

MATANEL PAPERS



European Jews
at the Crossroads

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“Yeshuat Hashem k’heref ayin.”

The salvation of God is like
the blink of an eye.

Pesikta Zutreta, Esther 4:17.

Foreword

The 2nd Matanel Think Tank on European Jewry
18-21 February 2016, Pomezia (Italy)

The 1st **Matanel Think Tank on European Jewry** took place in Luxembourg in June 2011. It brought together a small group of experts from various Jewish communities in order to provide advice and ideas on specific issues, subjects or problems. Most participants held leadership roles, either as professionals or as lay leaders, in their respective communities, institutions, organizations or areas of practice.

The first meeting led to the formation of Hulya (Hebrew acronym for *Hug Lelimudei Yahadut Europa*), a joint initiative of Matanel Foundation and the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) aimed at providing a platform for assisting, training and empowering young rabbis in their communities, providing resources and establishing a social network for them. Great resources have also been invested in training sessions for young rabbis; immersion seminars in Judaism for families, students and young professionals; construction and restoration of kindergartens and *mikvaot* throughout Europe; distribution of hundreds of thousands of Jewish holiday packages (for *Chanukah*, *Purim*, and *Pessah*); awarding of prizes for best practices for Jewish education and celebration; and so on.

In February 2016, the 2nd Matanel Think Tank gathering was held in Pomezia. The period between the two meetings saw Europe undergoing many changes; Islamic terrorist attacks occurred in various cities, mainly in Paris, and waves of migrants seeking to reach north Europe flooded the continent. The Think Tank attendees, representing more than ten European countries, come from diverse cultural backgrounds and religious denominations, and have a variety of points of view regarding the issues on the agenda of the Jewish people. Their positions (professional or lay) in the community typically involve research, planning or rabbinical and educational guidance.

In planning the 2nd Matanel Think Tank program, the following assumptions were taken into consideration:

- We are entering a period of globalization whose civilizational uncertainties exceed its certainties.
- The State of Israel and the North American communities are the two main sources of inspiration for European Jewry. In other words, the “Pillars Model,” which sets as many pillars as one would wish to consider (three: Israel, the United States, Europe; or four, by adding Latin American Jewry, according to some researchers), applies to or underlies the relations between Israel and the communities of the Diaspora in a spirit of free, exciting and creative mutual emulation.
- There will soon be no more living survivors of the

Shoah, leaving to the following generations the duty to perpetuate their martyrs.

- Judaism is a way of life at the crossroads of existential questions of individuals and structural questions about Jewish communal services, scientific and technological progress, and the evolution of other religions, new and old ones, inspired by the Scriptures or other sources.
- All questions are pertinent to the great debate concerning the Jewish condition.

By the end of the meeting, comprising almost four full days of deliberation, including the celebration of *Shabbat*, the participants had debated all the topics outlined in the program. They certainly did not forget from which country they had come nor the institution they represented, but they did share a common interest in European Jewry and the steps required to perpetuate a Jewish presence on this continent.

Rabbi Benjamin Myers took upon himself to summarize the debates and bring them, under the guidance of Rabbi Eliyahou Birnbaum, to the vast public. Ami Bouganim, advisor of Matanel Foundation, writer and thinker, revisited his previous opinions on this issue. Both are presented at the end of this booklet, as is the list of Think Tank participants and their mail addresses. Without their attendance at all the Think Tank sessions and their intelligent and responsible insights, this booklet would not have come into existence.

We believe in the future of European Jewry, and this vibrant and intense experience has given us the energy to pursue our activities, either through Hulya or other channels.

We would like to thank all those who were involved in preparing this meeting and those who participated in it, and wish an interesting read to all those concerned with the future of Europe and the place and role of the Jews on this continent.

Joëlle Aflalo and Gad Boukobza
Matanel Foundation

Program

Thursday, 18 February 2016 | ט' באדר א' תשע"ו

- 14:30 Reception**
- 15:00 – 17:00 Opening Presentations**
Who am I? From where am I coming? What characterizes my community? What is my position? What is my main concern? What are my expectations of this meeting? What makes me a Jew today? What drives me? What do I aspire to? What am I dedicated to transmitting to my child/student? What are the main traits of what is generally called "the educated Jew"?
Opening Keynote Address: Eliyahu Birnbaum
Concluding Remarks: Joëlle Aflalo, Ruth Dureghello
- 17:00 – 17:30 Mincha and Break**
- 17:30 – 19:00 The Europe to Come**
What are the main challenges facing Europe? Which of these challenges are global and which are specific to Europe? How should Europe cope with these challenges?
Opening Keynote Address: Riccardo Di Segni, Robert Braun
Concluding Remarks: Julien Darmon, Dov Maimon
- 19:30 – 20:30 Dinner**
- 20:30 – 22:30 European Jewry to Come ***
What should be the attributes of European Judaism?
An interview of Adin Steinsaltz Even Israel
Concluding Remarks: Barbara Spectre, Jonathan Boyd

Friday, 19 February 2016 | 'באדר א' תשע"ו

07:00 ***Tefilah (optional) and Breakfast***

08:30 – 10:30 **The New Anti-Semitism**

What are the expressions of the new anti-Semitism? How much anti-Zionism is a new form of anti-Semitism? What should be the role and policy of European Jewry? In the public arena as well as in the communities? What should be the approach to the State of Israel? What are the repercussions of the geo-political situation of Israel on Jews as individuals as well as on communities? What may the Diaspora legitimately ask of Israel? What should be the policy toward the Israelis living in European countries?

Opening Keynote Address: Dov Maimon,
Jonathan Boyd, Daniel Bodnar

Concluding Remarks: Shimon Levin,
David Revcolevschi

10:30 – 11:00 **Break**

11:00 – 13:00 **Closed Judaism/Open Judaism/Pluralistic Judaism/Assimilation**

What attracts the individual Jew to Judaism? What alienates him from Judaism? What are the dissonances between Jews and their institutions? How do their lay leaders or their spiritual leaders cope with these dissonances? Who is qualified to cope with these dissonances? What are the best means of Judaic socialization in the world today? How can we implement interdenominational dialogue?

Opening Keynote Address: Shlomo Koves,
Ute Steyer, Julien Darmon

Concluding Remarks: Yehoshua Ellis,
Eliezer Di Martino

13:00 – 14:00 **Lunch**

14:30 – 16:00 **To Be a Jew Today**

What should be the place and the role of Judaism in Europe? What hampers the exchange of ideas between Jews in communities? What models for interfaith exchanges exist? How can we bring a better understanding of Judaism to non-Jews? How can we get a better understanding of other religions? How should we relate to other ways of life such as Buddhism, Shintoism, and other Asiatic religions?

Opening Keynote Address: Rachel Shababo,
Naftali Haleva, Shaya Boas

Concluding Remarks: Judith Darmon,
Daniel Epstein

17:29 ***Kabbalat Shabbat and Arvit*** (*optional*)
Parashat Hashavoua

19:00 – 20:30 **Dinner**

21:00 – 22:00 **Judaic Studies in Europe**

What is the state of Judaic Studies in Europe? Who leads the field in Judaic studies? How are they considered by non-Jews? How can we foster Judaic Studies? What should be the roles of the rabbis and of the scholars? The role of the medias?

Opening Keynote Address: Barbara Spectre,
Shimon Levin, Jonathan Megyeri

Concluding Remarks: Elijahu Tarentul

Saturday, 20 February 2016 | יא' באדר א' תשע"ו

08:30: *Shaharit* (optional) and Breakfast

10:30 – 12: 30 **Jewish Status Issues**

What are the main social issues challenging the Jews? What should be the policy toward intermarriage? Toward mixed families? Toward conversion ? Homosexual marriages? Jews from mixed Jewish/non-Jewish backgrounds in new communities ?

Opening Keynote Address: Debbie Young Somers, Yehoshoua Ellis, Eliezer Di Martino

Concluding Remarks: Ilana Epstein

12:30 – 13:30 **Workshops: My Jewish Road Map**

Which one-page text reflecting your Jewish involvement will you choose to teach on one foot? Each participant will present his choice. Texts in English or in Hebrew have to be sent as soon as possible. We plan to print an anthology. *Havroutot* of 5-6 participants

13:30 **Lunch**

15:00 *Mincha* (optional)

15:30 – 17:00 **Issues in Jewish Education**

What should be the priorities in European Jewish education? What kind of programs are still needed? In which areas should we invest? How do we transmit the feeling of European Jewish belonging? What can we learn from American Jewry?

Opening Keynote Address: Ethel Barylka, Ilana Cicurel, Elijahu Tarentul

Concluding Remarks: Minos Moissis, Jonathan Megyeri

- 17:00 – 18:30** **Issues in Spiritual and Religious Guidance**
What makes a rabbi a real spiritual leader? To what extent does *Halakha* assist him to cope with his mission? How to better relay it? Are communal services ready to cope with the issue of degenerative diseases?
Opening Keynote Address: José Ruah, Daniel Espstein, Judith Darmon
Concluding Remarks: Albert Aflalo, Debbie Young Somers
- 18:30** ***Arvit and Havdalah*** (*optional*)
- 19:00 – 20:00** **Dinner**
- 20:00 – 22:00** **A Strategy for European Jewry**
Should European Jewry have a common strategy? What should be its borderlines? What should be its highlights? What should be its benchmarks? What should be the required minimum?
Opening Keynote Address: David Revcolevschi, Minos Moissis, Chanan Atlas
Concluding Remarks: Ute Steyer, Ethel Barylka, Jonathan Megyeri

Sunday, 21 February 2016 | י"ב באדר א' תשע"ו

07:00 – 08:30 **Tefilah (optional) and Breakfast**

08:30 – 10:30 **From Strategy to Practice****

What can we learn from the various attempts to externally impose European structures? What can be another way to give institutional-communicational expression to the European Judaic spirit? What kind of resources will be needed? How should they be assembled?

Opening Keynote Address: Dov Maimon, Daniel Bodnar

Concluding Remarks: José Ruah, Rachel Shababo

10:30 – 11:00 **Break**

11:00 – 13:00 **Closure**

What have we learned from this meeting? What should be the next steps? What kind of study/research is required? What can we already do now? What should be the guidelines for the next meeting?

13:00 **Lunch**

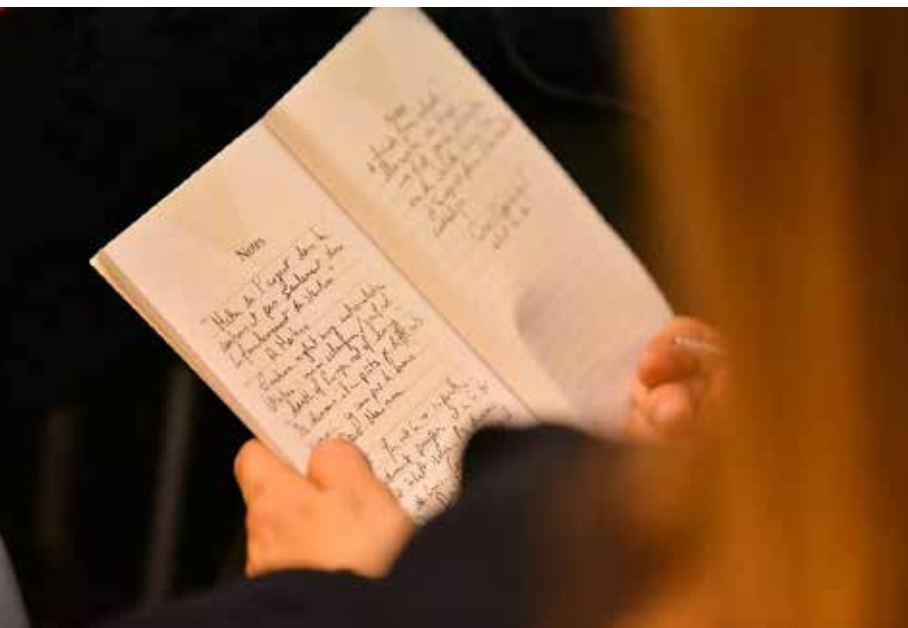
* A summary of the interview with Rabbi Steinsaltz that was conducted during this session is not included in this Matanel Paper.

** This session was cancelled.















“If a Jew doesn’t make Kiddush (to sanctify himself by maintaining a distinctly Jewish lifestyle), then the non-Jew will make Havdalah for him (by making the Jew realize he is truly different).”

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin

Introduction

by Rabbi Eliahu Birnbaum

Despite the dozens, if not hundreds, of conferences in which I have participated, I am excited and happy to open this conference, and I will explain why in a moment.

I would like to open by first recognizing and thanking our hosts, Matanel Foundation, Mrs. Joëlle Aflalo, Mr. Gad Boukobza, Mr. Albert Aflalo and my dear friend of many years, Dr. Ami Bouganim.

Joëlle and Gad established Matanel Foundation ten years ago with the aim, among other aims, of strengthening the Jewish world. I believe it is a special foundation, since it is not interested only in action but also in thought, strategic planning, long-term vision and dialogue, which is why they decided to bring us all together here today.

But beyond that, the founders of Matanel Foundation are here with us to participate in the process and contribute from their vision and experience to the discussions. This is the reason that among the key sentences I found on the Matanel Foundation website are the following words of the writer Khalil Gibran:

“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”

We are used to conferences of rabbis, community leaders, politicians, academics and more, each one in his own field.

This, however, is different. Here we are all together: community leaders, educators, rabbis, businessmen, academics, members of the media, etc., in order to start an interdisciplinary dialogue and think together.

I am glad we are sitting here together, people from various countries, positions and denominations, and with different opinions within the Jewish world. We actually managed to create a microcosm of the Jewish world here.

This conference is different—a conference of thought and questions, a conference of dialogue and listening, a conference of responsibility and leaders.

One of the great teachers of educational philosophy, who was my rabbi and both my and Ami Bouganim's teacher, Prof. Seymour Fox *z"l*, used to say: "There is nothing more practical than a good theory."

We often underestimate the value of theory, thought and dialogue, either because we are too busy with actions or because we sometimes don't know how to listen to others.

Unfortunately, I believe that among the many things the Jewish nation lost in the early modern period were not

only the letter but also the word: the written word and the spoken word. We know how to write, but not how to talk to each other; we know how to fight with each other very well, but not how to listen. That is why this conference is so important.

At this conference we must only talk, listen, think and have an open, respectful dialogue. We don't have to agree with each other or reach clear conclusions, just to maintain a dialogue and even a Jewish argument (*machloket*). We will try to renew the Talmudic dialogue and way of thinking.

In an article on community, Rabbi Soloveitchik asks: How is a community established?

“The simple answer is that two separate individuals create a community in the same way God created the world: with a word, through speech. The word is also the tool with which a person creates his community.

The individuals that belong to a community complete each other. Each person has a unique, rare quality, which is not known to others; each individual has something special to say, a special color to add to the community's rainbow of colors. Therefore, when an individual joins a community, he adds a new dimension to that community. He contributes something that no other person could have contributed. He enriches the community.. Thanks to that uniqueness,

individuals group together, complete each other and reach unity..”

We will try to create a community here, together, through joint dialogue and thought.

Therefore, since the goal is creating a community of dialogue, this conference isn't a one-time occurrence—the dialogue must continue. So if we succeed in this meeting, we will continue to meet regularly, continue to study and think together.

The topic we will be discussing is the future of European Jewry. We often think of the Jewish nation's past, study and glorify it, and build museums and monuments, but we don't always think of the future.

We cannot ignore the fact that, these days, thinking about the future is accompanied by many difficulties and obstacles that have arisen in Europe and are very worrisome to many—will Europe be a place for Jews in the future?

We will try to discuss processes and not only phenomena. There is no doubt that Jewish history is a sequence of processes and not only historic chapters, but we can't always recognize the processes while they are happening, even though we are the ones who create them. During this conference, we will try to describe processes, even though we will, of course, also discuss specific phenomena relevant to understanding the processes.

A theoretical discussion of processes also includes giving thought to strategies and tactics. The sages say: “The Almighty connects good intentions to actual practices.” Each of you is invited to voice his or her opinion throughout the conference. I only ask that you not focus on your community alone but widen your perspective to include all the European communities in your vision. You can and must, of course, present your community and the local matters that bother you, while also considering how other communities may be dealing with such matters.

The program of the conference is before you. It is based on sessions. Each session addresses a central topic and many pertinent questions. The questions are the basis for discussion. We don't have to, and won't be able to, answer all the questions. They are meant to raise and encourage more questions. I imagine there will be more questions than answers in this conference.

I have been dealing with “business of the Jewish nation” for over thirty years. I filled educational and rabbinic positions in various places around the world, in South America and Europe. For the last eighteen years, I have been serving as the director of the Amiel Institute, which trains rabbis and educators to serve in the Diaspora, and we have hundreds of graduates around the world, from Australia to Guatemala and in dozens of communities in Europe. I also serve as the rabbi of the *Shavei Yisrael* Association, which searches for

lost tribes, descendants of Jews around the world, *bnei anusim* in Spain and Portugal, *subotniks* in Russia, descendants of Jews in Kaifeng, China, Jews of the Amazon in Brazil and hidden Jews in Poland. Only recently did I return from a trip to the Kurdistan Region in North Iraq, where I searched for lost Jews. I also serve as a *dayan* at the rabbinic conversion court in Israel.

“Wherever I go, I go to the Land of Israel,” said Rabbi Nachman of Breslev. Based on this, I allow myself to say: “Wherever I go, I go toward *Am Yisrael*.” This is a magical and challenging journey, over days and years, encompassing oceans and continents.

