

# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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607 Joshua 10:13; II Samuel 1:18
608 Avodah Zava 25a See also text in Em Yeshar, ad. in.
609 Cf. "The Talmud," Deuteronomy 6:18 n. 24 (infra, Chap. 4, n. 67)
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171) Genesis 18:14.

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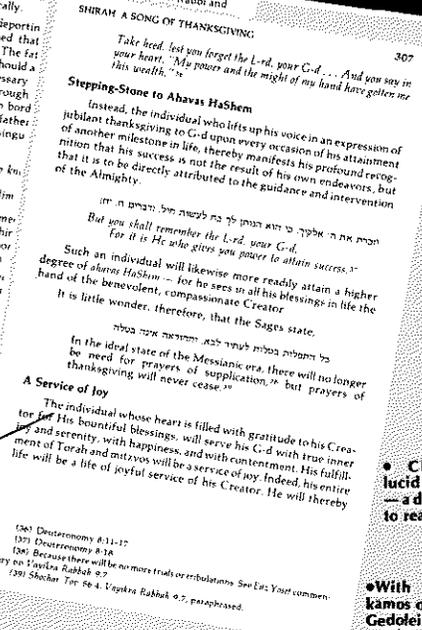
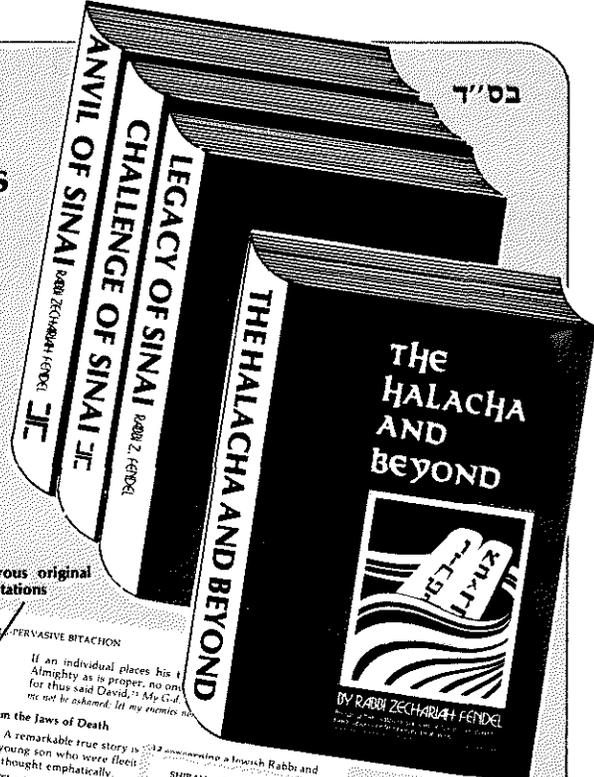
Into there was it shown, to him that the L-rd. He is G-d. There is none else beside Him

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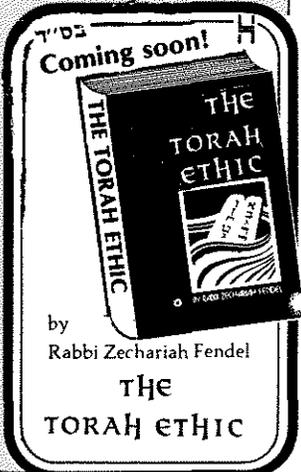
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Forty Jewish Muscovites desperately want to celebrate Pesach, but realize what detection by the KGB means. Is it worth the risk?

## Lail Shimurim— 5743



As told by one of the participants to HANOCH TELLER

**T**RY AND observe Passover in Moscow. There aren't any matzos, kosher wine or meat; gathering together to celebrate a *seder* is all but illegal.

This past Pesach, forty Jews decided to participate in a communal *seder* nonetheless. Each participant carefully thought over his decision. Was a one-night ceremony worth all of the inherent risks? Detection by the KGB (and who could avoid it?) was tantamount to arrest and incarceration. Parents would be guilty of religious indoctrination of Soviet youth, a felony, and university students would face immediate expulsion and automatic conscription into the army. Was a *seder* really necessary to impress upon a Soviet Jew the image of Egyptian subjugation?

