

WITH LOVE AND FAITH

by MOSHE SHARETT

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Chaim Weizmann must be numbered among the exceptional personalities whose mortal and transitory life is stamped with immortality—men who are chosen to leave their mark upon history during their own lifetime and in full view of their contemporaries.

Three qualities in Chaim Weizmann accounted for his greatness: ardent love, profound faith and a unique spirit of dedication. He drew faith and love from the depths of his people's life and his own soul. His inspiration—a divine personal gift granted by fate—became a supreme national asset. Armed with those three qualities, he emerged as his people's advocate in the earth-shaking days when a new world was about to be born. Indeed, when first he confronted the outside world with Jewish claims, he did so without having been chosen or formerly designated. It was the hand of Providence which raised him up from among the people, an inner voice which commanded him to embark on the struggle, and his own spiritual resources which gave him both the confidence and the call of duty to come forward to exhort and persuade.

In him the intense regenerative energies of a tormented people crying out for redemption, acquired renewed strength; they fructified his imagination; they spurred his actions. With the mighty power of prophetic utterance, he made articulate the longings and desires of generation after generation that had been condemned to grieve in silence. The spirit of Israel—the very foundation of its national existence, that extraordinary phenomenon of human history and a theme that challenged thinkers throughout the ages—that spirit manifested itself in Chaim Weizmann in all its strength and glory, marvelously fusing the

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"Shechina," the godly inspiration of the people, with the magic of its leader's personality.

He was for his people and for all the world the symbol of the great Jew—true to the rock from which he was hewn, nourished at the roots of his people's being, proud of his heritage, confident of its deathlessness. He appeared before the nations of the world and their leaders as the illustrious exponent and the living personification of Jewish morality.

There was a radiance about his personality, and there were men who gloried in falling victim to its spell; though others were disturbed and alarmed by it or even fled from it fearful of its magic influence. Some were scorched by the flame and warned others against approaching it. Almost without exception men revered his moral stature and marvelled at the range and power of his spirit. In the course of his many years of activity he acquired world fame as one of the most distinguished men of his time—not only as an outstanding national leader, but as a wizard of personal relations who fascinated everyone with whom he came in contact. He became an international legend in his own lifetime.

His relationship to the external world was affected far less by the realization of his personal distinction than by his sense of the great responsibility entailed by the position to which his people had called him; the honor which historic destiny had conferred upon him. The dignity of his status as leader of World Zionism and foremost Jew of his generation became imprinted upon his personality and never forsook his consciousness. That sense of historic mission was with him always—in private and in public, in the company of friends as well as in official interviews, at closed sessions and public meetings, in splendid European or American mansions and in humble huts in Israel, in hotels, aboard ships and aeroplanes. For all his genuine simplicity he walked among us as a man apart, lofty of stature, robed in dignity, enveloped, as it were, in majesty.

Weizmann's royal bearing embodied and symbolized for all men our people's readiness for statehood, its right to national freedom.

For Jews and for the world at large Weizmann was the President of the Jewish State, even before the rise of Israel, even while the possibility of the State's emergence was still hidden

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in the womb of the future. Just as his stature was raised by his serving as the spokesman for a people with a great historic legacy, so the people's status was correspondingly enhanced by his greatness. Even after it was given to us to achieve independence and to take our place in the family of nations, we continued to benefit as a State—alas, for far too short a time—from his unquestioned moral authority and the profound respect the entire civilized world felt for his name.

And a nation which has given birth to such sons, in its present as in its past, has earned its title to immortality.

Excerpts from
HIS HISTORIC
STATEMENTS,
WRITINGS AND
ADDRESSES

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A Biography
with
introductions
by
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Goldmann
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and
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9.11.1952
Doc 00835



Chaim Weizmann

JEWISH AGENCY-
AMERICAN
SECTION
NEW YORK