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THE JEWISH OBSERVER

כתיבה וחתימה טובה

Who are the "unexceptional failures"?

Are all of the Six Million to be considered "Kedoshim"?

What kind of anniversary gift is a "Kesuba"?

How are Iranian Jews faring in the USA?

Should you read the new "Daniel"?

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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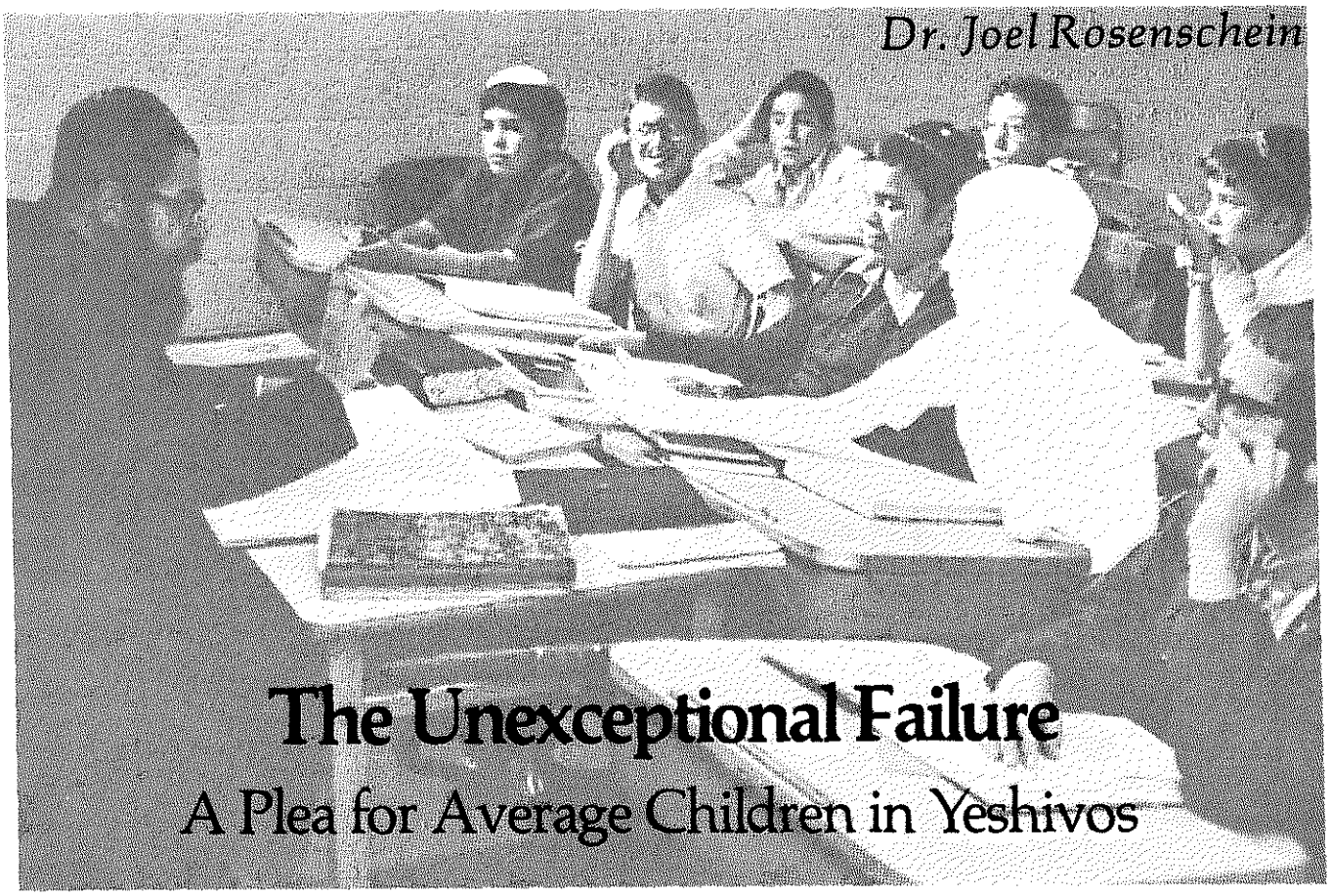

The Unexceptional Failure

A Plea for Average Children in Yeshivos

Dr. Joel Rosenschein

Discovering the Discrepancy

When yeshiva children face a learning problem, it is generally attributed to a specific situation relating to the child or his family. As a result, solutions are usually sought in the context of the specific child or his family. Little thought has been given to the intellectual milieu of the elementary yeshiva school, especially when the school is a "successful" one. Yet there are many children who are not exceptionally slow; nonetheless they are somehow left out of their school's success story. Very often, it is the school's intellectual climate—the very ingredient that makes the record of achievement in many yeshivos so enviable—that is at fault. Better identifying how this factor isolates these children can help us come to grips with it and perhaps learn to modify its influence—or at least inspire others to deal effectively with the problems it triggers.

A yeshiva's expectations are not determined by broad research that somehow found the intellectual capacity of the average student in the system. It starts with the Torah's command that every Jew must strive to master all of our overwhelming heritage. Then, it is brought down to the intellectual abilities of a specific student body, taking into account limitations of age and social conditions. But the ultimate goal is still unreachably high. Moreover, the abilities of the student body seem to be well above that of the overall population. While it has been recognized that the very weakest students tend to suffer neglect in the highly intellectual atmosphere of the yeshiva classroom, little thought has been given to the deleterious effects this atmosphere has on some children whose abilities may place them within the national average range—or above it.

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Finding the Center of Gravity

Formal I.Q. testing has been common in the U.S. for at least fifty years. The basis of all I.Q. ratings is the "normative sample"—a statistical technique geared to reflect all parts of the ethnic and socio-economic strata of the U.S. This is achieved by basing the composition of the sample on the percentage of the United States population represented in each group. Thus, urban and rural; blue collar, white collar, and professional families; North, South, East and West; black and white; and all other variables are accounted for in the selection of the sampling. When we say that a child is of average

intelligence, we are indicating that he or she falls within the middle range of all children in the country. We are making no statement as to how the child falls within his or her daily learning environment, i.e., his or her class—in this case, the elementary yeshiva class. Yet, obviously, this is more important than how the child compares to the overall U.S. population. I have, therefore, attempted to determine a clear picutre of the ranges found in the yeshiva population, to better present the true learning environment of a yeshiva child.

The graph below demonstrates the I.Q. profile of a sampling of 354 yeshiva students. The tendency of line "B" on this graph toward the higher I.Q. scores portrays how *the average of yeshiva children* tends to be above that of the average in *terms of the general population.* This picture has been verified by other research in this area.* In addition, yeshiva children stand out even further from the overall population in terms of verbal ability—due to the stress in Jewish homes toward book learning, regardless of the vocational status of the heads of family. Thus, the average child in a typical yeshiva classroom is faced with a reality of being considered below average, i.e. dull normal, if not borderline, when he or she actually falls within the average** range, pushing him into a defensive position.

The Heavy Halo

Research done on halo effects, where teachers tend to judge children in all areas based on an impression gathered at the outset, would further place these children in a tenuous situation. This tendency to judge these children poorly continues, then, and reinforces the child's status as a slow learner, eventually leading to ego erosion.

Of course, one might well ask: "What is really new about children at the bottom of the class suffering neglect? What difference does it make if these children are average or better in the *general* population? Aren't they going to do poorly in school anyway? And does it really matter if teachers are swift or slow to judge them when the end result is the same?" The truth is that there is a great deal of significance in whether these children perform "poorly" as compared to their classmates or to the overall population of children their age. And these children will be very quick to sense the difference.

When counseling teenagers from our yeshiva world who are revolting against Orthodox practice, one often encounters a youngster nursing a damaged ego—and, often as not, the teenager says that it all began with school failure. Thus, if a person is told through grades, words, or looks that he is less than worthy, he tends to step down to the expectations expressed, while deeply resenting those who put him down. And the *rebbis,* the yeshiva, and total Orthodox world would represent a source of negative feelings for the person who is seen as slow, in terms of academic achievement.

On the other hand,in the sphere of social activity or employment, these persons are *not* seen as unworthy. In fact, by all decent standards, they are often at least as good as the next guy. As a result, a child grows up to see a segment of Orthodoxy, whom he or she is taught to respect, as not treating him fairly; while others, who may or may not be Orthodox, treat him most properly. Where will he go from there?

Wanted: a Net for a Falling Student

There is a vast difference between the end-result of school failure in the U.S. as comapred with the European *shtetl.* Our society leaves the non-achieving yeshiva student in a total vacuum. At age 13 or 14, he or she cannot be apprenticed to a craftsman—not only due to the compulsory education law, but also due to the unavailability and unconventionality of this alternative. In fact, a yeshiva that attempted a modification of such an approach met with little acceptability, and eventually closed. So the child continues in a yeshiva or Bais Yaakov and is, at best, a nonentity to his or her teachers. Taking into account group dynamics and the strong need of teenagers for peer acceptance, one can further understand the effect of the child's school failure on the total personality of the child.

The teenager struggling towards independence and adulthood in this type of social milieu has little chance of staying within the fold of the Torah community. The next place this teenager could look for a positive group experience would be the street, and this choice, even in religious neighborhoods, leaves much to be desired. In our society, any setting devoid of intensive learning is a setting without *Yiddishkeit.*

Parents: Reinforcing the Lesson

Very often the parents not only help set the tone of high expectations, they also play a most important role in the final result. To be sure, parents want their children to succeed and to be accepted as good students. Parents told by *rebbis* or secular teachers that their chil-

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*(1) Research of Zecharia Dershowitz, Ph.D.—*Jewish Culture and the WISC & WAIS Test Patterns,* Journal of Consulting Psychology, 43.2, 126–134, Apr. '75.

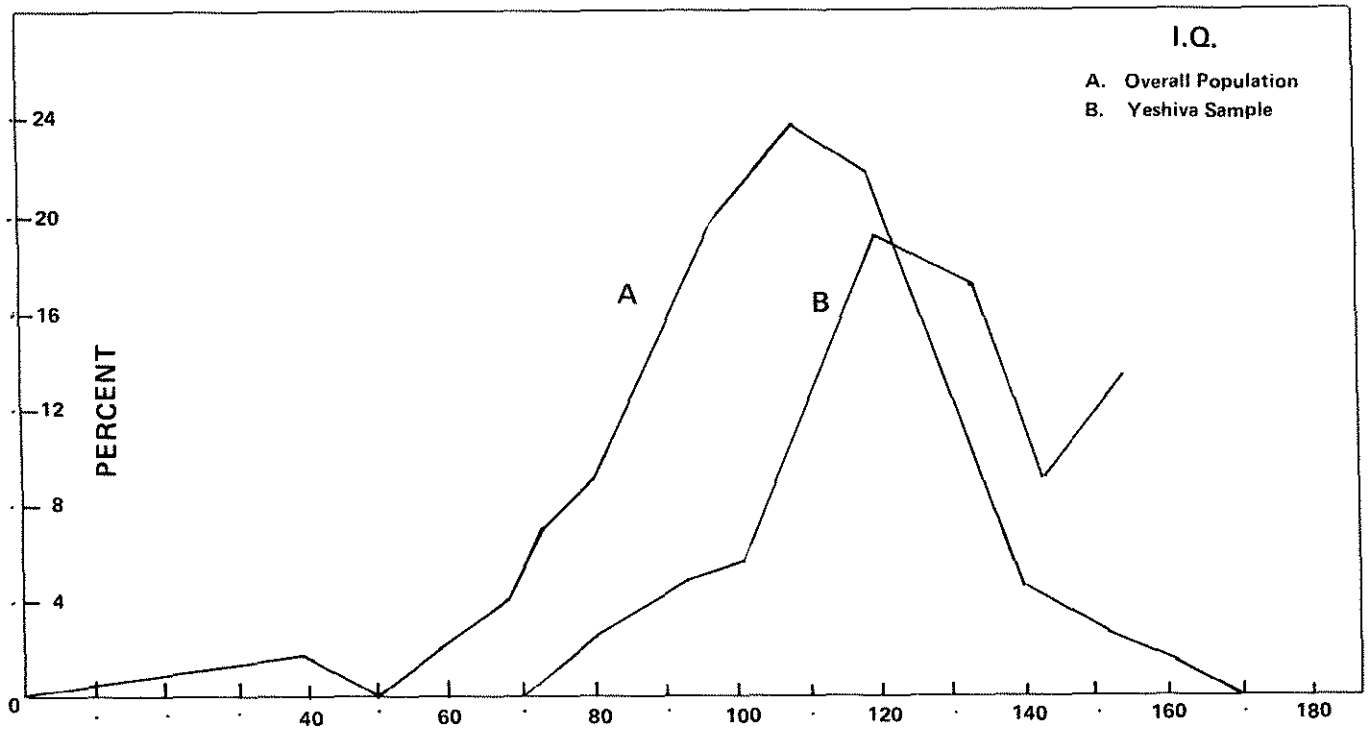
(2) *Hemispheric Assymetry & Jewish Intelligence Patterns,* Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology, 1978. Dec. Vol. 46 (6), 1299–1301.

(3) *Cognitive Style of Eastern European Jewish Males, Perceptual & Motor Skills.* 1977, Aug. Vol. 45 (1), 279–283.

(4) *Goodenough–Harris Drawings of Jewish Children of Orthodox Background,* Psychological Reports, 1977, Aug. Vol. 41 (11) 155–158.

(5) *Psychological Test Patterns Among Orthodox Jewish Children,* Dissertation Abstracts International, 1976, Sept. Vol. 37 (3–8), 1438.

**When not indicated otherwise, "average" refers to the national average, not the yeshiva- or classroom-average.



dren are poor in school often do not realize that the teachers' expectations may not be realistic for this particular child. They tend to push the child toward these goals and then blame him for failing—demeaning the child and causing him to feel a diminished self-worth. To top this, this treatment also leads to negative comparison with other siblings who are doing well in school. Depending on the severity or duration of this type of punishment, children can eventually veer away from failure situations and look for success elsewhere.

Everybody needs encouragement and success in life. Where can a child find these and bolster his failing ego, if not among his peers who are also doing poorly, or in relationships outside of the classroom? These may by chance be good influences, but case histories continuously show this to be the rare occurrence. Most often, the results are disastrous in terms of *Yiddishkeit.* The child is easily led away from a life of fidelity to Torah to one of non-religious practice or acts of rebellion and anti-social behavior—and an encounter with either can be truly frightening.

(At this point, mention must be made of the ability of Chassidic communities to give an individual a sense of self-worth on the basis of factors *outside* of academic achievement. Also, summer camps and youth groups can do the same in their own way.)

While there are certainly many causes for this besides school failure, therapists and other counselors who work with troubled children and their parents find this one of the main causes brought up in their discussions.

The defense mechanism of placing the blame on others rather than on oneself prompts the child who fails to meet educational standards to see his parents and *rebbis* as the true culprits. This is but a short step away from feeling, "If this is the way religious people act, why do I want to be associated with them?" Indeed, this type of expression is often heard from the revolting teenager or adult who has already left *Yiddishkeit.*

Zeroing in on the Problem

The solution to this problem begins with an awareness by all parts of the Jewish educational system that it is not an uncommon problem, and that it demands our attention and involvement.

Once we truly realize that average children may be shunted aside in the rarified atmosphere of the yeshiva classroom, we can devise a course of action that can also meet the needs of those who are *below* average by national norms, as well. Certainly, those children are no less entitled to our care and concern than are their more favorably endowed classmates.

Springing Loose From the Parent Trap

The solution should begain at home. While we have been speaking of a "yeshiva" problem, there is no doubt but that parents are as crucial to the solution as are professional educators. Of course, parents should promote their children's growth in Torah study and encourage success, but they must always keep an eye on the capacity of their children, so that "challenge" will never become "push"—which easily deteriorates into "shove." By the same token, a child must be made to feel that he is a worthwhile human being with something valuable and irreplaceable to offer mankind, even if he is not a scholar. This can be quite tricky, for on the one hand, we want every child to strive toward maximum achievement in Torah studies, and yet we do not

wish to see him become unduly frustrated. Nor would we want him to throw in the towel prematurely, and switch to a non-academic track before such a radical move is warranted . . . But, then again, being a parent never was presented as an easy task.

The yeshiva principal—or whoever designs the curriculum—must bear in mind that elementary yeshiva education cannot aim solely at producing only boys and girls capable of higher accomplishments in intellectual Torah learning; it must also ensure that *all* Jewish children remain or become religiously observant. Somehow we must devise means of obtaining both by aiming at having each person (i.e., child) reaching *his/her* highest potential, keeping all students academically active, so that all are achievers. The brighter children would continue (or perhaps even increase) their Torah learning, while average and bright normal children would be guided toward their potential. The subject matter for both would be similar, but would differ in the amount of material and methodology of presentation for differing groups of children . . . Obviously we are talking about individualizing education. Is this possible?—and if so, how is it done?

Group Teaching

The key to individualizing education is group teaching. The first step in the process is to set up homogeneous ability groups based on present achievement levels, with differing assignments.

One group studies independently in *chavrusa* or individual review while the teacher directly instructs another group. The role of the *rebbi* or teacher thus becomes more intense in preparation for a day's lesson, rather than only during the teaching time.

This approach is common in secular teaching, especially in Special Education. Beyond benefits for the average child, such an approach improves education for the brighter student allowing him to move at a faster pace. In paying attention to the so-called average child, the children who now are supposedly receiving the best the Torah world has to offer, would also end up with a better learning situation.

This should not imply the end of teaching an entire class as a group. Rather, it points out the need for varying one's approaches so that all children are taught to achieve their highest potential.

Of course, secular studies abound with workbooks especially tailored for independent study, as well as graded materials that teach the same concepts in different ways for children of varying abilities. By contrast, Torah studies do not have hundreds of educational publishers vying for the yeshiva market, turning out a steady flow of material. Production of much of the basic supportive and reinforcement materials is left to the initiative of resourceful *rebbis* and teachers. That leaves this solution easy to describe, but admittedly difficult to administer, making progress slow, but no less essential.

