issue at hand. A responsum takes sides, presenting an interpretation and advocating its acceptance. Like any true argument, it seeks to win its point through persuasion, and it can persuade its intended audience only by appealing to those texts, ideas, and principles which that audience, a particular Jewish community, accepts as standards of religious truth and value. A Reform responsum is just this sort of argument, directed at a particular audience: Reform Jews committed to listening for the voice of Jewish tradition and to applying its message to the religious issues before them. It is an invitation to the members of that audience, its partners in religious conversation, to accept the understanding of Torah and Jewish responsibility that its author or authors set forth. It is an attempt at persuasion, not an act of power or authority. This, we believe, is what the responsa literature at its best has always been.

A second feature that distinguishes our responsa from most others is our definition of the "right" answer to a question. Our responsa, like others, search for that answer in the halakhic literature; for all the reasons we have stated, we are deeply interested in what the *halakhah* has to say. We do not, however, identify *halakhah* as a set of crystallized rules or as the consensus opinion held among today's Orthodox rabbis. We see *halakhah* as a discourse, an ongoing conversation through which we arrive at an understanding, however tentative, of what God and Torah require of us. As far as we are concerned, this conversation cannot be brought to a premature end by some formal declaration that "this is the law; all conflicting answers are wrong." We hold, rather, that a minority opinion in the halakhic literature, a view abandoned long ago by most rabbis, or a new reading of the old texts may offer a more persuasive interpretation of Jewish tradition to us today than does the "accepted" halakhic ruling. We therefore assert our right of indepen-

The Meaning of Mitzvah

Mitzvah (plural, *mitzvot*) is what a Jew ought to do in response to God and to the tradition of our people. This response comes from personal commitment rather than from unquestioning obedience to a set of commandments which past tradition thought to be the direct will of God. By making choice and commitment part of our plan of life, we willingly and purposefully strengthen our bonds with the God of Israel and with our people.

Mitzvah is, therefore, more than folkway and ceremony. As we choose to do a mitzvah — be it a positive act or a negative act (an abstention) — we choose the way of duty, of self-discipline, and of loyalty. To do so with eagerness and joy is the true seal of Shabbat observance.

This manual lists Shabbat mitzvot and offers options and opportunities. It is suggested that you make a permanent decision to apply the principles of this catalogue of mitzvot to your life. You may do this for yourself alone, or together with your family, or a member of a group of like-minded Jews who seek such a commitment....

How much ought I observe? To make Shabbat meaningful, observe as much as you can. Begin from where you are now, with what you presently do or do not do. If your Shabbat is like a weekday, begin with any mitzvah, but begin. Make your decision into a habit. From a modest start you may progress to a more significant observance. If you presently observe some mitzvot, search for the opportunity to deepen or enlarge that practice.

You must always remember that you are performing mitzvot. It is not a question of "how you feel about it" at any given time. You may not be "in the mood." But being a Jew is not always convenient or easy. The performance of mitzvot ought to be the pattern of one's life. The more deep-rooted such a pattern, the more intense and regular one's performance of mitzvot, the richer and truer will be one's life as a Jew. Do not become discouraged because the manual contains mitzvot which you cannot now fulfill. The secret of observing a mitzvah is to begin.

W. Gunther Plaut
From *A Shabbat Manual*

Mitzvah is the key to authentic Jewish existence and to the sanctification of life. No English equivalent can adequately translate the term. Its root meaning is "commandment," but mitzvah has come to have broader meaning. It suggests the joy of doing something for the sake of others and for the sake of God, and it

conveys still more: it also speaks of living Jewishly, of meeting life's challenges and opportunities in particular ways. All this is mitzvah. Doing one mitzvah, says our tradition, will lead us to do another and another.

This book was written by Reform rabbis. Reform Judaism attempts responses to the conditions of each age in order to make it possible for Jews to live their Judaism meaningfully and richly. Such Jewish responses should seek to preserve the continuity of Jewish life and at the same time be sensitive to opportunities for desirable innovation.

In an earlier stage, Reform sought to distinguish between ethical and ritual mitzvot. It was argued that the ethical commandments were valid eternally and thus binding upon Jews of every generation. The ritual commandments, however, were considered linked to particular experiences or circumstances, and therefore they were considered optional or even superfluous. But this dichotomy is often arbitrary, for ethical resolve and ritual expression, intention and act, are in fact closely interlinked, as are reason and feeling. Ritual, as the vehicle for confronting God and Jewish history, can shape and stimulate one's ethical impulses. Therefore, the ancient advice is still valid: the very act of doing a mitzvah may lead one to know the heart of the matter.

This book was conceived to help Jews make Jewish responses, to give their lives Jewish depth and character. It recognizes that not all Jews need to do the same thing or make the same responses, that even within the realm of each mitzvah various levels of doing or understanding might exist. Reform Judaism maintains the principle of individual freedom; each Jew must make a personal decision about the Judaism which has come down through the ages.

Nevertheless, all Jews who acknowledge themselves to be members of their people and its tradition thereby limit their freedom to some extent. This book is an expression of Reform Jewish philosophy in that it is built on the twin commitments which each Jew ought to have, the commitments to Jewish continuity and to personal freedom of choice.

Simeon J. Maslin

From the Introduction to *Shaarei Mitzvah/Gates of Mitzvah*

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Q: What is the "platform" of Reform Judaism, and specifically what is it about Reform that makes some other Jews so angry?

A: There have, in fact, been three occasions on which major "platforms" have been published in the name of Reform Judaism: the Pittsburgh Platform, in 1885; the Columbus Platform, in 1937; and most recently, a statement (more descriptive than prescriptive) called Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective, promulgated in 1976. The three make a fascinating study. If you are interested in pursuing this topic in depth, I suggest you read a book called Reform Judaism Today, by Eugene Borowitz. The author was the chair of the committee that developed the Centenary Perspective, and the book is, in essence, an extended commentary on that 2-page platform.

In my opinion, the central dividing point between Reform and Orthodox Judaism is over the question of halacha, that is, Jewish law. The Orthodox believe (in varying degrees and with varying interpretations) that halacha represents an accurate, precise description of what God want us to do. Therefore, the law is binding on us. That's it, plain and simple. No ifs, ands or buts. God is God. We know what God wants. We have to do it. It doesn't matter whether we understand it or not. It doesn't matter whether we like it or not. It doesn't matter whether it gives us a spiritual feeling or not. It doesn't matter whether we feel it enhances our lives or not. God wants it, we have to do it. Period.

The Reform position is much more complicated. First, how do we know what God wants? Reform asserts that every knowledgeable Jew has an equal claim to a personal understanding of what God wants. Therefore, Movement-wide agreement is, in principle, not necessary nor desirable, nor probably even possible. We each (if we are knowledgeable about the tradition, if we confront it seriously and take its claims and its wisdom seriously) have the ability, the freedom, indeed the responsibility to come to a [potentially differing] personal understanding of what God wants us to do.

But if we are free to choose, what, then, is the point of Torah (and halacha)? For me, and I think for many other Reform Jews as well (though in principle it doesn't matter), it is a record of how our people, in widely differing times, places and societal circumstances, experienced God's presence in their lives, and responded. Each aspect of halacha is a possible gateway to experience of the holy, the spiritual. Each aspect worked for some Jews, once upon a time, somewhere in our history. Each, therefore, has the potential to open up holiness for people in our time as well, and for me personally.

However, each does not have equal claim on us, on me. Some (the agricultural laws, for instance) are no longer possible to observe. Others (the sacrificial laws, for instance) come from a social context so foreign to our own that it would be impossible to conceive modern people finding holiness in their revival. Much of the halacha arose in societal settings where distance from the peoples in whose midst we lived was desirable. The "outside" world was dark, dangerous and threatening. That is no longer our situation. We welcome, applaud and are uplifted by much of Western culture. Portions of the halacha whose main purpose seems to be to

distance us from our surroundings no longer seem functional.

Yet some parts of the halachic tradition seem perfect correctives to the imbalances of life in modernity. Shabbat, for example, reminds us of the importance of balance as we struggle with time. The various ethical imperatives remind us not to make idols of the self. And so on. In those parts of tradition, we are sometimes blessed to experience a sense of God's closeness. In my personal life, I emphasize those areas. And other areas of halacha, I de-emphasize, or sometimes abandon.

Reform Judaism affirms my right, our right, to make those kinds of choices. Many Orthodox Jews are offended by our presumption, to give individuals the right to abandon the practice of what, in their opinion, is God's will. And some of them get positively furious when we lead others down those same paths (in their opinion, away from what God wants). And it makes some of them really go bonkers, when we assert that we are making those choices, precisely in the name of Judaism, that is, in the name of getting closer to what we believe will bring us closer to God and to what God calls us to do.

Written by Rabbi Ramie Arian, Wexner Heritage Foundation, New York, NY.
The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Wexner Heritage Foundation, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, or any particular congregation or institution.

Q: If Reform Judaism is about making informed choices, how can the average Reform Jew be expected to have enough knowledge to interpret Jewish law without guidance from learned rabbis?

A: Clearly, interpretation needs to be based on knowledge. And yes, obviously, that knowledge is present especially among the learned. That is all true, but it is not enough.

Jewish interpretation, and not only the interpretation, but the very agenda of what is of to be interpreted, requires interaction with the real world. Otherwise, we run the risk of creating interpretations that are book-wise but counterproductive in practice. Judaism's interpretive tradition is profoundly conservative by definition. No teacher is permitted, traditionally, to overturn a ruling by a previous sage, unless he is greater in learning. And that is presumed (by definition) to be nearly impossible, since the earlier teacher was nearer (chronologically) to Sinai, and hence presumed to have a more authoritative tradition.

Narrow interpretation in that way is profoundly maladaptive in eras of radical social and historical change in the world. Great turning points in history have required courageous, mold-breaking leadership, which was not afraid to interpret the tradition in radically new ways. Such was the generation, for example, of Yohanan ben Zakkai at Yavneh (who enabled Judaism to survive the destruction of the Temple).

The 20th century has brought multiple precedent-shattering crises to the Jewish world. Political emancipation, large-scale confrontation with modernity, the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel: any one of these alone would have been an earth-shaking crisis for world Jewry. To claim, as some of my ultra-Orthodox colleagues do, that the Holocaust happened because Reform Jews in Germany in the 1930's were not sufficiently punctilious in repairing their mezuzot, is insulting, obviously inadequate as an explanation for the historical reality of the Holocaust, and patently a mis-interpretation of the situation. Yet this interpretation comes out

of halachically observant, learned sages, and is taught in the name of Torah and truth to thousands of disciples in the Yeshiva world.

Is this a more reasonable, more reliable method of interpretation than what I claim? So-called "Torah-true" interpretation puts high on the agenda of today's discussion such pressing issues as whether lettuce or broccoli can ever be truly kosher, given that it is nearly impossible to wash all the microscopic insect matter out of them. So-called "Torah-true" interpretation carefully follows the letter of the law, while sometimes completely missing its spirit. Such interpretation, for instance, allows creation of kosher for Passover bagel mix, cake mix, pizza, even burritos: Is this truly is the "bread of affliction" that our ancestors ate in Egypt?

I aver that interpretation requires knowledge, learning. I aver that no one has the right blindly to "do whatever they want" Jewishly without a solid basis in understanding the tradition. I acknowledge the value of Torah, as it has traditionally been interpreted, as a guiding voice in determining a correct interpretation for today.

Yet Torah (as traditionally interpreted) needs to be in dialogue with modernity (that is, with the modernity of whatever age it is), in order to make sense of "what God wants us to do". And there are many sensitive persons who are able to perceive God's voice in the world in diverse ways. And I (and other rabbis like me) don't have a monopoly on truth.

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Q: Is there such a thing as Reform Judaism outside North America? What are European Jews? Reform? Orthodox?

A: Yes, there certainly is Reform Judaism outside North America. Reform Judaism is actually a product of the European Enlightenment of the late 18th and the 19th century. This was the time when the walls of the ghettos were broken down and the Jews slowly entered the society around them as citizens with "full" civil rights. There were Jews who chose not to do so, but to stay in self-created new ghettos with invisible walls; these are the ultra-orthodox Jews of today who do not mix with society more than absolutely necessary.

Reform came to America halfway during the 19th century, brought by European immigrants. By the end of the century, Reform broke up into two parts, when the Conservative movement was founded. If you are interested, look at Rabbi Gunther Plaut's two sourcebooks "The Rise of Reform Judaism" which deals with the European background, and "The Growth of Reform Judaism" which deals with the American continuation, both published by the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Another excellent book is Michael Meyer's "Response to Modernity."

Today, Reform exists in Great Britain where it is organized in two movements, the Reform Movement which is slightly more traditional, which arose out of the British Sefardi community in 1840, and the Liberal movement which is more like American Reform, which arose out of the Ashkenazi community in 1905. Almost the opposite development from the the US, interestingly enough.

A: The fundamental difference is the approach to Torah and the implications of that approach. The Orthodox believe that it comes directly from God and so cannot be changed. All we can do is "understand" (they wouldn't even say interpret) it, and the right to do so has devolved upon rabbis, descendants of the Pharisees who probably began teaching during the Babylonian Exile. The "authentic" understanding of the Torah is encapsulated in the "halachah," the law (literally, "way"). God is thus the law-giver whose literal words must be obeyed. From this comes the concept of MITZVAH, which means "commandment."

For Reform, the Torah is the God-inspired attempt by Hebrews/Israelites/ Jews to understand their surroundings and their relationship with God. While it is a holy document, the Torah is rooted in the past, and we can even sometimes discern the circumstances under which certain sections were written down. Reform thus sees development in Judaism, not just through the biblical period but thereafter as well, so that we can continue the process of helping Judaism evolve by coming to our own understandings. We also recognize that Jews in various places developed varying customs and understandings, again proof to us that Judaism is not and never was monolithic. When Reform Jews relate to God, they do so on a more personal and less mechanistic level than one would through halachah, though I must add that I am sure that many Orthodox Jews also have a very "personal" relationship with God, and many Reform Jews do feel that God demands certain behavior of them. The fact is, Judaism has never really imposed a "belief" on people, though obviously the halachah system implies a specific understanding of God.

Written by Rabbi George Stern, Temple Beth Torah, Upper Nyack, NY



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Q: How do Orthodox and Reform practices differ?

A: The differences in the manner in which Reform and Orthodox Jews practice their tradition is grounded in their view of the Hebrew Scripture (Bible) and the status of other sacred texts, such as the Mishnah and Talmud. There are also law codes, such as the Mishneh Torah (by Moses Maimonides) and the Shulchan Arukh (by Joseph Caro) which guide the life of Orthodox Jews. For Orthodox Jews, the Hebrew Scriptures is a divinely-authored text and therefore every commandment contained therein must be obeyed. The Mishnah and Talmud are considered to have virtually the same status and are called Oral Torah. Reform Jews, however, understand the texts to have been written by human beings – our ancestors. In my personal opinion, the texts are certainly divinely inspired and reflect our ancestors' best understanding of God and their covenant with God, as well as their view of God's will, but that is not the same as being divinely-authored. Hence, Reform Jews read the texts through the spectacles not only of a religious person, but those of the scholar as well. Some institutions are considered to be a product of the cultural milieu and societal norms of the ancient Near East when the Hebrew Scriptures were written down, and do not speak to our lives today. In addition, Reform Jews do not ascribe to the Mishnah and Talmud the same authority which Orthodox Jews do. While the Talmud and law codes guide the lives of Orthodox Jews, it is more accurate to say that they inform the lives of Reform Jews.

These differences in perspective can be seen in every aspect of life: how holy days and festivals are celebrated, how kashrut (the laws of keeping kosher) are kept, how the prayer service is organized and conducted, etc. But it is not accurate to generalize and say "All Orthodox Jews do this..." or "All Reform Jews do that..."

To learn more about the Orthodox perspective, I recommend to you the books of Rabbi Maurice Lamm and Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin. To learn about the Reform perspective, I recommend the following books published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis: Gates of Mitzvah (life cycle) Gates of Shabbat (observing the sabbath) Gates of the Seasons (holy days and festivals)

In addition, if you are interested in the perspective of the Conservative Movement on these same issues, I recommend Rabbi Isaac Klein's "A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice."

Written by Rabbi Amy Scheinerman, Columbia, MD

Q: What is the most fundamental difference between Reform Judaism and Orthodox Judaism? How does this difference then manifest itself in the ways these two respective groups live their lives in response to God?

A: The fundamental difference is the approach to Torah and the implications of that approach. The Orthodox believe that it comes directly from God and so cannot be changed. All we can do is "understand" (they wouldn't even say interpret) it, and the right to do so has devolved upon rabbis, descendants of the Pharisees who probably began teaching during the Babylonian Exile. The "authentic" understanding of the Torah is encapsulated in the "halachah," the law (literally, "way"). God is thus the law-giver whose literal words must be obeyed. From this comes the concept of MITZVAH, which means "commandment."

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**AUTHORITY-
CONSERVATIVE**

This is not to say that earlier generations got it all wrong. Nothing could be further from the truth. To witness their deep engagement with Torah and Talmud is to tap into inexhaustible wellsprings of mental acuity and spiritual power. It is to discover the multiple and ingenious ways - critical, midrashic, kabbalistic and philosophical - in which they explicated these texts. Like them, Conservative scholars take their place in an unbroken chain of exegetes, but with their own arsenal of questions, resources, and methodologies. No matter how differently done, the study of Torah remains at the heart of the Conservative spiritual enterprise.

Moreover, it is pursued with the conviction that critical scholarship will yield new religious meaning for the inner life of contemporary Jews. It is not the tools of the trade that make philology or history or anthropology or feminist studies threatening, but the spirit in which they are applied. Rigorous yet engaged and empathetic research often rises above the pedestrian to bristle with relevance. Witness the tribute paid by Moshe Greenberg, professor of biblical studies at the Hebrew University and a graduate of the Seminary, to Yehezkel Kaufmann, who a generation earlier pioneered a Jewish approach to the critical study of the Hebrew Bible.

Yehezkel Kaufmann embodied a passionate commitment to grand ideas, combining the philosopher's power of analysis and generalization with the attention to detail of the philological exegete. His lifework is a demonstration that the study of ancient texts does not necessitate losing contact with the vital currents of the spirit and the intellect.(5)

The Governance of Jewish Life by *Halakha*

The sixth core value is the governance of Jewish life by halakha, which expresses the fundamental thrust of Judaism to concretize ethics and theology into daily practice. The native language of Judaism has always been the medium of deeds. Conservative Jews are rabbinic and not biblical Jews. They avow the sanctity of the Oral Torah erected by Rabbinic Judaism alongside the Written Torah as complementary and vital to deepen, enrich and transform it. Even if in their individual lives they may often fall short on observance, they generally do not ask of their rabbinic leadership to dismantle wholesale the entire halakhic system in order to translate personal behavior into public policy. Imbued with devotion to klal yisrael and a pervasive respect for tradition, they are more inclined to sacrifice personal autonomy for a reasonable degree of consensus and uniformity in communal life.

Collectively, the injunctions of Jewish law articulate Judaism's deep-seated sense of covenant, a partnership with the divine to finish the task of creation. Individually, the mitzvot accomplish different ends. Some serve to harness and focus human energy by forging a regimen made up of boundaries, standards and rituals. To indulge in everything we are able to do, does not necessarily enhance human happiness or well-being. Some mitzvot provide the definitions and norms for the formation of community, while others still generate respites of holiness in which the feeling of God's nearness pervades and overwhelms.

The institution of Shabbat, perhaps the greatest legacy of the Jewish religious imagination, realizes all three. The weekly rest it imposes both humbles and elevates. By desisting from all productive work for an entire day, Jews acknowledge God's sovereignty over the world and the status of human beings as mere tenants and stewards. But the repose also conveys an echo of Eden, for Shabbat is the one fragment left over from the lost perfection of creation. Shabbat seeds the tortuous course of human history with moments of eternity, linking beginning to end while softening the massive suffering in between. Stopping the clock and diminishing the self allow others to reenter our lives. We are transposed to another dimension of reality.

Shabbat is an exquisite work of religious art created out of whole cloth by the meticulous performance of countless mitzvot. We join with family, friends and community in a symphony of ritual - clothing, candles, table-setting, prayer, food, song and study - to turn Shabbat into the Jewish equivalent of a country home. To gain renewal, we give up a measure of dominion. The hallowed tranquility that ensues helps us reach beyond ourselves. Like the halakha as a whole, Shabbat at its best invests the ordinary with eternity and life with ultimate meaning. Submission to God sets us free.

Never has this heroic effort to generate pockets of holiness in our personal lives been more important than today. Emancipation has thrust Jews irreversibly into the mainstream of contemporary civilization, with incalculable benefit to both. We are determined to live in two worlds and have won the right to be different, individually and collectively, without impairing our integration. The question is whether our Judaism will survive intact? Our sensibilities as Jews have been transformed and the discrepancies between the two worlds beg for accommodation.

The challenge, however, has not induced Conservative Judaism to assert blithely that the halakha is immutable. Its historical sense is simply too keen. The halakhic system, historically considered, evinces a constant pattern of responsiveness, change and variety. Conservative Judaism did not read that record as *carte blanche* for a radical revision or even rejection of the system, but rather as warrant for valid adjustment where absolutely necessary. The result is a body of Conservative law sensitive to human need, halakhic integrity and the worldwide character of the Jewish community. Due deliberation generally avoided the adoption of positions which turned out to be ill-advised and unacceptable.

Nevertheless, what is critical for the present crisis is the reaffirmation of halakha as a bulwark against syncretism, the overwhelming of Judaism by American society, not by coercion but seduction. Judaism is not a quilt of random patches onto which anything might be sewn. Its extraordinary individuality is marked by integrity and coherence. The supreme function of halakha (and Hebrew, for that matter) is to replace external barriers with internal ones, to create the private space in which Jews can cultivate their separate identities while participating in the open society that engulfs them.

Belief in God

I come, at last, to the seventh and most basic core value of Conservative Judaism: its belief in God. It is this value which plants the religious nationalism and national religion that are inseparable from Judaism in the universal soil of monotheism. Remove God, the object of Israel's millennial quest, and the rest will soon unravel. But this is precisely what Conservative Judaism refused to do, even after the Holocaust. Abraham Joshua Heschel, who came to the United States in March, 1940, to emerge after the war as the most significant Jewish theologian of the modern period, placed God squarely at the center of his rich exposition of the totality of the Jewish religious experience.

To speak of God is akin to speaking about the undetected matter of the universe. Beyond the reach of our instruments, it constitutes at least 90 per cent of the mass in the universe. Its existence is inferred solely from its effects: the gravitational force, otherwise unaccounted for, that it exerts on specific galactic shapes and rotational patterns and that it contributes in general to holding the universe together.

Similarly, Heschel was wont to stress the partial and restricted nature of biblical revelation.



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A Matter of Interpretation

by Rabbi Jerome Epstein

In coining a term for the rules and guidelines for Jewish living, our ancestors selected the word halakhah, in part because the word is rooted in the notion of "process." Indeed, halakhah, by its nature, has always been dynamic. The importance of halakhah, and a true appreciation for its ongoing development, are vital values in Conservative Judaism. So too is respect for those who try to live their lives according to Jewish law -- even if their interpretations differ from our own.

Although there are some members of the Jewish community who claim, with certainty, to know precisely what God desires, I must admit, in all humility, that I do not. Accordingly, I am not willing to trivialize opinions different from mine. I believe I know what God wants from me, and I am prepared to live my life according to those standards for daily living. Indeed, it is because I believe that halakhah, as I understand God's will, is right for me that I choose to share it with others. I teach, I encourage, and I try to convince. Still, without some absolute and definitive proof that my interpretations of God's will are any more correct than those espoused by other committed Jews, I am unwilling to demean either the individuals or their beliefs.

Jews have always defined halakhah differently based on particular interpretations, societal conditions, and varying traditions. Is the correct halakhah to eat rice on Passover or to abstain? The answer might depend on whether one is an Ashkenazic or a Sephardic Jew. Is the correct interpretation to wait one hour, three hours, or six hours between eating meat and dairy products? Recognized authorities legitimate each of these positions, depending on the community in which they live. Based upon halakhah, there are Orthodox communities today that permit women to have their own minyanim, and others that forbid them. Is one interpretation really correct and the others wrong? I would contend that the answer is a resounding "No." There have also been such disagreements. Today, in a broadly dispersed Jewish community, it is not surprising that we, too, have many such differences, each based on a valid interpretation of Jewish law.

I am not pained that others come to different conclusions about their practice of halakhah. In fact, I revel in it because it demonstrates the continued vitality of Jewish life, with different groups exploring Jewish values and applying them to daily life. It is therefore my hope and prayer that my Orthodox colleagues will continue to teach their broad spectrum of viewpoints on halakhah.

I, of course, will continue to teach mine.

Rabbi Epstein is the Executive Vice-President of The United Synagogue of

Conservative Judaism, the association of Conservative congregations in North America.

October 1999

Formulating Jewish Law for Our Time

From The United Synagogue Review

by Dr. Elliot N. Dorff

Many members of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards have written rabbinic rulings, or *teshuvot*, for the Committee, each with his or her own specific approach to Jewish law. So that you may better understand the work of the Committee, I have been asked to describe how one member understands what he is doing when writing rulings for the Committee, and thus for the Movement.

What, then, makes Elliot run? That is, what prompts me to be a practicing, Conservative Jew in the first place, and what do I think I am doing when I write a ruling for consideration by the Committee and participate in the discussion of rulings written by others? In essence, these are the questions I must address.

Motivations to Observe Jewish Law

Writing a *teshuvah* to explain to people how they should observe Jewish law assumes that it is clear why we should observe Jewish law in the first place. Why should Jews -- and, in this case, why do I -- do that? Most Jews would immediately say that the ultimate reason is that God will punish you if you disobey and reward you if you obey. That, indeed, is one rationale given in the Torah, the one enshrined in the verses we use as the second paragraph of the *Shema*.

The Torah, though, knew that that alone would not suffice. After all, a short forty days after the revelation at Mount Sinai, with its accompanying lightning, thunder, and earthquakes, the Israelites were already worshipping the Golden Calf. If even those who had witnessed the revelation were not deterred by the manifestation of God's might in the Exodus and at Sinai, surely later generations would not be. As a result, the Hebrew Bible delineates a number of other rationales for obeying Jewish law. That is tremendously important for me, for I, too, abide by Jewish law at any given time for one or more of a variety of reasons, and I am comforted in knowing that my tradition, from the Torah on, was aware that people might have many different reasons to live in accordance with Jewish law.

The Bible actually delineated nine different motivations to obey Jewish law, and the Rabbis add three more, all of which I describe in some detail in the book I wrote eight years ago for United Synagogue Youth, entitled *Mitzvah Means Commandment*. For our purposes here, I will just list them and trust that you will consult that book for more detail.

The Bible, then, says that you should obey Jewish law because of

- 1) Divine enforcement: God will reward you if you do and punish you if you do not.
- 2) Human enforcement: Human courts will enforce the demands of Jewish law, a fact that was true of most Jewish communities in the world until 1945.
- 3) Wisdom: The commandments are inherently wise, tested and proved by experience, such that any intelligent person should want to live his or her life by them.
- 4) Morality: The commandments define moral values, and so you should obey them if you aspire to do the right and the good.
- 5) The Covenant: You were at Sinai, and, along with your ancestors (or your new ancestors, if you are a convert to Judaism), you made a promise to uphold the Covenant. The morality of promise keeping, and the covenantal relationship that you want to sustain with God, should therefore motivate you to obey Jewish law.
- 6) Owing God: You should obey God's commandments because you owe Him for all the good He has

done for your ancestors and for you -- indeed, as the liturgy says, for "Your miracles that are daily with us."

- 7) The reputation of God and Israel: You should obey the commandments in order to preserve the good name of God and Israel among non-Jews (*kiddush ha-shem*).
- 8) Holiness: You should obey Jewish law because it is your mission to do so, the way you become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6)
- 9) Love of God: You should obey the commandments out of love of God.

In addition, the Rabbis add the following motivations for observing Jewish law:

- 1) Maintaining the world. The Rabbis were convinced that if we fail to follow the commandments, human society, and indeed the world itself, would disintegrate.
- 2) National identity. The commandments distinguish Jews from non-Jews and thus define the Jewish people. *Kashrut*, for example, is, among other things, a way of identifying with the Jews worldwide in the past, present, and future.
- 3) Aesthetic value. Friday night around the table, or eating together in the *sukkah*, is, apart from all else, simply beautiful.

Two things must be said about this list. First, as the Rabbis themselves say, even if none of these motivations prompt you to obey, the law nevertheless remains binding. The tradition knew that no legal system can depend on blind obedience alone, but ultimately we must obey God's law.

Secondly, none of these motivations can rightfully be understood simply and straightforwardly. I firmly believe, for example, that abiding by Jewish law contributes to moral knowledge and motivation, but we all know seemingly religious people and institutions that do immoral things and, conversely, non-religious people who live by high moral standards. Nevertheless, even if this list must be nuanced and balanced, it does describe for me why I should and do live my life according to Jewish law.

Factors that Determine the Substance of Jewish Law

What, though, does fulfilling the demands of Jewish law entail? For better or worse -- I think distinctly for better -- the Jewish tradition is not fundamentalist. That means that I cannot simply look at the Torah and define Jewish law that way. The Judaism that we have inherited, after all, is not the religion of the Bible; it is the religion of the Bible as defined and interpreted by the rabbis of each generation.

In making decisions, then, I must recognize, as the Conservative Movement has asserted since its inception, that Jewish law has developed over time and that the law that has come down to us is not necessarily what the law should be today. At the same time, I must also remember that if what we do today is to be recognizable as Judaism, we must retain at least most of the tradition that we have inherited. To use the term of the founders of our Movement, we must "conserve" the tradition -- and hence we are the "Conservative Movement." Together, these convictions require that we always place the burden of proof on the person who wants to change the received tradition, but it also means that we acknowledge that sometimes that burden can be borne.

Deciding matters in Jewish law, then, requires a honed sense of judgment about when to retain the law as is and when and how to change it -- always with a much greater respect for what is already on the books than is common among secular lawmakers. In this regard, the position of rabbis is much closer to secular judges, whose job is to interpret the law as received rather than make new law -- and it is no accident that the Jewish tradition understands the role of rabbis not as lawmakers but as judges. Rabbis make decisions in Jewish law as part of their judging and teaching functions.

The Jewish tradition emerges from the interaction between what the Rabbis say and what the people do.

In Jewish terms, *halakhah* -- the way we should go -- is the product of law and custom, of *din* and *shag*. This means that in deciding what Jewish law should be today, I must, as Solomon Schechter said long ago, take note not only of what the legal texts say, but of how they have been put into practice by "catholic Israel," by the observant community in the past and present. I must also, as the Rabbis clearly understood, be concerned by the effect of any given ruling on that community. Thus, even if a given way of deciding a matter seems clearly demanded by the texts and precedents of the tradition, I must not rule that way if such a decision will inflict undue economic hardship on the community or if it will simply be ignored by those who otherwise obey Jewish law.

I must also take care to ensure that the law embodies the highest of moral standards, for it would be a desecration of God's name, a *hillul ha-shem*, to decide otherwise. That is easier said than done, for "high moral standards" is not automatically equivalent either to what was interpreted as such in the past or to what are seemingly the most stringent demands. The content of "high moral standards" must rather be continually determined by difficult, but absolutely critical, acts of judgment.

Discerning and Living by God's Will

I must mention one other matter. After all is said and done, we are engaged in this process of interpreting and applying Jewish law primarily because we want to do what God wants of us. To do that, though, we must discern God's will. Catholics do that by following the Pope; Protestants do that by following their individual consciences; and Jews do that by interpreting and applying Jewish law. Moreover, while any Jew may, and indeed should, engage in the process of learning and interpreting the tradition, it is the Jewish community -- or, historically, sections of it -- that determined which interpretations would be accepted as our understanding of God's will and which would not be.

Thus, when I write a ruling, I am acutely aware that my task is not only to describe what I personally would like the law to be, but what I think that God would want of us. I am also keenly aware that I am not God and dare not speak for Him. My ancestors, though, have interpreted the Torah to put that privilege and responsibility in the hands of the rabbis of each generation. I therefore take on the task of writing a ruling with a real sense of responsibility to God and to my people. I am comforted that my own mistakes in discernment can and will be corrected by my colleagues on the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards -- and, ultimately, by the practices and customs of all Jews serious about making Jewish law part of their lives.

We may all, of course, be mistaken, but Jewish faith is precisely that the Torah and its ongoing interpretation and application by rabbis and by serious Jews articulates the will of God. As one who shares that faith, the approach that I use in writing a ruling is one that attempts to combine honesty about the past and present, humility about what we can know of God's will, and passionate commitment to making God's will real in our world.

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USR Spring 1998

**AUTHORITY-
RECONSTRUCTIONIST**

4

The Past Has a Vote, Not a Veto

Kaplan's views on chosenness stand out in contrast to his attempts to reconstruct most other elements of Jewish life. He rarely felt strongly that a concept was so unamenable to reconstruction that it had to be altered radically. For the most part, radical alteration was not the desirable reconstruction that Kaplan sought or envisioned. In fact, Kaplan personally remained a traditionally observant Jew throughout his lifetime.

The criterion by which Jewish life was to be reconstructed can be described by Kaplan's epigram, "The past has a vote, not a veto." Understanding what Kaplan meant by that phrase is the first step in developing the model for the reconstruction of Jewish life that must be pursued in every generation if Jewish civilization is to continue to thrive.

The Authority of the Past

"The past has a vote, not a veto." That is the answer to the question: What is the authority of the past? Preceding generations attributed the authority of the tradition to divine revelation. The Written and Oral Torah were seen as the record of God's will as it was revealed to Moses and Israel at Mount Sinai. Thus, the very notion of innovation was discouraged. Ancient and medieval innovators claimed—and

believed—that they were but recovering and restoring the original meaning of the Sinaitic revelation. As the Jewish people adapted to new, changing circumstances and Jewish civilization evolved, our ancestors engaged in what Kaplan called “transvaluation” —claiming ancient authority for new insights.

Today, our awareness of historical forces is radically discontinuous with the ahistorical consciousness of our ancestors. To claim that Judaism is an evolving civilization is to acknowledge that people and traditions change in response to historical circumstances. We innovate consciously today with the awareness that we ourselves are shaped by our milieu, just as our ancestors were shaped by theirs. We engage in conscious “reevaluation,” in Kaplan’s terms, rather than in our ancestors’ “transvaluation.”

But Reconstructionists are not dispassionate historians who claim objectivity. While we attempt to understand the experience at Sinai, for example, by striving to recover the social, political, cultural, and psychological forces that shaped Moses and the Israelites, we do not claim that the divine voice they heard was the projection of their primitive imagination. We acknowledge the existence of God and thus the reality of divine-human encounter. What we deny is that the records of such revelatory encounters are transcripts of God’s speech. God, it will be recalled, is discovered quite naturally by humans who seek God. Thus, the content of a revelation is the record of a particular human quest and discovery; the evolution of Jewish civilization is the natural progression of successive generations of Jewish people who have sought and found God in their own terms.

Seen in this light, the value of the past is considerable. The Jewish tradition is a record of the insights of prophets and sages through the generations. Neither human nature nor the nature of the divine has changed over the millennia; only the concepts and idioms through which Jews understand the world have evolved. Thus, we strive

translate the insights we have inherited from the Jewish past into our own terms. We thereby revalue inherited beliefs and practices so that we can enrich our lives through them. Reconstructionists who observe Shabbat and the holiday cycle of the Jewish year, for example do so in order to immerse themselves in the sacred forms and calendrical rhythms with which our ancestors shaped their world. Their

is more to the Jewish outlook than a series of propositions to be judged true or false. Judaism is a civilization that communicates and acculturates in many nonverbal ways.

When Past and Present Conflict

The process of reevaluation is no simple task. For all the brilliance and depth of insight of our ancestors, their values are often not applicable today in a straightforward way. They are occasionally even repugnant from our perspective. Kaplan insisted that we preserve and observe Jewish customs and values as long as they continue to serve as vehicles towards salvation—the enhancement of the meaning and purposefulness of our existence.

When a particular Jewish value or custom is found wanting in this respect, it is our obligation as Jews to find a means to reconstruct it—to adopt innovative practices or find new meanings in old one. That the past has a veto means that we must struggle to hear the voices of our ancestors. What did this custom or that idea mean to them? How did they see the presence of God in it? How can we retain or regain its importance in our own lives? That the past does not have a veto means that we must work to hear our own voices, distinct from theirs. What might this custom or that idea mean to us today? As participants in a secular civilization, how can we incorporate our values into our lives as Jews?

It is clear that our ties to our Jewish past and our sense of it

secular present often pull us in opposite directions. Reconstructionists seek to find ways to merge those two sensibilities while remaining faithful to both of them. Kaplan's statement that the past does not have a veto implies that tradition is susceptible to adaptation. Innovation need not entail the destruction of tradition; on the contrary, change is an important part of keeping tradition alive, as it has been throughout Jewish history. As the world changes faster, Judaism must be reconstructed ever more quickly if its wisdom is to continue to guide us.

Post-halakhic Judaism

By contemporary definitions, one cannot define Reconstructionism as a halakhic form of Judaism. If halakhah were defined as the Jewish process of transmitting tradition and practice, then we certainly could see ourselves within the framework of halakhah. Unfortunately, today the term has taken on the meaning of a rigid body of law, changeable only under rarefied circumstances. In past generations and other eras of Jewish life, halakhah functioned as we think it should today: though in theory it was seen as immutable law, in fact it served as a body of tradition that could adapt to the needs of the Jewish people throughout the ages.

We also question the effectiveness of the halakhic method itself for dealing with contemporary concerns. In traditional Judaism as well as contemporary Orthodox and Conservative Judaism, only rabbinic scholars who are experts in the history and development of halakhah are empowered to make halakhic decisions. The halakhic method presumes that all questions are answerable with reference to legal precedent. It ignores the possibility that new issues, while they may be guided by old values, must be discussed with reference to the world in which we now live.

Furthermore, Jewish teachings no longer function for us as law, nor can they be expected to do so. For law to function, it must have an organized structure to create and adjudicate it. There must be sanctions against anyone who disobeys. Nowhere in the world does Jewish law now function in that way. In tightly-woven Orthodox communities, the members choose voluntarily to place themselves "under the yoke of the law" and can choose to leave at any time. Even in Israel, where Jewish law governs issues of personal status, the law can be circumvented. Therefore, thinking of halakhah as binding law is misleading in today's world.

Finally, this change in social circumstances is not accidental. It reflects a basic value of Western democracy—that individuals ought to make religious choices autonomously. Our ancestors believed that the ideal Jew was one who subordinated independent judgment and instead behaved in accordance with the will of God. By contrast, we believe that moral and spiritual faculties are actualized best when the individual makes conscious choices. Thus, even if there were an opportunity to return to an authoritarian community in which the traditional *mitzvot* were enforced coercively, we would not choose to do so.

The individual's choices, however, can and should not be made alone. Our ethical values and ritual propensities are shaped by the culture and community in which we live. Living a Jewish life, according to the Reconstructionist understanding, means belonging to the Jewish people as a whole and to a particular community of Jews, through which our views of life are shaped. Thus, while Reconstructionist communities are neither authoritarian nor coercive, they aspire to influence the individual's ethical and ritual choices—through study of Jewish sources, through the sharing of values and experiences, and through the impact of the climate of communal opinion on the individual. Some groups even hold community *kallot* (study week-

ends) in which recommendations about ethical or ritual practice are developed for members. Many members of Reconstructionist communities, for example, have not considered observance of Shabbat as a possibility before they joined; when they become acquainted with Jews for whom Shabbat is a key practice, they often decide to explore Shabbat observance for themselves. No one forces them. They are not judged negatively for what they do or don't observe. Nevertheless, their perceptions, and hence their choices, are affected by their participation in the community.

The Reconstructionist movement strongly advocates that Reconstructionist groups consider collectively questions of ethical and ritual behavior, but Reconstructionism ultimately is an *approach* to Judaism. We learn and appreciate what the tradition has to say, we come to a spectrum of options that reflects that understanding, and the organizations of the movement may even issue a set of guidelines. But ultimately we believe that in all cases, be they questions of ritual or principle, individuals must decide for themselves about the proper Jewish way to proceed in a given situation. While we may share certain values and life situations, no two sets of circumstances are identical. We hope that the Reconstructionist process works to help people find the right answers for themselves, but we can only assist in helping individuals to ask the right questions so that their choices are made in an informed way within a Jewish context.

To be true to ourselves we must understand the differences in perception between us and those who have gone before, while retaining a reverence for the traditions they fashioned. If we can juxtapose those things, we ensure that the past will have a vote, but not a veto. It is important to describe some practical examples of how this principle works. How might a Reconstructionist approach a matter of ritual or ethical difficulty?

TORAH

Reconstructionism differs greatly from traditional Judaism because it does not believe that God revealed the Torah to Moses at Sinai. The Reconstructionists accept the thinking of modern biblical scholars who teach that the Bible is the work of many

people in many ages. Kaplan wrote that the Bible is not the record of God's word to us but of our search for God. Whenever we discover a religious truth or great moral idea, it is for us a revelation of God's will.

Because of this view about the giving of Torah, Reconstructionists do not believe that the halachah is holy and unchangeable and do not speak in terms of mitzvot. They point out that since the Jewish community can no longer enforce observance of Jewish law and since each Jew can now *choose* to keep the law as he or she sees fit, it is foolish to use the old terms "halachah" and "mitzvot." The Reconstructionists instead call the mitzvot "folkways" and "customs." Every people in history has created its own folkways and customs; each civilization has its heroes, sacred events, holy days, and holy objects. In the same way, Judaism has its heroes—Moses, Akiba, Rashi, Maimonides—its sacred events—birth, marriage, Bar and Bat Mitzvah—its holy days—Sabbath, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur—and its holy objects—Torah. These folkways and customs bring us closer to God and help us to lead more meaningful lives. But even more importantly, they bind us together as a people and keep the Jewish people alive and flourishing. So we need not observe rituals such as Sabbath because God commanded us to do so and they are mitzvot or law, but because observing Sabbath teaches us the importance of rest and helps us to survive as one people by uniting us.

A RECONSTRUCTIONIST GUIDE TO RITUAL

Kaplan hoped that the customs that help preserve the historic chain of the Jewish people and that enrich our spiritual lives might be preserved. But he taught that these should be accepted willingly by the people; no one should be forced to observe a custom. He supported the idea of a demo-

cratic vote by which people might decide which laws they would keep or not keep. And, while he taught that the tradition should always be consulted before laws were changed, he felt that the past alone should not decide for us: "The past should have a vote, not a veto."

Kaplan also taught that mitzvot that seemed out of date or clashed with our highest ideals should be reinterpreted. If no new meanings could be found in them, they should be dropped. Of course this privilege to change the past also carries with it the responsibility for us to create new customs and practices to replace the old. Kaplan was in the forefront of this trend. He worked for women's liberation within Jewish life long before we used the words "women's liberation." He created the Bat Mitzvah ceremony for girls in order to give them a feeling of equality in Jewish ritual life.

At first it was thought that giving each individual the right to choose personally meaningful rituals might lead to chaos. But Kaplan suggested that this problem might be avoided by creating guides to Jewish living that a person would be free to follow or to reject. Such a *Guide to Ritual Usage* was prepared in 1941. It outlines practices that might help a Jew to survive as a Jew and to grow spiritually. But above all, the people and not the rabbis, Kaplan taught, must have the final say in accepting or dropping mitzvot. Indeed, in Kaplan's congregation, the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, the entire membership votes for or against ritual changes. This may be one reason the Reconstructionist movement is the most democratic of all Jewish groups.

Reconstructionism places its heaviest emphasis on *Am Yisrael*, the Jewish people, which is the center of Jewish civilization. The purpose of the civilization is to keep the Jewish people alive and vibrant, that is, to create values that give worth to human life. Furthermore, the Torah exists for the sake of

the Jewish people since it is a cornerstone of Jewish civilization. Kaplan wrote that it is a great mitzvah for any people to survive, create, and flourish; it is a particularly great mitzvah for Jews to live as a "people created in the image of God." He felt strongly that we must revive the Jewish people's will to live and

THE JEWISH PEOPLE

overnment be taught in public schools as a kind of civic "religion," with special attention given to the ethics of freedom and justice. In short, he believes that both the American and Jewish communities would be strengthened if democracy would be considered a kind of public faith.

Oddly, Reconstructionism has not been too active in interfaith activities. Rabbi Kaplan believed that religious debates and dialogues could seldom succeed since most religions consider themselves superior to other religions and friendly discussion often becomes impossible. Rabbi Ira Eisenstein has also been cautious about such activities because he feels that as long as each religion claims that it alone has the only truth, cooperation is an impossible dream. But Reconstructionist leaders do try to work together with other Jews and non-Jews on problems of a nonreligious nature such as the fight against poverty and disease, oppression and corruption.

INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

Because of their belief that mitzvot can be changed or even dropped, the religious practices of the Reconstructionists differ from congregation to congregation, from place to place. The movement believes that Jews observe some rituals in order to enrich their lives spiritually and strengthen their ties to the Jewish people. But the choice of which to observe is left to the individual and the congregation; and the movement tries not to use any force or to speak of sin or guilt. Dr. Kaplan has remained throughout his life an observant Jew: he

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Instead we can ask other questions, such as, "What does this story tell me about being a Jew? about people's relationships to each other? about their relationship to God? What's most important in life?" These are the questions that make our tradition most alive, and which give us the opportunity to offer our own comments and insights as *midrash* (commentary on the text).

Eventually we need to return to the question of what God is really like. But the Bible may not be the best place to answer that question. There is a wealth of Jewish philosophy, theology and other thought which is more useful in thinking about God's nature than the Bible is.



Answers to questions about Torah

"What is the Torah?"

Broadly, Torah means all of collected Jewish wisdom throughout time, while more narrowly it refers to the first five books of the Bible, often called "the written Torah." Some Jews believe that the written Torah is the word of God. Reconstructionism asserts that the Torah is a collection of history, stories and religious laws that was put together over hundreds and hundreds of years. It is the result of the Jewish people's attempt to understand God, themselves and their origins, and what was important in their lives and in the life of their community. Kaplan said that Torah was also the earliest diary of the Jewish people.

Many Reconstructionists think that Torah is the result of a connection between human beings and God, and others see it as an explanation of what Jews considered "godly." In either case, talking about Torah as God-given can help us understand the wish to act as if we work for a "higher authority."

The fact that the words of the Torah were crafted by people doesn't take away from its holiness. The Torah has, over its thousands-year long history, become holy in the eyes of the Jewish people. While Reconstructionist Jews do not take the Torah literally, we do take it seriously, as a record of our ancestors' search for moral principles and spiritual practices that can help us become more fully human.



"Was the Torah given by God at Sinai?"

No, not even if you look at the Torah stories literally: Moses heard the word of God, and then he had to write it down. The act of writing the Torah occurred over a long time, and it is forever marked by the human hand. Sinai is a mythic moment when all the Jews of the past, present and future stand together to experience the deepest possible connection with each other and with God.



"Come on, God didn't really create the world in six days!" or "What about the dinosaurs? How can Torah be worth anything if it's so wrong about its facts?"

The Torah never pretends to be a scientific document. It says that God

created the world in six days, but it doesn't say how. The Torah is a religious and national (peoplehood) document. It cannot be accepted on scientific principles, and it can't be denied on those principles either. The Bible doesn't take into account the theory of evolution, the dinosaurs, or any of the other scientific advances of the last few hundred years.

Yet despite all that, the Torah is a valuable document. For one thing, it tells us about how our ancestors understood who they were and where they came from – how the people called "Israel" came to be. For another thing, Torah tells us what the people who wrote it considered important – their relationship to God, their ethics, their prophetic voice.

Its importance is based on *spiritual* principles – Does it help us to live an ethical life now? Do its stories teach us something of human nature? Reconstructionists believe that the answer to these questions is, Yes!



"I'm a vegetarian, and I don't like all the animal sacrifice in the Torah!"

Remember that Reconstructionists say that Judaism *evolves* over time. That means that the way we worship today is very different from the way we worshipped 100, 500, or certainly 3,000 years ago. Way back at the beginning of Jewish history, the Jewish people worshipped by sacrificing animals. This was pretty common at the time; the Greeks and Romans used animal sacrifice in their prayers also. We can look at the parts of the Torah that deal with animal sacrifices as a history book, a description of how things were then.

When the Temple was destroyed, the Jewish people had to find a new way to worship. They stopped sacrificing animals and began to pray with words, in synagogues, and to observe events like Shabbat and holidays at home. These practices have continued to this day.

But although we don't do or want to do sacrifices today, we can still look to what the sacrifices were supposed to mean. To give only one example, the Torah says that Jews were to offer sacrifices on the three festival holidays of Sukkot, Shavuot and Pesah -- we can take this to mean that these holidays are important and should be celebrated in special ways. This is something we can do today, even if we do it differently from how they did it then, or even differently from the way the Torah says we "should" do it.



"How do we deal with the violence of some of the Bible stories?"

We believe that violence is never the best way to solve human problems, whether in the Bible or in our own lives. The Bible portrays imperfect human beings in an imperfect society, and violence is a part of that imperfection. But because the Bible is such a complicated story, one often has to ask if the violence is being supported by the narrative, if it is simply being reported as fact, or if it is later condemned (as is the case when the prophet Nathan holds David accountable for the murder of Uriah the husband of Bathsheba).

We can think of the Bible as a challenge to our own problem-solving capacities. Perhaps in the Bible the only way they could imagine to resolve a particular problem was with violence. Given what we know

about the story, the characters, and our own best sense of Jewish values and good behavior, can we think of any alternatives, either in the Bible or in our own lives?



"If God didn't give us the Torah, then why should I care about the Ten Commandments?"

Like the rest of the Torah, the Ten Commandments were developed by human beings who were trying to put into words their understanding about living ethically and about what they thought God wanted them to do. The reason that the Ten Commandments, in particular, are so powerful and universal even to us today is that they speak about the most important values in life: Don't murder, don't steal, respect your neighbor's property – these are universal ideas, spoken about by every religion on Earth. The Jews attributed them to God because the Jewish religion *always* put a big emphasis on God, but that doesn't change the universal nature of the commandments.



Answers to questions about Israel

"Israel" is used here to mean both "the people Israel" (the Jewish people) and the modern State of Israel.

"My father is Jewish and my mother isn't. Am I Jewish?"

The Bible tells us that, at that time, the status of the child when it came to inheritance and family identity came through the father. The rabbis who decided Jewish law, though, changed this so that the status of a child was based on the mother – that is, if the mother was Jewish, the child was Jewish. They did this because, at that time, having a Jewish mother was pretty much a guarantee that the child would be raised Jewish.

Reconstructionists understand the child of one Jewish parent – whether father or mother – who has been raised as a Jew, as Jewish. Jewish law treated the Jewishness of the mother as sort of a magical transmitter of Jewishness to the child, when we know today that birth does not decide what will happen later. A family who lives a Jewish life, educates its children Jewishly, celebrates Jewish holidays and identifies with the history and culture of the Jewish people is a Jewish family, and the children of that family are Jewish, regardless of whether both parents or only one are Jewish.

[Despite this, Orthodox and Conservative Jews do not recognize the Jewishness of a child of a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother, regardless of how the child sees him-/herself, how the child's community sees him/her, or how Jewishly well-educated the child is. This is especially so in Israel, where Orthodox rabbis rule in matters of "Who is a Jew." There's no denying that this is a problem – if the child of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother wants to marry a Conservative or Orthodox Jew, he/she will almost certainly have to have a formal conversion ceremony.]



"Orthodox and Conservative Jews say that being Jewish is based on *halakhah* (Jewish law) – that if you follow *halakhah*, you're a good Jew. How does Reconstructionism feel about that?"

There is such a wide range of religious practice amongst Jews today – committed Jews, Jews who take Judaism seriously as a religious practice – that making Judaism dependent on one particular definition of how to behave or which laws to observe cannot be useful.

Reconstructionists prefer to think of Judaism as a living, ever-growing way of life. This means that Jews today do not practice their religion the same way that Jews did even 100 years ago, let alone farther back in time. Those who currently consider themselves the guardians of *halakhah* for the most part refuse to acknowledge this process, and instead look at Jewish law as a rigid, unchanging body of laws.

People choose their practices based on their study of holy text, of history, and on the basis of their own personal values and their community's practices. Reconstructionists feel that decisions about how to practice religion as a community should be made by the community, and that personal religious decisions are best left to the individual, in connection with Jewish tradition and with others in the community. Certainly Reconstructionists strive to be dedicated, educated, and practicing Jews, and that's what's important.



"What makes Reconstructionists different from Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jews?"

The answer to this question is not very simple. We might ask in what ways we are alike and in what ways we are different from some of your friends who may be Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox Jews. If you and your friend are both committed to Judaism and the Jewish people, then you are probably more alike than different.

How might you be different? It's likely that you will think about God a bit differently. As a Reconstructionist you are more likely to think of God as a powerful force for goodness and holiness in the universe. Your non-Reconstructionist friends will probably think of God more as a person. It is also likely that you may think about the chosenness of the Jewish people somewhat differently. As you may know, Reconstructionists simply don't believe that Jews are the chosen people. As much as we feel that Judaism is a wonderful tradition, we are convinced that Buddhists, Christians, and Moslems can feel the same way about their religion.

Let's return now to what you share with Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jews. You are committed to Judaism. You may remember an important line from the aleynu prayer that says "*letakeyn olam b'malchut shaddaj*" – our job is to make the world into a better place, the place God intended when he or she said of the world that it was "very good." All Jews believe that Judaism gives them the wisdom to make the world a better place, and that a belief in a single, good and just God gives us the faith to keep trying to accomplish this goal even when it is difficult.



"I understand how Reconstructionism is different from Conservative and Orthodox Judaism, but what about Reform? They seem so similar."

There are indeed many similarities between Reconstructionism and Reform Judaism as it is currently practiced. In their attitude toward

halakhah as tradition rather than as binding law, in their belief in *equality between women and men*, in their *acceptance of gays and lesbians* in all aspects of the life of the congregation, and in their inclusion of *intermarried families*, Reform Judaism and Reconstructionism have taken a stand together as the most progressive elements in Jewish life.

But there are still some significant differences between the two movements:

Democratic decision-making. Reconstructionist congregations make many of their decisions about ritual practice on the basis of study, conversation and group decision-making. For instance, a community deciding which activities are acceptable in the synagogue building on Shabbat and which aren't, or what role non-Jewish family members of congregation members may play, would generally make such decisions as a community, in consultation with the rabbi. In contrast, the Reform movement often makes such decisions based on policies set by the central institutions of the movement, or leaves it solely to individual choice. The central institutions of Reconstructionist life generally provide guidelines for their congregations, but they don't set policy, which is left to the individual congregation.

Role of the rabbi. Even in the Reform movement, less interested in *halakhah* than the others, the rabbi is often the central decision-maker in the community, deciding matters of synagogue policy alone or based on the decisions of the central institutions of the Reform movement. We have already seen how different that is from Reconstructionist practice. In Reconstructionism, rabbis are *a* source of authority, not *the* source of authority.

Attitude toward tradition. Although there has been a movement among Reform Jewry toward traditional modes of observance, Reconstructionists have always been more comfortable with such observance and so don't need to make any "movement back" to it. To give only a couple of examples: while many Reform institutions like camps and synagogues pay little attention to the traditions regarding kosher food, Reconstructionist congregations and institutions take such traditions very seriously when making their decisions, and most in fact observe *kashrut* to some degree. Reconstructionist congregations usually include far more Hebrew in their services than Reform congregations do. And while it is still far from universal to see *kippot* and *tallitot* in Reform services, these garments of prayer and connections to tradition are very common among Reconstructionists.

In addition, Reconstructionist congregations usually value *smaller congregations*, and are oriented towards *spirituality* and *new and innovative forms of worship*. These ideals make Reconstructionism unique among the four major streams in American Jewish life.



"I was at my cousin's bat mitzvah last week, and at her temple some of the prayers are different. What's up with that?"

One of the most important ideas that the founder of Reconstructionism, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, had was that Jewish civilization *evolves* – that it changes in response to its times and the situation it finds itself in. One of the ways Judaism changes is in its prayers.

When a Reconstructionist is deciding how to pray, he or she looks at the

QUOTES

Quotes

“The Talmud speaks with the ideology of its time, and for its time it was right. I speak from the higher ideology of my time, and for my time. I am correct.”
-Samuel Holdheim

“The Law, both Written and Oral, was closed with Moses at Sinai.”
-Samson Raphael Hirsch

“I stand on the ground of positive, historical Judaism. In order to understand what it means in the present, one must first look to the past and to the path which Judaism has traveled. The positive forms of Judaism are organically integrated into its character and form a part of its life and, therefore, may not be coldly and heartlessly disposed of. Where would we be if we would allow our inner life to be torn to shreds and, instead, would let new life spring forth from our minds as Minerva sprang forth from the head of Jupiter? We cannot return to the letter of Scripture. There is too great a gap between it and us. Shall we grant the spirit of the time its influence? But the spirit of the time changes with the time. Besides, it is cold. It may appear rational, but it will not satisfy the soul.”
-Zacharias Frankel

“The past has a vote, not a veto.”
-Mordecai Kaplan

“Authentic Judaism regards the Oral Law as well as the Written Law as being of divine origin.”
-David Zevi Hoffman

Quotes
Teacher Version with Answers

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HISTORY- ORTHODOX

ORTHODOXY

Also: Judaism, Orthodox; Judaism, Traditional; Traditional Judaism

ORTHODOXY. The term "Orthodoxy" first appeared in respect of Judaism in 1795, and became widely used from the beginning of the 19th century in contradistinction to the Reform movement in Judaism. In later times other terms, such as "Torah-true," became popular. Yet, in general, Orthodox came to designate those who accept as divinely inspired the totality of the historical religion of the Jewish people as it is recorded in the Written and Oral Laws and codified in the Shulhan Arukh and its commentaries until recent times, and as it is observed in practice according to the teachings and unchanging principles of the halakhah. Orthodoxy as a well-defined and separate phenomenon within Jewry crystallized in response to the challenge of the changes which occurred in Jewish society in Western and Central Europe in the first half of the 19th century: Reform, the Haskalah, and trends toward secularization. Those who opposed change and innovation felt it necessary to emphasize their stand as guardians of the Torah and its commandments under altered conditions and to find ways to safeguard their particular way of life.

[Nathaniel Katzburg]

Orthodox Judaism considers itself the authentic bearer of the religious Jewish tradition which, until Emancipation, held sway over almost the entire Jewish community. The term Orthodoxy is actually a misnomer for a religious orientation which stresses not so much the profession of a strictly defined set of dogmas, as submission to the authority of halakhah. Orthodoxy's need for self-definition arose only when the mold into which Jewish life had been cast during the period of self-sufficient existence of Jewish society had been completely shattered. Orthodoxy looks upon attempts to adjust Judaism to the "spirit of the time" as utterly incompatible with the entire thrust of normative Judaism which holds that the revealed will of God rather than the values of any given age are the ultimate standard.

At the very dawn of Emancipation, many Orthodox leaders foresaw the perils which the breakdown of the ghetto walls incurred for Jewish survival. Some of them were so apprehensive about the newly available political, social, and economic opportunities, which they felt would make it almost impossible for the Jew to maintain his distinctive national and spiritual identity, that they went so far as to urge the Jewish communities to reject the privileges offered by Emancipation. Others, while willing to accept the benefits of political emancipation, were adamant in their insistence that there be no change in the policy of complete segregation from the social and cultural life of the non-Jewish environment. R. Ezekiel Landau was so fearful that exposure to the culture of the modern world might ultimately result in total assimilation of the Jew that he proclaimed a ban on the reading of Moses Mendelssohn's translation of the Pentateuch, even though Mendelssohn had advocated strict observance of the halakhah. Fear of assimilation was intensified by a number of developments, seen as alarming, ranging from numerous instances of outright conversion to Christianity to the efforts on the part of the Reform movement to transform radically the character of Judaism in order to facilitate the total integration of the Jew within modern society.

The Orthodox leadership believed that the aesthetic innovations which characterized the first phase of the Reform movement were motivated by the desire to model the synagogue on the pattern of the Protestant Church—a move that was regarded by its advocates as indispensable for gaining for the Jew full acceptance by his Christian neighbors. The claim that the introduction of organ music or the substitution of prayers in the vernacular for those in Hebrew did not violate talmudic law was refuted by 18 leading rabbinic authorities who joined in writing the book *Elleh Divrei ha-Berit* (Altona, 1819). The Orthodox community, intuitively realizing that liturgical reforms were only the beginning of a long-range process designed to change the tenets and practices of Judaism so as to remove all barriers against full immersion in the majority culture, reacted with an all-out effort to preserve the status quo. The slightest tampering with tradition was condemned.

Orthodoxy in this sense first developed in Germany and in Hungary (see Samson Raphael Hirsch; Neo-Orthodoxy). As its religious and political ideology crystallized, it emphasized both its opposition to those who advocated religious reform and the essential differences in its outlook and way of life from that of the reformers. At the same time, it refused to countenance any possibility of cooperation with those advocating different viewpoints. Herein lay Orthodoxy's main impetus toward organizational separation, a trend epitomized in Germany after 1876 when separation from the established community

became legal, thus permitting the formation of the "separatist Orthodoxy" (*Trennungsorthodoxie*). This trend was opposed by R. Isaac Dov Bamberger, one of the outstanding German Orthodox rabbis of his day. Underlying the opposition to secession was the reluctance to jeopardize the unity of the Jewish people. Historically, membership in the Jewish community was never regarded merely as a matter of voluntary identification with a religious denomination. One's status as a Jew was not acquired through the profession of a particular creed. With the exception of converts, the privileges and responsibilities devolving upon a member of the people of the Covenant derive from the fact that he was born a Jew. To this day Orthodoxy has not been able to resolve the dilemma that a considerable section of Jewry today no longer obey the *halakhah*. There are those who lean toward a policy of withdrawal, lest they be responsible for the implicit "recognition" of the legitimacy of non-Orthodox ideologies. Others, so concerned with preserving the unity of the Jewish people, advocate involvement of Orthodoxy in the non-Orthodox Jewish community even at the risk that their policies might be misconstrued as a willingness to condone non-Orthodox approaches. It was, ironically, the issue of separation that precipitated most of the internal conflict that has plagued Orthodoxy. In its early history, Agudat Israel was torn asunder by the controversy over whether Orthodox Jews should be permitted to take a leading part in the organization if they, at the same time, also belonged to groups in which non-Orthodox Jews were allowed to play a prominent role. The influence of the Hungarian element finally swayed Agudat Israel to adopt a resolution barring its members from participation in non-Orthodox movements. Isaac Breuer, a grandson of Samson Raphael Hirsch and one of the leading Agudat Israel ideologists, formulated in his *Der neue Kuzari* a philosophy of Judaism in which refusal to espouse the cause of separation was interpreted as being equivalent to the rejection of the absolute sovereignty of God.

Mizrachi on the other hand espoused a policy of cooperation with non-Orthodox and secular elements. It is also noteworthy that in Eastern Europe most Agudat Israel circles frowned upon secular learning, while Mizrachi, as a general rule, adopted a far more sympathetic attitude toward worldly culture. In Central and Western Europe, however, Agudat Israel circles were guided not only by Hirsch's separationist policy toward the non-Orthodox community, but also subscribed to his philosophy of *Torah im derekh erez* (Torah with secular education), and espoused the synthesis of Torah with modern culture. In Israel, the split between the two approaches is especially noticeable. Mizrahi and Ha-Po'el ha-Mizrachi have favored full participation in the political life of the *yishuv* and subsequently in the sovereign State of Israel. Agudat Israel circles, however, refrained from joining the Knesset Yisrael (the recognized community of the Jews in Palestine) and refused to recognize the official rabbinate appointed by that body. After the establishment of the State of Israel, Agudat Israel participated in elections to the Knesset and for some time even participated in a coalition government. A far more extreme position was adopted by Neturei Karta. They have categorically refused to recognize the authority of a secular Jewish state which, in their opinion, came into being only through the betrayal of the religious values of Jewish tradition.

Although the followers of the *Torah im derekh erez* approach advocated openness to modern culture and discouraged the insulation of the Jew from the intellectual currents of his time, they nonetheless unequivocally rejected any doctrine which in the slightest manner would jeopardize the binding character and validity of the *halakhah*. They were unbending in their insistence that the traditional belief in *Torah min ha-Shamayim* entailed: that the Masoretic text represents an authentic record of divine communication of content; and that the Oral Torah represents in essence the application and extension of teachings and methods that are ultimately grounded in direct divine revelation (see Oral Law). This view not only clashed with Abraham Geiger's radical doctrine of "progressive revelation," according to which even the Bible was the product of the religious genius of the Jewish people, but also with the more moderate theory of "continuous revelation" as formulated by the positivist historical school. According to Zacharias Frankel (considered by some to be the spiritual father of Conservative Judaism), the original Sinaitic revelation was supplemented by another kind of revelation—the ongoing revelation manifesting itself throughout history in the spirit of the Jewish people. Orthodoxy balked at Frankel's thesis that the entire structure of rabbinic Judaism was the creation of the scribes and subsequently of the *tannaim* and the *amoraim* who allegedly sought to adapt biblical Judaism to a new era by inventing the notion of an Oral Torah. From the Orthodox point of view, rabbinic Judaism represents not a radical break with the past, but rather the ingenious application and development of teachings which ultimately derive their sanction from the Sinaitic revelation. Whereas for the positivist historical school, the religious consciousness of the Jewish people provided the supreme religious authority, the Orthodox position

rested upon the belief in the supernatural origin of the Law which was addressed to a "Chosen People."

Walter S. Wurzburger

German Orthodoxy exerted a significant influence upon Jews in Western lands, especially Holland (to which Reform had not yet spread) and Switzerland. Hungary became the center of a specific type of Orthodox development. The spread of Haskalah there and the reforms in education and synagogue worship led to tension within the communities, especially from the 1840s on (see Aaron Chorin). Orthodoxy became very much aware of its distinctive character, especially under the influence of R. Moses Sofer and his school. Later the call for independent organization became more pronounced. Preparations for a nationwide congress of Hungarian Jews at the end of the 1860s gave this trend an organizational and political expression in the formation of the Shomrei Hadass Society (*Glaubenswaechter*, "Guardians of the Faith"), founded in 1867 to protect and further the interest of Orthodoxy, thus becoming the first modern Orthodox political party. In a congress held from December 1868 to February 1869 the Orthodox and Reform camps split; afterward the Orthodox withdrew, announcing that the decisions of the congress were not binding on them. Independent Orthodox communities were set up in those areas where the established communal leadership had passed to the Reform camp and a countrywide organization of these separate communities was set up. Orthodox autonomy was confirmed by the government in 1871. Approximately half Hungarian Jewry joined the Orthodox communities.

Within Hungarian Orthodoxy, two strands can be discerned:

- (1) traditional Orthodoxy, encompassing the ḥasidic masses in the northeastern districts; and
- (2) non-ḥasidic Orthodoxy, which contained a segment that bore the marks of modern Orthodoxy—a measure of adaptation to its environment, general education (without the ideology of *Torah im derekh erez*), and use of the language of the country. Non-ḥasidic Orthodoxy was shaped by the school of R. Moses Sofer.

In Eastern Europe until World War I, Orthodoxy preserved without a break its traditional ways of life and the time-honored educational framework. In general, the mainstream of Jewish life was identified with Orthodoxy while Haskalah and secularization were regarded as deviations. Hence there was no ground wherein a Western type of Orthodoxy could take root. Modern political Orthodox activity first appeared in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 20th century with Agudat Israel. Orthodoxy's political activity was especially noticeable in Poland. During the period of German conquest at the time of World War I, an Orthodox political party was organized (with the aid of some German rabbis), the Shelomei Emunei Israel. In the communal and political life of the Jews in the Polish republic, Orthodoxy was most influential in the townlets, and was supported by the ḥasidic masses. The central political aim of Orthodoxy was to guarantee its autonomy in all religious matters. After World War I, a definite shift may be detected in Orthodoxy in Poland toward basic general education to a limited degree. Agudat Israel established an educational network, with Horeb schools for boys and Beth Jacob schools for girls.

European Orthodoxy, in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, was significantly influenced by the move from small settlements to urban centers (within the same country) as well as by emigration. Within the small German communities there was a kind of popular Orthodoxy, deeply attached to tradition and to local customs, and when it moved to the large cities this element brought with it a vitality and rootedness to Jewish tradition. From the end of the 19th century, countries in Western Europe absorbed newcomers from the East, who either constituted an important addition to the existing Orthodox congregations or set up new communities. After World War I, scholars from Eastern Europe (among them the rabbis Abraham Elijah Kaplan and Jehiel Jacob Weinberg) went to Germany and other Western countries. They exerted a perceptible influence on Western Orthodoxy, providing it with a direction in scholarship and drawing it closer to the world of talmudic learning. In the interwar period, young Orthodox students from the West went to the yeshivot of Poland and Lithuania, and yeshivot of the traditional type were later established in Western Orthodox centers.

In the United States, Orthodoxy constituted one of the mainstreams of life and thought within Jewry. Different varieties of Orthodoxy coexisted. In 1898 the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America was founded. Its declared aims were to accept "the authoritative interpretation of our rabbis as contained in the Talmud and codes." Among the leaders and teachers prominent in American Orthodoxy were the rabbis Bernard Revel, Joseph D. Soloveichik, and Joseph H. Lookstein. One of the influential

Orthodox centers in the United States, Yeshiva University, inspired the establishment of many other schools offering instruction in both Jewish and secular subjects on the elementary and high school levels. This trend of U.S. Orthodoxy published the periodicals *Jewish Life*, *Jewish Forum*, *Tradition*, and *Intercom* (publication of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Societies). The differences within American Orthodoxy were evidenced by the establishment of different rabbinic bodies there. Rabbis from Eastern Europe, representing traditional Orthodoxy, make up the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada (founded in 1902), while rabbis educated in America united to form the Rabbinical Council of America (in 1923; reorg. 1935). Hasidic groups, who became influential chiefly after World War II, constitute a separate division within American Orthodoxy. Especially well known are those associated with Menahem Mendel Schneerson of Lubavich and Joel Teitelbaum of Satmar. Rabbis, scholars, and the heads of yeshivot who came after World War II and built yeshivot according to the Lithuanian tradition added their special quality to American Orthodoxy. Most prominent among them was Rabbi Aaron Kotler.

The senior central organization of the Jews of England, the United Synagogue, is an Orthodox body in its constitution and rabbinic leadership. However, the lay leaders and congregants are not necessarily all observant in the light of the accepted Orthodox standard. Those who were dissatisfied with the degree of observance and religious spirit prevailing in the United Synagogue founded separate congregational organizations. The Federation of Synagogues, which in composition was more suited to the spirit of those who came from Eastern Europe, was founded in 1887, and its numbers multiplied with the extensive Jewish emigration to England. In 1891 the society known as Machzike Hadath ("The Upholders of the Faith"), was formed, and immigrants from Western Europe founded the congregations known as Adath Yisroel in the spirit of German Orthodoxy. In 1926 R. Victor Shonfeld established the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations which attempted to unite the various branches of Western traditional Orthodoxy.

[Nathaniel Katzburg]

Trends Within Modern Orthodoxy

In spite of the new impetus given to Orthodoxy by the success of the day school and improved methods of organization and communication, evidence of grave dangers cannot be ignored. The rapid polarization within the Orthodox camp seriously threatens to split the movement completely. While much of the controversy seems to revolve around the question of membership in religious bodies containing non-Orthodox representation, the real issue goes far deeper. The so-called "modern Orthodox" element is under severe attack for allegedly condoning deviations from halakhic standards in order to attract non-observant Jews. On the other hand, there constantly come to the fore mounting restlessness and impatience on the part of significant elements that are dismayed over the slowness with which Orthodoxy has responded to the upheavals of Emancipation, the Enlightenment, and the establishment of the State of Israel. The charge has been made that instead of coming to grips with these events which have confronted the Jew with entirely new historic realities, Orthodoxy has been satisfied with voicing its disapproval of those who have reacted to them.

Some of the more "radical" thinkers regard the Hirsch type of synthesis between Torah and culture as an invaluable first step, but it must be developed much further if it is to meet contemporary needs. They look askance at the feature of "timelessness" which in Hirsch's system constitutes a hallmark of Torah and which, in their opinion, ignores the dynamic character inherent in the processes of the Oral Torah. They contend that as long as the domain of Torah remains completely insulated from the culture of a given age, the authorities or the *halakhah* cannot creatively apply teachings of Torah to ever-changing historic realities. What, therefore, is needed is not merely the coexistence but the mutual interaction of the two domains. This view, of course, runs counter to the basic tenets of "right-wing" Orthodoxy, which frowns upon the intrusion of elements derived from secular culture as a distortion of the authentic teachings of the Torah. The exponents of the more radical positions of "modern Orthodoxy" are frequently charged with cloaking under the mantle of Orthodoxy what essentially amounts to a Conservative position. This argument, however, is countered by the claim that no modifications of the *halakhah* are condoned unless they are sanctioned by the methods governing the process of halakhic development. There is no thought of "updating" the *halakhah* in order to adjust it to the spirit of the time. What is advocated is only that its meaning be explicated in the light of ever-changing historic conditions. The contention is that as long as halakhic opinion is evolved in conformity with the proper procedures of

halakhic reasoning, its legitimacy as a halakhic datum is assured.

To bolster their case, the proponents of this "left wing" frequently claim to derive the basic elements of their position from the teachings of Rabbi Kook, as well as from the philosophy of the most influential contemporary Orthodox thinker, R. Joseph B. Soloveichik. Neither of these two seminal thinkers has in any way identified himself with the views advanced by the more "progressive" wing. But Kook's readiness to attribute religious value to modern secular movements, as well as his positive stance toward cultural and scientific developments, provide a key element to a philosophy that seeks to integrate the positive contributions of the world within the fabric of Judaism. Similarly, Soloveichik's characterization of the man of faith in terms of the dialectical tension between a commitment to an eternal "covenantal community" and the responsibilities to fulfill socio-ethical tasks in a world of change is widely hailed as an endorsement of the thesis that the Jewish religious ideal does not call for withdrawal from the world but for the confrontation between human culture and the norms and values of the Torah.

Obviously, such a conception of the nature of the commitment of the Jewish faith completely disposes of the charge of "moral isolationism" that time and again has been hurled at Orthodoxy because its alleged preoccupation with the minutiae of the Law renders it insensitive to areas which do not come within the purview of formal halakhic regulation. Actually, the covenantal relationship between man and God embraces all aspects of life and cannot be confined to a mere adherence to a set of legal rules. The observance of the halakhah, far from exhausting the religious task of the Jew, is designed to make him more sensitive and "open" to social and moral concerns.

THE DILEMMA OF ORTHODOXY IN THE MODERN WORLD

Although many segments of Orthodoxy have veered away from the course of "splendid isolation" which has been espoused by the "right wing," they have not as yet been able to formulate a systematic theology capable of integrating the findings of modern science and historic scholarship. For that matter, there has not yet been developed a theory of revelation which would satisfy the demands of modern categories of thought. There are some isolated voices clamoring for less "fundamentalist" or "mechanical" approaches to revelation which would utilize some of Martin Buber's notions and assign a large role to man's subjective response to the encounter with the Divine. But it remains to be seen whether such a solution is feasible within the framework of Orthodoxy. At any rate, some of the widely recognized Orthodox authorities unequivocally reject any approach which compromises in the slightest with the doctrine that divine revelation represents direct supernatural communication of content from God to man.

Even more serious is the problem of the increasing resistance to the Orthodox emphasis on the authoritative nature of the halakhah. This runs counter to the prevailing cultural emphasis upon pluralism and the individual's free subjective commitment, a freedom which challenges acceptance of objective religious values or norms imposed upon the individual from without. What renders the problem even more acute is the paradox that the Orthodox community, which places so much emphasis upon the authority of the rabbis to interpret the revealed word of God is the one that has been plagued most by conflicting claims of competing authorities. Characteristically, all efforts to establish some central authority have failed dismally. The proposal to revive the Sanhedrin, far from promoting cohesiveness, has actually precipitated considerable disharmony within the Orthodox camp. The latter, so far, has not even succeeded in evolving a loose organizational structure which would be representative of the various ideological shadings within the movement.

