

The Jewish Component in Jewish Communal Service— from Theory to Practice.*

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Our practice must be grounded in knowledge—professional and Jewish; it must be permeated with values drawing heavily upon our tradition; synthesized with an art and dedication born of experience, trying, failing, learning and succeeding. All of this is in a context of hopeful optimism coupled with tough, intractable patience.

Discussion of Jewish content, of Jewish components, in the practice of Jewish communal service is noted as early as 1907 in the proceedings of the organization which preceded the present-day Conference of Jewish Communal Service. Obviously this was but an extension of a dialectic begun in Biblical times, a perennial effort to fathom "what the Lord requires" of us.

Thus we can be a bit more modest and suggest that the "Second National Symposium on the Jewish Component in Practice" might more properly be seen as beginning the fourth millennium of discussion about Jewish behavior and Jewish values. My task here is to try to add a dimension to the on-going dialogue in the hope that the process of practice refinement (the behavior of the worker in the client relationship) will go on.

Some of us have great difficulty with how, when, and even whether to introduce Jewish components into practice because we use narrow and admittedly often unarticulated definitions of what we mean by the term. For some, the rituals of the Jews as embodied in traditional Jewish definitions become the frame of reference for joining the issue. Such workers often fear that an agency might ask a worker to tell a client to keep kosher or observe the Sabbath even though this would be an infringement of self-determination, indi-

vidual freedom, and the like. My example may be too simplistic, but I use it to emphasize the difficulties encountered if one uses simplistic definitions of a profoundly complex matter.

I used the word components precisely to emphasize the complexity involved in even defining the word Jewish. Realizing full well that this year's symposium is focused on practice and not theory, I will cast my definitions in practical terms.

Issues in Definition

My premises are:

1. All that happened to and is happening to Jews is to be seen as shaping the definition of what is Jewish. Historical events, theological perceptions (or, if they are, misperceptions), legal prescriptions and proscriptions, contemporary realities—all these impinge upon, shape, and influence the psyche and very life of the Jew today, *even as every Jew always and everywhere has been influenced*, negatively or positively, by the components mentioned above.

To be as specific as possible, an example may suffice. The "enlightened" Jew in Germany who decided to convert to Christianity was responding to his Jewish condition with what he deemed appropriate behavior. Other Jews evolved radical new Jewish forms (read "reforms") alongside still other Jews who withdrew into themselves in order to escape the negative effects of the newly observed society. All three responses reflected what their agents took to be appropriate behavior, although each behavior had a

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different effect upon the Jewish component and its future. Which leads us to the next point.

2. Jewish experience may be viewed negatively or positively depending upon the perspective of the time, the person, and the impact upon Jews as a people.

The Holocaust was, to put it much too mildly, a horrendously negative experience for the Jewish people (and, of course, for millions of others). However, the lesson drawn from this experience by its survivors themselves is highly variable. Some survivors renewed their lives as Jews with a fervor which bespoke their thanks to God for having been able to live through the unspeakable horror. For some, the opportunity to give testimony against man's bestiality was and is seen as an opportunity to serve God in ever more pietistic, realistic, traditional terms.

A hypothesis enunciated by other Jews argues that Jews throughout the ages have been persecuted for being different. Some, as a result, had tried to become like everyone else, i.e., to assimilate, as many did in Germany. Hitler, however, was believed to have punished the grandchildren of the assimilated as Jews *because* they had become *too* much like the Germans and in the process had diluted the purity of the master race. Thus, said this group of Jews, we have been damned for being different from others; we have been damned for being the same as others. Perhaps we should now be Jews regardless of what the world says or feels about us.

Yet others concluded that the problem for the Jew in the Holocaust related to his not having vanished from Europe. This group, fortunately small, has removed itself from Jewish life, has been given to changing names and sometimes physiognomy, and moving to places distant from other Jews, all in the hope of sparing themselves and their progeny the pain of being labeled Jew.

From this analysis grows the next premise.