I truly believe that despite the fact that *Am Yisrael* is a chosen nation, it is important to strengthen our present existence in order to sustain our future existence. This is how I see my mission around the world and my obligation as a Jew and a rabbi: to maintain the existence and future of the Jewish people in each and every site, in Israel and abroad. I believe that if we don't do this actively, the existence of the Jews is not assured.

The existence of the Jews and the continuation of Judaism are in danger, not only due to anti-Semitism, but mainly because Judaism has stopped being the relevant spiritual strength of the people.

Over thousands of years, Jews maintained their identity and did not think about the simple question, “Why should I be Jewish?” They nursed their Jewish identity

with their mothers' milk. They were Jews because their forefathers were Jews; they inherited the Jewish faith and felt the need to impart it to their children.

Today, the link is starting to break. Jewish continuity is not assured. Passing the Jewish faith, tradition and culture over the generations is not natural and clear but needs explaining and persuasion. The question, "What is Judaism and why should I continue to adhere to it in my personal and family life?" has become a legitimate question that needs a relevant answer.

This is why I am here, to discuss and think together with you about our wonderful people and our future in Europe and around the world.

The Matanel Think Tank on European Jewry

A Summary of the Deliberations
by Benjamin Myers

SESSION: THE EUROPE TO COME

Introduction

In the November 2015 issue of Commentary magazine, 70 leading thinkers presented their thoughts on the state of world Jewry in 2065. The vast majority posited that European Jewry will have ceased to exist by then. However, as Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks stated in his article, “Jews make prophecies, not predictions. The difference is that if a prediction comes true, it has succeeded. If a prophecy has come true, it has failed. We don’t predict the future; we make the future.”¹

Two key issues will influence the state of European and world Jewry in the coming years. An understanding of these issues will allow us to formulate the best approaches to tackle them. These issues are:

1. External pressures and conflicts
2. Internal pressures and opportunities

1 <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/symposium-part-5/>

1. External pressures and conflicts

These include phenomena like wars and violent conflicts that could potentially develop from local conflicts, such as in the Balkans, to conflicts throughout Europe (possibly instigated by the Russia-Ukraine conflict). Also, the mass influx of refugees from Syria and other Middle Eastern countries are changing not only the demographics, but also Western European ideals and philosophies regarding the impact of welcoming refugees on local and national cultures.² Old unions and political philosophies are on the rise. The fall of the Iron Curtain did not bring an absolute end to ideological and physical conflicts, and recently it seems that the wall is being rebuilt. Economic issues impact society at large, and as a result of the potential collapse of national economies, Jews are making *aliya* or seeking a new start elsewhere. While many seek a new start, many more are unwilling or unable to make the transition, and the remaining Jewish community is often bereft of leadership, structure or the means to continue. Social norms are also changing. Previous traditional concepts of family—mother, father, children in one family unit—are no longer sacrosanct. Furthermore, fertility rates are low; couples are marrying later in life and are having fewer children at a later stage in life.

2 Could a rise in anti-Semitism be attributed to the influx of migrants with preconceived notions, or to a change in feelings and perceptions of the so-called home-grown natives?

2. Internal pressures and opportunities

Extremism is threatening modern Europe's way of life, be it Islamic extremism³ or the rising right-wing extremism⁴. Europe and Western civilization are facing tremendous challenges to their own value system, such as the arrival of a heightened number of migrants and refugees since the beginning of the current crisis in Syria.

This migrant crisis is no genocide. The issue throughout the Continent is how to register, house, resettle or repatriate hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees, a daunting logistical challenge. But perhaps not since the Jews were rounded up by Nazi Germany have there been as many images coming out of Europe of people locked into trains, babies handed over barbed wire, men in military gear herding large crowds of bedraggled men, women and children.⁵

How best to handle the refugee crisis, how best to handle extremism, how best to handle the changing social structures of family life and society are all questions facing modern-day Europe. Due to its unique history, its texts, law and lore, Jews and Judaism have much to contribute to these discussions. Judaism can be at

3 cf. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/isis-fighters-hiding-on-migrant-boats-coming-to-europe-report-says-10255887.html>; <http://www.wnd.com/2016/06/terror-expert-take-islamic-extremists-at-their-word/>.

4 <https://www.chathamhouse.org/media/news/view/178303#>

5 http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/05/world/treatment-of-migrants-evokes-memories-of-europes-darkest-hour.html?_r=0

the forefront of the theater of the war of morals, ideas, ideals and culture, and not necessarily on the physical battlefield.

It can also be argued that while European Jews have much to offer, it is not their task to save the world from itself. Such an approach may well only invite accusations of arrogance and conceit. Jewry can share its values with the world, not by patronizing, but simply by being a living example. Throughout the ages Jews have contended with the tension that exists between universalism and particularism, between being faithful to one's heritage and religion while at the same time helping general society grow and thrive, even when conflicts arise between the two realms. Examples can be drawn from previous generations, such as Maimonides, an accomplished philosopher and court physician, who was also the leading figure of Jewish law and thought. In modern times, one needs to look no further than the State of Israel as a whole, labeled as the "Start-Up Nation," pioneering in fields of medicine and technology, while still maintaining its connection to and appreciation of its religious history. In an interview with former Jerusalem Post Editor-in-Chief, David Horovitz, the author of *Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*, Saul Singer, remarks:

We need to update our narrative. The Jewish narrative has changed over the years. We need to enter the 3.0 era.

1.0 was the era of the Bible. What we Jews were about

then was purpose. And our purpose was to transform the pagan world—the world of child sacrifice and extreme immorality. Along with Christianity and Islam, we succeeded to spread a message of one God and of ethics. The pagan world was transformed. Mission accomplished. And we grew as a people. But then we faced the destruction of the Temple and exile.

And that took us into the 2.0 era. 2.0 was the era of survival. In that mode, what we Jews were about was survival, and the dream of a return, and messianism. We were hoping we'd be around to see the future. That 2.0 period lasted 2,000 years...

That takes us to the word “miracle” in the book’s subtitle. When I moved here [to Israel] 16 years ago, we thought that the dream of being a light unto the nations probably had to wait for peace. We were busy surviving. That challenge is still there. But what we learned writing this book is that the light unto the nations dream is already happening. We are saving lives through medicine—through medical innovation. Better Place is showing the whole world how to get off oil. Almost every technology you look at—computers, cellphones, Internet—has a piece of Israel in it. Almost all of the major technology companies are doing some of their research here. We’re having an impact and it can increase dramatically. There’s tremendous potential for it to grow.

What the “Start-Up Nation” has done for science and technology is influenced, according to Singer, by the Jewish narrative. It is this narrative that wishes to see the world constantly becoming a better place that can convey a bright message to Europe and the troubled times in which it finds itself.

Conclusion

The consensus appears to be that European Jewry is in crisis, and its very future is in doubt. At the same time Europe itself is in crisis, with confrontations coming from within and without, raising questions about Europe’s continuation as a beacon of Western civilization. The challenge facing the European Jewish world manifests itself in whether to be insular, open-minded or a balance of both:

a. Should the Jewish community do its best to spread the message of Judaism, its morals, ideas and ideals to the wider world through improved PR, by establishing centers of learning, publishing books, articles and on-line literature? Such a method could have a positive influence on future leaders.

b. Is it preferable for the European Jewish world to take care of itself, its people and its institutions? Such is the case in Turkey where the focus is the Jewish family and Jewish education, strengthening Jewish identity internally. While university education is important, the emphasis should be on educating the Jews to heal the

rift between science and *Torah*, to make *Torah* a living *Torah* and a source of life, and not so much to educate non-Jewish students. Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni noted, in response to the recent furor over wearing a *kippah* in public: “If the choice is between wearing a *kippah* in public or not, because of the danger, the answer would be that it’s time to leave... The job of a leader is to explain that they must be good Jews, better Jews, and it’s not important where they are.” Are European values worth saving? It could be argued that the Jewish community is better off putting its resources into ensuring the survival and flourishing of Jews, rather than remaining fixated on geographical and geo-political connections and history.

c. Is there a way to do both, to strengthen Jewish identity, to increase knowledge and pride in each Jew’s Judaism while at the same time sharing the beauty and messages of Judaism with the wider world?

These are some of the questions and challenges facing Europe and European Jewry. The jury is still out regarding the best approach to bring about solutions to these challenges.

SESSION: THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM

Introduction

An oft-quoted definition of anti-Semitism is “to hate the Jew more than is truly necessary.” While the virtue of

this statement bears discussion, it seems clear that hatred of Jews is a phenomenon that will not disappear in the foreseeable future. As such, the Jewish community must learn to first identify such racist thought, speech and action, it must learn to defend itself against attack—physical and non-physical—and must work together with society at large to hopefully eradicate anti-Semitism, showing that it is unacceptable in modern society.

Definition

When seeking to identify anti-Semitism, first we must ask ourselves what is anti-Semitism? The answer to this question has a direct effect on how to contend with this phenomenon.

Pierre-Andre Taguieff (Appendix 1) provided three definitions of anti-Semitism, their root causes, goals and manifestations.

1. Christian anti-Semitism seeks to eradicate Jewish belief and practice.

The charge of deicide fueled the flames of anti-Semitism for many generations, and the blood libels only stoked the fires further. The mere existence of Judaism prevents the ultimate redemption, and so the solution is to rid the world of Judaism. This is done through proselyting, forced conversions and where all else fails, expulsion and death.

2. Modern anti-Semitism sees the Jewish problem differently.

The Jew, inherently, is problematic. While non-Jewish society may not have a problem with Judaism, when asked if there are too many Jews in politics, economics, the media and so on, the attitudes toward Jews become much more negative. As such, the solution is discrimination against the Jews and their eventual extermination. These attitudes are further exacerbated by nationalistic feelings, and the view that the Jews don't belong here wherever that "here" may be.

3. The third type of anti-Semitism is perhaps the most difficult to diagnose, because of the form it takes, namely anti-Zionism.

Here, the issue is the attitude toward the Jewish State, either because of the Palestinian question, or even without entering the question of whether Israel is an occupying force that is subjugating another nation. The supposed solution is the destruction of the Jewish State as a political and religious entity.

Indeed, these definitions are echoed in the EUMC's working definition of anti-Semitism, as defined by the European Parliament Working Group on Anti-Semitism:

Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

In addition, such manifestations could also target the

state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. Anti-Semitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

These definitions are potentially vital when it comes to thinking about how best to approach the manifestation of anti-Semitism across Europe and beyond.

What Are the Numbers?

While the perceptions are of a dramatic rise in anti-Semitism across Europe, the numbers may not necessarily bear this out. Taking the UK as a case study, there is a definite rise in anti-Semitic incidents occurring during times of heightened conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. However, over a period of time, while there are peaks and troughs, the level of anti-Semitism remains constant (See Appendix 2).

Furthermore, beyond understanding the root cause of anti-Semitism, one must also define what are the manifestations and definitions of anti-Semitism—is it thought, feeling, verbal abuse, online abuse, physical attacks on places (Jewish institutions, shops, cemeteries) or physical attacks on people? This would lead some to contend that measuring anti-Semitism is not science; it is based on attitudes. Do Jews feel safe in a certain place? Has the anxiety felt by Jews in certain European

countries affected the number of incidents reported? Does the media play a role in quietening or heightening sensitivity to anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic incidents as a whole (for example, the current climate of virulent anti-Semitism in the British Labour Party⁶, or the recent walk through Paris undertaken by an Israeli reporter⁷).

Another factor to take into consideration is the change in Europe's population, which has been largely Christian-based and has seen an influx of Muslim immigration over the past few years. While anti-Semitism may be a constant, this is perhaps the underlying reason for the change from Christian anti-Semitism, as outlined above, to anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian anti-Semitism. The influx of Muslim immigration may well affect the levels of anti-Semitism in certain places where the Muslim population makes up a greater percentage of the general population and/or where anti-Semitic acts are undertaken specifically by members of the Muslim community (see Appendix 3). Again, this factor affects the approaches and methods to combat attitudes and actions.

In all, it is difficult to draw exact numbers on anti-Semitism or anti-Semitic incidents, which may well depend

6 See for example Joel Braunold, Labour Party's anti-Semitism Struggle: "Recognizing Jews Are a People, Not Just a Religion", <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/the-jewish-thinker/premium-1.718793>.

7 Zvika Klein, "10 hours of fear and loathing in Paris", <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/676/485.html>.

on the type of questions asked in any particular survey, whether incidents are even reported (Appendix 4), and the reliability of the data.

What Can Be Done?

While the debate about the definition and manifestation of anti-Semitism may rage, there are nonetheless definite incidents against people and property—in the virtual and real world. What can be done to combat these attitudes and actions? A number of suggestions include:

1. Volunteer protection

Establish something akin to the Community Security Trust (CST) in the UK, whose real value is what happens behind the scenes—ongoing high-level dialogue between government officials, police and the CST. This is beyond training members of the Jewish community to be vigilant and stand as guards outside Jewish institutions, such as synagogues and schools, particularly during times of high-occupancy (school hours, prayer times, etc.).

2. Interfaith work

If the reasons behind anti-Semitism are faith based (deicide, Islamic extremism, etc.), establishing interfaith forums can help. Anecdotal evidence is often given that “you, a Jew, are OK, it’s just all the others...” If such forums can create dialogue and show Jews/Muslims/Christians in a positive light, this may have a positive impact on general attitudes and society.

3. Monitor

Monitor carefully to understand what's going on in order to advise a course of action to the Jews.

4. Carry on regardless

While incidents occur, perhaps it is best to carry on in spite of what is happening and refuse to cave into the anti-Semites' efforts to destroy what has been built.

5. Emigrate

If Jews feel that they are under attack, whether perceived or in actual fact, moving to another country (Israel or elsewhere), another town or even neighbourhood may be a solution. While this may seem like giving in to bullies/terrorists/anti-Semites, it does at least allow for safety and continuity.

6. Educate

To fight anti-Semitism, we have to first educate and reinforce our Jewish identity. A proud nation is more willing to stand up for itself. Education is not just for the Jewish community, but also to show the beauty of Judaism and Jews to the outside world.

Appendix 1

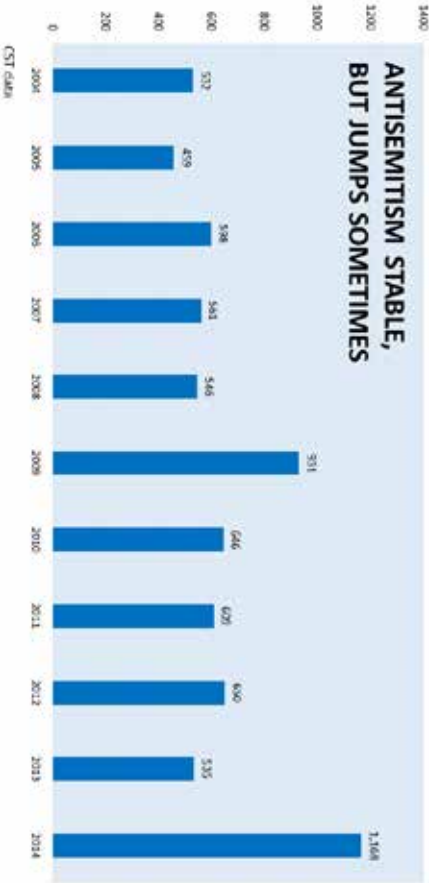
Definitions of Anti-Semitism, Pierre Andre Taguieff, based on his book *Rising from the Muck: The New Anti-Semitism in Europe (2004)*, summarized in a slide show by Dr. Dov Maimon:

	Christian Anti-Judaism	Modern Anti-Semitism	Anti-Zionism
The unacceptable entity	Jewish beliefs	Jewish individual	The Jewish nation-state
Goal	Judaism-free world	Jew-free world	Israel-free world
Ideology	Christianity	Racism Nationalism	Anti-racism Post-nationalism
Expression	Discrimination & Conversion	Extermination	BDS

Pierre Andre Taguieff

Appendix 2

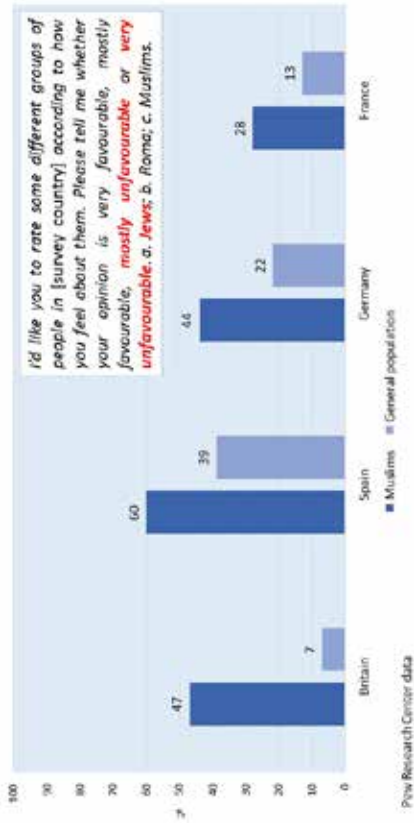
ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS COUNTS



Appendix 3

LEVELS OF GENERAL ANTI-PATHY DATA

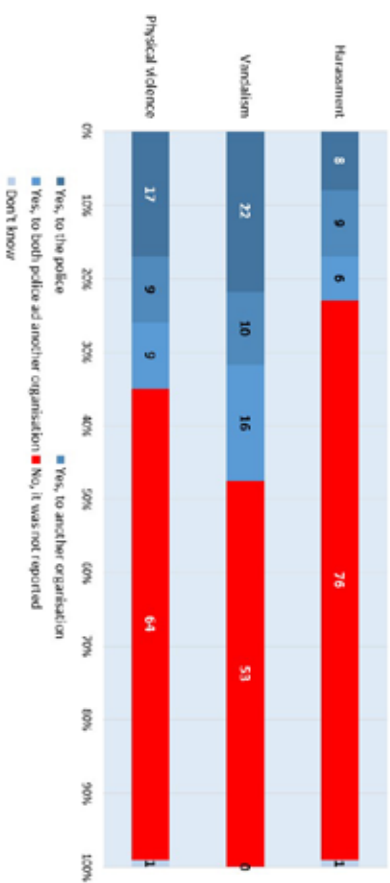
Is the antipathy towards Jews being imported?



