

TIKUN HATZOT

Prayers in the Middle of the Night

by Burton Weiss

Lord, let me not now or ever
sing (or if I do, not well)
"peace, peace"
when there is no peace.

Let me not stories tell
of a grateful task,
but let me learn at last
as we were taught of old:
the sages increase peace throughout the world
although, recurrently through darkness hurled,
they alone shall no peace find
in this wide world or that to come
which occupies, eternally, their mind.

"From strength to strength they go":
embracing Wisdom and increasing Peace,
they give of what they never have.

They live from night through night
by praises and forgetting
and by stabbing in the dark.
They lie abed or walk the town
and startled are to wake up sweating
as even now I woke to write this down.

Lord, let me not, at least in this
my lingering youth, sing of (Thy) peace.

So musical my ear How may I only stop
awhile?

Please God and thoughtful friends
who hand me instruments — matchbooks and
pen — when I am high and in the dark:
let me not forge harmonies
in your name.

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IDENTITY, INVISIBLE RELIGION, AND INTERMARRIAGE

by Everett Gendler

"... the possibility that a new religion is in the making."

— Thomas Luckmann

Conferences on religious identification and intermarriage continue; statistical studies multiply; the "problem" persists. Suggested analyses rarely seem adequate, proposed "solutions" rarely seem satisfactory. Might it be that our perception of the present is obscured by the past? that we are misled by analogies with former times?

These questions are prompted by a combination of certain rabbinical experiences and some studies that I have come across recently. The combination has, for me at least, sharply challenged some earlier assumptions about our situation today, and leads to some conclusions which are at variance with what I formerly thought.

These conclusions, further, imply certain changes in my religious behavior. To me, at least, they suggest that certain attitudes and stands I have previously taken as a rabbi are questionable, possibly inappropriate, probably harmful religiously. This being the case, I am anxious to share some of these thoughts with those who are living what I think I am observing, so that they, in turn, may either help confirm my intuitions or challenge and thereby clarify them.

To share the background of these conclusions requires references to several recent works dealing with religion. None of these works is beyond challenge, and all are perhaps questionable in some respects. Their point will be further blunted by the extremely brief summaries of their arguments and considerations. Even so, they seem to me substantially correct in what they have to say, and they also seem to converge in what they may mean for the religious situation today.

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Let me add immediately that the authors I cite are not to be held responsible for the conclusions I derive from their works. Perhaps they would find such conclusions warranted and appropriate, perhaps not. In any event, they and their works are cited with appreciation for the stimulation and illumination they have afforded me, but they are not necessarily to be associated with the argument as it unfolds.

I should also add that what I speak of here has reference primarily to the religious scene in the United States today. Its applicability to other societies is an independent question. Furthermore, while the implications of these considerations are many, with application to other areas of religious concern and practice, for convenience I want to confine the consideration here to intermarriage.

My rabbinic involvement is quite clearly the stance from which I write, and this accounts for the specific focus of the last section on rabbinic participation in such "intermarriages." What this entire analysis implies for experimental and evolutionary religious communities is a question most appropriately addressed by the members of such communities themselves.

One last introductory word. It will be noticed that I do not present lengthy arguments on behalf of the particular points. I prefer to think of this as an essay in shared recognitions. "This is how it seems to me; does it seem this way to you?" It is to this question and in this spirit, I hope, that those closest to the actuality will respond.

A) The Definition of "Interfaith Marriage"

In many areas of our lives we have come to realize that the traditional use of attributes may not be helpful. "A good Jew," for example, means many things to many people. Even for those who might agree on the meaning, to describe any given person simply as a "good Jew" or "not a good Jew" would probably seem an over-simplification. Would there not be significant degrees of difference? Would not any person be "good" in some respects and "not good" in others? In practice, do we not, for meaningful and precise discourse, use "a good Jew" as a variable term rather than as a fixed attribute?

Similarly, suggests J. Milton Yinger,¹ there is a need to re-define "interfaith marriage as a variable, with possibilities of more or less." Urging that the definition of interfaith marriage not depend on "the single criterion of church membership or identification," Yinger suggests the value for research of transforming "a long-held dichotomy into a variable."

"If we begin to take account of the several dimensions of religion, we may discover that those who are intermarried when viewed in terms of one dimension may be *intramarried* when viewed in terms of another: . . . Once we think of intermarriage as a variable, not an attribute, we can turn to the task of designing scales to measure it.

