

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM AND ISRAEL

A Symposium

The emergence of the State of Israel marks one of the noblest achievements in modern Jewish history. Yet the future of the young state is by no means clear. While its very physical existence seems to hang in the balance, its spiritual development is likewise uncertain. Even in a time of national emergency, it may be well for us to consider some of the deeper problems that confront the state and examine what contribution we of the Conservative movement can make in this direction. Three distinguished members of our movement, each of whom is well known for his love and labor for Zion, have been invited to participate in this Symposium.

Editor

OUR SHARE IN ERETZ YISRAEL*

A Program for Conservative Judaism

by

MOSHE DAVIS

I

AS WE come to consider the long-range program of the Conservative movement in *Eretz Yisrael*, we are deeply aware of the present danger which threatens the life of the State of Israel. Because of this danger, some counsel exclusive concern for the imperatives of this difficult hour, and postponement of *any* long-range program which relates to the personal and spiritual identification of American Jewry with *Eretz Yisrael*. Certainly the times are fraught with danger, and call for our vigorous action together with world Jewry. We of the Conservative movement must not, however, postpone the search to embed our eternal bond with *Eretz Yisrael* within the framework of our total commitment to Judaism. There are duties of the hour. There are opportunities of the age. In fulfilling the duties of the hour, we dare not neglect the opportunities of the age.

Precisely because the times are perilous for Israel and the world, precisely because the political security of Israel is likely to be threatened for a long time

* Condensed from an Address delivered at the United Synagogue Convention, November, 1955.

to come, we dare not confuse immediate urgencies with basic needs. Indeed, I too ask: What *are* the imperatives of this critical hour? How do we meet our obligations to history?

The history of Judaism teaches us that one faces a crisis best by devoting himself, even in the very heat of the crisis, to the permanent and enduring values of Judaism and mankind. For the very nature of a crisis is impermanence, transience, an interruption in the normal development of mankind. Our Tradition teaches us, therefore, to place crisis in perspective and to meet it as a moment in history. And history is not hysteria. To be deflected from the *permanent* task is the real defeat. The enemies of Israel must not succeed to make us forget the future.

The people in Israel understand this truth. While the emissaries of Israel are pursuing every possible political opportunity in the world capitals, and while they plead for peace at every opportunity, the people of Israel are devoting themselves in even greater measure to peaceful deeds at home.

We can do no less. We, too, should realize that in order to claim our share in the Holy Land, we must look beyond continuing crises to plan the *Eretz Yisrael* program of the Conservative movement on the foundations of permanent peace. As citizens of the United States, we will, of course, continue to seek all possible means, in concert with Americans of all faiths, to secure the political and material growth of the only democracy in the Middle East. And as members of the world Jewish community, we will meet, with ever increasing support, our responsibilities to the United Jewish Appeal and Bond drives. But as members of the Conservative movement we have a special *collective* commitment to *Eretz Yisrael*, which goes beyond these obligations.

The United Synagogue is exactly what its name says it is: a union of synagogues — a religious brotherhood. Our particular commitment to *Eretz Yisrael* must therefore be directed to the religious and educational tasks of Israel's future. We look forward to the day when the young State will be not only a cultural force in the world, but also, as it was in the days of the prophets, a source of spiritual insight and human hope for the family of the world. In the realization of this aspiration, we in the United Synagogue want to have an active share, as part of our own total commitment to the ideals of Judaism.

II

In planning our future share *in Eretz Yisrael*, we must take into account the changing conditions of modern life: in communications, in the world of ideas and in religious affairs. I would like to point up the special relevance of these changes to our program in *Eretz Yisrael*.

First, world civilization has entered the Air Age. What is significant to us is that the air age is not only reshaping the economic geography of the world, it is also affecting cultural and spiritual centers of influence. The new era in travel has shrunk the world, and for us this has already wrought extraordinary changes in the cohesiveness of Jewish communal life. It has created a new

physical unity among the Jews of the world, particularly between Israel and America. New York will soon be only twelve hours from Jerusalem; and within two decades even that distance may be cut to three hours.

In the Jewish world, the air-revolution has virtually abrogated the theory that the Jews in *Eretz Yisrael* and Jewish communities throughout the world are necessarily separate cultural and religious entities. The conquest of space has introduced wonderful possibilities for continuous interchange of men and ideas. "Going to Jerusalem" need no longer be post-mortem; it can be a part of life, and it has already become a reality for increasing numbers of Jews.¹ Most important, today Israel is a suburb of America; and in spiritual terms American Judaism can be a suburb of Jerusalem. In the new age, we live side by side. It will soon take as long for an American Jew to get to Jerusalem as it took Sabato Morais to travel each week from Philadelphia to New York seventy years ago, when he undertook to establish the Seminary as a national institution.

In the light of this new freedom of communication, we must plan boldly, imaginatively. For individuals, those who do not plan to settle permanently can certainly think of living in Israel for some part of their lives. For our institutions, we can plan to establish sections of our educational departments in Israel and implement common programs of action with kindred groups in Israel.

A second revolutionary development is the rapid emergence of Israel as the contemporary embodiment of ancient Hebrew culture and civilization. This is a phenomenon which has caught the imagination of the cultural and intellectual world. I can cite no better example than Edmund Wilson, who described in detail in the *New Yorker* how he came to take up the study of Hebrew and Bible, and how this study helped him to understand the Hebrew mind. The fact that Hebrew — and all that it implies — is spoken again as a living tongue, and that out of Zion have come forth scholars, scientists and artists, has created an attitude of renewed respect for Jewish culture. This, in turn, has given an impetus to Jewish creativity in all its manifestations throughout the diaspora.

Pleased as we may be with the effect of the Israeli renaissance on the broader cultural life, we are even more impressed with the effect this very renaissance has had on so many of our fellow-Jews, and especially on many young and gifted talents whom we never won to ourselves, who have remained alien to Jewish tradition as expressed in America, and who have suddenly discovered themselves as Jews. Hundreds of brilliant American Jewish technical experts have chosen to serve Israel, ignoring greater material and professional rewards. It is reported that their numbers "constitute proportionally the largest single concentration of variety in foreign know-how ever afforded one nation by another." Numbers of Jews are thus coming to learn about their people and their tradition through the motive power of *Eretz Yisrael*.

¹ The new *Eshkol* edition of the *Siddur* concretizes this relationship with a supplementary prayer inserted for air travel following the prayers for those who travel by sea and land.

A third profoundly significant factor is the amazing new interest in the Land itself, in Israel's historic past. In this connection, I do not refer only to the remarkable performance of archaeologists over the past decade and to the recent exciting discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but also to the growing interest among varied groups in the abiding values of Judaism. This interest derives from the newly-awakened concern with religious ideas which has gripped the American mind. American Christian tradition always espoused the fulfillment of the prophetic vision of the Return. When we examine American religious history, we see reflected again and again the deep passion and love which the American people have for the Holy Land. Governor Theodore R. McKeldin, a consecrated champion of human rights (who is giving unique service to Israel as President of the America-Israel Society), describes in an address "The Jews of Maryland," the effort in the early nineteenth century of Thomas Kennedy and others to eliminate discriminatory legislation which affected the Jews. The young Kennedy who, strangely enough, never came into contact with Jews until the last years of his life, brought in a report which is one of the earliest and one of the most fervent Christian statements on Zion.

But if we are Christians, we must believe that the Jewish Nation will again be restored to the favor and protection of God. May we not hope that the banners of the children of Israel shall again be unfurled on the walls of Jerusalem and on the holy hill of Zion.²

This love for the Holy Land and for Zion rebuilt has been a pervading influence in American religious life.³ It has built a mighty reservoir of friendship and active help for Israel, and the blessings have been manifest in strange and beautiful ways. In our own day, President Truman consciously — and truly — likened his role in helping the establishment of the State to the role of Cyrus.

This devotion is felt wherever the Bible and spiritual ideals touch people's lives.⁴ Americans want to help Israel because they know the meaning of

² *Congressional Record* (Feb. 11, 1954).

