

ISRAEL: ANTICIPATION AND REALITY

THE MEANING OF ISRAEL IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORY

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ALTHOUGH THE STATE OF ISRAEL now celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary, a quarter of a century is a very short period in the entire complex of Jewish history. It might seem that we are too intimately and immediately involved to engage in detached evaluation of the significance of Israel. However, the roots out of which the state grew and the components of its culture and self-government—including the machinery required for its self-defense—derive from sources sufficiently removed from the immediate past to justify an effort to view it from an historical perspective. After all, the relative smoothness of the transition to independence and total self-government in 1948 was the consequence of experience gained in operating a *quasi* self-government that in reality had been established as far back as 1920-21 by Jews who were, even then, preparing for genuine statehood.

Clearly, our appraisal of this history must be quite tentative, but in the final analysis, any historical evaluation derives its strength, as well as its weakness, from the standpoint of the viewer, and it may be nonetheless worthy of a hearing for all its provisional quality. As for the specific subject of our examination, Israel is, I believe, sufficiently mature and sufficiently developed politically, economically and culturally to sustain a frank review and a realistic assessment.

From an historical point of view, then, how has Israel affected Jewish history? What has Israel provided for the Jewish people as a whole, for its own citizens as well as for those living in the Diaspora, apart from itself—i.e., apart from its society, its culture, its haven for hundreds of thousands who could find no home anywhere else in the world?

israel as a unifying force

WHAT IS IMMEDIATELY OBVIOUS, it seems to me, but nevertheless deserves to be repeated again and again, is a fact not sufficiently appreciated—that simply by virtue of its existence and its successful struggle for survival,

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Israel has become a unifying force for the Jewish people such as they have not enjoyed for some twenty centuries and more. This may seem a startling claim to some, in light of the widespread notion of the relatively great unity of the Jewish people in pre-modern times. However, this notion of the unity of the Jewish people before the forces of modernity made deep inroads into Jewish society is, in reality, a myth that deserves to be discarded once and for all. Unity, to be sure, is in and of itself not necessarily a virtue, and the mere presence or absence of unity of purpose and organization would not suffice to warrant a value judgment. But the fact of the matter is that Israel has served as a force for unity far greater than the Jews have had since the days of the Maccabean state and that this sense of unity has brought many to incorporate into their lives deep commitments to Judaism and to the Jewish people from which they would otherwise have been considerably alienated.

One often hears the taunt that Jews are actually a people that tend towards fragmentation, and have indeed reflected such tendencies since ancient times. The number of competing parties in Israel and in the Diaspora in our own days provides graphic support for this characterization, and the record of Jewish history will prove that this is not a recent Jewish development. For all its tendentiousness and distortion, Josephus' description of the siege of Jerusalem reflects internal divisions among the Jewish population that could not be overcome even in the face of compelling circumstances. Much later in Jewish history, the bitter Maimonist controversy in northern Spain and northern France divided the Jewish communities of those areas into factions that engaged in a bitter controversy for almost a century.

The split in the East European Jewish community in consequence of the rise of Hasidism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was deep and bitter. Even in the Warsaw Ghetto there was more than one high command directing Jewish resistance. Jews have often quarreled and remained aloof from each other. This is, of course, true even today. However, Israel has succeeded in establishing itself as a uniquely unifying element for the whole of the Jewish people—the few dissidents are no longer of any real consequence—even as the ancient Maccabees apparently were able, in consequence of their struggle for Jewish statehood, to make Jerusalem and the Temple umbilical institutions for the whole of the Jewish people. (This, to my mind, was the real significance of the festival of Hanukkah and of the institution of the half-shekel, which modern scholars have suggested should be credited to Maccabean efforts.)

Given the history of Jewish dispersion and the history of Jewish fragmentation, the speed with which modern Israel attained its centrality in Jewish concerns is simply marvelous and bespeaks a response to a deep

need and yearning in the hearts of Jews everywhere for some unifying force. Indeed, the tensions between the *edot* and parties in Israel do not reflect, as I see it, tensions inherent in Jewishness so much as the different historical experiences of various ethnic sub-groups, different collective memories and varying orientations to life which, willy-nilly, the immigrants carried with them to their new state. The pains and tribulations of adjustment sustained by the different groups in Israel are far less severe than they might well be and, indeed, are in other countries. In point of fact, never have Jews shared so common a purpose, so common a vision, and so common a concern as they now do in Israel and as they now do the world over with respect to Israel. Even the Karaites have been restored to the Jewish people and to the State of Israel, and many other lost tribes and groups, some of whom we had never known, have come home to form a united nation.

