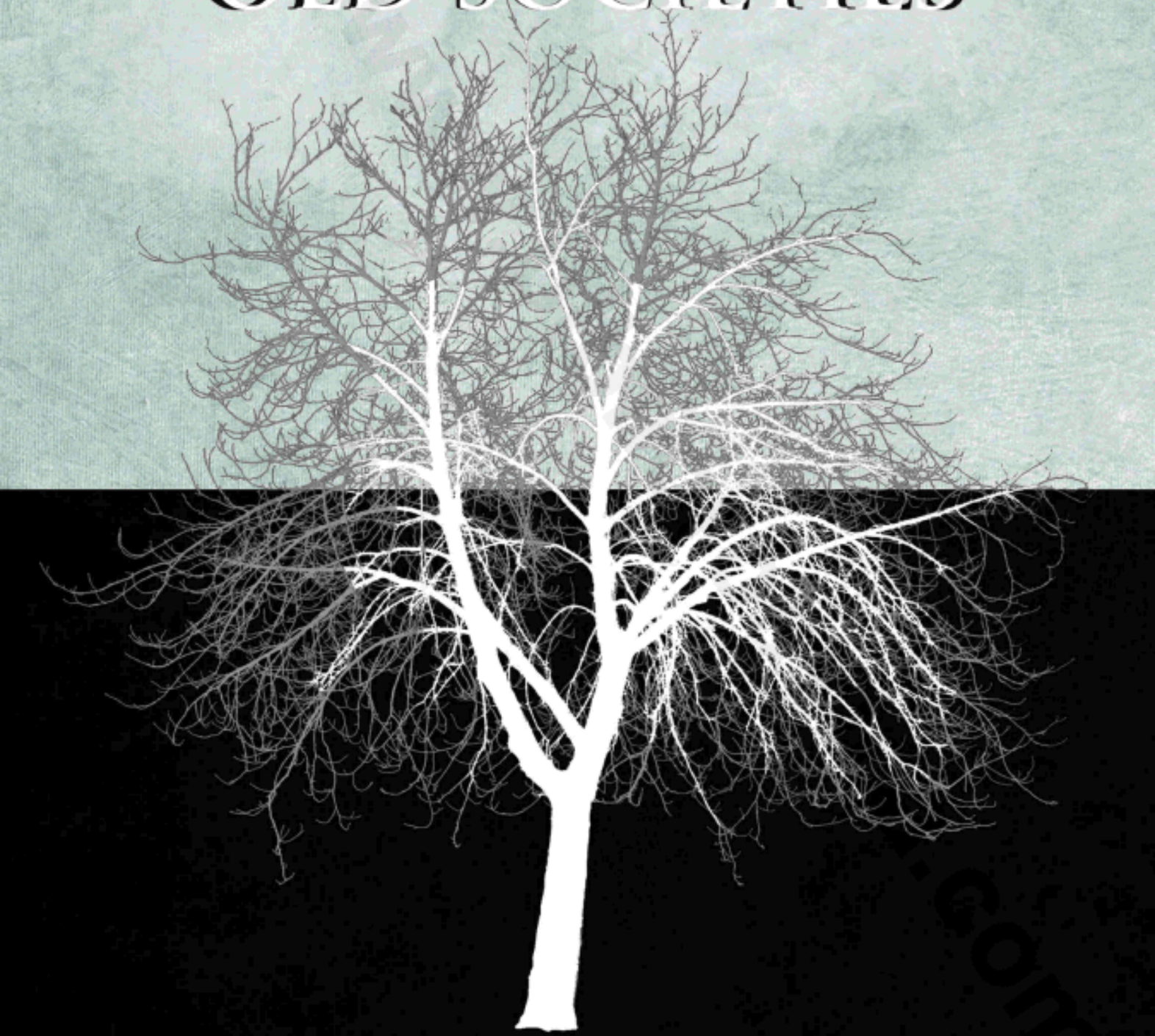
NISSAN RUBIN

NEW RITUALS OLD SOCIETIES



INVENTED RITUALS IN CONTEMPORARY ISRAEL

NEW RITUALS – OLD SOCIETIES

JUDAISM AND JEWISH LIFE

NEW RITUALS

OLD SOCIETIES

INVENTED RITUALS IN CONTEMPORARY ISRAEL

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PART THREE

Personal Definitional rites: Changing one's Identity

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This collection of essays, written over a span of fifteen years, represents my research interests in rituals and ceremonies. I present them in this collection as they were originally published; therefore, some important contemporary scholars are not cited. The essays present my theoretical approach in interpreting ethnographical material using structural tools and symbolic analysis. I believe that the theses are still valid and provide a basis for further developments.

The main aim of this collection is to explore how some new rituals were introduced, developed and changed in Israel during the process of building a modern secular society, with old Jewish tradition in the background. Until the early 20th century, cultural life in the Jewish Diaspora in Eastern Europe (from which most of the pioneers who settled in Palestine emigrated) revolved mainly around the active obligations and commands imposed by the Law (Torah). Routine participation in regular religious ritual performances was the paramount expression of identification with Jewish life. Those who sought escape from their Jewish identity and looked ahead to Gentile society, rejected a religious life style, and went through a process of secularization. But those secular Jews, who identified with Zionism, did not escape from their Jewish identity. As a movement of returning to Zion they considered themselves representatives of Jewish historical continuity. Ultimately, the State of Israel was established upon their vision of a secular civil society.

For many the old tradition and its rituals were no longer valid. It was necessary to invent new rituals for the public in order to celebrate national events, and for Individuals to celebrate family and life-cycle milestones. Israeli society therefore, became a laboratory for analyzing how secular

rituals emerge, develop and change. I hope that this collection of essays contributes to the understanding of such a process.

Classic anthropological theories on ritual asserted that tribal and traditional societies have higher level of ritualization compared to modern societies (Gluckman, 1962; Turner 1977). They claimed that ritual as such is vanishing in contemporary Western society. Gluckman distinguished between ritual and ceremony: while rituals refer to supernatural notions, ceremonies denote real events, changes or turning points in the life of a society or an individual.

Other theoretical approaches claim that new types of ritual have replaced traditional ones in the modern world. Moore and Myerhoff (1977) discuss secular ritual (sometimes interchanged with ceremony), which do not appeal to the otherworldly powers, but rather connect to an immanent and inner-worldly sanctity. According to Grimes (2000:5) past decades have seen a revival in the invention of rites of passage for life-cycle transitions, as well as ritualizing other changes in personal status and identity.

Myerhoff (1987) used the term definitional ceremony in reference to deprived and marginal groups whose problems are invisible to the public and as a result are not treated or taken care of. Definitional ceremonies "are strategies for being seen, gathering witnesses to one's worth, vitality and being" (Prashizky and Remennick, 2008:3). Following Mrerhoff, my colleagues and I coined the term personal definitional rites in reference to individuals who perform, publicly or privately, informal rites affirming a change in their identity. The rites are performed with the purpose of getting recognition for their new identity (see chapters Six and Seven in this volume).

The two chapters of Part One discuss the connection between social structure and funeral rites in different societies and situations.

Chapter One suggests a structural theory to explain variations in the extent and scope of participation in the mourning process in different societies. In other words the question is: when do mourning customs involve the extended family and the overall social matrix, and when do

they become the province of the nuclear family? By using the theory of social networks, I have dealt with how societies resolve their structural problems in a death crisis by distinguishing between levels of network density in different types of societies and then connecting them with the prevalent mourning practices.

Chapter Two demonstrates how people react when there are no formal rituals for expression of a death crisis. In this paper I discuss a case of unofficial memorial rites conducted by soldiers in honour of comrades in arms who died in service. It seems that soldiers of different social status get different performances of official and unofficial memorial rites. Indeed, formal military rules specify the rites for soldiers killed while serving in the Israeli army. These regulations officially also forbid the memorialization of individual soldiers by comrades in arms who have no formal rituals for expression of bereavement. But informal expressions of bereavement and memorialization of fellow soldiers do actually occur. Further, despite efforts by the military to institute an egalitarian system of burial and mourning, unsanctioned distinctions arise based on the circumstances of death and the position of the deceased in the hierarchy of his unit. Through this informal system of memorialization, the military reduces conflict between hierarchical and egalitarian symbols.

The three papers in Part Two deal with invention of tradition in civil societies, where the old traditional rites lost their meaning and significance.

Chapter Three, co-authored with Rina Neeman, "Ethnic Civil Religion: A Case Study of Immigrants from Rumania in Israel", illustrates the interweaving of civil and traditional religions in an ethnic context, as manifested in a voluntary association of non-religious Rumanian Israelis. It is argued that the association is a "visionary" one, offering its members a constructed redefinition of the Rumanian ethnic identity. As this cultural endeavor serves purposes of ethnic integration, legitimation, and mobilization, we term it an "ethnic civil religion". The ethnic message of the association abounds in traditional Jewish motifs, which are harmonized with the non-religious orientation of members through symbolic strategies

employed during activities. The sociocultural profile of the association's members and leaders is conducive to such harmonization. The analysis illuminates how traditional religion and its agents can play a meaningful role for non-religious people who are preoccupied with problems of self and engaged in the quest for ultimate meanings.

Chapter Four, "Death Customs in a Non-Religious Kibbutz: The Use of Sacred Symbols in a Secular Society", examines the development of mourning customs from the early stages of the kibbutz, where the sacred in terms of Jewish tradition was rejected as a matter of ideology, and where secular tradition had not yet developed. Coinciding with the eradication of traditional symbols, there was a search for alternative symbols to replace those rejected by the revolutionary kibbutz pioneers. Hence, a process of creation and innovation of new rituals was introduced, either by the adoption of ritual elements from outside sources or by the transformation of existing Jewish symbols through the infusion of new content. These replaced the sacred transcendental symbols of traditional Jewish life with symbols which were to be no less sacred, but found their origins and definition in secular ideology and collective identity. As long as ideological fervor was strong, secular formulations of ritual could be preserved. With the waning of ideological fervor, some of the secular elements of mourning customs disappeared and more traditional content was reinstated.

Chapter Five, "Personal Bereavement in a Collective Environment: Mourning in the Kibbutz", enable us to examine the development of new rites and symbols in a society which had consciously rejected a traditional network of symbols and rites.

This study deals with the connection between the social structure of the kibbutz and the mourning patterns that evolved. The silence and inaction of early kibbutz society reflect the community's perplexity during that period. Out of this confusion evolved a network of mourning ceremonies which convey the collective ideology of the kibbutz and posit the group as a primary unit. The kibbutz's expansion, which transformed it into an anonymous body for many of its members, led to changes in the patterns of mourning which are expressive of the new situation.

In the two following articles of Part Three I introduce, as mentioned above, the concept personal definitional rites. Following Myerhoff this paper investigates the phenomenon of informal rites affirming identity change performed by individuals, privately and publicly, with the aim of getting recognition for their new identity, which is not addressed by the existing public rituals. From the findings of these articles one comes to the conclusion that, while Van Gennep and Turner referred to rites of passage, in the societal "macro" level as primarily religious acts addressed to the transcendental beings, the definitional rites and the personal definitional rites serve to confirm identity change of individuals in the "micro" level in a non-religious context as well. The stepwise ceremonial structure (separation-transition-incorporation), presented by Van Gennep and Turner, is also discernible in these ceremonies.

Chapter Six, "From Fat to Thin: Informal Rituals of Identity change" (co-authored with Carmela Shmilovitz and Meira Weiss), claims that while rituals provide public solutions to some types of life crises or change, there are crises which beset the individual in modern society which are not easily addressed by public ritual. The present paper observes such a life crisis and identifies conscious rites performed by individuals. These personal definitional rites, take place in situations demanding identity changes. Newly acquired identity is performed ritually in an attempt to elicit recognition of a new social state.

Thirty six patients clinically defined as obese underwent gastric reduction surgery. Patients were interviewed after having lost excess weight in order to understand the social results of the dramatic change in appearance. Patients described various rites they used to complete their conversion from fat to thin.

Chapter Seven, "Formal and Informal Retirement Rites in the Israeli Army" (co-authored with Drora Peer), discusses the meaning of formal and informal rites in shaping an individual's identity in life passages, by using the example of early retirement from the standing army of the Israeli Defense Forces. Both types of rites were observed in research on 35 male and 15 female officers who retired after 20 years of service, some of

junior rank (up to major) and some of senior rank. The formal retirement rites combined closed and open elements, where the former were performed according to official regulations and the latter were improvised. The closed structural elements, which were similar for the two retired groups, were perceived as formally separating retirees from their organization. The open elements differentiated between the groups: the senior officers received a "thick" ceremony with deeply meaningful collective symbols, while the juniors had a "thin" ceremony, where less meaningful collective symbols were evoked. These distinctions represent the different expectations the organization has from each retired group: To the juniors the "thin" ceremony communicated that theirs was a real separation, with little chance to enter into central societal elites. In contrast, the senior group underwent a ritualized separation, but not a real one; in fact, the rites strengthened social networks, promoting incorporation into political, economic and administrative elites. These formal rites were accompanied by informal personal definitional rites performed within the social network of the retiring senior officers and expressing their identity in this liminal situation. Varying degrees of liminality (mild to acute) were found, with the extent of liminality related to level of satisfaction with the retirement process and the richness of informal rites.

I gratefully acknowledge the following publications in which these essays appeared:

- Chapter One, "Social Networks and Mourning: A Comparative Approach," *Omega – Journal of Death and Dying*, 21: 113-127, 1990.
- Chapter Two, "Unofficial Memorial Rites in a Army Unit," *Social Forces*, 63: 795-809, 1985.
- Chapter Three, "Ethnic Civil Religion: A Case Study of Immigrants form Rumania in Israel." *Sociology of Religion*, 57: 195-212, 1996 (with Rina Neeman).
- Chapter Four, "Death Customs in a Non-Religious Kibbutz: The Use of Sacred Symbols in a Secular Society," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 25: 292-303, 1986.
- Chapter Five, Personal Bereavement in a Collective Environment: Mourning in the Kibbutz, *Advances in Thanatology*, 5 (2): 9-22, 1982.
- Chapter Six, "From Fat to Thin: Informal Rituals of Identity Change." *Symbolic Interaction*, 16: 1-17, 1993 (with Carmela Shmilovitz and Meira Weiss).
- Chapter Seven, "Formal and Informal Retirement Rites in the Israeli Army." *Megamot*, 40: 103-130, 1999 (with Drora Peer)..

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PART ONE

RITES AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MOURNING: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

Literature on dying death and mourning has been enriched over the last two decades by important research. Riley (1970) noted that the relationship between specific patterns of mourning rites and the particular social structures associated with them has not been thoroughly investigated. Riley's judgment seems no less sound today than it did years ago. As no sociological theory is inclusive enough to explain this relationship, it is important to identify the social conditions under which mourning behavior takes place. In other words, the question is: what is the connection between social structure and mourning behavior, and how does this connection vary from one society to another? Since this question is a very broad one, I will concentrate on a more specific one: when do mourning customs involve the extended family and the overall social matrix, and when do they become the province of the nuclear family? Again no sociological theory is inclusive enough to explain this relationship, and the social conditions under which mourning behavior takes place must be identified.

To my knowledge, only two sociological theories deal with the issue, and although neither of these is sufficiently inclusive to serve as a general theory, they do provide a start. Blauner (1966) attributed social variations in mourning behavior to structural differences between societies. In preindustrial society, which has a high death rate, people die relatively young before completing their social careers. Death takes place within the family circle and the community. Death, then, is a social process that has a more immediate impact on society. In contrast, industrial society has a low death rate, and deaths occur largely among elderly adults. Thus, death becomes a

matter of isolated individuals in hospitals and their passings are only minor footnotes in the daily cycle of social events. The major agencies that organize productive work (and other activities) are relatively immune to the depletion of their personnel by death because their offices and functions are impersonal and transferable from one incumbent to another. When those who die tend to be irrelevant for the ongoing social life of the community, and when the potential of death to disrupt social activities is controlled by compartmentalization into isolated spheres (where bureaucratic routinization is the rule), only individuals and families are affected. Adjustments and bereavement become their private responsibility, and there is little need for the entire society to undergo a transition period.

Parsons (1963) and Parsons and Lidz (1967) probably in reaction to Mitford's (1963) and Harmer's (1963) criticism on American funeral practices, provide a different theoretical perspective. They reject the argument that American society is attempting to deny the reality of death in its funeral practices (Dumont and Foss, 1972; Becker, 1973; Huntington and Metcalf, 1979; Barely, 1983). Such arguments come from scholars who see denial in the treatment of the deceased's body and its burial, e.g. embalmment of the body, the use of cosmetics to beautify it, and the use of expensive coffins (Mitford, 1963; Harmer, 1963; Bowman, 1959; Vernon, 1970: 250-256). Parsons and Lidz (1967: 134) claimed "American society has institutionalized a broadly stable, though flexible and changing orientation to death that is fundamentally not a "denial" but a mode of acceptance appropriate to our primary cultural pattern of activisms".

In fact, they distinguish between two basic orientations toward death in American society. The first, an active or "normal" one, which is concomitant with the high value placed on science and rational activity in Western society, expects mourners to contain their feelings and finish their "grief work" quickly and privately within the intimate framework of their family. Among holders of this orientation are those who join movements concerned with the economics of funeral practices. The second orientation is fatalistic and eccentric to the rational orientation of modern society. Among those who are characterized by this position are those who deny

the reality of death. This attitude is held by persons suffering a decline in their social status; by second-generation immigrants who are seeking symbols of American identity; and by status seekers striving to be "super Americans". In a funeral held by persons with this orientation, the deceased is surrounded by symbols of status, forming a sort of Pan-American, secular, symbolic universe that transcends any religious symbols of specific ethnic or religious groups (Parsons and Lidz, 1967: 154-159).

The advantage of these two theories is in the connection they try to develop between mourning behavior and social structure. Their weakness lies in the fact that they explain only a limited range of cases. Thus, Blauner's theory is unable to explain internal variations within different industrial or preindustrial societies. For example, the theory does not explain the differences in mourning practices between the two related preindustrial tribes, the Dinka-Nuer and the Anuak. The mourning patterns in these societies should be elaborate, according to Blaunder's theory, but in fact, the pattern in Dinka-Nuer is a simple one (see: Lienhardt, 1962).

Likewise, the theory does not satisfactorily explain the elaborate funerals found in modern American society. In this case, the pattern predicted by the theory would be a simple one. Similarly, while Parsons and Lidz relate the changes in American patterns of mourning to a historical process, primarily to the development of a rational, activist orientation to reality, their theory is unable to explain differences in mourning rites in different cultures and social structures, especially those in non-Western societies.

Huntington and Metcalf (1979) expanded upon the classical works of Hertz (1960) and Van Gennep (1960) by proposing a comprehensive, anthropological theory that is flexible enough to explain cross-cultural variations. According to this approach, the best way to understand the meaning of death customs is by relating them to the eschatology of the body and the soul. Because eschatology is seldom explicit in most societies, they propose a careful study of the symbols of the human corpse and of mourning customs as a way of decoding portions of the eschatology of the ideologies of society. The human body, alive or dead, symbolizes

social conceptions of the individual's destiny, his social ideology, and the rules of social order.

Death rituals according to Huntington and Metcalf (1979: 93-118) focus on ongoing life as well as on death; as a result, they may also reveal symbols of vitality and fertility. Discussing extensively death rituals among the Bera, a pastoral society on the plains of South Madagascar, they show that the Bera's collective representation of death displays intensive vitality: song, dance, drums, and licentious sexual activity. This vital behavior, which breaks through into funeral rituals, serves as ammunition in the war against the sterile and freezing order of death. The Bera believe that death is not the end of life but, rather, the completion of one phase of it, replaced by another. Death is a rebirth into the world of the fathers.

By the same token, treatment of the body of the deceased and the customs surrounding death in the American funeral – which they fund to be amazingly uniform[1] – reveal American ideology. Without denying the existence of ethnic and religious variations, American funeral symbols reveal a common inner-worldly ideology: the completion of a full life cycle and the fulfillment of wishes. During the life cycle, a person is expected to live a stormy youth, followed by activity and achievements, and leading to a gradual decline towards death. A good life is considered to be without pain and misery (Huntington and Metcalf, 1979: 189-211). The embalming of the body is a symbolic expression of this ideology. The "loved one" is displayed in a passive state, the body unharmed and nicely dressed, the face made up, and the loved one lay on a soft cushion in a comfortable casket. The deceased is an icon in the focus of a rite that symbolizes a completed and successful life cycle. Though no law requires embalmment, Huntington and Metcalf found it was practiced in 78 percent

1 Public opinion, as reflected in journal articles, relates to the funeral in the United States as a uniform one (e.g. "The Jewish Way of Death," *Baltimore Jewish Times,* May 11, 1979; "The Cost of the Funeral," *The Boston Globe,* January 17, 1983). This uniformity is unusual considering the size of the country and the large numbers of churches and denominations.

of all American funerals indicating that people accept this practice as an almost obligatory norm (Huntington and Metcalf, 1979: 189). The wake, which used to be a family affair, sometimes is developed into a social affair in a public funeral parlor. While Huntington and Metcalf do not ignore economic and psychological factors that have had an impact on the development of the American funeral, they found these factors do not explain variations in the content of rituals.

In light of the flexibility of Huntington's and Metcalf's approach, which seems to explain adequately, cross-cultural variations, there is a need for a complementary, sociological theory that will explain the range and scope of mourning customs. The main question to be addressed in this context is: when do mourning customs involve the extended family and the overall social matrix, and when do they become the province of the nuclear family?

SOCIAL NETWORKS THEORY

The theoretical model proposed here refines Blauner's theory by viewing specific mourning behavior as a function of the density of the social networks in a given type of social structure. This model is based, in Mitchell's terms, on a "structural order," that explains behavior according to the location of individuals within the social structure, and on a "personal order," that explains behavior – in structured and unstructured situations – according to the type and number of interactions individuals have with and between groups (Mitchell, 1969: 9-10).

The term "social network" was introduced by Bott (1957; 1971), who described an order of social relations that cannot be explained exclusively in structural terms.[2] The term is used extensively in sociological theory (Fischer, 1982; Knoke and Kulinski, 1982; Hallman, 1984) and especially in the literature of social support systems (Gottlieb, 1981; Argyle and Henderson, 1985; McCubbin, Cauble and Petterson, 1982). In this paper I am not referring to variations and elaborations of the term; I

2 Actually Barnes (1954) suggested the use of the term, and Bott further developed it.

abide with the primary meaning proposed by Bott. The crucial point in Bott's theory is that the actual influence of others on the individual must be taken into account when seeking to explain individual behavior, although neither side may have a well-structured, formal relationship with the other. Others may have an impact on the individual in any given situation even when they are not physically present. Along these lines, Bott distinguished between loose-knit and tight-knit social networks. She used this distinction to explain differences in the social division of labor in conjugal relations. She found that London couples, who belonged to tightly knit social networks, where everyone knew everyone else, had segregated role relationships in their marriages. They depended primarily on their friends for emotional support and shared comparatively few social activities. Conversely, couples whose social networks were loosely knit, i.e. whose kin, friends and neighbors did not know each other, did more things together, both inside and outside the home. Bott claimed tightly knit networks have a well-defined system of norms and a capacity for strong social control while loosely knit networks have different norms in each succeeding social circle.

Epstein refined Bott's distinction pointing to areas of high density in any individual's social network (Epstein, 1969: 109-113). Intensive interaction among participants in the network is characteristic of the *effective* network within which one can ignore status differences. The remaining portion of one's social network may be described as one's *extended* network where status differences are expressed.

How does this relate to mourning patterns? In tightly knit networks, mourners identify with people outside the nuclear family; they are able to find substitutes for the deceased in their immediate social environment (Vernon, 1970: 136; Volkart and Michael, 1965: 281). Death is not their problem alone; it becomes one with which an entire network has to cope. Mourning rites focus on rehabilitating the damaged role system by reallocating roles in each of the deceased's social circles. The mourner receives personal support as a result. In loosely knit networks, individuals are under greater stress. The death of someone in the nuclear family is

the death of a significant other with whom the individual has developed exclusive emotional relations. Death does not affect wider social circles, which have potential substitutes for the deceased.[3] This is generally true of modern, Western, urban society, where death is removed from the center of everyday life. The hospital, rather than the home becomes the setting, and death itself undergoes a process of bureaucratization, releasing family, close friends and neighbors from the burden of dealing with the problem (Blauner, 1969). Because the social system is not affected significantly, there are no rituals for the rehabilitation of survivors, and, consequently, the individual receives very little social support. Professional support is introduced as a substitute; ministers, psychiatrists, social workers and psychologists are employed to help the bereaved to cope, just as the responsibility for treatment of the disabled and older adults has been progressively removed from the family sphere and been assumed by professionals.

Two processes operate simultaneously in mourning practices: segregation, which isolates mourners from their immediate social environment, followed by aggregation, which reincorporates them back into their social system. In a tightly knit system having a number of effective network foci, rituals simultaneously create intensive segregation – expressing mourners' existential isolation – and generate a process of aggregation, removing them from that state. But when a system is loosely knit, the effective network is relatively limited, and, in the extended network, relations are not tight enough to supply social support. As mourners are already relatively isolated, they do not have rituals of segregation to express their isolated condition. Moreover, aggregation rituals are also absent since society as a whole has not been affected and so requires no rites of reincorporation or aggregation.

It seems then, that by retaining Blaunder's structural framework, but replacing his concepts of preindustrial and industrial society with Bott's

3 However, when the deceased occupied a leadership position, death might disorganize society (Parsons and Lidz, 1967: 159-162).

more flexible concepts of loose-knit and tight-knit social networks, one can arrive at an analysis of both the macro and micro levels. In this context, two test cases will be used to demonstrate the connection between network density and mourning behavior: the American funeral and the Israeli kibbutz funeral. The latter case will be discussed at greater length as it has received less attention in the literature. While it is recognized that a comparison between American funeral customs and those in the kibbutz is problematic, mainly because American society is large and heterogeneous while a kibbutz is small and homogeneous, the justification for comparing them is that they are two different, modern cultural types representing different social environments coping with similar social change situations. Hence, the size of the society is not the crucial factor. The theory expounded here should explain these discrepant cases and serve as a basis for examining other societies as well.

THE AMERICAN FUNERAL

The homogeneity of the American funeral has already been noted. It is interesting to note as well that from coast to coast there is virtually one single funeral type characterized by the following components: removal of the body from hospital to funeral home; embalming and dressing; and viewing and burial.

The modern American funeral is considered by many critics of American society to be an elaborate and wasteful ceremony. Statistics seem to support this contention as 50,000 funeral directors are employed in 22,000 funeral homes across the country. Moreover, according to one survey, 90 percent of the deceased were buried in burial plots while in only 4 percent of the cases were cremation requested (Huntington and Metcalf, 1979:189-190). Kephart (1950) indicates that lower-class families spend more of their savings on family funerals. There are even lower-class families who borrow against their life insurance policies in order to cover funeral expenses.

Note here that those who relate *a priori* to the American funeral as a "wasteful" one are not value free. This must be proved by comparing

the "spending" on funerals by per capita income of individuals. On this basis it is probable that Americans actually spend less "productive" time and expend fewer dollars on their funeral rites and practices than other Western societies. Nevertheless, this is an elaborate pattern that causes a relatively wide range of people to participate and be involved in the funeral ceremonies. I suggest that this pattern of elaborate funeral and burial practices is an existential response to the needs of the individual mourners in the face of insufficient ritual support from their social environment. Thus, individuals use the elaborate funeral as an instrument to enforce participation by members of their loosely knit social networks. Participation in a funeral that takes place in an elaborate setting where the deceased is placed for viewing and that includes giving flowers and presents to bereaved relatives, forces the creation of mutual social relations and provides patterns of individual (as opposed to group) response. Those invited to such a ceremony feel obligated to "repay" with a similar ceremony. A mourner who receives presents and flowers feels obligated to return in kind (just as marriage ceremonies create reciprocal obligations in the exchange of presents). What is involved here is not so much a denial of the reality of death, but, rather, an attempt to involve the broader social environment in the mourning process through participation. This involvement provides the mourner with social support by legitimizing the mourning process as a whole.

Parsons and Lidz (1967) have maintained this type of funeral confirms the social status of individuals in a competitive society. In a highly mobile, modern world, many suffer status anxiety; they are afraid of possibly "slipping" downward in the social hierarchy or being unable to move upward. As economic achievement in such a society is viewed as the measure of members' success and constitutes a central factor in their social evaluation by others, the funeral provides an opportunity to display such success and thereby achieve social recognition (on conflict between funeral directors and clergy, with the point of contention being the cost of the funeral see: Turner and Edgeley, 1976; Bradfield and Myers, 1980; Fulton, 1961). Indeed, Kephart (1950) in his research in Philadelphia found that as the

level of education increased, the tendency to seek an expensive funeral declined. He also found this relationship to hold for other measures of socioeconomic status. Thus, the entire symbol system of the funeral represents one of the most important American values: success.[4] Parsons and Lidz (1967: 156) argued that it is among individuals suffering a decline in social status or those seeking to demonstrate their "Americanization," such as relatively new immigrants, that a preference for such "inflationary" funerals is found.

Sudnow claimed the number of people who know of a given death, i.e. the number who attend the funeral, telephone and send letters of condolence, are indicators of the family's social status (Sudnow, 1967: 164-165). He noted that a small attendance at the funeral may be as difficult for the family to accept as death itself. Families who are confident of their social status arrange for modest "private" funerals without flowers or elaborate arrangements, and those who have reason to be concerned about poor attendance may do the same to avoid any embarrassing incidents. In contrast, families whose social prestige is not particularly high but not too low may endeavor to appear more important than they actually are by deliberately inflating attendance (by inviting even remote acquaintances). Persons of high status, who find a modest funeral sufficient, also tend to arrange for modest postburial ceremonies, such as the receiving of condolences. Persons of high status, whose social contacts are manifold, tend to be members of effective social networks; therefore they do not require extensive and elaborate ceremonies to obtain social support. It is, rather, those members of groups with status anxiety, lacking the benefit of such supporting networks, who need the elaborate funeral to help create a temporary pseudo-tight-knit social network capable of providing them with a framework for condolences in a transitory but intensive form. This is not surprising when we note that a high proportion of social mobility in American society is connected with geographical mobility. Research has

4 Comparing the Fante funeral to the Californian one, Chukwukere (1981) shows that in both cultures wealth is excessively displayed in order to demonstrate and achieve status. See also Saugree's (1981) response.

indicated that stable, high-status families have more extended family ties than families who are moving up or down socially (Bradfield and Myers, 1980; Fulton, 1961; Chukwukere, 1981; Saugree, 1981; Litwak, 1960a; Litwak, 1960b; Aiken and Goldberg, 1969; Mirande, 1969), and the latter tend to have loose-knit networks (White, 1957: ch. 7).

MOURNING IN THE KIBBUTZ[5]

In terms of Bott's conceptualization, the kibbutz should constitute a social unit whose members are all part of a tightly knit social network. This appears to be the case. There is a great deal of overlap between friendship circles, neighbors, kin and coworkers in a kibbutz, particularly one that is small and middle sized. It is essential to note that first-generation kibbutz members detached themselves from their families, who often remained in the *Diaspora* (abroad), and immigrated to Palestine alone or as members of youth groups. Today, however, they live with their offspring, so that one now finds wider family networks including second – and third-generation kibbutzniks.

As a secular, revolutionary movement, the kibbutz has rejected many elements of traditional Jewish religious life. Among the rituals and ceremonial forms almost totally abandoned by that founding generation were Jewish mourning rites. There are grounds to assume traditional mourning rituals would be replaced by new patterns not visibly tied to traditional beliefs and expressing the solidarity of the group and the bereaved's membership within it. Viewing the kibbutz as a tightly knit social network, it is assumed that the sense of loss would be communally expressed providing moral support to the bereaved individual or family.

On the whole, the first generation of kibbutzniks rejected the traditional patterns of funeral, burial and mourning. The hush of silence that became characteristic of the kibbutz funeral was seen as a form of self-restraint associated with Western culture, as opposed to what was perceived

5 For a more detailed treatment of mourning in the kibbutz see Rubin (1986; 1982) [chapters 4 and 5 in this volume], where some methodological considerations in the analysis of the kibbutz are also discussed.

as the lack of decorum of traditional Jewish funerals (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 15). As long as ritual substitutes in expression and actions were unavailable, the silence remained a central feature. Yet, as time went on, objections were voiced: one must "break the tradition of silence at the open graveside. Let him speak who has something to say, whose words, he feels, speak for the truth… Silence alone is vapid…. Let us not be silent at mourning, for if we do not fill the void with meaning and norms, it may be filled with content strange and unacceptable to us" (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 2); "If there are not customary practices, we will begin to see mourning as a 'private matter' for each member, and this creates the danger of a disruption in the connection between the individual and the community" (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 11).