³ One of the most striking examples of this love for the modern builders of Zion dates back to 1830 when the Mormon Church, the first indigenous American religious group, included amongst its articles of faith the belief in the literal restoration of *Eretz Yisrael*. Later Joseph Smith, its founder, dispatched Orson Hyde, one of his ardent disciples, to Jerusalem, to help facilitate the return of the Jews. Hyde's prayer, offered on Mt. Olives, and later incorporated as an official prayer in the Mormon ritual, reads like the prayer of a pious Jew. A brief citation will suffice to transmit the mood and character of the entire supplication: "... Thou, O Lord, did once move upon the heart of Cyrus to show favor unto Jerusalem and her children. Do Thou also be pleased to inspire the hearts of kings and the powers of the earth to look with a friendly eye toward this place, and with a desire to see Thy righteous purposes executed in relation thereto. Let them know that it is Thy good pleasure to restore the Kingdom unto Israel — raise up Jerusalem as its capital, and constitute her people a distinct nation and government . . . Let that nation or that people who shall take an active part in the behalf of Abraham's children and in the raising up of Jerusalem find favor in Thy sight . . ."

⁴ We are told, for example, in Harold Ribalow's volume on *The History of Israel's Postage*

Jerusalem. One of the finest formulations of the American love for Jerusalem was presented by President Pusey of Harvard in an American Jewish Tercentenary address which he called "America and Jerusalem."

The Jewish contribution to the settlement and building of this country is important, but when we have said this it is not necessary to add that at this level of consideration it is not essentially different from those of other cultural groups who were coming to America at the same time. It should not be forgotten or undervalued, but it is not here that the most distinctive and most valuable contribution of the Jewish people is to be found. To get at this we must go back of Newport and New Amsterdam, back of the earlier Jewish settlements in Russia, Germany and Spain, back to a more distant time, to that long confused period in which not only what we now call Western Civilization itself, was forming in the ancient Middle East. For it is not in business, nor in music, nor in the professions, but in religion, that the Jewish people have made their greatest contribution both here and abroad . . . I have endeavored . . . to suggest that greater, immeasurable spiritual debt that all men — we in this country, and others East and West, whether it be recognized or not — owe, and must ever owe, to Jerusalem. This place, for nearly three thousand years, has been summoning us to life — giving acknowledgment of our inescapable dependence on God.⁵

These are the currents of our times which are shaping American and world opinion, and from which we can benefit greatly in the evolution of our own new program. In essaying these trends, I am not unmindful of the counter-opinion which is working against us, and the effect of which, alas, is also clearly manifest. But I am convinced that we have in these constructive trends the more permanent manifestations of American thought.

III

What, then is the measure of our own contribution to *Eretz Yisrael*? What does Israel require of us now more than anything else?

The assurance that in American Jewry it has a firm partner in the creative enterprise of the Jewish people and in the transmission of the Jewish Faith.

And what do we require of ourselves in this relationship?

The feeling that we can offer to this partnership not only our material resources but our spiritual strength as well; the assurance of our ability to give Torah to Israel as well as to receive spiritual guidance from Eretz Yisrael.

In order to achieve these ends, the *Eretz Yisrael* program of the Conservative movement must be based on two fundamental propositions.

First, that the greatest contribution we can make to *Eretz Yisrael* is to build an authentic, indigenous and creative Jewish community in America based on

Stamps, that Israeli stamps are purchased, in proportion to numbers, more by Christians than by Jews, because of the attraction of *Eretz Yisrael* and the Biblical themes on the stamps.

⁵ *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. XLV, no. 1 (September, 1955), pp. 1-6. Another address on this theme, quite remarkable for its penetrating thoughtfulness, was delivered in 1953, by the Governor-General of Canada, Vincent Massey, and published by the Canadian Jewish Congress.

the solid foundations of the Tradition. As Dr. Kaplan writes in his *A New Zionism*: "Zionism can emerge from its present crisis strengthened by the experience of challenge and danger. It can lead to the fulfillment of the prophecy that 'from Zion shall go forth Torah,' but before the Torah can go forth from Zion it will have to enter into Zionism." This is the beginning of our task: actually to bring Torah into our lives and into the life of Zionism. Thus, just as Israel has become a vital factor in the recent intensification of Jewish life in America, so will a flourishing and *creative* American Jewry become an important factor in the cultural advancement of the *Yishuv*.

We must not be appalled by the thought that we, too, must bring Torah to *Eretz Yisrael*. Unless this is our ambition, it is inconceivable that we can ever have a full share in the Land, nor will we be in a position to make a meaningful contribution to the totality of Jewish life. American Jewry is accepted in the counsels of world Jewry essentially because of its numbers and material strength, but we shall never make a fundamental contribution to the inner life of world Jewry unless we reorient our own lives about Torah and its teachings.

Some challenge those who express a belief in the creative potentialities of American Jewry: "Do you believe American Jewry is Babylonian Jewry?" I answer that the question itself is irrelevant. Would that we should *want* to serve the historic role of Babylonian Jewry in relation to Israeli Jewry. We would then affirm that at least we aspire to the achievements of that creative age.

Yet Torah should be brought to *Eretz Yisrael* from American Jewry if we want Israel to respect us. Ben Gurion once met a group of Iraqi children whom he wanted to impress with the opportunities offered them to raise the standards of Israeli life. "Who was the first *Sabra*?", he asked. The children spontaneously responded, "Abraham." "No," he reminded them, "It was Isaac. Abraham was an Iraqi, and he brought the belief in one God to Israel."

Not only in ancient days at the time of Abraham, but in modern days, too, diaspora communities have played a crucial role in shaping the character of life in *Eretz Israel*. The whole revival of modern Hebrew is a phenomenon of the diaspora, the creation of East-European Jewry. It is not inconceivable that American Jewry could teach Israel how the Synagogue may be revitalized in modern circumstances and in a contemporary setting. Thus we could bring new meaning to the personal spiritual life of the Jews in Israel.

The second premise on which our program should be based is personal religious commitment. *Aliyah*, that is, settlement in *Eretz Yisrael*, is a word which we avoid out of the fear that any positive affirmation of an American *Aliyah* implies a choice against America.

What is the purpose of *Aliyah*?

Generally, one thinks of *Aliyah* as a program for building Israel. That is obvious! What should be equally obvious is that *Aliyah* is vital to build the American Jewish community, to help create in America an authentic Judaism. A Jewish community that wants to be part of the mainstream of the Jewish

tradition should inspire a portion of its numbers to *want* to go up to Jerusalem; otherwise it may not succeed in becoming a *Jewish* community at all. *Yishuv Eretz Yisrael*, settlement of the Holy Land, is a historic function of all diasporic communities, and the *Aliyah* of select individuals and groups of settlers has always added to the quality of the Jewish community at home, precisely because of the religious significance of *Eretz Yisrael* in Jewish life.

The insight about *Yishuv Eretz Yisrael* cited in the name of R. Ḥanina — “the Land of Israel when it is inhabited expands, when it is not inhabited it contracts”⁶ — applies with equal force to the impact of *Aliyah* upon diasporic communities. Jewish communities in the diaspora also expand in the dimensions of their spiritual life in proportion to their active contact with the Land.

The *Aliyah* of those individuals, or as Haim Greenberg called them, pilgrims, ascending to *Eretz Yisrael* out of love for the ideas of Judaism and for the Tradition, out of their religious commitment, is the *Aliyah* we should be proud to achieve. Such pilgrims, coming from America, would be exponents of the American spirit of freedom. They would represent a climax of the American ideal, for such pilgrims will come to Israel with a love of America. They will come as consciously creative forces to a new country in the process of creation. They would relate the American background to the Jewish tradition, and add a new ingredient to the Israeli amalgam.

This we must remember: American Jewry can influence Israel — but not from afar! It will not be difficult for Americans who settle to influence Israeli life. Israel is waiting for them to come.

Our religious commitment to *Eretz Yisrael* ought to be that *every* Jew identifies himself with the Land and feels part of it. Those who do not go — for whatever reason — are subject nevertheless to the requirements of Jewish life and discipline. We have been given six hundred and thirteen *mitzvot*. No Jew fulfills all of them. But the Jewish people fulfill all of them as a *people*. Therefore it is a serious mistake to equate any individual’s given situation or decision at a particular time with the total experience of the entire Jewish community.

We must look at the decision of *Aliyah* as a collective decision of the American Jewish community. American Jewry collectively should adopt *Aliyah* as a permanent part of its program and its teachings, just as it teaches other *mitzvot*. We do not know who will go, or whose life will be fulfilled by *Aliyah*, but we do know that if part of us will be there, we will be there, America will be there. Fulfilled as a religious ideal, Americans who understand the American tradition, will honor those, who through their *Aliyah*, will pioneer in the furtherance of religious brotherhood and world democracy.⁷

⁶ ארץ ישראל בזמן שיושבין עליה רווחא ובזמן שאין יושבין עליה נמא . . . גיטין נ"ז, א.

