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STATE and TORAH

... is it time for a parting of the ways?



What is the Impact of Yeshiva Education?

- *The Success of Yeshiva Education*
- *Alienation Among Yeshiva Youth*



THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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Is it Time for a Parting of the Ways?

A searching examination of the relationship of State and Torah, with some challenging conclusions. An opposing viewpoint will appear in one of our next issues.

Has the time come to think of a separation of state and religion in Israel? Such a possibility cannot be considered gladly and without compulsion; and the choice it offers carries with it profound pain and heartache.

The situation brings to mind that of a person who faces the amputation of a limb to save the rest of his body from deadly infection. Obviously, it is an even greater tragedy when an entire community has to face the loss of one part. In the past, when *Klall Yisroel* lost individuals to apostasy, there was no feeling of "good riddance" but deep sorrow and mourning. When, on some occasions, entire groups had to be excluded from the community, this was done out of the most serious heart-searching and agony. And when some of our leaders were forced to call for the creation of separate *Kehilloth* and institutions for Torah Jewry, they did not do so lightly and happily.

If we face a deteriorating situation, and shall be forced at some point to seek a separation of the religious institutions from the state—so that our Torah should remain whole, to be passed on to our children inviolate—the day of such a decision will be a somber one. We will have to see in it yet another curse of our long *Goluth*.

* * *

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, obvious advantages to the present state of non-separation. The ideal of the Jewish people is a situation in which state and religion see no conflict between each other. And even when the partnership is limited, as at present, to one small area—that of marriage laws*—there is a benefit here

This article is adapted from a series, written by Yisroel Spiegel, that appeared in the *Hamodia*, daily newspaper of Agudath Israel in Israel. Mr. Spiegel is a prominent religious Israeli journalist.

* While Shabbos observance and kashrus are official state policy, in those areas—unlike marriage laws—the individual is not compelled to comply in his private life.

that should be preserved by all means. But what if the small area of cooperation dwindles more and more, as the state increasingly expands its authority at the expense of its partner? What if religion—far from being able to make any demands upon the state—receives orders from the state on how to function and what the *halachoh* should be?

Obviously, when this last state is reached and when the state in certain cases even assumes directly the authority to decide religious issues, there is no more basis for a partnership: the question of a separation of religion and state answers itself at that point. Many ask today whether this moment has arrived. We see the government interfere with the indispensable minimal authority of religion, rabbinate, and *halachoh*. We are witnesses to the highest legal authority of the state, together with the executive and legislative branches of the state, forcing their control upon the religious institutions. And we see that, in the resulting struggle, both sides want, so far, a continuing partnership—but one of them, encouraged by its success, wants it based on the subordination of religion to the state, while the other side, the official guardian of religion, is ready for any retreat or surrender needed to preserve the partnership.

The motive for such a policy, the fear of a total separation of religion and state, can easily be understood. But may we not, as a result, drift into an even more dangerous situation? To use, again, our previous analogy: is there not a point where delaying an amputation jeopardizes the life of the patient?

* * *

TWO RECENT EVENTS have given urgency to the discussion, and have highlighted the position of both sides in the struggle. The decision of the Supreme Court giving recognition to the privately-performed marriage of *Kohen* and a divorcee demonstrated the self-assertion

of the secular government; while the tour-de-force of Mrs. Seidman's conversion (whose *halachic* aspects it is not for us to discuss) shows the submissiveness of the religious partner.

It must be understood that the decision of the Supreme Court was, in one respect, much more far-reaching than that in the Shalit case concerning "Who is a Jew." The latter judgment dealt with a secular, governmental issue—the registration of a citizen—while the last decision concerned a controversy between the appellants and the rabbinic courts, on a purely religious matter, and the Supreme Court, in deciding the case, assumed for itself the authority of the rabbinic court. It did not just recognize the man and woman as married (as it recognizes civil marriages contracted abroad) but specifically recognized their marriage to be valid in the religious, *halachic* sense.

On the other hand, there is Mrs. Seidman's conversion. Before she ever underwent a reform conversion, she had applied for conversion to a rabbinic court—and had been refused. Now, with action by the Supreme Court hanging over the heads of the religious authorities, somebody found it possible to arrange an immediate rabbinic conversion. This produced various benefits—it forestalled Supreme Court recognition of reform conversions (for the moment!) and also enabled the *Mafdal* (Mizrachi) ministers to stay in the government. But it also glaringly showed that, at least as far as some people are concerned, *halachah* can be manipulated to achieve ulterior purposes. Was that worth it?

And it must be realized that these two incidents were not the first; they are not isolated cases; and they will undoubtedly not be the last. They did, however, set new and most far-reaching precedents which will surely come to plague us in the future. That is why they force us to face the painful question: is not separation of religion and state necessary to save the independence of Torah and *halachah* in the country?

* * *

IT IS INTERESTING that the question of separation comes up every time a religious issue appears on the political scene—and it always seems as if the demand for separation, as a cure for all such crises, comes from the entire secular segment in the country, or at least most of it. However, on closer observation it turns out that we deal here with the demand of a very small minority. Even at the present moment, which shows such a profound lack of communication between the opposing sides, the majority of the secular camp does not want separation. It is not they who will force the



הבנענים

מדוע רישום הלאום עברי

הגדרתנו העצמית בתור יהודים דנה אותנו להיות מדינת
גטו קטנה וסוגרנית הדוחה את בני בריתנו הטבעיים
בן לאם לא יהודיה יכול ויכול להיות בן ללאום העברי, אבל
אין הוא יהודי
כל מהגר מתאים לא יהודי יכול ויכול להיות לבן ללאום העברי, אבל
אין הוא יהודי

הדרוץ היוצא בצבאנו לחיים ולמות —
הבדוי, הלוחם עמנו שכם אל שכם —
המרדני, ששפת הקודש שלו ארמית והוא מתייחס על
הציונים, דוברי העברית —
הפלה ביהודה ובשומרון, צאצאי הישוב העברי
הקדום —

כל אלה יכולים ויכולים להיות בנים ללאום העברי,
אבל — אין הם יהודים

הגדרתנו העצמית בתור בני הלאום העברי היא המפתח
לנצחון על הפנערבאות, קץ להדיפת בני בריתנו
הטבעיים לזרועות אויבינו, פתח לגאולת הארץ ועמה

עצם עתידה של המדינה עומד על ההגדרה הלאומית — הלאום — עברי!

- חברה עברית. פתוחה לכל מבקשי בריתנו היום ומחר.
- בית-ספר עברי חילוני אחיד לכל האוכלוסיה בגבולותינו.
- המרדה בין המדינה והדת
- שיוון חובות וזכויות לכל

הלאום — עברי!

אם אתה רואה חשיבות בפרסום הדברים האלה — כתוב:
שלח חרומתך (בהמחאה ע"ש מ. גור) לת"ד 17223 ת"א.

"Considering ourselves Yehudim condemns us to be a small ghetto country. . . . A member of a non-Jewish nation—can be a part of a nation of Ivrim—but not Yehudim."

A leaflet published by those secular elements who want no link between state and Judaism.

issue at this time; it is, rather, we who have to weigh whether, from a Torah angle, it is better to continue as at present or not.

There are, essentially, three groups—which together make up the majority of Israel's inhabitants—which do not want a change. Each of them, however, has its own specific approach, and its own particular conditions on which it insists.

First, the *Charedim*, the Torah element. They feel, perhaps more strongly than anybody else, the responsibility for *Klal Yisroel* as a whole, fearing the consequences of a separation. Therefore, they want a

continued partnership of state and religion. Yet they have specific conditions for continuing this arrangement.

There is, at present, only one area of law given over to Torah: the regulation of marriages. In this area, rabbinic authority must be completely autonomous, without any outside interference in the determination of the *halochah*, or any possibility of appeal to outside authority for relief from rabbinic decisions. This demand is logical—for, if there is to be secular interference in the operation of Torah law, we cannot, in effect, speak any more of a link between state and Torah but only between the state and pseudo-Torah. The falsified *halochah* that results is a danger to the purity of Torah and, at the same time, negates any possible benefit from continued partnership of state and Torah. There is in truth, no partnership left, once there is no autonomous religious partner. And it does not matter, in fact, how serious the interference is; it is the principle that counts.

* * *

THE SECOND GROUP is the religious camp identified with *Mafdal* and the religious-national ideology. Its opposition to a separation of religion and state, and its enthusiastic championship of the present arrangement, is related to its view of the State of Israel. [See box]

It sees in the creation of the state, and the mass immigration at its beginning, a profound religious event. Hence its almost mystical attitude toward *Yom Ha'atzmo'us*, and its total rejection of all those religious Jews who—at least for the time being—see these events as ordinary events in Jewish history. From this perspective they see the link between state and religion as vital. They consider the rabbinate's role as a government agency, and the passing of legislation on religious matters, as the highest possible achievements. They realize that for these purposes it needs the cooperation of the secular majority; and they are, therefore, ready for the compromises that may be needed.

In the field of legislation this is evident when laws are put forth in the Knesset that have a religious basis but contain secular elements modifying it. In connection with the rabbinate, the compromise lies in the fact that the entire institution has been established by a secular parliamentary law: the rabbinate does not exercise any powers by virtue of an inherent and autonomous authority, nor even because the Knesset has given it such unchallenged authority, but only because the Knesset has created a rabbinic institutional set-up and accorded it specific functions and powers.

ONE MAN'S VIEW

"In winding up the Knesset debate on the budget of the Ministry of Religions . . . the Minister of Religions also addressed himself to the question of the separation of religion from the state. He declared that this would be drifting into an abyss of desolation. We must not fool ourselves to think that such a separation would save us from attacks, indignities, expressions of hatred. There is no nation of Israel without the Torah of Israel, and there is no Torah of Israel without the nation of Israel," he stated.

(*Hamodia*, July 23)

But: is the nation of Israel the same as the State of Israel? !

It is natural, as a result, that the secular partners—who, after all, helped create the rabbinate—argue: the rabbis are not above us, we are above them. They must bow to the law of the state, and not vice versa. This was clearly spelled out the other day by the Minister of Justice in connection with the Supreme Court's decision. [See box, p. 6]

The issue was actually discussed at the time of the establishment of the Chief Rabbinate. It was then that Agudath Israel warned of the possible consequences of a state control of the rabbinate. The Mizrahi saw in these warnings a hostility to a community-wide rabbinate, whereas in reality they reflected an amply warranted concern for the independence of the rabbinate. Today, there are already some circles in *Mafdal* who have begun to see that the governmental establishment of the rabbinate is a double-edged sword, and that it may not warrant any more the concessions that the government extorts.

* * *

THE THIRD GROUP in favor of the present arrangement is the "moderate" secular camp, actually the majority of the country. This group very much wants the link between religion and state—but for national reasons, not religious ones. It understands the historical significance of proclaiming the separation of the Jewish religion from the state. The link between them appears to this group the assurance of Jewish national survival. But—it is not willing to pay too big a price for this.

DOES A RABBI IN ISRAEL HAVE TO ACCEPT "THE BAD WITH THE GOOD"?

In a recent Knesset debate, on the budget of the Ministry of Justice, Shlomo Yaakov Gross (Agudath Israel) attacked the Supreme Court's inroads into the area of work of the rabbinic courts. In reply, Justice Minister Yaakov Shimshon Shapiro pointed out that *"the problem is that, from one side, the Rabbis hold office by virtue of laws made by the Knesset, and their election and authority flows from such secular laws—and, on the other hand, they occasionally act as if this were not so."*

In the case of the *Kohen* who married a divorcee, he stressed, the *Kidushin* are binding according to *halochah*, and the rabbinic court only invalidated them because the witnesses were *possul*, unfit—but

"the government will not agree, I will not agree that a Mechallel Shabbos is unfit to serve as a witness in any court or Beth Din that there may be. . . ."

In any case if the Supreme Court assumed competence in this case, and recognized the marriage,

"there is one basic principle in this area, that the Supreme Court determines, in any case that comes before it, whether or not it has the authority to deal with it."

