

CLAL
The National Jewish
Center for Learning
And Leadership



PERSPECTIVES

A CLAL THESIS

**THE THIRD GREAT CYCLE
OF JEWISH HISTORY**

VOLUNTARY COVENANT

**THE THIRD ERA
OF JEWISH HISTORY:
POWER AND POLITICS**

IRVING GREENBERG

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OUR NAME

The rabbinic phrase *clal Yisrael* refers to the indivisibility and sacred collectivity of the Jewish people. It is in this spirit of pluralism and respect for the many forms which Jewish practice may take, that we have chosen the word CLAL for our name. CLAL heralds our belief that only by strengthening each and every constituent part, and by encouraging dialogue between groups, can all of Judaism be strengthened. CLAL symbolizes our commitment to serve as a Center where Learning And Leadership go hand in hand.



HOW WE DO IT

Shamor *Leadership Education*

As the Programming and Educational Division of CLAL, *Shamor* provides lay and professional leaders extraordinary learning and pluralistic religious experiences. It also identifies, nurtures, and motivates talented individuals to assume the obligations and responsibilities of leadership in the Jewish community.

CLAL, in joint sponsorship with local Jewish organizations and national Jewish agencies, annually coordinates over thirty ongoing classes in five cities, sponsors dozens of weekends, seminars and institutes, for more than ten thousand leaders in over 50 Jewish communities in the United States and Canada.

Am Echad *(One People)*

CLAL has undertaken a major new challenge—dealing with the dissolving bonds of Jewish unity. To strengthen the forces committed to Clal Yisrael, CLAL has created Am Echad (One People), a new division devoted to promoting intermovement understanding and interaction.

The common objective of all of CLAL's Am Echad (One People) programs is to reduce polarization and increase cooperation between movements by creating the occasions and the voices which will spread the message of Clal Yisrael.

CLAL's Am Echad (One People) activities include: Chevra, Lay and Rabbinic Communal Programming, Symposia for Unity, Advanced Theological/Halachic Dialogue, the Modern Orthodox Outreach, and International activities.

Zachor *Holocaust Resource Center*

The first Holocaust Resource Center in the country, Zachor, was founded by CLAL to commemorate and explore the fundamental challenge of the Holocaust. Among its accomplishments are its help in establishing the permanent United States Holocaust Memorial Council, and the development of a service for Yom Hashoah, the Day of Remembrance. Zachor also created "The Fifth Child", a commemorative prayer developed by an interdenominational group of scholars, authors, and rabbis, designed for use in the Passover seder.

Other resources include the award winning "Witness to the Holocaust" film series and *The Holocaust: An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide*.

WHY CLAL

CLAL is dedicated to preparing Jewish leaders to respond to the challenges of a new era in Jewish history; challenges which include the freedom to accept or reject Judaism, the liberty to choose from an abundance of Jewish values and lifestyles, and the exercise of Jewish power after the Holocaust and the rebirth of the state of Israel.

CLAL believes that freedom and pluralism are unparalleled blessings in Jewish history which can stimulate higher standards and more individual participation, strengthen each segment of Judaism, and enrich the totality of Jewish life.

WHAT WE DO

CLAL educates Jewish leaders, teaching them the lessons of leadership through the treasures of Jewish history and texts. Our programs strengthen Jewish unity, create a deeper appreciation for Jewish culture and religion, yield insights from our tradition, and offer authentic Jewish responses which can be applied to private behavior and communal policies.

CLAL provides its learning experiences to Jewish leaders through classes, dialogues, study groups, conferences, publications and retreats. Our programs are offered to Jewish groups in their communities throughout North America.

CLAL (formerly the National Jewish Resource Center) was founded in 1974 by Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, Elie Wiesel and Rabbi Steven Shaw. In 1983, the Institute for Jewish Experience, founded by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, merged into CLAL.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

JACOB SAPIRSTEIN
1885-1987

He believed that the Torah in all its glory —
its way of life, its values of community and tzedakah,
its scholarship and learning —
could be carried on in the United States.

He made his faith come true
by his leadership and generosity, by his personal life and model.

יהי זכרו ברוך

[MAY HIS MEMORY BE BLESSED]

IRVING GREENBERG

Rabbi Irving Greenberg is the President and co-founder of CLAL — The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. CLAL offers Jewish education for community leadership and is the leading organization in intra-Jewish dialogue designed to reduce religious polarization and seek unifying solutions to the problems which divide the community. Reflecting Greenberg's theology of *clal Yisrael*, CLAL's program is pluralistic; participants and staff are recruited from every wing of the community.

An ordained Orthodox rabbi, Harvard Ph.D., scholar, and prominent lecturer, Rabbi Greenberg has been a seminal thinker of contemporary Judaism. He advocates confronting the Holocaust as an historically transforming event, and Israel as the Jewish assumption of power and the beginning of the third era in Jewish history. He has published widely on Jewish thought and religion. He is the author of a forthcoming book, *Living As A Jew: Observing Jewish Holidays*, to be published by Summit Books.

Prior to founding CLAL, Rabbi Greenberg served as rabbi of the Riverdale Jewish Center, and founded and chaired the Department of Jewish Studies of City College. He was instrumental in the pioneering of numerous organizations in American Jewish life, including Yavneh, the National Religious Students Association; the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry; and the Association for Jewish Studies, the professional organization for Jewish studies in American universities.

Rabbi Greenberg is married to Blu Greenberg. They have five children.

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the Jewish people has been marked by two great eras: the Biblical and the Rabbinic. Each era was shaped by a formative 'orienting' event: the Biblical by the Redemption from Egypt; the Rabbinic by the Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Each event yielded a response which creatively defined the terms of the covenantal relationship.

In this series of articles, Rabbi Irving Greenberg argues that Jews have now embarked upon a third great era, marked by the polar events of destruction and redemption, the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. Following classical models, Greenberg claims that these events guide the Jewish way through history, and their implications redefine the covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people.

Rabbi Greenberg lays before us the demands and the dynamics of the new era: the hiddenness of the divine, the holiness in secularity, the sacrilege of powerlessness, the institutions of power and the commitment to a shattered covenant.

These articles were written over a three year period, from 1980 to 1982, and represent much of the formative thinking that gave birth to CLAL (then called NJRC—the National Jewish Resource Center).

In "The Third Great Cycle of Jewish History, (1981)," Greenberg analyzes the nature of the covenant between God and the Jewish people in the Biblical and Rabbinic eras. He argues that God's ever-deepening hiddenness, the shift from God's manifest to concealed involvement in history which climaxes in the Holocaust, brings with it a shift in the distribution of divine and human responsibility in the covenant. The primary covenantal venue now lies in the so-called 'secular' arena. Much of what is today viewed as secular action needs to be acknowledged as 'hidden' holiness, which demands standards of conduct that approach and reflect the sacred.

In "Voluntary Covenant (1982)," the argument of the lessons of history takes some surprising new turns. Rabbi Greenberg argues in classical terms that the covenant has been at once 'broken' and renewed in this new era of Jewish history. In the renewal, Jewish assumption of covenantal responsibility is voluntary. In retrospect, this maturation of the human component in the covenant was implicit in the very concept of covenant. The Holocaust, then, can be seen to have broken open the structure of the relationship. But this should be carefully understood. The Holocaust was the *occasion* not the *cause* of the acceptance of full human responsibility for the outcome of the covenant.

"Voluntary Covenant" focuses its attention on the particulars and implications of the renewed covenant. By providing us with an understanding of the Jewish role in history, it provides us with a reason and a design for living as Jews.

In "The Third Era of Jewish History: Power and Politics (1980)," Rabbi Greenberg focuses on the particular institutions of leadership and power which need to be nurtured in this new era of the Jews' acquisition of power.

The strength, integrity and utility of Rabbi Greenberg's arguments require not only our attention, but our response.

Nina Beth Cardin
CLAL Publications Coordinator

THE THIRD GREAT CYCLE OF JEWISH HISTORY

Judaism is a midrash on history. Its fundamental assertion is that human life and history are rooted in the divine, an infinite source of life and goodness. History, therefore, is moving toward a final perfection. At the end, human life will be redeemed and every human will attain his or her fullest expression as a creature created in the image of God. In that age, the infinite value, equality and uniqueness of every human being will be upheld by the socio-economic realities of the world; there will be no oppression or exploitation; there will be adequate resources to take care of every single life appropriately. The physical, emotional and relational aspects of the individual's life will be perfected. Judaism dreams that life will win out so that eventually even sickness and death will be overcome. Judaism affirms that this incredible perfection will be attained in this world, in actual human history. God, the ultimate source of life and energy, has made that promise. In return, the Jews pledged to live their lives in obedience to the divine mandate and as witnesses to the promised final perfection. This mutual pledge constitutes the covenant of the Jewish people.

The meaning of redemption that is central to Jewish tradition grew out of and is validated by an event in Jewish history: the Exodus, the freeing of the Hebrew slaves from bondage in Egypt. The lessons of the Exodus—that there is a redeeming God, that human power is not absolute and will not be permitted to oppress people indefinitely; and that freedom and dignity are the inherent rights of all individuals—will be universalized at the onset of the Messianic Age, which will be the culmination of history. Judaism has been guided by the Exodus as its orienting event since Biblical times. This orientation has set the basic direction, goal and operating methods of Judaism in history.

Since the religion is committed to the proposition that the final realization of the Exodus will take place in actual history and not in some other world or reality, the credibility and persuasive power of the promise of redemption rises and falls under the impact of historical events. History apparently confirms or denies the basic teaching. Jewish triumphs or rescues from evil traditionally have been perceived as confirmations of the promise of history. Occasionally, historical events were of such magnitude that they profoundly affected the understanding of the central model—one could not go on affirming the central message without taking the new event into account. Such events became orienting events themselves and were incorporated into the religion and way of life of the Jewish people.

Why should the vicissitudes of Jewish history affect

divine teaching so much? According to the Bible, the Jewish people are the carriers of the message of redemption to the world. This people models moments of perfection, testifies to the future redemption and witnesses to the divine concern and presence which will bring it all about. Because God is infinite and beyond human comprehension, the news of God's presence and promise is communicated through the Jewish people. Therefore, the persuasiveness of the message is directly correlated to Jewish existence and Jewish life. The ultimate message of the infinite has been turned over to a flesh and blood people to deliver to others and to incarnate in its own life. While Jewish sociology and Jewish theology are not identical, they are profoundly inter-related.

The Jews are all too human. Even the heroes and great religious figures of Jewish history are flawed, as are all humans. This fallibility is built into the divine assumptions; the sociological dynamics and personal needs of the people which are bound to shape, if not distort, every teaching are allowed for in the divine strategy of redemption. It follows that events which are everyday history in other people's annals become part of the sacred history of the Jewish people. Furthermore, the triumphs and tragedies of the Jews have direct effects on the believability and the understanding of the central message of redemption. For this reason, again, great events in Jewish history do not only affect the sociological or geographical condition of the Jews but directly influence their theological and cultural self-understanding. Consequently such events powerfully affect the legitimacy and credibility of Jewish institutions and that of Jewish leadership groups.

Classical Jewish theology holds that God continually calls into existence the leadership needed to guide the people and replaces or rejects those who do not measure up. But one need not even accept the notion of divine agency to see how powerfully sociology confirms this tendency. Leadership—especially political leadership—is primarily tested by its ability to insure the basic needs of security and livelihood. When the Jews ruled their own land, kings could stay in power by meeting these needs, even if they diverged from the higher purposes and values of the Jewish covenant. But the land of Israel was never insulated from outside cultures. In the final analysis, Jews were a miniscule minority. Only a mission of universal significance made it essential in their eyes that they go on living and testifying as Jews. The price of surrendering meaningful differences between Jewish and non-Jewish culture was the bleeding away of the Jews. Whenever the legitimacy of institutions or the persuasiveness of the

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content of Jewish testimony was shaken by events, the leadership quickly lost its following unless it could convincingly explain the events and make sense of the Jewish condition. It had to incorporate the event into the Jewish way and harmonize or correlate it with Jewish destiny. If it could not do so, the leadership itself gave up or lost its hold on the people. Leadership passed to any group that could again correlate the Jewish purpose and Jewish condition.

Because of the fragility of Jewish existence and the incredible breadth of Jewish claim to significance, Jewish history has been harsh to Jewish leadership. There is a continuous pressure which sweeps clean and insures the survival of the fittest. In the short run "the fittest" are not necessarily measured by a values standard; given the pressure which must be met, "fittest" is clearly defined by survival itself, not by the highest ideals of Judaism. In the long run, though, leaders who merely ensured survival while ignoring, repudiating or excessively diluting the religion's ultimate redemptive message would typically lose their effectiveness as Jews assimilated or as conditions changed again.

There need not be a fundamental transformation in the understanding of the redemption paradigm after each event. Given the power of inertia, the desire for the familiar and the power of cultural homeostasis, new evidence and developments are assimilated to the existing structures. Important changes may lead to the coexistence of newer institutions and leadership with the old. For example, the growth of prophecy in the monarchical period of Biblical history from the tenth to the sixth century B.C.E. did not overthrow the centrality of king and priest, or of the monarchy and the Temple, as the cultic center. The Temple retained its force because there the same God who spoke through prophets could be contacted and would speak to the masses through the priest. However, sometimes an event is so shattering or so transforms the basic Jewish condition that it cannot be simply assimilated to the central Jewish paradigm. Either the paradigm is changed or new institutions, theology and, consequently, new leadership are needed to make the whole amalgam cohere once again.

In retrospect, we can see that in all of Jewish history, there have been two grand fusions of basic condition, theological message, institutional performance and leadership group. Despite continuing shifts in local situations, institutions, practices and self-understanding, these four elements were so coherent that one may characterize the overall era as a unity. In each case, it took a fundamental change in condition to motivate the kind of transformation which led to a new synthesis. Yet the resolution was seen as a continuation of the previous pattern and the new

Jewish equilibrium that emerged was perceived as a station on the way to the final goal. These two historical syntheses correspond to the Biblical and the Rabbinic eras. Each era oriented the Jewish way in the light of a major event. In the Biblical Age, the event was one of great redemption, the Exodus; in the Rabbinic Age, it was an event of great tragedy, the Destruction of the Temple. Remarkably enough, in this age the emergence of a new synthesis is taking place before our very eyes. The third era is beginning under the sign of a great event of destruction, the Holocaust, and a great event of redemption, the rebirth of the State of Israel.