Low Register Classes

Another approach to individualizing education for the average child is the setting up of low register classes (that is, classes of small enrollment) for children functioning at a slower pace, with a specially tailored curriculum. Rather than deal with this group as a "special" class, it would occupy a regular classroom with lower registers, and have an open flow to and from other classes, which would help avoid the stigma of the "slow or special class." Above the fifth grade, where there is a degree of departmentalization, children could be shifted for different subjects from the high to low register classes, thus further avoiding stigmatization. The most important factor for success of this type of program would be the atmosphere created by the teachers and administration. If we truly understand the normalcy of these children in terms of their needs and not see them as failures, and if we provide teaching which helps them maintain their motivation, academic achievement, and self-image, then these classes are not negatively special, but rather special in a positive way.

We must, of course, recognize that this system, which is already employed in a number of yeshivos, has a number of drawbacks: it calls for a large enrollment—large enough to accommodate several parallel classes. It cannot work in a small school. . . . The parents must be willing to go along with the assignment of their child to a "lower register" special class. Euphemisms and number designations do not fool them, and in our highly competetive society, some parents would rather see their children "a tail to lions" where they are at least lions by association, than "heads to foxes". . . . It calls for a gifted teacher to inspire a class of children of average-at-best ability to aspire for maximum achievement. Gifted teachers frequently prefer teaching classes of gifted children. . . . While this plan can work in elementary schools—and indeed it does—it calls for unusual creativity and a strong sense of daring to introduce *effective* low register classes on a mesivta level high school with a modified curriculum that succeeds in making its enrollees feel as though they are an integral part of the yeshiva society.

There are many other methods of reaching these children; the need is for all to begin to accept responsibility for these children's success.

A word in closing concerning the rights of all children to a Torah education. There has been for the last few years a lot of work done in being *Mekarev Rechokim*—bringing alienated youth closer. Some of these *Rechokim* were once *Kerovim*—close to us. While *"Mikarev Rechokim"* work is of major importance, we must take steps to keep children from Orthodox homes from moving *out* of the fold. When all children feel that they are accepted for what they are and that they are part of the Torah community, no matter what their potential Torah level, then and only then can we be ensured of reaching our main goal of having all of our children Torah oriented, in the fullest sense of the word.

A. Scheinman

"Bikrovei Ekodeish": The Six Million "Kedoshim"

The annihilation of the best of world Jewry by Nazi Germany continues to haunt us as an irreparable loss, an inexplicable tragedy. From time to time, THE JEWISH OBSERVER *publishes articles that attempt to guide the reader in dealing with this event, without pretending to offer definitive explanations. The following essay deals with the use of the term "*kedoshim*" in regard to those who lost their lives in Churban Europe.*

I. The "Kadosh" Paradox

No passages written about Churban Europe weigh so heavily on the heart of the religious Jew as those that see "no point, no faith, no Divine inspiration . . ." in the death of the 6 million. We admire those who preserved their faith under the worst of circumstances. Indeed, we view the individual who is a *moser nefesh*—who risks his very life—to be *mekadesh shem Shomayim* (sanctify G-d's name) as someone whose concept of life transcends the flesh and blood of a this-world existence. Thus, we revere the Jews of the Middle Ages, *gadol up'shutei am*—spiritual giant and simple Jew alike—who chose the stake over the cross; in their death we catch a glimpse of eternal life. Regardless of the nature of their previous life, their choice at the

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Rabbi Scheinman *is an American studying in Jerusalem. His articles frequently appear in these pages.*

moment of truth branded each as a *kadosh*, and for all time to come their act is a beacon of inspiration.

But what about "Churban Europe"? What choices were the victims given? What merit could they have earned with death? Why do we call them all *kedoshim*, when so many of them had been vehemently anti-religious and had helped destroy the foundations of Torah in Europe? Consider, for example, the most ironic situation imaginable: a young Jew, born of Jewish mother and Catholic father, raised as a Catholic, is kneeling in a church, quietly murmuring his *paternoster*, perhaps even offering a prayer for the well-being of the brave German soldiers. In come two soldiers and drag him off to the death camps, while he protests all along that he is a good Catholic, and not a Jew—Is he also one of the Six Million *Kedoshim*?

The source of the confusion lies in the incorrect translation of *kedoshim* as "martyrs." While a martyr is usually someone who willingly gives up his life for a principle ("a person who chooses to suffer death rather than renounce his religion"—first definition, *Random House Dictionary*), "*kadosh*" has a far broader and deeper meaning. Let us begin by explaining *Kiddush Hashem* and *Chillul Hashem*.

II. The Makings of "Kiddush Hashem"

G-d is immutable. He does not ever change in the least—not in sanctity nor in its lack—regardless of any actions initiated by man. On the other hand, man can affect the degree of Divine revelation in our world—the degree of *gillui panim* and *hester panim*—that which permits man to perceive the Divinity, or veils Him from human perception. This can be understood on a simple level, in terms of psychological impact: if a person commits an *aveira* brazenly and with impunity, it can weaken faith in G-d on a broad scale; and should he perform a *mitzva*, the positive, inspirational effect could be equally far-reaching.

This can also be understood on a deeper level, as the *Nefesh HaChaim* elaborates: Every person is granted the power both to bring *ha'oras HaShechina* (the light of Divinity) to this world, or to block its illumination if he so chooses. Thus the description "*mechallel Hashem*" (desecrator of G-d's Name) applies to the person whose actions serve to dim the rays of *ha'oras panim*—His illuminating presence; and "*mekadesh*" (sanctifier . . .) refers to the person whose action brings about *gillui haShechina*—revelation.

Kiddush Hashem can be achieved in two ways—actively and passively. The active approach is simple to envision: a person does *mitzvos* with great dedication, involvement, and *mesiras nefesh*, or he actually gives away his life for G-d's honor. . . . The Mirrer Mashgiach, Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz זצ"ל elaborates on this point in his classical *shmuess* on "*Ha'Avos Heim HaMerkava*" (the *Avos* are the "chariot" upon which the *Shechina* entered our world). He explains that *Kiddush Hashem* describes any action that serves as a vehicle to usher the *Shechina* into our domain. In other words—any action that makes G-d's truth more apparent is an act of *Kiddush Hashem*.

But what is "passive" *Kiddush Hashem*? To understand this, we refer to G-d's declaration of "*Bikrovei Ekodesh*" ("I become sanctified through My close ones") in regard to Aharon's sons Nadov and Avihu, who were consumed by holy fire during the consecration of the Tabernacle. Their transgression was so slight that commentaries have difficulty in pinpointing it. Their level of *Kedusha* was so great that it surpassed that of Moshe and Aharon (see Rashi on *Vayikra* 10:3), and they—not their elders—were chosen to be the *Kedoshim*. The *Gemora* explains that in our conception of things, G-d becomes elevated, awesome, and sanctified when He castigates *tzaddikim*, even though they did not perform any acts of *Kiddush Hashem per se*; through suffering Divine retribution, they become instruments of Divine revelation, and their status merits the description of "*Ekodeish*—I will become sanctified through them."

We encounter many examples of this type of *Kiddush Hashem*:

- A person who is *Mechallel Hashem* is forgiven only through his death. He had lifted his hand audiciously, defying the existence of the Deity. Only when he himself crumbles into nothingness is a proper perspective restored.
- The *Gemora* explains: כי לך תכרע כל ברך—זו יום המיתה "Every knee will bow before You"—This is the day of death.

Chazal saw in death the ultimate prostration before the Almighty. The haughty, the mighty, the self-annointed deities persist in misleading the world, till the day their own knees buckle before their inevitable demise. Then their mortality is established, and the true state of affairs is once more reaffirmed—G-d's eternal immutability, in contrast to man's fleeting, transitory state.

- One says "*Kaddish*" after the passing of a close relative, for an intimate encounter with death brings a person closer to the realization that this world was created by the Almighty and is ruled in accordance with His will. The surviving relative expresses verbally his humility before G-d's eternal sanctity. If this death can help others comprehend G-d's omnipotence, it surely is a great *zechus* for the deceased.

III. The Corrective "Kiddush Hashem" of the Klal

This is the passive *Kiddush Hashem* of an individual. What is the passive *Kiddush Hashem* acheived collectively by *Klal Yisroel*?

The *Kiddush Hashem* of *Klal Yisroel* is the realization of: "And you[r fate] will be a shock to all the nations of the earth" (*Devarim* 28:25). Or: "And you

will be a wonderment, a metaphor (for suffering), a legend among all people" (*ibid.* 37). Or: "All the people will say, 'Why did G-d do this to this land? Why this great anger?' And they will say, 'Because they abandoned the covenant of . . . the G-d of their fathers'" (*ibid.* 29:23-4).

When *Klal Yisroel* is punished on so awesome a scale, that one can almost see the Divine Hand manipulating its fate, we are forced into saying *"Why did G-d do this. . . ?"*

By the same token, *Churban Europe* can be attributed to no other cause than *"Why did G-d do this?"* The German-Jewish confrontation was not a case of two nationalities competing in a zero-sum-total situation, as exists with the Palestinians-versus-the Jews. Nor was it a situation of the Jew as the prospering middleman between the drunken estate-lord and the oppressed serf, as it was during the pogroms of the Middle Ages. We cannot even ascribe the Nazi campaign against the Jews to the madness of a psychopathic aggressor, for deep, deep in the war, when every bit of aggressive instinct should have been engrossed in waging the war on the battlefronts, major emphasis was on the meticulous planning to carry out the Final Solution to its fullest infamy.

Considering the events of that epoch in the light of the passages in *Devarim,* the question is not "Where was G-d at Auschwitz?" but "*Why* was G-d at Auschwitz?"

In a remarkably prescient essay, Rabbi Meir Simcha HaCohen of Dvinsk (the *Ohr Somayach*) wrote in the late 19th Century* of an impending *churban* due to the *haskala*—total assimilation to the host culture of Western Nations; Rabbi Avrohom Grodzenski (who was killed in the Grodno Ghetto) made a list of specific *aveiros* that in his view brought down G-d's wrath; but all this is of secondary importance. The primary point made must be that one way or another the destruction was a Divine corrective action for a long-standing accumulation of shortcomings on the part of *Klal Yisroel* over the ages.

> *My father, who was in the Kovno Ghetto with Rabbi Mottel Pogremanski (the Tavriger Illuy)** told me that Reb Mottel would say* shmuessen *(discourses) during the closing moments of the* Shabbos. *A deep hush would fall on the crowded room. . . . Reb Mottel closed his eyes and began, in a haunting voice: "I see no German parading . . . I hear not the bark of their rifles. . . . Passages from* Tanach *I do see . . . I hear the* Kol Hashem—*the Voice of G-d—echoing from one end of the ghetto to the other:* . . . אם לא ביד חזקה . . . אמלך עליכם
>
> *"As I live—said G-d—with a strong hand, an outstretched arm and a flow of wrath shall I rule over you . . . I will gather you from the lands where you are scattered . . . to a wilderness of a nation and I will wrangle with you there face to face" (*Yechezkiel *20:33-36). Had we been deserving, we would have been* mamlich *Hashem—accepted G-d's rule—on our own; but we did not do so, and now he is forcibly imposing his dominion over us."*

Reb Mottel's words, seeming to reaffirm Reb Meir Simcha's predictions, echoed the anguished cry of the Prophet: "For saying, 'Let us be like all the nations . . .' (did G-d vow:) 'As I live . . . with a strong hand . . . and a flow of wrath shall I rule over you!'" (ibid:32-33). The prophecy, the warning, and the searing lament at the brink of destruction all seem to suggest that *Klal Yisroel* had been chosen to distort its collective image by emulating the nations, rather than pursue its own sacred destiny. Meant to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, inhabiting the sacred soil of the Holy Land, it betrayed its charge. The "corrective action" for this was a brutal, massive rejection of Jewry by the most powerful of Western nations, the epitome of European culture—Germany. This terrible suffering was *Bikrovei Ekodesh* before the eyes of humankind as a whole: G-d is our King, ruling us by His determination, if not by our own elective volition. And the purest, the saintliest, the most learned, the most innocent were included in this terrifying enactment of *"Bikrovei Ekodesh."*

The Response. . . .

The proper response? Perhaps this was most succinctly phrased by the *Sephorno* in his commentary on וידם אהרן *And Aharon was silent*: "He found comfort in the *Kiddush Hashem* that resulted from their death."

. . . and the Burden

The burden resting on our shoulders, as the first generation after the Holocaust is not the burden of self-defense; nor is it the wreaking of vengeance on the Germans. It is the burden of knowledge by a generation that witnessed *Bikrovei Ekodesh,* the ביד חזקה אמלך עליכם. If we sin, it is the sin of one who has seen the fury of Divine retribution. It is committed with the callousness of one who has peered into the depths of Gehinom, seen the fires and heard the screams, and then continued on as if nothing had happened. As *Rashi* comments on the impact of witnessing the death of the sons of Aharon: should anyone sin in a like manner after their death, it would be comparable to having witnessed a man drink poison and die, and then drink more of the same potion himself. As surviving witnesses we are charged with an awesome responsibility.

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*In *"Meshech Chachma"* on *Bechukosai.* For a free translation see JO Sept. '73.

**The Tavriger *Illuy* was an illustrious Torah personality, one of the greatest disciples of the yeshivos of Telshe and Slobodka. He was widely recognized for his Torah scholarship and original *mussar* thoughts, in addition to the exemplary *tzidkus* and piety. He survived the Nazi purgatory, dying in Paris shortly after the war.

Ch. Y. Maggid

A Kesuba For Our Anniversary

Four months after Lester and Rena Weiss's 31st wedding anniversary, they both remarried—each other. It was a brief and reverential ceremony; there was no band, photographer, flowers or even bentchers. *In fact, it was not even "an intimate family gathering," but I was there and I wish to tell the story.*

One Friday evening 32 years ago, Lester Weiss met Rena Sheinberger at the Seitenstettengasse Synagogue in Vienna. Lester was working for the American Military Intelligence Service headquarters in Vienna. Although his clandestine missions often brought him into the Russian occupation zone, he tried to return before Saturday to the American sector to attend *Shabbos* services every week.

Following her graduation from nursing school, Rena had volunteered into the W.A.C.S. After the war, she was stationed in Vienna, where she began to go to *shul* every Friday evening. It seemed like a *"glick shidduch"*—both United States Army officers who "just happened" to be in the same synagogue one Friday evening, thousands of miles away from home. And indeed it was. Not much later, Lester and Rena were *"chassan* and *kallah,"* and were on their way back to the States to be wed.

The wedding was strictly a family affair held in the Sheinberger backyard, in Harrington Park, NJ. Lester requested that a rabbi preside, so Mr. Sheinberger arranged for Reverend Cohn, a *chazan* from nearby Newark, to officiate. And, after that, they lived happily ever after . . . almost.

Ch. Y. Maggid *is an American studying in Jerusalem. The story on these pages is true, told to Mr. Maggid by "David Weiss," a close friend. Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the principals.*

The Problem Surfaces

In the early sixties, a metamorphosis began to occur in the Weiss household. Lester, the more observant member of the family, began to intensify his commitment to Torah. He sent David, their eldest son, to a day school. Through the years, the Weiss's became true *baalei teshuva.* Lester—or Levi—began attending a local *shiur,* Rena entered the fold, and David started studying at the Lakewood Yeshiva. Last year, David married a charming girl from Flatbush, to the heartfelt delight of Mr. and Mrs. Weiss. Throughout the wedding celebration and during the following week of *Sheva Brachos,* Levi began to wonder about his own wedding: How kosher were his *eidim* (marriage witnesses)? [Jewish law provides that to be a witness, one's way of life must be in accord with the law.] Was his *kesuba* (marriage contract) satisfactory? [As a protective measure for Jewish women, a man and wife may not live together without a *kesuba,* which binds him to fulfill all marital obligations to her.]

For years, David had been haunted by the same fear, but what was he to do? He could hardly have told his parents that he had suspected that their marriage ceremony had been invalid, for that would be tantamount to saying that they had lived together without *halachic* sanction all these years! How could a son tell that to his parents? He once thought of "misplacing" their *kesuba* to necessitate the drawing up of a new one, and then take care of other corrective measures at the same time. To his chagrin, he discovered that his mother kept her *kesuba* in a safe deposit box in the bank, making it inaccessible. His father's newly expressed concern gave David his opening to take steps to rectify the situation.

"Tell Me, Rabbi . . ."

With Levi's consent, David called up his high school *rebbe*, Rabbi Mendel Finkel, who knew the family and was well versed in the laws of marriage. His *rebbe* listened carefully, asked several questions, and promised to call back that evening, after he had researched all the relevant *halachos*. Three hours later, Reb Mendel called back and said, "This is a complex *sheilah* of sensitivity, requiring a *shei'las chacham* (query of an expert). You must find out if the witnesses who signed the *kesuba* are Torah-observant Jews: Are they related in any way to your mother, your father, or to each other? Were there any Sabbath observing men present at the wedding ceremony?"

David researched the event carefully and called back later, reporting in detail: "One witness, who is not religious, is my mother's uncle; the other witness is *Shomer Shabbos* (Sabbath observant) however, he is my father's uncle. My father told me that Reverend Cohn, the local *Kol Bo* (religious functionary) who officiated is an observant Jew. He had studied in a yeshiva in his native Hungary, sends his children to yeshiva and advocates *mitzva* observance. Aside from him and my great-uncle, there were not any *shomrei Shabbos* present. My mother's father's name is Chaim Mendel. Menachem Mendel was entered in the *kesuba* by mistake; 'Rena' is also misspelled. I am not sure whether the text of the *kesuba* is correct, for I checked it against mine and there are differences."

Rabbi Finkel explained that quite aside from the fundamental question of whether their marriage was ever kosher, their *kesuba* is patently invalid, for lack of the two required witnesses. If the marriage *is* kosher, then they need merely draw up a new *kesuba*; if it was not, a new marriage ceremony is in order—preferably entailing a *minyan*, a *chupa*, *yichud* (the couple alone in a private room); and of course, acceptable witnesses and a ring.

Calling for a Decision

Upon Rabbi Finkel's suggestion, David consulted a renowned *poseik* (halachic authority) to determine his parents' marital status. David was asked to describe particulars about Reverend Cohn's level of observance and beliefs, and the exact relationship of his father's uncle—the only other religious Jew present at the wedding. The *poseik*, relying upon a lenient opinion, ascertained that two "kosher" Jews had witnessed the wedding: "Even though one of them was not specified as a witness, his very presence at the *chupa* allows him to serve in this capacity. So, Reverend Cohn qualifies. And since your father's relative is a maternal uncle, according to the *Ramban's* views he is also not disqualified. Together, these two witnesses legitimized your parents' marriage. A new *kesuba*, however, must be written up at once. I recommend that after the *kesuba* is filled out, your father give a plain ring belonging exclusively to him to your mother and say *'Harey at mekudeshes* . . . Behold you are consecrated to me with this ring in accordance with the law of Moses and Israel,' to avoid any doubts."

