

## "THE LEAVEN IN THE DOUGH" OR THE SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE JEW

A sermon delivered on the High Holidays 1968-5729, Beth Am, Miami, Florida  
Rabbi Herbert M. Baumgard, D.H.L.

WHEN YOUR BUILDING COMMITTEE SELECTED THE INSCRIPTIONS FOR THE WINDOWS OF THIS SANCTUARY, THEY CHOSE THOSE SAYINGS FROM OUR TRADITION WHICH ARE STILL COMPELLING IN MODERN TIMES. THE LAST WINDOW ON YOUR LEFT CONTAINS THE TEACHING OF THE PROPHET AMOS, WHO PROCLAIMED IN THE 9TH CENTURY BCE, "O CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, ARE YE NOT AS THE ETHIOPIANS UNTO ME, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS". THE ETHIOPIANS WERE, AND ARE, OF BLACK SKIN. IN THIS WAY, AMONGST OTHERS, DID THE PROPHET AMOS CHASTISE THE HEBREWS OF HIS DAY WHO THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE INATELY SUPERIOR TO OTHER PEOPLES.

OUR BIBLE, WHICH SOME SCHOLARS CALL THE "OLD TESTAMENT", CLEARLY INDICATES THAT GOD MADE A COVENANT THROUGH ADAM AND THROUGH NOAH WHICH APPLIES TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN SPECIES. THE MIDRASH, THE RABBINICAL COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE, POINTS OUT THAT ANY NON-JEW WHO MERELY FOLLOWS THE SIX COMMANDMENTS GIVEN TO NOAH IS ACCEPTABLE IN THE EYES OF GOD. THIS VIEW, SO WELL KNOWN TO LEARNED JEWS, WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT FAR FROM GIVING PREFERENCE TO JEWS, GOD MAKES THINGS MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM. THEY ALONE WERE REQUIRED TO ACCEPT A GREATER DISCIPLINE. FOR A LONG WHILE, THROUGH MOST OF THE BIBLICAL PERIOD, OUR TRADITION TAUGHT THAT GOD WOULD, IN THE VERY LEAST, REWARD THOSE WHO WERE RIGHTEOUS AND FOLLOWED HIS LAWS. THE BOOK OF JOB, PREPARED PROBABLY IN THE FIFTH CENTURY BCE, BOLDLY CHALLENGES THIS THESIS. THE AUTHORS OF THIS BOOK ARGUE THAT GOD DOES NOT RESPOND SO MECHANICALLY EVEN TO DOERS OF HIS WILL. THE WORLD IS FAR MORE COMPLICATED THAN WE THINK, THESE AUTHORS CONTENDED, AND THEY BID US TO DO GOOD, NOT FOR THE SAKE OF REWARD, BUT MERELY FOR THE SAKE OF DOING GOOD, AND EVEN IN SPITE OF SUFFERING AND SEEMING NEGLECT BY GOD.