Expressions of mourning, too, became westernized; objects were transformed into symbols uncharacteristic of Jewish tradition (at least in Eastern and Central Europe, the homelands of most of the first-generation kibbutzniks). They include, for example, the temporary hanging of the picture of the deceased (framed by a black border) in the communal dining hall; the sending of flowers in memory of the deceased; the dimming of the lights during the eulogy; and the general use of black during the funeral and the mourning period.

These are but a few examples of the search for appropriate mourning symbolism. But common to all attempts is the inextricable connection between the meaning of mourning symbols and ceremonies on the one hand and "the tie between the individual and the community," on the other. Indeed, the kibbutz members themselves saw their community as one large, tightly knit family:

> We are a unique society. Our mourning customs have a character different from that of all other societies. We are like one large family which vouchsafes the social and economic well-being of an orphan and the widow. At the death of a child in our children's quarter, we are all bereaved no less than the parents. At the passing of a kibbutz member, we are all orphaned. The departure of one of us signals not only the loss of a friend,

> father, wife or son, but of a partner in our way of life. This transforms the mourning of an individual into the mourning of the whole community. (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 2-3).

And a member of Kibbutz Meoz Haim states that "planned and organized economic cooperation is not enough"; there is also a need for proper rituals "to express the ties which bind us to one another" (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 11). In connection with the problem of eulogies, a member of Kibbutz Gevat writes:

> In a society like ours, where one is immersed in the lives of his companions physically and spiritually, and where different generations live side-by-side on a daily basis, without the barriers of separate homes, the eulogy is a problem in search of a solution (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 4).

This sense of kinship is reinforced by the familial terminology applied to the deceased as well as the living kibbutz members. All members of the older generation or parents of members are called *saba* (grandpa) or *savta* (grandma); members of the intermediate generation are called *abba* (father), *imma* (mother) or simply *chaver* (fellow member), and the young are called *ben* (son) or *bat* (daughter). Moreover, the entire kibbutz expresses mourning in obituaries, generally preceding the name of the kibbutz with the term *beit* (house) a term synonymous with "family".

Over time several generally accepted patterns of mourning practice have emerged. Before the funeral the casket is placed in a central location. During the funeral, in which older high school students participate, there is a work break; a selection of modern Hebrew literature, or a chapter from the Bible, is read as a eulogy, or a eulogy is given at the graveside. After the funeral three days of mourning (in some, mostly small kibbutzim, the traditional seven days) are observed as follows: cancellation of parties, movies, or other forms of entertainment for two more days; cancellation of the weekly Friday night party if the funeral falls on that day or alteration of the program if Friday is the second or third day of mourning; and postponement of kibbutz holidays but not national or workers' holidays until after

the mourning period. On the seventh day, the deceased is eulogized in the local newspaper, and on the thirtieth day, a memorial gathering is held. On the first anniversary, with the unveiling of the tombstone, a second gathering is held, and a memorial pamphlet is published. All the deceased members of the kibbutz are remembered on Yom Kippur. On the thirtieth day after the death and on the anniversary of the death, the deceased is mentioned in the kibbutz newspaper. Material on his or her life is placed in the kibbutz archives including a collection of his or her writings (if there are any) and a picture (Rubin, 1982) [chapter 5 in this volume].

Note that all of the above-mentioned rituals relate exclusively to the kibbutz as a community and obligate all members to a like degree. No rituals have been formulated to provide behavioral norms for the individual or the immediate family. The guidelines consider the whole kibbutz to be in mourning and are taken for granted by all members.

The situation becomes more problematic in large kibbutzim, which have substantial numbers of elderly members and subsequently more frequent deaths. Relatively frequent funerals could create a problem if everyone were obligated to attend and participate in the mourning. It is appropriate to quote the words of a kibbutz member regarding the proper form of mourning in such a case:

> A three-day mourning period seems to me a minimum, not only because our forefathers taught so ["three days for tears, seven to recall; and thirty to refrain from shaving and having one's hair cut" (*The Babylonian Talmud, Moed Katan*, 27b)], but also because you cannot impose an extended mourning period on a large group of people, many of whom do not feel bereaved, and also because in such a large community, in which death occurs more frequently, you cannot disrupt social life for long. (By a kibbutz member who participated in a seminar of cultural co-ordinators at kibbutz Mizra, November, 1970).

Yet, though this kibbutz member recognized the difficulties of communal mourning practices in large kibbutzim, he makes no attempt to

distinguish between the bereavement of the immediate family and that of the rest of the community.

Nevertheless, bereaved persons do not behave in individualistic ways. Some individuals conscientiously observe all the traditional Jewish mourning rites sitting *shiva* (the traditional seven-day period of mourning) in their homes as well as growing a beard. Others do not remain in their homes, eat in the kibbutz dining hall, and continue working at their routine jobs. Each bereaved individual also receives sympathy and emotional and social support from the community, as is evinced by the personal testimony of many members. It should be stressed that this process is not structured or institutionalized in any formal or obligatory fashion.

The foregoing evidence lends credence to my hypothesis: that where there is an overlapping of social circles the community as a whole participates in the mourning process, and the individual mourner receives strong social support. It seems likely that the absence of explicit formal norms for the individual derives from original kibbutz ideology (when the kibbutz was antifamilistic). Conceiving of itself as one large, surrogate family, the kibbutz feared the development of the individual family would weaken commitment to the collective (Talmon-Garber, 1970: 29-33). Today, however, as the familistic tendency grows, the question of how to relate to the grief of the individual has come to be increasingly important.

As the size of the kibbutz increases, its social network becomes extended and, in Epstein's terms, looser and less similar in structure to an effective network (Epstein, 1969). Within this extended network, one can identify clusters of persons who maintain tightly knit networks of social relations. In the extended network the social circles tend to overlap less frequently, and, consequently, every individual is not a significant other to each other member of the kibbutz. Such a situation leads to a demand for differentiation in mourning patterns. There are those who find the general mourning difficult, and community participation is incomplete. We find that different levels of communal participation are defined as being appropriate according to the status of the deceased. For example, at

Kibbutz Yifat, a period of seven days was established to mourn the death of a *chaver* (member) or child and two days for a parent living on the kibbutz. No official mourning was conducted for the deaths of parents or relatives living outside the kibbutz, except for a ban on entertainment on the day of death. Later the kibbutz established a revised period of only two days for the death of a parent or child, thereby, reducing the frequency of mourning days. This example substantiates my hypothesis that if the death does not disturb the social order, the community does not participate as a social entity in the mourning of the individual.

CONCLUSION

Mourning rituals were perceived by some scholars in terms of the functional contribution they make to group solidarity (Leming and Dickinson, 1985). The result of this perception is that the interpretation given to the rituals neither distinguishes nor explains the variations found in different social contexts. The main questions I raised in this article – when do mourning customs involve the extended family and the overall social matrix, and when do they become the province of the nuclear family? – cannot be answered in functional terms. It seems, rather, that a structural theory is required in order to explain social variations. Indeed, Blauner (1966) and Parsons and Lidz (1967) suggested macro theories explaining, partly, such differences, but their theories lack the power to explain finer differences within societies on the macro and micro levels. By using the theory of social networks, I have dealt with the ways in which societies resolve their structural problems in a death crisis by distinguishing between levels of network density in different types of societies and then connecting them with the prevalent mourning practices. When social structure is thrown out of kilter by the loss of a member, and when dense social networks are shaken up, the group takes measures of rehabilitation and rearranges itself through ritual. A mechanism of segregation from and aggregation into immediate social environments operates simultaneously, and mourners, in the core of a social network, find themselves supported and rehabilitated. The

kibbutz – a part of industrial society – and other dense social networks in both preindustrial and industrial societies – respond to mourning in this way. Mourning is not just a matter of the nuclear family but a matter of wider circles of society including the extended family, relatives, neighbors, friends and coworkers.

When social networks are not affected by the loss of a member, the group does not rehabilitate itself, and ritual is only the concern of the nuclear family and close relatives. The American funeral is a special case in modern society where bereaved individuals may force members of their loosely knit social networks to participate in the funerary events in order to generate an image of social support. The same may be true of preindustrial society. For example, the seminomadic Dinka-Nuer has a fluid social organization (Lienhardt, 1962). They travel in variable groups of five or six families, whose composition may change from season to season. The death of an individual is not of structural significance to society, and we find that their funeral practices are few and simple. In contrast the Anuak have a stable social organization, and the loss of an individual is significant to their society; funeral practices surrounding the loss are therefore elaborate.

Comparative studies of mourning behavior in different societies, and in different periods in the same society, are needed to validate the ideas presented in this article and to form the basis for a more forceful explanation and better understanding of cross-cultural variations.[6]

6 For efforts to verify these ideas see Rubin (1997) on mourning patterns in Jewish society during the Talmudic era. See also Rubin (1985) and Rubin (1986) [chapters 2 and 4 in this volume] on mourning in an army unit and in a kibbutz.

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CHAPTER TWO
UNOFFICIAL MEMORIAL RITES IN AN ARMY UNIT

BACKGROUND[1]

The Israel Defense Force (IDF) sets forth regulations to be followed in the event of a soldier's death during peacetime.[2] The army conducts a military funeral, the unit commander must convey a handwritten letter of condolence to the family of the deceased, and the soldier's immediate commanding officer must pay a condolence visit to the bereaved family. The army is responsible for arranging burial at either a military or civilian cemetery – in accordance with the wishes of the family – and is responsible for the erection of the gravestone, which must in principle be identical in form and style for all soldiers. These constitute the official rites of mourning and memorialization for individual soldiers. In addition, the army holds an annual day of remembrance in commemoration of all military dead, and special remembrance days for each corps. Monuments and other memorials may be erected by specific units in memory of all their fallen comrades on approval of the Ministry of Defense. It is, however, expressly forbidden

1 The idea for the study was formulated during a seminar which I gave in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Bar-Ilan University on the subject of "Bereavement and Mourning in Israel." The data were collected by two former officers who participated in the seminar and who were from the same army unit. Their personal observations were complemented by interviews with the people concerned. The investigation was not conducted within the army itself. All names have been changed.

2 Conditions during war are entirely different. Two of the cases presented here occurred during peacetime; in the third, although the soldier was killed during the Yom Kippur War, he was buried after the war according to peacetime custom (see Note 13).

for military units to conduct mourning services or to erect memorials for individual soldiers. This prohibition is justified on the grounds that such behavior is liable to undermine morale. Indeed, subsequent to military action in which a number of comrades are killed, the survivors are occasionally given a short leave to allow them to "forget" what happened and to stop them from "talking among themselves."

Unofficial rites of mourning and memorialization in a combat unit have received almost no attention in the sociological literature on mourning. We regard the rites of mourning and memorialization as a system of posthumous reward which, according to contemporary popular values, must be egalitarian. In our discussion, we will attempt to distinguish between rites of mourning and rites of memorialization, though these may at times be treated as constituting a single system of reward.

The official rites of mourning conducted by the IDF (the funeral service and condolences) are intended to form a bridge between the military and civilian framework (Janowitz, 1975) and constitute the payment of a debt to the family and to the community. Although the ceremonies are conducted by the army, they are not regarded as closed military occasions and are attended by civilians. Within the unit, however, the army refrains from conducting mourning rites for the deceased soldier. The place of the deceased is immediately filled so as to ensure the continued functioning of the system. This behavior is typical of all anonymous bureaucratic occupational organizations wherein in the event of death, dismissal or retirement, replacement is automatic and unaccompanied by any formal ceremony. It lies in contrast to custom within small, intimate groups such as the family or the kibbutz (Rubin, 1982) [chapter 5 in this volume] where there is no immediate replacement of the deceased and where mourning rites give expression to the complexities of separation and to the sense of existential crisis (Rubin, 1979; Vlokart and Michael, 1965). However, the military framework is distinct from other bureaucratic-occupational structures.[3]

3 On differences between military bureaucracy and other types of bureaucracy, see Janowitz (1971; 1975).

The soldier, spends twenty-four hours a day with his comrades over a long period; a situation that creates a network of strong primary relationships (George, 1971; Little, 1969; Shils and Janowitz, 1948). Although the function of the deceased soldier may be immediate taken over by someone else, the soldier as a personality has no immediate replacement, and his death may well evoke grief among his comrades. It may be assumed, therefore, that rites of mourning will take place among the comrades of a fallen soldier. In view of the army's official prohibitions, such ceremonies will be neither formal nor institutionalized, but will be unofficial, specific and unique. The soldiers who thereby express their grief at the death of their comrade do not constitute "mourners" in the official sense of the word. Official mourners generally include only close relatives of the deceased who, even though they may not actually experience grief, take part in the official mourning ceremony. In the following discussion, rites of mourning in an army unit refer to ceremonial expressions of mourning on the part of soldiers who are not related to the deceased and who are not therefore officially defined as mourners.[4]

The army's opposition to mourning within the unit may be understood on the grounds of the contradiction between the principle of equality and the principle of differentiated reward based on achievement. On the one hand, the army in a bureacratic organizations based on the principle of differentiated reward (Stouffer et al., 1949) whose hierarchical structure is manifest in formal status symbols such as insignia of rank. On the other hand (and in contrast to numerous other bureaucratic structures), the army also displays evidence of egalitarianism in, for instance, its uniform

4 On the distinction between "mourning" and "grief", see Fulton (1977). Sudnow (1967:161-162) notes that persons unrelated to the deceased but wishing to be considered mourners adopt words from family terminology in order to indicate the extent of their grief: "She was like a mother to me"; "We were like brothers". Thus, they attribute intimacy to their relationship to the deceased in order to claim quasi-bereavement. Doctors and nurses constitute another population that frequently comes in contact with death, and although the deaths of some patients might affect them emotionally, they lack normative means by which to express their grief. See Glaser and Strauss (1964).

dress. Indeed, uniform and rank combine symbols of equality and hierarchy. (This phenomenon is characteristic of other total organizations such as the police force or hospitals). Equality of reward is essential to any army based on compulsory service that demands equal sacrifice from all. However, inequality of reward must also be preserved in order to provide motivation for positions requiring a higher level of risk, special training or unusual effort. Thus, in spite of fundamental equality, pressure is constantly exerted in the direction of differentiated reward, even among soldiers of the same rank. For example, although the basic salary is the same for soldiers of the same rank, a soldier serving in a field unit will receive a special field pay allowance. This may be considered a symbolic reward since the actual difference in salary is minimal and does not reflect the difference in degree of risk and endeavor. The soldier serving in a field unit will also receive additional symbolic rewards such as the type of uniform and color of beret, and other insignia. For soldiers of different ranks, there are also different service conditions: the officers and enlisted men may eat separately in the field, although the food is the same for all ranks; and the officers may sleep separately, although they, too, will do without beds. In other words, with regard to material rewards, equality prevails to a greater or lesser extent; with regard to symbolic rewards, hierarchy prevails.

A similar combination of equality and differentiation is apparent in the rites of burial and mourning. Each and every soldier, by his death, sacrifices himself for the continued existence of the community. After his death, the specific corps and unit in which the soldier served lose their significance and the military funeral is fundamentally the same for all ranks. The ceremony conducted in the IDF, in addition to customs required by Jewish Law, is similar to that followed by the British army. Its military elements include an honor guard, a firing party, and wreath-bearers. However, the ceremony also includes differentiating elements: the coffin-bearers are always of the same rank as the deceased soldier; the honorary salute is made up of three gunshots for soldiers below the rank of colonel, and three cannon shots for soldiers from the rank of colonel

and above. These different customs are inconspicuous and are only significant for those familiar with army protocol.

Military cemeteries also display the principle of equality. Mosse (1979) has noted the "soldierly simplicity" and military homogeneity of the straight lines of graves and the unadorned uniformity of the gravestones. The visitor to a military cemetery immediately senses the subordination of the individual to the community. This uniformity stands in stark contrast to the display of personal taste evident in civilian cemeteries. The military cemetery is usually located in a specially selected site; if it shares a site with a civilian cemetery, it will be separated from it by a hedge or fence. Thus, the military cemetery symbolizes the military community, which remains intact even after death. Here, the entire community participates in mourning and acknowledges the sacrifice made on its behalf.[5]

Contemporary Western values perceive such equality as essential to the social system. Society cannot, on the one hand, demand equal sacrifice and, on the other, provide unequal rewards. Were some soldiers to receive preferential treatment in, for instance, the location of their grave or the elaborateness of their gravestone, the social system would be undermined. However, signs of hierarchy do appear; the rank of the soldier and the circumstances of his death are carved, albeit in code, on his gravestone: "who fell in battle" refers to those who died in action; "who fell in the call of his duty" refers to those who died in the framework of the army, but not in action, as for instance in a training accident; and "who fell in service" refers to death unrelated to the army such as natural death, a road accident while on leave, or suicide. These constitute the three levels of prestige in the hierarchy of death,[6] a hierarchy which

5 Mosse (1979) found that military cemeteries are a relatively new phenomenon, originating in the national wars of nineteenth century Europe and the American Civil War. The cemetery at Gettysburg was the first of its kind in the United States (1863).

6 The words "who fell in air battle" are engraved on the gravestone of a pilot killed in battle, although a soldier in a tank unit receives no such specific acknowledgement on his gravestone. Indeed, the Air Force, which is a part of

is also perceived as essential to the system since the varying degrees of contribution, achievement, and endeavor cannot go unacknowledged. Such acknowledgement serves as motivation for others and as a reward for the bereaved family; any attempt to eradicate it is liable to provoke resentment among family and friends of the deceased.

Thus, in the military cemetery, we are confronted with the coexistence of symbols of equality and symbols of hierarchy. The use of a "code" to indicate the circumstances of death is characteristic of such a state of contradiction and the nuances of meaning are only significant for the initiated. Any attempt to alter the balance between the symbols of equality and the symbols of hierarchy is liable to provoke public response, particularly on the part of those closely related to the deceased. In the military base as in the cemetery, the ideal of equality is preserved, and the soldiers are expected to continue to function normally without public expression of grief. It must be emphasized that the official ban on any such expressions is in itself an indication of equality, since it prevails without regard to rank or corps. However, the official prohibition does not provide for the existential need to express grief, and we must, therefore, expect unofficial rites of mourning.

HYPOTHESIS

"Often we find that if the principal ideal aims of an organization are to be achieved, then it will be necessary at times to bypass momentarily other ideals of the organization, while maintaining the impression that these other ideals are still in force" (Goffman, 1959; see also Page, 1946). On the one hand, the "bypassing strategy" ensures the preservation of the ideals and regulations of the organization intact; on the other hand, it provides a practical means by which to resolve needs which may arise and which are contrary to regulations. Thus, in the

the army and not a separate service, has created an elitist status for itself within the army, which it displays in various symbols. The book by former Air Force Commander Ezer Weizman (1977) provides an outstanding description of this phenomenon, particularly the chapter on the air force's "war of independence".

army, regulations forbidding mourning within the unit are bypassed at the initiative of those closes to the deceased soldier. Paradoxically, when the aims of the primary group (the bereaved comrades) are identical to those of the organization, the latter will ultimately be strengthened by the bypass (George, 1971). It seems, therefore, that unofficial mourning ceremonies initiated "from below" will be tolerated so that on the informal level, "justice" is ensured through appropriate reward while, on the surface, the regulations remain intact.

Official and institutionalized symbols of equality and symbols of hierarchy exist side by side at the military funeral and the military cemetery. Likewise, although equality is theoretically ensured by the official prohibition of acts of mourning and memorialization of individual soldiers, such acts find unofficial and unequal sanction. These symbols provide a solution to the exertion of contradictory pressures within the military framework.

The extent of differentiation in these ceremonies may be explained by two factors. First, is the significance according to the soldier's death. In the event that the soldier's death is accorded national significance – if he fell in battle – he will be seen to merit relatively greater honors. If his death is not attributed to the national cause, the army's ambiguous moral position may work against memorialization, particularly in the event that the soldier meets his death outside the military framework. Second, the extent of differentiation will vary according to the status of the soldier. A soldier who served in a battle unit will be regarded as worthy of greater honors than one who served in a service unit or was still a new recruit at the time of his death. Furthermore, a soldier of higher rank will receive greater respect than a soldier of lower rank in view of his firmer social anchorage within the military framework, both in terms of the relative size of his social circle and his proximity to the most influential ranks. A further element making up the soldier's status is the social position of the bereaved family. The higher their status the greater the likelihood of inviting the family to participate in the mourning and memorialization ceremonies conducted within the unit.

The combination of these two factors, the circumstances of death and the status of the deceased determines the degree of "social loss" (Sudnow, 1967)[7] and the extent of unofficial mourning. Contradictory pressures are satisfactorily resolved: on the one hand, the regulations are preserved intact, and on the other, the existential crisis receives fitting expression.[8] This system will continue to function as long as public opinion perceives that justice lodges in the correct relationship between the principle of equality and the principle of hierarchy. This balance cannot be externally measured but is determined by public opinion.

ANALYSIS OF CASES

We present three cases that occurred during the years 1973 to 1976. Needless to say, the nature of our enquiry does not permit us to choose the timing of the events and to plan participant observation in advance. This is particularly pertinent in view of the fact that fatalities during peacetime, especially within a specific unit, are fortunately, extremely rare. Thus, though all three of our cases took place in the same unit, they are not identical in all their component elements.

Case 1: The death of a new recruit

This case occurred in a company of new recruits, all recent immigrants who are only obliged to serve for six months.[9] Many of them were older than the average soldier; some were married and had families. Their

7 Sudnow (1967) characterizes by this phrase the varying attitudes on the part of hospital staff toward the death of different patients. This difference in attitude occurs in spite of the egalitarian treatment required by medical ethics.

8 One officer commented on the army's tolerance for this informal arrangement: "The army can in fact take action against all these deviations (i.e. private ceremonies), but the issue is sensitive and the army prefers to avoid it as much as possible.

9 Every Israeli citizen, on turning eighteen, must serve in the army for three years. New immigrants about the age of eighteen are not obliged to serve the full term; the requirements vary according to age and family situation. Most immigrants are released after basic training and placed in reserve duty units.

places of origin included Iran, Eastern Europe, and the Asian regions of the former USSR (Bukhara and Georgia). Most of them had only a limited knowledge of Hebrew and social contacts often developed among soldiers who spoke a common language. As early as the second week of training, the officers' attention was drawn to Misha, an immigrant from the former USSR who had already been living in Israel for a year and a half at the time of his enlistment. He was married and had one young child. The other members of his family lived outside Israel and among his new friends in Israel were three soldiers in his company who originated from the same city in the former USSR.

Misha, who proved outstanding during military training, was very popular in his unit and was soon appointed platoon orderly. Shortly afterwards he became company orderly and took on the role of liaison between the soldiers and their officers. He aroused the admiration of his officers in that he did not use his position to seek personal favors.

In the third month of training, during field exercises, Misha began to complain of severe pains in his stomach. He was rushed to the military hospital where he was immediately operated on for a hernia. Three days later, an urgent message reached the company commander at midnight informing him that Misha had died in the hospital. According to Jewish law, burial must not be delayed any longer than necessary and preparations for the funeral began immediately. The company commander, on the advice of the base commander, shortened the company's field training by two days and the soldiers returned to base. Soldiers from Misha's platoon were selected for the honor guard, the firing party, and the coffin-bearers. (The burial itself is conducted by a unit of the military rabbinate). The platoon rehearsed the funeral ceremony for over a day and a half.

Misha's wife was immediately informed of his death. The official cause of death stated on the death certificate that he "died following an infection and complications from a hernia operation." This explanation aroused the suspicion of the deceased soldier's wife and friends, who regarded it as an attempt to hide the real facts. They attributed the blame for his death on the army rather than the hospital.

The funeral was held on the morning after the soldier's mother had been located abroad and had arrived in Israel. The majority of those present were soldiers from Misha's company and from the army base in which he served. There were very few friends present from outside the army. During the seven days of mourning prescribed by Jewish law, the camp commander and the company commander paid a condolence visit to the wife of the deceased. They were received in a cold and reserved manner. Conversation took place through a Russian-Hebrew interpreter from whom the officers understood that their presence symbolized to the mourners those responsible for Misha's death. They stayed for half an hour and felt the atmosphere to be uncomfortable.

Meanwhile, a committee of enquiry set up by the army and the hospital established that death had been caused by a defective immunological system, which had failed to repel infections brought on by the operation. This finding removed the responsibility for Misha's death from the unit. At the end of the official period of mourning, the two officers paid a second visit of condolence though they were no longer under any official obligation to do so. In view of the fact that Misha's wife now attributed the blame for his death to the medical system, the mourners' attitude toward the visitors was now more positive and the officers were much relieved. However, after this visit there was no further contact between the officers and the dead soldier's wife. The officers wished to put the unhappy event behind them and to return to daily routine as quickly as possible.

In Misha's company, however, things had not returned to normal. Although training continued as before, his death left its mark, in particular in Misha's platoon. During the seven days of mourning, the soldiers refrained from frequenting the base cinema, usually the most popular entertainment, not to be missed even after a hard day of training. Then, a large number of soldiers requested to be excused from attendance at a platoon "evening"[10] that had been planned for that week. They explained that they

10 At a platoon evening, officers and soldiers discuss any problems, and the soldiers receive a report of the past week's events and are presented with the coming week's schedule. The evening ends with singing.

could not participate in an evening of entertainment so close upon the death of their friend. Further, many requests for special leave were put forward in order to pay a condolence call on the bereaved family.

The platoon commander, sensing the special atmosphere, decided to act in such a way as to respond to the soldiers' needs, on the one hand, and to resolve the issue of the platoon "evening", on the other. Instead of the standard platoon evening, a special commemorative evening was held at which the company commander, the platoon commander, the unit commander, and a number of friends spoke in Misha's memory. Although it was impossible to grant all requests for leave without undermining the routine, soldiers from the same country of origin as Misha, perceived by the platoon commander as more entitled to be considered "mourners", were given special release. Thus, the company soldiers expressed their grief by avoiding entertainment, by turning a regular platoon evening into an occasion of remembrance, and by paying condolence visits to the bereaved family.

Case 2: The death of a cook

Approximately two months after the death of Misha, the base cook[11] was killed in a road accident while on leave. The soldier was from a Moroccan family of five children whose home was situated about a three and a half hour drive from the army base.

The announcement of his death did not arouse much excitement in his unit. Prevalent was the feeling that *no more* than a cook had died in *no more* than a road accident and that this was a suitably "undignified death" for someone in an "undignified" position. Thus, some sort of "justice" had prevailed.[12] A cook "does not" die in battle; a fighting soldier "does not" die in an accident.

11 In contrast to the other two cases presented here, we have not called the cook by name; most of the people who spoke of him did not know his name and simply referred to him, slightly disparagingly as "the cook".

12 The observations of these attitudes was made possible by the data collectors' close involvement in the unit.

Preparations for the funeral were hasty. An honor guard and a firing party, composed of soldiers serving on the same base, rehearsed for a mere three hours. The funeral was attended by only those officers obliged to do so by regulation and only a handful of other soldiers. On the other hand, many members of the deceased soldier's family were present and were audience to the carelessly prepared ceremony; neither the honor guard nor the firing party carried out their job well and the officer's eulogy, composed of a few banal sentences, had obviously been hastily prepared.

After the funeral, feverish efforts were made to find an immediate replacement to the cook so as not to disrupt the shift arrangement. The base commander and the dead soldier's direct officers were most displeased by their obligation to pay a visit of condolence to the bereaved family and stressed that the seven hours spent traveling there and back could have been used for "something more useful".

Case 3: The death of an officer in battle

The two previous cases relate to the phase immediately following death. In the following case, for reasons that will become clear, we cannot discuss this stage. The event occurred about two and a half years before the other two cases, during the Yom Kippur War. While the soldier was killed in battle, he had been classified as missing in action for some time. His body was eventually discovered after the war and the funeral was, therefore, conducted according to peacetime custom. In this case, we do not have any details of the response immediately subsequent to death; we will concentrate on the funeral and later acts of memorialization. The latter did not occur at all in the two other cases.

The soldier, Dan, was a captain in the standing army. He was the son of a well-to-do family and an outstanding soldier. He was posthumously promoted to the rank of major in appreciation of his excellent service. Dan had completed a number of courses with distinction an on graduating from the officers' course had been immediately appointed platoon commander. Within a relatively short time, ahead of more veteran soldiers,

he was advanced to the position of company commander. He took upon himself the most difficult tasks and although he was demanding of his soldiers, his unlimited concern for their well-being earned their appreciation and respect. Two weeks before the outbreak of the war, he had been promoted to the rank of captain, a year ahead of the time usually required for such a promotion. At the time he was second-in-command of the recruit training camp.

At the outbreak of war, the recruits who had not completed their training and could not participate in the fighting were sent instead to guard the now unmanned bases. Dan made every effort to join a battle unit and finally succeeded. He was killed toward the end of the war but his body was only discovered and identified afterwards.[13] He was given a standard funeral ceremony which was prepared with great care. A large number of senior officers were present (more than is customary at the funeral of a major) and a number of eulogies were delivered. During the seven days of mourning, a constant flow of soldiers paid visits to the bereaved family and contact with the family continued beyond the official mourning period. Dan's parents were invited to attend various memorial ceremonies at the base. On the thirtieth day after burial (a special mourning date in Jewish law), a memorial evening was held in Dan's honor and he was given special mention at other events held in the unit. Much was spoken of the battle in which he took part and the story of his death soon became part of the unit's "battle legend".

Dan's death was accompanied by various acts of memorialization. Monuments, the initiative for which may come from parents, relatives or friends, are generally set up in army bases in commemoration of all their fallen. The Department of Memorialization attached to the Ministry of Defense participates in financing and designing such enterprises. It is, however, expressly forbidden to erect memorials for individual soldiers.

13 During battle, fallen soldiers are usually buried in temporary burial sites. The family does not attend this burial service and is informed of its location afterwards. After a year, the bodies are transferred to a permanent cemetery – according to the family's wishes – and the official burial service is conducted as in peacetime.

In spite of this prohibition, a grove of trees, a stone monument, an officers' club and library, and a curtain for the ark in the synagogue were established on Dan's base in his memory. The planting of the grove and the erection of the stone monument were initiated and personally supervised by the camp commander, Lieutenant Colonel Benny formerly Dan's officer and then close friend. The memorial consisted of a marble slab set on layers of stone, on which appeared the words, "Dan's Grove. A grove in memory of Dan A. who fell in the Yom Kippur War." It was placed in the center of the camp adjacent to the flag square. Lieutenant Colonel Benny said that at first he had not known that official permission was needed in order to erect the memorial. On realizing this, he did apply for permission, but though his application was supported by the base commander, Colonel Gad, it was refused. Since contributions had already been collected, Colonel Gad allowed the plans to go ahead anyway in the hope that approval would yet be granted, which, however, never happened.

Some time afterwards, Lieutenant Colonel Tal, an officer and friend of Dan, initiated the establishment of an officers' club and library in his name. Colonel Gad also stood behind this enterprise and did not even bother to approach the authorities for approval. The club was set up in the officers' living quarters and comprised a wood-paneled, luxuriously furnished room adorned with a large photograph of Dan. A library, containing about three hundred books was set up in an adjacent room. An appropriate dedication plaque was hung at the doorways to the club and library. Financial support for this enterprise came from Dan's parents, the Soldiers' Welfare Organization, and a commercial body that had adopted the corps.

Shortly afterwards, Dan's parents donated a new curtain for the ark in the base synagogue. They had been invited to attend the graduation ceremony of a course, after which they were taken on a tour of the base. While visiting the synagogue, Dan's mother noticed that the ark curtain was faded and needed a replacement. In this case, Colonel Gad's permission was not sought.

Dan, in view of his outstanding military career, received unusual memorialization. It must be added that some of his comrades expressed the opinion that there had been other brilliant officers who deserved similar

attention. Dan was regarded as exceptional and, indeed, it was considered a privilege to have been his friend. The memorialization was no doubt facilitated by the fact that Dan's rank brought him in close contact with officers in key positions. Furthermore, his parents were a source of financial support. Dan would probably have received similar attention had his parents not been of such high social standing, but their economic contribution was significant.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In view of the inherent contradiction between the principle of equality and the principle of differential reward, we suggested that unofficial, unequal rites of mourning and memorialization could be expected. We attributed the degree of differentiation to the significance accorded to the soldier's death and to his status. Let us examine the three cases.

Dan won high personal and professional status among his comrades. He had actually volunteered to join a fighting unit and met his death in the midst of battle. Thus his death could be seen as a sacrifice of national significance, and one would expect virtual unanimity of respect and grief. His immediate formal reward and the posthumous raising of his rank, and the standard ceremonies were meticulously rehearsed and carried out with unusual care. But public response demanded that Dan be appropriately – that is, distinctively – rewarded for his services, and to this end, the army's official egalitarian ideals were bypassed. *Mourning* and *memorialization* were initiated not only by friends and officers within the unit, but also by Dan's parents. Since responsibility for his death was not laid on the army, contact with his parents was relaxed and continued far beyond the period required by the regulations.