Forty Moscow Jews did not view this question as hypothetical. Aside from this example of heroism, the parents taught their children the ingenuity of Jewish enterprise. A clandestine *shmurah matzah* bakery was set

*Hanoch Teller, a regular contributor to these pages, is an American studying in Mir Yeshiva, Jerusalem.*

up. Each fragile *matzah* was smuggled out in a newspaper. As for the four *kosos*, friends and relatives helped purchase the huge amounts of raisins needed for the making of wine.

While this was going on, some of the participants looked over carefully prepared notes about how to conduct a *seder*. Cassettes containing Pesach *nigunim* circulated with joy and excitement among the friends.

Zev,\* the *seder* mastermind, suggested that since they had never attended a *seder* before, a rehearsal was necessary. Accordingly, Zev and Sasha secretly convened in Moshe's apartment in preparation for that momentous night. Using makeshift props: water substituting for wine, plates for *matzos*, a pen for the *zroa*, etc., the mock *seder* commenced.

**I**T WAS MORE than a week before Pesach, but for the three men sitting at the bare *seder* table, the excitement was already impossible to contain. By the time they reached *Hallel* in the Haggadah, they were hoarse from

\*Names are changed to protect the principals.

their hushed singing. But they couldn't stop. Each stanza about the slavery and the Exodus was so rich in meaning for them: שומרים הפקר לעירך כל היום וכל הלילה

"Appoint watchmen to your city all day and night" . . .

Bang, Bang, BANG!! It wasn't a knock at the door, but a thunderclap intended to unsettle and frighten. The pounding was accompanied by the incessant ringing of the buzzer. The intruders weren't petitioning for permission to enter. Before they broke in they wanted to instill as much fear as possible. You never knew exactly what waited on the other side of the door. How many? How anti-Semitic? Had they brought along the hungry dogs who always managed to get loose for a few seconds . . . ? Five men burst through the door and surrounded the three. They started shoving and shouting: "Jewish nationalist propaganda!" "Obstruction of socialist justice!" "Anti-Communist blasphemy!" "Zionist hooliganism!" etc. Each mouth parroted a different offense. This went on for almost an hour, waking up all of the neighbors in the building. After examining the identity papers of the Jews, they threatened that one more violation of "anti-Soviet propaganda" would mean immediate arrest.

If the purpose of this raid was to frighten them, it hardly succeeded. Of course, initially they were scared and had trouble falling asleep, but they remained undaunted. Come what may, they were going to conduct a *seder*.

**R**IGHT BEFORE *Erev Pesach*, they received permission to use someone's *dacha* (vacation home) at a relatively safer location, fifty kilometers from Moscow. They made their exodus from the city one by one, each person carrying a portion of the precious *Pesach* cargo. The women worked like an experienced team to render the kitchen *kasher le Pesach*, while the men helped out with the rest of the house. This little home had to double as a *shtieble* and a dormitory.

When evening arrived, the tired but jubilant men gathered in the dining room for *Maariv*. There were so many different types of Jews assembled in the *dacha*. For some it was their first *Maariv*, for others it was their first *Maariv* with a *minyán*. After they finished, they quickly took their seats around the special table. The air of expectation in that room was almost tangible. All eyes were turned toward Zev who started the *Kiddush*. Afterwards, Moshe's son Chaim'ke asked the four *kashas*, *Ma nishtama halaila hazeh mikol halailos?* There wasn't a dry cheek in the room. *Ma nishtama halaila hazeh mikol halailos!* Why is this night different from all other nights? On this night forty Jews chose to affirm their Judaism they knew so little about. To stand up to a calculated campaign against such affiliation. On all other nights they can only *dream* about being a Jew and *leshana haba be Yerushalayim*. But tonight, tonight was so different! "We were once slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. 'Maaseh avos siman lebanim—the actions of fathers presage the events of the

children'—how true it is. Laban tried to uproot everything—and he's still trying!"

The most attentive participant was dreamy-eyed Avrum Eisikovitch. The last time he had attended a *seder* was fifty years ago, when he was just ten years old. For Avrum, the thrill of the *seder* was mixed with cherished nostalgia—fifty years ago he had asked the *Ma nishtama*.

He remembered the sequence of the *seder* and offered instructions to the participants before Zev could read them out.

