

ELLIS RIVKIN

## The Crisis of Identity in the Dynamics of Jewish Life

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The structure of my presentation this morning will consist of two distinctive parts. First, I will focus on the nature of the contemporary crisis in Jewish identity, particularly those long-range forces at work which I consider to be fundamental. Then I shall assess with you the resources which we have available in the dynamics of our past which may be of some value to us as we confront the deep crisis of our own day.

### *The Crisis*

As an historian, I have been primarily interested in and concerned with change. It comes as no news to you that change is a very characteristic human condition. But what we really have to be concerned with is not so much change per se, but the degree of change. Change may be, on the one hand, simply an on-going kind of rippling variation, or it may, on the other hand, be revolutionary change which occurs only infrequently in the course of human history. I consider that the changes which have been going on, particularly since the end of World War II, to be among the most qualitatively significant, among the most revolutionary in all of the history of humankind. And for this reason, I look upon our contemporary crisis of Jewish identity as emerging out of these qualitative, revolutionary developments of recent years. I should therefore like to consider with you what these long-range fundamental forces are, try to separate them

from the peripheral and the transient, and to project the direction in which these forces are leading us. Then, even if we do not as yet have clear-cut answers to our identity problems, we shall, at least have a clear definition of their nature, and have some notion as the sort solutions which might prove viable.

### *Dramatic Technological Changes*

What makes the change in our own day so vital is that it involves a transition from one kind of technology to one radically different, so different in fact that it has no equivalent in the annals of humankind. Though hardly perceived at the end of World War II, there has emerged a spiral of development. This spiral of development is unique because it is linked up with, and is a consequence of a qualitative breakthrough. This new technology is not just simply a building up of a new technology on the technology which preceded it.

It is a technological revolution even more vital and in its ultimate impact, far more consequential than the technology which ushered in the industrial revolution, and the technologies followed on its heels. The industrial revolution "and the technologies which developed out of the industrial revolution were merely technologies that were built one upon the other. The previous technology bred the new technology. The new technologies were thus a consequence of already existing techniques—it was simply a matter of expanding and extending what was already there. It was rooted in prior techniques.

By contrast, the revolutionary transformation which began during World War II, and which are now in the process of rapid development are technologies that are grounded in a very different

kind of soil. It is being generated out of a source hitherto scarcely tapped, namely the most fundamental and abstract laws of nature.

To make this very clear and very highly specific, let me share with you the circumstances which gave birth to this new phenomenon. In its efforts to build a more potent weapon to bring the Nazis and the Japanese to the United States set up the Manhattan Project to extract from an abstract scientific formula,  $E=MC^2$ , a weapon of awesome potency. The success of this effort launched the new technology of which I have been speaking. Never before in the history of humankind had a highly abstract law of nature been translated directly into highly complex technological processes, processes which effectively yielded an awesome weapon. Now that translation of abstract laws of nature into technologies which had been energized by the need for a decisive weapon turned out to be but the first of a series of developments which, in each instance, confirmed the dependability of this translation process: the development of the H-bomb, of intercontinental-ballistic missiles, and most dramatically the Apollo Project and the landing of a man on the moon. These breakthroughs reveal the operation of the same dynamics which proved so successful in developing the atom bomb. One begins with a problem such as how to offset the threat of a dangerous enemy. Certain abstract laws of nature, if translatable into operative technologies could hopefully achieve this goal. To be sure no guarantees exist that these abstract laws of nature will yield atomic bombs or intercontinental ballistic missiles, or moon landings. Yet it turned out that the problem itself, when adequately funded, generated the solution. That which was believed to be impossible becomes a simple matter of fact. This continuously repeated process of (1) problem (2) abstract laws of nature, (3) innovating technologies, (4) reduction of the impossible to matter of fact has itself expanded a fundamental

principle which had lain dormant through the centuries. This is the principle of synergy— a principle which makes true creativity possible. For synergy is that name which is given to any process where the output is not predictable by the input. Thus if two metals when separate have a tensile strength of ten each, but when combined have a tensile strength of 1000, this outcome is attributed to the operation of the principle of synergy. In a word, the structure of reality is continuously demonstrating that  $2+2$  can equal 7, or 50, or 5000.

The successful translation again and again since World War II of abstract laws of nature into innovating technologies has spun-off a developmental spiral. And what is this development spiral? It is a spiral continuously moving upward and outward by virtue of the continuous breeding of new technologies out of the laws of nature on the developmental frontier.