3. The components we call Jewish are multifaceted and must be understood as such as a context for practice. They include the

theological, ideological, cultural, sociological, psychological, and the geo-political.

What Jews believed and believe shapes the least religious among us even as it guides the most devout. A Jewish atheist does not really earn that label unless, rather as Hillel prescribed, he understands what he opposes. However, to define being a Jew *only* in theological terms would do a great disservice to the historical definitions of Judaism. It provides a simplistic definition, which has led to a false syllogism on the part of many of our young. Judaism is a religion, goes the argument: I am not religious, therefore I am not a Jew. The Drew study of college freshmen in the early part of this decade found 17% of the Jewish respondents stating that their parents were Jews, but that they themselves were not, because they did not believe in God.

The ideological approach for some does not encompass the theological. In a generation's time, Marx-inspired Zionists have successfully (to their satisfaction) fused a modern ideology with an ancient dream and profound identities as Jews, even as the name of God is expunged from their Jewish practices. Even they, in studying the Bible, admit that whether or not God exists, the Jews of ancient (and some would say recent) times have lived as if He did. That belief, however misplaced, has produced, if not a God-intoxicated people, a good-intoxicated people.

For still others, contending with Jewish reality has resulted in a Zionist ideology with messianic and universalistic overtones sharable with the most traditional among us. They espouse the hope of "normalcy" in Israel, the hope that Jews there will be like people everywhere else, but they also stand side by side with Jews who pray fervently for the messianic period when all people shall be as one in preparation for the acceptance of the One God.

There are yet others for whom the cultural components of Jewish life are more than matters of theology or ideology. Jewish artifacts, stories, legends, language, music, food—though almost all of these in truth

represent borrowings and transmutations from other peoples in whose midst Jews have dwelled—provide comfort, nourishment, familiarity and kinship as a frame for living. At its crassest, lox, bagel and cream cheese on Sunday mornings may be nearly the last but not the least remnant of a culture which is taken in physical nourishment even as the Mickey Katz record is played for nostalgic reasons before or after the *2013 Year Old Man*. That sense of culture can also manifest itself through Schoenberg's opera *Moses and Aaron*, Bernstein's *Jeremiah Symphony*, a painting by Chagall, a story by Kafka, or a poem by Karl Shapiro. Disraeli's identification with his Jewish ancestors despite his conversion to Christianity has some of the ironic contradictions and inconsistencies I am trying to identify.

The psychological and the sociological also define the Jewish components. Many seek psychological comfort in being Jews and engage in Jewish practices not out of obedience to divine commands, but out of a search and a need for psychic ease. It feels good to be Jewish and do Jewish things with fellow Jews. The golf courses and theaters are peopled by small clusters of human beings. Upon analysis they would be seen, more often than not, to be discretely identifiable groups of ethnically homogenized people. There they find comfort in engaging in shared activities which are a function of their socio-economic position and are best enjoyed with others of like socio-economic *and* ethnic background.

Most Jews today would deny theological imperatives even as they select from the 613 commandments in Jewish tradition those which comfort them most or which they find most satisfying. The recent upsurge in Jewish practice on a personal and communal level grows out of a search for Jewish adjustment rather than a return to a belief in God.

The sociology of the times encourages this. Ethnicity is at its height. Group membership has been labeled acceptable by all manner of sages and seers. Within the group called Jews,

succor is possible for the externally marginal people. Sometimes anomalies are created wherein the group is expected to act publicly in a manner which is incongruent with individual behavior. Jews who relish the "forbidden" foods may be horrified when the same menu they enjoy in the privacy of their homes or restaurants is served at a public Jewish function.

Just as importantly, the Jew's public actions might also grow out of what the general community might think or do. *Ma yomru hagoyim?* (what will the Gentiles say?) has had its ebb and flow through history as a guide for the public behavior of Jews.