### WHAT OF "CHOSENNESS"?

NONETHELESS, YOU MIGHT WELL ASK, WHAT OF THE DOCTRINE OF "CHOSENNESS", WHICH PERMEATES THE BIBLE. DOESN'T CHOSENNESS IMPLY A SPECIAL REWARD FOR THE CHOSEN? HERE, WE BEGIN BY REMINDING OURSELVES, THAT ON MANY QUESTIONS THE BIBLE GIVES MORE THAN ONE VIEWPOINT. THE BIBLE MUST BE CONSIDERED AS THE EVOLVING RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND A VIEW HELD IN THE TIME OF ABRAHAM AND MOSES CAN, AND, OFTEN, DID CHANGE SHARPLY BY THE TIME OF THE PROPHETS AMOS OR ISAIAH. IN THE 400 YEARS BETWEEN MOSES AND AMOS MANY CHANGES TOOK PLACE WITHIN THE HEBREW NATION, AND ITS RELIGIOUS TEACHERS DID NOT HESITATE TO DEVELOP NEW CONCEPTS APPLICABLE TO A NEW AGE. MOSES SPOKE OF THE SPECIAL LAND THAT GOD HAD PROMISED TO HIS SELECTED PEOPLE. AMOS, HOWEVER, SPEAKS, NOT OF REWARD, BUT OF PUNISHMENT. FOR AMOS, THE DOCTRINE OF CHOSENNESS HAS EVOLVED MORE FORCEFULLY INTO THE DOCTRINE OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY. BECAUSE GOD HAD WALKED WITH ISRAEL WHEN IT WAS A CHILD, TAUGHT AMOS, THE JEW WAS EXPECTED TO LIVE BY A MORE EXALTED PERSONAL STANDARD. BECAUSE ISRAEL HAD THE FIRST INSIGHT INTO THE TORAH, ISRAEL HAD THE GREATER DUTY TO CREATE THE JUST SOCIETY. IN SPITE OF THE OBVIOUS PARADOX WITHIN THEIR TEACHING, ALL OF THE GREAT PROPHETS PROJECTED THE IDEA OF GOD'S EQUAL LOVE FOR ALL NATIONS, ON THE ONE HAND, AND GOD'S INSISTENCE THAT ISRAEL LIVE THE MOST EXEMPLARY LIFE, ON THE OTHER. IN MODERN TIMES, WE WOULD SAY THAT THE PROPHETS RE-DEFINED THE DOCTRINE OF CHOSENNESS INTO A DOCTRINE OF "NOBLESSE OBLIGE". THE PROPHET MICAH ASKED HIS PEOPLE RHETORICALLY, "WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF YOU?", AND THE PROPHET ANSWERED, "ONLY THE PERFORMANCE OF JUSTICE, THE LOVE OF DUTY, AND HUMBLE PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD HIMSELF". I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ESPECIALLY FOND OF THE MIDDLE PHRASE OF THIS MAJESTIC TEACHING. I REFER TO THE PHRASE, AHAVAT HESED, WHICH IN ITS PROFOUND MEANING MAY BE TRANSLATED, "THE LOVE OF DUTY". TO BE A JEW, IN THE GRAND SENSE, ONE MUST COME TO UNDERSTAND THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING A JEW. ONE MUST COME TO HIS DUTIES WITH BOUNDLESS ZEAL, WITH ENDURING CONCERN, WITH LOVE.

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THERE WAS A TIME WHEN JEWS, WHO WERE FORCED TO LIVE IN ISOLATED GHETTOS, FELL BACK UPON THE OLDER DEFINITION OF CHOSENNESS. IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT FOR THE JEWS OF EASTERN EUROPE WHO LIVED, UNTIL RECENT TIMES, AMONGST ILLITERATE AND UNCULTURED PEOPLES TO THINK THEMSELVES SUPERIOR. CERTAINLY, THE JEWS OF EASTERN EUROPE WERE BETTER EDUCATED THAN THEIR NEIGHBORS, LESS WARLIKE, MORE CHASTE, MORE SOBER. MUCH OF THIS HAS CHANGED IN OUR TIME, HOWEVER. THE NON-JEWISH ELEMENT OF AMERICA TODAY IS NOT TO BE COMPARED TO THE NON-JEWISH COMMUNITY OF THE EASTERN EUROPE OF YESTERDAY. THE NON-JEWS, OF MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICA ARE IN MANY WAYS, INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE JEW. THE EXTERNALITIES OF THE SITUATION ARE SUCH THAT JEWS, IN INCREASING NUMBERS, ARE SAYING, "THE MESSIANIC DAY IS HERE. JEW AND NON-JEW HAVE BECOME ONE".

