

NORMAN LAMM
GENEVA

MEMORIAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE
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"PRESERVING AND ENHANCING JEWISH VALUES"

socially real. Tal, real, exists, festival; I - indep. Danyrov. (Tours Nelson - Gishuruk - Queenchina)

Because my paper more theoretical, I am simpler

I

IT IS TEMPTING TO BEGIN THIS LECTURE ON A SEMANTIC NOTE: WHAT ARE VALUES? ARE VALUES "REAL?" MOST IMPORTANT, WHAT ARE "JEWISH" VALUES?

HOWEVER, SHOULD I SUBMIT TO THIS TEMPTATION, MY LECTURE WOULD BOTH BEGIN AND END WITH DEFINITIONS, AND THAT WOULD LEAVE BOTH ME AND MY AUDIENCE DISSATISFIED. *THE QUESTION OF* *most of*

I THEREFORE BEG YOUR INDULGENCE IF I MAKE THE QUICK AND REASONABLE ASSUMPTION THAT WE KNOW WHAT VALUES ARE, THAT WE AGREE THAT THEY ARE OF GENUINE SIGNIFICANCE, AND THAT WE HAVE AT LEAST AN INTUITIVE IDEA OF WHAT IS MEANT BY "JEWISH VALUES."

II

MY CONCERN IS THE RELATION, AND OFTEN DIALECTICAL TENSION, BETWEEN THE TWO KINDS OF VALUE: THE GENERAL, HUMANISTIC, UNIVERSAL VALUES ADVOCATED IN JUDAISM, ON THE ONE HAND, AND *ON THE OTHER HAND,* *SOMETIMES* THOSE WHICH WE RECOGNIZE AS SPECIFICALLY "JEWISH" — AND WHICH ARE OFTEN DEROGATED AS PARTICULARISTIC, ETHNOCENTRIC, OR SIMPLY PAROCHIAL. — *ON THE OTHER.*

AN EXAMPLE OF THE UNIVERSAL VALUES WOULD BE: PEACE OR KEVOD HA-BERİYOT — HUMAN DIGNITY. THE PARTICULARLY JEWISH WOULD INCLUDE *THOSE EMBODIED IN* SUCH ITEMS AS: THE SABBATH, THE STUDY OF TORAH, OR THE SETTLEMENT OF ERETZ ISRAEL. *my initial purpose - result of years of contact with students - in life - substance, in values.*

ONE OF THE MISTAKES OF MANY JEWS SINCE THE EMANCIPATION WAS THAT
NOW, ONE OF THE "ORIGINAL SINS" OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT WAS ITS DECISION *THEY* TO RETAIN ONLY THAT WHICH *IT* WAS CONSIDERED UNIVERSAL IN THE JEWISH HERITAGE, AND DISCARD ALL THAT WAS DISTINCTIVELY JEWISH. RESPONDING TO SOCIOLOGICAL PRESSURES, OF WHOSE NATURE THEY WERE USUALLY UNAWARE, *THESE* ~~MANY~~ JEWS COMMITTED THIS TRAGIC ERROR, FROM WHICH FLOWED THE WELL-KNOWN CONSEQUENCES OF ASSIMILATION, THE DERACINATION OF JEWISH CONSCIOUSNESS, THE LOSS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND RELATED PHENOMENA WHICH PUSHED SO MANY JEWS OVER THE BRINK INTO OBLIVION.

THIS BASIC DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULARISTIC, THE HUMAN AND THE JEWISH, IS, IRONICALLY, BASED UPON A FUNDAMENTAL MISCONCEPTION. LIKE SO MANY OTHER DISTINCTIONS WHICH ARE INTENDED AS SEMANTIC DEVICES RATHER THAN AS METAPHYSICAL DUALISMS, THIS UNIVERSAL-HUMAN VERSUS PARTICULARIST-JEWISH DICHOTOMY WAS TAKEN NOT AS AN ANALYTIC TOOL, WHICH IT IS, BUT WAS MISREAD AS REPRESENTING AN ONTOLOGICAL BIFURCATION, ^{as corresponding to 2 different realities}

MY THESIS IS THAT THIS IS SIMPLY NOT SO; THAT WHILE FOR ANALYTICAL PURPOSES SUCH DIFFERENTIATIONS ARE LEGITIMATE, THEY ARE NOT PERMISSIBLE ON AN ULTIMATE OR PHILOSOPHICAL LEVEL. AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO ORIENTATIONS CAN BE DECISIVE -- EVEN FATEFUL -- FOR OUR FUTURE AS JEWS. MY TASK IS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULARIST VALUES IN JUDAISM MUST BE TAKEN AS A WHOLE. EITHER WE SHALL SUCCEED IN BEING MORE JEWISH AND MORE HUMAN -- OR UN-JEWISH AND ALSO LESS THAN FULLY HUMAN.

PERMIT ME TO CLARIFY MY BIAS. I AM A BELIEVING AND OBSERVANT JEW WHO SUFFERS ALL THE TENSIONS OF FAITH IN AN UNBELIEVING WORLD; AN AFFIRMATIVE JEW IN A SOCIETY WHICH HAS OFTEN MOCKED SUCH ALLEGIANCE AS ETHNOCENTRIC. I AM DEEPLY COMMITTED TO TORAH AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE. YET I FERVENTLY BELIEVE THAT SUCH COMMITMENT DOES NOT REQUIRE OF ME TO IGNORE THE OTHER 99.8% OF MANKIND. I FULLY REJECT THE FORMULA THAT COUNSELS ME TO BE A JEW AT HOME, AND A HUMAN BEING OUTSIDE IT. MY SENSE OF WHOLENESS AND INTEGRITY REQUIRES OF ME TO BE BOTH AT ALL TIMES AND ALL PLACES. TO ME, HUMANITY AND JEWISHNESS ARE INSEPARABLE.