Technologies no longer are measured in decades but in years. The computer is already well advanced into its fourth generation even though the computer age was ushered in hardly thirty years ago. And each generation marks a qualitative not merely an additive, development of computer technology. We have thus been witnessing a continuous process of knowledge, creation and of technologies breeding technologies at an even faster tempo. As a consequence, there has emerged a self-sustaining, self-generating developmental frontier where new process are being created out of nature's womb. And this frontier is right here, in the United States.

It is the United States therefore which displays for us what I shall call an advanced developmental profile. This profile is unique. It has no analogue in the history of humankind. Indeed, it is found only in a knowledge-based society—a society which has emerged thus far only in the United States. There have been pre-industrial societies and industrial societies, but there has been hitherto no post-industrial, knowledge-based society.

What does it mean to be a post-industrial society? It means that there is a rapid and steady

decline of the percentage of the population enjoyed in agriculture. Whereas at the end of World War II, more than 20% of the American people were farmers, now less than 5% are involved in the agricultural. Yet this agricultural sector is on the very edge of the developmental frontier because it is a knowledge-grounded agriculture. It exemplifies the successful translation of scientific thought into the technology of abundance. More is continuously being created by less and less input of labor and more and more input of thought. Just ponder for a moment the remarkable growth in productivity which has come from high technology agriculture as reflected in the Green Revolution, in the effective application of fertilizer, in the development of ingenious hybrids, and most vividly in the stunning fact that 5% of the American people feed in abundance not only the American people, but virtually all the peoples of the world. Without this innovative kind of agricultural technology, famine would long ago have swept away the problem of overpopulation as millions starved to death.

### *The Changing Profile of the American Earner*

A second feature of this profile is the steady decline of the blue collar working class. Even though this decline has not been nearly as dramatic as it has been in farming, it has been dramatic enough if we remember that a blue collar worker today in the U.S. is no longer a blue collar worker except by definition. More and more American workers are involved in directing fantastically productive machines which highly refined thinking has brought on line. The mental energy that has gone into the developing the machines which make labor ever more productive is prodigious. Hence even though, in a technical sense, one might still refer to a blue collar working class of 25% or so of the American population, it is not a blue-collar working class by European or even Japanese standards, or by comparison with workers in the underdeveloped parts of the

world or with the blue collar workers in this country during the 1920's and 30's.

Thirdly, and this is the most significant feature of the profile, is the breakout into the so-called service sectors of the economy. Now the service sectors of American economy are highly complex, since this sector includes government employment, retailing, office work, etc. The precocious development however has been in the knowledge sector. Here the knowledge which energize the new technologies is discovered and processed, and it is here that we must look for the source of that breakthrough into a post-industrial society with more than 50% of all gainfully employed in the U.S. earning their living from the service sector. And it is the knowledge industry which nurtures the developmental frontier and spins off the spiral of development.

#### *The American Jew in the Forefront of Change*

Now how does this relate to the Jews and the crisis of Jewish identity that we face in the contemporary world? If we look at the advanced developmental profile of American society and then look at the profile of the Jews in the U.S., we discover that the Jews in the U.S. have the most advanced developmental profile of any people in the world. It is a developmental profile far more precocious, and far more advanced than that of American society as a whole. It is by virtue of this profile that we as Jews have an identity crisis which gives every indication of being a permanent one. There is no visible end to it. American Jews are virtually out of farming, and those few Jews who are in the agricultural sector are involved in high technology farming. There are very few Jews indeed who can be considered farmers. And if we turn to the blue collar working class, Jews are for the most part out of the working class. It is true that there are Jews of an earlier generation who may be classified as blue collar workers, but as you well know, we were already well on the way to leaving the working class in the 1920's. When, however, we

look to the service sector, we discover that we are overwhelmingly concentrated here. And in the service sector, we are more and more involved with discovery, processing and teaching of knowledge. Consequently the Jews as an entity are almost totally—and this is particularly true of the younger generation—on the developmental frontier. Virtually no young Jews are becoming farmers or proletarians.

The simplest way of determining the degrees of development of a society is the educational index. Very quickly, we are able to know where any particular society stands on the developmental spiral, for it reveals the degree to which knowledge is deemed vital for an effective work force. In the U.S. almost 50% of all young people of college age go to college. This is absolutely staggering, because even the most advanced European countries, like Germany, France and Britain have at most 15%—and this is a high estimate—of their youth in college. This means that the United States is three times as committed to the knowledge society as Europe. Yet even this precociousness is exceeded by American Jewry, 85% of whose college-age youth go to college. This means that 85% of American Jewish youth is preparing itself for the knowledge sector. 85% are on the development frontier. American Jewry thus sports a developmental profile almost twice as advanced as that of the American people as a whole. We Jews have already precommitted our youngsters to the innovating sectors of the American economy and by doing so have thrust them onto the very edge of the frontier of development. It is thus not surprising that Jews are now to be found more and more in the highest decision-making roles in American society, since they represent a vast pool of knowledge and creative talent.

