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A HISTORY OF ORGANIZED SYNAGOGAL PHILANTHROPY IN THE UNITED STATES

Submitted to the Faculty
of the
Hebrew Union College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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and for the degree of
Master of Hebrew Letters by

Eugene J. Lipman May 23, 1943

Referees:

Dr. Abraham Cronbach Dr. Jacob R. Marcus

To My

Mother

FOREWORD

The title of this thesis is a misnomer. Were it accurately stated, it would read: "Preliminary Notes Toward a History of Synagogal Philanthropy in the United States." The writer has consulted only those volumes on the subject which were available in the library of the Hebrew Union College. Not all the congregations in the United States have had any material published about their histories; the Hebrew Union College Library, in addition, does not possess all the histories which have appeared. In addition to this fact, in order to write a complete history of synagogal philanthropy in this country, it would be necessary to study carefully the minute-books and account-books of every congregation which could be made available.

As a consequence of the sketchiness of the material utilizable in the preparation of this study, I have made no attempt at absolute conclusions applicable to the entire field. The evidence here collected, however, does point clearly to certain conclusions. It is my belief that complete data would substantiate those conclusions. Further research on the subject is certainly a desideratum.

I am deeply grateful to the staff of the Hebrew Union College Library for their patience. They have been most kind in assisting me to find the scattered material for this study, and have not complained about the many rules which have been violated in the process. The brief

section about the activities of the Free Synagogue, New York, could not have been written without the prompt aid of Dr. Sidney E. Goldstein, director of the Social Service Department of that institution. To him, too, I am grateful.

When I first met with my referees to discuss this projected study, it was suggested by Dr. Cronbach that we could here solve a basic philosophic conflict of the Middle Ages: matter versus form. He proposed that he advise me about form, and that Dr. Marcus undertake to assist in the preparation of the matter. Both referees have fulfilled their functions with great care and patience, and I could not close without a sincere word of gratitude to them.

May 23, 1943 E.J.L.

"If thy brother be waxen
poor and fallen in decay
with thee, then thou shalt
relieve him, whether he be
a stranger or a sojourner,
that he may live with thee."

--Lev. 25:35

CHAPTER ONE

Then Thou Shalt Relieve Him

The impulse of one human being to assist his fellow man materially and spiritually can certainly not be considered the monopoly of any nation, race, or religious group. It is one of our most universal human virtues, arising from the almost instinctive love and sympathy we feel when confronted with human suffering and human need. Our very words for this phenomen are derived from roots connoting that love and sympathy. Our word "charity" is derived from the Latin "caritas"--a display of love (carus--love). "Philanthropy" is even more explicit in its derivation, being the combination of the two Greek words "philo" and "anthropoi", "I love men."

Nor can we consider philanthropy a refinement of relatively advanced civilization. The earliest scratchings on the walls of Egyptian tombs, dating back four millenia prior to the Common Era, contain narratives extolling kindness to the homeless and the fatherless. (Kohler, K., The Historical Development of Jewish Charity, p. 3)

Roman civilization was not immortalized for its humanitarianism, and yet throughout the duration of the Empire, one of its outstanding characteristics was the frequent and tremendous distribution of gold and food to the poor of the city. (Ibid.) In far-off India, it was the followers of gentle Gautama Buddha who first erected hospitals for the care of the sick, and who have always spent their "best

efforts upon alleviating the pain and suffering of their fellow-creatures." (Kohler, op. cit., p. 4)

Biblical Judaism, however, did make a unique and major contribution to the development of humanity in its attitude toward philanthropy. For the first time, "it was the Jewish law that made charity a human obligation." (Ibid.) From the time Mosaic law came on to the scene of man's history, the giving of philanthropy was no longer a paternalistic pleasure; it was man's duty, his obligation toward his fellow-men--and toward his God. For Judaism developed the concept of God as the actual owner of everything. It was His will that a certain portion of His gifts be set aside for those in need: "For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee saying: 'Thou shalt surely open thy hand unto thy poor and needy brother in thy land.'" (Deut. 15:11) This verse referred to the commendability of loans, but it can well be applied to the entire field of benevolence. The elaborate laws of Ma'aser Ani, the tithe for the poor, of the setting off of the corners of the fields, the gleanings, and the leavings for the poor, of the jubilee year--all these put into daily living this basic principle in human relationships and in the relationships between God and His people.

The fertile rabbinic mind was quick to note possible difficulties in Jewish concepts. The question is raised early in the Talmud: "If God is the father of all men, rich and poor, why does He not support the poor?" The discussion is attributed to Rabbi Akiba and the Roman

governor Tinneus Rufus. Rabbi Akiba answered as follows: "In order that we (by charitable deeds) might be delivered from Gehinnom." (Baba Batra, 10a) Kohler quotes the answer in this way: "God the father of both rich and poor wants the one to help the other so as to make the world a household of love." (Op. cit., p. 9) Whether an accurate translation or not, this concept is fundamental to Jewish thinking through the ages.

Philanthropy became a tremendously important aspect of Jewish religious life during the medieval period. Elijah Ha'Kohen in his Me'il Zedakah compares it in importance with the Sabbath, with fasting and repentance, with the Tefillin, with the honoring of one's parents, with the study of the Torah itself. In fact, according to him, Zedakah is the greatest of the Mizwot. (Cronbach, A., The Me'il Zedakah, HUCA, Vol. XI, p. 511ff.)

Throughout Jewish literature, the idea of Zedakah has always included more than the mere giving of alms. The Me'il Zedakah lists as categories of this concept: the rearing of orphans, the paying of fines incurred by the poor, the lending of money, free education, ransom of captives, entertainment of wayfarers, the invitation of the poor to the hospitality of one's home, and medical treatment. (Cronbach, op. cit., p. 505) A contemporary, more modern writer lists seven branches of charity, all of which were basic in medieval Jewish life, almost all of which have retained their validity to the present day:

1. To feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty
2. To clothe the naked

3. To visit the sick
4. To bury the dead and comfort the mourner
5. To ransom captives
6. To educate the fatherless and shelter the homeless
7. To dower poor maidens
(Bogen, Boris D., Jewish Philanthropy, p. 18)

There are, in Hebrew, two words which express the idea of philanthropy: "Zedakah" and "Gemilut Hasadim." The Talmud differentiates between them in this way: "Zedakah" is almsgiving, while "Gemilut Hasadim" consists of loving deeds. (Sukkah 49b) As Kohler puts it, "Zedakah, the practise of righteousness which consists in the giving of money to provide for the immediate needs of the poor;... Gemilut Hasadim, the bestowal of kindness which includes the elements of personal helpfulness...." (Op. cit., p. 10f.) In later rabbinic literature, however, the two become almost identified. In the Me'il Zedakah they are considered similar, almost identical: "Gemilut Hasadim is a genus of which Zedakah is a species." (Par. 120, quoted in Cronbach, op. cit., p. 508) The institutions erected by medieval Jewry to implement their philanthropic impulses followed this latter viewpoint, for the most part, both in the names given the organizations and in the functions they undertook.

There are literally hundreds of expressions in medieval Jewish literature of the importance of philanthropy, of the techniques to be used in its dispensing, of the rewards bestowed upon the philanthropically minded individual, etc. A few of them follow, selected from Montefiore and Loewe, A Rabbinic Anthology:

Secret almsgiving is infinitely more beneficial than

public beneficence, according to the Rabbis. "He who gives alms in secret is greater than Moses." (Baba Batra,9b) "Just as there was a 'vestry of secret givers' in the Temple, so was there one in every city, for the sake of respectable people who had come down in life, so that they might be helped in secret." (Tosefta Shekalim, II, 16)

Benevolence must not be indiscriminate and haphazard, but systematic, in accordance with the needs of the individual. In commenting on the verse, "Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother," (Deut. 15:11) the Sifre remarks: "To him for whom bread is suitable, give bread; to him who needs dough, give dough; to him for whom money is required, give money; to him for whom it is fitting to put the food in his mouth, put it in." (Re'eh, #118, folio 98b)

As will become very clear later concerning philanthropy in the United States, great concern has always been evidenced by the Jew for the careful care for and burial of the dead. A characteristic statement to this effect follows:

"The highest form of benevolent action is that undertaken towards the dead, for then there can never be any thought of recompense from the recipient. A poor man may one day be in a position to repay his benefactor, but the dead man cannot repay, and moreover, the dead needs the help of the living. This idea is the subject of the Midrashic comment on the request made by Jacob, on his deathbed, to Joseph, that he should do unto him 'true kindness.' Is there, then, such a thing as 'false kindness'?....Jacob said, 'The kindness you do me after my death, that indeed

is true kindness.'" (Tanhuma, Buber ed., 107a)

"We have most accurate information about the Jewish system of relief as far back as Hillel's time." It is characteristic of the Jewish people to organize institutionally for the implementation of an idea; philanthropy is no exception. Widely ramified institutions appeared very early in the Mishnaic period to handle various aspects of philanthropic activity. They, however, had one thing in common, aside from their united purpose: "All of our charitable institutions found their origin within the synagogue." (Bogen, op. cit., p. 363) From the synagogue radiated organizations for every conceivable type of philanthropy. Basic to the entire system was the "Kuppah," the charity box, and it maintained its position of importance through the centuries. (Kohler, op. cit., p. 14; Bogen, op. cit., p. 40) This "Kuppah" contained the funds for the support of both indigent townspeople and ppor transients. In addition, the first "soup kitchen" came into being--the "tamhoi" (or "tamhui"), a charity bowl for the keeping of victuals needed for immediate relief. (Kohler, op. cit., p. 15)

Money was collected once each week from the townspeople by two appointed men, usually citizens of high standing. They were not permitted to separate, and had full power to tax the people and seize property until any required sum had been collected. (Ibid.)

Every Jew took upon himself the duty of sitting up with the sick and assisting in the burial of the dead. In addition, the "Hebdesh" came into being, a combination

crude hospital and shelter home, supported by communal funds and run by voluntary help, as a rule. (Ibid.)

These institutions all continued through the medieval period and became progressively more important in Jewish life. "Communal responsibility for the welfare of its members, deeply ingrained in an age-old tradition, was fortified by the greater insecurity of medieval Jewish life and the enhanced solidarity of the ghetto community." (Baron, S., The Jewish Community, Vol. II, p. 319) And, of course, new institutions were added to meet new communal needs. Some Spanish communities, according to Baron, added an institution called the "Kesut," for the provision of clothing. (Op. cit., p. 320) Maimonides speaks also of a burial fund as a fourth fundamental charity collection. (Ibid.)

It is extremely difficult to generalize about medieval Jewish philanthropic institutions once the general categories have been set up. Local customs were varied, and different lands had greatly differing minhagim about the distribution of charity. It would be impossible in an introductory essay of this brief nature to outline even skethhily all the ramifications of all the European Jewish organizations of the Middle Ages. There are, however, some institutions, techniques, and rulings which directly affected the later organization of synagogal philanthropy in the United States. It may be of value to mention some of them very briefly.

Begging by mendicants or by individuals on behalf of

certain poverty-stricken Jews was forbidden in many communities. The entire burden of collection was placed on the hands of the overseers of charity (Gabai Zedakah), despite a Responsum of Ibn Adret to the contrary. (Baron, op. cit., p. 321f.) In most communities, the communal treasury bore the brunt of the taxes of the poor, since there was no exemption from the state. (Baron, op. cit., p. 325) Free loan societies were common in the ghetto; some loaned to Jews only, others to both Jews and Gentiles, and still others were exclusively for the use of Gentiles. The most famous of these was the Venetian banchi del ghetto. (Baron, op. cit., p. 327)

The London community, in 1678, just after its resuscitation, declared: "It is a general virtue of all the congregations of Israel in all the places where they dwell, to establish and form a Hebra, which shall practise the meritorious and urgent charity which is due to the sick and dead." (Ibid.) The Hebra usually combined the old "Hekdesh," now modernized, and a Bikkur Holim society. Rigid laws were made concerning the responsibilities of members of these societies, concerning fines to be paid for shirking them, and concerning the duties of the officers and leaders of the groups.

The care of widows and orphans never lost its place as the most deeply ingrained of all charitable obligations. It is considered the oldest charitable commandment in Judaism. Guardians of orphans were appointed by local courts, responsible to the community for the proper care of all property

and wealth. About the middle of the 17th century, some communities established special asylums for orphans. (Baron, op. cit., pp. 330-332)

Young girls were also considered wards of the community, whether orphaned or not. If relatives could not provide dowries and trousseaus, either the community directly or a special organization for that purpose undertook to fulfill the need. (Ibid.)

"Supreme among charities ranked the 'redemption of captives.'" Maimonides stressed it as follows:

> "The redemption of captives has precedence over the feeding and clothing of the poor, and there is no commandment as great as that of redeeming captives, for the captive is among the hungry, thirsty, and naked, and lives in constant terror. He who closes his eye to an opportunity of redemption violates (several) positive and negative commandments." (Mishneh Torah, VIII, 10; quoted in Baron, op. cit., p. 333)

Almost every community in medieval Jewry was called on frequently to subscribe relatively huge sums for the redemption of captives taken by Mediterranean pirates, Tartars, North African assailants, etc. Strict laws were enacted by the communities to provide for swift collection and payments of all ransoms requested, exorbitant as they might be.

The same intensity of interest was evidenced in refugees, who wandered about after pogroms or expulsions. Often preparations for their reception were inadequate and much suffering resulted, but valiant attempts were invariable. (Baron, op. cit., p. 337f.)

The wide variety of charitable calls upon the purse of the individual Jew could have constituted a tremendous burden, and no doubt frequently did. Some communities set up community-wide statutes providing for annual percentage contributions. Some individuals voluntarily tithed their incomes for philanthropic purposes. Some gave even more. Fines, levied for various offenses, increased the incomes of charitable societies. And if necessary, the Gabai Zedakah supplemented the revenue by direct begging. (Baron, op. cit., pp. 343-346)

Mismanagement was not infrequent in these medieval charitable organizations, and some communities were found to be in dire financial straits as a consequence. But more frequently, the community undertook more than it could handle. "Thus it came about that, at the approach of the Emancipation era, most European communities, although still maintaining the integrity of their religious, educational and judicial structure, found themselves on the verge of financial bankruptcy." (Baron, op. cit., p.350)

Out of this background of traditional ties, widespread and widely ramified organization, and no little confusion, came the pioneers of our people to the New World. Their attempt to reestablish their communal life in the United States and the modifications, developments, and progress that ensued in the field of social service, the recording of these and their analysis constitute the purpose of this paper.

"...provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or the community, but be supported by their own nation."

--West Indies Company to Peter Stuyvesant

CHAPTER TWO

Supported By Their Own Nation

The beginnings of any society, or any group within a given society, are usually difficult to trace. They are so frequently clouded in inaccurate tradition, unfound sources, and the general darkness of centuries of elapsed time. Attempts to reconstruct any such beginnings must be undertaken cautiously, and with the free admission that so long as our evidence is incomplete our conclusions must be tentative.

The earliest development of Jewish religious and social life in what is now the United States is no exception to this difficulty. Conflicting sources battle, and baffle the inquirer. Our shreds of evidence are frequently inconclusive. But with the frank admission of our incomplete material and consequently tentative conclusions, we can undertake to trace the development of our major interest: synagogal philanthropic institutions in this country.

"In the United States, as everywhere else, the cemetery and the synagogue were the first manifestations of Jewish social activity." (Bogen, op. cit., p. 363) And frequently, the establishment of the cemetery preceded the organization of the synagogue itself. "Frequently this (organization of synagogue) was preceded by the purchase of some little plat (sic) of ground to be used for a 'Beth Chayim.'" (Temple Beth El, Detroit, 50th anniversary souvenir, 1900) Occasionally, however, the organization of

a relief society preceded all other social and religious institutions. This society usually took the form of a Hebra Kaddisha, a society for the care of the sick, the dying, and the deceased. Lee K. Frankel, pioneer Jewish social worker in the United States, remarked in an address in 1905: "It is characteristic of the time that the first development of the philanthropic impulse in the Jews of the United States was directed not toward the succor of the living but rather to the care of the dead." He cites Congregation Rodef Shalom, Philadelphia, as a Hebra Kaddisha which developed into a congregation. (Jewish Charity, Vol. IV, No. 5, February, 1905, p. 153) Once these combination relief societies and cemetery associations had met for worship as a congregation, they almost immediately undertook other charitable functions. "The giving of Zedakah was essentially the function of the congregation." (Ibid.) Bogen confirms this opinion in the statement that "the first Jewish organizations in the United States of a philanthropic nature were relief societies. These were connected closely, sometimes organically, with the synagogue, and were sectarian in character." (Op. cit., p. 2)

The synagogue retained its place as the social, religious, and philanthropic center of Jewish life throughout the colonial period of American history. Before the revolution, "the Jewish social centers were the synagogue and the Chevra (Verein). The charity of the chevra was cooperation. It was the forerunner of the beneficial

order of a later generation." (Eliassof, H., German-American Jews, p. 15) We might add to this statement the fact that the hebra, both synagogal and independent, was also the forerunner of the contemporary social agency.