In Misha's case, some of the blame for his death was attached to the wider military framework. This worked against memorialization in two ways: because of the moral ambiguity of the situation, the officers were eager to forget the entire incident; and because ties with Misha's family were quickly severed, the added impetus they may have provided was also lost. In terms of his status, although Misha was a most promising recruit,

he had not actually reached a high rank or become a fighting soldier. In his case, the regulation mourning ceremonies were efficiently executed, and some unofficial acts of mourning were initiated by Misha's friends, and approved by the officers. Thus, formal requirements were bypassed, though more modestly than in the case of Dan.

In the third case, the cook's low status both as a soldier and as a member of society, and the ignobility of his death, conspired against any memorialization beyond what is required by law. Indeed, although his funeral and burial ceremonies were conducted in the standard manner, even they were haphazardly prepared. Because blame for the cook's death was laid to an element outside the army, the unit felt under no "moral" obligation to confront the issue any more thoroughly than it did. Contact with the bereaved family was immediately discontinued, and the base headquarters occupied itself with the problem of a replacement for the cook.[14]

Thus, the officer, the new recruit, and the cook each represent a different evaluation of "social loss" according to which the standard of the official ceremonies and the extent of unofficial mourning and memorialization varied.

The cases constitute three positions on a diagonal in "property-space" (Barton, 1955) constructed by two axes: (1) the significance according to the soldier's death and (2) the soldier's status.[15] These two axes chart various combinations in property-space according to which the degree of reward can be predicted. Had it been the officer who died in the road accident, though his status would have remained the same, less significance would have been attributed to his death. Accordingly, we might have expected less unofficial reward and memorialization. Certainly, the story of his death would not have become part of the unit's "battle legend". On the

14 We have no details about his co-workers' reactions, since they went on leave for a week shortly after the funeral.

15 Barton's (1955) term "property-space" refers to the location of the subject in space according to at least two properties. The first property is a variable on the vertical axis, and the second is a variable on the horizontal axis. The point of meeting between the two scores gives the property-space.

other hand, had the cook been killed in battle, he would have risen on the scale of significance attached to death, and we could expect that he would have received greater posthumous rewards (see table 1).

An analysis of the three cases gives rise to a general conclusion: the legitimation for bypassing an organization's regulations varies according to the importance of the purpose for which they are bypassed. The greater the consensus concerning the importance of its purpose, the greater the tolerance for bypassing the regulations. The initiative for such bypassing will not generally come from the decision-making ranks, but rather from those of a relatively privileged position, who are powerful enough to propose bypassing the regulations without risk of outright rejection and who will generally receive the tacit support of the higher ranks. The more exceptional the bypassing the more likely it will have originated in a relatively higher rank. In the case of the officer, it was initiated by an officer at the rank of lieutenant colonel and given the encouragement of the higher ranking colonel. In the case of the recruit, the bypassing was given initial encouragement by the platoon commander, a lieutenant, and tacit support by the company commander, a captain. In the case of the cook, even minimal regulations were incompletely carried out, and this situation remaining uncorrected by any of the higher-ranking officers.

Our discussion has focused on the military organization. The question now arises as to whether it is possible to adapt our conclusions to other social frameworks also based on the principles of collectivity and equality.

Table 1: Property-space of soldiers' rewards

STATUS	SIGNIFICANCE		
	Battle	**Military**	**Non-military**
High	High reward		
Intermediate		Medium reward	
Low			Low reward

The kibbutz provides a positive answer to this question. As a society based on the principles of collectivism and egalitarianism, its regulations concerning mourning (the most recent formulation was approved by the Inter-Kibbutz Social Committee in 1978) set down an egalitarian treatment for every kibbutz member on his or her death. However, although the official formulation has remained unchanged over the years, various pressures bend the tradition. Thus, symbols of hierarchy may be found in the eulogy, the gravestone, the memorial booklet published by the kibbutz, and the various commemoration ceremonies.

As within the military framework, so too on the kibbutz it may be expected that the deviation from the regulations will be greater in the case of greater contribution of the deceased to the collective aims. Indeed, paradoxically, he who devotes more of his life toward the construction of an egalitarian society will receive relatively greater rewards on his death. In Durkheimian terms, he who represents the egalitarian value system in his life becomes it collective representative on his death. Thus his memorialization is both personal and collective, and bypassing the regulations is legitimated. We may assume that this will be pertinent to any organization in which the deceased person represents its highest values.

The hypothesis requires additional verification by means of a comparatives study of organizations of collective and egalitarian orientation. We may assume that historic communes, monasteries, and other such social institutions would manifest similar patterns of response to those described in this paper.

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PART TWO
RITES AND CIVIL RELIGION: INVENTION OF TRADITION

CHAPTER THREE
ETHNIC CIVIL RELIGION: A CASE STUDY OF IMMIGRANTS FROM RUMANIA IN ISRAEL

Rina Neeman and Nissan Rubin

The concept of civil religion (Bellah, 1967; Wilson, 1979; Bellah and Hammond, 1980; Hughey, 1983; Kapferer, 1988) incorporates several characteristics of traditional religion: it offers a meaning system comprising symbols, beliefs, myths, values, practices and rituals; and it evokes the involvement of its adherents by imposing obligations. Nonetheless, there is an important difference between the two: At the core of the civil religion stands a corporate entity rather than a transcendent power (Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 1983a :4; Ungar, 1991: 516). Thus, the purpose of civil religion is to sanctify modern pluralistic states – which are characterized by increased differentiation and the separation of religious institutions from significant economic, political and cultural ones – by supplying some common goals and visions to their citizens (Bellah, 1981; Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 1982: 58). In order to attain this objective, civil religion functions in three directions: it integrates the society by involving members in a common past and destiny, usually expressed in ceremonies and myths; it legitimates the social order, as well as the common societal goals; and it mobilizes society's members to assume common tasks and responsibilities (Liebman and don-Yehiya 1983a :5).

As the values and symbols of civil religion represents the goals and interests of modern states, and accommodate the beliefs and behavioral

patterns of their non-religious populations, they may conflict with traditional religion. In an attempt to reduce this tension, civil religion tends to reformulate traditional symbols by employing such strategies as confrontation, dissolution and re-interpretation (Liebman and don-Yehiya, 1983a:19-21; Wuthnow, 1988).

Most studies are concerned with civil religion in the broad context of the nation-state. However, recent trends in Western society suggest that the potency of national civil religions is on the decline. Civil religions are undermined by the division of society into numerous interest groups (based on occupation, class, race, religion, ethnic origin or ideology) that share few collective purposes and common visions, as well as by the increased concern with self and the belief that ultimate meanings can only be found in one's private emotional life (Berger, 1979; Markoff and Regan, 1981; Liebman and don-Yehiya, 1983a: 229-230; Williams and Demerath, 1991: 418).

This rise in pluralistic and individualistic tendencies has been accompanied by a proliferation of immigrant and ethnic associations. Such organizations serve both as an expressive support mechanism, facilitating psychological, social and cultural adaptation to the new environment, and as a powerful means of gaining political and economic benefits. They perform a variety of functions, including utilitarian welfare, socialization, ethnic reinforcement, social encounters and recreation and play prominent roles even in countries with large institutionalized social welfare programs, such as the U.S., England, Israel, the Netherlands and Australia (Jenkins 1988; see also case studies of specific associations in Bonnett, 1980; Basch, 1987; Kliger, 1989; Bai, 1992).

In light of these trends, we propose to go beyond the broad context of the nation-state and explore the possibility of more particularistic civil religions in organizations within the nation-state, such as voluntary ethnic associations. Along these lines, we distinguish between two orientations of ethnic associations – service and visionary – following Liebman and Don-Yehiya's (1982: 58) distinction between service and visionary states. We define a visionary association as meeting some

goal or realizing some vision beyond the immediate interests of its membership and teaching the significance of that goal or vision to its members.

In Western states, based upon a secular social-service ideology, ethnic associations tend to emphasize utilitarian welfare functions at the expense of expressive and normative ones (Bai, 1992: 32). This tendency is enhanced as governments become more reluctant to fund social welfare programs (Wharton, 1991). Even the Israeli authorities, who are ideologically committed to aid Jewish immigrants in the absorption process, have been less forthcoming than in the past (Korazim, 1988: 196-197). In contrast, we present a cultural association of Rumanian Israelis which may be termed "visionary".

We argue that, aside from certain expressive and recreational services rendered to members, this association constructs, in the course of its activities, a cultural redefinition of the Rumanian identity. This endeavor is aimed at integrating the Rumanian immigrants into Israel, legitimating Rumanian ethnicity in Israeli society, and mobilizing members to perform ethnic tasks. As these functions – integration, legitimation and mobilization – are the very ones that characterize civil religions, we suggest that the cultural endeavor performed by the association can be terms an "ethnic civil religion".

We further argue that this ethnic civil religion abounds in Jewish traditional themes and symbols despite the irreligious character of the members. Therefore, we perceive the association to be a relevant arena for examining the articulation between traditional and civil religions in an ethnic context. Along these lines, we examine the mechanisms employed by the association that are conducive to such articulation.

The paper is organized as follows: After a brief description of the field and methods of research, we analyze the redefinition of the Rumanian identity constructed by the association as an ethnic civil religion. We proceed by examining several mechanisms of reconciling this ethnic civil religion with the Jewish traditional religion. We conclude by reflecting upon the theoretical implications of our analysis with regard to the functions

of traditional religion and its agents among irreligious modern people, who are preoccupied with problems of self and engaged in the quest for ultimate meetings.

THE FIELD

While there are numerous Rumanian associations and *landsmanschafen* in Israel (Neeman, 1990: 431-432), the one under study is characterized by a strong cultural (as opposed to political) orientation, as well as intensive activity. It was founded in 1980 and by 1986 its membership numbered 2,000. Rumanian origin is the sole requirement for membership and participation. All members are first generation immigrants, aged 55 and over. Most have lived in Israel for at least ten years, and they consider their economic situation to be satisfactory. They come from several different cities and towns in Rumania, and they reside mainly in urban areas in the center of Israel. Their occupations vary, as do their political views and affiliations. They define themselves as irreligious, a definition which refers to the rejection of traditional religious beliefs and observance, as well as to their anticlerical views. While some members celebrate Jewish holidays, they do so for family reasons or esthetic purposes rather than out of religious deference. Most members of the association speak additional languages besides Rumanian, but many of them do not know Yiddish (the language commonly used among religious circles in Eastern Europe). Some have learned Hebrew in Israel, but there are those who cannot read or write the language and even have difficulty conversing in it.

The association defines itself as a world organization of Rumanian Jews.[1] Its head offices are in Tel Aviv, with branches in other Israeli cities.

1 The recognition of diasporan Rumanian Jews as an integral part of the ethnic entity, as well as the effort to communicate and interrelate with them, is comparable to the orientation of the State of Israel's civil religion towards diasporan Jewry (Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 1983a: 132). Actually, the association's activity outside Israel is limited, as are the links with the Jewish community in Rumania, out of fear of jeopardizing the precarious situation of the Jews in Rumania under the Communist regime (during the period under study, the Communist regime was still intact).

The association organizes various kinds of activities, such as celebrations of national Israeli holidays and Jewish festivals, meetings dedicated to historical and contemporary personalities or events related to Rumanian Jewry, lectures and discussions on social and cultural topics, art and entertainment evenings, excursions, exhibitions, courses and bazaars. There is a lending library with a collection of books in Rumanian, French, English, German, Yiddish and Hebrew and a reference library comprising thousands of historical docs related to Rumanian Jewry, some of them rare. Activities are held in the associations' clubs or in public halls. The main language used during association activities is Rumanian.

The association is financed by membership fees, income from activities and contributions from Rumanians living in Israel and abroad. No funds are received from any political institutions or from local or national authorities. The organizational structure is hierarchical and comprises elected officials and committees. Elections are conducted according to formal procedures defined in the association's statutes. All elected officials and activists are volunteers and they are relatively few in number.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This paper is based on an extensive study of Rumanian Israelis over the period 1980-1986. In the course of the research, the first author conducted participant observations at various association activities – at the association's clubs in Tel Aviv and other towns, on excursions, and at entertainment or cultural evenings held in public halls.

She also conducted 57 structured interviews and dozens of informal conversations with a broad range of respondents. These revealed additional relationships and spheres of life in which association members participated, as well as biographical info. Respondents also expressed views on the past situation of Jews in Rumania and on the present situation of Rumanian Jewry in Israel, as well as on the association's significance to them.

Most of the material collected in the course of field work is in the Rumanian language. The parts presented in this paper were translated into

English. These focus upon the association's leaders, as it is they who structure the cultural redefinition of the Rumanian identity.

THE ETHNIC CIVIL RELIGION CONSTRUCTED BY THE ASSOCIATION

As an example of the association's definition of the Rumanian identity, we present passages from a lecture entitled "Cultural Values of the Rumanian Aliyah" (The Hebrew term for immigration to Israel, literally "ascent"). The lecture was delivered by the secretary-general at a cultural meeting organized by the association.

> I took upon myself, and perceive it as a great personal honor, to speak this evening about the cultural values of the Rumanian aliyah. These values cannot be separated from the sacred treasures that we left behind us, such as the philosophy of the Ba'al Shem-Tov, the poems of Itzic Manger, the intensive activity of the Zionist movement in Rumania, or the spiritual bequest of our eminent rabbis.[2] On the one hand, we are firmly bound to these historical roots which grew and flourished during our five-hundred-year stay in Rumania. But on the other hand, we also form an integral part of the great Jewish tradition beginning with our father Abraham, and continuing to this very day....

Concerning the present-day values of the Rumanian aliyah, I would need several hours just to mention the names of the prominent figures who engage in cultural activities and who bring us honor and joy: scientists and scholars, physicians and engineers, writers and poets, sculptors, musicians and painters [he mentions their names]. Our association wishes to glorify their contributions and this evening is one of the occasions dedicated to that purpose.

2 Israel Ben Eliezer Ba'al-Shem-Tov, 1700-1760, was the founder of the mystical Hassidic movement. Itzic Manger, 1901-1969, was a Yiddish poet of Rumanian origin.

These passages illustrate three main motifs around which the Rumanian identity is defined in the association: the Rumanian cultural distinctiveness, as well as past and present solidarity of Rumanian Jews in Israel and abroad; the cultural and historical integration of Rumanian Jewry within Israel and world Jewry; and the portrayal of Rumanian Jewry, both in Rumania and in Israel, in a manner that is flattering according to the members' values, which include education, erudition and culture.

This version of the Rumanian identity is inconsistent with the popular perception of its members regarding Rumanian Jews in Rumania and in Israel, as well as with historical sources dealing with Rumanian Jewry (Bercovici, 1975; Zait, 1978; Siniol, 1980; Lebanon, 1982). According to these sources, to cite just one example, the main characteristics of Rumanian Jewry as a whole, in Rumania as well as in Israel, is their lack of solidarity due to past and present fragmentation into numerous groups, fanctions and organizations. These are termed by the respondents, somewhat contemptuously, as "churches" (*biserici*) or "little churches" (*bisericute*).

The data reveal that the association's definition of Rumanian identity is a cultural construct, initiated by its founders and leaders and continuously molded through its activities. In the course of this process, various facets of Rumanian identity are reinterpreted (the history of Rumanian Jewry, the cultural heritage, the profile of Rumanian Israelis). Some examples of the fictitious character of this construction may be found in the secretary-general's lecture. The Ba'al Shem-Tov, who is referred to by the speaker as a pillar of the Rumanian tradition, was in fact of Ukrainian origin, and sojourned for only a few years in Moldava, Rumania. As regards the Zionist movement, it was but one of the ideological affiliations adopted by Rumanian Jews alongside traditionalist, socialist, and assimilationist trends, and even within Zionism there were sharp divisions along ideological and practical lines. Furthermore, many of the Rumanian figures mentioned by the speaker as prominent in the Israeli society are strongly opposed to the association's ethnic tone, and some are even unwilling to identify themselves as Rumanians.

By means of this reinterpretation, the leaders intend to elevate the Rumanian image in the eyes of both Rumanians and non-Rumanians, and to curtail prejudice, belittlement, and even persecution of Israelis of Rumanian origin.[3] This doctrine was put forward by the association's vice-chairman in his opening words at the inauguration of a new club.

> We Rumanians comprise one of the two largest *aliyot* in Israel,[4] and our fellow men have contributed vastly to the Jewish people and to the State of Israel. Nevertheless, we hold an inferior position relative to others [ethnic groups]. To put an end to this disgraceful situation, we must unite on a common cultural basis, and if there is no such basis on the surface, we must dig it up from our historical depths and revive it. Indeed, this is the objective of our association. The association does not allot jobs or houses or loans. As you well know, we are apolitical and therefore very poor.... Our sole aim is cultural and educational, in order to straighten the backbone of the Rumanian *aliyah*.

In order to realize this aim, the leaders suggest that members pursue several objectives, which are presented, among others, in the association's registration form.

> Jews of Rumanian origin,
>
> For the first time after many years of alienation, we are ready to unite in a wide association of Rumanian Jews.... The objectives

3 This assessment of the Rumanian situation in Israel reflects the personal impressions and feelings of both leaders and members of the association. They believe, for example, that many political opportunities are closed to Rumanians because of their origin, that they are excluded from radio and television programs, and that their cultural heritage is ignored by researchers of Jewish history. While empirical research about the Rumanian population in Israel is limited, the few studies on this subject (Ayalon, Ben-Rafael and Sharot, 1985; Neeman, 1990) do provide some evidence supporting this claim.

4 *Aliyot* is the plural of *aliyah*. The estimated number of Rumanian immigrants in Israel is 400,000. The other large immigrant groups are the former USSR Jews and Moroccan Jews.

> of our association are: to reaffirm our Jewishness and our special [Rumanian] message to the State of Israel and to world Jewry at large; to rehabilitate our community;[5] to publicize our rich spiritual heritage among Rumanian who are deprived from knowing them in the past… Integration, Jewishness, culture – these are the objectives engraved upon our association's front. Join us, and together we shall indeed realize them!

In other words, the association's reconstruction of the Rumanian identity is meant to legitimate Rumanian ethnicity in both the Jewish and the Israeli contexts, to unite Rumanians in a common culture and destiny, and to mobilize members to rehabilitate their community and disseminate their spiritual heritage – in short, its functions as an ethnic civil religion. This interpretation is reinforced by the emotional tone and terminology of the leaders in presenting their ethnic vision to their audience.

MECHANISMS OF ARTICULATING CIVIL AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

The Jewish motif, which is central to the association's constructed ethnicity, contains many elements from the traditional Jewish religion, such as symbols, myths, ceremonies and historical connotations. As the beliefs and behavioral patterns of association members are irreligious, the question arises as to how these diverse orientations are reconciled. In the following sections, we examine several mechanisms which assist in this reconciliation: the sociocultural characteristics of the association members; the sociocultural characteristics of the association's founders and leaders who construct the ethnic civil religion; and symbolic strategies employed by activities, by which traditional elements are selected and reinterpreted.

5 The term "community", frequently employed by the association's leaders, has ethnic rather than geographical connotations.

Sociocultural Characteristics of Members

As mentioned above, culture, learning and erudition are considered major values by association members, governing their attitudes and preferences in most domains such as occupational careers, choice of spouses and friends, and recreational activities. In the domain of work, for example, professional, scholarly and artistic occupations are the most highly rated, and those engaged in such occupations are called "intellectuals" or "people of high level" (*oameni de nivel*). The noting of professions (e.g. attorney, engineer, pharmacist, journalist) beside family names is a common practice among association members, even in addressing each other on informal occasions. Those respondents who regretfully do not engage in such occupations stress their deep interest in "culture", that is, in reading books and frequenting concerts of classical music. Because of this outlook, card playing, dancing or even consuming food and beverages, as they perceive such activities as "noncultural". From this perspective, the members' attitude toward religion as an intellectual pursuit entailing learning and scholarship is basically positive and respectful, even if personally they are not committed to religious beliefs and practices.

The members' lack of antagonism toward religion is also anchored in their Rumanian past. Most respondents were not committed in Rumanian to a specific ideology such as Zionism or Communism, so that their nonreligious outlook does not stem from ideological beliefs, but from ignorance of the Jewish tradition or from outright assimilation. Moreover, on many occasions of persecution in Rumania, Jews of all ideological persuasions viewed their religious institutions and figures as the sole source of spiritual leadership, practical aid and moral support.

The respondents' situation in Israel as immigrants and elderly people also contributes to their reconciliation with the Jewish tradition. Although they are veteran immigrants, the respondents perceive themselves as socially and culturally unintegrated in Israel. As main manifestations of this condition, they point to their lack of knowledge of the Hebrew language, their confinement to a Rumanian milieu (termed by them as a "ghetto" or "nature

reserve"), as well as their incompatibility with the Israeli temperament and way of life. Their feelings of estrangement or even marginality in the Israeli society are enhanced by old age, as they share the stigmatic orientation towards the elderly prevalent in modern societies (Cowgill and Holmes, 1972; Rosow, 1974; Loether, 1975), especially when old age is coupled with minority or ethnic affiliations (Dowd and Bengston, 1978; Hoyt and Babchuk, 1981; Neuhaus and Neuhaus, 1982: 21). Against this background, the integrative themes emphasized in the association's civil religion are of utmost significance to them, evoking a sense of belonging not only to the ethnic entity, but also to the State of Israel and the Jewish people. From this perspective, the meaning of the Jewish tradition is existential rather than religious, and as such, acceptable and even desirable even among nonpracticing people.

Sociocultural Characteristics of Leaders

The association's founders and leaders may be divided into two groups: Zionist activists and writers. The former lived in Rumania in small Jewish communities (*shtetls*) and received from their families a Zionist and/or Jewish traditional education, as well as a sense of social commitment and a strong inclination towards voluntary activism. Their occupations are varied (professionals, officials, businessmen) and they are socially and culturally integrated in Israel. They know Hebrew well and are involved in diverse relations with non-Rumanians.

The members of the second group were writers and journalists in Rumania, who acquired their formal education in literature, linguistics and philosophy. They resided in Bucharest, lacked any Zionist or Jewish background, and were not involved in voluntary activity. In Israel, they continue to write in the Rumanian language and most of them are engaged in Rumanian press.[6] These writers hardly know Hebrew and are mostly confined to a Rumanian social milieu.

6 The Rumanian press in Israel includes two daily newspapers (the most popular being *Viata Noastra* – Our Life), one weekly, and several magazines. Since 1986, there have been two periodicals, each in both Rumanian and Hebrew (Neeman 1990: 429-430).

The Rumanian identity is highly significant in the personal profile of all the association's founders. They maintain varied and ongoing relations with Jews of Rumanian origin both in Israel and abroad. Rumanian Jewry holds them in high esteem and perceives them as cultural elite. Their combined characteristics serve as resources for both the cultural redefinition of the ethnic identity and the activation of the association as an organizational arena. Indeed, the cultural leadership functions also as the organizational one.

The association's chairman shares characteristics of both Zionist and writers' groups of leaders, and therefore serves as mediator between them. He comes from an observant family that lived in a Rumanian *shtetl,* resided for many years in Bucharest, and has been involved in Zionist activity from his early youth. In Israel, he holds a senior position in a government office. He writes books and papers in Rumanian, Hebrew and Yiddish. The chairman is held in high esteem by both groups of leaders, as he has what each of them lacks: The Zionist group admires his literary and scholarly pursuits, whereas the writers' group appreciates his vast Zionist activity, as well as his social and cultural integration in Israel.

Being the sole observant person among the association's founders, well versed in the Jewish tradition, and well acquainted with diverse sectors of the Israeli religious population, the chairman is responsible for the structuring of the Jewish themes in the association's civil religion. This endeavor is backed up by several rabbis who participate in the association's activities. All of them are long-term acquaintances of the chairman, and were persuaded by him to join the association and to fulfill diverse roles in it. We discuss two of them in detail: Rabbi Dr. Alexander Shafran and Rabbi Mordechai Burstein.

Dr. Shafran was Chief Rabbi of Rumania in 1940-1947, appointed to this high post at the early age of 29. He serves as Chief Rabbi of Geneva, Switzerland, as well as the association's chairman in Europe. He holds a doctoral degree in Philosophy from the Sorbonne. Rabbi Shafran is well known and respected by the association's members owing to his

courageous stand as spokesman of the association's members owing to his courageous stand as spokesman of Rumanian Jewry vis-à-vis the Rumanian authorities, as well as to his intensive activity on both cultural and practical planes inside the Jewish community. The respondents hold him responsible for the physical rescue of the Rumanian Jews (as opposed to other East-European Jews, who were mostly annihilated). Many continue to approach him for financial assistance and personal advice.

Rabbi Burstein is the son of Rabbi Dov-Ber Burstein, who served as rabbi and religious judge (*av beit din*) in Botosani, Rumania, as well as in Haifa and Jaffa, Israel. He resides in Jerusalem and works as both a teacher of retarded children and a teacher of non-Jews who wish to convert to Judaism. Rabbi Burstein does not hold any official post in the association, but fulfills diverse ad hoc roles, such as excursion guide, or leader of religious services at the Jewish holidays celebrated by the association. He is well liked by members for his sociability and sense of humor.

The persons who structure the Jewish themes of the association's ethnic civil religion – namely the chairman and the rabbis – share several characteristics. They are not confined to a religious milieu, but rather participate in diverse social worlds; they are open to non-religious ideological and cultural trends; they have a varied education rather than a strictly religious one; they are both men of learning and men of deeds; and they enjoy high prestige among the association's members due to their personalities, activities or provenance. It is our contention that these characteristics enable them to serve as mediators between the traditional Jewish elements incorporated in the association's ethnic civil religion and its non-religious population. This mediatory function is facilitated by the fact that they are not a part of the Israeli religious establishment, so that they do not evoke antagonistic attitudes among members. Moreover, their personal lives exemplify the articulation of Rumanian ethnicity together with Jewish tradition and nationality, thereby rendering the association's civil religion – which purports to combine these identities – credible and valid.

Symbolic strategies

Through its activities, the association manipulates traditional Jewish symbols, incorporating them into the ethnic civil religion. We illustrate this use of symbolic strategies in three concrete activities: an excursion organized and led by the chairman, a Hanukkah ceremony performed by Rabbi Burstein, and a lecture on Holocaust Day given by Rabbi Shafran. These events relate to different contexts, secular, religious-traditional and secular with religious overtones, respectively. As these events were structured by the religious persons involved in the association, they also express their personal characteristics.

Excursion

The rationale of the association's excursions is presented by the chairman on numerous occasions. For example, at an annual meeting of all members, he stated:

> Our excursions are neither for touring nor for recreation. We are interested in places of Jewish significance; we want to get acquainted with our country, with its beauty and its achievements, and to see with our own eyes the Rumanians' vast contributions to its development.

In other words, he perceives the excursions as opportunities for redefining the Rumanian identity in a flattering and integrative manner, harmonizing ethnic, Jewish and Israeli motifs, and as contexts for the socialization of members to this redefinition. With regard to Jewish motifs, the chairman's commentary during excursions manifests a historical, psychological and literary orientation, rather than a religious one.

To illustrate this strategy, we present some of the chairman's points of reference in the course of an excursion from Tel Aviv to the Dead Sea. Near Latrun (20 miles southeast of Tel Aviv), the chairman described the significance of this location in the Independence War. In this context he added:

> The Seventh division fought at Latrun. In this division were many Rumanian immigrants, most of them having been brought there directly from the port [their point of debarkation in Israel]. As they were totally inexperienced, many died in action.

Upon passing the Elishah spring, the chairman elaborated on this biblical figure, particularly his relations with Elijah; he also described the dermatological qualities of the spring's waters. At Jericho, the chairman also related the biblical battle at this site, emphasizing the psychological considerations concerning the assault upon the city's walls. On approaching the Moab Mountains, he told the story of Ruth, citing excerpts from the Book of Ruth, translating them into Rumanian, and explaining the symbols and metaphors therein. Upon visiting the industrial zone on the shores of the Dead Sea, he said, "many of our representatives [i.e. Rumanians] are employed here upstairs [as engineers and executives and downstairs [as factory workers]."

Hanukkah

The Hanukkah celebration took place at an elegant hotel in Tel Aviv. The religious ceremony was followed by an artistic program and refreshments. Rabbi Burstein lit the Hanukkah Candles and recited the blessings, and a lady member of the association stood by him and translated each blessing into Rumanian. (It should be noted that in the Jewish Orthodox religion, women do not perform such rituals and the participation of a female is unusual). Upon lighting the first candle, Rabbi Burstein said:

> The lighting of Hanukkah Candles began, two thousand years ago. The candles wandered with us [Jews] all the time and in all places, bringing light and beauty into our lives. We Rumanians lit our own candles, and brought them with us to Israel. Just imagine: At this very moment and in every Jewish household throughout the world, kindle thousands of Hanukkah Candles, and we [the association's members] join them with our own.

However, he made no reference to the historic or religious background of Hanukkah, that is to the Maccabean or Hasmonean revolt and the attainment of cultic freedom and a large measure of Jewish sovereignty in the Second Temple period, due to God's miraculous intervention on behalf of the Jews (Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983a: 15-16). Rather, the central theme of the ceremony was the use of Hanukkah Candles in order to symbolically integrate the association's members and all Jewish people in Israel and abroad, the Rumanian past and the Israeli present,[7] observant and nonobservant Jews, the Hebrew and Rumanian languages, and even women and men.

This interpretation of the Hanukkah ritual is highly significant in view of the secular non-Jewish Rumanian motifs evident in the subsequent artistic program. For example, one of the singers participating in the program said to the audience:

> I prepared a special number for this occasion. With you I feel at home, amongst people of my own. Let us cease for a moment to break our teeth in Hebrew. Let us recall the Rumanian songs of our youth, when we thought only of *Love, Wine and Music* [the name of the song she performed]. Please join me.

Besides Rumanian serenades and romances from the 1930s and 1940s, the program offered additional genres of Rumanian music, such as gypsy, shepherd (*doina*) and tavern (*lautari*) songs. All of them were known and well liked by the audience who applauded fervently and sang with the performers.

By harmonizing the Rumanian heritage with both the Jewish tradition and the contemporary culture in Israel, the ceremony performed by Rabbi Burstein legitimated the secular Rumanian elements displayed in the artistic program. In so doing, he enabled participants to enjoy the program without feelings of estrangement or marginality. This outcome was made possible by ignoring the religious connotations of Hanukkah and by emphasizing instead its integrative symbolism.

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7 On the use of fire as a central element in the ceremonial idiom of contemporary Israel, in a variety of civic rituals, see Katriel (1991:51).

Holocaust Lecture

On Holocaust Day, the association organized an event in honor of Rabbi Shafran, then visiting Israel. The Rabbi gave a lecture about the Holocaust, from which several passages are quoted here.

> The subject of this evening concerns worldwide Jewry, at this time [World War II] our very existence was in jeopardy. Nevertheless, I wish to emphasize that the Rumanian Jewry presents a special case. Indeed, we contributed our share: from over a million Rumanian Jews, only 400,000 survived. But our rescue was extraordinary. I think that during the Nazi occupation and oppression, we were the sole Jewish population in the world in which the Jewish leadership, elected by the Jews themselves, negotiated with the anti-Semitic leaders in order to save Jews….
>
> As regards the future, no one can foretell. We are only human beings, who live in the past and steal some moments from the present. According to the Jewish faith, man is a God-like creature. Therefore, he stands alone in the universe unable to fully comprehend himself or to envisage his destiny. We face God and his world open-mouthed, full of awe and anxiety, wrestling with our existential predicaments. But we can rest assured about one thing. God is forever involved in our destiny, even when we are among foes. Our very name – ISRAEL – contains the world God.[8] Therefore we cannot and will not be abolished. No other people in the world can make such a statement with such conviction. Whereas the existence of the Jewish people is forever and ever warranted.

Rabbi Shafran's lecture displays several traditional motifs regarding the Holocaust which also figure in the Israeli civil culture (Liebman and Don-

8 The suffix of Israel, EL, is the Hebrew word for God.

Yehiya 1983a: 123-66). These include: the myth of the Jews as the chosen people and the perception of Jewish cosmic distinctiveness; the perception of Jews as a national group sharing a common history and fate, dispersed throughout the world but destined to be reunited in Israel; the concept that Jewish history is one of perpetual suffering, culminating in the Holocaust; and the notion that Jews are an isolated people forever beleaguered by enemies, both in the Diaspora and in Israel, who may depend only upon their own resources. However, the Rabbi refrains from expressing the religious connotations of these traditional motifs. For instance, when referring to God's election of the Jewish people, he does not mention that this is a privilege reserved for those who fulfill the required observances detailed in Exodus 19: 5-6 and Deuteronomy 7: 6-13, 10: 12-22 (Smith 1992: 441). As a result of this selective presentation, the references to God and the Jewish faith may be interpreted by members within a cosmic, existential framework, rather than a religious one, and so are rendered acceptable, convincing and even soothing to them as nonpracticing people.