Walter S. Wurzburger

Developments in Modern Orthodoxy

Orthodox Judaism is by no means monolithic; the diversity in faith and practice is legion; it has no ultimate authority or hierarchy of authorities; and it has never been able to mobilize even one national or international organization in which all of its groups would speak as one. The diversity in halakhic rulings is typical of most legal systems. It stems principally from reliance on different sources all of which are deemed authoritative, or from methods of reasoning, applied to the sources, which are also deemed normative by all halakhists. Philosophy or teleology play little part in the decision-making process except for a few among the Modern Orthodox.

The Modern Orthodox constitute neither sect nor movement. They convene no seminars and no colloquiums. They have no organized group and no publication of their own. There is no list of rabbis or laymen who call themselves "Modern Orthodox." They are at best represented by a group of rabbis who see each other from time to time and share the same commitment, namely that the Torah does not have to be afraid of modernity since there is no challenge that the Torah cannot cope with. Some prefer the word "centrist" because the word "modern" is too often associated with permissiveness. Others reject the term "centrist" because it suggests being in the center on all issues. But the Modern Orthodox are extremists on the positive side of many issues such as the centrality of ethics in religious behavior and the need for improving the status of women in *halakhah*.

The diversity among all Orthodox Jews that evokes the most acrimony revolves around three issues: the nature and scope of Revelation; attitudes toward secular education and modern culture; and the propriety of cooperation with non-Orthodox rabbis. To systematic theology very little attention is given. The writings of the medieval Jewish philosophers are studied and expounded but they appear to stimulate no new approaches. Orthodox Jews are still rationalists or mystics; naturalists or neo-Hegelians; and, even existentialists, most notably Joseph D. Soloveitchik. Starting with the premise that all the Torah is God's revealed will, he holds that logically all of it must have theological significance. Therefore, he sees the totality of Torah as the realm of ideas in the Platonic sense, given by God for application to the realm of the real. Just as the mathematician creates an internally logical and coherent fabric of formulas with which he interprets and integrates the appearances of the visible world, so the Jew, the "Man of Halakhah," has the Torah as the divine idea that invests all of human life with direction and sanctity. "The *halakhah* is a multi-dimensional ever-expanding continuum that cuts through all levels of human existence from the most primitive and intimate to the most complex relationships." And though the *halakhah* refers to the ideal, its creativity must be affected by the real. "Man's response to the great halakhic challenge asserts itself not only in blind acceptance of the divine imperative but also in assimilating a transcendental content disclosed to him through an apocalyptic revelation and in fashioning it to his peculiar needs. It is rather the experiencing of life's irreconcilable antitheses—the simultaneous affirmation and abnegation of the self, the simultaneous awareness of the temporal and the eternal, the simultaneous clash of freedom and necessity, the simultaneous love and fear of God, and His simultaneous transcendence and immanence."

As for conceptions of the hereafter and resurrection of the dead, Soloveitchik holds with earlier authorities that no man can fathom or visualize precisely what they signify in fact, but the beliefs themselves can be deduced logically from the proposition that God is just and merciful. God's attribute of absolute justice and mercy require that he provide rewards and punishments and that He redeem Himself by being merciful to those most in need of mercy—the dead. Soloveitchik holds with many earlier philosophers that the immortality of the soul after death is to be distinguished from a this-worldly resurrection of the dead in a post-Messianic period; the Messianic period itself will produce only international peace and order.

Essentially the doctrines represent fulfillment of Judaism's commitment to an optimistic philosophy of human existence. In Soloveitchik's intellectual development there was a period when there was a clash, a confrontation between two ways of life and modes of thought; that of Brisk (Brest-Litovsk), where he became the great Talmudist, and that of Berlin, where he later became the great philosopher.

For many of his disciples who call themselves Modern Orthodox there was no such clash. They grew up in both cultures simultaneously and the synthesis they sought and attained was a gradual achievement over a long period, virtually from elementary school days through graduate study. What little they achieved was not born altogether from anguish but more by the slow natural process of intellectual and emotional maturation. That is why they often part with the master in whose thought existentialism plays the major role and they are more likely to embrace a more naturalist theology.

Theology and eschatology generally receive very little attention from Orthodox Jewish thinkers. The case is not so with Revelation, on which, the range in views is enormous. There are those who hold literally that God dictated the Torah to Moses, who wrote each word as dictated, and there are those who maintain that how God communicated with Moses, the Jewish people, the Patriarchs and the Prophets will continue to be a matter of conjecture and interpretation but the crucial point is that He did it in history. As creation is a fact for believers, though they cannot describe how, so Revelation is a fact, though its precise manner is not clear. This less fundamentalist approach would not deny a role to man's

subjective response to the encounter with the divine, but all Orthodox Jews would agree that the doctrine of divine Revelation represents direct supernatural communication of content from God to man.

There are those who hold that every event reported in the Torah must be understood literally; some are less rigid in this connection and even regard the Torah as the ultimate source for a Jewish philosophy of history rather than Jewish history itself. This accounts for the fact that presently some authorities insist that Orthodox Jews must hold the age of the earth to be some five thousand years plus, while others have no difficulty in accepting astronomical figures.

The head of the Lubavich movement, Rabbi Menahem Schneerson, insists that the age of the earth is what the tradition holds it to be. The Modern Orthodox are more likely to hold with Rabbi Menahem Mendel Kasher that it is not imperative that one so hold, and he thus advised scientists who sought his definitive opinion on the issue. He made no dogma of the traditional view. There are many Orthodox scientists, researchers, and academicians, who bifurcate their position. They hold to the traditional view as believers and to the scientific views in their professional pursuits—and this schizoid position does not disturb them.

With regard to the legal portions of the Torah, many Orthodox Jews still insist that they are eternal and immutable. Others maintain that the Oral Torah itself affords conclusive proof that there are laws that are neither eternal nor immutable. In the Oral Torah one also finds that some commandments were deemed by one authority or another never to have been mandatory but rather optional. Such were the commandments with regard to the blood-avenger and the appointment of a king. However, exponents of Orthodox Judaism generally affirm eternity and immutability even though they engage in halakic development without regard to the fiction they verbalize. The Modern Orthodox are more likely not to articulate the fiction as they explore ways to make the eternal law cope with the needs of the period.

With regard to parts of the Bible other than the Pentateuch, some hold that all of them were written because of the Holy Spirit; others are more critical and do not dogmatize with regard to their authorship, accuracy of texts, dates of composition, or literal interpretation. Some extend the doctrine of the inviolability of the Torah to all the sacred writings including the Talmud and the Midrashim and do not permit rejection even of any of the most contradictory legends or maxims. Others are "reductionists" and restrict the notion of inviolability to the Five Books of Moses.

Many of these views were expressed before the modern period. They are found in the writings of Jewish philosophers of the Middle Ages and some are clearly expressed in the Talmud and Midrashim. The so-called Modern Orthodox are more likely to be found among those who hold the more liberal views with regard to these issues. Similarly, on the basis of tradition the Modern Orthodox differ with their colleagues with regard to secular education and modern culture and the cooperation of Orthodox Jews with non-Orthodox Jews.

There were Orthodox rabbis who bemoaned the collapse of the ghetto walls because they fathomed what this would mean to the solidarity of the Jewish community and especially the future of its legal autonomy. *Halakhah*, which had always been applicable to the personal, social, economic, and political existence of Jews, would thereafter be relevant to very limited areas in the life of the Jew. These rabbis opposed any form of acculturation with their non-Jewish neighbors. Others advocated acculturation in social and economic matters but retained commitment to a Judaism totally unrelated to, and unaffected by, the ideas and values that dominated the non-Jewish scene. Others advocated the fullest symbiosis, outstanding among them, Rabbis Abraham Isaac Hacoheh Kook and Joseph D. Soloveitchik. Rabbi Kook maintained a very positive attitude to all modern cultural and scientific developments; Rabbi Soloveitchik described the believing Jew as one who is forever in dialectical tension between his being a member of the covenanted community and his obligation to fulfill his socio-ethical responsibilities with and for all humanity in a rapidly changing world. Disciples of theirs even find that their secular education and exposure to modern culture deepen their understanding and appreciation of their own heritage, even as it helps them to evaluate modernity with greater insight and a measure of transcendence.

Because of differences of opinion, one finds contemporary Orthodox Jews holding many different views with respect to their own mode of living, their careers, and the education of their children. Those who want no part of modernity prefer to live in isolation and earn a livelihood by pursuing "safe" careers in business. They want the same for their offspring. Others seek to bifurcate their existence. They are modern in dress, enjoy the culture which surrounds them, but avoid intellectual challenges, and build a

protective wall around their religious commitment, forbidding the environment to encroach upon their faith and ancestral practice. Usually they too want for their children what they enjoy and they also encourage their young to pursue "safe" careers at college—courses in business, law, medicine, accounting, but rarely the social sciences or the humanities.

Then there are those who are determined to cope with all the challenges that modernity can offer. Some, like Samuel Belkin, held to this view but spoke of the "synthesis" between modernity and traditional Judaism as a merging of the two cultures in the personality and outlook of the Orthodox Jew. His predecessor, Bernard Revel, the first president of Yeshiva University, had a more exciting goal—a genuine synthesis of the best in both worlds. He craved the sanctification of the secular as did Rabbi Kook; the integration of the best that humanity has achieved with the eternal truths of Judaism; the greater appreciation of Judaism because of its differences from other religions and cultures; and the reformulation of the cherished concepts and practices of Judaism and their rationalization in modern terms. This goal has been achieved by only a few, but most of the intelligentsia among the Modern Orthodox share Revel's dream rather than the less difficult goal of Belkin.

The attitudes of Orthodox Jews to their non-Orthodox co-religionists also range from one end of the spectrum to the other—from hate presumably based on revered texts to toleration, total acceptance, and even love, similarly based on revered texts. Those indulging in hate are responsible for the physical violence occasionally practiced against any who deviate from the tradition. Theirs is a policy of non-cooperation in any form whatever with any who disagree with them. and they not only pray for the destruction of the State of Israel but even take measures to achieve that end. Others simply desire total separation from those who deviate from their customs and practices even in the matter of dress.

A further group is reconciled to the fact of pluralism in Jewish life but has no affinity whatever for the non-Orthodox. A fourth group loves all Jews irrespective of how they behave but does not accord even a modicum of tolerance to organizations that represent non-Orthodox rabbis and congregations. It is more tolerant of secular groups—no matter how anti-religious. A fifth group is even willing to cooperate with non-Orthodox groups in all matters pertaining to relationships between Jews and non-Jews, at least in the United States. Even they are less open-minded with regard to the situation in Israel. Only a very small group goes all the way with the inescapable implications of the thought of Kook and Soloveitchik and welcomes the challenge of non-Orthodoxy, even as it views secular education and modern culture as positive factors in appreciation of the tradition.

It is also in this last group, Modern Orthodox, that one is likely to find those who will project halakhic decisions that are based on the sources but not necessarily the weight of the authorities. Especially with respect to the inviolability of the persons of all human beings, including Jewish dissenters, they are zealots. Thus they encourage dialogue with all Jews, solutions to the painful problems in Jewish family law, more prohibitions with community sanctions against the unethical behavior of Jews in business, in the exaction of usury, in the evasion of taxes, and in the exploitation of the disadvantaged. They propose the use of more theology and teleology in the process of halakhic decision. Their principal difference with so-called right-wing Conservative rabbis is that they do not wish to "update" the *halakhah* to adjust it to the spirit of the time but rather within the frame and normative procedures of the *halakhah*—its sources and its method of reasoning—to express the implications of the *halakhah* for the modern Jew and his existential situation.

The Modern Orthodox are especially attentive to historical, psychological, sociological, and teleological considerations. A few illustrations may be of interest.

They oppose any form of religious coercion by Jews against Jews and not by resort to the legal fiction that every Jew is now to be considered the equal of one who was taken captive in his early childhood and never raised as a Jew.

The tradition exempts such a person from religious coercion. The Modern Orthodox prefer the approach which says that religious coercion was only permitted when it might truly change the attitude and inner feeling of its victim. However, coercion now only angers the victim more and makes him or her more hostile to Judaism. Therefore, it defeats rather than advances its original purpose.

Similarly, Jewish family law developed to give dignity and Sanctity to the status of every member of the family, with every individual enjoying the right freely to serve God and fulfill his or her responsibilities as a member of the family. When Jewish law, however, no longer serves this purpose and becomes an

instrument for exploitations of one by another and the literal enslavement of spouses or offspring then there must be legislation and the sooner the better. Therefore, the Modern Orthodox especially favor antenuptial agreements anticipating certain unfortunate events and the reactivation of the annulment of marriages—all of which has ample sources in the halakhic literature.

Last but not least, the Modern Orthodox are more likely than others to give a sympathetic ear to halakhic changes in the face of developments in modern medicine—especially the right to volunteer one's organs for transplanting. This is a field in which very little creative work has been accomplished by rabbis, except to assemble ancient sources with little or no philosophical analysis.

Because of the enormous diversity among Orthodox Jews in both creed and practice, there is a tendency at present to speak of the ultra-Orthodox, the Orthodox, and the Modern Orthodox. Yet in each of these groups there is substantial diversity, and the outlook in a free world and open society is for more, rather than less, of it.

Emanuel Rackman

NEO-ORTHODOXY

Also: German Orthodoxy; Orthodoxy, German

NEO-ORTHODOXY, name of the modernistic faction of German Orthodoxy, first employed in a derogatory sense by its adversaries. Its forerunners were to be found among the more conservative disciples of Moses Mendelssohn and N. H. Wessely, like Solomon Pappenheim and Nahman b. Simḥah Barash. At the time of the controversy over the Hamburg Temple (1818), the participants in the campaign against the reformers included some rabbis who adopted a stance similar to that later advocated by the Neo-Orthodox; for example those of Amsterdam, Hanau, Rawicz, and other communities, who produced the polemic, *Elleh Divrei ha-Berit* (1819). Other forerunners were the new Orthodox preacher of Hamburg, Isaac Bernays; Jeremiah Heinemann (1788–1855) of Berlin, the editor of *Jedidja* (1817–31); and Solomon Plessner (1797–1883) of Breslau, the author of various apologetic works.

However, the ideology of Neo-Orthodoxy crystallized later and its institutions were only established during the second half of the 19th century. In essence, the movement is connected with Samson Raphael Hirsch and his doctrine of *Torah im derekh eretz* ("Torah together with the conduct of life," meaning in this context secular culture), which he expressed in his major writings. In 1851 he became rabbi of the Orthodox separatist community of Frankfort and was able to realize his ideas and plans in a suitable environment. During the second half of the 19th century, the rabbinical leadership had already suffered defeat in the campaign against reformers and assimilationists. The small groups which remained faithful to tradition referred to themselves as "remnants." At the same time, the rising tide of the Reform movement was curbed. The process of Jewish integration into general society was well advanced and was no longer conditional on their "religious" reform. Moreover, the radical line adopted by such Reform leaders as Abraham Geiger and Samuel Holdheim during those years had alienated important elements among the non-Orthodox (Leopold Zunz, Zacharias Frankel, and others).

The development of a trend combining features from both Reform and Orthodoxy thus became feasible. From the Reform movement it adopted the aim of integration within modern society, not only on utilitarian grounds but also through the acceptance of its scale of values, aiming at creating a symbiosis between traditional Orthodoxy and modern German-European culture; both in theory and in practice this meant the abandonment of Torah study for its own sake (as in the classical yeshivah) and adopting instead an increased concentration on practical halakhah. Other Reform features were the replacement of Hebrew by German as the language of Jewish culture; the acceptance of the Haskalah program in educational matters; the struggle for emancipation and the positive appreciation of the Exile; the exchange of the material idea of "Return to Zion" for that of the "Universal Mission"; German patriotism; the renouncement of a particular Jewish appearance (involving readiness to cut off the beard and the side-locks, to uncover the head when not at worship, etc.); the education of women, including their participation in religious life and their political emancipation; the abolition of the coercive powers of the community; and the acceptance of the liberal concept of freedom of conscience. From Orthodoxy the faction took: dogmatism (*emunat hakhamim*, "faith in the rabbis"); reservation toward the preoccupations of the Wissenschaft des Judentums and opposition to the principle of freedom of research; the acceptance of the authority of the Shulhan Arukh and the traditions and customs of the late 18th-century German communities; acceptance of the Orthodox position on laws which came into being as a result of its campaign against the reformers, such as those against the demands for changes in synagogue usage; excessive strictness in the observation of the precepts and customs; and acquiescence in the disruption of the Jewish community and the sectarian nature of those remaining true to Orthodoxy. The second most important leader of this trend was Azriel (Israel) Hildesheimer, who founded a rabbinical seminary (1873) and broke the monopoly of the non-Orthodox in Jewish studies. He thus made possible the integration of the intelligentsia into the neo-Orthodox circle, in contrast to Hirsch, whose system was tailored to the requirements of the ordinary community members, the so-called *ba'alei batim*. Hildesheimer was more attached to ancient rabbinic Judaism than Hirsch and his attitude to Jewish affairs in general was more positive, while his approach to general culture was less enthusiastic. As a result of this, the role Hildesheimer played in world Jewish affairs led to the creation of contacts between the German Neo-Orthodoxy, East European Jewry, and the Hibbat Zion movement. In 1876 a law (the *Austrittsgesetz*) was passed which enabled individuals to secede from a church or community without changing his religious affiliation. This facilitated the secession (*Austritt*) of Orthodox minorities from

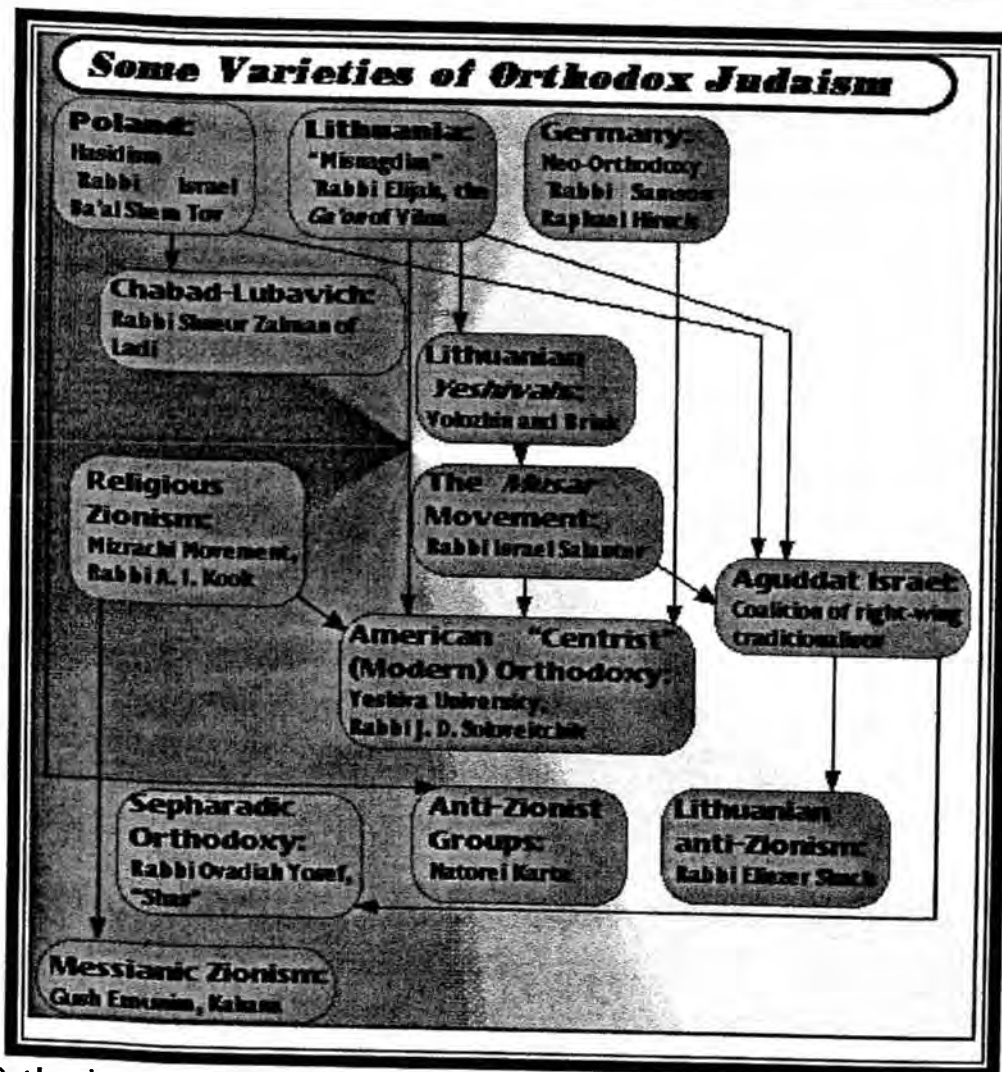
communities where they considered that coexistence with the reformist leadership was impossible. In many places this situation induced the reformers to make far-reaching concessions to the Orthodox minority. German Orthodoxy thus became split over the question of whether the new law should be exploited in order that they might secede from all communities administered by reformers. To Hirsch, the *Austritt* concept became a supreme religious principle, while Seligmann Baer (or Dov Baer) Bamberger, his Orthodox opponent, showed reserve toward both the modernism and the extremist separatism of Hirsch, and preferred to preserve the unity of the community. After some time, German Orthodoxy was again divided on another issue: the attitude toward Zionism. One section joined the Agudat Israel movement, while the other showed a preference for the Mizrachi and Ha-Po'el ha-Mizrachi and later for the Po'alei Agudat Israel.

Moshe Shraga Samet

Varieties of Orthodox Judaism

The major groupings of Orthodoxy from its inception until the present day are represented in the following diagram.

Note that this diagram is an HTML image map. Clicking on any of its components in a graphic World Wide Web browser will link you to a detailed description of the movement in question.



The term "Orthodoxy" is applied to Jewish traditionalist movements that have consciously resisted the influences of modernization that arose in response to the European Emancipation and Enlightenment movements. It is not usually employed to designate Jewish traditionalism prior to the modern era, nor does the phenomenon appear in communities that were unaffected by the Reform movement; e.g., in North

Africa, or in Eastern Europe before the mid-nineteenth-century.

The adjective "Orthodox" ("correct belief") is taken from the conceptual world of Christianity, where it denotes a conservative and ritualistic religious outlook, as viewed from the perspective of liberal Protestantism. It appears to have been first applied derisively to Jewish conservatives by a Reform polemicist in an article published in 1795.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch commented bitterly in 1854 that

...it was not "Orthodox" Jews who introduced the word "orthodox" into Jewish discussion. It was the modern "progressive" Jews who first applied the name to "old," "backward" Jews as a derogatory term. This name was at first resented by "old" Jews. And rightfully so...

Yet so pervasive was the use of the term that in 1886, when Hirsch established an alliance of the traditionalist congregations in Europe, he named it the "Freie Vereinigung für die Interessen des *Orthodoxen* Judentums" (Free Union for the Interests of *Orthodox* Judaism)!

Of all the movements on the contemporary Jewish scene, Orthodoxy is the least centralized and the most diverse. Whereas the Conservative and Reform movements in America each has a single seminary, Rabbinical association and synagogue union, the Orthodox world is fragmented into diverse institutional structures. Though they agree on basic issues of religious authority (e.g., the divine origins of the Bible and Oral Tradition) and the commitment to the study and observance of Jewish law, the *halakhah* as interpreted in a relatively inflexible manner, Orthodox Jews diverge on a broad range of secondary issues, such as:

- the importance or legitimacy of mysticism
- policies towards Zionism and Jewish nationalism
- the eschatological status of the State of Israel
- educational philosophies
- leadership models

HISTORY- REFORM

REFORM JUDAISM

Also: Judaism, Liberal; Judaism, Reform; Liberal Judaism; Progressive Judaism

REFORM JUDAISM, first of the modern interpretations of Judaism to emerge in response to the changed political and cultural conditions brought about by the Emancipation. It is also known as Liberal or Progressive Judaism. (The others were Neo-Orthodoxy and Conservative Judaism, which began in part as a "Counter-Reformation" in response to Reform Judaism.) True to its own inner dynamics, Reform Judaism's manifestations vary from place to place, and have undergone constant change in the course of time. They all share the assertion of the legitimacy of change in Judaism and the denial of eternal validity to any given formulation of Jewish belief or codification of Jewish law. Apart from that, there is little unanimity among Reform Jews either in matters of belief or in practical observance. Conservative and radical positions coexist and enjoy mutual respect. The history of Reform Judaism can be divided into three periods, with the characteristics of one period often incorporated into the succeeding one. It is thus possible to distinguish between the following stages:

- (1) aesthetic;
- (2) scholarly and ideological; and
- (3) organizational.

Aesthetic Reforms

The first reformers were laymen, working without rabbinic leadership. Their primary concerns were the large-scale defections from Judaism in the age of Emancipation and the absence of Western standards of aesthetics and decorum in the traditional manner of Jewish worship. They set about reforming the service by abbreviating the liturgy, introducing the sermon in the vernacular, choral singing with organ accompaniment, and supplementing the standard Hebrew prayers with prayers in the vernacular. Of such a nature was the service conducted by Israel Jacobson in his school chapel in Seesen in 1810, and in his private home in Berlin from 1815 on. This style of worship was also adopted by the Hamburg Temple, which was opened in 1818, and was the first regular synagogue established on a Reform basis. Jacobson and his followers had no intention of breaking with tradition. On the contrary, they made every effort to demonstrate, by an appeal to the Talmud and the codes, that their reforms were compatible with traditional Jewish law, but their invocation of rabbinic sources failed to convince the traditionalists. Although the reformers desired neither a break with tradition nor the formation of a new Jewish sect, it is evident—and this is particularly true of the Hamburg Temple and its prayer book (published in 1819)—that the aesthetic improvement of worship was not the sole motivation. Already in the first stage of Reform Judaism some dogmatic considerations came to the fore. The German reformers no longer shared the traditional longing for a return to Zion and the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem and its sacrificial cult. Minor changes in the wording of the liturgy were made to reflect this changed attitude.

x Authority
History

Ideological Developments

Although the first steps in the reform of Judaism were taken by laymen, over the next 30 years some outstanding rabbis and scholars rallied to the cause. A new generation of rabbis, with a university education in addition to traditional training, showed themselves sympathetic to the cause of Reform Judaism. Two events brought them to the fore. One was the second edition of the Hamburg Temple prayer book (1841) and the literary warfare to which it gave rise. The other was the invitation extended to Abraham Geiger in 1839 to assume the rabbinate of the Breslau community. This call was opposed by the Orthodox who were already familiar with Geiger's critical and scientific approach to the sources of Judaism. A two-volume work, *Responsa on the Compatibility of Free Investigation with the Exercise of Rabbinical Functions* (1842–43), provided the platform for the rabbinical friends of progress. Not all, however, ultimately espoused the cause of Reform.

In 1844, 1845, and 1846, rabbinical conferences were held in Brunswick, Frankfurt, and Breslau to bring the modernist rabbis together. Since there was no unanimity among the participating rabbis, a discussion of theory was carefully avoided. The conferences were devoted to matters of practice. They provided justifications from traditional sources for liturgical reforms, particularly connected with the use of the vernacular in worship and with organ accompaniment of the service. They also sought to lighten some of the traditional severity of Sabbath observance and laws of marriage and divorce. When Zacharias Frankel left the 1845 conference in protest against a decision adverse to Hebrew, the specific

Reform character of those gatherings became clearly evident. Nevertheless, the participating rabbis endeavored to remain within the mainstream of Judaism, refusing to regard Reform as a sect. They remained cool toward the Berlin Reformgemeinde, established on a radical basis in 1845. They also rejected the short-lived Frankfurt "Society of the Friends of Reform" (1842), which believed in "unlimited development" and discouraged circumcision.

Although their attitude toward the Talmud and codes was often ambivalent, the German Reform rabbis continued to justify their reforms with references to rabbinic sources. They thus differed significantly from other contemporary manifestations of Reform Judaism, such as the quasi-Karaite position adopted in 1840 by the West London Synagogue of British Jews, which accepted the Bible as the word of God, but rejected the Talmud as a merely human document. It may be noted, however, that British Reform Judaism later adopted a more positive approach to tradition, and developed along rather conservative lines. Therefore, in 1901 a new movement appeared under the name of "Liberal Judaism" espousing a far more radical position, both in theology and in practice. In America, too, Reform Judaism passed through a stage in which the Bible was accepted and the Talmud rejected. This position yielded to the acceptance of the higher criticism of the Bible and to the belief in "Progressive Revelation."

With the exception of the Hamburg Temple and the Berlin Reformgemeinde, German Reform Judaism also differed from attempts in England, the United States, Hungary, and France. In these countries, Reform mostly took place outside of the Orthodox congregations, whereas in Germany the reform was "from within," manifesting itself within old-established communities. There was no continuation of the German rabbinical conferences of the 1840s, and even the "Israelite Synods," in 1869 and 1871, composed of rabbis and laymen, were sparsely attended. Yet the major Jewish communities of Germany, Berlin, Frankfurt, Breslau, Munich, etc., adopted reformed liturgies, and organ accompaniment was widespread in German congregations. In contrast to U.S. Reform Judaism, German Reform Judaism always retained a pronounced traditionalist aspect, calling itself "Liberal" rather than "Reform." In Germany, the latter term was restricted to the extremist Berlin Reformgemeinde, the only congregation in Germany with an all-vernacular service, bareheaded worship, and the Sunday Sabbath.

THE THEORIES OF GEIGER

The participation of rabbis in the Reform movement from the 1840s on led to the crystallization of two different theoretical positions associated with the names of Abraham Geiger and Samuel Holdheim respectively. On the basis of his scientific research, Geiger had reached the conclusion that Judaism is a constantly evolving organism. Biblical Judaism was not identical with classical rabbinic Judaism. Similarly, the modern age calls for further evolution in consonance with the changed circumstances. The role played by tradition enabled Judaism to adapt itself constantly. Geiger, for whom tradition and change were synonymous, valued tradition highly, and saw in it the inherent justification of Reform. The modern rabbis are entitled to adapt medieval Judaism, as the early rabbis had the right to adapt biblical Judaism. Geiger was also one of the very few Jews of his day who studied the Bible from a critical point of view. He found traces of evolution within the Bible itself. Yet, for Geiger, change in Judaism had always been organic, never revolutionary. The modern changes must develop out of the past, and not represent a revolutionary break with it. Since Judaism as a whole is involved in the process of change, Reform Judaism must not give itself a sectarian appearance. Thus, while radical in his views, Geiger remained basically traditional in liturgy and in practice. For him, monotheism and the moral law are the constant elements of Judaism. Ceremonies have the function of expressing those ideas. Yet they are of value only as long as they fulfill that function. They are, therefore, Judaism's changing element. The nature of the Jewish people, too, is subject to change. Though once a nation, it was one no longer. The messianic hope is to be interpreted in universal terms rather than in terms of national restoration. Geiger's theory became basic to all future formulations of Reform doctrine, particularly of that aspect known as "Progressive Revelation." In the light of that doctrine, Reform Judaism was later able to affirm God's participation in the formation of the Talmud, and, accepting the findings of biblical criticism, it was willing to admit human participation in the production of the Bible.

THE THEORIES OF HOLDHEIM

In his recognition of the need for Reform, Holdheim was in agreement with Geiger; but he differed from him both in the theoretical justification and in the practical steps to be taken. For Holdheim, Reform is revolutionary, not evolutionary. The Bible, revealed by God, has a twofold content: the eternally valid

religious elements and the temporally bound components of the constitution of the ancient Hebrew commonwealth. The latter came to an end when the Temple and the State were destroyed in 70 C.E. Thereafter, only the religious elements (monotheism and morality) had validity. Everything connected with the Temple and State is to be considered abolished. Holdheim put practically the whole "ceremonial law" into this category. He criticized rabbinic Judaism for operating on the assumption that the old "constitution" is still valid and ascribed, at best, a relative validity to rabbinic Judaism, stating "In the talmudic age, the Talmud was right. In my age, I am right." According to one opinion in the Talmud, "ceremonial law" will be abolished in the messianic age. Holdheim saw in the Emancipation of the Jews the dawn of the messianic era of universal brotherhood, calling for the abolition of ceremonial barriers to that brotherhood.

AMERICAN REFORM

In Europe, acceptance of Holdheim's radicalism was confined to the Berlin Reformgemeinde, which Holdheim served as rabbi, and to a shortlived radical group in Hungary. But in America, Holdheim's ideas fell on more fertile soil. Here, too, there was a division between moderate and radical Reform, the former championed by Isaac M. Wise, and the latter by David Einhorn. Yet, by 1885 the radical position had become dominant in American Reform Judaism. It was expressed in the "Pittsburgh Platform," which contained statements such as the following:

We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and today we accept as binding only its moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.... We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state.... Their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.... We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.... We reassert the doctrine of Judaism that the soul is immortal, founding this belief on the divine nature of the human spirit, which forever finds bliss in righteousness and misery in wickedness. We reject as ideas not rooted in Judaism, the beliefs both in bodily resurrection and in Gehenna and Eden... as abodes for everlasting punishment and reward.

However, seeing changes and development in earlier stages of Judaism, Reform Judaism was not averse to change within its own ideological structure. When the easy optimism of the 19th century was upset by historical reality, and the American reformers realized that the role of traditional observance in Jewish survival had been considerably underestimated, the "Columbus Platform" of 1937 emerged. Retaining the stress on Judaism's compatibility with science, on the centrality of the moral law, and on the progressive nature of revelation, contained in the "Pittsburgh Platform," the "Columbus Platform" differed considerably in its emphasis. It stated:

The Torah, both written and oral, enshrines Israel's evergrowing consciousness of God and of the moral law. It preserves the historical precedents, sanctions and norms of Jewish life, and seeks to mould it in patterns of goodness and holiness. It defined Judaism as "the soul of which Israel is the body," and recognized "in the group-loyalty of the Jews who have become estranged from our religious tradition a bond which still unites them with us," and affirmed "the obligation of all Jewry to aid in [Palestine's] upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life." It stressed that "Judaism as a way of life requires, in addition to its moral and spiritual demands, the preservation of the Sabbath, festivals, and Holy Days, the retention and development of such customs, symbols, and ceremonies as possess inspirational value, the cultivation of distinctive forms of religious art and music and the use of Hebrew, together with the vernacular, in our worship and instruction.

RECENT AMERICAN DEVELOPMENTS

Since the adoption of the "Columbus Platform," there has been a greater openness on the part of American Reform Jews to many traditional observances, and the study of Hebrew has returned to the curriculum of many schools. Anti-Zionism, at one time considered a mandate of "universalism," has

given way to large-scale support of the State of Israel. But those changes, of a "practical" nature, are not in themselves evidence of a deeper theological rethinking. Such theological thought as has characterized Reform Judaism since the "Columbus Platform" has not yet had a marked bearing on actual Reform Jewish practice. First, the strong 19th-century religious liberalism, basically theistic in nature and stressing the "rational" character of Judaism, has made its peace with the hospitality accorded the "symbols and ceremonies" in the "Columbus Platform." A second school of thought, influenced by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig and by representatives of other trends in religious existentialism, as well as by considerations of *kelal Yisrael* ("the unity of Israel") is mainly confined to the younger theologians of the movement. They are engaged in the "rediscovery" of traditional theological concepts such as covenant, revelation, and law. Not rejecting the findings of scholarship, this group seeks to understand itself as standing within the unbroken chain of Jewish religious tradition. A third group, avowedly secularist and humanist, is turning away from traditional theism and calling for the recognition of Reform Judaism as a new religion founded in the 19th century. The Jews are primarily seen as a social grouping and tradition is considered of value only to the extent to which it furnishes insights into human relations.

Pulled simultaneously in opposite directions, Reform Judaism thus faces the problem which has remained without solution since the movement's beginning: the question of religious authority with the resulting difficulty of setting limits to a liberal religion. Another aspect of the same problem periodically appears when the demand for a guide to religious observance is met with the repeated reply that the publication of such a guide would turn Reform Judaism into another orthodoxy, and must therefore be avoided. Yet, such guides have already been issued by some congregations. It seems that any solution to the problem of authority will be on the local level. In the meantime, the leaders of Reform Judaism are concentrating on the strengthening of its organizational structures and institutions.

Organizational Developments

The world's Reform congregations are united in the World Union for Progressive Judaism founded in 1926, with constituents or representatives in 26 countries. Three rabbinical seminaries, in London, Paris, and the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion (with campuses in Cincinnati, New York, Los Angeles, and Jerusalem), train the rabbis of the movement. A fourth, the Berlin Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums, founded in 1872, was a victim of the Holocaust. In general, the modern rabbinical seminaries of all Jewish schools of thought that apply scientific methods to the study of traditional sources are a result of the early Reform strivings for a synthesis of tradition and modern knowledge. Numerically the strongest constituent of Reform Judaism is the American branch, which because of its numerical and financial strength, has assumed the world leadership of the movement, even though outside the U.S. Reform Judaism tends to be far more traditionally observant than it is in the United States.

[Jakob J. Petuchowski]

Review of Developments in Reform Judaism to the 1990s

From the 1930s, Reform Judaism underwent a far-reaching ideological transformation in its perception of Jewish Peoplehood and religious observance. This transformation was embodied in official declarations as well as by internal social changes and by the surge of history. The declarations were responses to the social and political forces, and also served to rally Reform Jews around a new vision. One of the declarations was the Columbus Platform of 1937 in which the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) acknowledged Jewish Peoplehood, called for the recognition of a Jewish "homeland," the restoration of traditional ritual and ceremonial practices, and the increased usage of Hebrew. This was soon followed by a similar pronouncement by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC). In 1943, the CCAR declared that Zionism and Reform were not incompatible and called for the cessation of anti-Zionist activities by some of its members. By the 1950s, the principles of Reform were becoming reified and institutionalized along expanding fronts.

THE ISRAEL-ORIENTED DIRECTION OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

Most striking and most symbolic was the establishment of the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem (1963) under the direction of its president, Nelson Glueck, and in the face of violent anti-Reform opposition, blunted by the decision of the Jerusalem municipality which ceded land to the college for a symbolic annual rental. Beginning as an archaeological center and a place of worship for its local

adherents, the college has rapidly become the physical and spiritual focus of Reform in Israel and throughout the world. In 1987, under the leadership of President Alfred Gottschalk, and Board Chairman Richard Scheuer, the college completed an extensive expansion program. It now encompasses the headquarters of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, maintains a hostel for Reform youth from the Diaspora, conducts an intellectual and cultural program for the people of Jerusalem, and provides facilities for a religious action program. At its center, however, is its rabbinic training curriculum which has evolved from its inception. The program requires that candidates for the rabbinate spend the first year of their five-year training in Jerusalem. Later, the college opened a special department for preparing Israelis for the Israeli rabbinate. *Semikhah* (ordination), first granted in 1980, had by 1992 been conferred on 12 graduates of the College in Jerusalem.

Some Reform achievements in Israel preceded the college, establishing a beachhead for a steady advance by the movement. Individual congregations, notably Har-El in Jerusalem (1958), Kedem In Tel Aviv, and Or Chadash in Haifa (1964), persisted in the face of intense opposition. Each now has its own building and is served by a rabbi who has pioneered in behalf of Reform legitimacy in Israel. Today, additional Reform congregations are to be found in Ramat Gan, Ramat ha-Sharon, Ramat Aviv, Kiryat Ono, Netanyah, Nahariyyah, Holon, Rishon le-Zion, Upper Nazareth, Beersheva, and Ra'anannah. They are augmented by a national youth movement, by an assembly of progressive rabbis (Moetzet Rabbanim Mitkadmim), and by a national body representing the Israeli movement, Tnuah I'Yahadut Mitkademmet (Telem). The movement has produced a siddur (prayer book) and ma'azor (festival prayer book).

The Leo Baeck School in Haifa (organized in 1939 as the Hillel Elementary School by Leo Elk) has become the Reform Movement's high school in Israel. Under the direction of Rabbi Robert Samuel, it has developed an expanding program which includes the absorption of American students for semesters of study, the imparting of Jewish values in a progressive idiom, the encouragement of worship in its Ohel Avraham, and more recently the development of a center program for a culturally and socially mixed constituency.

Israeli Reform has, from its inception, been committed to protecting its religious and legal rights. It was long involved in struggles to protect congregations from being evicted from temporary homes or from securing land on which to build. The movement is currently engaged in a legal struggle for the recognition of two of its rabbis, Moshe Zemer and Mordecai Rotem, as official marriage registrars in Israel. It has successfully defended the existing Law of Return from repeated efforts to amend it, and has enlisted the Conservative and other movements in this cause. It has fought in the courts for the legal protection of immigrants who were converted by non-Orthodox Rabbis. True to its Reform mandate, it has intervened in behalf of disadvantaged groups such as immigrants from Ethiopia whose Jewish status was questioned, and it has declared its concern about moral aspects of the Arab uprising. Israeli Reform's halakhic authority, Moshe Zemer, attempts to deal with many of those issues in the context of Jewish law. The movement has established its Religious Action Center which is committed to confronting social issues affecting Reform and the nation. The Religious Action Center has filed suit in the Supreme Court for approval of a Reform burial society (Menucha Nechona) that will provide burial services under Reform auspices.

Through the Religious Action Center, a social agenda is beginning to be implemented. The center, under the direction of Uri Regev, intends to coordinate a broad spectrum of social issues.

In 1972 and 1973, members of the CCAR in America and in Israel met in Oranim and at the Leo Baeck School with leaders of kibbutz movements to discuss, in Hebrew, the areas of common spiritual and social concern in which each could be helpful to the other. Out of these meetings, lasting several days, emerged a united decision to strive for the creation of a Reform kibbutz.

Consequently, the Reform Movement has created two kibbutzim—Yahel (1977) and Lotan (1983) in the Negev. Both consist of native Israelis and immigrants who, in their economic and social lives and in their religious-cultural experiences, strive to integrate a liberal orientation with an assertive traditionalism. Together with Har he-Halutz, the movement's observation outpost (*mizpeh*) in Galilee (1985), these settlements represent an effort at synthesis of past and present.

REFORM IN NORTH AMERICA

The Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 stressed universalism as paramount in its perception of Judaism. But

"A Centenary Perspective" (1976) declared that while the ethics of universalism implicit in traditional Judaism must be an explicit part of our Jewish duty, yet the "survival of the Jewish People is of highest priority and . . . in carrying out our Jewish responsibilities we help move humanity toward its messianic fulfillment." While the Reform community continues to respond to the prophetic impulses in Judaism, it appears also to be moving steadily toward ever stronger manifestations of particularity. Both in religious and in ethnic-national terms, Reform is at this period stressing its Jewish uniqueness, if even as an aspect of humanity's "messianic fulfillment." This does not suggest abandonment of Reform's special social consciousness but rather a reordering of priorities in response to the demands of the times. Thus, the Reform stress on Israel, and the spiritual inward turning within Reform, do not invalidate social concern but rather appear to supplement it. Certainly, since 1967, Reform Jews, reacting to the isolation experienced by Jewry prior to the Six-Day War, began to concentrate on the crisis of Jewish existence and to define themselves more as Jews than as Reform Jews. It is no overstatement that Israel has possessed more of the emotional, moral, and religious space of Reform Jews. This is best articulated in the conclusion of a resolution passed by the CCAR during an emergency session in June 21, 1967: "We declare our solidarity with the State and the People of Israel. Their triumphs are our triumphs. Their ordeal is our ordeal. Their fate is our fate." One of the first, if not the first, American Rabbinic conventions was held by the CCAR in Israel on Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem, in June 1970. Others followed in March 1974, June 1981, and March 1988.

On the American scene, the Reform Movement has gone through a period of spiritual creativity unmatched in its previous history. The CCAR has produced a new siddur, *Shaarei Tefillah* (1975), a new maḥzor, *Shaarei Tshuvah* (1978), in expanded traditional yet also new form, with greatly increased use of Hebrew (as well as some Yiddish), with stress on Israel and the Holocaust. It has also published a new manual for rabbis, *Maaglei Zedek* (by David Polish and Gunther Plaut) which reflects many of the changes taking place within Jewish life, such as sexual equality and the spiritual pervasiveness of Israel. The UAHC has produced a modern commentary on the Pentateuch (by Gunther Plaut and Bernard Bamberger), a new Haggadah (by Herbert Bronstein and Leonard Baskin), and other works.

Preceding these events, the steady alteration of Reform took place from what was primarily a theological, profoundly ideological system, into an extended regimen of doing Jewish deeds, of performing *mitzvot* at home and in the synagogue. This was in keeping with a trend which in part triggered and increasingly responded to the Columbus Platform. In 1957, *A Guide for Reform Jews* (by Doppelt and Polish), stressing the phrase, "it is a mitzvah to," and identifying *mitzvot* with formative moments in Jewish history, was created by individuals for the specific purpose of prompting official Reform responses which came in the form of *Gates of Mitzvah* (1979). The CCAR has also produced *Reform Responsa*, a two-volume collection of hundreds of rabbinic decisions (Walter Jacob, editor, 1983, 1987) and *Gates of the Seasons* (1983). The growing awakening within Reform to what has become a mitzvah system, has resulted in widespread observances within congregations where *Seliḥot* services, the second day of Rosh Ha-Shanah, the widespread employment of cantors, the universal practice of Bar and Bat Mitzvah services prevail. In addition, the increased response to the *mitzvah* of *talmud Torah* is resulting in the proliferation of camping programs, Reform day schools, summer pilgrimages to Israel, and extended periods of study in Israel. The Reform Movement is also increasingly stressing the importance of personal and home observance in respect to the Sabbath, festivals, life cycle events, and prayer. Of special significance is a recent effort by the Reform rabbinate of New York and Los Angeles to train corps of *mohalim* and *mohalot* (circumcisers) for Reform communities. The purposes are to encourage the observance of *brit milah* (circumcision) and to counteract the refusal by some Orthodox *mohalim* to officiate for families whose infants may be considered to be halakhically non-Jewish.

All this represents a significant turn toward collective and individual spirituality but it does not necessarily suggest that Reform Judaism is becoming halakhic. As has been noted, the movement has been steadily producing a mitzvah system and an accompanying body of literature, and collective consensus. Nevertheless, it would be a fallacy to suggest that this is necessarily leading toward acceptance of halakhah as a determinative code for Reform. What can be said is that a substantial, although unmeasured, sector of Reform is taking *halakhah* far more seriously than it may have in the past, although even this must be qualified by many instances of early halakhic discussions over such issues as the circumcision of male converts. Today, however, the number of halakhic inquiries and authoritative responses by Solomon Freehof who published hundreds of responsa, and by his successor,

Walter Jacob, who has written and compiled many responsa, attest to the unprecedented interest of Reform Jews in learning what the tradition has to say on a multitude of issues.

At the initiative of Alexander Schindler, president of the UAHC, an intensive program was launched to confront the growing challenge of intermarriage. A special department was established along a national front to reach out to intermarried families and prospectively intermarried couples. This involves classes, conferences, retreats, films and literature, all aimed at stimulating and deepening interest and involvement in Judaism. Also, the CCAR in 1983, passed its Patrilinear resolution, declaring the children of intermarried couples (with either parent Jewish) to be Jewish, subject to the parents' wishes and to the fulfillment of basic *mitzvot* by the children.

As issues broaden and begin to affect the entire Reform community and its own self-definition, the halakhic dilemma becomes far more complex. It is here that we observe sharp divisions between anti-halakhists, non-halakhists, halakhists, and quasi-halakhists. This configuration can best be observed in such issues as medical ethics, intermarriage, women in the rabbinate, and patrilinear descent. Anti-halakhists would argue that a modern, liberal Reform may make its determination without reference to a halakhic system which is not equipped to deal with eventualities unanticipated by the *halakhah*. Halakhists, perhaps the smallest component in the Reform rabbinate, would support halakhic ingenuity in finding solutions for our times. Quasi-halakhists would perceive *halakhah* as an authoritative guide, usually when revealing less restrictive options, but not necessarily determinative. Thus, in 1922, Hebrew Union College Professor Jacob Lauterbach issued a halakhic responsum rejecting the ordination of women, yet the CCAR opposed him, and in 1971 the college ordained the first woman. Despite the clear tendency of the *halakhah* against patrilineality, the CCAR, having searched the *halakhah*, nevertheless took its unequivocal position. In 1973, the CCAR confronted the issue of intermarriage. Following a year of study, a special committee produced and the CCAR adopted a document reaffirming and strengthening an earlier statement of opposition to rabbinic participation at intermarriages, and in that context also reaffirmed the principle of rabbinic autonomy. The latter as applied especially to such an issue is hardly halakhic. The contradiction has been noted. Personal autonomy is unique to the Reform rabbinate. It is perceived by many as a moral force and by others as a stumbling bloc. A definitive Reform view on *halakhah*, if such a view is possible, has not emerged.

The growth of Reform particularism notwithstanding, the commitment to social activism continues to animate Reform in North America. During the 1960s and 1970s, numbers of Reform rabbis and congregations were involved in the civil rights struggle and in opposition to the Vietnam War. Rabbis and lay people participated in civil rights demonstrations in the North and the South. In a few cases, rabbis' homes and temples in the South were threatened and attacked. Reform activists demonstrated and spoke out against the war, both in their communities and from their pulpits.

Under the auspices of the UAHC, the Religious Action Center in Washington presides over a broad agenda of general and Jewish issues, and for many Reform Jews, social involvement is a primary justification for their Jewish commitment. Under the direction of Rabbi David Saperstein, the center seeks to apply the ethical-social commitments of Judaism to contemporary social and political issues within Jewish, American, and international contexts. Through education, lobbying, activism, involvement of youth and adults on local levels, and collaboration with other Jewish and non-Jewish agencies, it has become a prominent and influential intervening medium on the American and Jewish scenes.

KELAL ISRAEL ("JEWISH COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE")

The creation of the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA, 1977) resulted both in the emergence of a worldwide Reform Zionist body (Artzenu) and for the first time a Zionist organization based on Reform religious Jewish principles. Since its inception, ARZA-Artzenu has been a major factor in the support of the Reform *kibbutzim* and *moshav*; it has brought the Religious Action Center in Jerusalem into being; it has had a growing representation in Zionist Congresses since 1978. From 1988 to 1992 it was represented in Zionist councils by Richard Hirsch, as chairman of the Zionist General Council (1987-92), and by Henry Skirball as head of the World Zionist Organization's department of education in the *Diaspora* (1987-92). With the rest of the movement, it has successfully resisted efforts to amend the Law of Return and at the 1987 Zionist Congress led the successful fight calling for equal treatment for all religious Jewish bodies within Israel (the pluralism resolution). In 1988, it adopted a declaration embodying a comprehensive position on its religious-Zionist philosophy. The Declaration affirms Reform Judaism as committed to the dual traditional stress on piety and justice; it affirms

democracy and pluralism in Jewish life which also includes secularism; it affirms the Diaspora and *aliyah* (immigration), and warns the Diaspora to "understand the historical risks entailed by. . . success." It calls upon the government of Israel to "repudiate religious repression and political violence." It rejects religious extremism, calls for safeguarding the rights of Arabs in the administered territories, and urges a peaceful settlement based on mutual guarantees and concessions.

As a forerunner to ARZA's total involvement in the world Jewish community, the CCAR in 1972 became a member of the World Jewish Congress, and the UAHC joined soon thereafter.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of Reform Judaism, beginning in the 1930s, advancing in the 1940s, and becoming more extensively institutionalized and internationalized from the 1950s, represents a new phenomenon in Judaism and in Jewish life. It has had its effect not only on its adherents but upon the Jewish world. To be sure, there are contradictions and problematics, but with full consideration of their severity, the tide seems to be moving in a positive and creative direction. The movement which began with hostility towards a Jewish national home is not only securely imbedded in that home but is helping shape its destiny.

[David Polish]

Dc. 1983-92 Update

Attitudes to Homosexuality

On June 25, 1990, at its 101st Convention, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) adopted the report of its Ad Hoc Committee on homosexuality and the rabbinate.

This report follows a line of resolutions adopted by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) and the CCAR, dealing mainly with the human and civil rights of homosexuals, and their place in the Jewish community. The present report took this matter one step further and dealt with the highly controversial and sensitive issue of homosexual rabbis.

For Reform Judaism, in dealing with the issue of homosexuality (as with other halakhic issues), the fact that the Torah includes an explicit prohibition against homosexuality, calling it an abomination, is not necessarily the ultimate consideration in forging its contemporary position and attitude. Reform Judaism attempts to investigate the historical circumstances that resulted in a particular biblical or oral law, and confronts it with the present reality, bearing in mind changing scientific, social, and moral circumstances, as well as the dictates of conscience.

In 1969, the leading figure in shaping the American Reform movement's position on *halakhah*, Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, issued a responsum that followed the traditional position viewing homosexual behavior as sinful, and seeing homosexuality as running "counter to the *sancta* of Jewish life."

The changing position of Reform Judaism on homosexuality is based on the recognition that approximately 10% of the population is homosexual. Equally the growing visibility of homosexuals, and the increasing knowledge about the psychological and etiological foundations of homosexuality have played their part. Even though there is no unanimity in the scientific community as to the sources of homosexuality, it is clear that for many, sexual orientation is not a matter of conscious choice, but is constitutional, and, therefore, not subject to change.

Holding the conviction that all persons are created in the Divine Image and that sexual orientation is irrelevant to one's human worth coupled with the new understanding of homosexuality, Reform Judaism finds it difficult to uphold the traditional view which presupposes choice and therefore sees homosexuality as a deliberate act committed by "heterosexuals" in willful violation of the Divine command.

In 1977, the UAHC and the CCAR passed resolutions calling for equal protection under the law and opposing discrimination against homosexuals in areas of "opportunity, including employment and housing."

The UAHC admitted as members congregations with special outreach to lesbian and gay Jews and in 1987 added a resolution stating that "sexual orientation should not be a criterion for membership of, or participation in, an activity of any synagogue."

In 1989, the UAHC went further, stating that its congregations must be a place where gay and lesbian Jews can know that they are accepted on terms of visibility, not invisibility, and that "no limits are to be placed on their communal or spiritual aspirations."

These resolutions reflect the mood in which the Ad Hoc CCAR committee deliberated on the issue of homosexuality and the rabbinate. The report approved of the new admissions policy to the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Until the early 1970s homosexual orientation was perceived as a mental illness or deviance, and anyone who was openly gay was not considered for admission. The new policy considers the sexual orientation of an applicant only within the context of a candidate's overall suitability for the rabbinate, and does not make an *a priori* disqualification on that basis.

The report urged that all rabbis, regardless of sexual orientation, be accorded the opportunity to fulfill the sacred vocation which they have chosen. At the same time the CCAR recognized its limited ability to guarantee the tenure of gay or lesbian rabbis who "come out of the closet." In view of the unique role of the Rabbi and the fact that this is an intensely emotional and potentially divisive issue, the CCAR concluded that the question required further education and dialogue within Reform congregations.

The majority of the committee viewed the issue of choice as crucial and held that heterosexuality is the only appropriate Jewish choice in order to fulfill one's covenantal obligations. It reaffirmed the centrality of heterosexual, monogamous, procreative marriage as the ideal human relationship for the perpetuation of the species, covenantal fulfillment, and the preservation of the Jewish people. Also expressed in the report is a minority viewpoint that accepts homosexuality as a legitimate alternative to heterosexuality. The report met with some criticism from both sides of the debate. There were those who felt that the position expressed is too mild and would like to see a clear validation of homosexual life styles and unions. Others felt that the Reform movement had lost its bearings and standards bowing to the popular and passing mood. The latter group holds to the biblical injunctions and still view homosexuality as an "abnormal and objectionable" lifestyle.

At the same time that the deliberations were taking place in the United States, this matter was being taken up in liberal and progressive Jewish movements throughout the world. In England, for example, the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain published a booklet following a process of study over three years by a group of Reform rabbis and lay leaders. The booklet explained that homosexuality was not a perverse choice and stressed the profound distinction between those who refuse to fulfill their traditional obligations, and those who are unable to do so. The study emphasized the special Jewish obligation towards oppressed minority groups and called for the welcoming of homosexuals in the community.

The Rabbinic Conference of the Union of Liberal & Progressive Synagogues, also in England, has published a position paper on homosexuality, rejecting as morally wrong the harboring of prejudices of discrimination against homosexuals as a group, whether on the basis of an instinctive aversion of biblical teaching. The position paper sees such discrimination as violating Judaism's most fundamental ethical teachings.

Lastly, the Israel Council of Progressive Rabbis has also formulated its position, rejecting the traditional labeling of homosexuality as an abomination, and expressing its belief in the homosexual's equal rights in society. At the same time the Council views homosexuality as an exceptional phenomenon which cannot be accepted as a norm, equivalent to heterosexuality which represents, in the form of the family unit, the sacred ideal of Jewish tradition.

[Uri Regev]

For Reform Judaism in the State of Israel see Israel, State of: Religious Life.

**HISTORY-
CONSERVATIVE**

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

Also: Historical Judaism; Judaism, Conservative; Judaism, Positive Historical; Tenuah ha-Masortit (Isr.)

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM. Conservative Judaism is one of the religious responses to the situation in which Jews found themselves in the era of emancipation. This movement arose in the middle of the 19th century both in Europe and in the United States; it was known then as "Historical Judaism," the name which it always retained in Europe, or "The Historical School," which name was replaced in general use in America after the beginning of the 20th century by the term Conservative Judaism. The American development was parallel to the one in Europe; it was influenced in the early years by men who had received their education within European historical Judaism, but it was an essentially autonomous development. Those who identified with Conservative Judaism affirmed the end of the ghettoization of the Jews and their emancipation, and the separation of church and state, as positive goods; they hailed the Westernization of Jews in manner, education, and culture; they knew, therefore, that some changes were inevitable in the modes of Jewish religious life, and they affirmed that these changes could be made validly in the light of biblical and rabbinic precedent, for they viewed the entire history of Judaism as such a succession of changes. They laid the emphasis on the Jewish people throughout history as an organism which refreshed its living spirit by responding creatively to new challenges. The founders of Conservative Judaism faced the contemporary age in the belief that the traditional forms and precepts of Judaism were valid and that changes in practice were to be made only with great reluctance. They maintained considerable tolerance for those among the Conservatives who were boldly innovative, provided that these innovations did not touch essential commitments of the Conservatives, such as their devotion to the Hebrew language in the liturgy, the observance of kashrut (see Dietary Laws), and the Sabbath.

This attitude was first represented in the United States by Isaac Leeser, who had received both a talmudic and a secular education in his native Germany before he went to Richmond, Virginia, in 1824. Between 1829 and 1850 he was hazzan of the Sephardi congregation, Mikveh Israel, in Philadelphia, and he remained in that city until his death in 1868. Leeser pioneered in the introduction of the sermon in English and he proposed such changes as rearrangement of the service to remove unnecessary passages and to introduce a few readings in English, but he was otherwise deeply devoted to the retention of the traditional liturgy. Leeser tried to cooperate with Isaac Mayer Wise, the leading Reformer, in organizing both rabbinic and congregational unions in the middle of the 19th century in which all of the various forces could cooperate in the creation of a unified American religious body, but such efforts failed repeatedly. The stamp had been laid on American-religious organizations by the nonconformist Protestants, who had been the majority among the founding fathers of the country, so that each Jewish congregation was separate and supreme, and could thus be moved to change with relative ease. The rabbinic figures who were arriving from Europe in the middle of the 19th century were mostly reformers. The dominant tendency was against compromise; it was against the acceptance of the older restraints or the creation of new authority. In the middle third of the 19th century Reform Judaism had become so successful that in 1880 only 12 of the 200 synagogues then in America identified themselves as other than Reform. Nonetheless, there were important centers of traditionalist influence in Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore. Leeser had succeeded in creating a rabbinical school, Maimonides College, in 1867. Even though it disintegrated by 1873 it did graduate the first four men trained for the rabbinate in the United States and it left a memory which was to be followed 14 years later. The Sephardi Congregations in Philadelphia and New York and their ministers, Sabato Morais and H. Pereira Mendes, and the laymen who came under their influence, remained staunchly traditionalist. In 1859 Benjamin Szold, a Reformer of the most moderate kind, came to Baltimore where he was to found what was perhaps the first Zionist group in the United States. Marcus Jastrow went to Philadelphia in 1866 and Alexander Kohut to New York in 1885. Both were Jewish scholars of the first rank. Neither of these men was Orthodox and their general stance, which allowed for radical changes of the service (Jastrow, like Szold before him, published prayer books of his own editing), was more flexible than that of Morais and Mendes. However, at a time when Reform was dominant in the United States all of those who refused to be part of it tended to cooperate. Conservative Judaism in the United States crystallized its institutions, not in dissent from Orthodoxy, but in reaction to Reform.

The final and firm break with the then overwhelming majority occurred in the year 1885. The Reform rabbinate met in Pittsburgh and announced their very radical platform in which, among other assertions,

all of the rituals such as *kashrut*, were pronounced to be relative and dispensable. Alexander Kohut took vehement public issue with Kaufmann Kohler, the principal author of this Reform program, and Sabato Morais began to urge upon all his friends the organization of a rabbinical school dedicated to the "knowledge and practice of historical Judaism." This institution was organized through the cooperation of Morais, Mendes, Kohut, and a number of prominent laymen who had remained traditionalists. It was opened at the beginning of 1887 with a class of eight students. In its Articles of Incorporation this Jewish Theological Seminary of America Association was dedicated to "the preservation in America of the knowledge and practice of historical Judaism as ordained in the law of Moses expounded by the prophets and sages in Israel in Biblical and Talmudic writings."

The men who formed this new institution were West Europeans by birth and training, but most of the Jews in the United States in the 1880s who were traditionalists were the recently arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe. These were Orthodox in a quite different mold. Such figures as Mendes and Cyrus Adler attempted to bridge the gap, for they early saw the virtue of the addition of this new strength to their ranks. Despite their efforts, this union was not to be. In 1898 there was a first attempt to organize an association of Orthodox synagogues in the United States and Mendes was, indeed, elected president, but the breach between the groups soon came. At its third convention this synagogue body repudiated the authority of graduates of the new Jewish Theological Seminary as rabbis. Inevitably, the group which had created that institution and continued to be associated with it had now to define itself in its own posture as Western, traditionalist, but not Orthodox, at least not in the East European way. Toward the end of the century the members of the historical school agitated to convoke a "synod" to find the limits of permissible change and enact, on the basis of valid precedent, those changes which were required in the modes of the tradition. Writing from England in 1898 Solomon Schechter, who was rapidly becoming a major influence in America, argued against such a synod. He saw a healthy development as possible only as it grew naturally and spontaneously among those committed to the religious tradition; he believed that rabbinical assemblies to deal with the law, such as those which the Reformers had in abundance throughout the 19th century, would be imposing on Judaism a sacerdotal model which he mocked as un-Jewish.

In the last two decades of the 19th century many hundreds of thousands of Jews had arrived from Eastern Europe and their Americanization had become a matter of concern to their compatriots of the older community. One of the motivations which led to the reorganization of the central institution of Conservative Judaism, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, was the need that was then felt by such men as Jacob H. Schiff and Louis Marshall, who were themselves Reform, to provide an English-speaking, Westernized clergy for these immigrants to replace their very foreign immigrant rabbis. Something of this operated in the mind of Cyrus Adler, the disciple of Morais, who was the chief actor in this reorganization, though his primary concern was to continue traditional Judaism in America, for Adler had grown up in the circle which had resisted Reform in the previous generation. The reorganized Seminary opened in 1902 with a small but very distinguished young faculty which had been assembled by Schechter, including such figures as Louis Ginzberg in Talmud. In the next year (1903) Alexander Marx and Israel Friedlander were added. Despite the attitude of the chief financial backers of the Seminary, who were anti-Zionists, Schechter and his younger faculty colleagues all identified with the movement as the expression of their sense of the religious and cultural unity. The orientation of the movement on the building of Jewish life both in America and in Palestine was well established from the very beginning.

An alumni association of the Seminary existed by 1901, even before the reorganization of the institution. This body had been renamed The Rabbinical Assembly of America before 1920, the name under which it was incorporated in 1929. This reflected the fact that rabbis graduated from other institutions who joined the Conservative tendency were being admitted to this body along with graduates of the Seminary. In 1962 this organization was renamed the Rabbinical Assembly, the International Association of Conservative Rabbis; there were by then rabbis on all the continents sharing the Conservative outlook, among them by 1970 more than 40 serving in Israel in various capacities, several at the head of congregations of their own. A decade of effort was put by Solomon Schechter into the organization of an association of synagogues sympathetic to the religious stance of his Seminary. There was internal opposition to this move especially by Cyrus Adler, who expressed fear that such an organization would permanently close the door to a unity of all the traditionalist forces, but Schechter prevailed. At the founding assembly of the United Synagogue of America in 1913 a constitution was

adopted which announced as the religious purpose of the organization "the maintenance of Jewish tradition in its historical continuity" and explained this purpose further by summarizing the main outlines of traditional Jewish practice. It was in the last sentence that the real purpose of a separate organization was made clear. The new body "while not endorsing the innovations introduced by any of its constituent bodies" would "embrace all elements essentially loyal to traditional Judaism." The question remained unresolved as to whether it was the purpose of the United Synagogue to act as a pedagogic instrument to wean congregations with mixed seating of men and women, or which used the organ to accompany Sabbath and holiday services, from these practices; whether it was simply willing to tacitly condone such deviations permanently; or whether such and other changes in practice would ultimately crystalize as the legitimate norm of Conservative Judaism. Solomon Schechter died in 1915 and these unresolved problems were part of the legacy of his successors.

Cyrus Adler immediately became the acting president of the Seminary, and in 1924 he was elected president, which office he occupied until his death in 1940. Louis Ginzberg was, throughout this period, the dominant figure in the faculty and the authority on Jewish law for the movement. He was cautiously liberal. For example, he discouraged but did not utterly condemn mixed seating in the synagogue. More radical leadership was coming from Mordecai M. Kaplan. Kaplan was the founder in 1918 of the Jewish Center in New York, the first American synagogue center, in which he attempted to integrate religion, education for both young and adults, and recreational endeavor. It was, however, Kaplan's philosophy of Judaism which was even more important in changing the shape of Conservative Judaism. His viewpoint was already emerging even before the death of Solomon Schechter, and it was ultimately formulated in a book which appeared in 1934, *Judaism as a Civilization*. In his view Judaism was a "religious civilization," the evolving creation of the Jewish community which expressed its ethos through the patterns of behavior and folkways which it devised. If the inherited ideas and rituals of Judaism were expressions of such past devisings, the present generation, while reverential toward that past, was both free and obligated to make its own changes in the light of its own needs. The heaviest philosophical influence on this viewpoint was that of Zionist cultural nationalism and of John Dewey's American pragmatic philosophy. Institutionally this view, which came to be known as Reconstructionism, expressed itself through a synagogue, the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, which was founded in 1922, with Kaplan as its leader, and a biweekly magazine, *The Reconstructionist*, which began to appear in 1935. During these years Kaplan's influence extended increasingly to Reform and even secularist circles, but the majority of those who followed him, in whole or in part, were within the Conservative movement.

In the 1930s and the 1940s the majority of the younger leaders of the Rabbinical Assembly, even those who found Kaplan's theological views too naturalist, did battle for changes in ritual practice. In 1936 the Rabbinical Assembly voted to establish a prior condition in the ritual marriage contract (the *ketubbah*) to make it possible for the *bet din* (court of Jewish law) to grant religious divorces to women abandoned by their husbands. This modification had been proposed by one of its most learned members, Louis M. Epstein, but the suggestion was withdrawn because of the opposition from the Orthodox. These desires to formulate clearly a definition of outlook and practice for Conservative Judaism as avowedly differing from the Orthodox encountered strong opposition from the majority of the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary, as well as from some of the leaders of the rabbinate, and this conflict has continued to the present. The traditionalists, increasingly led by Louis Finkelstein, who became president of the Seminary in 1940, wanted to view the Conservative movement not as a party but as the valid heir of the whole of the older tradition of Judaism. The professor of Talmud who was added to the faculty in 1940, Saul Lieberman, represented an undeviatingly legalistic outlook even though he did collaborate in 1952 in amending the marriage contract with an additional clause under which the groom obligated himself to accept the judgment of a religious court of law if it instructed him to give his wife a divorce. This arrangement was completely within the realm even of the most Orthodox interpretation of Jewish law, and this concession on the part of the traditionalists did not end the continuing pressure within the rabbinate for more radical changes. In 1968 the Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly unanimously accepted the recommendation of Edward Gershfield, one of its members and a talmudist on the Seminary faculty, which amounted to giving rabbis the right to declare the nullity of Jewish religious marriages if the groom refuses to undergo the traditional procedures for religious divorce. These tendencies toward an independent stance had crystallized as early as 1948, when the dominant Seminary influence on the Law Committee was rejected, and it first surfaced in a decision in 1915 which permitted the use of electricity on the Sabbath and which endorsed, as a worthy act, travel to the

synagogue on Sabbath for the purpose of attending services. In the first half of the 20th century the Jewish Theological Seminary of America succeeded in becoming an academic institution of international eminence. In addition to the rabbinical school and to the Teachers' College, which was opened in 1909, the Seminary Library grew to be the single most important collection of books on Judaism that was ever assembled. In 1931 the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects was opened, and in 1939 the Seminary reached out to the larger community by launching the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion. After World War I, and coming into floodtide in the era after World War II, Conservative Judaism rose rapidly in numbers. It became the religious movement which spoke to the American-born children of East European immigrants, reconciling both their attachments to the traditional emotions of the youth of most of them and their acculturation in America, and educating their children in congregational schools and in recent years also in some tens of day schools. In this period, the Conservative rabbinate itself consisted of men who had mostly begun their careers within Orthodoxy. In the practice of the laity, substantially less of the tradition was observed than was the norm of public and synagogue behavior, but its total disregard was evident only among few. In the 1950s every study of religious preference among the Jews in America showed that almost half regarded themselves as Conservative Jews. This has lessened somewhat with the appearance of the younger generation, the grandchildren of the post-1882 immigration, who are to an increasing degree unaffiliated even emotionally with one of the religious groups. On the other hand, the Conservative movement itself has succeeded in the post-World War II period in producing the majority of its younger rabbis, and the faculty appointments to its Seminary have come almost entirely from within its own ranks. In 1970 there were some 350,000 families, representing perhaps 1,500,000 people, in the formal structure of Conservative synagogues; at least two-fifths of the affiliated Jews in America belong to a Conservative congregation.

The tensions inherent in Conservative Judaism from its very beginnings continued to operate. The Reconstructionist group moved increasingly toward defining itself as a denomination in its own right, and it even established a rabbinical school of its own, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, in Philadelphia, in 1968. Also in 1968 a younger group which was to some degree under the influence of Abraham Joshua Heschel, the theologian and hasidic philosopher who had come to the Seminary faculty in 1946, organized the beginnings of a rabbinical school and a religious movement of its own in Boston, under the name *Havurat Shalom*. Within the structure of Conservative Judaism the decision by the Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, published in 1969, to permit individual congregations to abandon the second day of all the festivals except Rosh Ha-Shanah, thus paralleling the practice in Israel, evoked conflict with the traditionalists in its own ranks. There was an ongoing problem with the rabbinate of Israel, which continued to refuse to recognize the validity of such actions as divorces granted by members of the Rabbinical Assembly. All of the segments of the Conservative Movement have direct institutional involvement in Israel, including a Seminary Academic Center in Jerusalem (1963), several Conservative synagogues in the country, and numerous programs, especially during the summer, of the United Synagogue. As early as 1943 the Rabbinical Assembly had held its first joint session with the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the organization of the Reform Rabbinate, and cooperation between these two bodies increased. The tendency within the Jewish Theological Seminary has been as emphatically in the other direction, toward a more Orthodox stance than existed within it in the previous generation. The Conservative movement has always shown great capacity for maintaining institutional unity amidst great conflict. To continue such unity amidst ever greater diversity is the problem which it, perhaps more than either Reform or Neo-Orthodoxy, will have to face in the next generation.

[Arthur Hertzberg]

Developments 1970–1990

DEMOGRAPHY

Although the roots of Conservatism can be traced to Germany in the early and middle 1900s, in the 20th century it has flourished most in the United States. According to *The American Jewish Yearbook 1989*, from the end of World War II to the present a plurality of American Jewish adults have identified themselves as Conservative Jews. After the decimation of European Jewry in the Holocaust, American Jews have constituted the world's largest Jewish population with the most financial resources, the predominance of Conservative Judaism in America then being especially significant.

A major shift, however, has occurred in American Jewry in the last two decades. While 33% of American Jews still consider themselves Conservative (in comparison to 9% Orthodox, 2% Reconstructionist, and 0% Reform), a full 26% no longer identify with any of the religious movements. Jews now feel totally at home in America, and their understanding of America is quite secular—more secular, in fact, than most American Christians take it to be. Even those Jews who do see themselves in religious terms do not necessarily join synagogues. Nationwide, in fact, only about half of American Jews are currently synagogue members, with the weakest affiliation rates in some of the largest Jewish communities. This, represents a major decrease in membership and impact for all three of the major religious movements in American Judaism. Their primary challenge is not the competition engendered by each other, but the secularism.

THE SEARCH FOR DEFINITION

These demographic factors were one important stimulus for the drive within the Conservative Movement during the 1970s and 1980s to formulate a clearer definition of the meaning of Conservative Judaism. No longer would adult Jews join synagogues almost automatically as a result of social pressure; now they must be convinced to take on a religious form of Judaism in the first place, and a Conservative form in particular. To accomplish this, the movement could no longer satisfy itself with a vague understanding of its principles on the part of its leaders and constituents; it would have to articulate its principles and programs clearly in order to mount a campaign to convince unaffiliated Jews to join.

In addition to these demographic pressures, two events proved the need for such a definition. In 1968, the left end of the Conservative Movement formed its own rabbinical school, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. The followers of Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan had, until then, described themselves as a tendency within Conservative Judaism, but this marked the establishment of Reconstructionism as a small, but distinctly separate movement.

Then, after a protracted struggle within the arms of the movement, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Conservative movement's only institution for ordaining rabbis, decided in October 1983, to admit women to rabbinical school beginning with the Fall 1984 class. This led the right wing of the Conservative movement, which was adamantly opposed to this development, to form a new organization, the Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism. The union established its own Board of Halakhic Inquiry, a direct challenge to the univocal authority of the Conservative movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, and it pursued fund raising and other projects on its own. Ultimately, in 1990, the union dropped its tense affiliation with the Conservative movement altogether, changing its name to the Union for Traditional Judaism and opening its own rabbinical school.

These defections on both the left and the right and these demographic developments together led the leadership of the movement increasingly to call for a clearer definition of Conservative Judaism. Seminary Chancellor Gerson D. Cohen and Rabbinical Assembly President Alexander Shapiro convened a commission in May 1985, under the chairmanship of Rabbi Robert Gordis, to write a statement of the movement's philosophy. The final product, *Emet Ve-Emunah: Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism*, published in March 1988, was the joint effort of the movement as a whole. The document, some 40 pages in length, is divided into three sections: "God in the World," "The Jewish People," and "Living a Life of Torah." It affirms belief in God and the legitimacy of the multiple interpretations which Jews have given that belief historically. It also avows belief in revelation, "the uncovering of an external source of truth emanating from God." It describes three varying theories of revelation within the Movement, ruling out, however, relativism, on the one hand, and fundamentalism and literalism, on the other. It supplies a number of reasons why Jewish law is "indispensable" within Judaism as the Conservative movement understands it, and it describes its conception of the development of Jewish law and its methods for making decisions within Jewish law. While the Commission members rejoice in the existence and flourishing of the State of Israel and "encourage and cherish *aliyah* to Israel as a value, goal, and *mitzvah*," they also affirm that there are various centers to Jewish life, not Israel alone, and that Israel and the Diaspora must contribute to each other's growth. *Emet Ve-Emunah* acknowledges that there is a wide spectrum of opinion within the Conservative movement with regard to the role of women in Jewish ritual, but it expresses the conviction that "justice and dignity for each human being can be achieved within the framework of Halakhah." The document's chapters on prayer, evil, and eschatology, together with those on God and revelation, make clear that Conservative Judaism is not just a specific approach to Jewish law and Jewish study, but a form of Judaism with deeply grounded theological beliefs—and, indeed, these theological sections have been

the occasion for much adult education on the substance of Jewish belief.