Appendix 4

ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS COUNTS

Reporting rates of the most serious antisemitic incidents, in the past five years in the UK, 2008-2012 (%)



**SESSION: CLOSED JUDAISM / OPEN JUDAISM /
PLURALISTIC JUDAISM / ASSIMILATION**

Introduction

Why be Jewish? This isn't a question that should only be posed to potential converts to Judaism, but one that should be asked of each individual Jew and of the Jewish community as a whole. What is it that makes Judaism attractive, that makes it meaningful? On the other hand, what is it that alienates Jews from Judaism, and how can this be combatted?

The Changing Face of Judaism

Generally speaking, in past generations, being Jewish meant that automatically you were part of a communal set-up. Dating back to biblical times when the Jewish nation was divided up into households and tribes, all the way through to *shtetl* life, all that was needed to become a member of a Jewish community was to be born Jewish or convert through the relevant channels.

Nowadays, according to the Pew Research Center, 30% of American Jews offer “no demonization” in response to categorizing themselves within the realms of the wider Jewish world (the options being: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, other, don't know).⁸ These are people who absolutely see themselves as Jews, and yet are alienated

8 <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/08/26/a-portrait-of-american-orthodox-jews/>

—by choice or otherwise—from being members of a Jewish denomination, and by extension, Jewish community. These numbers notwithstanding, the fact that unaffiliated Jews still consider themselves to be Jewish is cause for optimism.

Connections

While the makeup of the Jewish world and its affiliation has changed, many aspects of the Jewish community and its organization have remained the same. Old guidelines and bylaws, social structures and a top down system that places the rabbi at the top of the framework are still in place. All the while the modern world has seen governments overthrown through the use of social media and the ever-increasing influence of the virtual world on the real one, a world where hierarchy no longer exists. This leads to the question of how to engage both the unaffiliated—through outreach—while not neglecting the active and affiliated.

While all the above may lead to a feeling of pessimism, the opposite is true. Lord Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, writes in his book⁹:

We have neglected the institutions needed to sustain communities of memory and character. The assumption has been that society could exist on the basis of the private choices of individuals and the occasional intervention of the state, as if these were the only significant enti-

9 Lord Sacks, *The Persistence of Faith*, p. 89.

ties in our social landscape. But a plural society needs a moral and cultural base.”

People are looking for a sense of security. Not just physical, but also spiritual and emotional. For example, for Jews, the spiritual, emotional and communal sense of wellbeing and safety is most likely felt in Israel. However, the likelihood of being attacked, injured or killed by someone whose aim to is kill Jews/Israelis is probably greater in Israel than anywhere else in the world. Nevertheless, people still seek to emigrate to Israel out of a sense of belonging. It is this feeling of wanting to belong that communities—and communal leaders in particular—must foster to encourage individuals to belong and be active in local communities as well.

Seventy Doors

Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra¹⁰ writes in his introduction to his commentary on the Pentateuch: “The *Tōrah* has seventy faces.” This is often understood to mean that different interpretations and approaches to biblical and Talmudic exegesis can all be accommodated within the boundaries of acceptable interpretation, even though they may vastly disagree with one another. By extension, it is understood that the approach to Judaism itself can come about through different ways and means.

It is this understanding that can enable Jewish communi-

10 Spanish biblical exegete, philosopher, poet and philologist, 1089-1164.

ties to open the doors to the unaffiliated, while also maintaining and strengthening its base populace. The doors include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

1. Identity

Strengthening the individual's Jewish identity is paramount to establishing and increasing his or her connection with other Jews and the Jewish community. This can be achieved through events, lectures, online interaction, and more, in a non-religious context, to address broadly accepted Jewish topics such as Israel, social awareness (*tikkun olam/chessed*), and the like. Another option is creating the space—Jewish community centers—for Jews to come together in a non-threatening and religiously non-obligating setting for a host of programs, clubs, fitness (gym/swimming), theater, etc.

2. Culture

In an article published in *The Forward*,¹¹ Prof. Steven M. Cohen¹² defines himself as a “cultural Jew,” and writes about how to pass along cultural or secular Judaism while retaining a Jewish identity.

In short, you can be secular, cultural, and non-believing and still engage in prayer and Shabbat, observe holidays, do mitzvahs, give tzedakah, connect with Israel and embrace Jewish culture, be it Jon Stewart or Torah

11 <http://forward.com/articles/215198/can-you-pass-down-cultural-judaism-without-the-fai/>

12 Steven M. Cohen is Research Professor of Jewish Social Policy at HUC-JIR, and a Director of the Berman Jewish Policy Archive at NYU Wagner.

study. Your children can survive as Jews as apikorsim (non-believers), but they can't survive as am-artzim (ignorant of their heritage and traditions)..

You can do so with integrity, provided you don't exclude Jewish religious practice just to be "faithful" to your secular commitments. Lots of Israeli Jews are secular, cultural Jews as well. But they speak Hebrew, have Jewish friends, live in Jewish neighborhoods, care about Israel, celebrate lots of Jewish holidays, and have learned Jewish texts and thought as school children.

On order to do this and to insure that the next generation will not be *amaratzim*, it is necessary to create a sense of belonging. This requires finding teachers who can pass on this sense of identity, providing parents—often in mixed-religious marriages and partnerships—with the tools, knowledge and strength of character to pass on the universal messages of Judaism, its culture and its heritage.

3. Experiential

Many *kiruv* organizations, and beyond, advocate Hands-on Experience as a means to strengthen Jewish identity and create a sense of belonging and community. They bring a Jewish tint to common daily activities, adding vibrant music and song to prayers, and more. Jewish education is a vital component of this endeavor.¹³

13 Carolyn Gerecht, "What Exactly Is Experiential Jewish Education?", <http://www.spertus.edu/news/experiential-jewish-learning>

Experiential Jewish Education is the process of teaching Jewish life, and Jewish values, by building meaningful Jewish experiences—creating programs that combine traditional methods of text study, learning, and service, with physical and emotional interaction between learners.

*That might mean learners experience directly the warmth of a Shabbat dinner together. They might participate in a mock Beit Knesset voting on enacting a Jewish law as a national law. They might build a real *eruv*. Learners form extremely close relationships with each other, and with outgoing, knowledgeable role model/educators. Experiential Jewish education works to inspire learners to embrace meaningful Jewish lives.*

4. International message

Judaism can be a vehicle to understanding the world. What are our ideas? How do we present and articulate those ideas to the masses, Jewish and non-Jewish, and get them to relate to the ideas and ideals of creating a better world and better society? Judaism must provide an outlook on all aspects of life, not just religious and spiritual, but also on financial, cultural, ethical, professional, etc. By presenting such ideas to society at large in a positive manner—not preaching or sermonizing—the sense of pride in the Jewish way of life could well be increased.

Conclusion

The great Hassidic leader, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk (1787–1859) stated:¹⁴

*If I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you,
then I am I and you are you.
But if I am I because you are you and you are you because I am I,
then I am not I and you are not you!*

The keys to having a sense of belonging, of having a strong Jewish identity, are firstly knowledge, education and understanding of Jewish law, lore, culture and history. Then comes pride in who you are, pride in your history and awareness of being another link in a chain of a people—nation, religion, culture—dating back centuries, with a message that is both universal and individualistic.

SESSION: TO BE A JEW TODAY

Introduction

Being a Jew in Europe—and indeed the rest of the world—today means being part of a global network. It means being connected to local, national and international culture, being influenced by outside forces that

14 Quoted in *Tales of the Hasidim: The Later Masters* (1948) by Martin Buber.

may be in opposition to Jewish law, outlook and philosophy. How does the individual Jew and the Jewish community stand up to these challenges? Is it preferable to hide oneself away from all outside influence, or to meet the challenge head on? If the latter, how does one ensure the continuing survival and strengthening of Jewish identity on the personal, familial and communal level, while at the same time risking potential assimilation into the wider world.

What does being a Jew mean in relation to the big wide world? While this is a question that looks outward, it is also one of introspection:

In an age when being Jewish is mostly seen as a burden and less as a privilege, we must finally articulate answers to the most difficult of questions: Why be Jewish?

Traditionally, we have been instructed about the intricacies of what it means to be Jewish and how to engage in Judaism, but so often we ignore the “why?” We are part of a generation that mostly sees Judaism as stagnate, dull, and unimaginative. Young Jews are seeking meaning in an often chaotic world, but instead of turning toward Judaism they have found different outlets for answers.¹⁵

15 Jon Leener and Avram Mlotek, “What Should Being Jewish Mean Today?” Published March 20, 2014. <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.580972>

Does the answer to the introspective question—what does being Jewish mean to me?—provide a clue to the first question—what does me being Jewish mean to the rest of the world?

Rabbi Debbie Young Somers¹⁶ outlined her vision and understanding of interfaith dialogue, parodying ABBA's famous lyrics: "knowing me, knowing you, there is nothing we CAN'T do."¹⁷

Being a Jew today is complex and multifaceted, and encompasses concentric circles: the individual; the family; the community; responsibility to Israel; and responsibility for and relationship with society and the outside world.

As such, before being able to go out to the world and speak about Judaism, one first needs to be strong in his or her identity, to stand up and be counted. Personal identity and pride in one's heritage must then come into play with regard to family and community. We can't be attractive to others—Jew and non-Jew alike—if we are insular.

16 Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers is the Community Educator at the Movement for Reform Judaism, supporting 42 UK Reform communities. She is a Buber Fellow from Paideia, The European Institute for Jewish Studies, and holds a first class degree in Religious Studies.

17 The original lyrics are "knowing me, knowing you, there is nothing we can do." <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/abba/knowingmeknowingyou.html>

During the Yom Kippur War, Israel's Prime Minister Gold Meir remarked: "Pessimism is a luxury that Jews can't afford."¹⁸ It is incumbent upon the professional, spiritual and lay leadership of Jewish communities to make Judaism attractive to its greatest potential ambassadors—its own members. This means that one cannot be pessimistic about one's own faith, but rather must see the inherent good, and be able to transmit that goodness to others, be they co-religionists, members of other faiths or, indeed, adherents of no specific religion.

In an article¹⁹ entitled "Why do we need Interreligious Dialogue?" Dr. Malka Simkovich²⁰ outlines a number of benefits.

There are aspects of other religions that, when properly incorporated into my own religious practice, enrich my own religious experience.

There are times that by looking beyond the specific prism of one's own religion and religious practice, one gains a better understanding, draws ideas—without

18 First published in *The Observer*, 29 December 1974 (<https://goo.gl/KMyf8j>).

19 <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/why-do-we-need-interreligious-dialogue/>

20 Malka Simkovich has a Ph.D from Brandeis University in Second Temple Judaism. She earned an MA degree in Hebrew Bible from Harvard University and a BA in Bible Studies and Music Theory from Stern College of Yeshiva University. Her research focuses on universalist Jewish literature that emerged from Egypt under the Roman empire.

compromising religious beliefs and law—and has a more profound appreciation for one’s heritage. It is fertile ground for exchange, without compromising one’s own principles. Such dialogue can be conducted in both formal and informal settings, such as public forums and debates, but also in less formal settings, such as the workplace. Again the guiding principle is that the aim is to create a better understanding of the other, and as such requires the individual to first study, and be engaged in and proud of one’s own position. Dr. Simkovich adds another point:

Dialogue and mutual understanding in this generation can help to prevent acts of violence and oppression in the next generation.

Being put into a position where one has to explain one’s beliefs and practices, and to listen as others explain theirs can lead to more pride, knowledge and awareness. The aim of interfaith dialogue is not to convince others, not to preach or proselytize, but to teach, inform and shine a light on the positive in order to form the basis of mutual respect and understanding, and undermine the often baseless, xenophobic hatred that contribute to acts of violence.

There Is Nothing We Can’t Do

Rabbi Shaya Boas²¹ advocates integration without as-

21 Director of Friends of Lauder Business School, Rabbi of the Ohel Abraham Synagogue, Vienna, Austria.

similation. That is, know who you are, know who others are, know what people and religions stand for, but retain your own independence and voice. Put another way, one needs to maintain balance in life, with religion playing an important role in defining who you are. “Go to lunch with colleagues, but go for a beer with Jewish friends.”

Finding common ground while maintaining the differences may be the cornerstone on which to build a healthy European society. Different religions can all come together in support of agreed upon needs and challenges facing the world, such as raising breast cancer awareness, fighting world hunger and combatting global climate change.

Conclusion

One has to be strong and knowledgeable in one's identity in order to mingle with others in interfaith forums, formal and informal. While much interfaith dialogue happens mainly at leadership levels, the need is to transfer the high ideals spoken of at such forums into everyday life, with the important exchanges taking place not in ivory towers or synagogues, churches or mosque halls, but rather at more common levels, at lunch with colleagues, over the garden fence or in random meetings on the street or in shops. When such understanding and appreciation of the other becomes commonplace, the future will look brighter and safer, leaving plenty of room for the spiritual growth of every individual and community.

SESSION: JUDAIC STUDIES IN EUROPE

Introduction

Education is a life-long curve, beginning with the very first moments after a baby is born—for both child and parents—and continuing, mental faculties willing, until a person's last days.

Each stage in a person's formal education is important, from learning the basics of the alphabet and reading to writing dissertations. However, the approach to teaching, the methodologies and indeed the target audience has changed over the course of generations, as Felix Posen²² notes²³:

As far as I know, the European Jewish educational gatherings that take place each year do not address the subject of teaching secular European Jews a form of Judaism consistent with their lifestyle and beliefs (or non-beliefs). Why not? Is it any wonder, given the

22 Felix Posen was born in Berlin in 1928, and left after *Kristallnacht* for Holland, the UK, and finally the USA. He served in the US Army in Korea, lived for six years in Japan and moved permanently to the UK in 1967. BA Johns Hopkins University; DPhil Hon Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, Haifa University; Honorary Fellow Hebrew University; Governor Emeritus, and Honorary Fellow Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies; Trustee Institute of Archaeo-metallurgical Studies, University of London; Founder Posen Foundation.

23 "Jewish Education for Today's Secular Age," September 9, 2015, <http://leatid.org/jewish-education-for-todays-secular-age/>

woeful state of education, that our numbers continue to decline—in some areas precipitously?

Take the UK, where I live. In 1939, there were over 400,000 Jews living here. When Rabbi Sacks took on the UK Jewish leadership in 1990, there were 313,000; and now we are down to 260,000, a number that decreases year by year despite the robust Haredi birthrate.

The UK Jewish day schools, some of which are very good, even outstanding, in secular subjects, teach Judaism exclusively as a religion. Brachot are mainly learned by heart, often in a language not understood by students who of course don't practice such Judaism. This is the old fashioned religious system in which I too grew up and which was useful for students coming from religiously observant homes.

But this style of Jewish education no longer makes sense for the non-religious majority. Statistically, it belongs to a different era. Why then are students still taught Jewish history from a religious rather than a cultural perspective? Why not teach them in a manner consistent with the beliefs and values of the homes these children come from—and go back to?

Facing the Challenge

Multiple measures may be implemented to face the challenge, including increasing resources, wages and communal support from preschool through primary

and secondary education; promoting greater cooperation between synagogues and schools;²⁴ reviving the synagogue; and applying the religious studies learned in the classroom to everyday life.

Another approach is top down, that is, providing greater opportunities for higher education at college level across Europe. When speaking of Jewish education, the communal thinking often stops at the end of high school, as indeed the JDC²⁵ survey shows:

The survey questionnaire offered 11 statements regarding Jewish education. These varied from philosophical approaches, to policy issues, to observation of facts.

- 1. Jewish education does not help our youth to connect to global, non-Jewish issues they care about.*
- 2. The professionals working in Jewish schools (teachers, directors) are well paid.*
- 3. A Jewish education is less important for Jewish survival than for developing a strong Jewish social life and Jewish network.*
- 4. Jewish schools do a good job of facilitating the*

24 "Children's rabbi wades into 'shul versus schools' debate", June 9, 2016, <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/essex-rabbi-wades-into-shul-vs-schools-debate/#.V1nNXf1jRSI.facebook>

25 *Third Survey of European Jewish Leaders and Opinion Formers*, 2015, page 19, <http://www.jdc-iccd.org/en/download/article/70/one.pdf>

transition of our youth between Jewish and non-Jewish settings.

