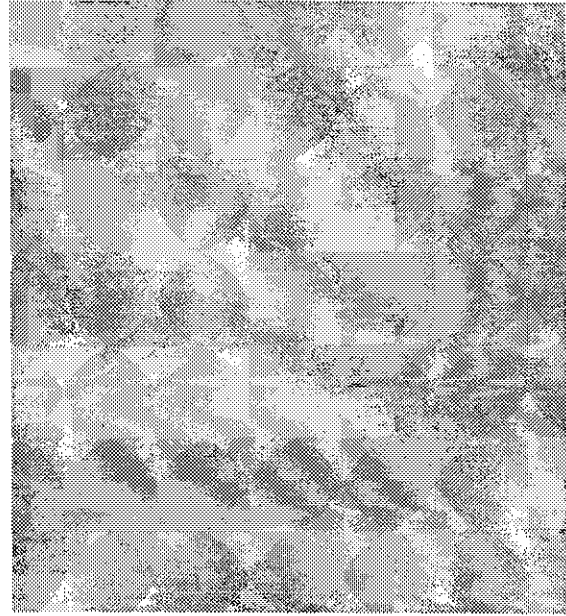
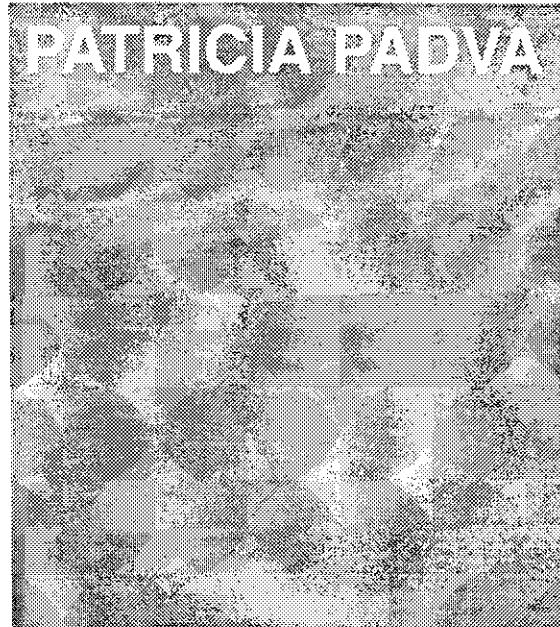


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Attitudes Toward Israel and Jewish Identity

A FOCUS GROUP STUDY



Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations
The American Jewish Committee

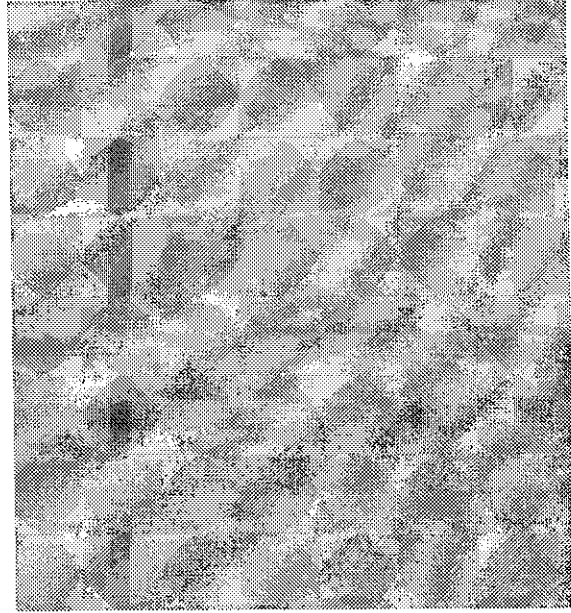
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The Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations, an arm of the American Jewish Committee, undertakes programs and activities in the United States and Israel designed to enhance the collaboration between the two largest and most important Jewish communities in the world.

The Institute is grounded on these premises:

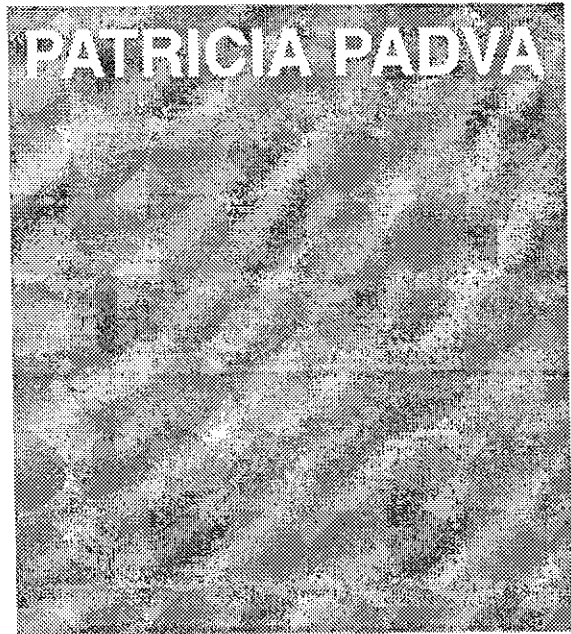
1. The American Jewish community is a healthy, creative and viable community with a positive future in the United States.
2. American Jewry's commitment to Israel's security and survival is strong and irrevocable; for many, Israel is a major ingredient of their Jewish identity.
3. Israelis have come to recognize the importance of the American Jewish community's economic, political and moral support and the potential for joint action.
4. Events that affect either community are likely to affect the status and future of Jewish communities the world over.



Attitudes Toward Israel and Jewish Identity

A FOCUS GROUP STUDY

PATRICIA PADVA



American Jewish Committee

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FOREWORD

The close attachment to Israel on the part of American Jews has been evidenced in many ways. Indeed, for a large number of American Jews, Israel is a primary source of Jewish identification. However, recent studies conducted by the Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations (IAJIR) have indicated that the attachment to the Jewish state on the part of young American Jews has become attenuated.

By and large it appears that Jews born after 1948, for whom the Holocaust and the creation of the Jewish state are but historical addenda, do not feel as close to Israel as do those born before 1948, for whom these events were experiential realities. In order to gain some insight into the distancing of younger Jews from Israel, IAJIR asked Dr. Patricia Padva to conduct a number of focus groups primarily with unaffiliated Jews from 25 to 50 years of age to discover how they felt about Israel and why; how they perceived their personal Jewish identities; and what patterns of Jewish behavior they exhibited. Focus groups were also conducted with a number of affiliated Jews so that a continuum of the thoughts and feelings of this age group could be gained.

Dr. Padva was able to elicit a wide range of expressions about being Jewish and about Israel which graphically depict the deep ambivalence of many young Jews. The anguished comment by one participant offers a remarkable illustration of the bipolarity of feeling that seems to be a common element among those interviewed:

Jews in America and Israel do not have to be either powerless victims or vengeful aggressors. When will we apply our ethical values and tremendous intellectual resources to designing an Israeli society which is really just, humane and tolerant?

This study illumines the psyche of Jews between the age of 25 and 50 and provides valuable clues for community policy and action.

Bertram H. Gold
Director

INTRODUCTION

One of the realities of life in the Diaspora is that there is no universally accepted central authority who decides what is or is not acceptable Jewish behavior. Traditional rabbinic authority and binding halakhic standards are used by Orthodox Jews to determine how they live their private and public lives. For non-Orthodox Jews (as individuals or as members of non-Orthodox denominations and *havurot*, both internal and external standards are used to assess the authenticity of their private and public practices. These include: creating formal and informal authority structures to determine current standards for implementing the tradition, pursuing individual autonomy, and following the practices of esteemed individuals.

In spite of the lack of a central authority, an informal consensus regarding normative Jewish behaviors has evolved within the American Jewish community.¹ These behaviors include:

1. Support for the State of Israel
2. Remembrance of the Holocaust and a resolve to not allow it to be repeated
2. Involvement in major life-cycle events and holidays
3. Mutual responsibility for all Jews
4. Appreciation of Jewish history and culture
5. *Tzedakah* via philanthropy and social justice for all peoples
6. Pride in being an American

In democratic societies individuals are free to practice their religion and ethnicity as long as they support the nation in which they reside. For this reason American Jews can choose to be or not to be Jews (at religious, cultural, ethnic, and community levels). Since the boundaries between Jews and non-Jews are permeable, Jews can choose to assimilate totally and non-Jews can convert.

Thus individuals who are Jewish by birth must decide how Jewish they will be. They must answer, for themselves, several questions: Will they remain Jewish? What religious, ethnic, and cultural behaviors will they implement? Will they accept current values and behaviors? Will they belong to existing Jewish religious and communal organizations? Will they form new organizations which reflect new perspectives? Will they support Israel? Will they remember the Holocaust and work to ensure that it will not happen again to any part of world Jewry?

¹ Jonathan Woocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 67.

1. METHODS, ISSUES, AND PARTICIPATION PATTERNS

The research described in this report was commissioned by the American Jewish Committee's Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations to explore three aspects of the lives of unaffiliated American Jews:

1. Attitudes toward Israel
2. Personal Jewish identity
3. Patterns of Jewish behavior

The research instrument was the focus group, a small group of people selected in various ways to discuss a particular topic, providing qualitative data that is sometimes used to supplement the quantitative data gathered by interview or questionnaire surveys. A focus group provides participants with a supportive environment in which they can interact and make explicit their internal values and preferences. When the focus group is facilitated by a trained psychologist, the participants' discussion of the group's topic often generates data about their deep-seated values, cognitions, and emotions.

The present project was advertised by presentations to Jewish groups and by outreach contacts to religious and community leaders. As a result of these efforts, a number of volunteers undertook to host focus groups, inviting friends and acquaintances to participate. Sixteen focus groups were conducted in south Florida, New York City, and the Los Angeles area between October 16, 1990, and March 28, 1991.

Of the 64 participants, 40 were female. Most participants were married; three were involved in romantic relationships with non-Jews. Sixty-one were under age 50.

Thirty-two participants were unaffiliated with synagogues or mainstream Jewish organizations. Twenty-two were affiliated with non-Orthodox synagogues and with Jewish organizations. Ten were affiliated with Orthodox synagogues (modern Orthodox and a Chabad Lubavitch synagogue). Three actively participated in *havurot*. Some of the unaffiliated individuals had been active in meditation groups (Buddhist and Hindu).

Eighteen of the 32 unaffiliated participants had visited Israel, and two of them had studied there. Ten of the 22 non-Orthodox affiliated participants had visited Israel and one had lived there. Eight of the 10 Orthodox participants had visited Israel, four had studied there, and two had lived there.

The participants' occupations included: lawyers, a state senator, journalists, social workers, a real estate entrepreneur, a shoe salesman, artists, a psychiatrist, psychologists, fund-raisers, Jewish communal professionals, filmmakers, a director of a peace center, professors, biomedical researchers, rabbis, a small-business owner, homemakers, a rabbinical student, media producers, teachers, photographers, a dentist, accountants, an actress, and a script reader.

