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"Toward a Text-book for the Intermediate Grades on Jewish
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This is a relatively short thesis of less than 80 pages of text, divided into 12 chapters. The first three deal with the goals and present-day problems in the area of Jewish community life. The balance attempts to provide the basis for a textbook for use with the intermediate grades (Grades 4-6).

The first portion is of much better quality than the last. In the early chapters the author gives a good analysis of the various texts and approaches to the subject of Jewish demography and concludes that the systematic or chronological approach, through formal Jewish history or a "tour of Jewish organizations," is lacking in relevance to the intermediate grade pupil. That children must develop understandings that are germane to them is essentially his conclusion. Therefore a suitable text must embody objectives which lead the child to feel that the Jewish community relates to him and serves a worthwhile purpose as it affects him. At the same time he must come to understand the nature of this community, why it is as it is and his personal relationship to it.

The author proceeds to translate these ideas into the proposed text. The nine chapters deal with the following subjects: differences and similarities of peoples; where American Jews live and how they earn a living; the origins of American Jewry, its different backgrounds, and what each has contributed to present-day American Jewish life; the reasons for a Jewish community; the causes to which we contribute and what some of them do for people in the community; some important Jewish contributors to American life; a bird's-eye view of world Jewry and the organizations that help it; what the individual is expected to do as a member of the Jewish community. These are important topics and germane to the author's subject.

However the treatment leaves a great deal to be desired. The chapters are often quite sketchy; some are confusing because of inadequate organization (e.g., Chapter 6, "Where Do We Come From?"). The approach, despite the author's desire, often departs from that of the child and his perspective, and full advantage is not taken in cases where it does deal with his concerns, as, for instance, in the matter of how one's father makes a living (Chapter 5). The style likewise tends to talk down to the reader or become preachy in places.

Admittedly this is not an easy text to prepare. Many others, as the author himself points out, have made the effort without success. Nor does this material overcome some of these difficulties. While the goals are sound, the execution fails to bring them off.

(continued next page)

Report on Rabbinical Thesis
of David R. Powell (cont.)

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Yet the author has made a worth-while effort and his work will undoubtedly prove helpful to others in the field seeking to come to grips with teaching Jewish community life to the intermediate grades.

I recommend the acceptance of Mr. Powell's thesis.

Sylvan D. Schwartzman
Referee

TOWARD A TEXT-BOOK FOR THE
INTERMEDIATE GRADES OF JEWISH
LIFE IN AMERICA

DAVID R. POWELL

REPORT ON THE THESIS OF
DAVID R. POWELL, "TOWARD A
TEXT-BOOK FOR THE
INTERMEDIATE GRADES OF
JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA"

Hebrew Union College
Institute of Religion

1-1

Approved, Professor A. J. Rosenberg

THESIS DIGEST

This thesis entitled "Toward a Text-Book for the Intermediate Grades on Jewish Life in America," is a response to a need. There is no text which deals with the subject other than Dorothy and David Explore Jewish Life. Certain suggestive materials exist, such as Weitz's Jewish Demography, but only in a limited outline form. Curricula used in the reform movement, particularly the official "guide" of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' Commission on Jewish Education, have sorely neglected the whole area of community life. The subject matter is either part of the history cycle or it becomes a dry factual description of organizations and institutions. As pointed out in the thesis, authorities in the field of religious and general education have indicated that the aforesaid approach is neither good pedagogy nor does it reveal any understanding of pre-adolescent social-psychological growth patterns.

Thus the thesis works on the basis of how people. They show a concern for Jewish identity, environmental reality and personal experience. The approach is topical, with history, facts, personalities and institutions being integrated when and where the topic merits inclusion.

How are these goals developed? The "text chapter" begins with the question "Who are we?" This is broken down

into a discussion of the individual's identity, his family, friends, school and general interests. However, there are many people in the world and we are not all the same. Differences exist in terms of cultural practice, religious belief and basic ways of life. This basic pattern of differences goes to make up America. We who are Jews are part of this pattern.

From here the thesis goes on to a discussion of some facts and figures. This is also handled topically. Where do we live? How many are there of us? How do we make a living? Is our method of livelihood different than our neighbors, or from the Jews of the past?

We have a beginning. Where do our families come from? The thesis indicates the reasons for coming to America, such as business opportunities, adventure, freedom and so forth. Our families built this Jewish community we now live in and in fact had a great share in the building of American life.

One area of possible confusion to American Jewish youth is the tension that exists between American identity and loyalty to the "Jewish community." The thesis attempts to deal with this problem, not via apologetics or propaganda, but through an appreciation of the community's role in their own lives and that of their families. Thus the whole notion of "helping," "charity," "social justice," and similar value systems are interwoven with a description of Jewish community life.

World Jewry is also touched upon. Without going into detail the thesis tries to relate the World Jewish community

to the individual here in America. Areas of common interest are brought in, e.g. youth groups, youth camps and a common concern for Jewish existence. The concept of "Tzedakah" is expanded to the world scene. The thesis closes with a brief chapter on a youngster's specific role - for example, his own duties and commitments to the Jewish community.

This thesis is dedicated
to the memory of my mother-in-law
MARIE PARNADÉL - she was a woman of
righteousness and charity

The writer gratefully acknowledges the help of his
wife Adrienne. Her assistance was invaluable.
She was a constant inspiration
and honest critic.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The present project of developing a course of studies in Jewish community life is not built merely on a desire for creative writing, but rather on an assumption that most current materials in the field fail to satisfy. Problems exist and they must be met for the sake of Jewish education and the child. A survey of sample curricula and text-books will indicate the problem existing in the study of Jewish community life.

The curriculum of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations¹ appears to be based on the assumption that if a student is exposed to the texts, he will take away the required knowledge to complete his learning. The approach is basically traditional. Although the curriculum represents a Liberal interpretation of Judaism, it is intended to relate the child to a traditional understanding of scripture.² Pedagogy may be a means of implementing the curriculum, yet there appears to be little connection between goals and the supposed concern for developing "attitudes, habits and appreciation"³ in the child. The area of Jewish community life is merely a reflection of the "History" part of the course. Following the pattern of the total curriculum one discovers that

the section dealing with Jewish community life shows no cyclical development or interest motivation. Very few resources are offered and the whole approach is organization, institution centred.⁴

In his Living Judaism⁵ Dr. Zerin summarizes the goals for a study of Jewish community life as follows:⁶ "To provide opportunities for the child to relate himself creatively as an individual and as a member of his group to the American way of life through an emphasis upon selected aspects of the Jewish adventures in America."

Dr. Zerin has gone far to demonstrate the integration of American Jewish history with the history of this country. Through various techniques and media he helps the student gain certain understandings, such as: the Jews' role in early America, the development of communal institutions, the contribution of Jewish personalities, and the meaning of Reform Judaism as a way of life. His approach presents a strong case for the argument that the Jew is very much at home in America. Unfortunately, Dr. Zerin falls into the same pit as other Jewish educators. A presentation of the content of Jewish organizations and institutions in terms of facts, figures and functions does not lead to a relevant or meaningful learning experience.

An effort has been made by Dr. S. Schwartzman,⁷ via a large unit approach, to integrate the facts of Jewish experience with the relevancy of present day American Jewish life.⁸ The primary aim is to convey insights. For

example, a study of Jewish community life is not taught just as an illustration of modern history. Rather, we find it to be part of a unit cycle on Jewish social studies. The approach is basically sound.

One may question the material to be covered in relationship to specific grades. Would grade 2 students really be ready or interested in the question, "What special services are provided by our Jewish community, e.g. vocational guidance or education of New Americans?"⁹ The economic-social understandings hoped for in grade 6 are too profound for the average twelve year old.¹⁰

Dr. Schwartzman does raise the right questions and points to real needs. However, the areas to be covered should be re-arranged into a more flexible unit, adjustable to the related age levels.

The philosophy of Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple's¹¹ curriculum is completely experimental within a context of a unit approach.¹² The course on Jewish community life begins in grade 6 with a study of early Toronto Jewry and culminates in grade 7 with Jews of Canada and World Jewry. Through the concept of a "Mitzvah campaign" an attempt is made to examine the basis of fund raising and its function.¹³

Unfortunately, the unit is too organization centred. Some excellent features of his approach are the many projects he suggests to make the course a living experience.

The goals that Dr. Kurzband has set down in his curriculum,¹⁴ paint a picture of the ideal in Religious

Education.¹⁵ The goals promise that the child will develop a "religious approach to life and integrate Judaism with American Life." The confirmand, we are told, will be an individual, well immersed in the "Jewish Heritage".

Does the reality of the curriculum measure up to the high level of the goals? As far as History is concerned the answer is negative. On the Junior High School Level, history is taught purely chronologically. Dr. Kurzband is perhaps more successful in the lower grades, particularly in the units for grade 4 and 5. These units based on a study of the Synagogue and Jewish Life carry with them excellent texts. There is, however, an irrelevancy on the grade I level, which concentrates on "Jewish Festivals and Bible Stories." It would have been better to have started with a more immediate experience, such as the familiarity of a home, synagogue and school environment. His unit on Jewish community life lacks a thread of continuity. Each section of the unit,¹⁶ - Tzedakah, Human Rights, Jewish Immigration, American Jewish Hall of Fame - is worthy of attention, yet the goal is not realized. Dr. Kurzband does not tell what it means to be a full Jew at home in America. He does not answer the question - Who am I in this modern way of life?

Any curriculum, regardless of its value can only set down goals, means and techniques. Text books are necessary to provide both resources and motivation to student and teacher. In the field of Jewish community life there are

few available, and of questionable value.

An Analysis of Some Text Books on Jewish Community Life

I. Alofsin - The Stream of Jewish Life - Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1957 : This book is an attempt to describe Jewish Institutional organizations on a national level. Brief surveys are made of the major Jewish religious movements as well as the other secular groups such as the Jewish Agency and American Jewish Congress. History, function and purposes are incorporated into the efforts of the authoress as she writes of the various bodies.

The age range is for intermediates, say 12-13 years. However, the material is complicated enough to be of concern to an older age group.

The format used is the involvement of a device. The family experience with an Uncle Saul, Dan and Jerry take us through the story of American Jewish life.

The book is usable. It is not pro-Reform nor is it antagonistic. I would say that it does not depict just traditional Jews and can be used in a Reform Religious School.

The main weakness of this book is its lack of relevance. For example, concerning the state of Israel, much of the nature of American Jewish life has changed radically since the publication of the book. The illustrations are out dated in dress and buildings. The book is also somewhat trite, as is often the case when some

"catch device" is used. The only strength is the factual information contained in the text.

II. Braverman - Children of the Emek - Furrow, 1937: This book is a remake of an earlier volume that dealt with the settlement of halutsim in Palestine. It is an attempt to develop a picture of Israel's life and history.

The book is aimed at 9 and 10 year olds for grade 4 or 5 level. Once more, however, we find the use of the device. This time it is twins who have come with their parents to settle in a colony. We follow their adventures.

As far as its suitability is concerned, this depends on the particular school's philosophy regarding the State of Israel. The main short coming is its propaganda - pro Israel. In this light it tends to be very one-sided and radically Zionist. Probably its greatest strength is the incorporation of various Hebrew expressions.

III. Pessin - Michael Turns the Globe - Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1943: This book is an introduction to world Jewry. It is its name to inform the children of the customs and habits of Jews in various countries.

The book is probably most suitable for an intermediate age level, say about 12 years old. The format is that of a story, involving a young boy named Michael, a globe and the tales of his world travels. David. Dr. Jonathan.

Because there is no text available on world Jewry

one could conclude that the book fulfills an important function. However, it naturally neglects the State of Israel. It would be helpful to supplement with "Keeping Posted."

Other than the fact that it is slightly dated the book tends to be more of a travelogue than a study of world Jewry. Of course any information on the subject is welcomed.