*Change and the Identity Crisis*

It is now clear why we have a crisis of identity. To the degree that any group moves to the developmental frontier where knowledge is being created, where new technologies are being born and where traditional knowledge and traditional rootage can frequently be an impediment and an obstruction to survival, to that degree do members of the group experience an identity crisis. If one is living up too much on past patterns, he will have great difficulty in sustaining himself in an environment which ticks off technological generations every three years or so. Such a pace does not allow very much time for lingering over knowledge which has become obsolete. The radical restructuring of values which has already occurred in American society testifies to the directional thrust of the American system. The values of yesteryear were inadequate to the needs of the knowledge sector, the outgoing, outmoving frontier where innovation, not replication, is the norm. We have all witnessed the collapse of one sturdy value after another during the 1960's. In the 1950's the most fundamental and dependable value in American society was love of country and the patriotism which it nourished. We saw how that collapsed. Another fundamental American value was the family, and a commitment to its stability. Yet, the divorce rate is daily calling to our attention the erosion of this vintage value. We all had clearly defined roles. A woman is a woman, a man, a man with all the implications for career choice. Women were extremely limited in what they might choose for themselves. In those stable 50's, the young women at Radcliffe and Smith and even Sarah Lawrence were concerned with how they could fulfill their role as women by managing a home, raising many children, and giving loving support to husbands.

One's creativity was demonstrated by precocious fertility. At that time psychiatrists were concerned with getting penis-enjoying women who sought to compete with men at the expense of child-bearing and housekeeping, to face up to their neurosis and root it out. How obsolescent

all this seems now, and yet it was only a few short years ago. The transformation of sexual identity—the whole revolution which occurred here—is among the first fruits of the advancing developmental frontier. And what of religion? It too has been undergoing an equivalent kind of crisis. Not that religion has collapsed, but it bears very little relationship in its thought structure in its assumptions of the eternal verities—a chance highlighted most dramatically by the Catholic Church, which had been the symbol of non-change, taking the lead in audacious revisions and innovations. And of course, there has been a telling revolution in the status of blacks, chicanos, and even native Americans.

These transmutations have occurred under our very eyes. All of us have been transformed by them to some degree. Yet few of us are aware that the generative source of these radical changes is to be found in the emergence of the developmental frontier. It is the need of this frontier for innovating, creative, forward-looking, free-choosing individuals that has spun-off the transmutation of values which has already occurred. The self-development of the individual has become the dominant concern on the psychological frontier. Introspection, experimentation, re-evaluation of long-discarded religious and spiritual options— all have become modes for seeking self-realization. Free-choosing has become the hallmark of our age, even as conformity was the hallmark of the 50's. The ultimate outcome of this innovating developmental frontier is the emergence of the age of the free-choosing individual. Never in all the previous history of humankind has free choice been a viable option except for small elites of wealth and privilege. When for example I went to Johns Hopkins in the 1930's, it was a rare privilege indeed—one that was extended to a handful of the worthy poor who might qualify through competitive examinations to attend an Ivy League type school such as this. We who attended any kind of college were a minuscule part of the population. Most of the Jews at that time had no such

choice. The job market determined their destiny. Few had the free choice of either opting for the career that they preferred or opting out of a career which gave them little satisfaction. The notion of free choosing is thus a novel one, and one which can be devastating; for at the heart of the identity crisis is a shift from those objective anxieties which are generated by the age-old unsolved problems of food, clothing and shelter—the dependable anxieties which veiled from us whether our anxiety was being generated from within or whether they were being generated by our fear of hunger, homelessness, and helplessness, to those subjective anxieties which are unleashed when economic restraints are loosed and when we are free to choose virtually whatever we wish. We can opt in and we can opt out. Society no longer says "yea" or "nay." It no longer ostracizes the deviants. We are thus compelled to choose for ourselves. And such compulsion—the compulsion to choose freely—can be exhilarating, but in most instances, it can be terrifying and paralyzing. It makes a big difference whether society penalizes divorce or is indifferent. It makes a big difference whether society assigns a woman her role, or whether she must decide for herself. It makes a big difference whether society condemns the black to permanent underdevelopment or whether it dismantles the barriers to economic, social, and political equality. As a consequence we are ravaged because the security of constraint is giving way to the insecurity of freedom.

