

# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

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2011

Volume 14



# Southern Jewish History

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Articles appearing in *Southern Jewish History* are abstracted and/or indexed in *Historical Abstracts*, *America: History and Life*, *Index to Jewish Periodicals*, *Journal of American History*, and *Journal of Southern History*.

*Southern Jewish History* acknowledges with deep appreciation grants from the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, New York, and the Gale Foundation, Beaumont, Texas.

In memory of the late William Lee Frost, president of the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation and friend of *Southern Jewish History*.

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ISSN 1521-4206

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*PRIMARY SOURCES*

The Bible and Bombings: Southern Rabbis  
Respond during the Civil Rights Movement

by

Scott M. Langston\*

**“. . . And None Shall Make Them Afraid,” sermon by Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, delivered on Friday, October 17, 1958, Atlanta, Georgia**  
**“The Friday Following the Bombing of the Temple,” sermon by Rabbi Perry E. Nussbaum, delivered on Friday, September 22, 1967, Jackson, Mississippi**

**T**he role of southern rabbis during the modern civil rights movement has been chronicled from a variety of perspectives.<sup>1</sup> Typically, these studies emphasize the role rabbis played in their congregations and communities in responding to segregation, as well as their personal experiences navigating precarious situations. While scholars have generally noted the biblical, and especially prophetic, underpinnings of rabbinic responses to segregation, detailed analysis of how rabbis used the Bible to justify their own support of the movement, to encourage others to follow suit, and to rebut segregationists has been lacking. When interpreting biblical texts, these rabbis mixed contemporary and biblical ideas in order to address their particular situations. This mixing was sometimes done intentionally, but occasionally could even be done unconsciously as rabbis traversed between the biblical and contemporary worlds with varying

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degrees of effort. Regardless of their level of intention or awareness, this process reflects how the ideas of the rabbis and the biblical writers interacted within the climate of the mid-twentieth century South, especially as they sought to negotiate and address the challenges brought by the civil rights movement. The analysis of southern rabbis' uses of the Bible, however, does not stop with their interpretation of texts, but goes further by examining the Bible's usefulness as a tool for achieving certain goals. Living among Christians, who for the most part regarded the Bible highly, southern rabbis, like their counterparts throughout the country, found it to be an effective instrument for interacting with them, as well as for addressing their own congregations.

The following sermons illustrate how two southern rabbis—Jacob M. Rothschild and Perry E. Nussbaum—used the Bible in their initial responses to violence, namely, the bombings of their synagogues. As such, they prove to be useful primary sources, providing windows into the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of these rabbis, including the early strategies they employed in the aftermath of the bombings.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, they reflect how the two rabbis related to contemporary cultural attitudes and ideas. They also open up future possibilities for comparison with other uses of the Bible during the civil rights era, both Jewish and Christian and clerical and non-clerical, as pro- and anti-segregationists struggled against each other.

*Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild<sup>3</sup>*

For the Jews of Atlanta's Hebrew Benevolent Congregation, more commonly known as The Temple, the violent backlash against the civil rights movement came forcefully to their collective doorstep on Sunday, October 12, 1958. In the early morning hours someone detonated fifty sticks of dynamite against one of The Temple's side walls, destroying offices and Sunday school classrooms and causing about \$200,000 in damage. Within minutes of the bombing, a person identifying himself as "General Gordon<sup>4</sup> of the

*Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, c. 1958.*  
(Courtesy of Janice Rothschild Blumberg.)

Confederate Underground" called the offices of the United Press International (UPI) and claimed responsibility. He also warned, "This is the last empty building in Atlanta that we will bomb. All nightclubs refusing to fire their Negro employees will also be blown up. We are going to blow up all Communist organizations. Negroes and Jews are hereby declared aliens." As news of the bombing spread, people across the nation, including Jewish and Christian clergy, the mayor of Atlanta, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower, expressed sympathy and support for The Temple and its members. Various groups offered rewards for the capture of the perpetrators, and the *New York Times* even covered the developing story for several days.<sup>5</sup>

The bombing of The Temple was not an isolated incident. Since the Supreme Court's striking down of school segregation in 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education*, hundreds of bombs exploded across the South in retaliation. By the end of the decade, about 10 percent of those bombs had been aimed at Jews, in spite of the fact that they comprised far less than 1 percent of the region's population.<sup>6</sup> Even though African Americans had pressed for and made some gains in Atlanta—for instance, the integration of the police force, school board, public golf courses, and public transportation—the city had somehow avoided the spreading anarchy until the morning of October 12.<sup>7</sup> For Atlanta's Jewish community, though, this was not the first time it had been the object of violence.

In 1915 Leo Frank, a member of The Temple and superintendent at the National Pencil Factory, had been lynched for the murder of Mary Phagan, a white, thirteen-year-old factory employee, even though substantial doubts had been raised about his guilt. Frank's trial, which began in 1913, and his lynching left their mark on Atlanta's Jewish community. According to Melissa Faye Greene, "The most awful and lasting legacy of Frank's murder for The Temple Jews of Atlanta was the sense of isolation: they were marginal, they were dispensable, they were still 'the other' in the mind of white

Christian Atlanta.”<sup>8</sup> Although it had been over forty years since the Frank trial and lynching, and despite the fact that Atlanta’s Jews got along well with the city’s non-Jews, an underlying sense of fear still resided among them. The Temple bombing brought these fears to the surface.

The Temple’s rabbi, Jacob M. Rothschild, had been speaking in support of civil rights for African Americans since his arrival in 1946. After growing up in a Reform congregation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and graduating from Hebrew Union College, Rothschild briefly served a congregation in Davenport, Iowa, before returning to his home congregation, Temple Rodef Shalom, as assistant rabbi. When World War II broke out, he enlisted as a chaplain and spent most of the war in the Pacific Theater. Shortly after being discharged, he began his rabbinate in Atlanta. Living in a segregated and largely Christian city, Rothschild crossed religious boundaries and participated in interfaith and community organizations, while also attempting to strengthen the Jewish identity and practice of his congregants.<sup>9</sup> As the years went by, he also grew more active and vocal in support of civil rights. During the first High Holy Days that followed the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Rothschild addressed the decision head on. Acknowledging the “supreme delicacy of the problem,” he nonetheless pointed out Judaism’s deeply rooted teaching in the “belief in the equality of all men” and the responsibility of Jews to live up to their spiritual heritage.<sup>10</sup> In a sermon titled, “Can This Be America?” given in 1958 (approximately five months before The Temple bombing), he expressed shock over the bombings of synagogues and Jewish community centers throughout the South. Somewhat ominously, he indicated it was “hard to believe that it [i.e., a bombing] could happen here.”<sup>11</sup>

While some of his congregants agreed with Rothschild’s approach toward civil rights, others were uncomfortable with his outspokenness. Clive Webb notes that, “Some of the sternest criticism that the rabbis faced came from their own

congregations” because rabbinic support for African American equality “threatened to erode the already precarious security of southern Jews.” Among his fellow rabbis in the South, there was widespread support for integration, at least in principal, but much disagreement over how it should be addressed. Rather than acting collectively, though, southern rabbis responded on an individual basis. Rothschild openly advocated civil rights and worked to build support among Jews and Christians, even exercising great influence in crafting the so-called Ministers’ Manifesto, a statement issued by the Atlanta Christian Council in response to the controversy swirling around efforts to integrate Little Rock’s Central High School in 1957.<sup>12</sup> The Temple bombing, however, meant the issue could no longer be ignored or quietly brushed aside by his congregation. In the following days, Rothschild, who had regularly encouraged others to apply the message of the biblical prophets to modern issues,<sup>13</sup> strategically used the Bible to respond to the bombers, his congregants, and the larger non-Jewish community.

*“ . . . And None Shall Make Them Afraid”*

The day after the bombing, the rabbi prominently displayed the title of his upcoming Friday sermon on The Temple’s outdoor sign where all could see it: “. . . And None Shall Make Them Afraid.” Those who stopped at the nearby traffic light, including many on their way to work, would have clearly seen the sign. This was in some ways his first public response, and it had come in the form of a biblical phrase. This phrase appears in several places in the Prophets (*Nevi'im*)—Micah 4:4, Ezekiel 34:28, Zephaniah 3:13, Isaiah 17:2—making it difficult to know exactly which text he had in mind.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, it makes little difference because the rabbi’s intent was clear. This biblical phrase expressed his message of defiance to the bombers: they had failed, and Rothschild refused to be intimidated.

Micah 4:4 is perhaps the most well-known rendering of this phrase: “But they shall sit every man under his vine and

under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid.”<sup>15</sup> While in its biblical context this phrase reflects a future hope for a peaceful time in which people will fear no one, Rothschild appropriated it to express a response to a present reality. The rabbi and his congregation had many reasons to be afraid—their status as a minority living in a volatile social situation, their past experience of one of their own being lynched, and now an attack on the architectural center of their congregation with an accompanying threat that the people would be next. Rothschild, however, transformed this verse of hope—perhaps unconsciously—into an expression of determined defiance. With the shattered building now constituting its context, the phrase’s significance changed. Their present circumstances overrode the ancient context of the biblical prophet, uncovering a usefulness that those focused on the text’s historical meaning likely would miss. When formulating doctrine, these historical concerns might take precedence, but when responding to an act of terror, they made little difference. Rothschild, however, was not presenting an exegesis of a passage of scripture, nor was he trying to develop, explain, or apply doctrine. Instead, he was attempting to respond powerfully to a violent act of intimidation. Given these circumstances, the phrase’s ability to summarize succinctly his refusal to be intimidated, along with the ease with which it could be remembered, made it particularly useful in responding to the bombers. At the same time, it also sent a message to The Temple’s members. Although the phrase aptly expressed the rabbi’s determination, many of his congregants remained uncertain. The phrase, therefore, encouraged his congregants to refuse to be intimidated.