Only an act of the Knesset can interfere, which is unlikely; while two occasions in the past the Knesset did choose to impose its will on the rabbinic courts:

"In 1953 in the Equal Rights of Women Act we specified that this law—despite its secular character—shall be binding upon the religious courts. And, again, recently, we made the same provision in the Marriage Permits Act. Anybody serving as a Rabbi in the State of Israel, may be opposed to this law with every fiber of his soul—but if he accepts rabbinic office he has to accept the bad with the good."

Rabbi Lorincz (Agudath Israel) retorted:

"You will bring about a situation where nobody will accept a rabbinic position any more. The Supreme Court is unlimited, the rabbinic courts are not—this is the danger that Gedolei Yisroel saw from the outset."

Its adherents are interested in a symbolic relationship, but they are not willing to give up the exclusive sovereignty of the state and its secular legislation. They are convinced that, by giving official sanction to the rabbinate, they have done enough—and they expect something in return. If the rabbinate is given official status, it must, in exchange, adapt itself to the "spirit of the time."

In this light, the government expects the rabbinate to accept the latest Supreme Court decision, whether it likes it or not. It was created by the Knesset, and must accept the fact that like all legal institutions of the state, it is subject to the ultimate authority of the Supreme Court. On this point, very logically, the secular element in the country, with its unqualified acceptance of parliamentary supremacy, feels unable to compromise—so much so that the Minister of Justice can actually demand of the rabbinic courts that they accept a Supreme Court decision on a *religious* matter.

* * *

There is no room for the illusions of *Mafdal* that the rabbinate can be at the same time government-established and autonomous, or that at worst there will only be marginal and accidental clashes. The moderate secular camp does not call for separation of state and religion on principle; it is willing to cooperate—but the price is acceptance of the supremacy of the government, and this will become increasingly difficult.

There has lately become evident a rapprochement between the government and Reform and Conservatism. These forms of "Judaism" offer, the possibility of a partnership between state and religion without the burden of *halochah*. Undoubtedly, the government will exert pressure on the rabbinate to show some of the "flexibility" of these movements. The danger is grave that the ultimate goal of the secular leaders of the government will be a state religion as devoid of *halachic* content as reform is. Total separation is obviously infinitely better.

What militates for a change today, then, is not the "suffering" of the non-religious exposed to religious "coercion," but on the contrary the suffering of Torah, *halochah*, and rabbinate. The secular groups can well be satisfied with the present situation—they have a "religious state" and at the same time every religious issue is resolved to their satisfaction. To us, on the other hand, a change matters. A separation means that the country will be officially and totally secular. It will neither claim nor have a link with our Torah heritage. At that point, nobody will be forced to take recourse to rabbinic courts if he does not want to—but, on the

“What militates for a change . . . is the suffering of Torah, *halochah*, and the rabbinate”

other hand, nobody will be able, or eager, to dictate to the rabbinic courts what to do.

* * *

OF COURSE, THE OBJECTION will be raised immediately: will separation not mean the emergence of a variety of *Kehilloth* and groupings? But in reality we should rather ask whether unity among Jews can be attained through forced means, by religious legislation of a secular body, put through as a result of secret or not so secret coalition agreements, always through pressure and coercion.

There can be no doubt that even today, when a very large part of our people does not live a Torah life, there does not exist—and cannot be created—any other link between Jew and Jew than the sole original bond that ever united them: that of religion. Admittedly or unadmittedly, it links the Torah observer with the non-observer. Would this relationship really be broken if the state were to stop legal enforcement of Torah rules in the one single area of family law where it now provides such enforcement?

Let us understand what separation would really mean. If there existed at present a Torah-state, in which the Torah directs and controls its entire way of life, and secular pressure were exerted to end this situation, such a decision would have to be weighed with the utmost care. But we all know the real situation: in effect the state is completely secular in every respect—except for the one area where the battle presently is fought.

Undoubtedly, this is a most vital area. But even here we see how the process of disintegration has started to work. Despite the fact that this is the only field of religious authority left, the secular groups evince not the slightest patience for the demands of *halochah*. Even for the sake of some marginal problems—marriage of *Kohen* and divorcee, *chalitzah*, a small percentage of conversions—they are willing to attack at once the autonomy of *halochah* and to impose upon it

secular legislation: registration of non-Jews as Jews, acceptance of invalid conversions, recognition of marriages that the *halochah* forbids.

If the Supreme Court continues with its decisions along this line, we will soon have a situation where whoever wants a marriage permitted by the *halochah* will go to the rabbinic courts, and whoever has a *halachic* problem will go to the secular courts and obtain a “solution” there. Such a situation is even worse than total separation, for—in the absence of official civil marriage—the “solutions” of the secular courts will become part of what is considered valid religious marriage law, just as invalid conversions (at least from abroad) have become legally approved.

* * *

BUT DOES NOT THE OFFICIAL acceptance of the Torah's marriage laws by the state prevent a split among the Jews of Israel and between them and the Jews dispersed throughout the world? This argument ignores the fact that the separation of religion and state is not a new experience for the Jew. Only a quarter of the Jewish people lives in *Eretz Yisroel*, while three quarters live in places where religion is not connected with the state, and where the Torah's marriage laws do not enjoy official recognition. Yet this does not affect their belonging to the Jewish people. Only in the State of Israel is there a law that requires a Jew to be married according to religious rules; yet surely membership in the Jewish people is not limited to only those Jews that dwell in Israel, but includes all Jews whether they have or have not a state-recognized relationship to their religion.

It is self-understood that, if the State of Israel accepted all the obligations inherent in the partnership with religion, and granted to the rabbinate the necessary exclusive autonomy in the area of marriage laws, we could not be permitted to consider at all the dissolution of this partnership. But, as we pointed out, this is not

the case and the price that has to be paid for the advantages of the present arrangement is well-nigh catastrophic.

In the United States, for instance, membership in an Orthodox *kehillah* is voluntary—but there is the advantage that it can conduct its affairs without compromises. Here, on the other hand, one is forced to belong—but at the price of compromises imposed on the rabbinate. And can one really say that in this country everybody is “Orthodox”—even in the limited sense of abiding by the Torah’s marriage laws? Don’t we know what is going on—and all under the label “Orthodox”? Elsewhere somebody whose conduct is halachically questionable, sets himself apart from the religious camp; here, even this distinction is blurred and obscured. Thus we may well ask what practical significance an official separation would have.

As things stand, there exists today a complete separation of religion and state in every field: education, Shabbos, and all other aspects of life—and in the only area which forms an exception, the religious aspect is inexorably whittled down.

* * *

THE TRUTH IS THAT TWO FORCES as opposed to each other by their very nature as a secular state and a religion, cannot really live in harmony—for each must seek to assert itself at the expense of the other. There *can* be a Torah state, but that means a state which sees itself as a part of a Torah nation and derives its authority and all its guiding principles from the Torah. In that case Torah and state together form one unit. In the case of the State of Israel, however, the relationship between religion and state is not an organic but an artificial one: the state at its very founding declared itself to be a modern secular state, and only through coalition agreements was a tenuous link established with religion. In other words, two entirely autonomous factors were involved—one of which inevitably had to bow to the other. Religion, being the weaker of the two, had to bend—and Torah had to suffer.

When the original pattern was established, there was a sincere hope that “*mitoch shelo lishmoh bo lishmah*,” the proper relationship would develop in due course. The falsity of this assumption could have been perceived then already; but people were hesitant to face it, for they did not want to let the state and the community drift away. However, today there is no more room for illusions, as the secular groups, far from accepting the dictates of *halochah*, try to dictate to it. The crowning indignity is that they do *not* say to us that they want to dissolve the partnership, but instead, in its name,

and for its sake, try to tailor *halochah* to suit their convenience.

* * *

ACTUALLY, NOT SEPARATING RELIGION from the state will, in the natural course of events, make the secular

HOW SECURE IS THE ENTIRE RELIGIOUS "STATUS QUO"?

The other day Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz (Agudath Israel) submitted a motion that the Knesset discuss the religious situation in Israel, pointing out that preservation of the *status quo* had been a plank in the program of every Government since the creation of the state, and that lately the *status quo* had been interfered with in a variety of areas, such as Shabbos, marriage and conversion.

The Minister of Justice, Yaakov S. Shapiro asked that Rabbi Lorincz’s motion be rejected. He did not, however, provide a reply to the latter’s detailed charges. Instead he challenged his right to raise the entire question:

“What concern do you have with the *status quo*? You are not a member of the Government, and therefore you are not a party to the agreement on the observance of the *status quo*. And certainly there is no religious significance to the concept of the *status quo* per se. I have said before that I found no reference to it in Bible, Mishnah and Talmud.”

“This Government, like its predecessors, is committed to the principle of the observance of the *status quo* in religious matters in the country. But we do not mean with this that one cannot move from it right or left as matters develop. . . .” To an interjection by Rabbi Menachem Porush, “Answer to the point: has there been a change in the *status quo*? Why don’t you answer?” Shapiro replied: “You are not involved in this matter.”

The implication of Justice Minister Shapiro’s words are clear: the government does not consider the maintenance of the religious *status quo* a fundamental, so-to-speak constitutional principle, of concern to every citizen, but merely an agreement between the coalition partners, subject to their good will in abiding by it.

groups partners in determining the principles and the actual decisions of *halochoh*.

There is a vast gap between the starting points of secular democratic politics and of *halochoh*. The secularists start with the democratic principle and try to apply it to the *halochos* that the state is concerned with. They feel that the majority should decide—in politics and also in the *halochos* which affect the political community. Therefore they consider themselves entitled to a voice in determining the *halochoh*. In reality, however, Torah and *halochoh* are not amenable to democratic rules; they do not change according to the winds of the time. There is bound to be a conflict—and, in our circumstances, religion must lose.

In such a situation, separation is a necessity. As said before, it was not inevitable from the beginning. If there would have been an unquestioned commitment on the part of the state not to interfere with *halochoh*, separation would have been wrong and harmful. But when, instead, cooperation (what cooperation!) becomes more and more of a danger, separation becomes inevitable and, in a certain way, perhaps a blessing.

There will be a clarity, religion that is not politicized, religion that is not subject to the changing moods of the secular government. He who will want to go in the way of the Torah will have to accept all the obligations that this entails; and he that is not ready to accept them—will also know clearly where he stands.

Education in the State of Israel is free: whoever wants a secular education can obtain it, and whoever wants a religious education can obtain it. Everybody knows that the government does not particularly encourage religious education, and the atmosphere in the country—created by all the tools of propaganda and communication—certainly does not work in favor of the religious groups—and yet 40% of the country's inhabitants send their children to one of the various types of religious schools. If this is our experience in the educational field, how much more does it stand to reason that in the field of marriage and divorce a much, much larger percentage will turn to the rabbinate, rather than seeking other recourses,—and there will be no question then of the secular powers interfering with the work of the rabbinate! □

Shaul Lustig

What is Behind the Success of the Yeshivos ...and the failure of "modern education" ?

Recently an outstanding Torah educator passed away: Rabbi Shaul Lustig, principal of the Beth Jacob Seminary in Ramat Gan, and for 40 years an inspiring and creative force in working with our youth. The following essay was written for a booklet published by *Chinuch Atzmai* for the benefit and guidance of elementary school graduates in Israel, to introduce them to the world of Yeshivos. The thoughts expressed have, we believe, a significance that transcends the Israeli scene. Certainly the much discussed alienation of American youth and the convulsions which have marked American college life during the last few years give special importance to the author's observations. The young American Jew has been hit particularly hard by youth's identity crisis; it is most essential to define clearly what the Yeshiva can do for him.

I. *The Rosh Yeshiva as a Model*

THE SECRET OF THE SUCCESS of the yeshiva, both qualitatively and quantitatively, can be found in this crucial factor. Youth today streams in ever increasing numbers into the yeshivos, and since this movement carries the stamp of free choice and self-dedication, it indicates that the yeshiva has a strong and lasting power of attraction. How does this power express itself? It seems that, first and foremost, there is here at work the basic

desire of the young person to find somebody to model himself by, to choose for himself an ideal personality that invites imitation.