Now there is one other value undergoing mutation which needs especial emphasis and that is the shift in loyalty from the nation-state to a world community. For of all durable traditional values, none was deemed more in the U.S. than patriotism, love of the flag, and love of the country. Yet this value was the major casualty in the 60's and 70's. This decline in American nationalism is a direct outcome of the advancing technological frontier and the spiral of development which it generates. For the spiral of development to be effective, it is essential

that the nation-state banners to global development be dismantled. At the same time, the autonomy of regions, cultures, and ethnic entities needs to be confirmed and sanctioned as legitimate. The European Common Market's steady progress from economic to political union is the most vivid illustration of a transitional process. Likewise global corporations cosmocorps as George Ball would call them, daily expose the traditional nation-state as archaic and inefficient. This momentous and painful transition from nation-state to global community steadily transforms individuals on the developmental frontier into citizens of the world who look upon the multi-colored, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious people of the world as co-humans. Little wonder that our youth revels in the exotic, the bizarre, the unfamiliar.

Let us now look more closely at how the developmental spiral operates. Because the developmental frontier breeds new technologies incessantly, it allows for the transfer of what was formerly its high technology to the level of the spiral immediately below, for example, the common market, and Japan. These countries, in turn, can now transfer their former high technology to societies on the level below them, and so on down the spiral until even the most underdeveloped peoples are drawn onto the spiral.

So long then as the developmental . frontier translates the abstract laws of nature into innovative technologies, all the peoples of the world are propelled upward on the spiral. For the first time in the modern epoch, there is no incentive to hoard advanced technologies, since technology transfer is mandated by the innovations on the frontier. Imperialism, which thrived on the hoarding of technology and in the nurturing of under-development, is rendered obsolescent by the developmental spiral. Whereas Great Britain's hegemony was rooted in preserving a world half-slave and half free, the United States can exercise hegemony only to the degree that the world is liberated through the spiral of development —a *paxhumanica*.

### *World Jewry as Societal Change*

Let us now turn to the other levels of the spiral. The level immediately below that of the United States is that of the European Common Market, Japan and Canada. Immediately below this level is Israel with a people that is clearly developmental, but it is not that of the developmental frontier. It is a radically different profile. Whereas less than 5% of Americans are engaged in farming, 30% or so of all Israelis are engaged in agriculture. Israeli agriculture, to be sure, is a highly developmental kind of agriculture, but it still absorbs about 30% of its work force. And when you turn to the blue-collar working class, in Israel you have a true blue-collar working class. Israelis work in factories, and though these factories are more and more adopting advanced technology, Israeli industry is still in a lower stage of development. A blue-collar worker in Israel thus much more resembles a blue-collar worker in the U.S. of 20 or 30 years ago than an American worker of today. And if we turn to the service sector, we find that it is overwhelmingly concentrated in the governmental bureaucracy with only a small percentage involved in the knowledge sector. This is starkly confirmed by the educational index: whereas the 45% Americans go to college, no more than 10% of all Israelis go to college. The typical American young person today is being trained for the knowledge sector, while the average young person in Israel, aside from being headed for the military service, is destined for the more traditional kinds of occupations—occupations that were dominant in the U.S. before World War II. And when we compare the American Jewish people with the Israeli, the chasm is even wider.

There is another crucial difference between the Israeli and the American-Jewish profile. Whereas the Jews of the United States have virtually no underdevelopeds among the younger Generation, the Israelis have vast unresolved problems of underdevelopment. Those who come

from the less advanced countries of North Africa, the Middle East, etc. create a problem for Israel which is akin to—though not identical with—hut akin to the black problem in the U.S. By contrast, the Jews in the U.S. have no underdeveloped problem to speak of except for the elderly and the handicapped. Indeed. one of the reasons why the American Jewish profile is even more precocious. than the American profile as a whole is that the U.S. has vast problems of underdevelopment stemming from large numbers of blacks, chicanes and others, while American Jewry has only minimal problems in this area. It is thus apparent that whatever kind of identity crisis the Jews in Israel may have, it cannot be identical with our identity crisis. It will be a long time before Israelis will be exchanging objective for subjective anxiety. We American Jews however, are feeling only too painfully the transition.

To stress the difference, one needs only contrast the dimension of patriotism in the United States where it is becoming an obsolescent value with its necessity in Israel as a prerequisite for survival. Indeed for the American Jew, patriotism is experienced to the degree that he identifies with the Israelis. And finally, if we analyze the profile of the Soviet Union, we discover that the profile of the Soviet Union is less developed than is Israel's. Soviet agriculture still utilizes something like 35 to 40% of all labor. And it is utterly inefficient. If there is a way to inhibit seeds from growing, the Soviets have discovered it. Indeed, the only innovative knowledge they have spun-off is the extent to which inefficiency is possible. It is as though their motto were: 'Less with more.' 35% of the Soviet work force are true proletarians—soot colored workers. As for the service sector, inefficiency is its hallmark. Overwhelmingly concentrated in the governmental bureaucracies, these workers screen out whatever efficiency may have inadvertently escaped notice. Indeed, one of the reasons Jews are having such difficulties in the Soviet Union is that the Soviet system cannot absorb more than a limited amount of knowledge

much the way that India has been unable to utilize its knowledge workers because of the backwardness of its society. This inability is reflected in the Soviet educational index: less than 10% of college-age youth so to college.