⁷ For an excellent statement of traditional American precedents and attitudes which cast light on this America-Israel relationship, see: Oscar Handlin, *Israel and the Mission of America* (Boston Hebrew Teachers College Press), 1955.

IV

In order to make concrete the role of the Conservative movement in *Eretz Yisrael*, a joint commission of the United Synagogue, the Rabbinical Assembly and the Seminary, representing the three constituent bodies of the Movement, was appointed at the last convention with instructions to draft a program of action in the spirit of our commitment to *Eretz Yisrael*. Mr. Charles Rosen-garten, President of the United Synagogue, is chairman of the Commission. The immediate projects described are based on the memoranda drafted by Dr. Simon Greenberg.⁸ While it may take some years to achieve them, these projects are nevertheless conceived as a series of *first steps*.

The *Eretz Yisrael* program of the Conservative movement, calls for the following specific projects:

A. *The Establishment of the Seminary Center in Jerusalem*

Plans for this project were first discussed in conversations between Dr. Finkelstein and Premier Ben Gurion in Jerusalem, in 1952. Mr. Ben Gurion, Mr. Sharett, and other leaders of the State enthusiastically endorsed these plans, and see in them infinite possibilities for the development of the kind of America-Israel relationship we all seek.

The first building of the Seminary Center to be built on land allocated by the Jewish National Fund will be a *pnimiya*, a students' residence hall. The *pnimiya* will be the home for students of the Seminary who will be studying in *Eretz Yisrael*, and whose studies will be credited toward the requirements of rabbinic ordination. The Faculty of the Seminary looks forward to the day when every rabbi and teacher prepared by the Seminary will receive a portion of his training in the Holy Land. It is indispensable for any spiritual leader whose task it is to interpret the Tradition to receive part of his training in the Land where the prophets and ancient rabbis taught. It is also indispensable that future American spiritual leaders share contemporary spiritual experiences with fellow Jews in *Eretz Yisrael*. When the time comes that every rabbi receives such training, new avenues of cultural and spiritual reciprocity will develop so that those students will return and influence their own students and congregants to seek some form of personal identification with *Eretz Yisrael*.

The Residence Hall will be open to other qualified students from America and abroad. Plans include the construction of a students' synagogue, an auditorium and a library. The library will specialize in Rabbinic studies, in theology and philosophy; and in the American section, it will lay special emphasis on the contribution of American theologians, philosophers, and scholars.

⁸ I want further to record that in this section of the paper I have drawn not only on the content of Dr. Greenberg's statements, but also on some of the phrasing. The full record is available in the files of the Commission.

The Seminary Center will bring into person-to-person contact the young men and women who will be the teachers of the future generations of American and Israeli Jews. It is also contemplated that the Center will make a contribution to the fundamental task of building understanding between the people of America and the citizens of Israel and the Near East generally. This is the crux of the program Dr. Finkelstein outlined to Israeli leaders, and to which they responded so warmly. American students, graduate and undergraduate, and American faculty members, living at this Center for at least one year could do much to interpret, in word and act, American democratic institutions to the people of Israel, and the spirit of the people of Israel to America.

B. *Pilgrimages to Israel*

Basic to any cultural relationship is a personal relationship. Members of the United Synagogue, in all of its groupings, are to be encouraged to go to *Eretz Yisrael* for long or short-term periods. Only in this way can the Jews of this country be witness to the "miracle of redemption," to the creative mood of the Land and to the renaissance of Hebrew culture.⁹ These pilgrimages will be directed and serviced through our Center in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Even before the total program is initiated, the National Youth Commission of the United Synagogue with the cooperation of the Jewish Agency is conducting a six-week study tour for its members. Unquestionably, this project will grow from year to year, and we see in this new undertaking a significant development in the Jewish education of high school and college youth. We congratulate the United Synagogue Youth, who through their program called "Building Spiritual Bridges" inaugurate the first group pilgrimage of our movement.

C. *Scholarly and Intellectual Exchange*

The natural concomitants of this personal exchange will be an exchange of ideas. Israeli life and thought as they affect Jewish values will influence American students and visitors. In turn, American thought will be brought to Israel by men and women who love America and who are deeply rooted in its life and institutions. Not only American thought and culture will be brought to Israel; the experience of American Jewish life and creativity will also be shared with Israelis.

⁹ For an analysis of the results of such personal contact with *Eretz Yisrael*, see Jacob Lestschinsky's article "Center-Trends in Diaspora Jewish Life" in *Current Events in Jewish Life* (April-September, 1955), pp. 17-27. See also the "Call to Pilgrimage" issued by the Ashkenazic and Sephardic Chief Rabbis in Israel, *Hadcar* (2 Iyar, 5716), p. 431.

An outstanding example of the gift American Jewish scholarship has made to the Holy Land is the recently published monumental commentary on the Tosefta by Professor Saul Lieberman, Dean of the Seminary Faculty. In accepting the first copy from the hands of United States Ambassador Lawson, President Ben Zvi said: "It does great credit to the United States, and to American Jewry in particular that the critical edition of the Tosefta has been prepared and published in America." And then President Ben Zvi underscored the salient aspect of the event: "This new edition . . . could strengthen Israel's links with the past and contribute toward the rebuilding of the historic homeland of the Jews."

D. *Support of Religious Institutions*

In our own *pnimiya* synagogue we will conduct ourselves as we do at home because we want our students and laity who come to Jerusalem to feel completely at home. But we shall not come to Israel as propagandists. It is not for American Jews to interfere with the normal development of the religious life and institutions of Israel. It is not our purpose to introduce controversy. As in American Jewish history, so in the Israeli present, the living people will produce living answers. And their right to do so must be inviolate. It is our purpose to offer economic assistance to religious institutions without requiring conformity with our particular point of view. This is in keeping with the American practice of unity within diversity. We will help further *all* Israeli institutions aiming to make the Synagogue a vital force in the intellectual and personal life of the individual and the community.

E. *Implementing the Program*

It is estimated that a million and a half Jews in America are associated with the Conservative congregations in the United States and Canada. *The financing of these projects is so designed that no one can be denied the opportunity to share in our program.* Therefore the United Synagogue has issued a call for a volunteer tax of two dollars per year to be self-imposed by every member in every constituent synagogue. This fund is to be expended on the projects described above. In time there will be created an annual fund to support and enlarge the *Eretz Yisrael* program of the Conservative movement. (The capital funds to be raised for the buildings will be the gift of a small group of people who understand the scope of the program and its potential impact on American and Israeli Jewry.)

* * * *

Every member of the Conservative movement is given an opportunity by this fourfold program to participate in the establishment of our "House of

Life and Learning" in *Eretz Yisrael*. Each of us may now, if we will, perform an act of *Kinyan*, an act of acquisition, a declaration of faith in Israel and in America.

As the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah to claim his portion of land in Anathoth: — *כי לך משפט הגאולה לקנות* — The right of redemption is also *ours* to acquire.

This is our share in *Eretz Yisrael*.

A NEW ZIONISM

HERTZEL FISHMAN

A commentary on contemporary Zionism, motivated by a reading of Dr. Mordecai Kaplan's book, *A New Zionism**

AT ITS last convention, the Rabbinical Assembly of America voted to implement a major thesis of Dr. Kaplan, as expressed in his series of lectures compiled by the Theodor Herzl Foundation, entitled *A New Zionism*. This thesis is the need to reaffirm the concept of Jewish Peoplehood, through a formal covenant in Jerusalem, by representatives of organized Jewish bodies the world over.

While the "covenant" idea is perhaps the principal practical suggestion offered in his *A New Zionism*, Dr. Kaplan analyzes in his own inimitable manner the over-all confusion which reigns today in the ideological and philosophical nature of the Jewish group. Such confusion is due to the failure to comprehend Judaism as a continuously evolving religious civilization. Instead, one body of Jews, the Israelis, view Judaism predominantly in terms of a chauvinistic political nationalism; another group of Jews, the euthenasian assimilationists in the Diaspora, view it in terms of an ambiguous set of beliefs and ethical principles which most of them do not practice; while the mass of Orthodox Jews, though quite heterodox in practice, identify Judaism only with the traditions handed down to them by their parents who lived their lives in confined Jewish environs, uninfluenced by the currents of enlightenment and democracy. Jews who comprehend Judaism as a dynamic religious civilization, centered around a vital universal Jewish People, are *not* part of the mainstream of contemporary Jewish thought.