The geopolitical realities are no less important a factor in Jewish practice. Washington watches the level of Jewish philanthropic as one way to measure Jewry's wavering or growing sense of its oneness. May Israel's response to diaspora Jewry as a sometimes full and always present partner to life in Israel not then be seen as an expression of the brutal realities of political clout and trade-offs? How can 2.3 percent of the U.S. population maintain a relationship with people in Congress and the administration which will result in a sympathetic response to "Jewish" requests and at the same time feel free to criticize the selfsame people when the legitimate interests of non-Jews are being ignored or subverted? Does anyone truly believe anything could be done to help Israel, or Jews here and elsewhere, if there were not coalitions of understanding with all manner of other groups? Will poor ethnics sit still for high-priced gas in America when Israel gets fuel guaranteed by America, unless Jews agree to help those poor ethnics with their own economic and political concerns? I doubt it.

I have tried in this first section to indicate that all manifestations of the dimensions mentioned above are Jewish components to practice. It should follow that the professional's task is to discern when any, some, or all of the above become a focus for legitimate professional concerns. It is far easier to get a consensus on broad definitions of the Jewish

component than on issues which are traditionally personal and private in nature. Thus, it would be the rare community or Jew not immediately ready to petition the government for aid to Israel when Israel's physical safety is at risk. From the issues and areas of broad consensus, one could then compare the nature and extent of Jewish components in practice to a large sieve with increasingly finely meshed screens through which the issues must be sifted. As the sifting process continues, the disagreement on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of Jewish response to practice issues increases. Consider: while almost all Jews in America favor Jewish action in America on behalf of Israel, the Jewish community does not agree (and should not) on how the West Bank problem should be solved.

On the local level, many comparable issues would suffice to drive home the difficulties to be faced as one becomes more specific and more focused on matters of seemingly personal and private concern. Think of the acceptance in Jewish community centers of the concept of programming on Saturday in ways that are "consonant with the spirit of the Sabbath," and then review the literature on the bitter discussions that ensued when a given Center implemented the principle with specific programs while simultaneously attempting to placate the Orthodox and the secularist members.

The Issues

1. Should standards of Jewish knowledge be required for professionals in Jewish agencies?
2. Should Jewish professionals be "role models" for their communities and clients?
3. Can or should Jewish social service be "value free?" Should agencies encourage their professionals to utilize Jewish values and concepts in dealing with clients?
4. Should Jewish professionals take a position on issues that divide Jewish Community?
5. In developing new programs, should the Jewish component be given a high priority?

Standards of Jewish Knowledge

Countless papers have been written on the question of what Jewish knowledge a professional in the field of Jewish communal service should have. The schools devoted to educating Jewish communal workers are agreed on the need for standards, but not yet on what those standards should be.

I wish to deal with a goal we should move toward; I fully understand of course that, as with all reality, it may never be achieved for all, but why let that prevent it from being sought after?

Minimally, a Jewish communal worker should have a knowledge of Jewish history and its impact upon Jewish thinking. The issues confronting us did not begin today. Even as they cannot be solved immediately, their context provides us with clues for practice. Again, a practice issue might demonstrate this better. A Holocaust survivor's caseworker must understand the psychic implications of being a survivor, the guilt of having survived, the special role survivors' children have in their lives, especially if any of their children died in the camps. A multiplicity of other reasons should suffice. One caseworker told me she could not watch the movies or the T.V. series and could not bear to read about the Holocaust; she found it too upsetting. What would you say to this worker?

The Soviet Jews present another reality. The role of government in the Soviet Union must be appreciated to put the actions of many Soviet Jews into a proper context. The impact of Soviet anti-Semitism, the philosophical implications of communism and the meaning of work, the status of titles, the Jewish amnesia of the assimilated Jew of Moscow, contrasted with the Yiddish-speaking Jews of the Southern Ukraine (part of it under Rumanian sovereignty until the end of World War II)—none of this can be properly dealt with if a worker hasn't achieved some understanding of the history of Russian Jewry.

The guilt of the Israeli emigre—the so-called *yored*—his sense of having betrayed the

Zionist dream, cannot be appreciated in its full potency if the worker isn't acquainted with the historical Zionist literature. The Israeli as the product of a largely politicized society like Israel needs empathic response as he tries to cope with an often politically naive and indifferent American society. The understanding worker appreciates the different attitude to law and bureaucracy that the Israeli may bring to America from his Mediterranean country.

