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CONCEPTIONS OF JEWISHNESS AMONG THE LAITY IN AMERICAN REFORM CONGREGATIONS

by

Morton M. Kanter

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Master of Hebrew Letters Degree
and Ordination

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Cincinnati, Ohio
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Referee:
Professor Katz

DIGEST

The intent of this thesis is to discover by sociologically sound methods the attitude of Jews as to what a "good Jew" should do, or how a "good Jew" should be. There has been relatively little research done in the fields of ethnic group behavior and religious attitudes and it was felt that this research was at least in part the responsibility of the dedicated religionist to help him interpret his own role and better understand the conceptions of Jewishness held by those he hopes to serve. To make this study relevant to the interests of the writer, it was decided to limit the study in such a way as to throw light on the Jewish attitudes of Reform Jews, e.g. to measure a Reform Jew's activities, beliefs and sentiments with regard his personal religion, the temple, the Christian community, the Jewish community and his family. To make a manageable sampling it was further decided to limit the respondents (interviewees) to twenty second generation Reform Jews, i.e. those whose parents have been members of Reform temples in our community for at least ten years.

Preliminary to the sociological research an historical survey of conceptions of Jewishness was conducted which pointed out that until most recent times Judaism was a unitary system of legislation sanctified and revealed by God with many significant norms of Jewishness. Today, for better or for

worse, there is no longer a single model of Jewishness and the American Jewish synthesis may be thought of as a sub-culture which offers a variety of ways of being Jewish.

For the sociological study it was decided through perusal of the relevant studies and impressionistic writing to posit certain hypotheses about the current state of religion in the group we desired to investigate and to compare the findings with the hypotheses. Next it was necessary to think in terms of a semi-structed interview with the respondents. The "open-end" interview was decided upon. In the "open-end" interview the questions are designed to permit free response from the subject rather than one limited to stated alternatives. The distinguishing characteristic of the questions used in this type of interview is that they merely raise an issue but do not provide or suggest any structure for the respondent's reply. The proposed respondent was sent an introductory letter by the writer and several days later was called and an appointment was arranged at the office or in the home. The writer recorded verbatim much of the conversation and the respondent was assured that his identity would be held secret.

The results of interviews tended to validate many of the hypotheses set forth at the outset. There was little mysticism in the sense of seeking an ecstatic relationship with the divine, and among the respondents there is little internationalization of what appears to be the demands of God or the cult. It is also very true that prayer is formal, yet people feel some personal need at periods like bereavement.

There was no evidence that the respondents felt that preservation of religion is the responsibility of the rabbinate. Altogether the writer sought information about twenty different hypotheses.

What then is the characterization of the "good Jew" among our sampling? As the writer sees it, for these twenty second generation Reform Jews a "good Jew" is affiliated with the temple, but "spiritually" active in the secular community or Jewish communal endeavors where his highly developed ethical and moral sense can be put to use. He only wants the "insurance" religion provides in case of tragedy, but is receptive to the interest the rabbi may show in his personal and familial well-being. He expects his children to receive a good Jewish education, but he denies the validity of religious practice in the home. He is "at home" in America and feels that by his religious affiliation he is subscribing to, and asserting his representation of the same "spiritual values" Reform Jews and liberal Christians hold in common.

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INTRODUCTION

Much of the ground covered in this thesis has not been dealt with before by an investigator with a Religious orientation. Except for statistical treatments[1] as to what people do as "good Jews", there has been much speculation but little careful investigation on the attitude of Jews as to what a "good Jew" should do, or how a good Jew should be. The research on Jewish attitudes up to this time has been done primarily by Jewish defense agencies such as the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee.[2] These organizations and interested Sociologists and Social Research agencies[3] have been most interested in such matters as Gentile-Jewish relationships, the degree of assimilation within American Jewish life, aspects of Gentile discrimination against Jews and the "marginal status" of diaspora Jewry. These findings have tended to indicate that the great majority of native born American Jews now indentify themselves strongly with the Jewish group. Not only do they avoid assimilation and intermarriage they are showing an increased interest in Judaism.

Even the unpublished research material on feelings of Jewishness have generally not attempted to deal with the fundamental areas of religious life, such as the Jew and his personal religion or the Jew and the synagogue and have centered on more conventional sociological studies such as

the mechanics of adjustment to dual cultures or the role of the Jewish center in fostering a feeling of Jewish belongingness. Many of these studies have dealt with small groups or attempted to establish a number of correlations from statistical data.[4] A noteworthy exception to this trend is "A Research on Jewish Group Identification," a doctoral dissertation written in 1951 by Joseph B. Adelson at the University of California. Dr. Adelson studied the ideology of the authoritarian Jew and the problem of Jewish group identification. The periodicals have followed much the same course as the unpublished researchers, or have dealt with the same underlying areas of reaearch that the large studies have approached by the statistical method.[5]

There is then a lack of research into the fundamental areas of religious expression by committed students of Jewish Religious expression and Jewish institutions. The same does not hold true in the Christian world for we find that the Roman Catholic church has developed a Catholic Religious Sociology under the auspices of the National Catholic Welfare Federation and the Council of Church's of Christ in America, engages in constant research about the religious attitude and changing conceptions their constituents.

We should recognize that the reason why we have not extensively engaged in this type of research before is that the methodology, the techniques for sociological investigation are new and still experimental. Secondly, historically speaking, the need for this type of research among Jews is of

a recent date. Before the French Revolution it was possible to characterize the attitudes of the average Jew toward religion. Before this time it was possible to characterize the attitudes of the "good Jew" to his faith, Jewish community, home and Gentile community about him. There was something all pervasive about Jewish life. A well known Jewish sociologist has described this earlier period in the following manner. "There was a time when Jewishness permeated virtually every moment of one's existence." "This was the natural order of things, inherent in the expectations of the people and the cultural pressures around one. One could deviate, but only from a relevant Jewish norm."[6]

Even the Judaism of the "shtetl" up until the advent of World War I could be described as a "unitary system of legislation sanctified and revealed by God". Zborowski and Herzog have written:

> To the man of the shtetl, "Jewishness" is "my way of Life", in which religion, values, social structure, individual behavior are inextricably blended. It means the way life is lived among "us", and "us" means the shtetl. There is no conscious rigidity or purism in this, it is merely taken for granted. We are "the" Jews, our way of life is "the" Jewishness, and the word for it is Yiddishkayt.[7]

Today this pattern has disappeared entirely. The Jews liberated from the ghettoes of Europe and their limited pattern of interraction with the non-Jews a mere one hundred and fifty years ago found their ways in unbelieveable numbers to the United States, where conditions of Jewish life were radically altered. With the changes in the lives of the Jew

changes in Judaism have naturally resulted.

In the continuing creation of American Judaism we are witnessing "the" adjustment of a traditional Jewish system whose practices were in harmony with the medieval "closed" society.....to a new system characterized by a secularized special order--an "open" society where Jews exercise the rights of citizenship."[8] We realize then that the resulting cultural system is no longer an exclusively sacred one, for it now consists of a number of folk ways allowing for considerable deviation. "It (the American Jewish synthesis) may be thought of as a sub-culture whose flexible patterns offer a variety of ways of being "Jewish."[9]

By consensus--the historian, sociologist, philosopher and the educated layman have agreed that there is no longer a single model of "Jewishness" as may have existed in times past. All have studied and discussed this new situation, as we have noted most often from the angle of assimilation, adjustment and anti-semitism. It behooves the religiously oriented researcher, and specially the rabbis to investigate these still new conditions of being within the Jewish community, to understand if possible the individual's unverbalized values, some of the actual motivations of his behavior and attitudes; to comprehend how his "Jewishness" expresses itself. We need to know what the Jew says, how he says it and how he seems to comprehend what religion says. In short we need to establish communications, i.e. common understanding between the leader and those he hopes to lead. If the accrued gains from this

type of research instruct the rabbi about the Jewish attitudes of his congregation, then this thesis and those to follow may make for more effective rabbinic leadership, and more confident planning of religious and educational and social action programs for our religious institutions.

To achieve these goals the following steps will be followed.

1. We will examine conceptions of Jewishness as found in Jewish history and selected sources, emphasizing the latter period, particularly the works and sermons of reform rabbis and pronouncements of the movement.

2. We will describe the basic concepts of current religion in the middle class as seen by the impressionistic writers, sociologists and historians, both Jews and Christians.

3. We will interview a select sampling of second generation Reform Jews (i.e. those whose parents have been members of Reform congregations for at least ten years) to discover their conceptions of their Jewishness. Interviews of a variety of types, questionaires, projective techniques, participant observations will all be used in an effort to discover the dominant expressions of Jewishness. Our attempts are studies in depth. While the more conventional sociological studies deal with broad groups, this study seeks to know a few cases as throughly as possible, and to arrive at a deeper understanding of the multiple factors underlying their Jewishness. We have divided Jewish expression into five categories, namely the Jew and personal religion, the Jew and the synagogue,

the Jew and the Christian community, the Jew and the Jewish community, and the Jew and the home. It is felt that the Jew expresses his Jewish attitudes through one or more of these expressions.

4. We will evaluate the collected material in terms of the hypotheses about Jewish expression we started out with and we will compare our findings with those of Jewish social scientists and research groups like the American Jewish Committee.

We have advanced hypotheses for each of the categories noted above, e.g. under the category of the Jew and personal religion, the following are some of the hypotheses we will test against our findings in the interviews: There is little mysticism in the sense of seeking an ecstatic relationship with the divine; Prayer is formal but not inward, yet people feel some personal needs at periods like bereavement.

5. We will evaluate the significance of this work for the future of the Reform movement and for the work of the rabbis.

CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF CONCEPTIONS OF JEWISHNESS

Throughout the history of Jewish existence, some four thousand or more years, one can define two channels of conceptions of Jewishness. One is the official expectations of Jewishness, i.e. the conceptions of Jewishness recorded in the Bible, the post biblical, medieval and all modern "authoritative" Jewish works. The other thread can be entitled the expectations of the laymen, for as is common among all people, people do not always live as their leaders desire that they should. In some ages the official conceptions of Jewishness and the lay expectations agree and run together, in others, more particularly in modern times there is a disparity between the official and the actual reality of conceptions of Jewishness.

In hopes of ordering this birds eye glance at Jewish history and sociology this chapter will be divided into four survey periods: From the beginning of Jewish history until the end of the Babylonian exile; From the Time of Ezra and Nehemiah to the conclusion of the Talmudic period; From the sixth century to the seventeenth century; The eighteenth century to modern times with special references to the expectations of Jewishness found among the American Jews.

From the Beginning of Jewish History to the end of the Babylonian Exile

The basic elements of the Jewish religion and the Jewish way of life were crystallized in this period in direct contact with the culture of the surrounding people (Babylonia, Egypt etc.) and at the same time in sharp opposition to them. God was the center of the universal plan and his ordinances were those that men live by. Religion was associated therefore with the practical life of the people, the discharge of justice and the waging of war. It was favorable to the growth of a communal conscience, which coupled with the fear of the more or less mysterious diety, exercised a certain degree of moral restraint on the individual, and was a powerful incentive to courage and devotion.

The Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20:22-23:33; 34) like other Hebrew codes of law, even down to the Mishna, the Talmud, and later Jewish codifications expresses God's all encompassing concern for his people. He is concerned with (if not the very author of) civil and criminal legislation, ritual rules, and humanitarian prescriptions. And in terms of the chain of official expectations, we may assume that Jews up until the time of the Babylonian exile lived their lives by these prescriptions. The statutes (mishpatim, 'ordinances') deal with slavery and concubinage, homicide, and other crimes punishable with death (like kidnapping, unfaithfulness, mayhem, theft, damages to property, seduction, witchcraft, unnatural lust, idolatry). The second part of the code, the debarim, 'words'

enjoin justice and kindness to the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless, generosity to the impoverished debtor, respect for God and constituted authorities, prompt delivery of the first fruits, abstention from certain foods, judicial impartiality, restoration of lost property, humanity to animals, desisting from labor on the Sabbath day and many other things.

In this "official" system God was the supreme author of the laws whereby men "should live".[1] In such a system, we can assume that the expectation upon the individual was to make torah his life. Religion was to be a "kiddush hahayyim". God was the author of life and the search after the Divine being was the goal of all living.

There is little doubt that this already comprehensive system of legislation was more honored in its breach at an early age. The prophets of Israel have left us a literature which tells us of the prophetic opposition to the seemingly dominant priestly group.. Obviously, by the eighth century B.C.E. the official expectations of Jewishness were not satisfying to at least a limited segment of the population. Dr. Samuel S. Cohon has written:

> ...the priests of ancient Israel identified piety with scrupulous regard for the requirements of the national cult. The way to securing God's favor was through the punctilious fulfillment of the prescriptions of ritual in the minutest detail. The prophets, on the other hand, with their deeper sense of the holiness of God, repudiated the sacrificial cult as well as the stated festivities as an all-effective means of gaining God's favor, and called for piety that expresses itself in the self-consecration of the individual and the nation to God, in untarnished personal purity and integrity and in social righteousness.[2]

Many of the prophets chose righteousness over ritual. They were all at odds with society and by so doing they created new concepts of Jewishness among the laity of their time and ultimately influenced the whole course of historic Judaism. By actions and words they sought to improve human society, to promote the brotherhood of man, and to secure liberties for all.[3] Jewish expectations came to include moral responsibility, social justice and civil rights.

In this early period it is difficult to say how closely the expectations of the laity approached the official expectations which we have here briefly recounted. We can at best assume that Judaism endurance attests its ability to create adherence within the laity to its dominant official trends.

From the Time of Ezra and Nehemiah to the Talmudic Period

At the very onset of this period, attention should be called to the Book of Job. The author of the book articulates the protest against the dogma that human suffering is proof of human guilt. God's dealings with man may be an inscrutable mystery; they need not be a monstrous injustice unless we insist on regarding them as consistently retributive. The doctrine that all suffering is the proportioned penalty for sin is denied, and God is pictured as an unfathomable being beyond our understanding. This conception of God influenced the individual's idea of God throughout the ages.

