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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HAVURAH MOVEMENT

By

SHELDON WAYNE MOSS

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of requirements for ordination.

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

1977

Referee Professor Robert L. Katz

FOR SHELLIE,

MY FRIEND AND WIFE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The completion of a study of this kind depends upon the assistance and cooperation of many persons. The investigator wishes to thank the participants in the intrasynagogal havurah program of Valley Beth Shalom for the time and thought they have given to filling out the questionnaire and offering their views during interviews.

S.W.M.

DIGEST

This thesis studies the significance of the havurah movement. It begins with a general history of the Jewish volunteer fellowship association, tracing its origins from the second Jewish commonwealth until the 1970's. Original research findings are presented, taken from participants in an intrasynagogal havurah program at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California.

Data was gathered in the three mandated areas of havurah: social benefits, educational enrichment, and enhancement of participation in Jewish life. In addition, the effect of the intrasynagogal havurah program on the pre-existent synagogue structure was assessed.

The purpose of the intrasynagogal havurah program was to reconstruct community within the synagogue. Many rabbis and laypeople were concerned that havurot within the synagogue would divide the synagogue rather than unite it. Their fantasies of separation and competition between synagogue and havurah were not realized.

The limited membership (18-20 people) of a havurah allowed for intimacy as well as a low organizational profile. Yet, it also limited the group's potential for internal stimulation. When internal resources were diminished, the synagogue acted as a supply center, offering study materials, guest speakers, social action programs, religious services and facilitation of intrasynagogal havurah communications.

Life within havurah is informal and accepting. Despite its low organizational profile, havurah functioned as an effective support group to its members. The interpersonal ties of members are like those between siblings or same age cousins. There was not strong interest in replacing the broadened base for intragenerational contact for the intergenerationality that would make havurah a surrogate for the eroding extended family.

Havurah study does not produce scholars of Judaica, rather it fortifies the Jewish identities of its participants. The most successful study topics were: Jewish Holidays, What is a Jew?, Quality of Jewish Life, and Zionism and Israel. Over one-third of the respondents felt the need for direction from the rabbi in choosing study materials, as well as interesting methods of presentation.

Havurot throughout Jewish history have taken upon themselves the fulfillment of mitzvot. Respondents reported that as a result of participation in their havurah, the following mitzvot were adopted: driving only to and from the synagogue on the Sabbath; inviting a Russian family to a Passover seder; fasting on T'sha Ba'av; building a sukkah on Sukkot and acquiring an etrog and lulav for Sukkot; eating and sleeping in a sukkah; tree planting on Tu Bishvat; and reciting the blessing(s) after eating.

Rabbis who had instituted an intrasynagogal havurah program reported that it allowed them greater freedom to facilitate Jewish activities and to be creative. The intrasynagogal havurah program is an answer to the need for community building within the large suburban synagogue.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Voluntary fellowship associations have existed in the historical experience of the Jewish people since the first century before the common era. They have been referred to by the synonymous terms hevra and havurah. The theological premise for their existence is the traditional Jewish belief that God's presence is encountered when Jews band together in performance of Divine Commandments. Jakob J. Petuchowski[1] likened the intention of havurah members to those of the Jews recorded in the book of Nehemiah (10:33); they announced "...we lay upon ourselves mitzvot...". In this manner, haverim brought sanctity into their lives and reaffirmed their particular relationship with the God of Israel. Havurot (plural of havurah) were formed to carry out many such Commandments, i.e. the study of sacred texts, care of the needy and proper burial of the dead.

The difference between a havurah and other Jewish groups with purposeful programs is that it has limited membership. A limited membership allows intimate interaction between members which would inevitably disappear if the group grew larger. Present day havurot have approximately 18 to 20 members.[2]

The last decade has witnessed a resurgence of interest in havurot. The term havurah has become quite popular among rabbis, Jewish social workers and laypeople. Synagogues have formed intrasynagogal havurah programs to enable their members to reap the benefits of deepened personal, communal and religious identities.

It is the purpose of this thesis to study the significance of the havurah movement. A general history of havurah's origins, function and evolution will be presented. Next, original research findings will report the implications the havurah movement has for the contemporary synagogue and congregational rabbi. The research was conducted at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California, the synagogue with the oldest and largest intrasynagogal havurah program to date.

Six years ago (1971) at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California, twelve pioneer havurot were formed. In 1971, Valley Beth Shalom with its twelve havurot was the established leader of the intrasynagogal havurah movement. At present, there are over fifty functioning havurot. To date, over one thousand people participate in the intrasynagogal program. Hundreds of requests for information and assistance in setting up intrasynagogal havurah programs have been answered by the Havurah Coordinating Committee of Valley Beth Shalom. The reform movement of Judaism sent copies of Valley Beth Shalom's program material to all rabbis, educators and presidents of congregations belonging to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Rabbi Schulweis' essay on the havurah movement, "Restructuring the Synagogue," was translated into Portugese and was used at a conference of leaders of conservative Judaism in Rio de Janeiro. In addition to being the longest lived, Valley Beth Shalom's havurot were clearly the most influential.

This research concerns itself with answers to the following questions: Which social, educational, religious and membership needs are being met by the intrasynagogal havurah? How does a havurah program effect the rabbi and the pre-existent synagogue structure?

FOOTNOTES - INTRODUCTION

[1]J. J. Petuchowski, "Toward a Modern Brotherhood," The Reconstructionist, 16 December 1960.

[2]Sixty-eight percent of the interviewed *havurot* wanted their *havurah* to have between 18-20 members.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF HAVURAH

The First Havurot

Jews created the first havurot[1] to resist apathy in the Jewish community toward the fulfillment of religious laws. Havurot were founded in villages and towns of Jewish Palestine during the second commonwealth in order to foster observance of proper tithing and ritual purity.[2]

One became a member of a havurah for the purpose of carrying out the above-mentioned laws, and in so doing, one was distinguished from the common citizenry. The concern of haverim[3] for their purity forced them to cast a barrier between a haver[4] and an outsider with whom contact was defiling.[5]

The havurot of the second commonwealth were loci of communal living.[6] They were much less rigid in their formation than other religious communes of their time. To become a haver, an individual would pass through three stages, supervised by at least three older members of the havurah. He or she would enter the category of reliability by showing concern for tithing, the concern for the ritual purity of his own food, the cleanliness of his hands, and thereafter, the cleanliness of ritually sacred books. In the last phase, that of a novitiate, the novice added to his or her concern for tithing and personal food, the concern for food of the havurah and the purity of his or her garment.[7]

Professor Chaim Rabin of Oxford argues that the Qumran community

(located near the Dead Sea) was a continuation of the havurot from the first century before the common era. If this is correct, the existence of havurah during the first century of the common era is substantiated. He asserts that the Qumran sect is not to be associated with the essenes; it was rather a continuation of the havurah which "withered away in rabbinic Judaism because of the concessions which rabbinic Judaism made in order to enable non-pharisees to join in its life."[8]

A haver accepted the pharisees' view on Jewish law,[9] but the term haver cannot be used synonymously with the term perush (a pharisee), since not all pharisees were members of a havurah. The nature of this havurah (whether it was pharasaic or essenic) was argued by Abraham Geiger and Kaufmann Kohler; the former asserting it was pharasaic, and the latter asserting that it was essenic.[10] The proper assignment of the Qumran community to either the essenes or the pharisees was made difficult in that Jewish Palestine of the first century of the common era swarmed with many different religious sects.[11] Dr. Saul Lieberman of the Jewish Theological Seminary notes[12] the uncertainty of ascribing documents regarding havurot to any of the major sects. Whatever sect they belonged to, the structure and purpose of earlier havurot insured strict adherence to religious laws. Haverim resisted the dilution of the law, not by rhetoric, but by action.

The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem was followed by a period of crisis. The need for a consolidated community precipitated the merging of the various groups within Judaism, that eventuated in the establishment of authority at Jabne.[13] As early rabbinic Judaism grew, the structure and purpose of the Jewish voluntary association began to change.

Havurot in the Rabbinic Sources

The Temple in Jerusalem and the theocracy which it represented had been destroyed. While people's concern for ritual purity waned, the rabbinic standards for purity were raised to unattainable levels. In response to this growing conflict, rabbinic sources record a change in the function of the havurah by the end of the second century of the common era.

> One discovers an elaboration of the conditions for becoming a haver. R. Judah says, 'He may not rear small cattle /a conservation measure/ nor be profuse in vows of levity, nor contact corpse uncleanness, nor minister in the banquet hall.' They said to him, 'These things never came within the rule.' This was correct, for the original articles of the fellowship did not cover such matters. 14

Gotthard Deutsch posited that the havurot recorded in rabbinic sources were extensions of the aforementioned fraternities which dated from the second commonwealth.[15] By the late third and early fourth centuries of the common era, havurot violated the prohibition against contacting corpse uncleanness.

Since ancient times, the proper burial of the dead had been regarded by Jews as a religious duty of the highest importance. Exact knowledge of how havurot functioned at this time is tenuous as there is a paucity of material in the rabbinic sources. The Babylonian Talmud, Maseket Moed Katon (27b) records:

> Judah in the name of Rab: If there is a dead man in the city, then all inhabitants of the city are forbidden to work. Once Rab Hamnuma came to Daru-Matha and heard a blast of a trumpet announcing a death, yet he saw that the people continued to work. 'The people of this town ought to be banned' he said. 'Isn't there someone dead in this town?' But when they told him that there were associations in the city /habruta ikka ba matha/ he said: 'Well if that is so, let the ban be removed.'

Rashi, the eleventh century commentator, commented on this passage:

"Haburta Ikka - There were havurot that they buried only their own dead by themselves."[16] The Talmudic commentators, Tosofot, Alfasi and Asher, make no comment on this passage. This meant either that they concurred with Rashi's commentary, or that they did not consider the passage important. Although there are no remarks, there are additional Talmudic sources that provide evidence of the existence of havurot.

The existence of havurot during the third century is found in the Babylonian Talmud Maseket Shabbat (106a): "If a member of a havurah dies, all the members of the havurah shall be concerned." A citation in Maseket Ketubot (17a) delineated the concern of havurah members: "The men of the city were divided into havurot that dealt with its own dead, so that during the time of the funeral escort they all had to attend." A minor tractate appended to the Babylonian Talmud dealing with death and mourning, euphemistically called Semachot (rejoicings), further depicted the activities of such havurot. Semachot (12:5) states: "Thus used the havurot to conduct themselves in Jerusalem. Some used to go to the house of mourning and others to the banqueting houses, some to the shevua haben."

The Jerusalem Talmud records the existence of other havurot which took upon themselves the proper burial of the dead. Yerusalmi Berakhot (3a) noted that when a body was handed over to the officials (carriers of the dead), the relatives of the deceased broke their fast, which had begun at the moment of death. On the basis of this decision, the codes since Nahmanides[17] (thirteenth century) formulated a law that, in places where officials were charged with burial of the dead, the relatives of the deceased had done their duty as soon as the body was delivered to the officials.

The prominence of havurot associated with proper burial gave rise

to the assumption that they also cared for the sick. Death was often preceded by sickness, and the vital concern of havurah members could have easily encompassed care for the sick.

In Bereshit Rabba, a Midrashic text (redacted 425 of the common era), there was evidence which suggested the possibility that there were havurot which took care of the sick. Bereshit Rabba (13:18) on Genesis (2:6) recorded "Abim min habrayya hawa mebakker bishayya." A possible interpretation of this is that Abim, one of the haverim, was visiting the sick. Jacob Marcus of the Hebrew Union College conceded:

> This would give us evidence of a ritualistic brotherhood or an academy. This particular verse therefore informs us that Abim, who we know to be a colleague of Hiyya bar Abba, was one of the members (of the Academy of Tiberias) and that he once payed a sick call. And this is all that it says. 18

Clearly, Marcus was not impressed with this evidence for the existence of sick care havurot. He further argued:

> If there were sick care societies we must assume that there would be at least a few references in the vast Talmudic literature. The absence of any clear cut statement about sick care societies would seem to indicate that they did not exist. 19

The nature of the havurah had undergone a profound shift in identity and focus. It had begun in the first century before the common era as a challenge to, and an indictment of, the normative Judaism of its time. By the fourth century, its function had changed from a safeguard against apathy to the providing of an indispensable communal service. It had moved into the center of the Jewish community, and within four centuries was given its highest honor.

The Hevra Kaddisha

Burial of the dead is the highest form of lovingkindness (hesed shel emet), in that no reward is expected.[20] A common name given to the

voluntary association which involved itself in burial practices was the hevra kaddisha.[21] A havurah known as the hevra kaddisha was first mentioned in the responsa of Nissim ben Reuben of Barcelona in the fourteenth century.[22] This was thought to be the oldest reference to the hevra kaddisha, although another tradition attributed to Judah Low ben Bezallel,[23] the chief rabbi of Prague, the organization of the first hevra kaddisha in 1593.

Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the hevra kaddisha served only its own members. During the sixteenth century, the hevra kaddisha extended its responsibilities to encompass the whole community, especially the poor.

In addition to performance of "true lovingkindness," three factors motivated the contemporary German hevra kaddisha to expand its responsibilities: periods of pestilence and crisis forced the German community to cope with burial; the community was dissatisfied with the mercenary burial entrepeneurs of the time; they also responded from a sense of competition with the Spanish-Italian-Sephardic Brotherhood (lavadores) who performed the rites of burial in a devout manner.[24]

Membership in a hevra kaddisha was a great honor. The diary of Sir Moses Montefiore expressed great pride at his election to membership in the burial society (lavadores) of the Spanish and Portugese congregation of London (1784-1885).[25] In a similar manner, Shneur Zalman of Lyaddy (eighteenth century), founder of the habad hasidic dynasty,[26] prized his membership in the hevra kaddisha.

While there is no clear evidence, even at this latter date, that havurah members cared for the sick, they did make sick calls. The hevra kaddisha was referred to in the Ma'abar Yabbok,[27] a book of prayers to

be recited at the bedside of the dying. The hevra kaddisha was also mentioned in a copy of Leon de Modena's Zori La Nefesh U-Marpe La-Ezem (1619), which included a listing of members and their terms of duty.[28] Such visitation of the sick foreshadowed the expansion of havurah's program. Havurot responded to the wide spectrum of communal needs when they were forced to adapt to changing social conditions. The hevra kaddisha of Vienna offered a specific example of this process of expansion.

The Expanded Program of Havurot

During the seventeenth century, the Austrian authorities forbade Viennese Jewry to organize itself as a corporate group. In response to this action, the Viennese hevra kaddisha attempted to take over the various duties that normally would have been the functions of a juridically recognized community.

