

IF YOU WILL IT, IT IS NO DREAM

By Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein

The rebirth of Israel in 1948 was the realization of a dream cherished by generations of our ancestors.

But without nurturing, every dream gradually fades until we can no longer remember it.

What are we personally prepared to do to keep the dream alive?

The State of Israel is at risk daily -- and so is the Zionist dream.

- Israel is at risk from terrorists who are devoted to her destruction.
- Israel is at risk from religious and secular institutions that call for divestment.
- Israel is at risk from universities that prevent their Jewish students from studying at some of the finest educational institutions in the world, simply because they are in Israel.
- And Israel is at risk because of the apathy or ambivalence of American Jews.
- Israel is at risk... and so are our dreams.

We cannot eliminate all the risk. But we can take steps to rekindle passion for Israel in the souls of North American Jews so that the dream will be as vivid tomorrow as it has been for centuries.

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and MERCAZ are committed to fostering the re-engagement of Conservative Jews in North America with Israel.



At the Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center, we enrich the lives of North American Conservative Jews through programs such as:

NATIV: During this freshman-year college program of academic study and Jewish leadership training, participants spend their first semester at Hebrew University or at the Conservative Yeshiva of the United Synagogue while living at the Fuchsberg Center. The second semester is spent on a kibbutz, doing volunteer work in an absorption center, or completing the year at the Conservative Yeshiva.

USY Israel Pilgrimage: This six-week summer program allows high school students to experience Judaism in the context of Jewish history while exploring the Land of Israel.

USY High: Students benefit from eight weeks of accredited high school academic course work designed to enhance appreciation of Jewish life.

Beit Cafe: Visitors enjoy cultural programs every Sunday and Tuesday evening. These activities are often in cooperation with the Conservative/Masorti movement in Israel (which includes 52 congregations) and Marom, its young adult program. The Masorti movement office at The Fuchsberg Center helps to foster engagement between North American and Israeli Jews.

United Synagogue Conservative Yes Iva: Students learn in stimulating summer and full-year programs for men and women from all religious backgrounds. Participants grow in observance and are influenced by a warm and supportive community as they study Jewish texts with the help of an open and creative faculty.

Center on Campus: Programs are provided for North American students spending a year or a semester at an Israeli university. As part of KOACH, it provides college students with stimulating educational experiences and supportive social opportunities in non-coercive, friendly environments that promote religious pluralism, and also pairs students with Conservative Yeshiva, Jewish Theological Seminary, and Ziegler School rabbinical students for evening study.

Project Oded Continuing Education Program: Besides 16 weekly classes, participants enjoy the Monday Evening Forum lecture series, which features guest personalities throughout the year. Project Oded plays an important social role and provides a support system for attendees, who include local English-speaking Israelis, olim from United Synagogue congregations, and visitors from abroad, some of whom are active retirees with children in Israel, who plan their extended visit to Israel around the class schedule.

Solomon Schechter School Programs: Young students frequently reside at and use the resources of the Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center during visits to Israel.

Lipson Schilit Family Gemilut Hessed Project: Volunteers are able to assist the needy through short- and long-term tzedakah projects such as the distribution of gift packages to families, soldiers and other individuals.

MERCAZ is your connection to the Zionist dream.

- **MERCAZ** plays a vital role in strengthening the commitment of Conservative Jews in North America to their homeland, through promoting short-term and long-term programs in Israel for youth and adults.
- **MERCAZ** promotes and lobbies on behalf of Conservative/Masorti Judaism and religious pluralism in Israel.
- **MERCAZ** creates and disseminates Zionist educational materials, promoting the study of the Hebrew language and raising the Zionist consciousness of Conservative Jews, and encourages *aliyah*.
- **MERCAZ** represents the Conservative movement in the World Zionist Organization, Jewish Agency for Israel and Jewish National Fund.

What You Can Do

Make sure that you and your friends take advantage of the resources of the United Synagogue Shirley and Jacob Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center. We can make your visits to Israel more meaningful. We want to meet your needs. Visit our website at www.uscj.org.il or e-mail us at Israel@uscj.org.

Register to vote for the World Zionist Congress elections so that you can support the **MERCAZ** slate. The Conservative movement benefits from **MERCAZ** involvement in the World Zionist Organization (**WZO**) and the Jewish Agency. Because of our past successes in **WZO** elections, the various branches of the Conservative movement (The Masorti movement, the Fuchsberg Center, Machon Schechter Institute and Ramah) receive direct allocations and

programmatic subsidies in excess of \$2,000,000 each year for a wide range of projects in Israel and throughout the Diaspora.

This funding not only supports Conservative Jewish institutions abroad, which are not funded by the Israeli Government as Orthodox institutions often are. It also helps us here in North America by subsidizing:

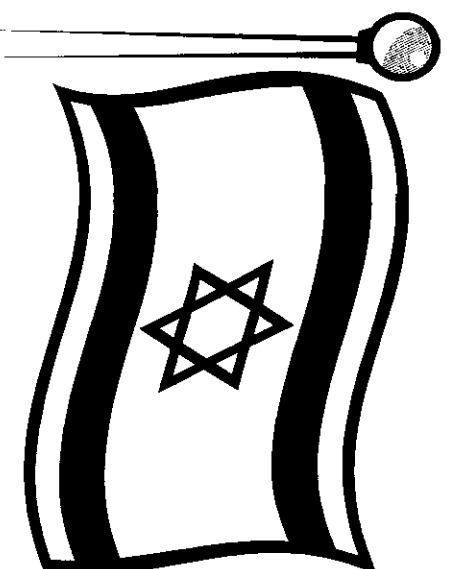
Shilchim (Teachers and youth leaders) from Israel for our youth movements (**USY** and **Ramah**) to help inspire Conservative Jewish youth with a passion for Israel. With your vote, we can have more *shilchim*.

USY Pilgrimage, **Ramah Israel Seminar**, **NATIV** and the Conservative **Yeshiva** benefit from the Jewish Agency and **WZO**. With your vote, we can make these programs even more affordable and attract more young people.

But we need to do more to keep the dream alive. *We can* do more... but only if you register and vote. A few minutes of your time and a payment of your "Zionist Shekel" will enable you to ensure that the dream will not evaporate. Without you and without your vote, the next generation of Conservative Jews will be deprived of the legacy that is their birthright.

The **WZO** election campaign has already begun.

For more information, contact **MERCAZ** (1-888-99**MERCAZ**, info@mercazusa.org or www.mercazusa.org) or **MERCAZ-CANADA** (1-800-419-5666 or mercaz-masorti@intra.net).



**IF YOU WILL IT,
IT IS NO DREAM**

By Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein

The United Synagogue of
Conservative Judaism

Rapaport House

155 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10010

Tel: 212-533-7800 / Fax: 212-353-9439

E-mail: info@uscj.org / Website: www.uscj.org