It must not be inferred that there were no important independent philanthropic agencies even in the early period of American-Jewish development. We have no record of such an agency before the Revolution, but Charleston, S.C. did organize a Benevolent Society which had no organic connection with Congregation Beth Elohim in 1795, developing out of an earlier Hebra Gemilut Hasadim organized in 1784. Before 1850, however, such organizations were few. To quote Frankel again, "it speaks well for the early Jewish pioneers who came to the United States that comparatively few benevolent societies, separate and apart from the congregation, were organized prior to 1850." (Op. cit., p. 153) This was particularly true of the Sephardic group, where we find only three such societies coming into being: the Charleston society already mentioned, a second Charleston organization founded in 1801 as an Orphan Home, and the Philadelphia Benevolent Society, organized in 1819. The New York Hebrew Benevolent Society, founded in 1822, was an Ashkenazic organization. Generally, the Sephardic congregations were able to handle their philanthropic problems within the orbit of the synagogue.

Congregation Shearith Israel, New York

The exact date of the arrival of Jacob Barsimson into New Amsterdam has never been settled exactly. There is

general agreement, however, that he was the first Jew to arrive in the Dutch colony, aboard the ship Peartree, which docked in New Amsterdam harbor in the summer of 1654. (AJHS, Vol. XVIII, p. 3; for sources on the entire controversy concerning the landing of the first Jews in New Amsterdam, cf. AJHS, Vol. I, p. 46ff; Vol. III, p. 75; Vol. VI, p. 64, pp. 84-5; Vol. VIII, p. 9, p. 14; Vol. XIV, p. 21ff; Vol. XVIII, pp. 49-52) Other Jews followed the next month. Once again, the exact date and number are questionable, but there were Jews arriving in sufficient number to cause Peter Stuyvesant, director of the colony, to take action against them by September 22, 1654. At that time he directed a letter to the Amsterdam Chamber, part of which reads as follows:

> "The Jews who have arrived would nearly all like to remain here, but learning that they (with their customary usury and deceitful trading with the Christians) were very repugnant to the inferior magistrates, as also to the people having the most affection for you; the Deaconry also fearing that owing to their present indigence they might become a charge in the coming winter, we have, for the benefit of this weak and newly developing place and the land in general, deemed it useful to require them in a friendly way to depart; praying also most seriously in this connection, for ourselves as also for the general community of your worships, that the deceitful race, --such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ,--be not allowed further to infect and trouble this new colony, to the detraction of your worships and the dissatisfaction of your worships' most affectionate subjects." (AJHS, Vol. XVIII, p. 5)

Upon receipt of this letter in Amsterdam, the Jews of that community addressed a letter to the Chamber of the city in January, 1655, petitioning that their brethren in New Amsterdam be permitted to live on there. A note is

"apostilled" in the margin of that petition by the Chamber of the company: "Granted that they may reside and traffic, provided they shall not become a charge upon the deaconry or the Company." (AJHS, Vol. XVIII, p. 9)

The chamber's reply to Stuyvesant is dated April 26, 1655. It shows clearly that the company was not motivated by humanitarian interests in allowing the Jews to live in New Amsterdam, but by very practical facts: Jews in Holland were large investors in the West India Company and had, consequently, considerable influence with its directors. The letter reads as follows:

> "We would have liked to effectuate and fulfill your wishes and request that the new territories should no more be allowed to be infected by people of the Jewish nation, for we foresee therefrom the same difficulties which you fear, but after having furthere weighed and considered the matter, we observe that this would be somewhat unreasonable and unfair, especially because of the considerable loss sustained by this nation with others, in the taking of Brazil (by the Portugese, January, 1654), as also because of the large amount of capital which they still have invested in the shares of this company. Therefore after many deliberations we have finally decided to apostille upon a certain petition presented by said Portugese Jews (in Amsterdam) that these people may travel and live and remain there, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or to the community, but be supported by their own nation. You will now govern yourself accordingly." (AJHS, Vol. XVIII, p. 8)

The Jews of New Amsterdam never became a burden to the company or to the community. We do not know how they lived through that first winter in their new homes, but there is no record that they ever applied to Stuyvesant or the authorities of New Amsterdam for relief of any kind.

In customary fashion, soon after their arrival, the

Jews of New Amsterdam organized for worship, for the purchase of a cemetery, and for charitable purposes. It is said that Congregation Shearith Israel was founded in 1655, the year after the first landings, but this oral tradition is not corroborated in any sources. There are records of the Dutch church to show that a synagogue did exist in 1682, and Chaplain John Miller's map of New York (renamed after the English conquest in 1664) in 1695 shows a Jews' synagogue on Beaver Street, near Mill. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. xiii)

Unfortunately, the earliest records of Congregation Shearith Israel are lost. The minutes now available begin with Volume XXV. In it, constant reference is made to earlier volumes, especially to a constitution of 1706. (Ibid.) The extant minutes range from 1727 until September 27, 1775, then take up again after the completion of the Revolutionary War.

During the summer of 1727, the Jewish citizens of New York attempted to raise funds for a permanent synagogue building. The synagogue was dedicated, finally, in 1730, with Moses Lopez de Fonseca as minister (haham). There is mention, however, of an earlier officiant in the community named Saul Brown. The dates of his ministry are not known. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. xv)

On September 15, 1728, the Congregation met to "revive ....with amendments and additions, the constitution of 5466 (1706)." Article 7 of the new constitution read as follows:

> "7thly If any poor person should happen to come to this place and should want the assistance of the Sinagog the Parnaz is hereby empowered to allow every poor person for his maintenance the sum of Eight Shillings pr week and no more Not exceeding the term of twelve weeks. And the Parnaz is also to use his utmost endeavours to despatch them to sum other place as soon as Possible assisting them with necessarys, for their Voyage, that is for a single person fourty Shillings, but if it be a family, then the Parnaz shall call his assistance and consult with them both for their maintenance whilst ashore and also for their necessarys when they depart; those poor of this Congregation that shall apply for Sedaca shall be assisted with as much as the Parnaz and his assistants shall think fitt..." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 2-3)

So the congregation undertook itself to fulfill the philanthropic needs of the community. No special organization was deemed necessary either for the collection or distribution of philanthropy; the "Parnaz and his assistance" were assigned both tasks.

Two other articles of the same constitution are relevant to charitable undertakings. We are informed that "offerings shall be Gather'd every three months by the Parnaz" for charitable purposes. (Ibid.) The congregation broke with tradition and stopped the selling of Mizwot in the synagogue. Instead, all men's seats were taxed on an annual basis, between 5 and 15 shillings, the proceeds to be used for the Sedaca, and Mizwot were to be given out by the Parnas for the year. (Ibid.) In this way the congregation assured itself of sufficient funds for its various needs.

The word "Sedaca" throughout the minutes of the congregation causes difficulty. At times it would appear to be a special fund for charity purposes. At others we gain

the impression that it is the general fund of the congregation. All expenditures for philanthropy come from the Sedaca. On the other hand, Isaac Navarro "received from the Sedaka in part of his account in connection with the building 15 pounds, 15 shillings, 3 pence." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 25) And further, "The Holy Sedaka of Seerit Israel, Dr.," followed by a list of general expenses for the congregation: wood, oil, wax, etc. (Ibid.) These statements, corroborated by similar passages throughout the minutes, lead us to conclude that one fund existed, a congregational treasury, out of which all expenditures were made, and that this fund was known as the Sedaca or Sedaka, since its chief function was to provide for the philanthropic disbursements of the congregation.

We are fortunate in having a fairly complete accounting of these disbursements in the account book of the congregation. The earliest shed little light on the purpose of the expenditure, being list as "obras pias" (pious or good works) or as "obras pias and transportation." The amounts of money expended are, however, of interest:

September 11, 1730	For obras pias and transportation	53. 4. 1
September 30, 1731	For obras pias	41. 5. 6
September 27, 1734	For obras pias and passages	29.11. 4 3/4
September 16, 1735	For obras pias and passages	14.19. 1

(AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 26-33)

These records would be very illuminating were we able to trace the economic trends of the years encompassed by them, to correlate the variations in expenditure with the relative prosperity of the community.

The first mention of educational organization comes on March 3, 1737, when a Rev. Macada was elected Hazan of the congregation. Part of his stated duties was the conduct of a "Public school" daily. The children of poor members were to be taught gratis. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 36)

It is impossible to trace Sedaka expenditures annually through this period. Several pages of accounts are unfortunately missing between 1737 and 1746. Those available to us, however, read as follows:

September 14, 1738	For obras pias	18.17.8
October 2, 1739	Obras pias	48.4 . 8½

The account for September 10, 1741, specified, for the first time, the "obras pias" for which some part of the money had been used. It read:

David Piza to Barbados	1. 0. 0
Passage for Haim Abendanon & family	3. 0. 0
Jacob de Campos and family	6. 0. 0
Joseph Lopez and family	3. 0. 0
Aaran de Larah	1. 0. 0
Obras Pias	7.14. 9

(AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 38-43)

September 26, 1745	Poor and passages (& expenses of the synagogue	48. 4. 3
	Plus wood for officials and poor	28. 0. 0

(AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 47)

We are given some details about the organization of the synagogue during this period. The first synagogue institution established by Shearith Israel was the society Ki Mi'Zion Te'ze Torah, founded in 1731 for the purpose of perpetuating the old ritual. We find no further mention of it in the congregational annals. (AJHS, Vol. VI, p. 131)

In 1746 the congregation boasted a membership of 51 families, who paid a total to the synagogue of 268 pounds, 6 shillings. The next year the income of the congregation rose to 308 pounds. The Sedaca was under the sole administration of the Parnas until 1756. In that year he was forbidden to expend more than 150 pounds for salaries and 20 pounds for charity without the consent of the Trustees. And in 1770 a 500 pound bond was placed on the Parnas. (Judge Joachimsen in Reformer and Jewish Times, quoted in AJHS, Vol. II, p. 88) The same article informs us that congregational dues were two pounds per person per year, plus assessments according to the fortune of the individual. Pew sales and voluntary contributions increased the revenue of the congregation, plus penalties imposed for various reasons, which ranged from two pounds to twenty pounds.

The minutes and account book of the congregation continue to stress philanthropic expenditures:

September 4, 1747 To Cash giveing to the Poor and sundry charges for their use	50. 0. 9
Wood for officers and poor	32. 0. 0
September 22, 1748 To Cash paid for wood to the officers and poor	36.15. 0
To Cash for despatch of Abm de Mattos and family to Barbados	44.10. 4
To Masoth for the officers and poor	4. 5. 8
To the poor and for their use	76. 8. 7

(AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 57-8)

Compared to our previous charity expenditure notations, this is an enormous sum. The cost of passage for transient immigrants had risen almost unbelievably, and some type of economic depression must have seized

the community, for the general expenditure for charity rose more than 25% over the previous year and many more times that of three or four years previous to that. The next year, however, expenses dropped again in connection with passages, and there is no recording of "obras pias" expenses:

Wedu Serra and family	13.15. 5
David Abrahams and family & Rachel Colly to Curacao	16. 8. 0

(AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 60)

Starting with 1755, the minutes of the congregation are more explicit yet about charitable expenditures. Actual case records appear from time to time which are of great interest.

On December 7, 1755, at a meeting of the Parnassim and Elders, "it was also resolved that forty shills. shall be given in small sums to the poor shoe-maker, and that forty shills. in the like manner be given to Isaac Navarro." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 72)

The case of Widow Mrs. Hanah Louzada came up on April 18, 1756 at a meeting of the Parnassim and Elders. It was to plague the congregation for a long time. On that date she was allowed support for four weeks only. (Ibid.) On July 17th of the same year, the Parnassim and Elders voted to despatch Mrs. Louzada to Lancaster, but to keep her son Benjamin in New York at the expense of the congregation. Mr. Aaron Louzada (probably an uncle of the boy) promised six pounds per annum toward the support of young Benjamin. (Ibid.) We hear again of the hapless

widow Louzada next on January 17, 1760, when she was sent by the congregation to "the Jerseys" at their expense. The debts she had incurred with various persons were to be paid from "publick money." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 81)

The Parnassim and five of the assistants met on February 13, 1763, and recorded their decision to allow the Widow Solomons five pounds toward her house rent, to commence May 1st. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 86) On October 8th of the same year, the "Samaz Levy Israel" was paid two pounds, sixteen shillings out of the Sedaka for having boarded a young man for a month "some time past." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 87)

On July 1st, 1764, the following decision was reached: "Sedaka (Hebrew) should allow a sufficiency for Lodging and Boarding the sick man, now at the widow Solomons, and twenty shillings to be given to Mrs. Andrews." (Ibid.)

The expense account for October 21, 1764 read:

Rachel Solomons	5 pounds & discharged
Rachel Campinal	5 pounds
Hannah Louzada	3 pounds
Rebecah Navarro	3 pounds
Mrs. Seixas family	6 pounds

(AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 88-9)

In all probability the Mr. Seixas referred to is not Gershom Mendes Seixas, the rabbi of the congregation for more than fifty years.

The indigent ladies noted above continued to receive cash benefits from the congregation:

October 16, 1765	Rachel Campanel for wood	3. 0. 0
	Hannah Louzada	3. 0. 0
	Rebeca Navarro	3. 0. 0
	Mr. Seixas family	6. 0. 0

In addition, the rabbi and the Hazan received allotments for wood. Mrs. Navarro was to be allowed a doctor, at congregational expense. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 91) The first two items above were repeated in the account for October 5, 1766. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 93)

A meeting of the "Parnassim and Assistance" took place on November 17, 1765. It took note of the sartorial condition of one of the members of the congregation, and decided "that Three Corse shirts be made and sent to Aaron Pinto as he is almost naked." (Ibid.)

Rachel Campanel's case occupied the attention of the Parnasim and Assistants again on February 22, 1768. It was then voted to increase her allowance from 20 to 25 pounds each year, to be paid quarterly, plus three pounds for firewood. This increase was determined upon because of her advanced years and infirmities. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 95)

The following case came before the Parnasim and Assistants on May 16, 1768:

> "The Parnasim acquainted the Gentlemen Assistants, That one Jacob Musqueto, an object of Charity had arrived from St. Eustatius and Thrown himself on the Mercy of the Sedaka, Imploring Some Assistance and dispatching him to the Island of Barbados, It was therefore Resolved that the Parnasim should pay for Board etc. of said Musqueto while in this place, and also That he should dispatch this Musqueto to Philadelphia in his way to Barbados, and at same time to write a letter to Mr. Michael Gratz at Philadelphia, Requesting that he would Collect Sufficiemt among the Yahudim at Philadelphia as would defray the Expence of same, and if on collection there should be a deficiency of three or four Pounds, that the same should Be paid By the Parnas, out of the Sedaka here." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 99)

Several important facts appear here. First, there was quite a migration to the Barbados via New York by Sephardic Jews coming either from Holland or, in a few cases, England. Second, it was fairly common to send such migrants from one community to another, depending on the Jews in each city to assist the individual. Third, in the year 1768 the Philadelphia Jewish community was not organized. This fact will be substantiated shortly.

On January 28, 1770, the Parnasim and Assistants decided that "Allowance for Judah bar Myer (sick) be Continued and paid, while necessary also that the Expences for Moses Calonemos (sick) be allowed and paid." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 106)

The record for 1770 continues with the decision on September 23rd that the Sedaka "Allow Sam Israel for the use of Rachel Campanel 20 shillings per week and to have two pr. of sheets made and sent her Also to pay Levy Marks 40 shillings and discharge him from the Sedaka." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 107) And on October 21st: "At a meeting of the Parnasim and Assistants it was agreed to give Levy Moses Five pounds and Doras Benja. three pounds out of the Sedaka for the Use of their Famleys they both being (something missing here in MS) at Jama (Jamaica-?) on Long Island." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 108)

Rachel Campanel's infirmities necessitated medical care at one time, and so on June 16, 1771 it was "agreed

that Doctor Anderson his Accots of 5 pounds for attending Rachel Campanel, be paid." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 109)

Occasionally an individual apparently undertook good deeds on his own responsibility, and later applied to the congregation for reimbursement. Such a case occurred on August 11, 1771, when it was decided that an "old bill for Matzoth (Hebrew) for the poor (3.17.1) back in 5528 (1768) be paid to Isaac Marshalk." At the same time the Sedaka undertook to pay four pounds, twelve shillings, onepence for charges incurred in sending Moses Mial, "a Poor Lad," to St. Croix. (Ibid.)

