



27/516
September 6, 1996
22 Elul 5756

Inside...

School's in session.

**The shofar is sound-
ing. And we are back
with a full agenda.**

**We begin with
strategies for
recasting the Ameri-
can Jewish land-
scape.**

**Three bold ideas;
three passionate
voices.**

Sh'ma

A JOURNAL OF JEWISH RESPONSIBILITY

The promise of community high schools ■ Daniel Lehmann

There is a growing chorus of voices in American Jewish life calling for the transformation of American Judaism. Sociologists, theologians and historians are claiming that the institutions created nearly a century ago as the cornerstones of American Judaism may be inadequate to sustain a vibrant Jewish community in the 21st century. As American Jews reimagine the structure of the Jewish community in which they live, old institutions may lose their power and new institutions may emerge to address contemporary needs. One new institution that seems to be developing with great rapidity and energy as we come to the end of the millennium is the community Jewish day high school.

New Creations For New Needs

Community Jewish day high schools have existed for some time in communities like Washington DC, Philadelphia and more recently in Denver and Los Angeles. But within the past year a flurry of activity has led to the establishment of new Jewish community high schools in Boston and Atlanta with discussions underway for the establishment of similar schools in Cleveland, Minneapolis, Phoenix, San Diego and Seattle. These new schools are multi-denominational, community-based schools that have developed from the vision and commitments of educated laypeople with the professional support of local Federations.

While some would argue that the community Jewish high school is merely a

natural outgrowth of the day school movement and introduces little that is new to the American Jewish scene, I would like to offer a different perspective. It is my contention that the Jewish community high school offers a unique response to a new set of needs that have arisen in the Jewish community of the United States.

Union If Not Unity

Unlike the vast majority of elementary day schools, the community Jewish high schools that are being created are not affiliated with a particular denomination. The decision to make these new high schools multi- or trans-denominational can be attributed to two major factors. One is simply the need to pool resources. High schools are very expensive enterprises. More importantly, however, the community high school may be responding to a dissatisfaction with denominational structures among the baby-boomer generation and the need to bridge the rifts between denominations that have often characterized Jewish life in America.

There are precious few institutions in American Jewish life which allow for an exploration of the basic theological and ideological assumptions of the various religious movements. Even fewer places make it possible for particular understandings of Judaism to be played out in the presence of others who possess very different Jewish commitments and interpretations of Jewish practice. The moral impli-

Evan Mendelson	3
Rachel Brodie	4
Steven M. Cohen	6
Ta shma	7

cations of this are quite serious. Is it not a fundamental tenet of our tradition that moral refinement is created out of the dialectic interplay of opposing perspectives? Can our religious movements afford the luxury of splendid isolation?

Advancing Our Pedagogic Development

College and university Hillel's are often a good model for this type of dynamic interchange, but unfortunately only a small fraction of the undergraduate student's educational experience is framed by Jewish institutions. The emerging Jewish community high school, with its various prayer services and religiously diverse faculty, presents an opportunity to create a new type of Jewish interchange that can shape a generation of Jews who understand the particularity of their own commitments in the context of the broader Jewish community.

The Jewish community high school also represents a new level of seriousness about Jewish education and a new commitment to the particularism of Jewish identity. Elementary day school education, by its very nature, did not challenge the notion that Jewish education was primarily a pre-bar/bat mitzvah enterprise. The establishment of community Jewish high schools, however, takes day school education well beyond the bar/bat mitzvah years into the thick of adolescent identity formation.

The high school years represent a period of intellectual and social development that has been virtually untouched by the advantages of day school education. While youth groups and camps have for some time been able to impact positively on Jewish identity during these important years of a young adult's life, formal Jewish education has had little opportunity to create a sophisticated and literate Jewish community. The students who graduate from these schools will have the skills and knowledge base to conduct their Jewish lives on much firmer and deeper ground. Precisely at the stage when young Jews will be discovering their analytic and creative potential and exploring ideas that will determine their view of the world, they will be engaging in serious Jewish study that will infuse their consciousness with Jewish sources of meaning.

The Challenges

These challenges confronting these new institutions are formidable. Will these schools be able to reach beyond the current day school population to educate a broader spectrum of the community? Can students representing a

.....
RABBI DANIEL LEHMANN, a former Wexner Heritage Foundation Fellow at CLAL, is the founding headmaster of the New Jewish High School of Greater Boston which will be welcoming its first group of students in 1997.

full spectrum of religious affiliations be attracted to such institutions? Will these schools empower students to see their knowledge of Judaism as a vehicle to transform our Jewish community and our society at large? Will these schools be able to foster a dedication to a disciplined spirituality and renaissance of Jewish creativity? Can a pluralistic Jewish high school education set the stage for a truly pluralistic Jewish community? Will a new type of Jew and a new type of Jewish leadership emerge from the educational experiences of these schools? Are there sufficient numbers of inspiring educators to staff these schools? Will the community focus its resources on the financial needs of these new schools?

