



CONTENT OR CONTINUITY?

ALTERNATIVE BASES FOR COMMITMENT

The 1989 National Survey of American Jews

STEVEN M. COHEN





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FOREWORD

Five years ago the publication of Charles Silberman's *A Certain People* challenged prevailing assumptions about future Jewish continuity. Where sociologists had long argued the case for Jewish erosion and assimilation, Silberman underscored Jewish vitality and renewal. He sought in his book to replace the prevailing pessimism about Jewish identity in America with a celebration of Jewish achievement.

Since that time much of the controversy concerning Silberman's book has focused on the distinctions between form and content in Jewish life. Silberman emphasized the structural forms – residential patterns, occupations, friendship patterns – and argued that, on these bases, Jewish life appears strong. Those who emphasize content point to the shallow ideological commitments of American Jews, the paucity of Judaic literacy, and the weakness of Jewish education. A 1988 Los Angeles *Times* survey of American Jews suggested that Jews knew little about what being Jewish meant beyond a general commitment to social liberalism.

At the root of this debate over the Jewish future lies the challenge of intermarriage. Silberman pointed to conversion to Judaism as a new resource and pocket of Jewish energy. Regrettably, less than one-sixth of intermarriages currently result in the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse. Recent data indicate that, in all likelihood, as many Jews will abandon the Jewish faith via intermarriage as the community will gain via conversion. The long-term implications for second- and third-generation offspring of intermarriages remain nebulous at best. In terms of the content of Jewish life, mixed-marrieds absent conversion to Judaism demonstrate only the weakest of commitments to building a Jewish home. These realities suggest that intermarriage must be confronted honestly. Illusionary hopes that intermarriage will in fact strengthen the community will accomplish little save to raise unrealistic hopes and expectations.

Far more productive is discussion over what we can do to enhance Jewish identity in both endogamous and mixed marriages. To stimulate such policy debate, the American Jewish Committee commissioned Dr. Steven M. Cohen to ascertain via survey research what Jews mean by their Jewishness – what are their ideological commitments to leading a Jewish life.

Cohen's findings corroborate the above distinction between form and content. Most Jews are proud to be Jewish, they value the forms of Jewish life – e.g., family gatherings and food. Only a small minority of 10-15 percent are totally unaffiliated with the organized Jewish community. The overwhelming majority do express commit-

ment to Jewish continuity and identify themselves with the traditional labels of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism.

The weakness in Jewish life, however, lies in the realm of Judaic content. Jews have difficulty formulating a distinctive Jewish identity – informed by knowledge of both Jewish heritage and democratic American norms. For example, Jews appear the most secular of American social groups. Being Jewish is all too often an instinctual reaction to perceived anti-Semitism or to threats to Israel's existence rather than statements of theological or spiritual content. Cohen's study suggests that the traditional communal agenda of safeguarding Israel, defense against anti-Semitism, and social liberalism is insufficient to guarantee the content of the Jewish future. Jews require initiatives that will enhance the quality of Jewish life, communicate the richness of Jewish tradition, and underscore the spiritual basis of Jewish identity.

A noteworthy example in this regard has been Orthodox Judaism in America. Orthodox Jews score particularly well on rates of in-marriage, observance of holidays and rituals, visits to Israel, and Judaic knowledge – criteria that are important to all Jewish leaders but are achieved mostly by the Orthodox. The salience and strength of Orthodoxy as a resource for American Jewry is often obscured by the "Orthodox bashing" and hostility to traditional Jews that often pervade Jewish communal life.

Further policy implications of this report concern enhancing Jewish identity within the broader Jewish community. Cohen suggests that communal initiatives be targeted to the "middles" of Jewish life – those who demonstrate a minimal or marginal commitment to the Jewish community and whose Jewish identity can therefore be enhanced. This suggests a target audience significantly different from that of the popular slogan "outreach to the unaffiliated" – a group whose numbers have been greatly exaggerated and who would be difficult to find in any case.

Moreover, Cohen suggests a language of communicating Jewish content – a language of resource rather than of reproach. Jews are unlikely to listen to a message of Jewish identity that addresses them as fallen Jews. They are far more likely to respond to a message that emphasizes the beauties of the Jewish heritage and demonstrates how it can enrich our private and public lives.

Finally, we must recognize that formation of a distinctive Jewish identity may well be offensive to many. A distinctive Jewish identity that will energize Jewish life may in some ways run counter to the universalist norms of American society. Formulation of that distinctive identity will necessitate both changes in the Jewish communal agenda and willingness to challenge prevailing assumptions about America. Efforts to enhance the quality of American Jewish life must address these challenges to be successful.

Steven Bayme, *Director*
Jewish Communal Affairs Department

CONTENT OR CONTINUITY?

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BACKGROUND: A STUDY OF ATTITUDES RATHER THAN BEHAVIOR

How do American Jews think and feel about being Jewish today? Which features of Judaism do they regard as most important, and what do they believe about them? In short, what does it mean to be an American Jew near the end of the twentieth century?

It might seem that social scientists ought to have a pretty good idea of how to answer these questions. After all, the last decade has witnessed a surge in quantitative research on several aspects of Jewish involvement and identity. The large number of surveys, many of which were sponsored by local Jewish federations, have spawned numerous reports, many articles, and several books on such issues as intermarriage, fertility, ritual practice, and Jewish communal affiliation and involvement (e.g., Goldstein and Goldscheider 1968; DellaPergola 1980; Schmelz and DellaPergola 1983, 1989; Cohen 1983a, 1988a; Yancey and Goldstein 1984; Goldscheider 1986).

For the most part, the recent quantitative research on Jewish identity has focused on concrete behaviors, that is, what Jews do, rather than how they feel or what they believe. The exceptions to this generalization include a few investigations into the emotional and ideational sides of Jewish identity. Most have been produced by anthropologists and ethnographers, those who specialize in the observation of cultures and communities in action (e.g., Heilman 1976, 1983a, 1983b; Furman 1987; Prell 1988). In addition, there are indeed a small number of recent quantitative investigations of Jewish attitudes. These have focused on orientations to Israel (Cohen 1983b, 1983c, 1987a, 1989a), on political views (Cohen 1989b), and on American Orthodoxy (Heilman and Cohen 1989). But not since Marshall Sklare's study of "Lakeville," Illinois, in the late 1950s (republished as Sklare and Greenblum 1979) has there been a major effort to collect and seriously analyze survey data among mainstream American Jews on the "softer," more ambiguous, but perhaps more interesting and crucial aspects of Jewish identity. (About twenty years ago, Simon Herman conducted research on the Jewish identity of Israelis: Herman 1970; see also Herman 1977. For a more recent investigation comparing qualitative aspects of Israeli and American Jews, see Liebman and Cohen 1990.) In brief, what little we know systematically and empirically about American Jewish identity has focused on actions rather than attitudes, and on behavior rather than beliefs.

That the last decade of quantitative Jewish-identity research has focused so heavily on concrete behaviors rather than emotions or beliefs is readily understandable. The major sponsors of such research - the local Jewish federations - have a powerful

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policy interest in understanding observable and tangible acts of Jewish commitment. Examples here include affiliation with synagogues and Jewish community centers; support for Jewish philanthropic campaigns; marriage within the faith; and utilization of Jewish schools.

In the federation-sponsored studies, constraints on interviewer time have forced researchers to be very selective in choosing questionnaire items. As a result, experimental questions (those that have not been asked repeatedly in earlier studies), or questions that tap more subjective areas such as Jewish attitudes, cannot compete successfully with the standard, unambiguous questions on Jewish affiliation and ritual practice that have come to dominate the Jewish-identity sections in questionnaires designed for most Jewish population studies.

Of course, a fuller understanding of Jewish identity encompasses a lot more than what Jews do. It certainly ought to extend to what they think, feel, and believe. To explore this sphere of Jewish identity, the Jewish Communal Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee commissioned the present study. Although this study's principal novelty consists of its emphasis on the beliefs and attitudes of American Jews, it also devotes attention to some behavioral items that have been included in few other studies.

MAJOR QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN JEWS. Several major questions permeate the analysis below. The most basic and overarching question concerns the condition of American Jewish identity and its future. Put most simply, this question asks whether American Jewish identity is sufficiently strong to assure the numerical and qualitative continuity of the American Jewish population. Learned observers are divided as to whether large numbers of American Jews are assimilating (e.g., Silberman 1985; Hertzberg 1985; Glazer 1987; Goldscheider 1986; Cohen 1987b, 1988a; Liebman 1988). Those who project a smaller and qualitatively inferior Jewish population point to intermarriage as a prime concern. These "pessimists" claim that most out-marriages produce children who are very distant from Jewish involvement. For this and other reasons, they conclude that trends in intermarriage, fertility, and disaffiliation portend a sharp shrinkage in the number of actively identifying Jews.

On the other side of the debate are those who see great significance in the considerable quantity of cultural innovation and pockets of energy in Jewish life. Included in this camp as well are those who discern signs of persisting Jewish cohesiveness found in Jews' distinctive patterns of marriage, friendship, neighborhood settlement, occupation, education, and politics. (To be clear, my own position lies between these two extremes. Crudely summarizing, I have contended that however bad -- or good -- Jewish life is judged, overall it is not getting much worse -- or better.)

Those who are gloomy about the American Jewish future regard the evidence of Jewish creativity and innovation as ultimately beside the point. In their mind, only a minority of Jews are more Jewishly active and vibrant than their elders; they are heavily outweighed by the majority who are increasingly distant from things Jewish. Equally unconvincing to the skeptics has been evidence of generational and age-linked stability in several indicators of Jewish involvement. As compared with older Jews, younger adult Jews who have reached parenthood are no less likely to join synagogues, practice holiday rituals, and send their children to Jewish schools (Cohen 1988a). The more pessimistic concede that some behavior indicators may be stable over time, age, and generation. But they question whether the same actions reported equally by young and old bear the same significance. Just because young and old may have roughly equal levels of communal affiliation and ritual practice does not guarantee that young and old are equally involved, committed to, and capable of fostering American Jewish continuity. In essence, this argument raises subtle, complex,

fundamental, and ultimately crucial questions of meaning. Only by examining what Jews think and feel, as well as what they do, can we begin to understand whether most Jewish families' identity is indeed eroding, or simply changing form while retaining its potency and staying power.

THE MODERATELY AFFILIATED. Closely related to the big question of the American Jewish future is one concerning the Jewish character of the contemporary American Jew. The debate between optimists and pessimists on the prospects for a cohesive and distinctive American Jewish community ten or twenty years down the road essentially turns on an assessment of the nature and strength of Jewish commitment among those in the American Jewish middle, or what I have called elsewhere the "marginally affiliated" Jews (Cohen 1985b) and here call the "moderately affiliated." Rabbis, educators, communal professionals, and lay leaders often have a hard time conceptualizing and understanding the commitment of the American Jewish rank and file, that is, the vast majority who are affiliated but not heavily involved in Jewish life. Is their Jewish commitment genuinely sustainable? Or are they living out a nostalgic vestige of a once intensive, but now fading, Jewish past?

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We cannot address these perplexing interpretive questions without a better understanding of the vast Jewish middle, the group located around the median of what may be called the Jewish-identity spectrum. (The notion of a Jewishness continuum, implying that some individuals are "more Jewish" or "less Jewish," is crude, to be sure, but very useful if not unavoidable. In its favor is the fact that respondents can readily and meaningfully rank the intensity of their own Jewish commitment and involvement. Their self-appraisals moderately correlate with a variety of behavioral and attitudinal indicators, demonstrating a correspondence between subjective evaluations and objective indicators. Social scientists ought to be able to use the same abbreviated language, albeit with a great degree of caution and attention to nuance.) Behavioral markers alone are inadequate to the task of describing the Jewish identity of those in the Jewish middle. At the same time, from prior research, we do know quite a bit about the behavior of moderately affiliated Jews. That research demonstrates that almost all those in the Jewish-identity middle celebrate High Holidays, Hanukkah, and Passover, belong to synagogues when their children approach age 12 and 13, send their children to afternoon school or Sunday school, and at least occasionally support the federation campaigns. But all the behavioral evidence certainly falls short of rich description of this pivotal group; to construct such a description, we need to go beyond Jewish activity and behaviors to the world of feelings and cognition. Constructing a richer description of the Jewishness of the moderately affiliated constitutes a key objective of this study.

To anticipate a central finding of this study, the analysis will substantiate the proposition that two broad dimensions of Jewish commitment may well serve to conveniently distinguish the Jewish-identity patterns of the more involved and passionate elites from those of the more numerous marginally affiliated Jews, those with roughly average levels of Jewish involvement and emotional investment. For want of better terms, one dimension may be called "commitment to content" and the other "commitment to continuity." Alternatively, we may speak, respectively, of

"commitment to ideology" versus "commitment to identity."

The distinction may be illustrated by the reaction a few years ago to Jonathan Woocher's book, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (1986), a study of Jewish commitment among leaders of the United Jewish Appeal, federations, and their associated agencies. The monograph argued that organized Jewish philanthropy had in effect created "civil Judaism," a nascent brand of Judaism distinct from the major religious denominations in contemporary Jewish life. Civil Judaism is replete with its own myths, legends, symbols, norms, texts, heroes, and villains. Its central motif is found in the title of the book: assuring the survival of the Jewish people is a sacred task. Precisely how Jews are to survive, the normatively preferable style of Jewish life, is of secondary importance to the several thousand philanthropic leaders when they act in their roles as communal activists and spokespeople. Although they certainly are leaders, philanthropic activists articulate the "commitment to continuity" among the masses in the same way that managers of the mass media (though part of the country's elite) reflect the aesthetic tastes of a far wider public than other cultural elite figures.

The critical reaction to Woocher's book is instructive. Many rabbis, educators, and academics looked askance at Woocher's characterization of the federation world as almost an authentic Jewish alternative to Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform. Those who are learned in more traditional Jewish texts tend to see typical federation leaders as Judaically ignorant (that is, ignorant in the matters that define their view of the truly learned Jew) and as spiritually empty. This skeptical view of the federation world, they would argue, does not in any way impugn the passion of federation leaders. The skeptics accept the idea that federation leaders express a high quantity of Jewish involvement and commitment; but they question whether the quality of civic leaders' Jewishness alone is ultimately valuable and sustainable.

This implicit critique of the Jewish communal world by rabbis and others points to the distinction between "commitment to content" and "commitment to continuity." Commitment to content refers to dedication to a particular brand of Jewish culture and community, such as Orthodoxy, Conservatism, Reform, secularism, political liberalism, or Zionism. Commitment to continuity refers to a passion for Jewish survival in any recognizable form, be it a particular denominational style, merely sentimental, or otherwise. The rabbis and others might argue that they are committed to Jewish content (over which they often disagree vehemently among themselves); while the civic leaders, they would contend, are simply the chief advocates of the commitment to continuity, largely devoid of commitment to a specific Jewish content.

To simplify greatly, we will learn that a large majority of Jews (roughly two-thirds) feel committed to Jewish continuity and to their identity as Jews. Only about a fifth to a quarter, though, are committed to a particular Jewish content or to a certain ideology. Throughout the analysis we will find ideas, beliefs, emotions, and activities endorsed, reported, or supported by a great majority of American Jews, while more specific and demanding elements are endorsed, reported, or supported by a much narrower minority. This two-tiered pattern of responses recurs in almost every set of responses to the survey questions. It lends support to the idea that only the marginally affiliated Jewish center is committed primarily to continuity, while the more

active minority is committed not only to continuity but to some particular content or ideology as well.

DENOMINATIONAL DIFFERENCES – LOCATING THE CLEAVAGES.

Almost all prior investigations of denominational distinctions find evidence of a gradient of Jewish commitment. On most measures of conventional Jewish involvement, the Orthodox outscore Conservative Jews, the Conservative population surpasses the Reform, and the Reform marginally exceed nondenominational Jews. The analysis below attempts to enrich our understanding of denominational distinctions. It refines the idea of a denominational gradient to identify those areas where the gradient is smooth and where it is even. Sometimes, for example, the Conservative-Reform or the Conservative-Orthodox gaps are unusually large. That is, in some respects, the sharpest distinctions are between the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox; in others, they divide Orthodox and Conservative Jews from Reform and nondenominational Jews.

By repeatedly presenting denominational cross-tabulations, the analysis illuminates denominational differences and boundaries among the wider Jewish public. Denominational distinctions among the Jewish rank and file are not as generally well understood as they are among the rabbis (whose thoughts on Jewish identity are readily available in numerous public utterances).

JEWISH COMMUNAL INVOLVEMENT. Little prior research has differentiated the Jewishness of organizational activists from that of the marginally affiliated or the totally unaffiliated. This analysis tries to go beyond trivial observations (e.g., the more active have more "Jewish" beliefs and attitudes). Instead, it tries to determine precisely where the activists differ from the rest, as well as where the unaffiliated differ from the more involved. In so doing, it tries to describe the communally involved (or inactive) and to add some richness to the indices created in the course of the analysis.

The issue areas outlined above (the future-of-American-Jewry debate, the marginally affiliated, the distinction between content and continuity, denominational differences, and communal activism) permeate the entire analysis. In addition to these, the concluding parts of this study address four special topics – age, family status, intermarriage, and gender.

Age and Family Status: The research literature demonstrates that age and family status are associated with fairly significant differences in levels of Jewish activity; moreover, one cannot understand the impact of either of these crucial factors without bringing the other into account. To elaborate, however such things have been measured in the past, younger adults are indeed "less Jewish" than their elders. However, this is not true for all aspects of Jewishness; the differences between young and old vary with the area of Jewish involvement. Compared to their elders, younger people have far fewer Jewish spouses, friends, and neighbors, somewhat fewer institutional ties, and only slightly lower levels of ritual observance. But once they are married parents, the younger adults perform rituals and join synagogues about as often as their parents and elders (for elaboration, see Cohen 1988a, 1989b). This finding suggests that younger people are less Jewishly active in large part because they

are less often married with children. Whether this pattern and reasoning extends to other aspects of Jewishness remains to be seen.

Obviously, understanding the distinctiveness of younger Jews and the impact of family transitions is crucial to understanding the current and future vitality of American Jewry. In these areas, the analysis extends the previous research on behaviors to attitudes and beliefs.

Intermarriage: In the debate over the American Jewish future, the impact of intermarriage on Jewish identity and continuity is the pivotal issue. Those who are optimistic about the Jewish future see intermarriage as having only minor deleterious consequences for the total number of Jews and the quality of their Jewishness (e.g., Silberman 1985; Goldscheider 1986; Cohen 1988a). They argue that intermarriage may increase the velocity and number of imports and exports (people who effectively join and leave the Jewish group), but that means little for the overall levels of Jewish commitment and activity. Their intellectual opponents see far more severe adverse quantitative and qualitative consequences embodied in out-marriage.

Previous research has focused on such issues as the group identities of the spouses and children of mixed marriages (i.e., how many of the partners in intermarriages and their children identify as Jews). It has also examined patterns of ritual practice, communal affiliation, and intergroup friendship (Mayer and Sheingold 1979; Cohen 1988a; Mayer 1983, 1985; Yancey and Goldstein 1984; Goldscheider 1986; Kosmin et al. 1989). By examining a wide range of attitudes and beliefs, this study expands the horizons of knowledge about differences between in-married (born-Jew and born-Jew), mixed-married (Jew and Gentile), and conversionary couples (where the born-Gentile has converted to Judaism).