I WISH TO SAY THAT I HAVE FOUND THIS STATEMENT TO BE TRUE, ON OCCASIONS WHEN I HAVE CONSIDERED A SINGLE NON-JEW AS AGAINST A SINGLE JEW, BUT I HAVE NOT FOUND IT TO BE TRUE WHEN I CONSIDER THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, AS A WHOLE, AGAINST THE NON-JEWISH COMMUNITY. THERE IS NO LITTLE DIFFERENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, BETWEEN TEMPLE BETH AM AND THE CHURCHES OF THIS AREA. THERE IS AN OVERWHELMING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RABBINICAL ASSOCIATION AND THE ASSOCIATION OF MINISTERS. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE IN WHAT WE THINK IMPORTANT; THERE IS A DIFFERENCE IN WHAT WE SPEAK ABOUT FROM THE PULPIT; THERE IS A DIFFERENCE IN WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE DO IT. FURTHER, THIS DIFFERENCE IS AS APPARENT TO THE MINISTERS AS IT IS TO US. IT IS NOT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RELIGIONS THAT I WISH TO ACCENT TODAY, HOWEVER. ON THE CONTRARY, I WISH TO SUPPORT WHAT THE PROPHETS AND THE BEST JEWISH TEACHERS HAVE TAUGHT, NAMELY, THAT ALL MEN, IRRESPECTIVE OF RACE OR NATIONALITY, HAVE EQUAL POTENTIAL AND EQUAL VALUE. INDEED, THE HASIDIM OF THE 18TH CENTURY, NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH TODAY'S HYPER-ORTHODOX HASIDIM, THE ORIGINAL HASIDIM TAUGHT THAT EACH PERSON HAS HIS OWN UNIQUE VALUE TO GOD THAT NO ONE ELSE POSSIBLY COULD HAVE. EACH MAN, THEY TAUGHT, IS EQUAL IN HIS UNIQUENESS, THOUGH WHAT HE MAY DO MAY DIFFER WIDELY IN SCOPE AND IN INTENSITY. EACH MAN, THEY TAUGHT, HAS HIS OWN PARTICULAR PURPOSE IN LIFE, HIS OWN DISTINCT TALENT AND ABILITY, AND NO ONE CAN SAY THAT WHAT ONE CAN DO OR CONTRIBUTE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT THE OTHER DOES. IN A SENSE, WE MIGHT SAY THAT THE HASIDIM WERE FORERUNNERS OF THE MODERN HIPPIES WHO SAY THAT EACH PERSON SHOULD DO HIS "BAG". THAT IS, HE SHOULD DO WHAT HE WANTS TO DO AND CAN DO, WHATEVER THAT IS, AND WHETHER IT SEEMS TO HAVE UTILITARIAN PURPOSE OR NOT, FOR IT HAS VALUE IN AND FOR ITSELF.

WHILE THE GREAT JEWISH TEACHERS HAVE TAUGHT OF THE UNIQUE VALUE OF EACH HUMAN BEING, WHILE THEY TAUGHT OF THE DAY WHEN ALL MEN WILL ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR COMMON BROTHERHOOD; NONETHELESS, THEY HAVE ALSO TAUGHT THAT IF JEWS ACCEPT THEIR SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN LIFE, THEY WILL BECOME DIFFERENT FROM OTHER MEN. THE PROPHETS ASKED THE JEWS TO DETACH THEMSELVES FROM THE MASS OF MEN, TO SET THEMSELVES ASIDE AS FRONT-LINE WORKERS FOR THE MESSIANIC DAY. THE PROPHETS ASKED THE JEWS TO BE DIFFERENT IN THE MEASURE OF THEIR RESOLVE TO HELP THE WEAK AND DEFENSELESS, TO BE DIFFERENT IN THE DEPTHS OF THEIR LOYALTY TO THE VISION OF A PEACEFUL WORLD IN SHORT, THE PROPHETS ASKED THE JEWS TO BE MEDIATORS OF THE DREAM, TO SET AN EXAMPLE BY REALIZING THE DREAM IN THEIR PERSONAL LIFE AND BY CONSTANTLY REMINDING MEN OF THE INADEQUACIES OF PRESENT SOCIETY. THIS IS WHAT MICAH MEANT BY "AHAVAT HESED", THE LOVE OF DUTY, NOBLISSE OBLIGE.

