Redefining Ahad Ha-Am: Israel and the Diaspora as Coexisting Centers of Jewish Life

Alfred Gottschalk

Ahad Ha-Am (Asher Ginsburg) was born in 1856 and died in 1927. He was one of the most creative men of Jewish letters and philosophic disposition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although Ginsburg was perhaps the most individualistic of the thinkers of the Jewish world of his time, he always considered himself most modestly as just Ahad Ha-Am, "one of the people." Ahad Ha-Am was endowed with a keen, perceptive mind, and his critical barbs forced his opponents constantly to review and reevaluate their positions as well as their analyses of the problems that plagued the Jewish world of the time. Ahad Ha-Am was not only an essayist of note who sharpened the tool of Hebrew so that it might be useful to express the thoughts of modern man, but also set down with clarity those basic notions which have come to be identified with his name and which we recognize when we use the term "cultural" or "spiritual" Zionism. In a real sense, Ahad Ha-Am was the architect of that philosophy of Zionism. As the editor of *Hashiloah*, which served as the Haskalah's "Review of Literature," as leader of the B'nai Moshe, an elite intellectual group, as a proponent of the rejuvenation of Hebrew culture, he created a rich heritage whose heirs we are to this day.

The outlook of Reconstructionism, the emphasis within Conservative and Reform Judaism on the rebirth of Hebrew as a means for conveying the spiritual treasure of our people, the stress on the teaching of modern Jewish values in our schools, are all derivatives of Ahad Ha-Am's world outlook. In his own way he was an educator *par excellence*, having before him the vision of a people which had to be led out of illusion into a new dimension of thought and experience. Because of this, Ginsburg emerges as one of the great Jewish leaders and teachers at the turn of the century.

Perhaps one of the significant aspects of Ahad Ha-Am's thought—which immediately separates him from such luminaries as Herzl, Pinsker, Borochov, Brenner, and Berdichevsky—is that he did not view the Jewish "problem" in terms of the problems that beset individual Jews in the modern world. The problem of anti-Semitism, for example, which was the determining wedge in the creation of political Zionism, was not a primary consideration for Ahad Ha-Am. What was of prime importance for him was the "plight of Judaism" and the problems which it faced due to the onslaughts of Darwinism, positivism, and nationalism. Compounded with the onset of these movements was the steady decline of traditional Judaism as an overview which could command the thinking and allegiance of the modern Jew. Ahad Ha-Am singularly devoted himself to the task of finding a solution for the "plight of Judaism" rather than the problems of Jews. For this reason he found it necessary to become the architect of a system of thought, out of which a comprehensive overview of Judaism emerged.

Ahad Ha-Am's Early Life

Before entering into a discussion of Ahad Ha-Am's thought, it is only proper to take a brief glimpse at the man. Asher Ginsburg was born in 1856, in the small town of Skivre in South Russia, a year after the new tsar, Alexander II, ascended the throne. Though Russia was caught up in the midst of the Crimean War, the ascension of Alexander was hailed as the beginning of a new era. The tsar, while he could not bring about political peace in Russia, did attempt far-reaching social and administrative reforms. For the Jews it meant a breath of relief after the horrors of Tsar Nicholas and his regime. The dreaded policy of juvenile conscription came to an end after thirty oppressive years. Schools and universities were again open to Jews, though the reason behind this policy was to quicken the assimilative process of Jews into Russian culture. The overall effect, however, was a sharpening of intellectual life in which the Jewish community benefited. Hebrew and Yiddish periodical literature once again flourished, and hopes for a promising new age flickered on the horizon. However, the liberal adventure was shortlived. Dissension within Russia manifested itself in revolutionary uprisings and assassinations, and when news came to

the tsar that the Jews were fomenters of revolution and the oppressors of the peasantry, committees of investigation were once again set into motion and restrictive legislation followed. As a part of a larger pattern of restriction against the revolutionary elements, Alexander's policy was bound to have serious repercussions, and so, after being the object of a manhunt, he was finally assassinated in the spring of 1881.

