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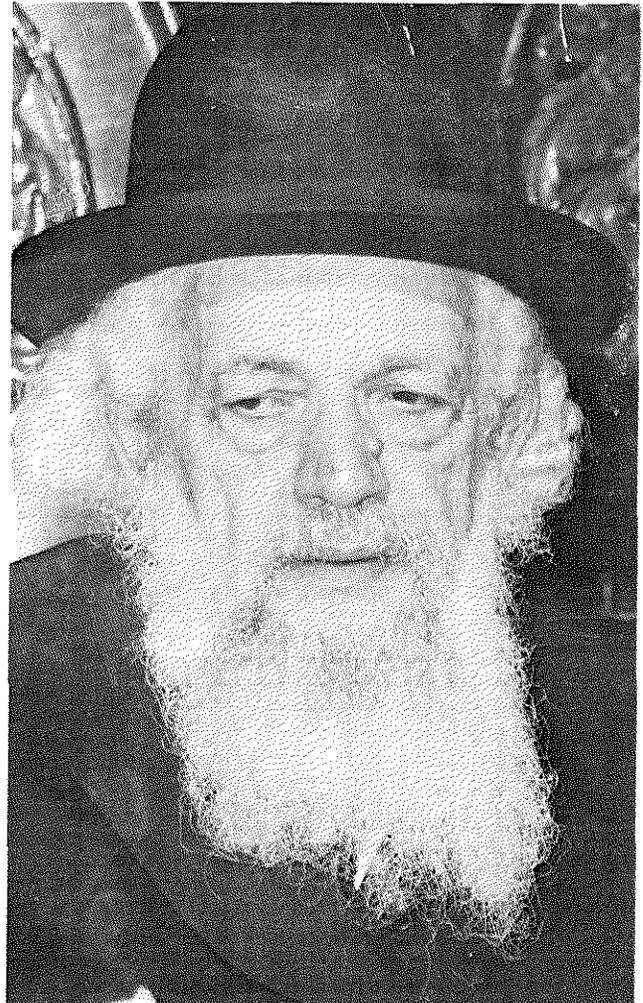


The Season of Renewal

based on lecture by

RABBI GEDALYA SCHORR זצ"ל

*prepared for publication by
Rabbi Avrohom Schorr*



Liberation and Rejuvenation

Prior to the Jews' exodus from Egypt, they were entrusted with three precepts, the first of which was the establishment of the lunar calendar. *Sipurnu* notes that this commandment signified the beginning of their redemption from the yoke of slavery. When a person is enslaved, his time belongs to no-one but his master, for a slave is obligated to utilize all of his time in productive activity for the benefit of his master, leaving him no

Rabbi Gedalya Schorr, the late Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, was one of the outstanding Jewish leaders, thinkers, and teachers of this generation, and a member of the presidium of Agudath Israel of America. Essays based on his Torah lectures have been published in *Ohr Gedalya*, prepared for publication by his son, Rabbi Avrohom Schorr, who also translated the above article.

time whatsoever to spend as he pleases. Once the Jews were about to be redeemed, they were told: ... החודש הזה לכם. "This month is for you . . ." *The utilization of time is now in your hands.* You are in charge of how to employ it.

According to the *Chidushei HaRim* (Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Alter, the first Gerer Rebbe), this precept is more than just a transitional link between slavery and freedom. It teaches the very essence of freedom. This is indicated by a description of the onset of this exile, when the *Chumash* states that "a new king arose over Egypt . . ." (*Shemos* 1:5). *Chazal* (the rabbis of the Talmud) explain that in reality the same king still ruled; however, his ways were different in that he no longer recognized the contributions of his viceroy—"that did not know Yoseif"

(ibid) . . . The king renewed himself—that is, he changed his personality, and ushered in a new regime.

The capability of renewing oneself is a special strength that is not come by easily; at the same time, however, it is a trait that is essential to every G-d fearing man. It is therefore surprising that this trait was attributed to an Egyptian king. Chazal expounded on this, stating that it was only possible for Pharaoh to gain this power of renewal because the quality of rejuvenation was lacking among the Jews. The Jews as a people are associated with all virtues—as long as they maintain them in practice. If the people abandon these qualities, however, these cast-aside traits are then acquired by other nations. Once the Jews intermingled with the Egyptians to the point that they no longer felt or behaved as aliens, they forfeited their power of rejuvenation. At that point, "A new king arose," and the exile of the Jewish nation started in full severity. Only when they regained mastery over this trait of rejuvenation could their redemption begin.

Rosh Chodesh, the new month, begins with the appearance of the new moon, the natural symbol of rejuvenation. Just as the moon goes through its phases of waning and waxing, renewing itself at the onset of each new month, so too can a person renew himself spiritually. This is stated clearly in the prayers recited at the appearance of the new moon. עתידין להתחדש כמותה— "The Jewish nation is destined to renew itself just as the moon does." Therefore, they were told: "This month is for you." The attribute of *chiddush*, of renewal, was now theirs, when on the threshold of their redemption. In fact, this very quality was their gateway to freedom.

The Sign of the Gift

The disciples of Rabbeinu Yonah* question the importance attributed to *Rosh Chodesh*: Isn't it merely a question of a mathematical computation as to when the new moon will appear? Why, then, should the natural phenomenon of the reappearance of the moon symbolize the virtue of being able to rejuvenate oneself? In reply, Rabbeinu Yonah cites the passage in the Talmud that states that when one gives a morsel of food to a child, one should notify his mother. This dictum is clarified by advising that if one smears oil on the child's face, it is tantamount to notifying the mother. When the mother later sees the smear on the child's face, she will realize that he had met someone. Upon questioning the child, she will learn that he had been given some food (*Shabbos* 10b).

In the same vein, when G-d bestows upon us a *hashpa'ah*, an influential force in abundance, He wants us to be aware of the opportunity it entails. A "smear on the face" of events in the earthly world symbolizes a corresponding event of a similar sort in spiritual spheres. True, the renewal of the moon is a "natural" occurrence, but it simultaneously serves as a reminder to all who see it of an abundance of a particular spiritual influence from Above—namely, one's spiritual rejuvenation.

We attest to *Rosh Chodesh* as the beginning of redemption in a passage that we recite at the Seder. In the *Haggadah* we say, "Yachol me *Rosh Chodesh* . . .," proposing that the recital of the *Haggadah* begin from the first of the month rather than from the actual day of the Exodus. *Rosh Chodesh* comes into consideration, for the actual redemption did commence on *Rosh Chodesh*—a day that possesses that powers of rejuvenation that led to the redemption. The decision, however, is that full praise to G-d is only recited at the conclusion of the redemption, which is Seder night.

The Earthly Links

All the holidays are associated with a material phenomenon as the reason for rejoicing. Pesach is celebrated as the holiday of *Aviv*—springtime, a time when trees blossom and grains sprout; . . . Shavous is *Katzir*, summer—the season in which we reap grain; and Succos is called *Chag HaAsif*—the Autumn Festival, when the wheat is harvested. Since there are obvious spiritual reasons for rejoicing, why are these holidays connected with earthly events?

This linking of these holidays to occurrences in the natural world serves as a symbol of spiritual influence of a similar kind. The blossoming reminds us of the spiritual influence that aids us in returning to our youthful vigor, enabling us to start anew. Thus Pesach, when we gained our freedom from slavery, is directly related to this season. Freedom from slavery encompasses not only the right to use time as one pleases, but also signifies the rise of a new spirit within each person, experiencing a renewed belief in G-d.

The Recurring Time of Renewal

As has been said many times, a Jewish holiday is not merely a commemorative event. Just as the age-old cycle of nature repeats itself every year, at the same time, with the same force, so too does the spiritual cycle assert itself again with all its original characteristics, year after year. That same influence of rejuvenation bestowed upon us on the first day of Nissan in Egypt, returns every year on that day. On Pesach we are aided in our ability to free ourselves from whatever "masters" we may have become enslaved to. It is only by utilizing this bounty of spiritual influence at the time of the holidays, that a person can live up to its true meaning.

And on Pesach itself, one is especially aided in one's ability to free oneself from any self-imposed yoke of slavery. One need not despair from the burden of wayward tendencies of the past. One can now start anew! One can go in the ways of our forefathers who seized this opportune time to be redeemed from the depths of impurity. Thus Pesach more than teaches us a lesson of rejuvenation and rededication. It is a season when we can experience rejuvenation and rededication with a freshness rivaling that of the original Pesach, because in some respects, it is the original Pesach. ❏

*Sage of Gerundi, Spain (circa 1220-1280)

A. Moshe Possick

"Chanoch LeNa'ar" OR Children Are Also Human Beings

How to reach 3/3's of the class.



Meet Yankel, a man in his upper 20s, with one son. He works as a clerk in one of the local stores. His parents, nominally observant, had sent him to the local day school. It was a school with a fine reputation that advertised small classes, individual attention, very high standards; as a matter of fact, almost all the students were in the above-85 or-90 percentile. (Sound familiar?)

Yankel hated school. The competition was fierce. He felt no sense of achievement. He failed time and time again. His rebbe ridiculed him. At age 11, he changed yeshivos and fortunately met a rebbe who probably was not a good technician, but was a warm individual and treated Yankel as a human being.

As an adult, Yankel met the rebbe from the first school. His feelings of hurt, degradation and the low self-image rushed to his head. He told the rebbe, "You know, I'm one of the lucky ones who was saved from the dungeon you threw me into. But where are all the others you hurt, insulted, and turned away?"

Yankel, before his son's bris, visited yeshivos, observed the rabbeim as people, and then sold his house at a loss to relocate near a yeshiva that develops what he termed "a good feeling" in its students.

Rabbi Possick, principal of Shevach Girls High School, Queens, NY, is president of the National Council of Yeshiva Principals, of Torah Umesorah.

(I'm reminded of the poster that I saw recently that says, "I know I must be good because G-d didn't create junk.")

And now another Yankel, also in his 20s: Whenever he reviewed his studies at home as a child, his father would lose patience with him and call him "stupid." When his grandfather, an admired tzaddik and talmid chacham, passed away recently, Yankel pledged to study "I'zecher nishmaso." He opened his Gemora he saw "dmus dikyono shel aviv"—the face of his father who had humiliated him. Yankel could not learn. He felt stupid and inadequate again . . . By some miracle he still is Shomer Shabbos and puts on tefillin.

The Individual in the Classroom

As we know from Torah sources and as is supported by findings of modern research, each human being is a unique individual. This psychological fact has long been accepted in a superficial way, but only recently have we come to know how deeply and completely this is true. In the past, uniqueness was considered a nuisance to overcome, and we attempted to reduce it to produce uniformity. Lefties were taught to write with their right hand.

A child was considered ready to enter school because his birthday fell on a certain date, or because the competition accepted students at a younger age.

Even in the same family, siblings, children with the same heredity and the same environment are different. Not even identical twins are the same. Nature has gone to an enormous amount of trouble to produce unique individuals, while our schools—on the wrong track—have tried to repeal nature's law.

We educators push everyone into the same mold. Many teachers now claim to cater to the needs of the child, and they do so by making him learn the lessons that they have set out for him, on the assumption that the teacher (or principal) knows what is best for him. What they, the educators, value most, however, is the lesson and not the learner. Being more concerned about things rather than people brings about many difficulties.

In the classroom, the teacher can easily witness each student's struggle for identity. Some children achieve their uniqueness by scholastic excellence, by superior performance in sports, or in some other positive fashion. Those who are unable to achieve this type of recognition, however, often become unique in other ways: i.e. cheating, bragging, creating classroom disturbances, becoming the class clown, truancy and other such anti-social behavior. The required development of confidence and sense of achievement might have not been realized.

Climate Control

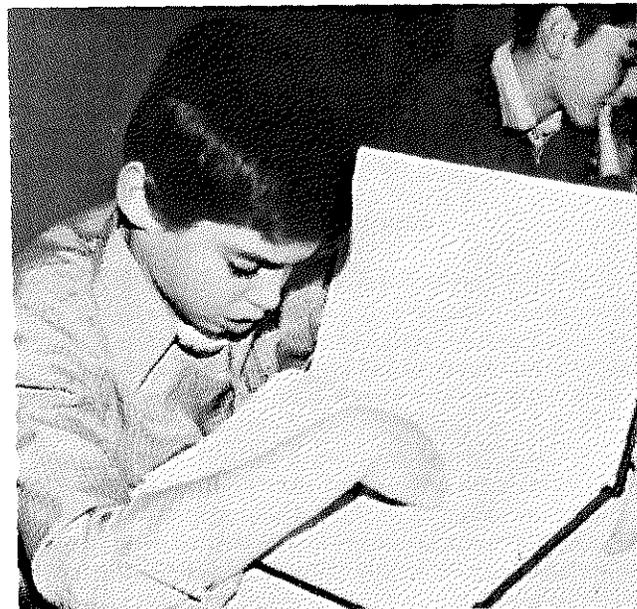
Innovators have been neglecting a significant body of research of the effect of the learning climate on the individual. "Climate" might be defined as the aggregate of social and cultural conditions which influence individual behavior in the school. When we speak of schools having a "warm" or "cold" atmosphere, we are referring to climate. We have, however, done little to identify characteristics of school climate and even less to purposely modify climate.

We have known for some time that "closed," authoritarian environments condemn learners to continuing criticism, sarcasm, discouragement, and failure, so that self-confidence, aspiration, and a healthy self-concept are destroyed. Learners condemned to such relentless failure learn only that they cannot learn, and their anger and distress in the face of this is frequently vented against the system and the society that has inflicted this inhuman punishment on them. In the yeshiva this means that first the child learns to hate school, then the teacher, and then, most unfortunately—our real goal, Torah and *Yiddishkeit* itself. We also know how to identify teachers who inflict such environments on their pupils. Yet we continue to sentence pupils to such teachers for a year at a time, often in spite of protests from both pupils and parents. In fact, trends in general education lead away from establishing a warm class-

room climate. A key word in this is "accountability." Accountability for what? What is the yardstick for success? Federation wants to know: how good is your school? Parents push for the highest academic standards; high schools and post-secondary schools—universities and *yeshivos*—seek those with the highest academic standing. . . . Unfortunately, the common method of evaluation is comparable to judging adults by their bank books.

It would be sad, indeed, if judgments in *chinuch* were made accordingly. *Yiddishkeit* is a religion of deed not creed. It is a unique way of life. In speaking of preparing the child for life, a Torah life, we must look upon the individual as a thinking, doing, willing person, a moral human being. Hence, when facing a problem, the individual is driven to action not only by what he knows, but also by how he feels. And how one feels is rooted in attitudes, appreciations, likes, and dislikes—in emotional reactions rather than in intellectual opinions.

Subject matter is vital and should enhance and complement the aims, but must never displace the original goal. Torah teaching, Torah learning, and Torah living, going hand in hand, is the aim. Torah is the curriculum. Torah is the subject matter. Torah is the tool. Torah is the lifestyle.



Teaching the "Tuned Out"

Every person believes that he has value—as a fighter, as a person attractive to his peers or one who is able to run farther, swim faster, hold his breath longer, read signs at a greater distance than his peers; in our terms, in his ability to learn *halacha*, *Gemora*, *Chumash* or to say *Tehillim*. But along the way, something may happen to the child in the home, community, or school, and he may lose his pride in himself, and in his ability to perform.



The school has the responsibility of seeing to it that each pupil has a successful school experience.*

To give that sense of accomplishment, our premise must be that children are *not* a special class *apart* from the human race, but simply younger human beings with their own rights, values, and validity as humans, and subject to similar cultural, social and emotional pressures that effect us. Their problems are *human* problems. Perhaps adults are big children, or children are small adults. They deserve the treatment we want for ourselves. Reward, compliments, touch, a smile, a kind word—are the strongest motivating factors in one's life, regardless of age: adult, adolescent, or child. The spirit of Torah *chinuch* demands the human-centered curriculum instead of the common, lesson-centered curriculum.

Role of the Rebbe

For these reasons, it is most important that the *rebbe* be the kind of person who is able to open his heart, mind and emotions in order to intermingle his very being with that of every student—not once in a while with a special student, but every year with every student in every class he teaches. "*Devarim hayotzim min halev, nich-nasim el halev*" (words that emanate from the heart enter the heart) certainly is not limited to academics, but includes *hashkafos*, attitudes and feelings, as well. A Torah teacher who limits his activities to imparting knowledge and skills, disciplining, and compiling lists of test marks is denying the very essence of his task. There must be love and affection coupled with order and discipline; empathy and understanding vis-a-vis individual problems; cheek pinching, back patting, arm-around-the-shoulder strolls, and the sounds and sense of happiness. Then total communication is present. *Then Torah is not only being learned, it is being transmitted, breathed and lived.*

Picture for a moment a most frightening situation: a school where the *rabbeim* are *talmidei chachomim* but lack the warmth and understanding to reach the souls and hearts of their charges. The general studies teachers,

who are competent in their subject matter, are the ones who communicate on the human level and do indeed develop the personal relationships. Who then becomes the role model espoused by that school?

