JEWISH AND DEAF
One Microculture or Two?

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Deaf Jews are members of two cultures. The Deaf community, is strong and unified, but for Deaf Jews, there are many barriers to full participation in the Jewish community, including a halachic view that emphasizes disability and the lack of adequate educational and religious services. Recommendations are made to support the attempts of Deaf Jews to become full members of the Jewish community.

A man explains that he grew up in a Catholic school and did not learn until he was a teenager that he was not Catholic, but was Jewish. Another man was denied the opportunity to have a Bar Mitzvah ceremony, the Jewish rite of passage into manhood. A girl sits in the back of the synagogue, unable to lipread the words of the rabbi, with no idea of what is going on in the service. Others are unable to understand their own weddings or the funerals of loved ones. They have seen the candles, mezuzot, *Torahs, and other symbols of Judaism all their lives without ever understanding their meaning or significance.*

Each person above is a member of two groups. Their religion is Judaism, and their exceptionality is Deafness.[1] This article examines Jewish religion and culture, Deaf lifestyle and culture, and the combination of the two to determine whether they constitute one microculture or two mutually exclusive subcultures. It then makes some recommendations for bridging the gap between the two cultures.

There are no recent data on the number of Deaf Jews in the United States. At the time the National Census of the Deaf Population was conducted in 1974, there were almost 500,000 prevocationally Deaf persons. Schein and Waldman (1986) suggest that 5% of this population was Jewish, yielding a figure of 25,000 Deaf Jews. A 1965 study of religious preferences of Deaf persons in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area found that 4.5% of the respondents identified themselves as Jewish, in contrast to almost 19% as Catholics and 68% as Protestants. At that time, Jews made up about 5% of the Washington population. Thus, it would appear that Deaf persons' religious preferences are distributed similarly to those of the general population.

Culture can be defined as a group's program for survival and adaptation to their environment (Banks & Banks, 1989). Another definition is that it is knowledge shared by individuals who cooperatively accomplish their social affairs (Epstein et al., 1987). Members of a culture "share a system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting" (Goodenough, 1971, as cited in Epstein et al. 1987).

Judaism is a religion, but it is also a culture. As Bernard Reisman (1979, p. 4) wrote, "The Jews are both a religious and an ethnic community and the two elements have been so interrelated over the course of Jewish history that it is not possible to know where one begins and the other ends." Some examples of cultural characteristics include using the Yiddish language, observing Jewish customs and holidays, reading Jewish journals and newspapers, living in a Jewish neighborhood, or just feeling Jewish. The culture of Judaism is transmitted by the practice of rituals from generation to generation—informally through the family, and formally through religious education.

Deafness is a disability, but it is also a culture. Deaf people are a linguistic minority who, like other cultures, share a system of beliefs and values, ways of perceiving the world around them, patterned behaviors for social interaction, and a common preferred language. Deaf culture has traditions, rituals, a history, and criteria for acceptance into it (Epstein et al., 1987). The cement that binds the Deaf community of the United States is American Sign Language. It is preferred by Deaf persons because it is adapted to the eye, just as English is adapted to the ear (Schein & Waldman, 1986).

Because of the difficulties of communicating with hearing people, Deaf people feel a strong need for community. In *Dancing without Music*, Benderly (1980, p. 236) explains that Deaf people "have to get together; there's no other way of satisfying the basic human craving for sociability. They generally can't "kibbitz" on the job or pass the time of day with the neighbors or chat with shopkeepers or drop in at the corner tavern. Typing on the TTY has none of the warmth of chatting on the phone."

Traditionally, Deaf culture, unlike the Jewish culture, has not been transmitted by the family, since most Deaf children are born to hearing parents. Instead, in the dormitories of the residential schools for Deaf children, they are introduced to the social life of Deaf people. In this environment, children learn not only Sign Language but also the content of the Deaf culture. Thus, the schools become the hubs of the communities that surround them, preserving for the next generation the culture of earlier generations (Padden & Humphries, 1988).

If Jewish culture is generally transmitted within the family structure and Deaf culture within the residential school environment, then how is information about Judaism passed on to Jewish Deaf children?

It clearly is not passed on in the residential schools, most of which offer no Jewish religious or educational programs. In sharp contrast to the absence of a Jewish presence at most residential schools, every major Christian denomination is represented by ordained or lay people, who are fluent in Sign Language, to give spiritual guidance to the youngsters. As a result, many Jewish children innocently participate with their Christian friends in their Bible classes (Schein & Waldman, 1986).

