

# Sh'ma

## *a journal of Jewish responsibility*

7/139, OCTOBER 14, 1977

### **Cairo triologue: christian, moslem, jew**

*Harold Schulweis*

Three of us, a Moslem imam, a Presbyterian minister and I, a rabbi, have returned from an intensive 10-day visit in Egypt, during which we met with a number of key Egyptian religious and political figures. The implications of those meetings far exceeded our original intention to promote inter-religious triologue among the three monotheistic traditions. The experience confirmed the values in the power of the word in meeting and the potentiality for religion to help prepare the ground for peaceful co-existence. It suggested alternate ways for Jews and non-Jews, within and without Israel, to effect the climatic change essential to political negotiation in the Middle East.

During our stay in Egypt, we were granted two private audiences with the Grand Imam and Rector of Cairo's Al-Azhar University, Abdul Halim Mahmoud, recognized in the Islamic world — Sunni and Shiite — as the leading authority on Moslem scripture and law.

We met privately and at length with Pope Shenouda III, Patriarch of Cairo and Pope of Alexandria of the Coptic Orthodox Church. During those meetings more than pro forma exchanges of inter-faith good will took place.

Our stay in Egypt was not limited to private meetings. We were interviewed for some two hours by a distinguished journalist for the Arab Rose Elyosof newspaper and appeared on national Egyptian television. The latter program was shown on prime time (Sunday, July 24, channel 5) as a segment in the popular talk show "International Club," hosted by Samir Sabri, Egypt's well known movie and television celebrity. Our segment, originally scheduled for 15 minutes, lasted close to an hour. Prior to that appearance, we met privately with Abdul Moneim el-Sawy,

President Sadat's Minister of Culture and Information, with whom I engaged in open and even heated discussion.

#### **Interreligious Dialogue takes on New Dimension**

A word about how this all came about. A year ago I was approached by Dr. A. Muhsin el-Biali, a citizen of Egypt, spiritual leader for Moslems on the West Coast of the United States, to join him and Dr. George B. Grose, a Presbyterian minister, in an inter-religious dialogue. Dr. Grose is originator and founder of this triologue which seeks to deepen the relationship between the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and to lecture on the religious and moral foundations of the three faiths before religious and secular audiences.

I accepted their invitation because I have long felt that the waning inter-religious dialogue since the late 60's is a serious detriment to Jewish and humanitarian interests. Additionally, I cherished the notion of establishing a relationship with a Moslem leader, particularly one who had publicly condemned the terrorist massacre in Munich. Moreover, none of us was blind to the possibilities which such inter-religious dialogues may contribute towards peace in the Middle East.

Out of our mutual interests and joint encounters grew a friendship and a resolve to bring our work to the attention of spiritual leaders in the Vatican and the Middle East. While the Egyptian government would not allow el-Biali to go to Israel, that would not prevent our going to Egypt to confer with Islamic and Coptic leaders.

#### **Gaining Entrance into Egypt**

Arrangements for our Rome and Cairo meetings were made by Drs. Grose and el-Biali. We were to meet in Rome and then together fly to Cairo. Dr. el-Biali first flew home to Egypt, and I to Israel to visit my children at Kibbutz Beit Hashittah and to see my newborn sabra grandson, Yonathan. Upon arriving in Rome, we received an urgent telex from our Moslem colleague advising us to cancel our plans to come to Egypt and to proceed with our business in Rome. In Rome we read of bombings that had taken place in Ataba Square, the site of one of Cairo's main bus stations, and that an extremist Moslem sect, Takfeer el-Hejira, had kidnapped and later assassinated the Egyptian Minister of Religious Endowment, Mohammed Hussein Zahabi. We surmised that el-Biali was concerned for our safety and that the introduction of Jewish and Christian theologians in Egypt at this time could be used by orthodox Moslems as evidence of Sadat's unorthodoxy.