The average person who passed by The Temple during the first week of the bombing and saw the rabbi’s sermon title probably would not have known this phrase’s biblical origins. They may not have even associated it with the Bible at all. This made little difference because Rothschild was capitalizing on the phrase’s poetic power, rather than on its doctrinal or theological assertions, or even the Bible’s cultural

authority. His use reflects a little studied and underappreciated aspect of the Bible's reception history<sup>16</sup>: its role as a source for poetically powerful phrases that, at least in this instance, acted as the leading edge of a response to powerful and sometimes violent opposition.

The rabbi, however, returned to the phrase's biblical meaning when he delivered his sermon to an audience filled with both Jews and non-Jews who had gathered for Shabbat services on the Friday night following the bombing. As the title of his sermon, it reflected one of the themes emphasized throughout, namely, that the bombers failed to intimidate him and his congregation. Yet, he did not actually quote the phrase until the sermon's last sentence: "With God's help we shall rebuild in pride and gratitude—and create a stronger Home of the Spirit where He may dwell in our midst. Together with an aroused humanity we shall rear from the rubble of devastation a city and a land in which all men are truly brothers—and none shall make them afraid."<sup>17</sup> In keeping with the biblical prophets, Rothschild articulated a hope and a vision for what society could become. Having used this phrase to defy the bombers and to strengthen the resolve of his congregation, he now sought to encourage and give hope by focusing his audience on their society's potential.

Rothschild's handling of the phrase reflects the possibilities residing in any biblical text. Whether done consciously or not, the rabbi shaped the present situation in accordance with the prophetic idea by adhering closely to the phrase's biblical meaning. Just as the prophet attempted to give hope to a people living in a discouraging situation, so too did Rothschild. When, however, he recontextualized the phrase, he used the present situation to reshape and bring new meaning to the prophet's words. The biblical wording—not the biblical meaning—proved most useful to Rothschild in this regard. Taken together, both uses reflect a symbiotic relationship between the biblical text and the contemporary situation in which each influences and shapes the other. The rabbi used both to express simultaneously hope and defiance.

*Mayor William B. Hartsfield (left) with Rabbi Rothschild  
at The Temple, examining bomb damage to the north wall.  
(Courtesy of The Temple-Hebrew Benevolent Congregation of Atlanta.)*

*The Moral Law, Democracy, and American Identity*

While Rothschild used the prophetic phrase to characterize society's ultimate goal, he turned to other biblical texts to critique modern American society. He began his critique by identifying the bombers' intent as an effort to create panic and confusion, to tell "an already fearful minority" (that is, Atlanta's Jewish community) that they and their religious ideals were unwelcome, and to make clear to "all the bewildered and confused people of America" that the bombers had the means to spread terror, and they, the bombers, were, in fact, the law of the land. Rothschild rebutted these intentions, asserting that the bombing had taught three truths:

The first of them is that this must be a land ruled by law and not by men. This was always a truism in American life. None doubted it. Yet, now, for the first time, its real meaning has become clear. To advocate the disregard of one law creates an atmosphere of lawlessness in which men reserve the right to choose the rules by which they will live. Once man decides that it is within his personal province to decide which laws he will obey and which he will ignore—then there is no law at all. And this is anarchy. Southern leaders have made possible—unwittingly, I am sure—the creation of just such a society as this—a society without control by law, a government of anarchy. To be sure, they do not advocate violence. They, themselves, abhor it. But their words loose the uncontrolled passions of men who are quick to get their way by violence and who seize the opportunity in their march for personal power. Thus, it is clearer now than ever before that we must restore America to the rule of law.

And that law must be the moral law. This is the second truth we have learned. It is not easy to live by the rigorous demands of our spiritual forbears [*sic*]. Yet, it is more dangerous not to. For every time we stray from the paths they have set for us, we bring ourselves near to danger and destruction. The difficult way is still the safest way, after all. Once again we are confronted with and challenged by the prophetic ideal that teaches us that all men are brothers, that justice and righteousness must prevail, that only the work of righteousness

shall bring peace to the world, that we must love our neighbor as ourselves and pursue with diligence the path of justice.

In these first two truths, Rothschild emphasized some of Reform Judaism's central tenets: the moral law (rather than the Torah in its entirety) and prophetic ideals, namely, the brotherhood of all and the pursuit of justice and righteousness. In doing so, he was laying the foundation for a more far-reaching argument: the bombing was not merely a Jewish issue, but an American one, a connection he skillfully makes with the help of the Bible.

It is the moral law that undergirds the very foundations of democracy. Our country is founded upon the biblical ideals first taught by the prophets of Israel and later incorporated into the ideology of Christianity. We know it today as the Judeo-Christian tradition. When we fail to live by the spiritual truths of our religious faith, we weaken the principles of democracy. And conversely, when we fall short of the goals of freedom and equality set forth by the founders of our Republic, we have demeaned our religious faith.

It is not surprising that Rothschild invoked the Judeo-Christian tradition. Doing so was increasingly common in 1950s America. What he does with it, however, is significant. The term, "Judeo-Christian," had been used since the 1930s to describe a common set of values and beliefs shared by Jews and Christians. During the 1940s and especially during World War II, the Judeo-Christian tradition was increasingly associated with democracy, particularly in opposition to fascism. By the 1950s, according to one scholar, "good Americans were supposed to be, in some sense, committed Judeo-Christians. It was a recent addition to the national creed." As the cold war struggle with the Soviet Union intensified, the Judeo-Christian tradition helped define the magnitude of the conflict and vilify the "godless" Russians and Communism.<sup>18</sup>

Against the broader cultural backdrop of an increasingly accepted connection between Judaism's prophetic ideals and American democracy, Rothschild unfolded his argument:

It is in the realm of choice that the third truth lies. For who is to blame for the wave of violence that has swept across our land? The guilty ones are not alone the political leaders whose words fan the flames of hatred and incite to violence. Not even those who perpetrated the very acts themselves bear all the blame. Responsibility rests equally with those good and decent people who choose to remain silent in such a time. Too many of us, motivated by fear, led by the desire to be comfortable and safe, have failed to live by the ideals which we know to be right and good.

Put simply, the silent majority, so to speak, contributed to the bombing by failing to apply Jewish ideals to the desegregation struggle. Nonetheless, the bombing itself had "roused the conscience of decent men and women everywhere," many of whom had heretofore remained silent. The messages of support that had poured in from across America led Rothschild to conclude:

They [the messages] assure us that the dynamiters—whenever they are—do not represent America. They are a cancer to be cut out of the body politic and left to die. Except for these few—our letters tell us—all Americans stand united and strong—a people dedicated to righteousness [the prophetic ideals of Judaism].

By asserting a united American response against the perpetrators, Rothschild effectively isolated them, at least rhetorically, while also positioning Jews as part of the American mainstream. He did so by emphasizing that the bombing was not primarily an antisemitic act, nor was it carried out largely in retaliation for his activities in support of desegregation. Rather, "all bigots and their bigotry are inseparable. Hate is readily transferred from one minority to another. We live now in an atmosphere of hate." Having characterized the bombing as a general act of bigotry, rather than one of specific antisemitism, Rothschild was then able to portray Jews and desegregationists as true Americans. Thus, the bombing was an attack on American values, values evident in the symbols present in "every house of God," including The Temple:

In our Temple, that light [the Eternal Light] hangs from the great seal of America. The ideals of democracy upon which our freedom rests have not been shaken by this blast any more than the walls of this building have been weakened by it. Decency, equality, brotherhood, humanity—all these still live—now stronger than ever—in our hearts.

And here, in the Ark of the Covenant, are the scrolls containing the moral law. There they stand—crowned with their silver ornaments—as they have stood in every Jewish House of Worship through centuries of time. Proudly they bear witness to the law of God, to the ideals towards which man is urged ceaselessly to strive—and which will yet become the pattern of his life on earth.

“Holy shall ye be, for I the Lord your God am holy” [Leviticus 19:2] is the challenge they proclaim. “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart” [Leviticus 19:17]. “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” [Leviticus 19:18]. “Justice, justice shalt thou pursue” [Deuteronomy 16:20]. “Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us all?” [Malachi 2:10].

The association of biblical ideals with democracy and the founding of the United States was nothing new. American Christians were particularly fond of doing this, especially when it buttressed Christianity’s status as the nation’s unofficial religion. Rothschild, however, actually used this association to accentuate his congregation’s Jewish legacy in spite of the fears of some that openly advocating civil rights, especially on the basis of Jewish ideals, could only mean trouble under their present circumstances. Rather than trying to live quietly among a sea of white, Christian opposition to black civil rights, he had urged The Temple’s members to put aside their fears and boldly embrace civil rights on the basis of their Jewish ideals. In essence, he argued that when Jews actively live out their religion’s ideals, they are living as Americans in the fullest sense. Rothschild’s equation of the Bible, democracy, and American origins essentially moved Jews from the minority to the majority. What’s more, the Bible provided the crucial link in making this move. Rothschild used both the prophetic underpinnings on which American

democracy was based and the biblical moral law on which a peaceful and orderly American society depended (at least, according to him) to calm Jewish fears of being marginalized as not quite American enough. Not only did this use of the Bible give Jews a solid claim to American identity, it also challenged the widespread understanding of true Americans as Christians.