THE BIBLICAL ERA

Historians and scholars, traditionalists and critics argue about the actual historical character of the Exodus and about how and in what sequence Biblical understandings flowed from it. Such arguments are important but they reflect the ideological agenda of modern culture, primarily the concern that the divine authority of the Bible would be challenged by different versions of its origins or by showing outside cultural parallels to its teachings. But, all this is a moot point from the perspective of the overall synthesis of the Biblical era. Whether the monotheism exemplified by the Exodus applies to all people immediately or centuries later; whether freedom from slavery initially applies only to Jews and later is generalized; whether the Exodus is the miraculous departure of more than a million Jewish slaves and families or the flight from Egypt of a small group of tribes and fellow travelers is secondary in light of the overarching unity of the Biblical period. Out of the Exodus, directly and through interpretation, by revelation and by generalization, comes the teachings which revolutionized Jewish fate and humanity's history. Central to Biblical thought is the idea that there is an ultimate power that cares about humanity; that there is a fundamental human right to freedom and dignity; that the covenant makes the divine commandments binding on both ruler and ruled; and that there are basic laws by which human behavior should be guided as exemplified in the Ten Commandments.

According to Biblical teaching, whatever happens to Jews to form Jewish values also shapes the destiny of the world. It follows from the Exodus that, sooner or later, the entire world will be perfected. This concept implies that until that perfection is attained, one should not settle for anything less. Telling and retelling the Exodus story and its underlying event has been the Jewish religious vocation. Out of this soil grew the Christian teaching of salvation that passed over to other nations and changed the values of half the world. Centuries later, in secularized form, the redemption paradigm was the seed for Marxism's insis-

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tence that the dispossessed must revolt and that all institutions will be overthrown until a final equality is reached. Millenarian movements in earlier centuries and liberation theology in the twentieth century have turned this idea toward the political and economic spheres while preserving its religious ground with explosive effects on the status quo. Alfred North Whitehead, the great British philosopher, has argued that the Biblical idea of an orderly created universe whose laws can be discovered combined with the idea of perfecting the world gave rise to Western culture in which science, treating nature lawfully yet instrumentally, can grow.¹ Hence, Jewish values and culture have shaped political behavior, shaken the local culture of billions of people in the modern period and stimulated some of the great dynamic thrusts of Western culture.

The great internal struggle of the Biblical era lay in coping with the challenge of Jewish sovereignty and statehood while trying to live up to covenantal values. The land of Israel was located at a highly strategic crossroads of the world, along the invasion routes between Europe, Asia and Africa. Thus, every world empire sooner or later marched its armies on the road to Jerusalem. The vulnerability and fragility of Jewish existence in the land was exacerbated by the relatively small Jewish population and the continual magnetism of foreign cultures. International pressure made a central ruler an inescapable necessity, so the monarchy was instituted over the opposition of tribal loyalties, religious objections and other centrifugal forces. But the monarchs and ruling classes into whose hands Jewish fate was consigned were continually forced or drawn into active contact with outside powers which only increased the cultural vulnerability of the Hebrew religion. It was difficult to live up to covenantal values of dignity for the weak or freedom for Hebrew slaves when comfort, power and the need for defense conspired to legitimize self-interest and the rule of might makes right. The dialectic of power and covenantal values was fought out in confrontations between prophets and kings, even as the need for legitimacy and religious guidance unified kings, priests and court prophets.

How noble to us, but how naive to their contemporaries, the prophets appeared as, in the name of God, they made their demands for absolute righteousness and immediate freedom for the slaves. I recall how moved I was as a child by *Jeremiah*, Chapter 34, in which the prophet chastises the kings and nobles for their failure to live up to the covenant and free the Hebrew slaves after six years. How powerful the message and how unequivocal! The nobility had not kept the covenant and God would therefore give the people into the hands of the Babylonians as slaves. When I grew up and became an administrator, my

perspective changed. I envisioned the king and nobility desperately trying to build defenses as the mighty armies of Babylonia drew near. It was hard enough to build fortresses under the best of conditions. Now they had to use all the labor—both free and slave—they could get. Without adequate defenses, the people of God could well be crushed and destroyed! Yet, at the moment of gravest danger, the prophet—that wild man—walks in and says: "Let the slaves go free!" Obviously, kings cannot depend on the insubstantial words of prophets for national security. Government must defend its people or fail totally. The prophet speaks with all the idealism of a man who never met a payroll in his life!

Of course, the 'realist' version is likewise incomplete. If pure political calculation was to win out, the sense of Jewish calling would dissipate, leaving Israel and Judea totally vulnerable to disintegration and assimilation. Fortunately, in Biblical times, periodic phases of religious renewal maintained some balance of values and power. Nevertheless, in the Biblical period, the prophets did not, by and large, succeed with the masses. Their uncompromising demands, coming from a source beyond the people, were too far away from the equivocal realities of everyday life. Later the Rabbis, operating out of the people's reality, compromised and improved matters, step-by-step. They educated the people, and finally uplifted them to the point where they accepted the prophets as normative and saw prophetic ethics as within reach.

During the Biblical era, the covenantal relationship itself was marked by a high degree of divine intervention. God's manifest presence in the Temple was the cultic counterpart of prophecy. Even as God spoke directly to Israel through prophets, so at Jerusalem the divine could be contacted. The awe and power of the place demanded that Israelites go through careful ritual purification before entering. Unauthorized encounters with the divine presence led to instant death.²

The same overt divine intervention expressed itself in the events of Biblical history. When Israel obeyed the Lord, it was victorious. When it strayed, it was defeated. Defeat, itself, was the best proof that disobedience had taken place. Thus, the setback to Joshua's invading army at Ai—coming as it did after the great victory at Jericho—was quickly traceable to the sacrilegious taking of booty by a man named Achan.³ "Stand and see the salvation of the Lord," says Moses. "God will fight for you and you will hold your peace."⁴ These words precede the splitting of the Red Sea, the triumphal moment of the Exodus when divine power finally and completely shattered Pharaoh's human might, underscoring the ultimate weakness and relativity of all human power. This overwhelming divine

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might was the best proof of God's presence and God's existence. Human power denied God's might.⁵ At this moment of divine triumph, Israel saw the great hand, feared the Lord and believed.⁶ The covenant may be a partnership but it is very clear that God is the initiator, the senior partner, who punishes, rewards and enforces the partnership if the Jews slacken. In the stinging words of Ezekiel, "You say, we will be as the nations... As I live, says the Lord God, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm and with poured out fury... I will rule over you."⁷

In sum, during the Biblical period, the way of redemption is marked by a growing sense of mission; both manifest divinity and holiness are expressed in cult and prophecy. The primary institutions of Temple, priests and prophets and the Jewish leadership reflect the active intervention of the divine in Jewish life as well as the struggle to live with the tensions between the covenant and realpolitik. This entire complex was first challenged and then transformed in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction and the people of Israel's exile.

THE RABBINIC ERA

The destruction of the Second Temple and the succeeding crushing defeats of the Jews in 70 and 135 C.E., after wars that bled Judea white, generated a major crisis of faith and meaning in the Jewish people. The massive loss of life, the sale of tens of thousands of Jews into slavery and the triumph of Rome despite the conviction of Jewish Zealots that God alone should rule Israel, deepened the questions. Was there not God? Had God been overpowered by the Roman gods? Had God rejected the covenant with Israel and allowed his people and Holy Temple to be destroyed? Were the traditional channels of divine love, forgiveness and blessing now closed to the Jewish people?

Today it is hard to recapture the monumental importance of those questions in the first century. It is now 1900 years after the Rabbis resolved the crisis of faith that followed the Temple's destruction. We are the beneficiaries of the Rabbis' achievement and of the ways they responded to the questions. Their responses are so entrenched in the tradition as to blur the importance of the questions they answered. In that powerful and undermining crisis of faith, at least one group of Jews concluded that Judaism was finished following the destruction. Christian Jews until then had operated within the covenant of Judaism, praying in synagogues and regarding Jesus as the fulfillment of the Messianic promises within Judaism. The polarizing effect of the Roman wars, the spread of Christianity primarily among Gentiles but not Jews and the destruction of the Temple convinced them that they had misread the signs. The razing of the sanctuary meant that the old channels of

atonement and connection with God, which they initially thought were being paralleled in Jesus, were in fact blotted out by the destruction. They concluded that Jesus was not a continuation of the Jewish way but a *new* channel of salvation. The Gospels were a *New Testament*, not a section of the Old; Jesus' life was the occasion of a new covenant, not merely a renewed one. The destruction meant that Jesus' sacrifice must have replaced the Temple and Judaism. This reinterpretation of Jesus' life was to guide them over the next section of the road to final perfection. Paradoxically enough, the Christian Jews were very Jewish in their thinking when they concluded that the Temple's destruction was a great historical event that held a religious message for them.

The Christian analysis was shared by other Jews. The Sadducees, especially the court nobility and the priests, could not envision Judaism without a temple. When they proved unable to rebuild the sanctuary, the Sadducees could not cope with the Jewish people's situation and religious needs and so faded from the scene. Indeed, many Pharisees and Rabbis shared the Sadducees' analysis and poured enormous efforts into trying to rebuild the Temple. Some declared they would have no children and no celebrations—they would allow no normal life—until the Temple was restored. Although Rabbi Akiva reassured the Jews that even without the Temple, it was possible to obtain atonement directly from God, he nonetheless gave all out support to Bar Kochba's desperate attempt to recapture independence and rebuild the Holy Sanctuary. Akiva went so far as to endorse Bar Kochba as the Messiah. It was all in vain. The Romans were too powerful. Had the Temple-centered view triumphed, the Jews would have put all their effort into regaining Jerusalem, a policy that would have spelled frustration, spiritual exhaustion and, finally, devastation.

Another effect of the destruction and exile was the increased exposure of Jews to the external culture. By destroying the major lodestone of Jewish life and, through geographic dispersion, immersing more Jews in Greek culture, the destruction exposed Jews to the extraordinary magnetism of Hellenism. Hellenism was a cosmopolitan, sophisticated culture led by an affluent and pleasure-seeking elite that had already drawn many followers from the Jewish leadership. The loss of the Jewish land brought Hellenism to the masses, as well. In fact, Jewry could not have maintained itself in the face of this competition but for the Rabbis' development of a more learned and more internalized Jewish practice and value system.

The Rabbis responded with what became the first public education system for adults. If the direct connection to the Temple was lost, then Torah study would enable the Jews to internalize the teachings and values of God's way.

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This would allow them to confront the challenge of Hellenism and the more open society in which they lived following the Dispersion. Study was glorified as the ultimate mitzvah in the saying "Talmud Torah (Study of Torah) equals them all."⁸ The Beit Knesset (House of Assembly/Synagogue) was made into a Beit Midrash (House of Study). Opportunities for study were built into the services and the home liturgies. All aspects of life could be suffused with Jewish values and the meanings taught through actions and words.

The Rabbis' fundamental theological breakthrough was a kind of secularization insight. The manifest divine presence and activity was being reduced but the covenant was actually being renewed. God had not rejected the Jews, but rather had called them to a new stage of relationship and service. From where did the Rabbis draw the authority to take charge of Jewish religion and destiny, to expand required observance in every area of life, to shape new institutions and to legitimize the use of their minds and reason as the key source for deriving knowledge of "what does the Lord require of thee?" The unspoken, oft-used axiom is the unfolding of the covenantal model. The Jewish people, the passive partner in the Biblical covenant, is being urged to assume a new level of responsibility by its divine counterpart. If Israel's phylacteries praise God as the *echad*, the unique one, its God also wears phylacteries which contain the praise of Israel: "Who is like your people, Israel, one unique nation in the earth?" The Divine Partner becomes more restrained, more hidden, more intimate in relationship to the Jews.

In the Biblical period, God's presence was manifest by splitting the Red Sea and drowning the Egyptians. In the Second Temple siege, God did not show up, like the cavalry in the last scene of a Western movie, to save the day. God had, as it were, withdrawn, become more hidden, so as to give humans more freedom and to call the Jews to more responsible partnership in the covenant. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said that God's might, shown in Biblical times by destroying the wicked, is now manifest in divine self-control. The *Ethics of the Fathers* say: "Who is mighty? He who exercises self-restraint."⁹ God allows the wicked to act without being cut off immediately.¹⁰ The great Biblical praise of God as "great, mighty and awesome" found in Deuteronomy¹¹ is used as the model of divine praise for the opening of the central Rabbinic prayer, the Amidah, the standing, silent prayer, *but the meaning is reversed*. God's might is expressed in allowing human freedom instead of punishing the wicked.

Although the central Biblical idea of covenant implies a treaty between two sides, nowhere in the Bible is the term "partner" or "partnership" used. Divine intervention is so overwhelming that the term partnership is hardly appro-

priate. One of the Rabbis' most powerful ideas is that the people Israel and the individual Jew become partners of God through religious activity. "He who prays on the eve of Sabbath and chants *Vayechulu* ('And the heavens and the earth were complete,' Genesis 2:1) becomes, as it were, a *partner* to the Holy One, blessed be He, in the work of creation" (italics supplied).¹² A judge who gives true judgment¹³ and one who observes the holy days¹⁴ become partners with God.

A world in which God is more hidden is a more secular world. Paradoxically, this secularization makes possible the emergence of the synagogue as the central place of Jewish worship. In the Temple, God was manifest. Visible holiness was concentrated in one place. A more hidden God can be encountered everywhere, but one must look and find. The visible presence of God in the Temple gave a sacramental quality to the cultic life of the sanctuary. Through the High Priest's ministrations and the scapegoat ceremony, the national sins were forgiven and a year of rain and prosperity assured. In the synagogue, the community's prayers are more powerful and elaborate than the individual's but the primary effect grows out of the individual's own merits and efforts. One may enter the synagogue at all times without the elaborate purification required for Temple entrance because sacredness is more shielded in the synagogue. In the Temple era God spoke directly, through prophecy or through the *urim and tumim* breastplate. In the synagogue, God does not speak. The human-divine dialogue goes on through human address to God.¹⁵ Prayer, which we view today as a visibly sacred activity, was, by contrast with Temple worship, a more secular act. Prayer became the central religious act because of the silence of God.

The classic expression of the broadening and diffusion of holiness is the Rabbinic application of Temple purity standards to the home and other non-sacred settings, a process that started before the destruction. Indeed, Jacob Neusner suggests that the Oral Torah—the Rabbi's primary document—existed from Sinai as a Torah for the world outside the cult, paralleling and completing the written Torah which was written for the cult. However, the 'worldly' Torah won out when Rabbinic leadership won out in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction. The Rabbinic interpretation and intertwining of the two Torahs shaped the understanding which became dominant for those who survived as Jews. Temple holiness was metaphysically applied to everyday acts of life. By washing hands ritually before the meal and by learning Torah at the meal, the table becomes an altar. The Shechinah, the divine presence, is there when people eat together and exchange words of Torah, or when even one person studies Torah. "The Shechinah is at the head of the bed when one visits

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the sick."¹⁶ "When husband and wife are loving and worthy, the Divine Presence is between them."¹⁷ Blessings to express gratitude and the awareness of God were articulated for every moment of life from awakening to going to sleep, from feeling or flexing muscles to urination or defecation. In effect, the blessings help the individual discover the divine that is hidden in the everyday secular society.