Two strangers, Porto and Abrahams, arrived in New York from Curacao (misspelled Curacoa in minutes) in April, 1773. The congregation undertook to "found" them until after the Holy days; that is, to lodge and board them until after Pesach. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 115)

Until this time, the English pound had beenused exclusively as the currency basis. On January 7, 1774, we find the dollar used for the first time. In a confused list of approved expenses, we find the following:

> "Agred that D.H. Senr have Six Pounds gave him, Including what he has already received. (This notation is dated July 6, 1773)
> Tabet 12th (January 7, 1774) Agreed at the same time that the Expences of the Hacham Hiam I Caragal shall be paid with his Passage to Rhode Island. (The same Hayyim Carigal known to Ezra Stiles of Yale University)
> Agreed that D. H. Senr: shall be allowed Four Dollars a Month till the First of Tisri next.
> Agred to make a Nadabah in Pesach (collection in the synagogue) for the Kall of Honen Dalem of Statia (the island of St. Eustatius)" (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 115)

During this period it was the universally accepted belief that debtors belonged in prison. New York's laws followed this belief. On September 9, 1773, one Mark Jacobs, a shopkeepr, petitioned Solomon Simson (probably the Parnas of Congregation Shearith Israel) for "relief from confinement in debtors' prison, New York." He was assisted. (AJHS, Vol. XXVII, p. 29)

When members of the congregation fell into temporary financial distress, various means were used to assist them. One rather unusual case was considered on September 18, 1773, when Michael Jacobs applied for assistance. It was then decided to return to him all the money he had ever offered and given to the synagogue. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 117)

It has been obvious that a great deal of the charity work done by Congregation Shearith Israel during the 18th century concerned transients and guests in the community. The tempo of immigration apparently increased just before the Revolution, for the number of persons applying for passage and temporary assistance also seemed to increase markedly. The following is recorded on October 18, 1773:

> "Ribi (Rabbi-?) Tobiyah from London haveing been maintained Two weeks at the Kahal expences and haveing applied for assistance he intending for Philadelphia, it is agreed to give him Eight Dollars and pay Mrs. Hay's account accordingly." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 116)

And on July 25, 1774:

> "Mr. Aaron Bosquado to be sent to Curacoa as Soon as Possable giving him Provision and paying his Passage, and hsi board untill he leaves this place.

(AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 117)

In August of the same year: (Lyons, in editing the minutes, lists this date as July 20th, but this dating is impossible in the sequence; Menahem 12, 5534 must have been August 20, 1774)

1. Rabbi Ezekiel to be sent to Statia
2. A Dumb man to be sent back to Philadelphia immediately (Ibid.)

The burden of the congregation increased again in the fall of 1774. On October 11th, the following is recorded:

"1. Moses B Franks be allowed 2 Coards Oake wood & Cartage
2. D...H...(same as D.H.Senr mentioned previously, no doubt) pention be augmented from Eight to Twelve shillings per week.
3. Abraham Solomons Blog be allowed five pounds for his dispatch from hence.
4. Jacob Rodrigues Brandon be allowed 5 pounds for his dispatch to London--to be repaid upon his arrival." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 121)

The last notation is, by the way, the first loan agreement in the minutes.

A week later, on October 17th, it was decided to increase Hanah Lousada's (sic) pention from eight to ten shillings per week. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 124)

The increased pressure upon the charitable resources of the congregation at this time is indicated by the unusual frequency of meetings of the parnas and his assistants. They met again on November 6, 1774, to consider two cases. Joseph bar Nathan had applied for wood, and was granted one cord of oak and cartage. "Rabby Samuel Bar Isaac Surnamed Keyser" applied for a passage for himself and his son either to London or to Jamaica. An

investigation was ordered of relative costs, the report to be made at the next meeting. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 127) That meeting was held on November 9th, and it was decided to send the Rabby to Jamaica.

On December 4th the "committee" met again to consider the application of Benjamin Nathans for assistance. It was decided to send him immediately to Philadelphia at congregational expense, provided the cost would be three dollars or less. On December 19th the appropriation was increased to four dollars and approved. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 129, 132)

At the same December 4th meeting, it was also agreed to repay Mr. Jacob Rod Rivera, outstanding citizen of Newport, R.I., the money he had advanced for the passage of Abraham S. Blog to Surinam, a gentleman previously assisted by the congregation. The amount involved was one-half "joe." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 131) A "joe," it appears, is a diminutive name for a Johannes, a Portugese gold coin worth about $8.00 at that time, named for King John, whose picture appeared thereon. (Twentieth Century Unabridged Dictionary)

It must not be believed that every application to the authorities for assistance was granted, though a great majority were. On March 5, 1775, Mr. D...H... (Senr) applied for more money for himself and his wife. Rents were high, and they had to move in May. The petition was denied; the Sedaka could not afford more than his present pension. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 135)

A notation of April 2, 1775, informs us that Sedaka money was used to pay part of an increase in salary voted to Gershom Mendes Seixas. The implication of this note is that there were other funds for salary payments in the congregational treasury, and the Sedaka was a separate fund for philanthropic purposes only. We are unable to ascertain if this is a later development, or that we were mistaken in our original premise that the Sedaka may have been an all-purpose fund.

It was fairly common during the development of Jewish congregational life in the United States for congregations to write to other synagogue groups requesting aid in building a permanent place of worship, or for other sacred purposes. Usually these requested were granted by a collection being taken during Sabbath services in the synagogue. In 1775, however, Congregation Shearith Israel refused two such requests. An appeal was received from London for the distressed Jews of Surinam. Congregation Beth Elohim of Charleston, S.C., wrote requesting money for a synagogue building. Both were refused. No money was available, and apparently the Parnas was averse to irregular collections in the synagogue. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 138-9)

The minutes of Congregation Shearith Israel cease after September 27, 1775, and do not resume until December 9, 1783.

Congregational activities continued, however, until August, 1776, when the British threatened to capture New

York. (The actual occupation of the city took place late in September.) Rabbi Seixas insisted that the congregation could not and would not function under British control. (AJHS, Vol. VI, p. 129ff.; Vol. XXI, p. xvi) From August, 1776, Rabbi Seixas and the Sifre Torah of Congregation Shearith Israel remained in Stratford, Conn., until 1780. A few members of the congregation were with him there. Many more, however, had moved to Philadelphia to escape the British. They insisted that their Hazan join them there, and Seixas finally assented. He remained in Philadelphia until the spring of 1784.

Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia

During the four years he lived in Philadelphia, Gershom Mendes Seixas and his New York congregants strengthened the organization of Congregation Mikve Israel. A group of Jews had been worshipping for some time in Philadelphia in a hired hall, but were not organized. On March 17, 1782, Mr. Isaac Moses of New York called a meeting of this group for organizational purposes. He was duly elected Parnas of the Kahal, and an Adjunta of five men was also elected. Immediate plans were made for the building for a permanent house of worship. A mistaken tradition tells us that the building was completed on September 22, 1781, but this is, of course, impossible. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 183) Actually, the consecration of the synagogue took place on September 13, 1782, with Rev. Seixas officiating. (AJHS, Vol. I, pp. 15-16)

One of the first functions of the new congregation was philanthropic activity. Sabato Morais, rabbi of Mikve Israel for many years, informs us that:

> "A commendable feature in a congregation with exceedingly limited means is the promptness it exhibited in responding to the appeals of humanity. A perusal of the minutes, noted down in its early stages, shows that the cause of the poor and the stranger was not pleaded in vain. Here one is told that widows were granted enough to prevent their being left without a shelter; there, that a subscription was raised to enable a French lad in a state of destitution to return home comfortably and decently clad. In fact, Zedakah or 'charity' occupied the attention of the directors (Adjunta) equally with the securing of means to carry on public worship." (AJHS, Vol. I, p. 17)

Mikve Israel, then, followed almost the same techniques in the distribution of philanthropy as did its sister congregation in New York. The Parnas and the Adjunta (known usually in the minutes of Congregation Shearith Israel as the "Assistance" or "Assistants") were directly responsible for the collection and distribution of all money and clothing for the needy. It may be assumed, too, that they were charged with overseeing the care of the sick, paying for medical care, and also with the task of securing decent burial for indigent dead. Thus far, the "Shalshelet Ha'Kabbalah" from late medieval philanthropic institutions is intact.

Congregation Yeshuat Israel, Newport, R.I.

This Sephardic congregation was founded in 1658 by some 15 families who had just arrived in the little

village of Newport, which then boasted a population of about two hundred families. (Gutstein, M., The Story of the Jews of Newport, p. 28ff.)

The early charitable organization of Congregation Yeshuat Israel is not known to us. The earliest Sedaca record dates from 1756 and is found in the business ledger of Daniel Gomez. (Gutstein, op. cit., p. 142) The system there noted is almost identical with that of Congregation Shearith Israel. The Sedaca fund in Newport, however, is definitely a separate one, and was apparently well-managed at all times. It undertook to fulfill all the varied needs of the poor of the community.

In the family Bible of Moses Seixas, the following entry is found:

> "Martha Lazarus alias Moravia, Died Thursday, 12 July 1787, 26th Tamuz 5547. She having been a pensioner of the Sedaka 6 years and 9 months and cost about 1500 dollars." (Ibid.)

It has been noted previously that transients were often sent from one community with credentials to another congregation, certifying them as worthy of assistance and requesting either board and lodging for them, or passage to a further place. On May 26, 1761, the following letter was written by Naphtali Hart, Parnas of Congregation Yeshuat Israel to Congregation Shearith Israel, New York. It is a typical example of inter-congregational cooperation in benevolence:

Gentlemen--
The Bearrers Messrs Abraham & Mathias Cohen Arrived here last Week in Capt. Cuzzins from Savanah Lmar (Savvanna-La-Mar) in the Island of Jamaica, and where recommended to us by the Gabay of that Congregation as Objects of Charity, and as Such I take the Liberty to recommend them to you & your Congregation--They have with them their Credentials from the Several Congregats to the Same Effect, We on our Parts have Contrebuted as much as the Nature of our affairs would admitt of at this time and Considering we Our Selves Are petitioners, hope there Successes in this Undertaking May Answer their Expectation--wch is the Sincear wishes of
Gentlemen your Most Obedient & Humble Servts
NAPH HART Parnas

(AJHS, Vol. XXVII, pp. 182-3)

On another occasion, just beforethe outbreak of the Revolution, these two congregations once again cooperated philantrhopically. They shared the expenses of transporting Rabbi H. H. Samuel Cohen to London at a total cost of thirty-one pounds, eight shillings, sixpence. (Lebeson, A., Jewish Pioneers in America, p. 89)

Congregation Yeshuat Israel continued its noble philanthropic work until early in the 19th century, when it declined and expired as an active group. The congregation was not resuscitated until after 1870. The rejuvenated congregation takes no direct part in philanthropic activity, but cooperates with the secular agencies now active in the social service field in Newport. (Gutstein, op. cit.,pp. 226, 256)

Congregation Beth Elohim, Charleston, S. C.

It is in Charleston that the first deviation from the traditional congregational system of philanthropic

activity took place in the United States. Though a Sephardic, or Anglo-Sephardic, congregation, Beth Elohim did not undertake to fulfill directly the charitable needs of the Jewish community of Charleston. The Kahal itself was founded in 1750. Very soon thereafter, its members organized an independent Hebra Gemilut Hasadim, following the Germanic influence. (The Occident, Vol. I, p. 338) Ashkenazic influence was generally very strongly in evidence from the beginning of the congregation's history. By 1786, in fact, there was a separate German congregation. (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. III, p. 677)

The Hebra Gemilut Hasadim undertook all the charity work for the community. It expended in one of its first years over 400 pounds for relief, plus sick visits, nursing care, and the burial of indigent dead. (The Occident, loc. cit.)

About 1795, the official title of the organization became the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Charleston. From that time to the present, no mention is made of any official tie between the Benevolent Society and any of the congregations. (Constitution and By-Laws of the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Charleston, 1900) This fact is borne out by a statement of A. E. Frankland about Congregation House of God (Beth El), Charleston (no doubt an error for Beth Elohim):

> "The basis of the religious structure...was charity.... and the sums yearly expended for charitable purposes in relieving the sick and indigent, frequently esceeded 400 pounds. To extend the sphere of their charity and usefulness, they organized a distinct organization, which still exists, for relieving the destitute and sick strangers who might come within

> their borders. Their members visited and nursed the sick, clothed the naked and buried the dead." (Frankland, A.E., "Fragments of History," in American Jews' Annual, 1888-90, p. 13)

It is probably the Germanic influence which caused the organization of an independent benevolent society in Charleston, the first in American-Jewish life.

Summary

With the exception of the copious minutes of Congregation Shearith Israel, New York, the material for the pre-Revolutionary period is scanty and scattered. The Sephardic congregations, with one exception, adhered to the pattern of Congregation Shearith Israel. The Parnas and his Adjunta, or assistants, undertook directly to collect sufficient funds for philanthropic needs. Some sources of income were obligatory, gained by taxes on the membership of the Kahal; others were voluntary Nedabot of various kinds. It was also the responsibility of the Parnas and the Adjunta to expend the money, to perform all necessary philanthropic functions. They had the power to coopt members of the congregation for sick visits, for nursing care, for preparations for burial. The various congregations cooperated in relief activities, particularly in securing passage for transients to various places.

The only exception to this pattern was Congregation Beth Elohim, Charleston, S.C., which contained from its inception a large number of Anglo-Sephardic and German

adherents, who later separated and formed another congregation, and who influenced the method and procedure of the congregation. At a very early date it formed an independent Hebrew Benevolent Society which took over from the Kahal the various philanthropic duties.

Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that the Sephardic pattern of philanthropic organization was utilized also in Canda during the Colonial period. Congregation Shearith Israel of Montreal was founded in 1768. Until 1848, all charitable work was handled by the Parnas and Junta. In that year a Hebrew Philanthropic Society was founded in the congregation, headed by the Haham Dr. Abraham de Sola and Moses J. Hays. A few years later a young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society was formed by members of the congregation. The two societies have since merged into an independent Baron deHirsch Institute. (Shearith Israel, Montreal, 150th anniversary souvenir, 1918, p. 47)

"Much will depend on the offerings of this day, and it is hoped that every man will be recompensed according to the goodness of his works.

--Gershom Mendes Seixas

CHAPTER THREE

The End of the Sephardic Pattern

The period following the Revolutionary War saw many changes in the methods used by the Spanish and Portugese Jews in the United States to fulfill their philanthropic responsibilities. Their task was becoming more complex; the number of indigents, transient and resident, was increasing rapidly, and this new situation made new demands on the authorities, and called forth new organizations to meet the demands.

The transition began shortly after the end of hostilities, and continued with increasing extensiveness until the beginning of the Ashkenazic rise to predominance, which can be dated approximately at the end of the first quarter ofthe nineteenth century.

Once again New York is the focal point of activity. The greatest burden rested upon the Jews of this community, and their efforts are of great interest. We are fortunate in having sufficient source material available to give us a fairly complete picture of the community and its philanthropic endeavors.

Congregation Shearith Israel, New York

Gershom Mendes Seixas returned to his Kahal in March or April of 1784. The congregation had already reopened the doors of the synagogue and had undertaken once again the charitable activities handled by it

before the war.

The pension system became somewhat systematized during this period. Needy widows of deceased members of the congregation were granted an annual stipend. (AJHS, Vol. II, p. 90) Individual applications for relief continued apace. On February 4, 1784, the application of Mr. Jacob Cohen was considered and approved. He received 10 pounds (the currency system of the United States had not yet been stabilized) for a better residence for himself and his invalid wife; her condition required a finer home. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 144)

A new and rather confusing group in the congregation is mentioned for the first time on August 8, 1784. Mr. Joseph Nathans had applied to the Parnas and Adjunta for assistance. The Sedaka was in critical condition at the time, and his application was rejected. The petition, however, was recommended to the Board of Trustees for an allowance for his son. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 147) The exact status of the Board of Trustees is somewhat of a mystery. They are a final authority in the synagogue, as will be quite evident shortly. But their origin, method of election, sphere of influence, etc., are nowhere clarified.

In 1785 began the process of specialization in organization of charitable enterprise within the congregation. A Hebra Gemilut Hasadim was formed, originally for the sole purpose of burying deceased members of the

congregation. (Goldstein, I., A Century of Judaism in New York, p. 34; AJHS, Vol. VI, p. 131) Rev. J. J. Lyons, minister of Shearith Israel from 1840 to his death in 1877, has provided us with a detailed description of this society and its functions. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 252-255)

The Hebra Gemilut Hasadim was the first charitable society in Congregation Shearith Israel. Its earliest available account book is #2, recording expenditures and receipts between 1786 and 1790. Rev. Lyons concludes that a society must have existed "much earlier and later disbanded for a time." (p. 252) There is no evidence to support his contention. Volume I of the society's account book may have covered only the first year or two of its existence.

Originally the Hebra had four managers. An item appears in the account book as follows:

> "1788 July 25. By Cash paid Solomon Nettling by order of Arba Anashim (four managers) 2 pounds"

The Hebra received its income in various ways. Each new member was assessed in initiation fee of one pound, seventeen shillings, fourpence. In addition, each member paid a monthly subscription of two shillings. Each year the Hebra had a Festival (forerunner of the Hebra Se'udah, the Annual Ball of later years), for which each member paid a tax of one shilling. Each time a member did not attend Minyan during Shivah week or the Jahrzeit of another member, it cost him one shillings in the morning, but only sixpence if he missed Minhah. Were he summoned

to sit up with a sick member and did not respond, he paid a fine of eight shillings. Absence from a meeting of the Hebra was not tolerated; the fine was one shilling. Nor were members permitted to insult the Gabaim. Moses Gomez did so onee, and was fined a shilling. In addition, offerings were made in the synagogue on different occasions for the benefit of the Hebra. Of this procedure there is further record at a later date.