SINCE THE EMANCIPATION, INTELLECTUAL GHETTOS ARE NO LONGER CONCEIVABLE OR ADVISABLE FOR JEWS. WE HAVE ENTERED THE STREAM OF MODERN HISTORY, AND THERE CAN BE NO NATIONAL "RETURN TO THE WOMB" A` LA FREUD.

NEVERTHELESS, ^{THE} ~~THIS~~ PRECIPITOUS CHANGES IN JEWISH HISTORY NEED NOT, SHOULD NOT, AND MUST NOT BE THE SIGNAL FOR ASSIMILATION. WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD THE LUXURY OF SUBSCRIBING TO THE MYTH OF "UNIVERSALISM," WHICH USUALLY MEANS ^{FORCED} ~~THAT JEWS ARE THE FIRST AND OFTEN THE ONLY ONES TO ABANDON THEIR PARTICULARITY~~

^{an}
FOR ~~THIS~~ ELUSIVE AND UNREAL GENERALNESS.

~~ON THE CONTRARY~~, OUR RATIONAL PRIORITIES CALL UPON US, PRECISELY BECAUSE WE ALREADY ARE SO FULLY IN THE MODERN WORLD, TO RE-DISCOVER AND CHERISH THE PARTICULARLY JEWISH VALUES WHICH MAKE US JEWS AND NOT MEMBERS OF OTHER GROUPS. ONLY IN THAT MANNER SHALL WE SUCCEED IN FULFILLING OUR DUTIES TOWARDS ALL THE REST OF MANKIND.

III

MY THESIS IS BASED UPON THREE PROPOSITIONS:

B) MANY OF THE MOST CHARACTERISTICALLY JEWISH VALUES HAVE IMPORTANT UNIVERSAL MORAL CONSEQUENCES AND GENERAL HUMAN DIMENSIONS.

A) THE DENIAL OF VALIDITY TO THE SPECIFICALLY NATIONAL, JEWISH VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS IS MERELY ANOTHER FORM OF THE GENERAL REPUDIATION OF INDIVIDUALITY IN THE MODERN WORLD -- A RESULT OF THE DEPERSONALIZING HOMOGENIZATION IMPOSED UPON MAN AND SOCIETY BY AN EVER-GROWING TECHNOLOGY, AND A NOXIOUS FEATURE OF EVERY FORM OF DEHUMANIZING TYRANNY IN OUR UNHAPPY CENTURY.

C) UNIVERSAL, HUMANITARIAN VALUES TEND TO BECOME INCHOATE, CHIMERICAL, AND HELPLESSLY ^{amorphous} ABSTRACT, UNLESS THEY ARE FORMULATED IN PRECISE, MUNDANE, EVEN LEGAL MANNER SO THAT THEY BECOME PERSONALLY MEANINGFUL AND COMPELLING AND CAPABLE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN DISCRETE, REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS. JEWISH LAW -- HALAKHAH -- IS THUS A MEANS OF EXPRESSING, APPLYING, AND PRESERVING UNIVERSAL VALUES FOR JEWS. THROUGH THE HALAKHAH, UNIVERSAL VALUES ARE TRANSFORMED INTO AND APPROPRIATED AS JEWISH VALUES.

IV

LET US NOW TAKE THESE THREE POINTS, ONE BY ONE, AND SEE HOW THEY ARE EXEMPLIFIED IN JUDAISM AND THE JEWISH TRADITION.

THE MOST "PARTICULARISTIC" OF ALL THE DISTINCTIVELY JEWISH VALUES, IS THAT OF AM SEGULAH -- THE ELECTION OR CHOSENNESS OF ISRAEL. FEW IDEAS HAVE

SUCCEEDED IN SO EFFECTIVELY INSPIRING OPPOSITION AND DISDAIN.

MY PURPOSE HERE IS NOT TO DEFEND OR EXPLAIN THIS CARDINAL JEWISH CONCEPT, BUT RATHER TO EXPOSE ITS UNIVERSALISTIC DIMENSIONS AND THUS TO DEMONSTRATE HOW INTERTWINED AND INTERDEPENDENT THE UNIVERSALISTIC DIMENSIONS AND PARTICULARISTIC ELEMENTS ARE IN OTHER JEWISH STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS WHICH ARE LESS OBVIOUSLY "JEWISH."

IN ENUNCIATING THE DOCTRINE OF CHOSENNESS, THE TORAH ADDS FOUR SIGNIFICANT WORDS: $\text{כִּי כֹל הָאָרֶץ לִּי}$, "FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE" (Ex. 19:5). FOR OBADIAH SEFORNO, AN ITALIAN-JEWISH COMMENTATOR OF THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD, THESE WORDS ARE INTENDED AS AN EXPLANATION OF WHY ISRAEL WAS CHOSEN. THE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE HUMAN SPECIES ARE ONLY OF DEGREE, NOT OF KIND. BECAUSE GOD, AS THE MASTER OF ALL THE WORLD, LOVES ALL MANKIND, ESPECIALLY THE RIGHTEOUS, HE CHOSE ISRAEL AS A "KINGDOM OF PRIESTS" (Ex. 19:6) TO TEACH ALL HUMANITY TO TURN TO GOD. HENCE, THE PURPOSE OF PARTICULARIZING THE DIVINE MISSION IS -- TO BENEFIT ALL MEN, UNIVERSALLY.