In 1763, the hevra kaddisha of Vienna (youngmen's society) performed six explicit functions: (1) furthering the study of Torah; (2) supporting the local poor; (3) rendering aid to impoverished wanderers; (4) outfitting indigent brides; (5) clothing the naked, and (6) collecting funds for building synagogues in other lands. An alternative to this system in which one havurah performed a multifaceted program, was the proliferation of many havurot to fulfill specifically mandated functions. Such a system existed in Perpignan (1380) where there were five havurot, only one of which dealt directly with burial. Conscientious concern for the sick and the education of the poor were mandates of the Perpignan havurot and the Jewish fellowship associations found in Spain.[29]

One of the most noteworthy functions of these expanded havurot

was the study of texts. The study of sacred Jewish texts was suited to the purposeful foundation of havurot. The Talmud prescribed the formation of such groups in Taanit (7a) which announced, "Form yourselves into bands to study the Torah, for Torah is not acquired except in groups." Study of sacred Jewish texts was motivated by the Jewish belief that "an ignoramus is not a pious person." Scholars and businessmen[30] alike studied, and a high degree of learning was recorded.[31] Havurot were created for the recitation of psalms, the study of the Bible and its related commentaries, study of Jewish legal codes, study of moral and ethical literature, study of the Mishna (the first compilation of the oral law) and the study of the Talmud (a commentary on, and elaboration of, parts of the Mishna).[32]

The most notable havurot which studied Torah were located in Safed (1583), where the mystics studied Torah daily as part of their esoteric pursuits. The study of Torah within havurot continued in the seventeenth century. It was during time that Rabbi Shabbatai Sheftel Horowitz of Frankfort urged every householder to join a havurah for the purpose of study. He suggested that one hour per day be spent in such a study havurah. Rabbi Horowitz's influence extended to the setting up of havurot for the purpose of study as far away as Posnau, Poland.

Beyond the urging of Rabbi Horowitz, community regulations were enacted in Bohemia (Prague 1611) and Germany (Worms 1667) which asked for community members to participate in study havurot for at least one hour per day. A prime example of such a study havurah existed in Hanover, Germany during the seventeenth century. The central theme of that havurah was the study of the weekly Bible portion, which was studied together with its traditional commentaries and the pertinent laws of the standard legal code, the Shulchan Aruch.

Early Havurot in America

The notion of a havurah with a mandated purpose was brought to America by Eastern European Jews. Their havurot functioned as safeguards against the seductive assimilation offered by the New World. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a mass migration of these Jews to America. Upon their arrival, they were confronted with both a secular and a Jewish culture much different from that which they had known in Eastern Europe. The Jewish religion as practiced by the earlier waves of Jewish immigrants to America also seemed alien to the new immigrants. Their response was the creation of many havurot, mandated to fulfill almost every community need. The burial society (hevra kaddisha) was joined by other notable havurot such as the loan society.[33]

The penchant of the Eastern European Jew for establishing havurot drew criticism from the assimilated Western European Jewish establishment. The comments of one congregational rabbi (1910) typified the criticism: "It is because the Jews have lived within themselves in other countries on the hevra principle that they have made the existence of the Jews in those countries intolerable...the sooner the hevra movement is crushed out of existence, the sooner we will move from our midst the only drawback to the advancement of Jews in this country."[34] But the early American havurot persisted for they facilitated programs which the non-Eastern European Jewish establishment could not or would not provide. Half a century later, American havurot were again to emerge to meet the unmet needs of the Jewish community.

The communal havurot from the first century before the common era functioned loosely as the antecedent models for the American havurot of

the sixties. The modern haverim were also dissatisfied with the religious practices of their Jewish contemporaries. In 1968 and 1969, havurot were formed in Boston and New York, respectively. Their founders created havurot as an indictment of, and a turning away from, the traditional American Jewish community.[35] The organized Jewish community had not offered significant experiences in Jewish communal living. Jewish study, worship and ethical action in the established organizations were criticized as being plastic and vicarious[36] experiences that did not allow the individual Jew opportunities for personal expression or participation in significant decision making.

The majority of those who formed havurot were college-aged Jews. They sought a "wholeness that grew out of being in an organic harmony[37] with themselves, their friends and with nature." This wholeness was effected by living, studying and praying together with a group of fellow Jews who had deep interpersonal understanding. They perceived the alternative to be swept up and torn apart by American life, reduced to paranoids fighting for a more comfortable survival rather than a more fulfilling living experience.[38]

Significant criticism of most American institutions marked the decade of the 1960's. The founders of havurot echoed the anti-establishment rhetoric of those times, creating sensationalism about their pursuits, which, in turn, drew criticism from the establishment. According to critics, havurah was a fad in which members were easily deluded by speeches promising facile solutions to the challenges of American-Jewish life. The most personal attack was leveled at the members of the Boston havurah, Havurah Shalom. It was alleged that they were struggling to maintain ties with adolescent Jewish activities, thereby postponing the

acceptance of mature adult responsibilities.[39]

As the decade of the sixties passed, most of the havurah members, along with their criticisms, re-entered the established Jewish community.[40] Thus, their move into the center of the Jewish establishment was reminiscent of the ancient havurot which eventually took a prominent place in the Jewish community of their times. The result of this movement is that the American synagogue has adopted havurot to provide a more meaningful Jewish communal experience for its members.

Throughout Jewish history, havurot have been formed by Jews who have taken upon themselves the fulfillment of mitzvot (Divine Commandments). Mutual interests traditionally united people who have dedicated their energies and themselves to the survival of the Jewish community. It is indeed striking that the havurah has been so frequent an association for effecting that survival.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER I

[1]A Hebrew word: Havurot is the plural of havurah; more than one havurah.

[2]Jacob Nuesner, "The Fellowship (Havurah) in the Second Jewish Commonwealth," Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 53 (1957), pp. 125-142.

[3]A Hebrew word: Haverim is the plural of haver which means one member of a havurah; two or more members are called haverim.

[4]A Hebrew word: Haver means one who is a member of a havurah.

[5]Jacob Nuesner, "The Fellowship (Havurah) in the Second Jewish Commonwealth," Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 53 (1957), pp. 125-142.

[6]It was known from archeological remains at Petra and elsewhere that the commune was a widespread social form of religion. Jacob Nuesner asserts this on the basis of Baumgarten's argument: J. Baumgarten, "Qumran Studies," Journal of Biblical Literature, No. 77, pp. 249-257.

[7]J. Baumgarten, "Qumran Studies," Journal of Biblical Literature, No. 77, p. 253.

[8]Chaim Rabin, "Qumran Studies," Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 135.

[9]Jacob Nuesner asserts this on the basis of Baumgarten's argument: J. Baumgarten, "Qumran Studies," Journal of Biblical Literature, No. 77, pp. 249-257.

[10]Jacob Marcus, Communal Sick Care in the German Ghetto (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1947), p. 60.

[11]Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, Vol. 20 (1951), p. 404.

[12]Saul Lieberman, "Discipline in the So-Called Dead Sea Manual of Discipline," Journal of Biblical Literature, No. 61, pp. 199-206.

[13]From time to time there merged new spiritual centers of the Jewish people. Jabne began such a center after the destruction of the Temple. It was laid down that the court was to have central determining authority (Sifra Deuteronomy, p. 153).

[14]For evidence of this change in the nature of the fellowship, cf. Sotah 9:15; Tos. Shabbat 1:7; Bekorot 30b; Lieberman, p. 216, para. 40, states: "According to the tradition of the Babylonian Talmud, Abba Shaul hands on an ancient law, but afterwards, when the Temple was destroyed, the standards of ritual purity /observed by the priests/ were raised, so as not to place credence in any man, even a sage." Professor Lieberman cites Maimonides, The Book of Cleanness, Laws of Midras and Moshav, ch. 10, para. 3; and the extensive variations in the definition of the haver in Berakhot 47b.

[15]Gotthard Deutsch, "Hevra Kaddisha," Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, p. 300. Gotthard Deutsch correctly drew attention to the paucity of Talmudic laws which regulated the activities of havurot involved with proper burial. However, there is no clear evidence to support his proposition that havurot mentioned in the Talmud were extensions of the havurot from the second commonwealth.

[16]From his comment it was evident that there were different havurot in the town, each of which buried its own dead. Rashi did not comment as to whether or not such havurot still existed in his time (the eleventh century). In Maseket Ketubot (8b) of the Babylonian Talmud, Rashi apparently contradicted himself by declaring that the synagogue Beadles (Hazanei ha-ir) bury the dead. His commentary read: "Hazanei ha-ir: They ministered in that they worked with the dead and the rest of the needs of the community." Shelomo Luria (Hachmat Shlomoh) commented on this passage and proposed a resolution for the apparent contradiction: "The Hazanei ha-ir bury the dead even though everyone /here he refers to women/ joined a havurah."

[17]Nahmanides, Torat Ha-Adam Tur Yoreh De'ah, 341, 343, 383.

[18]Marcus, p. 60.

[19]Marcus, p. 60.

[20]Burial of the dead is seen as hesed shel emet; the highest form of a good deed, because in its fulfillment there is no expectation of reward.

[21]Responsa Ha-Rashva, 267. Burial societies were documented in the time of Solomon B. Abraham ibn Adret (1265-1310), and in Marcus, Communal Sick Care in the German Ghetto, p. 62; Responsa Ha-Ran, No. 75. Five havurot were recorded in Perpignan in 1380; one of them dealt with burial.

[22]This comes with reference to a case in which legacies are left to charitable societies, among them the kabbarim, No. 75.

[23]Deutsch, Vol. 6, p. 300.

[24]Marcus, p. 70.

[25]Marcus, p. 62.

[26]Eliezer Steinman, Mishnat Habad (Tel Aviv: Knesset Press, 1956), p. 31.

[27]Aaron Berechian of Modena, Ma'Abar Yabbok (Vilna, Rome, 1927).

[28]Deutsch, Vol. 6, p. 300.

[29]Jewish fellowship associations were found in Spain. These groups were called by many names, i.e. havurot, confradias, confratrias and confraries. These associations had a wide range of activities which included burial of the dead, education of the poor and the conscientious concern for the sick.

[30]Rashi's comment on Betza (24b) of the Babylonian Talmud: "Even the most insignificant person /nowadays/ is perfectly conversant with the laws regarding attached /fruits or vegetables/ and 'newly born'; for Rav Papa /Betza 24b/ rendered a final ruling..." Apparently, a ruling by a Talmudic sage would be well known to all. Rashi may have been exaggerating, but the ruling was probably well known.

[31]Irving A. Agus, The Heroic Age of Franco German Jewry (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1969), p. 345. The fact that some adults studied Talmud even while they were active in business is implied in the following letter sent to Hasdai ibn Shaprut in the middle of the tenth century. The letter was sent by members of a community of Southern Italy. "The community of Otranto is lacking three shepherds /i.e. teachers/ due to the abominable persecution. Their names are: Rav. Isaiah, a great personage, a basket full of books, pious, righteous and humble, to whom our eyes saw no equal; R. Menahem, a sage and a pious man who diligently fulfilled all commandments; and their student, Mar Elijah, righteous, honest and a merchant."

[32]Israel Goldman, Lifelong Learning Among Jews (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1975).

[33]Isaac Levitats, "The Jewish Association in America," in Essays in Jewish Life and Thought (eds. Blau, Friedman, Hertzberg, Mendelsohn) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 333-349.

[34]Stuart Rosenberg, The Search for Jewish Identity in America (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964), p. 168.

[35]Alan Mintz, "Along the Path to Religious Community," Judaic Fellowship in Theory and Practice (ed. J. Nuesner) (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1972).

[36]Gerald Goldman, "What is the Student Revolt All About?" (Clearing House of B'nai Brith, Hillel Foundations, December 1971).

[37]Alan Mintz, "Along the Path to Religious Community," Judaic Fellowship in Theory and Practice (ed. J. Nuesner) (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1972).

[38]Paul Ruttkay and Robert Agus, "Proposal for Fabrangen," Judaic Fellowship in Theory and Practice (ed. J. Nuesner) (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1972).

[39]Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, Conservative Judaism, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 16.

[40]"Have You Sold Out?", Response: A Contemporary Jewish Review, Vol. 29, (Spring 1976), p. 33. "Most of the founders of havurot...are no longer involved in these concerns. Some have made aliyah /moved to Israel/. Others are now employed by the very organizations /or professions/ against which they once campaigned."

CHAPTER II

THE INTRASYNAGOGAL HAVURAH

The Need for an Intrasynagogal Havurah Program

The Babylonian Talmud suggests that "anybody who has a synagogue in his city and does not attend there is called a bad neighbor" Berakhot (8a). Most contemporary Jews fell into this category, and yet worse, those affiliated with synagogues lacked interpersonal ties as well. An intrasynagogal havurah program was devised to remedy this situation. The havurah was an ancient and effective method for creating good neighbors.

The American synagogue was criticized[1] for not offering its members significant opportunities for participation in Jewish communal life. Congregants reported having a surprisingly low number of friends within the synagogue. The Long Range Planning Committee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations commissioned Leonard Fein to study their affiliates. He reported a "powerful, perhaps even desperate, longing for community on the part of American Jews."[2] The synagogue's functions had become limited. It was basically a "service station" where members consumed certain services such as the education of their children and the observation of life cycle rituals.

Rabbis, American Jewish sociologists and laypeople set about evaluating the "service station" posture of the synagogue and introduced changes to better meet the needs of the Jewish community. The members of synagogues belonged to nuclear families, the heads of which were usually professionals whose pursuit of advancement entailed multiple changes in

communities of residence.[3] In view of its mobile constituency, the synagogue had to accomodate itself to members who had replaced physical continuity with psychological continuity. The synagogue had to become a place for like-minded, psychologically secure people to "plug in" for an average five-year stay.

The average congregant was highly secularly educated, but had a minimal Jewish education. Despite their minimal exposure, members sought a rediscovery of Jewish roots, a rediscovery characterized by relevance and intimacy. The common structure of the synagogue had to be altered to facilitate their quest. A new decentralized synagogue was envisioned that could activate the majority of Jewish people and return to them the control over their Jewish communal experiences.