Now while, as I have said, unity of itself is not necessarily a virtue, it is, nonetheless, a decided asset of immeasurable importance in the context of modern Jewish history. For one hundred and fifty years, the Jewish intelligentsia have been in search of new definitions of Judaism and Jewishness and of new directions and goals for the Jewish people. To many Jews who had virtually lost sight of their *raison d'être* as a people apart, Israel has provided a fresh and energizing force and thus restored the desire for some common Jewish identity the world over.

The events of 1948, 1956 and 1967 aroused many Jews to rediscover themselves as a people. There is an eagerness among Jews to work together, on some issues at least, that has not been felt since Judea was under siege by the Babylonian army. The response of Soviet Jewry to the new State is eloquent testimony to this phenomenon. It would seem that we have again become an *am*, a corporate kinship group, in fact and not only in faith.

A phenomenon closely tied to this new sense of unity is that the rebirth of a Jewish state in the ancient homeland has also given the Jews of the world a new sense of pride in their Jewishness. The world has long accused the Jews of arrogance; Christian and Arabic literature is replete with denunciations of Jewish haughtiness. But, in truth, the Jew has long, and in recent centuries quite visibly, walked about with a burden of self-doubt far in excess of any ostensible self-assurance that he seemed to evidence. Centuries of denigration made deep inroads into Jewish self-esteem, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of us still suffer, more or less, from some degree of self-doubt, and this is true even in Israel. However, the *trend* appears to have been reversed, and that reversal is in large measure owing to the emergence of Israel and to its achievements.

A comparison of American college campuses in 1940 or 1950 with those of today will make my point. Many of the very same men and women—students, as well as faculty—who in those earlier years would never have identified themselves as Jews, now show absolutely no hesitation in doing so. On any campus in the country you will find Jewish young men—and again, even faculty men—walking about with skullcaps on their heads. Often this is not so much, I believe, a ritual act, as an affirmation of the pride they feel in their Jewish identity.

In a commencement address delivered in 1906, Solomon Schechter spoke of the spiritual value of political Zionism. Schechter felt that through the agency of the Zionist rediscovery and reappropriation of the physical roots of the Jewish people, many a Jew would be restored to his spiritual roots; and that is precisely what has come to pass. Responding to the magnetic pull which the land of Israel exerts on every Jew who sets foot on its soil, many a Jew has indeed found a way home from alienation. The noble traits displayed by Israel's Defense Forces, by Israeli youth in their readiness to give of themselves for their country and, above all, by Israel's kibbutzim in their efforts to create new model Jewish societies have been a source of spiritual energy and inspiration to Jews everywhere.

THANKS TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ISRAEL—coupled somewhat with a sense of guilt over the Holocaust and the logic of the democratic creed—the contempt of the Deists for Judaism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of the Philosophes in the eighteenth century, and of the modern liberal theologians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, all of which was so trying to Jewish morale, is increasingly becoming a subject for critical re-examination by historians of ideas. Jew-hatred is by no means over, but in intellectual circles, at least, the justification of an attitude of contempt for the Jew with reasons drawn from the estimable realms of philosophy and theology has become, because of the Holocaust, an obscenity and as a result of the existence of the State of Israel, an absurdity.

Yet another consequence of the establishment of the State of Israel has been the acceptance by the general educated public of Jewish culture as a genuine culture worthy of a hearing, study and examination. Ironically enough, it was only in consequence of the concentration of this culture in one small corner of the globe that Jewish culture was at long last able to shed the stigmas of “parochialism” and “fossilization” with which the modern taste-setters of Western culture from Hegel to Toynbee had dubbed it. Judaism and Jewish culture in all its manifestations have finally gained acceptance as part of the intellectual fabric of the Western world. Not only are Biblical studies and modern Judaica taught today in secular universities—even by Jews!—but Talmud, too, as well as Kabbalah and

Hasidism, modern Hebrew literature, Jewish history and Jewish theology. All of these have now become part of the accepted curriculum in many great universities. Twenty-five years ago, the number of those teaching Judaica in American universities was considered remarkable even though they could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Today university teachers in these areas are numbered in the hundreds, and they are to be found not only in the United States, but in Canada, England, France, Spain and, paradox of paradoxes, in Germany. Jewish culture and Jewish history have certainly ceased to be the chimera that socialist leaders publicly labelled them in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

