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## AREN'T THERE SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE PRACTICE OF JUDAISM IS ACTUALLY INCREASING?

By Rabbi Moshe ben Asher, Ph.D. & Magidah Khulda bat Sarah

While it is true that the middle decades of this century witnessed a burgeoning of Jewish congregational membership, with 70 percent of Jewish families congregationally affiliated in 1950,<sup>1</sup> “it was not matched by a rise in synagogue attendance,” according to Jack Wertheimer.<sup>2</sup> In effect, it may have been a relatively shallow religious revival.<sup>3</sup>

And it is also true that now more people than ever are attending seders, lighting Chanukah candles, and fasting on Yom Kippur. But social scientists tell us we don't know the meaning of this phenomenon; that is, we cannot reliably assume that it means greater commitment to Judaism. The increase in once-yearly observance has come simultaneously with a massive decrease in weekly and daily observance.

Steven Cohen asks, “How does one evaluate the ‘Jewishness’ of those who ‘merely’ attend a Passover Seder, light Chanuka candles, fast on Yom Kippur, and who have some, if not many, close non-Jewish friends?”

Cohen's answer is that the most interested observers in the Jewish community—scholars, rabbis, educators, communal professionals, and lay leaders—are “ignorant of the nature of Jewish commitment and involvement harbored by those who may be termed marginally affiliated.” Cohen adds, “Without such an understanding, one cannot be certain about the prospects for Jewish continuity among large numbers of Jewish families.”<sup>4</sup> And in a concluding chapter he states, “It is here that is found one of the more severe limitations of our data.”<sup>5</sup> We wonder why, as Cohen points out, that “. . . no serious historical study has assessed the extent of Jewish religious authenticity in the recent American past and contrasted it with today's levels.”<sup>6</sup>

Jack Wertheimer and others suggest that forms of observance that demand daily or weekly practice and that set Jews apart from their neighbors, such as dietary laws and Sabbath prohibitions, are much less likely to be followed—and they are in fact declining.<sup>7</sup> According to one major study of New York Jews, there is “clear evidence of erosion of traditional ritual practices associated with each generational transition through at least the third generation.”<sup>8</sup>

Nowadays less than half of those who identify themselves as Jewish are affiliated with a congregation. Gary Tobin's presentation of National Jewish Population Study (NJPS) data shows that when current affiliation is examined by region, rates range from a high of 48 percent in the Midwest to a low of 29 percent in the West, with rates of 43 and 35 percent for the Northeast and South respectively. According to Tobin, “The actual percentage of members is probably considerably lower than reported here because many Jews say they are affiliated when they are not.”<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in the early 1980s, when 44 percent of all Americans claimed they attended religious services every week, only 24 percent of the congregationally affiliated Jews claimed weekly attendance.<sup>10</sup>

We believe that the main fact of contemporary Jewish out-migration is that American Jewry is undergoing an historic crisis of faith, one that encompasses almost all the country's congregational communities,<sup>11</sup> but with varying external causes and internal dynamics. In a prescient television interview more than two decades ago, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel decried, “. . . We have religious institutions without religious belief. We have a wave of non-belief.”<sup>12</sup>

Why are we in a crisis of faith?

Traditional Jewish authority and its reciprocal, covenantal community, shaped and matured in the *shtetl*, have not worked well as the basis for congregational life among geographically dispersed and denominationally disparate Jews in the United States. The authority has been undermined and the practices abandoned as archaic, even by most congregationally affiliated Jews.

It is not surprising that under these conditions many Jews have become less observant. (Rabbis in several Conservative congregations have estimated to us that 95 percent or more of their members do not keep kosher, and, in one case, the synagogue's kitchen was not kosher.)