We had relied upon Dr. El-Biali to wave the wand for my entry. Unable to contact our Moslem colleague, who was somewhere in Egypt for further information, Dr. Grose and I decided to gain visas for Egypt on our own. We approached the Egyptian Embassy in Rome and were told to fill out the visa applications which included such items of information as religion, profession and purpose of visit. I filled out the visa, indicating that I was Jewish and a rabbi. My passport witnessed to my prior visits to the State of Israel. While Dr. Grose's visa application was immediately approved, the secretary looked at my application, then at me and then again at the application form as if to test her sense of congruence. She suggested we see the Egyptian consul, Shadia Shoukry, who, examining the application, broke out in smiles of incredulity and judged my application as "impossible." We both explained the nature of our visit, Dr. Grose offering testimony to my character and benevolent intention. We insisted that we speak to the Egyptian Ambassador. While Consul Shoukry could not arrange such a meeting at short notice, she offered to speak with him herself. She picked up the telephone, engaged him in an intense Arabic conversation and finally announced that the Ambassador authorized the granting of a visa for me.

**Proposal for a Reciprocal Exchange of Scholars**  
In Egypt, Dr. Grose and I stayed at the Hilton Hotel overlooking the Nile. Two Egyptian plainclothesmen wearing revolvers were stationed near the elevator of our hotel floor and kept 24-hour duty throughout our stay.

We made contact with our Moslem colleague who arranged our first meeting with the Grand Imam. The rector of Al-Azhar received us politely and ordered tea and coffee to be brought in. He fingered his string of 99 beads, each bead corresponding to another attribute of Allah, and noted the neglect and even distortion of Islamic tradition in the West. Through Dr. el-Biali, who served as our interpreter, I proposed a reciprocal exchange of scholars to overcome the ignorance and misconceptions of our traditions. Could not Islamic ulemmas offer courses at Jewish and Christian seminaries and, reciprocally, could not Jewish and Christian theologians offer courses in their respective traditions at Islamic seminaries such as Al-Azhar. While Dr. Mahmoud agreed to sending Islamic scholars to the United States, he could see no purpose in arranging reciprocation. From his perception, Islam already accepts Judaism and Christianity, Moses and Jesus, and both traditions are taught at Al-Azhar. It was a position we would hear expressed

repeatedly. I asked him who it was that was teaching Judaism, and he answered that the instructor was an Islamic faculty member. I respectfully pointed out that for the same reasons that he was not satisfied with non-Islamic scholars teaching the Koran and Islamic theology, I would question the wisdom of having the Bible and Judaism taught through Islamic eyes. Dr. Grose, speaking for Christianity, agreed that scholarship aside, it lacked the authenticity which comes from the exposition by an identified believer.

**Leader feels Judaism not always Taught Best by Jews**  
Dr. Mahmoud added the observation that as a student at the Sorbonne he had heard lectures on Judaism

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from Jewish instructors who did not present Judaism in the best light. In short he advised that Judaism, taught by Al-Azhar scholars, would be better off in Islamic hands. I suggested that there must be Muslim scholars whose reading of Islam he would similarly find objectionable, but that, at any event, those teachers of Judaism sent to Egypt would be qualified and selected by his Jewish counterparts. While the Grand Imam agreed to take the proposal under consideration, his answers were grounded in the classic Islamic position which views the Koran as offering the corrected version of Old and New Testament history. As Dr. el-Biali put it, the Koran was the "last edition." I argued that the claims of Judaism as "the first edition" or the Koran as "the last edition" were not pertinent to our intention of overcoming the ignorance which veils us from each other. Such exchanges should preclude theological one-upmanship or conversionary design. Dr. Mahmoud laughed aloud at the mention of conversion. I suspect that he had Christian missionary movements in the Middle East in mind and was sensitive to their conversionary zeal in Moslem countries. Creating dialogue in the East requires the same patience and persistence it called for and still demands in the West.

Several days later at our second meeting with the Grand Imam our discussions were more relaxed. We were greeted as old friends. Dr. Grose proposed that leaders of the three traditions proclaim days of prayers for peace to coincide with the Geneva Conference. Dr. Mahmoud agreed to my suggestion that he compose a prayer for peace to be added to the others, an ecumenical act which would encourage the negotiators in their search for peace.

**Explaining Zionism as a Counterpart to "Ummah"**  
At a separate meeting, the Coptic Pope Shenouda III accepted both proposals for theological exchange and the prayer for peace in the Middle East. The Patriarch of Cairo cautioned that initially the exchange should be limited to theologians and only later to students and that at least in the beginning the congruent elements of our faiths be stressed. He indicated that his caution derived from personal experience. On the wall of Pope Shenouda's impressive study was a framed inscription of Arabic calligraphy. I asked the patriarch its meaning and he explained that it was a verse from Isaiah, "Blessed be Egypt." I admired the beauty of the script but observed that the enframed verse was incomplete. Missing were two concluding parts: "And Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance." Pope Shenouda good humoredly pointed to the wall and replied, "You see,

it was such a small frame." He embraced and kissed each of us.