1935: IV. Weitz - Jewish Demography - Hebrew Union College, ✓

: The purpose is to develop a potential teaching guide ✓
for a course on the Jewish life of Cincinnati. Its greatest use is probably for an upper intermediate grade level - 12 to 14 years old. The format is a combination of sociological facts, community interest stories, lesson plans and projects.

It is the only available material that deals in a direct way with a Jewish community, other than through the use of a story form. It is quite applicable to the religious school. The great problem with this book is its dating, having been written in 1935.

V. Edidin - Rebuilding Palestine - Behrman, 1939: The purpose of this book is to instill within Jewish children of the Diaspora a concern for Palestine (i.e. so-called at time of printing).

This is for a high-school level, say at about age 15-16. It is fairly narrative with an historical and sociological approach. As a reference book to early Zionist activities and the development of Palestine it has

a use.

The main shortcoming is its Zionist propaganda and ideology. It also tends to discuss issues which are no longer a problem. Its strength lies as a reference text, but only in the hands of a broad minded and well-informed teacher.

VI. Conovitz - Dorothy and David Explore Jewish Life - Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1957: Although this book has been revised from an original and early printing (1938), nevertheless the purpose is the same. It attempts to introduce the child to the function and purposes of Jewish communal life.

In all likelihood this volume is to be used with an intermediate age level (12-13 years). The approach is that of the "device"; two story book characters and their trip through community agencies.

Other than Weitz's "Jewish Demography," there is little else available as a reference for a course on Jewish communal life. It is suitable if it makes sense to the group in relationship to their own community.

The main problem is the sameness of each chapter. A similar technique is used again and again, in and out of one agency and organization after another. The main strength is the potential for projects and discussions at the close of each chapter.

Thus without reiterating an analysis of curricula and text-books we can conclude that there is a problem. The problem involves creating a course of studies or text

for the intermediate grades on Jewish community life. This poses certain questions. Are educators concerned about the problem? If so, what do they say about it? What about the field of general education? Does this offer any approach to the problem?

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER I

¹Eugene B. Borowitz, The Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1959)

²Ibid., p.2.

³Ibid., p.12.

⁴Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁵Edward Zerin, "Living Judaism," (an experimental edition of the curriculum, Temple B'nai Jeshurun, Des Moines, Iowa, 1958)

⁶Ibid., Introduction, p.1.

⁷Sylvan D. Schwartzman, Toward a New Curriculum for the One-Day-A-Week Religious School (Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College Press, 1955)

⁸Ibid., p.10.

⁹Ibid., p.21.

¹⁰Ibid., p.26.

¹¹H. W. Warschauer, "The Holy Blossom Temple Curriculum," (unpublished curriculum, by the author, Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto)

¹²Ibid., Kindergarten, grade 3, grade 4.

¹³Ibid., grade 6.

¹⁴Toby A. Kurzband, Administration of a Religious School (White Plains, N.Y., Jewish Community Center, 1953)

¹⁵Ibid., p.2.

¹⁶Ibid., p.18.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION (Continued)

Articles have been written in such journals as the "Jewish Teacher" and "Jewish Education" that are relevant to our concern. As early as 1932 an excellent article appeared in Jewish Education vi:1 with the title "A Retrogressive Approach in Teaching Jewish History." Strangely enough this article was written before the publication of most text-books on Jewish history, all of which seem to ignore any suggestions made by the author. He points out that the traditional organization of Jewish history does not find its starting point in any conscious or unconscious need of the Jewish child.¹ The writer sums up the desired goal for the teaching of modern Jewish life and/or history by saying "Whatever the aims of history teaching may be, we feel that the Jewish School must look steadily forward to one need alone: an appreciation and understanding in the child of the various problems and situations in modern Jewish life - the starting point here is not the fact, but the question. The guide is not the content of history, but the content of young Jewish minds."²

The author demonstrates that any system that starts from the past and drags up to the present is radically misarranged. Thus he offers a topical approach to history, quite applicable to a study of Jewish community life.³

An article that appeared in Jewish Education viii:1, by Kahn, pointed out the problems associated with teaching

Jewish history and Jewish life. The author suggested that knowledge alone is not enough, but there must be a concern for attitudes and understanding. Facts and dates are not sufficient.⁴ A study of Jewish life should relate to the environment of the learner. The solution Kahn offers is basic and provides good motivation for learning. His approach runs on a series of questions and problems concerning Jewish life related to institutions of the present and past.⁵

The Text Book Analysis of the American Council for Judaism offers a legitimate criticism of "Dorothy and David Explore Jewish Life." They show how the book provides little or no picture of a larger and integrated society.⁶ Also as the critique points out no distinction is made between the Jewish religion and secular Judaism.

Dr. Toby Kurzband,⁷ who is an experienced Jewish educator, recognizes the futility in attempting to put history across chronologically. Although he provides no solution to the absence of a text, he does offer some approaches to a study of Jewish life. His technique centres about problems and events. For example, in an article written during World War II he suggests as motivation to learning: "What this war means to us," "What the Four Freedoms mean to us as Jews", or "How the Jews happen to be in America."

These techniques lead us into a Jewish community life unit. One may begin with projects such as a family tree, a picture gallery, or album. Perhaps one may interview a

parent or obtain a biography of an immigrant. These suggestions offer a means to an understandable study of Jewish community life.

The Insights of General Education

Strangely enough the pedagogic means for which we yearn in Jewish education have been in practice for years in general education.

One of the reasons for this is that the curricula display an obvious awareness of certain characteristics related to the social development of grade 5 and 6 pupils.⁸ The characteristics are worthy of mention at this point, for they do hold significance for a study course on community life. Thus we may summarize some of the more important as follows:-

- A. A developing sense of conscience and morality.
- B. A development of concepts necessary for daily living.
- C. Developing attitudes of social responsibility.
- D. Learning an appropriate social role.

However, beyond this level of basic psychological reality is the curriculum itself, for example the Social Studies Bulletin of the Cincinnati Public Schools.⁹ The insights offered are most valuable to an understanding of our problem.

First of all the curriculum is based on a sound educational philosophy. It organizes "general understandings around the physical, mental, social and emotional aspects of child growth and development."¹⁰ Social studies are

based on definite goals. These goals aim at a development of the individual's personality and capabilities as well as to help him learn a social and spiritual value system.

One unit is concerned with the theme of "Getting to Know Junior High School." The beginning point is that of the familiar in the youngster's world. Another unit entitled "This Land of Ours" is not just a course in dry chronological history, but strives to develop certain aims and understandings. For example, the child is taught the relationship between geographical factors and a standard of living. He learns to value privileges and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy.¹¹

The section on the local community is of interest to us. The theme is "Living in a Modern City." The children discover, through personal involvement and experience the ways in which a city runs, with all its benefits and difficulties. Certain questions are posed, such as, where does my water supply come from, or what does a city manager do? These are real, living concerns for an inquisitive child.

Another general curriculum displays further understandings present in a study of community life.¹² Through a course on "civics" the student learns the relationship between society and the individual. Answers are sought to the question; "How do we solve the many problems present in our community?" Such a concern is not at all removed from the child's world. A study of the Akron, O. community for instance, makes history of early settlement as excit-

ing as Daniel Boone or a cowboy and Indian epic. Another interesting technique is the use made of the yellow pages of the telephone directory. The child looks up local businesses in aid to answer the question "What kinds of products are made in Akron"?

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER II

¹A. Segal, "A Retrogressive Approach to Jewish History," Jewish Education, VI (January-March, National Council for Jewish Education, 1935) p.23.

²Ibid., p.23.

³Ibid., p.25.

⁴R. H. Kahn, "A Problem Approach to the Teaching of Jewish History," Jewish Education, VII (January-March, National Council for Jewish Education, 1936) p.51.

⁵Ibid., p.53.

⁶Text-Book Analysis - American Council for Judaism (American Council for Judaism, New York, 1935-?)

⁷Toby A. Kurzband, "Project in American Jewish History," Jewish Education, X (April-June, National Council for Jewish Education, 1940) p.16.

⁸From an outline prepared by Rabbi Leonard Aravitz, Hebrew Union College, and based on Havichurst, Human Development and Education (Longmans Green, 1955)

⁹Social Studies Curriculum Bulletin, Grades 7-8 (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1958)

¹⁰Ibid., p.5.

¹¹Ibid., p.190

¹²Curriculum Hand Book, Social Studies, Elementary Grades (Akron Public Schools, Akron, Ohio, 1958) p.6.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND PROPOSALS

Our summary of the analysis of sample curricula, the opinions of educators in the religious education field, and the insights of general education could be summarized as follows:-

1. Most of the curricula that concern themselves with "Jewish community life," do so either through a study of institutions or as a unit on American Jewish history. This latter approach is usually chronological, related to the "history cycle."
2. Text-books are limited in number and dated. There is also the problem of relevancy, that is, what is true for one community is not the case for another.
3. Jewish educators are aware of the problems connected with the teaching of Jewish community life and/or modern Jewish history. Unfortunately, no analysis has gone beyond critique and evaluation. There is some evidence of practical suggestion and even outlined units; however, no text-books have arisen to meet the problem and its

challenge.

4. In the field of general education there seems to be a more progressive and relevant approach to the teaching of community life. There is an involvement of the child with his reality and community experience.
5. One can conclude that a new set of goals are necessary in an attempt to create a text-book dealing with Jewish community life. These goals should be meaningful to the youngster who may read such a book.

What Are These Goals?

- A. To direct the material to the child's reality - his interests and concerns, not that of history, personalities or facts for their own sake.
- B. To inspire a youngster to feel that contemporary Jewish life is worthy of personal commitment to its causes.
- C. To help answer a basic question "What does it mean to be a Jew in America"? This could be in terms of the following:-
 - i. A child and his family are inextricably bound up with American history.
 - ii. As an American Jew, a youngster responds to the same stimuli as his fellows.
 - iii. One can be "different", e.g. as a Jew,

- and still be very much at home in America.
- D. To have an understanding of origin - i.e. "where one has come from."
- E. To understand one's physical relationship to fellow Jews here and in the world.
- F. To know and appreciate the concept of Jewish community life.
- G. To help a youngster realize how his Jewish community can help him. This is gained through an understanding of certain dynamic institutions - e.g. in the area of philanthropy, welfare, health, defence, inter-faith, religious, education and recreational.
- H. Conversely to impress a need upon the child "to want to help."
- I. To come to appreciate the new role of professionals in his life - e.g. "Rabbi," "Social worker," "Jewish teacher."
- J. To help a youngster gain a perspective on world Jewry.

These goals could be integrated into such a text as follows in the succeeding chapters. Basically the approach centres about a number of questions directed to the youngster's concern and interest. Some of these are:-

- i. Where do I and my community come from?
- ii. Where do we live?
- iii. Why do we live here?
- iv. How does my father make his living?

- v. Have Jews always earned their living this way?
- vi. Why a Jewish community?
- vii. What if I needed help?
- viii. What does the community do for me?
- ix. Why help world Jewry?
- x. What does it all mean to me?

CHAPTER IV

WHO ARE WE?

At first thought it appears that the answer is a simple one. I am either a boy or a girl. But really it goes much deeper than this; we are more than just "boys or girls". For the question "Who are we?" asks that we tell something about ourselves.

What Can We Say?

There are some things we can say with certainty. To begin with we are part of a family. Perhaps with brothers or sisters we live in a home together with our parents. Now this should not be taken for granted, because the family is a very special part of society. In fact Judaism with its customs, ceremonies and even education revolves basically around the family.

Most of us go to school. We are students, learning about life from the beginning of time right up to this atomic and space age. The wonders of science or the beauty of language and literature fills our minds and imaginations each and every day. At school we may discover that we possess special abilities. So we play sports, act in plays, write for the school paper and may even be a member of the student council.