Geographic dispersal has also resulted in a loss of intimacy of association. Leonard Fein has written that, ". . . The problem is that the Jewish community does not provide for most of its members the intimacy of association that is required if it is to be a central source of their values. . . . For most Jews, the very notion of community is a euphemism; their actual experience is one of association rather than community. . . . Nor can the network of Jewish organizations function as a surrogate for the traditional community."<sup>13</sup> Writing almost two decades earlier, Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver stated, "It is not the individual and routine failings of individual Jews which endangers Jewish survival (as some rousing sermons would seem to indicate) so much as the vagueness, the emptiness, and the limpness of what passes for a corporate Jewish way of life."<sup>14</sup>

The myth of modern American Jewry, according to one non-affluent Jew, is that all Jews ". . . give tzedakah in large quantities. . . . send their children to camp, to Ivy League schools and to Israel for the year after college. . . . buy annuities, take cruises and retire to Florida. . . . [and] don't worry about paying their health insurance premiums."<sup>15</sup>

However, more than a quarter of the Jews in America have annual incomes, as single adults, near or below the poverty line. This group includes elderly living on fixed incomes, immigrants, disabled individuals, homeless people, divorced women with children, and those with AIDS. Not far from them on the income ladder are Jewish white-collar workers and professionals working in the public and non-profit sectors, and small business entrepreneurs.<sup>16</sup>

James Besser, a Washington-based correspondent for the Jewish press, has written: "Thousands of Jews in cities like New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Chicago receive welfare benefits like Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and food stamps. . . . In wealthy Palm Beach County, Fla., local officials estimate that 10 percent of the elderly Jewish population is at or beneath the poverty line; the proportion goes up in the oldest age brackets. . . . Elderly Jews receive Medicaid funding that enables them to receive nursing home care; in fact, Jewish nursing homes around the country depend on Medicaid for some 70 percent of their funding."<sup>17</sup>

In one major metropolitan area, when subsidized housing for low- and moderate-income Jewish seniors became available, more than 1,000 applications were distributed on the first day, with Russian-speaking émigrés from the former Soviet Union constituting three-quarters of the applicants.<sup>18</sup>

A Jewish Family and Children's Services director told us: "As Jews become more and more assimilated, they take on the same characteristics as the overall society. What we are seeing is the full picture, that there are Jews with alcohol problems, there are family violence problems, the divorce rates are getting closer and closer to the rates in the overall society. We do a lot of work with people who are having financial problems."

Out-migration from Jewish congregations and Judaism is positively correlated with the more severe social pathologies—divorce, alcoholism and drug addiction, and domestic violence—and their incidence among Jews has been growing,<sup>19</sup> except possibly for domestic violence. As a leader of an up-scale Reform congregation said, "We and our kids are involved in destructive and delinquent behavior like everyone else."

We believe that out-migration—the flight of Jews from Judaism and the influence of Jewish religious life—is the best evidence of erosion of Jewish belief and practice in the United States. We use the term out-migration since the term for the most visible symptom of what is happening—"intermarriage"—views these events through the lenses of social work and religious education.<sup>20</sup> Treating intermarriage as "the problem," although focusing on a critical situation that demands attention, leads us away from examining the causes of out-migration, and inevitably it limits our options for action. It also puts us in the position of referring to intermarried Jews as a problem.

The demographics of the Jewish population in this century are startling. Barry Kosmin presents evidence of Jews becoming "the least familial group in the nation." He notes that world Jewry in 1900 was growing at a rate of 1.5 percent per annum. By 1920 the world Jewish population was larger than the Mexican, Vietnamese, Egyptian, or Canadian populations. "There was one Jew for every five Latin Americans; today there is only one Jew for every 50 Latin Americans." We have the largest proportion of one-person households and the smallest proportion of households with children.<sup>21</sup> The fertility rate, according to some studies, has fallen below the replacement level.<sup>22</sup>

The effects of the low Jewish birth rate have been compounded by intermarriage (in which one spouse is not Jewish). In the 1940s, about seven percent of Jews were intermarrying; in the 1960s the rate had risen to about 17 percent; by the 1970s the intermarriage rate was about 32 percent.<sup>23</sup> In 1989, Egon Mayer reported that "among those under 40 years of age about 37% of Jewish men and 24% of Jewish women entering first marriages are marrying Gentile partners. These figures increase to about 55% for men and 42% for women in second marriages."<sup>24</sup> In 1992 Mayer reported that "in-

terfaith marriage has increased roughly five-fold in just 25 years.”<sup>25</sup> In some areas of the country, the rates are much higher. For example, the Allied Jewish Federation of Denver Demographic Study of 1983 showed that the intermarriage rate was 66 percent for those in the 18-29 age group.<sup>26</sup>