Gender: Very little prior research seeks to learn how and why the Jewish commitments of women and men differ. Some scattered pieces of evidence indicate that women are somewhat more Jewishly involved than men, but the picture is certainly scanty and even far less complete than that associated with age, family status, and intermarriage. The analysis attempts a first step in exploring a broad range of differences between men's and women's patterns of Jewish identification.

THE DATA AND SAMPLE

The survey data analyzed below are based on a mail-back questionnaire completed by 944 Jewish respondents nationwide. The survey was fielded in January and February 1989 by the Washington office of Market Facts, Inc., a national survey research company. These respondents are members of the company's Consumer Mail Panel, consisting of individuals who have agreed to be surveyed from time to time on a variety of concerns.

The 944 individuals who returned usable questionnaires constitute more than 75 percent of the 1250 potential respondents who received the survey. These 1250 comprised all those who had returned the survey that was administered in April 1988. At the time, they represented almost three-quarters of the 1700 potential respondents who received the 1988 questionnaire.

How representative is this sample of all American Jews? Except for the underrepresentation of Orthodox respondents (a problem corrected by post hoc weighting in the analysis), the sample seems to correspond to a reasonably accurate profile of the full spectrum of American Jews (see Appendix).

The underrepresentation of the Orthodox emerges clearly when the sample is compared with several Jewish population studies of metropolitan areas. These studies have determined that the Orthodox constitute roughly 10 percent of all American Jewish households. As in earlier surveys using the Market Facts Consumer Mail Panel, the proportion of Orthodox in the sample (roughly 5 percent) falls below the 10 percent estimated for the actual population. To correct for this underrepresentation, weighting procedures roughly doubled the Orthodox respondents. Doing so produced a sample whose demographic and Jewish-identity characteristics largely resemble those found in several local Jewish community studies that use far more expensive sample techniques (primarily Random Digit Dialing), as well as in other sources, such as the April 1988 survey of American Jews sponsored by the *Los Angeles Times*. As the Appendix reports in some detail, the distributions of age (from 25 up), education, income, region, denomination, ritual practice, and affiliation variables approximate those found in the more rigorous, complex, and expensive local and national surveys of American Jews. (All percentage tables are based upon weighted data.)

The analysis repeatedly utilizes two important classifications -- religious denomination and level of communal activity. Each merits some description and elaboration.

The denominational variable is fairly straightforward. Based upon their self-identification, the respondents divide into four groups: Orthodox (10 percent), Conservative (33 percent), Reform (26 percent), and nondenominational (32 percent). (Reconstructionists, whose ritual practices are closer to Reform than to Conservative Jews, were grouped with the former.) It should be emphasized that the survey interviewed the rank and file, not their rabbinic leaders. The criterion for classification as Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform is simply one of self-definition, not subject to any test of affiliation or observance. A few Orthodox, many so-called Conservative, and many more Reform Jews in this study belong to no synagogue, let alone one associated with their self-proclaimed denomination. Thus figures reported in this study are not exactly proportional to the number of members belonging to each denomination's synagogues.

The communal-involvement index also divides respondents into four groups: unaffiliated (26 percent), affiliated (50 percent), non-Orthodox activists (19 percent), and Orthodox activists (5 percent). The way these distinctions were achieved is somewhat complicated.

At its root is an index that counts the following six types of activities (Table 1): synagogue membership (49 percent), Jewish organization membership (46 percent), devoting at least "some time" to a Jewish organization (28 percent), serving "on a board or committee of a Jewish organization or synagogue" (20 percent), contributing at least \$100 to the UJA or Federation (19 percent), and contributing to an "American pro-Israel political candidate or committee" (14 percent). Those who scored zero -- the quarter of the population who had none of the six types of attachments -- are classified as unaffiliated. Those scoring one to three points -- about half the population -- are called "affiliated." Last, the quarter of American Jews who score four or more were regarded as "activists."

The activists who are Orthodox are divided from those who are not. (The Orthodox represent about 10 percent of the total American Jewish population, but about twice as high a proportion -- about 22 percent -- of those are defined as activist.) This procedure yields four groups in all: two activist categories (a smaller Orthodox group and a larger non-Orthodox group), an affiliated group in the middle, and an unaffiliated segment.

FINDINGS

Pride in Being Jewish: Nearly Universal

Several traits characterize a very large number of American Jews, both those committed to continuity and the smaller number committed to some specific content as well. One of these traits is Jewish pride. Most American Jews are proud to be Jews. They are proud of Judaism, of other Jews, of being Jewish, and of how they have decided to express their Jewishness. Moreover, being Jewish is something special to them. While they may differ as to why it is special, the sensitivity to and awareness of centuries of persecution is a common denominator upon which Jews of almost all persuasions can agree.

These generalizations emerge from several questionnaire items, all of which elicit consensual support. Majorities of roughly 90 percent agreed with six of the eight statements listed in Table 2. By agreeing with these items, respondents are, in effect, saying that they are proud to be Jews, that they identify with the Jewish people and with their own Jewish families throughout history, that they appreciate and admire that history, and that they are unquestionably and inescapably bound to their identity as Jews.

The widespread endorsement of these expressions is not at all surprising. Most of the items were extracted from prior depth interviews and focus groups with "marginally affiliated" Jews. Common to almost all these interviews -- and to the items in the table -- was a strong sense of connectedness with Jews generally and with one's Jewish family in particular. All eight questions in the table are highly intercorrelated, suggesting that they probably tend to measure a common underlying attitude. "Pride in being Jewish" seems to be a fair, though approximate, characterization of this common construct.

As noted, six of the eight items elicit about 90 percent agreement. The seventh (the one that sees Jewish involvement as connecting with "my family's past") elicits almost as high a level of agreement (78 percent). The eighth item ("Jews are a 'chosen people'") is included here because it does, in fact, correlate highly with the other seven, even though only 50 percent of the sample agree with the statement, in contrast with the much higher levels of concurrence for the other items. Apparently, readiness to call the Jews a chosen people is, like the other items, promoted by attachment to one's Jewishness. However, acceptance of the chosen-people concept is limited by a universalist ethos (about which more later) that finds expression of unvarnished Jewish pride somewhat uncomfortable, if not offensive. The traditional

notion of chosenness historically has posed a perplexing dilemma for modernizing Jews in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century West (see Eisen 1983).

While ethnic pride and attachment may be nearly universal among American Jews, these sentiments vary in systematic ways by religious traditionalism and communal involvement. As one moves from Orthodox Jews to Conservative, to Reform, to nondenominational, the level of ethnic pride (as measured by an index combining the eight items in Table 2) declines steadily (Table 3). In fact, each change to a less traditional denominational category is associated with approximately equal declines in the value of the index. That is, a gap of about seven points out of a possible 100 points separates each denominational group from the adjacent denomination of greater or lesser traditionalism.

Ethnic pride is just as closely linked to communal activity as it is to denominational identification. People who are active in Jewish communal life express a higher level of pride in and attachment to being Jewish than those who are not active. The gap between the unaffiliated and the affiliated is slightly larger than that between the affiliated and the activists, but each increment in communal affiliation and activity is associated with parallel increments in average levels of Jewish pride and attachment.

Feeling close to other Jews, a sentiment related to ethnic pride, bears a similar relationship as does pride with denomination and communal involvement. The closeness index combines responses to three questions on feeling close to Jews. As might be expected, more religiously traditional Jews and more communally active Jews feel closer to other Jews than do the less traditional or less active.

Closest Friends Are Mostly Jewish

One would expect that a group that expresses a great deal of in-group pride would also be characterized by a thick network of in-group social relations. Indeed, such is the case for American Jews (Table 4). Consistent with all other prior studies of American Jews, most respondents in this study report that most of their closest friends are Jewish. The results are the same whether the questionnaire inquires about their three closest male friends, their three closest female friends, or their three closest friends with gender unspecified.

In responding to all three versions of the question, 45 percent report that all three of their closest friends are Jewish, and an additional 20-26 percent say that two of their three dearest friends are Jews. Accordingly, about two-thirds of American Jews have mostly Jewish close friends. Very few (less than a sixth) say that none of their closest friends are Jewish.

The density of Jewish friendship networks varies closely and predictably with denomination and level of communal activity. Combining the three questions on Jewish friends yields an index ranging from 0 to 100, values that are roughly equivalent to the percent of closest friends who are Jewish (Table 5).

Orthodox and Conservative respondents (with mean scores of 83 and 78) have far more close Jewish friends than do Reform (62) or nondenominational (53) respondents. While Orthodox and Conservative Jews' friends are heavily Jewish, so too are those of communal activists, whether Orthodox (89) or not (86). About two-

thirds of the close friends of the affiliated (68) are Jewish, but less than half the close friends of the unaffiliated (43) are Jewish. Taken together, these results indicate that the Orthodox, Conservative, and communally active maintain heavily Jewish friendship networks; that about two-thirds of the close friends of Reform and affiliated Jews are Jewish; and that about half the friends of the nondenominational and communally unaffiliated are Jewish.

Noteworthy here are the significant differences in the Jewishness of friendship circles of those who are more and those who are less Jewishly active (be it in religious or communal terms). Those who are more active tend to inhabit far more thoroughly Jewish networks than those who are not. Nevertheless, that about half the close friends of those in the least active denominational and communal categories are Jewish suggests that even these people generally retain numerous ties with the informal Jewish community.

Denying Tribalism

As is reported in more detail below, the questionnaire asks what qualities constitute a "good Jew." The question uncovered an interesting datum regarding Jewish friendship. Of the many items whose importance to being a good Jew was ranked by the respondents, it is curious that so few (about a quarter) regard having mostly Jewish friends as "desirable" for being a good Jew (hardly any, just 4 percent, see it as "essential").

As we have just seen, most American Jews have mostly Jewish friends. In this study, about two-thirds of the respondents say that most of their closest friends are Jewish. Respondents generally attach importance to those activities or behaviors they perform. In light of the large number of Jews with mostly Jewish friends, the relatively low value attached to having Jewish friends represents something of an anomaly, worthy of explanation.

Apparently, despite their social embeddedness in the informal Jewish community, American Jews are reluctant to elevate that fact of their social existence into a principle. Saying that being a good Jew demands that one make friends mostly with other Jews violates the universalist and integrationist ethos that pervades much of Jewish life. American Jews do not like to think of themselves as insular, clannish, or particularist (even if they sometimes genuinely feel or behave this way). The three-quarters who reject the desirability of Jewish friendship networks for their concept of a good Jew, then, reflect an ideological or rhetorical commitment to integration, even as their behavior suggests a widespread preference for a large degree of ethnic insularity. In this, as in so many other respects, they betray both universalist and particularist impulses and ideals.

The Universal and the Particular

The extraordinary sentimental attachment Jews have for their group ties and their embeddedness in ethnic friendship circles might lead one to anticipate widespread expression of ethnic particularism, bordering on group chauvinism. Ethnic pride,

attachment, and involvement can easily nurture exclusive concern for one's own group. But, of course, Jewish particularism is tempered and framed by a powerful universalist strain.

The latter owes its origins to the Jewish encounter with modernity. Traditional Judaism was nurtured in premodern centuries when Jew and Christian (or Moslem) held each other in mutual contempt. The relatively sudden admission of Jews into the newly open and enlightened West meant that Jews needed to reformulate and reconstruct their understanding of what it means to be a Jew. In large measure, at its core, this meant universalizing what had been a particularist civilization. Hence Jews who care about remaining affirmatively Jewish have grappled with several sorts of tensions between the particular and the universal. They have sought to maintain a cohesive community while simultaneously integrating into the larger society. They have tried to maintain a distinctive Jewish message while seeking legitimacy under the canons of the Western Enlightenment. And they wanted to think of themselves as contributing both to Jewish community and continuity as well as to the larger society. As a result, modern universalist sentiments came to compete with ancient particularist attitudes with which they often coexisted.

In the course of a partially sermonic discussion, Leonard Fein (1988:196-197) makes the following insightful observation:

And so it should come after all as no surprise that Jews express at one and the same time a concern for the particular along with their commitment to the universal. . . . Jews can at one and the same time declare their loyalties to other Jews and to all of humankind. . . . To live with the tension [between the universal and particular] intact means to stand at the intersection of Hillel's two classic questions: If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And, If I am only for myself, what am I? It is precisely there, at that intersection, that we can discern a Jewish meaning waiting to be formulated.

Reports from previous surveys have elucidated the complex and sometimes paradoxical melange of particularist and universalist attitudes on the part of American Jews (see Cohen 1987a, 1989a; Liebman and Cohen 1990). The current data can make only a minor contribution to enriching that discussion, but they do contain a few items of some interest (Table 6).

Evidence of Jewish particularism is found in the majority (54 versus 36 percent) who believe "I feel that there is something about me that non-Jews could never understand." The statement claims a certain indefinable special quality to being Jewish that only other Jews can appreciate. A more blatant statement of Jewish peculiarity receives sizable support, even if it is only a minority (41 percent agree, 45 percent disagree): "Jews have certain inner feelings that others don't have." On these two items, respondents display some sympathy for the idea that Jews are intrinsically different from others. At the same time, universalist sentiments emerge elsewhere. More than a two-to-one majority (66 to 31 percent) agrees that "My being Jewish doesn't make me any different from other Americans." In fact, respondents say,

converts can readily adopt a genuine Jewish identity; a hefty 82-to-14-percent majority rejects the racist notion that "Converts to Judaism cannot be as Jewish as those born Jewish."

Jews with levels of particularism and universalism near the statistical average seem to be making two statements simultaneously. On the other hand, they say (in effect): "We Jews feel things others can't understand (and we may even feel in ways that others do not); nevertheless we're no different from Gentiles, and – if they convert – they can easily learn to be like us." In a manner of speaking, they are reaffirming their interpretation of the traditional dictum to combine particularist with universalist commitments.

To be sure, the data available in this survey are not entirely adequate to make the case that most Jews dwell at Fein's intersection of universalism and particularism. More convincing evidence of this point appears in earlier studies. Nevertheless, the sparse data that are available are certainly consistent with this seemingly paradoxical observation.

Broad Affection for Jewish Family, Food, and Festivals

Aside from Jewish pride (albeit qualified), a second major theme to embrace a very large majority of the population is an affection for certain aspects of being Jewish, in particular, the widely celebrated Jewish holidays. From 70 to over 90 percent expressed affection in various ways for Jewish holidays (Table 7).

The answers to the survey questions provide some clues as to why Jews feel so affectionate toward their holidays. One theme common to the six items is family. Holidays are meaningful because they connect Jews with their family-related memories, experiences, and aspirations. Respondents say that they want to be with their families on Jewish holidays, that they recall fond childhood memories at those times, and that they especially want to connect their own children with Jewish traditions at holiday time. Moreover, holidays evoke a certain transcendent significance; they have ethnic and religious import; they connect one with the history of the Jewish people; and they bear a meaningful religious message. Last, food (typically consumed in family settings) constitutes a major element in Jews' affection for the holidays.

The centrality of food to Jewish identity would come as no surprise either to anthropologists or to Borscht Belt hotel owners. Nevertheless, the place of attachment to certain foods in this transmission of Jewish identity has merited very little systematic attention from professional Jewish educators and spiritual leaders (except to exhort Jews to keep kosher). The positive feelings about Jewish food are, no doubt, connected to positive feelings about Jewish families and family members. One implication of this finding is that Jewish educators may want to emphasize the value of preparing and eating food associated with Jewish holidays as an educational tool and as a technique for celebrating Jewish holidays. Thus food may serve to stimulate positive feelings for Jewish holidays among adults and also to lay the foundation for affection for the holidays among youngsters.

Further evidence of emphasis on the most popular holidays comes from another survey question (Table 8). The questionnaire asked, "How important is it for you to

engage in the following activities?" Of the dozen items listed, respondents say that five are particularly important to them. One of these five refers to giving their children a Jewish education. But all four others refer to the most widely celebrated Jewish holidays: Passover, Hanukkah, and the High Holidays. From 40 to 46 percent label these items "extremely important" and from 14 to 24 percent say that they are "very important." In other words, from a majority to two-thirds of American Jews see celebrating these holidays as at least very important.

The relative importance of Passover, Hanukkah, and the High Holidays can be highlighted when the results are compared with respondents' reactions to the other items in the series. In comparison with the three holidays, relatively few respondents highly value three activities: observing the Sabbath, adult Jewish education, and keeping kosher. (Notably, the wording of all three items was "softened" by the use of such qualifiers as "in some way" or "to at least some extent." Nevertheless, no more than a third regard these items as very or extremely important.)

These findings provide the affective side to an observation frequently derived from studies of behavioral patterns. Most American Jews attach affection and importance to three periods of seasonal, family-oriented holidays; only a small minority feel the same about keeping kosher, observing the Sabbath, studying Jewish texts, and, presumably, the traditional Jewish life that revolves around these activities. Here we see a duality in the findings, with the vast majority feeling attached to Passover, Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur; only a narrower segment expresses attachment to quite a few other practices.

There may well be other prominent aspects of the American Jewish experience that evoke widespread fondness, affection, and sentimentality. But, whatever they are, family, holidays, and food (all of which are deeply interconnected) are among the most prominent. For purposes of reaching marginally affiliated Jews, then, holidays (and their associations with family and food) provide a very potent "entry point." Educators and rabbis may be better able to influence the Jewish involvement of the Jewish rank and file by focusing on the holidays they most often observe — Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, and Passover.

Observance of Jewish, American, and Christian Holidays

Having learned that Jews attach greater import to one group of holidays than to another, it would follow that their frequency of observance of these holidays should follow a similar two-tiered pattern. Respondents reported how often they celebrated seven Jewish holidays, three major American civic holidays, and the two Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter (Table 9). They could choose one of four answers — "always," "usually," "sometimes," and "never." (As a matter of stylistic convenience, the discussion below often collapses the "always" and "usually" responses, although the adjoining table and the appendix retain the results in their original detail.)

Several observations come to mind. First, consistent with the dual pattern of attitudes reported above, respondents differentiate between two groups of Jewish holidays. Over 80 percent celebrate Yom Kippur, Passover, and Hanukkah, but a third or less usually celebrate Purim (35 percent), the Sabbath (35 percent), Sukkoth

(28 percent), and Israel Independence Day (18 percent). The dual levels of support, endorsement, importance, and involvement apparent in several aspects of Jewish identity covered in this survey emerge here as well. Obviously, only a minority of American Jews celebrate the second group of holidays, and, we may presume, the same may be said for many other commemorative days on the Jewish calendar that were too numerous to include in the questionnaire. At the same time, the High Holidays, Hanukkah, and Passover are celebrated by the vast majority of American Jews. The marginally affiliated obviously celebrate these three holiday seasons; but they rarely participate in activities connected with most other Jewish holidays.

Why these distinctions have taken shape is not entirely clear. Marshall Sklare proposed five criteria to explain which traditional practices American Jews retain and which they abandon (Sklare and Greenblum 1979: 57-59). The most widely practiced customs, according to these criteria, are those that (1) can be redefined in modern terms, (2) do not demand social isolation, (3) respond to the surrounding religious culture, (4) are child-centered, and (5) demand only infrequent performance.

These criteria, frequently cited in the research literature, are neither necessary nor sufficient to explain which holidays Jews typically celebrate. Most of these criteria probably apply to the three widely observed holiday seasons; but not all do, and not all apply in equal measure to all three holiday periods. Many of these criteria also seem applicable to Purim, if not Sukkoth as well. Why is Yom Kippur so widely observed, while Purim -- a child-centered holiday if there ever was one -- is so unpopular? Traditional observance of the Sabbath may be demanding, but a special Friday night meal or Sabbath candle-lighting is not. Yet only a third or so "usually" mark the Sabbath in any way, be it in a demanding or nondemanding fashion. Obviously, considerations other than those contained in Sklare's oft-cited criteria come into play here.