In this period also we find the aphorisms on the conduct of life of the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. They claim

that the best thing in the world is not philosophic theory, but the practical maxims by which a sagacious man orders his life. They appeal to prudential motives rather than to the higher ethical principles; but they constantly affirm that morality is the condition of success and happiness, and that religion is the foundation of worldly wisdom. Warnings against the fascination of strange women, the serpent that lurks in the wine cup, indolence, hasty anger, gossip and slander are common themes. There is hardly anything specifically Jewish in these moral precepts, nor is there the least concern about ritual and ceremony; religion is with them not a matter of observances but a serious and reverent temper of mind toward life and the moral order of the world. These late Biblical books describe new conceptions of Jewishness, not concerned with God all encompassing laws as in earliest times, with ritual or ceremony as was the case the time of the priesthood, with the conditions of world as in the time of the prophets, but with the personal relationship of the individual to man and to God.

Within this period all of the older laws, customs and practices whereby the Jews were identified were further developed and expanded on the foundation of biblical law, and the adoption of the customs of the other people to the Jewish religious conception of life. We know that the Jews of this period were not segregated in space. There were colonies in Egypt, Babylonia and Persia and even contact between the Jews in Judea and their Gentile neighbors could

not be avoided. The Jew was forced to adapt the customs of other people to his own way of life and more important he needed a religion which would not only continually distinguish him from the heathen, but would likewise be a constant reminder to him that he was a member of the Jewish race and faith. The Jew needed to be demarcated from his neighbors not merely by creed, but by a mode of living. His manner of worship would be different; his home would be different; even in the common acts of daily life there would be distinguishing features which would constantly recall his Jewishness. His life in every detail, was to be controlled by Torah--By the written enactments of the Mosaic code and the development of the corporate life of the people, as the altered conditions demanded change. The result of these pressing needs were the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds which were in essence the written expression of life itself.[4]

From the time of the completion of the Talmud until most modern times it was possible to identify the official Talmudic conceptions of Jewishness in most every human activity. The Talmud advised and legislated for all occurances and described the nature of all beliefs in a most complete manner.

Yet it is important to note that there was early dissent from this stratified approach to Jewishness. The leader of this opposition movement was Anan ben David who asserted over and against the authority of Talmudic tradition the authority of the Bible and the right and duty of private

interpretation. The sect, later called the Karaites, gave literal interpretation to the Torah and was thus led to greater strictness in various matters than was the rule among the authors and interpreters of the Talmud. But even in the case of the Karaites, although they created other religious laws, they were still bound by divine sanctions. Their God centered modes of existence used the same norms as the larger Jewish community, and varied only in the strictness of interpretation.

From the Sixth Century to the Seventeenth Century

The completion of the Talmud gave the character of finality to tradition, and from the sixth to the seventeenth century it is perhaps easiest to discern what official Jewishness was.

The Jews lived under Islam and Christianity. They fared differently under Islam than they did under Christianity. In the Oriental renaissance under the caliphate the stirrings of the new intellectual life was quickly felt by the Jews. One of the first manifestations was a revolt against the authority of tradition, to which the completed codification of the Talmud had given the character of finality. The Jewish community produced poets and philosophers bent on joining the neoplatonic elements in the Arab philosophy and in the Moslem mystics with the teachings of Judaism. The result was a greater inwardness and a mystical tone of piety. Both moods however, broadened the intellectual base of Judaism, harmonized it with the intellectual findings of the time, but did not essentially challenge the nature of Judaism.[5]

In central Europe by the fourteenth century Jewish learning so evident in the Golden Age of Mohhammedan Spain, gradually decayed and the revival of learning and the Protestant reformation did little to improve the situation. Insulated in their ghettoes from the larger Christian community even their speech was untouched by the development of literary high German, and their antiquated German, mingled with Hebrew words, was in the ears of their neighbors a barbarous jargon. The Jewish life of Eastern Europe became one culture, fostered by intellectual isolation and legal disabilities and ruled by Torah which came to equal all Halacha. Zborowski and Herzog have summarized the situation as follows:

> Despite countless local variations, the Jews of Eastern Europe had one culture, possessing the characteristics that mark a culture: a language, a religion, a set of values, a specific constellation of social mechanisms and institutions, and the feeling of its members that they belong to one group..."The word Yidd ishkayt carries as an aura the veneration of learning, the acceptance of obligations, the inextinguishable hope of ultimate reward. And somewhere between its syllables flickers the wry, ironic acceptance of the price that must be paid for membership in Klal Yisroel, a price acknowledged with tears, with groans, and with innumberable quips.[6]

The basic theme in this stratified Jewish existence was that God, Torah and Israel are one, i.e. the Jew is expected to adhere to the age old traditions as seen in the lights of external environment.[7] God and Israel are contracting powers, each with duties and privileges. There was an implied belief that God is a reasoning, responsible power with whom you can argue--provided that you live up to your side of the bargain. Rachmonis and yosher are two aspects of

God which the chosen people regularly invoke. One asks God in justice to fulfill His promises under the covenant, and one begs Him in mercy to forgive the transgressions of imperfect mortals.

Torah is a bridge between the world of God's reasonableness and man's reasonableness. Man and the world are interrelated through Torah. Eventually Torah came to mean the whole of Jewish lore, which embraces the whole of Jewish life.[8] The truth it contains is the only possible and acceptable truth for the ghetto Jew. Even the handling of the Torah, which contains the essence of the Law, symbolizes the paramount importance of law. It was treated as a living thing, almost as a living being, for it occupies the most important position in the synagogue along the East Wall.

Holidays in this culture, like personal events such as birth or marriage were never restricted to the home or to the synagogue, but are partly in each.[9] Some were centered more in the community, some more in the family, but any major event is shared with the group. The observances are always a mixture of ritual prescribed in the sacred writings and folk customs that were interwoven with the written law. Prescribed ritual was necessarily uniform among the Orthodox Jews until most recent times, but the folk customs varied widely from place to place, although only the learned would recognize a difference between the two.

Religious holidays like the Sabbath meant assuming a different life. The daily burdens and worries were laid

aside. One put on different clothes, ate different food, ordered his house in a special way in order to make the Sabbath different from the rest of the week. It was on the Sabbath, Zborowski and Herzog have written, that "the atmosphere is steeped in history and symbolism. Time and space are welded into a close unity. One lives in communion with ages past and with all the far flung members of the Chosen People who in all parts of the earth are celebrating at the same time in the same way."[10]

This society recognized a bilaterial pact between God and man as noted above. In this pact man has three major obligations, i.e. to study constantly the word of God, to establish a family, and to observe the social, economic and ritual activities directed toward the fulfillment of commandments between man and God. Divine sanction touches the Jew in every aspect of his life and claims of being a good Jew were measured by one's ability to make Jewishness a way of life in which religion, values, social structures, and individual behavior are inextricably blended.by religious law.

No matter what a man did, he was still a Jew, but he would not necessarily be a real or good Jew. A man who achieved this status combined his heart and his head, i.e. he had the abstract intellect and the ability to see and apply all possibilities combined with a "Yiddish heart, for "a Jew is known by his pity."

> A real Jew does not merely sympathize, he acts on his feelings. Nor does he have to be told, he feels the

> need. He thinks, feels, acts, communicates--for a real Jew is always part of a group. To be withdrawn and isolated is to be disqualified.[11]

A real Jew never despaired, he never stopped hoping and trying. And he was a man of peace. Physical violence was abhorrent to him; verbal and intellectual strife was invigorating. But the real Jew was a pacifist by conviction. His capacity for passive resistence was as great as his capacity to fight on the rare occasions when conviction tells him that he must. He was also devout in his observance of religious precepts, yet the primary emphasis is on "mentsglikhkayt" Be a Jew and be a man. Religious observances are taken for granted and their neglect will not go uncriticized, yet a man who performs the ethical precepts but does not observe the letter of the law is held in higher regard than one who observes the law alone.[12]

Lastly, this culture did not recognize any physical characteristics as typically Jewish, but Jewish traits can be expressed through the body, i.e. "His Jewish heart lies on his face". Certain gestures were recognized as Jewish. The acceptance of the body as a vehicle for Jewish expression is in line with the easy acceptance of world and physical pleasures as good, the simple absence of ascetisism in a culture than placed primary stress on nonmaterial values. This was in decided contrast to Christian culture which makes a virtue out of resisting physical gratification, thereby exalting physical pleasures.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to know the true conditions of Judaism as it existed in the ghettoes. We are unable to accurately define the lay conceptions of Judaism. Dr. Israel Bettan has described our lack of information about Judaism as it was actually lived in the middle ages in the following way:

> What the moulders of our faith have wrought and taught, stands revealed to us in a clearer light than has been deemed possible. But what still remains shrouded in obscurity, with little or no attempt being made to lift the veil of darkness, is the inner life of the masses of the people. We know now, in great measure what Judaism is and has been, we still grope in darkness as to how much of it, and in what spirit the people, in the various periods of our history, actually accepted and practiced. Particularly is this true of the medieval period, when code followed code in rapid succession and new ideas and outlooks, notwithstanding most stubborn resistance, became even more persistant and clamorous.[13]

This unitary culture which reached its peak in the medieval closed society existed to some extent until the beginning of World War II. However, it was primarily the culture of the ghettoe, shtetl or pale of settlement and not that of all Jews. Much that is reported above would not be true for Jews in large cities of Eastern Europe from the seventeenth century on, and certainly not true for German Jews since the time of Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) who initiated reforms in education which prepared Jewish youth to appreciate and appropriate German culture.

The French Revolution more than any other particular event opened the floodgates of new ideas and secular aspirations to the Jews of Europe. At an unequal pace modern ideas began to come into Jewish life from the cultures which surrounded it.

on all sides. The resultant internal conflicts hastened the breakdown of the unitary culture, i.e. the rejection of "official" Judaism based on God, Torah and Israel. The Jewish way of life which was so well defined in the ghettoe began to adopt itself to the surrounding world, and as a consequence lost more and more of its traditional content, i.e. Judaism developed a flexible pattern that offered a variety of ways of being Jewish.

The Eighteenth Century to Modern Times

No where is this process more marked than in the United States. A leading historian has said that diversity, voluntarism, equality, freedom and democracy are the products of three centuries of Jewish experience in America.[14] This is contrasted with the innumerable restrictions from without and the burden of tradition and narrowly and rigidly construed from within which marked Jewish life in the old world. Others have described three hundred years of Jewish life in America as a clash between a Jewish Eastern Orthodox unitary system sanctified and revealed by God and a Western secular Protestant environment.[15] What has resulted as a continuation, reinvigoration, or reformulation of selected elements in the system which fulfill certain continuing needs and which do not conflict seriously with American patterns.and the growth of new conceptions of Jewishness, new functions for Jewishness which tend to compensate for the void which has resulted from the undermining of the earlier unitary system enjoined by divine sanction. A Jewish sociologist has described the American-

Jewish pattern in the following manner:

> The overwhelming majority of Jews in this country were born here, and have received their education in this country. Hence it can be assumed that the Jewish community's emerging cultural patterns, are to a large extent the same as those of the general American community in terms of language, leisure time activities, demographic developments, and as we shall see even of stereotypes in thinking,--including religious concepts as well. At the same time the Jewish cultural patterns will continue to contain sizeable though varying residues of Jewish mores and ways of expression--some inherited from European immigrants, others having originated, developed or considerably altered here.[16]

Shorn then of the force of divine sanction and exposed to the cultural pattern of the American community, what are the emerging conceptions of Jewishness? Certainly even for the small percentage of Jews who observe the dietary laws, the Sabbath and the Jewish marriage laws, even for them the whole Jewish civil law code no longer exists. They no longer, except in rare instances resort to rabbinical law for the settlement of their business matters such as partnerships, contracts or loans. A few generations ago the law governed life.

Today if one looks at the pronouncements of America's rabbis and lay religious leaders, he will find that today there are a variety of ways of being "Jewish" and the emerging Jewish cultural patterns are often the same as those of the American community moderated and directed to varying degrees by Jewish mores and ways of expression inherited from Europe or originated here. At best the rabbis have expressed certain principles, certain theological ideas, but the people themselves by their rejection and their acceptances, by their neglects and their

observances have somewhat determined their own religious practices and attitudes.

The late Israel I. Mattuck, rabbi of the Jewish Liberal Jewish synagogue in London defined a Jew as one who adheres to the Jewish religion and feels a sense of relationship to all Jews in the "universal community of Israel," and discerned that a good Jew is one who has faith, righteousness, participates in prayer and study, feels the solidarity of Israel and conceives of life and conduct in terms of holiness. Faith is measured in terms of faith in God and the good Jew is obligated to give to faith in God the commanding place in his life. By this faith, man is instructed in the knowledge of righteousness and impelled to practice love and justice in all his relations. Through prayer and study the good Jew expresses and feeds his faith in God, the good Jew also feels the solidarity of Israel and thereby indentifies himself with the life of the Jewish people and obligation to help Jews who suffer special hardship. Lastly, Dr. Mattuck wrote:

> Fifthly, the good Jew conceives life, personality, and conduct in terms of holiness. Observances can help him to keep the ideal before him and to give his life and home that indefinable atmosphere which we call the beauty of holiness. Though few among men have fully attained to holiness yet it belongs to the religious conception of life to strive for it. It distinguishes the religious from the non-religious way of living. All that holiness means is included in the third element of Michah's definition of the good life: to walk humbly with God. It is the ideal for character and conduct, unattainable as it is majestic, but Judaism makes it the guide to the Jewish way of life.[17]

Religion is a "life dedicated to the Holy One," according to the writings of Dr. Samuel S. Cohon, a leading

Reform theologian.[18] Without defining the good Jew, Dr. Cohon implies that the good Jew would be the religious Jew who does all things for God's sake. The religious life is a mode of living representing joyous participation in the religious community, its problems and its tasks, and a sharing in its creed, code of conduct and cult or form of worship. Dr. Cohon tends to emphasize man's role in the reciprocal relationship that exists between God and Israel. The source of Devine sanction i.e. halacha is relative rather than absolute and is valuable only when it dictates norms for this worldly existence.[19] For example Dr. Cohon says that the primary purposes of the dietary laws were to foster Jewish distinctiveness. This was resented by the Jews when they began to struggle for civil and social equality in the non-Jewish communities. Jewish distinctiveness was to be limited to the "sphere of religion and the cultural and social elements associated therewith, as in the case with Catholics, Episcopalians, Quakers, and Unitarians."[20] Nevertheless, Judaism embracing the whole of life can accept certain elements in the dietary laws that streghten Jewish consciousness and maintain the religious character of the home. Dr. Cohon in effect removes the element of divine sanction that was paramount in earlier conceptions of Jewishness and the case of the dietary laws says that man can choose those which are meaningful for him. He must choose however, since other wise Judaism would abdicate its all-embracing role in life.

