



האגודה להבנה בינדתית בישראל (ע"ר)
جمعية المواخاة بين الأديان في إسرائيل
THE ISRAEL INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION

Joseph Emanuel (Manela)
25.1.1933 – 24.5.2013



With Hadara and Joan
עם הדרה וג'ון

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Editorial by Michael Krupp

Forward

Antigonus of Socho said: Be not like servants who minister unto their master for the sake of receiving a reward, but be like servants who serve their master not only to receive a reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you.

Mishnah Tractate Avot 1,3

The late Joseph Emanuel, who for many years was the general secretary of the Israel Interfaith Association, acted according to this saying. Joseph Emanuel lived for the "sake of heaven" without receiving a reward, without worrying about his old age. However, due to a stroke of good fortune, good friends and an old-age pension from the State of Israel he was able to find a good nursing home for the last years of his life. Joseph Emanuel succumbed to his disease in May, 2013 and was buried in the Jewish-Arab village Neve Shalom \ Wahat al-Salaam, of which he was one of the founders, beside the grave of his friend and colleague, the "father" of Neve Shalom, Father Bruno Hussar. In the last issue of the Israel Interfaith Association brochure there was only time and space for a short announcement. This issue is, however, dedicated to Joseph's memory. I include a brief outline of his life taken from documents which his wife, Hadara, has made available. Following this outline, there will be obituaries from friends and finally I quote from a book about the spiritual climate in Israel in the fifties, when Joseph Emanuel under his previous name of Joseph Manella played an important role.

Joseph Emanuel was an extraordinary personality. Because of his selfless and calm nature he led the interfaith movement in city and country with an almost invisible hand. At that time, Joseph Emanuel initiated a new era of interreligious cooperation in Israel. This era came to an end with his passing. It is incumbent upon his successors to dare a new beginning. We need a new Joseph Emanuel.

A life for others and with others

Joseph Emmanuel was born Joseph Manella in Poland in 1933. Manella is an old Sephardic Jewish family name originating in Portugal. His parents immigrated to Palestine in 1936 with their children, Joseph and his sister. A younger sister was born later in Palestine. Almost all relatives from both his father and mother's side who remained in Poland were murdered by the Nazis.

After their arrival in Palestine, the family settled in Haifa, where Joseph grew up and attended primary school. From 1947 he attended the Reali School, at that time the best high school in Israel. The school had a department to advance the most talented pupils. Here Joseph became the pupil of Dr. Joseph Schechter, one of the leading educators in the pre-state Jewish settlement in Palestine, who initiated a movement called Schechterism (followers of Joseph Schechter). Joseph became one of the favored pupils of Joseph Schechter and was especially supported by him. On the other hand, Joseph assisted his teacher by writing and translating essays and contributed a great deal to the spread of the ideas and teaching of his mentor.

After graduation Joseph and friends founded a group of young idealists, who wanted to realize the ideas of Schechter in their daily lives. They established the village of Yodfat in lower Galilee. The young settlers wanted to actualize a religious renewal, beyond the existing orientation of orthodoxy and the liberal tendencies of the time. In addition they sought to create a true community where they could renew the old revolutionary spirit, which existed in the beginning of the kibbutz movement. The new spirit of this village in the sixties and Joseph's participation in it found its reflection in the book of Herbert Weiner "The Wild Goats of Ein Gedi", which was published in several editions until the seventies and which inspired a generation of young idealists in the country. Quotations are found at the end of the publication.

Yodfat attracted numerous visitors from inside and outside the country who wanted to learn about Joseph and life in the village. Among them were representatives of a great variety of religious traditions: Buddhists of the Mahatma Gandhi movement in India, Christians like Brother Yochanan Elichai from the Order of the Little Brothers of Charles de Foucault, and the head of the Hebrew speaking Catholic communities at that time, Brother Daniel Rufheisen of the Carmelite Order, and finally, the Jewish-French philosopher André Chouraqui,

who moved from France to Israel in those days, and many more from France, Switzerland, Germany, the USA and Africa. Joseph Emanuel mastered seven languages (Hebrew, Yiddish, Arabic, English, German, Spanish and French), which helped him with these contacts. During this time Joseph was increasingly active in literary work; he edited or wrote publications for his teacher, Joseph Schechter, and worked as a translator.

In the meantime Joseph's world of ideas was changing, expanding. From a desire to renew Judaism, his horizons grew to strive to create a platform for discussion among different religious traditions

When an interreligious circle was created in Tel Aviv, Joseph Emanuel moved there, and founded a Jewish-Christian forum with Clotilde Mathies (a Catholic woman who came to Israel with this vision). A project such as this had not existed until then in Israel. Ehud Ben Ezer, who gave a lecture to this circle in 1975, wrote in his diary about Clotilde Mathies: "Clotilde was a Christian from Canada, a kind and admirable elderly lady who came to Israel with the intention of making her home available for interreligious activities".

In Tel Aviv, Joseph published the journal *Prozdor* (*Corridor*), in collaboration with like-minded people, which introduced a new trend to intellectual circles in the country for the understanding Judaism and towards an opening to other religions. Later, he published the journal *Petachim*, together with the philosopher Joseph Bentwitch, which was oriented in a similar way.



1977 – at the award distribution ceremony for the Interfaith Association
 1977 – בטנס חלוקת הפרסים של האגודה להבנה בין-דתית

During this time he was approached by the Dominican priest, Bruno Hussar, who asked for his help in realizing his dream of founding of a Jewish-Arab village. Joseph came to his aid willingly, as usual.