Of real importance is the realization that we are

not alone. We live in a city that has other young people like ourselves; many of whom become our friends. Some of these friends are just school chums. We may say "hi" or "see you" to them. However, others are very close. They are the ones we invite over to the house to play or to listen to records or just to watch T.V. Our friends may be Jewish like each of us; then again we may be friends with somebody of a different religion or whose skin is not the same color as our own.

What Do We Have In Common?

There are many experiences that we share with our friends. We may go to the same school. We worship God and practise our particular religions. One person may go to a church and another to a synagogue or temple. Also we enjoy much of life the same way. We like movies, television, ice-cream and baseball and all else that makes life fun. The problems of our city or nation affect us all. If there is a tragedy or war then we all suffer. When our country needs us we are ready to help, from joining the Boy Scouts to having a big brother in the army, navy or air-force.

Are We Different?

Is it right for us to speak of differences? Yes, and this should not be surprising, for nobody is really the same. Think for a moment of your experiences at school. Are there not some subjects that you like or do better than others. Perhaps you enjoy mathematics or science. Another

classmate may consider poetry or literature as the most enjoyable course that is offered. One person may like to spend extra-curricular hours on the basketball court or in the swimming pool while someone else spends his time with the drama club or debating group. Just think for a moment the differences in food tastes. Chocolate ice-cream may be your favorite choice and yet some other person cannot stand the flavor. Our differences will always be with us; from the friends we choose to the music we listen to, and in fact just about in every facet of our life.

People Are Different Too!

What we mean is that there are different types of people. For example not everybody looks the same. Some are dark, others are red and still others have a yellowish tinted skin. Many are "white" but not even that is definite. People go under different headings; Negro, Oriental, Indian. People are different because of religion. One survey on comparative religion demonstrated that Americans are associated with at least three hundred religious groups.¹

What About Their Different Ways Of Life?

Did you know that most people in the world sleep on the ground? Millions of people use a piece of wood for a pillow. There are people who consider milk a disgusting liquid. There are hundreds of millions of people who are unable to read. Some people in the world wear hardly any clothes, while others conceal virtually every conceivable

part of the body.²

Although these examples are strange to us, nevertheless even here in this country there are "ways of life" that seem quite different and surprising. One religion for example will not allow blood transfusion. Still another refuses to pay allegiance to the flag. Certain religious sects such as the Mennonites will not bear arms, take oaths, and also reject all worldly conveniences. The group is marked by simplicity of dress and habit.

To be different is not necessarily the sign of eccentricity. America is made up of all groups and manners of living. One can have a grandfather from Poland, England, Italy or Germany and still be American. One's religion could be Protestant, Catholic or Jew but we all have one country.

Therefore - Who Are We?

There is an answer to this question. We are Americans and something more - we are Jews. We are members of an important "religious ethnic group", that is we are a people and a religion who have developed and continue to create institutions for worship, learning and social welfare. We may live like all other Americans, but we have our own way of life too! To know this way of life we must first attempt to discover its whereabouts.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER IV

¹Milton G. Miller and Sylvan D. Schwartzman, Our Religion and Our Neighbors (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1959) p.10.

²Ashley Montagu, The One Nation Library: What We Know About "Race," (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1951) This is a pamphlet with an excellent discussion about the varieties of cultures that exist.

CHAPTER V

WHERE DO WE LIVE?

Jewish communities like our own are found in every state of the United States, with an estimated total of 5,367,000 Jews.¹ Some states have a very large population as:-

New York	2,413,500
California	524,900
Pennsylvania	454,000
New Jersey	314,200
Illinois	297,800

Others Are Quite Small:-

Hawaii	1,000
South Dakota	900
Wyoming	800
Montana	600
Alaska	300
Idaho	300

Then Others Are Somewhat Average:-

Ohio	161,600
Maryland	118,000
Michigan	101,800

In What Cities Do We Live?

Nearly half of the five million Jews live in New York City. In fact this metropolis possesses the greatest Jewish community in the world. At first new immigrants crowded together in the tenement district of the lower east side. As the years went on Jews moved to other sections of the city - Bronx, Manhattan, Long Island. Today 90% of all cities and towns in America include Jews in their populations.³

Are We Remembered?

Later we shall learn about some "giants" of our American Judaism. It is noteworthy at this point to mention some historic sites or monuments associated with Jews of this country.⁴

If you are in Boston visit the chapel of Boston University's School of Theology. There you will find a stained glass balcony window framing a medallion picturing Rabbi Alexander D. Goode and the three other World War II chaplains who sacrificed themselves for their men.

Driving through Nevada, you will notice immortalized on Mount Davidson a man by the name of Ben Davidson, one of the participants in the first Jewish religious service in San Francisco in 1849.

In the great rotunda of our capitol building in Washington D.C. are the statues of Kentucky's two most distinguished sons, Henry Clay and Ephraim McDowell; both were gifts of an official of the U.A.R.C.

On the great plaza in front of the Commerce Department building stands the Oscar S. Straus Memorial, honoring the first Jew named to a President's cabinet.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, we find the Hebrew Union College and the American Jewish Archives. These are two of the main religious and educational centers for Reform Judaism.

Are There Jewish Farmers Today?

Unlike our ancestors of two thousand years ago, we Jews in America are not really farmers. In ancient Palestine the "Jews" were a people of the land. Amos, that great prophet of social justice was himself a humble shepherd in Tekoa. In fact many of the commandments in the Bible are directed to an agricultural society. We all know the commandments "Thou shalt not covet....". This goes on to refer to not only a neighbor's house, wife, manservant or maidservant but his ox and his ass. ^{Exodus 20:14} The book of Leviticus, specifically the Holiness Code, ^{Leviticus 14} talks of reaping the harvest of your land, "You shall not wholly reap the corners of your fields, neither shall you gather up the gleanings of your harvest." These are magnificent ideas of charity and justice, whose meaning remains with us.

America is very much a farming nation. This country takes great pride in the crops produced and the cattle we breed. Farming is a great industry in America. Why are we not part of it?

In the first place we are not used to this way of life. Aside from their experience in Palestine, Jews were excluded from agriculture or the right to own farms. The facts were quite to the contrary. Jewish merchants were the chief representatives of the commercial activity of city life.⁵ Although surprisingly enough there is some evidence that Jews of Persia did possess olive orchards and that Jewish gardeners were of such excellence that they were employed by non-Jewish landowners.⁶

Another fact to keep in mind is that Jews were confined to specific sections of certain large cities. The occupations they were restricted to were a far cry from farming - namely peddling, money lending and dealing in old clothes.⁷

When Jews immigrated to America they were totally unprepared to handle farming as their way of life. As noted, their background leaned more to business and as we shall discover, to professions and to skilled trades. Still there were attempts at "agriculturizing" the Jew. In fact there is still evidence of an interest in farming and agriculture among Jews. It may be of surprise to learn that there are over 100,000 Jewish farms in the U.S.A. today.⁸

This is no large figure in terms of the total farming population. Yet considering that we Jews, for historic and practical reasons, are city dwellers, it is quite a representation.⁹

In Israel today agriculture serves as the basis of the national life. The achievements of our people in that little country since 1948 are unbelievable. However, in America Jews turned to other ways of making a living, and with outstanding success.

How Do Jews Earn Their Living?

Did you know that a thousand years ago there were really two Jewish communities? One of these developed in the Southern and Eastern land that was Moslem dominated, and the other in the Christian environment of the North and West. The "Southern" Jews were Sephardim. Soon we shall see how their descendants influenced American Jewish life. The Sephardim did a great deal to advance the great culture of art, philosophy, literature and science in the Moslem world. Many of the Sephardim developed talents as merchants and even administrators of the Moslem empire.

The "Northern" Jews or the Ashkenazim, as they were called, were not as influential upon the "cultural life" of the community. They did, however, perform vital functions in the area of trade and commerce.¹⁰

It seems that history with or without the Jews' consent has given them a special training in business arts. Yet it has been our greatness that we still remained "the people of the book," strong in culture, intellect and sense of community.

How Do American Jews Make A Living?

How does your father make a living? We could con-

eralize and say that he and most other American Jews are engaged in some form of trade. However, this is not quite the same as with our forefathers of the middle ages. Unlike Jews of that period we today are not tax collectors or money lenders. They are free to enter business and industry. For the first time in our history, Jews in America are able to become members of a profession. It is not unlikely that many of you will be doctors, dentists, lawyers, architects or engineers.

Television, radio and the movie industry have attracted many Jews. It has been said that Jews like the Irish have a gift for words, for fantasy and for story telling.¹¹ We make good lawyers and are beginning to emerge as politicians and statesmen.

Jews are Americans and they represent an important segment of American life. Throughout the years our position has changed as a result of change. Where did it all begin?

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER V

¹Alvin Chenkin, "Jewish Population in the United States, 1959" American Jewish Year Book (The American Jewish Committee, New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1960) pp.4-8.

²Ibid., p.9.

³Ibid., pp.4-8

⁴"American Jewish Landmarks," American Judaism, January 1955, pp.15-17

⁵Israel Abrahams, Jewish Life in the Middle Ages (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1911) p.214.

⁶Ibid., p.225

⁷Lee J. Levinger, A History of the Jews in the United States (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1956) p.557

⁸Ibid., p.277

⁹W. Atwood, "The Position of the Jews in America Today" Look, November, 1955, p.28.

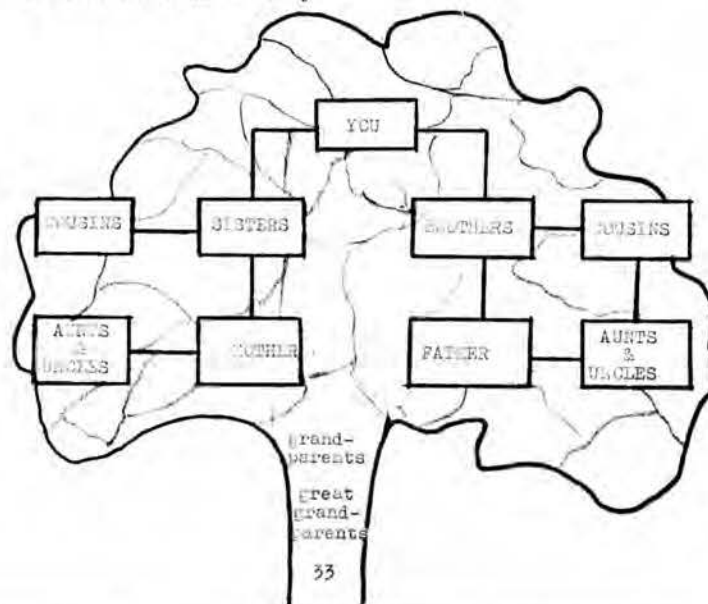
¹⁰O. Handlin, The One Nation Library: American Jews; Their Story (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1958) p.6.

¹¹W. Atwood, Look, p.28

CHAPTER VI

WHERE DO WE COME FROM?

Suppose we went around the class in our religious school and tried to discover the answer to the question. "Where do we come from?" Within our own class we could come up with the most interesting information about ourselves. It would in fact be quite possible for each of us to construct a family tree.¹ If we filled it in with information tracing back our father and mother, grandparents, uncles and aunts, we would have a bird's-eye view of American Jewish history.



Naturally every family has its own particular background, but one would be surprised how many Jews have so much in common as far as origin and history is concerned. Each of us are the products of one of four different Jewish groups that came and settled in this country. Briefly we could title these groups as follows:-

1. The Eastern-European Jews - from Poland and Russia.
2. The Central European Jews - from Germany and France.
3. The Early Settlers - these are the "Sephardim" who came from Spain and Portugal.
4. The most Recent Arrivals - these are the post-World War II settlers. This is a special problem that we will talk about in the next chapter.

