

## THE SEAGULL AND THE TREE

A Yom Kippur Sermon by  
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PERHAPS THE GREATEST AMERICAN AUTHORITY IN THE FIELD OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION HAS BEEN WILLIAM JAMES. WILLIAM JAMES HAS BEEN DEAD A FEW YEARS, BUT HIS BOOK, "THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE", IS STILL THE STANDARD IN THE FIELD. JAMES TELLS US THAT WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS IS A MORAL EQUIVALENT FOR WAR. WHAT HE MEANS BY THIS IS THAT IN WARTIME PEOPLE SEEM TO BE ABLE TO LAY ASIDE THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS AND AMBITIONS AND ARE ABLE TO WORK ENTHUSIASTICALLY FOR THE COMMON GOOD. WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS, JAMES TAUGHT, IS SOMETHING NOT DESTRUCTIVE, AS WAR IS, THAT CAN PULL THE PEOPLE TOGETHER POSITIVELY IN AN EXCITING CAUSE. JAMES SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE HAPPIER WHEN THEY ARE PART OF A GROUP WITH A SHARED PURPOSE. THE CLOSEST WE SEEM TO GET TO THIS KIND OF FEELING IN AMERICA TODAY IS THE FEELING WE SHARE AT A FOOTBALL GAME.

THE ISRAELIS TELL US THAT THE BEST SOLDIERS IN THEIR CRACK ARMY ARE THE YOUNG MEN WHO COME FROM THE KIBBUTZIM. THE KIBBUTZIM ARE THOSE VILLAGES IN WHICH GOALS AND WORK ARE SHARED. IN A KIBBUTZ, EVERYONE IS TRAINED FROM BIRTH THAT HE HAS CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD THE GROUP. WHEN YOUNG MEN SO TRAINED ARE PLACED IN THE ARMY, THEY ARE THE SOLDIERS MOST READY TO COOPERATE AND TO WORK AS A TEAM.

DURING THE TERRIFYING AERIAL BOMBARDMENT OF BRITAIN BY HITLER, SOCIOLOGISTS NOTED THAT CHILDREN WHO REMAINED WITH THEIR FAMILIES SHOWED NO PSYCHOLOGICAL ILL EFFECTS FROM THE FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE. SINCE THE DANGER WAS SHARED, THE CHILDREN ADJUSTED VERY WELL. THOSE CHILDREN WHO WERE NOT WITH THEIR FAMILIES SHOWED MORE SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL ILL EFFECTS, ON THE WHOLE. APPARENTLY, THERE IS A SECURITY IN THE FAMILY OR GROUP SITUATION WHICH ENABLES THE INDIVIDUAL TO HOLD UP BETTER UNDER LIFE'S POUNDING.

I SPEAK OF THESE THINGS BECAUSE IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IN AMERICA TODAY WE ARE SEEING LESS AND LESS EMPHASIS ON THE FAMILY AND THE GROUP. WHAT WE ARE EXPERIENCING IN THIS COUNTRY TODAY IS AN EMPHASIS ON THE INDIVIDUAL WHICH HAS NO PARALLEL IN HUMAN HISTORY. CONCERN FOR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IS OF COURSE THE REASON FOR THIS COUNTRY'S EXISTENCE, BUT WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THIS CONCERN WAS SPELLED OUT AT A TIME WHEN NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS WERE RULED BY KINGS WHO GOVERNED ARBITRARILY AND WITHOUT CONCERN FOR INDIVIDUALS. WHAT IS GOING ON IN OUR COUNTRY TODAY MIGHT GIVE US PAUSE TO WONDER WHETHER WE HAVE GONE TOO FAR, IN SOME RESPECTS, IN TRAINING INDIVIDUALS TO THINK TOO MUCH OF THEMSELVES AND NOT ENOUGH OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GROUP.