This is not to advocate a policy of permissive softness. What is suggested are love and affection coupled with order and discipline, and a firm, consistent demand that holds up Torah achievement *and living* as the ultimate goal. This is achieved by building self-respect and "mental hygiene" into every lesson through total communication. A teacher could be *Koneh Olam Habah b'heref ayin* (earn a share in the World-To-Come in a second) if he is sincere. Or do the opposite if he is not careful. Two examples follow, in which I take the blame or the credit, as the case may be:

Before taking over a new position, I met with the class that was to become my senior class. I introduced myself and explained some of my goals and aspirations for the school.

FOOTNOTE

*Torah *chinuch* presupposes individual differences and meeting them in the learning situation in a positive manner. The success of such an approach was recently borne out in a very interesting experiment that was tried in the Atlanta Public School system a few years ago. "Project Success Environment," which was founded by ESEA Title III involved 51 classes at five schools. It operated on the premise that every child is a worthwhile human being, and tried to create a classroom in which children are treated with esteem. A description follows:

All Project Success teachers provide positive reinforcement—a tangible reward coupled with verbal praise—whenever students exhibit desired behavior. In the elementary schools, students earn check marks on success cards. In the middle school, they earn tickets. Filled in cards and accumulated tickets may be exchanged for specific rewards during trading time, a period set aside for this purpose.

Each Project Success teacher observes three basic rules. First, reinforcement must be immediate. Second, reinforcement must be accompanied by specific descriptive praise. "Thank you for raising your hand, Jimmy. You've earned a checkmark for that." Not: "I'm giving you a checkmark, Jimmy, because you've been so good today." Third, and most important, only desirable behavior receives attention. This "ignore and praise" technique is crucial to a Success class; it insures that the children receive attention only for desirable behavior. Unless disruptive behavior is dangerous to others or so persistent that the teacher can find nothing positive to reward, it is ignored. Instead of punishing the offender, the teacher focuses on a nearby student who is exhibiting exemplary behavior and rewards that child. The children usually get the message in a hurry.

In reinforcing academic behavior, the Project Success teacher observes three basic rules, all requiring some modification of curriculum. First, each child must experience success. Second, each child must receive work at his own level—work he can do. Finally, each child's work must be evaluated frequently and reinforced immediately.

Data collected thus far by the project staff confirm the benefits of the Success technique. Project classes are less disruptive and more work oriented than regular classes. Project classes have made significantly greater gains in IQ scores than comparison classes. Further, they have gained twice as many months in reading and almost that much in math.

Whatever the data show, however, the real benefits of the program can be measured in happier children and happier teachers.

When the class was asked to express what they felt they achieved in school during the past decade, I was met with dead silence. Finally one young lady piped up, "How to get married." Clever, I thought. I retorted in kind: "Getting married is easy; staying married is rough." She was devastated. I later learned that her parents were divorced.

In a get-tough campaign with a group of boys regarding Minyan attendance, I publicly asked each boy why he missed Minyan and came late to school. Shlomo asked if he could speak to me outside. Some reason, perhaps the look in his eyes, or the pleading sound in his voice, persuaded me to permit him to discuss the situation privately. . . . His parents had separated that morning, causing him to be late. I put my arm around his shoulder. We spoke about *Kibud Av V'eim* (honoring one's parents) and I told him that I would always be available if he needed me. . . . I cherish the card that Shlomo left on my desk when he heard I was leaving his city.

Experiencing Achievement

Closely related to the basic human need for self-worth is the need for achievement. Success breeds success; success promotes interest; and interest results in success.

The need for achievement is developed in the early relationship between an infant and its mother. As this sense of achievement grows in the child it adds immeasurably to his own feeling of inner security.

People need a sense of accomplishment throughout their lives. All of us need praise; all of us need attention; all of us need a feeling of independence. Without it we tend to feel inadequate and sometimes inferior. It is simply a matter of "love alone isn't enough." The child may feel that he is liked, but he wants also to be respected. If we are to be sure of ourselves, the feeling of worth each of us has must be proved again by achieving. In the most simple or difficult ways we are driven to prove our worth. It is important to review the ways in which we can help the child meet his need for achievement:

1. See to it that the child does not suffer many failure experiences.
2. Allow him to set his own standards and help him recognize when these standards are improving. Be sure to recognize when he has succeeded in meeting his own standards and when he is discouraged.
3. Avoid expecting the same quality of work, the same return or productivity from all children. Be sure that each one has some chance to do some easier assignments—easier for him. Do not overlook the need each child has to "show off" a little bit.
4. Be sure that the rewards are distributed widely among the children in the classroom. Do not give rewards for identical work. Instead give rewards for improvement over yesterday's efforts.
5. Beware of stressing rewards such as stars, candy or high marks. These symbols come to be false substi-

The Alter fun Navaradok on Individual Needs:

As to the question of whether the young must be kept under constant surveillance and have all of their needs looked into, it is to be pointed out that such is indeed the case as indicated in the words of our sages of blessed memory: "Rav once came to a certain place and decreed a fast but no rain fell. When the prayer leader recited 'He causes the winds to blow' the wind blew, and when he continued 'He causes the rain to fall' the rain fell. Thereupon Rav asked him 'What is your occupation?' to which he replied, 'I teach the young, the sons of the poor as well as those of the rich and I take nothing from those lacking in means. Also, I have some fishponds and if a student is recalcitrant, I bribe him with fish and accommodate him, conciliate him until he is won over to study.'" (*Taanis* 24a).

How great were his deeds? Not only did he devote himself to teaching the sons of the poor as well as those of the rich, taking nothing in return from those of limited means, but he exerted himself even further in all kinds of actions which would draw the hearts of the recalcitrant ones closer to Torah. For on the face of it, would it not have been sufficient had he expended all of his efforts on those who desired to learn from him and were completely receptive to his words? Nonetheless there would be demanded from him a tremendous expenditure of energy if they were to understand and to progress as they should. Was it also necessary that he unceasingly pursue and encourage even those recalcitrant ones confirmed in their obduracy? . . . [How great were his deeds!]

—from TO TURN
THE MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS
(*Mezake Horabbim*) by
Rabbi Yosef Horowitz, זצ"ל
translated by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein,
Feldheim Publishers

tutes for self-worth and often create a hostile competition. Try to explain that it is the effort, the planning, the persistence that is bringing rewards.

"Envy among scholars increases knowledge." Yes some competition is good. It spurs one to reach their potential. But, when one already has reached *his* maximum, that additional competition can be devastating. Too much of even a good thing is not good.

One of the incentives that is widely used in school is the threat of failure on the one hand, and the emphasis on grades on the other, demanding certain marks as a

Letter to a Dead Teacher

Dear Mr. Stock

Thanks to your understanding, I became aware of my own possibilities. You recognized me.

I needed recognition. I was a shy, uneasy girl, too foreign, too intense. The English language, newly learned, lay clumsy on my tongue.

I don't think you knew what you did for me, Mr. Stock. We teachers seldom know whom we influence, or even why. It was not my defects you emphasized, but my worth.

Other teachers dealt differently with us, demanding discipline or wooing with false camaraderie.

You assumed one simple fact: If the lesson was interesting, we would be attentive. We were more than attentive. We hated to see the period end . . . the dismissal bell. You did not try to charm or to beguile us. You never pretended to be a pal. You were a teacher. Your dignity was unassailable. Because you respected yourself and us, we were able to respect ourselves.

Somehow you made everyone feel special. Once you quoted from Shakespeare: "Who can say more/Than this rich praise—that you alone are you?" I knew you meant me. And so did each of the 34 others in the room.

When one of us returned after an absence, you would say, "We missed you." When one was unprepared, you would shake your head: "Too bad, we were hoping to know what you think." You treated us as adults, your equals, and so—in your class—we were.

Are teachers like you really dead?

I asked my students to complete this sentence: "I once had a teacher who . . ." with something positive, something that had made a difference to them. They wrote:

"If the subject didn't fit me he didn't make me feel dumb but looked at me more like a human person than a mark."

"Didn't talk only from the mouth out, but from insides."

"When I was young in elementary school he loaned me his scarf when it was snowing. It was 100% cashmere."

"This crazy teacher thought I was smarter than I was, so I was."

—THE EDUCATION DIGEST, May '75

basis for competitive sports eligibility, honor roll lists, and so on.

This pressure does help some without serious hazards. But motivation for high grades usually has a

favorable impact on only those individuals who have a chance to win. Most often, these are the ones who need it the least, because they are self-motivated to do high quality work, with or without special motivational activities. By contrast, the impact of keen competition for marks on the less able student is likely to be quite unhealthy. Having failed before, he tends to be overly anxious at the outset of the learning experience. Added pressure tends to result in less effort in academic areas and a turning to other, less desirable avenues of fulfilling his needs for success.

The Parent as an Educator

Parents frequently ask what they can do to help their children succeed in school. All too often, though, many parents assume that a child's education starts and ends during the period of time he is in a classroom. Some parents further believe that schools know all that is best for their children; therefore, things pertaining to education should be totally up to the educators, who after all are trained in the field.

It is true that teachers and *mechanchim* are experienced and trained in techniques designed to assist them in educating youngsters. Schools and yeshivos cannot, however, provide the sum total of a child's educational needs. A child brings much of his home to school each day. Children carry thoughts and ideas that originate in the home to school, just as adults think of important home matters at work.

The very first acts of learning take place between a child and his parents, not between the child and his teacher. He learns to walk, express his thoughts, to share things with others, and to listen. He learns to speak cautiously or to yell when he wants something. He learns to love or to hate. He learns to be grateful or to gripe. He learns that work is honorable or he learns to gain an income through less-than-desirable means. He learns to appreciate doing *mitzvos* and studying Torah, or he learns that they are mere burdens that a *Yid* must contend with.

Thus, the child's habits will be sloppy or organized, depending on those things he sees and hears in his home years before he enters school. As one of my daughters said in response to my compliment to her: "Abba, take your pick—it's either heredity or environment."

The early years at home are so very important; children are literally made or broken as future adults during the pre-adolescent years. *The real central core of a youngster is shaped by the hand of parents.*

Treating our students and children with respect has one other ingredient expressed by Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov זצ"ל. He stated that the obligation of *Kibud av v'aim* rests not only upon the child to honor his parents. It is the father's obligation to respect "parenthood," and to treat this position with dignity. This attitude of the parent to his most important station in life, will guide an invaluable *hashkafa* to be developed in our children. Self-respect for ourselves and our actions encourages the most positive relationships with one another. ✠

The Hebrew Day School— A Means or an End?

If the ultimate goal of the day school is continuation on the high school level, why is this not being realized? How can it be achieved?

To even suggest that the day school may be an end unto itself, as the title proposes, may seem silly. Certainly a primary-grade school is only capable of educating on an elementary level, and at best can only prepare a child to continue his education at a higher level. Certainly the community day school should be perceived as a vehicle for bringing thousands of Jewish youngsters to the point where they will choose to continue on at a mesivta or yeshiva high school. Yet throughout the country, where we find a day school in virtually every community that has any sort of Jewish communal life, and as we publicly boast of a record-breaking enrollment of more than 94,000 students in Hebrew day schools, we are failing miserably at guiding day school graduates on to yeshiva high school. This vehicle, which seems to be well constructed, well-fueled and well-operating, runs out of gas somewhere along the journey. What are we doing wrong? And how can we turn this situation around?

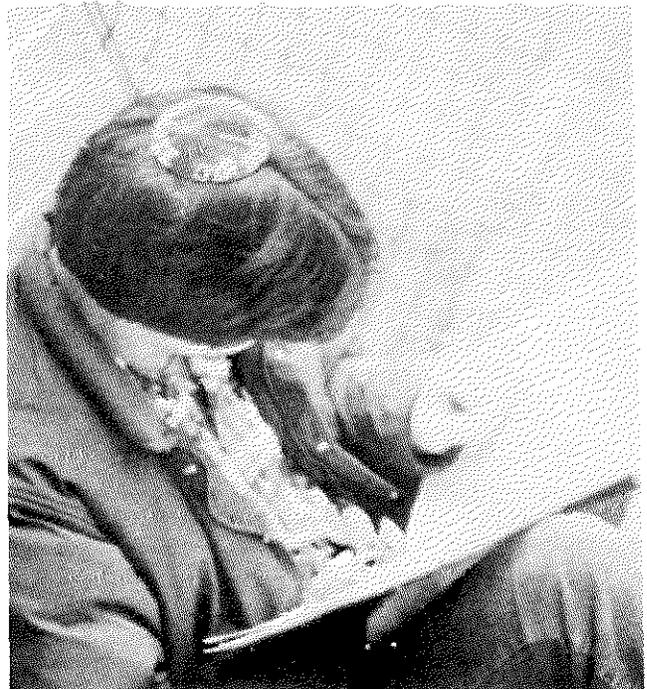
There is no simple answer to these questions. Nor is it a matter of fixing blame on anyone. The purpose in writing these words is only to pinpoint some aspects of the problems and to suggest how they can be remedied. After being active in *chinuch* out of New York City for more than ten years, I am convinced that some of the contributing factors can be remedied, and that through a few initiatives and a lot of sincere hard work, with *Syata Dishmaya* we could change things radically.

Not a Total Failure . . .

Before continuing, however, I would like to dwell on a basic point that to my view has been greatly misunderstood. Many well-intentioned and concerned individuals have faulted the day school movement as a whole for failing to inspire its graduates to continue in yeshiva at the high school level, as if this were the only measure of the success of the day school: Put simply, any child not continuing represents a waste of effort and little if anything will become of him.

Although no one can argue that there is no comparison between the graduate who continues his education

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on the high school level and one who does not, it is not true that those who drop out are total losses. First of all, thousands of day school youth come from an environment of outright assimilation. Exposure to a Jewish education of any type can save this child from the impending threat of intermarriage. When I meet teenagers in town, it is obvious to me if they had attended a day school or not. It shows.

Second, we must recognize that, unlike 30 years ago, most of today's day schoolers come from Conservative backgrounds. The authentic Orthodox day school is very much a positive (often the only positive) influence in their lives, regardless of how short the results fall from the ideal. We must scale down our minimum requirements for what constitutes some degree of success.



Third, let us not forget that we are still working with first generation day school products. In the future, we will see a more positive attitude on the part of children whose parents had themselves received a day school education. Generally speaking, day school parents who are themselves graduates are more committed to the school's goals than are those who did not attend a day school. Perhaps we will achieve greater success as their ranks grow.

... Nor a Complete Success

This does not mean to say, however, that the "success" is not tinged with failure. We have failed because we have not embarked on any ongoing, organized effort to deal with this situation. When the day school movement was young, efforts were made to organize day schools in every community and everyone was involved. *Baruch Hashem* we succeeded, and lived happily ever after. Except for one thing; the job wasn't over. . . . Time is long overdue that we take similar initiatives to promote secondary level yeshiva education. For example, years ago your local Orthodox rabbi hammered home one point almost weekly in his sermons—Jewish education. Rabbis were involved in building the local day school—often their future depended on it. You heard about it whether you liked it or not. . . . When was the last time you heard the rabbi speak about the importance of sending the children away to a yeshiva high school?

Furthermore, for years the day school was dependent upon these congregants for both financial support and a source of children. We got into the habit of praising them for their idealism and self-sacrifice. That was fine twenty years ago. Now that that first hurdle is cleared, it's time to make these same people aware that eight years is not enough. This is no simple feat, for what can one expect from parents who view their 13 year old child—a mere day school graduate—as a finished product? The parents who have no Jewish education are

deeply proud of their child who knows some history, celebrates holidays, has mastered a smattering of *Chumash* and reads a bit of *Rashi*. No one tells them how little their child really knows. The rabbi has never even mentioned the possibility of yeshiva high school, no less driven the point home. Why in the world should parents be less than proud—and complacent?

A Promotional Program

The situation calls for a massive effort to promote awareness of the need for continued Jewish education. Most day school principals are very guarded on this topic. If it is spoken about, it is done privately, individually, as though the mere suggestion were illicit or shameful. We must get the yeshiva high school out of the closet. Furthermore, every rabbi, regardless of his affiliations, must be influenced to speak out forcefully for continuing Torah education. Perhaps those responsible for Torah education ought to meet with the leadership of the various Orthodox rabbinical groups, and nail down specific approaches, coordinating their efforts.