Two scales, I think, are needed. The first will measure the degree to which the couple is intramarried, considering similarity on the many possible religious factors. . . . The second scale will measure the extent to which a married couple is bound into an 'integrating' or 'separating' network of other persons and groups. If all the persons with whom they interact and all of their significant others are of the same faith, then they are strongly intramarried on this group dimension. If they interact with many other persons of a different faith, if some of their relatives are intermarried, then they are partially intermarried, even if they are members of the same church and hold the same beliefs."

Concluding his very suggestive remarks, Yinger adds: "The redefinition of intermarriage as a variable, with values produced by the interaction of two sets of forces, is already a drastic shift in our perspective. If we are to undertake more precise work on such problems as interfaith marriage, however, adequate to the task of multivariate analysis, we must demand of ourselves even more radical changes in our concepts."

If a change in the approach to intermarriage is a scholarly desideratum, might it not also be a practical religious desideratum? And might not the key definitional change be similar; from intermarriage as a simple dichotomy to intermarriage as a variable?

Now obviously the recognition of this variable nature of intermarriage would manifest itself differently in the practical religious area. One need hardly subscribe to multivariate analysis, complete with statistics and ratings for each couple, to admit at least this much: there are degrees, subtleties, and a variety of considerations in the case of each couple which are not sufficiently taken account of by the final determination, on the basis of the traditional definition, that this is *either* an interfaith *or* an intrafaith marriage. Rather than continuing to accept such a dichotomy, as a minimum we need to recognize the gradations in the different circumstances of different couples, and we need some variations of the traditional wedding ceremony so that it can be more exactly suited to individual situations.

B) The Nature of Friendship

Dr. J. Fentener van Vlissingen,² a brother from the Taize community (a Protestant lay-monastery in France), has recently completed an historical study of friendship? Very briefly, it suggests that three major stages of friendship may be distinguished in history, each of which has particular characteristics.

The first stage, the ethnological, finds friendship firmly set in the structure of society, sanctioned by values and symbols, specifically defined, and often contractual. Its main function is to mitigate tensions which arise from the social organism and family relations. Though the earliest historically,

elements of this stage may persist even today in various societies.

The second stage is that which begins with Greek society, where friendship is defined in ethical terms and has as its purpose the ethical fulfillment of the participants. From Greek times to the eighteenth century there was a moral pre-occupation with mutual perfection in friendship, and this, of course, also implied a socially recognized value system which defined ethical perfection or offered models of it.

The third stage, the romantic, dates from the nineteenth century, when friendship results from special feelings between two people who, interacting, set their personal seals upon one another. Each, then, in some measure determines the character of the other by the interaction. Here the psychological rather than the ethical is central, and the consequence is that personal-subjective rather than societal-objective considerations are the primary determinants of the relationship.

For our purposes, one implication of this stage of friendship—certainly the predominant stage in our age—must be stated explicitly. In the case of a friendship between two persons of different religious traditions, not only is there some exchange of subjective characteristics but some exchange of these religious elements which constitute part of the persons. Thus the friendship serves as a bridge for the flow of symbolic meaning and feeling, and is the point of translation of symbols from one tradition to another.

The effects of this on religious configurations can hardly be overestimated, especially over periods of time. It means that in friendships of this kind, persons from different traditions discover that the human meaning of the particular symbols of each tradition can in significant ways be translated into symbols of the other tradition, and so an exchange and identification of personal and religious feeling can and does occur at such points. The deeper the friendship, the greater the symbolic sharing, with each person participating in some measure in the appreciation or celebration of the symbols or rites of the other. Where, as in the United States today, inter-religious friendships are numerous, each represents a point of significant religious interchange and an unspoken challenge to traditional claims of religious untranslatability and exclusiveness.

The religious effects of such friendships are re-enforced by certain current symbolic and doctrinal developments.

C) The Symbolic Thaw

For a long time it had been assumed that the *meaning* of religious symbols was identical with their *explanation*. Explanations, of course, were formulated in the doctrinal terms of particular religious, theological or philosophical traditions. Hence even similar symbols (e.g., candles, bread, wine) were regarded as having essentially different values or meanings in different traditions, and different symbols were taken as proof of insurmountable differences between traditions.

