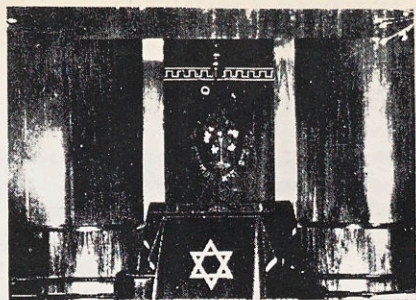


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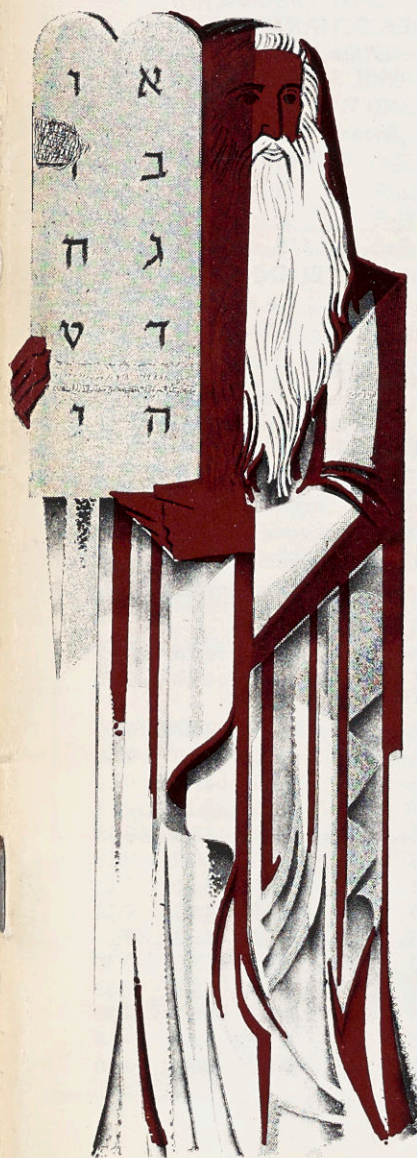
הבית

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Tamuz-Av-Elul 5751

Number 329

June-July-August 1991



"WHEREVER YOU GO, I WILL GO"

Paradigm of loyalty. Embodiment of devotion. Prototype of love.

Naomi had been noble, wealthy and titled, happy wife and loving mother. Now she was bereft of husband and sons, destitute and homeless. "Could this be Naomi?" was the shocked reaction when she returned to her townspeople. "Call me not Naomi (the 'pleasant one') but call me Mara (the 'bitter')," was her sorrowful reply, for bitter was her lot.

But in her bitter state there was a seed of sweetness, a nugget of wealth in the midst of poverty, a precious remnant of love to keep her company in her loneliness. Ruth, the Moabite daughter-in-law, related only by marriage, a stranger to Naomi's people, an outsider to Judaism, clung to her. And those simple words softly spoken on the dusty road to Bethlehem, words of warmth, of loyalty, love and devotion, spoken so many thousands of years ago, warm our hearts to this day.

And also stir our conscience!

"Wherever you go, I will go," said Ruth, the Moabite. She meant not only her beloved mother-in-law, but also Naomi's faith: "Your people are my people and your G'd is my G'd."

Surely the loyalty and devotion and love of Ruth, the stranger, ought to be ours too: solidarity with our people and obedience to G'd.

Rabbi Shlomo Kahn

Shavuoth

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

1991		<i>Preceding Evening</i>	<i>Morning</i>	<i>Mincho</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Day Break</i>	<i>Shema Before</i>
May 19	1st day Shovuos	8:15	8:30	7:30	8:51	4:32	9:14
May 20	2nd day Shovuos-Yizkor-Sermon	7:30	8:30	8:20	8:52		
May 25	Noso	7:00	8:45	8:20	8:57	4:26	9:12
June 1	Beha'alo secho	7:00	8:45	8:25	9:03	4:20	9:10
June 8	Shelach (Blessing Month of Tamuz) Sermon	7:00	8:45	8:30	9:08	4:17	9:09
June 15	Korach	7:00	8:45	8:35	9:12	4:15	9:10
June 22	Chukas	7:00	8:45	8:40	9:15	4:16	9:11
June 29	Bolok	7:00	8:45	8:40	9:15	4:19	9:13
July 6	Pinchas (Blessing Month of Av)	7:00	8:45	8:35	9:13	4:23	9:15
July 13	Matos-Masse	7:00	8:45	8:35	9:10	4:29	9:18
July 20	Devorim (Chazon)-Sermon	7:00	8:45	8:35	9:05	4:36	9:21
July 27	Voes'chanan (Nachmu)-Sermon	7:00	8:45	8:20	8:58	4:43	9:24
Aug. 3	Ekev (Blessing Month of Elul)	7:00	8:45	8:15	8:52	4:52	9:27
Aug. 10	R'eh (Rosh Chodesh)	7:00	8:30	8:00	8:40	5:00	9:30
Aug. 17	Shoftim	7:00	8:45	7:50	8:30	5:08	9:33
Aug. 24	Ki Setze	7:00	8:45	7:40	8:18	5:17	9:36
Aug. 31	Ki Sovo	7:00	8:45	7:30	8:07	5:25	9:38
Sept. 7	Nitzovim	7:00	8:45	7:15	7:56	5:32	9:40

(continued on next page)

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES *(continued)***WEEKDAYS (unless listed otherwise—See below)**

Mornings: Sundays and Legal Holidays (Thursday, July 4)	8:00 A.M.
Mondays and Thursdays	6:40 A.M.
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays	6:50 A.M.
Evenings: Until September 5	7:30 P.M.

SPECIAL DAYS

Sunday	May 19	Shovuos-Lernen 7:30 P.M.
Wednesday	June 12	Rosh Chodesh Tamuz, 1st day: Shacharis 6:30 A.M.
Thursday	June 13	Rosh Chodesh Tamuz, 2nd day: Shacharis 6:30 A.M.
Sunday	June 30	Shivo osor b'Tamuz: Fast begins 3:38 A.M.; Shacharis 8:00 A.M.; Mincho-Maariv 7:30 P.M.; fast ends 9:12 P.M.
Friday	July 12	Rosh Chodesh Av: Shacharis 6:30 A.M.
Sunday	July 21	Tisho b'Av: Fast begins Shabbos 8:22 P.M. Mincho-Maariv Shabbos 8:35 P.M.; Shacharis Sunday 8:00 A.M.; Mincho-Maariv 7:30 P.M.; fast ends 9:01 P.M.
Shabbos	Aug. 10	Rosh Chodesh Elul, 1st day: Shacharis 8:30 A.M.
Sunday	Aug. 11	Rosh Chodesh Elul, 2nd day: Shacharis 8:00 A.M.
Sunday	Sept. 1	Selichos 7:00 A.M.
Monday	Sept. 2	Selichos 7:00 A.M.
Tuesday	Sept. 3	Selichos 6:15 A.M.
Wednesday	Sept. 4	Selichos 6:15 A.M.
Thursday	Sept. 5	Selichos 6:00 A.M.
Friday	Sept. 6	Selichos 6:15 A.M.
Sunday	Sept. 8	Erev Rosh HaShono 7:00 A.M.

SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Daily Lernen after Shacharis
 Daily Lernen after Maariv
 Chumash Shiur Shabbos 45 minutes before Mincho
 Sidro explanation Shabbos after Mincho
 Ladies' Shiur Mondays 8:00 P.M.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



As every year, the Gemoro Shiur, under the skillful and erudite guidance of our Rabbi, took place every Shabbat between Chanukkah and Shabbat Hagadol. Rabbi Kahn had chosen the Tractate Chagiga. After each Lernen we had a Kiddush with refreshments, sponsored by the following:

Mr. & Mrs. Hugo Bacharach, Mr. Albert Blank, Mr. & Mrs. William Blank, Mr. & Mrs. Lothar Brown, Mr. & Mrs. Eric Hanau, Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Hanauer, Mrs. Anna Hartoch, Rabbi & Mrs. Shlomo Kahn, Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Knurr, Mrs. Ottie May, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Michel, Mr. & Mrs. Kurt Neu, Mrs. Bertel Neuhaus, Mrs. Rita Rosenthal, Mrs. Ruth Ruhm, Mrs. Hilde Saul, Mrs. Beatrice Schmidt, Mr. & Mrs. Harry Speier, Mrs. Charlotte Wahle, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Wolff, Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Wortsman, our Chevra Kadisha and our Sisterhood.

A Siyum, especially for the benefit of the first-born, was held on Erev Pesach after the Shacharis prayers, consisting of Rabbi Kahn's conclusion of the Gemoro tractate followed by a breakfast, sponsored by our Chevra Kadisha and prepared by Mesdames Rose Bacharach, Irma Hanauer and Ilse Strassburger. Our heartfelt thanks to all those who were donors and those who prepared the breakfast, but especially to Rabbi Kahn for his efforts in making the Shiur interesting and inspiring.

Following an established tradition, our Chazan, Mr. Seth Lutnick, spent the first two days of Pesach at home with his family, and in his absence our Treasurer, Mr. Eric Hanau, led the Synagogue Services in his usual very capable manner and we all enjoyed the familiar melodies that he presented. Mr. Albert Blank took over the Reading from the Torah. Our deep appreciation to both of them.

And, finally, heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Herta Hirsch who once again polished our Torah silver to a festive shine.

William B. Blank

COMMUNITY NEWS



JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL THE KESHER PROGRAM

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CONGREGATION NEWS IN BRIEF



...elsewhere in this issue appears a full report on Chevra Day, meeting, Memorial Service and Purim-Chevra-Dinner, which took place on February 24th...

...the Congregation's annual General Membership Meeting occurred on March 3rd -- see full report in this issue...

...an additional donation towards the purchase of the Gemoros for use in the Lernen between Chanukkah and Pesach was made by Miss Rosel Hirsch..

...the Pesach Yomim Tovim enjoyed traditional observance, prepared by several services to the members, such as a Siyum on Erev Pesach which followed months of weekly Talmud study, distribution of Pesach food guide and holiday instructions, with Yomtov services conducted by Cantor Seth Lutnick and Mr. Eric Hanau...

...Yom HaShoah was noted during the services on Shabbos, April 13th with a short dramatic reading and the Holocaust Memorial Prayer...

...celebrating Israel's 43rd anniversary, a special Yom Atzmaut service on April 17th included Yom Zikaron prayers (for victims of Israel's wars), a festive Maariv in Yomtov chant, concluded with serving of refreshments by the Sisterhood...

...for those interested: bus service to Cedar Park-Beth El Cemeteries is scheduled for May 12, June 2, and 16, July 7, August 4 and 25, September 1...

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GREETINGS FOR SHAVUOTG

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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING 1991

On a sunny mild March morning, Sunday, March 3, 1991 to be exact, 37 loyal members of Congregation Beth Hillel and Beth Israel gathered for the annual membership meeting, held in the Social Hall of the Congregation.

The meeting opened officially at 10:36. The Minutes of last year's meeting, read in their entirety by Mr. Weil, were accepted. One minute of standing silence was observed in memory of Manfred Walden, long-time executive secretary of the Congregation and, both preceding and following his retirement, second chazan on the High Holydays, and of Walter Strauss, active and valuable Board member of many years, both of whom had died during the preceding year.

William Blank, president of our Congregation, gave the annual "State-of-the Congregation" report. In general, the affairs of the Congregation are in good order. The new air-conditioning system for the synagogue is functioning most satisfactory and, in balance, will soon pay for itself. It may possibly be extended to also serve as our heating system. The Congregation participated in Operation Exodus with modest success. Several members pointed out that many people donated directly to Operation Exodus. Mr. Blank touched upon several other topics, all to the effect that the Congregation's activities and responsibilities were in a satisfactory state.

Rabbi Kahn connected the theme of the preceding Shabbat Torah *sidra*--Moses receiving the Tablets of the Law from G-d--with the work of the Board members and others of the Congregation. Moses' face "shone" (the Hebrew "shining face" is very similar to "horns," leading medieval translators of the Torah to err and Michelangelo to place horns on Moses) when he descended from Mt. Sinai with the Tablets. What was the origin of his facial spender, brilliance? According to one Midrash, Moses was writing the first Torah in a cave; the effort caused him to perspire. The satisfaction attending his efforts transformed his facial perspiration into a glow, a facial radiance. Rabbi Kahn concluded that the same radiance applies to all our congregants who work diligently for the welfare of our Congregation.

