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# RESPONSE

A CONTEMPORARY JEWISH REVIEW

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Hillel Levine

Nina De-Nur: Interview

Harold Goldberg

## POETRY:

Burton Weiss

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Issue No. 6

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# RESPONSE

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## Statement of Purpose

**RESPONSE** is the continuing attempt of college students to examine the vitality and relevance of Judaism to personal development and community progress.

To what extent may intelligent participation in Jewish civilization serve as a stimulus for intellectual growth, for increased sensitivity to human problems, for active contribution to societal endeavors?

Can Jewish commitment provide a common basis and depth for a variety of lifestyles? How can the symbolic language of Jewish experience express our own temperament? What is, and what ought to be, our relationship to existing communal structures? To Israel?

**RESPONSE** is dedicated to a sincere consideration of these questions as they relate to issues of current concern. As an independent journal, **RESPONSE** is not committed to any particular approach, "line", or ideology. All of the opinions expressed in these pages are the sole responsibility of their various authors.

**RESPONSE** welcomes contributions from the college community. Articles, poems, stories or letters should be typed, and double spaced, with a covering letter. Please send material to the editorial office, **RESPONSE**, Room 14J, 210 West 101 St., New York, New York 10025.

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# TO SHARE A VISION

by Hillel Levine

It is said that when the Messiah comes, he will turn the hearts of fathers to children and the hearts of children to fathers. In this age, one can understand how this might be his most difficult task.

At the outset, I must make one point clear. I am not a part of this convention; neither was I nor any young person asked to speak at this time. I stand here with a mandate from my friends hoping that what I say expresses the opinion of many other young Jews, but I stand here because of pressure that we exerted upon the planners of this conference to permit us to address you directly. Knowing that we were given this opportunity only through threats of a disruption, you might dismiss us as children of our times, bored with the battle of the campus and looking for a new stage upon which to play our childish pranks of doubtful morality. But we see ourselves as more than children of our times; we see ourselves as children of timelessness. We see ourselves as Jews who know that when one has an urgent matter to bring to the attention of the community, even the reading of the Torah in the synagogue may be disrupted. We see ourselves as your children, the children of Jews who with great dedication concern themselves with the needs of the community, the children of Jews who bring comfort to the afflicted, give aid to the poor, who have built mammoth philanthropic organizations, who have aided the remnants of the Holocaust, who have given unflinchingly to the building of Israel, who give more per capita to charity than any other group in America. We are your children and affirm this, but, to paraphrase the Rabbinic aphorism, we want to be not only children — *banim* — but also builders — *bonim*. We want to participate with you in the building of a vision of a great Jewish community. It is when we think of this that we become dismayed with the reality of American Jewish life which we cannot reconcile with what you have taught us to cherish.

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*This is the text of the speech given to the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds in Boston, Mass. in November 1969 by Hillel Levine, a recent graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Rabbi Levine is a graduate student at Harvard and a member of Havurat Shalom.*

We thought we understood you. You grew up during the Depression and always wanted us to have what you did not. You worked your way through college with great difficulty. You lived through the difficult years of World War II, knew of the death of six million Jews, for which we cannot envy you. You enjoyed the post-war prosperity, made it to the suburbs, built synagogues and centers. You want us to be a little Jewish and bring you a lot of *nachas*.

But perhaps you would be more interested in knowing who we are. We were born during and shortly after the war. The Holocaust made a deep impression on our young minds, as did the new-felt pride in the state of Israel. We had the best set of blocks, the shiniest bicycle, and piano lessons. We did well in school. We went to Hebrew school and occasionally synagogue, but found them dull. There were few exciting models for us in the Jewish community, little opportunity to give expression to our youthful ideals. In contrast, the larger world was exciting, a labyrinth of mystery and challenge. The warmth of an old grandfather, the tranquility of a Sabbath at home, the moral indignation of a verse from the Prophets may have given us second thoughts about our Jewish identity, but on the whole we knew where the action was and where it was not. We went down to Mississippi for summers, marched against the war. The Jewish publicists spilled seas of ink bemoaning our alienation. Rarely, though, was an honest appraisal made of the source of our alienation. Perhaps it was a sign of our health that we were not attracted to a Jewish life devoid of intellectual and spiritual energy.

It took us several years to realize our confusion of form and essence and to recognize that there was more to Judaism than its poor expressions in the American Jewish community. For some it was a trip to Israel, for others it was the reading of Buber's *I and Thou*, for others an encounter with Hassidim, for others it was a traditional Jewish education redirected to confront existential problems, for others the exploration of self could not overlook the Jewish component. The Six-Day War forced us to reassess our attachment in deciding to risk our lives if necessary on Israel's behalf. The black awakening reminded us that the melting pot dream was a fool's fantasy and that differences were legitimate. We woke up from the American dream and tried to discover who we really were. For many of us this now means turning our concerns inward into the Jewish community because we are disenchanted with the crass materialism of the larger society. Yet where can we find inspiration in the multi-million dollar Jewish presences of suburbia?

It is perhaps unfair to place the blame of a stillborn American Jewish life on the philanthropic organizations. Yet insofar as they are the closest semblance of an organized Jewish community, insofar as they assume the responsibility of planning for the Jewish community and establishing its priorities, insofar as they control the largest charity coffers, any statement on the lack of fulfillment of the Jewish community must begin and end with them.

In describing the history of Jewish philanthropy in America, the account inevitably goes back to the agreement concluded by the early Jewish colonists in New Amsterdam with Peter Stuyvesant, whereby they would be allowed to settle in a place which would later become the world's largest Jewish community, on the condition that they agreed to provide for their needy. I am always amused by the repetition of this story in that by making Peter Stuyvesant honorary founder of American Jewish philanthropies, one might imply that it would be conceivable for Jews not to provide for their own needy—as if there were not Torah and tradition which made the same demands. *Tzedakah* was always a primary obligation of the Jew and throughout Jewish history there have existed complex philanthropic organizations involving all Jews in the provision of the physical and spiritual needs of the community. Perhaps attributing secular origins to Jewish philanthropy in America is an attempt to justify its secular concerns. A cursory examination of organized Jewish charity indicates its two major concerns—adjustment to American life and the perpetuation of a vague sense of Jewishness.

Until the late 19th century philanthropy was managed by synagogue adjuncts and local societies, but soon such management was found inadequate. Federations of charities were formed with wealthy benefactors maintaining controlling interest for pet projects with resultant inefficiency and duplication. Orphanages, health agencies and settlement houses proliferated. Millions of immigrants were aided to make material and cultural adjustments to the new world. America was the golden land and it was accepted without second thought that adjustment had to be made in whatever ways demanded, particularly culturally. Like their emancipated co-religionists in Europe, American Jews were willing to leave their Jewishness behind as the entrance fee to the modern world. A labor force of Jewish civil servants and social workers was developed. Early in the history of federated charities, concern was expressed for the responsibilities of Jewish philanthropies. One position on Jewish social service saw its purpose as perpetuating spiritual as well as serving physical needs. The opposite position was that the task of Jewish charities is to accelerate the process of assimilation and to help Jews become an integral part of the brotherhood of man. What was consistently characteristic of American Jewish philanthropies and what perhaps made them typically American was that they lacked direction and well-considered values. They shared the American malaise of favoring action over thought, regardless of its intrinsic value or the needs that it filled; a program was undertaken if it attracted the interest of sponsors. The response to discrimination against Jews was to reproduce that which Jews were excluded from. They did not allow us into their hotels, so we built our own. They did not allow our doctors to receive training in their hospitals, so we built bigger and better ones. As the Jew rose into a secure middle class niche, he became more of a social and political being. Organizations multiplied which reflected the needs of adjustment and defense. Later these became euphemistically known as community relations. Settlement houses had suburban off-shoots of Jewish community centers

closely modeled after YMCA's. These Jewish swimming pools and game rooms were to be instrumental in maintaining Jewish loyalties. Yet the philosophy of the Jewish community center, which is often alluded to in the literature, to the best of my knowledge never received a cogent exposition. Through Jewish group experience under the supervision of social workers, Jewish content would somehow be transmitted, perhaps by magic, osmosis...

Jewish education was the step-son of organized Jewish philanthropies. An occasional community school received support but as the synagogue-Jewish center with denominational affiliations began to develop as a force in the Jewish community, most Jewish education fell within that domain. The later developing day schools received even less support. Jewish Federation, choosing to be "non-sectarian," refused to accept fully its responsibility to religious life and chose the recreation-oriented center of low Jewish content over Jewish education of substance. Ironically, constituent organizations have declared a holy war against government support of Jewish education while simultaneously refusing to give any aid themselves. Peter Stuyvesant, who was a good Christian, would have had something to say about Jews who refuse to support their Hebrew schools. The priorities of organized Jewish philanthropies favor a greater mobilization of resources to combat one crack-pot anti-semitic than to deal with the Jewish illiteracy of millions of Jews.

But times have changed, changed dramatically; however, these changes have not been reflected in the priorities of Federation leaders, many of whom are aware of these changes. As a prominent Jewish scholar has said, we are prepared to fight battles of thirty years ago — while the urgent needs of today receive little response. Jewish philanthropic organizations have proven their success at helping large numbers of Jews adjust to American life. They have maintained some Jewish loyalties through their centers and camps. But most of these efforts merely duplicate existing services in the general community. They are no longer a primary responsibility of the Jewish community. A vague sense of Jewishness can no longer compete in an open market of identities for Jews three or four generations removed from a substantive Jewish experience. Identities are based on ideologies and experiences and neither can be offered by Jewish swimming pools and game rooms.

Changing notions of social responsibility and soaring costs of public health and welfare have forced the government to assume a greater financial responsibility in these areas. Yet again, Federation allocations reflect little response to these changing circumstances. The special services that such institutions under Jewish sponsorship could offer the Jewish community are either no longer necessary or no longer available. Jewish doctors are readily accepted for training in all hospitals and kosher food is often easier to obtain in non-Jewish hospitals. It is clear that Jews as individuals contribute to local health agencies. Federation allocations to such agencies now constitute a minor portion of the total budgets of these agencies, which if phased out over

a period of several years would be undertaken by the government. Such freeing of a significant percentage of the Jewish charity dollar would allow its application to areas of Jewish life in dire need of funding.

We know of the historical generative powers of Jewish education and its stimulation of a meaningful Jewish life. In modern times we know of its ability to deter inter-marriage and assimilation. We know that it correlates highly with participation in Jewish life and support of communal activities. Yet Jewish education in America can be spoken of only in litanies of despair. Its insipid and irrelevant content usually proves to have counter-productive effects on young minds. You, being closer to the scene, know the situation better than anyone. Your 34th and 35th conferences were dedicated to the problem of bringing Jewish education out of the Middle Ages. Consistently you have passed resolutions which acknowledge the problem and its seriousness, and call for creative responses for which Federations must assume a greater financial responsibility. Some Federations have taken this responsibility seriously and there have been hopeful responses. Yet there is no dramatic increase in the funding of Jewish education in most cities. Of the total budget of over \$44 million of funds allocated locally in 125 communities in 1967, only \$6,238,000 or 14.1% of the budget went to Jewish education on all levels while \$12,448,000 or 28.1% went to Jewish community centers, camps, and youth services of low Jewish content. While 35% of the total budget for community relations in 1966 was covered by Federation, less than 10% of the budget for education and about 2½% of cultural agencies was covered by Federation and Welfare Funds. To be sure, lack of funding is only one of the shortcomings of Jewish education. The shortage of qualified teachers and administrators and the absence of curricula development are crucial; but the problem is of a magnitude that only top level planning and research with financing that will stimulate innovation will make an impact. From examining the response of most Federations and of the CJFW to the problem of Jewish education, one gets the impression that the situation is rather hopeless but not terribly serious — not serious enough to warrant concerted and creative responses. Federations which in soliciting funds exploit Jewish sentiments carefully imbued through Jewish living and education cannot be oblivious to these concerns. It is no secret that fewer people, and particularly fewer young people, are responding to Federation appeals. This should certainly be a warning. But the possibilities of Jewish education cannot be seen simply in terms of keeping Jews within the fold or training further “machers.” Jewish education must compensate for the shortcomings of the educational system in character building and stimulating moral sensitivity. Living in more than one culture can give young Jews valuable perspective. Quality Jewish education will help the individual remain whole in a society which denies sanctity to the human vessel.

