THE JEWISH IDEA OF COMMUNITY

by

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Secondly, in Israel, as has already been noted, the Jew perceives himself as in a partnership with God. He feels the presence of God and he hears the command to cooperate in the task of building the world depicted in the messianic vision. He has these experiences because he lives in the holy land.

In summary, it is evident that what is most important about the Jewish state to the religious Jewish mind is its potential to strengthen the quality of sanctity in Jewish life. The holy tongue guides speech and thought into channels of morality and piety. The holy land imposes more extensive and more intensive obligations on its Jewish resident. In it, the Jew experiences the presence of God and senses his partnership with the Divine Being in the enterprise of realizing His plan in Jewish and human history. The ideal community is that in which the relation of the Jew to the Divine Being can be most intimate.

This conclusion is expressed in the rabbinic observation that prophecy, which represents just such a close relation with God, can occur only in the holy land. It is also implied in the talmudic declaration that he who lives beyond the boundaries of the holy land may be considered as one who has no God. If relation with God is essential, and this is axiomatic to the religious consciousness, then that relation can best be achieved in the holy land.

IV

The religious significance of the state of Israel is not exhausted by the observation that the Jew is required by biblical prescription to live in Israel. What is of greater import is that it is the Jewish state that has the potential to become the ideal Jewish community and to create the ideal Jewish personality.

Chapter VIII
THE IDEA OF SYNTHESIS

The American Jew does not wish to insulate himself from the world external to Jewish life. Even when he confines his activities to the Jewish community, he willingly occupies a position in a wider political arena, happily engages in the study of science and gratefully accepts the blessings of technology.

The committed Jew, determined to participate in each of these domains — Judaism, science, democracy — and to justify such involvement, projected the ideal of synthesis. At first, this ideal referred merely to an accommodation of the world of reason (particularly that form of reason known as scientific method) with Judaism. Today, the ideal of synthesis should be understood to refer, in addition, to yet another accommodation, that of Jewish life and freedom.

Synthesis is essential for survival. The committed American Jew, with some exceptions of course, is not happy with a solution that requires a ghetto-type isolation as the price for the preservation of Judaism. He seeks another formula — one that will enable him to preserve Jewish identity and commitment, and that will permit him, at the same time, to share fully in a world enriched by science and freedom. He finds such a formula in the principle of synthesis.

This principle needs both analysis and justification.

I

First, it is necessary to respond to the possible objection that
if synthesis refers to a kind of unity, as in fact it does, then it cannot be achieved, in any form, because the claims of Judaism contradict those of science and of freedom. It should be admitted that the committed Jew who lives in a democratic society and in the scientific world sometimes experiences a sense of conflict.

The sense of conflict, however, can be avoided. When it occurs, it has either of two sources; one is logical and the other psychological. Consider first the conflict that a scientist with a Jewish commitment senses between his vocation and his faith. It has a logical side. The propositions of science and the assertions of Judaism must be compared to determine that they do not contradict. This problem has been explored extensively and in detail by many, and it is not necessary to dwell on it here. A few observations, however, may not be inappropriate. There can be no logical incompatibility between scientific and religious claims in those instances where the latter refer to transcendental non-empirical entities such as the Divine Being. If, for example, it were the case that science denied the existence of God, a Jew, committed to the principles of Judaism, would sense an irresolvable logical contradiction among his affirmations. But science neither denies nor affirms His existence; it simply says nothing about it. Since God, by definition, is not available to observation or experimentation — either directly or indirectly — He belongs outside the domain of scientific concerns. In general, a logical contradiction between the claims of science and Judaism will not arise at least in those cases where the religious assertion refers to a non-sensible, transcendental entity. Hence there can be no logical conflict between the assertions of science and such crucial religious declarations as that God exists; that He revealed Himself to Moses; that He entered into a covenant with the people of Israel, etc.

