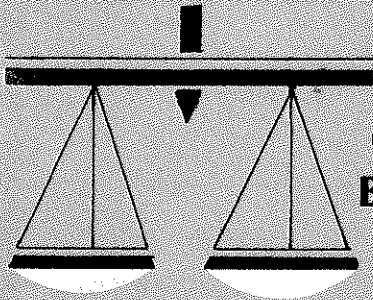


# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

SIVAN, 5738 / MAY, 1978  
VOLUME XIII, NUMBER 3  
ONE DOLLAR



**DID YOU  
CONDUCT YOUR  
BUSINESS AFFAIRS  
"WITH FAITH"?**

**HOW DOES A  
REVERED  
TORAH LEADER  
ASSESS OUR  
SECURITY NEEDS?**



**SECOND  
LOOKS**

**BOOK  
REVIEW**



**RABBI REUVAIN  
GROZOVSKY  
זכר צדיק לברכה  
— TWENTY YEARS  
SINCE  
HIS PASSING**

**LETTERS  
TO  
THE  
EDITOR**



**WHAT CAN  
BE DONE  
FOR RETARDED  
CHILDREN?**

**WHY DIDN'T  
THE ALLIES  
BOMB  
AUSCHWITZ?**



# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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## נשאת ונתת באמונה?

# Did You Conduct Your Business Affairs With Faith?

### The Questions

After a person has lived his years on earth, he must appear before the Beis Din Shel Ma'alo (Heavenly Tribunal) and answer, among other questions: "הנשאת ונתת באמונה – Did you conduct your business affairs with faith? (usually taken to mean "with integrity"), "קבעת עתים לתורה" – Did you establish set times for studying Torah? ... צפיית לישועה – Did you anticipate the Redemption?" (Shabbos 31a). Interestingly, another source in the Talmud (Kiddushin 40b, Sanhedrin 7a) says that a person is first judged in regard to Torah, which as Tosfos points out, is an apparent contradiction. Tosfos then explains that while in judgment, business conduct takes precedence over Torah study, retribution is in a different sequence: punishment for neglecting Torah study comes first. The reason? The cause of a person's misconduct in business is a lack of proper knowledge of Torah and a lack of loyalty to its teachings. All else is built upon that foundation.... The questioning starts with a man's integrity in personal relationships with others – but punishment begins at the source – laxity in Torah study.

### Why This Topic

At first glance, a discussion of honesty and correct business practices may appear to be out of order, since such fundamental principles of Torah could well be

**RABBI PAM**, a Rosh Yeshiva in Mesifita Torah Vodaath, Brooklyn, delivered these remarks at a gathering of Torah Vodaath alumni. This essay was originally published in Hebrew in HAMESIVTA, a journal of Torah thought and novellae. **MATTIS BLUM**, a student in the Beis Hamidrash of Mesifita Torah Vodaath, prepared for publication both the Hebrew and English versions of this essay.

*An eminent Rosh Yeshiva examines the implications of the question that every man must ultimately answer.*

taken for granted. It is interesting to note, however, that the Gemora uses the term "באמונה" – "Did you conduct your affairs with *emuna* – with faith?" – instead of "tzeddek," or "mishpat," or "din" – Were you righteous, or just in your business affairs? The reason might be because *Emuna* has a

two-fold meaning – integrity, and faith in G-d. Complete trust in G-d would prompt one to act even beyond the letter of the law, and imbue him with a higher sense of ethics; his faith dispels any apprehensions about loss of income resulting from ethical conduct.

The Chofetz Chaim declared that a G-d-fearing man entering the field of commerce is obliged to study carefully the second section of *Choshen Mishpat* (the section of the Codes dealing with monetary matters), especially those *halachos* dealing with cheating, and the possibility of an error in sale (# 227-238). Just as a *shochet* is obligated to learn the laws of ritual slaughter, and a *sofer* must be an expert in the field of Torah script, so, too, must a merchant be equally proficient in the *halachos* pertinent to his profession. It would be wonderful if just as ordination is granted to Rabbis to permit them to enter the rabbinate, so, too, would some form of *semicha* in ממכר מקח וממכר (Laws of Commerce) be instituted for people entering the business field.

A *shochet* once told Reb Yisroel Salanter, "I'm giving up my position because I find the responsibility of slaughtering properly too much for my conscience to bear. If I make but one mistake, imagine how many people would be eating unkosher meat because of me!"

Asked Reb Yisroel: "What will you do for a living?"

Replied the man, "I'll open up a small business."

To which Reb Yisroel said: "Do you really think that that's preferable? As a shochet you have one responsibility — people should not transgress 'You shall not eat any meat improperly slaughtered' (Devarim 14:2) and that makes you tremble. If you'd be involved in business, do you know how many positive and negative commands you'd be dealing with, how careful you'd have to be not to violate any of them?"

\* \* \*

The Chofetz Chaim cites a few examples of *halachos* that are of extreme import to those engaged in business.

### SOME COMMON EXAMPLES

#### Defects in Sales

When selling an item, a person must be very careful that it does not have any flaw in it, or that it be lacking in any way. And should it be flawed, he must notify the would-be purchaser in advance, for if he does not, the sale may be invalid. If it is a defect that would cause a person to reconsider the purchase, not informing the purchaser would be deemed deception. This consideration applies whether the purchaser is a Jew or a Gentile, for one may not take their money under a false pretext — *gezel akum* is forbidden. (The Chofetz Chaim cites various sources; the Rambam — *Hilchos Geneiva* 7:8, among others). Should a person have made this kind of invalid sale, he must return the money.

Similarly, a person is not permitted to cheat anybody — Jew and non-Jew alike — in any manner, in keeping with the passage: "Do not commit an injustice in measures, weights, or volume" (*Vayikra* 19:38). You must make an exact accounting with the person who buys. "Committing such an injustice is an abomination before G-d" (*Devarim* 25:15).

#### Defective Merchandise

The Chofetz Chaim also cites examples dealing with the purchaser: When a person who has discovered that an item he purchased has a defect, and uses it anyway, he may not bring it back for a refund, for use implies acceptance (*Choshen Mishpat* 232:3). Of course, if the defect is discovered after the item is used, it is a different matter, and a refund is in order. But the purchaser must be certain that he did not cause the flaw. (A person may feel that the shopkeeper will return the item to the manufacturer, and the manufacturer has thousands of such items; what difference does one more make? This type of rationalization is, of course, invalid and self-deceiving.)

Similarly, when examining an article one must be careful not to damage it in any way. When people

purchase a *lulav*, and they examine it for defects, such as a split down the spine, they may well cause the split by examining it carelessly; and then say: "I don't want this one. Let me see another one, please." This is a common occurrence, and one should be exceptionally careful about it.

The Chofetz Chaim's son, Reb Leib, wrote that when the *Sefer Chofetz Chaim* was being printed, his father spent weeks on end in the printshop in Warsaw to make certain that there should be no error in the printing or the binding; he was truly frightened that perhaps someone would purchase a faulty copy which might constitute *gezel* (unintentionally defrauding the purchaser).

*In 1906, when the Chofetz Chaim was publishing his Mishna Brura, he asked Reb Leib, who had moved to Warsaw, to supervise the production of the sefer. Later, somebody purchased a set of Mishna Brura with one section printed incorrectly. The man sent a complaint to the Chofetz Chaim, who immediately wrote to his son, protesting: "What have you done to me, my son? All my days I was concerned that I be spared from even the remotest likeness to gezel. Never did I think I'd be caught up in outright gezel! And now, because of you, I fell into the trap of full-fledged gezel." He commanded his son to print a number of extra copies of this section without the inversion in it, for fear that others were similarly "defrauded," and put a notice in the newspaper to the effect that: "Whoever purchased the Sefer Mishna Brura containing a misplaced section should please write me, and I'll send you a corrected section." Which he did.*

Reb Avrohom Horowitz זצ"ל, a true tzaddik, ran a bedding supplies store in the East New York section of Brooklyn. When someone would ask: "Do you have a nice mattress?", he would say: "Nice? I don't know. Maybe others have better merchandise. I can only show you what I have."

If he was in the back room of the store, and he overheard his wife showing a particular mattress to a purchaser, he called out to her: "Did you show the customer the damage on that? Please show her."

He was always wary of defrauding the customer or misleading him in any way. (Offering a person advice that is to his disadvantage is a transgression of the Torah command "Do not place a stumbling block before a blind person..." *Vayikra* 19:14.)

If someone asks a salesman for an item, specifying a desired color or fabric, and that particular item is not in stock, the salesman may not say: "They stopped making those. But I can show you something else that's much better."

### Specifying Details of Agreement Beforehand

The Chofetz Chaim stresses (in *S'fas Tomim*, and also at the end of *Ahavas Chessed*, Section I) that when two people enter an agreement for some contracted work, it is extremely important that they both spell out precisely what they expect from each other in terms of work and payment. Frequently people say: *Start now. When the job's done we'll get together.* Then, upon completion of the job, disputes arise regarding payment, or how well the job was done; and when they part company, each one claims that he was short-changed by the other party.... Worse yet, some people prefer not to argue and let things go — but one party does not really forgive the other for the money withheld or overpaid, and thus ends up with possibilities of *gezel*.

Should such a dispute arise, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules that payment should be determined by the prevailing custom of the locality in regard to such work. If someone pays one cent less than required, then "The Torah considers this man dishonest, and guilty of withholding the wages of his worker."

However, it is usually difficult to ascertain the prevailing customs which govern a particular type of work. Therefore, it is best that the two parties spell out precisely what each expects from the other before entering contract.

## THE DEEP-SEATED ATTRIBUTES

### Charity and Justice

In his introduction to *Ahavas Chessed*, the Chofetz Chaim comments on G-d's reference to Avraham Avinu: "I love him because he will command his children and his household after him, that they will keep the way of G-d, to do charity and justice" (*Bereishis* 18:19). "Justice" refers to doing things correctly, in keeping with the law. "Charity" involves yielding to somebody else's needs beyond the requirements of the law. How are these two expressions to apply simultaneously?

The Chofetz Chaim explains that in dealing with somebody else, one must not say: *He won't mind if I pay him a little less for the item.* Or when sending out an order: *He won't mind if I short-supply him slightly.* With regard to fulfilling one's obligation to somebody else, the rule should be *mishpat* — justice — adhering to the letter of the law, no matter how insignificant the amount. On the other hand, in your expectations from others, the rule should be *tzeddaka* — tend to be generous and waive your rights in minor matters. Thus, *tzeddaka* and *mishpat* can both reside within the same person.

In the *Chut Hameshulash*, the children of the *K'sav Sofer* (Rabbi Shmuel Binyomin Schreiber ל'צ"ל) recorded how their father was so cautious in regard to

other people's money he would not rely on seventy reasons for *heter* (permission) against one reason for *isur* (prohibition).

### The Extra Measure of Caution

In 1872, when Reb Meir HaKohein was ready to print the *sefer* bearing the name by which he eventually became known, Chofetz Chaim, he travelled to various communities neighboring his own Radin for advance orders. Normally, people make some payment, but he refused to accept any money. When his son, Reb Leib, asked him why he had so refused, the Chofetz Chaim explained: "Perhaps some of these people will move, or even die by the time the *sefer* is finished. How will I be able to trace their heirs, or find them if they're alive in other cities? It is better that I take orders without money." So his son asked: "Then tell me, why do you go to the trouble of getting orders altogether? Print the *seforim* and then travel around and sell them." His father replied, "I have to borrow from others to finance this undertaking. What right do I have to ask others to lend me money on a risk, unless I have some idea of how many *seforim* I am going to sell?"

When two people verbally enter a business agreement, without any exchange of money or merchandise, either of the principals could change his mind, but it is "contrary to the wishes of the sages" (*Babba Metzia* 48a). There is a difference of opinion between two authorities, however, whether or not this type of conduct renders a person *מחוסר אמונה* — lacking in integrity, and halachic authorities decide according to the more stringent view (Rav Yochanan). Thus, if two people enter into an agreement — no money was taken, no contract was signed, no deposit was made — and later one changes his mind, he is not acting contrary to the strict requirements of *halacha*. The situation often arises when someone selects merchandise but has no money, and says: "I'm going to buy it," and the proprietor says: "Okay, it's yours. Come back tomorrow with the money." He returns the next day and the item is gone; or he is guilty of not returning the next day. Such practices are frowned upon by our Sages. (Some authorities say that these restrictions do not apply when the price of the item has changed — *Choshen Mishpat* end of Ch. 202, but it is a minority view). Integrity means being faithful to your word. When a person fails to do this, he is not "conducting his affairs with *emuna*."

### Faithful in Thought

There is yet another, higher degree of *emuna*, of faithfulness in transactions: Rav Safra fulfilled "speaking truth in his heart" (*Tehillim* 15:2).

---

It is insufficient to simply meet the requirements of din (Torah law), but one must strive for ever higher levels in faith, until one can respond positively to the query: "Did you conduct your business affairs with faith?" in all its possible implications. Thus, the judgment of the rabbis, that a scholar with a stain on his garment is among those who "cause disenchantment with religion" certainly applies to misconduct in human relations and general unethical behavior.

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In addition to "not going back on his word," Rav Safra never went back on his thoughts: A customer once entered Rav Safra's store to make a purchase. He offered a price, but Rav Safra was saying Kri'as Shema and did not answer. He raised the offer several times and Rav Safra still did not comment. When Rav Safra completed the Shema, he said: "I'll accept the first price." Said the man: "But I'm willing to pay the last." Rav Safra replied: "Yes, but I was willing to accept the first. And since in my heart I said 'yes' — although I could not speak — I will not change my mind." (She'iltos D'Rav Achai, Vayechi, 36). "Speaking honestly in one's heart" is an extremely high level of integrity.

The same She'iltos quotes a Midrash that comments on the passage: "My [i.e., G-d's] eyes are on the trusted, that they dwell together with Me" (Tehillim 101:10). In this regard, the Midrash (on Shmuel) relates how the celebrated Amora Shmuel was named:

Shmuel's father had been a merchant. Rabbi Yehuda ben Beseira asked him to put aside for him a measure of silk, but he did not pay for it, nor give a deposit. A long period of time transpired, until Shmuel's father had occasion to bring it to Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Yehuda was surprised: "Why did you keep this merchandise for me?" he asked. "After all, we only exchanged words. I didn't pick up the silk, nor did I give you money." Answered the merchant: "An honorable man's word is as good as money." Reb Yehuda marveled at this man's concept of integrity, and he blessed him: "Because you trusted in me, may you be worthy of begetting a son like the prophet Shmuel, about whom the Scripture testifies, 'And all Israel from Dan to Beer Sheva knew that Shmuel was a trusted prophet of G-d' (Shmuel I 3:20)." When his son was born, the merchant named him Shmuel.

Perhaps that is what is meant by "dwelling within the boundaries of G-d". Being worthy of bringing Shmuel into the world is the equivalent of dwelling with G-d.

#### The Blessings of Trust

"A man of trust is many times blessed, but the man anxious for wealth is never clean" (Mishlei 28:20). While the first part of the passage is an obvious truth, the second part is more subtle, referring to someone who is impatient for G-d's blessings, and wants to become rich immediately; he will never emerge clean from the stain of sin.

"The man of trust many-times blessed" refers to Moshe Rabbeinu. Indeed, every endeavor that he undertook, or for which he served as treasurer, was blessed. To demonstrate his trustworthiness, Moshe called together Klal Yisroel for an accounting when the building of the Mishkan (portable sanctuary) was completed. This was surely unnecessary, for G-d Himself testified that "My servant Moshe ... is trusted throughout My house" (Bamidbar 12:7). The Midrash explains that Moshe did this to avoid the suspicion that he had become wealthy from handling the funds used for building the Mishkan.

It seems strange that someone trusted by G-d still was not satisfied until he had proved himself clean in the eyes of man. Yet, this is of extreme importance. The Talmud reports that the proceeds of the shekolim tax were stored in huge vats, and periodically an official would remove some of the coins to make purchases for the Beis HaMikdash. He was not permitted to wear a hemmed garment, shoes, or an amulet around his neck, because it would offer an opportunity for him to smuggle out some coins for himself. Then, should he become poor, people would say: "Do you know why he became poor? He was punished because he stole from the treasury." And in case he becomes wealthy, people would say: "Do you know how he became rich?"

Because he stole from the treasury" (*Shekolim* 3:2). He must ascertain that his actions are beyond suspicion. In this regard it says: "And you shall be clean before G-d and Israel" (*Bamidbar* 32:22). Then, the *Mishna* cites an additional passage: "And you should find favor and good understanding in the eyes of G-d and man" (*Mishlei* 3:4).

*Tiferes Yisroel* explains that both passages are needed. The first one ("And you shall be clean ...") teaches us that we must avoid acting in a manner which could cause suspicion. But it is insufficient to clarify our actions after they are done. We must "find favor and good understanding" in everyone's eyes, so that people have no reason to question our actions before or after they occur. This is what we learn from the second verse.

### A Two-Fold Obligation

The Chasam Sofer ז"ל (Rabbi Moshe Schreiber) writes (Collected Responsa 59):

*All my days I was in anguish over the passage: "And you shall be clean in the eyes of G-d and Israel." These two obligations are like two millstones weighing on my neck. It is possible to absolve oneself of the first — that is, to be clean in the eyes of G-d — much more easily than it is to satisfy people, for they imagine bizarre plots; and the punishment for failing to satisfy others is far more severe than for not satisfying G-d ויח. Indeed, the Gemora (end of Yoma) tells us that there is no atonement for Chillul Hashem — desecration of G-d's name (which results from misrepresenting the high standards demanded by the Torah). Unfortunately, too often we hear people say: "Imagine that a Torah scholar such as he should be guilty of such-and-such!" even though it is pure speculation that leads them to judge him so. I often wonder whether any man has actually fulfilled this obligation to his fullest. Perhaps this is what King Solomon had in mind when he said: "There is no fully righteous man on earth, who has done right and not sinned" — meaning that even though a man has done only good it is impossible that he should not have "sinned" in somehow falling short of having his actions understood by others.*

The Chasam Sofer adds that while the Tribes of Reuven and Gad more than fulfilled their obligation of "And you shall be clean ..." by fighting on the front lines of Bnei Yisroel when they conquered Canaan, it is unlikely that they could completely clean themselves in the eyes of their brethren. It may well be for this reason that these two tribes were later exiled before the remaining ten tribes.

### A Peaceful Hereafter

The Chofetz Chaim points out that when Yisro advised Moshe in regard to setting up a judiciary system,

he concluded his words with: "If you follow this approach, then you will be able to withstand the pressures. All these people will return to their place *b'shalom* — in peace" (*Shemos* 18:23). It is strange that Yisro spoke of the people returning "in peace," when this is a terminology usually reserved for the ultimate peace wished to a person when he dies (as opposed to *l'shalom*) *Berachos* 64a. The Chofetz Chaim explains that when somebody is guilty of some type of cheating and dies without returning the money to its original owner, he has no rest in the World-to-Come until somehow the monies are restored to the original owners or their heirs. Thus, Yisro assured Moshe that if he sets up a proper judiciary system, justice will prevail. Then when the people ultimately die, they will find eternal rest and not be troubled by unfulfilled financial obligations.


