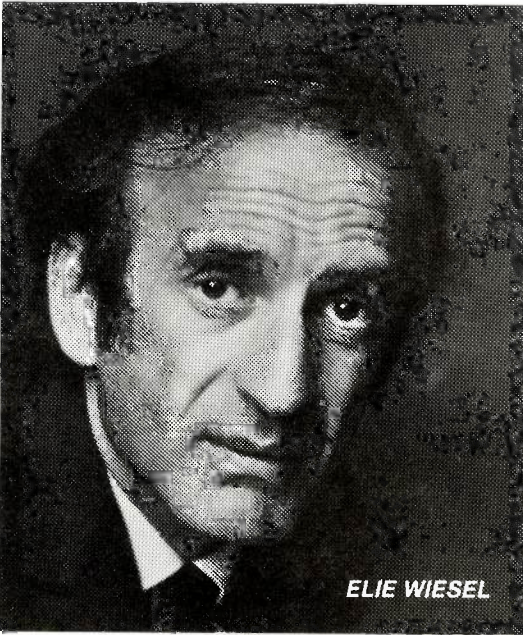


# WHAT BEING JEWISH MEANS TO ME



*Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 1986*

I remember: as a child, on the other side of oceans and mountains, the Jew in me would anticipate Rosh Ha-Shanah with fear and trembling. He still does.

On that Day of Awe, I believed then, nations and individuals, Jewish and non-Jewish, are being judged by their common creator.

That is still my belief.

In spite of all that happened? Because of all that happened?

I still believe that to be Jewish today means what it meant yesterday and a thousand years ago. It means for the Jew in me to seek fulfillment both as a Jew and as a human being. For a Jew, Judaism and humanity must go together. To be Jewish today is to recognize that every person is created in the image of God and that our purpose in living is to be a reminder of God.

Naturally, I claim total kinship with my people and its destiny. Judaism integrates particularist aspirations with universal values, fervor with rigor, legend with law. Being Jewish to me is to reject all fanaticism anywhere.

To be Jewish is, above all, to safeguard memory and open its gates to the celebration of life as well as the suffering, to the song of ecstasy as well as the tears of distress that are our legacy as Jews. It is to rejoice in the renaissance of Jewish sovereignty in Israel and the re-awakening of Jewish life in the former Soviet Union. It is to identify with the plight of Jews living under oppressive regimes and with the challenges facing our communities in free societies.

A Jew must be sensitive to the pain of all human beings. A Jew cannot remain indifferent to human suffering, whether in former Yugoslavia, in Somalia or in our own cities and towns. The mission of the Jewish people has never been to make the world more Jewish, but to make it more human.

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*This season of Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur is a good time for thinking about what being Jewish means to you. It is a time for every Jew to explore his or her ties to the Jewish people and to the Jewish heritage.*

*The American Jewish Committee believes in the future of our people. American Jewry offers an abundance of exciting intellectual, spiritual and cultural opportunities. Jewishness can provide a sense of meaning and of belonging, and a connection to the ideals and aspirations of our people. We believe that every Jewish person should have the opportunity to learn, to experience, and to become involved in Jewish life.*

*For information on a variety of programs and organizations in the American Jewish community which will help you to explore your connection to Jewish life, write or call us at (212) 751-4000, ext. 267.*



## The American Jewish Committee

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President

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*This message is presented by the American Jewish Committee as a service to the Jewish community. 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.*

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