What are the projections for intermarriage? Some researchers expect that by the end of the decade the intermarriage rate will be 50 percent, rising to 60 or 70 percent within 15 to 20 years.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, using data from the 1990 NJPS, Mayer concludes that “Of the Jewish marriages entered into by Jews since 1985 only about 35% are endogamous. Another 10% are conversionary, and the remaining 55% are mixed. In short, *more than half of the nuclear families formed by the most recently marrying Jews are mixed-marriages.*”<sup>28</sup> (Emphasis ours.) Eleanore Judd concluded from the Denver study that “Jews were delaying marriage while they finished their education and began careers, and when they did marry, many chose partners who were not Jewish.”<sup>29</sup>

While the rate of intermarriage has risen sharply in recent decades, some studies show that the rate of conversion by the non-Jewish spouse to Judaism has fallen. Joan Ephross interprets data from the 1990 NJPS to the effect that the 1965 rate was 23 percent, from 1965 to 1974 it was 28 percent, and from 1975 to 1984 it was 14 percent.<sup>30</sup> Egon Mayer and Amy Avgar, on the other hand, cite surveys made in 1975, 1977, and 1982 to show that there has been a rise in the rate of conversion among non-Jews who married Jews, although they conclude that “the proportion of converts among the intermarried has remained constant at about one-third of the total pool.”<sup>31</sup>

Congregational affiliation among the intermarried is almost twice as unlikely as compared to the “in-married” (in which both spouses are Jewish) or “conversionary marriages” (in which one spouse has converted to Judaism). Overall, 85 percent of those in mixed marriages reported no congregational affiliation; 40 and 44 percent respectively of those in-married and those in conversionary marriages reported that they were members of congregations. Similarly, attendance at religious services by those in mixed marriages is much lower (six percent) than for those in-married (28 percent) or in conversionary marriages (34 percent).<sup>32</sup>

In addition, few children of the intermarried are socialized into Jewish religious life. In the first generation of mixed-marriage families, more than three-fourths of the teenagers never attend synagogue or temple and only 14 percent become bar or bat mitzvah. The proportion of children ages 10 to 13 that are not receiving a Jewish education is 59 percent for those from mixed marriages, 16 percent for those from conversionary marriages, and five percent from in-married couples.<sup>33</sup> In short, “only a small minority of children of mixed marriages are socialized into Jewish religious life and identify their religion as Judaism.”<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, the intermarriage rate increases with each generation. In one study of Los Angeles Jews during the mid-1980s, the intermarriage rate jumped from 11.6 percent in the first generation to 43.5 percent in the fourth generation.<sup>35</sup> Other studies reveal similar patterns throughout the country, although they are more pronounced in the West. Predictably, the proportion of mixed marriages is much higher among those who identify themselves as “just Jewish” (46 percent) than those who identify themselves as Orthodox (six percent), Conservative (seven percent), or Reform (22 percent).<sup>36</sup>

Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, Director of the National Jewish Outreach Program estimates that if present trends continue, four million Jewish-Americans are “likely to totally assimilate within the next 25-50 years.”<sup>37</sup>

Considering the trends in relation to the estimated 6.8 million persons who described themselves as Jewish ethnically or religiously in the 1990 NJPS, we tentatively conclude as a rebuttable presumption that at least three million Jews are out-migrating at various speeds from organized Jewish religious life.

Anti-Semitism may be one of the most significant long-term causes of the current out-migration from Jewish religious life.

It is true that overt xenophobia and institutional anti-Semitism, based on status rather than any specific behavior, like comparable racism, is much less acceptable and prevalent now than it was three or four decades ago. Today, acceptance into a professional school or moving up in a corporate or government hierarchy is not inherently more problematic for people with Jewish names than getting motel reservations.

Has there been a similar large decline in personal anti-Semitism in the United States? For five years in a row, acts of anti-Semitic harassment of individuals—“in-your-face” acts of violence and assault—“far outnumber incidents of vandalism against institutions and other property.”<sup>38</sup> Not surprisingly, recent Federation initiatives to combat anti-Semitism have had strong appeal in some areas.<sup>39</sup>

In recent years there has been a stream of court cases in which Jewish families have sought legal remedies when their children in public school were expected or instructed to participate in Christian activities. The range of these activities extends to songs, prayers, holiday projects, such as Christmas tree-trimming, and even away-from-school activities, such as choir performances. In virtually all of these cases, Jewish students who stood up for their right to a non-sectarian education, one that would not offend their Jewish beliefs and practices, were vilified and worse by many Christian classmates. Their families were harassed and sometimes threatened by parents of other children, and by local residents when the case was publicized.<sup>40</sup>

