

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

SIVAN, 5739 / APRIL, 1979
VOLUME XIII, NUMBER 10
\$1.25

Anatomy of Peace

Rabbi Boruch Sorotzkin שליט"א

Intermarriage:

Solutions and Their Problems

Sefirah Reflections

Book Reviews

Letters

in this issue . . .

"Peace"—The Anatomy of a Dramatic Change,
Ezriel Tshavi 3

Combatting the Intermarriage Crisis . . . and Some of
the Solutions, *Nisson Wolpin* 6

When the Sun Set at Midday: An Appreciation of
Rabbi Raphoel Boruch Sorotzkin ל"צו,
Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller 11

The Omer — Some Reflections, *Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan* . . . 17

Addenda — Books in Review 20
Mitzvos
Children's Literature
Books on Jerusalem

Postscripts:
Last of the Leningrad Trial 25

Second Looks at the Jewish scene
Of Death and Life, *Rabbi Shlomo Kahn* 27

Letters to the Editor 29

THE JEWISH OBSERVER (ISSN 0021-6615) is published monthly, except July and August, by the Agudath Israel of America, 5 Beekman Street, New York, N.Y. 10038. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Subscription \$9.00 per year; two years, \$17.50; three years, \$25.00; outside of the United States, \$10.00 per year. Single copy, \$1.25
Printed in the U.S.A.

RABBI NISSON WOLPIN
Editor

Editorial Board
DR ERNST L. BODENHEIMER
Chairman
RABBI NATHAN BULMAN
RABBI JOSEPH ELIAS
JOSEPH FRIEDENSON
RABBI MOSHE SHERER

THE JEWISH OBSERVER does not assume responsibility for the Kashrus of any product or service advertised in its pages.

Copyright 1979
APRIL, 1979 VOL. XIII, NO. 10

**Subscribe
Renew
or Give
Now
and
SAVE**

Clip, and save

The Jewish Observer
5 Beekman Street / New York, N.Y. 10038

One year \$9.00 Two years \$17.50
 Three years \$25.00

Send Magazine to:

Name.....
Address.....
City..... State/Zip.....
From:
Name.....
Address.....
City..... State/Zip.....

Enclose gift card Bill me: \$..... Enclosed: \$.....

"Peace"— Anatomy of a Dramatic Change



The events of the past few months have ushered in a welcome relaxation from the unrelenting tension that has gripped Israel virtually since the founding of the State thirty-one years ago. After a continuous state of war with all her neighbors, the one confrontational enemy that had been most responsible for this belligerency and proved the most threatening adversary on the battle field has sat down with Israeli representatives and signed a peace treaty.

True enough, few people are deluding themselves into believing that we have finally achieved the peace for which we have been praying for millennia. Banners decorated with doves and tri-lingual peace slogans notwithstanding, we know that we have yet to realize the fulfillment of the concluding request of our every prayer, our every *Kaddish*: "May He who makes peace in the upper spheres bring peace to us and all Israel"!

Moreover, it is obvious that it is even premature to

celebrate a total cessation of warfare. Erstwhile moderates, such as Hussein, have gravitated into the camp of rabid belligerents; Ayatollah Khoumeini is now calling the shots in once friendly Iran, which has now turned over the Israeli embassy building to the PLO; the PLO, and the Palestinians in general, are basking in new respectability; and even the Egyptian-Israeli friendship may yet go the way of the Syrian-Egyptian union of the short-lived United Arab Republic of a decade ago. Furthermore, Israeli military might, security and economy are tied to American foreign policy, fiscal stability, oil dependency, public generosity and political mood as never before. Can these be depended upon?—and for how long?

But all of these clouds do not mitigate the tremendous relief, that we have reached a point—in whatever form, for whatever duration—where an ominous threat does not lurk at Israel's border to the south. And the steadily mounting loss of lives in war, totaling in the tens of thousands since 1948, has finally come to a stop. This, above all, cheers Jewish hearts the world over.

EZRIEL TOSHAVI observes the Israeli scene for JO readers.

PEACE שָׁלוֹם

Of Flaws and Effects

Some go beyond the tenuousness of the peace, and say it is no peace, but a ruse, and deserves mourning not celebration, for Israel is conceding territory that is irreplaceable as a defense buffer, gaining nothing of substance in return. While their arguments are not easy to refute, others are quick to point out that Israel could not conceivably ignore the Sadat peace offensive, and still maintain any sort of image in the international community as a seeker of peace. More important, Israel simply cannot afford to by-pass any opportunity for peace, no matter how slim, when the alternative is continued bloodshed.

While everyone must find some relief in the gestures of peace-making, critics and defenders alike must also accept that it is inevitable that both options facing us were unattractive. This dilemma is typical of political choices that are forced upon us in this less-than-perfect world of ours, especially in regard to *Eretz Yisroel*. No doubt, those who believe that the creation of the *Medina* is part and parcel of the flowering of the *ge'ula* cannot come to grips with the quandary we face, finding no fully gratifying resolution to the "peace" problem, when the *Medina* should usher in an era of unequivocal normalcy and peace. But to the rest of us, who did not see the creation of the state as *As'chalta deGeula*, it should not be surprising that both sides of the coin are direct products of a situation that means that there is an abundance of work for *Moshiach* to accomplish . . . And, the choices being what they are, we gladly opt for cessation of bloodshed.

Relinquishing Lands: Too High a Price?

The immediate terms of the peace agreement call for evacuating Sinai. This means relinquishing a heavy investment of money, energy and military installations, which is being weighed against the obvious gains—making it a difficult price to pay for peace, but certainly worth the expense. The future of the administered lands on the West Bank—Yehuda and Shomron—is a different matter. True, most secular Israelis make no secret that they would not object to losing control of these lands, preferring to settle for less of the Holy Land under full Israeli control. After all, incorporating the West Bank and Gaza Strip into Israel and keeping its Arab population under military control is an extremely tenuous plan—especially in view of the high Arab birth rate, contrasted with the low Israeli rate, and the mounting Arab restlessness.

But there are others, for whom full possession of the

entire land has a different meaning—those whose dream is based on the Divine promise to Abraham: "To your seed shall I give this land." They view our millennia-long historical experience and our destiny as a people as intrinsically bound with inhabiting *all* of the Holy Land, not merely isolated parts. As G-d promised Abraham: "And I will give to you and your children after you . . . ALL of the land of Canaan as an everlasting estate . . ." (*Bereishis* 17, 8). Permitting sacred acreage to slip from our hands has a special stabbing effect to this Jew. In its way, it can represent a distancing from our dream of fully inhabiting the land, and is an extremely high price to pay for promises of peace.

But considerations of *pikuach nefesh*—the preservation of life—are of overriding concern; and as numerous *Gedolei Torah* have said time and again, the *mitzva* of "Lo *Se'chaneim* (Do not grant others possession of the Land)"—the halachic prohibition against selling any lands in *Eretz Yisroel* to a non-Jew—does not prevail in a life-and-death situation. Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Schach שליט"א the venerable Ponovezher Rosh Yeshiva, wrote the Agudath Israel Knesset representatives:

"With reference to the question you asked me on how to vote—for or against—the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt which will be discussed in the Knesset:

"My brief reply to you is that there is no shadow of a doubt that we are obligated to agree with every step towards peace in any form. We are obligated to accept any compromise that can bring peace closer since much bloodshed will be prevented as a result of peace.

"And all discussions about the prohibition regarding 'lo sechaneim' and the issue of G-d's promise that all of the land was given to us in its entirety—according to our situation in our era, there can be no basis for such views since this does not depend upon us. Our obligation is strictly to better our ways in the observance of Torah and Mitzvos, and then surely we will be worthy of the fulfillment of G-d's promise. We must pray that G-d will bless His nation with peace."

True, we dream of inhabiting "all of the land of Canaan," as G-d promised. But the means for achieving this is not by military might, but by directing our actions so they reassure the true Master of the Land that we pursue the goal He described to Abraham in the closing words of His promise: "I will give you . . . all the land . . . so I may be your G-d"—much as Rabbi Schach delineated in the closing lines of his letter.

While everyone must find relief in the gestures of peace-making, critics and defenders alike must accept that all choices available must be unattractive in this less-than-perfect world of ours . . . leaving over much for Moshiach.

A Time to Reflect

So we have finally reached the point where there can be serious talk about opening Israeli-Egyptian borders to trade, tourists, and student exchanges; and the time is no longer distant when one will be able to dream about eventual demobilization, and the country will finally anticipate relief from the terrible pressures of feeding the greedy war machines — to the tune of over a third of the national budget. Soon, it is hoped, the army uniform will no longer be a ubiquitous reminder of threat of war and of lives already lost, nor will military service so dominate everyone's life plans. — And then? And then people will be able to ask themselves, "Where have I come from?" and, "Where am I heading?", which should lead to the concluding consideration: "Before whom must I give an accounting?"

Confronting these questions could lead to a restructuring of lives along the lines of Torah heritage and our Torah destiny. They could . . . but, on the other hand, a relaxation of wartime tensions could lead elsewhere — to a selfish turning inward, focusing on personal whims, with an emphasis of material gains and emotional gratification. Anyone who has lived in a country mobilized for warfare — whether World War II America or 1967 Israel — remembers how disparate segments of the broad populace were galvanized into a cohesive unit, brimming over with patriotism and heretofore untapped resources of altruism . . . Nothing unites a people as much as the domination of their national priorities by simple survival. Once this survival threat is gone, however, the country often goes on a binge of overcompensation for the austerity it suffered.

Relief and Relaxation

Of course, few experiences can match the relief of resolving a personal (or national) crisis and everyone is anxious for its advent. Undoubtedly, a similar feeling marked the Jewish emergence from confinement behind ghetto walls, in the early 1800's. Until they were "liberated" from the ghetto, Jews could only dwell on a designated *Judenstrasse* — usually crowded and beset with filthy conditions—engage in narrowly prescribed means of earning a livelihood, and not stay beyond the ghetto walls after nightfall. At the same time, ghetto walls represented more than confinement; they also meant protection from corrosive influences of the outside world. To be sure, no one living within a ghetto would greet the crumbling of its walls with anything

but jubilation. Yet, the accompanying result was exposure to debilitating influences that proved to be a threat to *Klal Yisroel's* spiritual integrity.

By the same token, the relief at achieving peace is not without its attendant challenges: Who is to say that, come peace, everyone will recognize that simply to live, or even to flourish, as just another Levantine state indistinguishable from the rest, is not life, but national death? We certainly welcome the prospect of no more trenches dug in against foreign invaders, but they did have one positive function—as initiators of "foxhole faith." If the student-age population fails to gravitate to *emuna* without foxholes, then the absence of warfare in its own way may be cause for as deep a concern for survival as is a face-off with belligerent neighbors.

In addition, "open borders" may spell "open families," assimilation, and even intermarriage with our Arab neighbors—especially when the culture, the way of life, and the sons and daughters of our erstwhile

EGYPTIAN STUDENTS INVITE ISRAELIS By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, May 1, (JTA)—Amin Ebady, chairman of the Egyptian Student Organization in New York University, extended an invitation today to Israeli students here to come and participate in Egypt Day celebrations on May 9, at the NYU campus. According to Naomi Ben-Gur, national secretary of the Israeli Student Organization (ISO) in the U.S. and Canada, the invitation came by telephone this morning at the headquarters of the ISO here.

"Amin told me that in view of the new era of peace that started between our two countries, his organization would like to have a group of Israeli students at this year's celebration of Egypt Day. He invited us to share an Egyptian meal and view Egyptian movies," Ben-Gur said. She said that the invitation was accepted and it was also agreed that the Israeli students will bring with them Israeli food and films as their contribution to the celebration.

Ben-Gur said that she also discussed with Ebady further contacts and cooperation between Israeli and Egyptian students in this country and in Canada.

enemies assume the deadly attraction of once forbidden fruits now rendered permissible.

Other groups are looking to the prospect of peace as an unrivalled opportunity to embark on new ventures, reap new achievements . . . The fundraising establishment is launching new "peace drives," to justify their continued activity . . . Rabbi Stanley Rabinowitz, president of "Mercaz," a newly formed Conservative segment of the Zionist movement, told colleagues that "now that peace is at hand . . . we reaffirm our commitment and struggle to achieve full religious pluralism in Israel, a luxury we could ill afford when Israel was beleaguered on all sides." Specifically, peace will give Mercaz an opportunity to enroll the unaffiliated within the Zionist movement world-wide and to provide an alternative expression of Zionism for those who object to the Orthodox monopoly in the area of religion." (quotes from JTA, May 3, '79)

The Onus on Us

The Conservatives, the fundraisers, the students all see new opportunities and new challenges in the advent of peace. We, too, must see the change in atmosphere as

an opening for embarking on new opportunities for Torah to flourish with more strength and more breadth. Who else can counter the subtle, yet lethal threat of spiritual indifference and assimilation? Undoubtedly, this puts the onus on those astute enough to recognize it when most others are too drunk with the prospect of "no more wars" to even know that the threat exists. This means that our Torah camp will be more concerned than ever with presenting a life with fidelity to Torah as attractive and purposeful; and that "reaching out" to our spiritually impoverished brothers cannot be the occupation of only a handful, but must somehow be the constant concern of all.

Perhaps the eventual change-over to a peace-time society will finally bring an end to the lack of appreciation of the yeshiva population as prime "Defenders of the City" through their activities in the Beis Medrash. They will then be more at ease with people from the mainstream of Israeli life, interacting with them for the betterment of all concerned.

Torah has in many ways suffered displacement from the list of national priorities because of war-time considerations. We must not permit it to suffer neglect in the heady euphoria of peace. Now Torah *must* dominate. 17

Nisson Wolpin

Combatting the Intermarriage Crisis . . . and Some of the Solutions

Surveys and Proposals—Our Concern

The rising number of Jews alienated from our heritage is surely one of the major tragedies of our time. And nothing within the full range of alienation can match the finality of an intermarriage, for it signals the slamming shut of the door on the likelihood of future generations returning to Judaism. Either the children of such a union will be non-Jews, or most probably they will be brought up without any understanding of what being Jewish means. Thus, every intermarriage is a tragedy of many dimensions—to the people involved, to

the children to be born, and to *Klal Yisroel* for its loss of precious *neshamos*.

The Orthodox community is removed from the scene of the disappearing Jew, yet it surely feels the pain of such losses more acutely than other groups. Who else is closer to the heritage that is losing adherents? Who else is more closely aligned with 4,000 years of history that the intermarriers are abandoning? And if someone is going to reach out to the alienated Jew and reunite him with Judaism, who else is more capable of doing so?

To be sure, there are emergency measures to use, such as those catalogued in Kalman Packousz's book *How to Stop an Intermarriage*, which presents last-ditch methods for dissuading would-be intermarriers. But, as Mr. Packousz himself stresses, how long can one live on artificial respiration? A near-drowning victim must eventually breathe on his own; and an almost-drop-out from Judaism must eventually use both Jewish "lungs" on his own.

In approaching the intermarriage problem from a more long-range view, one might be tempted to dismiss studies, reports, and solutions prepared by secular defense organizations, or by a Reform rabbi. Unwittingly perhaps, they nonetheless represent way-stations out of the fold rather than a retaining force. What bearing can their comments have on saving a desperate situation?

This, however, is not the case. Spurred on by the rocketing intermarriage rate in America—rising from 6% in 1950 to a current estimated 40%—the American Jewish Committee commissioned a study involving 446 intermarried couples living in eight communities across the United States, and the report it issued deserves our attention. First, its probing questions uncovered information that should be of interest to anyone concerned with what is happening. These data may well serve as the basis for plans and policies to be formulated by communal agencies. As indicators of the direction in which the organized Jewish community might be heading, the commission's report thus does deserve scrutiny.

By the same token, a leading Reform Rabbi's proposal to head off the combined ravages of ZPG, assimilation, and intermarriage by engaging in active proselytizing cannot be dismissed as just so much opportunistic press-agentry. Indeed, because of the prestige of the proponent of the idea—Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew (Reform) Congregations, and widely respected as former Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations—it received prominent coverage in the *New York Times*, and is being hotly debated in Reform and Conservative circles. If this proposal will actually spur a campaign to bring "unchurched Christians" into Jewry, as he suggests, then this too deserves comment. It would be inadequate to concentrate on our efforts to keep fellow Jews from drifting from the fold. We must also be aware of the proposed resolutions of others and the pitfalls they may entail.

The AJC Survey: Mitzva Statistics

The American Jewish Committee study is a thorough examination of responses of mixed couples, analyzed according to the previous religious affiliation of the husband/wife, comparison of results in mixed marriages vs. conversionary marriages, attitudes of the father/mother toward inter-faith friendship/dating/

marriage, presence of religious symbols and artifacts in their parents' home, Jewish education of the individual, degree of Jewish identification passed on to the children . . .

The details are fascinating and can give the patient student many an insight. For instance, a table on "Religious and Cultural Objects in the Parental Homes of Born-Jewish Respondents" reveals that 54.7% of the parents of intermarried children owned, and/or displayed a *mezuzah*, while only 7.1% maintained separate dishes for dairy and meat . . . 45.2% lit Sabbath candles, 47.5% had Jewish books in their home, but only 12% made use of a *havdalla* set. In attempting to use this data, one should bear in mind that keeping "involvement *mitzvos*" (as compared to *mitzvos* that can be reduced to symbols) usually testifies to some degree of prior commitment, and such intangible factors will hold greater sway than more symbolic reminders of Judaism, or selected *mitzva* performance. Thus one must look beyond the *mitzva per se*, to make judgments.

Moreover, when considering stress on *mitzva* performance as a retaining force within Jewry, one must not simply rely on the *mitzva-goreres-mitzva* factor; that is, the inherent religious magnetism ascribed to a *mitzva* as a means of encouraging more *mitzvos*. An act should also call for some degree of active involvement to counteract the tug of assimilation encountered in a free society. It would seem safe to surmise that *mitzvos* that can be reduced to "symbols" would be less effective as a means of preserving strong Jewish identity than *mitzvos* that involve the individual in active participation, calling for an investment of time or money.

The report closes with a section of summaries and conclusions: In mixed marriages (where the non-Jew does not convert), little if any Jewish feeling or identity is passed on to the children; but where the gentile spouse does convert, the sense of Jewish identity is even stronger than in many endogamous marriages—simply, the report suggests, because the convert had attended classes as an adult, and had learned more about Judaism than many marginal Jews. Or perhaps, we suggest, because the convert had cared enough about his new religion to learn something about it.

The Intermarrying Rabbi

One other finding of the report is worthy of note: When a mixed marriage (where the non-Jew does not convert to Judaism) was performed by a rabbi, the couple later maintained a greater degree of Jewish practice in married life as compared with couples married without a rabbi (though still considerably less than in conversionary marriages). Background data cited in the report suggest, however, that there is no basis for assuming that rabbinic participation was the *cause* of increased religious practice; rather, it was more likely the *result* of some greater degree of commitment prior to the mixed marriage.