A Jewish worker must not only know Jewish history but understand and appreciate the impact of Jewish ideologies upon present-day Jewish life. The import and impact of a Mordecai Kaplan, a Soloveitchik, a Fackenheim, a Stephen Wise, an Isaac Mayer Wise, and a Solomon Schechter, to name a few, is imperative if one is to understand the very institutions and organizations one works in and tries to serve.

Knowledge of the history of American Jewish institutions is too often missing. Did the *treyfa* banquet of the 1880's—which alienated traditionalist support for the Hebrew Union College—change history in America any more or less than the decision to develop two national Jewish communal service organizations, one primarily lay, and the other professional, when originally one national organization sufficed as an umbrella for such services?

I say "yes." A worker should know Jewish history, Jewish ideologies, Jewish geography and Jewish sociology. But all of this must be placed in a broader Jewish context. He must understand the teachings of his people so that he can help bring to life the application (and sometimes modifications) of the values of his people.

The worker must know and understand the Jewish life cycle and the Jewish calendar so that their meanings and possibilities can be utilized when and where appropriate. I will not here rehearse my own articles in which I have attempted to bring this thought to life in a practice context. It has been and remains my contention that the skilled worker uses that knowledge in an appropriate manner and the

appropriateness is not solely a matter of individual judgment.

For example, individually, it is appropriate to remind a Jewish couple seeking marital counseling after having decided to get a divorce why a Jewish divorce may also be indicated. The ramifications of seeking or ignoring the *get* must be explained by the worker. The decision to obtain a *get* or to dispense with it will remain the clients'. On the other hand, workers in some settings cannot let "self-determination" be the final arbiter for action. The most dramatic and healthful discussion in the world at a singles club sponsored by a Center or a synagogue which decides to have a trip to the World Series on Yom Kippur could never be considered appropriate behavior for the group even though it was arrived at "democratically."

The complications come when the choices aren't so simple. Then the art of the worker and the appropriateness of the knowledge are fused and decisions are made out of ignorance but precisely because of a fusion of art, skill, knowledge *and* values. The rabbis understood this when they judiciously tempered their interpretations while paying heed to God's law as they understood it in its application. Thus the commandment of God to put transgressors to death for various infringements upon God's laws found its greatest test regarding the application of capital punishment by the rabbis. Their abhorrence of capital punishment led them to require the testimony of 2 witnesses to a crime who had inquired of the accused prior to or during the performance of the act whether or not he was aware of what he was doing and what the consequences of his actions would be. With these restraints and requirements as a test for the possible use of capital punishment, the rabbis were later to call any court which in its life-time sentenced even one person to death a "murderous" court.

This selfsame synthesis of knowledge and the understanding of when and how to utilize it must become more and more the *sine qua non* for Jewish practice.

Lest one feel that this art of synthesis only results in compassionate and romantically acceptable endings, let it also be appreciated why Jewish tradition finds it so easy to approve the use of pressure in trying to persuade a person in our voluntary society to pay his "Jewish taxes" by using guilt as one tool for persuasion. Responsibility is a good Jewish word and sometimes responsible behavior is best induced by confronting people with tough expectations.

Professionals as Role Models

How deceptively simple the question and the answer. Do we hire murderers and thieves? "Isn't an ethical person a good Jew?" "Does the Jewish community own me?" "What I do in my own time is my own business." In truth there is no easy answer and certainly no one answer.

Can you help teenagers with drug problems when you use pot and "sniff" once in a while yourself? Can you run a Jewish family life education program when you have proclaimed yourself a permanent single or a person who will never have children? Do you advocate family sanctity while having an interesting affair with a client or a board member? Do you plan for Jewish activities at the Center and then take off to ski during the first 2 days of Passover?

