

may 15, 1964

RECENTLY, AN ARTICLE APPEARED IN "LOOK" MAGAZINE WHICH SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY THAT WITHIN A FEW MORE GENERATIONS, THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY WILL HAVE PRACTICALLY VANISHED. THE AUTHOR BASED HIS CONCLUSIONS ON SOME RECENT FIGURES CONCERNING THE RATE OF INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN JEWS AND CHRISTIANS. WHILE THERE HAVE NOT BEEN MANY STUDIES MADE ON THE SUBJECT, WHAT LITTLE INFORMATION WE HAVE DOES INDICATE THAT AMERICAN JEWRY IS FACING A STEADILY MOUNTING THREAT. THE FIGURES WE HAVE ARE THESE:

1. A SURVEY MADE IN WASHINGTON D.C. SUGGESTS THAT ^{50 years ago} ONE OUT OF EVERY 65 JEWS MARRIED A NON-JEW ~~50 YEARS AGO~~. 25 YEARS ^{ago} AGO, ONE OUT OF EVERY TEN JEWS MARRIED A NON-JEW. AND IN OUR GENERATION, THE THIRD GENERATION AMERICAN JEWS, 18% - OR ALMOST ONE OUT OF EVERY FIVE JEWS MARRIES A NON-JEW. THESE STATISTICS WOULD INDICATE THAT UNLESS AMERICAN JEWS TAKE A SERIOUS VIEW OF THE PROBLEM, THEY MAY VERY WELL MARRY THEMSELVES OUT OF EXISTENCE. *of*

IT IS, OF COURSE, TRUE THAT AN INCREASING NUMBER OF PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS ARE MARRYING OUT OF THEIR FAITH ALSO. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE BUREAU OF CENSUS IN 1957 MADE A COMPARATIVE STUDY BASED ON A SAMPLING OF 35,000 FAMILIES AND FOUND THAT WHILE ONLY 7% OF ALL JEWS CURRENTLY MARRIED HAD MARRIED OUT OF THE FAITH; 21 % OF ALL CATHOLICS THAT HAD MARRIED WERE MARRIED ~~OUT OF THE FAITH~~ TO A PERSON OF ANOTHER FAITH. ~~THE CENSUS~~ ^{THE CENSUS} FIGURES HAVE TO DO WITH ALL EXISTING MARRIAGES, INCLUDING OUR GRANDPARENTS AND PARENTS. THE ~~SIGNIFY~~ MORE SIGNIFICANT FIGURE IN PROJECTING THE FUTURE IS WHAT THE PRESENT GENERATION OF JEWS IS DOING. THEY, LIKE THEIR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS, SHOW A MUCH MORE RELAXED ATTITUDE TOWARD INTERMARRIAGE THAN DID THEIR GRANDPARENTS. ON THE ONE HAND THIS SIGNIFIES THE FULFILLMENT OF THE DEMAND OF THE JEW FOR ACCEPTANCE AS AN INDIVIDUAL; ON THE OTHER HAND, THE RELATIVELY FREE CROSSING OF THE LINES OF RELIGION SIGNIFIES A WEAKENING OF JEWISH COMMITMENT. IN THE CLOSED COMMUNITY OF 19TH CENTURY EUROPE, JEWS HAD NO PROBLEM MAINTAINING THEIR IDENTITY. IN THE OPEN COMMUNITY OF 20TH CENTURY AMERICA, THE SURVIVAL OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IS THREATENED.

FOR SOME YEARS NOW THERE HAVE BEEN TWO DISTINCT THEORIES AS TO THE IDEAL TOWARDS WHICH AMERICANS OUGHT TO WORK. THE FIRST THEORY IS CALLED "THE MELTING POT THEORY". ITS ADVOCATES CONTEND THAT THE GLORY OF AMERICA IS THAT IT TAKES ~~ALL~~ MANY DIFFERENT CULTURAL, ETHNIC, AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND MOULDS THEM ALL INTO ONE RICH, ALL-INCLUSIVE AMERICAN TYPE. THE SECOND THEORY IS CALLED THE THEORY OF CULTURAL PLURALISM. IT SUGGESTS THAT THE GREATNESS OF AMERICA IS THAT ^{each} DIFFERENT GROUPS ~~ARE~~ ABLE TO MAINTAIN ~~THEIR~~ SEPARATE IDENTITIES WHILE CONTRIBUTING ITS PARTICULAR GENIUS TO THE BROADER STRUCTURE OF AMERICA. the SURVIVAL OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN AMERICA MAY WELL DEPEND UPON OUR CONSCIOUS ACCEPTANCE OF THE SECOND OF THESE THEORIES. UNLESS THE INDIVIDUAL JEW COMES TO REALIZE THAT HE HAS A DEFINITE RESPONSIBILITY ^{to be} TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AS WELL AS TO THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY, HE MAY BE ~~SILENTLY~~ ^{passively} ASSISTING IN THE STEADY DEMISE OF JUDAISM IN AMERICA.

