

**PASSOVER FEATURE** (Continued from Page 9)  
 most productive periods in our history. Jewish poets, theologians, physicians and statesmen flourished.

Although there were cordial relations between Jewish and Moorish scholars, and Jewish financial experts and physicians were called upon to serve the Arab rulers, the Jewish community, as a whole, was not tempted to surrender its religion, its unique culture, or its folkways.

What this indicates -- and many other examples could be given -- is that no generalities are possible concerning Jewish prospects for survival. We have somehow endured in the most unlikely places -- and have withered away in the most hospitable soil; and we have been destroyed by tyranny and have prospered spiritually and intellectually in freedom.

Our American future is not foreclosed -- but neither is it guaranteed. History is helpful, but its lessons are often contradictory. What we do know is this: studies in several American cities indicate a disturbingly high rate of intermarriage; in some areas, as high as 30% of all marriages involving Jews.

**THE REAL THREAT**

Of course, not all intermarriages result in the desertion of Judaism; there are instances, too, of conversion in the opposite direction. A number of proselytes enter our ranks every year -- but hardly enough to make up for the departures.

But, perhaps, even this is not the main threat. Along with those who cut themselves off from us completely, there are an indeterminate number who almost imperceptibly cast themselves adrift from Judaism through indifference, ignorance and the attraction of other interests. These may even include people who routinely attend synagogue -- but who fail to involve themselves in Judaism itself.

They may listen to sermons -- but Judaism does not penetrate their hearts. They slip into a kind of limbo, removed from Jewish concerns, altho, for awhile, they may go through the motions of membership in the Jewish community.

These are the spiritual sleepwalkers -- and their numbers are legion. This is the group whom we should first seek to reach, for this is the group likeliest to succumb, in time, to total assimilation. And we can only reach them with a Judaism and Jewish institutions that breathe a sense of vitality, drama and purpose, qualities we are in danger of losing.

These are the Jews whom we must "convert" to Judaism! And then we will be certain that Elijah will attend all our future Feasts of Freedom!

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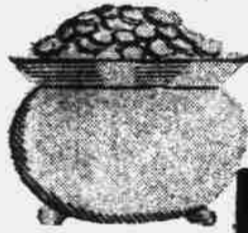
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