### Pleasing to the Eye ... Acceptable to the Heart

In spelling out the exact details of the construction of the *Mishkan*, G-d gave Moshe precise instructions in how to drape the material used in covering the sanctuary (*Shemos* 23:13); to which Rashi comments: "The Torah here teaches us proper conduct — that a man should be concerned with the aesthetic."

A yeshiva student who has absorbed the light of Torah within himself radiates a special beauty of his own. It is this beauty that he should preserve with the utmost care. Even a small stain can mar it. Especially in our times, when people are so quick to find fault with the Torah and its students, *bnei yeshiva* must endeavor all the more to present the beauty of the Torah in all its aspects.

Thus it is insufficient to simply meet the requirements of *din* (Torah law), but one must strive for ever higher levels in faith, until one can respond positively to the query: "Did you conduct your business affairs with faith?" in all its possible implications ... *Were you among the faithful of the earth upon whom "the eyes of G-d gaze"?* Thus, the judgment of the rabbis, that a scholar with a stain on his garment is among those who "cause disenchantment with religion" (*Shabbos* 114a; *Rambam De'os* 5:9) certainly applies to misconduct in human relations and general unethical behavior.

Upon completion of the *Mishkan*, Moshe blessed the people (*Shemos* 39:43); according to *Rashi*, he said, "May it be the will of G-d that the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) rest on all your activities," implying that the *Shechina* not be limited to the sanctuary but be found everywhere, in all their endeavors. This fulfills the command: "And you shall love G-d," which refers to being so exemplary in conduct that it inspires love and appreciation for G-d; people will say, "How graceful are the ways, how perfect are the acts of so-and-so who has studied Torah!" (*Yoma* 86a).

Fortunate is he who inspires others to the love of G-d and enhances Torah in their eyes. 

**I**T TOOK over thirty years for the truth to surface. And now that it has, Professor David S. Wyman's article, "Why Auschwitz Was Never Bombed" in the May *Commentary Magazine*, should be required reading. After sifting through the primary sources, including many documents that have only recently become declassified, Prof. Wyman has underscored what Orthodoxy has known and believed for many years. In brief, the American government and the world at large had been alerted to the massive annihilation of Jews taking place under the Germans. Among the very few who took the situation to heart were a handful of Orthodox Jews, who applied their untiring efforts to saving the remnants of their brethren from extermination. They — and they alone — persistently attempted to agitate the

U.S. government to destroy the death machinery of Auschwitz by bombing it, but they did not succeed in their attempt. The details, as recorded by Wyman, are worthy of study. What follows is a summary of some of the points that he presents.

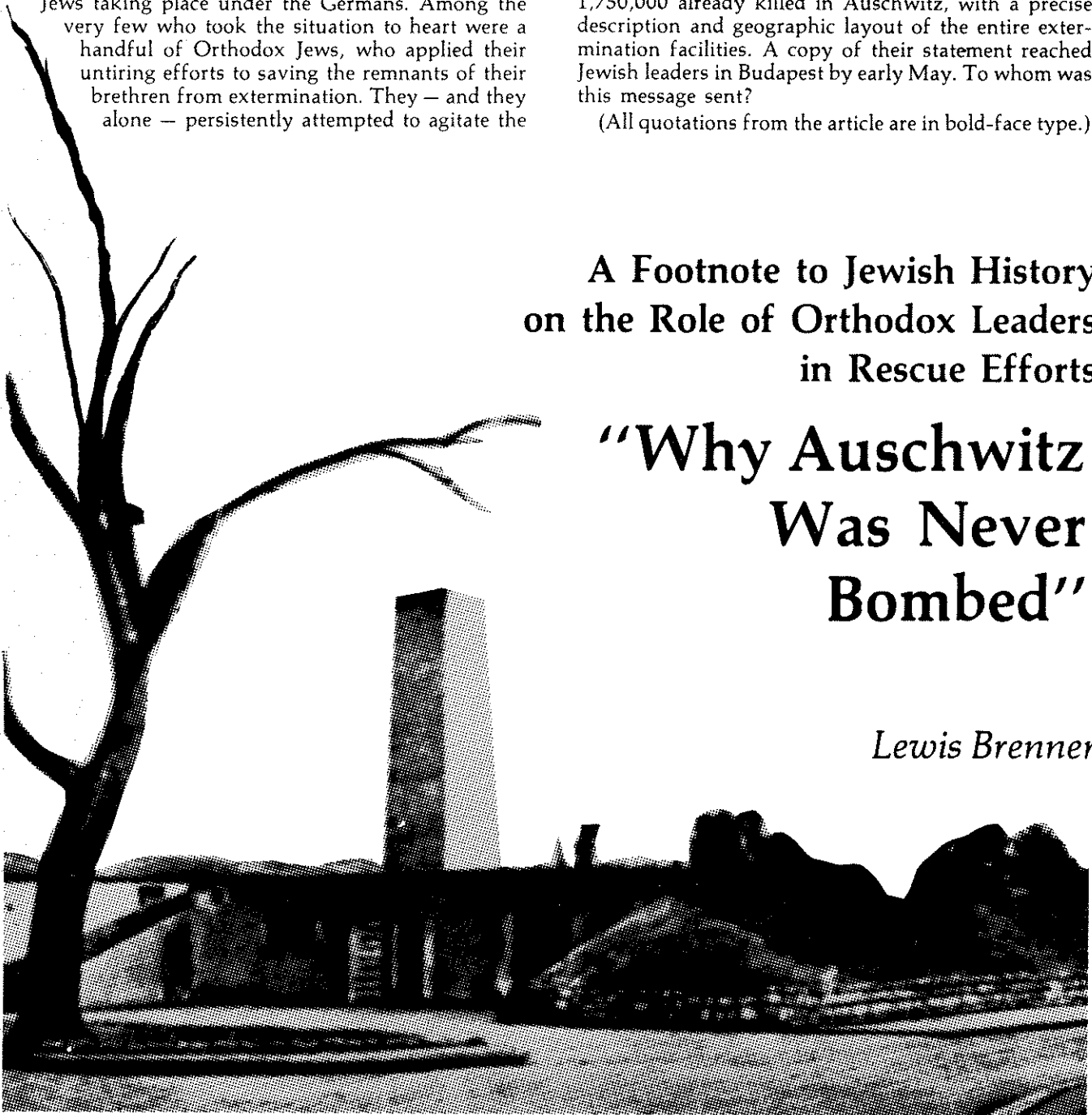
The time was April 1944. The Nazis were concentrating the 760,000 Jews of Hungary for deportation to the killing center at Auschwitz. Two young Slovak Jews who had escaped from Auschwitz to a Jewish underground facility dictated a 36-page report on the 1,750,000 already killed in Auschwitz, with a precise description and geographic layout of the entire extermination facilities. A copy of their statement reached Jewish leaders in Budapest by early May. To whom was this message sent?

(All quotations from the article are in bold-face type.)

## A Footnote to Jewish History on the Role of Orthodox Leaders in Rescue Efforts

# "Why Auschwitz Was Never Bombed"

*Lewis Brenner*







### A Letter to Sternbuch

By mid-June, the Slovak underground had smuggled the report to Switzerland, where it was passed to the American legation and found to be consistent with earlier trustworthy but fragmentary information that had filtered out concerning the Auschwitz death camp. During June, this information spread to the Allied governments and began to appear in the Swiss, British, and American press. By late June, then, the truth about Auschwitz, along with descriptions of its geographical location and layout, was known to the outside world. In mid-May, as deportation from the eastern provinces of Hungary started (under the direct supervision of Adolf Eichmann), Jewish leaders in Budapest sent out a plea for the bombing of key points on the rail route to Poland. Dispatched via the Jewish underground in Bratislava, Slovakia, the request was telegraphed in code to Isaac Sternbuch, representative in Switzerland of the American Orthodox Jewish rescue committee (Vaad Hahatzala). It reached him about May 17.

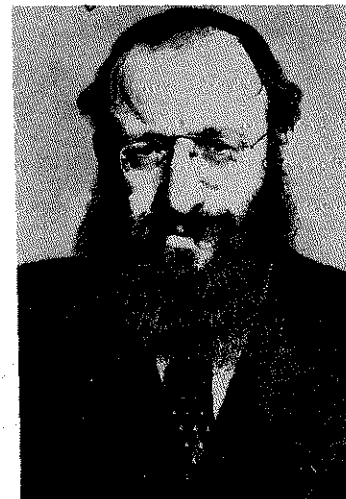
This is the very same Isaac Sternbuch who was in constant touch with Michael G. Tress — leader of Zeirei Agudath Israel of America, and director of its emergency rescue efforts, many of which could not be revealed due to the opposition of the Roosevelt administration. These activities are thus not yet subject for another such *Commentary* article.

Prof. Wyman continues to tell us:

Sternbuch immediately rewrote the telegram for transmission to the headquarters of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis in New York and submitted it to the military attache of the U.S. legation in Bern, requesting that it be telegraphed to the United States through diplomatic lines. Three days later, a similar but more urgent telegram arrived from Bratislava. That appeal also went to the U.S. military attache for delivery to New York. The pleas kept coming every two or three

**RABBI BRENNER** resides in Brooklyn, where he is active in communal affairs. He is a frequent contributor to Jewish periodicals, and is represented in *THE JEWISH OBSERVER* by "Song of Faith" (Jan. '78) and "Come With Me To The Tisch," an appreciation of the late Vizhnitzer Rebbe זצ"ל (April '72).

days for the next month, and Sternbuch continued to relay them to the military attache. Yet by June 22, Sternbuch had received neither reply nor acknowledgement from New York. For unknown reasons, the messages had been blocked, either in Bern or in Washington.

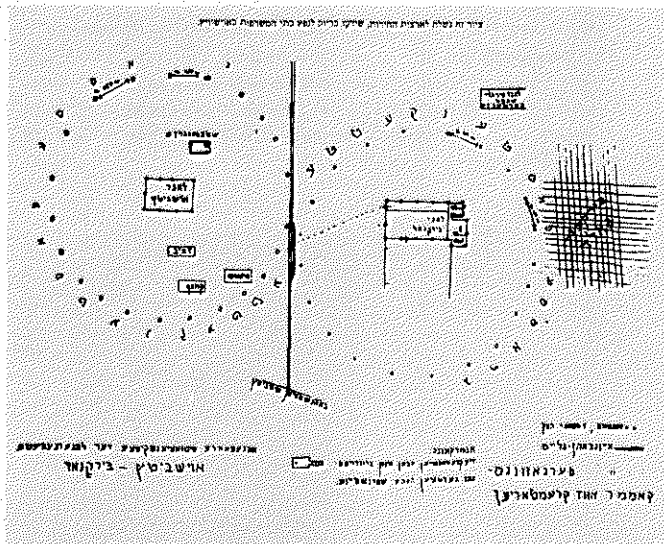


### A Plea From Reb Michael Ber

At the same time, the most gripping appeal for help came from that great *tzaddik*,

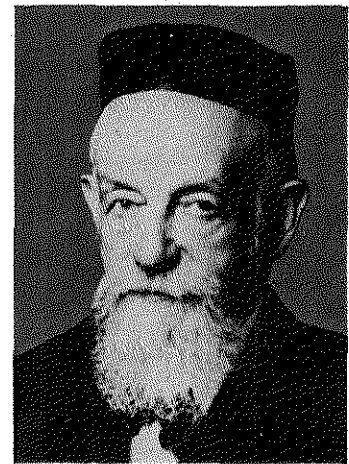
Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandel, and [from] Mrs. Gisi Fleischmann, both leaders of the Slovak Jewish underground, [who] wrote a long letter pleading with the outside world for help. They described the first deportations from Hungary and stressed the fate awaiting the deportees on arrival at Auschwitz. Their stark account revealed that four forty-five car trains were leaving daily, each train carrying about 3,000 people. During the two-to-three-day trip to Auschwitz, the victims were pressed together, standing, in closed freight cars without food, water, or sanitary facilities. Many died on the way. After describing the plight of these Hungarian Jews, Rabbi Weissmandel and Mrs. Fleischmann appealed strenuously for immediate bombing of the main deportation routes, especially the Kosice-Presov railway. They also cried to the outside world to "bombard the death halls in Auschwitz." Writing in anguish, the two asked: "And you, our brothers in all free countries; and you, governments of all free lands, where are you? What are you doing to hinder the carnage that is now going on?" Smuggled out of Slovakia, the plea, accompanied by copies of the Auschwitz escapees' reports, reached Switzerland, but not until late June.... Mrs. Fleischmann and Rabbi Weissmandel were deported to Auschwitz, at different times, during the fall of 1944. She was gassed there; he escaped from the train and survived the war.

Rabbi Weissmandel later made his way to America. Settling in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn he would go from *shul* to *shul* crying out in his anguish over the failure of U.S. Jewry to do anything to save its brethren from extermination. While he con-



Facsimile of a map of Auschwitz, pinpointing bunkers and crematoria, dispatched by Rabbi Weissmandel to the U.S.A.

continued to bewail the misfortune, he involved himself in the re-establishment of the great Nitra Yeshiva in the Mt. Kisco farm settlement. This Orthodox leader left a book entitled "Min HaMeitzar — From the Depths" — a scathing indictment of those who refused to place rescue work as the top priority in Jewish activity.



## The Rosenheim Appeal

The role of the World (office of) Agudath Israel in these efforts is highlighted by the activities of its president, Reb Yaakov Rosenheim. Prof. Wyman records that

Rosenheim's appeals to Washington were first relayed to the War Refugee Board (WRB), an agency that President Roosevelt had established by executive order five months earlier, on January 22, 1944. The President had charged the board with carrying out all measures within its [the government's] power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death.

We are told that although Roosevelt named the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War as equal members of the War Refugee Board, in actuality Henry Morgenthau, the Secretary of Treasury, was the real boss. Imagine the opportunity this "could-have-been-modern-day-Mordechai" was given to save his people! Yet, through John. W. Pehle, his delegated head of the War Refugee Board, Morgenthau refused to take action upon Reb Yaakov Rosenheim's recommendations to bomb — on the grounds that it was impracticable: the targets were too far from the Allied air bases; or this would deflect materiel from the major purpose of fighting the war. In the WRB's words,

"We must constantly bear in mind ... that the most effective relief which can be given victims of enemy persecution is to insure the speedy defeat of the Axis."

In concrete terms, this position meant that the military had decided to concentrate strictly on the war and avoid the diversion of resources into rescue or relief activities.

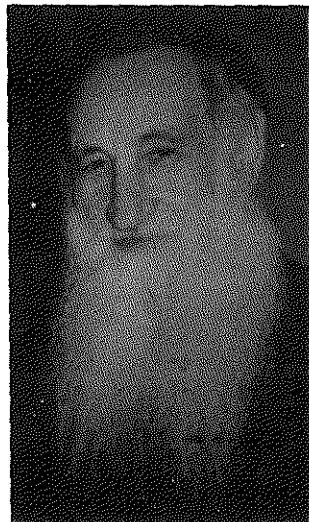
Prof. Wyman documents that the policy was conceived out of thin air, not as the result of any investigative study. And actually, not only was such a bombing practical, oil installations only five miles away from Auschwitz were being bombed on a regular basis.

An Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe pressured for the bombing of Auschwitz. A more dramatic proposal was made by the World Jewish Congress to the War Department directly calling for the

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ABMACHUNG FERTIG STOP REIMAN LIEFERT EIGENMAECHTIG AB					
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AUSFUHRFREI FRANCO GRENZE STOP KONDITIONEN ANMOEGLICH STOP					
DA DIESER KONKURENZERFOLG AUSSCHLIESSLICH EUERE VERSCHULDUNG					
VERANLÄSSET WENIGSTENS SOFORT RESCHESTE EXPEDITION EBENFALS					

Copy of one of Rabbi Weissmandel's telegrams to Bela Lebovics in Zurich, pleading that he prevail upon the Joint Distribution Committee and the Vaad Hatzalah to influence the Allied powers to bomb Auschwitz. Most key words are expressed in code. For instance, REIMAN refers to Germany, 12 TONNEN = 12,000 Jews, PROVINIEZ HELLER = Hungary, ALBUS = Auschwitz, KANDITIONEN ANMOEGLICH = certain death, RESCHESTE EXPEDITION = aerial bombardment, etc.

bombing of the Crematoria, but not all Jewish leaders concurred in this view. In fact, the U.S. section of the World Jewish Congress, reports Wyman, opposed bombing the death installations because Jews in the camps would be killed. Others in America disagreed.



### Night Call From Rabbi Kalmanowitz

At the beginning of September, pressure built once more on the War Refugee Board for bombing rail lines, this time the lines between Auschwitz and Budapest, where the last large enclave of Hungarian Jews was threatened with deportation. These entreaties came from the Orthodox rescue committee in New York. Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz, anxious for the appeal to reach the WRB as soon as possible, placed a night phone call to Benjamin Akzin, who relayed the plea to Pehle the next day. Akzin took advantage of the opportunity to spell out to Pehle, in polite terms, his dissatisfaction with the inaction of the War Department regarding the bombing requests.... But the Board did not move on the appeal.


Note that this insistent campaign emanated from the Orthodox community, which acted on the basis of Torah law and its stringent requirements for the preservation of human life, even at the expense of the desecration of the Sabbath. The leadership of the Orthodox rescue committee in New York — which included Rabbi Reuvain Grozovsky, Rabbi Aharon Kotler, and Rabbi Eliezer Silver — put aside all personal needs to do everything possible to save their brethren. Earlier accomplishments — the rescue of the entire Mirrer Yeshiva, among many others — were dwarfed in their eyes by the mounting tragedy, and they continued to plead and beg for the saving of more and more of their brethren.

To the U.S. government, however, the terrible plight of the Jews apparently did not merit any active response. This, concludes Wyman, "remains a source of wonder, and a lesson, even today."

### More Than The Record of a Struggle

Professor Wyman's account signifies more than just a day-to-day account of the struggle to save European Jewry. It highlights a fact too often ignored by serious students of Jewish history: only those who are totally guided by Torah, and those under their tutelage, can size up a situation and its true needs properly, because their Torah perspective frees them from the shades of self-seeking motives or the influence of shallow thinking, sloganeering, and popular pressure. Men of this calibre were able to grasp the full dimension of a problem and discern the true implications of a situation.\* When others were content with press releases, large newspaper ads, and official protests, the Sternbuch's, Weissmandel's, Rosenheim's, and Kalmanowitz's were *moser nefesh* for the cause of *hatzalas nefashos* — rescuing lives. It is no wonder that their names should appear so prominently in the official record of the efforts to bomb the rail lines to Auschwitz.

In retrospect, the gravity of the situation may now appear obvious, but during the middle of the war people greeted with skepticism the reports that the Nazis were bent upon the total annihilation of the Jews. They may not have noted how Hitler was neglecting the military war in order to pursue his war against the Jews; that the railway system and the rolling stock, which were so strategically necessary for supplying the armies, were being diverted for transporting Jews from all over Europe to the gas chambers. Those pleading for the bombing had hoped that if the extermination process could not be stopped, at least it could be delayed. Professor Wyman points out that hundreds of thousands of Jews (including Anne Frank) were on those last trains being shipped out of Holland, France, Italy, and Hungary in the concluding months of the war. From Hungary alone 500,000 victims were gathered in the spring of 1944 and shipped by Eichmann on *top priority trains* along vital railroad lines to Auschwitz.