How ironic it is to remember that in 1818, Leopold Zunz, the father of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Western Europe, issued a little pamphlet entitled, *Etwas ueber die rabbinische Litteratur*, in which he urged German universities to institute courses in rabbinic literature (by which he meant all post-Biblical Jewish literature) and to hasten to catalogue this literature because, for one hundred years hence, there would be no one in the world capable of deciphering these books and comprehending their contents. Zunz was the first to reflect a desire to give a decent burial to a culture he clearly loved. Today, however, not only are these books being read, but they are being reprinted, read, studied, and interpreted by laymen and scholars the world over, not only in Jewish schools but in universities that had studiously excluded them.

Israel, in short, has sharply affected the mentality both of the Diaspora and of the world at large. Although I cannot provide statistics to measure all these developments, the facts, I believe, are beyond question. If, alas, these gains have only been won at the cost of much blood and annihilation, they are nonetheless real and palpable to anyone who remembers the days before and up to 1967. In a word, Israel has altered the course of Jewish history and the posture of the individual Jew in his orientation to his Jewish confreres and to the world at large.

NEVERTHELESS, I THINK IT MUST BE AFFIRMED with equal emphasis that Israel has by no means put an end to Jewish history as we have known it until now, nor has it eliminated many of its characteristic features. If this last observation may seem too obvious to require articulation, I think that if we examine some of the factors that generated the birth of Israel, the reason I speak of the putative end of Jewish history as untenable will become clear.

lack of alternatives

FOREMOST AMONG MANY IMPULSES orienting Jews toward Israel was, of course, classical Jewish faith and hope: "Next year in Jerusalem." Week

after week, the Jew hears the Biblical injunction and promise, “When you come to the Land.” The Bible was oriented to the Land, and the complete fulfillment of the Torah was possible only within its borders. Jewish faith articulated a yearning for the reestablishment of genuine worship in the Temple, and Jewish hope was forever sanguine about the imminent possibility of the reclamation of the homeland.

On the other hand, in deference to historical fairness it must be emphasized that although much has been made in modern literature of pious men who tried to stimulate interest in the return to Israel, those pious people who made any genuine efforts to move to Israel were, until the birth of Zionism, exceptions and often mavericks. The *religious* capital upon which Israel drew was in itself insufficient to generate the resolution and the forces required to create the State. Until progressive elements within modern Orthodoxy finally began to rally to the Zionist cause, the early *yishuv* would hardly have been surprised by a story contained in the diaries of David Reuveni.

David Reuveni, you will recall, came to Italy in 1526 in order to raise funds for a Jewish army. As he went around raising funds he kept a diary in Hebrew of his activities. He had little lists of those whom he would reward and those from whom he would exact payment when the Messiah arrived. He also recorded vignettes of his encounters with his fellow Jews. One story tells of a conversation between himself and a very pious Jew of Siena, a man apparently of some means. When Reuveni asked him for financial assistance, and told the man that with these funds he would enable him to return to Jerusalem, the pious Jew replied, “I am quite happy in Siena.” Men of faith were generally content to wait, and that fact has not been quite forgotten in Israel. Moreover, it is demonstrated every day that whatever adherence was finally given by Orthodox groups was in exchange for dominion over certain key areas of Jewish life. To the average Israeli, Jewish tradition has often not manifested its most attractive features with respect to restoring the Jewish people to freedom in Zion. Jewish faith prayed for a restoration, but by and large men of faith in pre-modern times did precious little about it.

Indeed, one is on good historical grounds in arguing the very opposite, that it was not faith so much as the deterioration of Jewish faith and the lack of any alternative that compelled Jews to choose the land of Israel as the place in which to find a genuine home. If classical faith made Israel the place of choice, it was the lack of an alternative that made the choice of Israel inevitable. Moreover, whether we like it or not, the fact of the matter is that it was the nations of the world that themselves compelled the birth of Israel—by progressively closing Western society to Jewish life and settlement, and subsequently, by sitting silently by as the Final Solution

was being enacted. In short, Zionism was the final consequence of a lack of alternatives: it was the *Jewish* final solution to "the Jewish Question."