From all these sources the Hebra reaped a tidy income. There were 55 dues-paying members in 1790, and the number probably increased thereafter.

"Although partaking of the nature of a Mutual Benefit Society, the Hebra did not restrict its usefulness solely to its members; its object was a general charity. It relieved the needy by donations in money and fuel, and when sick, it provided them with proper medical assistance. It superintended all funerals in accordance with our established rites and customs. It extended religious consolation to the mourner and greatly contributed toward the maintenance of brotherly love and kindly feelings in the community." (p. 254)

The mutual benefit aspect of the Hebra was expressed in the payment of one pound, four shillings to every member who was in mourning. This payment was known as "Abel money." The Hebra paid for medical care for its sick members, also for lodging and board when necessary. We read, for example:

1788 March 19 Mrs. Myers for 17 weeks boarding of Mr. Nettling 8.10.0

1789 Dr. Cogsdel Receipt for attending the sick 7.10.0

(Account Book, Hebra Gemilut Hasadim, pp. 33, 61)

The Hebra owned its own hearse, in addition to all the tools and implements necessary for the functioning of a cemetery.

"The Society probably ceased to exist before 1802 as in that year necessity called for the organization of the Hebra Hased Va-Amet, a Society for visiting the sick, attendance at funerals and at the house of mourning, and to provide assistance for the needy which was formerly done by the then obsolete Hebra Gemilut Hasadim." (p. 255)

An interesting controversy occurred with reference to the Hebra Gemilut Hasadim in 1786. The following was reported at a meeting of the Parnas and the Adjunta:

> "The parnas informed the adjuntas of his having rec'd: a Letter from the Gabay of Gemilut Hasadim requesting leave for the said society to have offerings made for their Benifit in the Synagogue." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 150f.)

It was agreed to allow this as follows: every person might make one offering for the society, plus one for the Sedaka. The resolution could be rescinded, however, if it was found that the funds of the congregation were suffering unduly. (Sedaka here obviously refers to the general funds of the congregation) (Ibid.)

On June 27, 1786 a letter was received by the Parnas from Benjamin Seixas, chairman of the Board of Trustees. Seixas requested reconsideration of this resolution. The Hebra had previously applied to the Board of Trustees, which had refused, in view of the ill consequence to the congregation of such benefit offerings. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 152f.)

On June 31st (Lyons records May, but this is, of course, impossible) the Parnasim and Adjunta resolved that they had been within their rights in granting such indulgence to the Hebra, and that they regretfully were forced to disagree with the Board of Trustees in the matter. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 153f.)

A further correspondence took place. The Trustees appointed two men to consult with the members of the other "Religious Incorporated Societies" in the city. They reported to the Parnas and Adjunta that there was general agreement throughout the city that the granting of benefit indulgences was vested only in the Board of Trustees. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, p. 155)

A joint meeting was finally arranged between the Parnas and Adjunta on one hand and the Board of Trustees on the other. Meanwhile a letter was received from Moses Gomez, Gabay of the Hebra Gemilut Hasadim, regretting the contention which had arisen, accepting the rescinding of the permission, granting that the Board alone should have the right to grant such indulgences. Unfortunately, the minutes of the congregation do not inform us whether

or not the Hebra was eventually granted permission to collect offerings in the synagogue for its benefit. (AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 156-158) We have here, however, a fairly typical example of the complications and contention that can arise in a highly-organized, non-centralized synagogue.

Shearith Israel continued to expand organizationally. In 1799 the Matan Besether Society was formed. It collected charitable contributions, the names of the donors being kept a secret at all times. On December 20, 1805, Rev. Gershom Mendes Seixas preached on behalf of the society. Part of his sermon read as follows:

> The Society Matan Besether had been founded in 1799, "when few of our brethren resided in this city and many of those fell victims to the direful epidemic (Yellow fever). Some others felt the malignant influence of the disease but through the goodness of Providence are enabled to attend us this day. At that time our contributions were small, still they were found to be of great service to our distressed friends; many have been benefitted since in proportion to the insufficiency of the fund, which could not extend in a more ample manner to supply all who stand in need of assistance at this dreary season of the year. Much will depend on the offerings of this day and it is to be hoped that every man will be recompensed according to the goodness of his works." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 255-256)

Two days after the delivery of this sermon, a committee was appointed to revise the laws of the society. Part of its report is of interest to us:

> "We beg to lay before you an enlarged plan of Charity. Your active zeal, which have been evinced on so many occasions, where Charity was the leading object, warrants us in a fond hope

that the following will at least claim your serious consideration. Your Charities heretofore have been considerable, but applied in such manner, as to have been productive of a limited effect, and that only for the present time.

In an increasing Congregation like ours, considering the local situation, it is time, that the foundation of a permanent charitable institution should be laid, as well for the benefit of posterity as ourselves. We are inhabitants of a populous city, nearly in the centre of the United States; its commerce extended to all parts of the globe; the principles of our government, the equal rights we enjoy, the friendly disposition of the people of this State, the commercial advantages of our city over most others, the enterprising and commercial spirit of our nation; all are powerful reasons that this City in the course of time will contain the largest Congregation in the New World. If this reasoning be correct, if you admit the probability of such an increase of members, will you hesitate to admit also that it is time the foundation of a great and charitable institution should be laid, which will naturally progress with the increase of the Congregation, and be an honor to every member of it?

If it be made to appear that you could lay the foundation of a Poor House and Hospital, forward the same, and become incorporated without any great exertion, where then can any possible objection arise to such a plan?

All this can be commenced from nothing, supported with little, and without injuring the circumstances of any, rendering all respectable, and in time relieving you from the heavy burthen you now bear--

With these views, your committee submit the following outlines of a Constitution." (AJHS, Vol. XXI, pp. 256-257)

No exact draft of this Constitution has been available to us, but it contained provision for an annual membership contribution of $3.25, and for subscriptions in order to raise money for a Poor House and for a

Hospital. (Ibid.)

Unfortunately, there is no further mention of the Matan Besether Society in any of our sources, so that we cannot know why the projects were never carried out.

The organizational expansion of Congregation Shearith Israel in this post-Revolutionary period was completed with the formation, in 1802, of the Hebra Hesed Ve Emet. (The name of the organization is spelled in a variety of ways in different sources) Its purpose was the visitation of sick and burial of dead, and its founders were Ephraim Hart and Naphtali Phillips. (AJHS, Vol. IV, p. 216) The official statement of purpose read as follows:

> "The duty of this society is to attend to the burial of its members, but the burial of indigent Portugese strangers and of poor connected with the society and the congregation frequently devolves upon it." (Congregation Shearith Israel, 250th anniversary fair, Souvenir Program, 1906, p. 11)

The congregation also organized a Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1821, and a Hebrew Relief Society in 1831. The two were combined, as societies independent of the congregation, in 1870. (Ibid.) That specialization in charitable activity had gone rather far in the synagogue is evidenced by an appeal dated June 23, 1830. A Committee of the Hebra Hesed Ve Amet appealed to the women of Congregation Shearith Israel to organize a woman's Hebra for the purpose of ministering to the sick and dying, and attending to the dead of their sex. (AJHS,

Vol. XXVII, p. 113) This despite the existence of the Hebrew Female Benevolent Society at that time.

Meanwhile, individual petitions to the Parnas and Adjunta had not ceased. On March 19, 1805, Simeon Levi applied to the congregation for Matzoth for himself and his family of eight. (AJHS, Vol. XXVII, p. 85) In 1809, two different collections were taken up in the synagogue by the congregation for the benefit of KK Beth Shalome, Richmond, which had requested aid in building a synagogue. (AJHS, Vol. XXV, p. 165) As late as 1819 the congregation was having financial difficulties with its charitable work. On January 24th of that year, Abraham Touro loaned money to the congregation for the following purposes:

> $500 for 10 years, interest to become a permanent fund for the relief of the poor.
> $250 for 10 years, interest to be applied to "the Sucor of poor Sick Israelites."
> $250 for 10 years, interest to go for education in Palestine. (AJHS, Vol. XXVII, p. 103)

Boris D. Bogen has stated that "the beginning of the organization of independent Jewish charities dates back to as early as 1812, when the number of Jews in New York City was not more than 500." (Bogen, op. cit., p. 86) Nowhere in any of our sources do we find a record of any independent organizations that early. The first independantly founded benevolent society in New York was the Hebrew Benevolent Society, founded in 1822. (Ibid.-!!; American Jews Annual, 1887-8, p. 125) At that, though no official connection existed between this society and

any congregation, Goldstein asserts that members of the Shearith Israel Congregation were responsible for the organization of the society. (Goldstein, op. cit., p. 49)

The year 1822 may be considered the terminus ad quem in Shearith Israel's philanthropic activity. Thereafter we have no record of new organizations, and little news of the old ones. The Hebra Hesed Ve Emet continued to exist, but its function is limited. The era of independent charities in New York was under way.

Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia

A remarkable similarity was noted in the Colonial period between the activities of Mikve Israel, after its founding, and its "parent" congregation, Shearith Israel. That similarity continued in the post-bellum period. The congregation apparently continued its control of all philanthropic activity. A society for the relief of destitute strangers was founded in 1784, but there are no records extant of its activities or the duration of its existence. (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IX, p. 672) It is possible that this is the same society mentioned in one Mikve Israel source as the Ezrath Orchim Society, founded in 1783 by the congregation with Jacob I. Cohen as president. Its other officers were men famous in the annals of American history: Isaiah Bush, secretary; and Haym Salomon, treasurer. (Dedication of the New Synagogue of

the Congregation Mikve Israel at Broad and York Sts. on September 14, 1909, p. 13) The Jewish Encyclopedia erroneously mentioned a Society for the Visitation of the Sick and for Mutual Assistance, headed by Jacob Cohen, allegedly founded in 1813. (loc. cit.) We can find no support for such a statement, nor any evidence of the existence of such a society, unless it is identical also with the Ezrath Orchim group.

A Female Hebrew Benevolent Society was organized in the congregation in 1819, with Mrs. Rebecca Phillips as president, and Rebecca Gratz as secretary. That society has continued to exist to the present day. It is not, however, the "first Jewish charitable organization in Philadelphia," as alleged by the Jewish Encyclopedia. (loc. cit.; Cf. Mikve Israel dedication, op. cit., p. 17)

Following the New York pattern again, the Jews of Philadelphia organized a Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1822. (Jewish Encyclopedia, loc. cit.) But we do have further records of Mikve Israel's activities at a later date. As late as 1855, the ladies of the congregation, led by Rebecca Gratz, organized a Jewish Foster Home, which they continued to control until 1874 when it became part of a united charitable organization. (Tarshish, A., notes to A History of the Jews of the United States, Vol. I, p. 168; cf. Morais, The Jews of Philadelphia, chapter 20)

Congregation Beth Elohim, Charleston, S.C.

In 1784, the Jews of Charleston organized an independent Hebra Gemilut Hasadim, the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Charleston. It had no organic connection whatsoever with Congregation Beth Elohim. Its statement of purpose read: "The object of this Society is Benevolence....all the tender offices of Charity." Elzas, B., The Jews of South Carolina, pp. 120, 282f) The organization began its activity with the assistance of immigrants, but later expanded to general charity activity. It is still functioning as part of a federation of charities.

The community also organized a Hebrew Orphan Society, in 1801, known officially as the Abi Yetomim Ubne Ebyonim Society. (Elzas, op. cit., p. 285) Congregation Beth Elohim had begun aid for an Orphan's Home back in 1791, when it raised 58 pounds, 5 shillings for such a home. (The Occident, Vol. I, p. 385)

Despite these independent societies, however, the congregation carried on extensive charitable activity, apparently without any organized leadership. In 1800, the synagogue boasted 107 members. It disbursed in that year the following charitable sums:

Charity to transient poor	10 pounds
Sick persons and doctors bills	33.17.10
Allowances and donations to sundry poor	82. 7. 7

(Elzas, op. cit., p. 288)

In 1818, when the independent societies had already been functioning for many years, the following expenses are

reocrded by the congregation:

A Marks for Departure	15 pounds
Little Englishman	5
Little Dutchwoman	5
Departure for Pola nder	(no sum)

(Elzas, op. cit., p. 290

As Elzas put it, "scientific charity was not yet in vogue, but the cry of distress was never heard unanswered." (Ibid.)

In 1821 the congregation had no rabbi. A request came from the Ladies Benevolent Society, a nonsectarian agency, for a benefit sabbath. Without benefit of sermon or plea, the congregation raised $250.00 one Sabbath morning for the benefit of that society.

Richmond, Virginia

Congregation Beth Shalom(e) was founded in Richmond in 1792. The revised Constitution (1856) contained the following statement:

> "Article VI, Sec. 9. He (parnas) shall have the power of giving to any person professing our holy faith the sum of five dollars, and for Pesach a reasonable quantity of Matzoth if deemed a proper object of charity; but should a larger amount of money be requisite to carry out the benevolent design, he shall convene the board of management." (Constitution of Cong. Beth Shalom, Richmond, Va., 1856)

The Parallelism between this type or organization and the other early Sephardic congregations is too obvious to require further comment.

In 1839, the Jews of German origin connected with Congregation Beth Shalom founded a social and charitable society known as the Chebrath Ahabat Yisrael. It was

formed "for interchange of views and for mutual assistance, to aid the needy, to help the sick, and bury the dead." (Congregation Beth Ahaba, Richmond, Va., 60th anniversary souvenir, 1901, pp. 10-11) The reasons for this split-off are not known to us, but we do know that these Ashkenazic Jews continued to worship with Congregation Beth Shalom until 1841. Then they broke off completely and organized Congregation Beth Ahaba. (Ibid.)

This is the first example in American-Jewish life of a benevolent society being organized later into a congregation. Other outstanding examples of this phenomenon have occurred, and will concern us later.

Summary

The last forty years of the Sephardic period of American-Jewish history were characterized by two major developments in the field of philanthropic activity. First, the congregations organized within their own ranks specific societies to undertake specific aspects of philanthropy. Second, independent societies began to appear, organized usually by members of the congregations, but not connected organically with the synagogue. It is these societies which first began to undermine the supremacy of the synagogue in the distribution of benevolence. Gradually during the next forty years they became almost all-powerful.

"To devise means to place
the charities of the
country on a permanent
and equitable footing, in
a manner as experience
may hereafter point out.
(Board of Delegates, 1859)

CHAPTER FOUR

On A Permanent And Equitable Footing

"There were no Jewish charities, with the exception of several decaying chebroth and two societies in New York. There was no provision for widows and orphans, no hospital. In brief, the American Jews had not one public institution, except their synagogue." So spoke Isaac Mayer Wise of conditions in the year 1848. (Reminiscences, p. 85) It is one of the purposes of this chapter to prove the enormity of the error of the Founder.

In 1824, Solomon Etting stated that there were 6,000 Jews in the United States (Oppenheim, S., The Jewish Population of the United States; p. 31; reprint from American Jewish Year Book, 1918) By 1840, the population had risen to 15,000. (Ibid.; Frankel, L., "Jewish Population of the United States," in Jewish Charity, Vol. IV, No. 5, February, 1905) When the wave of German immigration had ceased and the Eastern European influx was just beginning, 230,000 Jews were settled in this country. The number of congregations had risen from five or six in 1825 to more than seventy in 1855, and many more by 1880. (Ibid.) It is to be expected, as a consequence, that the task of administering material relief in its many forms would become more complicated during this period of rapid expansion. Congregations continued to organize benevolent societies; more independent societies sprang up. Some of these even evolved into synagogues. German societies competed with Sephardic

societies--then both learned how to cooperate. Societies merged for more effective administration. Combinations of societies appeared, each retaining its individuality but all working together in one way or another. National organizations were attempted. All in all, American Jewry roared through the years between 1825 and 1880 just as all America roared and grew. The task of recording accurately any aspect of this growth is a complex and difficult one, but fascinating at the same time. Synagogal philanthropy is no exception.

In order to make any sense out of the chaos of the period, it has been deemed expedient to record events by city, and in alphabetical order.

Congregation Beth Emeth
Albany, N. Y.

The congregation was founded in 1838 as Congregation Beth El. There was a split in 1850 during the ministry of Isaac M. Wise, as the result of the reforms he introduced into the synagogue. Congregation Anshe Emeth was formed by the rebels. The two congregations re-merged in 1885 as Beth Emeth. (Congregation Beth Emeth, 100th anniversary souvenir, 1938)

In 1847 Congregation Beth El already had a Benevolent Society (Hebrat Ahabat Ahim) and a Ladies Benevolent Society. The organization paid $3.00 per week to any disabled member. In addition, it functioned as a general philanthropic society. (The Occident, Vol. IV, p. 599)

A Ladies' Sewing Society was organized in 1854 in Congregation Anshe Emeth, which continued after the merger and exists today. Its objects have been entirely benevolent. Clothing and shrouds are sewn for the indigent of the community. (Congregation Beth Emeth, loc. cit.)