The legacy of the War is the near-total destruction of European Jewry. The footnote to this tragic chapter is the dominant role the Orthodox leadership played in attempting to stop the destruction. Perhaps this article will encourage some serious scholar to delve further into recently open archives and compile a complete account of Orthodoxy's role in the rescue efforts. And — more important — people will realize that life-and-death decisions for our people should be made by those who are above petty political considerations. 

\* In his book *The Russian Jew*, Professor Salo W. Baron discusses the special sensitivity of great religious leaders to subtle dangers threatening the Jewish community. He cites an attempt by Dr. Max Lilienthal to propagate the establishment of modern Jewish schools in Russia in 1841. Baron states that most Jewish elders rightly suspected that the government was pursuing a conversionist program, rather than one of enlightenment. This was borne out in the secret correspondence between the Czar and the minister of education, Uvarov.

A NOTED  
ROSH YESHIVA  
WRITES:

## A Letter of Guidance For These Troubled Times

*During these crisis-ridden, confusing times, the Torah Jew is faced with many problems in regard to interpreting events and determining a course of action.*

*We are deeply concerned over the survival of Israel, and the many aspects of security — its spiritual, physical, and political components. At times, media emphasis on one aspect tends to eclipse others. How do we determine the proper area of emphasis?*

*We are fortunate to present a letter dated 17 Adar Sheini — the third in a series of such letters — from the revered Ponovezher Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Man Schach שליט"א, in which he discusses basic concepts regarding the security of Jewry and applies them to these most troubling problems. A careful reading of this letter can yield much in regard to how to set priorities and where emphasis should be made.*

*The following is a free translation of excerpts from this most recent letter:*

### Kiss of Emnity

AN AXIOM that all Jews should know — and not only know, but constantly review — is Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's statement, quoted by Rashi (*Bereishis* 32:4): "It is established that Eisav is an enemy to Yaakov." It is interesting to note that Rashi cites this quotation in his commentary on: "And Eisav ran to him (Yaakov) and he embraced him and he fell upon his neck and kissed him, and they wept." How awesome! With his *Ruach HaKodesh*, drawing upon "G-d shares his secrets with those who fear Him," Rashi understood that even during this moment when Eisav expressed such love for his brother, it was only for the moment, and only in response to Yaakov's submission as he bowed before him. And only because Yaakov had prayed to God that he be saved, and he had appeased Eisav with gifts. To this, the *Seforno* adds that during the siege of Jerusalem (68 C.E.) the Second Temple would have never been destroyed would the rebellious faction (*Baryonim*) not have precipitated hostilities by destroying the storage places of grain and

## Different Tactics in Facing Hostility

## Pitfalls of Secular Leadership

wood — as Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai himself had remarked (*Gittin* 64b).

THE DESCRIPTION OF ISRAEL as a lone sheep amongst 70 wolves is not a metaphor, but a description of an actual condition, which will prevail until Moshiach's time. As a result, Jews have always been "a nation that dwells alone" — both as a national group and as individuals. Every Jew must recognize that surviving depends upon relying on the course pursued by Yaakov Avinu: prayer, gifts (for appeasement), and war — which Rashi says refers to the separating of Yaakov's group into two camps, so that should one be attacked the other will escape unharmed; or, more specifically, as the *Ramban* says "war" refers to taking flight. To engage in warfare as Yaakov was prepared to do, is a tactic to be resorted to only when facing direct attack, in line with the rule: "When one arises to murder you, stand up and kill him first," which was the situation that Yaakov had encountered in his meeting with Eisav. This is not an approach that anyone can choose to pursue; for those void of religious convictions will at times risk their own lives when unwarranted, and by the same token, will take gambles with others' (*Pesachim* 49); for they do not conceive of Jewry as being different from any other nation and they conduct their policies no differently.

THUS, THE SECULAR LEADERSHIP loses no opportunity to "score points" even though this can serve to antagonize other nations. How painful it is, then, that a Reform rabbi is the spokesman for the Jewish community of the United States (which numbers six million souls) — and to some measure also speaks on behalf of the Jewish state. If we would be worthy, *Klal Yisroel* would be spared leadership by those who have not been reared with a commitment to *Daas Torah* and its traditions, for they fail to perceive the bankruptcy of all the ideals upon which they have been brought up. Perhaps people of this type may recall a religious grandfather or observant father, but this has no relevance to being immersed in Jewish tradition and the legacy of responsible leadership of the Jewish nation.

How, then, can we rely upon such men to refrain from seizing every opportunity to speak with arrogance and power, and to restrain themselves from antagonistic actions and policies — (such as some policies in regard to the administered territories). Such policies are a direct outgrowth of the basic fallacy of the Zionist doctrine, which believes that all the suffering the Jews have undergone in its millennia of *Galus* flow directly from our stateless condition; and that now that we do have our own state, we are a nation similar to all others: The more we flex our muscles and assert our views, all the more will our enemies be submissive before us....

## Shelter in Torah

## The "Builders" Who Destroy

WHAT, THEN, IS THE CORRECT COURSE of action to be pursued? The Midrash (*Devarim* 2, 3) sheds light on this problem: *When G-d said, "Enough circling this mountain. Turn צפונה: to the north," Said Rav Chiya — G-d said to them, "When you see a nation seeking to antagonize you, don't confront him, but הצפינו — hide from him until he passes from the scene" (building on the similar construct of צפונה and הצפינו).* Further: *Israel said to Him: "Ribono Shel Olom, his father (Isaac) blessed him, 'And you shall live by your sword,' and You concurred with him. You advised us to hide from before him. Where can we find refuge?" Said He, "Flee to the Torah and take refuge there until Moshiach comes."*

I am, therefore, writing this letter to declare that it is incumbent upon us to strengthen ourselves in Torah and *Yiras Shomayim* (Fear of G-d), and forbid that we should weaken in this in any way. Along this line, we should seek to establish yeshivos large and small, more places of Torah study. This is our major obligation, for a bit of light dispells much darkness.

INDEED, WE ARE LIVING in constant danger, whether or not "peace" prevails. To the best of our understanding, those who claim to be preserving the state are actually endangering it. Didn't the Torah warn us against being "rejected from the land for defiling it"? And yet the state has permitted the violation of the most stringent of prohibitions, such as shedding of blood through abortions, and recognizing common-law marriages, which can only engender more immorality. The vast majority of the youth is being brought up in a way totally void of any sanctity, further "defiling the land." The yeshiva population is but a small minority. And the religious centers, where the situation is far better than general, are few and far between.

We are waging a battle against tremendous odds, for the media are conduits of immorality and project shocking examples of degradation. As for the "national heritage studies programs" in the public schools — what value can there be in those few minutes, when the school teachers, who serve as role models, project an image of immodesty, and more?

Thus, I return to my theme: Let us strengthen ourselves and strengthen one another for the sake of G-d and Torah, to distance ourselves from all this.

As a postscript, I add once again that our support of the current government is not because it satisfies our needs, but because it is a lesser evil than its predecessor, and that we trust in G-d that we will succeed in preventing further deterioration from taking place.

I remain, with a blessing and a prayer that G-d will lead us in a good path,

(RABBI) ELIEZER MENACHEM SCHACH

# REB REUVAIN GROZOVSKY

זכר צדיק לברכה

— *Twenty Years After  
His Passing*

*Prepared for publication by Nisson Wolpin*



It is twenty years since the passing of Rabbi Reuvin Grozovsky זכר צדיק לברכה, and six years more since he was immobilized by a stroke that robbed him of his speech and *Klal Yisroel* of his active leadership. One Chassidic leader described the ailment as an act of mercy by G-d on behalf of *Klal Yisroel*, to temper the trauma of Reb Reuvin's absence by removing him from leadership gradually rather than abruptly.

Today Reb Reuvin is well known in the study halls of yeshivos throughout the world through his recently published works, *Chidushei Reb Reuvin*, a collection of his *shiurim* (lectures). But otherwise, his leadership role in affairs of *Klal* — especially as chairman of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah (Council of Torah Sages of Agudath Israel of America), and in the leadership of the *Vaad Hatzala* — is almost forgotten. Furthermore, during his lifetime, his greatness of personality could be surmised at but never really known except to intimates — and even then, it was never fully fathomed.

To discover the many hidden facets of a man no longer among us, there are several paths to pursue. First, his immediate family preserves a loyal tradition bearing his strong imprint, and cherish detailed recollections of his comments and actions. So, for that matter, do many of his *talmidim* (disciples). In addition, he had recorded his views on various contemporary issues, which were collected and published in "*Bayos Hazman* — Problems of the Times." Moreover, he left several volumes of notebooks of personal comments, credos,

reminiscences, and poetry (which, according to his family, he wrote on Tisha B'Av afternoons, to express his deep pain for the tragedies the day commemorates).

This article, then, is based on his family's recollections, as told on their behalf by Rabbi Shamshon Grozovsky, his oldest son; selections from his own notes, presented by Reb Shamshon; quotations from *Bayos Hazman*; and an appreciation of Reb Reuvin, written from the viewpoint of a *talmid*, Rabbi Menachem Rokeach, who studied under him in Mesifita Torah Vodaath and in Beth Medrash Elyon in Monsey.

There are gaps in the portrait, because — as a person — Reb Reuvin was a very private individual. Certain attributes, however, run through all of his activities and thoughts, recorded and spoken: *Life is full of choices and it is man's responsibility to choose correctly. Whether the question is one of understanding a passage in Rambam, determining a policy for Agudath Israel, or a purely private matter, the approach was: — Are there any precedents? — What are the options? — Which one best describes this situation? — Can the validity of the other options be refuted? (If not, one of them may well be valid). The decision, once determined, was followed through in all its implications.*

Thus, the dividing of a biography of Reb Reuvin into distinct sections is rather arbitrary and only a device of convenience, for the divisions between life-story, teachings, and leadership were non-existent.

## Thumbnail Facts

The facts are but a skeleton — not at all revealing of the man, but frame on which to place significant insights: Reb Reuvin was born in Minsk, Russia, in 1886, to a family that traced its ancestry through

**RABBI ROKEACH**, who supplied much of the material in this article, is rabbi of the Traditional Synagogue of Rochdale Village (New York), and vice president of the Rabbinical Alliance of America. His articles have appeared in numerous Jewish journals.

generations of Torah scholars and rabbinical leaders. He studied in the famed Slabodka Yeshiva, and later joined his father-in-law, Rabbi Baruch Ber Lebowitz, in leading his yeshiva in Kamenitz, Lithuania. In America, he spent a brief but profoundly effective decade\* in delivering *shiurim* in Mesifita Torah Vodaath (Brooklyn) and Beth Medrash Elyon (Monsey, N.Y.).

While Reb Reuvain was involved in communal affairs in the 1930's, during the 40's and early 50's he was especially active in efforts to rescue Jews from war-torn Europe, in Torah education on the individual and communal level (the latter through Torah Umesorah), and — through Agudath Israel — in a broad range of problems affecting Jewish life in America and Israel.

\* \* \*

### The Rosh Yeshiva

After crossing the Pacific in his journey from Europe, Reb Reuvain Grozovsky landed in Seattle, Washington, on May 2, 1941, to raise funds and secure affidavits for students of his Kamenitz Yeshiva seeking to escape the Nazi onslaught. A local Orthodox lawyer had offered him his car and driver to tour the strikingly scenic metropolis of the Northwest and to relax after the long strenuous journey. Reb Reuvain refused: "I have no time for sightseeing," he said, and when not involved in his other activities, he closed himself up in his room to pursue his Talmudic studies.

In New York City, Reb Reuvain joined Rabbi Aharon Kotler and Rabbi Avrohom Kalmanowitz זכרונם לברכה in leading Vaad Hatzala's efforts to save as many people from the mounting ravages of Nazi destruction as possible. This on-going struggle involved much fund-raising, lobbying, and clandestine transferring of funds — much of it unrecorded, and likely to be totally forgotten from the record. In the process, Reb Reuvain, brought over some 110 members of the Kamenitz Yeshiva community — thirty to *Eretz Yisroel*, the rest to New York, where he set up the Kamenitz Kolel in the Lower East Side.

#### The Shiur: In Delivery ...

In 1944, when Rabbi Shlomo Heiman, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesifita Torah Vodaath, passed away, Reb Reuvain was invited to succeed him, and a new generation of Torah scholars became exposed to his *shiurim*: It was as though a window were opened to his mind, and the study hall crowded with students would witness his thought-process at work, as if to demonstrate to them how they could do as he did:

A question posed by the *Rashba* and his two answers represent *three* approaches to a problem — even a hypothetical approach later rejected demands our understanding, since the *Rashba* had considered it —

\* Reb Reuvain's talmidim from his American period include people who head or say top-level *shiurim* in: Bais Medrash Elyon, Mesifita Torah Vodaath, Toras Emes-Kamenitz (B'klyn), Kamenitz (Jerusalem), Bais Shraga, Be'er Shmuel, Bobover Yeshiva, Itri (Jerusalem), Karlin-Stolin, Mir (B'klyn), Ner Israel (Baltimore), Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim (NYC), (Tallman), Yeshiva S.R. Hirsch, Ohr Sameach, Zichron Melech, Yetev Lev d'Satmar, Ohr Yisroel, Bais Yehuda (Detroit), Bais Reuvain, Torah Temimah, Beth Jacob of Boro Park, B'nos Israel; as well as Kivvashter Rav, Shiniver Rav, Satmar Dayan, Rav of Y.I. of Brooklyn, Y.I. of Briarwood (NY), Queens Jewish Center, McKeesport (Pa.), and Rio de Janiero.

Three approaches to be analyzed and understood, corresponding to three possible generalizations to describe the phenomenon at hand.... If there is a fourth, you must not ignore it; you must disprove it, or it just may be more valid than the three you favor. Forget "gut reactions." Truth must emerge as a proven entity from close study of the texts, not through a good feeling about an apt description.

Challenges arise, and the air becomes electrified as Reb Reuvain asks "Vie?" (How's that?) in his high-pitched voice. He pauses to think, as the question is repeated. He responds with an answer — explaining, emphasizing — and continues.

#### ... and Preparation

The lecture — lively and emphatic in delivery — is likely one that Reb Reuvain had presented fifteen years earlier in Kamenitz; but the freshness of the presentation is not contrived. Preparation began on Thursday, when Reb Reuvain checked into Bais Medrash Elyon — Torah Vodaath's school for advanced research. After *Maariv* he retired to his study with an older student (usually in his mid-twenties) to start virtually from scratch — the *Gemora*, *Rashi*, *Tosfos* — on into the night. A study-partner who agreed with all of Reb Reuvain's postulates soon lost his position. His assignment was to challenge and disprove. At 2 A.M. the *bachur* was excused to get some rest, while the Rosh Yeshiva continued on until dawn.... The same routine was followed the next night, after the *Shabbos seuda*, in further preparation for the Sunday afternoon presentation.... Invariably, both mornings the Rosh Yeshiva was unable to say the *Birchas HaTorah* (Blessings for Torah Study that one recites to initiate a new day of study), since the morning's study was but an unbroken continuation from the previous evening.... Occasionally, when he did change partners, it was because the young man could not match his stamina, and begged off.

Before delivering the same *shiur* in Mesifita Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn on Tuesday, he presented it to a small group of students in his home with minor changes, often eliminating some of the more difficult aspects. The painstaking care put into his *shiurim* always reflected the consideration: *What will the bachurim get out of this point?*





Reb Reuvain quoted RABBI CHAIM SOLOVEITCHIK: "When faced with a kushya (question), don't seek an answer ... Do away with the kushya."

### Not Beyond Doubt

After the shiur, students would crowd around him and question various points. Sometimes he would concede an area of doubt.... A colleague once asked him, "Why do you confuse the students with doubt? A shiur should teach absolutes."

Replied Reb Reuvain: "There are times when it is more important to teach that I do not really know."

Another noted Rosh Yeshiva recalls a lecture he delivered in Reb Reuvain's presence. Reb Reuvain later asked him, "Why did you quote the Haga'os HaAshri?" "I thought it was interesting."

"Yes, it was interesting," Reb Reuvain agreed, "but it didn't explain anything. Whatever doesn't add, distracts attention from your major thesis, and can only spoil your presentation."

An unusually promising student in Bais Medrash Elyon told Reb Reuvain one of his Chid-dushei Torah (novellae). He listened critically, and then said, "Too much!"

"Too extreme in its projection?" asked the young man.

"No. Too much. Reb Y..., a well-known genius, anticipated everything that Reb Chaim Brisker (Soloveitchik) ever said. I once asked my father-in-law (Rabbi Boruch Ber Liebowitz זצ"ל) why Reb Y... never gained Reb Chaim's fame. 'Reb Chaim knew what not to say', replied my father-in-law tersely."

### The Analytic Personality at Work

Reb Reuvain's analytical approach didn't "invade" his other areas of activity. It was integral to his personality.

In Kamenitz, where he had served as Rosh Yeshiva for close to 20 years, Reb Reuvain tested every student upon entry, and continued to test them regularly during their first two years in the yeshiva (on forty new blatt every two months!), fixing the amount of their stipend according to their performance.

A Kamenitz talmid recalls:

*I never heard Reb Reuvain deliver a Mussar shmuess — (lecture on an ethical theme) until*

Rosh Hoshana, 5700 (1939). The Nazi Army was approaching and the tension had us on edge, some of us devising all sorts of impulsive schemes.... Reb Reuvain spoke about Akeidas Yitzchak (the Binding of Isaac): "There is a well-known question: Why isn't the akeida named for Avraham? It was basically his test? The Midrash answers that the actual binding was Yitzchak's idea, as a restraint against forcibly resisting his father's sacrificial knife — thus the name Akeidas Yitzchak. But wasn't Avraham's task of wielding the knife the more difficult one? Shouldn't this have been memorialized in the name of this incident?"

Reb Reuvain answered, "The Torah gives greater recognition to Yitzchak's thoughtful anticipation of future situations to avoid a wrongful action, than it does to Avraham's great, heroic act, which did not require the same careful thought."

The application was obvious and the attitude it spoke was typical of Reb Reuvain.

### Structure at the Graduate Level

Reb Reuvain's analytical approach, as applied to leading a yeshiva, underwent no changes when it was exercised on American shores.