The Rabbis were a more secular leadership than priests or prophets. Priests were born to holiness and were bound to ritually circumscribed lives. The Rabbis won their status through learning and were not bound to sacramental requirements different from the average Jew. Prophets spoke the unmediated word of God: "Thus, saith the Lord...." By contrast, the Rabbi judged what God asks of us by the best exercise of his judgment, guided by his knowledge of the past record of God's instruction—the Biblical models and the legal precedents. The Rabbi stated that prophecy had ended with the destruction and the exile. In fact, however, Biblical prophets such as Ezekiel had prophesied during the Babylonian exile. What the Rabbis really meant then, was prescriptive. After the second destruction, there can be no prophecy. If God has withdrawn, then prophecy is inappropriate. Prophecy is the communicative counterpart of splitting the Red Sea! Rabbinic guidance is the theological counterpart of a hidden God.

The prophets gave clear, unambiguous instruction from God. If two prophets disagreed about the divine mandate, one of the two was a false prophet. But if human judgment is the new source of understanding, then two Rabbis can come to different conclusions. The Talmud captures the uneasiness caused by this departure from the old certainty by stating that when the students of Hillel and Shammai did not serve their teachers properly, disagreements as to the law multiplied. People feared that the two school's opposing views could not coexist and therefore, one school's view must be false. After three years of anxiety, prayer and seeking divine guidance, a heavenly voice told them that "both views are the words of the Living God."¹⁸ Since humans are being given more responsibility for leading Israel on its redemptive way, then it is right that there be more than one path to follow. For practical reasons, the majority decides which of the two paths shall be followed but the views of the minority are *not* wrong. The authority for this transition comes from the old source, a heavenly voice, but one which can only speak to confirm the new Rabbinic responsibility.

The famous Rabbinic story of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkenus' refusal to accept a majority vote against his legal ruling takes on new meaning in light of this analysis. Rabbi Eliezer evokes three divine miracles and a heavenly

voice to prove that his view of the divine will was correct but he was still overruled.¹⁹ The story is not merely an example of the democratic assertion of human authority. Rather, it shows the Rabbis in action, willing to face the consequences of divine withdrawal. If the human power is to be more responsible, then God cannot intervene in the legal process with miracles and heavenly voices such as Rabbi Eliezer had invoked. The majority of the Rabbis must rule. It is surely no coincidence that Rabbi Eliezer was a part of the first generation of students of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, the great leader of the Rabbinic response to the Temple destruction. Rabbi Eliezer's excommunication for his refusal to accept the majority opinion also makes sense. It is a harsh penalty but it is asserted in a generation which is struggling to affirm the calling of the Jews to responsibility. The Rabbis' own hesitations and inner divisions about assuming the authority to interpret the divine mandate create the need to punish disobedience.

The Rabbis recognized that God's withdrawal and their own new authority meant that an event such as the Exodus in which God directly intervened would not occur again. This led them to postulate a new central redemptive event for their age. The Rabbis saw Purim as the redemptive paradigm for the post-destruction world. In the Purim story, the Jewish people in exile after the first destruction is threatened with genocide. The nation is saved by the actions of Esther and Mordecai. Operating as fallible and flawed human redeemers, the two manage, by court intrigues and bedroom politics, to save the Jewish people and win permission for the Jews to fight off their enemies. The Rabbis point out that the story of Esther marks the end of redemptive miracles; it is not a miracle, it is a natural event. In justifying the new holiday of Purim, the Rabbis connect Esther's name to the Biblical verse "I (the Lord) will hide (*asteer* in Hebrew, closely resembling the word *Esther*) my face on that day."²⁰ God's name does not appear in the book of Esther, yet this hidden presence is the redemptive force which the people acknowledge. In an incredibly bold analogy, the Rabbis go one step beyond comparing Purim to Sinai as a moment of covenant acceptance. They say acceptance of the covenant at Sinai was 'coerced' by the manifest miracles of God and would not be legally binding today. However, on Purim the Jewish people reaccepted that covenant by recognizing God's presence and salvation in the guise of the secular redemption.²¹ This acceptance was binding because it occurred in the context of a world in which God does not split the sea but works in mysterious ways through human redeemers. Thus, the reacceptance of the covenant is legally the equivalent of the Jewish people's maturation and the acknowledgment of their new responsibilities.

Of course there are no neat dividing lines in history.

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People are too conditioned by their habitual modes of thinking to make total breaks in response to any event. The kernel of the synagogue and of the major Rabbinic theological themes existed before the destruction and were available for development.²² "God prepares the medicine before the sickness comes," said the Rabbis. And the Rabbis were neither consistent nor total secularizers. They invoked divine intervention through miracles throughout this era. But God's intervention was perceived in more limited forms and without *manifest* participation in major historical events. The shift in Judaism is a percentage shift but the effect—in terms of theological understanding, the perception of the Jewish people's role and the development of new centers—is a new era. Having successfully interpreted and coped with the new Jewish condition, the new cadre of Rabbis replaced the Biblical leadership groups.

This argument is not meant to suggest that the Rabbis won strictly on the theological merits. In all historical situations, sociology and theology interact. Jacob Neusner has pointed to the Rabbis' link-up with the Babylonian ruling authorities. Their role as civil servants undergirded their spiritual role with political power and legitimacy.²³ Still the Rabbis' ability to interpret the meaning of Jewish fate, to give assurance that the covenant was not broken, to broaden holiness and make it available everywhere and to teach their values to disciples and the masses made their victory possible. Indeed, they were most suited to interpret the meaning of the new Jewish condition of powerlessness and exile. Their teaching and halachic developments gave sustenance to a people that had lost the power of policy-making and of deciding its own fate.

Although the long exile led to many dispersions, persecutions and changing cultural conditions, there was enough flexibility and dynamism in the system to adjust to new conditions. Some of the crises generated major new developments. The Spanish expulsion brought Kabbalah to the fore as a means of interpreting and overcoming the disaster. Kabbalah gave new inner content and theological models to the Rabbinic system. The Sabbetai Zvi false messianic movement in the 17th century shook and divided Rabbinic leadership. Later, social estrangement and spiritual isolation in Eastern Europe brought Chasidism into being, replacing Rabbis with Rebbes. Yet all these developments can be seen as articulations or modifications of the Rabbinic synthesis. The basic unity of a condition of relative political powerlessness; of a hidden or more withdrawn God; of synagogues as institutional centers; and of Rabbinic leadership gave coherence to the second era of Jewish history.

The Rabbinic synthesis was continuous with the Biblical. The carrier people of salvation was the same: Israel. The

covenantal goal was the same: redemption. The covenantal partner was the same: God. However, the level of Jewish participation was transformed. The Rabbis were aware of their role in transforming Judaism. Yet they insisted that their teachings were derived directly from Sinai. One Rabbinic legend captures this dialectic superbly: Moses, visiting Rabbi Akiva's academy, was totally unable to comprehend the form and details of the Torah study there and he grew faint at the shock of his ignorance. He was revived and reassured when a master told his disciple that the Torah he is teaching was from Moses at Sinai.²⁴

Finally, it should be pointed out that the influence of the Rabbinic synthesis did not stop with the Jewish people. Despite the relative isolation and pariah status of the Jews and despite their outsider status in Christian and, often, in Moslem societies, Rabbinic Judaism affected the world. Islam was formed under the influence of Rabbinic Judaism. Medieval Christianity was influenced by Judaism. One might also argue that the tremendous Rabbinic expansion of the law and articulation of the covenant played an important role in shaping the parameters of Western constitutional thought and its focus on the law. Thus did Jewry and Judaism—being truthful to themselves and sharing their story with the outside world—play the role of witness and source of blessing in the second era. Yet, that era too has come to an end in the twentieth century.

THE THIRD ERA THAT WASN'T

Judaism's first confrontation with modernity can be analyzed as an initial attempt to enter a third era. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, drawn by the dynamic modern culture, Jews were pulled from rural and pre-modern ghettos into the cities and the frontiers of the new world aborning. The remarkable flowering of ideals—democracy, liberalism, socialism, revolution, to mention only a few—seemed to many Jews to offer the possibility of a basic transformation of the Jewish condition from outsider to full participant, from pariah to equal citizen of the nation or of the world. To many Jews, fundamental theological transformations were dictated by the new culture. For some, God could be dispensed with as men took charge of human fate. For others, the concepts of God and Judaism were transformed by rational or evolutionary criteria. The result was the (re)casting of Judaism into more universal, rational forms by Reform Judaism; into modern, more folk-oriented criteria by Conservative Judaism and later by Reconstructionism; or by secular standards ranging from Zionism to Ethical Culture.

New leadership emerged in the Jewish community, its authority validated by a superior relationship with the modern culture's authorities. Thus, in the early modern

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period access to Gentile ruling circles bestowed leadership on people whose life style and involvement had moved them out of the traditional community. Affluence, political links, philanthropy and competence in modern culture became keys to Jewish community leadership. Access to modern culture became a more important power source than access to traditional culture. One can trace the growing modernity in Eastern Europe by a shift in the alliances between riches and learning when rabbinic students were replaced by university educated beaus as preferred matches for daughters of wealthy families.

New organizations arose to represent Jewish interests and care for Jewish redemption. The Zionists felt that a basic change in the Jewish condition could only come about by reestablishment of Jewish sovereignty. For others, the basic change took the form of citizenship in a host country or in some worldwide humanitarian movement. Reform Jews spoke freely of the end of Rabbinic Judaism. Nowhere is the dynamic of the new era captured as well as in American Reform's Pittsburgh Platform of 1886 which speaks of "the modern era" as "the approach of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice and peace among all men." Of course, to the Rabbis in Pittsburgh, the fundamental change in the Jewish condition was the giving up of nationhood and attaining full participation in the world, as a religious community.

In retrospect, we see that this initial attempt to enter a third era of Judaism was stillborn and did not change the fundamental Jewish condition. The Holocaust showed that Jewish powerlessness had not changed in the modern period. As the catastrophe revealed, the real change was that the oppressive power that could be brought to bear on the Jews had been enormously multiplied by the unfolding technology and bureaucracy of modern culture. The theological transformations induced by modernity ultimately came under review and fire. No new leadership cadres and institutions totally won out in Jewish life, although they did begin to develop. Still, modernity had an enormous impact on Jews and Jewish culture, primarily by universalizing Judaism or substituting universalisms for Judaism and Jewish identity. But modernity was an outside force. Using it as the touchstone for the emergence of a third era constitutes the imposition of external categories on Jewish history. In any event, for many Jews this cut-to-measure Judaism has been overturned by the Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel. The Holocaust posed a radical challenge to all the hopes and assertions of modernity as it did to Jewish existence itself. And Israel reborn cast its own spell on Jews, drawing them to the central significance of redemption and the nature of Jewish life in our time. For those Jews who will remain

Jewish, these events do impact Jewish history—they neutralize and even shatter the magnet of modernity. Future ages will recognize that in these two events of destruction and redemption the third era of Jewish history was born.

Modernity is not likely to be rejected by the Jews. The Holocaust assured modernity's triumph by killing off 90 percent of the Jewish groups that still actively resisted modern culture. But modern values are likely to be filtered and recast in the Jewish categories of existence. The earlier overwhelming rush to modernity will be seen as a temporary jiggle on the graph of Jewish history and destiny. The question that must be posed is this: If the Biblical era, under the sign of the Exodus, produced a Bible which has been a central values force in Western culture; and if the Rabbinic era, under the sign of the Second Temple's destruction, produced a Talmud and many other treasures that also affected humanity; then what will be the outcome of an era that grows out of both an event of destruction unparalleled in Jewish history and an event of redemption that rivals the Exodus?

THE THIRD ERA

About 6,000,000 Jews were killed in the Holocaust, approximately one third of the world's Jewish population. But the Holocaust cut even deeper. It is estimated that more than eighty percent of the Rabbis, Judaica scholars and full-time Talmud students alive in 1939 were dead by 1945. Ninety percent of Eastern European Jewry—the biological and cultural heartland of Jewry—was decimated.

The Nazis sought to wipe out Judaism, not just Jews. Before they were killed, Jews were denied access to synagogues, mikvehs and kosher food. They were stripped of Jewish learning, opportunities and cultural resources. Parents were forced to choose between their own survival or their children's and children were told to sacrifice elderly parents or face their own deaths. Nazi round-ups and *aktionen* were systematically scheduled for Shabbat and Jewish holidays to poison reverence and depress Jews on those days. In persecution, as in life, Jewish existence and faith were inseparable. Theologically speaking, the decision to kill every last Jew was an attempt to kill God, the covenantal partner known to humanity through the Jewish people's life and history. As the frenzy of mass killing unfolded, the murderers sought to make Jewish life less worthy of care and respect, ever cheaper to eliminate. The total assault on the value and dignity of the Jew—an absolute contradiction of the Jewish belief in the infinite value of human life—reached a stunningly successful climax in the summer of 1944 when thousands of Jewish children were thrown into the burning pits while

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still alive in order to economize on the two-fifths of a cent worth of Zyklon B it would have taken to gas them first. This triumph of murder and oppression was and still is counter-testimony to the Jewish witness that life will triumph over death and that redemption is the fate of humanity. The Nazi assault shattered the covenant of redemption.

Thus, the third era opens with a crisis of faith and meaning that dwarfs the earlier ones. The burning children challenge the faith in a God who cares; the meanness and cruelty of the deaths of 6,000,000 Jews and the apathy and indifference of the world toward their deaths make the dream of perfection appear to be an illusion.

Those who seek to minimize the religious significance of the Holocaust argue that there have been other catastrophes in Jewish life and that there is nothing especially decisive about this one. Actually, the opposite is closer to the truth. Lesser disasters had a profound impact on Judaism. The Kabbalah's spread and triumph in Jewish life was made possible and even necessary by the need for consolation and redemptive hope and meaning after the expulsion from Spain. And both the Shabbetai Zvi false messianic movement and Hasidism's growth owed a great deal to the search for meaning after the Chmelnitsky mass pogroms of the seventeenth century.

The Nazi decision to kill every last Jew and their near success raised the crisis to a whole new level. When Richard Rubenstein wrote that after Auschwitz "we live in the time of 'the death of God'" he meant that hope of redemption was destroyed. Rubenstein quotes an Isaac Bashevis Singer character who states that "Death is the Messiah." He concludes that "the world will forever remain a place of pain . . . and ultimate defeat."²⁵ Rubenstein thus expresses the dimensions of the crisis well, although his response is not representative of the Jewish people and I do not believe that his views will prevail. What is underway is an enormous communal and theological effort by the Jewish people to confront the challenges of the Holocaust and to integrate this unassimilable surd into the Jewish midrash on history. That response is shaping the third era.