The three more popular Jewish holiday seasons are, of course, not the only ones that large numbers of American Jews celebrate. About three-quarters claim to celebrate July 4th and New Year's Day, while over 90 percent celebrate Thanksgiving, more than celebrate any other holiday, Jewish or not. To Jews, Thanksgiving is "a quasi-religious ritual, Jewish in form and in purpose, and not at all un-Jewish in content. Imagine, for example, what it would have meant had the Pilgrims found wild boar rather than turkey" (Cohen and Fein 1985: 79).

The very high rates of participation in the purely American holidays, those with no overt Christian connotations, may be contrasted with what must be seen as very low rates of celebration of Christmas and Easter. A fifth (20 percent) say they usually celebrate Christmas and less than half as many (9 percent) celebrate Easter. (At the same time, 16 percent of the respondents say they had a Christmas tree in the year prior to the study.)

Obviously, Jews exercise some discretion in deciding whether to celebrate these holidays. It turns out that most of the respondents who celebrate Christian holidays are married to a Gentile spouse. Accordingly, few in-married Jews engage in any kind of celebration of Christian holidays. On an index of Christian holiday observance ranging from 0 to 100, in-married Jews score an average of 7, while the mixed-married score 54. (A mean score of 0 would mean that no respondent in the group

ever celebrated Christmas or Easter; a score of 100 would mean that all in the group always did so.) Resistance to Christian holidays is exemplified by the near absence of Christian holiday observance in Jewish homes lacking a Gentile spouse; in all likelihood, in celebrating Christian holidays, mixed-married Jews are accommodating their Gentile spouses' wishes.

Resistance to such celebration is also demonstrated by the distinction Jews make between Christmas and Easter. As noted, more than twice as many Jews celebrate Christmas than Easter. In America, as elsewhere, Easter has been more a church holiday with major Christian spiritual import than has Christmas. While both holidays have religious origins and significance, the purely religious features of Easter tend to command more attention than they do for Christmas. American society has made Christmas into a massive commercial, child-centered, and seasonal festival replete with ubiquitous decorations, gift-giving, and party-going. Quite simply, there are many more secular or non-Christian ways of celebrating Christmas than Easter. For Jews who are more integrated than most others into the larger society, it can be said, "You don't have to be religious to love Christmas."

To examine conveniently the holiday-observance patterns by denomination and level of communal activity, the analysis utilized four indices of holiday observance ranging in value from 0 to 100 (Table 10). The index of Popular Jewish Holidays incorporates responses to the questions on Yom Kippur, Passover, and Hanukkah. The index of Traditional Jewish Holidays included the items on Purim, the Sabbath, Sukkoth, and Israel Independence Day. The index of American Holidays combines answers to the questions on the holidays of Thanksgiving, New Year's Day, and July 4th; while the index of Christian Holidays drew upon the questions on Christmas and Easter.

Each index represents not merely the particular holidays explicitly included in its construction, but a much larger construct. Celebration of the popular Jewish holidays is indicative of performance of other widely practiced Jewish activities such as celebrating the bar/bat mitzvah of one's children, or performing ritual circumcision on one's sons. Celebration of the less popular, so-called "traditional" holidays is a sign of performance of other traditional activities such as keeping kosher or studying Jewish texts. Similarly, celebration of American holidays represents identification with and a feeling of comfort in the larger society; while celebration of the Christian holidays connotes the penetration of specifically Christian religious motifs into the lives of American Jews. Thus, in analyzing these indices we are also analyzing popular Jewish observance generally, traditional Jewish observance, American integration, and Christian influence.

Here, the denominational differences are especially revealing. The level of observance of popular Jewish holidays is nearly universal among Orthodox and Conservative Jews (means of 95 in both cases), and is almost as high among the Reform (84). Nondenominational Jews (with a score of 65) are the one group where a substantial number fail to participate in the most widely celebrated Jewish holidays (and by extension, it must be presumed, in the most widely practiced Jewish activities).

However, quite a different picture emerges when we examine the traditional or less popular holidays. Here, the major cleavage is between the Orthodox (mean of

73) and all the rest. But having noted the sizable Orthodox/non-Orthodox gap, we should also note the smaller denominational differences among the non-Orthodox. The familiar denominational gradient emerges with the Conservative outscoring the Reform (42 versus 28), and both groups exceeding the nondenominational (18).

These results for popular and traditional holiday performance parallel those for Israel support reported in an earlier study (Cohen 1989a, 1988d). Some statements of support for Israel were widely endorsed (by two-thirds or more of the sample). These questionnaire items showed only mild interdenominational differences. However, the less popular and more demanding statements of Israel involvement presented a different pattern. In these, levels of endorsement sharply differentiated the Orthodox (who scored very high) from the rest (who scored much lower).

These results suggest that the location of the major denominational cleavage -- the largest gap in frequencies between the four denominational groups -- is associated with the popularity of the item under examination. Some very rough generalizations from these findings and others presented below can be made. The most popular items (those endorsed by about 80 percent of American Jews) display a split between the higher-scoring three denominational groups and the lower-scoring nondenominational Jews. Those items that are only fairly popular (endorsed or reported by about half the population) tend to divide the population into Orthodox/Conservative and Reform/nondenominational camps. Last, the least popular items (the type endorsed by only about a fifth of the population) tend to divide the Orthodox from all the rest.

The frequency of both American and Christian holiday observance also varies by denomination. With respect to the former, the only notable finding is that the Orthodox are somewhat less likely to partake of American holidays than the others (the Orthodox mean is 62 as against roughly 80 for the other three groups). Apparently, the insularity of the Orthodox from the larger society is reflected in their relative abstinence from American holiday celebrations.

Celebration of Christian holidays is almost totally absent among Orthodox and Conservative respondents (scores of 6 in both cases). However, it is about three times more frequent among Reform Jews (17) and even more frequent among the nondenominational (28). These results parallel the denominational distributions of the mixed-married, the group with the highest level of celebration of Christian holidays. Hardly any mixed-married Jews identify as Orthodox, and very few say they are Conservative. If they select a particular denominational identity at all, they choose Reform; however, a large number (perhaps a plurality) claim to be "just Jewish," that is, nondenominational.

The holiday-observance patterns of the four population segments stratified by level of communal activities resemble those of the four denominational groups. That is, the Orthodox communal activists resemble the larger Orthodox population from which they are drawn; the non-Orthodox activists act like the larger Conservative population from which most of them derive; those who are marginally affiliated approximate the Reform population in observance patterns; and those who are unaffiliated behave like nondenominational Jews.

The Orthodox generally and the Orthodox communal activists as well report

very frequent celebration of all sorts of Jewish holidays (both traditional and popular), relatively infrequent celebration of American holidays, and rare celebration of Christian holidays. Conservative Jews and non-Orthodox activists behave much like the average American Jew except for a slightly greater tendency to celebrate traditional holidays and for a much smaller tendency to celebrate Christian holidays. Reform and communally affiliated Jews very infrequently celebrate traditional holidays and only a few mark Christian holidays (although they do so about three times as often as Conservative or Orthodox Jews). The nondenominational and unaffiliated are distinguished by their relatively low rates of observance of the more popular Jewish holidays and by their relatively substantial observance of Christian holidays.

Putting matters at their simplest, most American Jews (four-fifths or more) celebrate Passover, Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and major American civic holidays; not many (a third or less) observe the Sabbath, Sukkoth, Shavuoth, and minor Jewish holidays; and even fewer (a fifth or less) celebrate Christmas and Easter. All these patterns are tied in predictable ways to denominational identification and level of communal involvement.

The More Observed, the More Important (and Vice Versa)

The findings on the observance of Jewish holidays and those on the importance of Jewish holidays suggest a linkage between behaviors and attitudes. Those holidays that are widely celebrated are perceived as most important. Moreover, this linkage may be generalized to Jewish activities other than holidays. To recall, the questionnaire asked about the importance of several activities. The average level of importance attached to each activity varies directly with the frequency with which the particular activity is practiced.

To demonstrate this generalization, we need estimates -- even if only very approximate -- of the extent to which American Jews actually undertake certain activities included in the question on importance. In some cases, the questionnaire specifically asked about the particular activities. Thus, for example, we know that about 80-85 percent say that they usually have a seder, light Hanukkah candles, attend High Holiday services, and fast on Yom Kippur, and about the same number believe their children with a Jewish education. On this survey (as on others) about two-thirds say that most of their three closest friends are Jewish. The number of Jews celebrating the Sabbath in some way stands at around 40 percent and the number keeping kosher to some extent is roughly at 30-35 percent.

These estimates of actual behavior may be compared with the proportions who regard these respective activities as "extremely important." In strikingly recurrent fashion, the frequencies with which the particular activities are performed are just about double the frequencies at which they were judged extremely important. For each activity, there are about twice as many who do it as think it is "very important."

Two implications flow from this finding. First, more widely practiced activities are more widely seen as important. Second, of all those performing a given Jewish activity (like participating in a seder), about half the participants invest the activity with great importance (and meaning), as indicated by the "extremely important" responses,

and about half do not. In rabbinic terms, on any given *mitzvah* (commandment), only half claim a high level of *kavanah* (serious intent).

Respondents in focus groups or in-depth interviews often report anecdotes supporting this observation. They tell of sitting down to a family seder with individuals of highly varying levels of commitment, knowledge, and interest. Some seder participants are intent upon hearing every word; others are impatient with the recital of the Haggadah and cannot wait to begin the meal. This experience, it turns out, is a metaphor for much of Jewish life. People performing the same act at the same time in the same place attach different meanings and varying levels of salience to the activity. The congregation of worshipers, the dining hall with major UJA donors, or the sukkah filled with holiday celebrants may appear to hold people performing identical acts. But, in reality, the intensity of their devotion to these ritual and communal acts varies widely.

(It is this sort of observation that has led some [e.g., Liebman 1988] to question whether reports of near stability [or even of increases] in ritual observance rates over time and generation [see Cohen 1988a] really portend a stable level of commitment to Jewish life. For even though young adults may light Hanukkah or Sabbath candles as often as their elders, they may also vest considerably less importance in those acts than their elders do. Later, the analysis examines the extent to which older and younger respondents report different degrees of importance to their Jewish activities, and finds stable levels of importance.)

Here we learn that respondents from different denominations and those with different levels of Jewish communal involvement vary considerably in the extent to which they regard holiday observance as important. In fact, the emotional investment in celebrating Jewish holidays is even more closely tied to denomination and to communal activity than is the frequency with which these holidays are observed.

The analysis (Table 11) uses an index that combines answers to questions on the importance of (1) the Passover seder, (2) lighting Hanukkah candles, (3) fasting on Yom Kippur, and (4) attending High Holiday services. On this index, the Orthodox score an average of 93 (just short of the theoretical maximum of 100). Gaps of roughly twenty points on the index separate Conservative (79), Reform (59), and nondenominational Jews (37). The variations among those with different levels of communal involvement are as large, if not larger. Just as those who are more religiously traditional attach a far greater importance to celebrating Jewish holidays, so too do those with higher rates of involvement in organized Jewish life.

Ideals for One's Children: Jewish Family Continuity Is Paramount

The earlier discussion of holidays noted how much images of the family interplayed with images of the holidays. Clearly, the family is critical for the expression of Jewish identity in so many ways. Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not include a large number of questions on family themes.

One set of questions that did explore an aspect of family attitudes centered on Jewish ideals for the children. The questionnaire asked respondents, "How important to you is it that your children . . ." and followed with thirteen items. Many responses

to these items confirm findings reported in greater detail elsewhere in this report. However, the responses to two items on this child-oriented question introduce implications not previously reported and are worth noting now.

Fully three-quarters of the sample feel it is extremely important for their children to "feel close to their family," and almost all the rest feel it is very important (Table 12). This item elicits more support by far than any other in the list. The high level of importance attached to family closeness in the context of a questionnaire on Jewish identity suggests, if only weakly, the importance of family as an arena for the expression of Jewishness. The centrality of the family in the Jewish consciousness also emerges in responses to another item in the list, that referring to the importance attached to one's children circumcising their sons.

Jewish Family Continuity and the Mystique of Circumcision

A large proportion (55 percent) of respondents say it is extremely important that their children "have sons ritually circumcised." Another 18 percent say it is very important. Of all six of the most highly rated items in the series on Jewish ideals for one's children, this is the only one referring to a specific behavior. The five other highly rated items state more general and abstract feelings, beliefs, and characteristics, and, as such, elicit broader support than the more narrowly constructed items. Thus the importance attached to grandsons' circumcision is especially striking. Equally intriguing is that fewer respondents care about in-marriage than care deeply about circumcision -- only 33 percent say marrying another Jew is extremely important for their children as opposed to the 55 percent for circumcising their grandsons. Why is there such widespread support for circumcision and such a discrepancy with the support for in-marriage? After all, out-marriage of one's children is the one event that would clearly diminish the chances that one's grandsons will be ritually circumcised.

On some level, ritual circumcision signifies the continuity of Jewish identity in one's family in a stronger, more assured way than in-marriage by itself. The failure to circumcise the son (the respondent's grandson) may imply to many Jews the rupture of the mystical bond that links their descendants with their ancestors, and with the Jewish people through time, both in the past and in the future. In this regard it is noteworthy that nineteenth-century American Reform Jews, who welcomed their rabbis' calls for abandonment of much traditional ritual, largely rejected the same rabbis' characterization of circumcision as an illogical, primitive pagan rite worthy of abandonment (Glazer 1972); in early-nineteenth-century France, Jewish notables, in providing a minimalist definition of Judaism, noted just three items: the Sabbath, the holiday festivals, and circumcision (Meyer 1989); and Hellenizing Jews over two millennia ago underwent surgery to reverse the physical effects of circumcision. These examples are not isolated. Even for Jews bent on radically reforming Judaism to comport with modern times and the larger society, circumcision has held a certain deep and mysterious attraction, one which probably affects contemporary American Jews as well. More generally, circumcision obviously marks a major life-cycle event. As a rule, passages in the family life cycle (birth, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage, mourning,

even divorce) are periods of heightened Jewish significance for American Jews (just as comparable passages are important in the religious life of other Americans).

One other reason that circumcision is held to be so important is that respondents may well view it as placing few objectionable demands on their children. Some may feel that opposing mixed marriage may be seen by the children as invading their realm of privacy and autonomy or that it is simply unrealistic to expect children to reject a prospective spouse because of religious differences. In contrast, parents may think, circumcision imposes no significant burden, hardship, or sacrifice on their children (although, as some have joked, the eight-day-old grandson may feel otherwise).

When seen in the context of the other results for the series of questions on children, the responses to the circumcision item suggest that widespread importance is attached to continuity, but only a minority is deeply committed to a Jewish life filled with a particular content. Thus, judging from the proportions who answer "extremely important," about half are deeply committed to their children feeling good about being Jewish, understanding what it means to be a Jew, learning about their Jewish heritage, and, as noted, circumcising their sons. At the same time, only a quarter to a third attach a great deal of importance to their children celebrating Jewish holidays, marrying Jews, having Jewish friends, caring about Israel, and practicing Jewish ritual. To many rabbis, traditionalists, and those heavily involved in organized Jewish life, it is hard to imagine Jewish continuity in the absence of in-marriage, holidays, Israel, Jewish friends, and Jewish ritual. But, if the interpretation of these findings can be stretched a bit, that is precisely what those in the middle of the Jewish-identity spectrum believe. In their minds, Jewish continuity (phrased in various ways) is extremely important, but the specific behaviors that many Jewish elites believe essential to ensure and give meaning to that continuity are obviously not as highly valued by the wider Jewish public.

The Traditional and the Involved: Highly Committed to Continuity

The intensity of commitment to the Jewishness of one's children can be measured by an index (Table 13) that combines six items identified by a factor analysis as comprising a single cluster. (Factor analysis is a statistical technique that, among other things, can identify which survey questions are answered in a similar fashion, based on correlations among them. These "clusters" of questions are thought to represent "factors," or underlying fundamental attitudinal dimensions.) These six survey items asked about the importance of one's children dating Jews, marrying Jews, having Jewish friends, circumcising their sons, celebrating Jewish holidays, and practicing Jewish ritual. Those scoring 100 on the index think that, on average, these items are "extremely important"; those scoring 0 say that they are "not important." (The average score is 56, signifying an average answer somewhere between "very" and "somewhat" important.)

As might be expected, the index varies with denominational traditionalism and Jewish communal involvement. Perhaps surprising is the large magnitude of the relationships. Although the ordering of denominations with respect to commitment

to continuity is predictable, the size of the gaps between denominations is quite large. The average Orthodox score is 88 (between extremely and very important), while that of Conservative Jews is 69 (equivalent to very important), that of Reform Jews is 51, and that of the nondenominational is just 35 (i.e., only somewhat important). In like manner, commitment to children's Jewishness increases with each increase in communal involvement. The unaffiliated score only 34, the affiliated 56, non-Orthodox communal activists average 72, and Orthodox communal activists average 93.

These large differences point, in the first instance, to the strength of Orthodox Jews' commitment to Jewish continuity. (It is noteworthy that the items included in the index are endorsed by leaders of all three denominations, and are not the exclusive domain of Orthodox rabbis.) Second, while Orthodox Jews' scores are indeed sharply differentiated from the rest, significant differences are found among the non-Orthodox as well. Those who are communally active (even if not Orthodox) and Conservative Jews collectively are more deeply committed to their children's continuity as Jews than are less active or Reform Jews. To some extent, affiliating with Orthodoxy, Conservatism, or with organized Jewry reflects a commitment to Jewish continuity, and to some extent such choices promote that commitment. We cannot determine the causal order here, but we can make a point that should be obvious: those involved in more traditional denominations and those involved in organized Jewish life profess a greater commitment to their children's survival as Jews. What may be less obvious is that the differences between denominations and levels of communal involvement may be greater than some have predicted.

The Symbolic Centrality of Anti-Semitism

Rabbi Harold Schulweis (1988:6) has said:

The Holocaust is the nightmare from which we struggle to awake. It intrudes on our sleep and spills over into our waking moments. The Holocaust is the dominant psychic reality in our lives. It lies hidden in our hoarse conversation with our children about mixed marriage, in our arguments over the low fertility rates of Jews, in our debates over support of the State of Israel, in our appeals for Jewish unity, in our fund-raising -- whatever the Jewish cause. The Holocaust shapes our stance toward the world and our self-understanding. It clings to our skin and penetrates beneath our skins, motivating our agenda and our policies. How could it be otherwise? Who could expect that a people that lost two out of every five of its members -- 40 percent of its community -- should emerge unscathed, unscarred, fully normal?

The questionnaire asked respondents, "In thinking about your sense of being Jewish, how important would you say are each of the following symbols or concepts?" They were then presented with a list of a dozen concepts, several of which refer to areas reported elsewhere, and two of which break new ground (Table 14). To

elaborate, the novel and noteworthy material in this series of questions entails understandings of the Holocaust and American anti-Semitism. Both are among the symbols seen as most important by the respondents. In fact, the Holocaust is important to more respondents than any other symbol. As many as 85 percent say it is at least very important, and 56 percent call it extremely important. Both figures exceed comparable rates for all other concepts in the series. Using a similar calculus, American anti-Semitism virtually ties Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur for second place on the list; it even narrowly outscores God and the Torah.