Mr. Hanau, our treasurer, reviewed our financial situation and found it to be satisfactory. The attendees accepted his report. The committee reports followed. Mr. Michel, for the House Committee, voiced the Committee's satisfaction with the new air-conditioning unit and sidewalk repairs. Future kitchen repairs were suggested by Mrs. Blank. Mrs. Blank, as acting chair of the Social-Cultural Committee, subsequent to Mr. Roos' resignation, lauded Mr. Roos' contributions, and listed the Congregation's successful social and cultural activities during the period 1990/91. The "Habayit" makes its quarterly appearance with the usual pattern of diverse articles and congregational items under the able leadership of Rabbi Kahn and devoted support of Mrs. Roman (Dr. Bloch, Bulletin Committee). Dr. Bloch also reviewed the editorial philosophy of "Habayit." Mr. Wortsman mentioned the visits to the sick and homebound by the Bikkur Cholim Committee, and Mrs. Wahle emphasized similar activities by the Washington Heights-Inwood Community Council. Fifteen members availed themselves of the inter-High Holidays' car service to visit graves in the Cedar Park-Beth El cemeteries (Messrs. Speier and Blank; Cemetery Committee). For the Synagogue Committee, Mr. Blank lauded the 10 to 15 men whose regular attendance maintains the daily minyan. Mr. Walden was missed at the High Holyday services and a suitable replacement will be sought. The number of seats in the rear of the synagogue will be reduced. The meetings of the Family Club have been suspended until Mrs. Richmond, its Director, will have recovered from her accident. Mr. Hanauer, president of the Chevra, reported on the Chevra's visits to the sick, the homebound, the bereaved, sponsorship of Oneg Shabbat events, and of donations to the needy and the Congregation. Similar activities are carried out by the Sisterhood, as detailed by Mrs. Blank, Sisterhood president. In addition, Mrs. Blank reported that all officers were reelected at the 48th annual membership meeting of the Sisterhood. She remembered the late Ria Roos in whose memory a memorial plaque will be placed. Ninety-five percent of the *Taharot* are performed by the Sisterhood. Mr. Blank thanked the Chevra and the Sisterhood for their efforts and support of the Congregation, and voiced his appreciation to "all those who help keep us alive:" the Board, the officers, the staff, the membership.

(continued on next page)

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING 1991

(continued)

Mr. Michel, for the Nominating Committee, reported that every current officer stands for reelection. the following were elected: William Blank (President), Oscar Wortsman (First Vice-President), Arthur Hanauer (Second Vice-President), Walter Michel (Third Vice-President), Eric Hanau (Treasurer), Kurt Hirsch (Assistant Treasurer), Charles Wolff (Secretary), Gary Weil (Recording Secretary), and three-year Trustees: Alfred Gerstley, Sidney Neuburger, Dr. Allen Neuhaus, Ruth Ruhm, Stanley Stone, and Frances Simon as two-year Trustee.

Mr. Wortsman, voicing the sentiments of the Congregation, thanked Messrs. Blank, Hanau, Michel and Hanauer, and Mesds. Blank and Hirsch for their services to the Congregation. The meeting adjourned at 11:48.

Dr. Eric Bloch

CONSECRATION OF MEMORIAL PLATES

During the Yizkor service on the eighth day of Pesach, the consecration of memorial plates which had been affixed during the past year, took place, as is traditional in our Kehillah for many years.

Rabbi Kahn devoted the sermon to the theme of redemption and faith in G'd, recalling the epic events commemorated by Pesach, especially the last of the ten plagues which finally led to Israel's freedom. He traced the Maariv *Hashkivenu* prayer to the mood of the Jewish first-born who relied on G'd's promise to save them from death while death stalked the streets of Egypt.

Similarly man commits his soul to heavenly protection every night and so too when the "long sleep" arrives.

After the traditional Yizkor prayers, the following names inscribed on Memorial Plates were read:

ILSE NUSSBAUM
THEA OSTER
JULIE HANAUER
RIA ROOS
WALTER STRAUSS
LILO HAMMEL
JULIE GOLDSCHMIDT
MANFRED WALDEN
ANNE WOLF

The Yizkor service concluded with recalling all who perished in the Holocaust.

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CHEVRA DAY

On or near the 7th of Adar, birthday and Yahrzeit of Moshe Rabbenu, we observe our Chevra Day. This year it was scheduled for Sunday, February 24th. It included all its three-fold elements: the annual general meeting of the Chevra, a community-wide Memorial Service, and a festive Chevra Seudah, jointly featuring as the Congregation's Purim Dinner.

The membership business meeting was conducted by Chevra President Authur Hanauer who presided over the proceedings which were attended by members of the Chevra Kadisha. It included discussion of past year's proceedings, finances, and election of officers and trustees. All of it took place smoothly and efficiently.

At the Memorial Service, which took place in the synagogue, Mr. Eric Hanau officiated, leading the assembled in the Mincha Service. A rendition of the choir preceded the sermon delivered by Rabbi Kahn, who used the text of a Mishna recited at the Kabbolas Shabbos service on Friday evening to highlight three Shabbos preparations: apportioning food, also for the needy, setting aside a communal domain, and kindling the Shabbos lights. Rabbi Kahn then applied these to the entire life which is a preparation for the afterlife, requiring deeds of loving kindness, care for the community, and preparing for the continuity of life of the soul.

The names of the deceased were solemnly read and the traditional prayer for their repose chanted. With a rendition by the choir, the service was concluded.

The dinner guests then entered our social hall which had been fittingly prepared for the Chevra-Purim Dinner. As in the past, Mr. Hanauer had arranged for the serving of excellent and plentiful food served by courteous waiter. He welcomed the attending guests and supervised the serving of the meal.

Rabbi Kahn departed from his usual practice of delivering an amusing dinner speech as he felt it inappropriate to do so while the Gulf War and its danger to our brethren in Israel still prevailed.

The enjoyable, delicious and successful dinner was concluded with the reciting of Benshen by Rabbi Kahn, after the traditional Benshen-auctioning which enjoyed wide and generous response. Once again a vote of thanks is due to Mr. Authur Hanauer and Mr. Charles Wolff for a successful afternoon.

Hugo Bacharach

SHAVUOT GREETINGS

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ALL IN THE FAMILY

The geographical dispersion of our people has brought forth a wealth of local customs apart from those prescribed by established standards. Where we grew up this complex of *Minhagim* was referred to as "Brauchjudentum." Aware that this term included also many culinary delights, "Volksmund" managed to coin a fitting, though less elegant, description of the joys of Jewish cooking by the simple means of dropping the second consonant of the concept named above.

With the inbetween Yom-tovim status at the time of this writing, your reporter wistfully remembers Hamantashen and Passover cakes, while already priming his taste buds for the cheesecake honoring Shavuot.

The "diet" of Besorot Tovot to be reported this time, alas, is a trifle on the scant side; but belated congratulations go to Mrs. Ann Scher whose 70th birthday should have been recorded in the Pessach issue. This time we feature three nonagenarians; with Mr. Rudolph Bauer celebrating the four-score-and-ten mark in May, Mr. Simon Metzger his 91st birthday in the same month and Mrs. Bertha Bechhofer having observed her 97th birthday in April.

Fourth-generation enrichment occurred to Mrs. Else Richmond who was presented with a great-grandson in March and to Mrs. Elsa Lowenstein with the birth of a great-grandson in April. To Mr. and Mrs. Eric Loeb a granddaughter was presented in April. Mr. and Mrs. Manfred Schoen share in the simchah of their granddaughter Bonnie Glasman's engagement to Mr. Daniel Kaplan.

In the absence of more family items, your correspondent wishes to convey one more bit of good dietary news: A low-cholesterol 2 egg diet has been found and it is really very simple: One on Pessach and one on Shemini Atzeret! Oh yes, and we'll also try to make "The Simchah List" as long again as its introduction...

Chag Shavuot Sameach,
Shalom ve-hatzlachah,
Theodore H. Spaeth

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BEST WISHES FOR SHAVUOT

THANK YOU

My sincere thanks to the Congregation, Chevra Kadisha, and Sisterhood for their concern shown at the passing of Justin Hirschheimer, my dear brother, and father of my nieces.

Irene Heimer

Many thanks to Rabbi and Mrs. Kahn, the Congregation and Sisterhood, for the good wishes and flowers I received on my 90th birthday.

Gerta Stern

Congregation Beth Hillel and Beth Israel was an integral part of our parents' lives in the Washington Heights Community. We wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who made it so.

To all who touched their lives and shared their pleasures and their pain, we hope you will share fond memories.

The Lowenfels Family

Our sincere thanks to Rabbi Kahn, President and Mrs. Blank, Mr. and Mrs. Wortsman and members and friends of our Congregation, for their expression of sympathy on the passing of my dear sister.

Walter & Leoni Michel

We like to thank Rabbi Kahn, the Shevra Kadisha, our relatives and all our friends who gave us so much comfort at the passing of our dear wife and mother Anne Wolff.

John & Melvin Wolff & Family

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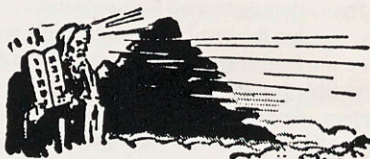
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Michael Reinheimer

Greetings and best wishes for a pleasant summer



THE EQUALIZER

Rabbi Shlomo Kahn

This July it will be 221 years since 56 men of vision, "in General Congress assembled," endowed with wisdom, imbued with integrity and provoked by vexing circumstances, affixed their signatures with bold strokes to a timeless document. Its second paragraph begins in ringing words:

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.

So absolute and unquestionable was this "truth" of the equality of man to the signers of America's Declaration of Independence, that they issued neither documentation nor corroborating data. They simply stated it as an unequivocal pronouncement, offering no proof or elucidating analysis.

Almost two-and-a-quarter centuries have passed. Mankind has fallen deeply in love with the "truth" of the equality of man, has "grown accustomed to her face." But this was not always the case. Societies in ancient and medieval times and well into the period of the American colonies and beyond, sincerely questioned this rather novel, innovative and frankly, presumptuous "truth." Is it really self-evident?

If self-evident is synonymous with "natural," the answer is no. There is no equality in nature, no democracy, no sense of fairness. There *is* balance but it is not based on peaceful coexistence. How can there be, when the lion pounces on the gazelle, when the wolf preys on the sheep and the spider dines on the fly; when the rich foliage of the linden robs the struggling crocus of its desperately needed sunlight; when parents' hearts are filled with tormenting ache and anguish because the long-awaited child turns out to be mentally impaired?

Nor is there "natural" equality in society, when money breeds money and those born with the proverbial silver spoon enjoy the blessings of luxury while their "equals" under the law suffer from woeful inequities of economics, in a vicious cycle of want begetting want; when in the "land of the free" rag-clad and under-nourished homeless sleep in the gutter not far from the mansions of millionaires, nay billionaires who are their fellow citizens.

Does nature offer that other "truth" of the *Animal Farm*, that biting burlesque of pre-Gorbachev Soviet Russia, where the brazen pigs insist that "all animals are equal but some are more equal than others"?

Ah, but there blows also another wind in nature, fresh and invigorating, billowing softly, a gentle breeze which can quickly, disappointingly, die down, or be fanned into a powerful and irresistible storm, capable of dispersing all dark and threatening clouds to clear the way for bright sunshine. This is the "natural" quest for equality. It burns like a fire in every human being's breast.

We see it with undeniable clarity in the very young at a time when innocence, honesty and truth have not yet been adulterated, not yet masked by maturity and adulthood. It's in the baby's piercing cry and in the squeals of delight, it's in the child's spontaneous outbursts, the gales of laughter, the torrents of tears, not yet unchecked by the code of behavior which is carefully taught later. Here equality is indeed a self-evident truth, a fundamental basic right, claimed and defended and fought for tooth and nail. At dinner table and the classroom, at party games and on the ball team, fair and equal treatment is fully expected and loudly, even belligerently demanded.

(continued on next page)

THE EQUALIZER

(continued)

To be sure, man outgrows this so freely demonstrated human nature of his and becomes the polite and refined and civilized person, but his inborn behavior reveals what comes "naturally."

From this spark in the soul of man, burning desires are ignited which the winds of time fanned into mighty movements and irresistible forces. Powerful despots were toppled and swept away. Age-old dynasties were overthrown. Bejewelled crowned heads fell or were forced to become gilded figure-heads, and the long-suffering masses claimed and achieved coveted equality.