A logical contradiction is possible in those instances where the religious assertion refers only to natural and observable objects. For example, the claim that man emerged directly from a clod of earth conflicts with the scientific view that he arose out of lower animal forms as a result of an evolutionary process. But such contradictions seem not to have disturbed the religious mind even when that mind was, at the same time, scientific. In the first place, such religious statements are of a lower order, in the sense that they do not refer directly to the religious essentials such as the existence of God, His nature, or His relation to man and the universe. All crucial religious declarations of Judaism do refer to God and are, therefore, entirely removed from the domain of science. Secondly, the religious consciousness has even been able to resolve to its satisfaction the appearance of contradiction between religious propositions of the lower order and the assertions of science by adopting either a specific form of scientific theory e.g., by accepting an evolutionary theory of a purposive rather than of a mechanistic type, or by assigning to the religious assertion a metaphorical rather than a literal interpretation, or by doing both. Hence, though one may indeed, if he approaches biblical texts literally and scientific statements mechanistically, prepare an impressive list of inconsistencies between the propositions of science and religion, it is possible to approach both in such a way as to avoid logical conflict.

Is there then psychological incompatibility? Is the scientific temper so different from the religious that both cannot be possessed by the same personality? Is the scientific attitude expressed in the demand for verification so hostile to the religious attitude expressed in faith that both cannot be part of the psychological anatomy of a single individual? Such incompatibility would exist if it were impossible, according to the laws of psychology, for anyone who exhibits one of these
attitudes to display the other. It is clear, however, that this is not the case. Religious scientists, for example, evince both attitudes — they insist on verification in the sensible world but respond with faith in matters of religion. Hence, though these attitudes are sometimes experienced as conflicting, they need not be.

A similar situation obtains in the relationship of Judaism and political democracy. The doctrine of equality is, on occasion, held to be inconsistent with the Jewish view that the Jew is really different from others, in that he experiences a sense of obligation that is wider and deeper than that experienced by others and, hence, unequal to others in that he exemplifies, by the standards of Jewish life, a degree of sanctity not possessed by others. The principle of individual rights is also held to be incompatible with the obligations that Judaism imposes on its adherents.

But these contradictions — and this conclusion is even less debatable here than it is in the case of the alleged conflict between science and religion — are not logical. Their resolution depends on the strict application of the logical principle of non-contradiction. As formulated by Aristotle, it declares, "The same attribute cannot, at the same time, belong and not belong to the same object and in the same respect." The last phrase is crucial. It means that the same thing may have a certain character in one relation (respect) and fail to have it in another. The character of equality is relational — its presence must be judged with respect to some standard. It is logically possible for a person to be equal to another in relation to a political norm that prescribes each individual's weight in an election process and, at the same time, to be unequal to others in relation to a religious norm that determines the value of a person by the extent of his moral achievements.

The inconsistency that emerges in the consideration of democratic and Jewish views on the question of individual rights is also merely apparent — though its resolution is more involved. It would seem, to begin with, that a person cannot have both a right and an obligation with respect to the same thing. If one has the obligation to do a, he does not have the right to do b if a and b are mutually exclusive; for example, if a man has the duty to provide for his family, he does not have the right to squander his money on gambling. Conversely, if an individual has the right to do a or b, he does not have the obligation to do a; for example, if a student has been admitted to both Yale and Harvard and therefore has a right to attend either school, he does not have an obligation to go to Yale.

Notwithstanding, it is logically possible to have both a right to choose between two courses of action and an obligation to adopt one of them at the same time. This possibility flows from several considerations. First, rights and obligations, like equality, are relational, that is to say, they arise in relation to specific contexts. A person has the right to choose one of several religions in a political context in which freedom is inviolate and is simultaneously obligated to practice one of these in a religious context controlled by the principles of faith to which he is committed. To this extent, the situation is entirely analogous to that which obtains in the physical world where a body can be both at rest and in motion at the same time. The reason is that motion and rest are relational characteristics; the judgment that a body is moving or is motionless must be made in relation to a context, that is, a frame of reference. A stone lying on the earth is at rest with respect to the earth but in motion with respect to the sun because it shares in the earth's motion around the sun.