American Christians, and especially Protestants, commonly used the Bible's alleged connections to democracy and the founding of the nation to bolster their contention that the United States was a Christian nation. In practical terms, this meant that Christians, and in particular Protestants, constituted a sort of American aristocracy in terms of national identity. When coupled with racial considerations, a white Christian represented the highest level of American identity. As a key component in establishing and supporting this notion, the Bible also played a major part in challenging it. As indicated, Rothschild actually agreed that the Bible, democracy, and the founding of America were connected, and he even used that connection to support Jewish claims as true Americans. However, instead of using this connection to enhance Jews' social power and authority (in the same way that white Christians often did on their own behalf), he ultimately used it to enhance the status of African Americans. This essentially challenged the American identity of any who might embrace segregation. Plainly stated, if true Americans embraced the teachings of the Bible and democracy, then segregationists were not true Americans; their view was at odds with the Bible and democracy. Or, to redefine the words of "General Gordon," who had telephoned the UPI offices just after the bombing occurred, Jews and Negroes were not aliens; segregationists were.

Of course, Christian segregationists had believed for a long time that the Bible supported their notions of American identity and were not bashful in appropriating its influence. Once again, however, the Bible proved crucial as Rothschild challenged white southern Christian notions of American

identity. If, as both sides agreed, the Bible undergirded American democracy, then controlling the Bible's meaning in this regard was critical. Rothschild thus turned the Bible against segregationists, exposing them and their actions as un-American. He did not directly challenge the segregationists' use of the Bible. Instead he defined the Bible's message in terms of justice, equality, and love for all, and then simply assumed it as such throughout his sermon. The message is clear: if you are American, you respect the Bible, and that means insisting on equality for African Americans. Rothschild, thus, used the Bible to define American identity in such a way that segregationists—rather than Jews, African Americans, and desegregationists—were marginalized.

In using the Bible to challenge Christians, Rothschild followed a tactic that many southern rabbis in previous decades had employed. Usually southern rabbis used the Bible to challenge Christian doctrinal assertions or to check Christian encroachment on Jewish religious practices. They had also employed it to build bridges to the larger Christian community by emphasizing commonalities.<sup>19</sup> Rothschild, however, went beyond these traditional uses by appropriating it to embrace a controversial social position in a volatile and dangerous situation. In doing so, he was able to avoid making it a Jewish versus Christian issue, which potentially could have further marginalized his congregation. Rather, by packaging the Bible with democracy he redefined American identity in such a way that presented the Jew in the South who opposed segregation as a more accurate reflection of a true American than the white Christian who supported segregation. Certainly, the bombing of The Temple gave these arguments a potency and platform they otherwise may not have had, but the Bible provided the link he needed to make such a response.

*Rabbi Perry E. Nussbaum*

Rabbi Perry E. Nussbaum served as the rabbi of Temple Beth Israel in Jackson, Mississippi, from 1954 until 1973,

when he retired. A native of Toronto, Ontario, and a graduate of Hebrew Union College, Nussbaum served several congregations before coming to Jackson, as well as acting as an army chaplain during World War II. Many of his pulpit stays were short and turbulent, being characterized by numerous conflicts with his congregants. Nonetheless, he seemed to be an effective administrator and a good speaker and pastor. The Jackson congregation was small, consisting of about one hundred members (about one fourth the size of Atlanta's Temple), and on the whole, "highly assimilated." Nussbaum, therefore, like Rothschild, attempted to institute a program of Jewish education among his congregants. As was the case with Rothschild, Nussbaum encountered a city and state that was ardently Christian, although Mississippi was especially fundamentalist and evangelical. While in Jackson, he engaged in interfaith activities, even though clergy from some of the leading Protestant churches sometimes excluded him because he was Jewish. Whereas Rothschild had been able to work with various established ministerial and community religious organizations in Atlanta, Nussbaum was not allowed to participate in the Jackson Ministerial Association. He, however, got along well with other Christian clergy and formed close relationships with some. He even helped found an alternative clerical organization, the Jackson Interfaith Fellowship (which later became the Greater Jackson Clergy Alliance), the first group of Jews and Christians in Mississippi to integrate. Nussbaum also was a driving force in organizing the Mississippi Assembly of Jewish Congregations in 1955.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding civil rights, Nussbaum initially was not overly aggressive in advocating equality for African Americans. He favored it and even addressed the issue in sermons, but he also realized the hazards of actively and openly embracing it. During the late 1950s and early 1960s Citizens' Councils grew considerably stronger in Mississippi and especially in Jackson where the local chapter kept a card file detailing the racial views of most white people in the city.

*Rabbi Perry Nussbaum, April 1967.  
(Courtesy of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of  
the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
Americanjewisharchives.org)*

Nussbaum found this disturbing, as he did the rash of bombings in 1958 aimed at Jewish organizations in Nashville, Miami, and Jacksonville. The bombing of the Atlanta Temple particularly disturbed him, prompting him to write a column in the temple bulletin entitled, "It Can Happen Here." When a copy somehow made it into a Jackson newspaper, the city's leaders were not happy, and there was even an unsuccessful effort made at Temple Beth Israel's next board meeting to force Nussbaum to receive board approval before making public statements. In spite of this, Nussbaum grew more active in his support of the civil rights movement. Although initially not supportive of the Freedom Rides, during the summer of 1961 he began weekly visits to those riders who were Jewish and imprisoned in the Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman, located 150 miles from Jackson. When he encouraged other area rabbis to do the same, most responded negatively. In 1964, the rabbi participated in the Committee for Concern, an interfaith and interracial group that sought to raise money to help rebuild African American churches that had been bombed or burned.<sup>21</sup>

Although both Nussbaum and Rothschild worked in contexts where segregation was the rule, Nussbaum worked in a state that has been described as "the most openly segregationist state in the South." According to historian Clive Webb, compared with other southern rabbis, Rothschild led a "charmed existence," living in "an unusually progressive city" that was the only city in the South where a rabbi could be secure enough to compare Jim Crow laws with Nazi atrocities against Jews. While Rothschild clearly confronted great difficulties and danger, Nussbaum lived in an even more perilous climate. Members of his own congregation twice tried to have him relieved of his duties, while others threatened to end their financial support. Few rabbis, according to Webb, received less clerical support than Nussbaum, although Rothschild did respond positively after Nussbaum encouraged him in 1963 to organize a civil rights dialog among rabbis. Both rabbis also sent each other messages of encour-

agement after their respective temples were bombed, and corresponded somewhat throughout the years. Additionally, Nussbaum regularly exchanged letters with fellow rabbi and civil rights advocate Charles Mantinband of Temple B'nai Israel in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. On the whole, though, Nussbaum received little support. Nonetheless, throughout the 1960s he continued to press for equal rights for African Americans, and in 1966 he began sponsoring at Beth Israel one-day scholarly lectures for the clergy, including African American ministers. Thus, when Beth Israel was bombed on Monday night, September 18, 1967, the rabbi's stance on civil rights was well-known. In fact, according to the *Jackson Daily News*, Nussbaum indicated after the bombing that even though he had not received any recent threats, he had feared that something like this might occur "because of the nature of Mississippi's racial climate in connection with my congregation and myself who have tried to help these unfortunate people [i.e., African Americans], who have long been intimidated by violent organizations like the Ku Klux Klan." Jackson's other paper, the *Clarion-Ledger*, however, quoted Nussbaum as asserting that his work with the Committee of Concern had nothing to do with the bombing.<sup>22</sup>

Temple Beth Israel had dedicated new facilities just six months prior to the bombing. The dedication ceremony was an interfaith and interracial event, with leaders from both the local African American and the white Christian communities attending and participating. The inclusion of blacks stirred controversy in Jackson and within the Temple. Three of the five members of the building committee refused to attend the ceremony, and, one month later, in what Nussbaum described as "one of the roughest congregational annual meetings I've ever attended," the congregation voted to require board approval before non-Jewish organizations could use their facilities. In the words of Clive Webb, "No southern rabbi suffered more than Perry Nussbaum." In addition to the opposition he faced within and outside his congregation, he also became a target when his home was bombed on No-

vember 21. No one was injured, but the violent attack left the Nussbaums shaken. Both the bombing of the temple and Nussbaum's home two months later were perpetrated by members of the local Ku Klux Klan.<sup>23</sup>

In the wake of the bombing, which caused an estimated twenty-five thousand dollars in damage, support for the temple began to build. The *New York Times* covered the story, although not to the extent it had when the Atlanta Temple was bombed.<sup>24</sup> Joining the efforts of local law enforcement, the FBI became involved in trying to capture the perpetrators. Community and state leaders, including the mayor and governor, denounced the bombing, and the *Clarion-Ledger* called it "a cowardly, dastardly, criminal occurrence." Four days later a group of about forty ministers, mostly from the recently formed Jackson Clergy Alliance, along with other concerned individuals, engaged in a "walk of penance" in which they walked approximately one mile from a shopping center to the temple. Once there, about 150 people gathered at the synagogue to pray and express support for the congregation and opposition to the bigotry that had spawned such an act.<sup>25</sup> The following evening—the first Friday after the bombing—Rabbi Nussbaum addressed his congregation.<sup>26</sup>