Claude G. Montefiore in his essay Liberal Judaism in

notes that the ritual ordinances, such as the dietary laws, received great stress because they were wholly peculiar to Judaism while the moral laws were shared by other creeds.[21] In common with Dr. Cohon, Montefiore denied the divine origin of these ritual laws but went a step beyond the Hebrew Union College professor and denied the permanent religious values of these ordinances. Liberal Judaism, according to Montefiore, believes that the ritual described in the Pentatteuch and the post-biblical writings are dogma, and that man must humanize himself by conscious adherence to the moral law which is not and cannot be contained in a book; it is an ideal which is progressively interpreted. He wrote:

> The liberal Jew can no longer regard ceremonial laws as part and parcel of the moral law; they are at best only its servitors and dependants; but in the principle of law, and of self-imposed and glad subjection to law, he is at one with his orthodox brother.[22]

Many rabbis have offered their conceptions of the Jewish attitudes of the American Jewish Community. Abba Hillel Silver has characterized Jews as supporters of all good endeavers -- Jewish and non-Jewish. They also do not isolate themselves from the lot of fellow Jews in other parts of the world. Dr. Silver has warned that although American Jews are not in danger of assimilation, they are in danger of " a too facile adaptibility, an unconscious drifting and a carefree relaxation of all disciplines.....such as belonging to synagogues but not attending them, or sending children to schools which are so limited as to time that they cannot really give them an adequate Jewish education, or in very many instances,

not giving them any instruction at all, or emptying our homes of all Jewish content."

For Dr. Silver religion is "man's humble way to God." It is not a political strategy intended for others, but a personal quest and consecration. The danger is that today's Jews are prosperous, but with no spiritual anchorage and the hope of the future is that:

> American Jewry...will restore what has become peripheral in our life, to the center again--the synagogue, the school, the academy and the religious discipline of Judaism--if it will recapture the discipline of our ancient teachers who admonished us "Talmud Torah kneged kulom" -- the study of the Torah outweighs all other commandments for it leads directly to them all -- then American Jewry is destined to enjoy a resplendent century of spiritual growth in this gracious land.[23]

Dr. Silver points a finger at another aspect of American Jewish life. He notes that the lay leaders of American Jews contend that it is a religious community and act as if it is a secular community whose chief concern is philanthropy and defense. He concludes that although the scope of the synagogue may broaden to include psychiatry and other forms of guidance its core of faith, the belief that there is a God indwelling in all nature will remain unchanged.

Rabbi Harry Essrig who occupies the pulpit of Temple Emanuel in Grand Rapids, Michigan has warned that Reform Judaism has become equated with the minimalist conception of Jewishness. He has told his congregation "Most of you--please forgive me--- are not genuine Reform Jews. You are psuedoescapists or fighters against the maximalist faith of your fathers." The Reform Jew according to Rabbi Essrig, must combine the

strands of the triple cord of authentic Judaism, Love of learning, love of the Jewish people and love of our faith.[24]

Rabbi Herbert M. Baumgard of Elmont, New York has issued a pamphlet entitled, "What is Liberal Judaism," and a description of the obligations of a Reform Jew. Rabbi Baumgard states that the Reform Jew is obligated to study and to know, to teach and to practice. He writes in part:

> Properly a Reform Jew is one who is so well versed in the history and literature of Judaism that he is able to distill the essence of its teachings and emphasize it rather than the ceremonials of Judaism.
>
> Reform Jews must teach the cardinal principles of Judaism to members of their families, to other Jews, and, ultimately to non-Jews as well. Those who teach how life may be improved, it is said, are equal to those who create life.[25]

Rabbi Baumgard also notes that the earlier ethical motif of Reform failed and therefore Reform is "slowly adding a minimum code of ritual to its observance by deliberate choice". Some Reform Jews then observe a minimum ritual code, he also stresses duty toward all men, i.e. the concept of gamiloth hasidim is an obligation beyond the realm of the tribe, and he emphasizes the universalistic aspects of his faith.[26]

Dr. Julian Morgenstern has emphasized that Judaism is a religion of life which has found its strength in its ability to adopt itself to the dominant way of thinking and living in its home environment. He cautions that true American Judaism has not yet come into being. He stresses the fact that early Reform overemphasized the rational and intellectual elements aspects of Judaisms and neglected its ritual. This error is

now being corrected in Reform. Probably too, the passion for Israel and for ever closer affiliation with its Jews and the historic tradition of Jewish statehood is a factor in this trend.[27]

Dr. Nelson Gleuck has publicly stated that Reform is opposed to sectarianization of the public schools and government financial support for denominational schools. All religious groups are also obligated to maintain the liberty of the individual against the encroachments of the state. Speaking of America and the Reform movement he declared that Reform grew in intimate connection with the meaning and goals of America. Both have a common concern for God's moral order as the mainspring of American and cosmic constitutionalism: He further stated:

> There is mutual accord regarding man's God-given inalienable rights to seek truth through reason. There is oneness of understanding and determination that no human institution, be it directed to God or identified with government, may breach the liberty of any individual to choose unhindered and unharmed the tenets of his beliefs..... The manifest appointment with destiny of American moral idealism and American Reform Judaism lies in their seeking the increase of human rights through the rationalism of of enlightenment and the freedom of liberalism, through the law and love of God.[28]

Dr. Solomon B. Freehof has portrayed American Jews as "practical, future loving people who feel at home". They have completely partaken of the American temperament which is anti - doctrinal, which shies from theory and turns to practical action. Of course, there is a danger in this practicality. It makes American Jews a little too scornful of theoretical studies that have no direct practical benefit. But American Jewry's practi-

cal nature has differentiated it from Jewries all over the world. It has managed to set aside the doctrines that would have divided it in Europe and work together as a united community in many areas of endeavor.

The nature of the American community also explains the American Jew's attitude toward Israel. In Europe the Jew "had only step-motherlands," not a real homeland as he has in the United States. Since America does not try to destroy any historic group the American Jew does not feel that sense of exile which haunted other Jewish communities. American Jewry's practical nature which expresses itself in philanthropy has helped support Israel, but its sense of at oneness has limited the number of its members who desire to settle in the state.[29]

Laymen have offered their conceptions of Jewishness and it seems appropriate to offer the critical comments of one, Dr. Theodore H. Gaster, Professor of the History of Religions at Columbia University. Dr. Gaster has stated that the three divisions of American Judaism offer two common approaches to Jewish heritage; the antiquarian approach which overplays the particulars, and the modernistic, the universal; and what the American Jew is seeking is a formulation of Judaism which will satisfactorily envelop the one in the other. Reform Judaism, Dr. Gaster says, confuses abstractions with absolutes. He writes:

> It fails sufficiently to realize that abstractions presuppose concretions from which they are abstracted, and that one can only achieve concept of such ideas as Justice,

> Righteousness, Brotherhood, and the like by projecting them out of actual concrete forms. Hence, Reform Judaism's tendency to underplay rite and ceremony in favor of subscription to "ethical principles" is simply putting the cart before the horse, Religion is not a mental affirmation; it is a regimen and a regimen implies an accepted set of forms. To the extent that it dilutes those forms, Reform Judaism dilutes religion into mere ethics.[30]

The pragmatism of American culture is perhaps exemplified in the above noted conceptions of Jewishness expressed by theologians, rabbinic leaders, and laymen. There are no longer any specific norms of Jewishness upon which all agree. There are different attitudes and different emphasis and different explanations for the occurrence of significant attitudes. In the latter chapters we will explore the expressed attitudes of these leaders as compared with the discovered attitudes of the second generation Reform Jews interviewed by this writer.

CHAPTER II

AMERICAN RELIGION AT MID-CENTURY

This chapter will be devoted to a summary of the writings of leading historians, sociologists and impressionists on the nature and condition of religion in the United States. We will also examine what the sociologist and historian has written about the contemporary status of Judaism and its adherents and we will also concern ourselves with what the impressionistic writers have written about the nature of American Judaism.

The Origin of Religion and Its Current Manifestations

Sociologists are a general agreement that religion originated in man's attempt to cope with the unknown and unpredictable, and more specifically in his attempt to rationalize and render more acceptable the phenomenon of death.[1] Hertzler has summarized the nature of religion in the following way:

> Religion is one phase of man's cultural system, a body of attitudes, ideas and techniques whereby he explains and adjusts himself to the unknown, the mysterious and the mighty. By means of the various elements of religion he reaches out beyond the mundane--the material, the social, the readily knowable and observable...to observe a harmonious relationship with this power.[2]

Religion then functions as a means of self-preservation and spiritual security and also as a medium of social adjustment. According to the social scientist it also changes its

conditions of being as all else does--though often belatedly. In general it reflects the whole background and makeup of a people. For example in the United States religion in its various "Christian" manifestations reflects different secular groups, interests, and needs; philosophic currents, economic and political conditions; the multiplicity of cultures developed by stocks and varieties of peoples who make up the population; historical conditions such as the separation of church and state, frontier life, the Civil War, immigration, industrialization, urbanization, and technology.

When religious organization loses its supremacy among institutions, as in the United States, this accommodative tendency is much more readily observed. For example, as physical and biological science has advanced here in the last century, man's conception and grasp of the "natural" have greatly modified his interpretation of and dependence upon the "supernatural"; and as social science and social consciousness have developed, the relative emphasis upon "God" and "man" has been modified. As men have gained confidence in their accumulating knowledge and their demonstrated ability to manipulate nature and themselves, they have felt more secure; they have worried less both about this world and about the next world. Both naturalism and humanism have affected religion. It has become less God-centered, more man-centered; less passive, more creative; but also less sacred and more secular.

The Dean of the Harvard Divinity school has conceived

of peculiar nature of American religion as due to certain historical factors.[3] Dean Williard L. Sperry has noted that the separation of church and state is a prime cause of the special nature of American religion. Sectionalism also makes it dangerous to describe American religion, since sects tend to take on the color of the area wherein they grow. With these reservations in mind, Dr. Sperry wrote:

> ...it remains true that the total fact of America has done something to everyone of the religions which have migrated here. No one of them now is the exact counterpart of its parent body in Europe. Be it the climate or the constitution some subtle change has taken place.[4]

Even de Tocqueville noted that American religious expression differed from its European antecedents: He wrote:

> In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions. But in America I found they were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country.[5]

The process of assimilation and accomodation is always going on in religion. Indeed, the process is still unfinished in the United States with the manifold reasons for this process in mind, let us attempt to describe religion in America as it is. In most general terms religion in America has remained true to its original task of providing men with a way of facing the problems of an ultimate and unavoidable frustration, of evil and the generalized problem of meaning in some non-empirical sense. It remains concerned with finding some ultimate way.

Religion attempts some answer for the question of death. For man, mortality represents the fundamental and

unavoidable frustration of deep desires and wishes. In the course of the normal life span, every person loses by death persons of crucial emotional significance to him. People ask for a meaning that goes beyond medical or physiological explanations and these answers are still looked for in religion.

Religion in the United States also grapples with the problems of the still unavoidable frustrations that arise from man's imperfect or limited control of nature and human society. In our time, men ask whether the universe is basically safe for human munipulation. Every society raises such questions of meaning and defelops some answers to them. Then there is also the problem of evil. Men everywhere have standards of conduct, the mark of being human. Yet, everywhere standards are violated; everywhere, at sometime, evil seems to prosper and flourish. And the old questions seem to exist: Why does evil exist, why are there moral obligations, why must the good be destroyed? Religious institutions develop one answer to the deepest human questioning; any persons who have believed it possible to "abolish" religions have only succeeded in renaming it.

American religion has also put forth with special emphasis the idea that man has a soul and that all souls are "equal before God". These concepts have been basic to the ethical evaluation of the individual. Religion has also been a factor in increasing social conscience. Social action has never been an emanation of religious ideas but religion is always an interest, reciprocally related to the ideas of social action,

that partly derive from and react back upon "realistic" social situations.[6]

With summary of the ideological basis for American religion in mind let us turn our consideration to the general institutional system of American religion: and discuss its pervasive tendencies:

There are pervasive tendencies to emphasize the perfectability of man and the possibility of human progress--in relative contrast to much of the nominally accepted theology and dominant themes of European tradition. The faiths that a succession of immigrants brought here have uniformly pessimistic views of human nature as their point of departure. Man is a fallen and sinful creature, dependent upon divine grace for his salvation. Orthodox Christianity has never professed or pretended otherwise. Dean Sperry has called this attitude one of the primary persuppositions about religion in America and has summarized the situation as follows:

> George Tyrrell once said that Christianity is an ultimate optimism, but an optimism which is founded on a provisional pessimism. So construed, the religion of America has been premature and inexpert. It has struck straight for the ultimate optimism in neglect of the preliminary pessimism which the great religions of the world have all presuppossed as their premise.[7]

There has been a comparatively far reaching secularization of beliefs, especially in the Protestant groupings; an alienation from the literal dogmas that predominated in earlier times; an acceptance of religion on the grounds of expediency; withdrawal from intense involvement in strictly religious matters, and an associated interest in practical secular

activities carried on under church auspices. Hurani has described the secularization of America as follows: "The Western Community is a secular community in which religion is tolerated, but no longer gives the regulatory principles for every kind of human activity."[8]

Some have suggested that the process of accomodation and assimilation of both humanism and naturalism have accounted for this secularization of beliefs.[9] More recently, Will Herberg, a leading impressionist of religious topics has recognized that religion institutionally has had an extremely important sociological function which in a sense accounts for the paradox of religion without faith. Many second generation immigrants, anxious to identify themselves fully with America, turned deliberately away from their ethnic and religious affiliations. "Americanization" seemed likely to lead them to abandon all such baggage. The melting-pot, conceivably, would lead them all into one quasi-Protestant or unchurched mass. In Israel Zangwell's famous play The Melting Pot (1908) which popularized the phrase, the Jewish hero affirms the vision of America by marrying a Gentile girl. Distinction of race and creed, the play implies, will be obliterated in America. But in practice the melting pot was not so efficient. With the third generation came the desire for self-definition within the main pattern of Americanism. Hence the continuing sociological, as distinct from purely religious appeal of Catholicism or Judaism. Hence in a large part the present secularist tinge of American religion.[10]

Another impressionist has subscribed to the above views based to a large extent on the writings of Oscar Handlin[11] and Marcus Hansen[12] and added certain other considerations. Nathan Glazer has written that America recognizes that religious difference involves no inferiority; in fact we see that, more than simply tolerating religion, some element in American culture directly prescribes religious identification as a norm of middle class Americanism.[13] Herberg quotes President Eisenhower: "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith--and I don't care what it is." America prescribes religion: but it does not care which one.[14] Since religion in America is supported by social needs for conformity or identification, it does not emphasize the dogmatic elements of each faith, but rather the efficacy, social and psychological value of religion in general.