Another definitional experience occurred in 1985–1986. Traditional Jewish law defines a Jew as one born to a Jewish woman or converted to Judaism through specific rites. After the Reform movement acknowledged as Jewish children born to a Jewish father but not a Jewish mother, provided that further steps were taken to confirm the child's Jewish identity, the Conservative movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards passed a standard which reaffirmed the movement's commitment to the traditional definition. When this standard was later adopted by the Rabbinical Assembly, it imposed, according to the rules governing such matters, the traditional definition on the movement as a whole, with rabbis and synagogues subject to expulsion for violation. Since the Conservative movement had in the previous decade endorsed a number of changes in Jewish law, especially with regard to the status of women, many interpreted the vigor with which it pursued this reaffirmation as function of the desire clearly to differentiate Conservative Judaism from Reform Judaism.

EDUCATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Synagogues increasingly offer not only the common, formal, "cathedral style" service, wherein congregants are largely passive and the service is led by the rabbi and cantor, but also alternative services, in which sections of the service are led by different people each week. Rabbis in such services function primarily as resource people for those learning the services or preparing Torah lessons. The Ramah camps and the United Synagogue Youth groups have been a major factor in bringing about this change, for former Ramah campers and U.S.Y. members often want to replicate the participation they experienced in those atmospheres in their adult Jewish lives.

Since Jews who join synagogues are now making a conscious and socially free choice to do so, they often come with the desire to incorporate greater levels of Judaism in their lives. This has led to a proliferation of programs within the Conservative synagogues to train them in the skills necessary for synagogue and home Jewish life. This begins in premarital counseling, with some sessions devoted to the Jewish character of the home which the couple is about to create, and it continues with family education programs for the Sabbath and all the holidays. Learners' *minyanim* have become commonplace.

The arms of the movement have produced materials to aid in these and other educational efforts. The Art of Jewish Living series, for example—a joint project of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles (the seminary's west coast affiliate) and The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs—has to date included three volumes by Dr. Ron Wolfson of the University of Judaism faculty, to help people in varying family configurations learn how to celebrate the Sabbath, Passover, and Hanukkah in their homes. The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs has also sponsored a crash course in Hebrew literacy, created by Rabbi Noah Golinkin, and close to 100,000 people have learned how to articulate prayerbook Hebrew and decipher much of its message through these efforts. In 1985, the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of America published a new prayerbook, *Sim Shalom*; this is the first complete daily, Sabbath, and Festival Conservative prayerbook for both the synagogue and home. Now, the Conservative Movement is finalizing arrangements to produce a new, Conservative commentary on the Pentateuch and *haftarot* for use in Conservative synagogues and homes.

Major developments have also occurred in the formal and informal education of children and teenagers. At midcentury, the Conservative movement was largely opposed to day school education, claiming that American Jewish youngsters should influence, and be influenced by, the melting pot of the public school system. Approximately half of the children being educated in Conservative settings still study in public schools and in supplementary, afternoon and weekend Jewish schools. The other half, however, are now schooled in Solomon Schechter Day Schools. This major shift has occurred, in part, because of the increased acceptance in America of minorities and their cultures, such that it no longer is seen as un-American to prefer ethnic settings for education. Practical factors have also played an important role, including increased disappointment with the quality of public schools and increased financial ability to pay the costs of private education. The seven Ramah camps continue to be a showcase for Conservative educational efforts. United Synagogue Youth, now numbering some 20,000 members, has professionalized its qualifications for group leaders, has instituted programs to augment Sabbath observance among teenagers, and since 1972, has annually produced sourcebooks which have become popular study materials for adults as well as for teenagers.

Much of this activity has been fostered by a new spirit of cooperation among the arms of the movement.

The Jewish Theological Seminary of America no longer takes an aloof stance toward the movement; Chancellors Gerson D. Cohen (1972–1986) and Ismar Schorsch (1986–present) have both placed the Seminary squarely in the midst of the activities of the Conservative movement. Another mark of this new relationship is the role which seminary representatives now play on the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards: whereas such representatives were often at odds with their colleagues from the Rabbinical Assembly in times past, now they share an ideology and approach. This harmonization of the movement is in large measure due to the almost total Americanization of the seminary faculty in the last several decades.

The United Synagogue of America, the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, and the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs have taken an ever-more vigorous role in the educational and institutional affairs of the Movement. While this has represented a shift in structure, at times with some argument and pain, what has emerged is a movement which, while still held by the seminary and its rabbinic graduates, is no longer restrained by it. On the contrary, the seminary has now encouraged its affiliates to pursue Conservative objectives as energetically as possible, and the presidents of all the affiliates meet regularly to coordinate their efforts. Some regions have replicated this cooperative structure. The Pacific Southwest Region of the movement, for example, has created a Conservative Movement Council to coordinate efforts and plan joint programs.

ISRAEL

Solomon Schechter published an article supporting Zionism as early as 1906, just nine years after the First Zionist Congress. While his successors as seminary chancellor, Cyrus Adler and Louis Finkelstein, were not as enthusiastic about the Zionist cause, Mordecai M. Kaplan's strong orientation toward the Jewish people, its land, language, and culture won over the vast majority of Conservative hearts and minds during the first six decades of the 20th century. It is thus somewhat strange that the Conservative movement officially became part of the World Zionist Organization only in 1987, under the title of MERCAZ, the Zionist Political Action Organization for Conservative/Masorti Judaism. (In Israel the Conservative movement is called *Ha-Tenuah Ha-Masorit*, "The Traditional Movement").

In addition to the many programs which various arms of the movement conducted in Israel for youngsters and adults from abroad, the Conservative/Masorti movement in Israel now has some 40 congregations; one kibbutz (Hanaton) and a moshav (Shorashim); the Noam and Solelim movements for teenagers and college-age people, respectively; Nahal army groups; and Ramah-Noam summer camps. Much of the movement's impact on native Israelis is due to its Tali schools, a string of otherwise secular Israeli public schools which have adopted the movement's programs for teaching Judaism. In 1989, the Beit Midrash, the Masorti movement's new school of higher Jewish education for training Israeli rabbis and educators, ordained its first four rabbis. The Rabbinical Assembly of Israel now has a Law Committee of its own to deal with questions which apply specifically to the Israeli context. Its responsa and *Et La'Asot*, a new journal of thought, are both published annually, and Conservative congregations enjoy a weekly Torah portion guide published by the Movement.

THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE

Under the leadership of Rabbi Marshall Meyer, the Conservative movement became the dominant Jewish religious movement in Latin America. The Seminario Rabbinico Latin Americano, a seminary founded in Buenos Aires in 1962 to train rabbis, educators, youth and lay leaders, now has approximately 500 students, including some 30 in its rabbinical program. The Seminario is the only indigenous Latin American institution for training rabbis, and its graduates now serve some 50 congregations from Mexico to Argentina. To make their work possible, the Seminario has published translations of over 70 important Jewish books into Spanish and Portuguese, including the entire year's liturgy, and it publishes the quarterly journal *Maj'shavot/Pensamientos*, which includes translations of significant articles published originally in English and Hebrew as well as original contributions. The Seminario has established a Camp Ramah in Argentina and in Chile, and Latin American Conservative congregations in other countries run camps of their own. The Seminario is also the only agency in Latin America to certify the *kashrut* of foods.

As of the early 1990s there were two Ramah camps in Russia.

Rabbi Louis Jacobs of London has spearheaded the establishment of a number of Conservative congregations in England, and they have produced some of their own liturgical texts. There are also

Conservative congregations in France and Sweden, and the rabbinical seminary in Budapest has formal ties with the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The movement is most active, though, in the Americas and in Israel.

Elliot N. Dorf

**HISTORY-
RECONSTRUCTIONIST**

RECONSTRUCTIONISM

Also: Judaism, Reconstructionist

RECONSTRUCTIONISM, an ideology and a movement in U.S. Jewish life.

History and Development of the Movement

Both the idea and the movement owe their inspiration to Mordecai Menahem Kaplan. Kaplan argues that with the breakdown of certain traditional beliefs, Jewish identity had become attenuated. Jews remain loyal to their faith despite hardship and suffering because they believe that adherence to Judaism assures them of salvation in the next world. But in Kaplan's view, this is no longer credible. Consequently, Judaism must transform itself from a civilization orientated toward the life hereafter into one which can help Jews to attain salvation in this world. Belief in the possibility of this salvation is crucial to Kaplan's thought. It means the progressive improvement of the human personality and the establishment of a free, just, and cooperative social order. Kaplan maintains that there are adequate resources in the world and capacities in man to achieve such salvation. He defines God as the "power that makes for salvation." This notion of God conforms to our experience, since man senses a power which orients him to this life and elicits from him the best of which he is able.

Some Reconstructionists, Milton Steinberg probably being the best example, refused to accept Kaplan's theology. A more popular notion of Kaplan's was his definition of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization whose standards of conduct are established by the Jewish people and whose common denominator is neither beliefs, tenets, nor practices, but rather the continuous life of the Jewish people. The Jewish religion, said Kaplan, exists for the Jewish people, not the Jewish people for the Jewish religion. Judaism, like any other civilization, comprises a history, a language, a religion, a social organization, standards of conduct, and spiritual and social ideals. Under the influence of the early French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, Kaplan stated that whatever is an object of collective concern takes on all the traits of a religion, which in its turn functions in order to hold up to the individual the value of the group and the importance of his complete identification with it. Religion, therefore, lies at the very heart of every civilization.

Many Jewish intellectuals were attracted to Kaplan's program for a Jewish life. Since Judaism is, in his view, a civilization, its parts can only function in interrelationship with one another. He argued for what he called an "organic community" in which the basic unit of Jewish life would be the entire aggregate of synagogue, educational institutions, Zionist organizations, and defense and fraternal bodies, linked into a single community with a democratically elected leadership. Kaplan was also among the first to maintain that the synagogue must function as a Jewish center where an individual might find expression for virtually all Jewish and related activities.

The founding of the Reconstructionist movement may be dated from the establishment of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism (SAJ) in January 1922. The society served both as a synagogue center and as a forum for Kaplan's ideas. In 1935 he launched the magazine *Reconstructionist* in collaboration with his closest associates, of whom Milton Steinberg, Eugene Kohn, and Kaplan's son-in-law, Ira Eisenstein, formed the nucleus. In 1941 the *New Haggadah* and the *Guide to Jewish Ritual* were published. In the *Guide* ritual was viewed not as law but a means to group survival and the spiritual growth of the individual Jew. The individual was to be the arbiter of which rituals or folkways should or should not be practiced, though when making his choice, he was recommended to strike a balance between his own needs and those of the group. In 1945 the Reconstructionist *Sabbath Prayer Book* appeared, against which a ban (*herem*) was proclaimed by the Aguddat ha-Rabbanim and an adverse "statement of opinion" (*gillui da'at*) was issued by Louis Ginzberg and Alexander Marx (*Hadoar*, 24 (1945), 904f.). In accordance with Kaplan's ideology, it excised references to the Jews as a chosen people, and to such concepts as God's revelation of the Torah to Moses and a personal Messiah. Some passages of the traditional prayer book were retained despite Kaplan's rejection of the concepts which lay behind them. In such cases the editors suggested to the reader how the passages were to be understood. Thus, prayers for the restoration of Israel were retained, but readers were told this should not be construed as the return of all Jews to Palestine. Kaplan was a Zionist of the American school, ardent in his support for the colonization of Palestine, but opposed to concepts implying the "negation of the Diaspora" and to emphasis on the necessity of aliyah.

Kaplan's greatest success was in his impact on Jewish educators, social workers, and rabbis, especially students of the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he taught from 1909 to 1963. He left an indelible mark upon many of the leaders of the Jewish community. The movement was, however, less successful in recruiting a mass following. In 1970 there were ten congregations affiliated to the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships and about nine *havurot* (small groups who meet once every week or two for study and/or to observe the holidays together). The Federation affiliates have a combined membership of about 2,300 families. However, not all members think of themselves as Reconstructionists any more than all members of Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform synagogues think of themselves as Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform Jews. A more unreservedly Reconstructionist organization, the Reconstructionist Foundation, whose membership is open to any Jew (including Federation members), has approximately 1,000 members. Reconstructionist influence, however, is far greater than these numbers might suggest. It was greatly enhanced—it might even be said that a turning point in the movement's history was reached—when in 1968 the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College was established in Philadelphia. Students are expected to complete a doctoral program in religious or cognate studies at neighboring institutions in Philadelphia (primarily Temple University) at the same time as preparing for rabbinical ordination at the college.

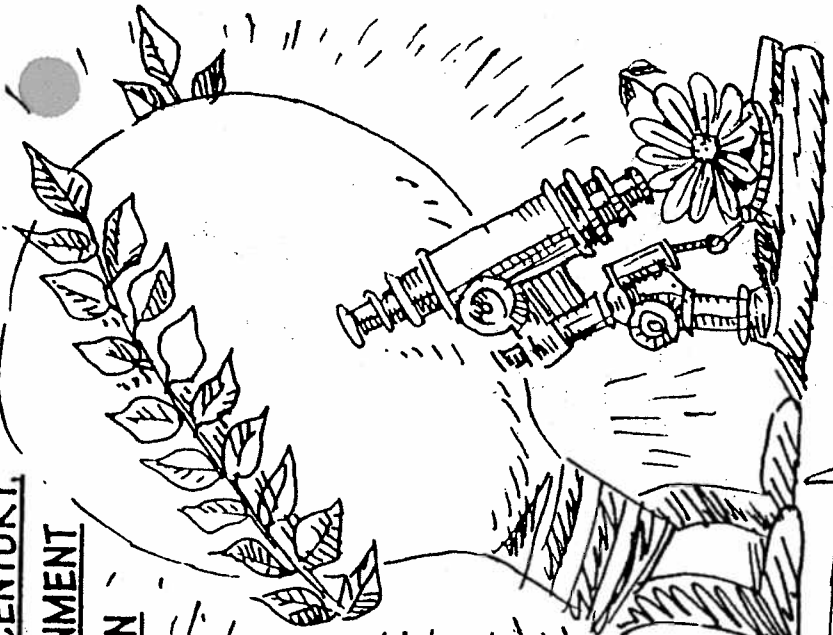
After Kaplan, the leader of Reconstructionism has been Ira Eisenstein, who has served as president of the Reconstructionist Foundation and of the college, editor of the magazine *Reconstructionist*, and de facto editor of the Reconstructionist press.

[Charles S. Liebman]

THE COMIC SIDE

**IN THE 18TH CENTURY,
THE ENLIGHTENMENT
LIT UP WESTERN
EUROPE.**

THE PHILOSOPHIES OF ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME, A SCIENTIFIC SEARCH FOR TRUTH, AND A PASSION FOR MOTHER NATURE SWEEP AWAY MEDIEVAL THOUGHT.



IDEAS OF INDIVIDUAL EQUALITY REPLACED RULE BY DIVINE RIGHT. FOR THE JEWS, EQUALITY HAD A FAMILIAR RING.

IN THE 1700's, THESE IDEAS STARTED TO BREAK DOWN THE GHETTO WALLS. THE JEWS, PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY TRAPPED INSIDE, BEGAN TO CLIMB OUT.



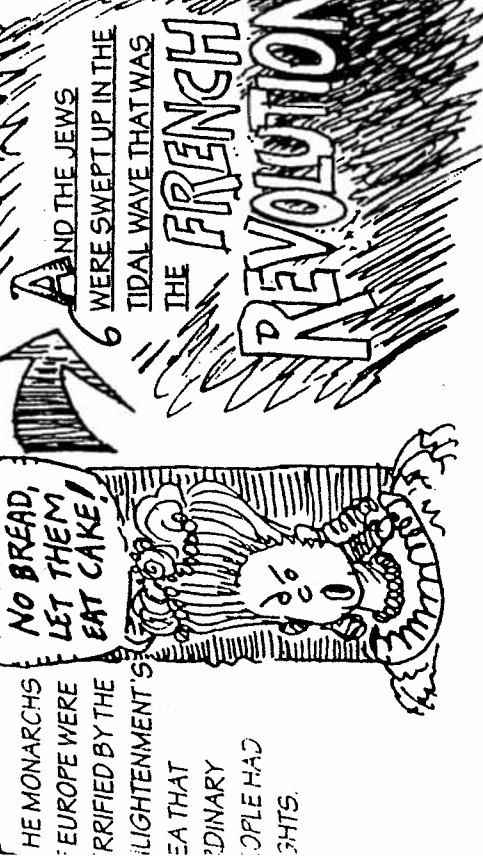


DESPITE THE PREJUDICE OF CHRISTIANS AND THE PROTESTS OF RABBIS, YOUNG GHETTO JEWS EMBRACED THE ENLIGHTENMENT.

I'M NOT WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH ANYMORE.

I SHAVED MY BEARD.

I'M LEARNING HOW TO PLAY CARDS.



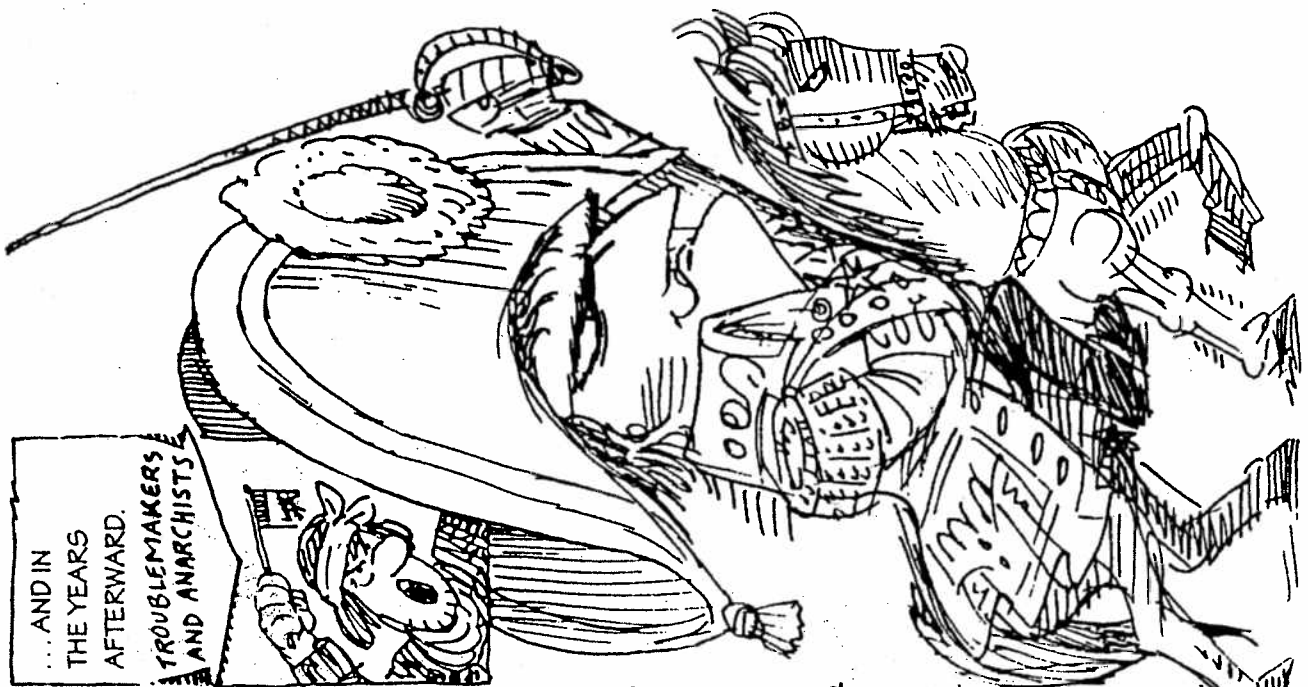
6 AGAINST THE POWER AND PRIVILEGE OF ARISTOCRACY AND CHURCH. AFTER THE BASTILLE WAS STORMED IN 1789, THE JEWS GOT EQUAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE NEW FRENCH REPUBLIC—MORE OR LESS.



TO HEAD OFF A ROYALIST BACKLASH AT HOME AND ABROAD,

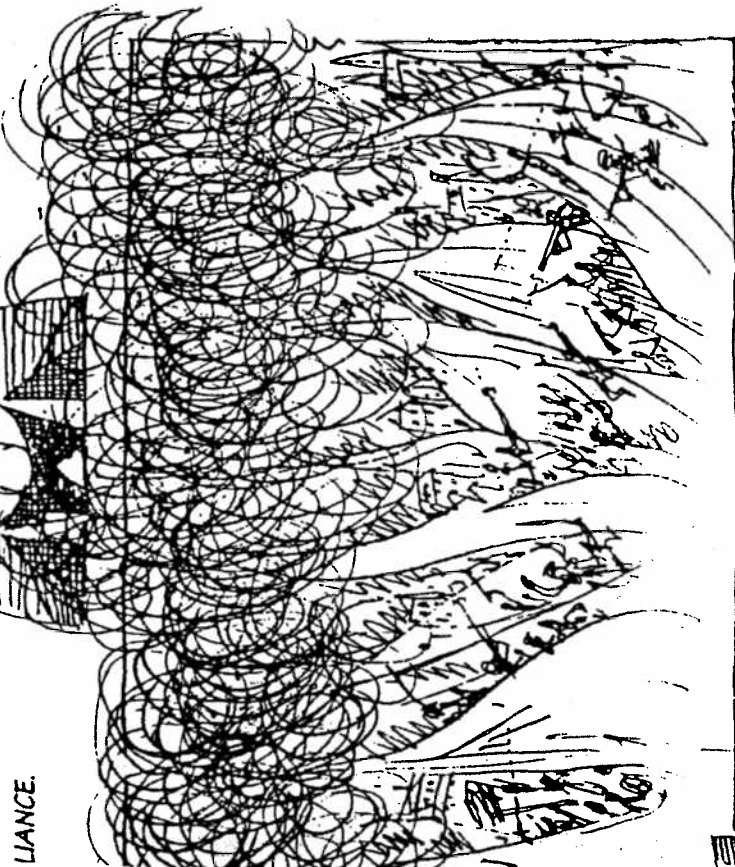
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE,

A YOUNG FRENCH GENERAL, GRABBED DICTATORIAL POWER. HE MARCHED ACROSS EUROPE, SPREADING THE IDEALS OF THE REVOLUTION AND OPENING INFAMOUS GHETTOS.



THE SCHILD BANK FAMILY WAS GROWING STRONG FINANCING ST NAPOLEON AND EN THE HOLY LIANCE.

SOON WE'LL ALSO FUND JEWISH AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENTS IN PALESTINE.



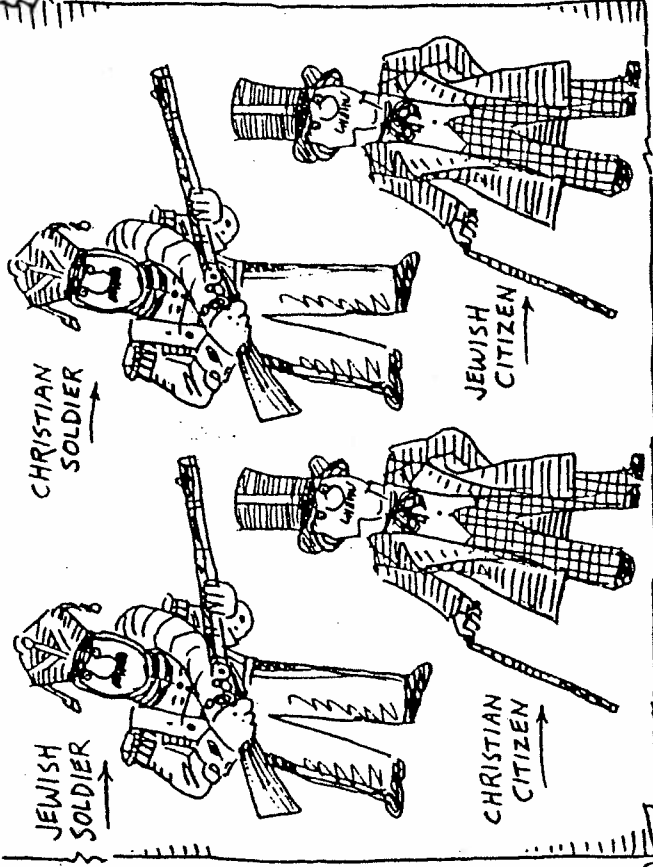
THE COMMON PEOPLE OF EUROPE WERENT ABOUT TO GIVE UP THE IDEALS OF EQUALITY AND NATIONALISM AND GO BACK TO FEUDAL TIMES. BY 1848, MOST OF EUROPE WAS AFLAME WITH REVOLUTION.



I DO NOT TRUST THESE PRUSSAINS... PIETISTIC HEROES OF THE SPIC AND SPAN UNIFORM, WITH THEIR... CORPORAL'S CLUBS DIPPED INTO HOLY WATER...

JEWISH ROLE MODEL OF PROTEST AGAINST POLITICAL OPPRESSION WAS THE ACERBIC POET ERICH HEINE.

CHRISTIANS TO DEFEAT THE AUTOCRATIC HOLY ALLIANCE. AS THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES OPENED THEIR DOORS, JEWS WERE FREE TO BECOME SECULAR CITIZENS OF THE MODERN WORLD.

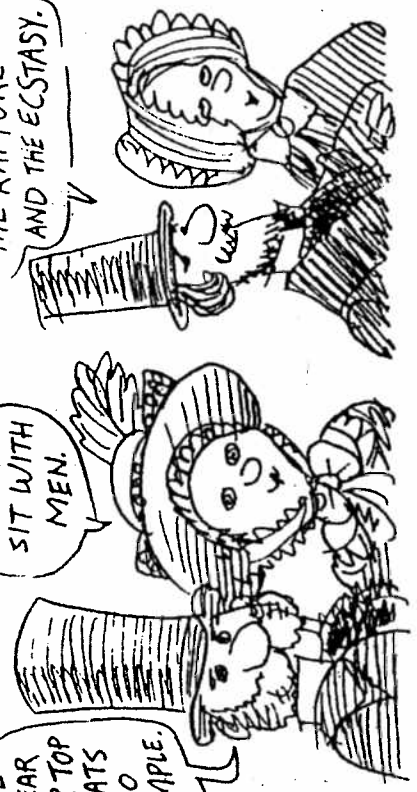


THE JEWS OF THE HASKALAH WERE ESPECIALLY DRAWN TO THE GERMAN LOVE FOR CULTURE AND SCHOLARLY DISCIPLINE. TO BLEND INTO GERMAN SOCIETY, THEY SANITIZED THEIR OWN RELIGIOUS SERVICES. IT WAS THE RISE OF THE JEWISH REFORM MOVEMENT.

WE WEAR OUR TOP HATS TO TEMPLE.

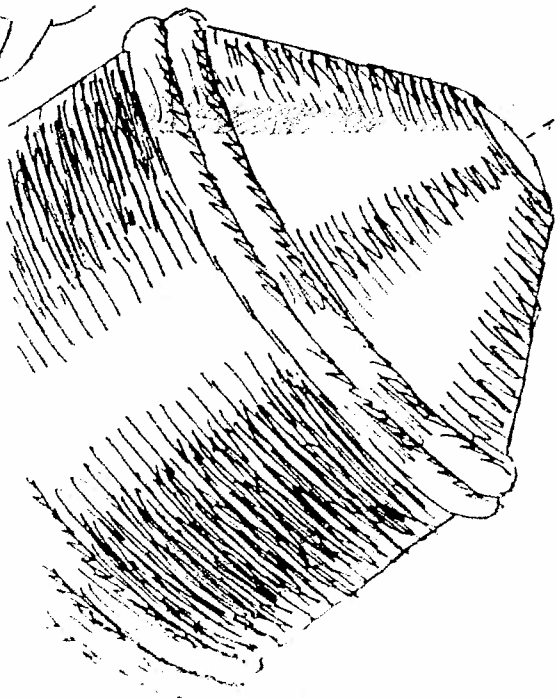
WOMEN SIT WITH MEN.

AND WE SKIP THE RAPTURE AND THE ECSTASY.

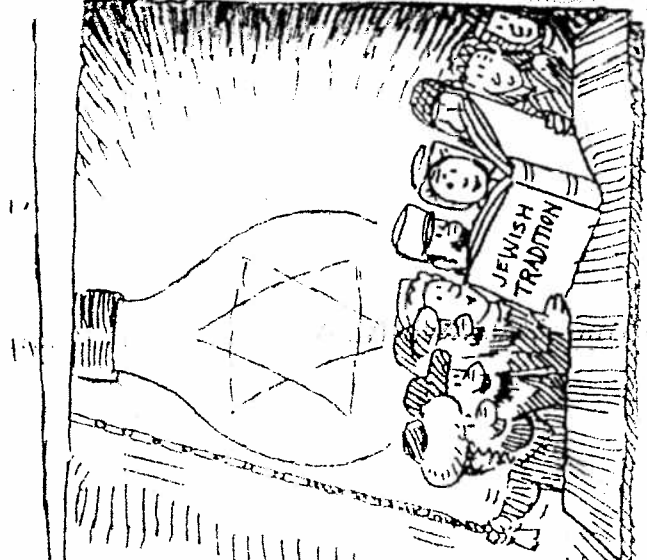


WORK IN EVERY AREA OF MATHEMATICS, THE SCIENCES, AND ESPECIALLY MEDICINE. THEY PIONEERED THE IDEA OF THE EXISTENCE OF MICROSCOPIC CARRIERS OF DISEASE.

THEY'RE CALLED GERMS.



AS THE JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT MADE ITS WAY EAST, SHITEL DWELLERS OF POLAND AND RUSSIA WOULD ALSO CREATE A TABALAH. BUT THEIRS WOULD NOT BE A BREAK WITH THE PAST. IT WOULD BE A SEARCH INTO IT.



1700s, RUSSIA WAS RULED BY CATHERINE THE GREAT. ALONG WITH HER POLISH LAND GRAB, SHE ACQUIRED A HUGE NUMBER OF JEWS. SHE RESTRICTED THEM TO AN AREA OF POLAND, LITHUANIA, AND UKRAINE CALLED **THE PALE OF SETTLEMENT**.

IN THE WEST, JEWS MAY BE GREAT SCIENTISTS, BUT HERE, THEY'RE DEVILS!



THE JEWS, ISOLATED IN THEIR RURAL SHITELS, REMAINED STUCK IN THEIR CULTURAL PAST.

IF IT WAS OKAY FOR MY GRANDFATHER, IT'S OKAY FOR MY GRANDSON.

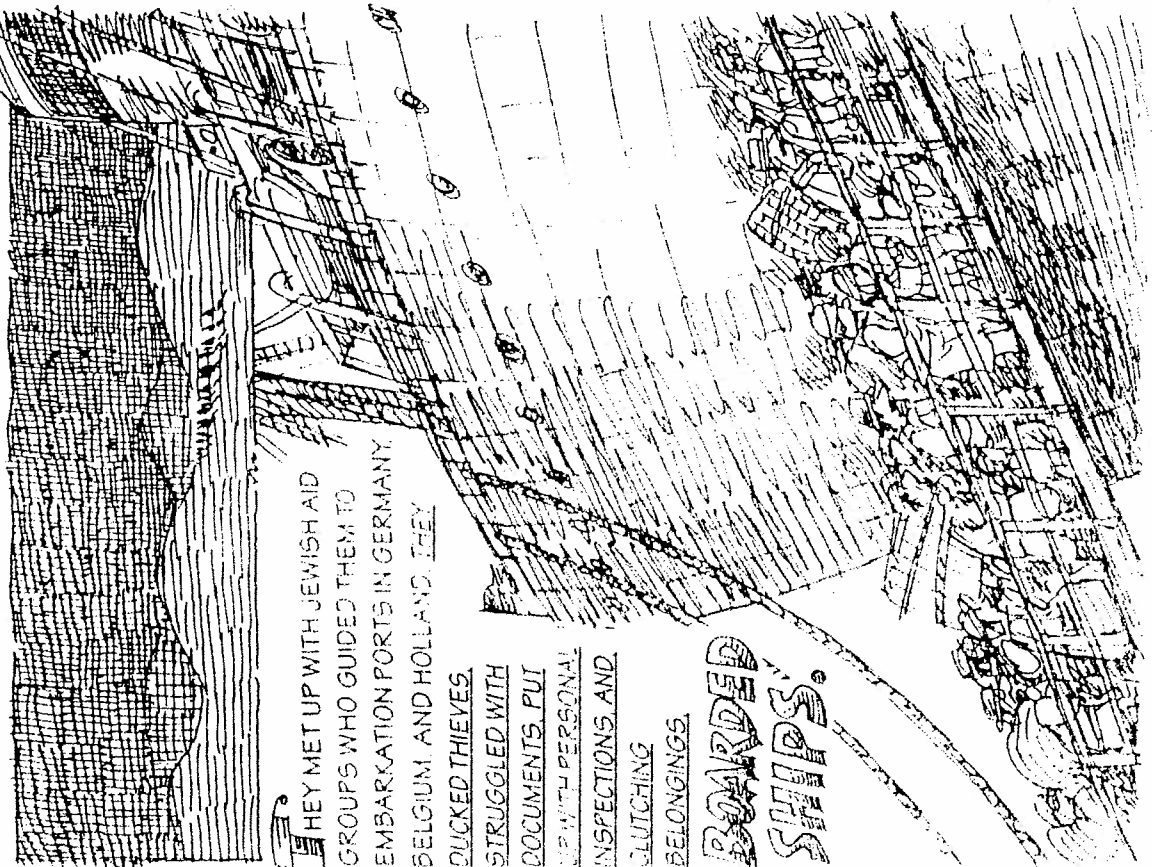


IN 1812, NAPOLEON BONAPARTE INVADIED RUSSIA, INTRODUCED THE IDEA OF REVOLUTION, AND ALMOST FROZE TO DEATH.



THE UNITED STATES

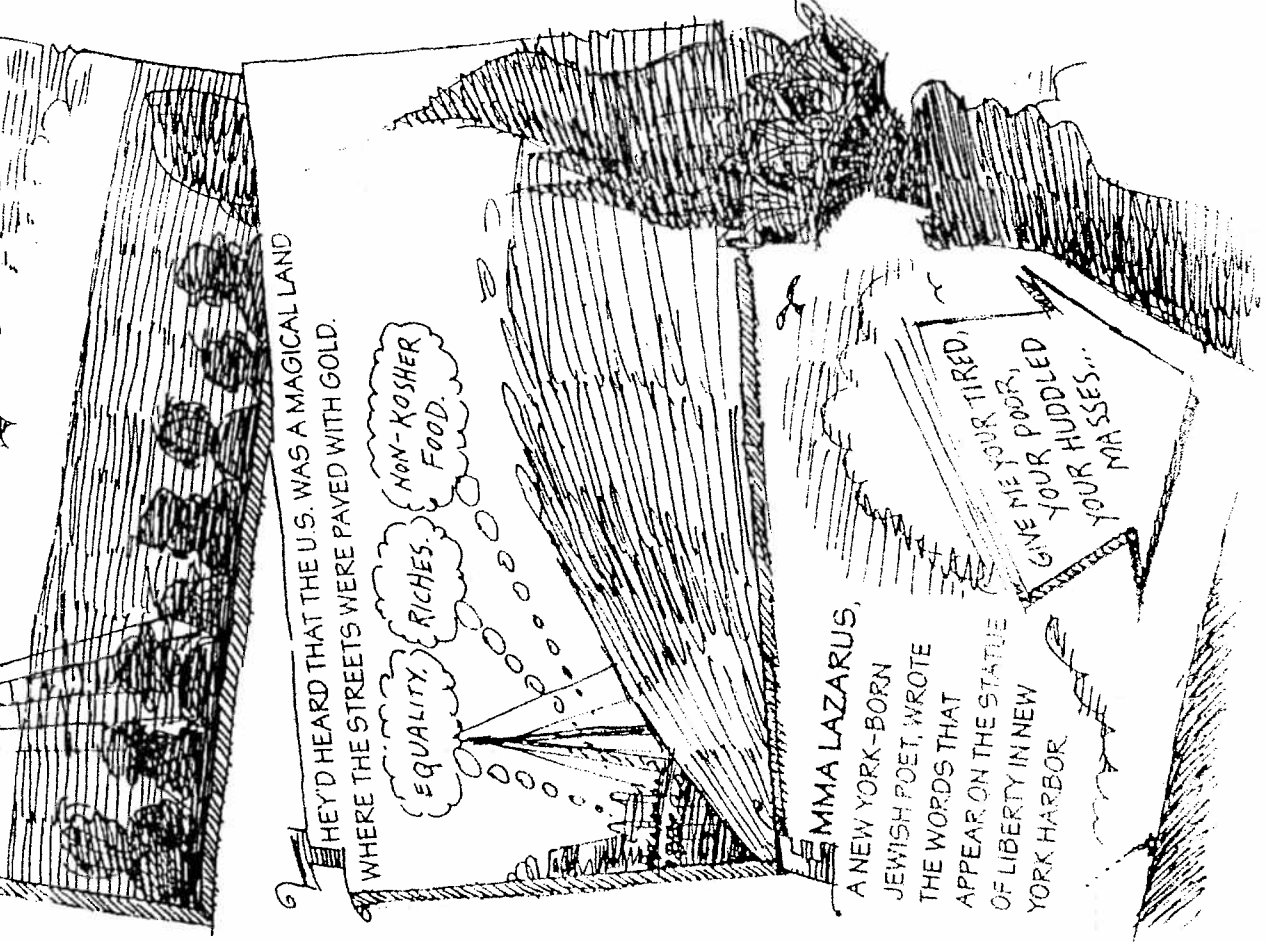
THE JEWS WHO LEFT EASTERN EUROPE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY SHARED ONE TRAIT: THE WILLINGNESS TO RISK THE UNKNOWN FOR A DREAM. THEY HUGGED RELATIVES, TRAVELED BY NIGHT, AND MADE THEIR WAY ACROSS A DANGEROUS EUROPE.



THEY MET UP WITH JEWISH AID GROUPS WHO GUIDED THEM TO EMBARKATION PORTS IN GERMANY, BELGIUM, AND HOLLAND. THEY DUCKED THIEVES, STRUGGLED WITH DOCUMENTS, PUT UP WITH PERSONAL INSPECTIONS AND CLUTCHING BELONGINGS.

BOARDED SHIPS.

CROWDED INTO STEERAGE, SICK, NOSTALGIC AND EXCITED, THEY HEADED FOR ENGLAND, AUSTRALIA, SOUTH AFRICA, SOUTH AMERICA, CANADA, AND ESPECIALLY, THE UNITED STATES.



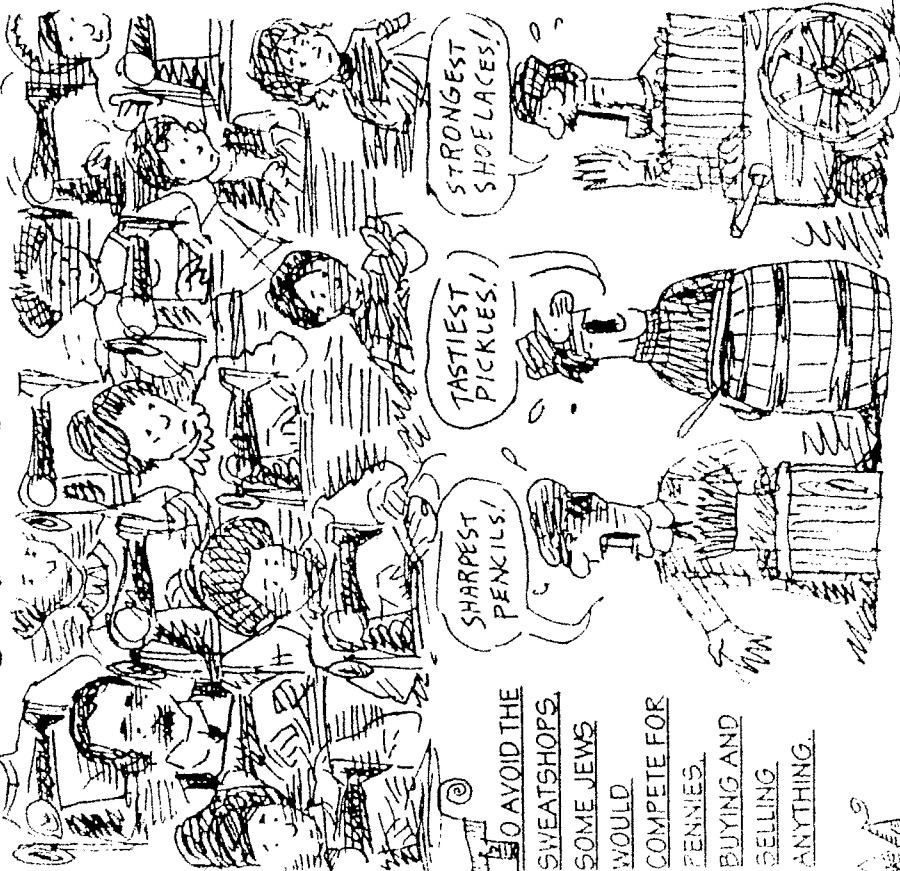
THEY'D HEARD THAT THE U.S. WAS A MAGICAL LAND WHERE THE STREETS WERE PAVED WITH GOLD.

EQUALITY, RICHES, NON-KOSHER FOOD.

MMA LAZARUS, A NEW YORK-BORN JEWISH POET, WROTE THE WORDS THAT APPEAR ON THE STATUE OF LIBERTY IN NEW YORK HARBOR

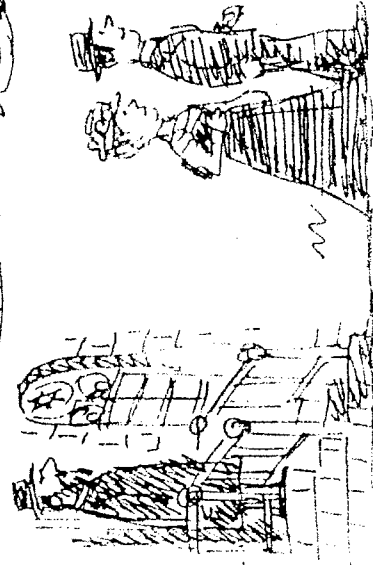
GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR Huddled, YOUR MASSES...

THE SEWING MACHINE AND A GROWING CONSUMER POPULATION CREATED A HUGE NEED FOR CHEAP LABOR. THE POOR JEWISH MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN WERE DRAWN INTO THE DEADLY WORLD OF THE NEW YORK **GARMENT SWEATSHOPS.**



TO AVOID THE SWEATSHOPS, SOME JEWS WOULD COMPETE FOR PENNIES, BUYING AND SELLING ANYTHING.

MEANWHILE, SOCIAL WORKERS, YIDDISH NEWSPAPERS, THE YIDDISH THEATER, AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS WERE HELPING THE JEWS MOVE INTO THE BIG, OUTSIDE WORLD. DESPITE THE PROTESTS OF THEIR RABBIS.



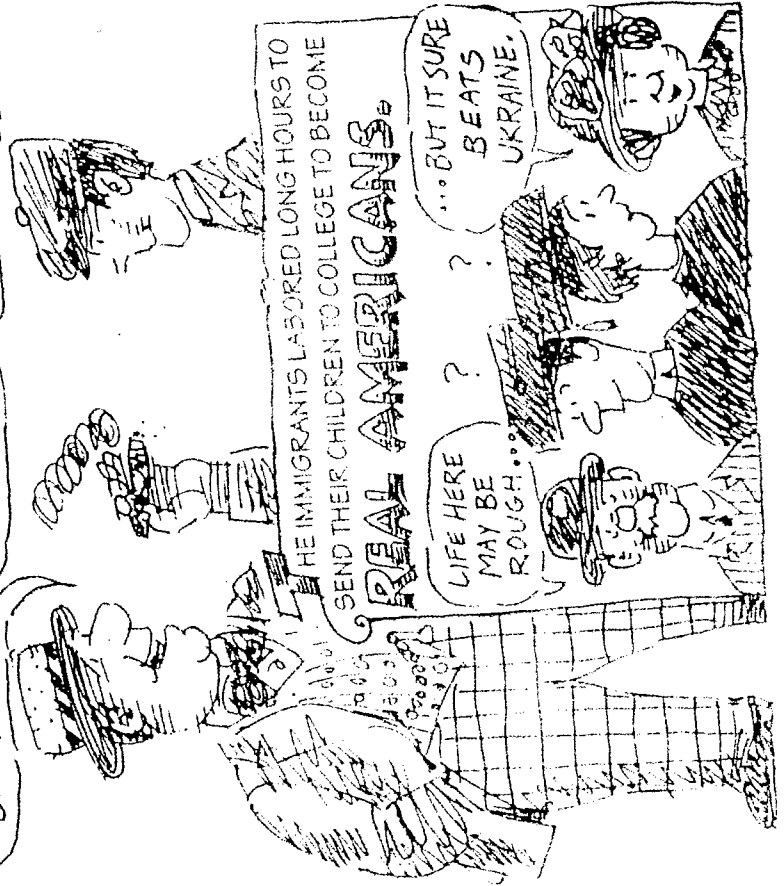
SOME FOUND THEIR FAITH IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT. THEY CONFRONTED THE BOSSES AND HELPED WIN ENORMOUS IMPROVEMENTS IN THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE GARMENT TRADES.



OTHERS LEARNED TO ADAPT TO THE SYSTEM AND BECAME RICH.

MY BOY, STAY AWAY FROM CIGARS AND BUTCHERING. THE REAL MONEY IS IN REAL ESTATE, JUNK, AND...

...ENTERTAINMENT. PENNY ARCADES ARE CHEAP TO RENT.



HE IMMIGRANTS LABORED LONG HOURS TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO COLLEGE TO BECOME **REAL AMERICANS.**

LIFE HERE MAY BE ROUGH...

...BUT IT SURE BEATS UKRAINE.

...DISH, THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE
 ...ED TOGETHER BY EARLIER
 ...S AS THEY MADE THEIR
 ...AY ACROSS EUROPE.

ASKALAH YIDDISH WRITING
ALLOWED JEWS TO LAUGH
AT THEMSELVES AND TOLD
THEM IT WAS OKAY WITH
GOD IF THEY LEFT THE
SHTETL.

GOD SENT TWO BOATS
 TO SAVE US, SURELY
 ONE WOULD HAVE
 BEEN ENOUGH.



ONE OF THE WRITERS WAS
SHOLEM ALEICHEM

WHOSE WORK CELEBRATED THE
 SADNESS, IRONY, ZANINESS,
 AND HOPE OF THE SHTETL
 WORLD. HE INVENTED TEVYE, THE
 ANTI-HEROIC JEWISH HERO, WHO
 CRITICIZED AND LOVED GOD.



IF GOD WANTED IT
 DIFFERENTLY, IT WOULD
 HAVE BEEN. YET, WOULD
 IT HAVE BEEN SO BAD IF
 IT WERE DIFFERENT?
 THANKS BE TO GOD.



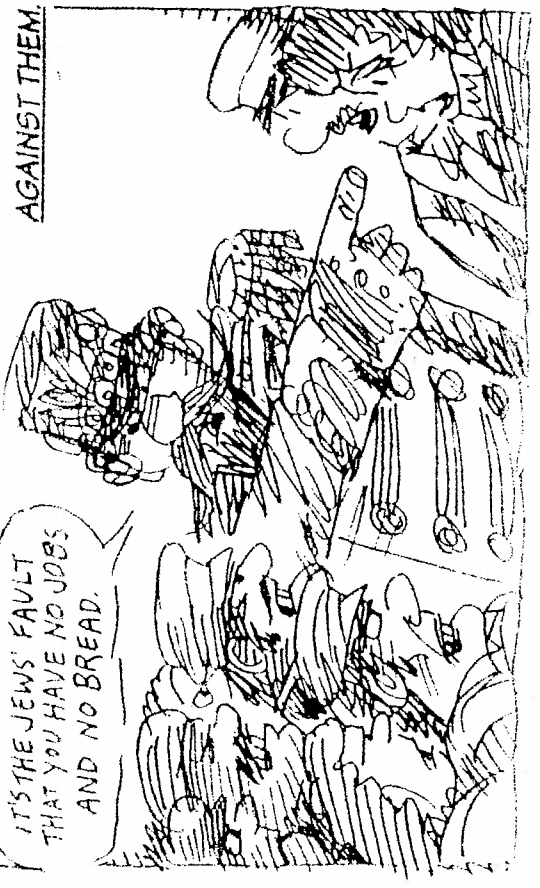
MEANWHILE, RUSSIA WAS FULL OF OPPRESSED PEASANTS AND
 FACTORY WORKERS, REBELLIOUS MINORITIES, GREEDY OFFICIALS,
 AND DEADLY SECRET POLICE. IN 1881, SOMEONE BLEW UP CZAR
ALEXANDER II. THE RUSSIAN ENLIGHTENMENT WAS OVER.



DISCOURAGED YOUNG JEWS JOINED OTHER DESPERATE RUSSIANS
 THREATENING VIOLENCE AGAINST THE STATE. THE GOVERNMENT
 ATTEMPTED TO DISTRACT THE PEOPLE BY BLAMING THE JEWS. THEY

INSTIGATED BLOODY ATTACKS, CALLED **POGROMS**,
AGAINST THEM.

IT'S THE JEWS' FAULT
 THAT YOU HAVE NO JOBS
 AND NO BREAD.



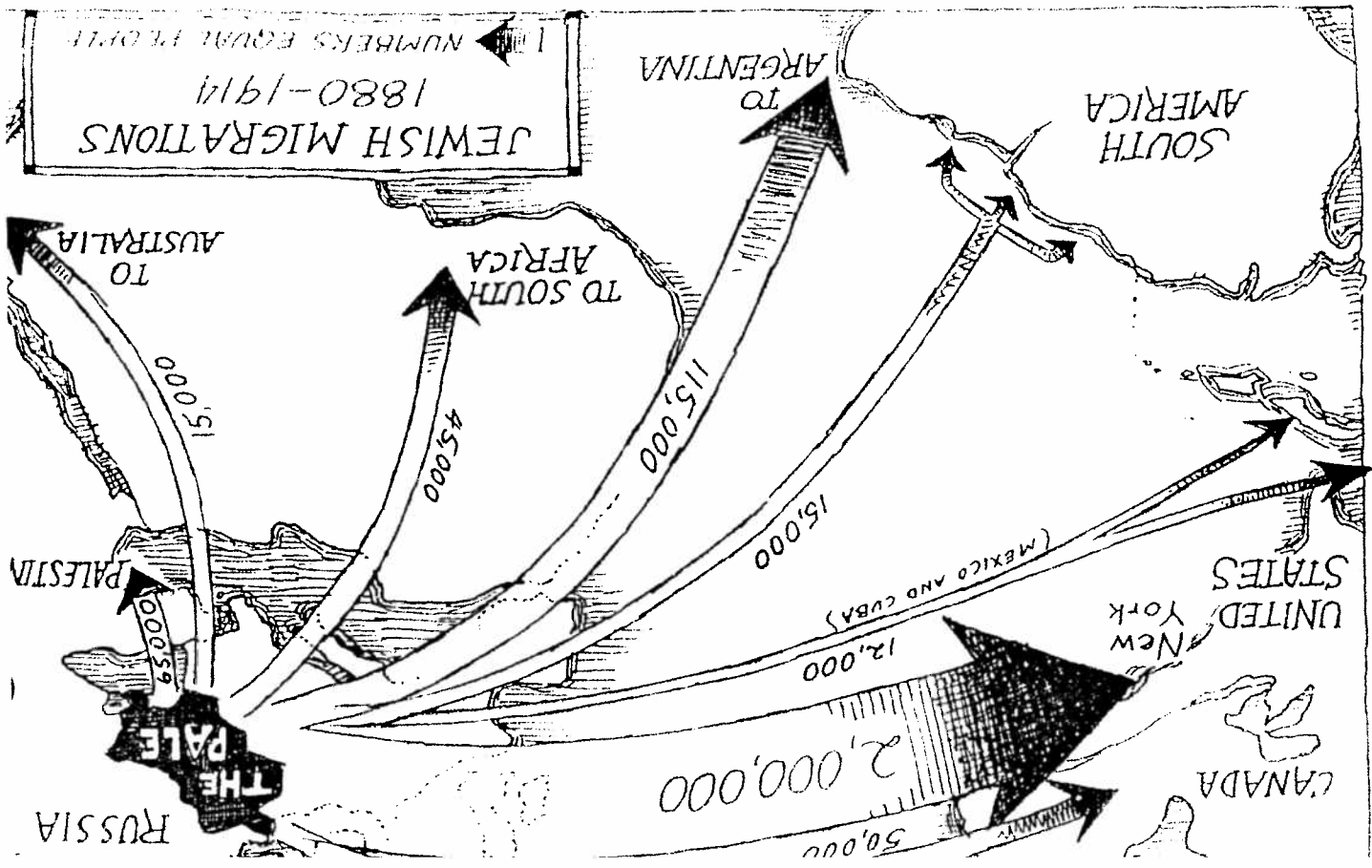
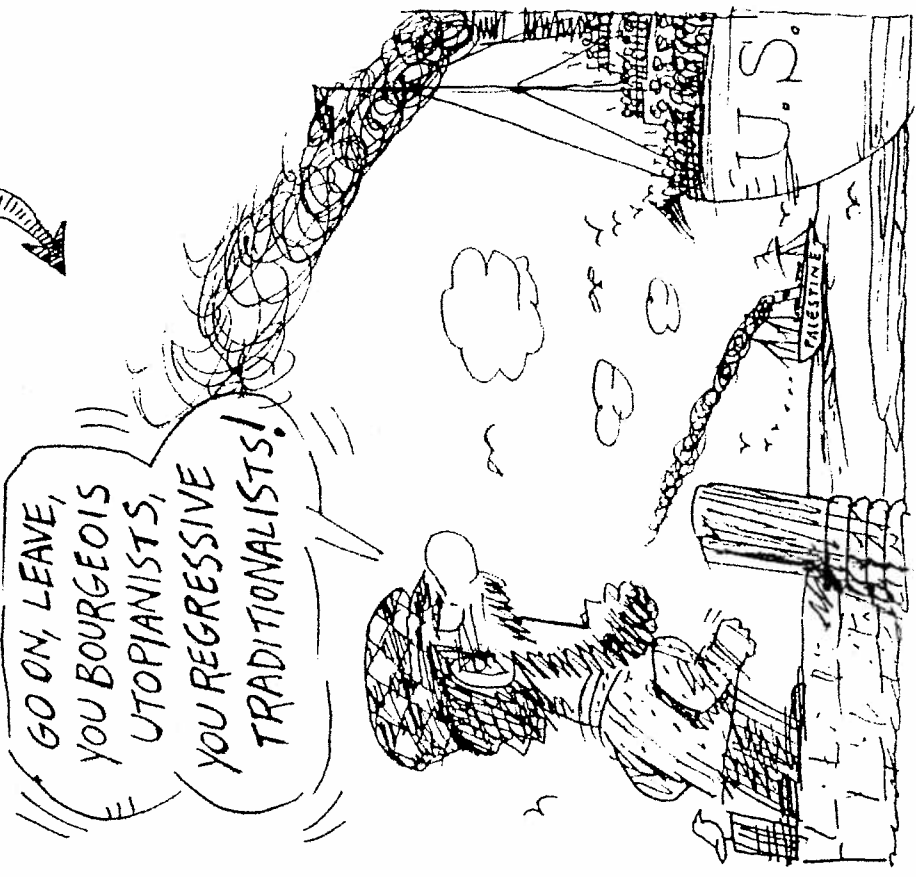
AS THE 20TH CENTURY DAWNED, MANY JEWS WERE ON THE MOVE.

A SMALL NUMBER WERE ZIONISTS SAILING FOR PALESTINE TO BUILD A NEW COUNTRY.

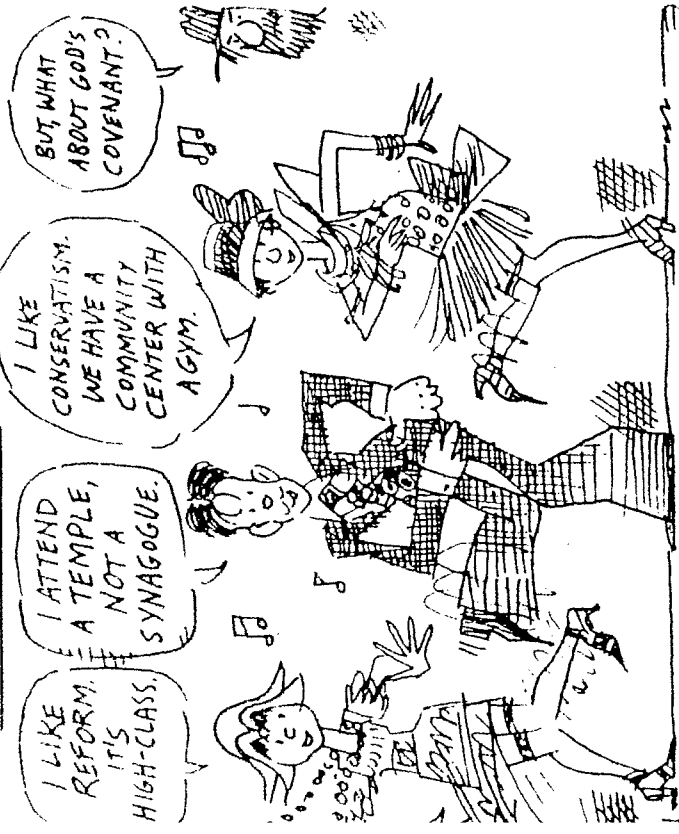
A FLOOD OF EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWS, EMBODYING YIDDISH CULTURE, WERE HEADING FOR THE HIGH-SPEED LIFE OF THE UNITED STATES.

SOME WERE SOCIALISTS STAYING BEHIND IN EUROPE, TRYING TO CHANGE AND IMPROVE SOCIETY.

GO ON, LEAVE, YOU BOURGEOIS UTOPIANISTS, YOU REGRESSIVE TRADITIONALISTS!



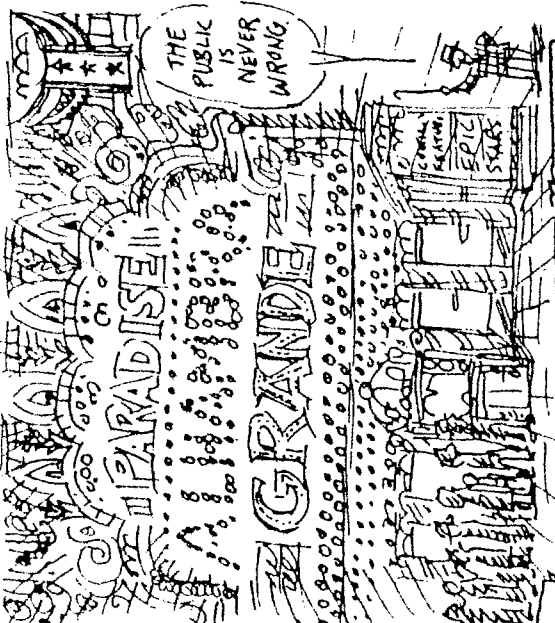
IN THE U.S., THE CHILDREN OF THE IMMIGRANTS LEFT BEHIND THE HODOXY OF THEIR PARENTS AND CUSTOMIZED A JUDAISM THAT WOULD FIT THEIR NEW LIFESTYLE.



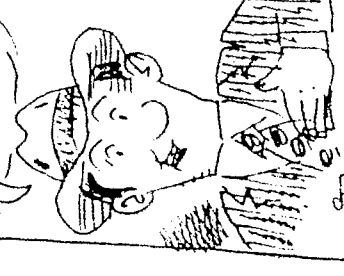
HIS FIRST GENERATION MOVED INTO TRADITIONAL PROFESSIONS IN LAW AND MEDICINE. BUT IT ALSO PLAYED A DOMINANT ROLE IN THE CREATION OF TIN PAN ALLEY, THE AMERICAN MUSICAL THEATER, AND THE HOLLYWOOD MOVIE INDUSTRY.



THESE DARING CHILDREN OF EX-SHITTEL PEDDLERS PUT TOGETHER THE EARLY FILM STUDIOS AND GLITTERING ENTERTAINMENT PALACES THAT GAVE BIRTH TO THE SPECTACULAR AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE.

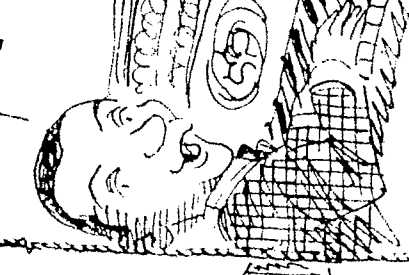


I CONVERTED. I USED TO BE JEWISH, NOW I'M INCORRIGIBLE.



JEWISH COMICS CREATED A WHOLE NEW KIND OF AMERICAN HUMOR — SELF-MOCKING, SUBVERSIVE, AND ABSURDIST.

LAND THAT I LOVE"



RYING BERLIN BORN IN SIBERIA WROTE "GOD BLESS AMERICA," "EASTER PARADE," AND "WHITE CHRISTMAS"

THE LATEST NEWS LIVE FROM OUR STUDIOS!



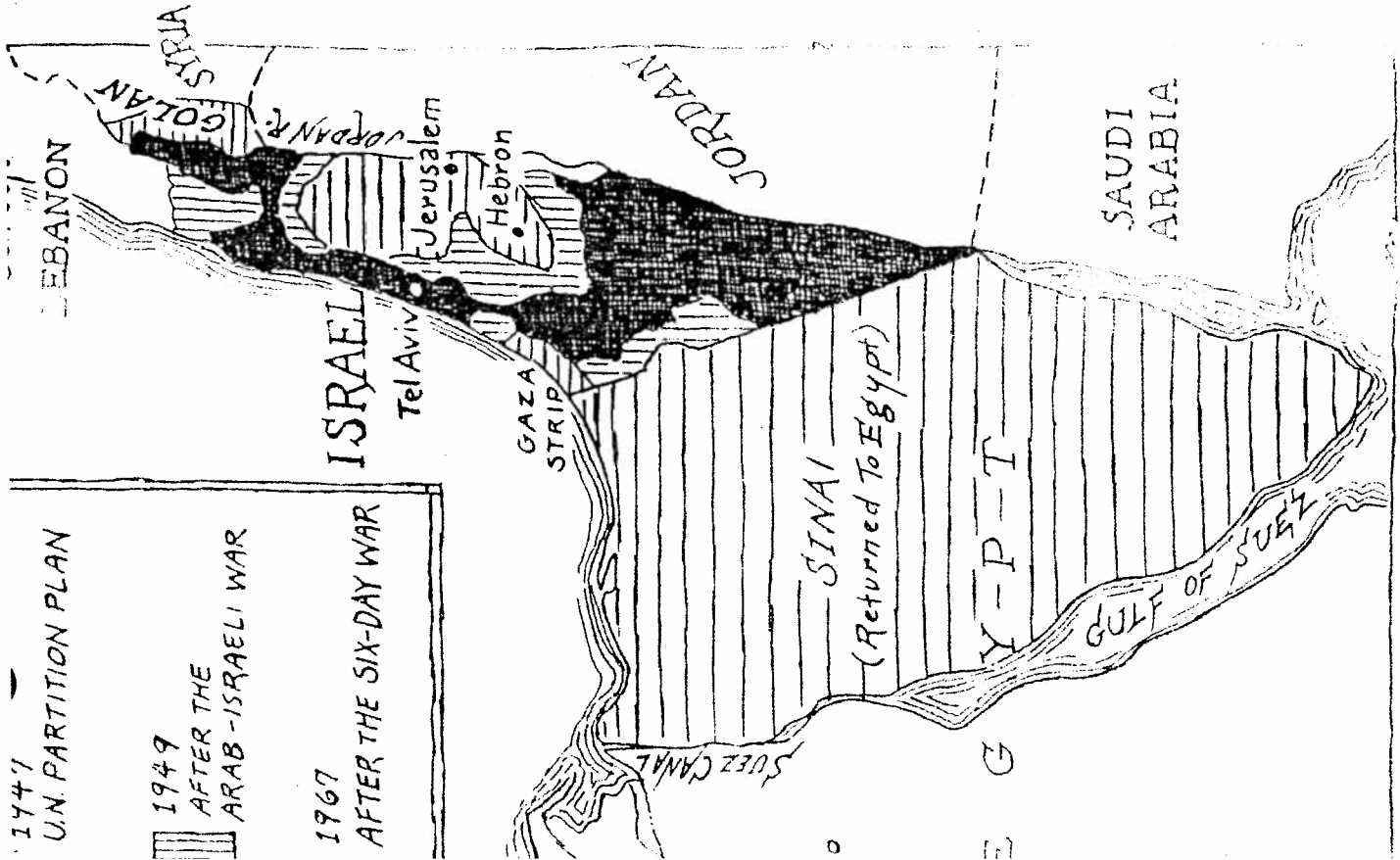
JEWISH WERE INFLUENTIAL IN THE NEWSPAPER BUSINESS AND IN EARLY RADIO AND TELEVISION.

THE PUBLIC IS NEVER WRONG.

1947
U.N. PARTITION PLAN

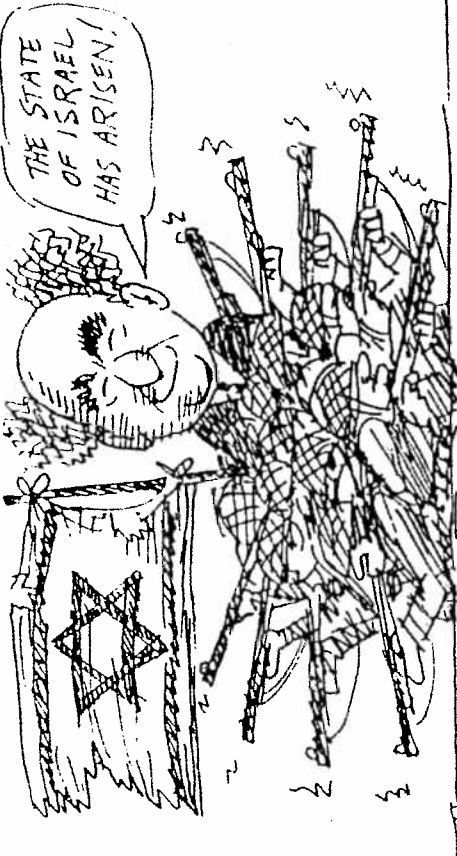
1949
AFTER THE
ARAB-ISRAELI WAR

1967
AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR

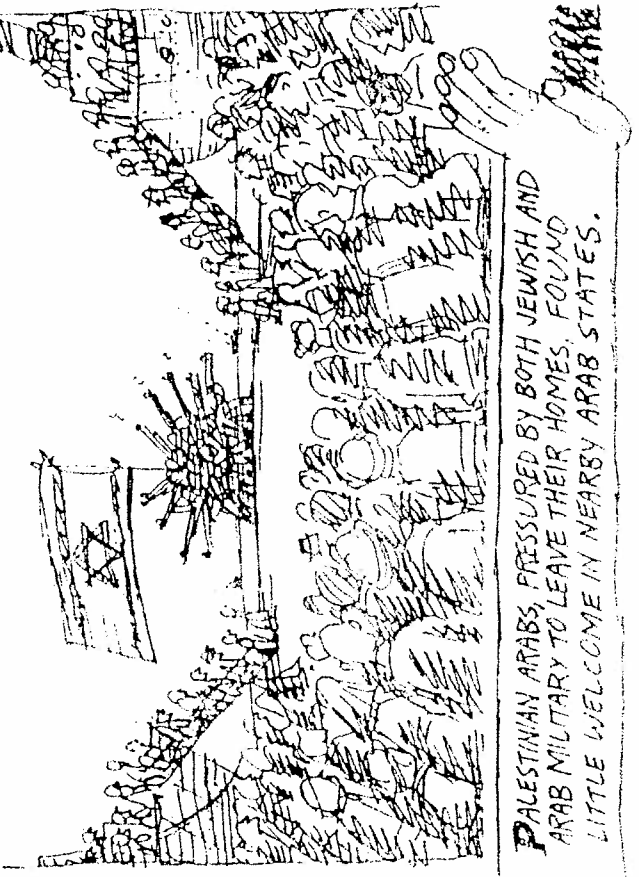


DAVID

IN MAY 1948 ISRAEL, LED BY HER FIRST PRIME MINISTER, DAVID BEN-GURION, ASSERTED JEWISH RIGHT TO THE LAND BY BEATING BACK AN ALL-OUT ATTACK FROM THE ARAB STATES.



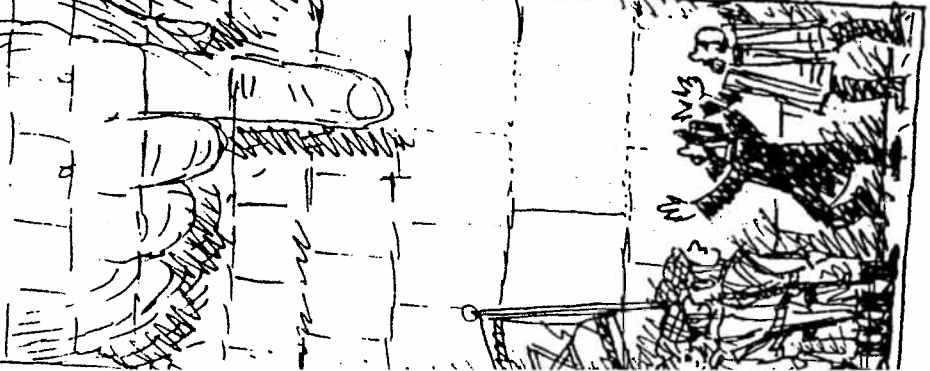
JEWS FROM EVERY PART OF EUROPE, ASIA, AND AFRICA BEGAN TO POUR INTO ISRAEL—INCLUDING THE SEPHARDIM, DRIVEN OUT OF ARAB COUNTRIES AFTER CENTURIES OF LIFE UNDER ISLAMIC RULE.



PALESTINIAN ARABS, PRESSURED BY BOTH JEWISH AND ARAB MILITARY TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES, FOUND LITTLE WELCOME IN NEARBY ARAB STATES.

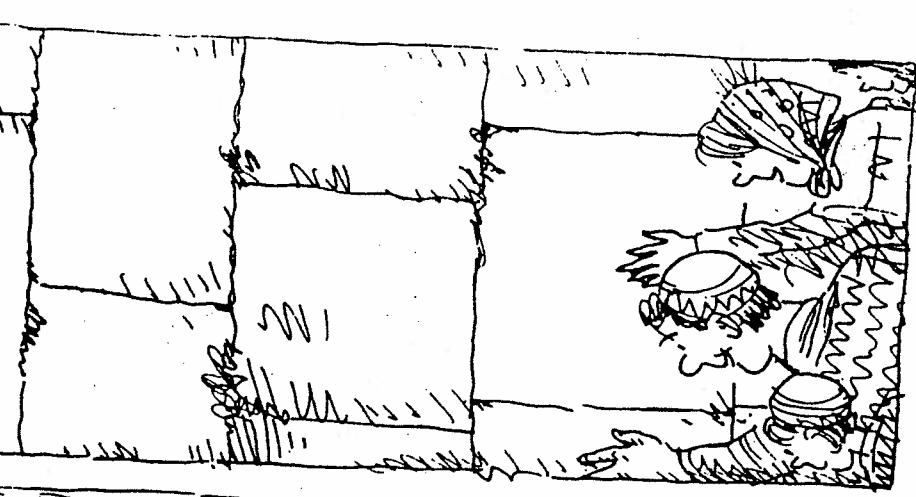
LOOK ON MYT
DIMENSIONS I
AND NON-JEWS
AROUND THE WORLD.

WITHIN ISRAEL IT
INSPIRED A RELIGIOUS
NATIONALIST
MOVEMENT WHOSE
MEMBERS BELIEVED
THAT GOD HAD HAD A
HAND IN THE VICTORY.



THE JORDANIANS, THE JEWS
FINALLY HAD ACCESS TO THE
MOST SACRED PLACE IN

JUDAISM: ~~THE~~
**WESTERN
WALL OF
HEROD'S
TEMPLE.**



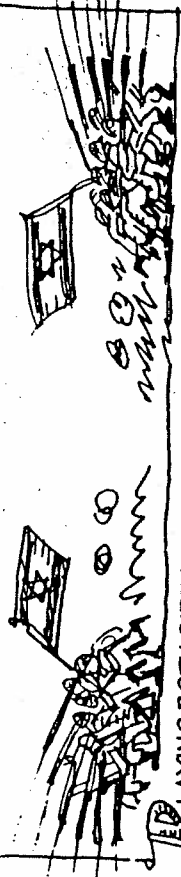
IN 1973, STEEL-WILLED,
GRANDMOTHERLY ISRAELI
PRIME MINISTER

GOLDA MEIR WAS
CAUGHT OFF GUARD BY A
SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN
SURPRISE ATTACK.

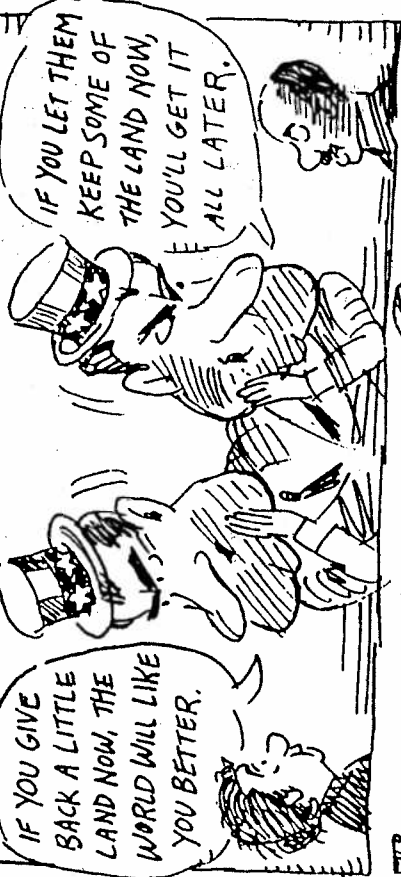


WE MUST
GUARD
AGAINST
OVER-
CONFIDENCE,
UH-OH!

GOLDA STRUCK BACK HARD. ISRAEL DROVE SOUTH ACROSS
THE SUEZ CANAL AND NORTH TO TAKE MORE OF THE GOLAN.



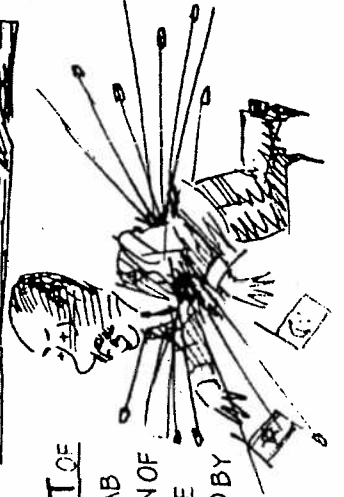
LAYING BOTH SIDES, U.S. PRESIDENT NIXON GOT ISRAEL AND
EGYPT TO AGREE TO A LAND-FOR-PEACE PACT.



IF YOU GIVE
BACK A LITTLE
LAND NOW, THE
WORLD WILL LIKE
YOU BETTER.

IF YOU LET THEM
KEEP SOME OF
THE LAND NOW,
YOU'LL GET IT
ALL LATER.

IN 1978, PRESIDENT SADAT OF
EGYPT BROKE WITH OTHER ARAB
STATES TO TRADE RECOGNITION OF
ISRAEL FOR THE RETURN OF THE
SINAI. IN '81, SADAT WAS KILLED BY
ARAB ASSASSINS.



ENJAMIN NETANYAHU, LEADER OF THE LIKUD, WON THE ELECTION OF 1996. AND THE PEACE PROCESS STALLED.

LONG WITH THE PEACE PLAN, THE RAEL ECONOMY DOOMED. AND REAT NUMBERS FRUSSIAN AMIGRANTS RIVED. THIOPIAN JEWS WERE ALSO BROUGHT IN THROUGH A GUISY SRAELIAIR RESCUE.

WE DON'T MAKE DEALS WITH TERRORISTS.



TRUST AND EXTREMIST VIOLENCE INCREASED. ISLAMIC TERRORISTS BLEW UP CIVILIANS ON THE STREETS OF ISRAEL.

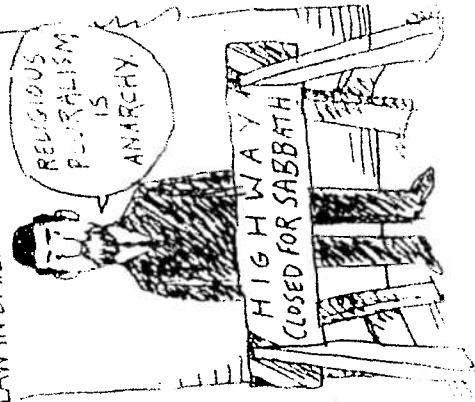
AND LIBERAL ISRAELIS, PROUD OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC IDEALS, GRIEVED FOR THE BATTERED PEACE PLAN.