Throughout the nineteenth century, Jews made genuine efforts to come to terms with Western society by reforming Judaism, by remodelling Jewish religion and Jewish ritual so that they would accord with the nationalist ideals and religious and ethical mores and tastes of their fellow citizens. Their efforts failed to achieve their envisioned aims. In 1848, they rallied to the liberal revolutions, only to encounter physical violence and social rebuffs on all sides. In the '70's and after, they found that it was precisely the German liberals who were accusing them of still clinging to the remnants of their faith and thereby demonstrating their reluctance to become full-fledged Germans. Many Jews thought socialism would provide the ultimate answer to their problem, only to find that among socialists, too, classical Jew-hatred was endemic, although it was disguised, of course, as progressive social and economic doctrine. The hope for minority rights between the two World Wars proved to be an equal illusion and frustration.

The more bitter the frustration in the effort to gain acceptance, the more militant and compelling became the Zionist solution. In a recent work on German-Jewish reactions to anti-Semitism, Professor Ismar Schorsch has described a very interesting phenomenon: the most militant Zionists of the early years of the twentieth century were those German Jews who had experienced little or no Judaism in their homes, but who had found that no degree of assimilation could open the doors of the university fraternities to them.

the unresolved jewish question

OTHERS CAME TO ZIONISM by way of an act of faith in reverse, so to speak. For these, Zionism was a revolt against those patterns of Jewish life that had evolved in the Diaspora; a revolt against Jewish passivity, against the rabbinate, against the *kehilla*, against abnormal economic distribution. Many of us were nurtured on Bialik's "Shirey HaZa'am" which bespeak the sentiments of revolt against the syndromes of Diaspora life and its passivity. Much of Bialik's truculence is incomprehensible to the young Israeli, who feels totally divorced from the traditional idiom and patterns of thought that underlie Bialik's poetry. But in any case, the fact remains that Israel is shaped by the spirit of revolt in the writings of Bialik, Brenner, Berdichevsky, Gordon—for all the differences among them. The Israeli may no longer be conscious of his spiritual roots which bespeak revolt against *galut and galutiyut*, both of which are terms of opprobrium to him. But however unconscious the roots may have become, the army the Israeli must serve in, the secularism that surrounds him, the economy of his

country and its religion of labor are all embodiments of a revolt against two thousand years of frequent humiliation and alienation. It was the determination to put an end to the humiliations succinctly embodied in the term "the Jewish Question" that moved the Zionist Jews to decide, finally, to get out and find a home of their own.

The young Israeli frequently shows little or no appreciation for the genuine nobility and loftiness of Jewish life in much of the Diaspora and through much of its history. It may be embarrassing to have to assert today what has become a commonplace to every student of Jewish history: namely, that the ghetto (physical or spiritual) was as much a shelter for the Jewish spirit and a center of autonomy as it was a place of separation from society at large. Alas, this denigration of much of the Jewish past often encountered in the Israeli press and literature is an unfortunate phenomenon and one which is pregnant with ominous consequences for the Jewish spirit and for the newly gained Jewish unity. But let us concentrate for the moment on the drive in political Zionism to put an end to the "abnormality" of Jewish existence in the Diaspora.

So much of Israel today is saturated with the Herzlian desire to eradicate those features of Jewish history especially associated with the Jewish Question that it is appropriate to ask whether this hope shows any sign of realization. My answer must be that I do not think so. I believe that although Israel has altered the *course* of Jewish history, it has not radically altered its essence.

It is true that we no longer see ourselves as a problematic people. Israel has removed the "Jewish Question" from the minds of Jews even as Hitler eliminated the Jewish presence from the society of western and central Europe. But Israel has not put an end to the fact that the Jew remains an alien in the minds of many people in Western society and certainly in the minds of the Arabs and of those sympathetic to their cause. The "Jewish Question," however it is phrased, remains a fact even in Europe, as the situation in the Soviet Union graphically demonstrates.

problems of jewish security

THERE IS A FURTHER and, to me, far more significant aspect of Jewish history that Israel has not really altered, and that is the problem of Jewish security. Anyone who has really analyzed the status of the Jew in society at large knows that ever since ancient times, the physical fate of the Jew has been determined by fairly consistent determinants. What is more, a dispassionate examination of the birth and growth of Israel will reveal that Israel's physical security is dependent not only on her own strength but, to no small degree, on those very factors that governed Jewish security even in the

Diaspora. Since this point will doubtless jar many a Jewish ear, I must dwell on it for a moment or two.

