

Impacts of Contemporary Life
Upon Judaism



MARCUS

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By

JACOB RADER MARCUS



The Jacob Rader Marcus Center
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This essay was originally written the year Adolf Hitler seized power in Germany—a decade, that is, before the Holocaust, the mass murder of European Jewry. I have asked myself: Was modernism responsible for the Holocaust, or is the Holocaust to be seen as a result of modernism only in the sense that modern science makes mass murder more far-reaching and effective? And I have asked myself: Would a return to medievalism offer the Jew a greater assurance of survival? I am not sure that I know the meaning of the Holocaust. I am not sure that anyone does. Prior to the eighteenth century, Jews were brutally mistreated. Often they were cremated alive. Ultimately they were expelled from nearly every land or independent principality of medieval Europe. It is true, of course, that the Holocaust occurred not in a medieval setting, but in the most technically-advanced country of Europe. Still, it seems to me, this may very well have been a historical “accident,” a quirk of fate. The German electorate gave Hitler no mandate to commit murder. Power was seized by this archcriminal or madman, who proceeded to annihilate vast numbers of human beings, among them six million Jews. Such destruction could have befallen any people in any country at any time in modernity. It may happen—God prevent it—but it may happen ultimately that united Arab forces will succeed in over-running the Republic of Israel and in massacring most of her inhabitants. Would we be justified, then, in assuming that aspects of modernism like Jewish nationalism, Zionism, the desire of a homeless people for a homeland of its own, were responsible for the Jewish State’s undoing? Unfortunately, no civilization, modern or medieval, can guarantee the survival of anyone. There is, however, no question in my mind that, for the Jew, the age of emancipation and modernism has been immeasurably superior to medievalism.

NOTHING IS MORE DIFFICULT for the Jew of today than to conjure up a picture of his status a century ago. We are moderns; our grandfathers were medieval. Our lives, our backgrounds, our outlooks are worlds apart. This is largely due to legislation imposed by the European states which thought it right to maintain disabilities against all non-Christians. Israel Jacobson, the founder of the Reform Movement in Judaism, a cultured gentleman of great wealth, actually had fewer political rights in 1805 than the illiterate maid who scrubbed his floors. Yet Jacobson was a German court-Jew and lived under the most favorable circumstances. The general situation of the average German Jew was much worse. In business many avenues were closed to him, farm holdings were seldom tolerated, most of the trades were forbidden him, and every office in the state excluded him. He was only too frequently a petty moneylender or a peddler hawking his wares from village to village, from farm-house to farmhouse, the victim of brutish peasants and their savage dogs. The Jew who crossed the boundaries of tiny states, or wandered from town to town, was often compelled to pay a humiliating body-tax that otherwise was exacted only of cattle. The economic restrictions imposed upon him were further intensified by the limitation placed upon his freedom of movement. Not only did some states compel the Jews to live

in ghettos, but others would not even allow them to step across the frontier. As late as 1770, the principality of Lippe-Deimold published the following ordinance: "All foreign beggars, collectors, [German] Jewish peddlers, Polish Jews, jugglers, bear trainers and tramps are forbidden access to this country under penalty of sentence to prison. All gypsies caught will be hanged and shot." Marriages were restricted in order to limit the number of Jewish families. A mother in Bohemia, or Moravia, or Silesia reared her' children with the dread consciousness that when they grew up and wished to marry all except the eldest would be expected to leave the land. As late as 1843, Isaac Mayer Wise had to marry Jewish couples secretly, in garrets, because the Bohemian quota of Jewish marriages was full. It was only natural that all these demoralizing influences would reflect themselves in the religious and cultural life of the Jew.

The coming of the French Revolution and the emancipation of the Jew marked the death of the older Judaism and the birth of the new. Our problem is to understand how this emancipation from his old life has modified and molded the Jew during the period of enfranchisement, from 1791 to 1919. The first significant change is his adoption of modern culture. Almost up to the nineteenth century, the Jew lived a distinctive civil, religious, and social life of his own under the authority of rabbinic law. Jewry was a legal, national, and religious corporation within the state. It had little cultural contact with the world at large. In fact, most Jews looked with disdain on the learning of the non-Jew. With the dawn of emancipation in the late eighteenth century, therefore, the Jew found himself, in matters of science at least, where his Christian fellow citizens had been at the dawn of the sixteenth; he was at least three hundred years behind the times. Yet within a generation the intellectual Jew had wiped out the intervening centuries, and

today he is not only abreast of the times but frequently beyond them. The modern Jew has plunged head first into the cultural life about him; he has identified himself completely with the teachings of the land of his birth.