One we analyze the profiles of world Jewry, we are struck by their incongruence. Each Jewry has its distinctive profile. Each has its specific problems of identity. But only American Jewry faces the unique identity crisis reserved for those on the developmental frontier.

### *Coping With the Identity Crisis*

What, if any, resources do we American Jews have to cope creatively with the crisis of the free-choosing individual, a continuous ongoing crisis of identity so long as the developmental frontier generates innovative technologies out of the laws of nature. What are we to do with our Jewish identity as we move objective to subjective anxiety, and from societies of conformity to societies of free choice?

We are a truly remarkable people. Our survival attests to the incredible know-how we have displayed over the years. And it is all so paradoxical, since we are a people whose origins are rooted in a simple semi-nomadic society. Yet, no other group in mankind's history has had so unbroken and creative survival in the face of ever-more staggering and complex problems, since survival for its own sake is scarcely a noteworthy phenomenon. No other society has done this, no other grouping has done this. There have indeed been groupings in the Far East which have had a very long unbroken history, but not a history which involved at every moment the facing of fresh problems generated by dynamic, radical change. These other societies tended to be cyclical, and were not themselves always minorities within larger host societies. Nor did they confront at every turn the convulsion, characteristic of the development of western civilization.

We started as a semi-nomadic people with sheep and cattle and tents and now we find ourselves in America, the most advanced, precocious people in the world thrust on the developmental frontier.

How did we do it? What is the source of our know-how?

### *Jewish Modes of Coping with Problems*

....At root, we developed three major ways of creative problem-solving. We are a problem-solving people. The first of these modes I shall call replication; i.e., simply doing it the same way. When one reads about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, one notes again and again that the Lord speaks to the Patriarchs. God says, "Get thee out of the land and go to the land which I will show you," or "Go down into Egypt," or "Do this or do that." There is God, there is the Patriarch, and there is direct verbal communication. This mode is replicated with Moses. Moses hears God talk and communicates what he hears. When the Israelites wandered through the wilderness, a problem arose. Moses would go to the tent of Meeting where God would speak to him. He would hear what God wanted done and he would then do it. God was always available. Similarly, Samuel asks God whether Israel should be given a king, and who this king should be. Elijah consults God as to how Ahab is to be countered. All this is very well known to you. All one has to do is leaf through the Bible and God is speaking and Patriarchs and Prophets are listening". This mode of problem-solving is a replicating mode, since there is the interplay between the problem. God and Patriarch or Prophet. The leader is attuned to hearing God.

When, however, we came to the prophets such as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, etc., we no longer have simple replication. Instead, we have a variation on the theme of listening. This variation is succinctly summed up by Amos when he says, "I am neither a prophet nor a son (of a prophet,

but I hear God nonetheless." Amos was in effect saying. "I am not replicator. I am not just like Samuel or Elijah or Elisha or Moses. Yet, I share with them the listening mode even if I have not been certified as a prophet. God has chosen me nonetheless to speak to you." This mode of problem-solving I shall call variation on a theme. This mode—variation on a theme—is one which Jews have resorted to when problems could not be solved effectively through simple replication.

There is a third kind of problem-solving which occurs only at very, very rare intervals—a mode which I shall focus on for the rest of my lecture. Although I do not know a fully satisfactory word to convey its meaning, I am certain that the phenomenon itself will be clear enough. Perhaps mutation, or creative innovation, or synergy conveys something of what I mean. But whatever term, the third mode of problem-solving is characterized by the emergence of a novel principle which restructures Judaism and which generates a new leadership class. A form comes into existence within Judaism which was never there before, and which cannot be found in the earlier stages of development no matter how one searches for it. The first example of such radical mutation is the final promulgation of the five books of Moses, sometime between 444 and 397 B.C.E. Now what is mutational is that following on that promulgation, prophets disappear. Prophecy has been phased out. This is startling indeed. For if one were to ask what would be essential to a Jewish identity during the biblical period, one would necessarily answer, "The belief that God will always send prophets to make known to Israel His will." Yet, with the promulgation of the Pentateuch, this secure, constant assured certainty dissolved. It dissolved, yet Judaism burst forth to the new levels of creativity. So non-essential did the prophet become that to put forth the claim was itself conclusive evidence of frauds.