This does not, however, fully settle the matter because moral-type contexts in which rights and obligations arise differ
from the physical variety in that it is possible for contexts of the former type to be themselves contradictory. Contexts contradict when one requires an affirmation inconsistent with that required by the other or when one commands an action which, if performed, violates a precept imposed by the other. Judaism and Christianity, for example, are incompatible contexts. One demands the affirmation of a divine unity that is absolute and the other one that is trinitarian. One requires participation in sacraments that are unacceptable to the other. The acceptance of a divine unity that is both absolute and trinitarian cannot be defended on the grounds that the two affirmations of unity are made in different contexts because unity is an intrinsic character of an object. If the Divine Being possesses a unity that excludes multiplicity (an absolute unity), He cannot at the same time have a unity characterized by multiplicity. It is also the case that the performance of ritual in one religious context (Christianity) is precisely what another religious context (Judaism) prohibits. Judaism and Christianity are indeed incompatible contexts.

There is no contradiction, however, between the Jewish and democratic contexts in regard to the question of individual rights. It is obvious that the political assertion of a right to choose does not mean that the individual is prohibited from assuming an obligation in the area in which the right to choose is assured. If the right to choose a religious faith meant that one could not assume a religious discipline as an obligation, then no American could be either Jew or Christian. The assurance of a right in the choice of a faith means only that others have the obligation not to force upon an individual the acceptance of their religious commitment. It does not mean that he may not make a choice of a faith and subsequently treat it as an obligation. But the obligation is acknowledged only in relation to the religion he has chosen. The political right has not, in the process, been rejected. Accordingly, when an American Jew performs an act prescribed by Jewish life, he is, at the same time, as an American, exercising a right and, as a Jew, fulfilling an obligation.3

Such circumstances occur not too infrequently. Suppose, for example, that a community conferred on an individual the right to enter into any profession or vocation of his choosing but that the family to which he belongs, because of a tradition of service to medical science, imposed upon him the obligation to become a physician. In choosing a career in medicine he is, at the same time, exercising a right and fulfilling an obligation.

In sum, there is no logical contradiction in asserting both equality (by one standard) and inequality (by another); and in insisting on both the right to choose among different actions (in the context of democracy) and on the obligation to perform one of them (in the context of Jewish life). Neither are there any psychological incompatibilities in simultaneously expressing the attitudes of the democratic personality and the Jew. It is indeed possible to regard an individual according to two different standards, as, at the same time, equal and unequal. The attitude that prompts the judgment of equality can belong to the same psychological anatomy as that which produces the judgment of inequality. It is also possible, at the same time and because of the different contexts in which these attitudes are expressed, to respect the right of an individual to do as he chooses and to require him not to adopt a course of action other than that which a certain obligation imposes upon him. The attitude that insists on individual rights can coexist, in the same personality, with that which demands obedience.

The human personality is not a simple but a very complicated entity. It is capable of reacting in contrary ways in
relation to two different objects — demanding verification, for example, for the existence of an electron but accepting on faith the existence of God. It is also capable of responding in disparate ways to the same object as long as it does so from two different but compatible perspectives — insisting, for example, that, as an American, a Jew may do as he pleases but that, because of his Jewish identity, he has certain obligations. It has been argued in these pages that the self is social in character. The attitudes that it develops are moulded by the community to which it belongs. It is apparently the case that an individual who is located in two communities can develop two sets of attitudes that will enable him, so long as they are not derived from principles that are logically contradictory, to respond in contrary ways even to the same object.

II

We must turn to the question: what kind of synthesis is possible? What kind of unity of science, democracy and Judaism can be achieved?