How many best-sellers and Hollywood movies does it take to tell us that there is something seriously wrong with the Jewish family? When walking

through the neat rows of split-levels in Brookline or Beverly Hills, Scarsdale or Highland Park, one gets a sense that the cumulative aspirations of millenia of civilization went into such push button comfort. Yet what unhappiness is there to be found behind so many of those gold trim doors. We all know of this, perhaps in intimate ways. Experimentation with ritual experiences in Jewish life and imaginative settings may ease some of the tensions that modern existence thrusts upon the family and may deepen relations in beautiful ways. Existing family agencies are simply not coping with such problems. Only funding and direction from the organized Jewish philanthropies could lead to any imaginative solutions.

And what about the campus, that wasteland of Jewish life, the one sphere that has been unresponsive to some of the awkward approaches of Jewish life? Yet we are told that young people are most open to challenges in life styles, most prepared to embrace meaningful ideologies. Why should the campus be a Jewish wasteland? No one has definitive answers but the situation encourages intelligent conjectures. What opportunity is there for young Jews to grow Jewishly commensurate with their general intellect? What overall plan does the Jewish community have to train Jewish scholars, to stimulate the growth of departments of Judaica in universities? The Jewish Culture Foundation, among its other responsibilities, is entrusted with these tasks of inestimable importance but is awarded only \$81,000 for its operations by Federations. Can any serious program be undertaken with such an amount? And there are those who would make solemn pronouncements about the efficacy of Hillel Foundations, saying, what has it accomplished, how many lives has it affected, who does it attract on the campus? Yet Hillel has hardly had an opportunity to demonstrate its viability with its desperately insufficient funds and shortage of manpower. Dedicated rabbis are overwhelmed by the demands made on them as the only knowledgeable Jews on campuses with thousands of Jewish students and faculty members. These men certainly cannot use their talents effectively under such circumstances. Less than \$60,000 of Hillel's budget comes from Federation sources. This hardly represents a significant contribution on the part of Federation to campus life. In the last few years several new student groups, journals and *Havurot* or religious communities have been developed by young Jews, a clear sign of vitality. Yet little has been done to encourage them. Some of these projects, with a fraction of the amount of money that this conference will cost, could have a great impact on Jewish student life. There is one student project in the Boston area which has received most of its support from a Christian foundation. Gentlemen, what would Peter Stuyvesant have to say about that?

An important Federation leader once shared his disappointment with me over the lack of interest on the part of young Jews in Federation activities. With great sincerity he stated the resources that Federation is prepared to make available to students. "We have 256 agencies in this city where a Jewish student can have his appendix removed and a mental hospital where he can be committed. We truly care about Jewish students." This concern I do not

for a moment doubt, and I appreciate it. But it is not our neuroses nor our ruptured appendices that we wish to share with you. It is our vitality, our enthusiasm, our vision that we wish to share. Coupled with your abilities and your experience, we want to build a Jewish community that is creative and not one that must concern itself with mere survival. We are willing to recognize divisions but they must be divisions which express needs and not historical controversies. We don't want commissions on youth; we don't want your organizations, organizations which have no meaning to us, seeking Federation funds to recruit for their ranks. We want to convert alienation into participation, acrimony into joy—the joy of being the possessors of a great legacy—a legacy which has meaning for today. This renewal can be accomplished only through a massive rededication to Jewish study and meaningful Jewish existence. It is inconceivable for a Jewish community to be guided by Jewish principles and values if its leaders are ignorant of them. Surely some knowledge of Hebrew, of Jewish history and traditions should be a pre-requisite. Leaders of Jewish philanthropies should not only solicit funds but educate benefactors to the needs of the community. This requires Jewish knowledge. Furthermore, participation of thousands of leaders in Jewish education will make them sensitive to the inadequacies of Jewish education and stimulate its creative development. Federations, as important benefactors of Jewish life, can set the pace by a re-appraisal of their priorities, by phasing out operations that can obtain support from other agencies or that no longer serve necessary functions while retaining displaced personnel for more vital areas of Jewish life. Federation must seek not only the financial support but also the guidance and leadership of a broader constituency of the American Jewish community. It can no longer be run by a few generous men or the patrons of particular projects whose concerns do not transcend their project. Rabbis, people involved in Jewish education, students, and concerned Jews should participate on all levels of decision-making and allocations. Our philanthropic organizations must again view their work as holy. Philanthropy must again become *Tzedakah*, righteousness, soliciting the personal involvement of the community. The operation may not be as streamlined but it will itself be a source of renewal.

I cannot propose a detailed architectural design for the new Jewish community, only a sketch. The details will be filled in through careful deliberation, but we must begin immediately. I know that it is easy to criticize and hard to create. I realize that each suggestion involves countless intricacies of implementation but we must overcome institutional inertia which has made the community stagnant. There must be recognition that *Ein zo baderech*, this is not the way. I will spare you the predictions of doom for Jewish life in America which will be inevitable if we do not start.

You will see some of us here in the next few days. We hope we will have a chance to speak to you. We, our peers, and other Jews disenchanted with the Federations of Jewish philanthropies will be at all your future meetings, hopefully in affirmation and not in dissent. We will be present at your offices and

conferences and will vociferously demand the changes we know to be necessary. We will not be pacified, co-opted, or compromised with vague resolutions. We want action and not delay. We want a change in the order of allocations and we want more equitable representation in decision-making.

Your response to us could be: You pampered kids, if you want things done differently, why don't you do it yourselves and leave us alone? This is the way we want the Jewish community. If that would be your response, then with much pain and disappointment we would indeed be forced to do it ourselves. It would take us longer and be more difficult, but we have already begun, the processes which have been set into action will not come to a stop. *Ruach vebazalah yavoh mimakom acher*. Help will come from somewhere else, in that we trust. And the organized Jewish philanthropies which have given aid and support to generations of Jews will fade from our spheres of concern. And then perhaps it will only be the coming of the Messiah that will turn our hearts to yours.

## Rilke: The Angels

*Their mouths sag,  
their bright souls are  
seamless.  
And a yearning (as for  
sin) sometimes flickers through  
their dream.*

*Almost  
they are all alike.  
They are silent in God's  
gardens, like numberless  
intervals in his  
power and song.*

*Only when they spread their  
wings does the wind  
wake: as if  
God's great sculptor-hands  
were rippling through the dark  
book of creation.*

Translation by Stephen Mitchell

# AN INTERVIEW WITH NINA DE-NUR

by Stanley Rosenschein

Nina De-Nur is a third-generation sabra. Her grandfather was among the founders of Tel-Aviv, and the history of her family in Palestine spans the period of modern Jewish settlement in that land. Since the Jewish presence in Palestine represented a commitment to the solution of a problem, namely the homelessness of the Jews, it is natural that Jews who lived in that country through the period of struggle should have been especially aware of the new problems generated by the very fact of their presence. Problems beget problems, and in Israel even solutions beget problems. Pre-1948 difficulties yielded to post-1948 difficulties which have been followed in turn by post-1967 difficulties as the search for real solutions goes on. Nina De-Nur, no less than other Israelis, recognizes the problematical nature of the situation (or "situation," as she would have it printed) and has developed an approach for dealing with it that she believes to be novel and promising. If enthusiasm is a measure of promise, there is indeed hope.

Currently Mrs. De-Nur is in charge of the Israeli Movement for Arab-Jewish Co-operation, and while on a recent visit to the United States she participated in setting up the American Movement for Arab-Jewish Co-operation. Nina De-Nur's method for confronting the "situation" involves the creation of a broad base of friendship between Jews and Arabs upon which can be built the political solutions of the future. This approach flows quite naturally from her personality. In conversation she is warm and sincere; she speaks with emotion restrained by intelligence and has an air of sophisticated self-confidence. Her combination of charisma, commitment, and charm is particularly well suited to the demands of her work.

Operating through the organizations mentioned above, Mrs. De-Nur hopes to encourage large numbers of Jews and Arabs to meet, to exchange ideas, and to begin co-operative projects in such areas as education and health services. In this way the gap between the two communities may gradually be bridged. Since to Mrs. De-Nur's way of thinking the entire "situation" is basically the result of a misunderstanding of intentions, once the barriers to communication are overcome the problems will begin to resolve themselves. Her work is thus based on two theoretical assumptions: first, that

the political situation is the result of mistrust, and second, that such mistrust is not so deeply embedded that it cannot be eliminated by contact between members of the groups involved. Both of these assumptions are plausible, and Mrs. De-Nur does not claim that they are anything more than that. Rather, her attitude lies somewhere between "Let's have a go at it" and "*en b'rerah*"; the problem is too pressing for us to ignore any possible means to its resolution.

In order to gain insight into Mrs. De-Nur's work and especially into the role of American Jews in these projects, I spoke to Rabbi Eugene Weiner, who has worked with the American Movement for Arab-Jewish Co-operation, and is continuing his involvement in the Movement from his new home in Israel. Although in the interview Nina De-Nur was quite optimistic about the prospects for Arab-Jewish dialogue outside of Israel, Rabbi Weiner indicated that in fact she had been somewhat disappointed by her contacts with Arab students in the United States. The Rabbi seemed to feel that possibilities for meaningful exchange between Arabs and Jews outside of Israel are severely limited by the absence of day-to-day contact with the situation, by a tendency toward abstract thinking, and by a resultant over-commitment to ideological positions on the part of the participants.

According to Rabbi Weiner, American Jews have, perhaps, a more important function than dialogue with Arabs in the Diaspora. American Jews may be able to soften the Israelis' negative attitude toward one trait that Israelis associate with the *galut* and find very distasteful, namely self-conscious striving for moral superiority. Israelis may prefer to express their morality spontaneously, but American Jews with their *galut* self-consciousness and traditional concern for minority groups can certainly help to make them more sensitive to the problems of the "*galut*," of the Arab living in the Jewish State. On the other hand, Rabbi Weiner expressed concern that well-meaning American Jews who work with Arabs could become very hostile to Israel if they failed to readjust their thinking to deal with legitimate paradoxes instead of the clearcut cases of justice versus injustice that they are apt to define for themselves when dealing with social issues in America.

We have thus seen two orientations to the same activity. Nina De-Nur's orientation is toward solving, in the long run, the Arab-Jewish political impasse while Rabbi Weiner's is toward coming to grips with certain moral issues raised by the existence of a Jewish State. It should be remembered, however, that quite aside from possible results on a large political or social scale, the activities of the Arab-Jewish co-operation movements may be outstandingly significant psychologically to individual members. Sensitive individuals in situations of this type have a need to talk to similar members of the group with which they are ostensibly in conflict. To these individuals, a personal reconciliation may be symbolic of a larger reconciliation and thus represent their goals and hopes; dialogue may almost serve as a form of prayer. Even this purely expressive function of Nina De-Nur's pro-

jects constitutes more than sufficient justification for their continuation and enlargement. If there should happen to be other constructive political or social effects, they would most certainly be welcome.

The following was excerpted from the interview with Nina De-Nur:

*Q. I think it is safe to infer from the name of your organization, The Israeli Movement for Arab-Jewish Co-operation, that you believe such co-operation to be largely lacking at present. Let me begin by asking what is the history and nature of the gap which your group is attempting to bridge.*

*A.* There had, of course, been contact between the Arab community and the Jewish community even before we opened our home for meetings in February, 1963. In fact, in pre-state Israel there was probably greater contact than there is now, or at least than there was before we started our work. The creation of the state interfered in that the first flux of refugees to leave were the more prosperous Arabs and the intellectuals. Whatever contact existed between the Jews and those Arabs who remained was (and I allow myself to generalize) more or less the inevitable kind of contact: people coming to government offices, people who are members of the same political parties, but very few friendships. There were two communities—the Jewish community and the Arab community—with the “situation” between them.

Israel's Arab community found itself in loneliness; the “situation” alienated them from their Arab brothers outside, who in many cases considered the Israeli Arabs to be traitors. And of course there was alienation between them and the Jews. I believe that for the great majority of Jews in Israel that alienation is not a result of hatred for the Arabs so much as it is the result of fear and of the psychological phenomenon that people think in great generalities like “an Arab is an Arab is an Arab.”

*Q. How did your work begin?*

*A.* Because of my experiences in Egypt during World War II when I had volunteered for the British Army, I felt that I had grown quite familiar with the Arabs there, and yet I woke up with a jolt five or six years ago when I realized that I did not know a single Israeli Arab. So my husband and I opened our home on the 28th of February, 1963 to show people, good people, people without malevolence, that an Arab is *not* an Arab, etc., etc. and that a Jew is not a Jew, etc., etc.