Now it is, of course, true that the doctrinal context does affect the meaning or value of a symbol to some extent, but it does not by any means determine its full meaning. As the late Erwin Goodenough brilliantly (and to me convincingly) argued, the psychological or emotional impact that a symbol may have on human beings depends on much else than the formal interpretation of the symbol, and the evidence in his *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* constitutes an invaluable connecting link with the symbolic expressions of other religious traditions.³

Meanwhile, the work of Jung and his school has opened further vistas, and the emotional-psychological-spiritual meaning of symbols is no longer confined by the interpretations of particular traditions. Among especially illuminating treatments of religious symbols from this point of view, one might single out Mircea Eliade's *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. The work of the late Erich Neumann has also been exceedingly valuable, and besides *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, his "Note on Marc Chagall" (in *Art and the Creative Unconscious*) is a brilliant portrayal of deep currents moving today in the Jewish spirit.

At the same time, even particularistic symbols are beginning to be explicated in functional human terms, and so they too begin to have "non-sectarian" meaning for these "outside" the given tradition. A very moving recent example of this is James W. Douglass' *The Non-Violent Cross* (Macmillan, 1968), with its beautiful and non-appropriative treatment of Ernie Levy, the Lamed-vav, the Ebed Yahweh, Gandhi, and others. By appreciating these figures in broad human terms rather than "claiming" them for particular "Christian" purposes, Douglas reveals rare religious sensitivity; yet relating them to the symbol of the cross in significant ways, he at the same time makes more widely available the non-doctrinal human meaning of the cross.

The release of symbols from institutional confinement is, I think, an increasing tendency, and the resultant fluidity of the situation will surely see new configurations take shape.

D) Doctrinal Developments

Three years ago, writing in *The Christian Century*, Harvey Cox stated: "We need as our theological starting point a Jesus who is neither the ecclesiastical nor the existentialist Jesus, but the Jewish Jesus...Our Christology must begin with the Jew who makes it possible for us to share the hope of Israel, the hope for a kingdom of Shalom."

Now, in *The Center Magazine*, September, 1968, Robert Gordis devotes an entire article to a survey of what he calls "Re-Judaizing Christianity." By this term Dr. Gordis means far more than the mere "Hebraization" of Christianity, as his summary makes clear:

"The demand for involvement in the world, the stress upon deed rather than upon creed, the sense of the dynamism of history, the

ethics of self-fulfillment, the realistic yet positive evaluation of human nature, the recognition of sex as a divinely ordained attribute of man—and the willingness to draw the consequences in the arena of life—all these elements of Biblical and post-Biblical Judaism are in the direction in which contemporary Christian thinkers are moving. On the other hand, such Hellenistic elements as a static view of God and history, the conception of the dichotomy of body and soul, the doctrine of man's innate corruption, and the stress on dogma and war on heresy are playing an ever-diminishing role in the thinking of Christians today. It follows, therefore, that we may be entering upon a new era of ecumenism, on a far deeper level than the exchange of pleasantries or even the recognition of mutual rights in a pluralistic society."

The conclusion Dr. Gordis derives from this is a rather modest one: "Perhaps the day is dawning when Jews as well as Christians will recognize... that Judaism still has a vital contribution to make to the world today." Rather more to the point, it seems to me, are two final suggestions he makes: "...the concept of the Judeo-Christian tradition takes on genuine relevance in our day...each tradition can speak significantly, first to its own devotees and then to all men."

This does seem to me the case, but it is likely to carry us well beyond the "truly meaningful dialogue" between the traditions to which Dr. Gordis refers, if such "dialogue" presupposes that each participant emerges with a better "understanding" of the other but is to remain in precisely the same relation to his own and the other tradition as was the case before the dialogue. For in such exchanges, just as in friendship, it is highly likely that there will be a significant mutual determination of outlook with distinctly unitive consequences.

E) Active Collaboration

Many clergymen have in recent years found themselves engaged in collaborative actions with those of other institutional religious traditions. Usually they have acted together in areas of common concern, the war in Vietnam, the racial situation; sometimes they have worshipped together. At times, as in Southern churches during the height of cooperation with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, they discovered that the full meaning of worship and the Presence of the Spirit could be felt and shared by all those present, no matter what their denominational affiliations. At other times, in intimate discussions with other clergy, they have sensed that true colleagues are not confined within the boundaries of "their own" established religious institutions, but are often found beyond these boundaries. Thus in calmer times as in crises, one's affective/effective religious community has been discovered to transcend the established boundaries of religious denominational groupings.

As with clergy, so with laymen: Powerful feelings of genuine religious

fellowship, not conforming to established religious configurations, have developed among many citizens working jointly on projects of common communal concern.