It has been shown that the fundamental principles of these three domains do not logically contradict each other — at least, they can be so interpreted. It should now be added that neither is it possible to bring these principles together into a theoretical unity. Synthesis does not refer to a logical unity of the theories of science, democracy and Judaism. One way of effecting a theoretical unity is by the method of reduction. Two theories $T_1$ and $T_2$ are generally characterized in terms of their fundamental concepts and premises. The fundamental concepts of Newtonian theory, for example, are time, space, mass and force; its fundamental premises are those of the theory of gravitation. Now if it is possible to define the fundamental concepts of $T_2$ in terms of those of $T_1$ and, having done so, to show that the fundamental premises of $T_2$ are logically implied by those of $T_1$, then $T_2$ has been logically reduced to $T_1$. Indeed, it was by following such a procedure that Whitehead and Russell succeeded in reducing mathematics to logic. A theoretical unity can be effected in still another way. It may be possible to find a theory $T_3$ such that the terms of both $T_1$ and $T_2$ are definable in terms of those of $T_3$ and, when so defined, the axioms of both $T_1$ and $T_2$ are deducible from those of $T_3$. It was in this manner that the theory of gravity ($T_2$) unified, because it logically implied, both Kepler's theory of planetary motion ($T_1$) and Galileo's theory of the motion of terrestrial bodies ($T_2$). It is not possible, however, by following either of these procedures to bring together, into a unity, the theories of science, democracy and Judaism. Such a unity would include theological propositions that are not available to the process of verification that science demands for each statement in a theory that belongs to its domain. Such a unified theory would also grant an individual the right to do whatever he wanted and, at the same time, oblige him to follow a specific course of action — and all this in a single context and from a single perspective. When this occurs, the theory is blatantly contradictory.

Since the effort to produce this kind of unity of three disparate disciplines must inevitably fail, it becomes necessary, should such a unity be attempted, simply as a matter of logic, to repudiate portions of some of them. It is usually Judaism that is sacrificed. There is a segment on the religious left of Jewish life which sought to achieve just such a theoretical synthesis and, unable to do so consistently, rejected parts of Judaism which it believed could not be logically retained. The rabbinic organization identified with this segment, for example, having declared by resolution its views on a certain issue, subsequently voted that, notwithstanding its corporate
position, in conformity with its commitment to the principle of individual rights, each member would be allowed to act according to the dictates of his conscience. The principle of individual rights was thus treated as an article of religious faith supplanting the principle of obligation.

The idea of synthesis does, however, have a psychological and a sociological meaning. While it does not refer to a logical unity of three disparate theories, it does refer, in the first place, to the psychological unity of personality. When an individual has absorbed the attitudes characteristic of science, democracy and Jewish life and responds appropriately in diverse relations and contexts, he exemplifies the idea of synthesis. He will obviously need a degree of psychological flexibility. He will, on occasion, have to react, to the same thing and at the same time, from different perspectives; but he can learn to do this. It is unnecessary, therefore, to go to the extreme adopted by another segment of the Jewish community on the religious right which rejects the idea of synthesis because it believes that Judaism is essentially incompatible with science and freedom and that, to preserve it, it is essential to isolate the Jew and to expose him to purely Jewish experiences.

The idea of synthesis has a sociological meaning as well. It has been argued here that attitudes are social; they arise out of social contexts. The psychological synthesis of personality is therefore a result of social conditions which permit its development. There are two sets of social arrangements which could, at least, theoretically, produce such a synthesis in personality. The scientific, democratic and Jewish institutions could exist, on a functional level, separate and apart from each other. Each institution would engage in its own activity, stress its own values and remain neutral in regard to the attitudes that characterize the other institutional types. A person could then exemplify the idea of synthesis if he were to receive adequate exposure to each of these institutions and if he were to absorb and subsequently to express the attitudes of each. Such social arrangements, however, would in themselves lack the character of synthesis. Or, institutions could be built in which the values of science, democracy and Jewish life are jointly expressed — in which case, synthesis would be present on a social level as well.