During these twenty-five years the character of Ginsberg was in the process of development. He was born into a noted Hasidic family which was both affluent and distinguished for its scholarship, and his father, Isaiah, a merchant and tax farmer, exercised his patriarchal prerogatives to the hilt. And so we have a picture of Asher rising early while it was still dark to study Gemorrah and the *Shulhan Arukh*. By the time he was sixteen he had a reputation as an outstanding talmudist and expert in ritual law. He had also, by this time, mastered grammar and studied some of the Spanish-Jewish writings. In addition to his interest in Jewish law, he had a passion for secular literature, which he read on the sly.

He reports in his *Pirke Zikronot* ("Memoirs") the incident of his grandfather surprising him in his study of algebra and geometry and rebuking him for his efforts. Thereafter he studied the forbidden lore by tracing the mathematical formulas on the steamed window, thereby leaving no evidence of his speculations. His grandfather, again discovering him at his studies, was aghast, thinking that the youngster was practicing witchcraft, and so his newest pleasure was quickly brought to an end. Ginsburg devoured the books in his father's study. So agile and keen was his mind, and so hungry was his soul for knowledge, that he mastered the Russian alphabet by reading the street signs and the signs over various stores. From these primitive beginnings he started his readings in Russian literature. His interest in philosophy, sociology, and the general traditions of Western intellectual life became a consummate passion for him. Although he made attempts at attending some of the German universities, Ahad Ha-Am always remained an autodidact. From an educational point of view, it is amazing that Ahad Ha-Am was able to assimilate so much knowledge of a most complex nature without the aid of the distinguished tutors and professors who graced the universities of Europe in his day. Ahad Ha-Am disciplined himself throughout his lifetime, and the time for study was part of the regimen of his daily existence.

With 1881 and the accession to power of Alexander III, an anti-liberal and pan-slavic program was initiated. Pobedonostsev, a tried reactionary, despised liberal institutions and wanted to create an autocracy under the aegis of the Orthodox church. He commenced a war on all minority groups and plagued Jews with a series of riots and pogroms which were not checked until 1882. In May of that year stringent laws were promulgated which narrowed the Pale of Settlement and practically prohibited Jews from roaming out of their villages. The impetus of these acts shook the Jewish world. A mighty blow had been struck to Haskalah and assimilation. Thousands of Jews milling at the borders in their attempt to flee to Russia dramatized the fact that the Jews had no land of their own where they could seek refuge. In response to the situation, societies of Hoveve Zion ("Lovers of Zion") sprung up which attempted to direct Jews to Palestine. Men such as Leo Pinsker, who had held out hope for emancipation, became, as it were, nationalists overnight. In 1881, as a result of the pogroms, he wrote his *Auto-Emancipation*, which became the new rallying point for the Lovers of Zion.

In these same years in Western Europe the great disenchantment took place. The hopes of the previous century for a world united in brotherhood exploded in the faces of the liberal elements of the Jewish community in particular. The dominant note sounded in the nineteenth century was that of nationalism. The nation had supplanted God as the recipient of loyalty and allegiance. Whereas in the medieval period the frame of reference for dealing with problems was of a religious nature and framed in religious and theological terminology, the nineteenth century spoke in secular and national terms. Whereas in the Age of Reason that which was common to all men received emphasis, the nineteenth century gloried in that which set men and nations apart, pitting one against the other in a war of cultures and national form. It was inevitable that Jews should be caught up in this struggle, since their problem was intricately intertwined with that of their environment. The problems of the nineteenth century were more complex because of the multiclass nature of society, each segment of which viewed the dominant motif of nationalism in terms of its own interest and goals.

In his attack upon capitalism, Karl Marx made the Jews an economic symbol by claiming them as the progenitors of capitalism, heaping upon them all the opprobrium of which he was capable. In aligning Jews with capitalism, he linked them to the worst aspects of an exploitive system of which they were a product but not the originators. Through this device the enmity of the working class was siphoned off and directed against the Jews, setting in motion one of the mighty forces—modern anti-Semitism.