The second change is the Jew's loss of his own culture. This came about, in part, because he was so anxious to absorb the new that he broke with many of his old loyalties. More importantly, however, it came about because the new culture directly exerted a disintegrating effect upon the old. Here we must mention the new science and the new philosophy. These became destructive of traditional norms not merely because of the phenomenal growth of science, but because of the emancipation of science and the arts from the controlling influence of religion. In the Middle Ages all life, art, philosophy, and science worked in the service of religion to glorify God, but today science and philosophy have tended to ignore the supernatural. They are concerned primarily with that which for them is clearly demonstrable, either physically or intellectually. Their approach is rational, materialistic, empirical. Coal, steam, electricity, the microscope, the test tube, the telescope, the experimental laboratory have opened up for us vistas and worlds of which our fathers never even dreamt. Man is mad with joy at the consciousness of the power he has unleashed in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. Ours is a scientific world too actively engaged in its specific tasks to concern itself extensively with deep-rooted convictions, with yearning, with contemplation, with surrender, with faith.

Even in those places where the new physical and social sciences have concerned themselves with traditional ideas, these ideas have been subjected to a searching criticism. Biology, geology, and astronomy have rejected the scheme of the universe and the creation story as they are depicted in the Bible. The sci-

ences that deal with society have proved that our holidays, our customs, our religious ideas and ideals are not always unique with us, nor are they the creation of a fixed moment in history. They are the precipitate of a specific environment and have undergone successive changes to comply with the demands of life and a growing ethical consciousness, and it is only natural to believe that changes in religious thinking and practice must be made when life and the times make them imperative. It is this concept which justified the right of every individual to determine his own religious life and observance, but it is this very religious freedom which has threatened uniformity in Jewish belief and practice. Literary criticism has convinced most of us that the Bible and all other sacred books are not the direct spoken word of God or exclusively the result of His inspiration, but the literary product of the Jewish people over a period of a thousand years, and authoritative only in the sense that everything is authoritative which appeals to the noblest within us. The spirit of criticism toward the old that is true of the sciences is true also of modern literature. It has no respect for authority or antiquity. It respects only truth as it manifests itself pragmatically in a happier and a more intimate human fellowship. The influences, therefore, exerted today by science, philosophy, and literature tend to shatter the belief in the exclusive possession of religious ideals, to break down the barriers of religious separatism, to disintegrate small, compact religious groups such as the Jews. People are less interested in creed and more concerned with mankind, with religion in the more universalistic sense. And in his eagerness to become one with the world at large, the Jew in this myth-destroying century has thrown overboard not only his traditional customs, but often his religion, too, for he has made the mistake of confusing changing types of observance with essential religious belief.

If these critical academic influences have done much to level Jewish barriers, social and business contracts between Jews and Gentiles have had an even greater levelling influence. The industrial and mechanical revolution, coupled with world markets, rapid transportation, and an international system of credit, has paved the way for the accumulation of great riches, and there is a line that leads straight from wealth through power and social ambition to ultimate assimilation. The function of economic effort is no longer to offer the individual a means to unfold a richer intellectual and emotional life, but has become an end in itself. People are so engrossed in economic production and distribution that they have little time for other interests; the tendency of mechanical development is to shift the emphasis from the inner to the outer life. The fact that factory and office have been unable to make provision for religious diversity has spelt death for the Jewish language, dietary laws, dress, daily services, and even the Sabbath, the obvious instruments of Jewish uniformity. It is tremendously difficult to remain Jewish in an economic world that is interdependent and standardized. Modernity insists on conformity, and the almost pathetic desire of the Jew to conform induces him to sacrifice much that sets him off as a Jew.

These tendencies to break away from the ties of the past, from the Jewish people, from Judaism, from religion as a spiritual reality, are made easy because many individuals have found acceptable substitutes which satisfy the craving for that religious expression which seems to be instinctive in most men. Scientific research, Zionism, political liberalism, socialism, communism, pacifism, and, above all, patriotism have become all things to many Jews. Intellectual and political interests have made numerous recruits at the expense of Judaism because they are exercised in common with all groups; they are not separat-

ist. Many intellectuals and liberals are ashamed to ally themselves with Judaism not only because they are ignorant of its content and nature, but also because of its questionable prestige as the religion of a somewhat disadvantaged minority.

