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COOPERATION, ALTRUISM, AND THE COMMUNITY CONTROL OF GROUP INTERESTS AMONG JEWS

It must not be forgotten that although a high standard of morality gives but a slight or no advantage to each individual man and his children of the same tribe, yet an increase in the number of well-endowed men and advancement in the standard of morality will certainly give an immense advantage to one tribe over another. A tribe including many members who, possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, who were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection. (Charles Darwin [1871, 500], *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*)

[We face] death on behalf of our laws with a courage which no other nation can equal. (Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion,* 2:234)

Nowhere are the poor of that nation [i.e., Jews] seen abandoned without assistance to become a burthen to the country; and while those very men, who regard as barbarians those who are strangers to the world and to its ways, reluctantly give a trifling portion of their superfluity to the wretched victims of misery, a people whose name is held almost synonymous with ferocity, would really think they should deserve the appellation, if they could hesitate to share their moderate resources with the unfortunate who surround them. Those who delight in affixing guilty intentions to praise-worthy actions will see

> nothing in this union but a dangerous association; but the sentimental observer will never hold back his just approbation. (*An Appeal to the Justice of Kings and Nations* [1801]; quoted in Tama [1807] 1971, 72–73)

A principle conclusion of the discussion of Chapter 1 is that human group evolutionary strategies are conceptualized as "experiments in living," rather than the determinate outcome of natural selection acting on human populations. It is therefore an empirical question to determine the position of any putative strategy on several theoretically important independent dimensions. One of these theoretically important dimensions ranges from high levels of within-group altruism and submergence of individual interest to group interests at one extreme to complete within-group selfishness at the other. Human group evolutionary strategies may be conceptualized as falling anywhere on this dimension, and the purpose of this chapter is to show that historical Judaism can be characterized as near the altruistic end of the dimension, although we shall see that in fact there have been important limits on altruism within historical Jewish communities.

It would be difficult to overestimate the theoretical importance of altruism in evolutionary accounts of behavior. Altruism is deeply problematic because it implies that individuals engage in self-sacrificing behavior in the interests of others. Genes for altruism are therefore always selected against within groups, and many theorists have concluded that the evolution of altruism by natural selection is unlikely to be a major force in evolution.

Nevertheless, there is every reason to suppose that humans can develop altruistic groups that rely ultimately on human abilities to monitor and enforce group goals, to prevent defection, and to create ideological structures that rationalize group aims both to group members and to outsiders (MacDonald 1988a, 290ff; Wilson & Sober 1994; see also Chapter 1). Thus, while it may well be that group-level evolution is relatively uncommon among animals due to their limited abilities to prevent cheating, human groups are able to regulate themselves via social controls so that theoretical possibilities regarding invasion by selfish types from surrounding

human groups or from within can be eliminated or substantially reduced.

Whatever the nature of the evolved machinery of the human mind, the thesis here is that human groups are able to impose altruism, cooperation, and acceptance of group goals on their members. A primary mechanism for the development of within-group altruism and the maximization of group rather than individual interests is proposed to be culturally invented community controls on individual behavior. Such controls can ensure that "cheaters" (i.e., non-cooperators, non-altruists) can be excluded from the group. Social controls also result in the reasonable expectation that the burdens of altruism will be fairly and impartially distributed within the community.[1]

However, social controls are not the only important mechanism influencing altruism, cooperation, and acceptance of group goals among Jews. Evolutionary models imply that the threshold for within-group altruistic behavior is markedly lowered when the group members are biologically related (Wilson 1991; Wilson & Sober 1994), and the data summarized in Chapter 2 indicate that indeed there is significant genetic commonality among even widely dispersed Jewish groups, combined with a genetic gradient between Jewish and gentile populations. Moreover, these data indicate that, with the exception of non-Jewish Middle Eastern populations, all Jewish groups are more closely related to each other than to any non-Jewish group. Thus, unlike universalist religions such as Christianity and Islam, Judaism over its history has fundamentally been a large kinship community in which the threshold for altruistic behavior toward group members was markedly lower than for altruistic behavior toward outgroup members.

In addition, the degree of biological relatedness within the many small and scattered Jewish diaspora communities was undoubtedly much higher than the degree of biological relatedness characteristic of the Jewish population as a whole. This is especially so since these communities were often founded by a very few families, so that the actual level of biological relatedness within particular Jewish communities may well have been very

high indeed. Several authors (e.g. Chase & McKusick 1972; Fraikor 1977; Mourant, Kopec, & Domaniewska-Sobczak 1978) have emphasized the importance of founder effects and inbreeding in the population genetic history of the Jews, stemming ultimately from the fact that Jewish communities were often founded by very few individuals who married endogamously and consanguineously, including relatively high levels of uncle-niece and first cousin marriage (see also below). The point here is that this phenomenon would also have increased the level of biological relatedness within Jewish communities and lowered the threshold for altruism. Moreover, as indicated below, immigration from other Jewish communities was often strongly discouraged by the Jewish community itself. Such a policy would also have the effect of keeping the level of biological relatedness within the Jewish community relatively high.

The relatively high level of biological relatedness both within and among Jewish communities is therefore expected to be a powerful force in facilitating altruism and the submergence of individual interests to those of the entire group. An important aspect of the following treatment will therefore be to provide evidence that relationships of kinship were important to Jews themselves and figured prominently in Jewish economic activity, marriage decisions, and Jewish charity. From an evolutionary perspective, an important role of kinship in these activities is not expected to be restricted to Jews. However, its establishment as being an important principle among Jews is highly compatible with the thesis that Judaism is an altruistic group evolutionary strategy.

Another force expected to facilitate altruism and a group orientation among Jews derives from the typical role of Jews as a minority group in the midst of an often hostile gentile society. A perennial problem for Jewish communities was to prevent individuals from engaging in behavior that would threaten the entire group. Thus, Katz (1961a, 40–41) notes that life in a hostile world required high levels of community control over individual behavior: “The danger threatening the group as a result of individual misconduct operated as the most forceful check. Reiterated warnings and admonitions that were issued by public

institutions and communal leaders stressed the fact that the life and death of the whole community rested in the hands of its individual members. The security of the Jewish community constituted a supreme and essential value . . . ."[2]

As described more fully in Chapter 1, in situations of external threat, individual self-interest increasingly coincides with an interest in preserving the group. Indeed, external threat may well provide a cue that triggers evolved altruistic, group-oriented psychological mechanisms.[3] Moreover, because anti-Semitism has been virtually universal throughout Jewish history, altruism may come to verge on anticipated future reciprocity. Reflecting these realities, the *Shulhan Arukh* advised that "[o]ne should also consider that the wheel of fortune is ever revolving, and that he himself or his son or his grandson will eventually have to beg for charity" (quoted in Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 198). Such sentiments were common beginning in the ancient world (Baron 1952b, 270).

A high level of within-group charity may also have benefited the group strategy because it provided a safety net in traditional societies where economic success can be ephemeral for anyone. The ephemerality of economic success is likely to be particularly salient to Jews since they have often been subject to capricious seizures of property, expulsions, and confiscatory taxation.

Interestingly, a medieval German synod enacted a law that required the entire Jewish community to pay when the king required a Jew to pay a capricious contribution, the only exception being in cases where the Jew was at fault (Finkelstein 1924, 60). In other words, if a Jew was penalized capriciously because of his group membership, the entire group was expected to pay. Regulations such as this could be an important concomitant of a group strategy, since the risks of group membership were spread throughout the entire group and individuals who were subject to such capricious acts were less likely to defect because their individual losses were minimized.

Hundert (1992) notes the perception among Jews in Poland that wealth was ephemeral, and Katz (1961a) notes that Jewish capital in traditional Poland was always precarious, since it was liable to

expropriation by the authorities. Jews often specialized in obtaining forms of wealth that could be concealed and that "could be quickly switched from a point of danger to a point of resettlement" (Johnson 1987, 246).