The significance respondents attach to the Holocaust also emerges elsewhere in the questionnaire (Table 15). Over three-quarters of the respondents affirm that "My feelings about the Holocaust have deeply influenced my feeling about being Jewish." (A total of 76 percent agreed to one degree or another; just 19 percent disagreed.) Those who find the Holocaust especially important tend to feel similarly about anti-Semitism. Both "grab" (or fail to grab) the same sorts of individuals.

Of course, this study is not the first to demonstrate the salience of American anti-Semitism in the American Jewish consciousness. On surveys dating back to 1981, from more than 50 percent to nearly 80 percent (varying by year and by question asked) have expressed serious concern about American anti-Semitism.

The 1989 survey questions on anti-Semitism entailed more pointed images of American anti-Semitism than those asked earlier. Notwithstanding the more demanding questions found in the 1989 study, levels of anxiety and insecurity remain high and impressive. A majority (57 percent) feel that "American Jews could one day face severe anti-Semitic persecution." A sizable minority (41 percent) feel that "Jews are widely disliked by Gentile Americans." And, putting matters most personally, over a quarter feel that "As a Jew, I don't feel totally safe in America." The symbolic importance of the Holocaust and American anti-Semitism is undoubtedly enhanced by these widespread feelings of perceived antagonism, anxiety, and personal insecurity.

Rabbis, educators, academicians, and others have been critical of the extent to which otherwise peripherally involved Jews respond so readily to matters pertaining to the Holocaust or American anti-Semitism. Direct-mail fund-raisers for Jewish organizations are well aware of the potency of both symbols as instruments of fund-raising. Some say that the Simon Wiesenthal Center (a highly visible agency dedicated to public education about the Holocaust) is the most successful direct-mail fund-raiser among American Jews. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith has specialized in portraying itself as the most effective opponent of American anti-Semitism. It is somewhat significant that the ADL staff and budget have grown more rapidly in the last two decades than those of its counterparts (the American Jewish Committee and American Jewish Congress). Nearly every major American Jewish community has built or is building its own Holocaust memorial.

Sensitivity to anti-Semitism is almost universal among the Jewish population. The symbolic importance of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust is high for all denominations and levels of communal involvement. As we have seen, most measures of Jewish commitment increase with greater denominational traditionalism and Jewish communal involvement. In contrast, the level of importance attached to the Holocaust and American anti-Semitism is about the same for Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and

non-denominational Jews, as well as for communally active, affiliated, or unaffiliated respondents. On an index combining the two correlated questions on the symbolic importance of the Holocaust and American anti-Semitism (Table 16), most respondents rank the Holocaust and American anti-Semitism as very important or extremely important in their sense of being Jewish.

These results help explain the critical stance that many rabbis and other Jewish intellectuals take toward the prominent place of anti-Semitism in the American Jewish psyche (especially of less involved Jews). To the critics, the high emotional investment in the Holocaust and vigilance against anti-Semitism by more traditional or more involved Jews have a certain logic and justification; after all, Jews who are in many ways involved with Jewish history and securing the Jewish present may be said to "have every right" to feel especially sensitive to anti-Semitism of the past or future. However, the same high investment by peripheral Jews seems (to certain elite figures) to constitute a distortion of Jewish priorities. Those who criticize the emphasis on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism may be especially troubled by the many Jews who identify vigorously with being Jewish only in responding to the Holocaust or to contemporary threats. Indeed, these data do indicate the presence of a large number of Jews who are not heavily involved in traditional or communal Jewish life, but who are probably as sensitive to images of Jewish persecution as are the most religiously traditional or the most communally active.

The Watchmaker God

According to Jewish tradition, God is an omnipotent force for good in the world, has a personal relationship with every human being (but a special relationship with Jews), and, accordingly, watches over people (especially in times of danger), answers their prayers, punishes sins, and rewards good deeds. Moreover, God gave the Jewish people the Torah through Moses on Mount Sinai. Do today's American Jews share these beliefs?

The questionnaire asked respondents to state the extent to which they accept or reject nine tradition-oriented statements about God (Table 17). For the most part, they believe God exists and is a force for good in the world, but also -- for the most part -- they doubt (in some cases quite widely) whether God actually does anything today.

Two contrasting items make the point. When asked if they believe that "there is a God," almost two-thirds say "definitely yes." When asked if "God intervenes in the course of human events," only 18 percent respond "definitely yes." With the exception of the item affirming God's existence, and one making the vague claim that God "is a force for good," most respondents evince a skeptical view of God. On all other questions (see Table 17), only 17-29 percent offer the true-believer's answer (definitely yes); in other words, about three-quarters entertain some doubt about the traditional view that the Almighty acts to shape history and everyday affairs. Even using a more generous criterion (one which would classify the "probably yes" respondents as believers rather than skeptics), at least half the sample must be classified as agnostics. These are the people who answer "probably not," "definitely

not," and "not sure" to items affirming God's active intervention in the world and responsiveness to prayer and human actions, both good and bad (or sinful).

In other words, most American Jews adopt the notion that has been called "The Watchmaker God." Like the watchmaker, God made the world, set it in motion, but since then has had little to do with keeping it in working order. Playing the role of God in a popular movie (*Oh, God*), George Burns claimed to have created the world and performed some miracles in early history but had now gone into retirement.

Of course, belief in God varies by religious denomination. The belief-in-God index (Table 18) combined responses to five items (there is a God, God punishes, God rewards, God watches over one in danger, and God intervenes in human events). On this index, which ranges from 0 (for no belief) to 100 (signifying definite belief in all five statements), the Orthodox (with a score of 81) decidedly outscore the other denominations. Conservative Jews average 64, slightly ahead of the Reform (54) and nondenominational (53).

Once we control for the fact that the Orthodox are overrepresented in Jewish communal life, belief in God is unrelated to communal involvement. The Orthodox who are communal activists (with a score of 85) score much higher than the others. Among the non-Orthodox, the average level of belief in God is the same whether one is an activist (59), affiliated (59), or unaffiliated (57).

These results point to a seeming paradox noted by many observers of American Jewish life. Relative to other ethnic groups in the United States, American Jews are among the most organized, most active, and most socially cohesive. But, relative to other religious groups, American Jews are among the most religiously inactive, the most theologically skeptical, in short, the most secular. Their religious-service-attendance rates fall way below those of other major religious denominations. Despite their penchant for institutional affiliation, their synagogue membership rates (about 50 percent nationally) lag well behind the national average for houses of worship (about 70 percent). Although Jewish thinkers historically rejected the division of Jewish identification into ethnic and religious spheres, the distinction does have some analytic meaning for contemporary American Jews. Any way one measures such things, Jews are ethnically hyperactive and religiously indolent.

This study's findings on American Jewish belief in God (or lack of it) support this interpretation. First, although explicit and complete comparisons are difficult to draw with certitude, American Jews' beliefs do seem more skeptical (i.e., agnostic or atheistic) than those of other Americans.

The following passage (Gallup Report 1987:51) paints a summary portrait of the patterns of belief in God among Americans nationally:

Ninety-four out of 100 adults . . . believe in God or a universal spirit. In a companion question, 84 percent believe in a Heavenly Father who can be reached by prayers. . . . Eight in 10 among [the 94 percent] who believe in a Heavenly Father believe God has led or guided them in making decisions. . . . Nine in 10 (87 percent) of this same group believe God has a specific plan for their lives. . . . The vast majority of this same group believe that God speaks to people today through some means.

While explicit and precise comparison between the answers by American Jews on the 1989 survey and those of Americans to differently worded questions on other surveys are difficult to draw, the inference is pretty clear. There is no doubt that fewer Jews believe in an active and personal God than do other Americans.

Second, another reason to call them less religious than other Americans is that they explicitly say so. In response to the 1989 survey question, "How important would you say religion is in your own life?" just 26 percent of Jewish respondents answer "very important" (Table 19). This figure may be compared to one twice as high (54 percent) nationally (Princeton Religion Research Center 1988: 22).

Third, we recall that once the Orthodox are excluded, strength of belief in an active and personal God bears no relationship with communal activity; in contrast, most other measures of Jewish commitment increase with higher levels of communal involvement. The implication is that, for the non-Orthodox, belief in God is not a particularly powerful stimulus of communal activity. In other words, not only do Jews, on average, profess relatively little belief in a traditional conception of God; for the non-Orthodox, the strength of that belief (as weak as it may be) probably has very little to do with why they involve themselves in Jewish communal life. In short, a Jew can be very communally active in contemporary America even if his or her faith in God is shaky or nonexistent.

Voluntarism: The Rejection of Halakhic Obligation

Respondents profess a faith in God, but very few see God as active and involved in contemporary affairs. Similarly, respondents express a generalized attraction to the religious tradition, but very few see it as personally obligatory.

As Charles Liebman has pointed out (Liebman and Cohen 1990), American Judaism is distinguished by its commitment to voluntarism and personalism, and by its aversion to ritualism. Voluntarism and personalism are expressed in the tendency of American Jews to reject the notion of an obligatory religious law and to select only those aspects of Judaism they find personally meaningful. Ritualism, a central feature of traditional Judaism, refers to the emphasis on a precise and detailed performance of ritual and to seeing rituals as valuable, efficacious, and pleasing to God.

Evidence of these tendencies (voluntarism, personalism, and aversion to ritualism) among American Jews comes in a variety of answers throughout the questionnaire (Table 20). Fully 90 percent of the sample agrees "A Jew can be religious even if he or she isn't particularly observant." (Note that the item reads "religious," and not merely "a good Jew.") Of the survey's statements of obligation, only the most loosely constructed elicit wide support. Thus, about half the respondents feel some sense of obligation to celebrate Jewish holidays. A slim majority would "feel embarrassed or ashamed if I failed to celebrate the major Jewish holidays"; an equal number feels "to a great extent" a commitment "to celebrate Jewish holidays," "to keep at least some Jewish traditions," and "to observe God's commandments."

But when the tone shifts to a stronger sense of obligation, support declines. Even though 54 percent would feel ashamed were they not to celebrate the major

Jewish holidays, just 40 percent "feel commanded" to do so. While 53 percent feel a commitment to observe God's commandments, only 25 percent feel "a commitment to obey Jewish law." As was reported earlier (in Table 14), very few (20 percent) see Jewish law as extremely important to their sense of being Jewish; almost all other concepts in the list garner broader support.

The dim view of ritual obligation is apparent in the small number (26 percent) who feel to a great extent "a need to practice Jewish ritual." The aversion to ritualism emerges in the other questions as well. As is reported below, only about a quarter of the population regards kashrut as relevant to being a good Jew; and a similarly small number call the practice of Jewish ritual by their children "extremely important."

In short, those in the American Jewish center certainly express an affection for the holidays and other aspects of the tradition. While they acknowledge some vague and ambivalent obligation to tradition or "God's commandments," they reject the idea that tradition or those commandments are necessarily embodied either in traditional Jewish law or in the ritual way of life that law prescribes.

As one might expect, the sense of religious obligation is strongly related to denomination, and moderately related to communal involvement. To demonstrate this point, the analysis uses an index composed of five highly interrelated survey questions that apparently measure a commitment to obeying religious law (Table 21). The five items consist of the three questions on being ashamed for failing to celebrate holidays, on feeling commanded to celebrate them, on calling oneself a religious Jew (35 percent did so), as well as the two items on feeling a great commitment to obey Jewish law and practice Jewish ritual. As with other indices, this index ranges from 0 to 100.

A large gap in scores separates the Orthodox (81) from Conservative Jews (61), while smaller gaps separate Conservative, Reform (49), and non denominational (37) respondents. In other words, Orthodox Jews are far more committed to obeying religious law than Conservative Jews; but Conservative Jews are only somewhat more committed than Reform Jews.

These results are consistent both with the observance patterns of the four denominational subpopulations as well as with their rabbinical leaders' philosophy. Orthodoxy claims a fealty to unchanging ancient Jewish law; Conservative rabbis teach an obligation to a developing Jewish law; and the Reform rabbinate is committed to a principle of individual autonomy that explicitly abandons a Jewish legal system but nevertheless sees the tradition as an authoritative guide to Jewish practice and belief.

The sense of religious legal obligation also varies directly with communal involvement. The Orthodox communal activists, for obvious reasons, score the highest on this index (84). But notable differences also separate the non-Orthodox in a familiar pattern. Scores are lowest among the unaffiliated (38), higher among the affiliated (53), and somewhat higher among non-Orthodox activists (60).

Earlier we saw that, the Orthodox aside, Jewish communal activity is unrelated to belief in an active and personal God, but here we see that it is related to a sympathy for obligation to religious law and ritual. How can the two findings, seemingly in tension, be reconciled? Why do so many more communal activists care about religious obligation than do the unaffiliated, even though they profess no deeper

faith in God?

As Jonathan Woocher (1986), for one, has noted, the Jewish communal world is filled with rhetoric about commitment and obligation. The affiliated and the activists in particular hear frequent exhortations to fulfill their obligations to their Jewish ancestors and to their threatened, impoverished, or beleaguered Jewish contemporaries. It is not surprising, therefore, that those with an empathy for the language of obligation are either drawn to Jewish communal life or are socialized to such language. On the other hand, there is little talk of God in communal settings, except perhaps in a fleeting reference. The few exceptions include the strictly ceremonial incantations offered by rabbis, or the barely understood references to God in the Hebrew language during an occasional public prayer or grace after meals. The non-Orthodox communal activist may feel a strong sense of obligation (or may, at least, feel comfortable expressing such a sense), but as opposed to most Orthodox (and to some others as well, for sure), that sense of obligation is unrelated to the concept of an active personal God who commands, rewards, punishes, and intervenes.

Resentment of Reproach: Taking Offense at Rabbis and Fund-Raisers

The fierce voluntarism of the American Jewish ethos, its ambivalence toward obligation, underlies the resentment and antagonism many rank-and-file Jews feel toward rabbis and communal leaders who speak the language of reproach and obligation. As I wrote a few years ago (Cohen 1985a: 154-155):

One of the common experiences of affiliated American Jews is the encounter with official Jews speaking the language of reproach, evaluation, and ultimately accusation. Rabbis chastise their congregants for failing to attend services, to observe ritual practices, to send their children to Jewish schools, or to marry within the Jewish faith. Fundraisers exhort the real and metaphoric survivors of the Holocaust to contribute generously to needy, endangered or embattled Jews in Israel and elsewhere. And Israeli emissaries remind them of their ostensible moral responsibility to support Israel politically, financially, and sometimes through migration.

In short, the language of official Judaism is overwhelmingly a language of demand and chastisement. Such chastisement makes the listener – who more often than not fails to meet the expectations implicit in the remarks – to feel as if he or she is being called a "bad Jew." . . . In point of fact, the vast majority of Jews – even those who intermarry and in other ways fall short of some of the expectations enunciated above – feel they are "good Jews," and resent being labeled otherwise. And presumably they also resent the aura of moral privilege which philanthropically generous, or communally active, or ritually observant, or Jewishly knowledgeable Jews arrogate to themselves.

Consistent with this observation, I earlier reported that the vast majority of American Jews (79 percent) consider themselves not just "good" but "very good" Jews.

Here we can add the finding that a good proportion (either a healthy minority or a majority, depending on how one reads the data) do, in fact, resent those who practice the language of obligation and reproach.

The questionnaire asked respondents to describe the extent to which they feel offended by a variety of Jews (Table 22). Very few (6-14 percent) were "very offended" by such dissenters from conventional positions as public critics of Israel, or women rabbis and other advocates of equality for women in Judaism, or homosexuals demanding acceptance by the Jewish community. On the other hand, over a quarter (27 percent) were very offended by "rabbis who try to tell me how I should live my Jewish life," and even more (30 percent) felt the same about UJA "fund-raisers who pressure me to make a donation." Combining the proportions answering "not offended" or "not sure," only about a third of the population seems untroubled by such rabbis and fund-raisers, far less than the comparable proportions who seem little bothered by women rabbis (85 percent), Jewish homosexuals (71 percent), and even critics of Israel (57 percent).

Expressing resentment of Jewish elites speaking the language of reproach and obligation can be seen, in part, as expressing American Jewish voluntarism, independence, pride, and self-assurance. Alternatively, it may be seen as reflecting alienation from institutional Judaism. Whatever their interpretation, the two questions apparently struck a raw nerve among the quarter or more who were "very offended," and perhaps even among the two-thirds who were at least "somewhat offended" by the demanding nature of certain rabbis and fund-raisers. As we shall see, though, widespread resentment is not limited to these groups alone.

Resentment of Orthodoxy

In the last decade, tensions and conflicts between Orthodox and other Jews in the United States and worldwide have mounted considerably (see, for example, Cohen 1988c). Some Orthodox partisans blame the conflict on increasing assimilation and intermarriage on the part of the non-Orthodox, as well as official accommodation by non-Orthodox rabbis and communal leaders to those disturbing trends. In particular, many Orthodox leaders have objected to some non-Orthodox rabbis seeming to sanction intermarriage, ritual laxity, homosexuality, and other behavior that the Orthodox regard as violations of ancient Jewish law. The non-Orthodox, for their part, often blame the rising power of the religious right within Orthodoxy for the tensions. They cite the increasing insularity of the Orthodox, their rabbis' tendency to avoid or withdraw from serious interaction with non-Orthodox rabbis and institutions, and a triumphant militancy bred of self-assurance, new-found affluence, and Orthodox institutional growth. Both the Orthodox and non-Orthodox interpretations of the antagonism contain some elements of truth.

Whatever the causes of the friction, there is no denying that tensions between the Orthodox and other Jews have grown in recent years (and this generalization holds true notwithstanding the continued success enjoyed by many Orthodox movements, such as the Lubavitch, in raising funds from non-Orthodox philanthropists). Not long ago, many non-Orthodox grudgingly admired a benign and

charming Orthodoxy, one often linked in their minds to the Judaism of their grandparents. In more recent times, though, that image has declined in popularity. Instead, many non-Orthodox have come to see the Orthodox as self-righteous partisans of a particular, fundamentalist point of view trying to impose their own concept of Judaism on Israel, American Jews, and the Jewish people worldwide. The recurrent battles over the "Who is a Jew?" legislation in Israel that peaked in 1988 certainly contributed both to spreading these unflattering images and to building antagonism toward the Orthodox on the part of the non-Orthodox.

Evidence of these trends is found in several survey questions (Table 23). As noted earlier, the questionnaire presented respondents with a half dozen groups who might be cause for offense. More than any other group, respondents choose: "Orthodox Jews who show no respect for the way I choose to be Jewish." Over half (54 percent) say they are "very offended" by this type of Orthodox. Another 30 percent say that they are "somewhat offended," and only 17 percent are not offended or not sure.

The questionnaire also provides evidence of one factor that may be linked to this anti-Orthodox resentment. If at one time Orthodoxy could successfully lay claim to near-exclusive Jewish authenticity among the laity, recent years have seen an evaporation of the potency of that claim. Respondents today resoundingly reject Orthodoxy's assertion of primary authenticity. Just 18 percent agree with the statement "Part of me feels that Orthodox Jews are the most authentic Jews around," and even fewer (13 percent) agree with a parallel statement about Hasidic Jews. (Note that the statements include the qualifier "part of me feels . . . ," so as to elicit the broadest possible concurrence. Without the qualifier, it is likely that even fewer would have agreed.) While many Orthodox respondents are sympathetic to these statements, among the non-Orthodox acceptance of the Orthodox or Hasidic claim to primary authenticity is even lower than the figures reported for the entire population in Table 23.

