

A Century at the Center  
Orthodox Judaism & The Jewish Center



**A Century at the Center**  
**Orthodox Judaism**  
**& The Jewish Center**

EDITED BY  
Zev Eleff

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*A Century at the Center  
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## *Preface*

Rabbi Yosie Levine

**I**n 1917, a group of visionaries broke ground on an institution that would ultimately change the landscape of Jewish life in America. The idea of The Jewish Center was nothing less than revolutionary. In the pages that follow are sermons and articles that are intended to tell a small part of the story that has unfolded over the course of these past one hundred years.

To grapple with the tensions of tradition and modernity; to integrate the values of our *mesora* with the very best of Western civilization; to use Torah and mitzvot as a guide to navigate the complexities of contemporary life: These were among the ambitions of our founders. The world has changed substantially in the past century, but our goals have not.

In conjunction with our yearlong centennial celebration, we are pleased to present in print for the first time a collection of sermons delivered by the rabbis of The Jewish Center over the course of its first century. They reveal a great deal about the culture, history, and faith of The Jewish Center. They reflect on historic events, the advances within Orthodox Judaism, and life on New York's Upper West Side. The scholarly essays that follow in the second part of the volume provide yet another window into The Center's extraordinary past.

## *Preface*

A word must be said about The Center's first rabbi, Mordecai Kaplan. Owing to his literal and theological departure from our camp, we have tended to downplay his presence. We have made the decision here to include one of Kaplan's first Jewish Center sermon not because with the passage of time his heresies have become any less heretical. They have not. The present volume, however, is not meant to be a book of theology. It is, rather, intended to cast the historical narrative of The Jewish Center in the words of its leaders. This sermon, published in a synagogue pamphlet, throws light on the vision of Kaplan and our lay leaders in constructing The Jewish Center. To omit Kaplan would be to omit the opening chapter of our story.

Then again, this volume is not just a token of the past. Beginning with our revered teacher, Rabbi Leo Jung, my rabbinic predecessors were men of great learning and commitment to tradition. Their words continue to resonate as loudly today as they did in the years in which they were first uttered. Their messages are as timely and their applications no less relevant.

I feel both humbled and privileged to call Rabbi Lamm, Rabbi Schacter, and Rabbi Berman my teachers. Many institutions can lay claim to longevity. But how many can lay claim to the continuity of purpose ensured by an unbroken chain of teachers and students? My predecessor bequeathed so much of his accumulated wisdom to me just as his predecessor had bequeathed so much to him.

As we begin to chart the course of our next hundred years, we will continue to be guided by the words of our rabbis. Their empathy will continue to give us strength in times of crisis; their wisdom will enlighten us in times of darkness; and their sense of vision will give us the courage to confidently confront the challenges of the days ahead.

In these first hundred years since the founding of our Center, our rabbinic and lay leaders have contributed to virtually every aspect of Orthodox Jewish life in New York and beyond. We have transformed a mere idea into a source of blessing that has added meaning to the lives of thousands of Jews the world over. Imagine what we can accomplish in the next hundred.



## *Editor's Introduction*

Zev Eleff

**I**n July 1977, The Jewish Center called Rabbi Isaac Bernstein to its pulpit. Just thirty-seven years old, Rabbi Bernstein arrived in New York with considerable experience. He had led a congregation in London, and another in Dublin before that. In hindsight, his dozen years in the rabbinate make Rabbi Bernstein, in years anyway, the most experienced man to have assumed The Jewish Center's rabbinical mantle. Most of the others started in their young thirties, having shown The Center's lay leaders that their youth was an asset and their prospects more than considerable.