Moreover, in traditional societies the economic basis of wealth among gentiles has often been the control of large areas of land—a relatively stable source of wealth. But, among Jews, the economic basis of wealth has been much more likely to depend on trade and commerce—occupations which are more prone to economic fluctuations—and Jews were often prohibited from owning land. Economic success in trade and commerce would also be facilitated by a safety net, which would encourage Jews to take economic risks. Engaging in economically risky behavior has been noted by many writers as being characteristic of Jewish economic activity throughout history (e.g., Johnson 1987; Mosse 1987, 314ff).

The diaspora situation itself also facilitated within-group cooperation among Jews. The diaspora resulted in Judaism being essentially a large kinship group in which internal divisions were de-emphasized and in which the major division was between Jews and gentiles, rather than within the Jewish community. As discussed below, by shifting to a diaspora context, economic oppression of Jews by other Jews was minimized, and Judaism itself developed a relatively homogeneous set of interests. Economic cooperation within the community was maximized and economic exploitation minimized, but conflict and competition with the gentile societies among whom they lived remained.

A principal theme of this volume is that Judaism is a collectivist culture in the sense of Triandis (1990, 1991; see also Chapters 7 and 8). Collectivist cultures (and Triandis [1990, 57] explicitly includes Judaism in this category) place a much greater emphasis on the goals and needs of the ingroup than on individual rights and interests. Ingroup norms and the duty to cooperate and submerge individual goals to the needs of the group are paramount. "Collectivists are concerned about the results of their actions on others, share material and nonmaterial resources with group members, are concerned about their presentation to others, believe in the correspondence of outcomes of self and ingroup, and feel

involved in the contributions and share in the lives of ingroup members" (Triandis 1990, 54). Collectivist cultures develop an "unquestioned attachment" to the ingroup, including "the perception that ingroup norms are universally valid (a form of ethnocentrism), automatic obedience to ingroup authorities, and willingness to fight and die for the ingroup. These characteristics are usually associated with distrust of and unwillingness to cooperate with outgroups" (p. 55). Each of the ingroup members is viewed as responsible for every other member, and relations with outgroup members are "distant, distrustful, and even hostile" (Triandis 1991, 80). In collectivist cultures, morality is conceptualized as that which benefits the group, and aggression and exploitation of outgroups are acceptable (Triandis 1990, 90). These themes will be apparent in the following.

Besides its obvious relevance to an evolutionary account of Judaism, it should be noted that within-group altruism and submergence of individual interests to those of the group result in an extraordinarily powerful competitive advantage against individual strategies. The competitive advantage of altruistic group strategies has always been obvious to evolutionists. The difficulty has been to conceptualize how altruistic groups could evolve as the result of natural selection. In the case of Judaism, however, the argument of this chapter will be that there has been an extraordinary confluence of forces that have resulted in relatively high levels of within-group cooperation and altruism and a de-emphasis on individual interests.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND PATRONAGE AMONG JEWS

> And for our duty at the sacrifices themselves, we ought in the first place to pray for the common welfare of all, and after that our own; for we are made for fellowship one with another; and he who prefers the common good before what is peculiar to himself, is above all acceptable to God. (Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion,* 2:196)

In Chapter 7, I will discuss the importance of eugenics and the conscious development of an intellectual, entrepreneurial elite among Jews. However, this development must be seen within the wider context of Judaism as an national/ethnic strategy that emphasizes the rights and obligations of the entire community of Jews. This sense of community involvement and kin-based altruism can be seen as an aspect of the basic ideology of Judaism. Baron (1952a, 10) notes that "Judaism stresses the general aims of the Jewish people. . . . to this day orthodox Jewish ethics has remained in its essence national rather than individual, and this accounts, incidentally, for the otherwise incomprehensible legal theorem of the common responsibility of *all* Jews for the deeds of each." The Law therefore is an "instrument of history" to which the individual is subservient, and "what really matters in the Jewish religion is not the immortality of the individual Jew, but that of the Jewish people" (Baron 1952a, 12). "The nation's future and not that of the individual remained the decisive objective" (Baron 1952b, 40; see also Alon 1989, 524; Bickerman 1988, 270–271; Johnson 1987, 159; Moore 1927–30, II:312). There was also a sense of corporate rather than individual merit—a sense that individuals inherited some merit from their illustrious ancestors (Bickerman 1988, 270–271).

In the period following the Destruction of the Second Temple (70 A.D.), organized systems of social welfare and mutual assistance developed among Jews (Alon 1989, 534). These systems of social welfare had their antecedents in the early history of Israel as a kinship group in which the social ideal was to eliminate within-group exploitation (see also Chapter 8).

Deuteronomy 15:1–18 clearly articulates the obligation to develop systems of welfare for poor Israelites. However, Israelite society often failed to live up to the ideal of a relatively egalitarian group in which within-group exploitation was minimized (see also Chapter 8). Israelite society was rife with class distinctions and the oppression of the poor during the period of national sovereignty, despite the disapproval of many prophets. Often the language used by the prophets reflects the language in the sections of Deuteronomy that emphasize the importance of social welfare among the Israelites, as when Ezekiel notes that among the sins of Israel "the fatherless and the widow are wronged in you" (Ezek. 22:7). The Maccobean period also had its share of despots, and sharp social divisions persisted through the Second Commonwealth Period.

Oppression within Jewish society would tend to lead to a lack of social solidarity among Jews and a loss of the fundamental kinship structure of Jewish society. However, when living as a minority in the diaspora, these trends were greatly lessened: "Before the battle for ethnic-religious survival, the inner class struggle receded" and a common economic front *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world developed (Baron 1952b, 241). "The Jewish minority community, placed on the defensive by a hostile world, could never develop those sharp internal conflicts which had characterized the Second Commonwealth" (pp. 242–243). In the diaspora context, even vast differences in wealth within the Jewish community would be less likely to be the result of poor Jews being exploited by wealthier Jews, since Jewish wealth would tend to primarily derive from economic transactions carried on with the gentile community. Rather than the exploitation of poorer Jews by wealthier Jews, the emphasis was on cooperation and patronage within the Jewish community, while economic relationships with the gentile community could be, using Katz's (1961a, 55; see Chapter 5) felicitous phrase, "purely instrumental."

Reflecting this, several writers have noted the high degree of commonality of interest and lack of class conflict in traditional Jewish diaspora societies. Weinryb (1972) writes of traditional Poland that "[t]heir communications and interests were similar, as

were their fears and hopes, despite increasing socioeconomic stratification" (p. 96). And Israel (1985, 171), referring to European Jewish society in the 17th and 18th centuries, notes that "[g]enerally speaking, [Jewish society] conformed hardly at all to the Marxist notion of class differentiation and struggle. Almost always, the vertical ties which lent Jewish society its inner cohesion—commercial collaboration and the patronage network implicit in Jewry's institutions, charities, and welfare system—were of much greater significance than any occasional friction between rich and poor."

The emphasis on minimizing within-group conflict is apparent in Jewish religious writing from the ancient period. The writers of the Talmud placed a high value on class harmony among Jews, as well as a strong sense of collective economic responsibility (Baron 1952b, 251; see also Alon [1980, 1984] 1989, 521ff). Neusner (1987, 161) finds that a major theme of the Babylonian Talmud is the imposition of community norms on individual behavior. Oppression of Jews was sharply enjoined, and individual economic rights were sharply curtailed in the interests of communal and family solidarity.

Reflecting these trends, there is excellent evidence that Jewish economic activity has historically been characterized by high levels of within-group economic cooperation and patronage. Jewish elites overwhelmingly tended to employ other Jews in their enterprises. In Chapter 5, the importance of highly placed courtiers in the general fortunes of the entire Jewish community was noted, the relevant point here being that there was a strong tendency for these individuals to help their co-religionists. Baer (1961, I:31) finds that the prosperity of Jewish communities in Spain under both Spanish and Moorish rulers depended on the influence of Jewish courtiers: "In the courts of princes, Jews rose to positions of eminence and influence. The fate of Jewish communities was closely bound up with the political fortunes of these Jewish courtiers, whose personal rise or fall often carried with it the prosperity or ruin of their community." Similarly, Stillman (1979) notes the role of Jewish courtiers in extending patronage to other Jews in a variety of Muslim societies and the fact that "the fall of a

Jewish courtier was a cause of deep anxiety for his brethren until the storm had passed" (p. 62; see also Patai 1986; Ahroni 1986, 138). During the early period of Mongol domination in Iraq, the Jew Sa'd ad-Daula filled his administration with "his brothers, kinsmen, and coreligionists" (Fischel 1937, 107). His fall resulted in violence directed at the entire Jewish community.