The horns of the dilemma were twofold. Out of Germany the angry voices of the anti-Semitic agitators Marr and Stöcker were to be heard. Pandering to the upper classes, they fastened on to the other horn of the anti-Semitic dilemma, attributing the revolt of the masses to those obvious Jews, Marx and Lassalle. Stöcker wrote, "The Jews are at one and the same time the pace setters of capitalism and of revolutionary socialism, thus working from both sides to destroy the present political and social order."

Ahad Ha-Am's Critique of Zionism

The trap of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was set. To capture Jews it could snap in either direction. In time the hatred of the Jew was formulated along lines that were consummated with the expansion of the German Empire. A cult of race, taking as its creed the framework of the science of anthropology, propounded the theory of blood and soil. Against this background we must understand the emergence of political Zionism and its correlative, cultural Zionism. It was the opinion of Herzl and of Pinsker that the Jews faced these anti-Semitic attacks because they were a "ghost nation," a people without a land, language, or national roots. Therefore, they proposed the necessity of regaining a National Homeland, where the masses of Jews could find refuge and create for themselves a true national existence which would make of the Jewish people a normal, integrated folk, whose prototype was the nation-state of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because of the agitation and ferment in Eastern and Central Europe, the political Zionists sought the alleviation of the Jewish problem in terms of individual Jews rather than through a philosophic program of national cultural revival. If the Jews were removed from the economic and political context of Europe, it was believed, anti-Semitism would

disappear. It was held that anti-Semitism resulted from the unfortunate economic situations that Jews were forced into, which were perceived as exploitative and nonproductive. This situation was to be resolved by the removal of Jews *en toto* and transplanting them to Eretz Yisrael or some other country, such as Uganda, where Jews could recreate a National Homeland.

It is of interest to note that Ahad Ha-Am was perhaps among the first to take cognizance of what is now a fact, that the creation of a Jewish state would never provide a haven for the majority of Jews living in the world. He was skeptical as to whether more than but a fraction of the entire Jewish world population would ever make Palestine its permanent place of residence. For this reason he never negated the validity of the existence of a wide diaspora of Jews who would have to remain nourished on a philosophy of Judaism which would be in consonance with the modern spirit. It was not that Ahad Ha-Am was calloused to the needs of individual Jews, but that he realistically faced the fact that Palestine could provide the solution for but a small percentage of the beleaguered Jews of his time. Far more serious, he thought, was the need to keep alive a modern, vivid expression of Judaism. To this he bent his great energy and evolved a philosophy of Jewish education.

The Zionist adventure, Ahad Ha-Am maintains, was born not because Judaism was in straits but because Jews were in straits. And, consequently, what Western Zionists wanted to do was to create a Jews' state so that they who now suffered disabilities because of anti-Semitism might find a place of refuge. Ahad Ha-Am took strong objection to having a state built on what he perceived to be negative grounds, namely, to serve solely as a haven of refuge for the persecuted. Commenting upon Herzl's *Der Basler Congress* (Vienna, 1897), he states that "it was anti-Semitism that gave birth to Herzl, and Herzl who gave birth to Political Zionism, and Zionism to the Congress." Western Jews who had their eyes opened to Jewishness through anti-Semitism did not create Zionism for its own sake, but rather to alleviate the ill-effects of anti-Semitism. His sharpest barb is the observation that if anti-Semitism suddenly disappeared, Herzl's Zionism would soon follow in its wake. He quotes Herzl as saying, "The nation is a collective of people whose relationship and unity is maintained by virtue of a common enemy." If the common enemy should disappear,

then it is clear that the nation would disintegrate. Herzl was not aware, according to Ahad Ha-Am, that historic Judaism derives its strength from the national culture which shapes its adherents in its image and unites them by means of an overwhelming spirit, whose existence is not dependent on any external foe.