The Eastern European Group - 1880-1930

If there was ever a time in the history of our country that the message on the Statue of Liberty had the greatest meaning, it was during this period.

The following is an extract from a charter decreed by Frederick II of Prussia dated April 17th, 1750. It is taken from a book "The Jew in the Medieval World" by Jacob Marcus, an historian and teacher at the Hebrew Union College who has collected and published original documents dealing with the lives of Jews in Europe. It will give an idea of the conditions under which our ancestors lived. It will also indicate how advanced is Jewish community life in America today. A good part of the decree was in force until 1850, a little over one hundred years ago.²

"No other Jews are to be tolerated except those named in the lists that are attached to the end of these regulations...(These lists were appended in the original).

List of the tolerated communal Jewish officials for the capital here in Berlin has been fixed:

1. One Rabbi or a vice-rabbi.
2. Four assistant-judges.
3. A chief and assistant cantor with his basses and his sopranos. These latter must not be married.
4. Four criers, one of whom must report daily to the police office the arrival of foreign Jews. (These criers or "knockers", used to call people to services at dawn by "knocking" at their doors).
5. Two employees in the synagogal-school.
6. Six grave diggers who also do other work for the Jewish community.
7. One cemetery guard.
8. Three slaughters.
9. Three butchers.
10. One secretary of the meat-market and his supervisor.
11. Three bakers and one restaurant-keeper.
12. A communal scribe.
13. Two doorkeepers and one assistant. (The doorkeepers at the city gates examined the papers of immigrant Jews).
14. Two hospital attendants.
15. One physician.
16. One male and one female attendant.
17. A fattner of fowl and cattle.
18. Eight attendants for the sick.
19. Two Hebrew printers.
20. Two teachers for girls. Both must be married.

No protected-Jew can stay away from home for more than a year without authorization; otherwise his place will be given to another...

The Jews must pay their taxes quarterly and all the Jews are responsible as a body for the payment of the taxes...

What is to be done with impoverished Jews or those facing bankruptcy...?

What action is to be taken when a Jew deliberately becomes bankrupt...?

The Jews must not pursue any manual trade...

We herewith establish, regulate, and order earnestly that in the future no Jew shall presume to engage in any manual trade, nor venture upon any except seal-engraving, (art) painting, the grinding of optical glasses, diamonds and jewels, gold and silver embroidery, fine cloth needlework, the collecting of gold dust by sieving process and other similar trades in which vocational associations and privileged guilds are not found. Particularly are they enjoined not to brew beer nor to distill spirits. However, they are allowed to undertake the distilling of spirits for the nobility, government officials and others, with the understanding that only licensed Jews and their sons are to be taken for this task... However, those Jews who have received or may receive special concessions for the establishment of particular types of factories or for the sale of goods of Christian manufacturers are to be protected in the future as in the past. (Frederick the Great and his father, as "protectionists", were anxious to promote Prussian industries).

Jews are forbidden the smelting of gold and silver...

The slaughter of meat for their own consumption is permitted the Jews if they kill the animals in Christian slaughterhouses...(but they cannot sell meat to non-Jews nor deal in domestic cattle).

The Jews in Berlin are not allowed to have dealings in raw wool or woollen yarns or to manufacture woollen goods...(they were allowed, however, to sell the domestic finished goods).

Jews are further allowed to sell one another beer and spirits...with the exception of kosher wines they are not allowed to do any business in wines....(Jews must not, however, sell strong drink to non-Jews).

The Jews must not trade in anything herein forbidden them, under threat of confiscation of their wares...they may not peddle in cities except at the time of fairs...

All foreign (non-Prussian) Jews who do not arrive with the post-carriage or their own vehicles may enter into and leave Berlin by only two gates. What is to be done in this matter in other large cities...(poor Jews were not wanted and were watched).

In the future the Jews shall not buy houses of their own. The forty houses owned by Jews in Berlin shall not be increased in number...in other cities where there are five Jewish families only one of them may buy a house...

How Did They Cope With Their Problems?

Life was indeed difficult for the Jews in those days. The individual had little freedom and was often persecuted. Jews were used as scapegoats, that is as a means of diverting the general population from their real problem, namely hunger and poverty. A cruel ruler of Russia, Czar Alexander III encouraged people to turn upon the Jews. Pogroms, that is organized attacks against the Jews broke out everywhere. In the latter part of the 19th century our people found themselves in a sufferable position, uprooted and even facing starvation.³ However, Jews were no longer content to accept suffering as their ultimate lot. They began their journey to the New World in ships which arrived at New York or Boston. By 1924 some 2,250,000 Jewish immigrants arrived in America.⁴ This flow ended in 1924 with new laws passed by congress halting immigration from Eastern Europe. Problems were not yet at an end for the children of Israel. In not too many years new difficulties would result in another "wave of immigration".

What Hardships Did These People Face In The New Land?

The greatest problem was size. Thousands of these new Americans crowded together in the big cities, New York, Boston, Chicago. They were very poor, living in inadequate

overcrowded tenement houses. Miserable slums were created. As is often the case with such environments insecurity and juvenile delinquency plagued the lives of these people.⁵ Bad housing, unemployment and exploitation by the "sweat shops" factory bosses tended to make life very unpleasant.

How Did They Make A Living?

It was a great struggle to make ends meet. Not at all unusual was it to see housewives bartering at push-carts that lined the street of New York's East Side. In order to keep the family together, clothed and fed it was necessary to try and save every penny.

Many men and women found work in the garment business toiling for hours over sewing machines, either at the factory or on "piece work" at home. It is a safe generalization that by the turn of the century most of the clothing in the United States was made by Jewish hands.⁶ We shall see later how significant this fact is for the development of labor unions in America. Some Jews worked in the building trade, either as painters or carpenters. A few struggled to operate the little corner grocery store or dry goods shop.

The Very Early Settlers - The Sephardim 1654-1820

As recent as two hundred years ago the white man was still rare in America. Very few Jewish people lived in what is now referred to as the United States. In fact the beginnings of Jewish life and its development in America is closely bound up with our country's history.⁷

We are taught that American history begins in Spain when Ferdinand and Isabella decided to assist Christopher Columbus in his voyage to discover the west. Many Jews, that is the Sephardim, influenced this voyage. These Jews were the aristocrats of Jewry. They not only financed Columbus but aided him with scientific knowledge and some even accompanied him on his voyage to America.⁸

1492 was an eventful year in Jewish history. Ironically in that year Ferdinand and Isabella passed an edict requiring Jews to be expelled or accept baptism. Of those who remained, some converted yet many lived as "secret Jews" or "Marranos". However, others sought different homes in hopes of freedom. We shall see that this flight to freedom is a common denominator in Jewish life. Some went to Turkey, others to Holland. A few were with Columbus in 1492. This group marked the beginning of Jewish settlement in America. The first actual colony started in 1654. From that time to the present, "waves" of Jewish immigrant groups have come to our shores.

By and large America and its Jews have stood ready to receive the homeless and the wandering. On the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor is a famous poem by an American Jewess. Her name is Emma Lazarus. She wrote "Give me your tired, your poor, your homeless masses yearning to be free." This poem is a fine tribute to America. The mother of exiles.⁹

Where Did They Come From?

These early Sephardic Jews came from Brazil. They left as a result of the Portuguese conquest and consequent persecution. In early September of 1654 a small group of 23 Jews arrived in New Amsterdam, now New York City. They were permitted entry by the Governor Peter Stuyvesant on condition that "the poor among them would not become a burden to the Dutch West India Company or the community."¹⁰

One could speak of this group as being the real Founding Fathers of the Jewish community in North America.¹¹ They established the first synagogue in North America. Its name is Shearith Israel - "The Remnant of Israel." This synagogue is now better known as the "Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue."

Did The Jewish Population Grow In This Period?

The growth of population was slow.¹² Although non-Jewish population did increase during these years from countries such as Germany, Ireland and Scotland, there were not many Jews among them.¹³ By 1776 there were fewer than 2,000 Jews in all of the thirteen British colonies. However, it did increase after the revolution, reaching about 15,000 by 1840.¹⁴

What Kind Of Jews Were They?

In those early years America had hardly begun to open up. The colonial period, as it is called, was restricted to a few Eastern seaboard cities, really towns. The Jews

who settled at this time were enterprising and adventurous. They loved liberty and were not afraid to take risks in order to obtain their goal. They struggled with new problems of making a living and learning a new language. They had to face loneliness, having parted from family and friends. Some had to fight for the right to be an American. One man by the name of Aaser Levy is remembered as the first American defender of Jewish rights.¹⁵ Angered at the law forbidding Jews to protect the colony against Indian attacks, he proclaimed "It is my right - if we are burghers, of New Amsterdam we share the burghers obligation to bear arms in defence of our colony."¹⁶

What Kind of Life Did They Lead?

As indicated previously the Sephardic settlers were primarily merchants. Boston, Newport, New York and Charleston being the prosperous commercial sea ports were also the main areas of early Jewish settlement. Many Jews were quite successful and became wealthy. Aaron Lopez was a thriving merchant of Newport, Rhode Island. He helped to develop the commercial life of that community. In Philadelphia the Franks family was most prominent in business activities with England. This period also had its heroes, such as Haym Solomon who aided the causes of America during the Revolution. George Washington expressed his gratitude to Solomon and other Jews when in a letter to the six existing Jewish congregations he wrote "May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the goodwill of the

other inhabitants while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make them afraid....."¹⁷

The Central European Group - 1820-1880

Shortly after the turn of the 19th century Germany found itself very poor and exhausted by war. There were very few opportunities for wealth or personal development. In fact for most central Europeans the future seemed to promise little hope. Many Germans at this time emigrated to the land of hope - America. Unlike the early Sephardic period, Jews at this time formed a large part of the general migration. The Ashkenazim, however, came for their own special reasons and needs. Jews of the German states were lacking in civil rights and were barred from many occupations. The future appeared brighter upon America's shores.¹⁸

Where Did They Settle?

They did not concentrate in the few large cities as in the case of their Spanish-Portuguese brethren. They spread throughout the whole country. In fact even Alaska was chosen as a place for settlement. Jewish communities multiplied in this period. The cities we live in today trace their Jewish roots back to this period. 1837 witnessed the first Jewish settlement in Chicago. Cincinnati, largely German populated, also became a centre for German Jews. When the gold rush of 1849 began in California, Jews were among the earliest settlers. Many more Jewish communities came upon the American scene - Memphis, Tennessee; St. Paul,

Minnesota; St. Louis, Missouri; and so on.

Were They a Different Kind of Jew?

These were not the aristocratic Sephardim or the wealthy merchants of the colonial period.¹⁹ There were a few intellectuals - writers, doctors and journalists. This was also the age of the peddler. He would start with a little stock of housewares and notions, carrying them on his back or on a covered wagon. Throughout the length and breadth of the south-west the Jewish peddler was a familiar figure. This same peddler became a cultured and a respected member of the American world. Out of these ventures grew such great stores as Gimbles and Sears-Roebuck. Jews fought on both sides during the Civil war. We find, for example, Judea P. Benjamin who was Secretary of State for the Confederacy. By 1880 Jews formed a very stable and successful segment of American society.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER VI

¹M. Weitz, Jewish Demonology (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1935) p.20.

²J. Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval world (ed. E. Gamoran, Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1936)

³D. Pessin, History of the Jews in America (New York: United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education, 1957)

⁴Handlin, p.17

⁵Ibid., p.18.

⁶Ibid., p.17.

⁷Leviner, p.23.

⁸H. Warschauer, The Story of Holy Blossom Temple (Privately printed: Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto, 1956)

⁹Alfred Friedman, Three Hundred Years of Jewish Life in America (New York, 1955) p.5.

¹⁰Ibid., a quote found on page 7.

¹¹H. Warschauer, The Story of Holy Blossom Temple, p.3.

