

## Supplementary Materials for “Looking Back, Looking Forward”

# Discussion Questions

1. “Conservative Judaism remains a path that to a significant number of Jews is joyful and profound, attractive and compelling. It offers the meaning that contemporary Jews need to live rightly and well and to raise their children that way.” [p. 34]
  - a. List a few Jewish practices that you think unite Conservative Jews.
  - b. List a few Jewish practices that you think help you to “live rightly.”
  - c. List a few Jewish practices that contribute to raising children to “live rightly”.
  
2. Chancellor Eisen does not see “tradition and change” as an optimal slogan for the movement, but he affirms that “it does, however, get at an essential truth about Judaism and certainly at a cornerstone of Conservative Judaism.” [p. 35]
  - a. Why does the Chancellor argue that “tradition and change” is problematic as a slogan of Conservative Judaism? Do you agree?
  - b. What is the “essential truth” of that slogan, according to Eisen? Do you find this “essential truth” compelling?
  - c. How do you understand “tradition and change”? Has your understanding of that slogan changed based on these essays?
  - d. What alternative slogan would you suggest for Conservative Judaism in the 21st Century?

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3. “We dance around the Torah to new melodies as well as old, and power enduring commitments with new ideas. We hold that the beliefs and practices of Judaism developed by Jews over many centuries are fully compatible with the best of modern convictions and sensibilities” [p. 35]
  - a. What beliefs do you think unite Conservative Jews? Can you sum up each belief in one sentence?
  - b. What values do you think are embodied in the life of a Conservative Jew? Which of these are these particularly important for Jews in the contemporary world, and why?
  
4. Eisen sees a need to strengthen and express Judaism in a way that does not “allow Torah to be squeezed between extremes of fundamentalism and militant atheism.” [p. 36]
  - a. How do you (or how could you) express this aspect of Conservative Judaism in: your personal life; the life of your community; in your city; on a national level; and on an international level?