Neither is Jewish culture transmitted within the family for many Jewish Deaf children. Being raised in a Jewish home is not enough when the hearing parents of a Deaf child cannot even communicate effectively with their son or daughter. Many parents of Deaf children do not know Sign Language, and their children may not be skilled lipreaders. And when the parents are Deaf, they may have little Jewish knowledge to pass on to their children, be they hearing or Deaf.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Lack of Adequate Religious Education

Historically, Christian religions have been strong supporters of their Deaf co-religionists. The Catholic Church has made many contributions to the education of Deaf children. In fact, a French priest established the first school open to all Deaf students (Schein & Waldman, 1986). Today, the Catholic Church maintains nine parochial schools for Deaf students, and the Lutherans sponsor two such schools. The only Jewish religious school for Deaf children is the Hebrew Institute for the Deaf in New York City.

The same pattern of stronger support by the Christian faiths for religious education continues at the college level. At Gallaudet University, the only liberal arts university for Deaf students in the world, Catholic and Protestant chaplains are assigned full-time by their religious orders.

1. It is a convention to capitalize the word "Deaf" to emphasize that it is a distinct culture.

In contrast, Jewish students are served only on a part-time basis by a person from the community who may either be trained in Judaism and not know Sign Language or by a Jewish Deaf adult who has no formal training in Judaism.

Rabbinical seminaries, unlike those of other religious faiths, do not include information about Deafness, how to teach Jewish precepts to Deaf people, or any sign language in their curriculum (Schein & Waldman, 1986).

Religious Services

The Christian religions' greater support of their Deaf co-religionists extends beyond education. Many churches provide interpreted religious services, have clergy who know Sign Language and sign the services, and offer Sign Language classes for their members. The *Second Jewish Catalogue* (Strassfeld & Strassfeld, 1976) suggests that Jewish leaders looking for Deaf Jews should check the local churches.

In addition, Sign Language has been influenced more strongly by Christianity than by Judaism, as the signs for most religious terms have been developed by the Christian community (Strassfeld & Strassfeld, 1976). For example, the most commonly used sign for Bible is "Jesus-book," and the sign "to pray" shows the hands together in a position used by non-Jews to pray. In addition, the commonly used word for "Jewish" denotes stroking the beard, is very close to the sign of "stingy," and is often used in a derogatory manner.

Traditional Jewish View of Deafness

One reason why Deaf Jews have had such a difficult time gaining access to Jewish religious education and services is the traditional Jewish view of Deafness, which emphasizes disability. The Talmud states that there are three categories of people who cannot engage in marriage, divorce, the making of contracts, or the buying of movable and immovable property: the *heresh* (the deaf-mute), the *shoteh* (the lunatic), and the *katan* (the minor). These three categories of individuals are placed together because of the assumed shared limitations in their ability to communicate, be communicated with, and therefore to understand what they are doing.

Under talmudic law, a Deaf person who did not speak could not assume full citizenship in the Jewish community. This restriction was seen as a necessary means of protecting such individuals from exploitation.

Since it is the inability to communicate and be understood that is the basis of this proscription, halachic authorities in recent years have modified it based on advances in technology and education that overcome this disability. David Feldman, a halachic scholar, explains:

> When the Mishnah says *heresh*, the Talmud declares that it does not mean a deaf person only; it means the deaf-mute; it means one who cannot hear or speak, it is presumed, has been denied the ability to communicate properly. If a person cannot communicate or be communicated with, then it must be assumed that he cannot learn what things are all about. Therefore, his *kavanah* (intent) to marry, divorce, to buy, to sell, to give *halitzah* (in the levirite ritual), to put on tefillin or perform other ritual observances—let alone the social deeds and activities he might engage in, if they have legal context to them—is inadequate. We must assume he cannot do them if he cannot hear or though he cannot hear. Because if he can speak, then he can say what he wants to know, and then others can make things known to him, knowing what he has said. And so one giant step forward has been taken by saying that as long as a person can speak, the loss of hearing alone no longer remains a disqualifying disability. (p. 13)
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> The next major steps in the history of halachic (Jewish law) development deal with the removal of other aspects of disqualification. What if one cannot hear or speak, but can hear with the assistance of an ear-horn or trumpet? These have been used for the past 250 years. Now they have been entirely superseded by mechanical hearing aids. Already in the nineteenth century the halachic authorities said that as long as a person can hear with assistance, he can hear. That is all that is necessary. Such a person is . . . as "open-minded" and as whole and functional as anyone else. The halachah states that there are no longer any disabilities so long as he can hear, even with assistance, such as the horn.
>
> The far greater advance in neutralizing the legal disqualification is by considering the reason why the deaf-mute cannot engage in these activities. If the reason is that he cannot communicate and therefore remains unaware, then what if he goes to a school where he is taught a sign language or lip-reading? Or is taught to communicate despite a total disability of hearing and speaking? Then we must say he is able to learn and to understand and to make himself as understood as those who have no impairment to begin with.
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> Five rabbis represented in this book decided that a person who goes to a school for the deaf and learns to overcome his impairment by being able to communicate in other ways should have no more legal limitations placed upon him. Five others retained the category and the limitations (Feldman, 1986, p. 14).