All the major denominations were represented: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist. Several participants had attributes that enriched the interviews:

- * One unaffiliated woman had an aunt and uncle who had been personally thanked by Ben-Gurion as major contributors to Israel.
- * One unaffiliated woman was a "red diaper baby" in a New York secular Jewish community.
- * One woman was Sephardi and active in preserving Sephardi traditions.
- * Two were *baalot t'shuva* (female returnees) and one was a *baal t'shuva* (male returnee).
- * Two participants who were over 50 were Holocaust survivors.
- * One unaffiliated woman was initiated into several levels of a Buddhist meditation society and was searching for a way to express her spirituality and social justice values with Jewish individuals and organizations.
- * One female participant had converted from Roman Catholicism before she met her Jewish husband.

Focus group questions were developed for each of the three areas to be explored: attitudes toward Israel, personal identity, and patterns of Jewish behavior. The same questions were used in all groups. They were designed to move the participants from highly personal and generic responses on a topic related to one of the areas to open-ended responses on a specific question to the generation of action recommendations. The questions were as follows:

I. Exploring My Personal Identity

1. I am aware of the Jewish part of me whenever I ____.
2. When I think of who I am, the Jewish part of me is present in these aspects of my life: roles, hobbies, personality traits, values, physical characteristics, or ____.
3. To me the joys and sorrows of the Jewish part of me are ____.
4. In my relationships I am in contact with other Jews as: spouse, significant others, parents, friends, colleagues, neighbors, etc.
5. My reactions to the Holocaust and other acts of anti-Semitism are ____.
6. When I hear the statement "Every Jew is a member of a historical community of peoples whose membership is worldwide," it personally makes me feel or think ____.
7. In the following categories, my Jewishness is supported and hindered thusly: family, friends, colleagues, synagogues, Jewish organizations, neighbors, and society.

II. Patterns of Jewish Behavior

8. I am/am not affiliated with a synagogue because _____ (Identify whether or not you currently belong, have belonged as an adult or child, level of involvement, and what synagogue affiliation means to you).
9. Identify what Jewish or non-Jewish holidays you have celebrated during the past year in your home and what holidays you celebrated in your parents' home. What are your feelings about your patterns of holiday celebration?
10. I have celebrated a bar or bat mitzvah or confirmation, and its influence on me was ____.
11. I received the following formal Jewish education and its impact on me was _____.
12. To me God and the Torah represent _____.
13. As I think about the common bonds of Jewish people I believe that Jews are connected because of: belief in the same God, genetic bonds, communal beliefs, nationality, common values, etc.
14. In my home I have the following Jewish religious and cultural artifacts and they have meaning to me because _____.
15. I have given time or money to the following Jewish or non-Jewish causes during the last year

because _____.

16. I engage in humanistic/secular Jewish activities; these activities include _____.

III. Attitudes Toward Israel

17. In my personal life, Israel makes me think or feel _____ and I want to do or say _____ about Israel.

18. My perceptions about Israel are based on: personal commitment, visits, media, historical events, other.

19. My perceptions about the current events involving Israel are _____.

20. In relationship to Israel, American Jews should _____.

21. If Israel changes the "Who is a Jew?" law to recognize only Orthodox conversions, I would think or feel _____.

22. When I hear the statement that "Jews can live a fuller Jewish life in Israel" my reaction is _____.

23. When I think about Jews being oppressed in Russia or Ethiopia or anywhere, I think I should _____.

IV. Concluding Thoughts

24. As I reflect on our discussions of these questions, I would want to receive the following types of support or services from the Jewish community _____.

25. As I reflect on our discussions, I think other Jews and I should relate to Israel by doing/thinking/believing _____.

Focus Group Participants' Affiliation Patterns

When the study was conceived, it was to be limited to focus group interviews with unaffiliated Jews (Jews with no synagogue or organization connection) aged 25-50. After the first few focus groups, it was decided to interview affiliated Jews as well so that a continuum of thoughts in the Jewish community could be gathered concerning the key issues.

The term "unaffiliated" proved to be ambiguous. Did it mean being unconnected with Jewish organizations, synagogues, traditions, ethnicity, or the "Jewish part of oneself"?

The participants who were not formally linked with mainstream Jewish religious and community organizations were often engaged in other Jewish activities. Many perceived themselves to be connected to Jewishness, and they disliked the label "unaffiliated." On the other hand, the participants who were connected with mainstream Jewish institutions did not accept some of the Jewish innovations of the individuals who were not so connected.

As more interviews were completed, it became apparent that an approach other than affiliation could be used to describe patterns of participation of individual American Jews. This approach is consistent with intergroup-relations research in which one measures the degree to which an individual or group wishes to interact with another individual/group. It determines the patterns of American Jewish affiliation and participation by assessing two variables:

1. The degree to which the individual/group wishes to maintain Jewish identity and behaviors
2. The degree to which the individual/group wishes to maintain a relationship with the general American society

When these two variables are simultaneously considered, a framework is created which generates

four patterns of participation in the American Jewish community: traditionalist Jews, cultural pluralist Jews, individualistic Jews, and culturally assimilated Jews.

Traditionalist Jews

Traditionalist Jews participate daily in ritual observances and mainly associate with other like-minded Jews. They view their Jewishness as the prime factor in their lives. Their relationship with mainstream American society is not as significant to them as their Jewishness. They do not perceive that they have choices regarding the practice of their Jewishness. Their lives revolve around the daily performance of *mitzvot* (prescribed observances) and interactions with family and friends who live according to the same precepts.

They have minimal interactions with nontraditional Jews and the rest of American society. They share common languages (Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino), style of dress, and family customs that reflect their Jewishness. The traditionalist Jews do not perceive themselves as individuals who shape their cultural and religious practices but as members of a group whose observances were established by God.

Unless their ideological beliefs support outreach to other Jews (such as the desire to enable other Jews to be traditionally observant), they are insular. Among the ten traditionalists in the focus groups, the degree of insularity differed according to the group to which they belonged. The Modern Orthodox participants were less insular, in their private daily interactions, than the Chabad Lubavitcher participants. The Chabad Lubavitcher engaged in more public outreach activities with nontraditionalist Jews than Modern Orthodox interviewees. However, the Modern Orthodox participants had a wider network of nontraditionalist Jewish friends and non-Jewish associates than the Chabad Lubavitchers.

The traditionalist participants all supported the current State of Israel and most of its activities. Three of them thought that Israel needed to trade land for peace to obtain secure borders. Five of them felt that the "West Bank is Judaea and Samaria" and must never be traded for peace but settled by Jews. All of them thought that Jerusalem must be a part of Israel and did not want to lose control of the Golan Heights.

Most of them thought that the Orthodox standard for "Who is a Jew?" should be formally adopted by the Israeli government. Three of them disagreed and thought that Israel should strive to formally support the establishment of all major Jewish denominations there. All wanted to protect the security of Israel and did not want Jews criticizing Israel before non-Jews.

Cultural Pluralists

Cultural pluralists maintain an explicit Jewish identity (religious and cultural) while fully participating in mainstream American society. For them, religious observances are not shaped exclusively by the Orthodox tradition. Many cultural pluralists have private life-styles whose patterns include religious and cultural aspects of their Jewishness. Most of the interviewees in this category had long-standing friendships with both Jews and non-Jews.

Of the 22 cultural pluralists in the focus groups, 19 were active in non-Orthodox synagogues and mainstream Jewish communal organizations. They represented all three major non-Orthodox denominations (12 were Conservative, 5 Reform, 2 Reconstructionist). Ten were volunteer leaders at their local federation. Five participated in the Wexner Heritage Foundation. One studied in a Judaic study program sponsored by the National Jewish Center for Living and Learning (CLAL). One was a rabbi who worked for a national Jewish communal organization. One was well known

for her books on Jewish identity.

Three participants, whose interview responses placed them in the cultural pluralist affiliation pattern, were so dissatisfied with mainstream synagogues and communal organizations that they were connected only with their *havurot* and with alternative communal organizations. All three had been affiliated with mainstream synagogues and communal organizations but felt that they could practice of their Jewish values with greater authenticity outside mainstream Jewish organizations.

Nineteen of the cultural pluralists supported the State of Israel by actively raising funds for it and by lobbying federal legislators. Some were attempting to increase Jewish investments in Israeli businesses. Some were unhappy with the current peace policies of the Israeli government and thought that the American Jewish community should openly criticize Israel. The three who belonged to alternative Jewish organizations were very unhappy with the Israeli government and thought that American Jews who were working for peace in Israel should actively support Israelis who were working for peace and directly lobby American legislators to reduce any Israeli foreign aid which hindered "land for peace" efforts. All of this group thought that Jerusalem must belong to Israel.

All 22 cultural pluralists were very concerned that the government of Israel did not acknowledge the authenticity of the Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist denominations. They strongly believed that all rabbis should be able to function fully as rabbis in Israel. They were angry with the Israeli government and average Israeli citizens for not supporting their positions as active American Jews who chose to be non-Orthodox. They were not sure that they would continue to provide Israel with the same levels of support if their denominations were ever formally delegitimated by changing the definition of "who is a Jew."

Individualistic Jews

Individualistic Jews firmly believe that their personal autonomy determines their Jewishness. Thirty-two participants, who were unaffiliated with a synagogue or mainstream Jewish organization, belonged to this category. Most of them viewed themselves as very Jewish and did not want to lose that part of their identity. Many of them were active in social justice causes and felt that these concerns sprang from their Jewish values.

They primarily perceived themselves as cosmopolitan humanists (citizens of the world) who were seeking to create meaning for themselves while surrounded by local, national, and international sociopolitical and environmental crises. Most of them were happy to be Americans but felt that their Americanness had little impact on their daily lives.

Many felt that a religious affiliation was important, and some did not perceive that the Jewish life-styles of their parents provided them with models to emulate. When they lived at home, many of them were affiliated with mainstream synagogues: 12 with Reform, 9 with Conservative, 5 with Orthodox, and 1 with Reconstructionism. Ten of this group had gone to several synagogues and federation events searching for a Jewish group with which to affiliate. They had not found any mainstream Jewish religious or communal organizations that reflected their personal values and that they could afford.

In their private lives most of them observed Jewish holidays (e.g., Hannukah candlelighting, Pesach seders, High Holidays) by creating innovative practices, such as blowing a shofar on the beach to observe the High Holidays. Most of them also celebrated a mixture of Jewish, Christian, and American holidays with their Jewish and non-Jewish friends. They did not think that they were engaging in a religious event when they celebrated a Christian-oriented holiday (e.g., Christmas). They viewed these holidays as national rituals. Some of them had belonged to alternative spiritual

groups (Hindu or Buddhist). Over half of the 32 participants in this category wondered how they would pass Jewishness on to their children.