What Makes a Good Jew?

A sizable majority of American Jews regard themselves as not just "good" Jews but "very good" Jews. The questionnaire asked whether they agree with the self-congratulatory statement "I feel that I am a 'very good' Jew." Those agreeing outnumbered those disagreeing by better than six to one (79 to 12 percent, with 9 percent not sure). While American Jews may agree they are very good Jews, they do not always agree on what constitutes a good Jew. What good Jews should feel, think, and do are matters of both consensus and dispute.

In their study of "Lakeville" Jews, Sklare and Greenblum (1979) utilized a question on what is "a good Jew" to understand alternative conceptions of popular Jewish norms and ideals. The investigators were particularly impressed with the extent to which, in contrast with earlier generations and with traditional Judaism, the answers of the largely third-generation suburban respondents to this revealing question demonstrated a commitment to liberal universalism rather than to Jewish law and ritual.

The 1989 questionnaire contained a modified version of the Lakeville "good Jew" question (Table 24). It asked: "In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following are essential . . . desirable . . . do not matter . . . and which are undesirable . . . ?" Following this opening was a list of twenty items, many of which replicated items first asked in Lakeville thirty years ago. Table 24 groups the items according to the extent to which they were seen as "essential," "desirable," or, in effect, irrelevant to the respondents' conception of a "good Jew." (The irrelevant category combines responses to three answers: "do not matter," "undesirable," and "not sure.")

THE MORE ABSTRACT, THE MORE ESSENTIAL. About half the respondents regard three items as essential to their concept of the good Jew -- leading an ethical and moral life, believing in God, and giving one's children a Jewish education. Most of the remaining respondents (those who did not see them as essential) labeled these items "desirable." Why do these three items on morality, God, and children rise to the top of the list? One reason is that they are more general statements of abstract principle rather than demands for specific and concrete behaviors. Survey researchers usually find broader endorsement of the general than the specific; here, on this question, generality explains part of the reason why some items obtain greater support. Being ethical and moral is a "motherhood-and-apple-pie" item, if there ever was one. Belief in God can also be interpreted quite broadly. This study reported earlier that claiming belief in God does not always translate into believing that God is in any way active in human affairs or responsive to human entreaties. While the general principle of giving one's children a Jewish education garners very wide support (47 percent call it "essential" and 41 percent say it is "desirable"), these results do not signify a deep commitment to intensive forms of Jewish education. In the same question, hardly any thought it essential for a "good Jew" to study Jewish texts, and even fewer (5 percent) found a day-school education essential (in fact, 80 percent said it is, in effect, irrelevant to being a good Jew).

The dual or two-tiered pattern of responses noted several times earlier with other questions emerges once again in the question on what constitutes a good Jew. Here we find the large majority acceding to broad, abstractly stated Jewish norms even as they reject more specific and demanding extensions of the fundamental statements of principle.

THE MORE WIDELY PRACTICED, THE MORE DESIRABLE. The next group of items are those that pluralities or majorities declared "desirable" in their concept of the "good Jew." Included in this group of items are: knowing the "fundamentals of Judaism"; attending High Holiday services; marrying a Jew; belonging to a synagogue; and supporting Israel.

The reasons that these items score near the top of the list are not very hard to fathom. Knowing the fundamentals of Judaism is another generality (it heads the list), one that demands no specific action. In contrast, as the bottom of the table shows, very few believe it even desirable for a good Jew to study Jewish texts, an activity that they apparently believe extends one's Jewish knowledge beyond the bare essentials and fundamentals of Judaism.

Two of the highly desirable items -- High Holiday synagogue attendance and synagogue membership -- are practiced at one time or another by the vast majority of American Jews. About two-thirds claim to attend services on the High Holidays (and more have done so at one time in their life) and, as we have seen, over 80 percent say they usually celebrate Yom Kippur. About half the households currently claim synagogue membership; rates of membership may near 90 percent when children approach bar/bat mitzvah age though they then decline precipitously (see Cohen and Ritterband 1987). Consistent with the inference drawn earlier, attitudes and behaviors are linked. Large numbers rate High Holiday services and synagogue membership desirable, in part because they are affirming their own behavioral choices. (They say, in effect, "If I do it, it must be desirable.") Synagogue membership and High Holiday attendance have come to be viewed by many as the proper modicum of affiliation for identifying American Jews, even for those who may lack deep and passionate religious commitment.

Waffling on Inter-marriage

Traditionally, Jews and Judaism placed extraordinary emphasis on the endogamy norm, that is, marrying within the faith. Today's organized Jewish community, and most rabbis and educators, have come to view intermarriage as a critical problem threatening the size of American Jewry, its quality, and perhaps its very future. The survey results demonstrate that, despite the relatively frequent occurrence of mixed marriage (about one-third of Jews marrying wed somebody born non-Jewish), in-marriage is still the preferred alternative for most American Jews, who see it as at least "desirable." However, many traditionalists would find these distributions disturbing. They would be happy neither with the mere quarter of the sample who regard in-marriage as "essential," nor with the third who find endogamy irrelevant to their conception of a good Jew.

Other evidence from the survey supports the inference that most American Jews have made their peace with mixed marriage (Table 25.) In a question about hypothetical reactions to one's children marrying out of the faith, just over a third would "oppose" such a marriage (only 20 percent would "strongly oppose" it), while most of the remainder said they would accept or be neutral to the prospect of their child marrying a non-Jew who fails to convert. On the question on ideals for one's children reported earlier, only 33 percent thought it extremely important for their children to marry Jews (Table 12). Combining these answers, it seems that about a third of the Jewish population can be regarded as deeply opposed to intermarriage in their own families, a third would object mildly, and a third have relatively few reservations about out-marriage.

Israel: Only a Secondary Concern

To say the least, Israel enjoys widespread support among American Jews (Cohen 1983b, 1985a, 1987a, 1989a). On several surveys of American Jews, roughly two-thirds say, in various ways, that they care deeply about Israel; however, only half that

number (about a third of the total population) display what may be regarded as an intensively pro-Israel commitment. In any event, Israel certainly is the major mobilizing issue in the American Jewish political domain. Yet despite all the evidence of pro-Israel interest and activity, Israel's impact on the identity of American Jews may be far less sweeping and powerful than some have been led to believe.

A recent series of publications (Cohen 1988b, 1988d, 1989a; Liebman and Cohen 1990) have argued for a more qualified view of the place of Israel in the consciousness of American Jews. They suggest that while Israel may dominate the public sphere of American Jewishness, it is largely marginal in the private sphere. That is, although the cause of Israel may pervade organizational life and political activity, it has little real impact on those more intimate activities usually conducted with family and friends, such as rituals, ceremonies, prayer, and life-cycle events. In the everyday (or every-week and every-month) conduct of their Jewish lives, American Jews maintain little substantive connection with Israel. With the possible exception of some of the Orthodox and those who have spent considerable time in Israel, few American Jews maintain a close, ongoing psychic connection with Israeli society. It is hard to imagine that many relate seriously or literally to the frequent references to Israel in the synagogue and home liturgy.

In line with this interpretation, it is not at all surprising that less than a fifth of the respondents regard supporting Israel as essential to their conception of a good Jew. (Likewise, on previous surveys about the same number – actually, a little less – have said that they have given any thought to living there, and an equally small number think that they can lead a fuller Jewish life in Israel than in the United States.) Relative to other vague, abstract principles (such as belief in God or knowing the essentials of Judaism), support for Israel is clearly in the second rank. (The implication here is that were the good-Jew question to have included a specific pro-Israel activity, such as contributing to pro-Israel causes or reading about Israel, the proportions seeing these activities as essential would have been even lower than the 19 percent who regard "support Israel" as essential to their concept of a good Jew.)

Further evidence of the subordinate place of Israel in the American Jew's private consciousness is found in several other survey questions. Wherever Israel is mentioned in the context of other items, symbols, and concepts, it falls into a secondary or tertiary echelon. One question, for example, asked respondents the extent to which they felt close to other Jews, to non-Jewish Americans, and to Israelis (Table 26). Just over three-fifths (61 percent) say they feel closest to other Jews "to a great extent." The parallel figures were 40 percent for non-Jews and only 19 percent for Israelis. While just 4 percent answer "not at all" close to non-Jewish Americans, as many 23 percent answer this way for Israelis. When asked about the importance of a dozen concepts and symbols to their sense of being Jewish, respondents rank Israel sixth, behind such items as "Passover" or "American anti-Semitism" (Table 14). When asked about the importance they attach to 13 Jewish ideals for their children, respondents place Israel eleventh, behind "support social-justice causes" and in a virtual tie with "practice Jewish rituals" (Table 12). However one looks at the matter, caring about Israel is important to American Jews, but not all that important.

Feeling close to Israel is related both to denomination and to communal activity.

With respect to Israel attachment, American Jews essentially divide into two groups: Orthodox and Conservative Jews (who are more attached) versus Reform and nondenominational Jews (who are less attached). This conclusion derives from an analysis using a closeness-to-Israel index that combines four items (Table 27). One item asks whether caring about Israel is an important part of "my being a Jew"; the second asks respondents to rate their closeness to Israel; the third asks them to rate their closeness to Israelis; and the fourth asks for the symbolic importance of Israel (see Table 14). The mean scores are 50 for the nondenominational, 56 for Reform Jews, 71 for the Conservative, and 78 for the Orthodox.

Closeness to Israel also varies directly with communal affiliation and activity. Scores increase from the unaffiliated (45), to the affiliated (62), to non-Orthodox activists (75), to Orthodox activists (85).

Any accurate appreciation of the meaning of Israel to American Jews needs to reconcile their passionate support for Israel with their insulation from the substance of Israeli society. Paradoxically, Israel's dominance in the Jewish public sphere is coupled with near-irrelevance in the private sphere; and Israel's importance to the most active and identified Jews is coupled with its relative unimportance to less active Jews.

More "Synagogue Jews" than "Federation Jews"

In appraising the attributes of the "good Jew," respondents clearly rank belonging to Jewish organizations and contributing to Jewish philanthropies below belonging to a synagogue and attending High Holiday services. The first two items refer to the world of institutional or civic Judaism, while the second two pertain to the synagogue world. More than twice as many respondents see the two synagogue activities as essential to their idea of the good Jew as see the two civic activities as essential. In this context, it is worth noting the responses to another question asking about the extent to which respondents felt attached to various Jewish groups and organizations (Table 28). While 36 percent feel attached to a local synagogue or temple, no more than half as many feel attached to a Jewish community center (10 percent), a federation (9 percent), or another local Jewish organization (18 percent). Equally impressive is the 20 percent who feel at least very attached to their children's Jewish schools. Excluding those who say the question does not apply to them (they may not have school-age children), fully a third feel very attached or more so to their children's schools, a proportion comparable to that feeling close to their synagogues.

Taken together, these findings certainly indicate that synagogues and Jewish schools command a greater (or at least broader) degree of attachment than do other Jewish institutions. The responses also suggest that there are two distinct and separate dimensions of institutional attachment. One is to synagogues and Jewish schools (especially among parents of children in Jewish schools). The other type of attachment is to "public" or "civic" Judaism, as embodied particularly in federations. Communal activists have the sense that they divide into "synagogue Jews" and "federation Jews." Certainly most federation leaders belong to synagogues, and most synagogue leaders contribute to federations; but activists in each sphere feel that their interests, social

backgrounds, and worldviews differ from those in the other sphere. This sense of a subtle differentiation among leaders finds confirmation in these findings for the wider Jewish public.

The Largely "Irrelevant"

Five of the items on the "good Jew" question (Table 24) were distinguished by unusually low levels of support. They are: having a kosher home, sending one's children to an all-day Jewish school, being a liberal (or being a conservative) on political issues, and having mostly Jewish friends. On all five items, majorities answer with the responses "do not matter," "undesirable," and "not sure." Taken together, these three responses comprise the "irrelevant" category. Different reasons for the low rankings apply to this diverse set of items.

Rejection of Traditionalism

The low rankings of kashrut and day-school education are but emblematic of a larger phenomenon: the rejection of Jewish traditionalism. And in this rejection, there lies a major area of contention between two groups of Jews. One is the nontraditional majority, including some who are very involved in communal Jewish life. The other is a traditionalist minority consisting of most Orthodox Jews, non-Orthodox rabbis and educators, some highly committed Conservative lay people, and just a few others. For much of the traditional group, kashrut and day schools are at the core of their Jewishness. But for the vast majority of the Jewish population, and even majorities in non-Orthodox communal decision-making bodies, these activities are actually irrelevant to their concept of a good Jew. We may recall that less than a quarter see the Sabbath as "extremely important" to their sense of being Jewish, and just a few say it is "extremely important" for their children to "practice Jewish ritual."

In other words, the more-religious minority would say it is next to impossible for them to conceive of good American Jews who fail to keep kosher homes, to observe the Sabbath, and to send their children to day schools. But a huge majority of American Jews believe that one can be a very good Jew even keeping a "trefe" home, failing to observe the Sabbath, and providing one's children with a part-time Jewish school experience. The differences over these symbolic issues (kashrut, the Sabbath, and day schools) parallel and reflect differences and clashes between religious leaders and nonreligious leaders in such areas as Jewish communal and taxpayer support of day schools and the importance of a traditionalist ambience for Jewish communal activities. Thus the nascent conflict here is not simply over kashrut, Sabbath, and day schools, but over very elementary beliefs about what is essential to Judaism and to being a good Jew.

The Declining Centrality of Liberalism

In the early 1980s, some politically conservative Jewish commentators claimed that American Jews were departing from their historically liberal political inclinations.

Subsequently, elections and research (Cohen 1984, 1989b; Fisher 1989) proved these perceptions inaccurate. American Jews continue to vote disproportionately for Democratic candidates and to support liberal causes with both money and activism. (To be sure, one analyst – Fisher 1989 – now perceives a slight shift to the right; but huge gaps on several issues still separate left-of-center American Jews from the rest of the country.)

But even if American Jews remain largely liberal in inclination and Democratic in their voting, a case can still be made for an emotional or sentimental retreat from liberalism. In the 1950s, almost two-thirds of the Lakeville respondents rated "be a liberal on political and economic issues" as either essential or desirable to their concept of the good Jew. In contrast, in this study, less than half as many (27 percent) rate "be a liberal on political issues" as at least desirable and, of these, just 6 percent see it as essential (as compared with 31 percent in Lakeville).

Despite the fact that Jews may still support liberal candidates and causes almost as much as in the past, the results suggest changes in the importance of liberalism. The notion that political liberalism and Judaism are inextricably interwoven may have receded. Jews may still be liberal, but they are no longer as religiously committed to their liberalism. (This conclusion is too significant for those few items on commitment to liberalism to substantiate. Rather, the conclusion derives primarily from a reading of recent American Jewish history, one that is consistent with, though not fully demonstrated by, the meager data on political commitment in this survey.)

If Jewish passion for liberalism is fading, Jewish enthusiasm for conservatism is negligible. Almost nobody sees political conservatism as essential (just 2 percent) to their concept of a good Jew, and only a few (10 percent) see it as desirable.

These findings imply that today's respondents do not see Judaism making many demands on them in the political arena. They believe Judaism commands them to be moral and ethical, but Jewish morality and ethics do not dictate to them a general stance in American politics. For most American Jews, their basic approach to politics is only weakly related to their understanding of Judaism.

Three Sensibilities: Traditionalist, Communal, and Universalist

Aside from the simple frequencies of responses in the "good Jew" question, the correlations – the extent to which people respond in like manner to certain groups of items – are also revealing. When respondents react in a similar fashion to a certain group of questions, those questions can be said to be measuring an underlying attitude or construct. And to the extent that we can identify such constructs, we can begin to appreciate the major patterns of thinking among American Jews with respect to the norms of Jewish life.

The analysis of the "good Jew" items discerns three clusters of questions. One cluster consists of the following: weekly service attendance, kosher home, studying Jewish texts, knowing the fundamentals of Judaism, celebrating the Sabbath, and sending one's children to day school. This group of items may be termed the "traditionalist sensibility," reflecting the criteria used by traditionally minded or religious Jews. The second cluster consists of the following items: giving to Jewish charities,

support for Israel, belonging to a Jewish organization, belonging to a synagogue, and attending High Holiday services. This cluster, the "communal sensibility," represents the widely held notion that the good Jew is one who publicly identifies with the organized Jewish community. The third cluster consists of just three items: giving to nonsectarian charities, being a political liberal, and working for social-justice causes. They constitute what may be called the "universalist sensibility," reflecting a concern for Jewish involvement in the broader society. Reform Judaism, Jewish liberals, and old-line socialists have emphasized this sort of sensibility in their definition of the good Jew.

Although the three sensibilities abide in most Jews, different camps or groups tend to emphasize one sort of criteria for being a good Jew over the others. If so, then we can better appreciate the meaning of these three sensibilities by examining their distribution among different Jewish subpopulations (Table 29). The items under each rubric form the basis for three indices ranging in value from 0 to 100. As an example, a score of 100 on the traditional-sensibility scale would mean that the respondents felt that all five traditional items were essential to their idea of a good Jew; a 0 would imply that all five were unnecessary to being a good Jew.

In examining the mean scores for the three sensibilities by denomination and by level of communal involvement, several clear patterns emerge. The Orthodox are far more sympathetic to the traditionalist criteria for defining a good Jew than are Conservative Jews, who, in turn, only slightly outscore Reform and nondenominational Jews in preferring these criteria. Significantly, Orthodox communal activists rate traditionalist criteria much higher than do non-Orthodox communal activists (mean scores of 85 versus 66).

The extent to which respondents utilize communal criteria to define a good Jew increases gradually with each increase in denominational traditionalism. Again, the Orthodox score highest, followed by Conservative Jews, followed in turn by the Reform, with the nondenominational scoring last. The use of communal criteria, though, is not so much a function of denomination or religious philosophy as it is of communal involvement. Communal activists, be they Orthodox or not, are much more willing to define a good Jew in terms of communal affiliation than are respondents with few or no ties to organized Jewry. The affiliated, in turn, regard communal criteria as more highly desirable than do the unaffiliated.

Most respondents rate the communal criteria higher -- that is, as more desirable or essential to a good Jew -- than the traditionalist criteria. However, among the Orthodox, the reverse is the case. For them, traditionalist criteria are slightly more important than are communal activities. To most respondents, good Jews are those who are tied to other Jews, be it in families, synagogues, or organizations, rather than those who observe the Sabbath and kashrut and send their children to day school. For the Orthodox, though, the good Jew is one who leads a traditional Jewish life where ritual observance and learning are paramount. For them, communal ties are an inevitable and positive consequence of traditionalist commitment, but they see communal involvement as flowing from that commitment rather than constituting the essence of Judaism.

The ratings of the universalist criteria hardly vary by denomination or level of

communal involvement. That is, respondents of all denominations and levels of communal involvement place roughly the same emphasis on doing good on behalf of others. These results seem to contradict the impression that Reform or unaffiliated Jews stress universalist aspects of Judaism more than do traditionalist or activist Jews. In point of fact, the results are consistent with this impression. When compared with the importance they attach to traditionalist and communal criteria, Reform and nonaffiliated Jews do regard the universalist criteria with greater seriousness than others. Since Reform and nondenominational Jews place so little emphasis on ritual observance in their definition of the good Jew, their relative emphasis upon universalist activities for defining a good Jew is much more prominent than among the Orthodox.