5. *In our community, the Jewish education system also serves children with disabilities.*
6. *Our educational institutions serve all ages and groups.*
7. *The main problem with Jewish education is its high cost.*
8. *We have enough institutions for Jewish education in our community.*
9. *Jewish communities should create integrated schools to serve Jewish and non-Jewish populations.*
10. *The level of Jewish education that our schools offer is high.*
11. *Jewish schools do a good job of integrating Jewish and general knowledge.*

There also seems to be a need for high quality higher education. The idea isn't to simply provide a Jewish education, but also a place where Jews and non-Jews can intermingle and learn from one another, and where Jews can delve deeply into the meaning and importance of Jewish identity and belonging. For example, the Lauder Business School²⁶ in Vienna, Austria promotes "diversity [that] encompasses personality dimensions (e.g. age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical abili-

²⁶ <http://lbs.ac.at/lbs-mission-statement-on-diversity-and-gender/>

ties, language(s), national origin, religious affiliation, social origin), life circumstances (e.g. residence, education, professional experience, interests, family status, income, leisure behavior, world view, traditions), and organizational framework (position at the institution, tasks, duration and intensity of affiliation). LBS puts individuals and their multiple changeable and unchangeable identity and group affiliation center-stage.”

As a business school, its aim²⁷ is “providing first-rate business education to prepare our Bachelor and Master students for international business careers.” This is an example of a school dedicated to providing excellence in education in the field of business, while at the same time offering opportunities for Jewish growth, including living in dorms at its Jewish Heritage Center.

Another example of a Jewish educational institution of higher learning is Paideia, the European Institute of Jewish Studies in Sweden. Paideia specializes in Jewish Studies, educator’s programs and MA courses in Jewish Civilization.

The education is open to anyone with an interest and capability to add to Jewish culture and to the contribution of Jewish culture to a multifaceted European society.²⁸

Barbara Spectre, Founding Director of Paideia, outlined

27 <http://lbs.ac.at/about/our-mission/>

28 <http://www.paideia-eu.org/about/>

in The Glamsta Declaration²⁹ the manner in which she and others believe is best for the advancement of Jewish Studies whose aim is the renewal of Jewish life and culture in Europe:

We envision the Beit Midrash, the house of study, as the centre of Jewish community life. A key element in our project is to reclaim the Beit Midrash and its methodologies in order to engage Jewish texts not simply as sources of authority, but as sources of inspiration, questioning and discovery. Where there are texts, there is always intertextuality. Texts invite other texts, including those from other traditions, and they call for renewed readings and interpretations. We believe that the doors of the Beit Midrash should be open to all, regardless of background, who share a common love of learning and inquiry. Diversity should be actively encouraged as a way to incorporate new perspectives and understandings. In the spirit of the Beit Midrash, we also encourage rabbis and community leaders to welcome creative dissent and to facilitate conversations around controversial issues through the learning of texts.

Conclusion

Prof. Robert Braun notes:

In order to assist European Jewish revival I think we need to focus on creating European institutions—both

²⁹ <http://makshava.org/glamsta-declaration/>

for putting the idea of a “European” Jewry on the (political) map and assist in building a networked web of communities. Also, European Jewry needs assistance from Israel and the US—both in terms of brains, networks, ideas, commitment and financial backing. A Jewish European university could be the place for all of this. When contemplating a university, one has more than a learning institution in mind—a university is a center for research, events, networking, political activism, publication of projects, etc.

Such pan-European institutes of higher learning can indeed become focal points for spreading knowledge about Judaism and Jews, their impact on society and desire for the betterment thereof, whether through Jewish or general Jewish Studies. They can also become centers of excellence where hearts and minds come together in an open, pluralistic and academic complex all with the aim of making the Jewish community of Europe and its constituent communities safer, more knowledgeable and Jewishly-aware places.

SESSION: JEWISH STATUS ISSUES

Introduction

Many things impact the makeup of Jewish family and communal life. Perhaps the strongest of all is the question of personal status and life choices. The community and its leaders must respond and relate to different

people, as stated by Rabbi Eliezer Shai Di Martino³⁰ in relation to the question of intermarriage as experienced in his work as a community rabbi in different communities:

Of course as rabbis, Jewish teachers and Jewish lay leaders we are committed to include and to reach out to fellow Jews who are intermarried, assimilated or unaffiliated. But what do we have to do when the vast majority of them is like this and is the critical mass, the opinion makers, the community shapers?

Intermarriage

Intermarriage is a fact of modern day life in Jewish communities. In an article published³¹ in September 2015, eJewish Philanthropy raises the question “How Would a European Pew Survey Look?”

[L]ike in America, intermarriage rates remain high in Europe. Identity à la carte also showed that the rate of mixed marriages among respondents was almost the same or even higher than among the parents' generation. In Bulgaria, 72% of respondents were intermarried versus 66% of their parents; in Hungary, 46% versus 42%; in Latvia 52% versus 38% and in Romania 72% versus 59%. In Western Europe, intermarriage rates oscillate between 40% and 50% depending on

30 Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Trieste, Italy.

31 <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/how-would-a-european-pew-survey-look/>

*the country. Does intermarriage lead to assimilation?
That is a more difficult question to answer.*

How does the community respond to such rates? Will intermarriage eventually lead to the cessation of Jewish life or perhaps lead to a revival as younger generations search for their roots as part of a spiritual and religious reawakening? Indeed, according to the Pew Report,³² religious affiliation across the world and across all religions will grow, while “Atheists, agnostics and other people who do not affiliate with any religion—though increasing in countries such as the United States and France—will make up a declining share of the world’s total population.” While the increase may be low in general relative to the fertility rates and the size of youth population as outlined in the report, one cannot dismiss the resurgence of religion and spirituality across the world.

In Jewish communities, challenges faced by intermarried couples are plentiful, including but by no means limited to these dilemmas: Are rabbis willing and able³³ to preside at such a wedding, thereby giving their bless-

32 “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050,” <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>

33 See, for example, the op-ed penned by Rabbi Seymour Rosenbloom, “It’s time to allow Conservative rabbis to officiate at interfaith weddings”, <http://www.jta.org/2016/04/04/news-opinion/united-states/op-ed-its-time-to-allow-conservative-rabbis-to-officiate-at-interfaith-weddings>

ing in approval of the union? Is such a family accepted³⁴ into the synagogue? How are children of intermarried couples to be raised—Jewish, another faith, no faith, or a mixture of both parents' heritage?

Furthermore, as outlined by Rabbi Di Martino above, what happens when all or some of the community's lay leadership is itself intermarried? How does this affect the rabbi's ability to bring people closer to Judaism and Jewish practice, when the leadership does not present a similar message on the importance of endogamy?

Conversion

Converts and conversion too are a part of the Jewish horizon. Throughout the generations, conversion has been viewed differently, yet one constant remains—the obligation to treat the stranger, the convert, fairly and with compassion.

This presents its own challenges to the community and its rabbi. For example, how much time should a community rabbi spend with potential converts in lieu of spending time with the community's members? How does a community make potential converts feel welcome, while at the same time maintaining a certain distance to show

34 See, for example, a blogpost written by Rabbi Daniel Friedman of the Family Shul, Edmonton, Canada, "Should we accept intermarried couples as members of our synagogues?" <http://www.lifyomi.com/2014/04/should-we-accept-intermarried-couples.html>

that the process is not yet complete. Is it acceptable to even ask such a question, or should converts be fully accepted as soon as they walk through the door?

Beyond the immediate challenges facing the rabbinate and the communities, there is also the acceptance of the conversion by other rabbinical bodies and in particular the acceptance of Orthodox conversion done in the Diaspora by the rabbinical establishment in Israel. This question may lead to many bureaucratic and, more importantly, personal and family challenges that the rabbi must address by counseling and providing emotional and spiritual support.

Homosexuality

It seems that few issues are as divisive between expected Western morality and traditional Judaism as that of homosexuality. While the *Torah* is categorical³⁵ in its position on the act of homosexuality—“And a man who lies with a male as one would with a woman both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon themselves”—Western civilization sees things differently. Arguments put forth include, for example, that one cannot legislate what happens in the bedroom; one cannot ostracize others simply for feeling a certain way, particularly if they are born that way; it is not the place of society to decide

35 Leviticus 20:13.

what is and is not acceptable between two consenting adults. A poll³⁶ conducted by the Pew Research Center provided the following insight into attitudes toward homosexuality:

The view that homosexuality should be accepted by society is prevalent in most of the European Union countries surveyed. About three-quarters or more in Spain (88%), Germany (87%), the Czech Republic (80%), France (77%), Britain (76%), and Italy (74%) share this view, as do more than half in Greece (53%). Poland is the only EU country surveyed where views are mixed; 42% say homosexuality should be accepted by society and 46% believe it should be rejected.

Judaism's main branches differ on their approach to the question of homosexuality, homosexual practices and marriage. While Orthodoxy remains firmly rooted in its prohibition of the homosexual act and is against homosexual marriage, the Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative (*Masorti*) movements have adapted their approach to this matter, including on the questions of homosexual clergy and officiating at weddings of homosexual couples.

The differing positions notwithstanding, the challenge of rabbis and communities—whether they accept homosexuality, are willing to countenance LGBT weddings

36 “The Global Divide on Homosexuality,” <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/06/04/the-global-divide-on-homosexuality/>

or officiate at such unions—is not so much about accepting homosexuality as accepting homosexuals.

Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, commented recently:³⁷

We must also be honest enough to recognise that there are places where the scourge of homophobia persists, even in our own communities, and that is totally unacceptable. Where that hate is religiously motivated, faith leaders and faith communities carry a particular responsibility to act...

In the face of such unspeakable violence, we must be introspective. The Torah takes a clear, well-known position on acts of homosexual intimacy but it also leaves us in no doubt about our responsibility to provide a welcoming environment in our synagogues and beyond for all Jews, regardless of their level of religious observance, ethnicity or sexuality.

After Orlando, we must take a step beyond condemnation and open our hearts and our synagogues so that no Jew feels persecuted or excluded from the warm embrace of our communities.

Conclusion

It is difficult to provide any specific solutions to many of

37 “The Chief Rabbi’s Statement on the Orlando massacre, 14 June 2016,” <http://chiefrabbi.org/chief-rabbis-statement-orlando-massacre/>

the challenges raised above for two main reasons:

1. Such situations are evolving, and as society's approach to the issues raised develop, so too does one's response, personally, communally and religiously.

2. Within Judaism, opinion is divided about how best to rise to these challenges. For example, does one seek out couples that are intermarried, advocating conversion for the non-Jewish spouse, or perhaps encourage them to separate for the sake of future generations and even their own religious well-being? The lack of consensus is not limited to divisions between different streams of Judaism, but also exists within the streams themselves. For example, Conservative Judaism leaves the question of officiating at same-sex weddings to the discretion of each rabbi.

One thing is certain—questions of personal and family status are issues that have beset rabbis and Jewish communities throughout the ages and will continue to do so. Rabbi Di Martino likened the position of the rabbi—at times—to that of the Corinthian King Sisyphus, condemned in Greek mythology³⁸ to an eternity of rolling a boulder uphill then watching it roll back down again:

The only thing I've been doing is trying to reach the young generations to strengthen their Jewish identity. But it is not enough. In an environment where the institution is taken care of more than the members of

38 <http://www.mythweb.com/encyc/entries/sisyphus.html>

the institution, where to get funds and to strengthen Jewish education we need lots of money, we have to go through interminable bureaucracy. In an environment where even the existing community funds are not always managed by leaders with a clear Jewish set of values, the immense boulder of Jewish identity that we rabbis and Jewish teachers are rolling up the hill, often rolls back down, repeating this action for eternity.

SESSION: ISSUES IN JEWISH EDUCATION

Introduction

On their homepage³⁹, PEJE (Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education), a North American non-profit organization specializing in promoting and strengthening Jewish education in schools across the USA and Canada, write the following by way of introducing themselves to the world:

PEJE believes that day schools are essential for fostering an engaged Jewish people for an enduring Jewish future. To flourish, Jewish day schools must be destinations of choice for students, families, and philanthropic investment.

It is difficult to disagree with these sentiments. The place of Jewish day schools for children has been of

³⁹ <http://www.peje.org/>

primary importance since the times of Yehoshua ben Gamla, a High Priest at the time of the Second Temple, who first introduced the concept of education for every child—boys, in the first instance—as detailed in Tractate *Bava Batra* 21a: ⁴⁰

Verily the name of that man is to be blessed, to wit Joshua ben Gamala, for but for him the Torah would have been forgotten from Israel. For at first if a child had a father, his father taught him, and if he had no father he did not learn at all... At length Joshua b. Gamala came and ordained that teachers of young children should be appointed in each district and each town. and that children should enter school at the age of six or seven.

The education of girls in Jewish day schools had to wait until general girls' education became more accepted in modern society, and while some schools were established across Europe, it was the advent of the Beis Yaakov movement under the leadership of Sarah Schenirer⁴¹ that raised the standard of Jewish day school education for young ladies.

Jewish day schools allow for the creation of an environ-

40 *Baba Bathra*, The Jew's College/Soncino English translation of the Babylonian Talmud, as published on http://www.come-and-hear.com/bababathra/bababathra_21.html

41 Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt, "The ultra-Orthodox Seamstress Who Determined the Fate of Jewish Women," <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.553831>

ment where Judaism is seen as inseparable from the rest of life; it permeates the whole day, whether through the dress code, the kosher kitchen serving lunches daily, the morning prayers that initiate the day, and the interaction among fellow Jews. Rabbi Mitchel Malkus, Ed.D.,⁴² adds further:⁴³

Day school graduates have been shown to be more Jewishly engaged, disproportionately involved in Jewish leadership roles, more likely to raise their children Jewishly, and less likely to engage in negative social behaviors in college than their Jewish public-school and private-independent school peers. There are also studies that suggest that the families of Jewish day school students benefit Jewishly from the school communities that they initially explored for their children and ultimately chose and continue to choose for their own Jewish involvement.

Challenges

While the benefits of Jewish day school education may be obvious, it is not without its unique challenges. Ethel Barylka⁴⁴ outlines some of these challenges:

42 Rabbi Mitchel Malkus, Ed.D., is Head of School, Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville, Maryland.

43 <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/can-we-attract-the-majority-of-american-jews-to-day-schools/>

44 Founder and Director of “Women and Judaism,” Barlyka has a BA in Hebrew Literature and Philosophy from the Hebrew University, and an MA from HU’s Institute of Contemporary Jewry.

1. Face of the department

In too many situations, the Jewish Studies Department and its leadership are merely considered the arbiters of religious decision, the court of arbitration in technical Jewish matters pertaining to the school, rather than the life and soul of the school. The challenge is to transform the way the students perceive Judaism from being one of a penal code to being *Torat Hayyim*, an all-encompassing way of life.

2. Living versus surviving

Teaching Jews to survive as Jews is something that's been inbred since the time of the exile and over nearly 2,000 years of the Jewish Diaspora. This, however, does not necessarily make for proud, happy and actively engaged Jews. In a world full of opportunities to learn and experience other faiths and religions, societies and cultures, modern pop culture, and more, the language of Judaism must also go on the offensive, offering attractive and positively experiential settings, boldly looking to the future and not just to the past.

3. Role of women

As general society evolves, providing greater opportunities for women in leadership roles in politics, business and religion, the Jewish world is also evolving. Schools are traditionally places where gender does not limit leadership prospects, and yet the traditional (Orthodox) world is considered to be ideologically opposed to this phenomenon. The challenge is to allow women to lead

fully participatory Jewish lives, bringing their knowledge, talents and skills to the fore. How does the educational system encourage women to take on leadership roles in the school when the outside world does not necessarily offer them such opportunities?

4. Professionalism

In too many instances, teachers of Jewish Studies are not trained educators. They may well have the requisite knowledge, however they lack the ability and skills to teach this knowledge. It is vital that the teachers be qualified pedagogues who also possess the personality to make Judaism and the study of Jewish texts, law and lore exciting and enlivening.

A Teacher's Perspective

From the perspective of the classroom teachers, their role as teachers of Jewish Studies is twofold and thus even more challenging. Firstly, and perhaps primarily, they must imbue the students with knowledge and skills necessary to make them lifelong learners. Secondly, they must inspire the students to become lifelong learners with a pride in their heritage and instill in them the desire to continue their lives as proud Jews through personal, familial and communal commitment. Keeping this in mind, the task of the teacher is problematic on both these fronts:

1. Home support

Homework is an integral part of school life. It is given

to complement, reinforce and supplement the material that is taught in the classroom. Often, particularly in the younger grades, parents provide a support network for their children, assisting them with their homework. This is difficult when many parents lack even the most basic knowledge or ability to help, such as to learn to read Hebrew. As such, the teacher must think twice about giving homework knowing that the support network isn't necessarily in place. Furthermore, there is often a dissonance between what is taught in class, particularly with relation to ritual, and what is practiced at home. This can and does impact the message delivered in class and further challenges the teacher by potentially limiting the teacher's ability to discuss and teach certain aspects of Jewish life and practice.

2. Grades

While grades are primarily designed to promote learning and thus to assist the advance of the students further in life, the contribution of grades to life beyond the boundaries of formal education is questionable. The aim of the Jewish Studies teacher, as outlined above, is to inspire and help mold Jewishly-aware, active and proud members of the faith and community. It is hard to inspire while having to give low or even failing grades (and even homework). The Jewish Studies teacher wants to serve as a role model, to be liked, and must balance these needs with the need and responsibility to provide the information, teach the skills and grade the students' work.