The sampling was too small to permit a hard-fast generalization, but taken as interpreted, it does reinforce the judgment of Dannel Schwartz, a Reform rabbi, (published in an article in *Moment*, Aug. '78) that, more often than not, those who officiate at mixed marriages are motivated by greed rather than by an honest attempt at keeping a straying sheep within the fold. We certainly share Rabbi Schwartz's dismay over the crass attitudes of the rabbis who do perform intermarriages without meeting the bride and groom in advance, or exhibiting some other concern over the type of home they will be creating. But the alternative implied by Rabbi Schwartz is also dismaying: Trying to convince the non-Jewish partner to convert or to join the Temple is no solution to the problem; only dissuading the couple from entering this marriage is.

The Bottom Line

Among the most significant comments in this Report may well be the simple truism: "The factor most res-

Rabbi Joseph L. has admitted that he has far more intermarriages than he can handle. As a matter of fact, Joseph L.'s wife and son assist the rabbi on a particularly busy day by signing state documents and ketubot so that Rabbi Joseph L. can get to his next wedding on time and doesn't have to do all the paperwork. At one board meeting, his intermarriage practices brought on demand for early retirement. One of the more vociferous complainants said, "We called the rabbi two months before my son's wedding and he didn't even make an appointment to see them. He just told my son that he was booked on that particular day . . . on the day my son was to be married, the rabbi had five weddings. Not one was a member of Temple, and every marriage was an intermarriage. How do you tell your own kid that the rabbi who named him, blessed him, and confirmed him, doesn't have the time to marry him to a nice Jewish girl because he's performing intermarriages for strangers?"

David and Jennifer Friedman have promised themselves that they will never walk into another synagogue as long as they live. "We called 17 rabbis in the area. Nine of them said, 'No' on the phone—they wouldn't even talk to us!" Five of the others saw the couple and refused, but gave them the names of three rabbis who would marry them. Two of the three agreed to officiate—on the condition that they first pay a \$150—\$200 fee.

But the harsh fact of the intermarriage problem is that it is a lucrative business. A significant number of rabbis who defend rabbinic

participation in intermarriage ceremonies on the basis of principle make no attempt at all to counsel the couple or even to meet them before the ceremony.

participation in intermarriage ceremonies . . . would seem to be the extent of Jewish background, knowledge, and commitment of the born-Jewish spouse." In addition, the families of intermarried and mixed-married couples—when compared with families headed by Jews-by-birth—have the weakest sense of being Jewish, if any at all. The hope that has been expressed in some circles that "intermarriage may actually add to the Jewish population by bringing non-Jewish spouses and the children of such unions into the Jewish fold"—is not at all supported by the study.

Surely, up to this point, one cannot disagree with the judgments drawn from this study. Indeed, one can easily build on them, and project that just as some intermarried Jews retain a measure of identity by virtue of background knowledge, a greater measure of background knowledge in their past might have warded off this tragic abandonment of our community altogether. This should say very much regarding the priorities and general scope of activities of communal organizations concerned with survival. As the qualitative discussion continues, however, the direction it takes is foreboding.

participation in intermarriage ceremonies on the basis of principle make no attempt at all to counsel the couple or even to meet them before the ceremony.

One survey of 47 New York state rabbis who officiate at intermarriages showed that only ten so much as spoke to the couple before the wedding. Of the 37 who had no contact with the couple, 33 had their secretaries handle all the details; four had their secretaries ask the couple to come in for a meeting with the rabbi. Each of the secretaries informed the caller that as long as no other clergyman of another faith was present, the rabbi would perform the ceremony. In every case, the secretary was very careful to make sure that the caller understood what the rabbi's fees would be and what time the ceremony would begin and end. At no point did any of the 33 secretaries even suggest that the couple see the rabbi until the wedding.

The fees requested by all 47 ranged anywhere from \$75 to \$250, and in one particular case was \$350. When asked why the last fee was so high, the secretary said indignantly, "Well, he's a national figure, you know." When the same rabbis were called again by another young woman, posing as a prospective Jewish bride planning to marry another Jew, the amounts plummeted to between \$50 and \$125, the highest charge being that of the "national figure." If there is a principle involved here, it appears to be the principle of the fast buck.

Dannel Schwartz is a rabbi at Temple Beth El in Birmingham, Michigan.

(from *Moment*, Aug. '78)

A Startling Suggestion

The AJC's national study concludes with a rather startling suggestion: "Since intermarriage is likely to increase, rather than decrease, in the foreseeable future, the greatest counterbalance to the assimilationist thrust of such marriages, in the short run, would seem to be an increase in the conversion rate among born-Gentile spouses. (*Totally ignoring the questionable validity of a conversion motivated exclusively by search for marital harmony—N.W.*)

"However, since the majority of born-Gentile spouses are not likely to convert to Judaism, the development of a constructive response to mixed marriages must be high on the Jewish communal agenda. For though the study reveals little Jewish content in mixed marriages, it points to apathy, ignorance and confusion, rather than rejection or hostility. It is up to the Jewish community to provide the positive experience and increased exposure that may lead to greater involvement."

One of the authors of this study, Dr. Egon Mayer, published an independent paper expanding on this nebulous-sounding proposal, giving it some frightening specifics. Dr. Mayer introduces his proposal—"The Naturalization of Non-Jews Married to Jews"—with the argument that:

"Our research indicates that there already exists a small minority of non-Jews in intermarriages, especially the children of intermarriages, who identify as Jews or partial Jews without any *halachically* legitimate claim.

"The secular Jewish institutions are ever more frequently welcoming the activity of non-Jewish spouses. Their inclusion on UJA Israel Missions and boards of Hadassah chapters, on Jewish Community Center committees and CJF drives sets a tone in which these most powerful communal institutions accept and even welcome intermarried spouses, whether it is the stated goal of the secular institutions or not.

"*This situation suggests that if a new means were created for formally bringing non-Jews into the 'people of Israel' on secular terms, substantial numbers might join, possibly enough to offset the frequently projected losses which intermarriage is supposed to inflict on American Jewry. Apart from its demographic and communal pay-offs, such a mechanism would also lend legitimacy to those non-Jews and the children of intermarriages who have sincerely come to think of themselves as members of a 'people' though not of a 'faith.'* Such a mechanism would also strike a more responsive cord in the hearts of the many largely secularized Jews who marry non-Jews.

"*What is being suggested here is that the ways in which one might join the Jewish people be broadened to include some sort of a 'naturalization' rite along the lines of citizenship rites. One attempt in that direction by a religious group is Reform use of Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a conversion ceremony for adolescents. Perhaps a*

Jewish marriage ceremony might be given a similar function." (*italics ours—N.W.*)

A Formal Secularization of Jewry?

This newly tailored naturalization ceremony is nothing less than a preposterous proposal to officially and formally secularize the Jewish people. To assuage the fears of those who might thus object to such a proposal, Dr. Mayer adds, "Since the 'naturalization' ceremony envisioned above is a strictly secular affair, it need not involve rabbis in the on-going controversy about whether they might perform a mixed-marriage or not."—As if the entire problem of Jewish identity were one of clerical rivalry;—as if to say that once the contesting rabbis are removed from the scene, the contention is over!

Perhaps this type of approach should have been anticipated once Jewish social agencies and fund-raising institutions began to "welcome the activities of non-Jewish spouses." At the outset, their reasons for doing so may have been pragmatic, but the ramifications were obviously ideological. For what began as an *ad hoc* gesture of convenience became basis for a policy of much further-reaching implications. And now, the initial violations of the collective conscience are being compounded by their legitimization.

One might suggest that it would be wisest to ignore such outlandish proposals, but that will not make them go away. Dr. Mayer has already attracted widespread attention on the basis of his work on the AJC study, which is being widely quoted. Rather, one must begin by simply reaffirming a truth that has been obvious for thousands of years—a truth stated succinctly by Reb Saadia Gaon in his aphorism: "We are a nation only on the basis of Torah." Any other representation is a falsification of our peoplehood. We cannot compensate for diminishing numbers by altering our national essence.

An Unasked Question

While the information provided by this report is intriguing, even informative, it is woefully limited for having failed to probe one crucial area. Before embarking on the qualitative evaluation of "*How Jewish do the families of the mixed marriages see themselves?*", a much simpler question should have been asked: "*Are the children of this mixed marriage Jewish?*" If the mother is Jewish by birth, the children are also, regardless of the father's status. If the father was born Jewish, the precise circumstances of the mother's conversion are crucial to the children's halachic status. Who supervised the conversion? Was an Orthodox *beis din* in attendance? If not, the conversion was invalid. The mother is not Jewish and neither are her children. This is not a matter of denominational rivalry. It is a question of basic halachic requirements and determining them is imperative.

In the case of Reform conversion, there is a total

absence of standards for procedure. Even the basic motions of the requisite rituals of circumcision and immersion are often omitted. Recent stirrings among Reform Congregations are only "to set up a program of minimal standards 'for dealing with the pedagogic, spiritual and psychological development of the converts.' There was no reference to ritual which is at the heart of the halachic approach." (*Jewish Week* April 7, '79 p.55)

More important, conversions to Judaism under Reform or Conservative auspices—even with proper rituals—are *ipso facto* invalid, simply because these groups do not subscribe to the basic principles of Torah Judaism (such as the eternal applicability of *mitzvos*, or the divinity of the Oral Law). Reform or Conservative rabbis cannot qualify for the three-man *beis din* required for conversion. Besides, how could a Reform or Conservative "bet din" usher a non-Jew into a full acceptance of Torah and *mitzvos*, which they themselves do not accept? Finally, serious doubt must also be cast on the effectiveness of some so-called Orthodox conversions, if those who have undergone it do not maintain allegiance to the tenets of Judaism. And indeed, the AJC Report noted that the vast majority of those who underwent an Orthodox conversion are currently affiliated with Reform synagogues.

Only after the validity of conversions in intermarriages has been determined should the problem of integrating these families into the broader community be explored. Attempting to do this without clarifying the status of the "converted" member creates serious pitfalls for people involved and can severely weaken *Klal Yisroel* rather than endow it with new-found strength, as some maintain.

This basic consideration puts a serious damper on the report's optimistic discovery that converts' enthusiasm for Judaism often exceeds that of their born-Jewish mates, as well as that of members of some endogamous marriages. What good to the Jewish community is the enthusiasm of converts who have not really converted?

The Schindler Proposal

Just as one cannot afford to ignore the AJC Study in spite of all its shortcomings, so too must we take note of Alexander Schindler's proposal that Jewry engage in proselytizing non-Jews to replenish our diminishing numbers, because here, too, the source of the suggestion is one that the broad community respects. And we must once again point out that the problems this proposal presents are myriad:

We are not out to proselytize others, nor have we ever been. Even in those times in our early history (in the Persia of Queen Esther, for instance) when large numbers converted to Judaism, the *geirim* were not sought after, but turned to Judaism on their own. In fact, our tradition calls for dissuading every potential convert from taking the drastic step of joining our

people (Naomi's dialogue with Ruth is the prototype of this approach), and instead is encouraged to seek fulfillment as a believing *ben-Noach* (fulfilling the Seven Noahide Commands). A Jewish mission to non-Jews is totally contradictory to this halachic tradition.

Dr. Schindler does recognize the peril of intermarriage to our people, but this does not prevent him from proposing to welcome the un-converted partner of a mixed marriage into our ranks and to encourage him to convert. There is a distinction, he claims, between embracing the intermarried and encouraging intermarriage. The distinction is a subtle one, and we maintain that it would be lost to those contemplating marrying out. In their view, their marriage couldn't be that bad if, after it's all over, the rabbi will be mounting a campaign to usher the Gentile partner into the community anyway . . . a far cry from the seven-day mourning period parents once kept when one of their children married out of the faith.

Parenthetically, one cannot help but wonder: how will Reform Jews, driven by a sense of impending doom emanating from their dwindling numbers, manage to sound the triumphal note of their mission? . . . And how will *we* succeed in our efforts to persuade our Christian friends to deflect their missionizing efforts from our Jewish brothers to non-believing Gentiles, when others from our own ranks are seeking to win "un-churched" Christians to Judaism, instead of concentrating on our own?

It would seem that Dr. Schindler, like Dr. Mayer, is dismayed by the mounting loss from within our ranks; but instead of building safeguards, they both have found a different solution: each in his own way proposes to extend the boundaries of Jewry, embracing those outside the ranks of our people, to increase our numbers with non-Jews who are "naturalized" or "converted."

Where the Solution Lies

The solution actually lies elsewhere, and Dr. Mayer himself has said as much in the conclusion of the AJC study (which he prepared with Carl Sheingold): "*The urgency of adult Jewish education and communal outreach (is not) limited to the intermarried. . . . It is even more important for many who were born Jewish to experience a learning similar to conversion. There is a crying need to strengthen Jewish experience and identity among American Jews, from earlier childhood on, and to continue those ties. . . . In the long run, this is the only way to assure Jewish continuity and to provide for a meaningful Jewish future.*"

We agree. There are no shortcuts or easy roads to a full Jewish life. The Torah must be revered, studied, and adhered to in its entirety, as presented at Sinai. This is the only definition of Jewish living, the only way to make Jewish experience successful and rewarding, the only way to keep all of our children within our fold.



When the Sun Set At Midday:

An Appreciation of Rabbi Raphoel Boruch Sorotzkin זכר צדיק לברכה

When the Telshe Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Boruch Sorotzkin זכר צדיק לברכה, passed away on Friday night, 13 Shvat (February 9, '79) the loss was felt on many levels — the personal and the communal — by his bereaved family, by his yeshiva, and by the many institutions and organizations that he served as life spirit.

Rabbi Sorotzkin was born on 13 Shvat, 5677 — precisely 62 years, to the day, before his death — in Zhetel, Lithuania, where his father, Rabbi Zalmen Sorotzkin, זצ"ל, was rav. Reb Zalmen later earned world-wide recognition as the Lutzker Rav, playing a key role in the leadership of Agudath Israel in Europe and subsequently in Israel, where he headed Chinuch Atzmai—Torah Schools, as well as the Vaad Hayeshivos. Reb Boruch's mother was the daughter of Rabbi Eliezer Gordon זצ"ל, revered Rav and Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe. Thus Reb Boruch was brought up with the twin heritage of Torah scholarship and communal leadership, as exemplified by both his parents' families.

As a young man, Reb Boruch studied under Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, זצ"ל, in Baranovitch, and then under Rabbi Boruch Ber Lebovitz זצ"ל in Kaminitz. In 1940, he married Rachel Bloch, daughter of the famed Telzer Rav and Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Bloch, הי"ד. With the outbreak of World War II, they escaped to America and moved to Cleveland, where he joined his wife's uncles (and his own cousins) Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch and Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Katz זכרונם לברכה, who re-established Telshe in America. In 1943 Reb Boruch began delivering shiurim in the Yeshiva. The Yeshiva grew and flourished. In 5715 (1954) the Rosh Hayeshiva, Reb Elyahu Meir, passed away and the full burden of responsibility fell on the shoulders of Reb Chaim Mordechai Katz. When Rabbi Katz passed away ten years later, Reb Boruch together with יב"ל Rabbi Mordechai Gifter



assumed leadership of the Yeshiva as Roshei HaYeshiva. Reb Boruch, in the Telzer tradition, extended his sphere of activities to include ever more areas of communal responsibility—Chinuch Atzmai, Torah Umesorah, Agudath Israel of America (as one of the youngest member of its Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah—Council of Torah Sages). The immense vacuum left by Reb Boruch's passing will not easily be filled.

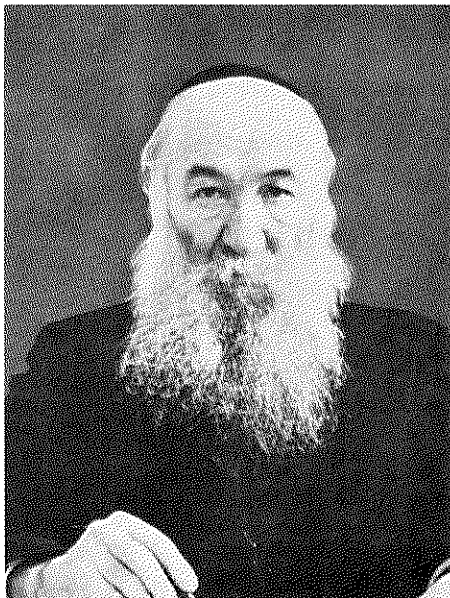
RABBI CHAIM DOV KELLER has been associated with Telshe and Rabbi Boruch Sorotzkin for close to thirty years, first as a talmid in Telshe-Cleveland, then as maggid shiur in the mechina, as mashgiach in the yeshiva, and subsequently as Rosh Hayeshiva in Telshe-Chicago. The following impressions regarding the late Telsher Rosh Yeshiva are not intended as a definitive biography or even as an in-depth evaluation of the man and his contribution to Klal Yisroel. They are adapted mainly from hespeidim (eulogies) delivered in Telshe Yeshiva in Chicago and at Agudath Israel of Toronto. N.W.

"When Rabbi Yochanan passed away Rabbi Yitzchok ben Elazar began his *hesped*: קשה היום לישראל כיום "This day is as difficult for Israel as the day the sun set at midday, as it is written (Amos 8): 'And it will come to pass on that day, that I will cause the sun to set at midday,' which Rabbi Yochanan had explained as referring to the day when King Yoshiahu was killed" (Moed Katan 25). Rashi (*Divrei Hayamim* II 35, 25) explains the expression as reflecting Yoshiahu's premature death—he was killed at thirty nine, in the midst of his years. How then, could Rabbi Yitzchok ben Elazar use this metaphor in regard to the death of Rabbi Yochanan when Rabbi Yochanan had passed away at an extremely old age? (He had been a Rosh Yeshiva for eighty years!)

Apparently age is not the decisive factor in using this term; rather, just as Yoshiahu left this world in the very midst of his most productive years, so did Rabbi Yochanan. Even though he had aged, he was still in the very midst of his work of learning and teaching Torah. His spiritual energy and intellectual powers were those of a young man.

So, too, did the Rosh HaYeshiva Reb Boruch leave this world at the very peak of his manifold activities for Torah and Klal Yisroel. When we first met Reb Boruch, he was a young man, in his thirties, and although he passed away at the age of 62, he never "grew old." He retained the energy, the dynamism, the enthusiasm in both learning and *avodas haklal* of a man many years his junior. When he was taken from us it was ובה השמש בצהרים as if the sun had set at noon. And what a sun that was! A sun that radiated warmth and light, inspiration and joy to all.