*Q. What form did those meetings take?*

*A.* One might think that it would be enough to bring people into one room for a dialogue to begin. After all, these were people of good will who wanted to do something—otherwise they would not have been there. They did begin to talk, but talk is not dialogue. So there sat in my home two groups of adults all knowing why they were there, all ready to begin “dialogue-ing”—anxious, in fact. During those first evenings it took atomic warmth to really blend

the groups, and although they left with exhilarating exhaustion, there was still the feeling that it could not go on much longer.

The dialogue was not complete. There was too much effort in the contact; real contact is without any effort. A few more weeks went by until my husband and I decided on a simple idea which has now become routine in our groups all over Israel: We meet, we socialize for about half an hour, and then we have a lecturer. We have had some of Israel's best lecturers, who consider it an honor to volunteer their services and who are excited by the idea of speaking to so un-homogeneous a group. The lectures were on a variety of topics not necessarily relevant to the "situation" because we felt that burrowing Jews and Arabs in the "situation" would only develop more neurotic personalities. During the course of the lectures and especially the questions and answers, Jew X and Arab Y suddenly discovered--had to discover--that they shared a great number of things in common. It was then that the dialogue became real, and now the only problem is how to get them to listen to the lecture!

*Q. You mentioned that you now have groups all over Israel...*

A. Yes. As our work began developing and taking root, more people became interested. I was asked to lecture to many groups, and gradually more homes were opened for meetings. Incidentally, I would like to stress that in the beginning we always met in homes. This was done for a particular reason. In Arabic, the connotations associated with the word "home" are quite special, and thus the fact that we met in homes added to the significance of the meetings. It was especially appropriate because our situation is a homeless situation, if you know what I mean. Everyone had a home, but spiritually speaking perhaps there were a lot of "homeless" people--from both the Jewish side and the Arab side.

Nevertheless, as our work developed we came to realize that we needed an organization. Individual homes "no matter how warm and how loving" have limitations, whereas an organization can begin to tackle bigger problems in education and medicine in addition to setting up a framework for cultural interchange. It was for this reason that the Israeli Movement for Arab-Jewish Co-operation was founded. The scope of the organization now extends well beyond the concept of those original meetings. For instance, we are now involved in setting up an Arab-Jewish culture foundation. We have a program in operation whereby a Jew can get a special scholarship if he pledges to spend his first year after graduation doing work among the Arabs--not in places as well off as Nazareth--but in poor villages or in refugee camps, if permission is granted by the government. Similarly, an Arab who gets this scholarship pledges to work among Jews who are refugees from Islamic countries. Another plan that we are currently working on involves the inauguration of the Middle East Peace Research Institute. And so on.

*Q. Has your approach, or more accurately, approaches, yielded any significant successes in alleviating the problem?*

A. The problem is largely political while our approaches are not. In fact, we pride ourselves on having dropped all party identification in our organization, which in Israel is a tremendous achievement. We often prefer to use women in our work precisely because women are apolitical creatures. One must bear our organization's non-political nature in mind when evaluating its success. Our successes are registered on the interpersonal level. At our meetings Jews and Arabs overcame to a certain extent the existing embarrassment between our two nations and could speak inclusively of *our* land and *our* future. Friendships were formed. Even at times when the "situation" occupied people's thoughts, Arab and Jewish friends would meet and greet each other with an almost defiant "Hello, old boy."

I think it is important that our organization is a grass-roots movement. The Israeli government is doing very much, but there are things which governments cannot do, which only people can do. Even if the government did develop a program similar to ours it would have to fail because some things drop from above like snow and rain and governments, and some things must grow from the soil like corn and friendship.

No one is denying that there is a problem. There is a problem which has been shedding blood day in and day out for the last twenty years. The only point is how to solve the problem. I think that the problem is so painful that it should be taken by degrees. Let's first find some common denominators; let's create some human contact. Then when you come to know one another, to like one another, to enjoy the dawn together, only then would I suggest playing around with politics, which none of us can really resolve but which every one of us can aspire to understand.

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# TIKUN ḤATZOT

Prayers in the Middle of the Night

by Burton Weiss

Lord, let me not now or ever  
sing (or if I do, not well)  
“peace, peace”  
when there is no peace.

Let me not stories tell  
of a grateful task,  
but let me learn at last  
as we were taught of old:  
the sages increase peace throughout the world  
although, recurrently through darkness hurled,  
they alone shall no peace find  
in this wide world or that to come  
which occupies, eternally, their mind.

“From strength to strength they go”:  
embracing Wisdom and increasing Peace,  
they give of what they never have.

They live from night through night  
by praises and forgetting  
and by stabbing in the dark.  
They lie abed or walk the town  
and startled are to wake up sweating  
as even now I woke to write this down.

Lord, let me not, at least in this  
my lingering youth, sing of (Thy) peace.

So musical my ear    How may I only stop  
awhile?

Please God and thoughtful friends  
who hand me instruments — matchbooks and  
pen — when I am high and in the dark:  
let me not forge harmonies  
in your name.

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*Burton Weiss, a student and a draft resister, works for The Jewish Peace Fellowship. He is a member of the New York Havurah.*

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# IDENTITY, INVISIBLE RELIGION, AND INTERMARRIAGE

by Everett Gendler

“ . . . the possibility that a new religion is in the making.”

— Thomas Luckmann

Conferences on religious identification and intermarriage continue; statistical studies multiply; the “problem” persists. Suggested analyses rarely seem adequate, proposed “solutions” rarely seem satisfactory. Might it be that our perception of the present is obscured by the past? that we are misled by analogies with former times?

These questions are prompted by a combination of certain rabbinical experiences and some studies that I have come across recently. The combination has, for me at least, sharply challenged some earlier assumptions about our situation today, and leads to some conclusions which are at variance with what I formerly thought.

These conclusions, further, imply certain changes in my religious behavior. To me, at least, they suggest that certain attitudes and stands I have previously taken as a rabbi are questionable, possibly inappropriate, probably harmful religiously. This being the case, I am anxious to share some of these thoughts with those who are living what I think I am observing, so that they, in turn, may either help confirm my intuitions or challenge and thereby clarify them.

To share the background of these conclusions requires references to several recent works dealing with religion. None of these works is beyond challenge, and all are perhaps questionable in some respects. Their point will be further blunted by the extremely brief summaries of their arguments and considerations. Even so, they seem to me substantially correct in what they have to say, and they also seem to converge in what they may mean for the religious situation today.

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Let me add immediately that the authors I cite are not to be held responsible for the conclusions I derive from their works. Perhaps they would find such conclusions warranted and appropriate, perhaps not. In any event, they and their works are cited with appreciation for the stimulation and illumination they have afforded me, but they are not necessarily to be associated with the argument as it unfolds.

I should also add that what I speak of here has reference primarily to the religious scene in the United States today. Its applicability to other societies is an independent question. Furthermore, while the implications of these considerations are many, with application to other areas of religious concern and practice, for convenience I want to confine the consideration here to intermarriage.

My rabbinic involvement is quite clearly the stance from which I write, and this accounts for the specific focus of the last section on rabbinic participation in such "intermarriages." What this entire analysis implies for experimental and evolutionary religious communities is a question most appropriately addressed by the members of such communities themselves.

One last introductory word. It will be noticed that I do not present lengthy arguments on behalf of the particular points. I prefer to think of this as an essay in shared recognitions. "This is how it seems to me; does it seem this way to you?" It is to this question and in this spirit, I hope, that those closest to the actuality will respond.

### A) The Definition of "Interfaith Marriage"

In many areas of our lives we have come to realize that the traditional use of attributes may not be helpful. "A good Jew," for example, means many things to many people. Even for those who might agree on the meaning, to describe any given person simply as a "good Jew" or "not a good Jew" would probably seem an over-simplification. Would there not be significant degrees of difference? Would not any person be "good" in some respects and "not good" in others? In practice, do we not, for meaningful and precise discourse, use "a good Jew" as a variable term rather than as a fixed attribute?

Similarly, suggests J. Milton Yinger,<sup>1</sup> there is a need to re-define "interfaith marriage as a variable, with possibilities of more or less." Urging that the definition of interfaith marriage not depend on "the single criterion of church membership or identification," Yinger suggests the value for research of transforming "a long-held dichotomy into a variable."

"If we begin to take account of the several dimensions of religion, we may discover that those who are intermarried when viewed in terms of one dimension may be *intramarried* when viewed in terms of another. . . . Once we think of intermarriage as a variable, not an attribute, we can turn to the task of designing scales to measure it.

Two scales, I think, are needed. The first will measure the degree to which the couple is intramarried, considering similarity on the many possible religious factors . . . . The second scale will measure the extent to which a married couple is bound into an 'integrating' or 'separating' network of other persons and groups. If all the persons with whom they interact and all of their significant others are of the same faith, then they are strongly intramarried on this group dimension. If they interact with many other persons of a different faith, if some of their relatives are intermarried, then they are partially intermarried, even if they are members of the same church and hold the same beliefs."

Concluding his very suggestive remarks, Yinger adds: "The redefinition of intermarriage as a variable, with values produced by the interaction of two sets of forces, is already a drastic shift in our perspective. If we are to undertake more precise work on such problems as interfaith marriage, however, adequate to the task of multivariate analysis, we must demand of ourselves even more radical changes in our concepts."

If a change in the approach to intermarriage is a scholarly desideratum, might it not also be a practical religious desideratum? And might not the key definitional change be similar; from intermarriage as a simple dichotomy to intermarriage as a variable?

Now obviously the recognition of this variable nature of intermarriage would manifest itself differently in the practical religious area. One need hardly subscribe to multivariate analysis, complete with statistics and ratings for each couple, to admit at least this much: there are degrees, subtleties, and a variety of considerations in the case of each couple which are not sufficiently taken account of by the final determination, on the basis of the traditional definition, that this is *either* an interfaith *or* an intrafaith marriage. Rather than continuing to accept such a dichotomy, as a *mini-tuon* we need to recognize the gradations in the different circumstances of different couples, and we need some variations of the traditional wedding ceremony so that it can be more exactly suited to individual situations.

## B) The Nature of Friendship

Dr. J. Fentener van Vlissingen,<sup>2</sup> a brother from the Taize community (a Protestant lay-monastery in France), has recently completed an historical study of friendship? Very briefly, it suggests that three major stages of friendship may be distinguished in history, each of which has particular characteristics.

The first stage, the ethnological, finds friendship firmly set in the structure of society, sanctioned by values and symbols, specifically defined, and often contractual. Its main function is to mitigate tensions which arise from the social organism and family relations. Though the earliest historically,

elements of this stage may persist even today in various societies.

The second stage is that which begins with Greek society, where friendship is defined in ethical terms and has as its purpose the ethical fulfillment of the participants. From Greek times to the eighteenth century there was a moral pre-occupation with mutual perfection in friendship, and this, of course, also implied a socially recognized value system which defined ethical perfection or offered models of it.

The third stage, the romantic, dates from the nineteenth century, when friendship results from special feelings between two people who, interacting, set their personal seals upon one another. Each, then, in some measure determines the character of the other by the interaction. Here the psychological rather than the ethical is central, and the consequence is that personal-subjective rather than societal-objective considerations are the primary determinants of the relationship.

For our purposes, one implication of this stage of friendship—certainly the predominant stage in our age—must be stated explicitly. In the case of a friendship between two persons of different religious traditions, not only is there some exchange of subjective characteristics but some exchange of these religious elements which constitute part of the persons. Thus the friendship serves as a bridge for the flow of symbolic meaning and feeling, and is the point of translation of symbols from one tradition to another.

The effects of this on religious configurations can hardly be over-estimated, especially over periods of time. It means that in friendships of this kind, persons from different traditions discover that the human meaning of the particular symbols of each tradition can in significant ways be translated into symbols of the other tradition, and so an exchange and identification of personal and religious feeling can and does occur at such points. The deeper the friendship, the greater the symbolic sharing, with each person participating in some measure in the appreciation or celebration of the symbols or rites of the other. Where, as in the United States today, inter-religious friendships are numerous, each represents a point of significant religious interchange and an unspoken challenge to traditional claims of religious untranslatability and exclusiveness.

The religious effects of such friendships are re-enforced by certain current symbolic and doctrinal developments.

### C) The Symbolic Thaw

For a long time it had been assumed that the *meaning* of religious symbols was identical with their *explanation*. Explanations, of course, were formulated in the doctrinal terms of particular religious, theological or philosophical traditions. Hence even similar symbols (e.g., candles, bread, wine) were regarded as having essentially different values or meanings in different traditions, and different symbols were taken as proof of insurmountable differences between traditions.