Day School versus Camp

As opposed to school, whose primary aims are based on information, knowledge and skills, camp is very much on the experiential spectrum. Indeed, the first of six reasons given for attending summer camp is:

*Experiences first, explanations later. Kids are able to ultimately and immediately contribute to their Jewish community at camp. In other realms of Jewish life, they are taught about Jewish communal life and then experience it. At camp, they experience it (at meals, during Shabbat, on the ropes course, in the cabin—everywhere), and the explanations come later. This is a uniquely powerful experience they find nowhere else.*⁴⁵

Camps are immersive. A child at a camp is there for a week or two, sometimes longer, and is surrounded all day and night by the atmosphere of camp. Camp is also expensive. The question therefore becomes: is camp worthwhile? What parameters should be studied to see if the considerable amounts of money that parents spend on camps are worthwhile. Should we even expect more from a camp than glorified babysitting and making sure that children are safe and happy in order to allow parents to continue working?

In 2011, the Foundation for Jewish Camp released a study called Camp Works—the Long-Term Impact

⁴⁵ <http://www.reformjudaism.org/six-reasons-attend-jewish-summer-camp>

of Jewish Summer Camp that makes the case for Jewish summer camp as an effective way to assure Jewish continuity. They analyzed recent population surveys in 25 American communities, comparing attitudes and behaviors of adults who attended Jewish overnight camps with adults who did not.

The results were striking. Adults who spent summers at Jewish overnight camp were:

- 10% more likely to marry a Jewish partner.*
- 21% more likely to feel that being Jewish is very important.*
- 26% more likely to belong to a synagogue.*
- 37% more likely to light Shabbat candles.*
- 25% more likely to give to Jewish charities and*
- 55% more likely to feel emotionally attached to Israel.⁴⁶*

Such striking results beg the question: where are communal resources best used? While school takes up the majority of the year and camp is only for a few short weeks a year, perhaps more money should be spent on camps, if the desired result is to produce more Jewishly aware and active adults?

Conclusion

The importance of a good Jewish education can't be

46 Paul Lewis, "The Value of Jewish Summer Camp," <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/the-value-of-jewish-summer-camp/>.

underestimated, both formal and informal. A good education, that combines the acquisition of information and skills, positive experiences and active promotion of Jewish identity is the foundation stone of Jewish life—personal, familial and communal. It is incumbent on community leadership to provide the resources in terms of funds and human resources (educators and administrators) to provide the next generation with the best possible groundwork.

SESSION: ISSUES IN SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE

Introduction

Over the past few years, the rabbinate has undergone dramatic changes. Whereas in the past, the role of the community rabbi was to be the arbiter of disputes and provide rulings on day-to-day questions of *halakha*, the role today is greatly expanded. The rabbi is expected to be much more than simply a scholar, although this still remains an important element at least in the initial hiring of the rabbi. Rabbi Eliezer Melamed outlines these changes in an article published in 2014:⁴⁷

In recent generations, the role of rabbis has become complex and ambiguous. In previous generations

47 Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, “The Role of a Rabbi Today,” <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/14489#.V16crY9OLIU>

the community rabbi, or mara d'atra (local rabbinic authority), was responsible for Torah study and its observance. Under his leadership, there were Torah classes for adults and an educational framework for children. He and his beit din (court) instructed halakha in regards to what was permissible or forbidden, and decided the law in interpersonal relations and between husband and wife. The rabbi was also a party in representing the community before the government.

In the last few generations, the traditional Jewish community has disintegrated... Rabbis were left with the relatively technical role of arranging religious affairs, such as the supervision of kashrut and mikva's, solving problems concerning Shabbat observance and the synagogue, and laws of marriage and divorce.

Moreover, the social and cultural revolutions caused by modernity created great confusion with respect to rabbis. The values of liberty and freedom eroded people's attitude toward authoritative figures—particularly when they spoke in the name of religion. Academia taught to raise doubt toward all traditions of the past. The accessibility of information also decreased the status of rabbis, since answers to questions could be found in various books, and nowadays, also in computerized databases.

Nowadays the rabbi is expected to be a community center manager, a good public speaker, a counselor, a fund-raiser

er, a cook, a janitor, and much more. This has come about due to the change in the makeup of the community, and indeed one of the main questions to ask is not “what makes a rabbi?” but rather “what makes a community?”

What Is A Community?

Communities are much more heterogeneous than in the past. International travel and emigration have resulted in communities becoming more of a melting pot of different people, customs and cultures than the old-style *shtetl*-type community, and it is with this new reality that the rabbi has to contend. Furthermore, in a world that has become a global village, a decision taken in one community may influence and impact other communities around the world.

The rabbi is no longer the lone and ultimate source of Judaic information and *halakhic* rendition; this role has been usurped by social media and “Rabbi” Google. Therefore, the rabbi has to create a niche that will allow him to apply his or her expertise in a variety of fields in order to form personal connections and thereby a greater connection to the community as a whole.

The Rabbinic Spouse

The traditional role of the *rebbetzen* (or rabbinic spouse) has also undergone changes. No longer is the *rebbetzen* viewed as an accessory to the rabbi, someone who

is skilled at making a home and welcoming guests, but instead is seen as a person who can have a broader impact on the community. Often scholars in their own right, the spouses are expected to be active in the community, teaching, inspiring, providing services that in the past were either undertaken by the rabbi, by other lay members or ignored entirely. As such, many communities are no longer searching for a rabbi, but instead seek a rabbinic couple. The rabbinic spouse no longer automatically assumes the traditional title of *rebbetzen* because she is the spouse of the person who receives the title of rabbi, but rather because she has acquired the requisite knowledge and skills in her own right. This leads to the question of what training and experience is needed for this position.

Rabbi: A Spiritual Leader

To be a spiritual leader means to be available to the members of the community; to provide solace and inspiration; to take everyday life experiences and imbue them with added meaning. It means not waiting for the individual to come to the rabbi, but rather it is incumbent on the rabbi to search out his or her flock, to find them where they are—physically, spiritually/religiously and in the modern era, it means in particular being where they are in the virtual world, such as Facebook and Twitter. It means dealing with issues that may arise when the rabbi, or rabbinic couple, are invited to social functions, and yet the astute and more impactful decision would be not to attend.

Rabbi: A Teacher

Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, Dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at American Jewish University, discusses⁴⁸ another important aspect of the role of the rabbi.

At the core of this dilemma is the role of the rabbi as a spiritual leader. The late Erich Fromm noted that most people fear freedom, and seek to escape it by turning to a leader who can relieve them of any responsibility for their identity, character, and future. Many people treat their rabbis as such shields against accountability. But that is not the Jewish way. Ultimately, a rabbi who agrees to serve in that capacity is an accomplice in stunting someone's spiritual maturation, depriving them (and God) of the distinct rewards of an adult faith. Rather than imposing a dictatorial control on the seeker or believer, the rabbi is, above all, a teacher.

The rabbi is there to provide information, to create thinkers, to encourage questions and show people the moral and ethical way of the *Torah*.

The Older Generation: New Challenges

A unique set of questions facing the modern-day rabbi are a direct result of the rise in life expectancy. People are living longer, and this raises moral, familial and *halakhic*

48 <http://ziegler.aju.edu/Default.aspx?id=8287>

dilemmas due to the onset of illnesses such as dementia, Alzheimer's, cancer and physical degeneration that in the past were largely not relevant. For example, while it is incumbent upon a child to honor his or her parent, at what cost? Does this mean that the parent should move in with the child and grandchildren, thus potentially disrupting the fine balance of family life that has been developed? If a child needs to help the parent bathe and dress, how does one do this while retaining an element of modesty? If a child needs to physically restrain a parent lest he hurt himself or others, how can this be done without transgressing the prohibition of striking one's parent? When an elderly person who has kept the *Shabbat* all his life and attended synagogue services three times a day now finds that he cannot physically walk to the synagogue, is it preferable that he be driven to the synagogue thereby transgressing the *Shabbat* to maintain this vital social and religious lifeline, or to cut him off from his practice of decades in order to adhere to all the *halakhot* of the *Shabbat*? These questions require not just *halakhic* answers, but often they require someone just to listen to the pain and suffering that the family or individual are undergoing. This requires knowing when to refer to outside professional assistance and when it is possible to address such issues without professional support.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the words of Rabbi Miriam Margles out-

line⁴⁹ the role and responsibilities of the rabbi, particularly *vis-à-vis* the community.

On the one hand, I believe that it is my role as a rabbi to stir, agitate, and hold out a vision for our community and for Judaism as a whole that takes us beyond where we currently are at any given moment. It is my role as a rabbi to teach Jewish living and Jewish learning, alive with specificity, depth, and challenge—not watered down, abstracted, sentimentalized, or made superficially hip or convenient. Put another way, it is often said that the role of clergy is “to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable” (a statement borrowed from humorist Finley Peter Dunne [1867-1936] to describe the role of newspapers).

At the same time, I see it as my profound honour and role as a rabbi to meet people where they are, loving them and respecting them for exactly who they are, and offering Jewish resources for them to discover and build what is meaningful to them individually and collectively, encouraging their leadership, intelligence, and passion. This is not an art form I have perfected, but it is my life’s work.

49 Rabbi Miriam Margles, “The Rabbi-Community Relationship,” <http://djctoronto.com/rabbi-community-relationship/>

SESSION: **A STRATEGY FOR EUROPEAN JEWRY**

Introduction

Should European Jewry have a common goal and common strategy? Is it possible for communities that are diverse religiously and geographically to agree on any one measure, even though they are all within the boundaries of Europe?

According to Prof. Robert Braun, in order to strategize, you need a constituency (not necessarily to be representative). Once the constituency is defined, you then need to define a goal. The goal must be clear, simple and succinct. A well-defined goal leads to good strategies. If there are many goals, or if they are badly defined, the strategies themselves will be defective.

Is It Possible?

While creating one overarching strategy may be difficult, different models can certainly be created: political; diversity-based (the diversity of European Jewry is its strength); designed to maintain and protect European Jewish heritage; cultural; and more. One of the problems is that European Jews don't necessarily know each other. There's no central meeting point and no point of reference for all countries and communities to meet and discuss. As such, the first step is networking and creating connections, which historically have been good for trade and business, but have not necessarily been

applied to other broader domains. It must be pointed out that as potentially life-changing as this may be for European Jewry, the temptation to recreate a Tower of Babel where everyone is speaking the same words and marching to the same beat may cause more harm than good. One must recognize the limits that are naturally in place, be they linguistic, cultural, geographic or religious. The strategy may not be applied in every sphere, but rather in certain specific areas.

Beyond the question of whether such a goal is achievable, one must address the issues of consensus and representation. How would such a body be selected or elected? Would its members be representatives from different streams selected from within smaller communities, such as synagogues or schools? How binding would its decisions be, and how would they be implemented?

There are currently inherent meta-groups across Europe. Rather than creating something new, should the existing bodies and organizations be united and streamlined in order to offer a clearinghouse for issues facing European Jewry? For example, a rabbinic organization may not have the tools to deal with sensitive political issues, and yet organizations, such as the more experienced UK Board of Deputies, could work together for the mutual benefit of all their constituents. How can we take these groups and streamline them into different departments? How can we leverage existing networks?

What Could Be A Common Goal?

It is necessary to identify or create a common denominator for the European Jewish community. For example, the question of *shechitah* or permissibility of *brit milah* is one that affects all Jews across the continent. Such issues may be addressed at the European government level where decisions are binding in the constituent countries.

Other Europe-wide projects could include the establishment of rabbinical seminaries (taking into account different denominations); the teaching and promotion of Hebrew as a modern, cultural and liturgical language; the concept of *tikkun olam* as an all-embracing theme and the creation of pan-European projects under that banner, and more.

Other questions such as anti-Semitism may be harder to combat as the manifestation of anti-Semitism across the continent is not the same and potentially requires different approaches.

Conclusion

Different viewpoints lead to different strategies, and so perhaps limiting European Jewry to thinking and working within one framework or one paradigm may stifle creative approaches to finding appropriate solutions to the challenges facing the communities. However, creating networking opportunities, thinking and dreaming together may lead to a flourishing of thoughts and actions.

CLOSURE

Rabbi Eliahu Birnbaum

Every session was different; ideas were not repeated and they were conducted in a very good way. It was a long seminar, but time went by very quickly. This meeting was about dreams, about strategy, but not about actions. That is for the next meeting. This conference was intended to provide a time and place only for dialogue, to listen and to think. The topic was the future of European Jewry, and this was indeed discussed. The goal at the start of the conference was to create a community of dialogue, and this was achieved. Some of the issues raised at the conference were:

- Jews and Judaism
- Jewish Food
- Education
- Academic Studies
- Jewish Studies
- Hebrew
- Judaism for Jews
- Judaism Without Jews
- Conversion
- Belonging and Meaning
- *Tikkun Olam*
- Projects
- Community
- Rabbinate
- *Shoah*

- Jewish Culture
- Spiritual Leadership
- Religion
- Anti-Semitism
- Christianity and Islam
- Intergenerational Dialogue

Rabbi Debbie Young Somers

- There was much to absorb and to hear, and it's a rare opportunity to be in such a setting. It is both humbling and a privilege that Progressive Judaism had a seat around the table. Going forward, the more we can cooperate, the better it is for all Jews, whether they are affiliated or not.
- We've learned an incredible amount about what's going on in other countries, and there are many things that can serve to open doors to views that are different from what one would expect from the UK. Hopefully the connections will remain and grow, creating opportunities that will make this really work to make Judaism real for the people with whom we work.

Rabbi Utë Steyer

I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I met people who I usually don't hang out with. It was eye-opening to see that we are essentially dealing with the same issues, although it may be more or less pronounced in different places. We have to look beyond our own place;

we have to get beyond the fear of talking to someone who doesn't match our own brand of Judaism. Getting together, even if we don't adopt the same practices, and talking, finding areas where we can cooperate for the common good, is good.

Dr. Jonathan Boyd

- The whole conference was a particularly rich and invigorating one, a thought-provoking and enriching conversation.
- “Be the change you want to see.” – Gandhi. If the change we want to see is a strong community, the question that we must address in these sorts of gatherings is how do we want to see our community.
- For many Jews, the experience of community is a “cloakroom community,” you pop in, laugh together, clap together and then leave. The challenge is to go beyond the cloakroom.

Rabbi Chanan Atlas

The very fact that we got together to know each other is a huge contribution personally, and hopefully beyond. We're isolated in our individual communities, busy in our work. Getting to know about the experience and identity of other Jewish people through their eyes means that it is not just ideas that I'm taking back to my community, but also a new and different way of seeing things.

Rabbi Nafi Haleva

Community, continuity and commitment are the three Cs by which I live my life. The important thing is to move forward from today to implement new projects based on the many things that we learned at this conference.

Rabbi Eliezer Shai Di Martino

- It was very important to share, to leave the community for a few days to get a fresh perspective and a fresh start.
- We weren't meant to find a strategy, and the setting was not one I would normally dream of, sitting with Reform and Conservative rabbis. And yet, there wasn't anything we disagreed on, so either there was a lot of political correctness, or there really is a lot we agree on.

Rachel Shababo

"If you will, it is not dream" – Herzl. Matanel dreams and then makes it a reality.

Ilana Epstein

- I often address very large audiences when I speak and so that means I must be careful about what I say. The conference has inspired me, and now we need to take what was said by all the very intelligent people in this room and make it a reality.
- Like Mordechai in the story of the megilla, Jews throughout the ages have found themselves on the

wrong side of the border. Jewish leaders, including those in this room, try and make the best of the situation and do not contemplate leaving. These things are inspirational and make me appreciate the situation in London and the UK that much more.

Rabbi Daniel Epstein

Crises help get you to think. The greatest crisis was the story of the spies, ten of whom came back with a bad report. Caleb stood up and said, “yes we can!” One would expect that he would therefore be the next leader, the one who at the time of crisis stands up and says what’s needed. He is a helpful voice in the conversation. Joshua, however, is the voice of consistency and constant support. We in this room can be Caleb. But we need the Joshuas of the Jewish world who listen to the people to understand where they are and what their needs are. Having had a few days of Caleb, it is incumbent upon us now to be Joshuas.

David Revcolevschi

It was very interesting to get a sense of what’s going on throughout the European Jewish world and see the reality beyond the borders of France. I came with a sense of urgency because of what we are going through. I’m taking from this conference the knowledge that there are people with whom we can work on pan-European strategy, thinking beyond just ourselves.

Ilana Cicurel

European Jewry is beautiful, fragile and perishable. I have a feeling of satisfaction and anxiety that the same is true of this conference, that the beautiful ideas discussed will become fragile and perishable. There are great human resources in this room, chosen to be here because of who we are, not the titles we possess. We forgot our own interests and looked at the wider picture. This is very rare, and I'd like to find a way to maintain this and follow up by supporting each other in what we are doing, learning from what others are doing well, and finding things that we can do together.

Prof. Robert Braun

- Normally when people get together, it is because they are in trouble and therefore ask for help. Now is the time to turn it around and not ask for help, but offer help to others.
- By offering to help others around the room, we are not just helping them, but we are in fact helping ourselves.

Rabbi Shaya Boas

Although Chabad has similar conferences throughout Europe, many interesting ideas were heard here that are not heard at Chabad conferences. One radical thought I'm walking away with is that if we can't reach all the Jews, we might have to write some of them off. Just as you may need to write off certain parts of a busi-

ness to be able to focus on the rest, perhaps the same must be done with some Jews. It's a terrible thought, but perhaps the only way.

Rabbi Yehoshua Ellis

Beyond just dreaming together, we need to help others interpret their dreams and enable their visions. A person is rarely best placed to interpret his own dream and needs help from others. The greatest thanks we can give Matanel for the conference isn't by voicing our thanks, but by going out and taking action.

Dr. Elijahu Tarantul

There's talking and there's taking action. The participants of the seminar have the ability to talk, and also to take action, and there's an appropriate time for both.