It was said that his capacity for deep involvement in a Talmudic topic and his enthusiasm for a Torah discussion were inherited from his grandfather, Rabbi "Laizer" Gordon, who once passed



RABBI ELIEZER GORDON זצ"ל
Telzer Rav, whose enthusiasm for Torah was reflected in his grandson, Reb Boruch.

RABBI ZALMAN SOROTZKIN זצ"ל
Lutzker Rav, whose sense of responsibility for Klal was implanted in his son, Reb Boruch.

outside a Beis Medrash, and—hearing two Yeshiva-leit arguing over a point—vaulted through an open window to join the discussion

...
Colleagues remember crossing Russia with Reb Boruch by Trans-Siberian Railroad. Their fate was undecided, the landscape forboding, the food limited—the tensions almost tangible. Reb Boruch, throughout the trip, oblivious to the atmosphere of crisis, had a Gemora open on his knees, his eyes only on the pages before him ...

Those who occupied the front seats in the blatt shiur he said in former years soon learned never to leave their hands on top of the table. And his chavrusos would also keep their hands out of his way. Those who didn't soon learned that when he became involved in a chiddush he would seize anything within his grasp to emphasize his point ... "Anything" could be a hand, which he would squeeze until all the knuckles cracked.

"The Sun in Full Strength" — Even in Suffering

ח"ר הנעלבים ואינן עולבין שומעין חרפתן ואינן משיבין עושין מאהבה ושמחים ביסורים, עליהם הכתוב אומר: ואוהביו כצאת השמש (שבת פ"ח:) ... Those who act out of love and rejoice in suffering, of them it is said "and those who love Him will go forth as he sun in its full strength" (Shabbos 88b).

Reb Boruch was not afraid to take a firm stand, was not hesitant about forcefully advocating the *Daas Torah* as he saw it, notwithstanding the petty attacks he was at times forced to suffer. If he chose to respond, it was with dignity.

He acted with love—love of the Torah which he

learned and taught, love of the Yeshiva which he labored so incessantly to build and maintain, love of Klal Yisroel, whose burdens he bore so valiantly.

And he was שמח בייסורים, found joy in the midst of suffering:

Seventeen years ago the Rosh Hayeshiva became gravely ill. The prayers of the many were effective in saving him, but for the remainder of his life he lived in the shadow of danger. Besides the lingering malady which finally took his life, he suffered from a heart condition and underwent two major heart attacks. Yet he was always so full of energy and joy that those who were not very close to him were hardly aware of his condition.

Several years ago, Reb Boruch paid one of his regular visits to Chicago. He was then (as was often the case) recovering from a severe illness, and since there were a few hours until his scheduled visitation in the yeshiva, I suggested that he rest for a while.

"I never lie down in the middle of the day!" He replied. "Tell me, are there any phonecalls or personal visits you'd like me to make on behalf of the yeshiva? Let me mobilize my time here for your benefit."

A member of his shiur seventeen years ago recalls how periodically Reb Boruch would convene the class forty-five minutes earlier than usual, so he could finish in time to report to the hospital for radiation treatment. He would deliver the shiur with his customary gusto, and then leave to the car waiting to whisk him away. Once, the discussion in shiur became so heated that he was unaware of the passage of time, and the driver entered to remind Reb Boruch that it was time to leave. He stopped short, realizing that he was forced by circumstances to terminate the lecture, unfinished, and he broke into tears — the only time anyone remembers such an expression over his condition. (Rabbi Yaakov Horowitz)

During his recent stay in the hospital, he often gave encouragement to the doctors and nurses. Before he went into the operating room for his last major operation he called in his sons and sons-in-law, and said a shiur for them—told them a chidush in Torah that he had developed in his hospital room. Later, when I visited him, he repeated the shiur to me with great satisfaction.

During his final period of activity in the Yeshiva in Cleveland, when he had realized that he was extremely ill, he expended unbelievable effort not to depart in the slightest from any of his many sedorim, nor to lighten the burdens of his administrative duties. To the end, he was devising ways of improving the yeshiva. In his efforts to enhance Shacharis, and to make certain that davening began promptly, Reb Boruch was always first in the Bais Medrash, even after a pain-racked sleepless night. (Rabbi Chaim Stein)

As yesurim (physical pain) became his constant companion, Reb Boruch seemed to develop a philosophical accommodation to their presence. In his final shmues in the Yeshiva, he said, "Even if one does not attain the level of greatness of Rabbi Akiva, who said the 'Shema' with kavana (fullest concentration) while the Romans ripped his flesh with iron combs, exulting 'All my life I've aspired to fulfill the love of G-d with all my soul! ('b'chol nafshecha—referring to the command to give up one's life for the sake of belief in G-d, when necessary)—even so, any intelligent, believing Jew must learn to accept yesurim with love. As Rabbeinu Yonah says: 'When one accepts G-d's teachings, and improves his ways and deeds, it is fitting that he rejoice in his sufferings, for they yield lofty results and he should be grateful for them as he is for all means of success.'"

When he was wheeled into surgery, Reb Boruch said, "If I knew that this operation would atone for my aveiros (sins), I would dance into surgery." (Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Sorotzkin)

The Sun: Like a Chassan, Like a Warrior

He had, indeed, much in common with the sun, of which the psalmist tells us: "And [the sun] is like the bridegroom that emerges from his wedding canopy, he rejoices like a mighty warrior to run on a road."

There are two manifestations of simcha evident in the sun: its breathtaking brilliance, and the incredible alacrity with which it runs its course. They can be compared to two types of simcha to be found in talmidei chachomim. There is the simcha that the talmid chacham experiences as he discovers new insights in Torah, which is like the newly found joy the chassan experiences with his bride. And there is the rare simcha that the true Gadol haTorah feels when he shoulders the responsibility of Klal Yisroel. His is like the simcha of the tried and proven warrior that runs out to battle. He has no fears. He does not shirk his duty—he rejoices in it. His only sadness comes from not being able to face new challenges. This was Reb Boruch. His love of Torah was boundless, yet he was a chassan who realized that there was a time to "emerge from the chupah." There's a time when the talmid chacham must go out to do battle — to face unpleasant tasks and hardships. Reb Boruch did all this and he did it with simcha.

His face radiated with a tremendous joy from learning, whether alone or with a chavrusa or saying a shiur. And his joy was reflected in the tremendous zrizus (swiftness) with which he attended to his many responsibilities. Whether in the Yeshiva office (where he would look at a column of figures and correct the book-keeping), or on his trips to solicit funds, or participating in meetings of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah, Chinuch Atzmai, Tashbar or Torah Umesorah, where

the problems of *Klal Yisroel* were analyzed, and strategies were devised to solve them. There was literally no aspect of his life which did not bear the twin marks of joyous enthusiasm and responsibility. The largest task was not too awesome for him to undertake, nor were the most minute details too insignificant for him, if he felt that they had to be done and he could do them best.

Reb Boruch was to a large degree responsible for covering the budget of Telshe Yeshiva and spent many days every year on fund-raising trips across the country. Yet when his father the Lutzker Rav, Reb Zalman Sorotzkin, passed away, Reb Boruch took over the responsibility that his father had carried for the financial existence of Chinuch Atzmai. Every month a financial statement was sent to him, which he studied as he did his own bank statement and that of Telshe Yeshiva. More than once he personally guaranteed the transfer of funds from America to Israel. On numerous occasions, amounts in the tens of thousands were needed, and he personally drew loans from a Cleveland bank to cover the transfer, repaying them later with funds that he and Telshe talmidim raised for this purpose.

In the midst of a six-day fund raising trip to Los Angeles for Telshe (he did not want to stay away from the yeshiva for a full week), he learned that the speaker scheduled to address a parlor meeting in Chicago for Chinuch Atzmai was ill, and had cancelled. He offered his services, with two provisions: that a flight be arranged to return to California on the same day, and his family not be informed of the strenuous undertaking.

No undertaking too vast, no assignment too insignificant . . .

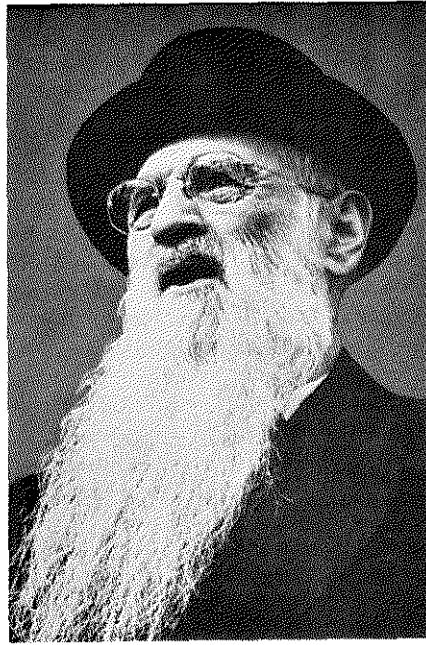
A few months before he passed away, Reb Boruch took personal responsibility for marrying off a niece, the daughter of his brother who had passed on. When a member of the family came upon Reb Boruch personally addressing the invitation envelopes in his study, he asked, "Why are you bothering with this?"

His reply was typical: "No one knows this list as I do, and if I don't do it, who will do it right? — But don't let the kalla know. She'll feel bad."

When in New York City during a August heat wave, he called Agudath Israel and asked, "What can I do for Agudath Israel? I'm here for three days." "The heat is unbearable. Why don't you relax for a few days?" "I have these three days until the zman starts. I repeat: What can I do for Agudath Israel?"

After a severe heart attack several years ago, some of the organizations that he was associated with hesitated to call on him. He telephoned Chinuch Atzmai, and asked, "Why don't I hear from you?" "I don't want to bother the Rosh Yeshiva until he fully regains his health." "Not even for counsel? . . . Do you think that my head has stopped working?"

Yet, Reb Boruch would not waste a moment from his Torah study. It was the secret of his great *simcha*. He would arise early to learn, and could be seen late into the night—sometimes into the early hours of the following morning—bent over a *sefer* in his study. Even when being driven around on one of his many fund-raising trips for the Yeshiva, he would look into a *sefer* if there was sufficient light, or "talk in learning" with his companions. In his last years, he would constantly repeat בעניי לולא תורתך שעשועי או אברהי בעניי "Were it not for my



RABBI ELIYAHU MEIR BLOCH ל"צ
and

RABBI CHAIM MORDECHAI KATZ ל"צ,
who founded the transplanted
Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, where
they were joined by their nephew,
Reb Boruch.

delight in Your Torah, I would perish in my suffering."

He was a prodigious writer. He painstakingly recorded every *shiur*, every *shmuess*, *drasha*, or *chidush* in *halacha* or *agada* in one of the many volumes of notebooks he left behind. And he was not satisfied with writing it once. If the results did not meet with his approval, he would rewrite until they did. This writing was usually done at night, when he was undisturbed by his other responsibilities. Many times the family would urge him to go to bed, but his answer would be, "I must write this down while it is still fresh in my mind."

He found time for everything: *For his family* — despite the many demands on him, Reb Boruch found time for his wife and children, to advise them, to learn with them, to direct them.

For the Yeshiva — there was no aspect of the Yeshiva — spiritual or material — which did not come under his scrutiny.

For the city — he was for many years the active chairman of the Vaad HaChinuch of the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, and was a leader of all activities for Yiddishkeit in the city.

For Klal Yisroel — only three months before his passing he mustered every ounce of his waning strength to attend and address the national convention of Agudath Israel of America where in a glance everyone realized how sick he really was. Yet they were amazed by his stamina and the enthusiasm of his fiery address to the convention.

When asked why he did not watch his health by curbing his activities, his answer was, "Who knows if it is not in this *zechus* that I'm alive?"

On a Friday last December, when he was approaching the final stages of his illness, Reb Boruch called someone in New York to meet him

at the airport on Motzaei Shabbos (Saturday night). A noted philanthropist who had given generously to Telshe, Chinuch Atzmai, and other important causes had passed away, and Reb Boruch wanted to be menachem avel (to pay a condolence call). "I don't think you should exert yourself so in your condition," was the response.

"I asked you for a favor, not for advice. Can you meet me there or shall I call someone else?"

He met him at La Guardia. At the home of the mourners, the Rosh Yeshiva asked the children, "Have you divided up your father's yerusha (inheritance) yet?"

They looked at him, with shocked disbelief.

"No — not his material holdings," he said. "His spiritual legacy — the institutions he supported. Who's going to help Telshe now? Who's taking over your father's role in Chinuch Atzmai? In Torah Umesorah? In Beth Medrasha Govoha?"

Although relatively young, he was invited to become a member of the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah, where the venerable *ziknei Gedolei hador* valued his keen perception of issues and his wisdom in approaching some of the most difficult and complicated problems facing *Klal Yisroel*.

The Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood, Reb Shneur Kotler, succinctly summed up his appreciation of Reb Boruch in his *hesped* at the *levaya* in Telshe Yeshiva, in Wickliffe: "איש חי רב פעילים" "A dynamic person pulsating with life whose deeds are many." When at a meeting of *Roshei Yeshivos* or *askanim*, he would infuse life into the discussion, dispel pessimism, and inspire others to action by his own readiness to assume responsibility and hard work. He could step into an abstract discussion and precipitate decisive action with his: "Nu, yetzt



"When Reb Boruch spoke . . ." at Agudath Israel of America Convention, 1977.

us darf men ton?" (Now, what do we do?)

His greatness in Torah and the great responsibility he felt for Klal Yisroel went hand in hand, as has always been the pattern among true *Gedolei Torah*.

He Stood Before Kings

"If you have seen a man diligent in his work he will stand before Kings" — these are the *tzadikim* who do the work of Hashem. Therefore, they will stand out in Torah of which it is said "With me (says the Torah) do kings reign." (Midrash Rabba Shir Hashirim)

If there was anyone who was swift and diligent at this work, it was the Rosh HaYeshiva Reb Boruch — and therefore he was *zoche* to stand tall in Torah. Indeed, it would seem that G-d rewards *Gedolei HaTorah* who take away precious time from learning for *avodas haklal* by granting them greater levels of Torah.

The lessons to be drawn from his life are the lessons to be learned from the *Keruvim* symbolizing *talmidei chachomim*, that were part of the covering of the Aron HaKodesh:

They had faces of children — always young, always fresh, always approaching the *sugya* (topic) with a new insight, an enthusiasm that only children have as they learn something for the first time. They faced each other — *talmidei chachomim* are not each for himself. They work together. Yet they always face downward toward the Aron HaKodesh which contains the Torah, for the Torah is their guide for thought and action. They were of one piece with the *Kapores*—(the cover of the Aron)— They were not molded separately and then attached to the Aron Kodesh. They were beaten of one piece of gold. The personality of the *talmid chacham* is formed from the Torah, not independently of it and then attached.

"The Keruvim stretched their wings on high protecting the covering of the Aron with their wings."

Those same talents and energies which the *Gedolei Hador* use to ascend ever higher in Torah, those aspirations for greatness are the very same as those with which they protect the Torah. And those wings with which they shield the Torah from all attacks, are the very ones with which they ascend to greatness in Torah.

An Inability to Sit Idle

The *Gemora* tells us that Rabba said that if a man hired workers for a day and the work for which he hired them was finished in the middle of the day he may give them other work of similar or easier nature. Otherwise he has to pay them their full wages. The *Gemora* asks: why should he pay them for a full day's labor — let him pay them as he would a worker that would take a reduction in salary so as to have free time. The *Gemora* answers that Rabba was referring to the porters of his own city, Mechuza, that were so accustomed to carrying heavy loads that when they sat idle they became weak. They therefore had to be paid in full. (*Baba Metzia* 77a)

The Telzer Rosh Hayeshiva was such a man — a man who could carry the heaviest of loads and could not stand to be idle. The work which G-d in His wisdom had designated for him was finished in the middle of that great day, which was his life. But Reb Boruch would have wanted to continue that noble work.

On the last day of his life, his mind was still clear but as the end approached he kept asking מיר הייבט מיר הייבט מיר "Lift me up!" The family could not understand what he wanted, because they had already raised the hospital bed as far as it could go. It would seem that the Rosh Yeshiva meant another type of uplifting. He could not be still. Then he said, "Moshe."

His son did not understand — "What Moshe? There's no Moshe here."

His answer was, "Why don't you understand? Moshe Rabbeinu." Just before his great spirit left this world, he somehow, in some way, experienced an awareness of Moshe Rabbeinu.

He passed away on Friday night, 13 Shevat, the day on which he was born — just as Moshe Rabbeinu was born on 7 Adar and passed away on 7 Adar. שהקב"ה ממלא שנותיהם של צדיקים מיום ומחדש ולחדש "For the Holy One, Blessed-be-He, completes the years of Tzaddikim from day to day and from month to month." When the Rosh Yeshiva Reb Boruch passed away, the sun set at midday. He would have wanted to finish his day's work. But G-d, in His ultimate wisdom, decreed otherwise. Surely — like the men of Mechuza — he will be paid in full. יהי זכרו ברוך ותהי משכורתו שלמה

The funeral procession in Boro Park, Brooklyn.





Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan

The Omer

I. Omer, When Every Jew Counts

On the second night of Pesach each year, Jews all over the world begin counting the Omer—the days between Pesach and Shavuot—in accordance with the commandment: “You shall count from the day after the festival-Sabbath, from the day that you brought the Omer offering, seven full weeks. Until the day after the seventh week, you shall number fifty days, and you shall then bring a new meal offering to G-d” (*Vayikra* 23:15, 16).

Although the *korban omer* was a communal offering, the days between Pesach and Shavuot had to be counted not only by the communal representatives, but by each and every individual Jew.¹

To fully understand the reason for this, we must first explore another point. Shavuot is known as the anniversary of the giving of the Torah—for it was on Shavuot, 2448, that all Israel stood at the foot of Mount Sinai and heard the declaration of the Ten Commandments, as one can calculate from the Torah’s account of the event.

Yet, nowhere among the many references to Shavuot in the Torah is any mention made of the day as the anniversary of the giving of the Torah. Why is this most significant aspect of Shavuot omitted?

There are a number of explanations offered to this. The *Alshech* explains that the Israelites reached the highest possible spiritual level with the giving of the Torah, a level that was subsequently lost with the sin of the Golden Calf. To specifically commemorate the initial revelation at Sinai would also mean recalling this great spiritual loss. Thus the Torah does not explicitly describe Shavuot as marking the giving of the Torah.

The *Abarbanel* offers a somewhat different approach. Remembering the giving of the Torah is a constant obligation upon every Jew. It is therefore not appropriate to

RABBI KAPLAN is a well-known author and translator whose articles are frequently featured in JO pages. Among his many works are *The Torah Anthology*, which he is translating from the original Ladino version of *MeAm Loez*, and *Jerusalem, the Edge of the Universe*, which is reviewed in this issue.

designate a single day for specific commemoration.