¹²Leviner, p.142.

¹³Handlin, p.10.

¹⁴Leviner, p.142.

¹⁵Elma Leviner, Jewish Adventures in America (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1954) p.17.

¹⁶Ibid.,

¹⁷Ibid., p.73.

¹⁸Handlin, p.14.

¹⁹Ibid.

CHAPTER VI]

WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS DID JEWISH SETTLEMENTS MAKE TO JEWISH LIFE?

What Did the Eastern European Jews Contribute?

By the time the Polish or Russian Jews had settled in America the former generations of American Jews were well entrenched in American life. The descendants of the Sephardim and German Jewry had become successful in business, industry and politics. Their communal organizations were flourishing. The new arrivals brought about great changes in Jewish life. Their innovations have had an affect on our lives as Jews today.

Have you ever been to a "Jewish" baker's shop or delicatessen? Such delicious foods as the bagel, lox and cream cheese, refilte fish and pickled herring are contributions that the Jews of Eastern Europe have made to our dietary habits.

Yiddish, the language of the old world, suddenly became the basic means of communication among thousands of Jews in this country. Perhaps you have picked up a few words still used by your parents. The common word "kibbutz" is basically Yiddish. Incidentally, Yiddish grew out of a Hebrew-German, although there is a Polish Yiddish and even an American

Yiddish. As an art form the "Yiddish theatre" offered the Jew not only entertainment but a security among his own people. It helped him to discover the dramatic humor and pathos of his life.¹ One play entitled the "World of Sholom Aleichem" was on Broadway for many months. It portrayed tales of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. Newspapers, periodicals and books are still read in this strange, yet expressive tongue.

The Eastern Europeans changed the whole character of "community life." When the immigrants left the old world it was often a whole town that made the voyage. As a result a new type of organization formed in America called landsmanchaften. These were common folk gatherings that joined together for mutual care and cultural-spiritual welfare. Little synagogues sprang up over night, enabling every man to worship according to his own custom. This variety of synagogue life has left its mark on us, as for instance when we speak of Conservative, Orthodox and Reform Judaism.

The nature of Jewish education, different from anything previous in America, developed among American Jewry in the early days of the 20th century. The "cheder," an after-school hebrew class, grew later into the Talmud Torah, and the Yeshivah. Orthodox Jews, as were most immigrant East-Europeans, brought over their own Rabbis. He was the Rabbi of the "old town," a man of learning and piety, respected and supported by the congregation.² These men were very poor, badly paid and often uneducated in general university studies. Many Jews devoted their interests to Zionism, the upbuilding

of Palestine as a national homeland. We can probably say that the existence of the State of Israel today is due in part to such concern. Others directed their efforts to the formation of labor unions and a variety of Jewish communal institutions that play a very great and important role in our Jewish life.

In 1924 new and strict immigration laws stopped the flow of newcomers. This also brought to a close a significant chapter in American Jewish history. In the years to follow Jews of this country solidified their strength of numbers and the depth of their culture.

What Did the German Jews Contribute?

The Central European Jews (mainly German) settled here somewhat earlier than those of Eastern Europe. As we noticed above these Polish or Russian Jews really laid the foundation of Jewish community life. What did the German Jews give to Jewish life?

The Jews from Germany gave us the "American synagogue." Reform Judaism, which had its beginnings in Germany, was brought over by the new settlers to America. This new "Reform" had a great influence upon synagogue and religious life. Certain important institutions, such as Hebrew Union College, which trains Reform Rabbis, or the Union of American Hebrew Congregations stem from the Central European period. One of our great leaders in Jewish life and the "father" of American Reform Judaism was a German born Rabbi. His name was Isaac Mayer Wise. A temple in Cincinnati, Ohio,

bears his name to this day.

We have noticed that the German Jews had a certain influence upon the growth of American life. Cities and towns in this country, as well as many famous businesses, were aided and even led by German Jews.

These same Jews were not, however, a unified community. Schisms formed as a result of differences in language and customs. Nevertheless, they formed their synagogues and mutual aid societies of protect themselves in life and care for their families after death. In most instances the Central European Jews lived in close association with his Christian neighbors. Yet they were still very conscious of their Judaism. In their own way they added strength to the foundation of Jewish life in America.

How Did the Sephardim Contribute to the Growth of Jewish Life?

Small indeed were the Sephardic settlements in America. What of significance did they do at such an early period in American and Jewish life? The Jewish communities of those days were small and unorganized. Still, there was some activity. The well-to-do men of early American Jewry did not neglect their religion and tradition. They formed congregations which allowed the members to carry on according to the Spanish-Portuguese custom. The synagogues were beautiful monuments of Georgian architecture.⁵ They established cemeteries and provided places of instruction for their children. Neither did they forget the needy and helpless. Thus one could conclude that the Sephardic Jews estab-

lished the basis for Jewish education and philanthropy in this country. Perhaps of most significance was their role in the fight for freedom and human rights.

The Most Recent Group - 1930 to the Present

The 1930s witnessed the beginning of a new and perhaps the worst tragedy in Jewish life. In Germany, with the rise of Hitler, thousands of Jews suddenly found themselves victims of political and religious persecutions. America and its tradition of freedom could not completely refuse admission to these victims of Nazi Germany. However, only a few from 1930 on were allowed to enter and resettle in the United States. Soon America and all the world was involved in the most destructive of wars. From 1939 to 1945 democracy fought to retain the rights of freedom against the forces of dictatorship. The late President Roosevelt sounded the call in his famous speech to congress, January 6th, 1941:

"Four Freedoms: The first is Freedom of speech and expression - everywhere in the world.
The second is Freedom of every person to worship God in his own way.
The third is Freedom from want....everywhere in the world.
The fourth is Freedom from fear.....anywhere in the world.

These stirring words were an inspiration to all regardless of race, color or religion. As Jews who had lost over 6,000,000 people during the Hitler holocaust we too could not

neglect the cause of freedom. We here cannot imagine the agonies and fears of the 6,000,000 who were murdered. One young girl, Anne Frank, has bequeathed a sad, yet poignant memory to us. The following are some quotations from her diary that can help us feel the needs and the "contribution" of that most "recent group" of Jews.⁴

"No one is spared - old people, babies, expectant mothers, the sick - each and all join in the march of death."

"...Jews and Christians wait, the whole earth waits; and there are many who wait for death."

"Leave me in peace, let me sleep one night at least without my pillow being wet with tears, my eyes burning and my head throbbing. Let me get away from it all preferably away from the world...."

"When I pray for her, I pray for all Jews and all those in need."

"When I looked outside right into the depth of nature and God, then I was happy, really happy."

"When I looked into the candle this evening I felt calm and happy."

"Is there anything more beautiful in the world than to sit before an open window and enjoy nature, to listen to the birds singing, feel the sun on your cheeks....."

"It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too. I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquillity will return again."

For us these words are a challenge and a hope. We respond to both - through new efforts in immigration, aid to world Jewry and the rebuilding of the State of Israel.

Where then do we come from? We come from over three hundred years of Jewish life. We share as well a tradition of old world origins reaching over the centuries. Today we are members of a Jewish community that has much in common and yet at the same time so many noticeable differences. However, each of us bears the impact of all movements that brought Judaism to America.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER VII

¹H. Hapgood, The Spirit of the Ghetto (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1909) pp.111-119.

²Ibid., pp.59-61.

³Handlin, p.11.

⁴E. Schnabel, Anne Frank - Profile of a Young Girl (Frankfort-on-Maine, Trans. from the German, Fisher, 1958)

CHAPTER VIII

DO I NEED A JEWISH COMMUNITY?

Do I Live in a Community Already?

It may be that your home is in New York, Chicago or Cincinnati, or perhaps in a similar location. Large or small, it is still a community. Living together are people of many racial backgrounds and a variety of religious persuasions.

What basically is a community? First of all we could say that it is a gathering of people. Their main concern is to organize in such a way that the necessities of life are cared for. Therefore, what has been created by this type of organization is a physical community.

It is made up of houses on a street adjoining other streets which form a neighborhood. When you mail letters they are sorted into zones. These zones are part of a larger area referred to as a county. Your city is part of a county.

A community does not end with an outlined sketch of houses, streets or counties. In order for life to function a community must provide for its members. What it provides are known as public services or utilities. Every month your father receives a bill for gas and electricity. This is a service operated by and for the general community. This is also true of the telephone service or the water and fuel that comes into your home. These utilities exist for the

people. They have nothing to do with Jewish, Catholic or Protestant ways of life, although all such people benefit from the services provided.

Our community gives us the means for education. As we learned earlier practically all young people go to public schools. The reason they are called "public" is to indicate that no discrimination exists to exclude one individual because of his race or religion. At the same time such a school is not concerned with the special teachings of one "group," as opposed to another. The public school is devoted to knowledge and truth in order to help every student grow and learn. Schools prepare you for your life's work - to become a doctor, lawyer, clergyman, engineer and so on.

In your community you can find entertainment and recreation. Movies and theatres provide pleasure for us all, with plays, dramas and musicals. The arts and music are interests for all people, again regardless of their race or religion. It may be that many folk groups or religions have their own music or creative arts. Your community has many forms of recreation and pleasure that range from bowling alleys to skating rinks to unusual restaurants. If you are lucky your city may even have a good basketball or baseball team. They are everybody's team and we all cheer them on.

A community can take care of you. Your mother and father may have paid "social security." This is a way of helping them live happy and secure lives when they become

older and retired citizens. We have a police force to protect us and keep the law. There are also courts to decide the law, and jails to keep people who break them. There are also hospitals that care for our mental and physical health. Of course a community has its leaders. They include such people as a mayor, city manager, judges, lawyers, dentists and doctors. Your father may be one of these leaders. Let us not forget you. To be active in your school life, the Boy Scouts or to act as a general helper in community projects makes you a leader also.

Why Then Do I Need a Jewish Community?

If I live in a city that is so well organized and takes care of me, why then do we have a Jewish community? As Jews we do not live alone. We live with other Jews. This does not mean next door to one, but that we live with a "sense of concern" for all Jews. This kind of "living" does not create a physical community; for a true Jewish community stretches beyond houses, streets and neighborhoods. It crosses cities, states and even the whole world. We need a Jewish community to help us survive as Jews.

However, we do not stop at survival. One can be called a "Jew" and in fact be happy, healthy and quite successful. Yet one misses something by just being or surviving as a Jew. There is so much more. To be a Jew means knowing and living a religion. It means fellowship with our people. It is a way of life that give us a sense of worth to our lives. We live together with all kinds of people. As Jews we have

some special things to offer to ourselves and to give to others. A Jewish community looks after us; sometimes in important ways neglected by that "general community" in which we live. Thus we require our Jewish environment to survive as Jews and to live full and good lives.

What Does Our Jewish Community Look Like?

We Jews can live side by side but it is voluntary, a matter of personal choice. We can live in many parts of the city. Sometimes we choose to live near our synagogue, since this is an important centre of our lives.

You may recall that Jews of the last century and earlier had no such choice. Jews of Eastern and Central Europe were severely restricted in their occupations, freedom of movement and way of life. Their community was not "voluntary" but "compulsory." They were compelled to live in a special section of the city called the "ghetto." Often this was a single street. There were gates at each end that were closed at night. In many towns and villages Jews were grouped together and kept separate from the main body of the population. Special taxes were paid to the rulers by the "ghetto Jews." When a Jew would cross the border he paid a "duty tax" for the right to enter another city or town.

Today our Jewish community is very different indeed. We still come together, however, there is no pressure or rejection from the outside. Rather than living in a closed ghetto we have created a community of organizations and

institutions. This may operate in buildings, but its services go outside to meet the needs of the people. These may be specifically Jews, however all other people are also helped by our Jewish community.

Why Do We Help?