Now it is, of course, true that the doctrinal context does affect the meaning or value of a symbol to some extent, but it does not by any means determine its full meaning. As the late Erwin Goodenough brilliantly (and to me convincingly) argued, the psychological or emotional impact that a symbol may have on human beings depends on much else than the formal interpretation of the symbol, and the evidence in his *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* constitutes an invaluable connecting link with the symbolic expressions of other religious traditions.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, the work of Jung and his school has opened further vistas, and the emotional-psychological-spiritual meaning of symbols is no longer confined by the interpretations of particular traditions. Among especially illuminating treatments of religious symbols from this point of view, one might single out Mircea Eliade's *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. The work of the late Erich Neumann has also been exceedingly valuable, and besides *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, his "Note on Marc Chagall" (*in Art and the Creative Unconscious*) is a brilliant portrayal of deep currents moving today in the Jewish spirit.

At the same time, even particularistic symbols are beginning to be explicated in functional human terms, and so they too begin to have "non-sectarian" meaning for these "outside" the given tradition. A very moving recent example of this is James W. Douglass' *The Non-Violent Cross* (Macmillan, 1968), with its beautiful and non-appropriative treatment of Ernie Levy, the Lamed-vav, the Ebed Yahweh, Gandhi, and others. By appreciating these figures in broad human terms rather than "claiming" them for particular "Christian" purposes, Douglas reveals rare religious sensitivity; yet relating them to the symbol of the cross in significant ways, he at the same time makes more widely available the non-doctrinal human meaning of the cross.

The release of symbols from institutional confinement is, I think, an increasing tendency, and the resultant fluidity of the situation will surely see new configurations take shape.

#### D) Doctrinal Developments

Three years ago, writing in *The Christian Century*, Harvey Cox stated: "We need as our theological starting point a Jesus who is neither the ecclesiastical nor the existentialist Jesus, but the Jewish Jesus...Our Christology must begin with the Jew who makes it possible for us to share the hope of Israel, the hope for a kingdom of Shalom."

Now, in *The Center Magazine*, September, 1968, Robert Gordis devotes an entire article to a survey of what he calls "Re-Judaizing Christianity." By this term Dr. Gordis means far more than the mere "Hebraization" of Christianity, as his summary makes clear:

"The demand for involvement in the world, the stress upon deed rather than upon creed, the sense of the dynamism of history, the

ethics of self-fulfillment, the realistic yet positive evaluation of human nature, the recognition of sex as a divinely ordained attribute of man---and the willingness to draw the consequences in the arena of life---all these elements of Biblical and post-Biblical Judaism are in the direction in which contemporary Christian thinkers are moving. On the other hand, such Hellenistic elements as a static view of God and history, the conception of the dichotomy of body and soul, the doctrine of man's innate corruption, and the stress on dogma and war on heresy are playing an ever-diminishing role in the thinking of Christians today. It follows, therefore, that we may be entering upon a new era of ecumenism, on a far deeper level than the exchange of pleasantries or even the recognition of mutual rights in a pluralistic society."

The conclusion Dr. Gordis derives from this is a rather modest one: "Perhaps the day is dawning when Jews as well as Christians will recognize... that Judaism still has a vital contribution to make to the world today." Rather more to the point, it seems to me, are two final suggestions he makes: "...the concept of the Judeo-Christian tradition takes on genuine relevance in our day...each tradition can speak significantly, first to its own devotees and then to all men."

This does seem to me the case, but it is likely to carry us well beyond the "trully meaningful dialogue" between the traditions to which Dr. Gordis refers, if such "dialogue" presupposes that each participant emerges with a better "understanding" of the other but is to remain in precisely the same relation to his own and the other tradition as was the case before the dialogue. For in such exchanges, just as in friendship, it is highly likely that there will be a significant mutual determination of outlook with distinctly unitive consequences.

#### E) Active Collaboration

Many clergymen have in recent years found themselves engaged in collaborative actions with those of other institutional religious traditions. Usually they have acted together in areas of common concern, the war in Vietnam, the racial situation; sometimes they have worshipped together. At times, as in Southern churches during the height of cooperation with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, they discovered that the full meaning of worship and the Presence of the Spirit could be felt and shared by all those present, no matter what their denominational affiliations. At other times, in intimate discussions with other clergy, they have sensed that true colleagues are not confined within the boundaries of "their own" established religious institutions, but are often found beyond these boundaries. Thus in calmer times as in crises, one's affective/effective religious community has been discovered to transcend the established boundaries of religious denominational groupings.

As with clergy, so with laymen. Powerful feelings of genuine religious

fellowship, not conforming to established religious configurations, have developed among many citizens working jointly on projects of common communal concern.

On campuses this is especially the case, and to such a degree that one Jewish chaplain, responding at a conference to the suggestion of his Christian counterparts that there be active involvement by campus chaplains and their student constituencies in broadly ecumenical social action efforts on campus, replied by warning against any approaches "in which the ecumenical effort becomes a pitfall to the particular identity of the Jewish participants." Acknowledging that "Jews and Judaism have an essential stake in the social change," he insisted that "their contribution must be made not in universalistic terms but within the clearly defined context of the Jewish tradition." Since his own primary responsibility was "to keep Jewish students Jews," he emphasized that social action was to be undertaken not "for its own sake" but rather as an expression of "Jewish tradition, history and experiences." (JTA dispatch in the *Boston Jewish Advocate*, December 19, 1968)

However one may react to this particular approach, there can be little doubt that "ecumenical effort" is indeed a "pitfall to the particular identity of the Jewish participants"---and, it is important to add, to the identities of the non-Jewish participants as well.

#### F) Identity and Invisible Religion

Considerations and developments of the kind cited above are, of course, matters of common knowledge. We have tended, however, to deny their obvious implications by means of the assumption, not often stated openly, that despite these developments, religious outlook and religious identity are still functions of our established religious institutions. It is precisely this assumption that is learnedly and severely challenged by Thomas Luckmann in his brief, incisive work, *The Invisible Religion* (Macmillan, 1967).

Challenging the uncritical tendency to identify religion with religious *institutions* (church, synagogue, etc.), Luckmann instead begins with the question of the *function* of religion. Following the leads of Weber and Durkheim, he presupposes that "the problem of individual existence in society is a 'religious' problem...the values originally underlying church religion were not institutional norms but norms lending significance to individual life in its totality."

Though at first merely a presupposition, Luckmann substantiates this starting point with a valuable discussion, George Herbert Mead-inspired, of how Selves develop: "...an organism becomes a Self by constructing, with others, an 'objective and moral universe of meaning.'...the organism transcends its biological nature by developing a Self."

And what has this to do with religion? "It is in keeping with an elementary sense of the concept of religion to call the transcendence of biological nature by the human organism a religious phenomenon." And in so far as

this process of biological transcendence depends upon the development of symbolic universes which are "socially objectivated systems of meaning that refer, on the one hand, to the world of everyday life and point, on the other hand, to a world that is experienced as transcending everyday life . . . we may conclude, therefore, that the world view, as an 'objective' and historical social reality, performs an essentially religious function and define it as an *elementary social form of religion*. This social form is universal in human society."

This historical world view, which may assume different forms in different social conditions, and which usually includes rituals, images and language, also affects directly personal identity: "...the individuation of consciousness and conscience occurs for historical individuals in the internalization of an already constructed world view rather than in the original construction of world views . . . The personal identity of a historical individual is, thus, the subjective expression of the objective significance of a world view. Earlier we defined the world view as a universal form of religion. Correspondingly, we may now define personal identity as a universal form of individual religiosity." Thus there is a profound relationship between inherited world view and personal identity.

Now whatever the case may be with simple societies, in our own, where we have "increasing complexity of the division of labor, a large surplus over the subsistence minimum and a correspondingly more differentiated pattern of social stratification," we also experience increasing institutional specialization and rationalization. We also experience keenly the sharp segmentation of the several institutional domains which characterize modern industrial societies . . ." And among the institutions affected by this trend have been specialized religious institutions, for "institutional specialization of religion" has been, in fact, the form that religious world views have taken in our civilization.

Now to speak in the plural of world views is already to reveal an important feature of a complex, differentiated society: no religious institution can express "*the* hierarchy of meaning in *the* world view." This factor of pluralism we have, I think, faced squarely.

What we have not faced squarely, however, is the full meaning of institutional specialization of religion in a context of general institutional specialization, segmentation, and rationalization. For not only do what were originally "total life values" tend to become "part-time norms;" not only may any religion come to be "apprehended by the individual as the fulfillment of *particular* requirements" rather than as an overarching, integrating system of meaning which determines effectively the priorities by which people live; but even more important "the primary public institutions no longer significantly contribute to the formation of individual consciousness and personality, despite the massive performance control exerted by their functionally rational 'mechanisms'." As a result, "personal identity becomes,

essentially, a private phenomenon."

Why is this? "Institutional segmentation of the social structure significantly modifies the relation of the individual to the social order as a whole. His 'social' existence comes to consist of a series of performances of highly anonymous specialized social roles . . . . At the same time, the 'meaning' of performances in one institutional domain, determined by the autonomous norms of that domain, is segregated from the 'meaning' of performances in other domains. The 'meaning' of such performances is 'rational'--but only with respect to the functional requirements of a given institutional area. It is, however, detached from the over-arching context of meaning of an individual biography." Thus the person experiences institutional demands for "conformity" at the same time that the institutions leave him, so far as personal identity or biography is concerned, very much subject to "individualism."

But should not the traditional religious institutions help co-ordinate the various institutional demands upon persons? Certainly "religion" should, but the nature of specialized religious institutions probably prevents their so functioning in our society. Luckmann's telling analysis---it repays very careful reading---can hardly be compressed further, but at least certain of the characteristics of institutional religion today should be mentioned in passing.

There is a growing incongruence between the "official" model of religion presented by the institutions and the actual systems of "ultimate" significance by which people do, in fact, order their lives. "Religious practices (such as service attendance) will be performed for a variety of 'nonreligious' motives and specifically religious beliefs will be compartmentalized into opinions (such as, God is almighty) which will have no direct relation to the individuals' effective priorities and everyday conduct." Thus religious institutions, rather than serving a truly integrating function in the lives of their participants, frequently fragment them further with demands which can hardly be taken seriously. At most, specifically religious roles become "part-time" and partial rather than pervasive and unifying.

As for the effects on succeeding generations, this we know very well. "The everyday concerns of the fathers are no longer those of the sons and many of the concerns of the sons were unknown to the fathers." Even more serious, however, is this fact: "what the fathers preach but do not practice will be internalized by the sons as a system of rhetoric rather than as a system of 'Ultimate' significance."

It is thus extremely doubtful that the religious institutions we know are effectively performing the religious function of integrating the routines of everyday life and legitimating its crises. It is quite certain, however, that no other primary public institution is performing this function either. "The effective social basis of the modern sacred cosmos is to be

found in neither the churches nor the state nor the economic system." Yet surely some norms do "determine the effective priorities in the everyday lives of typical members of modern industrial societies." What are these norms, and where are they expressed or found?

Luckmann responds to this question with the suggestion that we may, in fact, be witnessing a revolutionary change of profound social significance: "the replacement of the institutional specialization of religion by a new social form of religion." Just as historically in the West, an early period of "diffusion of the sacred cosmos through the institutional structure of society" was followed by a period of "institutional specialization of religion," we may now be in the period of transition to a new religious form: "*assortments* of 'ultimate' meanings directly available to persons "who themselves select certain religious themes from the available assortment and build them into a somewhat precarious private system of 'ultimate' significance." This individual religiosity tends to be supported by other persons who are of like inclination, and so one has partial sharings and even joint constructions of systems of ultimate significance, precarious though these may be. In the construction and sharing of such systems, the nuclear family is quite important and serves as the effective basis for such constructions. Yet in a profound sense, the new religion is "invisible" so far as its social institutional expression is concerned.

Among the major religious themes today, Luckmann discerns these: individual autonomy, self-expression, self-realization, familism, sexuality, and a mobility ethos. And where do the traditional religious institutions fit in this "emergence of a new social form of religion?" They may be seen, according to Luckmann, in one of two ways: either as "a survival of a traditional social form of religion (that is, institutional specialization) on the periphery of modern industrial societies," or more fruitfully as "one of the many manifestations of an emerging, institutionally nonspecialized social form of religion, the difference being that (they) still occupy a special place among the other manifestations because of (their) historical connections." In short, the traditional religious institutions now function largely as suppliers of certain religious themes which, though of special importance due to historical associations, nonetheless are subject to the same individual preferences that finally determine the acceptance or rejection of other such themes.