The answers to these questions are as of yet unknown. But I am greatly inspired by the vision that is giving birth to these new Jewish community high schools, a vision of Jewish education and the Jewish community that is bold and compelling. Community Jewish high schools are not a panacea to the problems of Jewish continuity, but they

Sh'ma A JOURNAL OF JEWISH RESPONSIBILITY

Senior Editors Eugene B. Borowitz, Irving Greenberg, Harold M. Schulweis

Editor Nina Beth Cardin

Administrator/Production Bambi Marcus

Contributing Editors Michael Berenbaum, Elliot N. Dorff, Arnold Eisen, Leonard Fein, Barry Freundel, Rela M. Geffen, Neil Gillman, Joanne Greenberg, Brad Hirschfield, Lawrence Hoffman, Paula Hyman, Lori Lefkowitz, Deborah Dash Moore, David Nelson, Riv-Ellen Prell, Elie Wiesel, Arnold Jacob Wolf, David Wolpe, Walter Wurzbarger, Michael Wyschogrod

Founding Editor Eugene B. Borowitz

Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility welcomes articles from diverse points of view. Hence, the opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the editors. Donations to *Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility* are tax-deductible. *Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility* is available in microform from University Microfilms Internat'l., Ann Arbor, MI.

Book reviews are by Eugene B. Borowitz.

Address all correspondence, subscriptions and change of address notices to *Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility*, c/o CLAL, 99 Park Avenue, Suite S-300, New York, NY 10016. Telephone: 212-867-8888; FAX: 212-867-8853.

Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility (ISSN 0049-0385) is published bi-weekly except June, July and August, by CLAL, 99 Park Avenue, Suite C-300, New York, NY 10016. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY. Subscriptions: \$29 for two years in U.S.; \$18 for one year; \$21 a year overseas; \$35 for two years overseas; bulk subscriptions of 10 or more to one address, \$9 per subscription; retired or handicapped persons of restricted means may subscribe for one year at half price. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility*, c/o CLAL, 99 Park Avenue, S-300, New York, NY 10016-1599.

Sh'ma Online, an interactive discussion group, is available through any online service which can exchange with the Internet, such as CompuServe, GENie, Prodigy, America Online, MCIMail, ATTMail or Delphi. To join, send a one-line message to: listproc@shamash.nysnet.org saying: **subscribe shma** your full name. Messages to *Sh'ma Online* can then be sent to: shma@shamash.nysnet.org

Copyright © 1996 by CLAL
September 6, 1996

are one new response that has great potential to transform our future. †

New ways of giving

■ Evan Mendelson

"Wealth is not new. Neither is charity. But the idea of using private wealth imaginatively, constructively, and systematically to attack the fundamental problems of mankind is new."

John Gardner

We are in the midst of a major shift in the character of American Jewish philanthropy which will effect the shape of our community as we enter the next century. The American Jewish communal enterprise has always been a unique blend of Jewish religious traditions and the democratic traditions of this country. Out of biblical injunctions to protect the poor, orphans, widows and strangers, a vast institutional infrastructure, supported by voluntary philanthropy, has developed. It has helped shape, and been shaped by, the uniquely American nonprofit sector, whose antecedents include the Elizabethan Poor Law and the establishment of the charitable trust in 1601.

The Traditional American Jewish Ways

Foundations, created by the great American industrialists at the end of the nineteenth century, "professionalized" the practice of charity, bringing modern progressive notions of management, efficiency and scientific thought to the enterprise of ameliorating human problems. The early American Jewish way of giving, influenced by a strong religious imperative for individual *tzedakah* and by the modern legal mechanisms that encouraged private philanthropy, evolved into a different model. Individual support for synagogues and welfare agencies grew into a Jewish federated philanthropy of pooled individual contributions that support a defined institutional infrastructure.