THE LATE PRESIDENT KENNEDY TRIED TO GIVE AMERICANS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE INABILITY OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO SATISFY EVERY WHIM OF ITS PEOPLE. KENNEDY ADVISED THE PEOPLE, "ASK NOT WHAT MY COUNTRY CAN DO FOR ME, BUT ASK, WHAT CAN I DO FOR MY COUNTRY." THE TRUTH IS THAT AMERICA IS DESPERATELY IN NEED OF HELP FROM ITS PEOPLE, BUT THE PEOPLE ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH ASKING FOR MORE FOR THEMSELVES.

NOW, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE TO USE THIS KIND OF STATEMENT TO SAY, "THE RABBI IS NOT IN FAVOR OF EXTENDING GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO HELP THE POOR." ANYONE WHO HAS FOLLOWED MY ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC LIFE AS A LONG-TIME MEMBER OF THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY BOARD OR THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD KNOWS THAT THIS IS NOT SO. THERE ARE GRAVE INEQUITIES IN AMERICAN SOCIETY, AND THEY NEED TO BE CORRECTED, BUT THEY WILL NOT BE CORRECTED PROPERLY SO LONG AS AMERICANS AT ALL ECONOMIC LEVELS TAKE FROM THE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT GIVING ADEQUATELY OF THEIR SKILLS AND MEANS. WHAT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT IS THE ATTITUDE WITH WHICH WE RELATE TO OUR GOVERNMENT. FOR MOST

OF US; THE GOVERNMENT IS THAT FOREIGN SOMETHING WAY OUT THERE, WHICH IS OUR ENEMY, TRYING TO TAKE OUR MONEY FOR TAXES. CONSEQUENTLY, WE ARE RESOLVED TO FIGHT IT EVERY INCH OF THE WAY, WITHOUT REGARD TO THE HIGHER PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT, AND WITHOUT REGARD TO THE OBVIOUS TRUTH THAT THOSE WHO ARE STRONGER AND RICHER MUST GIVE MORE TO THE GROUP THAN THOSE WHO ARE WEAKER AND POORER.

I DO NOT HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT THE CURRENT AMERICAN TREND IS AWAY FROM GROUP RELATIONSHIPS TO INDIVIDUAL FULFILLMENT AND TOWARDS INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS OF RIGHT AND WRONG. IN SUCH A SITUATION, THE COUNTRY SUFFERS AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY SUFFERS. INDIVIDUAL FULFILLMENT IS A WONDERFUL GOAL; IF IT IS ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN A FRAMEWORK THAT PROVIDES FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE GROUP AND THE CONTINUATION OF THE GROUP; BUT IF THE GOAL OF THE INDIVIDUAL IS TO MAKE HIMSELF SO INDEPENDENT THAT HE CAN LEAVE THE GROUP ENTIRELY, THEN THE GROUP IS IN TROUBLE, AND SUCH AN INDIVIDUAL IS ITS ENEMY.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, A BOOK WAS PUBLISHED WHICH WAS AN INSTANT SUCCESS. IT WAS CALLED, "JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL". THE AUTHOR WAS TRYING TO TEACH US THAT WE SHOULD EACH TRY TO BE LIKE THE SEAGULL SOARING IN THE SKY, EXPRESSING OUR FREEDOM FROM EVERYTHING THAT WOULD TIE US TO THE GROUND. THE IMAGE OF THE SEAGULL IS AN APT ONE FOR WHAT MANY OF OUR SO-CALLED FULFILLED INDIVIDUALS ARE BECOMING. THE SEAGULL HAS NO ATTACHMENTS TO THE EARTH, NO RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE EARTH. HE TAKES, BUT HE DOES NOT GIVE IN RETURN. HE IS A VULTURE, A SCAVENGER. SUPREME INDIVIDUALIST HE IS, MOVING FAST, TRAVELLING LONG DISTANCES, BUT HE LACKS ALTOGETHER THE QUALITY TO MAKE THINGS ENDURE AND TO BE HEROIC.

