

# UNITY IN AMERICAN JUDAISM

*How and When?*

An address delivered on September 22, 1945, at the inauguration of the seventy-first academic year of the HEBREW UNION COLLEGE by its President, RABBI JULIAN MORGENSTERN, PH.D., L.H.D., D.H.L.



we urge American

UNITY IN  
AMERICAN JUDAISM

To  
CARL E. PRITZ

LONG-TIME DEVOTED SERVANT  
OF THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE,  
HUMANITARIAN, LOYAL AMERICAN,  
BELOVED FRIEND



THIS AFTERNOON'S EXERCISES MARK THE CLOSE OF THE first cycle of seventy years in the life of the Hebrew Union College. We thank God reverently for His protection of our College during all these years, and we pray that our service may have been pleasing unto Him and that our achievement and the achievement of our sons may have found favor in His sight. We thank Him, too, from the depths of our hearts for sudden and complete victory of the Allied cause and for its vindication of truth, justice and humanity. We pray now for peace, peace which shall be just, enduring and beneficent. And as we enter into our second seventy years we pray for renewed strength, wider service, loftier achievement and deeper consecration for our beloved institution.

At this solemn moment mankind faces a new world. Though reconversion be our immediate task, this is merely the initial step in the advance towards a new society. The atomic bomb is symbolic. This new-found, immeasurable energy may well transform existence, as its creative potentialities are developed. Likewise the spread of socialistic principles in the slowly reviving countries of Europe, clearly demonstrated by the turn of events in England, promises far-reaching reorganization of political, economic and social relations within the life of nations and of all mankind, and to no small degree even in our own country. The effects of the war, the discovery of our real potentialities of production and distribution, the formulation of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms are certain to call forth a new definition and program of democracy, larger, truer and more compelling than aught of which we have conceived thus far.

Within the world of Judaism, too, there have been momentous changes. This tragic war, doubly and trebly tragic for Israel, has brought about the destruction of Jewish life and institutions on the continent of Europe, with at the best the possibility of only limited and very slow restoration. It has shifted the centers of Jewish existence to the United States and Palestine. The possible abrogation of the abominable White Paper by the new British regime, with the promise of intensive Jewish migration to Palestine and of momentous sequels thereto, contributes mightily to the transformation of Jewish existence in the post-war world.

Our own American Jewish community has been catapulted by historic circumstance into the position of the largest, richest, freest and strongest Jewish community in the world. Our influence is far-reaching, our opportunity for service to the household of Jacob immeasurable, our responsibility immediate and pressing.

In another direction, too, we behold significant trends. Among the liberal and progressive Protestant denominations, if I read the signs aright, there is a definite turn from the theology and program of Paulinianism, a growing emphasis upon life and works rather than upon doctrine and belief, upon the problems and duties of this world rather than upon the subtle mysteries and elusive rewards of the life beyond. The notable address of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., with the wide acclaim which it elicited, is symptomatic. Actually this implies a return to essentially Jewish belief and way of life. The issue is becoming tightly drawn; for the more fundamentalist Christian sects are likewise conscious of this trend within the Church and are becoming steadily more vocal and aggressive, are marshalling forces in defense of their traditional faith and of prerogatives which they once enjoyed as a dominant and none too tolerant majority in the religious life of America. Quite naturally their program transcends the boundaries of religious doctrine and worship and reaches out into the realms of social

relations, economic interests and political organization and action.

Here in America and responding to the spirit of America, progressive Christianity and progressive Judaism find themselves drawn to each other in growing mutual understanding and realization of common task and program, as never before. This is more than a manifestation of interdenominational good will. It is a circumstance of historic development which may be taken not too lightly, lest a precious opportunity be lost and less than a maximum good be achieved. Judaism in America must, for the present at least, and permanently we hope, shape its course with full concern for its inter-religious affiliations and obligations. This is an inescapable duty which it owes to religion, to America and to society, as well as to itself.

A heavy responsibility rests upon American Israel and American Judaism as we enter into this new world and its changing life. How shall we meet it? There can be only one answer. The crisis of the moment, with its tremendous alternative potentialities of widely radiating blessing or of self-destruction, commands that we marshal all our strength and all our forces for the struggle. To do this we must strive for unity in American Jewish life.