In this respect, the yeshiva can presently celebrate the fullness of its triumph, while—in contrast—institutions of higher general education are reaping their complete failure.

Let us call to mind the traditional picture as it is. The professor is apt to throne on his podium, he towers

above his disciples, he is separate from them—in the style of his lectures, in the nature of his approach, and in his official and personal position.

With the *Rosh Yeshiva*, personal qualities of character are the prerequisites to all else; while with the professor, all this does not matter—the one thing demanded of him is command of his subject matter, limited and circumscribed to the specific area of his expertise, and that is all.

Therefore, it is so easy to understand the educational success of the *Rosh Yeshiva*, who does not, G-d forbid, lift himself above his students, but walks with them, to be at their side. The *Rosh Yeshiva* continually radiates the essence of his personality, during his *shiurim* and afterwards, during *tefilla* or free discussion, at the time of public encounters or in private conversation.

It is therefore not surprising that the yeshiva student experiences a kind of spiritual revival and, at a time when the maturing individual begins to wrestle with himself and stands in fear of loneliness and isolation, he finds enduring paternal inner support from his *Rosh Yeshiva* or *Mashgiach Ruchoni*. Thus the pupil changes from a mere human grain of dust into a personality, attaining his self-crystallization.

II. *The Synthesis of Reason and Emotion*

THE OLD CONFLICT between reason and emotion, brain and heart, that is reflected in every human being, shows itself with particular strength in the case of youngsters during the period when they are first molded. It is a fact on which all educators in the country are agreed, that with the sabra this conflict is more pronounced, just because the sabras are ashamed of their emotions and hide or even suppress them.

Therefore, the students of the modern educational institutions are the ones that suffer most in this country. Shallow reasoning leads to wrong and harmful conclusions. How much more so when the secular environment, in the house and in the schools, presents, idealizes, and often forcefully pushes that which is evil! To the degree to which good natural inclinations dwell in the heart of the youngsters, they do not find their expression because among the sabras this would be considered a lack of *chevra* spirit or unmanly softness. As a result of this hidden inner conflict, modern youth feels frustrated and embittered.

The opposite is true in the case of yeshiva youth. In the first place, the yeshiva harnesses, reason and the logical faculty for the study of Torah, and most important, for the great effort needed to attain a deeper

understanding. As a result, reason becomes softened, and emotion is not pushed aside or stifled but raised into an impelling ethical force. Exactly as the *mitzva* of *tefillin* addresses itself at the same time to the heart (“to subjugate the desires and the thoughts of our heart to His service, may His name be blessed”) and also toward the mind (“that the soul that is in my brain, and my senses and faculties, should all be dedicated to His service, blessed be He”), so the life in the yeshiva leads to self expression through Torah study, the serving of G-d in *tefilla*, and the rendering of kindness to one’s fellow beings.

This harmony of reason and emotion, this joint functioning of all aspects of a person’s feelings and thoughts, that is brought about in the yeshiva atmosphere, implants into the soul the sense of perfection which is the road to inner happiness.

III. *The Longing for the Recognition of Truth, Through Torah Study for Its Own Sake, in Contrast to the Pursuit of Economic and Vocational Attainments.*

THE GREAT WEAKNESS OF MODERN EDUCATION in general is amply known: a concentrated striving for occupational expertise that brings about narrowness in all areas, including that of educational and ethical values.

In addition, modern pedagogy is moved by the desire to convert the very learning process into a game and enjoyment; thereby, it lowers the spiritual stature of the pupil and accustoms him to superficiality and lack of application in his mental functioning. The need for exertion is removed. “What are you learning? Is this required by the curriculum? A pity for the time!” This is the approach of today’s students. They are primarily interested in accumulating the credits required for admission to examinations and for the academic degree which is the key to riches and status in life.

See how far removed and different the yeshiva is in this respect! In it, there are no limits to exertion, no bounds to possible attainments in Torah. Perseverance is immense in all the yeshivos, and the simple reason for that is that the greatest degree of inner happiness belongs to the *Bnei Yeshiva* who turn their nights into days in order to penetrate more deeply into the Torah, and who labor without end in order to understand the will of the creator and His commandments. This is no study for the sake of some “goal,” for some selfish objective, for vocational perfection or for a career—this is study “for its own sake.”

The students at the secular institutions demonstrate their smartness by finding all sorts of devices to free

themselves of the need for exertion in their studies. They buy summaries of lecture notes, they deal with scientific abstracts, and swallow all sorts of "knowledge concentrates," like somebody who swallows "soup concentrate."

And the yeshiva students? They organize a *mishmar*: study at night. They join in small groups for free study, outside the regular *shiurim*. As they immerse themselves deeper in the ocean of the Talmud, so also their insight becomes deeper and wider, and they thirst to achieve and understand more and more. Since they engage in Torah for its own sake, there is no greater happiness that they could experience.

IV. *Mutual Loyalty and the Cultivation of Human Values Within the Walls of the Yeshiva.*

THE EXPRESSION OF THE SOCIAL SPIRIT is particularly developed among the *Bnei Yeshivos*. There are many forms that this phenomenon takes. In every yeshiva there exist today special funds for mutual help, and the young men concern themselves with the *mitzvos* of *tzedaka* and *gemilus chesed* and, in general, the *mitzvos* between a man and his fellow beings, in theory as well as in practice. There also grows up between them a sense of brotherliness and deep and strong loyalty. The *Rosh Yeshiva* himself serves as a living example and personal demonstration of the concern with deeds of charity and kindness in all their variety.

Here, too, there emerges a basic difference between the yeshiva and the modern institutions of enlightenment.

Modern man tends to throw off his ethical obligation towards others, and to shift them instead onto the shoulders of some "social agency" devoid of all feelings of mercy and all expression of actual sharing in the pain of our fellow-man. The "agency" puts to shame and debases, lowers and breaks the person that stands in need of it. This hard and rigid attitude characterizes even the contemporary institutions of "mutual assistance," and the "social worker" is not the person most suited to prevent a mother from doing away with herself because of her inability to feed her nine children that wilt from hunger.

And here comes the yeshiva and raises the banner of human dignity that has been torn down. In the yeshiva there is no cheap competition between the pupils. Since they study Torah for its own sake, no one envies the other, no one looks at the other with a jealous glance. On the contrary, everyone rejoices in the success of the other, and evinces his feeling of

closely woven friendship. The yeshiva today represents a place where *Ahavas Yisroel* is generated in its concrete form—and this fact, too, contributes to the atmosphere of spiritual happiness that rules within its walls.

V. *Emunas Chachomim—Trust in the Sages, as the Strongest Motive for Faith in G-d and in Torah.*

IT IS KNOWN THAT the manifestation of Jewish religiosity was always based upon the heritage of our forefathers. The Jewish home was pervaded throughout the pure atmosphere of faith and trust in G-d, and it was the parents who passed down this faith to their children. In our days, however, the power of the Jewish home to give such sustenance has been greatly weakened. It is rather widespread in religious circles that there rules in the home at best a cold and indifferent atmosphere, where *mitzvos* are a matter of rote. It is then, the yeshiva which serves as a well bringing new freshness, as truly a spring of living water that strengthens the understanding of our faith and its attainment in its purest form.

There are many aspects to the deepening of the pure religious insight among the students of the yeshivos. *Tefilla*—the service of the heart—occupies an honored place in the daily routine of the yeshiva as well as on the ladder of religious self-expression of the yeshiva disciple. Among the students of the yeshivos faith takes roots in the deepest recesses of the soul, and bursts into a flame that reaches to the noblest heights of self-sacrifice.

And there is another effective force, a powerful spur to religious insight—trust in our Sages, which pervades the atmosphere of the yeshiva. *Emunas chachomim* is the channel for the inculcation of the Torah heritage in general, and for the drawing of spiritual sustenance for every individual in particular. *Emunas chachomim* is the unbroken link to our Torah heritage that stretches from the moment when Moshe received the Torah, at Sinai, to the great luminaries of Torah in our generation.

Therefore, since this *emunas chachomim* is crystallized within the walls of the yeshiva in the most natural manner, the spirit of the *Bnei Hayeshiva* is thus profoundly uplifted and strengthened. If it was said, long ago, that there is no such joy as the resolution of doubts, then it is certainly true that in a generation as confused and straying as ours, there is an overflowing sense of happiness on the parts of the *Bnei Hayeshiva* thanks to their deep faith and to the trust in the Sages that is implanted in them. □

Alienation Among Yeshiva Youth

One of the most unfortunate situations plaguing us today, attracting the critical ire of our youth, is the all too obvious lack of feeling, involvement and integrity in our society. Twentieth century man has generated ingenious innovations making life more comfortable on the one hand but concomitantly creating more psychological problems on the other. These "problems" vary in name but are generally consistent with the same message. "Alienated youth," "generation gap," "neuroticism," "schizophrenia," and all the rest of the diagnostic labels seem to indicate the individual's poor or total lack of adjustment to the vicissitudes and challenges of life. The difference between "normalcy" and mental illness is a relatively narrow one. Abnormal thinking and behavior seems to be more of a matter of degree rather than an absolute entity. The neurotic's behavior is inappropriate and extreme. His basic lack of flexibility and security do not permit him to become involved in and self-committed to important life situations wherein he might make potentially valuable contributions. He is simply unable to assume mature responsibility and cannot emerge from his self-centered, unrealistic world. That unfortunate person may channel all of his creative skills into what is ultimately repetitive meaningless action. "Anomie" is an effect of this social sickness, i.e., the anxiety of not being able to feel, to love or become involved with others. Such is the sad plight of individuals who are hopelessly lost by having misinterpreted their purpose and goal in life. Eventually, normal "life presses" become so gnawing, that despondency and depression result. Suicidal thoughts may even develop and, at that point, one is in serious need of professional treatment. All of this seems to stem from a psychological breakdown between man and man but perhaps more profoundly, between man and G-d. Despite his professed atheism, it was none other than Freud himself who once admitted that "the moment man raises the question of the meaning of his life, *he is sick*."¹

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The Results of Meaningless Existence

Many clinicians find that the principal reason for chronic depression, depersonalization and despondency conditions in their young and middle aged patients are self confessed feelings of meaningless existence with no direction or purpose. Even when psychotherapy or other similar treatments are available, these people will only respond favorably if they are able to relearn and develop a new, more personally meaningful philosophy of life.

One specific clinical neurosis which professionals frequently encounter in their patients is the so called obsession-compulsion neurosis. Such patients are characterized by rigidity, senseless repetition, uncertainty and irritability. They become so overly involved in what should be routine procedures that they have no time for satisfying accomplishments or self fulfillment. Theirs is a life saturated with guilt and permeated with despair. Preparation for anything becomes an end in itself. Their life work remains uncompleted; their lives hopeless debacles.

A new focus in psychotherapy which attempts to treat this and other such problems has resulted in the development of "T" (training) "sensitivity" or "encounter" groups. Based on existential theory, the goal of the group "facilitator" (leader) is to externalize pent up feelings and emotions. Participants actually relearn *how to feel* by freely talking about experiences. The assumption is that this will help them with life situations more effectively. The more "regressed" the group, the more primitive will be the feelings they must simulate. This is based on the hypothesis that many individuals merely go through the *motions* of feelings but are essentially incapable of actual self growth and maturity. The lack of wholesome interpersonal encounters with others with the concomitant absence of mutual respect create artificial rather than real relationships. Once the group facilitator can reincarnate humanism by encouraging people to express themselves without anxiety, he has succeeded in fostering a positive therapeutic change with the members.