With Mr. Rizk, the Egyptian journalist of Rose Elyosof, the question of the distinction between Zionism and Judaism repeatedly arose. I tried to explain the inter-relationship as analagous to that between Islamic theology and the importance of "ummah" or peoplehood. Islam and Judaism are more than religious ideologies and ritual practices. They are holistic expressions of civilizations which embrace the economic, political and social well being of Dar al-Islam and Beit Yisrael. From that organic view of "religion," it should not be difficult for Moslems to appreciate the Abrahamic covenant of God and land and people. In this sense, Zionism was not born a century ago but has its roots in the Biblical promise to the father of many peoples.

#### **Recognizing Mutual Fears Breaks the Ice**

With Dr. El-Sawy, the Minister of Culture and Information, the exchange was sharper, more political. The discussion took place in the presence of my two colleagues and Mohammed Abdul Jawwad, director of the Middle East News Agency. For Dr. el-Sawy Zionism was an alien, European intrusion which dispossessed the native Arabs of Palestine. To every historical event legitimizing the Jewish state that I mentioned, he replied by asking rhetorically by what right Lord Balfour had to declare a Jewish homeland, or by what right did the League of Nations mandate the land to Great Britain, or by what right did the United Nations ordain the partitioning of Palestine.

We were at loggerheads. The argumentation seemed endless and unproductive. Non-verbally my colleagues indicated their unease with the way the conversation was going. I turned to Dr. el-Sawy to tell him that I had not come to make debater's points and that historical events were differently interpreted and weighted by us. My interest now was not in arguing over what occurred in 1917, but in exploring what we can do in 1977. What shall be done now, given the incontrovertible fact of Israel's presence and the terrifying possibility of a fifth war. As quickly as the conversation shifted from past claims and counter-claims to the pragmatics of the present and future, Dr. el-Sawy's tone changed as well. "Truly, why should we spill our children's blood? Our economy is drained by the preparations for war. Why do we need such wars?" I assured the Minister that having just come from Israel I heard his precise sentiments expressed by Israelis. "I know my people and I know how deep is their desire for peace here and now." "Then let them give back the land," he resumed. I spoke about Egypt

tian fears and Israeli fears. The Libyan-Egyptian outbreak had been announced that morning by President Sadat, and Dr. el-Sawy was sensitive to border threats. I asked him, "Would you counsel a country to deal with terrorists or to give them sovereign status in your midst knowing their hostility towards your existence? Should you not be apprehensive over Libyan or Soviet influence in such a dependent state?" He replied that granting autonomy and power to govern makes even extremists responsible leaders. In a lighter mood, I told him that taking such risks was obviously easier for Egypt than for Israel. However heated the meeting, and the unanticipated course of events it took, we parted with a friendlier and more appreciative understanding of our positions. What we heard was not only the rhetoric of loyalty but a confession of our vulnerability, of our felt fears of threats to our security. We were more than powers flexing our muscles. We were fathers of children.

#### A Sensitive Hour of Statesmanship "on-the-air"

The television studios were located in a sandbagged government building, guarded by soldiers. The television crew at channel 5 was intently interested in this program. There was more than the novelty of firstness, the appearance of a "Zionist" rabbi wearing his skull cap at this audio-visual presentation of three religious leaders sitting side by side. What was heard was a triologue without conversionary or triumphalist airs. We each spoke of our similarities and differences and the need to understand the other. In a society raised on the notion of Islam's supremacy and singular truth such a pluralistic presence based on mutual respect was not a prosaic event in Egypt. I praised President Sadat's statement earlier that week addressed to the Islamic Societies Conference which stressed that Islam is a religion of tolerance, commended Sadat for his statements that week which foresaw full diplomatic recognition of Israel and cultural exchange with Israel. Emphasizing Israel's desire for peace, I quoted in Hebrew and English Isaiah's prophetic prayer, "In that day shall Israel be the third Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth."