We have long felt this urge to unity, but more than ever in these last tragic years. Just two short years ago an earnest attempt was made to achieve unity of action for a crisis program. The American Jewish Conference was brought into being through a procedure as nearly democratic, or with as much semblance of democracy, as could then be achieved within the ranks of American Israel. From the consideration of numbers alone it represented, no doubt, the spirit, desire and passions of the majority of American Jewry, though actually of how large a majority we have no way of knowing. Upon most issues unified action was easily attained. Upon only one issue was there difference of principle and program, and even upon its most imme-

diate procedures, abrogation of the White Paper and unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine, unity of opinion and action might have been readily achieved. Upon the more remote phases of this one issue, however, there was wide division. Considerations of expediency and diplomacy might well have urged moderation. But numbers and passions prevailed. By an overwhelming majority the entire extreme theory and program were approved.

On the surface it did seem that the American Jewish community had at last spoken with united voice and unified purpose. It was hailed as a great victory; and undoubtedly it was a victory, but a victory of pyrrhic character so costly that a few more such would have completely exhausted the victorious forces. Today, as a result, we have division in American Israel more pronounced and intolerant and with issues and antagonisms more clearly and aggressively defined than ever before. We have, to a marked degree, a new alignment of parties and the unhappy spectacle of internecine strife unparalleled in vindictiveness and militancy in all of American Jewish history. This threatens directly some of our oldest and most basic institutions and weakens greatly our potentiality just when the maximum of influence and service in various directions is demanded. Unity in American Jewish life is imperative. Can it be achieved; and if so, how and when?

The aftermath of the American Jewish Conference has pointed invaluable lessons, three in particular: (a) that unity of action alone is opportunistic, superficial and precarious, and may not be forced too strongly; (b) that true unity in Judaism in America must be based upon community of spirit, vision and faith on the part of all elements in American Jewry, must reach to fundamentals and react to recognized and unchallengeable principles; and (c) that it must be a spontaneous growth, although this process may, no doubt, be stimulated through clear thinking and non-partisan, high-minded leadership.

The German pioneers of Reform Judaism were wont to regard historic Judaism as the constant product of two forces, tradition and the spirit of the age. The never-ending fusion of these two forces, they maintained, kept Judaism eternally young, vigorous and creative, a progressive religion of the living present rather than a decadent religion of the outgrown past. It was Geiger, I believe, who declared that the spirit of the age is also a revelation from God. Unconsciously, however, with their emphasis upon universalism and their world-wide outlook, they ignored a third principle, quite as potent in the evolutionary process as the first two, viz. environment, immediate physical and cultural environment; or, if they did not ignore it completely, they misinterpreted it as merely a local manifestation of the spirit of the age.

But while they may overlap somewhat, environment is by no means identical with the spirit of the age. Environment is itself a distinct force in the evolution of historic Judaism, much more compelling and much speedier in action and effect than is the spirit of the age. The latter may shape the philosophy of evolving Judaism in a particular epoch; but it is environment which determines most largely the ritual and ceremonial, the customs and institutions, the affiliations and programs by which historic Judaism, unfolding itself in this or that setting, gives outward expression to its inner spirit. It is environment which even fixes the extent to and manner in which the spirit of the age may react upon traditional Judaism in any locality. It is entirely as the result of environmental influence that within one age, this modern age, for example, we have forms of living, historic Judaism as divergent, and yet as vitally Jewish, as Oriental Judaism, East European Judaism, Central European Judaism and American Judaism. For all the spirit of the age is the same. But it is environment which determines the degree to which Judaism in the various lands becomes amenable to the influence of this spirit and

imparts to it local form and expression, individuality and character.