Loyal
passively

out of the faith - 7 out men + 3 are women

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PART OF THE PROBLEM OF THE AMERICAN JEW IS THAT HIS RELIGION EMPHASIZES THE UNIVERSAL ~~nature~~ ^{idea} OF GOD. WE DO NOT DENY SALVATION TO THE CHRISTIAN. WE EMPHASIZE THE IDEAL OF EQUALITY. WE CANNOT SAY, EVEN FOR THE SAKE OF PRESERVING OUR COMMUNITY, THAT THE JEW IS MORE LOVED BY GOD THAN THE CHRISTIAN. HOW, THEN, CAN WE MAKE A CASE THAT THE JEW SHOULD CHOOSE TO MARRY ONLY A JEW? WE CAN OFFER NEITHER THE THREAT OF HELL NOR THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL SALVATION. WE CAN ONLY SAY THAT WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY THERE IS A GREATER CHANCE THAT CERTAIN KINDS OF VALUES WILL BE ESPECIALLY EMPHASIZED AND MORE SECURELY PRESERVED. WE CAN ONLY APPEAL TO A SENSE OF NOBLESSE OBLIGE. WE CAN ONLY SAY YOUR FATHERS FIRST CONCEIVED OF THESE GRAND IDEALS, AND YOU HAVE THE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY OF WORKING FOR THEM THROUGH A COMMUNITY PARTICULARLY SUITED TO PROJECT THESE IDEALS. ALBERT EINSTEIN, WHO WAS CERTAINLY THE UNIVERSAL MAN, A SUPREME INTELLECTUAL, DELIBERATELY SOUGHT TO REMAIN WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY BECAUSE AS HE TAUGHT, " JEWS HAVE A PASSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE ~~AND~~ A COMMITMENT TO LEARNING FOR ITS OWN SAKE", *and a vital concern for the rights of the individual*.

YET THIS PASSION AND COMMITMENT CAN LEAD THE JEW TO SUCH UNIVERSALISTIC THOUGHTS THAT HE NO LONGER SEES THE NEED FOR REMAINING WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. A STUDY MADE OF THE JEWS WHO LIVE IN CHAMPAIGN, ILL., SHOW HAVE ONLY 6% OF THE MEN THERE ARE MARRIED ~~OUT/OF/THE/F/~~ TO A NON-JEW, BUT 20% OF THE MEN ON THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS IN THAT TOWN ARE MARRIED TO NON-JEWS. *This insufficient Report Jewish - inter-marry one ratio of 3:1 for the average Jew*
 A STUDY MADE AMONG THE JEWISH PSCHO-ANALYSTS OF NEW HAVEN, CONN, SHOW THAT 2/3 OF THEM ARE INTER-MARRIED. THESE FIGURES ARE, OF COURSE, NOT TYPICAL, BUT THEY DO LEND SUPPORT TO THE THESIS THAT JEWS WHO FOLLOW BROAD INTELLECTUAL PURSUITS TEND TO SURRENDER THEIR PARTICULARISTIC IDENTIFICATION WITH JUDAISM.

Could be interpreted to say that the intellectual Jew has a tendency to inter-marry one ratio of 3:1 for the average Jew

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE STOP HERE TO QUALIFY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOME OF THESE STATISTICS. MOST AMERICAN JEWS DO NOT LIVE IN PLACES LIKE WASHINGTON, D.C, OR CHAMPAIGN, ILL. MOST OF THEM LIVE IN NEW YORK, CHICAGO, AND LOS ANGELES, WHERE STUDIES ON THIS QUESTION HAVE NOT BEEN MADE. IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT IN COMMUNITIES WHICH HAVE A LARGE NUMBER OF JEWS THE RATE OF INTERMARRIAGE IS LOWER. FURTHER, THE STATISTICIANS DO NOT TELL US HOW MANY OF THE CHRISTIANS WHO MARRIED JEWS CONVERTED TO JUDAISM OR VICE-VERSA. ~~SINCE /OUT/OF/EVERY/TEN/JEWS/WHOM/MARRY/~~ THE FIGURES DO SHOW THAT ^{seven} ~~OUT/OF/EVERY/TEN/~~ JEWS WHO MARRY ~~a non-Jew~~, ^{seven} ~~SEVEN~~ ^{a non-Jew} OF THE JEWS ARE MEN. WHILE IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT MEN ARE LESS CONCERNED ABOUT RELIGION THAN WOMEN, THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY TRUE. IT HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE THAT MANY CHRISTIAN GIRLS ARE NOT ONLY ^{WILLING} HAPPY TO CONVERT TO JUDAISM, BUT ACTUALLY EXCITED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY. RABBI RUBENSTEIN WHO ^{directs} ~~runs~~ THE HILLEL FOUNDATION AT THE