Five of them had been raised in secular homes by parents who were active in Jewish cultural groups such as Workmen's Circle and they agreed with their parents' view that "you do not have to be religious to be Jewish." Some were not clear about wanting either a humanist or religious identity; they perceived themselves as "just Jewish."

Most of them believed that Israel was not practicing the Jewish values of justice, equity, and compassion. Several were active in both alternative Jewish peace organizations and mainstream American peace efforts. Some had worked actively to engage in joint peace efforts with Israeli Jews and Arabs and with Palestinians.

Most of them (26 of 32) felt quite connected to Israel and perceived that as an essential part of their Jewish identity. All of them supported the continued existence of Israel. One was not sure that the State of Israel should continue to exist unless it could develop equitable interactions with the Israeli Arabs (by returning land unfairly taken when Israel was created) and Palestinians (allowing the creation of their state on the West Bank).

All wanted Israel to engage in negotiations for peace with the Palestinians. Most thought the Palestinians should select whomever they want to negotiate with Israel. They viewed Jerusalem as part of Israel but most of them did not exhibit the same deep-seated emotional attachment to it as the traditionalists or cultural pluralists.

Assimilated Jews

An assimilated Jew chooses not to acknowledge his/her Jewish identity and fully identifies with mainstream American society. None of the focus group participants viewed themselves as being assimilated. Only three of those who were classified as individualistic Jews gave responses that indicated that they were close to being assimilated. As these three individuals described their Jewishness, they stated that they were not sure why they still thought of themselves as Jewish. However, all concluded that they felt that they were Jewish.

The boundaries between these four patterns of participation in the American Jewish community are not permanent or impermeable. Movement among the participation patterns was present in the lives of some of the interviewees. Two of the female *ba'alot t'shuvah* became traditional Jews (one from a secular background and one from a Reform). Most of the individualistic Jews had been active in synagogues when they were young. In the interviews some of the individualistic Jews indicated that they were having difficulties connecting with synagogues and communal organizations because they were not earning enough money. A few of the traditionalists were experiencing tension as some members of their synagogues were becoming ultratraditional and wondered how they could maintain a synagogue that was Orthodox without being rigid.

2. ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL

Israel is extremely important to American Jewry and this was reflected in the focus groups. All of the participants supported the State of Israel and wanted it to have a secure existence. However, a few would support Israel only if it was really, as one participant said, a "light unto the world and humane and equitable to all of its citizens and to the Palestinians."

The participants' responses about Israel and Israelis included a wide range of thoughts and feelings. These seem to be linked to several personal factors: type of affiliation, age, visits to Israel, Jewish literacy, and commitment to equality for all humans. The most significant factor influencing the participants' responses about Israel was their Jewish affiliation.

Individualistic Jews' Attitudes Toward Israel

The Nation of Israel

All the individualistic Jews wanted the country of Israel to survive. Most had moderate levels of attachment to the current state of Israel and high attachment for the Israel of their dreams: a perfect Jewish country which fully practiced justice and humanitarianism. Over half (18 of 32) of this group were not alive when Israel was founded. Although many of them had visited Israel, the Israel of their dreams was more real to them than the current state of Israel. The following quote illustrates what most of these respondents felt about Israel:

My thoughts about Israel are complicated. American Jewry's relationship with Israel is complex as it is our religious homeland and also a nation. I am not comfortable when I visit it as it is a middle eastern country and its culture is alien to my Yiddishness and my liberal social justice values. When I think of it, I often imagine it as the ideal Zionist state which is a light unto the nations -- the Israel I studied about in Sunday school.

Some (8 of 32) did not keep current with news about Israel and were surprised when they had an emotional response to the bombing of Israel. In spite of their emotional responses they did not support the current policies of Israel's leaders.

A few felt nothing when they heard that Israel had been bombed by Scud missiles. One of them² stated during an interview on a day on which a Scud attack occurred, "To me the bombing of Israel is just like the bombing of any country -- such as England -- I don't want any country to be bombed -- the bombing of Israel does not affect me personally." Others in this category felt closer to Israel after the Scud attacks and were more cautious about their efforts to pressure Israel into exchanging land for peace.

Most of them wanted Israel to be a haven for Jews who do not live in America and want to go to Israel to escape oppression. Some thought that the oppressed Jews of the world should move to either Israel or America. Many of them no longer identified with any aspect of Zionism. For

themselves they did not think that they could be more Jewish in Israel than they were in America. Since most members of this group viewed themselves as cosmopolitan humanitarians, they did not think that Israel would support their social justice values. Some of them were not sure they knew enough about the history and current events of Israel and thought they should study more.

A few (6 of 32) had a strong emotional attachment to Israel. This was exemplified by the following statement by one participant:

- If Israel was destroyed and ceased to exist, my heart would implode and I would feel like I lost my mother. The Six Day war was like the rape of Israel on her wedding night by a male Arab and this was the ultimate violation. When it started I was very scared and vulnerable.

Occupation and Intifada

Many individualistic Jews (22 of 32) perceived that Israel was denying the legitimate rights of Palestinian self-determination. They were very displeased with the current government of Israel. All of them were concerned about both Israel's national security and the Palestinians' right to self-determination. In one group, they cited the following Israeli actions which displeased them:

- * The presence of Jewish settlements on the West Bank and establishment of more of them
- * The support for Meir Kahane's racist ideas which has continued after his death
- * The very harsh military responses to the intifada

They thought that the Israeli Jews' treatment of the Palestinians was inhumane. They were outraged and embarrassed by Israel's continued harassment of the Palestinians (e.g., destroying homes and beating teenagers). Some of these participants were very active in alternative Jewish and non-Jewish efforts for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Their viewpoints are illustrated by the following statement:

My parents and Hebrew school teachers taught me that *tikun olam* (repairing the world) is important. As Jews we must all reduce oppression and human suffering. We must act justly and must never set up inhumane systems which hurt others. We are hurting the Palestinians and we are dehumanizing ourselves.

They were unhappy that mainstream Jewish communal organizations were not applying more public and private pressure on Israel to negotiate with the Palestinians. The following statement by a participant typifies the thoughts of many of the individualistic Jews regarding the occupation and the intifada:

Israel is a homeland for Jews and has a right to exist. I hate their treatment of Palestinians. Yet I am terrified for myself and Israel now that they are being bombed by Scuds. I want sustainable borders for Israel and my visits showed me how small it is. I can not defend their West Bank politics and fear Israel will use nuclear weapons and take the world with it.

Treatment of Israeli Arabs and Sephardim

Some (10 of 32) of these participants thought the Israeli government and most Israeli Jews discriminated against Israeli Arabs. In the focus groups they usually cited examples like: separate schools for Jews and Arabs, limited access for Arabs to managerial occupations, limited opportunities to create new businesses, and individual discrimination. These participants also

thought that Sephardi Jews were discriminated against by Ashkenazi Jews. All ten of these participants had Arab friends; these relationships had been formed at work or college. One of the participants stated these feelings thusly:

I have a strong love for Israel and have visited it many times. I am appalled by the current power of the Israeli right-wing militants. I want Israel to be strong and just with equity between Ashkenazi and Sephardi, Israeli Jew and Israeli Arab. I used to be a Zionist and come from a Zionist family, I no longer think about coming to Israel.

Who Is A Jew?

Many (20 of 32) of the unaffiliated were aware of the "Who is a Jew?" issue and they were concerned about it, although peace and equality issues were more important to them. This is understandable since they were not currently affiliated and tended to define their Jewishness (and other Jews) by their internalized standards regarding Jewish values.

However, those who intended to affiliate when they had children hoped that the mainstream Jewish communal and religious leaders would have influenced Israel into granting formal recognition to all Jewish denominations. One of them discussed the attempts by "Orthodox Israelis to restrict Jewishness" by stating that:

God does not discriminate among Jews. The Torah was given to all of us. The world views Jews as Jews and does not distinguish between us. I do not think the "ultra-Orthodox who were pushing for this realized that Hitler killed all the Jews he could regardless of what kind of Jews they were."

Israelis

Most (21 of 32) of the individualistic Jews thought that Israelis were arrogant, tough, and inhumane. Many (18 of 32) had visited Israel and three had studied there. As a result of their contacts with Israelis in Israel, they had a more negative attitude than before they visited Israel. They resented the fact that most Israelis acted as if they were "better Jews" than the Americans and seemed to dismiss anyone who would not move to Israel.

Most (14 of 32) also had contact with Israelis who were either studying or working in the United States. These participants thought that "Israelis who live in America are even more insufferable than Israelis in Israel." This does not mean that these individuals did not have warm friendships with individual Israelis. It does mean that they perceived most Israelis as lacking social humility.

American Jewish Self-Concept

In most individualistic focus groups the participants, after they shared the above insights, decided that some of their reactions to Israel were based on personal feelings of power and powerlessness. Many (20 of 32) derived psychic strength from Israel's military achievements and felt humiliated by its responses to the intifada. They also felt that Israel's vulnerability during the Scud attacks had increased their feelings of alienation and powerlessness. One interviewee said:

I was so proud to be a Jew after the 1967 War and now I am ashamed. Maybe Jews and non-Jews are comfortable when Jews are passive victims. For me I sometimes feel more Jewish when non-Jews praise me for Israel's strength.

These feelings of helplessness for individualistic Jews were often connected with their minority status in America and their weak connections with the total Jewish community. Some of them thought they judged their own Jewishness on the perceptions of Jewishness which were stated by their non-Jewish friends and colleagues.

The issues of positive self-concept and powerlessness for American Jews evolved for some of these participants (11 of 32) into a recognition that Jews in the Diaspora have had to struggle to survive for generations. The intellectual strength and ethical values of the Jewish community made them survivors. They thought that secular and religious Jews can work together in America and in Israel to create a just world. This viewpoint is found in the following statement:

Jews in America and Israel do not have to be either powerless victims or vengeful aggressors. When will we apply our ethical values and tremendous intellectual resources to designing an Israeli society which is really just, humane and tolerant?

Although some cultural pluralists also mentioned that they felt more powerful when Israel was powerful, cultural pluralists derived their feelings of strength and positive self-worth from their cultural and religious interactions with other Jews. None of the traditionalist participants mentioned anything related to individual feelings of powerlessness as a Jew. They spoke of anti-Semitism against the Jewish community.

Individualistic Jews, for the most part, perceived that members of the mainstream Jewish community allowed themselves to be unnecessarily dictated to by Israel. They did not want to jeopardize Israel's security but thought that American Jewry should provide public and private feedback to Israel. Many of them thought that mainstream American Jews would not acknowledge Israel's strengths because they were not allowed to overtly criticize Israel for its weaknesses. Most of them (20 of 22) did not think of Israel as being a role model for American Jews but as a co-equal community.