Another way of interpreting the talmudic restriction is to consider that there are two types of *heresh* (Feldman, 1986). One is the deaf-mute whose disability is permanent and whom the Talmud would disqualify from most activities. The other is analogous to the *katan* (the minor), who becomes Bar or Bat Mitzvah and is ready to assume the full responsibilities of citizenship. A *heresh* in the category of a minor—namely, one whose limitations will be corrected either with time, education, or a hearing aid—should only be restricted from those activities temporarily until the disability is removed.

Another problematic issue is the use of Sign Language as a vehicle of prayer. In his article, "Does God Understand Sign Language?," Henkin (1987) describes how Deaf Jews, experiencing the same powerful emotions as hearing Jews, seek to release these feelings in their native language, Sign Language. There are several references in the Talmud, the *Schulchan Aruch*, and in the works of Maimonides to the validity of prayer in any language. The Mishnah states that Deaf people are legally empowered to marry and divorce in ceremonies based on *remizot* (gestures or signs), rather than words. A Midrash describes how Mordecai, in the Book of Esther, was so skilled a linguist that he even understood the language of Deaf people. When there was a shortage of grain, a Deaf man signed to Mordecai the location of some grain, thereby averting a famine.

Other religious discrimination may stem from the interpretation of the word "hear." Judaism's watchword of faith, the "Shema," begins with the phrase, "Hear, O Israel." Henkin (1987) states that those who composed this prayer did not mean the words to be taken literally. Rather, the word "hear" can be translated in a conceptually and linguistically defensible manner as "Understand, O Israel," which can be signed in a way that has meaning to Deaf people.

Another question of Jewish law is the Deaf person's right to blow the shofar on the High Holidays. The *halachah* requires that when the shofar is blown for others, the shofar blower him- or herself must hear its sounds.

ATTEMPTS TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN CULTURES

Formal religious education for American Jewish Deaf children was first provided in the early decades of this century. At that time, Jewish students from the New York Institute for the Instruction of the Deaf (also known as Fanwood) were sent to classes at the Communal Center for the Jewish Deaf and to religious services at Temple Beth Israel and Temple Emanuel. In 1920 a prayerbook, written in simple language that was understandable to Deaf people, was developed; however, it had no drawings or signs. In the 1940s and 1950s, the New York Hebrew Association of the Deaf

offered religious services on Shabbat.

In 1956, feeling the need to live their Judaism in a supportive community in which they could be active participants, Jewish Deaf people joined together to form the National Congress of the Jewish Deaf (NCJD). The NCJD hosts a biennial convention, encourages rabbis to learn Sign Language, promotes religious services at schools for the Deaf, maintains a directory of interpreters who can provide services to Deaf Jews, and publishes a quarterly periodical. It also served as an impetus to the development of a book of Jewish signs based on Jewish concepts—*Signs in Judaism* by Adele Shuart, which was published in 1986. The World Organization of the Jewish Deaf was formed in 1977.

The NCJD has 14 affiliate state chapters, which meet regularly for both social and religious purposes. Many have a Sisterhood and Brotherhood and offer interpreted services for the High Holidays and a signed Pesach Seder. However, the scarcity of skilled religious teachers and leaders, combined with the lack of strong Jewish backgrounds of many of the members, makes it difficult for these NCJD chapters to maintain a rich Jewish existence (Strassfeld & Strassfeld, 1976).

