

**ROSH HA SHANAH FEATURE**

IN HONOR OF ROSH HA SHANAH, JEWISH NEW YEAR OF 5734, THE LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE WILL PUBLISH A SERIES OF STORIES TO COMMEMORATE THE HOLIDAY WHICH FALLS ON THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF THE MONTH OF TISHRI, THURS, SEPT. 27, & FRI, SEPT. 28. ROSH HA SHANA MARKS THE BEGINNING OF THE 10 DAYS OF REPENTANCE, AWE-INSPIRING, DAYS CULMINATING AT YOM KIPPUR, ONSAT., OCT. 6th

*Rosh Hashana & Amer. Jew*

by RABBI Ezra Boyarsky

In the constellation of the Jewish festivals, Rosh Hashanah occupies a unique position for in addition to and blended with its specific Jewish character, Rosh Hashanah also contains the ingredient of universality. This endows the Holy Day with a more comprehensive scope and with a wider spiritual latitude.

This universal aspect is laconically yet clearly expounded in its Musaf (additional) Ser-

vice liturgy: 'This day the world was called into being; this day all creatures of the universe stand in judgement before Thee...'

It is in this frame of reference that on Rosh Hashanah we take an all embracing and stereoscopic view of our past year's activities. And when we embark upon an introspective examination of our achievements and failures, fulfillments and derelictions we should do so against the backdrop of and in relation to more expansive and broader ambience than the restricted area in which we actually operate.

Parochialism, the narrow, provincial solicitude for only its own interests, blocking out the rest of the world from its purview, is not at all consonant with the spirit of Judaism. It is not by fortuity then, that the thundering appeals for social justice, ethical business dealings, moral conduct, fair employment practices, etc., the "stockin trade" of the Prophets of Israel, filtered down from their point of delivery and became in the course of time the common heritage of all enlightened nations; the fiery exhortative shafts of the Biblical Seers, while their primary targets were the Jewish people, were equally intended for all mankind.

Therefore it is in direct line with solid Jewish tradition for us to react to the tune of Judaic guidelines to all vital political and social issues of the day such as the current Watergate affair, proposed revisions of abortion laws, the problem of pornography and the Supreme Court's decisions on federal aid to parochial schools---and many more.

Rosh Hashanah being the time for inventory taking, how do we American Jews appear on the balance sheet as we stand on the threshold of the year 5,734?

Six million American Jews are enjoying a full measure of religious tolerance in the largest full-blooded democracy in the world with all the privileges and prerogatives to pursue a meaningful, content-rich religious and culturally Jewish life. But the American Jewish community, regrettably, is bypassing this singular historical opportunity and instead submits itself to a self-inflicting scourging flagellation---assimilation and its close and inevitably---intermarriage.

Addressing the third world conference of the Federation of Polish Jews held in early August in Jerusalem, Golda Meir Prime Minister of Israel, said 'There are bold symptoms which indicate that not in the very distant future two-thirds of the Jews in the Free World (she was referring to the U.S.) will disappear through assimilation.' Mrs. Meir based her statement on statistics that 40% of the Jewish college population marry out of their faith.

Emphasizing that Jews have no moral right to remain indifferent to this sad state of affairs, Golda Meir indicted Jewish parents for being grossly negligent in the quality of Jewish home life they provide and the watered down Jewish education they smugly and cozily nourish or supinely tolerate.

To be sure many extenuating circumstances may be invoked to explain away this erosion. When we turn to an historical comparison with the Ghetto Jews and the ongoing national and religious revival of Soviet Jewry (for whom American Jews are showing such heated concern), these excuses fade into a pale vindication and serve only to swell the indictment and the embarrassment all the more.

Notwithstanding all this we have an abiding and sustaining faith in the American Jews

that they will not let the House of Israel down; that they will in good time bethink themselves, consolidate their best forces and launch upon a freshly designed, vigorous and carefully planned rehabilitation program that will prevent them from being caught in the crush of disintegration.

Being the largest Jewish segment outside Israel, American Jewry carries a triple responsibility -- to itself, to the State and to the rest of world Jewry and its healthily functioning metabolism is indispensable to the viability of all three.



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