Individualistic Jews' Recommended Actions Regarding Israel

The following is a summary of all the major actions which the unaffiliated/individualistic Jews wanted American and Israeli Jews to do about Israel:

1. Major American Jewish organizations should redirect their energy and dollars to those efforts which are working for both peace in Israel and stopping Israelis' inhumane treatment of the Palestinians (28 of 32).
2. Israel needs, while maintaining its security, to trade land for peace so it will stop being an unjust nation (27 of 32).
3. If Israel does not recognize the legitimacy of non-Orthodox rabbis and their members, it will be perpetuating an injustice on American Jews (20 of 32).
4. American Jewish organizations need to stop being ruled by short-sighted leaders who do only what Israel dictates regarding Israel. They need to engage in joint decision-making with Israel about matters which affect both American and Israeli Jews. They should also lobby Congress to stop all monies which promote settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (18 of 32).
5. Unaffiliated Jews (like us) should study the history of Israel and talk with Israelis and other American Jews who hold views which differ from ours. The goal should be to understand each other's viewpoint and not to impose our views on each other (18 of 32).
6. Israel needs to be supported by American Jews who are living in a strong and vibrant Jewish community. American Jews are creating Jewish options which are as significant as Israel's (16 of 32).
7. Israel needs a constitution and a separation of synagogue and state (12 of 32).

8. Individual Israelis, in Israel and in America, need to respect other people and stop being so rude and arrogant (10 of 32).
9. American Jewish synagogues and communal organizations should network with grassroots projects in Israel and the territories which promote peace for the area (10 of 32).

Cultural Pluralists' Attitudes Toward Israel

The Nation of Israel

Cultural pluralists were firmly committed to the continued existence of a secure Israel. They strongly felt that they shared a common destiny with the land and people of Israel. Most of them were well informed about both the history and current events of the country. Many of them thought that Israel was a role model and leader for all Jews. They thought that the Israelis had the enormous task of building a nation based on Jewish values and practices.

Ten of them had visited Israel and one had lived there. Most of them did not think that Israelis are arrogant. The mainstream cultural pluralists who took leadership tours to Israel thoroughly enjoyed them. Some of them wished that Israelis would not be so chauvinistic about their country.

The three who were connected with alternative communal organizations and *havorut* were not as enchanted with the culture of Israel or with its citizens. One of them made the following statement which reflects what all three of them said about Israel (they were not in the same focus group):

I love Israel and go there every two years. I know I cannot live there since I would be constantly enraged. I don't like its Middle Eastern culture, I like my American culture. I do not want to bash Israelis so I have minimal involvement with them when I am in Israel. I love Jerusalem but it has become too Orthodox. I want to focus on the good stuff in Israel. I would rather smell the garbage in Israel than the flowers in America and would rather hear Hebrew on the streets of Israel than the most elegant poem in English. I have problems with the social equality abuses in Israel. I also do not like the standards of getting things done and how they relate to each other in stores, on buses, and banks. The cost of living in Israel is psychically high.

Many (10 of 22) of the cultural pluralists were very concerned about the government structure of Israel. They wanted the electoral system refined so Israelis could protect themselves from extremist parties. As they reviewed current events, they perceived that the current internal political stagnation was dangerous for the security of the country. They wanted Israel to have a constitution. They wanted more separation between the religion and the state.

As they listened to their fellow Americans, Jew and non-Jew, talk about Israel during the Scud attacks, they were aware of subtle levels of anti-Semitism and self-hatred being expressed. The following quote typifies this viewpoint:

If Jews stand up and fight back when they are attacked, non-Jews and Jews are quick to criticize them. The world likes Jews as victims and some Jews try to get accepted by *goyim* (non-Jews) by being more anti-Semitic than non-Jews. At the same time most Jews as a people are safer when we are spread throughout the world.

Occupation and the Intifada

In regard to the treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and the intifada, the cultural

pluralists' main concerns were to support efforts to ensure that Israel has safe borders. These participants had three viewpoints regarding the treatment of Palestinians by the Israeli Jews. Some (8 of 22) thought that Israel was behaving with restraint toward the Palestinians, some (6 of 22) thought that Israel was mistreating them, and some (8 of 22) did not think they knew enough to form an opinion.

Those who thought that Israel was treating the Palestinians properly were all involved in leadership study programs through their federations. A typical statement for this position is the following made before the Scud attacks:

- ° Israel is at war with the PLO and there is a little overreaction but the Israeli army needs to be commended. Maybe the land should have been returned but now these Arabs are threatening Israel and so they will have to be dealt with.

Most (14 of 22) felt that they could not have a consistent stance since the issues were complex and the conditions kept changing. Many believed that American Jews should not publicly comment on matters which affect Israel's security. As one of these individuals said: "We should remember the Cuban missile crisis and its impact on America; Israel has missiles on all of its borders." Others thought that Israel should be publicly criticized for its policies since, as one of them said, "Israel belongs to all Jews and Israelis are custodians of the land of Israel for *klal yisrael*" (people of Israel).

Most (12 of 22) thought that the American government was not supportive of Israel and that the media did not provide fair coverage of Israel's interactions with the Palestinians.

Many (11 of 22) worried that the occupation was dulling the spiritual and ethical sensitivities of Israelis. They were particularly concerned about the young soldiers who served on the West Bank. When this was discussed in focus groups after the Scud attacks had commenced, some of the participants were concerned that they were being prejudiced toward Arabs. One participant made the following statement:

I have often felt friction with Israelis because their survival goals are different than mine. I sometimes even thought that their Zionism equals racism and that many of them think that only a dead Arab is a good Arab. This type of prejudice always disturbed me. Now I am scared of myself because since the Scud attacks I find myself occasionally thinking "only a dead Arab is a good Arab." I now wonder what I should think as I watch the Arab world rejoice when we are bombed. I still think that Jews must not fall into anti-Arab prejudices which dehumanize both Arabs and Jews.

Most of them thought that Israel must negotiate land for peace. Some (5 of 22) thought that the national communal organizations were not supporting the peace efforts, and some (8 of 22) thought that they were too moderate in their peace efforts. Many of them had become more cautious about negotiating with the Palestinians since the Scud attacks. The following was said in reaction to the Scud attacks:

Watching the missiles land on Tel Aviv changed my smugness about the West Bank and security issues for Israel. When the West Bank was taken everyone knew it would be returned. The current Israeli kids do not know this. I was appalled to see the Palestinians cheering from rooftops as the Scuds hit Israel. I now have more trust in Israel's instincts regarding its survival but still don't trust most of the current leadership. I wish Israel had more statesmen in today's leadership.

Treatment of Israeli Arabs and Sephardim

Most of the cultural pluralists (14 of 22) did not approve of the way social justice matters are handled in Israel. They were mainly concerned about relationships between Serphardi and Ashkenazi Jews. When talking about the treatment of Serphardi Jews in Israel, a Florida focus group participant said:

As the great-grandson of an Orthodox rabbi I want Israel to live and I want it to practice the social justice my parents told me was based on the Torah. Yet my visits to Israel have shown me that Ashkenazi Jews are not accepting Sephardim. This angers me.

A Sephardi from South America whose relatives lived in Israel stated that he knew from his family's experiences that "Israel is racist to the Sephardi Jews living in Israel."

Some of the cultural pluralists (6 of 22) indicated that they were concerned about the treatment of Israeli Arabs. None of the individuals in this category had close friends who were either American or Israeli Arabs.

Who Is a Jew?

Almost all of the cultural pluralists (19 of 22) were very angry about the continued attempt by the Israeli Orthodox to amend the Law of Return so that it applied only to those who are Jewish as decided by the chief rabbinate in Israel. They thought that Israel must support the authenticity of the Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform denominations. They believed that all rabbis should be able to function fully as rabbis in Israel.

They were furious with the Israeli government for not supporting their positions as active non-Orthodox who chose to be non-Orthodox. They were not sure that they would personally continue to provide Israel with the same levels of support if their denominations were ever formally disclaimed by changing the definition of "Who is a Jew?" Whenever they talked about reducing their levels of time and energy spent on Israeli needs, they always qualified it with statements such as "I will only do what is needed to safeguard Israel's security but I am sure that Israel will not ever amend the Law."

A few (3 of 22) thought that the Law of Return changes were not being proposed for spiritual reasons. The following statement illustrates their thoughts on this matter:

Let's face it, conversions and marriages and divorces are big business in Israel and the Orthodox want to continue making the money. I feel that any Jew who makes the Russians and Ethiopians go through a conversion ceremony is wrong. It is not right for one Jew to delegitimize another.

Relationships Between Israeli and American Jews

The cultural pluralists were deeply attached to Israel and believed that they shared a common destiny. At the same time, they had many concerns about relationships between Israeli and American Jews. These concerns were related to four major issues:

1. Can one lead a full Jewish life outside of Israel?
2. Should all Jews be encouraged to live in Israel?
3. What should the relationship be between Israeli and American Jews?
4. What should be the current role for communal Jewish organizations?

For many (14 of 22) of the cultural pluralists, a full Jewish life was present in America and Israel. They rejected the classical Zionist position that all Jews would live a fuller Jewish life in Israel. They thought that they had created full religious and cultural Jewish lives for themselves and their families.

They also bemoaned the influence of both secular Jews and the ultra-Orthodox in Israel. Some (5 of 22) were convinced that as American Jews who observed a universalist and humanist form of Judaism, they could not live in Israel. The following statement was made in almost identical terms in several groups:

In Israel there is no pocket of space for the kind of Jewish life I live. My life is *havurah*, social justice and equalitarian. Israel needs religious pluralism.

For some (4 of 22) of these participants, it was more natural to be Jewish in Israel. Jewish life in Israel was richer and fuller than in the Diaspora. They believed that this was true for religious and secular Israeli Jews. They believed that the land of Israel was a part of the destiny of the Jewish people. For these individuals, Jewish life could not exist without the State of Israel, and Israel would determine the destiny of the Jewish people. They enjoyed being in a country where everyone was Jewish. They reflected on the difficulties of finding jobs in America which allowed them to freely observe all the holidays. The following statement is indicative of the strengths of being Jewish in Israel:

The flow of the day, the month, the year in Israel leads one into the Jewish holidays and Jewish moments. It is easy to be observant. You do not have to explain your Jewishness.

Most (14 of 22) of the cultural pluralists thought that Israel was and should be a haven for Jews of the world. Jews who were persecuted in their countries should have the freedom to move to Israel; American Jews should help raise funds for them. They also thought that if Jews, such as Soviet Jews, wanted to move to America, that was as appropriate as moving to Israel. A few (2 of 22) were concerned that the rich and diverse culture of world Jewry was being lost. The following statement illustrates this viewpoint:

Jewry is richer with vibrant Jewish population centers around the world. Jews in Turkey and elsewhere have rich Jewish cultures which should be maintained with the help of all of us.