Bruno Hussar was the son of assimilated French Jewish parents in Cairo. After they returned to France, he finished his studies in engineering. During his years of study, he converted from Judaism to the Catholic faith in 1935, and occupied himself with theology. He contacted the Dominican order of preachers, became a Dominican and was ordained a priest in 1950. During the Second Vatican Council, Bruno Hussar worked as an expert for the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity on the draft of the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, at the invitation of Cardinal Augustin Bea. In 1953 he arrived in Haifa, Israel for the first time. From 1960 he ministered to the Hebrew-speaking Catholic community in Jerusalem. In the following years, meeting different religious groups led him to aspire to work for understanding and a deeper respect among the great world religions. Finally he

leased a piece of land on a hill belonging to the Trappist Abbey Latrun, which was until 1967 no man's land. There Bruno Hussar, who became an Israeli citizen in 1966, founded the village of Neve Shalom \ Wahat al-Salaam in 1970 along with a group of volunteers. According to the understanding of Bruno Hussar the settlement was to be a village of peace, where Christians, Jews and Muslims would live together in mutual respect despite their religious differences.

In the meantime, Joseph Emanuel moved to Jerusalem in 1970 where he accepted Prof. Zwi Werblowsky's offer to become secretary general of the Israel Interfaith Association.

In the 1950's The Israel Faith Association had been founded under the name The Israel Interfaith Committee by Martin Buber, Hugo Bergman and other like-minded people, but had so far remained dormant. The initiative for the founding of an interfaith organization can be attributed to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Martin Buber and others were asked to create a forum where foreign visitors, especially Christian groups from America and Europe, who were looking for a conversation with Judaism in Israel, could find partners for dialogue.

The duo Werblowsky/ Emanuel structured the Israel Interfaith Association, as it was now called, to initiate a forum for better understanding among the different national and religious groups in the country. From Jerusalem branches and groups were created in the whole country, especially in the north – in Acre, Nazareth and the Arabic villages, but also in the south – Beersheva and Lod, all towns with a mixed population. Contacts were established with similar groups such as Bet ha-Geffen in Haifa. All this at the initiative and under the direction of Joseph Emanuel. Joseph supported the creation of the community of monks of Lavra Netofa in the north of the country, to deal especially with the concerns of neighboring Arab villages. In Jerusalem Joseph assisted a group in the Old City, called Mamre, which, under the leadership of Rina Geftman, later merged with the settlement of Neve Shalom.

Numerous projects were undertaken to strengthen understanding among the different peoples in Israel. "Education for Peace" was founded to help teachers and students in elementary schools teach and learn equality. One of the best journalists of leftist newspapers in Israel "Al ha-Mishmar", Gabriel Stern, donated his wealth to the Association. With it Joseph created the annual peace prize of the Israel Interfaith Association.

Besides given lectures continuously in the whole country, Joseph organized seminars in areas of conflict to acquaint the Israeli population with the problems of minorities, about whom they knew little until then. There were also practical activities. for example, taking part in a hunger strike in order to repatriate the refugees of Biram and Ikrit – Christian villages in the north, Activity, which unfortunately remain unsuccessful until now.

For the benefit of foreign countries, yearly seminars were organized between Israel and countries with which Israel did not have diplomatic relations in the 1970s: India, Spain and the African countries. Information can be found on African countries in the report of Joan Poulin, who was active in this work. These projects were financed by the Israeli Foreign Ministry, which was interested in establishing diplomatic relations with these countries.

From 1982 to 1990 Joseph Emanuel published the journal "Christian Life in Israel" in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. It was replaced by the journal "Religionen in Israel" in German, also published by Joseph.

To mention the numerous groups with which Joseph cultivated contacts at home and abroad would be too time consuming. Relations with Jewish-Christian groups in foreign countries were maintained through contact with their umbrella organization, the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), which is currently headquartered in the Buber House in Heppenheim, Germany, and of which Joseph was one of the founding members. In 1982 Joseph received the peace prize of the journal *New Outlook* for his peace work for the Israel Interfaith Association, especially in the Arabic division.

In 1990, the Israel Interfaith Association was plunged into financial crisis, caused by excessive expenditures by the administration, of which Joseph was a member. Joseph resigned as general secretary of the organization. The organization's work was reduced, especially since the former massive subsidies were no longer available. The international scope of the Israel Interfaith Association was no longer needed, as the State of Israel had by then established diplomatic relations with countries with which it had previously organized seminars.

However, Joseph faithfully stayed in contact with the work of the association and advised the new leadership because no one enjoyed as many contacts to all

essential circles in the interreligious field as Joseph. Joseph dedicated himself in later years to catalog the archives of the organization, which are now housed in the Ecumenical Institute of Tantur between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

The Funeral in Neve Shalom

Joseph fell accidentally eight years ago, broke a leg and was transferred to various hospitals. Even bedridden, he assisted the organization with his advice. Regretfully he was not able to compile a biography even with the help of volunteers. During the years, his health had gradually deteriorated. His 80th birthday was celebrated in March, 2013, instead of the actual date in January, because of the condition of his health. The birthday celebration took place in Neve Shalom and was a great event which numerous guests from the interreligious scene attended. In May, 2013 Joseph succumbed to his disease. He was buried in Neve Shalom beside the grave of its founder Bruno Hussar.



With Hadara and his devoted caretaker Nabil
עם הדרה והמטפל המסור שלו נביל

In his Memory

A eulogy to Joseph given in the funeral by his nephew Israel Wagner

We have gathered here today to take our leave from my beloved uncle, Joseph Emanuel (Manela).

For me as a boy and a young man, Joseph was always my mother's wise and learned brother from Jerusalem. I would proudly tell everyone that my uncle knew seven languages: Hebrew, Yiddish, English, French, Arabic, German and Spanish. Our meetings usually took place in family gatherings. I especially loved the Seder night with Joseph. The reading of the Haggadah was interlaced with questions and explanations – which turned the event from a boring reading and waiting for the food, to a fascinating and educational meeting.