Perhaps what is most interesting about the three sensibilities is that they loosely resemble the folk ethos of the three major denominations. Orthodoxy tends to emphasize the items that make up the traditionalist sensibility; Conservative congregations emphasize in practice the kind of things contained under the communal rubric (although Conservative rabbis may often wish for a greater appreciation of the traditionalist criteria); and the Reform movement has distinguished itself by most clearly articulating universalist concerns within a Jewish context. The close parallels between the normative structure in the population and the philosophies articulated by rabbis and other denominational leaders suggest that the denominations are not totally happenstance. Instead, they reflect and express genuine differences among rank-and-file American Jews over what constitutes a good Jew and, by extension, what constitutes real Judaism.

INTERIM SUMMARY

The Moderately Affiliated: More Committed to Continuity than to Content

At this point, we can ask, what is the nature of the Jewishness of moderately affiliated Jews? These Jews, who (by my definition) constitute about half of American Jewry, occupy the approximate middle of the Jewish-identity spectrum. To one side of the marginally affiliated is a collection of more highly involved Jewish groups. Using a somewhat arbitrary definition, the more intensively active Jews amount to about a quarter of American Jewry. Many in this group are Orthodox, but most are not. The intensively active include those Conservative and Reform Jews who take their respective movements' normative positions quite seriously. They also include those who are very active in the organized Jewish community, as well as secularist Jews who nevertheless sustain a deep and abiding passion for Jewish culture and learning.

At the other end of the spectrum are those less involved in Jewish life than the moderately affiliated. This more peripheral group consists of those with only occasional and very tenuous connections with the formal Jewish community and, often, relatively few informal ties to other Jews. Most of the mixed-married fall into this group, though the peripheral group also consists of younger adults who have not yet experienced parenthood (an event that brings many into contact with other Jews and Jewish institutions).

Between the more intensive group and the more peripheral group lies about half the Jewish population, the moderately affiliated. This group's Jewish activities almost invariably include celebration of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, and Passover. Most of the moderately affiliated are married to Jews; most if not all of their close friends are Jewish; and almost all send their children to part-time Jewish schools. We can also presume that they celebrate the major Jewish life-cycle rituals in one way or the other: they circumcise their sons, celebrate bar and bat mitzvah, marry with rabbinic officiation, and mourn the loss of family members by drawing upon some key traditional customs and ceremonies.

While the foregoing could have been adduced from the prior research literature, this analysis extended the portrait of the moderately affiliated in a number of ways. Throughout the analysis, we saw evidence of duality, or of two tiers of responses. One group of answers characterizes the vast majority of Jews, roughly 55-85 percent. This group includes both the moderately affiliated and the more intensively involved. Another set of answers was offered only by fractions ranging from about a fifth to a third of the population.

The majority, consisting of moderately affiliated and intensively identified groups, demonstrate a commitment to Jewish continuity. In contrast, only the narrower minority express a commitment to some form of Jewish content, one that is generally but not always religious in nature. The two-tiered pattern of responses, then, provides a way of describing the beliefs and attitudes of all three groups of Jews – the intensively involved, the moderately affiliated, and the peripheral or unaffiliated minority. The assumption here is that both the moderately affiliated and the intensively active (but not the peripheral) share a commitment to Jewish continuity, both for their own families and for the Jewish people generally. However, only the intensively active share a passion and enthusiasm for a particular style of Jewish life or a particular ideology.

What is the nature of the commitment to continuity that characterizes the vast Jewish middle? In no particular order, these generalizations (that extend beyond the prior literature) about the marginally affiliated may be drawn from the preceding findings:

(1) The moderately affiliated (the centrist half of American Jewry) are proud of their identity as Jews, of Jews generally, and of Judaism. ✓

(2) They combine universalist and particularist impulses; they are ambivalent about giving public expression to their genuinely felt attachment to things Jewish.

(3) They are especially fond of the widely celebrated Jewish holidays as well as the family experiences and special foods that are associated with them. ✓

(4) They celebrate High Holidays, Hanukkah, and Passover as well as most major American civic holidays. Unlike the more religious, most do not celebrate the Sabbath and other Jewish holidays; and unlike many mixed-married and other more peripheral Jews, few moderately affiliated celebrate Christian holidays. ✓

(5) They vest importance in those Jewish activities they perform; and they regard those activities they fail to undertake as of little import. Accordingly, they are happy with themselves as Jews; they believe they are "good Jews."

(6) Their primary Jewish goal for their children is for them to maintain Jewish family continuity. They want their children to remain emotionally close to them and to preserve and assure the Jewish identity of their children (the respondents' grandchildren). ✓

(7) The Holocaust and anti-Semitism are among the most powerful Jewish symbols. ✓

(8) The moderately affiliated believe God exists, but they have little faith in an active and personal God. ✓

(9) They are voluntarists; they affirm a right to select those Jewish customs they regard as personally meaningful; and unlike many intensive Jews, most of the moderately affiliated reject the obligatory nature of halakhah. ✓

(10) Many resent rabbis, fund-raisers, and others who, in effect, reproach them for failing to fulfill Jewish norms.

(11) Most resent Orthodoxy, or at least those parts of Orthodoxy that they see as self-righteous.

(12) They endorse broad, abstract principles of Jewish life (such as knowing the fundamentals of Judaism), but fail to support narrower, more concrete normative ✓

demands (such as regular text study or sending their children to Jewish day schools).

✓ (13) The moderately affiliated prefer in-marriage, but fail to oppose out-marriage with a great sense of urgency.

✓ (14) They support Israel, but only as a subordinate concern, one lacking any significant influence on the private sphere of Jewish practice.

(15) More are attached to synagogues and their children's schools than feel close to the civic institutions of Jewish life such as federations, Jewish community centers, or other organizations.

✓ (16) While many of the more intensive Jews are deeply involved in several salient features of traditional Jewish life (kashrut, the Sabbath, day schools, regular text study), the vast majority of moderately affiliated Jews see little value in such things for themselves.

(17) To the moderately affiliated, "good Jews" are those who affiliate with other Jews and Jewish institutions. To many in the more intensive and ideological minority, affiliation is a consequence of a prior commitment to one or another style of intensive Jewish life.

Assuming for the moment that this description of the Jewish middle is both fair and accurate, one is immediately tempted to raise the question of whether such a Judaism is sustainable. More broadly, one may also ask whether American Jewry can remain socially cohesive and culturally distinctive when so many American Jews share an identity characterized by both strengths and weaknesses. Some may argue that the Jewish identity of the vast Jewish middle is shallow and only weakly connected to traditional Judaism, and, as a result, that it is doomed to eventual weakening and erosion. Others may argue that whatever one thinks of American Jewish identity today, it is not much worse, so to speak, than it was twenty or thirty years ago. Apparently, depth of culture, richness of spirit, and profundity of knowledge may not be prerequisites for Jewish continuity.

Obviously, a description of the current state of American Jewish identity cannot adequately address what is essentially a dynamic question, one which asks about change in Jewish identity and the American Jewish future. However, we can gain some insight into the issues surrounding the assimilation debate by examining variations in Jewish-identity measures by age, family, intermarriage status, and gender.

SPECIAL TOPICS

Younger Adults: Less Pro-Israel and More Integrated

Examining variations in Jewish identity by age is appealing for one very important reason: the distinctive features of today's younger adults may offer some hints as to the future character of Jewish identity. After all, younger adults will inevitably replace their elders in the Jewish population. Young adults today may (but only may) respond like the more mature adults of tomorrow.

Many sorts of population-wide attitude changes over time have been driven by differences between birth cohorts (people born around the same time). For example, for several decades (until the 1970s), the American public as a whole became more liberal largely because each succeeding birth cohort adopted generally more liberal views than its elders. In like fashion, many observers reason that apparent declines in Jewish involvement on the part of today's younger Jews are the harbingers of parallel changes in the larger Jewish population in the next decade or two.

Of course, such simple extrapolations are always risky and often unwarranted. Somehow, historic events intervene to cause major changes in beliefs and attitudes that could not have been foretold by early signs among younger adults at a given point in time. For example, an accurate and thorough understanding of the behavior and thinking of young Jewish adults in 1965 could not have been used to foretell several crucial developments in the decade that followed. These include: the surge in pro-Israel sentiment, the birth and broad appeal of the Soviet Jewry movement, the growth in intermarriage and divorce, the rise of Jewish feminism, the explosion in Jewish studies, and the declining enthusiasm for liberal politics. Historic events have a way of disrupting straightforward projections from the young or from the immediate past.

Another reason to be cautious about using current adults' patterns of Jewish identity to forecast the future is that many forms of Jewish involvement rise substantially with the advent of school-age children. Since a good number of adult Jews under 35 have not yet married or do not have school-age children, their rates of affiliation, of ritual performance, and of other measures of Jewish involvement fall short of their future peaks (Cohen 1988a, 1989b). (For many if not most Jewish adults, the period just prior to their children's bar/bat mitzvah may well be the time of highest Jewish activity in their lives.)

Nevertheless, with these cautionary notes in mind, comparisons across the age spectrum remain of considerable interest and significance (Table 30). In light of the

low rates of mature parenthood among those under 35, the critical group to examine are those 35-44. How do their patterns of Jewish behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes compare with those ten, twenty, and thirty years their senior? As opposed to those under 35, unconventional family patterns among 35-44-year-olds cannot be regarded as transitory. Today's 35-44-year-olds, compared to those twenty years ago, experience higher rates of mixed marriage, divorce, and perhaps childlessness. But these family patterns are built-in features that depress levels of Jewish involvement.

For the most part, despite higher rates of unconventional family patterns, the measures of Jewish identification of younger adults resemble those of older adults. In other words, by these measures younger Jews are no "less Jewish" than older Jews. This generalization embraces a very wide range of behaviors and attitudes. Compared to their elders, younger Jewish adults are as likely to: express pride in being Jewish, feel close to other Jews, attach importance to holiday observance, celebrate traditional holidays (such as the Sabbath and Sukkoth), celebrate the popular holidays (Passover, Hanukkah, etc.), value symbols of traditional Judaism (e.g., Jewish law, the Sabbath), believe in an active and personal God, feel obligated to observe Jewish law, and feel committed to raising their children as active and identifying Jews.

However, even as these measures of Jewish identity are at about the same levels for all age groups, younger adults differ from their elders on several other indices. The differences can be reduced to two major distinctions between young and old. First, younger Jews are more integrated into the larger society. Second, they are more distant from public or civic Judaism.

Younger Jews' greater degree of social integration, spurred no doubt by their higher rates of mixed marriage, emerges in several ways. One is their more frequent choice of Gentile friends. Younger Jews report fewer close Jewish friends than do their elders. Those age 55-64 claim that around three-quarters of their closest friends are Jewish (they score a 74 on the index). In contrast, those 35-44 score fifteen points lower on the index (59).

Younger Jews also exhibit greater social integration by celebrating Christian holidays more often. From age 45, mean values on the Christian-celebration index range between 10 and 15; below age 45, the scores for the two younger cohorts are 20 and 22. These results suggest a sharp turn at around age 45: those under 45 are at least one-third more likely to celebrate Christmas and Easter than are those 45 and over.

A third sign of the greater integration of younger adults emerges in their slightly more muted reaction to the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. On an index combining reactions to these two symbols, younger adults scored somewhat lower than those 55 years of age and older. The larger number of Gentile friends, spouses, neighbors, and co-workers, the higher rates of Christmas and Easter celebration, and the diminished symbolic importance of anti-Semitism all point to a synthetic conclusion: Today's younger Jews are less segregated and more integrated in the larger, non-Jewish society.

The second major trend characterizing younger Jews is an apparent retreat from institutional or civic Judaism. The evidence here derives from analysis of an index measuring attachment to civic Jewish institutions. This index combines answers to

questions relating to the UJA, the local federation, and the Jewish community center (items that were all correlated with one another). Although Jews generally feel rather remote from these institutions, younger Jews feel even less attached than older Jews. Those 65 and over are particularly strong partisans of UJA-federation-JCC Judaism. Moreover, younger Jews also score lower than their elders on the index measuring attachment to Israel. Small declines are associated with every drop in age.

Since much pro-Israel activity has been heavily organized and orchestrated by the Jewish philanthropic world, the parallel declines among younger Jews in attachment to Israel and to institutional Judaism may well be related, although the causal direction is unclear. To some extent, younger adults may be less pro-Israel because they are less enamored of large Jewish organizations; alternatively, some may be less committed to civic Judaism because they feel less devotion to Israel, a principal reason to engage in Jewish philanthropies and other communal activities. The findings suggest a modest withdrawal from all forms of public Judaism, be it philanthropy, pro-Israel activity, or, as we saw earlier, liberal political activism. The long-term retreat from public Judaism may have occurred despite stability in private Judaism.

The Positive Impact of Marriage and Parenthood

A long line of research has documented that the transition from singlehood, to marriage, to parenthood is accompanied by a rise in several forms of Jewish involvement (Sklare and Greenblum 1979; Cohen 1988a, 1989b). In this respect, Jews are not unlike Christian Americans, who also experience a surge in religious activity when they become parents (Nash and Berger 1962; Nash 1968). The previous research on Jews demonstrated links between parenthood and increased numbers of Jewish friends, ritual observance, and communal affiliation. Synagogue membership, in particular, jumps markedly when children reach school age. Obviously, many Jews join synagogues in large part because they want their children to attend part-time Jewish schools and to have a setting in which to celebrate their bar/bat mitzvahs.

The findings here demonstrate that the largely behavioral changes reported in the earlier literature are accompanied by attitudinal changes as well (Table 31). (Technically speaking, we have no evidence of change per se; rather, we have static comparisons between married parents and single Jews or those who are married with no children. Nevertheless, it stands to reason that comparatively higher rates of Jewish involvement among married parents constitute evidence of changes associated with marriage or parenthood.)

When compared with both single adults and with childless married Jews, married parents have more close friends who are Jewish, and they celebrate Jewish holidays (whether the more traditional or the more popular) more often. On almost every index of beliefs or attitudes, parents surpass singles and childless couples. In some cases the differences are rather small. But in others, the gaps are substantial. The most impressive difference occurs with respect to feeling close to other Jews, attaching importance to celebrating Jewish holidays, feeling obligated to Jewish law, feeling committed to raising Jewishly active children, feeling attached to civic Judaism, and seeing anti-Semitism as symbolically important. Many of these measures connote

connections with other Jews, be they individuals, family and friends, or institutions. Parents, more than others, feel close to immediate Jewish family (i.e., their children and the holidays they celebrate together), informal Jewish networks (friends), and the organized Jewish community.

These findings testify to the family-centeredness of contemporary Judaism. So much of what Jews do as Jews, be it in the form of ritual practice or participating in Jewish institutions, takes on greater meaning or is perceived as more suitable for and by those living in conventional families.

The Alienation of the Single Jewish Man

Very little prior research has examined gender differences in Jewish identification. Some scattered pieces of evidence point to somewhat higher levels of conventional Jewish involvement on the part of women than of men. That is, the literature conveys the idea that women generally are "more Jewish" than men. For example, at least until recently, Jewish men out-marry more than Jewish women (Kosmin et al. 1989). Jewish women are more hawkish on Israeli foreign policies than are men, possibly reflecting higher levels of attachment to Israel by women (Brodbar-Nemzer 1987). Communal agency personnel report, anecdotally, that women participate in various social programs more than men. They attend events for singles (of whatever age) more than men; as a general rule Jewish women's organizations are more stable and financially secure than male counterparts; and the middle to lower level Jewish communal professionals are more often women than men. In only a few areas, most notably in the Orthodox community (synagogues, yeshivas) and in top leadership positions in Jewish life (rabbis, members of top boards and committees, and presidents of synagogues, federations, and defense agencies), do males seem to predominate (Kosmin 1989). But, even with all this said, gender differences constitute one area with a very small amount of prior research.

The analysis addresses this gap in the research literature by comparing the indices of Jewish identification for men and women (Table 32). Since men and women may differently experience different family statuses, Table 32 distinguishes singles from married parents and divides both groups into men and women. (There were insufficient numbers of childless married people and of widows/ers to allow for examination of these statuses by gender.)

A nearly universal pattern emerges in the examination of single men, single women, married fathers, and married mothers. Only small and inconsistent differences in Jewish-identity scores characterize the parents. Jewish fathers and mothers report very similar levels of Jewish involvement on almost every measure. (Perhaps one can discern a slight edge to the women, but the differences are indeed tiny and non-uniform.)

However, among singles, women repeatedly outscore the men, sometimes by substantial margins. In almost every respect, they are more Jewishly active and sentimentally inclined than are single men. (The only exception to this generalization is that women score higher on Christian-holiday celebration than their male counterparts. Perhaps women are generally more religiously inclined than men, leading

them to undertake both Christian and Jewish rituals more frequently.) Compared to single men, Jewish women are more proud of being Jewish, feel closer to other Jews, have more Jewish friends, observe more Jewish holidays, and are more religious (however one defines the term), more committed to their (prospective) children's Jewish identity, more pro-Israel, more concerned with anti-Semitism, and more attached to Jewish civic institutions. The list is rather impressive.

Several overlapping inferences derive from this set of findings. First, when compared with single women or with married men who are already fathers, single Jewish men are unusually alienated from Jewish life, in both behavioral and attitudinal terms. Second, as a corollary, more single women than single men manage to maintain their ties with conventional Judaism. The psychic or physical isolation from close Jewish family members (parents, siblings, spouses, or children) seems less consequential for women than for men. Third, by extension, marriage and parenthood have a larger impact on men's Jewish identity than on women's. Both sexes experience increases in the Jewish-identity indices in the transition from singlehood to parenthood; but because the men's measures start out lower than the women's and then wind up almost equal to their wives', the men's scores jump more dramatically with the advent of marriage and children.

These findings provide only a superficial insight into gender-related differences in Jewish identity. Certainly, the matter requires more attention, thought, and research.

The Mixed-Married, the Out-Married, and the Converts

No one knows the exact number of Jews who out-marry, that is, marry spouses who were not raised as Jews. Population studies suggest a rate of about one-third, but the possible undersampling of highly marginal Jews on the federation-sponsored studies may mask a somewhat higher rate (Kosmin et al. 1989). Whatever the national rate, it is clear that out-marriage varies widely by region, local Jewish population density, ritual observance, ethnic embeddedness, age, and timing of marriage.

This analysis is not at all concerned with the rate of out-marriage or its determinants. Rather, we are concerned here with its consequences for the Jewish identity of individuals.

The principal value of these results lies in the numerous comparisons they offer between Jews married to Gentiles (the mixed-married) and those married to other Jews (the in-married). In addition, the survey reached a few Jews who are married to converts (spouses raised as non-Jews who are now regarded as Jewish by the respondents) as well as converts (those who were not raised Jewish, whose mother and father were Gentiles, but who currently identify as Jews). Since the survey included rather small numbers of those married to converts and of converts, the findings for these groups have to be regarded with far greater caution than do those for the mixed-married or the in-married.

Previous research has demonstrated that mixed-married Jews participate far less frequently in Jewish ritual, communal, and informal activities than do in-married Jews (Cohen 1988a; Mayer 1989). One reason for this gap is that the mixed-married tend

to originate from families or communities that are more peripheral to the conventional Jewish community than the average. Even had they not married Gentiles who failed to convert to Judaism, these people, in any case, would have scored lower than average on most standard measures of Jewish involvement. At the same time, to some unknown extent, marriage to a non-Jew results in even lower levels of affiliation and participation than would otherwise be the case.