Statesmen and theoreticians embarked on painstaking thinking and agonizing debates to construct fair, equitable houses of representation, often resulting in calculated compromises between stubbornly staked-out areas of interest. Long, painful journeys led over seemingly insurmountable obstacles to obtain a fair shake and a just deal for the benefit of the working class. Clearing the roadblocks of racial and ethnic barriers left behind waystations of despair and even martyrdom. Bold and innovative court rulings made the highways smooth and safe for travel. And in the most recent stage of providing equal opportunities, neither expense nor effort is spared to accommodate the physically handicapped to fully participate in all amenities of life. So does modern man applaud and endorse with undisguised enthusiasm and vigor the 221-year-old declaration that "all men are created equal" as a "self-evident Truth."

But when all is said and done, another "Truth" is equally evident: full equality, an equality which effectively erases the differences that divide man from man, physically, economically, intellectually and emotionally eludes all our ambitiously and sincerely launched efforts. Unless we go to the cemetery!

Death is a great leveler, a grand equalizer. (Rashi renders Solomon's "...nor is there authority over the day of death" [Ecclesiastes 8:8] to mean "royalty is of no avail on the day of death ...as in the verse 'the days of David--not King David--drew nigh to die' [1 Kings 2:1].)

Democracy reigns supreme there, where the dead sleep. To be sure, the scene of tranquility is often tactlessly disturbed by a display of affluence, a practice on which the Rabbis of the Talmud frowned and which they discouraged with sweeping authority. "At first, the (expenses incurred by) burial proved more painful to the family than the (actual pain of) death, resulting in the flight of relatives, until Rabbon Gamliel willed (to be buried in) inexpensive shrouds; thus was it then established for all" (Talmud Moed Koton 27b). Hence the required uniformity of moderation: plain coffin, simple shrouds, no flowers.

But there is also an illustrious equalizer in life, namely the humbling presence of majesty. It is in the nature of people to differ, not only in physical appearance but also in character and attitude, in taste, likes and dislikes, in opinion and standpoint. This is healthy and of benefit, for variety brings balance and satisfaction on a broad scale. (How else would plain folks find loving marriage partners!)

Not surprisingly, differences lead to debate and discussion, again beneficial, for that elicits clarity and better understanding. But a regrettable consequence of dissent and disagreement is dispute and clash, bickering and quarrel, often needlessly ruffling feathers, heating tempers, destroying friendships. An immediate and effective calming element is the entry of a widely respected authority.

Let a teacher or principal stride into a boisterous classroom--at once the squabbling students fall silent. When the lecturing professor reaches the lectern, a hush falls over the vast auditorium. Picture now the Sinai event in its unparalleled grandeur, an entire people, we estimate 2-3 million strong, standing in trembling awe and tremulous reverence, seeing the thunder-and-lightning struck mountain on which a fire raged for the Almighty had descended on it to speak.

No wonder the Rabbis of the Midrash describe that moment in history in superlatives: "Not a bird chirped or took wing, no animal made a sound, not even the angels moved or sang their hymns of glory, the sea was motionless, not a word was uttered in creation, the entire cosmos fell silent as G'd began to speak" (Exodus Rabo 29:9)

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THE EQUALIZER

(continued)

Even more significant is this comment of the Midrash: "When G'd revealed Himself to Israel, there were no blind among them and no mute, there were no deaf among them and no lame, nor did anyone lack his sanity" (Mechilto 20:15).

Temporarily cured of physical handicaps? Yes, and compellingly and appropriately so, for acceptance of Torah requires full awareness and utmost alertness. But perhaps the Midrash also describes thereby a suddenly acquired equality, when faced by the commanding and overwhelming majesty of the moment.

A careful reading of the verse which introduces the Sinai passage bears this out. "They [plural] traveled from Rephidim, *they* [plural] came to the wilderness of sinai, *they* [plural] camped in the wilderness, there *Israel* camped [singular] opposite the mountain" (Exodus 19:2). "Everywhere else in bickering and strife--here as one man and with one heart" (Mechilto, Rashi *ibid*).

A popular Seder song comes longingly to mind:

"Had He brought us near in front of Mount Sinai
(even) without giving us the Torah
dayenu -- it would have sufficed for us!"

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THE TALMUD FOR EVERYONE

A surge of excitement could be felt in the domed Jerusalem study of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz when the first two volumes of *The Talmud*, *The Steinsaltz Edition* arrived fresh from the publisher. The beautifully designed cream-colored tomes could easily be coffee-table art books.



"Indeed, esthetics is part of our goal too," said a staff member at the rabbi's Israel Institute for Talmudic Publications in Jerusalem. "We hope that presenting the Talmud in a beautiful way, with an extensive commentary in English, will make (it) accessible and attractive to all Jews. We want to bridge the spiritual Berlin Wall that separates Jews from their tradition."

Ultimately, it is hoped that bringing this primary source of the Jewish religion into Jewish homes will create a type of revolution, a shift in what has seemed to be an inexorable movement toward assimilation. This might sound a bit bombastic, an exaggerated goal for one man's translation and commentary, but the maverick Steinsaltz, the impish, pipe-smoking talmudic scholar, has been carrying on a quixotic battle to keep the Jewish people in touch with its self and its sources.

"Most Jews," says Steinsaltz, "get their view of religion in Hebrew school, when they are very young. They grow, but their God doesn't grow with them."

The Jerusalem rabbi grew up in a Marxist, antireligious home—studying mathematics and physics at the Hebrew University—but turned in his mid-teens to seek a larger view of God through talmudic and kabbalistic sources. Luck was with the Jewish people: An extraordinary scholar and thinker emerged. But Steinsaltz chose not to enter an ivory-tower yeshiva environment. Supersensitive to the intellectual and cultural currents that influence contemporary thinking, he has devoted his extraordinary talents in Talmud to building bridges between Jewish sources and the lives and thinking of Jewish people today. His eyes sparkle mischievously as he said: "I've tried to keep the lines of communication open to home."

His most recent accomplishment in this direction was the creation of a yeshiva in Moscow. And now on the heels of that achievement has come the publication of the first two volumes of his English translation and commentary on the Talmud.

Bridging worlds often demands fancy footwork, even a certain degree of wiliness. And Steinsaltz has, to a great extent, succeeded in eluding categorization. He is at once a hard, rational talmudist and a mystic and *hasid*. Evidence of his diversity can be found in the simultaneous publication of *The Talmud* by Random House (\$40 per volume) and three volumes of his (*Discourses on Hasidic Thought* by Jason Aronson. *Discourses* discusses the thought of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Habad hasidism.) At the same time, Aronson has also published Steinsaltz's *The Strife of the Spirit*, a collection of essays ranging from theological discussions about the soul to analyses of contemporary issues. He has also spent time at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies—all of which makes it difficult to pinpoint the rabbi. Is he Zionist or *haredi*, cosmopolitan thinker or hasidic rabbi? "He who stands at an intersection is endangered by traffic from all directions," Steinsaltz has said.

The Talmud (the Oral Law) is the record of discussions and debates that took place among Jewish sages over several hundred years about the meanings and laws of the Torah (the Written Law). It was compiled in Aramaic in the fifth century of the Common Era, and is the basis of the Jewish lifestyle. Steinsaltz has explained that the Talmud is not a book you read and are finished with. Rather, it is what in contemporary educational theory is called interactive: The reader takes an active role in questioning the text, pitting one sage's views against another's. On the most abstract level, it creates an absorbing intellectual reality as does mathematics or chess. But as with mathematics, it points to and is the underpinning for the real world.

For most of his adult life Steinsaltz has been engaged in showing how this is true. He has demonstrated the relevance of Talmud for our lives. He has translated it from Aramaic to Hebrew, punctuating it and writing commentary to help the layman find his way through its circuitous logic. With more than a half-million copies sold in Israel, the completed 20 of the 36 projected volumes in Hebrew have become an indispensable aid to Jewish learning: Steinsaltz editions can be found in one out of every 12 Israeli homes, in left-wing kibbutzim as well as religious schools and homes. Now, Steinsaltz and his small staff are expanding the project in the English-speaking world as well.

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A TALMUD FOR EVERYONE (continued)

The rabbi sees his work on the Talmud in a broader vision of cultural and spiritual energy. At the beginning of this century, he feels, we witnessed a movement toward the sciences and technology. "There's always a flow toward content, to that which has something to say to our lives at the time," he explains. According to this view, it would seem that the study of the Talmud had apparently atrophied. It was not being presented in a meaningful way, as something that touches one's vital needs. But the Holocaust and the limitations of technology in improving human nature while synthesizing scientific thought beyond a mechanistic world view, have engendered the possibility of new spiritual energies. Steinsaltz's goal is to direct the spiritual flow toward a revitalization of Jewish life and learning.

The English translation of the Talmud is an attempt to achieve this. It is more than a literal translation—there are already other literal translations in existence like the Soncino. The Steinsaltz commentary takes the reader by the hand and guides him through the dense paths of law and lore to reveal the Talmud's relevance to contemporary life and thought. Included is historical background, biographical information on the sages, notes on later commentaries. The first volume in English is a reference guide. It illuminates talmudic terminology and concepts; and discusses the history, structure, language and logic of the Talmud.

"At the simplest level," the rabbi explains, "my hope is to reduce the alienation many Jews feel for the Talmud. The truth is that the subject has such a bad name. Many people feel it's impossible to approach it. It's too difficult and esoteric. I hope that we can afford a change of attitude in this respect. There are things that one feels are impossible, and suddenly one crosses a barrier and they become possible. At this very moment, we are witnessing this in the events in Eastern Europe. Before 1948, most Jews didn't relate to Zionism. But in 1948, a border was crossed. And it has an immense impact on American Jewry. Zionism gained respect. At the simplest level this is what I am hoping will happen in relation to talmudic study for the masses of people. A change of attitude will occur. Talmud, for example, is not popular in Israeli schools. It's difficult. Mathematics is also difficult. But if one doesn't like mathematics, one blames oneself. If one doesn't like Talmud, it's the Talmud's fault. It's all a matter of status."

Steinsaltz's edition of the *Talmud* is not only important in reducing alienation from tradition. "There are many people, even rabbis," says Steinsaltz, "for whom the Talmud has value, status, but they get little pleasure out of it because it's such hard work. We hope that, as (with) the Hebrew version, (the English version) will become a tool that will make talmudic study a pleasure for this group. There are people who like to do hard things like crossword puzzles. In the same vein, perhaps there are Jews who will be able to say 'Ah, I understand a page of the Talmud. What a pleasure!'"

Critics have accused Steinsaltz of simplifying a profound text, reducing it by polarizing and democratizing it. They claim that for centuries scholars have studied the Talmud day and night and now he wants to make it a quick read. Steinsaltz chews his pipe and listens. Schooled in the dialectics of rabbinical discourse, he hastens to respond. "We are not simplifying the text," he asserts. "We are simply taking away the technical difficulties. The intrinsic issues remain, and the more learned can devote their time to grappling with the deeper aspects of the Talmud."

"As far as being called a popularizer," the rabbi says with a smile, "I am not afraid of such terms. The Jewish approach is to teach the coming generations. That was Moses' job. The Jewish tradition never accepted the view that part of the Jewish people should remain ignorant."

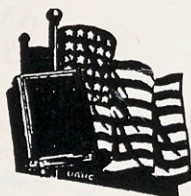
"The situation is urgent. It seems as if the Jewish people is going toward a situation where in another generation it will be divided between those who are very committed and those who have Jewish ancestors but are themselves no longer Jews. We have not yet come to this. At this point there are still Jews who are marginal Jews, and their children can go either way. They are standing on a precipice. It is our hope that we can still get to them, educate them, bring them over to the committed side before they fall into oblivion from a Jewish point of view."

"You know, the definition of a Jewish optimist," Steinsaltz says, "is the one who sees things as bleak as possible—and still hopes."

Rochelle Furstenberg

AMERIKAS AELTESTE SYNAGOGUE IST HEUTE NATIONALDENKMAL

Fuer unzählige Amerikaner ist das alte Newport in Rhode Island Synonym fuer Millionaersresidenzen und die gesellschaftliche Elite des Landes. Aber Dollar-Millionen reichen vielleicht auch heute nicht, Eingang in Newports "high society" zu bekommen. Der haengt vom richtigen Familiennamen, von entsprechender Erziehung und nicht zuletzt auch von der richtigen Religion ab. Doch die Ironie des Schicksals wollte es, dass, nur ein paar Meilen von den exklusiven Sommerpalaesten entlang der Bellevue Avenue entfernt, ein Symbol religioeser Freiheit in Amerika erhalten blieb: die Touro-Synagoge.