Several years ago Hadara passed to me some of Joseph's documents which she thought worth saving. Since then I looked into them twice: once when my oldest son Sharon was in seventh grade, and was writing a paper about the family's roots; and once – yesterday. The first time we looked mainly for information about my grandfather, Joseph's and my mother Tovah's father. We came again and again upon documents of Joseph's excellence in various fields; thus, the subject of our conversation turned once more to Uncle Joseph's wisdom. The second time, yesterday, I read them as a preparation to writing this eulogy. I decided to tell you some things worthy of telling about Joseph; and also to share with you a short document he wrote a few years ago, shortly summarizing his life.

Joseph was born in Poland eighty years and four months ago. When he was three and a half, his family immigrated to Eretz Israel. They were the lucky ones, for many of those who stayed behind were murdered by the Nazis in Treblinka.

Already during his high school years and later during his army service, Joseph actively joined the group of disciples of Dr. Joseph Schechter – a philosopher, rabbi, Dayan, theologian, educator and ideologist. Dr. Schechter greatly influenced Joseph, who was his right-hand and editor of his books, *From Science to Faith* – a basic and important collection of articles presenting his approach to

thinking and education); and *Chapters of Bible Instruction*, in which he summarized his special ideas about teaching the Bible.

After serving in the Army Intelligence Service, Joseph served for two years as a teacher of humanistic studies and as instructor in the agricultural high school "Ayanot" near Nes Ziona, which specialized then in the absorption of immigrant youth and youth from development towns, villages and kibbutzim, and gave them secondary studies as well as agricultural training.

For a few years, he was the organizer and treasurer of the "Yuval" group and their settlement in Yodfat in the Galilee, and was their representative in the national bodies of the state of Israel. He was active in the youth section of Union of Kvutzot and Kibbutzim and in the Scout movement. He was also appointed by the settlement authorities to act as head of the local Committee of the new settlement "Segev", near Yodfat.

Joseph became active in directing bodies of movements for social and religious renewal, as was also deeply involved in fostering understanding between nationalities and religions in Israel, in proper majority-minority relations and in fostering coexistence and education for peace – major issues till our time. He did much for establishing meetings between Arabs and Jews (adults and youth), for mutual dialog, and for the eradication of prejudices and stereotypes.

Some examples: Joseph was one of the initiators of Beit Kedem (Jewish-Arab center in Acre); initiator and actuator of Neve Shalom and the co-chairman of its board; Helped in fostering cultural relations between the settlers of Arad and the Bedouin population in the Negev; was editor of several journals on these subjects; translated religious and general theoretical books. He was General Secretary of the Israel Interfaith Committee of Israel for many years.

Joseph worked all his life in social, cultural and educational area, and had great influence on fostering human relations with the Jewish, Christian and Muslim world. Like his father before him, he devoted his life to the public. But unlike other public figures, he neglected providing for his own household and future security; and he paid a high price for this neglect.

Joseph wrote an outline of his life ("Such was my life"), telling us of the influences in his life and of the hard times he went through:



With his parents and two sisters

עם הוריו ושתי אחיותיו

Chapter one: Where we came from

The family history: mother, father, the Jews of Kelze, Poland; tradition and Zionism, immigration to Israel, acclimatization and striking roots.

Chapter two: Where we went

- a. Meeting with Schechter and his heritage and its influence; army service and self-sacrifice; settlement: "Yuval" group and Yodfat; constant search for meaning and self-fulfillment.
- b. Mission: interfaith fraternity – limitless comradeship between the Abrahamic religions; efforts toward meeting and dialog.
- c. Failed initiatives, fading, parting, loneliness – no appreciation, no livelihood; existence by faith and hope, on the verge of despair.

Joseph's life-work was education for freedom; life as a continuous search.

Finally – a sort of will for others: don't look for money' position, compensation; just do your job faithfully.

This was Joseph – may his memory be blessed.

Eli Ravid (Leishi) – from the site of Kiryat Haim

Joseph Emanuel, husband of Hadara Spiegel-Emanuel, has passed away.

Joseph was part of the group who founded “Yodfat” in lower Galilee at the end of the 1950’s. Several remarkable members of this nucleus joined our Re’ut group, during training at the military camp Beit Daras and during the period of our service in the Nahal unit.

Joseph Emanuel was buried at Neve shalom – near Latrun – a mixed Arab and Jewish settlement of which he was one of the founders.

He was an honest and straightforward person who accomplished much good for humanity at large but neglected to consider himself and his household.

May his memory be blessed.

Anne Le Meignen (*one of the founders of Neve Shalom*)

In the very rich "curriculum vitae" of Joseph Emmanuel, appears the name of Neve Shalom / Wahat al-Salaam, at present a quite well-known small village founded by Bruno Hussar, where we live together, Israeli Jews and Arabs.

From the very first year, in fact, Joseph was our friend, our advisor, sharing with us his vast experience of community living, acquired as one of the founders of the village of Yodfat in the north of the country.

Joseph knew many influential people in Israel and “with his patient persistence knew how to navigate administrative labyrinths and shake-up bureaucratic apathy” (quoted from Bruno’s autobiography).

Joseph supported us to the end of his life, confident in the success of the project, never abandoning the village despite some differences of opinion which, in the end, may, in fact, have proved productive.

Around 1990, wishing to create a centre of meditation on the Scriptures and on the realities experienced in this country in Neve Shalom, it was again Joseph who

was the advisor as well as a very active member. We organized the programs together, the topics and the lecturers. Together we also invited participants. Joseph's tremendous knowledge ensured the success of these programs. Without him this project would never have seen the light of day. Today it has developed into the "Pluralist Spiritual Centre". Along with the "House of Silence" it adds and new and indispensable dimension to Neve Shalom / Wahat al-Salaam.