*"I Shall Not Fear the Malicious Ones"*

Nussbaum drew on the Torah reading for that week, Deuteronomy 26:1–29:8, to shape his remarks, asserting that, "Perhaps the timeliness of the sedra will supply some answers to the questions some of you have been asking."<sup>27</sup> The book of Deuteronomy constitutes the last instructions of Moses before the ancient Israelites entered the land of Canaan, representing the last stage of their journey after having gained their freedom from Egyptian slavery and after wandering in the Sinai desert for forty years. Nussbaum called his listeners' attention to this context and characterized the *sidrah* as Moses's efforts to sum up and describe the "basic equipment" the Israelites would take with them into the Promised Land, that is, "the rewards and punishments if the

*Rabbi Nussbaum surveying damage to the secretary's office  
at Beth Israel, Jackson, Mississippi, September 18, 1967.*

*(Courtesy of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of  
the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

*Americanjewisharchives.org)*

army of the Lord neglects its compact with God." Even after forty years in the desert, many of the Israelites did not understand the essentials of their religion; they were "interested only in the material logistics of establishment."

The theme of rewards and punishments structured Nussbaum's interpretation of the temple bombing. In fact, he placed not only the bombing, but also the larger struggle over segregation and the congregation's response within the context of the biblical covenant made between God and the Jewish people. By turning to the Bible, in general, as "Judaism's and our congregation's source of answers and encouragement" and, in particular, the week's Torah reading as a source of help for "those who will listen—and reflect—and not deny the rationale of it all," the rabbi made sense of the racial chaos that had descended on his congregation, the city of Jackson, and the entire South. Nussbaum attempted to demonstrate how, rather than being relics of the past, Moses's words were being lived out at that moment<sup>28</sup>:

WILL YOU ALLOW ME TO PUT SOME OF IT INTO CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGE?

AFTER YOU'VE BUILT A SYNAGOG—YOUR SYMBOLIC HERITAGE—  
AFTER YOU'VE FURNISHED IT AND SETTLED IN IT—GO TO IT—  
BRING GIFTS IN GRATITUDE AND STAND BEFORE THE ALTAR OF  
YOUR SYNAGOGUE AND RECITE:

I am here—and here only—because I want to repay my God—  
Oh, not just in MATERIAL THINGS—NOT JUST THROUGH MY MON-  
EY TO KEEP THE SYNAGOGUE GOING—NOT JUST FOR DELIVERANCE  
FROM THE PERSECUTOR—THE PREJUDICED—THE BIGOT—THE  
GODLESS WHO YET INHABIT THIS COMMUNITY.

I am here—and here only—because the MIGHTY STRENGTH OF  
FAITH DRIVES ME HERE IN COMMITMENT! "GOD IS MY ROCK & MY  
SALVATION—AND I SHALL NOT FEAR THE MALICIOUS ONES."

The rabbi connected the Israelites' entrance into the Promised Land with Temple Beth Israel's recent construction and dedication of its new synagogue. It was indeed an important event in the congregation's life, but just as the physical process of the Israelites entering the Promised Land was not the

central point of their existence, so too the building, maintenance, and gathering at the new synagogue did not represent the fulfillment of the congregation's religious responsibilities. The rabbi then made explicit what these responsibilities were:

OH GOD—I fulfill the compulsions of my Religion—I give of the first fruits of my material blessings only because I understand what I must do to be faithful to YOU and MY RELIGION

To the Levite – to the Synagogue

To the stranger, the fatherless, the widow. I have helped them  
EAT THEIR FILL

I UNDERSTAND THEY SHALL NOT WANT. OH GOD, I AM ONLY A HUMBLE STEWARD OF WHAT I POSSESS, ONLY YOUR AGENT TO DO JUSTICE AND IMPLEMENT THE PRINCIPLES OF THIS RELIGIOUS WAY OF LIFE I CLAIM AS MY OWN.

GOD, I HAVE DONE WHAT YOU HAVE COMMANDED ME. I AM NOT CONCENTRATING NOW ON ONE OBJECTIVE ONLY—TO HURRY UP AND REPAIR THE DAMAGE TO A BUILDING!

With this last statement Nussbaum attempted to focus his congregation's attention on what he believed was the bigger issue—not the “material logistics,” that is, repair of their new building, although this was important, but the effort to bring about justice for African Americans. The rabbi did not see the new synagogue as the primary locus of Judaism. It was not the Promised Land; it was not some sort of protective bubble from the prejudiced, bigoted, and godless elements of southern society in which Jews could carry out ritual and cultural practices. The primary locus of Jewish religion was living out Jewish ideals among the prejudiced, bigoted, and godless within southern society. Dangerous and intimidating as it was, Nussbaum insisted that his congregants overcome their fears and fulfill all of their covenant responsibilities.

*“Why Did This Happen?”*

Once again proclaiming the timeliness of the Torah reading, the rabbi furthered his point by integrating the tem-

ple bombing into the biblical passage. He did so by combining portions of the biblical text with references to their contemporary circumstances, as illustrated in the following table:

<b>Deuteronomy 27:14-24 (according to the Jewish Publication Society's <i>Tanakh</i>)<sup>29</sup></b>	<b>Rabbi Nussbaum's rendering of Deuteronomy 27: 14-24</b>
27:14: The Levites shall then proclaim in a loud voice to all the people of Israel	The LEVITES PROCLAIMED WITH A LOUD VOICE that the inventory to be made is not only for the purposes of making a claim on the INSURANCE COMPANY but to review the curses man brings down on himself
27:15: Cursed be anyone who makes a sculptured or molten image	Your images and idols – be cursed.
27:16-23: In sum, these verses chronicle a series of curses against those who commit various social and sexual wrongs	Have you done injustice – be cursed
27:24: Cursed be he who strikes down his fellow countryman in secret	Have you STRUCK DOWN YOUR NEIGHBOR IN SECRET – JEW, Xn [Christian], WHITE, BLACK – be cursed

In recreating the scene from the Torah, Nussbaum rhetorically took the Levites from their place with the Israelites on the verge of entering Canaan and made them the heralds of the covenant in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1967. His congregants were not hearing distant and dead words that held only ritual and cultural significance. They were at that moment the modern version of the biblical Israelites, and their Promised Land was the South, but it was not the mythical, glorified land of milk and honey and peaceful coexistence. Their neighbor (fellow countryman) was not only their fellow Israelite, but now included Jackson's Christian white and black populations. Being Jewish clearly was not merely a matter of heritage. It required social action, and the neglect thereof

risked bringing down curses upon them. Nussbaum had connected one of the hallmarks of Reform Judaism—social justice—with covenant obligations. While acknowledging that such correlations were harsh, he also reminded his congregation that, “Judaism has never said, ‘Oh, just call yourself a God-believer and you’ll go to heaven.’ IF YOU SIN AGAINST GOD—WHAT A REMINDER, NOW THAT OUR PENITENTIAL SEASON IS UPON US—IT IS BECAUSE YOU HAVE SINNED AGAINST MAN.”

If his congregants were uncomfortable at this point, this surely increased with his next statements:

If our Synagogue was bombed, it was not just because there are Antisemites left in our world—but because HATRED IS COLOR BLIND. IT DID HAPPEN HERE because it HAS BEEN HAPPENING ALL ABOUT US.—AND WE ARE TO BLAME ALSO FOR WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING ALL ABOUT US.

If our Synagogue was bombed, it was because SO MANY OF THE SANCTIMONIOUSLY GOOD PEOPLE IN BETH ISRAEL AS WELL AS ALL OF THE CHURCHES IN OUR COMMUNITY HAVE SAID “ITS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS”—this climate of vicious bigotry which LIKE THE HURRICANES OF THIS WEEK [Hurricane Beulah and perhaps Hurricane Doria] HAVE—played with us for years while it [bigotry] danced maliciously from place to place over the stormy sea of contemporary life—and finally came down with ALL ITS CURSES once again on people—this time on US—Jew and Xn in Jackson.

If our Synagogue was bombed, it is because there are people who profess the teaching of the Scrolls in our Ark—Jesus did not reject our Torah—Xns do not reject OUR Torah—Jews still abide by our Torah—if our Synagogue was bombed it was because this MAKES SENSE, “Cursed be he who will not uphold the terms of this Teaching and observe them” [Deuteronomy 27:26].