Perhaps more than any other congregation in the United States, The Jewish Center has been blessed with a knack for selecting rabbis. Rabbis Mordecai Kaplan, Leo Jung, Norman Lamm, Isaac Bernstein, Jacob J. Schacter, Ari Berman, and Yosie Levine exercised broad leadership and assumed international profiles. No doubt, The Jewish Center benefited from their vision, just as these individuals furthered their careers through the legacy, relationships, resources, and prestige of this Upper West Side congregation. The Jewish Center's is more than an impressive rabbinic heritage, however. Lay leaders like Joseph H. Cohen, William Fischman, and Max Stern viewed The Jewish Center as essential

## *Editor's Introduction*

to the development and survival of Orthodox Judaism in the United States. Countless others passed through The Center and were inspired to serve the cause of American Judaism. Certainly, Herman Wouk is among these individuals, as are a number of assistant rabbis, resident scholars, congregational educators, and rabbinic interns who departed the West Side to succeed in other arenas of Jewish leadership. This centennial volume draws upon the rabbinic wisdom and institutional legacy of The Jewish Center. These pages demonstrate the role that The Center has played as a facilitator of Modern Orthodox leadership and as a model for how Judaism can engage all the complex social and cultural forces that reside beyond the synagogue walls. In particular, I draw special attention to gender. In this volume, readers will find that The Jewish Center grappled with *aguna*, bat mitzva, courtship, women in the Israeli army, and women's leadership in each of its epochs. Though the issues were presented through male rabbinic voices, these concerns surely reflected the interests of the women and men in the pews, as well.

This book is divided into two parts. The first consists of sermons and rabbinic writings delivered and authored by The Center's rabbis. The Jewish Center's rabbinic figures maintained or continue to hold an international presence. The ideas and Torah wisdom shared in this section – most never published – weigh in on the developments in Orthodox life, the local and national concerns of New York Jewry, and the vital role of Israel and its relationship to Jews in the Diaspora. It is also important to note that the transliteration in this book has been modified to reflect a sense of uniformity. Interested readers should refer to the acknowledgements section at the end of this volume to identify the sermons' original forms of transliterations.

The volume's second part is comprised of scholarly chapters that probe the fascinating history of The Center. The first is Rabbi Schacter's essay on the congregation's founding and the laypeople's curious relationship with its founding rabbi. Dr. Gil Graff's chapter reads deeply into Rabbi Jung's many writings, drawing out themes and showing how Rabbi Jung did so much to migrate German Orthodox culture to the United States. My chapter serves as a reception history of Herman Wouk's celebrated book on Jewish life and observance, and how his experiences with Rabbi Jung and at The Center influenced this tract. Finally,

Dr. Maxine Jacobson offers a documentary history of illuminating archival texts that help us better understand other adventures and later episodes and lay leaders who shaped this storied congregation.

Projects of this sort require support. Foremost, I thank Rabbi Yosie Levine of The Jewish Center for inviting me to steer this project. Back in 2011, it was my pleasure to play a role as a member of his clergy team, as the William Fischman Rabbinic Intern. Since then, Rabbi Levine has been a wonderful colleague and friend. In addition, President Avi Schwartz, First Vice President Andrew Borodach, and Chair of the Board Virginia Bayer Hirt and other staff members and leaders have supported this process as well as the larger centennial celebration. They have all displayed unwavering commitment to all aspects of this work.

Tomi Mager and Rabbi Reuven Ziegler of Toby Press expertly managed this project and improved it on many levels. I am also very grateful to Shulamith Berger, Rabbi Ari Berman, Menachem Butler, Talia Graff, Seth Jonas, Lawrence Kobrin, Batsheva Leibtag, Rabbi Ari Lamm, Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter, Aaron Strum, and Rabbi Dovid Zirkind for their guidance and recommendations throughout this enterprise. Words are insufficient to express ample gratitude to my editorial assistant, Sara Marcus. Sara steadfastly transcribed dusty texts and devoted many mornings proofreading with an insufferable editor. For me and Melissa, The Jewish Center was a large part of our first years of marriage, and predated our life with our children, Meital and Jack. Our West Side Story was therefore a prelude to unimaginable love and blessing. I conclude with boundless gratitude to Carrie, Ariel, Joe, and the late and much-missed Moshe Grun. Our cousins expertly mentored us about all-things Upper West Side, and so much more.