The enthusiastic response of those in the crowded television studio was not feigned. Mr. Samir Sabri who conducted the hour-long interview with sensitivity was obviously moved. He perceived us as apolitical, spiritual statesmen. On camera he spoke of the need of people to transcend their political and military leaders in their cries for peace. "War," Talleyrand wrote, "is much too serious to be left to the generals."

**Egyptian on-the-street has Warped View of Israel**  
On the evening of our departure from Egypt, Mr. Sabri came to our hotel to bid us farewell. He so clearly understood the potentialities of the triologic relationship that I proposed that he meet with his Israeli counterpart in the United States to speak together, not of "politics," but of their artistic interests and their concern for peace. He agreed to participate in such an exchange and was far from averse to having such a conversation before the public media. He has been invited by the United States government and plans to be here in September or October.

From cab-drivers and store-keepers to cabinet ministers, all received my expression of Israel's desire for peace and the recognition of her fears and needs for security with marked interest. Intentions for peace and Israel's concerns for its own security, so obvious to us, were heard as novel revelations by Egyptians who perceive Israel only as an awesomely competent military power with expansionist appetites. We must not lend ourselves to such caricaturing. I left such meetings convinced that power is a necessary prerequisite for dialogue but barely sufficient for the making of peace. Words are important, and expressions of concern for security and peace ought not be dismissed as rhetoric or feared lest they be taken as signs of weakness.

**Religious exchanges can pave way for political ones**  
What was accomplished by our trip? We signed no peace treaties and changed no borders. But there were small breakthroughs. On the basis of these experiences in Egypt, I feel encouraged to offer a number of proposals which bear on the possibilities for future relationships.

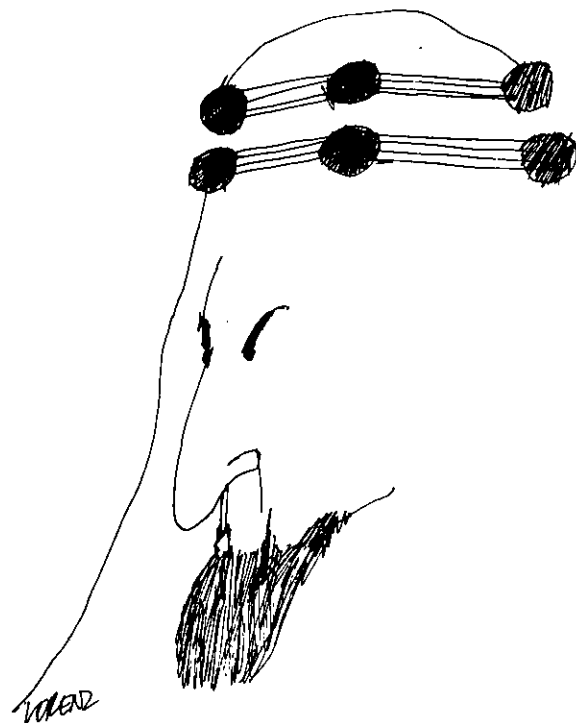
1. Religious and cultural exchanges need not wait for the political and military negotiations to be resolved. Such exchanges are needed now, antecedent to the diplomatic negotiations, needed to create some ambience of understanding and trust which ultimately is the prerequisite for political rapprochement. Meetings such as those we three experienced should be increased and wherever possible expanded to include other Arab states. I assume from our reception that the door to Egypt is not completely shut.

2. The time for direct encounters on political affairs may be unsuitable today, but religious dialogue may be more feasible. In an oblique fashion such theological interchanges may prepare the ground for other kinds of dialogue. Religion has earned an unsavory reputation as a divisive force in human relations. It may now have an opportunity to serve as a unifying instru-

ment in a world whose secularity has produced no prouder record for reconciliation. We must not be bound by stereotypic thinking which precludes religion's functioning as a healing agency in a part of the world where tradition wields great power.

#### The Triologue: More Potential than Dialogue

Coming from a secular society in which state and religion are separated, I must confess not to have fully appreciated the centrality of religion in Moslem society. As our stay in Egypt lengthened, it became clearer that our religious exchanges were far more than cheerful exercises in inter-faith civility. In the context of Middle East conflict, inter-religious contacts present a serious opportunity to affect social and political relations among peoples tragically isolated from each other by intimidating word and weapon. There is no easy analogue between three-way inter-religious exchanges in the East and the inter-faith encounters in the West. For all its limitations, the latter has a history of ecumenism nurtured in pluralistic societies which has matured considerably especially during this last decade. The former is in its embryonic stage but today carries in it far weightier political consequences. The theology and pragmatics of triologue can not be cavalierly treated as an admirable but irrelevant amenity.