Ethel Barylka

"Know that each and every blade of grass has its own tune, and from the combined you get the soulful melody of the shepherd." The Jewish melody has been played over the past few days, to speak and to sing, to join other voices. We need each Jew to make Judaism vibrant. Each voice is important.

Rabbi Dr. Julien Darmon

The people around the table are not just intellectuals,

but also people of action. It is important to be able to do both—to think, philosophize but also to take such words and put them into action. Together they instill in me that there is hope for the Jews of Europe.

Judith Darmon

It's difficult to clear one's mind for such a conference while leaving behind children and other dependents, particularly in the current climate in Paris. Nevertheless, I was able to build a wall, to shut out such thoughts and worries and be able to partake in the atmosphere of learning. The unity displayed, the willingness to accept others, be it by accepting the mechitza when normally it would not be there, or by taking the *Torah* scroll into the women's section which is not standard practice, shows that the group has become a community and offers hope for our individual communities and beyond.

Jose Ruah

The invitation mentioned Rabbi Birnbaum. I came not knowing exactly what was to happen or what was expected of me. It became clear that progress in our Judaism means commitment, and commitment means concessions. If we are closed in our own positions, we cannot advance with others. Together we will be strong; together we will survive.

Dr. Dov Maimon

- I was very reluctant to come, but in the end it was very

inspiring in many ways. Matanel is able to do things and bring people together that other organizations and even states cannot do. This resource is unique and should be used.

- I'm Caleb, I'm the one who does the talking and the shouting, but the important people here are the Joshuas, the ones who go out and do the work.

Daniel Bodnar

What impressed me most was the ambitiousness of Matanel. No issue is too small, and the idea that moves Matanel is to change the world for the better. Nothing less than changing the world is considered. This is not a position borne of *chutzpa*, but rather a passion for *klal Yisrael*.

Rabbi Shlomo Koves

- What makes Chabad successful is that Chabad creates community life around the rabbi. Everything revolves around him. You cannot build a future of Jewishness in Europe around people who only think Jewish, but rather people who are Jewish in every aspect of their lives. They live Judaism and can be the focal points for the community.
- Judaism is for all parts of the body—heart and hands. It not only imbues our social life, cultural life or spiritual life, but permeates every aspect of life—at home and at the synagogue, at work and at play.

Albert Aflalo

The main mission of the community is to prepare the children and the young, for they are the future. The main person responsible for this is the rabbi. The rabbi therefore has to be strong, to work with the young to help them achieve great things. He is the first to be criticized, and has to know how to cope, while always moving the community forward.

Joëlle Aflalo

When asked by his eight children, “who do you prefer?” he would answer, “I love you all, but I give more attention to the one who is sick, the one in danger, the one who is crying.” So too Matanel. We have spoken mainly about community, but really we’re a family.

The rich only give if there is some plan in place, but the poor open their doors willingly. So too with small and large communities. We need to change our approach from “what can we receive to what can we give.”

Gad Boukobza

Matanel is a family, a community. Each family is made up of different people, different characters. At the end of the day, when siblings disagree, they’re still a family. So too here. Even though we may not agree on everything, we are still a family. May this family continue to develop and be drawn together by that which unites us.

- Our goal is not to be a huge organization, but rather to provide support to start-ups, those who come with ideas and notions of how to help the Jewish world.
- We will listen to your ideas, but please remember that children don't always get what they ask for from their parents.

Dr. Ami Bouganim

I'll tell you a secret—I don't know what Matanel is. The best definition we have was given to us by Rabbi Steinsaltz: Matanel is an incubator of projects for people.

I believe in the Jewish people and can't imagine a time without Jews. While I may not know what kind of a Jew I am, I believe that the world would be a poorer place without Jews, Jews of every kind.

“I have already explained with clear proofs that the soul is the dominant factor in the nature of the Jew. For example, being stiff-necked is one of the bad qualities that Jews have. Practically speaking, that means that Jews refuse to accept criticism and will not listen to corrective advise. This is in fact because they are not essentially materialistic. Only something which is materialistic is readily altered. Consequently Jews are very resistant to change and will not accept the advise of others. Further, the Rabbis say (Talmud - Beitzah 25b) that they are the most aggressive and pushy people.”

Maharal of Prague (Rabbi Yehuda Loewe, 1526 - 1609)

Jews in Europe

by Ami Bouganim

The political establishment of the European Union (EU) serves first and foremost to answer the cultural needs of its educated and political elites. It was a response to a series of wars that for hundreds of years tore the continent apart. The subsequent reconstruction of Europe appears to have been slow, cautious, and awkward. Clearly, no one possesses the know-how to unify countries with differing cultural and political heritages rooted in a sharply defined national ethos, with governmental institutions steeped in ancient traditions, and which encompass a wide range of independent, competitive, if not opposing, ethnic images and symbols. Until Brexit, which certainly represents the most severe regression in the pan-European process, the EU, so it seemed, was being patched together, piece by piece and regulation by regulation, with each conference, agreement, and institution, as if it were playing a part within a fantasy dream. Yet no one was really willing to give up on joining it, not Turkey nor Ukraine, in spite of all the problems the EU encounters in attaining its various goals.

There have always been zealous Europeans, particularly among the Jews, who believe in the unification of Europe, even prior to World War I. One of them, the Austrian writer, Stefan Zweig, went so far as to take

upon himself the moral and political commitment to work toward the structuring of Europe according to the Swiss model, aiming for it to become a multinational federation that embraces various nationalities. He spoke enthusiastically of “that very wise maxim that raises differences in languages and nationalities to the level of brotherhood through mutual respect and true democratic values.”⁵⁰ However, the abundance of worn, repetitive expressions and clichés uttered by European leaders nowadays hides the fact that the populations comprising Europe are unprepared to cope with the various challenges related to the realization of the European vision: “The idea of ‘unity in diversity,’ proclaimed with stereotypical banality, is an intellectual crutch at best, a substitute concept for more complex ideas at worst.”⁵¹

Many questions weigh down the process of restructuring Europe. The most problematic relate to the autonomy and independence of each individual country, particularly the large ones, which are leading the way in various fields: How can one unite while still preserving the national and cultural diversity of each nation? What will be the status of the governmental framework, particularly in countries such as Germany, Spain and Belgium, which are themselves federations within the European political-institutional structure? Why would

50 S. Zweig, *Le Monde d'hier*, Belfond, 1993, p. 310.

51 L. Kuhnhardt, *Towards Europe*, 2007, p. 20.

different states in Germany, regions in Spain or provinces of Belgium continue to accept the authority of governmental institutions when under the jurisdiction of European institutions? How does one encourage a shared European spirit in those national cultures that zealously protect their own uniqueness and originality—which is the case in most European countries? How does one involve the masses in the European experience, whatever it turns out to be, when they experience Europe as a cultural-political toy in the hands of the intellectuals and statesmen, who complicate rather than ease the regulations and restrictions they have to deal with on a daily basis? How will Europe as a whole and each country within it cope with the waves of migrants that threaten to shatter the religious, political and cultural ethos of what has been Europe until now?

The architects of Europe decided to proceed gradually, advancing step by step. At the beginning, they avoided adopting legislation and chose to relate to the different treaties and agreements as landmarks for future law-making.⁵² Debates among statesmen focused more on institutions and implementation than on purposes and goals to the extent that Europe became, at best, “a democratic parliamentary system of multilevel governance,” which lacks sufficiently clear relationships between its

52 The Treaties of Rome, 1957; The Single European Act, 1968; The Treaty of European Union (Maastricht Treaty), 1991; The Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997; The Treaty of Nice, 2000; the Basic Treaty of Human Rights of the EU.

institutions and the political bodies of each of its member countries. Even after all this time, most European institutions are still powerless and lack the means to enforce their directives in spite of ongoing active legislation and the establishment of the European Court and a European police force. This weakness has been magnified by the waves of emigrants from the Middle East, Africa and Asia, which have caused the Schengen Agreement, which established a pan-European border-free area—one of the main achievements of the EU—to become obsolete.

The EU does not, at present, meet the pressing requirements of the day, principally the legitimate and imperious need of its societies for security—social and physical. It has been shaped within the constraints of the past while still aspiring to ease the anxieties of the future. The nations of Europe now realize that they cannot claim a leading role in the international sphere without organizing themselves into a political entity representing shared common economic interests. They wish to become an influential entity within a multifocal world and to take their place alongside the focal points of North and South America, China, India, the Arab countries and Africa. However, with the exception of the American and Chinese focal points, the other areas have yet to crystallize. Europe itself is still in the process of emerging from its previous state, with its ups and downs. It will take at least another generation before this process will be completed, and only if there

are no other regressions along the way like those of the Greek economic crisis, the closing of frontiers, Brexit, the rising of populist leaders, the popular rejection of traditional politics, the impact of the election of Donald Trump on the international scene, and the flagrant and pathetic inability to deal with the waves of migrants according to the European spirit of pluralism and openness.

The process cannot only be economic and legislative; it must also be diplomatic and military, and even more importantly, educational and cultural and eventually, also religious. Until the various nations start to educate themselves in the hopeful emerging European spirit, i.e., learning about an overarching European cultural heritage, its glories together with its darker hours, and clarifying the limits that implementing this spirit will impose, Europe will continue to be nothing more than a beautiful dream in a beautiful continent burdened by its common interests, which appear to be more divergent than convergent. The structuring of institutions, such as a European Parliament, European Council and European Court, is proving to be simpler than creating a European civil society. And, truth be told, if Europe possesses a shared heritage, it has not yet been revealed, not by legislators nor by writers. What one can focus on are the European visions of Goethe and Nietzsche, of Hegel and Marx, of Zweig and Benjamin. It is becoming clear that Europe was essentially designed by Germany, even more than by the Benelux countries currently

considered the cradle of Europe. At this point in time, Europe has managed to forget its geographical position, which places it on the western tip of Asia and detracts from its status as a continent.⁵³

In recent years, Europe has had to cope with the harsh challenges posed by the waves of migrants, most of them from Muslim countries in a state of war, by the threats of Islamic terrorism to the cohesion of its civil societies, such as those of France, Germany and Belgium, and by the Greek economic crisis and Brexit, which endanger the process of constructing Europe. Although no one was naive enough to insist that the European building process will not encounter difficulties, the pundits cannot yet predict what will be the impact of these threats on this process.

THE AMERICAN PRECEDENT

Europe does not enjoy following in the footsteps of the United States, even less so learning lessons from the experiences of the Americans. Yet, if we seek a model, America offers the most prominent one.⁵⁴ Europe will

53 Arnold Toynbee put it this way: "There is an unquestioned geographic reality which we call Eurasia." *The Course of World History*, Vol. 2, in L. Kuhnhardt, *Towards Europe*, 2007, p. 19.

54 If part of the criticism aimed at the United States is justified, part is an expression of fundamental narrow-minded thought. In Europe, particularly in intellectual circles, there is an attempt to hide slow scientific, artistic and professional progress within a very blatant anti-American attitude.

not easily admit that most of its goals have already been achieved, whether in America or in the multinational, multiracial, multid denominational countries of South America, such as Brazil, which has a greater percentage of Muslims in its population than does the United States. Forced in 1938 to flee from Nazi persecution, Stefan Zweig immigrated to the United States and then to Latin America—it was only there that he was able to realize his dreams for Europe. He was surprised by the Brazilian melting pot and astonished by the lack of tension and hatred that was so prevalent in Europe: “My eyes brimming with joy at the sight of the multitudinous beauties of this new nature, I had cast my gaze into the future.”⁵⁵

When Europe will agree to turn to the United States in order to learn from its experience, however, it will discover significant differences between the two regions, both positive and negative, that underlie the need for an original strategy for establishing European civic and cultural unity:

- The United States was established in the aftermath of a civil war that saw the victory of those advocating for the emancipation of slaves and equal rights to all citizens within the American federation. Most of them were Christians or converts to the Christian religion. Europe, in contrast, was established in the aftermath of two bloody world wars, which ended with millions of

55 S. Zweig, *Le Monde d'hier*, Belfond, 1993, p. 465.

lives lost and the extermination of its Jewry and Roma-
ni, two European trans-statehood peoples.

- The United States was built primarily by immigrants and their children who lent themselves without resistance, to the American melting pot. They saw themselves as active agents in its processes and claimed the right to be part of them and to benefit from them. This required each immigrant to shed his or her previous national identity or, at the very least, to subordinate himself or herself to a new identity, one more civic than national. In fact, immigrating to the United States implied a willingness to comply with the demand for exchanging one's nationality. This did not require the negation of the former nationality but rather casting it into the melting pot, from which it emerged as a national citizenship which was formed from a blend of all the nationalities from the very beginning. In contrast, Europe was built primarily from nation states, or national federations, virtually all of them stressing that Europeanism does not offer an alternative to nationality, nor even civil identity, but rather serves to supplement historical nationality—at least at this point in time. European traits should be added to those of each nation and should replace them only if they do not undermine a nation's personal identity. The establishment of a common currency, which has replaced national monetary units, is certainly the most significant landmark in the establishment of Europe. It has implications that reach far beyond its economic relevance; it proves that the most precious national

institutions of each and every country can be accessed and changed, with consequences that permeate the patterns of day-to-day life.

- The United States was, to some extent, built within a cultural void, since the culture of the American Indians (i.e., Native Americans) was discarded by the European immigrants from the very beginning. The newcomers had no particular difficulty in adopting the dominant language of English or in allowing it to take over as the language of communication between immigrants and as their children's language of culture. Europe is lacking, for now at least, a common language. Even though English is becoming widespread as the common language of communication, this is due more to the international situation than to Europe's own position. Europe's common language cannot be French, Spanish or German, because one cannot possibly expect China or India to speak any international language other than English.

- For the United States, human rights comprises an essential axis around which it elaborates its civic ethos, one that it is still cultivating, both for itself and for the rest of the world. By the same token, Europe has committed itself to every word of the 1949 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1969 European Treaty for Human Rights. This explains the embarrassment of European leaders when having to deal with the issue of migrants, which has cast a dark cloud over the establishment, functioning and expansion of Europe, in spite of the gradual standardization of rules and regulations

concerning immigration, absorption and the granting of citizenship—at least until the last waves of migrants.

THE EUROPEAN CHALLENGE

Europe is being forged in an atmosphere of deep concern for its future, which may impede its development or cast a shadow over it.

- Europe has yet to delineate its borders, finding itself in a continuous process of expansion, which might drain Europe as a whole of all substance and significance. Expansion only increases the differences that must be bridged. Europe will be required to consider the candidacy of Turkey, which will break the Christian hegemony, along with the tentative interest shown by Arab nations, such as Lebanon and North African countries. In the case of the Ukraine, Europe is faced with a geo-political and military test involving the awakening of the Russian Federation, and unless Europe disregards its relations with Russia, Ukraine will become hostage to the new-old tensions between the East and the West.
- Europe has not yet terminated its obligations to the nations it exploited during its wave of colonialism. It has not yet analyzed its role in events that were definitely European, such as the *Shoah* and the persecution of those who opposed communist regimes. Placing all the blame for the Shoah on Germany alone has given other nations an excuse for avoiding having to face up to their role in the annihilation of the Jewish people, such as

France's embrace of the Vichy Regime, Italy's collaboration with the Germans, and Austria's failure to object to being included in the Third Reich, which presented itself as the very epitome of a united, Jew-free Europe. The task of rebuilding the countries of Western Europe after World War II gave the Europeans an excuse to avoid confronting critical issues, such as the roots, motivations and cultural rationale surrounding the *Shoah*, while Europe's release from the yoke of communism and its threat provided an excuse to desist from dealing with the destructive forces that proliferated within the utopian, ideological movement that claimed to conquer the world. Even though Europe is the cradle of Western culture, it is also the largest cemetery of human culture. In the absence of a comprehensive debate regarding this polarity, there is a danger of perpetuating hypocritical human sentiments, behind which Europe has been hiding ever since the beginning of the Enlightenment. As for the undoing of colonial injustices, Europe does admit its guilt and sympathizes with the unstable condition of half the southern hemisphere, bestowing aid here and there while still expelling emigrants from the very countries it once exploited.

- Europe has yet to recognize its indebtedness to the United States for the military assistance it received during the two world wars, for its assistance in rebuilding Europe following World War II and for bringing the expansion of the communist-totalitarian regimes to a halt. Europe, and France in particular, harbor a scan-

dalous tendency to denigrate its relations with the New World. It does not acknowledge America's successes or failures, nor does it hide its contempt and scorn for it. Europe does not acknowledge that the multinational, multidenominational, multicultural United States is the biggest success story on the face of the earth—although we don't yet know how it will confront the challenge of integrating a greater number of Muslims. Europe tends to emphasize America's shortcomings while ignoring its positive characteristics.

As observed by some European intellectual circles, America appears somewhat flat, somewhat technical and even, in the words of Umberto Eco, somewhat philistine. Europe is inclined to pour scorn upon America's political heritage, to poke fun at the milieu in which its political games are played out and to view its leaders as tireless adventurers, drunk on their own power, Archie Bunkers married to Slovenian top models, and even as modern-day messiahs. However, Europe must ask itself, "To what extent does its own depth, whether real or imaginary, make it easier or more difficult for Europe to match the achievements of the United States when it comes to research, science and the arts?" Europe is not as creative as it once was, neither in literature nor in art. It is, for better or for worse, repeating doctrines of the past, interpreting them, pulling them apart and then putting them back together again. The truth of the matter is that Europe's skeptical attitude toward the United States is nurtured more by the denial of its debt to the United

States than by any cultural preference on its own part. The United States is not doing much to ease its acceptance by the Europeans. It dismisses their cinema, their food and their languages as it strides ahead, free of any complexes in its unrestrained democratic conquest of the world. It does not realize that it understands wax and plastic better than stone and marble, design better than art, scripts better than stories, strategy better than philosophy, and outer space better than dry land. Deaf to European romanticism, the United States, which is essentially ecological, froths at the mouth in protest against the inevitable process of economic and cultural globalization. It chooses to ignore Europe's fears, weaknesses and complexities.