Of many things I'm not certain. Of one thing I am. You cannot help people move toward a life style or value system which you consider "good" and "Jewish" if you are not willing to engage in the selfsame adventure yourself. You must be in a state of evolution and movement. The actualization of that process will grow out of one's understanding and appreciation of the Jewish dimensions referred to earlier in this paper. We are but reflections of our clients and, like them, we are products of the same community and conditions which produced them. We cope with our agencies, ambivalences, and expectations according to our strengths and abilities even as our clients do.

We have no right to have Jewish expecta-

tions, however defined, for others, if we don't have them for ourselves.

Role modeling is sometimes difficult for a given worker at a particular moment if we misdefine the term. Some take it to mean acting in accordance with the prophetic tradition in a given instance of a community's life. It has been found that the personality types who tend to be attracted to clinical work differ in style and approach from colleagues attracted to more public arenas where group work and community organization skills predominate. These colleagues may occasionally have more fantasies regarding their ability to deliver the appropriate jeremiad which will forever establish justice and remove evil from the world.

The Walter Mitty in all of us leads to some hidden fantasy in this regard. The profession as a whole might, and sometimes does, shape the community and inspire the individual to act differently by virtue of how the profession acts as a collectivity. Role models can be aided by the organization of which they are part by virtue of the resolutions passed and the actions taken by the organization with regard to the various concerns which confront us.

Yes, we must be role models, but the context will define its impact.

All of my comments up to this point have had a value-laden base, so it is appropriate to discuss the next point more directly: is social service "value free" and how does the answer impinge on practice in an agency?

Value Free Social Service

To offer social services under Jewish auspices is to enunciate a number of values. It is unnecessary here to discuss the ethical imperatives which underpin the Jewish communal responses to the unmet needs of Jews and others over four millennia.

The issue truly is not as posed. The issue is which values are to predominate? Let us be as clear and precise as possible.

A value is something assigned prime importance, an ideal cherished assiduously and tenaciously in the hope it will be actuated,

brought to life, and become identifiable in the behavior of people as individuals and as a collectivity.

Values are rarely empirically provable; they are chosen or espoused by people and societies as guides for living. Consider: "People can't change." "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." "People are poor because God made them so." "Love is not enough." "The meek will inherit the earth." "To each according to his need; from each according to his income." "What ever turns you on." "Love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."

The real question of choice is, "When social work values and Jewish values conflict, which values should a social worker and a Jewish agency choose?" My Jewish answer would be, it depends.

Take the concept of self-determination. Social workers are committed to try to live and help others live by that value. What does it really mean? In a world of regulations, limits, realities, trade-offs, and expectations, can anyone truly determine independently what is best (or worse—but still desirable in the individual's own eyes) for himself or herself?

Professor Ruby Pernell, one of my revered teachers and friend from days long past at the University of Minnesota, once told me a delicious story from her recent days at Case-Western Reserve. One of her action-oriented community organization students told her he was going to "do his thing" and destroy the agency he had been placed in because he saw in it a decadent manifestation of middle class imperialism. Her calm and squashing response was that she didn't think she could let that happen because it was her thing to see to it that he didn't do his thing.

When a social worker is non-directive, that is not a value-free stance. If a social worker is empathic, he believes that verbal reflection of feelings assuages pain and encourages growth. Those are easy ones. But what if a client is self-destructive? Is the social worker to be non-directive in the belief that a person can do whatever he wants, to readily declare to that client's family, children, or parents that

self-determination was the supreme value and was thus to be understood as a matter of right?

Now even more complications. What if a community or a people is engaged in something self-destructive? Is the social worker also to be value-free and say "as long as that's what they want it's my responsibility to help them; if I intervened or interfered I'd be imposing my values on them?"

In reality, of course, only very rarely in an open society can a social worker impose values upon anyone. The truth is, however, that the social worker can expose values to people and people to values by virtue of what he says, when he says it, the kinds of expectations he holds out for people, be they individual clients, groups or a community.