One of the distinctive features of our history is that Jewish security has always been dependent upon the assent and protection, active or implied, of a strong ruling authority, often of a strong imperial power. This had been true since the return under Cyrus and was especially true with regard to the wars of the Maccabees. We sing the praises of the Maccabees, and rightfully so, but as students of history let us never forget that it was Rome which determined the fate of the Middle East. It was Rome which provided the conditions necessary for Maccabean success. Had Rome decided that there should be no Epiphanian war against the Jews, there would have been no war. The fact that the name "Rome" does not figure in any account of the Maccabees does not lessen the centrality of her role in Jewish history long before Pompey intervened actively in the internal affairs of the Jews. Rome's importance to Jewish history, although the Jews have often not been aware of this fact, antedates the Epiphanian persecutions.

In the Middle Ages, religious protection was added to imperial protection for the Jews under Christendom as well as Islam. And not only was the birth of contemporary Israel, on the most fundamental level, dependent upon the acquiescence of the imperial powers with interests in the Mediterranean, but its continuing existence is also dependent upon these powers. Every great power is part of Jewish concern, for Israel's survival depends on the acquiescence of at least one great imperial power with interests in the Mediterranean. And to that extent, Israel depends on a strong "central government" in the world, by which I do not mean, alas, the United Nations. It is essential for us to be fully aware that the weakening of these forces or the renunciation of these interests could spell disaster.

We are people of thirty centuries of experience. We can not forget the pogrom of 411 B.C.E., when the Persian authority was absent from Egypt; or the pogrom of the Crusade of 1096, when Henry IV was busy in Italy; or 1391 in Spain, when government was weakened by an interregnum; or of 1648, when the Poles could no longer control the outlying areas from the Cossacks. It is not sufficient, either, to remember these tragedies as days of *Yizkor*; they must be remembered as warnings of the danger to which we expose ourselves if we are not careful about the policies we make. The forces of popular hatred which each of these catastrophes reflected could be unleashed again, and that popular hatred in the Near East today is synonymous with the Arab revolution. In short, Israel has not put an end to some of the fundamental characteristics of Jewish history even in the political realm.

Israel has changed much of the character of Jewish existence and provided for many entirely new and unexpected resolutions, but the basic

syndromes of its history remain. As early as 1933, Yehezkel Kaufmann pleaded with his fellow Jews not to delude themselves that the rebirth of *Eretz Yisrael* would solve the age-old problems of the Jewish nation. Kaufmann's analysis was not heeded and he suffered severely for having made his views public. He felt to his dying day, I am told, that he had been vindicated by the events in Europe between 1933-1945.

We, too, I believe, have frequently equated ideology with historical analysis, and our error, too, could be tragic. I do not for a moment suggest that our situation is the same as that of 1648, 1878 or even 1938; we have ceased to be helpless pawns in the international political arena. Our safety, however, is far from assured, and there is no doubt in my mind that until it is, Israel must occupy a central position in our policy-making councils. Still, for the sake of Israel as well as for the sake for the entire Jewish people, I would plead that we consider the implications of the *entire* course of Jewish history and that we do not formulate policies reduced by ideology to one simplistic solution. We must teach Jewish history in the Diaspora and in Israel with the same detachment with which I hope we study any serious problem. If we are to anticipate events and not merely to react to what has already taken place, and if we are to teach others to do the same, reality must be the controlling principle in our work. Too often, I fear Israelis speak as though the features of Jewish history are totally inapplicable to the State of Israel.

problems of the diaspora

I HAVE DELVED INTO POLITICAL QUESTIONS in this paper because I believe that we can no longer differentiate between the Jewish body and the Jewish soul. The destiny of our faith is intimately bound up with the destiny of our people and of its land; and history has made us all partners in the same enterprise. Given the syndromes of Jewish history, the Herzlian vision can never be realized until the Messiah comes. A strong and stable Diaspora, articulate and prosperous, will continue to be a political necessity assuring, among other things, that Israel will not quickly become a small nation dependent upon the whims and interests of great powers with no necessary commitment to it.

To talk of mass *aliyah* from the free countries is self-defeating on several counts, not the least of which is the inevitable disillusionment (and the divisiveness that would follow) when such an unrealistic expectation necessarily remains unfulfilled. The very concept of mass *aliyah* presupposes that the Diaspora is of no intrinsic merit other than as a source of immigrants and funds for Israel. This posture reflects a value judgment that in many ways grants the premises of the age-old enemies of the Jews and Judaism.