A well-known German proverb expresses this principle graphically, "Wie es sich christelt, so judelt es sich." This may be paraphrased in English, "As Christianity expresses itself and influences its environment, so Judaism, in turn, allows itself to be influenced and so finds imitative self-expression." Obviously this is a specifically Jewish proverb. And equally obviously it voices no little measure of Jewish self-contempt. It imputes to Judaism lack of virility, independence and power of self-determination. But it represents a complete misreading of history—it explains the emergence of the four major forms of Judaism during the late mediaeval and modern ages. It tells us that Oriental Judaism is the resultant of the reaction upon traditional Judaism of a dominant Oriental, Moslem environment, that Sephardic Judaism similarly was the resultant of Jewish reaction to a Roman Catholic environment, Eastern European Judaism, in turn, the resultant of such reaction to Greek Catholic environment, and Central European Judaism of the reaction to a predominantly Protestant environment.

Inevitably the question arises: To what environmental influence must American Judaism respond and what form must it eventually assume? For we will all agree that American Judaism is neither Oriental Judaism nor Sephardic Judaism, nor yet a transplanted Eastern or Central European Judaism. It is a Judaism which has not yet completely evolved, whose ultimate shape is not yet clearly determinable, but of which we have a deep confidence that it will be, and will be fair, positive and creative.

It may be argued that this evolutionary process, this response of Judaism in its unfolding to the influence of the environment, is naught but assimilation; and assimilation has become, in Jewish mouths, a term of opprobrium and of loathing. It is easy today to damn any movement or impulse within Judaism by labeling it assimilation.

I dealt in considerable detail with this very question five years ago in an address upon this same occasion. I showed that this assimilative process has been active in Judaism and Jewish life from the very beginning of Jewish existence down to this present moment. Throughout its approximately three and a half millennia of conscious history as a people, Israel has come into successive intimate contact with various nations whose culture was far more extensive than, and in certain aspects considerably superior to, its own, and which necessarily, by an inevitable, sociological law, dominated it in its own cultural evolution. But to this cultural influence of its environment Israel never yielded apathetically. It constantly reaffirmed the fundamental principles of its own native culture, and these it never consented to discard or to compromise. It assimilated much, very much, from the various cultures with which it came into close contact in the long course of its history, but it refused to be itself assimilated by these cultures, either singly or collectively. It took from Canaanite, Phoenician, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Hellenic, Roman, Moslem and Christian cultures, but in so doing it never lost identity, spirit and creative power.

Not everything it borrowed was good; and not everything borrowed survived. With many of these borrowed cultural institutions it experimented to determine their Jewish potentiality; and some in time it repudiated, while others it transformed into Jewish shape, infused with a Jewish spirit and made thoroughly Jewish in character and in the message which they express. Many of Judaism's most treasured cultural possessions grew out of this assimilative process, the Hebrew language itself, the Temple at Jerusalem, the Sabbath, the major festivals, the calendar, the doctrine of immortality and of retribution after death. The Psalms, the Book of Job and other biblical writings exhibit the potent influence which the earliest proselytes exerted upon the religious and literary expression of the Judaism

of their day. The belief in angels, a doctrine with which Judaism experimented for over two thousands years, which still plays an active and cherished role in the theology and practice of Oriental and East European Judaism, but which is being rapidly discarded by western expressions of Judaism, was of Persian origin. Even our traditional liturgy is not entirely free of foreign cultural influences. Assimilation, or acculturation, as sociologists call it, has given to Judaism many of the most precious elements of its cultural heritage and has contributed immeasurably to make it all that it is today, even in its most orthodox expression.

In consequence, as I have said not infrequently before, the constant and unavoidable task of Judaism in its historic unfolding, in its ceaseless and oft-times desperate struggle to live, and to live creatively, in this ever-changing world, is to assimilate without being assimilated, to react understandingly, sympathetically, positively to the influence of environment, to welcome new cultural contributions, to test whether they can be adapted to the Jewish spirit and become agencies for the expression of Judaism's message unto Israel and unto mankind, to then accept or reject, and through this process to constantly reaffirm the eternal purpose and faith of Judaism to create in every age new spiritual values for the guidance and blessing of Israel and of all mankind; and, above all, to carry on this assimilative process steadily and consciously, without itself being assimilated, without ever losing identity or sacrificing one iota of its eternal and imperishable character. This is the true genius of assimilation, of Judaism's historic response to the influence of environment, and not merely to the spirit of the age. It is this which has kept Judaism and Israel, its custodian people, alive through all the ages, even under the most adverse and threatening conditions of existence; and it is this assimilative, revivifying process which will keep Judaism and Israel ever alive and creative.