Congregants had to understand the theological, social and psychological underpinning of havurah before they could assume the additional identity of havurah membership. Traditionally, Judaism has stressed a sense of unity, a sense of peoplehood, a sense of common destiny for all Jews. A major vehicle of communion with God has always been for Israel to band together in performance of its sacred duties. Support for this position is found in the Levitical statement: "I will be sanctified in the midst of the people Israel"[4] and its Talmudic explanation, "Every act of sanctity cannot be accomplished unless a quorum of the community is present."[5] The classical statement of Hillel the Elder outlined each Jew's responsibility: "Do not separate yourself from the community."[6]

These abstract principles of unity become manifest in Jewish mourning rituals, which actualize the prototypical relationship between the Jew and his or her community. Mutual obligations and considerations

characterize the relationship between mourner and community. Loss of a significant person in one's life is the most stressful event in living. The impact of this intense stress renders the bereaved incapable of dealing with the many practical and emotional problems of burial. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the community to provide group expressions of comfort and support.

The correlative nature of the obligations incumbent on both mourner and community is evident in the cases where the seven-day mourning period conflicts with either the Sabbath or Holy days. The bereaved ceases public mourning at those times so as not to conflict with the communal obligation to rejoice.[7] On the other hand, the reciprocity of this concern can readily be seen in the case of the individual who dies and leaves no family to mourn. The community assigns ten worthy people to go to his home and mourn.[8] Jewish tradition teaches that:

> A man who has separated himself from the community shall not see its consolation. And it is taught: If the community is in trouble, a man must not say, 'I will go to my house, and eat and drink, and peace shall be with thee, O my soul.' But a man must share in the trouble of the community, even as Moses did. He who shares in its troubles is worthy to see its consolation. 9

The Jew outside of community was severely limited. The prayer life of such a Jew reflects these limitations. Jewish tradition maintains that "God does not reject the prayer of the multitude."[10] Thus, when a Jew prayed without a quorum of a community present, his prayers were necessarily diminished in quantity and power. There was no call to prayer, no reading of the Torah or its blessings, no sanctification prayer, no priestly benediction, no benedictions for marriage, no benediction to console mourners, God's name was not used in grace after meals, God's name could not be unified aloud, nor could its attendant

blessings. Community was mandatory for a complete Jewish life.

The Jewish existentialist and theologian, Martin Buber, believed that genuine Judaism could only be found in Jewish movements which sought community. The essenic, the hasidic and the kibbutz movements were all communal, and according to Buber, constituted the highest forms of Judaism.[11] Genuine Judaism did not force a choice between the personal renunciation demanded by communalism or the egocentricity of individualism. Rather, there is a progression from the individual to the communal. Communing with other people was not enough for people to become fully human. Each member of a community had to seek his or her own perfection before relations with others could be perfected.

Buber contended that God accomodated Himself to the pattern by which people live. People live in society; therefore, an association that brought people together to God-like things, such as deeds of loving-kindness, allowed God to reveal Himself.

In addition to such theological benefits, the havurah also met institutional and social-psychological needs. Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis of Valley Beth Shalom, Encino, California, suggested creation of an intrasynagogal havurah program to counteract the loss of personal expressivity which had been replaced with sterile decorous activities in the synagogue. Schulweis suggested that "heat" in the synagogue would have to rise from the pew upwards.[12] Attempts at theological and liturgical change could not alter the basic reality: The congregation was not a congregation of Jews involved in communal expression; it was an audience of private individuals who happened to be Jewish.

According to Schulweis, there were three Jewish types: (1) the religious Jew, (2) the ideological Jew, and (3) the psychological Jew.

Both the idological and the religious Jew responded to the corporate needs and voice of the Jewish people. The psychological Jew, however, considered the community to be potentially dangerous, invading privacy and damaging individuality. This type of Jew, having rejected corporate unity, recognized no collective wisdom or corporate voice.

Whereas, both ideological and religious Jews demanded commitment of themselves, the synagogue membership offered the psychological Jew few indispensable services. He or she saw a psychological benefit in life cycle rituals and in the statement of belonging to some religious group. There was a tendency on the part of the psychological Jew to privatize the synagogue. Rabbi Schulweis noted the growing popularity in Valley Beth Shalom and other synagogues of the Saturday afternoon Bar Mitzvah. The benefit of having a Bar Mitzvah during the afternoon, as opposed to the normal Saturday morning service, was the individual attention of the rabbi and cantor. The psychological Jew's family did not have to share either the clergy or their special moment with the community.

Schulweis described the predicament of the psychological Jew in this manner: "Privatism had soared into isolationism, individualism into a cage of solitary confinement, cool analytic detachment into numb affectlessness."[13] It became apparent that the end product of the withering of the psychological Jew would be the autonomous Jew searching for community.

This type of Jew could be best served by a decentralized synagogue which deprofessionalized Jewish living, so that the psychological Jew could "be brought back into the circle of shared Jewish experience."[14] To accomplish this, the synagogue had to function as a matchmaker, bringing its members together into havurot.

In such groups, the performance of Jewish communal activities had both theological and social-psychological advantages. Schulweis stressed both in his mandate to the intrasynagogal havurot at Valley Beth Shalom. Havurot were to consist of ten families each. Each havurah was charged to meet at least once a month in members' homes to socialize, to celebrate Jewish life cycle events and holidays together, and to become informed in a program of self study. The "cold" from which the synagogue suffered could be remedied by the transformation of an audience of Jews into a congregation of Jews. It was felt that it was within the potential of the intrasynagogal havurah movement to humanize the synagogue and simultaneously elicit Jewish commitment from those who had formerly been alienated congregants, and who now chose to be participants.

The Structure of the Intrasynagogal Havurah Program at Valley Beth Shalom

The intrasynagogal havurah program at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California, is comprised of fifty groups with approximately twenty members in each group. The organizing body of this program is the Havurah Coordinators' Committee which performs five functions: (1) interviewing prospective havurah members, (2) processing applications from new members, (3) attending the first meeting of a new havurah, (4) presiding over periodic meetings of the Havurah Coordinators' Committee (comprised of one representative from each havurah), and (5) functioning as resource persons for havurah programs. The Committee's job is a sensitive one; they are the shadchanim or matchmakers who bring individuals together into havurot.

The structure was implemented in the following manner. Applicants interested in becoming havurah members completed a membership questionnaire

asking their name, their age, the ages and sex of their children, and their preference in havurah programming: study, socializing or celebration. In addition, they were asked to state in their own words why they wished to join a havurah. With this information, the Havurah Coordinating Committee compiled several lists of people who appeared compatible. The Committee then asked one of the ten couples constituting a potential new havurah to contact the remaining nine couples and arrange a meeting at their home. Two individuals from the Havurah Coordinating Committee attended the first meeting of each new havurah. Havurah meetings were usually held at the conclusion of the Sabbath. To initiate the havurah, the attending Committee people led a havdalah service, which was offered as an opportunity simply to "plunge into Jewish activities." Following the service, the Coordinators offered statements of what havurah had meant in their lives. They then issued three cautions: (1) the havurah was autonomous, but it did owe some allegiance to the synagogue; thus, it would not schedule havurah activities at conflicting times with synagogue programs; (2) the new members were cautioned not to expect immediate friendship or fellowship; and (3) they were also cautioned to make their havurah meetings informal gatherings, to dress simply and have simple refreshments at the close of their meetings.

A representative to the Havurah Coordinating Committee was then chosen from the new havurah. A general meeting of the Havurah Coordinating Committee was scheduled at various times during the year. These meetings took place at the synagogue where the fifty havurot shared programming ideas, educational material and havurah life experiences.

Pathways to the Data

The intrasynagogal havurah program was initiated to transform membership in a synagogue from a peripheral allegiance to an affiliation which offered personal and religious fulfillment. The claims made for an intrasynagogal havurah program were classified into three categories: (1) social benefits, (2) educational enrichment, and (3) the enhancement of Jewish celebrations. Widespread claims for success have been registered in each of these three categories. However, a specific assessment of the intrasynagogal havurah program has not as yet been made. The objective of this research was to provide answers to the questions of concerned Jews who are interested in havurah's accomplishments.

The three mandated areas were socializing, education and celebration. Questions regarding the social benefits accruing to haverim were:

1. Who are the havurah members?
2. How does marital status effect havurah membership?
3. In what way is havurah a support group to its members?
4. Is havurah a surrogate for the eroding extended family?
5. What are the developmental stages in havurah life?
6. What are the effects of cliques and subgroupings within havurot?
7. Do some havurot fail?

Questions regarding the educational enrichment of haverim were:

1. What is havurah study?
2. What creates the character of havurah study?
3. Are havurah members satisfied with their study programs?
4. What do they study?

Questions regarding the enhancement of Jewish celebration were:

1. What is the enhancement that havurah offers for participation in Jewish life?

2. To what extent and in what manner are members involved in Jewish life?

3. What is the effect of havurah on communal prayer?

4. What is the balance of celebration in the overall program of a havurah?

The intrasynagogal havurah movement has significant ramifications for the pre-existent synagogue structure and its rabbi. This research will also address itself to these questions:

1. Can the havurah program in a synagogue be used as an administrative "vehicle" to congregants?

2. Does havurah membership detract from the participation of congregants on synagogue committees and boards?

3. What changes in perception of the rabbinic role are concommitant with an intrasynagogal havurah program?

4. What adjustments are necessary within the pre-existent congregational structure to accomodate havurot?

5. How do rabbis respond to a "havurized" synagogue? What new challenges does it present for them?

Collecting the Data

The chairpeople of the havurah program at Valley Beth Shalom were volunteer couples who spent many hours a week processing applicants and providing programatic material to havurot. A list of fifty havurot was obtained from them. Questionnaires were hand delivered to each representative of the Havurah Coordinating Committee (one representative

from each havurah). One thousand questionnaires were disseminated; two hundred responses were received. The particularly high response rate of twenty percent was due to the fact that this investigator attended eighteen havurah meetings, and personally administered questionnaires to all present. The identical introduction was made at each meeting: "My name is Sheldon Moss and I am doing research for my rabbinic thesis on the havurah movement at Valley Beth Shalom. I have prepared this questionnaire to obtain your opinions of the havurah movement. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is of the utmost value to myself and my rabbinic colleagues. I would like to emphasize the fact that there are no 'right' answers to the questions. Lists of possibilities appear and they are extensive. Please do not be intimidated by them. The questionnaire is anonymous. Your answers are valuable if they are honest."

Many havurot did not wish or could not arrange to meet with this investigator. The representatives of those havurot were delivered enough questionnaires for their entire havurah. The same introduction presented at havurah meetings was delivered to these representatives. Eight hundred questionnaires were distributed in this fashion.

Data were obtained from three sources in addition to the questionnaires. Eighteen group and twenty-seven individual interviews were obtained. The average duration of an interview was one-and-one-half hours. Seven rabbis in the Los Angeles area who had implemented havurot within their synagogues were also interviewed.

The data tabulated and analyzed represented one hundred eighty questionnaires and included all of the interviews. The balance of twenty questionnaires could not be used because they either late arrivals or

incomplete. Each question was tallied and the percentages were computed for each possible response.

The social, educational and celebratory significance of the havurot at Valley Beth Shalom will be presented in narrative form.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER II

[1]Marshall Sklare, American Jewish Community (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1974), p. 9.

[2]Leonard J. Fein, Reform is a Verb (New York: The Long Range Planning Committee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1972), p. 140.

[3]Gerald Bubis, Reconstructionist, Vol. 37, 15 October 1971.

[4]Leviticus 22:32.

[5]Mgillah 23b.

[6]Tanh. B., Nitzavim 25a.

[7]Yoreh Deah 399.1, Laws of Mourning.

[8]Yoreh Deah 476.3, Laws of Mourning.

[9]Tan. d. b. El., p. 112.

[10]Sifre Numbers, Pinheas, p. 135.

[11]Martin Buber, Pointing the Way (New York and Evanston: Harper Torch Books, 1963).

[12]Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis, "Restructuring the Synagogue," Conservative Judaism (New York, New York, 1971).

[13]Schulweis, "Restructuring the Synagogue."

[14]Schulweis, "Restructuring the Synagogue."

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF HAVURAH

The Social Profile

The Midrash teaches that to welcome a fellow man is to welcome the Divine Presence (Mekilta 18:12). Haverim welcomed one another into each others' homes and lives. Who were the haverim? What characterized their interpersonal relations? Were their expectations met by havurah?

The majority of respondents were married and involved in the rearing of children.[1] They had extensive secular educations[2] and held either white collar or professional jobs.[3] Despite their apparent successes in achieving status and comfort, they reported varying degrees of loneliness and isolation. This comment typified the sentiment of many: "Let's be frank, we are all lonely, it's basic. Los Angeles is a large city; it is easy to get lost in it. I haven't found a better cure for my loneliness than havurah. That's why we'll stick together."

Although there were many other social groups in Los Angeles, very few respondents participated in them.[4] Havurah membership was the only social group affiliation for twenty-six percent of the respondents. Another twenty-five percent belonged to professional societies.[5] However, these groups fulfilled very different needs. One professional contrasted his memberships in this manner: "When I get together with other people in my field I'm a competitor. I'm preoccupied with making contacts. Here (at havurah) I'm accepted for who I am, I can let down." Havurah offered both relaxation and acceptance.

Haverim reported that its distinctiveness was its small size and the quality of its personal relationships. Respondents wished to retain the "small group" features of havurah.[6] Membership in a consistent group of approximately twenty people was often an unprecedented occurrence in the lives of members.

Respondents reported that they had friends outside of havurah; yet, eighty-eight percent of the sample population expressed the desire for more social contact with members of their havurah between monthly meetings.[7] Their need for contact was evidenced by the high attendance rates at monthly meetings.[8]

Marital Status as it Effects Havurah Membership

Most respondents joined and attended havurot as couples, although, there was not a strong interest in explicit marriage enrichment programs within the intrasynagogal havurah program.

Fluctuations in marital status were reflected in the fact that there were seven percent more women than men in the sample population. Havurot absorbed widows and divorced people into their group lives. Members separated from their spouses often retained active membership within havurah. In cases of divorce, the ex-spouses had to decide who would remain a member of the havurah. Single members of predominantly married havurot asked their havurah's permission to bring dates to their meetings.

In some cases, widows and divorcees had concurrently joined one of the two singles' havurot in the Valley Beth Shalom program, while retaining their previous affiliation. This singles' havurah was comprised of a core of haverim whose events were attended by transient visitors.

One of their members stated: "I still belong to another havurah that my husband and I used to belong to, but I helped organize the singles' havurah because I realized that I had to make other friends and get into another world." The pattern of social interaction in non-married havurot differed from that in predominantly married havurot. The interviewed singles' havurah had more female than male members. One respondent stated: "We have developed great friendships, but we are always with other single women. We suffer from a lack of men. Those who do attend are 'lionized'."