The Implications for Torah Jews

Is the above strictly a secular phenomenon or does it have implications for Torah Jews? Are our educational institutions doing enough in the way of providing personal and emphatic guidance to our young people? Or is there any value in establishing small groups where young people are offered an opportunity for highly personal interchanges of thoughts and concerns with experienced leaders? And in other ways of providing more adequate help to them? This writer would like to assume an affirmative position based on actual therapeutic encounters with people of Orthodox upbringing and Torah environment. The bulk of this group consists of high school students and young adults who, in the confidential counseling relationship, complain of their religious insecurity. They term their own insincerity and lack of motivation, while maintaining the forms of observance blatant hypocrisy. There are various grievances, but certain ones appear to be overwhelmingly consistent from one person to another. One is the davening or daily prayer services. By rabbinic law, we are enjoined to daven the same prayers, don the same tefillin, talis, etc., and literally go through almost identical routines every day of our lives. We say "*Bechol Yom Vayom Yehu be'anecha kachadashim*"² (each day should be as a new beginning in your eyes, as if it was this day that you were commanded to do them) but the difference between merely stating a fact and emotionally accepting it is enormous. One young man recently told the writer that, whereas in the yeshiva, he is considered to be an "*adel*" (religious) person by overtly conforming with the religious customs and practices, he does not follow them at home. He had mixed feelings about this inconsistency but over the years has not been able to facilitate any change. "They are just empty words which have no meaning for me and I can't accept hypocrisy."

The same is true with other *mitzvos*. Rote, perfunctory performance can ultimately terminate in complete apathy and eventual rejection of those practices. People must actually see and feel progress if they are to persevere and continue in their religious growth and development (which is continuous). Enthusiasm must be constant and self fulfilling. It must also satisfy some basic need from within. When one reaches the point where his allegiance to *Yahadus* is shaky and in a state of turmoil, when he knows he is "performing" to satisfy "others" whomever they may be, then he is anchored and mired in what has been called "the existential crisis": a deep insult to the psyche which poses an ominous threat to basic beliefs or *emunah*.

Should more fortunate people who are not immersed in "seas of doubt and overwhelmed by waves of confusion"³ assume the naive approach that their fellow Jews will grow out of their dilemmas and see the light someday? Are not questions and inconsistent attitudes in themselves symptomatic of psycho-spiritual conflict and indicative of immediate intervention? Are these naive, underdeveloped immature souls who do not deserve our time and assistance or do we have an obligation to reach their troubled minds? Depending on how adroitly this sensitive problem is handled, it can either generate new intrinsic growth or result in psycho-spiritual destruction. When there is no intervention, however, the individual continues to feel that he is "not with it" and subsequently as the current expression goes, "cops out." "Hypocrisy" is a disease which to young people today has the same connotation that "communism" has to ultra right conservatives.

The Crux of the Dilemma

Here then is the crux of the dilemma. Young people have a tremendous need for honesty and consistency and refuse to accept that which is devoid of meaning for them. Even the famous Talmudic dictum of "insincerity leads to sincerity"⁴ does not placate bewildered youths who seek our answers for the here and now. Many young people in yeshivos today come from irreligious homes where the environment is certainly in no way similar to the day schools and yeshivos where they acquire the foundations of their faith. Their need for understanding and guidance is real and urgent.

Religious study in itself can be a rich and invigorating experience but only on one level. The personification and living example of learning occupies a much higher pinnacle. Too many of us have unfortunately never had the "*zchus*" of being personally inspired by a Reb Yisroel Salanter, Chofetz Chaim or Chazon Ish *Zi"l*. Fortunately there are many parents and teachers in our schools who consistently exemplify Torah teachings in their own lives. When this is not the case, however, the child is deprived of a crucial need. The difference between gazing at the Torah on parchment and seeing it personified in flesh and blood obviously defies comparison. To be more specific, learning what to and what not to do on Shabbos is learning; but seeing a *tzadik live the Shabbos* is inspirational. The more an individual is exposed to consistent living Judaism, the more meaningful it becomes to him. Great leaders evoke admiration and profound reverence. When a student or child has the privilege to be with teachers or parents who understand and respect their individuality

“Learning what and what not to do on Shabbos is learning; but seeing a Zadick live the Shabbos is inspirational. The more an individual is exposed to consistent living Judaism, the more meaningful it becomes to him”

as well, then mutual affection and deep personal allegiance is the result. In this sense, the writer fully agrees in principle with the observations of Rabbi Lustig and can personally attest to the deep, affectionate and spiritual ties between so many yeshiva students and their respective *Roshei Yeshivos*. It must be realized however, that, just as in any large educational setting, countless boys are not being reached and are in desperate need of guidance. Teachers and parents must always remember that effective education and child rearing is a two-way street. The uniqueness of the individual requires a very special acceptance at every stage of his growth and development. Young people today are not like pieces of clay that can be formed and shaped at will; they are individuals with feelings and personalities just as much as everyone else. The most effective method of teaching “religion” is to personify its lesson at all times, in and outside the home and classroom.

It must be realized that where this is not done, the child sees this as “hypocrisy.” For parents and teachers to insist on strict adherence to principles they themselves do not fully accept, is to make a laughing stock of our most cherished heritage. Consequently, wherever young people today observe an unfortunate gap between religious performance and commitment and complain about it, their protests are legitimate and appropriate. It is a sad fact that the Torah is often so misunderstood. The Maharal says it succinctly when he reminds us that the *only purpose* of all the 613 *mitzvos* is to elevate man to the highest degree possible where he actually emulates the ways of his Creator.⁵ It is certainly much easier but not sufficient, to remain at the “*mitzvah* level” rather than to undergo basic personality change. Rabbi Chaim Moshe Luzatto also stresses the importance of character perfection. He recommends strict adherence to *any* thought, action or behavior that will ultimately bring the individual

closer to righteousness and perfection.⁶ Every person has his own particular emotions and repertoire which forms his unique individual make-up. These specific patterns, if positive, should be respected and encouraged at all times. That each individual is unique, requiring different types of stimulation and attention, is another frequently overlooked fact.

Developing a New Genuine Personality

With the proper orientation, motivation and emotional acceptance of the Torah, the individual's life style should undergo an extensive reassessment, ideally leading to the generation of a new, more genuine personality. This type of person is, ipso facto, the antithesis of neurosis and emotional instability. The *test* of genuineness is when the individual performing his daily routine, gains self confidence, security and, most of all, self freedom and independence. These goals can never be superimposed upon people. They must be ignited by inspiration from within and find constant reinforcement from without. Self-actualization is accomplished when a person can experience growth and maturity. For him, the words of the Creator and His law are spontaneously binding and inspiring. There will be times when he will not understand why events occur as they do but as long as he is convinced that the Torah was created for his personal needs, he will continue to search for reasons which are meaningful to him. It is crucial that young people not be discouraged from expressing themselves freely and always find an empathetic ear for their anxieties.

The writer would like to urge, as a prophylaxis to the problem discussed, that much more be done, both through the home and the schools, to meet the needs of our youngsters. The necessary steps are similar in many ways to the original philosophy of the modern day *Mussar Yeshiva*. Firstly, each individual

must be absolutely certain that he understands *to his satisfaction* the meaning and purpose of *his life* as outlined by the Torah. Implicit here, of course, is that whatever is spoken or taught as law and religion must be consistently practiced by all from the very earliest grade in school, and parents must be watchful not to create confusion and dissonance between their own behavior and that which their children are taught in school. The writer has encountered parents who maintain that they can "explain" to their children the reasons why life is different at home. "When you're home, do as we say: what you do in school is a different story." Whether implicit or explicit, this rationalization is fallacious, harmful and callously cruel. Children should not be expected to choose independently. Parental guidance is paramount and should be considered an inviolable obligation at all stages of development. Any dereliction shows a lack of understanding, irresponsibility and poor control. A home environment which supports the school, on the other hand, creates security and self-assurance.

Secondly, it is essential that teachers take nothing for granted. The skilled instructor should be aware of signs and symptoms in his students and know how and when to intervene. Clarification and questioning should be encouraged and praised at all times. In the event that the teacher is unable to satisfy a particular situation, the latter must be mature enough to consult and, if necessary, refer to others who may be of help. Not all teachers can handle every problem. Obviously, sarcasm and belittling has *no* place in our system.

Thirdly, in order to consolidate feelings and action, certain times should be reserved each day for introspective contemplation and self evaluation. If the value of this neglected self discipline can be instilled in people while they are still young, their lives will be enriched with new spirit and inspiration. Contemplation prior to performing religious functions can generate a clearer state of mind and better motivation. (According to *halochah*, religious duties performed in an impulsive manner, without preparation, may actually not be properly executed.)⁷ Each individual should be encouraged to do the best he can in a manner which he, as a free and unique person, feels is most satisfying. Viewing *davening* in a different perspective, perhaps as a *personal*, confidential long distance call between the individual and his Maker may transform meaningless utterings into spiritual encounter, replete with meaning, purpose and emotional commitment. This "style" of thinking may even improve social relationships resulting from a new awareness of self and potential.

In short, honesty, mutual respect at all levels and self awareness may bring out those qualities from within that are necessary for survival. □

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T'FILLAH: A RE-EXAMINATION

Unfortunately religion, Judaism included, has not been left unscathed by the prevailing radicalism of our times. "Relevance" has become the battle cry of a new generation of theologians and laity, challenging orthodoxy, with its multitudinous laws and customs, as being archaic and out of tune with the requirements of modern man. "Social involvement" has been blended with traditional Orthodox doctrine and practice in such a manner as to change the very structure of the religion itself. "Commitment" has taken on a sacred connotation, and has become a status symbol for the young clergyman, as he dips his ecclesiastical hands into the turbulent cauldron of social equality and welfare. By stripping prayer of its maze of regulations some theologians feel that they have released religion from its archaic bonds, enabling the worshipper to bask in the emotional glow of a more personalized worship. Prayer has in some places degenerated into an emotional—as distinct from spiritual—orgy, a be-in of brotherhood and sensual enlightenment, embellished and enhanced by auditory and visual contrivances.

In the case of Judaism, an important factor which has contributed, and will probably continue to contribute, to attacks on its teachings is a superficiality in the understanding of the tenets in question. This gross negligence on the part of the "enlightened," in failing to earnestly try to grasp the subtle and profound concepts underlying our many *mitzvos* has drawn a very sizeable group of intellectuals away from orthodoxy. For that reason, a reexamination for example, of the conceptual basis of *T'fillah* would be of value—even to us who are committed—in the face of the inevitable strain our social environs have imposed upon us.

Some two thousand years ago Judaism underwent an abrupt metamorphosis and stepped down to a new

era of worship and belief. We were relegated from the rarified atmosphere of *kedusha* on the Temple Mount to a level befitting the decline in our faith and commitment to G-d. The *Bais Hamikdosh* was destroyed. The trauma of this spiritually cataclysmic event has never left us, and it will continue to pattern our lives until the arrival of the Moshiach. We lost "the heart of our people" as it has been called, where existence was purely spiritual and G-dly. The Ten Miracles, which were an integral part of the life of the *Bais Hamikdosh*, bore witness to a transcendence over the physical, as the bonds of nature were severed, leaving the supernatural and spiritual obvious to all worshippers. Every action, every detail built up to a *gestaltian* whole which in turn imbued these actions and details with an even greater spiritual significance. Inevitably embedded in the hearts and minds of the *Oley Regel*, the festival Pilgrims, these feelings were circulated throughout all of Israel, extending the powerful impact of the *Bais Hamikdosh* to all of *Klal Yisroel*. And it was basically the understanding and practice of one important concept which played a major role in engendering this atmosphere.

Our Dependency Upon G-d

G-d's existence is absolute, dependent upon nothing and requiring nothing to exist. Mankind's existence however, is completely dependent upon G-d; our being is absolutely not absolute. Our strength, our capabilities, our intelligence and our achievements exist only because He so desires. If we were independent in the slightest way, then, in that particular way, we would be on a par with G-d, a condition quite impossible. Since we are only dependent creatures our existence is not full or complete, but only relative. This, in turn, implies that we are truly non-beings, since we have no intrinsic claim to existence, independence and accomplishment. This Doctrine of Non-Existence (if it may

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be called that), the Maharal M'Prague tells us, is implicit in the declaration of the verse "*Ain oud milvado*," "Nothing exists aside from Him," the entire creation being in essence a non-entity, fully relative to His absolutism. As we realize this, we are in effect affirming G-d as the ultimate ruler whose dominion is so great as to nullify our inherent being. We are, in brief, fulfilling the object of the creation.