There are numerous examples of high-placed Jewish courtiers or capitalists employing co-religionists in their economic activities. During the period of increasing dominance by the New Christians in 15th-century Spain, Roth (1974) notes that when Diego Arias Davila was appointed treasurer, other New Christians quickly achieved similar high positions as a result of his influence. Roth (1974) also describes a general pattern in the New World in the 16th century in which the Sephardim controlled all imports and exports, with distribution throughout the country also performed by other Sephardim.

Israel (1985) shows that the Court Jews of 17th-century Europe overwhelmingly employed their relatives and other Jews in their operations on behalf of various governments. Jewish economic activity during the period is described as a complex interdependent pyramid in which all classes benefited from each other's activities: "From Court Jew to pedlar these divergent groupings penetrated and depended on each other economically . . ." (p. 171). For example, when Samuel Oppenheimer (1630–1703) obtained the right to settle in Vienna, he brought with him around 100 other Jewish families who were directly dependent on him. Oppenheimer also organized a vast network of co-religionist agents and suppliers; "he secured for them charters and passes, contracts and monopolies, and obtained for them permission to settle in cities from which Jews had been excluded for centuries" (Stern 1950, 28). Stern comments that this pattern occurred not only in Austria, but also throughout the German states.

In Poland, Jews went into partnership as moneylenders, merchants, and toll farmers on a large scale, and the employees in these business enterprises and in toll and tax farming were Jews over whom the entrepreneur often exercised judicial rights (Weinryb 1972, 97). Indeed, Katz (1961a) notes that there was an

entire Jewish working class among the 16th–18th-century Ashkenazim who "engaged in production, transport, and the management of enterprises financed by Jewish capitalists" (p. 49). Like the dependents of Jewish courtiers, this Jewish working class was entirely dependent on the success of the capitalist, and the capitalist in turn was absolutely dependent for his position on his being useful to the gentile authorities. Weinryb (1972, 97) notes that "[s]olidarity and contacts played a considerable role in economic activity. The strength and structure of an enterprise, firm, or partnership were conditioned by group solidarity."

This basic pattern continued into the 19th and 20th centuries: Lindemann (1991) describes wealthy Jewish capitalists employing other Jews in 19th-century Russia, and Sachar (1992) and Liebman (1979) find a similar pattern in the United States in the early 20th century. Indeed, Howe (1976) describes a sort of self-contained economic world of immigrant Jews in the early 20th century in which the vast majority of economic transactions for products and services were carried on with other Jews. Kotkin (1993) describes the continuing importance of what one might call "tribal economics" among far-flung Jewish groups in the contemporary world.

Beginning in the ancient world, Jews also tended to form protective trade associations (guilds) with other Jews (Baron 1952a, 261). Neuman (1969) describes numerous merchant and artisan guilds among the Jews of pre-expulsion Spain. Groups of Jewish traders and craftsmen organized "for purposes of self-defense and for regulating the industries in which they were engaged," and there were intense, bitter rivalries with Christian guilds in the municipalities (Neuman 1969, I:182ff). As indicated in Chapter 5, competition between guilds organized around ethnicity continued even after the forced conversions of 1391 and even though the New Christian guilds were nominally Christian. Similarly, Benardete (1953, 111–112) cites a 19th century observer of Sephardic Jews in Salonica "who was shocked to learn that the solidarity among them is so great that in the business world trade-union practices . . . prevailed." There was a "religious significance attached to the protection of one's livelihood" (p. 112).

In addition, Jews formed Jewish unions and other types of Jewish socialist labor movements in which the entire membership was Jewish (e.g., the Polish and Russian Bunds and, in the United States, the Union of Hebrew Trades and the Jewish Socialist Federation) (Levin 1977; Liebman 1979). These specifically Jewish labor movements, which typically combined socialism with a strong sense of Jewish cultural separatism, often conflicted with the internationalist, assimilationist tendencies of the wider socialist movement and ultimately with the Communist government in the Soviet Union (Levin 1977, 97–112; Pinkus 1988, 49ff). Indeed, Levin (1977, 213) describes the Jewish labor movement in the United States as a sort of "sub-nation" in which "Jewish laborers worked for Jewish employers, and the class conflicts between them were carried on in a Jewish ethnic culture . . . ."

Interestingly, the class conflict appears to have been much muted because the employers were also Jewish: Because the Jewish socialist leaders retained strong ties to the Jewish community, they were less hostile toward the Jewish bourgeoisie and often obtained charity for Jewish workers from Jewish capitalists. "Assistance, common interests [especially combating anti-Semitism], and relationships of this kind contributed to the muting of the Socialist union leaders' class hostilities. They also significantly diminished their intracommunal class hostility and helped to make these Socialists more broadly Jewish in their orientation" (Liebman 1979, 263).

On the other hand, Liebman (1979, 267–268) suggests that the Jewish union leaders became more conciliatory toward management when the ethnic composition of the unions changed toward being predominantly gentile. Moreover, union-management relations became more formal, rather than a communal affair, when the unions became predominantly gentile. The suggestion is that ethnicity had a powerful effect on all of these relationships.

This powerful communal sense can also be seen in immigration patterns. Aid was forthcoming not just from family members, but also from other Jews emigrating from the same town or region. Jewish employers often recruited preferentially from particular regions, with the result that "families, neighborhoods, and towns

would be transported almost intact and set down again in a tenement, block, or small neighborhood in a city in the United States" (Liebman 1979, 142). Once in the United States, Jews developed extensive mutual aid societies, including the *Landsmanshaft* societies, based on kinship ties and/or a common place of residence in Europe. Describing the function of the *Landsmanshaft,* Wirth (1956, 222-223) notes that

> a stranger who is able to call himself a *Landsman* not only loosens the purse-strings of the first individual he meets, but also has access to his home. Not only do the *lanslite* belong to the same synagogue, but as a rule, they engage in similar vocations, become partners in business, live in the same neighborhood and intermarry within their own group. A *Landsmanshaft* has its own patriarchal leaders, its lodges and mutual aid associations, and its celebrations and festivities.

Communication was also an element of Jewish economic cooperation. Katz (1961a, 151) emphasizes the fact that Jewish economic unity in the face of dispersion was important for its economic success: "The possibility of constant communication with people living in other countries, with whom there existed a kinship of language and culture, gave an economic advantage to the Jews, who were scattered over many lands." For example, writing of the Court Jews during the period from 1640 to 1740 in Europe, Stern (1950, 18–19) notes that "the Jew seemed to be better qualified for the position of war commissary than the Christian. He was in close contract with his coreligionists throughout Europe. He was therefore able to maintain agents and correspondents in all countries and could receive through them necessary goods and important news."

Stern (1950, 137) also notes that Jews were also ideally suited to function as financial agents to gentile princes because of their contacts with foreign banking firms. Ties of language were especially advantageous, since Jews from widely dispersed areas could easily communicate with each other.[4] Shaw (1991, 94) also describes a system of bills of exchange that were honored by other

Jewish traders and bankers and that gave Jewish traders a competitive advantage over Christian and Muslim traders.[5]

Such ties continued well into the modern era: Mosse (1987, 399), writing of the period from 1820 to 1935 in Germany, notes that "Jewish commercial activities outside Germany were facilitated by a strong sense of Jewish solidarity and mutual trust, often reinforced by kinship ties. Later with a weakening of the ties of social solidarity based on traditional Jewish observance, Jewish contacts across national frontiers persisted on a basis of common networks of acquaintance, of apprenticeships, of long-standing commercial relations occasionally reinforced by kinship ties." These commercial networks were much more extensive than those typically available to gentiles.