And now we may answer the question: What will Amer-

ican Judaism be; what form will it take; how will it express itself? For that there must be a positive American Judaism, responding sympathetically and progressively to the spirit of the new age and of the American environment, that only as such can Judaism perpetuate itself in the midst of our unique American culture and in the revolutionary age just dawning, and that this is in full accord with the constant principles of unfolding Jewish tradition and history, should now be self-evident.

That this ultimate American Judaism has not yet evolved, we may all agree. But that it must evolve in the necessary reaction of Judaism to this unique American environment is certain. With this, two fundamental principles assert themselves: (a) the attitude of Judaism towards the American environment must be trustful, sympathetic and receptive, and (b) this eventual American Judaism will be, not merely the continuation and expansion of one single movement or tendency in present-day Judaism in America, but the creation of all American Israel and of all the religious forces and impulses active within it.

Never in all its millennial history, perhaps not even in Palestine itself, has Judaism come to live and to evolve in an environment so sympathetic. The spirit of our Jewish Bible has pervaded the soul and structure of America, as no other nation, and has given character and content to its life, its conscience and its aspiration. American democracy is the direct continuation of that democracy which found initial expression on the lips of Israel's prophets. The United States is almost the only nation of the western world which has never known legal discrimination and persecution of Jews or of the Jewish people, but has, instead, consistently safeguarded their rights as full and unconditioned citizens. True, there have been and are anti-Jewish discriminations and anti-Semitic impulses and movements in America. The American people is quick in its prejudices and passions, and these are easily exploited by organized

and conscienceless interests. But there has never been in this nation a recognized anti-Semitic party nor has anti-Semitic sentiment or action ever received government sanction.

Undoubtedly there is at this very moment, the result of war-passions and attendant circumstances, more of anti-Semitism in America than at any moment in its history. But, correspondingly, never has there been so much philo-Semitism, as it may well be called; and certainly never has this philo-Semitism been so well organized and so militant in its defense of the Jew and of his rights as an American citizen. Recent trends in American political life, which have resulted in the repudiation and rebuke of anti-Semitic sentiments voiced by a few benighted Congressmen and in the sweeping of extreme anti-Semites from high office, and their consequent attempt, with altogether negligible results thus far, to organize a new national political party partially upon a platform of anti-Semitism, are indicative of the true spirit of America. Even in times of extreme emotional strain the conscience of America will not sanction anti-Semitic prejudice and persecution. This does not mean, of course, that we Jews in America may now relax in confident and neglectful security. With us, too, as with all true democrats, eternal vigilance alone can ensure our rights and liberties. But it does mean, beyond all doubt, that we may trust America, may repose implicit faith in our beloved nation and feel at home and at complete oneness with it, as we have never been able to feel in the midst of any other nation since our Jewish people was expelled from its native land.

And even more than this, America cherishes a spirit of religious enlightenment, liberalism and progress as does no other land. Here there is no state church nor any fettering tradition thereof. The principle of separation of church and state and of complete religious freedom is zealously maintained. This spirit of American democracy has entered

into the thinking and practice of all religious groups and denominations in America and shaped their theologies, rituals and programs. No church and no denomination in America could hold itself completely free of the influence of the American environment. And, least of all, might it be expected that Judaism, of all religions the most responsive to environmental influence and the most adaptive, should resist the pervasive and compelling influence of the American environment and the American spirit.

This is particularly significant at this moment. Within the last ten years a new movement has developed within American Judaism, which calls itself Reconstructionism. Like Reform, it regards itself as an advance beyond the outgrown norms of Orthodoxy and affirms the necessity of change and progress in response to the compelling spirit of the age. Manifestly it has much in common with Reform. But the very name Reconstructionism, obviously patterned after Reform, suggests unmistakably the unwillingness of its adherents to identify their movement with Reform, and even more, that they regard it as in competition with Reform for dominance in the development of Judaism in America. Within the past year, in one of our most widely circulated Anglo-Jewish journals, an outstanding leader of Reconstructionism has defiantly thrown down the gauntlet to Reform. And even more recently another recognized leader has appropriated the name, American Judaism, for this movement. Whether this implies a tendency to reject the term, Reconstructionism, certainly anything but a euphonious and happy name, and to find in American Judaism a title not only more worthy but also possessing far greater potentialities of appeal and expansion, is not yet clear.