As this concept becomes a part of our lives, the physical world, ourselves included, diminishes in importance. We can now become spiritual beings, as the spiritual displaces the physical and natural. In this way we become, of course, worthier of having miracles occur for us. However, in addition to our being simply worthier of them, miracles are now logically warranted: our enslavement to nature is an impediment to the supernatural miracle, but when our lives are not of the physical and natural, miracles can readily take place.

Central to the *Bais Hamikdosh* were the *korbonos*. The symbolism in burning the *korbon* as an offering to G-d is rich and profound, elevating the donor to a unique spiritual height. Behind every sin, every wrongdoing, is the conscious or subconscious assertion of man's independence from G-d. He follows his own will rather than G-d's during the act of the transgression itself, and expects to escape free of punishment, not withstanding a divine guarantee of retribution. The *korbon* is brought to rectify this: as man sees a part of himself—his possession—go up in flame, he sees his manifest dependence upon G-d. He begins to comprehend that every being must return to his creator, following the flame as it points to the heavens. He sees not only his independence lost in the conflagration but he also sees it as a replacement of himself. It becomes almost a self-immolation, as the heart, the mind, the stomach, and the eyes, all seats of desire and therefore stimulants to his feeling of independence, are destroyed, nullified by the absolute existence of G-d.

Even for the righteous, the physical manifestation of his noble thoughts has a profound effect upon him, and so the righteous also must at times present a *korbon* to G-d.

These offerings played a major role in giving the *Bais Hamikdosh* the spiritual existence it had: this impressive, almost disturbing, dissolution of the independence of the physical.

But the *Bais Hamikdosh* was destroyed. The *korbonos* which had enabled us to attain the spiritual

heights to which we had become accustomed were gone. We desperately needed a fitting replacement, and so the *chachamim*, in their wisdom, required all male Jews to pray three times during every twenty-four hour cycle.

From Korbonos to T'fillah

T'fillah supplanted *korbonos*. As we pray to G-d we come to realize our dependence upon Him, and become fully cognizant of our mere relative existence. In the *Shema* we proclaim Him as the one Supreme Being, all of creation dependent upon Him and His desires. "... *ve'asapha es d'gancha* ..."—"... and you shall gather your grain ..."—only if "... you listen ..." to the decrees of G-d. As we pour out our wishes and hopes in the *Shmoneh Esrei* we claim Him as the Giver, and declare ourselves as mere recipients.

The fulfillment of a prayer requires a special divine disregard of the laws of nature, for why should the words of our mouth bring about rain where no clouds are then present to supply moisture? After our involvement in *T'fillah*, where we decry our independence and make room for the spiritual, thereby becoming a more spiritual person, we are worthier of this intervention. However, not only are we simply worthier of more, but with this devaluation of the physical, nature, as the impediment to the supernatural fulfillment of our prayers, is more prone to His disregard.

We can now understand the cryptic statement of *chazal* that the major *s'char* or compensation for praying, with particular profundity is received in *Olam Haba*, rather than in this world. Superficially one would think otherwise, and consider the fulfillment of our prayers in this world to be the proper reward. Examining this point in the light of what has previously been discussed, it becomes clear that the basic accomplishment of *T'fillah* is a nullification of one's independence from G-d, a fundamental spiritual transformation. The fulfillment of the prayer is a mere outgrowth—a "*peiri*" or "fruit" as *chazal* calls it—of this basic spiritual elevation. And of course the real reward for this change is in *Olam Haba*.

T'fillah was to pattern our lives, our days and nights, not simply to provide an opportunity periodically to request our needs from G-d. *T'fillah* was therefore instituted as mandatory not just once but three times every twenty-four hours, morning, afternoon and evening. Man was to be reminded of his mere relative existence by being bound to *T'fillah* throughout all of his waking hours, constantly proclaiming his reliance upon G-d. Symbolically he sees the entire span of his being

claiming subjugation to Him. Each *T'fillah* is unique to its particular time; hence we have *halachos* concerning *z'man t'fillah*, the time one may pray each respective *T'fillah*. *Ma'ariv* deals with G-d as He is "*ma'ariv aravim*"—"brings about evening," controlling time and man's relation to it. *Shacharis* begins the day with our aspirations and hopes, desires and wishes. It sets the pattern of the day, setting prerogatives and goals, and is therefore appropriate to the morning. *Mincha* carries *Shacharis* through the day, bringing to the fore and reiterating our commitments and desiderata. Diurnally and nocturnally we are imbued with the concepts that *T'fillah* so eloquently expounds.

This supplanting of the *korbonos* by *T'fillah* lends so much more meaning to the appellation "*Bais Hamikdosh Koton*"—"the small Bais Hamikdosh" which has been given to our *Shuls*. The *Bais Haknesses*, founded upon the same philosophy of non-existence embodied must continue to embody those same ideals which were manifest in the *Bais Hamikdosh*. As the later-day "heart of our people" it must play the vital role of infusing Jewry with that same spirit of the *Bais Hamikdosh*, not through a passive dissemination of knowledge, but as an active force in the recurring rejuvenation of the mind and soul.

It is in the *Bais Haknesses* that we also, as the Ramban comments, evince our subjugation to G-d through *T'fillah B'tzibur*—praying with a *minyan*, a quorum of men. As an assemblage of people lift their voices in an earnest declaration of "*Shema Yisroel Hashem Elokenu Hashem Echad*," or any other part of *T'fillah*, they are communally, rather than individually, proclaiming G-d as the absolute monarch. They are powerfully emphasizing G-d as king of the multitudes, as the ultimate sovereign whose sovereignty negates the very existence of those masses.

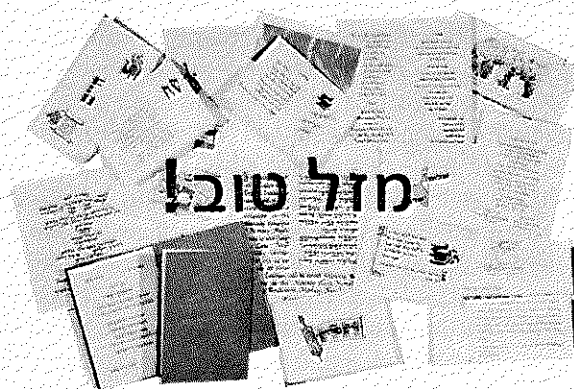
Praying with a *minyan* is an intellectual and spiritual enhancement of the personal, elevating *T'fillah* of the individual, rather than just one lost bolt in the machine of a *tzibur's* prayer. The formal "*mass-minyan*" is not the Judaic counterpart of the technological, mechanized society of the present in whose complex maze the lost existential individual has to search for a meaningful place. It is a *tzibur* of men individually entreating of, and communing with G-d. *T'fillah* in its true sense is not merely our unique rebuttal to the intellectual and emotional invective hurled at Orthodoxy. It is also the ultimate means through which the oft-discussed Lost American Jew can discover the solution to the disturbing all-encompassing impasse that our times have

inevitably created. *T'fillah* is that most personal search for a realistic understanding of G-d and His relationship not only with the Jew, but with all of mankind. The laws which the *chachamim* felt were necessary for a realization of this understanding are the guidelines to be followed for a more successful search.

"*Halachah*," literally translated, means "guide." The implication is that all of *Halacha*, that vast body of law dealing with every facet of human life, is not meant to be and does not function as an asphyxiating force, usurping the Self of the individual, and leaving behind a hollow automaton, a shell of mindless ritualistic observance. It is merely a guide to his endeavors as a specific individual, with a personality and capabilities unique to him. *Halachah* in *T'fillah*, as well as in all aspects of Judaism, is to direct this individual through the complex matrix of life to a transcendent, elevated being.

The Lost American Jew has only to search within himself, aided by *Halachah*, for his unique, congenital ability to find a meaningful personal rapport with G-d.

□



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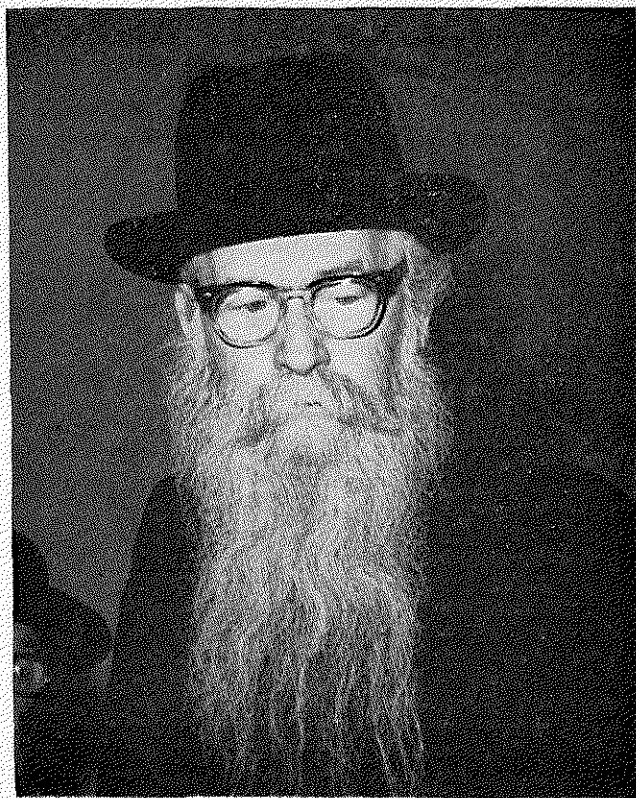
Reb Avrohom Jofen זצ"ל

by Yechiel Yitzchok Perr

Erev Pesach, following *Bedikas Chometz*, Reb Avrohom Jofen died in Jerusalem. He died as he had lived, with a regality of human spirit; with the dignity of intellect; calmly and with purpose; and after a lifetime of love of G-d, with a kiss.

From the public view, his passing marked the end of an era, the end of a saga. We find it so much easier to see the wholeness of a person when he is gone. His physical presence is no longer before us, beguiling us, as is the nature of the physical, to think that this which we see, and *only* this, is *all* of the reality. And with Reb Avrohom Jofen's passing, when the physical presence was removed, there was revealed not just the beauty of his spiritual self, but of a whole world of the spirit as well; to which he was the link, and perhaps the only key.

And it is a world from which we all have inherited. If, in the yeshivos today there is an ideal of *Limud Hatorah Lishmo* for all; a disdain for the blandishments of a materialistic society; an intolerance for any



hint of compromise; it is Navaradok that made a major contribution in introducing these thoughts into the everyday lexicon of the Torah world. But there was much more yet in Navaradok than an empty world dreams of; and now, who will interpret our dreams?

Navaradok. Conceived and founded by his father-in-law, Reb Yoseph Horowitz, "Der Alter." Der Alter spent seven years of self-imposed solitude in a Russian forest. Far from the petty world of men he found the great world that is man. Far from the tumult of society he heard the voice of his own heart. And having heard this voice, he went forth to scream its message to those others who struggle to hear through the deafening tumult, and to build a movement which he envisioned as a self-sustaining explosion, a storm center for the world.

Navaradok. The very name is invested with impact and legend, with *Mesiras Nefesh*. In a world seething with revolution and conquest, a

Talmid is taught anew the ancient wisdom, "the greatest conquest is mastery of one's self." In a world where Jewish Communists flaunt their atheism, *Rebbis* demonstrate: "Build yeshivos and teach Torah, bringing your safety and perhaps your life as a sacrifice on an altar to G-d." A Torah of black fire written on white.