Some members of the singles' havurah felt that the synagogue viewed them as socially maladjusted because of their different marital status, and they reported difficulty in integrating into the general Valley Beth Shalom community. One member stated: "The first thing the synagogue thinks that we need is counseling, but we don't need it any more than the married havurah members do. We are different from the mainstream of members, but we need the same thing that they do, good programs that attract people. The only difference is that we attract single people, whereas they attract marrieds."

The Supportive Nature of Havurot

Both married and singles' havurot functioned as support groups for their members. Over seventy-five percent of the respondents expected members of their havurah to support them when they had a personal problem. Yet, they were reluctant to use meeting time to air their personal problems. One respondent stated a general sentiment: "We only meet once a month, and the full group of twenty is too large. If someone is sick or mourning, we automatically respond, but we aren't equipped to do group psychotherapy at meetings."

Group psychotherapy notwithstanding, the individual member was offered therapeutic benefits by his or her havurah. This therapeutic effect was most evident during times of bereavement. The comfort offered by havurot was presented in the traditional Jewish manner. This respondent reported a typical occurrence: "After the funeral, the havurah prepared the meal of consolation, and every night they came to the house to pray so I could say kaddish (the mourner's declaration). It was the comfort and support of the havurah that got me through this last year."

Havurot have aided their members to overcome other kinds of losses. Nearly one-half of all respondents expected members of their havurah to help them secure a job if they became unemployed. In many instances, respondents held highly specialized jobs and the havurah could only offer indirect support. One respondent reported: "The layoffs hit some of the engineers pretty hard and we helped them over the rough spots. We really weren't exactly sure how to offer aid without humiliating the member, so we asked the rabbi and he taught us about the concepts of tzdakah (Jewish notions of charity), and we acted accordingly."

Havurah as a Surrogate for the Eroding Extended Family

The classical extended family is characterized by relations between three generations: brothers and sisters, cousins; parents and children, aunts and uncles; and ties between grandparents and grandchildren. It was hoped that the havurah could become a surrogate extended family for those members whose relatives lived outside of the Los Angeles area.[9] Havurah membership only partially fulfilled the need for a surrogate extended family. Though the multigenerational model of the extended family was not replaced, havurah substituted a large base for contact within the

same generation.[10] The interpersonal ties created between respondents were reminiscent of those between siblings and/or same age cousins. There was not strong support for occasional activities with other havurot whose members were old enough to be their parents.

The Havurah Coordinating Committee found that having children of the same age (within one year) was an excellent index for insuring the homogeneity of a havurah. However, respondents did not join havurah primarily for the sake of their children; involvement of children ranked seventh of fifteen havurah goals.[11] There was not strong interest in involving either children[12] or grandparent figures[13] in havurah activities on a regular basis. One respondent stated: "We involve the children on holidays, but we don't really want them to interfere with adult night out." In fact, respondents often encountered difficulty in involving their children. "If your children don't want to come to an event you feel guilty that they aren't with you, or that you couldn't get them to come."

Havurot with preteenage children were more successful in involving them than those whose children were teenage or older. When involved, children gained exposure to adult Jewish role models in addition to their parents, and the conviviality of other Jewish children their ages. In the few cases where involvement of children was consistently successful, the children formed their own havurah, with its own identity and activities.

Those respondents (forty percent) who had large extended families living in the Los Angeles area were proportionate to those who had no such local family.[14] Membership in a havurah was equally attractive to both groups. The affiliation of those members with extended families living in the area was understandable: havurah offered a surrogate sibling relationship that was all the more attractive because it afforded

companionship without natural sibling rivalry.

Developmental Stages in Havurah Life

Many respondents likened the developmental stages of havurah life to those of marriage. The respondents were placed in what seemed to be an arranged marriage. The Havurah Coordinating Committee had arranged the "match," but thereafter, the quality of interpersonal relations and programmatic activities were the havurah's responsibility. The initial contrived and artificial ambiance was replaced by a period of self-discovery and sharing. The next emergent stage was characterized by the adjustment of the havurah's program and relationships to best serve the needs of the group. Yet, the comparison of havurah membership and marriage had limitations. The open sharing of needs and expectations was as important to havurah growth as it was to marriage. However, marriage allowed partners to make a wider range of claims on each other.

Periodic re-evaluation sessions were necessary to discard programs with which members had become satiated. Many havurot reported difficulty in successfully re-evaluating. Forty-six percent of the respondents reported that their havurah did not evaluate the progress it made towards reaching its goals. When respondents were asked to list the goals of their havurah, the obvious goals of study, socializing and family enrichment were followed by the response "none." In view of the frequency of the failure to define clear affirmative goals, the inability to re-evaluate was understandable.

The informality of havurah life seemed incompatible with the process of agreeing on a goal or goals, division of goals into objectives, consideration of alternatives, proposal of programs and the evaluation of effectiveness.

Cliques and Subgroupings within Havurot

Isolated friendships of various intensities developed within havurot, but an overall commitment to havurah and its purposes remained. The Havurah Coordinating Committee suggested that friends not join the same havurah. The reconstruction of the community did yield many new friendships and natural subgroupings within havurot. These subgroupings within havurot often caused tension,[15] especially in the early stages of group life. Cliques which met between monthly meetings of havurot caused some members to feel that they were being excluded. The havurot which reported this problem discussed the issue at a monthly meeting. One respondent noted: "This issue was going to blow us apart as a group, so we discussed it and we understood that some of us have more needs for contact than others. When we raised this issue, we atarted along a path to building mutual respect for each other."

Havurot were more than friendship groups; they were fellowship groups. One respondent stated: "I have developed a fondness and closeness for the members of my havurah. I can't say that everyone is on the same level, but there is a fondness and an identification with the group as a havurah."

Dissatisfaction in Havurot

The Havurah Coordinating Committee was highly effective in bringing individuals together into havurot.[16] The counsel of the Havurah Coordinating Committee was: "Don't expect too much too fast, it will take time to develop." Nevertheless, a minority of the respondents had relinquished membership in havurot. Some members relinquished their membership because they were impatient; others were not satisfied with

the evolving program and "chemistry" preferred by the majority of members.

Their dissatisfaction was due to an imbalance between time spent studying and socializing, and/or a lack of intimacy among members. One respondent reportedly left his previous havurah because of unwarranted social complications: "My wife and I were in another havurah last year. They were so engrossed in socializing that they outdid themselves. The group was socially competitive. In fact, at one meeting they even catered the refreshments." This havurah was no longer attractive to the respondent. Another common loss of attraction resulted when havurot drifted from their stated purposes. One respondent left for this reason: "We were formed as a havurah study group. We had all stated that we were interested in getting into Jewish material in depth. We wound up mainly socializing, and that seemed to suit the needs of the group. We have a tremendous cadre of friends, and to be perfectly honest, we don't need a havurah for social pruposes. I joined because I wanted to study. We switched membership to a havurah that took study more seriously."

This problem seemed fairly widespread. Sixty-three percent of the respondents felt that their havurah did spend too much time socializing. Many admitted that it was easier to rely on socializing skills rather than risking exposure to study, celebration and the process of group growth.

Socializing was enjoyable and non-threatening. Difficulties arose around "high risk" interpersonal interactions. Disillusionment with a particular havurah was often precipitated by different levels of readiness to participate in personal disclosure. One havurah member stated: "We found that difficulties arise in our group when we get into 'gutsy' things and not just pleasant conversation. I felt that at times I opened up myself, exposed my vulnerable side. The other members

listened but did not 'open up' in return. It seems that there is an unconscious unwillingness to go into depth. We had personality conflicts within the group that we didn't know how to overcome."

Havurot had trained synagogue staff at their disposal to aid them in overcoming such problems. This investigator visited Valley Beth Shalom's troubled havurot for three years previous to undertaking this research. Havurot with difficulties benefited greatly by communication exercises, which helped them discuss their expectations from havurah and each other.

When a couple or member decided to leave, they were often criticized by the havurah for lacking patience during the group's periods of growth. This was a typical statement: "I get the feeling that those who left wanted havurah to happen immediately--like going to the frozen food section at the market--defrost it and it's there when you need it." The overwhelming majority of haverim realized that the search for a faultless havurah was futile. There seemed to be a sober realization that another havurah would yield less difficulties. It was significant that the majority of those who left havurot joined another group rather than leaving the havurah program entirely.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III

[1]36-50 years of age.

[2]Seventy-three percent were college educated; one-third of which had graduate degrees.

[3]Sixty-three percent were white collar or professional job holders (many homemakers held second careers).

[4]Bridge clubs, athletic clubs, Masons, country clubs, etc.

[5]Non-havurah affiliations (in order of their prominence) were: none, professional groups, athletic groups, Hadassah, card groups, temple choir, daily prayer minyan, book clubs, charitable organizations and country clubs.

[6]Sixty-eight percent of the members wanted to limit their havurah to 18-20 members.

[7]They preferred (in order of preference): dining out, inviting haverim to dinner or brunch, spending an evening chatting, attending religious services together and going to a concert or the theater together.

[8]Most interviewed havurot had followed the advice of the Havurah Coordinating Committee and set regular meeting dates (i.e. the third Saturday of every month at 8 o'clock in the evening).

[9]Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis, "Restructuring the Synagogue," Conservative Judaism (New York, New York, 1971).

[10]Half of the respondents favored other members being about their same age.

[11]Respondents stated that the goals of their havurot were: study (23%), social (16%), family (11%), none (11%), Jewish environment (10%), celebration (7.25%), friends (6%), children (4.5%), personal relationships (3%), closer links to the synagogue (3%), support group (2%), meet Jews (2%) and speak freely about Judaism (1.5%).

[12]Thirty-three percent of the respondents said that they would like to have members of their havurah who were young enough to be their children.

[13]Twenty percent of the respondents said that they would like to have members of their havurah who were old enough to be their parents.

[14]

Number of friends and relatives living in the Los Angeles area:	Percentage of Respondents
0-2	7.3
3-5	4.8
6-10	17.0
11-15	11.3
16-20	13.8
21-25	6.5
26-30	10.5
31-50	9.7
51-75+	18.6

[15]Twelve percent of the respondents did not wish to spend time with most members between meetings.

[16]Twenty percent of all years spent in a *havurah* were spent in more than one *havurah*.

CHAPTER IV

HAVURAH STUDY

An Increased Jewish Consciousness

The classical goals of Jewish study was the inculcation of the cognitive skills necessary to pursue a lifelong study of Jewish sacred texts.[1] Most respondents were students in the American Jewish school system; a system which has produced few literate Jews. They had replaced the traditional emphasis on study of sacred texts with advanced secular learning.[2] The study skills obtained in their secular academic careers theoretically could have enabled them to read Jewish sacred texts, especially if translated and explained in English. However, mere possession of the academic abilities proved to be insufficient; the interviewed havurot had limited successes in textual studies.

The classical student of Jewish texts has a Jewish identity that motivates textual study. Most interviewed havurot did not consider a developed Jewish identity as a prerequisite for havurah study. In fact, the accomplishment of havurah study was its aid to members in defining and fortifying their identities as Jews.

Keeping current on topics of Jewish interest and participation in the Jewish community were reported to be the most significant changes in the Jewish identity of havurah members. This explained why even respondents whose study programs were irregular and unorganized characteristically stated: "When I came into the havurah I had no background; now I am familiar enough to feel at home with my Jewishness." The following is a

table of expressions of Jewish identity stimulated by havurah:

	Percent of Respondents
a) To keep current on topics of Jewish interest	50
b) To participate in the Jewish community	42
c) To attend services more regularly	40
d) To feel a bond with the Jews of Russia	37.5
e) To feel a bond with the Jews of Israel	26
f) To have a stronger commitment to social justice	25
g) To join and pay dues to a synagogue	24
h) To visit Israel	24
i) To support Israel with political lobbying	23
j) To support Israel with money	22
k) To substantially increase my pledge to Jewish charities	19

An overt example of this fortification of Jewish identity was a change in attitude of one havurah that considered the question: "Am I a Jew before being an American?". One member proudly reported: "Last year we discussed the issue and voted; ninety percent of us said we were Americans first. This year we voted again and eighty-five percent of us said we were Jews first, then Americans."

Template for Study

At the first meeting of a new havurah, the representatives of the Havurah Coordinating Committee suggest the sharing of each member's earliest Jewish experiences. Such sharing often served as a prototype for havurah study. This comment was characteristic: "We don't structure our discussions, but even so, I have learned a lot of factual material as well as how people feel about being Jewish. It has been very broadening; It has stayed with me."

An animated group discussion on any topic was considered by all interviewed havurot to be a successful study session. This comment was echoed in many havurot: "We have very stimulating discussions; some times we go on until one-thirty or two o'clock in the morning, and then

we take a drive just to unwind." Discussions of this type served two purposes: first, the sharing of those experiences and associations responsible for the Jewish identities of members, and second, the exploration of Jewish issues with others whose past experiences and present attitudes were known. This process of sharing and contrasting experiences produced an assortment of Jewish role models for members. Each member's Jewish biography offered an in-depth study of a modern American Jew.

Both positive and negative memories were openly discussed. One member stated: "Every person in our havurah said they grew up resenting their Jewish education. Once we got away from our parents we stopped, but we all came back. When our children were born, we wanted them to know their heritage; we felt that it was vital for them and for us."

Open sharing was facilitated by the high value placed on each member's input. "X, Y and Z (havurah members) were always active in synagogue life; A, B, C and I had no formal Jewish education. We are just now finding out about our Jewish identities. Each of us has been accepted; each of us feels at home in this havurah."[3]

These statements characterized the intimacy and acceptance which were the foundations of havurah study. Members stated: "We are like a family ready to study together, rather than a group of students fulfilling the role of pupil." "As the years go on, more and more members actively participate in our study sessions. We are becoming increasingly comfortable with each other."

The acceptance of other members necessarily included acceptance of their varied levels of Jewish knowledge. Havurot reported reaching a plateau in their studies either when unequal attention was focused on

those members with enriched Jewish backgrounds, or when their questions about Judaism became more sophisticated than the answers which they could supply. Until reaching this plateau, those members with enriched Jewish backgrounds had participated at equal levels with those whose backgrounds were minimal. The more knowledgeable respondents reported that their havurah began to depend upon them in their search for answers. Some felt honored and comfortable in the role of teacher, but most reported ambivalent feelings. This comment was typical: "Every time a holiday comes up, I explain its history and rituals. It is getting to the point that I'm the evening's program. I feel I'm responsible for entertaining the group." Those cast into the position of teacher often complained to the investigator that they did not want to accept responsibility for the overall progress of their havurah's study program. The initial stage of their study had accomplished the debriefing and subsequent fortification of their Jewish identities. Satiated with this, they began a study program of material beyond their immediate grasp.