David told his parents the news; their marriage was kosher enough to preclude the need for a remarriage (*chupa, minyan, yichud, Sheva Brachos*, etc.). However, a new *kesuba* must be drawn up and a new ring should be given. David called up Rabbi Finkel and relayed the instructions he had received, adding that he and his parents hoped to be over in an hour to take care of the *kesuba* and *chassana*.

By the time the Weisses had arrived, Rabbi Finkel had already purchased a *kesuba de'erchasa* (the form for a *kesuba* to replace a lost one) and was examining the text with a colleague, who later joined Rabbi Finkel as a witness for the *kesuba* and brief wedding ceremony. Everything seemed in order, the names were filled out, and the date and location affixed. After one more persual, Reb Mendel and his colleague signed the *kesuba*. Reb Mendel then asked Levi if the ring was his—affirmative. "Then you may marry your *kallah*," he said with a smile. *"Harey at mekudeshes li betaba'as zu keda'as Moshe veYisroel"*—the words every *chasson* declares to his *kallah*, affirming the holiness of Jewish matrimony, and the authority of the rabbis in the realm of marriage. *Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov!* Rena holding her *kesuba* examined her new ring, Rabbi Finkel warmly embraced Mr. Weiss. . . .

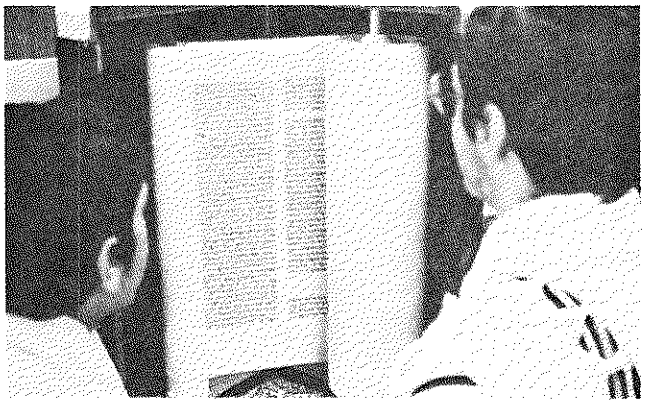
The Royal Couple

Our rabbis have elaborated upon the sanctity and eminent significance of marriage: A groom is compared to a king, a bride to a queen; their coronation takes place under the *chupa* upon which the Divine presence rests. If the bride and groom are meritorious, celestial angels descend to celebrate with them; and upon hearing the seven benedictions, they answer: "Amen! May it be the Almighty's will!"

Unfortunately, Levi and Rena are not the only couple that had been deprived of an optimal Jewish wedding. The laws governing the validity of a wedding ceremony in all its parts are demanding and complex, and when questionable circumstances surround a ceremony or the *kesuba*, a thorough review is in order.* Furthermore, if the *kesuba* is lost it must be replaced.

People interested in rectifying a faulty *kesuba* or other marriage uncertainties should seek rabbinical guidance. The angels' affirmative *"Amen"* to the Almighty's blessing is never too late in coming.

*If the wedding was invalid, there is a strong possibility that many other marriage laws were either ignored or glossed over, and that the bride did not immerse herself in a *mikva* (ritual bath) prior to her wedding or since. A couple's consent to a new wedding is an ideal opportunity to introduce them to the laws of family purity, including regular use of the *mikva*.



The Iranian Struggle—In America

Until recently, Iran had been one of those distant exotic countries. The little knowledge we had of life there was gleaned from myths, travel brochures, and occasional news stories. And this dearth of information also applied to its ancient Jewish community, as well.

It was not until the political upheaval of late, which catapulted this country into the international spotlight, that our attention was also focused on the ancient Jewish community of 80,000 souls in Iran. We also discovered that for years, thousands of Iranian Jews have been studying in universities across the American continent. We have gradually become aware of their problems—their isolation from other Jews, their own tenuous grip on Yahadus, *the very small proportion of women to men and the resultant tendency toward mixed dating and intermarriage.*

This past year and a half has also seen a large number of Iranian students coming to Jewish institutions in America, joining a small group already attending yeshivos here. They have made many of us somewhat more knowledgeable of the unique treasury this community represents, as a group that has maintained an uninterrupted fidelity to its own minhagim *(customs) and its own tradition of* psak halacha *for millennia.*

DAVID ZARGARI, *a Teherani who has been studying in Yeshiva Ner Israel in Baltimore these past five years, has played a significant role in helping others who followed him in their adjustments to American yeshiva life, while preserving their own particular* nusach *of Jewish practice. He has also been active in helping a large number of recent immigrant students in the many steps involved in completing the orientation process from "refugee" status in Italy (where Zargari and a colleague were dispatched under the aegis of Agudath Israel of America), to immigrants in Lakewood, NJ (where a crew of highly dedicated volunteers from the kollel community, under the leadership of Shimon Hershkowitz, worked with Agudath Israel professionals), to part-time or full-time student in various schools across the country, as well as adopted members of the many families that opened their homes to them—in Baltimore, Cleveland, Monsey, as well as in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn.*

While this latest chapter in the history of Iranian Jewry is unusually rich on every level—from diplomatic endeavor to heart-rending human interest to the truly inspirational—much is still too sensitive for public discussion. Nonetheless what can be reported should prove of interest to our readers. In the lines that follow, Rabbi Zargari presents some background regarding this Shevet MiYisroel *in its first and subsequent exiles.—NW.*

David Zargari

Iranian Jews

Until recently, the final request of a Teherani Jew, as stated in his will, would often be to be buried in "Giliard." According to a tradition spread among Iranian Jews, this small town in northern Iran was one of the first sites chosen for settlement by mourning Jews, exiled to Babylonia in the time of Nevuchadnetzar. Because of its striking similarity in climate and landscape to their beloved hometown in Gilad region of Eretz Yisroel, they had originally named this place "Gilad," but it gradually became mispronounced as "Giliard."

The exiles were soon so well established in their new

homeland—which encompassed modern Iran and Iraq—that after seventy years, when Koresh (Cyrus) emperor of Persia opened the gates of emigration to these Jews, they were extremely reluctant to uproot themselves and go back to Israel. (It seems that after 2700 years things have not changed much, and even after the recent upheaval in Iran, the consensus among the majority of Iranian Jews is still to remain in Iran as long as possible.)

The Iranian *galus* has experienced a great many ups and downs over the millennia. It endured many a follower of Hamman and enjoyed a number of would-be Koreshes. On its soil are found the gravesites of the prophets Daniel and Chabakuk, of Esther and Mordechai; indeed, Iranian Jews repaired to these sacred places in times of joy and sorrow. The most popular site of pilgrimage, however, was Kokolou, near Isfahan where, according to tradition, Serach bas Asher (who, the *Midrash* relates, went into Babylonia with the exiles of Nevuchadnetzar) appeared and saved the local Jews in times of a great threat. Descriptions of Jewish communities all over Iran are found in "The Travel Journals of Binyamin of Todela," as well as those of other prominent Jewish travelers. These communities were almost completely isolated from one another, and each one of them had its own Judeo-Persian dialect. Even today, a Teherani or Shirazi Jew, for example, would not be able to understand the Kermani Judeo-Persian. In addition, they differ in a number of *minhagim*, as well.

"The Variety of Minhagim"

(To help the reader appreciate the singular nature of the Iranian Jewish community, we asked Rabbi Zargari to present some of their more striking minhagim.)

Almost every city within this large territory has some specific *minhagim* of its own. The descriptions are therefore limited to those that are common to almost all Iranian Jews.

• We pronounce ק' and ג' (בלתי דגושה) glotally. In English, it would usually be spelled as "gh."

• On Friday nights, between the *Kiddush* and washing, it is a *minhag* to make a number of *brachos* ועשבי בשמים . . . עצי, האדמה, הגפן, and שהכל, in this order; and to endeavor to have a new fruit for שהחיינו. The rationale for this *minhag* is to complete the quota of one hundred *brachos* on *Shabbos*, when the *Shmona Esrei* prayer (a source of 57 *brachos* per day during the week) is so much shorter.

• At the *Shabbos* daytime meal, there is a *minhag* to eat eggs browned through continual cooking since Friday. These eggs are called *Tokhme-Morghe Shabbatti* (*Shabbos* eggs). They are served as a symbol of mourning for Moshe Rabbeinu who passed away on *Shabbos* (the egg represents the life cycle)—even though actual mourning is forbidden on *Shabbos*. (They also make a tasty *Shabbos* delicacy.)

• Before putting pieces of meat into the pot, it is customary to recite the *Shma*. This *minhag*, like many others, originates from the deep faith in *gilgul neshamos* (transmigration of the soul) among Iranian Jews. Since the animal it came from might be a *gilgul*, reciting the *Shma* as well as making *brachos* during the meal can serve to elevate the *neshama* that had been captive in the meat. For the same reason, bones of meat are not cleaned from the table until after *Birkas Hamazon* (Grace) is recited. (This *minhag* is also mentioned in *"Ben Ish Chai,"* the basic *halacha sefer* in Iran.)

• During the *"Dayeinu"* at the *seder*, the participants smite each other with fresh scallions to recall the whippings suffered in Egypt; also, to keep the children awake and to inspire them to ask questions.

• While these are among the more common customs, the Ashkenazi Jew would probably be most struck by the appearance of rice on the *Pesach* table—for the Sephardi Jews never enacted the prohibition against *kitniyos* (legumes, rice, and other foods that resemble grains), adopted in Ashkenazi lands.

The Status of Torah Scholarship

The yeshivos in Baghdad always provided the spiritual leadership for the entire region. Unfortunately, the Jews in Iran proper did not achieve until very recently any appreciable standard in Jewish studies, or, for that matter, in any kind of advanced studies. This could be attributed to the fact that Iran is ruled by the Shiite Moslems, which unlike the Sunni Moslems (the Arabs), consider the Jews an impure people. As a result of this prejudice, Jews have always suffered restrictions in Persia.

When the Pahlavi dynasty took over Iran some fifty years ago, the Jews gained emancipation over night, and this astonishing, sudden shift to total freedom without the benefit of proper religious leadership proved ruinous to the spiritual status of Iranian Jews. While fifty years ago, a public Sabbath violator would automatically be put into *cherem* (excommunication) in the "Mahaleh" (Iranian ghetto), nowadays, there are very few halachically Sabbath-observant families in the entire country.

This is a vivid example of the old rule: A community can not survive in the long run without intensified

Iranian students in Ner Israel bringing their own Sefer Torah into new Bais Hamidrash building.

scholarly Torah study. The Jewish educational system (Otzar Hatorah is the major network) was put into an untenable position by the former government, which opposed intensified religious studies of any kind *per se*; despite tremendous effort on the part of its dedicated staff, they simply were not able to raise a generation of Iranian *Bnei Torah*. There were always some boys, however, who went overseas to study Torah.

The American Venue

As people are now aware, scores of Iranian Jewish students had come to this country to study, with the recent turmoil in Iran. By the time of their arrival, however, a group of Iranian boys were already studying in Yeshivas Ner Israel in Baltimore for several years, participating in a unique pioneering project that the yeshiva has undertaken in hope of training future Iranian *bnei Torah*. Members of the new group were not uniformly prepared or motivated to join yeshivos. Under the guidance of Agudath Israel, the American yeshivos opened their doors to these Iranians. This multi-stage operation began in diplomatic channels in New York, Washington and Teheran, continuing in Rome, and then—surprisingly—in Lakewood, NJ. The Lakewood Yeshiva community contributed crucial help in welcoming the newcomers, exposing them to ten-day crash programs in *Yahadut*, and their place in it; and then matching them with appropriate yeshivos.*

The American religious community then opened its hearts and homes to their Iranian brethren, including many who were not prepared to enter yeshivos or who had enrolled in religious schools without dormitory facilities. As a result, we are experiencing a wonderful phenomenon: through a pure act of providence, we can see perceptible improvements in scores of Iranian young men and women, and within a few years we hope to have *talmidei chachomim* and *bnei Torah* in number to change the entire Iranian community for the better.

The many that did not find their way to a yeshiva (such as Ner Israel, Long Beach, Telshe, Skokie, Denver . . .) joined thousands of Iranian Jewish students spread across the continental U.S., many in remote places where there is no *Yiddishkeit* whatsoever. To reach those estranged brethren for the first time, as well as to encourage those that are in the yeshivos, some of the veterans who have been studying in yeshiva for an appreciable period of time formed the Iranian Bnei Torah Movement (I.B.To.M.). Through the medium of publications** in the Farsi (Persian) language, this movement is trying to reach as many Iranian Jews as possible and to introduce them to authentic Judaism. These publications include articles about the weekly *parsha*, Jewish philosophy, as well as *halachot* according to the Iranian *minhagim*. (For some examples of these reach-out efforts the reader is asked to read further.)

The strange course of events these past few years has brought our forgotten corner of the world to stage center; and now, as a result, many otherwise lost souls are being reunited with our eternal heritage, and our tradition.

**Several hundred Iranian students also entered the country under Lubavitch sponsorship, writing yet another chapter in this exciting story.*

***Anyone aware of Iranian students who would be interested in these publications should please send their address to: Iranian Bnei Torah Movement/400 Mt. Wilson Lane/Baltimore, MD 21208*

Pesach in Smyrna, Georgia

The fifty Iranian Jewish students attending Kenessa College in Smyrna, Georgia, and in nearby Georgia Tech were very far removed from Jewish observance. They are mostly in the company of non-Jews and have had little reinforcement of their Jewish identity. Until recently, they had no organized activities nor did they observe *kashrut, Shabbos,* or *tefillin.*

Two Ner Israel students, Daniel and Michael Shaliehsaboo, have a brother in Smyrna. Out of deep concern for him and other Iranian Jews in Georgia, they spent the entire Pesach vacation in Smyrna.

They brought a *Sefer Torah,* and their brother contacted the other Iranians to come to a *minyan Shabbos* morning. About twelve came. On Sunday five Iranian students who had never put on *tefillin* in their lives celebrated their "Bar Mitzvah."

The first *Pesach seder* brought together forty people. The Iranian students were experiencing their first *seder* in years—many had forgotten even the rudiments of Passover observance. The second night twenty-five came, but these were serious and anxious to learn. . . . *Minyanim* were conducted throughout the visit of the Ner Israel students.

The high cost of kosher food and its relative unavailability had deterred these people from buying kosher meat. One of the students had studied *shechita* (ritual slaughter) in Iran. Assisted by one Baltimorian who was a trained *shochet* and had his knife along, the Iranian slaughtered three goats; and the others took the meat home for salting. (In spite of their alienation, they all apparently knew how to salt meat!) Since the visit, a number of the students have ordered *tefillin, tallit, tzitzit* and *mezuzot.* They have begun a weekly *minyan* and receive the bi-weekly bulletin from I.B.To.M. . . . A total wasteland is beginning to be reclaimed.

Elchonon Oberstein

REPORTS FROM THE HINTERLAND

Shabbaton for Iranian Jewish Students at USL College Campus in Lafayette, Louisiana

There are approximately twenty Iranian Jewish students in Lafayette—many from somewhat traditional homes in Iran—but their level of Jewish observance has rapidly declined in the United States, with interdating and the subsequent danger of intermarriage. There is no leadership among these students; they do not even identify with the local Reform Temple.

Three Ner Israel students brought a Sephardic Sefer Torah and kosher food to Lafayette for a Shabbaton. All of the Iranian Jewish students in Lafayette participated in all services and meals on *Shabbos* and Sunday. The visitors spoke individually and collectively with the students about keeping Pesach and urged them to go to New Orleans (three hours travel by car) and contact the Chofetz Chaim Kollel there.

As a result of this visit, the Iranians have organized a regular *minyan* on *Shabbat* and Sunday. Many had *tefillin,* which they began putting on daily, and the others ordered new *tefillin* for themselves.

A more comprehensive program of visits could have a major effect on the religious observance and committment of these students.

Rabbi Oberstein *is director of development at Yeshivas Ner Israel in Baltimore. He is a frequent contributor to these pages.*

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Pesach in Oklahoma

There are at least two hundred Jewish students scattered over Oklahoma, in such communities as Oklahoma City, Norman, Durant, Stillwater, Edmond, Enid and Lawton. Religious observance has declined to a very low level. There is an estimated 15% intermarriage rate among them, and many of the students have non-Jewish girlfriends. (There are only four girls in the Iranian student population.) There was a *Shabbat minyan* at the Hillel House in Norman, which attracted approximately twenty participants.

Arriving in Norman on Thursday afternoon, March 26, four Ner Israel students brought a Sephardi Sefer Torah, 400 pounds of kosher meat and chicken, *shmura* matza, plastic dishes and cutlery, plus a number of Farsi language translations of the *Haggadah* (printed by Otzar HaTorah).

Their first *seder* attracted fifty-five participants. Services were held throughout the holiday and attracted about forty students each time.

The second *seder* was held in the Hillel House with an attendance of 120, about half of them American students who had attended a Reform *seder* the first night. This *seder* was trilingual. About ten American students joined the Iranian *minyan*, bringing the attendance to fifty.

During Chol Hamoed, the four Baltimore yeshiva students contacted most of the Iranians in Oklahoma City and several other places, and put them on the list to receive the bi-monthly Farsi Torah Journal. A major accomplishment: almost every Iranian contacted—at least 90% of the Iranians in Oklahoma City—ordered kosher meat and chicken, and arrangements were made for continued bi-monthly air shipment from Baltimore. Prior to the Pesach visit of the yeshiva students, only two students and two married couples ordered kosher meat.

Orders were also taken for *tzitzit* and *tefillin*, and efforts were begun for a second *Shabbat minyan* in Oklahoma City.

Students on the brink of intermarriage are now ordering kosher food. . . . There is a very good potential for success in increasing Jewish commitment and observance among these students.