Nussbaum placed blame for the temple bombing squarely on the hatred of bigots and the failure of the people of Jackson—both Jew and Christian—to stand against such hatred. It was not primarily an act of antisemitism. The rabbi apparently did not want his congregation to use antisemitism to shield

their failure to challenge the bigots. Nor was the bombing entirely the result of Jewish inaction. Here the rabbi used the Torah to bind Jews and Christians together in their culpability. While acceptance of the Torah—as well as the entire Hebrew Bible—as sacred scripture by both Jews and Christians had often been used in the past to emphasize their unity and encourage positive relations, Nussbaum used it to highlight a different kind of unity—shared guilt. Southern Jews and Christians were reaping the fruits of their failure to live up to the terms of the covenant, which in the modern South required opposition to segregation.<sup>30</sup> Rather than being cowed by those who perpetrated the bombing or silenced by those who urged neutrality or moderation in the face of segregation, Nussbaum used the Torah to advocate a more vigorous opposition. Nussbaum, like Rothschild, was not simply following the well-trod path of previous rabbis who used the Bible to check Christian encroachment on Jewish belief and practice or to build bridges across religious divides. He too was going further by using the Bible to embrace a controversial social position in a volatile and dangerous situation. Whether or not Nussbaum and Rothschild were using the Bible in a different way than had most of their predecessors is not yet clear. More research into rabbinic uses of the Bible is necessary before making this judgment.

If failing to live up to the terms of the covenant had brought about the bombing, embracing its requirements—in this case, fighting for equal rights for African Americans—carried the promise of blessing. Invoking the promises contained in Deuteronomy 28, the rabbi closed with this challenge:

WHY DID THIS HAPPEN . . . ?

Yes, God had something to do with it. I believe in His design—His purpose for the sons of God. God has said from the days of that wandering Aramean—Abraham, our Father—be MEN, STRONG IN CONVICTION! ALL I CAN DO FOR YOU IS TO KEEP THE RIGHT WAY OF LIFE IN FRONT OF YOU. BUT I CAN'T MAKE YOU FOLLOW ME. YOU MUST SHARE WITH ME. YOU MUST BE MY CO-

WORKER! I CAN'T GUARANTEE YOU'LL GO TO HEAVEN JUST BECAUSE YOU PROFESS ME AS YOUR GOD. IT'S NOT ENOUGH!

BE REASONABLE. DON'T MAKE ME [GOD] THE SCAPEGOAT. MAKE UP YOUR MINDS TO WALK WITH ME AND ONLY THEN CAN I CONVERT YOU INTO A HOLY PEOPLE; WILL MY PURPOSE BE ACCOMPLISHED.

"These are the terms of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to conclude with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb." [Deuteronomy 28:69]—and in Jackson, Miss. on Sabbath Eve, Friday, Sept. 22, 1967, as the calendar is reckoned. Amen.

Nussbaum's initial public response to the bombing did indeed reflect Reform Judaism's prophetic emphasis on social justice. But it was the Torah's idea of the covenant and its attendant obligations that provided Nussbaum the interpretive lens through which he articulated the bombing's meaning. In short, it was a manifestation of a curse: not a divinely initiated one, but one arising from neglect of the Torah's social obligations. As such, Jews were not so much helpless victims of antisemitism as they were active agents in shaping their circumstances. Likewise, southern Christians were not helpless victims of bigotry and hatred, but active agents in creating an environment in which such attitudes could thrive. Rather than emphasizing the hope for and need to work toward an ideal society rooted in justice—something that prophetic texts often did—Nussbaum followed the Torah's lead in describing the repercussions resulting from a society that does not insist on justice for all its members. Both societies—the ideal and cursed—were thus the product of human action, that is, adherence to or neglect of the covenant.

### *The Sermons in Retrospect*

The sermons of Rabbis Rothschild and Nussbaum represent immediate responses to what must have been disorienting circumstances. While their main points were

clearly made and certainly understood by their audiences, later reflection calls attention to ideas that may not have been foremost in their minds, but nonetheless were present in the fabric of their words. It also demonstrates how two rabbis responded to attacks on their congregations, albeit under somewhat different circumstances. Much had transpired during the nine years that separated the two attacks. Events such as the sit-in campaigns, the Freedom Rides, James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi, the protests in Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery, Alabama, the rise of Black Power, the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, and the eruption of riots in northern and western inner cities, all combined to create a starkly different environment in 1967 from that which existed in 1958. Other events such as the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Malcolm X, the implementation of the Great Society, America's deepening involvement in Vietnam, and the Six Days' War furthered the differences. The widespread patriotic fervor and religiosity of the 1950s was challenged by the counterculture of the 1960s. It is difficult to gauge the specific impact of the different circumstances on the two sermons, but they surely played a role in shaping the rabbis' responses. Perhaps the 1950s patriotic surge in the aftermath of World War II and during the early stages of the cold war struggle with the Soviet Union played some role in Rothschild's decision to emphasize American ideals, while the growing discontent and challenge to authority of the 1960s influenced Nussbaum's focus on the social disarray created by disobeying the precepts of the Torah.

The effectiveness of their responses on their congregations and larger communities can be debated, but these sermons reflect how both rabbis nurtured what has been called "a counteracting climate of conscience in their communities," even though their situations and circumstances differed.<sup>31</sup> As such, their voices were not particularly quiet as they publically resisted efforts at intimidation, simultaneously chastising and encouraging their congregants and fellow

southerners. The Bible provided them a language and framework through which they could do so.

Although both used texts from the Torah and the Prophets, the main texts they emphasized—prophetic for Rothschild and Torah for Nussbaum—greatly affected the character of their responses. So, too, did their refusal to see the bombings as primarily antisemitic acts. By distancing the Temple bombing's root cause from antisemitism, Rothschild could portray the problem as a broadly American issue that caused an American response based on ideals founded on Jewish scripture. On the other hand, Nussbaum hardly mentioned American aspects, choosing instead to emphasize the more specifically Jewish implications of the bombing as a manifestation of a breach of the covenant. As with the choice of biblical texts, both rabbis reflected Jewish and non-Jewish aspects of the respective incidents, but it seems highlighting prophetic calls for social justice lent itself better to responding in broad, national terms as Americans, while emphasizing the Torah's covenant better facilitated a response as modern followers of Judaism.

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**“. . . And None Shall Make them Afraid,” sermon by  
Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, delivered on Friday,  
October 17, 1958, Atlanta, Georgia<sup>32</sup>**

“Boruch attoh Adonay Elohaynu melech ho-olam sh’hechiyonu v’keyimonu v’higionu laz-man ha-zeh. Praised be Thou, O Lord our God who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this day in joy.”

These words are the traditional blessing of our faith uttered on occasions of rejoicing. We say them on our festivals, on Chanukah which commemorates the rededication of the Temple after the Maccabean victory, on birthdays and anniversaries and at dedications. Why then speak these words tonight, here in this

*Jacob M. Rothschild sermon, October 17, 1958, opening page, typescript.  
(Courtesy of Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library,  
Jacob Rothschild Papers, Emory University, Atlanta.)*

place? Better the prayer of mourning, mourning for the shattered stained glass windows of our sanctuary, mourning for our fellow-men who could fall so far short of God's way for them, mourning for a city and a land that could nurture and encourage so vile an act as the desecration of a House of God.

Not so. We sit in the place of devastation, true. And still we can say the age-old prayer of joy and hope. Why? Because truths that we and so many of our fellow Southerners had been reluctant or afraid to face, now at last we can no longer ignore.

What message was the explosion meant to deliver? What effect was it supposed to have? Its intent was clear enough. This was an act designed to strike terror into the hearts of men. It was intended to cause panic and confusion. It was to say to an already fearful minority: "You are not wanted here. Don't speak; don't preach the ideals of your religious faith. You are second class citizens marked for a life of fear." And more than this. It was to say to all the bewildered and confused people of America: "Terror is at hand. We have the means to spread that terror and to rule by force. Law is dead. We are the law."

Never was a message so garbled in its transmission. Never did a band of violent men so misjudge the temper of the objects of their act of intimidation. For this is what really happened: Out of the gaping hole that laid bare the havoc wrought within, out of the majestic columns that now lay crumbled and broken, out of the tiny bits of brilliantly colored glass that had once graced with beauty the sanctuary itself—indeed, out of the twisted and evil hearts of bestial men has come a new courage and a new hope. This single act of devastation has taught lessons which all words, all prayers, all pleas had been unable to teach. It is of these truths of which I would speak to you tonight.

The first of them is that this must be a land ruled by law and not by men. This was always a truism in American life. None doubted it. Yet, now, for the first time, its real meaning has become clear. To advocate the disregard of one law creates an atmosphere of lawlessness in which men reserve the right to choose the rules by which they will live. Once man decides that it is within his personal province to decide which laws he will obey

and which he will ignore—then there is no law at all. And this is anarchy. Southern leaders have made possible—unwittingly, I am sure—the creation of just such a society as this—a society without control by law, a government of anarchy. To be sure, they do not advocate violence. They, themselves, abhor it. But their words loose the uncontrolled passions of men who are quick to get their way by violence and who seize the opportunity in their search for personal power. Thus, it is clearer now than ever before that we must restore America to the rule of law.

And that law must be the moral law. This is the second truth we have learned. It is not easy to live by the rigorous demands of our spiritual forbears. Yet, it is more dangerous not to. For every time we stray from the paths they have set for us, we bring ourselves near to danger and destruction. The difficult way is still the safest way, after all. Once again we are confronted with and challenged by the prophetic ideal that teaches us that all men are brothers, that justice and righteousness must prevail, that only the work of righteousness shall bring peace to the world, that we must love our neighbors as ourselves and pursue with diligence the path of justice.