# Sermons

## *Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan*

In 1918, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan delivered his first sermons and lectures at the newly established Jewish Center on New York's Upper West Side. It is a great irony that perhaps the best-known "heretic" in American Jewish life during the twentieth century was also so instrumental in the institutional development of Orthodox Judaism – as an insider. In 1913, for instance, he had joined with other young rabbis and laypeople in the formation of the Young Israel Movement. And, together with laypeople, Rabbi Kaplan architected The Jewish Center, a foremost synagogue-center. Though he did not coin the term, Rabbi Kaplan endowed it with greater and more refined meaning. He suggested that the synagogue building and the congregation that occupies it strive to do more than worship, though this was of paramount importance. He envisioned a synagogue-center that took responsibility for community education, culture, and engagement. The broad social portfolio of the contemporary congregation owes much to the program Rabbi Kaplan realized during his short tenure at The Center (he resigned in 1922 once it became apparent that he could no longer abide by Orthodox practice). He frequently expressed his views on the role of the synagogue in his early sermons and synagogue bulletins. On March 24, 1918, on the occasion of "Jewish Center Day," as the congregation assembled to dedicate its new spiritual home, Rabbi Kaplan articulated his fullest vision of The Jewish Center idea.

# The Jewish Center

March 24, 1918

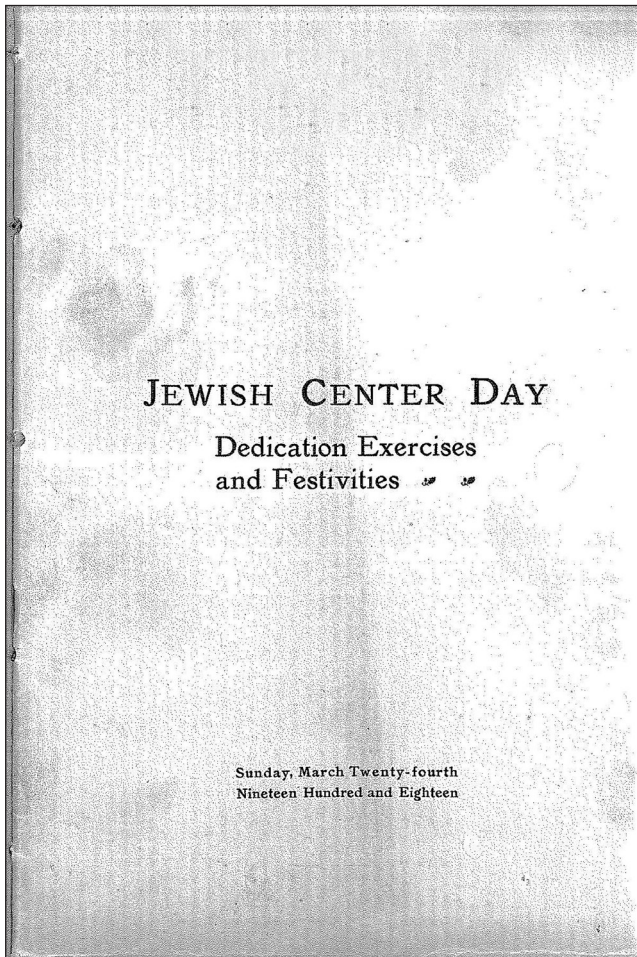
**W**e, the men and women of The Jewish Center, realize that we are but a handful in the great surging mass of humanity. A sense of proportion prevents us from exaggerating the importance of any undertaking that we may launch, particularly when that undertaking is intended to meet our own immediate needs. The Jewish Center is meant to satisfy what is often termed the higher and enlightened form of selfishness in us. We state frankly that we are establishing The Jewish Center for the purpose of deriving from it for ourselves pleasures of a social, intellectual, and spiritual character. We are not building a settlement, nor a communal, nor a Young Men's or Young Women's Hebrew Association; nor do we expect The Jewish Center to be an institution for the doing of so-called uplift work. This time we feel that we are as much in need of being uplifted as they for whose benefit the city is dotted with communal institutions.