Begun in 1895 with the Boston Federation, the federation movement has grown to 178 federated communities. Few independent Jewish foundations existed before

EVAN MENDELSON is Executive Director of the Jewish Funders Network, a national organization of Jewish donors committed to advancing the growth and quality of Jewish philanthropy through more effective grantmaking to Jewish and secular causes.

the 1970's. But as American Jewish wealth grew, as opportunities for philanthropy in the general community increased and as interest in "hands on" giving developed, the number of Jewish foundations grew. There are now over 3,000 Jewish foundations, with more being created every day. The most recent philanthropic model is the growing number of independent donor-advised funds and support foundations associated with Jewish federations. It is estimated that these various "endowment" funds already total over \$3 billion.

What Is Jewish Giving?

Currently the behavior of private Jewish foundations does not differ much from that of individual Jewish philanthropists.

However, certain new trends are emerging. Many Jewish foundations support both Jewish and general causes. Jewish giving by Jewish philanthropists has declined steadily from the first to the fourth generations, from 71% to 36%. This trend is likely to continue as the next generation assumes control of the foundations. Some older, more established foundations relegated Jewish funding to a lump sum given to the local Federation, and/or discretionary contributions by the individual family members. This model is changing as a growing number of foundations are beginning to evaluate their Jewish funding in the same way they assess their general funding. The walls dividing Jewish and universal philanthropy are beginning to be dismantled. New questions are being asked: Can a Jewish organization carrying out intergroup work in the general community be funded from the general community pot? Can a Jewish theater group be funded as part of the arts and culture program area?

An enormous transfer of wealth is expected in this country during the next two decades. Eight to ten trillion dollars will be passed down from Americans over the age of 50 to their children and their grandchildren, creating the largest transfer of wealth in the nation's history. For the Jewish community this raises several important questions. Will the next generation share the philanthropic values of their parents? Will they care about the same causes? Will they seek a different kind of involvement in their communities—American and Jewish?

This younger generation of donors prefers volunteering to sitting on a board, funding homeless projects rather than Jewish nursing homes, and has much less contact and historical experience with the State of Israel. These funders want to be involved in shaping, not just responding to projects. They also want to be validated in their philanthropic choices and in their identities as Jewish

funders: those who give to a Jewish institution as well as those who give based on Jewish values. Younger generations are often interested in funding different issues and organizations than those supported by their parents and feel that their choices are just as “Jewish” as their parents’ choices.

Jewish federations need to be mindful of the unintended negative message that is delivered to the next generation of Jews when the older generation is encouraged to leave its wealth to the Federation Endowment to “ensure” that the Jewish community is taken care of in perpetuity. This message could suggest that the next generation can not be trusted to care about the Jewish community, and might just be a self-fulfilling prophecy!

Foundations, Federations And The Future

New and creative responses will be necessary to meet the challenge of the trends listed above. The growing number of small independent foundations decreases the centralized communal fund that sustains the American Jewish communal infrastructure. Without a communal infrastructure, Judaism as a civilization cannot exist. The mix of essential organizations might change, but the need for stable funding of Jewish institutions is fundamental to the transmission of Jewish values and traditions. Overlap, duplication and wasted dollars can result from foundations acting without communicating with each other and the central communal planning structure. Independent funders should evaluate their funding patterns systematically and focus their funding more strategically if they want to increase their impact. They need to learn or be reminded of the importance and effectiveness of a communal pool of funding that sustains the Jewish infrastructure.

On the other hand, federations must change their language and processes in order to address the fundamental problem of a decreasing annual campaign. Most donors are not interested in “giving to the Federation,” but rather in supporting the Jewish communal enterprise.

As the number of new foundations increases over the next few years, there is a need for new models of support to nurture and serve Jewish philanthropists. The Jewish Funders Network is a new national resource organization for individual philanthropists, foundation trustees and staff that provides educational and networking opportunities and a framework for discussion of philanthropic issues without a set agenda.

Many funders are looking to “purchase” administrative and staff support in order to save on the high cost of establishing a private foundation. Jewish federations,

community foundations and some nonprofits now offer some of these services.

Meeting The Donor's Needs

The success of this model for connecting independent funders to the Jewish community, however, depends on whether the support organization is perceived as providing the service that the client wants. As Jewish funders’ choices expand, they seek grantmaking assistance in areas with which Jewish federation staff might be unfamiliar or judge as not serving the interests of the organized Jewish community. If Jewish organizations want to develop or retain relationships with independent Jewish funders, they will have to prove to them that they truly represent the client’s interests, not what they perceive as the community’s interests.