Glazer also feels that the phenomenon of the return of the "third generation" is not sufficient to explain the current revival of religious interest. Depression, wars, or the "other direction" expounded by David Riesman[15] are also partially inadequate to explain this interest. He continues that the era of William Jennings Bryan marked the end of revivalism and the faith of the Puritans on the American scene and from that time on no church leader was also a leader in America's spiritual or intellectual life. There must then be another answer for the revival of religion which at the turn of the century seemed to be dying. Glazer finds that religion became useful for social reasons. Religion

emphasing faith, dogma or theology was not very popular, but there was a necessity to define the excluded groups in society when frontier towns had become middle class societies. Along with these developments, respectability became a central value in American society and it became the "right" thing to do to go to church.

It was in the context of this discovery of the special uses of religion, and of the rise of the values of respectability, that, the factors on which Herberg lays stress -- the third generation return, and other directed conformity, could become important and could create the kind of religion that he has described. For the point of view of someone interested in the revival of authentic religious faith, a real dependence on God, these social factors are ambiguous; they do not form proper motivations for religious life, but they keep religious institutions and forms alive, and make it easier, perhaps, for real faith to exist.

More light on this paradox in American religion, i.e. religion without faith is offered by the psychiatrist and writer Erich Fromm who comments that man attempts to make sense of his own existence by a number of systems such as religion and philosophy called by Fromm "frames of reference." Fromm feels that the "intensity and fanaticism" which these secular aims are pursued is the same as we find in religions. He writes:

> ...All these secular systems of orientation and devotion (success and prestige) differ in content, but not in basic

> needs to which they attempt to offer answers. In our culture the picture is so particularly deceptive because most people "believe" in monotheism while their actual devotion belongs to systems which are, indeed, much closer to totemism and worship of idols than any form of Christianity.[16]

In effects Fromm agrees with American sociologists.[17] Much of the personality identification and involvement once centered on the churches appears now to flow into various types of personal relations, or nationalistic or secular "religions". And since American culture prescribes religious identification, it is indeed difficult to discern the nature of one's "real" religion.

This all pervasive secularization of religion has tended to separate religious institutions from other institutionalized structures. Williams has commented that "norms have religious referents and sanctions run through a wide variety of activities outside of organized religious bodies. But, he says:

> ...the very fact that religion in our culture is so frequently equated with churches is a telling indication of the compartmentilization of religious norms. Religious ideas, symbols, beliefs, values, have become firmly solidified in definite sodial organizations having their own specialized personnel, symbols of separate identity, special channels of communication, and segregated group affiliations. In addition, the separation of church and state have tended to isolate the churches from political power and from educational influence. These factors and the fragmentation of religious organization have made it possible for secular powers to force the churches quite generally into neutrality, isolation or "bystander" support with reference to other institutions.[18]

Such then is a survey of the status of religion in America at mid-century. It is marked by a number of tendencies to assimilate and accomodate to the dominant themes of American life. All admit that swelled church membership has not made

Americans more "religious," and that the explanation of this situation lies in other directions. The unbounded optimism of American religion seems to label it as immature in the eyes of Orthodox religionists, but, this condition seems to endure as a mark of American religion. Perhaps, the energy once expended on religious endeavors now finds its way into so-called secular "religions," yet, even as de Tocqueville noted many years ago, the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom are united in this country and the average religionist can believe in monotheism and yet devote his energy to a number of systems which are much closer to idol worship than Christianity.

The Contemporary Status of Judaism and its Adherents

As has been pointed out in print, there are very very few sociologists of the Jews.[19] There are many Jewish sociologists, but relatively few studies devoted to examining the attitudes of Jews toward their religion and its various expressions. In most general terms, sociologists look upon the American Jewish Community as a dual process. Side by side with strong ethnocentrism, it is nevertheless not only desirous of accepting, but is continuing to accept the social and cultural pattern of America. In the popular press this attitude of accomodation is exemplified by such statements as "You are an American who happens to be Jewish...The only difference between you and 160,000,000 other Americans is--you are a Jew. This means that you worship God in your own kind of church."[20]

This attitude is reflected in the comment of the Jewish

sociologists. Abraham G. Duker has written:

> In my opinion, participation in the activities of the synagogue is also participation in American life, because the synagogue in America, just like any church, is an American institution...The juxtaposition of the term "American" versus the term "Jewish" in this connection carries with it a certain degree of subjectivity, if not labeling.[21]

The problem of marginality or biculturality so forcefully presented by the late Kurt Lewin, John E. Cuber and others, wherein a marginal Jew was presented as a person living between two cultures and accepting or wholly acceptable in neither[22] is no longer a serious problem among American Jewry, according to the findings of research published by the Tercentenary Conference on American Jewish sociology. These findings prepared by the Division of Scientific research of the American Jewish Committee indicated that the great majority of native born American Jews now identify themselves strongly with the Jewish group. Not only do they avoid assimilation and intermarriage; they are showing an increased interest in Judaism. Apparently, the further Jews are from the foreign born generations, the more interested they become in their own tradition. The report stated, that "fully 97 per cent of the adolescents when asked, 'What is a Jew?', replied in terms of religion," as against 80 per cent of the parents. Herberg commented on these findings as follows:

> The third generation...felt secure in its Americanness and therefore no longer saw any reason for the attitude of rejection so characteristic of its predecessors. It therefore felt no reluctance about identifying itself as Jewish and affirming its Jewishness; on the contrary, such identification became virtually compelling since it was the only way in which the American Jew could now locate himself in the larger community.[23]

Jews, the study went on, have found a middle ground between the strict customs which made it necessary for the Jews to isolate themselves from the Gentile community, and complete rejection of Judaism. The customs adopted seem to have been transformed into symbols of Jewish identification; much of their authority at present is intimately bound up with their role in establishing identity rather than with their supernatural character. The ceremonies and customs which the present generation tends to preserve are generally joyful ones, in which the children can take part, and which do not separate them from non-Jews.

This study showed certain other significant findings:

1. Jews are sympathetic toward Israel but do not identify themselves with it. To them, Israel is a haven for persecuted Jews; they have little desire to live there.

2. Jews are generous contributors to charities, both Jewish and non-sectarian.

3. A predominantly native-born community, they have "great uniformity of culture, religious and folk practice."

4. Jews take an active part in community life; many belong to organizations that are predominantly non-Jewish.[24]

The all-pervasiveness of Jewishness which we noted in the ghetto culture of Eastern Europe no longer exists--not even for the children of the average Orthodox family. Jewishness tends to be isolated to an island in the personal life space. Chein writes:

> ...Jewishness becomes identified with certain activities at certain times, as when one is in the synagogue or in

> the Hebrew school, and there is no connection between these occasions and activities and anything else. Yet, the essence of meaning is that something is meaningful only insofar as it is tied up with other things in the outer world and with the mainsprings of feelings and motivations in one's inner self, Hence, the more circumscribed does Jewishness become, the less meaningful does it also become.[25]

Chein concludes that the more circumscribed one's Jewish existence becomes, the more it becomes identified with certain activities at certain times, the greater is the tendency to experience one's identity as a Jew only in those activities and at those times. "Jewishness, he said, "becomes a sort of role that one plays, and one is only a Jew while playing this role."

Blau bears out this assumption in his article entitled "The Spiritual Life of American Jewry, 1654-1954" wherein he points out that religious groups in America tend to develop along moralistic lines "Moralism," Blau says,

> ...will mean either the assertion that the primary expression of spiritual energies is the living of a moral life, or the assertion that spiritual energies may best be expressed through the channels of agencies and institutions that are not generally regarded as religious.[26]

Judaism has always been closer to moralism, Blau continues, than to ceremonial or ritual law. And in a country where men of all faiths have tended toward moralistic interpretation of their own traditions, Jews have followed the pattern in various ways. Whether or not they maintain memberships in the synagogue or temple, they regard themselves and are regarded by their neighbors, both Jewish and non-Jewish, not only as Jews, but also as good Jews by virtue of the time and energy they devote to doing good. For the most part this energy may be devoted

almost entirely to causes in the Jewish community, but more often than not the concern may be far more universal, expressing itself in concern for the Red Cross, Community Chest or Heart Fund. To some extent, Blau believes, the moralistic Jew has arisen because of the "bilateral character of the traditional American concept of freedom of religion." The first side of this agreement is that the government cannot interfere with the religious beliefs of its citizens, the second part is that religious groups should not participate in political activities. The result has been that religious groups, including the Jewish, have developed secular arms which in a real sense are an aspect of the spiritual life of American Jewry.

An interesting community study by Albert I. Gordon tends to agree with Blau's discussion of the moralistic Jew. Gordon found in his study of the Jews of Minneapolis that the traditional definition of the good Jew appears to have been modified. There is less emphasis upon ritual and observance, less concern for theological concepts and basic beliefs: Gordon wrote:

> The good Jew is generally regarded as the man who is charitable, who has a sense of social sympathy which prompts him to look upon all men as his brothers. The good Jew is one who has a highly developed ethical and moral sense, who practices these virtues in his home and in the market place, as well as in the synagogue. Finally, the good Jew is one who despite any personal denominational predilections works with and for a united Jewish community.[27]

Such then is a summary of the nature of Jewish expressions and attitudes as seen by sociologists of the Jewish people.

What of the institutional system in Judaism? Glazer writes that after World War II Jewishness as a secular culture became impossible and the only alternative was Judaism as a basis for Jewish life. There are two possible reasons for this situation, the advent of Hitler and Zionism which Glazer discounts or the impact of Jewish families moving from areas of second settlement because of general prosperity into new areas on the outskirts of the metropolitan centers where a number of social influences began to be felt which simultaneously strengthened Judaism and weakened Jewishness.

New suburban families became conscious of their Gentile neighbors and Jews in middle class circles discovered American social life moved to a large extent along denominational lines. "Gentiles expect the Jews to have a social community of their own." Parents in this group were unable to cope with the problem of teaching Jewish identification and the job was given to the synagogue religious school. Necessarily, then, according to impressionist Glazer, children are the cause of the unexpected religious vigor among second and third generation American Jews. Jewishness is child centered and religious institutions have responded to this need to serve as means of Jewish identification by building more schools and creating a galaxy of clubs, junior congregations, sisterhoods, brotherhoods, discussion groups and adult education projects. Glazer summarizes as follows:

> Actually, one could have reason to believe that the Jewish religious institutions have won such wide support

> lately precisely, and merely because they enable Jews in the guise of a denomination, to survive as a separate group in America.[28]

We shall have occasion to compare and contrast these research and impressionistic views of the current state of Jewish religious attitudes and institutions with the attitudes of twenty representative second generation Reform Jews in the succeeding chapters of this text.

CHAPTER III

THE METHODOLOGY OF THE INTERVIEWS

The design of this study has been indicated by what is written above. We have recognized that historically and up until most recent times there was a single model of Jewishness. The "good Jew" was molded by the expectations of the Jewish community and the external pressures about him. The Jewish community of the past was often ruled by laws of divine sanction (Halacha) and a small group of individuals who dominated the masses. Restrictions from within and without marked Jewish existence in the Old World; diversity, voluntaryism, equality, freedom and democracy have been the products of Jewish experience in America. Sklare has summarized the basic problem created by these differing patterns in this way:

> The problem of all three immigrant groups was basically similar: The adjustment of a traditional Jewish system whose practices were in harmony with a medieval "closed" society, where Jews frequently occupied the status of a pariah people, to a new system characterized by a secularized social order--an "open" society where Jews exercise the rights of citizenship.[1]

To this common problem all groups of Jews made differing types of adjustment so that by 1956 a professor of psychology at New York University could summarize the psychological situation of the Jew as follow:

We first note that the Jewish child faces a diversification

> of Jewish points of view, and a fractionalization of the Jewish community to a degree that never confronted his grandparents...
>
> For better of for worse there is no longer a single model of Jewishness. It is not surprising, therefore, that even many adult Jews, to say nothing of the children, are hard pressed when they are asked for a more-than-glib characterization of what they mean when they say that they are Jewish.
>
> We note second...the reduced scope of Jewishness. There was a time when Jewishness permeated virtually every moment of one's existence. This was the "natural" order of things, inherent in the expectations of the people and the cultural pressures around one. One could deviate, but only from a relevant Jewish norm.[2]

Realizing with Chein and others[3] that circumstances have conspired to compartmentalize Jewish existence, i.e. to restrict it to an island in the personal life space, and to diversify expressions of Jewishness, the desire of the writer was to create a study that would point out attitudes of Jews as to what a good Jew should do, or how a Jew should be. There was no desire to accumulate statistics as to what people do as good Jews, but rather to measure by some sort of sociologically approved interview method the attitudes of Jews toward their Jewishness and their conceptions of a "good Jew".

To make this study relevant to the interests of the writer, it was decided to limit the study in such a way as to throw light on the Jewish attitudes of Reform Jews, e.g. to measure by interview a Reform Jew's activities, beliefs and sentiment with regard his personal religion or the temple he belongs to. To create a manageable sampling, it was further decided to limit the respondents (interviewees) to second generation Reform Jews, i.e. those whose parents have been

members of Reform temples in our community for at least ten years. Twenty Jewish men and women were selected on this basis of their parents' previous affiliation with Reform and their own continued membership in Reform Temples. Additionally, it might be noted that all the respondents are married, all are college graduates and all are on a relatively high socio-economic level.