Ahad Ha-Am concisely set forth this view in the following statement:

> One may even doubt whether the establishment of a "Jewish State" at the present time, even in the most complete form that we can imagine, having regard to the general international position, would give us the right to say that our problem has been completely solved, and our national ideal attained. "Reward is proportionate to suffering" (Aboth 5:23). After two thousand years of untold misery and suffering, the Jewish people cannot possibly be content with attaining at last to the position of a State tossed as a ball between its powerful neighbors, and maintaining its existence only in diplomatic shifts and continual truckling to the favored of fortune. An ancient people, which was once beacon to the world, cannot possibly accept as a satisfactory reward for all that it has endured a thing so trifling, which many other peoples, unrenowned and uncultured, have won in a short time without going through a hundredth part of the suffering. It was not for nothing that Israel had Prophets whose vision saw Righteousness ruling the world at the end of days. It was their nationalism, their love for their people and their land, that gave the Prophets that vision. For, in their day, the Jewish State was always between two fires—Assyria or Babylon on one side, and Egypt on the other—and it never had any chance for a peaceful life and a natural development. So, "Zionism," in the minds of the Prophets, expanded that great vision of the end of days, when the wolf should lie down with the lamb, and nation should no longer lift up the sword against nation; and then Israel too should dwell securely in his land. And so this idea for humanity has always been and always will be inevitably an essential part of the national ideal of the Jewish people; and a "Jewish State" will be able to give the people rest only when universal Righteousness is enthroned and holds sway over nations and States.[1]

It is in this connection that Ahad Ha-Am proposed a new kind of center which was not necessarily to be a political center for Jews nor a haven for the oppressed. He fought tenaciously against the Uganda project, maintaining that only in Eretz Yisrael could Jewish culture be reclaimed and restored to its pristine state. The center to be established in Palestine needed to be one that embodied prophetic Judaism. Consequently the *merkaz ruhani*, the spiritual center which was projected, was one in which the choicest of Israel's intelligentsia was to find its moorings. There, according to Ahad Ha-Am, the B'nai Moshe, the

spiritual heirs of Moses, could rebuild the cultural foundations of Hebraism and correct some of the aberrations of what had come to be called Judaism. Ahad Ha-Am looked to the few and not to the many for the rebirth of the genuine Jewish state. It is of interest that a number of the philosophical principles which Ahad Ha-Am first espoused have been adopted and activated by the government of Israel. After Israel was established, its intellectuals turned to the problem of the meaning and definition of a *Jewish* state. What purpose was there for this center in addition to being a haven for the oppressed of the Jewish people? The first prime minister of the State of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, spoke of Israel as a vehicle for the redemption of man, for the implementation of the prophetic society to which Ahad Ha-Am had alluded. "Anyone who does not realize that the Messianic vision of redemption is central to the uniqueness of our people does not realize the basic truth of Jewish history and the cornerstone of Jewish faith."[2] It is argued that there has to be a uniqueness to Israel, that it has to embody a quantitative difference to make it distinctive from other nation-states.

The Role of Israel

Ahad Ha-Am conceived of the Jewish state as that place in which the moral superman was to be born. In an essay ("The Transvaluation of Values") against Berdichevsky, who had enthroned the Aryan superman as being the prototype to which Jews are to aspire, Ahad Ha-Am turns the eyes of history back to Moses, Amos, Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah for his prototype of the modern Jew. It is prophetic Judaism, then, which he espouses as the goal and purpose of the new cultural center—the Jewish State of Tomorrow.