The new leadership class are no longer prophets, but priests, the sons of Aaron. Their

power does not derive from hearing God speak, but in reading in what God has already said to Moses. They are oriented towards the eye and the book, and not towards the hearing ear. They work on the assumption that God has given His law, an immutable law, for all time. From this Law, there is to be no deviation. And in this Law God ordained a sacrificial system under aegis of Aaron and his sons unto all generations.

The hearing ear has given way to the seeing eye. One reads the Revelation, one does not anticipate hearing ongoing revelations. This transformation is mutational. It is unanticipated. The logic of prophecy is prophecy. If one prophet does not come through, then look for another prophet. The logic of prophecy is not the phasing out of prophecy. Yet not only did prophecy dissolve, but to proclaim oneself a prophet, is the height of heresy. It exposes you as an alien. You are a threat and a danger to Judaism. But the priests who had only nominal authority during the prophetic age, are not only dominant, but are wholly in control. This then is an example of mutation.

We thus have revealed three modes of problem-solving: replication, variation on a theme, and mutation. Whether replication, or variation on a theme, or mutation is appropriate—that is determined by the magnitude of the problem. The problem determines the kind of solution adopted. Replication is effective in problem-solving when the problems remain basically the same. Variation on a theme is an effective problem-solving mode when there is significant change, but not so drastic as to foreclose adaptation through variation. As for mutation, only the most radical and resistant problems allow for such a solution.

### *Mutations in Historical Perspective*

Since mutation is both so radical and so infrequent, let us focus exclusively on the other

mutations which have occurred. The second mutation emerged some time during the Hasmonean revolt in the middle of the second century B.C.E. when there emerged a scholar class, which we generally referred to as the Pharisees, but this scholar class spun off that innovative form of Judaism which in our day is referred to as traditional Judaism. At the time of its emergence, however, it was anything but traditional. Traditional Judaism on eve of the Hasmonean Revolt was priestly, Pentateuchal Judaism as we know from Ben Sera. The five books of Moses as literally read was Judaism. The Aaronide exercised priests in absolute authority over the Law. The Sofrim of that day had no authority over the Law. Their major concern was the pursuit of

*Wisdom, the realm of non-Law.*

The new form of Judaism, Pharisaism was by contrast highly mutational. The new leadership class consisted of neither prophets nor priests, but of scholars. These scholars had no right to rule. They are not even mentioned in the Pentateuch. In the Torah, there is provision for prophets, priests and Levites to exercise authority, but not scholars. Throughout all of the writings of the prophets, the prophets are the authoritative figures, not scholars.

A scholar class becoming the authoritative class and sitting themselves on Moses's seat is evidence of a mutation. It is an innovative act. It does not follow as a logical follow-through of priestly Judaism. The logic of the previous system of the Written Law, the Written Torah, and the logic of priestly hegemony is more concentration on the Written Law, more focus on the expiatory role of the Aaronides. One submitted to the Written Law day and night—this is the logical mandate. But this logic was disregarded. Something discontinuous emerged; something unanticipated—a quantum jump! This scholar class taught ideas and that were non-Biblical in their content. They taught that the one Father God had so loved the individual that He had

revealed not one Torah but two Torahs, two Laws, the Written Law and the Oral Law. And if the individual internalized this two-fold Law, the Written and the Oral Law, he or she could anticipate eternal life for the soul and resurrection for the body. These ideas are novel. There is no explicit statement within the Pentateuch with respect to an Oral Law. Authority was in the hands of prophets or priests, not scholars. There is no promise of eternal life or resurrection in the Torah. Yet these become prime teaching and the prime commitment—prime commitment of the overwhelming majority of Jews who enthusiastically followed the teachings of the Pharisees. Those who like the Sadducees, persisted in adhering to tradition, Pentateuchal, priestly Judaism are rejected as heretics and are denied a share in the world to come. Traditional Judaism became heretical, and mutational Judaism, traditional. Among the innovating institutions which the Pharisees created were the Beth Din Ha-Gadol and the synagogue, neither of which has Pentateuchal or prophetic sanction. These institutions proved to be durable, effective and authentically Jewish despite their non-biblical antecedents.

Pharisaism was a creative form of Judaism for mutation or high level creative innovation and there were many variations. Non-pareil. For almost 2000 years, it was able to cope creatively with every fresh problem by either replication or variation on a theme. It could spawn a Rashi for the Jews of Christian-feudal Europe, even as it could nurture a Maimonides in the Moslem world. It sustained rationalism and mysticism, mit-nadim and hasidim. All these variations reconfirmed that God had given two Torahs and not one. That the individual could look forward to eternal life and resurrection; that the halachah was the road to eternal life and resurrection. So flexibly creative was this system that it has earned its claim to being traditional Judaism. But its origins were in a quantum Jump.