Navaradok. What images are conjured up before the mind's eye. Wide-eyed eleven-year-olds and grey-bearded elders. Hundreds of young men excitedly pacing the *Bais Medrash* floor in the give and take of *Mussar*: "the Bourse." The clothes on your back are all that you've got. From five years of wear the shirt has turned black. A *Talmid* crouching over the little notebook where nightly he draws up an account of his spiritual condition and progress. Sending food to a chaver jailed for teaching Torah, and wrap-

RABBI PERR is the grandson by marriage of Reb Avrohom Jofen זצ"ל, and the Principal of the Yeshiva of Far Rockaway and also a contributor to the *Jewish Observer* (June '69, Jan. '70).

ping it in a page from a *Gemorrah*. Waiting in the dining room hoping there may be food, and "talking in learning" in order not to waste the time. Teen-agers jumping on moving trains, clutching desperately at the rain slick chains between cars, and pulling themselves up slowly to safety above the racing wheels. Smuggling themselves across the border to Poland. And *Talmidim* slipping coins into the shoes of a chaver while he sleeps, for they know he will never ask, for he is working on acquiring *Bitachon*. A hundred hungry bodies locked in dance, a hundred hungry souls vibrating between inner and outer cosmos; "this world, this world is a very narrow span; cross it—if you're unafraid you can."

Der Alter, dispelling all doubts with a lion's roar, "Az m'ken nit ariber, muz men ariber." *Der Alter* with a smile, "A person wishes he could become a *Godol* in one night, and he wishes to sleep that night as well." *Der Alter* to his lieutenants: "Where others send a letter, I send a telegram . . . Where other send a messenger, I have already gone myself, and will go yet a second time." Ten years of hard work are invested in building a yeshiva in a certain city. Yet when it becomes evident that the yeshiva will not be in the image *Der Alter* desires, he announces its closing. "*Rebbe*," his *Talmidim* cry, "ten years of hard work." "Torah must be taught only from

pure motives," he replies, "and protecting a ten-year investment is also an impure motive." And he closes the yeshiva.

Reb Avrohom, traveling arm-in-arm with his father-in-law in the no-man's-land between the red and white armies, seeking a place to establish another yeshiva, Reb Avrohom allowing his own children to hunger and giving away their food to others. A center in Bialystock, seventy-two yeshivos, four thousand *Talmidim*. His home so crowded with students he must prepare his *Shiurim* standing by the mantlepiece. The outstanding *Talmidim* of Grodno and Mir coming regularly to hear these *Shiurim*. Endless cheerfulness on his lips, endless encouragement. Tearing apart a *Talmid* who by any other standard is already a saint; and who will later stand forlornly in the streets, tears pouring down his face, having heard of his passing. Reb Avrohom standing with the *Talis* over his head before *Ne'ilah*, eyes closed, surrounded by his *Talmidim*, crying out, "A pure heart create in me, Oh L-rd, and a proper spirit renew within me." And tears coursing down the cheeks as *Mussar* is learned with its special *nigun* in the semi-solitude of the *Bais HaMussar*, "... it must become clear and true to a person,

. . . what is his duty in this world?

. . . what is his duty in this world?

. . . what is his duty in this world?

He had retired at midnight, to sleep the four or five hours he allowed himself. Feeling suddenly unwell, he asked that a neighbor be called. A doctor was summoned. He was made more comfortable. "The *Rosh Yeshiva* seems to be feeling better," the neighbor remarked. With a tone of mild wonder he answered, "Don't you see that I am breathing my last?" Within half an hour, a prayer on his lips, he followed his thousands of students into eternity.

In one of his *Shmuesin** he elaborated on the teaching of *Chazal* that, before the world was created, the Torah existed in the form of black fire written on white fire. And he explained that Torah has two aspects: the severe restrictions, characterized by the imagery of black fire, and all the beauty and blessing, warmth and

healing, represented by white fire. And he went on to explain that if not for the aspect of black fire in the Torah, the aspect of white fire would never be the blessing it was intended to be. The Shabbos is referred to as "a day of rest and sanctity" and has certain qualities which are best described as "similar to the World to come." And yet for Gentiles, their day of rest all too often is a curse; a time when the rate of violent crimes and deaths jumps dramatically. The difference between the two derives from the fact, that the blessing of white fire cannot exist without the restrictions of black fire. Leisure without simultaneous blinding restrictions becomes instead a curse. And to *such* an extent, that *Chazal* declare that a gentile is forbidden to keep the Shabbos. It should therefore be understood, he continues, that the black fire is nothing other than white fire in another form. They are the same; in the same way that the surgeon must make himself cruel in order to operate on a patient; while in reality his

* *Hamussor V'Hadaas*, Rabbi Avrohom Jofen, New York, 1957, pp. 73-74.

second looks at the jewish scene

The Abortion Law

On July 1, New York State's new "abortion on demand" law went into effect; it authorizes abortions during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, provided only that a woman and her physician agree upon the operation (a husband has no say in the matter).

It is a sign of our times, and of their effect upon us, that there has been no great wave of horror and revulsion sweeping over us all. Somehow we seem to have made our peace with a phenomenon that, we feel, has really no direct bearing upon us. Such a reaction is terribly wrong; it overlooks the manifold concrete ways in which this development is bound profoundly to affect us.

Torah law permits abortions in certain narrowly delimited circumstances. Except for such cases, abortions are considered by the Torah as "*appurtenances of murder*" (Rabbi Unterman, in *Noam*, vol. 6); this prohibition of foeticide applies to *Bnai Noach* also. (See Rambam, *Hilchas M'lochim*.) In contrast, the society we live in has sanctioned the most light-hearted and coldblooded recourse to wholesale destruction of budding human life. Is it not obvious that such disregard for the sanctity of life will inevitably affect modern man's attitude toward his fellow men?

The constant shrill warnings of the population experts that "there are too many people around and

something has to be done about it" have always carried the implication that human beings are not necessarily an asset. As it is, a spirit of violence, and callousness toward its tragic consequences, has been with us for quite a while, as witness the events of Mylai or domestic bloodshed of both the political and common variety. There can be little doubt that unrestricted availability of abortions will be a further giant's step in debasing the value of human life.

As a news story pointed out, "doctors and nurses on the obstetrical services, accustomed to bringing live babies into the world, had to make an emotional adjustment in performing abortions" (*Time*, July 6). The dimensions of the required adjustment are frighteningly indicated by a report from England about a woman who had an abortion in the 26th week and was then "told she can claim maternity benefits because her 'baby' lived for a while after the abortion." As a spokesman for England's Medical Defense Union said, "this shows how very difficult this whole situation has become. The abortion act concerns itself with terminating a pregnancy, it says nothing about killing the baby. . . . [The baby mentioned before] should probably be registered as a live birth. But what happens with a 16 week old fetus

actions are motivated by the utmost concern and pity.

And it is this "cruelty" that the Torah teaches us to acquire; for only with it can we properly regulate society, and our own homes. On the verse, "Black as a raven," *Chazal* teach us, "Torah cannot be acquired except by him who makes himself as cruel to his family as is the raven." But only with the understanding that this "cruelty" is required to set apart one's home from the profanities of society, and to create within it a

Torah atmosphere; that this is not "cruelty" but rather an expression of the utmost concern and love.

Beyond the poetry of his thoughts; and beyond the originality of his interpretation of *Chazal*; how relevant are these words today: in the private and public sectors; in the Jewish world and also in the Gentile!

And beyond relevance: his words draw for us a picture of the *Odom Hasholaim*; the goal for which Navaradok strove, and which he exemplified. □

which may live and have a separate existence after an abortion for a few minutes?" (*London Daily Express*).

At the time of creation, our Sages tell us, G-d made one single human being, to teach us the value of even one life. Can a world that tolerated the accursed doings of an Adolf Hitler afford to weaken further whatever reverence is left for the sanctity and significance of human life? Is there not the danger that, sooner or later, a sea of blood will drown such a society?

But this is not all that we have to fear. Immorality plays an even greater role in our society than violence. We have reached the point where one does not have to seek it out: it hounds us in the streets, sneaks into our houses, attacks us in myriad ways—radio and television, books and magazines, fashions and advertisements, theatres and movies. There have been arguments and counter-arguments on whether, in such times, the ready availability of abortions will lead to further moral looseness and promiscuity. Now some figures have become available.

The state of Hawaii has had a liberal abortion statute on the books for three months. Of the first 1002 operations, three-fourths were performed on single women, mostly between the ages of 20 and 30 (*Time*, July 6). If anything, the figures for New York, when they will become available, are likely to show even more clearly who will take advantage of the new law and what the consequences are likely to be. A further deterioration of moral standards and practice must be expected. Is this of no concern to us?

A final thought. The American public is still quite divided on the issue of making abortions readily

available, "no questions asked." A Louis Harris poll (*New York Post*, June 22) indicated that 40% of the nation were in favor, and 50% opposed, with the rest expressing no opinion. The same poll reported that, when broken down by religious affiliations, the results showed 30% of the Catholics in favor (64% opposed), 39% of the Protestants (with 49% opposed) and 71% of the Jews (with only 18% opposed)!

It is truly tragic that Jews should be the vanguard of the movement for the legalization of abortion. This is, of course, a measure of how far the bulk of American Jewry has drifted from Torah values and standard—and it underlines our responsibility to speak up. The law is on the statute book; but at the very least we have to make clear to ourselves, and to the world at large, how we view it.

A Dubious Satisfaction

The other day the Knesset debated the budget of the autonomous public corporation that operates Israeli television. The discussion was characterized by the extreme harshness of the criticism that was voiced on all sides about the Television Authority. Some of the most lethal attacks came from members of the Cabinet.

It must be remembered that Torah Jewry opposed the introduction of television in Israel; but it did not prevail. The public at large wanted television, and all sorts of benefits were anticipated from its introduction. Educational benefits: "Israeli television is not going to follow the fashion of other countries, and its programming will be unique!" And political benefits: "In times of crisis the government has to have this powerful propaganda tool at its disposal, to present its viewpoint and to reach foreign and, particularly, Arab circles!"

It now becomes clear that all these expectations have been dis-

appointed. The cultural and educational deficiencies of the programming have long been recognized and publicly discussed; the debate in the Knesset showed, however, that the government did not reap the political benefits either: the Television Authority simply did not provide the necessary cooperation. Far from working with the government to promote the interests of the country, it actually used its autonomy to the detriment of the state.

Mr. Eban pointed out in his speech that he had not been able to prevail upon the T.A. to give visiting friendly statesmen the courtesy of an interview—while sensationalists of all stripes, often very hostile to Israel, had easy access to the cameras and microphones. (A letter in *Davar*, giving the example of "Daniel, the Red" Bandit, claimed that the way to get on T.V. is to express radical leftist, anti-Jewish, and actually traitorous ideas.) There has been an urgent need adequately to present to the

world-at-large the foreign policy of the government; but the government could not count on getting the kind of presentation it wanted.

Yet the hands of the government are tied: the T.A. enjoys full autonomy. Again, it pays to look back at some recent history. When the question of T.V. on Shabbos came up, the government was ready to compromise, in order to avoid a political crisis. But when the T.A. insisted on fighting the matter out (at whatever cost to the political stability of the country!), the government was more than happy about the obstinacy of this autonomous agency and gave in quite readily. Now the government itself suffers,

unable to banish the spirit it has itself created.

There is scant satisfaction for us in the fact that we have been proven right, and the government wrong, on all the ramifications of the T.V. issue. We can only hope to be rid of the entire Television Authority and all its works—sooner rather than later. In the meantime, it appears in place to draw attention to an interesting phenomenon: the complaints of the Israeli publishing industry (on the occasion of "Hebrew Book Week") that business has been particularly bad since T.V. started operating—the only branch of industry that is flourishing are the publishers of Torah literature.

feel the recurrent need to return to the walls of the *Bais Hamidrash*, to take stock of how he has developed, and to check his bearings in life; if he has no such desire, it only shows how far he has drifted from the inspired ideals of his youth. A determined effort would appear in place, to organize a series of *Yarchey Kallah* projects in several yeshivos situated outside of big cities, for *Bnai Yeshiva* and all seekers of Torah, with *Shiurim* graded on different levels, and with vacationing facilities for the families. Considering the number of Yeshiva disciples in this country, the success of such an understanding should be assured even if only a small percentage participated.