For example, you and I may not be able to stop a given intermarriage. I challenge you, though, to think through the ultimate consequences to Jewish continuity if agencies, organizations, communities and social workers fail to evolve "propaganda" programs, rationales and strategies in an attempt to decelerate the rate of intermarriage and encourage conversion by the non-Jewish mate. One could list a number of issues in which the social worker easily sees himself as an advocate for the client, and rightfully so. Housing for the elderly, services to single-parent families, day-care centers, settlement programs for Soviet Jews and many more have all been initiated, improved, or intensified when social workers have acted in accordance with their values and *not* waited for self determination as the "go-ahead" sign for action.

The social worker too often avoids the obverse implication of the action. *Advocacy to a community on behalf of a client system bespeaks the responsibility to advocate to the client system the values the community stands for when those values are demonstrably essential to the continuity and prosperity of that community.*

Helping a particular couple dissolve a marriage while maintaining that a healthy family is central to Jewish continuity is no

more inconsistent than amputating a gangrenous leg while searching for cures for diabetes.

No one advocates lecturing to clients and telling them what they must do. Many social workers, however, refuse—improperly, I feel—to expose clients to alternatives which emphasize at times what they ought to do.

A father who doesn't "feel" good about paying child support when it is indicated cannot be let off the hook of responsibility, namely, the hook of behaving "well," just because he feels like not being responsible.

No other society has catered to the cult of the individual as America has. No society or community can long continue if individual expression and behavior aren't tempered with responsible expectations which shape those expressions and behaviors. Therapy cannot take place in a vacuum. The ultimate test of good therapy must be responsible behavior; if it is not, we are doomed.

In my opinion, it is not the option of the Jewish social workers, paid with Jewish dollars for work in Jewish agencies, to be parties to the destruction of Jewish life. There must be, then, an articulation of Jewish expectation *and* concern transmitted to a client. The client can't be ordered to do anything, but the horizon of possibilities must include options and opportunities which help Jewish life in particular. The client chooses, but that choice doesn't automatically require Jewish communal sanction and support. It may include taking the consequence of community rejection.

Divisive Issues and the Role of the Professional

The wise professional is always engaged in a series of judgments based on trading off consequences against benefits. One must first identify what the issue really is. Sometimes, personalities grandstand in response to issues and their response puts the issue in another context. One city recently was embroiled in heated discussion and debate on whether or not to publish a Federation-sponsored com-

munity paper, even though the community was served by a number of privately owned Jewish papers. Many arguments were aired supporting the private press. Countervailing positions were stated as vociferously. The stated issue was that of freedom of the press. The real issue was the concern of the private publishers that their livelihood would be jeopardized. The professionals had judged that the predicted outcries would be mute with time and the community would best be served by the community paper. All logic went out the window when a larger contributor at an open board meeting announced that people could vote as they pleased, but if the community paper was approved, he would withhold his gift. Do you want to guess as to how the vote went.

I recount this case issue because a professional often decides to bring a potentially divisive issue to the fore for resolution. He knows full well there is no way to avoid the ensuing outcries or discussions, but concludes that the issue is resolvable and that the aftermath will result in something better than what existed before. And that, to me, has to be the litmus paper test. Divisiveness is not hard to create. The measure for action must be the ultimate judgment about the benefits of the outcome against its losses. At the same time, the professional can't always control the variables, the players, or the game plan. The "position" of the professional is often not a public one, yet it will have great public consequences. The important point, again, is that his "non-position," namely his silence, is a position. In my experience, lay people respect a professional who gives his own reasoned judgments in regard to both the *process* for resolving divisive issues and the hope for *outcome* of that process.

Not only must a director in a Center help a board set up procedures to arrive at a policy statement regarding the use of the Center on Shabbat, he can in my judgment tell a board what he thinks should be done and offer careful documentation for his own position. In a given community, his own recommendations

will be weighed in the light of his credibility and probity as established by how he has responded to situations in the past.