As we begin to reshape the American Jewish community, private foundations will play a central role in supporting the experimentation that can lead to institutionalized change. They represent a uniquely American form of the philanthropic imperative. Those of us who are involved in the re-visioning and re-engineering of the American Jewish communal system must recognize and build on that reality. †

Jewish retreats

■ Rachel Brodie

Magic. The number one word, used indiscriminately, by participants and providers alike, to describe the transformative power of retreats. And who isn’t in need of a little magic when it comes to drawing people into Jewish communal life and practice? If the recent boom in the retreat business is any indication, a large cross-section of the Jewish community is, indeed, looking to retreats as a magic formula. But are retreats magical? And if so, what impact will they have on the American Jewish community in the 21st century?

The Jewish Retreat Center (JRC), a project of UJA-Federation of New York’s Jewish Continuity Commission, is billed not as a place, but as a concept. It does not represent a single site. It provides a network of sites in the Northeast, as well as access to significant programmatic and human resources for Jewish groups seeking to “retreat.” These retreats take many forms: synagogue

.....
RACHEL BRODIE was the Founding Director of the Jewish Retreat Center and is currently a Melton Senior Educators' Fellow in Israel.

shabbatonim for families, adult education seminars, school trips and Israel program training institutes.

Advertising for the Jewish Retreat Center has never gone beyond a modest brochure, a handful of ads in the Jewish press and some direct mailings. Yet, now completing its second year, the JRC has served more than 70 Jewish groups directly, on-site, and more than 1,000 individuals and groups indirectly through its referral service.

The Secret To Successful Retreats

How can we account for the overwhelming response? It is the perception that retreats are catalysts for change. Rabbis, educators, and Jewish communal professionals searching to jump-start the acculturation of a group of unaffiliated Jews or energize an apathetic congregation are turning to retreats to work magic on their community.

But are retreats inherently magical? No. Retreats sometimes fail and those that do are usually founded on fundamental misunderstandings of the purpose of retreating. One of the most common mistakes is motivation by what I call "None of us have country homes or the money for Club Med so let's hold a retreat" thinking. Essentially, these retreats are created as vacations—and that's all they become, relaxing but never transformative. And then there are retreats founded on the "forty-eight hour business meeting" plan. These marathon sessions are held in direct violation of the number one retreat rule: don't do unto participants at a retreat what could be done at home. Remember: Retreats are only as good as the planning that goes into them.

Retreats that work well result from attention to detail, clear goals, and a change of setting. The power of retreat settings lies in the intensity of concentrated, uninterrupted time in a special environment, and the intimacies of communal living. But the possibility of affecting individual and/or institutional change through a retreat experience rests directly in the hands of those who create the program and even more, in the hands of those who do the

follow-up. Indeed, the significance of mountaintop revelations or bunkbed bonding is often lost when they occur in a vacuum. Retreat experiences and revelations must be contextualized; relationships formed require further opportunities to be solidified; lessons learned need to be reviewed, and the learning must continue. Remember: the impact of a retreat is only the first step. Follow-up is key.

Even as the impact of a single retreat can be extended through significant follow-up, and the impetus for retreats is slowly extending throughout the American Jewish community, the long-term effect of retreat experiences on the ways and structures of American Jewry is little understood. The Jewish Continuity Commission of New York and a few individual philanthropists are beginning to show a healthy respect for retreat sites and programs, as evidenced by the availability of funds, but it is still too early to evaluate the long-term impact of these efforts.

However, the movement toward embracing retreats does reflect some other trends that are expected to influence the American Jewish community over the next century. These trends include: a more important role for quality informal Jewish education (the primary educational modality of retreats and camps), more cooperation between institutions (the model for a Jewish institution working with the Jewish Retreat Center), and more work being done in smaller groups (the ideal retreat size, depending on the specific agenda, is 30 to 100 people).

Also, retreats serve as safe spaces for Jews to work on identity issues outside their own homes and offer opportunities for Jews to live Jewishly, if only for two days, and not just talk about Jewish life and practice. The move toward the creation of more holistic experiences, through total immersion, is a useful tactic for engaging Jews in the post-*shtetl* era. Retreat participants cite the significance of a retreat Shabbat as being complete, not just Friday dinner and Saturday morning services but a safe and easy way to experience and experiment with a full day of rest.

A Virtual Community

Finally, if you ask adult participants what they are looking for in a retreat they inevitably mention their search for community. They lament the lack of extended family and Jewish support systems. Retreats offer people access to community, because they hold the same appeal as *havurot*; they are small, informal and *haimish*. If retreats will have a significant impact on American Jews in the next century, I believe it will be because communal leaders recognize the need for smaller, more intimate,

A HEARTY MAZEL TOV

to

Sh'ma Contributing Editor,

Rabbi Brad Hirschfield and his wife, Becky,

on the birth of their daughter.

sense of community among their members. But retreats are just one model, and we need to develop other creative, more normative responses to these challenges.