When the relationships between Israeli and American Jews were discussed, the discussions were mainly concerned about the power and influence aspects of the relationship. The deliberations were centered on the following questions:

1. Are the two Jewish entities co-equal or is one superior to the other?
2. How should Israeli and American Jews treat each other?

Almost all of the cultural pluralist participants (16 of 22) thought that the Israeli and American Jewish communities were co-equal. They thought that American Jews had created a form of Jewishness which is true to Jewish traditions and which also incorporates the democratic and universalist ideals of America. They acknowledged their spiritual connections with Israel. They thought that Israel should consult with them before making plans for Israel which affected all Jews.

A few (4 of 16) who held the co-equal viewpoint advocated joint decision-making about Israel's future. This statement captures these firmly held convictions:

Jews in Israel and America should create a mature adult relationship between two co-equals. Israeli and American Jews need to respect each other. Israel plays a strong psychic role for American Jews. Israel is a nation-state which is Jewish and is the motherland for all Jews. Israelis are stewards of the land of the Jewish people. Therefore all Diaspora Jews and Israeli Jews are joint owners of the land of Israel. American Jews who "jointly own" their spiritual heritage often have a clarity of vision about it which Israelis do not because they live there surrounded by Arabs who threaten their existence. We need to communicate our insights and Israelis need to carefully listen to us before they reject our ideas. We need to carefully listen to Israelis as they tell us about their needs and plans. American Jews must stop just giving money and start working with Israelis to create an ideal Israel.

A few of the cultural pluralists (2 of 22) thought that American Jews should follow Israel's lead and should raise money and lobby as requested by Israel's leadership. They believed that all Jews should try to move to Israel and should support Israel by visiting, sending money, and connecting with its institutions.

Most (15 of 22) cultural pluralists wanted the federations and communal organizations to continue to fund-raise for Israel, lobby Congress to support Israel, and educate American Jews about Israel's history and current events.

Some (8 of 22) no longer contributed to federation because they wanted to control where their money went. They wanted to ensure that their causes (e.g., Israeli peace groups, women's projects, environmental centers) were funded. Some (5 of 22) also thought that leadership missions only influenced those who went on them. Grass-root Jews of America and Israel needed to be given the chance to engage in collaborative forums.

A few (5 of 22) thought that American Jews should redirect some of the money they raise for Israel to the creation of better Jewish education programs for American Jewish youth and adults. The education programs should provide concepts, values, and skills about all aspects of being Jewish in American society.

Cultural Pluralists' Recommended Actions Regarding Israel

The following is a summary of all the major actions which the cultural pluralists wanted American and Israeli Jews to do about Israel:

1. American and Israeli Jews should remember to acknowledge and celebrate their common bonds (18 of 22).
2. Israel needs a more diverse religious community in which Jews of all denominations can be respected and fully practice their beliefs (18 of 22).
3. American and Israeli Jews need to create more effective media approaches about Israel which will reach Jews and non-Jews in America (15 of 22).
4. Israel should negotiate territorial compromises in the West Bank and Gaza in return for guaranteed secure peace (14 of 22).
5. American Jews and Israelis should learn more about each others' histories, cultures, and dreams (14 of 22).
6. Israel and American Jews must begin to establish co-equal decision-making about matters which affect them (10 of 22).
7. American Jews should not publicly comment on matters affecting Israel's security (6 of 22).
8. Israel needs to appear more moderate and change the world's perception of it so it can more easily hold onto its territories and obtain foreign aid (3 of 22).

9. Leaders like Shamir might want to adopt Western styles of cosmopolitan communication (3 of 22).
10. Israel needs moral education classes to enable it to create more appropriate relations with Palestinians and between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews (3 of 22).

Traditionalist Jews' Attitudes Toward Israel

The Nation of Israel

For most traditionalist participants (8 of 10), the current State of Israel was essential to Judaism. It enabled Jews to fully practice their religion and culture without any interference from non-Jews. Jews could be fully Jewish at home and in the public domain. Jewish values could be expressed in the synagogue, at home, and in the political, economic, and social spheres of the society. The survival of the Jewish people was ensured. It was a haven for all Jews. One of the Orthodox men expressed this thusly:

Israel is a central part of Judaism in all of its ramifications; the land, the state, it's a haven and it's a place for Torah learning. Children are not exposed to Santa Claus. It is good to see Israel win wars and to see Jews as warriors who can defend themselves physically, emotionally and intellectually. I could not handle the demise of Israel.

Two traditionalists were not as impressed with the current State of Israel. They felt that secular Israelis were turning the country into a new idolatry. Although they did not support the current Israeli practices, they supported the continuation of the nation of Israel. One of them expressed her viewpoint as follows:

I was there three times. Tel Aviv and *aliyah* were awful. I loved Israel. When I became more observant I understood that I want a spiritual home. Israel is too secular and so I am no longer a Zionist. I still support it's existence. It is our holy land.

When most of the traditionalists (8 of 10) discussed the challenges of being a Jewish nation, they were concerned about the challenges Israelis face to be true to the Torah. As one of them stated:

Israel must build a nation which is totally based on the Torah. All of its institutions, laws and mores must be permeated by Torah values. A just society will be formed which pragmatically lives the Torah in the land promised to us by God.

Occupation and the Intifada

Several positions regarding the occupation of the West Bank and the treatment of the Palestinians were expressed by the traditionalists. All of the traditionalists believed that the American media had biased coverage which did not accurately report the Jewish responses to the Palestinian rioters and protesters. Most of them believed that Israeli soldiers were still practicing "purity of arms" and treating the rioters in a humane manner.

Four of the traditionalists thought that Israel should give up the West Bank if a secure peace could be obtained by the creation of a demilitarized zone. One of the men expressed this viewpoint:

I wish Israel had better leaders who could handle this matter. We can live without the West Bank if we have to. In the long run the Arab population will be even larger and I

don't want us ruling over people who do not want to be ruled over. We need to focus on Jewish needs and build our land without spending all our energy on the Arabs. Israel needs to focus on protecting itself without eroding its character by continuing the occupation.

Three of the traditionalists thought that the West Bank was really Judaea and Samaria (biblical names for the West Bank). One of them said, "Jews should live there and Arabs should be removed." Five of them were outraged that Arab mothers were encouraging their sons to stone Jews. One of the traditionalist women reported the following:

I was on a bus tour of the West Bank with other Orthodox women. All of us on the bus thought the land is really Jewish, Judaea and Samaria. We were upset about the stonings. However, most of the mothers on the bus were saddened when we passed an Arab jail and saw a line of Arab women waiting to see members of their family. Maybe the land needs to be traded for peace.

Treatment of Israeli Arabs and Sephardim

None of the Ashkenazi participants thought that Sephardi Jews in Israel were being treated differently than Ashkenazi Jews. One of the participants thought that the economic and political structures favored Ashkenazi Jews.

Most (6 of 10) did not think the Israeli Arabs were being fairly and properly treated. They thought that Arabs needed to remember that they were citizens in a Jewish state. The other four thought that the Arabs did not have easy access to higher education and management positions in either the public or private sector. They thought that all forms of social inequality were not consistent with the Torah. This viewpoint is reflected by the following quote:

Hashem put us through the pain of slavery in Egypt so we can be *rachmanim b'nei rachmanim* (empathetic people) so we must conduct ourselves on the highest ethical level with everyone, Jews and non-Jews.

Who Is a Jew?

Most of the traditionalists (6 of 10) firmly believed that the Law of Return should be amended so that it applied only to those who were Jewish as decided by the chief rabbinate in Israel. They did not support the recognition in Israel of non-Orthodox denominations.

A few of them (4 of 10) thought that religious pluralism must be practiced in Israel, that all Jewish denominations should be legitimated, and that conversions did not have to be under the supervision of Orthodox rabbis. One of these respondents said:

I adamantly oppose anything which divides the Jewish people. We are one, God gave the Torah to all of us. I live my total life by Halakhah; yet my fellow Jews are not only Torah Jews. This is not a Knesset issue. We Jews must all debate together to resolve this.

Relationships Between Israeli and American Jews

Most (8 of 10) of the traditionalist participants thought that American Jews should support Israel by raising funds and lobbying American legislators for funding and support. They thought that Israel needed to be criticized within the Jewish community and non-Jews should not hear our criticisms. A typical quote for this position is:

If Jews do not support Israel these people have no roots. Some Jews hurt Israel, because they live in a non-Jewish environment. They are ashamed of Israel and its handling of the West Bank. They forget that Helms won his elections by racism and anti-Semitism. During the Holocaust there were anti-Semites in the legislature. We need Israel as a Jewish haven, it was promised to us by God.

Most (9 of 10) strongly believed that every Jew should visit Israel and should consider making *aliyah*. They also wanted all synagogues and communal Jewish organizations to have comprehensive classes on all aspects of Israel's history and current events. They wanted this education to include a study of the Torah. As one man said:

People no longer want to learn about their heritage. Study and discussion are no longer valued. The total Jewish community needs a strong educational campaign which is not judged by numbers but by desire of those who attend. Funds need to be allocated by all synagogues and communal organizations. This will help Israel and will help our people remain Jewish.

In regard to Israel, most traditionalists thought that Israeli society was not religious enough. Most wanted Israelis to follow Halakhah. Some (4 of 10) wanted Israelis to be more observant but if that was not possible they favored the following:

There is a need to bridge the gap between Orthodox and other denominations in Israel. Although I am Orthodox and would rather have secular Israelis become Orthodox, if this is not possible, I would rather have them in another denomination than totally secular.

Most (8 of 10) believed the following: American Jewish Reform and Reconstructionist synagogues which remove the Israeli flag from their premises should be criticized. All rabbis who give sermons against Israel and pro-PLO should not be allowed to speak on these matters. Reform seminaries needed to be more supportive of Israel as a country and as a homeland.

Most (8 of 10) traditionalists fully agreed with the following quote from one of the women:

Israel's Department of Tourism needs to properly train its people to explain our biblical heritage. The tour guides should read from the Bible to tourists at our holy sites.

They also thought that Israel needed a better American public relations program and media campaign. American businesses needed to be encouraged to invest in Israeli businesses. Most (7 of 10) thought that most Israelis were "feeling their oats." They believed that most Israelis (in Israel and in America) were arrogant and immature. A typical quote on this viewpoint is:

Israelis are obnoxious and I understand that some of it is due to macho feelings from living through threats and raising children who have to be ready to move into bunkers. On the other hand, I can not trust a non-Jew. Israelis do have a chip on their shoulders which they proudly carry while saying knock it off. I would like a more humane Israeli Jew but even Holocaust survivors play off against each other and suspect each other. When you survive darkness, it is hard to be a *mentsch*.