In Ahad Ha-Am's mind, Eretz Yisrael was the hub of the wheel. The spokes of the Diaspora were always a present and relevant factor in his conception of Jewish destiny. Consequently, his whole philosophy is Diaspora-directed as well. Israel, the modern counterpart to Ahad Ha-Am's "Palestine," continues, because of natural circumstances, to be the creator of the new Hebraic patterns of thought and culture. And yet the Diaspora also has a relevance. It is interesting that Ahad Ha-Am conceived of the Galut as having a twofold nature. There is the actual physical Galut, which Zionism cannot show us how to escape,

since the majority of Jews will never immigrate to Eretz Yisrael, and the spiritual Galut, which Ahad Ha-Am claimed could be escaped. The latter cramps the people in its spiritual life by taking from it the possibility of safeguarding its individuality according to its own spirit. This spiritual cramping, he says,

> which our ancestors called the exile of the Divine presence has become especially painful in our time since the overthrow of the artificial wall behind which the spirit of the people entrenched itself in past generations, in order to live their own lives. And now we, in our national life, are enslaved to the spirit of the people around us. We can no longer save our national individuality from being undermined as a consequence of the necessity of assimilating ourselves to the spirit of an alien life which is too strong for us. . . . Now it is this problem of spiritual *Galut* which really finds its solution in the national refuge of Palestine, a refuge not for all Jews who need peace and bread, but for the spirit of the people, for that distinctive, unique cultural form, the result of the historical development of thousands of years which is still strong enough to live and to develop naturally in the future. Though the refuge contains only a tenth part of the people, this tenth part will be sacred to the whole which will see in it a picture of its national individuality or what it is like when it lives its own life without external restraint.[3]

Implications for Jewish Education

We may accept from Ahad Ha-Am many of his remarkable insights, but the convolutions of present-day Jewish life give rich evidence that a number of his theoretical formulations have little relevance to the experiences of our time, including the Holocaust and the State of Israel.

There is an overriding commitment which Jews throughout the world now share—the survival of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. In the face of any external challenge to that survival we are one—Am Yisrael.

It is for these reasons that Ahad Ha-Am's call for the creation of a cultural/spiritual center in Israel must be ultimately redefined to include similar centers in the Diaspora, and especially in the United States. Questions such as the quality of Jewish life, the nature of Jewish culture, and the definition of a Jewish society come to the forefront. And confronting the challenge of building centers of Jewish culture in Israel and the Diaspora brings us face-to-face with the need to create usable, working models of such a creative process.

I would like to examine the role of Jewish education in building such a model. There is, after all, a strong basis for affirming that Jewish education is a central concern for Jews everywhere as they attempt to perpetuate a Jewish culture and peoplehood that are continuous from our past, responsive to our present realities, and attuned to the challenges of the future.

While Jewish education alone cannot resolve the problems of Jewish estrangement, alienation, and assimilation, it has a critical role to play in determining the continuity of the Jewish people. To better understand how Israel and the Diaspora might strengthen Jewish education everywhere, there is a need to analyze the foundations on which Jewish education rests, the goals toward which it seeks to move, and the realities in which it takes place.

The foundations of Jewish education lie in a vast inherited tradition, a shared historical experience, and a world view that is shaped by core values. For some these elements are perceived as fixed and immutable, challenging the educational process to transmit the past as it has been handed down and to firmly plant it in the minds and hearts of the present and future generations. Others understand these same elements as a dynamic and developmental process whereby generations of Jews have reinterpreted their tradition, history, and world view in response to both external and internal forces and changes. In this view the educational process invites interaction with this heritage to create a meaningful formula for contemporary Jewish living both individually and collectively. With the advent of the State of Israel still others have come to view this legacy as relevant insofar as it supports a national redefinition of Jewish identity and destiny. Education in this context focuses on the creation of a society and citizenry that embody the national aspirations of the Jewish people.

Thus in each case the meaning of Jewish tradition, history, and values is interpreted quite differently, reflecting profoundly held beliefs about the nature of Jewish destiny. In the face of these divergent perceptions about the foundations of Jewish education, the task is to search for those categories of knowledge which we might affirm as common to any vision of the educated Jew. Such affirmation would take into account that the acquisition and utilization of this knowledge would vary according to the several philosophies of Judaism.