IN ONE OF HIS EARLY ESSAYS, BUBER ELABORATES A SIMILAR IDEA, SHOWING HOW THE CHOICE OF ABRAHAM AS PROGENITOR OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE WAS A LAST EFFORT BY GOD, AS IT WERE, TO SAVE ALL MANKIND. THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM AND NOAH WERE EXPERIMENTS THAT FAILED. THEY HAD PROVEN THAT WITHOUT A SINGLE MAN OR FAMILY AS TEACHER -- EITHER ACTIVE OR PASSIVE -- MAN WOULD FAIL IN HIS MISSION ON EARTH AND ONLY INTENSIFY HIS ESTRANGEMENT FROM GOD. THE ENDS OF UNIVERSALISM THEREFORE HAD TO BE SERVED BY FOCUSING ON PARTICULARITIES. THE LATE RABBI YAAKOV YEHIEL WEINBERG HAS MADE THE SAME POINT MORE COGENTLY, NOTING THAT THE SAME VERSE (GEN. 17:4) IN WHICH ABRAHAM IS GIVEN THE COMMANDMENT OF CIRCUMCISION -- THE SIGN OF THE EXCLUSIVE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND ISRAEL WHICH INCLUDES THE CONCEPT OF CHOSENNESS AND THE PROMISE OF ERETZ ISRAEL -- IS THE ONE IN WHICH HIS NAME IS CHANGED FROM ABRAM TO ABRAHAM, "THE FATHER OF A MULTITUDE OF NATIONS," INDICATING THE ENLARGED SCOPE OF HIS MISSION TO ALL HUMANKIND. IN THE FOUNDER OF OUR PEOPLE, THEN, ARE UNITED THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR,

THE HUMAN AND THE JEWISH.

INDEED, IN A DOCTORAL THESIS PUBLISHED A COUPLE OF DECADES AGO, ONE SCHOLAR DISCOVERED THAT AMONGST THE TANNAIM, THE MORE UNIVERSAL THE THINKER, THE MORE DID HE EMPHASIZE THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION!

(ONE COULD PROCEED TO DO THE SAME FOR OTHER PECULIARLY JEWISH VALUES OR NORMS -- SUCH AS KASHRUT OR THE STUDY OF TORAH -- BUT I TRUST THAT IT IS NOT REALLY NECESSARY.)

V

MY SECOND POINT IS THAT THE NEGATION OF THE QUINTESSENTIALLY JEWISH VALUES IN THE NAME OF UNIVERSALISM IS OF ONE PIECE WITH THE REPUDIATION OF ALL PARTICULARITIES, INCLUDING THE INDIVIDUALITY OF HUMAN BEINGS. WHETHER THE STARTING POINT IS AN EXAGGERATED UNIVERSALISM OR MILITANT LIBERALISM, WHETHER A MISPLACED USE OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD OR A PENCHANT FOR TOTALITARIANISM, THE END RESULT IS THE SAME -- A DEPERSONALIZATION AND ULTIMATELY DEHUMANIZATION OF MAN.

HENCE, A HUMANISTIC APPROACH WHICH SEEKS TO ENCOMPASS ALL MEN WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF ITS CONCERN AND BENEVOLENCE BY ERADICATING THE CLAIM OF EACH PERSON, OR EACH COMMUNITY OF PERSONS, TO SINGULARITY AND DIFFERENTNESS, IS SELF-DEFEATING: IT DESTROYS THE VERY HUMANNESS IT PURPORTS TO ENHANCE. A UNIVERSALISM OF THIS KIND MAY ACHIEVE EQUALITY, BUT IT IS THE EQUALITY OF SAMENESS, AND IS ACHIEVED AT THE COST OF INDIVIDUAL DIGNITY.

WHAT JUDAISM SEEKS, THROUGH AN INTERPLAY OF TENSIONS, IS THE AFFIRMATION OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD BY THE ENHANCEMENT, RATHER THAN AT THE EXPENSE, OF HUMAN DIGNITY. IT SEEKS THE EQUALITY OF CONCORD, NOT THAT OF BLAND UNIFORMITY.

THIS ACCOMODATION OF THE TWO PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY AND DIGNITY IS LOCATED BY THE RABBIS IN THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF THE CREATION OF MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD; MORE ACCURATELY, IN THE CREATION OF A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL, ADAM, IN THE DIVINE IMAGE, RATHER THAN THE INITIAL CREATION OF TWO OR MORE HUMANS.

THUS, THE FOLLOWING EXCERPT FROM THE MISHNAH IN SANHEDRIN (4:5):

THEREFORE WAS BUT A SINGLE MAN CREATED IN THE WORLD, TO TEACH THAT IF ONE DESTROYS A SINGLE SOUL, SCRIPTURE CONSIDERS IT AS THOUGH HE HAD DESTROYED A WHOLE WORLD; AND IF ANY MAN SAVES A SINGLE SOUL, SCRIPTURE CONSIDERS IT AS THOUGH HE HAD SAVED THE WHOLE WORLD.

AGAIN (BUT A SINGLE MAN WAS CREATED), FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE AMONG MANKIND, THAT NONE SHOULD SAY TO HIS FELLOW, "MY FATHER WAS GREATER THAN THY FATHER"...

AGAIN (BUT A SINGLE MAN WAS CREATED), TO PROCLAIM THE GREATNESS OF THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED IS HE; FOR MAN STAMPS MANY COINS WITH THE ONE SEAL AND THEY ARE ALL ALIKE; BUT THE KING OF KINGS, THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED IS HE, HAS STAMPED EVERY MAN WITH THE SEAL OF THE FIRST MAN, YET NOT ONE OF THEM IS LIKE HIS FELLOW.

NOTE THE MORALS DRAWN BY THE TANNAIM FROM THIS ONE IDEA OF MANKIND HAVING BUT ONE PROGENITOR: FIRST, THE INFINITE VALUE OF EACH HUMAN. EVEN AS ADAM WAS ALL OF HUMANITY, SO EACH DESCENDANT IS A "WHOLE WORLD" -- AS VALUABLE AS ALL OF MANKIND. THERE IS NO CALCULUS OF VALUES. EVERY HUMAN BEING RE-CAPITULATES AND REPRESENTS ALL OF MANKIND. SECOND, COMMUNAL PEACE BASED UPON EQUALITY OF ORIGINS: SINCE ALL FAMILIES OF MAN HAD ONE COMMON ANCESTOR, NONE OF THEM HAS THE RIGHT TO DOMINATE OTHERS. THERE IS NO CLEARER CONDEMNATION OF RACISM IN ALL LITERATURE. THIRD, DESPITE THIS EQUALITY, ALL MEN ARE DIFFERENT ONE FROM ANOTHER. EACH IS CREATED IN THE DIVINE IMAGE -- AND YET EACH IS UNIQUE AND HENCE DISSIMILAR TO ALL OTHERS CREATED IN THE SAME IMAGE.