If Israel has not brought about the ultimate resolution of the political problems peculiar to the Jewish people, and if, therefore, she does have need of a strong Diaspora, the fundamental fact that follows is that Israel's supporters in this country must take an active interest in Jewish education here—for its own sake. A Jewish Diaspora cannot exist without a commitment to Judaism. The hue and cry about the dangers of intermarriage and assimilation are worse than meaningless if they do not reflect a deep concern for Jewish religious and cultural vitality inside and *outside* Israel. If intermarriage is dangerous only because it reduces the size of a worldwide pool of manpower for Israel, then we are playing political games with the spiritual lives of free people.

Our young people and our educators are well aware that many who plead for more intense Jewish education refuse, at the same time, to support American Jewish schools adequately. A second-rate education is recognized by those who deliver it and by those who receive it as a symptom of our conflict and despair. Our failure to invest in quality education proclaims that our children are being taught not so much for their benefit as for the benefit of the State or other agencies, but not of the Jews as Jews. Such a program is bound to fail. Ahad Ha'am, with all his secularism, saw that the faith and the ethos of those living in the Holy Land draw their strength from a covenant whose vitality and viability must be demonstrated to young people everywhere. It must be made applicable to their own lives.

Here, again, our Maccabean ancestors showed great perspicacity. We know today that it was under Maccabean rule that a Palestinian commission of elders was sent to Egypt to translate the Torah into Greek. Elias Bickerman has emphasized the uniqueness in the ancient world of such adaptability, and tells us that the Jews were the only ancient people willing to translate their scripture and its liturgy into the vernacular, thereby insuring that these scriptures would never become fossilized. The Book of Esther was translated in Palestine and amplified for the Jews of Egypt; for our ancestors understood that if a people is to have a common vision and a common purpose, it must have a common faith and a common literature. Kaufmann pointed out that Alexandrian Jewry never assimilated itself out of existence. It remained loyal to Judaism in the Greek garb it had prepared for it. Our genius has been *Dor, dor, ve-dorshav*, that every generation has its own interpretation, but remains dedicated to the same binding faith and commitment. Each community in Jewish history has adapted its own forms to its faith, and thus, paradoxically, all have remained loyal to the same dream. The time has come for us now to proclaim the enduring legitimacy of the Diaspora on a spiritual level. It is time now that Israel banish from its vocabulary the condescending attitude to *Galut* and *Galutiyut* that are, in the final analysis, outright appropriations from intellectual anti-

Semitic literature. We cannot accept a gentile diagnosis of a culture that has lived and created throughout the ages, even if that diagnosis is made in Hebrew.

A new generation is growing up without the common vocabulary that was shaped for us by the Holocaust and by the birth of Israel, and it is we who must supply a new vocabulary that will bind Israeli youth to Jewish youth everywhere. In this country our youth have begun to show an eagerness for a retranslation of the Jewish tradition. Indeed, only from the Diaspora can there come an over-arching commitment to Judaism based not on political statehood or upon geography but solely on the idea of covenant and commitment to ethos. Not a few young intellectuals in Israel itself see in Jewish education in the Diaspora—particularly in the Conservative variety of the Jewish religion—the only acceptable alternative to the dogmatic orthodoxy and the self-enclosed secularism that have characterized Jewish education in Israel. While I do not believe we can prescribe a religious vision to the Israeli in search, I do know that the impact of some of our young people on intellectuals in Israel has been enormous.

In the final analysis, however, this cannot constitute a rationale for Jewish education. Its rationale must be its own message, of which Israel will inevitably be a vital part. In short, the time has come for us to acknowledge that the legitimate place of the Jewish people, of Jewish culture, and of Jewish religion is not limited to a single geographic location. The original Zionist dream, which saw Israel as the home for all Jews, we can now recognize to have been unrealistic. To attempt to give substance to that dream would necessarily be to denigrate the Diaspora and the so-called 'exile mentality,' a course calculated to alienate Diaspora communities and to divert them from the responsibility they have accepted in the development of Israel.

THE ULTIMATE ANSWER to the problem of the relationship between Jews in America and Jews in Israel depends upon us and upon the education we provide for our young—both in America and in Israel. Any healthy educational approach must be rooted in real foundations and in common aspirations. By sponsoring such a shared educational experience, we could provide the first step toward a transcending unity of the Jewish people, a unity based upon equal partnership and shared responsibility in the formulation of new horizons of Jewish fraternity and spirituality. Diaspora Jewry, with its commitment to an idea, has an indispensable contribution to make to this unity and to this vision.