A Bais Medrash Elyon student had set up a demanding personal regimen which did not conform to the yeshiva schedule. When Reb Reuvain took him to task, the young man offered what he thought was an effective defense, Reb Reuvain replied, "You must understand: There are two types of yeshivas — those run by the administration and those not (hahala und nit-hanhala). In this yeshiva it is expected that you conform with the directions of the hanhala. Secondly, everyone needs a rebbe for guidance, and I am fulfilling this function for you, in advising you to adhere to the yeshiva schedule. Do you realize that my sainted father-in-law — long after he was established as a Rosh Yeshiva — continued to consult with both the Chofetz Chaim and Reb Chaim Brisker? And after Reb Chaim's passing, he consulted with his son, Reb Velvel, even though he was my father-in-law's junior in years. Third, even if the yeshiva tells you to do something that is not in your better



THE CHOFETZ CHAIM wrote to Reb Reuvain: *"I have learned that you were arrested for protesting against Chilul Shabbos ... I envy you the merit of suffering for the glory of Heaven."*

*interest, once the yeshiva has taken a stand, your action involves defiance of yeshiva policy, which can only be harmful to you. It now is to your benefit that you listen."*

The mashgiach of Bais Medrash Elyon, Rabbi Yisroel Chaim Kaplan, שליט"א, once asked Reb Reuvain to assume his duties for a short period of time when he would be away. Reb Reuvain accepted the assignment, pursuing it in keeping with his conception of the position. Checking the dormitory, he found one room particularly disorderly. He expressed his disapproval to the occupant — a usually meticulous fellow. The fellow offered an explanation, to which Reb Reuvain replied, "I have a tradition from Reb Chaim Brisker: When faced with a kushya (question), don't seek an answer. Try to do away with the kushya."

Reb Reuvain's devotion to the Lithuanian approach in Divine service can be self-understood. He had little patience for extended *zemiros* sessions at the *Shabbos* meal, and instituted a scheduling of two *zemiros* renditions (with the traditional words, of course) between courses. (On the other hand, he did express appreciation for some *nigunim*.) *Melave Malke?* — self-service, with a minimum of embellishment, if you please.

### The Man

It is frustrating to attempt to discover Reb Reuvain, the private individual, as distinct from the public figure. One either picks up a reflection of the analytical Rosh Yeshiva in search of truth — and living by it; or an echo of the Klal leader asking, "What would Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzenski have done under these circumstances?" — and then acting accordingly.

### The Leader in Youth

As a child in Minsk, Russia, where his father Reb Shamshon was *dayan* (chief judge in the rabbinical court), he had a strong influence on younger friends. Even after he left home for the famed Slabodka Yeshiva (under Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein and Reb Nosson Tzvi Finkel, *der Alter fun Slabodka*), he maintained contact and encouraged his friends (then simply "Yaakov Kamenetzky" and "Aharon Kotler") to join him. He had encountered special difficulties in the case of the latter: his father — a former *dayan* — had passed away, and some friends of the family insisted that he

Nonetheless, those of more Chassidic upbringing were among his closest disciples (knowing full well that they were under the tutelage of a world-renowned Talmudic authority, they had "made peace" with his opposition to some aspects of Chassidus in advance). His *midas ho'emes* — his relentless pursuit of truth, come what may — struck a responsive chord in their Chassidic tuning of personality.

One extremely gifted and sensitive *Kolel* fellow in Bais Medrash Elyon was of a famous Chassidic lineage. His young family grew and financial pressures mounted, so he left the *Kolel* to learn the diamond trade. Reb Reuvain left no stone unturned in trying to convince him to return to full-time study from the diamond center: "You are destined to be the leader of a prominent Chassidic Kehilla," he insisted. "You'll need every additional hour of Torah study to be fit to lead your people. Klal Yisroel can not afford less."

The young man finally yielded and is now a Chassidic Rebbe, conveying Torah and inspiring *Yiras Shomayim* to a large Chassidic Kehilla in Brooklyn. He may now take pride in having the recognition of older Chassidic Rebbes, but he has the added satisfaction of knowing that he acted on the encouragement and blessings of Reb Reuvain.

not "waste" his unusual gifts on Torah, but develop them in mathematics studies at a *Gymnasium*. As history has demonstrated, however, Reb Reuvain did prevail.

When Slabodka was forced to close at the outbreak of World War I, Reb Moshe Mordechai entrusted Reb Reuvain with reorganizing the Yeshiva in Minsk. Within a week, Reb Moshe Mordechai was in Minsk delivering *shiurim* to thirty students. At one period, the Yeshiva had moved to Kremeczug, where Reb Baruch Ber Leibowitz's *Knesses Bais Yitzchok* was also located. Reb Baruch Ber became acquainted with Reb Reuvain's genius and selected him as his prospective son-in-law.

Reb Reuvain's *hasmada* (diligence) was prodigious; he breathed Torah day and night. When his father, Reb Shamshon, passed away several days before Reb Reuvain's wedding, *der Alter fun Slabodka* did not tell Reb Reuvain, so the wedding could take place as scheduled. Weeks later he persisted in not telling Reb Reuvain of



RABBI BARUCH BER LEOVITZ instructed his son-in-law: "When you go to a conference for Klal, you must pack your tachrichim (shrouds) ... A Jewish leader must put his life on the line for his people."

his loss. His reason? "A son must be told of his parent's death to recite the *Kaddish*, to bring merit to his late father by sanctifying G-d's name. But Reb Reuvain, with his total involvement in Torah, says *Kaddish* twenty four hours a day."

#### Modest Aspirations

When Reb Reuvain joined his father-in-law in leading his yeshiva, it grew in size and stature, and the yeshiva relocated to Kamenitz. Once the yeshiva was settled, one might have assumed that its leaders at least lived comfortably. But that was not the case. Reb Reuvain viewed the yeshiva as a public trust, not a private domain. He drew a minimal salary — more than once his Rebbetzin was forced to borrow small change from the yeshiva students — and shared a small house with his wife's parents. He, his wife, and four children occupied the upstairs apartment with cardboard dividers separating the rooms. These partitions were covered with wallpaper in three of the rooms, but not in his own. His constant fear was, "I don't want *ת"ת* to use sacred funds for personal use."

Upon arriving in New York, he told his family, "We'll either live on the East Side or in Williamsburg. They are the least affected by the excesses of American culture. In such matters — the less exposure, the better."

#### Greatness in Small Acts

While popular figures are often cut down to size in their intimates' view, those close to a great Torah personality know more than others of his spiritual grandeur from his private actions and concerns.

Reb Reuvain's family recounts his meticulous *mitzva* observance, his adherence to the letter of the *halacha*, and then some ... perpetuating traditions he had witnessed in his own father's home: In Kamenitz, he stored a large sack of flour ground from *yashan* (wheat sprouted before Pesach) to avoid the use of *chaddash* — new grain — until the *omer*, the second day of Pesach. And in America, he corresponded with mills in the Mid-West to determine when the grains for various brands of flour and cereals are harvested. ... He washed exclusively with kosher soap (in line with a stringent minority view)... He strictly supervised the baking of his matzos, personally scrubbing the utensils used; he spent long hours into the night searching all corners, drawers, and shelves for *chometz* on Pesach eve, airing out all the *seforim* out-of-doors.... At the *seder* (where

the author was present), he translated the entire *Hagadah*, word for word, into Yiddish, only breaking from the text to explain each of the Ten Plagues with great detail and animation to his oldest grandchild, much to the delight of the little boy — again, in keeping with an *halachic* approach maintained by his father.

#### When Less is Better

During a war-time *Succos* in New York, shipping restrictions made it impossible to secure an *esrog*. Rabbi Nesanel Quinn, *menahel* of the *Mesifita* department of Torah Vodaath, asked a young man to write to horticulture schools, for spare citrons from their hot-house experiments. The University of Colorado in Denver responded with five: one was allocated to the Yeshiva for the students' use, and one each was given to Rabbi Quinn, the *Rosh Yeshiva* — Rabbi Shlomo Heiman, Reb Reuvain (on Reb Shlomo's recommendation; Reb Reuvain was not yet affiliated with Torah Vodaath), and a *Chassidic* leader. The young man felt deprived and complained directly to Reb Reuvain, who had already purchased the other three species at considerable expense. Reb Reuvain referred him to Rabbi Heiman, who somehow failed to satisfy the young man, and he returned to haunt Reb Reuvain.

Reb Reuvain asked him if he thought he was entitled to the *esrog*. He did. So Reb Reuvain handed it over to him without another word. He later told members of his family, who were visibly perturbed, that he did not want a *mitzva* at the expense of another's misgivings. An *esrog* can be borrowed, but nothing can compensate for someone's ill will.

During his final six years, it was very difficult for Reb Reuvain to talk. Nonetheless, leading rabbinical figures who visited him frequently, found him alert and informed, always clutching an open *sefer*.

A visitor during the first summer of his illness found Reb Reuvain filling his mouth with water, then emptying it into a cup. The explanation: Reb Reuvain had expected that for medical reasons he would be required to drink liquids on *Yom Kippur*. He was measuring his "*malei lugmav*" (his mouth's capacity) to determine the maximum he could drink without "violating" the coming fast.

## The Servant of Klal

When Reb Reuvain began to assume an active role in communal affairs, his father-in-law told him of an incident involving Rabbi Yoseif Dov (Reb Yoshe Ber) Soloveitchik of Brisk (author of *Bais HaLevi*):

*Reb Yoshe Ber was in St. Petersburg with a committee of rabbis to beseech the Czarist government's intervention on behalf of Jews suffering from pogroms by bands of Cossacks. The rabbis knew that the government was actually supporting the pogroms, and there was a difference of opinion as to whether they should confront the officials with their complicity.*

*Reb Yoshe Ber advocated maintaining a relationship of trust rather than calling the government's bluff, but he was outvoted.*

*The decision upset him deeply, and his mounting concern for the welfare of his people drove him to his sick bed with an illness from which he died.*

Said Reb Baruch Ber: "When you go to a conference, or in any way deal with the needs of Klal, you must pack your *tachrichim* (shrouds) in your suitcase. A Jewish leader must put his life on the line for his people — not like the secularists who sound chimes, eat and drink their fill, and then in a barely sober state decide what's best for Jewry."

Reb Reuvain recorded this advice in his diary, and indeed he fasted and said *Tehillim* on days that he felt burdened with portentous decisions — such as when he met with David Ben Gurion to protest the conscription of women into the Israeli Army, and before he spoke publicly in regard to *Yaldei Teheran*.

\* \* \*

In Kamenitz, he established a *cheder* to teach a full-day's program of Torah studies to young boys, and organized a Beth Jacob school for girls — importing teachers from Cracow, hiring others to teach required courses in Polish and mathematics, and raising the funds to cover expenses.

He directed *Tiferes Bachurim* in Kamenitz — an organization that scheduled Torah classes for working men. He also dispatched yeshiva students to lead study groups for laymen in *Chumash* and *Gemora* on Friday nights.

### In Protest Against Injustice

His zeal to protest against injustice was legendary. Yet he was far from unrestrained, or impulsive, and constantly consulted with his father-in-law, who in turn copiously quoted his mentor, Reb Chaim Soloveitchik. "A *talmid chacham* must be as zealous as a snake. If not, his tolerance for evil will result in his children abandoning Judaism."

*A group of maskilim planned to open a Tarbut*

*school in Kamenitz. Reb Reuvain called a mass meeting to be addressed by Reb Baruch Ber. The townspeople, in awe before the elder Rosh Yeshiva, crowded the hall to hear him denounce the plans to bring "treife culture" to Kamenitz. The school did not open.*

*In Vilna, after World War I, Reb Reuvain was detained by the police for organizing a demonstration against a Jewish football group guilty of Chillul Shabbos. The Chofetz Chaim wrote him a warm, congratulatory letter: "I envy you your merit of suffering for the glory of Heaven."*

*Two American students in Kamenitz attempted to dissuade the proprietor of a seltzer kiosk from opening on Shabbos. Not only did they fail, the man had them arrested. They came to Reb Reuvain with plans to press charges, go to the American embassy, etc. Said Reb Reuvain: "Do you think that will enhance K'vod Shomayim? You did your best. Now forget the incident."*

*Reb Reuvain was bothered by the glee with which others faulted great Torah personalities for minor offenses. Reb Baruch Ber told him not to be too concerned. "As Reb Yitzchok Elchonon Spector (revered Kovno Rav) said, 'when a cat catches a mouse, both the houseowner and the cat are delighted. Except for one point. The cat hopes there are more mice to be caught; the owner hopes not.'"*

Once he arrived in America, there was scarcely an area of concern to the Torah community in which he was not involved. Reb Reuvain's efforts for Hatzala often had him out of the house after a hasty breakfast, not returning until 2 A.M. for a hasty supper.

His role at the helm of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah involved every aspect of his personality. He was in constant consultation with Reb Aharon Kotler, and when he became ill, Reb Aharon sighed: "Now I am lost. I cannot work without Reb Reuvain."

In May 1951, Reb Reuvain was scheduled to address a mass meeting to protest the assignment of refugee children to irreligious *kibbutzim*, forcibly robbing them of their heritage. Before the meeting, some older Torah Vodaath *bachurim* asked Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky if they should take time from their studies to attend. Said Rabbi Kamenetzky: "If you miss one of Reb Reuvain's *shiurim* in *Gemora*, someone else can repeat it for you — or at least you'll hear another *shiur* later. But you will never have another opportunity to hear Reb Reuvain deliver a *shiur* in *Hilchos De'os* (Principles of Judaism applied to life situations)."

Reb Reuvain delivered a fiery oration. He scored those who would protect the perpetrators of this *shmad* from criticism on the basis of *Ahavas Yisroel* (Love of

Jewry), for making *Ahavas Yisroel* supersede *Ahavas Torah* and *Ahavas Hashem*. "Can one love a seducer of young innocent lives? Corrupting a child is even worse than murdering him!"

When some excited members of the audience broke into applause, he silenced them: "It is a time for *kinos* (lamentations), not applause!"

### Man of the Times

As in other matters, his decisions in regard to communal affairs were totally built on Torah deliberations. One of his most widely known pronouncements weighed the participation of Agudath Israel in the ruling cabinet coalition of the State of Israel as opposed to simply voting and sending representatives to the Knesset. The original, printed in his *Bayos Hazman*, is studied as a *shiur* in *halacha* as much as for its status as a position paper on a vital issue.

His immersion in communal affairs was such that any item dealing with Israel in popular newspapers or

magazines ended up in his hands. One Thursday midnight, a student in Bais Medrash Elyon entered his room to return something borrowed from the Rosh Yeshiva, and he found the table covered with Israeli dailies which the Rosh Yeshiva was examining. On another occasion, *Life Magazine* featured a special study on the developing State of Israel and Reb Reuvain had an older student translate the entire article for him into Yiddish.

In his deep concern over public opinion, Reb Reuvain instructed the Zeirei Agudath Israel to organize letter-writing campaigns to newspapers and magazines whenever a Jewish issue was misrepresented.

### In the Day School Movement

As chairman of Torah Umesorah's Rabbinical Advisory Council, Reb Reuvain articulated a strong and clear position on the problems besetting the growing movement (see attached).

*Reb Reuvain had addressed a founding gathering of a Hebrew Day School in Providence, R.I.:*

### Excerpts from Speeches by Rabbi Reuvain Grozovsky During War-Time, Regarding Rescue Efforts

#### "The Pity is Not on Them Alone"

In our Rosh Hashana *tefillos* we pray on behalf of our children: "אבינו מלכנו — Our Father, our King, remember Your mercy and withhold Your anger"; and He in turn demands that we remember *His* children in Europe . . . Do we feel like brothers toward them? Are we mindful of the countless threatened European communities, which encompass so much Torah scholarship in *chadorim* and *yeshivos*, so rich a Torah life in study groups and charity associations — and so much more!

G-d has never declined to act on behalf of mankind on the pretext that: "We will not save the entire world, so why bother with saving just a few?" On the contrary, in our *tefillos* we invoke the fact that: "You also remembered Noach with love, when You brought the flood waters to destroy all mankind."

If you felt like brothers toward them, you would find means through the Vaad Hatzala for saving Jews from Poland and Lithuania, Hungary and Rumania . . . You would be sending parcels to detention camps, to Siberia, to Shanghai. . . . You would be securing visas for them to South American countries.

The pity is not only on them, but on us as well. If someone wields a knife to stab — to murder half one's body, and the other half doesn't react, it is a sure sign that the other half is also dead.

#### "Remembering"

In our *Yizkor* prayers, we ask G-d to remember "the souls of our dear ones . . . who died, or were killed at

*Kiddush Hashem*." In our other *tefillos* we beg Him to remember with mercy our sons in the American Army who are in mortal danger, wherever they may be found. However, G-d is described as צלך — "your protective shield — your shadow," and indeed, He follows man's every gesture and act. That is, when we ask Him to remember, He first asks: "Do you remember the dead, the murdered? Are you concerned over the welfare of those in danger? Are you trying to determine how you can save them? Is your rest disturbed, do you lose sleep at night?"

The *passuk* implores you to help "When you see the donkey of your enemy crushed under his load . . ." (*Shemos* 23:5). Say the commentaries: "Your enemy — because would it not be your enemy, it is impossible that you would refrain from helping him. (There is no need for a Torah command to help your friend.) . . . The *passuk* continues, "And you will refrain from helping him." Says Rashi — this is phrased in question: "Is it possible that one Jew would refrain from helping another?" Elsewhere, however, the Torah does answer this question: It is indeed possible, when "you blind yourself to the circumstances" — when you close your eyes, stuff your ears, and otherwise make yourself oblivious to his problems and of the ways of alleviating them. To this the Torah cries out: "But you shall not blind yourself!"

Is it possible that should the lives of someone's mother and children be in doubt he would shrug: "They've probably died already, so why bother trying to save them?" On the contrary, we find that in regard to her son that was dead, the mother (in the case brought before Shlomo) cried out: "My son is the one that lives!"

"What role does a Rosh Yeshiva have at the establishing of a kindergarten? Doesn't he have other things on his mind? But that isn't the case. There's a long-standing rule in the Torah, that saving lives assumes a higher priority over everything else. Without Torah study, the children of this community are being buried alive. Without this kindergarten, they will, of course, go to school and learn about George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, but they will never know about Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov Avinu, or Moshe Rabbeinu. Thus, the item of foremost priority on my agenda is to be here and ascertain that these children will indeed live.

"Do you know at what point light radiated from Moshe Rabbeinu's face? Not when G-d first spoke to him, but when he became the intermediary between G-d and His people, teaching G-d's Torah to Jews.... If, as a result of this meeting, we save but one child, we will be worthy of being blessed with the light of Torah."

It is now twenty years since Reb Reuvain has left us. Beyond doubt, he affected radical changes in Torah in America and Israel — on the communal level and on the highest levels of study. To this day, our Torah study, our concept of *Klal Yisroel*, and our activities on behalf of *Klal*, are illuminated by the light of his teachings.

### On Hilchos Chinuch

(At a seminar for yeshiva teachers sponsored by Torah Umesorah, Rabbi Reuvain Grozovsky presented a shiur on the laws pertaining to Torah education. The following are several excerpts from this lecture selected to highlight his approach to the entire field.)

#### Teaching Torah . . . Not Just An Ordinary Activity

"Rules of Teaching" is an area of *halacha* related to a *mitzva* like all other *mitzvos* . . . And like all other halachic areas, effective teaching calls for vast knowledge of relevant discussions in the Talmud, comments of earlier and later authorities, an understanding of the general Torah approach, as well as access to authoritative decisions from the *Rambam*, *Shulchan Aruch*, and other codifiers. Decisions must be rendered only by accepted Torah authorities, and even if a teacher is an accomplished scholar, he, too, must consult someone greater than himself (such as Reb Shimon bar Sheilos' query before Rav in regard to corporal punishment — *Baba Basra* 29). The scarcity of published material on teaching Torah is no indication of the subject's lack of importance, permitting a lax attitude. On the contrary — as one Torah giant once commented: some people are apprehensive about becoming a *shochet* because of the abundance of halachic literature on the subject, and choose teaching instead. How foolish! Through a careless move, a *shochet* can inadvertently make an animal *treife*, but that is only an animal. How much more so must a teacher be careful not to mishandle a child!