At the same time, the redemption inherent in the rebirth of Israel puts it on a par with the Exodus. Three hundred thousand survivors were taken from hunger, psychic wounding and memories of terror, from statelessness and marginality, and given a chance for a renewed and dignified life in the state of Israel. The ascent from the depths of the slavery and genocide of Auschwitz or Sobibor to the heights of Jerusalem reborn surpasses the climb from the slavery and slaying of children in Egypt to Mount Sinai. In addition, 800,000 Jews came to Israel from Arab lands where most had lived as second class citizens, many in a state of pre-modern poverty and illiteracy. While

the Sephardim's integration into Israeli society has been less than perfect, the net improvement in their lives has been enormous. The same can be said of Soviet Jewry and other groups of immigrants. The restoration of Jewish sovereignty after 1900 years and the reunification of Jerusalem only confirm Israel's rebirth as a redemptive event of historic magnitude.

The Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel are profoundly linked yet dialectically opposed to each other, deepening the power of these events over Jewish self-understanding. Does the Holocaust disprove the classic Jewish teaching of redemption? Does Israel validate it? Does mass murder overwhelm the divine concern? How should we understand the covenant after such a devastating and isolating experience? Can the Jewish condition be the same after sovereignty is regained? These questions are being answered by the lives of the Jewish people. Already the basic condition of the Jewish people has changed. New institutions have grown up. New leadership is emerging that offers credible visions of Jewish purpose and methods of coping with the challenge of Jewish existence. That this is not clear stems from the fact that, by contrast with the past, today there are no universally accepted interpretations—or interpreters—of Jewish life. The lack of clarity is an historical optical illusion. Only in retrospect do the prophets stand out as the authoritative interpreters of the Biblical experience. Only in hindsight, and after their rivals have faded from Jewish history, do the Rabbis clearly appear to give the correct understanding of Jewish life's transformation after the destruction. Yet one cannot sit out history and wait for an official guideline. Most people react to a new situation by trying to act as they did before the orienting event occurred or by using their inherited models as best they can to respond to the new challenge. However, if we study Jewish behavior since 1940, we can discern the outlines of an emerging new synthesis in Jewish life and culture.

THE HIDDENNESS OF GOD: OR, HOLY SECULARITY

The key Rabbinic insight that led to the transformation of the covenant after the destruction was the understanding that God had become more hidden. God's withdrawal respected human freedom and was a call to Jews to assume a more responsible partnership in the covenant. If God was more hidden after the destruction of the Temple, how much more hidden must God be in the world after the Holocaust? Thus, religious activity itself must be profoundly immersed in the secular, where God is hidden. In fact, this has been the primary thrust of Jewish activity since 1945.

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There are good theological reasons that there be less talk about God now. Faith is living life in the presence of the Redeemer, even when the world is unredeemed. After Auschwitz, there are moments when the Redeemer and the vision of redemption are present and moments when the flames and smoke of burning children blot out faith.²⁶ But even when faith reasserts itself, the smoke of Auschwitz obscures the presence of God.

Heinrich Himmler, the man in charge of the final solution, told Felix Kersten that he insisted members of the S.S. believe in God, otherwise "we should be no better than the [atheistic] Marxists." Many of the defense affidavits introduced at the trial of Einsatzgruppen (shooting squads) leaders spoke of their religiosity. In December 1941, the Commander of the German 11th army in the Crimea told the head of the Einsatzkommando in Simferopol to finish killing the Jews *before* Christmas (so killing on the day itself would not spoil the holiday spirit). The Vatican and other churches protested the deportation of Jews converted to Christianity but not of Jews who were still Jews. In light of such behavior, it is incumbent on religious people to hide the divine presence until the murderers and the indifferent will have forgotten about God and released God's name from the grip of evil.

Elsewhere I have suggested that "no statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of burning children."²⁷ This suggests that we are entering a period of silence in theology—a silence that corresponds to profound hiddenness. The fundamental religious act is the reaffirmation of faith, redemption and meaningfulness through acts of love and life giving. Indeed, creating life is only possible out of enormous faith in ultimate redemption and a willingness to risk the worst suffering to keep the covenantal chain going. In an age when one is ashamed or embarrassed to talk about God in the presence of burning children, the creation of an image of God—viz, a human being of infinite value, equality and uniqueness—is an act that speaks even louder than words. This image points beyond itself to transcendence. The human vessel imprinted with the image of God testifies by its very existence to the source of that image. Perhaps this testimony is the only statement about God we can make.

The religious enterprise is an all out, even desperate attempt to create, save and heal the image of God. Every departure from the standard of human beings' infinite value, equality and uniqueness, becomes a confirmation of the Holocaust's denial of God. Thus, past acceptance of the inequality of the other, and residual denigration of the infinite value of another, become intolerable in an age when the entire religious witness is all but overwhelmed by the mass weight and counter testimony of six million dead.

Indeed, creating life is only possible where there is enormous faith in the meaningfulness of ultimate redemption. Yet, the very acts of love and conception, justice and equality, concern and respect of uniqueness are generally viewed as secular activities. Hence, the paradox that in the third era, the primary scene of religious activity must be the secular.

The Talmud asked: If God is profoundly hidden after the destruction, how do we know God's presence? How do we know God is awesome? The answer is: The ongoing existence of the Jewish people testifies to it. How else can the Jewish people, one nation alone in a world of hostile or apathetic nations, like a sheep among seventy wolves, survive? How else but that there is a hidden force field, the Divine, that is with it?²⁸ Thus the physical presence of the Jewish people—and that existence is made possible by secular Israelis as well as religious Jews—is the best testimony to the Divine.

To restore the credibility of redemption, there must be an extraordinary outburst of life and redeeming work in the world. The State of Israel, including its rehabilitation of more than a million survivors and Oriental Jews, is the Jewish people's fundamental act of life and meaning after Auschwitz. The great Biblical sign of the ongoing validity of the covenant—the affirmation of God and hope—is the restoration of Jewry to Israel.²⁹ Yet, the State shifts the balance of Jewish activity and concern to the secular enterprises of society building, social justice and human politics. The revelation of Israel is a call to secularity; the religious enterprise must focus on the mundane.

This secularism must not be confused with atheism or the celebration of the death of God. The claims of absolute secular humanism have been shattered in the Holocaust. The absence of limits or belief in a judge led directly to the belief that humans can become God and can hold the ultimate power of life and death. Mengele and other selectors at Auschwitz openly joked about this, especially when they scheduled selections for Yom Kippur—the day when, according to Jewish tradition, God decides who shall live and who shall die. A world in which humans are gounded in the infinite is a world in which humans have infinite value. If we have human, finite gods, then the image of God must be reduced proportionately as it was reduced in Auschwitz to "an anonymous mass . . . non-men who march and labor in silence, the divine spark dead with them . . . on whose face and in whose eyes not a trace of thought is to be seen. . . ."³⁰ At the heart of this new secular effort to recreate the infinite value of the human being is a hidden relationship to God's presence in history and a loving kindness that, out of faith in redemption, defies death and evil. The old categories of secular and religious are undone. Religion is as religion does; all the rest is talk.

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Here we come to the paradox of the Rabbis' insight. After the destruction, God was more hidden but the divine presence could be found in more places. If the divine presence resided on Jerusalem's holy mount, then the hidden God could be found everywhere. So synagogues could be located anywhere. By this logic, the God who, after the Holocaust, is even more profoundly hidden must be found everywhere. The divine is experienced neither as the intervening, commanding One of the Bible, nor the law-giving Partner of the Rabbinic experience but as the everpresent Presence of our era. "I [God] am with him in trouble" (Psalm 91:15) means that where Israel suffers, God is present, suffering with God's people.³¹ The answer to the question "Where was God at Auschwitz?" is: God was there starving, beaten, humiliated, gassed and burned alive, sharing the infinite pain as only an infinite capacity for pain can share it.

A presence need not formally command. Indeed, it does not command if a command means an order in words from the outside. The fact that I relate to the presence of God means that I sense more clearly the expectations, I feel more obligation and motivation and I am more deeply moved than any words or formalized commands can express. If God did not stop the murder and the torture, then what was the statement made by the infinitely suffering Divine Presence in Auschwitz? It was a cry for action, a call to humans to stop the Holocaust, a call to the people Israel to rise to a new, unprecedented level of covenantal responsibility. It was as if God said: "Enough, stop it, never again, bring redemption!" The world did not heed that call and stop the Holocaust. European Jews were unable to respond. World Jewry did not respond adequately. But the response finally did come with the creation of the State of Israel. The Jews took on enough power and responsibility to act. And this call was answered as much by so-called secular Jews as by the so-called religious. Even as God was in Treblinka, so God went up with Israel to Jerusalem. Says the Talmud: "Wherever Israel was exiled, the Shechinah was with them . . . in Egypt, in Babylon. Even so, when they will be redeemed in the future, the Divine Presence will be with them, as it is said, 'the Loving God, Your Lord shall come back with your captivity.'"³² It does not say 'shall bring back' but rather 'shall come back' which teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, comes back with them from the exile.³³ This is the answer to Richard Rubenstein's argument that God cannot be absolved of the Holocaust yet credited with the rebirth of Israel. God is involved with both events in the same way.

Thus, we are at the opening of a major new transformation of the covenant in which Jewish loyalty and commitment manifests itself by Jews taking action and

responsibility for the achievement of its goals. This is not a radical break from the past. In retrospect, this move is intrinsic in the very concept of covenant. Says Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, "[God] . . . became a partner in this community. . . . He joins man and shares in his covenantal existence. Finitude and infinity, temporality and eternity, creature and creator become involved in the same community. They bind themselves together and participate in a unitive existence." Soloveitchik explains, "the whole concept of 'I shall be with him in trouble' can only be understood with the perspective of the covenantal community which involves God in the destiny of His fellow members."³⁴

To see the divine everywhere, the Jewish people must be attuned to covenant. The people's religious receptors must be developed. The divine is more present than ever, in street and factory, media and stage, but the catch is that one must look and be open to the encounter. One is reminded of the story of Mendel of Kotzk who asked: "Where is God?" And he answered: "Wherever you let God in." If Jewry fails to deepen its insight, it runs the risk that it will continue to cling to existing concepts of ritual and denigrate the new activity instead of relating to it with its halakic structures. It may mistakenly define the new activity as secular and cut off from the covenant instead of being grounded in it. The incredible effort on behalf of Israel has fallen afoul of both risks. In America, particularly as Jewish observance and the power of the synagogue have declined and that of federations has risen, there has been a growing, almost petulant, dismissal of UJA and the work for Israel as "check book Judaism," "civil Judaism," "vulgarization," etc. Israel has been dismissed as a vicarious inauthentic myth, an instrument for the ignorant, non-observant nouveau riche to assert mastery over the community without living Jewishly. Even more dangerously, too many practitioners of philanthropy have accepted the definition of secularity and ruled out Federation involvement in religions or personal Jewish education. Both views are incorrect. The focus on philanthropy, the creation of a society and the restoration of the dignity of Jewish life have been the profoundest religious responses of the Jewish community to the Holocaust. The Nazis said, "Jewish life is not worth one-half a cent to put it out of its misery." Somebody else came along and said, "Have you anything to say that contradicts the Nazi testimony, other than the cheap and easy way of saying a prayer?" And one Jew, and another and then another said, "I say a Jewish life is worth a million dollars!" That became the power and testimony of UJA and Israel!

The focus on life and even materialism in Israel, and elsewhere, is part of the reaffirmation of all of life's sacredness. Biblical Judaism emphasized the unity of

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body and soul and stressed that the real world is where God's love and man's redemption is realized. Over the course of the exile, the separation of the spiritual from the material deeply penetrated Judaism as it did Christianity. Now body and soul will come together again in the sacred significance of the secular.

The synagogue and the tradition have been weakened by their failure to fully grasp this situation. They have clung so strongly to the inherited model of the covenant that they have been unable to respond adequately to its renewal. This failure has encouraged lay people to continue to neglect the tradition and to succumb to modernity's temptations. As long as the present model persists, the synagogue will continue to lose ground. Indeed, the synagogues' dilemma is comparable to that of the Temple and prophecy after the destruction. Even when prophecy spoke it was not listened to after the destruction. The Temple was too sacramental and prophecy too manifest in light of the more hidden Presence of God; the synagogue which functions as if nothing has changed is also too sacramental in light of the even more hidden God of the post-Holocaust era. Today, the most successful synagogues are those that have moved to a more *havurah*-like approach, a more secular style that reaches out into the home, street, etc.

But the greatest danger of misunderstanding may lay in the opposite direction. The religious devotion required to faithfully carry out secular activity—the sacrificial giving work and soldiering—may not develop if the secular Jews fail to see the profound religious context out of which they grow. The rising incidence of emigration from Israel is the first warning of what can happen when religious and cultural deracination goes unchecked and materialistic values triumph. Much of the recent *yeridah* has been among Sephardic Jews cut off from the life of Israeli society in part by the deliberate, politically motivated actions of past Labor governments. Among them are many who still accept the traditional categories. They have now tasted the erosive affluence of modern culture and can neither renounce materialism nor relate it to tradition. The pity is that the exploration of affluence's religious dimensions may well be one of the special aspects of the call to secularity. After rehabilitation and liberation, the next stage is the imbuing of daily life and affluence with meaning and values. Just as the move from powerlessness to power calls on the Jews to stop the suffering, so the move to secularity is a call to explore the religious dimensions of pleasure and the material. A more secular *halakhah* would go from denial to directed enjoyment. Thus, the religious challenge is not merely to give up work on Shabbat in testimony to creaturehood but

to explore work as a sacred means of perfecting creation all week long.³⁵

The religious challenge of sexuality is met not only in disciplining it through relationships and fidelity or occasionally giving it up through the mikveh ritual but in "making one's self holy in the permitted," making sexuality the expression of a loving relationship and discovery of the uniqueness of the body and soul of another. Affluence becomes the experience of leisure to develop one's self; the increased opportunity for sharing; and the giving of direction to pleasure through blessings.³⁶

The same issue underlies the continuing conflict over autopsies in Israel. The sacramental notion of the sacredness of the body, which is not to be exploited or instrumentally used after death, has blinded many rabbis to the holiness of using human power to gain medical insight and thereby save lives, giving more holiness and dignity to life. The secular notion of scientific power has blinded many doctors to the importance of not making autopsy a routine procedure. Using dead patients instrumentally can lead to a breakdown of reverence for the human being, a loss of values often expressed in excessive medical use of patients, both living and dead.