THE IMAGE THAT THE TORAH AND THE TALMUD SUGGEST FOR US TO IMITATE IS THE TREE. THE TREE DOESN'T TRAVEL FROM THE SPOT OF ITS BIRTH AT ALL, BUT IT DOES REACH DOWN AND UP. THE TREE SENDS ITS ROOTS INTO THE EARTH, HOLDING FAST TO IT AND THUS KEEPING THE EARTH FROM BEING BLOWN AWAY BY THE WIND OR FROM FLOWING AWAY IN THE FLOOD. THE TREE SENDS ITS BRANCHES UP TO HEAVEN AS IT REACHES FOR THE SUN, BUT IN DOING SO, IT DOES NOT SURRENDER ITS ROOTS. FURTHER, THE TREE YIELDS ITS FRUIT TO OTHERS IN NEED OF NOURISHMENT. IT LENDS ITS BRANCHES FOR BIRDS TO REST IN, AND IT PERMITS PEOPLE TO REST IN ITS SHADE. THE IMAGE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE IS THAT OF A TREE, AN "ETZ CHAYIM", A TREE OF LIFE. THE IMAGE OF THE MODERN AVANT-GARDE IS THE SEAGULL.

NOW, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT MY PURPOSE IS NOT TO PIT THE YOUNGER GENERATION AGAINST THE OLDER GENERATION. BOTH GENERATIONS ARE VICTIMS OF THE CURRENT TREND. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT WHILE THE OLDER GENERATION IS IN THE PROCESS OF PULLING UP ITS ROOTS, THE YOUNGER GENERATION IS BORN FLYING. IF YOU HAVE ONCE BEEN A TREE, YOU KNOW THE PROBLEMS OF EXCESSIVE MOBILITY. IF YOU WERE BORN A SEAGULL, YOU HAVE NO IDEA OF THE VIRTUES OF ROOTEDNESS. A SEAGULL HAS NOTHING IN COMMON WITH A TREE.

WE HAVE AN EXAMPLE IN OUR BIBLE OF THIS KIND OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS. DAVID, THE SHEPHERD BOY, WAS A MAN OF THE PEOPLE. HE HAD A STRONG TIE TO HIS TRIBE AND TO THE SIMPLE ETHICS OF THE DESERT. WHEN HE BECAME KING, DAVID OCCASIONALLY ACTED LIKE ALL OTHER ANCIENT KINGS, BUT WHENEVER THE PROPHET REMINDED HIM OF THE ETHICS OF HIS PEOPLE, DAVID QUICKLY REPENTED AND RETURNED TO THE OLD WAYS. HAVING BEEN REARED AS A POOR BOY IN THE OLD WAYS, DAVID KNEW THE VIRTUES OF THESE WAYS. HIS INDIVIDUAL DESIRES AS KING WERE TEMPERED BY HIS EARLY TRAINING AS A MEMBER OF THE PEOPLE.

DAVID'S SON, ABSALOM, DID NOT HAVE THE SAME TRAINING AS HIS FATHER. ABSALOM WAS RAISED IN THE KING'S PALACE. ALL OF HIS LIFE HE HAD SERVANTS TO DO HIS BIDDING. THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT SINCE DAVID HAD BEEN SO POOR, HE WANTED HIS CHILDREN TO HAVE EVERYTHING HE DIDN'T HAVE. HE DELIGHTED IN ALL OF THE MATERIALISTIC PLEASURES HEAPED UPON HIS SON. FURTHER, SAYS THE BIBLE, DAVID WAS SO BUSY WITH HIS KINGLY DUTIES THAT HE RARELY DISCIPLINED ABSALOM. AS A RESULT, ABSALOM WAS QUITE PREPARED TO BE A KING JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHER NON-HEBRAIC KINGS. THERE WERE NO RESTRAINTS

ON HIS CONSCIENCE AS THERE WERE ON THE CONSCIENCE OF HIS FATHER. UNFORTUNATELY FOR ABSALOM, DAVID LIVED TO BE A VERY OLD MAN, AND ABSALOM WAS IMPATIENT TO BE KING; SO HE RALLIED AN ARMY TOGETHER AND CLAIMED TO BE THE KING HIMSELF IN PLACE OF HIS AGED FATHER. DAVID HAD NO RESORT BUT TO SEND HIS ARMY AGAINST THAT OF HIS SON. IN THE BATTLE, ABSALOM TURNED TO FLEE FROM DAVID'S CAPTAIN, BUT ABSALOM WAS VICTIMIZED BY HIS LONG HAIR. THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT WHEN ABSALOM RODE HIS DONKEY UNDER A TREE, HIS HAIR GOT CAUGHT IN THE BRANCH OF THE TREE, AND WHILE ABSALOM WAS HANGING THERE BY HIS HAIR, JOAB, DAVID'S CAPTAIN, KILLED HIM.