A VICIOUS CYCLE

Thus, the lack of adequate religious education for Jewish Deaf children begins a vicious cycle, continuing with their own children, who may be either Deaf or hearing, and culminating in alienation from and even renunciation of the Jewish community. Fred Schreiber, a Deaf parent of hearing children, recounts his struggle to provide them a Jewish education.

> When I tried to enroll my children in Sunday School, . . . I was told I had to be a member of the congregation and despite my pointing out that I would derive no benefit from such membership, I was told "it would make my children feel better" if I joined. So I joined. I asked only that my children's teachers be made aware that I was Deaf and did not have the training necessary to fulfill the role of a typical Jewish father. This did no good because my children were continually coming home with questions that their teachers had told them to "ask their father." These questions, of course, I could not answer, which embarrassed both me and my children. So I refused to continue as a member of the congregation and took my problem to a reformed temple hoping for more understanding. Here I was told by the rabbi that he was more interested in me than my children. But I knew at the time there was little he could do for me, although, if my children had proper training . . . it was possible . . . that when they grew older they could interpret for me at the Services and thus bring me back into the fold . . . At this time, two of my children have married Gentiles. The other two will probably do the same. This hurts. Whether he attends a temple or not, whether he is Deaf or not, a Jewish boy who grows up in a Jewish household is still a Jew. And I begin to wonder—how many families are there in the same situation as I? If the deaf Jew is not important to the temple, certainly his children and his children's children should be (Schreiber, 1986, p. 34).

The cycle has begun. Knowing from experience the kind of religious education they received in their youth, Deaf adults have not made efforts to better the situation for the young Deaf students. The cycle is perpetuated as Deaf adults realize that they cannot telephone the synagogue because there is no TTY, they cannot meet with the rabbi because he or she does not sign and there is no budget for interpreters, and so on.

Deaf people's frustration with Judaism's negative laws and attitudes toward Deafness builds. They seek comfort and companionship in other churches; they intermarry. A 1969 study found that Jewish Deaf men have the highest rate of intermarriage among all groups studied (Schein & Waldman, 1986).

Given the discriminatory laws, negative attitudes, and deficits of knowledge and communication that Judaism imposes upon Deaf people, is it possible for a Jewish Deaf person with little or no religious background to maintain a strong Jewish identity? Can the Jewish community provide proper guidance and resources to develop and maintain the Jewish heritage for Deaf people?

Doing so will not be easy. Alan Hurwitz, a Jewish Deaf adult, argues,

> There is a tremendous opportunity for the Jewish community and Jewish Deaf people to work together and achieve a viable life for Deaf people. It is not reasonable to expect that Deaf people will fit into the Jewish community without special support services or modification in the temple services and programs. There are barriers which need to be removed. Interpreting services alone will not solve the problem. There are attitudinal problems which require a great deal of effort and education to help the general population to be more aware of the special needs of Deaf people (Hurwitz, 1986, p. 50).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rabbis, Jewish communal professionals and educators, and Jewish community members can support the development of Jewishness among Deaf people in many ways, thus facilitating the growth of Jewish Deaf identity in today's complex society. Deaf Jews need to feel that their religion is interested in them and that their rabbi is truly their teacher, their counselor, their source of comfort. They need to have someone to turn to in times of stress who can guide them in both religious and secular matters.

For Rabbis

- Provide interpreted religious services and activities to enable Deaf members to have access to Judaism. Encourage interpreters to use American Sign Language where appropriate to translate the flow of Hebrew liturgy into esthetically pleasing and conceptually clear prayers. Ask the Deaf people in the community which type of communication they prefer; American Sign Language, Signed English, Cued Speech, or an oral interpreter.
- Train rabbis and other spiritual leaders about aspects of Deafness and the special needs of Jewish Deaf people. At least one lecture during rabbinical training should be devoted to the Jewish Deaf community. There are Jewish Deaf couples in each community who go unnoticed. Without an introduction to Sign Language and Deafness, rabbinic institutions are unintentionally preventing the training of qualified Jewish teachers of the Deaf.
- Include Deaf people in religious services in sensitive and creative ways. Encourage a Deaf person to stand next to the person reading the Kaddish so he or she can feel its full impact. Give a Deaf person a copy (either in transliteration or Hebrew) of the Kaddish and encourage the person to follow along. Let Deaf people help roll the Torah from Deuteronomy to Genesis to experience the tactile sense of the Torah. Use responsive readings and encourage Deaf people to sign along. Incorporate sign-singing and tactile and visual resources, and use clear and interesting language.
- Allow Deaf people to serve as witnesses, chant the Torah in sign language, and be counted in minyans. Put them in the category of the "potentially major."
- Appoint Deaf paraprofessionals to work with rabbis.
- Prepare written materials in simple language so all Deaf people, not just those who are highly educated, can understand them.
- Persuade hearing children of Deaf parents to become rabbis and serve the Jewish Deaf population.
- Reach out to hearing parents of Deaf children and encourage their participation in Jewish life from a very early age.
- Remember that a synagogue is not the only place to practice Judaism. Reinforcement at home is essential.
- Develop a positive attitude toward Deafness. Be willing to overlook ritual prob-