Zionism has always had as its principal goal the meaningful preservation of the Jewish *People*. It has sought to attain this goal at various stages in Jewish history through a special emphasis on one or another *means* of survival. At

Rabbi Fishman is the spiritual leader of Temple Shalom, Greenwich, Conn.

* Theodor Herzl Foundation, New York, 1955.

one stage in our history, Zionism was expressed in the messianic idea of redemption; at another time in the Jewish cultural revival of the Haskalah period. With the growth of modern nationalism, Zionism expressed itself in the building of a political state; with the advent of modern anti-Semitism, through rescue and philanthropic projects in Palestine and Israel.

Today, Dr. Kaplan suggests, having achieved in Israel a natural base of operations, a society whose majority of citizens are Jews, Zionism should become that platform which enrolls Jews in a crusade for the salvation of mankind. The instrument for this crusade is that body of Jews willing to reaffirm its will to live as an exemplary People, and whose spiritual center is the modern State of Israel.

The program of Dr. Kaplan's "new Zionism" is threefold: one, to formally reconstitute the universal Jewish people through a covenant of loyalty to its steadily evolving religious civilization; two, to reclaim and rebuild the State of Israel with the aim of making it an exemplary society of spiritual power and ethical greatness for the entire world; and three, to encourage and foster the continuous development of Judaism as a philosophy of salvation (i. e., making the most of one's inherent potentialities), or, in Dr. Kaplan's words, furthering "the creative expansion of Torah."

The major contribution of the book is the due emphasis placed on the spiritual rebirth of the Jewish people, rather than on the Land of Israel, as the end goal of Zionism. It correctly delineates the State of Israel as being only the indispensable *means* to achieve this end, but pointedly sets up a new perspective of Israel in relation to the more basic theme of Jewish survival. In view of the overemphasis placed on political Zionism and philanthropic Zionism for so many years, this emphasis in itself is a "new Zionism."

This "new Zionism" has two far-reaching corollaries: one, it re-asserts unequivocally that the Land of Israel, its policies and destiny, is the rightful concern of the Jewish people whether or not they live in Israel; and two, it points out that Zionism is a particular way of life for Jews everywhere, whether they live in Israel or in the Diaspora.

The first proposition infers that a substantial degree of influence can be exerted by representatives of the Jewish people whose organized natural groupings have ratified the Peoplehood Covenant, on the policies and practices of the State of Israel as they may affect the Jewish people everywhere. This means that the term "sovereignty" as far as Israel is concerned, cannot be understood solely in the political sense accepted by the international community, but must be modified by the interests of Jewish Peoplehood. One must differentiate between those acts of political sovereignty affecting only the Israel State and other acts which have a direct bearing upon the status and future of the Jewish people throughout the world.

Jewish Peoplehood has a sovereignty all of its own, a spiritual sovereignty. The Israel society shares in this spiritual sovereignty as long as it too is part of this Peoplehood. Conversely, representatives of the preservationist bodies

of Jews throughout the world have the right and opportunity to influence the policies of the Israel society as they affect Jewish Peoplehood.

Ambassadors of Jewish Peoplehood

Once the Peoplehood Covenant is signed by representatives of national Jewish organizations, their spokesmen would reside in Israel as "ambassadors," representing to that Government and to the Israel society, the views and interests of the Jewish people living in the Diaspora. It would be in the interests both of Israel and the Diaspora that such ambassadors be conversant in the Hebrew language and Jewish culture, have a sympathetic understanding of the structure and problems of Israel society, and be willing to reside in Israel with their families for a lengthy period of time. They would circulate among Israeli legislators, educators, correspondents, and other molders of public opinion, address Israeli audiences, publish articles in the local press — all of these activities aiming to make the opinions of large units of the Jewish people outside Israel known to the Israel public. The ultimate decision regarding any Israel policy or legislation would rest with the citizens and government of Israel, but it would be up to the representatives of preservationist Jewry to try to influence that society on matters affecting Jewish Peoplehood.

In turn, these ambassadors of Jewish Peoplehood would serve as reporters and analyzers of the Israel scene to their respective Jewish bodies in the Diaspora. In these capacities they would have a great impact on the content of Jewish life in the Diaspora, for they would "feed" and interpret for the Diaspora the newly created patterns and values of modern collective Jewish life which Israel alone, by virtue of its predominantly Jewish population, can produce.

The scope of interests of these ambassadors cannot be defined *a priori* any more than can the scope of activities of any diplomatic representative to a foreign sovereign state. Diplomats on-the-spot create their own degree of influence based upon their own personalities and the circumstances existing in the country of their accreditation. But it might be helpful to suggest that the representatives of Jewish Peoplehood residing in Israel should not be concerned with purely domestic issues affecting Israelis only, such as public works, social welfare policies, or local tax problems. They should be involved in and seek to influence those areas of Israeli life, affecting not only the populace of Israel, but the Jewish people throughout the world. Two such spheres of their legitimate concern — education and religion — might be cited as examples.

It is of basic significance to the concept of Jewish Peoplehood that the Israeli government inculcate into its school children not only a love and loyalty for the physical land of Israel and its government, but also for the Jewish people the world over. Today, unfortunately, Israeli youth have a negative and condescending attitude toward Jews not living in Israel, viewing

such Jews as inferior to themselves if not outright disloyal to the Jewish ideal of national redemption.

It is morally defensible for representatives of Jewish Peoplehood to press the government of Israel to develop its educational program in Israeli schools within the framework of Jewish Peoplehood, for only then could we expect to cement genuine bonds of brotherhood between Israeli and Diaspora Jewries. Only then would Israel's participation in the Peoplehood covenant be truly realized. The implementation of such an educational policy rests with the Israel government; the responsibility of influencing that government rests with preservationist Jews outside of Israel.

In defense of Jewish Peoplehood, we are under equal pressure to seek to influence religious life in Israel. How we should go about doing this is not the subject of this article. What must be openly recognized is the need to abandon coyness and stop protesting that we have no such intentions. We *have* an interest in modifying religious thought patterns and practices in Israel, for we feel that a philosophy of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization has something definite to contribute toward rectifying the religious vacuum or outright climate of antagonism toward religion prevailing in Israel today.

Our purpose in influencing Israeli religious life is quite selfish. It is not aimed at bringing something in from without for the benefit of Israelis, though this motivation may also be considered morally valid. The vested interests which seek to perpetuate a rigid religious pattern in modern Israel, imported lock, stock and barrel from east-Europe, or from the even more cloistered Levant society, will have to yield sooner or later before the necessity of satisfying the urgent religious needs of spiritually starved Jews in that country. We would not be *imposing* a new religious pattern, but rather demonstrating the versatility of Jewish religious thought and practice for Israelis to choose from if they so desired.

Our primary interest in this subject, however, affects our own religious welfare here in the Diaspora. Whereas Israeli Jews may have other legitimate media to ensure their continued survival as a distinct group without the absolute immediate necessity of Jewish religious development, we Jews in the Diaspora have none of these cementing nationalistic media and view modern religious growth in Israel as a primary need for our survival as Jews in the Diaspora.

Though, indeed, we will develop our Jewish life within the framework of גלות circumstances, it is wishful thinking to hope that modern, yet authentic, Jewish religious values and practices can be initiated and flourish successfully in a predominantly non-Jewish society. Similarly, we would be misdirecting our innermost hopes if we did not look eagerly and expectantly to the Israel society for the normal "expansion of Torah," for the natural revival of Judaism. The religious and cultural fruits of such a Jewish renaissance in Israel are bound to give in the future, as they have in the recent past, new direction and meaningful content to our own "Jewishness" in the Diaspora, thereby strengthening our own chances of group survival in a challenging spiritually

non-Jewish world. When we say *כי מציון תצא חוררה*, we mean first and foremost for ourselves, as Jews living in the Diaspora. The uncertain future of the "Jewishness" of Jewish Peoplehood makes our entry into Israel's religious life a necessity, not a by-product of our Zionism, for only if we plant the seeds of historic Judaism — modified by the tenets of enlightenment and democracy — in Israel, can Israel society nurture a vital Judaism reflecting the spiritual needs of Jews intent on remaining gratified Jews in our modern world.