As for the effects of this on personal identity, since the individual does, in fact, construct his own system of "ultimate" significance, he in effect thereby constructs his own personal identity as well, since, as we noted before, "the personal identity of a historical individual is...the subjective expression of the objective significance of a world view." This personal identity no longer is merely a reflection of an inherited "official" model, however, but includes, in addition, other elements from the "rich, heterogeneous assortment of possibilities" which are directly accessible to each person.

Thus in the deepest sense personal identity, while relating to an inherited tradition, rarely if ever is wholly constituted by that world view alone. Each person today is rather a composite of many elements, and so the designation of him by any traditional religious attribute--Jew, Christian, etc.--is less and less adequate to his actual religious identity.

Whatever questions one might raise about Luckmann's analysis, and whatever modifications one might suggest in applying it, to the situation of Judaism today, it still seems to me the single most adequate and illuminating treatment I have yet seen of the religious situation today in the United States, and its support of the other developments noted above is, I think, fairly obvious.

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Now what does all this imply for our own attitudes and actions as concerned, radical Jews or as rabbis? Quite obviously a great deal. In order, however, that I avoid speaking for others and that this remain an essay rather than become a treatise, I want to speak primarily as a rabbi and confine myself mainly to one particular issue: so-called interfaith marriages among so-called alienated college students, especially those involved in social movements on campuses today. I would also include these same persons in their first few years after leaving the campuses. It will be helpful, then, to begin by paying special attention to the students as seen by the campus chaplains previously cited.

First of all, though "alienated from adult social concepts and practices," these political and cultural activists are, in the opinions of the college chaplains, "religiously motivated" and "the most spiritually sensitive generation that has appeared on the campus in a long, long time."

Perhaps we can now try to portray, however schematically, what seem to some of us the most significant qualities of these student experiences at their finest. These students come together for various projects of genuine importance to themselves and their society. Their serious criticisms of the present order often stem from religious motivation, and in the projects, campaigns, and struggles they feel a profound personal involvement. They work with students of all religious backgrounds and affiliations, they are assisted by chaplains of various denominations, yet they experience a significant unity. Moments of intensity, "peak experiences" occur in these situations of natural involvement which stem not from demands of the past but from urgencies of the present. In particular crises and in the group responses they may feel "more of religion" than they have ever felt previously at church or synagogue. The power of passionate dedication, the need for clarity of goals, the sense of higher aims and purposes, the intuition of help beyond the limited ego-self--these profound experiences which were our gift in Southern churches may also be felt to some degree by the serious and involved students on campuses, whether in formal or informal religious situations. They also experience quite genuine encounters with one another,

and an association which is not simply "social" but deeply personal, involving many levels of their being. Clearly, by any standard, these are experiences of religious significance.

Now these experiences, the students notice, occur outside the established religious institutions, though at times they are related to them. Further, the situations and experiences are no respecters of established religious lines, and can be and are shared by persons from different traditions. In addition, students discover that if elements of various traditions are brought to bear on the situation confronting them, these elements tend to be more or less available to all, significant to all, and illuminating to all. Even if they stem from "someone else's" tradition, in such circumstances the human-functional meaning of these symbols, myths, or teachings comes to the fore rather than their doctrinal uses. Thus they are widely shared.

The students, aware of the relevance and reality of religion in such situations, also retain some awareness of its too-frequent irrelevance and unreality in so many (not all) standard institutional religious settings. They are aware, also, that the "official" models presented them by parents and the institutions are not really functioning models. They hardly need Luckmann to tell them that there is "a marked degree of incongruence between the 'official' model and the *effectively* prevalent individual systems of priorities." By the mere fact of having lived this many years, they will have noticed very well the effective priorities in their parents' lives, and the following will already be the case: "what the fathers preach but do not practice will be internalized by the sons as a system of rhetoric rather than as a system of 'ultimate' significance."

When the time comes to consider marriage, the establishing of a home, and the continued sharing and transmission of the particular values which they have come to seek—and the aware students of today are far more sensitive to these issues than is sometimes realized—it is obvious to them that their own value systems relate to and draw from, but do not precisely correspond to, pre-established classical models. On the one hand, they still relate in some fashion to the symbols, rituals, social ideals, and group feelings of their inherited traditions; they often want to retain some tie or connection. At the same time, they have established deep and meaningful religious connections with those of other inherited traditions; these can hardly be disregarded. In effect, a new, "invisible religion" has been formed in the intimacy of their relationship, and this, they would insist, must take precedence over the particular demands of their inherited traditions.

Hence they find illegitimate the demand of the established traditions that they conform their own lives to systems of ultimate values which are, even for those professing them, in practice and in priority systems of rhetoric in many respects. They want to express, on the occasion of marriage as well as in their life together, those ties or feelings with their inherited traditions, but they are simply unable to subordinate their most profound intuitions and

convictions to such demands as "conversion" or promises about the rearing of children. In all honesty, they would insist that the rearing of children is a subtle task, and that in good conscience they must share with their children-to-come that combination of values which is the result of their relationship as it unfolds in mutual respect, with consideration for the values of each inherited tradition as well as for the other "assortments of 'ultimate' values" which are their inheritance as residents of this nation at this particular period of history.

As for the established tendency to characterize this as "intermarriage," even without reading the Yinger article they would know that the term is misapplied if simply confined to questions of institutional or group religious identification of affiliation.

The foregoing portrayal is admittedly sketchy and somewhat idealized. Even so, it has, I think, considerable validity when applied to many of "the most spiritually sensitive generation that has appeared on the campus is a long, long time." It is also descriptive of many of the young persons whose commitment to *tikun ha-olam* continues past college, expressing itself in the dedication of their talents and efforts to work of obvious social importance.

Two specific examples may help.

- 1) The young man is a social worker as is his fiancée; both are involved in public welfare. They are both active in the Resistance movement (against the war in Vietnam) and the civil rights struggle. They are presently both studying Hebrew, for they plan to spend the following year on a kibbutz in Israel. He is of Jewish background and training, she of Catholic; for each, the radical, social-action element of his/her tradition is that which has the greatest personal significance. Each is still involved in some measure with the tradition of birth, and they find that their respective interpretations of each tradition markedly coincide. They also find that their interpretations of their traditions, while solidly based, do not coincide with what they see of either religious community about them. Even so, they feel that something of genuine value has come to each from his/her tradition of birth, and their societal involvements relate even now to their inherited traditions. Since there is no pre-established religious community to which either truly belongs at this point, conversion for either is inappropriate. Since both retain and express religious feeling, however, they would like this recognized on the occasion of their wedding by the participation of a rabbi and a priest, both of radical sympathies.
- 2) The young man, who formerly worked with SNCC, has a good Jewish background; the girl is involved with the Catholic Worker movement. They plan to return south immediately after their wedding to work on a subsistence basis with a radical education program directed to the condition of southern whites. Both are mature, a few years out of college,

and each has distinctive religious convictions which arise both from their respective religious traditions as well as from the literary and social-action tradition of the West. They would like their wedding to include the full range of such expressions, hence it must be a rather individual ceremony. At the same time, it would be incomplete unless it related to the central birthright tradition of each. Priestly and rabbinic participation of radical persuasion would mean a great deal to both.

For such persons, we must now ask, what is the probable effect of the demand for "conversion" or promises about the rearing of children as a pre-condition for a rabbi's participation in their wedding? To the "non-Jew" it must surely seem like an unfair, coercive demand. And to the Jew? He will sadly find that the institutionalized religious tradition of Judaism--which already constitutes but a part of his de facto religious orientation--serves not as a resource for helping him establish a new, coherent world view, but rather as an obstacle to such growth. Rather than helping him unify in a meaningful way that unique fullness which is his developing Self, it demands that he maintain a permanent split between his "official" or "professed" world view and his actual system of values, priorities, and allegiances. It can only be felt, in short, as the demand of splintered elders that the same split be maintained and aggravated rather than healed.

Such an approach, I believe, renders a disservice both to the persons immediately concerned and to the tradition itself. The persons are, in effect, told that so far as this particular tradition is concerned, if they are not willing to accept it as it (rhetorically) is, they can forget it. By insisting on a refusal to participate rabbinically in their wedding, "official" Jewish religion seems to say in effect: between your nuclear family\* and our traditional religious institution there can be no institutional recognition. Personal good wishes? Perhaps. But that which is peculiarly the rabbinic function, some "official" institutional recognition of the personal importance and religious significance of this marriage between these two human beings? No, this we are asked to deny. How this helps them consider seriously the ultimate values of such a tradition can readily be imagined! And what this may mean so far as their own deep feelings about the validity of their marriage is not at all pleasant to think about--given the fact that they did care enough about their respective traditions to seek religious expression and acknowledgment of the significance of their new situation.

As for genuine religious development toward a new, urgently needed, over-arching structure of values adequate to help orient and restrain an increasingly uncritical technological society, this official Judaism does its

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*\*Mention of the nuclear family is illustrative, not prescriptive. The possibility of other forms of family structuring would, if anything, strengthen the thrust of this analysis.*

best to prevent by insisting in advance that any new developments conform to institutional models which have already proved inadequate to the new situation. Rather than help the new religious expressions and formations come into being--- and they would surely embody many of our most cherished traditional values--- we seem intent on seeing them still-born or enfeebled, failing to recognize that they might truly become, with time, nurture, and growth, the embodiment of our own and others' better religious selves.

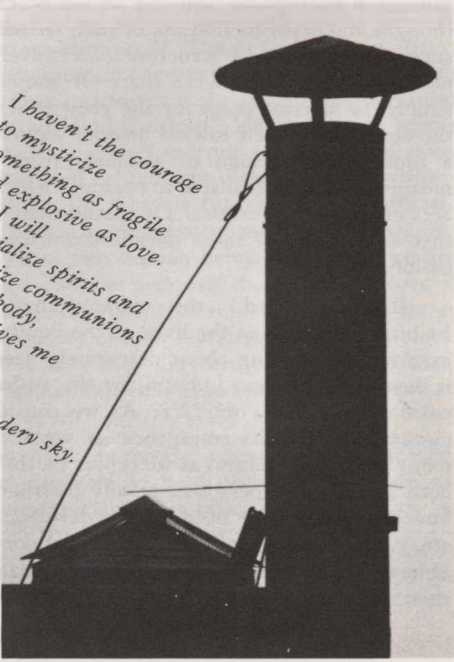
The implications of these considerations are obviously far reaching, both for rabbis and for experimental religious communities, and I do not want to detail them further at this point. However, it does seem to me that the minimum appropriate response on the part of established Jewish religion is the recognition that it is our responsibility, as guardians and representatives of an evolving religious tradition, to relate to this unprecedented religious situation by some form of rabbinic participation in such so-called "inter-faith" weddings. (The exact form of such participation, the exact circumstances and settings, possible criteria, co-officiation with other clergy, how this approach applies to those not involved in the social struggle, etc., though important, are questions for another occasion.)

As for experimental religious communities, it seems to me that their minimum appropriate response should be the serious consideration, both in thought and experimentation, of such far-reaching questions as these: Should such communities be structured exclusively about a given religious tradition and strive to preserve that? Or should a given traditional religion be simply the starting point for the growth of both individual members and of the community itself toward broader inclusiveness of persons together with a thoughtful selection of elements from the "*assortments* of 'ultimate' meanings directly available to persons" which do, in fact, now speak to members of such communities? Or should there be a fresh start altogether? (Further exploration of these questions must also be reserved for another occasion.)

There is indeed "...the possibility that a new religion is in the making." Its birthplace may be the lives of the youth, especially those most devotedly involved in bringing about desperately needed social change. It may be, if it develops, the new Judaism, or the re-Judaized Christianity, or the new cosmic humanism, or???????? As we consider soberly, not hysterically, the circumstances of its emergence; as we anticipate its likely embodiment of many traditional values; as we reflect on the inadequacy to the present crisis, both societal and personal, or any traditional structure; and as we realize how desperate is the need for the developing "invisible religion," now private, subjective, and split off from social concerns, to become visible, public, objective, and effective once again in civilization; how, then, can we do other than relate supportively to such a development?