The absence of longitudinal data and of detailed and accurate information about the parents of the respondents makes it impossible to precisely estimate the extent to which self-selection and intermarriage per se prompt low levels of Jewish involvement. All we can do is to note the size, nature, and location of the discrepancies in Jewishness between mixed-married and in-married respondents.

Consistent with prior research, the mixed-married in this study score substantially below the in-married on several measures of Jewish involvement (Table 33). For example, while about 80 percent of the closest friends of the in-married are Jewish, less than half as many (31 percent) of the friends of the mixed-married are Jews. Also consistent with prior research, the mixed-married perform traditional rituals about half as often as the in-married (scores of 20 versus 39 respectively), and undertake the popular observances about two-thirds as often (63 versus 90). As one would expect (and as noted earlier), mixed-married Jews celebrate Christian holidays far more than in-married (scores of 54 versus 7).

While the behavioral measures display rather large gaps between the mixed-married and the in-married, the gaps in most attitudinal measures are smaller. Almost all the patterns are in the expected direction – that is, the mixed-married trail the in-married on Jewish-identity measures. (The one exception is belief in an active and personal God, where the two groups have almost identical means.) Since mixed-married Jews come closer to in-married Jews in terms of attitudes rather than behavior, it seems fair to conclude that mixed-married Jews feel more Jewish than they behave.

While moderate differences characterize most of the comparisons of attitudes of the mixed-married and in-married, in three areas the gaps are especially large: feeling close to other Jews (50 versus 78), attaching importance to Jewish holiday celebration (40 versus 70), and being committed to raise one's children as active Jews (only 26 versus 64). Two of these attitudes have documented parallels in behavior. The mixed-married have very few Jewish friends (which may be why they feel distant from other Jews). They also celebrate Jewish holidays only about half as often as do in-married Jews (which may be why far fewer say that Jewish-holiday celebration is important to them). We have no information on child-rearing practices, but it stands to reason that the very low score of the mixed-married on the index of commitment to children's Jewishness is reflected in a variety of concrete ways in the home.

The implications of these findings for Jewish continuity and for the quality of Jewish life among the Jewish population generally are not readily apparent. On the one hand, it does appear that for many important measures of Jewish commitment the mixed-married score at levels around half those for the in-married. This pattern may mean that for any given Jewish activity or sentiment, the participation of the mixed-married is, on average, only about half as frequent as that of the in-married.

If true, this crude generalization implies large-scale disaffiliation from the Jewish community by the mixed-married and their offspring.

But what may be seen as disastrous for Jewish continuity in the individual case may be of little consequence or neutral in population terms. Mixed-married Jews create twice as many households when they marry Gentiles as when they marry Jews. For example, when 100 Jewish men marry 100 Jewish women, they establish 100 Jewish homes. But when the same number of Jewish men and women marry Gentiles, they establish up to 200 potentially Jewish homes. If the rate at which these homes participate in Jewish life (however one defines participation, be it synagogue membership, lighting Sabbath candles, or traveling to Israel) is one half that of the in-married population, then the impact of mixed marriage on the number of participating Jews in the population is negligible. In a sense, the Jewish community needs the mixed-married to undertake Jewish activities only half as often as the in-married for out-marriage to exert little or no impact on the level of Jewish activity in the population. If, for example, one-half the in-married population belong to synagogues, then only a quarter of the mixed-married need join synagogues for synagogue dues collections and family memberships to be unaffected by mixed marriage. If this reasoning is correct, then from the point of view of Jewish survivalists (those who care about Jewish continuity), mixed marriage may be individually perilous but, on balance, mixed or nearly neutral for Jews collectively.

This conclusion does not mean to suggest that the impact of intermarriage is negligible. Certainly the phenomenon weakens the boundaries between Jews and others. It probably contributes to a weakening of Jewish intensity and certainly exacerbates interdenominational friction as the Orthodox and the Reform adopt sharply contrasting policies toward the mixed-married and their offspring. However, intermarriage does sometimes result in quantitative and qualitative "gains" to the Jewish people, primarily by provoking conversion to Judaism among born-Gentiles.

Conversion of former Gentiles is certainly one of the few salutary outcomes of out-marriage for Jewish population size. (An out-marriage is the union of a born-Jew with a born-Gentile. Out-marriages without conversion by the Gentile to Judaism are mixed marriages; the others may be called "conversionary marriages.") A substantial number of out-marriages prompt conversion to Judaism. In this study it seems that about 18 percent of out-marriages resulted in conversion, a figure comparable to that found in several Jewish population studies. The nature of the converts' Jewishness is crucial to the question of the impact of out-marriage on the overall quality of American Jewish identification. If the converts and those in conversionary marriages are active Jews, then out-marriage must be credited with expanding the active Jewish population to that extent.

Only a few recent researchers have examined the Jewish involvement of converts and their spouses (see Cohen 1988a; Mayer 1989). Previous research suggests that, for the most part, converts and Jews married to converts report Jewish-identification scores that approach but do not quite equal those of in-married Jews. In almost all instances, the scores of mixed-married Jews fall well below those of converts and those with converted spouses. In other words, although converts and Jews married to converts may be slightly less Jewishly committed and involved than the average

Jew married to a Jew, they display far greater Jewish commitment and involvement than the mixed-married.

Previous studies of converts have suggested that they are more religiously Jewish than ethnically Jewish. Assuming that the distinction between ethnic and religious Jewishness is a valid one, the results here seem to confirm those earlier studies. Thus the converts equal or nearly equal levels of Jewish involvement reported by in-married Jews in several religious dimensions: the observance of holidays, the importance of holidays, the significance of traditional religious symbols, faith in God, and commitment to obeying Jewish law. However, they trail significantly in several dimensions that may be seen as representing ethnic Judaism: having Jewish friends, feeling close to other Jews, commitment to raising children as affiliated Jews, support for Israel, and attachment to institutional Judaism. The results here are neither one-sided nor unambiguous; but they do lean in the direction of supporting the idea that converts more readily adopt the Jewish religion than acquire Jewish ethnic characteristics and commitments.

There are several plausible explanations for this phenomenon. One is that converts, who are largely former Christian Americans, tend to think of Judaism in religious rather than ethnic terms. When they convert, they change religious but not ethnic identities (at least not so fast); upon conversion, they adopt Judaism, but not always Jewishness. Second, conversion takes place under religious auspices, with the supervision and instruction of one or more rabbis. It does not take place under ethnic auspices. Local federation presidents or executive directors, for example, have no authority to conduct conversions. They cannot conduct an ethnic conversion by substituting a mission to Israel for submersion in the mikvah. Third, assuming religious commitments and undertaking religious activities may come far more quickly and easily than adopting more subtle features of ethnic identification. Perhaps after twenty years or more living as Jews, converts acquire many Jewish ethnic characteristics; but in the short run, their religious conversion may race ahead of their ethnic transformation.

Whatever the explanations for their patterns of Jewish identification, it does appear that converts (and those married to converts) are almost as Jewishly active and identified as in-married Jews. For converts, the gaps in religious-commitment measures are small to nonexistent, while those in what may be called Jewish ethnic-commitment measures are small to moderate in size.

CONCLUSION

Repeatedly, the findings reported above fall into a two-tiered pattern. Some ideas and sentiments reflective of Jewish commitment are held by roughly two-thirds of American Jewry; many others are held by only a quarter, more or less. For example, the vast majority believes God exists, but only a narrow minority believe God is active and personal. The vast majority think that knowing the fundamentals of Judaism is important for them and their children, but only a small minority believe day schools, text study, and adult Jewish education are important. The great majority are committed to observing certain holidays and practices, but very few attach great importance to ritual observance or obeying Jewish law.

The two tiers of responses yield a three-group view of American Jewry. One quarter of the population, the more involved, are committed both to Jewish continuity and to Jewish content of one sort or another. About half the population, the moderately affiliated (those situated in the middle of the Jewish-identity continuum), claim a deep commitment to Jewish continuity, but they rarely voice a strong preference for a particular Jewish content in their lives. The remaining quarter, the most Jewishly peripheral group, express little interest in a Jewish content and not much passion in maintaining Jewish continuity.

With respect to the debate over the American Jewish future, the findings are ambiguous. In favor of the more pessimistic outlook, the mixed-married group emerges as fairly peripheral to Jewish life. The continued growth of mixed-marriage, then, would augur ill for the American Jewish future. However, the bottom-line impact of mixed marriage is still difficult to assess. The low rates of Jewish commitment and involvement may be compensated for by the acquisition of converts and by the simple fact that out-marriage doubles the potential pool of Jewish families.

In support of the optimistic forecast, the findings paint a portrait of commitment to Jewish life shared by the vast majority of American Jews. It might not be a portrait that many rabbis, educators, and intellectuals find very attractive or appealing. Yet, crude and inarticulate as this picture of Jewish commitment may be, the vast majority of American Jews do want to remain Jewishly connected to other Jews. In addition, the age-cohort analysis uncovered many more areas of stability than of decline. True, young people are less committed to public Judaism (including Israel) than their elders and they are more integrated into American life. But, despite greater out-marriage and all that it implies, younger Jews remain as committed and as active as their more in-married elders in such areas as holiday and ritual observance, ethnic

pride and attachment, faith in God, and on and on.

How one interprets the data, how one makes the conceptual leap from survey findings to addressing larger substantive questions, may ultimately rest on ideology and values more than science and analysis. The goals here have been primarily to present the findings in as clear and organized a fashion as possible, to offer tentative interpretations, to suggest qualifications, and to raise intriguing questions.

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Table 1
Jewish Communal Involvement Items

Do you belong to a synagogue or temple? YES 49% NO 51%

Do you currently belong to any Jewish organizations other than a synagogue or temple? YES 46% NO 54%

(IF YES) How much time would you say you spend working for Jewish organizations?

A great deal of time	5%
A lot of time	6%
Some time	17%
Very little time	17%
Not sure	1%
No time	54%

*Since you were 21, have you ever served on a board or committee of a Jewish organization?

YES 45%	NO 53%	NOT SURE 1%
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Do you now serve on a board or committee of a Jewish organization?

YES 20%	NO 80%
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In 1988, did you make any contributions to the United Jewish Appeal or Federation?

YES 50%	NO 50%
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*(IF YES) About how much did you and your household contribute in 1988?

\$0 50%	\$1-24 8%	\$25-99 23%	\$100-499 14%	\$500+ 5%
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In 1988, did you make any contribution to American pro-Israel political candidates or committees?

YES 14%	NO 77%	NOT SURE 10%
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*Only nonstarred items are included in the communal-involvement index.

Table 2
Pride and Attachment to Being Jewish

	Agree strongly (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Disagree strongly (%)	Not Sure (%)
Jews have been persecuted throughout history.	70	29	1	0	1
I am proud to be a Jew.	66	30	1	0	3
Being Jewish is something special.	54	31	10	1	4
Jews are <i>my</i> people, the people of my ancestors.	46	48	2	1	3
Jews have had an especially rich and distinctive history, one with special meaning for our lives today.	46	47	3	1	4
Being Jewish is so much a part of me that even if I stopped observing Jewish traditions and customs, I still couldn't stop being Jewish.	44	46	6	1	3
For me, Jewish involvement is a way of connecting with my family's past.	35	43	14	1	6
Jews are a "chosen people."	20	30	35	7	18

Table 3
Indices of Ethnic Pride and of Closeness to Jews by Denomination and Level of Communal Involvement

	Ethnic pride	Close- ness	N
TOTAL	74	71	925
Orthodox	86	90	90
Conservative	79	83	304
Reform	73	71	238
Just Jewish	65	54	293
Active, Orthodox	88	92	48
Active, non-Orthodox	81	87	176
Affiliated	74	72	464
Unaffiliated	64	54	236

Table 4
Close Friendships with Other Jews

Of your three closest male friends, how many are Jewish?					
0	15%	1	19%	2	20%
				3	45%
Of your three closest female friends, how many are Jewish?					
0	16%	1	17%	2	22%
				3	45%
(1988 survey question): Of your three closest friends, how many are Jewish?					
0	12%	1	17%	2	26%
				3	45%
Have you ever had a romantic relationship with a Jew?	YES	93%	NO	7%	
Have you ever had a romantic relationship with a non-Jew?	YES	61%	NO	39%	

Table 5
Percent of Closest Friends Who Are Jewish by Denomination
and Level of Communal Involvement

	%	N
TOTAL	66	925
Orthodox	83	90
Conservative	78	304
Reform	62	238
Just Jewish	53	293
Active, Orthodox	89	48
Active, non-Orthodox	86	176
Affiliated	68	464
Unaffiliated	43	236

Table 6
Universalism and Particularism

	Agree strongly (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Disagree strongly (%)	Not sure (%)
EVIDENCE OF UNIVERSALIST ATTITUDES					
Converts to Judaism cannot be as Jewish as those born Jewish.	5	9	53	29	4
My being Jewish doesn't make me any different from other Americans.	25	41	26	5	3
EVIDENCE OF PARTICULARIST ATTITUDES					
Jews have certain inner feelings that others don't have.	9	32	37	8	14
I feel that there is something about me that non-Jews could never understand.	15	39	32	4	9
Jewish charities and organizations place too much emphasis on helping only Jews and not enough on helping all people in need whether they're Jewish or not.	6	25	44	13	13
Jews are united by their history of persecution.	46	47	5	0	3

Table 7
Affection for Jewish Holidays

	Agree strongly (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Disagree strongly (%)	Not sure (%)
For me, Jewish holidays are a time to be with the family.	49	42	5	1	3
The major Jewish holidays make me feel connected to my Jewish heritage and traditions.	46	45	6	1	3
Certain Jewish holidays evoke in me some very fond childhood memories.	40	45	10	2	3
During major Jewish holidays, I feel a desire to make sure my children feel connected to Jewish traditions.	41	42	8	1	8
I find the religious significance of the major Jewish holidays very meaningful.	37	42	13	1	7
Some of my best feelings about the major Jewish holidays are connected with certain foods.	23	47	23	3	4

Table 8
Importance of Selected Jewish Activities

How important is it for you to engage in the following activities?	Extreme-ly important (%)	Very important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Not important (%)	Not sure (%)
EXTREMELY TO VERY IMPORTANT ITEMS					
Attend a Passover seder	46	20	21	12	1
Light Hanukkah candles	45	21	22	12	1
Give your children a Jewish education	44	24	20	9	3
Fast on Yom Kippur	41	14	18	26	1
Attend High Holiday services	40	16	21	22	1
VERY IMPORTANT ITEMS					
Have Jewish friends	32	27	29	12	--
Contribute to Jewish charities	30	23	30	15	2
Support social justice causes	25	28	32	12	3
Follow the news about Israel	23	28	38	10	1
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT ITEMS					
Celebrate the Sabbath in some way	20	13	30	37	1
Take part in some form of adult Jewish education	13	15	32	39	2
NOT IMPORTANT ITEM					
Keep kosher to at least some extent	17	8	18	56	1

Table 9
Frequency of Celebrating Jewish, American and Christian Holidays

	Respondents				Parents			
	Al-ways (%)	Usu-ally (%)	Some-times (%)	Never (%)	Al-ways (%)	Usu-ally (%)	Some-times (%)	Never (%)
Below are a list of holidays. For each one, please indicate (1) how often you celebrate the holiday in any way and (2) how often your parents celebrated this holiday when you were growing up.								
FREQUENTLY OBSERVED JEWISH HOLIDAYS								
Yom Kippur	72	10	11	7	83	6	5	6
Passover	71	13	12	5	82	8	6	5
Hanukah	69	14	11	5	75	11	8	7
INFREQUENTLY OBSERVED JEWISH HOLIDAYS								
Purim	18	17	32	33	31	18	28	24
The Sabbath	17	18	35	31	31	20	27	23
Succhoth	15	13	31	40	28	14	29	29
Israel Independence Day	6	12	24	58	8	8	18	66
AMERICAN HOLIDAYS								
Thanksgiving	75	17	7	1	70	16	9	5
New Year's	54	22	18	6	47	21	21	11
July 4th	45	27	22	6	36	23	26	16
CHRISTIAN HOLIDAYS								
Christmas	12	8	14	66	7	6	9	78
Easter	6	3	6	86	5	3	4	89
1988 Survey Questions (answers in percents):								
How often do you attend religious services?								
NEVER	18	1-4 TIMES A YEAR	39	5-10 TIMES A YEAR	19	ONCE A MONTH	5	
2-3 TIMES A MONTH	7	EVERY WEEK	9	MORE OFTEN	3			
								YES NO
Did you attend a Passover Seder at home or elsewhere this year?								79 21
Did you fast on Yom Kippur in 1987?								59 41
Do you use separate dishes at home for meat & dairy products?								20 80
Did you light Hanukah candles in 1987?								81 20
Did you have a Christmas tree in 1987?								16 84

Table 10**Indices of Traditional Jewish, Popular Jewish, American, and Christian Holiday Observance by Denomination and Level of Communal Involvement**

	Tradit. Jewish	Popular Jewish	American	Christian	N
TOTAL	34	83	78	16	925
Orthodox	73	95	62	6	90
Conservative	42	95	80	6	304
Reform	28	84	83	17	238
Just Jewish	18	65	77	28	293
Active, Orthodox	85	99	68	1	48
Active, non-Orthodox	51	96	79	5	176
Affiliated	33	85	78	13	464
Unaffiliated	14	64	79	33	236

Table 11**Index of Importance of Popular Jewish Holiday Celebration by Denomination and Level of Jewish Communal Involvement**

	Index no.	N
TOTAL	62	925
Orthodox	93	90
Conservative	79	304
Reform	59	238
Just Jewish	37	293
Active, Orthodox	99	48
Active, non-Orthodox	81	176
Affiliated	64	464
Unaffiliated	37	236

Table 12
Ideals for One's Children

How important to you is it that your children. . .	Extremely important (%)	Very important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Not important (%)	Not sure (%)	Total, unimportant*
EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ITEMS						
Feel close to their family	75	19	5	1	1	7
Feel good about being Jewish	57	24	12	5	1	18
Have their sons ritually circumcised	55	18	12	13	2	27
VERY IMPORTANT ITEMS						
Understand what it means to be a Jew	49	29	16	3	2	21
Learn about their Jewish heritage	47	31	17	4	1	22
Have a strong faith in God	41	22	20	12	5	37
Celebrate Jewish holidays	34	26	28	10	2	40
Support social justice causes	30	31	27	9	3	39
Marry Jews	33	18	22	25	2	49
Have Jewish friends	28	26	31	14	1	46
Care about Israel	23	29	33	13	3	49
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT ITEMS						
Practice Jewish ritual	24	22	33	20	2	55
Date only Jews	19	18	25	36	2	63

*"Unimportant" column is the sum of the following responses: somewhat important, not important, and not sure. Items arrayed from most to least important.