The lecture also presents two themes which help apply the general discussion of the Holocaust to the specific context of the association: the distinct situation of Rumanian Jews during the Holocaust, and the existential predicament of Jews. The former theme reinforces and legitimates the ethnic distinctiveness stressed by the association's civil religion, alongside the integrative elements connecting Rumanians with word Jewry at large. With regard to the latter theme, Rabbi Shafran dwells upon the Jews' sense of loneliness, the incomprehensibility of the world and of human fate, and human distress in the face of an unknown and unpredictable future. In so doing, he articulates the personal anxieties of the association's members due to their existential situation as immigrants and elderly people. He also enables the members to interpret their idiosyncratic afflictions in a widely shared context, of both the Jewish people and the human race. The introduction of thee themes is stimulated by Rabbi Shafran's personal characteristics, namely his own involvement in negotiations with the Rumanian authorities during the Holocaust, his education in philosophy and his intimate acquaintance with the association's members.

Selection and Reinterpretation

The above analysis demonstrates that the traditional Jewish motif of the association's ethnic civil religion is constructed by symbolic strategies of selection and reinterpretation (see also Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983a: 19-21; Rubin 1986 [chapter 4 in this volume]). This civil religion emphasizes the national, historical, ceremonial and literary facets of the Jewish religion, ignoring theological issues such as the belief in God as the ultimate transcendent authority, or the commitment to practical religious observance. The intent of this selection is twofold. On the one hand, it provides traditional legitimation to the association's civil religion and affirms the symbolic integration of the association's members with the Jewish people worldwide. On the other, it accommodates both the nonpracticing character and the cultural concerns of members. However, the traditional elements ignored by the association's civil religion are not rejected outright for several reasons. First, this cultural endeavor is performed by religious agents who are totally committed to Judaism personally. Second, the members' attitude towards religion is basically positive. Third, such rejection might prove detrimental to the association's integrative orientation by provoking resentment among religious circles in Israel.

The strategy of reinterpretation is employed in order to invest traditional symbols with ethnic and existential meanings, such as the distinct expressions of Rumanian Judaism, or the religious references to problems of self. These additional meanings are highly important from the members' point of view. As their Rumanian identity is the pivotal, vital and in fact the only continuous component of their biographies, they turn to it in order to cope with immigrant traumas, as well as with anxieties about aging. The ethnic and existential connotations of religious elements elaborated by the association legitimate this effort, which otherwise might be precarious in view of the members' perceptions about the negative attitudes towards Rumanians prevailing in Israeli society.

CONCLUSIONS

We have examined the interrelationship between civil and traditional religions in modern pluralistic societies within a new context – that of ethnic associations. Specifically, we have analyzed an association of Rumanian-born Israelis, in which an ethnic civil religion is being constructed.[9] This endeavor resembles both traditional religions and other versions of civil religion in being an intentional effort of cultural (or political) elite (Anderson 1983: 69; Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983b: 65). In addition, we have identified several mechanisms that the association uses to harmonize the ethnic civil religion with the Jewish traditional religion – namely, the sociocultural characteristics of the association's members and leaders, and the symbolic strategies employed in activities.

The appeal of the traditional Jewish motifs, emphasized in the association's ethnic civil religion, to its non-practicing membership is related to their existential situation as immigrants and elderly people. Jewish tradition, as constructed in the association, helps them cope with feelings of estrangement and marginality by integrating them symbolically with the Jewish people worldwide, and by answering questions of ultimate meanings about the self. This acceptance of traditional values and symbols should not be perceived as indicative of a weakening of the members' nonpracticing orientation or of an orthodox turn in their lives. On the contrary, they take a "functional" ("from without"), as opposed to "substantive" ("from within"), perspective towards religion (Berger 1974), providing legitimation to and reinforcing a secular world view.

9 Though the data were collected in the 1980s, the main arguments of this paper continue to hold in the present. Since the anti-communist revolution in Rumanian in 1989, one major change has taken place in the association – namely, meetings, both in Israel and in Rumanian, between association members and Rumanian artists and scientists. Even though the latter are non-Jews, the meetings are attended by rabbis, and the Israeli speakers often refer to the Jewish tradition. A new facet therefore seems to have been added to the structuring of Rumanian identity in the association, namely, use of the reconstructed identity as a bridge between Israel and the original homeland.

The role of the religious agents involved in the association is structured differently than rabbinical roles described in the literature (Deshen 1982; Friedman 1982; Herzog 1984). The rabbis are neither elected nor appointed by the association's members or leaders, but rather act as volunteers. Therefore, they are not dependent upon the association financially or in terms of social status. In fact, they support the association by generous donations, and thanks to their personal achievements and prestige, they heighten its image in the eyes of members. Their activity in the association stems from a deep feeling of commitment to their fellow Rumanians, based upon their common origin and fate.

The functions assumed by the rabbis accommodate both the needs of the association as a public ethnic arena, and the individual needs of its members. With regard to the former role, the rabbis participate in the construction of the ethnic civil religion, and provide religious legitimation to this endeavor, alongside the historical legitimation provided by leaders (backed by the chairman's studies in history and the historical documents in the association's reference library. Such legitimation is highly important in the presentation of Rumanian ethnicity to the Israeli public at large, as well as in negotiations with other Rumanian organizations (on the complex interrelations between Rumanian organizations in Israel, see Neeman 1990: 280-85). At the same time, the rabbis serve as professional therapists in existential matters, counseling members about questions of self and of human fate, and providing ultimate meanings. Their ability to perform this function among a nonpracticing population is facilitated by such personal characteristics as participation in diverse social worlds, a varied education, life-long public activity, and a great deal of charisma. Moreover, the rabbis do not perform strictly traditional rituals in the association (the lighting of Hanukkah Candles pertains to the civil religion in Israel), but are rather involved in cultural activities, such as commemorations, lectures and excursions. In other words, they present the cultural facet of the Jewish religion, rather than the transcendental or practical-observant one. This presentation of self conforms with the concerns and values of the members and evokes positive attitudes of respect.

The association's simultaneous activation of ethnicity and traditional religion for purposes of integration reflects some recent tendencies prevalent in Israeli society at large, as well as in other societies. First, it reflects the decline of Zionist-Socialism and Statism after the Six Day War (Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1982: 57-58; 1983a: 134), resulting in a general shift towards particularistic, nationalistic or orthodox religious values and symbols (Cohen 1983; on factors leading to the decline of political or civil religion in new states, see Apter 1963).

Second, it reflects the weakening, since the late 1960s, of the "melting pot" ideology, and the shift to "cultural pluralism", legitimizing the distinctive cultural traditions of diverse immigrant groups (Korazim 1988:192). This shift is concretely manifested by ethnic celebrations in Israel, especially among Oriental Jews, i.e., immigrants from Arab countries (for examples, see Deshen 1974; Goldberg 1978. It should be noted that the ethnic celebrations of the Rumanian association are unusual in that Jews of Ashkenazic (European) origin seldom engage in such activities (Neeman 1990: 4-6).

Third, the association's construction of an ethnic civil religion reflects the heightening of traditional religious components in the Jewish national identity, so that Jewishness appears to be a basic meaning of Israeli identity even to non-practicing people (Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983a: 133; Sobel and Beit-Hallahmi 1991). Bellah (1979: 355) has pointed to a similar reaffirmation of religion and myth in America society in the 1970s, the outcome of which he terms "post critical Western religion". This tendency in Israeli society counterbalances the divisive influences of ethnic cultural pluralism by supplying a unifying bond between all Jews (Cohen 1983). Against this background, both the ethnic and the religious tone of the association may be perceived by its members as conducive to their symbolic integration in Israeli society.

Assuming that, in the confusion and rootlessness of the modern world, individuals do require a symbol system to provide ultimate meanings by reference to a collective entity, and assuming that neither traditional religions, nor national ideologies can fully satisfy this need (Bellah 1979; Liebman and

Don-Yehiya 1983a: Smith 1986), ethnicity can play a prominent role. In this respect, we wish to point to the potential of ethnicity as a new expression of civil religion, transcending the private sphere, but narrower than Statism. This possibility is implied by Liebman and Don-Yehiya (1983a: 12), who envisage a variety of civil religions in modern pluralistic societies, serving to sanctify different sub-groups therein. It is also raised by Smith (1986: 176), who perceives ethnicity as a "surrogate" religion that links individuals to persisting communities by chains of shared memories and identities, thus rendering their existence meaningful. The Rumanian-Israeli case analyzed in this paper serves as an empirical example of an ethnic civil religion constructed by a visionary association. Whether these new functions of ethnicity and ethnic associations are also apparent in other modern pluralistic societies is a subject for further investigation.

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CHAPTER FOUR
DEATH CUSTOMS IN A NON-RELIGIOUS KIBBUTZ: THE USE OF SACRED SYMBOLS IN A SECULAR SOCIETY

Secularization in modern society sometimes carries with it processes of secular ritual. These may be observed on many levels, from national rituals to local, individual and rites of passage rituals. Research on secular ritual has grown around new concepts such as non-religious sanctity (Moore and Myerhoff, 1977). Writers such as Turner (1982a) and Moore and Myerhoff (1979) have developed theoretical frameworks for secular ritual. Earlier, Gluckman (1958) dealt with dedication rituals in socially loosely integrated communities. Similarly, there has been interest in secular funeral rituals in the United States (Huntington and Metcalf, 1979) and in European socialist countries (Fried and Fried, 1980; Binns, 1979; 1980).

Little has been written about the way in which secular ritual emerges, develops and changes. The present study is devoted to the question of change in secular ritual and uses the kibbutz as a test case. In this study the major focus is the development of mourning rituals in the kibbutz as a particular example of developing secular ritual. We connect changes in its secular ritual with changes in kibbutz social structure. These changes allow for shifts in meaning and emphasis which permit further social development. We begin with an examination of the background upon which the Israeli kibbutz was founded in order to provide a basis for our theoretical discussion.

BACKGROUND

The early kibbutzim were established in Israel in the second decade of the twentieth century by young Zionist pioneers who had emigrated from Central and Eastern Europe. Most of these pioneers were socialists who had been influenced by the revolutionary movements in Russia; some had even been actively involved. Their immigration to Israel was motivated by national and social aims, i.e., by the desire to establish a homeland based on egalitarian socialist principles. These revolutionaries actively rebelled against the Jewish tradition and lifestyle in the Diaspora (Talmon-Garber, 1962).

The life of Orthodoxy Jewry in 19th and early 20th century Eastern Europe revolved around the active execution of the day-to-day obligations imposed by the Law (Torah). Intense ritual vitality in daily life gave the individual group members a sense of closeness with the sacred. Routine participation in regular ritual performances was the fullest expression of identification with Jewish society. Those who rejected tradition and looked ahead to Gentile society went through a process of secularization, but those young people who identified with socialist Zionism or Zionism in general did not escape from their Jewish identity. The Socialist Zionists considered themselves representatives of Jewish historical continuity, because Zionism was, after all, a movement of *return* to Zion. This return rejected any connection with the era of the exile and Rabbinic Judaism and focused instead on the biblical period and that of the Second Commonwealth. Kna'ani (1976: 32-33) defines these Zionists as continuing Jewish tradition while rejecting all religious obligations and belief in the Almighty.

The Zionist pioneers who immigrated to Israel in the early 1900s found themselves in one of the most run-down areas of the Ottoman Empire. The central government and local rulers made various decrees and regulations which were without rhyme or reason. The 1908 rebellion of the Young Turks did not improve the situation. Life in Palestine remained one of the insecurity, isolation and poverty under a corrupt regime of unpredictable behavior (Giladi, 1983: 97).

Against this background, communes of wandering youth were organized in which there were no plans for fixed residence. The groups wandered in search of work among the veteran farms and among the farms set up by the Zionist movement. These youths did not want a permanent residence or place of work: they preferred to apply their energies to pioneering, moving onward whenever a new task was presented. The commune's membership changed rapidly and some communes disintegrated while others were newly formed. These were not favorable conditions for the establishment of family or for developing a stable lifestyle (Giladi, 1983: 104-108). In the political twilight zone of the Turkish regime, these vibrant wanderers, who sought self-perfection and the correction of all national and worldly ills, found the communal existence a mode of survival in face of alienation and isolation.

The twilight zone was however temporary; first, because the young grow older and cannot wander forever – hence the establishment of the early kibbutzim during Ottoman rule. Second, the conquest of Palestine by Great Britain after World War I led to more reasonable administrative arrangements which made it possible to develop a sense of stability and security. Meanwhile, the Zionist establishment began intensive settlement activities and the conditions for wandering disappeared.

Most of the early pioneers were young (17-25) and had migrated alone without their families (Kna'ani 1976: 93-94). The first kibbutzim were very small, numbering no more than 20 persons. Settlements were set up in a desolate and hostile environment without benefit of basic services and infrastructure, and the struggle for survival demanded sacrifice. Suffering and death were a part of everyday life; sickness, accidents, and attacks by hostile elements took their toll. There were also quite a number of suicides.[1] It became important to give meaning to the tribulations of life. As Jewish religious values had already been rejected, alternative symbols were likely to be generated to reflect the new

1 There are estimates that in the early 1920s, close to 10% of the deaths reported in the workers' newspaper were the result of suicide (Tsur, 1976: 33).

existential experience (see Douglas, 1973). Among these were symbols related to death and mourning.

Death from old age was unknown in the early kibbutzim, and despite the death of some young members, mourning did not become a pressing issue for many years. Only when the kibbutz became multigenerational, after second and third generations grew up and parents of members were absorbed, was the kibbutz society forced to deal with death of the elderly. The issue of death became particularly salient in the 1960s when the founders' generation began to pass on. In July 1970 the Inter-Kibbutzim Social Committee published a one-page mimeographed code of mourning that was distributed to all the kibbutzim and in March 1978 a revised two-page edition was circulated. The code in both editions differed from Jewish tradition (Rubin, 1982 [chapter 5 in this volume]; Ben Gurion, 1979).

Our observations and research have shown that the development of mourning customs and rituals in the kibbutz took an interesting course. It began with a total rejection of religious ritual and symbols based on the desire to eliminate religious meaning and a sense of "holiness" from their revolutionary settlement of the land of Israel (Kna'ani 1976: 101; Azili, 1984; 10-17; Liebman and Don Yehiya, 1983b), and creation of an alternative set of rituals. Though some of these rituals retained the structure of tradition while making changes in content, others were completely new, invented for newly introduced holidays, such as May Day, Settlement Day, the Hebrew Book Festival and the Festival of Shearing (Sheep)[2] All the rituals were meant to be non-religious.

As the kibbutz evolved, a sense of sacredness began to develop around this set of rituals, a sacredness similar to what Moore and Myerhoff (1977:20) label non-religious sanctity. For this reason, the kibbutz supplies

2 For details on Settlement Day, see Lilker (1982); on the Hebrew Book Festival and the Festival of the Shearing, see Nagid (1953: 313). Members of kibbutzim from Hashomer Hatzair movement proposed celebrating class holidays: May 1 was to be the workers' holiday; November 7 was to be celebrated as the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution and February 12 was to be celebrated as the anniversary of the Social Democratic Uprising in Vienna in 1934 (see Azili, 1984: 31, 43).

us with an interesting example of a modern, integrated, strongly ideological secular community in which the system of secular ritual expresses the ideology and cohesiveness of the community.

Of the four kibbutz movements in Israel, we deal here with three which are generally described as "secular".[3] We do not distinguish between them since, by and large, the individual kibbutzim of all three accepted the revised code of mourning with minimal variation (the Religious Kibbutz Movement follows the Orthodox Jewish code of mourning). Since the three movements are self-declared revolutionary secular movements and reject much of Jewish tradition, they provide an important field for the study of the development and crystallization of newer rituals and symbols.

In the present paper, we show first that when a society sees in the collective the source of the sacred, a secular religion[4] develops which requires the commitment of the individual to society. This suggests that collective patterns of mourning develop which replace traditional mourning rites. We also show that rituals of mourning in the kibbutz reflect the quality of existential experience in the different periods of kibbutz history. In the earlier periods, when the community fought for survival and was forced to deal with particularly difficult living conditions, ritual was a more spontaneous and effervescent nature. Later, as the kibbutz became more established and conditions improved, ritual became more formalized and lost its spontaneity. According to Lilker (1982: 60), the ideological fervor of the collective was weakened, i.e., when the group begins to make fewer demands on the individual because it has more or less achieved its goals, the rigid adherence to new symbols and rituals is lessened. Consequently, a paradoxical process begins, which, for a lack of a better term, we call

3 On the kibbutz movements, see, for example Darin-Drabkin (1962). Recently, the three secular kibbutz movements have merged into The United Kibbutz Movement.

4 We prefer to use the term "secular religion" rather than "civil religion" since, as Liebman and Don-Yehiya (1983a) state, the latter need not be totally secular. God can be a basis for civil religion, as, for example,, in the American version (Bellah, 1967; Gehrig, 1980). Moreover, civil religion is generally conceived as providing legitimacy for the social order, while secular religion and traditional religion can direct the individual against social order.

the "secularization" of secular religion. This is expressed by a willingness to accept some of the previously rejected rituals and symbols, an attitude which had been considered "sacrilegious" several decades earlier.

SECULARISM AND SECULAR RELIGION IN SOCIALIST ZIONIST AND IN THE KIBBUTZ MOVEMENT

Socialist Zionism in the first half of this century, had characteristics of secular religion; it was a system of symbols and action which gave ultimate meaning to human existence (Bellah, 1964). The ideology of Socialist Zionism reflected a quest for a new social order and a rejection of the traditional Diasporan order. If the Zionist movement was primarily secular, Socialist Zionism was even more so. Socialist Zionism actively rejected the major part of the values and practices of traditional Eastern European Judaism, sometimes vehemently (Kna'ani, 1976: 92-98).

As Don-Yehiya and Liebman (1981) observe, the socialist movement in Israel, of which the kibbutz was a part, resisted a religion of revelation and accepted the Bible only as a source of social values. God was expunged from ritual and replaced by the land, nation and social class as sources of ultimate values. The well-known traditional prayer, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One", was transformed in one kibbutz text to, "Hear O Israel, Israel is our Destiny, Israel is One" (cited in Don-Yehiya and Liebman, 1981: 128), reflecting an absolute change in value orientation even though the change was only in content while the traditional pattern of wording was retained. The texts of new ritual were paraphrases of the old religious texts. Almost every new ritual used the formulations of the older traditional texts to generate sentiment. The sources of transcendental holiness were replaced with a more immanent source.

A comparison between the traditional *Kiddush* ("sanctification of the day") made at the beginning of the *seder* (the main Passover meal) and the new kibbutz version illustrates this point:

> Blessed art thou Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast chosen and exalt us above all nations, and hast sanctified us with

> thy commandments. Thou Lord our God, has graciously given us Sabbath for rest, holidays for gladness and festive seasons for joy… Thou didst choose and sanctify us above all people …. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hallowest the Sabbath, Israel and the festivals (Daily Prayer Book, 1977: 598-600).
>
> Blessed art thou Lord our God, King of will, who hast chosen us to sanctify us with work, and hast given us days for work… because Thou hast chosen the workers and made them holy…. Blessed art thou O Lord, who hallowest labor and its festivals (Tsur et al., 1981: 319).

While the later version retains the traditional pattern of the *Kiddush* and even contains God's name, the change in content distorts the religious motif and places the ritual in a nearly secular frame. In place of the profane weekday and the sacred Sabbath, we find the sacred work day and the profane Sabbath – a day of no work. Many kibbutzim cancelled the traditional day of rest on the seventh day and allowed each kibbutz member to choose his own day of rest during the week. Nevertheless, the rest day, whenever it took place, continued to be called *Shabbat* (Sabbath).

Another example is the *kaddish* prayer, which is one of the high points in burial ritual. The *kaddish*, which begins "May the name of the Lord be glorified and sanctified", was sometimes reformulated as "May the lust of life of the Hebrew man be glorified and sanctified" (Ben-Gurion, 1963). Also Berl Katznelson (1887-1944), an outstanding moral leader of the labor movement, wrote a memorial prayer in March 1920 in memory of eight pioneers who had been killed in defense of Tel-Hai in Upper Galilee. The prayer begins, "Let Israel remember the souls of its sons and daughters" instead of the traditional, "Let God remember…"

It is apparent that if the people, the land and the social class become the source of the sacred, and labor becomes the sacred itself, then the nature of sacrifice would change as well. The legitimate right to a land of Israel is acquired not by Godly decree, but by self-sacrifice on the altar of national and social goals for renewal of the homeland and of Jewish society (Don-

Yehiya and Liebman, 1981: 128). In Douglas' (1973) terms, the cosmology became adjusted to the community's existential state.

MOURNING PATTERNS IN THE EARLY KIBBUTZ

Early kibbutz members were not generally kinsmen, and upon the death of one member there was no familial obligation to mourn; even so, we may assume that people living in primary groups grieved for one another. Written sources describing this period (1910-1920) provide some information as to mourning practices. Traditional patterns of mourning seem to have been maintained, with significant change taking place in the verbal content of mourning.

In one of the early tales of kibbutz life, "The First Grave" by Shlomo Zemach (1886-1974, an author who immigrated to Palestine in 1904), the only girl in a group of twelve young people died of an illness. The doctor, who was called from a nearby town, offered to send people from the town to attend the burial there. The members of the kibbutz, however, declined the offer, and three of them went to a nearby hill to dig a grave.

The story goes:

> After we finished the work, we returned to the cabin, someone brought water, another went to dismantle a fence and make a bier.... we washed her body very well and dressed Shlomit in holiday dress and wrapped her in a white sheet, put her on the bier and took her outside.... we walked upright... no one said a word, the bier passed from shoulder to shoulder... we took hold of the sheet and lowered her body ... into the grave. We then covered the grave with earth... we stood in our places... we didn't know what to do... then Amiram's shoulders began to shake... he approached the grave and with a voice choked with tears said.... 'May the name of the Lord be sanctified and glorified...' when we returned home, we could not sit.... we went outside and sat in sadness like lost children (Zemach, 1912).

Several things can be inferred from this story. First, the cemetery is a part of the community's collective identity and an expression of its ideological independence. Therefore, the kibbutz would not send its dead away but rather tended to them on its own terms (Lilker, 1982: 221). Second, though the burial did not conform to traditional Jewish East European practice (e.g. men never wash the bodies of dead women, the dead are carried in the arms, and Psalms are recited), traditional patterns were evident. Thus, the body is washed – similar to the purification of the dead (*tahara*); it is wrapped in a white sheet similar to the traditional linen shrouds; the pall bearers take turns; and the *kaddish* is recited at the conclusion, the high point of the funeral.

The modified symbols gave the kibbutz members a new sense of existence: the pallbearers walk upright to express their determination; they carry the bier on their shoulders in defiance of the hardship involved (on their silence, see below). The mourning ritual expressed growth and renewal rather than deterioration and degeneration because it was practiced in a society consciously in the midst of growth processes (see Huntington and Metcalf, 1979: 12). Sacrifice was legitimated by the resulting contribution to renewal, and this is what is being expressed in the above-mentioned ritual. This feeling was also reflected in the prose, poetry and art of this period (Nagid, 1983: 318-321).

Similar observations are supported by testimony on two other funerals. The deaths occurred one after the other in 1913 and in the same area. Yosef Zaltsman, an outstanding member of Kibbutz Kinneret, was murdered at the age of 23, an ambush on his way home from the fields. The ambush took place from behind a zyzphum (a thorny bush with deep roots) and the grave was dug at the spot where the man fell, at the side of the road. The bush was uprooted and a tree planted in its place. After the burial, someone began to eulogize the dead man. A.D. Gordon, a noted ideologist of the labor and kibbutz movement at that time, who was present, interrupted saying, " 'stop, stop, the words are profane!' and in tears burst forth with the *kaddish* (Habas, 1967: 56). The second death took place nearby, in the Segera farm in lower Galilee,

when Ya'akov Feldman, a member of *HaShomer* (a watchman organization, founded in 1909 to protect Jewish settlements), was killed. Before the funeral the body was moved and where he fell, a tree was planted. When the people returned from the funeral, the young men broke out in a popular song: "Here we will live, and here we will create a life of freedom" (Habas, 1947: 376).

Burial of the deceased on the spot in which he fell is reminiscent of early Talmudic Law, based on Deuteronomy 21:1, which states that the slain are buried where they were found (*The Babylonian Talmud, Bava Kamma* 81a). Renewal of the old practice, however, is at odds with the law of rabbinic authorities who discontinued this custom (Avidan, 1978: 28). Recitation of the *kaddish* is another traditional element present but its context is new as it occurred only after the traditional eulogy was cancelled. The uprooting of the bush was a major innovation. The uprooting of such bushes took much of the time and energy invested in preparing land for agriculture, and reflected the victory of the settlers over nature. It was a sign of being rooted to the soil and a steadfast belief in continuity even in the face of death. The planning of the tree and the spontaneous song of the youth also express the determination of the kibbutz members to grow and to establish new roots.

We have one other testimony of song and dance in mourning. When it becomes known that Yitschak Turner, a member of the watchmen, died of pneumonia, his friends sat in silence for a long time. Then,

> Fleisher … started to hum quietly to himself and this tune grew into a loud shocking song.… The others slowly came around and began to hum silently. He clasped his hands and stomped his feet and cried: "Hey, Hey friends, with passion, Turner didn't want tears, he wanted life and growth…" A *hora* dance began, with painful hearts and dancing feet … until early morning and from the dance circle to the sheep (Habas, 1947: 540).

While death is the absolute expression of nonactivity, quiet and order, song, dance and movement are expressions of vitality and action

(Huntington and Metcalf, 1979: 109-118). The more a society feels threatened by death, the more it tends to emphasize symbols of vitality.

The complex of symbols revealed in the above-mentioned examples reflect the chaos in which both the individual and society find themselves in mourning. They also reflect the state of kibbutz society within this period is departing from an old world and attempting to create a new one. It is in a state of transition, a twilight zone of neither here nor there or perhaps both here and there. Therefore, social symbols reflect a mixture of old and new, of tradition and of change. The contrast between silence and singing is heightened, reflecting according to Turner (1976: 90-102), an intermediate or liminal state. Both the silence and the dance are not ordinary things, and mixing them reflects a state of transition.[5]

CHANGES IN SECULAR RELIGION AND IN MOURNING

In its revolutionary stage kibbutz ideology was collectivist and anti-familist; this went hand-in-hand with egalitarian practices which see the family as a divisive force in the collective (Talmon-Garber, 1962). With the growth of the second and third generation in the kibbutz, it became evident that the family, far from being a threat, was supportive of the collective. Family metaphors became the genre for the kibbutz as a whole (Talmon-Garber, 1970: 18). Death of an individual was a loss for the whole community: "When a child dies in our children's house, we are all bereaved… when a member dies, we are all orphaned… this turns the mourning of the individual into a loss for the whole society" (Ben Gurion, 1963: 4). This collective feeling generated the kind of collective ritual observed above.

5 Huntington and Metcalf (1979: 46-49; 109-18) deal with the universality and the meaning of drumming, noise and silence in mourning. Drumming or noise indicates boundaries in time just as a wall makes boundaries in space. The opposition of noise and silence is similar to that of black against white or hairy against smooth which dramatize and emphasize the transition taking place.

In contrast to the more spontaneous responses – song and dance – in the 1910s, a period of silence characterized kibbutz funerals of the 1920s to 1950s. Behavior was restrained and decorous in comparison to the traditional Eastern European Jewish funeral. Yehuda Ya'ari (1900-1982, a novelist of kibbutz life, immigrated to Palestine in 1922) tells of the embarrassment and the dead silence at the funeral of one of the early members of Kibbutz Bet Alfa (established in 1922):

> We didn't know what to do or how to behave. The *kaddish* was forbidden and it was almost forbidden to cover one's head [as is the custom at traditional Jewish funerals]. We felt terrible, just stood still and kept quiet and no one had the nerve to leave.

Yoseph Baratz (one of the founders of Kibbutz Degania established in 1910), told of the death of one of his comrades who was killed in 1920 near Tiberias. "Here, too, the burial took place in silence. No one opened his mouth…" As late as 1936, reports of the silent funeral still abound. A kibbutz member wrote: "Blistering days hardened the hearts / Heat waves dried the tears / The people stood orphaned and alone… [in silence]" (cited in Azili, 1984:12). In accordance with the collective world view, the whole kibbutz took part in a funeral of a member and postponed all entertainment for a 3-to-7 day period according to the size of the kibbutz (Rubin, 1982: 15-17). As long as no active form of funeral behavior was innovated, the period of silence was the major identifying characteristic of the kibbutz funeral (Rubin, 1982; Ben-Gurion, 1979).

Gradually, antagonism against traditional Jewish religion relaxed: "Happily, we have passed through the period of antagonism toward tradition… the period of our pioneering adolescence has passed… we feel a desire for something better formulated than the feverish release of days passed" (Shelem, 1956: 176). One of the early founders of the kibbutz reflected, "We could maintain a Bohemian atmosphere in the early years as long as life was not complex… and there was no stability.… but when the kibbutz entered a more fixed path, when children are born, the thread of generations is spun … then the need for a stable

way of life becomes clear and, thus, we need formal patterns of behavior" (Maletz, 1960: 21).

The past acquires a nostalgic flavor and the "secular" rituals seem somewhat rootless: "In the kibbutz, we invested much energy in the creation of our own festivals. First, they were dry and tasteless. Only when we began to include traditional elements did we begin to feel the content and the beauty of the ritual" (Bittman, 1965: 475). This made it possible to begin to return to the spirit of tradition in ritual: "If there were a man who would try to deface a stone artifact of generations past… we would surely declare him wild…. yet, when we deface Sabbath and festivals by removing all content from them, no one takes notice" (Mano'ah, 1967: 16).

As the kibbutz grew and could no longer remain a small intimate community, the sense of ideological purity began to dissipate. The kibbutz became segmented into networks of varying degrees of closeness and some of the more revolutionary symbols lost their ability to generate sentiment. The door was open to the regeneration of old symbols, especially those which are shared by all Jews. This was not a process of return to Orthodox Judaism, but a tolerant combination of modernity and tradition (Gelb, 1979: 178).

Among those who questioned the new rituals were those who challenged the silence of the kibbutz mourning ritual. Quiet is meaningful when the community, as a whole, feels the pain or loss. Extended silence creates solidarity in an intimate group, but ceases to be cohesive when participants do not feel the same degree of closeness to the departed. Words become necessary to awaken feelings and participation. It is not surprising that in kibbutz Yagur, (near Haifa) whose members insisted that no eulogy be made in order to maintain equality among the dead, the cry arises, "We cannot accept the silent funeral – the assembled need a way to express themselves" (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 19).

More and more, we find cautious attempts to reexamine traditional patterns. There were those who were as yet unwilling to introduce religious texts into traditional ritual. A member of the Kibbutz Meoz Hayim, in the Beit Sean Valley, writes, "They say that traditional customs are the result

of religion beliefs of which we can have no part of; that they are the result of superstition, but did we not accept the salutation, *mazal tov* (good luck) … or the toast, *lehayim* (to life) on wine?" (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 11). These examples are neutral from a religious perspective; the greetings are traditional yet not religious. Referring to those who claim that their ancestors had fixed patterns for their whole life-style "even [one] for the last hours of life: *el maleh rahamim* [God full of mercy], *kaddish* and *zidduk hadin* [prayers for the dead]," the author proposes not a return to these prayers but acceptance of their validity. He also suggests the selection of appropriate texts, "ancient as well as modern", for integration into the ritual (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 9). This is quite contrary to the words of Yitzchak Tabenkin, one of the founders of the kibbutz movement, who said in the 1920s, "neither *kaddish*, nor *zidduk haddin*" (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 7).

There are kibbutzim which reintroduced some elements of the religious funeral. In Sedot Yam, in the coastal plain, a generally accepted veteran of the kibbutz with some traditional orientation conducts the traditional prayers. In Kibbutz Kinneret the prayers are said by the region rabbi or a close relative of the deceased. A member of Kibbutz Degania said that in Jewish tradition, it is accepted that the son says *kaddish* for his parents, but "in our kibbutz, the *kaddish* is said by our comrade, Yehiel, and in neighboring kibbutzim, it is said by a ritual practitioner or other outsiders… The *kaddish* is called the orphan's *kaddish,* our dear sons… must give us the last honor at the death of a father or mother" (Ben-Gurion, 1963: 15).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Deshen (see Deshen and Shokeid, 1974: 151-62 claims that secularization as a concept is not delicate enough to describe the transition from the pole of religious to the pole of secular. Deshen suggests a four-part typology: eradication, creation, innovation and profanation. This typology seems applicable to changes in secular religion as well; specifically it suits the varieties of change found in mourning rituals in the kibbutz. It can be shown that these changes in ritual are connected to structural changes resulting from historical processes.