Some people may challenge the right of preservationist Jewish bodies in the Diaspora to send its ambassadors to Israel, and seek there to influence Israeli policy as it affects the future of the Jewish people throughout the world. Such people, I feel, have not fully comprehended the unique nature of Jewish Peoplehood.

That we have a *moral* right to express ourselves in the affairs of the Yishuv is implied in the moral obligations that Jewish history, our Jewish consciousness, and the sovereign state of Israel have imposed upon us in supporting that state economically and otherwise. Yet, I think we will all agree that morally there can be no taxation without representation, just as in fact there can be no secure State of Israel without the continuous support of the *גולה*.

That we have a *legal* right to send ambassadors of Jewish Peoplehood to Israel is formalized in the still existing international status of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and in the law promulgated by the Israel Knesset, giving legal status in Israel to the World Zionist Organization. It is our thesis, however, that the present structure and policies of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency do not express these legal rights satisfactorily, and must undergo far-reaching changes, in the interests of Jewish Peoplehood.

The Jewish Agency, for all intents and purposes, is an executive body representing Israeli Jews, though it does have some members, elected by the World Zionist Congress, who represent Zionist organizations outside of Israel. However, all of the latter reside abroad, while the day-to-day work of the Agency, including the allocation of United Jewish Appeal funds, is done by the Israeli members who are spokesmen for Israeli political parties.

Such a Jewish Agency does not reflect the interests and views of preservationist Jewry in the Diaspora, anymore than does the World Zionist Congress, based, as it is, on a spurious pattern of "Shekel democracy," allowing for twice as many delegates from Israeli political parties as from Zionist bodies in the Diaspora. The fact that large bodies of "non-Zionists" (whatever this term means in the current Zionist vocabulary) are not represented at all at these Congresses, merely compounds the need to change the existing institutional relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry.

Implications for American Jewish Organizations

A New Zionism carries many implications affecting organized Jewish organizations, including national religious movements, here in the United States. The first sphere to be affected would be that of educational policy in

our schools, pulpits and meeting halls. We must liberate ourselves from old Zionist thinking and clichés, and our people must be inculcated with an appreciation and responsibility for new Zionist behavior.

In our teachings and preachings we must emphasize the difference between Zionists and pro-Israelis. To the former, the State of Israel is only a necessary *means* to preserve and strengthen Jewish Peoplehood; the *end* is the Jewish people. To the latter, the State of Israel is an end in itself. To the former, Zionism is basically a spiritual concept, affecting one's own self and entire family — values, thought patterns, home practices and community interests. To the latter, involvement in Israeli causes is essentially an impersonal political or philanthropic relationship — for the benefit of others in Israel, not for themselves in the Diaspora.

We must make it clear to our people that contributions of money and time to Israel causes do not necessarily make a person a Zionist, anymore than does residence in Israel itself. Only those who actively participate in the renaissance of the Jewish People and its unique civilization, acknowledging Israel as an indispensable medium in this process, are Zionists, whether they live in Israel or in the Diaspora.

As rabbis, we owe it to our congregations to clarify for them the historic spiritual relationship between the People of Israel and the Land of Israel. We are obligated to reinterpret for them the meaning of the prayers, customs and holidays which are Land-of-Israel centered, and which form a major part of our religious tradition. What should this tradition mean to Jews in the Diaspora? Surely the need for reinterpretation becomes a major challenge for the American rabbinate.

In the sphere of community activity *A New Zionism* compels us to re-think our approach to fund raising campaigns for Israeli causes. We should guide our own congregants to divert some of their contributions for Israel in general, to *particular* projects and programs in that country, directed and supervised by our religious movements in particular. The orthodox Rabbinical Council is sponsoring the *ישיבת הדרום*, the Reform movement the School of Archeology in Jerusalem, and the United Synagogue, the *פנימיה* project in Israel's capital city, a venture aimed at bringing direct benefits to the future teachers and rabbis of Conservative Judaism in this country. But in what way can American religious Jewry directly benefit the citizens of Israel? Let us here consider such a project. Again, it concerns education in Israel.

Many people, including Israelis, are disturbed over the excessive levantinism which prevails in the Israel society today to the detriment of western spiritual values. Probably, the best place to effect a change in the general spiritual climate of Israel is in the schools of that country, with a single elementary and secondary school serving as a model. The graduates of such a school can have a tremendous impact upon the Israel society at large, as have the graduates of the Reali School in Haifa, or of Gymnasia Herzliah in Tel Aviv. Any one of the organized American Jewish religious movements could sponsor

a model school in Israel in which a substantial number of highly qualified teachers, educated in the values and civic habits of western democracy at its best, and sharing a dynamic philosophy of historic Judaism, would teach. Such educational goals and practices, currently deficient in the curriculum of Israeli schools, when integrated with the fervor of Zionist idealism, would serve as a more wholesome basis for the country's scholastic program.

Bringing such a program into the Israel society is not a *kulturkampf* in the sense of foisting upon that country a pattern of thought and behavior alien to Zionism or objectionable to its citizens. Most Israelis have never been exposed to a mature civic way of life, particularly because of the non-democratic nature of their countries of origin. When Israeli leaders clamor for Americans to come to Israel, they do so not because they primarily need our technical know-how (as some American Zionist organizations rationalize), but because they realize that their country is in urgent need of a strong dose of American civic and democratic values.

Such values are not *forms* of behavior, economic, political or social; they consist of ethical *principles* of behavior, such as tolerance, fair play and good faith, civic responsibility, respect for law, a reverence for God and for religion in its diverse forms, non-party (political) orientation in schools and youth clubs, a *loyal* opposition in parliament, non-discrimination in labor and management policies, upholding the dignity and rights of the individual as a human being rather than because of membership in a political party, or belonging to social or economic class. Surely no fair-minded person having the future of both the State of Israel and the Jewish people at heart, can object to such importations into Israel, and the best medium for their dissemination among the Israeli citizenry is the school system of that country.

Since the establishment of the state, standards in the Israeli schools have been lowered to meet the tremendous influx of immigrant children. There are few *good* schools in the country due to a gross lack of teachers, textbooks, and physical facilities. Nor is there an overall philosophy of citizenship responsibility based on love for State, Jewish people, and humanity at large. Most of the secondary schools in the country are private, and a model school (or schools) sponsored by anyone of the preservationist Jewish bodies in this country would be most welcome by large segments of the Israel population. A dormitory attached to such a secondary school could be of tremendous value for scores of Americans and other Diaspora children, as was the dormitory of the Reali School of Haifa for hundreds of Jewish children from all parts of the world between the two world wars.

"Kibbush Hakhilot"

"New Zionist" thinking must also have a profound impact upon the program of activities in our local communities. This is not the place to enumerate the many phases of such a projected program, but its over-all philosophy should be clear: to bring forth as much of a genuine "Jewish" revival in

American Jewry as possible, through Aḥad Ha-'am's strategy of כיבוש הקהילות, capturing the communities, their schools, programs, fundraising bodies and pulpits to advance the purpose of the Jewish renaissance.

Put negatively, this campaign is one against Jewish lethargy, Jewish ignorance, and assimilation in its many disguised and subtle forms. It may not be pleasant or popular to wage such a war, but the leaders of American Jewish religious life, especially its rabbis, will have to lead their congregations along new paths of meaningful Jewish survival, or else forfeit their right to Jewish leadership.

Local laymen may well succeed in diminishing the influence of an individual rabbi, but it is doubtful whether the American rabbinate as a whole, or even the bulk of its members, once it decides to take a stand on the crucial issues of meaningful Jewish preservation, and guides and directs its membership on these issues, would be vulnerable and helpless in the face of an opposition born of confused values and lack of Jewish education and knowledge. As individuals and as a group, rabbis have a tremendous potential instrument in their hands — their knowledge, their prestige and their congregations — with which to stimulate thinking on matters of vital Jewish concern, locally, nationally and internationally.