The third mutation occurred in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was a mutation

indeed! It was a mutation which was provoked by westernization. Jews living in Germany and other westernizing countries were in one or another finding it very difficult to sustain a viable Judaism through a variation on the theme of Pharisaism. Hence a highly innovating breakthrough occurred. It was mutational in the following sense: Whereas all previous variations on a theme had nurtured the idea that God had given an immutable Torah, and that the individual could look forward to eternal life and resurrection if the individual adhered to the halachah. Reform taught that God is the source of an ongoing revelation. It denied that the halachah was binding. It rejected the dogma of the resurrection of the dead. For Reform the notion of an ongoing and continuous revelation was compatible with the progressive tendencies of western civilization. Although, to be sure, this particular mutation did not draw behind it the vast majority of Jews, it did reach out to large numbers of Jews who were grappling with their need for a Jewish identity compatible with westernization. Since, however, most Jews lived in eastern Europe, they were not exposed until much later with the problems of westernization. The fact that Reform Judaism made such headway in the United States is prima facie evidence that it was a true mutation and not a mere spasm. Indeed, insofar as practice is a significant indicator, most Jews in the United States conduct themselves as though the two-fold Law was not binding.

The fourth mutation occurred at the end of the nineteenth century, when Jews in parts of Western Europe, particularly Austria-Hungary, but mainly in Eastern Europe, were confronted with the problem of whether they could anticipate into their societies integration along western lines or whether this option was to be denied them. Reading the signs as inauspicious, such gifted leaders as Herzl and Pinsker proclaimed that the Jews were preeminently a nation deserving a recognized status among the nations of the world. The essential Jewish identity was thus national and not religious. This was a mutational idea indeed. Hitherto Jewish peoplehood was

inseparable from Judaism. Israel has always been a people of God, however much the concept of God may have undergone change. But with Herzl and the Zionist leaders who emerged in eastern Europe, the essence of being Jewish was a national spirit, an ethnic commitment. For them Judaism was peripheral, a vestige of an earlier and less enlightened age.

This mutation was eminently successful. The State of Israel is living witness to the power of a previously unknown identity becoming the dominant identity in Israel where most Israelis are not religious in any formal sense. And if we ask ourselves which Jewish identity at this moment encompasses most Jews, whether secular or religious, we would almost assuredly answer that we are a national, ethnic entity. We do not look down upon those Jews who are not religious as outside the fold. But in 1830, in 1840, in 1850 it was inconceivable that there could be a Jew without Judaism. Jewish nationalism is thus clearly a quantum jump.

What needs to be stressed is that each mutation was a radical alteration of identity. To have been a Pharisee was to have been a very different kind of Jew than to have been a Sadducee. You believed differently, you considered the other to be heretical. Each new mutation has brought about a transformation of identity which was not anticipated. It did not logically follow from the previous identity. In advance we have no way of knowing what that new identity will turn out to be.

Although we cannot predict what form a mutation will take, we can isolate the kinds of problems which provoke a mutation. They are always of such magnitude that neither replication or variation on a theme can be adequate. Prophecy, for example, was phased out when prophets offered mutually exclusive scenarios in Yahweh's name. Which prophet was one to listen to? The cacophony of prophetic oracles undid prophecy. Problems cannot be solved when the authorities themselves are on a collision course. There was another compelling reason. Jews had to face up

to the fact that though they were restored to the land, they could not enjoy independence. This the Persians would not allow. Realistically there could no longer be kings. Nor could there any longer be prophets who today might hail the Persian Emperor, and tomorrow denounce him. It would not be easy to reassure the Persian ruler that you are loyal, if at any moment a prophet might call out, "Thus says Yahweh. I abhor the sons of Cyrus, Yea, the kings of Persia I cast forth." There was thus the problem of shifting from anticipated independence to limited autonomy. The priestly system was the mutational solution.

With respect to the Pharisees, it was largely a matter of absorbing Hellenistic and Roman civilization, a civilization which Jews had not as yet been exposed to when the Pentateuch was promulgated. The Pharisaic mutation solved this problem brilliantly, because it focused on the individual and held out to him the hope of eternal individuality in the world to come and in the resurrection.