This support, this exceptionally effective assistance was given without expecting any compensation, always with the modesty and faithfulness which characterized Joseph. Since Joseph "left" us, I have gone many times to find him, to ask his advice, to share our thoughts always close in so many ways... I had many opportunities to admire his great patience and nobility as he experienced physical trauma. During all our activities together, I never heard him criticize anyone in a hurtful manner, always speaking with integrity and understanding.

Joseph was a friend and a brother to us. He loved Bruno dearly, his feeling reciprocated...

May he rest in peace. He believed firmly in the power and continuity of Life. May his memory and his presence remain with us in our project with which he was so closely associated.

Thank you, Joseph!

The Joseph Emanuel I Remember – Joan Poulin

I don't remember when I first met Joseph Emanuel but his impact on my life was profound and lasting.

The years spent working with Joseph when he was General Secretary of the Israel Interfaith Association were rich in experience, in encounters with amazing people (whom Joseph seemed to attract) and in learning how a man like Joseph had the stamina and vision to bring his ideals to fruition. Joseph's ideals were as broad as the universe, as high as the heavens and as deep as the human soul. they hinged on promoting peace and understanding among all human beings, but especially in his own little corner of the world, in Israel, between Jews and Arabs as well as well as

among the different religious groups in the country: Jews, Moslems, Christians, Baha'i, Druze. His preoccupations encompassed organizing interfaith encounters in Israel among the various religious groups, promoting dialogue groups of Jews and Christians throughout the cities and towns in the country, youth dialogue groups and many other projects. He was ready to help with any initiative that was proposed to promote peace.

The utopian idea of Father Bruno Hussar to establish a village where Jews and Arabs would live together and work out their problems peacefully was just such a project. Joseph did everything he could to help Bruno and his team realize his dream until finally Neve Shalom / Wahat al-Salaam was established and is flourishing to this day.

His goals did not only include the local scene. Joseph was involved in organizing conferences on Jewish-Christians understanding in Spain, France, England as well as in many other countries of Europe, the Americas and the Middle East. He encouraged the founding of Jewish-Christian Associations in these same countries in collaboration with the International Council of Christians and Jews founded in 1947, whose head office is in the former residence of Martin Buber in Heppenheim, near Frankfurt, in Germany.

Besides promoting dialogue among different religious groups, Joseph was also passionate about providing educational opportunities to study the Bible in Israel for different religious groups.

Joseph's pet project in this area was to organize a course especially designed for African clergy who spent a couple of months studying Biblical subjects at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The clergy groups consisted of members of every Christian denomination in Africa and were held in French and English in alternate years. The course included Biblical subjects and Judaism taught by prominent scholars from the university and elsewhere in Jerusalem, Hebrew language classes every day and social events to introduce the Africans to Israeli everyday life and to Israeli people, prominent and otherwise.



At one of the African seminars
באחד הסמינרים לאנשי דת מאפריקה

The students also visited Biblical sites around Jerusalem and throughout the Holy Land: archaeological excavations, historical sites, places known from Gospel stories. I was privileged to help organize as well as guide these excursions as well as other activities for the course. We took the opportunity while we travelled to visit development projects in Israel: in the Negev, for example, to learn about Israeli advances in desert survival (mud-brick housing adapted to a desert climate, arid-lands' irrigation methods, what plants could be adapted to dry climates etc.).

Joseph worked closely with the Department of International Cooperation in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs who financed the project along with some private donors. It was necessary also to get the cooperation of various governments to obtain visas from African countries, some of whom did not then have diplomatic relations with Israel.

The feedback we received after the students returned to their own countries was unanimously positive. Their experience in Israel changed forever their view of Scripture. and Judaism. Not only did the Biblical stories come alive when they walked in the land where the patriarchs and prophets lived and where Jesus travelled teaching his disciples and the crowds, but discussions with Israeli

scholars on the latest developments in Biblical archaeology, philology, history and exegesis helped greatly in their pastoral work back home.

The passing of Joseph is a great loss to the cause of mutual understanding among Jews, Christians and Moslems everywhere but also for the cause of peace in Israel.

Ruti Avidor (*One of the Founders of Yodfat and Joseph's Sister in law*)

In our lives, concepts of time include past, present and future. It is difficult for us to constantly live in the present. When close friends or acquaintances disappear from our lives, we become conscious for a moment that thanks to these people, even amidst other difficulties, there is a positive side to the past.

Joseph Emanuel (Manela) was one of these people. He left an indelible impression on those he left behind, on friends and strangers alike. His is a typical Jewish story: born in Poland eighty years ago, his family, parents and older sister, immigrated to Haifa, Israel, when he was a child (his younger sister was born in Israel). Each one in the family was gifted in his/her own way; each one's character was unique.

Joseph's gifts were special and unusual in that he never used them for his own benefit. Even as a small child, he displayed a striking characteristic so lacking in our own day: to strive for the good of humanity. As a gifted pupil at the Reali School in Haifa, his exceptional qualities were recognized by his teacher, Dr. Joseph Schechter, and the two of them were joined by a small group of students. Together they reflected on what Dr. Schechter called their "Interior Guide" which exists within each one but is often not expressed, or cannot find an outlet in one's personal or social life.

Dr. Schechter's philosophy was as profound as it was all-embracing. He did not know English, but "only" German, Hebrew and Yiddish, (and maybe Polish). At one time, before immigrating to Israel, he had been part of the "Vienna Group". In Israel, he worked for many years teaching and writing; his writings include interesting commentaries on Tanakh, Mishna, Talmud. He developed his views on

everything connected with the “Interior Guide” which exists within the Jewish people as well as within the rest of humanity.

His students, among them Joseph Emanuel who knew many languages perfectly, translated articles from around the world; Joseph was also able to translate many articles into Hebrew (Joseph’s knowledge of Hebrew helped in his work for Israeli Intelligence). At that time (in the 1950’s) not many people in Israel knew much about Buddhism, ecology and so on. Articles translated by his students (from Kierkegaard, Eric Fromm, Heinrich von Kleist, sacred writings from the Far East which had been translated into English, writings of famous Rabbis from every generation, and so on) lead them to an understanding that serious spiritual achievements in life could only be attained through a broad spectrum of insights from many sources.