There were other benefits as well: Sorkin (1987, 122) notes that a function of one of the many voluntary Jewish associations that sprang up in Germany in the 19th century was to provide loans to Jewish businessmen. Moreover, Mosse (1987, 36) finds that a large network of lesser Jewish bankers developed under the aegis of the Rothschilds. Mosse also provides several examples of "Jewish banks" in which the partners and directors tended to be Jewish even when there were no familial connections. And Jewish entrepreneurs in a wide range of industries often were financed by banking firms owned by Jews (e.g., Mosse 1987, 152, 155, 249). Moreover, Jews tended to do business with other Jews throughout this period "almost certainly beyond the call of 'purely economic necessity'" (Mosse 1987, 403).

Finally, in the era of joint stock companies after 1900, a "Jewish sector" of the German economy developed, characterized by interlocking directorships among commercial and industrial enterprises and their financial institutions (Mosse 1987, 257). In a statement which would also serve as a rough summary of Jewish economic behavior throughout history, Mosse (1987, 17) notes that one theory of the remarkable Jewish economic success, particularly in the banking industry (Mosse 1987, 382) in Germany throughout the period from 1820–1935 was based on

> an internal dynamic of dynasty formation, personal relations, kinship ties, socialization processes, and, in

> general, the operation of a variety of informal networks. At least until mid-[19th] century Jews tended to transact business mainly with fellow Jews, in part because Jewish ritual laws impeded, if they did not completely inhibit between Jew and Gentile the social intercourse almost inseparable from sustained business relations. . . . [W]hether through kinship ties, greater confidence and sympathy, feelings of solidarity, or recommendations, there would be a marked tendency for Jews to employ fellow-Jews in positions of trust, as men having *prokura*, and eventually to raise them to a partnership. Close and harmonious business relationships reinforced by personal friendship, the friendship of families, and common leisure pursuits would, not infrequently, contain also an element of common 'Jewishness.'

THE GROUP ETHIC OF JUDAISM AND ITS ENFORCEMENT WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

> A heathen cannot prefer charges of overreaching because it is said "*one his brother*" (Lev. 25:14). However, if a heathen has defrauded an Israelite he must return the overcharge according to our laws (in order that the rights of) a heathen should not exceed (those of) an Israelite. (*The Code of Maimonides, Book 12, The Book of Acquisition*, ch. XII:1, 47)

> It is permissible to borrow from a heathen or from an alien resident and to lend to him at interest. For it is written *Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother* (Deut. 23:20)—to thy brother it is forbidden, but to the rest of the world it is permissible. Indeed, it is an affirmative commandment to lend money at interest to a heathen. For it is written *Unto the heathen thou shalt lend upon interest* (Deut. 23:21). (*The Code of Maimonides, Book 13, The Book of Civil Laws*, ch. V:1, 93)

> *Nesek* ("biting," usury) and *marbit* ("increase," interest) are one and the same thing. . . . Why is it called nesek? because he who takes it bites his fellow, causes pain to him, and eats his flesh. (*The Code of Maimonides, Book 13, The Book of Civil Laws*, ch. IV:1, 88–89)

The group ethic of Judaism is also apparent in the formal rules and regulations of Jewish diaspora communities in traditional societies. The present section reviews evidence indicating that Jewish economic behavior was highly conditioned on group membership and that the interests of individual Jews were consistently subordinated to the interests of the group. From the standpoint of the group strategy, the goal was to maximize the total resources of the community, not to allow each individual member to maximize his interest. These regulations were enforced by the powerful centralized Jewish governments that existed throughout the diaspora.

Business and social ethics as codified in the Bible and the Talmud took strong cognizance of group membership in a manner that minimized oppression within the Jewish community, but not between Jews and gentiles. Perhaps the classic case of differential business practices toward Jews and gentiles, enshrined in Deuteronomy 23, is that interest on loans could be charged to gentiles, but not to Jews. Although various subterfuges were sometimes found to get around this requirement, loans to Jews in medieval Spain were typically made without interest (Neuman 1969, I:194), while those to Christians and Moslems were made at rates ranging from 20 to 40 percent (Lea 1906–07, I:97).[6] Hartung (1992) also notes that Jewish religious ideology deriving from the Pentateuch and the Talmud took strong cognizance of group membership in assessing the morality of actions ranging from killing to adultery. For example, rape was severely punished only if there were negative consequences to an Israelite male. While rape of an engaged Israelite virgin was punishable by death, there was no punishment at all for the rape of a non-Jewish woman. In Chapter 4, it was also noted that penalties for sexual crimes against proselytes were less than against other Jews.

Hartung notes that according to the Talmud (b. Sanhedrin 79a) an Israelite is not guilty if he kills an Israelite when intending to kill a heathen. However, if the reverse should occur, the perpetrator is liable to the death penalty. The Talmud also contains a variety of rules enjoining honesty in dealing with other Jews, but condoning misappropriation of gentile goods, taking advantage of a gentile's errors in business transactions, and not returning lost articles to gentiles (Katz 1961a, 38).[7]

Katz (1961a) notes that these practices were modified in the medieval and post-medieval periods among the Ashkenazim in order to prevent *hillul hashem* (disgracing the Jewish religion). In the words of a Frankfort synod of 1603, "Those who deceive Gentiles profane the name of the Lord among the Gentiles" (quoted in Finkelstein 1924, 280). Taking advantage of gentiles was permissible in cases where *hillul hashem* did not occur, as indicated by rabbinic responsa that adjudicated between two Jews who were contesting the right to such proceeds. Clearly this is a group-based sense of ethics in which only damage to one's own group is viewed as preventing individuals from profiting at the expense of an outgroup. "[E]thical norms applied only to one's own kind" (Katz 1961a, 42).

There was also keen concern for restricting competition within the Jewish community in order to maximize the economic benefits to the entire community even at the expense of individual Jews. Finkelstein (1924) summarizes the Talmudic law regarding economic competition among Jews. An early Tannaitic (second century A.D.) source forbade Jews to undersell each other. However, this regulation was overruled by later sages in the interest of competition inside the Jewish community—i. e., competition that would benefit Jewish consumers. A later authority ruled that, if all the trade among the gentiles is in Jewish hands, "it is forbidden for a newcomer to undersell a fellow-Jew, and therefore all competition is prohibited" (p. 377), and this ruling was upheld by later commentators. Thus, there could be free trade within the Jewish community in order to protect the buyer, but monopolistic practices outside the Jewish community were sanctioned. Finkelstein notes that the French and German

commentators supported the proposition that Jews should not compete with each other, but the point was clearly to prevent competition among Jews in trade with gentiles, not in trade with Jews. Thus Rabbi Eliezer b. Joel Ha-Levi ruled that "[i]f the *Gentile* cannot come to the house of R. except by passing the house of S. (the newcomer) then R. (the original shopkeeper) may object in accordance with the view of R. Huna" (quoted in Finkelstein 1924, 377; italics in text).

Katz (1961a, 61) finds that there was a large literature on preventing competition between Jews doing business with gentiles among the Ashkenazim. Jews were not allowed to underbid other Jews for franchises, nor were Jews allowed to interfere with monopolies held by other Jews, the point being "not to lose the money of Israel." Similar practices occurred among Jews in the Ottoman Empire (Shaw 1991, 64f).

Among Italian Jews in the 16th century there were regulations providing for exclusive monopolies on lending money to gentiles (see Finkelstein 1924, 312–313).[8] And even in the Jewish-dominated banking industry in Germany in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Mosse (1987, 383) finds that, although there were some rivalries among Jewish financial institutions, "on the whole, a co-operative spirit (based on a philosophy of 'give and take' and 'fair shares for all') prevailed."