There are several reasons for viewing the latter option as preferable. First, there are no scientific and democratic institutions that are genuinely neutral with respect to the values of Jewish life. The demand for neutrality, in regard to religious issues, among the institutions of science and of freedom, does not mean that such issues shall not be discussed at all. Such discussion is both appropriate and inevitable. A scientist has the right to ask, for example, whether God exists and he is entitled to apply his methods in the attempt to find an answer. Should he discover, however, that the methods of observation and experiment do not provide a satisfactory reply, he may take the additional step and decide, as a matter of subjective inclination, not to acknowledge the existence of anything that is beyond the scope of scientific verification. In doing so, he displays a scientific bias in an area not available to scientific investigation and, accordingly, is no longer neutral. The requirement of neutrality on religious issues is simply the demand that the scientist, qua scientist, shall not adopt a position on an issue that is beyond the scope of science. A similar definition of neutrality applies to enterprises of freedom. An individual may ask whether a Jew living in the democratic community has the obligation to abide by the precepts of Jewish life. He may find, upon investigation, the the principles of democracy are adequate to the task of answering this question only from the perspective of freedom. He may then take a
subsequent step, express the libertarian bias and declare that the Jew has no such obligation under any conditions — in which case, he loses neutrality. The demand that a personality identified with an institution of freedom shall remain neutral with regard to questions of Jewish life is the requirement that he shall not, qua free personality, adopt a position on a Jewish question, raised from a Jewish perspective, to which the principles of freedom do not supply a solution.

Now the bias of the scientist or the free personality is not easy to remove. Teachers and practitioners of science normally have definite views on questions of religion. A scientific campus or research institute is frequently a base of atheism and agnosticism. Scientific personalities do not normally withhold their views on religion even when they are engaged in scientific activity. The respect with which their words are greeted and the authority which they are readily assigned have an impact that goes far beyond the concerns of science. An analogous situation obtains in those institutions that are devoted to the life of freedom. A campus on which the rights-oriented perspective of democracy controls both thought and action is very often a ground on which, for example, the classic principles of morality are repudiated. Clearly, neutrality is not easy to achieve.

Now it is well known that an institution imbibes its members with certain attitudes, sometimes by force of argument, but more often through psychological and social pressures. It is difficult to resist the push to conformity that perennially permeates the life of an institution. Its rules cannot be violated and its perspectives ignored without exposure to the possibility of rejection and even ostracism. Hence, if the Jewish community should consent to social arrangements in which the individual — in order to absorb the values and to cultivate

the attitudes of science, democracy and Judaism — must expose himself to three different types of institutions, it would find that its task, in its own community, is not merely to instill the values of Jewish life but to do battle, hopefully with effectiveness, against the different forms of bias communicated in the institutions of science and freedom. The difficulties need not be enumerated; they are obviously enormous. These values and attitudes could be integrated into personality, harmoniously and with much greater success, in a community that contains institutions each of which exemplifies the idea of synthesis, that is to say, in a community which is so organized that its institutions express simultaneously the values of science, freedom and Jewish life.

There is a second consideration, namely, the two different sets of social arrangements themselves express and communicate different attitudes. In the first place, a sense of coherence is generally transmitted in a context where the conditions of social synthesis prevail. The separation of religious institutions from those of science and freedom suggests that they are in opposition, perhaps even incompatible. Their union in social synthesis suggests that they are in harmony and consistent with each other. These implicit suggestions have an impact on attitude development that may be even stronger than those that are explicit. If the goal is synthesis in personality, there is a better chance to achieve it in a community that itself exemplifies the ideal of synthesis.

Secondly, social conditions of synthesis contribute to the development of the sense of rationality. The task of realizing synthesis in personality is a very difficult affair, primarily because it requires the development of an attitude that enables an individual to adopt different perspectives, that is to say, it demands rationality. The enterprise of science provides a
good illustration. It requires that a scientist exhibit objectivity and detachment, that is to say, that he shall suppress the perspective that people normally adopt, namely, the point of view of his own interests, and take on another from which his own interests are a matter of indifference to him. The scientist must also consider an object in relation to a variety of frames of reference, that is, from the vantage point of different perspectives. It is precisely this ability that must be possessed by a personality who embodies the idea of synthesis.