Developments within the group progressed slowly, but after many ‘ups and downs’, a nucleus, called “Yuval”, was formed. This group was dedicated to the establishment of a community whose aim was to put into practice the spiritual principles which they had developed over the years. Joseph was the oldest member of the group, and in his quiet, confident manner paved the way for the foundation of the village Yodfat, where we have been living for over 50 years. Although the Jewish National Fund planned that we should become a rural village to restore the forests in the area, things did not work out as planned (but that is another story...).

Joseph also helped the only other Jewish village in the area, Segev, to prevent its disintegration (which seemed unavoidable) and helped solve the problems of the residents.

Later, Joseph moved to Jerusalem and accepted the position of General Secretary of the Israel Interfaith Association. I do not intend to ‘judge’, but many people, even with the best of intentions, could not avoid the escalation of personal conflicts. Joseph’s fidelity to his goals, his ability to overcome obstacles without being submerged by them, was in itself a great achievement. He was also instrumental in the foundation of Neve Shalom, a Jewish-Arab village, where he is buried. It is essential to mention his faithful and devoted companion, Hadara, who participated in all his activities, and helped solve his health problems until his dying day.

His passing gives meaning to the blessing "May his spirit be bound in the bundle of life". Amen.

Joseph Emanuel: His life-work and his contribution to the Masorti (Conservative) – Family Community in Beit Hakerem, Charles W. Greenbaum

Joseph Emanuel (1933-2013) passed away on the 15th of the Hebrew month of Sivan, 5773 (28 May, 2013), a few weeks after his 80th birthday.

Joseph Emanuel was a multi-faceted person, a pioneer in formulating and promoting an enlightened view of Judaism in Israeli society. He was heavily involved in the creation of communities in Israeli society that reflected the values of pioneering and spirituality. These were expressed by the world-view of his mentor, Joseph Schechter at the Reali High School in Haifa. Joseph was a founder of Kibbutz Yodfat in the Galilee, a place that was devoted to putting these values into practice.

In addition, much of Joseph's activity was devoted to developing good relationships between Jews and Palestinian Arabs in Israeli society. Thus, he helped conceive and plan a unique Jewish-Arab community, Neve Shalom \ Wahat al-Salaam, near Latrun in central Israel. Neve Shalom is the only town in Israel in which Jews and Arabs live as partners on a basis of complete equality. Neve Shalom promotes respectful coexistence of the two peoples in Israel through its School for Peace. Over the years, thousands of Israeli high school students, Jewish and Arab, have participated in its workshops.

Joseph was for many years the Director of the Israel Interfaith Association, an organization that was created to promote contact and understanding among Jews, Christians and Moslems. In this capacity Joseph initiated meetings, conferences, and tours for the different ethnic and religious groups from Israel and from other countries. I met Joseph for the first time at one of these events. At that time I was impressed by his devotion to the cause of coexistence, his attention to every detail concerning the activities of the Association, and his investment of time, thought, and energy to the activities of the organization,

In his later years Joseph and Hadara moved to Beit Hakerem and joined the Masorti-Family Community of Beit Hakerem. Joseph was a devoted member of this community. He and Hadara were usually among the first to arrive on Shabbat morning. Joseph knew and conversed with many in the community and participated in its meetings. He continued to come to Shabbat services for as long as he was able. Because of his quiet and modest manner, many in the community did not know of his past achievements.

Joseph stood out among the people who gave talks on Judaism or the Torah Portion at the community's services. His talks were always meticulously prepared. In addition to his explanation of the text, he wove spiritual and universalistic dimensions of Judaism into his talks.

In one of these talks he reviewed the major principles of Joseph Schechter's approach to Judaism and society. Joseph had been instrumental in bringing Schachter's book to publication. Afterward I asked him to lend me Schechter's book so that I could learn more. It was clear that the two "Josephs" had developed an authentic and humanistic Israeli view of Judaism that could fill a real need in present-day Israeli society.

In his last years Joseph became physically disabled and he was hospitalized in the Department of Geriatrics of Herzog Hospital in Jerusalem where he received a number of long-term treatments. The hospital became his home. Remarkably, Joseph kept up his spirits. Hadara attended to every detail of his care. Joseph left the hospital only rarely. On my visits to him in the hospital, we discussed many topics: the state of Israeli society, literature, Judaism, Jewish-Arab relations and more. Joseph was very well-read; he kept up with current events, read books and newspapers and kept abreast of current events. I felt badly that I did not visit him more; each time I learned something from him.

Joseph always asked about the Beit Hakerem Masorti community, about the people and the activities. The Community was important to him and he saw it as part of his social and public activity.

Hadara organized concerts at the hospital for Joseph on his birthdays, with the participation of outstanding musicians that they knew. These events lifted his spirits and others who were in the hospital at the time enjoyed them very much.

Some weeks before he died his friends and colleagues organized an 80th birthday party in honor of Joseph at Neve Shalom. People who had been with him at different stages of his life were there, modest people like Joseph himself. Prof. Haim Avni and I also took part. Haim spoke of Joseph's role in organizing visits with people from Latin America to Israel. At the end, Joseph spoke of some of his own experiences and added important details to the talks given by others.

After a number of weeks, we gathered again, this time sadly for Joseph's funeral, also at Neve Shalom. His life work was described well by his wife Hadara, his nephew Yisrael Wagner, and others... The same people who had gathered only a few weeks before were there, with the addition of some younger people from Neve Shalom, and family members. Again there were speeches, this time in Joseph's memory, again by the quiet and modest people who, like Joseph were people of deeds, people who built places not only for material gain but for the spirit. People sang songs from the Book of Psalms. It was a pity that we could not hear Joseph again summing it all up.