The strength of the dominant Christian culture and the intensity of its pressures against overt displays of Jewishness and Jewish preferences are suggested in the comments of a self-described “half-Jew.” She grew up

with dreams of living in WASP society and was without any Jewish education or identity. Her singular appraisal of the Hasidim, the only religious Jews she could identify by their open practice of Judaism, was that “they have so many bad qualities. . . . They’re pasty-faced. . . . They don’t get any exercise, which is good for you.”<sup>41</sup>

That even secular, non-affiliated, or “half-Jews” can take on dominant Christian values, interests, and policies that are anti-Semitic in practice is no surprise. The history of Jews internalizing their oppression<sup>42</sup> is well known.

One Northern California Hillel program director has written openly about his experiences of internalized oppression,<sup>43</sup> which we regard as representative of what many other Jews have known in the last 50 years or more. He grew up in Berkeley, California and received “confusing messages about being Jewish.” It was okay to be Jewish at home and in religious school, but there was something uncomfortable and embarrassing, even dangerous, about being publicly Jewish. In public school he experienced verbal and physical intimidation, which he was not prepared to handle. Although the men in his family were loving and sensitive, he never saw them “directly and powerfully stand up for themselves and demand to be treated with respect.” He saw that other Jewish boys were having similar experiences. His life became increasingly “split”—Jewish at home and in religious school and Jewishly invisible at public school—until he finally let go of his Jewishness in high school in order to “fit in.”

He began in adulthood to understand that his hesitancy to acknowledge his own Jewishness and his contempt for other Jews were directly linked to his experiences of anti-Semitism and his not wanting to be the target of “stereotypes and ignorance.” He came to understand that when as Jews we are subjected to social oppressions, “we internalize the messages of those oppressions and turn them on ourselves and other people like ourselves.”

Notwithstanding this case of a return to a religious Jewish life, the “brutal bargain”<sup>44</sup>—trading religious

identity and behavior for secular acceptance and success—has had the opposite effect for most American Jews. We believe that the second-generation children of Jewish immigrants were much less conscious than their parents of the bargain’s terms; their desire for social mobility created pressures for them to be more and more like their Gentile peers<sup>45</sup>—with a declining hold of Jewish tradition on their lives—because that is what the American version of anti-Semitism has required of us.<sup>46</sup>

Writing from a Jewish socio-communal perspective, and drawing heavily on historical, social science, and survey findings, Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab conclude that “group identity and cohesiveness are severely eroding for the large majority” of American Jews, which they understand as a response to the “openness of American society.”<sup>47</sup> While they believe a Jewish “core” will survive the present crisis, they also project that within two generations, by the middle of the next century, the community is likely to lose three million members.<sup>48</sup>

Jack Wertheimer proposes that “. . . Judaism has traditionally provided its adherents with patterns of behavior and reasons for identification that go beyond ethnicity, with a Jewish content that has motivated them to remain distinctive.”<sup>49</sup>

Alvin Reines also states that “Jewish religious institutions are critical for the survival of the western Jewish collectivity. The reason is that only a Jewish religious institution can create Jews and give to a person a sense of authentic Jewish identity. . . . Ethnic organizations are superstructures erected on a religious base: they cannot create and authenticate Jews, neither can they function without the subtle ambiance of religion nourishing their activity.”<sup>50</sup>

Lipset and Raab describe the problem of Jewish continuity as “beyond social engineering.” But they see as an inescapable fact that “the religious dimension of Jewishness is the key to continuity,” that Judaism is the “intrinsic sine qua non of American Jewish durability.”<sup>51</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Howard M. Sachar, “The Growth of the American Jewish Community,” in *The Course of Modern Jewish History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 725.

<sup>2</sup> Jack Wertheimer, “Recent Trends in American Judaism,” in (David Singer, ed.) *American Jewish Yearbook 1989* (New York & Philadelphia: American Jewish Committee and Jewish Publication Society, 1989), p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, pp. 86-92.

<sup>4</sup> See Steven M. Cohen, *American Assimilation or Jewish Revival?* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, p. 117.

<sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> Wertheimer, “Recent Trends in American Judaism,” pp. 86-92.