If, to integrate the attitudes characteristic of all three domains, an individual would have to expose himself to each separately, the burden of generating a synthesis would rest on his shoulders alone. He would receive little assistance from the conditions that prevail in the institutions to which he is exposed. A Jewish institution that exists in isolation from those of freedom and science does not face the task, though it may on occasion undertake it, of defining the various perspectives characteristic of the three types of institutions in order to demonstrate consistency; nor is the scientist or the free personality, in his institution, charged with the obligation to exhibit consistency with Judaism. None of these essentially isolated institutions imposes on its members the necessity to adopt a point of view other than its own. A community which, in its institutions, exemplifies the idea of synthesis, on the other hand, has no choice but to undertake this task. Since the feeling that compatibility prevails among the theories of science, freedom and Judaism depends on the ability to adopt different perspectives, such a community must, in the first place, distinguish and separate these perspectives and, in the second place, through its institutions, instill in its members the tendency to adopt each of them, consecutively or simultaneously, as the occasion requires. In other words, a community that itself embodies the ideal of synthesis is rational to the extent, at least, that it stresses the need for perspectival perception and it must, to preserve its character, develop in its members the very same rational capacity.

III

The idea of social synthesis receives little application in contemporary America. The tendency is to treat an institution's primary objective as its sole and exclusive function and to grant it autonomy so that it will not be governed by any principles other than those that are intrinsic to its own activity. American society is characterized essentially by functional segregation, that is to say, it adheres to the doctrine: one institution, one function. There is a theory of "art for art's sake", for example, which declares that the artistic object need serve no purpose other than that of providing the occasion for an aesthetic experience. Art, according to the theory, is not merely one aspect of a complex, multi-faceted human experience; it is rather an activity that is different and separated from others. Further, it need have no social significance or moral value. John Dewey criticized the tendency to isolate art in the museum and to separate it from life. A similar situation prevails in science. Should a moral question arise — transplantation of organs, for example — the effort is made to resolve it according to principles that emerge out of scientific activity itself and without consultation with other disciplines, religion for example, which are directly concerned with such questions. Functional segregation is also at the basis of the popular view that the physician is obligated to heal the sick though the latter is a diabolical criminal — a mass murderer, for example — because medicine need not take morality into account when deciding who shall be the beneficiary of its act. Academic institutions tend to adhere to similar patterns. The administrators of American universities are not inclined to
get involved in regulating the conduct of their students in matters of sex, for example, because the sole function of the university is the communication of knowledge. In the days of turmoil on the campus, many academicians believed that their function was not to take sides on the issues but merely to clarify them to their students. This tendency to treat an institution's objectives as its sole function has had an impact on religion as well. The prevailing inclination — among the members of society though perhaps not on the part of clergymen — is to regard the synagogue or the religious school as serving the purpose of religion alone and, hence, as irrelevant to other human concerns. Society is essentially in a state of functional segregation; the idea of social synthesis does not have much appeal.

Judaism, on the other hand, seeks functional integration in the institutions of Jewish life. The family is not merely a context in which children are reared in the climate of love; it is also an arena in which instruction takes place and Jewish commitment is conveyed. The Jewish school is classically concerned not merely with the transmission of information but with imbuing its students with a sense of morality and religious obligation. The synagogue is the bet hakena, the house of assembly, used not only for worship but also for study and as a forum for consultation on questions of communal need. Social synthesis, through the functional integration of its institutions, has always been a Jewish objective. It needs application to the American Jewish scene as well, to the institutions of contemporary life emerging in the Jewish community such as the university, the medical school, the hospital, the research institute, the newspaper etc.