BY THESE STANDARDS, THE JEW WHO IS GUILTY OF FRAUD IN HIS BUSINESS DEALINGS IS MORE THAN A CROOK AND A LIER. HE IS ALSO A TRAITOR TO A COMMUNITY AND TO A HISTORY THAT GOES BACK WITH HONOR 4,000 YEARS. OUR PARTICULARISTIC TRAINING ADMONISHES US TO TAKE A SENSE OF DUTY AND HISTORY INTO EVERYTHING WE DO. IT TEACHES US TO UNDERSTAND

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THAT EVERY DEED WE PERFORM SUPPORTS OR DESTROYS THE PAST AND SERVES AS A FOUNDATION OR AS A SNARE FOR THE FUTURE. THE RABBIS OF THE TALMUD TAUGHT, "IN THE PLACE WHERE THERE ARE NO MEN, BE THOU THE MAN. IN THE MARKET PLACE WHERE SO MANY LIE AND DECEIVE, BE THOU HONEST! IN THE PLACE WHERE THE ANGUISHED CRY OF THE POOR IS IGNORED, HEAR THOU THE CRY, AND RESPOND. WEAR "AS FRONTLETS BETWEEN YOUR EYES" THAT TEACHING OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH WHO SAID TO YOU, AS HE SAID TO THE JEWS OF HIS DAY, "I THE LORD HAVE SENT YOU TO FEED THE HUNGRY AND TO CLOTHE THE NAKED, TO FREE THE IMPRISONED AND TO OPEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND."

I THE LORD HAVE SENT YOU.