Reform Judaism was the response to westernization, scientific advance, novel ideas, etc. which accounts for its quantum jump. Jewish nationalism, in turn, was a mutation to ward off the collapse of western civilization and its denial of integration to the Jews. At a time that nationalism was bursting out all over Europe, Jewish nationalism seemed to be the obvious solution. When then we turn to the contemporary crisis of our day, we turn to it with an awareness that we have three traditional modes of problem solving: replication, variation on a theme, and, if the problem is of sufficient magnitude, mutation. Each of these modes is not only traditional, but biblical.

### *Mutation and the Identity Crisis*

The issue for us is not whether we have the right to mutate, but whether we are faced with that

which demands a quantum jump for creative survival. The developmental spiral now emergent would seem to be analogous to those previous situations in the past which necessitated a mutational breakthrough and identity restoring. Neither Jews or any other humans have ever lived in a world being transformed by a developmental spiral spun off by innovative knowledge and technology. There has never been moving from objective anxiety—concern for food, clothing, shelter—to subjective anxiety generated by virtually unbounded choice. If ever there were signs that neither replication or variation on a theme is the likely answer, they are to be seen in the precocious profile of American Jewry! What this mutation, if it occurs, will be neither I nor anyone else can predict. But what it will have to absorb if it is to be an effective and creative mutation, is refracted from the profile itself. The vital elements which will suffuse this novel Jewish identity will be an inherent right to choose freely one's preferred identity. The identity will not be mandated by either the family or the community. It will be an identity which one assents to out of choice—a commitment to a hierarchy of values that is satisfying to the individual. And since these values may themselves be transient, the individual will feel free to modify, or even abandon them. To the degree then that Judaism underscores free-choosing, with all its risks, as an essential value, to that degree will the free-choosing individual see his identity as necessarily Jewish. It makes a great difference to a Jew, wrestling with his Jewish identity on the developmental frontier, whether we say to him, "Your Jewish identity is fixed and immutable," or whether we say to him, "Your Jewish identity can transmute itself once again."

Prophets gave way to priests, priests to scholars, medieval forms of Judaism to modern, western, an exclusive religious identity to a national-ethnic one. There is nothing more Jewish than to be on the frontier of a new Jewish identity. Had we not transmuted our identities, we would not be here. We are on the frontier today because our forefathers knew when to mutate,

rather vary on a theme or replicate.

If we come to our young people and assure them that Judaism is an eternal quest which necessarily calls for fresh identities from time to time, then the novel identities spawned on the frontier will be legitimately Jewish. To be a citizen of the world rather than a nation-state would be Jewish. The realization that new knowledge and new understanding may continuously require (the quest for new values would be Jewish. To cherish individuality, to seek out novel possibilities, to enrich oneself through exposure to varied and exotic cultures, and to prefer to risk subjective anxiety than to be secure within a 2,000-year-old objective constraints—to be all these is to be Jewish.

Let us not delude ourselves. Unless we as Jews are ready, willing and able to retreat from the developmental frontier and seek out the vanishing farm, or the shrinking assembly line, we must face up to the fact that we are on the cutting edge of a mutational identity. It will be Jewish, if we will it to be Jewish. Yet such a mutation need not be frightening, for it may well be a grand return to our beginnings. Our Torah begins with that majestic verse, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." One God and not many gods. And this God filled the earth with abundant variety and crowned his creation with an individual. The capstone of creation, the end purpose of creation was a single person—male and female. Human is to be man or woman, not just simply the one or the other.

This individual was given a Garden of Eden, a paradise, which had not been earned, but on one condition that the individual forswear knowledge. But the first humans, Adam and Eve, refused to make that sacrifice. They wanted to know, even if knowing were to bring with it disastrous consequences. God thrust them out of Paradise and plunged them into history, where through the refinement of knowledge they might ultimately re-enter a Paradise earned.

And lest this idea of the One God, and the one universe, and the one crowning individual in God's image be lost, Israel was selected for that peculiar and unique history which was to spread her among all of the peoples of the world. This people clung to the single God, and single universe, and persisted in solving problem after problem now by replication, now by variation on a theme and now by mutation. These creative solutions have now thrust us Jews in America to the edge of the developmental frontier with a developmental profile more precocious than that of any people on earth; forced to face the problems of value-creation prior to any other grouping in the world. Yet the values to be created turn out to be none other than the values which were proclaimed in the first chapter of Genesis: a single creative Power so loved the individual that He made for this individual a goodly world, full of an abundance of goodly things which he may enjoy to the full when he freely chooses the good. God has not destined humans to defeat and despair. Through knowledge, Paradise can be earned.

Jews have been vouchsafed a glorious destiny. We have the opportunity of leading humankind to a higher realm of values by leading them back to the Rock from which they were hewed. As we go forth to fulfill our destiny, should we not proclaim along with the watchword of our faith, "Hear O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is One," the watchword for the years to come, "Forward to Genesis."