Jews were prohibited from bringing non-Jewish customers into a non-Jewish store or helping non-Jews with business. Partnerships and even temporary agreements between Jews and Christians were forbidden by Jewish law, and such laws were repeatedly enacted and re-enacted by the Jewish authorities: "There were constant condemnations and bans of excommunication against those who 'reveal the secrets of Israel', to merchants or noblemen" (Hundert 1986, 61).[9] Among the Sephardim, it was a major crime to cause a fellow Jew to lose property to a gentile. A Spanish synod of 1432 ruled that in such cases the culprit was subjected to extreme forms of punishment, including branding on the forehead, whipping, and execution (see Finkelstein 1924, 363).

CLOSE KINSHIP TIES AS ELEMENTS OF JEWISH ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR

> I did many acts of charity for my kinsmen, those of my nation who had gone into captivity with me at Nineveh in Assyria. (Tob. 1:3)

There is evidence that close kinship ties have been an important aspect of Jewish economic activities. Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 304–306) document the general importance of kinship as implying an obligation to provide assistance. The obligation for relatives to provide assistance is simply assumed and taken for granted not only within the immediate family, but also within the extended family. "Kinship ties, even distant ones, entitle an individual to food, lodging and support when he comes to visit. In a strange town or city you seek a relative to stay with . . . . He may be your uncle, your seventh cousin, or the nephew of your brother's mother-in-law. If a man needs a job, a wealthy relative must give him one if it is at all possible. If not, he must help him to find one" (p. 306).

In addition, besides the general patronage of wealthy Jews toward their co-religionists, close kinship relations were of great importance in cementing business ties. Leroy (1985) notes that Jewish business and commerce in medieval Navarre were facilitated by intermarriage and family solidarity. This pattern was not significantly altered by the severe persecution that began in the 15th century and continued well into the 18th century. Round (1969) notes the high degree of endogamy among the 15th-century New Christian office-holding families, despite their (often nominal) conversion to Christianity, and notes the role of these alliances in facilitating professional solidarity and the pursuit of patronage. Boyajian (1983; see also Baron 1973 108–109; Beinart 1971b; Benardete 1953; Finkelstein 1924, 11; Haliczer 1987; Roth 1974) shows that the Sephardic international trading network and the commercial credit it depended on were facilitated by religious and kinship ties among these families. Within these families, "frequent consanguineous marriages . . . , matching cousins and cousins, uncles and nieces, reinforced kinship and recombined

capital for enterprise. . . . The same pattern of kinship and intermarriage among the participants extended to the Diaspora and to correspondent bankers in Antwerp and Venice, or even overseas in Brazil and Spanish America" (Boyajian 1983, 46).

Similarly, as Johnson (1987) emphasizes, the Court Jews of 17th- and 18th-century Europe married exclusively among themselves and developed a large network of financial families whose resources could be organized to support particular goals. For example, Samuel Oppenheimer (1630–1703) was able to organize the resources of a "vast network" of such families, virtually all of whom were interrelated. "It became rare for Court Jews to marry any other kind" (p. 257), so that they in effect became a separate endogamous class within the Jewish community. In particular, Stern (1950, 28) notes that Oppenheimer's son served as his general representative in the Empire and that his two sons-in-law were stationed in the important trading center of Frankfort; his brother Moses was the principal agent in Heibelberg, and, in Hanover, he was represented by another close relative (Leffemann Behrens) and his son; in Italy, his interests were supervised by his grandson, and, in Amsterdam and Cleves, his relatives, the Gumperts family, were in charge.

In Arab lands, Goitein (1974) notes that Jews entered into partnerships with other Jews and that these business relationships were cemented by marriage alliances. The Geniza documents from the medieval period indicate numerous business relationships among close relatives (Goitein 1978, 40ff), including fathers and sons, brothers, brothers-in-law, cousins, and uncles and nephews. Fischel (1937) also notes this kinship solidarity among Jews in Arab lands, a solidarity "which economic historians have long recognized as a characteristic feature of Jewish participation in economic life" (p. 30; see also references therein). Deshen (1986), writing about traditional Moroccan practices, notes that individuals were enmeshed in extensive kinship networks in which kin were responsible for debts and businesses and homes were shared among close kin, and Shaw (1991, 94) makes a similar comment regarding Ottoman Jewry.

Among the Sephardim in 18th-century America, highly consanguineous marriages often cemented commercial arrangements, as among the Hendricks, Tobias, and Gomez families (Sachar 1992, 33).[10] Hyman (1989) notes that through the 19th century "Jewish family firms were often founded by brothers, and family contacts sustained the mercantile success of Jewish entrepreneurs in both Europe and America" (p. 185). Moreover, if business partners were not related to begin with, they typically arranged to become related: Solomon Loeb and Abraham Kuhn married each other's sisters, and in the firm of Goldman and Sachs, two Sachs sons married two Goldman daughters (Kaplan 1983, 298).

This pattern of consanguineous business relationships also occurred among the German Jewish merchant bankers in the 19th century (see Sachar 1992, 92, for a variety of examples). Perhaps the apotheosis of the Jewish tendency for consanguinity centered around a successful business is the behavior of the Rothschild family during the 19th century. After consolidating their family's position as the wealthiest in Europe, the youngest son of Mayer Amschel Rothschild married his niece, and Morton (1961) finds that of the 58 weddings contracted by the descendants of Mayer Amschel Rothschild, fully half were with first cousins.[11]

Interim Conclusion

The data presented in the foregoing sections are highly compatible with an evolutionary account: The social (and its correlative genetic) gulf between Jews and gentiles was associated with profound differences in economic behavior. Economic behavior in communities with Jews and gentiles cannot be understood as the atomized transactions of individual actors. Group membership was critical, and especially so for the often large percentage of Jews who were entirely dependent on a "Jewish" sector of the economy created and maintained by co-religionists.

The data also show that genetic variation within the Jewish community was viewed as a very important resource. The

concentration of economic resources coincided to a significant extent with the concentration of genetic variants.

The conclusion must be that genetic distance is important for understanding Jewish economic behavior. As will be seen in the following, this is also true in the case of Jewish charity: While there are high levels of economic cooperation (and charity) within the entire Jewish community and almost no charity between Jews and gentiles, even higher levels of economic cooperation (and charity) are associated with the close kinship ties created by connections of biological relatedness between specific families.

JEWISH CHARITY AS AN ASPECT OF JUDAISM AS A GROUP EVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

> You shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him, and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. Take heed lest there be a base thought in your heart, and you say, 'The seventh year, the year of release [of debts], is near,' and your eye be hostile to your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the LORD against you, and it be sin in you. You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him. (Deut. 15:7–10)

> Whatever sum is decided on by us as necessary shall be collected each year, and each person shall pay the sum assessed against him. If any Jew fail to give their share and disobey the agent of the General Community, their names shall be announced in every community in Germany. The announcement shall take this form: "The following men, who are mentioned by name, have been separated from the remainder of the Dispersion, they may not mingle or intermarry with us, neither they nor their children, and no person may recite from them the benediction of marriage. If any one transgresses this order and does marry them, whether he act willingly or under

> compulsion, the marriage is declared void." (Takkanan of the Synod of Frankfort [1603]; reprinted in Finkelstein 1924, 263–264)

There is no question that Judaism has been characterized by high levels of within-group altruism. The general importance of charity within the Jewish community dates from Biblical times and is strongly emphasized in the Talmud: "an undying spirit of common responsibility of each individual for the whole group and of the group for the individual" (Baron 1952b, 270; see also Johnson 1987, 158). Emphasizing the group nature of this responsibility, Woocher (1986, 85) notes that the traditional term *tzedakah* implies "an obligatory act of justice, not a noblesse oblige expression of personal beneficence. *Tzedakah* is a collective communal responsibility, one aspect of the larger command to the Jewish people that they pursue justice as a society."

The extent to which charity was emphasized within the Jewish community is truly remarkable. Writing of the traditional shtetl communities of Eastern Europe, Zborowski and Herzog (1952) show that the requirement for charity fairly pervaded life in the group; "at every turn during one's life, the reminder to give is present" (p. 193). Charity was "a badge of group membership [which] has been so worked into the structure of society that it serves as a channel through which property, learning and services are diffused" (p. 194).