IN REALITY, THE SAME IDEAS ARE IMPLICIT IN THE GRUNDPRINZIP OF MAN'S CREATION IN GOD'S IMAGE. THIS IMPLIES THAT MAN DERIVES FROM HIS RESEMBLANCE TO GOD AN IRREDUCIBLE CORE OF DIGNITY OR WORTHINESS; THAT THE DIGNITY OF HIS FELLOW HUMAN CREATURES IS NO LESS SACRED THAN HIS OWN; AND THAT EVEN AS GOD IS UNIQUE, SO IS EACH OF HIS BILLIONS OF HUMAN REFLECTIONS UNIQUE.

JUDAISM, IN ITS MOST AUTHENTIC EXPRESSION, THUS SEES NO INCOMPATIBILITY

BETWEEN EQUALITY AND UNIQUENESS, BETWEEN BROTHERHOOD AND DIFFERENTNESS.

WHAT IS TRUE OF INDIVIDUALS IS TRUE OF COMMUNITIES. ON THE SOCIETAL LEVEL, THE EQUALITY OF INDIVIDUALS EMERGES AS THE EQUAL RIGHTS OF EACH COMMUNITY AND NATION -- THE TEACHING OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD. AND THE DIFFERENTNESS AND UNIQUENESS OF EACH HUMAN, WRIT LARGE, BECOMES THE AFFIRMATION OF THE RIGHT OF EACH GROUP TO ITS OWN STYLE, DESTINY, NORMS, VALUES, AND IMMANENT PRINCIPLES. JEWISH DISTINCTIVENESS THUS FLOWS FROM THE SAME SOURCE AS UNIVERSALISM. DENY ONE AND YOU DENY THE OTHER.

VI

OUR THIRD POINT CONCERNS THE TENDENCY OF THE HALAKHAH TO GIVE CONCRETE, EMPIRICAL EXPRESSION TO UNIVERSAL IDEAS. ALTHOUGH AT FIRST BLUSH THIS TREATMENT MAY SEEM TRIVIAL, LEGALISTIC, NARROW, AND EVEN BANAL, IT IS YET THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF EXPERIENCING SUCH IDEALS INSTEAD OF MERELY GRANTING THEM INTELLECTUAL ASSENT OR VERBAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

THIS IS A REFLECTION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL MODUS OPERANDI OF THE HALAKHAH. DEEPLY RESPECTFUL OF THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF LIFE, THE HALAKHAH CAN NEVERTHELESS BARELY DISGUISE ITS CONTEMPT FOR ABSTRACT IDEALS THAT ARE NEVER COMMITTED TO PRACTICE AND REALIZED IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE:

לֹא הַמְדַרְשׁ הַעֵיקָר אֶלָּא הַמַּעֲשֶׂה "ACTION AND NOT THEORY IS MOST IMPORTANT."

THIS ESSENTIALLY PRAGMATIC BENT IS THE RESULT OF A HARD-HEADED ATTITUDE WHICH IS DISTRUSTFUL OF GLIB TALKING AND THEORIZING -- אַמִּיזֵר מַעַל וְיִטְהַר רַבָּה, "SPEAK LITTLE AND DO MUCH"; OF THE RECOGNITION THAT IDEALS ARE MEANINGFUL WHEN LIVED; AND OF THE INSIGHT THAT SUCH PRACTICAL EXPRESSION SERVES AS THE PEDAGOGIC MEANS OF DEEPENING THE EXISTENTIAL AWARENESS OF, AND HENCE COMMITMENT TO, THE ABSTRACT VALUES.

LET US ILLUSTRATE THIS BRIEFLY WITH REGARD TO A FEW "UNIVERSAL" VALUES.

WE SPOKE OF THE CONCEPT OF MAN'S CREATION IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, AND THE DERIVATIVE PRINCIPLE OF MAN'S INFINITE DIGNITY. THE MISHNAH (TERUMOT 8:12)

TEACHES THAT IF A GROUP OF WOMEN ARE SURROUNDED BY PAGANS WHO SAY TO THEM, "CHOOSE ONE OF YOU AND HAND HER OVER TO US AND WE WILL VIOLATE HER, OR ELSE WE WILL VIOLATE ALL OF YOU," THE LAW IS THAT THE WOMEN MAY NOT DESIGNATE ANY ONE OF THEM AS THE UNWILLING VICTIM. THE TOSEFTA TEACHES THE SAME FOR MURDER, AS WELL AS FOR RAPE: ONE MAN CANNOT BE FORCIBLY SACRIFICED FOR OTHERS. OF COURSE, THE LAWS BECOME MORE COMPLEX, DEPENDING UPON A VARIETY OF OTHER FACTORS, AND THE HALAKHIC LITERATURE OF THE HOLOCAUST PERIOD REFLECTS THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE AND URGENCY OF THIS HALAKHAH. BUT THE VARIOUS COMPLICATED LAWS, AS THEY RELATE TO SO MANY CRITICAL, REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS, REVEAL THE SUBLIME, UNIVERSAL VALUE: THE VERY HUMANITARIAN AND YET DEEPLY RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE OF THE INESTIMABLE AND INCALCULABLE VALUE OF EACH AND EVERY HUMAN. IF EACH INDIVIDUAL IS INFINITELY WORTHY, THEN TEN OR A HUNDRED TIMES INFINITY IS STILL INFINITY -- NO MORE, NO LESS.