*If I believe I cannot trust anything this man says, does that make me an anti-Semite?*

The triologue must be cultivated over the more conventional two-way dialogues particularly in the Middle East. In this sensitive area, any combination of the faiths which excludes the third appears as an alliance against the eliminated third. It raises suspicions of accommodating collusion. However circumspect the arrangement, the excluded tradition is made to feel an outsider and an obstacle to dialogue. The triologue represents a hopeful model of relationship in the Middle East.

#### Triologue should get Started within Israel's Borders

It is noteworthy that the National Council of Churches has recently set up a task force on Christian-Moslem relations whose purpose is to provide a Christian forum in which different approaches to Islam and Moslems can be explored and experienced. It is imperative that within and without Israel analogous Jewish bodies be organized for spiritual statesmanship but with an eye to include all three religious traditions. Israel is here to stay in the Middle East. Understanding and relating constructively to the community of Islam and Christianity is essential for Israel's present and future co-existence with her neighbors.

3. For the moment, it may be that non-Israeli Jews have easier access to the political enemies of Israel than Israelis do. If so, Jews of the diaspora and their leaders ought to be encouraged to promote peace in the Middle East *without interfering with the political and diplomatic politics* of the State of Israel.

4. I do not know whether such a religious triologue functions within the State of Israel today. I do know that there are within Israel's borders sensitive religious leaders of the three faiths who have the courage to begin such inter-religious explorations. Among the Israeli youth there are Christians, Moslems and Jews who might well welcome the opportunity to share some common spiritual life experiences for the purpose of laying the foundations of peace.

#### Changing Enemies to Friends is the Way to Peace

5. There is a mind-set which is understandably suspect of any dialogue with the enemy. A traumatized memory inclines to see all adversary relationships through the single lens of the holocaust. It is a tragic but precarious way of seeing the world. First, because not all enemies are cut from the same cloth. Second, because demonizing the enemy only serves to paralyze the energies which seek reconciliation. Cynicism freezes accumulated hatreds into immorality and discourages the imagination from discovering new ways towards peace. Santayana's aphorism that those who

refuse to remember history are doomed to repeat it is incomplete. Those who see history alone may similarly be doomed to repeat it. To see the past as the inevitable portent of the future is to deny the possibility of real change and choice. Where history is converted into eschatology, all efforts to overcome the past seem foolhardy. Faith and pragmatism converge against the cynical wisdom which predicts that "the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be."

What did we learn through these personal apolitical engagements? That there is something to be done for peace by people not governmentally involved; that there is a power in meeting, if only in that sworn enemies may catch a glimpse of the humanity of the other; that there are alternative routes towards peace. Strength and security are no enemies of dialogue. The enemy must hear the resoluteness of my will to live and see the toughness of my armour but he must also learn that beneath it lies a heart which means peace. The rabbinic sages defined the true hero as "one who can change an enemy into a friend." Indispensable for such heroism is the revelation that the enemy to be won over is a human being. At the conclusion of every silent (*Amidah*) prayer, Jews bow to the right and to the left as they recite the concluding prayer for peace. A hasidic interpretation explains that the liturgical gestures instruct us to search high and low, in new places and old, for alternate ways towards peace.

## In defense of the right to be separate

*Reuel Shinnar*

I was surprised that all the respondents to my article (*Sh'ma* 7/138) agreed with my basic claim that partial separateness is desirable and that we have to start thinking about its implications and consequences. Leo Pfeffer argues that my claims about present trends that endanger this right are erroneous and that our situation is better than ever before. I fully appreciate that Jews in this country enjoy a degree of equality, freedom and judicial protection that has had few equals in Jewish history. This puts a double obligation on us to preserve these rights for future generations. I hope I made it clear that I speak about trends which already have caused us to lose ground. The other discussants seem to appreciate this.