But certainly this latter procedure has deep import. It evidences a somewhat belated recognition of the principle, which we of the Reform group in America have acknowledged for a full century, ever since the coming of Isaac M. Wise to this country, that in the unfolding of historic Juda-

ism environment, too, must play a decisive role, that to live and progress here in America historic Judaism must adjust itself to the American environment in conscious and positive manner and take on a distinctively American outward form and inner character, even while at the same time loyally and uncompromisingly maintaining its basic and eternal principles and its conscious unity with its long and honorable past. In this aspect of its program there is in principle no essential difference between Reform and Reconstructionism and no justification for the assumption that the two movements are necessarily antagonistic and competitive.

But a fundamental, and perhaps the fundamental, principle of Reconstructionism, which distinguishes it positively from Reform, is its interpretation of the concept, Israel, and of the destiny of the Jewish people. We of the Reform wing conceive of Israel as a people, a chosen people, endowed from very birth with a genius for seeing God in every aspect of existence and of interpreting all of life, nature and history from the standpoint of the one, eternal God and of His purpose and will for His universe and His creatures therein; as a religious people, therefore, charged by God to fulfill the destiny and perform the service which its genius imposes upon it, chosen by God, therefore, to be His servant, the bearers of the highest knowledge of Him and of His way of life for mankind, unto all nations and peoples and throughout all time. It is for this service, so we conceive, that God has preserved Israel through trial and tribulation throughout the ages. True, Israel was a political nation once, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility, particularly in the light of developments during the last few months, that a section of our people may once again become a political nation of some kind in the land of Israel's first sojourning. But political national existence, whether of the past or of the future, is merely an incident of Israel's historic existence, and not at all its essence, so

we maintain. Whether in Palestine as a nation or in the so-called Diaspora in the midst of other nations and peoples, Israel remains still and ever God's chosen people, chosen for a service eternal and unending, so far as we can look ahead, a service which we dare not reject, a choice which we may not repudiate, if we would remain true to our genius, our history and our God.

But Reconstructionism interprets both Judaism and Israel differently. Through the dicta of its recognized leaders and spokesmen it has formally repudiated the doctrine of Israel as a chosen people. It seems, even in its theological belief and expression, to minimize the role of God in the universe and in the life and destiny of men and nations and to accentuate the role of man, to trend away from theism in the direction of humanism. In place of God and His will as the prime concern of Jewish thinking and aspiration it seems to set Israel itself. And certainly for the doctrine of the chosen people, which it repudiates unconditionally, it has substituted the principle of Israel's continuous and unending national existence, whether in Palestine as a political nation or in the lands outside of Palestine as a national entity, a nationalistic people, dwelling in the midst of other distinct and easily definable nationalistic peoples, and charged ever with the task, not of proclaiming God's word unto mankind, but instead of maintaining its nationalistic identity and nationalistic existence, stubbornly, defiantly, self-sacrificingly. It is an earnest and idealistic program, and its sincerity we must admire. But is it true? And will it work, particularly here in America? Can Judaism, so understood and so lived, ever develop into a real and proper American Judaism?

As the very name implies, the evolution of American Judaism is, of necessity, not a unilateral, but a bilateral process. The finished product must contain not merely Jewish elements, but American elements also and in measure sufficient to justify the adjectival portion of the name.

It must be American as well as Jewish, and American in a very true sense, such as can result only from a sympathetic and ready fusion of Americanism with Judaism.