It is true, however, that needless caution can overtake a professional, and this is understandable, depending upon the setting. Federations are consensus seeking by their nature. They must seek as broadly based support as is possible, for they are charged with the responsibility of raising as many dollars as possible. That search for consensus can sometimes lead to avoidance of issues which are potentially divisive. The artful professional also functions as an educator; as he establishes relationships with the decision makers and opinion makers, he can often help them understand better why conflict is sometimes healthy. Conflict is a healthy way to resolve *some* issues, providing all those involved will accept the resultant resolution of the conflict regardless of their own position. Leaders who "pick up their marbles" and use *their* gift as veto can indeed end conflicts quickly, or so it might seem. In reality, it becomes a matter of high priority to a professional and to lay leaders to attempt to educate such a leader as to the ultimate consequences for Jewish life if that policy became the norm for resolving differences.

A community is less fragile than many of us believe. Healthy communities resolve difficult issues by confronting them. In so doing, a divided community does not automatically result from a potentially divisive issue. Rather, the sound professional and lay leaders engage in a process of handling the issue as satisfactorily as possible. They recognize that resolution might ultimately result in polarization because there is no other way. They then take the consequences, whatever they may be, but this rarely becomes the mode for community decision-making.

Some communities struggled with this issue when confronted with how to handle "left wing" staff and organizations during the McCarthy period. More recently, the Skokie incidents were certainly another manifestation of the potentially explosive trade-offs which

are sometimes at stake. Some other issues which have resulted in professionals taking stands at key moments include Jewish community sponsorship of draft counseling during the Viet Nam war; Kosher kitchens in a Jewish Center; Sabbath openings of community facilities; public advocacy on behalf of Soviet Jewry; opposition to Congressional support of Saudi Arabia, to mention but a few. Each issue was potentially or actually polarizing to one degree or another before consensus was reached. In each instance, some professional somewhere acted in a way which might have added to the polarization. The consequences of inaction would have been greater than the consequences of divisiveness. So you see, it depends.

Priorities and Jewish Component

If my definitions of components are clear by now, I would suggest that a proper test might be to see which programs encompass most of the components. These programs would be seen to possess high priority if Jewish specificity were a desired outcome. Intensive Jewish education is one such obvious program. But what if a program of low Jewish specificity also had great ramifications? I raised the issue earlier relating to encouraging positive Congressional action to assure Israel's fuel supplies while anticipating the outcries from the recreation industry and poor ethnics about the price of gas and the consequences of its shortage? Would you deny dollars geared to an on-going intensive educational program in America, a program which included the re-establishment of coalitional politics with ethnics, in favor of a new Jewish day-school in the suburbs? Some people will give simple answers. I suggest that a sophisticated understanding of the meanings of Jewish components in practice will precede even more sophisticated and at times painful decisions in making priority decisions about how to distribute limited dollars. Certainly there are new programs which will not meet the test when measured against what's best for Jews as individuals *and* the Jewish community, but

that, in my opinion, is the framework within which the judgments must be made.

Under this test, it may well prove to be a matter of much higher priority to build a running track and fund a post-heart surgery rehabilitation program at the Jewish community center than one might think when simplistically assessing what the Jewish component means. In this instance, the rationale might be that Jews can be living Jewish lives only after they are restored to health. I would continue to make the case, as I have in the past, that a community or agency solely or primarily devoted to the physical aspect of maintaining Jews will in the long run dilute its own uniqueness and rationale as a sectarian agency. The physical needs of Jews are ultimately inseparable from their psychic, social, cultural and even theological needs; the ultimate measure must still be conducted against the tests for Jewishness developed earlier in this paper.

We thus end as we began, perhaps to demonstrate further the eternal nature of the questions and the quest.

Our practice must be grounded in knowledge, professional and Jewish; it must be permeated with values drawing heavily upon our tradition, synthesized with an art and dedication born of experience, trying, failing, learning and succeeding. All of this is in a context of hopeful optimism coupled with tough, intractable patience.

All of us are willy-nilly *Klei Kodesh*, holy tools, for this work is invested with transcendent purpose: helping to heal, to build up, and to serve the Jewish people. The very continuation of this discussion personifies those three tasks. Hopefully, this article will help extend those possibilities—again and again and again.

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