There are two groups which stand out in this flight from Judaism: the professionals who believe that religion cannot justify itself intellectually in our type of civilization, and those industrial workers who question the sincerity and the ability of religious leadership to cope with the social and economic problems created by our new economic order. The result of this revolt of the intellectuals and the Marxist proletarians has been the emergence today of a Jewish type that was impossible in the medieval Jewish community where a hierarchy enforced religious conformity. This new type is the secular Jew, who, if he decides to remain within the ambit of Jewry, does so because of his ethical traditions and ethnic pride. This secularist is the most distinctive creation of the past epoch; he is new to Jewish life; his relation to Judaism is the most important problem of the coming century.

Though, on the one hand, the new political, social, economic, and cultural agencies have drawn the Jew away from Judaism, they have, on the other hand, just as frequently worked in a constructive sense toward the maintenance of the Jew and his faith. It is true that the status of the Diaspora Jew today tends to be nowhere by any means ideal. Nevertheless, his position is immeasurably superior to what it was. The very influences in modern thought that have worked for indifference, secularism, and complete assimilation work at the same time for intensity, spirituality, and loyalty. The most convincing proof that the Jew has, on the whole, gained and not lost ground during the past age is this: in 1791, there were a bare three million Jews throughout the world, poor, miserable, hat-

ed, oppressed, without secular culture; in 1919, despite a world war in which a quarter of a million Jews had died of wounds, disease, or pogroms, there were about sixteen million Jews, citizens, educated, hopeful. Even in the early 1950's, after the Nazi genocide which had claimed some six million Jewish lives by 1945, world Jewry numbered nearly twelve million.

As late as 1762, only fourteen years before the Declaration of Independence, Ezra Stiles, a Christian preacher and Hebraist, later president of Yale, solemnly declared that Jews would never become citizens of America. He lived to see how mistaken he was. The nineteenth century witnessed the opening to all groups within the state of the vast fields of political opportunity, of national service and leadership. The value of political power for the Jew is twofold: in the first and more limited sense, it gave him a chance to intervene on behalf of his oppressed coreligionists in other countries. He took frequent advantage of this opportunity, for it was not until the terminal year of 1919 that the last of the East European Jewish masses were enfranchised. In a broader sense, political power with the Jew frequently spelt the opportunity to give practical expression to all the idealism pent up in the hearts of Jewish statesmen, both here and abroad. It is not accidental that Jews are found in the liberal and radical parties and that their social idealism, their high democracy, have invoked the admiration of the thinking minority and the bitter opposition of the parties of privilege and reaction.

Furthermore, the very concept of nationalism which, through its emphasis on uniformity, has served to disintegrate Jewish unity, has also afforded an instrument for its preservation. For in the form of a Jewish nationalism it has been taken up by the Jew to unify his own people and to encourage many thousands, particularly in the face of a rising anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism is the most dangerous force which world Jewry has ever encountered. Anti-Semitism is not the common run of Jew-hatred. It is a modern democratic movement, for the very democracy that gave the Jews the franchise gave that franchise also to the credulous majority, enabling it thereby to impose its blundering will upon a superior minority. Modern anti-Semitism is far more dangerous than the medieval aversion to the Jew. Medieval man either killed his Jews or expelled them; modern man has created a so-called scientific literature aiming to demonstrate the inferiority of the "Semitic race" and then declaring it a patriotic duty to organize political parties to crush this insidious race so that Western culture and civilization can be saved from Jewry's corrosive influence. The Jew, says the anti-Semite, is to be hedged in culturally and economically and politically until his morale is shattered and he is spiritually crushed and economic-ally strangled. Anti-Semitic leaders—frequently men of intelligence and even of erudition—have not studied Jewish history in vain. They know that Jews can survive pogroms but not unemployment. It is as a reaction to anti-Semitic nationalism that Jewish nation-alism gained its impetus, particularly in Eastern Europe. Czarist Russia never gave her Jews a decent opportunity to become Russians. Nevertheless, the Jew of that land wanted some recognized status, for the nineteenth century saturated him—as it did every man—with nationalist longings. Men had to belong somewhere, and so Zionism became inevitable for East European Jewry. This Zionism, the hope for the birth of the Third Jewish Commonwealth, gave millions of religionists and secularists the courage to maintain themselves and to persist during the most trying times, not only in the reactionary East but also in the liberal West.