It was next necessary to analyze areas of Jewishness expression, i.e. if there is no longer any single concept of Jewishness, then in what areas would the Jew express his Jewish convictions? It was determined on the basis of discussion with the Director of the Department of Human Relations at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and by perusal of the relevant studies and impressionistic writings that areas of conceptions of Jewishness could be best described through 1) personal religion, 2) the synagogue, 3) the Christian community, 4) the Jewish community and 5) the home. These areas of conceptions of Jewishness served as an underlying ordering system, wherein the interviewer could arrange direct questions for the respondent. The discussions and readings also pointed to a number of hypotheses about the current nature of conceptions of Jewishness among our sampling and it was determined to test these hypotheses through the interviews.

Naturally in attempting to define the areas for probing conceptions of Jewishness a great deal of overlapping occurs both in terms of the respective areas and the hypotheses about them. Following then, are the areas and the

hypotheses:

Area No. 1 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

The Jew and Personal Religion

Hypothesis: There is little mysticism in the sense of seeking an ecstatic relationship with the divine.

Hypothesis: There is little internalization of what appears to be the demands of God or the cult.

Hypothesis: There is an ambivalence regarding dependence on a personal God.

Hypothesis: (Area No. 1, Area No. 2) Preservation of religion is the responsibility of the rabbinate.

Hypothesis: There is a feeling that children should be "more religious" than their parents.

Hypothesis: Prayer is formal, but not inward, yet people feel some personal need at times like bereavement.

Hypothesis: Jewishness is verbalized in a religious sense.

Area No. 2 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

The Jew and the Synagogue

Hypothesis: (Area No. 2, Area No. 5) Religion is primarily rational and an increase in ceremonial and ritual observance is viewed as reactionary.

Hypothesis: The synagogue is the institution wherein the child will become "more religious" than the parents.

Hypothesis: (Area No. 1, Area No. 2) Preservation of religion is the responsibility of the rabbinate.

Hypothesis: The rabbi is viewed as the professional

head of the varied activities of the synagogue and/or center.

Hypothesis: Jewish identification is primarily associated with the synagogue and the rabbinate.

Area No. 3 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

The Jew and the Christian Community

Hypothesis: (Area No. 3, Area No. 4) While individuals view themselves as Americans of Jewish faith there are still emotional ties to people called Jews who live in other lands and in Israel--as expressed in philanthropy and pride in the achievement of the Israelites.

Hypothesis: (Area No. 3, Area No. 4) Certain aspects of the Jewish identification of other sub-groups in Jewish life makes this group feel insecure.

Hypothesis: (Area No. 3, Area No. 4) To x degree there is a feeling that Jews are responsible for anti-semitism and that if a unitary Jewish personality or form of adjustment were followed there would be a reduction of Jewish unpopularity.

Hypothesis: (Area No. 3, Area No. 4) Religious affiliation is often viewed as an expectation based on the conventions of the middle class--reflecting general acceptance and endorsement of religion in the American ethos.

Hypothesis: (Area No. 3, Area No. 5) While integration is the supreme value and social intercourse with non-Jews is sought, intermarriage is still taboo.

Hypothesis: There is a sense of superiority toward non-Jews despite the need for approval and acceptance by non-

Jews.

Hypothesis: The imagined Christian stereotype of the "good Jew" forces Jewish religious identification on the Jew. This is the ideal Jew who is loyal to his rabbi and interested in the synagogue.

Area No. 4 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

The Jew and the Jewish Community

The area of The Jew and the Christian Community noted above contain the pertinent hypotheses. One more should be listed:

Hypothesis: The sense of Jewish community exists, but can only be verbalized by undefined emotional responses.

Area No. 5 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

The Jew and the Home

Hypothesis: (Area No. 3, Area No. 5) Religious affiliation is often viewed as an expectation based on the conventions of the middle class--reflecting general acceptance and endorsement of religion in the American ethos.

Hypothesis: (Area No. 3, Area No. 5) While integration is the supreme value and social intercourse with the non-Jew is sought, intermarriage is still taboo.

Hypothesis: (Area No. 2, Area No. 5) Religion is primarily rational and an increase in ceremonial and ritual observance is viewed as reactionary.

Hypothesis: (Area No. 1, Area No. 5) There is a feeling that children should be "more religious" than their parents.

Hypothesis: Jewishness in the home is primarily expressed through the externals of ceremony with little internalization of the theological or historical basis of the act.

Next it was necessary to think in terms of a semi-structured interview with the respondents. The "open-end" interview schedule was decided upon.[4] In the "open-end" interview the questions are designed to permit a free response from the subject rather than one limited to stated alternatives. The distinguishing characteristic of the questions used in open-end interviews is that they merely raise an issue but do not provide or suggest any structure for the respondent's reply. Thus the respondent is given the opportunity to answer in his own terms and his won frame of reference.

Examples of open-end questions used in the interview follow:

> They say that America is becoming more "religious". Would you say this is true?
>
> a. Would this be true of Jews? Why? How?
>
> b. Does this apply to Reform Jews? Why? How?

In most open-end interviews, the questions and their order are predetermined, but the interviewer is given freedom to use at his discretion such non-directive probes as "why?", In what way?", What makes you think that?". In the actual interview situation the writer found it necessary to improvise his follow-ups to the specific responses of the subjects and in that sense at times he departed from the questionnaire inquiry and bordered on the "intensive" or "detailed" interview.

In the open-end interview the interviewer is to encourage the respondent to talk freely and fully in response to the questions included in the interview schedule and the interviewer makes verbatim record of his replies. Generally he has no freedom to raise new questions except to clarify the meaning of the subject's responses, and these, too, must be non-directive, e.g. "I am not sure I fully understand you. Could you tell me a little more?" Or, "What do you mean?" Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook have summarized the advantages of the open-end interview as follows:

> The subject's responses give a more detailed picture of his attitudes, a picture which is less subject to misinterpretation than the response to poll questions. The open-end question, by not suggesting responses, allows the subject to respond in terms of his own frame of reference. The freedom to respond, in a sense, forces the subject to respond in terms of the factors which are salient to him. Thus, the open-end question provides the indicator of the factors which are prominent in the thinking of the individual about a given issue. In the interviewing situation, open-end questions have a further advantage. If the respondent's interpretation of the question is different from that intended by the investigator, the fact is likely to become apparent, and the interviewer has the opportunity to clarify the meaning of the question.[5]

The open-end interview has another advantage, common experience shows that people enjoy the opportunity to be expansive in their responses.

Similar in some respects to the open-end question is the projective type question which was also used in the interview schedule.[6] The projective question is an open-ended question which is answered in a few words or lines and which in this study deals with something that the subject clearly is not in a position to know. In these questions the subject

is not aware of the implication of his response, and the interviewer does not take the answer at face value, but rather goes beyond the literal meaning of the response to look for deeper dynamic sources.

Examples of projective questions used in the interview follow:

> Does this generation of Reform Jews (yours) have the same interest in religion as your father's or grandfather's?
>
> How about the children of this generation and you?
>
> Will the religion of our children, their interest, be greater, the same, or less when they are adults?

Having arrived at the problem, formulated certain hypotheses, selected a sampling, and determined a method of data collection, the next step was to prepare the interview schedule taking into account all these factors. The writer prepared a first draft with the help of the questionnaire used in the "Trenton" study[7] and later obtained the critical comments of the Director of the Department of Human Relations at the Hebrew Union College--Jewish Institute of Religion. He also submitted the first draft to the Study Director of the Division of Scientific Research of the American Jewish Committee[8] for his critical comments. The resulting second draft follows:

Area No. 1 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

<u>The Jew and Personal Religion</u>

1. They say that America is becoming more "religious". Would you say this is true?
   a. Would this be true of Reform Jews? Why? How?
   b. Would this apply to Reform Jews? Why? How?
2. Does this generation of Reform Jews (yours) have the same interest in religion as your father's or grandfather's?
3. How about the children of this generation and you?
4. Will the religion of our children, their interest, be greater, the same, or less when they are adults?
5. When do people feel religion is helpful? Why? How?
6. Do people feel more religious on Rosh Hashannah or Yom Kippur?
7. Do Orthodox and Reform Jews pray for the same reason?
8. Some people including Christians feel that Jews are a chosen people? Is that true? What do they mean by it? How does it strike us today?
9. Is there a conflict between science and religion?
10. Do you think people believe in a personal God? Do Christians and Jews have the same God concept, apart from Jesus? What are the striking differences?
11. Are rituals and ceremonies necessary for the religious life?
12. Are there any (absolute) criteria for determining who is a Jew and who is a Reform Jew? Should there be?
13. What is the future of Judaism in America?

Area No. 2 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

<u>The Jew and the Synagogue</u>

1. What do people expect the temple to do for them? the rabbi?
2. What is the most important function of the temple?
3. Can we conceive of a Jewish community without temples and synagogues? If so, how would our Christian neighbors define us? - i.e. in what way would we be different from them?
4. Can one (a Jew or a Christian) be a good American without religious affiliation?
5. Does temple membership or attendence tend to make one a better citizen, more socially minded, more progressive, or, does it make him more conservative, or does it have any practical consequence? Would it effect his occupation, his voting on social legislation (desegregation, slum clearance etc.)?
6. Among your circle of friends, do you feel that people with children of religious school age are more interested in temple? If so, why? What do they expect the religious school to do for their children? Could it do the same thing for them?

Area No. 3 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

<u>The Jew and the Christian Community</u>

1. Are Christianity and Judaism fundamentally the same? How so? How do they differ? Are these differences important? Why So?
2. Would a Reform Jew have more in common with a Protestant Christian than he would have with an Orthodox Jew?
3. What do Christians think about intermarriage with Jews? How do Jews feel about intermarriage with Christians?
4. Is prejudice against the Jews on the decline or the increase? Why do you think so?
5. Do the activities, habits, etc. of the Jews have anything to do with anti-semitism or social discrimination?
6. Did you see the recent Look Magazine article about the Jews? If so, what do you think Christian readers thought about it?
7. What do you believe our Christian neighbors think about the state of Israel? Is there much difference between their attitude toward the Arab states like Egypt etc. and Israel?
8. In a city like ours, is there much social association between Jews and Gentiles? Define e.g. parties, dinners, games, other than business association. Should there be more? If so, why is there not more?
9. Would there be less anti-semitism if all Jews were Reform?
10. What is meant by the term "goy?" Did you ever hear the term "goyish kopf?" What does it mean? Do you agree that it is so? Why?
11. Do Christians respect religious Jews more than they do the Jew who has little to do with temple or welfare funds? Do you think that religion makes much of a difference?
12. Do you feel that Jews have as much "religion" as comparable groups of non-Jews?
13. Does anti-semitism increase in college as compared to the public high school?

Area No. 4 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

The Jew and the Jewish Community

1. Some people say that Jews are "joiners". Do you think that Jews join an unusual number of organizations?
2. Philanthropy and defense seem high on the list of causes within the American Jewish community. Do you support these "causes?" Does a "religious Jew" support these causes?
3. Should Jews support the secular charities and Jewish charitable causes? Does one deserve more aid than the other? If so, why?
4. How do you think American Jews react to the Arab refugee situation? Why?
5. Can Yiddish serve as a community tongue for American Jews?
6. Some people say that a common sense of destiny holds the Jewish community together. Evaluate this statement.
7. How do your friends react when a young man or woman marries a non-Jew who does not convert?

8. What organizations inthe American Jewish community serve worthwhile functions? How so? Why?
9. Are there any organizations or institutions which deserve special support?
10. Are there any organizations which do not serve worthwhile functions? Why?

Area No. 5 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

The Jew and the Home

1. Does "Jewish style" cooking and the celebration of certain festivals bring Jewish spirit into the home?
2. Some people feel that religious school training can only be as effective as the degree of Jewish practice and education carried on in the home? Do you agree or disagree? How so? Why?
3. Some people say that Jews have a more intensive home life than Christians. Do you agree?
4. Certain studies have shown that there is less drunkeness among Jews than other groups. Is Jewish home life responsible for this?
5. Do you feel that your children will be more religious in their home life than you are?
6. What can religion add to your home life?
7. Are there any ceremonies which you observe at home? Do you think these are important?
8. Do you subscribe to Jewish periodicals? Which ones?
9. Do we differ from Orthodox Jews in home observance and their degree?

After friendly greetings were exchanged with the interviewee, the purpose of the interview as outlined in the letter the interviewee received was explained again followed by a warm-up sampling in which the interviewer sought to create an atmosphere in which the interviewee would feel free to answer in his own way and at his own pace. Warm-up questions included:

1. What is your occupation?
2. What temple do you belong to?
3. When did you join?
4. What is your wife's maiden name?
5. How many years have you been married?
6. Do you have any children. Sex and age?

The introductory letter to the proposed respondent was

sent on the stationary of the Department of Human Relations of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. The letter read:

date

Mr. John Doe
Branch Avenue
Any City, Ohio

Dear Mr. Doe:

As a student of the Hebrew Union College, I am now preparing a thesis in the department of Human Relations on the subject: The Layman's View of Reform Judaism. To do this research properly, I hope to interview a number of members of local Reform temples to sample some of their views and impressions.

I hope that at your convenience I might discuss this topic with you either at your office or in your home. Our proposed conversation has bearing on research in the field of religion, for the training of future rabbis of America, and for my own preparation as a graduating senior at HUC. Incidentally, our interview will not deal in personal matters and like most field research the project will not mention the names of those interviewed.

I sincerely hope that we of the college can count on your participation. I plan to phone you in a few days and be able to arrange to meet you personally. With my thanks for your consideration, I am:

Sincerely yours,

Morton M. Kanter

Morton M. Kanter

As the letter stated the proposed respondent was contacted by telephone several days after the letter was mailed. As a group they were cooperative and anxious to participate in the study. The respondent was given the

choice of holding the meeting in his office or his home. The group was equally divided in their choice, half meeting with the writer-interviewer in their offices, and half meeting with him in their homes. Generally speaking those interviews conducted at a business office were more successful in terms of the production of information than those conducted at the home. It seemed to be easier for the respondent in the office to cut off telephone calls and other business for the length of the interview than for the interviewee to exclude his wife or children from the conversation at home.