**A**S THE *seder* continued, Zev's face suddenly turned pale. Looking up from the Haggadah he turned to Moshe and asked in a shisper, "Are we expecting anybody else?" Shadows outside the window began moving closer. Moshe, as calmly as he could, arose from the table and drew the shades tighter and double-locked the door. The responsibility resting on Zev's shoulders was awesome. He had not only invited all of the participants but had convinced them to attend. How could he bear the responsibility of causing parents and old people to be sent to Siberia? Zev lamely tried to assuage himself with the thought that it was *Lail Shimurim*.

But his conscience kept nagging at him, affording him no relief. The shadows were not disappearing. Avrum, unaware of what was transpiring, announced that it was time to open the door for Elijah the Prophet. Zev tried to delay. But Avrum wouldn't hear of it. "Everyone rise for Elijah," Avrum proudly announced. Zev told them that it was very cold outside and opening the door was not really necessary. "Lately," he assured the group, "the custom of opening the door hasn't been observed. . . ." Avrum scoffed at the comment, accused Zev of Reformism, and proceeded toward the door. Moshe intercepted him and stared at him for twenty long seconds until Avrum finally took his seat.

**I**T WAS 2:00 in the morning and Zev was anxious to finish the *seder*—there was just so much you could rely on *Lail Shimurim*. Everyone wished each other, and promised themselves, the most fervent greeting of the evening: "*Leshana Habaa be Yerushalayim*." All of the *matzos* and Haggadahs were quickly stashed away into various hiding places. Moshe peeked through the shade and found that the shadows had 'passed over.'

Parents of children and university students, potentially the greatest offenders in the eyes of the KGB, were recommended to leave the *dacha*, and to stay away until the following afternoon. At a quarter to seven in the morning the shadows reappeared, this time with their source in full evidence. Nine of them. They swarmed in like hawks and started searching the premises, not uttering a word. They found nothing, not a clue.

That night an even more joyous second *seder* was conducted. Avrum finally got to open the door for Elijah for it was *taka*—veritably—a *Lail Shimurim*. 17



Rabbi Mosheh Y'chiail Friedman

*In his previous article, "In Search of a Torah Psychology," the author rejected an understanding of the human condition that ignores his spiritual aspects, and called for one that integrates the fact that a person is animated by a divine soul. The following represents his initial steps toward setting up a framework for such an understanding.*

## Thoughts on the Nature of Man

Psychology traces its origin as far as Aristotle, and perhaps even further. Early in its history, the study of psychology was encompassed in the philosophical and theological speculations concerning the soul. In the seventeenth century, as psychology became more body-oriented, discussion of the soul was supplanted by the theorizations regarding body-mind relationships. By the middle of the eighteenth century, psychology had assumed a mechanistic stance, and at the commencement of the nineteenth century this posture was reinforced by the introduction of experimental psychology and the influence of evolutionary theory. Today, with few exceptions, psychologists consider the soul to be entirely irrelevant to their field of operation. Even those writers who include the soul in their theoretical scheme do not regard it as a specific entity of divine origin but rather as some sort of spiritual force in the human personality.

The point of view of contemporary psychologists is clearly reflected in the textbooks and literature which they produce. Either mention of the soul is omitted entirely or else it is included as an historical curiosity. The highest orders of mental function, such as thinking, speaking, problem-solving, and decision-making are treated as psychic functions. Even religious experience, in which the soul occupies central importance, is reduced

to a phenomenon of the psyche rather than of the soul. Thus, present-day psychology perceives man as a secular being whose sum total of experience is fit subject matter for its investigation.

### The Irrational Stress

One major consequence of this ideological orientation is that undue importance is given to the passions and irrational forces that are found within the human personality. In the absence of a soul that endows man with noble qualities, supreme among which is the freedom to choose, psychologists tend to see man as a plaything of his instincts, emotions, and uncritical attitudes, which shape his behavior in a manner that he does not control. This essentially deterministic view of man, which is further encouraged by the influence of scientific thought, also places much significance on the impact that the family and the social environment have upon the personality of the individual.

There are theoreticians in the field of psychology who struggle with the philosophical implications of this model, resolving the problematic issues according to the persuasion of their particular value systems. On the whole, however, psychology portrays man as a product of internal motivations, which may be extremely base in nature, and external forces with respect to which he is a rather passive object. The effect that this image has had upon society over the years is enormous and far-reaching, but this is a topic that goes beyond the immediate concern of this article.