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BOOKS

a review, by MOSHE KOLODNY

THE BOOK OF DANIEL, translation and commentary *by Rabbi Hersh Goldwurm,* with OVERVIEW by *Rabbi Nosson Scherman* (ArtScroll Publications, 1979, $12.95 hard-cover, $9.95 soft-cover).

Selecting the Prophecies

Over the centuries, prophecy was attained by some 1,200,000 Jews—that is, twice as many as had left Egypt during the Exodus. In fact, there were special academies where Jews aspiring for prophecy studied under recognized prophets. There they were nurtured in their growth in Torah knowledge, purity, and holiness, until they attained the requisite spiritual level (see *Malachim* 2 II:37. *Shmuel* 1 IX:5).

Of these myriads of prophets, only a select few had their words included in *Nach.* The determination of which prophecy should be committed to writing and included in the *Nach* was made by the *Anshei Knesses Hagdolah* (Men of the Great Assembly)—Israel's foremost Torah scholars during the first exile and at the beginning of the era of the Second Temple, among them members of the first Sanhedrin of the Second Temple.

Upon their return to *Eretz Yisroel,* they recognized that the era of prophecy was coming to an end: the flow of prophecy that had begun with Avraham would soon cease, until the coming of the *Moshiach.* They therefore set out to preserve for future generations the words of the past prophets, basing their selection on one criterion: "A prophecy needed for future generations was recorded" (*Megillah* 14a).

Rashi explains "need" as relating to "*teshuva* or *hora'a.*" *Teshuva* (repentance) refers to whether the words of the prophets would be instrumental in restoring Israel to a life consistent with Torah ideals. *Hora'a* or guidance has a two-fold meaning: (1) guidelines for keeping abstract precepts, such as faith, love of G-d and total reliance on Him, and ethical concepts; (2) *mitzvos*—directives for fulfilling through action or abstention—that is, the positive and negative commandments, such as *tefillin, tzeddaka,* abstention from work on *Shabbos,* and the like. Studying the prophets with any degree of understanding, then, would call for a background in both *halacha* (Torah law) and *hashkafa* (philosophy and ideology); and by the same token, preparing any interpretative translation and commentary to any book in *Nach* would require a similar command of both areas. Merely being adept at converting the words from one language into another is far from enough.

The proliferation of English-language works of translation and commentary on Scriptures should inspire concern on the part of the student. Fortunately, the requirements of scholarship for the translator/commentator have been more than met by those working on the ArtScroll Tanach Series. As an added result, some of the works are highly original, for each man draws on his particular expertise and knowledge to explain the sacred writings.

A Work of Scholarship and Originality

A recent publication in this series, the *Book of Daniel,* is an outstanding example of such scholarship and originality. *Daniel* has always been one of the most intriguing books in sacred literature. First of all, it addresses basic tenets of our faith: redemption through the coming of *Moshiach* and the resurrection of the dead. The time for the end of days was revealed to Daniel, with the command to "obscure the matter and seal the book" (*Daniel* 12:41, see Overview VI). In a brief but cryptic manner, the *Book of Daniel* outlines the history of Israel from the building of the Second Temple (352 BCE) through the subsequent long exile until the redemption. And this book has yet another element of difficulty, because a major portion of it is written in Aramaic.

There is another side to *Daniel,* one that it shares with the books of other prophets: that is, *hora'a,* as defined by Rashi. For example, many *halachos* of *tefilla,* the meaning of *brachos,* restrictions against wine and food of Gentiles, and aspects of the *mitzva* of the sancti-

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fication of G-d's name are all derived from the passages in *Daniel.* Because of the rich, complex nature of this sacred work, it should be apparent that a translation-commentary could only be prepared by a *talmid chacham* at home in a wide range of discipline.

After studying the ArtScroll *Daniel,* it becomes obvious that Rabbi Hersh Goldwurm, who authored the work, has rendered an anthologized commentary of the first magnitude. Drawing on the works of millennia of Torah scholars, and a thorough familiarity with world history and its unique relationship with Jewish destiny, Rabbi Goldwurm has skillfully charted the way for us through the complex and sometimes esoteric passages of *Daniel.* At crucial junctures in the text, prefatory notes shed light on the subject matter about to be discussed. Chronological tables of the period, with references to them woven throughout the commentary, will delight both the beginner and the seasoned scholar. The commentary expounds on many other themes, such as faith in the coming of *Moshiach,* and the role of various nations in G-d's scheme (Pref. note Chap. 2 V 40). This latter discussion expounds on the classical Four Kingdoms, citing the views of Rav Saadia Gaon, Ramban, and Rambam, up to such recent authorities as the Chazon Ish—culminating in an examination of the permissibility of marrying certain proselytes, with references to the opinion of Rabbi Yaakov Emden . . . Other halachic discussions explain the prohibitions against using wines and certain foods of non-Jews, citing the classical commentators and *poskim.*

Philology and Halacha

Problems in philology are also masterfully treated in the ArtScroll *Daniel.* The Aramaic section of *Daniel,* for example, features a discussion on the sanctity of Aramaic vis-a-vis *Lashon Hakodesh,* with reference to the paradox of the inclusion of Aramaic words in the standard *get* (bill of divorce) despite the requirement that the document be written in only one language (Pref. note to Chap. 8) . . . The word *"shok"* (thigh) (Dan. 2:33) is precisely defined, citing various halachic opinions including those of the Chazon Ish, and the *Sidrei Taharos* from the Redziner Rebbe, Reb Gershon Henach—all for purpose of clarifying the text.

The episode of *Daniel* in the lions' den offers a format for exploration of the origins of various customs associated with prayer, all skillfully traced to passages in the text: Why Jews now-a-days do not kneel during prayer, whereas Daniel did; Daniel's refusal to discontinue his prayer despite the risk it posed to his life, which of course is connected with the *mitzva* of *Kiddush Hashem* (sanctifying G-d's name). The command is also discussed at length here, as it is again in chapter 1 when Chananya, Mishael and Azaria were cast into the fiery kiln.

Rabbi Goldwurm's familiarity with far-flung areas of Torah thought serves us well—for example, in the

explanation of the words *"bracha," "olam,"* and the definition of *"Nes b'soch Nes"* (a compound miracle), where the works of the Chassidic masters are drawn from to give the reader the inner meanings of these words and concepts (Daniel 2:21).

The ancient peoples' concept of the Supreme Deity, word etymology, distinctions among various angels . . . the list of subjects dealt with in the context of understanding *Daniel* goes on and on. We even learn that the chapter divisions in the *Tanach,* which are not of Masoretic origin, but were developed by Gentile Bible scholars, were introduced in Jewish Scripture by Yaakov Adoniyahu in his edition of Scripture (Venice 1524) (See Pref. note to verses 3:31–4–34 Page 133).

I would suggest that the ArtScroll *Daniel,* as a richly researched piece of work, should have an index to provide the serious student with a key to its varied subject matter. It is hoped that the second edition will correct this omission.

The Overview

The Overview to *Daniel*—"Daniel, a Bridge to Eternity"—is a superb piece of work, as has become standard with that of all ArtScroll Publications, and is a most fitting introduction to the book. In the six distinctive yet related essays, Rabbi Nosson Scherman formulates essential prerequisites for understanding the tenets revealed in *Daniel.* The essays are based upon the writings of Maharal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the Gaon of Vilna, Rav Zadok of Lublin, among others, including some leading contemporary Torah thinkers.

Topics dealt with include the purpose of creation, prophecy, historical background of exile, spiritual growth of Israel through tests (the test of Chananya, Mishael and Azaria), and "The Mystery of the End"—the time of redemption. Rabbi Scherman also explains lucidly the relevance of the different calculations of the coming of the Moshiach according to the interpretation of the Gaon of Vilna.

Toil and Reward

Chazal relate that when the *Tanna* Yonasan ben Uziel made his *Targum* (interpretive translation) of the Prophets, an earthquake shook all of *Eretz Yisroel* and a heavenly voice cried out, "Who is this that dared reveal my mysteries to man?" The *Tanna* rose and said, "I did it not for my glory, but for Your glory—that strife should not increase in Israel (for lack of understanding the subtle meanings of the Prophets)" (*Megillah* 3a—see Overview VI).

A striking interpretation of this *Chazal* was given by Rabbi Yeshaya of Trani (*Tosefos Rid, ad locum*). The Divine voice expressed exception to the *Targum* for fear that "if a lucid interpretive translation were made available (to the masses), Israel would cease to toil in Torah study to understand its meaning." It is the effort expended in Torah study that ensures the existence of *Am Yisroel,* and any interference with this activity poses a life-threat to the Jewish People.

We hear an echo of that Divine Voice whenever ground is broken in presenting new, easier-to-cope-with commentaries on our sacred literature. So, here, too, one instinctively questions whether this new publication will rob us of toil in Torah, or instead serve to diminish strife in Israel by shedding light on aspects of *Daniel* that we had not taken the trouble (or had lacked the resources) to explore. To this reviewer, Rabbi Goldwurm's obvious efforts were well-expended, making our toil in Torah only somewhat less arduous, but the results far, far more rewarding than anticipated.

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GEDOLEI YISROEL CALL FOR EMERGENCY MEASURES TO INSURE SURVIVAL OF CHINUCH ATZMAI

Gedolei Torah in Israel and throughout the world have joined in an unprecedented appeal to the Jewish Community to respond to the Emergency Survival Campaign just initiated by Chinuch Atzmai. In many ways the tone of the campaign is reminiscent of the dedicated and selfless efforts of the Torah luminaries who established the Chinuch Atzmai some 27 years ago.

The catalyst which has caused this uproar in the Torah community is the austerity measures brought on by the Israel economy, which in turn has decreed a 6% cut in allotted subsidies for the Torah School Network. The Budget and Planning department of Chinuch Atzmai has stated that this translates into the loss of approximately $950,000 in basic school funding. In educational terms this would mean the abolition of some 3,030 classroom teaching hours per week, thus effectively spelling the end to the unique 'extra hours' and similar programs that make the Chinuch Atzmai a vital educational link in the development of generations of Israel's children.

In human terms these budget cuts called for the layoffs of approximately 200 teachers who depend substantially on the Chinuch Atzmai for their livelihood. Special transportation for young students and numerous other programs essential to the normal functions of the school system face disruption.

In light of these dramatic effects the Gedolei Torah have joined in this appeal to rehire laid off teachers and reinstate suffering programs, based on the projection that Chinuch Atzmai would expand its international fund raising efforts to help cover these costs.

The Board of Governors of Chinuch Atzmai here in the United States have called for an Emergency Survival Campaign to raise this year $3,000,000. Rabbi Shmuel Berenbaum, Rabbi Shneur Kotler and Rabbi Yaakov Perlow (Noviminsker Rav) serve jointly as treasurers of this Campaign. The National Executive offices are located at 167 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016

קריאת מרנו ורבנו זקני גדולי הדור שליט"א

להצלת החינוך העצמאי בא"י

קריאת קודש

בס"ד

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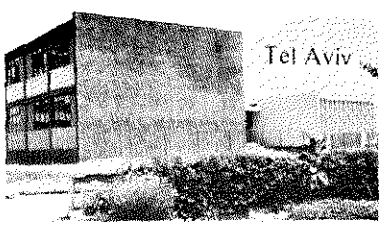

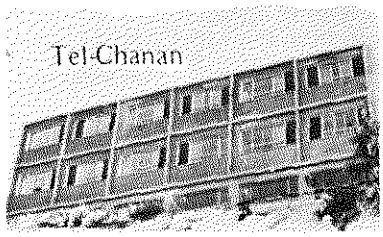

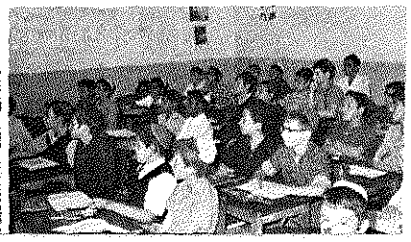

5741—The Year of Survival

$3 Million Chinuch Atzmai Emergency Survival Campaign

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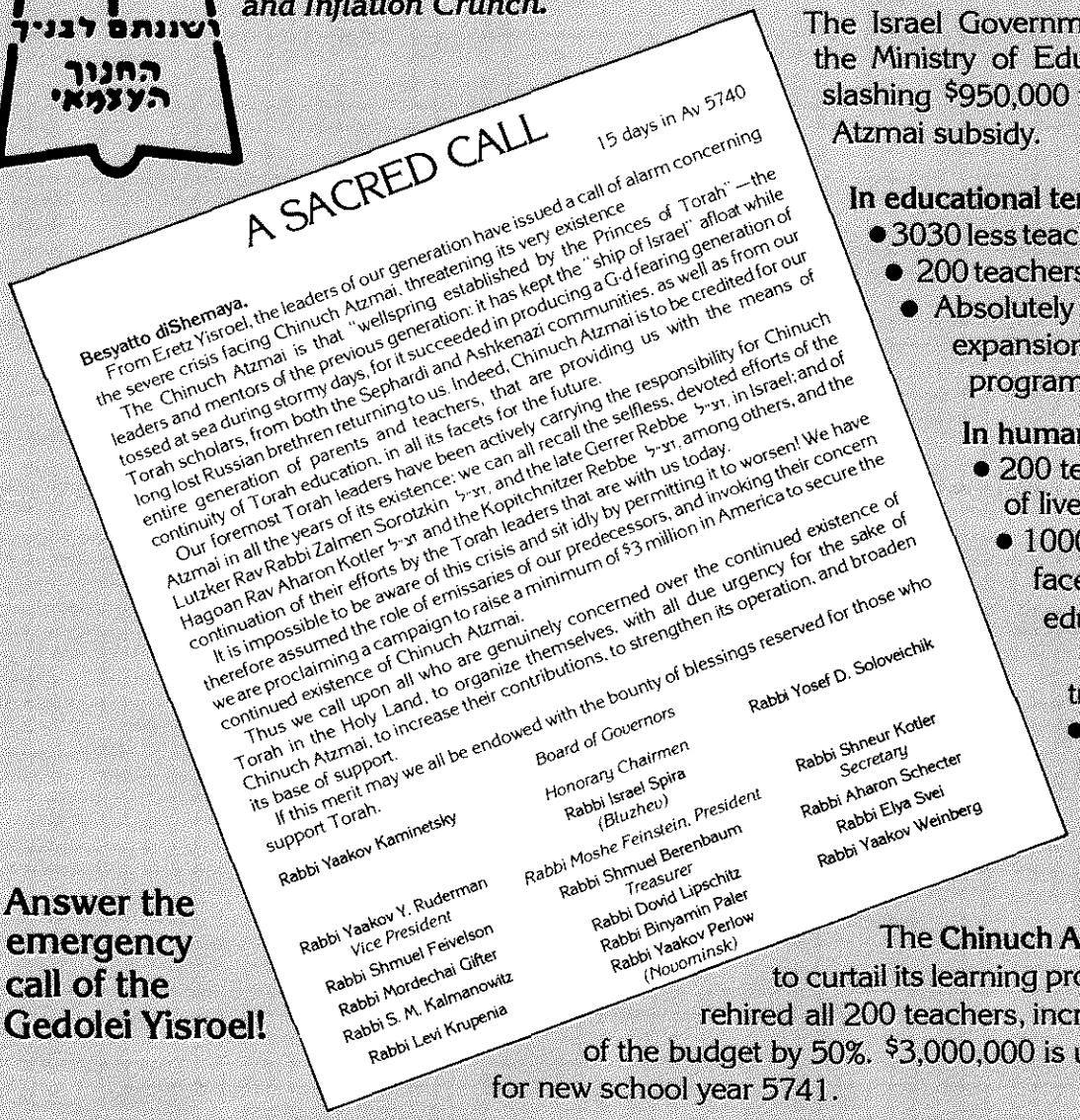

A SACRED CALL

15 days in Av 5740

Besyatto diShemaya.

From Eretz Yisroel, the leaders of our generation have issued a call of alarm concerning the severe crisis facing Chinuch Atzmai, threatening its very existence.

The Chinuch Atzmai is that "wellspring established by the Princes of Torah" —the leaders and mentors of the previous generation: it has kept the "ship of Israel" afloat while tossed at sea during stormy days, for it succeeded in producing a G-d fearing generation of Torah scholars, from both the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities, as well as from our long lost Russian brethren returning to us. Indeed, Chinuch Atzmai is to be credited for our entire generation of parents and teachers, that are providing us with the means of continuity of Torah education, in all its facets for the future.

Our foremost Torah leaders have been actively carrying the responsibility for Chinuch Atzmai in all the years of its existence: we can all recall the selfless, devoted efforts of the Lutzker Rav Rabbi Zalmen Sorotzkin ז״ע, and the late Gerrer Rebbe ז״ע, in Israel; and of Hagoan Rav Aharon Kotler ז״ע and the Kopitchnitzer Rebbe ז״ע, among others, and the continuation of their efforts by the Torah leaders that are with us today.

It is impossible to be aware of this crisis and sit idly by permitting it to worsen! We have therefore assumed the role of emissaries of our predecessors, and invoking their concern we are proclaiming a campaign to raise a minimum of $3 million in America to secure the continued existence of Chinuch Atzmai.

Thus we call upon all who are genuinely concerned over the continued existence of Torah in the Holy Land, to organize themselves, with all due urgency for the sake of Chinuch Atzmai, to increase their contributions, to strengthen its operation, and broaden its base of support.

If this merit may we all be endowed with the bounty of blessings reserved for those who support Torah.

Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky

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The Israel Government reduced the Ministry of Education budget, slashing $950,000 from the Chinuch Atzmai subsidy.

In educational terms, this means:

- 3030 less teaching hours per week
- 200 teachers dismissed.
- Absolutely no funding for expansion or enrichment programs.

In human terms:

- 200 teachers face loss of livelihood.
- 1000's of children face loss of Torah education.
- transportation.
- Classes will be forced to use sub-standard housing.

Answer the emergency call of the Gedolei Yisroel!

The **Chinuch Atzmai** has refused to curtail its learning programs, and has rehired all 200 teachers, increasing its portion of the budget by 50%. $3,000,000 is urgently needed for new school year 5741.