AT THE SAME TIME, THE ORTHODOX PRESSED FOR A GREATER ROLE FOR JEWISH LAW IN DAILY ISRAELI LIFE.

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IS ANARCHY.

HIGHWAY CLOSED FOR SABBATH



THE PEACE PLAN HAS BROUGHT ROCK CONCERTS, FROZEN YOGURT, AND CABLE TV.



THE DEAD SEA WILL MAKE A GREAT AMUSEMENT PARK.

ISRAELI, JORDANIAN, AND PALESTINIAN TOURIST BUREAUS MADE PLANS.

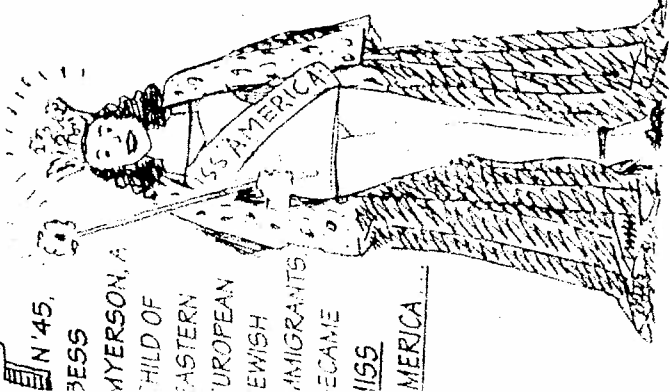
HE TRUCE HELD, DESPITE EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES ATTEMPTING TO SABOTAGE IT. THEN A TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD ISRAELI RELIGIOUS FANATIC KILLED RABIN.



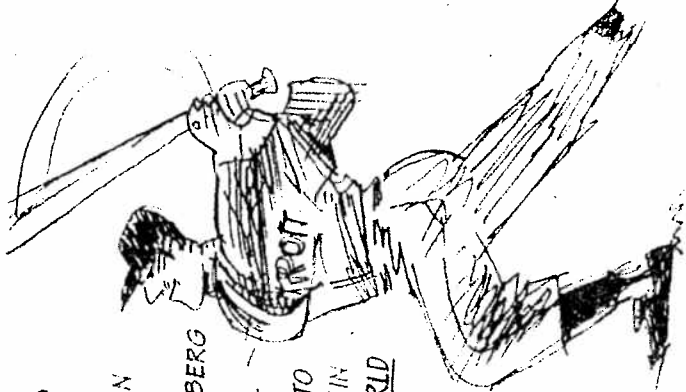
IN THE '40s HOLLYWOOD SUPPORTED THE WAR EFFORT WITH WAR MOVIES IN WHICH EVERY FOXHOLE SEEMED TO HAVE EVERY KIND OF MINORITY — ALL DIFFERENT, YET UNDER FIRE, ALL BRAVE AMERICANS.



AFTER THE WAR, JEWS CAME HOME TO FIND THEY WERE PART OF THE LARGEST AND RICHEST JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD.

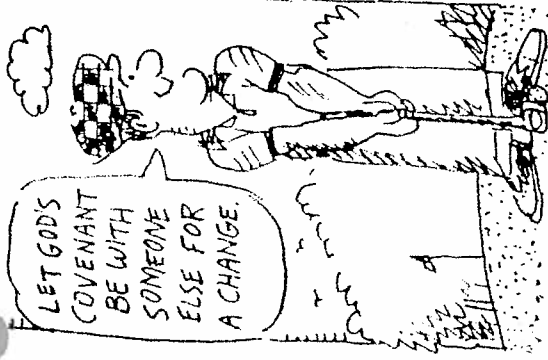


IN '45, BESS MYERSON, A CHILD OF EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWISH IMMIGRANTS, BECAME THE 1945 AMERICAN SERIES.



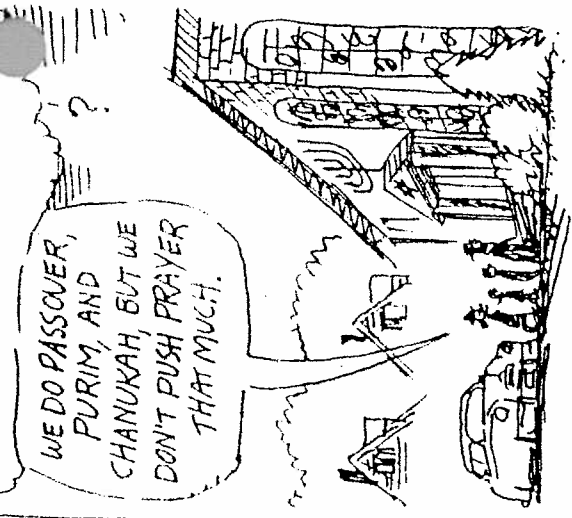
... AND ARMY VETERAN HANK GREENBERG LED THE DETROIT TIGERS TO VICTORY IN THE WORLD SERIES.

NEW ROADS TO THE NEW SUBURBS



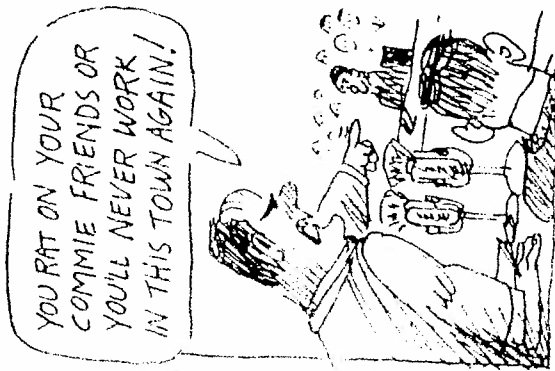
LET GOD'S COVENANT BE WITH SOMEONE ELSE FOR A CHANGE.

SYNAGOGUES



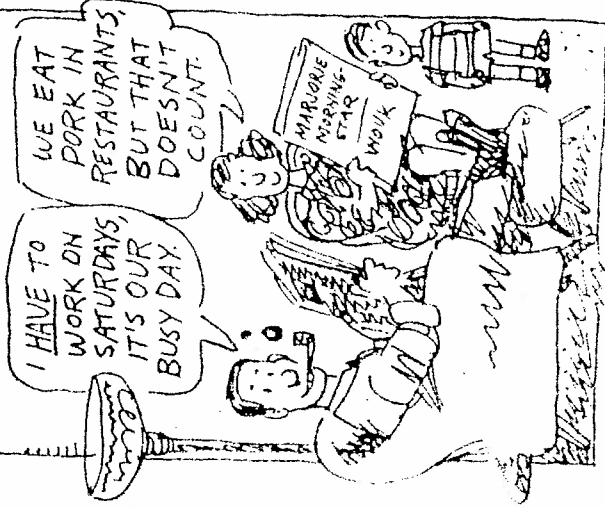
WE DO PASSOVER, PURIM, AND CHANUKAH, BUT WE DON'T PUSH PRAYER THAT MUCH.

IN THE EARLY 1950s, THE COMMUNIST WITCHHUNTS CRUSHED MANY IN THEIR GRIP, INCLUDING JEWS.



YOU RAT ON YOUR COMMIE FRIENDS OR YOU'LL NEVER WORK IN THIS TOWN AGAIN!

BUT MOST JEWS WERE BUSY BENDING JEWISH RITUAL TO FIT INTO THE AMERICAN MAINSTREAM.

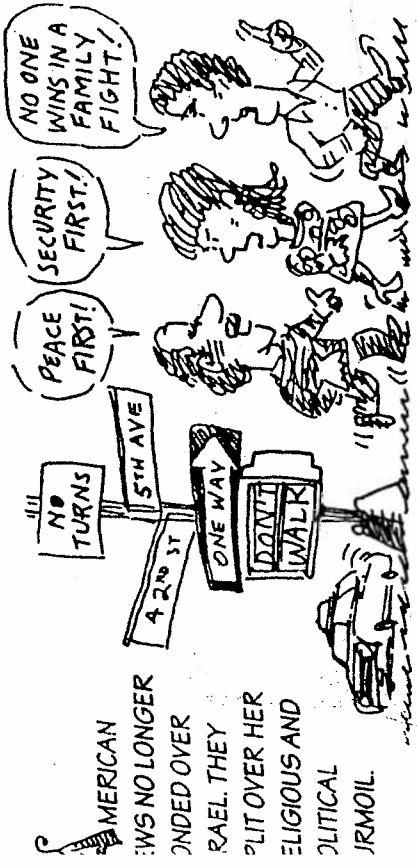
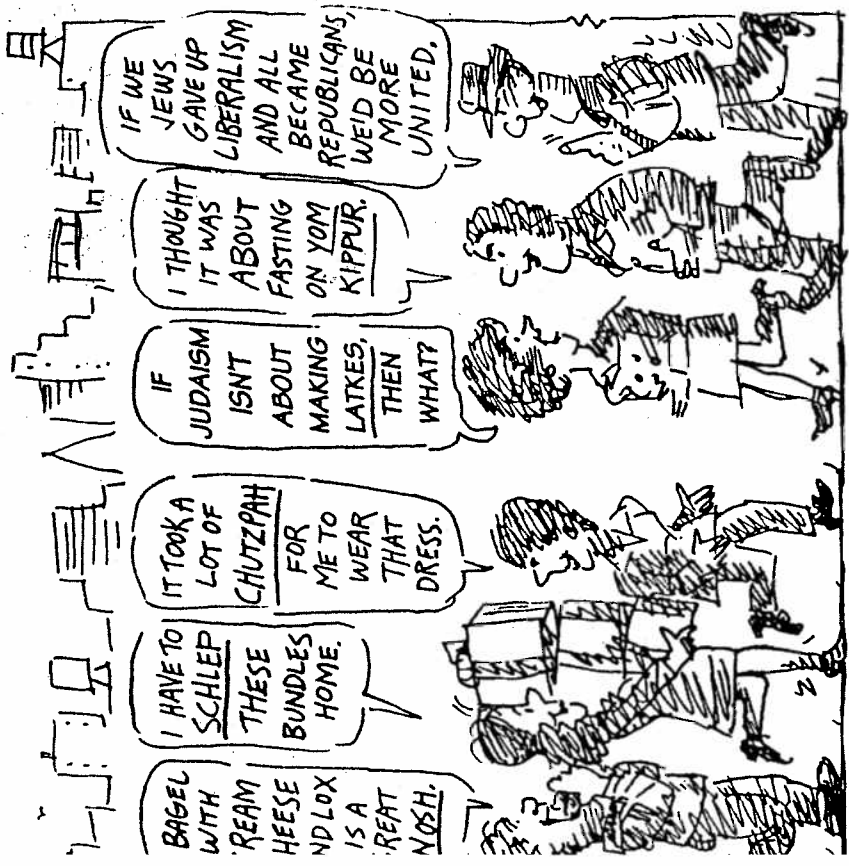


I HAVE TO WORK ON SATURDAYS, IT'S OUR BUSY DAY.

WE EAT PORK IN RESTAURANTS, BUT THAT DOESN'T COUNT.

WISH POPULAR CULTURAL ENTITY HAD BECOME A PART AMERICAN LIFE.

THE HOLOCAUST AND WOODY ALLEN MOVIES WERE NO LONGER ENOUGH TO BUILD A FAITH ON.



AMERICAN JEWS NO LONGER BONDED OVER RAE. THEY PLIT OVER HER ELIGIOUS AND PLITICAL JRM OIL.

INTERMARRIAGE RATE AT 50%. JEWISH LEADERS WORRIED THAT U.S. JEWRY WAS DISAPPEARING.



STRICT OBSERVANCE WAS THE ONLY WAY JUDAISM WOULD SURVIVE.

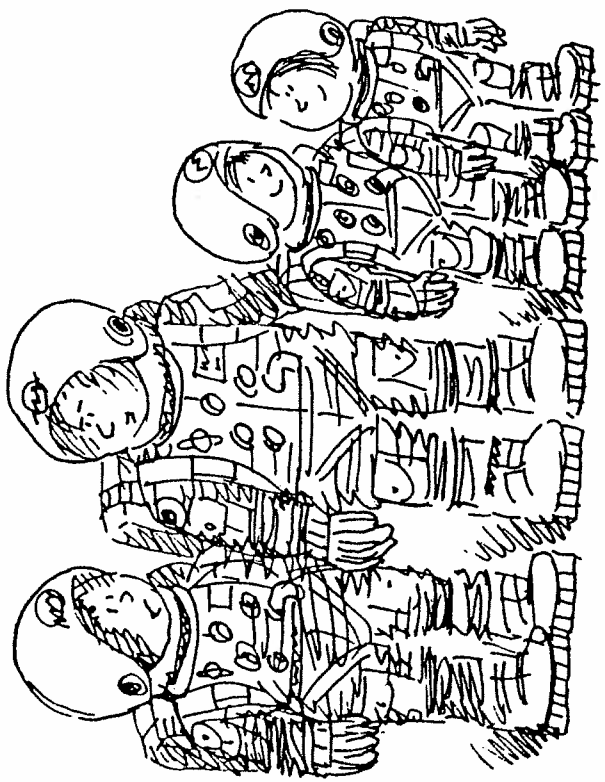


AND CONFUSED—CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY, CLAIMING THEIR PORTION OF HERITAGE RICH IN HUMANITY, FAITH, AND ACHIEVEMENT.

DID YOU PACK THE SHABBAT CANDLESTICKS?

NO. THE RABBI SAID THAT SINCE THERE ARE NO DAYS AND NIGHTS IN SPACE, THERE IS NO NEED TO LIGHT SHABBAT CANDLES.

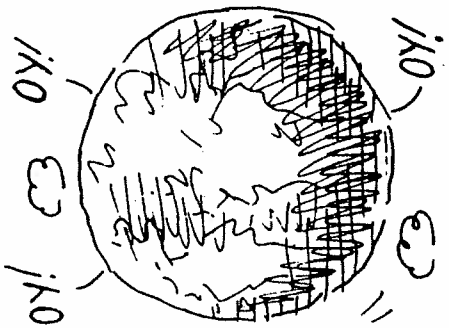
WE'LL TAKE THEM ANYWAY.



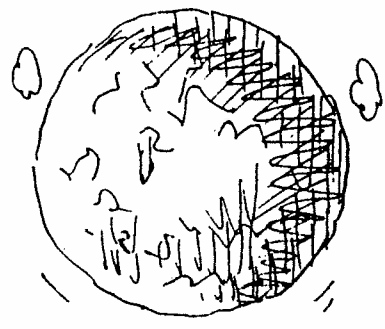
THROUGH IT ALL, THE JEWISH PEOPLE CONTINUE TO GATHER TOGETHER AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS FAMILIES, IN CELEBRATION, PRAYER... AND ARGUMENT (AGREEING TO DISAGREE)—AS THEY HAVE SINCE THE DAYS OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH.



NOBODY SAID IT WAS GOING TO BE EASY.



AGAIN WITH THE OY'S?



HISTORIC PERSONALITIES

presence) and his autocratic approach to the recipients of his donations, especially in the Argentine, Hirsch was firmly convinced of the future of the Jews as an agricultural people if they were provided with suitable conditions. In an article in *The Forum* (August 1891), he wrote: "My own personal experience, too, has led me to recognize that the Jews have very good ability in agriculture... and my efforts shall show that the Jews have not lost the agricultural qualities that their forefathers possessed. I shall try to make for them a new home in different lands, where as free farmers on their own soil, they can make themselves useful to that country."

[H.G.R.]

His wife CLARA (1833-1899) was a cultivated woman and accomplished linguist. She concerned herself with philanthropic activities from her youth, first helping her father and later her husband, whose interests she guided in this direction. As well as assisting in the work of founding colonies and developing schools and farms, she worked to relieve the misery of individuals and supported almshouses and soup kitchens, distributed clothes for children, and financed loan banks for traveling hawkers. Between 1892 and 1895, she donated over 200,000,000 francs. When her husband died in 1896 she became sole administrator of his vast fortune. She continued her husband's work, turning her home in Paris into her administrative office. During the three remaining years of her life she donated \$15,000,000 to charitable works in New York, Galicia, Vienna, Budapest, and Paris. In her will she left a further \$10,000,000 to endow philanthropic foundations.

[M.C.]

Bibliography: J. Pijls, *Die Familie von Hirsch auf Gernuth* (1931); S. Adler-Rudel, in: YLBI, 8 (1963), 29-69; K. Grunwald, *Tuerkenhirsch* (Eng., 1966), incl. bibl.; H. Avni, *Mifalo ha-Hityashenuti shel ha-Baron Hirsch be-Argentinnah* (1969; doctoral thesis, Hebrew University, Jerusalem; with Eng. summary).

HIRSCH, MENDEL (1833-1900), educator and writer. The eldest son of Samson Raphael *Hirsch, from 1855 he taught Jewish and general subjects at the high schools founded by his father in Frankfurt. From 1877 he was their principal and for 17 years was also headmaster of the Jewish elementary school. He contributed a series of articles on pedagogical subjects to the monthly *Jeschurun*, published by his father. Among his other works are: *Das reine Menschentum im Lichte des Judentums* (1893; *Humanism and Judaism*, 1928); a German translation of and commentary on the *haftarot*, *Die Haftarot uebersetzt und erlaeuert* (1896, 1913²; also Eng., 1966); on the minor



Mendel Hirsch, German educationalist. Jerusalem, J.N.U.L., Schwadron Collection.

prophets (*Kleine Propheten, uebersetzt und erlaeuert*, 1900); and on Lamentations (*Die Klagelieder*, 1903). In a published lecture (*Der Zionismus*, 1898) Hirsch adopted a stand against political Zionism, while recognizing it as an admission that assimilation had failed.

Bibliography: A. Weyl, *Direktor Dr. Mendel Hirsch* (1901); H. Schwab, *Chachme Ashkenaz* (Eng., 1964), 75. [Ed.]

HIRSCH, OTTO (1885-1941), leader of the German-Jewish community under Nazi rule. Born in Stuttgart, Hirsch studied law. In 1912 he entered the legal profession and was in charge of the municipal Food Control Office of Stuttgart during World War I. In 1919 he was appointed a senior official in the Ministry of the Interior. Hirsch was a member of the board of the *Centralverein, belonging to its pro-Zionist wing, and deputy member of the Jewish Agency. In 1919 he became head of the Union of Jewish Communities in Wuerttemberg, and in 1933 he was elected executive chairman of the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland (later the Nazi-imposed *Reichsvereinigung), a post in which he devoted his efforts to the twofold process of organizing emigration and ameliorating the situation of the remaining Jews. His courageous interventions to free Jews under arrest led to his imprisonment several times by the German authorities, but he rejected several offers from abroad to emigrate and take up another post. He was finally arrested (spring 1941) by *Eichmann, who disliked Hirsch's fearless behavior, including his attempts to influence the Gestapo. Hirsch was murdered at Mauthausen camp on June 19, 1941. A memorial for him was set up in 1959 in Shavei Zion.

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[Y.R.E.]

HIRSCH, RACHEL (1870-1953), German physician. She was the first Jewish woman to receive the title of professor of medicine in Prussia (1913). In 1905, while working at the Charité Hospital in Berlin, she was the first to describe the unchanged passage of orally given starch grains into the blood vessels through absorption from the intestine. She described the mechanism whereby corpuscular elements, passing through the system of lymphatic vessels, are finally eliminated from the blood through renal capillaries. At that time nobody took her seriously and, greatly disappointed, she discontinued her research. The phenomenon was "rediscovered" some 50 years later by Gerhard Volkheimer, working in the same hospital. At his suggestion the process was named the "Rachel Hirsch Effect." Hirsch was the granddaughter of Samson Raphael *Hirsch, founder of the neo-Orthodox movement in Germany. Miss Hirsch left Berlin when Hitler seized power, and she died in London.

Bibliography: Muntner, in: *Korot*, 3 (1964), 337f. [S.M.]

HIRSCH, SAMSON (BEN) RAPHAEL (1808-1888), rabbi and writer; leader and foremost exponent of *Orthodoxy in Germany in the 19th century. Born in Hamburg, Hirsch studied Talmud with his grandfather Mendel Frankfurter there. His education was influenced by the enlightened Orthodox rabbis Jacob *Ettlinger and Isaac *Bernays, and by his father, R. Raphael (who had changed his surname from Frankfurter to Hirsch), an opponent of the *Reform congregation at the temple in *Hamburg but also a supporter of *hakham* Bernays who included secular studies in the curriculum of the *talmud torah* of that city. Bernays had a great influence on Hirsch's philosophy of Judaism. Hirsch attended the University of Bonn for a year (1829), where he studied classical languages, history, and philosophy. He there formed a friendship with Abraham *Geiger, and with him organized a society of Jewish students, ostensibly to study homiletics but with the deeper purpose of drawing them closer to Jewish values. The friendship of these two youths, the future leaders of the two opposing movements in German Jewry, was disrupted only after Geiger published a sharp though respectful

criticism of the content below).

In 1830 Hirsch became

criticism of the content of Hirsch's "Nineteen Letters" (see below).

In 1830 Hirsch became *Landrabbiner* of the principality of Oldenburg. During his 11 years in office he wrote his most significant works, *Neunzehn Briefe ueber Judentum*



Figure 1. Samson Raphael Hirsch, leader of 19th-century German Orthodoxy.

(*Iggerot Zafon*; "Nineteen Letters on Judaism": first published under the pseudonym "Ben Uzziel," Altona, 1836; it appeared in many editions, translated into English by B. Drachman 1899; revised 1960), and *Choreb, oder Versuche ueber Jisroels Pflichten in der Zerstreung* (1837, 1921¹; *Horeb—Essays on Israel's "Duties" in the Diaspora*, ed. and tr. by I. Grunfeld, 1962). In these two works, which together form a complete unit, and were designed for young men and women with a consciousness of Judaism, Hirsch laid down his basic views on Judaism which were elaborated and explained in his subsequent writings. The first made a profound impression in German Jewish circles for its brilliant intellectual presentation, in classic German, of Orthodox Judaism. It is written in the form of an exchange of letters between two youths: Benjamin, the spokesman for the "perplexed," who expresses the doubts of a young Jewish intellectual, and Naphtali, the representative of traditional Judaism, who formulates his answers in 18 letters discussing questions concerning the relationship of Judaism to world culture. H. *Graetz, who was deeply impressed by the "Nineteen Letters," visited Oldenburg in 1837 and remained there for three years in order to complete his Jewish education under the guidance of Hirsch. Graetz later dedicated his *Gnosticismus und Judentum* ("Gnosis and Judaism," 1846) to Hirsch "with sentiments of love and gratitude, to the inspiring defender of historic Judaism, to the unforgettable teacher and loved friend."

In 1841 Hirsch moved to Emden, where he served as rabbi of Aurich and Osnabrueck in Hanover. From 1846 to 1851 he lived in Nikolsburg (Mikulov) as *Landesrabbiner* of Moravia. Here Hirsch took an energetic part in the struggle to obtain emancipation for Austrian and Moravian Jewry, during the revolution of 1848. After the March revolution of 1848 he was unanimously elected chairman of the Committee for the Civil and Political Rights of the Jews in Moravia. In Nikolsburg he also applied himself to reorganizing the internal structure of Moravian Jewry and drafted a constitution for a central Jewish religious authority for the whole country. The extreme Orthodox community he served had reservations about the intermediate position he adopted between the Orthodox and Reform. Some of the customs he practiced, his wearing a robe during services and especially his method of teaching (his rejection of casuistic argumentation and his refusal to disregard study of the Bible for that of the *halakhah*) aroused

opposition among the extreme Orthodox element in Nikolsburg. In 1851, Hirsch was called to serve as rabbi of the Orthodox congregation *Adass Jeschurun (known in German as the "Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft") in Frankfort on the Main, a position he held for 37 years until his death. Here Hirsch found a small circle of like-minded friends whose encouragement and moral support helped him develop and crystallize his conception of Judaism and to adopt a practical attitude to the problems which confronted the German Jews of that period. In addition, the Orthodox congregation of Frankfort, whose institutions, especially the educational system that he established and supervised, embodied Hirsch's ideas, served as a paradigm and prototype for *neo-Orthodoxy, which continued to develop in Germany and abroad.

Hirsch and Jewish Education. Hirsch referred his educational ideal to the saying of R. Gamaliel in *Pirkei Avot* (2:2): "The study of the Torah is excellent together with *derekh erez* [worldly occupation, i.e., secular education]" and the ideal Jew, in his opinion, was the *Jisroel-mensch* ("Israel-man"), a term coined by Hirsch for "an enlightened Jew who observed the precepts." The principle *Torah im derekh erez* became the general slogan of Hirsch's congregation and other congregations in Germany that were patterned on his community. It was this ideal that Hirsch endeavored to embody in the three schools he founded: a primary school, a secondary school, and a high school for girls. Besides the Hebrew language and Jewish subjects, the school curriculum included secular studies (such as German, mathematics, and natural sciences, including geography). This broadened syllabus, which aroused the antagonism of Rabbi Isaac Dov *Bamberger, not only was the result of Hirsch's views on education, as designed to develop the student's talents in several fields as well as to prepare him to face life, but also reflected the need to compete with the Philanthropin Jewish free school that had been established in Frankfort, among whose teachers was an extreme advocate of Reform, M. *Creizenach.

Hirsch's Attitude to Reform and Secession. Besides Jewish education, the chief contemporary problem facing Judaism was the demand for reform. Its challenge put Hirsch's conceptions of Judaism to the test. The advocates of Reform felt that Jews were prevented from finding their place within German society, not only because of a distinctive dress and language of prayer (Hebrew) but also by the observance of practical precepts which they considered were difficult to perform in a Christian environment. In 1854 Hirsch published a pamphlet *Die Religion im Bunde mit dem Fortschritt* ("Religion Allied with Progress") in which he refuted the argument of the Reform leaders that the combination of traditional Judaism and secular education was impossible. Hirsch himself recognized the need for effecting a revision within Judaism of externals, but rejected changes affecting the principles of Jewish faith proposed by the Reform wing, or alterations in the observances of the Law. In Hirsch's opinion the Jews, rather than Judaism, were in need of reform. Jews were in no need of "progress" (the catchword of the reformers) but of "elevation." For Judaism to have access to the cultural life of Europe it was essential for Jews to rise to the eternal ideals of Judaism and not to bring it down to adjust to the requirements of contemporaries who desired merely a more comfortable life (*Nineteen Letters*, 17); for the troubles of the generation are but the birthpangs of a "Judaism that recognizes and understands itself" (*ibid.*, 18).

Even Hirsch introduced some external improvements in the liturgy, such as a choir under the direction of a professional musical conductor, participation of the congregation in the singing, and preaching twice a month in

"the national cultural language" (i.e., German). However, at the same time he defended the traditional Jewish synagogue (the *schul*) against attacks by the Reform wing, and stressed the "inner harmony" within it. Similarly, he defended the Hebrew language as the sole language for prayer and instruction of Jewish subjects. Had our forefathers, he argued, written their prayers in the language of the nations of their environment, they would now be incomprehensible to us; he thus saw the Hebrew language as an important means of communication between Jews in the Diaspora. Although he confessed that the *piyyutim* were difficult to comprehend and alien in spirit, it would not be advisable to remove them from the prayer book. On the other hand, according to Graetz's testimony (and on the latter's initiative), Hirsch removed the *Kol Nidrei* prayer on the ground that it was susceptible to misunderstanding.

With all his opposition to the Reform movement, Hirsch did not consider that there was sufficient ground for an organizational separation between Orthodox and Reform Judaism as long as the latter exercised caution in its demands for reform. Even the rejection of the belief in the coming of the Return to Zion (as expressed in the prayers recited in the Hamburg Temple), which Hirsch strongly opposed, did not impel him to a "separation." In contradistinction to Geiger, who regarded separation as a kind of a surgical operation that would save the body of Judaism, Hirsch looked upon it as a schism that should be avoided as far as possible. When the rabbinical synod at

Brunswick (1844) decided to annul several prohibitions, especially those relating to the dietary and matrimonial laws, he changed his attitude however. In a letter addressed to the Reform wing, Hirsch wrote that if they carried out their decisions "the House of Israel would be split in two." The Reform wing would be the ones to disrupt the unity of the people by compelling the traditionalists to secede from them: "Our covenant of unity will no longer endure and brother shall depart from brother in tears."

As authority in the congregations increasingly passed to the hands of the supporters of a break with tradition, a breach between the Orthodox and Reform and separation became the slogan of Hirsch and his supporters. As an example Hirsch pointed to the congregation in Hungary where the government in 1871 (after the Congress of Hungarian Jewry in 1868-69) had recognized the Orthodox congregations as separate bodies. In the memorandum (published in his writings, vol. 4, 239ff.) written by Hirsch to the authorities, the representatives of Orthodox Judaism in Prussia asked "to permit the Jews to leave their local community organizations for reasons of conscience." In 1873 the Prussian *Landtag* debated a bill which would permit every man to leave his church or religious congregation, the intention of the law being to countenance the existence of "those without religion." According to the proposal of Eduard Lasker an amendment to the bill was accepted "that a Jew is permitted to leave his local congregation, for religious reasons, without leaving Judaism." The objections of the Reform wing to the amendment were not accepted, and in July 1876 the "Law of Secession" ("*Austrittsgesetz*") was passed and a legal basis created to create a specific, organizational framework for neo-Orthodoxy. The "separationist" movement, for which Hirsch envisaged not only an organizational goal but also religious obligations, was joined by, besides his congregation Adass Jeschurun of Frankfurt, small groups of the Orthodox in the congregations of Berlin, Koenigsberg, Wiesbaden, Cologne, and Giessen. But the large majority of Orthodox Jews in Germany continued to remain within the framework of the general congregations, and even Bamberger, who in general was not less Orthodox than Hirsch, permitted the Orthodox to remain within the general community body on condition that their independence be guaranteed and their religious needs provided for. This attitude gave rise to a stormy controversy between Hirsch and Bamberger.

In 1885 Hirsch established the *Freie Vereinigung fuer die Interessen des orthodoxen Judentums* ("The Free Society for the Advancement of the Interest of Orthodox Judaism") with its seat in Frankfurt. This organization was a restricted body during the lifetime of Hirsch and was broadened only after 1907.

Hirsch's Traditionalist Conception of Judaism. Hirsch's views on the essential content of Judaism led him to oppose the conception of the historical development of Judaism, as conceived by Graetz and Z. Frankel. He regarded genuine Judaism as the expression of Divinity, revealed in two ways: in nature and in the Torah (*Nineteen Letters*, nos. 18 and 6). Since the Torah, like nature, is a fact, no principle revealed in it may be denied even when it is beyond man's powers of understanding. It is incumbent on him to search for the revelation of God's wisdom in the Torah, as in nature; but the existence of this wisdom is contained in the commandments prescribed therein, just as the physical laws in nature are not conditioned by man's search. The character of the Torah as an objective reality lies in the fact that its central pivot is the Law. The Law is an objective disposition of an established order that is not dependent on the will of the individual or society, and hence



Figure 2. Title page of the volume collecting Samson Raphael Hirsch's monthly journal, *Jeschurun*, for the year 5615 (October 1854 - October 1855), Frankfurt, 1855. Jerusalem, J.N.U.L.

not even on historical processes. Nevertheless, the historical process is not without importance: mankind attains religious truth as the result of experience acquired in time. As a pledge and a guarantee, however, that mankind will reach its religious goal in this manner, a single people was created to whom the religious truth was given directly. Since this people has recognized this truth from the outset, it has no need for experiences acquired in time in order to learn it, hence it is not dependent on the historical process. *Menschentum* (humanity) as a concept based on ancient classical civilization and on humanism, as conceived by the classic German philosophers and writers, is merely an intermediate preparatory stage, which attains its highest expression in *Israeltum*. Man is led to this highest point of perfection by Torah-true Judaism.

This view also largely determined Hirsch's attitude to the modern approach to Jewish scholarship (**Wissenschaft des Judentums*). He applied one criterion to all branches of Jewish studies: to what extent do they contribute to the preservation and strengthening of "Jewish life?" "How many of those who study the *selihot*, the *yozerot* and the *piyyutim*," he asked, "still rise early in the morning for *selihot*?" Such study, then, is removed from "life" (as Hirsch understood it) for the sake of which the study itself is pursued. The *mitzvot* are explained not as mere ceremonies, to be discarded at will, but as divine rules of life for the people of God, eternal and inviolable. Where faithfulness in observance of the *mitzvot* is not put before speculation about them, the speculation becomes imprudent and deleterious (his commentary on Psalms 119:1).

Explanation of the Commandments and their Reasons; Classification of the Commandments. In conformity with his general views on the Jewish religion, Hirsch developed a system for explaining the commandments based on two methods: the method of "speculative etymology" or philosophical etymology (a term coined by the German philosopher F. Schlegel) which attempts to discover the intellectual conception of a word, and the symbolical method which seeks to demonstrate that the commandment in itself has meaning only by virtue of the ideal expressed through it. Hence the performance of a commandment is not determined by simple devotion but by attachment to the religious thought represented in symbolic form by the commandment. Symbolic meanings must be attributed in Hirsch's opinion, particularly to (a) commandments which are described by the Torah itself as signs (*otot*), such as circumcision, putting on phylacteries, and also the Sabbath rest; (b) commandments which are established as pointing to historical events, such as the sinew of the thigh vein (see **Dietary Laws*), *mazzah*, and *sukkah*; (c) commandments whose entire content testifies to their symbolic character, such as the **eglah arufah* (Deut. 21:1-19), *halizah*, and the like. Hirsch developed this view in his essays, *Grundlinien einer juedischen Symbolik* (*Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, pp. 213-448).

Hirsch arranged the commandments under six headings: teachings (the principles of the Jewish faith), decisions (precepts concerning the relations of man to man), ordinances (referring to the relations of man to the animal, vegetable, and inanimate kingdoms), commandments (commands concerning the love of all created things), testimonies (mnemonic signs), and worship (prayer and sacrifice). In Hirsch's opinion, all the commandments, despite their variety, reveal "a spirit of unity" (*Nineteen Letters*, 18), and can be reduced to three basic principles: justice, love, and the education of ourselves and others (*ibid.*, 10).

Translations of the Bible and its Exegesis. A prominent place in Hirsch's activity was his translation of, and

commentary on: the Pentateuch (*Der Pentateuch uebersetzt und erklart*, 5 vols., 1867-78, 1920*; English translation of the commentary, 1956-62); the Book of Psalms (*Psalmen uebersetzt und erklart*, 1883; 1924*: *The Psalms*, 2 vols., 1960-66); and prayers (*Israels Gebete, uebersetzt und erlaeuert*, 1895). Hirsch's translation of the Bible into German is a literal rendition; in its faithfulness to the details of the original it goes so far as to employ forms that are alien to the spirit of the German language. Franz **Rosenzweig*, who much later collaborated with Martin **Buber* in translating the Bible into German, regarded their work in this respect as resembling the method of Hirsch. Hirsch rejected the aesthetic approach adopted by his teacher Isaac Bernays, a disciple of **Herder*. In the opinion of Hirsch, the Bible addresses itself to the heart and intellect and leaves no room for the workings of the imagination. As one who denied the validity of the historical approach of the Reform wing, he also rejected the methods of biblical interpretation based on the context in time and space.

Views on Jewish Nationalism. While the Reform wing, with Geiger at its head, sought to demonstrate that Judaism was nothing more than a religious sect, Hirsch considered that God had established Israel as a people and not as a religious congregation, even though the concept of Judaism also includes *dat* (religion). Hirsch employs the concept "national Jewish consciousness" in his writings, and they are not altogether devoid of traces of love for Zion. "The Jewish people, though it carries the Torah with it in all the lands of its dispersion, will never find its table and lamp [i.e., its economic and spiritual development] except in the Holy Land" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 411). Fundamentally, then, Hirsch acknowledged the concept of Jewish nationalism, even though this nationalism is far removed from the nationalism that inspired the early founders of Zionism. Hirsch explicitly opposed the negation of *galut* by "both Jews and non-Jews whose description of *galut* is always accompanied by a violation and derogation of our rights" (*ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 82). These words were apparently directed against the views of Z. **Kalischer* and M. **Hess* (who, incidentally, made a number of observations concerning Hirsch and his ideas in his *Rome and Jerusalem* (1954), 69, 73). Israel's mission, as Hirsch sees it, is to teach the nations "that God is the source of blessing." For this reason "there was given to it as a possession the Land and its blessings; it was given a state system; but these were not conferred as an end in themselves but as the Torah." These views, particularly in conjunction with the other aspects of his philosophy became in the course of time—through the efforts of his son-in-law, S. Z. **Breuer*, his grandson Isaac **Breuer*, and Jacob **Rosenheim*—the ideological basis of the **Agudat Israel*. Hirsch was the founder and editor of the German periodical *Jeschurun* (1854-70; new series 1883-90 edited by his son Isaac Hirsch), which served as a vehicle for the dissemination of his ideas ("a monthly for the inculcation of the spirit of Judaism and of Jewish life in home, community, and school"). In that journal, Hirsch published his essays, some of which were later republished in his *Gesammelte Schriften* (6 vols., 1902-12). In English, Hirsch's collected essays appeared as *Judaism Eternal* (ed. and tr. by I. Grunfeld; 2 vols., 1960-66); an anthology of his writings, *Timeless Torah*, appeared in 1957.

Hirsch's importance as a religious spiritual leader, his wide influence as a preacher and teacher, organizer and writer, made him a dedicated champion of Orthodoxy in its controversy with the Reform-liberal Judaism. While advocating strict adherence to *halakhah*, Hirsch tried to find a solution to the political and cultural challenges presented in modern life to Judaism. He considered his view of Judaism

not as a system of philosophical speculation but as an explication of the Sinaitic revelation. Despite widespread opposition to his ideas from many circles in German Jewry his personal qualities won their respect and admiration.

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[S.K.]

HIRSCH, SAMUEL (1815-1889), rabbi, philosopher of Judaism, and pioneer of the Reform movement in Germany and the United States. Samuel Hirsch belonged to the first generation of modern European rabbis who, combining traditional Jewish learning with university training, founded the **Wissenschaft des Judentums* ("science of Judaism"). He was born at Thalfang, Prussia, and served as rabbi in Dessau (1839-41), and as chief rabbi of Luxembourg (1843-66). He then emigrated to America, where he led the Reform congregation Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia until 1888. He spent the last year of his life in Chicago with his son Emil G. *Hirsch, who was the leading Reform rabbi in the United States at the turn of the century.

In his major philosophic work, *Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden* (1842), Hirsch interpreted Judaism as a dialectically evolving religious system. In the manner of the contemporary speculative idealism, which tended to comprehend all of reality under a single unifying concept, Hirsch's system was based on man's self-awareness. Conscious of his distinctive self, man comes to know the freedom of his sovereign will by which he alone among all creatures transcends the determinism of nature. This capacity for freedom is something "given" and implies a transcendent Source, "an Essence that bestows freedom upon him . . . This Essence he calls God" (*Religionsphilosophie*, 30). A critical disciple of Hegel, Hirsch rejects his philosophic master's contention that Judaism holds a rank inferior to Christianity on the scale of religions. In Hirsch's view, Judaism and Christianity are both equally valid. Judaism is "intensive" religiosity, a way of living with the true God who has entered Israel's midst, while Christianity represents "extensive" religiosity, whose function is the proclamation of this God to the pagan world. Both religions are destined to become perfected as absolute religiosity in the messianic era when the Christians will complete the conversion of the pagans and the Jews will obey the true God freely, no longer by compulsion.

Hirsch opposed sporadic and unprincipled attempts at religious reform by radical lay groups, such as the Frankfort Verein, who in 1843 disavowed the authority of the Talmud and belief in the Messiah. He was a leading participant at the rabbinic conferences of 1844-46 at Brunswick, Frankfort, and Breslau, which formulated the basic positions of the Reform movement. Hirsch upheld the rite of circumcision and the use of Hebrew in public services; yet, he was the first rabbi to advocate the transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday, which he actually carried out as rabbi of Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia. Though at first adopted by a number of communities, this innovation was gradually abandoned by nearly all American Reform congregations.

Hirsch was president of the first Conference of American Reform Rabbis, which convened in Philadelphia in 1869 and played a leading role in framing the so-called "Pittsburgh Platform" (1885); this platform set the course of American Reform Judaism until the advent of the Hitler era (see *Reform Judaism). Hirsch founded the first American chapter of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and was a frequent contributor to Jewish journals. His other works in-



Samuel Hirsch, pioneer of the Reform movement in Germany and the U.S. Jerusalem, J.N.U.L., Schwadron Collection.

clude *Messiaslehre der Juden in Kanzelvortraegen* (1843), and the polemical *Briefe zur Beleuchtung der Judenfrage von Bruno Butler* (1843).

Bibliography: D. Philipson, *Reform Movement in Judaism* (1967?); Guttman, *Philosophies*, 313-21; N. Rotenstreich, *Jewish Philosophy in Modern Times* (1968), 120-36; Katz, in: REJ, 75 (1967), 113-26; M. Kaplan, *Greater Judaism in the Making* (1960), 258-65.

[J.O.H.A.]

HIRSCH, SOLOMON (1839-1902), U.S. politician and merchant. Hirsch was born in Wuerttemberg, Germany. He emigrated to America in 1854 and worked as a clerk in the East before entering business with his brother Edward (1836-1909) in Oregon in 1858. In 1864 he was a founder of the Fleischner, Mayer Company in Portland, which became



Solomon Hirsch, U.S. merchant and politician. Autographed mezotint by H. B. Halls Sons, New York. Courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.



Figure 2. The Belgrave Street synagogue in Leeds, built in 1860. From E. Krausz, *Leeds Jewry*, Cambridge, 1964.

congregation. The Leeds Jewish Representative Council, organized in 1938, embraced almost every local synagogue, Zionist group, charitable organization, and Friendly Society. There is a Hebrew department at Leeds University and the teachers there have included Shimon *Rawidowicz. Hyman Morris was lord mayor in 1941-42 and J. S. Walsh in 1966-67.

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[C.R.]

LEEK (Heb. חציר, *haḥir*), vegetable. *Allium porrum* is mentioned among the vegetables of Egypt for which the children of Israel craved during their journey in the wilderness (Num. 11:5). This vegetable was popular with the Egyptians, sketches of it being common in Egyptian paintings and remains found in their tombs. *Haḥir* elsewhere in the Bible refers to grass used as fodder, and is used for leek once only in the Mishnah (Kelim 17:5). It is usually termed *kereishah* or *karatei*, from the root כרת ("cut"), since it was densely sown and its green leaves cut from time to time for food. These were valued, among other things, as a remedy against snake bite: "If someone is bitten by a snake, leek may be cut for him [on the Sabbath]" (Yoma 83b). Its taste is similar to that of the onion, but more delicate. It was eaten to dispel the aftertaste of radish (Pes. 116a). If the plants are well spaced out they develop bulbs which were a favorite food. This bulb is in the shape of a head, hence its mishnaic name *kafutin* (Greek κεφαλατόν, "with a head"; for the difference between the leaf and the bulb see Tosef., Ter. 4:5). The leaf is dark turquoise green in color, close to that of *tekheler* (Ber. 1:2).

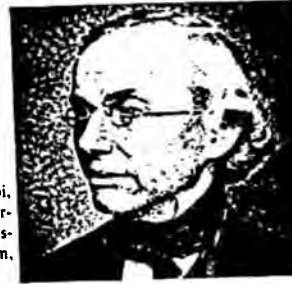
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[J.F.]

LEESER, ISAAC (1806-1868), U.S. rabbi, writer, and educator. Leeser, who was born in Westphalia, Germany (then Prussia), was eight when his mother died. His father took him to Dulmen, near Muenster, where he was reared by his grandmother and began his formal education. He studied with Rabbi Benjamin Cohen, and then with Rabbi Abraham Sutro, who was an ardent opponent of Reform. Leeser obtained his secular education at the gymnasium of Muenster. In 1824 he went to America to work for his uncle in Richmond, Virginia. He published his first article, a defense of Judaism against a defamatory article that had

appeared in a New York newspaper, in 1825. The essay attracted wide notice and in 1829 the Sephardi congregation, Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia, invited him to be its *hazzan*. Leeser was the first to introduce a regular English sermon into the synagogue service. In 1843 he founded the monthly *The Occident*, the first successful Jewish newspaper. For 25 years, this was an important forum for articles on Jewish life and thought. Leeser was its editor, chief contributor, bookkeeper, and sometimes even typesetter.

Leeser founded the first Jewish Publication Society of America and brought many important works to the attention of the American Jewish community. He published the first Hebrew primer for children (1838), the first complete English translation of the Sephardi prayer book (1848), and numerous textbooks for children. He founded the first Hebrew high school (1849), the first Jewish representative and defense organization in 1859 (the Board of Delegates of American Israelites), Maimonides College, and the first American Jewish rabbinical school in 1867. His major literary achievement was the first American translation of the Bible, a work that took him 17 years to complete, and was published in 1845. This became the standard American Jewish translation of the Bible until the new Jewish Publication Society translation of 1917. Leeser's later years were clouded by poverty and the fact that his congregation did not appreciate his many activities on the national scene. Toward the end of his life, his friends formed a congregation, Beth El Emeth, for him. Leeser was a traditionalist who did much to stem the tide of Reform. Although he was identified with the Sephardi community his influence affected the entire community and he laid the foundations for many of the key institutions of present-day



Isaac Leeser, U.S. rabbi, writer, and educator. Courtesy American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass.

Jewish life. His contributions to every area of Jewish culture and religion made him a major builder of American Judaism.

Bibliography: M. Davis, *Emergence of Conservative Judaism* (1963), 347-69; Korn, in: *AJA*, 19 (1967), 127-141; Englander, in: *CCARY*, 28 (1918), 213-52; J. R. Marcus, *Memoirs of American Jews, 1775-1865*, 2 (1955), 58-87; L. Jung (ed.), *Guardians of Our Heritage* (1958), 245-61; Whiteman, in: *AJHS*, 48 (1959), 207-44; M. S. Seler, in: *AJHSQ*, 58 (1968), 118-35.

[J.R.]

LEEuw, JACOB BEN HAYYIM (Heymann) DE (1811-1883), Dutch talmudist. De Leeuw was born in Leiden, but also resided for some time in 's Hertogenbosch. In 1874 he went to Amsterdam, where he taught in the *bet midrash* Ez Hayyim. He was the author of expositions and novellae on various themes in tractate *Ketubbot* which were entitled *Shoshannat Ya'akov* (1848); *Peri Ez Hayyim* (1852), with additional notes (1853); *Mishkenot ha-Ro'im* (1854); *Nahalat Ya'akov* (1857), in the introduction to which he took issue with Phinehas ha-Levi Horowitz, author of the *Hafta'ah*, on the subject of whether money may be extracted from its possessor by a majority decision; and *Helek Ya'akov* (1858). He also wrote *Ahuzzat Mere'im* (1879), novellae on

ordering of the world were acts of His wisdom, which is sovereign, creative, and dynamic. Thus wisdom becomes fully conceptualized when personified pictorially in Proverbs 8 as a personal instrument of God in the planning and implementation of the created order.

Bibliography: W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (1960); B. Gemser, *Sprüche Salomos* (1963); O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, an Introduction* (1965); R. Gordis, *The Book of God and Man* (1965); idem, *Kohleth the Man and his World* (1968); W. McKane, *Proverbs* (1970). See also bibl. to Ecclesiastes, Job, Proverbs, and Psalms. [R.B.Y.S.]

WISE, GEORGE SCHNEIWEIS (1906-), sociologist; first president of *Tel Aviv University. Born in Pinsk, Poland, he went to the U.S. to study in 1926 and graduated from Columbia University in 1930. He served as associate director of its Bureau of Applied Social Research from 1949 to 1952, and lecturer on the sociology of Latin America from 1950 to 1952. For his assistance in the anti-illiteracy campaign in Mexico in 1944-46 he was decorated with the order Aguila Azteca by the Mexican government in 1946, and was visiting professor at Mexico University from 1956 to 1957. Long a supporter of the Hebrew University, he was chairman of its board of governors from 1953 to 1962. In 1963 he was elected president of the newly established Tel Aviv University, which developed rapidly during his tenure of office. In 1971 he became its chancellor. Apart from wide business interests, he took part in Jewish public activities in the United Jewish Appeal and other bodies. He is author of *The Breakdown of Parental Authority in Polish Immigrant Families in the United States* (1931), *Caudillo* (1951), a study of Latin American dictatorship, and *Mexico de Aleman* (1952). [Ed.]

WISE, ISAAC MAYER (1819-1900), U.S. rabbi and pioneer of Reform Judaism. Wise was born in Steingrub, Bohemia. His father, a poor teacher, died during his childhood. Wise lived in Prague and Vienna, and studied at various yeshivot. His later writings suggest that the ideas of the French Enlightenment must have influenced him in his younger days. In 1843 he became the rabbinical officiant (*Religionsweiser*) at Radnitz in Bohemia. The Hapsburg Empire offered bleak prospects for Wise personally and for the removal of disabilities suffered by Jews. He resolved to emigrate—whether with a view to pursuing the rabbinic calling is uncertain—and arrived in New York in 1846.

The free atmosphere of America seemed to liberate in Wise capacities of which he had given no indication in Europe. He became rabbi of Congregation Beth El in Albany, N.Y., introducing reforms such as mixed pews, choral singing, and confirmation, designed to improve public worship. In 1847 he joined a *bet din* in New York, presided over by his lifelong friend Max *Lilienthal, and conceived the idea of its authorizing a single ritual for the American Jewish community. The attempt proved abortive, but in 1848 he issued a call for a meeting the following year to establish a union of congregations. Again the attempt failed, but Wise persisted in his championship of the idea. By this time he had begun to project himself as a writer, contributing regularly to Isaac *Leeser's *Occident* and the New York Jewish weekly *Asmonean*. In 1850 Wise accepted the rabbinate of Beth Elohim congregation, Charleston, South Carolina, which held an avowedly Reform position. On returning home he changed his mind about assuming this office, but evidently there was suspicion in Albany over the Reform positions he was taking. He refused to accept a purported ouster, and a brawl broke out in the synagogue on the New Year. Wise and his followers thereupon formed a new congregation, Anshe Emeth.

In 1854 Wise went to Cincinnati as rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, remaining there for the rest of his life. Within a few months of his arrival he began to publish a weekly, *The Israelite*, later known as *The American Israelite*, and a German supplement *Die Deborah*. By the end of the year he established the short-lived Zion College, combining Hebrew and secular studies. In 1855 he issued a call for a synod which would be the guiding authority of American Judaism, and succeeded in organizing a rabbinical conference which met in Cleveland. The conference agreed to call a synod and adopted a platform which recognized the Bible as divine and declared that it "must be expounded and practiced according to the comments of the Talmud." The Orthodox, as represented by Isaac Leeser, were at first satisfied, but soon grew suspicious of Wise's intentions. Worse, the Cleveland Platform was violently attacked as treachery to the cause of Reform by David *Einhorn, the German radical who had just become a rabbi in Baltimore. Wise replied with equal ferocity. The plan for a synod was stillborn, and thereafter Wise, who put "peace and union" first, was involved in antagonism not only with the Orthodox but with the Reformers who, following Einhorn, gave precedence to ideological purity.

Wise went ahead with some of the projects discussed at Cleveland. In 1856 he published *Minhag America*, a curtailment with modifications of the traditional Hebrew ritual. Despite repeated setbacks, Wise always returned to his advocacy of a union of congregations, a common prayer book, and a college to train American rabbis. He expounded his ideas not only in his writing but in repeated visits to the scattered Jewish communities of America. The recriminations over the Cleveland Conference and then the Civil War deferred practical action. The establishment of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites (1859) and Maimonides College (1867) in the East by the traditionalist forces aroused his sarcastic hostility.

Wise showed no sympathy for the Abolitionist agitation which preceded the Civil War. He venerated the American Union, denouncing any violation of its principles, and was prepared to tolerate slavery rather than contemplate the



Isaac Mayer Wise, U. S. Reform rabbi and first president of Hebrew Union College. Courtesy American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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dissolution of the Union. There are indications that at times, when frustrated in his ambitions to take the lead in American Jewish life, Wise contemplated a career in national politics. During the Civil War he sided with the "Copperhead" Democrats, and in 1863 accepted nomination in that interest for election to the Ohio State Senate, but his congregation forced him to withdraw.

After the Civil War, Wise renewed his agitation for a union of congregations. He attended the 1869 rabbinical conference in Philadelphia (see *Reform Judaism), but played a subordinate role. Though assenting to the resolutions adopted there, Wise veered away from them on returning home, probably having realized that identification with a standpoint too radical would put an end to the dream of a comprehensive union of American synagogues under his leadership. The next few years were punctuated by fierce exchanges between Wise and the more Germanic and radical Reform Eastern rabbis. He called rabbinic conferences in Cleveland, Cincinnati, and New York, which they boycotted, and reissued *Minhag America*, which they regarded with disdain.

Eventually, the lay leaders of the Cincinnati temples issued a call for a union of congregations in the South and West, guaranteeing that it would have no power to legislate for its constituents. Wise accepted this proposal, though when the *Union of American Hebrew Congregations was established in Cincinnati in 1873, his name did not figure prominently in the discussions. His interest was focused on one particular aspect of the Union's tasks—the establishment of a rabbinical college. He was appointed president of *Hebrew Union College, which opened in 1875.

For the remainder of his life Wise labored in the interests of the college. He ordained more than 60 rabbis, and by the time of his death had become the "founding father" of the Reform movement in America. Intellectually, however, the movement outpaced him. The Pittsburg Platform (1885, see *Reform Judaism) was the work of Kaufmann *Kohler, and, though Wise became president of the *Central Conference of American Rabbis (1889 until his death), the *Union Prayer Book* which it adopted was based on Einhorn's *Tamid* rather than Wise's *Minhag America*. Moreover, the arrival of a large community of East European Jews upset his expectation that Orthodoxy would not survive on American soil.

Wise's achievements rested on his stamina and his versatile adaptability to the needs of a pioneer society. Essentially self-taught, he read widely though not profoundly, and his voluminous writing reveals these same characteristics. Intellectually, he remained rooted in the Mendelssohn era. He was ready to mix with people and was devoted to his pupils, earning their affection in return.

Wise was married to Therese Bloch (1844), by whom he had ten children. She died in 1874. He then married Selma Bondi (1876), by whom he had four children, among them Rabbi Jonah B. *Wise. Wise's *Reminiscences* (1901, 1945?) cover the first decade of his life in America. "The World of My Books" (AJA, 6 (1954), 107-48) is also autobiographical. *Selected Writings* appeared in 1900.

Bibliography: M. B. May, *Isaac Mayer Wise* (1916); I. Knox, *Rabbi in America* (1957); J. G. Heller, *Isaac M. Wise* (1965), with extensive bibliography, 677-92; Temkin, in: AJA, 15 (1963), 120-42; Jacob, in: *Judaism*, 15 (1966), 437-49. [S.D.T.]

WISE, JONAH BONDI (1881-1959), U.S. Reform rabbi. Son of Isaac Mayer *Wise, he was ordained by Hebrew Union College in 1903. In 1904 he was appointed to Mizpah Temple, Chattanooga, Tennessee, and in 1906 to Temple Israel, Portland, Oregon. While in Portland he established a weekly Jewish newspaper *The Scribe*. In 1925 Wise moved to New York and there served as rabbi of the Central Synagogue until his death. Within his congregation

he did not depart from the classical pattern of Reform Judaism; family connections and an aptitude for social life helped to establish his position. In 1934 he established the weekly radio program "Message of Israel." He was an active worker for the *American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, serving as national chairman 1931-38. He visited Europe several times on its behalf and represented it at the Evian Conference on Refugees, 1938. In the following year he became national chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, though he rejected Zionism.

Bibliography: S. Caumann, *Jonah Bondi Wise* (1966). [S.D.T.]

WISE, STEPHEN SAMUEL (1874-1949), U.S. rabbi and Zionist leader. Born in Budapest, Hungary, Wise was taken to the United States at the age of 17 months. From childhood he determined to become a rabbi like his father Rabbi Aaron Wise, who, together with Alexander *Kohut and Gustav *Gottheil, rabbi at Temple Emanu-El, helped to prepare him for the rabbinate. He was graduated with honors from Columbia University at the age of 18. Ordained in 1893 by Adolph *Jellinek of Vienna, he became



Stephen S. Wise, U.S. rabbi and Zionist leader. Courtesy American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

assistant rabbi of New York City's Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, and assumed full responsibility after the death of Rabbi Henry S. Jacobs.

In 1900, shortly before marrying Louise Waterman, Wise became rabbi of Temple Beth Israel in Portland, Oregon, where for the next six years he pioneered in interfaith cooperation, social service, and civic leadership. His sermons are collected in *Beth Israel Pulpit: Sermons* (2 vols., 1905-06). He also served as unpaid commissioner of child labor for Oregon.

In 1902 Wise received his Ph. D. degree from Columbia University for his translation and editing of Solomon ibn Gabirol's *Improvement of the Moral Qualities*. For the Jewish Publication Society he translated the Book of Judges for their English version of the Bible, submitting his work in 1908.

Wise had begun his Zionist career during the late 1890s, helping to articulate the movement's ideology and organize its followers. A founder of the New York Federation of Zionist Societies in 1897, he led in the formation of the nationwide Federation of American Zionists in 1898 and served as honorary secretary until 1904 in close cooperation with Theodor Herzl. He had met Herzl at the Second Zionist Congress in Basle in 1898 and at that time agreed to serve as American secretary of the world Zionist movement. In 1914 he was instrumental in creating the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs and later headed it.

He acted as an important intermediary to President Woodrow *Wilson and Colonel Edward House in 1916-19, when, with Louis D. *Brandeis and Felix *Frankfurter, he helped formulate the text of the Balfour Declaration of 1917. He spoke on behalf of Zionist aspirations in Palestine at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1918-19, where he also pleaded for the cause of the Armenian people.

SCHECHTER, SOLOMON (Shneur Zalman; 1847-1915), rabbinic scholar and president of the *Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Schechter was born in Uscani, Rumania. His father, a Habad Hasid, was a ritual slaughterer (Ger. *Schaechter*). In his teens he studied with the rabbinic author Joseph Saul Nathanson in Lemberg. From about 1875 to 1879 he attended the Vienna *ber ha-midrash*. He acquired a lifelong devotion to scientific study of the tradition and developed the central notion of the community of Israel as decisive for Jewish living and thinking. He was to call it "Catholic Israel." From 1879 he studied at the Berlin Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums and at the University of Berlin. When in 1882 a fellow student at the Hochschule, Claude Goldsmid Montefiore, invited him to be his tutor in rabbinics in London, Schechter accepted. In England he rose to prominence as a rabbinic scholar and spokesman for Jewish traditionalism. In 1890 he was appointed lecturer in talmudics and in 1892 reader in rabbinics at Cambridge University. In 1899 he also became professor of Hebrew at University College, London.

Schechter's first substantial work was his edition of *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* (1887). His fame rests on the scholarly recovery of the Cairo **Genizah*. It created a sensation in the world of scholarship, and in its wake Jewish history and the history of Mediterranean society were and are being rewritten. Over one hundred thousand manuscripts and manuscript fragments were brought to England and presented to Cambridge University by Schechter and Charles Taylor, the master of St. John's College who had made Schechter's trip possible. Together they published the newly-discovered fragments of the Hebrew original of *Ben Sira (*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 1899).

Late in 1901 Schechter accepted an invitation by a number of leading American Jews, notably his friend, Judge Mayer Sulzberger of Philadelphia, to assume the post of president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He served in this capacity from 1902 until his death. He was able to attract a distinguished faculty, including Louis Ginzberg, Alexander Marx, Israel Friedlaender, Israel Davidson, and Mordecai M. Kaplan. The Seminary became one of the most important centers of Jewish learning and of Jewish intellectual and, indeed, national revival. Schechter's *Studies in Judaism* (3 vols., 1896-1924), his *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (in book form, 1909; based on essays in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1894-96) and *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers* (1915), remain indispensable documents of American Jewish religious Conservatism. Steering a course between Orthodoxy and Reform, Schechter combined scholarship and objectivity with piety, and piety with a measure of flexibility and innovation in doctrine and practice. In 1913 Schechter was instrumental in founding the *United Synagogue of America (his original designation read "Agudath Jeshurun—A Union for Promoting Traditional Judaism in America") which became a major national institution of Conservative Judaism in the U.S. In 1905 he acknowledged Zionism as "the great bulwark against assimilation." He felt close to religious and spiritual Zionism and in 1913 attended the 11th Zionist Congress in Vienna. Over the strenuous objections of Seminary board members Jacob H. Schiff and Louis Marshall, he opened the Seminary to Zionist activity. But he remained, essentially, a builder of religious Judaism in the American diaspora.

Schechter is considered the chief architect of Conservative Judaism in the U.S. In his view, this version of Jewish religious life and thought was organically related to the Historical School, founded by Zunz, Frankel, and Graetz. Schechter defined the theological position of the school:



Solomon Schechter, founder of Conservative Judaism. Etching by Hermann Struck. New York, Leo Baeck Institute.

It is not the mere revealed Bible that is of first importance to the Jew, but the Bible as it repeats itself in history, in other words, as it is interpreted by Tradition... Since then the interpretation of Scripture or the Secondary Meaning is mainly a product of changing historical influences, it follows that the centre of authority is actually removed from the Bible and placed in some living body, which, by reason of its being in touch with the ideal aspirations and the religious needs of the age, is best able to determine the nature of the Secondary Meaning. This living body, however, is not represented by any section of the nation, or any corporate priesthood, or Rabbithood, but by the collective conscience of Catholic Israel, as embodied in the Universal Synagogue (*Studies in Judaism*, Series One, JPS, 1896, xvii-xviii).

Though a staunch traditionalist, Schechter admitted the possibility of change. However, he felt that changes should not be introduced arbitrarily or deliberately. Rather, "the norm as well as the sanction of Judaism is the practice actually in vogue. Its consecration is the consecration of general use—or, in other words, of Catholic Israel" (*ibid.*, xix). Schechter insisted (*ibid.*, 180ff.) Judaism must be understood as regulating not only our actions but also our thoughts: "It is true that every great religion is a 'concentration of many ideas and ideals' which make this religion able to adapt itself to various modes of thinking and living. But there must always be a point round which all these ideas concentrate themselves. This center is Dogma."

Bibliography: N. Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter: A Biography* (1938); A. S. Oko, *Solomon Schechter: A Bibliography* (1938); M. Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism* (1963); A. Marx, *Essays in Jewish Biography* (1947), 229-50; B. Mandelbaum, *The Wisdom of Solomon Schechter* (1963); M. Ben-Horin, in: *JSOS*, 25 (1963), 249-86; 27 (1965), 75-102; 30 (1968), 262-71; *idem*, in: *AJHSQ*, 56 (1966/67), 208-31; *idem*, in: *JQR Seventy-fifth Anniversary Volume* (1967), 47-59; H. H. and M. L. Rubenovitz, *The Walking Heart* (1967), 14-20; A. Parzen, *Architects of*

discovered the green ray of the polar auroras. During subsequent years he investigated the subject of airglow and the physics and chemistry of the upper atmosphere. From 1928 Kaplan taught at the University of California, Los Angeles. He published *Across the Space Frontier* (1951) and was coauthor of *Physics and Medicine of the Upper Atmosphere* (1951). An active Zionist, he was a governor of the Weizmann Institute, Rehovot, and of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Bibliography: *Current Biography Yearbook 1956* (1957), 316-8; *The New Yorker*, 33 (June 15, 1957), 25-26. [D.ASH.]

KAPLAN, LOUIS LIONEL (1902-), U.S. educator. Kaplan was born in Slonim, Russia, was taken to the U.S. in 1909, and educated in New York. From 1930, he served as executive director of the Baltimore Board of Jewish Education and president of the Baltimore Hebrew College, and he was president of the National Council for Jewish Education (1939-41). From 1940, he was a member of the board of governors of *Dropsie College, Philadelphia. He was also a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Maryland from 1952. He wrote *A New Approach to the Teaching of the Torah* (1942) and edited Hebrew texts and readers. Kaplan views Jewish education as an instrument for helping the individual, through a study of the unique Judaic religious-historical tradition, to find his place in the larger society of which he is a part. [L.SP.]

KAPLAN, MORDECAI MENAHEM (1881-), U.S. rabbi and founder of the *Reconstructionist movement. Kaplan was born in Svencionys, Lithuania; he emigrated to the United States with his family when he was nine years old. Kaplan's early religious education was Orthodox, but by the time he reached secondary school he had been attracted to heterodox conceptions of the Bible and religion. After his ordination at the *Jewish Theological Seminary he became rabbi of the Orthodox synagogue Kehillath Jeshurun in New York.



Mordecai Kaplan, founder of the Reconstructionist movement. Courtesy Jewish Theological Seminary, New York. Photo Gedalia Segal, New York.

In 1909 Solomon *Schechter appointed Kaplan dean of the newly founded Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary. A few months later Kaplan began teaching homiletics in the Seminary's rabbinical school and, subsequently, Midrash and philosophies of religion. Kaplan had an active public career. He was one of the founders of the New York *Kehillah; he organized the first synagogue-center, the Jewish Center, and served as its rabbi from 1917 to 1922; and he founded the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, *The Reconstructionist* magazine (1935), and the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation (1935).

Kaplan taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary for five decades and influenced generations of Conservative rabbis, emphasizing intellectual honesty in confronting the challenges posed by modern thought to traditional Jewish beliefs and practices. In his approach to Midrash and philosophies of religion, Kaplan combined scholarship with creative application of the texts to contemporary problems. Through Reconstructionism he gave American Jewry some of its most fertile theoretical and practical ideas. As a student of the history of Jewish thought Kaplan has made significant contributions. He edited and translated *Mesillat Yesharim* by Moses Hayyim Luzzatto (1937, 1966), contributed a study of Hermann Cohen's philosophy, *The Meaning and Purpose of Jewish Existence* (1964), and described modern Jewish ideologies in *The Greater Judaism in the Making* (1960).

Philosophy of Judaism. In formulating his philosophy of Reconstructionism, Kaplan drew upon traditional Jewish sources, *Haskalah thinkers, and American philosophical pragmatism. He defined Judaism as an "evolving religious civilization," attempting thereby to aid in the adjustment of world Jewry to the social and intellectual conditions of the 20th century. He maintained that as a "civilization" the Jewish people possess all the characteristics of land, polity, and culture subsumed under that designation, but that in each aspect of civilization radical adjustments in Jewish social theory and polity are essential. Therefore, while Kaplan has always been an ardent Zionist, he has equally insisted that the creative survival of the Jewish people in the Diaspora is both possible and desirable. His theory of nationalism has been open to the impact of changing conditions, even though it consistently prods world Jewry to formulate a covenant as a transnational people and create the instruments for its implementation.

By "religious" Kaplan means that Jewish civilization expresses its genius best in clarifying the purposes and values of human existence, in wrestling with God (who is conceived in nonpersonal terms), and in the ritual of home, synagogue, and community. However, because Judaism is a civilization, the secular elements of culture are essential to Jewish spirituality; they curb the tendency of religion toward rigidity, uniformity, and worship of the past. Thus, Jewish religion embraces both the purpose and the unconscious product of the Jewish people's search for a meaningful existence for itself.

By "evolving" Kaplan means that Judaism should be considered from a pragmatic, historical point of view, rather than a metaphysical, revelational one. The focus of the content of Jewish life is the Jewish people, its needs, and its responses to challenge, rather than revealed texts or metaphysical constructions. Kaplan argues that the Jewish people will not accept a static theory of Judaism. Each Jew must solve life's perplexities for himself. Tradition can guide but must not dictate. Even Kaplan's own naturalistic approach can be only one option. Henceforth, Jews must learn to live with and cherish diversity.

Criticisms of Kaplan. Kaplan's critics have concentrated

their attacks on his theology. Kaplan's religious naturalism and humanism challenge both the belief in historical revelation and those theologies grounded on metaphysical interpretations of revelation. He argues that the idea of God is correlative to the idea of man and that conceptions of God necessarily bear an organic relationship to man's understanding of himself and the world. Kaplan regards God as that power in the universe on which man must rely for the achievement of his destiny (or, in theological terms, his salvation), and the inevitable result of such a definition is that God-ideas will reflect advances in the physical and normative sciences and in the imaginative arts and will prove as valid or as suggestive as the knowledge and inspiration derived from these sources.

To those who seek certainty or who view the experience of God as unique or as an act of grace by a transcendent Being, Kaplan's theology is too abstract and impersonal. Moreover, its implications are altogether disturbing to accepted forms of worship, ritual, and religious authority. The major foundation of Kaplan's views is to be found in his *Judaism as a Civilization* (1934).

Kaplan's works include *Ha-Emunah ve-ha-Musar* (1954), *Questions Jews Ask* (1956), *Judaism Without Supernaturalism* (1958), *A New Zionism* (1955, 1959²), *Higher Jewish Learning and the Future of the American Jew* (1963), *Not So Random Thoughts* (1966), and *The Religion of Ethical Nationhood* (1970). He co-edited, in addition to earlier editions of prayer books, the *Festival Prayer Book* (1958), and the *Daily Prayer Book* (1964).

Bibliography: G. D. Cohen, in: *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume* (1953), 9-33 (Eng. sect.); M. Arzi, in: *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly of America*, 5 (1938), 195-219; A. S. Kohanski, in: *JSOS*, 29 (1967), 155-70; C. Liebman, in: *AJYB*, 71 (1970), 3-71.

[J.J.C.]

KAPLAN, PESAH (1870-1943), Hebrew and Yiddish journalist. Born in Stawiski, Poland, Kaplan lived in Bialystok from 1888 and was active in Zionist circles, writing regularly in the Hebrew press. He also published a series of popular works and children's books in Hebrew. Later he moved away from Zionism, wrote in Yiddish, and served as journalist and editor of Yiddish periodicals. He was a member of the *Judenrat in the Bialystok ghetto and perished in the Holocaust. Two diaries which he kept in the ghetto (on the Bialystok Judenrat, and on the expulsion of the Jews of Bialystok) are preserved in the archives of *Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

Bibliography: Kressel, *Leksikon*, 2 (1967), 288f.

[G.K.]

KAPLANSKY, KALMAN (1912-), Canadian labor leader. Born in Bialystok (then Russia), Kaplansky emigrated to Canada in 1929 and worked in the printing trade in Montreal. He joined the Quebec Labor Party, serving as party secretary from 1935 to 1938, and later became an active member of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.), which succeeded the Labor Party. He represented the Montreal Typographical Union at the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and became director of the international affairs department in 1957. Kaplansky was a prominent figure in the Jewish socialist movement in Canada. He was chairman of the Montreal *Arbeter Ring (Workmen's Circle) committee in 1943 and in 1946 became director of the Canadian Jewish Labor Committee. From 1948 to 1957 he was secretary of the joint advisory committee on labor relations of the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Jewish Labor Committee. In these capacities he worked to prevent discriminatory practices in labor organizations in Canada.

[B.G.K.]

KAPLANSKY, SHELOMO (1884-1950), Zionist labor leader. Born in Bialystok (then Russia), Kaplansky trained as an engineer and joined the Zionist labor movement at an



Shelomo Kaplansky, labor Zionist leader. Courtesy Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

early age. He lived in Vienna between 1903 and 1912, founded the *Po'alei Zion movement in Austria, and edited its journal *Der Juedische Arbeiter*, which appeared in German and Yiddish. He was a founder of the World Union of Po'alei Zion and was instrumental in having it accepted as a member of the Socialist International. He devised the idea of the Erez Israel Workers' Fund (Kuppat Po'alei Erez Yisrael) which was founded in 1910 by the World Union of Po'alei Zion in order to foster cooperative settlements and enterprises in Erez Israel. He went to Erez Israel in 1912 to settle there, but between 1913 and 1919 he was secretary of the *Jewish National Fund head office at The Hague. He was a member and chairman of the finance and economics committee of the Zionist Executive in London between 1919 and 1921. Kaplansky, who belonged to the moderate socialist trend, supported the participation of Po'alei Zion in the World Zionist Organization and all its institutions. At the 1920 World Conference of Po'alei Zion in Vienna he preferred the movement's split, repudiating its pro-Communist faction (the Left Po'alei Zion). Between 1927 and 1929 he was a member of the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem and the director of its Settlement Department. From 1929 until 1931 he lived in London as an emissary of the Zionist labor movement to the British Labor Party, which was then in power. From 1932 until his death, Kaplansky was director of the Haifa *Technion. During the debate over the partition of Palestine in 1937 he opposed the scheme preferring the idea of a binational state in the whole of Palestine. As a result, he left the *Mapai Party in 1944 and later joined *Mapam. Some of his many articles and pamphlets in Russian, German, English, Hebrew, and Yiddish are collected in *Hazon ve-Hagshamah* ("Dream and Fulfillment," 1950).

Bibliography: Z. Shazar, *Or Ishim*, 2 (1964²), 159-68; A. Granott, *Dor Tekumah* (1963), 321-4; M. Singer, *Shelomo Kaplansky*, 2 vols. (1971).

[Ed.]

KAPO, prisoner in charge of a group of inmates in Nazi concentration camps. The derivation of the word is not clear; according to one view the name is Italian (*capo* = "boss"); according to others it is an abbreviation of *Kameradschaftspolizei* and would then have originated among the prisoners themselves. Similarly, it is not possible to ascertain when this unofficial term first came into use. The appointment of Kapos was made by the S.S. who guarded the camps; but the authority to appoint Kapos was never explicitly defined. It was the Kapo's task to carry out the orders of the S.S. and to ensure absolute control over the prisoners. The Kapo was not an expert like the "chief

SHALOM HARTMAN INSTITUTE
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DAVID HARTMAN

born in 1931 in Brooklyn, New York, Prof. Rabbi David Hartman received his rabbinical ordination from Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik of Yeshiva University, New York, and his Ph.D. in Philosophy from McGill University, Montreal. In 1971, after serving for many years as a rabbi in Montreal, David Hartman immigrated with his family to Israel. In 1976, he founded the Shalom Hartman Institute, dedicating it in the name of his father. Through his academic research, publications, public lectures and work as director of the institute, Prof. Hartman has endeavored to foster greater understanding among Jews of diverse affiliations - both in Israel and the Diaspora - and to help build a more pluralistic, tolerant Israeli society.



For over two decades, David Hartman was Professor of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and was also a visiting professor at the Universities of California at Berkeley and Los Angeles. His involvement in Jewish thought goes beyond the academic fields, in which he has published extensively. His influence has also been felt in Israel's political and educational arenas: he was an advisor to Zevulun Hammer, a former Israeli Minister of Education, and to several Israeli prime ministers in the area of religious pluralism in Israel and the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora.

In October 2000, David Hartman was awarded the prestigious AVI CHAI Prize in Israel, the aim of which is to recognize and reward individuals who contribute toward increasing mutual understanding and sensitivity among Israeli Jews of different backgrounds and commitments to Jewish heritage. As stated by the Prize committee, "the AVI CHAI Prize for 5760 was awarded to Rabbi Prof. David Hartman, in recognition of his educational, philosophical and public activities, especially his founding and direction of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem."

In October, 2001, during SHI's 25th Anniversary Celebration Event, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert rewarded David Hartman with the "Guardian of Jerusalem" prize for his unparalleled contribution to the Jewish political and religious life in the capital.

In the fall of 2002, David Hartman released his most recent book, *Moreshet B'Makhloket*, a translation of his landmark work, *Israelis and the Jewish Tradition*. Please see the publications list for details

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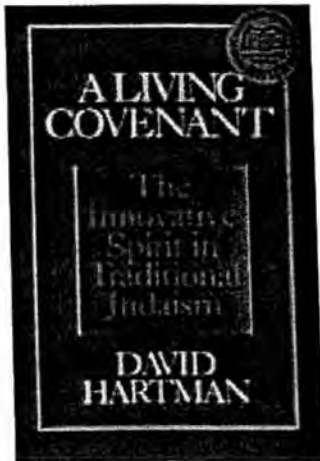
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--**Judith Hauptman**, Rabbi Philip R. Alstat Associate Professor of Talmud, The Jewish Theological Seminary; author of *Rereading the Rabbis: A Woman's Voice*

"I learned much from this book, and I appreciate its theological courage and originality."
-- **Harold M. Schulweis**, Rabbi, Cong. Valley Beth Shalom, Encino, California; author of *For Those Who Can't Believe*

David Hartman, philosopher and social activist, is one of the most respected theologians in the world today. He is the founder and director of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. Named after his late father, the Institute is dedicated to developing a new understanding of classical Judaism that provides moral and spiritual direction for Judaism's confrontation with modernity. Dr. Hartman is presently Professor Emeritus at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He is the author of several books including *A Heart of Many Rooms* and *Maimonides: Torah and Philosophic Quest*, both of which won the National Jewish Book Award.