## FOOTNOTES:

- (1) J. Milton Yinger: "On the Definition of Interfaith Marriage" in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. VII, No. 1, Spring, 1968
- (2) *Duet en Duet* Een verhandeling over de vriendschap Arnhem, 1966 (not yet translated into English, though such a translation would be of great value to those of us who do not read Dutch. My own acquaintance with the work of Dr. van Vlissingen is the result of attendance at an illuminating and sensitive seminar which he led in Cuernavaca, Mexico, under the direction of Elisabeth M. Hollants.)
- (3) cf. my review in *Conseervative Judaism*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, Summer 1967, and most especially Volumes 4-8 of his great work, published by the Bollingen Foundation and distributed by Princeton University Press.
- (4) The Eliade work is published by Sheed and Ward, the Neumann by Bollingen-Princeton.



*I haven't the courage  
to mysticize  
something as fragile  
and explosive as love.  
But I will  
materialize spirits and  
symbolize communions  
on your body,  
until it drives me  
to a raving  
ecstatic coma  
under this powdery sky.*

*Lorne Segal*

According to legend, among the things created in the Beginning was a great Light that stretched from one end of the world to the other.

## OR HAGANUZ

by Danny Siegel

Collage by Allan Sugarman

*Adam awoke and saw the light*

*that stretched his sight across the Garden*

*to the ends*

*of all there was*

*of world*

*and joined by Eve*

*they two later in the day*

*confused the order of the newborn world*

*and an angry Lord*

*disposed them out*

*into a darker place*

*(the light was*

*dimmer now)*

*Their eyes adjusted*

*all according to the laws of God and Nature*

*and they lived and died*

*with concentrated sight*

*a narrowed seeing*

*of an acre and a half*

*of fruit and vegetables*

*that fed*

*by sweat and grunts*

*and aching muscles*

*This morning*

*by the San Francisco Bay*

*a poor and wanderworking poet*

*saw the light the Lord*

*allowed to show a moment*

*past abandoned Alcatraz*

*beyond an endless*

*peaceful ocean*

*all the way around*

*and farther*

*to the mystic East*

*the racing eyes*

in time  
 with  
 puffing  
 blurring  
 hidden light  
 to guide

the East

where farsight moved to insight

longaway  
 then deep and  
 down

down into the heart

of a lonely peasant farmer  
 standing on a barren grassless  
 antigarden

seared by heavenfire  
 giftwrapped from  
 a hundred Santa Clauses  
 in a five-star red and  
 royal building  
 where the early  
 dawnlight of a  
 dusking freedomland  
 was not allowed to  
 clear

security

The poet paused

along the beach

and wept

with God

who put the  
 AdamEvenlight  
 away

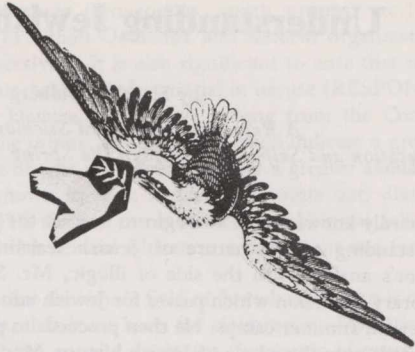
again

upon  
 His magic shelf  
 for future

use

whenever

Danny Siegel is the author of SOULSTONED, and is currently working on a second volume of poetry. He is studying in New York.



## Understanding Jewish Learning

by Harold Goldberg

*A Response to Howard Sticklor's Article,  
"Education and Self-Deception," in the Spring 1969 issue of RESPONSE*

One hardly knows where to begin to correct the illogic and the serious misunderstanding of the nature of Jewish learning that punctuate Howard Sticklor's analysis. On the side of illogic, Mr. Sticklor condemns the contemporary distortion which passes for Jewish education in synagogue schools and Jewish summer camps. He then proceeds to project the current situation backwards onto the whole of Jewish history. Mr. Sticklor assumes that things have always been as bad as they are now, but presents no logical evidence to support that conclusion. He sets up what seems to me to be an inaccurate contrast between the real, supposedly new, goal of "sensitizing students to the needs of the oppressed, the unfortunate and those to whom he relates on a personal level," and the perverse "mainstream" of Jewish learning throughout the ages characterized by "the dullness of man's imaginations."

On the side of misunderstanding, Sticklor reveals a basic misconception of Jewish learning when he asserts that the teaching of Jewish texts means that the students must become a "receptacle for the wisdom of the ages," whereas true Jewish learning should teach the student to "become a participant in an experience that will encourage him to articulate and act out his values".

Mr. Sticklor has indeed graphically formulated the current problem of most synagogue schools and educational camps. In his view, Jewish educational institutions are, by and large, self-serving, unconcerned with creating (or unable to create) an integral, religious personality and are — worst of all — obsessed with teaching stale texts of the past. But before we let this generalization stand, it must be qualified: Sticklor's comments may well apply more to the Conservative branch than to the Reform or Orthodox movements. As Dr. Charles Liebman pointed out in his study of major American rabbinical schools\*, the Jewish Theological Seminary is involved with the teaching of text *qua* text far more than Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion (Reform) or Yeshiva University (Orthodox). This has direct implications for the Conservative movement because, as Liebman has shown, most

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Harold Goldberg is a recent graduate of Yeshiva College in New York City, and is currently a graduate student in Jewish history at Brandeis.

\*The article, which appeared in the 1968 edition of the *American Jewish Yearbook*, was dealt with in some detail in our previous issue. —ed.

Conservative community structures (synagogues, youth groups, etc.) are immeasurably more loyal to JTS than Orthodox and Reform organizations are to YU and HUC-JIR respectively. It is also significant to note that more Jewish radical groups which are basically educational in nature (RESPONSE, Havurat Shalom, New York Havurah, etc.) have sprung from the Conservative movement than from the others, although this could indicate a greater creativity in the young people of that movement, and/or a greater alienation from Judaism as they have known it. Still, as Liebman points out, dissatisfaction is more prevalent in JTS than in the other major rabbinical schools. All this makes the issue of Jewish textual education a significant one for the Conservative movement.

But even if one assumes that the whole field of Jewish education is characterized by flat, textual study, that is no basis for claiming, as Mr. Sticklor does, that textual study has been equally vapid for thousands of years and should now be permanently shelved for our own good. In actual fact, a proper conception of Jewish education would include using the traditional texts in such a way as to accomplish most of what Sticklor proposes to be new ideals of Jewish education. The actual text, which Sticklor considers to be an obstacle to "character education;" to shaping a socially concerned, sensitive religious individual; in short, to teaching "students and not subject matter," is in fact the very means for developing this kind of person.

To the truly competent teacher, there is no difference between teaching the text and teaching the student. The text, seen as it really is, is almost animate; ebullient and effervescent, as it were, vibrating with holiness and reaching out to transmute the life of the student into a continual enrichment of his spiritual capacities, of his ability to relate to God and to man, and to improve the lot of the latter. In drawing out the life-giving potential of God's word (the text), the teacher and the text become one. Neither teacher nor text *per se* confronts the student, but the text *and* the teacher, who has made the text come alive, have the force of an integral communication medium where written word (text) and spoken word (teaching) coalesce. The student then faces the unified delivery of a pulsating, human telling of God's word. Properly understood, then, the teaching and learning of text is by no means a stale or rote experience.

The assumption here (and no theory is without its assumptions) is that Jewish texts are God's word. Only that Word which is an eternal will can be alive thousands of years and hundreds of cultures subsequent to its origin.

Further evidence that Jewish texts are vitally concerned with character education are the values expressed in the texts themselves. Witness the numerous dicta of the Talmud that the deed, rather than the accumulation of wisdom, is of primary importance; observe the sheer breadth of traditional texts concerned with very practical and interpersonal concerns, such as marriage (*Seder Nashim*, the Talmudic section dealing with the laws regarding women), and property and communal organization (*Seder N'zikin*, the section dealing with damages). To be sure, the manner in which these texts

are generally taught is not a good one. They are regarded by many as only stimuli to intellectual development, which of course they are. But they are not *only* that. They are, as I have already pointed out, God's means, in partnership with the teacher, of shaping individual character. This may be verified not only by objective perusal of Biblical and Talmudic texts, but also by attending the class of one of the rare individuals who teaches Talmud as a living, vibrant force, who communicates and generates in his students a personal sense of urgency in grappling with the text in order to act upon its social and personal demands. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein is one of those men. He was the only man among the Yeshiva University faculty to lead a public march last year for the children of Biafra, while at the same time speaking out for the fate of the Soviet Jews, finding the motivation for these and other projects within specific Talmudic principles. Men like Rabbi Lichtenstein are living examples that, contrary to Mr. Sticklor's view, not all Jewish education need be "methodical," "survivalist," flatly textual, and non-character shaping.

At this point, Mr. Sticklor might well object with his assertion that: the union between text and Truth has dissolved. Self-consciousness has reoriented man causing him to deal with process and not revelation. Answers inhere in situations, not in books, and thus the uniqueness of the present is cherished more than continuity with the past.

Sticklor might claim that our portrayal and example of a good textual education ignores the reality of self-consciousness; falls short of the requirement that Truth be based on process and not revelation and that Truth be derived from situations and not from texts, regardless of how relevant, exciting or character shaping these texts might be.

Yet, upon examination, a life that deals with process is not incompatible with one that deals with revelation. Self-consciousness is not the angel of death of revelation, of the textual formulation of the Jewish religious life, but its very crux. Not stifling one's self-consciousness but precisely a major tool for enriching it is a major accomplishment of revelation (the text).

One major portion of revelation has to do with *mitzvot*, God's commandments to man. The life of a *shomer mitzvot* (one who keeps the commandments) is a continual, dialectical process of opening oneself to God's revelation (His commandments), and in turn, of being opened up by God. Specifically, one undertakes to observe a *mitzvah*, and through its observance, new paths to additional *mitzvot* emerge. This process may be viewed as a constant expansion of one's self-consciousness because the *mitzvot en toto* demand a virtually infinite variety of emotional capabilities: the more *mitzvot* one observes, the deeper and more varied his emotional life becomes; his self-consciousness is continually widened in the process. There is also a heightening of one's sense of holiness, of living in the presence of God and deepening one's sense of uniqueness, together with a greater knowledge of the *content* of that uniqueness.

How does all this take place?

Throughout the Jewish year one is alternately asked to fast and to feast (on Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah), to seek tranquility and to suffer uncertainty (on Shabbat and the workdays), to experience self-abnegation and an awareness of one's might (on the Ten Days of Repentance and Channukah). Essentially, the observant Jew is required to endlessly expand his complexity of root, emotional experiences, enabling him to empathize with the rich and poor, oppressed and oppressor alike. Due to his ever increasing emotional flexibility, the observant Jew can serve all types of men, ameliorate each kind of imperfect circumstance. Sensitivity training, however, by means of *mitzvot* is not limited to one's direct relationship with God, within Whose realm all the above examples fall. In human relations as well, subtlety in emotions is a positive trait. One is submissive (before a great scholar) and powerful (in giving charity), controlled (as a *nidah*) and free loving (as a *taborah*), authentically lonely (during *shiva*, the mourning period for a deceased relative) and authentically together (during marriage). Literally thousands of additional examples could be brought to mind. *In short, the mitzvot sensitize man, ever deepening his awareness and his experience of the manifoldness of life.* In fact, there is frequently an interplay of opposites within the bounds of one overall *mitzvah*. On the celebration of Passover, one cannot completely fulfill the requirements of the *seder* unless one achieves the sensation of bondage, feeling oneself participating in and living through the suffering and anguish of his ancestors.

For all this, Mr. Sticklor might still reject our understanding of the true Jewish life. Since he writes that "answers inhere in situations, not in books," he implies that no other guidelines beside those suggested by the given situation are valid. That is, process as a religious experience may still be invalid to Sticklor when an outside source, such as the Torah, is invoked as an authoritative guide to be used within given situations. He seems to be saying that no authority other than an inner one is valid within a given event. But it is not clear from his article whether he alone holds this view, or whether he claims it to be a well-grounded Jewish option. In any event, a Jewish option it isn't! What inner guidelines are we to use in situations? Those of reason? That should surely be no good after witnessing a civilization whose bases of reason could not abort Auschwitz. Should we use our instincts as guideposts? That too is a blind alley in a post-Auschwitz world. Instincts have brought the world to its knees: Auschwitz, Vietnam, Biafra, Sudan, Nasser. And even if Sticklor were to come up with some objective criterion for action within situations, he would be left with the task of explaining why the Torah's is any less valid.