Perhaps you may have wondered at this question. It may be that you know why you help. The answer has come to you when you give a street beggar a nickel or a dime. You may find the answer when you give a donation to a man who knocks at your door, or when you give some clothing to the less fortunate in your city. This is charity.

Charity, however, is not just giving by the rich to the poor. In Hebrew our word "Tzedakah" is more than just giving. It tells us that as Jews we have a duty to seek out the righteous and good life. Through "Tzedakah" we reach out to man and honor God. By furthering "Tzedakah" we are living the righteous life of Judaism.

In the Bible we have many examples of this. In the book of Genesis Abraham and Sarah welcome the strangers to their tent, wash their feet and feed them. This is true "Tzedakah." In the book of Leviticus there are many laws that exemplify the practice. For example, the people are told to leave part of their field for the poor and the less fortunate.

In the middle ages there were special rules for practising "Tzedakah." One of Maimonides' sayings, a great teacher of this period, was that the greatest act of

charity was to give and take anonymously. Often in the synagogue a sack was passed around from which one could put in or take out as the need required.

During those ghetto days "Tzedakah" was the unifying factor of the community. The great teaching "All Jews are responsible for one another" was the central law of the people. The ghetto had great problems of persecution and narrow-mindedness. However, they organized to care for themselves and each other. Many societies from the arranging of marriages to the burial of the dead were formed to keep the community alive with a feeling of decency and well being.

Gone are the ghettos today. We are not sorry, for when the "Walls came tumbling down" the people were free to find a better life. Yet the spirit of Jewish community life is still with us.

CHAPTER IX

IF I NEEDED HELPWhy Do I Give Money?

In our last chapter we spoke about Tzedakah - the great teachings of justice, charity and righteousness. Religion should not be concerned with money you may say. Why then do I give at all? Does the giving of money have anything to do with "Jewish community life"?

No doubt at Sunday school you have participated in drives to raise money for many causes in Jewish life.¹ Perhaps you have even been chairman of your class campaign, or at least a member of a committee. Each week you give your nickels and dimes. At the end of the year you counted up the money collected and were surprised to see the amount. Why it might have been 75-100 dollars! Your parents also give money. Do you know some communities raise as much as a million dollars! That is a great deal of money. Your contributions helped to build such a sum.

We must, however, not lose sight of the value of giving. The amount is impressive, but it is not the important factor. It is also of importance to know why you give and where your money is going. Your giving should be a sincere action of the heart. Giving should be out of a spirit of true "Tzedakah" - a feeling of responsibility and loving

kindness.

Let us consider for a moment an ordinary dollar bill, just like the many you have raised in your class room. It is the same dollar that you use to buy food with, go to the movies or for purchasing tickets to a ball game.

Sometimes it takes a long time to try and save this from a collection of nickels, cents and quarters. You may have to save part of your allowance, or work after school to put together one dollar. To collect 50 dollars or a 100 dollars takes more than one person. Often a whole class has to work together for such a project. To raise hundreds and thousands of dollars requires the efforts and contributions of a community.

There are times when a dollar bill falls into wrong hands. It can stay in the billfolds of greedy or selfish people. However, this is not the sort of dollar in which we are interested. We are concerned about the one handled by youngsters like yourselves who feel a sense of concern and understanding. You give your money to build a bridge of friendship and care between you and others. You give to help people.

Where Does Your Money Go?

Whom do you help when you give away your nickels and dimes?² Well some of your money goes to help people in your own city. It goes to hospitals, homes for the aged, foster homes, religious schools, synagogues, camps and community centres. Your money may travel far from home, perhaps all the

way to Israel or other parts of the world where less fortunate Jews may live.

There is a book called the American Jewish Year Book. It is published each year and serves as an encyclopedia of Jewish life. It is filled with every kind of information about Jews here and in the rest of the world. We could summarize as follows³ the answer to the question, "Where does my money go?"

Religious

Reform

Union of American Hebrew
Congregations.
Hebrew Union College.
Central Conference of
American Rabbis.

Conservative

United Synagogue of America.
Jewish Theological Seminary.
Rabbinical Council of
America.

Orthodox

Union of Orthodox Jewish
Congregations.
Yeshiva College.

Welfare

Family Service.
Jewish Vocational Service.
United Jewish Appeal.
Jewish Community Centres.

Israel and Zionism

Zionist Organization of
America.
Hadassah.
Jewish National Fund.

Civic

American Jewish Committee.
American Jewish Congress.
Anti-Defamation League.
Jewish Labor Committee.
National Conference of
Christians and Jews.

Educational

B'nai Brith.
Jewish Chautauque Society.
Jewish Publication Society.
Y.M.H.A. - Y.W.H.A.
American Association for
Jewish Education.

Immigration Aid

Hebrew Immigration Aid.
Society.
National Council of Jewish
Women.

Scientific-Historical

American Jewish Historical
Society.
Yiddish Scientific Institution.

Medical

Jewish Hospitals.
Old Folks' Homes.
Day Nurseries.

We cannot go into details and list all the services of these organizations. The same American Jewish Year Book can

give you all the information you need. Let it be said that your dollar goes to further the work of these institutions. They exist for you. They all go to make up a Jewish community. You support them and they in turn help you.

Does My Religion Help Me?

It sounds strange to ask if religion helps us. In fact what has this got to do with "community" or "help" at all? At one time this question involved a particular type of answer. The ancient Israelites believed that the offering of a sacrifice was the way to invoke the help and active concern of God. Of course today we do not offer up sacrifices, therefore, this is not the help we have in mind. We are taught that prayer helps. This we still believe. However, this is not the only kind of help religion provides in our community.

The "help" of religion to which we refer has to do with you - your religion and the community. Very specifically, our concern is with the temple and the important part it has to play in your life.

The temple helps us to live and understand the religious life. You may remember your consecration into the religious school. Standing before the congregation you were blessed by the Rabbi and welcomed into the school. This was really your first experience in synagogue life. Learning is one of the purposes of the temple or synagogue. In our tradition the synagogue was a "house of study," where Jews spent many hours of each day pouring over the Talmud and the Bible. Today you also study. Your tradition helps you to live as

a modern Jew. Through a liberal understanding and interpretation of our ethics, history, customs and festivals, Judaism becomes a living faith. Prayer is basic to your religious life. The synagogue helps you experience prayer. The blessings that you learn bring you closer to God and enrich your life as a Jew, both at home and with your fellow worshippers. Prayer and worship bring you closer to important events in life. With other members of the congregation you learn to thank God for the good things in life; perhaps for a new little sister or brother. Sometimes the prayers are for sad experiences, as when someone dies. Still the Kaddish helps you be strong and continue your faith in God's gift of life.

The synagogue helps to bring you closer to the community. With family and friends you came together for High Holy days, Passover, Bar Mitzvahs, weddings and confirmations.

The synagogue is led by a man who is a central figure in Jewish life. No doubt you have seen your Rabbi "in action." He may teach your class, advise your club group, marry your friends and relatives and be present at those occasions of joy and sorrow that enter into all our lives. He helps you to be a better Jew. Through his teaching and sermons he shows you the way to Judaism and God.

By means of the synagogue you learn to help your general community. In your synagogue the youth group and adults can be part of a social action committee.⁴ Such a committee works voluntarily in the community on many worthwhile projects from assisting at a settlement house (a recreation

home for less fortunate members of the community) to helping out at an old folks' home. Sometimes a synagogue gives leadership in fighting for important community issues, such as racial understanding or better schools and housing.

The synagogue can help us bring to life the teachings of our religion. Think about the following examples:-

"How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, thy dwellings, O Israel." - Numbers 24:5.

"Behold how good it is for brothers to dwell together." - Psalm 133:1.

"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." - Isaiah 56:7.

"If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment...he shall surely live, saith the Lord God." - Ezekiel 18:5,7,9,16,17.

In former days the synagogue served many, many functions. It was a health centre, a burial society, a school, a place to distribute charity, a community club; also it served as a sanctuary for prayer in times of life and death. The synagogue was really the place in which the Jew lived.⁵ Today we still have such needs as a Jew. There are, however, other organizations than the synagogue to give us any help we may need.

Where Do I Go for Fellowship and Fun

There are many ways to have fun and enjoy life. Sometimes we do it alone with our hobbies or by just relaxing, as when we read or listen to music. In our community there are opportunities for other forms of recreation and entertainment. Some are light, like going to the movies, bowling alleys, skating rinks and sporting events. Others are more serious

as attending a play, lecture or symphony.

In a Jewish community there is an institution known as the Jewish Community Centre which serves certain purposes. First it is a place to relax and have fun like anywhere else. Often the word "Jewish" means nothing more than Jews doing things together, such as swimming, playing basketball or singing and dancing. However, this is important for sometimes it just makes us feel good to be together with people of our "own way of life."

The Jewish Centre does more however. Do you know that at one time in this country Jews would come to the "centre" after work to relax by learning. This relaxing and learning was very important in their lives.⁶ The Jewish Centre taught the immigrants English as well as new trades and occupations.

Today the Centre still provides "relaxation by learning." At a centre you can join club groups where you learn to play a guitar or perhaps receive dramatic training and even increase your ability as a "cook" if you are so inclined. A Jewish Centre also holds forums, lectures and discussions that are concerned with not only Jewish problems, but those of the total community as well.

One could say that the Jewish Community Centre provides recreation, fun and learning for all Jews in the community. It is the common meeting ground for Jewish life. Every Jew, young and old can feel at home in a Jewish Centre.

mother became sick, who would care for you? Such care and help can be found in the Jewish Family and Child Service.

By the way you would meet a very special person in our community, namely the Social Worker. He is a professional person who has studied at a university, learning skills and understandings to help with the problems;⁷ perhaps of widows, orphans, adopted children, neglected children, children in trouble, and people who have problems in general. The Jewish Family and Child Service is a very important part of our Jewish community. It does something quite special - it helps you to find happiness in your life.

The Jewish Hospital

People are always getting sick. Are you? Probably like everybody else you have had the measles, mumps, colds and sore throats. These, however, are ordinary sicknesses. Sometimes, though, there are more serious illnesses. These can cause us to go into hospital. One can go for a pleasant reason - like the time your mother went and you were born. In general, however, one enters a hospital for serious treatments or operations. It could happen to any of us.

As Jews we usually go to Jewish hospitals. This does not mean to say that other hospitals are not good. To the contrary, for most medical care is of a high standard today. Why a Jewish hospital? Well in the first place you can feel completely at home. That is, the practices you were used to at home are respected in a Jewish hospital. If you or a member of your family should "keep kosher," the

Will the Jewish Community Take Care
of Me When I Am Lonely, Sick or Old

If you live in an average to large size city, you probably could locate three different buildings. They are: The Jewish Family and Child Service; The Jewish Hospital and The Jewish Home for the Aged. These are more than mere buildings with busy workers, doctors and secretaries. On paper they could be of little concern or meaning. Yet it is possible that one or perhaps all could play a part in your life.

The Jewish Family and Child Service

Most of us are born into homes, that is to say our true parents live with us. Sometimes though a youngster is adopted. This means that he has been "chosen" by a man and woman to be their child. The boy may never know his real mother and father, but he can soon learn to become part of, and grow up in, his new home. The Jewish Family Service helps such parents and children plan and settle the adoption. However, this is the easy side of it.

Let us suppose you had a problem. Perhaps you were a good student, in a comfortable home but still you were very unhappy. You had few friends and you were quite concerned about yourself and your future. Who would help you? Well, if you were lucky enough to discover the institution the Jewish Family and Child Service would help you work out your problems.

What if your father passed away and he left little money? How would you and your mother manage. Say your mother became sick, who would care for you? Such care and

hospital will provide the special foods. This is very important for personal comfort, especially to an older grandfather who may be concerned about such matters.

A Jewish hospital provides Yiddish-speaking staff members, so that people who do not speak English can feel relaxed.