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**Rabbi Friedman** is director of the Torah Umesorah Counter-Force Program, which provides counseling and therapeutic services to Yeshiva students and their families in New York City.

There is yet another shortcoming of secular psychology, which is of fundamental importance in the application of its principles to human affairs. Psychology assumes that whatever truth it discovers about man's behavior is pertinent to all of mankind. More, even findings derived from experimentation with animals are often considered as useful in achieving a better understanding of the human personality. Many psychologists, because of their commitment to evolutionary theory, regard man and animal as occupying separate but related positions on a continuum of living things. Consequently, they recognize no fundamental distinctions between civilized man and savage, except as they are culturally determined, and certainly they do not acknowledge that the basic character of an individual possesses unique qualities because he is a member of a people that has a peculiar religious and national identity.

### The Beginning Point

Clearly the Torah has a totally different perception of the nature of man. To begin with, the study of man ought properly to be preceded by the study of Creation. Man is a cosmic creature. He constitutes a universe in miniature. In his own constitution, he replicates the dynamic configuration that is inherent in the world of nature. I would suggest, then, that to understand man, one must first understand the fundamentals of creation. If he is to be seen in his real dimensions, he must be perceived from a perspective that encompasses heaven and earth, all of G-d's handiwork.

Historically, three systems have been employed to attain this genuine insight into the character of man: the divine inspiration of prophecy, the metaphysics of philosophy, and the esoteric lore of mysticism. Although the three systems are independent, they are not initially exclusive: it is possible to transform insights from one frame of thought to another. Each system possesses its own conceptual organization, yet their propositions on the topography of man admit of common elements. A legitimate psychology of man, therefore, ought to commence with delineation of one of these systems. First one must answer the questions touching on the emergence of creation in its macrocosmic form; then it is possible to focus on man as the embodiment of the forces and elements that comprise the world. By virtue of this process it becomes possible to identify the temperament, attitudes, and emotions of man with definite elements in the universal scheme of things.

### Building on Existing Systems

It is not necessary to create these systems *ab initio*; they have existed a long time. Moreover, one need not go outside the realm of Torah literature in order to discover them. In the writings of such eminent personages as Sa'adiah Gaon, Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Gabirol,

Yehuda HaLevi, Rambam, Rabbi Yosef Albo, Rabbi Chaim Vital, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, one can find elaborate schema that demonstrate the integral relationship that exists between man and the universe. And from these schema one can ascertain what are the ultimate origins of human personality. It would be considerably beyond the scope of this discussion, however, to engage in a full analysis of human behavior in congruence with a particular schema of man's relationship with the cosmos. What will be presented, rather, is a paradigm of a total personality that is compatible and even congenial with the Torah viewpoint. It does not represent any single schema drawn from our Torah writings but is an improvisation that should be adequate for the needs that actuated this discussion in the first place.

Nor should the reader be indignant if he finds that the schema that is presented here consists of the author's constructs and does not necessarily correspond to the real world of the individual. Among our own eminent writers who dealt with the nature of man there is considerable difference in how the human topography is conceived. One of the key words in this topic—*nefesh*—is subject to different interpretations and resolved into different layers of components. Indeed, the Torah itself seems to use the word differently in different contexts. The words *neshama* and *seichel* also seem to lack a uniform definition. At times they appear to be interchangeable; other times each has its own definition. The author begs forgiveness, therefore, if he employs a degree of originality in presenting a model of man that does not conform precisely with any previous conception. To the best of his ability, the author has tested any novel idea appearing in these pages and found them to be congruent with Torah ideology.

### Dualistic Man

To construct this proposed topographical sketch of man, let us begin with a concept that is axiomatic to Jewish thought—dualism. The universe was created to include both corporeal and incorporeal entities which, on a cosmic scale, are represented by heaven and earth. In man, they take the form of body and soul. These two antithetical components of man cannot interact together unless there is a third component that can bind them together. This is the psyche, and it performs this unifying function because it possesses some of the characteristics of the body and some of the soul.\* Parenthetically, it may be noted that man himself is in a similar position because he is able to bring heaven and earth together.