Joseph's grave at the small Neve Shalom cemetery is near that of the Dominican priest, Brother Bruno Hussar, who died in 1996, founder and living spirit of Neve Shalom for many years. Not far from there is the grave of Ahmad Hijazi who was a member of Neve Shalom and Director of the School for Peace and the grave of Ahmad's 11 year old son, Adam, both of whom were killed in a tragic car accident some months before while on a vacation trip in Zanzibar, East Africa in 2012.

Here they lie, buried in the same patch of earth: a Jew, a Christian and Moslems, each of whom devoted a life to co-existence, dialogue and peace. How different this is from the bitter reality that exists among the living in the world of today.

We can only hope that Joseph's example and that of the others who are now near him will help us reach the goals for which they lived.



During his illness – with volunteers from the Hagoshrim organization
בעת אשפוזו – עם מתנדבים מארגון "הגושרים"

From The Wild Goats of Ein Gedi

By Herbert Weiner

The Israeli Yearning for "Something"

It was at a meeting of Amana¹ that I met what struck me as a most intriguing specimen of the new and perhaps future type of Israeli spiritual budding. The leader of some youngsters who called themselves Yuvalites, and who were then working as cotton pickers in the tropical valley of Bet Shean, had come to the meeting. I noticed him, a good-looking lad with large, dark eyes and tousled, light hair, leaning his head wearily against the chair in front of him. He saw me watching him, smiled, and shrugged. "*Diburim* – words, words," he whispered, as if to apologize for his lack of attention.

After the meeting we strolled through the streets of Jerusalem, and Joseph Manellah told me about his group. He was careful not to speak overenthusiastically about their immediate possibilities. As a matter of fact, they were at that time going through an organizational crisis. Many of the young people had left for the army. Among those who remained, a few had "gone off the deep end" in their enthusiasm for Yoga and other spiritual novelties. The group lacked permanent leadership, and above all at that time, a permanent home. For several years they had been wandering from place to place, trying to establish themselves. Still, Manellah was hopeful that their experiment would succeed. They had no desire to become a mass movement, but, thought Manellah, there was room for a small group like theirs, which if successful could eventually do more for the larger community by personal example than by preaching.

The ideology, such as it was, of Manellah's group was simple and when expressed could sound banal. They wanted to found a community based on inner bonds of love and friendship in which each member would seek to realize the most essential purpose of life – a purpose which they felt was linked to a consciousness of the "something above man." Above all, the individuals in Manellah's group wanted to close the gap between professed ideals and actual life.

¹ Think-tank at which Joseph met Bruno.

The call to spiritual regeneration by choosing life on a kibbutz has a hollow echo these days, for the kibbutz is going through its own crisis. New immigrants and city youngsters no longer are attracted to it. And in the kibbutz itself, there is a beating of breasts. "We have adopted the ideals of the city, and become bourgeois villages that give little more than lip service to the ideals of human relationships and the spiritual goals which inspired our foundation." This gap between official ideals and actual life in the city and in the kibbutz, in political and personal life, is the essence of what Israelis call their current crisis of values.

It is against the background of this discussion that the efforts of Manellah's group take on intriguing meaning.

The next day at one of the Amana sessions Manellah outlined the thinking of the young people he represented in more detail. Most of them were sabras, graduates of local high schools, and the children of nonreligious parents. The question which had brought them to form their group was simple. "We had asked ourselves as we were about to go out into life, what should a man do in this world? We do not want to just live and be dragged after that which is done. We wanted to reach the root of things, to understand them and to feel them."

Manellah explained that city life did not appeal to them, because "man in the city was lonesome. His human relations were usually based on artificial manners which were feigned, or else there was complete indifference." Nor did life in the villages and kibbutzim seem much different. Their goal also seemed to be a higher standard of physical existence, more comfort. Nor did his group feel that a sense of duty to people and state could be the center of a man's life. After much discussion among themselves, and with the guidance of Dr. Joseph Schechter, a high-school principal in Haifa, Manellah's group decided to create a collective settlement which would attempt to achieve a deeper relationship with that which is "higher than man" - with God. They decided that their ideal ought not to "remain in a state of constant discussion, but be realized in deeds." Quickly Manellah sketched some of their admittedly experimental efforts. They had decided to devote themselves to agricultural labor, because this would enable each individual to gain a better sense of being "a part of the cosmic cycle of life." They tried to infuse their work with meaning by various techniques. For example, in the morning before going out to work they set aside moments for solitude, "because it is first necessary to draw oneself together, become aware of oneself, awaken clear. A person draws himself together in order to have a full meeting with the world."

During their work they try to emphasize rhythm, not to begin quickly and to then end tiredly, but to make every moment as meaningful as possible. In the evenings there were also moments set aside for solitude, and occasionally group prayer. Their prayers are very short - "a long prayer is usually a sign of degeneration." They mark the Sabbath, but with a pattern different from both the religious Orthodox, or the so-called freethinking kibbutzim. Thus, they do not take the kind of journeys which the nonreligious kibbutzim like to enjoy on the Sabbath, for "leaving one's place is contrary to the spirit of the Sabbath." On the other hand, they do not have congregational prayers on Sabbath mornings like the Orthodox. Instead, each person goes off by himself to meditate. At one time they ate their Sabbath noon meal in strict silence, but lately they had lightened that rule, though they still avoided the compulsion to talk just for the sake of talking. They also observe the key religious holidays of the year, trying to sense the peculiar significance in each of them. For example, the Day of Atonement is for them an opportunity for renewal, a day of special effort to "drive out the demoniac elements" which have accumulated within individuals and the community during the course of the year. This demoniac took different forms - "inner emptiness, denial of ideals and values, cynicism, anger, weakness, feeble relations between man and his neighbor, and so forth." They also fasted on the Day of Atonement, and when they wash on the morning of that day, "there is a symbolic meaning in this washing."