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**Family, Faith, and the Conversion Law:
Israel and the Future of World Jewry**
by David Hartman

The modern world has witnessed the breakdown of a shared understanding among Jews of how they are meant to live. In contrast to many periods in the past, Torah and Halakhah today no longer define the collective or individual convictions of the majority of the Jewish people. The interaction with modern civilization and culture has weakened the controlling influence of classical Judaism over contemporary Jewry. While we may lament this loss and fear for the spiritual and cultural future of Jewish history, we must recognize this dramatic change in Jewish consciousness as a given fact of modernity.

This erosion of normative consensus was accompanied by the evolution of *family* into the basic concept informing Jewish self-understanding and commitment. Sociologically speaking, *family* rather than *norm* defines the fundamental experience of Jewish unity and accountability. Family-related notions of 'people,' 'memory,' 'shared suffering' and 'history' have emerged as the primary orienting values uniting Jews throughout the world, with the State of Israel - the shared home of all Jews - serving an essential role in giving structure and coherence to this family-governed experience of Jewish identity.

The centrality of family in defining Jewish consciousness is not, I believe, antithetical to classical notions of Jewish identity in the tradition. On the contrary, Maimonides rules in the *Mishneh Torah*:

One who separates himself from the Community, even if he does not commit a transgression but only holds aloof from the congregation of Israel, does not fulfill religious precepts in common with his people, shows himself indifferent when they are in distress, does not observe their fast, but goes his own way, as if he were one of the gentiles and did not belong to the Jewish people - such a person has no portion in the world to come. (Laws of Repentance, 3:20)

Indifference to the family of Jews is tantamount to indifference to their covenantal destiny.

Today, perhaps more than in any other period of history, Jews are openly showing a deep concern and an unprecedented ability to act effectively as a community on behalf of endangered Jews wherever they may be. If one compares North American Jewry's passivity during the Holocaust with its activism for Soviet Jewry in the 1960's, one is struck by the transformation of Jews from a reticent, self-conscious community into a vigorous, bold, national body articulating its legitimate survival needs and interests in the public arena of world cultures and nations. There is no doubt that one of the primary causes of this transformation was the return of the Jewish people to its ancient homeland; the re-establishment of the State of Israel gave Jews a new sense of public dignity and recognition, a new voice in which to express their collective concerns and aspirations.

The Law of Return, *Hok Ha'Shvut*, gave formal legal expression to the then evident idea that Israel was - and always will be - the home of all Jews. What this law said, in effect, was that Israel was not only the home of those who cast votes in its elections or served in its army, but that Israel was also home to the whole of the Jewish world. Everyone who participates in the destiny of the Jewish people has a right to become a citizen of the State of Israel. Everyone who identifies with the Jewish people, who publicly declares his or her Jewishness and who thus exposes himself or herself to the vulnerability of Jewish history is morally and legally entitled to become a citizen of this country.

One who does not appreciate the importance of the idea of family for contemporary Jewish consciousness and how deeply Israel has penetrated and sustains this sense of family by providing a common historical home for the entire Jewish people, then one cannot but realize the tragic mistake of trying to pass the currently debated Conversion Law in the Knesset.

One cannot, on the one hand, issue a bold invitation to all Jews to view Israel as their home (as in the Law of Return) and, on the other hand, allow the Knesset, the main legislative body of Israel, to rule that the Jewish way of life of the majority of world Jewry is fraudulent, inauthentic and officially devoid of legitimacy as a mediating framework of Jewish life and values.

The defensive argument that the Conversion Law would apply only in Israel is as cynical as it is irrelevant to the offensive issue at the heart of the legislation. How can the philosophy of Conservative and Reform Judaism be *treif* in Israel but kosher in the Diaspora? What makes Conservative and Reform theological and spiritual teachings legitimate on Park Avenue but not on Rehov Yehonatan? Is their content different?

It is ironic that the theology and practice of Conservative and Reform Jews in Israel is probably more traditional and more in keeping with the

traditional Judaism than in America. This irony only reveals the cynicism of those willing to give a *hechsher* (certifications of *hru*) because of their fear of interrupting the cash flow from the Diaspora or of the negative political and economic repercussions proclaiming the illegitimacy of Conservative and Reform synagogues and rabbis in North America and Europe.

How crass and transparently political is this argument aimed at the opponents of this seemingly serious theological and religious issue! What an "honorable" message the Knesset thus issues to the world at large!

It is important to place my objection to religious legislation in perspective by considering the distinction between pluralism and relativism. I am not arguing for the equivalent validity of all competing understandings of classical Judaism. Unlike relativism, pluralism does not negate the possibility of reasoned debate between rival views of Judaism or of reasoned choice among the various movements claiming to represent Judaism today. Nor does pluralism preclude believing in and arguing for the superior truth and meaningfulness of one's approach to Jewish life and tradition over its rivals.

The pluralism I am advocating aims at guaranteeing the rights of all religious groups to express their understanding and appreciation of Judaism within Israel without the State's deciding in favor of any one party to the religious discussion. I am not asking Orthodox rabbis to give up their convictions or understanding of the meaning of Torah and Halakhah. They are entitled to teach whatever they believe and to argue vigorously against Reform and Conservative rabbis and their theologies. This is a legitimate disagreement that should be aired and discussed throughout the Jewish world.

Open disagreements about the nature of Halakhic practice and religious belief, however vehement, will not threaten the future of the Jewish people so long as the legislative authority of the State of Israel remains outside of the debate. If the Knesset were to legislate the sole legitimacy of the Orthodox understanding of Torah into law, then the family-based sense of Jewish identity would be called into question. It is not the function of the State to arbitrate between the different theologies or philosophies of Judaism. Instead, the State must make sure that the groups that represent these different approaches to Judaism can live with dignity within the home of the total family of Jews.

Without a vital sense of family, we will never be able to build a moral and spiritual understanding of Torah needed for our generation. Family and collectivity precede the commitment of faith. The book of Genesis and the early chapters of Exodus tell the story of a family, a people, who share a common destiny. Only in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus does God call upon Moses to bring this people to Sinai to enter a covenant based upon Torah and mitzvot.

Today, although we have experienced a shared Egypt, a shared vulnerability and a shared suffering, we do not share a common Sinai. We are divided by competing and differing understandings of what Sinai entails, by what Torah and mitzvot should mean for modern Jewry. We do, however, share a common memory of suffering and a sense of family that binds us together as one people.

The Knesset must appreciate the important role sustaining Jewish identity throughout the world. Having lost Torah as the organizing factor of Jewish consciousness, we must nurture the remaining element of family awareness that informs Jewish identity today. How are we to weaken this fragile but indispensable feature of Jewish continuity!

I understand the pressures on the Prime Minister and others to make coalition agreements and to stay in power if only for the sake of providing 'peace with security' for the Jewish people in Israel. I also believe, however, that Jews both in Israel and throughout the world require for their security the belief in the Israeli government's ability to transcend self-interested coalition politics for the sake of a more profound conviction and commitment to the continued well-being of the Jewish family. Without such a belief, Jews will become alienated from their government and Israel will lose the credibility and vitality necessary for making this society the spiritual home for all Jews.

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Religious Diversity and the Millennium
by David Hartman

The millennium is a powerful symbol of hope, of something concluding and of something beginning anew. The passage into a new century evokes feelings of new possibilities for change.

Many religious people throughout the world believe that we are moving towards a messianic time, towards the establishment of God's kingdom on earth and the final vindication of their particular religious traditions. For them, such hopes and beliefs are implicit in the very meaning of faith in God.

We can, however, approach the millennium as a spiritual opportunity for people of different faiths to learn to understand and appreciate the meaning of radical diversity.

We are moving into a world where "the other," the different one, enters into our lives in ways never before experienced in history. There is no precedent for the new experience of "globalization" and of exposure to such a vast variety of cultural traditions throughout the world. Universality is no longer an abstract concept or prayer. It is part of the concrete reality of everyday life.

The question we need to ask is: How will the major Western religious traditions relate to this new reality?

Legacies of Intolerance

Christianity, Islam and Judaism have inherited founding stories that essentially preclude coexistence with one another. The past has given us a legacy of intolerance that sets one tradition against the other.

Christianity started out by calling itself the "New Israel." It claimed that it had superseded the "Old Israel," the rejected chosen people of the "Old Testament." God would now speak to humanity through the words of Paul, not the Law of Moses. Augustine perceived Jews - specifically their exile and humiliation in history - as living evidence of the truth of the Christian story. Jews should not be eliminated from the City of God, because their despicable condition bore witness to the Christian truth.

Throughout history we all tended to justify the existence of other faiths in our own terms by arguing that other faith traditions were unwitting divine instruments contributing to our ultimate triumph. Medieval Jewish thinkers saw Christianity and Islam as instruments for spreading the Bible, the necessary cultural language for disseminating the word of God and Torah throughout the world. By universalizing the fundamental categories of biblical religion they were, in effect, preparing the world to eventually accept the Jewish story.

Each faith thus perceived the other from the perspective of its own particular narrative. The "other" had no significance in its own right. Religious truth was a scarce commodity that could not be shared among different traditions. The only point of inter-faith discussions was to determine who really mediated God's truth. Whose revelation told the real story? Who was God's true prophet: Moses, Jesus or Mohammed?

The architectural landscape of Jerusalem is a telling illustration of this zero-sum conception of religious truth. The Old City is a cluttered, choking place. The Dome of the Rock is built on the site of the original Temple; the Church of the Nativity is situated nearby. Each building seems poised to squeeze out its rival. It is as if no religion can tolerate the other's presence. The vitality of "the other" undermines its own sense of worth, its *raison d'être*.

The religious history of Western civilization can be understood as a demeaning and ugly story of insecurity, jealousy and rivalry. The presence of Jews celebrating their own tradition - enjoying their Shabbat, their rituals, stories, their collective dreams - was experienced as a threat to other faith traditions. "What do you think you're doing! You are no longer God's elect community." Judaism, in turn, said to Christianity: "Do you really think true religion is expressed in the wafers you swallow or the choral music, the rituals and the "graven .../.../images" you create to serve God?" And Islam said to Israel: "You're not really the chosen children of Abraham. We are! You purposely falsified scripture, showing Isaac - rather than Ishmael - as Abraham's spiritual successor."

This ideological rivalry quickly spilled over into an endless battle for control of the Holy Land and especially the Holy City, Jerusalem. Jerusalem was considered the focal point of God's plan for history. And controlling Jerusalem was a sign of having been chosen to mediate God's will on earth. So history has shown that Jerusalem is less a city of peace than a city of war, a city of strife, of hatred and of "holy wars." The Promised Land became a land of intolerance.

Learning to Tell Our Stories Differently

A crucial issue of the millennium is whether we can free ourselves from inherited beliefs and habits of thought that imply that there is only one true story about God and Revelation and that people of faith must believe in the ultimate triumph of their particular religious traditions.

Christianity must rethink its traditional understanding of Jews and Judaism. Islam, which relegated "the people of the book" to second-class status, must also re-examine its relationship to Judaism.

Jews too, must re-evaluate the implications of the concepts of election and covenant. Even among ourselves, many religious leaders and educators are victims of limited conceptions of God and religious life. Conservative and Reform women trying to pray at the Western Wall are not welcome. Egalitarian prayer groups are considered subversive elements bent on destroying the sacredness of Jerusalem. Jews who came from the four corners of the earth - the "ingathering of the exiles" - are called "gangsters and whores" by self-righteous, self-appointed guardians of the faith. Like the Devil who quotes Scripture, fanatics have little trouble finding aggression and intolerance under the cloak of religious piety and holiness.

Now that we Jews have not yet developed a genuine acceptance of "the other." But that shouldn't stop us from working hard to create a religious vision that points in that direction. We have not yet built religious communities where acceptance of "the other" and celebration of religious diversity go hand in hand with intense piety and religious devotion. The spirit that guides our educational and search work in the Shalom Hartman Institute is to discover ways in which we can convey the power of our tradition without requiring the delegitimization of "the other."

This is the task of every religious thinker today. Each one of us must try to discover ways of telling our stories differently, but without emptying them of spiritual meaning and vitality. An outsider might say: "If you don't like your story as it is, why not abandon it altogether?"

None of us want to give up our particular stories or traditions because of our deep religious commitments and our belief that there is something compelling and vitally significant in them. What we must struggle to discover is whether the significant and captivating aspects of our traditions necessarily involve the delegitimization of stories and traditions not our own.

Do not deceive myself into believing that this is a simple task. On the basis of past and contemporary experience, it appears that heroic and passionate commitments grow out of absolutist claims and convictions. Although religious pluralism and intellectual openness foster civility and decency, they seem to go hand in hand with lukewarm religious commitments.

Nevertheless, we must aspire to develop religious forms of commitment and passion that do not require believing that only one tradition reflects the truth. The vitality of religious commitment is not necessarily a function of exclusivity and uniqueness. The presence of other religious traditions need not threaten a person's total devotion and commitment to a particular tradition. Affirmation does not entail the delegitimization of "the other."

Millennial Expectations

As I have often written, absolute truths and exaggerated expectations frighten me. Ugly things happen when people claim to have the exclusive keys to the Kingdom of God. Non-believers are never simply mistaken. They are willful deniers of the Truth and, therefore, enemies of God or of the Revolution. Few concepts can rival "God's love" as the justification for so many acts of violence and cruelty in history. Modern Marxism has challenged this infamous record in the name of a secular version of historical redemption and creation of a "new man." The belief in our ability to create a radically new, just society has been responsible for so much violence and dehumanization.

My prayer is that people will bear witness to their belief in God by focusing their hope for something new in history on the "still small voice" of God and on the prophet Micah's message: "Do justice, love goodness and walk modestly with your God." As a religious person I hope for a time when the religious impulse will draw people to live with "the other" in dignity, when religious passion will be informed by the commandment to "love the stranger."

The essential principle is not "love your neighbor" - which may not be that difficult since neighbors tend to be like you - but "love the stranger," the one who is different from you, who sings a different song from yours, whose rituals and world view differ from yours. Can you appreciate such strangers as they are, or do you have to fit them into your own comfortable, familiar categories?

Millennial expectations should not focus on a singular, peak experience but rather on a sustained, reflective learning experience. We must learn to experience God's redemptive love in our daily, non-dramatic resolve to make life a little more just and compassionate. This kind of commitment is not an insignificant achievement in the modern world. It requires changing the widespread belief that total redemption and transformation of the human condition are the most natural and authentic religious aspirations. Daily life, rather than the end of history, must become the primary target of our religious commitment and concerns.

those who come to the Holy Land expect to witness an explosion of spiritual energies, a new heaven and a new earth, they will be disappointed. The great revelation the millennium pilgrims can hope to find and bring back to their homes is that an intense faith experience need not shut people out by legitimating one way, one truth.

We must learn to celebrate the millennium by saying "Amen" to the fact that God has created a symphony of different voices and experiences. If they come to Jerusalem with this kind of expectation they will not be disappointed.

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Dr. David Ellenson [\(Display directory entry\)](#)

Dr. David Ellenson is President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion – the 8th President in its 125 year-long history. He holds the Gus Waterman Herrman Presidential Chair and is the I.H. and Anna Grancell Professor of Jewish Religious Thought at HUC-JIR in Los Angeles. A member of HUC-JIR's faculty since 1979, he has served as Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor of Jewish Religious Thought. From 1981-1997, he also held the post of Director of the Jerome H. Louchheim School of Judaic Studies.



Dr. Ellenson received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1981 and was ordained a rabbi at HUC-JIR's New York School in 1977. He holds masters degrees from Columbia, HUC-JIR, and the University of Virginia. He received his bachelors degree from the College of William and Mary in Virginia in 1969.

Dr. Ellenson is a Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of Jerusalem and Fellow and Lecturer in the Institute of Advanced Studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem (1999 to present). He has served as Visiting Professor of History at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, Lady Davis Visiting Professor of Humanities in the Department of Jewish Thought at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and Visiting Professor in the Center for Jewish Studies and a member of the Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Department at the University of California, Los Angeles (1986-97). He has also been the Blaustein Scholar at the Jerusalem Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies and regularly serves as a faculty member of the Wexner Heritage Foundation.

Dr. Ellenson has published and lectured extensively on diverse topics in modern Jewish history, ethics, and thought. He is the author of *Tradition in Transition: Orthodoxy, Halakhah and the Boundaries of Modern Jewish Identity* (1989), *Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and the Creation of a Modern Jewish Orthodoxy* (1990) (nominated for the National Jewish Book Council's Award for outstanding book in Jewish History, 1990), and *"Between Tradition and Culture: The Dialectics of Jewish Religion and Identity in the Modern World* (1994). He is also at work on another book-length collection of his essays.

His work describes the writings of Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist leaders in Europe, the United States, and Israel during the last two centuries and employs a sociological approach to illuminate the history and development of modern Jewish religious denominationalism. His application of this method has allowed him to emphasize the interplay between Jewish religious tradition and modern society in unique ways, and has prompted him to write and lecture on topics ranging from early Reform and Orthodoxy in 19th century Germany and conversion to Judaism at the beginning of the 1900s to the problems of medical ethics in present-day America.

Along with Dr. Stanley Chyet, Dr. Ellenson co-edited *Bits of Honey: Essays for Samson H. Levey* (1993), and is the author of the commentary entitled "How the Modern Prayerbook Evolved" in the acclaimed Five Volume Series on the Jewish

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Prayerbook, Minhag Ami My People's Prayerbook edited by Dr. Lawrence Hoffman. He is currently completing a book tentatively entitled, 'For the Sake of Heaven': Conversion, Identity, and the Politics of Modern Jewish Orthodoxy, co-authored with Daniel Gordis. He is also at work on another book-length collection of his essays.

He has written over 200 articles and reviews in diverse academic and religious journals and books, including The Hebrew Union College Annual, The Journal of American Academy of Religion, Religious Studies Review, The Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute, Journal of Religion, Modern Judaism, The Jewish Book Annual, The CCAR Journal, Conservative Judaism, The Reconstructionist, and Tradition. His academic lectures have been delivered at such institutions as Charles University in Prague, Ben Gurion and Bar Ilan Universities in Israel, Haverford College, Harvard, Yale, Brown, and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Dr. Ellenson is a member of several professional and academic societies, including the Association for Jewish Studies, the American Academy of Religion, the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, the Southern California Board of Rabbis, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He has served as a pulpit rabbi in Port Washington, New York, and Keene, New Hampshire, and has worked at several summer camps of the Reform and Conservative movements.

Born in Brookline, Mass., in 1947, Dr. Ellenson was raised in Newport News, Virginia. He is married to Rabbi Jacqueline Koch Ellenson, ordained at HUC-JIR in New York in 1983 and Chaplain at the Harvard-Westlake School in Los Angeles. They are the parents of Ruth (married to Robert Guffey Ellenson), Micah, Hannah, Naomi, and Raphael.

Education

- Ordained, HUC-JIR (1977)
- Ph.D., Columbia University (1981)

Electronic Publications

- "Imagine a World Without Denominations." *Forward*, Nov. 1, 2002

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Model of the Modern Rabbi

David Ellenson (Grad '72) - July-August 2002

by Charlotte Crystal

College was winding down and David Ellenson didn't know what he wanted to do with his life.

It was 1969 and Ellenson was a senior at the College of William & Mary. His history major didn't seem relevant to the social and political upheaval that raged around him—the war in Vietnam, the civil rights movement, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy the year before.

That spring, in a search for meaning, he took two seminars, in existentialism and contemporary Christian thought. He caught fire.

Ellenson enrolled in a new master's program in religious studies at the University of Virginia and became its first graduate. He went on to New York, to the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion where he was ordained a rabbi in 1977. Four years later, he earned a doctorate in religion from Columbia University.

Then last year, after two decades as a rabbi, a teacher and a widely respected scholar of Judaism, Ellenson, 54, was named president of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, which trains the religious leaders of Reform Judaism, America's largest synagogue movement. His position makes him one of the most important Jewish leaders in America, according to Rabbi Daniel Alexander, leader of Congregation Beth Israel in Charlottesville.

More importantly, he has found the work that gives his life meaning.

"Like many really intelligent people, David was a late bloomer," says James Livingston, a former professor of religious studies at William & Mary, recalling his student. "He enjoyed history, but he wasn't passionate about it. Those two seminars, in philosophy and religion, offered an interesting dialectic that sparked a whole new interest."



David Ellenson

Livingston recommended the newly established master's program at U.Va. as a good fit for Ellenson's new interest in religious studies and ethics. Ellenson applied, was accepted and came to Charlottesville to discuss it with Alan Lettovsky, a professor in the religious studies department who taught Jewish texts and Jewish thought.

"I tried to discourage him from coming," says Lettovsky, now a visiting associate professor at the Laura and Alvin Siegal College of Judaic Studies in Cleveland. "The program was too new. I was the only person teaching Jewish subjects. I thought it wouldn't be a rich enough program for him. But he was quite adamant and enrolled in the program."

Ellenson soaked up everything the University's religious studies department had to offer, sitting in on undergraduate classes, taking graduate seminars, and engaging in passionate conversations with professors—including Harry Gamble, now chair of the department; James Childress, the John Allen Hollingsworth Professor of Ethics; and David Harned, chair of U.Va.'s department of religious studies for more than a decade and now professor emeritus of Christian thought and ethics at Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge.

"What I particularly remember about him was his genuine excitement in learning," Childress says. "You could see his joy and eagerness to explore. He had very broad interests."

Ellenson studied with David Little, then on the U.Va. religious studies faculty and now the T.J. Dermot Dunphy Professor of the Practice in Religion, Ethnicity and International Conflict at the Harvard Divinity School.

"Ellenson's work with David Little was crucial to his growth as a scholar," Lettovsky says. "His exposure to the sociology of religion contributed greatly to his self-understanding and his intellectual path."

Ellenson agrees. "Studying the sociology of religion gave me a vocabulary and an analytical framework I could use to understand how people construct meaning in the world, how they bestow purpose on their lives," he says. "It played a crucial role in my understanding of how people in general, and Jews in particular, create meaning in their lives."

Ellenson also studied closely with Lettovsky, sitting in on his undergraduate course on Jewish thought and working with him at the graduate level, one-on-one, to study the Dead Sea Scrolls, rabbinic post-Biblical texts and medieval Hebrew texts. Growing up in an Orthodox family in Newport News, Va., Ellenson's religious education and knowledge of Hebrew was stronger than most, Lettovsky says, but still weak when it came to knowledge of texts and written Hebrew. Ellenson studied hard to catch up.

"Alan Lettovsky was my mentor in Jewish studies," he says. "One of the great blessings of my life was studying with him." Ellenson later dedicated a book to him.

A big man, standing over six feet tall, Ellenson is friendly and down to earth, an unassuming person who puts other people at ease. A kind, giving person, according to his friends. A mensch.

Lettovsky remembers calling him years ago in the wee hours of the morning to baby-sit his two young daughters as he rushed to the hospital with his wife, in labor with their third child. "The phone must have rung 36 times, but he finally woke up and came over as we were on our way out the door," Lettovsky says.

The experience must not have been overly daunting for Ellenson, now the father of five.

Ellenson is recognized as a thoughtful and respected scholar. He has written more than 200 articles in various academic and religious journals and books. And he has authored three books:

Tradition in Transition: Orthodoxy, Halakhah and the Boundaries of Modern Jewish Identity, Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and the Creation of a Modern Jewish Orthodoxy, and Between Tradition and Culture: The Dialectics of Modern Jewish Religion and Identity.



Ellenson and his wife look on as daughter Naomi reads from the Torah on the occasion of her becoming a bat mitzvah.

It is his pluralistic approach and broad understanding of Judaism, encompassing the issues and approaches of Orthodox and Conservative Judaism, as well as those of Reform Judaism, that garner respect for Ellenson's scholarship outside the Reform Movement, according to Alexander. (The three main branches of Judaism clarified their identities in the 19th century, with the Orthodox branch holding that individual lives were bound by Jewish law; the Reform branch permitting individuals to choose the nature of their religious practice; and the Conservative branch seeking a middle ground.)

Ellenson is interested in the interaction between religious tradition and modern

society and has written extensively on various topics in modern Jewish history, ethics and thought. He lectures widely and this summer will teach again at Hebrew University and at the Shalom Hartman Institute, an Orthodox center of learning in Jerusalem that welcomes rabbis, teachers and students of all denominations.

"My work has a sociological emphasis," Ellenson says. "I look at how religious traditions evolve over time, how Judaism draws upon the past and keeps up with changes in society."

That academic interest also is reflected in his personal life.

"He is a distinctly contemporary rabbi," Alexander says. "He is a strong Zionist, he spends a lot of time in Israel, he speaks fluent Hebrew, and his children attend Jewish day school. He is distinctly Reform in his ideology—he believes that individuals should shape their own lives and their practice of religion. Yet he encourages individual Jews to participate in the full range of what Jewish tradition offers, making him an ideal rabbinic leader for this age."

The Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, which he now leads, operates on four campuses—in Los Angeles, Cincinnati, New York and Jerusalem—and employs 60 full-time faculty and more than 100 part-time faculty. The college trains 450 full-time graduate students to become rabbis, cantors, religious school and camp directors, and providers of social services in Jewish settings.

In addition to providing academic leadership, Ellenson's duties include fundraising—the college is in the midst of a five-year, \$135 million campaign to build its endowment. And this year, he also had to cope with the anxieties of 60 rabbinical and cantorial students living in an embattled Israel for a year of required studies there.

"In my first year as president, I had to deal with some difficult issues, and the trouble in Israel took a lot of time and attention," he says. Students who were worried about their safety were allowed to leave.

But Ellenson remains committed to the importance of spending time in Israel, both for his

students and his family, who lived there from 1972-74, during another war in the region. "We're a family of committed Zionists," Ellenson says.

Ellenson lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Jacqueline Koch Ellenson, also a Reform rabbi, and their daughters Hannah, 16; Naomi, 14; and Rafi, 7. Their eldest daughter Ruth, 29, is a writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, and their son Micah, 24, is studying to be a Conservative rabbi.

"I enjoy my new job immensely," Ellenson says. "For 23 years, I was an academic and I enjoyed that. Now I rejoice in the opportunity provided me to do this.

"I feel a tremendous sense of gratitude to U.Va., because without it, my life would not have taken the direction it did. I hope in some way my own achievements will be a way of saying 'thank you' to my professors for the role they played in my life."

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Inauguration

Inaugural Address

Rabbi David Ellenson
President
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

October 13, 2002 - Plum Street Temple, Cincinnati, Ohio

In the Talmud, the rabbis command that when one views a large assembly of people, one should praise God, "*ha-yo'dei'a razim* - the One who alone knows the secrets of every human heart." At this moment, I cannot say what animates the souls of each one of you who are gathered today in this assembly. Indeed, it is difficult for me to even speak of all the thoughts and feelings that crowd my own soul at this moment. Yet, I can tell you that my heart overflows, and I hope that I can properly articulate the holiness and promise this moment holds for not only my family and me, but more importantly, for the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, our people, and our religion. My life has been personally intertwined with so many of you who sit here today, and I am touched beyond measure by all the kindnesses so many of you have showered upon my family and me -- particularly during this past year. I am grateful to each and every one of you for your friendship, and thank all of you for coming here to share this moment of celebration and revitalization in the life of the College-Institute.

To Burton Lehman and the Board of Governors of this school, I do express my heartfelt gratitude. It is an honor and inspiration to work together with you on behalf of our people and our God, and I am thankful for the confidence you have placed in me by selecting to me serve as the eighth president of this institution. Let me say to each of you at this moment of awe what my illustrious predecessor Kaufmann Kohler - second president of the Hebrew Union College -- said to the Board of Governors over a century ago at the outset of his own Inaugural Address, "*Yishar kokhakem v'helekem* - may your strength and might to accomplish good ever increase."

On this special day, I would like to begin on a personal note. At the outset, I want to say that I miss my parents dearly and I am sad that they did not live to share this moment with me. I am cognizant that if it were not for my mother and father and the passions and commitments that marked them, I could never have been open to all the influences that have brought me to this day. My father Samuel Ellenson died twenty-five years ago at the age of 55 after a long bout with ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease. He was a deeply emotional man who believed in the primacy of scholarship and he held an instinctual love for Judaism and klal yisrael. I have inherited much from him. My mother Rosalind Stern Ellenson, who passed away in 1989, possessed a different persona. She was a calm and measured person in both thought and deed. I not only loved her as all sons do their mothers. I liked her immensely. Well-educated in Jewish as well as secular topics, she was completely devoted to causes of social justice and Zionism. Her work as Director of the Social Services Department of Hampton, Virginia, and her service in Hadassah as well as the active role she consistently played in the life of the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Center in my hometown of Newport News provided me with the highest example of service and commitment to human and Jewish causes. She was kind and thoughtful, and she was in so many ways my best friend and my most trusted confidant. I have missed her terribly since her death, and she continues to represent for me the ideal of how a human life ought to be led. I am grateful to have been raised in the home of my father and mother, and I rejoice that my sister Judy and my brother Jimmy as well as so many other family members are here with me today.

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And to Jackie and my children – I cannot imagine what my life would be without you. There is no way to ever fully express love. I can only thank God that I have been blessed with each of you. Jackie, you above all have taught me what it means to live in Covenant. You are my best friend and my closest adviser, my severest critic and my most encouraging supporter. When we were married, we pledged and hoped to build a bayit ne'e'man b'yisrael, a Jewish home that would embody and reflect the highest values of our tradition. If we have succeeded in accomplishing this, it is due to you. I remain amazed and grateful that you have chosen me as your husband, and I feel fortunate that we have opened this new chapter in our lives together.

As I stand before this assembly today, I am keenly aware that two seemingly contradictory poles - each captured by an ancient rabbinic teaching – frame the position of responsibility I now hold as well as the challenge that we confront as a community. The first is expressed in the rabbinic notion of hitdardarut ha-dorot - the decline of the generations. It is a concept that leaves each of us acutely aware of our seeming inability to meet the standards and deeds of our ancestors. An emphasis upon our unworthiness, in contrast to the greatness of those who came before us, could not be more pronounced than it is in this teaching. As the Talmud phrases it, "*Im ha-rishonim ha-yu k'malachim, az anu kiv-nei adam* - if our ancestors were akin to angels, then we are akin to human beings."

However, in opposition to this perception of decline, stands an elementary rabbinic dictum known to all who labor in the fields of Jewish law, *Hilchata ke-vat'ra'ei* - the law is always decided according to the latest authorities. While our ancestors may loom as giants in our eyes, we nevertheless stand on their shoulders and we are regarded by God as being of infinite worth. God empowers each generation of this people Israel and its leaders to answer the demands of the day. As the Talmud phrases it, "*Shmuel b'doro k'yiftah b'doro*." Jephthah, the least of leaders, is as worthy of the mantle of leadership in his generation, as Samuel, the greatest of leaders, was in his.

It is this dialectical interplay between *hitdardarut ha-dorot* on the one hand and *hilkhata ke-vatraei* on the other that informs and guides my soul at this moment. It is in obeisance to the former precept that I acknowledge that I stand today on the shoulders of so many who were my teachers. Among them all, Professor Fritz Bamberger holds a central role of prominence. Possessed of an encyclopedic knowledge of Jewish intellectual history as well as general philosophy, this German-Jewish refugee always taught and spoke with care and deliberation. He was the embodiment of German *Bildung*, and his measured and proper being in the world stood at such odds with my own loquacious and less formal style. However, I always felt his gentleness, and I knew his appreciation and love for me at every moment. I have attempted to model my own being on his in so many ways, and I am eternally grateful to God that I was privileged to be his talmid. On this day especially, I miss him.

I also stand today upon the shoulders of so many others as well. For my entire adult life, I have devoted myself to a study of the modern Jewish experience. I have attempted to understand and analyze the diverse ways in which so many different Jewish leaders of every denominational stripe and inclination have turned at the crossroads of modern Jewish life. I have sought to understand how these luminaries have responded to the challenge of allowing Judaism to speak in relevant cadences for the contemporary world. I have studied and admired each of them, and stand in awe of their knowledge and insights, their brilliance and their creativity. All these persons boldly looked to the future as they applied their talents and their concerns to the cause of Judaism in their own day. They are my conversation partners in the ongoing dialogues that form modern Judaism, and what I say and do is a distillation in many ways both subtle and overt of what they all have said and done.

I stand as well upon the shoulders of my predecessors who have served in this office. Isaac Mayer Wise, Kaufmann Kohler, Stephen Samuel Wise, Julian Morgenstern, Nelson Glueck, Alfred Gottschalk, and Sheldon Zimmerman all gave vision and direction to our school. I thank them for all their

accomplishments and I pray that the College-Institute today proves capable of building upon the foundations they have established. Each in his singular way was a giant, and I stand in respect and wonder as I survey the heritage they have bequeathed us.

While my contemporaries and I may stand in relationship to our predecessors as Jephthah stood in relationship to Samuel, the task of leadership is no less pressing for us than it was for Jephthah and others in the past. After all, *hilchata k'vat'ra-ei* - the law is decided according to the later authorities - and just as my predecessors were required to do in generations past, I today am called upon to articulate an ongoing vision for the College-Institute as we confront the present and move towards the future. The other side of the dialectic that I outlined at the beginning of my speech must now receive its voice.

After 127 years of existence, the College-Institute and the North American Jewish community find ourselves at a much different historical juncture than our community did when Isaac Mayer Wise ordained the first class of rabbis in this institution in 1883. His was an age shaped and informed by an unfettered confidence in Enlightenment. He had not heard of Freud, and he could speak of civilization without recognizing the discontents that stand at its base. Isaac Mayer Wise and his colleagues could confidently proclaim that the day would come when reason alone would guarantee that "superstition would no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eyes." Unaware that a Holocaust was looming, where monsters of intellect would divorce learning from virtue, Isaac Mayer Wise and his peers as well as his immediate successors would soon forge a Judaism that would allow a predominantly immigrant Jewish community to adapt successfully to the demands of an American setting. His immediate successor Kaufmann Kohler proved able to forge a denominationally distinct Reform Judaism that was universalistic in its outlook. This vision of Reform flourished in a setting where Jewish integration into the cultural, social, economic, and political realms of American life remained limited, and at a time when the State of Israel did not exist.

How much has changed since that time. The rivalry and jealousy that formerly divided a German-Jewish American community from its eastern European sisters and brothers are at best an historical memory, and the promise of redemption offered by the existence of a Jewish State now constitutes a central element in Jewish life. The ethnic homogeneity that previously marked the North American Jewish community is a relic of the past. Today we witness an era where the rate of Jewish exogamy stands at an all-time high, and the limitations and constraints imposed by a previous age upon complete Jewish integration into all sectors of the American nation have given way to an epoch where Jews take part as complete equals in every walk of American life. At the same time, the twentieth century has borne witness to the previously unimaginable evil of the Shoah, as well as the genocides of other peoples, and we today cannot share the total certainty our ancestors did in the power of reason to achieve the good. Ours is an age of ambiguity and nuance - one in which we stand at the crossroads of global capitalism and global terror.

Yet, we must not allow the uncertainty of our own age to paralyze us. Our contemporary efforts at the College-Institute must be no less than those of our predecessors. We must recognize our own power, and we must employ our passion and our imagination as well as our knowledge to chart the course of Jewish spiritual and communal life for our own time as well as for the future.

Foremost among the commitments that we must now honor is our obligation to our brothers and sisters in Israel. At his inauguration on March 15, 1948, a scant two months before the State of Israel was born, Nelson Glueck recognized that the about to be born State was "literally under fire." However, he went on to state that "to abandon" an embryonic Israel would grant "license to terror." And this Dr. Glueck refused to do. Let me say with pride that my intention is that the destiny of the College-Institute will remain intertwined and interlocked with the fate of our people in the State of Israel, and I intend to do all in my power to enhance the presence and influence of HUC-JIR in Jerusalem by expanding our faculty and

increasing our student body in the years ahead so that the promise of our present can reach fruition in the future.

Our students in Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and New York who prepare for careers in the cantorate, communal service, education, and the rabbinate will continue to study in Israel at our Jerusalem campus, and there they will learn the true meaning of 'areivut, the ideal of mutual responsibility that binds Jews worldwide into one people. Our graduates will know that when Jews are in distress in Argentina and Europe or any place on earth that their responsibility to the people Israel is absolute.

More than thirty Israeli rabbinic students and dozens of Israeli teachers also currently attend our Jerusalem school, and they constitute the most precious resource we could possibly provide for the growth of liberal Judaism on Israeli soil. In a country where an extremist and coercive form of Judaism on the one hand and a strident and unyielding secularism on the other have provided the only two meaningful options between which Israeli Jews can choose, the need for us to educate native Israelis as rabbis and educators who speak the language of liberal Judaism is urgent. Should we fail in this sacred obligation, history will justifiably condemn us.

Our obligations are hardly limited to Israel. We must consider our responsibility to North America as well. 21st century America represents an extraordinary challenge and opportunity for us. Stasis in our present moment would be dangerous, and a dynamic and open approach to the future is required. We must reaffirm the broad vision that our founder Isaac Mayer Wise held of an American Judaism in light of our own conditions. Like Rabbi Wise, we must recognize that the foremost concern of the College-Institute is the education and formation of scholars and k'lei kodesh who will be imbued with the spirit of Torah. At the same time, our graduates must be bilingual - they must speak the language of America as well as the language of Judaism. This means that our alumni must be prepared to speak to Jews in the synagogue. No venue can be more meaningful for the future of the Jewish people. However, the spiritual hunger of Jews in this country is acute, and we must not rest content to confine our Jewish passion to the synagogue alone. Nor can we guard our own denominational boundaries too jealously. Our students must be equipped to address Jews across what are already often-outmoded denominational lines. Our graduates must be found wherever the possibilities for Jewish renewal appear – in the settings of Jewish Community Centers and Jewish organizational life, as well as in the university.

We must also continue to nurture the concern for equality and inclusiveness that has long been the hallmark of Reform Judaism. We proudly salute a full generation of women rabbis who have made remarkable contributions to Jewish life, and we are proud that the number of women on our faculty has increased significantly in recent years - these gains must be cultivated. The open embrace of persons of diverse sexual orientations must continue to be affirmed. We recognize that the voices of those people who were previously prevented from participation in the public discourse of the Jewish people now contribute immeasurably to the fulfillment of the messianic vision of justice that lies at the heart of Jewish religious tradition.

Through the ongoing growth of our institutes, we must expose our students to the initiatives these institutes are taking to enhance Jewish life on this continent. The implementation of the core curriculum project envisioned by our faculty, supported by the holdings of our library, our archives, and our museums, and directed by our Provost Norman Cohen must receive our highest priority. This pioneering project seeks to integrate the academic, personal, and professional components of the education HUC-JIR provides its students so that our graduates will be optimally prepared to serve our community in diverse ways and settings. Our students must apply the values and wisdom of our tradition to the different venues where they will be called to serve in this new century. The future and fate of the Jewish people and the Jewish religion are at stake.

Finally, we must be ever-mindful of our role in tikkun olam – our responsibility for

the betterment of the world. During the midst of World War II, as the most cherished values of western civilization were being trampled, Chancellor Louis Finkelstein of the Jewish Theological Seminary understood that the modern Jewish seminary was accountable to the larger human community as well as to the Jewish people. He therefore established an Institute for Religious and Social Studies and a Conference on Science, Religion, and Philosophy under the aegis of JTS. I find his example instructive and inspirational, and I would ask the Jewish world today to follow the model he established. Not to do so would be a betrayal of the task that God has assigned us as persons of faith to apply the teachings of our traditions for the amelioration of humanity.

It is in this spirit that I would ask that the College-Institute as an academic institution recognize the role it is called upon to play in the task of tikkun olam, and I would hope that HUC-JIR might take the lead in cooperation with other Jewish institutions so that together we might create an Institute for Advanced Studies modeled after existing institutes at universities such as Princeton and the Hebrew University. Here the College-Institute and other schools devoted to Jewish intellectual and professional development would foster study and intellectual reflection in an open and liberal Jewish spirit on the great questions of our time. During these past few years, the world has borne witness to the terror and destruction that monists and fundamentalists of all types have wreaked upon humanity. Our task is therefore to create a setting where a decisive liberal religious spirit might emerge, an institute where all types of persons – Jews and non-Jews, academics and activists, clergy and laity – of different viewpoints and convictions could come together to consider how the ethical and social obligations contained in Torah might find expression in practical programs and policy initiatives. We would here hopefully foster a new energy between American Judaism and the American and world marketplace of ideas. It would be a place where a Eugene Borowitz and a Robert Bellah, a Rachel Adler and a Stephen Carter could think about what Judaism as well as other religions might contribute to the public square. Such an institute might potentially become a central actor in the life of the Jewish people, and would hopefully contribute – however modestly – towards a better future for humanity.

As I conclude my remarks today, I would turn for inspiration and guidance to the words of Rabbi Leo Baeck, a man for whom I have always felt a special affinity. Rabbi Baeck was the last duly-elected leader of the Jewish people in Germany during the cruel era of Nazi rule. He was the teacher of my teacher Fritz Bamberger, and his direct interventions saved the lives of countless Jews. One of them was Rabbi Wollli Kaelter, who bestowed his blessing upon me today. Rabbi Kaelter was a young rabbinical student at the Hochschule when Rabbi Baeck directed him to Cincinnati to enroll at the Hebrew Union College in the 1930s. My link to Rabbi Baeck is personal and direct.

Rabbi Baeck was himself accorded countless opportunities to flee Germany during those years of Nazi hatred, but he refused to flee Germany. As a true *ro'eh yisrael*, shepherd among the people Israel, Rabbi Baeck decided that he could not leave his people while they were in distress and he ultimately was imprisoned in Theresienstadt. There three of his sisters died. However, Rabbi Baeck survived and out of those years there emerged a classic of Jewish religious literature that he authored while he was in the camp. Entitled *This People Israel*, this book constitutes one of the great spiritual treasures of our people and I find myself turning again and again to this work for inspiration and hope. The book is never far from my side.

At the conclusion of this book, Rabbi Baeck observed that the appearance of each new life constitutes a question that God has posed about the nature and worth of human life. He further stated that the manner in which that new life is led comprises an answer to the question that God has put forth.

As I am inaugurated as a new President of the College-Institute, I pray that I prove worthy of responding properly to the question that God has now assigned my life. An inheritance cannot be fabricated. It must be assumed with full responsibility, and nurtured with courage and creativity. People are not born into

community as if by fate. Rather, God calls us to the task of forging our world. I hope that we will work together in the days ahead so that the College-Institute can play its rightful role in the unfolding narrative of Jewish and human life. In so doing, we will meet our obligations to our own as well as future generations.

V'chen y'hi ratzon, v'no'mar amen – May this be God's will, and let us say, Amen.

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**Elliot Dorff, Ph.D.,
Rector and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy,
University of Judaism,
Los Angeles, CA**

Dr. Dorff was ordained a Conservative rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1970 and earned his Ph.D. in philosophy from Columbia University in 1971 with a dissertation in moral theory. Since then he has directed the rabbinical and Masters programs at the University of Judaism, where he currently is Rector and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy. He also teaches a course on Jewish law at UCLA School of Law. As a member, and currently Vice Chair of the Conservative Movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, his papers have formulated the validated stance of the Conservative Movement on infertility treatments and on end-of-life issues, and his Rabbinic Letters on human sexuality and on poverty have become the voice of the Conservative Movement on those topics. He has chaired two scholarly organizations, the Academy of Jewish Philosophy and the Jewish Law Association. In Spring, 1993, he served on the Ethics Committee of Hillary Rodham Clinton's Health Care Task Force; in March 1998 and May 1999, he testified on behalf of the Jewish tradition on the subjects of human cloning and stem cell research before the President's National Bioethics Advisory Commission; and in 1999 and 2000 he worked on the Surgeon General's commission to draft a Call to Action for Responsible Sexual Behavior. In Los Angeles he is a member of the Ethics Committee of the Jewish Homes for the Aging and of UCLA Medical Center. His publications include over one hundred articles on Jewish thought, law, and ethics, together with eight books, including one on bioethics: *Matters of Life and Death: A Jewish Approach to Modern Medical Ethics* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1998).



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Dr. Elliot Dorff

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Biography

Elliot Dorff is visiting professor of professional skills at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Rabbi Dorff was ordained in 1970 and earned his PhD in philosophy from Columbia University in 1971. He has since then served as rector, professor of philosophy and director of the rabbinical and master's degree programs at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles. He has also taught a course on Jewish law at UCLA School of Law.



Rabbi Dorff's publications include over one hundred articles on Jewish thought, law and ethics. The author of eight books, his most recent include: *Contemporary Jewish Theology: A Reader* (Oxford University Press, 1999); *Matters of Life and Death: A Jewish Approach to Modern Medical Ethics* (Jewish Publication Society, 1998); and *Contemporary Jewish Ethics and Morality: A Reader* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

A member of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, Rabbi Dorff sits on its commission on philosophy and its commission to write a new Torah commentary for the Conservative movement. His papers have formulated the validated stance of the movement on infertility treatments and end-of-life issues. His *Rabbinic Letters* on human sexuality and poverty have become the voice of the movement on those topics. Rabbi Dorff chaired two scholarly organizations, the Academy of Jewish Philosophy and the Jewish Law Association.

In the spring of 1993, Rabbi Dorff served on the ethics committee of Hillary Rodham Clinton's Health Care Task Force, and in March 1997 and May 1999, he testified on behalf of the Jewish tradition on the subjects of human cloning and stem cell research before the president's National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

In Los Angeles, he is a member of the Board of Jewish Family Service and has served as its vice president. He is also a member of the Institutional Review Board of Midway Hospital and the ethics committee at the Jewish Homes for the Aging and UCLA Medical Center. He is co-chairman of the "Priest-Rabbi Dialogue" sponsored by the Los Angeles Archdiocese and the Board of Rabbis of Southern California.

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Books

- *Contemporary Jewish Theology: A Reader* [Available for Purchase](#)
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First, he was a rabbi then, he became an academic philosopher. Over time, he earned the titles of bioethicist, author and administrator. But in reviewing a career that has spanned three decades, Dr. Elliot Dorff, the UJ's Rector and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, admits his life almost took a completely different turn... toward mathematics.

"I thought I was going to be a math professor," recalls Dr. Dorff. "I loved math, it always came easily to me."

But a competing interest took hold of Dr. Dorff during his undergraduate years at Columbia University. It was his passion—the relationship between religion and ethics—that set him on a course culminating in ordination as a Conservative rabbi and in a doctorate in Philosophy from Columbia. Still, while his career path seemed pretty clear, Dr. Dorff continued to adjust his professional goals as opportunities kept arising.

"Originally," he says with a chuckle, "I had intended to be a congregational rabbi. My wife and I had hoped to find a synagogue in the Midwest where I grew up."

Instead, Dr. Dorff ended up at the UJ. What was to have been a two-year teaching stint in fulfillment of a fellowship requirement has extended into a commitment of 30 years. During this time, he has directed the rabbinical and master's programs at the university and taught philosophy, ethics, ancient Jewish history and Talmud to both undergraduate and graduate students.

His work has been a labor of love, leading to new challenges he never could have anticipated. Take, for instance, his interest in bioethics. The catalyst for his delving into the field was a phone call 25 years ago from a colleague who asked him to serve on a panel on Jewish views of abortion. That experience triggered an intellectual quest resulting in scores of scholarly papers and a book on biomedical issues, plus two appearances before President Clinton's National Bioethics Advisory Committee several years ago and membership on two federal government commissions, one to craft the Surgeon General's "Call for Responsible Sexual Behavior" and the other to review and revise the federal guidelines for research on human subjects. His book on medical ethics—one of eight he has produced—is "Matters of Life and Death: a Jewish Approach to Modern Medical Ethics", (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1998).

While many of the challenges Dr. Dorff has faced have enabled him to assume new roles and responsibilities—such as serving as a visiting professor at UCLA's Law School, where he has taught courses since 1974—others have required a deep reconsideration of previously held views.

"Over the years," he acknowledges, "I've rethought my position on female rabbis in the Conservative movement. It became clear to me in the 1970's that despite the ways I grew up, there were compelling reasons for a change. My mind led my heart. I became convinced it was right and just."

On another matter that forced him to revise his thinking—the roles of gay men and lesbians in Conservative Judaism—he has met with considerable opposition from most of his peers in his movement's Rabbinical Assembly. Dr. Dorff favors the ordination of openly gay and lesbian Conservative rabbis as well as the sanctioning of commitment ceremonies for homosexual couples.

"The first time I really thought about this issue was in the mid-70's when I met a Conservative undergraduate student who had just come out of the closet," he recalls. "He was shunned by his religious peers. It was one of the few times I felt genuinely disappointed by our traditions."

The AIDS crisis in the early 80's precipitated more soul-searching. "At one point," Dr. Dorff reflects, "I even wondered whether I belonged in the Conservative movement. But I realized that I needed to stay in it and fight for my beliefs." One of the products of this fight is "This is My Beloved, This is My Friend", a Rabbinic Letter on Human Intimacy, Rabbinical Assembly document that outlines Jewish sexual ethics for both straights and gays and includes a description of both the majority and minority views of homosexuality within Conservative Judaism.

On practically all other points, Dr. Dorff feels "very much at home in the Conservative movement". But whatever the issue, he applies the same types of self-scrutiny and scrupulous research techniques he nurtures in his students.

He explains. "I want them to see that Judaism shouldn't be based on feeling alone. They should think through their convictions to arrive at an examined faith."





As Others See RRC In The N



Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz, Class of 1989, Is College's Fifth President

Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz is the Fifth President of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. He succeeds Rabbi David A. Teutsch, who stepped down to devote himself full time to teaching and scholarship as the Wiener Professor of Contemporary Jewish Civilization at RRC and Director of RRC's Center for Jewish Ethics.

Since graduating 13 years ago, Rabbi Ehrenkrantz has been a frequent visitor to the RRC campus, where he has served both as a visiting instructor for courses on Biblical Narrative and Poetry and the Challenges of the Rabbinate, and as a spiritual mentor to RRC students

Throughout his rabbinate he has exemplified commitment to the larger Reconstructionist movement in his willingness to assume significant volunteer assignments. He is currently co-Chair of Jewish Reconstructionist Federation's Camp Program Sub-Committee and is the immediate past president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, RRC's alumni organization and the professional association of the Reconstructionist rabbinate. A 1989 graduate of the College, Dan Ehrenkrantz was previously rabbi of Congregation Bnai Keshet Montclair, NJ. During his tenure, Bnai Keshet has continued as a strong, vibrant synagogue, now with its own building and an expanded professional staff that includes an administrator, religious school principal and a family educator.

An alumnus of Tufts University, where he graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. in Religion, Rabbi Ehrenkrantz has also studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University in New York.


"As the first RRC alumnus to be named President," said Donald L. Shapiro, Chairman of the RRC Board who headed the 10-month long search process, "Rabbi Ehrenkrantz' presidency marks a coming of age for the Reconstructionist movement he has so ably served his entire professional life. I am thrilled to have an RRC graduate as the College's president, especially one as talented and menschlich as Dan."

In addition to leading the successful \$2 million capital campaign that made possible the purchase, restoration and renovation of the landmarked building that now houses Bnai Keshet's sanctuary, administrative offices and classrooms, Rabbi Ehrenkrantz helped pioneer the creation of an innovative family education program currently used in more than 20 congregations throughout the U.S.

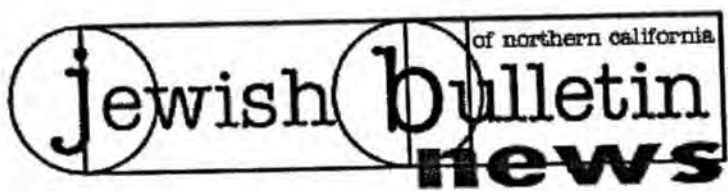
"Dan's dedication to the congregational rabbinate and deep understanding of both its challenges and its joys make him ideally suited to guide RRC," Shapiro said.

"His passionate commitment to Reconstructionism, his proven abilities as a movement leader, his creative accomplishments as a congregation and community builder, his gifts as a teacher and public speaker and his demonstrated skill as one of our leading Reconstructionist rabbis all uniquely qualify him to lead the College's continued growth and development in the challenging years ahead."

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College was founded under the leadership of Rabbi Ira Eisenstein z"l, President from 1968-1981. Rabbi Eisenstein was followed by Ira Silverman z"l, President from 1981-1986, Rabbi Arthur Green, President from 1987-1993, and Rabbi David A. Teutsch, President from 1993-2002.

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Reconstructionists tap alum to head college

JULIE WIENER

Jewish Telegraphic Agency

NEW YORK - The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College has, for the first time, hired one of its own graduates as president.

The appointment of Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz, 40, to head the movement's seminary is seen by many as a sign of maturation of North America's smallest and youngest Jewish stream.

A congregational rabbi, Ehrenkrantz has been a national leader in the movement, serving as immediate past president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.

However, unlike many seminary presidents, including the current heads of the Conservative, Reform and modern Orthodox seminaries, Ehrenkrantz is not an academic.

As the RRC's fifth president, Ehrenkrantz -- who will take over the post this summer -- assumes the helm at a time of transition in the Reconstructionist movement, which is headquartered in suburban Philadelphia. He will replace Rabbi David Teutsch, who has led the college since 1993.

Ehrenkrantz grew up in Berkeley and suburban Westchester County, N.Y. Although his family belonged primarily to Conservative synagogues, its religious outlook was closer to Reconstructionism, he said.

Reconstructionism, which views Judaism as an "evolving civilization," was founded in the 1930s by Conservative Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan.

It has grown dramatically in the past 15 years, with 100 congregations now, compared with 52 in 1986. In addition, the movement has recently produced its own prayerbooks, launched a summer camp and is creating a youth group.

The college has grown as well, increasing its entering rabbinic-student class from 10 to 18 and adding new academic programs.

The first movement to celebrate the bat mitzvah and approve rabbinic officiation at same-sex commitment ceremonies, Reconstructionists have long been seen as quirky, politically progressive and on the cutting edge.

But they have also embraced many traditional rituals that the liberal Reform movement until recently had rejected.

As the Reform movement, America's largest stream of Judaism, has become more open to tradition and has sought to create more intimate, participatory worship experiences, some see fewer practical

distinctions between Reform and Reconstructionism.

Reconstructionist officials believe Ehrenkrantz's pulpit experience will be just as valuable for the college -- whose primary function is training rabbis -- as would scholarly credentials.

Ehrenkrantz has served for 13 years as a congregational rabbi at Montclair, N.J.'s Bnai Keshet, where he is known as "Rabbi Dan." Under his leadership, Bnai Keshet pioneered a family-education program replicated at more than 20 other congregations. He also oversaw a successful \$2 million capital campaign there.

Ehrenkrantz brings "a strong representation of the day-to-day life of rabbis working in the Jewish community," said Rabbi Richard Hirsh, executive director of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association. He described Ehrenkrantz as "an interesting combination of a very precise thinker and a serious learner. He takes ongoing learning seriously."

Not being a scholar "would be a major issue if weren't someone of substantial intellect, but Rabbi Ehrenkrantz has shown himself to be a person who is of substance, thoughtful and deeply rooted in the sources of our tradition," Teutsch said.

As president, Ehrenkrantz expects to see the movement and college continue to expand, and said he hopes to implement a center for Jewish education and one for "Jewish creativity in the arts."

"Much of the way into Jewish spiritual life can be achieved through a variety of arts," he said.

He would also like to see the college focus more attention on Israel-diaspora relations -- particularly the different ways Jewish identities are constructed in Israel and North America -- as well as social action.

The college, which trains rabbis and cantors and has a small master's and doctorate program, already has an ethics center and center for gender studies.

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**JEWISH HOMELAND-
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Land of Israel

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The Land of Israel

Level: Basic

The Promised Land

The history of the Jewish people begins with Abraham, and the story of Abraham begins when G-d tells him to leave his homeland, promising Abraham and his descendants a new home in the land of Canaan. (Gen. 12). This is the land now known as Israel, named after Abraham's grandson, whose descendants are the Jewish people. The land is often referred to as the Promised Land because of G-d's repeated promise (Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 15:18, 17:8) to give the land to the descendants of Abraham.

The land is described repeatedly in the Torah as a good land and "a land flowing with milk and honey" (e.g., Ex. 3:8). This description may not seem to fit well with the desert images we see on the nightly news, but let's keep in mind that the land was repeatedly abused by conquerors who were determined to make the land uninhabitable for the Jews. In the few decades since the Jewish people regained control of the land, we have seen a tremendous improvement in its agriculture. Israeli agriculture today has a very high yield.

Jews have lived in this land continuously from the time of its original conquest by Joshua more than 3200 years ago until the present day, though Jews were not always in political control of the land, and Jews were not always the majority of the land's population.

The land of Israel is central to Judaism. A substantial portion of Jewish law is tied to the land of Israel, and can only be performed there. Some rabbis have declared that it is a mitzvah (commandment) to take possession of Israel and to live in it (relying on Num. 33:53). The Talmud indicates that the land itself is so holy that merely walking in it can gain you a place in the World to Come. Prayers for a return to Israel and Jerusalem are included in daily prayers as well as many holiday observances and special events.

Living outside of Israel is viewed as an unnatural state for a Jew. The world outside of Israel is often referred to as "galut," which is usually translated as "diaspora" (dispersion), but a more literal translation would be "exile" or "captivity." When we live outside of Israel, we are living in exile from our land.

Jews were exiled from the land of Israel by the Romans in 135 C.E., after they defeated the Jews in a three-year war, and Jews did not have any control over the land again until 1948 C.E.

Zionism and the Formation of the State of Israel

The Jewish people never gave up hope that we would someday return to our home in

Balfour Declaration, promising the creation of a national Jewish homeland within the mandated territory. Although Arab leaders were initially willing to give Palestine to the Jews if the rest of the Arab lands in the Middle East were free, the Arabs living in Palestine vigorously opposed Jewish immigration into the territory and the idea of a Jewish homeland. It is around this time that the idea of Palestinian nationality (distinct from Arab nationality generally) first begins to appear. There were many riots in the territory, and the British came to believe that the conflicting claims were irreconcilable. In 1937, the British recommended partition of the territory.

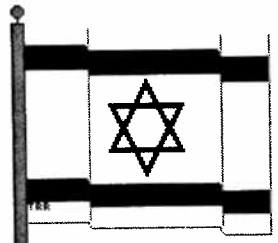
The Holocaust brought the need for a Jewish homeland into sharp focus for both Jews and for the rest of the world. The Jews who tried to flee Nazi Germany were often turned back due to immigration limitations at the borders of every country, including the United States, Britain and Palestine. Many of those who were sent back to Germany ended up in death camps where they were systematically murdered.

The British were unable to come up with a solution that would satisfy either Arabs or Jews, so in 1947, they handed the problem to the newly-founded United Nations, which developed a partition plan dividing Palestine into Jewish and Arab portions. The plan was ratified in November 1947. The mandate expired on May 14, 1948 and British troops pulled out of Palestine. The Jews of Palestine promptly declared the creation of the State of Israel, which was recognized by several Western countries immediately.

However, the surrounding Arab nations did not recognize the validity of Israel and invaded, claiming that they were filling a vacuum created by the termination of the mandate and the absence of any legal authority to replace it. The Arabs fought a year-long war to drive the Jews out. Miraculously, the new state of Israel won this war, as well as every subsequent Arab-Israeli war, gaining territory every time the Arabs attacked them.

Israel Today

Today, approximately five million Jews, more than a third of the world's Jewish population, live in the land of Israel. Jews make up more than eighty percent of the population of the land, and Jews are in political control of the land.



Jews continue to immigrate to Israel in large numbers. Immigration to Israel is referred to as aliyah (literally, ascension). Under Israel's Law of Return, any Jew who has not renounced the Jewish faith (by converting to another religion) can automatically become an Israeli citizen. Gentiles may also become citizens of Israel after undergoing a standard naturalization process, much like the one required to become a United States citizen.

Most Jews today support the existence of the state of Israel. However, there are a small number of secular Jews who are anti-Zionist. There is also a very small group of right-wing Orthodox Jews who object to the existence of the state of Israel, maintaining that it is a sin for us to create a Jewish state when the messiah has not yet come. However, this viewpoint does not reflect the mainstream opinion of Orthodoxy. Most Orthodox Jews support the existence of the state of Israel as a homeland, even though it is not the theological state of Israel that will be brought about by the messiah.

Israel Links

This page barely scratches the surface of all there is to say about Israel and Zionism. There are entire sites devoted to these subjects. Here are a few that are worth checking out:

Virtual Jerusalem is a great place to start your search for information about Israel. The site is based in Israel, and has lots of useful information, including Israeli news, travel information, information about making aliyah, and lots of great links.

You can also find a lot of useful information and links in Shamash's Israel section.

AICE is an organization devoted to fostering political, military and economic cooperation between the United States and Israel.

If you are interested in the history of Zionism, you may want to read the founding treatise on the subject, Theodor Herzl's The Jewish State, which you can buy from amazon.com by clicking the title above.



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Israel Summer Kollel

July 8 - August 20, 2003
\$4,399.00 (includes \$100.00 application fee)
Eligibility: High School Boys



View Streaming Video!

A unique learning program open to young Jewish men of high school age who wish to increase their commitment to Torah study and the Land of Israel through an intensive six-week educational experience on the campus of Yeshivat Ohr Yerushalayim.

Kollel is a combination of classes, touring, free time, and organized sports. Classes include shiurim in Talmud, Halacha (Jewish Law), Chumash (Bible), and Hashkafah (Jewish Philosophy) on advanced and beginner levels. In addition, various seminars are delivered by world-renowned Torah personalities like Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, Rav Hershel Schachter, the Chief Rabbi of Israel Rav Yisroel Meir Lau, Rav Mordechai Elon, the Bostoner Rebbe, and the Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel.

While the emphasis is clearly on learning, the organized sports are a big hit. The competition is top notch and the sports facilities, including an indoor gym, are first rate. When not learning or playing, you can take advantage of great trips to many fascinating sites. There is also ample free time to relax or visit relatives and friends. You will come back excited about learning, appreciating the beauty of Eretz Yisrael and motivated for greater success in your Torah learning.

The Summer Kollel also offers an honors masmidim track. If you are interested in this accelerated program, please mention this at the time of your interview.

The Israel Summer Kollel is directed by Rabbi Moshe Benovitz and Rabbi Yisrael Kaminetsky. The program is staffed by top advisors and experienced educators from the U.S. and Israel.

Sample Daily Schedule

- 7:00am Wake-up
- 7:30am Tefilla
- 8:15am Breakfast
- 9:00am Morning Seder & Shiur
- 12:45pm Lunch & Break
- 1:45pm Mincha
- 2:15pm Afternoon Seder & Shiur
- 4:15pm Sports & Break
- 7:30pm Dinner
- 8:00pm Night Seder
- 10:00pm Maariv
- (subject to change)

This schedule is for regular days. Tuesdays are generally reserved for tiyulim (outings) to

various sites around the country.

In addition, there are special programs and two free weekends throughout the summer.

Dates and Prices are subject to change. A limited number of 9th graders will be accepted.

All applicants require a recommendation from their NCSY regional director and/or an interview by the national office. Actual dates and prices are subject to change.

Contact Rabbi Moshe Benovitz (516) 295-5085

For more information about the Israel Summer Kollel please contact us at summer@ou.org
or call: 888-TOUR-4-YOU
NCSY Summer Programs, 11 Broadway, New York, NY 10004

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Michlelet NCSY

June 30 to August 11, 2003
\$4,499.00 (includes \$100.00 application fee)
Eligibility: High School Girls

[View Streaming Video!](#)



A unique learning experience for girls augmented by sports and touring. Open to young Jewish women of high school age who wish to intensify their commitment to Torah study and the land of Israel through an intensive six week program. Based at the modern Neve Yerushalayim campus, Michlelet is a fun, educational and inspirational way to spend the summer in Israel.

A perfect combination of classes, touring, sports and free time. Classes include shiurim in Halacha (Jewish Law), Chumash (Bible), and Hashkafah (Jewish Philosophy) on both advanced and beginner levels. In addition, various seminars are delivered by world renowned Torah personalities such as Rav Herschel Schachter, Rabbi Zev Leff and Mrs. Shani Taragin.

While the emphasis is clearly on learning, the trips to many fascinating sites are an integral part of the Michlelet experience. There is also ample free time available to relax, shop or visit relatives and friends.

Michlelet is directed by Rabbi Ari Winter, a former NCSY Regional Director, and is recognized as one of the most meaningful Israel programs available to teenage girls. Participants come back excited about learning, appreciating the beauty of Eretz Yisrael and motivated for greater success in Torah learning.

Sample Daily Schedule

- 7:30am Wake-up
- 8:15am Tefilla
- 9:00am Breakfast
- 9:30am Morning Seder & Shiur
- 1:00pm Lunch & Break
- 3:45pm Preparation for Guest Shiur
- 4:30pm Guest Shiur
- 6:00pm Shiur
- 6:30pm Mincha & Break
- 7:00pm Dinner
- 8:00pm Guest Shiur
- 10:00pm Maariv

(subject to change)

This schedule is for regular days. Tuesdays are generally reserved for tiyulim (outings) to various sites around the country.



In addition, there are special programs and two free weekends throughout the summer.

Here is an article from *Keeping Posted with NCSY* about the Michlelet Program written by a participant on the program.


1999 Michlelet Picture Gallery

All applicants require a recommendation from their NCSY regional director and/or an interview by the national office. Actual dates and prices are subject to change.

Contact Rabbi Daniel Schonbuch at 212-613-8202

For more information about Michlelet please contact us at: summer@ou.org
or call: 888-TOUR-4-YOU
NCSY Summer Programs, 11 Broadway, New York, NY 10004

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NCSY Home	<h2>Volunteers for Israel</h2> <p>Three Weeks Volunteering on an Israeli Army Base One Week Touring Israel</p> <p>July 2 – 30, 2003 \$2,599 (Includes Airfare!) Eligibility: Boys Ages 16-18</p> <p>View Video!</p> <p>What can I do, now, to help Israel? We ask ourselves this question all the time. And now, NCSY has an answer. It's called Volunteers for Israel, for boys 16 to 18 years old. It's an opportunity to help Israel in a very real, meaningful way. You'll spend three weeks on an army base. You'll stuff parachutes, you'll fix up army buildings and you'll even peel potatoes Israeli-style. And most importantly, you'll be showing the soldiers and the State of Israel that you care and you're there.</p> <p>But we all know that all work and no play can make a summer very dull...and that's why, once a week, Volunteers for Israel will take you on tiyulim and hiking trips. In the evenings, you'll get a chance to see the town and get in some R&R. And you'll be doing these exciting things with your new chayal (soldier) friends from the base who also need some well-deserved time off and a little R&R.</p> <p>During your final week, you'll travel north...you'll get a chance to swim in the Kineret or visit the holy city of Tzfat. What a wonderful way to conclude this incredible experience! You'll return home knowing that you've met remarkable people, made lifelong friends and truly helped Eretz Yisrael when help was needed.</p> <p>Contact: Esther Zlochower at 1-888-TOUR.4.YOU or e-mail summer@ou.org</p> <p>APPLY NOW!</p>
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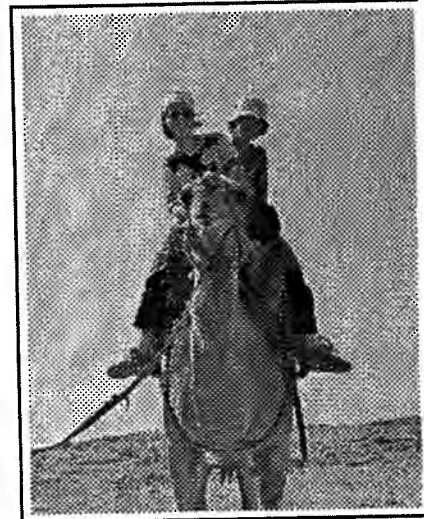
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NCSY/birthright israel Trip

Dates: June 26 – July 6, 2003
 Subject to change by birthright israel
Price: A gift from birthright israel

Eligibility: Graduating High School seniors, ages 18 and up.

birthright israel, an organization that sends Jewish students to Israel, is opening a tour for graduating NCSYers. Since its inception, birthright israel has sent more than 32,000 people to Israel. Now is your chance to join us for the summer experience of a lifetime!



On this birthright israel/NCSY trip, you will have a unique opportunity to spend 10 days touring the countryside, hiking and taking in the holy sights of Israel FREE of charge. You will get a chance to hike Massada at sunrise, see the waterfalls of Ein Gedi, swim in the Dead Sea, visit the Holocaust museum in Yad VaShem and much more.

As in all NCSY programs, every security precaution is taken to ensure the safety and well being of our participants. NCSYers on this trip will follow the safety guidelines set by the birthright israel organization who work in conjunction with the Israeli government to plan safe and appropriate tours.

Now is the time! Apply for the NCSY/birthright israel trip to Israel starting February 27th!

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Contact: Esther Zlochower at 1-888-Tour-4-You
 Advisors call Rabbi Dave Felsenthal at 1-201-862-0250

For more information about this and our other incredible summer programs, please contact us at summer@ou.org or call 1-888-Tour-4-You.
 NCSY Summer Programs, 11 Broadway, New York, NY 10004



**Israel!
We Care!
We're Going!**

Congregation Ohab Zedek/Orthodox Union

Solidarity Mission

May 20 – 27, 2003

Save the date!

**National OU/RCA Summer Solidarity
Mission**

August 12 to 19, 2003

Details to follow

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Articles about Winter 2003 Mission:

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- [Report on the OU Israel Solidarity Mission](#)
By Menachem Kovacs

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CONGREGATION OHAB ZEDEK
IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE ORTHODOX UNION AND EZER MIZION

Israel Solidarity Mission
May 20–27, 2003 • 19–25 Iyar, 5763

LED BY RABBI YEHOSHUA BERKOWITZ

- **Download Application**
- **View Flyer**
These flyers can be viewed using the Adobe Acrobat Reader. If you do not have this software, it can be downloaded FREE.
- **Waiver**

INCLUDES

- Round trip airfare via EL AL (JFK/TLV/JFK)
- 5 nights accommodations at Jerusalem Sheraton Plaza Hotel
- Breakfast daily, lunches on touring days, Shabbat meals, departure dinner
- All tips & taxes, security charges, admissions, r/t airport/hotel transfers in Israel

PROGRAM

- Communities & "people" of Gush Katif & The Shomron Volunteer Chessed Projects
- Opportunity to participate in the Magen David Adom Blood Drive
- Israeli Air Force Base & "Nahal Hareidi" infantry base (subject to approval of IDF) new development sites of Eastern Jerusalem, such as: Har Homa, Mt. of Olives, Mt. Scopus, Kever Shimon Hatzadik Kotel Ham'aravi
- Kever Rachel
- guest speakers from various segments of Israeli life
- Time to "reconnect" with relatives & friends living in Israel.

GROUP FLIGHTS

- Departure: May 20 – El Al #008, departs JFK at 11:50PM; arrives Israel at 5:05PM (5/21)
- Return: May 27 – El Al #001, departs Israel at 1:00AM; arrives JFK at 5:25AM

C O S T

\$1,795.00 (per person, based on double occupancy;
Single supplement - \$225.00)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION & APPLICATION

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JEWISH HOMELAND- REFORM

Resolution Adopted by the CCAR

WHERE WE STAND ON ISRAEL

**Adopted by the Board of Trustees
Central Conference of American Rabbis
December 11, 2002**

Background

Ever since the establishment of the State of Israel and even before, the Jewish People have stretched out their hands in friendship to their Arab neighbors in the hope of achieving a relationship of peaceful co-existence. That wish is clearly expressed in Israel's Declaration of Independence which remains a source of inspiration to her to this day:

"We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East."

Most of Israel's leaders across the political spectrum have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to this notion and preparedness to relinquish territory for the sake of peace. The agreements signed with Egypt in September 1978 by Menachem Begin and with Jordan by Yitzhak Rabin in October 1994 as well as the proposals presented to the Palestinians by Ehud Barak at Camp David in July 2000 testify to that. It is our hope and prayer that that same spirit of compromise will also in time bring the Palestinians back to the peace table.

Israel's Right to Exist

In addressing the current conflict, we affirm Israel's right as a Jewish State to live in peace and security within recognized international borders. There is no other nation on earth whose right to exist continues to be laid open to question after over fifty years of statehood arrived at through international recognition. The lessons of history have shown only too clearly that the Jewish People has the right, the need, and the justification to return to its ancient land after nearly 2,000 years of statelessness and powerlessness and to be allowed to live in peace.

Mutual Recognition

Peaceful coexistence between Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab states based on justice and mutual recognition is a moral necessity. It is clear that there will be no final resolution to the Middle East conflict until each side recognizes the fundamental justice and inalienable moral claims of the other for independence and freedom. Israel has amply demonstrated that she accepts the justice of the Palestinian claim. Now it is incumbent upon the Palestinians to recognize the justice of Zionism as an expression of the inalienable right of the Jewish People to live in peace in their own land.

A solution to the Palestinian right to political self-determination cannot be achieved at the expense of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish democratic State with a Jewish majority. While it is our hope that a Palestinian State will be established through a process of negotiation - but only a state which would be committed to peaceful co-existence with the State of Israel - we reject the Palestinian demand for a right of physical return to the State of Israel. Such a "return" would, in effect, mean that they not only be permitted to establish a sovereign state of their own on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip but also be allowed to become a demographic majority within Israel proper, thereby, in effect, creating two Palestinian states.

It is our hope and prayer that moderation and realism will ultimately prevail in the Middle East and that a Palestinian leadership will emerge that has the courage and the foresight to work honestly and vigorously to suppress hatred in the schools, intolerance on the streets, religious fanaticism in the mosques and the terror that results from them. Such steps on their part will encourage the dialogue required to bring peace to the region. Additionally, we call upon the North American rabbinate actively to engage in dialogue with Muslim religious leadership. The Muslim community should not remain silent in the face of such blatant abuse of religion as noted above. We call upon Muslims in North America actively to denounce hate speech in the guise of Islamic religious teaching.

At the same time, we call upon all segments of Israeli society and of the Jewish people as a whole likewise to teach the messages of peaceful co-existence, tolerance, democracy, deliberation, and the acceptance of the rule of law.

The Peace Process

The peace process that resulted in the Oslo Accords and led to the historic meeting between President Clinton, Yitzhak Rabin, and Yassir Arafat on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993, gave the world reason to believe that it would be possible for Israel and the Palestinians to come to an accommodation that would bring an end to the conflict.

However, the Palestinians rejected the proposals put forward by former Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak at Camp David and demonstrated a lack of willingness to offer any counter-proposals. The subsequent unwarranted and immoral Palestinian resort to violence and terror that has plagued Israel ever since has shown that Yassir Arafat is clearly unable or unprepared to take the necessary steps to reach an agreement with Israel. Nevertheless, there are signs that there is a younger generation of Palestinian leaders that is willing and able to engage the Israelis in constructive discussions once Arafat has left the scene. This gives cause for hope for the future.

Israel's Right to Self-Defense

We are united in the belief that military force will not resolve the Middle East conflict. Nevertheless, Israel has the right and moral obligation first and foremost to protect the safety and security of her people. No nation can be expected to sit back and allow its citizens to be slaughtered. We support the Government of Israel in its war against terrorism and its efforts to stop the people who execute, support and encourage it. At the same time, we call on the government and the Israel Defense Forces to be fully guided by the concept of *tohar haneshek* (purity of arms), employing reasonable restraint and, while doing what is necessary to protect human life, refraining from acts of collective punishment. In the final analysis, we recognize that the war against terrorism can only be a defensive measure at best until such time as political negotiations can resolve the conflict.

We acknowledge and are deeply pained by the immense suffering caused to Israelis as a result of the

Palestinian choice to resort to terrorism. We condemn without reservation the actions of those who have brought terror to Israel's towns and streets in the name of their political and religious agenda.

We are acutely aware that Israeli society has suffered emotionally, politically, and economically as a result of the Palestinian war against the Jewish State. We are also painfully conscious of the poverty and hunger which exist today within Israel's poorer Jewish and Arab populations. We, therefore, pledge ourselves to do all in our power to assist her in every way at this difficult time.