Every celebration and holiday included gifts to the poor, and, indeed, any event that was out of the ordinary elicited a contribution to one of the several tin cups that each family had for placing coins intended for various charitable causes. It was not only the wealthy who were expected to be charitable, but everyone—even those who were the recipients of charity. Children were socialized early regarding the importance of charity, partly by being used as go-betweens between donors and donees. Women contributed by visiting the sick and providing them with food and clothing.

There was also a variety of official community charitable organizations, including separate organizations for providing clothes for the poor, dowries for poor girls, support for orphans,

medical expenses for the poor, support for itinerant beggars, support for the aged, and support for burial expenses. There was also a community association that gave interest-free loans for starting businesses, and individual charity that helped others enter business was very highly regarded.

Penalties for avoiding Jewish charity were severe. The Spanish Synod of 1432 imposed the "stringent herem of ten maledictions" against tax evaders (Finkelstein 1924, 371). Goitein (1971, 67), writing of practices during medieval Islamic times, notes that payments for charitable purposes were viewed as a major religious obligation, analogous to membership dues in a modern religious congregation. Resident foreigners were also forced to pay toward the support of the community poor under threat of being banned. The passage from the Frankfort synod of 1603 quoted at the beginning of this section is also an excellent example of social controls that resulted in altruism among Jews: Individuals were assessed a certain sum of money, and they and their children were threatened with expulsion from the community if they did not comply.

But the greatest negative sanction was simply that of public opinion—the "cold shoulders, wagging tongues, and raised eyebrows" of other community members (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 209). The social cost of avoiding contributions was "so severe that few would brave it" (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 209). Wealthy men who were called to read the Torah at Sabbath services had to contribute to the community in return for this privilege. The amount contributed was announced to the congregation in advance of the reading. Wealthy men who developed a reputation for not being sufficiently charitable were called to read the Torah for the explicit purpose of providing group pressure on the individual to contribute.

In addition to these negative sanctions against those who fail to contribute, there was a strong emphasis on positive reinforcement. A principal source of one's reputation in the community depended on commitment to group goals. Being rich in itself brought far less prestige than being known as generous to the community. The rewards of charity were "so far-reaching and on so many levels,

that they are almost irresistible" (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 209). Charity is second only to learning in creating prestige for an individual (p. 75). But even so, being a scholar logically implied that one would not be miserly (p. 206), a result indicating the extent to which the scholar was expected to embody all of the social ideals of Judaism. A man who is *sheyn* (beautiful) "is a man of social conscience, fulfilling his responsibility to the community by service to the group and its individuals. His accepted obligation is to succor and protect those who are less wealthy, less privileged than he" (p. 75). Such a person receives *koved* (deference) from others.

It was customary to donate within the Jewish community for education as the first priority (e.g., for the medieval period among the Ashkenazim, see Kanarfogel 1992, 51). Charity for education served a group function because it would assist poor, but talented Jews to be an economic asset to the entire Jewish community in economic transactions with gentiles. However, by supporting the education of poor Jews, the economically self-sufficient Jews were also facilitating the development of the skills of children who would compete with their own children within the Jewish community. As discussed in the following chapter, the Jewish community was an intellectual meritocracy in which the ultimate payoff was reproductive success.

Charity for the poor was also of great importance. Obligation to the poor was proportional to one's wealth, and all of the poor were to be supported, although we shall see below that in fact there were important limits on Jewish charity. Goitein (1971), writing of practices during the medieval Islamic period, shows that the burden represented by the poor was heavy at times—estimated by Goitein as amounting to one relief recipient to every four donors. Shaw (1991) notes that in the Ottoman period individuals with means were expected to give between one-tenth and one-fifth of their wealth to the poor, including especially dowries for poor brides.

A particularly interesting aspect of community support for the poor was the practice of supporting the marriages of poorer members of the community by providing dowries for poor girls—a

practice that dates from at least the second century (Baron 1952b, 221). This type of charity is rather directly associated with the reproductive success of individuals whose own resources were insufficient to support a marriage. And because it is so intimately associated with attaining evolutionary goals, it is precisely this type of charity that would be expected to lead to high levels of commitment to the group.[12]

There are many examples of Jewish charity among widely dispersed groups. Neuman (1969, I:171) notes that "a Jewish wayfarer was assured of protection and welcome among his brethren in any part of the world. The essential unity of Jewish life in the Middle Ages transcended geographical boundaries and rendered Jews one sympathetic community in which the Oriental, African, Spanish, Italian and German brethren were perfectly at home with one another." Goitein (1971, 94ff) gives numerous examples of Jews supporting the poor in distant Jewish communities in the medieval Arab world. "Gifts were sent to localities in which the need was greatest" (p. 95), so that, for example, Jews in Cairo contributed to ransoming Jews in Byzantium, Spain, and other parts of Europe. Weinryb (1972) notes that during the anti-Semitic uprisings of the 17th century in Poland, Jews were welcomed as refugees in other Jewish communities in Poland and were ransomed by other Jewish communities from Italy, Constantinople, Amsterdam, and Hamburg. Israel (1985) describes taxes imposed on the communities of central Europe during the 17th century intended to free captives in the Mediterranean area, and Shaw (1991, 74) states that Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire "taxed themselves very heavily" in order to ransom Jewish slaves in the entire period from 1300 to the 19th century.

Another aspect of this far-flung effort was to contribute to the support of scholars and scholarly institutions in distant countries, and especially the academy in Palestine (Goitein 1971, 94). Israel (1985) describes the institutionalization of charity intended to prop up Jewish communities in the Holy Land among both Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities in Europe during the 17th century.

In Chapter 4, the general point was made that emancipation led to the decline of rigid forms of centralized community controls among Jews, but did not lead to an end to Jewish cultural and genetic separatism as an important aspect of Judaism as an group evolutionary strategy. Within-group altruism continued as an important aspect of Judaism in this period as well. In Hamburg in 1815, this voluntary rather than community-imposed system of support "provided a network of support from the cradle to the grave," which amounted to a sort of parallel universe of social support outside gentile society, including every aspect of social welfare, loans for businessmen, dowries for poor girls, and support for artisans and students (Sorkin 1987, 122). Moreover, Lindemann (1991) notes the numerous active attempts by Jews to help other Jews in different countries in late-19th- and early-20th-century Europe (e.g., French Jews helping Syrian Jews during the Damascus blood libel trial, the charitable and educational activities of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Western European Jews helping Russian Jews during the pogroms that occurred between 1881 and 1914).

Similar tendencies, especially notable during the period of immigration from 1880 to 1920, were evident among Jews in the United States (e.g., Sachar 1992, 151). Woocher (1986, 25–26) points out that charitable work is a very central aspect of contemporary American Judaism as a "secular religion" and in fact constituted the main force for Jewish unity beginning early in the 20th century. Indeed, in the absence of social controls enforcing within-group charity, voluntary financial contribution to Jewish causes became a defining feature of being a Jew. The obligation to aid other Jews had become "a primary expression of the meaning of Jewishness" (Woocher 1986, 28), the primary means for achieving a Jewish identity, for recognizing someone as a Jew, and for maintaining group cohesion in the face of powerful assimilatory pressures. Jewish charity became a mechanism where all involved could participate in the Jewish tradition, including the administrators, the volunteers, the professionals, and the recipients of aid. And, in particular, this mutual responsibility came to entail a deep commitment to Israel: "Jewish unity, mutual responsibility,

and Jewish survival all come together in Israel; it is the symbolic center of the civil Jewish universe . . .” (Woocher 1986, 77).

The evidence therefore indicates that Judaism was able to continue as a homogenous, highly endogamous subculture separated from the host society even after the demise of the *kehilla* system of self-government in the diaspora. As in traditional Judaism, Jewish charity is obligatory, but in the post-emancipation world there are no formal sanctions against those who do not contribute. However, by ceasing to participate in Jewish charity, one in effect ceases to be a Jew. Woocher notes that by maintaining such an obviously moral requirement, Judaism also gains a sense of moral justification—an important aspect of the ideology that Judaism represents an ethical “light of the nations”.