The stormy existence of the first pioneers explains the spontaneous nature of their mourning ritual in the second and third decade of the twentieth century. Rejection of the past led to rejection of ritual, of festivals and of the Sabbath. Yet, death could not be ignored; the departed had to be buried and the mourning was expressed in an effervescent and spontaneous way. In this period, we see an eradication of traditional symbols coupled with 1) the generation of new symbols and rituals often adopted from outside sources; and 2) transformation of existing Jewish symbols through the infusion of new content (respectively, creation and innovation of Deshen's typology).

These existing symbols were taken from the supply available in the Bible, while rabbinic interpretation was rejected. Such developments did not entail a process of vitalization (Wallace, 1956 and 1968; Spindler and Spindler, 1971; and Turner, 1982), since vitalization movements mark a return to fundamentalist forms and a reinforced connection with the supernatural. Nor is this an instance of the secular hedonistic revitalization which Manning (1977) had described. Rather it is a regeneration of symbols.[6] In other words, there was no return to Orthodoxy; items which kibbutz members did not consider limited to the supernatural were selected from tradition. Thus, for example, when the kibbutz employs traditional liturgy, it does so without the implications of religious prayer. Lilker (1982: 146) remarks that Israeli librarians do not catalogue the kibbutz Passover *Haggadot* with traditional liturgy. The use of old symbols with new content substantiates Avraham Shlonsky's (1900-1973, one of the foremost Hebrew poets who immigrated to Palestine in 1923), seemingly contradictory statement, "We came here to begin from the beginning because we came to continue the way" (cited in Nagid, 1983: 313).

6 The regeneration of ritual in kibbutz differs from that noted by Myerhoff (1982: 130-131) in a modern urban setting. In contrast to the *ad hoc* non-repeated rituals invented by individuals for personal use, kibbutz rituals are collective and reflect greater planning, i.e., they are decided upon by the individual kibbutz or even the entire kibbutz movement. And once agreed upon, they are not easily changed.

From the 1920s on, there were repeated attempts to modify and renew certain ritual symbols, such as the Passover *seder* and the beginning of the first fruit on Pentecost (Lilker, 1982). We no longer hear of spontaneous mourning, and yet for many decades no attempt is made to create new funeral rituals; only silence is accepted (Azili, 1984: 45). It is not until the end of the 1960s, with the aging of the kibbutz founders and especially their parents (who had been absorbed in the kibbutz), that a search began for new rituals to express the spirit of the kibbutz. At this point the kibbutz was already socially and economically established and earlier ideological fervor had died down.

Evidence points to a tendency toward traditionalism among the elder generation. Yet even younger members came to demand recognition for traditional Jewish symbols which had been rejected in the past, and this was answered by objections from among those who feared a gradual return to traditional customs (Lilker, 1982: 60). Even as the debate was going on, religious elements began to be introduced in kibbutz ritual. This too was not a matter of vitalization since it does not imply a return to orthodoxy. It may well signify the weakening of the secular religion. The ideology which was supported by secular religion lost validity when it achieved many of its goals and, as a result, a new process of eradication, creation and innovation was possible, this time involving the absorption of traditional religious elements. In this way, secular religion of the kibbutz moved closer to the civil religion of the nation (see Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 1983a).

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CHAPTER FIVE
PERSONAL BEREAVEMENT IN A COLLECTIVE ENVIRONMENT: MOURNING IN THE KIBBUTZ

The first kibbutzim were founded in 1910, by young men and women who had come to Israel from Eastern and Central Europe, to live on the land in collective agricultural settlements. The movement gained momentum in the 1920s, but it was in the 1930s that it ranks swelled and since then hundreds of kibbutzim of different ideological trends have been established.[1]

These early pioneers, who had come to the shores of their new home without family, formed small cohesive groups whose members were of a similar social and cultural background. They were fired by the burning desire to realize the renascence of the Jewish people in its ancient homeland. The kibbutz movement was basically revolutionary in character: it had rebelled against the lifestyle of the traditional Jewish community and the occupational structure of European Jewish society,[2] and it aspired to create a new society based on socialist principles.

1 The kibbutz is based on collective ownership of all property, except personal belongings. Its ideology stresses the common aims of the community for which the individual is asked to sacrifice personal interests. A vast variety of literature has been written on the kibbutz, among which are, for example, the works of Darin-Drabkin (1962), Leon (1969), Spiro (1956).

2 The following opinion by a veteran kibbutz member, out of the numerous statements on the discard of religion, will illuminate the young pioneers' approach at that time: "Upon arrival in the country and settlement on the kibbutz, we tossed over our shoulders our religious beliefs. We wanted to build a new life which would not be religious in character". See Ben Gurion (1963: 14). On the reaction and youth of the founders see Spiro (1956: 35-58).

A study of the kibbutz may thus enable us to examine the development of new rites and symbols in a society which had consciously rejected a traditional network of symbols and rites. This paper concentrates on mourning rites whose evolvement differs from that of other ceremonies and passage rites with which the kibbutz, already in its early stages, had to come to grips. The formation of mourning norms became necessary only at a later stage;[3] the youth of the early settlers rendered them insouciant to death.

While sociological research on the kibbutz abounds, mourning has hardly been studied, except for some very recent works describing mourning customs, such as Ben Gurion (1979), Zorea (1979), Gelb (1979). Sociological research on mourning in the kibbutz was first carried out by Rubin (1977; 1979).

The present study has three interrelated objectives: We shall delineate the evolvement of mourning patterns in the secular kibbutz movement,[4] and present the ambivalent attitude of the kibbutz toward Jewish tradition, from the movement's inception to date, as revealed by the latest formulation of mourning norms.[5] These norms are not obligatory, but serve as a general

3 It is interesting to point out the difference in attitude to death (which is also a question of the conceptualization of time) of the kibbutz and a group of traditional Jews, immigrants from the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, who established a new collective agricultural settlement in 1959, in the Northern Negev, in Israel. I witnessed the immigrants' arrival in cars, in the settlement: They refused to enter the houses which had been built for them. Some insisted on leaving instantly, notwithstanding the spacious homes and primary household and farming equipment given them. The agitation had been sparked upon the immigrants' learning that the settlement had no cemetery. They were not ready to live in such a place. Only after they had been promised that that very day a site for the cemetery would be allocated and sanctified in a traditional ceremony, did they consent to enter their homes.

4 We shall not refer to the religious kibbutz whose normative behavior strictly follows Jewish law. In the religious kibbutz too, patterns, similar to those practiced in the secular kibbutz, which supplement the religious norms, have evolved. We cannot however, discuss the phenomenon here.

5 In March 1978 the Inter-Kibbutzim Social Committee introduced a number of changes in the July 1970 formulation of "mourning norms". The new version was printed on two folio sheets and distributed to all the kibbutzim.

guide. Secondly, we shall examine whether mourning patterns obligate the kibbutz as a community or only the bereaved family. According to the model I presented elsewhere (Rubin, 1977, 1979), it may be assumed that in a society – applying Bott's (1957) term of a tight-knit network – whose members are in daily contact, mourning would encompass not only the nuclear family, but friends, neighbors, and kinsmen. The mourning patterns apply to the community and do not specify norms for the individual or the family. Thirdly, despite the egalitarian ideology of the kibbutz, norms applied in the mourning ceremony depend on the status of the deceased. Different mourning patterns are practiced at the passing of kibbutz members or their children than at the death of non-member residents of the kibbutz, kinsmen of a kibbutz member, or non-resident kinsmen of a kibbutz member. In all cases the bereaved is a member of the kibbutz.

The contentions that mourning rites fulfill a functional "purpose", either serving as moral comfort or answering emotional needs of the bereaved[6] do not hold here. The bereaved in all cases discussed is a member of the kibbutz; however, the comfort extended depends on the status of the deceased.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The data on which this paper is based were collected during a seminar on mourning patterns in Israel, held at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, at Bar Ilan University. The researcher and his students interviewed kibbutz members, especially the first-generation founders. Documents from the Festival and Ceremony Archives of the kibbutz, located at Kibbutz Beit ha-Shita, and articles by kibbutz members, published in journals of the kibbutz movement, and in the collection of excerpts by Aryeh Ben Gurion (1963) of Beit Ha-Shita were analyzed.

We assumed that different mourning patters had evolved in large and in small kibbutzim; because with expansion, the earlier intimacy of the

6 On functional approaches, see, for example, Becker (1933), Hinton (1972: 169-197), Vernon (1970: 153-160).

community has been lost. Our examination of mourning patterns was thus carried out both in large kibbutzim (of more than 1000 people) and small kibbutzim (of about 300 persons). We did not distinguish between kibbutzim of different ideological trends.[7] We shall discuss only the mourning patterns of the bereaved and the social environment from the time of death to the end of the official mourning period, not the funeral, burial, memorial ceremonies, or aspects of grief and bereavement.[8]

MOURNING IN EARLY KIBBUTZ SOCIETY: ANOMIE AND PERPLEXITY

Death of old age was unknown in early kibbutz society. People died of disease, mostly malaria, were killed in accidents or by murderers, committed suicide – the rate of which was relatively high in those days[9] – and, of course, fell in armed clashes with Arabs. Those who died at the hands of Arabs were usually nationally acclaimed: headlines in newspapers and representatives of the institutions of the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community prior to 1948) attended the funeral. But in all other cases of untimely death, the kibbutz had no ceremonial means of expressing mourning. The usual procedure was: the grave was dug by kibbutz members assigned by the kibbutz manager; the funeral cortege proceeded in silence and then dispersed "with fists clenched and teeth gritted both figuratively and physically" (Gelb, 1979: 477).

Silence became the hallmark of the kibbutz funeral;[10] a reaction of restraint and order, as found in European German-speaking countries at

7 The kibbutz movement had four ideological trends. Ihud ha-Kevotzot, ve-ha-Kibbutz, the Kibbutz ha-Me-uhad, Ha-Kibbutz ha-Arzi- ha-Shomer ha-Za'ir, and ha-Dati. On the differences between them see Darin-Drabkin (1962).

8 For definitions of "mourning", "grief", "bereavement" see Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson (1976: 2).

9 Exact statistics on suicide are not available. But a look at tombstones in cemeteries of veteran kibbutzim will make us realize that the rate of suicide in early kibbutz society was relatively high. See also Gelb (1979: 477).

10 "We learned to conduct a solemn funeral… silence and ceremony were exemplary … a quiet atmosphere reigned in the cemetery" Ben Gurion (1963: 15).

the turn of the century, to the noisy, disorderly traditional funeral rite in Eastern Europe. Passive silence continued to be the symbol of the kibbutz funeral so long as a different form of funeral ceremony had not evolved. This silence, however, was embarrassing not only when the bereaved met other members of the kibbutz, but in an encounter of members of the kibbutz, even on days after the funeral.

The following two eye-witness accounts of death and mourning, which occurred in the 1930s, by veteran kibbutz members, will illuminate the anomie of mourning rites. The extreme case, presented first, sharply focuses the helplessness of the members of the kibbutz in the face of bereavement. The second is perhaps more representative of the embarrassment of members of the kibbutz when one of their peers is bereaved.

A veteran member of a kibbutz in Upper Galilee recalls that the first death in the kibbutz was that of an infant. The members of the kibbutz, not knowing what to do or say to the parents or to each other, remained behind closed doors. The narrator, who then worked in the locksmithery, remembers how he peeked through a crack of the hut, which served as workshop, and saw the father of the child, accompanied by a friend, carry the coffin to the burial site. He watched them walk along the paths of the Kibbutz until they had disappeared from view. In the oppressive, electrified air, it was possible to sense, he recounts, the burning glances of the kibbutz members which followed the strange procession through closed shutters. "Today", he said "when I recall the incident, I feel ashamed and cannot forgive my behavior." This extreme case sharply indicates the perplexity, embarrassment, and helplessness of these young people in their confrontation with the first death that had occurred in their kibbutz.

The second account, more common, told by a female member of a kibbutz in Emek Beit Sha'an, is of a bereaved wife: "At that time we did not have any mourning customs. Sarah [whose husband had died] came to the dining room the evening of the burial; she did not stay at home. Tray in hand, she stopped at one of the tables to tell of the last hours with her husband. She had a need to speak [of her grief], but standing there with the tray in her hand, she looked so out of place; her urge to unburden

herself was awkward in the dining room. Had she remained in her room, and we had come to visit her would perhaps have better befitted the occasion… It would have created an atmosphere of mourning…"

The statements of these two kibbutz members demonstrate the need for passage rites. The daily routine is not a suitable vehicle for the expression of the extraordinary. Similar situations recurred time and again in kibbutzim in those days; so long as early kibbutz society failed to come to grips with death, mourning patterns remained in a state of anomie. Since then mourning patterns have evolved; some of these shall be discussed below.

DISCUSSIONS ON MOURNING PATTERNS

Mourning rites in the kibbutz, despite the passing of one or two members, did not become a pressing question for many years. In time, however, kibbutz society lost its uniform age character. Parents joined their children on the kibbutz and an older age level was formed. By the 1950's and '60s, the founders of the first kibbutzim had aged with a consequent rise in the mortality rate (Hartum, 1966: 26).

The problem of mourning norms became acute during the Israeli wars. In 1948, the War of Independence, the fallen had been mostly first-generation pioneers, some of them singles, others had been family men who left behind young widows and small children, but whose parents were either abroad or not members or residents of the kibbutz. The fallen in the 1967 and 1973 wars were mostly second-or third-generation kibbutz members whose parents were among the founders of the kibbutz.

Over the years, discussions on mourning norms have become more intense, especially among first-generation kibbutz members. The following question was posed by a member of Kibbutz Hefzi-Bah, in the Jezreel Valley: "Will we discuss behavior and mourning customs every time a member of the kibbutz passes away? Where will all this lead to?[11] (Ben Gurion, 1963: 15). Others protested the custom of silence adopted

11 Characteristic of these discussions was the question as to where the cemetery should be. A member of Kibbutz Nezer Sereni stated, "When we were confronted by the first grave and we asked where it should be, a tense discussion ensued.

by early kibbutz society. They wanted "to break the tradition of silence at the graveside. Let him speak who has something to say, whose words, he feels, speak of truth… silence is vapid."[12] "*Let us not be silent at mourning*" said another "for if we do not fill the void with meaning and norms, it may be filled with the content strange and unacceptable to us" (Ben Gurion, 1963: 2, emphasis in the original).[13]

The search for normative mourning behavior is succinctly illustrated by a member of Kibbutz Maoz Haim, in Emek Beit Sha'an, "… Condolence norms have not evolved in the kibbutz. Many might assume that the bereavement is immersed in his grief and should not be disturbed. Others criticize the behavior of the condolers who, at the home of the bereaved … talk about other thing. But what remains is the loneliness of the mourner.… I have heard young boys ask: How should we behave in the presence of the bereaved? How should we express our condolences? From whom are they to learn when there are no generally accepted norms? (Ben Gurion, 1963: 11).

New norms, which bear traditional elements, are evolving, but these are not superseding the age-old customs. The kibbutz has not gone back to orthodox or conservative rites, but combines modern norms with tradition (Gelb, 1979: 478). The following is an interesting example of the introduction of traditional elements in mourning patters of the kibbutz, as told by Rahel, a nurse, member of a kibbutz in Emek Beit Sha'an, who is of European origin. During the 1950s, as a young nurse at the Infant Welfare Center of Emek Beit Sha'an, she instructed Moroccan immigrant

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Some wanted the cemetery far from the settlement; I said it should be close to the kibbutz…" Ben Gurion (1963: 2).

12 This statement is recorded in Ben Gurion (1963: 3) in a passage attributed to Y.T., with the indication – in an oral conversation. The speaker was apparently Yitzhak Tabenkin, one of the leaders of the kibbutz movement and a founder of Kibbutz Ein Harod, the first kibbutz in the Jezreel Valley, established in 1921.

13 A further quotation is of interest. "Our parents' and their generation's reaction to heir parents and the tradition of their forefathers is the very reaction that transformed [struck] us, the sons of rebels, dumb. We are silent even when we stand by a graveside…." (Tal, 1970).

mothers, who had been raised in a traditional Jewish society, in modern hygiene and nursing. Her colleague was a nurse of Moroccan extraction, whose brother had just passed away. Rachel wanted to pay a condolence visit, but did not know how to conduct herself on such an occasion. The cleaning woman at the Center, who was also from Morocco, explained to her some of the mourning customs: for example, not to extend greetings upon entering the house, to sit with the bereaved on the floor or on a low stool, to bring with her refreshments, and so on.[14] Having finished her spell at the Infant Welfare Center, Rahel returned to her work at the kibbutz clinic. When someone died in the kibbutz, the members turned to her for advice. Resorting to her experience in Beit Sha'an, she was able to guide them during this distressing period: They were to visit the bereaved at home, bring refreshments to be offered to other visitors, make coffee for the mourners and bring food to them so that they might not be obliged to fetch it themselves, sit with them, and speak of the deceased. The members of the kibbutz accepted her advice and to those who did not know, she explained that these were traditional Jewish customs. Thus the very customs that the first-generation pioneers had rejected, in modified form became indirectly part of the normative behavior of kibbutz society. The forementioned evidence does not imply that there were not members of kibbutzim who knew traditional Jewish mourning customs; it points to the transformation of mourning symbols.

MOURNING NORMS IN THE KIBBUTZ TODAY

Variation in mourning rites still exists in the kibbutz movement in Israel. Some kibbutzim, mostly small settlements situated near urban centers, stress the traditional mourning customs. They resort to the religious services of the *hevra kaddisha* (burial society) of the town. By and large, these kibbutzim belong to the Ihud ha-Kevutzot ve-ha-kibbutzim

14 On traditional Jewish mourning rites see, for example, Lamm (1969) and Gordon (1975).

movement, which ideologically tends more to the right.[15] Most kibbutzim, however, practice the mourning norms formulated in 1978,[16] by the Inter-Kibbutzim Social Committee, which, *inter alia,* recommends the establishment of a "memorial and perpetuation committee" in each kibbutz.[17]

The following mourning norms were prescribed by the committee:

- A three-day mourning period for the whole kibbutz. (In many small kibbutzim the mourning period lasts seven days).
- Mourning begins on the day of demise and "during those three days, including the evening of the third, there is to be no entertainment of any sort, such as parties or movies. In large kibbutzim the mourning period extends inclusively to the morrow of the burial, on which general meetings, lectures and committee sessions may be held." [18]
- Mourning does not take precedence over national or workers' holidays, but has priority over local kibbutz celebrations (such as the commemoration of the kibbutz's settlement on the land, the harvest festival [Pentecost], Purim festivities, etc."
- "A wedding is not postponed because of mourning."

15 For example, some members of Gan Shlomo, situated on the coastal plain, and of Hulda, in the Judean Foothills, kibbutzim of the Ihud ha-Kevutzot ve-ha-Kibbutz movement, "rend" their garments, and recite psalms, the *Kaddish* and the *El-Maleh Rahamim* ("The Almighty is full of Mercy") prayer at the funeral.

16 See note 5. The text of the mourning norms formulated in 1978 contains the following paragraph: obituary announcement, funeral arrangements, mourning period, memorial days and behavior on these occasions, a cemetery, archives, a committee in the kibbutz responsible for the execution of mourning norms and behavior at memorials, conclusion.

17 It is interesting to note the name of the committee – "Memorial and Perpetuation Committee", not mourning or burial committee, or burial society. The name of the committee bears no reference to death, only to "memorial and perpetuity". This committee has, to this day, not been established in many kibbutzim. All matters pertaining to mourning are dealt with by the internal affairs secretary of the kibbutz who, in the hour of need, recruits members for whatever tasks have to be carried out.

18 The text does not specify what constitutes a large or a small kibbutz. In the absence of a definition there is room for "flexibility".

- Memorial meetings are held either on the thirtieth day or a year after death, but not on the seventh day. A memorial pamphlet or bulletin is issued; all the members of the kibbutz attend the unveiling of the tombstone and a memorial service, held either in the dining hall or at the cultural center. The family is consulted in the arrangement of the service. On Memorial Day, in some kibbutzim, it is customary to place the picture of the deceased on a pedestal, at the entrance of the dining hall or in another conspicuous location, with two burning candles at either side.

Besides Memorial Day, on the eve of the Day of Independence, which commemorates those who fell in the defense of Israel, the kibbutz holds a memorial for its departed, either on Yom Kippur or on the day the kibbutz settled on the land. Some kibbutzim have a memorial room in which are housed dossiers of the dead containing pictures, writings and tapes. Others keep a memorial book in which are inscribed the deceased members, their children and parents, as well as departed temporary non-member residents of the kibbutz. In short, the book is a record of all those interred in the cemetery of the kibbutz.

These regulations presume that the whole kibbutz is in mourning, a fact taken for granted by the members. Mourning becomes problematic in large kibbutzim where there is a more sizable older population (though not necessarily proportionally) and death occurs more frequently. The increase in funerals and mourning weighs heavily on the population of the kibbutz if all members are obliged to attend the obsequies and observe the mourning period. At a seminar of cultural coordinators, a member of a kibbutz stated: "A three-day (mourning) period seems to me minimally long enough …. you cannot impose an extended mourning period on a large group of people, many of whom do not feel bereaved, and also because in such a large community in which death occurs more frequently, you cannot disrupt social life for long…"[19] This passage succinctly pinpoints the dilemma of a large kibbutz. Conspicuous here is the fact that

19 The seminar was held in Kibbutz Mizra, in November 1970.

no attempt is made to differentiate between the mourning of the family and the kibbutz. For example, the family might have been allowed a longer mourning period (seven days), and the kibbutz a shorter one. The fact that no distinction is made implies the family unity of the kibbutz.

No clear-cut norms have been formulated to dictate the behavior of the bereaved and none to guide the public in its conduct toward him, except for the article that states "On mourning days members of the kibbutz should visit the bereaved family". Absence of such norms does not necessarily deprive the mourner, quite the contrary; abundant evidence points to the generous moral comfort extended him. However, such consolation is a spontaneous gesture on the part of the members of the kibbutz toward the family and does not follow prescribed behavior. Some mourners eat in the dining hall, others do not; some grow a beard, as a sign of mourning, during the first seven days or more, other do not; some rend their garments, others do not, and so on.

The general pattern of mourning behavior practiced is to accompany the mourner to his room after the funeral. Food is brought to the bereaved family if they prefer not to eat in the dining hall. Friends and neighbors host the visitors who come to pay their condolences. The extent of the mourning period is flexible, some observe seven days, during which they neither work nor appear in public, others prefer to go to work a day or two after the interment.[20]

GRIEVANCES ABOUT COLLECTIVE MOURNING IN THE LARGE KIBBUTZ

As long as the kibbutz is relatively small, general attendance at funerals and memorial ceremonies is not problematic. But in the larger kibbutzim, where the older population is more sizable and the death rate higher, there is an increased complaint that attendance at funerals has dwindled. "The younger generation, certainly the youth, does not rush to attend the funeral of an elderly person," stated a member of

20 According to Ben Gurion (1963, 1979) and to eye-witness reports.

Kibbutz Ashdot Yaacov; "they are resentful and angry when a movie is cancelled because of the passing of an elderly person". Another member vexedly exclaimed, "It hurts to see how few come to fulfil the humane percept of paying their last respects" (Ben Gurion, 1963: 7).

A member of Kibbutz Beit ha-Shita commented, "In the last few months a number of deaths have occurred [in our kibbutz]…. close to the holidays. Tz.H. passed away the week of Independence Day; thirty days had not yet passed when Father K. died and at his thirtieth-day memorial ceremony, we learned of the demise of Mother V.B.[21] Independence Day was not celebrated as usual. And should we cancel the festivities of the Festival of the First Fruits [Pentecost]? The settlement has numerically expanded and members and parents are growing old. Not everyone knows the other intimately. This is no longer the compact group, which was like a small family, which became greatly upset at the passing of a member".

Obligatory funeral attendance was not questioned by the founding members of the kibbutz. Protest has increasingly come from the ranks of the second generation, and especially the third: "I do not attend every funeral, only if I had any contact with the Deceased do I go", said a young girl. And her girlfriend rejoined, "Feelings and mourning behavior should not be dictated. I believe that if the Deceased were a person dear to me, I would not be able to go to the movies [during the mourning period]. There should be no hypocrisy in the matter".

This situation led to changes in the mourning patterns of the large kibbutz.[22] The mourning period has been reduced to one day, instead of

21 In the kibbutz it is customary to use a classifying terminology of address: the grandfather generation is called "grandfather" or "grandmother", the parent generation "father" or "mother", and the generation of the children "son" or "daughter". See Talmon-Garber (1970: 18).

22 An example of the demographical change in the kibbutz, due to mortality, is illuminating. The data are from a kibbutz founded in 1927, on the coastal plain, in the center of the country. The founders of the kibbutz were relatively older, aged twenty-eight to thirty, when they settled on the land. The parents of some of the members immigrated, especially after the Nazis rose to power, and came to live on the kibbutz. They did not become members.

three, as in the small kibbutz. And while in the 1970 regulations, mourning was to start on the day of the burial, in the 1978 regulations, it begins the day of demise, which, in fact, reduces the mourning period. While in the 1970 regulations, mourning does not precede a wedding "it causes the postponement of the wedding feast to a later date", in the 1978 regulations this clause is deleted and the wedding feast takes place on the day of the nuptials.

In a large kibbutz postponement of a celebration is problematic. While the regulations stated that Purim festivities should be postponed because of mourning, in reality this is not always carried out. The following circular was distributed in one of the larger kibbutzim of Emek Beit Sha'an on the day of *Purim* (2/29/80), on which a grandmother passed away.

> Dear Member, *Shalom,*
>
> Due to the bereavement that has befallen our kibbutz hours before the *Purim* festivities, we decided not to cancel the *Purim* party entirely, but to hold it on a smaller scale. The secretariat

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Fifty-eight people died in a period of fifty years (1927-1976). For the first nine years (1927-1935) no one passed away. The first death, caused by a work accident, occurred in 1936, the second due to illness. To 1956, most of the members who passed away were relatively young. They had been either ill or were killed in accidents. After 1956, demise of old age increased. Most of the parents who passed away died of old age (over the age of 65), not all of a very ripe old age, of course. After the mid-1960s, the death rate of old age among members of the kibbutz rose with a parallel decline in the number of parents to die of old age.

DEATH RATE IN A KIBBUTZ

Years	No. of deceased members	No. of deceased parents	Total
1927-1936	2	-	2
1937-1946	3	6	9
1947-1956	6	5	11
1957-1966	8	8	16
1967-1976	18	2	20
Total	37	21	58

> and the cultural committee decided to hold the *Purim* party in a small section of the dining hall. Before coming to this decision we have considered the matter at length, weighting all the possibilities and their import. Many are the preparations that have gone into making the *Purim* party. Since some of the members who organized the festivities will be absent next week and the organizing committee believes that it is not possible to postpone the party for a week, we hope that the public will understand why we took this decision.
>
> *The Secretariat and the Cultural Committee*

The decision was taken only after the family had given its consent. Had the family been opposed, the celebration would have been postponed. Members of the kibbutz later said that the party had been "gay and successful". In similar cases, the family is always consulted, but it has not yet happened that they should have reservations. On the contrary, the bereaved encourage the organizers of the party to approach the cultural committee not to cancel the public festivities. The solution is generally as above: A "change" is made, the party, scheduled to be held in the whole area of the large dining hall, takes place in a small section, which, in fact, is a symbolic expression of the mourning.

On the day of mourning, or during the three-day period, the youngsters of a large kibbutz can hardly be prevented from meeting for recreational purposes. More than once the solution has been to seek entertainment in a nearby town or in the neighboring kibbutz.

The kibbutz also observes a scaling of communal attendance of mourning, depending on the status of the deceased. For example, at one time, in Kibbutz Yifat, *seven* mourning days were held at the demise of a *member or child, two* at the passing of resident parents. No mourning was declared at the death of kinsmen who lived outside the kibbutz, except abstention from recreational activities on the day of death. Some years later, when the kibbutz had grown in size, a new regulation was enforced: mourning of

two days at the demise of a *parent* or *child*. Thus the number of mourning days decreased. According to the latest regulations of the kibbutz movement, three days of mourning are to be observed from the day of death (in a large kibbutz one day), but only the day of burial at the demise of a temporary resident. No mourning is to be observed at the passing of a kinsman who lives outside the kibbutz. Small kibbutzim do, however, acknowledge some kind of mourning.

DISCUSSION: SOCIAL NETWORK AND MOURNING

Our research has three objectives: to examine the evolvement of mourning patterns in the kibbutz, whether these mourning patterns apply to the community or to the individual or to both, and to what extent the status of the deceased determines differential mourning norms. The evolvement of mourning patterns encompassed the two later objectives. The obvious questions are: Why does the kibbutz observe communal mourning and does not formulate mourning norms for the individual? And why have differential mourning patterns evolved?

The phenomenon may be understood on the basis of a model I presented elsewhere (Rubin, 1979). There I showed that the kibbutz, following Bott's (1957) terminology, is an entity which has a tight-knit network of social relations, in which "everyone knows everyone else". In the kibbutz, the different social circles in which the individual functions greatly overlap: the circles of kinsmen, neighbors, friends and coworkers. A colleague at work is also your neighbor, your friend with whom you might spend your leisure time and he might possibly be a kinsman. In a loose-knit social network, characteristic of modern urban society, on the other hand, persons from one circle of acquaintanceship do not necessarily know people of the other circles – the neighbor is not a co-worker, who in turn is not a friend, and so on. In a tight-knit network the individual developed many emotive relationships outside the nuclear family, so that death is not the sole concern and problem of the individual, but one that the whole social network has to come to grips with. The network of ceremonies focuses on the restoration of the damaged network of social tasks. In the process

of restoring the social structure, the individual "gains" moral comfort and is rehabilitated.

In a loose-knit network, the death of a friend does not affect the social network as a whole. It is mainly the nuclear family that has been afflicted. Since the social network has not been impaired, no ceremonies are required. Bereavement and mourning is the concern of the individual.

Kibbutz society posited a substitute to the traditional mourning rites in that it incorporated some traditional elements in its mourning patterns. The kibbutz mourning ceremony contains elements not overtly religious whose primary function is to convey the solidarity of the group. Through communal mourning, which is the principal expression of the ceremony, moral comfort is also extended to the individual. It is important to point out that the ceremonies are not emotionally highly charged. There are not many ceremonial aspects to mourning as in the tight-knit traditional network; however, mourning is widely encompassing since all members are formally obliged to observe it.

There were few kinsmen among the first generation of the kibbutz; for, as we shall recall, the founders had been single upon immigration. Neighborhood, work and friendship ties had been especially close. Second- and third-generation members of the kibbutz have already formed family frameworks (Talmon-Garber, 1970: 12-35, especially 29-33), and the circle of kinsmen has become interlaced with the other social circles. Members of the kibbutz see themselves as one big family "which vouchsafes the social and economic well-being of the orphan and the widow. At the death of a child in our children's quarters we *all* are bereaved, no less than the parents. At the passing of a member, of the kibbutz *we all* are orphaned. At the departure of one of us, we not only lost a friend, father, wife or son, but a partner in our way of life. These aspects transform the mourning of the individual into a mourning of the whole community." (Ben Gurion, 1963: 4). [23]

23 Familism is succinctly expressed in the following statement by a member of Kibbutz Gevat: "In our society a person is involved in the life of the other not only in the daily routine, but in his all-around social and cultural existence;

It is therefore not surprising that this feeling finds expression in the family terminology current in the kibbutz – the deceased (in fact everyone) has a familial appellations. The elderly generation, the parents of the kibbutz members are called "grandfather" or "grandmother", the intermediate generation is "father", "mother" or "member". The young generation is called "son" or "daughter".[24] Also, in newspaper obituaries, the kibbutz announces the bereavement jointly with the family, and sometimes without it, with the term "house of" usually preceding the name of the kibbutz; and "house" expresses familism.[25]

The concept of the kibbutz as a large family thus explains why the kibbutz introduced collective mourning. The absence of formal mourning norms for the individual may also be derived from the kibbutz ideology which, in its initial revolutionary stage, was anti-familial. The kibbutz saw itself as an indivisible entity. The preservation of the family as a primary unit might have clashed with the individual's responsibility toward the collective.[26]

The kibbutz as a community, through its mourning rites, solves its existential problem. Thus the whole kibbutz is bereaved and in mourning at the death of a member because the network of his interaction spanned the whole kibbutz. However, when the demise does not affect the whole community – at the passing of a person not a member of the kibbutz –

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different generations are in daily contact with no houses to separate them…" (Ben Gurion 1963: 4).