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☐ **$5,400 per teacher**

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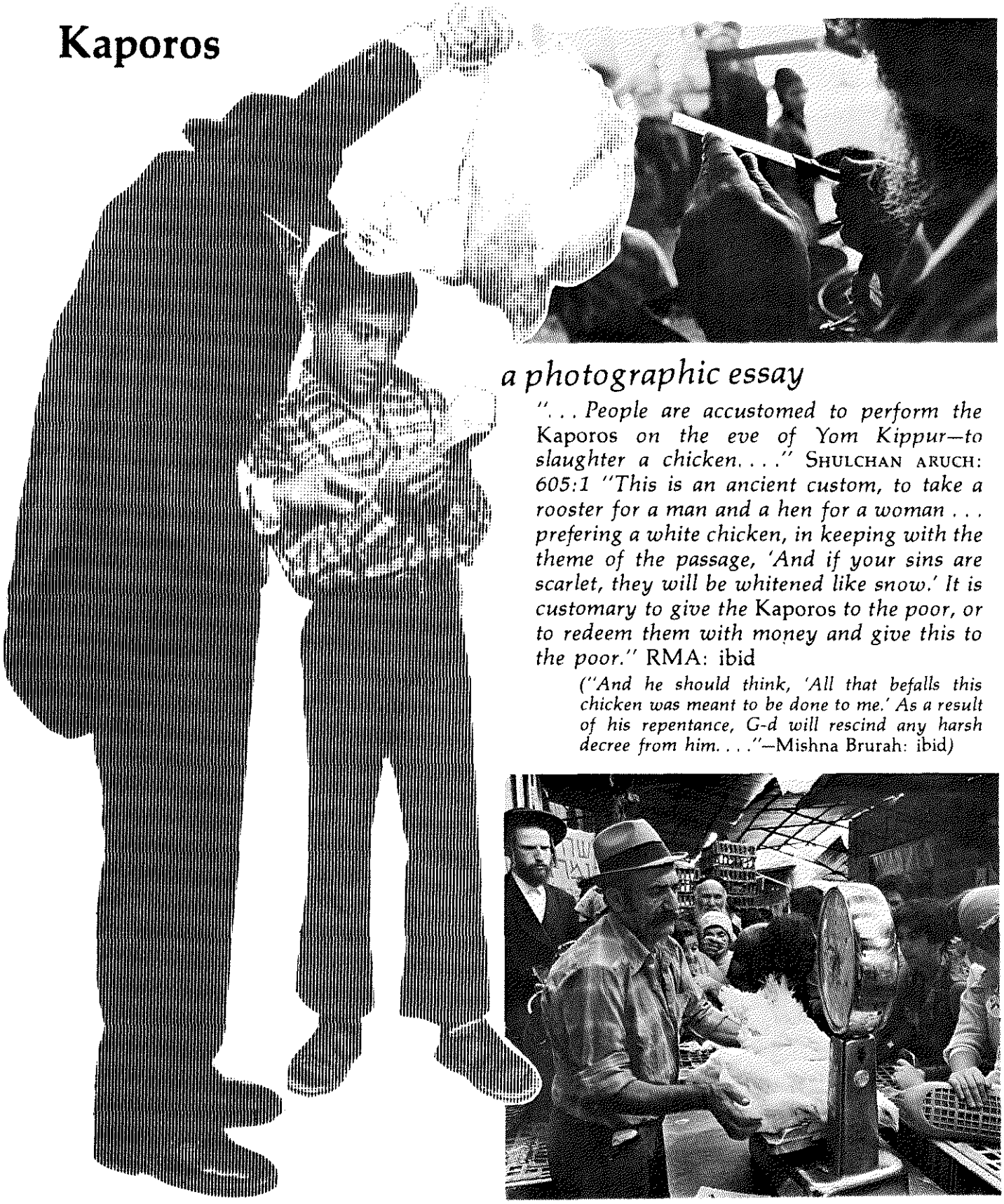
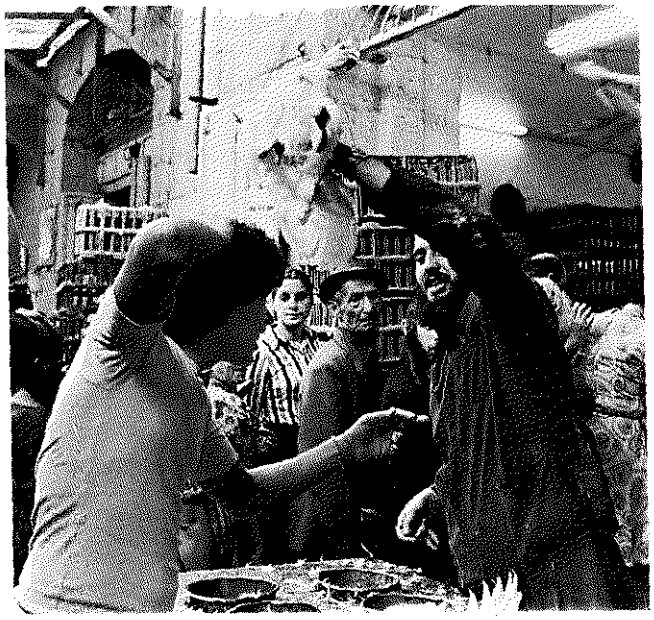
Kaporos



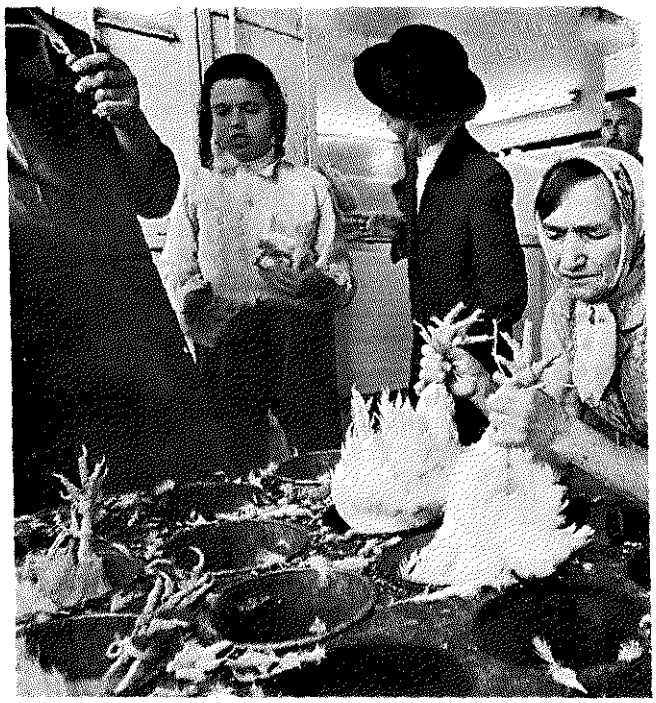
a photographic essay

". . . People are accustomed to perform the Kaporos *on the eve of Yom Kippur—to slaughter a chicken. . . ."* SHULCHAN ARUCH: *605:1 "This is an ancient custom, to take a rooster for a man and a hen for a woman . . . prefering a white chicken, in keeping with the theme of the passage, 'And if your sins are scarlet, they will be whitened like snow.' It is customary to give the* Kaporos *to the poor, or to redeem them with money and give this to the poor."* RMA: ibid

("And he should think, 'All that befalls this chicken was meant to be done to me.' As a result of his repentance, G-d will rescind any harsh decree from him. . . ."—Mishna Brurah: ibid)



Early Erev Yom Kippur morning, the Machane Yehuda market in Jerusalem is alive with early arisers. . . . People who have drifted far from religious practices mingle with the devout, choosing a suitable chicken, reciting the Kaporos *text ("This is my surrogate, my atonement . . . this chicken will go to its death and I will be inscribed for a year of life . . ."), swirling the chicken over his/her head, giving it to the* shochet *(ritual slaughterer), later claiming it to give to the needy—or to cook, and redeem with charity funds.—Photographs by* ISAIAH KARLINSKY



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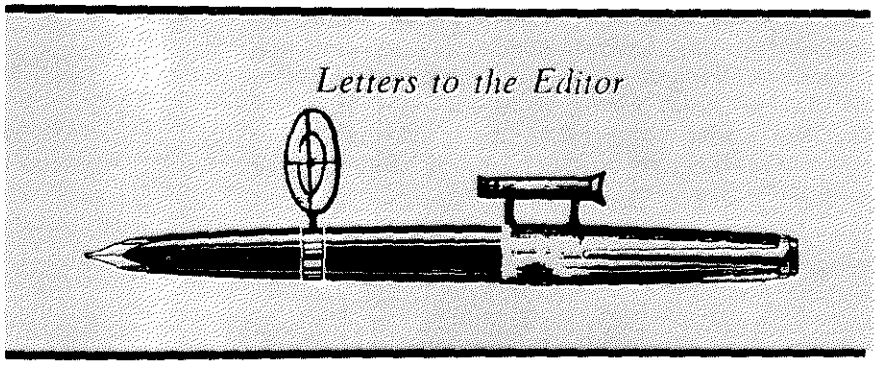
The Canvas of Greatness

To the Editor:

I enjoyed Rabbi Perr's reminiscences about his days with the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Aharon Kotler זצ"ל (JO Dec. '79). Every story about a *gadol baTorah*, certainly about a recognized *gaon* and *manhig hador*, is both precious and beneficial. However, I feel that some of the stories that Rabbi Perr chose for his reminiscences would have done the Rosh Yeshiva much more justice had they been presented as part of a more comprehensive picture of his greatness. Of course, Rabbi Perr had this picture in mind when he wrote the stories, but the vast majority of JO readers—who did not share the privilege of studying under or living with the Rosh Yeshiva—would not have had that picture while reading them.



Second, in regard to the exchange between Rabbi Perr and the head of his *chabura*, I've found that the latter's advice to flatly refuse the Rosh Yeshiva's request has been taken literally in spite of Rabbi Perr's assurances to the contrary. It would therefore be in place to describe the awe in which the Rosh Yeshiva was held by his *talmidim*, at the same time providing some background against which Rabbi Perr's reminiscenses can be better appreciated:

Old Mr. Hess, first president of Hess Oil, was a frequent visitor at the yeshiva during the last years of this life. He commented on the manner in which all the *talmidim* jumped to their feet whenever the Rosh Yeshiva entered; it reminded him of the way they had stood up for Reb Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor was described by no less a *gadol* than Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski זצ"ל of Vilna as "the Reb Akiva Eiger of our times"? Yet all his *talmidim* were awed by that brilliance, which was evident not only in his *shiurim*, but in his conversation: At the *Shabbos seuda* the Rosh Yeshiva would sit with his older *talmidim* (the others sat at nearby tables) who were studying some four or five different *mesechtos*. They posed their best and most difficult *kushyos*—questions that they had thought out to the end in preparation for *Shabbos*—one after the (Kovne Rav) when he would enter his *Beis Midrash*.

It was not simply that they jumped up, or how they dashed over to him if they saw that he needed a *sefer* or whatever (like the fellow who sneaked into his room every *Erev Shabbos* while he was bathing, to polish his shoes); it was not just how they waited expectantly outside his office or dining room to talk to him; it was not just the excitement when he came back to the yeshiva at the end of the week—or the electricity in the air when they posed a *kushya* on the *shiur*—or the heated discussions about what his brief, precisely worded answer meant. . . . There was a love and reverence, awe and sheer *bitul* (self-negation) that all his *talmidim* felt for him, young and old alike.

Who could truly evaluate the brilliance in Torah of a man who

other, each in his respective *mesechta*. The Rosh Yeshiva formulated his answers and fired them back before the question was completed. His best *talmidim*—well-known *roshei yeshiva* today—would be hard put to remember asking a *kushya* that gave the Rosh Yeshiva enough difficulty to allow them to finish their question.

They were inspired by his *Ahavas Hashem*: More than once he urged us to give *nachas ruach* (spiritual pleasure) to the *Borei Olam* (Creator) and he would invariably choke up, with tears filling his eyes.

His fiery love for Torah: I'll never forget the emotion in his voice when he exclaimed (was it on Yom Kippur?) his gratitude to Hashem who: "dragged us out of the *blotte mamesh* (virtual mire) and gave us *such a Torah*."

His *yiras Shomayim*: The visible emotions at *mussar seder* in Lakewood—he learned quietly, with a soft *mussar nigun*—but with great *hispeilus*, in Reb Yisroel Salanter's tradition.

His selflessness in all his monumental undertakings and in his every act throughtout his life: Rebbetzin Kotler שתחי׳ once told me that she does not remember one occasion in their fifty years of marriage that he ever talked about himself.

His great love and respect for all *bnei Torah* and especially his "*talmidim*/children": One looked for an opportunity to talk to him— just to bask in his radiant warmth— to look at that beautiful smile he saved for us. The Rebbetzin is reported to have once said, "He loved the grandchildren almost as much as the *talmidim*."

His extraordinary energy, *zrizus* and forcefulness in all matters pertaining to Torah—and in contrast, his self effacement, his soft sweet manner and his good humor in all personal matters.

And somehow—more than a sum of the parts—there was a *kedusha* that could be seen in him (as is spoken of in *Daas Tvunos*) a purity and *tmimus* in his mannerisms—even in his tone of voice. All this inspired that love and awe, and engendered the universal recognition that his every word is unadulterated *Daas Torah*—a recognition which enabled him to build the world of Torah which we are fortunate enough to live in today.

In line with Rabbi Perr's "time to speak," and as a case in point of how greatness in Torah and *emunas chachomim* offers one unusual vantage on events, I quote a story related this past *Yarhtzeit* by the Lakewood Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Shneur Kotler שליט״א about his father:

Right after World War II, the Rosh Yeshiva זצוק״ל had dispatched someone to Europe on a mission for Vaad Hatzalah. The plane on which he had been scheduled to return crashed in flight, leaving no survivors. After his family had received a telegram that he had in fact been on that flight, the distraught "widow" rushed to the Rosh Yeshiva to inquire whether they should begin sitting *shiva*, in mourning. To her great surprise the Rosh Yeshiva advised them not to sit *shiva* as yet, for there is a rabbinic statement that *mitzva*-emissaries are not harmed.

"But I have a telegram from the Army," protested the woman.

"I don't know," answered the Rosh Yeshiva, "he is a *shliach mitzva*. . ." He instructed her to go back home and not accept the report of his death as yet. . . . Three days later this emissary called up his family saying that he did in fact fly on that plane, but—having *Yahrtzeit*—he got off at a stopover to find a *minyan* for *Mincha* and didn't make it back on time.

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In Favor of Holocaust Remembrances

To the Editor:

The Jewish Observer as the forum for American Torah Orthodoxy, implicitly gives its imprimateur as an arbiter in certain halachic matters. While this may not be the intent of the publishers, it is precisely what happens when the magazine reaches its constituents. Thus an unsigned article condemning a stance on Yom Hashoa—a controversial and emotionally charged issue—("Thank You Elie Wiesel," April '80) prompts us to comment.

The author thinks he can answer "those genuinely disturbed survivors, children of survivors and other men and women of conscience" about overcoming his instinctive emotional response, and staying away from Yom Hashoa Remembrance Ceremonies on the basis of a remark by Elie Wiesel, and by using the setting of Temple Emanuel as the archetype. We do not advocate acceptance of ideals alien to Orthodoxy, but we do contend that no single Jewish group has monopoly on suffering or on its expression. We also find especially grating the implied position, that if Jews do not *daven* or socialize in an Orthodox setting, shul or shteibel, they are lacking a fear of G-d and are therefore unworthy Jews.

If nothing else, one must learn tolerance. Orthodox Jewry has the responsibility to be demanding of itself, but generous with others. Hitler cared not if a Jew was atheistic, Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Agudist, Mizrachist, or Zionistic . . . *rasha* or a *tzaddik*. A Jew was a Jew. Plain, simple. And for that crime alone, were you sent through the gates of Hell. It mattered not to him, and it should not matter to us. For every single Jew who was slain because he was a Jew is *kadosh*.

We take exception to the author's contention that Yom Hashoa Rememberance Ceremonies are public expressions of mourning. Yom Hashoa is neither a day of mourning nor of celebration. Rather, it is a memorial and a rededication day. . . . Yom Hashoa should be regarded as a special day, to remember the horrors of the past, and at the same time, to affirm our survival for the future. Yom Hashoa serves a primarily educational function in that it is a reminder when we are tempted to forget and the world challenges the veracity of the most gruesome and awful experience that has befallen the Jewish people.

The sheer magnitude of the numbers, the technology and the complicity of every nation of the world, demands that we set apart a time for remembrance. Not that we reduce all other Jewish experiences to insignificance, but the impact of the holocaust on world Jewry, and specifically American Jewry, cannot be ignored.

American Jews today are of two minds. There are those who feel as we do, that the holocaust must not be forgotten. Unfortunately, the others, who are in majority, suffer from guilt and denial. None of them wants to deal with the holocaust. Nor do they want to admit that we Jews are different. As Sinclair Lewis pointed out, people claim: "It can't happen here"—but it can. American Jewry is closing its eyes to the realities around it, whether they are on the political home front, where neo-

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Nazism is rearing its ugly head, or on the international scene, where nations of the world would gladly comply with the objectives of the PLO, because Jews are more expedient than oil.

It is imperative that we impress upon American Jews that we are, have been and always be, different.

"Esau is the enemy of Jacob" is not simply an historical footnote, but a painful reality. The truth of our difference compels us to remember.

Recalling the horrors of the Jewish people in the ovens of Europe is not antinomian. It does not constitute an abrogation of Jewish law. We wish simply to record and remember. When only two per cent of American Jews are observant, and three out of every four American Jews are predicted to intermarry, a remembrance of the sufferings of our parents and grandparents becomes crucial; a remembrance of the annihilation of European Jewry serves as the vital link binding young American Jews to a responsibilities to their past.

We do not advocate the invocation of those tragic words "Six Million" to elicit the carefully studied and commercial responses which prostitute the memories of our martyrs and have become the hallmark of some Yom Hashoa remembrances. We *do* advocate an intelligent, honest and responsible study of our European forebears . . . their sufferings, their indomitable spirit, their martyrdom. We should set the example in our Yom Hashoa Remembrance Ceremonies for the rest of the world. We may not understand the pain, but we are responsible to acknowledge it. We do not pretend to divine G-d's purpose or rationale. But we do feel compelled to learn and to teach.