- Europe has yet to consolidate a uniform policy on immigration and has no idea how to cope with the waves of unwanted immigrants converging from all sides: from Buddhist and Muslim Asia, Black Africa and the Arab countries. Its borders are increasingly penetrated by individuals who are usually in a desperate state and in search of work and sustenance for themselves and the families they have left behind. Ensuring they stay in their countries of origin is not the answer, since the income gained by the immigrants is steadily becoming a substantial part of the national product of weaker, undeveloped countries. The increased migration is gradually disrupting the demographic stability in all European countries, posing a growing threat to their national and cultural character and, more

and more, to their state security. Even though in enlightened circles there is a tendency to speak of democratic pluralism, there is a definite distaste for any change in the color, religion and culture of Europe. The Muslim minority—more than 20 million in Western Europe, representing approximately 5% of the total population—is certainly shaking the foundations of Christian Europe, which is all the more significant in a period when an invisible, underground religious war might break out between Christianity and Islam. In addition, the countries of Europe, which considered immigrants as guest workers who would at some point return to their native countries, did not develop policies for their absorption and are now facing serious problems with the second generation. Born in Europe, this generation protests against discrimination and makes cultural, social and political demands.

Europe has yet to consolidate a political ethos, in spite of considerable legislation that has produced effective rules and regulations throughout the European community. On the one hand, a united Europe detracts from the importance of political nationalism. On the other hand, it encourages ethnic and civil nationalism, such as seen among the Corsicans of France and the Basques in Spain. Built on the foundations of individual nations, Europe is highly likely to be confronted with regional and national claims for independence or autonomy, which would undermine the nations or “post-nations” from which it is constructed. In addition, religious mi-

norities, such as the Jews or Muslims, or ethnic groups, such as the gypsies, Armenians or Kurds, would consider themselves better off as trans-national European entities than as tiny segments of the populations of their respective countries of immigration in which they reside. It will be difficult to change mass cultural traditions that encompass several components of sinister fundamentalism, a pseudo-ethnic or pseudo-national pride and tendencies toward cultural isolationism. Europeanism is depicted by some theorists as the result of a concoction of European cultures that invalidate one another, and by other theorists as a type of inbreeding. At this stage, many slogans are uttered by people, whether Christian or humanist, all pointing a finger at Europe's intellectual stuttering about itself and its future: "One must call to memory the idea of individuality in creation which is based on the Christian doctrine that man is created after God's image, Aristotle's aim of eudemonia, the blissfulness which points beyond a life of pleasure... One must also call to memory the ethic, that in the Christian form is called 'faith, hope, love,' and in secular pathos 'freedom, equality, fraternity.'" ⁵⁶

It is likely that Europe is waiting for another renaissance that includes Muslim as well as Jewish components, for without it, Europe will surely remain a prisoner of empty slogans. It must reevaluate its classical sources in light of scientific achievements and following

56 L. Kuhnhardt, *Towards Europe*, 2007, p. 22.

its technological advancements; underscore the common elements rather than the separating forces; and bring back the Great Conversation and disseminate it throughout Europe. It cannot reduce humanism to the preservation of human rights, which are, in any case, universal, and then expect it to revive a European spirit. Europeans must recognize that European humanism, which is based on diverse cultural heritages, is still in its fledgling state. It seems as if Europeans lack the courage to ask the basic moral, religious and political questions for fear of challenging their achievements in these arenas or compromising their agreements in various areas, such as the free movement of people and goods and, most importantly, the secular nature or principles of its public arena. It is difficult to forgive Europe for its past crimes, though it is easy to fall victim once again to its intellectual illusions. At worst, if we are to believe Nietzsche, a field of universal nihilism is waiting to pounce upon uncontrolled hedonism; at best, a federation of suspicious and quarreling nations are setting ambushes for each other, with no hope of a common cultural-spiritual destiny. A Swiss diplomat expressed his own particular point of view: "The federation of states, merely secured by agreement, i.e., terminable, can never do justice to the seriousness of the matter. It is opportunity that it has in mind, not a community of fate."⁵⁷

57 D. Chenoux-Repond, in *ibid.* p. 26.

EUROPE OF THE FUTURE

If Europe manages to overcome the difficulties it has encountered in recent years—most notably, the economic crisis in several of its member countries, Brexit, the waves of migrants and the emergence of national populist movements that recuse the vision of a united Europe—avoids the stumbling blocks that still lie in its path, including those related to its economic, immigration and security policies, and continues to develop as a political entity, it is likely that:

1. Europe will become multicultural, i.e., it will show tolerance for the cultural diversity of national-traditional cultures with historical roots in Europe and immigrant cultures. It will even encourage the spread of ethnic cultures in order to contribute to a solution for the social and political problems associated with the absorption of waves of assorted immigrants and take a leading position in the international, intercultural debate. It will become a cultural laboratory—along with the United States according to some, replacing the United States according to others—a cultural workshop of humanity *par excellence* alongside those of China and, perhaps, India. The United States itself continues to search for its roots in Europe and to turn to it in pursuit of inspiration. Every time it burns its fingers, the United States is amazed anew by the depth of hostility it receives from Europe, which is recycled in every generation. In any case, Europe will speak in English, in spite of Brexit and regardless of the heated opposition of the French,

who will have to quickly come to terms with the linguistic issue.

2. Europe will most probably concern itself more with other religious minorities, primarily the Muslims and the Buddhists, than with the Jews. It will be busy limiting immigration from Third World countries, from Morocco to South Africa, from Kurdistan to China, and from Syria to Pakistan. The influence of the Jews will correspondingly be reduced because of their smaller number, and in all walks of life—cultural, public and political—in France as well as in Germany. In a multinational sphere, in which the Jewish minority is one of the smallest and most integrated, its presence and activities do not arouse rejection or discrimination, or even nervous responses as it did in the past. In other words, anti-Semitism is changing its face, not only or mainly because of Europe's sense of responsibility for the Jewish Holocaust in spite of its symbolic importance. Anti-Semitism is simply becoming more refined in comparison with the hatred directed toward the Arabs or the Africans, and now relates more to the level of hostility felt toward Israel in the Middle Eastern dispute than to the presence or absence of the Jews in the media or in political and economic spheres of power.

3. Europe will follow the lead of the United States in nurturing a closer relationship between Judaism and Christianity that draws its inspiration from biblical sources common to both religions. The closer rela-

tionship will, to a large degree, be the result of undermining Christian dogma—the deification of Jesus, the Holy Trinity, the curse of the Jews—and an increase in Christian interest in interpreting its sources. This phenomenon is already apparent in Protestant countries, which are experiencing a renewed preoccupation with Jewish-Christian crossroads, such as the period of Jesus and the apostles, the Lutheran period, or the turn of the 20th Century. More and more Protestant theologians and scholars are immersing themselves in Old Testament studies and referring to Jewish thinkers, such as Herman Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and Emmanuel Levinas. We will witness the process of the Judaization of Christianity, on the one hand, and that of Jewish reconciliation with Christianity, on the other hand. Judaism has the potential to play a significant role in the renewal of Christianity, particularly in the face of the challenge of Islam, as long as it overcomes its distaste for recognizing Christianity as one of its by-products. Since the encounter of the three monotheistic religions in Spain, they have not really engaged in any real dialogue among them, neither on theological issues nor on common social topics. Europe may become the cradle of a European Islam that will moderate the political as well as military jihad. Without establishing channels of exchange and new patterns of common life, local civil struggles might erupt in some countries and spread all over the continent, or at least to regions with a dense Islamic population.

4. Europe will try to play a major role in world finances by becoming one of the focal points of economic globalization and, no less important, one of the focal points of opposition to it. In addition, it will achieve stability, with or without England, as an alternative center of political strength to that of America, both in its discussions with China and in its dealings with the Muslim world.

EUROPE-ISRAEL

For nearly 1,000 years, from the Spanish period to the *Shoah*, Europe provided the central stage for Jewish history. Most of the great poets, commentators and scholars were Europeans. In addition, Europe was the cradle of Jewish nationality, a source for Zionist inspiration and the first and main reservoir of immigrants to the State of Israel.⁵⁸ However, during the last few decades, Israel has enjoyed a close relationship with the United States for political, cultural and Jewish reasons. The United States has given Israel unequivocal support. It has provided extremely generous grants and loans, and has sold enormous quantities of armament to Israel. Israeli military personnel and members of academia have

58 The report of the Biton Commission in Israel, charged in 2016 by the Minister of Education to examine the place of the “*Mizrahi*” heritage in the curricular material, is more eloquent on the degree of alienation of the “*Mizrahi*” population (or part of it) from the Israeli dominant culture and narrative than of a real omission of this heritage. It readily becomes clear that most of its members were partly or totally estranged from this heritage and don't really know what they are talking about.

spent extended periods of time in the United States, completing their professional or scholarly training there. Researchers and artists have turned their attention and energies toward this great world power, which has served as a model country for politics, culture and industry. The Israeli political leaders of recent times, most of whom rose from the ranks of the Israel Defense Forces, such as Yitzhak Rabin, Ariel Sharon, Ehud Barak and Benjamin Netanyahu, have little knowledge of Europe. Academics spend their sabbatical year in American universities, benefiting for the most part from American studies, methods and doctrines. They return with specialization in areas as diverse as political and policy studies, a multitude of organizational theories and a refined pragmatism appropriate to Israeli drive and determination. Europe, in contrast, is seen as a popular nearby tourist destination, at best, and to many as the land of their parents or grandparents. Nevertheless, a renewed interest in Europe seems to have recently emerged, at least among the academic elite. They are discovering that Germany and France provide intellectual and artistic laboratories for the United States. In the 20th century alone, Europe contributed outstanding philosophers, such as Heidegger, Gadamer and Sartre, sociologists of the status of Habermas and Bourdieu, and even highly acclaimed Jewish thinkers, such as Buber, Rosenzweig, Soloveitchik and Levinas. The irony is that Israel is becoming aware of its geographic and cultural proximity to Europe through translations into American English.

Israel will half-heartedly admit it more greatly resembles the countries of Central Europe, and will concede in private that it would like to compete with Europe's Mediterranean countries, such as Spain, Italy, Portugal and even Greece. At the very least, Israel sees its cultural and social playing field in the Euro-Mediterranean, without having come to terms with its proximity to Europe, nor to its location on the shores of the Mediterranean. Israel could become a cultural crossroads for Eastern and Western European cultures, for Eastern and Western cultures, Jewish, Christian and Islamic cultures, and more.⁵⁹ It could surely serve as a crossroads and meeting point for Jews from all over the world, including the Jews of Europe and the United States. In any event, Israel is connected at the navel to Europe despite the hostility it encounters from that direction.

Europeans, with their courteous ways and polite manners, are difficult for most Israelis to deal with. Israelis have much to learn from the public management methods employed by the civil services of France and England, from the welfare state and aid policies of Denmark and Sweden, and from the exciting architectural and environmental ideas of Spain and Hungary, to

⁵⁹ Israel has the greatest percentage of Muslims in its population than any other country of the OECD—it varies between 20% within the Green Line and a little less than 50% when adding the Judea and Samaria Area. The coexistence of Jews and Muslims in the first may be interesting as a case study from many points of view, such as the religious and cultural autonomy of the Muslims.

name but a few potential benefits. In order to carve out its own individual niche within Europe, Israel must lay the groundwork so as to ensure it will not become a part of the United States. America is too far away, too pragmatic, too polished and too technological. In spite of all this, it is entirely possible that Israel may join Europe one day. Its candidacy would surely present the European community with one of its most delicate moments of truth to date.

JEWS IN EUROPE

Jewish communities throughout Europe are searching for their place in the European scene, having not yet organized for themselves a pan-European platform. Most Jewish communities in Western Europe, both large and small, have not yet completed fine-tuning their relationship with the political authorities, with the exception, perhaps, of England. Even the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe have yet to restructure themselves in communities. It appears that the Jews are beginning the struggle to find answers to old-new questions from a European perspective, answers that may afford them their place in Europe.

One has to recognize the basic fact that the Jewish people are struggling with the issue of essential particularism, necessary for ensuring Jewish survival and renaissance without denying universal values. One has to ask how much attention should be given to reducing

the particular so as not to turn Judaism into a fossilized cult while allowing for a fertile dialogue with the surrounding gentiles. In light of this, and in spite of it being a free-will choice to become part of the Jewish community, the question of a voluntary, or even advisable, ghetto arises once again—the issue of self-ghettoization. To what extent can one safely live a full Jewish life outside a spiritual-intellectual ghetto, if not one with real walls then a psychological ghetto? As a rule, does the ghetto of the past and that of the present not provide a suitable solution to the problem of preserving minority religions or cultures within an assimilationist and sometimes hostile environment during a period of globalization that threatens minority cultures, religions and languages? What form should a revamped ghetto assume so as to allow for a vibrant community that refrains from oppressing its residents and avoids antagonizing its neighbors? What kind of institutions would it have? And if the community ghetto does not provide a solution, what alternative form could Jewish life in the Diaspora adopt?

- The phenomenon of the isolated Jew who is aware of his or her Jewish identity and cultivates it without joining a communal institution, whether through personal choice or because of the great distance from any type of institution, will grow with globalization. The void will be filled with virtual communities, whether in the form of virtual centers of religious study (*batei midrash*) or virtual charitable institutions. Imagine the isolated Jew-

ish family living in a small town in southern Italy or northern Spain who sends a contribution to the United Jewish Appeal once a year, visits Israel periodically, spends Passover in a hotel in the Alps that was engaged and koshered by the followers of some rabbi or other, sends the children to Jewish summer camps, prepares them for bar and bat mitzvahs in Rome or Madrid by means of a preparatory course provided by the Jewish Agency, and registers for a long-distance Master's degree program in Judaism at Yeshiva University or The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Diana Pinto addresses this phenomenon in her own particular way: "What is emerging before us are new personae: Jews with multiple loyalties who are rather like free electrons inside newly defined state and cultural perimeters."⁶⁰

Assimilation is no longer considered a betrayal but rather one of the options facing the isolated Jew as he or she sets about making decisions concerning his and her family's future, whether in the professional, cultural, religious or national spheres. To be more precise, people do not choose to assimilate or become religious; they slide into assimilation through apathy, or they take an interest in Judaism and return to the fold. They do not consider intermarriages shameful. Granted, such unions expose the Jewish husband or wife to a far greater assimilation-prone environment, increase their estrangement from Judaism and influence the choices their children make. But rhetoric and action taken

⁶⁰ D. Pinto, "Towards an European Jewish Identity" in *Golem*.

against intermarriage more often arouse antagonism than deter intermarriage. This is especially true during a period in which interracial, bicultural and interreligious hybridization are seen as representing a positive challenge, if not an ideal situation. For the most part, they betray weakness rather than strength and close minds rather than open them. They do not cause people with weak ties to Judaism to bat an eyelid, while those with strong ties to Judaism would not consider intermarriage in the first place. We must face the fact that assimilation is a universal sociological reality that is spreading throughout the Jewish community just as it is among other religious and ethnic minorities. Neither rabbinical nor educational preaching will halt it, but as Emmanuel Levinas suggests, proactive policies that explicitly present Judaism to the gentiles with the purpose of bringing assimilating Jews back into the fold will. After two or three generations of intermarriage, the issue is more one of converting hearts and minds than a return to orthodoxy, which is evolving slowly but surely. A static Judaism that recoils from intermarriage, distributes blame among those guilty of nothing and turns its back on both Eastern and Western creativity will not be able to prevent the process of assimilation.

Whether they like it or not, the Jewish communities of Europe represent links in the chain of the Diaspora that surrounds Israel. In some respects, they serve as political and cultural embassies for the Jewish state or nation in the eyes of the gentiles, and possibly of Jews as well;

in the eyes of those who hate Israel, as well as those who love it. In the Western countries, the waves of immigration and the demographic changes that followed muddied the waters concerning split loyalties and dual membership, a phenomenon exacerbated by the gradual establishment of the pan-European community. A committee may declare its support for Israel without getting too nervous about being accused of split loyalties. The State of Israel has become the most meaningful component of European Jewish identity, whether it limits itself to proclaiming unequivocal support for Israel or whether it resorts to pathological condemnation of it. Israel either shores up Jewish identity or confuses it. Jews far away, like those in the United States, can choose to ignore the existence of Israel; European Jews cannot permit themselves to ignore a state that is constantly in the news. They are too close to Israel, both geographically and through family ties, to estrange themselves from it.

The revitalization of communities in Central and Eastern Europe poses a most significant challenge. The people behind the revitalization of these communities are not restricted by any institutions, and most of them belong to intellectual circles whose members are undergoing a process of rediscovering their religion. A future revival of Judaism in Europe will more likely begin in Budapest and St. Petersburg than in London or Berlin. Those involved have been reborn as Jews of Europe rather than as Hungarian or Russian Jews. They

integrate general education with Jewish Studies and interpretative skills with creative ones. They are more connected to Israel than their American or British counterparts and, most importantly, they do not endorse anti-American attitudes. They are more enthusiastic, more independent and more curious, though they are still tasked with freeing themselves from the patronage of Israeli and American institutions, and making their own voices heard with clarity and resolve.