<sup>8</sup> See Cohen, *American Assimilation or Jewish Revival?* p. 48. The study also noted: “There is little we can say conclusively about the expected ritual behavior of as yet immature fourth generation Jews. There is neither evidence of stability, let alone resurgence in ritual practice, nor is there evidence of continuing erosion in the passage to the next generation” (p. 52).

<sup>9</sup> Gary A. Tobin, “Rethinking the Synagogue” (Waltham, Mass. and San Francisco, Calif.: Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and Institute for Community and Religion, January 1995), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> See Wertheimer, pp. 83-85.

<sup>11</sup> Mainline Protestant denominations have lost 15 to 25 percent of their members in the last two to three decades. Catholic losses probably would be comparable except for the influx of new immigrants. For a review and analysis of the causes of decline within

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mainline Protestant denominations, see Benton Johnson et al., "Mainline Churches: The Real Reason for Decline," *First Things* (March 1993), pp. 13-18. The authors conclude that of all the theories and explanations of church decline, the weakening of the church itself as an institution fits most closely with the responses they received in more than 500 telephone and in-person interviews. Among their findings were the following: More than 95 percent of those who had dropped their congregational affiliation no longer believed in some of the central tenets of their religion; likewise 68 percent of those who maintain a congregational affiliation no longer believe in some of those tenets. The authors conclude as follows about the dropouts: "They see no real point in getting involved" (p. 17). "Religion is not important for them, although [they are] believers for the most part. But they do not consider it necessary to attend church to nourish what faith they have" (p. 15).

<sup>12</sup> See "The Eternal Light: A Conversation with Doctor Abraham Joshua Heschel," publication T205 (National Broadcasting Company, 1973), p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> Leonard Fein, *Where Are We? The Inner Life of America's Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 174-75.

<sup>14</sup> From "Beyond the Apologetics of Mission," (in Silver, ed.) *Judaism and Ethics* (KTAV Publishing House, 1970), p. 334.

<sup>15</sup> See Marion Neudel, "Guest Columnist," *Moment*, 13(4):24 (August 1994).

<sup>16</sup> For a more definitive treatment of this subject, see Steven Huberman, "Jews in Economic Distress," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 62(3):197-208 (Spring 1986).

<sup>17</sup> James Besser, "Why Jews Should Care About Cuts in Welfare," *Jewish Bulletin* (January 20, 1995), p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> See Natalie Weinstein, *Jewish Bulletin* (March 17, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> For example, "divorce patterns" among American Jews "increasingly appear to resemble those of non-Jewish Americans in certain respects. . . . [and] the rate of increase over the last two decades is similar to the rate of increase for the entire society." See Chaim I. Waxman, "The Emancipation, the Enlightenment and the Demography of American Jewry," *Judaism*, 38(4):488-501 (Fall 1989) p. 491; Judith S. Wallerstein, "Children of Divorce, Challenge for the 1990s," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 70(2/3):100-108 (Winter/Spring 1994); and Steven Bayme, "Changing Perceptions of Divorce," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 70(2/3):120-126 (Winter/Spring 1994). In regard to family violence, specifically spousal, elderly, and child abuse, see also: Abraham J. Twerski, "The Problem Is Ours," *Jewish Action*, 55(3):25 (Spring 5755/1995); "Forum: Family Violence IS a Jewish Issue," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 68(2):94-139 (Winter 1991-92)—including: Lynn Jacobs and Sherry Berliner Dimarsky, "Jewish Domestic Abuse: Realities and Responses," (94-113); Sandra Jaffa, "A Model Child Abuse Prevention Program," (114-122); and Lillian Stern, "Sensitizing the Community to the Problem of Elderly Abuse: A Community Education and Public Awareness Approach," (133-139).

<sup>20</sup> We refer to assimilation as the final step in out-migration, that is, when an individual no longer self-identifies as Jewish.

<sup>21</sup> Barry A. Kosmin, "The Demographic Imperatives of Outreach," in (Egon Mayer, ed.) *Jewish Inter-marriage, Conversion and Outreach* (New York: Center for Jewish Studies, Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, 1990), pp. 10-11.