Readiness for Study

Many havurot reported confusion about what they ought to accomplish in the second stage. The majority of respondents were highly educated, and therefore, invoked academic models in planning their study programs. Respondents were familiar with study characterized by the reading and subsequent discussion of an assigned chapter in a Jewish book. The academic model held authenticity, but simultaneously set up resistance in many members. These comments were typical of such resistance: "We've stopped studying for this year. We were forced to read, and if I wanted to read, I'd go back to college!" "We are all busy finishing our

academic degrees or launching our careers. We want to relax at havurah--social relaxation only--nothing heavy." "We don't research, we just discuss. It's boring sometimes, but our goal is to be social. Maybe in a few years we'll get into real organized study."

Respondents reported that their study programs suffered because of their "laziness." There was no lack of willingness to intellectually confront an issue during havurah study--only an unwillingness to prepare for the discussion. A popular self-criticism was: "We are at a watershed. We've passed the stage of finding out about each other. We want and need a higher level of intellectual stimulation. We could do research ourselves, but we're too lazy. What we really want is a painless method of exposure."

What Do Havurot Study?

The impetus to overcome laziness came when a genuine life issue arose out of havurah's experiences. Now, study was no longer simply academic. The following were instances that forced consideration of challenging topics. When havurot wanted to lend financial support to a member they became motivated to research the Jewish understanding of charity; the importance of loyalty to the institutions of Judaism was discussed when non-synagogue members asked to join havurot; and one havurah reported a series of discussions to decide if the rabbi could speak for congregants on ethical issues.

The Bible and texts offering overviews of Judaism were the most popular books used by haverim to deal with practical issues, as well as general topics of interest. Haverim expressed feelings of accomplishment in reading such books. One member proudly remarked: "We actually read some books of the Torah; it was quite interesting. I never would have

been able to do it alone. Studying Torah with the group was enjoyable and I'm proud that I have read it."

The study topics of havurot also reflected a combination of practical and ideological interests. Havurot reported achieving the most success when studying fundamental Jewish issues. The four most successful topics were: "Jewish Holidays", "What is a Jew?", "Jewish Conceptions of God", and "Zionism and Israel". Most respondents could readily participate and become absorbed in these topics.

Many havurot attended adult weekends conducted at Jewish resident camps in the Los Angeles area. The three-day programs offered concentrated Jewish study, as well as the opportunity for members to spend longer segments of time together.

Problems in Havurah Study

Respondents were highly stimulated by these weekends, but they were difficult to arrange and often expensive. The obvious supply center of Jewish information was the synagogue.[5] The synagogue supplied resource people and study materials to help raise the quality of study in havurah. Still, one-half of the respondents felt that they needed more study material than the Havurah Coordinators' Committee provided. The rabbi himself was considered a "resource" supplied by the synagogue. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents wishing more contact with the congregational rabbi asked for his aid in directing their study program. These two factors pointed to a need for direction in the second stage.

Despite the clear indications that study was of great importance to the haverim, there was a strong indication that these feelings were not unmixed. Forty-nine percent of respondents felt that their havurah

ought to spend more time socially, at the expense of study and celebration. When questioned again, sixty-three percent felt that they spent too much time socializing, at the expense of study and celebration. Their ambivalence reflected their desire to study, but the very methods and materials used for study became troublesome, and at worst, tedious.

Respondents who wished to explore specified areas of Jewish study reported meeting with frustration. The unsuccessful learning experiences were:

	Percent of Respondents
a) Conversational Hebrew	89
b) Midrash	85
c) Zohar	85
d) Mishna	83
e) Talmud	68
f) Jewish Law	68
g) Jewish Conceptions of God	61
h) How does a convert become Jewish?	60
i) Jewish Understanding of the Messiah	59
j) Judaism on Death, Dying and Afterlife	58
k) Jewish Defense	58
l) Jewish Mysticism	57
m) Hebrew for Prayers	57
n) Torah as a Sacred or Human Document	54
o) Medieval Jewish History	45

Difficulties arose because respondents could not choose an appropriate text. One member stated: "We tried to study the Mishna; when we got into it we were floundering, it got very boring very quickly." Havurot frequently chose material that was often too advanced for them. They could not distinguish a primary textual source from a secondary text about that source, or an orthodox Jewish author from a liberal Jewish author.

Study and Havurah Purpose

Each havurah was autonomous, and therefore, ultimately responsible for its own program. In response to all these obstacles, a decision to

delete study from their program was at least possible.[6] However, those havurot without a study program felt that they lacked purpose. One member noted: "We have been floundering--in the back of our minds we know that we should be studying. We don't read the discussion material in advance, so we fall back on what we know, socializing--it's the easiest."

When faced with this dilemma, havurot exercised one of four options: (1) taking a year off from study, (2) assigning each hosting couple the task of preparing the material to be presented at their home, (3) appointing an internal steering committee to organize a program of study, or (4) arranging exposure to resource people from outside of the havurah. The acceptance of the fourth option indicated that havurot felt that they were limited in their potential because of their small memberships. To remedy this, and yet maintain their patterns of social interaction, non-member resource people were invited to join the havurah for one or two sessions. Many of the synagogue's lay and professional leadership were invited to speak at havurot. The inherent threat of becoming overly reliant on non-members for curriculum planning and presentation was allayed by meeting with these people on a limited basis.

Balance of Study in Overall Havurah Program

The mandate of the intrasynagogal havurah program went beyond study; it included celebration and socializing. Consequently, havurot created an activity balance of all three areas at the group's preferred levels. The fact that each havurah reached its own particular balance attested to the autonomy of havurot.

There was a marked absence of immediate success each year in all

three mandated areas. Many respondents reported that they were simply stockpiling pleasant and informative discussions that could be explored in greater depth at a later stage of havurah life, or at the formal adult study program offered by the synagogue.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER IV

[1]Orach Hayyim, Hayee Adam, Section 10, Parts 1 and 2, "Until when is a person obligated to study? Until the day he dies." (Vilna, 1832).

[2]Seventy-three percent of the respondents were college educated; one-third at graduate level.

[3]Ninety-five percent of the respondents were pleased, or very pleased, with the way in which their havurah decided what would be done at each meeting, and the objectives of its overall program. Eighty-four percent of the respondents felt that they played an active, or very active, role in their havurah's decision making process.

[4]

The most successful study topics were:	Percentage of Respondents Who Had Satisfactory Learning Experiences
a) What is a Jew?	96
b) The Jewish Family	92
c) Quality of Jewish Life	92
d) What is an Israeli?	88
e) Jewish Holidays	87
f) Relationship Between Individual and Group in Judaism	87
g) Zionism and Israel	87
h) Are we a chosen people?	76

[5]The synagogue staff recognized the need for instructions and ideas for joyous celebration. Six manuals were produced which included background materials on the holidays, as well as suggestions for their celebration. The texts were distributed every few months. They were:

a) Sukkot and the Jewish Poor (October-November)
b) The December Dilemma of Xmas and Channukah (December)
c) Shabbat: The Art of Celebration (January-mid February)
d) Journey Through the Haggadah (mid February-March)
e) Israel: Tears of Joy and Sadness (April)
f) The Plight of Russian Jewry (May-June)

[6]Ninety-four percent of all respondents did not feel that the Havurah Coordinating Committee encroached upon the autonomy of their group.

CHAPTER V

HAVURAH'S EFFECT ON JEWISH LIFE

The Phenomena of Command

It was hoped that membership in an intrasynagogal havurah would enhance the participation of haverim in Jewish life. The general consensus was that havurah did offer this enhancement, but how can it be quantified? One measure is the number of mitzvot[1] adopted by haverim as a result of their participation in a havurah. However, the caveat of the Midrash must also be born in mind, "He who loves mitzvot is not sated with mitzvot" (Devarim Rabba 2:23).

Mitzvot are lovingly performed by Jews as their part in the covenant between God and the people of Israel. The covenant is a bilateral agreement; in performing mitzvot Israel acts morally, and therefore, warrants the loving protection of God. When this reciprocity breaks down, Israel is punished. At the same time, in performing mitzvot, Jews become more fully realized as humans, as well as fully affiliated with the people of Israel. Traditionally, mitzvot are performed before an affective response and cognitive understanding of them develops. Most respondents altered this traditional approach to the performance of mitzvot.

The Quest for Involvement

Respondents most commonly described themselves as "Jews in their hearts."[2] The predominance of this response portrayed the affective emphasis of their identities as Jews. Their stress on "internal identity" did not motivate the strict observance of Jewish law. Their theological

positions were also not of the kind that would make them rigorously observant Jews. This phrasing of traditional Jewish theology, "God is our watchful, all powerful Father; He guides, shapes and controls our lives with Divine wisdom; He created and sustains purposeful progress in both nature and history" ranked fifth behind more restricted theological positions. The most popular position read as follows: "Godliness is what we experience when we individually and communally strive to realize our highest legitimate aims. There is no personal relationship to God but we experience holiness which we call Divine presence." The phrase "there is no personal relationship to God" was an exaggeration that implied no human feelings could exist for Godliness. This phrase was open to the following interpretations: no feelings for Godliness are possible; God is not a person and/or does not have a personality. Either understanding of the most prevalent theological position was distant from traditional belief.

The following is a list of theological positions and the percentage of respondents who ascribed to each position:

Theological Positions	Percentage of Respondents
Godliness is what we experience when we individually and communally strive to realize our highest legitimate aims. There is no personal relationship to God, but we do experience holiness which we can call Divine Presence.	26
God is the vitality of nature; He created and sustains the rhythmic pattern of birth, growth and decay in all of life.	24
God is the still small voice of conscience within us.	21
God is love.	10
God is our watchful, all powerful Father; He guides, shapes and controls our lives with Divine wisdom; He created and sustains purposeful progress in both nature and history.	9.3

We know nothing about God. He should concentrate on man and his movement towards his ideals.	6
There is no God. The happenings of the world are random. What ever happens does so without Divine plan, inspiration or assistance.	3.7

The Jewish self-descriptions and theological positions of the respondents were not suitable for rigorous observance, yet they yearned for the intense involvement that rigorous performance of mitzvot seemed to afford. Respondents were curious about the rigorous practice of Jewish law. Orthodox rabbis from the lubavich and habad movements of Judaism were popular guest speakers. A number of interviewed havurot reported seeking new members who were observant and could, therefore, function as resources and perhaps as role models for observance.

Nearly half (forty-eight percent) of the respondents had been exposed to Jewish practices which were not observed in their parents' homes. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents were less observant in their homes than they were when growing into adulthood. The use of observant role models proved frustrating for respondents for both groups. Many believed that only complete and loyal observance of Jewish law constituted "authentic Judaism." This "halachic"[3] model was ascribed authenticity; however, few respondents described themselves as halachic Jews. Some were defensive when asked about their practices. "I feel guilty about my lack of observance. When another member of our havurah got started about keeping kosher,[4] I felt threatened. We agreed that anything we did or did not do /with reference to the performance of mitzvot/ was our own business." At first glance, rigorous observance seemed attractive because it offered clear prescriptive behaviors which might have given expression to the growing Jewish consciousness of members.

On further investigation, it became apparent that the part of rigorous observance respondents admired most was not knowledge and practice of law; it was the kavannah (intentionality) of observant models.

Intentionality was the common element which linked together all havurot in Jewish history. As noted previously, Dr. J. J. Petachowski[5] suggested that havurot were formed by Jews who took upon themselves the fulfillment of certain mitzvot (as did the Jews in the time of Nehemiah 10:33, "We lay upon ourselves these mitzvot."). Respondents reported that as a result of participation in their havurah, the following mitzvot were adopted: driving only to and from the synagogue on the Sabbath; inviting a Russian family to a Passover seder; fasting on T'sha Ba'av (a fast day which marks the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem); building a sukkah (booth) on Sukkot and acquiring an etrog and lulav (celebratory implements) for Sukkot; eating and sleeping in a sukkah; tree planting on Tu Bishvat (Jewish Arbor Day); and reciting the blessing(s) after eating.

The following is a table representing mitzvot observance stimulated by havurah:

(A) Mitzvot haverim would now consider.
(B) Mitzvot practiced by haverim prior to joining a havurah.

Percentage of Respondents		
(A)	(B)	
10	90	Hanging a mezzuzah
47	52	Wearing a head covering during meals
37	63	Reciting the blessing(s) before eating
57	42	Reciting the blessing(s) after eating
38	62.5	Praying at home
33	66	Putting on phylacteries
20	80	Eating no pork products
22	77	Eating no shell fish
28	72	Buying only kosher meat
24	76	Having two sets of dishes and utensils
33	66	Practicing ritual family purity
43	57	Eating only dairy on Shavuoth

(A)	(B)	
74	26	Building a sukkah
78	23	Eating and sleeping in a sukkah
2	98	Lighting yartzeit candles
25	75	Using two separate (additional) sets of dishes and utensils for Passover
20	80	Searching for chometz (leavening) before Passover
2	98	Having a Passover seder
53	47	Tree planting on Tu Bishvat
77	23	Acquiring an etrog and lulav for Sukkoth
4	96	Acquiring a candelabra for Channukah
35	65	Gift giving at Purim
6	94	Fasting on Yom Kippur
4	96	Acquiring a pair of Shabbat candlesticks
15	85	Acquiring a challah cover
9	90	Acquiring a kiddish cup
10	89	Kindling Sabbath lights
16	83	Reciting kiddish over the wine on the Sabbath
37.5	62.5	Singing Sabbath songs around the table
43	57	Not working on the Sabbath
66	33	Driving only to and from the synagogue on the Sabbath
45	55	Wearing arbah kanfot (small tallis)
25	75	Wearing a mezzuzah or a "chai" as a necklace
86	14	Inviting a Russian family to your seder
81	19	Fasting on T'sha Ba'av

The list of eight mitzvot considered by respondents was substantial. Those members with very minimal observance habits suggested: "It may not look like much to you /this investigator/, but for us it is a quantum leap. We came from practically no observance to this." The adopted mitzvot aligned with a previously stated research finding that the havurah program made participation in the Jewish community more important to its members. Building a sukkah, tree planting on Tu Bishvat and inviting a Russian family to a Passover seder, all shared the common element of participation in Jewish community.

Respondents with high levels of prehavurah observance, together with non-observant members. stressed the fact that havurah membership nourished their affective identities as Jews. This comment was one of many of its kind: "We are not very observant at home or as a havurah, but that doesn't mean that our havurah hasn't effected us. Last year we had

a picnic in the park; we had a great time, all happy and cooperating with each other in cooking and setting up. A church group came over and asked us who we were. They were impressed with our spirit. We told them we were a synagogue havurah and we talked with them for a while. I don't think that I was ever as proud to be Jewish as at that moment."