It is the moral law that undergirds the very foundations of democracy. Our country is founded upon the biblical ideals first taught by the prophets of Israel and later incorporated into the ideology of Christianity. We know it today as the Judaeo-Christian tradition. When we fail to live by the spiritual truths of our religious faith, we weaken the principles of democracy. And conversely, when we fall short of the goals of freedom and equality set forth by the founders of our Republic, we have demeaned our religious faith. Long ago, a biblical writer set forth the challenge in simple and stirring words: "Behold, I have set before thee this day life and good, the blessing and the curse; therefore, choose ye life." We have now determined to meet the challenge in our own day. We, too, shall choose the good so that we may have life.

It is in the realm of choice that the third truth lies. For who is to blame for the wave of violence that has swept across our land? The guilty ones are not alone the political leaders whose words

fan the flames of hatred and incite to violence. Not even those who perpetrated the very acts themselves bear all the blame. Responsibility rests equally with those good and decent people who choose to remain silent in such a time. Too many of us, motivated by fear, led by the desire to be comfortable and safe, have failed to live by the ideals which we know to be right and good. Now we have discovered at long last what can happen when men are afraid to speak and when they allow the shadow of cowardice to creep into their souls. Thus, a strange phenomenon has taken place: When the fear of violence did serve to silence men, the act of violence has freed their tongues and loosed their hands for the work of righteousness. So men, now, say aloud what they have always known in their hearts to be true but could not bring themselves to utter. Editors, ministers, educators, men and women in every walk of life have demonstrated a new-found determination to affirm with courage the principles by which men must live. The curtain of fear has been lifted. Decent men are at last convinced that there can be no retreat from their ideals. Neither violence nor the threat of violence shall force us to abrogate the spiritual foundations of life itself. We do not make such an affirmation out of sheer bravado. We do not say it just to keep our spirits high. We affirm our spiritual heritage because we know that only when man—every man—lives by God's law, no matter how dangerous or difficult it may seem to be—that only then can he find personal security and help achieve peace and tranquility for all humanity.

Nor do we stand alone. On that certain knowledge rests the most heartening lesson we have learned. This dastardly and despicable act of desecration has roused the conscience of decent men and women everywhere. The countless messages of comfort and encouragement that came to us expressed the shock and revulsion of all America. They were addressed to us, but their words bring comfort and hope to all whose hearts have been gnawed by fear and whose souls were corroded by doubt. They assure us that the dynamiters—whatever they are—do not represent America. They are a cancer to be cut out of the body politic and left to die. Except for these few—our letters tell us—all Americans stand united and strong—a people dedicated to righteousness.

We are grateful for the magnificent response that has come to us from near and far. But we are not surprised. And surprised even less by the dignity and courage of the Jewish community itself. We Jews are well acquainted with blatant anti-Semitism and the use of naked violence. Our history is replete with the madness of pogroms and the bestiality of Jew-hating and Jew-baiting madmen. Fresh in our minds is the holocaust of the six million. Burned into the minds and hearts of Atlanta Jewry is the searing memory of the infamous Frank case. Yet, our Jewish community demonstrated only the highest qualities of courage and dignity. There was no hand-wringing, no panic and, above all, no cry for recrimination and revenge. After the first flush of incredulity and understandable shock, we Jews—the members of the temple and all our co-religionists—reacted calmly and with praiseworthy understanding. This bombing was but the act of a few bigots and hatred-haunted madmen. It did not represent the will nor the way of our fellow-citizens. This we know with an almost instinctive certainty. The terror on Peachtree Road did not spread to a terror in our hearts. I bless you for your sanity and courage.

And I applaud you for your determination to stand firm in the ideals of our religious faith. Your presence here tonight in such overwhelming numbers bears testimony to that dedication. You give incontrovertible testimony to the firm conviction that neither the threat of violence nor the act of violence can make us forsake the timeless truths by which we shall live. Nor is the response one of mere bravado alone. Now we are more certain than ever before that only when men are willing to live by God's law can they achieve personal security and dignity. What was till now only the theoretical application of an oft-repeated but seldom tested preachment suddenly has been forged in the fire of experience. Yesterday, our Temple—tomorrow, your church. No one is safe in the jungle of lawlessness and hate.

Yes, yesterday, our Temple. Why our Temple? Was it because the rabbi of this congregation has spoken out, has sought to bring the eternal truths of Judaism to bear upon the social problems of today? I have spoken out—here and in the larger community—as you well know. Even now, I would not—could

not—have done otherwise. And I do not seek to exculpate myself when I tell you that I firmly believe that I cannot justly accept the blame—or the credit, as you will. Unhappily, ours is not the only Jewish House of Worship that has been damaged by the blast of dynamite. And there is neither rhyme nor reason to the site selected for destruction. Synagogues have been bombed in communities where nothing at all has been said or written by the rabbi or any Jew at all. On the other hand, in at least one city a rabbi has spoken and not his but another Temple was desecrated. Christian clergymen have at times been outspoken but no churches have yet been bombed—thank God.

What, then, is the answer: All bigots and their bigotry are inseparable. Hate is readily transferred from one minority to another. We live now in an atmosphere of hate. It is directed toward the Negro minority. But in our midst is a small, virulent group of Jew-haters, an organization made up of neo-Nazis who would finish here what Hitler began in Germany. Because such venom is inseparable, I have no doubt that they hate Negroes too. At the moment, however, their primary target is Jews. They have taken advantage of the aura of hatred and that growing acceptance of lawlessness so noticeable in today's South to carry out their own personal vendetta.

They failed—and their failure is happily not limited to their attack upon us. They roused the conscience of a city and a nation. They awakened us to the danger of ceding leadership to the mob. They proved the need for courage and idealism and responsibility. Perhaps the magnificent response engendered here was made possible because eighty ministers issued their Manifesto less than a year ago and thus helped to bring sanity into our city. Perhaps those of us who stood and fought have succeeded in leading many along the paths of righteousness. Whatever the reason, even now, this night and in this place, I tell you that they have lost and we have won.

Tonight, our shattered building stands as mute witness to the evil that lurks in the hearts of men ruled by hatred and dedicated to the destruction of our noblest dreams. Our answer to them speaks louder even than that monstrous blast that shook the

silence of a peaceful night. The symbols of that answer stand untouched and strong in every house of God—as they are visible in this Sanctuary which bears the scars of man’s sad failure as a child of God. There is the Eternal Light. It shines forth once more and speaks its message of reassurance and of hope. God lives. He dwells in every human heart. If only man will seek to find Him there. And God lives eternally—even as this light is everlasting. So must our faith be eternal—it cannot be extinguished or dimmed—nor put to rout by the threats of witless men.

In our Temple, that light hangs from the great seal of America. The ideals of democracy upon which our freedom rests have not been shaken by this blast any more than the walls of this building have been weakened by it. Decency, equality, brotherhood, humanity—all these still live—now stronger than ever—in our hearts.

And here, in the Ark of the Covenant, are the scrolls containing the moral law. There they stand—crowned with their silver ornaments—as they have stood in every Jewish House of Worship through centuries of time. Proudly they bear witness to the law of God, to the ideals towards which man is urged ceaselessly to strive—and which will yet become the pattern of his life on earth.

“Holy shall ye be, for I the Lord your God am holy” is the challenge they proclaim. “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart”. “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”. “Justice, justice shalt thou pursue”. “Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us all?”

This law still lives in our hearts, still guides our steps, still lifts us up to the vision of a world of brotherhood and peace. The lamp of faith has not been dimmed. On the contrary, this despicable act of desecration has turned up the flame of faith and kindled the fires of determination and dedication. It has reached the hearts of men everywhere and roused the conscience of a whole community.

We are grateful for their support and sustained by their devotion. With God’s help we shall rebuild in pride and gratitude—and create a stronger Home of the Spirit where He may dwell in our midst. Together with an aroused humanity we shall rear from

the rubble of destruction a city and a land in which all men are truly brothers – and none shall make them afraid.

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**“The Friday Following the Bombing of the Temple,”  
sermon by Rabbi Perry E. Nussbaum, delivered on  
Friday, September 22, 1967, Jackson, Mississippi<sup>33</sup>**

Read selected passages from KI SOVO (Dt 26:1–29:8)

WHAT SHALL A RABBI SAY TO HIS CONGREGATION?

We have spent these past few days in making assessment of our damages.

PAY TRIBUTE TO SIDNEY GEIGER – Bettye Driskell – Henry Rudd

those who wanted to help but could not because the synagog problem since Tuesday has been PHYSICAL – and it could only be met by those experienced in reconstruction & the operations of this building.

PERHAPS THE TIMELINESS OF THE SEDRA WILL SUPPLY SOME ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS SOME OF YOU HAVE BEEN ASKING:

MOSES HAS DEVOTED AN ENTIRE BOOK FOR REVIEW AND RE-ASSMENT [SIC] OF RELIGION. FOR 40 YRS HE HAD BEEN IN COMMAND OF AN ARMY. HE HAS BEEN TALKING LOGISTICS! HE COMES NOW TO FUNDAMENTAL LOGISTICS – he MUST describe their basic EQUIPMENT when they are about to enter the Promised land

SO NOW HE SUMS IT ALL UP. NOW HE TELLS THEM ABOUT THE REWARDS AND THE PUNISHMENTS IF THE ARMY OF THE LORD NEGLECTS ITS COMPACT WITH GOD!

THE BIBLE IS STILL JUDAISM’S AND OUR CONGREGATION’S SOURCE OF ANSWERS AND ENCOURAGEMENT . . . THIS SEDRA WILL HELP THOSE WHO WILL LISTEN – AND REFLECT – AND NOT DENY THE RATIONALE OF IT ALL.