<sup>22</sup> From a 1984 unpublished article, "The Jew in the 21st Century," by Donald Feldstein, cited by Joan Ephross in "Professional Practice With Inter-married Couples," in (Egon Mayer, ed.) *The Imperatives of Jewish Outreach* (New York: Jewish Outreach Institute & Center for Jewish Studies, Graduate School of the City University of New York, 1991), p. 76. Overall, there is a wide divergence of opinion among demographers, from a projection of less than one million American Jews within a century to a projection of no change by the end of the next century.

<sup>23</sup> See Egon Mayer and Amy Avgar, *Conversion Among the Inter-married, Choosing to Become Jewish* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1987), p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> See Mayer, "Inter-marriage, Outreach and a New Agenda for Jewish Survival: A Perspective on the American Jewish Community," in (Mayer, ed.) *Jewish Inter-marriage, Conversion and Outreach*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> See \_\_\_\_\_, "The Case for a New Jewish Inter-marriage Policy," *Long Island Jewish Week* (September 4-10, 1992).

<sup>26</sup> See Sandra Heller, "Stepping Stones to a Jewish Me," in (Mayer, ed.) *Jewish Inter-marriage, Conversion and Outreach*, p. 52.

<sup>27</sup> See David W. Belin, "Putting Human Values First: Universalism and Jewish Affirmation in Outreach to the Inter-married," in (Mayer, ed.) *Jewish Inter-marriage, Conversion and Outreach*, p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> Mayer, "American Jewish Marriage in the 1990s and Beyond," in (Mayer, ed.) *The Imperatives of Jewish Outreach*, p. 41.

<sup>29</sup> Eleanore Judd, "Using Demographic Research for Program Development," in (Mayer) *The Imperatives of Jewish Outreach*, p. 104.

<sup>30</sup> Joan Ephross, "Professional Practice With Inter-married Couples," in (Mayer, ed.) *The Imperatives of Jewish Outreach*, p. 76.

<sup>31</sup> Mayer and Avgar, *Conversion Among the Inter-married, Choosing to Become Jewish*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>32</sup> See Peter Y. Medding, et al., "Jewish Identity in Conversionary and Mixed Marriages," in (David Singer, ed.) *American Jewish Yearbook 1992* (New York & Philadelphia: American Jewish Committee and Jewish Publication Society, 1992), p. 55

<sup>33</sup> See Medding, et al., pp. 55, 56, and 66.

<sup>34</sup> See Wertheimer, "Recent Trends in American Judaism," p. 96.

<sup>35</sup> Reported by Neil C. Sandberg in *Jewish Life in Los Angeles* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986) and cited in Chaim I. Waxman, "The Emancipation, the Enlightenment and the Demography of American Jewry," *Judaism*, 38(4):488-501 (Fall 1989), p. 496.

<sup>36</sup> See Medding, et al., p. 54.

<sup>37</sup> R' Ephraim Z. Buchwald, "It's Now Or Never, The Future of American Jewry," *Jewish Action*, 55(1):33-34 (Fall 5755/1994), p. 33. See also the comments of Hershel Shanks, "No Galvanizing Issues," *Moment* (August 1995), p. 4, in which he states: "A frighteningly powerful case has been made that the American Jewish community is on its way to extinction or insignificance in a generation or two."

<sup>38</sup> This commonly held viewpoint, nonetheless, may be misleading. For example, the Anti-Defamation League's annual audit for 1994 shows that anti-Semitic acts rose more than 10 percent in the U.S., surpassing 2,000 for the first time, a record high for the audit's 16-year history. The report also describes an increase in violent, destructive, and deadly incidents, with shootings, arson, and fire-bombings "far more prevalent than in recent years." See *Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, 1994* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1995), p. 1. In 1995 there was an 11 percent decline in the total number of incidents reported. The decline is thought to be the result of "enhanced security awareness by Jewish institutions, steadily improving law enforcement action, and passage of hate crimes legislation." On the other hand, for the fifth year in a row, incidents of personal harassment outnumbered incidents of vandalism. The report notes: "While it is encouraging that the number of harassments is down from previous years, a troubling trend has been maintained in the 1995 totals. As in past years, incidents of harassment are significantly more common than incidents of vandalism. While any ex-

pression of anti-Semitic behavior is troubling, the high number of these more personalized attacks is a cause for particular concern.” See *Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, 1995* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1996), pp. 1-2.