Any form of culture, whether social, intellectual, or religious, that is deemed necessary for those whose lot has fallen in less pleasant places is equally necessary for those whose lot has fallen in more pleasant places. It is priggish to regard the uplift work that is done for others as a substitute for the training and culture that one should engage in for

himself. We cannot delegate virtue nor be Jews by proxy. We are not of those who consider themselves exempt from religious worship because they happen to belong to some communal institution where services are held for those who could not afford to belong to a synagogue. This long-distance interest in things spiritual has a demoralizing effect upon both benefactor and beneficiary. This degrades the higher strivings to a means of keeping the masses within bounds, and reduces religion to a phase of police work. Those of us who wish to be spiritual benefactors to others should remove such a stigma from the good that we seek to do. We first have to earn the right to be benefactors. We will create for ourselves the kind of recreational, cultural, and religious opportunities which we shall then have a right to provide for others.

This conception of The Jewish Center as a means of giving us the right to do good to others need not be so constructed as to make it merely of local significance. Despite the fact that we do not dedicate The Jewish Center to interests of a general communal nature, and therefore do not call upon the general public for cooperation, but only upon those who can draw from it benefits of a recreational and spiritual character; despite the fact that it is to be a Jewish neighborhood house, primarily for the Jews of the neighborhood, The Jewish Center may acquire a meaning and value that should extend far beyond the neighborhood which it will directly serve. The Jewish Center will be dominated by a purpose of far-reaching significance, if we, who are about to establish it, will do so with the deliberate and conscious aim of conducting it as an experiment to help us solve the problem of Jewish life and religion. No matter on how small a scale the chemist works with the little alembics and test tubes in his laboratory, his findings are of worldwide importance. The Jewish Center should constitute for us a spiritual laboratory, wherein we shall engage in an experiment in the outcome of which both the Jewish and non-Jewish world may well be interested. For we shall attempt to conserve and develop Jewish life by a method hitherto untried. If we succeed, our method is sure to be adopted in every part of the world, wherever the problem of conserving and developing Jewish life is the same as ours. It would, therefore, be false humility on our part to underestimate the deeper import of our undertaking, and to fail to take the full responsibility for its character as a spiritual venture. To understand in

what sense The Jewish Center may be regarded as a spiritual laboratory, we have to bear in mind the nature of Judaism's struggle for existence at the present time. It is an infinitely keener struggle than that which went on during the ages of persecution. The emancipation from medievalism has written the question mark large across the whole of Jewish life. It has created conditions for us that at every turn and at every step torment us with the question: Why remain a Jew?



The title page of The Jewish Center Day Program. It occasioned the March 24, 1918, dedication ceremony of the synagogue building.



A vast and influential element among us sincerely believes that the solution of the inner problem of Jewish life and religion depends entirely upon our being able to find a satisfactory answer to that question. They believe that only those constituents of Jewish life should be conserved which are an articulate answer to the question: "To be or not to be Jews?" Whatever comes short of being such an answer should, in their opinion, be eliminated. We, however, believe that this solution of the inner Jewish problem makes for the complete dissolution of Jewish life. We shall pursue a radically different method. Instead of a merely attempting to find an adequate answer to the question why remain a Jewish, we shall, through The Jewish Center, create conditions that will forestall and prevent such a question from ever arising. When a man has come to such a pass that he asks himself the question: "Why live?" the thing to do is not to argue him into optimism, or to feed him on abstract thoughts and ideas that logically prove life to be worthwhile, but to provide him with those very things because of the lack of which he has lost interest in life. If he is without work, provide him with work; if he is hungry, provide him with food; if his general system is out of order, take him to the physician and let him enter upon a program of proper dieting and exercise. The same is true of the life of a people. If doubts and misgivings arise in the people's soul, if it is brought to the brink of despair, it should not be met with arguments as to the value of its life, but its life should be ordered such that it would never come to entertain those doubts or harbor that despair.