BY QUICKLY REVIEWING THIS STORY, WE CAN SEE THAT ABSALOM WAS NOT TOTALLY TO BLAME. HE WAS THE VICTIM OF HIS FATHER'S SUCCESS. HE WAS THE VICTIM OF THE EXCESSIVE AMBITION AND INDIVIDUALISM WHICH ALL HIS LIFE HE WAS ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP. THE POINT OF THIS WHOLE STORY IS FOR US TO ASK OURSELVES, "ARE WE DOING TO OUR CHILDREN WHAT DAVID DID TO HIS?"

CONSIDER NOW, WHAT DO WE TELL OUR CHILDREN FROM THE MOMENT THEY ARE BORN? WE TELL THEM WE ARE RAISING THEM TO BE MEMBERS OF ROYALTY. IF THEY ARE NOT TO BE KINGS AND QUEENS, AT LEAST THEY ARE TO BE DOCTORS AND LAWYERS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS AND MILLIONAIRES. FROM THE MOMENT THEY ARE BORN, WE PUT A BOOK IN THEIR HANDS, AND WE SAY, "THIS IS YOUR SOLE RESPONSIBILITY TO US. YOU MUST GET THE BEST GRADES IN SCHOOL. YOU MUST GO TO THE BEST COLLEGE. YOU MUST BECOME A PROFESSIONAL. YOU MUST EARN A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY, AND YOUR MUST BE SECURE ECONOMICALLY, LIKE A KING." ISN'T THIS WHAT WE TELL THEM?

IT IS WE WHO MAKE OUR CHILDREN SELF-CENTERED. WE ARE AFRAID TO GIVE THEM ANY CHORES IN THE HOUSE LEST WE TAKE TIME AWAY FROM THEIR BOOKS. WE DO NOT ASK THEM TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PURCHASE OF THE FAMILY FOOD OR TO THE PAYMENT OF THE RENT. WE ASK THEM ONLY TO TAKE FROM US WHAT WE INSIST ON GIVING, AND WE ASK THEM TO STUDY.

WHEN I WAS A BOY, I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF LIVING THROUGH THE GREAT DEPRESSION. I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SELLING NEWSPAPERS AS A STREET BOY AND PUTTING FOOD ON THE FAMILY TABLE. DO YOU KNOW WHAT JOY THAT CAN BRING TO A YOUNG BOY; TO KNOW THAT HE IS IMPORTANT TO HIS FAMILY IN SO VITAL A MATTER AS FOOD, TO KNOW THAT HE IS NEEDED AND THAT HE IS A PART OF A SOLEMN AND IMPORTANT EFFORT? OUR CHILDREN TODAY ARE DENIED THAT KIND OF PRIVILEGE. WE ARE, FORTUNATELY OR UNFORTUNATELY, TOO WELL OFF.

NOW LET US BE FAIR ABOUT THIS. STUDYING IS NOT THE CHILD'S NATURAL GOAL. IT IS WE WHO INSIST THAT THIS BE HIS ALL-CONSUMING PASSION. IT IS WE WHO NURTURE THE THOUGHT THAT SELF-IMPROVEMENT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT GOAL IN THE WORLD. WE SAY NOTHING TO OUR CHILDREN ABOUT FAMILY NEEDS OR THE NEEDS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE OR THE NEEDS OF AMERICA. NOW LET US FACE THIS QUESTION, "OF WHAT CAN A BOOKWORM PROPERLY DREAM?" DOES A BOOKWORM, OVERWHELMED WITH INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINE, BORED WITH SITTING, DREAM ABOUT ROOTEDNESS? DOES HE DREAM ABOUT BEING A TREE? OF COURSE NOT! HE DREAMS ABOUT MOVEMENT. HE DREAMS ABOUT RUNNING AND FLYING. HE DREAMS OF THE SEAGULL. HE DREAMS ABOUT THROWING OFF INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINE, AND TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, HE MAY VERY WELL HAVE TO REVOLT AGAINST THOSE WHO IMPOSE THIS DISCIPLINE ON HIM.