Die Synagoge, deren Grundstein 1759 gelegt wurde, stellt heute nicht nur im Rahmen des amerikanischen Nationalparks verwaltetes Museum und nationales Denkmal dar, sondern auch die aktive Synagoge einer aus 145 Familien bestehenden orthodoxen Gemeinde. Denn lange bevor Newport zum Spielplatz amerikanischer Millionaere wurde, bildete es—wie der gesamte Staat Rhode Island—die Zufluchtsstaette jener, die Glaubensfreiheit suchten. Der Staatsgruender Roger Williams wurde aus der puritanischen Bay Colony Massachusetts verbannt und plante Rhode Island deshalb als einen Staat, in dem "kein Mensch seines Glaubens wegen belaeztigt werde."

Das 1639 erstmals besiedelte Newport wurde zur Heimat fuer religioese Fluechtlinge. Viele waren Quaecker oder auch sefardische Juden aus Spanien und Portugal, oftmals Marranen, die sich hier wieder frei zum Judentum bekennen durften. Andere wiederum kamen aus weiteren Laendern Europas, Suedamerikas und aus westindischen Gebieten. Zu den namhaftesten Newportern zaehlte der Schiffsmagnat Arthur Lopez, der in Portugal unter dem Namen Duarte Lopez gelebt hatte. Obwohl in einer katholischen Kirche getraut, heirateten die Lopez in Newport nochmals nach juedischem Ritual, und aus Duarte bzw. Arthur wurde nun Aaron Lopez, einer der Synagogengruender und wichtigster Philantrop im Newport der Kolonialzeit.

Obwohl Juden schon seit 1640 in Newport lebten, mussten sie bis 1763 auf eine eigene Synagoge warten. Aaron Lopez, Abraham Rodriguez Mendez und Jacob Rodriguez Rivera machten gemeinsame Sache mit ein paar osteuropaeischen Neuankoemmlingen, um die Jeschuat Israel-Synagoge zu schaffen, die spaeter in Touro-Synagoge umbenannt wurde. Der Name ist auf Isaac Touro, den ersten Kantor der Synagoge, zurueckzufuehren, nach dem auch eine Strasse benannt wurde, in der das Bethaus steht.

Die Touro-Synagoge ist aber nicht nur ein amerikanisches Nationaldenkmal und Symbol religioeser Freiheit, sondern auch ein vom Meisterarchitekten des kolonialen Amerika, Peter Harrison, entworfenes architektonisches Kunstwerk. Harrison bediente sich des damals vorherrschenden Stils und der Grundsaeetze georgischer Architektur: Symmetrie, Ausgewogenheit und Rhythmus. Er passte alles den Beduerfnissen des juedischen Ritus an, damit das Gebaeude in diagonalen Position steht und die Gemeinde waehrend des Gottesdienstes ostwaerts in Richtung Jerusalem blickt.

Ein Grossteil der Inneneinrichtung blieb erhalten. Die sogenannte Hirschhaut-Tora im schuetzenden Glasschrank ist authentisch, ebenso das ueber der Bundeslade haengende Gemaelde der Zehn Gebote. Obwohl der dritte Buchstabe in den letzten vier Geboten falsch ist, wurden die Fehler in Anbetracht der historischen Bedeutung des Bildes nie korrigiert. Das Ewige Licht stammt aus dem Jahre 1765, wurde bis 1880 von Oel genaehrt und seither durch eine elektrische Gluehbirne ersetzt. Die erste Gluehbirne hielt bis 1975, was Experten auf deren niedrige Watt-Zahl zurueckfuehren, Gemeindeglieder aber mit dem Oelwunder von Chanukka vergleichen. Auch die fuef Messingleuchter stammen aus den fruehesten Jahren der Synagoge. Der groesste von ihnen hat zwei Zweige, die ebenso wie die zwei die Galerie stuetzenden ionischen und die zwei bis zur Decke reichenden korinthischen Saeulen die Staemme Israels symbolisieren.

Der 1746 in Amsterdam in Hebraeisch gedruckte und in Silber gebundene Tenach eines der Synagogengruender sowie ein zweites Gemaelde mit der spanischen Uebersetzung der Zehn Gebote sind Denkmaeler juedischen Lebens im Kolonialzeitalter. Die von vielen Besuchern bewunderten Windsor-Stuehle sind allerdings Reproduktionen. Zur Gruendungszeit der Synagoge gab es keine Stuehle, sondern nur Baenke entlang der Seitenwaende und—wie in orthodoxen Synagogen ueblich—eine Frauenempore.

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AMERIKAS AELTESTE SYNAGOG 1ST HEUTE NATIONALDENKMAL

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In den mehr als 200 Jahren ihres Bestehens hatte die Touro-Synagoge zahlreiche illustre Gaeste aufzuweisen: Diplomaten wie Abba Eban und Arthur Goldberg, Dichter wie Robert Frost und Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Schriftsteller wie Herman Wouk und Praesidenten von George Washington bis Dwight D. Eisenhower. Es war Washington, der nach seinem Besuch in einem Brief an die Mitglieder der Gemeinde den beruehmt gewordenen Satz schrieb: "Gluecklicherweise fordert die keinerlei Bigotterie duldende, keinerlei Verfolgung unterstuetzende Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten von jenen, die unter ihrem Schutz leben, lediglich ein gutbuergerliches Verhalten und eine effektive Unterstuetzung."

Im fruehen 19. Jahrhundert loeste sich die sefardische Gemeinde von Newport auf, und zwischen 1820 und 1883 stand die Touro-Synagoge leer. Doch gegen Ende der achtziger Jahre des vorigen Jahrhunderts stroemten Wellen neuer juedischer Einwanderer aus Ost-und Mitteleuropa nach Newport, und die Touro-Synagoge wurde wieder zum Gotteshaus der hier ansaessigen Juden.

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THE TRIUMPH OF THE SANHEDRIN

On the occasion of Tisha Be'Av, which commemorates the destruction of the Temple and the end of national independence, Dr. Moshe Dann traces how the sages of 20 centuries ago found the way to preserve Jewish national and spiritual identity.

As civil war raged within Jerusalem and the Roman army awaited the signal to attack, one of the leading rabbinical sages of his generation arranged to get himself smuggled out of the besieged city.

According to the traditional story, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai secretly made his way to the camp of Vespasian, commander of the Roman legions. He greeted the general with "Hail, Emperor." At that moment, a messenger arrived from Rome and announced that the Senate had indeed appointed the commander Emperor.

In recognition of Rabbi Yohanan's timely prophecy, and his implied acceptance of Roman rule, Vespasian granted his request for permission to re-establish the central institution of Jewish authority, the Sanhedrin, at Yavne, a small town not far from the coast.

This decision was a turning point in Jewish history, for it enabled the remnants of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael to create a basis for their continuity amid devastation.

The Sanhedrin had functioned since the time of the giving of the Tora. It existed long enough to provide not only a judicial system, but a foundation for the Jewish people to survive in exile by establishing institutions of learning (in Babylon) that lasted 1,600 years. The members of the Sanhedrin constituted what came to be known during the time of transition as the Men of the Great Assembly, *Anshei Knesset Hagedola*.

The Great Assembly gave form and structure to the development of Jewish civilization during the Babylonian Exile and the Return to Zion. It was originally composed of 120 sages (from where we derive the number of members of today's Knesset). Members who died were not replaced. The last of its members was Shimon Hatzadik (Simon the Just), who lived, according to tradition, in the early Hellenistic period and, some say, met Alexander the Great in the 4th century BCE.

Following this period, the leadership of the Jewish people was divided among *zugot* (pairs of scholars): the *nasi* (president, or "prince"), and the *av bet din* (chief administrative officer) of the Sanhedrin. (The term is Greek for an assembly that sits in judgement; the word came to be used commonly in the late Hellenistic/early Roman period.)

With the destruction of the Second Temple, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai struggled to bring peace and counselled submission to the Roman occupation. A disciple of Hillel, he was not only a brilliant expert on law, but was one of the first sages to engage in mysticism. It is said that he was the first one to enter the yeshiva and the last one to leave, that he never allowed anyone else but himself to open the door for his students, and that he always greeted others first, even non-Jews.

Yohanan cautioned against excessive mourning for the destruction, hoping to encourage the survivors to pick up the pieces of their lives and go on, rather than dwell in despair. In that spirit he emphasized acts of lovingkindness—*gemilut hasadim*—as atonement for the sins of the people, and the study of Tora as a replacement for the Temple ritual.

(This notion is reflected in the late chief rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Kook's vision that the era of the Third Temple or Third Commonwealth would be marked by altruistic love, as the Second Temple had been destroyed because of causeless hatred. This would be a redemption of awareness, of commitment—a redemption without end.)

The rabbis in Yavne, however, had to struggle with an immediate crisis: how to sustain Jewish

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THE TRIUMPH OF THE SANHEDRIN (continued)

life without the Temple—the focus of worship for nearly 1,000 years. Previously, only the Sanhedrin in the Temple had the authority to determine religious practices. Yohanan supported a strong central authority, represented by the office of the *nasi*. He believed that this would be the basis for a national and spiritual leadership that could provide stability and unity.

Under Rabbi Yohanan the sages continued to assemble the collective wisdom, laws, commentaries and traditions that provided continuity and inspiration despite overwhelming tragedies.

Learning centres again began to flourish, augmenting the revival of religious and cultural life. That so many centres existed testifies to both the tolerance and diversity among the rabbis.

The new academies epitomized the revival of religious and cultural life. As the codification of Jewish law began, a more subtle process took place concomitantly—forms of authority were re-established. These included the perfection of the calendar and determination of rules for setting the dates of festivals.

The achievements of the rabbis who constituted the Sanhedrin and the academies are reflected in the monumental compilation of law (*halacha*) and lore (*agada*), the key intellectual elements of the Mishna and Gemara, which together make up the Talmud. Had the rabbis failed in their effort to bequeath a reliable, authentic tradition, Judaism would have fragmented. Without a clear comprehensive and binding system, Judaism would have been less able to withstand the pressures to assimilate in the Diaspora.

Re-weaving the fabric of society torn by war and internal dissent, the rabbis, using techniques and institutions that had served them before, created a structure that would survive even the bitterest times of Jewish history. No matter where a Jew was, no matter what the conditions, the Oral Tora—as the Talmud and all subsequent Halacha is known—gave him a guidepost.

There are two editions of the Talmud. One was completed in Babylon, the other in Eretz Yisrael, mainly in Tiberias and Caesarea, Roman provincial centres that provided some protection and stability for the often beleaguered rabbis. But the latter was called the "Jerusalem Talmud" because of the symbolic importance of that ruined city where the Holy Temple once stood.

Rabbi Yohanan died about a decade after the destruction of the Temple. The work that he had begun was carried on by the grandson of the famous sage Hillel, Rabban Gamaliel II of Yavne, who was designated as the *nasi*, the head of the reconstituted Sanhedrin. His father, Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, had been the *nasi* at the time of the destruction of the Temple, and authored many *takkanot* (special rabbinic legislation to meet specific circumstances) to "preserve the world," that is, practical applications of moral law.

Rabban Gamaliel II, in fact, was one of the first to organize the topics of Halacha which would be incorporated into the Mishna, when it was codified in the second century CE. He did not emerge publicly as a leader until the Sanhedrin moved north to Usha in 86 CE, where it remained for a decade (Usha lies just east of present-day Haifa).

By the end of the first century CE, the intense persecutions briefly abated under the new Emperor Nerva (96-98 CE). He eased restrictions on the Jews and even removed the special tax levied on Jews to support the temple of Jupiter.

Teaching Tora again became a subversive activity as the academies struggled to survive the anti-Jewish laws of Trajan. R. Gamaliel II, after a brief return to Yavne, moved to Lod, where Rabbi Tarfon had a yeshiva. We learn that because of the expense of burying the dead, people would simply abandon them. Rabbi Gamaliel asked to be wrapped in a plain linen shroud—a practice which many observe today.

After his death, R. Elazar ben Azariah was appointed to head the sages in Lod, who now numbered 32. The situation had become so difficult that the rabbis were forced to move north and to meet secretly in Tzippori (Sepphoris).

Nevertheless, despite dangers, the rabbis asserted their authority and leadership. They traveled to Rome to plead the case of the Jewish community; one of them being the noted figure, Rabbi Akiva.

Rabbi Akiva, according to tradition, was an illiterate shepherd until the age of 40. He soon became the leading sage of his generation. A charismatic figure, and the most significant spiritual force behind the Bar Kochba rebellion, he died a martyr's death in Caesarea.