The method that has been tried and found wanting would reduce Judaism to a few general and abstract truths, which it becomes our mission as Jews to preach to the world. The belief in the unity of God and in the supremacy of righteousness is regarded as a fully satisfying answer to the question: "To be or not to be?" It is thought that only those elements of our religion should survive which emphasize the mission of Israel. The surrender is advocated not only of the distinctive practices of Jewish life, not only of the Hebrew language, every word of which, to use a mystic expression, is the incarnation of a Jewish soul, but even of the spiritual solidarity of Israel and of the hope breathed in the words of the prayer, "May our eyes behold Thy return to Zion." We cannot accept this method, because it has emptied Judaism of content;

it has made of it an anemic religion. It leaves us entirely submerged in everydayness. Instead of being a religion with depth, texture, dramatic actuality, and vivid tangibility, Judaism has become a mere abstract theism. Our feelings are starved, our thoughts confused, our lives remain rootless. To the Jew who has been stifling in the bad air of the ghetto, this method has come and orders him to betake himself to a vacuum. There is an old myth concerning a human being upon whom immortality was endowed without youth. Aurora is said to have been given the right to ask for her beloved any gift within the power of the gods to bestow, and in her haste, she asked for him only immortality, but forgot to ask that youth be joined in the gift. The result was that, as time went on, he began to grow old, his body grew thinner and thinner, and finally wasted away, leaving nothing but a mere voice and an echo. Similarly, as a result of the method that has thus far been employed, Judaism would finally become a mere frail disembodied echo, vainly trying to get itself heard in the infinite tumult of the world.

The method which we propose to adopt is to create the environment and to develop the conditions which will bring such health and soundness to Jewish life that the question "Why remain a Jew?" will not even occur to us nor to our children. The elements which are indispensable to health in human life are four in number: atmosphere, light, food, and exercise. Provide Jewish life with these constituents, and you will solve the problem of Judaism.

Give it atmosphere, create surroundings that breathe the Jewish spirit. Let those surroundings be so inviting that we should look forward to them with delight; let every nook and corner convey a Jewish sentiment; let the furnishings be made expressive through Jewish symbolic art; let the books and pictures be such as deal with Jewish themes; and, above all, let the entire atmosphere be pervaded by a spirit of piety and reverence. We are frequently exhorted to do all this for the home, but that is far from sufficient. Our mode of living has robbed the home of individuality. We lead the lives of nomads; our apartments are built with the uniformity of beehives. And the fact mainly to be reckoned with is that we spend most of our leisure hours outside of the home. What we need, therefore, is a Jewish atmosphere not only for each individual family, but in centers which should be the rallying points for a large

number of Jewish families in each neighborhood. It is in these centers, principally, that a Jewish atmosphere should be generated.

The need of a Jewish atmosphere is not due to any desire on our part to be different from the rest of the world. It is only a special form of a human trait which is characteristic of all higher life. All men are impelled to create new worlds for themselves, to which they can escape from the humdrum toil and carping cares of their workaday existence. This trait is the parent of all art. For what is art if not a world created by man, a world that is plastic to his heart's desires and his imaginings, as an escape from the world, which is hard and unyielding? Thus, the Jew, too, needs a little world of his own to which he might turn, not merely during a few crises of his life, but every day, for the purpose of having his existence enlarged, refined, and sweetened. Every Jew in whom there is still a spark of Jewish consciousness ardently longs for an environment of that kind. The real Jew feels lost and solitary without such surroundings. The psalmist voiced this longing of the Jew when he said, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His Temple."

The second requisite to Jewish health is light, and by light, I mean joy. "The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor." Thus, Scripture makes light synonymous with gladness and joy. Never did the problem of pleasure require so much care and attention as at the present time, when the nerves are perpetually at high tension. Never was the need for relaxation so urgent. On the one hand, labor is assuming a monotonous routine, which is deadening, and on the other hand, a complexity of organization which is prostrating. It is only by frequently resorting to entertainment and joy-giving recreations that our nervous systems are preserved from breakdown. If we want our religion to count as a factor in our lives, we shall have to imbibe it not merely during the few odd moments that we can spare from our work and our pastimes, but in the very course of these pursuits. On your travels, you may have seen long troughs of water between the tracks that are known as track tanks. Instead of locomotives stopping to have their boilers refilled with water, they take up water from these track tanks while they speed on. We cannot count upon people stopping frequently from their recreations

and their joys to store up spiritual energy for their lives, but we must make it possible for them to store up that energy at the very time that they speed on in search of recreation and pleasure.