The Effect of Havurah on Attendance at Communal Prayer

Forty percent of the respondents stated that as a result of their participation in a havurah, attending religious services had become more important.[6] The respondents were not disgruntled synagogue members who had aversions to the prayer sanctuary. On the contrary, participation in a havurah substantially increased their attendance at religious services. In addition, seventy-four percent of the respondents approved of holding a short religious service before havurah meetings. (Many of the twenty-six percent who did not approve of holding a service prayed daily at the synagogue.)

The most substantial change was from attendance only at special holidays to attendance two to three times per month. This significant climb in attendance was influenced by two factors: innovations in the prayer liturgy as well as the tone of the prayer experience, and the effects of havurah. Previous to the initiation of the intrasynagogal havurah program at Valley Beth Shalom, many innovations were introduced into worship services. The purpose of the changes was to transform worship from an experience of "prayer by proxy," where the rabbi and cantor performed the service, to an experience of greater group participation. Equally important was that the audience of Jews was transformed by the havurah program into a community that could pray together as an interrelated

congregation. Respondents were often unsatisfied when they attended services previous to the aforementioned changes. One member's comments typified this: "It was almost worthless to go to services and not know the people around you; to feel fearful of touching someone accidentally and invading their privacy. We went to services and read responsively when it was our turn. When we left, not one person except for the usher at the door wished us a good Sabbath."

The success of the intrasynagogal havurah program in this area was dramatic. Many respondents attended services as a havurah.[7] When haverim arrived at services they reported looking for other members of their group. The comment of one respondent was most insightful: "When I go to synagogue I look around for a havurah member, and sometimes I don't find one, but it doesn't bother me to sit alone as it used to." This respondent had internalized her havurah. Her participation had cured the estrangement that she once felt. The community had been restructured and she belonged in it.

Balance of Celebration in Overall Intrasynagogal Havurah Program

The Havurah Coordinating Committee suggested to new havurot that the Jewish calendar of holidays would supply their initial programming needs. There were approximately thirty celebrations and commemorations during the calendar year from which to choose. Respondents informed themselves about celebrations; study of the Jewish holidays was their most successful study area.[8] As a direct result, there was strong interest in including more celebrations in their programs[9]--a clear indication of their enjoyment of the celebrations that they had shared.

Havurah exposed respondents to the observances of havdalah and

the building of a sukkah.[10] These two observances typified successful celebrations in that they both provided inherent activities, and therefore, were effectively celebrated. They were also naturally suited to observance within a group; havdalah was usually observed in a darkened room with only the light of a flickering candle, while the group stood in a circle. The building of a sukkah involved the excitement of actual construction of a religious symbol. This response was typical of many reports: "Our sukkah building is the best celebration that we have all year. We all pitch in and build it, and it's a fantastic time. Channukah, on the other hand, doesn't go over so well. After you light candles, eat potato pancakes, and spin the dreydl, you are finished in one-half hour."

Many Jewish holidays are presently celebrated within the synagogue prayer services, and as such, do not lend themselves to celebration within a havurah. There are customs surrounding holidays that lend themselves to havurah celebration, but they are rather obscure and haverim are unaware of them. The synagogue staff recognized and responded to the need for celebratory manuals for all the holidays. Six such manuals were created with background material about havurot, as well as suggestions for joyful celebration.[11]

However, the publication of these manuals was only the first step towards creating celebrations for havurot which could complement those that took place at synagogue services. Respondents desired further suggestions for celebrations and commemorations as they enjoyed both the symbolism and the experience of these occasions. The desire for additional suggestions for celebration indicated the spiritual and religious growth of haverim. Respondents' "appetites" for celebration became whetted, which indicated their desire for added Jewish significance to their Jewish fellowship.[12]

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER V

[1]A Hebrew word: Mitzvot is the plural of mitzvah; a Divine Command to the Jewish people.

[2]

Possible Responses	Percentage of Responses
a) I am a Jew in my heart.	14.0
b) I am a Jew by religion.	13.0
c) I am a Jew in my behavior.	13.0
d) I belong to the Jewish people.	13.0
e) I am a born Jew.	13.0
f) I am a Jew in that I try to be an ethical person.	11.0
g) I am a Zionist.	8.0
h) I am a Jew by race.	7.0
i) I am an intellectual Jew	4.5
j) I am a non-believing Jew.	0.5
k) I am a non-believing, non-observant Jew	0.1

[3]A Hebrew word: Halacha means the way; living in accordance with Jewish laws, fulfilling as many of the 613 Divine Commandments as is possible.

[4]A Hebrew word: Kosher means proper; observing the Jewish Dietary Laws.

[5]J. J. Petuchowski, "Toward a Modern Brotherhood," The Reconstructionist, 16 December 1960.

[6]The following records changes in members' attendance at religious services:

Number of Services Attended Each Month	Increased or Decreased Percentage of Attendance
4-8 times	increase of 3%
2-3 times	increase of 15%
1 time	decrease of 1%
special holidays	decrease of 15%
only yartzeits (yearly memorial for deceased relatives)	decrease of 4.5%

[7]Eighty-eight percent of the respondents wished to see each other between regular monthly meetings. A large percentage of them wanted to attend services together.

[8]See Chapter IV, Footnote 4.

[9]Twenty-five percent of the respondents wanted more celebration in their overall havurah program as opposed to the five percent who wanted less.

[10]Membership in a havurah exposed the respondents to havdalah services and building a sukkah. The following table reflects the percentage of respondents who (A) observed this celebration/commemoration prior to joining a havurah, or (B) gained exposure to this celebration/commemoration in havurah:

Percentage of Respondents (A) Prior	Percentage of Respondents (B) During	Celebration/Commemoration
74	14	Significant birthdy celebrations
57	15	Visiting the sick
54	26	Visiting mourners
62	22	Friday evening Shabbat meal
20	52	Havdalah at the end of Shabbat
68	28	Lighting Channukah candles
80	6	Dinner on the eve of Rosh Hashanna
70	13	A break fast at the end of Yom Kippur
7	7	The ninth of Av commemoration
8	1	The Day of the Holocaust (Yom Hashoah) commemoration
68	15	Significant anniversary celebrations
60	36	Passover seder
58	9	Graduation from Hebrew School or confirmation (Mosad Shalom)
29	13	Israeli Independence Day celebration
23	43	Building a sukkah
80	3	Thanksgiving meal (November)
69	5	Circumcisions
57	40	Bar or Bat Mitzvah

[11]See Chapter IV, Footnote 5.

[12]When asked who their after 5 o'clock friends were, respondents were highly endogenous.

Exclusively Jews	Percentage of Respondents
1	30.0
2	17.0
3	16.0
4	5.0
5	15.0
6	21.0
7	21.0
8	4.0
9	5.0
10	3.5
Exclusively Non-Jews	

CHAPTER VI

HAVURAH SYNAGOGUE NEXUS

Jewish mysticism suggests that it was necessary for God to retreat inside of Himself to make room for the world's existence. The synagogue imitated this Divine process in its creation of the intrasynagogal havurah program, for it created, sponsored and encouraged the existence of groups not wholly dependent upon its facilities. There was initial concern that the havurah program would succeed at the expense of the synagogue. This fantasy of competition emerged from the assumption that synagogue membership was incidental to its members' lives, and could only be acted upon for a few hours per month. If havurah activities filled these hours, the vital committees and groups of the synagogue would atrophy from lack of lay leadership. This fantasy saw the "end of days" with the synagogue suffering neglect and/or rejection by haverim.

The Havurah Coordinating Committee explained the nexus of synagogue and havurah at the initial meeting of each new group. The representatives informed the new groups that they were autonomous, yet under the auspices of the synagogue, to which they owed some allegiance. This cursory description of nexus was developed further by policies set by the rabbi and the synagogue administration, pertaining to havurah and synagogue membership. The success of havurot precipitated members inviting non-synagogue affiliated friends to join in their havurah. In response, the rabbi stipulated that participation in a Valley Beth Shalom havurah was available only to synagogue members. In those cases where members of other

synagogues wished to join a Valley Beth Shalom havurah, an associate membership in Valley Beth Shalom was offered for a token fee. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents willingly adopted this stipulation which affirmed the primacy of synagogue allegiance. New synagogue members were an ancillary benefit to the synagogue from the havurah program, as its main intent had been membership enrichment.

The solicitation of funds within havurot catalyzed a more intricate description of synagogue havurah nexus. The original understanding suggested by Rabbi Schulweis was that fund raising be disallowed in havurot, despite the fact that financial support of worthy causes was a common manner of Jewish expression. He hoped that by disallowing fund raising, haverim would be compelled to experiment with other expressions of Jewish identity. Six years after the inception of its intrasynagogal havurah program, the synagogue undertook a building fund campaign during difficult economic times. Much of the available capital to support the drive had been sent to the State of Israel to aid in her financial crisis. The rabbi and the synagogue administration reconsidered approaching havurot to raise funds for the proposed additions to the synagogue buildings.

The possibility of solicitation catalyzed another discussion of the same issue: the synagogue havurah nexus. Haverim contrasted the personability and spontaneity of havurah life with the administrative needs and institutional features of the synagogue. This contrast raised new questions about the reciprocal benefits offered between havurah and synagogue. To aid in clarifying the nexus, the lay and professional staff of the synagogue restated their intent to involve as many members as possible in its central decision making process.

The Havurah Coordinating Committee had consciously placed synagogue

board members in different havurot. Theoretically, these haverim could relay the thoughts and sentiments of their havurah to the board. However, most board members did not feel so empowered. Rabbi Schulweis advised the creation of an advisory council to the synagogue board. One member from each havurah would sit on the council and function specifically to relay the thoughts and sentiments of havurah members.

The interviewed havurot sought a healthy symbiosis with the synagogue. They recognized their need for external stimulus, and had consequently maintained ties with the synagogue as well as other Jewish organizations. In so doing, they fulfilled both their need for external input as well as their obligation to support the institutions of Judaism. If a havurah chose to become distant and insulate itself from the synagogue, its program diminished as the potential for stimulation from within became exhausted. The comments of one member typified the sentiment of those few isolated havurot: "It is vital to realize that the synagogue is the institution that can safeguard the quality of Jewish life. It is the synagogue that has the expertise and the concern to give us succor. It took us some time to realize that this was its purpose as far as we were concerned."

Most interviewed havurot showed deference to the synagogue when scheduling the dates of their meetings and events. They did not schedule havurah activities at times which conflicted with synagogue programs of interest to their group members. Their deference was facilitated by the mail distribution of a monthly calendar of events and programs to take place at the synagogue.

Individuals within the intrasynagogal havurah program exhibited one of four relationships to the pre-existent synagogue structure. Those

who had been active in that structure remained active; membership in their havurah became another of their many Jewish affiliations. The leaders of the pre-existent synagogue structure enjoyed participation in a havurah as it allowed them release from the burdens of responsibility in a group setting where they could participate at equal levels with others.

Respondents with children active in the synagogue school and/or youth programs had clear ties to the synagogue and its programs. Their personal involvement ranged from weekly presence at the synagogue when transporting their children, to active work on administrative committees of these child-centered synagogue programs.

A third category was comprised of respondents without children receiving the direct benefit of such programs. They were anxious for affiliation with the synagogue, and havurah offered them a natural first step towards increased involvement. These respondents were either new synagogue members or members who had recently become active beyond their previous levels. A modeling effect operated in that haverim tended to join synagogue groups and committees in which other members of their havurah were active.

The fourth and final group of respondents were those disenchanted with participation in the formal synagogue structure. They were satiated by their daily dealings in the secular corporate society and sought a religious affiliation untainted by corporate structuring. Havurah was an intimate group with little need for internal organization. Synagogue involvement was different; many of the respondents in this category voiced fears of the spiraling involvement characteristic of committee work. (Their fears may have hidden their reluctance to compete for leadership positions within the synagogue.) In addition, the havurah offered near immediate

gratification, as opposed to the delayed gratification of work within the formal synagogue structure. The difference between havurah and synagogue involvement was not a deterrent to fifty percent of the respondents who were motivated to participate in the programs of the synagogue. They attended the synagogue's lecture series, formal adult education program, or became representatives to the Havurah Coordinating Committee.[1] The participation of havurot and havurah members in the synagogue allowed the foreground of the synagogue to become filled with the personalizing and humanizing ambiance of havurah, and consequently, allowed the administrative and corporate nature of the synagogue administration to recede into the background. The synagogue's lay and professional staff enthusiastically accepted the havurot who wished to usher at prayer services or raise funds to support the outreach and ethical action programs sponsored by the synagogue.

The caveat of the intrasynagogal havurah program was that individuals develop strongest ties to those programs and relationships in which they exercise a large measure of personal control. Ninety-four percent of the respondents felt that they were in complete control of their havurah.[2] As a result, both the autonomous Jew and the institution of the synagogue benefited.

The synagogue had formed the intrasynagogal havurah program to activate a larger base of participants in Jewish life. These democratizing interests were carried on into the interviewed havurot.[3] It was this autonomy that attracted and held havurah members, and ironically, it was the same autonomy that necessitated the finer definitions of synagogue havurah nexus.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER VI

[1]

Percentage of Respondents whose Affiliation in these Groups was Motivated by Havurah	Synagogue Affiliations
19.0	Representative to Havurah Coordinating Committee
10.0	Sisterhood
0.9	Brotherhood
0.9	Young Couples' Club
2.0	College-Age Group
17.5	Adult Education
23.4	Lecture Series
3.5	Golden-Age Group
1.8	Religious Services Committees
0.9	Temple Administration Committees
5.5	Youth Department Committees
0.9	Religious School Committees
--	Finance Committees
--	Community Affairs Committees
--	Board of Trustees
2.7	Board of Directors
1.8	Para Professionals (trained personal counselors)
--	Regional and/or National Synagogue Groups (United Synagogue, National Men's Club, etc.)
3.7	B'nai Brith
1.8	Pioneer Women
3.7	Jewish Federation Council

[2]The Havurah Coordinating Committee was the logical arm of the synagogue to attempt to upset havurah autonomy. A minimal six percent of the respondents felt that the autonomy of their havurah had been encroached upon.