Taking a bold position, the day school should sponsor seminars, PTA meetings, and similar educational programs on the topic. School administrators are often afraid that such a stand would look too extreme, too religious. But tip-toeing around the subject will not win converts. Yeshiva high school must be sold today the same way day school was sold thirty years ago—as an absolute imperative. And it must be marketed in a similar fashion. Of course, there have been other significant strides forward these past twenty years, such as Torah Umesorah's SEED program, which brings a group of senior yeshiva students to serve as a live *beis midrash* in a smaller community for six or eight weeks in the summer. As successful as SEED has been, however, it is only a scattered presence on the day school map; nor does it hit the mainstream of day schoolers and their parents. Other programs to give regional yeshiva high schools visibility in the community are desperately

needed. More on target would be Torah-flavored day camps in various communities, using *bnei Torah* (high school students) for the general staff.

The Child is Missing

The above approaches can bring parents to a better understanding of the need for attending yeshiva high school. There is, however, a more basic goal, and that is reaching the child. There is no sense in convincing the parent if the child has no interest in continuing. We all know the heart-rending case of the individual who wants to continue in a *mesivta* while his parents adamantly refuse, but most day-schoolers have no thought of continuing.

Why is this so?

First of all, a successful day school serves a wide cross-section of students from various types of homes and degrees of commitments. As a result, the prevailing atmosphere is quite mixed. In older grades, peer pressure is a major factor in student decisions. Often the negative or non-Torah outlook of a vocal minority (sometimes majority) has tremendous impact on the rest of the students. Their disinterest and sometimes mocking attitude is a relevant and common problem in our schools, and can prevent the school from serving as a setting and means of positive influence. Even with a top-notch charismatic teacher in charge, the classroom may not be the best place to indoctrinate children with the goal of continuation.

Secondly, because little or no effort is expended by the synagogue, school and community to promote continued yeshiva education, children (even those who might go on) are never reached in time. Our regional yeshivos' representatives run around like the proverbial headless chickens recruiting for ninth grade. Although they are moderately successful, at such a late date in the day school calendar, most are lost. Generally, only good prospects are sought out in the first place, consigning most kids to the losers' list without even trying to reach them. There is neither time nor opportunity to win over those students who until this point have not been cultivated.

Moreover, many regional yeshivos do nothing whatsoever to recruit. Those that are active, will convene a Shabbaton and expect that to do the trick. Unfortunately it doesn't. The only candidates who end up enrolling are the very few who are turned on by these weekends, or the few who are followed up on individually, or those who had a previous commitment to matriculate.

A Grass-Roots Movement

To overcome this stagnant state of affairs, I would propose developing a grass roots national youth movement, geared specifically to Torah study and *mitzva* observance. A club for Torah study beginning with

third graders should be established in every community with a day school, but should function outside the day school, if necessary, to avoid some of the built-in pitfalls or failures of the day school. The youngsters who belong to the Torah club must be commended, awarded, taken on special trips, and so on—all to cultivate their appreciation of the greatness of what they are doing. Now, of course, not everyone will choose to participate, but by beginning with nine-year olds, over the years these clubs will serve to develop a core group of those who will eventually aspire to continue beyond elementary grades. Within this group a positive peer influence will be generated. Within this group, discussions and plans will be made for "when you go to yeshiva," rather than "if you go. . . ." The club *rebbe* can and must create a genuine Torah atmosphere within the club, the type of atmosphere that cannot always be created in a formal classroom situation: The club is a place where the *rebbe* creates a personal, friendly relationship with his boys. The club is where the child sees that Torah learning is not just a school activity, that Torah teaching is not just a job. On *Shabbos*, during free time, Torah becomes alive. The club becomes a key aspect of the members' social life.

Obviously, the club leader-advisor is the all important person in this plan, for he must be fit to lead, inspire, and light up the hearts of the children. He might be a day-school *rebbe*, or he might be another community person. He must be sought after and engaged. The club should work closely with the regional yeshiva high school, arranging frequent trips to the high school and visits from its *talmidim* to the day school, setting up a buddy-system, with pen pals, and much more, so as to form a genuine *kesher* (relationship), between the two groups. The important thing is that it must be an organized, ongoing effort involving a substantial investment of time and energy.

Chasing after eighth graders is futile and frustrating. I am convinced that given a five-year trial, this proposal will yield tremendous results. (Nine years of this approach in Bangor, Maine, brought me much *hatzlacha* in this field.)

Three Points in All

The suggestions developed can be summarized by the following three point program:

- (1) To rally all *rabbonim* and their rabbinical organizations to join voices in promoting advanced Torah education for all.
- (2) To encourage all day-school principals not only to publicly promote the concept of continuing, but to institute programs such as "yeshiva open house" sessions where parents meet with yeshiva high school personalities, yeshiva visitations, SEED, and so on.
- (3) To start a Torah club in every town, which would cultivate interest in Torah study and inspire higher aspirations among our day school youth. T

William B. Helmreich, Ph.D.

How Successful Are Yeshivos in Reaching their Goals?

A sociological analysis

To what extent do yeshiva graduates adhere to principles and practices that they are exposed to in their student days? No serious, systematic analysis was ever made of the after-effects of having spent years in the advanced yeshivos that grace the American scene. The following is in its way a landmark achievement in that it presents a scientific study of this phenomenon, based on the results of a 74-item questionnaire that was sent to 878 alumni of a *yeshiva gedola* which we shall identify here as the Beth David Yeshiva. The school is fully accepted in the yeshiva world and its *rosh yeshiva* is a major figure whose name is familiar to almost every religious Jew. Beth David permits but does not specifically encourage college studies. 53% of those who were sent questionnaires responded, a very high percentage for a mail survey. More than half attended other *yeshivos gedolos* before or after they were students at Beth David. Thus the sample actually consists of individuals from numerous yeshivos.

"Are You Learning?"

One of the yeshiva's primary goals is to train people who, whatever their profession, will continue studying

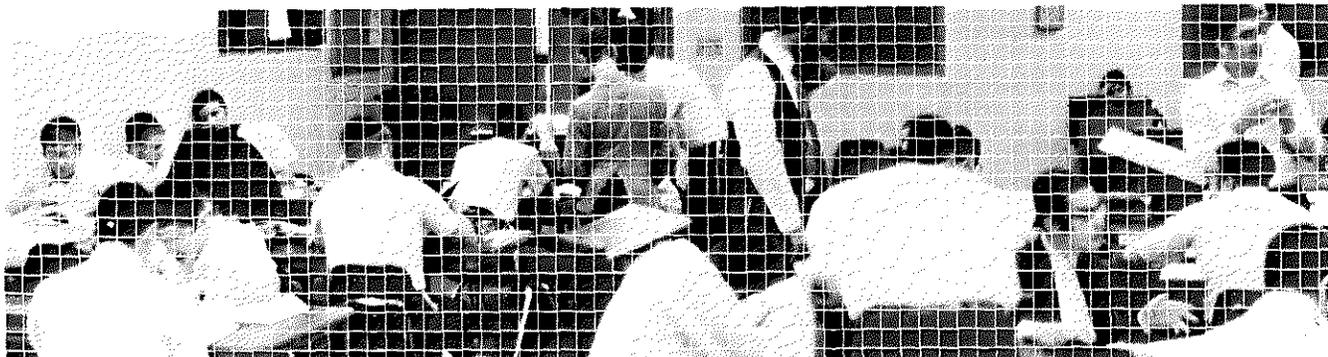
Dr. Helmreich is Professor of Sociology at City College of NY and CUNY Graduate Center. This article is part of his book, *THE YESHIVOS IN AMERICA*, a study of the *yeshivos gedolos*, soon to be published by Macmillan (The Free Press). The author augmented the research for this book by conducting several hundred personal in-depth interviews, his subjects ranging from *roshei yeshivos* and *rabbeim* to former students and community leaders.

Torah after they leave the institution. Slightly less than two-thirds of the 464 alumni who responded (62%) said they study *Gemora* almost every day and an additional 19% study *Gemora* once a week—providing ample evidence that the yeshiva has succeeded in instilling one of its core values into its graduates. Table One tells us with whom and how often such study takes place:

With whom and how often have you studied Gemora in the past year or so?
(Please check a box for each category below.)

With Whom	Almost every day	Once or twice a week	Several times a month	About once a month	Several times a year	Rarely or never
Alone	38%	18%	6%	4%	5%	29%
Friend(s) (chavrusah)	32%	22%	4%	1%	5%	36%
Children	8%	14%	4%	1%	6%	67%
With a Class	19%	19%	5%	2%	7%	48%
Other, please specify	—	—	—	—	—	—

N=426



While a somewhat higher percentage of positive responses to this question was, in fact, given by teachers and rabbis, the respondents came from many other professions as well. Interestingly, those who had been away from the yeshiva for a long period of time were somewhat more likely to study often than those who had completed their stay in recent years. If anything, this lends further support to the long-term influence of the yeshiva experience.

Preliminary analysis of the 9% who acknowledged that they studied "rarely or never" revealed no pattern with regard to income, occupation, age, secular education, or background in Orthodoxy, that would distinguish them from the rest of the alumni. They were, however, less strict in their religious observances.

How Faithful to Mitzvos?

The yeshiva has always felt that simply producing an observant Jew is not an acceptable goal at the *beis midrash* level. Adherence to the laws is taken for granted. Still, there has never been any effort made to determine whether even this minimum level is achieved by such institutions. The results of the survey prove the yeshiva to be more or less justified in its assumptions. Let us look first at laws of the religion that leave no room for interpretation within Orthodoxy:

95% responding claimed that they were *Shomer Shabbos* to the extent that they refrain from carrying from one domain to another—a rabbinical restriction. Similarly, 97% stated that they did not eat non-Kosher meat. With respect to *taharas hamishpacha* (the various laws concerning family purity), 90% described themselves as "strictly observant" and 7% as "generally observant."

Considering these results, it is perhaps not surprising that almost all the respondents went to *shul* on *Shabbos*. A more significant measure of commitment was that 79% did so several times a week besides *Shabbos*. Although there is no available evidence, I suspect that this figure would be considerably lower among Orthodox Jews who did not study at the *beis midrash* level.

Several other indices, such as the giving of *tzeddaka*, produced similar results. The only exception was the law against *lashon hora* (speaking unfavorably about

others). When asked how closely they adhered to this precept, 34% indicated "sometimes," 31% said "often" and 31% "almost always." 4% claimed they never engaged in *lashon hora*. The relatively high number of persons who indicated that they "sometimes" spoke ill of others may reflect not the frequency of this occurrence so much as a heightened consciousness that it is a transgression because of the yeshiva's strenuous efforts in this area.

Can You Spare Some Time?

A number of questions asked of the alumni addressed themselves, either directly or indirectly, to how they spent their free time. The results indicated that, by and large, the respondents reflected the viewpoint of the yeshiva in their daily conduct and in their attitudes. In this yeshiva the student is discouraged from reading secular literature, watching television, and going to the movies. The following figures reveal the long-term effects of such policies:

In your free time, how often do you engage in the activities listed below?

Activity	Almost every day	Once or twice a week	Several times a month	About once a month	Several times a year	Never or rarely
Read a daily newspaper	63%	19%	6%	2%	2%	8%
Read weekly or monthly magazines	16%	39%	19%	8%	8%	10%
Watch TV	29%	18%	10%	3%	6%	34%
Attend movies	—	—	6%	8%	33%	53%
Read popular novels	1%	1%	5%	7%	20%	66%
N=428						



These figures strongly suggest that leisure time pursuits are judged in terms of their usefulness and that those which are purely pleasureable tend to be avoided. Interviews lent credence to his assumption; many respondents noted that they read the paper or watched television largely because they felt it important to be informed about developments in society as a whole. Even those who watched television favored news programs by a very wide margin.

An interesting question is what type of yeshiva graduate is more or less likely to watch television or go to the movies. Our efforts here were limited to correlating such activity with level of education. The stereotyped notion that the less educated watch TV more or go to movies more simply did not hold true for the sample. In fact, the pattern was reverse. Among those who watched TV almost every day, 6% were high school graduates, 30% had attended college, 32% had gone to graduate school. Among those who rarely or never went to the movies, the breakdown according to education was similar: of those with only a high school secular education 92% stated that they rarely or never attended, far more than the average rate of 53% for all respondents. Similarly, more than a third of those responding do not own television sets, an extremely high figure compared to the general population where almost every household has at least one. Among those who went no further than high school, only 27% own sets. Among those who completed graduate school the figure reached 78%.

The negative relationship between education and mass media entertainment can perhaps be attributed to the fact that many of those who did not finish college were engaged in religious occupations such as teaching in a yeshiva or the rabbinate. Conversely, those who completed formal secular training at the college level or beyond are more receptive to the offerings of the dominant culture. If this interpretation is true, it would support the yeshivos' general opposition to college as a strong secularizing influence. Without interpreting the figures, we have here a population of which an inordinately high number of persons are not exposed in any systematic fashion to certain basic forms of mass media. Further, they are rearing a generation of children who will not be influenced by this crucial agent of socialization in our society.

Limiting the time spent on television and movies is not the only way by which the yeshiva alumnus seeks to prevent outside influences from encroaching upon his

values and lifestyles. He also keeps his contacts with non-members of the Orthodox community to a bare minimum. This is clear from the following responses:

Think of your four closest friends. Of these how many are:

Observant: 84% Not Observant: 15% Not Jewish: 6%

N = 466

How About the Future?

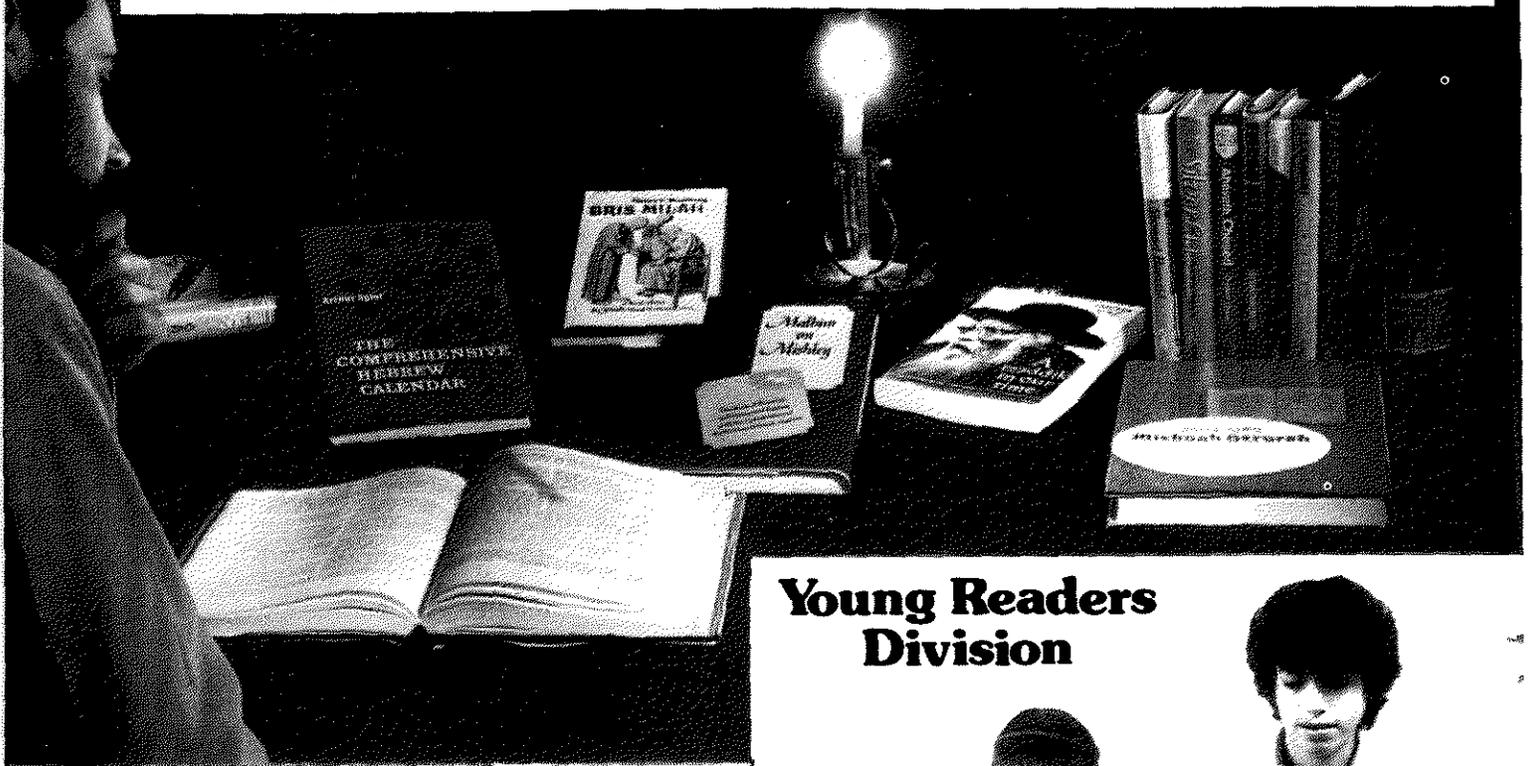
The long range effectiveness of yeshiva education depends, in large measure, on how successfully its teachings are transmitted to the alumni's children. Apparently the parents are making every effort to pass on their traditions: 97% reported that their children would attend a yeshiva day school or were already enrolled in one. The vast majority expressed satisfaction with their overall experience at Beth David noting that they intended to send their children to the same type of advanced school.