Traditionalist Jews' Recommended Actions Regarding Israel

The following is a summary of the major actions which the traditionalist Jews wanted American and Israeli Jews to do about Israel:

1. Israel, the nation, as stated in the Torah, is important and needs our full support of time and money (9 of 10).
2. Israel must not lose jurisdiction over Jerusalem (9 of 10).
3. Israel is needed as a nation for Jews to freely live as Jews and as a haven from persecution (8 of 10).
4. American Jews must force the American government to support Israel as it is presently anti-Israel (7 of 10).
5. Judah and Samaria are our land and we must not give them up (6 of 10).
6. Many Israelis are arrogant and need to exhibit some humility (6 of 10).
7. Israelis need to become more observant of Halakhah (5 of 10).
8. Just as here Sephardi Jews need to be given more respect by Ashkenazi Jews (4 of 10).
9. Israel needs a constitution and separation of synagogue and state (4 of 10).
10. Israel's leadership must negotiate for peace and creation of a demilitarized zone in the territories (4 of 10).
11. Israeli Jews must quit using Palestinian labor (3 of 10).
12. Israel's troubles are the result of not following the Torah (7 of 10).
13. We must create more settlements in Judea and Samaria (3 of 10).

3. PERSONAL JEWISH IDENTITY

All of the focus group participants perceived their Jewishness as a valuable part of their identity. Depending on the pattern of their affiliation with the Jewish community, their form of Jewishness ranged from being primarily an intrapersonal variable to being an all-encompassing religious/cultural/community variable.

Individualistic participants mainly experienced their Jewishness within themselves and with family and friends. They engaged in few formal religious or cultural structures which reflect the traditions of Judaism. They did not usually choose to live in predominately Jewish neighborhoods. Most of their friends were not Jewish. Yet many of them discovered, when talking about friends in the focus groups, that their closest confidants were Jewish. Their Jewish cohesion was with the generic Jewish people and with their Jewish family and friends and with all Jews. Their mental connections with all Jews (beyond their family and friends) were often not translated into behaviors. Most of them had not done anything, for example, to assist the emigration of Soviet Jews and did not donate to Jewish causes.

Cultural pluralists were engaged in formal religious and cultural structures (e.g., synagogues, communal organizations, Sunday schools) which were Jewish. Most of their friends were Jewish; but many of them also had warm friendships with non-Jews. They did not always live in Jewish neighborhoods. Their Jewish cohesion was with members of their families, synagogues, and communal organizations and with all Jews. Most of them had given time and money to assist Jews in America and throughout the world.

Traditionalist Jews were engaged in Orthodox religious and cultural Jewish structures. They lived in Jewish neighborhoods near their synagogues and usually associated only with Jews who were like them. Most of them chose not to be active in non-Orthodox communal organizations. Their Jewish cohesion was primarily with members of the traditionally observant community and with all Jews. Most of them had worked to aid Soviet Jews and provided time and money to Jewish organizations which were based on their values.

Individualistic Jews' Personal Jewish Identity

Individualistic participants firmly believed that their personal autonomy determined their Jewishness. They viewed themselves as Jews and did not want to lose that part of their identity. Many were active in social justice causes and felt that these concerns sprang from their Jewish values.

The Jewish Part of Me

Most of the unaffiliated were aware of being Jewish either when they were with other Jews (family, holidays, life-cycle events) and felt positively connected, or when they were with non-Jews and felt they were different. Most of the time their Jewishness was not central to their identity. The

following statements from individualistic Jews in focus groups are completions of "I am aware of the Jewish part of me whenever I am . . .":

- * on a subway and compare myself to a Hasid and we are the same and yet different.
- * got married and then Jewish tradition was important.
- * I am comfortable with non-Jews yet invariably over food or political situation or death, I realize we are different and this surprises me since we are also the same.
- * Only in the last few years did I become aware of really being Jewish. I was raised by my Jewish mother in an Italian neighborhood and I married a Puerto Rican and I did not have Jewish upbringing. Yet I still consider myself Jewish because I was born Jewish. I consider myself more as a white man than as a Jewish man. Jewish identity is foreign to me but part of me. I only saw Jewish first hand in Israel. I worry that a terrorist on a plane would consider me fully Jewish.
- * As a child of Holocaust survivors I feel my Jewishness more when I feel a threat to Jews in the world like the Scuds in Israel.
- * Although I grew up in a three-generation Jewish household, I feel more Jewish now that I am marrying an Italian Catholic.
- * I like Jewish trappings and traditions and family and I feel Jewish during the High Holidays and it feels good and connected but not enough to do so the rest of year.

Joys and Sorrows of Being Jewish

The joys of being Jewish for this group were almost always intermingled with sorrows. Other than an isolated event (e.g., a marriage or seder), most (19 of 32) did not identify any purely joyful examples. The cultural pluralists and the traditionalists had several joyful responses. It seems that for individuals who were not actively connected with a cohesive communal or religious group, it was hard to enjoy being Jewish. Many felt sorrowful, guilty, and anguished about their lack of happy Jewish connections. Some of them (8 of 32) found their main happiness in aspects of their lives which were not connected to their Jewishness. The following quotes complete the sentence "The joys and sorrows of being Jewish are . . .":

- * among my own, without excluding non-Jews, but my mother makes me feel guilty about not dating Jews.
- * seeing a group of Jews doing well and getting angry at the Wall Street situation.
- * Joy is Israel not attacking Iraq and Israel hurts me a lot with its current policies.
- * Joy is growing up in my close knit family and celebrating the holidays and having my grandmother living in the house. I hope I can keep Jewish connections when I marry my non-Jewish fiancée.
- * Jews who are prejudiced makes me sad. My tradition of Judaism is liberal and I don't like Jews rejecting minorities.
- * I am saddened by those Jews who are "holier than thou" and reject, defame, or delegitimize other Jews.

Relationships with Jews and Non-Jews

Most (26 of 32) of the individualistic participants had a diverse mixtures of friends who were Jews and non-Jews. As they answered this question, many of them discovered that they had "unconsciously sought Jews as close friends because it feels safer to share my deepest thoughts with them." A few (6 of 32) liked to be friends with non-Jews who seemed to be more spiritual and who did not make them feel uncomfortable about their Jewishness. A typical quote is the following:

Non-Jews are more stimulating and I like to share my religious convictions with them. They

are often so spiritual. My Jewish friends will say things like "How many boxes of *matzahs* did you buy?"

Reactions to the Holocaust

For most of the individualistic participants, the Holocaust was something they were told about by their families or in Jewish education programs. Most of them were not old enough to have personal memories about the Holocaust (such as reading newspapers or listening to family members discussing it during that time period). Nevertheless, for most of them (19 of 32), the Holocaust was very significant and influenced their Jewish identity. For some (8 of 32), the Holocaust should be remembered and not commercialized by synagogues and communal organizations. For a few (3 of 32), the Holocaust was something which the Jewish community needs to remember but move beyond. The following quotes are completions of the sentence "My reactions to the Holocaust are . . .":

- * My initial reaction is my entire grandmother's family was killed and she was sent over here and she would cry while watching documentaries. She would talk about her family pre-Holocaust times and she also exhibited survivors' guilt and so do I.
- * My parents never forget it and had survivors as friends. They talked about it a lot. My mother was a WAC nurse who enlisted to fight Hitler. We must always be alert and never again allow ourselves to be victims.
- * It is extremely important for Jews and non-Jews to learn about it. I learned about it when I visited Israel and discovered that my cousin lost three brothers and sisters and his parents. It is wrong to use it for fund-raising but we need to read and teach about it.
- * I think about it when I watch television and see Jewish neighborhoods as victims during Scud attacks. I fear that many Israelis feel that American Jews are distancing themselves during this time so we will not be connected to victims.
- * I am a child of parents who survived the camps and it fundamentally shaped me as child. My parents identified me as the one who had the responsibility to be the bearer who delivered all *naches* to them. I felt I had to keep this role until they died.
- * It was not the first Holocaust of Jews and not the last and it shapes my identity and its influence on me will not be erased soon.
- * It is a horrendous example of one of many holocausts wrought at different times to people of different cultures (Jews, Cambodians, Armenians).
- * As a child I read about it and resent the way synagogues and communal organizations commercialize it for their fund-raising. When they use the word Holocaust, it sets my teeth on edge.
- * I am not Ashkenazi and I am angry that my culture's persecutions are downplayed and all Jews must pay homage to this event. It was horrible and should be remembered but other persecutions of Jews in modern times should also be remembered.
- * I don't want to hear about it and Jews need to move beyond it. We are secure and anti-Semitism is on the wane.

Reactions to Anti-Semitism

Most individualistic participants (21 of 32) thought that anti-Semitism had minimal impact on their personal and professional lives. Some (8 of 32) thought that they must be careful not to raise their Jewishness to an overt level in the public areas of their lives. Some would not wear Jewish jewelry (e.g., star of David) in public. They explained this behavior in two ways: we should not cause non-Jews to become anti-Semitic and we should honor the separation of religion from public areas.

When discussing the above public/private aspects of being Jewish in America, some of them also thought that there was anti-Semitism in American society and that they had internalized the victim role. The following quote illustrates this viewpoint:

Jews have public-private selves in a Christian-dominated country. It is not safe to be me so I will be a facade but where does my facade end? I wish I knew how to add on my American me without losing my Jewish me.

Jewish Supports and Hindrances

Individualistic participants perceived that their Jewishness was mainly supported or hindered by their families, synagogues and communal organizations, and their own individualistic life-styles.

Most (27 of 32) perceived that they had a positive relationship with their families. Many (21 of 32) also thought that their parents did not model a style of Jewishness which they could follow. They thought that part of the reason they were not connected with either religious or cultural aspects of Judaism was because of their upbringing. The following quotes illustrate the ways in which they perceived the "supports and hindrances" they received from their families:

- * My mother is always on my back to stay connected but she seems to only be connected for friendship and I want spiritual solace. I can make friends anywhere.
- * My parents support me as a person and had me confirmed but they are not active Jews.
- * When I was a teenager and wanted meaningful seders, my family just wanted to eat. I associate seders with pain and anger.
- * My parents are active in a synagogue and their federation. I wish I could do the same. Maybe I will decide where to join when my children are older.
- * My parents were Orthodox and could not afford to send me to Jewish schools. I feel robbed of my Jewish education, I can't read Hebrew. I am Jewish in my heart and unable to be Jewish in a synagogue as I do not know what to do.