24 See note 21 above. Early kibbutz society opposed familial terminology. Children addressed parents by their first name. The use of the personal name creates intimacy, the familial, distance and respect. This concept went hand in hand with the egalitarian ideology of the kibbutz which centers on the group which sees itself threatened by the family. In time, familial terminology again became current. The kibbutz realized that in order to impose discipline in education remoteness and asymmetry in relations was required and that the family, in fact, posed no threat to the kibbutz (see Talmon-Garber 1962).

25 The kibbutz, in newspaper obituary announcements, sometimes signs "The House of Revadim", or "The Family an the House of Tel Katzir".

26 On the anti-familism trend in kibbutz, see Talmon-Garber (1970: 29-33). See also note 23.

the community as a collective body does not participate in the mourning of the individual.

As the kibbutz expands, a member's participation decreases in the various fields of activity in which he took part when the community was small. The cases in which not "everyone knows everyone" are multiplying and mourning for persons one does not know becomes a nuisance. In such cases, mourning, as per Epstein's terms (1969), is centered into the "effective network" of the individual and not in the framework of his "extended network".[27]

CONCLUSION

Our study of mourning ceremonies in the kibbutz revealed the connection between the social structure of the kibbutz and the mourning patterns that evolved. The silence and inaction of early kibbutz society reflect the community's perplexity during that period. Out of this confusion evolved a network of mourning ceremonies – some of which were discussed here – which convey the collective ideology of the kibbutz and posit the group as a primary unit. The kibbutz's expansion, which transformed it into an anonymous body for many of its members, led to changes in the patterns of mourning which are expressive of the new situation.

27 Epstein (1969) developed his terminology on the basis of Bott (1957). "Effective network" is a network of relations in which differences in status are not considered; "extended network" is a social framework in which differences of status tend to be stressed.

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PART THREE

PERSONAL DEFENITIONAL RITES: CHANGING ONE'S IDENTITY

CHAPTER SIX
FROM FAT TO THIN: INFORMAL RITES AFFIRMING IDENTITY CHANGE

Nissan Rubin, Carmella Shmilovitz and Meira Weiss

We experience changes in status and identity throughout our lives. Some status changes are planned and institutionalized, and naturally lead to the acquisition of new identities. These transformations are expected, and the point of transition is publicly announced, such as when a person receives an academic degree (Strauss, 1969: 90-93). Other transformations are the result of a slow, cumulative process, where points of transition are not obvious and the change remains unannounced (as in individuals who attempt to hide their true age). Regardless of whether the identity change is abrupt or gradual, announced or unannounced, social approval to establish the new identity will be forthcoming, so long as the identity that we attribute to ourselves corresponds with that which others attribute to us (Stone, 1981: 189-190).

There is another form of identity change, however, which cannot be considered part of a cumulative process, nor is it expected by others, even if planned. Thus, announcement of the transition may come as a shock. We expect identity to remain relatively constant in the domain of interpersonal relations, particularly among primary groups, where relations are continuous and less subject to change. Extreme examples are religious conversion, treason or a sex change. Such events are changes in one's basic status, which is expected to remain constant. Self- and social acknowledgement of the transition is painful and ongoing.

An interesting example in this respect is cited by Garfinkel (1967: 116-185), who describes the transformation from male to female of Agnes. Other researchers, who also employed ethnomethodological studies of sex change operations among transsexuals, investigated the social structuralization of gender (Feinbloom, 1976; Kando, 1973; Kessler and McKenna, 1978). Bolin (1988), in contrast, has adopted a more comprehensive theoretical perspective, adding a symbolic, interactional approach to the accepted anthropological one. In her study, she examined the ceremonial processes and strategies that the individual underwent up to the point at which he/she was incorporated into the new status group. Her research shows that every phase of the transformation is accompanied by a ceremony, and that these ceremonies are an integral factor influencing the success of the transformation. Thus, rather than focusing exclusively on status passages, Bolin also discusses rites of passage (following Van Gennep, 1960, and Turner, 1967), thereby providing a better understanding of the dynamics of identity transformation.

The present study seeks to contribute to the above body of research by investigating the structure of personal, informal rites of passage. An attempt will be made to show that they have an overall structure and transformational significance similar to those of the formal rites of passage described by Van Gennep and Turner. While we do not deal with all of the facets and structural characteristics of status passage, as described by Glaser and Strauss (1971), we attempt to apply Turner's macro-level of analysis to the micro-level of informal symbolic interaction. Specifically, we attempt to show how Turner's theoretical analysis of collective situations is also suitable for personal, idiosyncratic situations. Even though Turner refrains from using the term "ritual" in reference to secular situations, one can discern a general framework which is similar to private and public liminal states; in both, rituals are practiced in order to move from status to status.

Myerhoff contends that modern society lacks rituals to organize discontinued relations resulting from status change that derive from social and geographical mobility. She argues that rituals are absent even during

major junctures in one's life, such as divorce, recovery from an operation, menopause and "emptying of the nest" when the last child leaves home (Myerhoff 1982: 129-132). It is our belief, however, that these states are accompanied by unconscious yet discernible rites. Indeed, Myerhoff herself raises this point in one of her later articles (1987), by referring to a definitional ceremony, i.e. a ceremony instituted by deprived social groups which enables the group to identify itself publicly in order to stand up for its rights. It is interesting to note that this ceremony dramatizes the identity of the group that performs it.

In the present paper, we introduce a new form of ritual – one that is practiced partly in private and partly among friends and relatives. We refer to this as a "personal definitional rite", carried out by individuals undergoing a change of identity. The newly acquired identity is practiced ritually in private and in the presence of others in order to gain recognition for the new social state.[1] In presenting this personal definitional rite, we refer to the case studies of formerly obese individuals who underwent a process of drastic weight loss and rid themselves of the stigma of being "fat". In the relatively rapid process of losing weight, and given their new status as "thin" people, such individuals grapple with a new identity.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

In contemporary society, fat people are subject to several unpleasant stigmas. They bear a medical stigma, since obesity is perceived as a "disease" which necessitates medical counseling. Excess weight is generally considered a health hazard, and individuals are encouraged by physicians to reduce, even though research has shown that the medical damage caused by "normal" obesity has been somewhat exaggerated

1 See Turner (1983: 367-368) on the active perspective of ritual and its ability to change conditions. Examples of this can be found in Paige and Paige's (1981) study of transition rites and their functions in tribal political tactics. Fertility rituals, for example, serve as a tool for mobilizing political support in the male struggle for property and fertility rights with regard to women and children. See also Rubin's (1990) [chapter 1 in this volume] study of the American funeral, in which a support network is mobilized from the public for the family in mourning.

(Beller, 1977). Moreover, overweight people bear a religious stigma, since "overindulgence" is a sin; an esthetic stigma, as "fat" is considered "ugly"; and a moral stigma, since they are considered "unable to control themselves" (Allon, 1973). Obese individuals may perceive themselves as society perceives them and play the role of a "fat" person (Schwartz, 1984). Their clothes are not stylish, and they are degraded when they buy new ones, when they use public transportation and, indeed, whenever they are seen in public.

Obese individuals who rapidly become thin after an operation are subject not only to a considerable visible change in their physiognomy, but also to a change of identity. The intensity of that identity change is attested to by Yardena, who lost about 80 kilograms (175 lbs):

> I have completely changed. My character has changed.... I used to be very suspicious. People weren't trustworthy. Today I give people a chance. I think differently. I am more relaxed and less nervous. I am happier.... I have learned to leave things on my plate, something that fat people don't know how to do; they have to wipe up everything. Part of the change is the pleasure of buying pretty clothes whenever you want and not just where fat people buy.... I began to see myself as a thin person just after the operation, even though I was still fat. When I was fat, I used to dream that I had gotten up in the morning and all the fat had melted off, I was thin. When I was fat, I used to go out and dance... now I can be myself more. There are people I no longer speak to; I know they took advantage of me.... In those days I used to say "as long as I am with people, as long as I am accepted".... I was willing to sacrifice a lot. Today I stand up for myself. If there is something I don't like, it has to change. It's fun to be thin, it's a different quality of life.... At one time I laughed like a fat person, a roly poly laugh. Today I am more delicate. Today I am ready to take more risks. I am thinking of opening up a new business. I want something of my own, a new beginning... I used to keep things to myself, I didn't speak out....

> The fat made me willing to swallow a lot… You feel as if everything is beginning, everything is new. Everything you wanted to do when you were fat and had been unable to do, or afraid to do.... A fat person who lost weight as a result of an operation is less selfish. Before the operation, he thought just about his personal belly.... New people accept me the way I am [but] I show pictures. I want them to now I wasn't always this way. I was fat; I let everyone know this, so that they should know that there was a success. This is a totally different life, I am a totally different person.

Yardena's testimony suggests that she has rid herself of the stigma of being an overeater, unable to control herself. Indeed, the operation gave all our respondents the opportunity to rid themselves of their undesirable "fat" image and integrate themselves into the "normal" world. Almost all of them expressed a sense of revolutionary change.

A fat person who loses weight gradually undergoes a slow process of transformation which is not perceived as having a single turning point (Strauss, 1969: 93) and is not accompanied by rites. This gradual pattern of weight loss fits several formulas of status passage defined by Glaser and Strauss (1971: 3), involving scheduling (setting the expected pace of weight loss), regulation (calling for specific behavior in relation to food), and a prescription for action. In this case, status passage is not accompanied by rites of passage. In contrast, individuals who undergo drastic weight loss and thus struggle with an abrupt identity change can be expected to seek an easing of the transition by means of several rites of passage.

It should be emphasized, however, that the rites themselves do not bring about the transformation from "fat" to "thin". Unlike religious rituals, where it is the ceremony itself that brings about the transformation (Turner 1967: 19; 1980: 159; 1983: 360), the move from "fat" to "thin" is rendered by the act of medical surgery, i.e. it is the result of a rational, technical act. For our respondents, the rites serve both as a tool for alleviating anxieties that develop prior to the surgery (which is low risk), and as a means of announcing the subsequent identity change and redefining themselves.

These rites proved to them that they were acceptable in their new identity. They changed their image and redefined their status, acquiring power that had previously been unavailable to them (Turner 1980: 151).

RESEARCH METHOD

The study investigated individuals who were clinically defined as severally obese and underwent a process of drastic weight loss by means of gastric reduction surgery. This surgery is not considered cosmetic treatment, and it is not performed without medical justification (for example, individuals suffering from obesity due to endocrinological disorders are not operated on). The procedure, generally performed on individuals between the ages of 14 and 55, involves dividing the stomach into two parts either horizontally or vertically, and connecting the parts with two rows of staples. This method makes the patients feel full even after eating a small amount of food (Cogbill and Moore 1983: 506). Following recovery from the operation, the patients gradually resumes normal food consumption: during the initial phases, only liquids are consumed; afterwards, food must be finely ground in a food processor and then gradually thickened. About two months after the operation, the patients reach a point where they can eat solids. Solid food must be consumed slowly and chewed well, separating liquids from solids.

The surgeons who performed this operation reported a 90% success rate. All of the respondents lost their excess weight within 8 – 18 months, and the change in their external appearance was noticeable shortly after the operation.

Our respondents are not formerly overweight people who had lost excess weight through a conventional diet and exercise program. Rather, these are individuals who suffered from severe obesity, whose body weight was double the norm for their height and build, or fifty kilograms (110lbs.) more than the norm. This should be compared to the clinical definition of an obese person, i.e. anyone whose weight exceeds twenty percent of the norm set in height-weight tables (Bugokovski et al., 1983). It should be noted, however, that contemporary definitions of overweight

are inherently problematic, because conceptions of "standard weight", "ideal" and "acceptable" are socio-culturally determined, rather than established by an objective measure (Bennet and Gurin, 1982).

In September 1983 and May 1985, 44 women and 7 men underwent gastric reduction surgery in one hospital in central Israel. Our aim was to interview all of those surgery patients who had lost at least thirty kilograms (66 lbs.) Of the 51 people who underwent the surgery, we interviewed 36 (70 percent) – 30 of whom were women and 6 of whom were men. Of those who were not interviewed, 8 did not lose the required weight (16 percent); 5 could not be located (10 percent), and 2 refused to be interviewed (four percent). The entire research population underwent the same operation in the same hospital, in order to control the treatment method. Most of the subjects viewed the interview as part of the treatment, although they were explicitly told that it was solely for research purposes and that they had the right of refusal. The subjects were pleased to cooperate for the benefit of future patients. All respondents agreed that the interviews be recorded. It was evident that the interview served as a forum for rehashing the rites they underwent.

Each interview encompassed several types of questions. In addition to demographic questions, referring, for example, to age, education and ethnic origin, there were also open questions aimed at revealing the respondent's self-image as a "fat" person prior to surgery and as a "thin" person afterwards. We also asked subjects to describe their lifestyles before and after weight loss. Finally, we inquired into the reactions of others regarding the decision to have the surgery, as well as the new condition of thinness. During the course of the interview, subjects were permitted to direct the discussion toward questions and issues that they considered appropriate. Most of the interviews took place in the respondents' homes throughout the country; a few were carried out in the hospital during periodical checkups in the Nutrition ward. Every interview was transcribed after taping, and then analyzed. The names of all subjects were changed (on this research method, see Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Strauss and Schatzman, 1973). No correlation was found between demographic statistics and behavior.

RITES OF SEPARATION AND AGGREGATION

The rites that were described during the interviews reflect the confusion of the liminal state (Turner 1967: 93-111). Our respondents simultaneously incorporated rites of separation from the former status, and rites of aggregation into the new status.

The pre-surgical rites, which appear to address the individual's anxiety, can be considered rites of separation from the domestic world, from everything close and familiar. Upon entrance into the neutral hospital setting, the self is renounced; the individual loses control over what happens to him or her. This "total institution" (Goffman, 1957) is a liminal sphere in which the drastic transition by surgery takes place. Moreover, the surgery in itself is a liminal stage (although, obviously, we have no accounts of the surgical stage from the patients, as they were unconscious). After the surgery the patients are emotionally drained and succumb to the elements of the liminal state described by Turner: isolation and preclusion from daily activities, dependence on others, subjection to authority figures, and loss of personal status. Furthermore, the patients leave the hospital in liminal state – between their former world and the new world to which they must slowly adjust and in which they must reaggregate their status. In the case of these patients, once the results of the surgery become more evident, the question is not just the physical adjustment, but primarily of social adjustment: a new personal and social identity. This adjustment is accompanied by private rites that help the person cross the barrier into the normal world.

The post-operative patients' confused and ambiguous state is evident from their simultaneous performance of rites of separation and aggregation. The former are aimed at relinquishing past memories and shattering the "mirrors" (e.g. clothes, photographs) that reflect their old image. The rites of aggregation express the desire to be accepted in the new status, and include rituals of self- and social ratification. Rites of self-ratification strengthen the individual's perception of their new status. As opposed to the proverbial breaking of the mirror in rites of separation, here individuals see themselves through a new mirror – the "mirror" of new clothing

and a truly new image in a real mirror. Rites of social ratification are based on retrospective tales and photographs that merge the former image with the present, and elicit surprise in those witnessing the transformation.

PRE-OPERATIVE RITES OF SEPARATION

Pre-surgical rites were used to ease separation from the old identity. They were of several kinds: written farewells (letters and wills), "before" photographs and a last meal.

Farewell letters and wills.

Prior to surgery, Grazia, who is 25 years old and single, wrote three "very long letters". She gave them to her girlfriend with the instruction that:

> If anything happens to me, you should give these letters to the persons here indicated. Afterwards (after the operation), when I reread them, I saw that they were morally taking stock of myself and those around me.

Forty-three year old Sigal, married with three children, did not tell any member of her family of her intention to undergo the operation, owing to her husband's illness. She thus had none to whom to bid farewell prior to the surgery. Instead, she left a will in her hospital chart (on last wills and testaments before surgery, see Reading, 1979).

Before photographs.

The above examples are "pessimistic" rites of separation that express a fear of separation from life. There were also patients whose rites were more "optimistic", and their separation rites only represented the separation from their former life as a fat person. These people were photographed before the surgery in order to have a "fresh reminder" of that former period.

The last meal

Several respondents referred to a last meal. This is a rite of separation from fat that is performed with friends in good spirit. However, the name independently given to this rite by all of those interviewed has a double meaning: not only is it the last meal where one "is allowed" to eat everything, it can also be viewed as one's last meal before execution, where one can order food fit for a king. This double entendre expresses a sense of ambiguity, of anxiety and hope combined. In the words of Orna, 27 and single: "On the eve of surgery, we went to eat steak in a restaurant for the last time". Obviously, she knew that this was not the last time in her life that she would eat steak. Rather, she apparently saw this as her last steak dinner in her old life.

Prior to surgery, the obese individuals feel as if they are at the threshold of a new life, entailing new eating habits. Up to this point, a certain dietary regimen was followed, with the knowledge that the ingestion of a certain quantity of certain foods was unhealthy. Nonetheless, each one "cheated" now and again with "forbidden foods", under the assumption that dieting could be postponed till the morrow. However, the surgery, if successful, creates a wholly new situation, wherein unrestrained eating presents an imminent threat to one's life. The patients were not the only ones to initiate a last meal. Often, it was family and friends who conceived the idea. Grazia, who wrote the farewell letters, related that her friends came to visit her in the hospital before the operation. They brought her clothes "and we went out to a club and we drank wine and ate lots of cheese". She also stated that she felt the need to "have a lot of sex before the operation".

POST-OPERATIVE RITES OF SEPARATION

The two major post-surgical rites of separation from their former identity revolved around old clothes and old photographs. In many cases, these involved magic elements, physical dissolution and burning. Rites of destroying clothes and old photos are a "magical" means of signifying that the past is destroyed and will not return.

Discarding/keeping old clothes

Most of the respondents had a special relationship of some kind to their old large-sized clothes. Their attitude towards the clothes is indicative of their degree of ability to ultimately separate from their former image. This is similar to the dilemma of mourners with regard to the clothing of the deceased: discarding it symbolizes separation from the loved one, while retention of the clothing attests to the inability to separate.

Whereas Naomi "packed up all of my clothes and sent them to be sold at the flea market", others with less business sense gave their clothes to the needy or to family members. In any case, they did not leave any item as a reminder of the past, thus expressing a clean break with their former identity. Still others intentionally kept a garment as a reminder. Sefie, 25 and unmarried, threw away all of his clothes except for one pair of pants "in order to remember what I was, both for me and for my friends". Lilach, also 25 and single, got rid of her clothing in stages, whenever the closets were overflowing. In the end she retained only the "jeans she wore to the operation". This is the only thing I am saving as a keepsake". Lilach did not have any photographs of herself before the operation, so she kept something concrete to define the changes in her body boundaries.

On the other hand, there were those who kept all of their clothes. Perhaps they were unable to overcome their fears of failure. Ava stated: "My old clothes are in the closet. I am afraid. I don't know what will happen". Leah, a married mother of three, disclosed a practical approach: she altered the old clothing to suit her new figure. This is not for economic reasons, as even before the operation she had made herself "beautiful and unique clothing". Her inability to part from her old clothes indicates ambivalence and difficulty in accepting her new status. Even during the course of the interview, she expressed anxiety about the operation, and doubts regarding its necessity. She maintained that she would have to watch her diet now, and had she been able to do so successfully in the past, she would not have required the surgery in the first place. Leah's consciousness remains in the liminal state. She has not crossed the boundaries

into her new situation, and thus she does not discard her old clothes, but rather alters them.

Perhaps discarding all of one's clothes concretizes separation and the desire to forget the past. It might also indicate the hidden fear of returning to one's former state. Preserving one garment as a keepsake expresses a break from the past and confidence in one's ability to preserve accomplishments. The old "flag" declares the "victory".

Burning old photographs

As already mentioned, Lilach was never photographed when she was fat because, "I would have looked terrible". Except for a pair of pants, she has no reminder of the past. In contrast, Tamar, a 31-year-old single woman, had a completely different rite of separation: "I burned all of the photographs from that period. It is shocking to see pictures of someone with a pudgy face".

This rite of photograph burning, which is so common among divorcees and separated lovers symbolizing the end of relations (Myerhoff, 1982), was uncommon among these weight loss patients. Such a rite may have more meaning for the divorcees since their circumstances involve rage and frustration, whereas the anger of the weight-loss patients grew less intense after the operation. On the contrary, there were those that were photographed before the operation, and most proudly show these pictures of their past (see below). The situation was different for Tamar: she did not dispose of her old clothes, but instead parted from the past by burning the photographs. Whatever the mode, a need for a rite of separation is indicated. Perhaps Tamar's actions reflect her inability to accept a new situation, and her anger over the past.

RITES OF AGGREGATION THROUGH SELF-RATIFICATION

One of the most difficult problems of the obese is finding clothes that fit properly. Few establishments carry large sizes, and then only with a

limited selection. One must search from store to store, absorbing insults and degradation. There are those who prefer to have their clothing specially made, even though this is time-consuming and extremely expensive.

When formerly obese person rapidly became slim and able to buy normal sized clothes, they acquire a tangible sign of crossing the boundary between abnormal and normal. The actual purchases of clothing, as well as the ability to try on clothes in a store, are important elements of rites of aggregation. They offer a mechanism for the removal of stigma. By buying regular-sized clothes in an everyday manner, the formerly fat person has removed the badge of shame. This is reinforced by the image that the formerly obese now see in the mirror. In essence, both mirror and clothing serve to reflect their new selves.

Trying on clothing

Purchasing normal-sized clothes in a regular store symbolizes the return to the community of human beings. The return to fashion is a return to society, and in many cases it recaptures a lost youth. After losing ninety kilograms (about 200 lbs.), 32 years old Hannah developed a new hobby of going through the racks in clothing stores. When the clerk would ask if she needed any help, she would answer: "You do not have anything suitable for me". This was small, but sweet revenge for the years she had constantly suffered the humiliation of: "Madam, we do not have clothing in your size".

"Do you know how it feels", asks Tikvah, a 40 year old mother of three, "to hear, sorry, we do not have your size" and what a feeling it is now that, instead of size 54 (24 USA) pants that I could not find and did not fit me, I can find size 42 (12). Life is much better. Much easier, better in many ways…". Nira, a 37 year old kibbutz member and mother of four, related that a clothes salesman would sometimes come to the kibbutz, "I would look on with jealousy and only buy socks. Socks were my consolation. I would laugh with my girlfriends and say: 'so, I'll buy another pair of socks,

so what?"" Yardena, a 31 year old divorcee stated, "Now, I dress normally". These stories represent the essence of the transition from abnormal to normal, or in the words of Shmuel, age sixty and one of the older patients, from a "nonperson" to a "person".

Clothing concretely defines the body boundaries. Any reduction in clothing size is one stage in a changed identity. By trying on clothing and wondering whether or not it will fit, the person losing weight verifies the size of his or her body. Sefie, for example, felt that as a fat person, "I have no boundaries", and ceased looking at himself in the mirror. Only when he began losing weight did he begin to look in the mirror. Those interviewed enjoyed verifying the changes in their body through clothing sizes. For instance, Hannah related: "I began buying clothes when I lost forty kilograms (88 lbs.)…I went into a store and tried on size 48 (18), and I saw that 46 (16) was OK. Now I wear size 44 (14), I can't quite get into size 42 (12)."

Clothing size is a more efficient means of measuring weight loss than the scales, because clothing publicly testifies to the change, and is a constant reminder. Weighing is only done occasionally and usually in private. Awareness of this was evident in Yardena's response: "a week after I left the hospital, I went out to buy a sweatsuit to wear when having my stitches removed. One cannot return to the hospital in old clothes. Losing eight kilograms (18 lbs.) is not easy. I tried on Men's Extra Large, but it was not good for me. I got upset that it didn't fit me, but I was not upset that I only lost eight kilograms." Only one week had passed since her hospital discharge, and Yardena already felt a bodily change that "required" a change in clothing. Her disappointment came from the lack of a means to show this change.

Purchasing clothing

Most of the persons interviewed told of two changes regarding clothing. The first was a mania to buy clothes after they lost weight, whereas in the past they had suppressed this desire. Second was a change in everything related to taste, such as style and color preferences.

Shmuel who called himself "the person in grey", changed with the help of his wife, who loves to "change my colors". Forty three year old Simona, who used to have her clothes made for her in an "older style" by a seamstress, reduced from size 52 (22) to 40 (10) and began to buy clothes in a "young style". This change is pronounced in underclothing as well. Take the case of Mazal, 31 and a mother of two: "Life has changed in the area of dress, even the underthings… the inner part of the appearance has changed. Once I wore large underpants, today I wear skimpy underwear. My mother bought me the old type and I laughed. My inner appearance has changed". How do they show this inner change to others? Levana, 28 and a mother of two, discussed this: "I was so embarrassed to hang out my underwear so I hung them behind the clothes. Now I am not embarrassed and I hang out skimpy underwear and bikinis". This is just another means of presenting one's new self to the world.

The centrality of clothing in identity reformation can be understood within the context of the important role of clothing in society in general. On the one hand, clothing covers the body and blurs the sexual lines of identification in order to lessen attraction. On the other, clothing serves to awaken sexual attraction, through ostensible modest camouflage (Flugel, 1930; Kaiser, 1985). For fat people, clothing serves to cover the body and blur body lines. Naomi used to wear big dresses "and everyone thought I was pregnant, I hated myself in those tents". Others similarly described their old clothing: cloak, sack, jalabia (Arab for traditional hooded cloak). After weight loss, inclinations seem to change and the newly thin want to accentuate their physical attributes, achieving a new identity through clothing. As Naomi explained, "now for a party I dress as a rabbit in a tight bodysuit, and everyone said that I was daring and crazy. It didn't bother me to shake myself around and everything…" Ruth, 55, now wears "something in which you can feel the waistline"; though still not thin in the conventional sense, she already has adopted the identity of a thin person. It should be noted that most of our respondents do not have bodies suited to such exposure, due to the extra layers of skin on their arms, neck and legs. There are those who had plastic surgery to remove

the excess skin, and others intend to do so. Nonetheless, all of them emphasize their good appearance in clothes, such as Mazal, who says, "(with) a swimsuit closed up to the neck and in winter clothes which cover from here to there, you can't see it".

Clothing is a means of displaying one's status, economic class, religious and political identity. They serve as a means of control, attention and prominence (Douglas et al., 1977). However, fat persons cannot take advantage of this potential; instead, they are left with a feeling of passivity and subordination. After they lose weight, they feel like they have many resources, just like everyone else. In the past, they never demanded anything "… the most important thing was that the pants zipped up and the shirt didn't tear… and, if they only had it in red, well, what could you do… that's what there is." Today, they move on to another store: "if the pants are even one size too large…. if the colors are not to mine liking I won't wear them. I permit myself the luxury of buying a new pair of pants". They are no longer passive, accepting their fate, but rather take the initiative. This attitude permeates all aspects of their daily life.

Mirror

The two clothing rites discussed above served as a reflexive mechanism. To strengthen this ratification, the person losing weight uses a real mirror when they are alone. In front of the mirror, some try on old clothes or the garment that they left as a keepsake; some examine their front and profile. There are those who frequently look in shop windows for their reflection while walking down the street. They are privately playing the game of "I recognize/don't recognize", which is the same game they play with friends in social gatherings. Some individuals emphasize that it is not just their acquaintances that do not recognize them, but also that they do not recognize themselves, and thus they must constantly look in the mirror.

When Leah would see herself in the mirror in the hallway of her apartment, "I didn't know it was me, so I would go back". Sigal recounted: "In the beginning, when I would go on a bus and see myself in the mirror

in the front of the driver, it would take me a while to recognize my face". Ruth stated: "I look and see a face that does not belong to me, not me! What is that, a fantasy? Everything is different. When I touch my face, I feel bone; I don't have a double chin!"

Some told that when they were fat, they would ignore the mirror: "I would walk straight past a display window without turning my head", and "I only looked in the mirror to shave". Fat people apparently do not want to reflect to themselves their own social rejection. After weight loss, however, they are very occupied with the mirror. Levana put pictures of her past around the frame of her mirror. Her room resembles an actress' dressing room, where she keeps reminders of her past "role". Levana merges two rites of ratification simultaneously: the rite of the mirror, and the rite of the photographs, which we discuss below. She receives a "double dose" of ratification (see Fernandez, 1980, on the use of the mirror in rituals; and Myerhoff, 1982: 143).

RITES OF AGGREGATION THROUGH SOCIAL RATIFICATION

Rites of self-ratification are a reflexive process, whereas rites of social ratification are retrospective and involve a confrontation between the present and the past. The individuals who lose weight transmit a message that requires immediate feedback. The rites of stories and photograph displays reveal how this is achieved.

Stories of non-recognition

All respondents told how their old friends failed to recognize them. These tales were usually told in great detail and in good humor. Even those who have heard the story like to hear them again. They encourage the formerly fat persons to tell their story to those who have not yet heard it. The story of Shaul, 41, who lost 82 kilograms (180 lbs.), is a case in point. About six years prior to the surgery he had worked with a friend whom he knew well: "We travelled abroad together and slept in the same

room". Recently, this friend needed some technical design and returned to his former workplace:

> I went over to him and asked him, "Can I help you?" and he said, "Yes, I am looking for Shaul". I said to him, "Come with me. We will go together". On the way, I asked him where he was from and what he did, a complete interview. In the end, he slapped his leg and said, "It's you!" He recognized me by my voice. Even though he knew I had the operation. But he did not know that I am even thinner than him – and it's not that he is fat.

During social events, an atmosphere is created wherein friends preserve a shared secret in order to trick friends and strangers that have not yet seen them in their thinness. Everyone emphasizes the "fun" aspect of not being recognized, and the renewed enjoyment in each identification test. Hannah, who lost 90 kilograms (200 lbs.) recounted: "When they don't recognize you, it's a good feeling, a sign that I have succeeded and did not have the operation in vain". The objective fact of losing 90 kilograms is not important until it receives social recognition. This rite of non-recognition is one of the most important elements in creating a new identity.

One of the social successes of the operation is when the former patient is not recognized by the hospital staff. There is no better sign than when the persons who saw you at the "height of fatness", washed you when you were naked, and helped you initiate this change, fail to recognize you. Most respondents happily recounted their encounter with the hospital staff. It should be noted that these meetings (aside from the regular hospital check-up) are initiated by the patients and not the staff.

The significance of the ratification is apparent when the patients reveal their past to strangers. One would think that they would like appearing in public with only their new identity, and without their past stigma. However, as Sigal explained: "There are some people that did not know me before, and it is as if I am waiting for a compliment and they don't say anything, because they don't know that I was fat. I feel sort of disappointed. They don't know what I did". Therefore, some people take out

an old picture and show it to new acquaintances in order to gain recognition for their success.

Displaying photographs

Most respondents keep old photographs in their wallet and display them to people who did not know them, in anticipation of their surprise. At home they take out their old photo albums and proudly show the pictures. As mentioned earlier, there were those who were photographed just before the operation, and they show their pride in their post-operative state through these pictures. Some individuals bring along an old photograph when they come for their periodic check-up; then, if members of the hospital staff do not recognize them, they take it out for display. This is usually followed by reactions of joy and encouragement. This situation gives staff and patient alike much satisfaction.

Both rites of social ratification elicited responses of encouragement and wonderment. When the patients elicit these responses, all of the suffering was worthwhile. Not only the clothes and the mirror affirm this change, but also the public openly affirms it.

REBIRTH: CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The above accounts reveal how the individual utilizes rites to redefine his or her identity, similar to the process undergone during collective definitional ceremonies (Myerhoff, 1987: 162-163). That is, the same ritual process that Myerhoff found with respect to groups was found to hold for individuals (see Table 1).

The process develops, like any ritual, with a preliminal stage, i.e. a period of separation from primary relations with friends and family. The decision to operate opens a second stage of anxiety and a fear of eternal separation, provoked by the danger inherent in any operation, and reflected in farewell letters and in last wills and testaments. Hopes for success are reflected in the last meal and the "before" photographs. During the operation, individuals occupy a liminal space in the hospital, among

strangers in whose hands their fate has been entrusted. In the hospital, they are betwixt and between sick and healthy, fat and thin. Even after discharge from the hospital, they remain in a liminal state, although not among total strangers.