BUT RABBI, YOU MIGHT ASK, ARE YOU SAYING THAT WE SHALL GIVE UP THE TRADITIONAL JEWISH EMPHASIS ON LEARNING? I AM NOT SAYING THAT AT ALL. WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT LEARNING IS NOT THE ONLY THING IN THE WORLD. I AM SAYING THAT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN ACADEMIC LEARNING AND PREPARATION FOR A CAREER IS TEACHING A CHILD HIS RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE FAMILY, TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND TO HIS COUNTRY.

SINCE WE DO NOT GIVE OUR CHILDREN THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK FOR FAMILY, PEOPLE, AND COUNTRY, WE ARE TEACHING THEM SOMETHING ELSE. IN ADDITION TO TEACHING THEM OF THE CONSUMING IMPORTANCE OF A CAREER, WE TEACH THEM TO RECEIVE. WE DO NOT TEACH THEM HOW TO GIVE, TO SHARE. WE TEACH THEM TO TAKE. NO WONDER SO MANY OF OUR CHILDREN JOIN ALL SORTS OF CRAZY GROUPS THAT OFFER JUST THESE OTHER POSSIBILITIES

FOR THEM! WHAT DOES THE REV. MOON OFFER HIS YOUNG PEOPLE? HE OFFERS THEM WORK FOR A CAUSE, A HIGH PURPOSE BEYOND THEMSELVES, AND BELONGING TO A MEANINGFUL GROUP. WE JEWS HAVE ALL THESE THINGS TO OFFER AND MORE, BUT WE DON'T OFFER IT. ALL WE OFFER IS ATTENDANCE AT THE BEST COLLEGE AND FREE ROOM, BOARD, AND SPENDING MONEY!

CHILDREN TRAINED ONLY TO RECEIVE BUT NOT TO GIVE SOMETIMES CANNOT UNDERSTAND THAT PARADOXICAL MOMENT WHEN WE PARENTS FINALLY SAY, "ALL RIGHT, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN NOW. WE'RE NOT GIVING ANYMORE." "HOW CAN THIS BE POSSIBLE?" THE YOUNG PERSON MIGHT WELL ASK. "PARENTS ARE MEANT TO GIVE. ALL OUR YOUNG LIFE OUR PARENTS GAVE AND GAVE AND GAVE. HOW DARE THEY NOW SAY THEY ARE NOT GOING TO GIVE ANYMORE?" FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TRAINED ONLY TO RECEIVE, THIS MOMENT WHEN THE HANDOUTS CEASE CAN BE OVERWHELMING. IT CAN BE PERCEIVED BY THEM AS VINDICTIVENESS OR AS MISERLINESS ON OUR PART. OTHER CHILDREN ARE SENSITIVE ENOUGH TO PERCEIVE THAT THEY ARE CONSTANTLY TAKING FROM THEIR PARENTS WITHOUT GIVING IN RETURN. THEY UNDERSTAND THIS AS A DEHUMANIZING PROCESS. THEY SEE THIS AS AN UNDERMINING OF THEIR CHARACTER; BUT SINCE THEY ARE INVOLVED IN THE LONG TERM EFFORT TOWARDS PROFESSIONALISM, THEY HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO TAKE FROM THEIR PARENTS. AS A RESULT, THEY COME TO HAVE AMBIVALENT FEELINGS TOWARDS THE HANDS THAT FEED THEM, FOR THESE VERY HANDS HAVE MADE MUSHY DEPENDENTS OF THEM. THIS IS A PARADOX OF OUR CAREER-ORIENTED SOCIETY.