Finally, the Rabbis' secularizing insight following the destruction led them to the concept of a renewed covenant based on a further event of redemption. Saying that the covenant of Sinai was coercive and less binding in a world where the Romans triumphed, the Rabbis put forth Purim, with its hidden, human agency and flawed redemption, as *the* new redemptive model to which the Jews gave assent in upholding the covenant. Today we can say that the covenant validated by Purim is also coercive, for then the genocide was foiled, and it is less binding in a world that saw Hitler's murder of six million Jews. The redemptive event which evokes Jewish assent in upholding the covenant after the Holocaust is a new one: the re-creation of the State of Israel. It is more flawed, because Israel has many social problems; more secular in that God's role and presence are even more hidden; and more vulnerable as it is challenged and assaulted by Arabs, Russians, etc. Paradoxically enough, Israel's flaws and shortcomings are the best proof that this is the true, appropriate hidden redemption for this era. Anything more manifest would be inappropriate for this age and would not be heard. Note, too, that the religious group that does see Israel in manifestly Messianic terms, Gush Emunim, has, in fact, shaken support for Israel among a wide spectrum of American Jews and non-Jews of a more liberal, secular stripe. Only a hidden Messianism can be fully credible—once it is discerned.

History suggests that even as Purim renewed the

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covenant of redemption, upholding the Exodus and bringing its traditions into the Rabbinic era, so the rebirth of Israel must uphold the Exodus and Purim, bringing them with it into the third era. The contemporary task, therefore, is to find new meaning in the tradition, a process that has already started with the 'Judaization' of Federation and UJA circles and the explosion of Torah study in Israel.

Franz Rosenzweig once suggested that some day, as religious insight broadened, a mother's recipe for gefilte fish would be passed on in the family, bearing with it the same sense of tradition as do formal commandments or customs. Every act of social justice, every humane or productive factory, every sport contest in community centers, every act of human socializing and dignity will become a secularized halakhah as Jewish religious insight deepens and the sacred dimensions of the profane are uncovered. The classic memories and religious models of the Jewish people will have to be brought closer to daily life in order to influence and shape it. Nowhere is this more focused than in the State of Israel and the exercise of Jewish power everywhere. This is, at once, the transformation of the Jewish condition and the test of the ongoing validity of Jewish tradition and culture.

FROM POWERLESSNESS TO POWER: SECULARITY APPLIED

The most decisive change in the Jewish condition and in the shift of focus from the realm of the sacred to the realm of the secular is the move from powerlessness to power. The creation of Israel is an act of restoration and redemption and is the affirmation of the covenant through worldly effort. It is the key application of religion to actuality and as such it is the classic expression of hiddenness and the new holy secularity.

Attaining sovereignty brought a major shift in the allocation of Jewish resources, energy and spirit as it became necessary to create a society and build the infrastructure of power. The bulk of the activity in society and state is secular by pre-Holocaust standards. In itself this assures the relative centrality of secular activity in the third era. But this activity is also central to the defense of Jewish existence and therefore is life affirming and gives religious testimony. The real power of the secular is that it combines natural and spiritual paths in an indissoluble way. Similarly, relating to and backing the state become socially and theologically compelling activities, providing legitimacy and importance to fundraising, political activity and other secular activities while also giving great emotional and spiritual moment to prayer and the synagogue. The secular organizations, however, have been frankly designed to serve this purpose, while the

synagogue has been slower and more reluctant to respond, further tilting the balance in Jewish life toward the secular realm.

As the state, or the exercise of Jewish power elsewhere, becomes central to Jewish life, the litmus test of the classic ideas increasingly becomes whether they work in real life and whether a society can be shaped by them. In similar fashion, the ability to generate moral or responsible exercises of power and a sense of purpose and meaning in personal activity becomes critical to the State's ability to hold its own Jews and to attract others. Incompetence in daily functions or loss of moral and ethical standards will quickly be translated into loss of participation. Thus, every act of daily performance takes on transcendent meaning in completing the redemption of the Jewish people. Building the earthly Jerusalem becomes the basis for reestablishing the heavenly Jerusalem. The ability and willingness to perform daily actions faithfully and meticulously will also make or break the State physically and spiritually.

The key to performance and ethical excellence will be the systematic reconciliation of Jewish covenantal ideas and historical memory to the contemporary lives and activities of the Jewish people. Since power is results-oriented, more pragmatic and even more amoral than ideals, the capacity of the tradition to supply power with values and direction will be tested to the limit. Purists will recoil and dream of a purer religious reality or will offer a spiritual critique of the grubby Israeli reality. Yet the assumption of power is inescapable if Jewish existence is to continue. This secularity is a matter of life or death. Thus, the Holocaust and Israel come together, compelling the assumption of full responsibility for Jewish fate through the every day activities of the Jewish state and of the Jewish society. There is a steady flow of Jewish energy, wealth and talent as well as continuing reorganization of the community in Israel and abroad to deal with the exercise of power.

The reasons for this are *historically inescapable*.³⁷ The Holocaust made it overwhelmingly clear that Jewish powerlessness was no longer compatible with Jewish survival.³⁸ The Nazis' extraordinary success was made possible by Jewish powerlessness. Had the Jews ruled their own land, millions could have been saved. In the crunch, even decent countries like the United States of America failed to open their doors to Jewish refugees. It is no accident that the PLO continually attacks the Law of Return which guarantees every Jew the automatic right to become a citizen of Israel. The right to unlimited immigration means more than recruitment of the population that Israel needs. At the present time, the immigration rate is insufficient for this purpose. Despite the continuing attack

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on the law as racist, the Law of Return is staunchly upheld by Israelis because it is the most sensitive indicator that Jews are masters in their own land, that they exist by right and not by sufferance or by tolerant goodwill. Before the Holocaust, Zionism was a mass movement only in countries of Jewish persecution and Western Jewry was neutral or negative toward it. Since the Holocaust, however, Jews have become overwhelmingly Zionist because they have learned the lesson. Dig beneath the surface and you will discover that even Jews who prefer to live in the lands of the Diaspora have learned the lesson of the Holocaust. Even if you believe that it *won't* happen here, you can never again say it *can't* happen here. Only the Jews who reject the significance of the Holocaust and live as if it never happened, such as Neturei Karta or all out assimilationists, now deny this truism.

Jewish powerlessness is also immoral. It tempts anti-Semites into evil behavior.³⁹ Had there been no Jewish army or air force there would have been another Holocaust or two since 1945 and the singling out of Jews for imprisonment or destruction such as almost happened at Entebbe would have gone unchecked. Since the kind of power needed for self-defense in the modern period is only available to sovereign states, the Jewish consensus has raised the obligation for Jews to assume power to the level of sacred principle. Thus, the experience of the Jews in the Holocaust demands that Jews take power and the re-creation of the Jewish State in Israel responds to this demand. Any principle that is generated by the Holocaust and to which Israel responds, any action which is confirmed by the revelation in both of the two great events of this era, becomes overwhelmingly normative for the Jewish people. The shift from powerlessness to power becomes the necessary change in the fundamental Jewish condition in the third era. This recognition explains Arthur Hertzberg's inspired observation that the only sin for which the organized Jewish community decrees excommunication is the sin of denying Israel.⁴⁰ However, arguing about how the power is used is acceptable, especially inside Israel where it is not threatening to the Jewish possession of power. How to use the power is the new halakhah, but denial or endangering the power is considered the unforgivable sin. In this era, which orients by the Holocaust and Israel, such a denial is the equivalent of the excommunicable sins of earlier eras: denying the Exodus and the God who worked it in the Biblical age or denying the Rabbis and separating from Jewish fate in the Rabbinic era. I believe that the community has been too fearful of discussion or criticism in this matter and would benefit by expanding the margins of discussion. However, a famous Yiddish proverb is operating here: "If you burn your tongue once on hot soup, in the future you blow first, even on cold soup." Having tasted the bitter cup of

powerlessness to its dregs, the community overreacts to any perceived threat or undermining of the power it has.

Yet, there is a great deal of confusion regarding assumption of power as a basic change in the Jewish condition. Some scholars argue that, far from ending the threat to Jews, Israel itself is threatened and that far from ending Jewish ghetto existence, Israel is a kind of national ghetto in the Middle East. These observations only prove that Jews do not yet have enough power to remove the active threat to their existence. In the world we live in, no nation has enough power totally to insure its safety. In the case of the Jews, the relative balance of strength and threat is still too close for comfort. But there is a fundamental difference between the two situations. A threatened ghetto in Eastern Europe could only wait for its enemies to act, hope to sustain bearable losses and to live on by sufferance. When it was destroyed or expelled, the ghetto's wealth and achievement enriched its enemies. By contrast, Israel has a major voice in its own fate, indeed it has decided its own fate repeatedly in the past decades. And, while Israel's wartime losses have been devastating, with their lives the Jewish soldiers bought dignity, freedom and a measure of security for the Jewish people in Israel. Many times more Jews died in the Crusades, pogroms or the Holocaust, but their deaths made the Jews more vulnerable and more persecuted than before. The difference is noteworthy and in the kind of world we live, no small accomplishment. It is a basic measure of human dignity that my life is not cheap and that I give it for my purposes, values and benefit; that I choose for whom it shall be given; and my family and friends, not my enemies, inherit me. Thus power upholds the covenantal statement of Jewish dignity and the sacredness of life.

It is not just a matter of choices about death. It is the application of life's efforts, as well. Ninety years of building in the land of Israel have created a remarkable Jewish infrastructure containing school systems teaching Judaism and Jewish history; media, art, literature and scholarship in Hebrew; a firm foundation of agricultural and industrial productivity, all taxed and utilized for the benefit of Jewish life and Jewish people everywhere. The priorities of Jewish fate and purpose determine everything from national park preserves and museums to phone systems and garbage dumps. One need not deny Israel's many problems or faults to realize what a treasure of life and human sustenance has been built there. Just as in Biblical times, such activity was perceived as holy, despite its flaws, and was blessed, prayed for and nourished by the sacred cult and system, so will this activity today become suffused with religious symbolism and purpose.

Indeed the model is so impressive and catching that, despite their minority status, American Jewry, French

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Jewry and others have become increasingly politically active. Partly out of the lessons of the Holocaust and the example of Israel and partly out of desire to prevent another Holocaust and to preserve Israel, they have moved from invisibility in the political system to active involvement in it.⁴¹ These Jewries may stay in Diaspora but psychologically they are coming to the end of exilic Judaism. In exile the Jews' destiny was in the hands of others. As a marginal community the Jews could only take the political order as a given and seek to accommodate to it or serve it. Individuals, especially marginal ones, could revolt but the collective could not. The community did not have the power nor could it afford the moral luxury of judging the system. Of course, one must recognize that Jewish power is still limited. However, the change that has occurred has made all the difference in the world.

In the exilic phase, the great task of religion was to give dignity to the powerless, to show that one also serves by standing and waiting. Martyrdom was the highest sanctification of God's name. Since the condition itself could not be changed, the stress on exile as punishment for Israel's sins was a way of asserting control over the Jews' fate, a way of reclaiming moral dignity. If only Jews would repent enough, they would be delivered so they can perform morally responsible actions. The dignity of suffering, the hope for the world to come, the moral heroism of ascetism, penitential prayer—thousands of religious values and practices were conditioned to heal and uphold powerless Jewry.

The emergence of the State of Israel constituted the taking of power into Jewish hands so that Jews could shape their own destiny and affect or even control the lives of others. It represented a revolutionary, 180 degree moral turn in the religious situation. The dilemmas of power are far different from the temptations and problems of powerlessness. Jews have been fond of contrasting Christian persecution of Jews or Christianity's failure to crusade for social justice in the medieval world with Jewish behavior. It remains to be seen whether Judaism did not act similarly merely because it was powerless and whether it will not repeat or do worse in a situation of power. Will Judaism be able to function in a situation of power without becoming an established religion which interferes with the freedom of others, both Jews and non-Jews?

Ideally speaking, both Jewish religion and Jewish values can now actually do what they have always wanted to do. The assumption of power will now force them to put up or shut up. Spinning out ideal values will now be seen as empty blather if those values cannot be realized in daily life. If Israeli society fails, the credibility of Judaism drops. Jewish values will be seen, at best, as glittering generalities that do not work in the real world. Yet, all the ambiguities of

power and reality will still operate. The recalcitrance of the real to receive the ideal; the frequent lack of a pure good or pure bad side in the real world; the demonic and ironic elements in human nature and history; the exhausting tension between the ideal and the real; the sheer contrast between what can be realized and what can be dreamt will all test the inner fibre of the Jewish people and Jewish culture.

Work in real power situations is closer to the Rabbinic, halakhic process than to prophetic stances. It involves the capacity to judge specific situations and to reconcile shifting claims and facts. This probably spells the end of the traditional Jewish tilt toward the radical end of the political spectrum, a phenomenon that reflected lack of policy-making responsibility. Policy choices involve compromise and conservation as well as reform and perfection. Ultimate ends and proximate means must be linked in a continual process, something which can only be done through involvement, guilt and partial failures. Power inescapably corrupts yet its assumption is inescapable. The test of morality then is relative reduction of evil and better mechanisms of self-criticism, correction and repentance. There is a danger that those who have not grasped the full significance of the shift in Jewish condition will judge Israel by the ideal standards of the state of powerlessness, thereby not only misjudging but unintentionally collaborating with attempted genocide. Ideal moral stances applied unchanged to real situations often come out with the opposite of the intended result.

Yet how can we utilize power without becoming the unwitting slaves of bloodshed or an exploitative status quo? The National Religious Party and Gush Emunim's largely jingoistic position is a warning both of the unsuitability of older models and the overwhelming pull of the new situation. Exercise of power must be accompanied by strong models and constant evocation of the memory of historic Jewish suffering and powerlessness. It is so easy to forget slavery's lessons once one is given power, but such forgetfulness leads to the unfeeling infliction of pain on others. The memory of the Holocaust has enabled Israel to be a responsible and restrained conqueror. Memory is the key to morality.

The historical record of every group shows that even subtle participation in the realm of the possible can lead to acceptance of the status quo unless judgment is continually refreshed through exposure to prophetic norms. Jews will have to learn to reconcile prophetic idealism with the compromise of policy-making and to incorporate conserving and healing roles in Judaism to deal with tragedies and defeats which are the inescapable consequences of the human condition. The shock and depression of the Israelis following the Yom Kippur War only prove

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how human they are and how important religious values are in this era of power. But unless religion develops greater openness to other groups' criticism and greater sensitivity to other groups' needs, it may offer a morally deadening moral rearmament. It may also become guilty of idolatry, if it fails to critique even as it affirms the State.

The use of power also mandates the occasional use of immoral strategies to achieve moral ends. The acceptance of the guilt inherent in such actions calls for people of exceptional emotional range and strong orientation both to absolute norms and relative claims, both to judgment and to mercy.