Miracles. Many groups who hold retreats need a miracle to motivate the true or lasting transformation they seek for their participants. What many fail to appreciate is that it is the work that goes into planning and programming a retreat that gives retreats a good name. Many people look at the American Jewish community as we approach the 21st century and say that in order to survive we need a miracle. Others look at us and recognize that the difference between miracles and magic is that magic can be made. †

🍷 Endthoughts 🍷

A liberal defense of judgmentalism

■ Steven M. Cohen

David R. Adler (*Sh'ma*, 26/511, "The wrong way to 'jewish continuity'") takes me to task on two occasions for an article on intermarriage and Jewish continuity I had published in *Moment* (December 1994). Adler claims that much Jewish continuity discourse would fall on the racist side of the equation. In this context, he objects to my phrase "diluted ethnicity," as indicated by the decline in intra-group friendships among American Jews. In the same article, he then proceeds to accuse me of adopting a judgmental stance toward the unaffiliated when I drew what he claims is an invidious distinction between 'weaker' (unaffiliated) and 'fitter' (affiliated) Jews.

I am particularly touched by Adler's comments, and not just because it shows he has been reading my work (or some of it). It so happens that we share something in common (not much, I'm afraid, but at least something): Adler is editor of *Response* magazine, a position I held for some time when I was his age, roughly 20 years ago.

Tribalism Is Not Racism

To make this reply to Adler perfectly clear at the outset, I find his critique important, wrong and dangerous.

STEVEN M. COHEN is Professor at The Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

His critique is important because it eloquently articulates widely held sentiments in American Jewry today, particularly, I gather, among his twenty-something generation. No doubt, many would agree with what I regard as his most startling statement: The Jewish community's strictures against intermarriage would, in contemporary American parlance, fall under the racist category.

He is wrong because the Jewish people's historical emphasis on group solidarity, as expressed through marrying Jews and making friends with Jews, is not racist. True, both racism and Jewish tribalism (I happen to like the word, tribalism) share two features in common: They both recognize group differences based primarily on ancestral origin; and they both advocate treating majority and minority groups differently. But beyond these surface similarities lie numerous critical distinctions.

Distinguishing Public Policy From Personal Choice

Racism applies primarily to the public sphere: issues related to jobs, housing, schooling, political office, equal treatment under the law, etc. Jewish tribalism, though, applies to the private sphere: to one's family, religious life, most intimate friendships. The whole thrust of anti-racist movements in the U.S. and elsewhere has been to assure fair and equal treatment in the public sphere, while allowing individuals to construct their private lives as they see fit. No one can seriously claim that the tendency of Americans to seek out spouses and friends of similar cultural background (whether defined by education, region, religion, or ethnicity) is racist. Moreover, religion—even more than the other classifications—is seen as an acceptable basis around which to build family, friendships, and community. Would anyone in their right mind call racist the plea by a committed American Christian (or Mormon or Moslem) leader for religious adherents to marry one another, to make friends within the religious group, to become involved in the religious community, or to live in areas with many co-religionists? If so, then what is racist about urging similar behavior among Jews?

From all of us at *Sh'ma*
to all of you, our family of
readers and friends:

May you enjoy a year of
peace, promise and eternal hope

SHANA TOVA.

Next let us recall the arguments made by proponents of affirmative action for historically excluded minorities. They have claimed (rightly, I believe) that affirmative action differs from racist discrimination because the former give preference to a minority group for admirable purpose, while the latter denies equality to a minority with malevolent intent. Why does not the same logic apply to Jewish tribalism (vs. racism)? The norms of Jewish tribalism ask that Jews see each other as extended family, that they treat each other with special regard, that they take Judaism seriously enough so that they would inevitably seek out other Jews to share their most intimate, family-like times together. Why is that racist?

The Case For Judgmentalism

As for the charge of being judgmental, I plead proudly guilty. Since when are Jews enjoined to refrain from exercising judgment especially with reference to other Jews? Judgment is part and parcel of our tradition, from the Bible, to the Talmud, to the *shtetls* of Europe and *mullahs* of North Africa, to the civil rights and anti-war movements of the sixties, to present-day Israel, and to Jewish families and synagogues in all times and places. We are a judgmental and argumentative people. A long rabbinic tradition, derived from a straightforward reading of the Torah and consistent without culture through time, enjoins us not only to judge, but to reproach and reprove (*hochacha*).