It was also obvious that most parents would prefer their son to be a fine product of a top-notch yeshiva than an outstanding graduate of an Ivy League university. 92% disagreed with the statement: "For a son, good secular education is more important than a religious one." They also expressed considerable optimism regarding the future of Orthodoxy as a viable force. When asked to complete the statement: "In all likelihood, the next generation will be . . ." 49% said "more observant than my own," 32% replied "as observant," and only 19% answered "less observant."

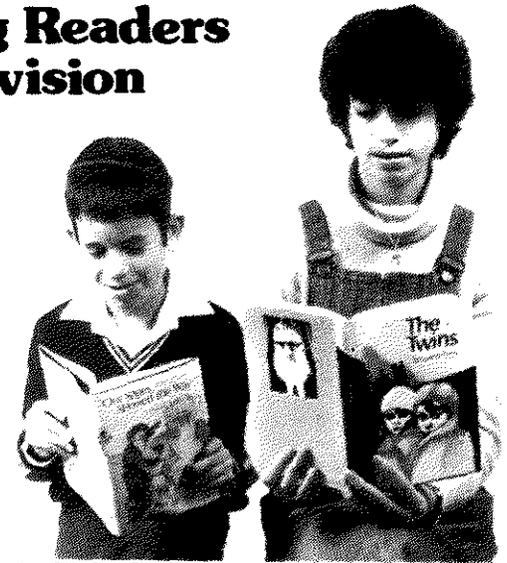
The Bottom Line

Summing up, it is clear from the high percentage of alumni who continue learning after they have left the yeshiva that learning has become ingrained in their lives. Moreover, the leisure patterns adopted by yeshiva graduates suggest that the yeshiva has succeeded in installing its values to a remarkable extent. The extraordinarily high figures of religious observance speak for themselves. No doubt, there are areas where the yeshiva might be able to improve. Perhaps still more should be learning and fewer should be engaging in other pursuits in their free time. Nevertheless, the results reported here indicate that the yeshiva's success rate in passing on its approach to life and in giving its graduates the skills necessary to lead a Torah existence is truly outstanding. **T**

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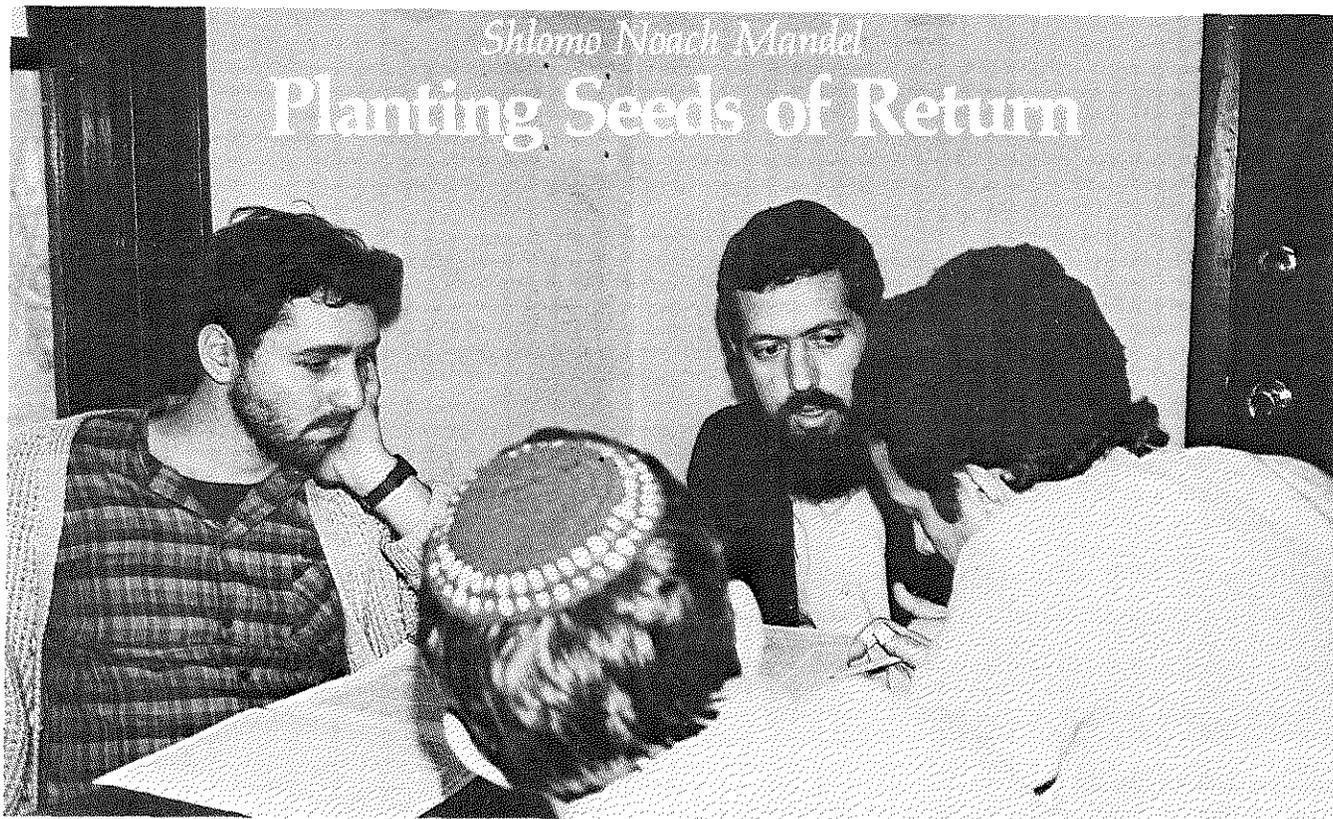


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Shlomo Noach Mandel
Planting Seeds of Return



It was at an Agudath Israel convention some 13 years ago, during a typical "How to Save Klal Yisroel" session. The Rosh Hayeshiva of Ner Israel, Baltimore, Rabbi Yaakov Ruderman, was particularly disturbed at all of the novel solutions. At his talk on Friday night, he remarked that "with Talmud Torah, you don't need any other solutions. The problems in a Torah community tend to resolve themselves. Without Torah study, all possible solutions are futile."

Rabbi Mordecai Gifter, Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe, instructed me similarly when I asked for guidance in setting up our JEP Program. "If you want to be successful," he said, "don't talk about why to be Jewish, why to keep mitzvos, and why to study Torah. The way to a Jewish heart is through Torah study—Period. Teach Torah and you will succeed."

Without minimizing the monumental problems burdening the Jewish community, and the very impressive efforts of organizations such as Agudath Israel for innovating solutions to ease the brunt of these difficult times for Torah, I believe that as the Roshei Hayeshiva indicated, the instructive statement of Dovid Hamelech: "If not for Your Torah as my delight, I would have been lost in my impoverishment," rings as true today as it did during his turbulent reign.

Having been privileged to work with *baalei teshuva*

Rabbi Mandel heads the Joseph and Faye Tanenbaum/Jewish Education Program of Agudath Israel in Toronto.

during the past few years, I find that despite the claims so many organizations have made about how they are saving North American Jewry from destruction, it is the Torah study at our yeshivos and kollelim that directly accounts for the overwhelming majority of the victories in the battle of assimilation.

Consider just a few examples . . .

Rhona had received three years of day school education in Toronto before her mother, an avowed Communist, pulled her out of school in mid-year and forced her to go to the local public school. She grew up in a public housing complex and, as she grew older, forgot the values she had absorbed in those three years . . . or did she? She ran away from home at the age of seventeen and married a Jamaican. Any objective observer would imagine that, in terms of membership in the Jewish community, she was a total write off . . . a wasted effort. But no effort is wasted . . . "Seeds of pure Torah, of sincere words emanating from the heart, must eventually grow and succeed in entering the consciousness of the Jewish Soul."

She showed up at our door one day. She had been a classmate of my wife and she asked to spend Shabbos with us. She had divorced her husband and was attempting to return to Yiddishkeit. "You know," she said, "I now realize that the only normal and happy years of my life were those first years in Yeshiva." Rhona is now remarried and a member of a frum community in North Toronto.

Perla grew up in Nova Scotia where her parents provided her with an afternoon school "Cheder" Jewish education. She

dropped into the JEP office during the final semester of a university program that awarded her a Masters in Social Philosophy. After months of painstaking evaluation of future priorities she decided to attend a Yeshiva in Jerusalem. Her letter to our office written en route to Neve Yerushalayim speaks for itself:

"Through the years I have had mild flings with Marx and early existential philosophy. But I have come back. How is one led back? When I first began my university career, I was led away from my roots; after seven years of studying every possible theory of man that has been elaborated, the one that still resounds most powerfully and convincingly in my ear is the one that I first heard from my Rabbis in Cheder in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. Only now am I beginning to come to grips with this, and it is exciting and intensely moving."

And then there is Albert. Albert came from a non-observant background. His brother became a baal teshuva at age 20, back in 1970: Albert came to Toronto to see what Yiddishkeit was all about. He lasted about eight months in Yeshiva and then disappeared. He eventually married a non-Jewess and was reportedly on hard drugs.

Another lost case, no? Another instance for our overburdened Roshei Yeshiva to throw in the towel and say it just isn't worth it, no?

No!

Last winter Albert visited some old acquaintances from yeshiva days. He was attempting to renew his friendships and family ties; his marriage was long since over. His brother, now a Rosh Yeshiva, suggested that he contact our office. Recognizing, as he put it, "My life couldn't be much more degenerate," he slowly began to return. Albert is now at Ohr Somayach; he has excelled there owing to his previous knowledge of Gemora.

The Common Denominator: The Yeshiva Connection

There is a common denominator in these cases. It was a previous encounter with a Torah Jew that imbedded a spark within each of these baalei teshuva, eventually inspiring their return. Of course, many yeshivos geared to baalei teshuva are attended by students that have had no previous encounter with any semblance of Judaism. Yet all roads eventually pass through the major yeshivos. It is there that our present generation of rabbeim in all baal teshuva institutions were educated, and it is to the major Torah centers that the "graduates" of the baal teshuva yeshivos are referred when they return home.

On the other hand, those of us who are easily identified with the Torah community—especially the students of yeshivos and Bais Yaakovs—must recognize that every encounter with another Jew represents a challenge to plant a seed of commitment to the word of G-d, whether by example or by direct interaction. This obviously requires a conscious awareness of presenting a correct image of what a ben Torah is, even outside the Beis Hamidrash. . . . The Jew you may cut off on the highway or in a supermarket aisle may have been a potential

baal teshuva. The pleasant "Good Morning" to the person standing next to you in the elevator can lead to a dialogue that may lead to an opportunity in kiruv.

On my last trip to Eretz Yisroel I flew Air France. While davening Shacharis the steward approached me. I was expecting a reprimand. Instead he said, "I am a Jew. I have only put on tefillin once since my Bar Mitzvah. Would you teach me how to put them on again?" As I watched him tremble with tears in his eyes while reciting the Shema, I thought to myself that had I been impolite to this steward during the flight, this opportunity would never have arisen. Instead, I was able to refer him to a Rav in Paris where he can continue to learn.

In all the excitement about the momentous experience that we see in the miracle of the baal teshuva movement, let us never lose sight of the recognition that it is the perpetuation of Torah study through yeshivos and day schools, and an educated and conscientious approach by their talmidim, that still represent the only hope for a future for Klal Yisroel.

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A Tribute to "Volozhin"—USA*

A great Rosh Yeshiva once remarked: The Navi says, "Between the ulam (ante-chamber) and the mizbayach (altar of the Temple) the Kohanim will weep" (Yoel I). The implication is that, at times, a great catastrophe occurs that can only be bewailed in private, and spoken of in language obscure to all but the inner circle.

(The following is a partial translation of some recently discovered memoirs, apparently written by a student at the world renowned Academy of Volozhin. His name is not known to us, but, as evident from the contents, he was there during its final period and tragic closing.—S. Bardov, translator)

My first impression of Volozhin was a disappointment. The glowing image of ultimate perfection, the philosopher's haven that I had dreamed of, was dashed to pieces by the odd groups of unworldly fellows, which seemed to constitute the entire student body.

I wanted to escape, but was luckily rescued from such drastic action by a sensation surely familiar to countless others before me. I was captivated by an energy source of dynamic proportions, and soon learned to respect the lofty academic standards of the Yeshiva and to appreciate the students for what they were—true G-d fearing scholars in the fullest sense of the word. That source was a certain individual whose position in the Yeshiva challenged definition. He was neither Mashgiach nor Rosh Yeshiva nor Menahel. What was he? No one could adequately explain. He was simply "Der Alter."

"Der Alter"

Search through the ethical works of *Mesilas Yeshorim* and *Chovos Halevovos* and glean from there all the glowing poetic phrases descriptive of human perfection; seek out the component ingredients of pure ethical man. Blend these harmoniously and then add a touch of humanity and warmth and sweetness beyond words. There you

*NOTE TO THE READER: "Volozhin"—the famous prototype of yeshivos which spawned a hundred worthy imitations but not one duplicate—is a sacred name in the annals of Torah study. This tribute, however, is not dedicated to the Lithuanian yeshiva of the previous century; instead its name has been borrowed to grace a *yeshiva gedola* that once flourished on American soil, but is no more. For those who recognize "Volozhin" as here presented, the tribute will strike a responsive chord. For those who do not, this article will at least portray an ideal that once existed and—should we be worthy—may come into existence again; or at least inspire a new generation of imitations.



have "Der Alter," an apt title, after all, for he personified eternity. In his company, the commonplace and ordinary had no room to exist. His was the world of the scholar-philosopher; where angels could feel at ease and where puny humans lost touch with their crushing pettiness, to be carried aloft on the soaring wings of wisdom to the dizzying heights of the ethereal plane. The presence of the *Shechina* shone forth from his kindly countenance, and he imparted its glow to the entire assemblage.

With quiet step he trod the floors of the Yeshiva, making his way among the endless rows of student benches, often hardly noticed by the men by dint of their deep concentration. His personal erudition was eclipsed by his heavy focus on ethical development, but many a time even the most brilliant students would marvel at his ability to resolve their Talmudic difficulties. Some wags claimed that this was more a result of his calming influence on the students than of his own profundity of learning; and therein lay a remarkable observation. . . . Even after all these years, the very memory of Der Alter has a soothing effect on my nerves and often brings a calm to troubled waters.

Thus passed in idyllic tranquility my earliest period in Volozhin. Soon afterward came my second major experience at the Yeshiva. I was privileged to be admitted to the *sanctum sanctorum*, the innermost chambers of wisdom—the very heartbeat of the Yeshiva—to the Rosh Hayeshiva himself.

"S. Bardov" is a nom de plume for a former talmid of "Volozhin."

Indirect allusion is most appropriate in such cases. Those whose ears are sensitive to the message will understand. The bewilderment of the uninitiated is preferable to the intolerable alternative of total silence. We are all too well aware of the dire consequences of "Shaul Shelo Nisped K'Halacha"—the calamity that befell Klal Yisroel for not eulogizing King Saul as would have befitted him. In this spirit, I present the following article.

The Rosh Hayeshiva

In our age of *papier mache* leadership and substitution of smiles for substance, the most sympathetic journalists are hard-pressed to find positive qualities for their subjects, and these must be used generously (like merciful snow on an urban landscape) to cover the preponderance of unsightly blemishes from the eyes of the viewer. Thus, children of the present generation will find it difficult to form a realistic concept of the lofty personality with whom we now deal.

I must mention parenthetically, that my foregoing remarks are intended primarily for strangers. For those who were privileged to personally experience the Rosh Hayeshiva, any attempt at eulogizing him could only serve to detract from his untarnished image.

The Rosh Hayeshiva was wisdom incarnate. His fine, sharp, and powerful mind was a repository for the knowledge of the ages. The *Tannaim*, *Ammoraim*, *Rishonim*, and *Achronim* were all alive and vibrant in the recesses of his magnificent brain: the Gaon personified, shades of the old Reb Chaim of Volozhin and Rabbi Akiva Eiger. Beneath the ancient eyebrows, his piercing eyes danced and sparkled with subtlety; each carefully chosen phrase of his was permeated with depth and an analytic insight. He inspired awe in the mightiest of scholars, and spurred them on to greater heights of achievement. The Rosh Hayeshiva's personal sanctity and purity were proverbial. His very presence endowed the Yeshiva with a majestic and holy atmosphere, Yom Kippur-like in its awe, focusing one's mind on higher realms.