#### . . . Not Just An Ordinary Teacher

Determining a correct approach to teaching, and successfully resolving various related problems depend upon one's concept of a yeshiva, and the goals of yeshiva education. For example, one cannot learn how to blow a *shofar* from a musician; nor would a *shochet* learn his skills from a non-Jewish butcher; nor would a *sofer* study

under an artist or calligrapher . . . because in each of these cases the goals are different and so is the methodology, in spite of superficial similarities. All the more so in the case of a teacher of Torah, where his labors are not merely preparation for a *mitzva*, but an act of *mitzva*-fulfillment. A teacher must learn the pertinent laws — even the methodology — from an authoritative rabbi, and observe the daily routines of a G-d-fearing teacher, so as to avoid any possible transgressions. Whoever chooses teaching as his occupation must recognize that he has chosen a sacred endeavor.

#### . . . Not Just Another Subject

We must help children understand the greatness of Torah — that it is of prime importance. We must open their eyes to its breadth and its depth. We must inspire them to strive for greatness in Torah — and in general make a practice of praising *tzaddikim* (righteous men) before the children. Reb Chaim Soloveitchik said that whoever does not aspire to be a *gadol* does not possess fear of G-d, and never will achieve it.

\* \* \*

At a meeting of the Rabbinical Council of Torah Umesorah, a principal proposed drafting a minimum curriculum for member schools. Reb Reuvain rejected the idea, saying, "Torah education is guided by maximum goals, not minimum requirements." The proponent of minimums persisted in making his point, to which Reb Reuvain responded, "You are obviously a graduate of a secular university, and you are attempting to force your secular ideology on Torah education. I tell you that it has no place. . . ." (He later took pains to affirm his general respect for the dissenting principal, stressing that he only took exception to this one proposal.)

With our Pesach households almost magically hidden away for another year, we tend to experience a mingled sense of relief and regret as one of our most difficult *Yamim Tovim* recedes on our calendar, day by day, to the status of the non-imposing pleasant past.

There are messages in the Haggadah, however; those obliquely-stated as well as those which are illuminatingly clear, that *must* be carried forth throughout the year. Inherent in the Haggadah is both a blueprint and a source for renewal of our energies with which we must pursue the life of the Torah Jew. We dare not permit its teachings to become just a yearly ritual.

As an educator, I find the Haggadah an inspiring source; since it aims to guide fathers in how to instruct their children, its timeless teachings very aptly find expression in some of the accepted educational maxims of the world of today. Thus, I was not at all surprised to discover that my interest in and concern for the special child also find pointers in the Haggadah.

### The Son Who Does Not Ask Questions

The Haggadah speaks of four sons; and while we most often consider the stark contrast between the *chacham* (the wise son) and the *rasha* (the wicked son), commentaries often point to other relationships, linking the *tam* (the simple son) with the *chacham*, and the *she'eino yodei'a lishol* (the one who does not know how to question) with the *rasha* (*Haggadah Yalkut Tov*). Like the wise son, the simple son is given an answer that is factual and reasonable, in a manner both warm and encouraging. It may be assumed that the simple and wise sons are somehow similar. They both quest for knowledge. The wise son will be able to absorb a great deal of information; the simple son will absorb less — but of the *same*

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After Pesach Musings:

## TEACHING THE FOURTH SON

by  
Helene Ribowsky



quality of information that will be offered to the wise son.

Another fascinating connection is the similarity between the wicked son and the one who cannot question, which the Haggadah implies by using the very same words in the answer to both. If we are content to merely note this similarity, however, it is very possible that a most vital message for parents and educators will be lost. For it is in the obvious differences in the handling of both sons that the Haggadah provides invaluable advice. The differences are such that they evoke, for me, both an understanding of children who are *unable* to question as well as an insight into how they may be aided through our fulfilling the *mitzva* of telling them the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

The child who does not ask may be young, bashful, or inarticulate. He may also be more severely handicapped: Whether we call this limited child *disabled*, an *underachiever*, a *slow learner*, or a *child who exhibits a developmental delay* is actually quite immaterial. Labeling, after all, can be an inefficient and inaccurate method of identifying a group of children who have learning difficulties. It is sufficient to view the troubled child who is *unable* to question as a child who is experiencing rather frightening and alienating frustrations in learning. With this guideline in mind, one can infer a rather significant educational and humanitarian message.

### The Differences in Approach

If one may ferret messages by examination of the differences, it would seem necessary then to determine the nature and extent of differentiation.

The Haggadah advises that we speak forcefully to the wicked son — that we do not spare him or mollycoddle him — indeed, that we “set his teeth on edge.” His greatest crime is that he has removed himself from *Klal Yisroel*, that he does not sense himself one of us.

The element of hope, however, hinges upon the very fact that he did question at all, and that he may yet be encouraged to rejoin his nation. The son who does not question, however, is spoken to in a soft manner designed to elucidate and encourage. *His* greatest crime is that he does not question. He is not permitted, however, to languish because he does not query. The element of hope here is that the parent is constrained by the words "And you shall tell your son." Furthermore, it must be accomplished in such a way as to literally open the child's world. "את פתח לו" You begin for him." It is self-evident that part of the ultimate goal will be to bring the child to the point where he will eventually question on his own.

And what of the method? Are we, in the very process of illuminating his world, to be as severe with this child as we are with the wicked child?

The Haggadah tells us that we must say the following to the wicked son: "It is because of this that G-d did for me when I went out of Egypt." Implying: *For me — but not for him. Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.*

To the son who does not question, however, we must communicate *only* the following: "It is because of this that G-d did for me when I went out of Egypt."

The method used, then, for the son who does not question, is first

to change the mode of imparting knowledge, in that this son is *told* the story of the departure from Mitzraim while the wicked son benefits only from an abrupt listing of facts. Additionally, the son who cannot question must also be approached delicately and positively in that he is told the story of Pesach but is not roughly warned that he would not have been worthy of being redeemed from the bondage of Mitzraim. The differences, then, are as obvious as is the similarity of the use of identical words.

What then is the message conveyed to us by this strange connection? In spite of the fact that the Haggadah forces us to link these two sons together by the very words used, these children are, after all, hardly as similar as they are different. They do not show the same characteristics, they do not speak in the same manner, they are not spoken to or taught in the same way.... What is the bond?

#### The Similarities in Destiny

The Haggadah gives an implicit warning by linking these two sons. If the educational needs of the son who cannot question are ignored, if the more difficult path of *Vehigadeta* — the painstaking telling — is not followed, then is raised the awful specter of a child who could very possibly *show* the characteristics of the wicked child. (The *Haggadah Yalkut Tov* notes that the son who cannot question is the most difficult to reach and un-

fortunately could well change into a wicked child.)

The warning implied is not that the child will *actually* become wicked, in the usual sense in which we view wickedness. It is that the child will be condemned to living outside of *Klal Yisroel* — that the criminal path that the wicked chooses for himself will be that sad, *unbidden* fate which the unquestioning or learning-disabled child will meet. The message calls for us to do our utmost to prevent this alienation. "You begin for him" — you open the world for this child; you teach and tell, until the child is no longer in danger of being cut off from his nation because of his disabilities.

The Haggadah and the Seder are, in and of themselves, prototypes of "You begin for him." Instances abound in which an action is initiated with the goal of creating interest and stimulating questioning. Very little is left to the imagination when we are told to actually *point* to items mentioned in the Haggadah. We do not merely recite a litany of freedom — but actually *experience* the delight of the free man at the Seder. The story of the Exodus is presented with the most pertinent information given concisely, and yet in some parts there is almost continuous repetition of the very basic theme of the Haggadah. From *Kadeish* through *Nirtza* there is orderly sequencing of material that both invites interest and enhances memory. Each component is announced and explained; little of the text is presented in a highly abstract state.

"You begin for him." The Seder is designed to elicit responses. Importantly, it hints at the methods needed to open up the world of a child who, for whatever reason, is unable to question. Most significant, however, is "And you shall tell your son" — the insistence that this child be considered as important to teach as the others — even though *this* child must be taught so specially. □

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## "The Stone Rejected by the Builders . . ."

A Monroe County (N.Y.) newspaper ran a holiday feature entitled: "Family Fosters Special Christmas." Pictured is a middle-aged couple and six children sitting around a Christmas tree. Read the article: *It is a long and loving holiday season for the Denny's, who celebrate both Christmas and Hanukkah with their six special children. The Christmas tree and the Menorah share the living room at the Denny's. Three of their six foster children are Jewish, so the entire family celebrates both holidays . . . A special Sunday school has been set up for them at Hausersville Chapel by Pastor James J. Horton.*

Defenseless and unsupported, the mentally retarded are the most misunderstood and maltreated group in the Jewish community. Objects of fear and apprehension, suffering social isolation and rejection, they are invariably stereotyped. The prevalent belief that "nothing can really be done" obscures the ultimate individuality and uniqueness of the human beings who comprise this group. (I recently met a young Jewish retarded woman who had participated in a rehabilitative project, and is now employed as a staff member of that very project.)

Mental institutions are overcrowded, understaffed and inhumane. Untrained or overworked institutional staff members have been known to shut retardates into locked boxes when they cannot control their behavior. They are treated as sub-humans, are called degrading nicknames, and in desperation attendants often resort to tying them to chairs.

Parents of institutionalized children brought a court suit against this brutal treatment in the Willowbrook Facility on Staten Island, New York, resulting in the Willowbrook Consent Decree, mandating an improvement of State institutions and a deinstitutionalization of the majority of residents, transferring them to community resources. The State has endeavored to locate foster homes or small residential centers (group homes) optimally located within the retardate's own community. Jewish families have unintermittently failed to open their homes to their retarded, even when offered

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HANOCH TELLER, who studies in the Mirrer Yeshiva in Jerusalem, is currently on a visit to the U.S.A. Several of his articles have been featured in recent issues of The Jewish Observer.

lucrative compensation. Dorothy Jacobs, coordinator of the family care program of the Bronx Developmental Services, could not locate a single Jewish family, let alone kosher home to host a retarded child.

The mentally retarded person, due to his intellectual limitations, must have the benefit of being viewed as a whole person who can move, albeit slowly, toward the achievement of his own potential. It is recognized that long-term institutional care is not needed by the majority of the mentally retarded, and invariably causes regression. Community living for the retarded enables him to lead a life of dignity and fulfillment.

To date, there is not a single Jewish group home! The ramifications of this vacuum are harrowing. Resident chaplain of the Brooklyn Developmental Center, Rabbi Solomon Wulliger wrote several articles (in the *Jewish Press*) that brought to public attention the destination of Jewish retarded: South Bronx, Bedford Stuyvesant, St. Christopher's Home in Brooklyn, Catholic Guardian Society, etc. The archdiocese's Catholic Charities is light years ahead of the Jewish Community in their care for the handicapped. Their treatment is meticulous and thorough; they sponsor a number of group homes, maintaining a "birth-to-death" policy. But so far the Jewish community has not begun to match Catholic achievements in this field.

### The Roots of Neglect

Jewish neglect for their retarded brethren stems from what Dr. Erwin Friedman, director of the Manhattan Concept Developmental Center, terms the "Elui Concept." For centuries, Jews have prided themselves on erudition and stressed intellectual achievement. The celebrated yeshiva student is always the perspicacious one; and those not capable of producing are ignored at best, generally shunned. As a result, the mediocre child may suffer neglect in the classroom, but at least he somehow fends for himself. The retarded child requires special treatment to cope with the most basic of needs, and the traditional yeshiva will usually reserve its special attention for the ideal end-product: the *elui* . . . While everyone that I interviewed had a different term for this phenomenon, all agreed that this was at the root of the problem of the neglect of the Jewish retardate.

Since Torah is the basis of Judaism, those not able to

learn Torah *a priori* are not considered genuine Jews. The dictum "Lo am ha'aretz chassid — an ignoramus cannot be saintly" (*Avos*) implies further limitations in the possibilities for a retarded child to realize his fullest role in Judaism. Thus, the special child is often ridiculed, humiliated, and ignored in the classroom, for sadly enough, religious education often fails to sufficiently emphasize that *gemilas chassadim* (performance of generous acts) also encompasses compassion and concern for the retarded. Marcel Biberfeld, director of Maimonides Hospital's Developmental Center, faulted our religious schools for not even screening out retarded students. A student could be in the fifth grade before it is detected that he is not simply "slow" or unmotivated, but retarded; and all this time he is being deprived of special education vital to his development.

The traditional Jewish sensitivity of sharing the misfortune of the needy seems to be totally absent regarding the developmentally disabled. The mentally retarded are not the only ones affected: The stigma of being the parents of a mentally abnormal child in the Orthodox community is insufferable; coupled by the realities of having trouble finding baby sitters, exclusion from activities by peers, relatives, and denial of recreational and social experiences. In addition, there is the fear that should people find out about the incidence of retardation, they will hesitate to marry into the family — usually a reluctance without scientific basis.

Due to the Jewish community's lack of concern, parents of the 60,000 Jewish retarded people in the New York City area are forced to carry the brunt of the burden by themselves. Inevitably, the retarded child is overprotected, family tensions are volatile, and often parents suffer guilt for having conceived such an "abnormality."

### A Way Out For the Jewish Retardate

Mental retardation is a reversible process — in no sense fixed and forever, but responsive to guidance, care, and education; and the rehabilitation process is greatly enhanced by a feeling of acceptance by others. Judaism stresses the human's intrinsic sacred value deriving from creation in G-d's image. The individual's value and rights are not only expressed in life and death matters, but also in regard to which normalization and equality of status within the community are to be maintained. The Torah specifically prohibits compromising an individual's value, including placing him in a situation where he might incur either physical harm, psychological harm or misguided Jewish character development. The inability of the victim to defend himself against the abuse only compounds the transgression (*Ramban, Vayikra 19:14*).

Judaism's rites and rituals are a retardate's means of overcoming his sense of isolation and rejection, thus enabling him to experience the self-esteem of belonging to a community. Jewish education, however, can only be provided in the proper Jewish atmosphere.

Rabbi Wulliger told me of a tragic case in point, of a retarded Jewess who became pregnant while at family care in a gentile home. The daughter subsequently born to her will never know her true religion. ... In another recent case a Jewish boy died of neglect in a gentile foster home. A Jewish home that cares was never an alternative for him. ... Children who had participated in Jewish oriented activities at Willowbrook, now participate in church services, and haven't had a kosher diet in years. ... Hassidic boys and girls from Williamsburgh and Boro Park have been baptized as Roman Catholics. This is unconscionable; it is also *halachically prohibited*.

### Not a "Shoteh"

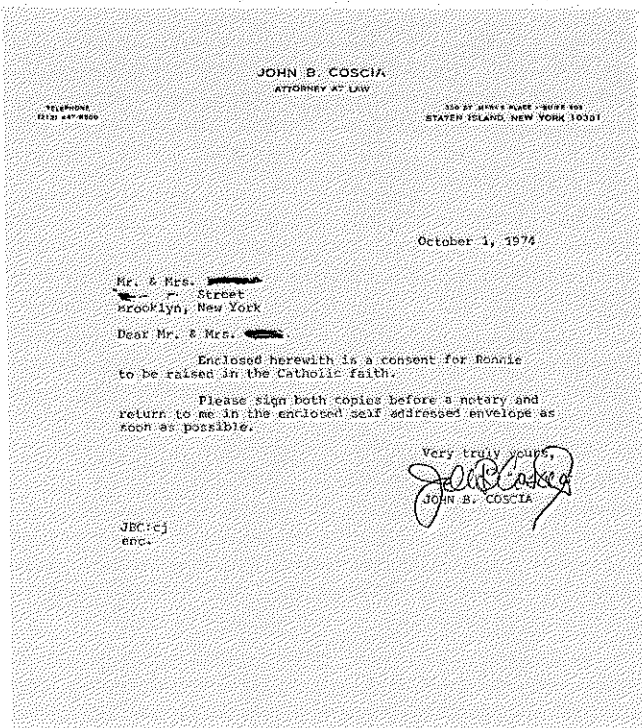
The 52,000 mildly retarded Jewish people in the New York City area are a far cry from *shotim*; they are functionable and educable.\* The symptoms of a "shoteh" as defined in the Talmud are: going out alone at night, sleeping in a cemetery, tearing one's garments, and losing all that is entrusted to him. Such a diagnosis today would be grouped with the more severe forms of emotional disturbance such as various psychoses. An amateur analysis might also include severe and profound mental retardation.

I had the privilege of discussing our obligations to retardates with Rabbi Pinchas Sheinberg א"ש, Rosh Yeshivas Torah Ohr in Jerusalem, a well-known halachic authority. He said that retarded people are definitely not *shotim*, and must be cared for and educated. Even if they would be *shotim*, the Jewish community would not be absolved from caring for

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\* The current definition of mental retardation as presented in the American Association of Mental Deficiency (AAMD) Manual on Terminology and Classification (Grossman, 1973) is useful in understanding what mental retardation is: "Mental retardation refers to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior, and manifested during the developmental period." Parameters of the definition need exploration, including the labeling process, intellectual deficit, sociobehavioral aspects, and educational, social and legal restrictions. Portrayal of mental retardation as a family and social problem is significant to readers of this article. The recognition that mental retardation is a socially culturally derived definition, always secondary rather than primary and not a purely medical condition as some may have previously thought, serves as a basis for an understanding of attitudes, feelings, and admitted lack of knowledge in this area.

Social functioning is the most important indicator of whether or not an individual is truly retarded. Naturally, this occurs across a wide spectrum from total care for survival to full independence. The utter variety and complexity of the causes of mental retardation span severe deprivation, protein malnutrition, and environmental factors. The major causes can be categorized as: 1) Cultural (undifferentiated); 2) genetic (including pathologic or mutant genes and chromosomal abnormality); 3) acquired (including prenatal, parantatal and postnatal). Mental retardation is to be viewed as a social problem, developmental in nature, with the likelihood that more than 90% of this segment of the population can be expected to assume a normal existence (*Community Mental Health Journal 13:1*).



them. When I explained the present situation and the prevalence of *shmad*, he exclaimed: "Hashem yeracheim — it must be stopped!" 150 years earlier the Chasam Sofer ל"צ prohibited sending a *shoteh* to a Viennese institution that did not serve kosher food.

*A Brooklyn mother could not understand why her son became agitated every time that they passed a MacDonald's. Due to the virtual non-existence of Jewish schools for her son, she had been forced to send him to a special program in the public school system. Much to her chagrin, she found out that it was the custom of parents to take the class, during school time, to MacDonald's for birthday parties.*

#### Vacuum at the Top

Where are our Rabbinic and community leaders? One distinguished special educator acerbically commented: "You can't become a Rebbe by having retarded Hassidim, nor can you become a Rosh Yeshiva by having retarded *talmidim*." The problem actually goes deeper than this. No prominent Jewish figures have ever stepped forward as did Rose Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey and made known that they have a retarded relative. Mental retardation is not a crime or a sin. Being buried away in an apartment for 15 years so as not to hinder sibling *shidduch* prospects, denial of Bar Mitzva ceremonies, and so on, is sinful. Many Jewish parents will not send their children to developmental centers or give them special treatment, for this means admitting that their children are retarded. The more observant the family — the greater the tragedy. Extremely religious

parents are known to have taken their retarded newborn directly from the hospital to whatever institution is convenient — quite frequently, Catholic ones. Jewish children subjected to *shmad* are at least finally awarded loving care. If Jewish leadership would become involved, something could be done. ... When was the last time you heard an appeal on behalf of the Jewish mentally retarded?