Mr. Sticklor writes: "In Jewish life, the vessel of prophetic alienation has disappeared; in its place we have the 'yes man'." While his analysis of the moral (or better, immoral) state of our current Jewish educators ("yes men")

is largely correct, his implication that the only valid contrast, in terms of values, lies in "prophetic alienation" is incorrect. The prophets were, to be sure, alienated. But, without taking up the opinion of Maimonides that the prophets were alienated from observing the Law and imbibing its spirit, there is no question that underlying the entire structure of rabbinic Judaism is a profound sense of alienation from the routine, the unjust, and the promiscuous. Through fulfilling the *mitzvot*, the observant Jew, in the fullest sense of the term, becomes a sensitive, socially concerned, God-loving individual: these qualities surely induce a deep feeling of alienation from the mundane and evil.

But the sense of alienation of the observant Jew in no way contradicts his power to be empathic. In fact, alienation allows empathy to exist, for without alienation one would be swallowed up in the morass of the world which one is trying to ameliorate. *Jewish alienation consists of the capacity to stand apart from society's distress, and be able at the same time to empathize with it.* The alienation of the observant Jew might be termed the middle road of a radical path: not withdrawn so much that one doesn't give a damn, but withdrawn nevertheless; and not involved so much that one becomes enmeshed in the troubles of society, but still involved. Without a sense of distance from society, it is impossible to maintain a radical perspective; without a sense of kinship to society, it is impossible to implement that perspective. The observant Jew maintains both the distance and the kinship.

Mr. Sticklor's differentiation between teaching students and teaching subject matter is a false dichotomy, as we have seen earlier, for inherent in teaching Jewish subject matter is the teaching of students. But there is still another issue at hand here, that of internalization. The student must be able to take the message that is transmitted from the pulsating aggregate of teacher and text, and make it his own in order to be permanently affected by it. Mr. Sticklor seems to ignore this fundamental issue of internalization by implying that dispensing with the text and concentrating on the student will somehow magically transform the student into a religiously sensitive individual. Yet, whatever teaching method is used, no one can truly shape himself into a deeply religious being without converting into his own actions what he has learned.

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#### AN APPEAL

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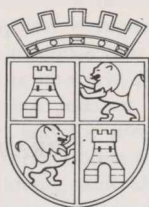
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For an interesting article on Jews and the draft, see the story of the Ruskay case "No Jew or Catholic Need Apply", in *Commonweal*, June 20, 1969. See also an article on Burton Weiss's sanctuary in *Judaism*, Summer 1969.

## MEMORANDUM



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## APOCRYPHA

*The writings which follow are presented as the editors received them—anonymous, ambiguous. Both sections appear to be excerpts from a larger (legendary) work. All footnotes are those of the author (or copyist?). We wish only to quote, here, the statement which was enclosed with the manuscript:*

We must have faith in the origins of these stories, in the essential truth not of what they say, but of their narration, true or not, so that others, telling these stories, may say that there was once someone who told them as they were intended to be told. We must have faith in the storyteller, not in the story told.

(1)

This concerns the story of the stone tablet and the island of Pehli. We do not know the origin of this story, after what must be so many ages, but the first written version appears in a medieval manuscript and was found by a German scholar on his peregrinations through the archives of German cities. The story itself is written in *mittel-hoch deutsch*. It has been translated, or shall we say, interpreted into several languages, among them English. The first translators as well as the original copyist are unknown, though some assume the work must have been accomplished during the period just after the return of Charles II. This is extremely unlikely, and we would place the translation in a much later period, possibly preceding the Queen Anne's War. A few notable critics even wish to credit the translation to the English romantics. Nevertheless, as to the original storyteller, we have scarcely enough clues to justify a reasonable guess. The work is undoubtedly of semitic origin, though perhaps by way of Greek and Latin sources.

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*These parables were presented at Brandeis University in April, 1969, as part of a program in remembrance of the Holocaust.*

The plain truth is that despite the claptrap and humbug of scholarship, we know as much about the origins of the story of Pehli as we do about the actual life of, say, Moses or Jesus or even Jan Hus. Which is, after all, pitifully little.

Here then is a summary of the story:

On the island of Pehli there was a stone tablet which read:

*On that day there shall be holocaust.  
He who is blind will see.  
She who is deaf will hear.  
They who are not will be.  
We who are will disappear.  
The evil*

The last half of the last line was, we see, missing. And it was precisely this missing half line which the villagers on the island of Pehli had come to worship. Their religion consisted of an annual spring sacrifice, in the hopes that the last half of the last line would somehow be revealed, or that the words, "The evil," would somehow be removed. (For, after all, the inscription seems complete without the last line.)

One spring the sacrifice chosen by the village was the young and lovely maiden Roáh. Roáh's reputation in the village was that of a stubborn, rebellious and wayward girl. She had refused the customary marriage with her uncle's second son, and she took to making long trips by herself along the forbidden parts of the beach, often venturing inland to the unknown jungle which surrounded the volcano on the island.

The volcano, in the memory of the most ancient men of the village, had never erupted. No billows issued from the cone, nor had billows ever been witnessed. All the same, the stone tablet upon which the Words were written was believed to be formed of lava. The sacrifice to the tablet was therefore a propitiation to the power which restrained the spirits of the volcano. Roáh, however, did not respect either the superstition which depended upon sacrifice to restrain those spirits, or the senseless desire to remove or add to the final words on the tablet. Her love and her magic were centered about the forest of vines which wound around the upper parts of the forbidden beach, and she herself had no fear of bodiless things--spirits of volcanos or forests of ancestors. She considered herself free of the tradition which, like a vine, bound the other villagers to their religion. She ran along the beach among the waves, she fed herself upon wild fruit, she experienced all the forbidden things without regret, compunction, or regard to the centuries of social superstition. The villagers identified her with the volcano spirits as they might identify any person who defied the perimeters of their circumscribed society. They also associated her defiance with the incomplete inscription, hoping that in her sacrificial death the last words would also dis-

appear or somehow be transfigured. But Roáh, in a final act of defiance, on the night before the sacrificial ceremony, escaped to the forest. There she knew she would be safe, realizing that the villagers would not follow her and risk the curse of the volcano ("We who are will disappear") or the greater curse of the tablet ("the evil' is unlimited," which was the interpretation the elders put upon the incomplete inscription).

The villagers, unhappy to have lost such an archetypal victim, quickly chose another, Roáh's cousin, whom she had refused to marry. From the forest, Roáh watched as the flames curled over her cousin's body, watched the smoke ascend to the tops of the trees and disappear near the rim of the volcano.

Roáh, so the story goes, grew more and more lonely, though remaining healthy and beautiful within the dark regions of the upper beach and lower forest. Then one day she gathered up fruit and began the climb toward the volcano. The mountainside was overgrown with luxuriant vines and great red trees and flowers which blossomed turquoise and silver<sup>1</sup> and among which ran golden-horned antelope and deer.

Some days later several of the more clairvoyant villagers dreamed of a turtle inside a conch shell<sup>2</sup>; a blind man claimed that a seagull<sup>3</sup> had flown to his shoulder and dropped a mirror<sup>4</sup> into his hand; an old lady with one ear gone claimed to hear a single piercing cry; the five elders, sitting around the fire, saw their ancestors dancing in the flames. And Roáh's uncle secretly buried the ashes of his second son out beyond the reef which stood opposite the forbidden beach.

Here the story ends. It seems, in many ways, complete enough: the parallels of the predictions on the tablet and the strange events after Roáh's presumed death in the crater of the volcano. In other ways, however, the story is certainly mystifying: was this the holocaust, these simple fantasies of magic and vision and fervent belief? Was there no change in the inscription on the tablet? Was Roáh actually a suicide, gathering up the social instinct within her to commit that supremely religious act? And to what can we attribute the holocaust--to the death of Roáh's cousin, or to that presumed suicide? Or was there in actuality a volcano, despite the belief that the tablet was formed of lava?

We can postulate a few conclusions: that Roáh, being the image of social disorder, hence of evil, was a necessary sacrifice to the disorder and discontinuity of the inscription on the rock; or that her suicide, if that is

<sup>1</sup> Can we believe the storyteller here?

<sup>2</sup> The two symbols of life — one trapped within the other; one trapped by its own birth, the other trapped by the waves?

<sup>3</sup> Symbol of nature, silent.

<sup>4</sup> How did he know it was a mirror?

what it was, was a manifestation of the ultimate end of all that is evil, just as the inscription itself ends in a void:

*On that day there shall be holocaust.  
 He who is blind will see.  
 She who is deaf will hear.  
 They who are not will be.  
 We who are will disappear.  
 The evil*

or that the act of casting Roáh out by designating her as a prospective sacrifice was in the eyes of the spirits of the volcano a sufficient moral act, and that her cousin's proxy could be accepted for what it was-- that all weeding out is necessary before that final day; or that the holocaust itself was not something final, but something enduring, and it would always claim annual sacrifice in the midst of life, in spring; or finally, that the inscription itself was meaningless, that the events after Roáh's death, if she died then, were all imaginary, and that what was meaningful was the mere respect, awe, worship, or fear of the inscription itself, or of the stone, and that Roáh's denial of the stone was an act of immorality beyond all others--for she denied the validity of that mystery which the villagers thought fundamental: that there was indeed something incomplete about the rock's inscription, that indeed it was not a perfectly complete inscription just as it was.

There are a few footnotes we can add to this story.

The island, which some believe to be the prototype for Pehli, has no volcano, although a sheer cliff on the western side rises two hundred feet above the sea and leads to a sharply-walled natural depression covered with vegetation that towers over a forest of barbed vines which slopes down to a village on the eastern side of the island.

A mineralogical exploration of the island has revealed that mirror-like pieces of mica do exist on a few walls of caves near the shore.

There is also, according to one biologist, a species of turtle which thrives inside vacated seashells.

Further, examination of the medieval manuscript in which this tale has been copied reveals that the dust on its pages can come only from lava.

Finally, we note this remark which the German scientist made upon the discovery of the manuscript:

*I have found on the inside [ we translate ], in the middle of this book, carefully hidden by folded pages, a pressed flower. Although the colors are faded, I believe the flower, which is very large and nearly covers the page of this folio, was once some combination of gray or silver and greenish-blue.*

That German scholar, whose disease of the eye brought him to eventual blindness, is long dead. The manuscript itself, kept in the archives at Munich, is now gradually disintegrating, and all that remains legible on the last page are the words "We who are" (and there are some words missing, we believe) "evil."

\* \* \*

(2)

A bearded, ugly man sleeps on a straw cot in the middle of his prison cell. The door to the cell is never locked, there is no guard, and the cell is the only occupied one in the entire dungeon, which is but a few feet below ground. The cell has no windows, receives no light, and is poorly ventilated.

Every day the ugly old man wakes at the same hour in the morning, washes himself in the basin which somehow always contains clear cold water, and scratches a mark on the wall opposite his cot with a steadily diminishing piece of stone. Then he walks the perimeter of the room four times, the stone held in his left hand. Finally he sits upright on his cot for sixteen hours, with his eyes open, staring at those marks accumulating on the opposite wall. Every so often he shifts the position of his legs, or blinks, or transfers the stone from one hand to the other. At the end of the sixteenth hour, he returns to sleep, letting the stone fall from his hand to the floor.

We have twice interrupted the man's routine to request him to leave his cell. He has refused both times, without a word, but with a grunt and a taciturn gesture that admit of no rebuttal. From our room in the castle above the dungeon, we can hear his pacing, and we have become so sensitive that we can even hear that single scratch on the wall in the morning. We are able to describe his regimen because we have spent so much time watching him stare at the wall, though all we can make of the scratches are single lines, parallel and equidistant, as if calendar markings.

None we have spoken to knows the history of this man, though some have intimated that he was at one time a rebel against the crown who, though pardoned long ago, has maintained his vengeance by creating and recreating an insistent symbol of defiance in his willful self-imprisonment. This has always seemed a rather fanciful interpretation, for the crown long ago was relinquished to the people, the castle long ago became the home of those a rebel would most dearly love, and the symbols of tyranny which once rode the parapets of the castle were long ago left mouldering in the filled-in moats far below the dungeon floor. No, there must be another explanation.

We have also heard that this man is in reality blind, or deaf, or mute, or some combination of the three. We attest to the falseness of these things, having visited him ourselves, having seen him see, having heard him grunt, having spoken to him and having had him understand. No, it is not physical disability.