In the western lands, particularly Germany and France, the process of assimilation had gone so far in the last century that citizenship and the newly acquired political rights were for some more important even than religious affiliation. But the storm of anti-Semitism that spread over those lands in the 1880's and 1890's was so fierce that even some of those Jews were convinced that the granting of political rights was only a formal act to which most Christian nationals, possibly even the majority, would never reconcile themselves. Many West European Jews who had come to believe that liberalism was only skin-deep naturally found shelter under the wings of Zionism. Their only recourse, if their own fatherland would not accept them whole-heartedly as nationals, was to return to their mother-land. It would, however, be unfair to the growth of this modern movement to interpret it merely as a reaction to dislike or discrimination. It is far more positive than that. Like other nationalisms, such as the German or the Italian of the mid-nineteenth century, it offers not merely physical security, but also spiritual values. It emphasizes ethical traditions, it glorifies and idealizes a romantic past. Jewish nationalism, specifically, links itself to a messianic tradition which insists that prophetic principles must realize themselves in a practical way in an ideal political state. It is this positive aspect of the movement that won for it many adherents, particularly in this land. It is this political and cultural idealism that appealed to thousands of secularized Jews and kept them loyal to their ancestral teachings. Jewish nationalism, whether in the form of the pre-1948 Zionist movement, or, since 1948, in the form of the State of Israel, has unquestionably been a tremendous force keeping the unsynagogued and secularized Jew loyal to his own ethical traditions. It has kept hundreds of thousands within the circle of Jewish life and has thus enabled them to

draw their ultimate source of inspiration from the religious core of the Jewish people.

Philosophy, science, and literature have done a great deal more than subject our beliefs and practices to the light of cold reason and searching criticism. They have ennobled our lives, they have enriched our personalities. They have opened before us new worlds of thought and potential achievement of which we had never dreamt. Every academic field was opened to us; all the professions were at our command. In the eighteenth century, the new scientific knowledge had as yet made no impression upon the Jewish masses. As an isolated example, we know that in the same century a group of scholarly rabbis maintained most indignantly that an animal could live without a functioning heart, and some years later Solomon Maimon recounted the story of a superstitious housewife who believed that the carp she was cutting up had uttered a sound. This case of a „dumb fish that had ventured to speak” was submitted to the rabbi, who decided that the fish was the incarnation of a human soul and accordingly ordered a religious burial in shrouds in the Jewish cemetery. Since those naive dark days, the Jews have not only entered into every field of academic endeavor, scientific research, and artistic effort, but they have in many places assumed positions of leadership and have established high standards. The value of modern academic techniques is not merely that they have broadened the mental horizon of the average Jew, but that they have also taught him to apply the canons of scholarship to his own vast literature. The application of the methods of critical research has succeeded for the first time in all Jewish history in giving to the Jew an adequate knowledge of the development of his own life and literature. Through this “Science of Judaism,” as it is called, every Jew today may, by the mere reading of an authoritative book, secure a more exact

understanding of his own past than was ever possessed by even the greatest of Jewish scholars in the pre-modern period.

The economic emancipation of the Jew has also been a basic force in sustaining him and his culture. Baron and Baroness Maurice de Hirsch, during their lifetimes, gave away almost a hundred million dollars for philanthropic purposes. The Baron was a child of the new economic freedom without which there could have been no achievement in modern Jewish life. The right to engage in every type of economic activity revolutionized the life of the Jew. The twentieth century found him building great railroads in Soviet Turkestan, growing wheat in the Argentine, creating huge department stores in these United States, and shaping an entire new economy in the Holy Land. The individual through this diversity is given the opportunity to unfold mentally and emotionally. He can now give free play to his creative sense. The basic pre-emancipation means of livelihood—peddling, pawnbroking, grogshops, petty trade, and crafts—were often devoid of dignity, unremunerative, stimulative of prejudice, and often degrading. New economic opportunity has brought a higher standard of living. Our industrial and financial structure has made possible the creation of great riches. And even as there may be a straight line leading from wealth to assimilation, there are also direct lines that lead from wealth to leisure, art, and philanthropy. Baron de Hirsch was but one of a long line of modern philanthropists whose impressive gifts have been made possible by the opportunities of the liberal, individualistic, economic order. With the tremendous sums at their command, prominent Jewish humanitarians have furthered research, worked for the advancement of the Jewish State and of the underprivileged Negro, encouraged study abroad, and struggled to reduce infant mortality. Jewish bankers—when their loyalties and courage were sufficiently