Dr. Herbert J. Cohen, director of the Bronx Developmental Services at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (Yeshiva University) sponsored a workshop on mental retardation. 500 clergymen and religious organizations were invited, phone calls were made to every local rabbi. Glatt kosher food was even served as an accommodation. 40 clergymen attended: mostly nuns, some priests, a few from Union Theological Seminary, and one Black Minister from Upstate New York, but not one rabbi save those put on the program to speak. ... Dr. Saul Hofstein, from the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, whose excellent paper, "Giving Jewish Retarded A Chance To Be Individuals" has been this author's constant companion, held a workshop where he invited 72 rabbis and not one attended ... The Bronx Developmental Services has been unable to recruit any rabbinic or synagogical assistance. The New York Board of Rabbis could not persuade a single rabbi to visit Jewish retardates in the Bronx without a monetary incentive, and no one was willing to run a Seder for them.

#### "Not on My Block!"

Recently, however, some dedicated men and women are attempting to affect some improvements. In June, G-d willing, on the outskirts of Boro Park, Ohel Children's Home will be opening a resident home for retarded people. Lester Kaufman, director of Ohel, lamented how his organization could have opened two group homes by now. Precious time in the race against *shmad* and the fight for retarded civil and legal rights was lost due to rabbinic and community-led opposition to a proposed group home. I listened to a two hour tape recording of the community planning board meeting discussing a proposed Flatbush site, and I still am haunted by the great profanation that the proceedings represented.

Mr. Kaufman led off the meeting by explaining the dire need for a facility for retarded people within the community. Ohel proposed a community residence for a maximum of 10 female adults between the ages of 18 and 35. These women would be under 24-hour supervision; in addition, they are free from any mental disturbances that would interfere with their peacefully living and participating within the community.

The program at the community residence consists of shelter, meals, companionship and social events. People living in the group home would work in the community at regular jobs or attend educational programs. Others

would be employed in sheltered workshops or take part in special occupational day care programs. Fears that unsupervised residents would be free to roam the streets and molest or offend the neighbors are groundless.

Mr. Kaufman was followed by representatives of the State Department of Mental Hygiene responsible to implement the Willowbrook Consent Decree. From this point on, the meeting became riotous, resulting in a premature adjournment. City Councilman Leon Katz arrived to announce that he opposes all residential facilities. "Group homes are a racket," he claimed to tumultuous applause. Local residents said that the "patients" were better off in Willowbrook than in Flatbush; here they would "wreck and threaten" the neighborhood. "Your next door neighbors are all mentally retarded; when they will become violent, who can guarantee the safety of our children?"

Although the program dealt exclusively with a home for the mentally retarded, community speakers (deliberately?) confused them with the mentally disturbed. One resident said, "We must all get out there and defeat this — we do not make idle threats; the project is going to create 'retarded-home entrepreneurs.'" ... Mr. Kaufman and State representatives were heckled and not allowed to speak. ... A neighbor of the proposed site threatened to rent his house to welfare clients if retarded women moved in. Just before the mayhem forced the meeting's conclusion, a local resident had this to say: "If this house is approved, I'll tell you one thing, you or any of your patients will not walk around that block, because I personally make a vow that every one of you will not profit in that house ... if I have to personally burn it down." There was a resounding applause and cheers.

The State could not understand why Jews would oppose a home for Jewish residents. This Flatbush home will not open, and I would venture that if a home would be proposed for central Boro Park the response would likely be the same. A gentleman in Riverdale attempted to open a group home and was awarded the same treatment.

Residents of Flatbush were afraid that a group home would lower the value of their houses. This is a myth. A stone's throw from Willowbrook, \$80,000 homes are being constructed. A recent article in *The New York Times* reported a statement by Dr. Julian Wolpert, professor of geography and urban planning at Princeton University, saying, "The siting of a residential facility in a neighborhood does not tend to depress surrounding property values, and in some cases, may even cause an appreciation in property values."

### A School For Those Rejected

The scene is not without its brighter spots. The Jewish Center for Special Education in Boro Park does cater to both the learning disabled and the mentally

retarded. Rabbi Herschel Fried, educational director and backbone of the school was prompted to found the school one Erev Yom Kippur when two parents approached him, telling him that their seven year-old sons were expelled from yeshiva and would not be readmitted because they could not read.

Rabbi Fried and his professional staff address themselves to the most pressing dilemmas facing Jewish special education: *If a child can only learn to read one language, should he be taught English or Hebrew?* Professionals unanimously will advise learning English. Rabbi Fried contends that these professionals are myopic. The child who cannot comprehend what goes on in *shul*, cannot follow his father's *Kiddush*, is unacquainted with the *Seder* proceedings, undergoes unbearable psychological strain. The child will not feel at home with his parents or in school; he could develop into a recluse. Teaching English instead of Yiddish to a youngster from Williamsburgh is tantamount to psychological homicide. The second that he walks into a grocery store and converses he is out of step.

I saw an audio-visual presentation on the *Seder* rituals at the Jewish Center for Special Education. Almost any child viewing that presentation would be able to participate in his family *Seder*. The school noticed a remarkable difference in the children after *Pesach*; their self-confidence was far greater. Rabbi Fried believes that a Jewish school for the retarded "has got to be more than a special school where Kosher food is served." Due to the particularly Jewish character of his school, he is entitled to very little State subsidizing. This is a marked difference which should be noted between group homes and his school.

The state has a policy of providing voluntary services for the retarded, and generous funding, particularly for group homes. By law, these must be non-sectarian, but Henry R. Marguit, Deputy Director of the State Department of Mental Hygiene, is aware of the specific heritage requirements of Jewish retardates and is predetermined to cater to this need. So far Jewish opposition has prohibited his acting.

### Other Measures

... Mrs. Jeanne (Sheindel) Warman, residents' chairperson of Neshei Ahavas Chesed, Boro Park's Women's Chesed League, has endeavored for years to open a group home. This past April, Neshei Ahavas Chesed made the decision to go ahead with their proposed home on the outskirts of Boro Park. Opposition encountered was of a different nature: The home's site borders on an Italian neighborhood, whose residents average age is above 65. They are quite set in their ways, and the idea of a Jewish Kosher home opening up in their neighborhood was not too appealing. It is interesting to note that the local opposition was anti-Semitic in nature, not anti-retarded. Mrs. Warman appears to have won Jewish backing for the home; "pro" petitions were signed as well as a letter of encourage-

ment from the Council of Jewish Organizations of Boro Park.

... Mrs. Schipper, who heads the Rosh Pinah Foundation of New Rochelle, has not achieved such success. Rosh Pinah has been trying for years to open a nature-sheltered, self-contained commune for Jewish young adults who will need special care all their life. For Rosh Pinah to succeed, it must be independent of State funds; private contributions, however, have not been forthcoming.

... There are several facilities and schools, albeit far too few, for Jewish retarded heretofore not mentioned. Satmar has a class for male and female mongoloids, Rabbi Reuven Rubin directs Chessed Yisrael in Flatbush, and Rabbi Avrum Mondrowitz coordinates Yeshivas Beis Sholom, which has an excellent program for learning disabled children, but does not serve retardates. Also well-known are Rabbi Max Kahn's Hebrew Academy for Special Children, Rabbi Maurice Block's School for Special Children, Mrs. Batsheva Mandel's Mishkan Home for Children, and the Maimonides Institute in Far Rockaway. Torah Umesorah runs Operation T.O.U.C.H., Dr. Joel Rosenschein manages *Petach*, and Herb Greenberg heads (the Conservative Movement's) Camp Ramah's Project Tikvah. The Federation of Jewish Philanthropies provides a host of programs for the retarded; to date, however, they still do not have a single group home.

Most of the above listed programs are afflicted by several problems: Some are void of religious content, some are not adequately professional, some suffer from both, few are neither.

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\* \* \*

Once Reb Yisroel Salanter זצ"ל did not arrive for the *Kol Nidrei* Service. The congregation had to proceed with *Maariv*, still without any trace of his whereabouts. Messengers were sent out to find him to no avail. At the end of the service, Reb Yisroel appeared with his jacket wrinkled, beard matted, and feathers in his hair. After he finished praying, Reb Yisroel explained his lateness: "I was on my way to *shul* and I heard a baby crying. I found a small baby wailing, clutching a baby bottle. Apparently his mother in her desire to go to the *Kol Nidrei* Service left the baby attended only by his six year old sister. Meanwhile, she had fallen asleep." Reb Yisroel fed the baby and put him to sleep, at which time his sister woke up. She begged Reb Yisroel not to leave for she was frightened to stay by herself.

Reb Yisroel could not reconcile a spiritual rendezvous with the Almighty by saying that it had precedence over the cry of a baby and the loneliness of a child. Orthodox Jewry must ask itself: "How many times have we neglected and ignored the cries for help of our mentally retarded brethren in the name of more lofty and sublime goals? How much longer will the crying go unanswered?"



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Sephardic. Rather, it was a Romaniot, or Greek-speaking community. Romaniot communities dominated the north-eastern Mediterranean region, and while maintaining customs very different from the Ashkenazim, they usually followed the decisions of the early Ashkenazic authorities, most notably those of Rabbeinu Yaakov Tam (1100-1171).

When Sephardim first arrived on Rhodes, there were many important halachic problems as to which customs

should dominate: those of the Romaniot who had formed the original community, or those of the Sephardim, who were now in the majority. As such, Rhodes was a microcosm of the entire Mediterranean area, where the Sephardim were overwhelming the pre-existing communities. In the case of Rhodes, questions regarding which customs should prevail were sent to the famed Rabbi Shemuel de Medina (the *Maharashdam*), who sent several *teshuvos* (responsa) to Rhodes attempting to resolve the conflict. However, in Rhodes as in most similar communities, the Sephardim simply submerged the original communities, and within two or three generations, the Romaniot community had ceased to exist.

Rabbi Angel, himself a descendent of Rhodeslies, presents a fascinating picture of this transition. He traces the growth of Rhodes into a major Sephardic Torah center, and the many problems that this insular community encountered. A great deal of his information is drawn from the Responsa literature (*She'elot U'Teshuvos*) — often from such giants as Rabbi Yoseif Caro and the *Radbaz*. Details of many cases are presented, offering rare insight into the workings of the community, as well as the methods these Torah giants used to resolve problems that arose.

This book is one of the first major studies of a Sephardic community. While dealing with a single community, it can provide the reader with a clearer insight into the Sephardic world in general. 

## A CALL FOR TORAH STUDY

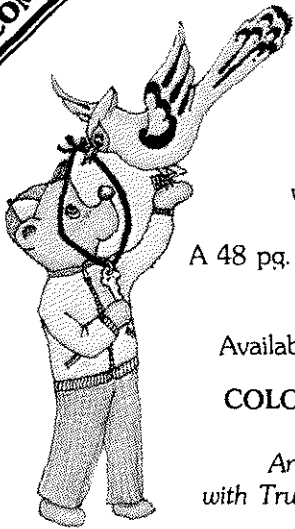
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# second looks at the jewish scene

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## "Holocaust"

### — At Least They Know

It is difficult to imagine someone not aware of "Holocaust," the nine-and-a-half hour telecast aired on NBC-TV the week preceding Pesach. If one could avoid *TV Guide* or newspaper advertisements and discussions announcing its advent, then one would have discovered its existence by having most telephone calls placed during critical evening hours greeted with a busy signal, or a hasty: "Call back after 11:00 (click)."

It is equally difficult to imagine anyone not aware of the tragic destinies of the fictional families Dorf and Weiss, who represented the fate of the persecutor and the victim in microcosm. Even non-TV-owners who did not borrow viewing space in front of a neighbor's set knew the vicissitudes of the various members of these families, thanks to morning-after re-caps on buses, elevators, and in newspaper columns.

And no Jew *should* be unaware of a phenomenon that focused the attention of millions of Americans on some aspect of Jewish suffering during World War II; and indeed, according to media experts, more than half the country's population watched at least some part of this "docu-drama."

#### A Media Event

Judging by comments in newspapers and magazines, the program was more than the record of an event; it was an event in itself, bringing in its wake study guides, a

best-selling book based on the TV script, specially convened discussion groups, and ripples of discussion and controversy.

The most superficial level of this

*(From a critical review by David R. Blumenthal, Professor of Judaic Studies, at Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia), appearing in the InterMountain Jewish News:)* "Holocaust" left the impression that the real "heroes" were those who died with guns in their hands, the resisters. What nonsense. There were no heroes. It is natural for us, the spectators (and perhaps for the survivors too), to want to believe that some ways to die are "better" than others. But who says so? The idea that dying as resistor is more "courageous" is a medieval pagan idea borrowed by modern romanticism. Those who "went like sheep" were no less human. Their deaths no less meaningful. Their children no less precious. To focus on resistance was to make the real Holocaust into a cheap Jewish western.

Furthermore, the praising of resistance left the false impression that there was some hope, some way to "save" oneself from humiliation. That simply was not the case. Those who have survived say that it was not by virtue of any act of theirs, nor by virtue of any conviction that they survived. It was chance (read: Providence — N.W.). What hope existed was illusory, a tissue of

"Holocaust" analysis took note of the widespread comment: "We never realized how much suffering actually took place." Thus: *It's important that we/they know what had happened.* This response was shared by most of the more critical viewers — both professionals and those who knew because they were there. But once the critical process began, many faults were uncovered, of varying degrees of severity.

Some dealt with facts: "The round-up in Warsaw was in the summer. I'll never forget the oppressive heat. And even if it had been in the winter, we'd never have been so well dressed, or so well fed. Did you ever see one fat survivor?"

Some dealt with nuances: John J. O'Conner of the *New York Times*

love and lies. (That is one aspect of the real Holocaust that was portrayed well).

And, if one must talk of heroism, what of the heroism of the religious? The rabbis who led their people to a religious death, the students who were beaten for providing prayerbooks in the camps, and the strength of the evangelical Christians whose courage matched that of their religious Jewish counterparts.

In addition, "Holocaust" was misleading because it focused on the personal tragedies and "triumphs" of its characters. The real tragedy does not lie in the beatings (and the portrayal thereof was also pitifully inadequate). That is simple inhuman violence, repugnant though it is. The tragedy lies, at least in part, in the cessation of Jewish civilization in Europe. Dawidowicz ends Part Two of her book with the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto, not because it was heroic but because it was the end of the Jewish community of Poland. There is no more communal, institutional history of the Jews in Eastern Europe. The history of the Jew stops cold. The survivors of the real Holocaust always speak of "we".

found all the characters cardboard stereotypes, with epochal dilemmas reduced to soap opera cliches, resulting in (as Elie Wiesel put it) a trivialization of a cosmic tragedy: The only member of the ill-fated Weiss family to survive is the poor-student, athlete-cum-partisan.... Time and again Nazi soldiers on the sidelines, watching Jews march benignly to their death, remarked, "See how cooperative they are? I told you they're sub-human!"

Some dealt with the focus of the program: Why depict the wiping out of an entire culture with the story of an assimilated, intermarried family? When Mrs. Weiss urged her young charges in a make-shift ghetto-school studying Western culture: "You must continue your (secular) education if you wish to make something of yourself," the irony was totally lost on the average viewer. For that matter, the script writer himself seemed oblivious of

the fact that the "saving" culture was identical with the one responsible for their ultimate demise.

#### Reb Mechel's View

This distortion of focus was elaborated upon by Reb Mechel, an alumnus of Buchenwald, in a private conversation: "I had promised myself not to watch. But I had to. And with each new episode I wondered how any one could escape the inevitable death that awaited us. And then I silently congratulated myself for making it — thanking G-d with every breath."

Was your reaction — your recognition of G-d's grace — implied in the TV presentation?, I asked him.

"Not at all. This was my personal celebration of making it, triggered by the scenes on the screen. On the contrary, I found nothing to give my type of survival, or the death of others, any semblance of dignity. The submission of the masses — forced to disrobe and march to their death site, along an open pit — seemed like a puzzle, a cruel joke. We weren't submissive. We were starved. Our bodies were disease-racked, broken. And yet we hoped. We could not imagine anything worse than what we had already endured. The round-up, the march — it could only be to better circumstances, we thought. And at the end — they whipped us, hounded us, made us run. To look over your shoulder was certain death. Who could hesitate, let alone resist? But this was a small consideration. The main thing is that the people should know. Without 'Holocaust' and NBC — trivialization, commercials, and all — they would never have been aware."

#### But Others Say ...

Not everyone agreed with Mechel. Ari Weiss was visibly upset: "Why did they have to show an assimilated family? Why did the

romantic leads have to live together and then get married — as though that were the norm for *anyone* in those days? Why should [Gerald] Green have to project that kind of counterfeit image of European Jewry for millions of viewers?"

O.K., the image was false, and insulting to us. But do you think it was damaging as far as the general viewer is concerned?

Ari's reply supplied me with half an answer to his own criticism: "It's hard to say. Last Thursday a telephone repairman was fixing our kitchen phone. He asked me, 'You any relation to the Weiss Family on Holocaust?' I explained that the story and the family was fiction, but the circumstances depicted were true: 'Oh, I know that,' he said. 'But I never knew until the show how much the Weisses and all you people suffered. I just never realized.'"

So you see, I told Ari, the program did reach him. And I'd guess that it was only because he could relate to the Weisses their sins and all, that he could identify with their suffering.

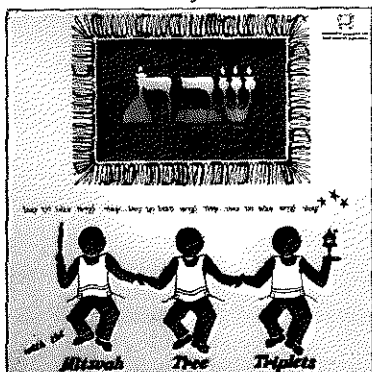
Ari thought a moment, and then "begged to disagree": "My mother was one of a group of girls in Auschwitz. The orderly in charge of dispensing food to the inmates was in the camp because his paternal grandfather had been Jewish — a *knappe Yid!* On Yom Kippur morning my mother pocketed her slice of bread and skipped her bowl of gruel. The orderly asked her why she was forgoing breakfast, so she told him about Yom Kippur. 'So that's why the other girls didn't take breakfast,' he said. 'If I'm here because they consider me Jewish, then I'm not going to eat today either!' he emphatically added.

"So you see," Ari said, "they appreciate us much more for being us, than for being carbon copies of them."

And I believe that he was right.

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# Jewish History — With a Twist

Jewish history is a fascinating storehouse of information and guidance. Study it and discover models to emulate; peruse it and find yet other figures representing modes of conduct to avoid. Of course, to learn from the past one must first study the facts objectively, and then apply standards of judgment supplied by sages, for Jewish history is also an aspect of Torah, which requires a learned interpretation.