#### WHY EXTRA RESPONSIBILITY?

RECENTLY, SOMEONE SAID TO ME, "RABBI, I RESENT THE IMPLICATION OF YOUR TEACHING THAT JEWS ARE BETTER THAN OTHER PEOPLE". IF I HAVE TAUGHT YOU THIS, I HAVE NOT SPOKEN OUT OF OUR HERITAGE WHICH SPEAKS OF THE INATE DIVINITY IN ALL MEN. ON THE OTHER HAND, I PLEAD GUILTY TO THE TEACHING THAT JEWS HAVE A DOUBLE RESPONSIBILITY TO SEEK MORAL PERFECTION. JEWS HAVE THIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR TWO REASONS: FIRST, BECAUSE OF THE ACCUMULATION OF 4,000 YEARS OF A TRADITION TOO WORTHY TO BE LIGHTLY REGARDED, AND, SECONDLY, BECAUSE OF THE TRAGIC SUFFERING OF OUR PEOPLE WHO HAVE REFUSED TO YIELD TO THE BARBARISM OF THE CENTURIES. CAN ONE THINK FOR A SECOND ABOUT HITLER AND THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND NOT DETERMINE TO SEE THAT THESE PEOPLE DID NOT DIE IN VAIN. IN MODERN ISRAEL, IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM THERE IS A LARGE AREA SET ASIDE AS A MEMORIAL TO THE SIX MILLION VICTIMS OF HITLER. AS YOU APPROACH THE LARGE BUILDING IN THE CENTER OF THE PARK-LIKE AREA, YOU PASS ON EITHER SIDE A ROW OF TREES. EACH TREE IS DEDICATED IN HONOR OF SOME NON-JEW WHO SAVED A JEW FROM HITLER. THERE ARE MANY TREES, MAYBE 100. AT FIRST YOU THINK, "MY, WHAT A LARGE NUMBER OF TREES". THEN, AS YOU WALK, YOU THINK, "THERE OUGHT TO BE MORE TREES". AT THE END OF THE PROMENADE, ONE ENTERS A BUILDING. YOU ARE GREETED BY DARKNESS. AFTER YOUR EYES FOCUS, YOU REALIZE THAT YOU ARE ON A SLIGHTLY RAISED PLATFORM LOOKING DOWN AT A LARGE FLOOR. THERE IS NO FURNITURE OR ORNAMENT IN THIS HUGE ROOM, EXCEPT FOR A TORCH IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER, WHICH SUPPLIES THE ONLY ILLUMINATION THERE IS. GRADUALLY, YOU BEGIN TO MAKE OUT A FEW WORDS WRITTEN ON THE FLOOR. YOU READ...BUCHENWALD...DACHAU. YOU BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THAT THESE ARE THE NAMES OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS WHERE THE GERMANS SYSTEMATICALLY KILLED THE JEWS OF EUROPE. YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THE OTHER NAMES BUT YOU ARE DRAWN TO THEM ANYHOW. YOU READ ... AUSCHWITZ...BERGEN-BELSEN...TREBLINKA...CHEMLNO...MAJDANEK...OTHERS. YOU ARE IN THE DARK, YET YOU SEE THE NAMES, AND YOU THINK BEHIND THE NAMES. WITHIN A FEW SECONDS YOU ARE TRYING TO STIFLE AN ALMOST UNCONTROLLABLE URGE TO SCREAM OUT YOUR ANGUISH! YOU WALK, ALMOST RUN FROM THE ROOM. FOOLISHLY, YOU TURN YOUR HEAD TO HIDE YOUR TEARS; FOOLISHLY, FOR EVERYONE ELSE IS CRYING TOO. YOU RUSH FROM THE ROOM, FOR WHO CAN BEAR THE SILENT THOUGHT OF SUCH HUMAN SUFFERING WITHOUT GOING MAD. YET--WE JEWS MUST THINK OF THAT SUFFERING FROM TIME TO TIME. FOR IT IS OUR SUFFERING. IT IS A SUFFERING WHICH SEPARATES US OUT FROM OUR UNIVERSALISM, EVEN WHILE IT WELDS US TO ALL HUMANS THAT SUFFER. WE ARE SEPARATED OUT FOR DEEPER FEELING, FOR DEEPER DEDICATION. IF WE FORGET OUR SUFFERING, THEN, ALL HUMAN EXPERIENCE IS A MOCKERY. IF WE DO NOTHING TO COMPENSATE FOR OUR GREAT LOSS, THEN HUMAN HISTORY BECOMES A MANIACAL JOKE. ONCE YOU HAVE BEEN IN THAT ROOM IN JERUSALEM, YOU KNOW WHAT THE STATE OF ISRAEL IS ALL ABOUT, AND YOU UNDERSTAND MORE CLEARLY WHY FROM THE TIME YOU SET FOOT IN THAT STATE, YOU ARE NOT JUST ANOTHER TOURIST.

IF THIS KIND OF IDENTIFICATION WITH INDESCRIBABLE SUFFERING LEADS US ONLY TO WORK IN BEHALF OF JEWS, IT WOULD NOT SUFFICE FOR THE TASK THAT OUR TRADITION AND OUR GOD HAS SPELLED OUT FOR US. FOR SUCH WHOLESALÉ SUFFERING, DEDICATION TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE ALONE IS TOO SMALL A DEDICATION; YET FOR SUCH SUFFERING, DEDICATION TO MANKIND, BUT NOT TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE IS UNTHINKABLE!

I HAVE HEARD SOME JEWS SAY THAT IN ORDER TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF MANKIND, WE MUST SURRENDER OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE. AS WELL AS TO SAY, THAT IN ORDER TO BE A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD, ONE MUST SURRENDER HIS INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS FAMILY. AS WELL AS TO SAY, THAT SINCE I AM A CHILD OF THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS, I CANNOT LOVE THE SPECIFIC MOTHER WHO BORE ME AND NOURISHED ME. AS WELL TO SAY, THAT SINCE ALL IDEAS ARE THE PROPERTY OF ALL MEN EVERYWHERE, THEREFORE, I CANNOT HAVE A SPECIAL RESPECT FOR THE TEACHERS WHO FIRST PROMULGATED THEM OR WHO WROTE THE CHERISHED BOOKS FROM WHICH THOSE IDEAS FIRST LEAPED. HOW IMPOSSIBLE IT IS TO LOVE THE WORLD AND TO SEVER ONESELF DELIBERATELY FROM THOSE WORTHY INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS INTO WHICH ONE WAS BORN, OR FROM WHICH ONE HAS BENEFITED.