For the few who had dabbled in secular studies, his presence was a unique revelation. His pure, potent wisdom and pristine personality were certainly a welcome relief from the stuffy sophists and scientists who claimed for themselves the exclusive right to scholarship. Compared to him, these were mere schoolboys who flaunted their meager knowledge in search of recognition.

Some of the Rosh Hayeshiva's students were already giants in their own right, and many were eagerly sought by established institutions to be deans and lecturers to fill important positions. In many a case, though, their thirst for the wisdom of their teacher kept them in the Yeshiva for additional years until they emerged in magnificent form.

The Wise One

The hierarchy of Volozhin boasted yet another wondrous individual. The Wise One, as he was known, punctuated the regular study program with his intermittent appearances. Each of these was occasion for a generous dose of his sparkling Talmudic insight or a brilliant dissertation on mystical aspects of Midrash and Talmud, and the pleasure of his scintillating conversation. A multifaceted luminary was he, with exceptional expertise in even many an exotic area of scholarly interest. He was a rare and unforgettable character: charming and captivating, empathetically relating to many an individual student. The profundity of his thinking, though, often required inordinate exertion for fullest comprehension for he was of the breed of theorists and philosophers, somewhat removed from the mundane tediousness of pragmatic concerns. Nonetheless, his impact upon the thinking of the student body was considerable. His ideas and phraseology inevitably found their way into the vocabulary of all true Volozhiners, gently and irresistibly expanding their mental horizons.

The Wise One was often beleaguered by an admiring following, eager to cull tidbits of wisdom from his repartee, delicately dissecting his dissertations in search of the vast scholarly treasure they harbored. He never acted with condescension and was equally at ease with the great and the humble. Yet, in many respects he was a lonely man, held aloof from any real intimacy, such as Der Alter was capable of displaying, by a wall of reserve. Yet the Wise One's fame spread far and wide, attracting to the Yeshiva a broader element of students than had been customary in previous times.

His role in the leadership of the Yeshiva expanded with the passage of time, ultimately assuming the foremost position, upon the demise of the Rosh Hayeshiva.

The Students

The greatness of an institution cannot be measured in terms of monumental structures for individuals. The significance of the great academies of history was based chiefly on the uniqueness of the scholars they produced. Their peculiar interests, their social forms and idiosyncrasies, created a unique cultural identity, which often heavily influenced the national character and culture. I will attempt to characterize the Volozhin scholar for the reader in brief terms, though it must remain for the serious historian of some future generation to give this subject adequate treatment.

There was no archetypical student in Volozhin. The mannerisms of the talmidim even with regard to dress, ranged from the dapper to the ascetic. National origin also varied widely, giving the Yeshiva its well-deserved reputation of being a supra-national cosmopolitan institution. The range of secondary interests of the students was equally vast in its extent, varying from liturgical

music to history, grammar, mysticism, philosophy, and oratory. In the Beis Hamedrash, the introspective ethicist rubbed shoulders with the fiery emotional divine, very often as partners in learning (*chavrusos*) debating with equal intensity the *pilpul* of the most recent Talmudic discourse as well as contrasting views on Torah *Weltanschauung*.

The most striking and memorable element in the composition of the Yeshiva was the aura of sanctity that permeated every facet of its activity. Even after the passage of years, with the blurring of images and the fading of memories dismayingly taking their toll, this noble characteristic stands out remarkably sharp and clear. It remains to this day the hallmark of the true Volozhiner. This spirit of holiness, as it were, having once been ingested by the student during his tenure at the Yeshiva, continued to radiate from within his soul for all his days, indelibly marking him with grace and distinguishing him among his fellow men.

As a genuine institution of higher learning and research, Volozhin harbored a generous dose of scholarly cynicism, but its intensity was limited to serve as a constructive stimulant for discipline in self-expression. It was, nonetheless, caustic enough to discourage most second-raters from choosing Volozhin as their place of study. This reinforced the Yeshiva's well earned reputation as the abode of genius, on a plane of its own, well beyond the normal academic level. The exceptional scholar who made his way to Volozhin after capping off a career as the outstanding student of his local yeshiva found himself subdued by the Yeshiva's community of scholars. Yet despite the varying natures and wide ranging personalities of the students, they throbbed as one great soul in their relentless yearning for truth and in their steadfast devotion to the high ideals of Torah.

The Treasures

Among the outstanding treasures of the Yeshiva was a mild, unassuming young man who may have appeared at first glance to be a perfect caricature of the inept unworldly scholar. His shyness deceived no one. Beneath his brow lay a phenomenal brain, which evoked admiration from all. Even the Rosh Hayeshiva was wont to marvel at this young man's capacity. During his tenure in Volozhin it was unnecessary to resort to reference works to trace an obscure Talmudic passage, as this living encyclopedia did the job without the bothersome task of turning pages. He was equally acute in depth and perception. A circle of admirers never seemed to depart from his company.

A certain diminutive young man gained for himself the distinction of being some sort of culinary expert. This belied an exceptionally organized and well-ordered mind attested to by his subsequent widely acclaimed role as the editor of a magnificent Talmudical compendium. He was also the Academy's bibliophile whose collection of rare *seforim* was extraordinary for its time,

and served as a magnet for eager bookworms from outside the walls of the Yeshiva.

Another individual who springs to the forefront of my memory filled the Beis Medrash with his mellow baritone for nearly eighteen hours a day, for his intense study was almost always accompanied by song. He charmed everyone with his pleasant ways and personal warmth, and was the special pride of Der Alter. That great man saw in this student, as did most everyone else, the personification of man's striving for perfection. Little wonder that he was chosen to fill the shoes of Der Alter when that saintly being passed from the earthly scene.

Non-Students, Volozhin Style

These are only a few. I could fill several volumes with more-detailed biographies of all of Volozhin's Wise Men, but what can you tell a world that has learned to accept mediocrity with complacency, and confers the awesome title of scholar upon vacuous nonentities.

The darling of the Yeshiva was its resident nutritionist, a homespun philosopher, one of those rare creatures, the stuff that dreams and nostalgia are made of. He was an anomaly in that intellectual community, but it was his genuine empathy and concern for every individual that endowed Volozhin with a human touch and gave it the capacity to serve for so many as a home away from home. He was the father-figure to many a fellow buffeted about by the vicissitudes of life. His keen eyes detected woes undisclosed to any living soul and faultlessly found the resonating chord to soothe the pained heart. A very great person once remarked that his company was as valuable as a volume of *Mussar*, and that it was worth one's while to travel from the ends of the earth to meet the man. I remain convinced that discovering him was one of my most valuable encounters in the Yeshiva.

The genius of Volozhin was manifest even in its gentile help, one of whom held several patents for inventions. I particularly remember his keen wit and powers of observation. (Once, when he noticed a student lying in bed during study hours, apparently fatigued from an entire night of vigorous learning, he remarked, "There lies one of our students, in deep meditation.")

Mention should be made of the dynamic community that the Yeshiva of Volozhin left it its wake. Originally located in an isolated, semi-rural setting, the Yeshiva had steadily drawn to its bosom clusters of Torah seeking families from without, who desired to bask in its light and cling to its holiness. A mini-community soon formed under the shadow of the yeshiva, nurtured by its vitality, fed by its outflux of maturing scholars, and crowned by its dominating presence. In time, however, this community flourished, and fast assumed an independent character, distinguished by great piety and serenity. The town ultimately survived the great academy that spawned it, and even superseded the Yeshiva in its

significance. Thus was Volozhin metamorphosed into an urban entity reminiscent in its way of some bustling city on the Rhine, darkened by the turrets of its ancient, crumbling castle, yet graced by its history and venerability.

(We omit the section detailing the events surrounding the tragic demise of the Yeshiva, the particulars of which are well-known to most of our readers. We bring only the final, moving section where the author recalls revisiting his Alma Mater in its desolation.—S. Bardov)

"Here, here, children, on this very spot stood Der Alter, his face gleaming like the sun radiating warmth and kindness and love and compassion.

"What! You never knew Der Alter? Oh, you poor child. A pity on you!

"You ask me why I avert my gaze? The glare blinds my eyes."

"What glare?"

"Don't you feel it? Don't you see how all the student-scholars stand cowed before the penetrating eyes, the piercing glance of the Rosh Hayeshiva, soaking up from his very countenance the wisdom of the ages, reduced to dust and yet elevated to the stars by the power of his majesty? Decades has passed since he last stood on this spot, but the room is still filled with his glory.

"Ah! You say you have never even heard of the Rosh Yeshiva! Oh, you pitiful thing. I weep for you, my child. Will you never know the meaning of greatness? Take my hand. Come. Let us run . . . run away from here. The shadows are closing in upon us with the black fury of finality, muffling and suffocating the anguished roar of the weeping of the scholars who once drank deeply from the lifegiving waters of our beloved Volozhin."

I shut my eyes tightly and sense a flash of euphoria as I conjure forth an image of happier days. Let it be thus! The pure untainted memory will sweeten the bitterness of the unhappy present, as I do my best to draw the veil for all time over the crumbling memories at the crossroads of Maple and Main.

(Translated by S. Bardov)



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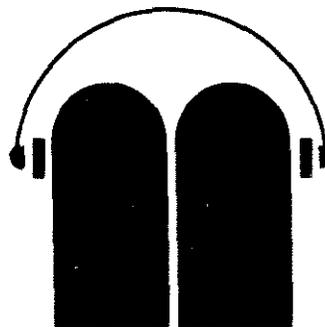
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"Naa, I don't go for these new translations. If it's a question of translation, I prefer the trusty old English *Kitzur Schulchan Aruch* anytime."

* * * * *

The age of English translations is here. The book market has been flooded with a staggering number of translations of classical Jewish texts and Judaica books printed at a rate too rapid to keep track of. The distinguished approbation from leading Roshei Yeshiva adorning the new books affirm that this literary deluge is a phenomenon of major import.

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RABBI MOSHE FEINSTEIN שליט"א approbation to
Halachos of Shabbos by Rabbi Shimon Eider.

Indeed, these new translations and adaptations have opened up a new world for thousands whose only obstacle in the way of Talmud Torah was lack of knowledge of *Lashon Hakodesh*. The incredibly brisk sales of these books attest to the tremendous vacuum these translations fill.

The Sobering Aspect

There is however a sobering aspect to this phenomenon:

Hanoch Teller is an American learning in Mir, Jerusalem. He is a frequent contributor to these pages as well as to other Jewish publications.

The Prophet relates (Ezra 3) that when the Jewish exiles returned from their Babylonian captivity: "They sang one to another praising and giving thanks to Hashem. 'He is good, for His mercy toward Israel endures forever.' And all the people shouted a great shout when they praised Hashem for the foundation of the House of Hashem was laid. But many of the Leviim and the heads of the fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first House (Temple)... wept aloud when (they saw) this House. Many shouted aloud from joy and the people could not discern between the sounds... the shout of joy and the weeping..."

Rashi explains (see *Horiyos 6a* and *Temurah 15b*) that those who remembered what used to be were moved to tears; those who never saw the first Temple rejoiced...

We have definitely heard the "shout" of these books, seen their attractive advertisements, and have been caught up in the enthusiasm of their warm reception. However, the old men that had seen the First House standing are weeping. We have lost a major part of our culture.

These books are testimony that we have lost our third and final distinctive attribute as Jews. Using our own language is a characteristic much more difficult to change than the other two—distinctive Jewish names and clothing—and perhaps that is why it has been so much more persistent a presence; nevertheless our language now has also received an eloquent epitaph. For the first time in our history, we have adopted a gentile language as our own, using it as a primary means of Torah study. Although there have been numerous previous works not written in *Lashon Hakodesh*, there was always something distinctly Jewish about them: The *Rambam's* commentary on the *Mishna* was written in Arabic but with Hebrew characters; Rabbi Shamshon Raphael Hirsch's commentary on the Torah is replete with Talmudic and Midrashic expressions, which he does not translate; and so on.

The Worthy Precedent

The uniqueness of today's translations and the audience they address—their advantages and their drawbacks—can be best appreciated in a historical perspective. The presentation of Scripture in the vernacular was both commendable and fascinating. Back in the 13th Century, a *Tanach* was translated into German so that, "every maid and woman can understand the word of G-d, and as they read herein each *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, they will realize of what true piety consists. Then they

will no longer waste their time with frivolous, pointless German tales. Thus saith the servant of all worthy, pious women, who bears the name of Yehuda bar Moshe Naphtali, and is called Leib Berish." We read in the introduction to this work that the author, realizing the inadequacy of previous translations, could not rest until he had produced a better rendition.

Likewise, Élias Levita edited a translation of *Tehillim* for women in order that "on the Shabbos and Holidays pious maidens might read of divine things, rather than the tales of Dietrich von Bern or similar authors."

Interested in stimulating the spiritual awareness of women who lacked Jewish education ("Let our daughters read them constantly!"—wrote the Vilna Gaon in a letter to his wife and mother about translated *seforim* for women), a plethora of literature ranging from *mussar* to *Tanach* appeared during this and later periods.

Analyzing the Orchids

In light of these noble precedents and the warm, enthusiastic endorsements of our contemporary giants, which grace so many of these works—approbations that I quoted at the outset—my words may seem brazen. A careful study of their words, however, suggests that in dealing with this phenomenon we would benefit from an analysis of what "should" and what "can" be translated. A definite distinction is to be drawn between *halacha-pilpul* (abstract discussion), *halacha lema'aseh* (practical Torah law), and *mussar/hashkafa* (ethics, philosophy and ideology). In the approbations to the *hashkafa/mussar* books, the *gedolim* commend the important service the authors have done by elucidating Torah principle; they make little note of the fact that the book was written in English. Apparently it is taken for granted that *hashkafa* books will be written in English, especially when they are primarily addressing an audience unfamiliar with Torah principles. In the approbations to *halacha lema'aseh* books, the *gedolim* comment upon the necessity to publish such a book in English to guarantee adherence to the law, to more effectively reach those that need them.

The Drawbacks

But who is buying the books and studying them? Perhaps the most alarming aspect of the English book phenomenon is the composition of the major contingent of this new consumer market. Although we like to think that "English books" are being produced for *baalei teshuva* and adults past yeshiva age with weak backgrounds, one of the primary groups of purchasers is the *bnei Torah*.

It is interesting to note that Rabbi Gifter, like many other *gedolim* in their respective approbations, mentions the benefits to *bnei Torah* as well as to the masses in his approbation to the ArtScroll/Mesorah series. On the one hand, it is a credit to the superb job the authors and translators have done; on the other hand, it is a sad

commentary on the inclination among many students in today's yeshivos to seek an easier path to knowledge. Short cuts have always been shunned by our *roshei yeshiva*; they eliminate *yegi'as haTorah*—toil in Torah study.

The *Gemora in Megilla* (3a) relates that when Yonasan ben Uziel translated the Torah into Aramaic, in his *Targum*, the Land of Israel shook 400 parasangs by 400 parasangs. What caused *Eretz Yisroel* to tremble so? The *Tosaphos Rid* explains that Yonason ben Uziel's translation limited the *yegi'as haTorah*.

A reduction in *yegi'as haTorah* is just one, albeit major, loss generated by the new translations. In the history of translations, countless perversions and irreparable damage, often in terms of spilled Jewish blood, have resulted from Biblical translations—both directly and indirectly. The first translation of the Torah into Greek was written with *Ruach Hakodesh* (Divine inspiration), yet it is commemorated every year with the fast of *Asara B'Teves*. The somber way Chazal chose to remember the writing of the Septuagint bespeaks their attitude toward translations: No matter how careful the translator and how laborious his effort, no translation can ever fully convey the precise meanings with which a Hebrew word is invested. At the other end of the spectrum, the advent of translations has opened up the possibility of deliberate mistranslations. Who knows how many hundreds of thousands of Jews have been ravaged, crucified, and murdered due to the translation of just one word in the *Vulgate*. It says in *Isaiah* 7:14 "Behold a young woman (*almah*) shall conceive. . . ." In *Matthew* 1:22-3 the verse was changed to read, "a virgin shall conceive," and for close to 2000 years this has been cited as proof that the "virgin birth" of the founder of Christianity was prophesied in the Bible. But *almah* does not at all mean virgin. Had *Isaiah* wished to prophesy that a virgin would conceive, he would have used *besulah* (*Vayikra* 21:3 *Devarim* 22:19, 23:19, *Yechezkel* 44:22), the correct word.

But one need not turn to such extreme examples to highlight the potential danger inherent in every translation. *Tirgumim* never intended for gentile readership can also be fraught with pitfalls, for translations are to a large measure interpretations. Even the most accomplished translator is forced to resort to his own comprehension and ingenuity to render into English virtually untranslatable, seemingly contradictory Hebrew verses. Furthermore, even an accurate literal translations, in some contexts can create profound halachic and philosophical errors.