Too often, a different sequence is followed. First the judgment is rendered, and then the facts are scrutinized, and tailored to fit the preconception. Reflecting this approach, we find two major figures of the Jewish past being held up as models in most surprising ways: one an outstanding scholar-leader of the nineteenth century, and the other a 17th century heretic who was written out of the Jewish community.

## Reb Yisroel Salanter — Courtesy of JTS

Rabbi Yisroel Lipkin of Salant is hallowed in Torah circles as the prime force in what came to be known as the Mussar Movement. He was a genius in Torah knowledge, a tireless seeker of personal perfection, a master *mechanech* (pedagogue), and a peerless communal leader. In 1849, Reb Yisroel left Vilna at the very height of his recognition there as a leading scholar because of pressures brought to bear on him to head a government-sanctioned Rabbinical Seminary. His reason? According to intimates, he did not want to be responsible for the formal training of rabbis by a "scientific method." "*Musmachim*, not doctors, should head our congregation," he said.

Yet somehow, Reb Yisroel is the subject of Chapter 1305 of the Jewish Theological Seminary's ongoing "Eternal Light" radio series, an ever-popular source of

play-scripts for religious schools and camps. How does Reb Yisroel become a JTS hero? Not on the basis of the objective historical record, mind you. Only by courtesy of a little dramatics — and a twist of factual authenticity to help Reb Yisroel fit the JTS mold.

And how, then does the Seminary manage? The radio play portrays the time Reb Yisroel commanded the Jews of Vilna to eat on Yom Kippur during the height of a cholera plague, when resistance to the disease was at a critical low. Now, anyone with a modicum of curiosity can read a documented account of the incident in Rabbi Dov Katz's *T'nuas HaMussar*, in which the halachic interplay between the mitzvos-in-conflict of fasting on Yom Kippur and life-preservation is explained, and the rationale behind Reb Yisroel's decision to unilaterally declare the need to eat is made clear. Very simply stated, a Jew is enjoined to preserve his life at all costs, even if it requires transgressing a Torah command. In almost all circumstances, the only exceptions to this "life above all" rule are the committing of idolatry, adultery or incest, and murder,

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which are inviolable, making it better to die than to transgress. But *Shabbos*, *Yom Kippur*, laws of *Kashrus* — all are to be violated, if necessary, for the sake of preserving a life. So the evidence must be weighed: does fasting on *Yom Kippur*

constitute serious threat to life or not? In Vilna of 1848, Reb Yisroel was almost alone in realizing the desperation of the situation, and he decreed that the fast be broken: In the halachic scale of values, life is more important than the fast.

In *The Eternal Light* version, however, rather than presenting an internal dialogue *within* halacha, the script-writer has a doctor in dialogue with Reb Yisroel, pitting medical needs *against* halacha. We quote (in part — admittedly sacrificing dramatic embroidery for the sake of cogency):

Doctor: Eight in every ten are dead and dying. Others will surely die. There must be no fasting on the Day of Atonement.

Salanter: "On the Day of Atonement ye shall take no manner of food and drink."

Doctor: Don't quote the scripture, Rabbi Israel ... there must be no fasting.

Salanter: They would sooner die than break the solemn fast.

Doctor: If they don't break it, they will surely die.

Salanter: Tell me what to do, Doctor.

Doctor: I want you to break the *Yom Kippur* fast.

Salanter: I cannot do that, Doctor. The righteous liveth by his faith. If it is G-d's will, I shall die. I am no longer young.\* Perhaps you cannot understand it, but if it is a choice of breaking the fast or dying, I have no alternative but to die.

Doctor: Suit yourself. I just can't understand it. But don't let them die ... tell them they must live.

Salanter: Yes, I can do that. Nothing is more sacred than life. All right, Doctor, I shall tell them to break the fast.

(Music: Montage theme and down for)

and so on, until Reb Yisroel realizes that he too must eat to convince others.

\* He was young — only 38 at the time, but the scriptwriter moved the cholera epidemic from 1848 to 1873, for reasons best known to him.



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Now we can see how the history of Reb Yisroel in Vilna has been "reinterpreted," to permit him a place in the JTS catechism. As the scriptwriter tells it, medical science has proved a certain aspect of Jewish ritual untenable. Thus, in good Conservative fashion, Reb Yisroel *first* finds it necessary to rewrite the laws for the masses, preserving a niche for his own traditional leanings outside the compromise for the congregation — like a good Seminarian would. (You know, like permitting mixed pews and counting women in the minyan in the province, but keeping things more strictly himself.) When that won't do, he bends personal conviction, and he violates the fast as well. — On what basis? — In keeping with the Biblical injunction "And you shall live by them" which overrules almost every Torah prohibition, including fasting on Yom Kippur? Forbid! Because contemporary medical expertise convinces the old sage of Vilna that laws must be bent for expediency. So much for Salanter, as per the Seminary.

### The Spinoza Conference

The crooked mirror of a "historical precedent," distorted to conform with a vested interest, works in many ways. Not only are leading scholars reinterpreted, leading heretics can be rehabilitated. Thus, eyebrows need not be raised at the recent convening of a "Conference on Spinoza" — again by the Jewish Theological Seminary.


Now, one may argue that not only is the Conservative Movement not monolithic, it is difficult to find any trace of discipline in its theology or halachic system. When popular pressure deems a particular approach untenable, some way is found to modify the unpopular practice. Its doctrines are flexible enough to embrace just about anyone. And should a particular subject prove too rigid in his convictions to fit within its elastic parameters, a little revision is not exactly out of order.

But Benedict Spinoza should be another matter. The famed lens-grinder of 17th Century Amsterdam succeeded in breaking through convictions and accepted traditions by introducing new approaches in G-d-denial through his philosophy of Pantheism. And he succeeded in so antagonizing Jewish leaders (even publishing his heresies in Latin, the official language of the Church), that he earned himself the rare distinction of *Cherem* — being excluded from the Jewish community.

It thus becomes difficult to understand how Spinoza could be an acceptable topic for a JTS conference. Even at its radical worst, the Conservative Movement has not ever denied the existence of the deity.

With the help of a sizable grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund this Conference, the Seminary probably could manage to bend the job-description of this "Jew who was a philosopher" into a "Jewish philosopher", and find ways to make Spinoza acceptable. Indeed, advance publicity predicted that in the second session of the Conference, "Dr. Silverman of the

Jewish Theological Seminary and Dr. Richard Popkin of Washington University will place Spinoza's rationalism in the context of the emergent messianism and mysticism of the 17th century. 'I think we can plausibly view Spinoza's thought as yet another form of messianic response to his times, as were the Sabbatian movement of 1666 and the Hassidism of the early 1700's,' said Dr. Silverman."

So, with a bit of imagination, Spinoza's places is secure, as just another "Hassid" — if you take your history with a twist. 

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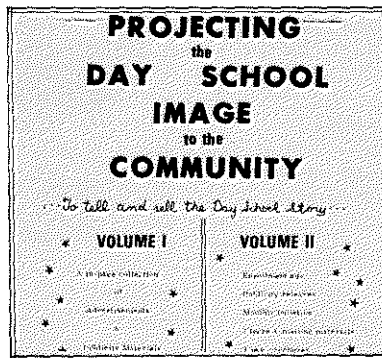
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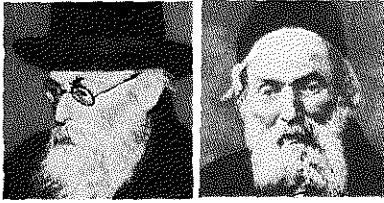
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*Funny stuff? My Mendel? Good Heavens! How many times I've warned him against talking back to the Rebbe, pleaded with him to stifle his wise-guy remarks, begged him to postpone his clownish antics to recess! How does one rehabilitate*

*an incurable brat? I catch my breath and stand frozen, watching the classroom door open, as out steps — Mendel Gross. Thank G-d — not my Mendel!*

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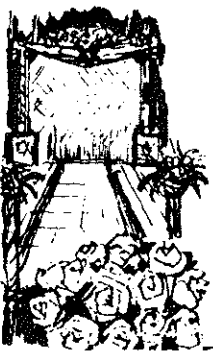
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care is at stake. And so, for that matter, is your image as a person with consummate taste ... So you let loose. *Two bars at the smorgasbord ... Squab for entre ... A spiked sherbert Intermezzo in between ... Fifteen pieces on the band, why not? ... Music makes the simcha.* Oh, yes and *Colored sound movies* ...

The excesses? — The needs elsewhere? — Answering to priorities? C'mon. This isn't so bad. In fact, it could be worse.

### Worse

It was enough to make you blush. There it was, in *The New York Times*: a Bar Mitzvah in the Orange Bowl, no less, with an accompanying photograph. I shift in my seat uncomfortably, and look frantically about. No sense trying to hide my embarrassment, because everybody else either read it already, or soon will.... Yessir, my neighbor on the subway train pulls out a clipping from the *Daily News*, the week before. "This is old hat," he says. And I read:

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Stan Cohen of Miami didn't want his son, Harvey, to have some kind of a blah Bar Mitzvah. So he decided upon a jet plane? A ferris wheel? Don't be such a piker. He rented the Orange Bowl, and hired Adams Productions of Hollywood, Fla., to stage it. There'll be a 100-piece high shool marching band for "halftime," waiters dressed like referees and waitresses decked out like cheer leaders. Said Harvey, who turns 13 on May 13, "Its pretty neat, I never expected anything like it." The event will cost papa \$1,500 for the bowl, plus security, lighting, entertainment and cleanup. The total, he said, will be "more than anticipated."

How awful, I think. Isn't a Bar Mitzva a private affair? Shouldn't it bespeak sanctity, continuity, tradition, responsibility? What a "shandeh" that one of ours should be guilty of such outrageous ostentation!

Then, back to the *Times* story that lavishes the details about the number of guests, the \$20,000 price

tag, the scoreboard proclaiming "Congratulations, Harvey!" And suddenly the redeeming quotation leaps off the page: "Earlier in the day, at the Conservative temple where no press cameras were permitted, Harvey completed ..." Oh. It was a Conservative Jewish function not an Orthodox one. At least we aren't guilty of such nonsense.

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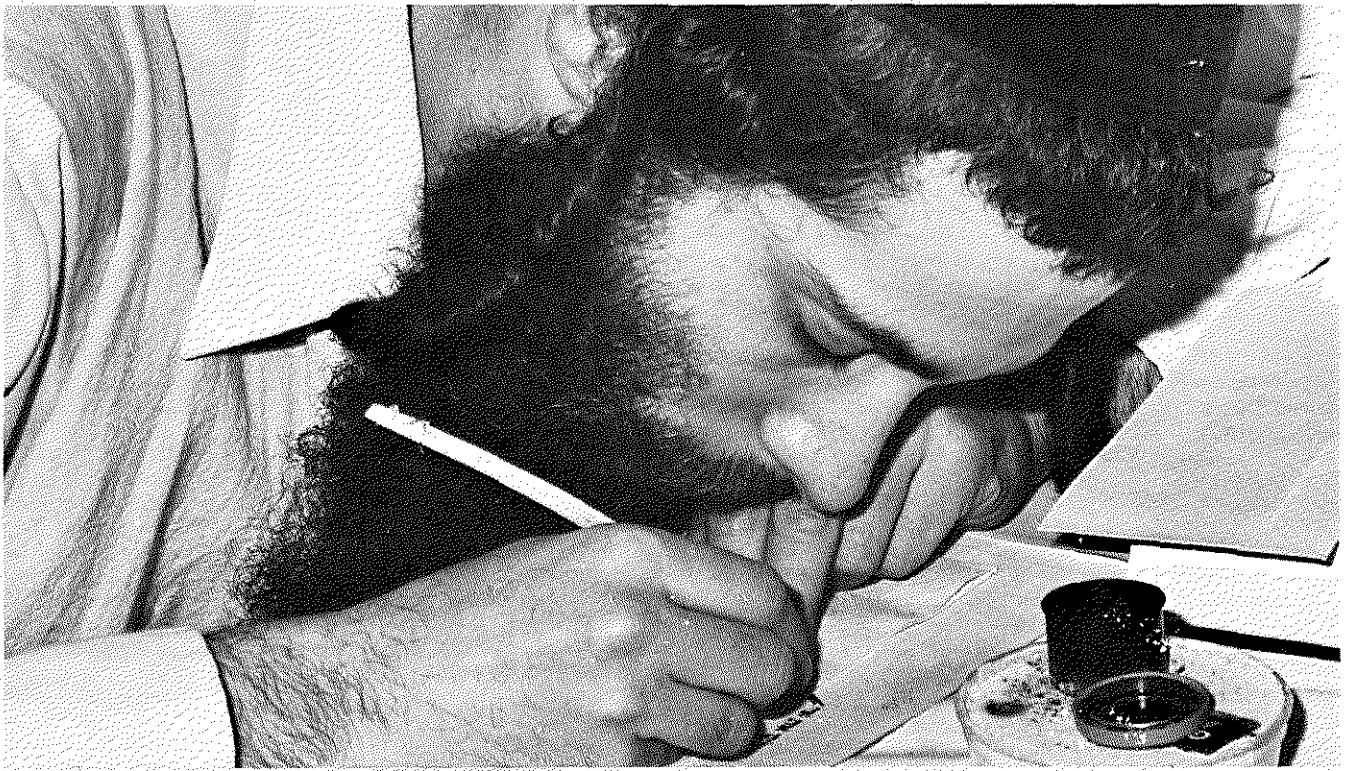
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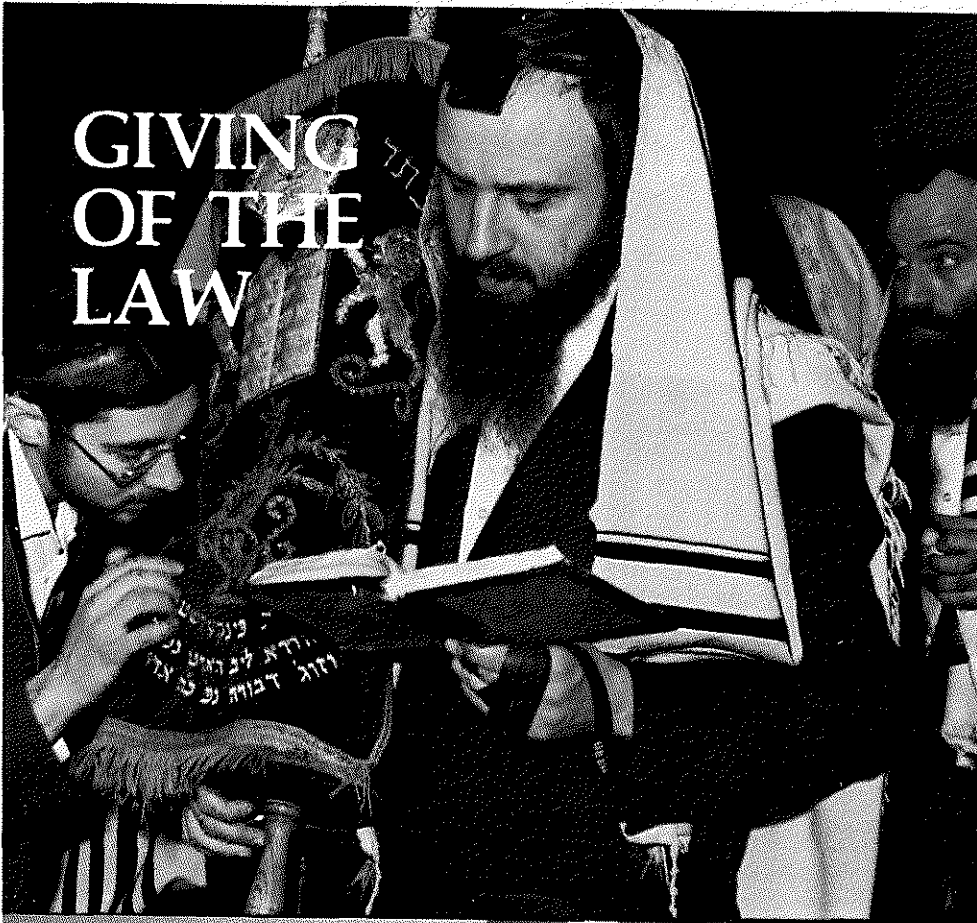
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## Pesach:

# A Time of New Understanding

Like all festivals, Pesach is a celebration of an aspect of Jewish nationhood — only more so. As on all festivals, the Pesach Kiddush intones "Blessed ... Who has chosen us from all nations," and twenty times during the holiday week, we say in the *amidah*: "You have chosen us from amongst the nations" — but much more. Pesach is the reliving of the Exodus from Egypt, the very creation of *Am Hanivchar*.

Why is it, then, that inter-faith events seem to pop up like crocuses in April when Pesach approaches, and instead of channeling their efforts toward internal understanding, dialogue-devotees persist in reaching out to other religious groups for exchange?

Undoubtedly, the dialoguists are at no loss for an answer. Pesach usually coincides with the Easter season, and the latter has usually been cause for anti-semitic riots and pogroms in Christian communities of old. Could there be a more propitious time for exchanging ideas and promoting mutual understanding?

But there is always that hazard that not only will information be exchanged, integrity will be compromised, and commitment will, to one degree or another, be watered down.

A prime example of this is an exchange of pulpits between Rabbi Ronald Sobel of (the 5th Ave.) Temple Emanuel, and Reverend Dr. Win. Sloane Coffin of the Riverside Church, which made front-page *New York Times*. Not relying on a public act to blur the differences between religions, Sobel made a point of declaring an ecumenicism worthy of being chosen "Quotation of the Day" by *the Times*:

"We stand before the world, and must proclaim without taint of hypocrisy that, ultimately and finally, in G-d's eyes, there is no Jew and no Gentile, no white and no black, but there is only precious human being."

No doubt, part of Rabbi Sobel's difficulty in failing to perceive the pitfalls of interfaith activity is his past failure to have ever learned the "You have chosen us ..." lesson. The particularist role inherent in being Jewish, the responsibilities and singular mission — where could he ever have encountered them, in Hebrew Union College? And once the lines are *not* drawn between groups, on what basis *do* Jews band together?

No one said it better than Rabbi Balfour Brickner, director of the national department of inter-religious affairs of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform), and we quote:

Beverly Hills, Calif. — The Reform movement in the United States should not exclude Reform rabbis if they became involved in the 'Jews for Jesus,' movement, according to Rabbi Balfour Brickner, director of the national department of interreligious affairs of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform).

Speaking as one of a panel of experts at the Brandeis-Bardin Forum on Contemporary Values, Rabbi Brickner said "I would not throw him out as a rabbi. I think such an action by Reform rabbi is foolish, ludicrous and impossible. He would exclude himself."

Rabbi Brickner said that the Reform movement has rabbis who are atheists and agnostics, and even homosexuals. "Should we throw them out?" he asked. "Where would we stop?"

(JEWISH WEEK & AMERICAN EXAMINER.)