If anything, Jews these days don't judge often enough or harshly enough, and when they do, they too often refrain from expressing their judgments of one another. As I pointed out in *The Case for Communal Conflict* (Response 31, 1976), Jewish communal organizations, particularly Federations, demand consensus over vision, agreement over passion. And Jews everywhere now participate in what my colleague Charles Liebman has called the therapeutic culture, wherein everyone's views no matter how ill-founded are validated by everyone else (I'm okay, you're okay).

Not only does such a spirit contradict every modern ideology of Judaism (so far), it contradicts the spirit of liberalism, the major socio-political ideology of American Jews (to which I happen to subscribe). Liberalism may stand for the right of every individual to express his or her views free of government interference, but it does not automatically validate everyone's views (shades of Voltaire?).

As for the case at hand, when I refer to weaker and fitter or stronger Jews, I am referring to the predictable ability (or inability) of some Jews to survive, as Jews, the rigorous test of modernity; that is, to remain identifiably

Ta sh'ma

We invite you to send us your favorite text and comment. Submissions should not exceed 200 words. Be sure to include proper citation of sources. Hebrew will appear in transliteration.

■ Lee M. Hendler

Ta sh'ma—come and study.

My eyes scan the page for the familiar:
the shape of a letter, the presence of a root
whatever lets me know I am partly home—
able to utter a neural sigh of recognition.

"You I know."

"You I have seen before."

And I am hearing and seeing at once
even though I am only reading and thinking.

Rejoicing in my disorientation
I grope toward Jerusalem.

A willing player in an ancient
game of Blind Man's Bluff.

I think I am getting somewhere
until Torah takes over.

Barely understood concepts play hide and seek with
my brain.

I count to ten and shout my warning
but all the good ideas are already
hidden in the best places.

So I run as fast as my intellect will take me
searching even as I go
for the telltale signs of
passing.

The echo of phrase
the force of act
the sense of moment
the edge of symbol
the sweep of time
the thrust of word
the presence of God.

When I find the last
I cease to play.

Wild pleasure renders up full joy
as I forget where I end and God begins.

For a moment
we are both in the same place.

Studying Torah together.

LEE M. HENDLER lives in Baltimore MD and enjoys the hours she spends studying Torah.

Jewish despite the impact of modern individualism personalism, voluntarism, and universalism, all of which are part of Judaism, but not to the extent that they dominate modern culture. When I say weaker or stronger, I don't necessarily mean worse or better, (although the objective character of strength is related to my subjective evaluation of quality).

We may disagree about what makes a Jew strong or good (or weak or bad). But we ought not have any disagreement that such distinctions exist, and that we ought to articulate our judgment as to who or what exemplifies those characteristics.

Mitzvah Requires Judgmentalism

Finally, I regard Adler's views in these matters as dangerous. If his views on ethnic solidarity prevail, then not only will many Jews intermarry, but American Judaism (unlike its predecessors in time or counterparts in space) will no longer define being Jewish as something ethnic, tribal, or national. If his rejection of judgmentalism prevails, then American Judaism will become the first ever to abandon the conception of commandment (*mitzvah*) and obligation (whether it is derived from God, Torah, rabbis, Jewish history, the Jewish people, the Jewish state, or some other sources). In such an eventuality, American Judaism will lose its transcendental power,

its claim to authenticity, its majestic links to the past and the future, and its ability to provide nurturing, meaningful communities. As sociologist Lawrence Iannacone has demonstrated (in an article entitled, *Why Strict Churches Are Strong*), American religious groups that are too faddish, too loose, and too oriented to individual taste are those which have suffered the most decline over the last thirty years. Those which have become too strict have degenerated into small sects. The key to success has been to find a stance that is somewhat strict, somewhat demanding, and somewhat at variance with the current *zeitgeist*. That is no easy task. But however difficult, it definitely demands both judgment and judgmentalism. †

*Sh'ma extends its sincerest condolences
to our friends and supporters*

Joan and Richard J. Scheuer

*on the loss of their beloved son,
Richard J. Scheuer, Jr.*

Through his generosity and kindness, he built enduring legacies. May his memory be a comfort to his family and a blessing to all he loved.

Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility

99 Park Avenue, Suite S-300
New York, NY 10016-1599

PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY

*19970905 504286 28 6
Cantor Deborah R. Staiman
Temple Israel Of Gtr Miami
137 Ne 19th Street
North Miami Beach FL 33132-1095