strong—have on occasion even used their influence to intervene on behalf of their own fellow Jews in lands of oppression. It has been the larger per capita wealth of modern Jewry that has made possible the support and furtherance of our great Jewish institutions of learning, our colonization projects, and finally our vast system of support for the Israeli republic and of European relief, the outstanding phi-lanthropic activity in the entire history of the Jewish people.

Some of the most striking changes in the past century were, of course, in the field of religious observance and belief. Judaism has unfortunately been compelled to surrender many of the folkways that gave it an integrated compactness, but it has gained an inner freedom, a wider range for spiritual adventuring. Emancipated, in the West at least, from a conservative ecclesiastical authority that no longer had any place in a modern Jewish life, it could and often did take over much that was worth while from the spiritual world about. The old order fought desperately for its hierarchical authority; it still does in the State of Israel. It fears—with some degree of justice—that basic Jewish ideals and ethics will be overlooked in the struggle for secular culture and conformity. Often it has vigorously opposed modern learning, which threat-ened rabbinic studies, Jewish practices, and the traditional theology. By 1845, the struggle was over in Germany, but it was carried on in Eastern Europe as late as the 1890's by such Hungarian stalwarts as Hillel Lichtenstein, who not only denounced secular education, but also chess, checkers, instrumental music, and even the desire of the Jew for political emancipation. But the mass acceptance of modern modes of thinking and judgment has practically brought to an end the drive against scientific studies which had been active ever since the historic ban of Solomon ibn Adret in 1305. Practically, it should be

noted, but not completely, for as late as the post-World I War period a group of zealous Palestinians banned the National and University Library and later the Hebrew University itself. On the whole, however, Judaism today has, in a constructive sense, emancipated itself from an unscientific and naive past. Reform Judaism blazed the path which has been followed, albeit somewhat gingerly, by all Conservative and even most Orthodox groups. It is true that today we have not one but at least three main groups of observant Jews. This, however, is no sign of weakness, but of strength, for they represent various types of a conscious and intelligent adjustment to the new world of thought. With rare exceptions, all Jewish religious groups today, even most of the Orthodox, have appreciated and assimilated the sciences. And the result has been that, wherever an individual really understands the implications of his studies, his Judaism does not remain an undigested compromise between two world orders, the medieval and the modern, but becomes a harmonious whole, real and liveable. The apparent conflict between religion and science properly resolves itself in the recognition that both religion and science are realities, and that they concern themselves with different realms, so that no new discovery in science can possibly destroy the validity of humanitarian ethics and the yearning for union with Divinity. It is true that there are proportionately fewer practicing Jews today than two centuries ago, but Judaism as a religion is not necessarily weaker. Its strength is not dependent on its numbers. The modern Jew is a good Jew because his Judaism is of his own choosing. In the medieval world he had to be observant—he had no choice—for conformity was demanded both by the state and by the Jewish authorities. For many, the hastily mumbled Hebrew prayers were meaningless. Worship today has summoned to its aid the beauty of music and art. The ap-

plication of criticism to religion has divested it of its trappings, but has more clearly brought forth its hidden, intrinsic beauties. Our unreserved acceptance of modern thought has served only to broaden our concept of the universe and to heighten our awe for the Power and the Force behind everything. The barriers that once separated us psychically from the peoples about us have been broken down, and we, if not the world about us, proclaim our common brotherhood. Jewry has certainly become more tolerant; our religion has become more truly humanitarian. The older Jewish emphasis on man here, rather than in the hereafter, has found its counterpart in the late nineteenth-century interest in social control and reform. The Judaism of the new economic order has begun, although cautiously, to cope with the social problems which the new order has aggravated. Thus Judaism has extended its religious horizon, tended to emphasize the universalistic over the particularistic, and made of itself a great, tolerant, universal religion.