Finally, in reading treatments such as that of Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 191ff) and Woocher (1986, 26ff), one gets the impression that charity has always functioned to make each individual aware of the group nature of Judaism. At all turns, one is reminded that all Jews had a common fate and that the group, not the individual, must come first in one’s thoughts. As Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 194) note, charity is a badge of commitment to group goals—the best sign that one has adopted the group ethic of Judaism.

On the one hand, the clear evidence for a very powerful set of institutional controls and strong cultural pressures toward charity is testimony that group strategies must overcome considerable evolutionary inertia that biases people away from high levels of altruism, even within a group that has retained a fairly high level of biological relatedness. On the other hand, the evidence implies that people can accept such a powerful group orientation and that quite high levels of altruism can develop within human group strategies. The importance of Jewish charity as a badge of group membership is particularly good confirmation of the fundamental thesis of this volume: that Judaism is a group evolutionary strategy characterized by high levels of within-group altruism.

Limitations on Jewish Charity as an Aspect of Judaism as a Group Evolutionary Strategy

> If we have been reproached at one time with want of industry, indolence, and aversion to labour, let us now avoid such reproaches, which might have been unjust formerly, but which we should now deserve. Let us exert all our influence to accustom our poor, who, till now, have been fed by our alms, to prefer the gains of labour, even at the sweat of their brows. (Letter of M. Berr-Isaac-Berr to his Brethren, in 1791, on the Rights of active Citizens being granted to the Jews; reprinted in Tama [1807] 1971, 28–29)

Despite the evidence that within-group altruism is an important component of Judaism as an evolutionary strategy, there were important limits on this altruism. As noted in Chapter 1, there are theoretical reasons to suppose that a successful altruistic group strategy must develop ways to protect against "freeloaders," and in the case of Judaism, charity toward the poor was neither complete nor unconditional.

In the traditional shtetl societies of Eastern Europe, orphans and the very poor supported by the community had a very low status and only very minimal provisions were made for their education (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 102–104). These children attended the *Talmud Toryeh*, and they were dressed very shabbily. On the other hand, children attending the *yeshiva* might be equally poor, but they had much more status because of their future prospects in the community. The Talmud Toryeh children were well aware of their low social status and were the butt of children's hostility.

More importantly, the Talmud Toryeh children were apprenticed to a trade and had no opportunity to ascend the ranks of scholarship. This gap between the religious ideal and actual practice appears to have resulted in a sort of communal guilt: "Uneasiness seems to be associated with the Talmud Toryeh which, although it fulfills the shtetl standard of helping the needy, nevertheless countenances a merging of sacred and worldly teaching that violates the traditional spirit of study" (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 104).

Despite the Talmudic injunction regarding the obligation to provide dowries for poor girls, the Ashkenazim consistently

regulated the marriages of the lower classes (Hyman 1986; Katz 1961a; Weinryb 1972), and Hundert (1986b) notes that the marriages of poor and indigent Jews came under special scrutiny by community officials. (The poor were also prevented from voting in *Kehilla* elections [Katz 1961a]). For example, it was common for the Jewish communities of Poland to have a quota of marriages of individuals with less than a certain dowry. Hundert cites a community regulation of 1595 to the effect that "no betrothal may take place in which the bride gives under 150 zlotys before there has been an investigation establishing that they will not become a burden on the community" (p. 23). In 1632 a couple was allowed to marry on condition that they not receive any community support for five years, and in 1679 and 1681 in Poznan a regulation was passed prohibiting no more than six marriages in which the dowry was less than 400 zlotys. Other communities had a lottery for poor girls allowed to marry.

There is some indication that at times the community regulation of marriage was motivated by a concern for an overpopulation of Jews. Katz (1961a, 140) notes that "(t)he *kehilla* was often responsible for the postponement of marriages in its wish to limit the number of breadwinners in the locality." If correct, this attempt to gauge the carrying capacity of the environment and regulate the population according to group interests would be a remarkable example of a group-level adaptive response involving altruism on the part of individual Jews.

In evolutionary terms this community control of reproduction is an extraordinary example of the triumph of group interests over individual interests. Although this type of group-selectionist thinking about population regulation has long been derided as a general principle of evolution since the writings of Williams (1966), there is no theoretical reason whatever to suppose that a human group strategy could not develop this type of ability and be able to enforce it.

Finally, despite the general tendency to minimize social class conflicts within Judaism, highly salient social class divisions did develop at several periods of Jewish history and did indeed result in conflicts of interest. These social class divisions within the

Jewish community occurred especially in areas, such as 19th-century Eastern Europe, where a very large increase in the Jewish population was accompanied by economic and social diversification within the Jewish community. Lindemann (1991, 143) notes that in Russia Jewish capitalists sometimes used Christian employees as strikebreakers against their Jewish employees, and there was a great deal of labor agitation by immigrant Jewish employees working for Jewish employers in the garment industry in early-20th-century New York (Levin 1977; Liebman 1979; Sachar 1992).

There are other indications of conflict of interest within the Jewish community. The Hasidic movement was supported primarily by "poor, rough people" (Johnson 1987, 297)—less-educated Jews who felt disenfranchised within the Polish Jewish community, which was dominated by "an intermarried oligarchy of rich merchants and lawyer-rabbis" (Johnson 1987, 294; see also Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 166–188). Moreover, it is a salient fact that throughout Jewish history there has been a tendency for the relatively poor and obscure to defect from Judaism (see Chapters 2 and 7), suggesting that within-group altruism is insufficient to overcome the pull of assimilation for these individuals. Nevertheless, Jewish charity has certainly been a very salient feature of Judaism and has certainly contributed to its internal solidarity.

Limits on charity are also suggested by the fact that charity has tended to be stronger with more closely related individuals. This direct correlation between altruism and biological relatedness is quite common in human societies (see Alexander 1979) and is certainly predicted by evolutionary theory. This type of gradation was recognized by the ancient sages. Baron (1952b. 271) notes, "In the hierarchy of philanthropic values they taught, 'your own poor come before those of your city, those of your city before strangers.'" Thus, among the Ashkenazim, there was the expectation that one's own poor relatives should receive priority, especially with regard to the duty to provide dowries to the daughters of poor relatives (Katz 1961a). Indeed, Goitein (1978,

45) notes that wealthy individuals in medieval Islamic times had a duty to keep poor relatives from being a burden to the community.

The diminution of Jewish charity with genetic distance can also be seen from the fact that Jewish communities deriving from different areas have often segregated themselves from each other and prevented foreign Jews from entering. Thus, beginning in the medieval period, European Jews developed the institution of the *herem ha-yishuv* to deny admittance to newcomers (Goitein 1971, 68). Ben-Sasson (1971, 215) describes the ideals of the medieval Hassidim of Ashkenaz (Germany) as attempting to marry completely among themselves and exclude other Jews completely from their communities. Israel (1985) notes a community regulation in England requiring Jews who were admitted to prove that they were financially independent. While such formal institutions did not develop in the Arab world during this period, there is evidence that newcomers who represented competition with local Jews were discouraged from entry.

Beginning in the late 19th century into the early decades of the 20th century, there was a major split in the United States between the older German-American Jewish community and the more recently arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe. We have seen that the German-Jewish community did provide charity for the immigrants, but there are indications that it was resented and, to some extent, minimized. Liebman (1979, 152) quotes a Yiddish newspaper of the period as follows:

> In the philanthropic institutions of our aristocratic German Jews you see beautiful offices, desks, all decorated, but strict and angry faces. Every poor man is questioned like a criminal, is looked down upon; every unfortunate suffers self-degradation and shivers like a leaf, just as if he were standing before a Russian official. When the same Russian Jew is in an institution of Russian Jews . . . he feels at home among his own brethren who speak his tongue, understand his thoughts, and feel his heart.