TABLE 1. THE PROCESS OF IDENTITY CHANGE

Breaking primary relations	Liminal state among strangers	Liminal state in community	Return to primary relations
farewell letters	operating room	destroying clothes	stories of nonrecognition
wills	gastric reduction	burning photos	showing photos
last meal	recuperation	trying on clothes	
"before" photos		buying clothes	
		mirror	

With the weight loss, this separation slowly disappears. Reaggregation is affirmed with the aid of ceremonial destruction of clothing and old photographs, which express separation from the previous existence. At the same time, rites of trying on and purchasing clothing and rites involving mirrors affirm the new identity. The newly thin individuals receive ratification from their environment by relating stories and displaying old photographs. The narrative mythologizes the past, telling how things were "once upon a time" and relating obstacles which fell before the mythical hero. The tale of the newly thin – like every mythological tale – achieves its goal with audience approval. The pictures dramatically concretize the difference between the mythical past and the present reality. Every

old picture represents the self, yet recognizes the difference between the person and picture. When newly thin people and their friends look at a picture from the recent past, the opposition between the recent (fat) past and the thin present is sharply defined. This distinctive opposition demands social ratification, which the newly thin enthusiastically receive from their environment. The primary circle can now expand. Not only are they acceptable to their families and close friends, but the entire community has become potential members of their primary group. Their feeling is of rebirth.

The newly thin apparently find it easier than transsexuals to gain social recognition for their new identity. People are happy to accept the formerly overweight "deviants" back into the fold. Transsexuals, in contrast, have a two-fold problem. Society finds it more difficult to accept them in a new status which conflicts with their normal one; and they themselves avoid referring to their past for fear of rejection. Hence, it is easier for the formerly obese to integrate into their new role than for transsexuals. While the latter, do not receive enough support from the people around them, and are forced to incorporate their new identity without social support, the newly thin gain strong social approval aided by a network of informal rites.

In short, this paper showed how powerful "personal definitional rites" can be in establishing identity change. The rites themselves accomplish the change rather than merely symbolizing it. In contrast, transsexuals lack rites that publicly confirm their identity transformation and as a result even they do not experience a total identity transformation.

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CHAPTER SEVEN
FORMAL AND INFORMAL RETIREMENT RITES IN THE ISRAELI ARMY

Nissan Rubin and Drorah Pe'er

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary Western world, there is increasing reluctance to dedicate oneself to a single, life-long career. This tendency goes hand in hand with a growing preoccupation with individual autonomy and a rejection of strictures on freedom of choice. Individuals, so the theory goes, should be aware of their needs and how to meet them. One path to self-discovery is to leave an organization perceived as burdensome and join another instead (Giddens, 1991; 1992; Berger and Kelner, 1974; Beck, 1992: Ch. 4). This is facilitated by the job structure of the contemporary economy, which allows relatively easy mobility between prestigious professions.

Changing jobs in mid-career, and in general any change of status, is a turning point that usually involves a rite of passage (Strauss, 1969: 89-90; Becker and Strauss, 1956) Giddens (1991: Ch. 3), however, claims that in post-modern society, rites are abandoned together with the organizational framework because both are perceived as impairing the individual's autonomy. Instead, there tends to be protracted dialogue with others – particularly an intimate other – as a means to self-discovery.

It is our belief that, notwithstanding the growing tendency toward equality and dialogue (and away from hierarchy and ritualism), rites have not disappeared in post-modern society, but have merely changed their

guise. Myerhoff (1987: 131), for instance, speaks of the individual's need for rites in a modern, individualistic society which does not know how to express transitions in the individual's life cycle. It was Myerhoff who coined the term "definitional ceremony" as a nonce ritual of an underprivileged group. Rubin, Shmilovitz and Weiss (1993 [chapter 6 in this volume] expanded this term to "personal definitional rites" – private rites performed by individuals who are undergoing a change of identity. These rites are a powerful tool whereby individuals define their new identity for themselves and present it to their immediate environment for validation.

Such interactions may be defined as rites only by adopting a very loose definition of the term, such as Wallis' (1983: 334-335): "the performance of one or more persons of actions designed to express some range of meanings, these actions being permeated by symbolic content and highly constrained by the character of that content". This definition covers both private and public rites, formal and informal ones. Below, we shall see the importance of formal rites, and even more so of informal rites, in shaping the individual's identity in situations of transition. Evidently, informal private rites are an important element of post-modernist discourse.

Through this concept of personal definitional rites, we believe it possible to broaden the interpretational framework of rites put forward by Handelman (1990). In his book, Handelman distinguishes between events that model the lived-in world – rites which **transform** the social order – and events that present the lived-in world – rites which **reflect** the social structure. Rites that present, says Handelman, are declarative; their effect on the social structure and on daily life is not immediately obvious (1990: 23-33). While Handelman's study focuses on formal public ceremonies, the retirement rites we will be discussing have both a formal and informal component. Both components belong to Handelman's general category of rites that present. Below, we shall attempt to analyze these rites by "reading between the lines".

At retirement, individuals often undergo a rite of passage that separates them from their previous status and incorporates them into a new one

(Van Gennep, 1960; Jakobson, 1991). However, people who leave their jobs in mid-career – whether by voluntary and deliberate act of resignation or as the result of a forced dismissal – differ from those who end a life-long career at the standard retirement age. Whereas the latter do not plan another long-term career and retain their professional identity even after they retire, people who leave in mid-career need to prove that they can continue to achieve and develop (Erikson, 1960-1963). If it was their choice to resign – perhaps to start a new career – their self-image remains intact (Strauss, 1969: 89-109). Not so a person who is dismissed or is placed in a position where he or she is expected to leave, even if alternative employment is immediately found.

In this article we shall be discussing the retirement of officers and NCOs from the standing Israeli army after completion of approximately 20 years of service. At this point in their life they are still relatively young (40-45) and see themselves as capable of undertaking a new career. Usually, the officers have reached the rank of lieutenant colonel at their retirement. Above this rank, promotion is almost impossible, since jobs at the top of the pyramid in the standing army are few and far between. The rare few who manage to transcend this professional barrier may continue in the army for another ten years or so. Some officers plan their retirement in advance, either because they want to leave (even if the army would like to keep them on), or because they realize that their chances of promotion are virtually non-existent. They may actively seek an alternative career in the civilian market. In any case, they have time to prepare themselves for the new identity they will be assuming. Those, however, who entertain hopes of promotion or an extension of their contract make no effort to find an alternative career.[1]

1 Some would have preferred to continue their army career even without promotion. But the army usually does not continue to employ people with no chances of promotion, preferring to promote younger employees of junior rank. Those who are unable to find a career after their contract with the army has come to an end, have to contend with the image of a "young pensioner".

When the hoped for promotion or extension is not forthcoming, they find themselves suddenly in a situation they are not prepared for. This is a turning-point (Strauss, 1969: 93-100), when many feel themselves "let down" by the "system" with which they identified so completely and which they admired so unreservedly.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Organizations, including armies, invest large amounts of resources in formal ceremonies they hold for their employees on different occasions (Bellow, 1984). Studies have focused on the function these ceremonies fulfill for the organization and the employee (Trice, Belsaco and Alutto, 1969; Trice and Beyer, 1984; Trice, 1985). Some researchers have attempted to develop a theory concerning the role of parting ceremonies for moribund organizations (Harris and Sutton, 1986). Only a few have discussed retirement ceremonies. One explorative study in this field is Jakobson's (1991), which claims that retirement is perceived as a threat, and that the retirement party serves as a cohesive factor which mitigates the threat. Indeed, in the IDF, retirement is accompanied by a formal leave-taking ceremony which is virtually identical for all ranks and is mandated by General Staff orders. The ceremony formally severs the ties between the retiree and the army and helps, we suppose, to redefine their identity.

Note that the army has an interest to maintain egalitarian retirement ceremonies although in most cases, a suitable replacement for the retiree is soon found, and the organization is none the poorer for his loss. On the contrary, it may even feel satisfaction at giving a chance to others, and benefit from the discovery of new talent. But we contend that the egalitarian nature of the ceremony varies in accordance with the retiree's personal and social status and social network. Although the parting rite severs the formal tie between the individual and the organization, it does not sever emotional ties with his or her colleagues of many years standing. The higher ranking officers – particularly brigadier generals and major generals – will probably be joining the economic and political elites

upon their retirement.[2] These officers will maintain ties with their army colleagues. For them, therefore, the parting ceremony symbolizes not so much a separation as a prolongation of ties. In contrast, for majors and NCOs, who have very little chance of joining the economic and political elites, the parting ceremony represents a total separation.

We therefore hypothesize that the higher the retiree's status and the more condensed his/her work network, the "thicker" (more elaborate) the ceremony will be – that is, the more it will exceed the official orders.[3] On the other hand, the lower the officer's status and the looser his/her social network, the "thinner" (plainer) the ceremony will be, conforming to, or even falling short of official army regulations.[4] The "thickness" of the ceremony for higher-ranking officers can be said to emphasize their military identity and its merging with a new elitist civilian identity. In contrast, the "thinness" of the ceremony for lower-ranking officers emphasizes the totality of the separation.

It is further hypothesized that senior officers who plan their retirement and are ready to assume a new identity[5] express the transition from military to civilian life through a complex system of personal definitional rites in addition to the formal retirement rites conducted

2 The place of the army in Israeli society and the ties between the senior officers' cadre and other elites is beyond the scope of this paper. Many studies have been published on this topic, to mention but a few: Horowitz and Lissak (1990); Lissak (1985) and Etzioni-Halevy (1994; 1996).

3 In this context, the ostentatious retirement ceremonies the air force put on for its retiring commander, Major General Herzl Bodinger, are of interest. The major general invited "all those I have to take leave of, irrespective of cost" to the formal farewell ceremony. As part of the ceremony, a mini Remote-Piloted Vehicle (mini RPV) escorted the major general's car from his home to the base at which the event took place. He also flew a combat plane and launched a missile which cost about ten thousand dollars ("Ostentation in the Air Force", *Ha-Aretz*, May 21, 1996, p. B1, editorial; for a report on the ceremony, see *Ha-Aretz*, May 20, 1996, and other dailies on that date).

4 For a parallel situation with respect to military burial ceremonies, see Rubin (1985) [chapter 2 in this volume].

5 See Glaser and Strauss (1971: 3), on the stages in the process of changing identity.

by the organization (Rubin et al, 1993) [chapter 6 in this volume]. The initiative for these rites is expected to come from colleagues or the retirees themselves, independently of the organization. It is through these informal rites that the individual confirms his or her changing identity and communicates it to society, which in turn signals its recognition thereof. On the other hand, senior officers who failed to make contingency plans, even if their retirement was not entirely unexpected, experience anger and frustration. They may even undergo a kind of mourning process (Glick, Weiss and Parkes, 1974: 51-73; Rubin, 1997: 45-47). It is hypothesized that such officers tend to shun personal definitional rites, wholly or in part. Paradoxically, those who "leave for good" are expected to make do with the formal ceremony only, while those who expect a continuation of ties will reinforce those ties through elaborate informal parting rites.

Finally, it is our contention that separation/incorporation rites are meaningful for people who are well-integrated in a social system, as a way of severing old ties and establishing new ones. Where such ties do not exist in the first place, symbolic separation and incorporation rites become irrelevant (Rubin, 1990) [chapter 1 in this volume]. The more the retirees feel they have successfully exhausted their potential and are ready to leave, the less is their separation a true one. They may be leaving their job, but they will be keeping up ties with colleagues in the organization, and with the organization itself. They will be leaving with a sense of satisfaction and a feeling of indebtedness toward the organization. Thus, the betwixt and between state in which the retirees find themselves, the "liminal" state as Turner puts it (1967: 93-111), is expected to be relatively mild. At their retirement, they are assumed to invoke more parting rites from their friends and peers than dissatisfied retirees, and these parting rites will also act, paradoxically, as incorporating rites into elite circles. On the other hand, retirees who are resentful towards the organization and their colleagues will tend to feel less fulfilled and less indebted toward the organization. Their sense of liminality will be more acute, and they will tend to reduce rites of separation/incorporation to a minimum.

METHOD

The study was conducted in 1993-1994 on fifty officers and NCOs in the army (35 men and 15 women), who had served for at least 20 years. Some were still on retirement leave,[6] and all had retired within the previous year. Thirty of the subjects (including ten women) were senior-ranking officers, from lieutenant colonels to brigadier generals; twenty (five women) were of junior rank – majors and NCOs. Although all had most recently been stationed in rear bases, many had served in field units in the past. For simplicity's sake we shall be referring in this study to only eight (including one woman) of the senior ranking officials, who are representatives of this group. This will enable us to focus on the personal histories of a number of people.

The subjects were interviewed in the army, at their new civilian jobs, or in the offices of the second co-author of this study. The interview, which lasted for two hours, was divided into two parts; the first consisted of background questions (age, gender, education, origin and position in the army) and the second of questions relating to their retirement (from the decision to leave or notification of retirement to the retirement itself). The subjects were asked about their reactions to leaving the army; how they felt about turning in their army uniform and car; their adjustment to civilian life; job-hunting; professional challenges and income other than pension. They were also questioned about formal and informal parting rites, valedictory letters and anything that might be construed as a symbolic or ritualistic expression of separation. They were asked about their social networks, job information sources, how they had settled into their new jobs and ongoing ties with the army. The subjects were asked to describe personal crises surrounding their retirement, the loss of power and influence, and the loss of friends and colleagues. Finally, they were asked about changes in their everyday life since their retirement, changes in the division of labor within the family, changes in leisure pursuits and in their

6 Before they leave officially, retirees from the standing army get leave for purposes of acclamation to civilian life. They receive a salary and remain in uniform, but no longer perform their military duties.

expectations of the future. At the end of the interview, the subjects were allowed to raise any new topic. Finally, subjects were asked if they had any objections to showing their farewell letters to the researchers. Not all the questions have been analyzed in this paper. Only those relating to the basic research assumptions will be discussed.

In addition, our study consisted of a textual analysis of General Staff orders on retirement ceremonies, in order to ascertain their overt and latent significance. Likewise, we observed formal army retirement ceremonies for officers and NCOs. In this study, we shall be focusing on two such ceremonies: the first for senior officers and the second for NCOs and junior-ranking officers.

The tests, ceremonies and interviews were analyzed according to Geertz's (1973) interpretational technique, that is, through interpreting the meaning the rite held for the participants themselves. The rite, says Geertz, is the means whereby individuals try to interpret the social order to which they belong. Or as Geertz so aptly put it – in his discussion on cockfights in Bali – the rite or ceremony is "a story they tell themselves about themselves" (Geertz, 1973: 448). The participants in the event may not always be aware of its anthropological significance. The researcher, on the other hand, perceives the ceremony as a text he or she "strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they belong properly" (Geertz, 1973: 452). Below, we shall examine the dynamics and contents of the rites themselves, in an effort to test the research questions.

FORMAL PARTING RITES

The army mandates a parting ceremony (individual or collective) for each soldier in the regular army, standing army or reserves, who is about to retire or be discharged.

> *Soldiers about to retire from the standing army, conscripts who have completed their regular army service or reservists being discharged from reserve duty, will take leave of their commander in a special meeting called for this purpose… the parting ceremony will take place near the date of retirement or discharge* (General

Staff order 33.0914 – Procedure for retiring soldiers, discharged conscripts and discharged reservists).

Army regulations further stipulate that the officiating commander "must be at least two ranks higher than the retiree" and "for NCOs to first sergeants must be at least a major, and for sergeant majors to captains at least a lieutenant colonel". The rationale behind this may be found in the structure and objectives of the army. Being discharged from the army is different from being discharged from any other institution. People who are discharged from hospitals, prisons or boarding schools, for example, are not expected to return, but are considered as having left for good. In the army, however, discharged conscripts and retirees who have served only for a short while in the standing army are expected to continue serving in the reserves. Thus, the **parting** ceremony actually lays the groundwork for **continuation** of the relationship in the future. The hierarchical structure of the army is impressed upon the retirees in the parting ceremony, reinforcing the awe in which the commanders are held, in years to come. The rank of major is sufficiently senior to impress the retiree, and to define his place within the military hierarchy when he joins the reserves.

The parting ceremony is usually held in the visitors' room at the base, or in the civilian headquarters, in the presence of a senior officer. The ceremony includes a ceremonial dinner, the presentation of valedictory letter and farewell gift, a farewell speech by the officiating commander and a speech by a representative of the retirees.

THIN AND THICK CEREMONIES

Although the formal ceremonies are supposed to be the same for all retirees, there are in fact many variations. The ceremony may be placed on a scale from "thick" – enriched or elaborated beyond formal requirements – to "thin" – diluted to meet the bare requirements. The degree of "thickness" of the ceremony depends largely on the personal status of the soldiers and on their social ties. The greater the retirees' social network and personal status, the "thicker" the ceremony.

Below we shall discuss two parting ceremonies for soldiers in the standing army: a "thin" one and a "thick" one.

A THIN CEREMONY

This parting ceremony took place in the Paratroopers House in Ramat Gan, on a summer evening in 1992. The ceremony was held for twenty male and female NCOs, junior officers and medium rank officers, the most senior being a major. The longest-serving officer had completed twenty years of service. The retirees' spouses/partners were also invited to the ceremony.

Initially, the guests gathered on the lawn adjoining the house, where the first part of the ceremony took place, under colored lighting. The tables were covered with white cloths and disposable tablewear. A buffet supported a variety of meats, salads, soft drinks and rolls. At another table, hot drinks, cakes and pastries were served. After about an hour, the guests were asked to repair to a kind of mini-theater, "for the cultural part of the evening", as the organizers called it. Inside was a stage, the front of which was decorated with a floral arrangement. On the right-hand side was a table with a pile of gift-wrapped books, valedictory letters and bunches of flowers wrapped in cellophane paper. On the left-hand side of the stage was a rosette of five flags, comprising the flag of Israel and the ensigns of the territorial command. On the wall behind the stage was a large placard bearing the inscription: "Farewell ceremony for retirees from the Central Command". The insignia of the army and of the Central Command were displayed on either side of the stage.

The evening was opened by the education officer [a major], who invited the Chief Personal and Records Officer (G-1), [a colonel] to speak. The G-1 began by praising the retirees' performance. He went on to speak of the difficulty of meeting the demands of both army and family, the importance of the family as a supportive mechanism, and the sense of camaraderie the army breeds. He ended by wishing the retirees success in their future careers. The education officer then proceeded to read out the names of the retirees in descending order of rank. As each name was

called out, the corresponding soldier approached the G-1, saluted and shook hands with him. In return, he or she was presented with a valedictory letter, a book and a bouquet of flowers.

The ceremony ended with the education officer reciting a farewell poem (unfortunately, we have been unable to trace its authorship), of which two stanzas are quoted below:

> Turn in your uniform, hide it away,
>
> Stow away stripes for a rainy day.
>
> Your wife, she's a-smiling, gone are her tears,
>
> For now you're all hers, after so many years.[7]
>
> The days whirl by with giddy brutality,
>
> It's time to adjust to another reality,
>
> And suddenly your heart almost misses a beat,
>
> For now you must stand on your own two feet.

The first two lines of the poem symbolize "curtains down" on a stage of life. The soldier's uniform and stripes ("setting" and "front", respectively: Goffman, 1959: 32-40), the most obvious symbols of his/her status, are put in storage. The retirees sever their links with the past and enter a no-man's land of anonymity. From now on the family takes priority, and the army is relegated to the back seat. These are days of transition, liminal days, in which you have to learn to "stand on your own two feet": to walk away from the army and manage without its support. This poem contains

7 Obviously, the army was perceived by the major as a masculine domain. Even though the retirees included some female soldiers, the poem speaks of "your wife" and does not mention the female soldiers or their spouses. In the "thick" ceremony below, the major general takes the same approach in his speech when he states that "Special thanks and appreciation go to you, wives and families of our officers…."

all the elements typical of rites of passage: separation from a previous identity (in this case, the army), fusion with the family, and a sense of confusion of liminality.

A THICK CEREMONY

The following is a description of a "thick" parting ceremony held for twenty senior officers from the rank of lieutenant colonel and above. The ceremony took place during the holiday of *Hanukah,* December 1992, at 7:30 p.m., at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. It was attended by high-ranking military officials, including the Central Command Officer. At the entrance to the museum, two female soldiers presented bouquets of red carnations to the female officers and to the wives of the male officers. To the right of the lobby was a small hall serving light refreshments and cold drinks. The guests were served by two soldiers in uniform.

After about half an hour, the guests were asked to make their way down to the terrace adjoining the hall where the ceremony was to take place. The terrace held six tables, covered with red cloths, holding meats, salads, bread and hot and cold drinks. The guests helped themselves to the buffet using paper cups and plates. At 8:45 p.m., the OC Central Command arrived and the guests were asked to move indoors, where the "cultural part" of the evening was about to begin.

Inside, the stage was decorated with a rosette of the national flag and ensigns of the Central Command. The insignia of the army and of the Central Command were displayed on either side of the stage. A guitar, organ and amplifiers occupied the middle of the stage. The front of the stage was decorated with a large floral arrangement. To the right stood a table bearing twenty *Hanukah* lamps. Each lamp was inscribed with the insignia of the Command, and bore the following dedication: "To…., upon completion of your service with the Central Command. In appreciation, OC Central Command, [name of major general].

The command's education officer [a lieutenant colonel] opened the ceremony by greeting the guests and welcoming a Russian (new immigrant) signer to the stage. The singer performed the popular song *Kan*

noladeti ("Here I was Born" – Israel's contribution to the Eurovision Song Contest the previous year) with a revised text that he had composed himself. Before launching into his song, the singer clarified that since, regretfully, he was not a native Israeli, he had had to modify the song accordingly (substituting "there" for "here", for example).

> There I was born, years ago,
>
> There I learnt all I know
>
> The Land of Israel I got to know.
>
> Through maps and views
>
> But most of all
>
> Through love of Jews!

This was followed by Israeli songs. The singer ended his performance with his rendering of *Toda 'al kol ma she-bara'ta* ("Thank You For All You've Created"), which introduced a Sephardic flavor to the evening (the song was originally sung by a popular Sephardic singer). The guests joined in enthusiastically, clapping loudly.

When this song came to an end, the major general was asked to take the stage and speak. The following is an excerpt of his speech:

> …. No doubt you will find it hard to forget the time you spent in the army.… I know the transition [to civilian life] is not easy, and is fraught with frustration. Nevertheless, I am confident that as members of the national elite you will succeed both in life and in your careers.… Life [in the army] has not been easy.… Special thanks and appreciation go to you, wives and families of our officers, for refusing to be left behind, but for moving forward together with us "to the front". No doubt, providing encouragement was no easy feat. Once again, our thanks and appreciation to you… Please consider the Command as a home away from home. If any of you should ever need any help, we shall be glad to provide it.…

After the major's general speech, the education officer read out the names of the retirees in descending order of rank. The retirees mounted the stage in turn, saluted the major general and were presented with a *Hanukah* lamp, after which they left the stage.

Formal Valedictory Letter

The farewell ceremony, as stated, includes the presentation of a valedictory letter. Army regulations stipulate the rank of the signatory of this letter, which varies according to the rank of the retiree. A valedictory letter addressed

> to a lieutenant colonel or above will be signed by the Chief of General Staff. All other letters will be signed by the Chief of the Manpower Branch…

In other words, officers of lieutenant colonel rank and above – all with term of *aluf* in their rank (*segan aluf, aluf mishneh, tat aluf* and *aluf*: lieutenant colonel, colonel, brigadier general and major general, respectively) – have their valedictory letters signed by the *pater familias,* namely the Chief of General Staff (*rav aluf* – lieutenant general) in person.

Other than the signatory, there is virtually no difference between the letters received at the "thin" and "thick" ceremonies. All valedictory letters to soldiers in the standing army are printed on imitation parchment. The top right-hand corner of the letter bears the army insignia (sword and olive branch) embossed in gold. Underneath are five different-colored bars representing Israel's wars (the War of Independence, the Sinai campaign, the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the Lebanese War). While the gold symbolizes glory and worth, the parchment-like paper is an allusion to traditional Jewish culture (the Torah, phylacteries and *mezuzot* are all written on parchment). Together, these symbols form a link between the army and Jewish tradition in the remote and recent past (symbolized by the parchment and bars respectively). Although this is our

own interpretation of these symbols, we believe that the creators of these symbols were influenced, even unwittingly, by these connotations.

In the letter, the signatory thanks the retiree, on behalf of the army, for having dedicated his or her best years to the army. The letter emphasizes that the army is a civilian army whose success depends "overwhelmingly on the caliber, dedication and spirit of excellence" of the nucleus of soldiers in the standing army. The army, so the letter claims, shares in the major mission of our times: "to nurture the spirit" and strengthen Israeli's military might. The repetition of the word "spirit" emphasizes that the army has a spiritual – not merely a military – value and mission.

Farewell Gifts

Farewell presents were distributed at both ceremonies. Although the actual gifts were different at each ceremony, the messages they carried were similar. The book which was presented at the "thin" ceremony was *Derekh 'Eretz – Am Hai be-Nofav* (The Way of the Land – A Nation Living in its Landscape, edited by Irit Zaharoni, Ministry of Defense publications). This nicely bound and elegantly designed coffee-table book contains pictures of scenic beauty in Israel in the past and present. The book begins with a review of archaeological sites from the biblical and Second Temple periods, skips two millennia or so, and continues with the modern period, from the Return to Zion (1882) to the War of Independence (1948).[8] The message conveyed by this gift is that the army officers are heirs to Israel's legacy of sovereignty and heroism in the past and in the present. Likewise, the fact that the gift is a book conveys the message that they are the custodians of the tradition of "sword and pen".

8 In the total dismissal of the 2000 years of Jewish exile from the Second Temple period to the modern Return to Zion, this book faithfully mirrors the Ben-Gurion type of Zionism. Characteristic of this kind of Zionism is its glorification of Israel's two periods of sovereign independence, and its total disregard for the long intervening period of Jewish exile.

The *Hanukah* lamps, which were presented at the "thick" ceremony, deliver a similar message. The lamp links the past with the present, designating the continuation of the heroism of the Maccabee period. The significance of the *Hanukah* lamp as a ritual object throughout the period of exile is totally disregarded in the present secular context (in fact, the participants "forgot" to light the *Hanukah* candles at the ceremony). Although the lamp may have had a utilitarian significance for some of the recipients (for lighting the *Hanukah* candles), to mainly serves as a symbol of the victory of the minority over the majority, and of light over darkness – messages that correspond to the values of Israeli civil religion (Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 1983a).

FORMAL RITES AS EXPRESSING SEPARATION (CLOSED) AND INCORPORATION (OPEN)

CLOSED AND OPEN ELEMENTS

The described "thin" and "thick" ceremonies, with their corresponding valedictory letters and farewell gifts, share a common structure – what can be termed the "closed" part of the formal rite (Myerhoff, 1987). Both ceremonies open with an informal buffet and continue with a formal (cultural) leave-taking ceremony, introduced by the education officer. In both scenarios the stage is decorated and arrayed in a similar fashion. In both ceremonies, the retirees are addressed by a senior officer, in a similar manner. In both, the education officer calls up the retirees, in order of rank, to receive the valedictory letter and parting gift from the officiating officer. In structural terms, the farewell poem at the end of the "thin" ceremony corresponds to the singer's performance at the start of the "thick" ceremony.

Within the "closed" part of the ceremony, food, gifts and the valedictory letter play an important role. As is the case in many rites of passage, eating and drinking foster unity and solidarity in those present before departure. Gifts, even if given without true feeling, create a feeling of mutual obligation (Malinowski, 1922; Mauss, 1954, Battaglia, 1992). In the

context of the formal parting ceremony, a gift symbolizes the severance of the tie between donor (the organization) and recipient. The fact that all participants in each ceremony are given identical gifts is the organization's way of notifying them that now they are all equal before it. Of course, the army's farewell gift serves a different function from other work gifts, usually granted to a few select employees as a reward for excellence. Finally, the valedictory letter symbolizes separation from the organization through a document that can be displayed in public.

There are, nevertheless, some structural differences between the two ceremonies that reflect the hierarchical makeup of the army. The "thin" ceremony, for officers of low-to-medium rank or NCOs, was officiated over by a colonel, as required by army regulations. In the "thick" ceremony, where the retirees themselves were all lieutenant colonels or above, the officiating officer was a major general and no lower-ranking officers were included, even though regulations allow this. Thus, even in the leave-taking ceremony from the standing army, the hierarchical structure of the army is reflected. Indeed, there is no separate ceremony for each individual rank, but there are different ceremonies for groups of ranks. One group comprises officers of lieutenant colonel rank and above (variations of *aluf*), whose valedictory letters are signed by the Chief of General Staff (*rav aluf*). The second group comprises officers and NCOs, whose valedictory letters are signed by the Head of the Manpower Branch. The senior officers are perceived as being entitled to higher symbolic rewards. The presence of the "top brass" at their ceremony lends it substance, rendering it "thicker".

While, on the whole, the ceremonies share a common structure, nonetheless they differ in seemingly trivial details that are, in fact, most significant for the purposes of our analysis. The "open" portion of the ceremony is the parts that are improvised, which may vary from one ceremony to another. This is where there is room for flexibility and diversity, marking the major differences between the ceremonies. The ritual elements of the "open" part of the ceremony are what determine the main differences between a "thick" ceremony and a "thin" one. These ritual elements

represent society's main values. They may be present in a "thin" ceremony too, but are far more prevalent in a "thick" one.

We will use the site of the ceremony to demonstrate this difference in "open" elements. The "thin" ceremony was held in The Paratroopers House – a civilian location which, although belonging to the municipality, has ties with the military establishment. Though it is often used for military ceremonies of different kinds, particularly those which involve paratroopers, private civilian events are also held there. The "thick" ceremony, in contrast, was held in the Israel Museum, a cardinal location in Israeli cultural consciousness. The Israel Museum is an extremely prestigious institution and does not accommodate private events. It may be described as a civilian sanctuary of secular culture. The fact that the ceremony took place here symbolizes the marriage of sword and pen. The supreme existential value Israeli society attaches to the army (which is basically simply a bureaucratic tool) is compounded by the supreme cultural value the museum represents. The added value of the place adds an extra dimension to the ceremony, bringing military and cultural elite figures together.

A second example of differences in detail is related to the "cultural" part of each farewell ceremony. In the "thin" ceremony, a poem was recited by an army official (the education officer), while in the "thick" ceremony, entertainment was provided by a professional singer accompanied by electric guitar and organ. The latter took more time and was more elaborate. Moreover, the singer (a new Russian immigrant) performed a number of songs, including one with a Sephardic flavor, symbolizing the meeting of old (veteran Israelis) and new (immigrants), as well as of Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews. Here, too, there is a melding of social and cultural values with the military institution.

SEPARATION AND INCORPORATION

The formal parting ceremony – as other rites of passage – serves two main goals: **separation** between the individual and the organization, in which both are relieved of mutual obligations; and **incorporation** into

the general aims of the society served by the organization, in this case the State. It is our contention that the "closed" parts of the ceremony serve the first goal, while the "open" parts serve the second. To illustrate this, we shall apply Myerhoff's distinction between "closed" and "open" parts to two of the three elements that Parsons and Shils (1951) ascribe to all action systems: the social and the cultural (the personal element is irrelevant, as this paper does not treat the level of personality).

The "closed" part of the ceremony may be seen as dealing with societal aspects of the organization, i.e. organizing the actual web of social linkages. By arranging the individual's retirement from the organization, the ceremony has achieved one of its goals, namely, the separation of the individual from the organization of which he or she is a member. The "open" part of the ceremony, on the other hand, ties in with the cultural element, which governs social interaction. This is "the framework of beliefs, expressive symbols and values, in terms of which individuals define their world, express their feelings and develop judgments" (Geertz, 1973: 144-145). The symbols of the "open" part of the ceremony serve to bridge retirees and the "outside" civilian world. It is necessary to "read between the lines" in order to uncover their connotative and mythological meaning (Barthes, 1973: 109-127), to understand what we tell ourselves about ourselves (after Geertz, 1973, p. 448). From this perspective, the ceremony reflects the main values and orientations that society wishes to transmit to its members while ensuring their allegiance. When there is no contradiction between patterns of social interaction and the cultural context that invests these patterns with meaning, the ceremony fulfills its purpose as a facilitator of transition. In the absence of such consonance, the rite will not fulfill its purpose (Geertz, 1973, p. 169).

By deciphering the symbols of the "thick" and "thin" ceremonies, we are able to elucidate what was said above concerning the function of the cultural element: the symbols transmit dual messages, as do all liminal situations in rites of passage (Turner, 1967: 93-111). Each of the ceremonies contains elements of hierarchy and elements of equality (different

ceremonies for different ranks of officers; retirees called on stage in descending order of rank vs. ceremonies similar in structure; identical presents; identical valedictory letter).[9] These contradictory symbols serge to bridge gaps within the military organization: for while the parting ceremony sanctions the existing hierarchy, it simultaneously confirms that, in the final reckoning (at retirement), the contribution of each and every one is equal.