Many inherited models will have to be reversed to function properly today. After Auschwitz, martyrdom is morally offensive. The command is to live and to testify. Power must be widely distributed to insure that it will not be abused. This sets up a dialectic of power which must be applied to Israel as well as to all power-wielding nations. The ideal would be maximum self-government for Palestinians and Arabs as a check on Jewish abuse. But such self-government can only be accepted if it does not threaten the existence and security of the Jewish people. To yield autonomy without overwhelming proof of Palestinian desire to live in peace is to invite martyrdom and morally reprehensible death by genocide. The Palestinians will have to earn their power by living peacefully and convincing Israel of their beneficence or by acquiescing to a situation in which Israel's strength guarantees that the Arabs cannot use their power to endanger Israel.

The same principle applies to internal Jewish society. One of the ironic and unintended side-effects of Israel's 1967 victory was an economic boom that left many Sephardim behind, trapped in poverty. The morally and religiously erosive effects of ill-distributed affluence must be challenged by the application of covenantal values and the political redistribution of power in Israel. While many American Jews are unhappy with the present Likud government and its perceived conservatism, clericalism and even jingoism, they fail to see how much of its support comes from Sephardic Jewry. The redistribution of power caused by the Likud's victory in 1974 brought new people into government, including many who did not know how to function effectively due to lack of experience. The opposition came to power after thirty years of Labor governments and it must be given time to develop competence. This is all part of the normal back-and-forth shifting in the course of learning to exercise power and, despite the fumbling, it is a healthy development. The exaggerated and even apocalyptic talk of the breakdown of Israel now ripe among American Jews as well as Israelis is a reflection of the relative immaturity of the new Jewish culture of power. People who live by ideal principles

believe that everything will crumble once there is failure. Politicians know that there are cycles of victory, defeat, competence and ineffectiveness. But in a democracy, there are mechanisms for correction which will eventually bear fruit. Obviously, it is nerve-wracking to watch this ineffectiveness against the background of the continuing Arab and Soviet bloc hostility toward Israel. As Jews grow used to the exercise of power, however, the apocalyptic tone should modulate to a prodding, patient awareness of an involvement with the State of Israel. The ability of Jews to reconcile realities and covenantal ideals; the ability to generate the human, moral and religious resources to carry on the struggle; and the ability to set about perfecting the world, however modestly, will be the test of Judaism in the third era.

NEW INSTITUTIONS

Contemporary Jews live in an era when a basic change in the Jewish condition coincides with a crisis of faith after destruction and assimilation. In the past, the challenge of coping with new conditions and the search for meaning inexorably led to the rise of new institutions and new leadership. Existing established institutions and leadership are deeply invested in the previous reality and are slower to respond to new needs, tending to repeat what they did before but with words that are less credible and actions that are less suited in light of the change. Yet it is hard to create completely new institutions that can quickly win acceptance. Typically, therefore, institutions that existed but were marginal before the crisis, institutions that can be more suited or more responsive to the new situation, become central after the crisis. In the case of the third era, these institutions will be more secular, corresponding to the increased hiddenness of God and the necessity to solve the problems of power and daily life. However, they must also carry on the way of the covenant so that they can supply competence and meaning to the new historic condition.

The primary third era institution that meets these criteria is the State of Israel. Its shift from marginality to centrality in Jewish life is directly related to the Holocaust and its own rebirth and is, at once, demographic, political and spiritual. In 1939, there were 400,000 Jews in Palestine out of a worldwide Jewish population of 17 to 18 million or about two percent of world Jewry. Within two years of the founding of the State, the population numbered 1.15 million out of 12 million Jews or nine percent. Today, Israel's Jewish population is about 3 million or 21 percent of world Jewry. As the main agent of dealing with the challenge of Jewish power, the State has gained increasing support from world Jewry.

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Such secular institutions as the Knesset and the Israeli Defense Forces which existed in embryonic form before the Holocaust now have evolved as central organs of coping with the new Jewish condition. They preside over Jewish priorities and investments in self-defense and they help set the agenda of Jewish power regarding the protection of Jewish communities. Of course, the more Israel plays this role, the more support and participation flows toward Israel from the Diaspora. By now, Jewish scientists, many of them completely assimilated, are barred from French nuclear programs and Russian military research even as American Jewish analysts are reportedly excluded from certain military and diplomatic roles in Washington. If one can factor out the anti-Semitism in these discriminations, they clearly also reflect a perception that Israel has a claim on the talents and knowledge of even the most marginal Jews.

Israeli welfare agencies and private organizations do not only serve Israel's population—thereby reasserting the dignity and preciousness of life which is the central religious testimony in the new era—they are increasingly involved with Diaspora Jews who are concerned with Jewish life or looked to by others seeking to deal with problems. Kibbutzim and other settlements absorb Diaspora Jews seeking Jewish expression; problem children are sent to Israeli institutions and orphans to Youth Aliya villages. Israeli universities and yeshivot have become important centers for foreign Jewish students. Even the proliferation of yeshivot in Israel reflects the new situation. The greater governmental support available in a Jewish society has funded their growth.

Israel has also pioneered in the creation of a new sacred institution of the Third Era, the Holocaust memorial center. Even as the synagogue was a place to commemorate the Temple's destruction and to express the continuing, if more secular, sacred values, so Yad VaShem, the government-sponsored memorial, and similar structures are the focal points for a more secularized religious experience. These are places where the memory is preserved, the story told and the acts of mourning and continuity publicly expressed. In traditional religious institutions, legend and miracle embroider the classic myths, the central organizing stories which guide life. Elaboration is part of the evocative power of such stories. However, the new institutions are officially secular; the stories which are at the heart of these religious institutions must be factual and historically reliable in order to be moving. By pre-Holocaust standards, these are secular criteria but the message must meet these tests to be effective in the third era. In masked fashion, these institutions express such classic religious values as the roles of martyrdom, sacrifice, heroism, Jewish and non-Jewish saintliness and continuity.

In America, the institutions which have been thrust into centrality by the after-effects of the third era's two revelatory events are those of the Federation/United Jewish Appeal complex. Their message is: You can respond to the worthlessness of Jewish life in the Holocaust by testifying through giving money to rehabilitate Jewish lives. You are purchasing an indirect share in Jewish power because UJA money frees up Israel's money for defense purposes. The local welfare agencies are also perceived as affirmations of the dignity and value of Jewish lives. Furthermore, support for Israel has naturally led to political representation of Jewish interests. The power center has shifted from the general defense agencies, such as the American Jewish Committee and American Jewish Congress to local Community Relations Councils. In part, CRCs' increased importance is a function of the councils' stronger funding; in part the new religious and spiritual fundamentals bestow an extra measure of status on them. The Community Relations Councils are perceived as representing the entire community, the unity of Jewish fate and purpose which transcends the pre-Holocaust divisions. The organizations and synagogues are tarred by the burst of denominational divisiveness.

Many have argued that the Federations' power is a function of their superior access to money. However, they are able to attract money only because they transmit meaning and values and can bestow status. One of UJA's most magnetic tools has been its ability to offer its givers and workers access to Israeli officials. While this factor was more important to the older generation, it is too simple to dismiss the process as mere celebrity-seeking or simple ego-stroking. Israeli officials are on the front line of Jewish self defense. It is the combination of social appeal and theological and historical relevance that makes this kind of involvement so magnetic. Similarly, one of the Federations' great recruiting mechanisms has been the mission to Israel and Eastern Europe which bears vivid witness to the role of the Holocaust and of Israel in validating the functions of philanthropy and Jewish political self-defense. I would argue that behind these overt levels of historical consciousness is a sense that the covenant and destiny of the Jewish people is being continued through this vehicle. The continual media attention to Israel, even the obsessive focus on condemning Israel in the United Nations, is often seen by givers as the secularized version of the Jews' role as a 'light unto the nations' or as the chosen people, singled out and standing alone, testifying to a world mired in the status quo of power politics and oppression.

Federations also have been pushed toward greater political involvement. The historical maelstrom has pulled them and many individual philanthropists into political

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areas which decades ago they shunned as the plague for fear of undermining Jewish acceptance in modern society. The main weakness of the Federations as perceived by the community has been that they are not designed to overtly articulate the values which undergird continued Jewish existence. Some of this weakness has been offset by the unarticulated messages implied by their work for Israel and their efforts to commemorate the Holocaust. However, the perceived weakness has led to increasing communal demands to intensify Federations' efforts to transmit Jewish values. Thus the Federations have been pushed toward greater investments in Jewish education, Hillel and college work as well as support for a variety of Jewish cultural and religious concerns. In this way again, the demands of a new reality have led to a strengthening and broadening of their functions. Why were synagogues and schools not the exclusive vehicles for dealing with such concerns? I submit it is because they are not secular enough to be fully credible or fully effective in the emerging third era. They operate with the handicap of being too sacramental, hence their message is not fully heard, too divided because their dividing lines are perceived as pre-Holocaust, pre-Israel; and too detached from the power and defense issues of Jewish life.

Synagogues, schools and yeshivot are treasured by Jews who seek Jewish survival. However, there is a shift of focus in Jewish life toward those institutions that deal with the new Jewish condition in more appropriate, secular settings. Secularity enables them to speak more effectively in the post-Holocaust atmosphere and to deal better with the reality of the open society. A message that is too sacramental or too internal will not be picked up by the media and other disseminating agencies of American culture. Of course, the danger is that this very secularity makes the people trained in the new institutions more subject to the pull of the general society.

New institutions are characteristically *pluralist*. This quality is often attacked as leading to an overemphasis on consensus in all decision-making. However, pluralism is the expression of a powerful theological value statement in Jewish unity and is yet another proof that the Holocaust and Israel are the guiding events of this era. Religious, political, or even financial lines that divide Jews are secondary when it comes to these two events. In the Holocaust, the fact of Jewishness was decisive; the type of Jew one was made no difference. And Israel was built by Jews of every religious, political and financial stripe. The statement of pluralism is the statement that the group is no longer primarily defined by guidelines such as Reform, Orthodox or secular which characterize modern culture, but by the overriding unity of Jewish fate in the new era. This is not to say that the earlier divisions are meaningless.

After all, they do reflect the variety of Jewish life conditions and observances. However, most Jews see these elements as secondary characteristics. Those who treat these issues as primary lose some plausibility.

Pluralism is also the theological consequence of the reformulation of the covenant into a voluntary covenant.²⁴ The unprecedented openness of American society combines with the risk and suffering of Jewish fate to insure that those who are Jewish are those who choose to be so. There can hardly be any punishment, divine or human, that can force Jews into the covenantal role when it is obviously far more risky to choose to be Jewish. Given the voluntary nature of Jewish commitment, there cannot be one imposed standard of Jewish loyalty or excellence. Organizations which respect this fact are successful, for they tap the full moral and historical force of the new condition.

Since the new institutions operate in a secular setting, they and their leadership cannot claim any born authority. They have an earned, not traditional, respect. After the second destruction, the Rabbis were in a similar situation vis-a-vis the prophets and priests who had bestowed status and sacramental powers. By contrast, today's rabbis and synagogues claim ascribed status based on traditional authority and standing. The lay groups have no inherited authority and cannot present themselves as masters of the tradition. They must appeal, rather, on the grounds that they are competent to deal with the Jewish situation, have a relationship to the Holocaust and Israel, and offer participatory roles to all. This approach gives them an advantage over groups that appeal to tradition. In an open society all the voices in the culture are heard and the self-evident nature of authority is eroded. One must be able to get out the message and be heard amidst the claims of other voices and to persuade and move people. The claim of sole authority weakens the message's credibility because it is heard as 'parochial,' 'intolerant' or 'withdrawn' in contrast to the multiple voices of an open society.

The open society has also 'deculturated' many Jews. They are less in touch with tradition and classic Jewish terms and values because they have been stripped of Jewish culture and its memories. Those Jews who are not inside the community are more likely to respond to agencies or institutions able to send their messages out through general channels such as the media or public schools. The net effect is that those institutions which go to where the Jews are do better and become stronger than those which do not. Typically, the established, pre-Holocaust institutions whose constituency still comes to them are less outgoing and their messages are less able to circulate through the open media.

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Finally, the need for legitimacy coupled with society's openness leads to a participatory style. Process, discussion and the right of participants to take part in decision-making become the keys to acceptance of policies. Participants are presumed to have sufficient knowledge and judgment to make the decisions, even if this is not necessarily so. In the competitive situation of the open society such styles constantly win out over authority-centered structures.

In addition to the State of Israel and the Federations, other new institutions are developing. One example is retreat centers such as Brandeis-Bardin Camp Institute near Los Angeles. Unlike the synagogues, the retreat center is secular ground. Its religious components must be carved out and set up by the group. Characteristically, a retreat center is pluralist, bringing together people with a wide variety of backgrounds and using faculty of varying persuasions. The retreat center's ability to transmit values is enhanced because it is a total environment in which a Jewish mini-society is established that envelops the individual. In fact, the retreat experience is an excellent tool to strengthen the synagogue.

In recent years, the Holocaust memorial center has also emerged as a new post-Holocaust institution. Such centers have developed locally and each community has responded to its own set of forces. Typically, the center is secular, although some space for meditation or prayer is often set aside. But since all types of Jews endured the Holocaust, most center's presentations are pluralist in tone, frequently using such secular tools as films and focusing on teaching and participation.

Jacob Neusner, in decrying excessive emphasis on the Holocaust, has argued that the story should be told through the synagogue as one of many messages about Judaism. Neusner asks why the Holocaust should have a place dedicated just to it?⁴³ The answer again is that the Holocaust is increasingly viewed as an orienting event in Jewish history, one of a handful of events that we recognize as so decisive that the Jewish way through history and the individual's way of life is guided or shaped by its implications. Just as the Exodus and Divine Presence were made manifest in the Temple and just as the synagogue brought together community, new covenantal values and liturgical expression after the destruction of the Temple, so the Holocaust center makes visible this new revelatory event. The lesson is pluralist and 'secular' in guise and in tone; the synagogue is not. While the synagogue can and should incorporate this event and the rebirth of Israel into its liturgy and life, incorporating the Holocaust into the synagogue liturgy is a challenge, for the counter-testimony to faith in this event must not be evaded in the service. Holocaust centers are typically set up as

citywide or regional institutions. The memorial center is the natural channel to externally symbolize and to vividly communicate the reenactment dimension of Jewish liturgy using films, documents and actual materials. In effect, the center becomes the place where the event that shapes the new era and the lessons and value implications of the third era are represented.

The growth of such centers in the United States has been slow and halting. There has been significant opposition from those who argue that the Holocaust should not be overstressed, as well as from some rabbis and synagogues which have feared theological 'distortion'—or institutional rivalry. Although there is no framework in which to understand the significance of the issue or of the fledgling institutions, there is evidence that this pattern of development is very much like that of post-Biblical holidays. Many scholars believe that Purim developed at the grass roots, with significant resistance to its content and form evinced by rabbis and others. Only after the holiday had spread was it adopted and fully integrated into Jewish religious and communal life. This pattern is even more appropriate in this era given the masked nature of the holiness and sacredness of Yom HaShoah and the revelatory nature of the Holocaust and of Israel's rebirth.