#### ANCESTRAL MEMORIES

YES, WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS FIRST, BUT WE JEWS ARE A SPECIAL KIND OF HUMAN BEING. WE ARE AMERICANS, YES, BUT WE ARE A SPECIAL KIND OF AMERICAN. WE ARE MEMBERS OF THE WHITE RACE, YES, BUT WE ARE A SPECIAL KIND OF WHITE. WE ARE DIFFERENT BECAUSE WE CARRY WITHIN OUR GENES AND WITHIN OUR MIND, ANCESTRAL MEMORIES--MEMORIES OF BEING PART OF A MISUNDERSTOOD MINORITY, MEMORIES OF DISCRIMINATION AND GAS CHAMBER, MEMORIES OF SINAI AND COMMANDMENTS, MEMORIES OF AN AMAZING INTELLECTUAL STRIVING THAT LED OUR PEOPLE TO DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF MUSIC, SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND MEDICINE. DOES NOT ALL THIS HISTORIC EXPERIENCE PRODUCE A HUMAN PRODUCT THAT IS DIFFERENT?! IS IT PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY FOR AN INTELLIGENT MODERN JEW TO DENY THE FACT THAT IF HE IS NOT DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS, HE OUGHT TO BE?

WHEN WE WERE IN ISRAEL, I COULD NOT HELP BUT MARVEL AT A YOUNG ISRAELI SOLDIER WHO SEEMED SO MILD AND PLEASANT AND INCAPABLE OF KILLING. I THOUGHT OF THIS BOY'S GRANDFATHER WHO MUST HAVE BEEN A TALMUDIC SCHOLAR IN EASTERN EUROPE BEFORE HE WAS KILLED. HOW INCAPABLE OF HOLDING A GUN WOULD THAT GRANDFATHER HAVE BEEN. HOW ACCUSTOMED TO NON-VIOLENCE WAS THIS ZADI, HOW EASY A TOUCH HE WAS FOR THE INSENSITIVE NAZI WHO SAW IN THIS BOOKISH OLD MAN A DANGEROUS ENEMY OF FASCISM. BUT THIS ISRAELI BOY HITCHING A RIDE ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM - WHAT MANNER OF MAN WAS HE? FOR ONE THING, HE WAS A MEMBER OF PERHAPS THE BEST SMALL ARMY IN MODERN HISTORY. HE KNEW HOW TO FARM WITH HIS HANDS IN THE HOT SUN, TO BRING WATER HUNDREDS OF MILES IN PIPES TO THE DESERT. HE KNEW HOW TO FLY A JET AT SIX HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR, AND HE COULD DRIVE A TANK ACROSS THE DESERT FOR SIX STRAIGHT DAYS PAUSING ONLY TO SLEEP AND TO REFUEL. WAS THIS ISRAELI SOLDIER, WHO SPOKE THE LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE, WAS HE MERELY A MAN LIKE OTHER MEN, OR WAS HE DIFFERENT IN SOME STRANGE WAY?