On the cultural level, the ceremony symbolizes commitment to the overall goals of the society the military organization serves. The symbols represent, on the one hand, a trans-historical bridge between past and present, and, on the other, a bridge between contemporary social inequalities. The gifts of books and *Hanukah* lamps are a symbolic expression of the past and its revival in the collective memory in the present. The "thick" ceremony, which had a richer symbolic content, was further "thickened" by acting as a bridge between new immigrants (the Russian immigrant singer) and native Israelis, and between Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews.

In short, the "thick" ceremony both mirrored and bridged social gaps – between pen and sword (museum versus army), between veteran and new immigrant, between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. The higher ranking officers, who were about to join the political and economic elites in civilian life, were expected to relate to matters of major national importance. They may have left top ranks in the army, but they had not left the top ranks of the social pecking order. The lower-ranking retirees, on the other hand, were not expected to deal with issue of major national importance, but were rather "allowed" to deal with more "mundane" issues,

9 In modern, democratic society, the army is usually built on a strange blend of differentiation and equality: differentiation, because the army is essentially a bureaucratic organization, built on differentiated reward (Stouffer, Schuman, DeVinney Star and Williams, 1949: 304-305), the most striking expression of this being symbols, such as insignia of ranks; and equality, because there is a pressure toward egalitarianism in the army, the most striking expression of this being the uniform dress. Uniform and rank are thus symbols of equality and hierarchy (Rubin, 1985: 797) [chapter 2 in this volume].

such as home and family, as indicated by their farewell poem. Their "open" elements were too thin to have an incorporating effect. From their point of view, the separation was final.

INFORMAL PARTING RITES

The term personal definitional rites (Rubin et al., 1993) [chapter 6 in this volume] refers to rites performed by individuals who undergoing a change of identity. These rites are a powerful tool whereby individuals define their new identity for themselves and present it to their immediate environment for validation. Retirees from the army also hold a complex system of personal definitional rites in addition to the formal ceremony. These rites take place before the formal ceremony.

Below, we shall present a typology of informal farewell rites for eight retiring senior officers (including one woman) based on the following components: farewell parties, gifts they received, farewell letters they wrote and what they did with their uniform after they retired. Methodologically, we would have preferred to relate to all these variables in each case. In practice, however, we do not have data on all these variables for each person interviewed. Therefore, we had to compose an archetypal profile based on different subjects. This archetypal profile may be considered a Weberian ideal type.

THE PRIVATE FAREWELL PARTY

Many retirees have private farewell parties, organized by themselves or by their colleagues. A select circle of commanders, subalterns, friends and relatives are invited. The parties vary substantially, from small parties catering mainly to army colleagues, to medium-sized parties catering also to a few relatives and friends outside the army, and finally to large-scale, lavish parties catering to friends in and outside the army. Of course, not everyone has an informal farewell party. Below, we present some extreme cases: a retiree who had a grand farewell bash, and two others who had no farewell party at all.

The Director

After 24 years of service in the Manpower Branch, Lieutenant Colonel Avraham organized his own farewell party, a grand affair which took place in the officers' mess of his unit. The invitation to the party was deceptively plain: "After 24 years of action-packed service, the time has come for me to strike out in a new direction. Please join me in a toast to mark my retirement from the army, on…. at 18:00, in the officers' mess, the Kirya, Tel Aviv. We look forward to seeing you".

A toast generally implies a modest celebration; before the New Year or the Passover festival, for example, it is customary for employees to raise a toast together with their employers; toasts are also drunk at birthdays and small receptions. Accordingly, most of the guests thought they were being invited to a modest, intimate affair. To their surprise, they found themselves at a function catering to 200-250 people. Tables lined the sides of the hall, laden with a variety of meats, salads, fruit, cakes and soft drinks. The place was so crowded it was hard to get to the refreshments. The guests included members of the territorial forces, the air force and the navy, from subalterns to major generals, including some retired major generals. Some senior and junior members of the police force were present. Among the civilian guests were former members of the standing army and politicians. The guests included men and women, the observant and the secular, the famous and the rank and file.

Lieutenant Colonel Avraham stood in the center of the hall by the microphone, surrounded by his family, while the guests approached him one by one, shaking hands with him, slapping him on the back and exchanging a few words with him, before moving on. The entire event was videotaped by his brother-in-law. At about 7:00 PM the ceremony began.

The host began by welcoming his guests and thanking them for coming, and called upon the chief army chaplain to speak first. The chaplain (a major general) reviewed Lieutenant Colonel Avraham's military careers, stressing how suited he had been to his most recent post, and emphasized his public-spiritedness in undertaking voluntary charitable work.

After reading out a letter by a Member of Knesset (Israeli parliament) whose many public duties had prevented him from attending, Lieutenant Colonel Avraham invited his commander (a colonel) to speak. The commander was followed by a succession of other speakers, all of whom sang his praises. Afterwards, Lieutenant Colonel Avraham himself spoke, describing his great emotion on this occasion, to which the public responded with loud applause. His farewell speech, which he read from a prepared script, reviewed his life to date, including his childhood, education, military service and family. Afterwards, the guests took leave of him one by one with a handshake.

The most striking feature of this ceremony was the vast social support network that Lieutenant Colonel Avraham displayed, which probably would have been less striking without such an event to hinge itself onto.[10] The ceremony he created was one of connection for the purpose of separation, but also, paradoxically, of separation for the purpose of connection: the farewell party was a way of publicly severing his ties with the military establishment, while laying the groundwork for new ties in the civilian life he was about to embark on. This duality is typical of liminal, or "betwixt and between", situations. This rite, like other rites of passage (weddings and bar mitzvahs) was immortalized by the video camera, a sign of importance the subject attached to the ceremony. In conclusion, one may say that Lieutenant Colonel Avraham staged his own "personal definitional rite" as a means of publicizing his new identity.

The Hopefuls

The importance of the informal farewell party can be gauged from the sense of frustration felt by those who had hoped for one, but were disappointed. Apart from feeling hurt, they were also left with a feeling

10 The situation can be compared to the extensive support network that mourners in American society surround themselves with during the mourning period (Rubin, 1990) [chapter 1 in this volume].

of "unfinished business", of not having really made the final break with the army.

Take the case of Lieutenant Colonel Aryeh, who retired after twenty years of service. His most recent posting had been in a General Staff unit. His anticipated promotion was not forthcoming, due to an altercation concerning his work performance. For him, retirement was tantamount to a "slap in the face". He nursed a sense of grievance, feeling he had contributed a lot to the army in the past seven years and expecting some reward for his efforts. However, as he pointed out: "The system is ungrateful. I put a lot of effort into my field of work, and expected promotion. I hoped for some sign of appreciation, even verbal, but instead I got nothing". Despite his resentment, he still hoped for a farewell party (in addition to the formal parting ceremony): "I hoped that someone might remember me and hold some kind of farewell party, even if just to say goodbye. Standing for thirty seconds would be enough, as far as I'm concerned". But no party was forthcoming.

Circumstances were similar for Colonel Benjamin, another case of someone who, having completed 25 years of service (most recently as a senior G-1 in the Manpower Branch), aimed unsuccessfully for a more senior rank. Despite his disappointment at failing to achieve this goal, he still hoped for a farewell party. "There was a leave-taking ceremony held for several colonels, including myself", he said, "but no personal ceremony". Obviously for Colonel Benjamin, the formal leave-taking ceremony was not enough. He felt the need for a more personal private farewell party. Benjamin later blamed himself for not having organized his own farewell party: "Actually, I'm a little to blame myself. I turned down various attempts to arrange a party for me". Although his subalterns drank a toast to him and gave him a present, Benjamin was hoping that his senior officer friends would organize a party for him and take leave of him personally. As he himself put it: "They told me they got a present for me, so there must be a party". The party, however, never took place.

Lieutenant Colonel Avraham left the army with a sense of satisfaction, as reflected in the "thick" farewell party he organized. Evidently,

this rather ornate parting ceremony sprang from his strong sense of belonging to the framework which he was now leaving. Lieutenant Colonel Aryeh and Colonel Benjamin, on the other hand, left the army with a sense of having "missed out" on something, of not having properly taken leave of their friends and colleagues. The absence of the informal party left an emotional residue, a feeling of being suspended between an unreal past (since it has not been publicly endorsed via the ceremony) and an unknown future. The "hopefuls" were unable to give adequate public expression to their change of status, and did not receive the social endorsement that is usual on such occasions. The separation mechanism that is called into play by the rite of passage (Rubin, 1990) [chapter 1 in this volume] was not present here. Thus, Aryeh's and Benjamin's experiences were diametrically opposed to Avraham's: The former, in their minds, had already effectively severed ties with the military establishment, even without the instrument of the farewell ceremony. Their sense of grievance upon retiring made them feel that there was no-one from whom to take leave. It was unlikely that they would continue to maintain ties that may still have existed. Thus, those who had effectively separated from the army initiated no rite of separation, while those who had not separated orchestrated elaborate rites of separation. In the latter case, however, the separation was simply formal. No real separation took place. On the contrary, the rite was a means of consolidating existing ties.

INFORMAL GIFTS

As well as the formal farewell gifts, which were identical for each group of retirees, the retirees also received personal farewell gifts, usually from their peers and subalterns. The personal gift serves a different function from the formal one: While the latter expresses separation from the organizational system, the former expresses the opposite – the wish to prolong connections. Obviously, personal gifts are not the same for all retirees, but usually express a special relationship between the donor and recipient, as illustrated below.

Framed photo of an Airplane

Lieutenant Colonel Yehuda served for ten years as an adjutant officer with the air force. He was then transferred to the computer unit, where he served another ten years, hoping for promotion. At the farewell party, the air force representative presented him with a framed photo of an F-16. A small metal tag in one corner bore the following inscription: "To Lieutenant Colonel Yehuda, in appreciation".

Since his retirement, Yehuda has been working as head of the manpower division in a computer firm. His office is a testimony to his military past. Hanging on the wall is the framed picture of the F-16, as well as a clock bearing the following inscription: "Best wishes for your success upon reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel…" These symbols of his military past convey the message that his past identity is an integral part of his present one. He still uses military status symbols to project his self-image. Since Yehuda left the army with a sense of personal gratification ("I gave of myself, I made my contribution, but you've also got to know when it's time to get up and go…"), he found it hard to separate from it. His sense of personal satisfaction with his military career is conveyed to those with whom he comes into contact through the gifts on display in his office.

A set of civilian clothes

Though disappointed by the farewell party and present he expected of his colleagues and which never materialized, Colonel Benjamin was pleased to report that "I received a nice surprise from my subalterns – a set of civilian clothes". Of course, this is not a kind of present he could display as a token of appreciation for his performance in the army. The gifts Benjamin received in the course of his service were mostly symbolic: "I have a number of souvenirs, such as the command's ensign, a trophy and the emblem of the Upper Galilee Council… I don't intend to put them on display, but they kind of go well with the house". These

contradictory messages betray Colonel Benjamin's ambivalence. While expecting meaningful appreciation from senior headquarters, he consoles himself with other military or civilian "mementos". Although he disclaims any wish to exhibit them, they are displayed openly around the house.

Regimental Colors

Lieutenant Colonel Moshe retired reluctantly, after 22 years of service. He began his military career as a combat soldier in the infantry and ended it as an officer in a maintenance unit. At the start of the interview he said: "Although I wasn't angry when I left… this is really a blow to my loyalty and dedication…" Toward the end of the interview, he admitted: "I do feel a sense of frustration and anger".

In an outdoor farewell party held in his honor one afternoon, Moshe was presented with the ensign of the infantry brigade he had served in, by his former colleagues. This, according to him, "was the best present I could have got…" His service in this brigade "was the most significant period of my life…. it was a period in which I took part in many operations. The guys remember me, because I belong to them…" This gift, therefore, by alluding to a more glorious period in Moshe's military career, pulls a blanket over his more immediate past in an administrative position.

Although he has kept the gifts he received at the various farewell ceremonies, they are not displayed very prominently in his house. It would therefore seem that Moshe's leave-taking was more a nostalgic separation from a remote and glorious past, no longer part of his life, than a real separation from the more recent – and more unsatisfactory – past.

A Poem on Limitation Parchment

After 20 years of service in the Manpower Branch, Lieutenant Colonel Dafne was very upset when she did not receive the promotion she had

expected. "I simply got up and left, without any fanfare". According to her, she received no presents from her colleagues, except for a poem on imitation parchment, from two of her female subalterns, which she hung in her study at home.

For her, this present is "something special", because of its originality. Although the poem bears the army emblem of sword and olive branch, according to Dafne "it has no military connotations, either in style or content". Her disillusionment with the army caused Dafne to deny the existence of such connotations.

The retirees' attitude toward their farewell gifts is one further stage in the way they perceive their changing identities. The farewell gifts convey the following message: "Although you are leaving, we expect you not to forget us". Retirees who displayed these gifts publicly were in fact publicizing how much their present identity was bound up with their past, and how important the past was in building their future identity (on the importance of objects as bridges to the past, and as symbols of identity, see Silver, 1996).

Lieutenant Colonel Yehuda displayed his gifts openly in his office; Colonel Benjamin displayed his openly in his house; Lieutenant Colonels Moshe and Dafne displayed their gifts discreetly in their houses. Yehuda, who left the army with a sense of personal satisfaction, did not sever all ties with the past, but continued to relate his past identity to himself and to his environment. Dafne, on the other hand, who left the army with a sense of grievance, hid the personal gift she had received in her study at home. The gift, "which had no military connotations", was for her a "civilian" gift, a personal farewell present from her colleagues, independently of their military context. Moshe and Benjamin, both of whom had left the army with a sense of disillusionment and frustration at not having realized their full potential, displayed their gifts at home. For them the ties have not been totally severed, especially for Benjamin who is still awaiting a more substantial indication of his worth from the army, and for whom the presents "go well with the house".

Farewell Letters by the Retirees

The subjects of this research are at the seventh stage of Erikson's (1963, Chapter 7) eight stages in the development of the individual, each with its own inherent dilemma. The dilemma at this stage lies in conflicting self-perceptions: the individual's sense of ***generativity*** (confidence in his or her ability to continue developing and contributing to society) or ***stagnation*** (inability to "renew" oneself). In our study, most of the subjects emphasized the generative aspect – their confidence in their ability to continue contributing to society both in the military – if the option was available – and in the civilian life they were about to embark upon. At this stage in their lives, they had to submit their "biographies" to the judgment of the society they were leaving and the one they were joining. The farewell letters constitute a small part of this "biography". The image they wish to project is not an objective one, but rather the idealized image of the kind biographers seek to project, based on filtered, processes and reconstructed information (Hazan, 1984: 86). The farewell letter, therefore, in its capacity as a concise autobiography, becomes part of the rite of passage. It serves both as a public declaration of separation from the previous status and as a stepping stone for the continuation of ties into the future, whether through expressing a desire to keep up such ties, or through the inclusion of a private address or telephone number in the letter.

Though not all retirees even wrote farewell letters, those that did tended to use a similar structure that included:

1. ***Announcement of forthcoming retirement:*** An example might be: "As this period of my life draws to a close…"
2. ***Specification of years spent in the army or in last position:*** For example, "After 25 years in the service, I shall be retiring from the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]."
3. ***Description of duties:*** For example, "I was active in matters relating to the security of the State, its settlements and inhabitants". Usually,

the description contains an element of hyperbole, with emphasis on national and universal values ("we were active in promoting immigrant-absorption…" "with a view to expanding human capital reserves…." and the like).

4. ***Actions/changes/improvements on the job:*** For example, "…I made every effort to continue [the way], develop and progress…"
5. ***Appreciation of commanders and subalterns:*** An example might be: "… Therefore, before I leave, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all those who have helped me…"
6. ***Best wishes to successors:*** For example, "With pride and regret, I hereby commit this precious change into the trusty and capable hands of…"

Despite the overall similarity in structure and the banality of the content, the letters do vary in form. Some have a military style, others a civilian one. Some letters bear the official signature of the retiree, with full name and rank, while others are signed informally, without the surname or without the rank. Some letters give the retiree's address and phone number, others do not. Some carry the unit's insignia, others do not.

A study of the letters indicates a correlation between the way the retiree feels about his or her retirement and the form and content of the letter (or whether one is written at all). Retirees who opted for military trappings in their letters identified more with the army and left with a greater sense of satisfaction. They tended to be more emotional and to express the pain of separation. Those who opted for a more civilian format identified less with the army and felt less satisfied at leaving.

Lieutenant Colonel Yehuda who, as you will recall, left with a feeling of satisfaction, wrote: "… I leave the army with a sense of having completed my mission, and am thankful for having been given this opportunity to make a contribution to the unit… I'll never forget the friends I made here". Despite the emotional contents of the letter, it has all the trappings of an official military communication, such as: the unit's address, the addressee,

and the full signature of the retiree including rank and position and above all, official secrecy classification (in this case, "unclassified". This letter is a clear indication of the writer's difficulties in separating from the army and discarding his previous identity.

Lieutenant Colonel Avraham's farewell letter (i.e. the invitation to his party) was short, but his real farewell "letter" was the speech he read out at the grandiose party he organized for himself, which was immortalized on videotape. Unlike an ordinary farewell letter, which is a one-way communication from the retiree to colleagues, Avraham's "spoken letter" invited immediate feedback from the public. The separation conveyed by the farewell letter was immediately followed by re-affirmation of his belonging, through the public's reaction to the letter (applause, well-wishing).

Colonel Benjamin, despite his sense of grievance, provided a rich décor on which to project himself – expensive paper with a blue font, reminiscent of the national flag. Despite this ostentatious exterior, the letter contains only one reference to his feelings ("I have mixed feelings…"). Otherwise, the letter is prosaic and unemotional.

The aggrieved Lieutenant Colonel Dafne not only had no farewell party to mark her retirement, but chose not to write a farewell letter. According to her, she felt no need to boast of her performance in the army. Since the "system" did not appreciate her performance, she had nothing to say. Nor was she interested in wishing her successors well.

Lieutenant Colonel Aryeh, who also nursed a grievance, similarly refused to write a farewell letter. He expected the "system" to take leave of him in a style befitting an officer who had served for many years and had made a significant contribution to the army. In practice, however, there was no farewell party or letter.

Uniform

Army uniforms, stripes and other identifying marks are the external symbols of the identity of military personnel. They express changes in military status, with concomitant changes in social status. Upon retiring

from the army and "turning in their uniform" (a metaphor for quitting the army; see also above, the poem read out at the "thin" farewell ceremony), the retirees lose an important external symbols and henceforth enter an anonymous zone. What they do with their uniforms, as with the gifts, is an indication of their present identity. In both cases – gifts and uniform – use is made of past symbols in the present. Interviews with the retirees show that each one related differently to the uniform in terms of where he or she kept it and how accessible it was.[11]

Lieutenant Colonel Yehuda, who retired on his own initiative with a sense of self-fulfillment, "decided it was only fair to inform the system [of my retirement] well in advance. In this way, I was good to the system, in the same way as the system had been good to me". Yehuda kept one set of army clothes, complete with insignia: "I kept one set of clothes with stripes, badges and insignia for reserve duty… for the ceremony… who knows? The rest I returned to Shekem [the army canteen organization], like a 'good little boy'". The "rest" in this case were five sets of army uniform for which he was credited by Shekem. The other set he kept in his closet, among his civilian clothes. Every day, when he opened his closet, he caught a glimpse of his army uniform, like an apparition from the past. Lieutenant Colonel Moshe, who entertained ambivalent feelings towards the army, also held on to "one set of uniform with stripes and decorations".

Lieutenant Colonel Dafne, who felt angry about her enforced retirement, had a completely different attitude toward her uniforms: "I gave it all back to Shekem. I've kept nothing, except the stripes – from second lieutenant rank to lieutenant colonel rank…" Dafne – who spurned any ritual in connection with her retirement, disdained "military" presents

11 The retirees' attitude to their uniforms may be compared to the attitude of people who have lost weight to their former clothes. Those who have effected a final separation from their past will discard their old clothes, retaining perhaps a token item or two as a keepsake. Those, on the other hand, who have been unable to make this final break, feel ambivalent towards their former clothes and will find it hard to discard them (Rubin et al., 1993) [chapter 6 in this volume].

and repeatedly asserted that she had "divorced the army" – left all her uniforms behind, thereby expressing her wish to make "a fresh start" unrelated to her military past. Although she insisted that she wanted to cut herself off entirely from the army, her behavior belied this. During the interviews, for example, it transpired that she had decided to keep her army satchel which, she claimed, was "light and comfortable". Moreover, the color of the civilian clothes she wore was olive-green, a color that dominated her life throughout her army career. She likewise held on to her symbols of rank, and her study sported a framed poem bearing the army symbol. Evidently, despite Dafne's assertions to the contrary, she still retained latent ties with her former military existence.

The way Colonel Benjamin felt about his retirement lay somewhere between Yehuda and Dafne. His inability to come to terms with the separation was reflected in his attitude towards his uniform. He did not return it to Shekem: "I left my uniform hanging in the closet in the attic. Why should I give it back" That's where it is, for the time being anyway. Perhaps I'll keep it for my son."[12] By holding on to his uniform, Benjamin is expressing the hope that the army will change its mind and call him back. His behavior is indicative of his inability to separate.

INFORMAL RITES AS AN EXPRESSION OF INVOLVEMENT AND LIMINALITY

The emotional responses of senior officers to their retirement varied from willing acceptance to disillusioned resentment. The above case studies show that when the initiative for retirement comes from the army rather than from the retiree, the latter is left with a sense of disillusionment, frustration and anger, responses typical of grief and loss (Glick et al., 1974: 51-73; Rubin 1997: 45-47). While these same feelings of hurt can be found among people who have reached the age of retirement, they are more intense in the standing army because there is

12 In Israel, virtually all young men are drafted at the age of 18 and serve for three years.

no standard age at which people retires, and therefore anyone asked to do so is perceived as being unproductive.

The rites that the individual or society invokes during life passages help the individual redefine his or her situation. In critical liminal situations, as Van Gennep (1960) has stated, symbolic rites of separation are invoked, representing severance from the past, as well as rites of incorporation into the new situation. Our study has shown that those who were forced to retire against their will, while being most in need of the rites of separation that might have smoothed the transition, were the very ones who had to make do without. These people may be defined as suffering from relatively acute liminality. On the other hand, those who protected themselves with elaborate rituals suffered from only mild liminality. More specifically, retirees can be placed along a continuum of liminality (or transition), ranging from acute to mild, depending on their degree of involvement with the army and on whether they wanted to retire or not. For simplicity's sake, Table 1 (page 174) divides retirees into three levels of liminality (mild, average and acute) as determined by the degree of their satisfaction with the army (high, moderate, low) and by the type and intensity of the retirement ceremony (party, gift, farewell letter, uniform).

ACUTE LIMINALITY

Below are three cases illustrating acute liminality, all involving feelings of anger and alienation. In all three, the subjects found their "enforced" retirement humiliating and were unprepared for it. When the initiative for retirement comes from above and is unexpected, the parting ceremonies tend to be "thinner" than those of retirees who initiate their own retirement.

"I HAVE DIVORCED THE SYSTEM"

Lieutenant Colonel Dafne's retirement from the army was accompanied by a sense of anger and frustration. In her interview, she strongly expressed this sense of disillusionment: "I have divorced the system, I

don't believe in people, I'm disillusioned with the system, I've cut myself off from it…" According to her, she was not promoted because she lacked the "right connections". For her, leaving the army was a true divorce, and all she was interested in was getting her financial benefits: "I made sure I got the best pension rights and all the benefits due to me". As to emotional "benefits", she no longer expected any. The fact that she described her retirement as a "divorce" indicates the extent of her disillusionment. What she is effectively saying is that after putting so much emotional energy into the army, the lack of appreciation and reciprocity killed her feelings for it. Her "enforced" retirement typically lacked any separation or incorporation rites. There was no farewell party (she did not even expect one); she returned all her army uniforms; there was no farewell letter and only one gift, devoid, so she claims, of any military connotations, which hangs discreetly in her study.

"The Moor has done his duty, the Moor can go"

Colonel Benjamin, too, left the "system" with a sense of frustration. He accused the army of betraying him: "The system lied to me and did not honor its agreements. I was promised a top position, but in the end, the system bowed to external pressures and gave the position to someone else, who in my opinion is less suitable than me". Had he been given this position, he would have been promoted to the rank of brigadier general. This sense of being discriminated against prevents him from coming to terms with his separation from the army. He is caught between two worlds. On the one hand: "Many army friends call me up for advice, ask me to put in a good word for them with the top brass". On the other hand: "Fewer and fewer people are calling me… several rang me up and I just snubbed them…" He says: "I could have continued in the army and got to the top" but again contradicts himself by saying: "My life at the moment is much fuller, and I'm busy making myself a new career… I still need a visiting card and a car, which I'll receive [from my employer] nearer the time of my departure [during retirement leave]. The conditions, however, are far

better and the salary much higher…" These words betray his longing to continue in the army, despite the economic perks he will probably receive in his civilian appointment.

After his retirement, Benjamin was appointed director-general of a large marketing firm. He regards his status within the civilian hierarchy as higher than his status within the military hierarchy. This attitude helps him cope with: "I've no way of signaling that I'm a general. I'm a director in my own right. My military past doesn't come into it". In actual fact, Benjamin retired as a colonel, not a general. Had he been promoted, he would have attained the rank of general. Benjamin believes that his new firm was aware of his "ex-colonel" rank, as he puts it – and that this helped him get his present job. Naturally, he would have preferred to be an ex-general, although his firm, so he consoles himself, "does not differentiate between colonel and general".

On the face of it, Benjamin quickly and successfully adjusted to civilian life. His statements, however, imply unfinished business. He displays the symbols of his military past at home, but not at work. He has not yet returned his uniform (it's hanging in the closet for the time being, I might yet need it. Perhaps I'll keep it for my son..."). It is hard for him to discard the symbols of his previous identity and he has not yet acquired symbols of his new identity. Benjamin is still hoping for an informal "intimate" party. Finally, although the farewell letter he wrote was not military in style, it bore the external trappings of status, as befitted his rank.

"We can manage fine without you"

"The worst thing after all the confusion and uncertainty of retiring is the knowledge that you're dispensable", said Lieutenant Colonel Moshe. "I had a very senior planning and operations position, and suddenly they just dropped me. The idea that they don't need me anymore is really depressing.… Although I didn't leave the army in anger or rage, I do expect thigns from the system, I expect it to help me and provide me with information, although now that's impossible. It's a real blow to my dedication

and contribution over the years". Shortly, thereafter, he contradicts himself: "Although I can understand what they did, I still feel anger and frustration". And: "Retirement is not easy. A new identity is really what I need now". While aware of the fact that the curtain has dropped on his military past, he has not yet been able to carve himself a new civilian identity.

Moshe like Benjamin expresses his ambivalence through the various parting rites. Although a large formal farewell party was held for him, together with other retirees, no private party was held. And while the presents he received from the army and from his army friends are displayed at home, they are not displayed in a very prominent position. He has kept only one set of army clothes, with stripes and decorations. The farewell letter he wrote was more civilian than military in style.

MILD LIMINALITY

Another group of subjects lies at the other end of the liminality spectrum, namely individuals who initiated their own retirement from the army and did not harbor grievances. When retirement is prepared for, the parting rites tend to be "thicker" than those of retirees who experience "enforced" retirement. The following two cases exemplify this.

"I DON'T WANT TO BE UNGRATEFUL TO THE SYSTEM"

Lieutenant Colonel Yehuda has no complaints about the army: "I don't want to be ungrateful to the system. Those who receive promotion or have their studies paid for by the army should not bite the hand that feeds them. You've got to appreciate what you've been given…" Yehuda decided to initiate his own retirement so as not to face the uncertainty of whether or not the army would extend his contract, and also in order to find a job that would improve his economic status. Yehuda took up a civilian position immediately after his retirement from the army. In this job, the yardstick of success, or "the bottom line" as he puts it, is profitability. He is aware that he has exchanged a job with a collectivist

orientation for one which an individualist orientation: "In the army, my ideal was to contribute to the public. Today, my goal is to make money for my family…" Referring to his adaptability he says: "I'm like a Siamese cat, I land easily on my feet". Yehuda denies he went through a crisis "although everyone does to a certain extent…."

In accordance with the above, Yehuda's parting rites were elaborate. He had no objections to displaying gifts and mementos from his army days. His farewell letter was emotional in tone, but had all the formal trappings of a military missive. He returned all his army uniforms to Shekem, except for one set that he retained as a keepsake (unlike Benjamin and Moshe, who are hoping to use the uniform in the future).

"I DECIDED WHEN TO LEAVE"

Toward the end of his army service, Lieutenant Colonel Avraham began hunting for a job. "When I found a job that suited me, I approached the head of the Manpower Branch and informed him of my forthcoming retirement". Avraham went straight from the army to his new civilian position, without even taking retirement leave. His sense of personal satisfaction is reflected in his parting rites. He organized and elaborate and large farewell party for himself, at which he read out a lengthy farewell letter. He kept one army uniform as a keepsake. Gifts and souvenirs from the army are displayed in his office. As with Yehuda, the period of transition from military to civilian life was minimal.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As a bureaucratic-hierarchal institution, the army introduces a hierarchical element into its retirement ceremonies, based on rank. However, like all modern armies in a democratic society, the army has had to introduce a measure of equality in its ranks, too. This egalitarian approach is also symbolized by the wearing of uniform and by equal basic service conditions for all ranks (Rubin, 1985) [chapter 2 in this volume]. Since retirement is, in a certain sense, a symbolic "death",

the formal army retirement ceremony has an element of equality. The ceremonies do not vary by rank, but by groups of rank. Basically, there are two such groups: one comprising officers of lieutenant colonel rank and above (seniors), and the second comprising officers and NCOs up to the rank of major (juniors). Army regulations dictate the "closed" part of the ceremony, which is fairly similar for both groups of rank. It is this part of the ceremony that symbolically severs the tie between the individual and the organization of which he is part.

The "open" part of the formal ceremony expresses the differences between the two officer groups. It uniforms the senior officers that the separation is not a true one, but rather a maintenance ceremony of their social network and ties. For them, the farewell ceremony is merely a passport to compete over positions among the civilian social elites. The message it relays to the junior officers, on the other hand, is that their retirement is more or less final; their military rank will not gain them entry into the top civilian elites. The formal ceremony therefore reflects the retirees' potential to make headway in his or her civilian life.

Not every retiring senior officer, however, is capable of realizing this potential. The research indicates that some retirees in this group were disillusioned with the army and found it hard to make a new life for themselves. Differences between retirees in the senior officer group can be learnt from the above case studies of informal personal definitional rites. These informal rites reflect the retiree's liminal status. The retiree exists in a kind of no-man's land until he or she is completely identified with his or her new status. Some may feel more lost and confused than others. Therefore, the retirees may be ranked along a continuum of liminality ranging from acute to mild liminality (see table 1).

We found that the "intensity" of the informal rites may be classified according to the way the retiree perceives his or her involvement and commitment to the army. The more the retirees feel committed to the army, have a strong sense of achievement and choose to retire, the milder their sense of liminality and the more they invoke rites of separation (from the army) which, as we said above, are also rites of incorporation (into civilian

elites). The less retirees feel committed and fulfilled and the more they are "forced" to retire against their will, the more acute a sense of liminality they feel and the fewer rites of separation and incorporation they invoke.

Table 1.
Degree of liminality of retirees from the standing army as indicated by degree of satisfaction and informal rites

RITE	DEGREE OF SATISFACTION		
	High	**Moderate**	**Low**
Party	Lavish	Small	None
Gifts	Publicly displayed	Discreetly displayed	Not displayed
Farewell Letter	Military elements and emotional contents	Mixture of military and civilian elements; emotional and prosaic contents	Civilian elements and prosaic contents; or no farewell letter
Uniform	Insignia and stripes kept within easy access	Not kept within easy access	Returned
LIMINALITY	**Mild**	**Average**	**Acute**

The personal definitional rites described above support the claim (Rubin et al., 1993) [chapter 6 in this volume] of their importance in shaping new identities during situations of transition from status to status. For some (those with mild liminality), these rites are a means of confirming their new identity (based on their former military identity) for themselves and for their social environment. For others, who have severed their ties with the army (those with acute liminality), these rites are the

most confirmation of their break with their former identity. These retirees may have cast off their previous identities, but they have so far been unsuccessful in forging a new identity for themselves.

Although the subjects of this study retired when they were relatively young and still able to embark on a new career, most had served as long as 20-odd years in the army. Presumably, over such a long period, the individual forms a strong sentimental attachment to his or her workplace. While this attachment is reflected, inter alia, through the informal retirement ceremony, the degree of attachment is expressed through the informal parting rites. With this in mind, it might be worthwhile to apply this conceptual framework of formal and informal parting rites to employees in short-term careers in other organizations which do not guarantee tenure.

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