Hebrew Benevolent Congregation
Atlanta, Georgia

Some type of benevolent society had existed among the Jews of Atlanta as early as 1860. In that year the City Council deeded to that society six lots in Oakland Cemetery for their use in perpetuity. (Hebrew Benevolent Congregation, 50th Jubilee, 1917, p. 11)

During the Civil War the society continued its activities until after Sherman's entranceinto the city. Then the entire community vanished, as it were, until the end of hostilities. The reconstruction of Atlanta was actively engaged in by the Gemilath Chesed Society, as it called itself. (Ibid.)

A turning point in Atlanta Jewry's history came on January 1, 1867 when Rabbi Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia came to the city to officiate at a wedding. He met with the Jewish citizens of Atlanta and urged them to organize for worship as well as for philantrhopic activities. (Hebrew Benevolent Congregation, op. cit., p. 12) His urgings bore fruit and Congregation Bemilath Chesed came into being soon thereafter. The members paid 50¢ per month in dues. All surplus money and "schnoddergelt" went into the charity fund of the congregation, which

continued to fulfill the philanthropic needs of Atlanta's Jewish community. (Ibid.)

Rabbi David Marx, spiritual head of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation for many years, wrote as follows in their Fiftieth Jubilee volume:

> "A survey of the minutes of the past forty-one years shows that the congregation at all times responded to the calls made upon it in the interest of the Jew and Judaism. When disaster befell other communities, it shared in the common sorrow and the common helplessness. Appeals from the pulpit for laudable movements and worthy purposes were never in vain. The comgregation came to the help of Galveston and San Francisco. It heard the call from Russia and from the War Zone....Locally, the Council of Jewish Women was called into being twenty-one years ago by its pulpit. It is the parent of the Jewish Charities of Atlanta. It inspired the Educational Alliance and the Federation of Jewish Charities." (p. 22)

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

Congregation Nidche Israel, or the "Stadtschule" was founded in 1830. In its early years the congregation performed its philanthropic functions directly, through the "Board." We read, for example, in the records of the congregation:

> "Owing to the continued illness of.....(sic) his family is in want and the Board donates $5.00 to that family."
> "A stranger made application to bury his child, and the Board, respecting his poverty, agreed not to make any charge."

(Guttmacher, A., A History of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, 1905)

No later records of congregational philanthropic activity are extant. It is safe to assume that the congregation turned over its duties in this sphere to

the various independent societies as they were founded.

The "Irish Chevra"
Baltimore, Md.

This paradoxically named organization first appears in our records in 1832, when we learn that they held services over an inn at Bond and Fleet Sts. They constituted, consequently, a congregation.

There are two reasons given for the peculiar name. First, that it is a misnomer for the Iris Chevra; second, that an Irish lady used to sit regularly at the door of their meeting place. (Elum, I., and others, The Jews of Baltimore, pp. 7-8) Be these reasons as they may, the official name of the organization was never used; it was always known as the "Irish Chevra."

On March 4, 1834, the assembly of Maryland incorporated the United Hebrew Benevolent Society of Baltimore, "for the laudable purpose of affording relief to each other and to their respective families in the event of sickness, distress, or death." (Ibid.) Despite this group, the "Irish Chevra" continued to meet and carry on their activities for over half a century; then the organization died a natural death.

Congregation Oheb Shalom
Baltimore, Md.

Congregation Oheb Shalom was founded in 1853 by a group of German Jews who wished a reform services, but not so radical a type of reform as was practised at Har Sinai

Verein. Throughout their ninety years of history, there is no mention of any separate, organized charitable work. The congregation itself, as well as the members, have given generously to outside, independent agencies, but no other activities have been recorded. (Rosenau, W., Congregation Oheb Shalom, 3 volumes., 1903, 1928, 1938)

From 1846 to the present day, the field of philanthropy in Baltimore has been dominated by independent societies. The first of these was the United Hebrew Assistance Society, organized to assist the poor in general, but new immigrants in particular. It was reorganized in 1856 as the Hebrew Benevolent Society. (Blum, op. cit., pp. 9, 18; Tarshish, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 378; The Israelite, Vol. VII, No. 7, p. 50) A Ladies Sewing Society came into being, a Free Burial Society was formed in 1869, and three years later a Hebrew Orphan Asylum was founded. (Archives Israelite, Vol. XXV, p. 226, Vol. XXVI, p. 940ff.; Blum, op. cit., p. 19.

Boston, Mass.

The Boston Jewish community was relatively late in organizing. The first congregation, Ohabei Shalom, was founded in 1842. We are informed that in the early years of the congregation charitable work was purely individual. A needy person appealed to a member of the congregation, and that worthy proceeded to circularize his friends and collected sufficient funds for the client. (Schindler, S., Israelites In Boston, 1889,

no pagination) In 1847, Congregation Ohabei Shalom organized two benevolent societies, one for men and one for women. (Friedman, L., Jewish Pioneers and Patriots, p. 123f) In 1861, both were still functioning, but probably died not too long thereafter. (Friedman, op. cit., p. 129) A United Hebrew Benevolent Association was formed in 1864, and all the congregations in the city joined. (Schindler, op. cit.)

There is some disagreement about the founding of Temple Adath Israel. The Jewish Encyclopedia (Vol. III, p. 331) states the founding as having occurred in 1853. The Temple, however, celebrated its 80th anniversary in 1934, implying the founding date to be 1854. (Anniversary booklet)

In 1861 Temple Adath Israel organized a Hebrew Benevolent Society within the Congregation, and in 1869 there followed a Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society. (Ibid.) It is to be supposed that the Hebrew Benevolent Society expired when the United Hebrew Benevolent Association was formed (1864), and that the Ladies' society developed into the Temple Israel Sisterhood.

Temple Beth Zion
Buffalo, N.Y.

The first Jews to settle in Buffalo were apparently of German origin. The first society there was the Jacobsohn Society, founded in October, 1847, with eleven members. Its purpose was to visit the sick, grant money

benefits to its members, and assist in the burial of the dead. It was, in short, a Hebra Gemilut Hasadim.

The same year Congregation Beth El was established, all of whose members were of Polish origin. There was apparently no relationship between the two groups, the Beth El members carrying on their own philanthropic activity.

In 1850, the Jacobsohn Society members organized into Congregation Beth Zion, but were not incorporated until 1864. The congregation dates its founding from this latter year.

The Sisterhood of Zion was formed early by the congregation as an active social service agency. It has continued itsactivities until the present time, but is now a part of the Federated Jewish Charities of Buffalo. (Temple Beth Zion, Buffalo, N.Y., 50th anniversary souvenir, 1915, p. 8f.)

Congregation Mizpah
Chattanooga, Tenn.

The Jewish settlement in Chattanooga was relatively late also. The first organization records known to us date from May 20, 1866, when a Hebrew Benevolent Society was organized. In addition to its charitable activities in the community, the society conducted a religious school and worship services. This situation continued for over twenty years, until 1888, when the Society changed its name and emphasis, becoming Mizpah Congregation.

The philanthropic aspect of its work was shortly thereafter taken over by secular agencies. (Inventory of the Church and Synagogue Archives of Tennessee, 1941, p. 19)

Chicago

It is extremely difficult to trace clearly the development of philanthropic organizations in Chicago. Conflicting sources exist which are almost impossible to evaluate insofar as their accuracy is concerned. In addition, synagogal influence and control are not clearly indicated in many instances, but may be implied or induced.

"Strangely enough, the first society in Chicago" was a burial society. (Frankland, op. cit., p. 24) From our previous statements there is, of course, nothing strange about the fact that the first organization in Chicago was the Jewish Burial Ground Society, founded in 1845. (Felsenthal, B., History of Congregation KAM, 1897, p. 12) Two years later, 1847, Kehilath Anshe Maarab (variously spelled) was organized. It absorbed the Burial Ground Society almost immediately. (AJHS, Vol. II, p. 24; Frankland, op. cit., p. 24)

Three sources are extant on the founding of the Hebrew Benevolent Society. Frankland (op. cit., p. 25) wrote:

> "This society, while nominally formed (in 1850) for the purpose of nursing the sick and burying its dead (a Hebra Kaddisha) was a great factor in bringing about reform in the congregational service (emphasis mine-e.j.l.) and during its twenty years of active experience constituted a brave band in favor of advanced ideas. The

> organization is still kept up nominally, owns a cemetery near Graceland, but only meets regularly for the purpose of electing officers."

Felsenthal, who used KAM's records, dates the founding of the Society in 1851 as purely a cemetery-owning society, which still exists. (Op. cit., p. 12) Eliassof also dates the formation of the organization in 1851, but does not mention KAM at all in connection with it at any time. (Eliassof, op. cit., pp. 53-54) We might conclude that members of KAM congregation organized a benevolent society, probably in 1851, and proceededto buy a cemetery to to perform other charitable functions. It continued its activities until early in the '70's, when the United Hebrew Charities was formed. Thereafter it lived on as the owners of a cemetery, meeting annually to elect its officers.

A second congregation was founded in 1852 which took the name B'nai Shalom. We know little or nothing about it. (AJHS, Vol. XI, p. 125f.) A year later a "adies Relief Society was formed, which may have been connected with this synagogue, or may have been independent. There are no exact records extant." (Ibid.)

The Hebrew Benevolent Society was also known as the German Hebrew Benevolent Society. Its annual report for 1855 showed that it distributed $3,923 to 1,940 applicants, and retained a cash balance of $2750. Its standing in the community was excellent, its members zealous, and its activities efficiently handled. (Ammonean, Vol. XII, No. 2, May 4, 1855)

By 1859 the number of Jews in Chicago had become so large that existing organizations were unable to handle the needs of the community. We have reocrds of the organization of two new societies in that year; they may be the same, however. A United Hebrew Relief Society was formed. It was independent of synagogal influence, hired a salaried superintendent, and apparently carried on general charitable activities. (Felsenthal, op. cit., p. 12; Eliassof, op. cit., p. 54) A Hebrew Relief Society's founding is also dated in 1859. Its sole purpose, according to our source, was to maintain a hospital. (AJHS, Vol. XI, p. 126) We have, however, no other record of the organization of a hospital association until 1866-7 when a building was opened which was destroyed in the great fire of 1871. (Eliassof, loc. cit.) It is possible, therefore, that the Hnited Hebrew Relief Society did have as one of its purposesthe building of a hespital, but that this purpose was not fulfilled for several years.

The last mention we have of synagogal charities' functions during this period concerns the organization, in 1861, of a Ladies Sewing Society as an auxiliary of the Hebrew Benevolent Society. (Felsenthal, loc. cit.) It, too, must have been absorbed by the United Hebrew Charities.

The date of the merging of Chicago's Jewish philanthropies into a United Hebrew Charities is questionable. Bregstone give no specific date, but places the consolidation in the "early '70's." (Chicago and its Jews,

1933, p. 7) Eliassof, on the other hand, states that the United Hebrew Relief Assocation "became" the United Hebrew Charities in 1888. (loc. cit.) It is possible that the consolidation occurred in the '70's, and that the UHRA, largest of Chicago's benevolent societies, joined in 1888. That step would have made the union a complete one, for the UHRA controlled Michael Reese Hospital, built in 1881, a tremendous undertaking. The same year a Manual Training School was organized in Chicago's "ghetto." It functioned ably for more than 30 years. (Bregstone, op. cit., p. 20f.)

After the organization of the United Hebrew Charities, Chicago's philanthropic history is almost completely secular. The United Hebrew Charity group became a Jewish Aid Society in 1907, part of the Associated Jewish Charities, formed in 1900, which was a clearing house and a collection and campaign group. It contains no synagogal charities. (Eliassof, loc. cit.)

Cincinnati

The first Jewish settler in Cincinnati was Joseph Jonas, who arrived in March of 1817. He was joined by enough other Israelites to permit the organization of a synagogue in 1824. (Philipson, D., The Oldest Jewish Congregation in the West, 1924, p. 13) At first no society for relief and charity existed. Strangers in need were helped individually. (Ibid.)

Four years after the organization of Congregation Bene Israel, a charitable organization was founded. It

was not connected with that synagogue, for it bought a Sefer Torah and held its own services, in addition to philanthropic activity. It also owned a cemetery. In 1833 the group was chartered as the Hebrew Beneficent Society. By 1844 it was purely a mutual benefit organization, with over 160 members. (The Israelite, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 19)

An independent Hebra was formed in 1842, known as the Hebra Meshivat Nefesh, to collect funds for immigrants in particular, but for indigents in general. It held an annual banquet. (Ibid.)

A series of women's organizations were founded during this period, all for the same purpose. It might be assumed that petty jealousies accounted for the superfluity of organization to some extent, at least. A Ladies Benevolent Society began to function in 1838. It was followed by the Old German Ladies Benevolent Society in 1841, which had over 140 members. In 1850, a German Ladies Relief Society was formed with 40 charter members. Eventually, all these societies merged and consolidated into the United Hebrew Charities, formed in 1896. Long before that date, however, they had ceased to be an important force in communal efforts. (The Israelite, Vol. I, No. 4, p. 26; Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 41)

The men of the community were not far behind their spouses in the creation of conflicting benevolent societies. A Great Hebrew Benevolent Society was chartered in 1844,

apparently by members of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, though probably not affiliated directly with the congregation. (History of KK Bnai Jeshurun, 1892; Heller, J., As Yesterday When It Is Past, p. 22) In addition, between 1842 and 1853 the Cincinnati Jewish community organized: the previously-mentioned Meshivat Nefesh Chrvra, a Jewish hospital (the first in the United States, 1850), and a Chevra Kadisha (1853), for the purpose of attending the sick, dying, and deceased. It had 65 members, with a rabbi in attendance, though not connected with any synagogue. (Heller, loc. cit.; The Israelite, Vol. I, No. 3p. 19)

Despite allthese organizations, Congregation Bene Israel had a charity committee, which was functioning by 1844 or 1845. The congregation employed a physician, and furnished medicine and a nurse. It also buried at congregational expense any poor or strange Jews. (Philipson, op. cit., p. 22; Tarshish, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 742)

The minutes of the congregation furnish us with several interesting items:

The President and the Vice President had the power to bind out as apprentices the children of poor Jews. (Philipson, loc. cit.)

An application was made to the Trustees by a poor Jew. He was granted $6.00 per month for six months. If he died, his seat in the synagogue was not to remain in his family, but was to be relinquished to the congregation, as was all his other property. (Minutes, November 2, 1845, quoted in Tarshish, loc.cit.)

Despite the conglomeration of benevolent societies and the competition between them, cooperation was apparently possible on occasion. We learn that in 1847 the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, the German Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, the Hebrew Benevolent Society, the Hebrew Beneficient Society, Congregation Bene Israel, and Congregation B'nai Jeshurun joined forces to select a physician to attend the poor gratis, his remuneration to be split among them. Dr. Bettmann was chosen. (The Occident, Vol. VI, p. 60)

Cincinnati Jewish society considered the Annual Ball of these many benevolent societies among the highlights of the social activities of the year. There was usually a banquet, a speech by the Rabbi or some renowned visitor, a collection, then dancing. (Wise, op. cit., p. 243f.)

Cleveland

Taking into consideration the fact that Cleveland has at present a large Jewish population and a well-organized communal life, there is suprisingly little to be said about its synagogal charitable organizations during the German period, and nothing in later times.

The first Jew to settle in Cleveland arrived in 1838, and a year later the first religious organization came into being, called the Israelitish Society. In 1842 it split, but four years later re-merged into Anshe Chesed Congregation (Euclid Avenue Temple). In 1850,

dissenters from Anshe Chesed organized Congregation Tifereth Israel (The Temple).

The only record we have of a synagogal charity in Cleveland is the mention in the Occident (Vol. X, p. 305) of the existence of a Hebra Ahabat Ahim. Otherwise, the congregations seemed content to allow independent societies to administer charity in the community. Both temples, and the conservative and orthodox synagogues as well, have alwaysbeen most generous in their financial support of all worthy organizations.

The development of philanthropic organizations in Cleveland took place as follows:

1857, Hebrew Benevolent Society, a dues-paying organization receiving $4.00 per year from each member.

1875, Hebrew Relief Association

1894, Personal Service Society (now merged into the National Council of Jewish Women)

1905, Free Loan Society (Gemilas Chesed)

In 1903 the Federation of Jewish Charities was formed. The congregations are not represented. (Gries, M., The Jewish Community of Cleveland, p. 8)

Columbia, South Carolina

Jewish organizational life seems to have begun in this daughter-community of Charleston in 1822, with the formation of a combination congregation-benevolent society. We know nothing about its activities. The next year a Female Auxiliary Jewish Society was organized.

The benevolent society, which as usual started merely as a burial society, became a full-fledged philanthropic institution in 1826, and was incorporated in 1834. It then became independent from the congregation, which became known as Tree of Life. (Elzas, loc. cit.; Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, p. 481)

Temple Beth El
Detroit, Mich.

The temple was organized in 1850. Its Constitution, dated April 21, 1851, reads in part as follows:

> "Article IV: On application for charitable purposes, the President shall have the right to grant a sum not exceeding $5.00." (Temple Beth El, History, 1900)

The dispensing of charity by the congregation became more systematized in the '60's, when the Beth El Relief Society was organized. It continued its work until 1899, and dispensed almost $100,000 in cash during that time in addition to its gifts in food and clothing, and personal service activities. In 1899 it became part of the United Jewish Charities of Detroit. (Ibid.)