They wanted to achieve an inner peace by this way of life. "This state of inner peace," said Manellah "is the place of meeting between the soul and God. The world wants noise and distraction and fears peace. If we attain a fundamental faith, a unity in the community, a life of simplicity and labor, joy will also come. Joy is a feeling that there is a purpose in life."

All of these thoughts were not original, Manellah admitted with a quiet smile. They were common to Indian, Chinese, primitive Christian, and Islamic traditions. But they were also to be found in the Jewish tradition, though sometimes "contact with non-Jewish tradition helps us to understand better the expressions and symbols which in our own tradition have been forgotten because of much use." Therefore the group often discussed existentialist literature, or drew upon Indian writings or even Christian writings in addition to their Jewish sources.

Aware that the kind of life he was portraying might not seem sufficiently Jewish to his listeners, Manellah closed with a quote from A. D. Gordon.

“Jews in the past were first of all human beings, who lived, thought, and felt about God, about man, about their life; and because they were Jews, they afterward called the way of life they had created Judaism. So also, if we will have something to say about great things in the world, and if we shall create a true way of life, it too can be called Judaism.”

In conclusion Manellah paid tribute to Dr. Joseph Schechter, the teacher whose inspiration had brought the initial group together, and who is still their spiritual guide, even though he could not live with them.



A certificate of Hareali school – 1950

Dr. Schechter was present at the meeting of Amana. He is stocky, ruddy-faced, husky voiced, and fierce in his opinions – a vigorous personality. In another age he might have been the type that could start a religious sect. This thought has evidently occurred also to Schechter, with whom I spoke after the meeting.

“I do not have enough mana – primal power – though in other ways I am all right. With money, for example, I am O.K. It plays no role in my life. In other ways, too, I'm O.K. – but necessary is this mana.” Schechter has a way of opening his eyes wide, and pausing as if to let the full significance of his remarks sink in.

I later obtained some of Schechter's writings and realized how important this concept of *mana*, primal and direct, was in his thought. "A community possessing great existential energy," writes Schechter, "is equipped for the struggle with the phenomenon universally characterized in all human communities – the victory of death over life, the disintegration of existence, the phenomena of license, individualism, cynicism, lust, irony, boredom, emptiness, doubt, demonism, fetishism and ossification, 'inner death.'"

It is the quality of *oz*, usually translated as strength, but according to Schechter a term employing the manifest presence of God, a type of *mana* or life power, which Schechter sees as the main characteristic of the biblical individual and community. This "existential energy," when linked with community needs, becomes "responsibility – the key trait of the religious person's life."

Even a quick reading of Schechter's writings, some of them in books, others in mimeographed sheets got together for pedagogical problems, shows how deeply Manellah and his group, who are sometimes called Schechterists, are influenced by the Haifa educator. "The kibbutz, the collective settlement," says Schechter "is the Israeli solution to the problem of man in our time. The kibbutz is not to be appreciated primarily as a solution for economic or security problems, but from the point of view of the spirit. It is a view of life, which comes naturally to young people desirous of returning to a type of communal life which was known of old among the tribes, and in different communities throughout the ages, and its purpose is to renew a positive relationship between the individual and his natural basis of existence."

The essential drive of a person who enters a kibbutz, in Schechter's opinion, ought to be his eagerness to live in the present.

"He whose hopes are always in the future is a coward. He wants something, but does not have the strength to realize it now, in his life, in the present." Similarly, one who is always thinking about the past is simply a "tombstone." He also does not live his own life. He is not present at all. A person who is truly mature, however, and possessed of inner strength, takes upon himself full responsibility for his life, and therefore lives now, today – not tomorrow and yesterday. One who wishes to live in the present finds supreme meaning precisely in repetition. For such a one, the present is one with eternity and eternity is one with the present. Everything both repeats and renews itself. Every morning is like the first

morning, every Sabbath like the first Sabbath, and every season of nature and life as if it were met for the first time.

The pamphlet goes on to point out that the “covenant” is the traditional way of forming the community which wants to achieve this kind of life. Every individual who enters a covenant community should experience a “new birth.” That is to say, what had previously existed within him as a possibility now becomes reality. He who was previously a “strong man” becomes now a “responsible man,” for strength and weakness are only possibilities which have to be realized, and the realization of an individual's strength in a community is achieved through his taking on of responsibilities for the community and its individuals. In that way what was once only a “view of life” becomes a “way of life.”

In such a community “people who are together do not mock each other, do not relate to each other ironically, do not close themselves off from each other, do not make little of each other, and never abandon each other in any situation.” For mockery, irony, self-enclosure, etc., all of these remove a person not only from the community, but from his own sources of life contact, and deprive him of *oz* – existential energy. They also deprive him of joy, for the absence of joy is present when an individual does not fully carry out the movement from inner desires and thought to realization in life.

One of the keys to a fully realized life lived in the present is an attempt to harmonize all life expressions, both inner and outer, with the natural biological and geographical environment. This is an idea which Schechter says he has culled from Eastern sources. He once read some chapters written by a Chinese scholar which suggested how a person might relate himself to the twelve months of the year. For example, if certain birds appear at a certain time of the year, then one should pay attention to the kind of songs they sing and weave their style of melody into one's own singing. The color of a season's flowers, the texture of the skies, and other natural phenomena are part of the “law of heaven and earth,” to which man should harmonize the details of his life, his manner of work, of dress, his thought.