On campuses this is especially the case, and to such a degree that one Jewish chaplain, responding at a conference to the suggestion of his Christian counterparts that there be active involvement by campus chaplains and their student constituencies in broadly ecumenical social action efforts on campus, replied by warning against any approaches "in which the ecumenical effort becomes a pitfall to the particular identity of the Jewish participants." Acknowledging that "Jews and Judaism have an essential stake in the social change," he insisted that "their contribution must be made not in universalistic terms but within the clearly defined context of the Jewish tradition." Since his own primary responsibility was "to keep Jewish students Jews," he emphasized that social action was to be undertaken not "for its own sake" but rather as an expression of "Jewish tradition, history and experiences." (JTA dispatch in the *Boston Jewish Advocate*, December 19, 1968.)

However one may react to this particular approach, there can be little doubt that "ecumenical effort" is indeed a "pitfall to the particular identity of the Jewish participants"—and, it is important to add, to the identities of the non-Jewish participants as well.

F) Identity and Invisible Religion

Considerations and developments of the kind cited above are, of course, matters of common knowledge. We have tended, however, to deny their obvious implications by means of the assumption, not often stated openly, that despite these developments, religious outlook and religious identity are still functions of our established religious institutions. It is precisely this assumption that is learnedly and severely challenged by Thomas Luckmann in his brief, incisive work, *The Invisible Religion* (Macmillan, 1967).

Challenging the uncritical tendency to identify religion with religious institutions (church, synagogue, etc.), Luckmann instead begins with the question of the *function* of religion. Following the leads of Weber and Durkheim, he presupposes that "the problem of individual existence in society is a 'religious' problem...the values originally underlying church religion were not institutional norms but norms lending significance to individual life in its totality."

Though at first merely a presupposition, Luckmann substantiates this starting point with a valuable discussion, George Herbert Mead-inspired, of how Selves develop: "...an organism becomes a Self by constructing, with others, an 'objective and moral universe of meaning...the organism transcends its biological nature by developing a Self."

And what has this to do with religion? "It is in keeping with an elementary sense of the concept of religion to call the transcendence of biological nature by the human organism a religious phenomenon." And in so far as

this process of biological transcendence depends upon the development of symbolic universes which are "socially objectivated systems of meaning that refer, on the one hand, to the world of everyday life and point, on the other hand, to a world that is experienced as transcending everyday life . . . we may conclude, therefore, that the world view, as an 'objective' and historical social reality, performs an essentially religious function and define it as an *elementary social form of religion*. This social form is universal in human society."

This historical world view, which may assume different forms in different social conditions, and which usually includes rituals, images and language, also affects directly personal identity: "...the individuation of consciousness and conscience occurs for historical individuals in the internalization of an already constructed world view rather than in the original construction of world views The personal identity of a historical individual is, thus, the subjective expression of the objective significance of a world view. Earlier we defined the world view as a universal form of religion. Correspondingly, we may now define personal identity as a universal form of individual religiosity." Thus there is a profound relationship between inherited world view and personal identity.

Now whatever the case may be with simple societies, in our own, where we have "increasing complexity of the division of labor, a large surplus over the subsistence minimum and a correspondingly more differentiated pattern of social stratification," we also experience increasing institutional specialization and rationalization. We also experience keenly the sharp segmentation of the several institutional domains which characterize modern industrial societies. . . . And among the institutions affected by this trend have been specialized religious institutions, for "institutional specialization of religion" has been, in fact, the form that religious world views have taken in our civilization.

Now to speak in the plural of world views is already to reveal an important feature of a complex, differentiated society: no religious institution can express "the hierarchy of meaning in the world view." This factor of pluralism we have, I think, faced squarely.

What we have not faced squarely, however, is the full meaning of institutional specialization of religion in a context of general institutional specialization, segmentation, and rationalization. For not only do what were originally "total life values" tend to become "part-time norms;" not only may any religion come to be "apprehended by the individual as the fulfillment of *particular* requirements" rather than as an overarching, integrating system of meaning which determines effectively the priorities by which people live; but even more important "the primary public institutions no longer significantly contribute to the formation of individual consciousness and personality, despite the massive performance control exerted by their functionally rational 'mechanisms'." As a result, "personal identity becomes,

essentially, a private phenomenon."