The Jewish hospital was a research and training centre for Jewish doctors, who at one time had difficulty in other hospitals.

Today you can feel quite secure and at ease in our Jewish hospitals. They are a source of pride to our Jewish community. Our hospitals are open as well to all religious groups.

The Jewish Home for the Aged

Where do your grandmother and grandfather live? It may be that at your house, an active part of the family. Then again, they might be living by themselves, or if there is only one grandparent then that one is living alone. There is, however, another place where they could be spending their later years, namely the local Jewish Home for the Aged.

What has this got to do with you who are reading this? Well in the first place they are your family; therefore you should care. There is also the possibility that someday you may have similar problems. Of course that is a long way off in your life.

Does an Old Age Home really help people like your grand-

parents? Is it a nice place to live in.⁸ Remember that your grandmother or grandfather are not going to a charity home for the poor. There are some people who cannot afford to pay, and they are looked after by funds that youngsters like yourself have helped raise. However, most older folk or their families do pay a substantial sum for support.

In many ways the "home" is like the family environment that they once lived in. The "old folks" have a private room, well equipped and comfortable. There are also many friends around who keep each other happy. Family contacts are not lost as they have many opportunities for visiting. The folks can also knit, listen to the radio and watch television. Although the food is not like home, it is quite good and nicely served around a family style table.

A Jewish community may also have a hospital for the chronically ill old age. These are people who need constant medical care and nursing. It is a wonderful feeling of satisfaction to visit such people. It becomes lonely lying sick day after day. A visit by a young person who will chat or play cards with an older patient is quite a source of joy to folks who are ill.

The main point to remember is that an Old Age Home is not a place where the "old folks" are put away and forgotten. The goal is to keep such people useful and happy in their twilight years. At one time there was no need for an "Old Age Home." In Jewish communities of the past the older members were respected leaders of the community.

They were the "dayanim" - judges and "chachamim" - scholars of the town.⁹ Old people have always been important and never forgotten in Jewish life. Let us keep alive this tradition.

So we have some idea of the help that the Jewish community offers to us. What about the general community and its relationship to Jewish life? Does our Jewish community do anything for the

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER IX

¹Ariel Eisenberg, Tzedakah and Federation (New York: Jewish Education Committee, 1952) pp.2-4.

²S. F. Goldberg, "Jewish Community Services," American Jewish Year Book 1960, pp.116-118.

³Benjamin Sellinger "Jewish Community Organizations," Jewish Toucher (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, April 1946) pp.4-5.

⁴Albert Vorspan and Eugene Lipman, Justice and Judaism (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1957) pp.66-68.

⁵Abrahams, pp.15-18.

⁶Leviner, A History of the Jews in the United States, p.496.

⁷Jewish Family Service Bureau (Pamphlet published by the Jewish Family Service Bureau, Cincinnati) p.21.

⁸M. Conevitz, Dorothy and David Explore Jewish Life (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 2d. ed. revised, 1957) pp.24-27.

⁹Abrahams, p.54.

CHAPTER X

WHAT HAS AMERICAN JEWRY DONE FOR US?

We Are All Americans

One of the questions with which we concerned ourselves in this book was - "Where Do We Come From"? We learnt that our grandparents and our great grandparents came from as far away as Spain, Russia and Germany. Somewhere back in our family tree these immigrants settled in this country, helping and even establishing many communities throughout these United States. We discovered some of the reasons for leaving the "old world" and coming to the new. We caught a glimpse of some of the struggles and problems our grandparents experienced in this "new world." With pride we learned of the organizations and institutions that have grown over the years which make up the Jewish community and our "way of life." Much of Jewish life was created by and for Jews. In our previous chapter we discussed certain Jewish organizations that exist in order to give help to those in need. Although such help may be available to all people in the community, nevertheless the concern is specifically for us who are Jews. Much of what we have accomplished is unique, particularly in the nature and functioning of our institutions. Yet what has been true for we Jews is just

as true for other groups.¹ In fact our experience and life is the story of America.

Who Else Came to America?

Did you ever hear the expression - "So and so came over on the Mayflower"? What does a person mean when he uses this phrase? Well besides boasting about his ancestral background he is relating something of his own origin. Like the little group of Jews who fled from South America and landed at New Amsterdam, the immigrants on the Mayflower who docked at Plymouth Rock symbolized the hope all "new Americans" had in this country.

Did you know that Maryland² had become a haven for persecuted Catholics, and that not only Jews but Quakers as well were welcomed to the one-time colony of Rhode Island. The Irish came to America in order to gain independence. In 1848 many Germans arrived here after fleeing from the oppression and revolutions taking place in their country. It was with a hope for the future that the French came to Louisiana and the Spanish to Florida and Mexico. The negro slave of yesterday, offspring of an ancestor from Africa, is today a member of a major group in the United States. It is still to our nation's discredit that the negro is still a second-class American. Yet progress has been made and there is hope in our democracy for all peoples.

Who Has Contributed to Our Life?

On first consideration of the above question we would say our parents have contributed to our lives. This is very

true; for it is our parents who provide for our needs and care for our wants. They give us a home and help us grow up in love and security. Our teachers also contribute through their guidance and inspiration, moving us towards independence and preparing us for life. Really hundreds and perhaps thousands of people, from lawyers, plumbers, dentists, doctors to Rabbis and community leaders have given and continue to give to our lives.

America, however, has provided certain outstanding people, representative of many groups who have done a great deal for us. In most cases we are not even aware of their names, although their contributions have had an important affect on our lives.³

For your interest, let us list a few examples. Also to show you how life is affected by many kinds of Americans we will indicate their racial or national background.

In the field of medicine we find the first successful operation performed on the human heart was carried out by a Negro - Daniel H. Williams. Irishmen known as the Mayo Brothers established one of the first research and surgery clinics in the world. An Italian, D. J. Calicchio developed superior machinery for blood transfusions.

In other sciences we find that an explorer by the name of Robert Perry, a man of French-English descendant, discovered the North Pole. Thomas Edison, the inventor of the electric light bulb and many other inventions was a Scot-Netherlander.

In politics at least three of our Presidents were of

German origin - Martin Van Buren, Herbert Hoover and Dwight D. Eisenhower. The people who have had an affect on our lives may have originated from any country in the world, but these people are all Americans!

What Jewish Men and Women Have Made a Difference in Our Lives?

It is to our credit that Jews in every field of activity, including law, medicine, physics, government, labor unions and the arts have contributed to our lives. We shall only pick out a very few at this time.

Every day you drink, in one form or another, a glass of fresh pasteurized milk. Most of us take the health precaution of pasteurization for granted. Many years back a man by the name of Nathan Straus,⁴ became very concerned when his cow fell sick, poisoning her milk and making it quite unfit to drink. Nathan Straus recognized the importance of pasteurized milk in saving many lives. This man devoted the next twenty years of his life in a campaign to improve the conditions of dairies in this country. As a result of his efforts laws were passed requiring that the milk you drink today be inspected and pasteurized.

Perhaps if you are a girl you are a member of an organization called Junior Hadassah, or you may belong to the adult movement simply referred to as Hadassah. This organization that promotes good fellowship and creative good work among Jews today was founded in 1912 by a great American Jewess, Henrietta Szold.⁵ Its original work was to undertake practical work in Palestine. She directed this

organization for over 25 years, involving over 300,000 women. You and your mothers can be proud of the work that Hadassah has done over the years. With the financial aid of Nathan Straus, by the way, Henrietta Szold and her Hadassah organization established hospitals, provided medicines, financed doctors and nursing units in what was then known as Palestine. She herself spent much of her later years in this land. She toiled for the cause of Zionism and the upbuilding of a Jewish homeland. Hadassah established and supported Kfar Szalf, a children's village set up in the Negev. Henrietta Szold passed on in 1945, in the land of her beloved Palestine. She left a legacy of projects to the organization and its members she founded. Today, thousands of American Jewish women devote their time to furthering the development of the State Henrietta Szold dreamed about, but never saw come into being.

Television, the stage and movies have served as media to bring many Jewish performers into the lives of us all.⁶ We have all laughed at the subtle humor of a Jack Benny or the rolling eyes of Eddie Conner. Movie making owes much of its greatness to Louis B. Mayer of M.G.M. The Broadway musicals whose tunes we whistle were written by such composers as Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern and George Gershwin. Thousands thrill to the violin artistry of Nathan Milstein and Issac Stern. If you like lighter music and jazz then you might be a fan of Benny Goodman. One of the great composers of religious music, Ernest Block, whose "Sacred Service" is an adaption of the Union Prayer Book we

use in our Temples.

The list of names who have contributed to our lives is long, but this is a book in itself.

Have Jewish Organizations Made a Difference In Our Lives?

We mentioned certain organizations that formed to help Jews in their problems. However, there are certain institutions in Jewish community life that have had a great influence upon the nature of American life in general. For example the nature of "practical Tzedakah" or philanthropy, fund raising for worthy causes, grew out of the American Jews' combined efforts to raise money to provide for his less fortunate neighbor.

Your community is the mainstay and strength of all organizations and agencies that give "help". It is also the source of funds for such organizations as the Joint Distribution Committee and the United Jewish Appeal that gives relief to needy Jews overseas. We will talk about that in our next chapter.

For many years organizations that served the Jewish community would campaign separately in every town and city. This created a difficult situation involving an overlapping of causes and a shortage of funds.

True to the sense of community concern, Jews co-operated to form the above fund raising organization. These collect in once a year drive from all Jews and work out a system of distribution to Jewish causes here and abroad.

Meanwhile this idea caught on in the general community.

Our concept of philanthropy has influenced the welfare drives of the communities in which we live.⁷ Protestants and Catholics had at one time been collecting separately also for their various charities. Campaigns were often held simultaneously. Their leaders decided to try a joint campaign by all three religious groups in the community. Out of this grew the American Red Cross and the Community Chest.

There are other concerns in a community besides the raising of money. One of these is the protection of freedom and civil rights, while trying to promote a greater understanding among those who may live in our community. Perhaps there exists in your community an organization known as B'nai Brith or the American Jewish Committee. Your parents may hold membership in these groups. Basically they all began as social or fraternal organizations. They helped people, specifically Jews, feel wanted and at home. Sometimes they worked to represent the concerns of Jews before government leaders.

Today these organizations play an important function in our community as a whole. They fight for Jewish causes, like anti-semitism. This is a condition where people strike out at the Jew, blaming him for their own troubles and problems. It has been with us throughout our history and still exists as evidenced in certain articles that are written by prejudiced people, or in the attempt to bomb a synagogue. Fortunately today the organizations we have named are working to prevent these incidents and create a

healthier society.

The American Jewish Committee is working on the problem "religion in the schools." This simply means that efforts are being made by the American Jewish Committee to keep any special religion out of our general public education. In a democracy we separate religious interests from education. That is the reason we have such organizations as the synagogue and church in our community. As well, groups like the B'nai Brith and American Jewish Committee are striving to create a prejudice free society, so that all peoples, regardless of race or color can eat in the restaurant of their choice and live in any home or neighborhood that suits their taste.

Do We Need Our Neighbors?

We have touched previously on the needs of any community - health, welfare, education and cultural all of us, of every religion and group, support and strengthen. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions American Jewry has made to us is that it has helped us feel part of a true democracy.

Let us take the church and the synagogue as an example.³ There are many differences between them; in our prayers, services, sermons and religious instruction. Yet we have much in common. Both are devoted to God and the desire to live in harmony with our fellowman. We learn that it is good to be different and yet quite possible to respect and appreciate your friends' faith or religion.

Synagogues and churches are also centres of general community life. Your Rabbi and the local Minister work together as active participants in the life of the community. Every person in the community can and should work together to build the good life. Let us join our Rabbis in this task.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER X

¹M. Nadel, "All Americans are Immigrants," Jewish Teacher (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, November, 1947)

²Ibid., p.24.