WHILE IN ISRAEL, MY WIFE AND I SAW THE BEDOUIN, THOSE IMPOVERISHED ARABS WHO LIVE IN TENTS MADE OF GOATS-SKIN AND WHO FOLLOW THEIR SHEEP FROM OASES TO OASES IN SEARCH OF WATER AND A LITTLE GREENERY. ABRAHAM, OUR FATHER, WAS SUCH A BEDOUIN 4,000 YEARS AGO. BY WHAT CHEMISTRY, BY WHAT LEAP OF FAITH, BY WHAT MIRACLE OF COURAGE, DID ABRAHAM SET OUT ON THE PATH THAT LED HIM AND HIS DESCENDENTS FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY FROM THE ILLITERATE AND BACKWARD ARABS THAT STILL PEOPLE THE NEAR-EAST, AND WHO LIVE SUBSTANTIALLY AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE? HOW IS IT THAT TEL-AVIV HAS ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS AND CAIRO DOES NOT? HOW IS IT THAT THE JEWS HAVE BUILT ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT MEDICAL CENTERS IN JERUSALEM AND ONE OF THE GREAT SCIENTIFIC CENTERS IN THE TECHNION AND AT THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY, CENTERS THAT SIMPLY HAVE NO PARALLEL AMONGST THE ARAB PEOPLES? WE CAN ALL THINK OF REASONS FOR THESE DIFFERENCES; --NONE OF THEM OUGHT TO REVOLVE AROUND THE NOTION OF THE INATE SUPERIORITY OF JEW OVER ARAB, FOR THIS IS NOT SO! THE DIFFERENCE IS ONE OF SPIRITUAL INSIGHT, INTELLECTUAL ENERGY, GEOGRAPHICAL WANDERING, INEXPLICABLE COURAGE. THE DIFFERENCE IS CAUSED BY CHANCE AND BY EFFORT, BY GOOD FORTUNE AND BY BAD FORTUNE; BUT THE DIFFERENCE IS THERE. IN MORE SUBTLE WAYS IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JEW AND NON-JEW ON THE AMERICAN SCENE, ALTHOUGH SOME OF US MAY NOT BE MINDFUL OF THAT DIFFERENCE.

MY APPEAL TONIGHT IS THAT WE STOP RUNNING AWAY FROM THIS DIFFERENCE, THAT WE RE-ASSERT THE UNIQUENESS OF OUR PEOPLE-HOOD, THAT WE ONCE AGAIN SHOULDER THE GROUP PURPOSE THAT IS WORTHY OF AN "AM S'GULAH", A PEOPLE THAT HAS HAD A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HISTORY. THE DAY OF UNIVERSAL PEACE AND BROTHERHOOD ENVISIONED BY OUR PROPHETS IS THE GREAT GOAL, BUT BEFORE IT CAN BE ACHIEVED BY THE BROAD SPECTRUM OF MANKIND, IT MUST FIRST BE ACHIEVED BY SMALL GROUPS SUPERBLY DEDICATED. THIS IS NO TIME FOR FALSE PRIDE AND TALK OF SUPERIORITY, BUT THIS IS A TIME FOR ORDINARY INDIVIDUALS TO ACT WITH UNCOMMON MOTIVATION. THIS IS A TIME WHEN THOSE WHOM HISTORY HAS SENSITIZED IN A UNIQUE WAY MUST ACT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO HELP SENSITIZE OTHERS.

"BE THOU THE LEAVEN IN THE DOUGH", A JEWISH TEACHER SAID TO THE JEWS OF 2,000 YEARS AGO. THOUGH YOU ARE SMALL IN NUMBERS, HE TAUGHT, KNOW THAT IT TAKES ONLY A LITTLE LEAVEN, A LITTLE YEAST, TO MAKE THE DOUGH RISE. IT DOES NOT TAKE MANY DEDICATED PEOPLE TO MOVE A SOCIETY FORWARD, TO SPARK IDEAS, TO START TRENDS, TO REINFORCE THE GOOD, TO SET AN EXAMPLE IN MORALITY.

LET'S NOT BE AFRAID TO BE DIFFERENT IN THIS SENSE, MY FELLOW JEWS. LET US DETERMINE ON THIS ROSH HASHANAH THAT WE SHALL WILLINGLY ACCEPT THE OBLIGATION OF "AHAVAT HESED", THE LOVE OF DUTY. LET US DETERMINE THAT WE SHALL STRIVE TO BE THE "LEAVEN IN THE DOUGH", THE CATALYTIC GROUP THAT WILL STIMULATE MANKIND TO RELEASE THE DIVINE POTENTIAL IMPLANTED WITHIN IT.