(THE SAME PRINCIPLE OF MAN'S RESEMBLANCE OF GOD IS THE SOURCE, ALTHOUGH NOT EXPLICIT, OF MAN'S RIGHT TO PRIVACY -- MORE, MAN'S DUTY TO PROTECT HIS PRIVACY. IN THIS SENSE, THE HALAKHAH'S TEACHINGS ON PRIVACY ARE MORE ENLIGHTENED THAN THOSE OF MOST COUNTRIES INCLUDING THAT OF THE U.S.A.)

"THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF" (LEV. 19:18) IS SURELY AN UNEXCEPTIONABLE SENTIMENT. THIS VALUE FOUND MANY INTERESTING PRACTICAL -- AND SURPRISING -- EXPRESSIONS IN THE HALAKHAH. TO CHOOSE BUT TWO: IN CONTRADISTINCTION TO THE PREVAILING PRACTICE IN MUCH OF THE ANCIENT WORLD, THE TALMUD FORBADE A MAN TO MARRY A WOMAN WITHOUT SEEING HER FIRST, LEST THEY DO NOT ATTRACT EACH OTHER, FOR IF INDEED THERE IS A FEELING OF REVULSION BETWEEN THEM, THEY WILL BE IN VIOLATION OF, "THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF" (KID. 41A). SECOND, A CONDEMNED CRIMINAL HAD TO BE EXECUTED AS PAINLESSLY AS POSSIBLE; "CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT" WAS PROHIBITED BY THE TALMUD (PES. 75A, ET PASSIM) -- MUCH BEFORE THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION! -- WHICH REFERRED ITS RULING TO "THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF."

PEACE -- SHALOM -- IS A UNIVERSAL IDEAL. WHAT COUNTRY DOES NOT ASSERT

THAT IT IS "PEACE-LOVING?" THE MISHNAH, CODIFIED AT A TIME WHEN JEWS HAD LOST THEIR INDEPENDENCE, CONCENTRATES ON PRACTICAL SITUATIONS, RELEVANT TO JEWS, IN INCULCATING THE IDEAL OF SHALOM. THE UNIVERSAL VALUE OF PEACE IS CRYSTALLIZED IN A DISTINCTIVELY JEWISH FORM, IN THE LAWS OF SABBATH, AND IN THIS MANNER SERVES AS AN EDUCATIONAL DEVICE TO KEEP ALIVE THE COGENCY OF PEACE AS A HIGH PRINCIPLE OF LIFE. ONE OF THE LAWS OF THE SABBATH IS THAT WE MAY NOT CARRY FROM ONE DOMAIN TO ANOTHER -- FROM PUBLIC TO PRIVATE PROPERTY, AND VICE-VERSA. ORNAMENTS, HOWEVER, ARE CONSIDERED PART OF ONE'S DRESS AND NOT AS PORTABLE OBJECTS. YET THE MISHNAH FORBIDS WEARING A SWORD OR ANY OTHER WEAPON ON SHABBAT, BECAUSE THEY ARE A DISGRACE, NOT AN ORNAMENT (SHAB. 6:4). THE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY THE SAGES GIVE FOR THIS RULING IS THE FAMOUS VERSE IN ISAIAH (2:4), "THEY SHALL BEND THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES, AND THEIR SPEARS INTO PRUNING-HOOKS." IN THE DAYS OF THE MESSIAH, THE SAGES WERE SAYING, ISRAEL WILL IMPLEMENT PEACE ON THE POLITICAL LEVEL; MEANWHILE, IN ANTICIPATION OF IT, WE FORBID CARRYING WEAPONS ON THE SABBATH. EVEN NOW, PEACE IS NURTURED IN THE MINUTIAE OF LIFE SO THAT ITS VALUE NOT BE FORGOTTEN ON THAT DAY WHEN WE SHALL AGAIN PLAY A ROLE ON THE WORLD SCENE.

ONE CAN, IN THIS MANNER, GIVE EXAMPLE AFTER EXAMPLE OF THE CONCRETE EXPRESSION JUDAISM GIVES TO ABSTRACT IDEALS -- HOW IT TRANSMUTES UNIVERSAL VALUES INTO JEWISH VALUES. (THE LORDSHIP OF GOD OVER ALL CREATION FINDS EXPRESSION IN JUDAISM IN THE LAWS OF THE SABBATH, THE SABBATICAL YEAR, THE OUTLAWING OF SELF-INCRIMINATION IN JEWISH COURTS, THE TEACHINGS OF JUDAISM ON ECOLOGY. FREEDOM IS CELEBRATED IN VARIOUS HOLIDAYS; AND IN THE CENSURE OF THOSE WHO WILLINGLY FORFEIT THEIR FREEDOM BY SELLING THEMSELVES AS INDENTURED SLAVES. THESE ARE BUT A FEW ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE UNIVERSAL AND UNIVERSALIST VALUES IMPLICIT IN WHAT SUPERFICIALLY SEEM TO BE QUITE NARROW AND EVEN PAROCHIAL FORMULATIONS.)

VII

WHAT WE LEARN FROM THE ABOVE, THEN, IS THAT THE UNIVERSALIST AND THE

SPECIFICALLY JEWISH VALUES IN JUDAISM ARE SO INTERTWINED, SO DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER, THAT TO DISENTANGLE THEM AND TO ENDEAVOR TO SEVER THEM FROM EACH OTHER IS TO RISK THEIR EXTINCTION. CUT OFF A SPECIFIC JEWISH VALUE FROM ITS AXIOLOGICAL CONTEXT IN THE WHOLE OF JUDAISM, AND IT MAY SURVIVE FOR A WHILE, EVEN SEEM COLORFUL AND CREATIVE - BUT IT WILL SURELY WITHER AND DIE IN TIME. IT IS LIKE CUTTING OFF A LEAF FROM A TREE - IT WILL TURN MORE COLORFUL AND SEEM AN ATTRACTIVE PLAYTHING. BUT REALLY IT IS A TOKEN OF DEATH. AND DEATH COMES IN MANY COLORS.