An examination of the most recent curricula developed by the several ideological movements in North American Jewish life is revealing in this regard. Dr. Walter Ackerman of Ben-Gurion University noted that although the content areas of the several curricula shared much in common (history, texts, prayer, Israel, etc.), each defined the perspective and goals in these areas in consonance with the particular ideology of the movement that created the curriculum. The conclusions to be drawn are that this common core of knowledge is to be utilized to reinforce a specific ideology and that attempts to formulate a curriculum for universal use would prove most difficult. If this is the case in one Diaspora community, it is clear that efforts to create a curriculum that would be suitable for Diaspora communities as well as Israel would not prove fruitful. This reality does not preclude collaboration on other levels. For example, a knowledge of Bible is most likely a sine qua non of any Jewish educational model. Accordingly, considerations about Bible, both scholarly and pedagogical, could form the basis of joint efforts to strengthen Jewish education. Scholars and educators from both Israel and the Diaspora have unique perceptions to bring to such a mutual effort. The very recognition of a common commitment to the text in the face of a plurality of perceptions about its meaning might provide a basis on which to move forward to other categories of knowledge.

There is another important consideration in examining the foundations of Jewish education, namely, the realm of educational theory, technology, and methodology. Whatever the particular view of Jewish tradition and content, any educational effort must take into account the body of knowledge and research which derives from the discipline of education. Assuming a shared goal of creating the most effective models for Jewish learning, Israel and the Diaspora can create a partnership that seeks to apply the scholarship in education to the particular challenges of Jewish education. Drawing on such theoretical fields as sociology of education, curriculum, instruction and evaluation, academics, researchers, and practitioners might collaborate to create a base of knowledge that addresses some of the most perplexing Jewish education questions. To the degree that Jewish education seeks to

build Jewish identity, how can evaluation theories provide models for the assessment of outcomes that indicate identity formation? How does curriculum theory contribute to the creation and implementation of models that respond to the overall aims of Jewish education while taking into account the particularities of different populations, social settings, and cultural environments? The potential of educational technology in the service of Jewish education is a universal question. Eli N. Evans, in his essay "The Electronic Village: Its Implications for Jewish Life," advocates the use of all forms of media—cable television, broadcast television, video discs, and computers—to reach mass audiences of Jews in order to enhance Jewish learning. Such an approach takes into account the impact of media in the lives of children and adults worldwide, but there is much research to be done on the educational effects of the media. Not only is joint collaboration important in assessing technology in the light of educational goals, but educators in both Israel and the Diaspora must generate more experimental projects to disseminate Jewish learning through the media. In such an endeavor scholars of Judaica, educators, and media specialists from all communities will need the support and encouragement of funding bodies to carry on research and development. This brief survey of the importance of collaborative efforts in the realm of educational research and scholarship indicates the benefit to be derived from a partnership between Israel and the Diaspora that focuses on common educational issues.

The Goals of Jewish Education

Any examination of the potential for joint efforts between Israel and the Diaspora must take into account the goals which are posited for Jewish education. Here the differences in perspective are significant. In Israeli education there is a presumption that the Israeli and Jewish identities of students are inextricably linked. Both the secular and religious tracks in Israeli education include, as a matter of course, the classical texts and history of the Jewish people. The continuity with Jewish cultural experience is provided for by the centrality of the Hebrew language. Both Jewish and general subject matter are an integral part of an Israeli child's education. The questions that arise in the

context of Israeli education are an outgrowth of how Jewish culture is perceived in the formation of national identity and citizenship. The range of views includes both the most traditional understanding in a religious sense to a secular outlook that perceives Jewish culture as the historical heritage of the Jewish nation. Ultimately the goals are to educate and socialize the young of Israel to a vision of citizenship and patriotism in accordance with a particular definition of Israel as a Jewish state.