*Perry Nussbaum sermon, September 22, 1967, page 1, typescript.  
(Courtesy of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of  
the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
Americanjewisharchives.org)*

ONE OF THE CRUCIAL POINTS HE MAKES IS AT THE VERY END OF THIS SEDRA. IT HAS TO BE FACED UP TO. LISTEN:

“Yet to this day the Lord has not given you a mind to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.” Think of it. After 40 years of wandering in the most miserable of conditions, after praying and suffering as no human being was ever forced to suffer in recorded history, after FINALLY BRINGING THEM TO THE PROMISED LAND AND BEING DENIED A REWARD WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN HIS—TO GO WITH THEM AND EAT OF THE FRUITS IN THAT LAND OF PROMISE—HIS REWARD WAS TO ONLY SEE IT FROM A DISTANCE. Think of it!

SHOULD HE HAVE SAID TO THEM OUT OF ALL HIS FRUSTRATIONS? Don't worry. Everything is going to be a bed of roses. Because you have become God's Chosen People, God will take care of you! God will guarantee you prosperity & security. MOSES FOR 40 YEARS HAD TRIED TO REASON WITH THEM. For 40 years he had tried to forge a WAY OF LIFE which was to have its roots not in BLIND EMOTIONALISM, PETTINESS, SELFISHNESS, SUPERSTITION, BUT IN A PROGRAM INSISTING ON USE OF MAN'S INTELLECT. AND HE HAD TO SAY TO THEM—THOSE PEOPLE INTERESTED ONLY IN THE MATERIAL LOGISTICS OF ESTABLISHMENT

Oh my people, you still do not understand. You still will not look to the essentials. GOD IS NOT GOING TO DO YOUR REASONING FOR YOU. HE GAVE YOU THE POTENTIALS. BUT GOD IS NOT GOING TO DO FOR YOU WHAT YOU MUST DO FOR YOURSELVES. GOD IS NOT GOING TO MAKE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE OUT OF YOU. GOD IS NOT GOING TO MAKE JEWS OUT OF YOU. YOU MUST USE YOUR OWN GOD-GIVEN ENDOWMENTS.

THAT WAS THE CRY OF A FRUSTRATED MAN. BUT ALWAYS A HOPEFUL MAN. A REALIST! BUT HE KNEW THEM! HE COULD IDENTIFY ALL THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HIS RELIGION MEANT NOTHING AT ALL.

IS THIS TIMELY?

REVIEW WHAT WE READ: WILL YOU ALLOW ME TO PUT SOME OF IT INTO CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGE?

AFTER YOU'VE BUILT A SYNAGOG—YOUR SYMBOLIC HERITAGE—AFTER YOU'VE FURNISHED IT AND SETTLED IN IT—GO TO IT—BRING GIFTS IN GRATITUDE AND STAND BEFORE THE ALTAR OF YOUR SYNAGOGUE AND RECITE:

I am here—and here only—because I want to repay my God—Oh, not just in MATERIAL THINGS—NOT JUST THROUGH MY MONEY TO KEEP THE SYNAGOGUE GOING—not just for deliverance from the PERSECUTOR—THE PREJUDICED—THE BIGOT—THE GODLESS WHO YET INHABIT THIS COMMUNITY.

I am here—and here only—because the MIGHTY STRENGTH OF FAITH DRIVES ME HERE IN COMMITMENT! “GOD IS MY ROCK & MY SALVATION—AND I SHALL NOT FEAR THE MALICIOUS ONES.”

OH GOD—I fulfill the compulsions of my Religion—I give of the first fruits of my material blessings only because I understand what I must do to be faithful to YOU and MY RELIGION—

To the Levite—to the Synagogue

To the stranger, the fatherless, the widow. I have helped them EAT THEIR FILL

I UNDERSTAND THEY SHALL NOT WANT. OH GOD, I AM ONLY A HUMBLE STEWARD OF WHAT I POSSESS, ONLY YOUR AGENT TO DO JUSTICE AND IMPLEMENT THE PRINCIPLES OF THIS RELIGIOUS WAY OF LIFE I CLAIM AS MY OWN.

GOD, I HAVE DONE WHAT YOU HAVE COMMANDED ME. I AM NOT CONCENTRATING NOW ON ONE OBJECTIVE ONLY—TO HURRY UP AND REPAIR THE DAMAGE TO A BUILDING!

IS THIS SEDRA TIMELY FOR THE SABBATH OF THE WEEK OUR SYNAGOG WAS BOMBED?

The LEVITES PROCLAIMED WITH A LOUD VOICE that the inventory to be made is not only for purposes of making a claim on the INSURANCE COMPANY but to review its curses man brings down on himself:

Your images and idols—be cursed.

Have you done injustice—be cursed.

Have you STRUCK DOWN YOUR NEIGHBOR IN SECRET—  
Jew, Xn, White, Black—be cursed.

HARSH! Of course! Judaism has never denied that there are REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS. Judaism has never said: Oh, just call yourself a God-believer and you'll go to heaven. IF YOU SIN AGAINST GOD—WHAT A REMINDER, NOW THAT OUR PENITENTIAL SEASON IS UPON US—IT IS BECAUSE YOU HAVE SINNED AGAINST MAN. AND FOR GOD'S SAKE, GET RID OF THE ARROGANT IDEA THAT YOU CAN BE DECLARED EXEMPT FROM THE STERN JUDGMENT WHICH IS YOUR CONSCIENCE! AND THE DICTATES OF MORAL LAW!

If our Synagogue was bombed, it was not just because there are Antisemites left in our world—but because HATRED IS COLOR BLIND. IT DID HAPPEN HERE because it HAS BEEN HAPPENING ALL ABOUT US.—AND WE ARE TO BLAME ALSO FOR WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING ALL ABOUT US.

If our Synagogue was bombed, it was because SO MANY OF THE SANCTIMONIOUSLY GOOD PEOPLE IN BETH ISRAEL AS WELL AS ALL OF THE CHURCHES IN OUR COMMUNITY HAVE SAID "ITS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS"—this climate of vicious bigotry which LIKE THE HURRICANES OF THIS WEEK HAVE—played with us for years while it danced maliciously from place to place over the stormy sea of contemporary life—and finally came down with ALL ITS CURSES once again on people—this time on US—Jew and Xn in Jackson.

If our Synagogue was bombed, it is because there are people who profess the teaching of the Scrolls in our Ark—Jesus did not reject our Torah—Xns do not reject OUR Torah—Jews still abide by our Torah—if our Synagogue was bombed it was because this MAKES SENSE, "Cursed be he who will not uphold the terms of this Teaching and observe them."

BUT LIFE IS NOT ALL CURSES. This is what Moses was trying to say.

JUST DON'T LOSE PERSPECTIVE.

USE YOUR REASON.

OPEN YOUR EYES AND HEARTS TO THE CHALLENGES OF LIVING. THERE IS ALWAYS THE SUNLIGHT OF TOMORROW. AND YOU WILL BE BLESSED—"Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the country." "Blessed shall you be in your comings and blessed shall you be in your goings." —I DO NOT KNOW ANYTHING MORE TIMELY FOR BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION & JAX & MISS.

THERE IS PROMISE. "The Lord will make you the head, not the tail; you will always be at the top and never at the bottom" —IF, IF, "only you obey and faithfully observe the commandments . . . and do not deviate to the right or to the left" from any of them.

WHY DID THIS HAPPEN — THIS TRAGIC CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF A SMALL JEWISH CONGREGATION IN A GREAT AMERICAN METROPOLIS?

Yes, God had something to do with it. I believe in His design—His purpose for the sons of God. God has said from the days of that wandering Aramean—Abraham, our Father—BE MEN, STRONG IN CONVICTION! ALL I CAN DO FOR YOU IS TO KEEP THE RIGHT WAY OF LIFE IN FRONT OF YOU. BUT I CAN'T MAKE YOU FOLLOW ME. YOU MUST SHARE WITH ME. YOU MUST BE MY CO-WORKER! I CAN'T GUARANTEE YOU'LL GO TO HEAVEN JUST BECAUSE YOU PROFESS ME AS YOUR GOD. IT'S NOT ENOUGH!

BE REASONABLE. DON'T MAKE ME THE SCAPEGOAT. MAKE UP YOUR MINDS TO WALK WITH ME AND ONLY THEN CAN I CONVERT YOU INTO A HOLY PEOPLE; WILL MY PURPOSE BE ACCOMPLISHED.

"These are the terms of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to conclude with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb." —and in Jackson, Miss. on Sabbath Eve, Friday, Sept. 22, 1967, as the calendar is reckoned.

Amen.

## NOTES

I am grateful to The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (Cincinnati, Ohio) for their permission to publish the text of Rabbi Perry E. Nussbaum's sermon. Likewise, I want to thank Emory University's Manuscript, Archives, & Rare Book Library (Atlanta, Georgia) for allowing the publication of the text of Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild's sermon. Their generosity and support of historical research is greatly appreciated. The archival staffs at both institutions were most accommodating and provided helpful assistance.

<sup>1</sup>For example, see P. Allen Krause, "The Southern Rabbi and Civil Rights" (rabbinical thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1967); Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin, eds., *Quiet Voices: Southern Rights and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa, 1987); Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens, GA, 2001).