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\*That the noncorporeal part of man is divisible into several components is a recurrent concept in the literature of Torah *hashkofah*. See, for example, *Midrash Rabba* (14,9); *Shemona Perakim of the Rambam*; *Shaarei Kedusha of Rabbi Chaim Vital* (Part I, Portal 1 and 2); and, especially, *Maharal's Gevuros HaShem* (Chapter 21) which contains a schema analogous to the one proposed here.

This role is epitomized in the person of *Moshe Rabbeinu* who is given the title *Ish Ho-Elokim*—Man of G-d—because he signified the ultimate peak that a human being could reach in securing a union of the earth with the Divine presence.

The psyche, then, is that part of man that is bounded on one side by the soul and on the other by the body. But at these boundaries we again face the same condition of interaction between two dissimilar components, although to a much more moderate degree. At these boundaries, therefore, one discovers elements of human topography which, at the one site, signify interaction between the psyche and the body, and, at the other interface, signify interaction between the psyche and the soul.

### From Structure to Function

From structure let us proceed to function. The bodily functions are well known. The biology of man, his anatomy and physiology, his organs and life processes, have been extensively investigated. In dealing with this aspect of man there is considerable resemblance between the functions of a human being and those of other living things. The functions of the soul are also commonly understood. Through the power of the soul, man is able to choose between good and evil; to discriminate between right and wrong; to employ his intellect in the recognition of G-d's wisdom, goodness, and glory; and to comprehend G-d's unity and His exclusive sovereignty over the universe. The soul gives man the power of will, a sense of awareness, the ability to express his thoughts through speech, and all those lofty aspirations and capabilities that lift him above every other being and crown him as the supreme work of the Creator.

Hence the functions of the psyche, which mediates between the body and the soul, must lie somewhere between these two categories. Thus to the psyche we can ascribe such human features as temperament, certain passions and emotions, imagination—aspects of human experiences that surpass purely brutelike qualities, yet do not reach into the realm of the noble and the sublime. At this point we can also delineate the boundary functions. Where the psyche meets the body, we encounter the operation of psychosomatic phenomena, the influence of the psyche on bodily processes, as well as the reverse, the influence of bodily processes on the psyche. Where the psyche meets the soul, we meet those aspects of human behavior in which the natural temperament of the individual interacts with the influence of the soul, the outcome of this engagement determining the character of the person.

This depiction of human topography is not complete, however, inasmuch as it offers a passive rather than a dynamic picture of personality. Man may be perceived as a field in which various forces operate. In some

instances these forces are mutually supportive and in others they are antagonistic to each other. In his ideal state, all of man's activities are governed by the wisdom and intellect of the soul, which acts of its own free volition. When this condition exists, the other elements of man—those associated with his psyche and with his body—carry out subordinate responsibilities in helping the soul fulfill its own divine purpose.

Ordinarily, however, this blissful order does not exist. A physical illness or disability may deter the soul from performing its proper functions. Of greater significance, an undisciplined psyche can make incursions against the sovereignty of the soul and succeed either in defiling its purity or unseating it from its throne. Conversely, a soul may incur its own deficiencies through lapse of will or cloudy intellect, which in turn will negatively affect the well-being of the psyche. Mediated by the psyche, the soul in a sense determines the physical health of the individual as well as other more direct influences.

This last concept must be understood with a certain amount of reservation since there are individuals who inhabit the earth whose souls have long since become encrusted by their sins and yet they continue to enjoy splendid health. On the other side of the coin, people who are undoubtedly saintly may suffer from dire illness. This paradox can be resolved in more than one way, but this work will not engage in such intricate discussions.

### One Life-Force For All Functions

The elementary topographical model of the soul presented earlier needs refinement on other grounds as well. All three regions of the person—body, psyche, and soul—owe their being to a divine life-giving force which vitalizes them. There is a classic debate among philosophers of the soul, discussed by the *Rambam* in *Shemona Perakim*, as to whether the life-giving force of each function is separate and distinct, or whether a single such force inspires all of these various functions. The author makes no pretense of being a deciding opinion on this controversy. For the sake of perspicuity, however, one would prefer to employ the *Rambam's* assertion that there is only one such life force, which emanates from the soul and pervades all other regions of the person.

As a construct, this position is extremely useful in rationalizing the interactions that take place within the person and emphasizing the essential unitary nature of human behavior.