Nonetheless, it would be very surprising if the Torah provided no hint whatsoever to the great significance of this day. Both the above commentators state that there is an allusion to it in the counting of the Omer: The Omer days are counted, because of the outstanding significance of the period between Pesach and Shavuot in Jewish history. On Pesach, the Israelites began as newly freed slaves; and during the ensuing seven weeks, they were elevated to a level where they would be worthy of hearing G-d’s voice proclaiming the Commandments. The very fact that Shavuot comes at the end of this counting alludes to its importance as the day upon which the Torah was given.

This also explains why every single individual must count the Omer. The acceptance of the Torah is described with the words, “All the people answered with one voice, and said, ‘All the words that G-d has spoken, we will do’” (*Shemos* 24:3). The *Sefer Chasidim* explains that the Jews were required to possess perfect unity—to speak “with one voice”—to receive the Torah. If even one Israelite had refused the Torah, it could not have been given.²

Moreover, each individual had to rise from the level of slavery to that of revelation. Thus, every individual “counted” those days between the first Pesach and the first Shavuot.

Besides preparation for receiving the Torah, the counting of the Omer also bespeaks the Israelites’ eagerness for the Torah, for they had realized that they would receive the Torah seven weeks after the Exodus, and they literally counted the days in anticipation.³ Here, too, each individual shared in this excitement.

II. Shavuot: Culminating the Advance Toward Freedom

Pesach is known as *z’man cheiruseinu*—the festival of our freedom, marking the Exodus, when we were freed from Egyptian slavery. This was only physical liberation—only the first step toward true freedom, which was realized on Shavuot with the acceptance of the Torah. As our Sages teach, “The only truly free man is he who is devoted to the Torah” (*Avos* 6:2).

Many people question this, wondering how total subjugation to the Torah can be equated to complete freedom. But the concept is actually not that difficult. Nothing in the world is truly free. Natural phenomena are bound by laws of nature. And there are laws and rules—natural and man-made—that govern both the individual and society. Further, a man ruled by his passions is also in no sense free. . . . A careful analysis would reveal that true freedom simply does not exist in the material world, for nowhere is any creature free to do whatever it desires.

In the final analysis, only G-d is truly free, for of all that exists, only G-d can do exactly what He wants, at any time that He chooses, with no restraints whatsoever. Stated in another way, true freedom only exists with G-d. Man in search of freedom must seek association with G-d, and his only link to G-d is through Torah—G-d's word. Therefore, ultimate freedom can only be realized through total devotion to Torah.

With the first Pesach, the Israelites had their first taste of freedom. They then eagerly counted the days until they would gain total, absolute freedom, through receiving the Torah.

Freedom: Beyond the Beast

In a sense, freedom is an essential ingredient of humanity, for the ability to consider and select his options is a feature peculiar to man. Thus, one can say that with the acceptance of the Torah, the Israelites first realized their potential to be truly human in the fullest sense of the word.⁴ They now had the freedom to totally transcend their animal nature.

This is also alluded to in the Omer, for the word "omer" means sheaf, and according to the Oral Tradition, the Omer on the second day of Pesach consisted of a sheaf of barley. The *Abarbanel* explains that barley is normally animal food⁵, signifying that immediately after the Exodus the Israelites had not yet transcended their animal nature.

On Shavuos, however, the offering was two loaves of bread made from pure wheat flour. Wheat is a human food, indicating that with the acceptance of the Torah, the Israelites gained full human status.

Moreover, the Omer offering consisted of meal, while the offering on Shavuos consisted of fully baked breads. Flour is but the first step in converting grain into human food; bread is the final product. On Pesach, the Israelites had taken their first step toward realizing their true humanity; on Shavuos, they took the final step.

"Chametz" as an Offering

Also significant is that the Two Breads of Shavuos were leavened bread (*chametz*). This is in sharp distinction to Pesach, when *chametz* is absolutely forbidden.

As the Talmud states, *chametz* represents the Evil

Inclination (*Yeitzer Hora*)⁶, and on Pesach, the *Yeitzer Hora* was totally negated. As long as the Israelites were bound to the *Yeitzer Hora* they could not even begin their advance toward freedom. The banishment of the *Yeitzer Hora* was represented by the banishment of all leaven from each Israelite's possession.

On Shavuos, however, the Israelites reached a level of true freedom and total self-discipline. On this level, one can make use of the *Yeitzer Hora* to serve G-d. Our Sages interpret: "You shall love the Lord your G-d with all (parts of) your heart"—even with the *Yeitzer Hora*⁷, directing us to harness drives usually associated with evil, and direct them toward good. On that first Shavuos, this was achieved without conscious effort. Since even the *Yeitzer Hora* could now be used as a means of coming close to G-d, the Shavuos offering also included *chametz*.

This can be understood on a deeper level in light of a teaching of the Baal Shem Tov. The Talmud states that in the end of days, G-d will slaughter ("le'shochto"—from *schecht*) the *Yeitzer Hora*⁸. The Baal Shem notes that the Talmud employs the term normally used for ritual slaughter of kosher animals. He concludes that just as *shechita* (ritual slaughter) renders an animal kosher, so too will "slaughter" of the *Yeitzer Hora* render it "kosher"—that is, transform it into an angel of good.

Since receiving the Torah raised the Israelites to a level approximating that of the world of the future, they could deal with the *Yeitzer Hora* virtually as a good angel. In recognition of this, the Shavuos offering specifically designated use of leaven. This lofty spiritual level was lost with the Sin of the Golden Calf.⁹

III. Two Loaves, Two Tablets

Also of significance is that *two* loaves were offered, corresponding to the Two Tablets containing the Ten Commandments: and the reason for the number in both cases is very similar.

All through the Book of *Shemos*, the Tablets are referred to as *Luchos Ha'bris*—Tablets of the Covenant. The generation that had entered the Covenant at Sinai was still alive, and to them the Tablets served as a *tangible sign* of this covenant. In *Devarim* they are referred to as *Luchos Ha'eidos*—Tablets of Testimony. Since the majority of the people alive then were born after the revelation at Sinai, the Tablets then *bore witness* to this great event.

The Midrash explains that this is one of the reasons that there were *two* tablets. Just as testimony is only valid when taken from two witnesses, so too did the testimony of the Tablets require the presence of *two*.

The paradigm of a covenant (*bris*) was the "covenant between the halves" (*Bris bein HaBesarim*) in which animals were cut in half, and Abraham walked between the sections. Rashi explains that this is the thrust of every covenant: the makers of the covenant accompany

each other between the sections of a divided entity. This also is alluded to in the two-ness of the tablets and the loaves.

IV. The Bridge of Sevens

There is also significance in the duration of the purification process of the Omer—49 days. As Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch notes (based on the *Zohar*), many types of impurity are purged in a seven-day purification period. Cleansing can be understood as an act of re-creation and rebirth, with the period of cleansing paralleling the seven days of creation.

Before the Torah was given, however, the Israelites were required to undergo a most thorough cleansing—not only of their own impurities, but of all those that tainted the entire world from the time of creation. Thus, the requisite period of cleansing was seven times seven days.

V. Omer: A Period of Mourning

All of the themes associated with the Omer—freedom, preparation and anticipation for receiving the Torah—would lead one to think that these particular weeks would be a time of rejoicing and celebration. But instead, it is a period of national mourning when weddings and similar happy events are forbidden, as are cutting of hair and shaving. This is because the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva died during this period.¹⁰ It might seem strange that these great men died during these weeks, and even more surprising that this should be enough to endow this entire period with a spirit of mourning.

But the Talmud records that they died because they were somehow faulted for lacking proper respect for one another. The Midrash also states that in some minute way—surely undetectable to us—they were jealous of each other.¹¹

Rabbi Akiva's students were the greatest Torah scholars of their time, and as the Talmud states, their death left the world "desolate." During this period of preparation for receiving the Torah, they should have put aside any differences—no matter how minute—that may have existed between them; they should have lived in perfect harmony and unity. Since they maintained their so-called rivalries, even during this period, they were punished precisely during these crucial weeks.*

As mentioned earlier, the very act of receiving the Torah required total unity on the part of the Jews.

*Actually the plague that killed Rabbi Akiva's students only lasted until Lag Be'Omer (18 Iyar),¹² as the Ashkenazim refer to it—or Lag LeOmer, in the Sephardic tradition.

Lag BeOmer is best known as the *Yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, but it also had a significance much earlier. In the Talmud, it is known as *P'ros HaEtzeres*.¹³ The *Yerushalmi* explains that the laws of a festival are taught for 30 days preceding the festival, and the midpoint of this 30 day period is known as the "pros" of the festival. (It is at this time that the charity bins were emptied.) The *P'ros* of Shavuos falls of Lag BeOmer.¹⁴

Without such unity, our acceptance of the Torah cannot be complete. And without Torah, we are nothing. It is therefore taught that the Temple was destroyed because of the sin of unwarranted hatred (*sinas chinam*), for in a state of cleavage and rivalry we were without Torah and totally lacking in the merit required for having the Temple in our midst.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov teaches that since the Temple was destroyed because of hatred, we cannot expect it to be rebuilt unless we purge this hatred from our midst.¹⁵

We therefore continue to mourn the death of Rabbi Akiva's students, as we continue to mourn the destruction of the Temple. For we know that as long as the Temple is not rebuilt, we have not yet rectified the stain resulting from a lack of unity of these students. Until we do, the Temple cannot be rebuilt, and the *galus* cannot end. Only when we learn to have the fullest measure of respect for one another and live in unity can we be worthy of the true Redemption. ❏

Notes

1. *Menachos* 65b. According to many authorities, this means that one person cannot exempt another; see *Sefer HaAgudah* ad loc.; *Teshuvos Rashba* 126; *Levush* 489:1. Also see *P'ri Chadash*; *Chok Yaakov*. Although there is a general rule that "listening is like answering" (*shome'a keoneh*; *Sukkah* 38b), this case is seen as an exception. This is because the commandment here is to *count* rather than to speak, and hence even if one writes the correct date he fulfills his obligation; *Magen Shaul* 20. Cf. *Ramban* on *Vayikra* 23:15. Just as one cannot exempt another by writing the Omer date for him, so is he unable to exempt him by saying it. This is also the reason that, unlike conventional prayers, one must understand what he is saying when counting the Omer. See *Magen Avraham*.

2. *Sefer Chassidim* 233.

3. *Sefer HaChinuch* 306; *Ran* (on *Rif*), end of *Pesachim*.

4. Hence, "You are called 'man,' and not non-Jews," *Yevamos* 61a.

5. Cf. *Sotah* 9a. The *Zohar* also likens this to the offering of a *Sotah*; cf. *Numbers* 5:15, *Rashi ad loc.*

6. *Berachos* 17a.

7. *Berachos* 54a. Freedom from the Angel of Death is equivalent to freedom from the *Yeitzer Hora*; see *Bava Basra* 16a.

8. *Sukkah* 52a. See *Toldos Yaakov Yoseif*, *Kedoshim* (Koretz, 1780), p. 98d.

9. One may then wonder why the Israelites sinned if they no longer had a *Yeitzer Hora*? The *Gemora* explains that this was part of a divine plan to teach the ways of repentance to the world; *Avodah Zara* 4b.

10. *Yevamos* 62b.

11. *Bereishis Rabbah* 61:3.

12. *Me'iri ad loc.* states that this is a tradition from the Gaonim. See *infra*.

13. *Shekalim* 3:1, *Yerushalmi ad loc.*; *Bechoros* 57b, 58a.

14. *Abudarham*, quoted in *Bais Yosef*, *Orach Chaim* 493. However, see *Rambam Yad*, *Bechoros* 7:8.

15. *Kedushas Levi*, *Peirush HaAgados* (Jerusalem, 1958) p. 409.

Addenda



"To the making of books there is no end" (*Koheles*) — and books continue to flow from the printing presses, many of which, in different ways, contribute to the understanding of Torah and the Torah way of life and thought.

Torah Classics

Sefer HaChinuch, with translation and footnotes by Charles Wengrov, 450 pages (Feldheim, Jerusalem/New York, 1978, \$13.95).

WE HAVE HAD occasion previously to comment on the Torah Classics Library of Feldheim Publishers. They have now issued the first volume of a work, which, undoubtedly and most deservedly, will receive the widest acceptance: *Sefer HaChinuch*, ascribed to Rabbi Aaron Halevi of Barcelona, in a critical, vowelized edition, with translation and footnotes, by Charles Wengrov.

The *Sefer HaChinuch* was written in Spain in the thirteenth century. It presents the 613 commandments of the Torah (as enumerated by the *Rambam*) according to the order of their appearance in the Torah, and gives for each commandment the verse on which it is based, its salient laws and regulations, and its possible rationale. The author does not claim that he can explain the reasons for all the details of each *mitzva* — for this he refers us to the masters of *Kabbala* — nor does he claim that the reasons he does offer exhaust the intent of the Divine Lawgiver; rather, he seeks to convey to us a source of the lessons that the commandments teach us. Man is not molded by listening to abstract ideas, but by ways of acting which embody these ideas; hence the Torah prescribes specific actions — the commandments. The ideas that the author traces for each *mitzva*, together with his introductory exposition of what the Torah teaches, form a veritable textbook of Jewish philosophy, and the *Sefer HaChinuch* has indeed served in this role through the centuries.

Rabbi Wengrov therefore deserves great appreciation for making this work available to readers who could not study it in its Hebrew form. The English is clear and readable, and the Hebrew text — in beautiful

typography — is based upon comparison of the earliest extant manuscripts and prints. The footnotes reflect the author's erudition. They provide wide-ranging references to rabbinic sources of great value even to the scholar, and explain concepts and statements that might not be clear to the lay reader; thus, Rabbi Wengrov for instance points out where the author's outline of the *Seder* differs from our practice (though he fails to comment on the author's statement that for *Afikomen* "everyone takes a bit of *matzah*"). Generally, he espouses briefness (though one very interesting footnote extends over several pages, endeavoring to resolve a contradiction in the text, pp. 204-7). Generally, he does not enlarge upon the philosophical ideas of the work; he does not consider it his function to elaborate on them, or trace the author's overall pattern of thought, which indeed would have gone beyond the frame of his undertaking.

A Philosophy of Mitzvot, by Rabbi Gersion Appel, 300 pages (Ktav, New York, 1975, \$6.95 paperback; \$15.00 cloth).

ACTUALLY, a fine effort in this direction was made in a book that appeared a few years ago, *A Philosophy of Mitzvot*, by Rabbi Gersion Appel, which seeks to provide a systematic exposition of the *Sefer HaChinuch's* approach to the *mitzvos*. It originated as a doctoral thesis, which probably accounts for some of the excessively technical terminology used, (why does the author call the *Nefesh Hachayim* "neo-kabbalistic"?) as well as for the inclusion of some references (such as G. Scholem) glaringly in conflict with Torah tradition. However, the author has succeeded in effectively summarizing the philosophical and ethical approach of the *Chinuch*.

There are some questionable points. Thus, the author oversimplifies when he states that nowadays the non-Jew is "held to be in the category of a *ger toshav*"; and his explanation that Jews are not called upon to enforce the Noahide laws against immorality upon the Gentiles because "voluntary commitment rather than compulsory compliance" is sought from them, is unconvincing — after all, the Gentiles are required to compel obedience to these laws upon pain of death! The obligation of a husband, even in our days, never to divorce a wife whom he had wrongly accused, is not an "ethical extension of a law no longer in force" but the *Chinuch's* understanding of the actual legal position. Likewise, when the author wants to show that "an inner ethical core in *halacha* is at times the purposive factor in determining the law," the rule which he gives as an example is based by the Rabbis upon a legal principle (*smichas hapsukim*), and there is no justification for stating that "it is apparent, however, that the determining factor in this instance is the underlying humanitarian consideration."

Overall, however, the author has been successful in presenting his subject well, and he deserves particular

credit for placing it in the overall context of rabbinic teachings and highlighting their essential unity. While he points out the difference of approach between *Rashi* and *Rambam* concerning the study of the reasons of the *mitzvos*, he himself stresses that, ultimately, the difference is a very fine one. Indeed, by and large the disagreements between the rabbis on this point have been educational and tactical rather than philosophical and fundamental: not whether the Divine commandments are meaningful, but whether it is better to search out their meaning or not, considering that *mitzvos* should be observed just because G-d commanded them.

The Mitzvot, The Commandments and Their Rationale, by Rabbi Abraham Chill, 500 pages (Bloch, New York, 1974, \$15.95).

THIS SUBJECT is also treated in another volume — *The Mitzvot, The Commandments and Their Rationale*, by Rabbi Abraham Chill. Rabbi Chill has sought to present the 613 commandments along lines similar to the *Sefer HaChinuch* — quoting the biblical verses from which they are derived, summarizing their main legal provisions, and offering explanations for them culled from the main commentators on the Torah and the commandments (an annotated list of the authors used is included). Moreover, an introduction deals with the general subject of the 613 commandments and the search for reasons for them.

The author obviously devoted great effort and diligence to this ambitious undertaking, and the quotations from the various commentators which he has gathered for each commandment will undoubtedly prove stimulating and worthwhile to the reader. However, his work raises serious questions. In the first place, he does not list all the 613 commandments individually and separately, but occasionally combines several of them, which leads to a certain loss of clarity. More importantly, his summary of the legal provisions must in many instances be questioned.

There are, for instance, strange combinations (*eruv tavshilin* is inexplicably included in the *mitzva* of *tehumim*; when discussing the law against injuring his fellow-being, the author stresses that Judaism hold the lives of all living things sacred, and therefore the blood of a victim has to be covered, and "this law even applies to beasts and fowls . . ."). There are many *halachic* mistakes and inexactnesses ("If a Jewish master caused a non-Jewish slave to lose a limb, the slave automatically went free. If the slave was a Jew, the master had to pay him an indemnity in addition to releasing him"; "Each day is divided into 1,080 parts . . ."). There is a dangerous tendency to merge the rationale for a *mitzva* and its legal provisions. ("The feast was to be celebrated with such enthusiasm that no part of the sacrifice would be left over for the next day. Accordingly, the law specifies that no part of the meat must remain until the morning.")

Above all, abstruse rules are often given (e.g. the

right of a king, during the First Temple, to execute without due process) while crucial ones are omitted. Thus, the author writes that "after any staining a woman must 'count' seven clean days. On each of these seven 'clean' days . . . she must examine her clothes and bedlinen for staining. At the end of her seven 'clean' days she immerses herself in a *mikveh*." The omission in such an account of the need for her to examine herself is surely most misleading to readers with limited Jewish knowledge.