Selection of the day marking the end of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising as Yom Hashoa does not imply that physical resistance was the only valid response to the Nazis. The Uprising was significant, not only in terms of affirming the strength and courage of the Jewish people, but also as the first successful civilian resistance to Nazism *in all of Europe*. The Nazis fought longer in the Warsaw Ghetto than in any battle fought in occupied Europe (with the exception of Russia). Poland took nine days to overrun; Holland, five; France, a month. Yet it took six weeks for the German Army to extinguish the fires of Jewish resistance in Warsaw.

While some risked lives to celebrate Pesach, others were inspired by the Festival of Freedom to fight for the freedom of the Jews. Among these was Yakov Rabinovich, a *"rebbish kindt,"* a *chassid*, an Agudist. He escaped from Treblinka

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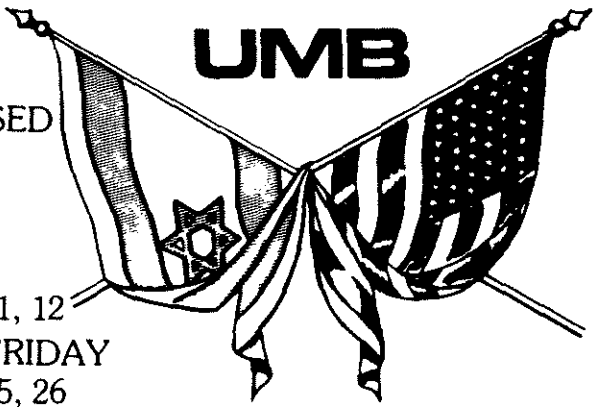

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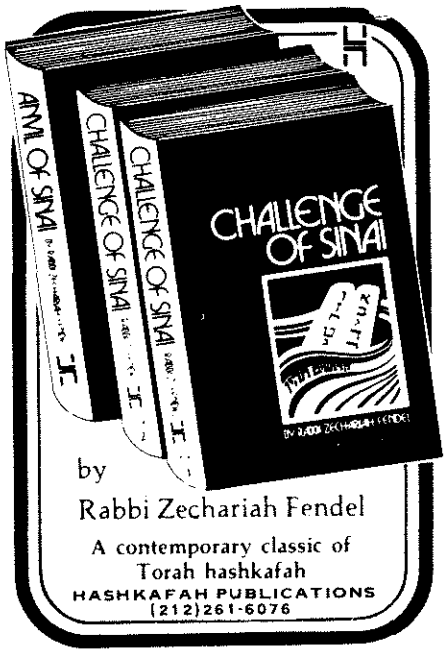
to lead a group fighting at the wall. His *yahrtzeit* is Pesach. We dare not forget him and what inspired him.

It is certainly wrong to focus a memorial for six million martyrs exclusively on those who bore arms to fight. It is equally indecent to deny the legitimacy of the "men of the daring Molotov Cocktail." The martyrs of the holocaust are eloquent testimony to the spirit of the Jewish people who followed the letter of the law: "to love G-d with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and your whole might." And if they chose to question or agonize in their misery, we do not have the right to condemn.

To remember the tragedies visited upon the Jewish people is not a departure from accepted Jewish practice recall the Yizkor Bücher of the Middle Ages, or the Chronicles of the Crusades, or the *piyuttim* composed in the wake of the Rheindsfleisch massacres, when every persecution was committed to paper as a record for posterity and as an affirmation of faith.

We are of the opinion that Yom Hashoa Remembrance Ceremonies are not contrary to Torah Judaism.



We see it as an obligation to ourselves and to future generations. Yom Hashoa is not a substitute for religious observance. It is a supplement; a necessary, albeit tragic, footnote to our existence. It is a testament from those who died and those who survived to us and to future generations of Jews. We are the link between past and future, and we must not ignore our responsibility to remember, to teach and to continue to bear witness.

JEANETTE FRIEDMAN SIERADSKI, BRENDA RABINOVICH, STEVEN TENCER, RITA GROSZ FRIEDMAN, YEHUDAH FRIEDMAN, CHANIE FRIEDMAN FROMMER, SARA ROSS, RUTH RINTEL, MIRIAM SUGERMAN, SIMCHA FROMMER,
Group Project
for Holocaust Education.

Reply:

Remembering: For Torah Purposes, in a Commensurate Manner

Unfortunately, the writers of the above letter failed to understand our criticism of Yom Hashoa Ceremonies. Like our correspondents, Torah Jews also want to remember. Not simply as a gut reaction, or by reason of sentiment, however, but in keeping with a Torah command: "Remember what Amelek did to you" (*Devarim* 25:17), and "Remember the days of old, understand the years of every generation" (*ibid.* 32:7). There is more to remembering, however, than simple recall, and it is at this point that the similarities end.

All Torah "remembering" is directed toward a specific goal, and as a result, must follow a prescribed course. Remembering the destructive encounter with Amelek, the progeny of Eisav, for instance, reminds us that our fortunes are forever in tandem with that of Eisav's offspring. When we sink in our devotion to Torah as a way of life, Eisav achieves an asendancy over us. . . . Study of history can give us clues to understanding

every generation, providing the binding clause is honored: "Ask your father and he will declare for you, Your elders and they will instruct you" (*ibid cit*). Remembering is an integral part of Torah life, to be structured along Torah guidelines.

For this reason, a remembrance based on emotional criteria can scarcely qualify. Temple Emanuel as a setting and Elie Wiesel's words in the commemorative oration only serve as examples of how a Memorial Assembly uninstructed by Torah will end up contrary to Torah.

By the same token, it is difficult to see how one can pretend that a meaningful memorial assembly does not involve mourning. In the writers' own words: "Yom Hashoa should be a special day, to remember the horrors of the past." Since it is so obviously a sad occasion, it is not surprising that *not one halachic* authority has ever given his approval to the Nissan date. We wish to stress this because, contrary to the assumptions of the writers, *The Jewish Observer* does *not* aim to decide halachic matters. But when the broadest consensus of *Gedolei Yisroel* exists—as it does in selecting *Tisha B'Av* for remembering *all* tragedies, and rejecting a day convened during a month when sad commemorations are not permitted—then we do not hesitate to articulate their position. Advocating "honest and responsible study of our European forebears . . . and their indomitable spirit" while transgressing the words of their leaders, is to lock this spirit in a glass museum case rather than to subscribe to it as a guiding life force.

If the writers agree with us (as they maintain they do) in highlighting spiritual heroism and reaching for spiritual perpetuation, then they should be with us in protesting against the defamation of the concept of *kedusha/kedoshim* that results from holding the Day of Remembrance Ceremonies at a time unacceptable by *halacha*, and in a place where many of the *kedoshim* would never have entered. And their voices should join ours in crying "foul" when Elie Wiesel took the Divinity out of the *Kiddush Hashem* of their martyrdom. When the concept of *kedoshim* is being misused, *we* must not be Jews of silence, no less their direct heirs who deign speak in their names.

We are *not* exclusive in regard to whom we remember, or who joins us in remembering. We surely recognize that Reform and totally non-religious Jews perished, and that they too were *Kedoshim* (see A. Scheinman's article on this topic in this issue). And we welcome everyone who is so moved to join us. But outright prohibitions in regard to time, place, and content can never be overlooked simply because "it is

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important to remember."

There may be a kernel of truth in the argument that Holocaust Remembrances do help some people hold on to their Jewish identity, but would such an assembly be less effective if it is held on *Tisha B'Av* instead of during the month of *Nissan?* Furthermore, it is true that a conventional type of commemorative could have a place in the larger scheme of things—as a binder of sorts between past and future, to give shape and direction to memories, as they become the blueprint for dreams and schemes, but not in isolation of all other Jewish values.

After all, a Jewish identity based *exclusively* on the Holocaust is of questionable value by any criteria. For one, it can repel some people: taken out of context of Jewish history, and divorced from the panorama of *golus/geulah*—exile/redemption, it can frighten one into total supression of his Jewish identity; or it can provoke an extreme militant response, far beyond what is safe or reasonable. . . . Truly, what value can such an identity have? As Helen Epstein pointed out in her study *Children of the Holocaust*: "Many survivors who had lost their faith in the war did not know what to pass on to their children. The Holocaust had become the touchstone of their identities as Jews and it became touchstones for their children as well. The trouble was that while it conferred an identity, it provided no structure, no clue to a way of life" (page 231).

To be sure, holocaust commemoratives, such as sculptures and scholarly tomes, and even memorial assemblies can contribute to a positive Jewish identity, as long as they are understood to be but a preliminary means to a further means, not ends unto themselves. Focusing on the highest ideals realized by the generations that adhered to them does more than make use of the memories of those that perished; it enshrines their memories, and gives them a certain viability and immediacy:

Are you searching for remnants of Ponevezh or Telshe, Satmar or Belz, Frankfurt or Mattersdorf, Mir or Ger, so as to remember their glory? If you are limiting yourself to combing the ruins of Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and Germany, —literally or figuratively—you are wasting your time. Their glory lives—indeed, it thrives elsewhere. In fact, many many more people can pinpoint the precise location of the present day reincarnation of these communities—because of the Torah that is studied and lived in their new settings—than can even guess at the country of origin of these hallowed names. The most imposing monuments, the most inspiring assemblies—even the most stirring literature—cannot measure up to throbbing yeshivos and thriving kehillos *as a means of perpetuation. Together, they assure us that a hallowed past will extend into the future, and give subsequent generations a positive basis for a viable Jewish identity.*

If the writers are serious in their task of remembering to rebuild, let them join us in a massive concerted effort on the part of all members of *Klal Yisroel* to redeem ourselves from the sufferings of *golus* and the *Tochacha.* The thrust of this *teshuva* will be renunciation of reliance on "my might and the power of my arm," a sense of responsibility for one another, and fidelity to Torah and its sages. This will save our American brothers and sisters from the holocaust of assimilation and intermarriage. Invoking the smokestacks of Auschwitz and Treblinka *per se* will not.

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Helping Others With What You've Got

Dear Editor,

Your recent issue on "The Baal Teshuva Movement" was truly thought-provoking. It made one aware of how much there is to be done and how much is required of each one of us . . .

At a yeshiva function I attended, a speaker was prodding the people to do all they can, to share whatever they did with the Yeshiva. After that speech my father told me that he realized that he had something he could contribute. He later took out a roll of plastic from his car trunk and left it for the Yeshiva (he manufactures plastic slipcovers): "I'm sure they can find some good use for it," he said. They did—it now protects the *shulchan* and *bimah* coverings.

Every individual has unique talents and abilities. Every person can fill some public need, if only he would direct it, even in a small way to helping Torah and *Klal Yisroel.* As a case in point—an advertisement in a Jewish newspaper announced an orchestra offering its services, saying that it was willing to play for needy couples *for the mitzva alone!*

The same "*Ma'aser*" concept—of giving a tenth of your profit to *tzeddaka*—was extended by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein as an obligation to spend one-tenth of one's time working on behalf of others, bringing them closer to Torah (see the recent issue—pg. 36). It should also be understood to refer to *all of one's resources,* both physical and spiritual.

Imagine what could be done if every professional would donate a tenth of his time to aid yeshivos! If a wedding hall would make every tenth wedding free for some needy couple! If a grocery would donate every tenth day to needy people! If a shoemaker would mend needy yeshiva boys' shoes for the *mitzva* alone! If a housewife would spend a tenth of her discretionary time for *mitzvos!*

There are as many different needs as there are people. And there are as many other people who can fill these needs.

MOSHE GOLDBERGER
Staten Island, N.Y.

Reach-Out in Bnei Brak

To the Editor:

You are to be commended highly for dedicating an entire issue to the important subject of "The Baalei Teshuva Movement." It is understandable that you could not have included reports on *all* institutions serving young people in search of Torah values.

Your readers, undoubtedly, would have liked to know that the thriving Torah community of Bnei Brak has warmly welcomed and embraced *Yeshiva Ohavei Torah* which was founded several years ago by Rabbi Shmuel Weissman and Rabbi Shmuel Samuel with the strong encouragement of Rabbi Elazar Schach and Rabbi Nissim Karelitz.

Yeshiva Ohavei Torah is an integral part of Torah life in Bnei Brak—the students' *tefilla* and study sessions take place within the walls of other major yeshivos in the community, and *Shabbos* meals are hosted by local families. As a result, students quickly become "saturated" in Torah learning and commitment and quickly move on to existing, recognized yeshivos. How does one measure the success of an institution like Yeshiva Ohavei Torah? Probably by the high student "attrition" rate.

Dr. LOUIS NULMAN
Brooklyn, N.Y.

A New Haven For Baalei Teshuva in Chicago

To the Editor:

The last issue of *The Jewish Observer* dealing with "The Baal Teshuva Movement" is another feather in *The Observer's* cap.

Rabbi Mendel Weinbach's article dealing with the *Baal Teshuva* when he returns to his family and home in America had my special interest . . . Most *Jewish Observer* readers are not aware of Yeshiva Migdal Torah, in the Chicago area, which is geared exclusively for *Baalei Teshuva* and late starters. We opened our doors in November of 1978, and have full-(with room and board) and part-time programs for men, and part-time programs for women. Aside from helping individuals in our area make this transition, it is the only full time yeshiva for late-starting men between New York and California.

(Rabbi) YOSEF TZVI HEISLER
Dean, Yeshiva Migdal Torah
5665 No. Jersey Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60659

The Baal Teshuva in a Conventional Yeshiva

To the Editor:

I would like to congratulate you on your recent issue on the Baal Teshuva movement which was highly informative and conveyed a real sense of the enthusiasm and dedication of workers in the field. In particular, I welcome the call of Rabbi Baruch Horovitz for more communication and sharing of experiences by those involved in Kiruv Rechokim work.

In this vein I would like to suggest another vehicle for effective work in this field beside the existing *baal teshuva* yeshiva and the proposed hostel option:

Baal Teshuva programs offered within the context of a traditional yeshiva have many advantages. Although the program of study is carefully planned to take into account the specific needs and capabilities of these students who have only recently begun serious study of their Jewish heritage, the overall resources of the entire yeshiva community can be utilized in helping to integrate these late-starters into Torah-true Judaism in a more natural manner. There is the opportunity to draw from the staff of *roshei yeshiva* for special supplementary inspiration and uplifting experiences. The *beis midrash bachurim* provide real life role models and help simplify the transition to a Torah way of life in a myriad of ways. Experiencing Judaism (*tefilla, Shabbos,* learning Torah, *chessed*) in the context of a yeshiva is a very powerful tool in *Kiruv Rechokim.*

Furthermore, a difficult conflict common to yeshivos specializing in educating *baalei teshuva* can be avoided. With the progress in Torah learning and observance of the *baal teshuva,* the question arises as to when his Torah potential could better be realized in a *yeshiva gedola* rather than the *baal teshuva* yeshiva. The situation may arise where the interests of the *baal teshuva* yeshiva are served by urging its advanced students to remain and help participate in the training of the next group of students, while a transfer to a suitable *yeshiva gedola* would best serve the needs of these advanced students. This conflict of interests is avoided when the *baal teshuva* program exists as a division within a traditional *yeshiva gedola,* and both institution and individual interests are best served

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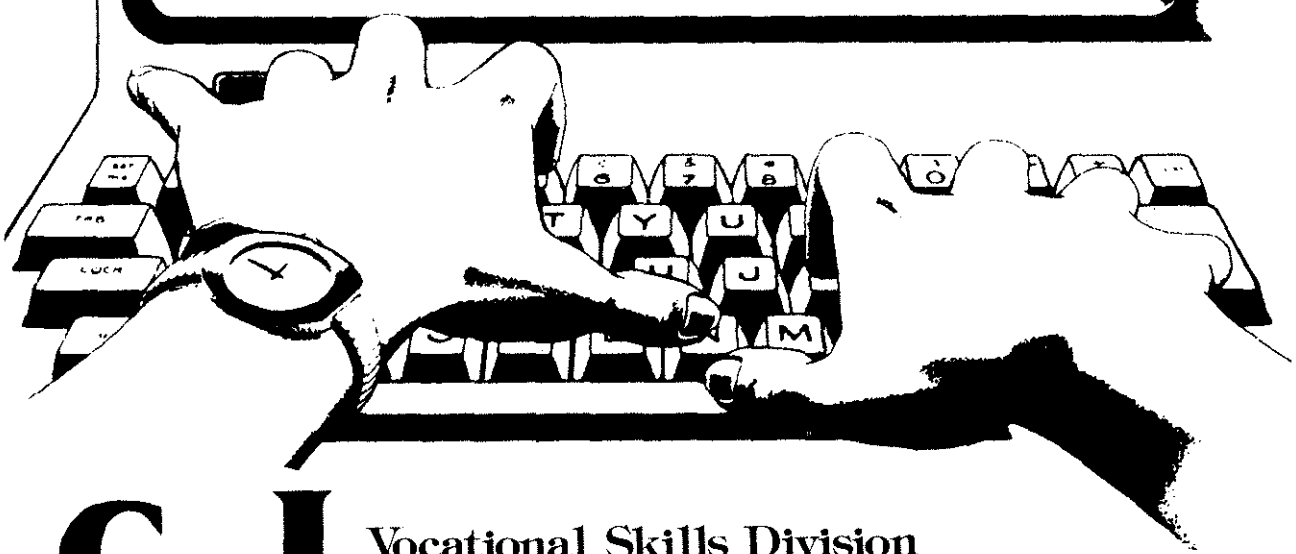

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RABBI SHABSAI SLAE
Director, Jewish Studies Program
Hebrew Theological College
Skokie, Ill.

"Hineni" and the Teshuva Movement

To the Editor:

Just four short years ago I was a senior high school student living in Brookyn and a leader of the Jews for J. My mother, Mrs. Mildred Schneider, called every individual and every organization that she thought might help bring me back—all to no avail. She called Agudah, who referred her to J.E.P. Despite all their efforts, they were unsuccessful. Finally they suggested that my mother call Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis and Hineni . . . and that is how a new life began for me.

Through Hineni I returned to my Torah, to my people, and to my G-d. I also met my husband, Danny Cohn, through Hineni.

Danny, too, had been a leader of the Jews for J (in Washington D.C.). He, too, had been taken from rabbi to rabbi and from organization to organization (some of which were mentioned in your magazine). Again, the only individual who succeeded in rekindling that spark of Yiddishkeit which lies dormant in every Jew was Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis.

