

WHAT BEING JEWISH MEANS TO ME



Morris Smith
former Manager
Fidelity Magellan Fund

Last year, at the age of 34, I made the decision to leave the world of money management and spend a year in Israel together with my wife Devora and our four children. After 10 years in the investment management business - all at Fidelity Investments - I resigned as manager of the Fidelity Magellan Fund, the nation's largest stock mutual fund. I left Fidelity to put more of my energy and time into two pursuits which are at the core of Jewish existence: the study of Torah and the education and enjoyment of my family.

As I join my fellow Jews in strengthening the sovereign Jewish State, I find Israel enables me to continue developing the spiritual aspect of my being, an aspect which helps me appreciate fully the precious gift of Torah that is the Jewish people's unique heritage.

The practice of Judaism and the study of our religious tradition have provided me with the guidance I need in conducting my personal and professional life. Our Torah, given to the Jewish people by God as a sacred trust more than three millennia ago, has preserved and protected us throughout our wanderings and persecution and will always remain the foundation of our people in the future. To me, Judaism and our Torah have the power to enhance our relationship both to God and to our fellow human beings. It directs us to integrate religion and ethics into one whole. In the words of the rabbis, "If there is no ethical behavior, there is no Torah."

Israel and Judaism are my connection to past and future. It is the tradition and culture passed down to me by my parents, and it is what I hope to transmit to my children. In a society where "popular" cultural values often distort and destroy standards of morality, Judaism preserves the authentic values and morality of an ancient but ever-new way of life. Being Jewish continually reminds me that ultimate values are spiritual and ethical in nature. Material success can be, at most, only a means in pursuit of transcendent goals.

The American Jewish Committee is proud to present this message, the fourth in a series, on the meaning of being Jewish today. The Jewish community offers an abundant diversity of intellectual, spiritual and cultural opportunities that can enrich and deepen one's life. Jewish living, we believe, provides rootedness in the present and a link to our history and destiny.

We encourage all Jews to explore the many paths to being a Jew in contemporary America, and to experience the joy and beauty of the Jewish heritage.

For information on a variety of programs and organizations which can help you develop your connection to Jewish life, write or call us at (212) 751-4000, ext. 267.



The American Jewish Committee

Alfred H. Moses
President

David A. Harris
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The American Jewish Committee is dedicated to strengthening the Jewish community, enriching the quality of Jewish life, and enhancing the creative vitality of the Jewish people. AJC advocates public policy positions rooted in American democratic values and the perspectives of the Jewish heritage. Founded in 1906, it is the pioneer human relations agency in the U.S.

*The American Jewish Committee,
Dept. ICAD, 165 East 56 Street, New York, New York 10022*