

### New Year Message

By Raymond Epstein  
Pres. Council of Jewish Feds. and Welfare Funds

By long custom, at the approach of the New Year, we are asked and are reminded to celebrate the Creation, the very birthday of the world. It is a world whose troubles these last twelve months have added further to the crises of our history. And yet, as members of the North American Jewish community, we have sober reason and need to celebrate.

At this High Holy Days season, the core sense of our tradition and the hard-earned experience of recent months meet and come together. Both are witness to the wisdom, ever relearned, that we have been privileged to wrest from the crises of our times. We have been propelled toward a fuller understanding of one of the keys of creation -- the critical interdependence of ourselves with our brothers and sisters, wherever they are, for our very integrity, survival and for the quality of our life as individuals and as Jews.

It is a lesson now being learned on a global scale as well: the sovereignty of nations -- economic, political, and social -- is subject yet to the well-being of the larger family.

It is this unity of spirit that surely has been the bittersweet burden of our tradition. It is this ecology, of brotherhood and community as the master design of creation, that permits us to re-experience at Rosh Hashana that meaning of creation of itself. And as ever -- "to choose life."

Just yesterday we thought to rejoice and relax in the achievements of Israel's 25th anniversary, and the progress and hope it held for Israel's three million Jews and those millions elsewhere -- in the Soviet Union, Syria, Iraq, and other lands of oppression and need.

Just yesterday was October 6th and the shock of a Yom Kippur War with its wave of new problems for the people of Israel, and the new dimension of responsibility placed on us in the United States and Canada and throughout the free world.

Happily, our response to crisis has been true: an unprecedented expression of devotion to sus-

tained help in the long aftermath of the Yom Kippur War. We can humbly rejoice that we had the understanding and the commitment to help meet and encompass the many needs of our people during the past year.

But the crisis knows no neat calendar. It continues. Israel lives in an uneasy peace. World economics, continued immigration and need for protective defensive measures, make the challenges for her greater than ever before. For Israel, vital decisions and hard choices appear to lie ahead.

Acts of terrorism at Ma'alot, Kiryat Shemona and Nehariya are still fresh in our memory. As pervasive as those that stir hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Soviet Union to courageously reaffirm their birthright. Life-saving and rescue are still very much on our agenda. Through our community organizations, we are committed to that continuing work, as we are to ensuring vital program and services to Israel's many newcomers, and to the quality of Jewish life here at home.

In our own communities, our Federations and Welfare Funds must -- in the face of spiralling costs -- address themselves to the multi-sided and complex range of needs and services; not only relief for the aged, the infirm, impoverished, but a regard for the dignity of their lives. And they must address themselves as well to sound, community-building in matters of Jewish education, in enhancing Jewish family life, in building communal leadership, and strengthening the fibers and fabric of our organized communities. Together, we need to add our strength to the common fight against social injustice, corrosive poverty and the neglect of the disadvantaged.

The Shofar's cry again is heard, old and yet new; in assuaging the lives of others, we redeem our own. Such is our mutual pledge now for the intensified support of the people of Israel and our reaffirmed commitment to fellow Jews in our land and elsewhere throughout the world. In behalf of the Jewish communities of North America, we shall continue to mobilize our energy for the cause of peace, freedom and that crowning act of creation and our covenant which is the self-realization of ourselves and our communities.


**Happy New Year**

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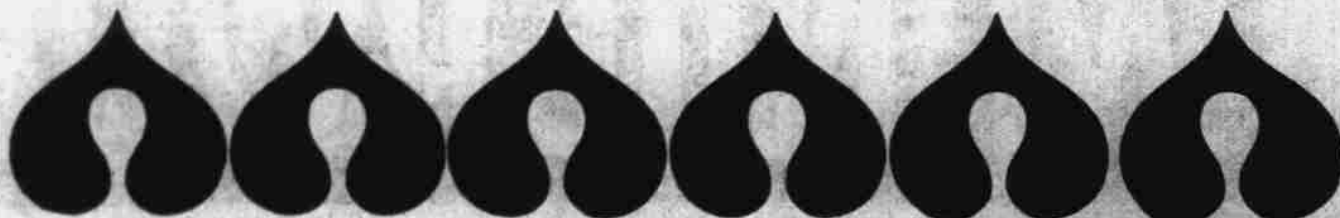
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