Most (22 of 32) had gone to events at their local communal organizations. They had gone to socialize with other single Jews, to attend lectures, or just to connect. These contacts had not always been positive experiences for them. The following quotes illustrate their viewpoints:

- * I have never found a federation or Jewish organization which offered anything substantive for couples without children. I also can't afford the fees, life-styles and fund-raising which I see in these groups.
- * These organizations are so pretentious and push their glitzy life-style, where are the "down-to-earth Jews"? I don't find them in synagogues and federations.
- * How can one be Jewish and into alternative life-styles? I live for social justice and saving the planet.
- * It is expensive to be a connected Jew: Passover food, High Holiday tickets. I feel ripped off by my own people for being Jewish. They tend to support causes which don't improve life.
- * Synagogues are built fancy for High Holidays and why should I pay for them when I can pray to God on a beach?
- * American Jewish men are nerds and Israeli men are sexist so I have had two Christian husbands but I miss my Jewish world.
- * I find Jews in groups to be a glitzy and phony society which is only concerned with how much you own and not what you think, do, and believe.
- * I need to meet my needs as an unaffiliated professional Jewish woman who wants to

think, study, play without pressure to get a husband or to give dollars. I haven't found a Jewish place to do this.

- * I want to learn more about my religion and culture and wish the local classes were more interesting.
- * I would like help getting a husband to fit my life-style.

Cultural Pluralists' Jewish Identity

The Jewish Part of Me

° The cultural pluralists identified more aspects when they talked about the Jewish parts of themselves. They also were aware of being Jewish either when they were with other Jews (family, holidays, life-cycle events) and felt positively connected or when they were with non-Jews and felt they were different. The following statements from cultural pluralists completed the sentence "I am aware of the Jewish part of me whenever . . .":

- * When I wake up and eat, it permeates my day and I prefer to do business with a Jew.
- * Every moment of every day when I *daven* and say blessings at meals and celebrate Shabbat and the holidays.
- * Oh, when I give my baby her kosher pacifiers -- one for milk and one for meat.
- * Everything I do is Jewish, the way I think, walk, move my hands, pray.
- * On the anniversary of my father's death and I decided to convert to his religion. He was Orthodox and I said *kaddish* for a year.
- * When my co-workers give me troubles about being Jewish.

Joys and Sorrows of Being Jewish

Cultural pluralists mentioned being joyful about their Jewish connections with families, synagogues, and communal organizations. They were sad about divisions within the Jewish community and about being oppressed as Jews. The following quotes are completions of the sentence "The joys and sorrows of being Jewish are . . .":

- * Since my divorce I have joined a *shul* and it is a joy. I like my Jewish connections. If I am not at *shul*, they call me.
- * Joys for me are from my temple which I joined to say *kaddish* for my father. It makes me feel at home. It is in my old neighborhood and for New York we are special. We have 400 families and a female cantor, I enjoy the rabbi and the friendly congregation.
- * Joy for me is being a leader in my synagogue and federation. I am helping Jewish people. I am living my religion and culture. My friends are members of my synagogue and federation. Our families enjoy each other.
- * I am sad that I can never be Jewish enough for some Jews because I don't wear ankle-length skirts and cover my hair. I hate Jews who divide us.
- * It is hard to be Jewish in America, my kids want Christmas gifts and I have a hard time being able to leave work to go to High Holiday services.

Relationships with Jews and Non-Jews

Most (18 of 22) had more Jewish friends than non-Jewish friends. Most had a few close non-Jewish friends. All of them derived joy and strength from their Jewish connections. It was easy for them to expand their connectedness with Jews, since they already had a feeling of ease with Jews in synagogues and organizations. The following quotes illustrate how they felt about these relationships:

- * My personal connections are Jewish but I am very close to several non-Jewish neighbors and colleagues.
- * If I meet a person and can identify that he speaks Yiddish or Hebrew I feel a kinship and I can't compare it to any non-Jewish friendships.
- * I speak Hebrew and have roots and I seek out synagogues when I travel. I have a connection and chemistry with Jews in other cultures.
- * I am uncomfortable in that I feel more comfortable with Jews and yet I am a world citizen.

Reactions to the Holocaust

Most cultural pluralists were actively working to ensure that no Jew was subjected to the same oppression which the victims of the Holocaust experienced. Two were children of Holocaust survivors. Most of them had been actively working to help Russian Jews. Many (12 of 22) were active in Holocaust education programs. Some (8 of 22) were concerned that communal organizations were inappropriately using it for fund-raising purposes. The following quotes are completions of the sentence "My reactions to the Holocaust are . . . ":

- * Thinking about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism saddens me.
- * The Holocaust for me is not a personal feeling as I didn't lose relatives but I have friends from survivors' families.
- * I work very hard to make sure it will not happen again. We must save Russian Jews.
- * It upsets me when the Holocaust is denied.
- * I am thankful that all my grandparents moved here before the Holocaust. My father lost all his family and my mother lost most of hers. I was sad when they were not at our seders.
- * What gets to me is when Israelis have to wear gas masks. Will Jews be gassed to death again?
- * I wish we had more education about the Holocaust for all citizens. *

Reactions to Anti-Semitism

Most cultural pluralist participants (16 of 22) thought that anti-Semitism impacted their personal and professional lives. The following quotes illustrate their feelings:

- * Americans who have parents who fought in World War II are still prejudiced, this angers and frightens me.
- * I feel it on the subway and some people are talking against Jews and this stings me.
- * I have not gotten promotions in my corporation because I am Jewish. This is why Jews are safer if they work for themselves.

Jewish Supports and Hindrances

Cultural pluralists perceived that their Jewishness was mainly supported or hindered by their families, synagogues and communal organizations, other Jews and society.

Most (19 of 22) perceived that they were good parents and were passing on strong Jewish beliefs to their children. Many (10 of 22) had experienced tension with their parents when they grew up and established their Jewish homes. Most perceived both Orthodox and unaffiliated Jews as hindering the total Jewish community. Most (19 of 22) perceived that communal organizations were positive influences and three did not. The following quotes illustrate the ways in which they perceived the "supports and hindrances" they received:

- * When I was in college my family didn't want me to be Orthodox or to marry a non-Jew. They wanted me to be a classical Reform Jew like them. I am an observant Conservative.
- * I can't be kosher because my husband will not allow it.
- * My family supports my Jewishness as does my synagogue.
- * My parents think we are too Jewish and don't like us being kosher. My mother wants to cook for me and wants us to eat at her house. Orthodox Jews won't eat at my home and say I am not being observant enough. What a mess. Who hurts us more: Jews to Jews or non-Jews?
- * American society makes it hard for workers and students to fully observe Jewish holidays.
- * The unaffiliated want a lot of pampering and are not willing to pay to maintain Jewish organizations and synagogues. How will they pass anything Jewish on to their children?
- * Jewish communal organizations and synagogues are constantly devising new ways to support us who are affiliated and to outreach to the unaffiliated and the intermarried. They also are involved in helping Israel and social justice causes.
- * I used to work for a Jewish organization. They all waste money. Most of them are after power and prestige. They don't live Jewish lives and nothing in their personal lives makes them passionately Jewish. They should not be there since lassitude and power set in and they can't get anything done.

Traditionalist Jews' Identity

The Jewish Part of Me

The traditionalists identified their Jewishness by their deeds and connections with the Jewish people. The following statements complete the sentence "I am aware of the Jewish part of me whenever . . .":

- * All day and at all times, I begin the day by restoring my soul to my body and I pray three times a day. As a woman I observe the laws of purity and this makes me happy.
- * All the time and every moment.
- * All the time during the week. I am aware of being Jewish on Tuesday when I think about getting ready for Shabbat.
- * When I do my *mitzvot* and study the Torah and love my family.
- * My father was a Jewish funeral director, being involved in Jewish life is natural and all that I know.

Joys and Sorrows of Being Jewish

Traditionalists were joyful about their Jewish connections with their families, synagogues, and other traditional Jewish organizations. They were sad that more Jews were not observant. Some (4 of 10) were upset that Jews who were not observant were delaying the coming of the *Mashiach* (Messiah). Some (3 of 10) were angry that many Orthodox were becoming more inflexible about their observances than is required in the Torah. The following quotes the sentence "The joys and sorrows of being Jewish are . . .":

- * Living and observing in my Jewish community gives me pleasure.
- * I have trouble getting off on Friday afternoons for *Shabbos*.
- * That *Mashiach* is not here because other Jews are being like Christians.
- * I get my joy from *simchah shel mitzvah* (joy from performing commandments).

Relationships with Jews and Non-Jews

The friends of the traditionalist Jews were overwhelmingly Jewish, and most often observant Jews like themselves. Few were comfortable with non-Jewish acquaintances.

- * My best friends are observant Jews and I have a few other Jews as friends and I work with friendly non-Jews.
- * I am guarded with non-Jews about Jewish matters and have to make tedious explanations to Christian co-workers.

Reactions to the Holocaust

Most traditionalists were deeply saddened by the Holocaust and believed that Jews must be alert to avoid more persecution. They remembered family members who were murdered. Two were Holocaust survivors. Some (3 of 10) are concerned that if the Jewish community only remembered the Holocaust it would be reactive and bitter. They believed that Jews should joyfully live each day as observant Jews. Two of them were active in Holocaust education programs. The following quotes completed the sentence "My reactions to the Holocaust are . . .":

- * I am named after my grandmother who was shot by the Germans. My father's grandfather died in 1939 and the family doesn't know what happened. I am glad that my children learn all about it at day school.
- * As Jews we are born with extra sensitivity regarding anti-Semitism. After I escaped to America I could not ride on a train. I also was not allowed by my uncle to talk about what was happening in Europe. I was young and this confused me. I taught my children to fight and protect themselves. After the war I went back to Europe and visited my old synagogue. Someone called me by my Jewish name and they thought I was my cousin who had died in the gas chambers.
- * Being Sephardi I didn't know about it until learned about it from a teacher. My parents are from Egypt and my grandparents are from Syria. I was totally floored by the Holocaust. I now know why some of my non-Sephardi friends acted the way they did.

Reactions to Anti-Semitism

Most (8 of 10) lived and worked in Jewish environments. They were not concerned about how it impacted them if current conditions continued. They did worry about the return of large-scale anti-Semitism. One of the *baalot t'shuva* thought that anti-Semitism caused her parents to act less Jewish. She knew that this caused her to grow up as nonobservant. The following quote illustrates this:

- * Anti-Semitism caused my family to deny its Jewishness. My father was in the navy and had to sleep with his hands cuffed to the bed at night so he would not be thrown overboard for being Jewish. My mother was not allowed to use the bathroom at the local country club when she played golf. Today my sister hides her Jewishness and passes as a blond and blue-eyed non-Jew.