Today, *Baruch Hashem*, we have a home which we hope is truly a *bayis ne'eman*, and a beautiful son, Moshe Menachem . . . and all our joy is due to Hineni.

It therefore grieves me to see the entire issue of a Torah magazine devoted to the *Ba'al Teshuva* movements and find that one of the most meaningful and successful is ignored.

RIVKA SCHNEIDER COHN
Brooklyn, New York

Response:

One issue of *The Jewish Observer* could not possibly deal with absolutely everything happening in regard to the Baal Teshuva Movement. We refer you to our disclaimer (p. 4): "By no means do the articles in these pages pretend to exhaust the topic; in fact, there are some glaring omissions among the people and institutions represented here. For a more complete picture, we ask the reader to investigate on his own—in back issues of *The Jewish Observer*, and perhaps in his own backyard."

N.W.

Time For Yeshivos To Educate the Public

To the Editor:

Dr. Fryshman's article (April '80) was long overdue. It is only a pity he didn't elaborate a little more.

It is time we recognize that *rabbeim* must be paid a truly competitive salary—a salary that would attract the most qualified people to teach and guide our children. We should rise to the call of Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky שליט"א at the last Agudath Israel Convention in Rye, N.Y., that salaries of *rabbeim* must be increased.

There is however a rationalization to the parents' bitter bargaining over tuition. Many parents are under the notion that yeshivos have other sources of financial backing. Yeshivos, they believe, are getting large sums of money from government programs. Funds through such organizations as Agudath Israel, milk and lunch monies, transportation subsidies, free books, and so on. Rumors have been circulating that some yeshivos received large reparation payments for Nazi war crimes from the German government. Or else parents rationalize that it is some benefactor who covers most of the costs.

What is needed is more candor on the part of the yeshivos. Yeshivos should educate the public as to the true nature of their financial base. Independent auditing should be shown to each parent, detailing what part of the financial burden the parents must carry.

So long as parents believe that yeshivos have other monies, they will keep on bargaining.

Some parents are also skeptical,

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to say the least, as to where their monies are going. Is it going to the salaried people on the payroll, or is it getting "lost" along the way? Some frankness is needed in this area, as well.

DAVID LEDERER
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Tuition Bargains—Shortchanging Our Children

To the Editor:

I read Bernard Fryshman's article on the plight of *mechanchim* with great interest, since I have recently made a decision not to "go into *chinuch*." This decision has resulted in my receiving criticism from my teachers and guilt pangs from my own conscience.

What my teachers and my conscience have been telling me are one and the same: *You're being selfish. You're running after money.* I confess. My motivations are definitely selfish. However, I feel that my act of selfishness—the selfishness of a seventeen year old girl entering the computer field to make it easier for herself to support a *ben Torah* is miniscule when compared to the selfishness of our *frum* society. Within this society it is considered normal to continuously contrive excuses to get children educated for next to nothing.

The opening of the computer field is a very real fourteen-week threat to the caliber of *chinuch* our children are, and will be, receiving. It is winning many potentially good teachers by offering them three and a half times the salary teaching is offering them to start. I'm not predicting that all potentially good teachers will reject the field of *chinuch*. There will always be selfless girls and girls who can afford to teach who will do so. But, I can say with conviction, that the caliber of the girls in *chinuch* will slip.

We can thank the computer field for that, for it is paying potential teachers a good salary. The computer field, in turn, owes thanks to the *frum* society. It is because we refuse to pay for our children's education that IBM has so many bright *frum* girls programming their computers.

Ironically, it might be the opening of the computer and other fields, and not the *roshei yeshiva*, that will force us to deal with the problems that beset our *mechanchim*. These problems are forcing all but the very selfless out of the *chinuch* field. Many positions are then left open for incompetent people to fill.

When it becomes obvious that our children might be getting exactly the inferior education we are paying for, maybe the phrase "I can't afford to teach" will become archaic.

HADASSAH GEFEN
Brooklyn, N.Y.

JO and the Road to "Teshuva"

To the Editor:

I would like to order two (2) new subscriptions to *The Jewish Observer*, each for 1 year. . . . The latter is a gift. Please include a card from: "Your son, thanks for all your loving support." . . .

I am a former Ohr Somayach *talmid* now making my way to Telshe. Thanks for all the enjoyment your magazines afford me . . . no matter how old, as in all Torah areas, they're never out of date! I hope now that they can א"י be a source of understanding for my parents and help be *mekarev* them as you have with me.

(NAME WITHHELD)
New Haven, Ct.

CORRECTIONS

Several errors crept in the credits in the "Baal Teshuva Movement" issue of *The Jewish Observer* (June '80). Rabbi Noach Weinberg ("Shedding our Blinders" Page 39) is the founder of four yeshivos serving *baalei teshuva* in Israel, including Ohr Somayach and Aish HaTorah. Depicted on the cover (photograph by Yael Rosen) is Rabbi Yisrael Gelis, who has been heading the Israeli Hineni movement for the past seven years, and is associated with Ohr Somayach. Author of "Watching the Airplanes" (p.19) is Shmuel ben Avraham. The picture of Rabbi Meir Shuster (p. 10) illustrating "The Teshuva Solicitors" was published courtesy of P'eylim, which sponsors Rabbi Shuster's activities.

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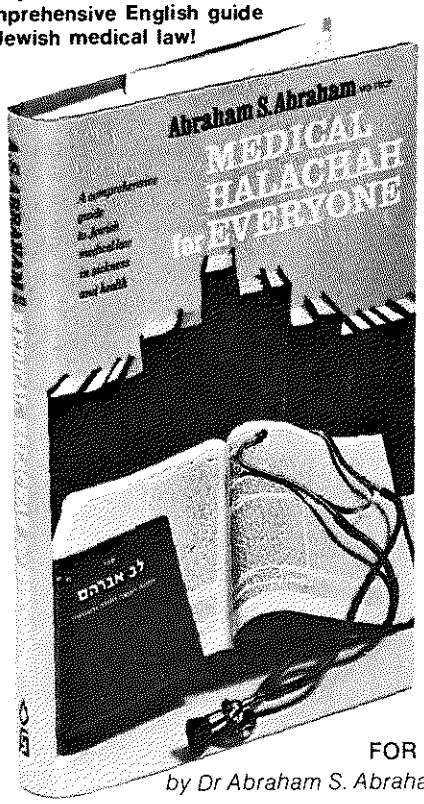

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Shmittah and Israeli Ethrogim

Israeli Ethrogim under strict controls of Otzar Beth Din

The Sabbatical year vis a vis the export and use of Israeli Ethrogim has been the subject of much uninformed speculation. The fact is that under properly controlled circumstances the export and use of Israeli Ethrogim is halachically permissible; indeed, in view of the circumstances, to be encouraged even more than any other year.

It is unnecessary to dwell at length on the superiority and reliability of the *ethrogim* of the Holy Land. The greats of the past generations have already established that "it is fitting and proper for every G-d-fearing man to purchase an *ethrog* of the produce of the Holy Land for the *mitzvah,* in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* properly (Rabbi Sh'muel Salant o.b.m., Rabbi of Jerusalem). Since then and always, the Torah greats living in the Diaspora, strove to fulfill their obligations with *ethrogim* imported from Eretz Israel, upon whose fitness no doubt was cast. Moreover, it is well-known that the greats of Eretz Israel, e.g. Rabbi Joseph Karo, author of the *Shulchan Aruch,* Rabbi Yitzchok Luria, the renowned kabbalist, Rabbi Moshe ben Yom Tov, and Rabbi Moshe Kordiviro o.b.m. used Eretz Yisrael *ethrogim.*

In recent generations, when we have attained the privilege of using *ethrogim* that have been grown by G-d fearing men in the Holy Land, and in which all the precepts dependent upon the land have been fulfilled, the halachic authorities have established that "a holy obligation lies on every Jew, wherever he lives, to give preference to fulfill the commandment of the four species with ethrogim of Eretz Israel." (Rabbi Zevi Pesach Frank o.b.m.). Moreover, thereby we are strengthening and supporting the *yishuv* in our holy land.

The greats of the generation, e.g. the author of "Imrei Binah" of Kalish, and the author of "Nefesh Chayah" (See first chapters of the latter), put great effort in to the distribution of the *ethrog* imported from Eretz Israel, and the author of "Nefesh Chayah" even planted "*ethrogim* for the *mitzvah,* without any doubt whatever of their fitness." Through his initiative, the greats of the Diaspora engaged in an enthusiastic appeal to give the *ethrog* grown in Eretz Israel preference over the one grown elsewhere. Thereafter, the *gedolei Yisroel,* among them Rabbi Isaac Elchanan of Kovna, Rabbi Jacob Etlinger, author of "Aruch Lener," Rabbi Shalom Mordecai Shwadran, known as Maharsham, and many others, took arms against those who gave preference to "the fruit of the son of the hated wife over the *ethrogim* of the son of the beloved wife" (*Aruch Hashulchan*). The gaon of Plonsk discovered an allusion to this in the verse: ". . . if I do not raise Jerusalem over my greatest joy." The Hebrew word for *I will raise* is אַעֲלֶה. These four letters are the initials of: *E*throg, *A*ravah, *L*ulav, and *H*adas—implying that we should insist upon fulfilling the obligation of the Festival of Sukkoth with produce of G-d's land.

It is not our purpose here to clarify the fitness of *ethrogim* imported from non-Jewish orchards from various parts of the world. It must be emphasized though that the trustworthiness of the *ethrogim growers* themselves is extremely important, and will inevitably reflect in the reliability of the kashruth.

The Sabbatical Year (Shmittah)

This year, a *shmittah* year, **Israel's Ethrog Center** and **Ethrogei Hadar** the major growers and exporters of Israeli *ethrogim* have publicly announced that they have fulfilled the laws of the Sabbatical year in all the *ethrog* orchards under their jurisdiction. The orchards were relinquished; no labors interdicted for *shmittah* were performed in them; only those labors permissible in *shmittah* were performed, according to the instructions of the rabbis. The **Israeli Ethrog Center** *ethrogim* were delivered to the *Otzar Beth-Din*—the treasury of the rabbinic court—headed by Rabbi Itzhak Yedidia Frenkel, the chief rabbi of Tel-Aviv—Jaffa, and they are serving merely as agents of the *Beth-Din.* **Ethrogei Hadar** is under the supervision of the **Otzar Beth-Din** of **Beth-Din Zedek Vaad HaRabonim of Agudath Israel.**

What is the Otzar Beth-Din?

Fruits of the Sabbatical year are free for all. For the benefit of the public, to enable them to distribute the fruits of the Sabbatical year in a desirable manner, the Sages of the Talmud enacted that the rabbinic court is appointed to gather the fruits of the Sabbatical year into the treasury of the court, and to distribute them to the public (*Tosefta Sh'viith,* beginning of ch. 8) during the Sabbatical year. The court sends workers to perform the necessary care which is permissible, and to harvest the fruits of the public, which they may do in the usual manner (*Chazon Ish, Sh'viith,* 12:6,8). Fruits found in the *Otzar Beth-Din* need not be eradicated, since they are already eradicated (*Chazon Ish* ibid. 7). Obviously, the court does not do business with the fruits, but collects payment for all the expenses, from the recipients of the fruit.

Israel's Ethrog Center and **Ethrogei Hadar** have accomplished these actions as agents for their supervising *Beth-Dins* in order to supply their customers all over the world with beautiful kosher *ethrogim,* in connection to which the *mitzvah* of *shmittah* has been fulfilled. For the expenses and the labor involved in supplying the *ethrogim,* **Israel's Ethrog Center** and **Ethrogei Hadar** collect payment according to *Beth-Din's* instruction.

This year the export of *ethrogim* out of Eretz-Israel by **Israel's Ethrog Center** and **Ethrogei Hadar** is being done according to the instructions of the *Beth-Din* in accordance with the decision of the Gaon Ridbaz in his work, *Beth Ridbaz* (5:18), that it is permissible to export *ethrogim* of the Sabbatical year out of the Holy Land. Moreover, according to all authorities, an *ethrog* exported from Eretz-Yisrael is fit to use in fulfilling the *mitzvah* even according to those who do not concur with Ridbaz, as is found in *Chazon-Ish, Sh'viith* 11:6. Likewise, Rabbi Pinchas Epstein o.b.m., head of the *Beth-Din* of *Edah Chareidith* in Jerusalem, promulgated a halachic decision to permit export. He wrote as follows: "It is true that we gave out a decision that it is permissible to export *ethrogim* of the Sabbatical year according to the decision of the great of the greats, Ridbaz . . . and as has been practiced for many *shmittoth* by the geonim of Jerusalem like the gaon, the head of the *Beth-Din* of Jerusalem, Rabbi Chaim Berlin, o.b.m.

This year, **Israel's Ethrog Center** and **Ethrogei Hadar** have fulfilled the *mitzva* of the Sabbatical year in all its preferred manner; one who purchases an *ethrog* from the *Otzar Beth-Din,* in addition to having obtained an *ethrog* that is fit and beautiful according to all views, *is aiding those who observe the Sabbath of the land.* **Therefore, especially this year, more than other years, a sacred obligation lies upon every Jew in every part of the world, to show preference and to purchase an ethrog from Eretz-Israel, over those produced in other countries. As Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Shlita, wrote in a letter of Shevat 16 5740,** ". . . We may buy Israeli *Ethrogim* this year (Shmittah) as in all other years, provided we buy a lulav at the same time." (See also *Igroth Moshe Orach Chaim* 1:186).

For information where to obtain the *Ethrogim* of the **Otzar Beth Din,** please contact **Israel's Ethrog Center, Ltd.,** 38 Canal Street, New York, N.Y. 10002. Tel. (212) 431–4140.

World Agudah Delegation at Reparations Conference

Amsterdam—A two-day series of meetings of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, held in this city on July 7th and 8th, was attended by three representatives of the Agudath Israel World Organization: Presidium-member Dr. I. Lewin, Chairman of the world executive Rabbi Moshe Sherer, and Knesset member Rabbi Menachem Porush. The Agudist delegation sought to provide input from the global constituency of the movement and the Torah institutions which look to the World Agudah movement to represent their interests.

At these conferences, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of both agencies, announced that after seven years of negotiations, he had succeeded to obtain an agreement that the German government will make a final reparations payment of approximately $200 million over the next four years to Jewish individuals who, although they were Nazi victims, missed previous claim deadlines. Experts estimate that over 60,000 Jews will be eligible for a one-time grant of some $2500 from these new funds.

The Agudath Israel delegation also held a special conference with Dr. Goldmann, to inform him of the major new projects which a growing, dynamic Orthodoxy in every part of the world is sponsoring. Dr. Goldmann declared that he expects to obtain a one-time grant from the German government in addition to the new compensation funds for individuals, which would be given to the Memorial Foundation for cultural and educational purposes. The Memorial Foundation resolved to create a commission which would reevaluate the activities of the Foundation in light of the current needs of the Jewish people, and the Agudath Israel World Organization has been promised a seat on this new commission.

Among the grants at this conference were the sum of $150,000 in scholarships to 100 Kollel students throughout the world, beside scholarships granted to young people in Torah institutions who agreed to engage in community service in Jewishly underdeveloped areas in the capacity of rabbis, educators or other community functionaries. At the close of the conference, Mr. Shlomo Klagsbald, president of the Belgian Agudath Israel and a member of the World Agudah's inner executive, came to Amsterdam to meet with the Agudist delegation, and joined in conferring with the other two members of the World Agudah's inner executive: Mr. I.M. Cymerman of London and Mr. Moses Herz of Zurich.

Agudath Israel Convention To Explore Orthodox Agenda For Future

The growth of American Orthodoxy this past decade will serve as the basis for deliberations on Orthodoxy's challenges, at the 58th national convention of Agudath Israel of America, which will take place November 27 to 30, it was announced by Mr. Avrohom Halpern, convention chairman. The convention, which will be attended by over 3,000 delegates and guests, will be held at the Rye Town Hilton, in Port Chester, New York.

"Rather than focus on one specific theme, this year's convention will be a marketplace for ideas for new priorities of the Orthodox Jewish community," Mr. Halpern said. "To facilitate discussions on a broad range of topics, the convention will for the first time hold several sessions, led by prominent Torah educators, laymen and community leaders. Many of the topics are already on the agenda of the Orthodox Jewish community." He went on to list women's draft, the rise of the *baal teshuva* movement, the growing role of Jewish education in smaller communities, and the spiritual absorption of Russian Jews, as examples. Some discussions will center around the implementation of resolutions adopted in Jerusalem earlier this year, at the Sixth Knessia Gedolah.

The convention will also be highlighted by addresses over *Shabbos* from the nation's foremost Torah authorities, including the members of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages).

Mr. Halpern added: "The past few conventions served as town hall meetings for the Orthodox Jewish community. This convention will further develop the idea of involving the grassroots in planning the future course for the American Orthodox Jewish community."

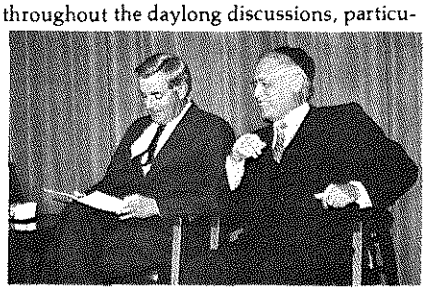
Because of the extraordinary interest in the convention, the organizing committee has announced that reservations will once again be advanced to the month of August.

The Agudah Women of America—(N'shei Agudath Israel)—and the Zeirei Agudath Israel—(the Agudath youth movement)—will be conducting separate sessions simultaneously at the convention.

Agudath Israel Leaders From Twelve States In Dialogue With U.S. State Dept., Administration, & Congress

Washington, D.C.—An uprecedented dialogue between Orthodox Jewish leaders from twelve states and top leaders of the Carter administration and the State Department took place here on Wednesday (July 2nd) under the auspices of Agudath Israel of America. While the discussions covered a broad gamut of Jewish concerns in this country and overseas, the main confrontation on the White House and the State Department centered around the dissastifaction of the Agudath Israel leadership group with the U.S.abstention on U.N. anti-Jerusalem vote, instead of casting a veto.