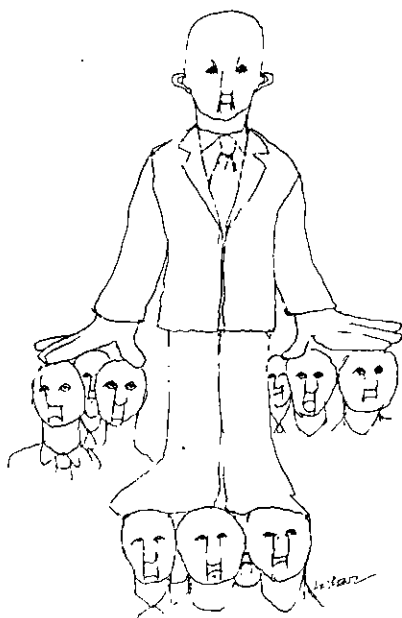
What surprised me most was that there was almost no discussion of my statements with respect to our stand on civil rights. Rabbi Lamm mentioned the problem of forced desegregation of Williamsburgh, but other-

wise there was no comment. This is regrettable as this is the most imminent danger and it allows us to focus clearly on what degree of separation our society can permit.

**Jews are Entitled to a Fair Share of Public Welfare**  
Most of the criticism was directed towards my suggestions as to how to deal with the problems of education and public welfare. As the latter is somewhat easier to deal with I will start with it. I raised a specific problem as an example: the old Jew who requires a nursing home which not only provides Kosher food but also an atmosphere of sabbath observance and a minyan. The only way this can be provided for him is in an institution which gives preference to such Jews. Twenty years ago, only private charities provided such services. Today, N.Y. State to give the local case, provides these services (on a large and expensive scale) and we all pay high taxes for them. I specifically stated that the state should not pay for any of the religious services provided, but it should provide basic services under conditions that do not compromise his religious needs.

Rabbi Lamm agrees with me and suggests that the support should go to the individual. A very good proposal. He also questions if the state will be able to afford it. This is not my concern here. Whatever the state can afford, this old Jew is entitled to his share. Mr. Goodman states that there are still ways to deal with the problem under present laws, but admits that it is becoming more difficult. He also makes the sensible suggestion that rather than writing laws that allow direct subsidy of separated institutions, we should see to it that present laws are written and interpreted in a way that allows us to live with them. I fully support that.

**Even the Courts must be Open to Change**  
Leo Pfeffer does not mention the old Jew. For him it is obvious that he has to be supported by private charity. It would be both unconstitutional and immoral to do otherwise. I am an expert on neither law nor morality. But there have been other experts such as Alexander Bickel who maintain that our present Supreme Court has often far overstepped its rights in interpreting the constitution. And once society recognizes that there is a justified claim here, the court's interpretation of the constitution could conceivably change as it has in other areas. I have even more problems with the claim that allowing the old Jew to benefit from his share of welfare is immoral. While others have a right to it, he is a second class citizen dependent on private charity. I appreciate the moral problems raised by Leo Pfeffer. In Kantian ethics,



*Why is it that there is no one on my level for me to talk to?*

actions are either always moral or immoral, and consequences do not count. In real life moral decisions involve dilemmas and sometimes require compromises.

Most of our life cannot be separated from religion. Complete separation between church and state requires that any intervention of the state in the citizen's life must be minimized. The problem of the old Jew is caused by the increased role of the government and by the high taxes raised to provide the increased services. If I accept Pfeffer's view I would also have to accept the conservative view that public welfare is a danger to our freedom. But, personally, I have difficulty in accepting such a view, and I also believe that the trend to public welfare is not reversible. We have to learn to take advantage of the benefits it offers to society as a whole, while minimizing its evil side effects. I prefer Goodman's suggestions that one could modify existing laws while maintaining the beneficial role of the separation between church and state.

#### **Thin Line between too Much and too Little Separation**

The school problem is more difficult. I never suggested full support of Yeshivoth and parochial schools. I talked about society's obligation to permit each parent to provide required secular education under conditions that do not unduly interfere with his child's religious education and I mentioned several current trends that seem to endanger this right. There is no truly neutral school today. Rabbi Lamm sug-

gests that I exaggerate. Educators are too incompetent to do any harm. This is hardly an argument. I do not want to wait till they become competent. Leo Pfeffer worries that this would introduce prayer to the public school. I cannot see why, and I am not sure which is more dangerous, or objectionable to me, public prayer or the present suburban school with its anti-religious tendencies. But I admit that this is a more complex problem which merits discussion on its own.