<sup>2</sup>It is not the intent of this essay to discern whether or not Rothschild or Nussbaum intentionally sought to make a particular point or consciously used the Bible in a specific manner. While intent can be discerned with reasonable certainty in some instances, it can be difficult to prove in others. Nonetheless, assumptions that undergird and inform certain statements or actions, as well as their broader implications, can, with careful analysis, be uncovered with some degree of plausibility.

<sup>3</sup>A version of this section of the essay was presented at the 2010 Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in Atlanta, GA.

<sup>4</sup>Probably a reference to Confederate General John Brown Gordon, a trusted military officer serving under Robert E. Lee and purported leader of the Ku Klux Klan in Georgia during the late 1860s, U.S. Senator (1873–1880 and 1891–1897), and governor of Georgia (1886–1890).

<sup>5</sup>Melissa Faye Greene, *The Temple Bombing* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 1–2, 246, 253–258. See also, Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *One Voice: Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild and the Troubled South* (Macon, GA, 1985), 83–84; "President Asks F.B.I. Aid in Blast," *New York Times*, October 13, 1958, as well as "Temple Bombing Stirs Wide Hunt," October 14, 1958; "Note Threatens Jews in Atlanta," October 15, 1958; "and Anti-Semitic Data Seized in Atlanta," and "Bombing Suspects Tied to 'Hate' Unit," October 16, 1958.

<sup>6</sup>Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism* (New Haven, 2004), 309.

<sup>7</sup>Greene, *Temple Bombing*, 185–188.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 6, 74. In 1983 an individual came forward with information supporting Leo Frank's innocence. This led to a request for the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles to pardon Frank. After some deliberation, the board ultimately decided not to issue the pardon because they deemed it impossible to determine conclusively Frank's guilt or

innocence. A few years later, the board ruled that the state of Georgia had denied Frank his constitutional rights by failing to keep him safe from the lynching that occurred while he was imprisoned. See Steve Oney, *And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank* (New York, 2003), 645–649.

<sup>9</sup> Greene, *Temple Bombing*, 15–23; Janice Rothschild Blumberg, “Jacob M. Rothschild: His Legacy Twenty Years After” in *Quiet Voices*, ed. Bauman and Kalin, 261–264.

<sup>10</sup> Jacob M. Rothschild, “The Challenge of a Dream,” October 7, 1954, Jacob Rothschild papers, box 12, folder 8, Manuscript, Archives, & Rare Book Library (MARBL), Emory University, Atlanta, GA (hereafter cited as Rothschild Papers). The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was rendered on May 17, 1954.

<sup>11</sup> Rothschild, “Can This Be America?,” May 9, 1958, Rothschild Papers, box 13, folder 2.

<sup>12</sup> Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 170–172; Greene, *Temple Bombing*, 105–106, 178, 184–185; Blumberg, “Jacob M. Rothschild,” 267–269. While Rothschild helped write the Ministers’ Manifesto, he did not sign it due to its overtly Christian language and because he wanted it to come from the Christian clergy.

<sup>13</sup> Blumberg, “Jacob M. Rothschild,” 261.

<sup>14</sup> The Bible used as the source for all chapter and verse references in this article is the Jewish Publication Society’s, *The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia, 1917).

<sup>15</sup> The translation comes from the Jewish Publication Society’s, *The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia, 1917). The same translation is also reflected in the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV), which was published in 1952, and, in turn, was a revision of the *American Standard Version* published in 1901.

<sup>16</sup> Reception history is a relatively new methodology that studies how biblical texts have been used throughout the centuries not just in religious or theological contexts, but also in political, cultural, social, artistic, and other settings. The Bible’s religious and theological meanings and uses, therefore, are only one aspect of its history.

<sup>17</sup> All quotations from Rothschild’s sermon come from a manuscript, “. . . And None Shall Make Them Afraid,” October 17, 1958, Rothschild Papers, box 13, folder 3.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Silk, “Notes on the Judeo-Christian Tradition in America,” *American Quarterly* 36 (Spring 1984): 65–70.

<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, Scott M. Langston, “Rabbi Morris Newfield: Ambassador to the Gentiles, A Balancing Act,” *American Jewish Archives Journal* 59 (2007): 79–88; Langston, “Interaction and Identity: Jews and Christians In Nineteenth Century New Orleans,” *Southern Jewish History* 3 (2000): 83–124; George R. Wilkes, “Rabbi David Marx and the Unity Club: Organized Jewish-Christian Dialogue, Liberalism, and Religious Diversity in Early Twentieth-Century Atlanta,” *Southern Jewish History* 9 (2006): 35–68; Mark K. Bauman and Arnold Shankman, “The Rabbi as Ethnic Broker: The Case of David Marx,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 2 (Spring 1983): 51–68.

<sup>20</sup> Gary Phillip Zola, “What Price Amos? Perry Nussbaum’s Career in Jackson, Mississippi” in *Quiet Voices*, ed. Bauman and Kalin, 230–241; Blumberg described Atlanta in 1946,

the year Rothschild arrived, as "a completely segregated city." Blumberg, "Jacob M. Rothschild," 262.

<sup>21</sup> Zola, "What Price Amos?," 238–250; Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 183–187; "Synagogue Blast Reward Offered," *Jackson (MS) Daily News*, September 19, 1967. Zola identifies the newspaper that published Nussbaum's temple bulletin column as the *Jackson (MS) State Times*, October 15, 1958.

<sup>22</sup> Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 189–197, 204–207. Regarding the rabbinical dialog on civil rights, Webb indicates that an informal meeting was held on November 18, 1963, in Chicago, but it is not known who attended or what was discussed. Zola, "What Price Amos?," 251–254; "Synagogue Blast Reward Offered," *Jackson Daily News*, September 19, 1967; "Neighbors Swell Ranks for Prayer," *Jackson (MS) Clarion-Ledger*, September 20, 1967. The *Clarion-Ledger* also reported that Beth-Israel's bombing was not the first in Jackson that year. In February and March, a business and a personal residence had been bombed, and dynamite was found near the Briarwood Presbyterian Church.

<sup>23</sup> Jack Nelson, *Terror in the Night: The Klan's Campaign Against the Jews* (Jackson, MS, 1993), 45–46; Letter from Arene and Perry E. Nussbaum to Dear Friends, October 1, 1967, Perry E. Nussbaum Papers, Mss Col. 430, box 3, folder 6, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH (hereafter cited as Nussbaum Papers); Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 192.

<sup>24</sup> "Mississippi Rabbi Sees Rise in Violence," *New York Times*, September 20, 1967.

<sup>25</sup> Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 192; Nelson, *Terror in the Night*, 59–60; "Synagogue Blast Reward Offered," *Jackson Daily News*, September 19, 1967, and "Demolition Team Joins Blast Probe," September 20, 1967; "Bombing of Temple is an Act Deeply Deplored by Citizens," *Clarion-Ledger*, September 20, 1967; "March to Jewish Synagogue Tonight," *Jackson Daily News*, September 21, 1967, and "Blast Probe in 4th Day; March Held," September 22, 1967; "Clergymen Stage Walk in Jackson," *Clarion-Ledger*, September 22, 1967; "Group Prays for Brotherhood," *Greenville (MS) Delta Democrat Times*, September 22, 1967.

<sup>26</sup> Nussbaum's sermon does not appear to have been printed in either of Jackson's newspapers.

<sup>27</sup> All quotations from Nussbaum's sermon come from a manuscript, "The Friday Following the Bombing of the Temple," undated, Nussbaum Papers, Mss Col. 430, box 4, folder 2.

<sup>28</sup> The use of capital and lowercase lettering in the excerpts from Rabbi Nussbaum's sermon reflects the manner in which it appears in the manuscript.

<sup>29</sup> While the Jewish Publication Society's *Tanakh* was not completed in its entirety until 1985, the Torah portion of the translation was issued in 1962, with a revision in 1967. This seems to be the translation used by Nussbaum.

<sup>30</sup> The day after Nussbaum's sermon, a lengthy and intriguing letter was published in the *Clarion-Ledger* by one of Beth Israel's members, Mrs. Robert D. Levy. Levy echoed parts of Nussbaum's explanation for why the bombing occurred: "It is only right that such violence should rear its ugly head and deliver its wrath upon my Temple. It is in the terms of

our agreement. It is obvious that we were 'chosen' for this. Our share of the bargain gives the Creator permission to exhibit us so that all mankind may see the perfection and the flaws; the strength and the weakness of His product. The Jewish people are the looking glass of all humanity. We are the instrument in which all history reflects itself. And if mankind does not like what he sees in the mirror, who should he blame? When you look into a mirror, do you see the mirror?" See, "Temple Blast Could be a Bell That Tolls for all of Jackson," *Clarion-Ledger*, September 23, 1967.

<sup>31</sup> Bauman and Kalin, eds., *Quiet Voices*, 16.

<sup>32</sup> Jacob M. Rothschild's sermon can be found at Emory Univ., MARBL, Jacob Rothschild Papers, box 13, folder 3. It is presented here without correction to any errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar or word usage that appear in the original.

<sup>33</sup> Perry E. Nussbaum's sermon can be found at The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH, Perry E. Nussbaum Papers, Mss Col. 430, box 4, folder 2. It is presented here without correction to any errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar or word usage that appear in the original.