Interviews generally lasted an hour and a quarter to an hour and a half, with s ome lasting two hours. Throughout the course of the interview the interviewer took extensive verbatim notes which were transcribed immediately after the interview had been completed. The material was transcribed under the five areas noted above (also see Appendix A) in the attempt to maintain comparability from respondent to respondent. In a sense this is an artificial arrangement, and much overlapping necessarily occurred. It should also be noted that the use of open-end interview questions, predetermined in the hopes of maintaining comparability from interview to interview often made for an awkward situation. A subject's responses were not always appropriate to the prearranged sequence of questions. Often in response to an early question the interviewee answered a later question. It is hoped that this type of problem is adequately handled in the summaries to follow, but, it is nevertheless true that the requirements of

more or less formal comparability from interview to interview lessened flexibility.

Note should be taken of one other method used during some of the interviews. If the interviewer felt that he was not getting adequate response within a certain category or that emotional blockage had occurred, i.e. when the respondent wished to divert the attention from himself by directing the question to the interviewer, the interviewer at the conclusion of the interview would present the subject with a typewritten statement meant to elicit response in the unexplored field. Two examples follow:

Area No. 1 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

The Jew and Personal Religion

Statement: The religion of the Jews has been tempered to human nature, made easy. It demands little--no searching of the heart, no moral conflict, no sacrifice and there is no need for mystical escape.

Area No. 3 and/or Area No. 4 Re: Conceptions of Jewishness

The Jew and the Christian Community

The Jew and the Jewish Community

Statement: American Jews are sympathetic toward Israel but do not identify themselves with it. To them, Israel is a haven for persecuted Jews: they have little desire to live there.

With these considerations in mind, i.e. the problem, the study design, the method of data collection, let us turn our attention the results of the twenty studies and finally the conclusions and interpretations that may be drawn from the results.

CHAPTER IV

A SUMMARY OF THE INTERVIEWS IN TERMS OF AREAS OF CONCEPTIONS OF JEWISHNESS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the content of the twenty interviews under area headings. As was noted above the use of these divisions is somewhat artificial and a certain amount of overlapping occurs. In the following chapter we will compare the interview findings with the original hypotheses.

Area No. I: The Jew and Personal Religion

We find that perhaps half of the cases felt that there was a religious revival in the United States. World War II and the subsequent world tension, Hitler as a personal cause and the establishment of the state of Israel were chosen as the causes for this revival of revival of religious spirit. World tension and Hitler were negative causes of return and Israel was classed as a happening that has made Jews proud of their Jewishness and allowed them to return to the synagogue with a happy spirit. Respondent K said, "Hitler and the establishment of Israel brought local Jews back to their religion. The German Jews of the 30's in our city were ashamed of their religion, and only these factors were sufficient in intensity to cause their return."

A smaller group was equally sure that there is no revival of interest in religion in our community. The cause of increased temple membership is economic prosperity. As respondent T stated, "When times are good temple membership increases, and we are living in good times." He imagined that a corresponding situation existed in the 1920's. Respondent I said that the return among Reform Jews was to conservatism. Interviewee E noted an "intensification of sectarianism in religion." On a social level, he said, "this means that Episcopalians do not invite Presbyterians to their homes, even though Jews may be found at both."

The respondents found religion helpful in several different ways. The primary occasion when religion is helpful is in time of death or equally grave distress. Interviewee A said, "Religion is helpful when you are in difficulty. When you need a Mother or a Father to turn to, you can turn to religion for help. Jews turn to religion at death for this reason." Interviewee J related that his friends go to temple only on the anniversary of a death and this is because the temple secretary notifies them of the occasion. Respondent K said that death is the only time when a "resurgence of religious feeling" takes place. Respondent L seemed to express the majority sentiment most clearly when he said that he and his friends expect very little of religion. He said, "The temple (i.e. religion) is certainly wanted more at marriages and

funerals." Respondent N joined in these sentiments.

Respondent O said that religion is helpful in helping one believe "there is something material behind everyday being." Respondent R viewed religion as helpful when one can pray in beautiful surroundings and P maintained, "As the unknown becomes smaller and the fear of death diminishes, then this is the proper time for religion to cease." Interviewee D caught the general tone of most responses, "People need religion when they are in trouble." Only one respondent suggested that religion could be helpful on happy occasions and then only because one knows that things can't get better and could get a lot worse.

God is not a topic of discussion or current thought for most of the respondents. All struggled in a ttempting to describe the Diety and most denied the possibility of a personal God. Respondent A cleverly said, "God is a miracle, and it is a miracle that people believe in God. For interviewee G God is faith, i.e. one must have faith (God) to understand that what is unknown is there for some reason. Several respondents equated God with what is good or what is unknown. Respondent S said that for those who need help God is a personal being, and for those who are self-sufficient there is no need for a personal God. Interviewed O said that "God is a basic good which all people share."

Respondent L expressed the most mystical concept of a personal God. He said, a personal God is "one thing that gives you a feeling of comfort, satisfaction, that assists

you with the problems of life." But the respondent felt he did not really know what a personal God is, most of his friends are not concerned with the concept, and if they were, each would have a different idea. Only one respondent felt any demand on him by God. Respondent R said that God is personal in the sense that he judges your performance in this world. God knows unconscious thoughts of man, and much of the inner unexplained torment that man feels is caused by his understanding that God is aware of his misdeeds.

For most respondents the God of the Christians and the God of the Jews was necessarily alike. Once God was equated with "the good" there was little difference between the two faiths. Respondent M expressed this similarity when he referred to Jesus as a "trapping of Christainity." In fact, the respondent felt that there is no real difference between a liberal Christian and a Reform Jew. Questions stated by the interviewer about the God concept were usually answered in terms of the idea of similar moral concepts, i.e. the Golden Rule, or similar ethics and morals. The only area of separation between Judaism and Christianity was "the Trinity" or the concept of the divine nature of Jesus, which many of the respondents' Christian friends denied. Respondent E put the situation this way, "Liberal Christianity stresses the moral life as does Judaism, but Christianity uses the fear of hell and the glory of heaven and the tools of the confessional to get men back. Moral guidance is similar for Christians and Jews," Interviewee H maintained that both religions have the same God idea since

they stress ethics. Only one respondent felt that the duty of the Jew was to choose God.

Since most respondents held the Jewish God and the Christian God were similar in their demands and being, it followed that the respondents as a group would deny the "chosen people" concept. All were emphatic in this denial and their agreement that God has chosen all people and at most would agree with respondent A who said that the extent of the choice was the Jewish mission to announce the message of monotheism. If Jews had been chosen for any other purpose it was to suffer. Respondent M said, "The Jews have been chosen to be the goats of history." The implication in most statements about the choice was made explicit by respondent T who said, "Jews are no difference except as they were forced to be by periodic restraint and pogroms." The external pressures of past generations has caused many Jews to interpret "chosen" as "select" or "different". Interviewee N caught the spirit of several other respondents who felt that this concept has been a cause of anti-Jewish sentiment. He said, "The idea of a chosen people has motivated prejudice against Jews, because some Jews (the respondent later indicated he meant Orthodox Jews) feel they are select. At best the Jews have been chosen to preach the gospel of good--good ethics to the world. Jews are not a superior sect even though more Orthodox Jews could believe that Jews are elevated to superiority."

Only one respondent felt that the Jews were chosen. Respondent R said, "Yes, the Jews are a chosen people. And

they are not happy in this choice. The Jews have been destined to be the thinkers, the probers of the human race, they are more intense than other people, more rebellious. They are born with a tremendous urge to express themselves, to succeed, make over the world."

Jews attend services on the High Holidays because of "custom" or by way of "asserting" or "acknowledging" their religion. Respondent A typified the attendance pattern. He said, "I go to services three times a year, Rosh Hashannah, Yom Kippur and my Mother's Yarzeit. On the Holy days we go because it is the custom to go to temple."

Several respondents said that social pressure causes them to attend services on the Holidays. The "social pressure" often was the wishes of still living parents, the memory of dead parents or the office pattern of their place of business. Several respondents did not attend services on these days. D said, "I don't stay away (from work) on the holidays. Certain people here do, and I think the Christians admire them more (than me.)" Respondent H never attended a holiday service.

Generally speaking the respondents agreed that Orthodox and Reform Jews might pray for the same reason. However, Reform Jews do not pray much (Respondent N, S). When they pray it is usually for help, forgiveness and most often, for comfort in bereavement. Interviewee J caught the main trend, "When people pray they pray for forgiveness, comfort in bereavement and for help. Most people pray only when they are in

trouble and they tend to shift the blame (for their lack of prayer) to the rabbi because he doesn't move them (i.e. inspire them to pray.)" Several respondents thought that you pray to God for things you want. Only one found some value in the formal prayers of the Union Prayer Book. Respondent T specified; The prayers in the Union Prayer Book "moderate extreme views either way. Most responsive readings point out the frailties of all types of people." One interviewee felt that Orthodox Jews pay more "lip service" to prayer than do Reform Jews, while another felt that "Orthodox Jews get more satisfaction in prayer because prayer is more a part of their existence."

One respondent felt that "you answer your own prayers," and that most worshippers were not concerned with the content of the prayers. Several felt that a Jew could commune directly with God, in contrast to the image of the Christian priest as an intermediary between God and man.

Almost as a group the respondents felt that ceremony and ritual played no significant role in their lives and was of little meaning in their homes. Respondent C said, "Rituals are the external manifestations of religion. They give warmth and beauty to religion. They are symbols of rejoicing, ornaments to religion. They help us remember history." Respondent O asserted that ritual are "pleasant introduction to religion" for children, but they are not necessary in adult life.

Interviewee T caught a significant theme when he said

that ritual does not add to one's ethical background and therefore is not significant. Throughout the interviews religion was equated with ehtics and morals, and ritual is not a necessary adjunct of religion of this sort. T said, "One's moral fiber is determined by family influences mainly and ritual plays no part in it." Respondent S specified that one does not need ritual in order to be pious. Two respondents (G H) visualized ritual as necessary so the rabbi may have something to talk about in temple and so the congregant would realize why he was in the synagogue. One respondent (Q) said the observance of ritual allows one to assert his ethnic ties, and several intimated that they do not like Orthodox ritual because it is not understandable and foreign.

Most respondents did not know if their children would be more religious than they are, but most wanted their children to have a positive attitude toward Judaism, i.e. so "They will know why they are Jews and will recognize that they are Jews," in the words of respondent F. Respondent I intimated that a child will be as religious as a parent wants him to be. Respondent J caught a prominent theme. He said, that today's children will be more religious than their parents, just as the respondent's generation is more religious than his father's. Yet, religious events like confirmation will mean little to the child, "Because it's what's inside that counts." It is difficult to measure increased religiosity, when religion is described in terms of ethics.

With this universalizing of religion and God it seemed

to follow that there would be an unwillingness onthe part of the respondents to discover criteria determining who is Jewish and who is a Reform Jew. Logically if there were none, there should be none. Respondent N summarized this attitude, "There should not be any criteria for identifying a Jew or a Reform Jew. Why should there be a difference (between Jews and Christians) other than religious beliefs. Jews should not separate themselves as different." Criteria act as divisive factors and should be avoided. However, throughout the course of the twenty interviews there were many intimations of criteria, usually phrased in a descriptive manner. Respondent E felt that a Jew is one who "accepts the culture, morals and mores (of the Jews) and probably the religion of Judaism."

Interviewee R said that there are no absolute criteria for identifying a Jew or a Reform Jew, but that there are several which are fallible. They are the physical characteristics (nose, skin color) and the specific emotional patterns. Orthodox and Reform Jews can not be outwardly distinguished except in the rare case where a man might close his place of business on Saturday. Through conversation, one might discern that (O), "Religion is more of a cultural thing for the Orthodox Jew, in fact, his life is more centered on the fact that he's a Jew than mine." Many responded equated liberal Christianity and Reform Judaism, and Orthodox Judaism and Catholicism. For many Judaism as a religion was an ethnic tie which one asserts like the Christmas tree is an institution which a good American enjoys.

All of the respondents felt that the future of Judaism in America is good. There were several words of caution: (I J) The Jew should remember that he is an American first and a Jew with religious persuasion next. M is worried about the meaningless customs of Orthodox Jews which do not conform to the American pattern. N was afraid that American Jews might act as a pressure group, engage in politics. He said, "A Jew should be satisfied to be a Jew by religion and let his religion occupy that part of life which is apportioned to it." R was anxious that American Jews learn to mingle more with the Gentile community and assume positions of leadership whenever they are asked to. T left the task of a bright future to the rabbis who must be able to compete for time in our ever more compartmentalized society with the lure of an ever increasing list of recreational activities.

Area No. 2: The Jew and the Synagogue

There are several generalizations in this area which can be made on the basis of the interviews. 1) Affiliation with the temple is viewed as a civic responsibility which one usually undertakes when his children are of religious school age or less often when a couple is married. 2) The most important function of the temple is the religious school. 3) The religious services of the temple are a sort of "insurance" which one buys through membership, entitling him to "protection" in case of death or disaster. 4) Affiliation tends to make one a "good American." 5) The ideal rabbi would combine friendliness and intellectual ability; he would visit the

sick without being asked, he would run the religious school, be active in the community, and be a good pulpiteer.

Respondent N expressed the dominant attitude when he said that temple membership is a "civic obligation that they (the average congregant) accepts for those who want it. The congregant," N reported, "realizes that religious institutions are part of American civilization, and one supports them as he would any other formal arm of American civilization."

P boiled down the functions of the temple like this, 1) to operate a religious school, 2) function in births, marriage and funerals, and 3) provide a place for religious services.

The religious school should "teach a positive feeling toward Judaism." A child should learn that "Judaism makes more sense than any other religion (E)". Old line Reform families with regards their children "have little interest in religion and the religious education of their children is a task or nuisance--they are offended by any taint of nationalism." Recent "converts" to Reform "expects their children to have an acquaintance with customs, Hebrew and history. This group has had this in their home. Yet, the first group is slowly growing in awareness of religion (F)."