All respondents point out the dangers in excessive demands for separatism. I may have underestimated them but they cannot be avoided. We can only minimize them by being reasonable in our demands. In any case, too little separation is at least as dangerous as too much separation. I can only refer Rabbi Lamm to the words of one of the Baale Mussar that the proper way of life is a narrow bridge.

I also realize that our power to influence the trends that endanger our freedom is limited. But this should not prevent us from reevaluating our own stand and the activities of Jewish organizations dealing with these problems.

#### **... but others say about yom hashoah ...**

My Prime Minister and My Holocaust Remembrance Mr. Begin wants to take my heroes away. He has decided that *Yom Hashoah Vehagevurah* (Holocaust and Resistance Day) should henceforth be divided into two separate days – the first part to be added to *Tisha B'av*, and the second to *Yom Hazikaron Lehalalei Tsahal* (the Israeli Army Memorial Day). No longer when I mourn the victims of genocide will I at the same time celebrate the heroism of those I grew to love and to feel were my inspiration. I will remain in the domain of the bleak and the gruesome for I will be without comfort, without a resurrection hope, for our resurrection was in my heroes.

When first I began to learn our terrible history, I read about the resisters, Lulu, and Chaika, and Vladka, and Cecile. I knew that somewhere, they lived, and that thus they had achieved our victory. It gave me hope; it gave me courage; it taught me the road of the righteous. Later, when I came to know them across three continents, I had living proof that I could be proud that we had vanquished our enemies. The very fact that they, my proof, still lived strengthened my learning; it became an experience in history. Those partisans, those fighters, by their presence, made my

communion with history. In them the two sectors of our history, Holocaust and Resistance, blended together to form one perfect whole, each fragment helping to understand the other. Now they tell me that I should commemorate these two parts of my history separately and relegate each to a separate part of my consciousness.

What are we Doing to Future Generations?

You shall not succeed with me, my Prime Minister. It is too late. My consciousness is already formed. For as long as they shall live, my heroes, they shall celebrate together, and I together with them, on the day destined by history to be our day of commemoration, and not on *Tisha B'av*, a day with no particular Holocaust significance, a day picked for his own reasons by a mortal. But I am of no importance and I have already learned the Holocaust lessons and wept my many tears. Nothing shall change my course. But there are many younger than I; there are the unborn. How shall they be taught? What shall they learn? How shall they see? They will not have the live heroes — they shall have to content themselves with second and third hand teachers, and books and stories. They are already disadvantaged. They will have lost forever the personal dimension of my learning. Will they also lose my communion with history, the communion of the reader and the hero, this sacred communion through which we learn all of our history? Will they realize what almost happened to our people? Will they know how to use this lesson to guide them the rest of their lives?

I am disarmed as well as distressed. Now they still live, these heroes. But *Yom Hazikaron le alalei Tsaha* is for the dead. If we celebrate our heroes then do we wish to hasten their end? Could we not at least afford them the courtesy of a natural death? And I will not rally to the synagogue on *Tisha B'av* to remember the Holocaust. It would be a foreign and pre-

tentious act. I will not ask my children to do so. And as long as there shall be survivors, I am confident our history will remain intact. But they cannot be replaced by the heroes of the Israeli Army and their place, once sacred, will indeed be profaned, for all eternity, and will be enfolded into a pattern of historical events, a chain which stopped long before us, which cannot be picked up again, which is distant, oh so distant, from our minds, and our hearts. So my Prime Minister, for what you have done to my heart and my soul, and the mind's eye of my children, we shall not forgive; we shall only continue to demand that you not betray us, and that you not make us betray ourselves.

Cynthia Haft,  
Jerusalem

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WE WOULD like to welcome our Fellows for this year: Marc Brandriss is a doctoral student in Middle Eastern Affairs at Columbia University and assists at the American Jewish Committee Near Eastern department; Nina Cardin is studying for a master's degree in Talmud at Jewish Theological Seminary; Adina Mishkoff is a professional librarian in industry and volunteer librarian at Lincoln Square Synagogue; and Mindy Portnoy is a third-year rabbinic student at Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religion.

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A slight correction: Charles Stanley is a Max Beckman Memorial Scholarship recipient in Advanced Painting at the Brooklyn Museum Art School.

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REUEL SHINNAR teaches chemical engineering as part of the graduate faculty of City University of New York.

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