Consider:

1. *Vayikra* 20:17

ואיש אשר יקח את אחותו . . .

וראה את ערותה והיא תראה את ערותו, חסד הוא.

"And if a man shall take his sister . . . and see her nakedness, and she see his . . ., it is a kindness (*chessed*)."

2. *Orach Chaim* 302:3

מקפלים כלים בשבת לצורך שבת ללבשם בו ביום, כאדם אחד.

"It is permissible to fold clothing on *Shabbos* to be used on that very *Shabbos* provided that only one man folds them."

In the above two examples the translations are meticulous; they are also misleading and false. *Chessed* does mean an abundance of kindness, but in this passage where it refers to an abundance of misplaced affections, it denotes quite the opposite: incest. In the second example, the *Shulchan Aruch* says that only one man (and not two together) may fold clothing on *Shabbos*, but this translation, while accurate, implies that there is a difference between men and women regarding this law; i.e., a woman may not fold clothing on *Shabbos* to be used that very *Shabbos*. This is incorrect. Here "adam" means person.

Examine the following translation.

וקשרתם לאות על ירך והיו למוטפות בין עיניך.

"You shall bind them for a sign on your hand and they shall be for *frontlets* between your eyes" (Translation of *Siddur Hashalem*, Phillip Birnbaum).

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It is questionable if someone who recites the *Shema* in English using the word "frontlets" for *totaphos* has fulfilled his obligation (*Mishnah Brurah* 62:2:3).

Aside from all this, there is the ancillary problem of the connotation and specificity of translations. Does "Goy" mean gentile? "Nefesh" mean soul? How does one translate *zika*, *kinyan*, *eiruv*? Furthermore, topics of religion often sound artificial and sterile in translation, as opposed to their natural ring in *Lashon Hakodesh* or Yiddish.

There are no simple ways to overcome these problems. It does seem clear, however, that as accurate as a translation may be made out to be, and as helpful as it is—it is merely a translation, a second best, suffering severe handicaps not present in the original.

Narrower Horizons

Rabbi Hutner זצ"ל alluded to several of these points in his approbation to the translation of the *Mishnah Brurah*. He wrote his approbation in English and stressed that even though the *Mishnah Brurah* is now accessible to the English-speaking public, it should still only be learned under the aegis of a competent instructor: "... will now be able to begin studying the work in groups led by instructors competent in *Mishnah Brurah* in its original form." Rabbi Hutner is apparently stressing that since misconceptions are practically inevitable, compounded by dealing with words that defy translation, this book is certainly not for someone incapable of handling the original without some guidance.

Recently, a highly technical booklet about *melechets oraig* (the prohibition against weaving on *Shabbos*) was published, obviously catering strictly to a yeshiva audience. One may seriously wonder if the day will come when translations will be printed of the *Ketzos Hachoshen*. Personally, I would be embarrassed to study from a linear

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English translation of Rashi, or an English *Mishnah Brurah*, but since *Guard Your Tongue* (an English-language adaptation of *Sefer Chofetz Chaim*) has been printed, I have hardly looked into the original. The yeshiva student is becoming entrapped by a tremendous service not always intended for him.

The Short Term and the Long Run

We must take note of what is happening, and something should be done. A leading *rosh yeshiva* banned from his *beis midrash* the use of a popular commentary-anthology, for he found that it stifled independent researching in other *seforim*. For the same reason, English translations of *seforim* may be of short-term help for the novice, but inadvisable in the long run, due to the dependence they create. A noted *rosh yeshiva* in Jerusalem suggested the creation of a newspaper or magazine written in "English-Yiddish"—English with Hebrew characters—to help avoid the impending cultural assimilation by helping the struggling student into command of written Hebrew. . . . The proliferation of new English *seforim* is certainly cause to rejoice, but perhaps the joy ought to be one of *gilu birada*—"rejoice in trepidation." **T**

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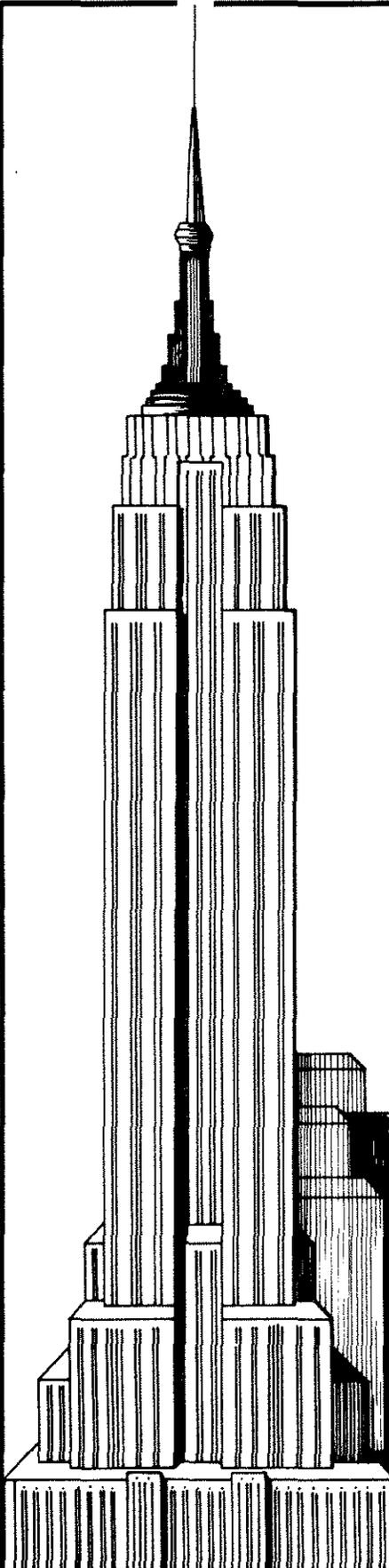
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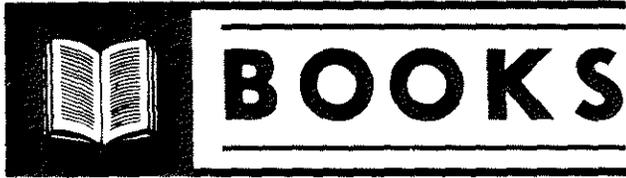
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BOOKS IN REVIEW: Siddurim

The Metsudah Siddur, A New Linear Siddur with English Translation and Anthology of the Classic Commentaries, by Rabbi Avrohom Davis, Vol. 1, Daily Prayers (New York, 1981, Metsudah Publ., \$9.95)

This Siddur represents a new approach, well thought out and excellently executed, and provides the correct Hebrew text arranged so that each line contains a complete *Tefilla* thought, and—next to each line—a clear and careful translation of it. Both Hebrew and English text are set in readable and attractive type (to aid correct reading, every *Shva Na* is marked); detailed directions are furnished, and footnotes provide source references and brief comments drawn from the Siddur commentators.

In perusing the Siddur, we note many particular features. Thus, Rabbi Davis includes in *Birchas Hamazon* the special prayer that guests should say for their host (p. 221). In various places, e.g. p. 66, he draws attention to the need for special concentration in prayer (strangely, though, he does not do so in connection with "*Pose'ach Es Yodecho*"). While this volume is devoted to the daily prayers, it includes the special *Tefillos* of *Rosh Chodesh* and *Chol Hamoed*, as well as *Selichos* for the Fast Days, and the Torah readings for all these occasions, which make it a most complete and useful work.

The *Nussach* follows the Ashkenazic rite. However, within this rite there are differences in practice which should perhaps have been indicated, e.g. in connection with the placement of the Blessings for the Torah, the inclusion of the *Akeida*, or when exactly *U'l'chaporas Peshah* is to be included in the *Musaf* of *Rosh Chodesh*. This reviewer was surprised at the wording of the blessing, "*Hamekadesh Es Shimchah Borabim*" (p. 26), which would appear to be a mistake. The *Yehi Ratzon* for *Sefiras Ha'omer* is included (without room for the mention of the day's *Sefirah*), but that for the *Lulav* is omitted; and there is no indication that "*Asher Heiny*" is only recited in the evening (p. 323).

The quality of the translation deserves special emphasis, since it makes possible a more meaningful and concentrated prayer. The choice of language is indeed

excellent throughout. The one question that could be raised is the rendering of the four-lettered name of G-d; Rabbi Davis has chosen not to give any English word for it, but merely to transcribe the way it is pronounced. In contrast, the Artscroll Publications, which also do not translate G-d's name, render it as *Hashem*. Considering the fact that the English text will be used for study purposes, this reviewer's preference is for *Hashem*.

The Prayer Book, A New Translation with Halachic Instructions and Commentary Anthologized from Classical Rabbinic Sources; by Rabbi Nosson Scherman (New York, 1981), Mesorah Publication, \$8.95—hard cover, \$5.95 soft cover)

This is the first volume of the "Artscroll Siddur", devoted to the Friday evening services: *Minchah*, *Kabbolas Shabbos*, and *Maariv*, according to *Nussach Ashkenaz*.

Artscroll Publications have previously published a number of volumes, in the *Mesorah* series, dedicated to various parts of the liturgy—notably on the *Kaddish*, the Priestly Blessing, *Birchas Hamazon* and the *Zemiros* of *Shabbos*, all of them dealing with their subject in what has become the traditional and exemplary Artscroll manner: a challenging philosophical introduction, a careful and readable English translation, and a comprehensive commentary culled from Talmudic and Rabbinic literature. The present volume follows the same pattern, but is marked by a number of special features occasioned by the subject matter. Thus, for instance, the *halachos* concerning details of the *Shemonei Esrei* are concurrently given in the margin, and special inclusions, such as *Aneinu*, are printed on a dark background. The commentary, rich in ideas, is supplemented by introductory notes to each of the *Tefillos* (and there is also a special note explaining the unexpurgated version of *Aleinu*); this reviewer, in fact, would have appreciated a similar note explaining the making of *Kiddush* in *shul*, since this practice is probably unfamiliar to many of the readers. The overviews deal with the concept of prayer in general, and the three daily prayers in particular. Thus, they also serve as an introduction to the volumes to come.

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The Amen Response, by Rabbi Sholom Yehudah Gross
(Brooklyn, 1981)

This booklet is dedicated to explaining the importance of being conscientious in answering "Amen" and in not talking during the prayers and reading of the Torah. The author has assiduously gathered comments, stories, and observations from Talmudic and Rabbinic literature that pertain to his topic. The English translations could perhaps have been somewhat smoother in spots; illustrations, on the other hand, are excellently done.



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Editorial Apology:

"Turning to Rabbi Chill's *The Minhagim*," our reviewer said, "we find, in total contrast, a responsible scholarly work . . ." The contrast was drawn between *The Minhagim* and several books just reviewed that were found wanting. No reference was being made to Rabbi Bloch's *The Origin of Jewish Customs: The Jewish Child*, which the reviewer described as "a very complete survey of the areas covered." Through an unfortunate layout error, the review of *The Jewish Child* was inserted, before *The Minhagim*, whereas it was written to follow *The Minhagim*. The resultant implied criticism of this book was not intended.

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second looks at the jewish scene

Goodbye, TV . . . For a While

From time to time—usually inspired by a newspaper or magazine article—we have commented on the harmful effects of indiscriminate TV-viewing on both young and old. At this writing we are reacting to a feature piece in the *NY Times* (Mar. 16, '82) about a school in Ridgewood, N.J., that actually had the entire student body refrain from any and all TV viewing for seven days and seven nights. The report was fascinating for various reasons.

- When confronted with the need to take decisive action against excessive TV watching among their students, yeshivos often raise their shoulders in a defeatist shrug, as if to say: "You're right, but what can we do?" The mere fact that the Glen School in Ridgewood could and did impose such a ban, albeit for only a week, proves that yes, it can be done.

- In spite of pupil protests—such as 5-year-old John Donovan's howl: "They can't do this. They're not the law!"*—the overwhelming majority of the students pulled through. Many, including Donovan, did not even take advantage of the one-hour viewing permitted Saturday morning. (As you can see, the scene of the experiment was not a right-wing Yeshiva.)

- The alternative activities that the children pursued are indicative of what they had been denying themselves while hooked on their 55-hour-a-week viewing habit:

*All quotations from The New NY Times.

Some "made it through the week by having classmates over more frequently after school. . . . Students in every class reported spending more time reading books and talking to their friends and families. 'My daughter and I rediscovered each other,' said one mother. . . . 'My three children actually played together,' said another." TV watching may be defended as a means of broadening horizons, but the trade-off in more meaningful interaction with friends and family or in private scholarly pursuits, more than compensates for the alleged loss.

- In presenting the anti-TV case, children can afford to be much more blunt than parents or teachers would be—and they often are: "At the final assembly, Anne Cruz, a pupil, read an original poem. 'The TV Disease,' which declared that television 'decays morality' and 'builds wickedness.'"

- The after-effects of the week's self-denial was a carry-over of continued abstinence: "Playing is more fun' . . . (several people) said they would never watch as much television as they had before. . . . 'TV is not my life!' proclaimed Jocelyn Selim. (A representative of another school that had conducted a similar experiment three months ago said that the amount of viewing there remained diminished.)

"Two classmates typed a 'Secret Pact' to watch only 30 minutes of television each week for the next four weeks."

Our objections to what's wrong with TV and our sensitivity to the violence TV does to our most cherished character attributes of modesty, compassion, and shunning of

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ONE: *The Essence of the Jewish Home* (English translation of *Bayis Ne'eman*) by Chuna Hertzman and Shmuel Elchonon Brog; New York, 1978; 126 pages, hardbound; \$5.00 in bookstores; \$6.00 postpaid from Rabbi S. Brog at 1474 E. 10th St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11230.

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Where Are the Tears? A. Scheinman

Israel this week was treated to a heartbreaking sight. The Yamit area settlements had begun to be cleared out and the "stop the withdrawal movement" people refused to leave. Soldiers had to drag them out one by one—men, women and children. The settlers kept appealing to the conscience of the soldiers: "How can you uproot Jews from their land and send them into exile?" Many of the soldiers cried, their tears mingling with those of the settlers.

In some ways, the scene inspired pride in my heart. A Jew's sensitivities, no matter how hurt they are, should not stop him from doing what must be done; but on the other hand, being forced to perform a harsh assignment should not deny his heart of its emotions. The personal tragedies are tragedies, even if inevitable.

But at the same time, the scene raises a question: Why is it that when religious old men are beaten at the archaeological digs, the police do not shed tears? Assuming that they are disturbing the peace, and they must be dealt with so brutally, and where is the pain and hurt?

A writer for the irreligious daily newspaper, *Haaretz*, echoed the same

Rabbi Scheinman, an American studying in a yeshiva in Jerusalem, is a frequent contributor to THE JEWISH OBSERVER.

feelings. He writes that he was shocked to discover that he actually *enjoyed* watching (on TV) the beating of the old religious Jews! His conclusion? "It is the fault of the religious community. They have so separated themselves from the mainstream of Israeli society, that Israeli society has no feelings for them!"

More disturbing, I sometimes wonder about our feelings in Israel, with regard to the irreligious community. The feelings usually run the range from hope to apathy to antipathy. But somehow I do not think that we sufficiently shed tears. Are they not our brothers, sons of the same father, who have gone astray? How does a father react to a son that has become a drop-out from society? Though he engages him in the most furious of battles, and shouts and threatens him, at night he puts his weary head on his pillow and releases a flood of tears.

Of all of us who battle the secular establishment—politically, polemically, and pedagogically—should we not mix more pity with our rage?

Chazal teach us that the "gateway of tears has never been closed." A tear soaks its way through the most impermeable of steel barriers. Who knows which weighs more, a vat of ink or a vial of tears? "Those who sow in tears reap in joy." ❧

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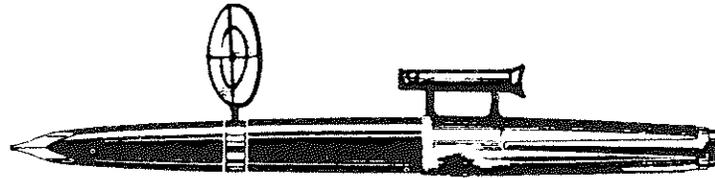
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Letters to the Editor



Learning Disabilities and Retardation

To The Editor:

I found your treatment of children with learning disabilities by Helene Ribowsky, as well as Lester Kaufman's article on the needs of retarded children (Dec. '81), extremely important. These are issues that must be aired and given respectability.

I would however like to make one point. Grouping these two articles together implies that the learning disabled are retarded. The learning disabled, as Mrs. Ribowsky pointed out, often have normal to above normal intelligence. *The Jewish Observer* made a similar association several

years ago (May '78). I feel this association is unfortunate, not only because of its false premise, but because it further stigmatizes the learning disabled. The more we are willing to openly discuss these issues, the sooner we bring these children out of the closet.