Why is this? "Institutional segmentation of the social structure significantly modifies the relation of the individual to the social order as a whole. His 'social' existence comes to consist of a series of performances of highly anonymous specialized social roles At the same time, the 'meaning' of performances in one institutional domain, determined by the autonomous norms of that domain, is segregated from the 'meaning' of performances in other domains. The 'meaning' of such performances is 'rational'—but only with respect to the functional requirements of a given institutional area. It is, however, detached from the over-arching context of meaning of an individual biography." Thus the person experiences institutional demands for "conformity" at the same time that the institutions leave him, so far as personal identity or biography is concerned, very much subject to "individualism."

But should not the traditional religious institutions help co-ordinate the various institutional demands upon persons? Certainly "religion" should, but the nature of specialized religious institutions probably prevents their so functioning in our society. Luckmann's telling analysis—it repays very careful reading—can hardly be compressed further, but at least certain of the characteristics of institutional religion today should be mentioned in passing.

There is a growing incongruence between the "official" model of religion presented by the institutions and the actual systems of "ultimate" significance by which people do, in fact, order their lives. "Religious practices (such as service attendance) will be performed for a variety of 'nonreligious' motives and specifically religious beliefs will be compartmentalized into opinions (such as, God is almighty) which will have no direct relation to the individuals' effective priorities and everyday conduct." Thus religious institutions, rather than serving a truly integrating function in the lives of their participants, frequently fragment them further with demands which can hardly be taken seriously. At most, specifically religious roles become "part-time" and partial rather than pervasive and unifying.

As for the effects on succeeding generations, this we know very well. "The everyday concerns of the fathers are no longer those of the sons and many of the concerns of the sons were unknown to the fathers." Even more serious, however, is this fact: "what the fathers preach but do not practice will be internalized by the sons as a system of rhetoric rather than as a system of 'Ultimate' significance."

It is thus extremely doubtful that the religious institutions we know are effectively performing the religious function of integrating the routines of everyday life and legitimating its crises. It is quite certain, however, that no other primary public institution is performing this function either. "The effective social basis of the modern sacred cosmos is to be

found in neither the churches nor the state nor the economic system." Yet surely some norms do "determine the effective priorities in the everyday lives of typical members of modern industrial societies." What are these norms, and where are they expressed or found?

Luckmann responds to this question with the suggestion that we may, in fact, be witnessing a revolutionary change of profound social significance: "the replacement of the institutional specialization of religion by a new social form of religion." Just as historically in the West, an early period of "diffusion of the sacred cosmos through the institutional structure of society" was followed by a period of "institutional specialization of religion," we may now be in the period of transition to a new religious form: "assortments of 'ultimate' meanings directly available to persons who themselves select certain religious themes from the available assortment and build them into a somewhat precarious private system of 'ultimate' significance." This individual religiosity tends to be supported by other persons who are of like inclination, and so one has partial sharings and even joint constructions of systems of ultimate significance, precarious though these may be. In the construction and sharing of such systems, the nuclear family is quite important and serves as the effective basis for such constructions. Yet in a profound sense, the new religion is "invisible" so far as its social institutional expression is concerned.

Among the major religious themes today, Luckmann discerns these: individual autonomy, self-expression, self-realization, familism, sexuality, and a mobility ethos. And where do the traditional religious institutions fit in this "emergence of a new social form of religion?" They may be seen, according to Luckmann, in one of two ways: either as "a survival of a traditional social form of religion (that is, institutional specialization) on the periphery of modern industrial societies," or more fruitfully as "one of the many manifestations of an emerging, institutionally nonspecialized social form of religion, the difference being that (they) still occupy a special place among the other manifestations because of (their) historical connections." In short, the traditional religious institutions now function largely as suppliers of certain religious themes which, though of special importance due to historical associations, nonetheless are subject to the same individual preferences that finally determine the acceptance or rejection of other such themes.

As for the effects of this on personal identity, since the individual does, in fact, construct his own system of "ultimate" significance, he in effect thereby constructs his own personal identity as well, since, as we noted before, "the personal identity of a historical individual is...the subjective expression of the objective significance of a world view." This personal identity no longer is merely a reflection of an inherited "official" model, however, but includes, in addition, other elements from the "rich, heterogeneous assortment of possibilities" which are directly accessible to each person.

Thus in the deepest sense personal identity, while relating to an inherited tradition, rarely if ever is wholly constituted by that world view alone. Each person today is rather a composite of many elements, and so the designation of him by any traditional religious attribute—Jew, Christian, etc.—is less and less adequate to his actual religious identity.

Whatever questions one might raise about Luckmann's analysis, and whatever modifications one might suggest in applying it, to the situation of Judaism today, it still seems to me the single most adequate and illuminating treatment I have yet seen of the religious situation today in the United States, and its support of the other developments noted above is, I think, fairly obvious.