THE PRIME EXAMPLE OF THE DISTORTION THAT OCCURS WHEN A SPECIFIC VALUE IS TORN OUT OF CONTEXT AND DEVELOPED IN TRUNCATED FORM IS - EDUCATION. TALMUD TORAH, THE STUDY OF TORAH, IS SURELY ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT AND SACRED OF ALL JEWISH VALUES. BOTH THEORETICALLY AND HISTORICALLY, IT COMES AT THE VERY APEX OF THE PYRAMID OF VALUES IN JUDAISM. BUT AS JEWS ASSIMILATED, THIS LOVE OF LEARNING WAS REDIRECTED FROM TORAH TO GENERAL CULTURE. REFRACTED THROUGH THE PRISM OF SECULARISM, TALMUD TORAH BECAME THE WELL-KNOWN JEWISH PENCHANT FOR GRADUATE DEGREES AND THE FASCINATION WITH THE ACADEMY AND THE PROFESSIONS. I DO NOT KNOW HOW LONG THIS ETHNO-CULTURAL INCLINATION WILL CONTINUE AFTER HAVING BEEN SUNDERED FROM THE REST OF THE TRADITION AND FROM ITS JEWISH ROOTS. BUT, IN AN IRONIC DIALECTICAL TURN, THIS SAME ESTEEM FOR EDUCATION HAS BECOME A DANGEROUS SOURCE FOR THE POTENTIAL UNDOING OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE: THE CAMPUSES HAVE BECOME THE PRIME SITE OF THE DE-JUDAIZING OF THE YOUNG, WHO ARE LED BY THEIR GENERAL CULTURAL SOPHISTICATION, WHEN THEY COMPARE IT WITH THEIR PRIMITIVE AND DIMINUTIVE JEWISH KNOWLEDGE, TO AN ATTITUDE OF CONTEMPT TOWARDS THE VERY TRADITION WHICH HISTORICALLY CONDITIONED THEM TO STRIVE FOR CULTURE AND LEARNING IN THE FIRST PLACE.

VIII

HOW DO WE REINTEGRATE THE SEPARATE VALUES IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE COMING GENERATION SO THAT THE SEVERED LIMBS ARE RECOMBINED

IN THE "TREE OF LIFE" OF A WHOLE JUDAISM, SO THAT BOTH THEY AND IT MAY FLOURISH?

FIRST, BY CONTINUED AND MUCH GREATER EMPHASIS ON JEWISH EDUCATION -- BUT FAR IMPROVED BOTH QUANTITATIVELY AND QUALITATIVELY. THE DAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT IS OBVIOUSLY SUPERIOR TO OTHER FORMS OF JEWISH EDUCATION ON THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS -- AND ON THE TERTIARY LEVEL AS WELL. BUT IN ALL KINDS OF SCHOOLS, WE NEED A NEW ORIENTATION: WE MUST GIVE NEW DIGNITY TO THE SPECIFICALLY JEWISH COMPONENT, AND DEMONSTRATE HOW THE MOST SIGNIFICANT UNIVERSAL-MORAL VALUES ARE IMPLEMENTED, REENFORCED, AND "NATURALIZED" IN THEIR JEWISH MODES OF EXPRESSION.

SECOND, WE MUST SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE MORE SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH IN JUDAISM, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE APPLICATIONS OF THE INSIGHTS OF JUDAISM TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE MODERN WORLD.

AND THIRD, IN THE PROCESS OF DECISION-MAKING ON THE POLICIES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, AND ALSO IN THE ENUNCIATION OF SUCH POLICIES, THERE SHOULD BE INPUT, BY JEWISH SCHOLARS, OF JEWISH TEACHINGS ON THE GREAT ISSUES OF THE DAY.

THIS NEED FOR ENHANCING THE SPECIFICALLY JEWISH VALUES IN CONCERT WITH THE UNIVERSAL TEACHINGS OF JUDAISM, IS NO LESS URGENT IN ISRAEL THAN IN THE DIASPORA. (THE NOTION THAT JUDAISM WILL AUTOMATICALLY SURVIVE IN ISRAEL WITHOUT EFFORT, WILL POWER, AND DELIBERATE DESIGN -- IS A MYTH, AND A DANGEROUS ONE. THOSE OF US WHO POSSESS IDEALS WITHOUT BEING BLINDED BY IDEOLOGY, KNOW FULL WELL THAT STATEHOOD CAN NO MORE GUARANTEE THE SURVIVAL OF THE JEWISHNESS OF THE JEW THAN IT CAN ENSURE THE PHYSICAL SAFETY OF JEWS FROM ANTI-SEMITIC ONSLAUGHTS. THE STATE HAS CONFERRED MANY BLESSINGS ON US -- FROM THE ABOLITION OF HOMELESSNESS TO RENEWED NATIONAL DIGNITY -- BUT IT IS NOT, NOR CAN IT EVER BE, A PANACEA FOR ALL THE PROBLEMS OF JEWS AND JUDAISM.)

THE PROBLEM OF JEWISH VALUES CUTS ACROSS ALL GEOGRAPHICAL LINES. (IF ANYTHING, THOSE OF US WHO CONSIDER ISRAEL AS A POTENTIAL SPIRITUAL CENTER, WHETHER FROM A RELIGIOUS OR AN AHAD HAAM PERSPECTIVE, HAVE EVEN MORE REASON FOR CONCERN AT THE EROSION OF THE SPECIFICALLY JEWISH COMPONENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE STATE.) THE ENORMOUS SECURITY AND ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON THE STATE SHOULD

NOT CAUSE US TO IGNORE THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT. ON THE CONTRARY, THE TWO MAY YET PROVE TO BE SURPRISINGLY INTERDEPENDENT. WE MAY LEARN, IN ISRAEL AS WELL AS IN THE DIASPORA, THAT ONLY AS WE BECOME MORE JEWISH DO WE BECOME MORE HUMAN, AND THAT THE MORE WE BECOME HUMANIZED THE MORE DO WE BECOME JUDAIZED.