lems, language differences, and lack of training.
- Ask Deaf people what they want or need.

For Jewish Communal Service Professionals

- Provide Sign Language or oral interpreters for all activities to enable Deaf members to be full participants.
- Develop or improve Deaf Awareness programs within the Jewish community. Support Deaf Awareness Week and Disability Awareness Month every year with appropriate programming, such as signed song performances, mini-Sign Language classes, interpreted events, Deaf magicians, mimes, storytellers, etc.
- Provide continuing education in Judaism to Jewish Deaf adults by making Sign Language or oral interpreters available for all classes.
- Invite a consultant from your local vocational rehabilitation office or college Sign Language program to provide "Deaf Awareness Training" to your staff.
- Include Deaf adult leaders as speakers at meetings of the Jewish community.
- Provide Sign Language classes to your hearing membership. Hire Deaf teachers.
- Select Deaf people for policy-making boards.
- Persuade hearing children of Deaf parents to become community leaders and serve the Jewish Deaf population.
- Consider the needs of Deaf Jews when developing Jewish community projects.
- Use Jewish Community Centers as a resource for Deaf people in the Jewish community. Encourage Deaf people to feel welcome and permit them to benefit from all services offered. Let Deaf adults feel comfortable asking questions to fill in the gaps of their Jewish knowledge.
- Install telecommunication devices for Deaf people in synagogues and JCCs. Publish your TDD number in local and national TDD directories. To be listed in the national TDD directory, (used by Deaf people in communities around the country like a giant "Yellow Pages"), contact: Telecommunications for the Deaf Incorporated, 8719 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301)589-3786.
- Prepare written materials in simple language so all Deaf people, not just those who are highly educated, can understand them.
- Enable Deaf people to have a say in their own programs. Work with them, not for them. Ask Deaf people what they want or need.
- Develop a positive attitude toward Deafness. Be willing to overlook ritual problems, language differences, and lack of training.

For Jewish Educators

- Provide religious education to Deaf Jewish youngsters.
- Provide continuing education in Judaism to Jewish Deaf adults by making Sign Language or oral interpreters available for all classes.
- Install telecommunication devices for Deaf people in your office so that Jewish Deaf parents can contact you. Publish your TDD number in TDD directories (see address above). Ask Deaf leaders in your community how to contact editors of local publications.
- Develop or improve Deaf Awareness programs within the school. Contact Deaf adults in the community to teach hearing and Deaf students alike the signs for Jewish concepts; encourage hearing students to interact with and feel comfortable with their Deaf classmates.
- Reach out to hearing parents of Deaf children and encourage their participation in Jewish life from a very early age. Help the child develop his or her potential for living and at the same time encourage parent/child communications.
- Recruit and train qualified teachers in religious education across the nation for both Deaf youths and adults. Find teachers who know Sign Language, or be willing to provide interpreters.
- Teach Hebrew to Deaf Bar and Bat Mitzvah candidates. The Deaf person can learn Hebrew using fingerspelling, Sign Language, orally, or in another mode of their choice.
- Encourage summer camp programs, particularly those who specialize in working with children with disabilities (e.g., Camp Ramah), to develop Deaf programs.
- Support "Our Way," a magazine for children containing Jewish holiday descriptions, games, legal guidance, and articles by Deaf children, and "NCSY Our Way" for Jewish Deaf, a youth organization. For more information, contact: Rabbi Fred Friedman, 6108 Gist Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21215, (301)358-7060.