Liebman suggests that these negative attitudes on the part of the German-American Jews resulted in attempts among the new immigrants to build up their own charitable organizations. Moreover, Liebman (1979, 153) describes "numerous occasions when the philanthropy of the German Jews coincided with their economic interests to the detriment of the needy Eastern Europeans," including using their positions in charities to recruit cheap labor or to break strikes. It is of interest that the mutual animosity between these two communities of Jews lessened in times of external threat: Pogroms and other threats to Jews in Eastern Europe tended to soften the attitudes of the German-American Jews toward their co-religionists (Liebman 1979, 155)—another indication of the importance of external threat in facilitating group cohesion and altruism.

The importance of a gradation in Jewish charity depending on degree of genetic relatedness is also indicated by the descriptions of the *Landsmanshaft* societies among Jewish immigrants in the United States presented earlier in this chapter. Mutual aid was a direct function of the physical proximity of the other members of the group, and this physical proximity was closely bound up with endogamous marriage practices.

These findings not only show the importance of Jewish charity, but also show that Jews were often highly selective in their charity: The examples suggest that, when a choice was necessary because of limited resources, they favored the Jewish individual or group that was more closely related genetically. Thus, the idea that Judaism is simply a religion, rather than a national/ethnic movement, breaks down even when thinking about relationships within Judaism: Despite sharing the same religion, charity is preferentially directed to more closely related individuals.

CONCLUSION

The material summarized in this chapter indicates that historical Judaism can be characterized as a group evolutionary strategy in which individual self-interest was significantly submerged in the interests of group goals. This group orientation does not imply the

absence of competition within the Jewish community. On the contrary; in the following chapter, it will be shown that competition for social and economic status within the Jewish community (and its correlative reproductive success) was intense. However, the data reviewed here indicate that this intense competition within the group was not allowed to compromise group goals. From the standpoint of the group, it was always more important to maximize the total resource flow from the gentile community to the Jewish community, rather than to allow individual Jews to maximize their interests at the expense of the Jewish community. Within the Jewish community, however, there was a significant redistribution of wealth, so that in the end decrements to individual interests resulting from these community social controls were minimized.

The material reviewed in Chapters 2, 4, and 6 can be viewed as a summary of the main centripetal forces binding Jews to the community and preventing defection from the group strategy: the maintenance of high levels of genetic commonality within the group and a genetic gradient between Jewish and gentile populations; the development of powerful cultural barriers between Jews and gentiles; extremely severe sanctions on defectors ("informers") and their families; a high level of economic cooperation and a relative lack of class conflict within the group; and a high level of altruism within the group, which benefited lower-status members and provided a safety net for all. In the following chapter, it will be shown that traditional Jewish society was to a significant extent a meritocracy, so that lower-status Jews could hope that they or their children could rise in status. Presumably this also cemented allegiance to the group.

NOTES

1. Mechanisms that result in equality of risk imply selection at a higher level than the units undergoing risk. At the genetic level, meiosis evolved as a random process for excluding some genetic variants. Wilson and Sober (1994) note that this implies that meiosis (apart from meiotic drive) must be conceptualized as a

group-level phenomenon, since fitness differences are eliminated at the genetic level. This is also presumably the reason why "drawing straws" and other random determinations are sometimes used as a mechanism for determining who should engage in dangerous work for the benefit of the community (e.g. military draft lotteries)—implying selection at the group level. It is also the reason why social controls at the community level that significantly level reproductive success and access to resources within groups, as proposed here for Judaism, imply group-level processes. Combined with data indicating group differences in fitness (see Chapter 5), this implies selection at the group level among humans.

2. The theory of anti-Semitism developed in *SAID* (ch. 1) implies that in cases of group conflict examples of immoral behavior by individuals tend to be uncritically generalized to the group. Community control over individual behavior has therefore been a major aspect of efforts to combat anti-Semitism.

3. As discussed in *SAID* (ch. 4), in addition to high levels of real danger resulting from anti-Semitism, Jewish groups have often exaggerated external threats with the result that group allegiance is heightened.

4. In 1618, a French diplomat noted that Jews

> are numerous and influential in Amsterdam and have exceedingly intimate relations with the State, because they are equally attentive to foreign news and to commerce. . . . In both matters they obtain their information from the other Jewish communities with which they are in close contact . . . . By this means the Jews in Amsterdam are the first and the best informed about foreign commerce and the news of what is going on in the world . . . . These practices are the source of their riches. (Quoted in Baron 1973, 48)

Baron (1973, 49) states that these remarks may be exaggerated, but "they undoubtedly contain a grain of truth."

5. Shaw (1991, 95) also notes that because Jews controlled the customs in the Ottoman Empire, they charged non-Jews more money on their goods, another competitive advantage of ethnic solidarity.

6. The Deuteronomic law of interest has been variously interpreted throughout Jewish history, and an apologetic historiographical literature has developed (see, e.g., Stein 1955). These issues are discussed in *SAID* (ch. 4). (See also note 7.)

7. The ethical double standard *vis-à-vis* gentiles has been a very prominent theme of anti-Semitism (see also *SAID*, ch. 2). During the Middle Ages, there were several disputations between Jews and Christians centering around the permissibility of Jewish moneylending to Christians and other examples of ethical double standards (Maccoby 1982; Rabinowitz 1938, 90; Rosenthal 1956; Stein 1955, 1959). For example, one disputed passage, b. B. K. 38a, states that if a Canaanite ox gores an Israelite, damages must be paid, but damages need not be paid if an Israelite ox gores a Canaanite. The passage also recounts an incident in which Roman agents investigating the ethics of the Talmud disagreed with this passage, but did not tell their government. During the medieval period, several prominent Jewish apologists vigorously defended the differential treatment of Jews and Christians regarding moneylending. There were also attempts to argue that Talmudic references to heathens or idolators (*'akum*) in matters of differential ethics did not apply to Christians. Rosenthal (1956, 68; see also Rabinowitz 1938, 90) notes that despite this type of argument, the Jewish masses "did not differentiate between the non-Jew in the Talmud and the non-Jew of his time." And Stein (1959, 58; see also Katz 1961a) notes that the idea that gentiles were not idolators (and thus not subject to an ethical double standard) continued to be controversial among Jewish thinkers. Maimonides, for example, explicitly viewed all Christians as idolators. Maccoby (1982, 33) argues that, since medieval Christians behaved savagely toward Jews, it was reasonable that they be viewed as *'akum*.

8. Interestingly, the text of the regulation notes that the non-Jewish nobility often attempted to make the owner of the monopoly give up his exclusive rights in favor of competition that would tend to lower interest rates to the advantage of the gentiles.

9. These practices were a potent fuel for anti-Semitism (see *SAID*, ch. 2). Anti-Semitic writers often condemned Jews for

proscriptions on doing business with Christians. Non-Jews attempted to respond to the competition represented by Jews by using many of the same tactics, so that monopolistic-exclusion principles operated on both sides (Weinryb 1972, 159).

10. Indeed, Sachar (1992, 33) suggests that the strong tendency toward consanguinity resulted in a tendency toward mental retardation among the Gomez family.

11. This percentage would undoubtedly have been higher had first cousins always been available. The four sons born to James and his wife/niece Betty all married exogamously, the marriages occurring between 1905 and 1913 at a time when marriage to first cousins was impossible because of lack of availability. As noted in Chapter 4 (note 22), the Rothschild marriage strategy shifted from establishing attractive alliances to consanguinity after the Rothschilds became the wealthiest family of Europe.

12. Herlihy (1991) makes this point in assessing the importance of the ability to marry in explaining the powerful group orientation of the early Mediterranean city-states in Greece and Rome: "Under conditions of acute competition, it was necessary to maintain the moral commitment and physical energies of the citizens. Such conditions favored the development of democratic and republican, rather than despotic institutions. The citizens whose moral commitment was essential for the welfare of the state had to be granted some participation in it. But another, equally crucial means of maintaining commitment and morale was to offer all citizens access to marriage. Not only would they gain the satisfactions of sexual union, but the rearing of the family and the acquisition of heirs would give them a large stake in the *salus populi*" (pp. 14–15). Similarly, the ability to marry would be a highly salient force that would tend to create allegiance to group goals among Jews.