Jewish Supports and Hindrances

Traditionalist Jews perceived that their Jewishness was mainly supported or hindered by their families, synagogues, and other Jews. Some (3 of 10) experienced tension with their parents when they grew up and established their Jewish homes. Some (4 of 10) perceived both other Orthodox

and non-Orthodox Jews as hindering the Jewish community. The following quotes illustrate the ways in which they perceived the "supports and hindrances" they received:

- * My parents did not want me to move outside their Sephardi world and would not pay for my college. I remained observant in college. I am now married to an Ashkenazi husband and am close to my family.
- * My family did not want me to become an independent woman in the outside world.
- * When I first became religious, my parents didn't support me. My mother resists my *t'suvah* because she doesn't want to feel a failure.
- * As an Orthodox woman whose family has always been Orthodox I find separate seating for women difficult. I don't want to sit with the men but why do I have to kill myself trying to reach over the *mechitzah* (wall separating women and men) to kiss the Torah.
- * I wish we would live the Torah, it is wrong for some Orthodox rabbis to say it is all right to kill Arabs.
- * Our *shul* is into money and power too much. Why should an immoral businessman get *aliyah* (call to Torah) if he gives a lot of money.
- * Some of our synagogue members think they are God's policemen and spend a lot of time judging other members. They are also committing *leshon hara* (gossip) when they talk about how *un-frum* (non-observant) other members are.
- * Jews who do not support the Torah hinder the whole community.
- * The local federation is not observant enough and I don't like my children to attend their functions.

4. PATTERNS OF JEWISH BEHAVIOR

Cultural pluralists and traditionalists engage in many religious and cultural behaviors which are overtly Jewish. Individualistic Jews engage in few normative Jewish behaviors but most of them observe the major holidays (mainly in an ad hoc manner) with their friends and family.

Individualistic Jews' Patterns of Jewish Behavior

Synagogue and Organizations

None of the 32 individualistic Jewish participants belonged to a synagogue. Many (16 of 22) thought that they could not afford to belong. They also thought that synagogues did not welcome anyone who was not a member of a stable nuclear family. They were also not active in mainstream Jewish organizations. Four were active with the Jewish Peace Lobby. Two attended an *ad hoc* group of friends who met periodically to observe *Shabbat* or the High Holidays. The following quotes indicate why they chose not to affiliate with mainstream Judaism:

- * Although my parents came from Orthodox homes, they were not observant. So I did not acquire observant practices or any practices. All they did was to go to a Orthodox synagogue on High Holidays.
- * I really cannot afford to join.
- * As a single Jewish mother, I have not found a synagogue which I can afford and which empathizes with me as a single women.
- * I meditate and am a good person and I don't need a synagogue where people go to show off their wealth.
- * If you belong to a synagogue, you belong to a people. We can't find one which is not status conscious. We feel alienated and unconnected. We want to join for our baby.
- * It is enough to celebrate holidays with relatives we don't see very often.
- * You know that Judaism is really cultural and not religious. It is done with your family and friends.
- * I do Israeli folkdancing and I am more comfortable with Jewish culture than with organized synagogues. I like the simple way of me directly talking to my loving God by myself.

It should be noted that most (29 of 32) of these unaffiliated Jews did not grow up unaffiliated. Their past affiliations, mainly in their youth, included memberships in synagogues and communal organizations. These past affiliations included the following:

Reform synagogue - 12
Conservative synagogue - 9
Orthodox synagogue - 5
Reconstructionist - 1
Havurah - 1

and non-Orthodox Jews as hindering the Jewish community. The following quotes illustrate the ways in which they perceived the "supports and hindrances" they received:

- * My parents did not want me to move outside their Sephardi world and would not pay for my college. I remained observant in college. I am now married to an Ashkenazi husband and am close to my family.
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Conservative synagogue - 9
Orthodox synagogue - 5
Reconstructionist - 1
Havurah - 1

Workmen's Circle school - 1
B'nai B'rith Girls - 1
United Synagogue Youth member - 1
Hillel - 3
Mitzvah Corps - 1
Orthodox yeshiva - 1
Jewish Communist affiliations - 1
Jewish atheist - 2
Workmen's Circle - 2

Jewish Education

Most individualistic participants had received a Jewish education. Fifteen went to a Sunday school. Eight went to a Hebrew day school or yeshiva. Many (14 of 32) had a bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah, or confirmation. Five were raised in homes which were secular but their families were active in Jewish cultural organizations.

God and Torah

Most (16 of 32) believed in a God which is a personal force located within them which makes them better people. A few (5 of 32) wanted to pray to a God, who they thought was supernatural, but they felt like Jewish illiterates. The following quotes illustrates the range of their viewpoints:

- * I can be a Jew without believing in God.
- * God is in each of us, there is no supernatural God.
- * I don't believe in God.
- * Torah is holy but I don't take it personally.
- * God and Torah I only think of during crisis like today's Scud attack. I pray in my own way, I usually go to the beach to pray.
- * I believe in a supernatural God but I am an illiterate Jew and don't know Hebrew or how to pray. I wish I knew more so I can help my children.

Ritual and Cultural Jewish Objects

Most of this group had ritual and cultural objects in their homes. Most of them did not use these objects. However, when they moved they valued them enough to keep them. The following is a list of their Jewish objects and an indication of how many of them own these objects:

Jewish books - 30
Mezuzah - 26
Sabbath candlesticks - 17
Menorah - 16
Kiddush cups - 12
Seder plate - 8
Jewish prayer books - 6
Father's talith - 5
Shofar - 2
Havdalah set - 1

Jewish Causes

Many members of this group (16 of 32) were active in social justice issues with non-Jewish

organizations. They attributed their involvement to the Jewish values they were taught by their parents and grandparents. The few Jewish causes they supported are: Tikkun, Jewish Peace Lobby, Jewish Peace Now, and New Jewish Agenda.

Cultural Pluralists' Patterns of Jewish Behavior

Synagogue and Organizations

Most of the cultural pluralist participants belonged to non-Orthodox mainstream synagogues. Most (18 of 22) grew up in affiliated homes. Ten were volunteer leaders at their local federation.

Five participated in the Wexner Heritage Foundation. One studied in a Judaic study program sponsored by the National Jewish Center for Living and Learning (CLAL). One was a rabbi who worked for a national Jewish communal organization.

Three were so dissatisfied with mainstream synagogues and communal organizations that they were only connected with their *havurah* and with alternative communal Jewish organizations.

The following quotes indicate why the cultural pluralists chose to have formal affiliations with mainstream Judaism:

- * I am not Jewish unless I am connected with Jews. I want to be connected to God and to the culture.
- * How can Jews continue to be a people if we don't stay together? How will we pass anything on to our children and grandchildren?
- * I formed a *havurah* to express my American Judaism.

Jewish Education

Most (18 of 22) had Jewish educations. Seven went to a Hebrew Sunday school. Eleven went to a Hebrew day school or yeshiva. Many (15 of 22) had a bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah, or confirmation.

God and Torah

Most of the cultural pluralists believed in a nonsupernatural God whose character cannot be defined by humans. Two believed that they had a relationship with a personal God who was supernatural and transcended mankind.

Ritual and Cultural Jewish Objects

All cultural pluralist participants had and used all of the ritual and cultural objects which were mentioned by the individualistic interviewees. The following is a list of their Jewish ritual and cultural objects and an indication of how many of their homes had these objects:

- Jewish Bible - 22
- Jewish books - 22
- Mezuzah - 22
- Sabbath candlesticks - 22
- Menorah - 22
- Kiddush cups - 22
- Seder plate - 22

Jewish prayer books - 22
Talith - 22
Kippah - 22
Shofar - 12
Havdalah set - 12
Seperate dishes - 10
T'fillin - 10

Traditionalists' Patterns of Jewish Behavior

Synagogue and Organizations

Eight of the ten traditionalist participants belonged to Orthodox synagogues. Two were members of a Chabad Lubavitch synagogue. All were fully observant and kept the holidays and fasts, observed *kashrut*, attended synagogue at least once a week, and were *shomer shabbos* (kept *Shabbat*). They were active in Jewish organizations which reflect their veivs.

Jewish Education

Most (7 of 10) had Jewish educations. Six went to a Hebrew day school or yeshiva. Four had advanced degrees in Hebrew studies. One was a retired rabbi. One of the *baalot t'shuva* and the *baal t'shuva* had received education at their Reform synagogues. One of the *baalot t'shuvah* had not received any Hebrew education.

God and Torah

All but one of the traditionalist believed in God. They spoke of God and Torah in personal and energetic terms. The following quote illustrate the close feelings they had when they spoke about God and Torah:

God and Torah are personal to me. I believe strongly in them and I live by the Torah. They give me joy and I know God is keeping the Covenant. I wish more Jews would keep ours.

Ritual and Cultural Jewish Objects

All the traditionalist interviewees had all the ritual and cultural objects mentioned by the other participants. They use them in the performance of their *mitzvot*.

Reccommended Actions to Increase Jewish Affiliation

The reccommended actions to increase Jewish affiliation which came out of the focus groups with the individualistic, cultural pluralists, and traditionalists were similar. The recommendations cover two areas: Jewish education and synagogues and communal organizations. The following is a summary of the major actions which come from the sixteen focus groups:

Jewish Education

1. There should be courses for adults on Jewish education provided by synagogues and federation. The core curriculum should help the adults achieve Jewish literacy.
2. There should be focus groups or identity sessions which enable Jewish adults to confront and overtly identify the deepest aspects of their Jewishness.

3. There should be courses for parents on how to provide a home which will enable their children to grow into affiliated Jews.
4. There should be cultural activities which provide opportunities for secular Jews to connect with other Jews.
5. There should be more depth provided in the Sunday programs.
6. Support systems should be developed to provide day care and other resources to single parents.

Synagogues and Communal Organizations

1. Jewish denominations need to engage in more joint problem-solving sessions to determine how they can support *klahyisrael*.
2. Synagogues need to budget for outreach to the unaffiliated just as they budget for their operating expenses.
3. Membership fees need to be reduced even more for young couples.
4. Synagogues and communal organizations need to be more active in universalist social causes.

5. CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

This study's focus group interview data indicate that the American Jewish community will become more diverse as the current generation shapes their Jewish identity. The individualistic Jews are not as attached to Israel or as moved by the Holocaust as are the cultural pluralists and traditionalists. Most of them are seeking spiritual meaning. They are attracted to activities which can provide them with opportunities to build an inner spiritual life and to engage in social action programs. They need to be shown that they can find these opportunities in the Jewish community.

The immediate challenge for Jewish leaders is to develop current forms of social cohesion which will ensure that Jewish religious and cultural norms will be transmitted to future generations. Leaders of synagogues and communal organizations will have to determine how much of their time and fiscal resources they can devote to the youth, the current affiliated adults and the unaffiliated.

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