In summary, even in this simplified sketch, which does not explore in detail man's relationship to cosmic forces, there emerges a far more exalted concept of man than that which appears in the most humanistic school of secular psychology—presenting a radical difference between the two models with profound and far-reaching implications. Rather than stressing man's

insistant drives and the base passions which emanate from an individual's corporeal substance, the Torah places its accent on man's sublime qualities and emphasizes his capacity to overcome the invasion of his bodily desires. In this titanic struggle between good and evil that rages within each individual, the psyche serves as the chief battleground where the ceaseless clashes over man's soul occur.

17

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כשר

מנהל רוחני  
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א"ה

# A Primer in the Effective Use of Put-Downs

## Targeting in For the Kill

As defined by my trusty dictionary, a "put-down" is an attempt to slight, belittle or snub someone. The objective is to subtly erode the individual's self worth until he or she becomes unnerved, emasculated, debilitated or totally inoperative.

The problem is to find a target that not only will allow us to exercise and develop this skill at will, but also one who can't or won't strike back.

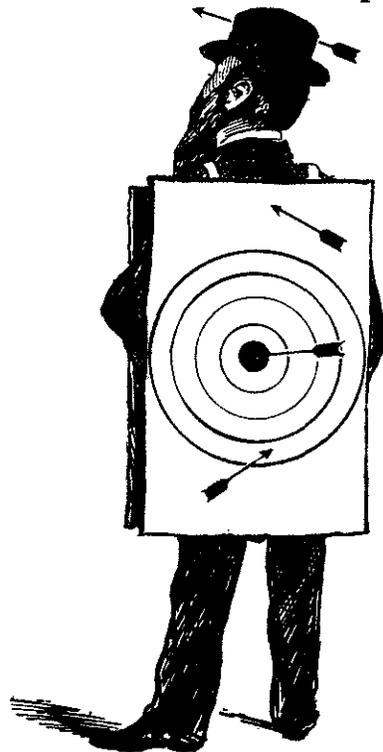
Let's examine the possibilities. Try a put-down on your wife ("You drive nicely—for a woman") or on your children ("You finally got a 100 on your math test—40, 30, 30!") and the joyous family you once knew will slowly become cold and critical. You will find your home a place to eat, sleep, and then run away from.

Try put-downs on your employees or employer ("Joe. Congratulations on your becoming vice-president! Until you became one, I thought it was a tremendous achievement"), and you stand to rupture a valuable business association. Since we make our living from the cooperation of these people . . . we'd be foolish at best, or idiotic at worst, to use put-downs in business.

If we were to exercise put-downs on our friends and colleagues, we'd just find ourselves in a slowly narrowing social circle. But worse, we always risk someone turning the tables on us and putting *us* down, a very unpleasant experience. This leaves us with just one group who are both vulnerable and accessible, people whose position and temperament allows us to put them down with no fear of retaliation—the *klei kodesh*—rabbis, principals, teachers, *shochtim*, organizational people, and the like. Since these are dedicated, service-oriented and usually kind-hearted, we could even fool ourselves into believing that they don't have any feelings . . . and they don't care! Voila! We have suddenly discovered the perfect target.

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Avrohom Mayer is the pseudonym of a person with many year's involvement in chinuch. This article is a result of hearing a colleague being put down once too often.



To begin with, we will practice put-downs in third person, to a friend, or a small group. Eventually, we will learn how to deliver put-downs in public, such as at a board meeting or a social gathering. The height of our skill will be when we can put down someone face to face. When we can do this nonchalantly without any compunctions or guilt feelings, we will know that we have mastered the art!

As a general rule when putting someone down, try to convey a feeling of concern: We don't mean any harm . . . to the contrary, our intent is that of helpfulness and friendship. Make sure that your tone of voice and mannerisms express the same genuine friendship and camaraderie.

For beginners, we will start with comparatively easy examples. Let's begin with lesson number one.

### LESSON ONE

*"The principal (Rabbi, teacher) is paid, so he doesn't need any acknowledgement (praise or recognition)."*

Or as I once heard so eloquently expressed,

*"The hired help don't need no thanks . . . they should feel lucky we pay them."*

If this statement is said with enough conviction, not only can we make the point sound logical, but we can even convince our listeners that if we do express appreciation, the Rabbi (etc.) may even begin to think he's good and eventually ask for a raise!