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THE TRIUMPH OF THE SANHEDRIN (continued)

The persecutions that almost destroyed the Jewish community following the rebellion threatened the delicate process of rebuilding that had begun only a generation before. Finding a safe place to convene Jewish courts and centres of learning was difficult.

Under more favourable emperors, Antoninus Pius (142-161) and Marcus Aurelius (161-180), there arose for the first time in generations the opportunity to form a Sanhedrin comprising in one location all the rabbis bearing authoritative traditions. Rabbi Yehuda the Nasi immediately grasped the historical moment, knowing that it would likely never be repeated. If the Oral tradition, carefully and reliably transmitted from generation to generation, would not be codified at this occasion, then it would be lost forever—surviving only as unreliable fragments and subject to the distortions that are the lot of other oral traditions.

The call went out for teachers *tanna'im* and students to assemble in the Galilee. The *tanna'im* who were at the centre of this massive and brilliantly successful project of codification also passed a number of *takkanot* dealing with the hardships and disintegration of family life during the period.

As the process of rebuilding Jewish communities throughout Galilee continued, the Sanhedrin moved about, from Usha to nearby Shfaram, to Tzippori, where under the leadership of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi the redaction of the Mishna was completed, and finally to Tiberias. When the last *nasi*, Rabban Gamaliel VI, died in 425 CE, the emperor refused to appoint a successor, and the Sanhedrin ceased to exist.

But by this time the Oral Tora had been codified; the calendar was authoritatively fixed and a system of yeshivot was flourishing throughout Eretz Yisrael and elsewhere. This was sufficient to assure the continuation of Jewish civilization. The Sanhedrin had served its purpose in guiding the people who had lost their national independence through a tumultuous period.

The significance of the Sanhedrin as a symbol of spiritual and national independence was not forgotten in Jewish history. Nearly 1,000 years after the patriarchate and Sanhedrin were abolished, Rabbi Jacob Berab, a student of Rabbi Yitzhak Aboab (the last *gaon* of Castille) and chief rabbi of Safed, attempted to convene a Sanhedrin. In 1538 he brought together 25 local rabbis, who gave him the power of ordination (which had been banned since the Roman period). His efforts met with opposition by the rabbis in Jerusalem, and ended in failure.

Four hundred years later, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Maimon, the Mizrahi leader and Israel's first Religious Affairs minister, urged the re-establishment of the Sanhedrin as a way of uniting the Jewish people under the chief rabbinate. It was bitterly opposed.

These efforts were prompted by a sense that we were close to the era of the Final Redemption. The institution of the Sanhedrin was intimately connected with a fundamental restructuring of the Jewish world—perhaps even the critical period that precedes the moment of rebirth.

Although the messianic perceptions may have been premature, the image of the Jewish people emerging at last out of tragedy and suffering into an age of freedom became central to a new vision of the world. The Sanhedrin represented an expression of national unity and spiritual commitment that heralded the fulfilment of divine prophecy.

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DIE SCHWARZEN JUDEN VON HARLEM

"Schabbat Schalom." Rabbi Claim White und Rabbi Bezalel Ben-Israel heissen die Brueder und Schwestern der "Gebote wahrenen Gemeinde aethiopischer Hebraeer" zum Schabbatgottesdienst willkommen. Maenner und Knaben dieser groessten und aeltesten Gruppe schwarzer Juden in der Synagoge West 123rd Street, New York, nehmen in den Vorderreihen, in der Naehe der Bundeslade, Platz. Frauen und Maedchen sitzen hinten. Kurz vor Beginn des Gottensdienstes werden die Namen jener "Brueder und Schwestern" aufgezaehlt, denen in dieser Woche eine *Alija Latora* zuteil wird.

Besucher ausserhalb von Harlem sind hier nicht sonderlich erwuenscht. Keineswegs aus mangelnder Gastfreundschaft, sondern aus Misstrauen gegenueber Kuriositaetenjaegern, die diese Gemeinde mit den in Israel lebenden Schwarzen Hebraeern verwechseln, die als einzige "echte Juden" gelten wollen. "Wir sind keine Clowns. Wir mischen uns nicht in fremde Dinge ein und wollen in Ruhe gelassen werden," erklaert Rabbi White, ein Mann mittleren Alters, der seinen Lebensunterhalt mit einer Tankstelle in Newark, N.J., bestreitet.

Die Empfindlichkeit ist, in an betracht wiederholter Zweifel an ihrer juedischen Authentitaet, verstaendlich. "Wir sind Juden. Unsere juedische Kultur wurde von unseren Eltern und deren Eltern gepraeagt," sagt Rabbi White. "Als die zwolf Staemme zerstreut wurden, zogen manche nach Afrika. Sie wurden spaeter als Sklaven gefangen, ihrer Rechte und ihrer Tradition beraubt. Es spielt keine Rolle, ob man uns Hebraeer, Israeliten oder Juden nennt. Wir sind alle miteinander Brueder."

Sind wir es wirklich? Diese Frage blieb in all den Jahrzehnten offen, in denen Schwarze in New York und in anderen amerikanischen Staedten, insbesondere in Chicago. Anerkennung als Teil der juedischen Gemeinschaft beanspruchten. In den sechziger Jahren wurden gewisse Bruecken zwischen den schwarzen Synagogen in Harlem und den weissen Juden von New York gebaut. Rabbi Hailu Paris, in Aethiopien geboren, der jetzt eine kleine schwarze Gemeinde in der Bronx anfuehrt, schaeetzte damals die Zahl der in einem Dutzend von Synagogen organisierten schwarzen Juden auf 10,000. Keiner kennt die gegenwaertige Zahl der Juden in dem halben Dutzend weiterhin in New York bestehender Gemeinden. "Auch wir hatten unter Mischehen und einer Verminderung des geistigen Lebens zu leiden," sagt Rabbi Paris.

Juedische Buergerrechtler hatten damals auch eine gemischte Jugendgruppe geschaffen, die sich Hazaad Harischon (Erster Schritt) nannte und den Dialog foerdern sollte. Derartige Versuche wurden spaeter, in Anbetracht halachischer Zweifel am juedischen Ursprung der Schwarzen, aufgegeben. Einer anderen Version zufolge war es jedoch Rassismus, der diese Spaltung bewirkte.

"Kein Mensch hat jemals versucht, den juedischen Ursprung eines Herrn Bernstein oder eines Herrn Cohen infrage zu stellen. Wenn es aber um die Schwarzen geht, werden prompt Studien ueber ihre Vergangenheit angeregt," meint Rabbi Irving Block, Mitglied des Board of Governors des New Yorker Rabbinerrates. Rabbi A. James Rudin vom American Jewish Committee plaediert fuer "Oeffnung der Tora": Wer immer nach dem Holocaust Jude sein wolle, solle willkommen sein.

Andere juedische Fuehrer bestreiten entschieden, dass die Hautfarbe irgendeine Rolle spiele und betuern, es gehe lediglich um juedische Religionsgesetze. "Man wird zum Juden entweder durch Abstammung oder durch Konversion," erklaert Rabbi Yitzhak Brandriss von der Agudat Israel. Eine aehnliche Haltung nimmt der Sprecher des israelischen Generalkonsulats ein: Das einzige Kriterium sei der Geburtsschein, aus dem hervorgehen muss, dass die Mutter Juedin ist. Derselbe Grundsatz gelte derzeit auch fuer sowjetische Emigranten.

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DIE SCHWARZEN JUDEN VON HARLEM (continued)

Rabbi White empfindet die Forderung des juedischen Establishment nach einer Konversion der Schwarzen als eine Zumutung: "Wir sind ja schon Hebraeer, also was soll die Konversion? Infolge dieser Differenzen haben die Schwarzen einen eigenen rabbinischen Rat gebildet. Sie nennen sich Hebraeer oder Israeliten mit afrikanischen Wurzeln. Juden seien lediglich die Nachfahren des Stammes Jehuda, und die sind entweder europaeischen oder arabischen Ursprungs. Allerdings verweigern sowohl die American Association for Ethiopian Jews als auch die North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry der Gemeinde Whites die Anerkennung einer aethiopisch-juedischen Authentizitaet.

Die Black Hebrew haetten sich in den zwanziger Jahren etabliert, ein Jahrzehnt spaeter haetten wiederum andere die Bewegung Black Muslims geschaffen, behauptet Soziologieprofessor Howard Botz von der McMasiers University in Toronto in einem Buch ueber die schwarzen Juden von Harlem. Seiner Version zufolge hat Marcus Garvey den schwarzen Nationalismus entzuendet, und Rabbi Wenworth A. Matthew, Gruender der Gemeinde, war ein Bewunderer Garveys. Die Black Muslims haben dieselben Wurzeln.

Bis auf die Tatsache, dass die mitglieder der "Gebote waehrenden Gemeinde" eine Kopfbedeckung tragen, die eher der muslimischen als der traditionellen juedischen Kippa aehnelt, laeuft der Gottesdienst weitgehend nach orthodoxem Ritus ab. Die Gebete werden in Hebraeisch gesprochen, doch die Betenden bleiben waehrend des gesamten Gottesdienstes stehen, ausgenommen waehrend der Toralesung. Einige Elemente des Gottesdienstes erinnern eher an baptistische oder reform-juedische Praxis. Eine Orgel begleitet den Chor von acht Frauen und zwei Maennern.

Rabbi White weist allerding derartige Vergleiche entschieden zurueck. "Wir leben nach den Gesetzen der Tora. Unsere Lebensart hat nichts mit nichtjuedischer Lebensart zu tun." Er bedauert das Misstrauen weisser Juden gegenueber seiner Gemeinde. Aber deren Mitglieder sind weder auf juedische Philantropie angewiesen noch empfinden sie Hass gegenueber Juden anderer Hautfarbe. "Wir wollen lediglich den Geboten folgen," sagt Rabbi White und schliesst das Gesprach ab mit den unter Juden ueblichen "Schalom."

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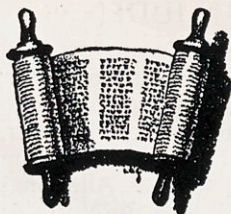
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ONE MAN'S SEARCH

YIRMIYAHU BEN-DAVID pushes a few buttons on his computer, and out comes a 12-page account of his life and beliefs. "What you are about to hear is based on a chain of logical reasoning," he explains. "If you leave out one link, it all falls apart. So I like to have it all organized and written down. That way I won't miss anything."

There are many other American immigrants living in the vicinity of Ben-David's Ra'anana apartment. But the 46-year-old Ben-David can claim a connection to the U.S. far greater than most.

Born Clint Van Nest III, he is the descendant of Pieter Pieterse Van Nest, who arrived in New Amsterdam from the Netherlands in 1647. A neighborhood in the Bronx is named after this ancestor of Ben-David's. The family turned up in our own generation as Baptists in Miami where Van Nest was born.

Van Nest took his religion seriously, embarking as a youth on a course of both formal and independent studies that eventually led him to convert to Judaism and to move to Israel.

"I was born to a Christian family," Ben-David recalls. "We attended church regularly. Yes, you could say my parents were devout.

"As early as I can remember," he continues, "I was interested in religion. I'd always felt there was a Creator, and I wanted to relate to that Creator."

Ben-David says he used the scientific method and reason to seek an understanding of his Creator. Mysticism never appealed to him. "You know what I think about mystics," he says dismissively.

Ben-David went about his search for God the way a scientist conducts an experiment: he developed a theory, then tested it. "My proposed theory was that somewhere an intelligent creator would have left his signature and instructions for us," he writes in his computer-text.

"The proposed theory predicted that He would leave his instructions in some direct relationship to His signature so that we could recognize their authenticity." In other words, he was looking for a Divine sign on earth—but one that could be grasped rationally, rather than intuitively.

To find that sign, Ben-David did not rely on the say-so of clerics. "It occurred to me that an intelligent Creator would not expect everyone to mindlessly follow his religious leaders simply because he was born in that certain religion," he writes.

Since he was born a Christian, Ben-David naturally began his search by looking at the Christian Bible. "In my studies I found divergence from the New Testament source texts and contradictions in all strains of Christianity," he writes.

Nevertheless, the doubts that began to appear in his mind did not prevent him from becoming a Baptist minister. "It was part of the learning process," he says now, "and I found I could use it as a tool to show others what I was discovering." That was soon after his honourable discharge from the U.S. Air Force, where he served in Germany as an intelligence officer with a Top Secret security clearance.