The religious school should "compare one religion with another, so he (the student) will understand the attitude of Jew toward Jew, Jews towards Christians and visa versa. If the child understands Judaism, he can face the threat of anti-semitism--he can treat it as it comes (G)."

"Parents expect children to get what they got in

Religious school training (I)." The congregant insists "that their children have a better religious education then they had. They have a guilty conscience; they want their children to have more education, but they are unable to define the extent and scope of the education (J)."

Respondent T felt that his son should retain more history than he did, also, "he should be exposed to Judaism," and he should get some sympathy and understanding for the wide variety of Jews (i.e. through particular religious orientations) seen in a large religious school.

Many of the respondents felt that their own religious education was inadequate to equip them for American life, and that their children should have the opportunity they refused or were denied (D H). None felt that temple attendance or membership could change their political or social habits, and many made the equation of good American and temple goer. J said, "A good American doesn't need to be a temple or a church goer, but it helps, and it would mean (temple or church attendance) that a person would have more sincere convictions and thereby a better American."

The characterizations and descriptions and expectations of the rabbi are too lengthy to describe in any detail and the reader is advised to refer to the interviews under Appendix A, or the brief generalization noted above under 5).

Area No. 3: <u>The Jew and the Christian Community</u>

Certain generalizations appear in this area of our study. 1) Religiously speaking, Judaism and Christianity are

considered fundamentally the same; they both teach, moral, ethic, "a way of life." 2) All twenty respondents agree that in our community the Gentile respects the affiliated Jews "who flys his colors" more than a Jew who is not associated with a temple or who does not contribute to the welfare fund. 3) The respondents imagine that on their socio-economic level there is more social intermingling between Jews and Gentiles than in most comparable cities. Yet, they are sure that percentage-wise it is a limited occurrence. 4) Jews were generally proud of Israel when it was founded, but look on current happenings with some fear and some doubt about the sentiments of the non-Jewish community. 5) Intermarriage is not approved of or encouraged and seems to occur only when the non-Jewish partner is a woman. Yet, it is looked upon as a natural result of acculturation. 6) Certain habits and manners of Jews are the cause of the anti-Jewish sentiments of fellow Jews and non-Jews. 7) Jewish-Christian mixing is highly approved of on the community service or cultural level.

F said that both Judaism and Christianity teach "piety" and are much the same. The difference is Jesus, and this causes a "big chasm" between Jews and Gentiles. (L) "Christianity and Judaism are a lot alike, they teach the proper way to conduct our lives." (T) can be paraphrased as follows: Generally speaking Jews are no different than Christians. They do tend to be discriminated against because of their name, physical characteristics, or because they are a minority that is easily identifiable. But these factors do not make them

any different than comparable socio-economic groups.

B said "Enlightened Christians respect a Jew who has affiliated with a synagogue, but the synagogue alone does not identify the Jew." In fact the respondents tended to divide the non-Jewish community into two groups, the intelligent majority, and a small hard-bitten group of anti-semites that no amount of education or persuasion can change. The majority group seemed to hold the affiliated Jew in respect because they are used to joining churches themselves (N).

It is unfortunate that Jews tend to live together (O). They are gregarious and tend to ghettoize themselves. Sometimes they are considered "clannish" (P). It is true that exterior pressures once forced this "clannishness" on Jews, but that kind of pressure is no longer existant. M tended to summarize the attitude of the majority of respondents which is paraphrased as follows: There is some intermingling between Jews and Christians in our community. For Jews in our city are more highly regarded by the Christian community than in most other cities. But mixing is generally restricted to those Jews who have had recognition by the entire community, the G. and M. and F. families, perhaps? Often, this mixing is limited to a regular bridge game, or something of that sort. When it comes to country clubs, Jews are not wanted in Gentile clubs. If there is to be more intermingling it should be done on the level of community charitable endeavors for that is as far as one can go, and the rest is up to the Gentiles.

T had this to say about Israel: "Israel to some extent has given the (Christian) community respect for the

Jews--at least it hasn't hurt--it could hurt if in case of arms shipment or war the Jews carried on some quotable pressure campaign which would lead the public to think that the Jews have dual allegiance." E may be paraphrased as follows: At the founding of the state of Israel Christians made a positive association between Jews and Israel. But, it is unfortunate that Jews and Israel are synonomous. Today the Christians are very puzzled about Israel and the Zionists have succeeded in bringing this about. However, the position of the American Council for Judaism is detrimental to the welfare of the Jews, "even though its views are not far from mine." Most respondents indicated that the establishment of the state was a positive factor in the growth of temple membership that has occurred since 1948 (see Area 1 above).

J had many close friends who are intermarried, and when conversion has occurred, the converted partner (usually female) is welcomed. J objects to intermarriages "because they just don't work out." Christians (J) also object to intermarriage. L said, "Christians disapprove less and less of intermarriage, Jews are not enthusiastic about it." L would try to guide his children beforehand so that they would not enter into an intermarriage, though he would accept a Gentile daughter-in-law if his guidance failed. H added the thought that Christians tend to approve intermarriages "because Jewish boys get along better economically."

G presents an extreme example of feeling about Jewish traits. Paraphrased he said: Some people do tend to say that

Jews are sharp. Yet, this is not a character trait, but a result of environment. East European Jews, for example, had to make their living by lying and cheating and this was not a facet of the Jew's character, but he was forced to live that way by the external community. Others tended to resent "Jews who flaunt their wealth" and those who may use "unseemly expressions (Yiddish)" and they noted that these traits were equally objectionable in or to Jews and Christians. K said that some Jewish customs and habits are more a cause of Jewish self-hatred than Gentile hatred of the Jews.

Area no. 4: <u>The Jew and the Jewish Community</u>

Certain generalizations may be made from the interviews: 1) A certain strong emotional tie (some said ethnic or racial), exists among Jews regardless of their birthplace or home. 2) This sense of community is most often expressed in philanthropy and good deeds. 3) Israel is a focal point for Jewish philantropy, but the Jew who is financially able is expected to contribute in equal amounts to the support of the secular charities.

R said that there is a "strong emotional feeling about being Jewish." This was evident during and after the massacre of six million Jews in Europe. R also said that even in a crowd of strangers Jews gravitate toward each other, and at least at the onset have a point of common interest which may not last, but which binds them together at the very beginning."

O was somewhat more poetic when he said that even on a barren desert a Jew feels a nearness to another Jew and will

tend to pick him out. He went on to say that this sense of nearness binds Jews together in social intercourse and philanthropy. Only one respondent (Q) held the Jews to be an ethnic or racial grouping and one was insistent on maintaining that religion only binds Jews together (M).

T caught the majority sentiment on philanthropy when he said that the Jew "bears a different burden" than the rest of the community in the sense that he is obligated to contribute to overseas help. The Christian understands the needs of Jews overseas and this form of charity is acceptable in his eyes. Therefore overseas aid is "out of comparison" with the needs of the secular charities. Even with this added burden, local Jewish service agencies have higher standards than the secular agencies. Three respondents (E J M) all agreed that equal support should be given to the secular agencies along with the Jewish agencies and this factor of equal giving was a consideration in gaining entrance to one of our country clubs. There was a certain reluctance to support organizations operating in the United States that are devoted to nationalistic causes (E G), but most agreed that it was easier to contribute to most causes and not be bothered with additional solicitations.

There was also a certain amount of pride (L) that the Jewish social service and fund raising arms seem to be better organized than comparable secular groups and a feeling that religious organizations like the Union of American Hebrew Congregations should not participate in political meetings (G M).

Area No. 5: <u>The Jew and the Home</u>

In this area there are certain undercurrents that should be noted: 1) The Jewish family is visualized as more "close knit," more intense than comparable segments of the non-Jewish community. 2) When home ritual and ceremony is practiced it is for the sake of the children or at their insistence. 3) The home is charged with ethical and moral education of the child; the religious school is asked to reinforce the home and teach the "positive values of Judaism."

G summarized the tone of opinion about the Jewish family. He stated that Jewish families do tend to be closer together than Christian families, because historically speaking, the ghetto and the pogrom had forced them to be closer. After they were forced into this pattern by the outside world they recognized the value of it. G said, "Jews I have known tend to be better family people than Christians I have known." There was some disagreement on this score (F I K) from respondents who could see no difference on a comparable socio-economic level.

E said that ceremonies are meaningful for children, but not necessary for adults in the home or in the temple. C called ritual and ceremony "external manifestations" of religion, and N said that the family lights the Sabbath candles "every once in a while because the little fellow asks for it."

T caught the majority sentiment when he said that "the moral fiber is determined by family influences and the ritual plays no part in it." However, the school reinforces the home in the educational process of teaching a "living Judaism," and

it makes up for an educational void which many of the respondents felt.

Most of the interviewees did not subscribe to any Jewish periodicals and in some cases had cancelled their few subscriptions after a year or so trial because they were too busy to read the literature.

CHAPTER V

AN EVALUATION OF THE HYPOTHESES IN TERMS OF THE INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This chapter is concerned with an evaluation of our original hypotheses in terms of the attitudes, feelings and opinions expressed by the twenty interviewees. We will consider each hypothesis and the findings relevant to it.

Hypotheses .	Evaluations
There is little mysticism in the sense of seeking an ecstatic relationship with the divine. (Area No. 1)	We find that in most of the cases this was generally true! More than one respondent (B H) said that God was never discussed after college days and only in "bull session" at college. O said that "God is the basic good which all people share," which tends to remove God from the realm of a personal being and accordingly the respondents do not think along the lines of an "ecstatic relationship with the divine." Only respondent L seemed to express a sense of mystical relationship to God when he said that a personal God is "one thing that gives you a feeling of comfort, satisfaction, that assists you with the problems of life."
There is little internaliza-	The burden of proof

tion of what appears to be the demands of God or the cult. (Area No. 1)

points in this direction! Only one respondent (R) felt that God makes any demands on him. He saw God as omnipotent and omnipresent. The only demand of the cult and/or God is the good life which is the concern of Christianity as well as Judaism. Religion for the majority equals ethics and morals which can be imparted by the home and reinforced by the religious school (E T). These demands are not internal in the sense religion enforces them, but rather, they were originally posited by religion and have remained religion's primary concern.

There is an ambivalence regarding dependence on a personal God. (Area No. 1)

There was little evidence of this hypothesis in the interviews. Most respondents denied that there was a personal God, and all struggled in their attempt to describe God. A called "God a miracle" and for G God was "faith," i.e. one must have faith (God) to understand that what is unknown is there for some reason. With regards a personal God N said, "What do you mean, someone that is animate, that moves about up there?" He continued, not even people who attend services regularly know what a personal God is. Only S shaded this inability to describe God and man's dependence on him. He said that for those who need help God is a personal being, and for those who are self-sufficient there is no need for a personal God. Most of the respondents are "self-sufficient" and this perhaps is the reason why there is no need to depend

on God.

Preservation of religion is the responsibility of the rabbinate (Area No. 1, Area No. 2)

There was no evidence for this hypothesis turned-up in the interviews. The only hint of any feelings in this direction came from T who said that the task of insuring Judaism in America is up to the rabbis, who must be able to compete for time in our ever more compartmentalized society wherein so many leisure time activities are vying for the time that religion used to occupy. There was no evidence of what Herberg called "vicarious observance by the rabbi" in Protestant-Catholic-Jew wherein the rabbi was expected to live up more or less to the standards which were no longer operative among the members of his congregation.

There is a feeling that children should be "more religious" than their parents. (Area No. 1, Area No. 5)

This hypothesis needs to be slightly altered to fit our findings. It should read: There is a feeling that children should be better informed about Judaism than their parents. F used a phrase that reoccurred over and over again, "I want my children to have a positive attitude toward Judaism." This statement should be placed in Area No. 2, since all respondents look to the religious school to inculcate this "positive attitude."

Prayer is formal, but not inward, yet people feel some personal need at periods like bereavement. (Area No. 1)

This hypothesis is one hundred percent accurate. Respondents N and S echoed

the findings of all twenty interviews. For these respondents said that Reform Jews don't pray much. When they pray it is for help, forgiveness, and most often for comfort in bereavement. J said, "Most people pray only when they are in trouble and they tend to shift the blame (for their lack of prayer) to the rabbi because he doesn't move them (i.e. inspire them to pray.)" Only T felt that the prayers in the Union Prayer Book had some personal value because "They moderate extreme views either way. Most responsive readings point to the frailties of all types of people."

Jewishness is expressed verbally in the religious sense. (Area No. 1)

The burden points in this direction, but of course there are many subtle shadings. Basically, the Jew in our interviews identifies himself as a religious being, and when frontally confronted with aspects of culture or race, he is quick to deny these identifications since they are divisive elements. There is a notion of underlying religious unity; for these Reform Jews, Protestantism and Judaism represent the same spiritual values. These sentiments are represented in different ways: For I, "Jews are a religion. Jews are Americans first, and a religious community second!" E said, "Liberal Christianity stresses the moral life as does Judaism..." Practically, the writer ventures the guess that for most of the respondents Jewishness is expressed moralistically as Blau as ventured in "The Spiritual Life of American Jewry, 1654-1954" in the 1955 American Jewish Year Book. Philanthropy and

"maasim tovim" are the Jews means of expression for most of the respondents.

Religion is primarily rational and an increase in ceremonial observance is viewed as reactionary. (Area No. 2, Area No. 5)

This was generally true in most of the cases the writer interviewed.

Perhaps the word "reactionary" could be changed to "unnecessary." Religion asserts that all men are capable of a moral and ethical existence. This existence is governed by the intellect and ritual is not a necessary adjunct of this type of religious life. Several respondents, notably I, felt that Reform was moving toward conservatism. O asserted that ritual is a "pleasant introduction to religion" for children, but they are not necessary for adult life.

The synagogue is the institution wherein the child will be made "more religious" than the parents. (Area No. 2)

The synagogue is the institution wherein the child will learn the "positive values" of Judaism which may make him more religious than his parents. There is little feeling among the respondents that their children are or will be "more religious" than they are, but, there is a desire that the child thould learn in a religious school that "Judaism makes more sense than any other religion (E)." Or children should learn to be "tickled-pink" that they are Jewish by their experience in the religious school.