PEOPLE TRAINED ONLY TO RECEIVE BUT NOT TO GIVE HAVE DIFFICULTY WHEN THEY GET MARRIED. SINCE THEY HAVE ONLY KNOWN THAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WHERE THEY ARE THE RECEIVERS, HOW CAN THEY NOW SUDDENLY PARTICIPATE IN A RELATIONSHIP WHERE THEY ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO BE GIVERS? THEY HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO BE ENTERTAINED CONSTANTLY. HOW CAN THEY NOW ASSUME, SUDDENLY, THAT MARRIAGE IS FOR TREES BUT NOT FOR SEAGULLS? WHEN YOU'RE MARRIED, YOU CAN'T BE FLYING ALL OVER THE PLACE. MARRIAGE CUTS DOWN ON YOUR MOBILITY. PEOPLE TRAINED ALL THEIR LIVES TO MOVE AROUND BUT NOT TO SINK DOWN ROOTS HAVE CONSIDERABLE TROUBLE WITH THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP.

THE VISIBLE RESULTS OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN AMERICA TODAY ARE THESE: MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DELAYING MARRIAGE UNTIL THEIR VERY LATE TWENTIES OR EVEN INTO THE THIRTIES. WHEN THEY DO GET MARRIED, THE DIVORCE RATE IS AROUND FIFTY PER CENT. IF THEY DO GET MARRIED, MANY OF THEM ARE NOT INTERESTED IN HAVING CHILDREN. IF THEY ARE INTERESTED IN CHILDREN, THEIR INTEREST WANES AFTER THE FIRST OR SECOND CHILD. WHY? HAVING CHILDREN, I AM TOLD, INTERFERES WITH THEIR LIFESTYLE. NO SELF-CENTERED PERSON WANTS TO SHARE HIS SKY SPACE WITH HIS OWN CHILD. BESIDES, A CHILD BINDS ONE TO THE EARTH.

NOW, I HAVE MADE THE SITUATION A LITTLE MORE EXTREME THAN IT ACTUALLY IS, BUT ONLY A LITTLE MORE EXTREME. I HAVE DONE SO TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE OBVIOUS TREND OF OUR TIME. CERTAINLY THIS IS TRUE FOR MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES SUCH AS OURS, AND IT IS ALL THE MORE TRUE FOR JEWISH FAMILIES, BECAUSE WE ARE THE MOST CAREER-ORIENTED OF ALL MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES. THEREFORE, THE PROBLEM OF THE TIMES IS MOST EVIDENCED IN OUR MIDST.

TO THOSE WHO DEAL IN STATISTICS, THE PRESENT TREND IS DISASTROUS FOR THE JEW IN AMERICA. OUR CHILDREN ARE NOT GETTING MARRIED, AND THOSE WHO DO ARE HAVING FEW CHILDREN. IT HAS BEEN PROJECTED THAT WITHIN A FEW GENERATIONS, IF THIS TREND CONTINUES, IT WILL BE ALL OVER FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN AMERICA.

WITH THESE PROJECTIONS IN MIND, WHAT THEN ARE WE TO TEACH OUR CHILDREN? A CAREER IS IMPORTANT, OF COURSE, BUT IT IS ONLY ONE OF MANY IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE. SURVIVAL FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE IS IMPORTANT, THEREFORE JEWISH MARRIAGES AND JEWISH CHILDREN ARE IMPORTANT. SHARING WITHIN THE FAMILY IS IMPORTANT. CONTRIBUTING TO THE FAMILY NEEDS IS IMPORTANT. MAINTAINING AND CONTRIBUTING TO JEWISH INSTITUTIONS IS IMPORTANT. SAVING OUR COUNTRY IS IMPORTANT. SHARING IN THE PROBLEMS OF CITY, STATE, AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IS IMPORTANT.

CURRENTLY WE ARE TEACHING OUR CHILDREN TO BE SEAGULLS, TO BE LUFTMENSCHEN. WE HAVE TO TEACH THEM TO BECOME TREES WITH THEIR ROOTS IN THE EARTH AND GIVING FRUIT TO THOSE IN NEED.