SUZETTE MUNK
 Brooklyn, NY

Making a Spotless Dent

To the Editor:

Although I appreciated Dr. Fryshman's article "Automobiles Wanted—As Is" (Feb. '81), I felt I must object to one minor aspect of it.

If a person is characterized by his car as well as his clothes, as Dr. Fryshman rightly claims, and one

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has "an injunction to maintain a Jewish *levush*," then a Ben Torah has an obligation to keep his *car* clean, as he would his clothes.

The Talmud, which states that "a *talmid chacham* must not have a spot on his clothing," certainly would disapprove of the idea that when a Ben Torah takes over a car, "all washing, polishing, retouching and body work ends at once."

Hoping to be able to give you a lift someday soon in a clean "Ben Torah" car.

DAVID ZAHAVI
New York City

Graphic "Kavod HaTorah"

To the Editor:

Allow me to congratulate you on your recent journalistic masterpiece, "Speaking Up for Kovod HaTorah." Obviously you have succeeded in surpassing the editorial achievements of a most prestigious secular magazine. Who would imagine three "Man of the Year" issues in just a short span of one year!

Bedecked in the beauty of "Talmudic scripture," the Ponovezer Rosh Yeshiva is truly a sight to behold, a spectacle I presumed that was reserved—only to depict the wit and genius of "Ragotchover" proportion. How inspiring, especially since *Makos* 22b is incidentally missing from my *Gemora*. (Of course it was still difficult to comprehend the *havanas hasugya*, as I kept reflecting on an image of מרן שליט"א (Rabbi Shach) emblazoned in my mind, or was it *on the daf*?)

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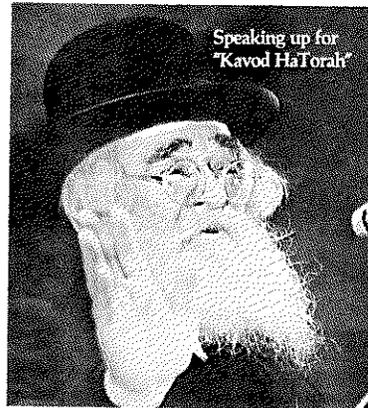
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The photograph of the Ponevez Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Elazar Shach שליט"א, that graced the cover and page 4 of the February '82 issue of THE JEWISH OBSERVER is the handiwork of Frank Storch of Baltimore, MD, who continues to provide Agudath Israel of America and THE JEWISH OBSERVER with the fruits of his masterful photography.

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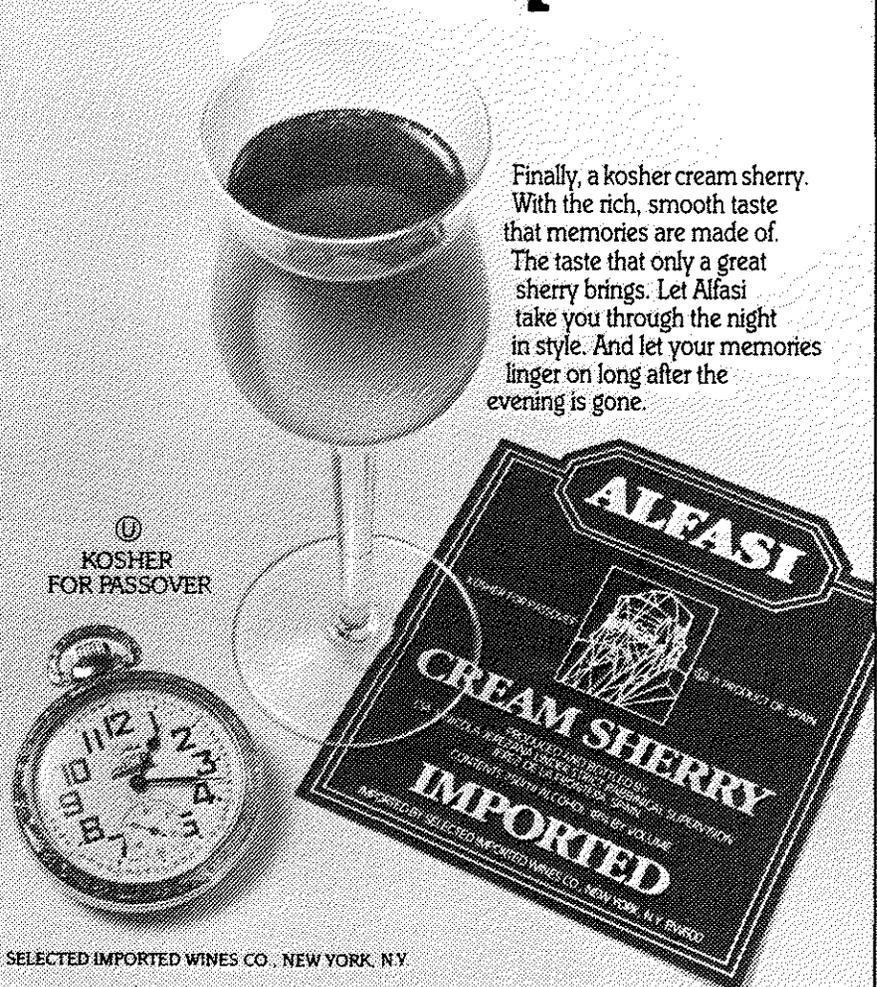
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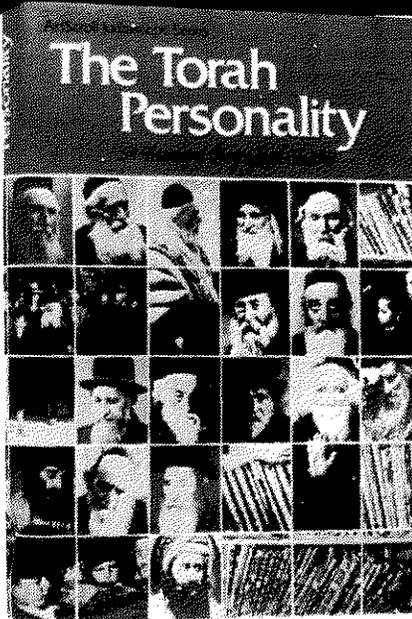
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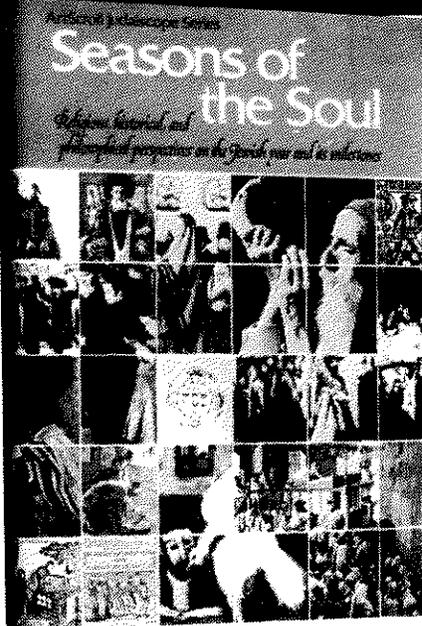
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AGUDATH ISRAEL: "JEWS SHOULD BACK ORTHODOX VIEW ON ABORTION"

With the heightened national interest over the abortion issue being debated in the legislature in Washington, the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel of America called on Jews to rally behind the traditional Torah-based Jewish view on this crucial issue. In a statement released by Professor Aaron Twerski, chairman of the Commission, the national Orthodox movement noted that any legislation should be measured against the specific Orthodox Jewish law and the preservation of First Amendment rights.

The following is the full text of the statement released by the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel on the Orthodox Jewish viewpoint on abortion: "Jewish law teaches that all human life is sacred. The life of a fetus has status and dignity under Torah dictates. The continuation or termination of pregnancy is not a matter of free choice within the province of the mother. In those cases when elimination of the fetus is warranted, such as when the mother's life is endangered, such decision must be made only upon consultation with medical and halachic authorities.

The prohibition against the taking of human life is a fundamental moral principle binding upon all mankind, regardless of denominational affiliations. Society cannot accept the right of any of its citizens to take the life of another. Fetal life is thus entitled to significant protection.

Any legislation dealing with this area will be measured against the twin goals of recognizing the dignity of fetal life and protecting the legitimate rights of free exercise of religion protected under the First Amendment."

In making this statement on abortion, Agudath Israel did not take a specific stand on legislation now pending before the Congress, stating that the principles embodied in its statement should be applied to any legislation under consideration by the U.S. Congress.

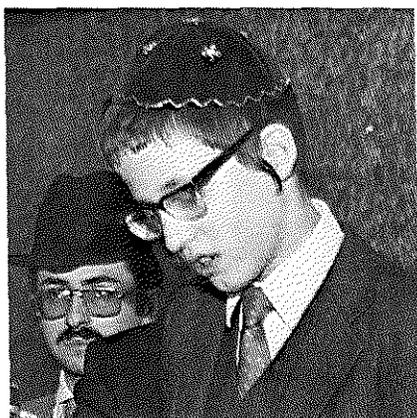
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MEMORIZE 80,000 MISHNAYOS IN PIRCHEI AGUDATH ISRAEL PROGRAM

In an atmosphere charged with excitement, enhanced by the image of the venerable sage, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, on a screen above the platform, an overflow crowd of 1,300 youngsters celebrated the 19th annual *Siyum Mishnayos* of Pirchei Agudath Israel of America on March 13th. The Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Tiferes Jerusalem and chairman of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages) told the youngsters in a special videotape message that the Tannaim and Amoraim of the Mishna were seeking the ultimate truth, and even when disagreements did occur, it was only out of a desire to grasp the *emes*. He added: "There was real peace in their relationship with one another."

The auditorium of the Mesivta Toras Emes Kamenitz in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn was filled to capacity as more than 1,300 youngsters, some from as far away as Montreal, came to celebrate the conclusion of the study of *Mishnayos* by heart.

For two of the youngsters there was special cause for celebration, as they were crowned the winners of this year's contest. Aharon Olshin, 12, of Lakewood, memorized 3,000 *Mishnayos*, and Meir Pogrow, 11, from Monsey, came in with 2,600 *Mishnayos* under his belt. For their achievements, Aharon was asked to recite the *Hadron* and Meir the *Haschalo* of *Brachos*. They each received a complete set of the Talmud for their outstanding efforts in Torah study.

Twelve other youngsters also had reason to be proud as they joined the "1,000 Club," the select group of participants who study between 1,000 and 2,600 *Mishnayos* each. Between them and the two top winners, they had memorized a total of more than 21,000 *Mishnayos B'al Peh*. In addition to the top finalists, the Club members are: Tzvi Rabinowitz, Chaim Aharon Eidelman, Tzvi Gamss, Yoir Bin-nun, Pinchos Braunstein, Yisroel Stern, Nesanel Pfeifer, Uri Gliberman, Avrohom

Teitz, Yisroel Glustein, Chaim Stauber, Yitzchok Schneidman, and Aharon Gabioff.

Rabbi Yehuda Oelbaum, *Menahel* of Mesivta Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, who served as chairman of the evening, contributed to the unprecedented enthusiasm at the event. Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz, National Director of Pirchei Agudath Israel, reported that while the New York gathering was one of the most impressive, similar celebrations were being held in Chicago for the Midwest, and in Los Angeles, Denver, Savannah and Miami. Meir Ament, branch leader of Montreal, and Teddy Schneider were honored with plaques for their many years of service to Pirchei Agudath Israel. Tribute was also paid to other activists who helped organize the *Siyum Mishnayos*: Gershon Nathan, honorary chairman; Eliezer Parnes, chairman; Mendy Kofman, Mendy Kramer, Joseph Nathan and Aryeh Leib Karmel who served as co-chairman of the event.

The *Siyum Mishnayos* celebration was the culmination of the 19th Annual Interbranch Shabbos of Pirchei Agudath Israel. Youngsters from many cities throughout the northeast and Canada participated in the huge Shabbos gathering which was held in the Agudath Israel of Boro Park Center on Fourteenth Avenue. The youngsters heard addresses from Rabbi Eliyohu Steger, Rabbi Zyshe Heshel, Rabbi Motty Katz, Rabbi Yosef Friedland and Rabbi Boruch Zaks (in order of appearance).

The growing popularity of studying at least one *Seder Mishnayos* in honor of the Bar Mitzvah was clearly in evidence when it was reported that over 170 boys participated in this project during the last few years. Elimelech Gavriel Trenk, Yehuda Wagner, Yitzchok Kaplan and Yehuda Schuster each completed the entire six volumes of *Mishnayos* in honor of their Bar Mitzvah.

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REAGAN ADMINISTRATION LEADERS ADDRESS AGUDATH ISRAEL CONFERENCE

The values embodied in both the domestic and foreign policies of the United States under the Reagan Administration are consistent with traditional Jewish values, two leading representatives of the Administration told an audience of 300 government, business and Jewish community leaders at the seventh annual Conference on Social Concerns sponsored by Agudath Israel of America on Monday (March 15th) at the Vista International Hotel. Dr. Edwin L. Harper, newly appointed Assistant to the President for Policy Development, and Ambassador Jean Kirkpatrick, U.S. Representative to the United Nations, addressed the theme of "New Directions in America's Foreign and Domestic Policies: Are They Working?"

Discussing the "family perspective on our economic problems," Dr. Harper noted: "Even though we who call ourselves Americans come from every part of the earth, we believe that there is a community of values in this country. It has at its center a belief in family, work, neighborhood, peace and freedom. These are values at the heart of the American tradition. The Agudath Israel is living proof of the community of values."

Dr. Harper particularly lauded the efforts of Agudath Israel of America and its leader, Rabbi Moshe Sherer, for its two-decade old struggle to obtain tuition tax credits for parents of nonpublic school children. Mr. Harper added: "President Reagan agrees with Rabbi Sherer and has stated his intention to initiate a program of tax credits to help families meet the burdens of education. If pluralism is one of the great strengths of America's society,

then diversity in education is an important contributor to that pluralism, and nonpublic schools play an indispensable role in making educational diversity possible."

Asked later in the question and answer session whether the clock was not running out on the President's commitment for a tuition tax credit bill in the 97th Congress, Mr. Harper responded: "I would anticipate that we will have legislation completed and submitted to the Congress in the very near future." In response to a query on the future of Jewish neighborhoods as a result of federal cutbacks, Mr. Harper said that the Reagan Administration was merely trying to "eliminate bureaucratic overhead" and that the resultant block grants would in the end not reduce the federal commitment. He had similar assurances on the effect of the elimination of social programs on the Jewish middle class. He said that since "the people who foot the bill are the middle class, the President has maintained that tax cuts" will be the most substantive way to strengthen the middle class. He also pledged that the same number of people would be served in job training programs when the federal government eliminates waste through overhead expenditures and stipends.

Kirkpatrick Lashes Out At U.N. Neutrals

In an eloquent presentation, Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick expressed concern over "the resurgence of anti-Semitism in the world." She drew an analogy between the recent publicity of the Leo Frank case 70

years ago, when anti-Semitism sent a Brooklyn Jew to his death in the South for a murder he did not commit, with the attitude of neutral nations in the world body. She compared the neutral nations to Alonzo Mann, the 83-year-old eyewitness who actually saw another man commit the crime. She added: "Like Alonzo Mann, they are intimidated. Perhaps they need oil, or petrodollars, political and economic support or are afraid they'll be targeted by this and that terrorist group."

Mrs. Kirkpatrick told the Agudath Israel group: "We share common understandings and common values. We also share a conviction that what happens in the U.N. matters to these common values and common understandings."

Using harsh terms to describe the atmosphere in the General Assembly, she said: "The objective is to isolate and denigrate Israel and ultimately to undermine its political legitimacy. A secondary objective is to isolate and undermine the United States. A related objective is to frighten away from association with Israel any country which might be disposed to befriend her."

Ambassador Kirkpatrick told the gathering that she saw no role for the United Nations in negotiating peace in the Middle East. She added: "The U.N. has effectively been eliminated as a useful mediator in the Middle Eastern conflict. The time when a Ralph Bunche could work on behalf of the United Nations for peace between Israel and the Arabs has long passed."

During the question and answer session, the U.S. Representative to the U.N. took note

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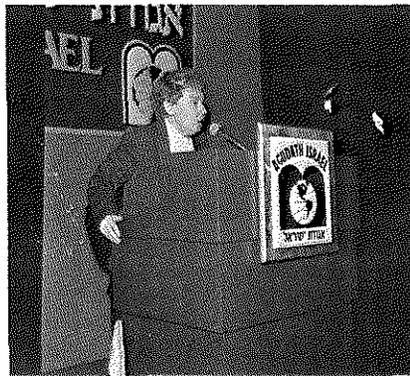
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Ambassador Kirkpatrick.

of a recent resolution introduced in the Congress by such prominent legislators as Senator Patrick Daniel Moynihan and Representative Jack Kemp on U.S. action in the event of a move to expel Israel from the world body. The Ambassador said that the most likely place is not in the General Assembly but in one of the specialized agencies." She added: "The United Nations cannot survive if it does not live by its own rule, since membership is supposed to be decided in the Security Council where the U.S. can cast a veto." Mrs. Kirkpatrick said that she doubted whether the U.N. could survive a "flagrant disregard of its charter and constitution." She termed the policies of the Soviet Union towards Jews "a gross and persistent abuse of human rights."