As one goes about the country, one finds that the members of the rabbinate have fallen into a serious pitfall, in relation to positive Jewish endeavors. They have bowed — once again with exceptions — to the determination of the Jewish laity to keep the rabbi out of effective positions of leadership in Jewish public affairs, particularly in fund-allocating policy bodies. By and large our task as rabbis at public functions has become limited to rendering the invocation, or if other rabbinic colleagues also share the program, the benediction. The opinion is being formed in this country that the rabbi's rôle is one of an agreeable functionary, a marry-and-bury technician rather than a policy molder and spiritual leader.

Rabbis should actively seek to occupy key positions of leadership in the Jewish community, particularly in the allocation of United Jewish Appeal funds for domestic purposes. They must ensure that the bulk of such funds be directed to fostering the Jewish renaissance in this country, to advancing the purposes of Zionism.

If the rabbis do not educate and guide our congregants as to what does and what does not take priority in the ladder of Jewish preservation here in the Diaspora, who will? Are we to leave the allocation of public community funds in the hands of vested interests whose "Jewishness" lies exclusively in mortar and brick projects, most of them bearing "non-sectarian" imprimatures? Who in the Jewish community — if not the rabbis — will ensure the financial support for the *Jewish* renaissance, definite Jewish "sectarian" goals, projects of higher Jewish learning, progressive all-day Hebrew "prep" schools, Jewish-content camps, meaningfully Jewish adult retreats; creative Hebrew painting, sculpture, and crafts, drama, music and dance, literature and poetry, hymns and prayers depicting Jewish values and motifs; books in the English language

portraying for our American Jewish youth and adults the spiritual values of the *הגנה*, the bravery and idealism of the *חלוצים*, the pragmatic and beautiful religious pattern of *תורה ועבודה*; or Hebraic studies in our colleges and universities, responsible Anglo-Jewish weeklies seeking to interpret and guide — not only to amuse — their readers; meaningful Jewish program material for our nursery and religious schools, for our men's clubs and sisterhoods and for the local units of national organizations and "Jewish" community centers.

Affirming the Democratic "Golah"

A major contribution of the "New Zionism" to the Jewish scene is its ideological affirmation of the possibility of meaningful Jewish preservation in a democratic Diaspora. This pragmatic approach to Jewish life sets aside the pessimism of *שוללי הגולה* as to Jewish survival outside of Israel. But note the key words in this new Zionist realism — "possibility" and "democratic." The term "possibility" means that only those Jews who deliberately and personally pursue the Jewish renaissance through the daily practice of definite Zionist *מצוות*, can achieve it. Such a goal is not easily attainable, not without personal sacrifice nor the adoption of a unique pattern of family living, and certainly not without swimming against the tide of conformity in our society. Only those who will it, can reach it. But democracy allows us to will it!

Even so it would be wrong not to admit our Israeli brethren's contention that this minority of Zionists, even in a democratic Diaspora, cannot be as naturally Jewish, as Jews living amidst their own majority culture in Israel. Such a claim must be granted, for it is much easier and far more normal to be part of the Jewish renaissance in Israel than it is in the United States. But this is the price that American Zionists are apparently prepared to pay for the opportunity of living in two civilizations. We may not be as exclusively and creatively Jewish as the Israelis, but we may well be as Jewish spiritually, in our sense of values, in our practical idealism. And we may have the additional opportunity of enriching Judaism by slow osmosis of western democratic values into the ancient Jewish blood stream, a modern application of *יפיתו של שם יפת באהלי שם*.

Just because the State of Israel comprises a Jewish majority, it does not *automatically* guarantee the preservation and the modern re-creation of Jewish values any more than does Williamsburg in Brooklyn. The term *גולה* can be a physical one or a psychological one. It is entirely conceivable that Zionists in a democratic Diaspora, while residing physically in *גלות*, live in Zion psychologically and spiritually; whereas Jews who physically reside in Zion can be living psychologically and spiritually in the *גלות*. We must always distinguish between Zion the ideal and Zion the reality, indeed always striving to make the reality the ideal. But if Israel the reality will ever be found wanting in fulfilling its historic pivotal rôle in the Jewish renaissance; if she fails to provide the necessary cultural and spiritual gratification for Jewish Peoplehood — Zion

will continue to remain only the ideal to be pursued by preservationist Jews the world over, as it has since the destruction of the second Jewish Commonwealth.

Zionism, then, is an ideology spearheaded by the Israel society, whose purpose it is to enrich humanity through the preservation of the Jewish people. It is a program to further the re-creation of Jewish values and strengthen the loyalties of Jews to their people's unique civilization. It is as much a goal for Israeli Jews as for Diaspora Jews. This has been expressed on numerous occasions by leading Israeli thinkers, including the present Prime Minister.

It behooves the Rabbinical Assembly of America, the one national rabbinic group in the United States which has consistently and officially viewed Zionism and Israel as cardinal planks in its philosophy of Judaism, to initiate, along with other similarly minded bodies, a reformulation of Zionist goals and techniques, both in thought and in deed. Several of the ideas suggested by Dr. Kaplan in his *A New Zionism*, may well serve as the springboard for such a refreshing ideological offensive.

OUR MOVEMENT AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

JOSEPH P. STERNSTEIN

IT WOULD be good at the outset of our discussion to survey, with our mind's eye, the vast and majestic panorama of selfless Jewish effort dedicated to the upbuilding of a Jewish Homeland. Careful understanding of this erstwhile achievement, placed in stereoscopic perspective against current contributory endeavors for Israel, may enable us to chart a fruitful road for Conservative Judaism in Israel.

Until 1948 contributions from world Jewry for the Yishuv could be classified into three broad categories: finances, socio-political ideas and people. These three routes of contribution, to be sure, were not reflective of disparate motivation or action, but emerged as it were from one ideological chrysalis: the need and will to build a "publicly-recognized, legally-secured Jewish Homeland." As the momentum of the Zionist movement picked up speed and dynamic power, the three activity channels alternated in triggering propulsive spurts of progress and advance. There were moments in Zionist history, as the movement swept on in spate, when all three joined in pouring physical provender in equal torrents into the enlarging dimensions of the Yishuv's growth.

Financially, such state-building projects as the Keren Kayemeth, Keren Hayesod, United Palestine Appeal, Bonds for Israel — endeavors which activated all ranks and all strata of Jewish public support — rendered incal-

culably great support to the nascent Jewish Homeland. Jews figuratively emptied their pockets in a display of altruism that was in admirable disproportion to the philanthropic record of their non-Jewish neighbors among whom they dwelt. With each dollar donated, the Jew's stake in the soil of his spiritual homeland was driven ever more deeply. Thus for many Jews, who could never hope to visit Israel and personally witness the "portion of their labor," this stake became inextricable. And noteworthy, they gave willingly and generously while consigning to others the responsibility of determining the disbursement of their donations. This was a true *חסד של אמת*. Of course, such blind giving encased within the shell of generosity pregnant seeds of disservice to Israel as well as to themselves, seeds which eventually sprouted into some of the entangling underbrush vexing the ideological course of world Zionism today. Nevertheless, regardless of ideological nuances, their philanthropy was characteristic of stalwart devotion to a hallowed ideal.

The second avenue of Jewish contribution to the upbuilding of the Jewish Homeland was the transmission of socio-political ideas. We deliberately use the word "transmission," for with the probable exception of A. D. Gordon's philosophy, the socio-economic-political ideas which permeate the complex of Israeli life today were originally conceived in the womb of foreign lands, developed and matured within the corpus of foreign politics and, finally, grafted onto the organism of the Palestinian Jewish society. The range of party systems and their ideologies had their roots in diasporan soil, and by and large, their transference to Palestine represented the earnest desire of their ideological votaries to put them into practice in an ideal, "controlled" territory over which they maintained hegemony. It is quite evident that even the ideological *modus vivendi*, the pattern of political mannerisms, parliamentary behavior and action programs worked out by Israeli parties with each other, depicts a microcosmic replica of the broad relationships existing between similar ideological factions throughout the world.

Finally, the most protean and glorious avenue of contribution was the human element. What people! This people, crowned by the aureole of immortality, wrested their destiny out of the tenacious clutches of a grimly unyielding fate. Today, still, the spirit of "*ils ne passerons pas*" is the driving impulse of the Israeli: too far and too much have we travelled, this is the last ditch; we have had too many "St. Louis's," drifting jetsamlike on the international waterways, journeying their dreary and dolorous way, unwanted and rebuffed; our memories are surfeited by the haunting spectres of too many harrowing *Transdnestrias* . . . These are the people who today man the ramparts of a beleaguered Israel, whose planted gardens have inched their green promontories into the no-man's land of forbidding crags and malignant marshes.