The introduction, too, in the view of this reviewer, lacks clarity in various respects. Thus the author states that "there were those who strongly believed that not only was there no reason to search for a purpose, but that there was no rationale at all." It is not at all agreed that somebody holds this view (see *Ramban* on *Devirim* 22:6) — and it certainly has no relationship to the Talmudic controversy whether, in halachic arguments, we explore the reason for a biblical statement. It is a pity that an effort of such magnitude as this work should be marred by such weaknesses and actual halachic inaccuracies. A thorough revision is called for if it is to serve effectively the noble purpose for which it was designed.

For Our Children

THERE SURELY ARE FEW—if any—parents concerned with their children's spiritual welfare who have not be-moaned the lack of suitable reading material for them.



at the
RYE TOWN HILTON
699 Westchester Avenue Town of Rye, New York 10573

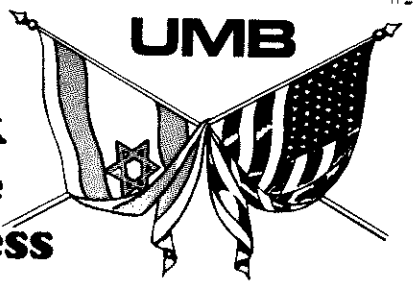
גלאט כשר
CATERING

Garden Weddings
Bar Mitzvah Weekends
Magnificent Country Setting

(914) 939-6300

Charles Phillippe DiCesare,
Director of Catering

**a bank
whose
business
IS BUSINESS**



- Commercial and Industrial Loans
 - Discounting of bills receivable
 - Working Capital
 - Equipment financing
- Corporation Savings Plans
- Certificates of Deposit
- Short Term Investments
- Export Financing
- Domestic and Foreign Collections
- Letters of Credit
- Acceptance Financing
- Foreign Exchange
 - Spots — Forwards — Swaps
- Money Transfers
- Foreign Remittances
- UMB Israel Travel Card — for traveling businessmen
- Travelers Cheques



UMB BANK
and Trust Company
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10020
(212) 541-8070

MEMBER FDIC

CLOSED ON ALL JEWISH HOLIDAYS

A subsidiary of UNITED MIZRAHI BANK LTD., ISRAEL

The only Orthodox English-Yiddish weekly in the world presenting the authentic Torah viewpoint.

Stimulating!

Informative!

World-wide coverage of news.

JEWISH TRIBUNE
Organ of Anglo-Jewish Orthodoxy

97, Stamford Hill

London, N. 16. England

Annual subscription: Airmail \$35.

Surface mail: \$18.50

Write now for your free sample copy

We have previously commented on this problem, and taken note of the appearance of a number of books for our children. Since that time, many more publications have appeared for the youngest set—and we are now also able to welcome a few books for older children, through the early teens.

The Haunted Shul and other Devora Doresh Mysteries, by Carol Hubner (Judaica Press, New York, 1979, Hardcover \$4.95, Softbound, \$3.95)

The Haunted Shul and Other Devora Doresh Mysteries, by Carol Hubner will undoubtedly be an instant success. Detective stories starring a *frum* youngster, who is—girls, note—like any actual Bais Yaakov student, represents a recipe that cannot be beat. At the same time the author gets a very important point across to her readers: the hero of the book finds in the timeless teachings of her heritage guidance on how to solve the problems which she encounters.

David Meyer, the Orphan from Jerusalem, by G. Silver (G.E.S., 32 St. Kildas Rd., London N16, 5.50 - \$11.00)

An even more ambitious undertaking is *David Meyer, the Orphan From Jerusalem*, by G. Silver, privately published in England. This volume is in the tradition of our 19th century story tellers, such as Marcus Lehmann, whose novels were designed to give powerful and emotional expression to traditional Jewish values. They were read and reread when they first appeared, and still today, in English translation, cast a spell upon their young readers. Yet they leave a void, for their settings are all in the past. In contrast, the story of David Meyer is set in contemporary *Eretz Yisroel* and England. As we follow this precocious thirteen year old orphan of the Yom Kippur War on his strange journey, we not only learn about his experiences, but also how a good Jew should react to them. A large number of concrete issues are treated in this manner—and if, occasionally, the author tends to be a little too didactic, he may at most tempt a youthful reader to skip a paragraph or two to get back to the excitement of the story. It is to be hoped that this book will find such a warm reception as to encourage its author—and other writers—to provide us with many more such books.

I am an Orthodox Jew, by Laura Greene, illustrated by Lisa C. Wesson (New York, 1979, \$5.95)

AS MENTIONED, our younger children are being offered much more material. Thus the fifth book has already appeared in the **Dov Dov Series** (Dov Dov Publications, 6203 Biltmore Ave, Baltimore, MD 21215). A rather recent and unique newcomer to publisher's ranks is L.C.S. Publications—a project of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Lakewood Cheder School. L.C.S. Publications was created in order to raise funds for this growing school (all proceeds go to the Cheder). Moreover, many of the writers and illustrators are local women who help support their families in this manner.

But at the same time, the publications they have produced—readers for younger and somewhat older children, a fine coloring book, and story tapes on Chanukah and Purim adapted from the famous Yiddish tapes of Rabbi Laibel Weinstock ז"ל—help provide excellent, enjoyable, and instructive entertainment for our children.

It is a sign of the times that such creativity is shown within the Torah community—and that, at the very same time, an old-established non-Jewish publishing house, Holt-Rinehart-Winston, should be interested to produce a children's book called *I am an Orthodox Jew*, by Laura Greene. It is a valiant effort to present in a sympathetic light "some of the ancient traditions still practiced today . . . from the point of view of a young Jewish-American boy."

Here, however, lies the rub. This book will undoubtedly be of interest and value for Jewish public school children woefully ignorant of their Jewish heritage—but a source of confusion or amazement to a child brought up in a traditional Jewish home. The author tries to be "realistic" in presenting the outlook of a "young Jewish-American boy" and therefore imputes to him some ambivalent feelings—without however seeking to resolve them. Thus, after explaining that women sit in the synagogue balcony so that men should not be diverted from their prayers, she writes: "Rachel does not like this rule. She says she cannot see the Rabbi as well as I can. She cannot hear very well either. That makes her angry." Why not at least, balance such remarks by an effort to point out the special role and unique function which women do have in Torah life? Instead, the author writes: "My sister will never have this great honor (of reading in the Torah) because she is a girl. She doesn't think that's fair . . ." And, in connection with Kiddush, she states: "My brothers and I had to learn these blessings because we are boys. My sister learned them just because she wanted to." Apart from being misleading to the point of inaccuracy, such passages suggest that the author is here projecting her own unresolved feelings on this subject—and that is not a good basis for presenting Yiddishkeit to others.

A CALL FOR TORAH STUDY

Join the hundreds of Chaverim in the U.S.A., Israel and other parts of the world who now enjoy an extra spiritual dimension in Jewish living by learning three halachas and / or two mishnas and / or the weekly sedra every day.

כל העוסק בתורה בלילה נמשך עליו חוט של חסד ביום
הלכות חיות לרמב"ם פרק ג'

You will gain respect and love from your family and become an inspiration to your friends.

In memory of Mr. Charles Batt, ז"ל

Ask for your free *lu'ach* from
RABBI ELIEZER KARP, *Chairman*
MISHNA AND HALACHA YOMIT
1880 47th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11204

Eretz Yisroel

Jerusalem, the Eye of the Universe, by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (NCSY, New York, 1979, \$3.95)

THE CONTINUING FLOOD OF BOOKS on *Eretz Yisroel* should not occasion any surprises. After all, *Eretz Yisroel* is very much in the center of our concern. In the past, however, we commented on the fact that so many books fail to do justice to the unique character of our Holy Land. There is no lack of such books today either—but we have also been blessed with a number of books that beautifully evoke the true spirit of *Eretz Yisroel*. *Jerusalem, the Eye of the Universe*, by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, is another in the series of publications put out by the National Conference of Synagogue Youth to deal with fundamental tenets of our faith. The present volume is not concerned with the geography, history and sociology of Jerusalem *per se*. Its primary goal is to explain why Jerusalem holds such a central place in Judaism; this goal it achieves most effectively. The author deals with the unique sanctity of this mid-point of our universe, as our Sages define it, with the

ISRAEL

Burials and American Disinterments

שלמה שאולזאהן

announces that RIVERSIDE continues to be the only licensed funeral director in the U.S. able to effect

Transfer to Israel within the same day

Har Hazeitim Har Hamenuchot

And all Cemeteries in Israel

RIVERSIDE also is available as the

Sole agent for Sanhadrea Cemetery

RIVERSIDE only can offer this service

Enroute to Israel within the same day

- Strict adherence to Halacha and Minhagim
- Arrangements made during lifetime with no obligation
- Chapel secured in any community.

RIVERSIDE

Memorial Chapel, Inc. Funeral Directors

MANHATTAN:

180 West 76th St. (at Amsterdam Ave.) N.Y., N.Y. / EN 2-6600

BROOKLYN: 310 Coney Island Ave. (Ocean Parkway at Prospect Park), Brooklyn, N.Y. / UL 4-2000

BRONX: 1963 Grand Concourse (at 179th St.), Bronx, N.Y. / LU 3-6300

FAR ROCKAWAY: 12-50 Central Ave., Far Rockaway, N.Y. / FA 7-7100

And The Westchester Riverside Memorial Chapel, Inc.

21 West Broad Street, Mt. Vernon, N.Y. / (914) MO 4-6800
Chapels in Miami, Miami Beach, Hollywood, Sunrise, Florida
Carl Grossberg / Andrew Fier / Solomon Shoulson



For generations a symbol of Jewish Tradition

unique institutions of Temple worship, Torah teachings, and prophecy that had their center there; the role that Jerusalem plays even now, as the "gate of prayer" and holiness; and its rebirth with the coming of

Moshiach. The ideas presented are profound and based on impressive erudition, reflected in the footnotes (though the author's statement that the *Sanhedrin* "was disbanded after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans," after the persecutions of Constantine, is not historically correct). Undoubtedly this book will contribute to a heightened understanding of the true nature of the Holy City.

The Heavenly City, by Menachem Gerlitz translated into English by Shaindel Weinbach (Feldheim, New York, 1979, \$6.95)

THE SAME OBJECTIVE is sure to be furthered greatly—though in a very different way—by another recent work, *The Heavenly City*, by Menachem Gerlitz, beautifully retold from the Hebrew by Shaindel Weinbach. Rabbi Gerlitz, himself an old-time Jerusalemite, in this book has painted a haunting canvas of Jerusalem of yore—its Rabbis and scholars (such figures as Rabbi Schmuel Salant and Rabbi Yehuda Leib Diskin), its merchants and tradesmen, its sufferers and its rogues. The scenario is provided by the multitude of reminiscences, anecdotes and folktales of Old Jerusalem on which the author was able freely to draw. This book is a moving evocation of a society in which scholarliness and saintliness were a way of life and set the standard for a daily existence made livable by faith in G-d rather than material amenities. The reader will not only find this work a sentimental memoir but, rather, a challenge to his own values and ways—the highest tribute one can pay to a book.

Finally...



a children's record that even adults will enjoy!

Suki and Ding
The Jewish Education Program
Shema Kolenu
present

**UNCLE MOISHY
and the Mitzvah Men**



Ad & Album Cover - Tov Art Design/INC

In response to the negative influences of the outside media which our children are constantly subjected to, it is a great pleasure to introduce you to this great sounding record which will be accepted and appreciated for its great "Chinuch" value. It is ideal for Yeshiva children of all ages and from all backgrounds. The songs about Shabbos, Kashruth, and Tzedakah, as well as many other Mitzvohs, will be loved by your children and will be sung over and over for many years to come.

J.E.P. RECORDS
425 E. 9th St.
Bklyn, N.Y. 11218

YES! I would like my children to hear Uncle Moishy sing about Torah & Mitzvos and help the Jewish Education Program at the same time.

Enclosed please find \$5.00 for each record ordered. I've added 50¢ to help cover the cost of mailing and packaging. Total Enclosed _____ for _____ Records.

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY STATE ZIP

Pincus Mandel

Renowned Expert — Over 25 years experience in Kvura on all cemeteries in Eretz Yisrael With all Hidurim — as done only by Shomrei Torah Umitzvos

Responsible for current system — speedily expedited — at Airport in 4 to 5 hours

With more than 45 years of cemetery experience unceasingly dedicated to the highest standards of Chesed Shel Emes in all its implications without emphasis on the *inyan* of monetary gain.

Recommended by Most Prominent Rabbanim and Admorim

Pincus Mandel

1569 47th St / Brooklyn, N.Y. 11219

Day and Night Phone: (212) 855-5121

*All bills rendered on actual "Costs-Plus" Basis
No hidden or 'padded' charges
Agudah Member — 50 years*

P.S.

Last of the Leningrad Trial



Iosif Mendelevich is still serving his twelve-year sentence in prison. In the April 78 JC, we published an interview with his sister Rivka Drori, who was visiting the USA to try to gain high-level intervention on his behalf, to mitigate his terrible conditions. He was then and still is in solitary confinement—then in the notorious Vladimir Prison, now in equally severe Chistopol. As the reader may remember, this additional hardship was imposed on Iosif for refusing to eat non-kosher foods and insisting on completing his seven-day work quota in but six days to avoid working on *Shabbos*. This was considered a violation of the labor camp regulations.

Since that time, Iosif's condition has not improved. His sister learned that during Pesach he subsisted on an incredibly meagre diet of 300 grams of matzos and water!

The celebrated prisoners-for-spies swap of late April, which freed

Edward Kuznetsov and Mark Dymshits, left Iosif the only Jew still imprisoned from the two Leningrad trials of 1970, for allegedly attempting to illegally fly a plane out of Leningrad.

As a deeply religious man, Iosif's suffering is two-fold—as a prisoner and as a Jew. Our concern for him must also be two-fold. What can we do for him? We surely can—and must—attempt to influence the American government and the Israeli government to use their good offices to prevail upon the Soviets to free Medelevitch, just as they did his less religious fellow prisoners. Perhaps this is most effectively accomplished by those accustomed to dealing with high-level officials, but there are some activities the humble reader (and writer) can do best: We can think about him, share his suffering, remember him in our *tefillos*, dedicate our Torah study to him, give *tzeddaka* on his behalf—all the thoughts and deeds he yearns to do, we can do for his sake. If we do, we can hope that his immense storehouse of merit will be even further enlarged. If we don't, we are the poorer . . .

Every day we bless the Almighty for "releasing those in bondage." May He do so for Iosif Mendelevich, as well.

תופס הצלחה
EV 7-1750
פאר פרייע
עמית'דזשענטי אקסידרוזשען

מעשיות לשלמה

-Maaseil Lishlomo Torah Seminars-

Introducing a cassette-series of live, unedited Torah seminars in English-Yiddish on Chumash-based topics. Originally delivered before a chabura of Talmidei Bais Hamedrash at Mesivta Chaim Berlin by Horav Shlomo Carlebach, then Mashgiach of the Bais Hamedrash. Each tape contains one complete seminar of 65-75 minutes duration.

The second set

of ten tapes entitled בית הלוי ברכו אה, pertains to פרשת וואה of ברכה השבטים and deals with the following topics:

- #17. Reuvain's confession repairs גלות השכינה
- #18. כח היצר as antidote to ודרי
- #19. You are my witnesses, כי אתם עדי ואני קל
- #20. True ברכה is חודש צורה
- #21. Deeds vs. essence in הבורא יתב הכרת
- #22. עונה מביאה לידי רוח הקודש
- #23. מעשה of מלוי טאה is חטא מרגלים העגל
- #24. כח בריה מילה as bridge between טבעי and ניסי
- #25. Why is חלמוד חורה greater than כבוד אב ואם?
- #26. עוזת יניית vs. שבט לוי

\$2.50 per tape

Mail pre-paid orders or requests for information and catalogue of previously published tapes to:

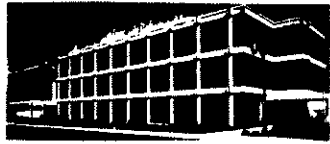
J.C.M. Foundation
(tax exempt organ.)

418 Avenue I
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11230

854-2911
neginah
orchestras

סמנריון למורות בית יעקב

Beth Jacob Teachers' College of Montreal



1750 Glendale Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1B3 - (514) 739-3814

Our Seminary is now accepting dormitory applications for the forthcoming school year.

All out of town students who want to study in this well-rounded program, please write for an interview.

Picturesque, European styled Montreal, is a beautiful setting for your Seminary education.

SUBJECT	INSTRUCTOR	TIMES PER WK.
כשרות וברכות - דינים	RABBI E. FINKELSTEIN	1
שאלות בכל יום - דינים	RABBI D. MUND	1
חומש	RABBI M. TOBER	4
ענינים חומש	RABBI M. KATZ	1
כתובים	Dr. H. BIBERFELD	2
מגילות	RABBI M. BARKANY	1
נביאים אחרונים	Dr. H. BIBERFELD	2
נביאים ראשונים	Mrs. M. GLUSTEIN	1 (every 2nd wk.)
עברית	Mrs. P. RABINOVICZ	3
פרשה	Mrs. D. TAUB	Quiz
קיצור	Miss T. ZINNER	Quiz
תפילה	Dr. H. BIBERFELD	1
A. & C. in the Classroom	Mrs. M. COHEN	2 (every 2nd wk.)
Child Psychology	Dr. A. WORENKLEIN	1
Early Childhood	Mrs. M. ROSENSWEIG	1
Jewish History	Mr. P. TESSLER	2
Jewish Identity	Mrs. Y. WENGER	2 (every 2nd wk.)
Jewish Philosophy	RABBI S. ZEFFREN	1
Methods of Education	Mrs. M. GLUSTEIN	2
Remedial Reading	Mrs. P. RUSS	2 (every 2nd wk.)
Special Education	Dr. A. WORENKLEIN	1
Student Teaching	Mrs. M. GLUSTEIN	2

The program also consists of the following optional courses

Data Processing	Full Programmer Course
English Literature & Composition	2 times per week
French	2 times per week
Swimming (in our own pool)	1 time per week

Our graduates also receive a government diploma (Quebec equivalent of Junior College) as our Teachers' College is recognized by the Department of Education.

RABBI S. AISENSTARK
Principal

RABBI P. HIRSCHPRUNG
Chief Rabbi of Montreal
President

SCHECHTER'S
KOSHER CLATT **CARIBBEAN** HOTEL

ENTIRE OCEANFRONT BLOCK - 3718 to 3818 BL MIAMI BEACH
... is a **GREAT Kosher Hotel** - you'll love it!

• **DIAL MIAMI BEACH FREE!** Write for **FREE** brochure and booklet or call **800-327-8165**
FLORIDA AREA CODE (305) 531-0061

• **Private Pool and Sandy Beach**
• **Oceanfront Synagogue**
FREE Parking

כה

A new life is waiting for you in Israel.