The attractiveness of contemporary culture, the pervasive character of social contacts, and the desire for conformity have apparently undermined the distinctive Jewish life. Certainly the uniformity of a universal orthodoxy is gone. Yet it is very probable that, in spite of all the inroads, in spite of the diversity of religious belief, there is now more actual and real solidarity in Jewish life than at any time since the Dispersion began. The new solidarity is due in considerable part to Zionism, an international Jewish movement. It is due, to a larger extent, to the onslaughts of anti-Semitism, but both these forces of unification pale into insignificance before the purely mechanical means of rapid transportation and the speedy transmission of news. The very modernism that has done so much to disintegrate Jew-ish life has more than compensated for it by the creation of new agencies welding world Jewry together into

one indissoluble union. Traveling by horseback, a messenger of King David would have easily required fifteen to twenty hours to transmit a message from Dan to Beersheba; it takes far less than a minute today. Rapid communication annihilates space and time and creates one Jewry the world over. A new unified, united world Jewry has been brought to birth by the beneficence of steam, oil, and electricity. The new sense of nearness has heightened the historic Jewish consciousness and sense of loyalty. The almost instantaneous transmission of news fires Jewish sentiment. Ever since the first cable was laid across the Atlantic in 1866, Jewry here has been only a few hours distant from Europe and Asia; it followed with bated breath the emancipation in Central Europe, the Roumanian and Russian pogroms, the Dreyfus affair. By means of wireless and radio, Jewry breathlessly followed the sad tale of massacre in Mandatory Palestine, the rise of an atrocious anti-Semitism in the Third Reich, and the Israeli experience. There was never such a sense of unity and mutual sympathy and understanding as prevails at this hour in Jewish life.

Less than a hundred years ago, intermarriage, assimilation, and group disintegration were the lot of the Jew in the scattered hamlets of this far-flung land, but the telephone, the radio, and television, not to mention the Anglo-Jewish press, have brought Jewish influences to bear on every distant village. The development of railroads and then of automobile and air travel has enabled every Jew to come into contact with an active Jewish community. But this unification of Jewry in the small towns is insignificant compared with the unification brought about by the growth of large cities. Here great masses of Jews have found rich opportunities for settlement and growth. In 1796, Amsterdam had probably the largest Jewish community in the eighteenth-century world—23,549 Jews. In 1969, Greater New

York had 2,381,000, more Jews than all Palestine sheltered in biblical times. Indeed, almost 50 percent of all the Jews in the world are settled today in nine-teen large cities, where, compact, cultured, alert, they have large, powerful, well-coordinated institutions and a vigorous, intelligent, Jewish vernacular press which permits them to express themselves effectively and even to act, as occasion requires it, as a united people.

The Jews have not been put to rout by the advance of civilization. On the contrary, it has drawn them closer together. In May, 1846, the 27-year-old Isaac Mayer Wise left the harbor of Bremen on the sailboat "Maria"; sixty days later he landed in New York. Today an ocean greyhound pulls out of a European harbor and docks in New York after a voyage of six days. Airplanes make the transatlantic crossing in six hours; from Lydda Airport near Tel Aviv to Kennedy International Airport at New York, a jet-liner takes scarcely more than ten hours. We are that much closer physically to the Jew abroad. In 1648, the Cossacks and Tatars united against the Poles and the Jews and butchered them by the thousands. Refugees set out on foot or in wagons for the German and Austrian borders. Hundreds if not thousands died on the road. They traveled for weeks and even months before they reached the German and Austrian frontiers only a couple of hundred miles away. Beginning in 1881 and once more in 1917, in those very villages of the Ukraine, mass murder and economic disability again drove hundreds of thousands away from their homes. Through the aid of swift-moving trains and steamboats, through the liaison established in Jewry by cable, telegraph, and telephone, mass migrations that were to save a whole people were set in motion, and in a few weeks large numbers traveled thousands of miles in safety to their new homes across the seas. The result of such migrations has been that the center of gravity of Jewish

population has shifted to the west. Large numbers of our coreligionists have advanced from lands of an inferior to lands of a superior culture. These new wanderers since the 1880's have brought with them storehouses of Jewish tradition, rabbinic lore, and pulsating Jewish idealism. The union on American shores of Jewish masses, Hebraic learning, and abroad and liberal secular culture is among the most fruitful promises of a new Jewish life in the modern world.