[3]Ninety-eight percent of the respondents reported that their group decided programming either by majority agreement or by unanimous decision. Only two percent of the sample population felt that a few members decided the content of their programs. When asked to evaluate the decision-making processes of their havurah, seventy-five percent of the respondents were pleased, if not very pleased, with the manner in which their havurah planned programming. Only five percent of the respondents found these processes irritating. Democratic institutions have some members who assume passive roles in the decision-making process. Eighty-four percent of the respondents reported that they played an active, to a very active, role in their havurah's decision-making process. The choice of a passive role (represented by the remaining sixteen percent) was due either to the lack of personal assertiveness and/or relatively consistent agreement with the consensus of the majority.

CHAPTER VII

THE INTRASYNAGOGAL HAVURAH PROGRAM AND THE CONGREGATIONAL RABBI

In addition to aiding congregants in the process of Jewish self definition, the intrasynagogal havurah program was designed to have beneficial effects on the congregational rabbinate. Rabbis felt themselves becoming increasingly indispensable in Jewish communal life. Yet, simultaneously they were becoming removed from the lives of the people at whose life cycle ceremonies they officiated. It appeared that most Jewish people were passive and reluctant to take on Jewish skills and behaviors, and thus, the rabbi became both indispensable, and at the same time, paradoxically irrelevant to daily life.

The intrasynagogal havurah program attacked the root of the rabbis' dilemma. The program foreshadowed the end of the need for rabbis to pretend that sermons were responses to questions posed by a concerned constituency. The havurah program had created real questions: respondents asked their rabbi to aid them in making ethical decisions, elucidate points of Jewish interest and preach on topics which interested them.

The havurah program itself generated the need for answers to pertinent Jewish questions. The major area of rabbinic input to havurot was the power to suggest havurah goals. Sixty-eight percent of respondents reported that the rabbi had influenced their choice of havurah goals. Thirty-six percent of the respondents felt the need for increased contact with the rabbi. They specifically wanted him to be more accessible to

them, and to provide direction in choosing study materials.

The following table reflects respondents' changed perceptions of their rabbi after joining a havurah:

Aspects of the Rabbinic Role	Percentage of Respondents		
	Essential	Moderately Important	Incidental
Officiating at all Jewish rituals involving you	-9	+7	+2
Scholarship and/or publishing	+5	-3	-2
Pastoral counseling	-7	+5	+2
Visiting you when you are sick	+5	-3	-2
Visiting you when you are mourning	+2	-5	+3
Being a person who gives you a higher vision of yourself	0	-1	+1
Being a community leader in social action	+9	-5	-4
Being a representative of the Jewish community	+1	0	-1
Being a fund raiser	+8	-4	-4

The ceremonial functions of the rabbi became less essential for respondents. This was expected in that Rabbi Schulweis and the Havurah Coordinating Committees stressed the importance of the return of the individual Jew to the center of Jewish life and its celebrations. The additional emphasis which the respondents placed upon publishing reflected both Rabbi Schulweis's emphasis on publication and the fact that havurah study had sensitized members to the complexities of Jewish issues. Less pastoral counseling was needed from the rabbi since the havurah functioned as a support system for its members.

Paradoxically, more respondents felt that they would want to see

the rabbi when they were ill, compared to their desire for such visitation previous to their havurah membership. It is possible that the underlying religious purposes of havurah membership had sensitized members to the search for meaning; a search that became critical when they were sick and acutely aware of their finitude. Yet, there was less interest in having the rabbi available through the mourning process. This again attests to the support offered by havurah to aid a haver enduring a loss.

Social action had waned from the prominence it held a decade ago in the sixties, yet, havurah had greatly increased members' expectations of their rabbi as a community leader in social action. The added need for the rabbi to raise funds reflected the expenses of the building campaign of the synagogue.

Many synagogues in the Los Angeles area adopted an intrasynagogal havurah program. Rabbis who served these congregations discovered that once instituted, the program enriched their rabbinic experiences. They spent initial time and effort creating havurot within their synagogues. Once this initial work was done, the responsibility was easily delegated to lay coordinators. The ability to delegate the bulk of concern for the week to week functioning of havurot allowed the rabbis to adopt secondary advisory postures.

Rabbis enjoyed attending the meetings of havurot; they most often discussed matters of Jewish interest, but rarely "synagogue politics." All of the interviewed rabbis commented upon the particularly moving manner in which haverim helped each other to endure hardships.

One of the major obstacles in the creation of the intrasynagogal havurah program was the rabbis' need for ego gratification through exposure and control. Many rabbis are highly gratified when in the center of Jewish activities. Their need for visibility seems to counteract feelings of

personal and professional inadequacy engendered in part by the vastness of their role. One rabbi stated: "We all want to be everything to everybody, and it's impossible." Havurah brought its members into the center of Jewish experiences, and consequently, moved the rabbi out. The rabbi then became an integral part of the community, but was no longer the predominant personality, and thus, the professional Jew for his congregation.

Thus, released from the compulsion for personal centrality, rabbis with intrasynagogal havurah programs noted that they had extra time to create and study, which offset their feelings of professional inadequacy.

The consensus of opinion among the interviewed rabbis was that havurah members enjoyed this new taste of Jewish life. However, havurah was not a panacea for all the challenges to Judaism and its institutions. They contended that the intrasynagogal havurah program would only maintain its significant impact on the lives of its members if it remained self corrective and adapted to their emerging needs.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY OF HAVURAH DISCLOSURES

The following statement was made by Eric Fromm: "Man is alone and he is related at the same time. He is alone inasmuch as he is a unique entity, not identical with anyone else and aware of his self as a separate entity. And yet he cannot bear to be alone, to be unrelated to his fellowman. His happiness depends on the solidarity he feels with his fellowman, with past and future generations." Isolation of the recluse offers little hope for solidarity, while selfless devotion to community purpose seems more fitting for bees or ants than people. In search of solidarity, people aim for a middleground somewhere between selfishness and altruism.

Jewish ancestors were ideal participants in community; the Bible says that they joined in with "willing hearts" (Exodus 35:5). But, these idyllic ancestors are too receded in the past to serve as guides for modern Jews in search of community. The contemporary guides which exist and can be observed, learned their enjoyment of Jewish community while young enough to be within the target population of institutions for Jewish learning and living.

They are successful products of the suburban child-oriented synagogue. Yet, even when these Jews grew out of the target population, they faced the pressures of adulthood in a secular society. For many, their inability to find Jewish fellowship was written off to these forces, or worse, taken as a personal failing, their inability to sustain a group of friends.

Where could they find and merge with a Jewish community? Many

gravitated to Jewish college organizations, but like the suburban child-oriented synagogue, these organizations suffered from age limitations. Discotheques, country clubs or professional societies were not Jewish groups, but served as gathering places for Jews, and thus, filled the interval until returning to the synagogue to enroll their children.

In response to the limited or non-existent Jewishness, young Jews in Boston and New York, who had been participants in youth-oriented synagogues, chose an alternative. They formed volunteer fellowship societies, havurot, and thus, forged links in a chain of havurot that can be traced back through Jewish history to the first century before the common era.

A cursory glance at havurot in Jewish history yields two types: havurot formed as an indictment of, and challenge to, the practices of the general Jewish community of their day; and havurot which took upon themselves the performance of religious programs and social services necessary to the survival of the Jewish community of their time. There seems to be a trend for critical havurot to precede havurot central to their larger community. With the emergence of the Boston and New York havurot, this cycle seems to have been repeated. These havurot were followed by the development of an intrasynagogal havurah program--a larger communal adoption of havurah. The synagogue created havurot within itself to allow members of all ages the opportunity for deeper Jewish communal expression.

How has the intrasynagogal havurah program fared since its inception in 1970? The mandate of the intrasynagogal havurah program was to provide social benefits, educational enrichment and enhance the participation of its merbers in Jewish celebrations. The synagogue endowed havurot with autonomy, which allowed members the opportunity to grow from a mixed multitude and create their own community, as did their desert ancestors.

The leader of the intrasynagogal havurah movement was Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California. Through investigation of the three mandated areas of the intrasynagogal havurah movement, as well as its relationship to the pre-existent synagogue structure and its rabbi, an appraisal of the success of this movement has been made. The following are highlights of this research.

The social milieu in havurah is informal, relaxed and accepting. Havurah's eighteen to twenty members do not require extensive internal organization. Yet, havurah functions effectively in its offerings of group support to members. Havurah membership is refreshing. Its participants belong to a large synagogue and a complex bureaucratic society; havurah lacked differentiated status and rigidly prescribed procedures which are found in large institutions.

Havurah members wanted more contact with most members of their havurah between monthly meetings. The high levels of desire for more contact is symptomatic of some loneliness on the part of members. Yet, this loneliness was not part of an overall failure syndrome, as the sample population had achieved relatively high levels of socio-economic status. It indicated that havurah had significantly filled their need for communal solidarity.

The interpersonal ties between members were like those of siblings or cousins of the same age. Havurah provided a widened base for intragenerational contact. There was not strong interest for intergenerationality within havurah that would make a havurah a surrogate extended family. Family participation in havurah involved both parents and children, but parents were not vicarious participants. In fact, most havurot chose to limit the number of programs which involved their children.

Even without this added stabilizing element, commitment to havurah

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Even without this added stabilizing element, commitment to havurah

was markedly stable. Eighty percent of the respondents remained in their initial havurah. This attests to the effectiveness of the Havurah Coordinating Committee in its matchmaking activities and the categories used to determine homogeneity. The twenty percent who had left their havurot did not leave the intrasynagogal havurah program completely, but joined another group.

Natural affinities of various intensities developed within havurot. They caused difficulties if not openly discussed. In most cases, members accepted friendships of various intensities within havurah as long as a general commitment to havurah purposes were intact. Breakdowns in group communication were exacerbated when and if havurah goals went undiscussed, or emerging needs were not shared. Communication exercises, wherein each member shared his or her expectations of havurah, were extremely effective in breathing purpose and spontaneity back into a havurah.

Goal obscurity is a synonym for alienation which is endemic in our society. Havurot which practiced periodic and successful self-evaluations moved closer to overcoming the alienation in their lives as Jews.

The most successful study topics mixed theoretical and practical concerns. They were: "Jewish Holidays", "What is a Jew?", "Jewish Conceptions of God", and "Zionism and Israel". The study programs of havurot did not produce scholars of Judaica, but rather fortified the Jewish identities of participants. A tone of Jewish searching was set at the first havurah meeting when new members shared their earliest Jewish experiences. In havurah discussion, each member's input was valued equally during the initial stages of group life. However, havurot eventually arrived at a watershed where they needed additional Jewish input. At this point, members with enriched Jewish backgrounds were placed in the positions of being teachers. Many were

flattered, but more felt uncomfortable with the responsibility of controlling the quality of Jewish content within their havurah. Havurot that set their sights on a more rigorous course of study often invoked an inappropriate academic model by which they organized and evaluated their learning. The academic model they learned in their pursuits of higher education offered limited serviceability, and in fact, created resistance to study among some members. Some reported that their study program suffered from their laziness. They sought a painless method of exposure to Jewish materials and activities. Visits from people possessing Jewish expertise were painless enough and were highly valued, yet this presented a danger of dependency upon experts. Over one-third of the respondents wanted aid in their choice of appropriate study materials, as well as methods of presentation. They looked to the rabbi and the Havurah Coordinating Committee for this assistance. The success and challenge of havurah study stem from the fact that it is self taught.

In assessing havurah's achievements at increasing participation in Jewish life, there is a danger in counting mitzvot as the only method of deciding how Jewish are the Jews. Haverim were proud of the increased Jewish consciousness which havurah had brought to them. It was from this consciousness that they adopted the following list of mitzvot: driving only to and from the synagogue on the Sabbath, inviting a Russian family to a Passover seder, fasting on T'sha Baav, acquiring an etrog and lulav, building a sukkah with which to celebrate Sukkot, and reciting the appropriate blessings after eating.

Voluntary assumption of mitzvot had been a feature in havurot throughout Jewish history. The list of eight adopted mitzvot represents a leap in observance for many members. Respondents held rigorous observance of Jewish law in high esteem, yet their theological positions and Jewish self-descriptions

were not well suited to this extent of observance. The attraction of rigorous observance was the ease and intentionality exhibited by observant role models. Havurah members differed from observant models in that their sense of religious command emerged primarily from a tie to Jewish peoplehood and a concern for the State of Israel.

Another major behavioral change of members was increased attendance at religious services. The most notable change was from attendance at special holidays to two or three times per month. This increase resulted from changes on the pulpit, as well as in the pew. Innovations in prayer services were introduced close to the initiation of the intrasynagogal havurah program.

The assumption that synagogue membership can only be acted upon for a few hours per month created fantasies of competition and separation between synagogue and havurah. If havurot succeeded in filling these few hours, the vital committees and groups of the synagogue would atrophy from lack of lay leadership. This did not happen.

The nexus of havurah and synagogue was clarified as the intrasynagogal havurah program grew. The first description was offered by the representatives of the Havurah Coordinating Committee to new havurot. The havurah was characterized as autonomous, yet under the auspices of the synagogue to which they owed some allegiance.

Two issues catalyzed a clarification of this nexus. The primacy of synagogue allegiance was adopted by the majority of members when the rabbi made clear the synagogue's preference that only synagogue members be allowed to participate in a Valley Beth Shalom havurah. The second issue was precipitated by possible solicitation of havurah members to aid in the building fund drive of the synagogue. The rumor that the synagogue might approach

havurot catalyzed discussion of the reciprocal benefits of havurah and synagogue. It became apparent that havurah was the synagogue's lifeline to its members. The formation of an advisory council to the synagogue board was offered as a method to channel the thoughts and sentiments of havurah members into the decision making process of the synagogue. The advisory council would consist of one representative from each havurah, functioning specifically to funnel the opinions of their havurah members to the board.

Havurah members exhibited one of four relationships to the synagogue. People active in the pre-existent synagogue structure remained active. Their membership in havurah became one of many Jewish affiliations. The second group were those whose children were involved in the education or youth programs offered by the synagogue. Their ties to synagogue existed, although they were most often vicarious and passive. The third group had no children actively enrolled within the child-centered programs of the synagogue, and they were anxious for an affiliation. The final group had qualms about participating in a large synagogue that seemed trapped by the institutional necessities of such institutions. They sought a religious identification "untainted" by extensive internal organization. Many in this group had been members of Valley Beth Shalom when it had had fewer members, or had come from other smaller congregations. This group was also attracted to the gratification of havurah life which is more immediate than participation within the pre-existent synagogue structure. These factors combined and made havurah the only palatable method of Jewish affiliation for this group.