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Now what does all this imply for our own attitudes and actions as concerned, radical Jews or as rabbis? Quite obviously a great deal. In order, however, that I avoid speaking for others and that this remain an essay rather than become a treatise, I want to speak primarily as a rabbi and confine myself mainly to one particular issue: so-called interfaith marriages among so-called alienated college students, especially those involved in social movements on campuses today. I would also include these same persons in their first few years after leaving the campuses. It will be helpful, then, to begin by paying special attention to the students as seen by the campus chaplains previously cited.

First of all, though "alienated from adult social concepts and practices," these political and cultural activists are, in the opinions of the college chaplains, "religiously motivated" and "the most spiritually sensitive generation that has appeared on the campus in a long, long time."

Perhaps we can now try to portray, however schematically, what seem to some of us the most significant qualities of these student experiences at their finest. These students come together for various projects of genuine importance to themselves and their society. Their serious criticisms of the present order often stem from religious motivation, and in the projects, campaigns, and struggles they feel a profound personal involvement. They work with students of all religious backgrounds and affiliations, they are assisted by chaplains of various denominations, yet they experience a significant unity. Moments of intensity, "peak experiences" occur in these situations of natural involvement which stem not from demands of the past but from urgencies of the present. In particular crises and in the group responses they may feel "more of religion" than they have ever felt previously at church or synagogue. The power of passionate dedication, the need for clarity of goals, the sense of higher aims and purposes, the intuition of help beyond the limited ego-self—these profound experiences which were our gift in Southern churches may also be felt to some degree by the serious and involved students on campuses, whether in formal or informal religious situations. They also experience quite genuine encounters with one another,

and an association which is not simply "social" but deeply personal, involving many levels of their being. Clearly, by any standard, these are experiences of religious significance.

Now these experiences, the students notice, occur outside the established religious institutions, though at times they are related to them. Further, the situations and experiences are no respecters of established religious lines, and can be and are shared by persons from different traditions. In addition, students discover that if elements of various traditions are brought to bear on the situation confronting them, these elements tend to be more or less available to all, significant to all, and illuminating to all. Even if they stem from "someone else's" tradition, in such circumstances the human-functional meaning of these symbols, myths, or teachings comes to the fore rather than their doctrinal uses. Thus they are widely shared.

The students, aware of the relevance and reality of religion in such situations, also retain some awareness of its too-frequent irrelevance and unreality in so many (not all) standard institutional religious settings. They are aware, also, that the "official" models presented them by parents and the institutions are not really functioning models. They hardly need Luckmann to tell them that there is "a marked degree of incongruence between the 'official' model and the *effectively* prevalent individual systems of priorities." By the mere fact of having lived this many years, they will have noticed very well the effective priorities in their parents' lives, and the following will already be the case: "what the fathers preach but do not practice will be internalized by the sons as a system of rhetoric rather than as a system of 'ultimate' significance."

When the time comes to consider marriage, the establishing of a home, and the continued sharing and transmission of the particular values which they have come to seek--and the aware students of today are far more sensitive to these issues than is sometimes realized--it is obvious to them that their own value systems relate to and draw from, but do not precisely correspond to, pre-established classical models. On the one hand, they still relate in some fashion to the symbols, rituals, social ideals, and group feelings of their inherited traditions; they often want to retain some tie or connection. At the same time, they have established deep and meaningful religious connections with those of other inherited traditions; these can hardly be disregarded. In effect, a new, "invisible religion" has been formed in the intimacy of their relationship, and this, they would insist, must take precedence over the particular demands of their inherited traditions.

Hence they find illegitimate the demand of the established traditions that they conform their own lives to systems of ultimate values which are, even for those professing them, in practice and in priority systems of rhetoric in many respects. They want to express, on the occasion of marriage as well as in their life together, those ties or feelings with their inherited traditions, but they are simply unable to subordinate their most profound intuitions and

convictions to such demands as "conversion" or promises about the rearing of children. In all honesty, they would insist that the rearing of children is a subtle task, and that in good conscience they must share with their children-to-come that combination of values which is the result of their relationship as it unfolds in mutual respect, with consideration for the values of each inherited tradition as well as for the other "assortments of 'ultimate values'" which are their inheritance as residents of this nation at this particular period of history.

As for the established tendency to characterize this as "intermarriage," even without reading the Yinger article they would know that the term is misapplied if simply confined to questions of institutional or group religious identification of affiliation.