Table 13
Index of Commitment to Children's Jewish Involvement by
Denomination and Level of Communal Involvement

	Index no.	N
TOTAL	56	925
Orthodox	88	90
Conservative	69	304
Reform	51	238
Just Jewish	35	293
Active, Orthodox	93	48
Active, non-Orthodox	72	176
Affiliated	56	464
Unaffiliated	34	236

Table 14
Importance of Selected Jewish Symbols and Concepts

In thinking about your sense of being Jewish, how important would you say are each of the following symbols or concepts?	Extreme-ly impor- tant (%)	Very impor- tant (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Not im- portant (%)	Not sure (%)
EXTREMELY IMPORTANT SYMBOLS					
The Holocaust	56	29	13	1	1
Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur	54	25	16	4	1
American anti-Semitism	52	26	15	4	3
God	52	20	16	8	4
The Torah	51	25	18	5	1
Passover	44	29	22	4	1
VERY IMPORTANT SYMBOLS					
Israel	37	30	25	6	6
The Exodus from Egypt	35	30	26	8	2
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT SYMBOLS					
The Sabbath	24	21	33	21	2
Jewish law	20	23	37	16	4
The United Jewish Appeal	9	17	39	30	5
NOT IMPORTANT SYMBOL					
The Jewish radical tradition	7	9	23	39	22

Table 15
The Impact of the Holocaust and Anti-Semitism

Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?	Agree strongly (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Disagree strongly (%)	Not sure (%)
My feelings about the Holocaust have deeply influenced my feelings about being Jewish.	32	44	17	2	6
One or more wars Israel has fought deeply influenced my feelings about being Jewish.	18	36	31	2	1
Jews are widely disliked by Gentile Americans.	7	34	46	3	11
As a Jew, I don't feel totally safe in America.	4	23	53	13	7
American Jews could one day face severe anti-Semitic persecution.	12	45	25	5	14

Table 16
Index of Symbolic Importance of Anti-Semitism by Denomination and Level of Communal Involvement

	Index no.	N
TOTAL	78	925
Orthodox	80	90
Conservative	83	304
Reform	76	238
Just Jewish	75	293
Active, Orthodox	84	48
Active, non-Orthodox	83	176
Affiliated	79	464
Unaffiliated	71	236

Table 17
Beliefs About God

Do you believe that . . .	Definitely yes (%)	Probably yes (%)	Probably not (%)	Definitely not (%)	Not sure (%)	Total, skeptical responses*
WIDELY ACCEPTED BELIEFS						
There is a God.	64	18	5	3	11	19
God is a force for good in the world.	50	28	6	4	12	22
MARGINALLY ACCEPTED BELIEF						
God watches over you in times of danger.	29	29	18	11	13	42
LARGELY REJECTED BELIEFS						
God wrote (or dictated) the Torah.	23	25	22	14	16	52
God has a special relationship with the Jewish people.	22	27	22	13	15	50
God will reward you for your good deeds.	21	28	26	13	13	52
God answers your prayers.	20	27	24	12	17	55
God intervenes in the course of human events.	18	23	30	13	15	58
God will punish you for your sins.	17	25	29	17	13	59

*Skeptical responses include "probably not," "definitely not," and "not sure." Items arrayed in order of frequency of responses affirming belief in God.

Table 18
Index of Belief in God by Denomination and Level of Communal Involvement

	Index no.	N
TOTAL	60	925
Orthodox	81	90
Conservative	64	304
Reform	54	238
Just Jewish	53	293
Active, Orthodox	85	48
Active, non-Orthodox	59	176
Affiliated	59	464
Unaffiliated	57	236

Table 19
Importance of Religion vs. Importance of Being Jewish

How important would you say religion is in your own life?

Very important 26%	Fairly important 44%	Not very important 30%	Not sure 1%
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How important would you say being Jewish is in your own life?

Very important 48%	Fairly important 37%	Not very important 14%	Not sure 1%
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Table 20
Voluntarism – Rejection of External Legalistic Authority (Halakhah)

To what extent do you feel . . .	To a great extent (%)	To some extent (%)	Not at all (%)	Not sure (%)	
A commitment to celebrate Jewish holidays	54	40	6	1	
A commitment to keep at least some Jewish traditions	53	43	4	1	
A commitment to observe God's commandments	53	40	5	3	
A commitment to obey Jewish law	25	59	13	3	
A need to practice Jewish religious rituals	26	52	20	2	
	Agree strongly (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Disagree strongly (%)	Not sure (%)
A Jew can be religious even if he or she isn't particularly observant.	36	54	6	2	3
I would feel embarrassed or ashamed if I failed to celebrate the major Jewish holidays.	26	28	36	5	4
I feel commanded to celebrate Jewish holidays.	17	23	48	9	3

Table 21
Index of Feeling Obligated to Jewish Law by Denomination and
Level of Communal Involvement

	Index no.	N
TOTAL	52	925
Orthodox	81	90
Conservative	61	304
Reform	49	238
Just Jewish	37	293
Active, Orthodox	84	48
Active, non-Orthodox	60	176
Affiliated	53	464
Unaffiliated	38	236

Table 22
Rejection of Reproach

To what extent do you feel offended by . . .	Very offended (%)	Somewhat offended (%)	Not offended (%)	Not sure (%)
Rabbis who try to tell me how I should live my Jewish life	30	36	25	9
United Jewish Appeal fund-raisers who pressure me to make a donation	27	39	26	8

Table 23
Attitudes Toward Orthodoxy

	Very offended (%)	Somewhat offended (%)	Not offended (%)	Not sure (%)
To what extent do you feel offended by Orthodox Jews who show no respect for the way you choose to be Jewish?	54	30	11	6

	Agree strongly (%)	Agree (%)	Dis- agree (%)	Disagree strongly (%)	Not sure (%)
Part of me feels that Hasidic Jews are the most authentic Jews around.	4	9	53	25	9
Part of me feels that Orthodox Jews are the most authentic Jews around.	5	13	51	23	9

Table 24
The "Good Jew" -- What Is Essential, Desirable, and Irrelevant

In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter to whether you would consider the person a good Jew, and which are undesirable or better not to do?

	Essen- tial (%)	Desir- able (%)	Do not matter (%)	Unde- sirable (%)	Not sure (%)	Total irrelevant*
ESSENTIAL ITEMS						
Lead an ethical and moral life	67	28	4	0	1	5
Give one's children a Jewish education	47	41	11	0	1	12
Believe in God	51	28	20	0	1	21
DESIRABLE ITEMS						
Know the fundamentals of Judaism	35	55	9	0	1	10
Attend services on High Holidays	30	39	30	0	1	31
Support Israel	19	54	25	1	1	27
Marry a Jew (or a convert to Judaism)	27	39	32	1	1	34
Belong to a synagogue	24	40	35	0	1	36
MARGINALLY DESIRABLE ITEMS						
Work for social justice causes	14	46	36	1	3	40
Celebrate the Sabbath in some way	16	38	45	1	1	47
Belong to Jewish organizations	11	43	46	0	1	47
Contribute to Jewish philanthropies	10	43	45	1	2	48
Contribute to nonsectarian charities	7	41	48	1	3	52
Attend weekly services	9	36	53	0	1	54
Study Jewish texts	6	35	55	2	2	59
IRRELEVANT ITEMS						
Have a kosher home	8	21	67	4	1	72
Be a liberal on political issues	6	21	60	7	6	73
Have mostly Jewish friends	4	23	67	5	1	73
Send one's children to an all-day Jewish school	5	16	64	13	3	80
Be a conservative on political issues	2	10	69	13	7	89

*Note: "Irrelevant" column is the sum of the following responses: "Do not matter," "Undesirable," and "Not sure."

Table 25
Attitudes Toward Inter-marriage

If your child were considering marrying a non-Jewish person, would you . . .

STRONGLY ENCOURAGE THEM	2%
ENCOURAGE	2%
ACCEPT, BE NEUTRAL	53%
OPPOSE	16%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	20%
NOT SURE	8%

How would you feel about this marriage if it involved a conversion to Judaism? Would you . . .

STRONGLY ENCOURAGE THEM	15%
ENCOURAGE	28%
ACCEPT, BE NEUTRAL	46%
OPPOSE	2%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	3%
NOT SURE	6%

Table 26
Felt Distance from Israelis

To what extent do you feel . . .	To a great extent (%)	To some extent (%)	Not at all (%)	Not sure (%)
Close to other Jews	61	36	3	1
Close to Israelis	19	54	23	4
Close to non-Jewish American	40	54	4	3

Table 27
Pro-Israelism by Denomination and Level of Communal Involvement

	Index no.	N
TOTAL	61	925
Orthodox	78	90
Conservative	71	304
Reform	56	238
Just Jewish	50	293
Active, Orthodox	85	48
Active, non-Orthodox	75	176
Affiliated	62	464
Unaffiliated	45	236

Table 28
Attachment to Local Jewish Institutions

To what extent do you feel attached to each of the following local Jewish groups and organizations?	Extremely attached (%)	Very attached (%)	Somewhat attached (%)	Not attached (%)	Not sure, doesn't apply (%)
A local synagogue or temple	20	16	25	37	8
A local Jewish community center (or YMHA)	5	5	23	59	8
The local Jewish federation	4	5	26	60	5
Another local Jewish organization	8	10	26	50	6
My child's Jewish school	10	10	12	28	40

Table 29**Indices of Traditional, Communal, and Universalist Criteria for a "Good Jew" by Denomination and Level of Communal Involvement**

	Traditional	Communal	Universalist	N
TOTAL	63	69	61	925
Orthodox	84	81	59	90
Conservative	65	75	62	304
Reform	60	68	62	238
Just Jewish	57	62	60	293
Active, Orthodox	85	83	62	48
Active, non-Orthodox	66	79	66	176
Affiliated	63	69	61	464
Unaffiliated	57	59	57	236

Table 30
Indices of Jewish Identification by Age

Ethnic Attachment: Pride in Being Jewish, Felt Closeness to Jews, Number of Close Jewish Friends

	N	Pride	Close	Friends
TOTAL	925	74	31	66
Under 35	142	71	66	51
35-44	224	72	71	59
45-54	155	72	68	64
55-64	188	78	74	74
65+	217	75	74	79

Holiday Observance: Importance of Celebrating Holidays, and Frequency of Celebrating Traditional Jewish Holidays, Popular Jewish Holidays, and Christian Holidays

	N	Importance	Traditional	Popular	Christian
TOTAL	925	62	34	83	16
Under 35	142	63	27	83	22
35-44	224	63	35	84	20
45-54	155	61	30	82	14
55-64	188	62	34	82	10
65+	217	61	40	82	15

Importance of Traditional Symbols, Belief in God, Feeling Obligated to Jewish Law, Commitment to Children's Jewish Identification

	N	Symbols	God	Law	Children
TOTAL	925	62	60	52	56
Under 35	142	59	60	49	55
35-44	224	62	62	54	57
45-54	155	60	57	50	54
55-64	188	63	61	53	56
65+	217	63	58	54	56

Pro-Israelism, Attachment to Civic Judaism, and Symbolic Importance of Anti-Semitism

	N	Israel	Civic	Anti-Semitism
TOTAL	925	61	25	78
Under 35	142	54	15	69
35-44	224	58	21	73
45-54	155	60	23	78
55-64	188	65	26	84
65+	217	67	35	84

Table 31
Indices of Jewish Identification by Family Status

Ethnic Attachment: Pride in Being Jewish, Felt Closeness to Jews, Number of Close Jewish Friends

	N	Pride	Close	Friends
Single	228	71	65	53
Married, no kids	60	69	66	59
Married parent	571	75	74	71
Widow(er)	67	74	74	79

Holiday Observance: Importance of Celebrating Holidays, and Frequency of Celebrating Traditional Jewish Holidays, Popular Jewish Holidays, and Christian Holidays

	N	Importance	Traditional	Popular	Christian
Single	228	55	28	75	16
Married, no kids	60	54	24	77	21
Married parent	571	66	37	86	15
Widow(er)	67	57	42	80	22

Importance of Traditional Symbols, Belief in God, Feeling Obligated to Jewish Law, Commitment to Children's Jewish Identification

	N	Symbols	God	Law	Children
Single	228	58	60	47	48
Married, no kids	60	52	52	43	51
Married parent	571	63	60	55	59
Widow(er)	67	68	63	53	57

Pro-Israelism, Attachment to Civic Judaism, and Symbolic Importance of Anti-Semitism

	N	Israel	Civic	Anti-Semitism
Single	228	59	20	73
Married, no kids	60	58	23	73
Married parent	571	62	26	80
Widow(er)	67	65	34	84

Table 32
Indices of Jewish Identification by Sex and Family Status

Ethnic Attachment: Pride in Being Jewish, Felt Closeness to Jews, Number of Close Jewish Friends

	N	Pride	Close	Friends
Single man	127	68	61	49
Single woman	100	74	70	56
Married father	277	74	70	68
Married mother	293	75	76	72

Holiday Observance: Importance of Celebrating Holidays, and Frequency of Celebrating Traditional Jewish Holidays, Popular Jewish Holidays, and Christian Holidays

	N	Importance	Traditional	Popular	Christian
Single man	127	49	24	72	11
Single woman	100	61	33	78	20
Married father	277	64	36	85	14
Married mother	293	68	37	87	15

Importance of Traditional Symbols, Belief in God, Feeling Obligated to Jewish Law, Commitment to Children's Jewish Identification

	N	Symbols	God	Law	Children
Single man	127	51	55	43	44
Single woman	100	65	65	52	51
Married father	277	62	60	54	58
Married mother	293	64	59	55	59

Pro-Israelism, Attachment to Civic Judaism, and Symbolic Importance of Anti-Semitism

	N	Israel	Civic	Anti-Semitism
Single man	127	56	16	67
Single woman	100	62	24	78
Married father	277	64	25	79
Married mother	293	60	26	80

Table 33
Indices of Jewish Identification by Family Status

Ethnic Attachment: Pride in Being Jewish, Felt Closeness to Jews, Number of Close Jewish Friends

	N	Pride	Close	Friends
TOTAL	948	74	71	66
Single born Jew	263	73	69	60
Born Jew, in-married	511	77	78	80
Convert	27	67	60	38
Married a convert	27	74	70	55
Married a Gentile	120	62	50	31

Holiday Observance: Importance of Celebrating Holidays, and Frequency of Celebrating Traditional Jewish Holidays, Popular Jewish Holidays, and Christian Holidays

	N	Importance	Traditional	Popular	Christian
TOTAL	948	62	34	83	16
Single born Jew	263	57	31	78	15
Born Jew, in-married	511	70	39	90	7
Convert	27	64	39	83	25
Married a convert	27	64	30	85	12
Married a Gentile	120	40	20	63	54

Importance of Traditional Symbols, Belief in God, Feeling Obligated to Jewish Law, Commitment to Children's Jewish Identification

	N	Symbols	God	Law	Children
TOTAL	948	62	60	52	56
Single born Jew	263	60	61	50	53
Born Jew, in-married	511	64	60	57	64
Convert	27	70	60	52	45
Married a convert	27	59	47	51	51
Married a Gentile	120	51	59	39	26

Pro-Israelism, Attachment to Civic Judaism, and Symbolic Importance of Anti-Semitism

	N	Israel	Civic	Anti-Semitism
TOTAL	948	61	25	78
Single born Jew	263	61	24	76
Born Jew, in-married	511	66	28	81
Convert	27	49	19	81
Married a convert	27	62	19	81
Married a Gentile	120	44	16	67

APPENDIX

Comparison with Other Samples of American Jews

The findings reported above derived from a survey of the Market Facts Consumer Mail Panel. For many reasons, we might expect this sample to be unrepresentative of American Jews. One reason to suspect the quality of these data is that respondents who agree to be surveyed on a wide variety of consumer issues may differ from the population as a whole; and they are those respondents who, over the years, have tended to respond more often than others. Another problem with the method is that certain types of people are more likely than others to respond to mail-back surveys (telephone surveys are less demanding of motivation and educational background). For these, and other reasons, it is wise (if not necessary) to demonstrate that the demographic characteristics of the 1989 survey reasonably resemble those derived from other surveys using different sampling and survey methodologies.

To examine the representativeness of the national sample of Jews from the 1989 survey, the following tables present distributions of key variables from other sources. The first column in all tables reports distributions from this survey (NSAJ89=National Survey of American Jews). AJYB refers to the *American Jewish Year Book*. The AJYB collects estimates of local Jewish populations from Jewish federations and provides estimates of Jewish population distributions across the ten regions defined by the U.S. Census. NFO refers to National Family Opinion, Inc., a market-research firm that has amassed a list of Jewish households in a fashion similar to that used by Market Facts. 7-CITY refers to an amalgam of Jewish community studies conducted in 1981-86 in seven major metropolitan areas (Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Miami, Chicago, and Cleveland.) The data set was weighted to take into account variations in population size. LA TIMES refers to the national telephone survey of 1,108 Jewish households conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* in April 1989. The households were identified over several months of Random Digit Dial telephone surveys which queried over 50,000 households nationwide. TELENATION refers to an amalgam of Jewish households located through several months of national Random Digit Dialing by Market Facts, Inc.

The NSAJ89 sample's geographic distribution is very similar to that reported by the other sources. Its Jewish-identity characteristics also largely resemble those reported by the other sources. Insofar as the NSAJ89 sample differs from the 7-CITY data set, it seems to include somewhat more uninvolved (or what some may call "assimilated") Jews. The NSAJ89 sample contains more respondents who failed

to report most of the rituals listed, but the 7-CITY data set includes more respondents without any Jewish schooling as well as those who never attend synagogue services. We should note that owing to the location of the seven cities (it excludes smaller cities and communities west of the Mississippi), the 7-CITY sample figures to be more observant than the true national average. If so, then the NSAJ89 sample's somewhat larger number of less involved Jews may be closer to the true national proportion than to that found in the 7-CITY sample.

The distributions of NSAJ89 sociodemographic characteristics resemble those reported by the three other sources. In most instance, the figures for the NSAJ89 fall within the ranges provided by the other data sets. Two exceptions are the high proportion earning over \$50,000 and the low proportion of elderly individuals age 75 and over.

NSAJ89 = National Survey of American Jews, 1989

AJYB = *American Jewish Year Book*

NFO = National Family Opinion, Inc.

7-CITY = Jewish Community Studies, 1981-86

LA TIMES = *Los Angeles Times* Survey of American Jews, April 1988

TELENATION = Market Facts, Inc.

<i>Region</i>	NSAJ89	AJYB	NFO
New England	9	7	8
Middle Atlantic	42	45	41
East North Central	9	9	8
West North Central	1	2	2
South Atlantic	17	16	20
East South Central	1	1	1
West South Central	4	2	4
Mountain	3	3	3
Pacific	15	15	14

<i>Denomination</i>	NSAJ89	7-CITY	LA TIMES
Orthodox	10	10	11
Conservative	31	37	35
Reform	25	31	26
Other	33	22	28

<i>Been to Israel</i>	NSAJ89	7-CITY
No	64	63
Once	24	24
Twice or more	12	13

<i>Jewish Education</i>	NSAJ89	7-CITY
Day school	6	10
Hebrew school	51	47
Sunday school	21	15
Tutor	5	6
None	14	23

Synagogue Attendance

Never	18	26
1-4 times a year	39	29
5 or more times a year	43	45

Observance

Attended Passover seder	79	90
Lit Hanukkah candles	81	79
Fasted on Yom Kippur	59	68
Have separate dishes	20	26
Had Christmas tree	16	14
Most close friends Jewish	71	89

Married Individuals	NSAJ89 72	7-CITY 71	NFO 71	TELENATION 74
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Education

Graduate degree	29	28	37	24
B.A.	22	25	22	29
Some College	27	19	22	20
H.S. or Less	23	28	19	28

Income

Under 20,000	19	29	24	17
20,000-30,000	13	20	17	20
30,000-40,000	14	16	17	14
40,000-50,000	16	61	31	12
50,000 or more	39	30	29	37

Age

Under 25	1	6	1	12
25-34	18	20	19	20
35-44	24	18	26	22
45-54	17	17	13	11
55-64	19	19	16	13
65-74	17	14	18	13
75 or older	4	7	8	7

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