Great educators of the world have begun to realize that pastime and recreation are needed not only to build up the body, but also to build up the soul. If conducted in the proper environment, they are among the most powerful character builders. To play the game is held up as the ideal of political and social life. To play the game is said to mean “to learn to give and take, command and obey, and to subordinate the interests of the individual to those of the group.”

It is true that until the present time the Jewish environment provided by the synagogue did not have to contain game rooms, swimming pools, gymnasiums. But we forget that in the past the bulk of our people accepted the fact of their being Jewish as the most self-evident of all moral axioms. “To be or not to be a Jew” occurred as a fleeting doubt only when the inquisitor tightened the screw of torture. The reason that it did not occur to them to ask “Why remain a Jew?” was that the very ghetto within which the Jews were impaled was illuminated with the joy of Jewish life, and the more fiercely the storms of hatred raged without, the cozier and more snug a retreat it provided to be. The synagogue must provide us with all the spiritual health-giving elements that formerly existed within the ghetto walls, and must supply these elements in a manner corresponding to the strenuousness of modern living. We need more than ever the life-giving light of joy.

The third requisite to the health of Jewish life is the proper soul nourishment, that is, the food of knowledge. As of old, Wisdom builds a house and cries out invitingly, “Come and eat of my bread!” Ours is not a religion of blind faith. It calls for the exercise of the mind as well as of the heart. It requires of us that enlargement of soul whereby we are rendered capable of including within our mental vision long stretches of time and space. The Jew, to live his life fully, must be able to retain in his consciousness the residue of over three thousand years of history and spiritual achievement, and his sympathies must be broad enough to overleap the boundaries that divide nation from nation and find in every land spirits akin to his own. To be a Jew, in the full sense of the word, is to be highly cultured. Our faith must be supplied with the rich intellectual

content which has been stored up by Jewish learning. The tree of Jewish culture has not withered; it is still abounding in sap. It is still a tree of life to those that lay hold upon it. There is in Jewish knowledge food for the soul, from the time that the intelligence of the child begins to disclose itself in lisping accents until we are ready to lay down life's tasks and are contented to contemplate in retirement the years behind us. Say the rabbis, "From the moment the child begins to speak his father should teach him the holy tongue." They urged not only that we teach them the blessings, or have them recite the ritual, but that we accustom them to the use of the holy tongue. Though they were not psychologists, they realized intuitively the important truth that you can convey through the very sounds of a language the spirit of the people that speaks it, far more adequately than through abstract principles and formularies.

Jewish knowledge is not only the food for babes and young children, it is bread and meat for all who are eager to feed their minds on the most substantial and intellectual food. What a pity that we have allowed our Bible, the mirror of a nation's soul, to remain a mere textbook for the little ones. How few of our men and women even consider it important to turn to it now and then to contemplate its divine teachings. And as to the later developments of Jewish thought and later products of Jewish learning, their very existence is known only through hearsay. A state of affairs such as this will be impossible if we have Jewish centers wherein the very atmosphere is conducive to the acquisition of Jewish knowledge. Our sons and daughters, who learn something of the great world cultures and national literatures, but nothing of the culture and literature of our people, can at best be but starving Jews. It is only the starveling Jew who asks himself, "Why remain a Jew?" We want to prevent the spiritual starvation of the Jews.