In the Diaspora the social, cultural, and practical context is quite different. With the exception of those Jews who by choice exclude participation in the social and cultural life of the communities in which they live, all others contend with the challenge of living in two worlds. One's Jewishness is shaped through interaction with the other cultural forces in the environment. National and religious identity are not blended, and under the best of circumstances do not stand in opposition to each other. Jewish identity in the Diaspora is optimally the affirmation of the individual and collective expression of Judaism in relation to values and mores that derive from the general culture in which Jews live. In the Diaspora Jewish education must reflect goals that give credence to these multiple realities, setting forth how Judaism can be a pervasive force in the lives of Jews within such complex realities. The articulation of goals in the Diaspora is further complicated by the various ideological forces in Jewish life, each presenting a different view of what constitutes the core Jewish experience and appropriate accommodation to the general society and culture.

Given the very different world views and needs of Jews in the Diaspora and Israel, we might only hope to achieve consensus on the most general aims for Jewish education. Beyond those affirmations more specific goals, objectives, and standards would provide little guidance within such a plurality of perspectives. Even the quantification of what a Jewish education should consist of would not achieve universal acceptance. There is, however, great promise in creating opportunities for serious dialogue among educationists from the different communities and philosophical perspectives. Much can be gained from the sharing of experience, knowledge, and skills which have the potential for effective utilization in a wide variety of settings. The creation of a common pool of human and material resources, reflecting special expertise, could serve as an important asset for all forms of Jewish edu-

cation. The challenge would be that of adaptation, not adoption, in a particular educational configuration.

Israel and the Diaspora as Partners

After forty years as a sovereign nation, Israel remains the lodestar of the Jewish world. It is central to all Jewish organizations for living a normal Jewish life. It represents in its dream component and harsh realities the opportunity for fulfillment of an individual as a Jew in a national environment and under circumstances which lead to the re-creation and reconstruction of the Jewish people within our time. A Jewish world without Israel at its center is but a shadow existence. Jews living in the Diaspora who are leading Jewish lives to the best of their ability and within the context of the freedom accorded them will preserve Judaism and Jewishness in the Diaspora environment. With Israel at the center of Jewish concerns, in terms of spirituality, language, scholarship, and the arts, that life will be enhanced and enriched.

Yet world historical events since Ahad Ha-Am's time have made necessary a redefinition of his concept of Israel as a Jewish cultural/spiritual center. The Diaspora must create similar centers for the millions of Jews who will continue to live outside the State of Israel. There, coexisting centers of Jewish life can create the intellectual and spiritual apparatus which will allow world Jewry to survive in this crucial age, providing an overall framework for the totality of our people and the shaping of the Jewish national culture by both Israel and the Diaspora.

The model of the Diaspora-Israel partnership in strengthening Jewish education that I have suggested in this essay is but one step in such a direction.

I cannot help but feel that such an approach will ultimately lead to the mutual strengthening of both Israel and the Diaspora. And that mutual strengthening must have a future. We can build a living bridge of Jews who will traverse the tangents between the Center and the Diaspora. Let those of us who are part of the modern world in Israel and the Diaspora write a new *K'tav Amanah*, a document of mutual trust and belief.

We Jews, whether we are Israelis or Diaspora Jews, especially American Jews, have much in common, both in our past and in our future. We are an uprooted people, and so, wherever we find ourselves today, we care about each other and about our welfare as a people. Ahad Ha-Am, I suspect, would have felt very much the same way.

Notes

A portion of the present article was published in the *Journal of Reform Judaism* as "Ahad Ha-Am: Confronting the 'Plight of Judaism' " (Summer 1987, pp. 63–72). I am grateful to the *Journal of Reform Judaism* for giving me permission to use this material.

1. Ahad Ha-Am, *Zionism and Judaism* (1922), pp. 26–27.

2. *Forum*, vol. 4, p. 113.

3. Ahad Ha-Am, *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, trans. Leon Simon (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), p. 97.

Alfred Gottschalk is President and Professor of Bible and Jewish Religious Thought, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He is the author of numerous contributions to the thought and influence of Ahad Ha-Am.