The foregoing portrayal is admittedly sketchy and somewhat idealized. Even so, it has, I think, considerable validity when applied to many of "the most spiritually sensitive generation that has appeared on the campus in a long, long time." It is also descriptive of many of the young persons whose commitment to *tikun ha-olam* continues past college, expressing itself in the dedication of their talents and efforts to work of obvious social importance.

Two specific examples may help.

- 1) The young man is a social worker as is his fiancée; both are involved in public welfare. They are both active in the Resistance movement (against the war in Vietnam) and the civil rights struggle. They are presently both studying Hebrew, for they plan to spend the following year on a kibbutz in Israel. He is of Jewish background and training, she of Catholic; for each, the radical, social-action element of his/her tradition is that which has the greatest personal significance. Each is still involved in some measure with the tradition of birth, and they find that their respective interpretations of each tradition markedly coincide. They also find that their interpretations of their traditions, while solidly based, do not coincide with what they see of either religious community about them. Even so, they feel that something of genuine value has come to each from his/her tradition of birth, and their societal involvements relate even now to their inherited traditions. Since there is no pre-established religious community to which either truly belongs at this point, conversion for either is inappropriate. Since both retain and express religious feeling, however, they would like this recognized on the occasion of their wedding by the participation of a rabbi and a priest, both of radical sympathies.
- 2) The young man, who formerly worked with SNCC, has a good Jewish background; the girl is involved with the Catholic Worker movement. They plan to return south immediately after their wedding to work on a subsistence basis with a radical education program directed to the condition of southern whites. Both are mature, a few years out of college,

and each has distinctive religious convictions which arise both from their respective religious traditions as well as from the literary and social-action tradition of the West. They would like their wedding to include the full range of such expressions, hence it must be a rather individual ceremony. At the same time, it would be incomplete unless it related to the central birthright tradition of each. Priestly and rabbinic participation of radical persuasion would mean a great deal to both.

For such persons, we must now ask, what is the probable effect of the demand for "conversion" or promises about the rearing of children as a pre-condition for a rabbi's participation in their wedding? To the "non-Jew" it must surely seem like an unfair, coercive demand. And to the Jew? He will sadly find that the institutionalized religious tradition of Judaism--which already constitutes but a part of his de facto religious orientation--serves not as a resource for helping him establish a new, coherent world view, but rather as an obstacle to such growth. Rather than helping him unify in a meaningful way that unique fullness which is his developing Self, it demands that he maintain a permanent split between his "official" or "professed" world view and his actual system of values, priorities, and allegiances. It can only be felt, in short, as the demand of splintered elders that the same split be maintained and aggravated rather than healed.

Such an approach, I believe, renders a disservice both to the persons immediately concerned and to the tradition itself. The persons are, in effect, told that so far as this particular tradition is concerned, if they are not willing to accept it as it (rhetorically) is, they can forget it. By insisting on a refusal to participate rabbinically in their wedding, "official" Jewish religion seems to say in effect: between your nuclear family* and our traditional religious institution there can be no institutional recognition. Personal good wishes? Perhaps. But that which is peculiarly the rabbinic function, some "official" institutional recognition of the personal importance and religious significance of this marriage between these two human beings? No, this we are asked to deny. How this helps them consider seriously the ultimate values of such a tradition can readily be imagined! And what this may mean so far as their own deep feelings about the validity of their marriage is not at all pleasant to think about--given the fact that they did care enough about their respective traditions to seek religious expression and acknowledgment of the significance of their new situation.

As for genuine religious development toward a new, urgently needed, over-arching structure of values adequate to help orient and restrain an increasingly uncritical technological society, this official Judaism does its

*Mention of the nuclear family is illustrative, not prescriptive. The possibility of other forms of family structuring would, if anything, strengthen the thrust of this analysis.

best to prevent by insisting in advance that any new developments conform to institutional models which have already proved inadequate to the new situation. Rather than help the new religious expressions and formations come into being--and they would surely embody many of our most cherished traditional values--we seem intent on seeing them still-born or enfeebled, failing to recognize that they might truly become, with time, nurture, and growth, the embodiment of our own and others' better religious selves.