For Jews in the Community

- Install telecommunication devices for Deaf people in your place of business. Deaf members of your local community will be more apt to patronize your business. Publish your TDD number in local and national TDD directories (see address above).
- Develop better rapport between the Jewish community and Deaf leaders. Contact the State Association of the Deaf and find out who are the Jewish members. Invite them to join your professional, civic, social, or philanthropic organizations. Provide interpreters where necessary.
- Include Deaf adult leaders as speakers at meetings of the Jewish community.
- Consider the needs of Deaf people when developing community projects. Ask Deaf people what they want or need.
- Select Deaf people for policy-making boards.
- Identify Deaf Jews in your community. Befriend them, share with them, learn from each other. Be willing to overlook ritual problems, language differences, and lack of training.

For additional resource assistance, such as interpreters, social service workers trained to work with Deaf people, and the like, contact:

- National Congress of Jewish Deaf
  250 Jay Street #M210
  Brooklyn, NY 11201
  (718) 643-8107
- National Association of the Deaf
  814 Thayer Avenue
  Silver Spring, MD 20910
  (301)587-1788
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf,
  8719 Colesville Road #310
  Silver Spring, MD 20910
  (301)608-0050

CONCLUSION

In his article "The Meaning of Deafness," Fred Schreiber stated that "the least crippling problem of a Deaf person is the inability to hear" (cited in Strassfeld & Strassfeld, 1976, 154). More problems result from the world's insensitivity to the Deaf individual than from the condition of Deafness per se. Being able to communicate is the issue that brings Deaf people together and often pulls them away from the Jewish community. Given the strength and the unity of the Deaf community, and the weakness of Judaism's pull, can Jewish Deaf people give their ultimate loyalty to Judaism?

The Jewish Deaf community has been neglected, probably due more to lack of awareness than deliberate policy. As a result, Jewish Deaf people are not complete participants in the Jewish community. They may feel the passion for a Jewish existence, but they have been denied the opportunity to build a rich Jewish life.

The religious isolation and ignorance that some Deaf Jews feel can be reduced. Deaf Jews are no different from hearing Jews in wanting ceremonies, rituals, and worship to have a sense of holiness, a sense of meaning, and a sense of belonging to them. Deaf Jews want to feel a part of both the Deaf Community and the Jewish Community, and they deserve a fair chance.

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MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR SOVIET RESETTLEMENT

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Jacksonville, a young growing community of 10,000 Jews, has resettled the highest number of Soviet immigrants per capita through its creative mobilization of resources. Under a cooperative arrangement, Lutheran Social Services of Jacksonville provides staff and obtains funding for the initial stages of the resettlement process, enabling the Jewish community to focus upon acculturation of the new Jewish Americans. Jacksonville's experience illustrates how large number of immigrants can be resettled by smaller communities.

The Midrash recounts that King Hezekiah could have become the Messiah, but did not attain that distinction because he did not recite the "Great Hallel." Our rabbis interpret this enigmatic statement as underscoring the need to take advantage of a momentous opportunity when it arises.

This century has seen two such times: one, the horror of the Shoah, and the other, the triumph of the establishment of the State of Israel. We are now in the midst of a third critical period—the opening of the gates of freedom for Soviet Jewry. As many as 1.5 million Soviet Jews may leave the U.S.S.R. during the 1990s, a migration that may become the greatest transfer of Jewish population since the original exodus from Egypt. This almost unimaginable fulfillment of one of our people's fondest dreams of this century is of immense significance to Jewish communities throughout the world.

Because political events during 1989 and 1990 have developed with such breathtaking speed, we have not had the ability to assess their impact upon world politics. Changes in the Soviet Union and their effect on Jewish communities in Israel and the Diaspora, as well as the sociological, political, and economic implications of this emigration, have not been well defined. We are just beginning to understand that world Jewry will have to pay billions and billions of dollars in resettlement costs to build a successful foundation for the free lives of our brethren.

As Jewish communities everywhere hurry to examine alternatives that will finance and implement our commitment to *pidyon shvuyim* (redemption of captives), the experience of Jacksonville, Florida may be instructive in providing a model for large-scale resettlement at reduced costs.

Jacksonville is an emerging, Sunbelt, "yuppie" community of 10,000 Jews. Before 1989, it had a typical experience with Soviet resettlement when approximately 50 Soviet families arrived during the large wave of immigration of 1978–1981. Perhaps one half of these families later migrated to larger emigre communities. Those who remained have become moderately successful, maintaining varying degrees of involvement with the Jewish community.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

As part of the North American resettlement of 18,000 free cases at the end of 1989, the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) requested that Jacksonville accept 30 refugees in addition to the 20–30 family reunification

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