After having familiarized himself with the Bible in its English translation, his next step was to study Hebrew and Greek so he could read the holy book in the original.

That "opened a Pandora's box," he says. He confronted his fellow ministers with his discoveries, but "they didn't know the answers and couldn't find them. They just said, 'His ways are other than our ways and we shouldn't expect to understand.' How many times have I heard that?"

Reasoning that the law of entropy—that everything in the world tends towards disorder—applies in religion as well, he decided that the most correct practice must be the oldest one. That brought him to Mount Sinai and the written and oral laws revealed there.

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ONE MAN'S SEARCH (continued)

There in the desert, where the Children of Israel wandered, Ben-David says he found the sign of God he was looking for: the *shechina*, in the form of a pillar of fire leading the camp towards the promised land.

Ben-David understands *shechina* not as a mystical experience of God—the Kabbalistic implications of the term are foreign to him—but as that physical pillar of fire which he has no doubt was an actual historical occurrence.

"Everyone there saw it," he says. "Trying to explain it might have been tough, but seeing it was seeing it."

While studying for a master's degree in computer science at the University of Central Florida, he engaged colleagues in a debate on religion through a computer network that brought him into contact with theology students at seminaries all over the U.S. "Nobody could refute my findings," he says. "That, more than anything else, convinced me I was right and encouraged me to convert."

For Ben-David, becoming a Jew went hand in hand with moving to Israel. In 1983, while he was still a graduate student, he and his wife Karen came for a visit. They "cautiously" inquired about the possibility of conversion, but came away disappointed.

"I remember on the bus back to Ben-Gurion (airport) looking at the lights in the apartments and wishing I could be in any one of them rather than leaving," he writes. Still hoping that one day he would live as a Jew in Israel, he changed his name.

A year later, in what he considers to have been a miracle, Ben-David met "an Orthodox rabbi who listened, understood, sympathized and agreed to convert us." The Ben-Davids underwent a conversion which was halachically sound, if somewhat bizarre; it included ritual immersion in the ocean on a winter night in zero-degree weather. They insisted on "taking our *mikve*" in the ocean because they believed it was the most authentic way to do it, but "we wouldn't risk postponing it until warmer weather." The couple also held a second wedding ceremony, this time in accordance with Jewish law.

Karen, who hails from Tennessee, was a full, willing partner in her husband's conversion. "We were pretty much on the trek together," she says.

Two years later, Ben-David's parents converted as well.

In his research, Ben-David says he discovered a Second Temple sect that provides him with a personal link to Jewish history. These, he says, were the first followers of Yeshua—Ben-David refuses to use the name "Jesus," and even eschews the term "historical Jesus," which Christian scholars use to distinguish the actual person from the God-man of later Christian doctrine. The sect members were called Netzarim, from the Hebrew word *netzer* (sprig), Ben-David says.

They were not at all like Notzrim (the modern Hebrew word for Christians) and observed all the laws of Halacha, as Yeshua required. Matthew, who scholars believe wrote the oldest of the Gospels and therefore, in Ben-David's view, most closely reflects the historical truth (he calls the book by its Hebrew name, Matityahu), refers to the Netzarim, Ben-David says. So did the early Christian historian Eusebius, who "disapproved of them because he saw them as distinct from Christians."

At the time, Ben-David says, the Netzarim were one of countless Jewish groups, and were ostracized by other Jews only after they refused to accept the anti-Roman rebel Bar-Kochba as a messiah, or Jewish king. Yeshua was the Netzarim's messiah.

"Today everyone would agree the Netzarim were right to reject Bar-Kochba as messiah," Ben-David comments. "It's possible they were wrong to accept Yeshua, but they definitely were right about Bar-Kochba."

Ben-David decided to revive the Netzarim and established a synagogue, Beit Hanetzarim, in Orlando, Florida. "That was a mistake," he says today. "Netzarim should pray in modern Orthodox synagogues."

He also wrote a book, *The Netzarim Reconstruction of Matityahu*, describing the sect. But he has been unable to find a publisher, and complains that the *Biblical Archaeology Review* "refuses to carry an ad for my book, even though they publish ads from charlatans claiming to know the secret site of Moses's ark and the location of Noah's ark."

Of his and Karen's time as Jews in Orlando, Ben-David writes, "We became an island of two marooned aliens in the midst of a head-shaking community. Neighbours really thought we had lost

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ONE MAN'S SEARCH (continued)

our minds when we built a shanty in our backyard in the autumn and when I never noticed the strings hanging out of my pants."

He chose the name Yirmiyahu because "I sympathized with the prophet (Jeremiah) who was told people wouldn't listen to him but that he had to speak out anyway." The name Ben-David is in honour of his messiah, Yeshua, a descendant of King David.

Yirmiyahu and Karen finally moved to Israel in 1985. Soon after, "Hashem performed another miracle" and after 11 years of childless marriage, the Ben-Davids had a daughter. Ben-David is proud of the fact that Yael, now 5, is more fluent in Hebrew than in English.

Having achieved Judaism, Ben-David did not end his search, but continues to study in an effort to discover the most correct Jewish practice. This had led him to some interesting conclusions. He says the biblical commandment to wear *tefillin*, for example, does not stipulate that they should be donned only during prayer. Ben-David therefore wears his *tefillin*, which are smaller than the standard ones all the time. His head *tefillin* looks like a plastic bandage on his forehead; he wears the hand *tefillin* on his left wrist like a watch.

The *tzitzit* Ben-David wears coiled around his belt include an indigo thread—the *techelet*, he insists, referred to in the Bible. He does not, however, wear a skullcap, because the Bible does not say that one's head must be covered.

That leads to some funny situations. "People keep stopping me and telling me I've lost my *kippa*," Ben-David says. "How can I answer them? I can't give them a two-hour lecture."

Ben-David is not a Karaite. He accepts the Talmud and later texts, although his knowledge of them is limited. However, he believes that rabbis exceed their authority when, instead of just interpreting the laws, they legislate. "My objective is not to satisfy the rabbis, but Halacha," he says.

Since coming to Israel, Ben-David has been unable to find a job. Karen, a dental hygienist, supports the family. "Many employers have told me I'm over-qualified," he says. He has been filling his time developing a computer software system for medical clinics, which he calls FuturDoc.

According to his resume, FuturDoc is "a meta-intelligent package incorporating 10 knowledge bases which think and act on their own, converse with one another and initiate managerial action."

He has also invented Robek, "software interface for an educational robot," and a computerized Hebrew-English/English-Hebrew vocabulary tutor. He has been trying to sell these inventions but with little success.

Still, he would never go back. "We still marvel," he writes, "that the Jewish holidays are national holidays, that the work week revolves around Shabbat instead of sun-god day (Sunday)..."

At night when I look out at the lights in the apartments I remember that night on the bus back to Ben-Gurion and thank Hashem that tonight I am standing in one of those windows."

Ron Wegsman

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BARCELONA & GIRONA

A statue of Christopher Columbus stands at Barcelona's Placa Portal de la Pau, right where the explorer returned to Spain from his first voyage to America. This is perhaps the best place to contemplate the inconclusive stories of the voyager's Jewish ancestry. One of the most intriguing pieces of circumstantial evidence has to do with the timing of his departure from Spain. Ferdinand and Isabella had set August 2, 1492, as the deadline for all Jews to be out of the country. Somewhere between midnight and dawn on August 3, Columbus set sail, passing many ships bearing emigrating Jews. He departed not only in the year of the expulsion, but virtually at the hour.

If Columbus were returning to Barcelona today, he couldn't pick a better spot. His statue stands at the foot of the tree-lined Ramblas, one of the great strolling streets of the world—filled with cafes and shops, newspaper and book stalls, vendors selling birds and beads—into which people spill from narrow alleys and broad avenues. Two miles up the Ramblas, and a few blocks over, stands the synagogue and Jewish community center of modern Barcelona. It's a vibrant place, filled with youngsters babbling in Spanish and Hebrew. Most are from families that have come in the last two generations from former Spanish colonies in North Africa and some, undoubtedly, are descendants of the people Columbus passed off the Spanish coast as he sailed for the New World.

To understand Barcelona and its Jews, past and present, you have to understand the diversity of Spain's cultural and religious history. Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia, a region with its own language (Catalan) and identity. Catalonia has the highest living standard, the strongest anti-Franco tradition and the least affection for bullfighting of any region in Spain. Although the Catholic Church is probably weaker in secular, Republican Barcelona than anywhere else in the country, Catalonia has been Christian far longer. The Moors were driven out of the northeastern corner of Spain in 801 C.E., after only three generations of occupation. They stayed in Granada until 1492. Central Spain and the northeast were not united until 1479, under Ferdinand of Aragon (whose domain included Catalonia) and Isabella of Castile, so until the last few years before the expulsion, Spanish Jewry never lived under a single sovereignty.

In the midninth century C.E., Amram Gaon of Sura, in Babylonia, sent a responsum to Barcelona, the first recorded reference to a Jewish community in the city. Sources from the tenth and eleventh centuries mention Jews owning land in Barcelona. The mountain on which Jews owned considerable land in that era, and placed their cemetery is still known as Montjuïc—"Jews' mountain."

From the eleventh to the middle of the fourteenth century, Barcelona was home to Jewish artisans, merchants, minters, scholars and poets. The counts and kings employed Jews as financiers and treasurers, diplomats and advisers on Muslim affairs. Under the protection of the sovereign, the Jewish quarter was an autonomous entity located near the royal palace.

While it is true that Spanish Jewry fared somewhat better under Muslim rule, in fact Jews were tolerated more under Christian and Muslim authorities when the dominant culture was on the rise; once the power of the majority had solidified, Jewish fortunes tended to decline. The biographies of Spain's two most illustrious Jewish scholars bear this out. When the Rambam (Maimonides) left Cordoba in 1148, his family was fleeing Muslim persecution. When the Ramban (Nahmanides) left Catalonia in 1267, he was fleeing the church.

Though it was more than two centuries before the expulsion, Nahmanides's trouble was a turning point for Spanish Jewry. At the suggestion of Pau Christiani, a converted Jew who had joined the Dominican order, King James I of Aragon convened a public debate on the validity of Christian and Jewish teaching. The King promised Nahmanides, the sole Jewish debater, freedom of speech. The Disputation of Barcelona, as it became known, took place during the last week of July 1263 in the royal palace.

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BARCELONA & GIRONA (continued)

Ecclesiastical authorities claimed victory, but their actions were signs of defeat. In response to Nahmanides's defense of Judaism and critique of Christian dogma, they urged that the debate be stopped, even though it was never formally concluded. Thereafter, the Dominicans revamped the arguments they used in attempting to convert Jews. After Nahmanides returned to his home in Girona and issued a written account of the debate, some church authorities sought to have him tried before the Inquisition for blaspheming Jesus. A papal bull issued in response to the case became the basis for prosecuting suspected Judaizers under the Inquisition. King James sought to protect Nahmanides, but pressure mounted from the church and the Ramban left Spain for Eretz Yisrael.

James I was the last king of Aragon to have a Jewish treasurer and mintmaster, although the community remained secure for most of the next century, when the Jews numbered about 5,000, or 10 percent of the city population. Even as persecution mounted in the fourteenth century, the Jews always had friends. The King tried to protect the community from mobs during the Black Death epidemic of 1348 and, although some Jews were killed by rioters, Barcelona was one of the few cities in Europe where fewer Jews died from the mob than from the plague.

When anti-Jewish riots swept Spain in 1391, the city fathers and artisans of Barcelona attempted to protect the Jewish community. And though Catalonians may sometimes overstate the role played by outsiders in their problems, there is evidence that the violence in Barcelona was started by a band of Castilians. King John I condemned 26 rioters to death, but the Jewish losses—to death and forced conversion—were much greater. Jewish life in Barcelona was at a virtual end by 1400.

Elsewhere in Catalonia, Jewish life continued. The community in Girona was never as big as that of Barcelona, but it was a great center of Jewish scholarship, and site of the first school of Kabbala in Spain. Discrimination mounted in Girona during the fifteenth century. The community was ordered to close all but one synagogue in 1416; in 1431, the last treasurer converted; in 1442, the area of the Jewish quarter was reduced. Most of the remaining Jews went into exile in 1492.

Conversos played a prominent role in the commerce of Barcelona in the sixteenth century, but the ravages of the Inquisition and assimilation eventually put an end to any kind of Jewish presence.