In 1909, the temple took over two beds at the Children's Free Hospital. They were paid for out of the treasury of the congregation. (Temple Beth El, 1900-1910, p. 47)

In 1940, the following were listed by Dr. Leo M. Franklin, then rabbi of the temple, as its philanthropies:

1. Temple Memorial Fund: "This is used to care for cases of persons in need whose position is such that they cannot be cared for through the usual philanthropic agencies.

2. Ruth Franklin Einstein Memorial Fund: aid to university students.

3. Book of Memories Fund: any congregational purpose specified by the Board.

4. Various library funds.

5. Tuition Fund: for children whose parents cannot afford the fees charged in the religious school.

6. Temple Scholarship Fund: same purpose as the Einstein Memorial Fund.

7. Corrinne W. Lewis Hospital Welfare Fund: provides refreshments, etc., for hospital patients

8. Jahrzeit Fund: provides a scholarship at the Hebrew Union College.

9. Nettie Simon Memorial Fund: for general philanthropic activity

(Franklin, L., An Outline History of Congregation Beth El, 1940, p. 34)

Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation

Isaac M. Wise visited this community in 1855. He found cemeteries and "chebroth," "But there were no further signs of Judaism among them." (Reminiscences, p. 294) It is not known whether the community was stimulated by his visit or not, but within a year one of the Hebrot had become the Indianpolis Hebrew Congregation. According to the congregational history published in 1936, the synagogue was responsible for the beginnings of social work in Indianapolis, for the founding of the Jewish Federation, and for the organization of the Jewish Communal Building. (80th anniversary souvenir) No specific cha-

ritable organizations are mentioned.

In a series of corrective notes to the first draft of this study, the following was appended by Dr. Abraham Cronbach:

> "In my childhood, there was at Indianapolis a Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society. My mother belonged. She often brought from the after-meeting refreshments some cream-puffs which my sister and I would devour. Surely those cream-puffs ought to go into a history of Jewish philanthropy."

Keokuk, Iowa

In the late '40's and early '50's, Keokuk was the most important settlement in Iowa. It was a "jumping off" point for huge caravans to the west coast. Its first Jewish organization was a benevolent society, "The Benevolent Children of Jerusalem." It had fourteen members. Services were held during Pesach, 1855, according to the Minhag Poland. Contributions were made to the upkeep of the society-congregation from both Jews and non-Jews. $3.00 annual dues were collected from each member. In its first six months of existence, the society expended a total of $10.75 for aid to poor transient Jews.

On November 25, 1855, the Society changed its name to Congregation B'nai Israel. It lasted for three stormy years, racked by a controversy over Minhag Poland vs. Minhag Ashkenaz. In 1858 the congregation did split over the issue, and both dissenting groups died. Keokuk's importance waned at about the same time, and no more is known about the community. (Glazer, S., The Jews of Iowa,

p. 184, p. 189, p. 192)

Knoxville, Tennessee

The Knoxville Benevolent Society was organized in 1866, with twenty-five charter members. It held both reform and orthodox services fromthe outset. In 1877, the name and emphasis were changed, and the group became Beth El Temple. In 1893, the Hebrew Benevolent Society was chartered as a separate organization. (Tennessee Archives, op. cit., p. 17ff.)

Lancaster, Penna.

Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim was founded in 1866. Ten years later the ladies of the congregation organized a Ladies Benevolent Society. Eventually it was taken over by the Jewish Welfare Association of the Temple, headed by the rabbi. This organization allocates funds to various groups, and distributes some money directly to needy persons in the community. (75th anniversary souvenir, 1931, p. 16)

Louisville, Kentucky

Congregation Adath Israel was founded in 1842. "The congregation was the headquarters for and the source of all communal work, including that of charity. Thus, for instance, in July, 1849, the officers were empowered, in any case of sickness, to appoint from the members four for

night and two for day duty, to attend the sick, this provision to remain in force until some society for such purposes should be organized." (History of Congregation Adath Israel, 1906, p. 16)

Individual relief cases were submitted to meetings, apparently of the entire congregation, for discussion and decision. (Ibid.) The organization to be formed came about in 1854, when a Relief Association was founded, within the congregation. It continued all communal charity work until 1876, when it became an independent organization. (Adath Israel, op. cit., p. 18, p. 91)

Memphis, Tenn.

There are two conflicting dates given for the founding of Congregation B'nai Israel. The Israelite states that it was organized in 1852 as a combination congregation and benevolent society. (Vol. 7, No. 7, p. 308) The more reputable sources state that the congregation was founded in 1853 as an outgrowth of a previously-organized Hebrew Benevolent Society. (Tennessee Archives, op. cit., p. 14) At any rate, we know that once again charitable work preceded the organization for religious activities. Eventually the Benevolent Society became independent and finally merged into a typical Jewish federation.

Mobile, Alabama

On June 25, 1844, Jewish services were held in Mobile for the first time. The date of the incorporation

of Congregation Shaarai Shomayim is not known. The only reference found its incomplete annals about charity informed us that the congregation was known in its early years as "Friends of the Needy." (AJHS, Vol. 12, p. 120)

Montgomery, Alabama

A Hebra Mebaker Holim (misspelled in the Hebrew) was founded in Montgomery in 1846, as a typical society for visiting the sick, burying the dead, and for general charitable work. "This society observed Rosh Ha-Shurah (sic) and Yom Kippur..." (AJHS, Vol. XIII, p. 84) On May 1, 1849, the Hebrah was enlarged into "Kahl Montgomery," which eventually became Temple Beth-Or. (Ibid) The benevolent functions of the Kahl were later divorced from the temple.

Nashville, Tennessee

The Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society was formed in 1853. It continued its existence until 1882, when the Hebrew Relief Society took over its functions. The members of the Society met in 1854, however, and organized Congregation Magen David. In 1868 this group merged with the later-organized Congregation B'nai Jeshurun. The combined temple was called Ohavai Shalom, known today as the VineSt. Temple. Charitable work remained outside the congregation. (Tennessee Archives, op. cit., p. 14, p. 16)

New Orleans, La.

Jews were settled in New Orleans fairly early in American history. Jacob and Judah Touro were among the early citizens. The latter fought in the War of 1812. Some time before 1828, a Shaaray Chesed society was formed, which bought a cemetery and performed the duties of a combination Hebra Kaddisha and Hebra Gemilut Hasadim. (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IX, p. 246) About the same time, it became a congregation, despite some confusing evidence about the organization of only a separate benevolent society at this time. (Feibelman, J., A Social and Economic Study of the New Orleans Jewish Community, 1941, p. 71; cf. Shpall, Leo, "Early Local Jewish Charity," Jewish Ledger, August 19, 1938) Our contention is supported by the following statement:

> "Congregational development is generally preceded by the purchase of burial grounds and almost as often preceded, or else accompanied, by the organization of benevolent societies. Around 1844...the Hebrew Benevolent Society was founded." (Heller, M., Jubilee Souvenir of Temple Sinai, 1922, p. 8)

The Occident gives the date of the Hebrew Benevolent Society as March, 1845. (Vol. II, p. 165) At any rate, it was not organized in 1828; the congregation was. It now bears the name of its founder: the Touro Synagogue. Congregation Sha'aray Tefillah was organized in 1849. In 1853 it formed a Montefiore Ladies BenevolentAssociation for general charitable activities. When the independent societies in the city took over philanthropic activities, this group became a Sisterhood, affiliated

with the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. (Inventory of Church and Synagogue Archives of Louisiana, 1941, p. 91)

A Hebra Bikkur Holim was started in 1849 by orthodox Jews. We know little about it. (Feibelman, op. cit., p. 90) Twoyears previous, the ladies auxiliary of the Hebrew Benevolent Society was formed, "whose charitable impulses cannot be described in words nor its gracious beneficence estimated." (Myers, W., Israelites of Louisiana, p. 54; quoted in Feibelman, loc. cit.)

A second benevolent society for men was started in 1851, for what reason we do not know. It was known as the Society for Love and Benevolence, and was controlled by Portugese Jews. Its purpose was to aid the ill and bury the dead. (Heller, op. cit., p. 8)

Two important organizations came into being during this period: the Touro Infirmary in 1852, and the Orphan's Home in 1854. Neither had any synagogue affiliation. In 1874 the Infirmary and the Benevolent Society were merged. (Heller, op. cit., p. 8, p. 128 note)

There were two other benevolent organizations in New Orleans. A Rachel Benevolent Society was founded in 1894; a Somech Nofelim society was organized by orthodox elements in the community in 1895.

New Orleans had a fortunate set of circumstances permit the federation of all its charities in 1912 without rancor or difficulty. The Federation controls local, national, and overseas relief. It became part of the

Community Chest of New Orleans in 1925, largely through the efforts of Rabbi Emil Leipziger. (Feibelman, op. cit., p. 90)

New York, N.Y.

Obviously, it would be impossible to encompass the synagogal philanthropic activities of New York's enormous Jewry within the confines of this study. A bare outline must suffice.

About 1820, a Hebra Gemilath Chesed was organized by "eighteen gentlemen who later became members of Congregation Bnai Jeshurun." (Goldstein, op. cit., p. 68) A Constitution and By-Laws were formulated on July 2, 1826. This organization was also known as a Hebrew Mutual Relief Society. It soon expanded into a general communal organization.

One of Congregation Bnai Jeshurun's first acts as a group was to assist victims of the disastrous fire of December, 1825. The congregation received a communication from Mr. Bogardus, chairman of the relief committee, which read in part:

> "I beg to return the sincere thanks of the committee and permit me to add that a Congregation whose almost first act is to relieve the sufferings of the unfortunate cannot fail to prosper." (Ibid.)

The members of Bnai Jeshurun have always been active in all phases of social service. They were instrumental in the formation of the Home for Aged and Infirm Hebrews, and to a lesser degree, of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum and the Young Men's Hebrew Association." (Goldstein, op. cit., p. viii)

In 1845 the Bnai Jeshurun Benevolent Society was formed, according to the Occident, which commented that

> "daughters of Israel were, as usual, active in benevolence, visiting the sick, comforting the dying, and performing the last duties to all who required their aid in a large congregation like that in Elm St." (Vol. II, p. 445f.)

In his history of the congregation, however, Dr. Israel Goldstein states that the group, known officially as the Bnai Jeshurun Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society for the Relief of Indigent Females, was founded on November 21, 1848. It raised its funds through its annual ball, various sociables, entertainments, etc. In 1860, three sociables raised $1,000 and were noted favorably all overthe city. (Goldstein, op. cit., p. 137; The Jewish Messenger, Vol. VIII, No. 25, p. 188)

The Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society reached its peak of importance between 1860 and 1880. It averaged for many years between 300 and 400 maternity cases, in which the mothers were assisted both pre- and post-natally. In 1870, a home for aged ladies was opened by the society at 215 W. 17th St. After 1874, it gradually relinquished its duties to the United Hebrew Charities.

In 1894, however, a Sisterhood was organized in the congregation for "personal service," under the diredtion of the United Hebrew Charities. (Goldstein, op. cit., p. 210) A Junior Sisterhood followed. The groups were assigned a territory of East Side families, in which they functioned as case workers. Between January and October,

1894, they served 277 families, expended $1243 in addition to other services. (Ibid.)

Between 1903 and 1913, under the leadership of Mrs. Herman Levy, a Neighborhood House was organized by the Sisterhood at 336 E. 65th St. It spent an average of $3000 per year on social, educational, and relief activities. It received support from the congregation and from the United Hebrew Charities. (Goldstein, op. cit., p. 237)

Temple Emanuel was organized as the Emanuel Verein in 1845. Though it formed no separate charitable institutions, its influence was paramount in the German Hebrew Benevolent Society, supported almost wholly by Emanuel members. (Occident, Vol. III, p. 524; Stern, M., The Rise and Progress of Reform Judaism, 1895; Temple Emanuel, 75th anniversary booklet, 1920)

The same year, the Polish element seceded from Congregation Bnai Jeshurun and organized Congregation Shaaray Tefilla, now known as the West End Synagogue. The records of the congregation itself which were available to us give no indication of any separate charitable undertakings on the part of the group. (80th anniversary booklet, 1935) We have, however, two other bits of evidence of Shaaray Tefilla organizations. In 1860, the Ladies BenevolentSociety of the congregation was engaged in sick visits, fuel distribution, and had just organized a sewing group of over 200 members. (Jewish Messenger, Vol. VIII, No. 25, p. 188) And in 1874, when the United

Hebrew Charities was formed, one of the constituent organizations was this same Ladies Benevolent Society. (First Annual Report of the Board of Relief of the United Hebrew Charities, 1875)

In 1855, the Archives Israelite reported the following organizations active in New York:

Seven charity societies (for men, or men and women)
Four charity societies (for women only)
Eighteen Mutual Benefit Societies
Nineteen Synagogues

The editor deplored the lack of cooperation among them, the duplication of their efforts, and the resultant loss of efficiency. (Vol. XVI, p. 301)

Lest it be thought that Shearith Israel had died completely as a group interested in benevolence, we learn that the Hebrew Relief Society of the "Portugese Congregation" sponsored a fair in a "fine house on Broadway" in 1860. (Jewish Messenger, Vol. VIII, No. 25, p. 188)

A period of terrific expansion in congregational numbers occurred between 1860 and 1900. It would be impossible to chronicle their organization and the institutions they set up. Suffice it to say that after 1874, only small "chevras" and ladies' auxiliaries were formed in most of these synagogues. This was a period of transition from synagogal control of philanthropy to professionally-administered social agencies. Two phases of this transition are clearly indicated. First, existing societies began to merge. Typically, the Hebrew BenevolentSociety (1822) and the German Hebrew Benevolent Society (1845) merged into

the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society in 1859, continuing their joint activities until their work was gradually incorporated into the Uhited Hebrew Charities. (Goldstein, op. cit., p. 109)

The United Hebrew Charities came into being in October, 1874. Its original constituentbodies were:

The Hebrew Benevolent Fuel Association
The Hebrew Relief Society
The Shaaray Tefilka Ladies Benevolent Society
The Yorkville Ladies Benevolent Society

(First Annual Report, op. cit., 1875)

The chief accomplishment of the United Hebrew Charities in its early years was the division of the city into relief districts, with different organizations responsible for each. Some of these organizations were synagogal. For example, the Bnai Jeshurun Ladies Benevolent Society and the Beth El Society of Personal Service both had districts in which they worked. (Goldstein, op. cit., p. 143f.; Beth El Society of Personal Service, Annual Report, 1894-5, p. 5) This was the second phase of the transition period: the secular agencies controlled the activities of synagogal charities, directly their efforts. Further consolidation and change took place after the turn of the century.

Paducah, Kentucky

As might be expected, the first Jewish organization in Paducah was a burial society, the Chevra Yeshurun Burial Society, organized in 1859. Nine years later it evolved into a congregation, and retained its original name until

1893, when the synagogue was re-named Temple Israel. No further information exists about the function of the synagogue in philanthropic fields after it became purely a religious institution. (Bernheim, J., Settlement of Jews in the Lower Ohio Valley, p. 29)

Philadelphia, Penna.

The first Ashkenazic institution in Philadelphia was the Hebrew German Society (Rodeph Shalom) founded in 1802 as a sick and burial benefit society. The Constitution of that body of 1812 is still extant. It read in part:

> "Article 15: The President orJunto can draft two men to sit with the sick at night." A fine of $2.00 was imposed for refual to comply,, except when the disease was contagious.

(Davis, E., History of Rodef Shalom Congregation, p. 14f., p. 20)

This set-up is more closely akin to the Sephardic congregations than to the Ashkenazic, influenced possibly by the practises of Mikve Israel Congregation.

In 1823, the congregation allowed offerings to be made in the synagogue for the benefit of the United Hebrew Beneficial Society. The officers of that Society expressed their gratitude properly in a letter to the congregation. (Davis, op. cit., p. 33)

Despite their cooperation with a secular benevolent society, the congregation continued itsown philanthropic activities. Three such individual cases are cited by Davis:

> 1826 Money given to an old doctor
> 1833 Contribution to Mrs. Levitt of Jerusalem
> 1836 Money to help get a poor woman out of jail.

(Op. cit., p. 127)

It is to be expected, however, that shortly after 1836 the synagogue concentrated its efforts on support of the independent benevolent agencies.

Congregation Keneseth Israel was founded in 1847. The only mention we have of synagogal philanthropic institutions concerns the founding by Dr. S. Hirsch, in 1868, of the Familien Waisen-Erziehungs Verein, known now as Orphans Guardians. The congregation administered the affairs of this society for 23 years, before giving it up to secular auspices. (Keneseth Israel, Philadelphia, 90th anniversary, 1937)

Pine Bluff, Arkansas

Congregation Anshe Emeth was founded in 1867. In 1870 it organized a Ladies BenevolentSociety for general charitable work. The organization functioned for twenty years, then changed its name to the Ladies Temple Society. Thereafter it continued social service work, but in increasingly smaller amounts, most of its activities being confined to temple affairs. In 1908 a Willing Workers society was formed in the Sisterhood for social service. It dispenses money, sews garments, and distributes them. (50th anniversary booklet, 1917)

Plaquemina, Louisiana

In 1856, the Hebrew Benevolent Society was incorporated "to acquire a temple and establish a cemetery." In 1878 it changed its name to Congregation Ohavi Shalom.