A serious objection has been raised to the implementation of this idea. It is argued that a commitment to any purpose other than the objective for which the institution was created will interfere with its program. The endorsement of religious dogma may bar a medical school, for example, from performing certain scientific experiments e.g., heart transplants. Religious institutions, it should be admitted, have historically presented obstacles to the development of science. A newspaper's adoption of an ideological position prevents the discussion, in its pages, of issues which challenge the accepted views and, thereby, limits freedom of expression. This cannot be denied. It is obvious that when an institution devoted to science embraces a moral doctrine or a religious creed, its own enterprise is, to some extent, subordinated. The scientist, working under such conditions, will enjoy unlimited freedom to pursue his investigations except when, in the course of his activity, he is about to violate a moral or religious scruple to which the institution is sensitive. A similar situation obtains in an institution committed to freedom. When it has, like an individual, exerted its right of choice and adopted an ideology, it will not permit debate on its fundamental commitments in its own domain. A priest, to consider an extreme example, will not be invited to preach on the trinity from the pulpit of a synagogue. Here too the principle of freedom is subordinated to ideological commitment.

Nevertheless, such commitment need hamper neither progress in science nor life in freedom. When communist countries are criticized for submitting the arts and sciences to the control of social aims, the intent of the criticism is not to question the value of a voluntary institutional attachment to moral, religious or political goals but the suppression of artistic forms and scientific theories. Indeed, there are two objections to the policy of communism. One is that social considerations are imposed on such institutions. The second is that the views imposed are not challenged by other institutions
in the same society. The forced regulation of the arts and sciences in a context of political totalitarianism is indeed detrimental to them. In a democracy whose character is culturally pluralistic, however, there will be other institutions with voluntarily assumed religious or ideological commitments — many among them may indeed be functionally segregated — which will encourage activity prohibited by others and welcome the expression of views they reject. Institutions will then challenge each other to clarify their commitments — so as not to prohibit conduct which is really compatible with their views — and to justify the positions which they adopt on various controversial issues. Freedom will not then be curtailed; discussion will continue and individuals will not be deprived of the opportunity to engage in the debate or to make a decision. Neither is it likely that scientific progress will be hindered under such conditions.

In addition, a useful purpose may be served. Moral and religious views will be treated with deference in a community that embodies social synthesis. They will command greater respect than that which they receive in a society that is characterized by the functional segregation of its institutions. The creation of such functionally synthesized communities is eminently desirable. Neither science nor freedom offers any guidance as to how, for example, the incredible quantity of energy unleashed by science — a quantity sufficient to destroy mankind — is to be used. If religion and morality fail in this task, human survival is threatened. A partnership of science and morality, if not religion, is essential. It may prevent mankind’s self destruction, a possible by-product of the isolation of the scientific function from the moral and religious. It is essential that scientists, for example, who labor in these institutions exhibit synthesis, at least to the extent that they attach moral commitment to scientific activity. But synthesis in personality is ultimately derived from synthesis in the institutions of society.

But whatever position one may wish to adopt on the question of institutional synthesis in American life, it is clear that the implementation of this idea in the Jewish community will contribute enormously to its strength. There is a greater likelihood that Jews will retain Jewish identity and Jewish commitment if they are exposed to Jewish attitudes even in their educational, professional or economic activities. It is essential to Jewish survival in a democratic and open society to create a Jewish community that embodies the idea of synthesis. The institutions of Jewish life should derive their Jewish character, not from the fact that they are created by Jews for the purpose of serving Jews but from the circumstance that even while they are intended to accomplish a variety of non-religious objectives — artistic, scientific, academic, economic, social etc. — their structure is such that they embody and express Jewish values and attitudes as well.

IV

The practical obstacles on the path to social synthesis are many. Among them are the resistance to change due to human inertia, weakness in Jewish commitment, the considerable effort that must be expended to effect social change, the almost inevitable occurrence of failure and the concomitant frustration, etc. Social synthesis cannot easily be achieved. A service may nevertheless have been rendered by portraying the goal. It may inspire some to undertake the task; it may even illuminate the way.