In affirming that the first obligation of any sovereign state is to defend its citizens, we reject the simplistic moral equation that has been constructed by certain observers of the Middle East conflict that would seek to draw a parallel between the murderous actions of Palestinian homicide bombers and the generally measured responses of Israel's defense forces. Whereas the proclaimed intention of the terrorists is to murder and maim innocent men, women and children, Israel has not purposefully targeted civilians and has frequently, as in Jenin, gone out of her way to avoid casualties at great risk and also cost to her own military personnel.

Affirming Human Rights and Justice for Palestinians

We affirm Judaism's deep religious commitment to defend the human and civil rights of all created in God's image. Israel's Declaration of Independence also emphasizes Israel's commitment to the prophetic teaching of liberty, justice and peace. The realization of these principles is a pre-requisite for harmonic co-existence. This is of particular importance at this time when Israeli Arabs' and Palestinian rights are so adversely affected by the current violent conflict. We are deeply pained by the growing poverty and hunger within the Palestinian community. The current dire situation of Palestinians is largely a bi-product of Palestinian terror but the long-lasting occupation has contributed to the Palestinians' plight. We call on Palestinian as well as Israeli leadership to address this immediately.

A Political Solution

We urge the government of Israel to continue to work towards a political solution to the Middle East conflict and formulate those policies that will form the basis for dialogue in the future. Ultimately, the Palestinian issue can only be resolved through negotiations resulting from a shared yearning for a secure and peaceful future and the vision of a world in which "nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4).

The Broader Context of the Israel/Palestinian Conflict

The Palestinians have repeatedly failed to take advantage of the historic opportunities granted them to reach independence. However, we recognize that the Israel/Palestinian conflict takes place in a global context that also includes the relationship between the Arab world and democracy, the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and the position of Israel as an outpost of democratic values in a region of the world in which dictatorships, monarchies and theocracies are the political norm.

We are also conscious of the fact that the plight of the Palestinians has repeatedly been exploited by various Arab states and potentates for their own political ends. Frequently, oil rich nations, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq, have been prepared to finance terror against Israelis while doing little to better the lot of those they term their brothers.

In this context and by contrast, we note that both Arab nations and the world community have chosen to ignore the fact that Israel has always opened her doors to refugees and has served as a haven for some

600,000 Jews that were expelled or fled from Arab lands following the establishment of the Jewish State. Their children and grandchildren, now numbered in millions, are full citizens of the country.

We call upon the Palestinian diaspora in North America to take an active part in the amelioration of the dire economic and social conditions of Palestinians. We urge joint endeavors between Jewish and Palestinian individuals and foundations in this critical work.

Territorial Considerations

In addressing the territorial issue, we believe that a return to the Green Line of pre-1967 days is unrealistic. Any final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians will need to take into account current circumstances and may require territorial adjustments akin to those offered at Camp David.

In the context of a peace agreement, it should be acknowledged that the 1949 cease-fire lines were no secure borders. We believe that Israel has the right to recognized and secure borders and, therefore, some settlements will continue to exist within the re-drawn map of the State of Israel. Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip came about as a result of a war not of her making.

Nevertheless, thirty-five years later, we acknowledge that Israel's presence there and the establishment of certain settlements by governments of all political complexions have served to deepen the sense of enmity and distrust felt by the Palestinian population and thus are an impediment to peace. We reiterate our call to the government of Israel to adopt a policy of neither building nor expanding settlements in West Bank and Gaza. Yet, over 200,000 Israelis live in settlements on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip and deserve our support on a humanitarian basis. The aim of this support should be to guarantee the health and security of those who live in the settlements and should not be for expansion or infrastructure.

We recognize that acceding to the Palestinian right to self-determination will inevitably involve the evacuation from their homes of many settlers currently living in areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Jews willing to live peacefully under Palestinian rule should be able to do so, just as Arab citizens of Israel live peacefully within Israel.

Seeking Peace

We commend the untiring efforts of successive administrations of the United States government that have sought to act as mediators in bringing the Middle East conflict to an end. We again call upon the Bush Administration vigorously to engage both Israel and the Palestinians in imaginative, bold and sustained efforts to help bring to an end the current violence and to work towards a just and lasting peace. At the same time, we defend the right of Israel's citizens, who live within a democracy, to be the ultimate determiners of what is in the best interests of their security.

We commend all those who seek to build bridges between Israelis and Palestinians and who work towards the achievement of a just solution to the Middle East conflict.

We Once Again Affirm

In addition to the above, we reaffirm the positions expressed in the "Resolution on Peace in Israel," adopted by the Board of Trustees, June, 2001:

We call upon our Christian brothers and sisters throughout the world to bear witness to that part of their

own early history which affirms the historic connection of the Jewish People to the Land of Israel, the ancient temple and the city of Jerusalem.

We call for the immediate release of all Israeli MIA's, including: Ron Arad, Adi Avitan, Benyamin Avraham, Omar Sawaid, and Israeli civilian Elhanan Tenenboim.

We call upon the government and Jewish citizens of Israel to all in their power to ameliorate the social, economic, and educational situation of Israel's Arab citizens.

"Bakesh shalom v'rodfehu - Seek peace and pursue it." (Psalm 34:15)

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Resolution on Conversions and Pluralism in Israel June 2001

WHEREAS the State of Israel has refused to recognize the conversions performed by the **ה'תשנ"א** of the Rabbinical Assembly in Israel; and

WHEREAS such conversions are conducted according to the requirement of **הלכה**; and

WHEREAS we deplore the monopoly of the Chief Rabbinate in conversions and in marriages.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Rabbinical Assembly support the continued efforts by the Masorti Movement to obtain recognition by the State of Israel for these conversions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rabbinical Assembly one again call upon the Government of Israel to change its policy in these matters and to recognize the legitimacy of pluralism within Judaism and to act with equity toward all streams of Judaism.

2001-#9

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NFTY L'dor V'dor *From Generation to Generation* Five Weeks in Israel and Europe!

3 Days in Prague, Czech Republic
3 Days in Krakow and Warsaw, Poland
28 Days in Israel

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Experience for yourself the epic story of the journey of the Jewish people. Together with NFTY friends from all over North America, begin your adventure in Europe, exploring more than one thousand years of our rich European Jewish heritage. Truly appreciate the beautiful community and culture our ancestors created and its virtual destruction during the holocaust. With an intimate understanding of the importance of Israel in our time, enjoy four wonderful weeks discovering your personal connection to our people and our history.

Spend the next four weeks together with teens from across the continent exploring incredible Israel, ancient and modern, from border to border and from sea to sea.

With NFTY's renowned tour guide educators leading the way, walk on the walls of the old city of Jerusalem, make your pilgrimage to the Kotel, the western wall, travel back 2000 years in time as you explore the ancient tunnels around the foundation of the Temple Mount. Wear a toga in a Roman-style restaurant; and see the ancient Dead Sea Scrolls at the Shrine of the Book.

Tour Highlights:

- Prague –the old town square, the famous astrological clock, Charles Bridge, and the historical Jewish quarter
- Moving pilgrimage to Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps
- Oskar Schindler's factory from "Schindler's List"
- Make your pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Kotel, the Western Wall
- Sunrise from the top of Massada
- Float in the Dead Sea
- A real Archeological dig ? Explore the Galilee and the Golan
- Swim in the Kineret, the Sea of Galilee
- Visit the mystical city of Safed
- Ride a camel and stay overnight at a Bedouin tent Explore the underwater coral reef of Eilat
- An incredible outdoor desert experience
- Interaction with Israeli teens



- The Keneset Israel's parliament
- Wear a toga in a Roman-style restaurant
- The Dead Sea Scrolls at the Shrine of the Book

Tour itinerary

Week One: Eastern Europe

Prague, Czech Republic

Our transatlantic trip allows us time to meet and make new friends. We begin our journey in the enchanting country of the Czech Republic with its magnificent architecture, exquisite natural beauty, friendly people and rich Jewish heritage. On hundred million people visit Prague each year and you'll see why as we stroll over the Charles Bridge into the fairy tale-like old city center. For 1000 years Prague was home to a thriving Jewish culture. Visit the Alt-neu Shul, the oldest continually used synagogue in Europe. Wander through the Jewish Quarter and see how Jewish lives have been filled with creativity and vitality or a millennium. The old Jewish cemetery is a remarkable site, and is the second oldest in Europe. Twelve Thousand tombstones are literally jammed together at various angles creating an almost surreal landscape.

Krakow, Poland

Travel by over-night train to the medieval city of Krakow and enjoy an afternoon stroll around its beautiful old town square. Visit the ancient Remuh Synagogue and the newly rededicated Reform "Tempel" synagogue. See Oskar Schindler's Factor from the movie "Schindler's List" and the inspiring castle and Coronation cathedral. Together with NFTY youth from around the USA we make a moving pilgrimage to the Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps where we will gather to remember and rededicate ourselves to building a Jewish future.

En route to Israel visit Warsaw and discover for yourself how courageous Jewish heroes led the Warsaw Ghetto uprising

Week Two – Spiritual Jerusalem and ancient Israel

Stay at the beautiful hotel at Kibbut Tzuba in the mountains of Jerusalem. This hotel is on Kibbutz grounds in a contained safe and secure area about 20 minutes outside of the city. From here we will go on day trips exploring the history, spirituality and magic of the ancient city of Jerusalem. We will visit the Kotel the western wall and the famous tunnels that lead directly to the heart of the Jewish people as they run beneath the temple mount. We will visit the Israel museum and the Scrolls of fire, and eat in a Roman style restaurant in the Jewish quarter of the old city.

We take a trip into the desert of Judea as we follow in the footsteps of the Hebrew Zealots running from the Romans after the destruction of the second temple, as they fled to the mountain fortress of Massada. We ascend to the summit of Masada at dawn, as the sun rise paints the mountains of Jordan with amazing colors. Float in the Dead Sea, cover yourself with the famous black mud, and cool off in the famous Nahal Arugot waterfall near Ein Gedi. Dig into your roots on an archeological expedition, and unearth ancient pottery with your own hands. Crawl through the caves of the Maccabean revolt by candlelight and visit the ancient city of tel Marash.

Week Three – Galilee, Golan and Kineret (the sea of Galilee)

Explore the Galilee and Golan during your stay on the banks of the Kineret at the

hotel in Kibbutz Ma'agan along the southern coast of the Sea of Galilee. The kibbutz is located twenty minutes outside of the city of Tiberius. This a magnificent three star beach resort on the kibbutz grounds in a safe and secure closed area with a pool, a beautiful beach and roomy accommodations. We will be using this resort as our base for visiting the mystical city of Safed wander thru its alleyways filled with quaint little shops that sell the famous Safed candles and art works of local artists. We will visit the famous Naot sandals factory and tour the Golan Heights to understand its significance and importance to the state of Israel. Moving forward in the story of our people we visit the village of Kineret the first settlement on the banks of the Sea of Galilee where we examine the important beginnings of a drea of Jewish state hood in Eretz Israel, fostered by young eastern European Jews making "Aliyah" arriving in Palestine towards the beginning of the twentieth century

Week Three – Desert wilderness experience

Hosted by the first Reform Kibbutz in Israel, Kibbutz Yahel outside of Eilat, our thir week is dedicated to understanding the ancient roots of our people. We explore th desert, where we first started our journey, and where we evolved in to "Am Israel". We hike and camp out in the most beautiful backdrops of black and red granite mountains, deep blue seas, and sleep under the cover of the most amazing star-studded skies. Our days are filled with desert and wildlife experiences and water activities such as snorkeling the crystal clear blue waters of the Red Sea; relaxing on a sandy beach, and swimming in the kibbutz pool. We will ride camels, role down sand dunes, and spend a magical night, as very special guests in an authentic Bedouin tent were we sip hot tea and hear amazing stories about life in the desert.

Week Four – Modern Israel

Returning to the beautiful Kibbutz Tzuba hotel for our last week in Israel, learn about the creation of the state of Israel when we visit Independence Hall in the modern city of Tel Aviv, swim in the Mediterranean, and shop on the famous Dizengoff Street. Understand the connections and commitments the state of Israel and the Jewish Diaspora share with one another. Visit the Knesset the Israeli parliament and Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and museum, walk through the military cemetery at Mt. Hertzl, where some of Israel's greatest leaders are buried. See the Latrun and Ammunition Hill memorials commemorating those who died fighting and protecting the new state of Israel.

Return to spiritual Jerusalem for one final visit as you prepare to fly home having had a spectacular summer adventure of personal discovery, challenging Jewish growth, feeling proud of yourself, your people and your land. Return home having had a once-in-a-lifetime journey of pride, discovery, friendship and fun.

Special note about Safety and Security:

In almost 50 years of sponsoring programs in Israel – Safety and Security of participants has always been our primary concern. It is our hope and expectation that Israel will be an appropriate destination for NFTY teens this summer. NFTY wi always strive to aspire to the highest standards of safety and security. NFTY has a well-deserved reputation for care and caution in designing and implementing summer programs. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions and concerns. **Please visit our safety and security page for additional information!**

Application deadline: May 1 – (Most applicants apply from December to April. After May 1 applications will be accepted on a space available bases).

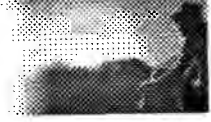




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Why NFTY? In their own words...

" I had very high expectations for the trip and they were all met. I wanted to have fun, see all the amazing places, explore my Judaism and meet great people. All of my expectations were met and so much more..." *Rebecca, Boston*

" The summer was an experience of a life time. I feel so privileged to have gone! " *Jonathan, Atlanta*

Israel

"I will always know that I am among the elite of American Jewish teens who have traveled to Israel and experienced our homeland " *Jonah, New Jersey*

"When I touched the Kotel stones it felt as though I was shaking God's hand, I was physically touching the most important part of our history" *Brian, California*

"NFTY did a great job helping us feel safe. I never once worried about my safety, the thought never even entered my mind" *Lisa, Denver*

European Roots

"The trip really made in impact on my faith in Judaism, I realized what my people went through to survive" *Hana, Austin*

"It was incredible and amazing to see and experience all these places that I had learned about in school and at my temple" *Rachel, Los Angeles*

"I felt so proud that I am practicing the same laws and celebrating the same holidays and traditions as the Jews of 14th Century Prague, the Golden age of Spain and all the various communities we visited on our trip" *Julie, Philadelphia*

Jewish Identity

“My NFTY experience has already effected me a great deal and will continue to shape and influence me for the rest of my life” *David, Toronto*

“ I was connecting with my Jewish Family around the world, AM echad, Lev echad, - One people One Heart” *Jonah, New Jersey*

“The summer with NFTY made me even prouder to be a Jew. It mad me feel a part of a people that is strong and will continue to be stron because of me” *Sarah, Sacramento*

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Safety and Security Protocols for NFTY groups traveling in Israel

- NFTY has always been very cautious and conservative.
- Itineraries are reviewed on a daily basis to determine if the route and destination provide the highest level of safety. We are always prepared to make changes in our summer itinerary if need be, although we do not anticipate that this will be necessary.
- NFTY's Directors in Israel (full time Rabbis, education and logistics professionals) consult daily with the security department of the Jewish Agency for Israel who are in constant contact with the government, Police and military authorities.
- NFTY groups do not travel in the territories, in or near the Gaza Strip or East Jerusalem.
- Public transportation is never used. We use only our own NFTY chartered buses. An Israeli security guard travels with each group on a daily basis.
- Parents can reach the NFTY office in Israel 24 hours a day during th program. Group leaders on each bus have a cell phone and can be reached 24 hours a day in case of an emergency.
- NFTY has contingency plans to, if need be, move groups to safety or bring groups home if called for.
- NFTY participants and parents sign the NFTY Code of Conduct – expressing their willingness to abide by all rules, regulations and safety guidelines.
- NFTY staff members and participants receive a thorough orientation regarding expectations for appropriate behavior and safety and security procedures and protocols.

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Download Registration
Materials:
EIE Program Catalog
EIE Application

All downloaded files require
the Adobe Acrobat Reader
plug-in or application for
viewing. This software is
available free from Adobe.



For additional
information, please
send an e-mail to
nfty-eie@uahc.org or
call 212-650-4073.

More Than Forty Years of Excellence

Since 1961, over a thousand exceptional high school sophomores, juniors and seniors have spent an unforgettable semester immersed in the culture and history of Israel. This experience has had a profound effect on the lives of participants, many of whom are leaders of North American Jewish communities. The NFTY-EIE High School in Israel has, as the decades passed, evolved into an exceptional living and learning experience, responding to the needs and expectations of participants, parents and home high schools.

No other program in Israel offers so much to the dedicated student:

- **Celebration of Reform Judaism and progressive Jewish life in Israel.**
- **Kibbutz living at Kibbutz Tzuba and integration with kibbutz families.**
- **Program filled with Reform values and ideas.**
- **"Israel: Land, People and Cultures": an intensive and challenging Jewish studies course which includes field trips throughout Israel.**
- **Fully Accredited General Studies Courses.**
- **Hebrew Language Instruction (Ulpan).**
- **"Gadna" Army Experience, Negev Desert and "Sea to Sea" hiking expeditions.**
- **Week long Prague-Poland Pilgrimage.**

Quality Academics and High School Credits

The key to the success of the NFTY-EIE High School in Israel is the special relationship that exists between NFTY and the Department of Education of the Jewish Agency for Israel. The NFTY-EIE High School in Israel is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools and is recognized by the Ministry of Education in Israel. The NFTY-EIE High School in Israel is under the careful supervision of NFTY's full time staff in Israel.

For any overseas high school semester to succeed, the confidence and cooperation of participants, parents and home high schools are required. Through accredited courses and small classes students can be assured that they will reintegrate easily into their home high schools at semester's end. Students are awarded academic credit for:

1. Israel: Land, People and Cultures (Jewish Studies) and the Hebrew Language Instruction.
2. Personalized instruction in small general studies classes to ensure that students keep current with work being done in their home high schools.

Students register for 3-5 general studies courses. NFTY submits a detailed curriculum for each general studies course to the high school for its approval. A broad range of courses (including Honors and AP) are offered to guarantee that qualified students can participate in the NFTY-EIE High School in Israel.

3. While in Israel, students may take the PSAT, SAT I, SAT II, ACT or AP exams. NFTY offers a special "mini" course to help prepare students for the SAT exam.
-

How Can Families Afford the NFTY High School in Israel?

Scholarship assistance is available from a variety of sources:

UAHC Congregations.

Local Jewish Federations-Bureaus of Jewish Education.

Many Federations provide special scholarships for study programs in Israel.

NFTY has a scholarship fund for the NFTY-EIE High School in Israel. Please request a scholarship application.

Eligibility

The selection of students is made by the Admissions Committee which seeks the following qualities in selecting candidates:

- Bright, capable Jewish young people who have achieved a high level academic success at school and who are highly motivated to learn.
 - Personal qualities of leadership that have earned them the respect of both peers and adults.
 - Self-confidence, self-reliance, emotional maturity and an ability to establish warm, friendly relationships with diverse kinds of people in their surroundings.
 - Active involvement in Reform congregations, religious schools, youth group and Jewish camps.
 - Good physical and emotional health.
 - A desire to be a part of Israeli society, to travel the country, to speak Hebrew and to be a part of the Jewish people in our ancient homeland.
-

The Goals of the NFTY-EIE High School in Israel

The purpose of the NFTY-EIE High School in Israel is to provide an opportunity for outstanding high school students to spend a semester in Israel under the sponsorship of the Reform Movement. This experience is intended to develop young leadership and to increase Jewish knowledge and commitment to Jewish life and learning. The goals of the NFTY-EIE High School in Israel for our students are

- to teach and to strengthen their feelings towards Judaism, Jewish History and the Jewish people.
- to build their Jewish self-esteem and to enhance their personal identities as Reform Jews.
- to give them a better understanding of and appreciation for Israel, Zionism and Progressive Judaism in Israel.
- to assist them in developing Hebrew language skills.
- to sharpen their awareness of international issues
- to widen their horizons through living and learning in a different culture.
- to foster independence and maturity while living away from their home environment.
- to immerse them in Israeli society by living as part of a Jerusalem family.
- to enable them to develop leadership skills that will serve them as they become role models for their temples, youth groups, UAHC camps and the Jewish community in general.

Partial List of General Studies Courses

English	Pre-Calculus & Calculus
Biology	Trigonometry
Chemistry	US & World History
Physics	Economics
Geometry	US Government
Algebra II	Foreign Languages

Program Calendar

September ~ January or January ~ June

Highlights:

"Israel; Land, Cultures and People" – an intensive course in the history of the Jewish people integrated with extensive field trips throughout Israel

Hebrew Ulpan (Language instruction) at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.

Celebration of **Shabbat and Jewish holidays** with Reform teens from across North America, HUC rabbinical students and NFTY staff and their families.

Kibbutz experience – Students are based at Kibbutz Tzuba located outside of Jerusalem. Students become an integral part of kibbutz life and have ongoing contact with Tzuba families. Students learn about kibbutz egalitarian values and culture while volunteering on the Reform Kibbutzim Yahel and Lotan in the Negev. In conjunction with these visits students participate in a four day desert camping adventure which includes hiking, camel riding, snorkeling in the Red Sea and Bedouin hospitality.

Prague-Poland Pilgrimage - EIE students join together in a weeklong pilgrimage to Prague in the Czech Republic and to Krakow and Warsaw in Poland. The pilgrimage includes a moving visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps. Students will explore the European Jewish experience from the Medieval period to the Holocaust.

Gadna – This challenging week offers a taste of one of the most significant institutions of Israeli life: the IDF (Israel Defense Force). Gadna, designed as an army orientation program for Israel teens, allows EIE students to join in a mini “basic training” program to gain an inside view of the army and modern Israel.

In Their Own Words

Jewish Studies Program

“Jewish History was absolutely amazing, we learned and experienced so much.”
 “I got a real understanding of the history of the Jewish people and Israel.”
 “Intense, changed my life and perspective on the Jewish life and Jewish people.”
 “It altered my views of how I live and see myself.”
 “It gave me an in-depth study of Jewish history and it allowed me to get to know my roots and gave me an insight into my Judaism.”

The Group Experience

“I got to know the other 30 people more than I ever wanted to know anyone.”
 “Helped me learn how to live and deal with others.”
 “Gave me an idea of what living in a dorm would be like.”

The Travel-Tour Experience

“Fun, so much fun, interesting.”
 “Best way to see the country, inspiring and intense.”
 “Hiked everywhere from Eilat to the Golan and enjoyed every minute of it.”
 “Absolutely amazing.”
 “The most enjoyable way to learn.”

General Studies

“Excellent teachers, they really cared about us.”

Personal Growth

“Living in our community enabled me to learn about myself and how to act with other people.”
 “It changed the person I am, my outlooks and views. I am a much more positive person now.”
 “I learned more about myself than anything else. I discovered who I am.”
 “I feel more in touch with Judaism.”

The Kibbutz Experience

“I really enjoyed my job and I got to learn what kibbutz is like... I met some really nice people.”

NFTY High School in Israel
 UAHC Youth Division
 633 Third Avenue 7th Floor
 New York, NY 10017-6778
 or call
 212-650-4073
 fax: 212-650-4199
 e-mail: nfty-eie@uahc.org

" I felt I was making a contribution to the country."
"We felt the soil, got our hands dirty, a real participant in Israel."
"I experienced an integral part of Israeli life."

©2003 North American Federation of Temple Youth



ARZA WORLD provides real substance at every stage of the trip.

ARZA/WORLD UNION wishes to strengthen and deepen the relationship between North American Reform Jews, Israel and the Jewish world, and WORLD TRAVEL is present by its side working to fulfill that goal. Its congregational tours, family trips, and rabbinical study missions are a prime, powerful force in showing Israel and the Jewish world to American Jews in innovative ways that are singularly meaningful and memorable.



"We make sure to provide real substance at every stage of the trip," says Guy Millo, Executive Vice President of ARZA WORLD TRAVEL. "From dreaming to planning to meticulous implementation, we ensure that the Jewish travel experience is what it was meant to be: the foundation of a lifelong relationship between the Jewish traveler and the Jewish world."



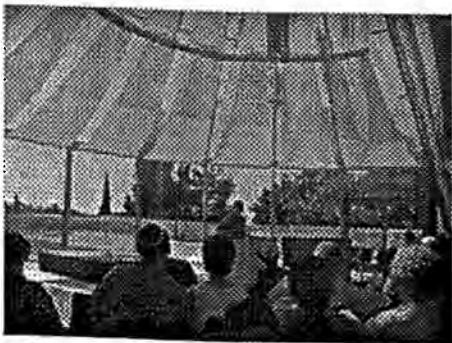
Rabbi Donald Rossoff, Senior Rabbi at Temple B'nai-Or in Morristown, NJ, and Chairman of the Central Conference of American Rabbis' Israel Committee, has said that the trip he took to Israel with ARZA WORLD TRAVEL was the best trip he had ever led. Rabbis, congregations, families and individuals who have traveled to Israel & the Jewish World recently with ARZA WORLD TRAVEL will tell you they saw story behind the story, met the real people, behind the fleeting image and enjoyed the sightseeing. ARZA WORLD TRAVEL makes sure you interact with Reform Jewish communities, through briefings by the

most prominent leadership, with site visits to schools, synagogues and Jewish community centers.

According to Ya'acov Fried, President of ARZA WORLD TRAVEL, the educational elements of ARZA/WORLD UNION missions and trips are above and beyond anything else available on the Jewish travel scene today. An on-staff educator sees to a consistently high level of programming. Dialogues with leaders of the Movement for Progressive Judaism and visits to Reform congregations and homes will not only introduce you to



the exciting and creative world of World Progressive Judaism. They will also show you first-hand how Jews around the globe cope and as they look toward a better future, in a way that will make you prouder and more inspired by Reform Judaism than ever before.



ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America, is an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Reform Movement's representative to the World Zionist Congress. It champions the Reform Movement's Zionist cause.

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 Voice: 212-683-6311
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ARZA WORLD takes you beyond the ordinary travel experience and introduces you to the greater Jewish world.

New and exciting Rabbinic Missions are in the process of being planned. Check this page on a regular basis for an updated schedule of missions.

[Click here for more information on Reform Movement Solidarity Missions to Israel](#)

**NOW IS THE TIME.
We Need To Be There.**

Reform Movement Solidarity Missions to Israel

Have you ever been to Israel? Do you know what it's like to walk on the same ground as our ancestors? Do you know what it's like to see the Holy Land? Do you know what it's like to be part of a mission to Israel? Do you know what it's like to be part of a mission to Israel? Do you know what it's like to be part of a mission to Israel?

MISSION DATES AND LEADERS


May 2003	June 2003	July 2003	August 2003
Leaders: [Name]	Leaders: [Name]	Leaders: [Name]	Leaders: [Name]

Form: Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone, Email, etc.

Click here for more information on the May mission to Israel

[Click here for more information on the May mission to Israel](#)

NOW IS THE TIME. WE NEED TO BE THERE.
 SOLEMNITY MISSION TO PEAK
 July 19-27, 2003



**Solely Jewish Mission for Peace, with
 Rabbi Danny Saperstein
 Director, Episcopal Action Center of
 Synagogue Judaism**

MISSION STATEMENT
 The Solely Jewish Mission to Peak is a unique opportunity for Jewish leaders to engage in a profound spiritual and intellectual journey. This mission is designed to foster a deeper understanding of our faith and its relevance in the contemporary world. Through a series of lectures, discussions, and practical exercises, participants will explore the intersection of Jewish tradition and modern challenges. The mission is open to all who are committed to the pursuit of truth and the betterment of our community.


Program Highlights:

- Daily lectures by Rabbi Saperstein on Jewish thought and leadership.
- Interactive discussions and group projects.
- A special service on the final day of the mission.
- A certificate of participation for all attendees.

Registration Information:
 The mission is free of charge. Registration is required. Contact: [Contact Information]

[Click here to join this mission with Congregation Emanu El](#)

CONGREGATION EMANU EL
LEGAL FAMILY MISSION
 February 21-June 1, 2004
 Mission Led By: Rabbi David Green and Rev. Scott Kagan



MISSION STATEMENT
 The Legal Family Mission is a unique opportunity for Jewish leaders to engage in a profound spiritual and intellectual journey. This mission is designed to foster a deeper understanding of our faith and its relevance in the contemporary world. Through a series of lectures, discussions, and practical exercises, participants will explore the intersection of Jewish tradition and modern challenges. The mission is open to all who are committed to the pursuit of truth and the betterment of our community.

Program Highlights:

- Daily lectures by Rabbi Green on Jewish law and ethics.
- Interactive discussions and group projects.
- A special service on the final day of the mission.
- A certificate of participation for all attendees.

Registration Information:
 The mission is free of charge. Registration is required. Contact: [Contact Information]



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THE VERY BEST IN PROGRAMMING ALONG WITH GREAT VALUE AND FLEXIBILITY

ARZA WORLD TRAVEL ensures that the travel experience is what it was meant to be: the foundation of a lifelong relationship between the Jewish traveler and the Jewish people.

ARZA WORLD TRAVEL offers congregational tours, family trips, and rabbinical study missions as a powerful tool in showing the global Reform family to American Jews in innovative ways that are singularly meaningful and memorable.

ARZA WORLD TRAVEL frequent departure dates give you the flexibility to join a planned trip with other Reform Jews from around the country.

ARZA WORLD TRAVEL in conjunction with a gay owned and managed tour operator, takes pride in offering its "South African Dream" gay travel program designed especially for the gay and lesbian community.

ARZA WORLD TRAVEL Going the extra mile to offer you the very best in programming along with great value and flexibility...that's what ARZA World Travel is all about!



Message From Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch

Tailor Made CUSTOMIZED Group Travel



Very best in programming along with great value and flexibility



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Solidarity Study Tours to Israel *9 Day Leadership Missions by The Reform Family*

Reform Movement Solidarity Missions to Israel

NOW IS THE TIME. WE NEED TO BE THERE.



WHO IS LEADING THESE MISSIONS?

These trips will be unique. We will not only visit our Reform/ Progressive institutions and leaders in Israel, but also delve into the issues



surrounding Israel's current security crisis. We want to give you a first hand opportunity to involve yourselves in the lives of Israelis and understand their daily challenges.

Excorted Package Includes

- Flights NYC-Tel Aviv-NYC on ELAL Israel Airlines
- 6 nights Deluxe accommodations
- 5 nights Inbal, Jerusalem
- 1 night Kibbutz Kfar Giladi, Galilee
- All transfers
- 9 meals: 6 buffet breakfasts, 3 dinners
- Sightseeing per itinerary in modern air-conditioned motor coach
- Services of English-speaking tour manager throughout
- All program / speaker fees and entrance fees per itinerary
- Hotel taxes & tips included

Special Features

- Israeli political realities
- VIP tour of the Knesset
- Military briefings
- Study sessions with leading university faculty
- Meeting with Reform congregations

DAY 1, Sat, Depart U.S.A.

DAY 2, Sun

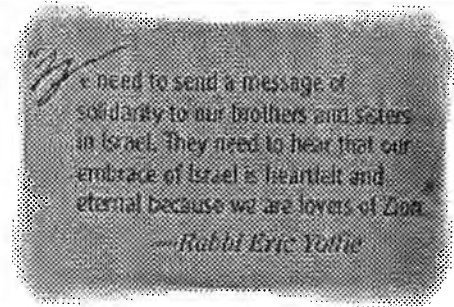
Arrive at Ben Gurion International Airport.

Welcome by our representative and assistance with arrival formalities.

Travel to Jerusalem via the Judean Hills.

Stop at Nebi Samuel for the sheheyanu blessing and a geopolitical update on Jerusalem and

its environs. Check into the hotel. Opening dinner at the hotel with remarks by Rabbi Uri Regev, Executive Director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and Anat Hoffman, Executive Director of the Israel Religious Action Center: "The Reform Movement and the Intifada" (D): JERUSALEM





Rates

Solidarity Study Tour to Israel	Twin P.P.	Single Supp.
2003		
Feb 1; Mar 8	\$1987	\$295
Jun 14; Jul 19	2340	325
Dec 27	2158	325
2004		
Feb 21; Mar 20	2080	315
May 15	2425	345

Not Included

Airport taxes, tips to local guides, driver, and tour escort/manager (see Terms & Conditions). Itinerary is tentative and subject to change. Guest speakers are not confirmed at this time.

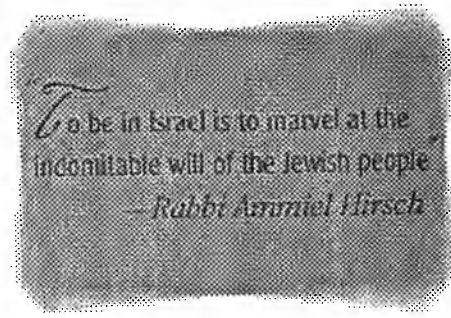
DAY 3, Mon

POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY

Breakfast at the hotel.

Israeli Political Realities: "The Effect of Diplomacy on Internal Israeli Politics," with Dr. Reuven Chazan of the Political Science Department of Hebrew University.

The IDF and Intifada II: Military briefing with leading Israeli field officer in the new controversial neighborhood of Har Homa, overlooking Bethlehem and Beit Sahur.



The Reform Progressive movement and Intifada II : Meet with MARAM rabbis at Beit Shmuel: MARAM is the professional organization o

Progressive rabbis working and living in Israel. It operates a Beit Din (rabbinic court) for all matter related to Jewish status. VIP visit to the Knesset for power lunch meeting with leading Knesset members and government ministers at the Knesset cafeteria.

The Media and Intifada II: Who Shaped What? – meet with Professor Gadi Wolfsfeld of the Political Science and Communications Departments of Hebrew University, and with leading American journalists on the campus of Hebrew University. Debriefing of the day. Dinner on own (B): JERUSALEM

DAY 4, Tues

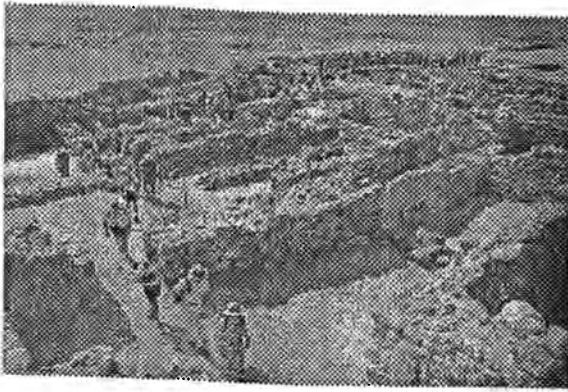
LIVING ON THE EDGE: THE "GREEN LINE"

Breakfast at the hotel.

Depart Jerusalem for the north via the coastal plain.

The Green Line: Israel's Soft Underbelly:

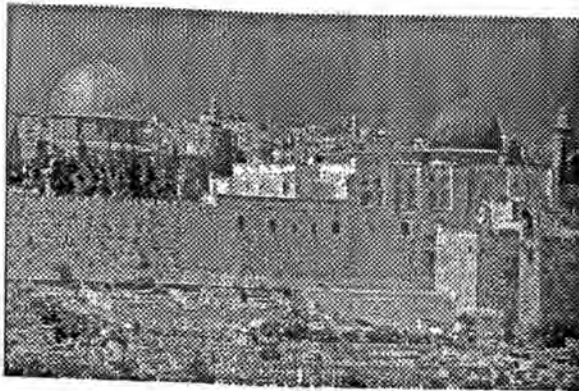
Meet with the Mayor of Netanya- Miriam Fierberg -- for her insight into how residents are dealing with the multiple tragedies and ongoing tension. Visit and lunch at the Park Hotel (lunch not included), site of the Passover Seder Massacre. The Green Line I: visit the Green Line Control Headquarters for a briefing on the challenges facing the Israeli security establishment in the



Wadi Ara region.

Living Along the Green Line II : special program at Um Al-Fahm, with Jewish and Arab residents of the Wadi Ara area for an insight into the complexities involved in living together but apart.

Drive to the Kibbutz: Created as primarily agricultural settlements. The Kibbutz model played an important role in the first years of the new state, reclaiming the barren lands, absorbing new immigrants and securing the borders of the new country. Dinner at the Kibbutz. My Kibbutz: Interaction with a local family living on the Kibbutz (B,D); GALILEE



DAY 5, Wed

VISION AND REALITY

Breakfast at the hotel.

In What Direction is the Israeli Economy Heading
Field seminar at Teffen, high-tech industrial park.

Visit the Leo Baeck school: Established in 1938, as an initiative of Jewish immigrants from Germany with the spirit of Reform Judaism, it has become a comprehensive educational center, which includes, besides kindergartens and high school classes, a community center, a sports club a synagogue and a college for Jewish studies. Stop for lunch and meet with members of the local Reform community "Congregation Sulam Yaacov" (lunch not included) or free time for lunch.

The First Aliyah and the Contemporary State of Israel: visit the new First Aliyah Creative Museum in Zichron Ya'akov and take part in an interactive program designed to re-live the days of the First Aliyah.

Stroll through the pedestrian mall or "midrechov" of this beautiful colony, and frequent the artists' galleries and stores for a taste of local flavors.

Dinner in the new city of Modi'in and meet with members of the local reform community. Congregation Yozma (the name means "initiative") is an example of modern-day pioneering in Israel – a new community offering new type of Judaism in a new city or drive to Jerusalem and check back into the hotel followed by dinner (B, D): JERUSALEM



[View printable version \(PDF\)](#)

DAY 6, Thurs

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning at leisure: Our staff will help you plan a morning of self-exploration. Options are plentiful, shopping, visiting favorite sites or frequenting Jerusalemite artists in their galleries. Afternoon study session at the Foreign Ministry: "The Role of the American Jewish Communities in Clarifying Israel's Message." Dinner briefing with guest Rabbi Michael Melchior, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (B, D); JERUSALEM

DAY 7, Fri

ISRAELI REALITIES

Breakfast at the hotel.

Nuances of Coexistence: Political Realities in Jerusalem: study tour in and around Jerusalem exploring the current situation and possible scenarios for the future.

Preparing to welcome Shabbat: Welcome the Shabbat at the TALI preschool with the children: TALI (Hebrew acronym for "enriched Jewish studies") reaches' more than 20,000 Israeli schoolchildren and their families in over 100 TALI schools and kindergartens throughout Israel and provides a modern and non-coercive Jewish studies program. Meet with children and faculty a TALI school to get another perspective on Israeli realities.

Afternoon at leisure.

Shabbat services at local congregations.
Private Shabbat dinner at the hotel and Oneg Shabbat with family, and with "Zmirot" (B,D):
JERUSALEM

DAY 8, SHABBAT

SHABBAT IN JERUSALEM

Breakfast at the hotel.

Saturday morning services at Hebrew Union College-JIR.

Day at leisure.

Havdallah service on the veranda of Mercaz Shimshon facing the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem with students from HUC.

Farewell dinner with the HUC students.

Transfer to the airport: (B,D)

DAY 9, Sun
Depart for the USA.

*Itinerary is tentative and subject to change.
*Guest speakers are not confirmed at this time.

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Voice: 212-683-6311
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Email: info@arzatravel.com

**JEWISH HOMELAND-
CONSERVATIVE**

Statement on Israel

October 13, 2000

ברוך אתה ה' הפורש סכת שלום
עלינו ועל כל-עמו ישראל ועל ירושלים.
*Blessed are You, God, who spreads Your shelter of peace
over us, over all people, and over Jerusalem.*

Prayers for peace must be linked to deeds of peace.

Prime Minister Barak's actions have made his hopes for peace concrete.
Chairman Arafat's actions have led to violence and death.

WE DECRY...

The Palestinian Authority's unprovoked and planned call to arms,
especially of its children.

The United Nations one-sided resolution
weakens its ability to be a positive force for peace.

The lack of courage by Yasir Arafat and by Arab leaders
to embrace Israel's hand of peace... at Camp David... and even now.

We support the people and State of Israel.

We mourn the loss of all human life and pray for the well being of those hurt and suffering.

We believe face to face negotiations by Israel and the Palestinians are the only real way to resolve issues between them.

The Conservative/Masorti Movement

Jewish Theological
Seminary

United Synagogue
of Conservative Judaism

Women's League
for Conservative Judaism

Ziegler School
of Rabbinic Studies

Cantors Assembly

MERCAZ

Rabbinical Assembly

Masorti Foundation
for Conservative Judaism
in Israel

Federation of Jewish
Men's Clubs

**Conservative/Masorti synagogues in North America, in Israel and around the world
are always open as a place of comfort and action for the Jewish people.**

The Leadership Council, 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027

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Resolution on Aliyah and Strengthening Our Presence in Israel

June 2001

WHEREAS the Conservative/Masorti Movement was the first religious stream to be pro-Zionist; and

WHEREAS Medinat Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael have continued to be of central importance and paramount concern to the Conservative Movement; and

WHEREAS the current situation in Israel has increased concerns about physical safety and resulted in the diminution of the presence of world Jewry coming to Israel for visits and for study; and

WHEREAS first-hand reports from recent visitors to Israel suggest that security within Israel is undiminished.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Rabbinical Assembly continue to encourage aliyah, long-term study and organized synagogue and personal visits to Israel.

2001-#11

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Resolution on Jerusalem and the Temple Mount

June 2001

WHEREAS the Temple Mount and the remnants of the Temple have been sacred to the people of Israel and to the Jewish religion for centuries; and

WHEREAS Moslem religious leaders have denied this historic connection of Judaism and the Jewish People to the Temple Mount and to the Western Wall; and

WHEREAS these attempts have been supported and initiated by members of the Palestinian Authority in an attempt to delegitimize the Israeli presence in Jerusalem.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Rabbinical Assembly strongly affirm that Jerusalem and the Temple Mount have been at the heart of Judaism at least since the days of King David, over 3,000 years ago; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rabbinical Assembly, while realizing the importance of this site in Islamic tradition, call upon religious leaders of Islam to respect the centrality of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount to the Jewish People throughout our history, and to acknowledge the truth of historical Jewish presence in these holy places.

2001-#8

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Resolution on Conversions and Pluralism in Israel

June 2001

WHEREAS the State of Israel has refused to recognize the conversions performed by the **בית דין** of the Rabbinical Assembly in Israel; and

WHEREAS such conversions are conducted according to the requirement of **הלכה**; and

WHEREAS we deplore the monopoly of the Chief Rabbinate in conversions and in marriages.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Rabbinical Assembly support the continued efforts by the Masorti Movement to obtain recognition by the State of Israel for these conversions; and

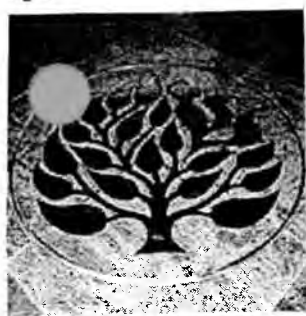
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rabbinical Assembly once again call upon the Government of Israel to change its policy in these matters and to recognize the legitimacy of pluralism within Judaism and to act with equity toward all streams of Judaism.

2001-#9

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The Sacred Cluster

The Core Values of Conservative Judaism *Ismar Schorsch*

If dogmas or doctrines are the propositional language of a theological system, core values are the felt commitments of lived religion, the refraction of what people practice and profess. To identify them calls for keen observation as well as theoretical analysis.

Conservative Judaism is best understood as a sacred cluster of core values. No single propositional statement comes close to identifying its center of gravity. Nor does Conservative Judaism occupy the center of the contemporary religious spectrum because it is an arbitrary and facile composite of what may be found on the left or the right. On the contrary, its location flows from an organic and coherent world view best captured in terms of core values of relatively equal worth.

There are seven such core values, to my mind, that imprint Conservative Judaism with a principled receptivity to modernity balanced by a deep reverence for tradition. Whereas other movements in modern Judaism rest on a single tenet, such as the autonomy of the individual or the inclusiveness of God's revelation at Sinai (*Torah mi-Sinai*), Conservative Judaism manifests a kaleidoscopic cluster of discrete and unprioritized core values. Conceptually they fall into two sets - three national and three religious - which are grounded and joined to each other by the overarching presence of God, who represents the seventh and ultimate core value. The dual nature of Judaism as polity and piety, a world religion that never transcended its national origins, is unified by God. In sum, a total of seven core values corresponding to the most basic number in Judaism's construction of reality.

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- > [The Defining Role of Torah in the Reshaping of Judaism](#)
- > [The Study of Torah](#)
- > [The Governance of Jewish Life by *Halakha*](#)
- > [Belief in God](#)

The Centrality of Modern Israel

The centrality of modern Israel heads our list of core values. For Conservative Jews, as for their ancestors, Israel is not only the birthplace of the Jewish people, but also its final destiny. Sacred texts, historical experience and liturgical memory have conspired to make it for them, in the words of Ezekiel, "the most desirable of all lands (20:6)." Its welfare is never out of mind. Conservative Jews are the backbone of Federation leadership in North America and the major source of its annual campaign. They visit Israel, send their children over a summer or for a year and support financially every one of its worthy institutions.(1) Israeli accomplishments on the battlefield and in the laboratory, in literature and politics, fill them with pride. Their life is a dialectic between homeland and exile. No matter how prosperous or assimilated, they betray an existential angst about anti-Semitism that denies them a complete sense of at-homeness anywhere in the diaspora.

And their behavior reflects the dominant thrust of Conservative Judaism not to denationalize Judaism. Even in the era of emancipation, Zion remained the goal, as it was for the Torah, an

arena in which to translate monotheism into social justice. A world governed by realpolitik needed a polity of a different order. The liturgy of the Conservative synagogue preserved the full text of the daily amida (the silent devotion) with its frequent pleas for the restoration of Zion. Heinrich Graetz, who taught at the movement's rabbinical seminary in Breslau and authored the most nationalistic history of the Jews ever written, inspired Moses Hess to pen one of the earliest Zionist tracts in 1862 and would not write of the biblical period until he had personally visited Palestine in early 1872. During the last two decades, well over 100 Conservative rabbis have made aliyah, often at the cost of professional satisfaction, attesting not only to movement ideology, but personal courage.

This is not to say that Conservative Judaism divests the diaspora of all spiritual value or demands of all Jews to settle in Israel. Ironically, the state of Judaism is far healthier outside the Jewish state, where Judaism is indispensable for a resilient Jewish identity. Most Israelis have sadly been severed from any meaningful contact with Judaism by the absence of religious alternatives and by the erosion of sacred Jewish content in the secular school system where 75% of Israel's Jewish children are educated. And yet, the miracle and mystery of Israel's restoration after two millennia out of the ashes of the Holocaust continues to overwhelm Conservative Jews with radical amazement and deep joy.

Hebrew: The Irreplaceable Language of Jewish Expression

Hebrew as the irreplaceable language of Jewish expression is the second core value of Conservative Judaism. Its existence is coterminous with that of the Jewish people and the many layers of the language mirror the cultures in which Jews perpetuated Judaism. It was never merely a vehicle of communication, but part of the fabric and texture of Judaism. Words vibrate with religious meaning, moral values and literary associations. Torah and Hebrew are inseparable and Jewish education was always predicated on mastering Hebrew. Hebrew literacy is the key to Judaism, to joining the unending dialectic between sacred texts, between Jews of different ages, between God and Israel. To know Judaism only in translation is, to quote Bialik, akin to kissing the bride through the veil.

These are some of the sentiments which prompted Zacharias Frankel, the founder of Conservative Judaism in central Europe, to break with Reform over the issue of Hebrew at the Frankfurt Rabbinical Conference in 1845. Despite the leniency of Jewish law, he was not prepared to endorse a resolution which would acknowledge that synagogue services could theoretically dispense with Hebrew. Given the rapid shrinkage of Judaism with the advent of emancipation, the fostering of Hebrew for Frankel became a symbol of historical continuity and national unity. Much of his scholarly oeuvre was intentionally written in Hebrew. And the language has remained at the heart of the Conservative agenda ever since.

Hebrew became the language of instruction of the Seminary's Teachers Institute not too long after its opening in 1909, as well as the language of daily conversation in the Ramah summer camps which it launched in the late 1940s. The Conservative synagogue never expunged Hebrew from the liturgy, and its supplementary Hebrew school, despite the constraints of a very pared-down curriculum, never gave up the struggle to teach a modicum of Hebrew literacy to the young. If anything, the Solomon Schechter day schools of the movement, an achievement of the past two decades, excel in the teaching of Hebrew language.

The revival of Hebrew in the last century-and-a-half, that is *Hebrew Reborn* as Sholom Spiegel put it in the title of his celebratory book of 1930, is as singular a feat as the creation of the Jewish state. Hebrew has been wholly transformed from an unwieldy classical

medium of liturgy and learning into a modern Western language fit for the sciences and sensibilities of secular society. Diaspora Jews can little afford to remain deaf to the sounds of Hebrew as they can ignore the fate of the Jewish state.

In a Jewish world of sundry and proliferating divisions, Hebrew must emerge as the common and unifying language of the Jewish people, and nothing would advance that vision more effectively than to redefine Zionism today solely in terms of the ability to speak Hebrew. To restructure the World Zionist Organization by earmarking all of its budget to the intensive teaching of Hebrew to diaspora Jews would create many more Zionists (that is, Jews who appreciate the centrality of Israel) than all the atavistic politics of the current Zionist establishment. The natural bonds of language and culture bind more firmly than those of abstruse ideological constructs.

I offer as example the young Mordecai Kaplan, then dean of the Teachers Institute, struggling to perfect his command of Hebrew to the point where he could preside over its faculty meetings and public events in Hebrew. In the 1920s he made the following poignant entry in his diary:

"Here is another failure I have to register against myself. Due to the lack of energy necessary to train myself to speak and write Hebrew with ease, I am afraid to venture on those occasions to give an address in Hebrew."(2)

Of such failures, the fabric of Jewish unity is sewn!

Devotion to the Ideal of Klal Yisrael

The third core value is an undiminished devotion to the ideal of klal yisrael, the unfractured totality of Jewish existence and the ultimate significance of every single Jew. In the consciousness of Conservative Jews, there yet resonates the affirmation of *haverim kol yisrael* (all Israel is still joined in fellowship) - despite all the dispersion, dichotomies and politicization that history has visited upon us, Jews remain united in a tenacious pilgrimage of universal import.(3) It is that residue of Jewish solidarity that makes Conservative Jews the least sectarian or parochial members of the community, that renders them the ideal donor of Federation campaigns and brings them to support unstintingly every worthy cause in Jewish life. Often communal needs will prompt them to compromise the needs of the movement.

Such admirable commitment to the welfare of the whole does not spring from any special measure of ethnicity, as is so often ascribed to Conservative Jews. Rather, I would argue that it is nurtured by the acute historical sense cultivated by their leadership. In opposition to exclusively rational, moral or halakhic criteria for change, Conservative Judaism embraced a historical romanticism that rooted tradition in the normative power of a heroic past. To be sure, history infused an awareness of the richness and diversity of the Jewish experience. But it also presumed to identify a normative Judaism and invest it with the sanctity of antiquity. It is that mixture of critical breadth and romantic reverence that imbued men like Frankel, Graetz, Schechter, Kaplan and Louis Finkelstein with the love of klal yisrael. And, fortunately, they all commanded the literary gifts to disseminate and popularize their views.

The Defining Role of Torah in the Reshaping of Judaism



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Attention Israel Participants:

Cancellation fees for all USY Israel summer programs will go into effect as of Monday, April 21st, 2003. [Click here](#) for the cancellation fee schedule for your program.

Summer Program Links:

- See the **Summer 2003 Dates and Prices.**
- USY is running a new **Outdoor Adventure trip in Costa Rica** this summer! [Click here](#) for more information!
- **Request an Information Packet** from USY.

- Print a **Preliminary Application for 2003 Summer Programs** (in .pdf format - you will need Adobe Acrobat to open this Application).
- See a schedule of **Summer Program Information Nights**.

Want to see what USY trips do in Israel?

- Take a look at the **Summer Program updates** from the Summer of 2002, including daily updates and photos from Israel!
- Find out more about the places USY visits in Israel by exploring this **clickable map of Israel** complete with pictures from our programs!
- **"See it, hear it, (almost smell it) and miss it..."**: Israel on your PC - a multi-media Power Point presentation, that the Jewish Agency has online for Israel Education month. It's a great vehicle to focus on the positive love for Israel, the land, the people and the culture.

Please note the following:

- Spaces are limited on all programs and are first-come, first served.
- Portions of the Eastern Europe/Israel Pilgrimage program are in conjunction with the Youth and Hechalutz Department of the World Zionist Organization.
- If there is a SOLD OUT icon next to the program you want to go on, you can still sign up. Your name will be placed on a waiting list and if spots open up, you will get to go.

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Spain/Israel Pilgrimage

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Explore the great heritage of Jewish Spain including many famous philosophers, commentators, writers, and poets, such as Maimonides, Abarbanel, Ibn Ezra, Rambam, and Ibn Gvirol. Expect to discover an important side of the Jewish roots in Spain. In the words of Yehuda Halevy, "My heart is in the East and I am in the West." Highlights include: Madrid, Cordoba, Sevilla, Granada, and Toledo.

Sample Itinerary:

- **Day 1**
Departure for Madrid.
- **Day 2**
Arrival in Spain, transfer to Cordoba, Orientation, evening activities.
- **Day 3**
Cordoba - visit to the Old Jewish Quarter, Mosque, Statue of Maimonides, and Synagogue Transfer to Seville.
- **Day 4**
Seville, visit to the Great Cathedral "La Giralda," the Church of "Santa Maria la Blanca" (formerly a synagogue). Transfer to Granada - Alhambra Palace, Generalife Gardens.
- **Day 5**
Transfer to Madrid. Preparation for Shabbat, Shabbat activities.

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- **Day 6**
Shabbat - meetings with members of the Jewish community. Walking tours of Gardens.
- **Day 7**
Excursion to Toledo, visit Transito and Santa Maria synagogues and El Greco's house Cathedral. Return to Madrid.
- **Day 8**
Prado Museum, Royal Palace, Orient Square, Panoramic view of the City. Free time.
- **Day 9**
Additional touring, departure for Israel.

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The graphic features a dark horizontal bar with a vertical bar on the left. Text is overlaid on the bar, including a URL and three buttons. The text reads: 'Subscribe to the USY listserv: (http://www.usy.org/listserv/)', 'I want to join the USY listserv TODAY!', and 'Join the list'.

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USY Israel Pilgrimage

Have an incredibly exciting and stimulating summer in Israel with USY. For six weeks, you'll be exposed to the history and contemporary realities of Judaism and Israel. You'll climb the fortress of Masada, explore the stalactite caves of Netifin, swim in the waters of the Kinneret, pray at the Kotel and drink tea in a Bedouin tent on the sands of the Negev deserts. You'll experience the sights and sounds of the Jewish homeland with new friends; friends who will share your love of Israel.



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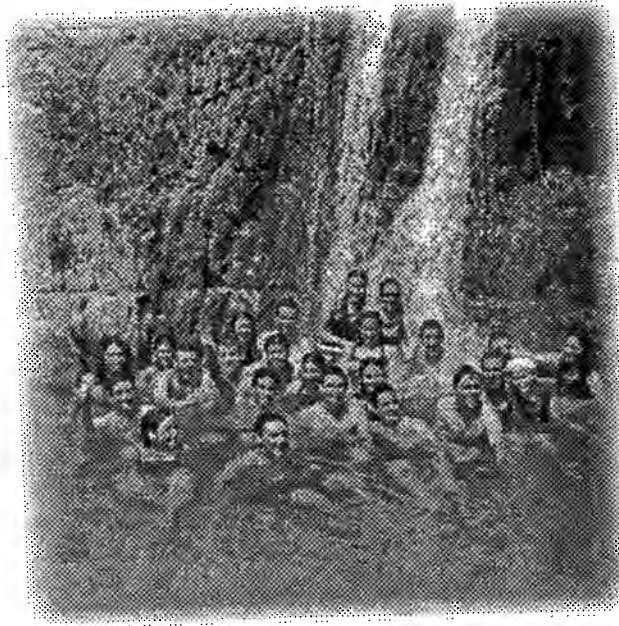
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From north to south, east to west

Wade in the waters of Ein Gedi and by the waterfalls of the Banias. Hike up the mountains of the Galil and down the crater of Mitzpe Ramon. Buy the latest fad on the chic streets of Tel Aviv and fresh pita from the sumptuous stalls of Machane Yehuda. Float away on the Dead Sea after hiking up Masada at dawn.



Dig through the pieces of our past at Beit Guvrin and wander through the cobblestone walkways of Tzfat's artist colony. Examine your family's history at Beit Hatfutzot and the cultural future at Jerusalem's Israel Museum. Israel Pilgrimage is the place to develop lifelong friendships with other teens from all over North America.



See what the Pilgrimage trips did in the summer of 2002!

- **Classic Israel Pilgrimage**
- **Israel Pilgrimage/Poland Seminar**
- **Eastern Europe/Israel Pilgrimage**

Or, you can view sample itineraries:

- **Classic Israel Pilgrimage - Sample Itinerary**

Discover Israeli hospitality

While traveling the country, your group will stay in hotels and youth hostels. Each group spends three weeks of the program at their bases in the suburbs of Jerusalem, all of which are a short distance from the city. You'll also have the opportunity to spend a free weekend with your Israeli friends and relatives.

The name behind it all

United Synagogue Youth (USY), under the auspices of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, sponsors Israel Pilgrimage in cooperation with the Jewish Agency, Youth and Hechalutz Department. We hire mature responsible counselors, many of them former USYers who understand and identify with USYers' physical, spiritual, and intellectual needs.

Leaving on a jetplane

The price includes round trip flights from New York to Israel, room and board, an approved Israeli medical plan, sightseeing tours with professional guides, gratuities and admission fees. (Personal expenses and extra personal baggage are additional.) Payments can be made by cash, check, MasterCard, Visa, and Discover.

Scholarships are offered by the USY regions (through the Tikun Olam Tzedakah program), local congregations and affiliated programs for deserving USYers. For further information on these and other scholarship programs, contact your synagogue or regional USY director.

What about security?

Although an enriching and exciting experience is certainly our

mission, the safety and well being of our participants has always been, and continues to be, our highest priority in Israel. Every decision regarding itinerary, travel route, lodging location, or site for an evening activity is made in conjunction with the Security Department of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). The JAFI Security Department is in constant contact with the police, army, and other intelligence sources, and provides USY with very frequent updates and precautionary advisories. In Europe, we consult with local security agencies and U.S. consulates and embassies on a regular basis.

Check your calendar

We arrange two separate departure schedules to accommodate each participant's schedule. Whenever possible, we will honor specific departure requests.

Sign up here!

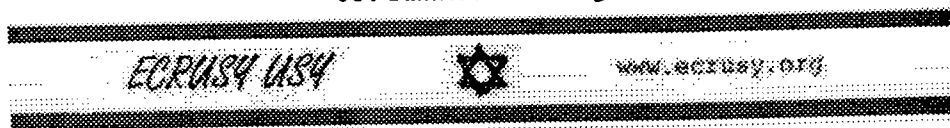
- Let us send you a **complete information and application packet**. Or call us at 212-533-7800, ext. 2316.
- Space is available on a limited basis and applications should be sent in as early as possible. You must currently be in grade 10-12 to participate in the program.
- Summer 2003 **Dates and Prices**

Group web sites

Past Pilgrims have shared their experience on the Web. (Note that these links will take you out of USY Online. We recommend visiting, but neither USY nor USCJ is responsible for the content.)

- **Group 7 '97**
- **Group 8 '97**
- **Group 9 '97**
- **Group 9 '96**
- **Group 3 '95**
- **Group 4 '86**

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Explore your roots

Have an incredibly exciting and stimulating summer in Israel. For four weeks, you'll be exposed to the history and contemporary realities of Judaism and Israel. You'll climb the fortress of Masada, explore the stalactite caves of Netifin, swim in the waters of the Kinneret, visit the Western Wall and drink tea in a Bedouin tent on the sands of the Negev deserts. You'll experience the sights and sounds of the Jewish homeland with new friends; friends who will share your love of Israel. The Israel Adventure program will help you to grow as a Jew with an open approach to Jewish tradition and practice.



Adventure from north to south, east to west

Wade in the waters of Ein Gedi and by the waterfalls of the Banias. Hike up the mountains of the Galil and down the crater of Mitzpe Ramon. Buy the latest fad on the chic streets of Tel Aviv and fresh pita from the sumptuous stalls of Machane Yehuda. Float away on the Dead Sea after hiking up Masada at dawn. Dig through the pieces of our past at Beit Guvrin and wander through the cobblestone walkways of Tzfat's artist colony. Examine your family's history at Beit Hatfutzot and the cultural future at

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Jerusalem's Israel Museum. Israel Adventure is the place to develop lifelong friendships with other teens from all over North America.



The name behind it all

Israel Adventure is under the auspices of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The United Synagogue has over 40 years experience running a broad variety of teen trips to Israel.

Leaving on a jetplane

The all inclusive cost is \$3,800 (guaranteed if paid in full by April 4, otherwise subject to change). The price includes round trip flights from New York to Israel, room and board, an approved Israeli medical plan, sightseeing tours with professional guides, gratuities and admission fees. (Personal expenses and extra personal baggage are additional.) Payments can be made by cash, check, MasterCard and Visa.



Get on board

Take off with Israel Adventure July 1 to July 28, 2003! **Request an application online** or call us at 212 533-7800, ext. 2316.

Space is available on a limited basis and applications should be sent in as early as possible. You must currently be in grade 10-12 to participate in the program.

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Etgar! The Ultimage Israel Challenge

Remember how you felt when you left, but promised that you would return?



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On your last trip, you fell in love with Israel. You watched the sunrise on Masada, felt the waterfalls' spary in the Galilee, hiked mountains near Eilat and went shopping on Dizengoff in Tel Aviv. And Jerusalem... you'll never forget Jerusalem.

Now take it to the next level with Etgar!

Program Dates:
July 1-August 4, 2003
Space is Extremely Limited!



To get a feel for how incredible Etgar is, click here to **see a sample itinerary.**

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***Subject to change.**

- **Day 1:**
Departure from New York
- **Day 2:**
Arrival in Jerusalem, Promenade View, Orientation, Walk in Area; overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 3:**
Jerusalem Walking Tours; overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 4:**
Jerusalem through the Ages; Shabbat begins; overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 5:**
Shabbat services and activities; overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 6:**
2nd Temple: Archaeology Seminar, Ophel excavation, Herodian Mansions, Rooftops, Cardo; overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 7:**
19th Century: Mea Shearim, Neighborhoods, Prophets Street, Guest Lecture; overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 8:**

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Religions in Jerusalem; overnight in Jerusalem

- **Day 9:**
Volunteer, Hebrew Class, "Being a People", Big Crater, Ein Yocke'am, Meet "Sherut Leumi", overnight Yerucham
- **Day 10:**
Volunteer, "Why did Jerusalem Fall?", Ovdad (swim), Jews from East, West, North & South, overnight in Yerucham
- **Day 11:**
Volunteer, "Facing Oneself", Shabbat Yerucham; overnight in Yerucham
- **Day 12:**
Shabbat services and activities; overnight in Yerucham
- **Day 13:**
Volunteer work, meet town politicians, swim, overnight in Yerucham
- **Day 14:**
Volunteer, Hebrew, Hike at Nahal Tzafit, Field cooking, overnight in Yerucham
- **Day 15:**
Volunteer, Little crater hike, Hebrew, Local Entertainment, overnight in Yerucham
- **Day 16:**
Nahal Gov Hike, Hebrew, Meet Lea Shakdiel, overnight in Yerucham
- **Day 17:**
Egypt/Israel border route, Hebrew, "Scavenger Hunt", Har Avnon, Summations, overnight in Yerucham
- **Day 18:**
Jerusalem; Free Weekend
- **Day 19:**
Shabbat Services and activities
- **Day 20:**
Hodayot - Camp Ramah Noam, Intro to camp, swim, overnight at Camp Noam
- **Day 21:**
Getting to know camp, Leave for tiyul, Hike at the Zaki, Sleep at Kinneret

- **Day 22:**
Kibbutz Nalkiya, Visit army base, Manara (rappeling), Tel Hai, Sleep at the Jordan River park
- **Day 23:**
Hike at Kziv Canyon, Back to camp, Prepare for Tisha B'Av, Fast Begins at 7:06, Megilat Eicha, overnight at Camp Noam
- **Day 24:**
Kinot, Educational seminar at camp, Disco boat ride, overnight at Camp Noam
- **Day 25:**
Educational workshops, Tikun Olam project, swim, Challah baking, Shabbat begins, overnight at Camp Noam
- **Day 26:**
Shabbat Services and activities, overnight at Camp Noam
- **Day 27:**
Seminar on the Masorti movement, Activities at camp, Farewell Swim and evening at Tiveria, overnight at Camp Noam
- **Day 28:**
To Tel Aviv via Netanya, Nachalat Binyamin Activity, Jaffa, to Jerusalem
- **Day 29:**
Jerusalem Through the Ages, "Sanhedrin Game" dig at Beit Gruvrin, Talmud Lecture, overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 30:**
JNF Hill 16 - Tree Planting, Forestry, Harel Mall, overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 31:**
Media Seminar, overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 32:**
Shabbat Preparations, Shabbat begins, overnight in Jerusalem
- **Day 33:**
Shabbat Services and activities
- **Day 34:**
Farewell Party, Departure from Israel
- **Day 35:**

Arrival in New York

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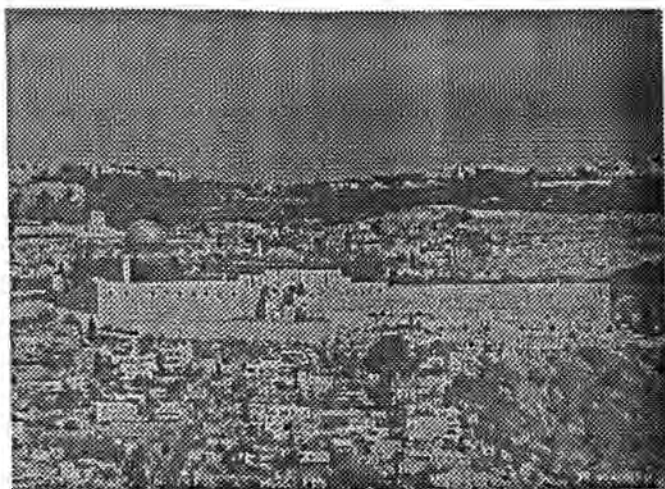
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נר חי נשמת אדם

USY High! January 27th - March 22nd 2003



USY High is:

- Fully accredited academic program in Israel for high school juniors and seniors
- 8-week session held during February and March
- Enriched "Israel Core Course" combining intensive Israel and Judaic studies integrated with hands-on field experience - the Land of Israel is your classroom!
- Receive high school credits
- Run in cooperation with Ramah Programs in Israel, provider of exciting and unique programs for children, teens and adults
- Live at the beautiful Goldstein Youth Village, a secure school community

in Jerusalem and home of Ramah Programs in Israel Students in 10th and 11th grades who wish to participate in a 16-week fully accredited high school program can apply to Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim, held from February until June.

Why USY High?

When you go to Israel on USY High, not only will you be with USYers from all over North America, but you will get to know the Jewish homeland in an exciting and unique way. Israel's history will come alive as you learn both in the classroom and by using the land of Israel as a live "text book" on hikes and tours.

This is no ordinary educational experience. For eight weeks you will live at the Goldstein Youth Village in Jerusalem. In the campus classroom, you will be introduced chronologically to each historical period. Campus class time will be interspersed with time experiencing our "classroom without walls", the Land of Israel. You will learn in an ancient cave, a mountain fortress, an army bunker, riding on a camel or even at the beach!

Generally, you will also receive full high school credit for Social Studies and English from the Israel Core Course, from individualized or small group tutorials, and from instruction in up to three sequential courses (regular, advanced or AP mathematics, science or foreign language) as required by your home school. You may also be eligible to earn up to six credits for college. An education specialist will work with you and your school to ensure a total credit exchange.

With USY High, you have the opportunity to experience Israel the USY way, with Shabbatonim filled with ruach, daily tefillot (services), activities with students participating in other teen Ramah programs on campus and with NOAM, the Masorti (Conservative) youth movement in Israel. You will see things that stir your emotions and feel things that touch your heart. USY High will strengthen your personal keshar (connection) with Israel and with Judaism.

*Students in 10th and 11th grades who wish to participate in a **16-week fully accredited high school program** can apply to Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim, held from February until June.*

So Let's Go!
Contact us for a USY High application packet. And start looking forward to the trip of a lifetime!

Tuition

Tuition for the Spring Semester 2003 is \$5620.
The price includes:

- The entire Israel experience
- Academic program and high school credit
- Full board and lodging
- Medical insurance
- \$100 non-refundable registration fee
- Up to 2 general studies or acceleration courses*

* the fee for additional general studies or acceleration courses is \$160 each.
The price does *not* include domestic or international air fare from North America or personal spending money.

Write to us for more information

For additional information and application details please contact:

Ramah Programs in Israel (New York Office),

3080 Broadway,

NY, NY, 10027

Tel.: (212) 678-8883, Fax.: (212) 749-8251

E-mail: ramahisrael@jtsa.edu

www.campramah.org

USY Central Shaliach Tel: 212-533-7800 x2321, Fax: 212-353-9439

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תיכון רמיה ירושלים

TRY - The Jerusalem High School
February 3rd - June 2nd 2003

TRY stands for Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim, Ramah's Jerusalem High School. TRY offers a very special 16-week program for 10th and 11th grade students from North America every year during the spring semester.



Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim (TRY) is:

- a high-level academic semester for 10th and 11th graders
- a fully accredited program of General Studies
- a fun and intensive Hebrew language program
- a core course focusing on Zionism and contemporary Israel
- extensive outings throughout Israel
- tefilah, Shabbat and holiday programming
- an international campus, housing students from Israel, Ethiopia, France and Yugoslavia
- interaction with Israeli teens and families through home hospitality

emphasized the need for a Jewish state to which Jews could go to escape anti-Semitic discrimination. A Jewish state could normalize the status of the Jewish people by making us like all other peoples. Spiritual or cultural Zionists, by contrast, emphasized the need for a return to the Land so that Jewish culture could flourish in a Jewish environment, and so that the values of our tradition could develop in a healthy, modern setting. It was with the latter, the spiritual Zionist camp, that Kaplan was associated. Its foremost spokesperson, Ahad Ha'am, was one of Kaplan's most significant teachers.

Ahad Ha'am rejected the stifling atmosphere of Russia, where he lived. He dreamed of a society in the land then known as Palestine where Jews could use the Hebrew language to express the nuances of their insights, where the Jewish heritage could be studied through the prism of the modern outlook, where legal restraints would not limit careers or education, and where a new society could develop naturally out of the collective experiences of Jews in their own land. Its culture would be authentically loyal to its heritage, yet thoroughly contemporary in applying that heritage to a modern society. Its cultural renaissance could be a beacon radiating Jewish renewal to communities across the globe, and the foundations it laid would ensure that Judaism would make an invigorated transition to the modern era.

Deeply influenced by the vision of Ahad Ha'am, Kaplan was outspoken in his support for the Jewish upbuilding of Palestine. The dream began to take shape as Hebrew became a spoken language again, reborn after two thousand years of use only for study and prayer. Scholars began to study biblical history. The Hebrew University became a center for the study of Judaica. Folk music and dance were created, incorporating biblical themes. Agricultural settlements and trade unions were founded on the basis of the conscious adaptation of prophetic and rabbinic ideals to the economy of a modern

Other Jewish Centers

Kaplan differed from cultural Zionism, however, in one significant respect. While he agreed with Ahad Ha'am that Israeli culture would be the center of the Jewish renaissance, he believed that Jewish centers in the Diaspora should influence that center as well as be influenced by it. Each Jewish community had developed its own customs and viewpoints through interdependent connections with others over the last two thousand years. So, too, could the interaction of American Jewry, with its distinctive environment, enrich Jewish civilization as a whole. He rejected the political Zionists' *she'ilat hagolah* (the negation of the Diaspora), affirming that Israel was not the only site in which Judaism could flourish.

Kaplan understood that, for American Jews, America is home, and that its Jewish renaissance ought thus to occur in the context of life in two civilizations. While others implored Western Jews to make *aliyah* for the sake of Jewish survival, Kaplan's position remained that Jews who do not face persecution will opt for life in Israel only when it offers them a credible promise of a fulfilling Jewish life. His focus remained, therefore, on the need for Israel to develop a reconstructed Jewish culture and ethos.

What Is a Jewish State?

Despite the reticence of most committed Western Jews to make *aliyah*, Israel remains central to our loyalty and self-definition. In supporting Israel, we do more than contribute to the security and welfare of our fellow Jews. We also affirm our vigilance against the machinations of anti-Semites. And we pledge our solidarity to the Zionist political programs that are based upon taking our fate into our own hands. Moreover, long after the "miracle" of statehood and the end of the

6 Zion as a Spiritual Center

The Reconstructionist understanding of the civilizational character of Judaism predictably has led us to Zionist conclusions from the very outset. If Judaism is recognized as the civilization of the Jewish people, then there is no denying the particular attachment of our people to the Land of Israel—the site of our origins and genesis, and the focus of our hopes and ideals through the millennia. Kaplan and his associates were supporters of the Zionist cause decades before American Jewry reached its current consensus. They worked for Zionism while other Jews declared that America was their Zion, denied that Israel could emerge before the coming of the Messiah, or worried that Jews would be accused of being disloyal if they allied themselves with another nation.

While he articulated the possibilities for modern Jews who live in two civilizations, Kaplan was aware that Jewish civilization could flourish completely only in a society in which it is primary. He was convinced that Zionist efforts to reestablish a Jewish presence in the land of Israel were central to the Jewish future.

Spiritual Zionism

In the first part of the twentieth century, before the establishment of the State of Israel, the Zionist movement was divided. Political Zionists

**JEWISH HOMELAND-
RECONSTRUCTIONIST**

pendence, we are still thrilled to think that biblical archaeology can be the passion of a nation, that a modern university would devote its computer facilities to the accessioning of rabbinic responsa, that *Adon Olam* can top the music charts on the radio. Furthermore, we have come to depend on the resources of Israeli scholars and educators for our own Jewish enrichment.

In the first years of the state, many Israelis were content to claim that theirs was the only Jewish community capable of surviving and worthy of surviving. In those years, Reconstructionists articulated the hope that productive relationships might be established between Israeli and other Jewish cultural centers. Today, Israelis see more clearly that Israelis are Jews too, and that all Jews share a common fate and hope. The current debate in Israel is rather about what it means to be a Jewish state.

Competing Visions

That debate can be summarized with reference to two issues. First, the original Zionist program was, to a certain extent, utopian and even messianic. By returning to the Jewish soil after languishing on alien turf, the Jewish spirit would be revived. The society to be formed would be based on such ancient biblical ideals as justice and true community, and thus the normalization of the Jewish people in its own land would serve the community of nations as a model to be emulated. Israelis would teach others how to drain swamps and make deserts bloom, how to form a prosperous and democratic society out of diverse population groups.

The utopia envisioned by pre-state Zionists has been modified by reality. The problems Israel faces are staggering—hostile neighbors and increasingly angry Israeli Arabs, terrorism, enormous defense budgets, cultural conflicts between Ashkenazim and Sephardim and

Action: JRF Resolutions on Israel

JUST ADDED (in our News section)

May 2002 Statement in support of United Jewish Communities campaign

August letter in response to UJC's reversal of longstanding policy

For earlier Reconstructionist statements, [click here](#).

1988 JRF Statement on Israel

The Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot is deeply committed to the flourishing of Eretz Yisrael as a Jewish State.

We appreciate Israel's extraordinary accomplishments achieved during the past 40 years, including creating the most democratic nation in the Middle East in the face of unremitting hostility from the Arab world, making the desert bloom with the most advanced of technologies, creating a strong industrial base, establishing an excellent educational system extending to all -- with facilities for Arab students second to none in the Arab world, developing a powerful defense establishment while simultaneously improving the standard of living for its citizens, absorbing millions of refugees -- including over one million from Arab lands, and establishing a social infrastructure guaranteeing basic human needs to all.

As Jews living in North America, we have both benefited from and contributed to Israel's achievements. As Reconstructionists, we affirm that Eretz Yisrael is central to the spiritual life of the Jewish people and that we are committed to furthering the dynamic relationship between North American Jewry and Israel through mutual respect, cooperation, and moral dialogue.