THE RELATION OF THE SPIRITUAL AND THE MATERIAL PARALLELS THAT OF THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR. I TAKE VIGOROUS EXCEPTION TO THE Gnostic DOCTRINE THAT THE SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL ARE LOCKED IN ETERNAL BATTLE, AND THAT THEY BEAR A SEE-SAW RELATION TO EACH OTHER, THAT ONE IS ACQUIRED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE OTHER. QUITE THE CONTRARY, A MORE JEWISH VIEW OF REDEMPTION IS THAT IN THE END IT WILL BE -- BOTH OR NOTHING. OUR VISION IS ONE OF NATIONAL PROSPERITY IN BOTH REALMS, THE MATERIAL AND THE SPIRITUAL, IN A WORLD OF PEACE AND JUSTICE. THE ALTERNATIVE IS A ONE-SIDEDNESS IN WHICH WE ARE ALWAYS IN JEOPARDY OF LOSING BOTH WORLDS; IN THE HEBREW IDIOM - OF BECOMING *קרה מכאן וקרה מכאן*.

PERMIT ME TO CONCLUDE ON A PERSONAL NOTE. AS A YOUNGSTER GROWING INTO YOUNG MANHOOD, MY OWN JEWISH CONSCIOUSNESS WAS REINFORCED NOT ONLY BY THE FACT THAT I CAME FROM A COMPLETELY AND AUTHENTICALLY JEWISH HOME, BUT ALSO BY THE TERRIBLE NEWS OF THE HOLOCAUST, AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER THE FOUNDING OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL. IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT I MADE A CAREER DECISION TO ENTER THE FIELD OF HIGHER JEWISH LEARNING AND TEACHING -- WITH ALL ITS WELL-KNOWN DIFFICULTIES AND DISADVANTAGES. THE DECISION INVOLVED A SENSE OF IDENTITY -- THAT I WAS NOT ONLY I, BUT THAT I WAS AN INSEPARABLE PART OF A JEWISH PEOPLE WHOSE EXISTENCE TRANSCENDED TIME AND SPACE.

IT IS BECAUSE OF THIS IDENTITY THAT I WAS PLAGUED WITH A NIGHTMARE, ONE THAT KEPT RECURRING, BUT THAT WAS VAGUE AND INCHOATE. I COULD NEVER IDENTIFY IT, NEVER QUITE PIECE IT TOGETHER AND IDENTIFY ITS CONTOURS. IT WAS ONLY LATER, WHEN I WAS READING THE WORKS OF ISRAEL'S NOBEL LAUREATE, THE LATE S.Y. AGNON, THAT I CHANCED UPON THE EXACT NIGHTMARE THAT HAD BEEN TROUBLING ME FOR SO LONG.

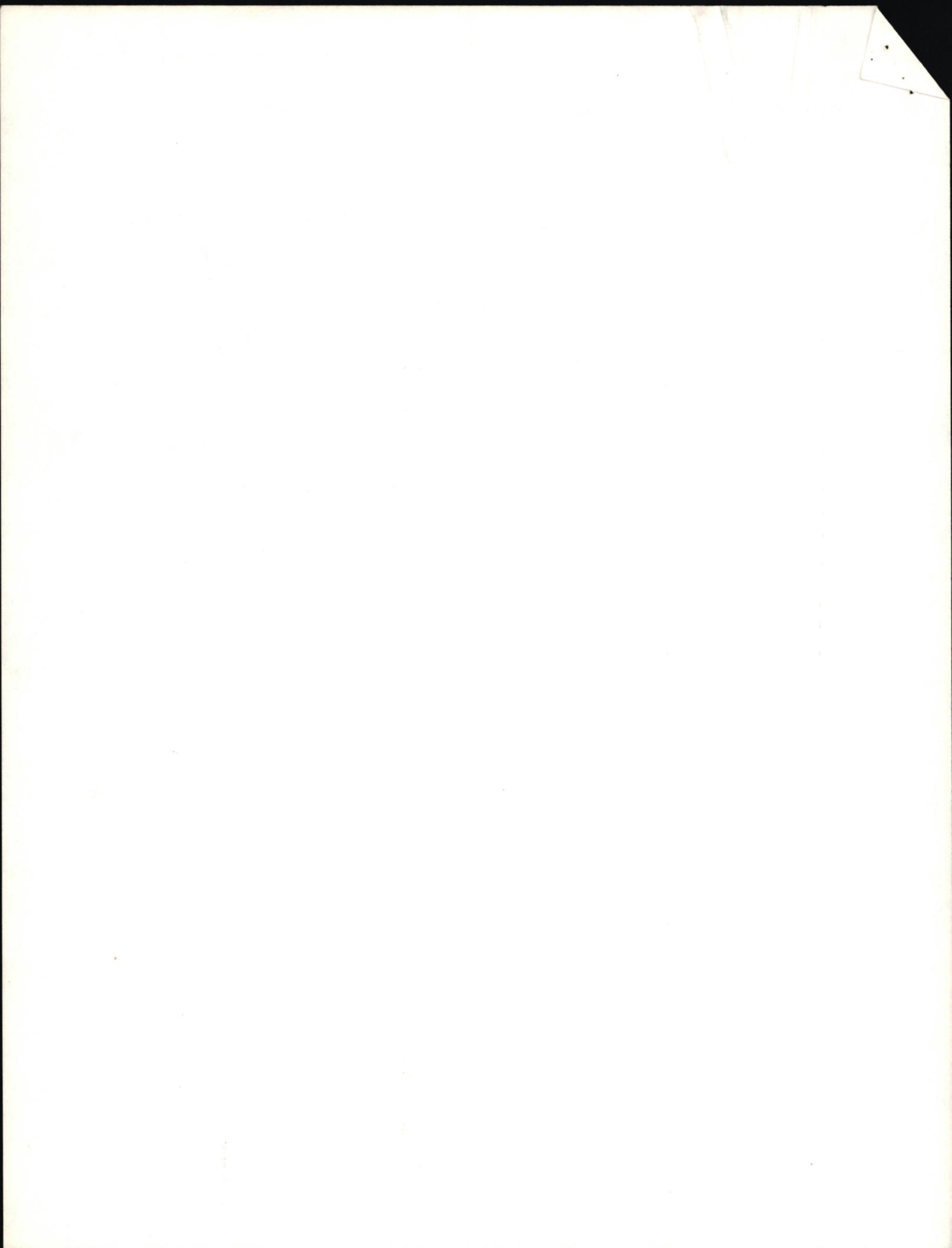
IN THIS "תמוז ששטום" AGNON TELLS THE EPIC STORY OF YITZHAK, THE