The organization died completely in 1932. (Inventory of Church and Synagogue Archives ofLouisiana, p. 6)

Portland, Oregon

Congregation Beth Israel was founded in 1858. The next year a Hebrew Benevolent Society was founded by the congregation. We do not know what became of this society, but can safely guess that it became independent and is now part of the Jewish federation of the city. (Congregation Beth Isreaa, 75th anniversary booklet, 1933)

Providence, R.I.

Congregation Sons of Israel and David was founded in 1844. No records of charitable institutions exist until 1877, when Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger founded the Montefiore Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association. In 1934 the organization was still functioning in general philanthropic work, and had about 300 members. (90th anniversary booklet, 1934)

Richmond, Va.

In 1849, the Rev. M. H. Michelbacher, rabbi of Congregation Beth Ahabah, organized the Ladies Hebrew Association, known usually as the "Ladies' Chebrah" of the community. After the Civil War it was reorganized as a Ladies Hebrew Beneficial Association,a mutual benefit society. In 1890 that provision was dropped from its purpose, and it became independent as a charitable

organization. In 1917 it boasted 200 members. (Ezekiel, H., and Lichtenstein, G., The Jews of Richmond, 1917, p. 231)

On February 1, 1852, there was organized in Richmond the Hebra shel Bikkur Holim U'Gemilut Hasadim. No one could belong to this society who was not a contributor to K.K. Beth Shalome. (AJHS, Vol. III, p. 27) We are fortunate in having extant the original Constitution of this synagogue philanthropic institution. It merits detailed consideration:

Article II, Section 2: "No person shall be admitted or continued as a member who is not a contributor to the Kahal Kodesh Beth Shalome of this city." (p. 3)

Article II, Section 5: Age limits for membership, 18-50. (P. 4)

Article III, Section 1: Annual dues, $5.00 per person. After the age of 45, $1.00 extra each year.

Article III, Section 3: Each member paid 6 1/4 cents weekly to the General Fund, plus 6 1/4 cents monthly to the Widow and Orphan Fund. (p. 5)

Article III, Section 4: Upon the death of a member, each person pays $1.00. Upon the death of a wife or child of a member, each person pays 50 cents.

Article V, Section 3: The President shall visit the sick or indigent when reported to him, or cause it to be done by some member of the Association." He shall have the right to tender them assistance when needed. (p. 7)

Article X, Section 1: The Hebra met in planry session four times each year. (p. 10)

Article XI, Section 2: Every member is entitled to $4.00 per week when ill or disabled. (p. 11)

Article XI, Section 3: Before sick benefits could be paid, the ill member must be visited by a member of the Board.

Article XI, Section 7: The President could appoint members to sit with a sick member when necessary. (p. 12)

Article XI, Section 9: Upon the death of a member, the widow is to receive $20.00 for funeral expenses. Upon the death of the wife or a child of a member (over 30 days of age) the member is entitled to receive $10.00.

Article XI, Section 10: The association is to appropriate $10.00 for a monument for deceased members.

Article XI, Section 10: Members keeping "shivah" are entitled to $10.00.

Article XI, Section14: Two persons to be appointed to watch the grave of amember for three suceeding nights in summer, four in winter. To be paid $10.00

Article XI, Section14: The widow of a member is entitled to $3.00 per week when she is sick or disabled. $1.50 per week for her children.

Article XVI, Section1: Members must attend the funeral of a member. They must attend "minyan" during "shivah", also "Yahrzeit." (p. 17)

Article XVII: A list is to be prepared at each quarterly meeting for sick visits.

Article XVII, Section 5: Eight persons to be appointed to perform "Taharah" upon the death of a member. (p. 18)

Article XIX: If the society is to be dissolved, the stock or securities owned by it are to be transferred to K.K. Beth Shalome. The funds are to be used by the congregation until 20 persons desire to form a new association. (p. 19)

Article XX: A list of fines and penalties ranging from 25 cents to $5.00 for various offenses:
absence from meeting (25¢)
refusal to attend sick ($1.00)
neglecting sick watch ($3.00 for night; $1.00 for day)
disorderly conduct ($5.00) (pp. 20-22)

The constitution of this Hebra is fairly typical of Germanic societies in Europe in the late medieval period. There is no relationship between the society and the community in general. It is solely for the benefit of its members.

Saint Louis, Mo.

The United Hebrew Congregation was founded in 1838. Until 1880 we have no records of its benevolences. In that year it organized a Ladies Aid Society, which is still functioning. That society, in turn, set up a sewing group, which also meets regularly at present and distributes itsproducts. (100th anniversary booklet, 1938)

Of all the large Jewish communities in the United States, St. Louis offers us the least material for study. After the Chicago fire of 1871, many families moved into St. Louis. They needed assistance. A United Hebrew Relief Association was formed, independent of any synagogue affiliation. Other charitable societies sprang up, all of which were consolidated in 1897 into the United Jewish Charities. (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X., p. 640)

Salt Lake City, Utah

The first religious service held by Jews in Utah took place on September 9, 1866, in Salt LakeCity. At that time male and female benevolent societies were formed. In 1893, the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society was still functioning; the men's had disbanded some years before. The members of the societies had organized Congregation Bnai Israel in 1874. (World's Fair Ecclesiastical History of Utah, 1893, p. 302)

San Antonio, Texas

A Benevolent Society existed in San Antonio as early

as 1856. It held services for six years before becoming a congregation, Beth El, which was not incorporated until 1874. (Cohen, H., One Hundred Years of Jewry in Texas, p. 23) The name of the Benevolent Association was changed to Montefiore Benevolent Association in 1885. A Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association was also formed. Neither now has any connection with the temple. (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, p. 34)

San Bernadino, California

Congregation Emanuel was founded in 1860. It organized a Hebrew Benevolent Society, which became an indpendent organization very early, and has continued in that capacity to the present time. (75th anniversary booklet, 1935)

San Francisco, California

With the beginnings of the gold rush in late 1848 and 1849, San Francisco became the center of a mad, chaotic new world inhabited by gold-crazed men. Among them were Jews.

Two religious services were held during the High Holydays of 1850. Both were conducted by benevolent societies which had been founded shortly before.

The Eureka Benevolent Society was founded by thirteen men, headed by August Helbing of New Orleans. (Foorsanger, J., "A Few Chapters from the History of the Jews on the Pacifist Coast from 1849 to 1860) in American

Jews Annual, 1888-90, p. 56) The purpose of this society was "to assist the poor, to nurse the sick, and to bury the dead." (Voorsanger, op. cit., p. 57) As we have mentioned, it also conducted services, and shortly evolved into Temple Emanuel. "In the fall of 1851, both congregations were already firmly established and the charitable organizations hard at work." (Ibid.)

The other "congregation" was founded at approximately the same time as the Eureka Benevolent Society. All told, we have three dates given for its founding:

December, 1849 (Archives Israelite, Vol. XVII, p. 23ff.)
January , 1850 (Frankland, op. cit., p. 23)
October , 1850 (Voorsanger, op. cit., p. 57)

We have no way of discovering which of these dates is accurate.

The full name of the society was the First Hebrew Benevolent Society for Assisting the Poor and Indigent of the Jewish Persuasion and the Burial of the Dead, or Hebra Sha'aray Hesed shel Emet. (Frankland, loc. cit; Voorsanger, loc. cit.)

According to Frankland, by September, 1850, the First Hebrew Benevolent Society already had purchased a cemetery with separate officers for its administration. (Ibid.)

The exact date of the coalescence of the Benevolent Society into Congregation Shearith Israel is not certain, but it probably took place at the same approximate time as Eureka Benevolent Society's emergence as Temple Emanuel. The latter was composed of German Jews; the former of

predominantly Polish Jews. (Archives Israelite, Vol. XXVI, p. 586ff.)

In the fall of 1850, a serious cholera epidemic broke out in San Francisco. The Eureka Benevolent Society and the First Hebrew Benevolent Society joined forces to form "a joint Humane Society or rather a Hebra Kadisha," of which Mr. J. J. Joseph was president. (Voorsanger, loc.cit.)

In 1857, the community organized a Bikkur Holim U'-Kadisha society to assist poor, sick Jews. The gold rush had abated, and many Jews were stranded in the city without funds or means. This society had no apparent congregational affiliations. It was still in existence in 1890. Its organization could be significant of a less active benevolent interest on the parts of Congregations Emanuel and Shearith Israel, but there is no evidence to back such a conclusion. (Voorsanger, op. citl, p. 62)

In 1865 Congregation Emanuel built a synagogue. Into the cornerstone went the following documents:

> Copy of Constitution, Charter, and Rules of Eureka Benevolent Society, its parent organization.
> Constitution of Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society. This is the only mention we have of this group.
> Constitution and By-Laws of the Hebrew Benevolent Society. This was probably the First Hebrew Benevolent Society. If not, we know nothing more about the group.

(Archives Israelite, Vol. XXVI, p. 35f.)

At that time Congregation Emanuel had 310 members. The Eureka Benevolent Society had its own treasury, with 140,000 francs therein ($28,000) plus an orphan fund. It spent 70,000 francs (14,000) annually on its charitable activities." (Archives Israelite, Vol. XXVI, p. 586ff.)

In the same year, the First Hebrew Benevolent Society had 225 members, practically all of them Polish. It had a cash balance of about $7,000, and spent about $4250 annually. It was an organic part of Congregation Shearith Israel. (Ibid.)

By 1910, both these societies had disappeared, and the philanthropic duties had been taken over by secular agencies. Temple Emanuel's Sisterhood was the only organization affiliated with a synagogue to be part of the Federation of Jewish Charities when it was started. (San Francisco Federation of Jewish Charities, First Annual Report, 1910)

Shreveport, La.

In December, 1857, a Hebrew Mutual Benevolent Association was organized in Shreveport. It purchased a cemetery, performed benevolent functions, and two years later organized into Congregation B'nai Zion. (Inventory of Church and Synagogue Archives of Louisiana, p. 3)

Non-Organized Congregations

There were nine communities which formed congregations during this period, of which we have record, which did not participate as groups in any way in the philanthropic activities of the community. They, too, must be noted here, to round out our view of the period and its developments. They were:

Davenport, Iowa, 1861. (Glazer, op. cit., p. 219, p. 274)
Easton, Penna., 1842. (100th anniversary souvenir, 1942)
Little Rock, Ark. 1867. (70th anniversary souvenir, 1937)
Los Angeles, Cal. 1862. (75th anniversary souvenir, 1937)
Newark: Congregation B'nai Jeshurun,
1848. (90th anniversary souvenir, 1938)
Congregation Oheb Shalom
1860. (75th anniversary souvenir, 1935)
New Haven, Conn. 1840. (95th anniversary booklet, 1935)
Scranton, Penna. 1862. (75th anniversary souvenir, 1937)
Syracuse, N.Y. 1839. (100th anniversary booklet, 1939)
Terre Haute, Ind. (Wise, op. cit., p. 204)

Summary

In this chapter we have discussed approximately fifty-eight or sixty different congregations. They were located in cities ranging in size from New York City to Plaquemina, Louisiana. There are few generalizations that can be made about their philanthropic activities. Charting them under four basic headings has revealed, however, the following:

14 congregations apparently never organized any synagogal philanthropic activities of any kind.

4 congregations carried on their philanthropy directly, through their Boards of Trustees or Juntos.

18 congregations organized benevolent societies of one type or another during this period.

20 congregations began as benevolent societies and were later organized as religious worship societies.

2 congregations carried on their philanthropic endeavors directly at first, but later organized specific societies for those functions (Beth El, Detroit; and Adath Israel, Louisville)

In no one of these groups do we find any correlation in the size of the congregations, the size of the city in which it was located, the background of its members, etc.

There is, however, one fact which stands out. Of the 20 congregations which began as benevolent societies, most

gave up eventually the charity aspect of their work, allowing independent secular organizations to take over for them. Of the four congregations which functioned directly in the social service field, none has continued to do so until the present time. Of the 18 which had separate societies, most do not have them today. Truly, the period between 1825 and 1880 was a transitional period, during which synagogue charities reached their peak of importance, then began to decline, to transfer their function--or to allow their function to be transferred involuntarily--to independent societies founded specifically for that purpose.

"The synagogue may make its appeal for all good causes; it may be the inspirer of splendid efforts, but there its function ceases."

--Martin Zielonka

CHAPTER FIVE

The Period of Consolidation

The tendency noted toward the end of the Ashkenazic period of American-Jewish development became accelerated after 1880, and the influx of hundreds of thousands of Eastern European Jewish immigrants into this country. Social service became a profession after 1880, and there was no room for amateur congregational charities in this profession. They had to reorganize with the new profession or die.

There are two major aspects to this last period of philanthropic activity. First, some congregations did continue their charitable work, even while independent social service societies were springing up all over the United States. Second, between 1910 and 1910, a tremendous movement toward consolidation of all Jewish charities took place, known to us as the Federation movement. The role of the synagogue and synagogue leadership in this development, if any, is of concern to us.

Once again, in charting congregational development, we are resorting to an alphabetical order. Occasionally congregations will be mentioned which have been discussed previously. For the most part, however, the Germanic congregations and the others which sprang up during the middle of the nineteenth century have been handled as completely as our materials will permit, in the previous chapter.

Athens, Georgia

Congregation Children of Israel has a Sisterhood, which is connected organically with the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, a purely philanthropic organization. (Athens, Ga., Congregation Children of Israel, 1927)

Baltimore, Md.

After 1880, the Russian congregations did not form any synagogal charity groups. During this period a Free Burial Society was founded, a Hebrew Emigrants Protective Association, a Gemilath Hasadim for free loan purposes--none of them affiliated in any way with the synagogues of the city. When the United Hebrew Charities were organized in 1907, no synagogal charities joined--because there were none left to join. (Blum, op. cit., p. 31)

Brooklyn, N.Y.

With its tremendous Jewish population, there was little synagogal philanthropic activity in Brooklyn during this period.

Temple Ahavath Shalom has a Milk Fund and a Charity Chest, both of which collect money for local and national organizations. (20th anniversary booklet, 1932) This is mentioned only because it sets a pattern for practically every congregation in the country. Religious school children collect money weekly for Keren Ami or

some similar fund. Collections are sometimes taken in the synagogue itself for charitable purposes--and then turned over to secular agencies for distribution. This is the "new order" in synagogal charities. (Goldstein, op. cit., pp. 282-285)

Temple Beth El of Brooklyn organized a Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1886. Shortly thereafter it became the Sisterhood of the Temple. In its first fifty years of existence, it expended over $100,000 for organized and private charitable work. It is now spending $5,000 to $10,000 annually, mainly in contributions to other organizations, but also to a few "pet" projects of its own. (Abelow, S., History of Brooklyn Jewry, p. 49f.)

Des Moines, Iowa

Two synagogues were organized in Des Moines early in the '70's of the last century. B'nai Jeshurun (German) came into being in 1873, and B'nai Israel (Russian-Polish) in 1876.

When a Charity Ball was held on Purim of 1875, the proceeds of $230 were turned over to the B'nai Jeshurun treasury for distribution.

B'nai Israel's charitable activity was individual in nature. The congregation appointed official Zedakah gatherers, who went from house to house with the traditional "pushka."

After 1876, there is no further mention of charitable activity on an organized basis in either of these synagogues. (Glazer, op. cit., p. 241)

Detroit, Michigan

The only synagogal charity in this large Jewish community which lasted through the years was the Temple Beth El Relief Society. It undertook an interesting project between 1891 and 1896, when the Bad Axe agricultural project was founded in northern Michigan. When that colony got into difficulty, immediately after its founding, the Beth El Relief Society sent clothing, groceries, Mazzot, and $1200 in cash to help the colony back onto its feet. The effort was a failure. (AJHS, Vol. XXIX, p. 63f.)

El Paso, Texas

In 1887 Temple Mt. Sinai organized a Mt. Sinai Association, whose objects are stated in its Constitution:

> "Section 1: Its objects and designs are to relieve the sick and succor the poor and needy.
>
> "Section 2: First by the establishment of a well-regulated system of relief to the poor and needy; second, by keeping and maintaining a cemetery."

Until 1905, the relief budget had been a maximum of $20.00 per month. By a resolution of the Board, April 9, 1905, "The dispensation of charity is to be left in the hands of Rabbi Zielonka, and the Board of Trustees were instructed to act accordingly." (Temple Mt. Sinai Year Book, 1928, pp. 10, 24)

Somewhat later, Mt. Sinai and Congregation B'nai Zion (orthodox) joined in the establishment of a separate

El Paso Jewish Relief Society, which has now taken over almostthe entire relief burden for the Jewish community. (Ibid.)

Milwaukee, Wis.

Congregation Emanuel established a Ladies Emanuel Society. It held an annual fair for charity purposes. One year its profit was $21,000, raised for the erection of a community hall. In this hall various organizations, classes, and societies met under congregational and independent auspices. The congregation itself also supports a Ladies Relief Sewing Society. (Hecht, S., My First Decade with Congregation EmanueI, 1898, pp. 33-35)

New Orleans, La.