Whereas we consider the Jewish people everywhere to be part of our extended family and that our tradition teaches us that when a member of our family seems to us to be on a dangerous path, we have moral obligation rooted in our love for them to speak out before it is too late (Talmud),

And whereas we believe that the continuous occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has an increasingly corrosive effect on the democratic nature of Israel and on its moral fiber and could eventually undermine the Jewish nature of the state,

We call for a just and lasting peace that will protect Israel's right to a secure existence and that will also fulfill the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people. Such a peace will require Palestinian leaders and heads of Arab governments at long last to acknowledge Israel as a permanent state in the region and to renounce all violence directed against the Jewish homeland. Such a peace will also require Israeli leaders to accept the principle of the land in exchange for peace which would allow the Palestinians to establish their own form of government on territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Such mutual recognition is in the spirit of Isaiah's call that "Zion shall be redeemed in justice."

We call upon the government of Israel to do its utmost to enter into negotiations that will bring about a peaceful and just resolution, We further call upon the government of Israel that in order to bring about a climate for negotiation it does not establish any new or enlarge any existing settlements in the occupied territories, that it permit peaceful

political activity including the election of indigenous leadership in the occupied territories and, that it refrain from the use of lethal force against demonstrators unless absolutely necessary for protecting the lives of others, and that it refrain from imposing collective punishments, punishments without trial, and deportations.

We call upon the Palestinian people to abstain from violent demonstrations and terrorist activities, and the heads of Arab governments to recognize the right of Israel to a secure existence and to enter into negotiations with the Israeli government.

We urge all parties involved to follow the commandment from the Book of Psalms: "Seek Peace and Pursue It."

2000 JRF Statement on Israel

JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST FEDERATION URGES RETURN TO NEGOTIATIONS

Recent events in the Middle East have been a cause of tremendous suffering for all concerned parties. As Reconstructionist Jews, we mourn the violence and tragic loss of life on both sides of this conflict. We firmly stand by Israel, its leaders and its people in this time of crisis. We support the government of Prime Minister Ehud Barak in its continuing quest to create a lasting peace. We join as well with the increasing number of firm supporters of Israel who recognize that Israel needs to come to a reasonable and just accommodation with its Arab neighbors in order to achieve peace.

At this time, we reaffirm the JRF Resolution on Israel, which states, in part:

"We call for a just and lasting peace that will protect Israel's right to a secure existence and that will also fulfill the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people. Such a peace will require Palestinian leaders and heads of Arab governments at long last to acknowledge Israel as a permanent state in the region and to renounce all violence directed against the Jewish homeland."

We therefore urge the Palestinian leadership to halt the violence and return to the negotiating table. We also urge Israel to address the legitimate social and economic grievances of its Arab citizens, as well as to pursue negotiations and an end to the cycle of violence with the Palestinian people.

We urge all parties involved to follow the commandment: "Seek peace and pursue it."

prayers that we have inherited and sees how they fit the way we live and believe now. If a prayer doesn't fit what we believe, we can revise it so that it is closer to what we mean to say.

One of the places where this really comes into play is in the idea of Jews as the "chosen people." Reconstructionists starting with Kaplan have rejected the idea that there is anything necessarily superior about Judaism or Jews, compared with other peoples or religions. Unfortunately, many of our prayers were written at a time when Jews *did* think they were superior to other peoples. This might have been compensating for being oppressed by these other people, but in any case, for Kaplan, this was a moral issue. Asserting that we are chosen – and by implication superior – exacerbates ethnic conflict. So he felt that the time for such language had passed, and most Reconstructionists have followed his example.

For instance, the Reconstructionist prayerbook has changed the blessing before reading the Torah from "*asher bahar banu mikol ha'amim*" (has chosen us from among all peoples) to "*asher kervanu la'avodato*" (who has drawn us to your service). In this way we acknowledge the special nature of our relationship with God, while not putting down anyone else. Several of the prayers have been revised in this way, including the Shabbat Kiddush and the Aleynu prayer.



"What is the Reconstructionist attitude towards Israel?"

The founder of Reconstructionism, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, was very supportive of Zionist settlement in Israel. He felt that nowhere else could Jews live so completely a Jewish life as they could there. And that is still the case today: Jews in Israel speak a Jewish language (Hebrew), their calendar is a Jewish calendar, their holidays are Jewish holidays, etc. There is even a well-developed Israeli culture that is a Jewish culture, but not necessarily a religious one, which embodies the idea that Judaism is a peoplehood, not simply a religion.

Some early Zionists felt that nowhere else in the world but Israel could people truly live as Jews, that Jewish life in the Diaspora would disappear and that there would be no place except Israel to make a Jewish life. Reconstructionists have never felt this way, and feel even less this way today. Despite the advantages of living in Israel, there are some real advantages to living outside of Israel as well. For example, there is much more room for religious experimentation in America than there is in Israel. Liberal forms of Judaism have a hard time in Israel because "church" and state are not separated there like they are in America, and the Orthodox rabbinate controls life-cycle events like weddings and divorces. Woman rabbis are still fairly rare in Israel.

Despite all this, Reconstructionist Jews are supportive of Israel. They mostly support liberal positions in Israel -- on the peace process, on religious pluralism, on civil rights, on the environment and on many other matters besides. And although Reconstructionism still has a small presence in Israel, it's getting bigger all the time.



"How can I support Israel when it does such terrible things to the Palestinians?"

The situation of Jews vs. Arabs in Israel has been going on for 100 years, and both sides have done terrible things to each other. Reconstructionists have been supportive of efforts at coexistence and reconciliation between the two sides, including supporting the peace process developed at Oslo. It is our hope that by supporting these peacemaking efforts, we can help Israel become the kind of country that we would all like it to be, a place that first of all is at peace with its neighbors.

But just like we keep loving America when it does things that we don't like, and just as we continue to love members of our families when they do things that we don't like, so it is important that we keep in mind the love that we have for Israel, even when it does things that we don't like. It is only our supportive love and efforts for change that will help make the situation there better. [Note: This type of response could also apply to issues of religious pluralism or other areas where we are disappointed with what happens in Israel.]



*Compiled by Moti Rieber, with Rabbi Shai Gluskin and Dr. Jeffrey Schein
For more information, contact the [JRF Education Department](#)*

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Mar 14, 2001

Discovering Your Jewish Roots in Eretz Yisrael

An Israel trip for Jewish Reconstructionists and their families

Day 1 Sunday

Depart New York for Tel Aviv

Day 2 Monday

Arrive in Israel. A leisurely evening with dinner in Old Jaffa
Overnight: Tel Aviv

Day 3 Tuesday

Tour the Diaspora Museum.
Drive to Atlit to simulate the "illegal" entry of Jews to Palestine in 1947.
Visit Clandestine Immigration & Naval Museum in Haifa.
Overnight: Kibbutz Ginnosar

Day 4 Wednesday

Tour of the Golan Heights.
Raft on the Jordan River. Sunset boat ride on the Kinneret.
Overnight: Kibbutz Ginnosar

Day 5 Thursday

B'nai Mitzvah ceremony in Korazim.
Lost in Safed: In Search of the Holy Rabbi Isaac Luria. Mifgash: Meet with Israeli Arabs in the Galilee.
Overnight: Kibbutz Ginnosar

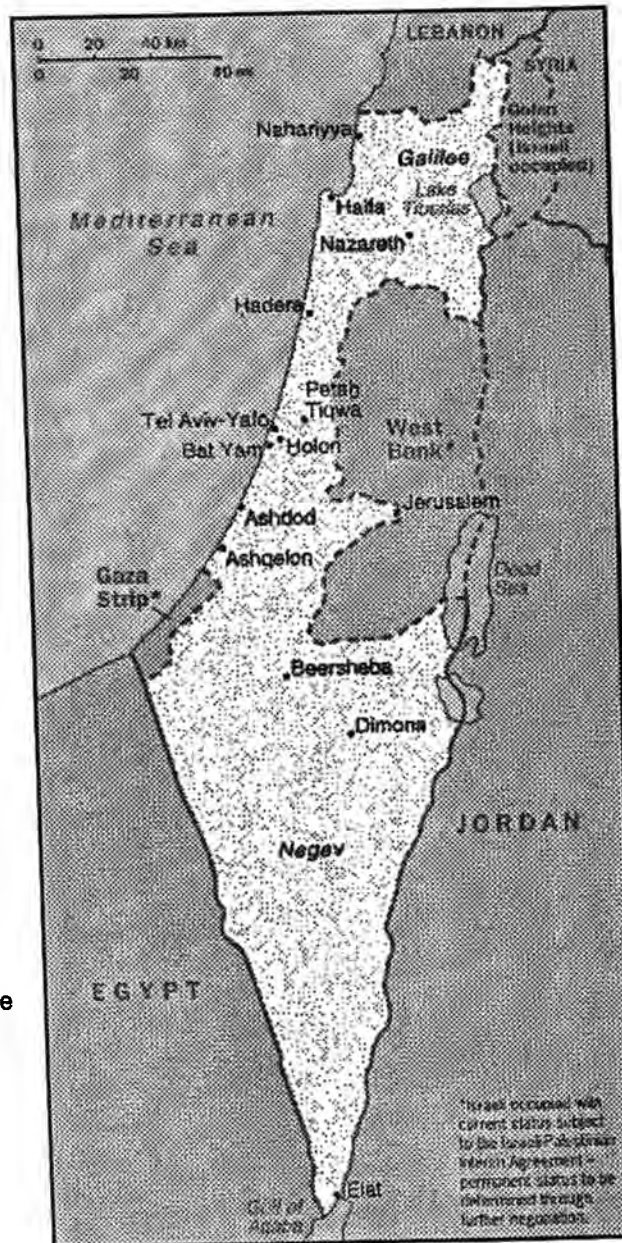
Day 6 Friday

Swim in Sachne, visit the "unJewish" synagogue of Beit Alpha. Return to Jerusalem. Kabbalat Shabbat at the Kotel. Traditional Shabbat dinner.
Overnight: Jerusalem, Kings Hotel

Day 7 Saturday

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem while in Jerusalem: Shabbat morning services. Walking tour of Christian and Moslem Jerusalem. Overnight: Jerusalem, Kings Hotel

ITINERARY



Day 8 Sunday

Visit Yad Vashem.
Live in two civilizati style at a Fourth of with American and Assn. of Israeli Citi
Overnight: Jerusal Hotel

Day 9 Monday

Archaeology Day: stratas of Jewish hi Old City. Participat archeological dig. ancient ceremonie Kedumim, the Bibli
Overnight: Jerusal Hotel

Day 10 Tuesday

Kaleidoscopic Jud Encounter the Jewi Iraqi, Kurdistani, In other Jewish com
Overnight: Jerusal Hotel

Day 11 Wednesd

Play at the Dead S Gedi. Visit Masada fortress and recall t problematic mixtur and extremism that
Overnight: Dead S

Day 12 Thursday

Drive to Kibbutz Ke Afternoon program
Spend the night at

Day 13 Friday

Contemporary Halutzim/Pioneers: Kibbutz Ketura. Meet the Israeli hal Reconstructionist - Partnership. Overn Ketura

Day 14 Saturday

Shabbat services o headed for snorkeli Farewell dinner. Fl Gurion Airport. Co

This was the itinerary of the Reconstructionist Family Trip to Israel, June 27 - July 11, 1999

**To read some letters home
[click here.](#)**

flight from Tel Aviv

Day 15 Sunday
Arrive in New York

[Display a text only version](#)

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Jun 13, 2000

Reconstructionist Educators' Mission August 19-23, 2001 ITINERARY



The 2001 Educators' Mission participants.
For a larger captioned image [click here](#).

Bulletins from Israel

- Day 1 Sunday August 19 [click here](#)
- Day 2 Monday August 20 [click here](#)
- Day 3 Tuesday August 21 [click here](#)
- End of mission message [click here](#).

Sunday, August 19th – Getting Started

[read about this day](#)

- Arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport, Jerusalem
- Check in to hotel; dinner at hotel
- Short introduction session for participants to get to know each other
- Overnight - Dan Panorama hotel, Jerusalem

Monday, August 20th – Complexity of the Conflict

[read about this day](#)

- Participants discuss their vision of Israel and how it has been impacted by the current crisis. Review itinerary with tour educator Avi Ben-Hur.
- David Mendelson: Perspectives on current political, social and security situation. Challenges for educators working with Jewish youth abroad.
- Walking tour through Old City's Jewish Quarter.
- Visit the new museum at the southern wall excavations and learn about the stir that was created by its opening.
- Meet with MK Dani Naveh (Likud), Minister without Portfolio
- Dinner and de-briefing session
- Overnight - Dan Panorama hotel, Jerusalem

Tuesday, August 21st – Living Together

[read about this day](#)

- Meet with Yisrael Medad, resident of Shilo and member of the Secretariat of the right-wing Gush Emunim movement, to hear his thoughts on the current political situation and life beyond the "green line".

- Drive to the overlook at Ramat Rahel. A panoramic view of Jerusalem's boundaries including areas under contention today (Har Homa, Gilo, Beit Jalla, Bethlehem, etc.)
- Guided tour through the Museum on the Seam a unique installation dedicated to the notion of co-existence
- Meet with Rabbi Arik Asherman from Rabbis for Human Rights, including a discussion on "What Does it Mean to be a left-wing Zionist?"
- De-briefing session on the day
- Overnight - Dan Panorama hotel, Jerusalem

Wednesday, August 22nd – Arabs and Jews

- Depart for the Knesset. Meet with Member of Knesset Collette Avital from the Labor party, with MK Mossi Raz, from the left-wing Meretz party, and with Issa Jabber, Director of Abu Ghosh Region Department of Education and Director of Interfaith Coordinating Council.
- Visit the joint Arab-Jewish settlement of Neve Shalom, lunch, meet with Arab and Jewish residents and hear about how their community is dealing with the challenges of co-existence.
- At Ramat Efal: Begin mifgash with "Bina", break up into small discussion groups made up of American and Israeli educators to discuss issues and concerns involved in educating about the current situation. dinner with Mifgash participants. Short lecture by Muki Tzur.
- Overnight - Dan Panorama hotel, Jerusalem

Thursday, August 23rd – Taking it Home an end of mission message

- De-briefing session
- Text study: *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh LaZeh* Rabbi David J. Derovan
- Visit Pedagogic Center at Kiryat Moriah. Meet with Rachel Korazim, Director of Formal Education in the Diaspora, JAFI Education Department, on implementing Israel in the classroom.
- "Taking it Home with You" with Sima Greenbaum, leading Jewish Educator
- Summary discussion of program facilitated by tour educator
- Festive farewell dinner in a Kurdish restaurant
- Depart for airport (for those who are flying home)

About The JRF Educators' Mission to Israel

On Saturday night, August 18th, 24 Reconstructionist educators and their partners left New York for Israel to return Friday, August 24th. They left on a mission to Israel offered by JRF for Reconstructionist education directors, teachers, rabbis and cantors.

This Reconstructionist Educators' Mission is part of a series of educators' missions to Israel organized and supported by the Jewish Agency for Israel. Additional support was generously provided through scholarships donated by Reconstructionist congregations and individuals.

The mission objectives were to help participants:

- Gain a better understanding of the current political situation inside Israel including its security and human rights dimensions.
- Meet with professional Israeli peers, enhancing the personal dimension of the educator's relationship to Israel
- Return equipped with educational material they will be able to adapt for use

Rabbi Shai Gluskin of the JRF Education Department and JRF New York Region Israel Educator Susan Ticker organized the mission from our end, working closely with the staff of the Jewish Agency for Israel's (JAFI) Department for Jewish Zionist Education who were responsible for creating and implementing a memorable experience for our educators.

Some Web links:

- [Jewish Agency For Israel \(JAFI\)](#)
- [Web pages of the JAFI Education Department](#)
- [The Pedagogic Center of the JAFI Education Department](#)
- [Rabbi Shai Gluskin's Web pages](#)

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Sep 9, 2001



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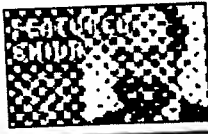
The War with Iraq: Special Prayers

We of the Orthodox Union and of the Rabbinical Council of America call for prayer, courage, and hope.

You will find texts of the appropriate special prayers here.

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Six Pesach shiurim are now online.



Pesach is Coming!

The 5763 OU Guide to Kosher for Passover Foods is online!



A Passover Message

The War in Iraq and the Exodus from Egypt: Liberation from Tyranny and Turning Points in History - A message by Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb.



U.S. Middle East Peace Initiative - Update

A "road map" toward a peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict is currently under discussion...



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OU and Nefesh B'Nefesh Announce Fund Drive to Assist Hundreds of American Families Planning Aliyah to Israel this Summer.



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The OU has compiled this partial list of Orthodox synagogues which are hosting communal sedarim.
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Check out our next Solidarity Mission to Israel dates!
- ▶ **IPA Action Alert**
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- ▶ **Help Israel's Front Lines**
Join 100,000 Jews in reciting the Tefillah l'Chayalei Tzah"al & raising \$100,000 for helping Israeli soldiers.
- ▶ **In the News...**
Rabbi Weinreb comments on the war in Iraq during a tefilla service shown in this March 26 TV news broadcast. [256k](#) | [56k](#)
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These times demand that increased vigilance and security measures must be put into place...
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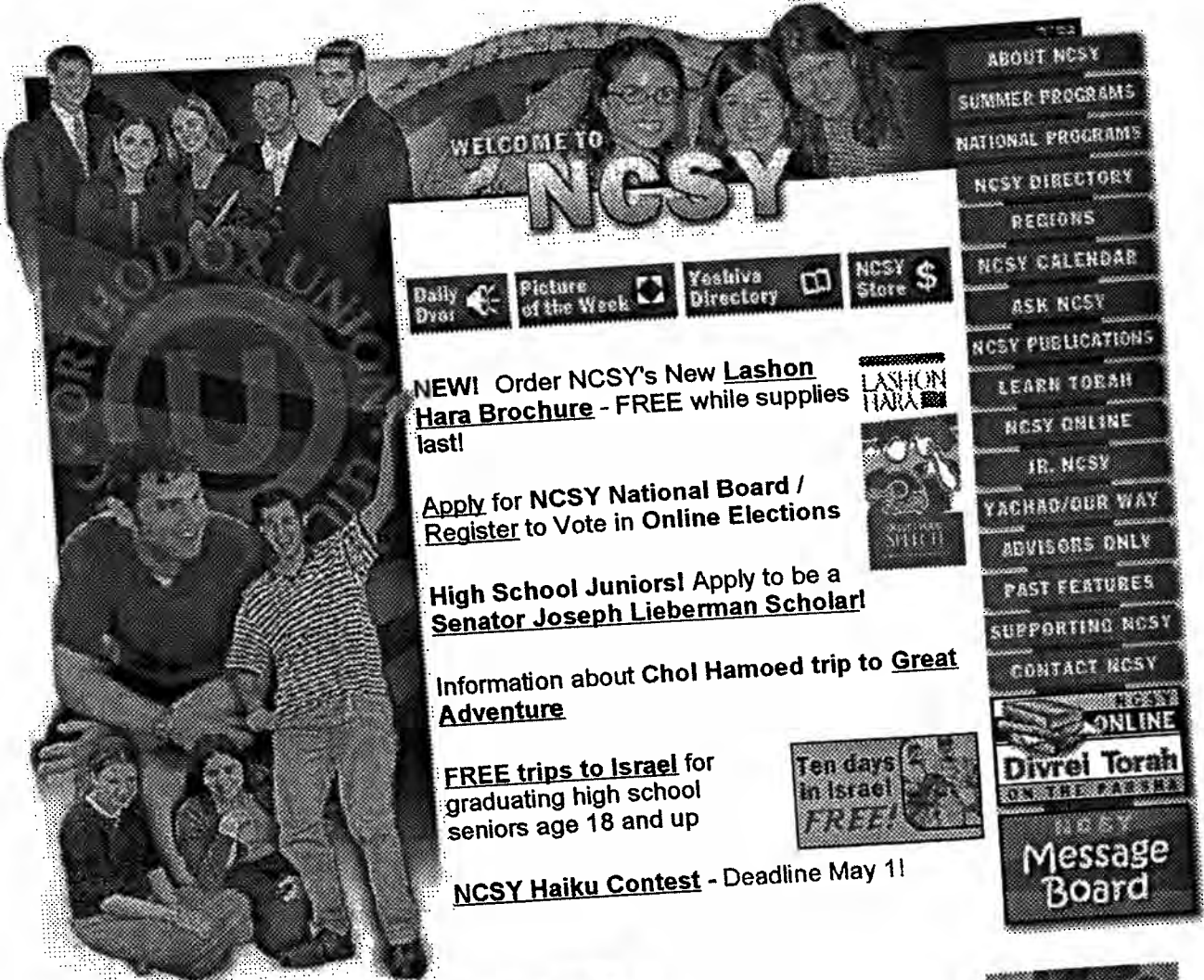
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A screenshot of the NCSY website homepage. At the top, it says "WELCOME TO NCSY". Below this are navigation buttons for "Daily Dvar", "Picture of the Week", "Yeshiva Directory", and "NCSY Store". The main content area features several announcements: "NEW! Order NCSY's New Lashon Hara Brochure - FREE while supplies last!", "Apply for NCSY National Board / Register to Vote in Online Elections", "High School Juniors! Apply to be a Senator Joseph Lieberman Scholar!", and "Information about Chol Hamoed trip to Great Adventure". There is also a promotion for "FREE trips to Israel for graduating high school seniors age 18 and up" and a "NCSY Haiku Contest - Deadline May 1!". On the right side, there is a vertical menu with links to "ABOUT NCSY", "SUMMER PROGRAMS", "NATIONAL PROGRAMS", "NCSY DIRECTORY", "REGIONS", "NCSY CALENDAR", "ASK NCSY", "NCSY PUBLICATIONS", "LEARN TORAH", "NCSY ONLINE", "JR. NCSY", "YACHAD/OUR WAY", "ADVISORS ONLY", "PAST FEATURES", "SUPPORTING NCSY", "CONTACT NCSY", "Divrei Torah ONLINE", and "NCSY Message Board".

Acheinu Lithograph
Said after Tehillim in times of uncertainty, this lithograph is available for purchase...



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What Is NCSY?

NCSY, the National Conference of Synagogue Youth, is the most effective and respected educational Jewish Youth movement in the world.

Offering programs to bring Jewish teens back to their heritage, NCSY is at the forefront of the battle against assimilation. Although most of NCSY's effort have been in North America, now NCSY in Israel is trying to bring back Israeli teens to their roots as well.

NCSY is a multi-faceted Jewish Youth group which is open to all Jewish youth regardless of background and affiliation. Offering social and educational programming in hundreds of communities across the U.S. and Canada, NCSY is a leader in bringing unaffiliated youth an awareness of what Judaism is all about. For Jewish teenagers, NCSY is a relaxed, fun environment to learn about their own heritage.

NCSY's programming really begins on the chapter level. There are many hundreds of local NCSY chapters across the country which offer educational and social events for Jewish teens. Usually located in the local synagogue, these chapters reach out to teenagers in the local community and introduce them to NCSY. All chapters are part of an NCSY Region. There are 12 NCSY Regions in North America. Each region runs programs bringing together the various chapters within its geographical area.

NCSY's history dates back to the 1950s when chapters around the country began to form and were slowly woven into a National Organization with well defined Halachic Standards (standards set by Jewish Law.) Today, NCSY reaches out to both public school and yeshiva students who wish to increase their commitment to Judaism. It is not rare to find second generation NCSYers at NCSY events around the country. More exciting than its past, however, is NCSY's future. Still growing every year, NCSY is constantly adding new members and developing in new communities.

If you would like to join NCSY, please contact us. We will be glad to show you how to become a part of the most exciting Jewish youth organization in the world. In the meantime, surf the NCSY website to find out more about all of NCSY's programs and projects.

For more information, please contact NCSY at: ncsy@ou.org. You can also call: (212) 613-8233 or write to: NCSY, 11 Broadway, New York, NY 10004

Read the NCSY Conduct Policy and Behavioral Standards Document and Ombudsman Information



NCSY Summer Programs

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Get ready for the adventure of a lifetime!

You've just taken the first step towards an incredible summer experience. From the breathtaking sunrise of the Grand Canyon to the sunset over Jerusalem, nobody does travel programs like NCSY. Our programs, both in North America and in Israel, combine the best in Jewish living and travel with the excitement of meeting teenagers from all over the world.

For over 40 years, NCSY Summer programs have combined the very best in experienced staff, transportation and lodging, incredible sightseeing, along with a complete experience in Jewish living.

New Programs

This summer, NCSY is offering some new and exciting programs including Volunteers for Israel, Outward Bound and Caravan West. With NCSY you can volunteer on an Israeli army base, travel by bus to the West Coast, go white-water rafting and hiking in the Canadian wilderness, visit and volunteer in Eastern Europe, and learn about Judaism in our world famous Torah study programs in Israel.

Security

Of course, on all NCSY programs, security continues to be our highest priority. In Israel, every decision regarding itinerary, travel route, lodging location, or site for an evening activity is made in conjunction with the Security Department of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). The JAFI Security Department is in constant contact with the police, army and other intelligence sources, and provides NCSY with very frequent updates and precautionary advisories. In Europe, we consult with local security agencies and US consulates and embassies on a regular basis. We want your experience to be as fun, enjoyable and safe as possible.

What participants are saying:

"The best summer and best experience in my entire lifetime. The impact of studying and traveling in Israel is one that I will never forget."
-R.G. New York, NY

"The level of professionalism and organization at every level of the trip was unbelievable. The staff provided us with daily updates and we felt all along the way that our son was in good hands."
-D.G. Baltimore, MD. Parent



Israel



North America



Eastern Europe



"The level of professionalism and organization at every level of the trip was unbelievable. The staff provided us with daily updates and we felt all along the way that our son was in good hands."

-D.G. Baltimore, MD. Parent

"The beauty of Israel isn't just physical, it's also the spiritual closeness you get while traveling with friends and amazing staff. I returned home more knowledgeable and with a real love of the people and land of Israel."

-P.F. Miami, FL

Apply Now!

Never before have NCSY summer programs offered you so much. So read on, and see what opportunities for discovery await you. Then go online, print out an application and register right away for NCSY this summer.

Wishing you a great summer,

Rabbi Daniel Schonbuch
Director of Education, National NCSY

APPLY NOW!

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(the NEWLY updated!)

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You will need Adobe Acrobat to view this file. It can be downloaded for FREE from the [Adobe website](#).

- Pictures from [New Jersey Jr. NCSY Spring Regional](#)
- New Jersey NCSY's [Shtick Bank](#)
- Southern NCSY's [Jewish music](#)
- Long Island NCSY's [Junior games](#)
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- [Ask NCSY!](#)
- Email National Jr. NCSY Coordinator [Shari Bensadoun](#)
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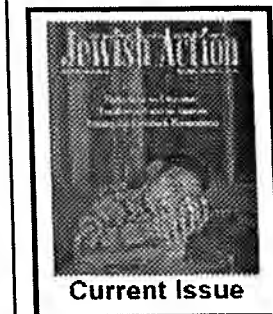
Special Section:

The Rise of Kollel in America

It Takes a Kollel: How Higher Learning is Transforming American Jewry

By Yaakov Feitman

We've come a long way. Just a few decades ago, most Jewish communities throughout the United States resisted the idea of Jewish day school education. Even once yeshivah education became established, young men would ordinarily rush headlong from their high school graduations to the halls of academia to secure the college degrees denied to their parents, graduates institutions such as Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen.



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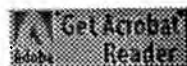
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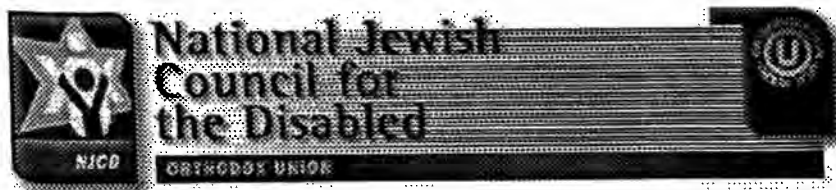
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Jewish Action
The Magazine of the Orthodox Union
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E-Mail: ja@ou.org



**NJCD is not just Yachad and Our Way.
And, Yachad is not just Shabbatonim.**

So, what is NJCD?

The National Jewish Council for the Disabled is dedicated to addressing the needs of all individuals with disabilities within the Jewish community. NJCD strives to enhance the life opportunities of people with special needs and to insure their participation in the full spectrum of Jewish life.

See Below for NADSEC

These goals are addressed through the following activities and services:

- Disseminating knowledge and information
- Advocacy on behalf of those with special needs
- Family counseling
- Sibling support groups
- Family retreats, conferences, & workshops
- Conferences & workshops for professionals working with challenged individuals
- Respite care
- Promoting Inclusive education and activities
- Sensitivity training for youth & adults through schools and synagogues
- Consultation to schools & synagogues on implementation of Inclusion
- Inclusive social/recreational activities for the developmentally disabled and hearing impaired in chapters throughout the U.S. and Canada
- Good Sports athletic training and sports activities
- Jewish heritage classes providing Jewish education for developmentally disabled and learning disabled youth & young adults
- Mainstreamed summer camping & touring experiences for the developmentally disabled & hearing-impaired
- Vocational Resources and Job Placement
- These services, which began with the Yachad program in 1983, have transformed the lives of thousands of challenged individuals and their families and has made dramatic changes within the Jewish community of which they are a part.

The NJCD is composed of 4 major divisions which include:

1. **National Resource Center**. A premier clearing-house which provides

resource information, referral services, consultation, and direct services to individuals, families and agencies regarding all kinds of disabilities.

2. **National Center for Inclusion** promotes, facilitates, and provides for the inclusion of all children and adults through its departments of school and educational services, vocational resources and job placement, and clinical services.

3. **Yachad** which provides unique social, educational and recreational "mainstreamed" programs for individuals (ages 8-40) with developmental disabilities.

4. **Our Way** which provides both mainstreamed and self-contained educational and recreational activities for the hearing-impaired and deaf.

5. **NADSEC** - National Association of Day Schools for Exceptional Children.

Newly formed association of yeshivot and day schools across the United States and Canada providing programs for students with varying special needs. Initial plans of the association include staff development opportunities, sharing curriculum materials, a resource guide with descriptions of existing special education programs and a general list serve for networking purposes.

For more information or participation, please contact Sharon Kolb, Coordinator. NADSEC is sponsored by Yachad, National Council for Disabilities (NJCD), a national resource/ inclusion center for special education and children and adults with special needs.

Telephone: 212-613-8156

Fax: 212-613-0796

E-mail: slksped@aol.com

View letter

Fill out the questionnaire!

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The Israel on Campus Coalition is a network of national organizations working to promote Israel education and advocacy on university campuses across the United States.



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- Zionist Organization of America

Union Of Orthodox Jewish Congregations Of America (OU)

The Orthodox Union is the largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization and national spokesman for 1,000 synagogues; a not-for-profit educational, outreach and social service organization serving the North American Jewish community for over 100 years.

The Orthodox Union provides specialized leadership training for colleg students, scholarship opportunities and apprenticeship programs to train young people for roles in government and communal service. One of the main programs that we have designed to meet these goals is the Orthodox Union-Institute for Public Affairs Washington Internship Program, which annually brings some of the brightest college students to Washington, DC. This outstanding program affords qualified student the opportunity to serve as summer interns in political offices in Washington, DC, providing them with the chance to participate in our democratic political process.

What we do:

Other programs include:

The INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS provides a strong Jewish voice in the halls of government; the OU/NCSY ISRAEL CENTER in Jerusalem, the educational center for American students, English speaking residents and Russian speaking immigrants; SYNAGOGUE SERVICES provides direct linkage and manifold services to 1,000 synagogues, plus retreats, seminars, conferences, and outreach programs.

The Union is also the Orthodox community's leading Kashrut certification agency, provider of educational and consulting support to synagogues and home for Jewish youth programming.

For more information:

Joshua Sussman, Associate Director,
Institute for Public Affairs
Phone: (202) 513-6484
E-mail: jussman@ou.org

Toby Herzog, Israel Action
Coordinator
Phone: (212) 613-4000
E-mail: herzogt@ou.org

Web site: <http://www.ou.org>



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About the IPA

As the public policy arm of the nation's largest representative Orthodox Jewish organization – with over 1,000 member synagogues nationwide – the IPA works to protect Jewish interests and freedoms by providing government officials with informative policy briefings, advocating legislative and regulatory initiatives, and coordinating our constituency's grass-roots political activities.

Importantly, the IPA works to bring the unique perspective of Jewish law and tradition to bear upon the widest range of public policy issues confronting American society at-large, thus seeking to fulfill our mission to work for the betterment of the world – tikkun olam – for all of humankind.

Within the Jewish community, the IPA serves as the Orthodox community's link to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, the World Jewish Congress, the International Committee on Free Trade with Israel, and other umbrella entities. The IPA also serves as the Orthodox Union's link to the broader international community through its recognized non-governmental organization (NGO) observer status at the United Nations.

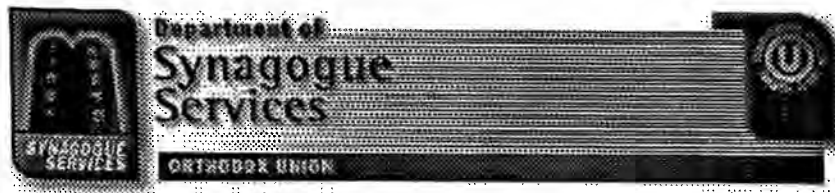
In addition to its day-to-day activities, the IPA sponsors an annual National Leadership Mission to Washington, D.C., an annual Conference on Law and Public Policy, the IPA Summer Internship Program – placing Orthodox Jewish college students in key governmental offices, and the publication of *Nexus* – a series of occasional scholarly papers on Jewish law and public policy. The IPA also coordinates the IPA Pro Bono Network – a network of attorneys who dedicate a portion of their time and services to serving the needs of Jewish causes.

The OU's IPA invites you to become an active participant in our programs and to become a partner in working for tikkun olam today. You can contact the Institute for Public Affairs at (212)613-8123 or by e-mail at ipa@ou.org

Richard B. Stone
Chairman

Nathan Diamant
Director

Betty Ehrenberg



What is Community and Synagogue Services?

The Orthodox Union has a stake in every community in the Jewish world. The Community and Synagogue Services Division of the OU is designed to function as a network of active, vital kehillot.

Our goal is to bond member synagogues to a central supportive headquarters and to each other by a unity of purpose and shared experience.

Synagogues look to the Orthodox Union now more than ever for this help and support. Community and Synagogue Services is the conduit through which all congregations can learn of the numerous programs offered by all OU departments.

Our Division will work on tailoring OU programs to the specific needs of your local population. This communication will benefit everyone, as Shuls will be able to render services that are truly relevant to their memberships. We will enable members and shuls to see themselves as part of the greater OU family.

The driving force that created the Orthodox Union over 100 years ago is even more important today in our complex world. Access to dynamic programming and powerful resources will make it all possible.

Rabbi Moshe D. Krupka
OU National Director of Community and Synagogue Services

Checklist of Programs for Your Synagogue

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Checklist of Programs for Your Synagogue

The Orthodox Union's Department of Community and Synagogue Services provides a vast array and great diversity of programmatic, educational, and administrative support services for member synagogues. Please call our office at 212-613-8226 regarding information on programs listed below.

- **Building and Strengthening Healthy Family Relationships**
 - A) Positive Parenting Workshops
 - B) Enhancing the Quality of Marriage

Interactive educational presentations and workshops on marriage and parenting.
Find out more!
- **Community Planning/ Long Range Planning**
A targeted program for you and your leadership to evaluate your resources and plan accordingly.
- **Torah Seminars for Women**
Ongoing educational and Yemei Iyun programs for women.
Find out more!
- **Pardes Project**
Interactive adult education Torah Study programs.
Find out more!
- **Torah Insights**
Weekly Divrei Torah and insights.
This Week's Dvar Torah
- **Family Bet Medrash Program**
A compendium of sources for Rabbanim on selected themes.
- **Online Services**
We will set-up and maintain a web site for your synagogue.
Find out more!
- **Young Leadership/ Singles**
Assistance in developing singles programs for all age groups.
Find out more!

- **Clearing House for Shadchanim**
Centralized networking for shadchanim
- **Scholars-in-Residence/ Speakers Registry**
Assistance in obtaining speakers and scholars-in-residence.
- **Shabbat Youth Manual**
Ready to use programmatic materials, grades K-6, on every Parsha.
- **National Conference of Synagogue Directors**
Professional body of Orthodox Union executive directors.
- **Synagogue Trends**
Timely synagogue issues written by and for synagogue leadership.
- **Publications**
Discounts on Siddurim, Chumashim, and Sefarim.
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- **Torah Dimensions Audio and Video**
Recordings on Holidays, Personalities, and critical issues within Orthodoxy.
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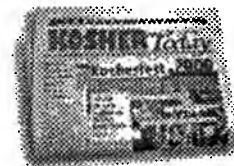
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The Kosher Advantage

- Over \$150 billion of kosher certified products are consumed annually, and spending continues to rise dramatically.
- The market for kosher certified products includes not only Jews who observe kosher dietary laws, but also Moslems, Seventh Day Adventists, and millions of individuals who are vegetarian or lactose intolerant.
- Marketing experts agree that kosher certification instills confidence in consumers that the product has passed inspection and meets high quality standards.
- Whether you manufacture consumer food items or industrial ingredients, or are involved in private labeling, kosher certification will raise your brand's profile in the marketplace and help expand your market share.

The OU Advantage

- OU Kosher is the world's largest kosher certification agency, certifying over 250,000 products produced in nearly 5,000 plants located in over 60 countries around the world.
- The OU, one of the world's best-known trademarks, immediately and universally enhances your product, affecting the perception of its quality, and increasing its marketability.
- OU Kosher is unique among all the major kosher certification agencies as it is part of a non-profit communal organization (founded in 1898), so we maintain the highest levels of integrity without any possible conflict of interest.
- Our 500 Rabbinic Field Representatives, located across Europe and throughout the world - from America to Australia, from the Far East to South Africa - are proficient in modern food production techniques and chemical and biological processes, no less than the intricacies of Jewish law.
- Our New York headquarters staff consists of over 50 Rabbinic Coordinators who serve as account executives for OU certified companies, supplemented by a roster of ingredient specialists, flavor analysts and other support staff.

- A state-of-the-art computer system stores and tracks product information and ingredients. The OU database contains information on more than 200,000 food ingredients.
- Many of the world's most recognized brands, large and small, choose the OU for their kosher certification, including: Avebe, BASF, Best Foods, Cerestar, Coca Cola, Cognis, Peter Cremer, Danisco, DSM, General Mills, Haarmann & Reimer, Chr. Hansen, Hebei Welcome Pharmaceutical, H.J. Heinz, Kraft/Nabisco, M&M, McCormick & Co., Nestlé, Proctor & Gamble, Pillsbury, Quest, Reynolds Aluminum, Rhodia, and thousands more.

The Orthodox Union would be pleased to help your company achieve the premier certification for your products. Please contact us to request an application, or to learn more about kosher and the certification process. We are always ready to be of any help or service to your company.

The OU is a hallmark of quality, dedication, cooperation and furthered understanding of how our traditions contribute to the world around us.

New Companies Department
E-mail: safrane@ou.org or call 212-613-8249

Orthodox Union
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New York, NY 10004

www.oukosher.org



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Sy Syms School of Business

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Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration

Benjamin N. Cardozo School Of Law

Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies

Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology

Wurzweiler School of Social Work

Founded in 1886, Yeshiva University is the oldest and most comprehensive educational institution under Jewish auspices in America one of the nation's top 50 research universities according to U.S. News and World Report.

News & Events

INFORMATION ALERT

Richard M. Joel, President of Hillel, Appointed 4th President of Yeshiva University

Message to YU Community From President-Elect Joel

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◆ Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary Rabbis Serve as Chaplains in Iraq War

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Founded in 1886, Yeshiva University is the oldest and most comprehensive educational institution under Jewish auspices in America. It reflects the centuries-old commitment of the Jewish people to learning, continuity, and the advancement of human knowledge and is a unique and vital resource for the Jewish community and society at large. *US News & World Report* rates Yeshiva as one of the top 50 research universities in America.

From its beginnings as a small day school on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, the University has developed into a multifaceted center for teaching and research with facilities on four campuses in New York City. Central administration offices are located on the Wilf campus at 500 West 185th Street, New York, NY 10033.

The University's 17 undergraduate, graduate, and affiliated schools and divisions reflect the full range of knowledge in the arts, sciences, and professions, and the richness of Jewish culture and thought. Total on-campus enrollment is approximately 6,300, including some 2,000 undergraduate students. An additional 600 young men and women per year study under YU auspices in Israel.

Undergraduate programs for men (Wilf campus) and for women (Midtown Campus) combine rigorous programs in the arts and sciences (and in some instances business) with extensive offerings in Jewish studies. The philosophy behind these programs is called *Torah Umadda* (Torah and Western learning). The goal is to convey both wisdom and knowledge, to imbue in students a system of values that can help guide their personal, professional, and communal lives long after they graduate.

Coeducational graduate and professional programs

are offered in medicine (Albert Einstein College of Medicine), law (Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law), social work (Wurzweiler School of Social Work), psychology (Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology), Jewish studies (Bernard Revel Graduate School), and Jewish education (Azrieli Graduate School of Education and Administration).

Rabbinic training and instruction in Jewish music are provided on the Wilf campus at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an affiliate of the University. The Yeshiva University High Schools provide college preparatory instruction for boys (Wilf campus) and for girls (in Queens).

Yeshiva University's 40,000 alumni work in virtually all fields and live in communities across the country and around the world. Several thousand have made *aliyah* to Israel. Most YU alumni are active in their local communities, and many hold leadership positions in communal organizations.

1. Special Memorial Edition of Chavrusa
2. Shiur Yomi on Massechet Ketubot: Rabbi Yonason Sacks
3. From the RIETS Archives: Golda Meir at Yeshiva University 11/12/63

[Click Here for Rabbi Soloveitchik 10th Yahrzeit Archives](#)



The Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), an affiliate of Yeshiva University, is the Western Hemisphere's largest center for Orthodox higher Jewish learning. Founded in 1896, RIETS is located at 2540 Amsterdam Avenue on the Yeshiva University Main Campus in New York City.

The Max Stern Division of Communal Services (MSDCS) of RIETS serves as the vehicle to transmit the inner vision of Yeshiva to the Jewish community. It fulfills this mission by providing professional and service programs, including: professional rabbinics training; placement of rabbis, educators and administrators; and, educational and outreach programming in synagogues, schools, boardrooms, and on college campuses. In addition, MSDCS provides lay leader and professional advisement, curriculum development and other educational services through the

Association of Modern Orthodox Day Schools and Yeshiva High Schools, which is convened and staffed by MSDCS.

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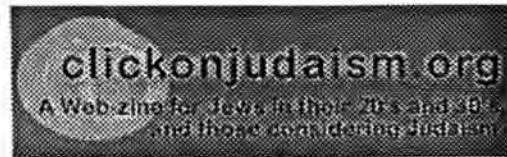
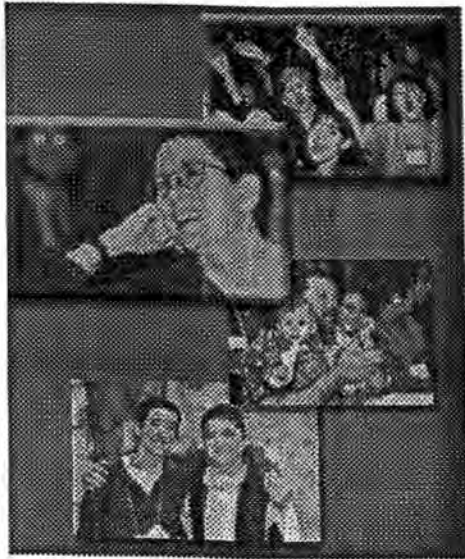


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איחוד ליהדות מתקדמת באמריקה



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About the UAHC

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The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the central body of the Reform Movement in North America, was founded in Cincinnati in 1873 by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise. It has grown from an initial membership of 34 congregations in 28 cities to more than 900 congregations in the United States, Canada, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. It is the largest Jewish movement in North America and represents an estimated 1.5 million Jews.

As the congregational arm of the Reform Movement, the UAHC's primary mission is to create and sustain vibrant Jewish congregations wherever Reform Jews live. The Union provides leadership and vision to Reform Jews on spiritual, ethical, and political issues as well as materials and consultation for programs in the congregation. The Union also provides opportunities for individual growth and identity that congregations and individuals cannot provide by themselves, including camps and Israel programs, study *kallot*, and national and regional biennials.

UAHC PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie has served as president since June 1996, when he succeeded Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, z"l. The UAHC staff of about 250 professionals and support staff implements the policies set by the General Assembly and Board of Trustees. Fourteen regional offices bring the programs and services of the UAHC closer to each member congregation, while national departments develop programs and materials and provide ongoing consultation and problem solving. The staff also coordinates and implements the activities of numerous UAHC committees, commissions, and task forces, which are composed of dedicated professional and volunteer leaders.

UAHC GOVERNANCE

The UAHC's policy-making body is the General Assembly, which meets every other year at the Biennial, in accordance with the UAHC Constitution and Bylaws. The General Assembly is composed of delegates who are members of and selected by UAHC congregations in proportion to the size of their synagogue.

The UAHC Board of Trustees meets twice each year and is responsible to the General Assembly. Its more than 242 Board members come from all parts of the United States and Canada. Fifty percent of the Board is elected directly by the UAHC's regions, while the remaining membership is made up of at-large members elected by the General Assembly and ex officio members who represent the Reform Movement's institutions and affiliate bodies.

The 90-member UAHC Executive Committee also meets twice each year. The chairman of the Board is Russell Silverman of Miami, FL.

COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

Lay leaders of the Reform Movement lend their talent and expertise to joint commissions, on which the UAHC is joined by the CCAR, HUC-JIR, and other Reform organizations. Through their deliberations, the

commissions help determine the Movement's position on critical issues affecting every Reform Jew, such as social justice and political concerns and the role of the non-Jew in synagogue life. More than 400 people serve on the joint commissions and the committees and subcommittees of the UAHC Board of Trustees, determining policy and direction for every aspect of the Union's operations.

MAJOR UAHC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Adult Jewish Growth

The UAHC sponsors publications and conferences to enhance the spiritual life of Reform Jews. *Kallot* and other programs provide individuals with the opportunity for serious study and worship in a retreat setting. Among other publications, Adult Jewish Growth publishes *Torat Hayim*, a weekly on-line Torah commentary and study guide for individual and congregational use.

Jewish Education

The Department of Jewish Education creates and supports a variety of programs that nurture the academic and spiritual growth of the Reform Movement. Education consultants in each region assist in curriculum development, teacher education, educational management, and lifelong Jewish study.

Jewish Family Concerns

The Department of Jewish Family Concerns was created in recognition that Jewish family life is becoming increasingly complex. The department brings together the work of committees and task forces that focus on issues facing the Jewish family, including older adults, bio-ethics, the synagogue as a caring community, AIDS, youth suicide prevention, *Lehiyot* (inclusion of people with disabilities), gay and lesbian inclusion, and substance abuse prevention.

Outreach and Synagogue Community

The UAHC is firmly committed to welcoming, teaching, and involving Jews-by-choice in the life of the synagogue; to encouraging the non-Jewish spouse in an interfaith couple to consider conversion; to educating children of interfaith couples as Jews; and to reaching out to unaffiliated Jews and involving them in the community. The Outreach Department assists congregations in developing programs that meet these goals.

Reform Judaism magazine, a quarterly publication sent to every household affiliated with a UAHC congregation, is the official voice of the UAHC. Transcontinental Music Publications is the music publishing arm of the Reform Movement, offering an extensive variety of printed materials for solo voice, professional and volunteer choir, and congregational singing, plus cassettes and CDs for synagogue and home use. The UAHC Press is one of the largest publishers of books and educational materials of Jewish interest for adults and children. In addition, there are a multitude of publications available in print and on-line to help with every aspect of congregational life and governance.

Religious Living

The mandate of the Commission on Religious Living is threefold: to enhance Reform worship, to integrate healing programming within the synagogue, and to foster the personal spiritual growth of every Jew. The commission and the Department of Religious Living are working with synagogues to redefine the role of the Ritual Committee.

Social Action

The Commission on Social Action assists congregations in establishing programs that apply the insights of Jewish tradition to such domestic and foreign issues as human rights, civil liberties, religious freedom and other major societal concerns. The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in Washington, DC, was established in 1961 to serve as a liaison between Reform Jews and government. The RAC follows pending legislation, alerts congregations about issues of concern to Reform Jews, and operates educational programs for youth and adults.

Synagogue Management and Small Congregations

Solving problems — from locating an architect to conducting member surveys — is the specialty of the Department of Synagogue Management, which provides consultation, training, and materials on a variety of topics to UAHC congregations. The Department also addresses the special needs of congregations with fewer

than 250 members.

Youth Activities

The North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) provides a wide array of programming for high school youth on the local, regional, and national levels. The UAHC operates twelve UAHC camps, each of which offers study and recreation for more than 8,000 youths of all ages every summer. Israel programs for high school and college students range from summer tours to serious study at Israeli universities.



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- [Kalsman Conference on Healing Wisdom](#)

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Statement of Purpose and Mission

Purpose

HUC-JIR is a religious and scholarly learning community dedicated to:

- Developing Jewish professional and lay leaders to transmit and apply to contemporary life the sustaining values, responsibilities and texts of our tradition;
- Applying the open and pluralistic spirit of the Reform movement to the study of the great issues of Jewish life and thought.
- Advancing the critical study of Jewish culture and related disciplines in accordance with the highest standards of modern academic scholarship.



Mission

HUC-JIR serves as:

- The educational and intellectual center of Reform Judaism:
 - Training and sustaining rabbis, cantors, communal and educational professionals throughout their careers for service to Reform Judaism and klal Yisrael;
 - Providing higher learning for scholars of religion of all faiths;
 - Supporting the educational and spiritual growth of lay leadership for the Reform movement;
 - Creating and disseminating scholarly research and publication;
 - Preserving and providing access to library, archival and museum resources;
 - Working with Jewish institutions worldwide to enhance Jewish life, learning and values and to shape the Jewish experience of the future.
- A Jewish religious community built on God, Torah, *avodah*, *mitzvot*, and *Tikkun Ha-olam*:
 - Integrating Jewish tradition, academic knowledge and professional competence in the development of our students;
 - Creating a religious community that gives meaning to the educational experience and provides a model for students to take with them into their lives and work;
 - Instilling in its members exceptional leadership skills and spiritual growth enabling them to become catalysts of transformation in the creation of vibrant Jewish communities.
- An innovative resource and learning center working with Reform congregations and leaders, the Jewish organizational world and the

religious and academic community at large;

- o Providing a forum for creative Jewish thought;
- o Acknowledging and supporting a diverse community of scholars, students and staff committed to academic freedom and rigor;
- o Contributing to the real-life decisions and growth of the Reform Jewish community worldwide;
- o Sustaining a vital relationship with the People and the Land by cultivating the growth of Reform Judaism in Israel.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

[Resolutions Adopted by the 114th Annual CCAR Convention and Board of Trustees now available online!](#) ***

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[Reform Jewish Leaders Push for Prescription Drug Benefits for Seniors](#) ***

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- [CCAR Journal](#) - our quarterly publication
The table of contents and lead article from the most recent issue on-line.
- [CCAR Press](#) - including the complete catalog and secure ordering
- [Joint Commission Sustaining Rabbinic Education](#)
Study opportunities for CCAR members. Sign-up now for Sp courses!
- [Responsa](#) - authoritative answers to questions about Reform Judaism and Jewish living
- [Resolutions](#) - formal positions adopted by vote at CCAR conventions
- [Platforms](#) - broad statements about Reform Judaism adopted by Reform rabbis
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- [CCAR Code of Ethics for Rabbis](#)
- [CCAR/UJHC Guidelines for Rabbinical-Congregational Relationships](#)

CONTACT US

General comments or questions: info@ccarnet.org

Web site matters: webmaster@ccarnet.org

For questions about Judaism and Jewish
please use the UJHC "Ask the Rabbi" service

The Spouse Connection
provides an opportunity for wives and husbands of rabbis to
share common experiences and provide mutual support

Visit the Reform Movement's
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Reform Movement Calendar,
offering a list of meetings and events
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Most recent update 9 Apr 2003



General Information about CCAR

The CCAR was founded in 1889. Its members are the body of rabbis who consider themselves and are considered to be the organized rabbinate of Reform Judaism.

Its members consist of Reform Rabbis ordained at the HUC-JIR Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, as well as Reform Rabbis ordained at liberal seminaries in Europe, and some rabbis who joined the Reform movement sometime subsequent to ordination. Most of the latter were ordained either at the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary or the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

The CCAR is led by President Rabbi Martin S. Weiner Executive Vice President Rabbi Paul Menitoff, and Executive Secretary Rabbi Elliot Stevens. The Director of Placement is Rabbi Arnold Sher. The CCAR may be contacted at: info@ccarnet.org and Rabbi Stevens at estevens@ccarnet.org. (Please address questions about Judaism and Jewish living to the UAHC "Ask the Rabbi" service.)

CCAR Press is considered to be the largest publisher of Jewish liturgy, certainly from the Reform perspective.

The CCAR also publishes a quarterly rabbinic journal: CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly.

Central Conference of American Rabbis
355 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10017
(212) 972-3636
E-mail: info@ccarnet.org



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PARDeS

This is the official web site for the Progressive Association of Reform Day Schools.

We honor Lenore C. Kipper, RJE

A visionary educator and an exemplar of leadership and service. Lenore is being honored by Temple Beth Am, Miami, and on May 19, will have conferred upon her the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, by the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. In recognition of her pioneering role in the development of the Reform Jewish Day School Movement. Lenore is founder and past president of PARDeS, member of NATE, CAJE, ASCD, CAJE-PAC.

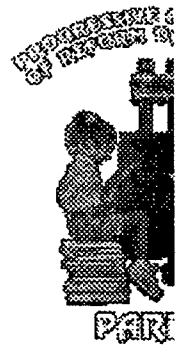
10 Years Supporting Reform Jewish Day Schools, where Jewish leaders of TOMORROW are being educated TODAY!

For all of you who are interested in Reform Judaism and education, we invite you to get to know about PARDeS, to identify our fine day schools, to support us through your membership, to interact with other PARDeS members, and to discover the excitement of PARDeS events and links of interest.

New!

We are growing and changing every day. Visions of Excellence is now available online. Click HERE to learn about our "Living Logo" project.

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UAHC AF

Faith Stein, Ph.D., 571

With much sadness, we report that on Wednesday, September 26, Faith Stein passed away in her hometown of Allentown, PA. Faith was a passionate advocate for all the causes she believed in and that included her devotion to the Reform Jewish day school movement, as exemplified by the wonderful work she did for PARDeS. We will all miss her terribly, and we will cherish the many precious hours that she spent with us. She was truly a beautiful person. Her memory will be treasured by each of us who called her "friend," and her work will live on in the important contributions she made to our mission. Faith is survived by her father, Leonard Stein of Whitehall, PA, and her brothers and their families.

Learn About PARDeS

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To mail your membership application or donations, please use this address:

PARDeS
PO Box 30085, Tucson, AZ
85751-0085



About PARDeS

PARDeS has a growing roster of members including professional and lay educators, parents and many other committed Reform Jews. Our goals:

- Development of the full potential of the person—intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual and creative—blending the best of our Jewish and American heritage
- A personal view of the covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people
- Ethical and moral values inherited from biblical and rabbinic sources
- A commitment to practice and observe the ceremonies and ethical mitzvot of Reform Judaism
- An appreciation of the historic kinship between the Jewish people and the land of Israel
- Love and respect for the Hebrew language, a knowledge of prayer and our sacred writings, as well as the ability to speak and read the living language of modern Israel
- An understanding of the Reform Jewish perspective
- Excellence in both General and Judaic Studies
- Leadership qualities to serve both the Jewish community and the secular world
- A sense of responsibility for one's actions in academic performance and daily behavior

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VP, Harriet Zoller, Atlanta
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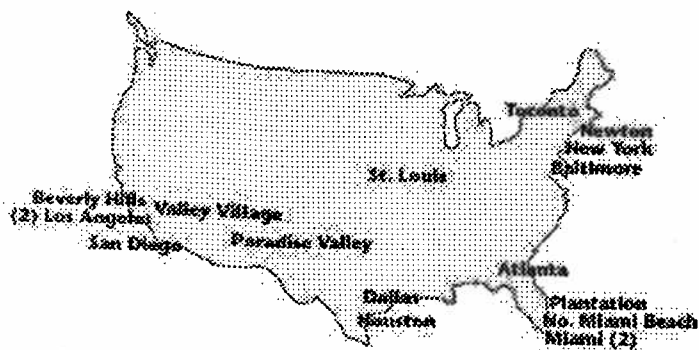
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 Marlene Myerson, Toronto
 Beverly Miller, New York

THREE YEAR TERM: 2002-2005
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 Helene Schlafman, San Diego
 Debbie Diamond, Dallas
 Michael Kessel, San Diego
 Rabbi Ron Symons, Boston

Strategic Plan

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Mission Statement



PARDeS, an affiliate of the UAHC, composed of both professional and lay leaders, is the central address an voice for Reform Jewish Day School education. PARDe advocates, consults, and provides support and service for existing and emerging Reform Jewish Day Schools **throughout North America**. PARDeS will serve the Reform Jewish Day School Network by providing communication channels, guidance and support, and b promoting standards of excellence for Reform Jewish School education.

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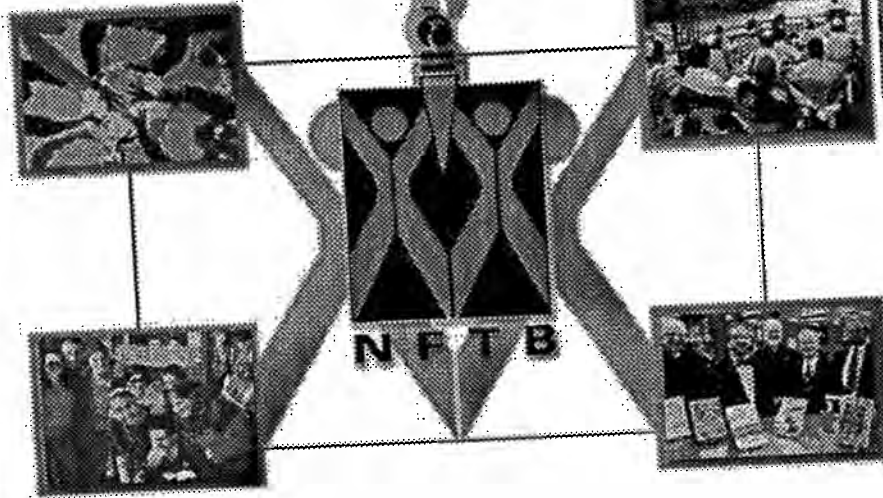
North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods

Welcome to the New NFTB Web Site!

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To Serve Jewish Men, Reform Judaism and its Local Congregations
--Official Mission Statement of NFTB



REGISTER NOW: 39th NFTB Convention - New Orleans, June 26 - 29, 2003

NFTB is a coalition of over 250 affiliated brotherhoods with 25,000 members across North America, dedicated to *tikkun olam*, 'repairing the world', through the practice of Brotherhood. NFTB members are actively involved in youth education, adult education, social action, and fellowship activities which contribute to the enrichment of their synagogue community.

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North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods

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NFTB History

Hinei Matov - 'How good it is' when brothers come together and celebrate! It was in this spirit that on January 23, 1923, sixty five Reform Jewish brotherhoods and men's clubs came together at the Hotel Astor in New York City to form The North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods. The mission of NFTB was the same then as it is today: to encourage local brotherhoods to engage in projects and activities that provide meaningful services to their congregation; to sponsor and promote vitally important nationwide community-building projects; and to give local brotherhood members the opportunity to explore and celebrate their male Jewish spirit.

In light of this, let us share with you a statement of purpose:

"to arouse the appreciation for and understanding of our religion among the young men of Jewish faith in this country, and to translate this appreciation and this understanding into action, by being loyal to the best traditions of our faith and alive to the needs of the modern day. This means humility before God; self-respect before man; readiness to eternally serve the weak, the downtrodden, the sick, regardless of race, creed or color; regard for our fellowman, respect for his feelings and beliefs, and finally willingness to battle against wrong and for the right, to battle fearlessly, fairly and effectively. ...

These are our aims and objects of our organization. We must study how best we can serve these ends. We must act as a supplementing force with our leaders and our rabbis to bring back to the Synagogue those of our brothers who have for a time forgotten their religion, and to strengthen others, as well as ourselves, to be inspired by and to carry on the eternal truths of Judaism. "

These words were spoken by Roger Strauss, NFTB's first president, as part of his welcoming address at the opening convention of NFTB. Over 75 years have passed, and NFTB stands tall, many decades of proud accomplishment behind it, and looks forward to the future determined to fulfill its renewed and enduring mission. Our members - our fathers, our uncles, our grandfathers - have quietly served as temple ushers, *shiva* corps members, new member greeters, *sukkah* builders, *Purim* carnival workers, chicken-flickers, blood drive workers, *kiddush* cup presenters, and scholarship donators. Truly, a versatile group of builders, repairers, painters, gardeners, lightbulb-replacers, and yes, extraordinary hosts of Sunday morning bagel noshes! *Our men of brotherhood have toiled in a spirit of extraordinary fellowship, striving to make our congregations warm and caring communities.*

NFTB's mission has been to encourage local brotherhoods to engage in projects and activities that will provide meaningful services to their congregation. From the

outset, our goal has been to increase the participation and involvement of Jewish men in the Reform movement.

For over 75 years, our members have been dedicated to *tikkun olam*, repair of this world, through active involvement in youth education, adult education, social action and yes, fellowship activities - all of which contribute to the enrichment of our synagogue communities.

Perhaps the most important and effective of NFTB's national programs has been its sponsorship of the Jewish Chautauqua Society (JCS). Adopted as NFTB's interfaith education arm in 1939, The Jewish Chautauqua Society was originally founded in 1893 by Rabbi Henry Berkowitz. Founded on the principles of the Chautauqua Institution of upstate New York, which sought to spread education and values, the Jewish Chautauqua Society built its image on the dissemination of Judaism and Jewish history. Over the years it moved from the education of Jews about Judaism to the interfaith work it is now famous for. JCS continues today to educate the non-Jewish public about Jews and Judaism. By employing the knowledge and teaching skills of Jewish clergy, JCS has found its way into many of America's educational institutions and religious organizations. Through a variety of lectureships, book grants, and films, JCS has earned its place among the many tried and true interfaith organizations.

In the early 1990s, JCS became a founding partner in the Dillard Center for Black-Jewish relations. Recently, JCS provided funding to the Thomas More Project, which is conducting a pilot interfaith project at an inner city school in Baltimore, Maryland. Now in its 106th year, JCS continues to battle anti-Semitism, racism, and ignorance through its strong claim of "Understanding Through Education."

Continuing in the spirit of education, NFTB has been the forerunner to Jewish education on the college level. NFTB's *Sambatyon* (College Youth Program), initiated in the 1960's, became the predecessor to the UAHC Youth Commission and provided Reform Jewish college students the opportunity to remain Jews while away at school. This program, which offered funding for lecturers, programs, retreats, and spiritual concerns became a major force in keeping Judaism part of college life. Reinventing itself in the 1990's as the Reform On Campus (ROC) program, ROC, has opened doors to the Reform Jewish college youth of America. Through the continued funding of programs and other activities such as Shabbat Dinners and weekend retreats with Jewish clergy, ROC has successfully kept Reform Jewish college students in touch.

For over seventy-five years, NFTB has also sought to educate its members of other larger societal issues and concerns that have affected the Jewish community. Its two main channels for communications were NFTB's national resolutions and the Brotherhood publication. The national resolutions, voted upon at each NFTB Biennial National Convention, has often been a reflection of the times. Keeping in mind the ethics of Judaism and upholding the rights of free people, NFTB has fought hard for various causes and done so in the spirit of Brotherhood. Whether it be speaking out against anti-Semitism in the 1930's, the support of Europe's Jews during WWII, support for Israel beginning in 1948, the fight against the persecution of Soviet Jews in the 1970's, historically, NFTB has made it clear that it would get involved in the world of international Jewry.

Brotherhood publications have evolved through the years and in turn have become an outlet and information source for Reform Jewish men. Beginning as *The Jewish Layman* in 1923-1951, the official publication of NFTB has had three reincarnations: *The Brotherhood Section in American Judaism* (1951-1966), *Brotherhood Magazine* (1967-1999), and in its newest incarnation, ACHIM Magazine (1999). With each renaming of the magazine has come a greater need for informing brotherhood members. While addressing issues of national, international, and Jewish concern,

NFTB's publication has also found time to address men's concerns. Whether it be advice on how to run an effective program, or more recently offering articles on prostate cancer and stress, NFTB's publication has always kept the well being of its members in mind. By addressing such subjects as "Jews and Masculinity", "Is Judaism Being Feminized", and "Jewish Men's Spirituality", **ACHIM** provides provocative and controversial articles that question the roles, identities, and problems that Jewish men face. By acting as house organ and now as the only Jewish Men's Magazine in North America, **ACHIM** proves to be an important component for communication, education, and the promotion of brotherhood.

NFTB has also provided its local brotherhoods with materials that help to bolster and renew their programming, membership, and fundraising within their temple community. NFTB's **BOLD Leadership Training Program** provides both speakers, often from the National Board of NFTB, and accessible material that motivates and revitalizes both new and old brotherhoods. BOLD's success is based on the concept of shared experience and willingness to listen. By allowing brotherhoods to express their concerns, problems, and fears, a dialogue is created where advice can be given and real strategies employed. In order to build a better Brotherhood, BOLD argues, all the members must agree to take action and engage the community.. Through this, brotherhood flourishes. Today, our members - our brothers, our sons, our grandsons - find greater meaning in their lives through their involvement with brotherhood; Men just as committed to their brotherhoods and to their congregations as were their fathers.

Today, NFTB does not take the participation of adult Jewish men in temple life for granted. Today's Jewish males must be encouraged to learn, to feel, and to appreciate the gift of being Jewish. Recently NFTB initiated a new series of projects that are collectively called the **ACHIM CORPS Projects**. Achim is Hebrew for "brothers" and it refers to the programs and resources we are producing that give our brotherhood members - and all the men in our temple communities - the opportunity to explore and celebrate issues of concern to Jewish men, through study, worship and service. Our goal is to increase our ranks with men ready to transform their renewed links to Reform Judaism into an active expression of commitment to perform *mitzvot* for their temple and their community.

By confronting various issues, The ACHIM CORPS attempts to create spaces and a language through which Jewish men can share, grow and succeed. Currently, the ACHIM CORPS produces materials for three different areas of concern : Men's Health, Men's Spirituality, and Jewish Men's issues.

The ACHIM CORPS Men's Health Initiative is the most successful of these programs and has produced materials which provides information and education on Prostate Cancer Stress, and Heart Disease. These three programs, each with its own set of information kits and program guidelines, enables a local Brotherhood to engage the health concerns of Jewish men and bring to light the danger of ignoring a health problem. By allowing each local brotherhood to develop and execute their own health program around the national guidelines, success often occurs.

The Men's Spirituality Program actively engages the spiritual and religious wants of the Reform Jewish Man. Through the resource guide Men and Shabbat and the upcoming Men and the Holidays, NFTB has established a space for men's observance and teaches them how to participate in and understand the Jewish Life Cycle in their own lives. Through prayer, discussion, and practice, men are given the opportunity to claim the Jewish calendar and celebrate it as fathers, sons, and brothers.

And most recently, continuing the long tradition of disseminating interfaith and Jewish education throughout America, NFTB became the national sponsor of **Walking Together**, a new nationwide program designed for Jewish, Christian, and

Muslim 4th-6th grade school children and their parents, teaching religious diversity through a variety of innovative and educational sessions. These sessions are lead by trained lay facilitators with the help of local community clergy. Walking Together is broken into three, three hour sessions where participants discuss, explore, and question their religious traditions, misunderstandings, and commonalities. They utilize a variety of ritual objects and sources, games and texts, and are given the opportunity to understand the meanings behind the faiths being examined. NFTB will be supporting and sponsoring at six different pilot locations around the country with the blessing of various national religious organizations and institutions.

NFTB is resolved to ensure that local brotherhoods are the temple address for ALL MEN. NFTB and its members are working to improve the quality of life for their families, for their congregations, and our society. We look forward to being partners with other arms of the Reform Movement in meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

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WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM

Women of Reform Judaism, The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, representing 100,000 women in 600 local Sisterhoods throughout the United States, Canada and thirteen other countries, is the women's agency of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the central body of Reform Judaism in North America.

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Membership & Leadership

Who, What, Why of Sisterhood
Founders Endowment Fund
Materials & publications
Recognition awards
Chai for a Membership Committee
We welcome new Sisterhoods!

Religious Action

Advocacy & Action
Critical Issues
Or Ami awards
Resolutions & Statements

Religious Living


 Seder Scripts
Art Calendar and Card
"Talking Shop" - Judaica Shops
2002 WRJ Judaica Shop Directory
Women's Torah Commentary

Development & Projects
YES Fund

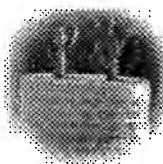
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ROE V. WADE TURNS THIRTY

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New Haggadahs for Sisterhood seders!

Sisterhood Leadership Forms 2003-2004



Read the news about the
WRJ Women's Commentary on Torah

Attention Sisterhood Judaica Shops and all who love fine Judaica!

Introducing the new Judaica Shop Directory for your convenience in ordering Judaica from the vendors and artists who support WRJ.



A Gift of Prayer:
The Spirituality of Jewish Women
A beautiful book of prayers, poems and meditations with art on the theme of prayer.

Be a sponsor of
The Fund for the Generations



WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM

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FOUNDED JANUARY 21, 1913

WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM, The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, is the voice, the presence and the arena of action of the women of Reform Judaism in the synagogue, the Jewish community, interfaith groups and the general, local, national and international community. It is the women's agency and an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the central body of Reform Judaism in North America. The founder of NFTY (the North American Federation of Temple Youth) and the Jewish Braille Institute, WRJ is a member of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and works on behalf of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

WRJ bands together more than 100,000 Jewish women in over 600 Sisterhoods throughout the United States and in Canada and in other countries: Panama, Netherlands Antilles, Argentina, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Israel, the Republic of South Africa, India, Australia and New Zealand.

Devoted to a broad spectrum of Jewish and humanitarian causes, WRJ furthers the teachings and practices of Judaism. Its diversified activities also include projects on behalf of the blind and visually impaired, education in international relations including the United Nations, religious and family education, intergroup relations and a wide range of vital, far-reaching programs in the field of social justice, the struggle for the freedom of Jews in Eastern Europe and support of the State of Israel.

WRJ represents Reform Jewish women to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Religious Network for the Equality of Women, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, National Interfaith Coalition on Aging, Interreligious Health Care Access Campaign and other coalitions and commissions dealing with social concerns in the interreligious and general communities. WRJ is an accredited representative to both the Department of Public Information and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

WRJ serves affiliated Sisterhoods through the preparation of materials to help the local Sisterhood function at its most effective level. This includes materials for: programming; continuing Jewish adult education; critical issues and community service; preschool Jewish learning; working with high school and college age youth; assisting the aging, the disabled, Jews of the Former Soviet Union and other parts of the Jewish community; and

organizational and leadership development.

WRJ affiliates are organized into thirteen District Federations, each of which develops a program of institutes, workshops, caravans and conventions meeting the needs of Sisterhoods within their respective areas. WRJ holds a biennial Assembly at which delegates representing local Sisterhoods make decisions regarding the program and policy directions of the WRJ .

WRJ is represented on the Board of Trustees of the UAHC, the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the Executive Board of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, the Commission on Social Action for Reform Judaism and other committees and commissions of Reform Judaism.

For further information about its programs and projects, please contact:

WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM
The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods
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Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

The Religious Action Center pursues social justice and religious liberty by mobilizing the American Jewish Community and serving as its advocate in the nation's capital



Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

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What is the Center?

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) has been the hub of justice and legislative activity in the nation's capital for over 40 years. It has mobilized the American Jewish community on legislative and social advocacy in the Congress of the United States on issues ranging from Israel to economic justice and civil rights, to international peace and religion.

The RAC is the Washington office of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), representing 1.5 million Jews and 1,700 Reform rabbis in 900 congregations throughout North America.

Who operates the Center?

The Religious Action Center is under the auspices of the Commission on Synagogue Reform Judaism, a joint instrumentality of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations with its affiliates: American Cantors, Association of Reform Zionists of America, National Association of Synagogue Administrators, National Association of Temple Educators, National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, National Federation of Temple Youth.

Contact us!

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 Fax: (202) 667-9070
 Email: rac@uahc.org

Leadership



Rabbi David Saperstein
Director and Counsel



Mark J. Pelavin
Associate Director



Robert Heller
Chairperson, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism



Rabbi Marla Feldman
Director, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism

Rabbi Michael Namath
Programs Director



Barbara Weinstein
Legislative Director



Sherry Levy-Reiner
Development Director



Alexis Rice
Communication Director



Shelley Engel
Administrator

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Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

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April 15, 2003

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Reform Jewish Movement Applauds Congressional Passage of Clean Diamond Trade Act

(Apr. 15) Following the passage of the Clean Diamond Trade Act, Barbara Weinstein, Legislative Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, released the following statement noting, "Every customer has the right to know that there is no blood on diamonds offered for sale, and that their beauty is untarnished by the suffering of innocent victims." [more](#)

Reform Jewish Movement Condemns Secretary Paige's Remarks on Religious Pluralism and Schools

(Apr. 10) In a letter today, Mark Pelavin, Associate Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, urged U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige to withdraw his remarks promoting Christian values in the context of American education and clarify his commitment to public education, noting, "We would hope that as Secretary of Education, you would be the nation's strongest advocate of public education—an institution that embraces diversity and teaches all children regardless of economic status, race, or religion." [more](#)

Reform Jewish Movement Applauds Senate Passage of the Charity Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act

(Apr. 9) Responding to today's Senate passage of the Charity Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act, Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC), issued the following statement noting, "Passage of this bill demonstrates that the government can work with religious organizations to help eradicate poverty in ways that are constructive, cooperative, and constitutional." [more](#)

Consultation on Conscience 2003

Read speeches and view pictures from RAC's biannual political conferece that took place March 30-April 1, 2003 in Washington, DC. [more](#)

Iraq Resources

RAC LEGISLATIVE ACTION

WORLD TO

Enter Your ZIP

Find your local

Chai IMPACT Action

• Urge Congress to Support Law Enforcement Hate Prevention Act

• Urge the Senate to Oppose Immunity for the Gun

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[Learn About L Seminar](#)

an intensive four-day Washington, DC, for Jewish values and so for high school students just announce

As the U.S. begins a war in Iraq, the RAC has created a resource guide to help you better understand both the current situation in Iraq and the organized Jewish community's response.

[View Resource Page](#)

Synagogue Security

Now that the federal government has raised its terror threat level to "high risk" orange, it is important to examine your congregation's security plan and work with your local law enforcement.

[View Resource Page](#)

Israel Information and Action:



[View the UAHC's Site Concerning Israel](#)









UAHC
Union of American Hebrew
Congregations



Central Conference of
American Rabbis

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<p>Central Conference of American Rabbis</p> 	<p>Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion</p> 	<p>Union of American Hebrew Congregations</p> 

For More Information, Please Contact
 Neal Schuster, Director, Berit Mila Program

c/o HUC-JIR 3077 University Avenue Los Angeles, California 90007-3796	(213) 749-3424, ext. 4261 Fax: (213) 747-6128 beritmila@huc.edu
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The Berit Mila Program of Reform Judaism seeks to make the age old practice of *berit mila* available to Jewish families as a meaningful and relevant Jewish life-cycle ritual.

One of our primary activities is the training and certification of Reform *mohalim* (sometimes called *moyels*) to perform *berit mila*. **Only qualified medical practitioners are eligible for certification.** Physicians and Certified Nurse Midwives enter the program with the medical skills and expertise to perform the circumcision – the Berit Mila Program provides the religious education and training for them to become *mohalim*.