OLEH FROM GALICIA DURING THE SECOND ALIYAH. YITZHAK HAS A DREAM. HE IS IN PALESTINE AT THE SEASHORE, AND HE FORGETS HIS SHOES ON THE SAND. HE GOES TO LOOK FOR THEM, WHEN A WIND BLOWS OFF HIS HAT. A MAN APPROACHES HIM AND SAYS, "COME I WILL SHOW YOU WHERE YOUR HAT IS." AS HE BEGINS TO FOLLOW HIM, THE MAN DISAPPEARS. YITZHAK STANDS IN THE STREET BAREFFOT, WITHOUT SHOES, AND HIS HEAD UNCOVERED. HE HEARS THE VOICE OF PRAYER, AND FOLLOWS IT. HE SEES A TWO-STORY HOUSE, WHERE THE BOTTOM PART IS BOARDED UP AND IN RUINS, AND ONE CAN REACH THE SECOND STORY, WHERE THE PRAYER TAKES PLACE, ONLY BY MEANS OF A LADDER. HE PUSHES THE LADDER AGAINST THE WALL, AND BEGINS TO CLIMB. AS HE COMES INTO THE WINDOW, IT CLOSES SHUT ON HIM, SO THAT HIS HEAD IS WITHIN, AND THE REST OF HIS BODY IS OUTSIDE THE BUILDING.

THAT IS MY NIGHTMARE: THAT WE SHALL, UNLESS WE DEFINE OUR GOALS PROPERLY, BE CAUGHT SHORT AT BOTH ENDS: BAREHEADED WITHIN, THE SYMBOL OF BEING BEREFT OF JEWISH VALUES, WITHOUT TORAH; AND BAREFOOT OUTSIDE -- ECONOMICALLY EMACIATED, POLITICALLY ISOLATED, AND SOCIALLY WEAKENED. MY NIGHTMARE IS THAT WE SHALL HAVE LOST BOTH WORLDS, FORFEITED BOTH HAT AND SHOES, BODY AND SOUL, MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL, UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUES. UNLESS WE STRIVE FOR BOTH, WE WILL ATTAIN NEITHER.

BUT A LAST WORD. ALONG WITH THIS NIGHTMARE I HAVE ALSO, AT ALL TIMES, CHERISHED A GREAT AND GOOD DREAM, ONE THAT HAS SWEETENED MY LIFE AND INSPIRED ME ESPECIALLY WHEN MY MOOD WAS GLOOMY AND MY SPIRITS LOW. IT IS A DREAM THAT IS THE MIRROR IMAGE OF THE NIGHTMARE: THAT WE JEWS WILL MAKE IT; THAT WE WILL SURVIVE THE OPPRESSION OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND THE EROSION OF JEWISH VALUES WITHIN; THAT WE SHALL SOMEHOW ENTER THE SANCTUARY OF ISRAEL'S ETERNAL HERITAGE, WITH HATS FIRMLY PLACED ON OUR HEADS AND OUR FEET WELL SHOD; THAT IT WHALL BE WELL WITH US JEWS, BOTH SPIRITUALLY AND MATERIALLY -- LITERALLY, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM.

AND JUST AS THE NIGHTMARE IS ONE WHICH I SUBSEQUENTLY FOUND IN MODERN HEBREW LITERATURE, SO THE DREAM, THE SWEET ONE, IS ONE THAT I WAS ABLE TO



IDENTIFY IN HEBREW LITERATURE TOO -- BUT OF A MUCH OLDER VINTAGE, A MORE ANCIENT LITERATURE, OUR TORAH. IT TOO CONCERNS A LADDER.

IT IS THE DREAM OF JACOB -- *לִסְכֵם מִצֶּבֶת אֶרֶץ וּרְאִשׁוֹ מִגִּיץ שָׁמַיְמָה*,
THE DREAM OF A LADDER PLANTED ON EARTH AND ITS TOP REACHING INTO THE HEAVENS
(GEN. 28:12). IT IS A GREAT JEWISH VISION: WE SHALL NOT LOSE BOTH WORLDS.
WE SHALL RETAIN BOTH WORLDS. THE LADDER SHALL LINK US TO BOTH THE EARTH BELOW
AND HEAVENS ABOVE.

THE TIME HAS COME TO CLIMB THIS LADDER PLACED ON EARTH AND REACHING HEAVEN.
LET US ASCEND -- STEP BY STEP, RUNG BY RUNG, VALUE BY VALUE, ACHIEVEMENT BY
ACHIEVEMENT. IN THE END, WE SHALL BE BLESSED BOTH WITH SPIRITUAL EMINENCE
AND MATERIAL PLENTY. WE SHALL BE BOTH FULLY HUMAN AND FULLY JEWISH.