Each havurah realized that the intimacy and low organizational profile they gained by having small memberships brought disadvantages as well. Their potential for internal stimulation was limited and easily exhausted. When and if needed, it was the synagogue that stood by to offer stimulation and

added purpose to havurah life. Therefore, havurot sought a healthy symbiosis with the synagogue.

The intrasynagogal havurah program was designed to have beneficial effects on the congregational rabbinate. The program itself generated the need for answers to Jewish questions which cast the rabbi in the role of teacher. The majority of participants felt that their rabbi had influenced their havurah goals. Yet, over a third of the participants wanted additional contact with him, to offer direction in choosing study materials.

The rabbi's priestly functions (i.e. officiating at all Jewish rituals involving congregants) became less essential to havurah members than they had been before they joined a havurah. This was accompanied by a rise in expectations that the rabbi function as a scholar and author in Jewish matters. The rabbi was needed less as a pastoral counselor, perhaps because havurah functioned as an immediate support group to its members.

The rabbi was released from the need to be central to Jewish experiences and was freed to gravitate towards the traditionally esteemed aspects of the rabbinate: teaching, participation in social action and leadership within the community.

Rabbis in the Los Angeles area who instituted intrasynagogal havurah programs within their synagogues, stated that havurah ought not to be seen as a panacea for all challenges facing Judaism and its institutions. They sensed within havurot potential to offer moments of Jewish communal experience which gratified congregants as well as rabbis. They project that havurot will continue only if they can adapt to emerging needs of its members.

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1. Male ( ) Female ( )

2. How long have you been a member of a havurah? ___ Years ___ Months

3. How long have you been a member of this havurah? ___ Years ___ Months

4. Your age _____

5. Your occupation _____

6. What was the last educational degree you earned? _____

7. What are the goals of your havurah? _____

8. What were some of your personal goals when you joined a havurah

Goal 1 _____

Goal 2 _____

Goal 3 _____

Goal 4 _____

Goal 5 _____

Do you feel your havurah makes steady progress towards meeting your goals

Goal 1 Not enough 1 2 3 4 5 Enough

Goal 2 Not enough 1 2 3 4 5 Enough

Goal 3 Not enough 1 2 3 4 5 Enough

Goal 4 Not enough 1 2 3 4 5 Enough

Goal 5 Not enough 1 2 3 4 5 Enough

9. Approximately how many relatives and close friends do you have living in the Los Angeles area? _____

10. Would you like to have members of your havurah who are old enough to be your parents? Yes ( ) No ( )

11. Would you like to have members of your havurah who are young enough to be your children? Yes ( ) No ( )

12. Do you think there should be an upper limit to the number of members in your havurah? How many ( )

13. What are the standards by which you admit a new member in your havurah? (please circle)

If the prospective member belongs to the synagogue:

Not important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very important

If the proposed member lives in the area that most of us do:

Not important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very important

If they have children about the same age as the children of the average member of our group:

Not important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very important

If the proposed member is a convert to Judaism:

Not important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very important

If the proposed member is about the same age as the average member:

Not important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very important

14. How does your havurah evaluate the progress it makes towards reaching its goals? _____

_____

_____

_____

15. The Rabbi exerted (strong, little, no) influence in our havurah's choice of goals. (please circle the appropriate word)

16. The Havurah Coordinating Committee exerted (strong, little, no) influence in our havurah's choice of goals. (please circle the appropriate word)

17. Does the Havurah Coordinating Committee do a good job of supplying your havurah with the information it needs? Yes ( ) No ( )

18. Do you feel the Havurah Coordinating Committee encroaches on the autonomy of your havurah? Yes ( ) No ( )

19. Is there anything your havurah wants from the Rabbi in addition to what he is doing at the present time? Yes ( ) No ( )
If your answer was yes, please explain _____

_____

_____

20. Please indicate the appropriate letter(s):

(A) Observances practiced by your havurah as a group
(B) Observances you practiced before joining a havurah
(C) None of the above

( ) Significant birthday celebrations
( ) Visiting the sick
( ) Visiting mourners
( ) Friday evening Shabbat meal
( ) Havdalah at the end of Shabbat
( ) Lighting Channukah candles
( ) Dinner on the eve of Rosh Hashanna
( ) A break fast at the end of Yom Kippur
( ) The ninth of Av commemoration
( ) The Day of the Holocaust (Yom Hashoah) commemoration
( ) Significant anniversary celebrations
( ) Passover seder
( ) Graduation from Hebrew School or confirmation (Mosad Shalom)
( ) Israeli Independence Day celebration
( ) Building a sukkah
( ) Thanksgiving meal (November)
( ) Circumcisions
( ) Bar or Bat Mitzvah
( ) Dedication of a new home
( ) Other _____
( ) _____
( ) _____
( ) _____

21. Would you like your havurah to spend more time (celebrating, studying, socializing). (please circle the appropriate word)

22. Does your havurah spend too much time (celebrating, studying, socializing). (please circle the appropriate word)

23. How would you best describe yourself? (please check one or more)

( ) I am a Jew by religion
( ) I am a Jew in my heart
( ) I am a Jew in my behavior
( ) I am a Jew by race
( ) I belong to the Jewish people
( ) I am a born Jew
( ) I am a non-believing Jew
( ) I am a non-believing non-observant Jew
( ) I am a Jew in that I try to be an ethical person
( ) I am an intellectual Jew
( ) I am a Zionist
( ) I am a Yiddishist

24. Do you (approve, disapprove) of holding a short religious service before each havurah meeting? (please circle)

25. Before becoming a member of a havurah, how often did you attend services?

( ) 4 to 8 times a month
( ) 2 to 3 times a month
( ) 1 time a month
( ) only for special holy days
( ) only for yartzeits

26. Since joining a havurah, how often do you attend services?

( ) 4 to 8 times a month
( ) 2 to 3 times a month
( ) 1 time a month
( ) only for special holy days
( ) only for yartzeits

27. What other social groups do you belong to (in addition to the havurah? (For example, bridge clubs, athletic groups, Masons, Minyan, professional groups, country club cliques, etc.)

_____

28. What is distinctive about the havurah when contrasted to the groups you mentioned above?

_____

_____

_____

29. How did you evaluate the functions of your Rabbi before you joined a havurah? (A) Essential (B) Moderately important (C) Incidental

( ) Officiating at all Jewish rituals involving you
( ) Scholarship and/or publishing
( ) Pastoral counseling
( ) Visiting you when you are sick
( ) Visiting you when you are mourning
( ) Being a person who gives you a higher vision of yourself
( ) Being a community leader in social action
( ) Being a representative of the Jewish community
( ) Being a fund raiser

30. Since joining a havurah, how do you evaluate these functions of your Rabbi? (A) Essential (B) Moderately important (C) Incidental

( ) Officiating at all Jewish rituals involving you
( ) Scholarship and/or publishing
( ) Pastoral counseling
( ) Visiting you when you are sick
( ) Visiting you when you are mourning
( ) Being a person who gives you a higher vision of yourself
( ) Being a community leader in social action
( ) Being a representative of the Jewish community
( ) Being a fund raiser

31. How does your havurah make decisions? (please check one)

( ) Unanimous agreement ( ) Agreement of the majority
( ) A few people decide for all

32. Are you (very pleased, pleased, displeased) with the way your havurah decides what it will do at each meeting? (please circle)

33. Do you feel that you play a (very active, active, passive, very passive) role in your havurah's decision making process? (please circle)

34. Please list five ways in which you would like to see the temple improved. (For example, making services more traditional or experimental; having more programs on the Jewish family; participating on an active front of ethical action projects, etc)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

35. Please check the definition(s) of God which comes closest to what you actually believe:

( ) God is our watchful, all powerful Father; He guides, shapes and controls our lives with Divine wisdom; He created and sustains purposeful progress in both nature and history.

( ) God is the vitality of nature; He created and sustains the rhythmic pattern of birth, growth and decay in all of life.

( ) God is the still small voice of conscience within us.

( ) Godliness is what we experience when we individually and communally strive to realize our highest legitimate aims. There is no personal relationship to God, but we do experience holiness which we can call Divine presence.

( ) We know nothing about God. We should concentrate on Man and his movement towards his ideals.

( ) There is no God. The happenings of the world are random. What ever happens does so without Divine plan, inspiration or assistance.

( ) God is love.

( ) Other (please explain) _____

_____

36. As a result of the havurah's influence, which Jewish observances have you adopted? (please indicate the appropriate letter)

(A) You would now consider
(B) You practiced this prior to joining a havurah

( ) Hanging a mezzuzah
( ) Wearing a head covering during meals
( ) Reciting the blessing(s) before eating
( ) Reciting the blessing(s) after eating
( ) Praying at home
( ) Putting on phylacteries
( ) Eating no pork products
( ) Eating no shell fish
( ) Buying only kosher meat
( ) Having two sets of dishes and utensils
( ) Practicing ritual family purity
( ) Eating only dairy on Shavuouth
( ) Building a sukkah
( ) Eating and sleeping in a sukkah
( ) Lighting yartzeit candles
( ) Using two separate (additional) sets of dishes and utensils for Passover
( ) Searching for chometz (leavening) before Passover
( ) Having a Passover seder
( ) Tree planting on Tu Bishvat
( ) Acquiring an etrog and lulav for Sukkoth
( ) Acquiring a candelabra for Channukah
( ) Gift giving at Purim
( ) Fasting on Yom Kippur
( ) Acquiring a pair of Shabbat candlesticks
( ) Acquiring a challah cover
( ) Acquiring a kiddish cup
( ) Kindling Sabbath lights
( ) Reciting kiddish over the wine on the Sabbath
( ) Singing Sabbath songs around the table
( ) Not working on the Sabbath
( ) Driving only to and from the synagogue on the Sabbath
( ) Wearing Arbah Kanfot (small tallis)
( ) Wearing a mezzuzah or a "chai" as a necklace
( ) Inviting a Russian family to your seder
( ) Fasting on T'sha Ba'Av

37. Are your after five o'clock friends (close, intimate friends):

Exclusively Jews 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Exclusively non-Jews
(please circle)

38. Do you regard your home (A) more Jewishly observant, (B) less Jewishly observant, or (C) on the same level of Jewish observance than the home you grew up in? (please indicate appropriate letter) _____

39. Would you expect the members of your havurah to support you when you have a personal problem? ( ) Yes ( ) No

40. Would you expect the members of your havurah to help you secure a job if you became unemployed? ( ) Yes ( ) No

41. In addition to seeing the members of the havurah at regularly scheduled meetings, would you like to spend more time with most of them? ( ) Yes ( ) No

42. If you answered "yes" to question 41, please check the activities you prefer to do with havurah members between regularly scheduled meetings:

( ) Dining out together
( ) Having them over to your home for dinner or brunch
( ) Attending services together
( ) Attending a lecture series together
( ) Attending synagogue adult education together
( ) Attending synagogue committee meetings together
( ) Engaging in sports (tennis, bowling, etc.)
( ) Going to the Music Center together
( ) Attending sporting events together (Lakers, Rams, etc.)
( ) Going to the theater together
( ) Taking vacations together
( ) Spending an evening chatting
( ) Working on community projects together (political campaigns, ecology, etc.)
( ) Meeting for lunch during the week
( ) Spending time on the telephone

43. As a result of belonging to a havurah, please evaluate these expressions of your Jewish identity as being (A) more important to you, (B) less important to you, or (C) uneffected by your membership in a havurah.

( ) To support Israel with money
( ) To support Israel with political lobbying
( ) To visit Israel
( ) To support Israel by making aliyah
( ) To support others in their desire to make aliyah
( ) To substantially increase my pledge to Jewish charities
( ) To have a stronger commitment to social justice
( ) To actively support the rights of American minorities
( ) To have mostly Jewish friends
( ) To join and pay dues to a synagogue
( ) To feel a bond with Jews of Israel
( ) To feel a bond with Jews of Russia
( ) To feel a bond with Jews of Arab lands
( ) To attend services more regularly
( ) To keep current on topics of Jewish interest
( ) To participate in the Jewish community
( ) To vote for Jewish political candidates
( ) To marry only within the Jewish faith

44. Please check those organizations which the havurah motivated you to become active in:

( ) Representative to Havurah Coordinating Committee
( ) Sisterhood
( ) Brotherhood
( ) Young couples club
( ) College age group
( ) Adult education
( ) Lecture series
( ) Golden age group

( ) Religious Services Committees
( ) Temple Administration Committees
( ) Youth Department Committees
( ) Religious School Committees
( ) Finance Committees
( ) Community Affairs Committees
( ) Board of Trustees
( ) Board of Directors
( ) Para Professionals (trained personal counselors)
( ) Regional and/or National synagogue groups (United Synagogue, National Men's Club, etc.)
( ) B'nai Brith
( ) Pioneer Women
( ) Jewish Federation Council

45. Below is a list of study topics which have been considered by havurot. Please indicate (by placing an A, B or C in front of each topic) your reaction to the material as presented in your havurah:

(A) Learned a lot
(B) Learned a little
(C) Unsatisfactory learning experience

( ) What is a Jew?
( ) What is an Israeli?
( ) Zionism and Israel
( ) The Relationship Between the Individual and the Group in Judaism
( ) How does the convert become Jewish?
( ) Are we a chosen people?
( ) The Quality of Jewish Life
( ) The Jewish Family
( ) Intermarriage
( ) What are the differences between the four Jewish "movements"?
( ) A Jewish Understanding of Jesus
( ) A Jewish Understanding of the Messiah
( ) Judaism on Death, Dying and the After Life
( ) Judaism and Sin
( ) Jewish Conceptions of God
( ) Jews in Other Countries
( ) Jewish Dietary Laws
( ) Ancient Jewish History
( ) Medieval Jewish History
( ) Modern Jewish History
( ) The Torah as a Sacred or Human Document
( ) Judaism and Psychology
( ) Jewish Law
( ) Jewish Deviant Groups (Messianic Jews, Jewish Radical Community, etc.)
( ) Judaism and Sex
( ) The Mishna
( ) The Talmuds
( ) Ethics of the Fathers
( ) The Midrash
( ) The Zohar
( ) Jewish Mysticism
( ) The Holocaust
( ) Jewish Life Cycle Ceremonies

( ) Jewish Contributions to Music, Art and Philosophy
( ) Jewish Prayerbook and Machzor
( ) Jewish Defense
( ) Hebrew for Prayer
( ) Conversational Hebrew
( ) Jewish Calender
( ) Jewish Holidays

46. If your answers to question 45 were mainly A or C, please comment: _____

47. If you are interested in further sharing your opinions concerning the havurah movement, please supply your name and telephone number, or feel free to contact Sheldon W. Moss at 656-5412.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INTEREST