Are you looking for a new lifestyle in Israel with a Torah atmosphere? Garin Merom Zion, officially recognized by the Jewish Agency, is preparing to move to their new Moshav Shitufi (collective) "Matityahu," presently under construction. Garin is seeking qualified religious couples between the ages of 21-35.

- Each family lives together in its own modern home.
- Free Yeshiva education for children.
- Agriculture and light industry.
- Daily shiurim.

MEROM ZION, for those who want to live in a Torah environment in Israel. Call now for further information (212) 924-9475. Poale Agudath Israel, Suite 811, 156 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10010. Or call: Atlanta, Ga.—Rabbi Boruch & Sally Gold, 1432 Merriman Lane, (404) 636-1998. Chicago, Ill.—Mitch & Aviva Rubinoff, (312) 761-3618. Silver Springs, Md.—Rabbi Shaya & Rivkah Jacobs, 411 Hannes St. (301) 622-2799



מקום ציון
the height of Zion

WANTED!



A home for Avi to live for a while . . . a place for Avi to smile . . . Can you help? Please call or write:

OHEL FOSTER CARE

4423 16th Avenue
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11204
Tel: (212) 851-6300

second looks at the jewish scene

Shlomo Kahn

Of Death and Life

"The urge to fortify mortal remains against decomposition has been a universal one," writes Ernest O. Hauser in an interesting article entitled "Secrets of Egyptian Mummies" (Reader's Digest August 1978).

He goes on to list some of the famous in history whose bodies were embalmed, obviously in a valiant attempt toward "immortality," to resist decay, to conquer the relentless passing of time. Among them Alexander the Great, whose body was preserved in honey (the Talmud records this method too; Herod used honey to preserve the body of the beautiful Mariamne), Lord Nelson embalmed — of all things — in brandy, Lenin, Mao Tse-tung, etc. We can add to the list, of course. The bodies of popes are embalmed. . . .

Such "living" examples seem to bear out the truth of Hauser's assertion, but there's another side, an opposing view to the story. It is from a most authoritative source which backs it up.

The Torah frowns on, and *halacha* vigorously rejects the practice of embalming. (Joseph's order to embalm the body of his father Jacob was an atypical exception; an Egyptian and not a Jewish practice.) Instead, rapid decomposition of the body after burial is welcomed. (Burial too must follow death quickly, on the same day whenever feasible.)

The earth is the point of departure of man's physical life and also

his destination. " . . . until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for you are dust and to dust you shall return," were G-d's words to Adam (Genesis 2:19). "The dust returns to the earth as it was, but the spirit returns to G-d Who gave it," observed King Solomon (*Koheles* 11:17).

Ideally, the body is literally interred in the ground, without coffin; so is it done in Israel to this day (coffins are only stretchers used to carry the body to the graveside, hence the Talmud's word *mitta*, lit. "bed" rather than *aron*).

Use of a coffin is however not contrary to *halacha*, provided its material does not for long impede disintegration. Therefore wood and nothing harder may be used. The practice of some to cut an opening into the coffin, also that of placing some earth directly on the body, attempt to more speedily bring the body in contact with the

THE WORLD FAMOUS DIGEST OF MEFORSHIM

לקוטי בתר לקוטי
מהרה"ג ר' שמיאל אלטער זצ"ל

Available at

LEKUTEI INC.

c/o I. Rosenberg

10 West 47th Street, Room 702
New York, N. Y. 10036

20 Volumes on Torah, Perek,
Medrash, Megilas and Talmud.

Proceeds of sales distributed among
Yeshivas and used for reprinting
of volumes out-of-print

PRICE \$6 PER VOLUME

The Gap Has Been Filled!

Today's Mesivta High School graduate, desiring to enter a Yeshiva Gedola—but finding himself inadequately prepared to meet its standards . . . Where does he go? Where does he turn?

YESHIVA SHAARE CHAIM

(Jerusalem)

Founded under the haskomos of Rabbi Chaim P. Scheinberg, Rabbi S.Z. Ohrbach, and the Steipler Rav, Shaare Chaim is the first preparatory yeshiva of this kind in Israel. The Yeshiva offers a complete program geared to the unique situation of such bachurim.

Sensitive to their explicit needs, the faculty devotes much effort to prepare serious minded boys for the road ahead. Daily Shiurim in Hashkafa, Chumash and Mussar. Personal tutoring is an intrinsic part of the program for those who are in need of it. The intensive one-half year to two-year program will qualify the average Talmid for entrance into the Yeshiva of his choice.

For further information contact:

America:

Rabbi Yisroel Plutzchok
(212) 435-9285/0595

Israel:

Yeshiva Shaare Chaim
P.O.B. 15078

Jerusalem, Israel

Tel. (02) 533939/533326



חברה קדישא גוש"א

Chevra Kadisha

Har Hamenuchot • Har Hazeisim
Eretz Hachaim

And All Cemeteries In Israel

maalin Bakodesh

SOCIETY

26 CANAL ST.

NEW YORK CITY 10002

Day & Nite Phone

233—7878

earth.

Is there a deeper significance to Judaism's ban on preserving the body of the dead? Indeed there is. Judaism's treatment of the dead

seems at first blush to be shot through with contradictions. The body is *tomey* (ritually impure, source of pollution) but at the same time the body is inviolable, honor to

and dignity of it supreme. Contact with the body defiles and is forbidden to the kohein, but preparing the body for burial is a high-ranking loving-kindness, lovingly performed by the Chevra Kadisha (Holy Society) where membership is highly esteemed.

This tension, bewildering and paradoxical reflects (or is a result of) a peculiar ambiguity: man is both mortal and deathless. His body is perishable but his soul indestructible. Moreover Judaism's tenet of an eventual physical resurrection of the dead (*t'chias ha-meisim*) endows even the perishable remains with a dimension of timelessness.

Hence we commit the mortal shell to nature's process of decay, a speedy return to its source. We see in the shell not the departed personality; that lives on in the spirit, the soul. Yet we salute what was man's earthly, human garment, handle it respectfully and lovingly, paying tribute to the person who no longer is with us. But we rule out any hint of glorifying the dead. The kohein, Temple ambassador and religious functionary, shuns the body because death must remain outside his domain. Judaism is a religion of life. ✠

Rabbi Shlomo Kahn Congregation
Beth Israel of Washington Heights
from his Synagogue Bulletin.

Can you compete in today's job market?

- Freshen up past skills • Develop new marketable ones.
- Enroll in a course of study which will train you.

COME TO C.V.I. (Cope Vocational Institute)

Courses Available July 2nd

Legal Secretarial

Executive Secretarial

Bookkeeping/Secretarial

-28 Weeks

-24 Weeks

-12 Weeks

PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Considering Computer Programming?

14 Week intensive Programming course

TUITION INCLUDES

- Comprehensive curriculum for the motivated student
 - BASIC/COBOL/JCL and BAL • Extensive hands-on terminal time with supervision • No additional charge — even for books • Placement assistance
- New Course Begins July 9th

Looking for summer employment?

Special intensive four-week course—
Brush Up Typing/Secretarial Accounting/
Business Correspondence

Classes begin May 29th

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES
CALL C.V.I. 587-9257**

Cope Vocational Institute
A division of
Agudath Israel
of America

Licensed by the New York State Department of Education

FROM THE HEART OF MUSIC COUNTRY!

The first Jewish record album
produced and recorded entirely
in the South

שיר ושבתה

THE RETURN OF THE NOAM SINGER

Cantor **ISRAEL MELLER**

THE MEMPHIS CHOIR BOYS

FEATURING

**THE
MEMPHIS
JEWISH
SOUND**

with
ORCHESTRAL ARRANGEMENTS BY
GARY TOPPER

Traditional texts set to original (Chassidic) music.

Vocal arrangements by ISRAEL MELLER

Distributed by House of Menorah, N.Y.C.

This record is available at all better Hebrew Book Stores

Letters to the Editor



Correcting "Marriage in a Torah Society"

To the Editor:

Rabbi Scheinman is to be complimented for his forthright article "Growing into Marriage" (January 1979), in which he calls attention to a number of important points that should contribute to marital bliss *al pi Torah*, about which, however, many misconceptions are prevalent among junior members of the Torah community. Yet, in his presentation there are a few erroneous statements which detract from the impact his theme deserves.

We read, "in vain do we search for pledges of mutual love, honor or respect (in the *Kesuba*)." That is incorrect. The pledge in the *Kesuba* states: "*ve'ano ephlach ve'okir*," I shall toil and keep with honor and respect, a reference to the Talmudic admonition that a man shall honor his wife more than himself: "*vehamechabdo yoser migufo*" (*Chupath Chassanim*). And even if the *Kesuba* is not so explicit, don't we find enough expressions in *Chazal* and *Poskim* (Rambam: *Hilchoth Ishus*, end of *Perek 15*) that make mutual honor and respect of paramount importance in marriage?

A more severe error appears under the heading of "The Give and Take of Life." Rabbi Scheinman says: "There is only one aspect of human nature that is *ex nihilo*—original with man, without counterpart in spiritual realms: the desire to receive." *Chollilo!* If there were a character-trait in man that does not have its counterpart in

Hashem Yisborach but *ex nihilo*, we would find ourselves in an abyss of *apikorsus*. *Ex nihilo* smacks with *shtei reshuyoth* (duality). Every student of *Hilchos Deos* knows that the entire *Olam Hatachton* is only a counterpart to the *Olam Hoelyon*, so there is no room for speculation to discover attributes in Man that G-d does not possess (ref. *Pachad Yitzchok-Pessach*, Chapter 54, par. 1). That renders his statement untenable on philosophical grounds. Furthermore, the author overlooks the fact that *Hashem Yisborach* is projected in Torah as full of the desire to receive; the *re'ach nicho'ach* of *korbanos*, the prayers of the House of Israel, *ba'ale teshuva* etc. So without challenging the basic concept of marriage evolved in the article, these errors should be brought to the attention of your readers.

In conclusion I permit myself to take issue with the rather sorry image that the author paints of *Bnai Torah* of today. They are for the most not so naive as we are led to believe in the opening paragraphs and certainly not so shallow to equate the pleasure of learning with that of playing baseball. That does not mean, that our 'dor' does not have a lot to learn.

*Hakosef lichvod hatorah
velomdeha,*

(Horav) SHLOMO CARLBACH
formerly Machgiach Ruchni,
Mesivta Chaim Berlin—
Kollel Gur Aryeh
Brooklyn, New York

TARGEM

certified translations/all languages

for immigration, Wiedergutmachung, Din Torah cases, study equivalence, foreign licenses, social security, etc., also literary works translated and edited.

City Office:

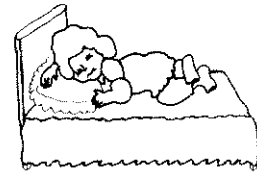
156 Hewes Street
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11211
Tel.: MA 5-0267

Out of Town Office:

P.O. Box 173
Spring Valley, N.Y. 10977
Tel.: 914/354-5322

**Satisfied customers since over 15
years**

HERITAGE NEEDLEWORK KIT



שמע ישראל ה'
אל קינוה ה' אחד.

A cherished gift for a child's room, this 9" x 12" (finished size) embroidery kit includes everything but the frame. Can be personalized in Hebrew or English. Please specify and send name. Also specify boy or girl.

NOW ONLY \$5.50 plus \$1.00 handling
& \$.39 tax in NY State

YOUNKER'S SPECIALTIES
43 Twiller St., Albany, N.Y. 12209

The Staff and Administration of
Camp Agudah wishes Aaron Dovid
(A.D.) Chait Mazel Tov on his
engagement to Beatty (Beatrice)
Strauss. תזכו לבנות בית נאמן בישראל



LETTERS CONTINUED

Divorce: No Epidemic
in Torah Society

To the Editor:

Your articles on "Marriage (or Divorce?) in a Torah Society" were interesting and informative, but their total impact was also frightening and even misleading.

A quick reading of Meir Wikler's article gives one the impression that the "divorce epidemic" (mentioned in the editorial introduction) is sweeping through the yeshiva community. Whose case histories were cited? Rivka, the seminary student and her problems, and Reuven, the yeshiva bachur and his problems . . . While there is no anti-problem insurance on any marriage, even within yeshiva circles, one can still point to the relative absence of divorces in kolelim. The Beth Medrash Govoha community in

Lakewood, New Jersey, of which I am a member, takes pride in the almost total lack of divorces in its thirty-plus years of existence.

Undoubtedly, there are many factors in this phenomenon. I would suggest two. First, in the line with your introduction, the breaking up of families is a condition basically plaguing general society. While Orthodoxy is not impervious to it, one might well postulate that its existence among religious Jews is in inverse proportion to the degree the individuals are sheltered from outside atmosphere. Thus a kolel would be just about immune. In a kolel, Torah values prevail, not those of the marketplace. The more corrosive influences of the outside world are shut out, the family remains strong, and thus divorces are rare. To be specific, all members of the family are investing their major efforts in making their home a "Torah unit" rather than in pursuing individual fulfillment at the expense of other members' needs. The family remains supreme.

Then there is a second factor, which Wikler does emphasize in his article. In most yeshivos, there is an active, if informal, counselling system whereby every prospective chassan has a series of sessions with a yungerman with whom he feels close. The discussions may deal

with halacha, but they go beyond; and the atmosphere is one of trust and confidence, encouraging the "Reuven" in the yeshiva to speak up and vent their fears and apprehensions. While I have heard that on occasion serious problems do arise prior to or after the wedding, when they do, they are referred to senior faculty members, who are more experienced and better equipped to deal with these cases, and do so from a Torah perspective. In this a frequent occurrence? I have no idea, since it is none of my business. But whether it is frequent and handled well, or rare, is of little consequence. Either way we may be proud.

Mrs. ZEV EGERT
Lakewood, New Jersey

Preparation For Marriage
and the Right to Know

To the Editor:

The articles on "Marriage in a Torah Society" were necessary to encourage parents to properly guide their children to marriage. There is, however, an additional responsibility which falls on Klal Yisroel and can, in a sense, hold us all responsible for some of the divorces today.

In many of the shidduchim made

WANTED!

The Jewish Youth Library is gathering back-issues of periodicals and binding them into volumes. If you have any back-issues of:

Olomeinu, Jewish Observer, Yiddishe Licht, Yiddishe Vort, Di Yiddishe Heim, Hapardes, Hamaor, Light Magazine, Bais Yaakov Magazine etc.

Please call the library at (212) 435-4711.

Your call will be answered at all hours. We will gladly come pick them up.

Is your name and address printed incorrectly on the JO mailing label? Are you moving? Help us deliver your JO to you as efficiently as possible. Please attach current mailing label in space below; or else print clearly your address as we now have it.

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Print your correct (or new) name and address here:

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Mail to:

The Jewish Observer
5 Beekman St./N.Y.C 10038

today, the "introducer" (or *shad-chen*) knows one party well but the other only casually. The parties involved must then ask around to find people who know the other person and are willing to give an honest evaluation of the person's character and the suitability of the *shidduch*.

Eager to see the *shidduch* (any *shidduch*?) work, the evaluation given is usually glowing, and the parties to the *shidduch* proceed on the assumption that the other person is really a fine person and a fine choice for him/her.

Unfortunately, the admonition of the Chofetz Chaim (הלכות לשון הרע)—(כלל ד' אות י"א)—that one should "tell the truth" when one is asked about another for the purpose of a *shidduch*—has been forgotten by many people. As soon as the *shidduch* breaks up, or ח"ו a marriage breaks up, the people who spoke so glowingly beforehand will suddenly say, "It's just as well. He always was a vengeful person," or "She *did* have many emotional problems when she was growing up."

Not every divorce today can be blamed on people having been misinformed during the courtship period, but there are enough such cases to demand a need for *tactful honesty* among people who are asked about a person and in fact know about potentially serious problems a person has had in his/her past. A history of previous

instability which can cause an unnatural strain on a marriage will eventually surface. Would it not be far better if it were before a marriage took place, when its effects could be evaluated objectively and disaster could be forestalled?

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

Education for Marriage: The Parents' Home

To the Editor:

Preparation for marriage begins long before a boy or girl becomes "of age". If we allow our children and teenagers to read novels and

Haolam Cheese... CHOLOV YISROEL AT ITS BEST



8 varieties of the finest quality, naturally delicious Kosher Cheeses,

under the supervision of K'h'al Adath Jeshurun, Rabbi Joseph Breuer.

THURM BROS.—World Cheese Co., Inc., New York, N.Y. 10013

ASK FOR THE NEW
"ERS" PACKAGE

CREATORS
OF
FINE
COLOR
PHOTOGRAPHY

ZELMAN STUDIOS

623 CORTELYOU ROAD
(OFF OCEAN PKWY)
BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11218

WEDDINGS BAR MITZVAHS
(212) 941-5500

Ninth Annual

**ישיבת
ירחי כלה**

צ.כ.ג. מנחם אב
AUG. 5 - AUG. 16

Lakewood, New Jersey
מס' יומא, פרק יוה"כ מדף פב
שיעורי עיון
מהרב ר' שמחה שוסטעל, שליט"א
שיעורים על הדף
מהרב ר' ברוך טובי, שליט"א

Accommodations accepted for full
two weeks only.

For additional information, please
call or write:

Rabbi Aaron Pam 652 East 5th Street Brooklyn, N.Y. 11218 (212) 633-7986	Rabbi Yosef Perlstein 750 Forest Avenue Lakewood, N.J. 08701 (201) 367-4526
--	--

Chap-A-Nosh at Miami's
DELI-NOSH
GLATT KOSHER FAST FOODS
Under Orthodox Rabbinical Council

Ⓢ DINNERS, LUNCHES
HAIMISHE TAKE HOME FOODS
BAR-B-Q CHICKEN, DELICATESSEN
SANDWICHES, BURGERS, FRANKS
EAT IN OR TAKE OUT
Open All Year 11 AM - 11 PM
420 Arthur Godfrey - 41st St.
Miami Beach, Fla.

**Are you staying in the
city this summer?**

**Yeshiva of Brooklyn Day
Camps**

fun-filled trips/activities/arts & crafts/large indoor pool/dedicated counselors and *rabbeim*/permeated with Torah learning and *ruach*/will make your summer unforgettable.

Ashreinu for boys/**Yedidus** for girls
only \$199
Call 376-3775



LETTERS CONTINUED

magazine stories depicting non-Jewish values of life, love, sex and marriage (television and movies are equally noxious), if we indicate to our children that dressing in the latest fashion is a necessity, how can we expect them to grow up to be individuals who understand being *mistapeek b'muat* (satisfied with less)? Or to be aware of the place of *gashmius* vs. the emphasis on *ruchnius*?