Actually, we have to touch here upon a question that merits closer examination. Do *Bnai Yeshiva* have the impact upon American Jewish life that their preparation and their sheer numbers warrant? The reluctant and unhappy conclusion of most observers is negative. Many factors are undoubtedly responsible. But one of the most significant reasons seems to us the way in which life wears down our noblest aspirations and loftiest ideals. We are engaged in a bitter war of attrition in which our energies are exhausted, our standards undermined, and our vision distorted. Ultimately, we tend to give in and settle down to the humdrum and uninspired, selfish routine of middle-class existence.

The institution of *Yarchei Kallah* would serve not only to recall to us the sense of uncompromising purpose and dedication to Torah that we once had, but also thereby to inspire us to renewed efforts both for ourselves and for *Klal Yisroel*. In this way, perhaps, *Bnai Torah* could be mobilized to play their proper and full role in the community.

The Way of Wisdom

American Orthodoxy is highly organized—some critics feel it is in fact over-organized. Yet there are still things we can learn from others. Perhaps the most important idea that we need to import from abroad is that of annual "*Yarchey Kallah*."

Eighteen years ago the Ponevezer Rav zt"l, launched this idea at his hilltop yeshiva in Bnai Brak. In the times of the Talmud, the scholars and disciples gathered on two months in the year to study jointly tractates that they had prepared at home during the rest of the year. To renew this ancient tradition—and, in the process, to give *Bnai Torah* an opportunity annually to return to the fold of the yeshiva and to replenish their spiritual resources—the Ponevezer Rav issued a call to all who wanted to come and spend three weeks during the summer at the yeshiva and to par-

ticipate in a special and intensive learning program. Fifteen men came that first summer; now more than 800 join in—from towns, villages, kibbutzim, the army, and some even from abroad.

The success of this undertaking inspired others to follow suit, first in Haifa and then—for the last seven years—in Gateshead, England. Farsightedly, the sponsors of the Gateshead *Yarchey Kallah* adapted the institution to the special needs of their country. Family members are also invited; daily excursions to beach and countryside are provided for them, in which they are joined by the menfolk after the end of the daily learning program. In this way families can schedule their annual vacations to coincide with the *Yarchey Kallah*.

Every disciple of a yeshiva who has gone forth into the world should

“First Judaica Major at Brooklyn College Expected in September”

Prospects have been described as excellent for the establishment, this September, at Brooklyn College of the first major in Judaic Studies in the City University system. It was proposed by a faculty-student committee established by the Bnai Brith Hillel Foundation at Brooklyn College. Brooklyn College has had a major in Hebrew language and literature for many years. Judaic content courses have now been introduced in the college's history, philosophy, political science and sociology departments; the new major will be based on these courses.

Why is this announcement a matter of concern to us? The answer should be very obvious. The J.T.A. report stresses the fact that “no religious instruction or indoctrination will be taught in [these] courses, which will take a purely historical and cultural approach.” It is obvious that no religious instruction could or should be provided at the college; but what will be the nature of a Judaic content course that will treat its subject matter purely from a secular cultural or historical evolutionary viewpoint? Bible as great literature? Kabbalah (a la Scholem) in relation to Greek gnosis? Family and dietary laws and their anthropological or psychoanalytical significance (a la Gaster and Reik)? We hear of distorted ideas on Jewish topics offered by history and Hebrew literature instructors estranged from Torah; do we need more of the same?

Moreover: who will flock to these

courses? In the first place, there will be those who come from an assimilated background and are eager to learn about Judaism. Where, otherwise, they might have continued their search for more truly religious guidance, they will readily accept these college courses as a surrogate for the real thing—very much in the same way as Modern Hebrew in the public high schools became for many a surrogate for attending Talmud Torah or even a Day School. There will, of course, also be those with a good Jewish background who will choose these courses out of a mistaken conviction that they are more advisable than courses with general content. Their day school studies could not, and should not be expected to, prepare them for the more or less scholarly *Apikorsus* that they will encounter; the results are predictable—disastrous.

And what is the purpose of the new major? The announcement specified three goals: “One would be to prepare Jewish students for advanced Jewish scholarship. The second would be to prepare such students for careers in Jewish communal service. The third would be to give solid Jewish backgrounds (*sic!*) to students choosing careers in the general society.” Let us not discuss how adequate an academic preparation this major can give for *advanced Jewish scholarship*, in the light of the course requirements formulated; so many of the “scholarly” Jewish writings that are being pub-

lished nowadays are shot through with the crudest mistakes, due to ignorance of Jewish sources, that the graduates of this major are not likely to do worse. But what will be the philosophy and influence of these future scholars and communal workers, considering the nature of their ideological preparation?

I am convinced that the real motive of some of the well-meaning initiators of this project was to make available at least a modicum of knowledge about Jewish matters to those many students who have no background at all and are not interested and concerned enough to seek real religious guidance. This is an understandable motive—but the question remains: does the diffusion of this modicum of Jewish knowledge (secularized and distorted) justify in any way the creation of a program whose very foundation is all wrong and whose impact must therefore be harmful? The answer obviously is no. It will, of course not be accepted by the sponsors of the new program; but at least let us be clear about it—and do our share to keep whomever we can from taking these “Judaic” courses.

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"I will leave Israel"

Ehud Avriel, chairman of the Action Committee of the World Zionist Organization and formerly an Israeli diplomat was quoted in an interview in the *Jewish Day-Morning Journal* as stating that, if the Orthodox will have their way in the question of "Who is a Jew," "I will leave Israel. I will not live and fight for a country where the religious force their ideas on me." When asked why, then, he was so intolerant of Dr. Nachum Goldman's criticism of Israeli foreign policy, if he himself was so critical of a possible government decision, he replied: "Goldman wants to liquidate Israel, and I want it to be free." This statement was made while attending a unity conference last month in Philadelphia convened by Zionist groups of all shadings to establish a Zionist Federation of America.

Talmud "Reaffirmed"

A recent article in a mass circulation magazine caused a considerable stir. It claimed that parents could choose the sex of their offspring at will. The scientific observations on which the claim is based, completely coincides with the Talmudic comment on the subject

which had long been ridiculed by the "enlightened."

Mapam Eats Bitter Fruit

Buenos Aires (ZINS) — A spokesman of the local General Zionist Organization, reacting to a report of the disintegration of the leftist Zionist youth movement, "Hashomer Hatzair" in Argentina, declared that this development is not surprising and that the Israeli emissaries of "Mapam" in Argentina, having sown the wind, are reaping the whirlwind. The many leftist emissaries from Israel, continued the spokesman, sent to Latin America by the Organization Department of the Jewish Agency, spend their time teaching Marxism to Zionists instead of teaching Zionism to Marxists. Now they must eat the bitter fruit of their teachings. All "Hashomer Hatzair" members in Argentina have joined the New Left. The spokesman was sharply critical of the Executive of the World Zionist Organization which he holds responsible for having given "Mapam" a monopoly on Israeli emissaries to Latin America.

"Togetherness"

The brothers at St. Andrew's Priory at Valyermo, Cal., will play host to a seminar of college-age Zionist youth on the weekend of June 26-8. . . . Plans for the retreat were worked out by Mosheh Sagie, young Israeli who directs Z.O.A. youth activities in the area, and Father Vincent Martin, O.S.B. Mr. Sagie and Father Martin, who spent four years in the Holy Land, spoke Hebrew during the discussions. Among the speakers for the weekend will be Benjamin Abileah, Is-

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raeli consul, and Simson Fuhrer, principal of Rambam Torah Institute of Yeshiva University.

(From the Bnai Brith Messenger, Los Angeles)

Bar Mitzvah on Massada

The Israeli authorities never run out of ideas to attract the tourist. The latest is particularly imaginative an invitation to hold Bar Mitzvah ceremonies at the world's oldest synagogue on the ancient fortress of Massada. . . . After the ceremony, participants descend to the Massada Museum to receive a certificate recording the event.

Jewish Population Growth

London, June 6—While the world is experiencing a population explosion, the number of Jews is declining in some countries and falling behind other groups elsewhere, according to a study published this week.

The factors it cited were the loss of young adults caused by the extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis, a low birth rate, and an increasing proportion of marriages to non-Jews and withdrawal from Jewry.

"The growth of the Jewish world population has become precarious," say the authors of "Jewish Population Studies, 1961-8," which surveys the latest demographic data on Jews throughout the world, following the decimation of Jews in World War II . . .

In the United States, the study found that the growth rate of the Jewish population ranks low among the major religious groups. The fertility of Jewish women, the book says, is more than 20 percent below

the urban American population, more than a quarter below the entire white population, and almost 30 per cent lower than the national level . . .

Even in Israel, where a baby boom among the Jewish population from Europe developed around 1950, there has been a decline in the birth rate.

(From The New York Times)

New Tourist "Attraction"

"Not everything in Israel is an old ruin," cried the headline, and there followed examples of what were presumably new ruins:

"Miss Cochava Harari for instance, can be found belting it out (in a manner that would surely have delighted Solomon) at the Omar Khayyam night club just behind the flea market in Jaffa."

Is that not enough to make you reach for your passport? Then how about this? "At Mandy's for instance, you could well think you were still in London . . . Until you clamber up the stairs to find yourself staring up at the 400-year-old walls of Jerusalem."

The Mandy in question is, of course our own dear Mandy Rice-Davies [of Profumo Scandal fame]. Who'd have thought that she'd become the symbol of new Jerusalem?


I am quoting no fantasy, but a full-page El Al advertisement in the Sunday Times magazine.

El Al, it will be remembered, have recently been at pains to sell Oberammergau and Jerusalem in one holy package, and they are perhaps now anxious to redress the balance with something more profane.

(From the Jewish Chronicle, London)

No Autopsy?!

The Israeli press reports that the body of Israel Barzilai, former Minister of Health, who recently died from heart disease, was *not* subjected to an autopsy. Barzilai, during his term in office, had defended unauthorized autopsies, and also the secret and highly questionable transplant of the heart of Avraham Sadgat; he had suffered his first heart attack when a lecture program he participated in was disrupted by protests over that incident.



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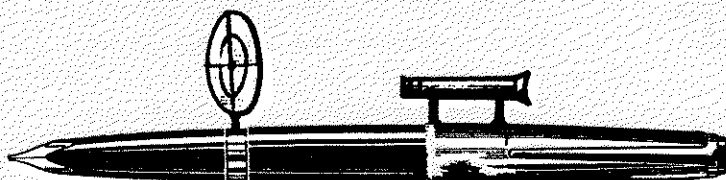
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Letters to the Editor



Encounter with Non-religious

To the Editor:

Notwithstanding a plethora of articles by the Jewish Observer every year on this topic, the ideas put forth are always the same. We must go out and bring in our brothers *shenishbu bein hagoyim*, back to the Torah etc., but be ever so careful not to really go to them and place ourselves in any position where they should actually "touch" us.

Agudah is in the forefront of confrontation—with the non-Jewish world and/or (G-d forbid) active enemies among the Jewish world—fighting to protect our *shechita*, etc. But as for confrontation in the sense of facing the world and attempting to salvage *neshomos*—when I think in such terms I think of the Lubavitcher movement first—I think of Yeshiva University Seminars and the Jewish Studies Program, to start people off from *aleph-beth*—I think of Yavneh (all aforementioned groups rarely get an inch of type in the Jewish Observer). Agudah and the Observer don't appear to be proponents of this kind of activity. For example, in the Adar issue, "teaching in non-Orthodox Talmud Torahs" is stated as being "unacceptable to us." It would seem that the Orthodox teacher could do important work with those *shenishbu bein hagoyim* at these schools by teaching these children something of true Yiddishkeit.

I have been a subscriber for many years and G-d willing, will continue to subscribe three years at a time. The Jewish Observer is an extremely essential magazine and is meant to be one. It is important. Encounter is not its "thing." Judaism as a whole has always been "encountering" and winning. Agudah's part has been to struggle with the negative elements of the outside world. But

it has not been "encountering" within Judaism.