The sociological theory of "cultural pluralism" may support the doctrine of a distinctive Jewish civilization in America. But "cultural pluralism" is not at all a scientifically demonstrable theorem, but is only a postulate which sprang up in an age surcharged with the spirit of racial nationalism. It affirms that it is the paramount duty of racial nationalistic groups to maintain identity at all costs, at all times, under all conditions and in all places. Its primary practical effect is to justify in principle the existence of racial nationalistic minorities, a principle embodied in and even basic to President Wilson's Fourteen Points, upon which in very considerable measure the issues raised by World War I were settled, with such disastrous results for the unhappy post-war period, and not least disastrous, by any means, for our Jewish brethren in Europe, especially in those lands in which they suffered the status of a minority racial nationalistic group.

Its immediate effect would be to transfer the application of this principle and its attendant circumstances to America. It functions here in this land as the antithesis of the old "melting-pot" hypothesis of speedy assimilation of racial nationalistic groups into the body and soul of the American people and nation. But this consideration emphasizes anew, that it, too, is but a non-demonstrable hypothesis and not at all a proved, axiomatic principle, that, precisely as the "melting-pot" hypothesis was certainly an American unreasoned, emotional reaction to the impulse towards universalism which animated the greater part of the nineteenth century, so the hypothesis of "cultural pluralism" is but the emotional reaction to and attempt at justification of the impulse toward racial nationalism, which has dominated the thinking of Europe for the last seventy years to its own wanton self-destruction, and

which today pervades Jewish life to an alarming degree. If the "melting-pot" hypothesis was extreme in one direction, certainly the hypothesis of "cultural pluralism" is no less extreme in the other. And if the former merited ultimate repudiation as contrary to the true spirit and best interests of America, may this not be equally true of the latter? Certainly the rejection of the one does not establish the validity of the other. The real truth and the real program of wisdom and progress for America may well rest with neither extreme, but in a sane middle course.

In relation to America the hypothesis of "cultural pluralism" holds that each racial nationalistic group should endeavor with persistent loyalty to maintain its group identity in this new land, far from native soil, and in the midst of this strange environment. It must zealously preserve its national culture, civilization, folk-ways. It should keep and employ its own language within the confines of its group, even though in contact with other similar groups it must of necessity resort to the vernacular of the land. It must cultivate its native literature and lore, folk-ways, folk-music, folk-dances, folk-festivals and folk-cooking. And it must pursue this program in order that it may make a maximum contribution to American culture. In this way it will be justifying itself and fulfilling its destiny in America. It is indeed an alluring program, deeply satisfying to the souls of nationalistically minded immigrants to America.

But within it lurks one fundamental fallacy. It does not state for how long, for how many generations, each separate racial nationalistic group within this American nation should maintain its identity. It seems to imply that this should be an enduring program. But if this be the implication, if, in principle at least, each separate racial nationalistic group is to maintain its nationalistic identity forever, then when will a distinctive, unified American people evolve, and when will that unique American culture, to the enrichment of which the various nationalistic cul-

tures are supposed to contribute, ever come into real and recognizable being? Certainly we cannot permanently preserve numerous foreign racial nationalistic cultures or civilizations here in America and at the same time have a distinctive American culture or civilization contributed to and participated in by all responsible American citizens. Despite its fair sounding the hypothesis of "cultural pluralism" denies the possibility of the evolution of a true American civilization to quite the same extent as the "melting-pot" hypothesis condemned the persistence of foreign cultural influences and folk-ways here in America for one moment longer than absolutely necessary.

May it not be that the failure of the advocates of the "cultural pluralism" hypothesis to state for how long their program is, in principle, to persist is because they recognize themselves that at the most it can be only a temporary, transition program, that the influence of the environment is irresistible, and that each separate nationalistic culture must recede, generation by generation, and eventually disappear, and that a true American culture and civilization not only must ultimately evolve, but actually has already evolved, even though not yet in full maturity and fruitfulness? And if this principle be admitted, then does it not follow that the hypothesis and the program of "cultural pluralism" are of only evanescent character, deal only with the period of transformation within this environment of the immigrant from a foreigner to a complete American, and that they affirm no more than that, contrary to the program of the "melting-pot" hypothesis, this process of transformation should be slow and gradual, drawn out rather than expedited and shortened, so that values be not lost for evolving American culture, but likewise that it be not impeded and delayed too greatly, lest these same values become too fixed, inelastic, and unassimilable in and uncontributive to American civilization?