Between 1895 and 1909, an institution grew up in New Orleans, flourished briefly, and then di ed. The Somech Nofphlim Society No. 1 was founded in 1895 as a charitable institution. The realm of its benevolent activity is not known to us. We do know that it held services for ten years, in addition to its charitable works. In 1905 it affiliated with Congregation Beth Israel, then died in 1909. Its charitable functions were taken over by the Young Men's Hebrew Association. (Louisiana Archives, op. cit., p. 110)

New York, N.Y.

The Sisterhood of Congregation Beth El was founded in 1890. It organized immediately a Society of Personal

Service. This group carried on an extensive club program, sewing groups, and general charity activity. The Sewing Club, until 1915, had assisted 425 families, 50,000 individuals, had provided jobs for unemployed totalling 1,000 days.

The Relief Section of the Society gave money, groceries, clothing, etc. There were also attempts made at case work, the teaching of thrift, budgeting, nutrition, etc.

Cases were reported to the Society from the United Hebrew Charities. Beth El handled the district from E. 23rd St. to E. 76th St.

In the year 1894-5, 247 different families were assisted by this group. 1,169 relief calls were made. 570 baskets of groceries were given out. Cash relief totalling $1,270.92 was extended, and 2745 pieces of clothing, made by the members, were distributed. The Kindergarten Section averaged an attendance of 39 children daily. A Working Girls' Section ran a club program, with an especially successful Pansy Club.

Our evidence does not carry us past 1915. (Beth El Sisterhood, 25th anniversary program, 1915; Beth El Society for Personal Service, Annual Report, 1894-5, pp. 13-15)

On August 15, 1859, a "holy alliance," or burial society was formed as a branch of Beth Hamedrash Ha'Godol of New York. "Charity dispensations in this Congregation

were next to the duty of prayer. It was not, however, the organized sort given by proxy, but the home kind that brings the poor in touch with the contributor." (AJHS, Vol. IX, p. 72) In addition to assistance to the sick and care for the dead, the Beth Hamedrash Ha'Godol carried on all kinds of benevolent activity. Upon their arrival in the United States, immigrants were met, fed, lodged, and cared for until settled. Frequently there was given to them a basket of wares withwhich to begin their search for a livelihood. (Ibid.)

Every day in the synagogue collections were taken for the sick, usually of the penny variety, but frequently larger. Every Shabbat Shekalim the revenue from the "schmoddering" went to the poor of Palestine. (Ibid.)

In 1888 the Congregation set up a Mo'os Hittim Society. Every year about $800 was collected and spent for Mazzot, meals, and cash distribution for Pesach.

In 1900 all these activities in Beth Hamedrash Ha'-Godol were still being carried on. We have no data for the period after the turn of the century.

Temple Emanuel, as we have noted, never formed any organizations for the explicit purpose of dispensing philanthropy. The Sisterhood, however, did take on certain charity duties, which gradually grew into a tremendous responsibility. In 1912 the group had a budget of $48,000, of which $26,000 went for relief purposes, and$22,000 for their various other activities: a kindergarten, day nursery, vocational counselling, musical training, library,

work room, club program, and a playground. (Jewish Charities, Vol. IV, No1 4, November, 1913)

Shreveport, La.

In 1887 a Hebrew Relief Society was organized in Shreveport. It holds no regular meetings. When funds are needed for any particular purpose, the Board of Congregation Agudath Achim meets and supplies the necessary funds. (Louisiana Archives, op. cit., p. 107)

The evidence just cited is so sketchy and so obviously incomplete for the hundreds of congregations in the United States that we hesitate to draw any conclusions from it. The general tendency, however, is still clear: fewer and fewer synagogues had any charities at all, and those which did restricted gradually the scope of the activities of their groups. There are a few outstanding exceptions (as Temple Beth El, New York) but they are definitely exceptions.

This trend is accentuated when we consider that those congregations not cited at all in our study have never published any material themselves on their activities, and in addition, have not been mentioned in any printed book about synagogal or social work activities in the United States that was available to us in the preparation of this study.

The Federation Movement

The first combination of different charitable societies

for common purposes took place in New York in 1874. It was not a true Federation, however, its constituent members retaining practically all their sovereignty, and centralization of budgetary control and campaign not having been achieved.

The Federations in Cincinnati and Boston, both organized in 1896, are generally conceded to be the first in this country. Boston had attempted a federation earlier, but it had failed. (Bogen, op. cit., p. 44; Cronbach, A., notation to first draft of this study)

National conferences were held on several occasions. The first, in 1885, was entitled the Conference of the Hebrew Relief Associations of the United States, and met in St. Louis. Thirty organizations from thirty cities were represented, and ten other cities sent messages. Only one congregation was represented at this Conference: Shaaray Shomayim of Mobile, Alabama. Several Rabbis were present, but not as representatives of their respective congregations. (Proceedings of the Conference of Hebrew Relief Associations of the United States, 1885)

The National Conference of Jewish Charities was organized in 1899. Its annual meetings were important, many basic policies of socal work procedure having been battled out on the floor of these conferences. (Bogen, op. cit., p. 31)

The Federation movement really became a movement in 1899 and 1900. City after city called meetings of its Jewish organizations for centralization purposes. Every Jewish newspaper and magazine in the United States carried, at one time or another, a symposium on the wisdom of such

mergers. The battle was fought fiercely through the first decade of this century. At the end, the Federation had triumphed as the most practicable and efficient means of raising and distributing philanthropic funds and social service.

The organization of these Federations is significant, from the standpoint of this study, only because so few of them had any connection whatsoever with any of the synagogues in their respective cities.

In the Detroit Federation, the Temple Beth El Relief Society was a constituent group. Gradually it became almost wholly a Free Loan group.

In Kansas City, the Federation was inspired by the influence of Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, and was dominated by him in the early years of its existence.

The only synagogue charity represented in the Louisville Federation was the Temple Free Kindergarten.

In San Francisco, the Temple Emanuel Sisterhood was a member of the Federation, and received money from it.

The Ladies Relief Society of the Madison Avenue Temple, a recent organization, is a member of the Scranton Jewish Federation. We have no account of its duties. Apparently it supported other local agencies and supplied volunteer assistance. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain its existence, in view of our findings that Scranton had no synagogal charity organizations at all during the Temple's first seventy-five years of existence.

With these few exceptions, the Federation movement was completely secularist, divorced from any synagogal attach-

ment, and not too much synagogal influence. As Bogen put it: the separation of the Federation from any synagogue and the influence of the synagogue was conscious and desired by the Federation.(Op. cit., p. 88) There are two reasons for this feeling: First, the synagogue was not capable of directing or even advising secular social service agencies; second, an antipathy gradually grew up between synagogue and social service which assumed major proportions in many cities.

The synagogue was not unaware of the strain between it and professional social work, of the thinly-veiled contempt inwhich it was held by many social workers. The first attempt to regain a hold on charity by the synagogue was undertaken by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. The Free Synagogue's cooperation with the United Hebrew Charities of New York is "worthy of emulation," according to Bogen. (Jewish Charities, Vol. VI, No. 6, p. 88) Even previous to the founding of the Free Synagogue, however, Dr. Wise went before the National Conference to speak his views. Then--1906--his views were poorly received. Since, however, he and other rabbis have worked valiantly to rehabilitate the synagogue with relation to philanthropy in general, and to set up some relationship with professional social agencies in particular. The motivation is well expressed by Bogen:

> "The synagogue, which willingly gave up its hold upon charity affairs to the relief agency, soon realized its mistake. A vital element now was missing. Jewish religionwithout applied Judaism became a dead matter." (Op. cit., p. 365)

But the coin has an obverse side, too. Social agencies needed religious guidance, inspiration, the human element which could be supplied by the synagogue, prevanting

the agencies from becoming cold and over-scientific.

Some progress has been made by both the synagogue and the social agencies to achieve more cooperation. Complete success is still far off, and constitutes one of the vitals concerns of the synagogue.

There is, however, one synagogue in the United States which, since its founding, has been rendering outstanding service in every field of social welfare. The Free Synagogue was founded in March, 1907, by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. Part of its notable statement of purpose read:

> "Not charity, but social service, building upon the rock of social justice, will be the watchword of the Free Synagogue. The essential thing in the religion of Israel--suchto be the teaching and practise of the Free Synagogue--is to quicken and keep alive the social conscience, to strengthen and make indissoluble the social bond."

(The Free Synagogue Year Book, 1910-11, p. 2)

And the Free Synagogue has done a magnificent piece of work in fulfilling this purpose.

Contrary to most synagogues, the Free Synagogue did not create auxiliary organizations to carry on its philanthropic activities. As Rabbi Sidney Goldstein, director of the Social Service Department since its founding, put it:

> "In the 'Free Synagogue' we believe that social service is so important that we have made the work not a subordinate activity of an auxiliary organization but a Department equal to and co-ordinate with both worship and education."

("The Synagog and Social Service," in the Year-book of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Vol. XLII, p. 3)

The Department has its own Board of Trustees, a separate office staff, and its own budget. It is represented on the Executive Council of the Free Synagogue by three members. (Ibid.)

The first committee organized by the Social Service Depa tment of the Free Synagogue was devoted to the social care of the sick. In 1907 there was no systematic care of Jewish patients in any institution in New York. The Bellevue Hospital was chosen because every year more than 6,000 Jewish patients were admitted there, all of whom needed some kind of social care. (Goldstein, S., op. cit., p. 4) The hospital was divided into sections, each of which was placed under the care of a volunteer worker, who was expected to visit his or her section at least once a week to discover social needs there. Needless to say, there were more cases than enough. (Cf. Free Synagogue, Annual Report, 1910-11, p. 12)

Out of the Bellevue Hospital work, which has continued to the present day, and has expanded to Lebanon Hospital as well, grew two other projects of the Social Service Department of the Free Synagogue.

A joint project was undertaken by the Department and the United Hebrew Charities in the care of tuberculous patients, to prevent relapse, to protect other members of the family, to provide suitable employment during convalescence, etc. Out of this experiment has grown the Committee for the Care of the Jewish Tuberculous of New

York, "which is now recognized as one of the most progressive organizations in the tuberculosis field and is exercising an influence in establishing standards of care both in this country and in Europe." (Goldstein, S., op. cit., p. 5)

The otherproject was concerned with mental hygiene and the care of patients in psychiatric wards of Jewish origin. After a period of experimentation, it was concluded that Jewish mental cases needed Jewish care. A five-point program was worked out:

(1) Educational campaign
(2) Mental Hygiene Clinics for Jewish patients
(3) A hospital. This was taken over by the Jewish Mental Health Society, which now maintains such a hospital.
(4) Convalescent care for mental hygiene cases
(5) A workshop for this group.
(Ibid.)

Another outstanding contribution of the Department has been in the field of juvenile welfare. A Committee on Adolescent girls had under its care in 1932 a continuous group of 125 girls; the Committee on Adolescent Boys worked with 125 boys. A summer camp is maintained for the boys, and a residence for the girls. (Goldstein, op. cit., p. 6)

The most famous aspect of the juvenile program at the Free Synagogue has been the Child Adoption program. By January, 1941, 1656 babies had been placed in adoption homes all over the United States, and a total of 4928 requests for babies had been received. (Cronbach, A., The Bible and Our Social Outlook, p. 208) That number is still increasing steadily. The work of this group, headed originally by Mrs. Stephen S. Wise in 1916, has made a concrete change in the approach of Jewish social workers everywhere toward

child care. Where orphan asylums were inevitably the placement agencies for homeless children, it is now a universally agreed fact that adoption homes are far superior to institutions, which are utilized only as a last resort. In New York, only those children are placed in institutions who are physically or mentally handicapped. (Goldstein, S., loc. cit.)

The Social Service Department is not concerned only with local problems. It has organized committees to cooperate with all important Jewish movements, local, national, and international.

A Committee of Forty-five was organized some years ago which addressed itself to major social problems in the community. Some of its investigations and concerns have centered around incompetence and corruption in government, unemployment and general economic injustice, international relations, peace, etc.

The Department now maintains a convalescent home, a tuberculosis workshop, and a marriage counselling bureau, in addition to all the above activities. In 1942, a total of $86,977 was spent in all the branches of the Department.

Only in New York City, in all probability, could such a program develop so fully. But were other synagogues to be motivated in the same manner, social service activity of many types could again become a major function of our religious organizations. The need is mutual: the synagogue needs function, and social service needs religious backing.

"The essential thing
in the religion of Israel
is to quickenand keep
alive the social conscience,
to strengthen and make
indissoluble the social
bond."

--Free Synagogue

CHAPTER SIX

The Present and the Future

In 1927, there were 2,895 Jewish social-philanthropic organizations in the United States. Of these, 1,875 or 64.77% were affiliated with synagogues. At first glance, this would seem to refute our entire contention that synagogal charities as a potent force do not, for the most part, exist any longer in the United States. But further examination reveals that of these, 1,643 (just under 90%) are women's groups, mainly sisterhoods. From our knowledge of sisterhoods, they concentrate their efforts to a great extent on the synagogue itself, the physical needs of the institution, the school, etc., and do not undertake much direct social service activity. The outstanding exceptions have already been noted. (Linfield, Harry, Communal Organization of Jews in the United States, p. 86)

Loan societies, mutual benefit organizations, cemetery groups, etc., are lumped together under the heading of economic-philanthropic societies. In 1927 there were 4,238 of these Jewish groups in the United States. Of these, only 1,799 (42.42%) were synagogal. A further breakdown of these figures is even more revealing. 83% of the Loan Societies were synagogally controlled (424 out of 509), but almost all of them were in or around New York City. Only 109 of the 2,367 mutual benefit societies were organically connected with synagogues, however. Of course, most of the cemeteries are congregationally owned, but they are outside thescope of this study. (Linfield,

op. cit., p. 92)

In the same year, 1,020 societies existed among the Jews of the United States for the care of dependents. (handicapped, indigent, widow, sick, orphans, etc.) Of these, 142 were specialized and could not be connected with synagogues. But only 183 of the rest were congregationally controlled, 109 of them in NewYork. None of the child care societies, or those caring for sick or aged were connected with the synagogue. (Linfield, op. cit., p. 102f.)

Obviously, not only has the synagogue lost the control of Jewish charitableactivity, but it has even ceased to be a force in the field of social welfare. Boris D. Bogen assigned the following reasons for the failure of the synagogue to maintain its supremacy in philanthropy:

1. Disagreement among Jews about the importance of the synagogue. Increase of non-synagoged Jews.
2. Position of Parnas became an achievemant. Competition and strife.
3. Increasing split-up of congregations and rivalry between them.
4. Increasing concern of therabbis for the pulpit instead of their people.

(Jewish Charities, Vol. VI, Nol 6, p. 87)

In another context, Mr. Bogen wrote:

> "When Jewish philanthropy in the United States came face to face with the problem of mass immigration in the eighties, it became apparent that the isolated, uncorrlated agencies for relief, the different groups connected with the synagogue were unable to cope with the situation. A more efficient organization became a necessity...1"

(Jewish Philanthropy, p. 364)

It is the belief of the writer that this study refutes almost entirely the theses here quoted. None of Mr. Bogen's statements can be challenged factually. It is true that unsynagogued Jews have increased in numbers, that there was much competitionand strife within congregations for power, that rivalry between congregations was, and often still is, a serious problem, and that our rabbis are more concerned about the pulpit that the people. But none of these reasons strikes at the root of the historical facts. It is not true that the synagogue maintained its supremacy in the philanthropic field until the mass migrations of the eighties. Before then, in the late fifties and sixties, a majority of the synagogues of the United States voluntarily gave up their philanthropic control to independent benevolent societies. The synagogue was unwilling to undertake the responsibility for handling even those prbblems caused by the Germanic immigration to the United States. By the time the Russian migration began, the synagogues were unable to perform any vitalsocial function. Their energies had been turned elsewhere, their emphasis was on other aspects of life. Whether or not the synagogue could have done the necessary job had it not given up its place of leadership during the German migration is a moot question, outside the scope of a research study. The facts are that the synagogue did not have hegemony any longer in the field of philanthropy by the end of the third quarter

of the nineteenth century.

There is a decided need for more synagogal participation in philanthropic endeavor, not as passive donators of sums of money to local and national organizations, but as functioning groups, putting into social practise the ethical teachings of the synagogue and of Judaism. And social service needs synagogal assistance and guidance. There has been a tendency toward coldness , scientific theory, and non-humanness in social welfare agencies for some years. The synagogue could counteract that tendency, could infuse social service with warmth, vitality, tenderness.

Enough examples have been cited to prove conclusively that the synagogue is not congenitally incapable of magnificent achievement in the field of social service. The will is needed; the will and the energy and the leadership. Judaism needs a transfer into living of its principles; Jewish social work needs inspiration and guidance and religion. Many plans of cooperation and mutual benefit are possible and can be tried. They must be tried--now.

The evidence of history rests with these beliefs and these aspirations. The future can bring fulfillment and accomplishment for the welfare of man and the ideals of our faith and our God.

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