³Ibid., p.28.

⁴Passin, History of the Jews in America, pp.260-261

⁵A. Vorseman, Giants of Justice (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1960) pp.150-159.

⁶Leviner, A History of the Jews in the United States pp.546-548.

⁷B. Edidin, Jewish Community Life (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1954) pp.234-236.

⁸Arthur Gilbert ed. pamphlet, Your Neighbor worshipping (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 195-?) p.28

CHAPTER XI

SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED
ABOUT WORLD JEWRY?Who Should Help?

Sometimes we may feel that our own Jewish community may be very small. This is true for those living in cities and towns that have a handful of Jewish families. If you live in a big city, where thousands of Jews live, with large temples and Jewish centers, then the community does not appear that small. However, whether we live together with thousands or just a few Jews our Jewish community is very big indeed. The Jewish community of which we are a part really spans this whole world. So when we think of "helping," we mean not only ourselves directly, but our fellow Jews everywhere.

What Do We Mean by "World Jewry"?

When we ask this question we are concerned with knowing where our fellow Jews live and how many there are. If we do have some relationship to those Jews then like anybody else whom we care for we are anxious to know where they live. They may not be relatives, although some of you may have an uncle, cousin or grandparent living in another country. Yet it is helpful to have some idea as to where to find these people. Besides it makes sense to

know whom we are "helping."

By world Jewry we mean, for example, those Jews who live in:-

The United States:--As this book is about the Jews of our country we will only mention that we have been here for over 300 years, coming from every country in the world.

The Jews of Canada:--The Canadian Jewish community recently celebrated its 200th anniversary.. Jews in Canada also represent many lands although mainly France, Poland, Germany and England.

The Jews of Great Britain:--These include Jews who live in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Jews are closely bound up with the history and tradition of these countries, particularly England. They have an active community life with a great interest in religious and philanthropic activities.

The Soviet Union:--A large segment of the world's Jews live in the Soviet Union. Most of them were born in Russia, although many trace their origin to Poland, Turkey and other European-Asiatic countries.

The Latin American Jews:--To those of us living here in the United States it is difficult to imagine the kind of life that exists in South and Central America or commonly referred to as Latin America. "Latin" in the sense that the people are of Spanish origin, with light brown complexions. Jews are very much part of this culture and involve themselves with the country's problems and its way of life. The Jews are prosperous and feel a strong attachment to world

Jewry, particularly to Israel.

The Jews of India:--How strange to imagine a temple youth group in India. One does exist, however, in the Bombay Reform congregation. The Jews of India are perhaps among the oldest in the world. They are part of the Indian culture, but still retain strong ties to Jewish life and tradition, particularly in terms of the synagogue.

The Jews of Israel:--Israel is a very young state, having come to life in 1948. It is probably parallel to the United States in the concern for world Jewry. We were once the home of freedom-seeking Jews. Today Israel plays that role. We Jews here in America can trace our beginnings to every country in the world, so now Israel today is also settled by Jews from all lands.

These are only a few countries where Jews live. It gives you an idea of the widespread relationship of our world Jewish community. We Jews are bound up with each other and the world. It has been said that no Jew need feel lost or lonely anywhere. Let him only go to the local synagogue and he is no longer a stranger, in fact he can feel at home. Perhaps there is truth in this statement.

How Many of Us Are There in the World?

As of 1960² the estimated Jewish population was 12,500,000 in all. As an example of the breakdown of these figures the countries we discussed above would contain the following number of Jews:-

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>GENERAL POPULATION</u>	<u>JEWISH POPULATION</u>
United States	174,064,000	5,367,000
Canada	17,048,000	250,000
Great Britain	51,680,000	455,000
Soviet Union	200,200,000	2,000,000
Latin America	135,210,000	634,880
India	397,540,000	25,400
Israel	2,052,000	1,337,000

We Jews really do not make up a large part of the population of the countries of the world. Just look at the comparisons in population figures for India, the United States or the Soviet Union. We are basically what is called a "minority group." However, each of us are still members of a great world Jewish community.

Do Jews in the World Need Each Other?

We have shown how in the United States we Jews have created institutions and organizations to help each other. If we do require help there are places that offer services for our many needs. We here in America are lucky for under freedom there exists the opportunity to seek help when needed. However, in many countries there is no freedom for Jews. Often when problems arise they are unable to care for each other. Here we come in, and each of us must ask "Am I not my brother's keeper?"

We need each other to protect our freedom. Today for, example, in Soviet Russia thousands of Jews are denied their religion and even the right to exist as a Jewish com-

munity.⁵

Jews are denied any right to emigrate to Israel, let alone to the United States.

We must help keep our religion alive and meaningful. In Great Britain, South America and India our religion needs help. These countries must have Rabbis, leaders and books. Judaism is a religion that has many paths towards understanding and practice. As Reform Jews we must strengthen this course wherever it needs help.

We must fight discrimination and prejudice. Here in America we Jews are generally free of such fears. Today we are trying to create equal opportunities for all people. However, as Jews we have suffered terribly over the centuries from intolerance and persecution. It is still with us. In Cairo, Egypt the government has announced plans for demolishing the 1,000 year old Jewish cemetery. In Morocco, Algiers and other North African nations where about 400,000 Jews live there is great insecurity and persecutions.⁵ In Germany synagogues were painted with swastikas, the symbol of the dictator Hitler. In fact such anti-semitic vandalism occurred in the United States.

As Jews we should work to provide a home for all "wandering Jews."⁶ Believe it or not many Jews have no home, that is one where they are safe and always welcome. In America we know security, therefore, let us not turn our backs on the needy. Six million Jews were killed in World War II, perhaps these include some members of your family. Thankfully to the generosity of Jews in America and the

creation of the State of Israel, those Jews who survived have a home today. The search for a home is not at an end, it still remains for the Jews of Rumania, Morocco and Egypt.

Yes, the needs are there and help must be given.

How Can We Help?

There is a job to be done for the sake of world Jewry. Can we who read this book do anything about it? The answer is a definite yes, regardless of where you live. Whether it is in a big city or small community. You can have a share in guaranteeing the survival and meaningful existence of our world Jewish community.

You do something when you contribute your nickels and dimes. These are used by organizations of men and women who spend your money to solve in practical ways some of the problems facing Jews of the world. You can help promote understanding and the attitude that we Jews in America really care about our fellow Jews around the globe. You do this by becoming a pen pal with a Jewish youngster in India, Israel or North Africa. Look at the wonderful opportunity to learn about life in other lands. We can also create understanding by reading such magazines as World Over and Keeping Posted. The latter, which is published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations keeps us in touch with the events of Jewish life everywhere.

We can help by sending books and supplies to religious schools. Perhaps a specific project can be undertaken. Recently the National Federation of Temple Youth raised

money to help the Reform congregation in Bombay. If we cannot do the job ourselves then we can help support certain organizations who are concerned with world Jewry.

How Do Some of Our Organizations Help World Jewry?

Let us look briefly at just a few of the organizations in our Jewish community who help Jews "overseas."

There is the United Jewish Appeal. This is the fund raising organization that co-ordinates all the money raised by you and your parents. It ties together all the local Jewish welfare funds in your individual communities.⁷ With the end of World War II it was realized that fabulous sums of money were needed to help Jews overseas. It was the Jewish families in America who accepted the challenge to raise this money. In 1960 the United Jewish Appeal raised over 130 million dollars among American Jews.⁸

The Joint Distribution Committee is means for distributing this money abroad according to need. After the war Jews who had survived fled to the free countries of Europe, Asia, South America and later Israel. This meant care for the orphans, the aged and the sick. Help was also required in reuniting families and assisting men to make a living. This is still a task among the wandering and the homeless Jews. The Joint Distribution Committee has helped the Jews of Moslem lands who are oppressed by poverty and discrimination. Tens of thousands have been helped by curing their diseases and settling them in Israel. In 1957 Poland suddenly open its gates for Jews seeking a fresh start in

Israel more than 30,000 were brought to the "Promised Land" through the efforts of the Joint Distribution Committee.⁹ Their work still goes on. Quite recently, for example, an earthquake struck the community of Agadir, Morocco. Aid for the Jews of that city was supplied by the Joint Distribution Committee. Its projects are worthy of our support.

What about our religion? Are there organizations to keep it alive and offer service to Jews who ask for it? In order to bring the message of our Reform Jewish faith to world Jewry a movement exists called the World Union for Progressive Judaism. This organization provides rabbis, helps congregations, distributes text-books and educational materials and tries to bring some unity of purpose to Liberal Jews all over the world. Congregations in Panama, United States, Argentina, England, France, Canada and India all belong to the "World Union." Perhaps you may be lucky enough to spend a week at the World Youth camp where Reform Jewish youth from all of the four corners of the earth join together for discussions, fellowship and prayer. By supporting the World Union for Progressive Judaism we can help build the religion of Israel.

It is a big world we live in. The possibilities for getting to know it are becoming greater each day in our "space and rocket age." At one time the Jews who lived in Babylonia gave up hope of ever seeing Judea again. Today we are luckier than they were. We do not live in "exile." We are also the leaders of a world Jewish community. It is a wonderful feeling to know you can be at home in so many places.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER XI

¹Murray Schiff "Canada" American Jewish Year Book, 1960 pp.175-176.

²Leon Shapiro, "World Jewish Population," American Jewish Year Book, 1960, pp.351-353.

³"Jews in the Soviet Union," Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isaac Landsman, IX (1943) pp.674-676.

⁴Keeping Posted, Volume VI, 6, 1960, p.37.

⁵Keeping Posted, Volume VI, 7, p.2.

⁶Pamphlet, My Brother's Keeper (United Jewish Appeal, 1958) pp.13-15.

⁷Leviner, A History of the Jews in the United States, p.531.

⁸S. P. Goldberg, "Jewish Community Services", American Jewish Year Book, 1960, pp.62-63.

⁹My Brother's Keeper, pp.199-200

CHAPTER XII

ONE FINAL QUESTION-- WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?

What Do You Know About Yourself?

Well you know that you are part of a history that goes back to the beginning of America itself. Your grandfather or grandmother represent the settlements and contributions of the many groups that came to this country. As a Jew and an American you live in the Jewish community that has grown up during those years.

To be part of this Jewish life involves a concern and interest locally, nationally and in the world. There are Jewish organizations to help you when in need. Others provide fellowship and recreation. You and your parents help raise money and support welfare drives for the collecting and distributing of funds. You have learned that you are free and privileged to live and enjoy the general community. You have also learned that not all Jews are so fortunate and that we must bring to life the adage "All Israel are brothers." We know that being a member of the Jewish community gives us much to be thankful for. It does, however, impose upon us certain challenges or duties.

What Are Our Duties As Members of the Jewish Community?

1. Enjoy being a Jew:--Your Jewish community,

through its organizations, Rabbis, teachers, leaders and your parents can help make Judaism a wonderful and rewarding experience for you.

2. Realize your abilities:--You are possessed with a mind and the ability to learn. Judaism asks you to be aware of life. Equip yourself with knowledge, both at school during the week and at the religious school on the week-end.
3. Honor your family:--Your family is the most important "group" in your Jewish community, above and beyond all organizations, fund raising drives and causes. They help you to live well and safely. You in turn show respect and love.
4. Help your congregation:--The Jewish community is strengthened by the message of religion. In the synagogue prayer and study will prepare you for action.
5. Be active in your community:--Do not let "George" do it. Be a "do it yourself man." Be concerned and informal about Jewish life in general.
6. Do not forget the world:--It is really a small world. We Jews live everywhere. Help to make us the finest examples of world citizens.

Thus what is a Jewish community? A Jewish community is a way of life created for you. It does not, however, end at that. You must continue to create. You see - You are the Jewish community!

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