Let us apply these considerations to Judaism in Amer-

ica. Our task is obviously to build here in this land of religious freedom and opportunity a dynamic American Judaism, in which the permanent and positive values of Judaism and Americanism are completely and effectively integrated. Manifestly this goal can not be achieved by the "melting-pot" program. Under its workings a process of passive assimilation, of speedy, total absorption, would eventuate undoubtedly in the complete disappearance of Judaism in America.

But under the workings of the "cultural pluralism" program would the end-result be aught different? If for the survival of Judaism in America a distinctive Jewish civilization must be developed, which must be maintained permanently and with effort and determination, manifestly because it runs counter to the natural cultural influence of the environment, then it follows necessarily that there can never be a positive and complete fusion of Judaism with Americanism, that only in externals and unessentials can there be a semblance of integration, but that at the bottom there will always abide in Jewish minds a misgiving of Americanism and of the effects of integration with it upon Judaism and Jewish cultural values. Under these conditions there can be at the best only Judaism in America, but never American Judaism. And as mere Judaism in America, but never completely American Judaism, never fully at home and at ease in America, never finishing the normal historic process of cultural evolution in this, its new home, Judaism can certainly not long survive. Three, four, five generations, perhaps, and it will have disappeared here in America under the "cultural pluralism" program quite as surely as under that of the "melting-pot." Those advocates of "cultural pluralism" who would build up a Jewish civilization here in America, and particularly a Jewish civilization the roots of which are ever in Palestine, and who claim that thereby they are bringing forth a, or even the, true American Judaism, are deluding themselves

and their followers and also their American fellow-religionists with specious words and dangerous doctrines, dangerous for Judaism and Americanism alike.

It follows, then, that there can be only one true American Judaism. It must evolve as a natural and inevitable stage in the unfolding of historic Judaism, in understanding sympathy with American culture and in unrestrained readiness to integrate Judaism with Americanism and Jewish cultural values with American cultural values. It must, through this process of active, two-sided, reciprocal assimilation, evolve into an expression of Judaism distinctive and dynamic, which will have lost absolutely nothing essentially Jewish, but which will have enriched its content by the integration and reinterpretation of American cultural elements, and will, in turn, give generously of its ancient heritage to evolving American culture in general and, more specifically, to progressive religion and the spiritual interpretation of life within America. This is American Judaism, this and naught else.

And if our friends of the Reconstructionist movement subscribe to this principle and in their appropriation for their movement of the name, American Judaism, make public affirmation thereof, then we, who have been the first protagonists of American Judaism and for almost a full century have employed this very name understandingly, consciously and proudly, welcome them eagerly into our fellowship and into cooperative endeavor for our high cause. But if it be otherwise, if they do not yet subscribe to this principle, then, very regretfully but no less determinedly, we must accept their challenge and, first of all, denounce their attempted appropriation of the name, American Judaism, as untrue and unwarranted. It would be but another unhappy manifestation of the internal division and dissension within American Jewish life today.

Yet, even should we be compelled to denounce their appropriation of the name, American Judaism, we would

not regret nor resent it. Rather, we would gladly see in it a tacit admission of the basic principle, that Judaism can survive here in America, under the influence of the American environment, only as American Judaism. And this admission we must greet joyfully, for it suggests that even within their own circle the principle is making headway and that eventually they or their posterity will take their stand with us as comrades in the holy task of building up here in America, our home-land and our nation, a living, virile, creative American Judaism. Such fellowship and such cooperation, whenever it may come, we will hail eagerly, for in it we must see not only the guarantee of the ultimate emergence of that true American Judaism, in which we have such abiding faith, but also a manifestation of evolving unity within American Jewish life, which is our assurance and our hope.

This brings us to our second principle, that this ultimate American Judaism will not be built up by any one single group within the body of American Jewry. For it is almost self-evident that, were this so, then we would never have a single, unified American Judaism, but, instead, only numerous American Jewish sects, which would differ, not upon matters of theology or ritual, but only upon Jewish political and cultural issues which are largely extraneous to America. The genius of Judaism has always abhorred sects and has sought and achieved inner unity. This same principle must hold for Judaism in America today and tomorrow. We may have, not diverse American Jewish sects, but only one, unified American Judaism.