I have read many important and interesting articles in the Observer and hope to continue to do so. My essential criticism is that few of your articles give concrete measures to be *mekarev* our unreligious brothers. I wish the new editor *hatzlocho* in his endeavors, and a hearty *yiyaasher koach* to Rabbi Jacobs for his excellent work.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH M. AUFRICHTIG
Brooklyn, N. Y.

To one familiar with the realities of Jewish life, our correspondent's remarks about Agudath Israel, despite their sincerity, seem almost ludicrous. In Europe, in Eretz Yisroel and here in America, the development of the Yeshiva and Beth Jacob movements has been inseparably linked with the mesiras nefesh of Agudists and the work of Agudath Israel as a whole—and these movements have not only "taken care of our own," but kept innumerable souls from getting lost, and attracted innumerable others that had already strayed. On the present day American scene, the work of Pirchei Agudath Israel and Camp Agudah and Bnos has certainly reached into the world of the Afternoon School population, and of the small-town Jewish community. Agudath Israel does not claim to be the only group active in this struggle, but it certainly is profoundly involved. The Jewish Observer itself—far from being an "in-group publication"—is evident of the concern of Agudath Israel with the community at large.

We certainly acknowledge that there are other groups that do a great deal for kiruv rechokim; but we must also say frankly that we cannot go along with all of them. But there is more to this issue. There is a common—and terribly danger-

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ous—belief that kiruv rechokim, or "encounter" with others, justifies all means. In reality, just as the Torah imposes upon us the duty to concern ourselves with our strayed brethren, it also imposes limits to our efforts: these themselves must not be in violation of Torah teachings. This principle, Agudath Israel, under the guidance of Gedolei HaTorah, has upheld at a time when many other organizations, albeit well-meaning, have compromised it. The effort must always be to bring "the others" into our circle; it cannot be a matter of joining "them," giving strength and status to "their" organizations or even merely adopting "their" unacceptable social, intellectual or religious approaches. We may charm some people with a plethora of "kum-sitzes" and similar social attractions, or, on the other hand, by "proving Torah relevant" to the most recent issues of the day; but this is not the way Torah will be implanted in Klall Yisroel. To say that does not mean to refuse to face the world, or to forget about saving neshomos, or to build stronger fortresses around ourselves. It rather means that

we have to understand—and this is a crucial problem of American Jewish life—how Judaism has always been “encountering” and winning, in an enduring manner.

The example of teaching in non-Orthodox schools shows the importance of such clear thinking. How can readiness to teach in these places be presented so very innocently as the test of our caring about kiruv rechokim? Are we not rather strengthening institutions—the Conservative synagogues—which have been the single most destructive force in American Jewry over the last years? The Solomon Schechter School movement, which is presently spreading out all over the country and threatening the existence of numerous small day schools, got its start through our Yeshiva graduates teaching there.

And what is the right way of kiruv rechokim? It is less dramatic, less rewarding, less productive of large numbers of adherents than some of the ways chosen by some of the other groups active in the field. But, as it takes them into the undiluted Torah atmosphere of the Yeshiva, the Beth Jacob, the Shabbos group, it produces personalities who will themselves become true protagonists of Torah. It is interesting that many who initially received their first exposure from some of the other groups become disillusioned and seek for a more intense and consistent Yiddishkeit. (In this sense, these groups may be said to fulfill a positive function, as way-stations for hesitant travellers.) But, again, does this end justify means—forms of organization and activity—that may be questionable? The Halocho is quite unequivocal on this point.

Jastrow's Dictionary

Dear Editor:

This concerns the item by Rabbi Salomon Alter Halpern in a recent issue, Iyar, Volume 6, #7. It was interesting, but really space in your magazine should be used for more important things—it's a waste of ink and space. That Jastrow was not really committed to Yiddishkeit totally we see from his introduction, where he lauds Geiger and other asserted *reshaim*. But this work is very useful, without a shadow of a doubt. To pick a few examples from 50,000 entries is not fair. And if he did make some

errors of discretion, conceit or ignorance, it still means nothing since those who use the dictionary don't study it, but use it only as an aid or tool to help them along—it gives the sources from which we really derive the meaning. It was a monumental task, notwithstanding the Arukh which is not in English, and therefore not everyone can use it. This is the only work in English.

YOSAIF CHAIM SHOAV

We cannot agree with our correspondent that Rabbi Halpern's article was a waste. The mere fact that it is so very widely used, as the only such available work, makes it particularly important for everyone to realize that it is flawed and must be used with caution.

"You've Changed!"

Dear Sir:

Let me start by apologizing for the sloppy letter, but I'm sending you this from work.—No, it isn't a mistake that caused me not to renew. I have noticed a slight, ever so slight, change in policy. No more articles on Autopsies, Sinas Hadas, the stealing of religious children . . . the strong stand, as is befitting an Agudah paper, on such subjects as reform, Jewish unity, and yes the Geziras Hamedinah is not to be found in your

pages. Whereas upon entering your second year (Oct. '64) you drew the line (March '64), called a spade a spade, let us know the attacks on Torah, and in a marvellous way, gave us the answers. For our own doubts . . . you today don't differ from the publications from the R.C.A., Mizrahi etc.

But as you said, "Knowing the pressures on all of us today" it is much easier to join the crowd, to stop being so negative—I assume you can't return to the policies of the Chofetz Chaim, Rav Elchonon, Rav Reuven, or the Brisker Rov, or not even to the policies of 3 or 4 years ago. So I will sit back and mourn the loss of a good idea, and watch it slide, just as Y.U. has changed, and the Jewish Press.

Anyway I felt I had to write.

B'chvod rav,

YOEL ROSS

We regret our correspondent's disappointment, but do not really know the reason for it—there has been no change in J.O. policy. The J.O. has continued, regretfully, but unavoidably, to take aim at the negative phenomena in Jewish life; but it must be understood that not every one of them can and should be touched upon in every issue particularly since there is also very much else that a Torah-true publication must write about.

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SOUTH AMERICAN AGUDIST CONFERENCE IN ARGENTINA THIS SUMMER

A conference of the South American branches of Agudath Israel will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina from August 20th through the 25th, to strengthen Torah education, lift the levels of religious observance and boost the morale of the Orthodox communities in that region.

A broad program of lectures and public forums will take place during the five days of the conference, in order to stimulate the Jewish masses in Argentina including the youth, to more intensive personal commitment to Torah and to a broader understanding of Torah views on relevant current issues of the day. The conference will close with a gala banquet on Tuesday evening in Buenos Aires, devoted to the Yeshiva "Heichal Hatorah" and the Bais Yaakov, which is the largest Torah educational center in Argentina and is a project of the local Agudath Israel organization.

The chief guest of the conference and of the public gatherings will be Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive president of Agudath Israel of America. At the recently-held national convention of the American Agudath Israel movement, a resolution was passed to concentrate greater efforts on the neglected Jewish communities of South America. One of the objectives of the gathering will be the creation of a united educational agency for Torah *chinuch* among the Latin American countries.

CHARGE AJC "ANTI- YESHIVOS" BECAUSE IT SPEARHEADS SUIT AGAINST N.Y. STATE SCHOOL AID

A charge that the American Jewish Congress and nine groups which have joined the Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty (PEARL) are "die-hard opponents of Jewish all-day religious education" was levelled by Agudath Israel of America, the national Orthodox Jewish movement which has for more than a decade advocated

government support of non-public schools. This accusation was made by Agudath Israel after the announcement that PEARL had filed a suit on Thursday morning, July 30th, against Governor Nelson Rockefeller and other New York State officials challenging the constitutionality of the law recently enacted by the State Legislature providing for the reimbursement to non-public schools of their expenses for certain State-mandated services.

Among the Jewish constituents of PEARL are the American Jewish Congress, B'nai Brith, American Jewish Committee and Jewish Labor Committee. Agudath Israel has estimated that the Jewish all-day schools (Yeshivos) in New York State will receive \$1½ million from this mandated services act.

A statement issued by Agudath Israel after the suit was filed by PEARL declared:

"The court trials which the American Jewish Congress has initiated against local and federal governments, as well as its widely-publicized denunciations of the efforts of the religious schools of all faiths to obtain their fair share of the tax dollar, have created a false image of the American Jew fighting for secularism versus religion and disgrace the Jewish name. Now that it has joined with several other Jewish groups in an attempt to abort even such a minimal program of government support for Jewish day-schools as the Mandated Services Law, which only compensates these schools for specific acts of record-keeping which they perform at the State's behest, they stand exposed in their true light as die-hard opponents of Jewish all-day religious education. There can be no other explanation for Jewish organizations who obstinately refuse to place Jewish educational interests, the sole guarantor for Jewish survival, above outworn and extreme application of the church-state separation dogma to the narrowest forms of government aid.

"We are confident that the courts will uphold the constitutionality of New York's Mandated Services Law which these secularist groups are contesting. We deplore the fact that in the process of these anti-parochial school activities by

these Jewish groups, the good name of the Jewish people is being sorely hurt. The American public must know that these groups do not speak for the Jewish citizens of our land."

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THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN IN SIX SUMMER EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS OF AGUDATH ISRAEL

Thousands of children from every part of the United States and Canada are benefiting this summer from six educational projects conducted or organized by Agudath Israel of America. These summer projects range from New York's Catskill Mountains through Canada to Israel.

The oldest and largest of the summer educational programs is Camp Agudah for boys in Ferndale, New York, where close to 1,000 children will be instilled with a unique Torah spirit utilizing the healthful surroundings of the Catskill Mountains. Since its inception over a quarter of a century ago, Camp Agudah has had a profound positive impact on numerous non-religious Jewish homes, when the children returned to their parents after being inspired to a Torah way of life.

The American girls' camp, Camp Bnos in Liberty, New York, has followed a similar program, and has gained a national reputation for its major contribution to the education of Jewish girls during the usually wasted summer months.

In Canada, the local chapter of Agudath Israel of Toronto is sponsoring its second season of Camp Agudah of Toronto, dividing half of the season for boy campers and the other half for girls. Camp Agudah of Montreal, sponsored

by the local Agudath Israel branch, has opened its first season for this year.

The second season of Agudath Israel's summer project in Israel is being enjoyed this summer: Camp S'dei Chemed International in Rishon L'Zion, which enables American boys to mingle with their European and Israeli peers for a highly inspiring and instructive summer in the Holy Land, and the "Live and Learn in Israel" project for girls which centers around the Bais Yaakov Teachers Seminary in Jerusalem.

The summer projects of Agudath Israel of America are an integral part of the organization's year-round educational activities which reach out to close to twenty thousand children through youth groups and publications.

ORTHODOX TOURIST AND ALIYAH OFFICE IS OPENED IN JERUSALEM

A special office to enable tourists to Israel to obtain a deeper dimension of religious life and accomplishments in the Holy Land, was opened in Jerusalem in June by Agudath Israel of America. The Orthodox tourist office was established by Agudath Israel in response to the requests from many tourists who felt that the official guided tours "did not sufficiently convey to visitors from foreign countries a true picture of Torah life in Israel," the Agudath Israel leader declared.

The new department will also help religious "olim" (immigrants) from the United States and other lands cope with their specific problems as Orthodox Jews in housing, education, and occupation. The Tourist and Aliyah department of Agudath Israel of America will be headed by a member of the organization's executive committee who recently settled in Jerusalem, Rabbi Gabriel Beer of Far Rockaway, New York.

Information can be obtained by writing the Tourist and Aliyah Department of Agudath Israel, 5 Shomer Hakotel St. P.O.B. 326, Jerusalem, Israel (Telephone: 27328).

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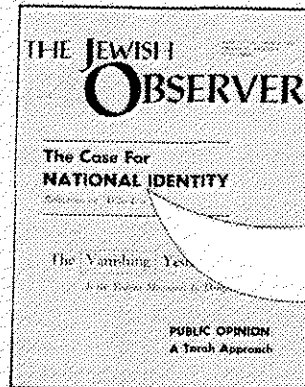
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