If we indicate to our children that going somewhere *motzaei Shabbos*

and Sundays is a must, otherwise they'll be bored, then how can they be expected to be happy staying home and taking care of their families? Or to be involved with doing *chessed* instead of wanting to be "away from it all"?

We must say it and emphasize it with our actions. We are *Yiddin*. We live differently than those all around us. Our values are different and our actions must bear this out.

If we stop acting like others in the various areas of life, we will see an improvement in the married lives our young couples are leading also.

(Mrs.) MINNA SAPIRMAN
Toronto

ISRAEL

BAR MITZVAH IN ISRAEL

The chance every child dreams of: Celebrate this event in the land of his forefathers; let us tailor a tour to fit your budget. We offer packages with Central & PLAZA Hotels, unique features and special Group and Family plans. One week packages with airfare as low as \$729 plus tax.

Escorted Tours from \$1178 to \$1288 based on charter airflights.

AIR ONLY CHARTERS from **\$599** plus \$3 tax.



Command Travel Inc.
6 E. 45th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10017
Toll-free 800-221-4840 New York 212-490-1213

**A Challenge to
"Marriage in a Torah Society"**

To the Editor:

In your recent articles on Torah Marriage I was really surprised to find that while you decry the fact that "Orthodoxy has not remained impervious to the divorce trend" there is no mention or crying over the fact that not only have we not remained impervious to the trend, we have become part of this trend, we have adopted this trend and too many other ideas from American society.

The cases mentioned in Meir Wikler's article represent people who came with their problems into a marriage, but what about the *frum* young couples whose marriages are destroyed because of the influences of the world trend? How many *frum* young wives read and absorb the sophisticated and "fardorbana" viewpoints of American society's writers? How often have I heard *frum* young women expounding on marriage and sounding like they memorized *Family Circle*?

Our problem is that we have not detached ourselves from the world trend. We have forgotten that *Am Yisroel* is different from everyone else, and that we have to turn to our *gedolim* and *rebbeim* for the Torah outlook on our daily lives. We must realize that as members of an *Am Kodesh* we can't grade our marriages on the basis of results of "How does your marriage rate?" test in the *Ladies Home Journal*.

I think that besides trying to find a cure for the disease, it's time we tried harder to find ways to inoculate ourselves against it.

(Mrs.) M. BIEGELEISEN
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Vigilance and Bereaved Jews' Rights

To the Editor:

Dr. Bernard Fryshman performed an invaluable service to the cause of *chessed shel emes* by formulating

FELDHEIM BOOKS



Time for fine summer learning

For the English reader, Feldheim Publishers offer a stimulating variety of works of commentary and interpretation that provide everything from inspiring mind-expanding perceptions, to entertaining turns of thought, to serious philosophical analysis.

Choose some of these titles today, and plan for some fine learning on a Sabbath afternoon:

Chapters of the Fathers by *Samson Raphael Hirsch*: the master's inimitable translation and commentary, incisive and inspiring (with vocalized Hebrew text).
\$3.95

Ethics from Sinai by *Irving M. Bunim*: an eclectic, wide-ranging commentary by a past master of homiletic thought and wit (with vocalized Hebrew text).
3 volumes. Soft cover, \$15.00/Hard cover, \$27.50

The Hafetz Hayyim on Pirkey Avoth: his distinctive interpretations and explanations, gathered from the full range of his writings; translated by *Charles Wengrov*.
\$6.75

The Baal Shem Tov on Pirkey Avoth: the radically profound mystic approach of the founder of *Hassiduth*, culled from the writings of disciples and descendants; translated by *Charles Wengrov*.
\$7.50

Living Judaism by *Paul Forchheimer*: Maimonides' commentary on *Avoth*, and his Introduction to *Helek* (Sanhedrin, Chap. X), form the basis for a systematic outline of a modern Jewish Philosophy.
\$7.95

Lilmod U'le'lamed A compendium in English of insights and interpretations of the weekly Sedra including a synopsis of each Parsha.
\$5.50

New Books:

אמרו אמן

And Let Us Say Amen by *Rabbi Joshua Alter Wildman*: to clarify the great reward for answering . . . אמן (*Amen* . . .) and אמן ידע שמה רבא, as well as their meanings and implications and their laws, gathered from the Talmud, Midrashim, Zohar and works of Mussar.

Hebrew text with English translation by Rabbi Charles Wengrov 290 pages, soft cover \$5.95

The Heavenly City from Jerusalem of the past: by *Menachem Gerlitz*: The author, a descendent of an old Jerusalem family, has woven a tapestry, rich with strands of history, fascinating details of daily life in the cramped quarters of the Old City, and vivid insights into the problems and conflicts that agitated the little pious community.

There are unforgettable glimpses of the personages who made the Jerusalem of the past a divine center of holiness.

Here it is at last in English, **The Heavenly City**, a lively translation that conveys the full flavor and charm of a colorful pulsating world of unknown, unsung heroes that has vanished. A wedding, a funeral, a market scene will linger in the memory long after the book has been put down. This is a notable chronicle of vivid history, heartwarming human interest, and lasting inspiration.

288 pages. hardcover \$6.95

Sabbath Shiurim Vol II by *Rabbi M. Miller*, Jewish Teachers Training College of Gateshead: This is the second volume by the renowned disciple of Rabbi Dessler on the weekly Parshioth, whose previous volume turned out to be such a great success and bestseller.

\$10.95

Available at better Jewish bookstores

FELDHEIM PUBLISHERS LTD.
39 TACHKEMONI ST., JERUSALEM

PHILIPP FELDHEIM INC.
96 EAST BROADWAY, N. Y., 10002

his "Bereaved Jew's Bill of Rights" (J.O. Dec. '78). The general community should be made aware that it has its own unique contribution to make in this area.

This writer has served for several years with several *Chevrei Kadisha*. Having repeatedly visited virtually all of the major funeral chapels in the N.Y.C. Metropolitan area, I have studied the sensitivity shown by chapel personnel to halachic requirements. At best, the more compassionate operators display unwitting ignorance of proper honor to the deceased; at worst, bodies are callously manhandled as so much human effluvia.

Chapel owners and their staffs simply cannot understand *kedushas ha-mes* if they are not committed, *kedusha*-oriented Jews (and as often as not, they are non-Jews!). It simply does not make sense to give over all handling of the *mes*, except the actual *tahara* to the care of those who think, "What difference does it make to him now? The dead can't feel."

We, of course, feel quite differently. Our firm belief in the eternity and elevated state of the *neshama* after death is reflected in

our insistence that only Torah-true Jews be allowed to tend to the needs of the deceased in any way. Every action, nuance, gesture can be invested with meaning and significance to the *mes*.

Several cities have chapels entirely controlled by Torah-true Jews. One might expect that these chapels be used to the exclusion of all others. Regrettably, this is not the case. Too often, the needs of the living ride roughshod over those of the deceased. Families try to find the most convenient location for the funeral, to ease the burden on those who will attend. This often means passing up the chapel with higher standards, which may be a few miles more distant.

Chapels, a multi-million dollar industry, employ subtle methods to insure that they won't lose business on halachic grounds. In several communities, chapel owners donate heavily to individual congregations. These shuls can hardly be expected to push for greater adherence to *halacha* at the risk of losing revenues they sorely need. Often, spiritual leaders are the recipients of favors from chapels, diminishing their resolve to speak out when they should. A favored device is rewarding "friendly" rabbis with oppor-


tunities to perform quick, lucrative services when the family cannot find its own clergyman.

Like most businesses, the key to a successful funeral trade is a good sales pitch. Chapel personnel are trained, like used care salesmen, to convince the customer to buy what they want him to. The strictly Orthodox service—minus the elaborate coffin, the flowers, the embalming—gives them the lowest margin of profit. Preying on a family's moment of vulnerability, they convince even the Orthodox that a "fancier" wooden casket is halachically allowable, and much more appropriate to the honor of the deceased. The rabbi cannot possibly be present every time arrangements are made. He must settle for what has been ordered, satisfied that it could have been much worse.

What must be done is self-evident. Where recourse is available to *frum* chapels, these must be used. Where this is impossible, the community must see to it that virtually no responsibility is given to irreligious or non-Jewish personnel, from the moment of death until interment. And the community as a whole must become sensitized to what *kedushas ha-mes* is.

These last objectives are best

One of
WORLD'S LARGEST
CAMERA STORES
שוקר שבת




**Wall Street
Camera Exchange**
Complete Line of Cameras
and Photo Supplies

82 WALL STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.
Telephone: (212)344-0011

— Wholesale — Mail Order — Retail

Special Reductions to all
Readers of
THE JEWISH OBSERVER



**GRADING and
REPORT CARDS**

FOR THE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL

A COMPLETE COLLECTION OF

Report Cards
Award Cards
Grading Schedules
Record Sheets
Progress Report

for an effective grading system

as developed at
THE HEBREW ACADEMY OF CLEVELAND

ATTENTION MECHANCHIM

Hebrew Academy of Cleveland
Publication Department offers
55 educational items for
Hebrew Day Schools

- Curricular manuals, guides.
- Workbooks
- Visual aids, maps, and many others

Catalogue sent upon request
Send 75¢ for handling to:
**HEBREW ACADEMY
PUBLICATIONS DEPT.**
1860 South Taylor Rd.
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

realized by more community involvement. In many areas, congregations are forming their own *Chevrei Kadisha*, prepared to confront tragedy with a full-time vigilance that larger groups can't. This author is aware of people on both the East and West coasts who stand ready to assist, guide, and train new groups dedicated to the proper performance of the *kavod ha-acharon*.

(Rabbi) YITZCHOK ADLERSTEIN
Los Angeles, Ca

Chevra Kadisha in Hempstead

To the Editor:

I read with interest Dr. Bernard Fryshman's article: "The Bereaved Jew's Bill of Rights" (J.O. Dec. 1978).

In my own community, the Young Israel of West Hempstead, we have established through hard work and dedication a Chessed Shel Emes Committee that might serve as an example to other communities. When a death occurs *ו"ה*, we take charge of all arrangements until burial. Our services include: *Shomrim*; *Chevra Kadisha* (men's and ladies') to provide the *taharah*; *tachrichim*; *aron*; facilities at the local funeral home (I. J. Morris) for the *hespid*; hearse, limousine for the

mourners; and a grave in our cemetery.

All costs are paid for by the *Kehilla* and are financed through a yearly tax of \$20.00 for each family.

Just as indicated in Dr. Fryshman's article describing the system in Europe—we have found that by taking complete charge of the funeral we accomplish two things: (a) the family is spared from making any arrangements (during a most painful period); and (b) we assure the *mes* the "right" to a funeral according to *halacha*.

HAROLD MECHANIC
West Hempstead, N.Y.

Enjoy...
Eat in good health!



The Most Trusted Name in
Kosher Poultry and Foods . . .
Preferred World-Wide

SARA SCHENIRER SEMINARY

Brooklyn, New York

is now accepting registrants to its

Class of 5740

(1979-80)

and to its

RESIDENCE HALL

Rabbi M. Meisels,
Dean

Applicants may apply
by phone or letter to:

Beth Jacob
Sara Schenirer Seminary
4622-14th Avenue
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11219
(212) 633-8557-8

GRADUATES!

Interested in an enriching experience?
BAIS YA'AKOV TORONTO
Jacob Perlman Teachers Seminary



has opened registration for out of town students
• High School Graduates can enroll in our 2 year program
• Students with previous Seminary background can enter the second year of our program

WE OFFER:

- an advanced comprehensive program in *Limudei Kodesh*
- intensive teacher training with practicum in both *Limudei Kodesh* & secular studies
- Seminary diplomas & Torah Umesorah Teachers Licence
- an atmosphere conducive to developing each student's individual potential
- residential facilities in select private homes in a pleasant environment.

For applications or information write:



Jacob Perlman Teachers Seminary
410 Lawrence Ave. W.
Toronto, Ontario M5M 1C2
or call (416) 787-4949 & ask for
Rabbi A. Stefansky, Principal

**Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah
in Jerusalem Demand
Abortion Law Change
in 60 Days**

Jerusalem—A meeting of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah (Council of Torah Sages) of Agudath Israel held there Sunday, May 6, decided to set a two-month deadline during which Paragraph 5 of the current Abortion Law (which permits abortion on demand for "medical, social or economic reasons") must be amended so as to exclude "social and economic reasons." This is one of the conditions that had been set by the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah two years ago for Agudath Israel to join the Begin government. If this amendment is not passed within the two-month period, the Council resolved to convene once more to review Agudath Israel's continued participation in the coalition.

This 3-hour session of the Torah Sages, headed by Rabbi Eliezer Shach (the venerable Ponovezher Rosh Yeshiva) and the Gerer Rebbe, Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter, also considered a number of other points in the coalition agreement that have yet to be fulfilled, such as curbing unauthorized autopsies, stopping desecration of ancient grave-sites, and passage of an amendment to the Law of Return to ascertain that only conversions performed in accordance with *halacha* be recognized by the State. After expressing appreciation to Agudath Israel's Knesset representatives for their important accomplishments on major religious issues until now, the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah charged them with the responsibility to work unceasingly until all 43 points of the coalition agreement are fulfilled.

The Moetzes also dealt with other issues, including the status of the projected sports stadium in Jerusalem; the express highway to Ramot which brings Sabbath-violating traffic to the Orthodox communities on Jerusalem's northern tier; the needs of various Torah institutions; specific educational problems; and plans for intensification of efforts towards Harbotzas Torah (dissemination of Torah study).

גילוי דעת

ברצוננו להעמיד דברים על אמינותם וקושטא קאי. לאחר שנודע לנו שאנשים בלתי אחראים הפיצו שמועות זכב מתוך כוונת קינטור על מהלך הישיבה של מועצת גדולי התורה שהתקיימה ביום א' ט' אייר דנא, אמנם אין זה מדרכנו לטפל בסילופים המהפרסמים בכלי התקשורת ובעתונות, אך לאחר שהדברים עברו כל גבול יצאנו מגדרנו הפעם לפרסם ברבים כדלקמן בכדי לסחוט פיות משטינים ומקטרגים.

ברצוננו לקבוע כי אין שחר לעלילת הדברים שכאילו בישיבת מועצת גדולי התורה נאפנו ח"י בחברי הכנסת של אגודת-ישראל על חוסר פעולה וכו', אדרבה האמת היא שבמהלך הישיבה הובעה הערכה לפעולותיהם הברוכות של חברי הכנסת לטובת חיוק היהדות ומוסדות התורה ואמרנו יישר כוח על הדברים שהושגו על ידם עד עכשיו.

נכון הוא שבקשנו מח"כ שיוסיפו ויגבירו פעלים ביהר עוז בעניני רחמינות, ויתבעו בכל חוקף את כצועם של הסעיפים שטרם בוצעו מההסכם הקואליציוני בכלל ובקשר לתיקון חוק ההפלות חוק איסור ניתוח מתים בפרט, דרישות אלה היו כפי הגדרת אחד מראשי מועצה"ת בגדר, אין מורדין אלא למורדין.

לאחר שלמגינת לבנו עוותו הדברים הננו להודיע שיש לנו אימון מלא בפעולות שנעשו ע"י סיעת אגודת-ישראל בכנסת בכל המישורים, וברכתנו שחפץ ה' בידם יצליח להגדיל תורה ולהאדירה גם להבא, ונזכה לגאולה שלמה בקרוב.

שמחה בונם אלהר

אליעזר מנחם מן שך

אור ליום י"ד אייר תשל"ט

Other renowned rabbinical leaders who participated in the meeting of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah included: the Vizhnitzer Rebbe, Machnovke Rebbe, Modzitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Yochanan Sofer (Erlauer Rav), Rabbi Sholom Noach Borozovsky (Slonimer Rosh Yeshiva), Rabbi Baruch Shimon Shneurson (Tchebin Rosh Yeshiva), Rabbi Moshe Shapiro (Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Beer Yaakov), Rabbi Pinchos Menachem Alter (Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Ger), Rabbi Simcha Zissel Broyde (Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Chevron), Rabbi Nisson Karelitz (Rosh, Kolel Chazon Ish), and Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov Zaleznick (Yeshiva Etz Chaim).

*Rav Shach and Gerer Rebbe
Issue Statement*

A public statement was issued several days after the meeting by the two top leaders of

the Council of Torah Sages in Israel, the Ponovezher Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Shach and the Gerer Rebbe Rabbi Alter, denying stories which had been published in the Israeli press which alleged that the rabbinic authorities had severely criticized Agudath Israel's Knesset members. "Just the opposite is true," the venerable sages declared in a signed statement, "a deep appreciation for the blessed activities for the strengthening of Yiddishkeit and Torah institutions by the Agudist Knesset members was expressed at the gathering." "What is true is that the members of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah asked the Agudist Knesset members to increase their activities in strongly demanding the fulfillment of the chapters of the coalition agreement which have still not been implemented, particularly relating to the amending of the abortion law and the autopsy law," the statement reads.

The unusual declaration by the two highly revered Torah leaders points out that they are making an exception to their general policy of not issuing denials only because the reports go beyond every border of decency, and conclude by stating: "We wish to express the full confidence of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah in the activities of the Agudath Israel faction of the Knesset in every field, and they have our blessings and with the help of Hashem they will succeed to strengthen Torah."

**Come To
Kosher Country**
© glatt Supervised

Formerly Kosher King
1501 Surf Ave. Coney Island
Whitehead Hall Brooklyn College

Rabbi Kaminetzky to Torah Youth: "Train for Klal Responsibility"

An overflow crowd of 1,000 yeshiva students participated in the National Torah Assembly sponsored by Zeirei Agudath Israel of America Sunday April 22, which heard the eminent Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta



Torah Vodaath, Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky, urge them to train for ultimate service to Klal Yisroel. Speaking at the Agudath Israel Center of Boro Park, the senior member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudath Israel advised: "Realize, that since you have been chosen to become a guide for Klal Yisroel, it is incumbent upon you to insure that your privileged stay in a yeshiva adequately prepares you to shoulder this awesome burden of leadership for which you are destined." The venerable Rosh Yeshiva also underscored the need to use one's youthful energies with responsibility. "True *kano'us* (zeal) is an outgrowth of compassion and concern for one's fellow, not impetuosity or vindictiveness."

Rabbi Kaminetzky addressed an audience comprised of representatives from major cities in the U.S., Canada, and *Eretz Yisroel*, who had gathered to join in the first National Torah Assembly of Zeirei Agudath Israel—which was conceived and promoted by leading Torah figures. Those attending were offered the unique opportunity of direct communication with illustrious Torah scholars to whom they normally are not exposed.