But granting this, it follows of necessity that, responding readily to the democratic spirit of both Judaism and Americanism, this eventual American Judaism will be achieved only through the joint endeavors and contributions of all elements of American Israel. It will not flow from the organization and the program of any one group. It will not be the continuation of any single present movement

in Judaism in America, not even our own Reform movement, uninfluenced by the thought and the purposes of other movements as well. We believe firmly that our Reform movement will continue to lead in the evolution of the eventual American Judaism, even as it has led throughout this last one hundred years; but it will not be the sole contributing influence.

We must realize, too, that as in this new era life changes in America, and religion must change and progress with it, so correspondingly Jewish life must change and the form and expression of Judaism with it. Reform Judaism dare not stand still and seek to abide by its ancient positions and traditions and rest on its former glories, lest it become old and senile, forfeit its proud position of authority and resign its leadership in the upbuilding of the eventual American Judaism to those who would in the end unwittingly destroy it through their reactionary, nationalistic, un-American policies and program.

With these fundamental considerations in mind we may now formulate the answer to our initial question: unity in Judaism in America, how and when? Can there be unity in Judaism in America? The answer is an unequivocal Yes. There can be unity in Judaism in America, and there must be, and there will be.

How? Under the process of integration of Jewish tradition, in its widest implications, with the American way of life, of Judaism within Americanism. To this integration every Jew and every Jewish group in America must conform. Its course is imperative, its force irresistible. With some individuals and some groups, particularly those who dwell in closed Jewish communities in our larger cities and whose contacts with the broad, non-Jewish world are limited and distant, this integration must necessarily unfold slowly. But sooner or later their children or children's children, educated in American schools, disciplined in the American army and navy, conscious of warm fellowship with all

Americans of their own generation, familiar with American folk-ways and understanding and trustful of the inner spirit of America, will venture forth from the semi-isolation of their parents to full, unconditioned participation in the social and cultural life of our nation. Gradually differences of origin and ancestry, which still divide us to no small degree, will disappear. We will be concerned far more with where our children will live, and the contribution which, as American Jews, they may make to the religion and life of America, than with where our ancestors came from and the customs and ceremonies which they cherished. Their legacy of Judaism will be safeguarded lovingly; but it will be for us not the dead hand of a completely outgrown past, but rather the impetus to active, progressive Jewish living, thinking and worshiping as full, contributing citizens of our great nation. Then and only then will we be all no longer merely Jews in America, but American Jews. And then and only then will a perfect American Judaism have evolved which will voice the spiritual thinking and aspiration of the entire Jewish community of America. And then and only then, and thus and only thus, will we have unity in Judaism in America. Judaism in America will achieve unity only as American Judaism.

And it will be unity in the higher and finer sense, not a totalitarian unity synonymous with uniformity and conformity, but a democratic unity, within which there is wide range of Jewish belief and expression, within which there may even continue to be a measure of both orthodoxy and reform.

Likewise, American Judaism will not be a thing apart and dissociated from the Judaism and Jewries of other lands. With all, it will preserve an active consciousness of kinship, of consanguinity, of joint possession of a noble tradition, a proud history, an ancient and precious heritage. With all the members of the great household of Israel in all the countries of their sojourn, it will live in unity and

mutual obligation; but it will be the unity of a large family, with many members, all sprung from a common ancestry, but each in his day and his land having his own character, his own individuality, his own strength, his own obligations to his brothers and to all his fellowmen.

American Judaism will evolve slowly and surely. Its growth may not be forced, lest something of its potential strength and beauty be lost. It will be the creation of all of American Israel. It will impart to American Israel dignity and consciousness of power with which to fulfill in noble manner its obligation to world-Judaism, world-Israel, America and all mankind. With this vision, this hope and this faith let us go forward, restraining all impulses and influences towards divisiveness, until at last we shall attain that unity for which we yearn and through which we shall achieve.