out of the faith - 7 ^{are} men + 3 are women.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURG CONTENDS, " MANY OF THE BRIGHT MIDDLE-CLASS GIRLS WHO ATTEND THE BETTER COLLEGES ARE ATTRACTED BY THE POLITICAL LIBERALISM CHARACTERISTIC OF JEWISH STUDENTS OR BY THEIR EQUALLY CHARACTERISTIC AVANT-GARDISM IN INTELLECTUAL AND AESTHETIC MATTERS. ". IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY CONVICTION THAT WHERE THE NON-JEW CONVERTS HONESTLY AND ACTIVELY TO JUDAISM, AN INTER-MARRIAGE CAN BE A GAIN FOR JUDAISM. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE NO FIGURES TO SHOW WHETHER JEWS ARE GAINING OR LOSING TO CHRISTIANS IN THE RATE OF CONVERSION. THE STATISTICIANS ASSUME THAT IT IS THE MAJORITY RELIGION WHICH ULTIMATELY GAINS FROM A HIGH RATE OF INTERMARRIAGE. IT IS EQUALLY TRUE STATISTICALLY THAT THE DIVORCE RATE IS HIGHER IN THE CASE OF INTERMARRIAGE, IF ONLY FOR THE REASON THAT DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS BRING ONE EXTRA AND IMPORTANT PROBLEM INTO THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP WHICH ~~IT'S/~~ ALREADY HAS MORE THAN ENOUGH BASIC COMPLICATIONS.

IN THIS DAY OF THE HYDROGEN BOMB, WE ARE ACCUSTOMED TO SAY THAT SINCE IT IS EASIER FOR MEN TO DESTROY THEMSELVES, THEY MUST BE MUCH MORE COMMITTED TO THE STRUGGLE FOR Peace THAN THEIR FATHERS EVER WERE. IT IS SIMILARLY necessary TO SAY, THAT IN THIS DAY WHEN IT IS RELATIVELY EASY FOR A JEW TO ~~ABANDON~~ ~~TO SURRENDER~~ HIS JEWISH IDENTITY, HE MUST BE MUCH MORE COMMITTED TO THE EFFORT TO PRESERVE THE JEWISH COMMUNITY THAN WERE HIS FATHERS. *Nevertheless,* I DO NOT TAKE A DIM VIEW OF THE FUTURE PROBABILITIES FOR AMERICAN JUDAISM. I BASE MY CONCLUSION ON AT LEAST ~~two~~ FACTORS :

THREE

1. IN THE GHETTOS OF NEW YORK AND CHICAGO, A JEW WAS A JEW BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT HE LIVED IN A COMMUNITY ALMOST ENTIRELY *composed of* JEWISH. FEW JEWS ACTUALLY SUPPORTED A SYNAGOGUE, FEW JEWS WERE ACTUALLY LEARNED IN JUDAISM. ONE WAS A JEW BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT HE BOUGHT HIS MEAT AT THE KOSHER MEAT STORE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BLOCK AND WORSHIPPED ON THE HIGH HOLIDAYS AT THE CORNER SHUL. WHEN THE JEWS BEGAN TO MOVE TO SUBURBIA, THEY FIRST BEGAN TO BUILD SYNAGOGUES WHICH WERE VITAL INSTITUTIONS. PEOPLE WHO HAD NEVER BELONGED TO SYNAGOGUES ~~JOIN~~ HELPED TO BUILD SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURES WORLD JEWRY HAS EVER seen. WHERE CHILDREN HAD GONE TO DIMLY LIT CHEDERS FOR A FEW YEARS ~~IN~~ ORDER TO BE BAR MITZVAH, THEY NOW WENT ON TO CONFIRMATION, STUDYING IN BRIGHT, MODERN CLASS-ROOMS WITH MODERN, BETTER PREPARED TEACHERS. PEOPLE WHO HAD ATTENDED SYNAGOGUE ONLY ON THE HOLIDAYS, BEGAN TO ATTEND SERVICES ON THE SABBATH AND FESTIVALS. THE MOVE TO SUBURBIA ~~HAS~~ BROUGHT MANY PROBLEMS TO THE AMERICAN JEW, BUT IT HAS SERVED TO INCREASE HIS voluntary COMMITMENT TO THE SYNAGOGUE.

2. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY ITSELF IS SUFFERING MUCH MORE OF A RELIGIOUS UPHEAVAL TODAY THAN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. WE HAVE ALREADY BUILT THE BRIDGE FROM A FUNDAMENTALIST FAITH TO A LIBERAL FAITH. WE HAVE ALREADY PASSED OVER THE CHASM LEADING FROM ORTHODOXY TO REFORM ~~JUDAISM~~ OR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM, BUT THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, *Relative speaking,* IS JUST BEGINNING THIS PASSAGE TOWARDS LIBERALISM. THE UNIVERSALISM OF JUDAISM IS HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE TO MANY CHRISTIAN THINKERS AND THE ROLE OF JUDAISM IN AMERICA IS BEING ELEVATED IN THIS SENSE. WHAT MANY LIBERAL CHRISTIAN THINKERS ARE SAYING, IN EFFECT, IS THAT CHRISTIANITY WILL BE SAVED ONLY IF IT IS PROGRESSIVELY JUDAIZED.

IF JEWS CAN BE SUFFICIENTLY AWARE OF THE CHANGE THAT IS TAKING PLACE ON THE RELIGIOUS SCENE, AND IF THEY CAN BE AWARE OF THE TREMENDOUS IMPORTANCE OF THE JEWISH POSITION IN THIS TRANSFERENCE, THEN THE STRENGTH OF JUDAISM SHOULD INCREASE, NOT DECREASE, IN THE FUTURE.

3. MY THIRD REASON FOR OPTIMISM IS OUR CHILDREN. I BELIEVE THAT SUCH YOUNG PEOPLE AS WE ARE HONORING THIS EVENING ~~ARE SUBSTANTIALLY ABOVE THEIR~~ REPRESENT A POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE LEADERSHIP FAR ABOVE THAT WHICH ~~Jews~~ EXISTED IN MY GENERATION AND IN THE PREVIOUS GENERATION. THESE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE GROUP WE WILL CONFIRM TOMORROW EVENING ARE NOT TO BE CLASSED AS JEWISH SCHOLARS, BUT THEY KNOW MORE ABOUT THEIR FAITH, AND HAVE A STRONGER COMMITMENT TO JEWISH ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE THAN THE YOUTH OF PREVIOUS GENERATIONS. I AM SUGGESTING THAT WHILE BEING JEWISH IS NO LONGER A MATTER OF MERE HABIT FOR THE JEWS OF TODAY, OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BETTER PREPARED FOR MAKING THE KIND OF VOLUNTARY CHOICE WHICH OUR OPEN SOCIETY DEMANDS.

I DO NOT WISH TO MINIMIZE THE PROBLEMS WHICH LIE BEFORE THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY. CERTAINLY I DO NOT WISH TO ~~discourage you~~ ^{to pull you into} TO ~~FEEL~~ A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY. WE HAVE A TREMENDOUS CHALLENGE, ^{none of us}

^{Can afford} ~~any longer~~ ^{to be neutral.} ARE CONFRONTED BY EACH JEWISH HOME HAS TO BECOME A SOURCE OF POSITIVE JEWISH IDENTIFICATION. THE PARENT AS MUCH AS THE CHILD MUST TAKE ~~POSITIVE~~ ^{ACTIVE} STEPS TO TIE HIMSELF TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. THIS IS A TIME FOR ~~hard~~ ^{searching} MUCH WORK AND FOR GREATER COMMITMENT THAN THAT EVIDENCED BY OUR FATHERS. ^{Our choices are clear.} ~~THE CHALLENGE IS REAL. I THINK WE ARE EQUAL TO THE CHALLENGE.~~

We move closer together or we disintegrate. We intensify our sense of mission & we propagate the faith more ardently or we surrender to the drift of assimilation. One can no longer afford the luxury of being Jewish without knowing why. It would be tragic, if even as the bugle calls men to the ~~last~~ ^{last} great battles for the ^{secret ideals} your fathers that the Jew should have no banner around which to rally.