In recent decades, Jewish studies in universities have undergone significant growth. The official culture of the university denies that such courses can or should be a vehicle that transmits religion or values. Furthermore, the pluralist, secular style of the university is perceived as non-theological and non-sacred. Nevertheless, there are hundreds of students of Jewish studies who make clear that such courses have profoundly affected their Jewish commitments and identities. Many students openly state that they take such courses as expressions of or in search of deepening their Jewish identities. While Jewish studies professors are not chaplains, it is precisely because their style is secular and pluralist that they have such impact within the framework of third era credibility. Many students who would not enter a synagogue or a more overtly sacred place, will encounter Jewish destiny and memory in the academic setting because it makes no official claims or demands. Yet once students experience the reality of Jewish experience or past values, they often are touched or stimulated to new levels of commitment. Of course, the pluralistic nature of the setting makes the outcome unpredictable, but, more often than not, the result is positive.

The media, too, have become a major source of Jewish experience and values. For many Jews, especially those who will not come to a synagogue or other overtly Jewish setting, the secular character and the hiddenness of the values messages presented by the media makes them

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acceptable. Such films as "Holocaust" and "Masada" have had enormous impact on Jews and on the Jewish community. There is, of course, a danger that the values transmitted may be based on ignorance or shaped by commercial considerations, but such programs seem destined for even greater influence. The way the community gathers to watch such programs makes them important transmitters of values.

The creation of Beit Hatefutsot, the Diaspora Museum, in Israel is another example of a third era institution. Beit Hatefutsot is not really a museum. It is a liturgical recounting and reenacting of the Jewish experience in the Diaspora presented in a secular, pluralist, hidden religious fashion. Since Israel and the Holocaust are events of major magnitude and Jewish life is filled with ferment and response, such new and creative institutions will continue to emerge and to attract Jews. The visitors, often family groups, come from a wide variety of religious backgrounds and Jewish communities. Their visits are often 'holy days' on the family calendar in which the family or other groups come to witness the Jewish experience and proclaim or confirm their own Jewishness. On the surface, such institutions have no claim to authority or sacredness. Yet the behavior of the Jews involved has many of the characteristics of religious behavior. Often the visit is a repetitive ritual, done in family units, and includes moments of reminiscence, meditation, devotion or even tears. Thus, the religious dimensions are hidden below the surface of the experience. The institution claims no intrinsic sacred effect or authority and any such impact is earned by the sheer power of the program. Its sacred impact is greater for being hidden and pluralistic, which is to say it is broadcasting on the right wave-length, the one with the most resonance in the third era.

As the Jewish way and the channels of its communication turn toward a more secular setting, the question of the role of the synagogue becomes more acute. By continuing to proclaim the evident sacredness of God and of its own place as it did before the Holocaust and rebirth, the synagogue comes across as too sacramental. Even as the Sadducees and priests proclaimed the unbroken authority of the Temple but were not persuasive in the more secularized Rabbinic era, so today's rabbis and synagogues risk a similar loss of credibility. The continuing division of synagogues by denomination also hurts because it represents a tacit claim that the divisions generated by the Emancipation are as salient as ever. Such divisiveness also contradicts the unity of Jewish fate which more and more Jews feel follows inevitably from the events of the Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel. The synagogue leadership has reacted to its loss of credibility with defensiveness and insistence that the synagogue

must remain the center of Jewish life. Not infrequently, they oppose the new institutions. There is a danger that the synagogue leadership will become the B'nai Bateira of the post-Holocaust period. The B'nai Bateira were members of a group that opposed Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai's symbolic transfer of the legal, religious authority of the Temple to the court and academy of Yavneh where new institutions were emerging following the Temple's destruction. In that case, faithfulness and the desire to give the familiar response led to a rear-guard opposition that was essentially obstructionist. Eventually, the synagogue and academy won and those who staked their fate on reconstituting the Temple died out. In our time, the danger is compounded in that the Temple was visibly destroyed, encouraging the search for alternative ways of religious expression, whereas the synagogue remains physically intact although its theological and cultural substrata have been fundamentally transformed.

The loss of the synagogue would be a cultural and religious catastrophe of disastrous magnitude for Jewry. The alternative is to renew the synagogue, and to help it develop communicative powers appropriate for the new era. The synagogue can learn to speak and operate in a secular world, a tendency already seen when community center, sports and other secular activities were added to the synagogue program. While such activities have added vitality to temple life, there is the danger that they will remain separate from the sacred and liturgical functions of the synagogue which continue to contract and may be overwhelmed by the new activities. Too many synagogues have become captive to the catering or health and recreation uses of the building. Such activities must be positively related to the sacred strands of synagogue life, but not allowed to substitute for them. Turning the synagogue into a vehicle for the United Jewish Appeal and Israel Bonds, for activities and rallies for Soviet Jewry, Israel and other Jewish concerns, allows the synagogue to reach out from sacred space into the secular reality and to connect with the vital shaping events which nourish Jewish spiritual life. Many synagogues have begun to incorporate the Holocaust and Israel into their liturgical life with special prayers, commemoration of Yom HaShoah and Yom HaAtzmaut and other special occasions. Thus the religious force of the synagogue is stepped up by the power of these events.

Still other tactics promise to strengthen the religious core of temple life. The development of synagogue havurot is another way of moving into secular space. Havurah members frequently share life cycle events, using the rabbi as a resource. Much of the learning and teaching is done by group members and the teacher, in effect a secular "rabbi," speaks with less sacramental

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authority. Despite the synagogue's official membership in a denomination, havurot are de facto pluralistic because of the range of participants' background and the eclectic nature of their sources of information. Thus, they pick up both the strength of pluralism and of Jewish unity. The National Havurah Coordinating Committee (of which CLAL, then the NJRC, was a founding partner) has sponsored national study institutes which offered a remarkable round of learning opportunities taught by a wide variety of teachers and spiritual figures. The Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education conferences follow a similar model and by all accounts the effects of the programs are extraordinary.

Some synagogues have encouraged their rabbis to move out into the community as teachers and models of Jewish values. Sometimes the rabbi must trade in the automatic authority he has in his own bailiwick in return for access and a chance to be heard. Those rabbis who accept and meet the challenge often find their impact multiplied. Frequently the ground rules provide that they cannot demand or offer traditional values as the only legitimate option as they can back on home ground. Yet both the audience *and the effect* is often *expanded*. In an open society and in an era when the sacred is hidden, less is often more; the tentativeness and modesty of the claims enormously increase their impact and acceptance.

This is not to say that the synagogue should surrender its character and completely adapt to a more secular society. Indeed a good strategy might be to offer a more sharply defined alternative to the new society. Mysticism and deeper religious experience offer a religious option for those who are dissatisfied with the dominant secular tone or for those who seek an encounter with the hidden divine for themselves. A synagogue that enriches its religious offerings and creates specialized, selected groups to explore spirituality in more disciplined and taxing ways can reach the seekers. Currently, it is difficult to explore spirituality in the synagogue. The general membership is too mixed and unselected; those uninterested in spirituality hold back the more able or adventurous people. The possibility of plural offerings—for seekers, learners, for conventional prayers—may be more promising than the present, denominationally defined variety of offerings. Plural religious activities can go hand-in-hand with secular outreach and community activity programs.

The synagogue can also offer itself as a consciously articulated alternative community. Such a synagogue can make special ethical or religious norms obligatory for all members. In effect, such a synagogue becomes a "guerrilla base." It recognizes that it is in opposition to the established moral and religious regime. People come to it for consciousness raising, ideological training and for

support, venturing forth to confront and offer alternative values to the society. In the guerilla handbook, the key to victory lies in the dialectic of swimming in the sea of the people. One must share the values and lives of the people even as one seeks to channel them, generate other visions, and radicalize them by creating enough perception of conflict so that the masses withdraw assent to the legitimacy of the existing system. This guerrilla analogy may sound exaggerated, but Judaism and the synagogue are, in fact, in significant opposition to the assimilating (and many of the other) values of society. By the light of this model, the synagogue building and service become the rest and recreation area for guerrillas, the place where the peer group is renewed; and where the commitment to persist and challenge the prevailing values is revived.

A policy of opposition would lead to the loss of many conventional members but it offers the hope of creating a committed, persistent minority alternative. The present policy runs the risk of death by inanition. Services that are conventional, denominational and sacramental continually lose out to the competing religious or secular authority. Adaptation in either direction is more promising for the synagogue than a stand pat philosophy or a reactionary attitude toward new institutions. The growth of a militant right-wing Orthodoxy in the decades of the 60's and 70's at the expense of modern Orthodoxy shows some of the promise in this alternative strategy. The growth of havurot and other experimental communities is another straw in the wind. Thus far there has been little help given by the national level for the local synagogues which are developing these models.

The synagogue is too important to be left only to synagogue members, or even rabbis. Helping the synagogue adapt should be high on the agenda of American Jewry. This generation has already sustained a too crushing physical loss of thousands of synagogues by enemy action. A further equivalent loss to spiritual erosion would be intolerable. By contrast, successfully bringing the synagogue into the third era will insure that the riches of the past will be available as resources for Jewish life in the new setting.

NEW LEADERSHIP

Each era of Jewish history has generated its own characteristic leadership cadre. Leadership has gravitated toward those who could cope with the problems of living while addressing, overtly or through their work, the meaning and purpose of being a Jew. Jewish minority status and exposure to countervailing civilizations has made dealing with problems of meaning as essential for continuity, and therefore for leadership, as the more prosaic challenges of daily life. The unfolding new era is

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characterized by a change in condition, from powerlessness to power; a change in the theological and religious paradigm, toward greater secularity and divine hiddenness; and the rise of new institutions. Therefore, these forces are generating a change in the type of leadership the Jewish people requires.

The Biblical era was an age of split leadership. Kings, judges and nobles dealt with issues of sovereignty; priests and prophets managed the Temple and direct revelation, two channels of access to the God who intervened. The Rabbinic era also had two leadership groups: the lay or political element and the Rabbis who discerned the will of the more hidden God. However, the lines between them blurred somewhat. Political power weakened and the Rabbis often played legal or political roles within the internally autonomous Jewish community.

The laypeople are emerging as the dominant group of the third era. In Israel, politicians—who could be more secular in image than politicians?—decide the priorities and mechanisms for pursuing the Jewish mission. Ironically, the official status of religion in Israel has only intensified the policy-making influence of secularists on the rabbinic leadership by allowing them significant influence in the selection of Chief Rabbis. In America, lay leadership is most obviously expressed in the institutions which have been the main beneficiaries of the third era. However, Jews in media, government, unions and other secular settings have gained important weight in Jewish community decisions. Even within the synagogue and other traditional institutions, much power has passed to lay leadership. The secularization process shows up another way as well. Some academics, workers and activists have become spiritual or charismatic leaders who play many of the classic roles of rebbe/rabbi. They offer access to God, give spiritual direction, incarnate norms and values, and offer policy guidance.

Coping with the issues of power is, in itself, a great stimulus toward secularization of leadership. Power is exercised in everyday, mundane realities. Religious or idealistic norms are often perceived as unworldly and, therefore, religious involvement is often seen as inappropriate both by religious people steeped in the old values and by the secular politicians themselves. In fact, invoking religious authority for political decisions runs the risk of investing partial, temporary actions with claims of absolute authority. These claims can endanger both the freedom of others and the pluralism which the democratic system needs to function well. Therefore, through tacit agreements, the religious types tend to withdraw and allow secular people to represent all interests including their own. A parallel situation is the case of Father Robert Drinan who, in 1980, was instructed by the Pope to end his

career as a congressman on the grounds that he should return to religious vocation and service. It is true that this concept of separating religion from political life was challenged by the rise of the Moral Majority and other political evangelical groups. However, the new political involvement was a reaction reflecting the feeling that the secular representatives had betrayed or failed to represent the concerns of the religious sector.

Lay leaders are particularly suited for effectiveness in the third era. They earn their authority, be it from money, knowledge, or competence in directing people. Rabbis also earn their wisdom or standing but once they receive the title or role of rabbi, they are automatically vested with all the associations of authority and tradition. There is a short-run advantage in getting such extra authority. On balance, however, the rabbinic aura weakens the effectiveness of rabbis, serving as a "protective tariff" which insulates them from the competition of an open society. Worst of all, the overtones give a sacramental halo to Rabbinic communications and to the synagogue which *reduces* credibility in the age of the deepest hiddenness of God.

For many people, the same sacramental quality puts the rabbi and synagogue out of their range of hearing and reduces the desire for contact. For such people, the Jewish lay leadership who meet them in secular settings are the only possible connecting links between themselves and the Jewish past and traditions. For such people, the lay leader is their only rabbi. Lay leaders appear as normal, everyday people. Their claims are seen thereby as more tentative and more likely to acknowledge other's claims. Their guise of secularity naturally makes the activities they offer a part of the new era. Therefore, if the deeper levels of religion and spirituality in these activities are perceived or articulated by the lay leadership, then the effect can be extraordinary. The danger is that the laypeople, lacking the spiritual insight, may be unable to see this significance. Thus, the secularity of the age does not mean the end of rabbinic influence. Rabbis can become educators, teachers and insight givers to lay-people who in turn can communicate them in the secular reality. In an age when laypeople are rabbis, rabbis can become rabbis' rabbis and may actually increase their influence in the process.

One more factor increases the stature of lay leadership. The changed Jewish condition has moved the larger issues into the realm of the lay leaders and moved the overtly religious issues away from the center of life. People grow to fullest stature when they deal with the largest issues. Some years ago, Arthur Hertzberg bemoaned the disappearance of great Rabbinic leaders, such as Abba Hillel Silver, who once led the Jewish community. Such

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leaders attained their stature in the secular or power areas of life, but even so, the shift in the equilibrium means either that greater leaders go where the action is or that, despite their talents, rabbis are reduced in size by the smallness of the concerns with which they deal. The synagogues' smaller concerns often attract smaller lay leaders which further shrinks the growth of the rabbis.

Yet the blame does not rest entirely on the rabbis. Many rabbis feel that synagogues offer a poor environment for their own personal and spiritual growth. Pettiness, overuse of the rabbi, and excessively formal roles often deny rabbis the opportunity to form friendships or even let their hair down and are frequently mentioned as factors that erode rabbis' personal and spiritual resources. The entire community should be concerned. Investments in retreats, sabbaticals and rabbinic fellowship groups would enrich the entire Jewish people. In the interim, the entire process steadily moves leadership and power toward laypeople.

The emerging lay leadership, however, does have some serious weaknesses. It is shaped all too much by the assimilationist forces of modern culture and does not know enough of the Jewish past or traditional resources.