In setting the tone for the conference, Dr. Seymour Lachman, University Dean and Professor of History of Education of the City University of New York, who served as chairman, said that the Reagan Administration's new approaches to domestic, foreign and defense policy were of deep concern to the American Jewish community and were making them wonder whether the new direction "was indeed working."

Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, Director of Government and Public Affairs of Agudath Israel, who opened the conference, urged the Reagan Administration "to plan the national agenda as part of a full partnership between government and communities." He said that this gathering was particularly significant as the organization celebrates its 60th year on

the American scene and as it looks to plan the future of the Orthodox Jewish community in America.

During its special award ceremony, Rabbi Moshe Sherer, president of Agudath Israel of America, joined Mayor Edward I. Koch in presenting Agudath Israel's 1982 "New Horizons" Award to Anthony B. Gleidman, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. In his remarks, the Mayor stressed the importance of housing initiatives undertaken by the Agudath Israel's Southern Brooklyn Community Organization in Boro Park, where an intense effort is underway to rehabilitate blighted housing stock in the periphery of the strong middle class Jewish neighborhood. At the same time, the Mayor used the opportunity to criticize a federal proposal to issue vouchers to the poor instead of constructing low income housing. Mr. Gleidman received the award for "opening new horizons for the communities of our Town by stabilizing and revitalizing neighborhoods, which are the strength of our city and nation." The Commissioner responded by praising Agudath Israel's helping people, and he had warm praise for the neighborhood revitalization efforts of the Agudath Israel agency. Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz, executive director of SBCO, introduced the award ceremony.

Nearly 300 distinguished representative of government, education, communities and business took part in Agudath Israel's seventh annual Conference on Social Concerns.

BAR MITZVAH BOYS STUDY MISHNAYOS IN PIRCHEI AGUDATH ISRAEL PROGRAM

More than 150 youngsters celebrated their Bar Mitzvah in the last three years by completing portions of Mishnayos, in a program sponsored by Pirchei Agudath Israel of America. According to Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz, national director of the Agudist youth movement, the study of Mishnayos is in addition to the traditional "pshetel" (a Torah talk), which the youngsters deliver at their Bar Mitzvah celebrations.

According to Rabbi Moshe Perlowitz, the originator of the idea, of the 150 boys that participated in the program, ten completed the entire series of Mishnayos. The boys are honored at the Siyum Mishnayos celebrations of Pirchei Agudath Israel where they receive a special gift of a sefer and an honor certificate.

The Bar Mitzvah program has been so successful that it has been difficult for Pirchei Agudath Israel to keep tabs on the number of youngsters that are now involved throughout the country. Bar Mitzvah celebrations are now frequently interrupted with a "had-ran" when the Bar Mitzvah boy, the father and the rabbi, as well as all the guests participate in the formal completion of a segment of Mishnayos.

Imbuing youngsters with love for learning Torah was the subject of yet another successful Pirchei Agudath Israel program as over 500 youngsters celebrated the completion of the Agudist youth organization's semi-annual Hasmoda Contest. To participate, the boys had to study a minimum of 10 hours during the Succos vacation. In addition to 227 youngsters from the Greater New York area, there were 192 participants from Baltimore, 28 from Lakewood and 10 from Elizabeth. There were also groups in Monsey, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and several cities in Canada.

There was special recognition for the members of the "One Hundred Club" or the select few that studied 100 hours or more during their vacation. The youngsters included Gavriel Kaminsky, Chiam Alexander Scheiner, Yaakov Yoel Weiss, Menashe Witkin, Yanky Edelman, Yisroel Meir Plaut, Chaim Roth, Tzvi Bloom, Yessochor Kaminsky, Yisroel Gellman, Zalman Witkin and Ari Glazer.

During the celebration last month, Pirchei Agudath Israel honored Rabbi Philip Kosowsky and Rabbi Yaakov Pasternak for outstanding service as yeshiva rabbeim. Rabbi Yaakov Bender, menahel of Yeshiva Darchei Torah, was the guest speaker. Pesach Ledereich entertained the youngsters. Mr. David Scheinfeld, President of the Girso D'yanuso Foundation, was the sponsor. When the evening was over, \$3,000 worth of seforim were distributed to the winners.

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JEP PLACES 100 MORE IN YESHIVOS

A record number of Jewish youngsters—a hundred in total—were placed in yeshivos in 1981 as part of the efforts of the Jewish Education Program, the “reach-out” agency of Zeirei Agudath Israel of America, according to JEP’s director, Rabbi Mutty Katz. In its last report, JEP reported that the total number of placements in yeshivos exceeded 1,000. Zeirei Agudath Israel is the youth division of Agudath Israel of America.

One of the most successful programs of JEP is Release Hour, in which Jewish youngsters attending public schools receive an hour of instruction weekly in Jewish education at a site close to their public school. The agency sponsors 19 such classes throughout New York City. Volunteer leaders use special guides to help them in instructing the youngsters.

JEP volunteers are also following up on some of the visitations they made during Chanukah in more than 20 institutions in all five boroughs of the City of New York, and in

New Jersey and Philadelphia. Shabbatons were recently held in Boro Park and Edison, New Jersey.

The Chavrusah Program, which teams up a youngster from a Jewish day school with a yeshiva student, continues to bring positive results. Two such programs team up students from Mesivta Torah Vodaath and Yeshiva Ohel Moshe, and Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin and Ratzad.

JEP branches throughout the country are also pitching in with programs similar to those in New York. A new branch is being planned for Baltimore, with Rabbi Nechemia Drillman heading the activities.

JEP has also adopted an “open door policy” to anyone that needs help with Jewish education. In the last few weeks JEP volunteers have assisted a 10 year old boy suffering from Spina Bifida, an Iranian youngster from Shiraz who wanted to receive some of JEP’s publications, and Russian immigrant youngsters.

AGUDATH ISRAEL IN 60TH ANNIVERSARY MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Orthodox Jews throughout the country are being asked to join Agudath Israel of America as part of a special membership drive of the Orthodox Jewish movement. In making the announcement, Nochum Stein, chairman of the campaign, said that this year’s effort would stress “the impressive contributions made by the national Torah coalition during its 60 year existence in this country.”

In appealing to Torah Jews to join Agudath Israel, the revered sage, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, dean of Mesivta Torah Vodaath and a leading member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah (Council of Torah Sages) told the recent Agudath Israel convention: “For those Jews that are not yet with us, this is the only group where a member can be part of a movement which has to its credit many good deeds in every area—in strengthening Torah and Chesed—Torah, Avodah and Gemilas Chasodim—the foundations of Judaism.”

Mr. Stein noted that one of the major factors in the success of Agudath Israel in recent years was the dramatic increase in its membership. He said that the steadily rising membership rolls enabled Agudath Israel to make even more gains for Yiddishkeit in this country and around the world.

In its appeal for membership, the national Torah movement pointed out that the major challenges the Torah community faces will, in the years ahead, be to confront the growing menace of Conservative and Reform throughout the world, which is directly responsible for the continued defection of large numbers of Jews. A second major objective of the organization would be to explore new means of assisting the financially ailing yeshivos in America. Although Agudath Israel pioneered in helping yeshivos obtain assistance from the government, the new budget realities of the 80’s will necessitate the development of new sources.

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MOETZES GEDOLEI HATORAH DEMANDS FULFILLMENT OF COALITION AGREEMENT

Jerusalem—The *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages, the policy making body of Agudath Israel) of *Eretz Yisroel* met on March 17, to determine a program for achieving the conditions of the coalition agreement with Prime Minister Begin's Likud Party. The session of the Council was opened by the Gerrer Rebbe (Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter), with Rabbi Elazar Shach (Ponevezer Rosh Yeshiva) presiding. The two serve on the Council's three-member presidium, together with the Vizhnitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Hager, who was not present because of ill health.

Among the points discussed was the government's commitment to discontinue all El Al operations on the Jewish Sabbath and holidays. The Council put a deadline on the government's plans to conform with this clause of the coalition agreement, warning that if El Al would not agree to cease Sabbath-violating flights by Pesach, the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* would appeal to the religious community to refuse to patronize El Al.

• Law of Return (*Giur Ke'halach*): the *Moetzes* instructed the Agudath Israel

Knesset faction to demand that the Prime Minister fulfill his promise to amend the law at the earliest possible opportunity.

• Health and Welfare: the *Moetzes* demanded that the government establish religious hospitals to accommodate the needs of the chronically ill so that Jews suffering from such illnesses not be forced to resort to establishments of this sort run by missionary groups.

• Internal Unity: the *Moetzes* appealed to all sections of religious Jewry to stop internal strife and endeavor to live side by side in harmony.

Others participating in the meeting were: the Machanovker Rebbe, Belzer Rebbe, Slnimer Rebbe, Modzitzer Rebbe, Sadigerer Rebbe, Rabbi Boruch Shimon Schneerson (Rosh Yeshiva—Chebin), Rabbi Yochanan Sofer (Rosh Yeshiva—Erlau), Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapiro (Rosh Yeshiva—Beer Yaakov), Rabbi Pinchas Menachem Alter (Rosh Yeshiva—Sfas Emes), Rabbi Nissim Karelitz (Rosh Kollel Chazon Ish), and Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov Zaleznik (Rosh Yeshiva—Etz Chaim).

FOUR AGUDATH ISRAEL BRANCHES INSTALL RABBONIM

For years, the National Conventions of Agudath Israel of America have been issuing a call to all *minyanim*, *batei midrashim*, as well as branches of Agudath Israel to engage *rabbonim* to serve as local *Mora d'Asro*. While several branches have had *rabbonim* for quite some time, the last two months has seen four Agudath Israel branches install leading Torah scholars as their rabbis:

Agudath Israel of Boro Park, 14th Avenue Branch, Rabbi Eliezer Horowitz as *Rav*, with a large representation of local rabbis participating in the installation; Agudath Israel of Baltimore—Rabbi Moshe Heinemann as *Rav*, with the Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Israel, Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, participating; Agudath Israel of Far Rockaway—Rabbi Nisson Alpert as *Rav*; Agudath Israel of Monsey—Rabbi Yosef Meir Kantor as *Rav*, with Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, participating. Rabbi Moshe Sherer, president of Agudath Israel of America participated in all the installation ceremonies on behalf of the national administration.

In each of the branches, an upsurge in Torah study and organized classes has been noted. It is hoped that other *minyanim* will follow suit.

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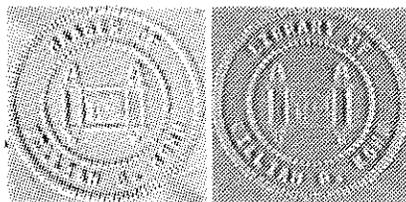
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Agudath Israel World Conference In Plan For "Underdeveloped Jewish Communities"

Jerusalem—A plan to dispatch *shlichim* to "underdeveloped Jewish communities" in Europe and other parts of the world was adopted at the recently concluded three-day conference of the Agudath Israel World Organization. The conclave, the first international gathering of Agudath Israel leaders since the *Knessia Gedolah* (World Congress) of the movement two years ago, brought together members of the Agudist World Executive from nine different lands.

In addition to adopting a blueprint for a campaign to intensify Agudath Israel's involvement in neglected Jewish communities, the conference agreed that Russian Jews should go to Israel, but rejected as "unacceptable coercion" a recent Jewish Agency-HIAS agreement denying aid to Jews who go to other countries. Other resolutions discussed the movement's role in Torah education of the masses, a public relations campaign in the world's press about the unique position of the Orthodox Jewish community and a plan to step up the religious reach-out activities of the world movement.

The meeting of the Agudath Israel World Executive opened with a huge public gathering on Tuesday evening, December 29th, as an overflow crowd of over 1,000 people jammed into the Hoffman Auditorium to hear the presidium members of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*. In his brief remarks, Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter, the Gerer Rebbe, said that "unity was the greatest blessing of all." Rabbi Eliezer Shach, while he had warm words of praise for the sensitivities of Prime Minister Menachem Begin towards religious concerns, lashed out against the annexation measure of the Golan Heights, which he considered an unnecessary "provocation against the nations of the world." The Viznitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Hager, stressed the importance of giving Jewish youngsters a Torah education. He added: "We must do everything to devote ourselves to educate a generation of servants of Hashem, a generation which should understand the holiness of the Shabbos." Rabbi Pinchas Menachem Alter, chairman of Agudath Israel of Israel, said that even the "leaders of the secularists admit to the bankruptcy of the education that they have offered their children."

Rabbi Moshe Sherer, chairman of the Agudath Israel World Organization and president of Agudath Israel of America, who led the American delegation of 30 Orthodox leaders, lambasted the Israeli press for calling Agudath Israel "blackmailers" when referring to the efforts of Agudath Israel Knesset members to secure funding for yeshivos. He

said that the Agudath Israel representatives are to be commended for their historic role in securing the funds for yeshivos, the only guarantee for Jewish survival. Rabbi Sherer also praised Agudath Israel's Knesset Deputies for "demonstrating Agudath Israel's independence and subservience to Torah authority" by following the united view of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* not to support the Golan annexation. A report was also rendered by Rabbi Yehuda Meir Abramowitz, co-chairman of the Agudath Israel World Organization.

Rescue Session

The first working session of the conference was devoted to the rescue activities of the Agudath Israel World Organization. Reports issued by leaders of the Agudath Israel movement included an impressive analysis of the activities of the new European office of the Agudath Israel World Organization office in Zurich, which has become a central rescue address for many Jews en route to other countries. In addition, the conference praised the legendary efforts of the European organization in sending parcels and tending to the other religious needs of Jews still living in the Eastern bloc. The central role of the American section of the world movement in rescue and relief activities also received recognition from the one hundred assembled Agudath leaders.

A special session devoted to an analysis of Israel's current security situation heard briefings from two Cabinet officials. Foreign Minister Yitzchak Shamir devoted a major portion of his briefing on the impending return of the Sinai to Egypt as part of the Camp David accord. Minister Shamir played down the strained relations with the United States, saying that the relationship was based on "a long-standing friendship bound by joint interests and similar values." The Foreign Minister answered questions in Yiddish, with many questioners pressing for a more global perspective regarding world Jewry's concerns, as well as religious aides in consulates.

In his briefing, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon emphasized the growing menace of Soviet intervention, revealing that the Soviets were stockpiling thousands of tanks, planes, missiles and other ammunition in the Middle East. The Defense Minister was warmly greeted for his remarks about the relationship between Jews and Judaism, adding that he had already said on many occasions that "without Judaism, there will be no Jews and that everything possible must be

done to strengthen Jewish education." He made this remark in response to Rabbi Sherer, who urged the ministers who had reported to also improve their relations with the "kingdom of G-d."

Knesset Actions and Abstentions

During the course of the session on Israel's policies on foreign affairs and defense, Agudath Israel spokesmen pointed out that its Knesset Deputies abstained on the Golan Law vote because its Torah authorities felt that the measure did not in any way enhance Israel's security position in that region, and was primarily intended as a "demonstration for export to the nations of the world."

A key session of the conference was devoted to a report of the accomplishments of the Agudath Israel faction in the Knesset. Knesset Deputies Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz, Rabbi Menachem Porush, Rabbi Avrohom Shapiro and Rabbi Shmelke Halpert pointed to the multi-faceted accomplishments of the Torah community in Israel as a result of Agudath Israel's coalition with Likud. The Agudist Deputies were particularly warmly received when they reported that they had succeeded in winning the approval of the Knesset's Finance Committee of 240 million shekel (\$18 million) for yeshivos during the next half year. They recounted that the measure passed in the committee without the opposition of the Labor movement.

Members of the Agudath Israel's World Executive were treated to a special address by Rabbi Sholom Noach Brozovsky, the Slonimer Rebbe, who spoke on "The Ideology of Agudath Israel." He said that Agudath Israel did not need a separate ideology since its course was based on authentic values passed down at Sinai. He emphasized that we were "living in an age of thirst for the word of Hashem," and suggested that the Agudath Israel movement should establish local committees of rabbis to spread the Torah message throughout the world.

The final day of meetings was devoted to discussions on involving Sefardic Jewry in the Agudath Israel movement in Israel and the Diaspora, Torah education in the Diaspora, strengthening of religious observance, publications and public relations, as well as the relationship between all branches of the Agudath Israel world movement. The meetings closed with the adoption of key resolutions for Jews worldwide.

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