Let us attempt at this point a cursory historical generalization. Can we not discern here a single motif infusing the spirit of all of these contributions? These were gifts (I use the term in a metaphorical sense), which, in the first instance as in the financial and human spheres, were transferred in fee simple

by the donor to the recipients to have and to hold forever, or, in the second instance as in the realm of the transport of ideas, was seized by the recipients and syncretistically blended, adapted and assimilated to their new life in the Yishuv — all were gifts and bequests predicated on the nihilistic conviction that life for the beneficiaries in their native lands was irretrievably impossible.

These three avenues, by and large, were identified with the physical transference of Jews to Palestine, later Israel, and were aspiringly oriented to ameliorate the physical lot of the Jews there. *They were designed to benefit and improve life in the Yishuv exclusively and were in no way pointed to the enhancement of Jewish life outside of Israel.*

These, then, comprised the first broad category of diasporan contributions. Actuated by vastly different motivations, however, were world Jewry's contributions in the area of *culture*. These consisted essentially in the founding of *institutions*. Let us, for analytical purposes, select three salient illustrations and determine their original purposes and their consequent evolution in reality.

Illustrative of the first type is the Hebrew University. As originally conceived, the University was to be primarily a radiating center of Jewish scholarly achievement, shedding its aura and lustre with equal splendor on the Jews outside of the Homeland as well as those living within the Yishuv. Only secondarily was it to become, prosaically, an institution of higher academic status for the Israeli high school graduate. With undeniable recognition of its academic attainments, it cannot, in all honesty *as yet* be said to have realized its original design.

There is a second type of cultural institution created by diasporan Jewry, and although new, is gradually becoming the prototype for an enlarging effort. I refer to the Z. O. A. House in Tel Aviv, where the major emphasis is placed on the systematic and deliberate insemination of foreign, especially American, culture into the Israeli environment. We can expect that even though the Z. O. A. House will gear its approach to suit the Israeli cultural climate, desires and needs, the fact that it lies within the complete control of the Zionist Organization of America assures closer adherence to its avowed and original objective. Still, definitive conclusions concerning its effect on Israel would be quite premature.

The various Yeshivoth, academies and centers of religious learning constitute the third type of cultural contribution initiated and sustained by world Jewry. Even though the Yishuv is abundantly, even embarrassingly, endowed with a plethora of such institutions, they have as yet made no notable contribution or impact, either within Israeli Jewry or on the תפוצות. There are many ambitious schemes apparently in the offing, but beyond filling some columns in the Yiddish press, very little definable is as yet extant.

What is evident in this second major area of contribution to the upbuilding of the Homeland is a divergence from a thoroughly nihilistic conception of the Diaspora *in toto* or in parts. It reflects, even though not in clearly stroked

measures, the yearning for the realization of a *מרכז רוחני*, the spiritual center. The effort in the cultural realm extract with greater success the contrapuntal resonance of a spiritually blended and harmonious Jewry, yet the acute ear will still discern a dissonance, a discordance which has still not been obviated even by this mode of diasporan-Israeli relationship.

This, as I see it, is the nettlesome question: Wherein do we wish to introduce Jewish themes, coincidentally born on foreign soil, into the culture of Israel, and wherein do we wish to introduce foreign, i. e. non-Jewish themes, either coincidentally or deliberately, borne by Jews from their native habitat into Israel's life? Even when we use the expression "the American way of doing things," as some use it for life in Israel, this indicates nothing more than the inclusion in our baggage of a cultural commodity picked up on non-Jewish soil.

We then come to a second question: How will the Yishuv welcome these cultural contributions? In the latter case — i. e. avowed introduction of foreign cultural elements — the Israeli Jew accepts it in its undiluted form and appreciates it in plain terms for what it is worth as a cosmopolitan endeavor to commingle many diverse cultural influences within Israel. In the former case — i. e. introduction of Jewish cultural ideas coincidentally born on foreign soil — there may, and often does, crop up an Israeli resistance, either overtly by an outright rebuff, or covertly, by wasting no time in assimilating it to their own mode, their own taste, their own needs, their own desires.

In these *cultural institutional* contributions to the upbuilding of Israel, world Jewry sincerely meant to shoot a figurative hawser line over a gaping abyss which would transport cable-baskets containing cultural and spiritual cargoes back and forth, serving both communities with equal helpfulness. To a certain extent this effort proved inadequate, because (a) institutions, as such, are inherently limited as vehicles for the conveyance of ideas; (b) practical application of the original cultural purposes was not sufficiently and thoroughly thought through; and most importantly (c) they simply did not answer the specific cultural needs of the respective communities, or else did not create the competent channels for such bi-polar influences. (It is the firm opinion of the writer that the broad community-mass interpenetration of cultural and communal influences can be accomplished best through the Zionist movement. But this is a thought which ranges far afield.)

Toynbee in *A Study of History* has worded a thought which indirectly illuminates the objective for which world Jewry strove, but somehow failed to attain: "It is the easiest thing in the world for commerce to export a new Western technique. It is infinitely harder for a Western poet or saint to kindle in a non-Western soul the spiritual flame which is alight in his own."

This thought brings to hand the convinced thesis of this paper that it is the realm of *religion* which can summon Conservative Judaism's greatest contribution to Israel — a contribution in which, again in the sphere of religion, Conservative Judaism is endowed with unmatched capacities for a destiny-

laden task. For, to paraphrase Toynbee's metaphor, a religious light has been ignited in the Diaspora which can kindle a flame in Israel — a fused flame whose augmented glow will radiate spiritual warmth to Jewry the world over.

As of today, in the realm of religion, the Diaspora has introduced nothing significant to Israel, except perhaps the financial maintenance of religiously colored institutions. The concepts and structure of religion prevailing in Israel today represent the indigenous legacy from Mandatory and pre-Mandatory days. Except for irrational forays into the outside, the ultra-orthodox remain alienated by self-imposed barriers and besotted by twisted fanaticism. In all truth, further, the ineffectiveness of the Chief Rabbinate and their legal-hierarchical structures and organizations cannot be concealed. Instead of becoming a vibrant force for a religious revival in the land, the Chief Rabbinate has become a bulwark of vested interest and temporal power, bereft of profound spiritual influence among the rank and file of Israeli Jewry and weighted with archaic technical trivia of no enduring significance.

Moreover, the "religious bloc" parties in Israel have largely developed so in name only. Anyone conversant with the intimate realities of life in Israel or with the operation of the World Zionist Organization can testify, with the corroboration of abundant evidence, that Mizrachi, Hapoel Hamizrachi, Aguda, etc., have become very little more than political power blocs, and in order to achieve simple and unalloyed political ends, have at innumerable times exploited their "religious" orientation and identification. As such, their impact upon the enhancement of religious life in Israel has been severely, if not mortally, circumscribed. These parties have not hesitated to join in gloomy concert with religiously obscurantist forces in subversion of religious ideals for political power. Instead of refining politics in the crucible of religion in the direction of *מלכות שמים*, they have oftentimes let themselves be implicated in the perpetuation of inequities and iniquities.

Now, all this time something has been happening religiously in the Diaspora. This "something" has been the rise and rapid growth of Reform and Conservative Judaism. In contradistinction to the export of financial and physical sustenance to the Yishuv, these relatively new spiritual ideas, sprouting and flourishing in the religiously voluntaristic communities of the Diaspora, found no transport to Israel. Historically, this blockage has several causes. First, the vehement anti-Zionism of early Reform rendered suspect to the Palestinian Jew anything deviating from the old and familiar pattern of Judaism (whether observed or ignored, at least the Jew there knew what it was about). Secondly, Conservative Judaism as a new religious force, was relatively unknown in its impact on world Judaism (we must never forget that Conservative Judaism, in the old days, was orthodoxy in modern garb). In addition, on American soil, most of the efforts of individual Conservative Jews to Zionism were directed into political and financial channels, primarily via the instrumentalities of the existing Zionist organizations. Thirdly, the early leadership of the Yishuv epitomized the rebellious flight from religion — it was the red flag which fluttered at the apex of Palestinian Jewish leadership.