When the second era of Jewish history emerged, the Rabbis were able to bring the riches of the Biblical era with them. They were masters of the Biblical text, models, and experience. While they modified, translated and even transformed the Biblical message, they fundamentally linked their own teaching to the Biblical text. Their teachings grew out of a creative hermeneutic on Jewish text and Jewish history and thus the Rabbis enriched the vocabulary and instruments of Jewish culture rather than reduced them. Despite the loss of direct revelation and the sacramental cult, the tradition emerged with a greater variety of methods, models and teachings.

There is a real danger that due to ignorance, the lay leadership could seriously impoverish Jewish life. By default, they may cast away major elements in Judaism's vast arsenal of communication, value-shaping teachings and observances. A Judaism cut off from its first and second era elements would be a tragically weakened and impoverished way of life. It may be that we are witnessing the emergence of an internalized, secularized Judaism that can maintain itself with little outward, traditional symbolism, concrete observances or memories of the past. Maybe voluntary Judaism will be relatively indistinguishable from the American way of life. But it is more likely that assimilation and dissolution will follow. Even if it doesn't collapse, such a Judaism would probably become not holy secularism but wholly secularist.

An obvious crisis of continuity has struck the Jewish community over the past two centuries and the crisis has

deepened with the impact of the open society. This supports the notion that a modern bowdlerized Jewish culture and way of life won't do. Past Jewish history suggests that the better way to proceed is to educate the laypeople and help them recover the viable past.

A second weakness of the new lay leadership is that it is more equipped for action than for the transmission of values and of the will to go on being Jewish. Here we can invoke the principle that the new secular institutions are too important to be left to lay leaders exclusively. By taking up the challenge of working in the third era, rabbis and synagogues, as well as new institutions such as retreat centers, Holocaust memorial centers and Jewish Studies departments, can help the lay leadership overcome the crisis of continuity. This could insure that a rich Jewish culture deeply steeped in the past can be the medium of Jewish survival.

The key to achieving these goals is the re-creation of Jewish community. Within the community, values, identities and knowledge can be communicated. Lay leaders and others who are properly trained and educated can provide personal models of Judaism, Jewish living and Jewish values in action. Their witness is the key to encouraging other Jews to identify as Jews and with the community. An important dimension, the dimension of celebration and joy, must be recaptured for Jewish living. To be a Jew is not just to feel compelled to help other Jews in trouble, or to be scarred by the Holocaust or to be attacked by anti-Semitism. To be a Jew is to taste the flavor of Jewish history every day whether through eating food or through the mind. It is to experience a special sort of family life or to be regularly exposed to models of wisdom, compassion, sacrifice and heroism. It is to dance on a Shabbat evening, on Simhat Torah, at a Purim masquerade, at a wedding, in front of a Russian consulate or the Western Wall. When these experiences are recovered, then people will choose to be Jewish not by the definition of a hostile world but by the deeply human choices of destiny, memory and meaning and of fulfillment in family and self.

To achieve these goals, the synagogue will have to reshape itself as a community and function as an agency of learning and transmission both for its own membership and for the rest of the community. The Federations and Jewish community centers will have to make themselves over into vehicles of tradition, transmission and educational growth. This does not mean that each agency will lose its distinctive character and function. It does mean that there will be an exchange of agendas and a willingness to work together to strengthen one another. The joint goal is to recover a sense of the overall destiny and mission of the people of Israel so that the institutions can make a contribution to the common cause.

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NEW SCRIPTURES, NEW REVELATIONS

Each great era of Jewish history has spawned a sacred literature of its own. The revelations and teachings of the Jewish way have been entered into that literature and each literature has been centrally shaped by the dominant historical event of the period. Moreover, each has reflected the method of revelation of the era.

The Bible is the classic distillation of the first cycle of Jewish history. It is shaped by the Exodus and its central message is that of redemption. The struggle of the people of Israel to cope with historical experience and the mission of the Jews is recorded in these books. The manifest God thunders forth the revelation in the Bible and the prophets bring the direct word of God to the people.

The Talmud is the authoritative work of the Rabbinic era. Its content and emphasis is profoundly affected by the destruction of the Temple and the exile of Israel. While redemption is the ultimate goal, the method and way to that goal is reshaped by historical experience and a new understanding of the human-divine partnership. Although heavenly voices and messengers appear throughout the Talmud, it is the Rabbis' reflections on the Scriptures and their deductions, applications and analogies from the Biblical texts and models that make clear what God wants of Israel. Of course, there is a great deal of further development beyond the Talmud but the legal models and precedents of those books remained dominant until almost the end of the Rabbinic era.

In order to deny Christian claims that further revelations had superseded Judaism, and because the model of the more hidden God suggests that the age of manifest revelation was over, the Rabbis did not apply the term of revelation to their own work. They officially subordinated the authority of the Oral Law to that of Scripture. Yet, in fact, the Rabbis and their interpretations and rulings attain the level of revelation *in effect* as well as *de facto* authority. Revelation is not merely command or specific instructions. Revelation is the orienting direction which guides the covenantal people on its way to the goal of redemption. Only in the initial phase is Revelation experienced as direct command from the Divine. Even in Biblical times, the events such as the Exodus are as much revelation as are God's words of instruction. Indeed, one might say that the revelation at Sinai is only putting into words, commandments and actions the implications of the Exodus event. When an event reaches the magnitude of the destruction of the Temple and leads to the reorientation of the understanding of the covenant and of the direction, methods and obligations of Israel in the march to redemption, it is, in fact, revelation. The revelation in the Rabbinic

period, however, is more indirect and hidden as is appropriate to the theological environment.

The same principle applies to the emerging third cycle of Jewish history. If the thesis of this paper is correct, then the covenantal way is undergoing a major reorientation in light of the Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel. We are living in an age of renewed revelation. In retrospect, this should have been anticipated because it is implicit in the Jewish model of a way to redemption in which later events illuminate and shed new light on the original redemption patterns and commandments.⁴⁴ The original goal always remains the same but the content of the goal emerges in history. The best proof that this is recognized as revelation is that the later events carry as much theological weight as the initial events. Most remarkably, Jeremiah articulated this model in his prophecy that . . . "behold the days will come, says the Lord, when they shall not say again, 'As the Lord lives, Who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt' but rather: 'As the Lord lives Who uplifted and brought the children of Israel up from the land of the north, and from all the countries where I had driven them' and they shall dwell in their land."⁴⁵ In other words, God will be turned to more as the God of the return than as the God of the Exodus.

When these days come and people are oriented by new revelations, such as the restoration of Israel and the Holocaust, then there will be new 'Scriptures' to express the event. In classic style, the Scriptures tell and retell the event until the Jew is caught up and says, "This is my story. I was there." The Scriptures also draw lessons and models from the event and give over commandments that respond to the event so that it can be applied to the further path of Israel toward its final, covenantal goal.

Such Scriptures are being written in our time, too. The reason that both the revelation and the Scriptures are not already recognized is that in accordance with the nature of the third era, they are, by definition, hidden. The destructive event and the redemptive one are so obscured, flawed and ambiguous that it is easy to miss their religious significance altogether. Yet any other kind of claim for these Scriptures, such as self-evident authority, would be, like prophecy in the Rabbinic era, inappropriate. The Scriptures of the new era are hidden. They do not present themselves as Scripture but as history, fact and, sometimes, as anti-Scripture. Revelation has been successfully obscured thanks to the deep hiddenness of the events and the continuing grip of modern ideas which seemingly cut off human culture from revelation channels. The inherited traditions in Judaism and Christianity that there will be no further revelation, which are defensive and designed to protect them from supersession, also serve to

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block consciousness of revelation by dismissing it in advance. Yet the Scriptures are being written. They are the accounts that tell and retell the event, draw its conclusions and orient the living. In the Warsaw Ghetto, Chaim Kaplan wrote in his journal: "I will write a scroll of agony in order to remember the past in the future."⁴⁶ When the Germans finally abandoned Auschwitz, Primo Levi wrote, despite his secularism and assimilationist background: ". . . in that hour the memory of biblical salvation in times of extreme adversity passed like a wind through our minds."⁴⁷

Nor are the Scriptures restricted to writing alone. One cannot view Chaim Guri's *The Last Sea* with its incredible films of the exodus from Poland to Palestine—of journeys over rocks and mountains, through endless seas and detention camps, to the beaches and cities of Palestine—without feeling that here is an account, no less grand than Biblical accounts, of the Exodus of our time. And do the lives of survivors who have lived through hell, whose families and loved ones passed through the fires of death, yet who renewed their hopes, their lives and families, fall short of the account of Jacob's struggle or Ruth's odyssey from the despair of death to the redemption of renewed life? It is too early to say which accounts will enter the canon which will become the permanent common possession of the Jewish people. There may be no official establishment of literature this time, in keeping with the more hidden character of the Scriptures. However, we must be open to hear the story, to enter into it until it becomes part of our lives as well. Those that understand and respond can become part of this revelation movement with its enormous significance for the covenant and for the hope of the world.

One more implication flows from the pattern of the previous cycles. In the past, what happened to the Jews influenced the rest of the world. Through the Bible, the experiences of Isaac and Moses, of David and Ruth, became part of the human story and through Christianity and Western culture formed the values of humanity. The Talmud impressed Islam, Christianity and Western legal procedures and affected the destiny of the world. We should expect no less than that in the third era. Jewish experience will remold the world.

Intimations of this fact have already appeared in contemporary history. Israel's anti-colonial revolt in 1946—a response to the bitter lessons of powerlessness in the Holocaust—helped set off a world-wide chain-reaction which ended Western political control and brought the Third World into being. Although the oil power of the Arabs has temporarily blocked its role, Israel has been a model of agricultural liberation and the transformation of population from pre-modern passivity to modern

productivity without total loss of self or past values. Israel's model is full of flaws but that is inescapably part of real-life, secular redemption.

Another example of the paradigmatic role of Jewish events is the United States' recent encounter with the Holocaust. The appointment of the President's Commission on the Holocaust, the acceptance of its recommendations by congressional legislation and the establishment of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council constitute a commitment by the Federal Government that the Holocaust become part of the sacred culture and memory of the entire American people. In 1979, when the flight of Vietnamese boat people was at its height, the United States government convened an international conference, took in 250,000 refugees and persuaded the nations of the world to absorb hundreds of thousands more to give them dignity and new life. The United States made clear that it did so to avoid repeating the tragic apathy and indifference of which it was guilty in 1938, when dealing with Jewish refugees at Evian. Thus, again, when the Jewish people shared its own most deeply felt suffering and struggle for life with the rest of the world, it reshaped values and brought a touch of redemption.

Many of the issues the Jewish people are wrestling with in the third era are paradigmatic challenges for the world. The tension of creating the new world without losing the memory of the past; how to self-fulfill yet avoid slipping into narcissism and the dissolution of family and community; the challenge of reconciling dignity through nationalism with the needs of other people; and the need to reconcile patriotism with multiple loyalties lest nationalism metastasize into imperialism and aggression are the issues being confronted by the Jewish people every day. The Jewish people has the opportunity to draw strength from its past, from its balance of family and self and from its ongoing covenant to create a model nation and a model Diaspora community. Since this will take place in real life, even if it is successful it will not be perfect. Other nations will undoubtedly explore the same issues and educate the Jews as well as the rest of the world. Still, an effective response to these challenges would mark this as a great creative period of Jewish history, the third great cycle of rebirth of the Jewish people and of its covenant. The model would be studied and imitated everywhere. Again, the ancient covenantal blessing would be fulfilled:

"Through you—in you—will the nation-families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).

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FOOTNOTES

1. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan, 1926).
2. Cf. Leviticus 10:10; II Samuel 6:6ff.
3. Joshua, Chapter 7.
4. Exodus 14:13-14.
5. Exodus 10:1-2.
6. Exodus 14:31.
7. Ezekiel 20:32-33.
8. *Mishnah Peah* 1:1.
9. *Ethics of the Fathers* 4:1.
10. *Yoma* 69b.
11. Deuteronomy 10:17.
12. *Shabbat* 119b.
13. *Shabbat* 10a.
14. *Pesikta Zutrati Pinchas*.
15. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "The Lonely Man of Faith," *Tradition*, Volume VII, Number 2 (Summer 1965), p. 37.
16. *Shabbat* 12b.
17. *Sota* 17a.
18. *Eruvim* 13b.
19. *Baba Metzia* 59b.
20. Deuteronomy 31:18.
21. *Shabbat* 88a.
22. See on this, Jacob Neusner, *Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), "Emergent Rabbinic Judaism in a time of Crisis: Four Responses to the Destruction of the Second Temple," pp. 34-49. See also, Neusner, *A Life of Yochanan Ben Zakkai*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962) first edition.
23. Jacob Neusner, *There We Sat Down: Talmudic Judaism in the Making* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971).
24. *Menachot* 29b.
25. Richard Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill Company, 1966).
26. Irving Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire," in *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era?* edited by Eva Fleishchner (New York: KTAV, 1977), p. 27.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
28. *Yoma* 69b.
29. See Isaiah, Chapters 41, 42, 45, 48, 49, 50. Jeremiah 16:9-15 and Chapters 30, 31, 32, 33.
30. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 82.
31. *Exodus Rabba, Mishpatim* 30:24.
32. Deuteronomy 30:3.
33. *Megillah* 29a.
34. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "Lonely Man of Faith," loc. cit. p. 28. See also, *Sanhedrin* 46a, *Y. Sukkah* 4:3. N.B. I deal with this question more fully in "Voluntary Covenant," pp. 27-44.
35. Irving Greenberg, *Guide to Shabbat* (New York: National Jewish Resource Center, 1981) Section II.
36. I will deal with this question in a future essay in this series, "Toward a Holy Secularity."
37. Yehuda Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1971).
38. This idea is expanded in Chapter III, "Power and Politics."
39. Manes Sperber, . . . *Than a Tear in the Sea*, Introduction by Andre Malraux, translated by Constantine Fitzgibbon (New York: Bergen Belsen Memorial Press, 1967).
40. Arthur Hertzberg, *Being Jewish in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978).
41. See Chapter III.
42. See Chapter II, "Voluntary Covenant" for fuller explanation.
43. Jacob Neusner, "Toward A Jewish Renewal . . . After the Flood, After the Rainbow," *Moment*, Vol. III, Number 6, May 1978, pp. 11-16.
44. Irving Greenberg, "New Revelations and New Patterns in the Relationship of Judaism and Christianity," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. XVI, Number 2 (Spring 1979), pp. 249-267.
45. Jeremiah 23:7-8; Jeremiah 14:14-15.
46. Chaim Kaplan, *The Warsaw Diary of Chaim Kaplan*, translated and edited by Abraham I. Katsh, Rev. Ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1973) p. 30.
47. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Collier Books, 1961) p. 43.

PERSPECTIVES

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