There are some who view the establishment of a European entity as the stepping stone to a Jewish renaissance in Western, Central and Eastern European communities. They aim to create a pan-European cultural-religious community. Reality dictates that this will entail a spiritual and cultural challenge, and that the communal institutions in well-established communities will be affected. In France and England, these institutions are so outdated that in some cases they have become stumbling blocks in the path of continuity rather than guarantees thereof. They have not managed to keep in touch with the political, cultural and social realities of the Jews in the various countries; they were not designed for integration into the European scene; and they are most probably neither interested in nor capable of adapting themselves accordingly. The French and British communities are imprisoned, each more than the other, by their own complexities and institutions. Both are jealous of the other's imagined independence and antiquated heritage. On the one hand, we see insti-

tutions left over from the Napoleonic period, such as the *Consistoires*, packed with North African rabbis; on the other hand, we have Victorian institutions intent on preserving their honor and splendor. The French community would like to rule European Jewry, but it is too French, too Sephardi and too arrogant to do so. And even if the British community were able to lead, it is not interested in doing so; it is too British, too ironic, a prisoner in its own island that does not really regard itself as a European community.⁶¹ Elazar writes: “The Jews have notably lagged behind the rest of Europe in this regard, divided as they are by the language and the habits imposed upon them by their respective governments at the time of Emancipation and subsequent eras, which the Jews, seeking to be emancipated and accepted, avidly embraced. As those self-same states became the leaders in the movement toward European integration, their Jews clung conservatively to their state-based, not Jewish-based, separateness.”⁶²

61 Under the joint leadership of the president of the institution and the chief rabbi of France, the *Consistoire Centrale de France* was directing the process of establishing an European institution for rabbinical training. The feelings of the various communities was not taken into account, neither were the changes that had occurred in the area of rabbinical training around the world, which increasingly emphasized the place of Israel. The initiative failed because it was the result of a Jewish political action in France and not the result of a process that included inter-European discussion and planning.

62 D. J. Elazar, “Israel, the fall of Communism, and the re-emergence of European Jewry” *Judaism*, 1998.

The Jews are currently in the midst of the European turmoil exacerbated by the Muslim political and cultural refusal to integrate into the civil society, its threats to the secular pretensions and principles of the civil societies, its strong hostility toward Israel with its embedded anti-Zionism and anti-Semitic feelings, and the threats of Islamic terrorism to the Occidental way of life. Jews are more perplexed than determined. They don't know what to do to escape the uncertainties faced by the delicate and gentle style of life, which was theirs until now. The most Zionist Jews, who are usually plainly or partly Orthodox, immigrate to Israel, without always being aware of what awaits them in the Promised Land; those less committed to Zionism, who are generally secular, choose to immigrate to other countries. The majority—mainly in France and in England—are waiting for better times. In the meantime, they are seeking avenues for bettering the security of Jews, and are trying to grasp their role in clarifying the clash of cultures between the ancient citizens of Europe and the new comers and their children. In this context, we assist the odd efforts of the Israeli governmental and semi-governmental institutions to realize their dream of populating the Judean settlements, as well as the peripheral towns of the Negev and the Galilee, with hundreds of thousands of French Jews who will supposedly immigrate to the country in the coming years. Israeli representatives don't miss an occasion to meet French community representatives in order to schedule and prepare the candidates for this mass immigration. In parallel,

French community representatives continue to open new schools, cultural centers, and synagogues, and to launch new megalomaniac projects. All are stating the number of *olim* from this country; no one is mentioning the number of *yoredim*. Israel is so accustomed to receiving and integrating emigrants from countries in distress, such as the Arab countries and the Soviet Union, that it has failed to change the paradigm that has for so long dictated its activities in this area. Symptoms of its inability to cope with this new immigration may be detected in the constant fluctuations in the number of *olim* and increase in the amount of *yordim*. Having said that, it may be that the collapse of European communities—if it happens—will be more damaging than enriching for Israel from a political standpoint, as well as a cultural and social one. Zionism must ask itself what is more necessary for the sustainability of its achievements, or in other words: Does the dismantling of flourishing European Jewish communities serve its geo-political and geo-cultural interests more than selling apartments in the towers of Tel Aviv, Ra'anana and Ashdod, without mentioning the illusory whim of installing the *olim* in peripheral towns—from Paris to Or Akiva—or in old or new settlements in Judea and Samaria?

The Jews are no longer the prominent non-Christian minority in Europe, and it seems likely that their symbolic and cultural influence will continue to diminish. They will have to change their way of thinking, their institutions and their attitude toward Israel and toward

the Jewish communities living outside Europe. They must emancipate themselves from institutions that fail to meet their needs and build healthy European institutions. In other words, they must renew the debate on emancipation in light of world events, particularly those in Europe during the 20th century and the last two decades.

- The Shoah was a European tragedy that exposed the limitations of human culture, education and progress in countering the basest of human instincts. All over Europe, Jews were the ones to pay the highest price for national zealotry, anti-Semitic hatred and pseudo-pagan totalitarianism; they paid with their lives.
- Political Zionism flourished in Europe during the era of blossoming nationalism. It declared that anti-Semitism constitutes one of the basic components of national cultures and proposed a Jewish national homeland in the Land of Israel as the solution to the problems faced by the European Jewry.
- The State of Israel is, first and foremost, a European creation, and half of its Jewish population is of European origin. It was founded with the aim of serving as a refuge for Jews, and it claims to embody the realization of statehood for the Jewish people. In any event, it is the only state the Jewish people have.
- The most important Jewish creation of the past thousand years is essentially European, and it continually nourishes Jewish thinking and creativity in Israel, the

United States and other communities throughout the world (as noted above, the “Oriental claims” as expressed by the Biton Commission in Israel, are mainly remedial and political, and not convincing. Nevertheless, they will have no impact on Israeli society, which will be more mixed and cross-cultured in the future.)

Jewish Europeanism or European Judaism requires clarification in the cultural, political and social spheres. We do not always know what are the aims of their adherents. What constitutes the “Jewish European pillar” that Diana Pinto discusses? What does it involve and what does it omit? What are its opinions regarding political and cultural negotiations among Jews? What are its opinions regarding non-Jews throughout Europe? Is there a common denominator for all Jews in Europe apart from their physical existence within European borders? What are its tenets over and above the vague declaration, “We view ourselves as European Jews”? It seems that the attempts of intellectuals and the activities of local organizations that have set themselves exclusively European goals, such as the *Alliance Israélite Universelle in France* and the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) in England, have been infiltrated by the obsolete yearnings of thinkers and authors such as S. Zweig. If the slogan “from ghetto to state power” has been prevalent for a long time among the Jews of the United States, in Europe many are giving lip service to the slogan “from ghetto institutions to cultural and symbolic power.” Supporters of a Jewish Europe are,

for now at least, seeking recognition both from their non-Jewish colleagues and from Jewish institutions in Israel and the United States. They view cultural creativity as the main field in which they will be able to obtain that recognition. Elazar summarizes his article with the following ambiguous claim: “Suddenly European Jewry has a source of energy of the kind that it has not had for generations. But like all contemporary Jewish sources, it is a flawed source, whose energy consists of a will, but whose bearers do not possess the tools to exercise that will effectively. It is under such circumstances that historic revolutions are made.”

On another level, European associations of rabbis, such as the Council of European Rabbis (CER) or the The Rabbinical Centre of Europe (RCE), are more frightened by their old fears than actually threatened in their daily lives. The Jews are no longer a general European concern and there is no real threat to performing circumcisions or processing kosher meat. On these two topics, Jews are “protected” or “endangered” by regulations that will or will not be enacted on excision, circumcision without anesthesia, or the slaughtering of calves. Jews can only be victims of collateral effects of regulations adopted to contain Islamic incidences in the public sphere. The rabbinical pan-European associations are more honorary than effective; they cannot enforce any rules on national institutions or local rabbis. Besides, these institutions will not be viewed as legitimate as long as they speak in two languages—a *haredic* one

within the institution and toward Israeli rabbinical authorities, and one expressing a more open approach toward community members. In any case, for more than one reason, their role is mainly representative.

A PROFESSIONAL EUROPEAN INSTITUTE

The consolidation of Europe enables or invites one to consider Jewish life and local Jewish communities in terms of Europe rather than in terms of individual countries. Unfortunately, we lack a pan-European Jewish framework that would be acceptable to all the various institutions and that would provide an address to both individuals and communities. The European Jewish Congress is failing to gain momentum and is struggling under the heavy burden of the American Jewish Congress. The CER, which primarily lacks the clear rabbinical orientation appropriate for the majority of European Jewry, is remote and with the exception of its biannual assembly, it does not accomplish very much, neither in training rabbis nor in the training of hearts. When the European Council of Jewish Communities was established, it was one of the wisest and most promising ventures of the time. It represented a clear model of a European organization for Jewish communities throughout Europe. It offered a wide range of activities that enjoyed considerable success. Unfortunately, the council lost its authority because of the political interference of international bodies, in particular the Joint, which turned it into a stooge for implementing its own European policies.

A number of communities have received or are about to receive payments or compensation from various sources. Thanks to a donation from the Swedish government, Paideia was established, which nurtures young leadership in Jewish communities throughout Europe. The French government directed a huge sum to commemorate the *Shoah* and to help fund Jewish cultural, educational and social activities aimed at ensuring the thriving of the community. Unfortunately, these new resources went mainly to old institutions and, with few exceptions, did not help improve neither the state of the research nor the establishment of innovative patterns of Jewish life. Even in Spain, some leaders are toying with the idea of approaching the authorities with a request for remuneration for the exile of the Jews in 1492. At the same time, some communities are becoming increasingly wealthy thanks to the new generation of businesspeople, children of immigrants who contribute funds to communal activities. These resources may set in motion the rusty wheels of outmoded national communal institutions that no longer meet the needs of individuals and communities searching for their identity and seeking to belong to something that does not involve cumbersome institutional membership. Generally speaking, the main challenge of communities, either in Eastern or Western Europe, is no longer a problem of resources but that of vocation. There are so many duplicate organizations in the communities that huge amounts of money go to cover salaries at the expense of activities.

The communities will manage to find common ground once again only when there is a charismatic institution that is free from political machinations and that works for the good of individual communities without promoting its own people or, more importantly, the interests of any particular international organization. The institution must be professional and provide services without involving itself in local community or global Jewish politics. It will enjoy support and raise enthusiasm only under the condition that it supplies trans-community services from a European perspective in the following areas:

- Offering small local communities research, planning and organizational consultation to deal with the European Union and other matters.
- Providing professional support in the various spheres of authority throughout Europe (Jewish school principals, community workers, rabbis, and others).
- Encouraging meetings of professionals from all over Europe (doctors, scientists, intellectuals, and others).
- Promoting activities that bring together young Jews from all over Europe (youth camps, study trips, Jewish Studies for students, advanced training for young artists, and other programs).
- Establishing projects for at least three communities in the spirit of the rules that guide the projects run by the European Union.

- Organizing programs that target individuals who do not feel the need to belong to any type of community (online learning organized by religious schools for parents and children, University of Judaism online learning, European Summer University, and others).

In order for the proposed institute to gain the trust of the Jewish public and Jewish organizations throughout Europe, it will need to abide by the following rules:

- Avoid any direct activity that may compete with an activity already underway, whatever its achievements may be. It must, for example, refrain from training young people for leadership while Paideia handles this task, or approving school principals as long as the European organization of school principals is active. During the first stage, it must give as much support as possible to the European organizations of the different communities and offer them the best assistance it can. It must, for instance, aid JPR research projects and help faculties of Judaism at the various universities plan their online courses.
- Aside from the professionalism demonstrated by its directors and consultants, the legitimacy of the institute will be the result of its ability to bring the various Jewish European players together on the same stage. In addition, it must enjoy the public support of financial bodies (be they international organizations, such as the Jewish Agency, the Joint and the Claims Conference, or European or international funds) or private contributors.

Part of the financing can and must come from donations from Jews interested in supporting European Jewish activity. The Jewish National Appeal, for its part, must be prepared to receive donations that will be divided among Israel, the community in the donor's particular country and activities in Europe, including the revival of communities in Eastern Europe and the preservation of pan-European Jewish cultural heritage, in accordance with the wishes of the donor. Withholding the possibility of making financial donations to Israel indicates a lack of sensitivity to the contributors' wishes. Usually, their donations constitute expressions of love for Israel that stem from true, if indistinct, Jewish roots. They fear the weakening of the strength of the Jewish state or nation. They are interested in giving charity, in bridging the gaps that divide the Jewish people, in repairing (*tikkun olam*) the world. The act of giving expresses a spiritual need to define one's place in relation to one's fellow man, in particular that fellow man who is disadvantaged and in need of charitable contributions. People are not keen on giving to established communities or well-off individuals. They are interested, first and foremost, in righting wrongs, whether or not they are personal "wrongs" or ones affecting a group of people dear to their hearts. They are also aware that Israel, for better or worse, constitutes the most significant creation of the Jewish people. They know, too, that the majority of Jewish children living under the poverty line don't reside in their own community but rather in the State of Israel and in Jewish communities undergoing

revival in Central and Eastern Europe. The problem of violence in Jewish schools is greater in Israeli society than in Jewish Diaspora communities, and this also applies to acute social problems. The needy are mainly to be found within the borders of the State of Israel or else are dependent, directly or indirectly, on the services of the State of Israel, whether they are governmental services, such as those provided by the Prime Minister's Office, or para-governmental ones, such as those of the Jewish Agency or the Joint. Allocation of part of a donation—according to the donor's wishes—to a European institution that is a cornerstone of European Jewry could breathe new life into Jewish voluntary activities. That said, it is possible that there is no need to establish a new institute and instead to opt to revive one already in existence upon obtaining political and professional approval for the initiative.

Unfortunately, I don't believe that the general mood of European Jewry is ripe for implementing this kind of recommendation. Each community is focused on itself and does not show any interest in other communities; for example, the opulent community of Prague is not inclined to help other small Czech communities. Each community has its own priorities and never has enough resources to fulfill its basic needs; for example, the rich community of Florence will prefer to collect money in order to rehabilitate its historical *mikveh*, which is situated but a few paces from the Chabad *mikveh*. Each community is jealous of its prerogatives and will

not concede any part of them to a federative body, be it secular or religious. Each religious group will invest a huge amount of money in outreach and interfaith activities while ignoring—for *halakhic* reasons, of course—Reform or Conservative synagogues. This is not always a curse; it may stimulate emulation between communities. But it undermines any attempt to develop a strategy for European Jewry as a whole. Communities will take care of themselves and Jewish denominations will not cooperate. Jewish men and women will get their inspiration from the religious authorities, mainly those located in Israel and the United States, and follow the instructions of the bodies or donors that pay their salaries or subsidize their activities. In the meantime, it is advisable to establish a “Great Fund for European Jewry” that will be rich and independent enough to allocate support according to rigorous criteria that will pinpoint “Best Practices for Jews in Europe” and encourage their replication or expansion. It will give priority to programs such as:

- Encounter programs between students and young professionals from all over Europe (e.g., ECJS, JEP, Limud, Paideia).
- Online learning programs focused on Jewish family education.
- Online communal services.
- Networks of professionals throughout Europe with the possibility of periodic meetings.

- Judaism for Creativity Scholarships for doctoral research.
- Prizes for rabbis, scholars, writers, producers.

Ideally, this fund should function as the European Union does, redistributing only what it receives from donors and communities to communities that contribute to it according to their size and resources (from tourism, as in Prague, from *shechita*, as in Poland, from real estate, as in Italy, etc.). It will not begin to distribute money before:

- Establishing a strategic plan addressing the overlaps and oversights in the different communities.
- Identifying the Best Practices for Jews in Europe.
- Prioritizing the areas of activity and the ages on which to focus.
- Establishing clear conditions for community admittance and explicit criteria for the distribution of money.
- Establishing a mechanism for collecting and redistributing money.
- Collecting enough money to convince the leadership of the communities of the feasibility of this idea.

Some of the Jews will leave Europe, others will return to it. Europe will become a kind of “rotating continent” for Israeli Jews, as well as for those of North and South America. No one predicted the revival of a Jewish community in Germany. No one can predict what will happen to the Israeli descendants of Polish and Bulgari-

an Jews. Zionism and the State of Israel perhaps have eradicated the *galut* feelings, but they have not eliminated the temptation for the Diasporic way of life that is built on historical Judaism; they only reformatted it. The Jewish Diaspora still attracts Israeli Jewish citizens, be they religious or secular. They wish to discover the great world, to dwell for a while in New York or Peking, to experience the Indian or Japanese way of life. The Jews' roots are in all the promised lands, with particular symbolic, liturgical and passionate links to Israel. Today they dwell here, tomorrow in Israel, and the day after elsewhere. The Jews were a global people before globalization began and, assuming fundamentalist regression and terrorism will not overcome science and its technological advancements, the global economy, the expansion of open communication, the revolution in the status of women, the interfaith dialogue and so on, Jews are set to become the main ferment of the world to come. Without real and transparent, sincere and open "mutual responsibility" binding the various communities, concretized by action and funding, Europe's Jewry will be void of content—additional wishful thinking in the rich panoply of wishes that characterizes life in the Diaspora. The leaders of the European communities will have to meet in Europe, as well as in Israel, in order to agree upon the best policy to implement to establish the institutions and platforms required for the Jewish world to come.

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