Men have been down to decipher his marking. They cannot, or say that they are simply counting signatures. His stone is merely a piece of chalk. His cot is merely straw. The basin of water is the only mystery, but engineers say that the dungeon walls perspire and leak sufficiently for the ugly man to be able to empty his old water and let the night air draw new clear water out of the walls. This seems plausible. (It is, at any rate, unimportant.) The cell is like the other cells which are no longer in use. In short, there is no simple physical explanation of the bearded man's adherence to this way of life.

The mystery then is in his choice. Even ascetics who have visited the place declare it uninspiring. Mystics cannot locate God within its walls any more intensely than without. Priests are antagonized by the man, but that is because they get the sniffles every time they descend to the dank dungeon. There is no simple religious explanation.

As to the history of the castle itself, once it was the center of much religious persecution: Anabaptists, Hutterites, Friends of Love. The usual set of thumbscrews and tortures and racks that every castle has gone through were once here. The castle has also some magnificent tapestries commemorating the seasons, processions, the hunts. A few statuary are sprinkled here and there, mostly Roman imitations. Some pieces of jewelry, some vases of fine porcelain, a large chandelier, a parqued entrance hall — all these things are gone to the people's museums. Little of that which might symbolize the old regime has been allowed to remain. The castle now harbors a fine restaurant, a park, a museum of postage stamps and old coins, and a fire engine corps.

What incongruity, then, for this wizened and ugly man to remain below in the dungeon, as if to say that once there was the necessity of rebellion and that once there was an inquisition and that once there was the despair which could drive a man to live out his life in a cell, voluntarily, without sun or companionship, marking the days as they pass.

But this all-too-frequently-suggested interpretation seems singularly inadequate: it does not explain what the inner compulsion of the man himself is — it is not at all concerned with that sense of mind and emotion which had to congeal before he could consider himself fit for such a role as pariah or nemesis. And our language also waxes too eloquent now, for his act, whatever it is, seems too straight-forward to merit such philosophy. When he dies, we all know we will not know anything more about the mystery than we knew before, and this is why we become disturbed when we chance to think of him, down below us, in his cell.

We suppose that if there should ever happen to be a Daniel among us, he would read his "*mene mene tekel vpharsin*" in the wall where those same scratches appear every day. Or if there were a young hunter, he would see

his face in the wall. Or if there were a neurotic intellectual, the wall itself, and the addition of those marks, the wall itself would be the symbol of this civilization. But the prison cell and the man cannot be explained away.

For this is a parable. There is in truth no man down there. The cells have been turned under, and there is now a park above them. Long ago, perhaps, there was a man down there. We are not sure. Someone just the other day found some ruins near where the old moats used to be, with a wall full of undecipherable scratches similar to the one we have been describing. Everyone thinks the marks are a primitive calendar, but if one looks closely there is on the twelfth upright mark and near the top, a slight horizontal bar; a cross. Which does not mean anything really, except that the marks are not simply calendar marks.

Of course, no one actually found any ruins. That too is in our imagination. Our imagination is what counts—the inquisition was nothing but that imagination, and all we can think of now when we think of the inquisition is not the horror of the torture (for who can imagine that?), but the horror of the possibility of a man choosing to live his life in a cell in order to remind us of that torture, that destruction: Anabaptists, Hutterites, Friends of Love.

And now, now that we have explained this to you, for the first and the last time, we descend the steps into the cell there to wait out the end of the days, to make marks on walls which no one will ever completely understand; to be silent, to live as if by will and spite alone, to remind the world that once it was necessary for a man to remind the world what it means for a man to choose to live in a dark cell, alone and cold and spiteful, remembering how once the millions were stoned, tortured until their bones turned to chalk, and destroyed, one by one by one, until who was left?

\* \* \*

THE ELECTRIC JEW, a new project for developing experimental Jewish art forms, is planning a gathering in New York, Feb. 6-8, 1970. For details write NETWORK, 2307 Broadway, N.Y.C. 10024.

# PSALMS

by Douglas Wolff

1

Jerusalem you are wise and you sit in your puddles  
 droplets lingering on your two thousand beards  
 The *shook* empty now, the buses full of old wash  
 women going to and endless rows  
 Of raincoats. Millions of knee boots. The  
 Knesset is still open I guess. It's  
 Not easy these days to fall in step with a  
 tour from Trenton or Young Israel  
 J. C.  
 The *Post* grinds out its chauvinistic doom,  
*Aretz* makes it (Yom I-Yom,) *Yediot*  
 wraps fish  
 And *Ma'ariv* never tires of uninteresting news  
 Jaffo road is metamorphosing how come I keep  
 finding new book shops every time  
 I walk there  
 Kiosks are the same tho and I've never stopped  
 to enlist in the national lottery I must  
 be a virgin  
 Tramping is a tougher game now you never know  
 what clouds hang on the other side  
 of the hill  
 And you snore Jerusalem you know better  
 Jerusalem you will awake when the first  
 cloudless day eases you out of bed.

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*Mr. Wolff lives in New York. His official affiliation is limited to the Public Library. He rowed college crew for two years and produces occasional literature.*

## 2

Padding around outside the biblical zoo — Is a  
Zebra worth the admission? Will the giraffes  
love me for it?

*Binyanei Ha'ooma* — knows all — tells nothing —  
for one pound get to hear Eshkol mumble to  
himself — Dayan knows better

Watching the fireworks in *Beit Shean* was something —  
the best things in life are free or else  
cost an arm and/or a leg

The charred tractor lay exploded on the workshop  
floor — they were almost ready to assemble it  
And somewhere you know who lay exploded in a box —  
they never found all the pieces

*Shalom adoni, shalom gveret, shalom chaver,  
shalom chabibi shalom aluf*

Shalom salute, load, fire, fire listening to a  
Columbia recording of the 6 Day War complete  
with the sounds of the dying

Ben-Gurion marching to the wall June 6 His old  
grey head knew all along. The Zionist dream  
lives. The Zionist dream kills.

But nothing like el-Fatah, baby.

## 3

Jerusalem why do I hide in your YMCA why do  
I creep among the Lutheran oak tables

I should be out weeding on a kibbutz

The YMCA auditorium is uppermost in my mind

Probably because it reminds me of high school  
auditoriums those brown plywood seats

That slam to a salute when you get up like the  
finale of Johnny Cash at the State Farm

YMCA you are a symbol yes you are yes a living  
testimonial to a world that is third  
party here

Yes sir you stern Puritans, Huguenots, Anglicans,  
Methodists, Baptists, Fundamentalists,  
Evangelists, Pugelists

You're just playing third fiddle here anyway

You and your suicidal crusades you and your  
suicidal life where eating and fucking  
is worse than

You don't even go for circumcision anyhow.

Castrate the Pope altogether.  
 Israeli helicopters dumping commandos on the Vatican  
 Thirteen incense burners destroyed in their fixtures  
 But not one human "Please step back — please move away"  
     being was hurt.  
 Not one habit rustled, messed  
 Lloyds of London, weeping, raised the pot.

## 4

Jerusalem you make me want to leave you also make me  
     want to come back  
 You are the mother of all cities, daughter to them all  
 The Absorption Committee wants to make you a London  
 You'll miscarry —  
 Just another scar  
 Jerusalem you are a state of mind you don't do anything anyway  
 You are a place to look down from  
 The pinnacle of the world  
 Josephus catalogued 152, 433 deaths here  
 And that's not sheep or pigeons, brother,  
 Jerusalem you're a contradiction in yourself I came up to you  
     and there's nowhere left to go  
 I search for the excavations by the Wall  
 Looking for the altar, the ark, a thread, or fragment of  
     breast plate and only finding faint trails of blood that  
 Andy Warhol goes to church every Sunday.  
 Jerusalem, I feel cheated.  
 Speak to me before the what this city needs is another  
     prophet — I saw him hawking newspapers, a blind man, yet.  
 Selling to the world what he could never know.

## 5

I'm coming back, Jerusalem  
 Getting off the plane, Jerusalem  
 The sight of Tel Aviv below still throbbing her  
     night cafes full and her streets walking  
 Looking for the highway, Jerusalem  
 Coming up to plant a tree  
 Coming up to plant myself  
 Jerusalem

# KRISTALLNACHT

(an East Village high)

*for Ron*

The rain below is hard as glass,  
or perfect features, shatters  
the air

lined by night streaming  
tears and broken windows  
in my draughty Spanish head  
left open (on purpose)  
to toss out  
so much sharply divided, intellectual  
pulp, I threaten to bury those  
sought merely to assault  
for their own good. "Jewish  
Pleasures": my very own,  
nothing personal, pogrom.

Aristotle on the table  
is clear as daisies,  
Either/            he loves me  
Or                he loves me not.

Whereas I-do-not-love  
is no longer at issue.  
Like a ghetto Jew  
faithful to the Sabbath Bride  
who lightly comes and goes,  
week after week, in peace;  
or like the sober Friend  
who now three centuries  
still travels far,  
war after war, patiently  
to sit awhile  
and maybe speak a word,  
So, dis-  
junctively, am I in love.

Not being with me this week,  
my love is sharp as rain.  
Cut off at the nape  
with only my head in place —  
I have a bad sore throat

still chanting endlessly,  
 by breathless rote, unsatisfied tunes  
 chasing their tails.  
 For endless are the voices  
 of the sweet singers of  
 Zion streaming tears,  
 approaching on the longest notes  
 dissolutions we in our  
 prayerbooks pause to admire;  
 while building strength,  
 their broken sighs and ours  
 (harsh as glass unsealed)  
 are felt as growing pains  
 or being healed.

Burton Ira Weiss

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## A JEWISH INDEPENDENT WEEKLY

In considering the order of desirable Jewish priorities, the need for an independent Jewish weekly newspaper seems to make a good deal of sense. Through its pages it would be possible to initiate, discuss and evaluate necessary changes and innovations which could make Judaism and Jewish life more meaningful to our generation of Jews.

With one or two possible exceptions (e.g. the Boston *Jewish Advocate*), there are no independent, qualitative Jewish weeklies in the United States. Most weekly periodicals are incredibly pedestrian, uncritical, and devoid of any real philosophy of Jewish life. (To be concerned about Israel is not a philosophy; it is an axiom).

News from Israel -- without adequate background or critical analysis -- dominates the Jewish weeklies, but they add little to the extensive coverage found in the *New York Times*. More puzzling is the lack of depth coverage or constructive critique of American Jewish life, whether on national or local levels. Contemporary Jewish "journalism" is geared to self-serving organizations and interests; it rationalizes and lauds segments of Jewry (e.g., a particular "establishment"), but rarely presents an honest description and *evaluation* of issues affecting *klal yisrael*. Young Jews are simply ignorant of a *world* Jewish people. The existing weeklies surely do not convey a meaningful spiritual dimension of Judaism, although they report most superficially about Jewish institutionalized religion.

Most young Jews, on and off the campus, have little conscious commitment to the Jewish people or its traditions. They are, however, willing to be shown, systematically, in relation to life's daily events, how Judaism is relevant to contemporary affairs. They want a voice in determining Jewish public policy, and need a thought-provoking news medium, not propaganda blurbs or uncritical cliches, to help them comprehend the crucial issues affecting Jewish preservation. They require a newspaper through which their Jewish identity can be articulated and strengthened.

An independent and responsible weekly would cover not only hard news (including the "Jewish angle" on general news), but would also keep its readers abreast of articles, books, films, plays, lectures, etc., that either have a direct bearing on Jewish interests, or that convey a significant ethical message to a generation in search of Jewish ethical and intellectual guidance.

Such a periodical would not ignore Jewish Telegraphic Agency or *London Jewish Chronicle* news, but would present it with appropriate background and sound analysis. A major and novel source of news would result from a group of responsible contacts throughout the Jewish world, including, of course, on college campuses. Imagine articulate Jews adding a new, more enlightened, more sophisticated dimension to the dynamics of Jewish life!

It would be interesting to learn how many readers of RESPONSE, including professionals and businessmen (even millionaires!) would like to become involved in launching such a New York City centered periodical (there are 2-1/2 million Jews in the New York metropolitan area) -- as low paid (initially) reporters and researchers, copy writers, columnists, lay-out editors, photographers, etc., and not least of all as advertisers, subscribers, or investors. Drop us a line.

Ben Samuel

If readers want to get in touch with any specific groups in the new Jewish counter culture, we suggest they write to NETWORK, 2307 Broadway, N.Y.C. 10024. This is a special service set up to keep the new groups in touch with each other, and to provide general movement news.

# RESPONSE

(A Contemporary Jewish Review)

**RESPONSE** is the continuing attempt of a group of Jewish college students to examine the vitality and relevance of Judaism to personal development and community progress:

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