<sup>39</sup> For example, see Gary Tobin, *Bay Area Jewish Community Study, Special Report: Philanthropy and Volunteerism* (Waltham, Mass.: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, December 1988), p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> See Rob Boston, “Jewish Students Teach Their Schools A Lesson,” *Jewish Monthly Online* (B’nai B’rith International 1995). We note parenthetically that the instances of anti-Semitic reaction to Jewish students’ claims for non-sectarian education are occurring within institutional settings, albeit they are mostly under local control and direction.

<sup>41</sup> From an interview reported by Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard in *Saving Remnants, Feeling Jewish in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), p. 57.

<sup>42</sup> Modern sensibilities tend to associate “affliction” and “oppression”—they share the same Hebrew root—with slavery and other drastic limitations on one’s freedom. The traditional Passover Haggadah also refers to affliction, however, as the “enforced separation of husband and wife.” See Philip Birnbaum, *The Birnbaum Haggadah* (New York: Hebrew Publishing, 1976), pp. 80-81. Rabbinic commentary on Scripture also suggests a more inclusive definition. In one case, affliction is defined as being wrongly suspected of willfully deceiving one’s spouse. See (R’ Raphael Pelcovitz, tr.) *Sforno, Commentary on the Torah*, Genesis 29:32 (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1993), p. 143. In another case, the prohibition against oppressing another is applied to afflicting an orphan with discipline or instruction greater than is required for the child’s own good. See the Sforno, Exodus 22:21. Oppression includes verbal threats against us by those more powerful than ourselves, such as someone saying, “you’ll get yours in the end.” See Rashi, Exodus 22:22. And traditional conceptions of oppression include wasting the time, energy, and money of one’s neighbor. See Proverbs 3:28 and Bava Metziah 111a.

<sup>43</sup> From Michael Taller, “Yom Kippur Sermon, 1994: Jewish Men” (unpublished, 1994) and “Jews, Anti-Semitism and Alliance-Building” (unpublished, 1993).

<sup>44</sup> This bargain in the modern world undoubtedly reflects the bargain Napoleon made with the Jews of France. They were to become “Frenchmen of the Mosaic persuasion,” full-fledged French citizens, but without “their own internal jurisdiction under the rabbinic courts, their historic claim to be a distinct people, and their hope of return to their own land.” See Howard M. Sachar, “Emancipation in the West,” in *The Course of Modern Jewish History*, Ch. 3 (New York: Random House/Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 38-61. According to William Nicholls, “Jews had to make a severe sacrifice of identity, and take on a concept of religion and its place in society that was novel for them, and inherently Christian, not Jewish.” See *Christian Antisemitism, A History of Hate* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1993), p. xxi.

<sup>45</sup> For example, see Mayer, “Intermarriage, Outreach and a New Agenda for Jewish Survival: A Perspective on the American Jewish Community,” in (Mayer, ed.) *Jewish Intermarriage, Conversion and Outreach* (New York: Center for Jewish Studies, Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, 1990), p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> Arthur Hertzberg writes in “United States Jewry—A Look Forward,” in (Wigoder, ed.) *Encyclopaedia Judaica Year Book 1990/91*, pp 26-29: “Anti-Semitism continues to exist, even in America, at a time when Jews are freer and more equal than they have ever been anywhere in the Diaspora. . . . My own research on college students has shown that those of the young whose Jewishness is primarily a fear of anti-Semitism are significantly more likely to want to intermarry—to live permanently among the anti-Semites! What explains this paradox is that such young people really want to ‘pass’ into a society in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile” (p. 27). He goes on to say that “ethnicity is not forever; anti-Semitism can, at least in logic, chase Jews out of their Judaism rather than make them rally together, and our deepest held religious convictions are ill defined and splintered” (p. 28).

<sup>47</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *Jews and the New American Scene* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 47-48.

<sup>48</sup> Lipset and Raab, p. 74.

<sup>49</sup> Wertheimer, p. 161. See also Jack Wertheimer, Charles S. Liebman, and Steven M. Cohen, “How to Save American Jews,” *Commentary*, 101(1):47-51 (January 1996).

<sup>50</sup> Alvin Reines, “Ontology, Demography, and the Silent Holocaust,” *Judaism*, 38(4):478-87 (Fall 1989), 483-84.

<sup>51</sup> Lipset and Raab, pp. 71 and 200.

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