The Berit Mila Program began in 1984 as the collaborative effort of Rabbi Lewis Barth, Ph.D., and Dr David James, with Dr. Deborah Cohen being certified as the first Reform mohelet in that same year. As increasing numbers of liberal Jews were choosing *berit mila* for their sons, it became clear that we needed an alternative to the classic *moyel* if the needs of Reform and liberal Jews were to be met. Rabbi Barth and Dr. James envisioned *mohalim* who would do more than arrive at a home, utter a few prayers circumcise and then leave – they would seek to make the ritual of *berit mila* a relevant and beautiful ceremony for the families they served.

Today, there are nearly two-hundred and fifty Reform *mohalim* - men and women - throughout the United States and Canada who have completed the program and received certification from the Berit Mila Board of Reform Judaism. These *mohalim* combine a medical expertise which puts parents at ease, with a religious orientation and knowledge to make *berit mila* a meaningful and beautiful part of each family's life-cycle rituals.

Additionally, Reform *mohalim* serve many families which Orthodox *moyels* would refuse to serve. Whether it is a family in which the mother has converted to Judaism, or if it is a mixed marriage in which the father is Jewish but the mother is not, or if it is a gay or lesbian couple, the Berit Mila Program recognizes that families of all types are committed to Jewish life and living.

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<u>Central Conference of American Rabbis</u>	<u>Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion</u>	<u>Union of American Hebrew Congregations</u>



GET CONNECTED.

Connect to Reform Jewish life on your campus! KESHER is the campus-based program of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' College Education Department. Working in partnership with Hillel and other campus organizations, KESHER serves Reform Jewish students through local Reform *chavurot* on campus and national leadership events. KESHER offers annual conventions, trips to Israel (through *birthright israel*) and Argentina, alternative spring breaks, and leadership training events. [Click here to learn more!](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

[Click on any event for more details!](#)

Shuva v'Shira
May 15-18, 2003
UAHC Kutz Camp - Warwick,

Kesher Israel Connection
birthright Israel Trip
May 18-29, 2003

Argentina Ambassadors Pro
May 22 - June 2, 2003
Argentina

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SPOTLIGHTS

- [Download the NEW KESHER brochure! \(PDF File\)](#)
- [Jewish U: A great new publication for college-bound students!](#)
- [Reform Movement Shadow Program](#)
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NFTY North American Federation of Temple Youth

An affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations



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STAY CONNECTED TO NFTY

Now you can get NFTY news and updates in your e-mailbox! Sign-up right now!



FALL OR SPRING SEMESTER

NFTY High School in Israel

Click here for details!

GO WEST!

\$1000 to the first 200 registrants!

Welcome to the North American Federation of Temple Youth homepage!
NFTY has offered thousands of young people the opportunity to explore and live Reform Judaism since 1939.
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★ ★ ★

NFTY&You

PROGRAMS OPPORTUNITIES

UAHC Kutz Camp

NFTY National Leadership Center

Take the next leap... A leadership experience that you will never forget! Join us for Summer 2003 at Kutz!

WHAT'S NEW

- [NFTY eSource](#) Come read the latest edition of NFTY eSource and get this month's ready-to-use programs for your TYGI! >>
- [NFTY Convention 2003](#) Come relive the fun and excitement of NFTY Convention. Share your convention memories and visit our photo album! >>
- [Travel Equalization Reimbursements and NFTY Convention Refunds](#) Please click here for updated information. >>

NFTY Travel Programs

What are you doing this summer? Come join NFTY on one of our exciting summer adventures in Israel, Europe or N. America!

UAHC Camps

Exciting opportunities for high school students including CIT programs and counselor positions at the UAHC camps

XtraStuff

World Conflict

Resources for Youth

NFTYites speak out about the Conflict in Iraq, the opinions of prominent Jewish speakers, creating a safe place for discussion and web resources. >>

SEARCH NFTY.ORG

GO



UAHC Youth Division
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North American Federation of Temple Youth

An affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations

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Welcome to the North American Federation of Temple Youth!

For over sixty years, the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) has offered thousands of young people the opportunity to explore and live Reform Judaism. Today, over 450 Reform congregations throughout North America sponsor Temple Youth Groups, bringing the NFTY experience to more than 10,000 high school-age young people. Through involvement opportunities offered by congregations, our 21 NFTY regions, and on the North American level, NFTYites strive to forge an identity in consonance with the goals and values of Reform Judaism.

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NFTY's Goals

- Instill Jewish Identity
- Increase Synagogue Participation among High School Youth
- Foster Long-term Commitment to the Ideals and Values of Reform Judaism
- Create Today the Reform Jewish Congregants of Tomorrow

NFTY's Values

- Jewish Literacy
- Spiritual Exploration
- Social Action
- Leadership Development
- Jewish Community
- Personal Growth

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North American Federation of Temple Youth

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NFTY is committed to...

Jewish Literacy

NFTY is committed to providing young Reform Jews with a solid foundation of Jewish information necessary to help them make informed Jewish decisions. What rituals will they observe? What is their connection to Israel? What values will they espouse and pass on to their children? NFTY strives to make Jewish learning both accessible and enjoyable through experiential informal Jewish education. Most NFTY programs are researched, prepared, and executed by NFTY leaders under the guidance of NFTY Regional Advisors, Clergy, and Educators.

Spiritual Exploration

NFTY wants its young people to have meaningful experiences living and praying Jewishly. NFTY helps young people find their connection to God and the role that faith can play in their lives. NFTY worship services are unique for Reform Jewish teenagers in setting, style, and choice of music.

Social Action

NFTY recognizes that young people are extremely concerned about the fate of the world in which they live. Commitment to Tikkun Olam-repairing the world-has always been a major component of the NFTY experience. Through community service, speaking, lobbying, marching on current domestic or foreign political issues, NFTY remains committed to learning, caring and making a difference in the world.

Leadership Development

In order to create the Reform Jewish leadership of tomorrow, NFTY cultivates the Reform Jewish Youth Leadership of today. Through a variety of elected and appointed positions from the youth group level up to the North American level, NFTYites acquire leadership skills through peer-led programming, taking stands at general board meetings, and networking. Adult advisors serve as role-models and guides in these endeavors.

Jewish Community

NFTY strives to create a holy Jewish community in which all NFTYites feel a sense of belonging, friendship, and purpose. Through local, regional, and North America events, NFTYites experience a meaningful Jewish community where each person is considered to be made B'tzelem Elohim-in the image of God.

Personal Growth

Through Jewish community, adult Reform Jewish mentors, leadership development, Jewish study, social action, and spiritual exploration, NFTY aims to give Reform Jewish youth the ethical tools to make decisions in their day-to-day lives.

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NFTY&You Opportunities & Programs

Each year NFTY holds several programs which provide opportunities for personal growth and learning for all of its members. From regional NFTY events to a summer experience in Israel, Europe or North American, there is something for everyone!

www.kutzcamp.org



UAHC Kutz Camp NFTY National Leadership Center

Are you striving to improve your TYG? Thinking about running for regional board or just thirsty for more knowledge? Maybe you have a taste for the creative and aspire to be a songleader, Israeli dancer or Jewish artist? Or perhaps you are looking to give back, performing acts of *Tikkun Olam*. Come join the unique NFTY summer community at the UAHC Kutz Camp - NFTY National Leadership Center and learn to lead!

www.nfty.org/travel



NFTY Summer Travel Programs

Imagine the most incredible summer of your life. Hike, climb, discover, and explore with new friends from across the continent. Return home with endless personal accomplishments, meaningful memories and stories you'll never forget. Come join us this summer in Israel, Europe or North America!

www.nfty.org/eie



NFTY-EIE High School in Israel

Since 1961, over a thousand exceptional high school juniors and seniors have spent an unforgettable semester immersed in the culture and history of Israel. This experience has had a profound effect on the lives of participants, many of whom are leaders of North American Jewish communities. The NFTY High School in Israel has, as the decades pass, evolved into an exceptional living and learning experience, responding to the needs and expectations of participants, parents and home high schools. The Eisendrath International Exchange Program prides itself on being NFTY's premier Israel program. EIE is a four-month academic semester program, during which participants have the opportunity to experience Israel as a "resident", and not simply as a "passer-by."



NFTY Regional Events

One of the most amazing aspects of NFTY is that almost every Friday afternoon during the year, Jewish kids gather in buses, train stations, temple parking lots and foyers, waiting for the excitement of one of NFTY's regional events to ensue. On the same autumn weekend, from NFTY-GER to NFTY Southern, the magical mystery of NFTY's regions help to shape the minds of young Reform Jews.

www.nfty.org/regions



UAHC Camp-Institutes

The twelve UAHC Camp-Institutes provide the opportunity for NFTYites to spend their summers either as a senior camper or as a staff member. We have twelve camps located throughout North America which provide thousands of young Jews with knowledge, growth and fun during the summers they spend there.

www.uahccamps.org



KESHER *Connecting Reform Jews on Campus*

KESHER is the campus-based program of the UAHC's College Education Department. Working in partnership with Hillel and other campus organizations, KESHER serves Reform Jewish students through local Reform *chavurot* on campus and national leadership events. KESHER offers annual conventions, trips to Israel (through *birthright israel*) and Argentina, alternative spring breaks, and leadership training events. KESHER also helps high school students exploring the possibilities of Jewish life on campus.

www.keshernet.com



The NFTY Website

The NFTY experience is online 24-7 at www.nfty.org! Log on for NFTY news, resources, photos and more.

Sign up at www.nfty.org for NFTY e-mails newsletters, including eSource. NFTY eSource is a collaborative effort between the NFTY North American Board and the NFTY staff to provide our community with resources related to the NFTY Program themes and leadership development on a regular basis.

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NFTY Resources

- [NFTY Constitution](#)
- [NFTY Code of Conduct](#)
- [NFTY Dictionary](#)
- [TYG Leadership](#)
- [TYG Administration](#)
- [Programming](#)
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- [Membership & Communications](#)
- [NFTY Social Action Theme](#)
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- [Download Help](#)

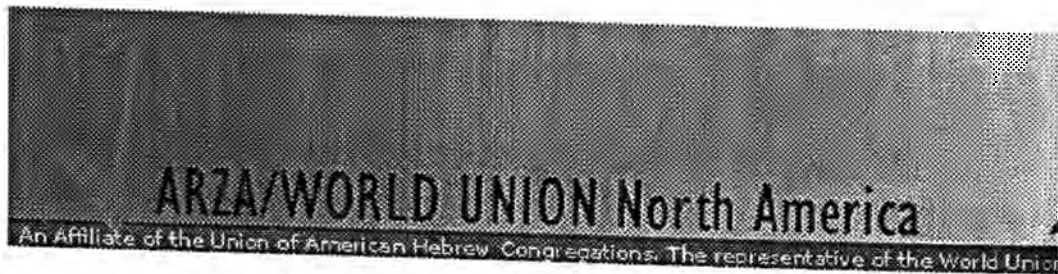


Welcome to NFTY's Resource Center! Here you'll find all of the resources and publications that NFTY provides for its regions and temple youth groups (TYG's).

The Resource Center "is powered by" our monthly e-mail newsletter called eSource. Esource provides regular web updates, news, resources and ready-to-use sample programs for your region or TYG. [Sign-up for NFTY e-mails right now!](#)

If you'd like more information about any of the resources you see here, contact the NFTY Office at (212) 650-4070 or e-mail us at nftyesource@uahc.org.

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- Events
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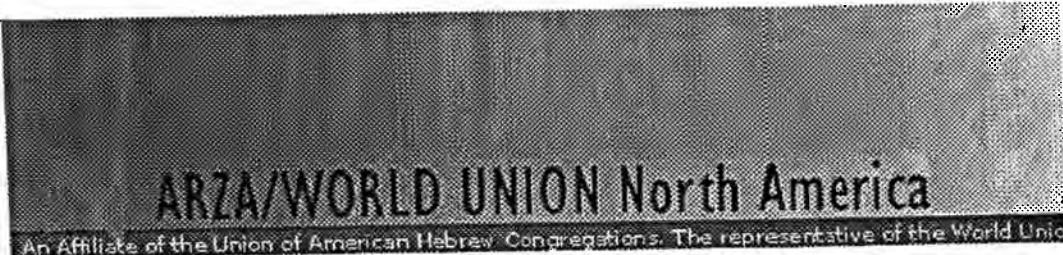
The mission of ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is the development of Progressive Judaism in Israel and through ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America strives to strengthen Jewish communities by encouraging Jewish solidarity, promoting religious pluralism and furthering Zionism.

ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is working to strengthen the relationship of North American Reform Jews with Progressive Jewish communities in Israel and throughout the world and to educate and inform our constituency on relevant matters of Jewish importance. ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is the representative of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- New CCAR President Rabbi Janet Marder Calls on 1.5 Million Reform Jews To Join ARZA/World Union, N.A. Now. [Click here to read this about this program.](#)
- **Coming soon:** Sign up and read our newly created E-bulletin: Connections.
- New! Nations Sing: A Yom Ha-Atzmaut Curriculum for Congregations and Communities. [Click about this interactive program.](#)
- [Read and use our monthly "Short Takes" for your con bulletin](#)
- Learn more about our [Missions to Israel, the FSU and](#)



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MISSION STATEMENT

ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is the official representative of the American community for all issues pertaining to Israel, Zionism and Reform Judaism worldwide of ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is to further the development of Progressive Israel, the former Soviet Union and throughout the world by supporting the institutions and activities of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. ARZA/WORLD UNION, strives to strengthen the relationship of North American Reform Jews with Progressive communities in Israel, the former Soviet Union and throughout the world, by encouraging solidarity, promoting religious pluralism and furthering Zionism.

As an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (the umbrella organization of Reform congregations in North America) and the representative in North America of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America represents one million North American Jews in over 900 Reform synagogues.

ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is committed to seeking the acceptance of religious pluralism in Israel and around the world. It encourages the State of Israel to grant full human and religious rights to all its citizens, thus enriching Israel as a model of Jewish

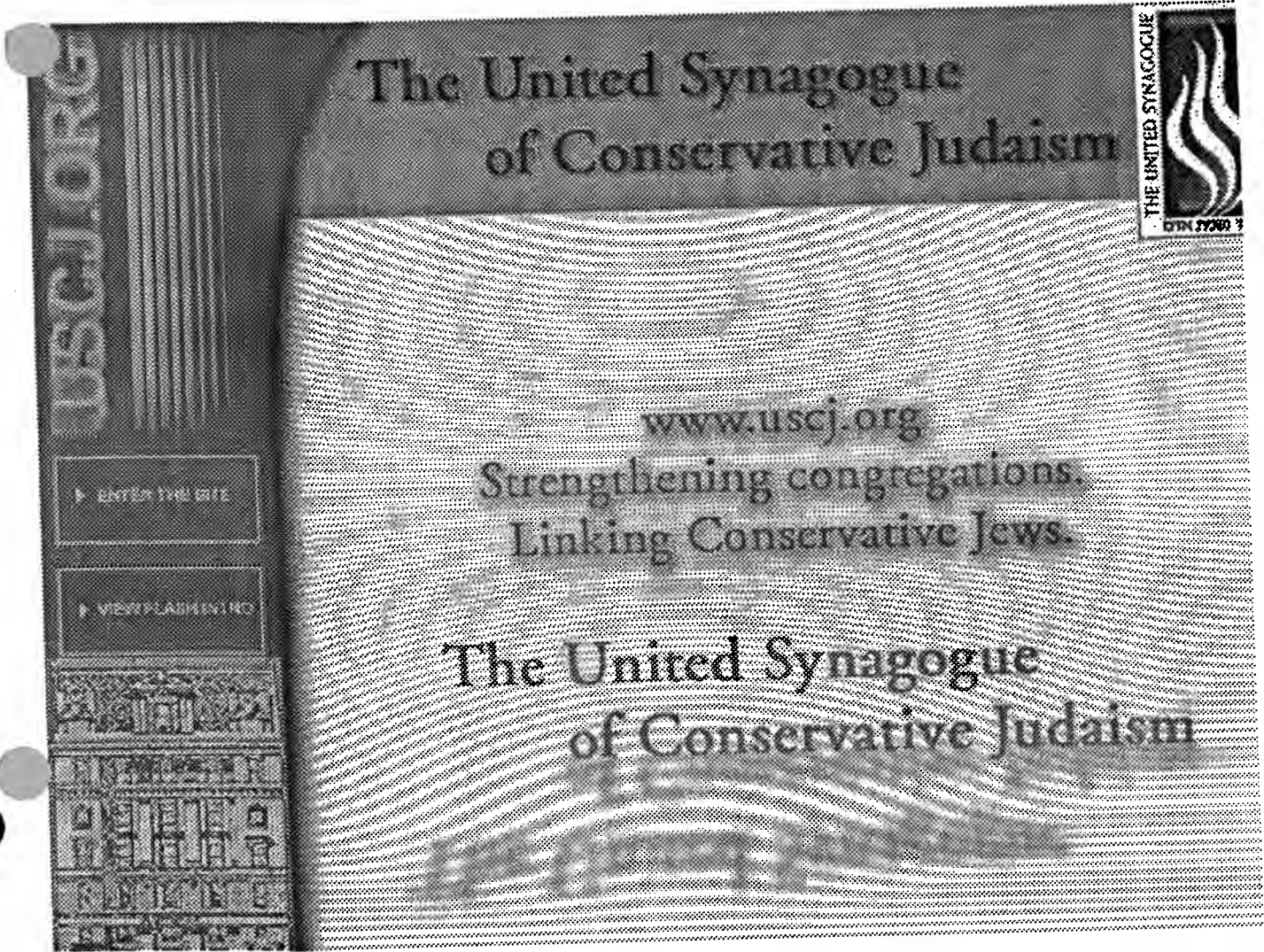
ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America educates Reform Jews on the principles and programs of Progressive Judaism. It communicates its message through the World Reform Reporter, which provides regular information on Reform Judaism in Israel, the former Soviet Union and throughout the world. ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America organizes missions for its members to meet with American government officials and Jewish activists to promote better understanding of religious pluralism and Reform Judaism. ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America also sends rabbinic missions to the Middle East, providing an opportunity for Reform rabbis to meet with both Israeli and Middle Eastern policy makers.

Sign up for our updates



ARZA/WORLD UNION
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**JEWISH NEEDS -
CONSERVATIVE**



The United Synagogue strengthens Conservative congregations and enhances t

The United Synagogue of Conservative Jud

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Israel & The Jewish World
For Synagogue Leaders

Conflict in Iraq

- [War and Peace from a Jewish Ethical Perspective](#)
- [Helping Children Face a Crisis](#)
- [A Prayer for Our Soldiers](#)

Small Congregations Conference

5th annual conference devoted to the needs of small synagogues. May 18-19, Orlando, Florida. [Register!](#)

Hazak on Wheels 2003 Summer Tour

August 10-18th, 2003. Deluxe touring of the Finger Lakes, Toronto, Montreal. For adults 55+. [More!](#)

"TheBrave" Discussion E-List

Listserv for Jewish families with members in the military. [Recent news about The Brave!](#)

Synagogue Security Update:

[FBI Audio Briefing Transcript: February 14, 2003](#)
[Additional Information from the RAC](#)

Framework for Excellence in Syn Schools

Read the Blue Ribbon Panel's full report

Sign Up For Operation Joshual

Israel Solidarity Mission, May 4-9, 2003

Solomon Schechter Awards for Excellence in Synagogue Program

[Follow this link to Learn How to Apply!](#)

GO

FAST LINKS

- Book Service
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- KOACH
- Project Reconnect
- Donate

USCJ MARKETPLACE

All For ISRAEL

Buy your gifts now and show your support for Israel



A Prayer for Our Soldiers

Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein, Executive Vice President of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, offers a [prayer for our soldiers](#) at this d. It is our hope that the prayer may be recited by individuals and u congregations in their worship services. You may also want to s expanding website section on the Conflict in Iraq, and learn abou a listserv created for Jewish families with members in the militar



Calling all alumni of USY, NATIV, KOACH, & ATID: Find old friends at www.ProjectReconnect.org

Project Reconnect, an exciting new initiative of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, seeks to identify and reconnect with alum NATIV, KOACH, ATID, and related programs. Project Reconnect has the potential to reinvolve, reinvigorate, and reconnect a key group of adults whose beginnings in Conservative Judaism stemmed from active involvement in youth and college programs of the USCJ. This section hopes to serve as a rich resource for potential Olim and the of Israel Diaspora relationships. Exciting things are happening with Project Reconnect and USCJ alumni. The Israel Yellowpages is up and running as a service for USY alumni that have made Aliyah. To view the site visit www.projectreconnect.org/yellowpages.

Register Now for the 2003 Biennial Convention!

Mark your calendars now for the USCJ Biennial Convention, October 2003, at the Fairmont Hotel in Dallas, Texas. Addressing the theme **Yameinu K'Kedem: Preserving the Jewish Past; Living the Jewish Future**, the Convention will feature lively mini-courses, stimulating panel discussions and sparkling social events. Teachers will include Rabbi William Lebeau, Dean of the JTS.



JTS > About JTS > Conservative Movement Links

Conservative Movement Links



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JTS NEWS

[New York Times covers Spring 2003 Rudin Lecture \(3/2003\)](#)

[Melton: New Winter 2003 issue of Melton Gleanings \(3/2003\)](#)

[List College Alumni to Honor Rabbi Harold Kushner \(3/2003\)](#)

JTS NEWS BULLETIN

- [More JTS news](#)
- [JTS Periodicals](#)
- [Press Releases](#)
- [Speeches and Addresses](#)

JTS EVENTS

[12/12/2002 - Culture and 3/31/2003 Costume at JTS Library](#)



Assembly of Masorti Synagogues, UK
<http://www.masorti.org.uk/>



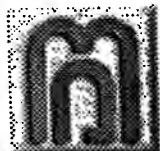
The Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem
<http://www.conservativeyeshiva.org/>



The Jewish Museum
<http://www.jewishmuseum.org/>



Koach
<http://www.usej.org/koach/>



Masorti Movement (Israel)
<http://www.masorti.org/>
[Other Israeli Agencies](#)



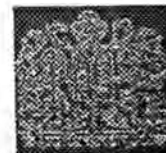
National Ramah Commission
<http://www.campramah.org/>
[Camps Online](#)



Rabbinical Assembly
<http://www.rabassembly.org/>



Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies
<http://www.schechter.org.il/>



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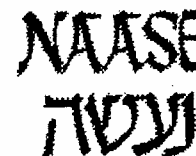
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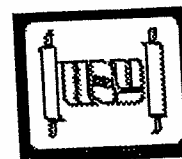
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Stu**
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Chapters and Branches

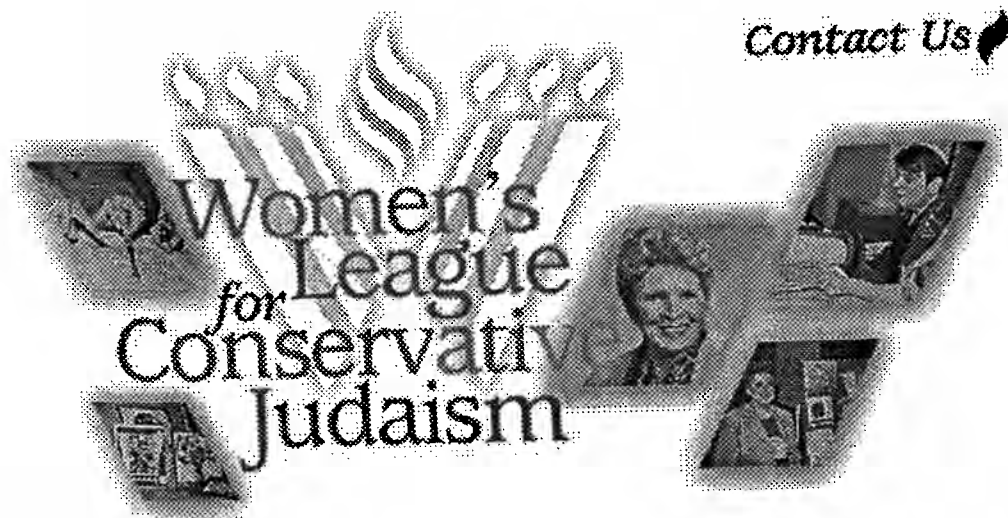
- **FJMC Chapters**
 - Temple Sinai Men's Club, Dresher, PA

Other Israeli Agencies

- Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies
- TALI Education Fund

Solomon Schechter Schools Online

- Perelman Jewish Day School, Philadelphia, PA
- Solomon Schechter Day School of Jacksonville, FL
- Solomon Schechter Day Schools of Chicago, IL
- Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston, MA
- South Area Solomon Schechter Day School, Stoughton, MA
- Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union, NJ
- Solomon Schechter Day School of Raritan Valley, NJ
- Solomon Schechter Day School of St. Louis, MO
- Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island, NY
- Solomon Schechter High School of New York, NY
- Solomon Schechter School of Westchester, NY



Contact Us 

We are Women's League for Conservative Judaism, the largest synagogue based women's organization in the world. As an active arm of the Conservative / Masorti Movement, we provide services to 700 affiliated women's groups in synagogues across North America. Join our network, which links 120,000 women in 25 Branches (regions), together with groups in Israel, Great Britain and South America.

Through our volunteer programs and projects geared toward education, religious observance, Israel, and public policy and advocacy, expand your knowledge and commitment to Judaism, participate in contemporary issues, and support Jewish ideals worldwide.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All About WLCJ• Services: <i>Helping Sisterhoods Thrive</i>• WLCJ Branches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Events• Publications & Resources• Torah Fund• Links/Connections
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WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

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(212) 870-1260 / fax (212) 870-1261
(800) 628-5083
womensleague@wlcj.org



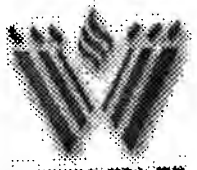
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- Torah Fund
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All About Women's League

Our Mission

The mission of Women's League for Conservative Judaism is to strengthen and unite synagogue women's groups and their members; support them in mutual efforts to understand and perpetuate Conservative / Masorti Judaism in the home, synagogue and community; and reinforce their bonds with Israel and with Jews worldwide.



120077 057 RD

Our Logo

Women are the keepers of the flames of *mitzvot*, family, study, Israel, Torah, and community. The W suggests the ancient menorah, and the phrase *Mah yafah y'rushataynu* (How beautiful is our heritage) reflects our ongoing commitment to our vital and dynamic traditions.

Our Standards of Leadership

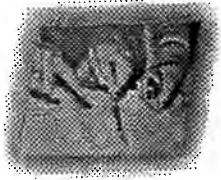
As a religious organization, Women's League recognizes its responsibility to maintain ideals of leadership. In this spirit we set forth the following cornerstones of commitment and observance, consistent with the *halakhah* of the Conservative Movement: *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*; Jewish Study; *Kashrut*; *Tz'dakah*; Synagogue; and Israel.

Our Branches

In order to better serve our members, Women's League supports 25 Branches across the United States and Canada. Each Branch is the direct link between Women's League and the individual Sisterhood woman.

[Browse our list of Branches](#) | [View list of Branch Presidents](#)

Our Departments



Education

Here's an opportunity to strengthen your Jewish identity, understand your heritage, develop a Jewish pattern of life, enhance home observance and holiday celebrations, and study. Women's League can provide you with meaningful programs, classes and materials in the following areas:

Adult Education

- Women's League Institutes
- *Kolot BIK'dushah*: women who are qualified to read Torah and/or lead services
- *Aytz Ha'yim He*: She Is A Tree of Life (Adult *Bat Mitzvah* Curriculum)
- Distance Learning with JTS

Archives: How to begin an archive program in your Sisterhood

Books, Libraries & Periodicals: Reviews and news

Creative Handcrafts: Designs and instructions

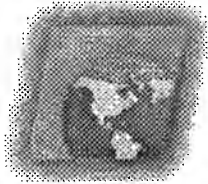
Jewish Living: Embracing the Jewish lifestyle of *mitzvot*

Judaica Shop: A valuable resource for acquiring Jewish ceremonial objects

Program/Music: Scripts, programs and ideas

Youth/School: Stimulating our youth to deepen their Jewish commitment

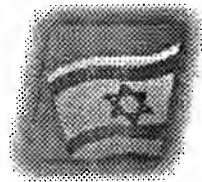
Resources



■ World Affairs

Add your voice to the public debate on the major issues of our time. Benefit Jewish communities at home and around the world. Women's League represents you in major national and international *Jewish and communal organizations* and supports the Conservative / Masorti Movement worldwide. Women's League provides the following:

- Ba'Olam: A World Affairs Newsletter
- United Nations NGO: Our eyes and ears at the world body
- Canadian Public Affairs: On the Canadian Scene
- Resources



■ Israel Affairs

Demonstrate your commitment to our six-point program: Love of Israel; Zionist education; economic independence; political and financial support for the *Masorti (Conservative) Movement*; tourism and aliyah; religious pluralism and political advocacy. Women's League fulfills this commitment through:

- Mercaz USA
- *Masorti* Women's League International
- *Masorti* Women's League International Study Days in Israel
- Biennial Conference Tours
- Israel Liaison

- Support of the *Masorti* Movement's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Program for Children with Special Needs
- Israeli Congregations
- Schechter Institute
- Resources

■ **Public Policy & Advocacy**

Focus on issues of concern to Jewish women in the new millennium. Our combined numbers **do** count in national, state and provincial capitals. We work to influence public policy on the following issues:

- Capital Conference
- Women's Health
- Environment
- Domestic Violence / "Love Shouldn't Hurt!"
- Gun Control
- Resources

■ **Community Service**

Reaffirm your sense of community and reach out to those in need through the following programs:

- The Mitzvah of Bikkur Holim
- Disabilities
- Jewish Braille Institute
- Jewish Girl Scouts of America
- Jewish Healing Service
- MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
- Holiday packages for Jewish military personnel
- Response to disasters worldwide
- Resources

■ **Membership**

Make things happen by joining your Sisterhood today! Women's League can help recruit and retain members through the following:

- Z'havah: Generating leadership for women 45 and under
- Singles: An opportunity to include this important segment of our community
- E-League: for women in their 20s
- WLCJNet: An online discussion group for all members of Women's League
- Resources

■ **Administration**

Running a successful Sisterhood is made easier with the following from Women's League:

- Parliamentary Procedure
- Public Relations
- Training Services
- Ways & Means
- Catalog of Scripts & Playlets
- Resources

■ **Personnel**



International President: Gloria B. Cohen

Vice Presidents: Janet Arnowitz, Athena Carpousis Ellner, Rickie Halth, Corinne Hammerschlag, Sylvia Levine, Phyllis Levy, Bernice Oswald, June Schwartz, Carol Simon, Miriam Suchoff, Marcia Toppall, Faye Ullmann

Recording Secretary: Shirley Morrison

Financial Secretary: Rita Wertlieb

Treasurer: Judith Horowitz

Executive Director: Bernice Balter

Education Director: Edya Arzt

Administration Director: Libby Lieberman

Public Relations Director: Rhonda Jacobs Kahn

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WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

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Website Updates

4/15/2003
Added a new Israel Poll:
What is your favorite type of Israeli food?

4/15/2003
Added a bunch of new icons to USY Buddy Icons

4/15/2003
Added 2000 to the Israel Timeline

4/14/2003
Added Kibbutz Sa'ad pictures to the Nativ 22 Updates

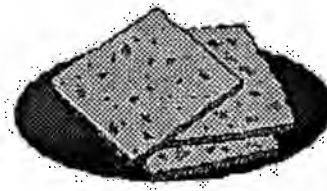
4/10/2003
Added 1993 to the Israel Timeline

What's New

Chag Sameach!

Passover (Pesach), the holiday celebrating the liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt over 3,000 years ago, lasts from Wednesday night, April 16th (14 Nisan) until Thursday night, April 24th (22 Nisan). Click here for more information.

Posted at: 04/15/2003



This Week's D'var Torah Israel Update Candle-lighting Times

USY Buddy Icons

Check out these brand new USY Buddy Icons for AOL Instant Messenger! You can choose icons for your region, USY program, USY club, and more, and you can suggest your own idea for a buddy icon!

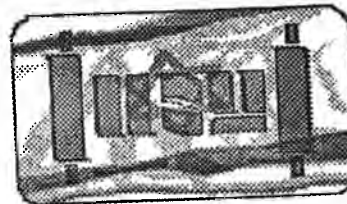
Posted at: 04/08/2003



New in Israel Affairs

In Israel Affairs, there's lots of new information! Vote in the new Israel Polls, check out the Israel Resources and the ongoing Israel Timeline, and find out more about this year's Israel Challenge as well!

Posted at: 04/03/2003



2003 Summer Programs

Interested in USY Summer Programs for THIS summer? Well, you are not too late! We are still accepting applications for Summer



USY Me



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Calen

Apr. 16, Pesach

May 02, Article deadline next issue of Jews in North

Most Rec

Question: What is your favorite type of food?

- Falafel
- Shwarma

More...

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2003. Programs are filling quickly and some have very limited spaces. **Click here** for more information!
Posted at: 03/26/2003

- Chocolate
- Fruits an
- Junk Food



View R

Project Zemirot!

Do you want to learn more Ruach songs? Learn new tunes? Check out the new **Project Zemirot** for your daily dose of Ruach! It's got tons of songs from the B'kol Echad as well as other places, along with the hebrew words, translations, transliterations, and MP3's of tunes to the songs!



Posted at: 03/26/2003

Nativ 22

Click here for updates on what Nativ 22 is doing in Israel, or **e-mail them** to hear more about their experiences. You can also **request information** about next year's Nativ 23.

Posted at: 03/26/2003

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Your USY

USY is your organization because you are the leaders. It's where the Conservative Movement is building *Jewish* leaders for the 21st century. At the International, regional, and chapter levels, USYers take responsibility in several program areas. Here you can learn more about these areas, while learning what it means to be part of USY.

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- > Advisors
- > Alumni
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- President's Message
- Israel Affairs
- Religion/Education
- Social Action/Tikun Olam
- Membership/Kadima
- Communications

You can also look at a **combined list of the resources** from each section's resources section.

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USY Memories

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Your USY Resources

The following is an easy to browse summary list of the resources that are available under the different sections of Your USY. Please browse the different sections too as there is more information available there as well. Rel/Ed and SA/TO Resources will be coming soon.

> Kadima
> Advisors
> Alumni

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• Israel Affairs Resources

○ How To's:

- How to Bring Israel Into Your Chapter and Region
- How to Write a Letter-to-the-Editor
- How to do an Israel Update

○ Discussion Ideas:

- Israel Discussions
- Monthly Sichot Topics
- Israel Role Play
- Where do you stand?

○ Programming Ideas:

- Adding Israel into Social Programming
- HeChalutzim Program Ideas
- Jerusalem Politics
- Jerusalem Municipality Meeting

○ Miscellaneous Information:

- Tidbits of Neat Information About Israeli Music!

• Membership/Kadima Resources

○ Helping Build Your Chapter:

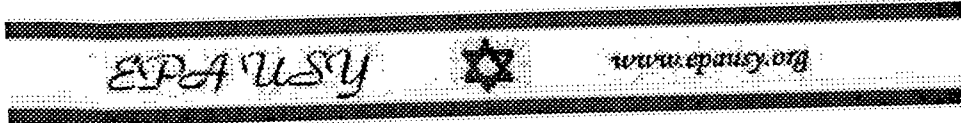
- How to Publicize USY
- How to Make Effective Phone Calls
- Direct Billing information
- New Member's Handbook

- o **Membership Programming Ideas:**
 - "Steal a SA/TO Program"

- **Communications Resources**

- o **Communications Helpfuls:**
 - **Communications is Key**
 - **How to Publicize USY**
 - **How to Make Effective Phone Calls**
 - **Making a Chapter Brochure**
 - **Ideas for Newsletters**
 - **Chapter Yearbooks**
 - **Publishing Tips**

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EPA Region USY

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Kadima is the middle school age affiliate of **United Synagogue Youth** and **The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism**. Kadima is Hebrew for "forward."

To find a Kadima chapter at a USCJ Conservative synagogue in your area contact your **Regional Youth Director**.

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Shalhevet -- USY's Creative Arts Magazine

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SOLOMON SCHECHTER DAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Today, increasing numbers of parents are choosing a Schechter education for their children.

- They seek a values-based program which teaches an approach to the sanctity of daily living in a nurturing, child-centered environment.
- They are attracted to an educational philosophy which seeks to integrate Jewish and general studies and demonstrates how each can influence the other.

Their goal — and ours — is to produce boys and girls infused with the joys and responsibilities of being Jewish. Together, we work to produce children who are

- Jewishly knowledgeable — in Torah, Rabbinic texts and *Siddur*; in mitzvot and in ethical values.
- Skilled practitioners in math and science; appreciative of literature and creative expression; genuinely respectful of other cultures and individuals.
- Speakers of Hebrew who have the access skills to study our Jewish sacred texts in Hebrew.

Building on the principles and beliefs of the Conservative Movement and the values of modernity — individual conscience, human rights, active participation as citizens of a democracy, intellectual honesty, embracing the canons of critical and scientific thought — we create a foundation for our students to meet the challenges of contemporary life.

Solomon Schechter Day Schools reach out in partnership to the family and the community. Hand in hand, we work to prepare the vigorous leaders of a new generation: knowledgeable, committed Jews and



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USCJ MARKETPLACE
All For ISRAEL
 Buy your gifts now and show your support for Israel.
 FUCHSBERG CENTER

responsible citizens.

Solomon Schechter Day Schools are opened to Jewish children whether of parents affiliated with Conservative Movement and parents not affiliated with the Conservative Movement.



Read it here!
The Torchlight, Fall 2002.
The latest issue.

FJMC
Regional Retreats

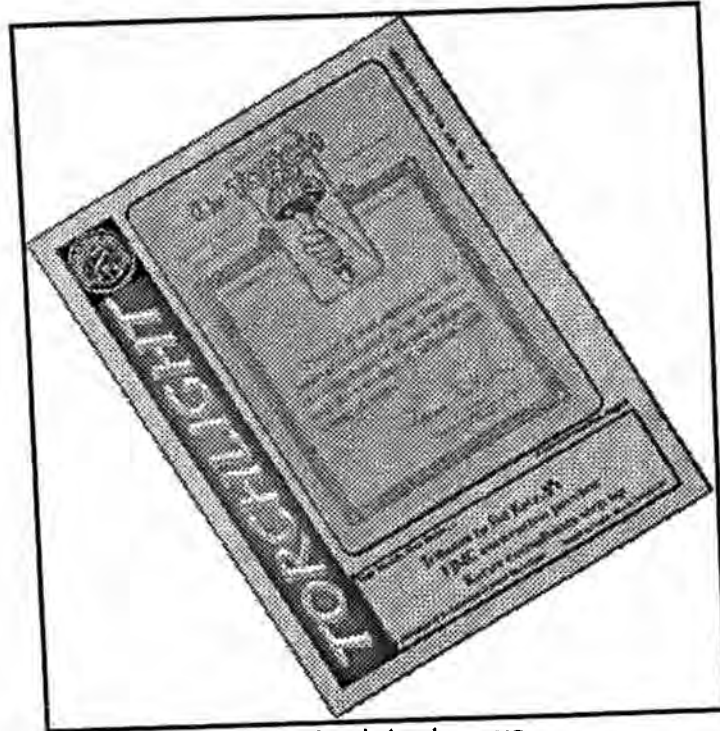
Men's Issues?
Check out the FJMC's "Hearing Men's Voices" series of Men's Issues programming!

Understanding Havdalah
Book Review

Building the Faith
Book Review

FJMC Store
Order your FJMC items on-line!
Use our secure server to make your purchases 6/24!

Henry Feinberg, FJMC Website
Chairman



Get the latest news

NOW!

Torchlight Spring 2003

We REALLY need to update our lists!

We keep asking, and many of you have filled out the survey. Even if you haven't had your election recently, still fill it out. We sent information update sheets to all of our member clubs, but unfortunately, not everyone has responded. In order to more efficiently serve our member's needs, and to move further into electronic communication methods, we are compiling an updated list of FJMC leaders. Please take a minute and fill-in this short survey. The data you supply is for our internal use only.

Club Officer Survey

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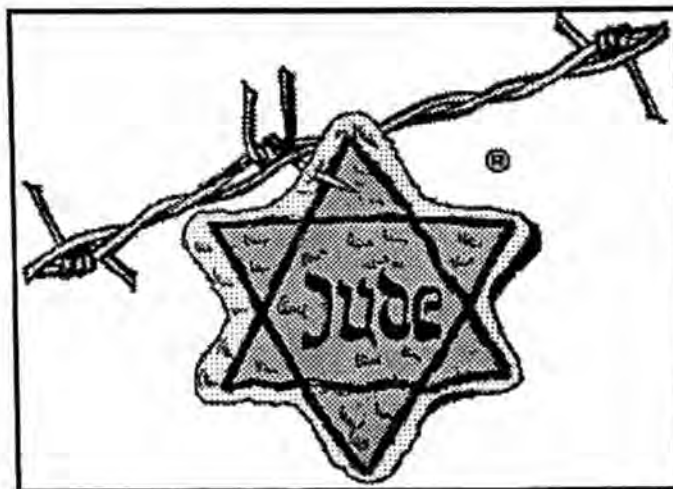
Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs Special
~~Involving Jewish Men in Jewish Life~~



It's time to order . .
April 15, 2003

Last day for bulk shipment orders to be received by FJMC.



Yom HaShoah Yellow Candles™

Go to the On-Line ORDER FORM

Go to the Yom Hashoah Yellow Candle page for more details about the program.

**CONVENTION
2003
REGISTER
HERE!**

[HTTP://convention.fjmc.org](http://convention.fjmc.org)

Now on-line!
Book your 2003
Convention Journal
Ads.



Torch Awards
*Have you
applied yet?*
Information
Online Application

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AND THE BUSH (TOFT)
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CONSUMED עֵצִים

NATIONAL RAMAH COMMISSION, INC.

3080 BROADWAY ♦ NEW YORK, NY 10027 ♦ (212) 678-8881

ברוכים הבאים למחנה רמה

Welcome to Camp Ramah:
The Camping Arm
of the Conservative Movement of Judaism

Important Dates Coming Up...

First Seder
Wednesday, April 16

First Day of Pesach
Second Seder
Thursday, April 17

Second Day of Pesach
Friday, April 18

Hol Hamoed Pesach
Saturday, April 19-
Tuesday, April 22

Seventh Day of Pesach
Wednesday, April 23

Eighth Day of Pesach
Thursday, April 24

Yom Hashoah
(Holocaust Remembrance Day)
Tuesday, April 29

[Link to more holiday information...](#)



Banana boats at Eilat

Summer Staffing Opportunities with Camp Ramah

More than just a summer job, a position with Camp Ramah is a chance to build critical skills that your future employers are looking for, while giving you the opportunity for unprecedented personal growth. Visit our special staff web site www.ramahjobs.org

Read "So you want to get a "Real Job?", all about how working at Ramah prepares you even better than an internship for a career post-college.

For additional job listings, visit www.jewishjobfinder.com. Ramah and many other organizations are partners in this job resource effort, spearheaded by the Jewish Education Services of North America (JESNA).

The Ramah Library

A selection of books written by, or recommended by, Ramah people. [Click here to review and purchase these books.](#)

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Camp Ramah CD's.

When you order books,
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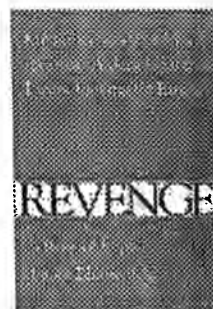
Amazon.com from this web site, you help support Ramah!

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- Classical Music
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Bitsela



Ramah Israel



What's "Nu"?

[A New Bet Midrash for Camp Ramah in New England](#)

[New amphitheatre opens at Ramah Berkshires](#)

[Ramah Seminar in Israel is over for 2002! Click here to follow the adventures of our Ramahniks on Seminar.](#)

[Looking for a two-month spring semester alternative in Israel? United Synagogue Youth Partners with Ramah Programs in Israel for USY High](#)

[The Camping Experience 1995-1999: a study of the impact of Jewish summer camping on the Conservative high school seniors of the "Four Up" Study.](#)

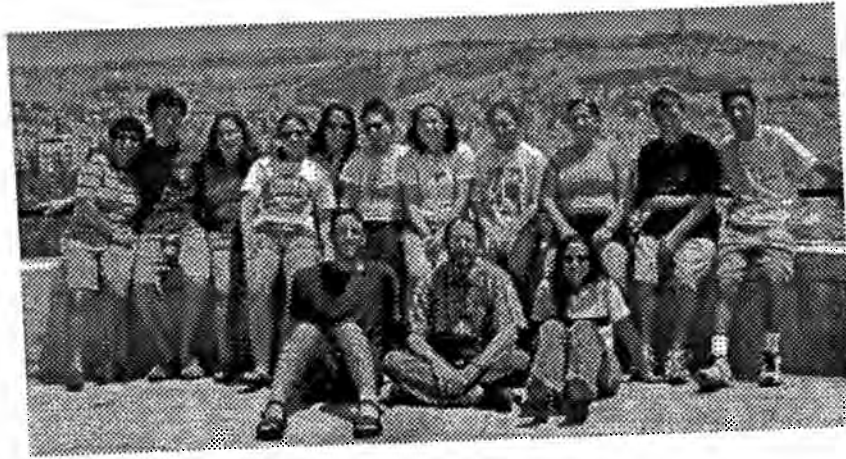
USY High: January 27 - March 22, 2003. Two-month accredited high school program for juniors and seniors. Join Ramah and USY for the experience of a lifetime! [For more information...](#)

Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim: February 3 - June 2, 2003. Accredited high school program for 10th and 11th graders. [For more information...](#)

Seminar: For more information please contact ramahisrael@jtsa.edu or call our office at 212-678-8883.



A site for a new Camp Ramah? Ramah, New Mexico, "discovered" by Rabbi Alan and Linda Cohen



There's Still Time to Register for Summer 2003!

Thinking about camp for summer 2003? Ramah offers overnight and day camping, in addition to family camps, the Tikvah camping program for children with special needs, and the Keshet program for children with hearing difficulties. Click here for the [web addresses, locations and contact information](#) of each Ramah camp, or e-mail ramah@jtsa.edu.

Summer Never Ends with Ramah Wear from Bunkline.com!



[Click here to go shopping!](#)

Israeli Wishes
We Bring Israel - To You !

Shop for Israeli Products - Benefit Israel and Raise Money for Ramah - 5% of your purchase is donated to Ramah

Enter IWRAMAH in the Discount Voucher and receive 5% discount



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Today is April 15, 2003

KOACH Poll

"Affirmative Action" should play a role in college admissions decisions.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

[Vote!](#)
[View Stats](#)

Powered by [Bravenet.](#)

The U.S. should be bound by policies set by the U.N.

(Voting on this poll closed April 2, 2003.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.) Strongly Agree	21%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.) Agree	0%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.) Not Sure	10%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.) Disagree	30%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.) Strongly Disagree	39%

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sell your Hametz

[Contract for the sale of Hametz](#)

[Passover links and resources](#)



Apply to be a KOACH Intern

Want to enrich Conservative Judaism on your campus? KOACH interns create exciting campus-based Conservative programs, receive training and craft a national agenda. [\[Click here to learn more...\]](#)

E-ZINE KOACH-ON-CAMPUS

PUBLISHED EVERY ROSH HODESH
Nisan 5763 / April 3, 2003

Theme: Holocaust

Do you do it enough? And by "do it" we mean "thank God" especially for freedom... what were you thinking? (Get your mind out of the gutter...) KOACH Midwest Fieldworker Leemor Dotan takes us on a guided tour of gratitude, just in time for Pesah.

Sarah Bier, KOC Assistant Editor, delves into the thought behind the items brought into space by Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon (z"l), including items from the Shoah.

Spreading JAM and the "Never Again" gospel at Yale is Rebekah Emanuel.

"Open" your mind to a totally new side to Holocaust education: personal creative writing. Alicia Cohen of Occidental sheds new light on the survivor's tale.

Connect to the Shoah through the brilliant writing of survivors. Audrey Shore, KOC Editor, analyzes Dan Pagis' moving poem, "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car."

YOUR OPINIONS

READ: Holocaust education: guilt-inducing and useless, or under-done and crucial? Hear what college students across the continent think about the wide world of Shoah curricula in Nisan's "Five Questions, Five Minutes" responses.

WRITE: Have any thoughts about Israel? Yeah, we thought you might... so surf on over to speak your mind about the homeland in our Iyar Five Questions / Five Minutes.



RESOURCES FROM KOACH

Shabbat on Campus

[Candle-lighting times...](#)

Job postings

Work in the Jewish community

JOIN THE KOACH LISTSERVE



ENTER TO WIN...

Win the new Etz Hayim Humash (Torah and commentary) just by signing up for our KOACH-ON-CAMPUS e-zine mailing list.

Mazal Tov to Aaron Yavelberg, a sophomore at Binghamton University, our most recent Humash winner!

VOICES & OPINIONS

Summer options... Articles from our archives

Shoshana Winograd-Hutner: The thrill of studying at the Conservative Yeshiva in Israel during the summer (Posted Fall 2000)

Isaac Judd and Heather Lobenstein: Using the hottest months of the year to learn the coolest life lessons (Posted 10/02)

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Keep in Touch

We've compiled a list of Jewish contacts at campuses across the country. (Learn more...)

RESOURCES FROM KOACH

Shabbat on Campus

Candle-lighting times...

Torah and Haftarah Study...

PHOTO ALBUMS, ETC.



KOACH Kallah 2003



birthright israel 2003

THE BASICS KOACH

Our Mission Statement...

KOACH provides college-age students the opportunity to maintain and develop connections to Conservative Judaism.

KOACH nurtures a love of Torah, the Jewish people, Israel and God through a variety of activities, including social, religious, educational, cultural and social action programs. We seek to create a passionate Jew who is committed to the future of the Jewish people and the improvement of the world.

Support Our Work...

KOACH needs your financial support. KOACH Tribute Cards are available to send in honor of a wedding or bar/bat mitzvah or in memory of a friend. Click here to buy a package of Tribute Cards. Your purchase includes a donation to KOACH.



Creative Grants

KOACH is designed as a partnership combining your energy, ideas, and creativity and our resources. We have established the KOACH CREATIVE GRANTS PROGRAM for campuses throughout North America and Israel, in order to help fund innovative projects developed through student initiative. (Read more...)

Reading material...



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Today is April 15, 2003

ABOUT KOACH

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- E-Zine
- Support KOACH by sending Tribute Cards



Is Holocaust education crucial...or useless?

[Read opinions in the Nisan issue.](#)

Enrich your Jewish campus experience

KOACH helps you connect with your Jewish life on campus

College is a time of exploration and discovery. Campus life will present you with a whirlwind of choices and challenges. Through these experiences, you will begin to discover who you are and what you believe.

KOACH can be an important part of this exciting time. As Conservative Judaism's College Outreach Program, we help connect you with your heritage, as well as with the Jewish community on your campus and on campuses throughout North America and Israel.

The KOACH Student Steering Committee helps guide the program to best reflect your needs. Working closely with your Hillel or Jewish student organization, we encourage you to explore Judaism and Jewish life, and to use these gifts in creating your Jewish identity.

KOACH provides...

Grants

The KOACH Creative Grants Program, supporting religious, cultural, educational and social programs for Conservative student groups across North America and Israel.

Newsletter

Our KOACH on Campus Newsletter, written by and for students, with features on Jewish campus life.

Conferences

An annual International Kallah (conference), bringing together students from dozens of colleges and universities for a weekend of sharing, study and good times. Regional conferences are rich opportunities to learn from and with other students in your area.

Learning

The KOACH Learning Project, a unique yearlong opportunity to study a common text with local friends and college students around the world.

Israel

[birthright israel is Succeeding](#)

Israel programming includes short-term travel and learning, programs for students returning from study abroad in Israel and a connection with the Conservative/Masorti Movement in Israel and the Conservative Yeshiva.

Photos from
Birthright Trip

New this year: **birthright israel**—an opportunity for first-time travel to Israel during winter break, at no cost to participants.

Mailing List

A mailing list keeps you up to date on KOACH travel and study opportunities, which in the past have included programs in Germany, Poland, Cuba, Israel and even rehabilitating low-income housing in the United States.

**KOACH
Faculty**

Campus programming can involve the KOACH Faculty, young rabbis and rabbinical students able to work with you to develop Conservative programming, serve as a resource for your communities and visit campuses to help bring Shabbat to life.

Online

Use our extensive email, including a **KOACH listserver**. To sign up, click here.

**Conservative
Movement**


We are a clearinghouse for speakers and materials offered by the Conservative Movement.

**Center on
Campus**

Programs are offered for students spending a year or semester in Israel, through our **Center on Campus Program** based at the Shirley and Jacob Fuchsberg Center for Conservative Judaism in Jerusalem.

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KOACH College Outreach is a project of [The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism](#).
Questions or comments about this website should be directed to webmaster@koach.org.



MERCAZ USA
The Zionist Organization of the Conservative Movement

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Newsletters!
MERCAZ
 That Am

MERCAZ USA is the Zionist Organization of the Conservative Movement, the voice of Conservative Jewry within the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Zionist Movement and the Jewish National Fund to support religious pluralism in Israel and strengthen the connection between Israel and the Diaspora.

MERCAZ USA congratulates Rabbi Vernon H. Kurtz of Highland Park, Illinois, on his election as President. [Click here](#) to learn about the new MERCAZ President.

"I Care and I'm Going!" [Click here](#) to make your pledge to visit Israel over the next 12 months.

MERCAZ has joined the effort, spearheaded by the American Sephardi Federation, to help collect testimonials from the approximately 900,000 Jews displaced from Arab countries after 1948 and to educate the public on this issue. [Click here](#) to learn more about the campaign.

WHAT MERCAZ STANDS FOR: [Click here](#) to read our positions on the important issues facing Israel and the American Jewish community.

LET'S EXPLORE HEBREW ROOTS! [Click here](#) to learn about MERCAZ's new educational program "Ivrit Masorit"

HOW TO HELP ISRAEL: Visit three new websites to buy Israeli products: www.shopinisrael.com and www.israelexport.org and www.allforisrael.com.

Latest Update from Israel: [Click here](#) for direct link to Israel's Foreign Ministry and New York Consulate.

[Click here](#) to download Adobe Acrobat Reader.

MERCAZ USA
 155 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010
 212-533-7800 x 2016 / fax 212-533-2601
 email: mercaz@compuserve.com

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The Mission of MERCAZ USA

MERCAZ USA is the Zionist Organization of the Conservative Movement, representing Conservative Judaism within the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Zionist Movement and the Jewish National Fund.

As the voice of the American Conservative Movement, MERCAZ works to increase the impact and influence of Conservative/Masorti Judaism on Israeli society and acts as a force for supporting religious pluralism and securing religious stream funding for the Masorti Movement programs in Israel and throughout the world. To this end, MERCAZ USA is affiliated with MERCAZ Olami, the worldwide association of Conservative Zionists and works along with other MERCAZ branches from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, England, France, Hungary, Israel and Mexico.

A grassroots organization promoting Zionist and Hebrew education, Israel travel and the development of a Zionist young leadership within the United States through various scholarship and subsidy programs, MERCAZ USA is supported by individual and family memberships in its annual membership campaign.

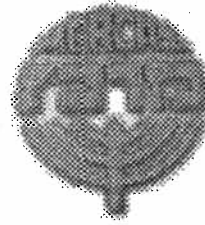
MERCAZ USA works in cooperation with all the other arms of Conservative Movement including the Jewish Theological Seminary, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the Rabbinical Assembly, Women's League for Conservative Judaism, Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, the Foundation for Masorti Judaism in Israel and the World Council of Conservative/Masorti Synagogues.

MERCAZ is affiliated with The American Zionist Movement. Your affiliation with MERCAZ implies acceptance of the **Jerusalem Program**.

The Jerusalem Program

The aims of Zionism are:

- The unity of the Jewish People and the centrality of Israel in Jewish Life
- The ingathering of the Jewish People in its historic homeland, Eretz Israel, through Aliyah from all countries
- The strengthening of the State of Israel which is based on the prophetic vision of justice and peace
- The preservation of the identity of the Jewish People through the fostering of Jewish and Hebrew education and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values



- The protection of Jewish rights everywhere.

MERCAZ USA

155 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010
212-533-7800 x 2016 / fax 212-533-2601
email: info@mercazusa.org

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Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Where Jewish Learning Lives



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(3/2003)

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History

The Jewish Theological Seminary was founded in 1886 through the efforts of two distinguished rabbis, Dr. Sabato Morais and Dr. H. Pereira Mendes, along with a group of prominent lay leaders from Sephardic congregations in Philadelphia and New York. Its mission was to preserve the knowledge and practice of historical Judaism and in 1887, the first class of ten students was held in the vestry of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue, New York City's oldest congregation.



Since then, JTS has greatly expanded its mission, created a beautiful Manhattan campus and evolved into the prestigious center of Jewish learning it is today. A Jewish university with a world-class faculty and a diverse student body, JTS grants undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees through its five schools and offers enriching programs for the Jewish community in the US, Israel and around the world.

JTS schools and facilities include the Graduate School; the Rabbinical School; the H.L. Miller Cantorial School and College of Jewish Music; the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education; Albert A. List College of Jewish Studies; the Rebecca and Israel Ivry Prozdor, a model supplementary high school; a summer school; five research institutes, including the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education; lay leadership and professional institutes; community education programs; student residence halls; and the incomparable collections of our library. JTS's affiliation with the Jewish Museum and consortia with prestigious academic neighbors support and enhance the scholarly ambiance of the learning community.

An engine for outreach, JTS is committed to the introduction of religious alternatives in Israel and eastern Europe through its Schechter Institute for Jewish Studies in Jerusalem; to training a new Jewish intelligentsia for Russian Jewry through Project Judaica, its Jewish studies program in Moscow; to raising a generation of literate and observant Jews in North America through its intensive work with the Ramah camps and Schechter schools; to providing Jewish knowledge and experience to adults through a panoply of innovative programs; and to creating a responsible Conservative Jewish voice on public issues from religious pluralism in Israel to bioethics.

Our multi-faceted community is committed to making Judaism come

alive for new generations, to bring the richness and vitality of traditional Jewish values into the twenty-first century.

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**JEWISH NEEDS -
RECONSTRUCTIONIST**

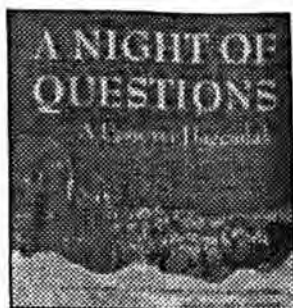


Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

Serving more than 100 affiliated congregations and havurot.

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Apr 8, 2003

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
7804 Montgomery Avenue Suite 9 · Elkins Park PA 19027
(215) 782-8500 · fax (215) 782-8805 · Info@jrf.org

[top of page](#)

144090



JRF Affiliations

Proposals for affiliations emerge from the JRF committee structure and are then brought to the JRF Board of Trustees for approval.

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)

The **Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life** was founded in 1993 to promote environmental education, scholarship, advocacy, and action in the American Jewish community. COEJL is sponsored by a broad coalition of national Jewish organizations.

Jewish Coalition Responding to HIV / AIDS in Africa

The **Jewish Coalition Responding to AIDS in Africa** is a project of the **American Jewish World Service**. It is a coalition of Jewish organizations and congregations convened to educate the American Jewish community on the dimensions and dangers of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, to provide a strong, unified Jewish voice in the debates and to work on issues related to HIV/AIDS in Africa. Their pages include a **prayer for AIDS Awareness Shabbat**, written by Rabbi Joshua Lesser. (World Aids Day is observed the first day of each December.)

MAZON


Founded in 1985, **MAZON** ('food' in Hebrew) is a national, nonprofit agency which provides food, help, and hope to hungry people of all faiths and backgrounds. It allocates donations from the Jewish community to the most effective hunger relief organizations in the United States, Israel and in poor countries worldwide. As MAZON 'partners', congregations raise funds for hunger-relief during the High Holy Days and other times. Many Jews also give to MAZON three percent of the cost of weddings, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and other joyous events.

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

National Christian, Jewish and other religious organizations work through the **Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice** to ensure reproductive choice through the moral power of religious communities. It seeks to give clear voice to the reproductive issues of people of color, those living in the poverty, and other underserved populations.

TZEDEC Campaign of the Shefa Fund

Established in 1988, **The Shefa Fund** has capitalized more than \$12 million in Jewish institutional investments in community development banks, credit unions and loan funds which provide credit for housing and business development in credit-starved neighborhoods. JRF supports the Shefa **Tzedek/"Justice" Economic Development Campaign** (or "TZEDEC") that has leveraged investments from Jewish federations, synagogues, synagogue movements and foundations. TZEDEC is working with Reconstructionist congregations to realize their tikkun olam vision of



increasing economic justice in America's low-income communities. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association have already invested in TZEDEC.

To learn how your congregation can participate in TZEDEC, [click here](#).

To learn more about how your congregation or havurah can develop a tikkun olam partnership with any of these groups, [send an email](#).

[Tzedec](#) [Tikkun Olam](#)

Jul 4, 2002

Who Are We?

For Teens Only

Teen Kallah

Charter Members

Camp

No'ar Hadash

Youth Workers

The JRF Youth Programming Network

Contact Us

CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT YOUTH EVENTS IN YOUR REGION . . .

A Reconstructionist Approach to Issues of Gender Equity



The Youth Programming Network of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

Who Are We?

No'ar Hadash (Hebrew for "New Youth") promotes and fosters creative, innovative, and fun Jewish youth programming from a uniquely Reconstructionist perspective.

We are a network of Reconstructionist congregations and havurot committed to the development of a quality youth program within the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (JRF). Participants in No'ar Hadash will find the inspiration, collegial support, programmatic ideas, and organizational structures to develop a truly Reconstructionist youth program.

As part of No'ar Hadash, Reconstructionist teens from across North America will take part in innovative, exciting, creative, fun, and engaging programs designed to meet their religious, intellectual, spiritual, and social needs. In local congregations and havurot, on the regional level, and across the continent, Reconstructionist teens now have the opportunity to create and participate in programs that are important to them and that speak to who they are as teens and as Jews. With events like the unbelievable **North American Teen Kallah**, summer experiences like the new Hadraha program at Camp JRF, and amazing weekend retreats across North America, No'ar Hadash has something for everyone.

**CLICK HERE TO CHECK
OUT YOUTH EVENTS
IN YOUR REGION . . .**

NO'AR HADASH: The Youth Programming Network of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

Who Are We? || Charter Members || For Teens Only || Youth Workers || Teen Kallah || Camp JRF || Contact Us

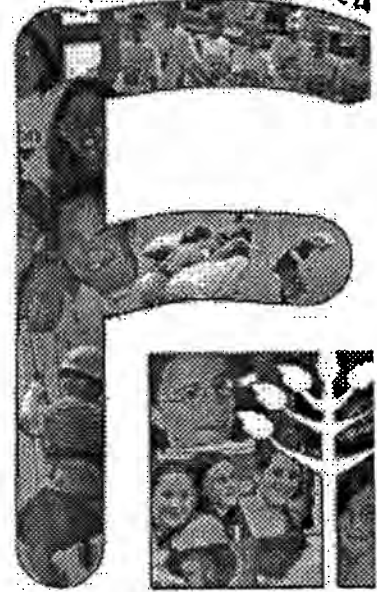
ALL THESE SMILING FACES WANT YOU TO
SPEND YOUR SUMMER WITH US AT . . .

Camp

CLICK HERE FOR A
CAMPER
REGISTRATION FORM

JRF

The summer of a lifetime



CLICK HERE TO JOIN US FOR SUMMER 2003!

Summer 2003 at
Camp JRF



Campers



Staff

CAMP JRF Phone: (877) CAMP JRF Email: info@campjrf.org
 Jewish Reconstructionist Federation - Beit Dinora - 7804 Montgomery Avenue, Suite 9 - Elkira Park, PA 1

JOIN US FOR SUMMER 2003!

Camp JRF

Camp JRF fills your summer with fun, friendships, and Jewish living. Our summer camp joyful, creative, and inclusive Reconstructionist community. In our 22 day session, campers swim, play soccer, basketball, baseball, volleyball, and other sports. They sing and explore other arts. They learn from visiting artists, scholars, and rabbis, as well from dedicated college-age counselors. Our campers make lasting friendships, experience a safe and fun summer, explore Jewish tradition, forge their own Jewish identity, and participate in creating a Jewish culture in which our values are lived each day.



Reconstructionism is a progressive approach to Jewish life which integrates a deep respect traditional Judaism with the insights of today. Camp JRF, we not only teach Jewish living s but we also create a warm and caring commu where campers can build character and lea deep respect for Jewish tradition and what it h offer in everyday life.



Our host facility is Camp Henry Horner, locate lakefront property in Ingleside, Illinois, 45 northwest of Chicago. Camp Henry Horne accredited by the American Camping Associ and includes 180 acres of wooded lands and fi a waterfront with canoes, kayaks, and a s beach; a skateboard park, low ropes, high r course, and climbing wall; an Olympic-size he

swimming pool; an observatory and hiking trails; tennis courts, volleyball courts, basketball courts, and athletic fields; a nature center and arts center; a kosher kitchen; and a complete health center.

Our **CAMPERS** come from Reconstructionist communities across North America, forming a vibrant and exciting Jewish community all their own. They are supported by mature **STAFF** members who believe in Reconstructionist values and in the importance of positive Jewish experiences for youth. The camp community is



[Click here for answers to Camp JRF's
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#)

[Click here to see pictures and notes from our
Summer 2002 Camp Diary](#)

[Click here to view
the Summer 2002 **VIDEO**](#)

completed by a core group of **FACULTY**

members - rabbis, educators, cantors, and youth workers - who help incorporate Jewish learning into each part of the program. Everyone comes together to form a community not only, a community which is certainly not to be missed!

CAMP JRF

(877) CAMP JRF

E-mail: info@campjrf.org

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation - Beit Devora - 7804 Montgomery Avenue, Suite 9 - Elkins Park, PA 1902



[Click here for more information
about our great programs for](#)

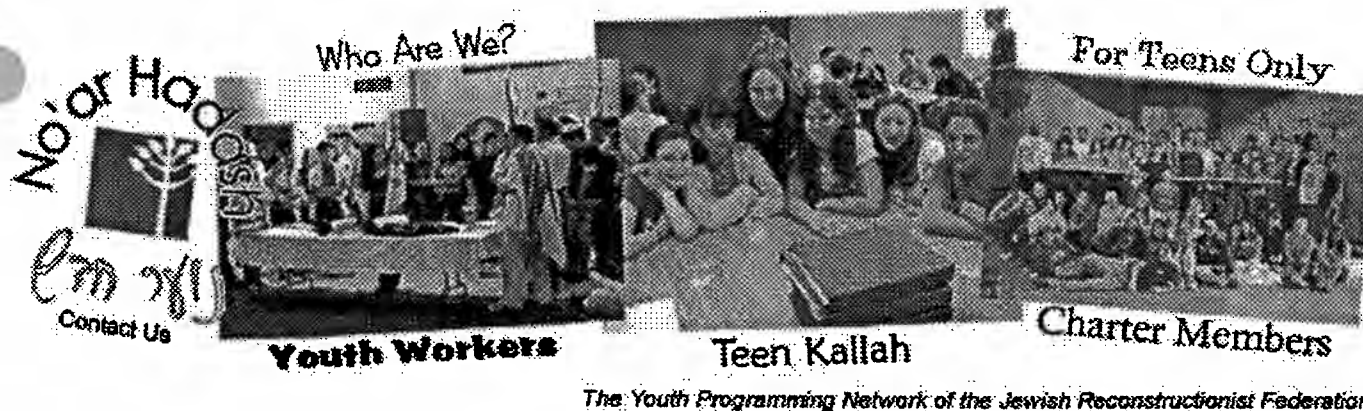
Campers



[Click here for more
information about](#)

Staff

Camp JRF is a program of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation. [Click here for more information . . .](#)



Camp JRF

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CAMP JRF, VISIT WWW.CAMPJRF.ORG.

After an incredibly successful first summer, Camp JRF is gearing up for another summer of great friendships, engaging learning, a vibrant Reconstructionist community, and all the fun of summer camp!

NEW FOR ENTERING 11TH & 12TH GRADERS

HADRAHA

COUNSELORS - IN - TRAINING

Take part in an exciting new program for entering juniors and seniors in high school. Spend three incredible weeks at Camp JRF learning what it means to be a *madrih* (counselor), how to develop and run creative and innovative Jewish programming, and what role you can play in a dynamic and vibrant Reconstructionist environment. Participate in lively discussions, engaging programs, heated debates, and moving services - along with the swimming, eating, relaxing, laughing, and great friendships you expect from camp.

JUNE 22 - JULY 13, 2003
AT CAMP JRF IN INGLESIDE, ILLINOIS
COST: \$1975

As with all Camp JRF programs, scholarships are available for participation in the Hadraha program. Requests for financial assistance are filled on a rolling basis - apply now to secure your scholarship.

Click [here](#) to download more information and an application.

In order to download this file, you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0. Click [here](#) to download this free program.

TEEN TRIP TO ISRAEL! Following their summer as Hadraha participants at Camp

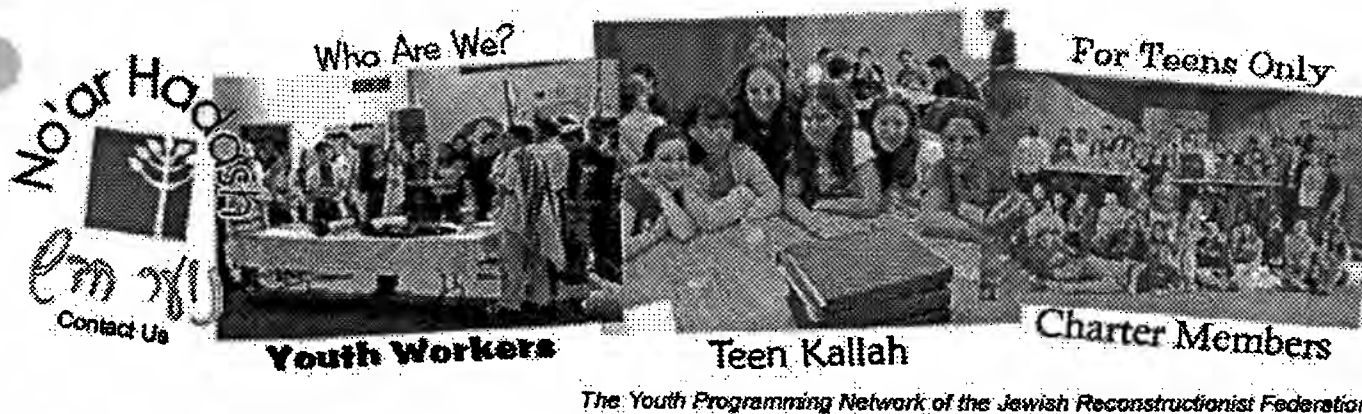
JRF, five American teens will fly from Chicago to Tel Aviv to join five of their Israeli counterparts of three weeks of discovery, learning, and excitement in Israel. Based on urban kibbutz G'vanim in the Negev town of Sderot, participants will spend half of each week participating in leadership and social justice programs. The second part of the week will include hiking and other *teva* (nature) experiences as well as innumerable opportunities to become acquainted with Israeli culture and communities. Participants will leave from Chicago immediately following Camp JRF and will be accompanied by American and Israeli staff during their time in Israel. All programs will be overseen by the JRF staff in Israel, and every safety and security measure will be taken. Click [here](#) for more information about this exciting new program. *(In order to download this file, you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0. Click [here](#) to download this free program.)*

Camp JRF is also looking for a dedicated, energetic, and talented group of staff members to make this an unforgettable summer for 100 children from across North America. Successful candidates for staff positions will be **entering college freshmen or older**, and will have previous experience working with children as well as a desire to promote the ideals of Reconstructionist Judaism.

For more information about Camp JRF, and to apply to be a staff member, click [here](#) to visit the website.

NO'AR HADASH: The Youth Programming Network of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

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Camp JRF || Contact Us**



The Youth Programming Network of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

North American Teen Kallah

More than 70 teens from 16 communities across the country joined together for the incredible **North American Teen Kallah**, making it the largest gathering of Reconstructionist teens ever! Throughout the weekend, participants engaged in meaningful discussions, took part in great programs, hung out at the Santa Monica Pier, made havdalah on the beach, rocked with RebbeSoul, met new friends and reconnected with old ones, sang and laughed at a campfire, danced with the Torah during services, and had the opportunity to explore what it means to be "Not Your Ordinary Jewish Teen."

Hosted by **Kehillat Israel** in Pacific Palisades, California, this event was put together through the hard work and dedication of many committed people. Thanks to the adult leadership and staff at KI; to the youth advisors, educators, and rabbis who supported the event in their communities and during the weekend; and most especially to the No'ar Hadash Va'ad.

The **Va'ad** is comprised of 10 teens from our charter communities who serve as the youth leadership of No'ar Hadash. Over the past months, these talented high school students have spent countless hours planning programs and preparing for this amazing event. The members of the Va'ad are Zachary Barrett O'Keefe (JRC), Benjamin Bechtolsheim (Shir Hadash), Jacob Doukas (Congregation Beth Shalom), Arielle Korb (Reconstructionist Havurah of Cleveland), Allison Moss (Or Hadash), Carly Pace (Columbia Jewish Congregation), Jamie Schulman (Ramat Shalom), Joel Schwarz (Adat Shalom), Lilah Sugarman (Kehillat Israel), and Larissa Wohl (Beth Hatikvah, JRF NY Region).

[Click here for pictures from this incredible event.](#)

With a phenomenal weekend strongly in our minds, planning is already underway for next year's Kallah. Check back soon for more information on what is sure to be a wonderful weekend, scheduled for **March 12 - 14, 2004.**

**NO'AR HADASH: The Youth Programming Network of the Jewish Reconstructionist
Federation**

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ROLE PLAYING FOR THE FUTURE

ROLE PLAYING FOR THE FUTURE

#1

You are married and have two children, ages 15 and 12.

It is day before Yom Kippur. You have made arrangements to eat with your family before going to services that night for Kol Nidre services. You have also made plans to spend the day, during your fast, with your family at a park close to the synagogue and to break the fast at a cousin's house also close by.

Your eldest child has told you that he will not be joining you. He has decided it would be more meaningful for him to spend Yom Kippur alone, meditating, thinking, and doing personal prayer.

Be careful in this scenario not to neglect what you know of Yom Kippur.

#2

You are married. You have three children ages 11, 15, and 18.

Instead of college, your eldest child went to Israel after High School. He went to study Judaism, to experience another country, and to find himself. He went with your blessing. Upon his return, you discover that his religious beliefs have changed from those of the rest of the family. He is now more observant and more particular about his observance than the rest of you and is no longer comfortable at home. He has requested the family make some changes to their life style in order that he may be more comfortable while at home.

#3

You are a junior in high school. It is springtime and time to take the SATs. Your school only gives the SATs on Saturdays, on Shabbat. Your family observes Shabbat together every week. What do you do?

#4

You are married and have two children, ages 18 and 16. Your eldest child desperately wants to attend a small college in an isolated town because it has the best program around for bilingual education, which is what she wants to major in. The problem, in your eyes, is that this school has only a 1% Jewish population and with it being isolated, there is no synagogue or JCC close by.

#5

You are married and have three children ages 14, 11, 9. At age 11, your middle child, a boy, has declared he wants nothing to do with Judaism. He doesn't want a bar mitzvah and he doesn't want to go to religious or celebrate Jewish holidays with the family anymore.

#6

You are a senior in High School and have a serious boyfriend. Your prom is scheduled for a Saturday night in Spring. You think that is great because there won't be any conflict over Prom being on Shabbat, since your family observes Shabbat. However, when you check the calendar, you see that Prom is scheduled on the first night of Pesach, the night of the first Seder. Your family has done the same thing for Seder each night for your whole life. You love Seder but you are up for Prom Queen and really don't want to miss the experience of Prom with your longtime boyfriend and all of your friends.

DEFINING PLURALISM

Pluralism:

a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization

1) a state of society in which members of diverse religious groups maintain an autonomous participation in their traditional culture or special interest

a. Define autonomous: _____

b. Rewrite this part of the definition in terms of Judaism and the Jewish denominations.

2) a state of society in which members of diverse religious groups maintain an autonomous development of their traditional culture or special interest

a. Rewrite this part of the definition in terms of Judaism and the Jewish denominations.

3) within the confines of a common civilization

a. Write your own understanding of this.

4) Rewrite the definition of pluralism in your own words and with relevance to Judaism.