The rabbi is viewed as the professinnal head of the varied activities of the synagogue and/or

There is little doubt that the respondents look

upon the rabbi as the professional in the field of religion. Although they have little current need for his services, they expect him to act as a functionary, run the religious school, be a "pastor" in times of distress and disaster and thrill the congregation with his eloquence (J P and many others.)

Jewish identification is primarily associated with the synagogue and the rabbinate (Area No. 2)

This seems to be a sound hypothesis on the basis of the response of the respondents. N expressed this dominant attitude when he said that temple membership is a "civic obligation that they (the average congregant) accepts for those who want it." This is also implied by the complete agreement on the part of the respondents that the affiliated Jew is more respected by the non-Jew than the unaffiliated Jew. Synagogue or church affiliation does not imply any ethnic separation and is highly regarded in American culture therefore it is the primary way the respondents can assert their religion. However, as was noted above, good deeds and philantropy are the dominant means of expressing one's Jewishness.

While individuals view themselves as Americans of Jewish faith there are still emotional ties to people called Jews who live in other lands and in Israel--as expressed in philanthropy and the achievements of the Israelis. (Area No. 3, Area No. 4)

This was universally true among the respondents. With slight shadings about the proportional percentages that should go to the secular or the Jewish causes, as a group they felt that they were Americans first, but according

to T, "Jews bear a different burden" than the rest of the community in the sense that they are obligated to contribute to overseas relief.

Certain aspects of the Jewish identification of other sub-groups in Jewish life makes this group feel insecure. (Area No. 3, Area No. 4)

This is basically true! The Orthodox Jew was often looked upon with distrust and certain misgivings (M). He was often equated with the Catholic (E N and others). There was also a certain fear of Jewish nationalistic organizations working in the United States and a critical attitude toward religious institutions that mix in politics.

To a degree there is a feeling that Jews are responsible for anti-semitism and that if a unitary Jewish personality or form of adjustment were followed there would be a reduction of Jewish unpopularity (Area No. 3, Area No. 4)

The first statement was found to be true. There was no evidence of thinking along the line of a unitary personality or adjustment on the part of the respondents. Clannishness (P) was recognized and a statement made by M: The respondent made one trip to Miami Beach and plans no more. The reason is: "No Gentile could have become more prejudice if he watched the parade (of fur coats, low cut dresses etc.) on Lincoln Road. I they (the Jews) behave themselves nobody objects, if they flaunt their wealth, be they Jews or Gentiles, I'm against them!"

Religious affiliation is often

The findings of the

viewed as an expectation of the middle class-reflecting the general acceptance and endorsement of religion in the American ethos. (Area No. 3, Area No. 5)

interviews tend to support this hypothesis. Among the respondents temple membership was looked upon as a civic obligation which one accepts at the time his children are old enough for religious school or when marriage takes place. N put it this way: Temple members realize that religious institutions are part of our American (and middle class) civilization, and one supports them as he supports the other formal arms of our civilization.

While integration is the supreme value and social intercourse with non-Jews is sought, intermarriage is still taboo. (Area No. 3, Area No. 5)

If we restrict the nature of this statement it can easily fit the expectations of the twenty respondents. Integration in the sense of community and cultural endeavor is highly approved of and sought after--social intercourse is approved of, but not sought in an overt manner (M and others). J represented a rather extreme viewpoint: "My greatest duty to Judaism is to break the barriers -- the social barriers -- between different groups (Christians and Jews)." He is a member of the American Jewish Committee. With regards intermarriage, on the surface the main objection is that mixed marriages "just don't work out (J)." Respondents also were concerned with the problem of children in mixed marriages, but all conceded that if they could not guide their children away from these problems, they would welcome a non-

Jewish mate for their child.

There is a sense of superiority toward non-Jews despite the need for acceptance and approval by non-Jews. (Area No. 3)

No where was this sentiment verbalized. Many of the respondents had known the term "goy" but reported that they had never used it. In a rather strong way N represented the group. The respondent did not like the term "goy" for it is a "slimy type of word" used with respect to Gentiles. The word "Yiddish kupf" is just as bad since it implies that Jews have a superior (business) mentality, which is not true!

The imagined Christian stereotype of the "good Jew" forces Jewish religious identification on the Jew. This is the ideal Jew who is loyal to his rabbi and interested in the synagogue.

By inference this is generally true. We have seen that affiliation is an accepted part of American middle class culture and the respondents show acceptance and loyalty to this concept by affiliating with the temple sometime after marriage.

Some sense of Jewish community exists, but can only be verbalized by undefined emotional responses. (Area No. 4)

This is an accurate representation of the sentiments of the twenty respondents. As R said, "There are strong emotional ties about being Jewish." O's statement will also be found in the preceeding chapter.

Jewishness in the home is primarily expressed through the externals of

This statement is rather far from the mark. Ceremony

ceremony with little internalization of the theological or historical basis of the act. (Area No. 5)

plays next to no part in the family life of the average respondent. For O they are a pleasant introduction to religion and of no value to the adult: J felt that since Reform parents do not understand most customs and ceremonies there would be little value in practicing them. Only Q suggested that ceremonies might have some ethnic value in reasserting one's Jewish ties.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE INTERVIEWS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE WORK OF THE RABBI

> The overwhelming majority of the Jews in this country were born here, and have received their education in this country. Hence it can be assumed that the Jewish community's emerging culture patterns are, to a large extent, the same as those of the general American community...including religious concepts as well. At the same time the Jewish culture patterns will continue to contain sizeable though varying residues of Jewish mores and expressions,--some inherited from the European immigrants, others having originated, developed or considerably altered here.
>
> Abraham G. Duker

Our sampling in this survey has necessarily dealt with a limited number of people in our community. The time and energy involved in seeing only twenty respondents and recording their sentiments about their Jewishness is extensive--as it is rewarding. For if the religiously orientented researcher can know and understand the religious expressions of those he anticipates serving, he will be better prepared to meet the needs and demands of the American Reform congregant. In a sense the picture that has resulted in the writer's mind as a result of the interviews could be considered gloomy. The religious life as it is known to Samuel S. Cohon as a joyous participation in the religious community, its problems and its tasks, and a sharing in its creed, code of conduct and cult or forms of worship does not fully exist for any of our respondents.

All partake in part, but none lead the religious life that the committed student of religion might consider minimal. Let us summarize the religious sentiments and aspirations of these twenty Jewish men and women and see their bearing on our movement and the work of the Reform rabbi.

There is little doubt in the writer's mind in terms of our sampling, twenty second generation Reform Jews, that much of what impressionists like Herberg and Glazer and sociologists like Williams have had to say about the current status of American religion and Judaism in particular is very applicable to our sampling. They all look upon their religion as a "civic obligation," something that one assumes at a particular point in his life span. American culture prescribes some sort of a religious identification as a norm of middle class Americanism and for the man born a Jew, this identification is most easily found in the synagogue or in the temple.

To an extent Herberg's concept of the third generation's desire for self-definition within the main pattern of Americanism is part of the answer as to why these respondents have more of a "sociological" desire for the temple, as distinct from a purely religious motive. But, many of our respondents are beyond the "third generation" and we must look for other reasons for their desire to become temple members. Their reasons for affiliation, the writer ventures, more closely resemble those which Glazer has only recently started to expound. It is in the context of the social uses of religion, its respectability, its middle class conservative attitudes

that we can find the reasons for affiliation for many of the respondents. Religion is the right thing to believe in, and the synagogue is the institution wherein the Jew acknowledges this belief in religion. Few of our respondents would shirk any of the responsibilities that American culture place upon them!

There is no stigma attached to affiliation with a religious body for the respondents. Jewish nationalistic organizations, even those which are anti-nationalistic are feared and mistrusted. For the average respondent: I am an American first and second a Jew by religion. The temple is highly respected in this pattern and by his affiliation the Reform Jew shares an underlying religious unity with the liberal Christian. By joining church or temple, Christian or Jew subscribes to different representations of the same "spiritual values." And herein lies Herberg's most cogent insight. He has overstated the problem to an extent, our respondents tend to respect and fear the influence of Catholic power, but, Reform Judaism and Protestant Christianity are alike, they both teach piety, ethics and morals as their forte. The things that divide them, the "trappings," the divinity of one's Savior or the validity of one's Scripture pale in comparison to their great atoneness. Because of this, our respondents can light the Christmas tree, and kindle the Hanukah candles on the same night and not detract from their religiousness, in fact it is improved in its asserting how much we are all alike.

Freehof accurately described another aspect of the

Jewish attitudes of our respondents. They have completely partaken of the American temperament which is anti-doctrinal, which shies from theory. The theoretical things are not necessary within the context of American culture, but a religious education for their children is! Glazer has called this a manifestation of the desire to belong in a social sense to accepted American religious denomination. But, herein, this writer finds one of the most significant Jewish aspirations that the respondents voiced. They partake of one of the oldest expressions of Jewishness. All want a religious education for their children: They want a "positive Judaism," want their children to be "tickled-pink" that they are Jews. They want more history, a little more Hebrew, modern Jewish problems and some understanding of the religious feelings of their fellow Jews.

Some may say that this tends to confirm Glazer's suspicion that our respondents only want a solid denominational footing for their children, or that they want to gird their children for possible anti-Jewish attacks. The writer feels that this factor represents a genuine longing, an inner need on the part of most all of the respondents. Many were denied a religious education, some did not like what they received; all expressed the longing that their children be steeped in some sort of Judaism. They were unable to define this Judaism in concrete terms, having never been fully exposed to it, but they felt that their children should have the opportunity to know. Education is of supreme value to most of them and they

look to the religious school to do the job, and indirectly to the rabbi to supervise and take a leading role in this educational process. If we of Reform see real religious motive in this desire for education, the task of the religious school will become a paramount concern for the rabbi. The parents too, will gain some vicarious pleasure from the child's participation in the school.

Ceremonials will also be a concern of the rabbi. Not the actual ceremony, but the meaning of the ceremony and its value in contemporary society. As a group our respondents have little use for ceremonial. It has no place in their moralistic religion--but a dedicated rabbi will have a willing audience if he is ready to meet with small groups of his congregants and explain the meaning and purpose of relevant ceremony. Prayer, is another topic that should be dealt with. For the respondents formal prayer as we know it in the Union Prayer Book, or any other prayer book for that matter, is purposeless. If prayer is only meaningful in times of tragedy, it is time to rethink our liturgy and look for new and meaningful forms of prayer.

Education is a bright spot in this picture. There is yet another! Silver has described this conception in a rather negativistic manner by saying that Jewish leaders call this a religious community and act as if it is a community set-up for philanthropy or defense. Blau stated that these latter functions developed out of the affect of the traditional American concept of freedom of religion. When work for philanthropy

or defense is the dominant spiritual factor in the life of any individual, his Jewishness has become moralistic. For our group of respondents, one expresses his Jewishness through affiliation with a temple and acts upon it through active participation in a variety of Jewish and secular organizations dedicated to improving many phases of life. If the rabbi could realize this twist and work out a synthesis between the Jew's means of religious assertion and his field of action many benefits might accrue to Reform. Perhaps the social action committee of the Temple is more important than many realize. Perhaps the rabbi is obligated to be a leader in the community service and cultural structure of the community. Educationally speaking, we recognize the importance of starting any educational procedure at the current focal point of those one wishes to educate.

Another area of concentration is the family. Jews seem to be more familiocentric than any other element of the population. Regardless of the respondents' feelings about Jews as a race or ethnic group (only one or two respondents implied that they were) all were convinced that a higher proportion of Jews marry, a lower number get divorced. And therein lies the possibility of using the family unit in the activities of the temple. The family service may not be a gimmick as the writer once thought, nor may any activity which unites the family through the temple.

As noted above our sampling has dealt with a limited group and new groupings in Reform may change this pattern but on the other hand, these people may soon catch-up, in the

assimilative process with where this sampling is. We would do well to understand their feelings about a good Jew and perhaps provide ourselves with some criteria by which to measure the forthcoming adaptation of neo-Reform families. In essence, for the twenty second generation Reform Jews, a good Jew is affiliated with a temple, but "spiritually" active in the community or Jewish communal endeavors where his highly developed ethical and moral sense can be put to use. He expects his children to receive a good Jewish education, but denies the validity of religious practices in his home. He only wants the "insurance" religion provides in case of tragedy, but he is receptive to the interest his rabbi may show in his personal and familial well-being. The essential question is unresolved: Can we in Reform be satisfied with these conceptions of Jewishness?

Unfortunately, the state of knowledge in the field of ethnic group behavior and religious attitudes is limited. The research of the American Jewish Committee is the best that is available, but it is not specifically concerned with religious attitudes. And in a sense the impressions of Herberg and Glazer suffer from the lack of specific research, but they have managed to savor the religious attitudes of at least this group of people and for this they deserve our careful attention. We cannot but be impressed by their efforts, if it only reminds us of our own responsibility as dedicated religionists to provide enough of the sociological raw material upon which to interpret our roles and chart our course in building an American Reform Judaism.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods Survey, American Judaism, Vol. III, New York, Sept. 1953-April, 1954.

2. See "Riverton" study conducted by the American Jewish Committee, referred to by John Slawson, "Social Discrimination--The Last Barrier" (American Jewish Committee), New York, 1955. Also, Marshall Sklare, et. al., "Forms and Expressions of Jewish Identification" (Jewish Social Studies Vol. XVII, No. 3), New York, July, 1955.

3. See John P. Dean, "Jewish Participation in American Community Life" (Tercentenary Conference on American Jewish Sociology), New York, Nov. 27, 1954. This study is based in part on Cornell University Intergroup Relations Studies.

4. See Bertha F. Abrahmson, "Jews Adjusting: Some Mechanisms of Adjustment to Dual Cultures Among Adult American Jews," unpublished thesis, New York School of Social Work, Columbia University, Nov., 1950.

5. See Will Herberg, "The Triple Melting Pot" (Commentary Vol. 20, No. 2), New York, Aug., 1955.

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APPENDIX A

TWENTY INTERVIEWS WITH SECOND GENERATION REFORM JEWS IN OUR CITY

The written reports of the twenty interviews conducted for the thesis entitled "Conceptions of Jewishness Among the Laity in American Reform Congregations," are on permanent file in the office of the Department of Human Relations of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. The identification of the respondents is also known to that office.