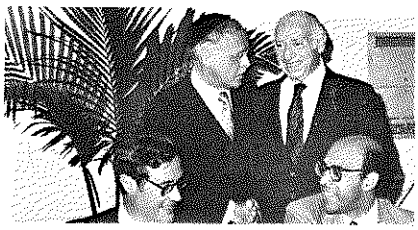
"The status of Jerusalem is not negotiable, and must not be included among the various bargaining elements of the peace process. Despite ideological differences that exist within the Jewish community, there is complete unanimity that Jerusalem, the eternal city of our ancient people, must remain under Jewish control." This thought surfaced throughout the daylong discussions, particularly when the Orthodox leaders conferred in the White House with Vice President Walter Mondale; Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; and in the State Department, Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs; and other officials.



"To See and Be Seen"

The day of briefings was opened at the State Department by Rabbi Moshe Sherer, president of Agudath Israel of America, who said the Orthodox leadership group had come to Washington "to see and be seen and to hear and be heard." In addition to Israel, the issues raised included saving Soviet Jewry, the plight of the Iranian Jews, and the acutely serious condition of Yosef Mendelevich, the religious Soviet prisoner of conscience.

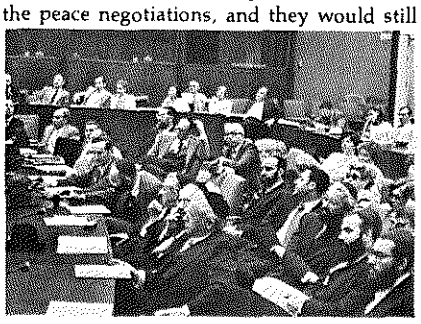
The group was officially welcomed by William J. Dyess, the new Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. The briefing on Soviet Jewry was conducted by Bill Farrand, Foreign Affairs Officer at the Soviet Desk and an overview of U.S. foreign policy in general was given by Matthew Nimetz, the Undersecretary of State for Security. Dixon Boggs, Director of Public Programs, served as moderator.



At the White House, the broadly representative Orthodox leadership group, which included men and women from every walk of life, raised such issues as government aid to non-public schools, the Orthodox position on women's draft and neighborhood preservation programs for the middle class. In addition to Vice President Mondale and Mr. Brzezinski, participants in the White House briefings included Stuart E. Eizenstat, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and Policy, and two members of the President's Cabinet: Secretary Moon Landrieu of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Secretary Charles Duncan of the Department of Energy. Alfred H. Moses, a noted attorney and who is a special advisor to the President on Jewish affairs, served as chairman of the session.

Mondale: Mistakes, But Friendship

Vice President Mondale admitted that the U.S. had made several mistakes with regard to its policy in the Middle-East, but claimed that the Carter Administration had never pressured Israel into any concessions nor had it conditioned acceptance of any U.S. view on economic and military aid. He also expressed his disappointment at the recent downturn in Russian Jewish emigration. Mr. Brzezinski rejected criticism from the group on the U.S. abstention vote on Jerusalem and said that its purpose was to relegate this issue to the negotiation table. He reaffirmed the U.S. position not to negotiate with the P.L.O. until they accept U.N. resolutions 242, 338, and Israel's right to exist. Even then, he noted, the U.S. would only accept the P.L.O. into the peace negotiations, and they would still have to prove themselves worthy of recognition. Mr. Eizenstat stressed the U.S. continued dependence on imported oil and said that until the U.S. was freed from this burden it could not really be independent in its foreign policy. The two Cabinet secretaries discussed the administrative domestic programs, including new housing initiatives and the comprehensive energy conservation program. The sessions were marked by lively and spirited debates.



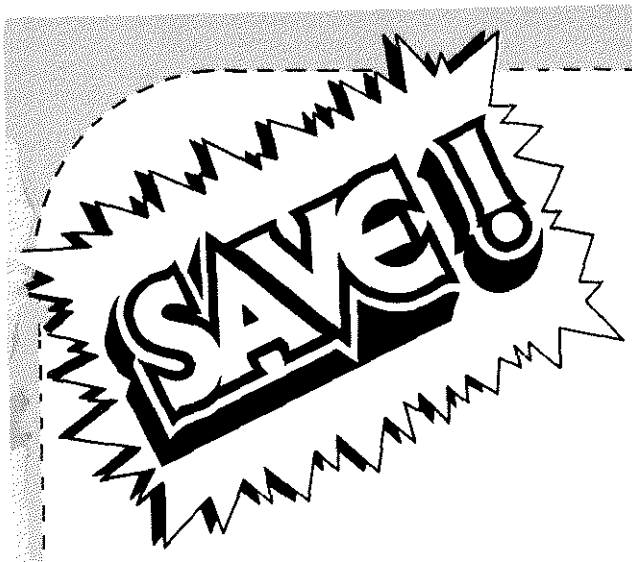
Frank Storch, Baltimore

Lunch at Congress

At a Congressional luncheon tendered for the Agudath Israel leaders in the House of Representatives, both Senator Jacob K. Javits and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan warned of difficult times ahead for Israel. Moynihan deplored the U.S. vote in the U.N. and also the continued silence for the U.S. government at various international conferences where anti-Israel resolutions are adopted on a regular basis. He was particularly warmly greeted by the group for his unyielding advocacy of government aid to the parents of non-public school children, after he pledged that despite a recent defeat in the Senate on a program to extend the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG) to elementary and secondary schools, he would continue to lead this fight—"it is a matter of justice."

In cautioning about Israel's delicate current state, Senator Javits said that the U.S. Senate was still overwhelmingly in support of Israel and would serve as a check-and-balance on the executive branch in government in any attempted to pressure Israel into suicidal concessions. He said, "At least 70 Senators and a majority of the House of Representatives are strong supporters of Israel." Javits lauded Agudath Israel as "one of the most effective responsible Jewish organizations in the country enjoying bipartisan respect." Senator Moynihan and Congressman Stephen J. Solarz, who spoke on behalf of the 13 Congressmen who were present, echoed this thought. The Agudath Israel delegation consisted of 125 national leaders from 12 states: New York, California, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Florida, Kansas, Georgia, and Maryland.

An interesting sidelight, typical of Agudath Israel, came when the New York delegation on its return flight aboard the Eastern Airlines shuttle, joined in a community study of the *Daf Yomi* (folio-a-day Talmud study). Crowded around Rabbi Yaakov Goldstein, who headed the study group, the group managed to complete the page for the day, thanks to a malfunction in the FAA computer which kept the plane airbound for 40 minutes longer than scheduled.



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Notes From Agudath Israel's Commission On Legislation And Civil Action

Law Internship Program

A new law internship designed to familiarize law students with the legislative and legal needs of the Orthodox Jewish community, was recently launched with the hiring of its first law student, it was announced by Professor Aaron Twerski, chairman of the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel of America. The first intern recruited for the program, Isaac Tessler, a student at Hofstra University School of Law and a *musmach* of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, will conduct research into some of the long-standing legislative problems of the yeshivos.

The purpose of the internship is multi-faceted: compiling research data on the legislative history of aid to yeshivos, compiling a bibliography of litigation for future use, and preparing a series of papers to help Agudath Israel's legislative commission deal with the daily problems of the yeshiva community.

Draft Registration

Agudath Israel conducted an information campaign regarding the requirement that yeshiva students register for the draft, as per a law passed early in July, even though their exemption status is unchanged.

Agudath Israel's Fact-finding Team Visits Greenhaven Prison

Two attorneys, members of the Commission of Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel of America, visited the New York State maximum security facility, Greenhaven, in Stormville, New York, to see firsthand how incarcerated Jews cope with religious problems. Chanoch Lubling and Michoel Lamm met with New York State prison officials, with the local chaplain, and with several of the prisoners.

In reporting to a full meeting of Agudath Israel's Commission on Legislation and Civic Action, Mr. Lubling noted that "religious conditions at the prison were greatly improved over the past year as a result of efforts by the organization and others to sensitize New York State officials about the needs of Orthodox Jews." He said that for the first time there was a regular *minyan* at the prison and that those who wished to put on a *tallis* and *tefillin* were accommodated. The prison maintained special facilities for kosher foods and the kashrus-observant have a separate eating area.

Mr. Lamm added that several Jewish prisoners who had not been Orthodox were taking an interest in religion and were requesting the religious requirements of an Orthodox Jew. The commission had earlier submitted a proposed bill of rights for Jewish prisoners to New York State Corrections Commissioner Thomas Coughlin. Similar fact-finding missions by teams of attorneys of Agudath Israel are now planned for state mental health institutions and local hospitals.

State Backs Down on Yiddish Test Requirement

Yeshivos in New York that participate in bilingual education programs of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Educational Act (ESEA) Title 1, will not have to test their students in Yiddish, as a result of the intervention of the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel of America. According to Professor Aaron Twerski, chairman of the Commission, the problem began when a number of yeshivos received instructions just several days prior to the deadline for the submission of their application that unless they tested participants in their native tongue, which was Yiddish, the yeshivos could not participate in the grant proposal of the local school districts to the Federal government.

While it appeared that the local districts were following a directive from the state which was based on its own guidelines, the State Education Department failed to recognize that no Yiddish test was currently available. "To develop an accurate test on such short notice would have been unfair and certainly not in the best interest of maintaining proper educational standards," Professor Twerski added.

The New York State Education Department agreed with the Agudath Israel contention. As a result, yeshivos that participated in the past in these programs will now be able to continue their participation.

Agudath Israel Tells President's Commission: Don't Legislate Brain Death

Washington, D.C.—Strong testimony opposing legislation or government policy establishing the time of death, was presented to the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research by a distinguished spokesman for the Commission of Legislation of Agudath Israel of America, Rabbi J. David Bleich. The Agudath Israel organization had requested of the chairman of the President's Commission, Morris B. Abram, that the Commission hear a distinctive Orthodox Jewish view on this subject from Rabbi Bleich, an eminent authority on Jewish law and medical ethics.

Rabbi Bleich, a Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University and Professor of Law at the Cardozo School of Law, testified that Jewish law demands that all respiratory and cardiac activity cease before a patient may be pronounced dead. He declared: "This is the accepted Jewish definition of death of which the renowned Rabbi Moses Sofer wrote: 'All the powers in the world will not budge us from the position of our holy Torah,' and is also the common law definition of death. Brain death criteria, which are advocated by some members of the medical profession, provide that a patient may be pronounced dead on the basis of certain neurological criteria alone. Such criteria do not indicate that the brain has been destroyed but demonstrate only that certain portions of the brain are no longer functional. The criteria advanced by the Harvard Ad Hoc Committee would serve to equate death with diagnosis of a state of irreversible coma."

The Orthodox Jewish scholar, who stated that the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations joined Agudath Israel in this policy statement, stressed that this is an issue which affects the civil and religious liberties of many citizens. He continued: "At present the courts have ruled that the wishes of the patient and his family must be considered in determining whether or not treatment should be continued when, in the opinion of physicians, there is little hope of recovery. This principle was developed in the Quinlan case and applied in a number of other cases brought before various courts and recently served as the basis for the decision handed down in the case of Brother Joseph Fox. A policy decision that a patient be pronounced dead on the basis of neurological criteria alone would effectively eliminate the option of any further treatment."

In his testimony, Professor Bleich introduced a letter offered by the world-renowned Torah authority Rabbi Moshe Feinstein strongly opposing government intervention on the subject of determining the time of death. The members of the President's Commission were urged to reject any proposal which would serve to compromise the religious liberties of citizens, who as a matter of conscience cannot accept brain death criteria. The Commission of Legislation of Agudath Israel of America has since many years made presentations to state and federal legislators and government officials, asking the government not to interject its authorities to determine the time of death, an issue which is so interfaced with religious and ethical considerations.

Camp Agudah's 39th Season Opens With New Shul

Ferndale, N.Y.—Camp Agudah, now in its 39th consecutive season of operation, unveiled a beautiful new *shul* building, making the entire season a *Chanukas Habayis* celebration for the boys' camp of Agudath Israel of America. The celebration began on the first Friday of the season, when close to 500 campers and counselors joined in a procession transferring the *sifrei Torah* to the new *shul*.

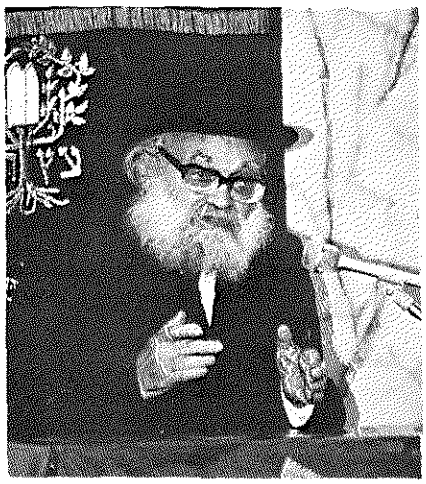
The *Pesicha* (opening session), which set the tone for the season, was enhanced by an address by the Novominsker Rebbe, Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, who is a presidium member of Agudath Israel. He stressed the importance of dedicating oneself with the new *shul*, and the effect that this can have on the

strengthening of Torah study throughout the summer.

The highlight of the summer-long *Chanukas Habayis* was a visit to the camp by the revered Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages), who spent a *Shabbos* with the campers and staff members. That *Motzaei Shabbos*, Rabbi Kamenetzky addressed a Melava Malke of Zeirei Agudath Israel at the camp, joined by Rabbi David Cohen, (Cong. G'vul Yaavetz), who spoke on the theme of preparing for *Moshiach*. In his various talks to the campers, Rabbi Kamenetzky spoke about the historic significance of a *Bais Hamidrash*, its halachic requirements, and the implications it carries in regard to growth as a Torah Jew.

The new *shul*, nearly double the size of the old one, helped make room for the record enrollment at Camp Agudah for the 1980 season. In addition to the expanded space, the *shul* boasts inspiring yet simple architecture, an innovative air-cooling system that utilizes well water from the premises, and a striking set of stained-glass windows designed and executed by one of the camp's staff members. . . . Camp Agudah began in 1941 as a health resort for refugees from Europe.

"A poignant reminder of that beginning," says Meir Frischman, director of Agudath Israel's summer camps, "appeared this year, when a group of Russian immigrant children came to camp on special scholarships." The immigrant children were placed in Camp Agudah and its sister camp, Camp Bnos, as part of the summer camp program of Project RISE (Russian Immigrant Services and Education) of Agudath Israel of America.



Torah Leaders To Address Midwest Conference Of Agudath Israel

The venerable sage and Torah scholar, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, and member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah (Council of Torah Sages), will be one of the principal speakers at the forthcoming Midwest Conference of Agudath Israel of America, which will take place in Wickliffe, Ohio, over the weekend of October 17-19. Rabbi Kamenetzky will be joined by Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, Rosh Yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, also a member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah, as well as by other Torah leaders, who will address the conclave which is expected to gather delegates from several large Midwestern cities. Rabbi Moshe Sherer, President of Agudath Israel of America and chairman of the Agudath Israel World Organization, is scheduled to address the keynote session of the conference on Motzaei Shabbos.

In discussing plans for the conference, Rabbi Shmuel Bloom, Administrative Director of Agudath Israel of America, said that a "primary purpose of the conference will be to give the local Orthodox leadership an opportunity to discuss their problems with Torah leaders from around the country, as well as to plan for the continued growth of communities in their own region."

The conference will feature a number of workshops during Sunday morning dealing with such areas as youth activities, legislative concerns and organizational problems. In addition to Cleveland, the following cities will have delegations at the conference: Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Toronto, Detroit, and Pittsburgh.

Rabbi Yonah Scheinbaum, Executive Director of the Agudath Israel of Cleveland, is coordinating the conference preparations.

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בבארא פארק ובמאנסי

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החל מר"ח מרחשון הבעל"ט

השיעורים:

פעמיים בשבוע יתקיים שיעור מעמיק ומקיף בהלכה עפ"י סדר השו"ע וספרי הפוסקים ע"י רב ומורה הוראה מובהק ראש ישיבתנו הק'.

פעמיים בשבוע יתקיים שיעור אומנות, להוראת מלאכת הכתיבה, תיקון הקולמוס וכיו"ב. ע"י סופר מובהק ומומחה גדול, בעל נסיון רב בהוראת האומנות.

תכנית הלימודים:

המחזור ימשך כעשרה חדשים, עם הפסקות ביניים קצרות לצורך חזרה ובחינות בכתב ובע"פ, ואי"ה עם סיום המחזור יעברו התלמידים בחינה כללית ע"י רבנים ומו"צ מובהקים ומפורסמים ולאחר תקופת שימוש כראוי יקבלו כתב קבלה וסמיכה לשמש כסופרים מומחים בישראל.

ההרשמה:

אברכים שתורתם אומנותם, יכולים לפנות למשרדנו לקבלת פרטים וטופס הרשמה. על המעונינים להביא מכתב המלצה מרבם, כי מתאימים להתקבל ללמוד אומנות זו שהיא מלאכת שמים ואחריות עולם.

לאור פעולות החינוך של "ועד משמרת סת"ם" בעיירות רבות ברחבי ארה"ב, אלפים מאחב"י מתעוררים לבדיקת תפילין ומזוזות, אחדי ששנים רבות לא זכו לכך, כי לא נמצא בסביבתם אפי' סופר מומחה אחד לכל העיר ולפעמים אפי' בכל המדינה, וכ"כ בהרבה בתי כנסיות מתעוררים לבדוק ולתקן הספרי תורות אשר רובם נתקלקלו ונפסלו במשך השנים,והעזובה וההזנחה רבה עד מאד, וב"ה כהיום פונים למשרדנו הרבה קהילות מכל קצוי ארה"ב בבקשת "תכניות חינוך", ההדרכה וסיוע בארגון מבצעי בדיקת סת"ם לכל חברי קהילתם ונצרך לכך הרבה כח אדם של סופרים מומחים ובקיאים בדיני בדיקה והגהה. אי לכך, מצוה רבה לאברכים ת"ח וי"ש ללמוד מקצוע נעלה בקודש זה, שיש בו משום זיכוי הרבים, וכ"כ מתן שכרה בצידה שיוכלו בע"ה להתפרנס בה בכבוד ולהמשיך בלימוד תוה"ק.

וזאת למודעי! כי ההצלחה באומנות זו אינה תלוי' כלל בחוש הציור (אַרט) או בכתב יד יפה, אלא בהבנת מבנה האותיות, בכח הריכוז וההתמדה.

מספר המקומות מצומצם, וכל הקודם זכה