Finally, the fundamental law to which we should give heed in order to secure a sound Jewish life is that to keep any thought or ideal alive, we must be doing something with it. It is not enough to be talking about it. It must find expression through action. This is what I mean by exercise as the fourth element in the reconstruction of Jewish life. The field of action in which we can express our Jewish spirit is as unlimited as the world, and as varied as life itself. To help those who are in want, to heal the sick, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to provide work

for the unemployed – these are but a part of the debt that we owe to society. They are so elemental in their character that the performance of them merely entitles us to that humanity which we hold in common with the rest of mankind. But we must also remember that there is a higher duty than philanthropy, and that is, justice. It is in the realization of social justice that the Jew can distinguish himself in the future, as it was through his proclamation of it that he distinguished himself in the past. It is as Jews that we should be deeply interested in the problems underlying the relations of employer and employee, the rights of property, the sanctity of family life. By being in the van of all movements that make for justice, we can contribute more than our share to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Above all there is need for that form of practical action whereby the spiritual solidarity of Israel shall be made to operate as a real and active force in our lives. We should not content ourselves with merely securing justice for the Jews in the lands of oppression. We should make the upbuilding of Palestine as a spiritual center of the world the foremost and distinctive contribution of Jewish life to the life of the nations. “In time to come,” say the rabbis, “the synagogue in the Diaspora will be removed to Palestine.” This is a prophecy foretelling the time when the synagogues will not confine themselves to the parochial and limited needs of their representative localities, but will become the chief agencies in the upbuilding of the Land of Israel. Whatever our opinion of political Zionism, we cannot shirk our duty to spiritual Zionism. It is our cardinal duty as Jews to make of *Eretz Yisrael* a center radiating influences, cultural and spiritual. It is the chief form of self-exertion necessary to strengthen the Jewish makeup. Nothing is so good for strengthening our backs and getting us to walk as God wanted us to walk when He said, “I have made you go upright.”

These, in brief, are the main elements essential to that normality and equilibrium of Jewish life, to that health which will efface forever from our lives the question “Why remain a Jew?” By providing these constituents to Jewish life, The Jewish Center will make of our religion not merely an abstract philosophy meant to appeal to the intellect, not merely a religion of the mind, but a religion of all five senses, a religion that has body and substance to it. It will make concrete the truth about it

which we symbolize at the going out of the Sabbath, when we pronounce the Havdala. We then pronounce benedictions over the enjoyment practically of the five senses, expressing at the same time our realization of the distinction between Israel and the nations. We thus imply that it is only a Judaism of the five senses that can give us individuality, that can enable us to retain our identity free from all harrowing doubt and gnawing despair.

Will the method of Jewish life which we intend to pursue rule out all purpose and idealism and center all our efforts upon mere existence? By no means. Having a purpose in life is just as necessary to health as air and light and food and exercise. But there is a vast difference between the purpose conceived in the exuberance of body and mind and the sickly dream of the famished and feverish. The so-called Jewish mission is but a sickly dream. The purpose of enriching the life and ideas of our country, of keeping alive the civilization in which its most valued institutions are rooted, is an ambition that we can hope to redeem when Jewish life will be hale and hearty. The men and women who have the highest interests of our country at heart fear lest it "stagnate forever, and become the Sicily of the modern world, rich in the world's goods, absorbing the thought, patronizing the acts of other peoples, but producing nothing from amidst our jumble of races, except steel, oil, grain, and ammunition." Now is our chance. The opportunity is ours to be among the foremost to render America the home of the loftiest idealism and motherland of the universal justice and peace.

We can do so only if the program of Jewish life will be big enough and heroic enough, to thrill our souls, to captivate our imaginations, and to hold our allegiance. It is to such a program that we can dedicate ourselves, a program that makes for the recuperation of Israel's health of spirit. It is a program that calls for an atmosphere that shall exhilarate the Jewish soul, for light that shall bring gladness and cheer to the Jewish heart, for food that shall nourish the Jew's mind, and for effort that shall bring his entire organism into play. At every great crisis in our history we have had to renew our covenant with the God of Israel. The present crisis is the gravest of them all, for there has never been such a period of transition and unsettlement. In The Jewish Center, we are proclaiming once more our allegiance to Israel and renewing our covenant with Israel's God.