What the Chinese writer did in terms of his country's seasons, Schechter tries tentatively to outline for the land of Israel. For example, the general mood of an Israeli summer is “tiredness, effort, and a yearning for what is ahead. The dominant sense is touch.” The sense of sight continues to function, but it is

limited, as is also the sense of smell in the summer. The typical flower of this season in Israel is the thorn bush, whose flowers are practically lacking in odor. The main animal of the season is the bird, and its voice is sharp and high (therefore, suggests Schechter, the songs sung in that season ought to be of a similar tone). The dominant color of the season is brown and white, and this might be reflected in the clothes. The major foods to be eaten are fruits and juicy vegetables rather than meat and porridge, and “not too many sweet things.” These are the kind of suggestions, admittedly experimental, which Schechter thinks are appropriate to the Israeli seasons.

The Jewish calendar, as Schechter understands it, does reflect a rhythm and mood in keeping with the natural law. It realizes that the day, for example, and particularly the morning, is the time when man goes out to meet the world. “But the essential mood of the evening is withdrawal for the sake of protection. The night is the time of darkness, the time of “the awakening of the harsh judgments” in Cabalistic terminology. Therefore, the night is the time for group meetings, because the group is stronger than the individual. It is also the time for group song and prayer. The morning, on the other hand, including Sabbath morning, might be set aside for individual meditation, because the individual has less need of the group at that time.

Schechter breaks each of the days, holidays, and seasons into this type of pattern, but enough has been quoted to indicate the general tenor of his thought. To the extent that the Yuvalites have an ideology, it is this attempt to bring their rhythm and style of life into direct contact with the laws of “heaven and earth.”

Shortly before they moved to their permanent home in Yodephet I visited Manellah and his colleagues in Segev, a newly built village for Moroccan immigrants, located in the western Galilee not far from Yodephet. They had rented some cottages from the villagers and were working in the area, some on road building, others in educational tasks among the Moroccan Jews.

I came there shortly before the Sabbath noon meal and found Manellah helping to prepare the meal in a small wooden shack which served the group as their dining room. Two girls were warming the food and setting the table. Food arrangements among the Yuvalites, Manellah explained, were more informal than among other kibbutzim. The kitchen and the icebox were always open. The idea was to have everybody “feel as if he were living in his mother's house.”

Shortly after noon the young people began walking into the room, most of them rubbing their eyes and half-yawning as if not quite emerged from deep Sabbath rest. All of them were in their early twenties or younger, and obviously very individualistic personality types. Manellah lifted a piece of bread and offered a brief blessing - not the traditional Orthodox form, but a simple "Thank Thee, God, for this bread." The rest of the meal was eaten in semi silence, broken by an occasional light comment. Though friendly, it was evident that the Yuvalites were not going to let the appearance of a stranger interfere with their Sabbath rest by letting themselves be drawn into a full discussion of their ideals or problems. After the meal they went to their rooms, some to nap, others to hear a concert on the radio. Manellah took me to his room. Another point of distinction between their group and other kibbutzim, said Manellah, was that they wanted to keep the family unit, including the children, intact, and living in the same quarters.

Through the windows of the cottage we could see Yodephet, the future home of the group. Manellah was still cautious about the future of his group. He would be happy, he said, if they received some publicity in America. Perhaps some youngsters there might be attracted. When I asked if there was anything I could do to help, he suggested that some books dealing with religious problems in a liberal way might be useful. Otherwise, all they needed were a few more young people. Life in Yodephet would undoubtedly be hard. There would be little opportunity for entertainment. But, said Manellah, there were surely some young people who felt that the kind of entertainment available in the city was taking them away rather than toward the essence of life and even joy. The pursuit of "new" things and "diversions" often came from a sense of inner emptiness and boredom. But in boredom – he quoted his teacher, Schechter – "man senses the eternal, but cannot endure it." Therefore he runs from it, but his running only further scatters his being and leads to more boredom and lack of joy. Manellah had the feeling that there were some young people – not many – who felt this way, and who would fit into his group. Despite his caution about the immediate future, the young sabra did feel that a group like his, soon to be called the settlers of Yodephet, had a contribution to make to Israel's crisis of values – a contribution which was indigenous to that land in both an historical and geographical sense.

In 1961 the Yuvalites moved into their new home on top of a stony hill. In one of their rooms they placed two loaves of bread and a bowl of water on a table under a constantly burning electric light to symbolize the daily, earthly life constantly

lighted by a light from above. Here they come, sometimes alone for a moment of meditation, or as a group, to sit quietly on mats and sing songs. Occasionally they read and discuss an unusual mixture of literature – perhaps an essay by Kierkegaard or Sartre, along with some saying of Lao-tse, a selection from Hasidic sources, a chapter from the Bible. On Sabbaths they eat their meal in semi silence, sitting around a table so as to face each other in a style reminiscent of the ancient Essene sects as they were described by the first-century Jewish Roman historian, Josephus.

The attempt to associate these husky Israeli youngsters with an ascetic religious group like the Essenes and Josephus is not as far-fetched as it might seem. They are what in more religious days might have been called a “covenant community”; that is, a group that has adopted a specific spiritual as well as organizational pattern of life. They are also connected with Josephus – by accident of geography. Near their new home are some stone walls, the remains of a fortress called Yodephet, which was defended by Josephus before he deserted the Jewish cause and went over to the Romans. The young people call their collective settlement, or kibbutz, by the name of the ancient fortress.

Kibbutz Yodephet is an intriguing phenomenon on the spiritual landscape of modern Israel, and a meeting with these youngsters can lead to what may be extravagant thoughts. But there is something about them which recalls the biblical commandment to love God “with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your might.” A kind of religious expression which is satisfied with nothing less than “all.” Their belief that ideals are to be realized in life and not only taught by speeches or pamphlets may seem naïve and even queer to some – but it is a technique which draws its inspiration, conscious and unconscious, from the deepest roots of the Hebrew tradition. But such talk would, I fear, be dismissed by the sabras of Yodephet as mere *diburim* - “words.” They are interested in more.