In contrast to southern Spain, where there were strong Jewish communities up to 1492 and from which many Jews emigrated, by the time of the expulsion most of the Jews of Catalonia had converted to Christianity. This difference had two consequences. In Catalonia, there were more people with something to hide and they did much more to cover the physical traces of the Jewish past. On the other hand, more Jews blended into the general population, and it is perhaps more usual in Barcelona than in Madrid for Catholics to wander into the synagogue wanting to find clues about their ancestry.

The modern Jewish community of Barcelona is a phenomenon of this century, but it is rooted in the expulsion of 1492. Many of the Jews who fled Spain fanned out across the Mediterranean, and in this century Jews returned to Spain from many of the same places. The first came from Morocco and Turkey, shortly after the turn of the century. The breakup of the Ottoman Empire brought Sefardim from Salonika and the Balkans. A government decree in 1924 granted Sefardim abroad the right to claim Spanish nationality. The 1920's and 1930's also saw an influx of Ashkenazim from Germany and Eastern Europe.

During the Spanish Civil War, Republican Barcelona was the base for many foreign volunteers of the International Brigade, a contingent with so many Jews (30 percent, according to some historians) that Yiddish was something of a *lingua franca* among troops. The American Abraham Lincoln Battalion was about 40 percent Jewish. After the Fascist victory in 1939, many Jews left Spain, but refugees came in during World War II and several thousand—Sefardim and Ashkenazim alike—were offered refuge.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, Jews from Morocco, particularly Spanish Morocco, began arriving in large numbers. It is these families that now constitute 80 percent of Barcelona Jewry.

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BARCELONA & GIRONA (continued)

In the 1970's there was an influx of Jews from Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, many of whom returned to South America when tensions eased in their countries of origin.

There are about 5,000 Jews in Barcelona today, virtually the same number that lived in the city in the Middle Ages. Barcelona itself, with more than 2 million residents, is about 40 times the size of the pre-Inquisition city. Barcelona's Jewish community is about equal in size to that of Madrid, and almost identical in origin, but there is a good-natured rivalry between the two that mirrors the cooler rivalry that exists between the two cities. Conditioned by Jewish history, Barcelona's Jews are sympathetic to the Catalan renaissance (most expression of Catalan culture, including the language, were suppressed under Franco), but it is Spanish, not Catalan, that most of them speak at home.

In 1954, the Comunidad Israelita Barcelona built a community center housing the first synagogue erected in Spain since 1492. Many of the city's Jews live in the vicinity of the building, in the San Gervasio and Placa de Francesc Macia areas. The community also has a day school in the city's beautiful Bonanova section.

Barcelona is Paris writ small, and one of the most charming sections of the charming city is the Gothic Quarter, just off the Ramblas. And in the heart of the Gothic Quarter, the oldest part of the city, is the Call (from the Hebrew *kahal*, which means community), as the Jewish quarter of every Catalan town was known.

The narrow streets of the Call look as if they date from the Middle Ages, although few, if any, of the buildings in the area are from the days when Jews lived there. The street layout, however, is more or less unchanged and there is some evidence of where various Jewish institutions and landmarks stood.

If you're coming from the Ramblas, the first part of the Jewish quarter you'll see is the Call Menor, which extends about half a block on each side of Carrer de Ferran—a commercial lane graced with wrought iron balconies—from Rauric to Avinyo. This is the newer section of the Call, which didn't become a Jewish neighborhood until 1257. The parish church of Sant Jaume, which dates to 1580, is believed to stand on the site of a former synagogue.

The Call Major, where Jews lived at least as far back as the twelfth century, runs along Ferran roughly from Banys Nous to Placa Sant Jaume, and up the side streets to the Placa Sant Felip Neri. The buildings are mostly four-story structures, and the streets are as narrow as seven feet across.

The main gate of the Call most likely stood at the corner of Carrer del Call and Sant Domingo del Call, where archeological remains of a kosher butcher shop have also been found. The Carrer del Call is a lively street of clothing stores, antique dealers, stamp and coin shops, standup cafes, and jewelry stores, some of which display Star of David pendants in their windows.

The side streets off the Carrer del Call are quiet and so narrow they stand in almost perpetual shadow. The main synagogue of the Call stood near 7 Sant Domingo del Call, a five-story building with arched wooden doors. Around the corner, embedded in the wall of a building on Carrer Marlet, is a stone bearing the Hebrew inscription "*Hekdesh Rabbi Shmuel Hasardi*," believed to be from a thirteenth-century Talmud Torah. The stone is a copy of one found on the site in 1820; the original is a few blocks away in the City Historical Museum.

At the Placa de Sant Jaume the Jewish quarter ends, but other Jewish connections unfold. A left turn out of the plaza onto the twisting Carrer de Paradis will take you to the back of Barcelona's imposing cathedral. The Placa Sant lu, sandwiched between the Cathedral and the Frederic Mares Museum, is a pleasant spot where street musicians often perform. On the wall of the museum is the coat of arms of the Inquisition. And on the cathedral and museum walls that surround the square you can spot, here and there, building blocks with Hebrew writing, mostly ancient burial stones. (Part of the floor in the cathedral's courtyard is made of Christian tombstones). Inside, the Mares Museum has a huge collection of Christian iconography and a small collection from Barcelona's Jewish past. In room 46 is an assortment of prayer books, Torah pointers, spice boxes and a *Megillat Esther*.

Around the corner from the Placa Sant lu, the dead-end Placa del Rei is the probable site of the Disputation of Barcelona. Its buildings—the back of the Mares Museum and the Chapel

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BARCELONA & GIRONA (continued)

of Santa Agata—rose on the site and incorporated some of the remains of the palace of the kings of Aragon. In this square, too, can be found building stones with Hebrew inscriptions.

The newest building on the Placa del Rei is the City Historical Museum, which has two rooms devoted to archeological evidence of Jewish settlement in Barcelona. In addition to the original stone from the Talmud Torah on Carrer Marlet, it has a detailed diagram of the Jewish quarter and various artifacts from the city's Arab Baths, which were operated by Jews. It also has a collection of eleventh-century gravestones from the Jewish cemetery on Montjuic.

Montjuic itself is on almost every Barcelona itinerary. It is the city's main park and will be the site of the 1992 Olympics. Not much of the Jewish past can be seen there, although the Archeological Museum, like the City Historical Museum, has some tombstones from the Jewish necropolis. If you want to see approximately where the cemetery was, go up to the Mirador del Alcaldé, which offers a spectacular view of the city and the Mediterranean. Just below the lookout point is a clay-pigeon shooting gallery. The cemetery was near the gallery entrance, and along the road that runs in front of it.

The center of modern Jewish Barcelona is located at Carrer de l'Avenir 24 (the street name is Porvenir in Spanish). Like most Jewish institutions in Europe, security measures (locked door, no sign, mounted video camera) give the stone building an impenetrable look but the *Magen David* and *menora* patterns worked into the grillwork around the door and the ground-floor windows make it look, if not attractive, at least integrated into the landscape. The synagogue interior, with wooden pews and a central *bima*, is highlighted by nine beautiful brass and crystal chandeliers.

In addition to the main synagogue, which follows a Sefardic rite, the bustling center also houses a small Ashkenazic chapel (used mainly on High Holy Days), a *mikve*, a kosher snack bar, a library, a documentation center and facilities for concerts, conferences and lectures.

GIRONA The hometown of Nahmanides is about 60 miles northeast of Barcelona. There is no Jewish community in Girona today, but the Jewish remains are as striking, if not more so, as those in Barcelona. Much of the old Jewish quarter has been restored to its medieval appearance and even some lanes that were sealed during the fourteenth century have been reopened in the past few years. In addition, the scholars and tourist authorities of Girona and the province of Catalonia have given great attention and care to rediscovering and preserving evidence of the city's Jewish past.

The main street of Girona's Call is the Carrer de la Força, which runs roughly parallel to, and two blocks in from the River Onyar. Not only are the streets and stairways of the sloping quarter narrow, in some places the tops of the gray stone buildings seem to converge, which gives the place the aura of another time and another world. Some of the buildings date to the fifteenth century, and in a few doorways you can still see the indentations for *mezuzot*. If you visit during the annual flower festival in May, you can see several such doorways, and more than a dozen courtyards, as homeowners in the quarter open their front gates to the public. At any other time, you can see at least one *mezuzá* indentation in a doorway in the square in front of the City Historical Museum, just off la Força.

Ancient maps of the area indicate that a synagogue stood approximately at 17 la Força, near the Valenti furniture store. A few feet away is Carrer Sant Lorenc, more a stairway than a street, along which the most important evidence of Girona's Jewish history has been found.

About halfway up the stairway, on the right, is the Isaac the Blind Center, named for the leader of one of Girona's Kabbala schools. The center, a complex including a Jewish museum and a cafe, is located on the site of the last functioning synagogue in Girona. Lleo Avinay, the leader of the community who lived at 15 Sant Lorenc, signed a document of sale for the building in 1492.

The cafe is in the courtyard at ground level as you enter the center; the museum is downstairs, at the same level as la Força. The exhibit, which is still growing, includes a model of the Call, a copy of a synagogue cornerstone and a variety of photographs. There are also continuous showings of a film, "Girona: The Mother of Israel," which will be available in video in the United States in December.

Alan M. Tigay

WE REMEMBER

*the departed brothers and sisters inscribed on the Memorial Windows
and Bronze Tablets in our Synagogue*

May	Sivan		June	Sivan	
25	12	Martin Israel	3	21	Jakob Plawner
25	12	Reinhard Loewengart	3	21	Max Schloss
26	13	Isak, Bertha, Else, Heinz Erwin & Irma Bratt	3	21	Helene Spaeth
26	13	Lina Buchheim	3	21	Herman Speier
26	13	Louis Jonas	3	21	Gustav Wahle
26	13	Siegfried Mendle	4	22	Arnold Berney
26	13	Adolph Sandler	4	22	Fritz Schiff
27	14	Paul Adler	4	22	Fred Schindler
27	14	Frieda May	4	22	Max Strassburger
27	14	Jacob, Frieda & Liselotte Schiff	5	23	Marie Gutman
28	15	Henriette Buxbaum	5	23	Adolph Heimer
28	15	Felix Jonas	5	23	Herman Rosenthal
28	15	Friedel Kaufman	6	24	Wilhelm Feuer
28	15	Johanna Kaufman	6	24	Martin Heineman
28	15	Clementine Krueger	6	24	Siegfried Loew
28	15	Louise Levy	6	24	Dora Meyer
28	15	Leopold Markus	6	24	Hans Neubauer
28	15	Pauline Schloss	6	24	Julius Reinstein
30	17	Benno Baumann	7	25	Ernest Rosenberg
30	17	Emil Gundel	8	26	Max Neumann
30	17	Robert & Elise Hirsch	8	26	Dr. Leo Richmond
30	17	Rosa Klar	8	26	Harry Siegel
30	17	Betty Traub	8	26	Ernst Simon
31	18	Alice Dressler	8	26	Selma Stern
31	18	Paul Holzman	8	26	Bertha Wolfsheimer
31	18	Fred Kahn	9	27	William Basch
31	18	Martha Kahn	9	27	Ludwig Bauernfreund
31	18	Curt Lauter	9	27	Frieda Lehmann
31	18	Amalie Levis	9	27	Otto Morgenthau
31	18	Michael Lichtenthal	9	27	Kurt Zechemann
June			10	28	Hilde Kahn
1	19	Jenny B. Baerwald	10	28	Sigmund Marx
1	19	Julius Dreifuss	11	29	Erna Katzenstein
1	19	Rosa Fussmann	11	29	Moritz Mayer
1	19	Malchen Gottlieb	11	29	Samuel Silbermann
1	19	Richard Jung	11	29	Betty Silbermann
1	19	Hugo Mannheimer	11	29	Rosa Stern
1	19	Leopold Meyer	11	29	Gisela Sundheimer
2	20	Amalie Baum	12	30	Max Alexander
2	20	Harry Lessheim	12	30	Frida Hirsch
2	20	Walter Rosenbaum	12	30	Richard Katz
2	20	Arthur Schloss	12	30	Martha Leitner
2	20	Johanna Sommer	12	30	Albert Spaeth
2	20	Sophie Daniel			
3	21	David Gunzenhaeuser	Tamuz		
3	21	Rosa Katzenstein	13	1	Carl Bergman
3	21	Jakob Levis	13	1	Max Erman-Bach
			14	2	Herta Levy
			14	2	Julia Noy

(continued on next page)