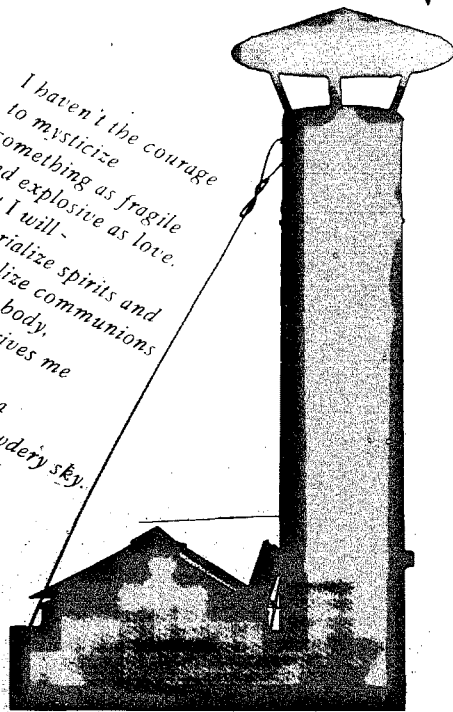
The implications of these considerations are obviously far reaching, both for rabbis and for experimental religious communities, and I do not want to detail them further at this point. However, it does seem to me that the minimum appropriate response on the part of established Jewish religion is the recognition that it is our responsibility, as guardians and representatives of an evolving religious tradition, to relate to this unprecedented religious situation by some form of rabbinic participation in such so-called "inter-faith" weddings. (The exact form of such participation, the exact circumstances and settings, possible criteria, co-officiation with other clergy; how this approach applies to those not involved in the social struggle, etc., though important, are questions for another occasion.)

As for experimental religious communities, it seems to me that their minimum appropriate response should be the serious consideration, both in thought and experimentation, of such far-reaching questions as these: Should such communities be structured exclusively about a given religious tradition and strive to preserve that? Or should a given traditional religion be simply the starting point for the growth of both individual members and of the community itself toward broader inclusiveness of persons together with a thoughtful selection of elements from the "assortments of 'ultimate' meanings directly available to persons" which do, in fact, now speak to members of such communities? Or should there be a fresh start altogether? (Further exploration of these questions must also be reserved for another occasion.)

There is indeed "...the possibility that a new religion is in the making." Its birthplace may be the lives of the youth, especially those most devotedly involved in bringing about desperately needed social change. It may be, if it develops, the new Judaism, or the re-Judaized Christianity, or the new cosmic humanism, or??????? As we consider soberly, not hysterically, the circumstances of its emergence; as we anticipate its likely embodiment of many traditional values; as we reflect on the inadequacy to the present crisis, both societal and personal, of any traditional structure; and as we realize how desperate is the need for the developing "invisible religion," now private, subjective, and split off from social concerns, to become visible, public, objective, and effective once again in civilization; how, then, can we do other than relate supportively to such a development?

FOOTNOTES:

- (1) J. Milton Yinger: "On the Definition of Interfaith Marriage" in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. VII, No. 1, Spring, 1968
- (2) *Duet en Duel* Een verhandeling over de vriendschap Arnhem, 1966 (not yet translated into English, though such a translation would be of great value to those of us who do not read Dutch. My own acquaintance with the work of Dr. van Vlissingen is the result of attendance at an illuminating and sensitive seminar which he led in Cuernavaca, Mexico, under the direction of Elisabeth M. Hollants.)
- (3) cf. my review in *Conservative Judaism*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, Summer 1967, and most especially Volumes 4-8 of his great work, published by the Bollingen Foundation and distributed by Princeton University Press.
- (4) The Eliade work is published by Sheed and Ward, the Neumann by Bollingen-Princeton.



I haven't the courage
to mysticize
something as fragile
and explosive as love.
But I will -
materialize spirits and
symbolize communions
on your body,
until it drives me
to a raving
ecstatic coma
under this powdery sky.

Lorne Segal

According to legend, among the things created in the Beginning was a great Light that stretched from one end of the world to the other.

OR HAGANUZ

by Danny Siegel

Collage by Allan Sugarman

Adam awoke and saw the light

that stretched his sight across the Garden

to the ends

of all there was

of world

and joined by Eve

they two later in the day

confused the order of the newborn world

and an angry Lord

disposed them out

into a darker place

(the light was

dimmer now)

Their eyes adjusted

all according to the laws of God and Nature

and they lived and died

with concentrated sight

a narrowed seeing

of an acre and a half

of fruit and vegetables

that fed

by sweat and grunts

and aching muscles

This morning

by the San Francisco Bay

a poor and wanderworking poet

saw the light the Lord

allowed to show a moment

past abandoned Alcatraz

beyond an endless

peaceful ocean

all the way around

and farther

to the mystic East

the racing eyes