April 9, 1978

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## Letters to the Editor



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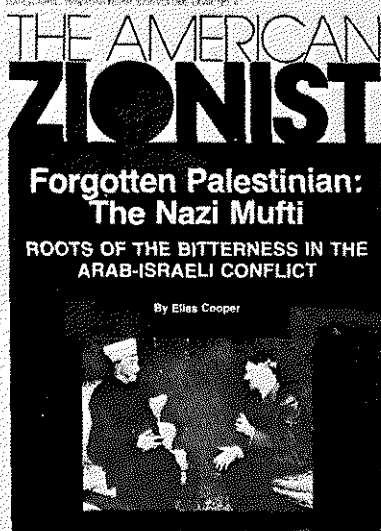
### The Arabs in Nazi's Council and the Nazi in Arab Leadership

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To the Editor:

While the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, does not need me to bolster his thesis regarding Mufti support of the Nazi genocide of Jews (J.O. Nov. '77), I found a footnote to his article in a recent publication. The Zionist-oriented press has made little note of the Nazi-Mufti connection, perhaps because this group's designs to create a Jewish state in Palestine, totally without Arab participation, may have added to the Arabs' enmity for the Jews.

Now, in an understandable move to cast doubt on the sincerity of Arab friendship toward Jews, the *American Zionist Magazine* has discovered that the Arabs do, indeed,



harbor an historic antipathy toward the Jews. In a book-length feature that fills the entire March-April edi-

tion of the magazine, editor Elias Cooper presents "Forgotten Palestinian: The Nazi Mufti."

According to Professor Cooper: "The Arab connection to the Holocaust is both general and specific. In the 1930's and during WW II Arab leaders throughout the Middle East, by threatening to make common cause with the Axis powers, pressed Britain, the power then administering Palestine, to keep the gates of that country closed to Jewish refugees from the Nazi horrors.

"The specific Arab connection to the Holocaust was the activity of the leader of the Palestinian Arabs, Haj Amin el Hussein, who sat out the Second World War in Berlin as Hitler's Quisling-in-waiting, the man who hoped to be Hitler's gauleiter for the Middle East, and who associated himself fully with the Nazi 'final solution' of the Jewish problem."

The main documents proving the Mufti's association in the Nazi campaign of genocide are quoted by Cooper, as follows:

1. *The clause which the Mufti proposed as part of a 1940 Arab-Axis treaty: 'Germany and Italy recognize the right of the Arab countries to solve the question of the Jewish elements in Palestine and other Arab countries in a manner that conforms to the national and ethnic interests of the Arabs and to the solution of the Jewish question in the countries of Germany and Italy.'*

2. *A November 1943 speech by Hussein over Berlin Radio, which carried this statement: "National Socialist Germany knows the Jews well and has decided to find a final*

*solution for the Jewish danger ... The Arabs ... and Moslems ... are obliged to make this their goal from which they will not stray and which they must reach with all their powers: It is the expulsion of all Jews from Arab and Moslem lands."*

Cooper points out these statements prove that the Mufti was planning to extend the Nazi extermination program to the Jews of the Middle East because at that very time the Mufti was writing letters to the leaders of Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania and other Nazi satellite governments advising them to "expel" all their Jews to Poland, the center of the extermination activities.

The Nazi orientation of the Palestinian movement is traced from the Mufti of Jerusalem's first contacts with Nazi Germany in the 1930's.

The motive for the new discovery of this old truth is, of course, obvious. Says Cooper: "If there is an emergent new Palestinian national consciousness, it is so dependent for its cohesion on hatred toward Israel that it would be best not to encourage it." But old truths have more than one level of applicability.

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**LETTERS CONTINUED**

**Jerusalem: The Stadium and the Greenbelt**

To the Editor:

As a professional City Planner, I wish to add my voice to those opposed to the building of a new stadium in Jerusalem. The Judean Hills not only offer a magnificent view, lending to the serenity of the Shabbat, but also are part of Jerusalem's natural "greenbelt."

The Talmud commands the Jewish people to leave an open space area around each city. This

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modern concept of a "greenbelt" thus has ancient roots in *halacha*.

Environmentally, these "greenbelts" serve a function, aside from aesthetic considerations, which would be reason enough for maintaining them. Trees could be planted in the "greenbelt" which would serve as vacuum cleaners, and act as natural absorbers of air pollution caused by industry, power stations, home heating, and motor vehicles.

The proposed stadium would not only cause the urban area to encroach on the city's "greenbelt," it would add considerable vehicular pollution to the very atmosphere of Jerusalem. This would eventually have an adverse effect on the beautiful Jerusalem stone facings of the buildings, and detract from the beauty of the whole city, not just French Hill, Ramat Eshkol, Ramot and Sanhedria Murchevet.

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## Agudath Israel Dinner Hears Rabbi Moshe Feinstein Call for Expanded Social Services With Torah Guidance



A SECTION OF THE PAIS. Rabbi Chanoch Ehrentreu (England), Rabbi Jacob I. Ruderman (Baltimore), Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (speaking), Rabbi Moshe Sherer, and Senator Jacob Javits. (Photograph: M.Z. Weisberg)

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, addressing the recent 56th anniversary dinner of Agudath Israel of America on behalf of the Council of Torah Sages (Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah), called for "the expansion of social services programs conducted in accordance with Torah principles, for only under Torah guidance can these services be performed with responsibility and integrity. Especially praiseworthy are Agudath Israel's continually growing social services programs, which are exemplary for the skill, responsibility and understanding with which they are being carried out."

Rabbi Chanoch Ehrentreu, Rosh Kollel Harabonim of Sunderland, England, who was the evening's guest speaker, decried "the *golus* tendency of attempting to please other groups with one's cultural expressions, when the inherent authenticity of our own Torah culture should be its own source of pleasure to us, its practitioners." He singled out the wide-spectrum activities of Agudath Israel of America for its single-minded loyalty to Torah both in determining its goals and in selecting the means it pursues to reach these goals.

The audience consisted of a cross-section of the leadership and activists of the Orthodox Jewish community from many cities in North America, and the two-tiered dais was graced by distinguished rabbinic and lay leaders. Representing the Council of Torah Sages, besides Rabbi Feinstein, were Rabbi Jacob I. Ruderman, Rosh Yeshiva of the Ner Israel Yeshiva of Baltimore, and Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin-Kollel Gur Aryeh.

### "Avoid 'State Of War' Over Jet Sale," Javits Cautions

Senator Jacob J. Javits, in a special appearance at the dinner, offered greetings and a message of encouragement to the organization. He told the crowd of 1,000 guests that filled the N.Y. Hilton ballroom:

"It would be inimical to Jewish interests to permit the defeat (in the Senate on the package sale of warplanes to Arab countries) to cause a 'state of war' between the Jewish community and those who disagree with us on this sale." At the same time he stressed that "we must never be intimidated into diminishing or relinquishing the constitutional right of the citizens of this nation who are Jewish, to let their views be known."

Senator Javits acknowledged that Jews

### Thousands Benefited from Agudath Israel Global Pesach Aid

In what has become an annual tradition for Agudath Israel of America, thousands of Jews in the United States and overseas benefited from programs sponsored by the organization.

In this country, senior citizens and other poor Jews enjoyed special Yom Tov programs sponsored by the Commission on Senior Citizens of Agudath Israel of America. Model *sedorim* were held in the senior citizens centers sponsored by Agudath Israel as was a well-attended community Pesach *seder* in Boro Park.

Pesach activities also included the distribution of food parcels to the needy. The food included wine and matzos for the *seder* as well as other holiday foods. Shut-ins who cannot leave their homes because of ill health

were "traumatized by the loss that was suffered when the Senate approved the package deal," but he warned that "it would be counter productive to treat this one vote as demonstrating that our federal legislators no longer fully appreciate the significance of Israel and its security needs."

Senator Javits concluded: "What is crucial at this time is for us to work unrelentingly to see that America's 'special relationship' to Israel should indeed be forever — in a practical sense and not only in rhetoric." New York's senior senator lauded Agudath Israel of America for performing its community service programs "with traditional Jewish compassion and the highest standards of integrity" and for its advocacy of public issues with "wisdom and responsibility."

Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive president of the movement, presented the awards to three community leaders: Rabbi Edwin Katzenstein — Hagoan Reb Aharon Kotler Memorial Award for distinguished service to Torah; Rabbi Chaskel Besser — Moreinu Yaakov Rosenheim Memorial Award for outstanding service to Agudath Israel; and Joseph M. Engel — "Shearis Hapleitoh Man of the Year" Elimelech Tress Memorial Award.

Branch Service Awards were presented by Rabbi Shmuel Bloom, Director of Special Projects of Agudath Israel, to five leaders of local Agudist chapters: Max Grossman — Boro Park, 14th Avenue; Joseph Greenberg — Far Rockaway; Lazar Friedman — Monsey; Yonah Blumenfrucht — Midwood; Moshe Ungar — Boro Park, 18th Avenue. Rabbi Chaim Bressler, Rosh Yeshiva of Beth Moshe of Scranton, Pennsylvania was the chairman. An appropriate *nigun* was sung by Eli Kahn, representing Agudath Israel's youth groups, Pirchei Agudath Israel of America.

had holiday meals brought to them by volunteer girls of Project NAJR, Bnos Agudath Israel's ongoing homebound meals program. As a result of all these activities, food valued in the thousands of dollars was distributed to poor Jews all over the city in the Jewish tradition of *Maos Chitim*.

Overseas many needy Jews received matzos and other kosher l'Pesach food parcels through the annual effort of the international Agudath Israel network, with an assist from the American Agudah's Project YAD. A special Pesach program for Russian immigrants in Israel was sponsored by the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund. In addition to the distribution of thousands of food parcels throughout Israel, Haggadahs in the Russian language were also distributed.

## SBCO Neighborhood Program Expands to Flatbush

Flatbush, one of Brooklyn's largest Jewish communities, is the focus of a new program recently launched by the Southern Brooklyn Community Organization, which is sponsoring many community organization and development projects in neighboring Boro Park. SBCO was launched less than a year ago by the National Commission on Jewish Ethnic Affairs of Agudath Israel of America, to promote renewed economic development and community organization within some of Brooklyn's largest Jewish concentrations. The project, partially funded by the Ford Foundation, has in the short time of its existence become a model community endeavor for similar movements throughout the country.

The effort in Flatbush will closely emulate the extensive program undertaken in Boro Park. In that predominantly middle class community, SBCO has organized block associations, neighborhood-wide groups and a vibrant Merchants' Association for its main commercial strip: Thirteenth Avenue. As the first steps in its sweeping program for the community, under the watchful eye of an active Advisory Board which reflects the inter-ethnic nature of the project, SBCO has also sealed or demolished several blighted buildings in Boro Park to erase potential sore spots in the neighborhood.

According to Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz, executive director of SBCO, much of the

problem in the Flatbush-Boro Park communities is "deteriorated housing stock, especially four-story walk-ups which stand in the midst of middle class communities like a thorn." Says Rabbi Lefkowitz: "These buildings were unfortunately constructed decades ago amidst neatly lined one and two family private homes. Once buildings have been neglected, they virtually assure an out-migration of middle class whites."

In announcing the new Flatbush program, the SBCO leader noted that an Advisory Board was also being organized for the Flatbush community. Headed by Dr. Bernard Fryshman, it will also involve representatives from the different ethnic communities who reside in Flatbush. The current blueprint for Flatbush action, according to Rabbi Lefkowitz, is to "organize the residents of the area and help them deal with the immediate problems of security and sanitation, while longer-ranged projects such as housing and general community development are in the active planning stage."

Like Boro Park, SBCO intends to work in Flatbush with neighborhood groups whose goals are similar. Rabbi Yaakov Lonner and Mr. Chaim Israel, both of SBCO's staff, have been working closely with the lower 40's Neighborhood Association, the Boro Park West Neighborhood Association and with the Thirteenth Avenue Merchants' Association. Robert F. Solamine, assistant director of SBCO for housing, assists with individual landlords to develop strategies for their housing stock.

SBCO's rapid expansion is in line with the Agudath Israel resolve to sponsor neighborhood projects in middle class neighborhoods well before deterioration and social change threaten their existence. The initial successes of SBCO have received wide recognition from neighborhood groups, government agencies, and experts dealing with local organization and development throughout the country.

## Israel's Yeshivos Receive IL 32 Million Grant

Jerusalem — Institutions of higher Torah learning in every part of Israel received before Passover government grants totalling 32 million Israeli pounds. The Agudist Knesset deputies, deeply concerned by the financial woes of Israel's yeshivos, caused by spiralling inflation, had insisted that the government increase financial aid to Torah institutions, especially since it funds universities at a much higher level of grants.

The 32 million pounds were assigned for distribution to the Vaad HaYeshivos, the country's major united agency representing yeshivos of the broadest of circles, which made certain that the institutions receive their grants before the Passover holiday. The timeliness of this grant, when the needs of the yeshivos and their students are especially acute, was stressed in the many expressions of gratitude from the hard-pressed leaders of the institutions.

## Violators of Mezuzah Fraud Law Warned by Agudath Israel

Stern warnings were issued to a number of vendors, from whom Agudath Israel of America's monitors purchased non-kosher *mezuzos*, requesting a confirmation in writing that they will henceforth comply with the New York State law, which bans such sales as consumer fraud. The warning was sent by registered mail by attorney Marc Z. Newman, chairman of the Consumer Protection Task Force of Agudath Israel, whose monitors have been making purchases of *mezuzos* since the law went into effect October 6, 1977.

According to the new law, which was initiated by the Commission on Legislation of Agudath Israel of America, and signed by Governor Hugh L. Carey, every *mezuzah* or pair of *tefillin* sold in New York must have a packaging clearly stating the name and address of the manufacturer, fabricator or importer of that religious article. In the event that the *mezuzah* or *tefillin* fails to conform with "Orthodox Jewish religious law," then the wrapping must be clearly labeled "non-kosher."

Mr. Newman informed the vendors who had sold non-kosher *mezuzos* to Agudath Israel's monitors that after this first warning, the organization will have to take appropriate steps to enforce the provisions of the statute if further violations are found. Mr. Newman also issued a call to the Jewish public for anyone with information about the sale of non-kosher *mezuzos* or *tefillin* to write to his attention to: Commission on Legislation and Civic Action, Agudath Israel of America, 5 Beekman Street, New York, New York 10038.



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## Agudath Israel Urges End To Job Discrimination Against Orthodox Jews

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) was urged by Agudath Israel of America, to adopt new strict guidelines and to otherwise influence business to end discriminatory practices in employment against Orthodox Jews. In testimony at an EEOC hearing in New York on Thursday, April 6th, chaired by Commissioner Eleanor Holmes Norton, Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, director of Project COPE told the commission that Orthodox Jews "still face enormous hardships in locating employment because of their religious beliefs."

Citing the experiences of the Agudath Israel career guidance and job training agency as a guide, Rabbi Lubinsky noted that despite legislation "there still exists a subtle discrimination in the business sector which affects thousands of Orthodox Jewish job seekers. In addition to Sabbath observance," he said, "wearing a yarmulke or Chassidic garb continues to be a major handicap in seeking employment."

The Agudath Israel spokesman urged the Commission to adopt new guidelines, especially in light of the confusion that has resulted from the much publicized Supreme Court decision in the TWA v. Hardison case, in which the Supreme Court exempted TWA from accommodating a Sabbath observer on the grounds of "undue hardship," which was increased costs. In addition, Rabbi Lubinsky made a strong pitch for broad educational campaign targeted at business to familiarize employers with the unique needs of Orthodox Jews and other special groups. The Agudath Israel statement continued: "As a result of our experiences with both employers and employees, we would strongly urge that education be a top priority of those that are concerned with accommodating the religious needs of employees. This approach, coupled with new strict guidelines following 'Hardison' is certain to have positive results."

In a special appeal to the business community, Rabbi Lubinsky said: "Employers would do well to note that their customers and others with whom they deal on a daily basis are ahead of them and fully perceive that pluralism in America is a reality to be seen and appreciated in every facet of society. Business should not be exempted from cultural pluralism."

Agudath Israel of America was one of the early pioneers in mobilizing support for legislation to protect the Sabbath observers in public and private employ. Citing the more recent example of serving more than

## Gay Rights Bill Could Speed Exodus From New York, Agudath Israel Warns

"The effort to defeat the Gay Rights bill introduced April 18 in New York's City Council is a last-ditch battle to save New York City from further decay; its implications reach deeper than the immediate legal impact of the measure and may accelerate the mass exodus from the city." This warning was issued by Dr. Bernard Fryshman, Chairman of the Commission on Legislation of Agudath Israel of America.

The Agudath Israel spokesman pointed out that the City of New York "has in recent years been reeling at the ropes from a growing moral decay which has contributed to the spiritual erosion of a city beloved by millions." The public admonition also stated:

"If the City Council will now adopt a Gay Rights bill, it would further deteriorate the moral tone of the entire community, and severely damage New York's image in the eyes of our nation and the entire world. A law which bestows legitimacy upon a practice which the Bible condemns as an abomination, which mandates that teachers, policemen and camp counselors can all be overt homosexuals, will result in ever-increasing numbers of children concluding that homosexuality is a legitimate alternative lifestyle.

"Proponents of this measure have been organizing huge pressure campaigns on the City Council members, falsely claiming that the current situation violates the civil rights of homosexuals. Actually, society's obligation to protect itself from those who would destroy its mores, supercedes any other alleged consideration.

15,000 job applicants at Project COPE, the Agudath Israel leader concluded that accommodation was possible "with a small measure of good will by employers." Agudath Israel lauded the EEOC for conducting the hearings and for its demonstrated sensitivity to the problem of meeting the religious needs of working Americans.

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## Hospitals Consider "Jewish Patient's Bill of Rights"

At least one hospital has formally adopted the "Jewish Patient's Bill of Rights," for the treatment of religious Jewish patients, according to a spokesman for Agudath Israel of America, the national Orthodox Jewish organization which authored the unique document. The first hospital in the country to officially adopt this code was the Barnert Memorial Hospital Center of Paterson, New Jersey, which voted to adopt the "Jewish Patient's Bill of Rights" as hospital policy. In addition to Barnert, many hospitals throughout the country are now using the code as their governing guidelines in the treatment of observant patients.

Agudath Israel published this Bill of Rights as a service to hospital administrators who are "eager to offer the most effective healing facilities to all of their patients," and to inform Orthodox Jewish patients that "a polite but forceful request for their rights will be honored by hospitals." Dr. Bernard Fryshman, chairman of the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel, who authored the "Jewish Patient's Bill of Rights," emphasized that "lingering neglect by hospitals of the Jewish patients' unique needs are mainly due to ignorance by hospital staff rather than malicious intent."

A spokesman for Agudath Israel warmly applauded Barnert Hospital in New Jersey for being the first to formally adopt the procedure. Nearly 200 hospitals throughout the country have written the national office of Agudath Israel for more information.

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Rabbi Eisenberg's work is warmly endorsed by Maran Hagaon Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Maran Hagaon Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, Hagaon Rabbi Shneur Kotler; Hagaon Rabbi Moshe Stern, Rav of Debrecyn; and Hagaon Rabbi Binyamin Silber of Bnai Brak, שליט"א.

All halachos have been reviewed by the Debrecyn Rav who has graciously allowed the author to include many heretofore unpublished halachic decisions.

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