WE REMEMBER *(continued)*

June	Tamuz		July	Tamuz	
15	3	Amalie Eberhardt	1	19	Selma Schlesinger
15	3	Selma Glaser	1	19	Julius Schoenberg
15	3	Maurice Gudoff	2	20	Herta Levi
15	3	Jettchen Stern	2	20	Hermann Scharenberg
15	3	Joseph Voss	3	21	Lina, Siegfried & Wolfgang Frankenstein
16	4	Doris Baer			
17	5	Bertha Kahn-Bruchfeld	3	21	Gustav Gruenberg
17	5	Leopold Henlein	3	21	Fred Heumann
17	5	Hermann Hirsch	4	22	Rosel Kahn
17	5	Amalie Rosenberg	4	22	William Kugelman
18	6	Emma Baer	4	22	Salomon Lehmann
18	6	David & Rosa Frankel	4	22	Julius Lippmann
18	6	William Goldschmidt	4	22	Rika Seligmann
18	6	Lisl Schuelein	5	23	Charlotte Hammel
20	8	Judith Berman	5	23	Erich Lauter
20	8	Harry Loewenstein	6	24	Dr. Leopold Frei
20	8	Gabriel Schloss	6	24	Eva Lachman
21	9	Max Bruchfeld	6	24	Amalie Neumann
21	9	Alma Gutman-Sucher	6	24	Pauline Reis
21	9	Ludwig Goetz	6	24	Fanny & Julius Schaler
21	9	Moses Hess	6	24	Leo, Martin & Walter Spicker
21	9	Marianne Sondheimer	6	24	Emma Willner
22	10	Efroim Birman	7	25	Josef Abramson
22	10	George Braun	7	25	Ernst Bauernfreund
22	10	Lisa Lauber	7	25	Johanna Goldstein
22	10	Thekla Lewy	7	25	Irma Haas
22	10	Rebecca Schoemann	7	25	William M. Kreisle
23	11	Leo Basch	7	25	Norbert Neumann
23	11	Selma Furcht	7	25	Fanny Rosenthal
23	11	Walter Friedmann	7	25	Anna Singer
23	11	Max Strauss	7	25	Fred Stone
24	12	Isidor Brunn	8	26	Lola Friedman
24	12	Lina Frei	8	26	Karl Gutmann
25	13	Bernhard Hirsch	8	26	Eduard Ofsijowitz
25	13	Isaias Weiskopf	10	28	Rosa Breslauer
26	14	Julius Abraham	10	28	Louis Cohn-Victor
26	14	Leo Forchheimer	10	28	Albert Gutkind
26	14	Flora Marx	10	28	Hannchen Heilbrunn
26	14	Rudolf Sinsheimer	10	28	Max Jacob
26	14	Leopold Sonneberg	10	28	Fred & Lucille Roland
27	15	Edgar M. Loew	10	28	Albert Schwager
28	16	Arthur Einstein	10	28	Isadore Wormser
29	17	Abraham Rosenthal	11	29	Paul Ernst
29	17	Sally Lewy	11	29	Blanca Marx
29	17	Jonas & Amalie Roer	11	29	Bettina Sonn
30	18	Emma Behrens			
30	18	Lucie Furstenberg			
July				Av	
1	19	Alfred Bloch	12	1	Walter Kahn
1	19	Ida Dreifuss	13	2	Bernard Gootter
1	19	Mathilde Gottlieb	13	2	Lothar Herz
1	19	Leopold Lemke	13	2	Adolf Stern
			14	3	Anna Dicker
			14	3	Klara Rothschild

(continued on next page)

WE REMEMBER *(continued)*

July	Av		July	Av	
15	4	Martha Levi	30	19	Louis Wolfsheimer
16	5	Irma Loewenstein	31	20	Horace E. Bauer
16	5	Sophie Marx	31	20	Ernestine Hirsch
16	5	Siegfried Salomon	31	20	Richard Hirsch
17	6	Jocheved Auer	31	20	Max Kahn
17	6	Sara Gruen	31	20	Rosalie Meyer
17	6	Leopold Stern	31	20	Mitchel Rosenthal
17	6	Ellen Strauss			
18	7	Joseph Bender	Aug.		
18	7	Hugo Loewenstein	1	21	Karoline Bloch
18	7	Franz Regensburger	1	21	Willi Blumenthal
18	7	Clara Schnell	1	21	Max Meir Karpf
19	8	Dr. Fred Dreifuss	1	21	Bertha May
20	9	Willi Heinsfurter	1	21	Salomon Tannenbaum
20	9	Selma Lesser	2	221	Arthur Neu
20	9	Else Starkhaus	3	23	Rosel Hersch
21	10	Gertrude Hirsch	3	23	Max Schwarz
21	10	Rose Royce	3	23	Arthur Simonsohn
22	11	Albert, Anita & Hedwig Pollack	3	23	Max Wolf
22	11	Alfred, Siegfried, Rudolf & Emmy Schloesser	4	24	Rudolf Bauer
22	11	David Stern	4	24	Jettchen Goldschmidt
22	11	Kurt Tannenbaum	4	24	David Katzenstein
22	11	Rudolf & Erna Tannenbaum	4	24	Walter Lachmann
23	12	Oskar Gruenbaum	4	24	Max Mayer
23	12	Max Kahn	4	24	Thea Oster
23	12	Julius Kraft	4	24	Elfriede Pollack
23	12	Martin Saul	4	24	Max Schwarz
24	13	Recha Levitus	4	24	Gustave Wimpfheimer
24	13	Lazarus Strauss	5	25	Anna Bauernfreund
25	14	Mathilde Lendt	5	25	Adolf Blumenthal
25	14	Alfred Sherlin	5	25	Josef Goldschmidt
25	14	Salli Stern	5	25	Hannah Goldsmith
25	14	Jenny Strauss	5	25	Moritz Gottschalk
26	15	Paula Heumann	5	25	Nathan Mathes
26	15	Fritz Levite	6	26	Frederick S. Braun
26	15	Miriam Nussbaum	6	26	Siegfried Frank
26	15	Emilie Wimpfheimer	6	26	Lazarus Herz
27	16	Max Blumenthal	6	26	Erna Klein
27	16	Julius Hamburger	6	26	Sigmund Markus
27	16	Adolf Gottlieb	6	26	Heinrich Wortsman
27	16	Martin Krisle	7	27	Ernestine Lehmann
28	17	Martin Brunn	7	27	Fanny Loew
28	17	Leopold Eichtersheimer	7	27	Camilla Michels
28	17	Ricka Frank	7	27	Hilde Schwager
29	18	Ida Goldberg	8	28	Babette Levi
29	18	Lina Hellmann	8	28	Jeanette Tannenbaum
29	18	Sigmund Schloss	9	29	Julie Katz
30	19	Harry Benger	9	29	Betty Oppenheim
30	19	Albert Blank	9	29	Lina Rosenthal
30	19	Joseph Hamburger	9	29	Fred Tager
30	19	Benjamin F. Herz	10	30	Oskar Cahn
			10	30	Frederick Jellinek
			10	30	Ludwig Stahl

(continued on next page)

WE REMEMBER *(continued)***Aug Av**

10 30 Eugene Stern

10 30 Siegbert Weil

Elul

11 1 Daniel Gottlieb

11 1 Heinrich, Wilhelm, M.
Julius, Jettchen & Senta
Levi

11 1 Robert Levitus

11 1 Flora Neuburger

12 2 Clara Lindheimer

12 2 Josef Pretsfelder

12 2 Dr. Emmerich Wellisch

13 3 Blanche Rothstein

13 3 Arthur Sonneberg

13 3 Benno Sternfels

13 3 Clara Strauss

15 5 Rika Bender

15 5 Leopold Lindheimer

15 5 Heinz Moritz Lippmann

16 6 Heldegard Hoffman

16 6 Eva Veisz

16 6 Ruth Zimmerman

17 7 Josef Wolf

18 8 Karoline Hirsch

18 8 Martha Levor

18 8 Siegfried Stein

19 9 Julius Hirsch

19 9 Jacob Nartel

19 9 Siegfried S. Nordschild

20 10 Sussman Moses

20 10 Louis S. Obermeier

21 11 Erna Harwitt

21 11 Georg Lendt

22 12 Dr. Franz Bergman

22 12 Rose Spaeth

22 12 Harry Stern

23 13 Heinrich Bloch

23 13 Erna Hess

23 13 Hedwig Kaufman

25 15 Leo Adler

25 15 Joseph Katz

25 15 Lilly Kohn

25 15 Erna Strauss

26 16 Ludwig Levy

26 16 Cantor H. Silbermann

26 16 Louis Strauss

26 16 Leopold Tannenbaum

27 17 Leo Aach

27 17 Fritz Gern

27 17 Erna Liebenstein

27 17 Julius Schaefer

28 18 Bernhard Greenbaum

Aug. Elul

28 18 Arnold Rosenstock

28 18 Siegmund Schwarz

29 19 Regina Goldschmidt

29 19 Johanna Stern

29 19 Jacob Wachenheimer

30 20 Max Levite

30 20 Joseph Silberman

30 20 Adolf Traub

30 20 Gustav Kahn

Sept.

1 22 Betty Blumenthal

1 22 Sophie Levy

1 22 Arno Trautman

2 23 Olga Jonas

2 23 Simon Levite

2 23 Stephan Mondschein

2 23 Rosa Rothstein

3 24 Sally Friedberg

3 24 Bertha Hofmann

3 24 Rose Lang

3 24 Emma Moses

3 24 Hulda Ofsijowitz

3 24 Susan Rosenthal

3 24 Dr. Norbert Rothstein

3 24 Else Seligmann

3 24 Hermann Seligmann

4 25 Ferdinand Baumann

4 25 Bernhard Groeschel

4 25 Dina Hirschmann

4 25 Noa Holtz

4 25 Sali Kahn

4 25 Dr. Leo Stahl

5 26 Vera Morgenthau

6 27 Traute Feith

6 27 Daniel Guggenheim

6 27 Ida Meyer

6 27 Jacob Sommer

7 28 Robert Arnstein

7 28 Dina Hirsch

7 28 Albert Kronenberger

7 28 Solomon Ottenheimer

7 28 Jacob Simon

8 29 Jenny Holzer

8 29 Elizabeth Levy

8 29 Julius Menges

8 29 Adolf Pollack

Tishri

9 1 Mathilde Kahn

9 1 Ernest A. Lilienstein

9 1 David May

9 1 Moritz Schwarz

(continued on next page)

WE REMEMBER (continued)

Sept. Tishri

9	1	Paula Sonn
9	1	Samuel Sonn
10	2	Alfred & August Levi Arthur, Hermann & Wilhelm Levi
10	2	Dr. Nathan Roos
10	2	Eva Walden
10	2	Salo Walden
11	3	Dr. Ernest Einstein
11	3	Walter Jonas
11	3	Salomon Katz
11	3	Morris Nager

Sept. Tishri

11	3	Salomon Katz
11	3	Morris Nager
11	3	Rosa Neumann
12	4	Paul Camnitzer
12	4	Eugene Fleischer
12	4	Meta Kahn
12	4	Theo Mathes
12	4	Zacharias May
12	4	Max Schorsch
15	5	Esther Rosenberg

*The names of the departed will be read by the Rabbi
during the service on the Shabbat preceding the Yahrzeit*

PEACE AND EVERLASTING MEMORY

Justin Hirschheimer	formerly	Thuengen
Anna Wolff, nee Linz	formerly	Siegburg
Julius Kahn	formerly	Markt Berolzheim
Siegfried Lowenfels	formerly	Huettenheim
Ida Michel	formerly	Niedaltdorf
Dr. Ruth Neubauer, nee Wolfsheimer !!!!!!!	formerly	Ludwigshafen/Munich
Alfred Morgenthau	formerly	Dueren

We extend our warmest sympathy to the bereaved.

A SUGGESTION TO OUR MEMBERS

Our Congregation has received during the last years substantial amounts under the Wills of members and friends of our Congregation for the purpose of keeping the memory of their loved ones alive.

The form of such provisions usually reads as follows:

"Thereby give and bequeath the sum of...Dollars to Congregation Beth Hillel & Beth Israel, Inc. with present offices at 571 West 182nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10033, with the proviso that the Congregation causes Kaddish, the traditional prayer in commemoration of the departed persons, to be recited during the year of mourning and on the Yahrzeit days (the annual anniversary dates of my death)."

We suggest that our members and friends who want to act in a similar manner contact their lawyers and discuss with them the insertion of such a provision in their own Last Wills.

William Blank President

Carolyn

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