Fourthly, the aforementioned hostility of the officially constituted Jewish religious authorities, implacable and resolute, against any diverging religious spirit. Finally, and this most significant, the very inapplicability of the modern religious rationale (spring as it did from the singular web of circumstances prevailing in the Diaspora) for the needs, demands and criteria of religious adherence and observance in the early days of the Yishuv. Why modify a religious service linguistically when the very colloquial speech was the "tongue of the prophets?" Why study the development and significance of Judaism and religion generally when "religion was an opiate of the masses?" As yet, in the early days, the quivering strings of the inquiring philosophical-theological heart in the Diaspora did not strike corresponding chords in the still insensitive heart of the Palestinian Jew, still immured as he was in the morass of malarial swamps.

Slowly, however, the procession of events in Israel and outside are taking their toll in religious change. An awakening interest in matters other than material is becoming hearteningly evident. Concomitant with the riveting of the increasingly agitated minds of Israeli youth on spiritual problems, there is emerging a growing resentment of the ossified encrustations which thwart wholesome religious expression. Also, the establishment of a political entity — the State — and its necessary obeisance to the political and civic tenets of Western democracy has highlighted the normative ideal of church-state separation, and has illuminated the embarrassingly dark corner where lurk many religio-political difficulties, exemplified by such awkward and discomfiting principles as rabbinic control of domestic relations. In addition, the prominent rôle of Conservative and Reform rabbis in the Zionist Movement, albeit not religiously, has provided salutary opportunities for the Israeli to be exposed to the true nature of the movements to which they minister. Further, it would be unfair to denigrate completely the embryonic movement for spiritual revival budding even within the ranks of Israeli orthodoxy. The real fact of the inescapable pressures of day to day living compel examination and re-examination of traditional modes of law and life. Even the orthodox cannot skirt the powerful rivers of historical events and escape undrenched. Lastly, and the effect is only now being articulated, there is discernible a slowly-evolving atmosphere within world Zionism rendering belated and long-overdue homage to the centrality of the religious impulse in Zionism's ideological heritage.

At this juncture of historical influences, Conservative Judaism as a movement looms astride the religious road of Israeli Jewry, and can now begin to render historic service to the cause of world Judaism.

Before defining this challenging opportunity, let us cast a quick glance at our record as a movement vis-à-vis Israel. Schechter, Friedlaender, Ginzberg, Marx — all were eloquent and courageous exponents of Zionism. Their towering strength, in fact, proved a buttress of support, not only within our religious movement, but sustained the ramparts of early American Zionism generally. We are prone to forget that even as a movement, the United

Synagogue built the Yeshurun Synagogue in Israel. Yet it should have been foreseen that the seeds nurtured in this potentially significant contribution would fail of efflorescence, submerged as they were in arid soil and bereft of beneficent watering of *wise* and calculated financial support. As a movement, therefore, our contribution has been, as in the latter case, of a building, an institution which was quickly assimilated to the Yishuv's religious coloring, or alternately, as represented by Conservative Jews individually, in the normal course of Zionist activity.

As a *religious* movement, however, we are confronted with the task of introducing, or awakening interest in, our *religious ideology*, which in its broad religious aspects will create a common religious tie, sustaining and invigorating Judaism as it prevails universally, while adapting itself to the individual convolutions of each Jewish community's problems and opportunities.

This urgently needed task, we submit, can be accomplished best by Conservative Judaism. For Conservative Judaism, in its historical and religious evolution, embodies facts of unique relevancy and compatability for the religious challenges and needs of Israeli Jewry. Reform, even though increasing its scope of traditional observance, still lacks that indissoluble legal-historical link with the unbroken disciplinary continuity of Judaism which to us is normative Jewish consciousness. Orthodoxy, on the other hand, represents a confused ambivalence in its attitude toward the historical development of traditional Judaism and its applied pertinence to contemporary Jewish living. Conservative Judaism, however, embodies the propitious intersection and juxtaposition of both the vertical historical-religious line — that is, our determination to safeguard the integrity of tradition as a legal-religious-historical continuity and discipline — and the horizontal line — namely, the identification of the Jewish *people* in the contemporary context as a determinative factor in the evolution of *הלכה* and life. Anchored in the bedrock of Jewish discipline, Conservative Judaism can have appeal for the thinking Israeli Jew who makes short shrift of a religious regimen truncated by the slices of alien and capricious distractions.

The sensitive Israeli Jew has verbalized his worry about the *Jewish* character and identification of the Israeli. He has been distressed to watch pageants, hear songs, and even attend debates in the Knesset (as for example, during consideration of the terminology in which the Independence Declaration should be couched) which reflected relative disdain for traditional Jewish values and concepts. He has also been disquieted by the deprecation of world Jewry in various phases by significant elements of Israeli Jews. If cultivation of a religious ideology could counteract these centrifugal tendencies, this sensitive Israeli would ally himself with the effort for its inculcation.

Hence, the thinking Israeli Jew feels the imperative need for the vertical and horizontal frame. From the standpoint of religious education, he has become increasingly anxious about insinuating distortions among Israeli youth in their intellectual dismissal of specific historical epochs, while from the point of view of the unity and importance of Jewish peoplehood, he has become

increasingly disturbed about the diverging drift of American and Israeli Jewry. He will therefore embrace those forces embodying the restoration of authentic Judaism, synthesizing the importance of *all* the people with the importance of *all* the tradition, and religiously, Conservative Judaism is the only such force refreshingly available to him.

Conservative Judaism is, religiously, challenged by portentous demands and unusual opportunities. How can we respond?

Individually, we must continue to affiliate with and support the Zionist movement wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. Aside from the excruciatingly severe pressure of political tasks, and the equally demanding financial obligations — tasks which will intrude upon our serenity for a long time to come — it is the writer's conviction that the Zionist movement is moving into a wide and important area of Jewish service which will contribute much to Jewry.

As a *religious* movement, we must seek *direct* access to the people of Israel. How? Although it will probably be true for a long while to come that in Israel Conservative Rabbis will be refused acknowledgement by the Chief Rabbinate as recognized rabbinic authorities, we would surely not countenance an attempt to maneuver for power through any form of irredentism. Similarly, cordial words uttered by Israeli official *unofficially*, and vainglorious words uttered by us from a distance, also ring hollow. We must seek ways to ignite the spirit, and this can be done in only one manner — *by example*.

The desideratum for which we must strive is the element whereby the rooted rationale and spiritual tentacles of Conservative Judaism can be intertwined into the soil and fabric of Israeli life. We must seek direct contact with the Israeli, provide him with this guiding compass of religious life, train him in its effective use and let him operate it for his own spiritual orientation.

The founding of the פנימייה is but the first step, and appraised as such in its initial modesty, it bodes to render invaluable service, primarily as an instrumentality of exposing the future American Conservative rabbi to the milieu of Israeli life. Yet this alone will not kindle a fire. For it is quite problematical as to whether a young American Jew in Israel for a quick sojourn, unsure as yet of his own spiritual moorings, can exercise a sufficient impact upon Israeli society, either alone or on concert with his fellow students. Another step may be the creation of some sort of adult studies academy, as envisaged by Franz Rosenzweig's conception of a *Lehrhaus*, dealing not only with scholarly and technical subjects, but also instituting seminars on the problems, philosophy and needs of Jewish life in Israel and elsewhere.

An indispensable addition would be a model Synagogue, whose service would contain the ideally desirable features of Synagogue worship as well as cultural and social activities, appropriately designed for the Israeli matrix of religious criteria.

Around these projects whose prime motivation would be the dissemination of the *religious idea*, would gather those elements in Israeli life who are earnestly striving for religious insight and inspiration. We can anticipate they and their families become living, active nuclei of a Judaism, practiced publicly

and at home, which would be reflective of the highest aspirations of our movement.

The pace and tempo of each community's advance in religious and social gains is determined by its own net of circumstances — economic, social, political, cultural, spiritual — and by its own time and place. The respective communities are inevitably thrust into the necessity of deriving meaningful interpretation of Judaism for their own time and their own clime. In this manner we can hope that Jews the world over will benefit by the experiences of their brethren, and by rebounding against each other, can enlarge the spiritual patrimony of Judaism. There is no more salient area for such fruitful reciprocal influence than religion.

Thus, by impenetration of the Israeli Jewish community, we can become implicated in a religious effort there whose salutary effects will directly enhance the cause of Judaism in Israel, but will inevitably redound to the enduring benefit of American and world Jewry.