At this session—a festive banquet which culminated the day-long program—the



gathering heard Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, the Novominsker Rebbe, implore them to

identify with and join Zeirei Agudath Israel, which stands in the vanguard of concern for one's fellow Jews: "We should feel privileged to be affiliated with an organization whose policy of continued activism for the physical and spiritual betterment of the Jewish community is based on a solid foundation of Torah, under the leadership of *Gedolei Yisroel*." He also reiterated the need for every Yeshiva *bachur* to aspire to become an accomplished scholar capable of perpetuating our *mesorah* of deep commitment to true Torah learning.



In extending greetings to the assembly, Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive president of Agudath Israel of America, encouraged those present to stand proud of their religious heritage and "to band together under the coalition banner of Agudath Israel, under the guidance of our Torah sages; to work effectively for authentic Yiddishkeit by instilling a sense of Torah pride among the Orthodox Jewish masses."



Earlier in the day, the participants heard a complex Pilpul Shiur on the laws of Charity from Rabbi Elya Svei, Rosh Yeshiva of Philadelphia. The Shiur was followed by a stimulating symposium, "The Responsibility of a Ben Torah—To Himself, To His Community," moderated by Rabbi Nissim Wolpin,



editor of *The Jewish Observer*. Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller Rosh Yeshiva, Telshe Yeshiva of Chicago, began the session by clearly delineating the dilemma facing each and every young man today: pursuit of one's own personal spiritual elevation as opposed to involvement with meeting the Torah needs of one's fellow Jew. He emphasized that an individual's personal perfection is intrinsically tied to, and dependent upon, his concern for his Chaver's spiritual advancement.



The second discussant, Rabbi David Steinwurtzel, Rosh Yeshiva of Bnei Zion of Bobov, delivered a fiery call to the assemblage to broaden their horizon of Torah accomplishment and assign themselves specific attainable goals: master Halochos, know the blatt, finish the Mesechta. "Knowing more makes you more, and as a result, your impact on the community will be greater." In addition, Rabbi Steinwurtzel advised the gathering that they must be prepared to function productively even outside the confines of pure Torah learning, even when working and living in today's secular world. A lively question and answer period followed with both discussants providing candid, enlightening answers to numerous questions on the topics.

The National Torah Assembly was organized as part of Zeirei Agudath Israel's aim of providing Orthodox Jewry with their spiritual as well as physical needs. (Another such project is Reshet Shiurei Torah, Zeirei's successful program of organizing Torah study groups, geared to individualized levels). The success of the assembly and the enthusiastic response of those attending indicate the need for continued, broader programs in the future to deal with current topics and problems facing conscientious Torah youth today.

"Respect Religious Rights," Agudath Israel Tells N.Y. State

Alarmed over several reported incidents of adoption of Jewish children by Non-Jews, Agudath Israel of America joined the Ohel Children's Home in forcefully requesting that "religious rights" be respected in foster care procedures, at hearings convened by the New York State Department of Social Services Task Force on Foster Care on April 27th. The state agency had convened the hearings as a prelude to the redrafting of laws and regulations pertaining to foster care. Dr. Gerald David, representing Agudath Israel of America, explained that "the Jewish way of life views the family unit as the primary vehicle for inculcating ethical, moral and religious values."

In his testimony, the Agudath Israel spokesman said that "while pleased to see that you are considering legislation to strengthen preventive services to keep the natural family unit intact, we are however, very concerned that a singular emphasis on adoption, with loss of reimbursement to agencies that fail to meet this quota, will result in a wholesale disregard of the religious rights of natural parents and children; and, even more important, it will foster the breakup of natural families. We will have a law that will first keep the family together with preventive and rehabilitative services, and when these services fail, the law will tear the natural family asunder and sever all familial ties to the child as the child is permanently adopted.

"Since long term foster care will be looked upon as undesirable by the proposed law, the intermediate step of foster care which gives the natural family unit a chance to be rehabilitated and which maintains the ties of the natural family unit a chance to be rehabilitated and which maintains the ties of the natural family to the child will be terminated quickly in favor of adoption. A family for whom preventive and rehabilitative services have in the short run failed, will be offered as the only way out."

The Agudath Israel statement suggested that the legislation adequately protect parents and children in the following ways: 1) Natural parents should actively be advised that they have the right to request that their child be raised within their own religion. A signed statement as to the wishes of the parent should be part of every case record. 2) Their request should be respected at all times by the agency, not only "when-ever practicable." No child should be forcibly removed from his religion. Children also have religious rights. 3) Whenever there is a chance that the natural family unit can be saved, foster care should be preferred over adoption. 4) Long term foster care should

be considered on a case-by-case basis with full consideration of the child's and natural family's physical and emotional status. 5) No agency should suffer the loss of reimbursement if it has not met its adoptive quota. If the agency has clinical and medical data to support its decision that foster care is needed for a particular child, for most or even all of its children, then the state should not pressure the agency in any way. We all want the best care for our children."

Banner Season For Agudah Camps

Camp Agudah for boys and Camp Bnos for girls are planning for their 37th successive season, in New York's Catskill Mountains, scheduled for a June 27 opening, with a record pre-registration. The camps expect to serve more than 1,000 campers with their exceptional recreational and educational programs, which have earned these camps the title "Ruach Country." The American Agudah summer camps are featuring many physical changes this year, including remodeling of bunks on both campuses and the enlargement and redecoration of the Camp Bnos dining hall and "main house."

In Camp Agudah, special emphasis is being placed on continuing the spiritual enrichment that the camp has come to be associated with, such as the inspiring visits of outstanding Torah personalities such as Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky (member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah), Rabbi Yaakov Perlow (Novominsker Rebbe), Rabbi Yehudah Halevi Turnower, and Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz (Bostoner Rebbe)—all who graced the camp with their presence last summer. In addition, a special effort was made to engage the services of six top-notch professional *Rabbeim* to instruct the camp's learning groups. As in the past, outstanding senior yeshiva students have been engaged as counselors.

The special Camp Bnos Ruach will be enhanced this coming summer with the introduction of a series of workshops for older campers instructing them in artistic skills and crafts, as well as the obtaining of the services of a senior staff member to serve as a sports specialist.

Agudath Israel Agency Helps Single Homemakers

For the first time, the Jewish community has a specific project which is designed to help people, predominantly women, who have lost their basic source of income as a result of being separated, divorced or widowed. The effort is part of a new pilot project by Project COPE. According to Risa Schmookler, head of COPE's special project, and Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, director of Project COPE, the initiative was in response to a growing number of women who were

Threat to "Shechita" Averted by Agudath Israel's Action

A threat to the future of *shechita* (kosher slaughter of animals) was averted this week when speedy intervention by Agudath Israel of America resulted in the U.S. Department of Agriculture backing down on a new regulation that it sought to impose on the largest producer of kosher beef in the country, Spencer Foods of Spencer, Iowa.

The story began last month, when the representative of the Department of Agriculture in Iowa insisted that cattle should be shot with a bullet immediately after the incision is made by the *shochet* (kosher slaughterer). The government representative claimed that it was necessary to stun the animal in order to halt its convulsive movements after the act of *shechita*, which allegedly exposes the animal to bacteria from the mud-encrusted neighboring steer.

The supervising rabbis at Spencer Foods, Rabbi Mordecai Savitsky and Rabbi Jacob Savitsky, rejected this demand on Halachic grounds, declaring that stunning the animal immediately after *shechita* causes the blood to clot and thus renders it unfit for kashruth. The USDA official in Iowa thereupon issued an order halting all kosher operations at the slaughterhouse as of that Monday morning.

Recalling the role that Agudath Israel played in 1975 in solving a previous danger to *shechita* at the same plant presented by local officers of the USDA, the supervising rabbis and the president of Spencer Foods contacted the organization's executive president Rabbi Moshe Sherer. The Agudath Israel leader enlisted the aid of Senator Jacob K. Javits (N.Y.), who prevailed upon Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland to withdraw this ban and rescind the "stunning" requirement, which was called "a threat to the practice of *shechita* in the entire country." Some sprinkling arrangements will be added to the plant's operation in order to respond to the hygienic demands of the local USDA official.

forced to return to work as a result of unforeseen circumstances and who were not job ready.

Called the Fresh Start Training Program, it operates out of Project COPE's Flatbush office at 813 Avenue H (between E. 8th and 9th Streets). The services provided include: evaluation of skills, information on current job and educational opportunities, vocational testing and guidance, individual and group counseling, and financial and legal advice.



NATIONAL MISHNAYOS CHAMPS—Aron Bursztyn, 12, of Lakewood, New Jersey, (left) and Sholom Perl, 12, of Montreal, Canada, (right) were this year's top achievers in the 16th annual Siyum Mishnayos Contest sponsored by Pirchei Agudath Israel of America. At a gala celebration in Brooklyn, New York, on March 19, attended by more than 1200 children from cities throughout the United States and Canada, Aron, who memorized 1335 Mishnayos, read the conclusion of the Talmud while Sholom with 1200 Mishnayos under his belt, immediately recited the beginning. In addition to New York, Siyum Mishnayos celebrations were also held in other cities, including Chicago, Denver, and Savannah.

New York Yeshivos Receive Government Aid Before Pesach

Agudath Israel Hails Court Victory

Yeshivos and Bais Yaakov schools in New York State received over \$1 million in government support during the week before Pesach, as the result of a U.S. Supreme Court decision releasing these funds. Agudath Israel, which has pioneered and spearheaded for the past two decades efforts to obtain government support for Yeshivos, greeted this development "as a harbinger of good news for the future of obtaining justice for nonpublic education," and expressed delight that the financial help arrived in time for the crisis-ridden Yeshivos to help their teachers before Pesach.

The funds released to the Yeshivos were held in escrow since 1977-1978, when the American Jewish Congress joined other anti-Yeshiva forces in a lawsuit testing the constitutionality of a law passed by New York State reimbursing religious non-public schools for their expenses for such State-mandated activities as attendance-keeping, pupil-testing, etc. When a regional federal court several months ago upheld the constitutionality of this law, the American Jewish Congress and its partners immediately appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, and at the same time filed for the escrow funds to be withheld. The Supreme Court in its decision ruled that although it has still not passed on the appeal, the reli-

gious nonpublic schools are entitled to receive the escrow money based on the lower court decision.

As a result, in addition to the \$1 million received by the Yeshivos before Pesach, the Torah institutions will also receive another half-million dollars in government aid during the month of May as payment for the 1979 school year. The Agudath Israel statement pointed out that these funds are especially needed now, when Yeshivos have accepted so many Russian immigrant children. It appealed to the conscience of the American Jewish Congress leaders to stop obstructing the furtherance of Jewish education through constant court battles.

18 AVENUE SEFORIM & GIFT CENTER

5001 — 18 Avenue
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11204
(212) 633-9225

- Large selection of ספרים and English Books
- We sell exclusively all lecture tapes of Rabbi Avigdor Miller שליט"א
- Wonderful story tapes for children (in Yiddish) by Rabbi L. Weinstock זצ"ל (from Monsey)

Agudath Israel Pesach Program Assists Thousands Worldwide

Thousands of poor, sick and elderly Jews all over the world benefited from special Pesach programs sponsored by Agudath Israel of America. The program involved material help as well as spiritual programming.

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 at each of the Agudath Israel senior citizens facilities. In Boro Park's Agudath Israel 14th Avenue branch, 200 people participated at community sedorim. Amongst those at the sedorim were a large number of Russian immigrants.

In addition to the sedorim, the Pesach activities also included the distribution of food parcels as well as financial aid to 500 needy families. The food packages included wine and matzohs for the seder as well as other foods that are unique for the holiday. Shut-ins who cannot leave their homes because of ill health had holiday meals brought to them by volunteer girls of Project NAJR, Bros 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.

In other U.S. activities, Project AISHEL (acronym for Agudath Israel Student Hospitality League) placed a large number of Iranian Jewish students with New York families for Pesach. Haggadahs with Persian translations were also distributed. Project RISE (acronym for Russian Immigrant Services and Education) sponsored a special pre-Passover program for newly arrived Russian immigrants.

Overseas, many needy Jews received matzohs 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 elaborate 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.

**SHELLY
LANG
orchestra**
438-3402



american friends of machon yerushalayim
**the jerusalem institute
of talmudic research**

The description of the pioneering efforts of **Machon Yerushalayim** featured in last month's *Jewish Observer* informed you about the undertaking that has captured the imagination of the Torah World:

**Machon Yerushalayim:
Kolel Manpower at Work**

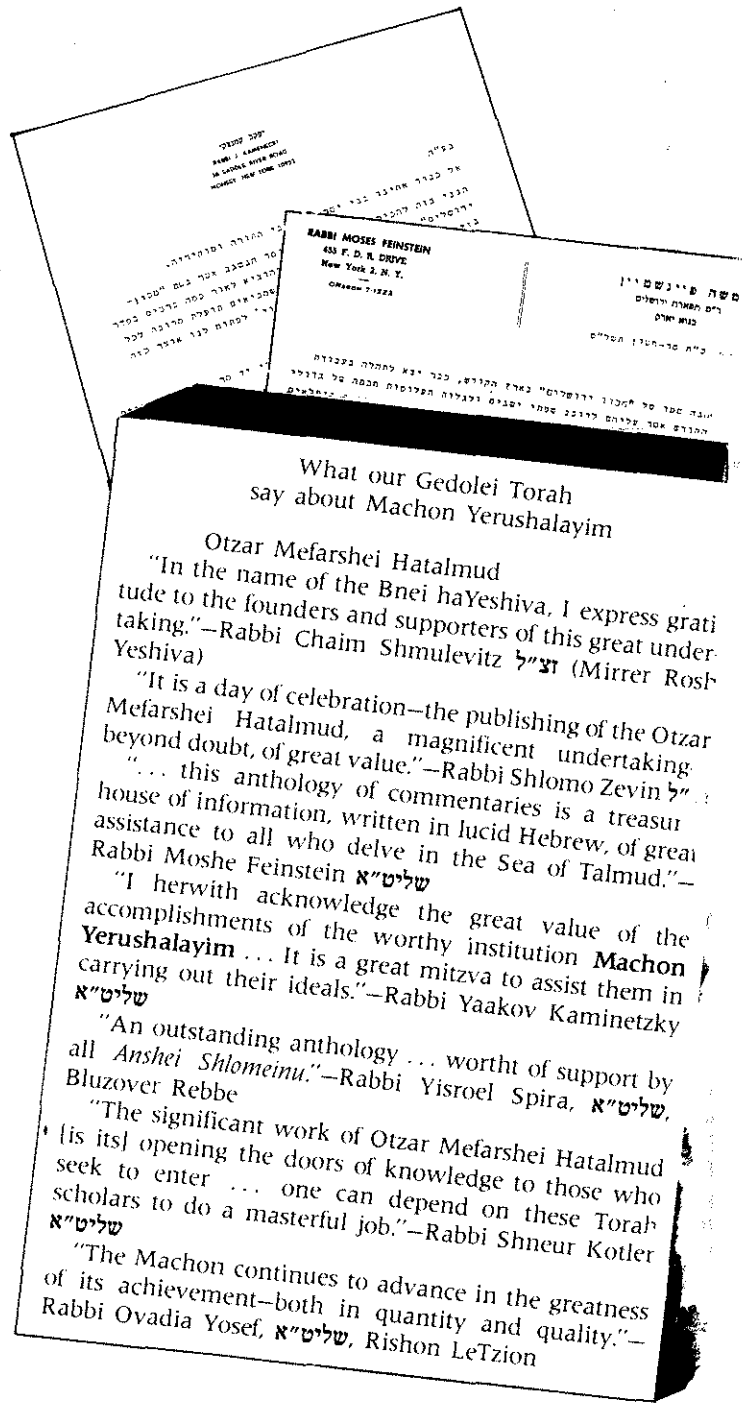
Seasoned Talmudic scholars who graced the outstanding Kolelim in Eretz Yisroel are turning their efforts to redeem old, forgotten manuscripts from oblivion. In addition, they are preparing a comprehensive anthology of all known commentaries of the Talmud, and presenting them in a digest form. Among the various works completed to date are:

- *Otzar Mefarshei Hatalmud* Treasury of Talmudic Commentators—condensed commentaries and glosses of the Talmudic and halachic authorities to the Babylonian Talmud, from the *Rambam* (Maimonides) on to the present era.
- *Mifal Torah Chachmei Ashkenaz*—The writings of the Sages of Medieval Germany
- *Mifal Ohr Hamizrach*—The writings of the Greatest Sephardic Rabbis (for instance, a 452 page volume of *Chiddushei Rabbeinu Dovid Bonafed* on Tractate Pesachim was recently published).
- *Mifal Yad David*—Projected publication of the twenty-volume opus of the great Gaon, Rabbi Joseph David Snitzheim, a commentary covering most of the Talmud.

Machon Yerushalayim's program has stirred up great interest in American Torah circles to create an affiliate institution in the United States, whereby *Kolel* fellows here will be mobilized to devote their talents and efforts toward making the riches of our heritage more accessible to the broad Torah studying public.

To expedite this undertaking, we are inviting you to embark in the creation of the Machon Yerushalayim—USA, Founders Group. Your contribution will be instrumental in bringing an exciting new development in organized Torah study to these shores. You will be helping Torah scholars help *you* study better and know more.

Your generosity ולהאדירה will be greatly appreciated.



What our Gedolei Torah
say about Machon Yerushalayim

Otzar Mefarshei Hatalmud
 "In the name of the Bnei haYeshiva, I express gratitude to the founders and supporters of this great undertaking."—Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz זצ"ל (Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva)

"It is a day of celebration—the publishing of the *Otzar Mefarshei Hatalmud*, a magnificent undertaking beyond doubt, of great value."—Rabbi Shlomo Zevin זצ"ל

"... this anthology of commentaries is a treasure house of information, written in lucid Hebrew, of great assistance to all who delve in the Sea of Talmud."—Rabbi Moshe Feinstein שליט"א

"I herewith acknowledge the great value of the accomplishments of the worthy institution **Machon Yerushalayim** ... It is a great mitzva to assist them in carrying out their ideals."—Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky שליט"א

"An outstanding anthology ... worth of support by all *Anshei Shlomeinu*."—Rabbi Yisroel Spira, שליט"א, Bluzover Rebbe

"The significant work of *Otzar Mefarshei Hatalmud* [is its] opening the doors of knowledge to those who seek to enter ... one can depend on these Torah scholars to do a masterful job."—Rabbi Shneur Kotler שליט"א

"The Machon continues to advance in the greatness of its achievement—both in quantity and quality."—Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, שליט"א, Rishon LeTzion

Machon Yerushalayim USA
 4407 15th Avenue / Brooklyn, New York 11219

Gentlemen:
 Enclosed please find my contribution of \$_____ to Machon Yerushalayim USA, in help founding a Machon Yerushalayim Kolel in America.

Please send me more information regarding

your institution
 the seforim you have already published.

Name _____
 Address _____