Hard-nosed, bottom-line businessmen are learning that every form of acknowledgement, from a simple thank you letter, a note to the wife, having their employees' names published . . . small gifts and bonuses increase productivity. That is not an ethical, moral or even humanistic approach; rather a simply effective one: to get better productivity, acknowledge your people. In a *Wall Street Journal* article (December 6, 1982) entitled, "To Raise Productivity Try to Say Thank You," the author writes: "If management would begin thinking in terms of doing things for their people instead of to them, we would see productivity increase off the scales."

But do we need industry to tell us what our life experiences dictate? Anyone who has even minimal experience with people knows that every person, regardless of how lofty or lowly his station in life, needs recognition for what he does. How paradoxical that the one complaint voiced by *klei kodesh* more than any other is "I am taken for granted."

The *Rebbe* who spends considerable time preparing for his students and learning with them, the couple that opens its home to *Shabbos* guests week after week, the Rabbi who goes out of his way to service some particular need, the principal who involves himself in projects not directly related to the school, the organizational worker who takes humiliation in stride . . . all these are lumped together and shrugged off with a flip of the hand and a "So what? It's their job."

Whether the achievement of these *klei kodesh* are entirely, partially, or not at all their job has no bearing on their right to be recognized and acknowledged, or with the very pragmatic, clear-cut fact that most everyone who is acknowledged will work better.

We may strive to raise ourselves above the need for recognition for our good deeds, and we look to our *klei kodesh* to exemplify the highest attainment in character, where they're above such needs. But not all are *malochim* (angels), and try as they might to overcome their human shortcomings, they will still react as human beings. And the fact that some *klei kodesh* actually do not need recognition, do not want it, and do not expect it, does not exempt the rest of us from the basic decency of expressing a kind word now and then.

In a sense, many of our *klei kodesh* and thus our organizations are caught in a cycle of thanklessness. Parents don't appreciate the devoted work of school officers (they chose to do it, no one forced them), the officers don't appreciate the principals (after all, he's paid to do the work anyway), the principal doesn't express appreciation for the teacher (if I don't get it, I don't give it), and so on, down the line.

(In the midst of writing this article, a neighbor's child came into the house and told me something that his *Rebbe* taught him that morning. *Moshe Rabbeinu* did not hit the water for the plague of blood because of his appreciation for the water; and then the *Rebbe* added,

"From here we learn that even when one does their job—as did the water in floating the basket of Moshe—thanks and appreciation are in place!")

## LESSON TWO

"If they meant it *L'shem Shamayim*, they wouldn't ask for a raise"

and,

"What does he mean he can't stay late! I volunteer my time; why can't he volunteer his time?"

The implication in these put-downs are simple. I (the volunteer) work for the institution *L'shem Shamayim*—for the sake of Heaven. I don't get paid. They (the employees) do get paid; therefore their devotion is questionable.

First, let's clearly define the parameters of the concept of volunteering. The dictionary defines volunteer as anyone who enters into any service of his free will. Free will means free to choose how he wants to serve, when he wishes to serve, with whom he wishes to serve, and under what conditions he wishes to serve. Just because you decide to volunteer doesn't mean anyone else must, or should do likewise. You can't be *moser nefesh* (lit: give away your life) with someone else's *nefesh*.

Second, in many situations there may be a large measure of *L'shem Shamayim* in the individual's decision to serve where he is, doing what he is doing. For example, a teacher in the Oshkosh Hebrew Day School is doing his share, or even more, by having traded off a lucrative business career in the N.Y. area for teaching. Be careful before you flaunt *L'shem Shamayim* because no one has the right to enforce dedication. We can and should motivate, inspire, role-model, but after everything is said and done, you can't legislate dedication.

There are many ways to induce people to volunteer and to work along with us. The best is to create a climate of growth, self respect and excitement. However, the well-meaning chairperson, in his/her desire to see the project completed, often emits just the opposite signals—"push" instead of motivate; "demand" instead of inspire; you "have to" instead of "please can you." . . . If, instead of generating an uplifting and enjoyable climate, we promote a degrading and demoralizing one, we only have ourselves to blame when some people do not choose to work along with us!

## LESSON THREE

"He can't get any other job anyway, so why pay him more?"

and,

"If he would be capable, he would be a dentist (accountant, businessman, salesman) not a teacher (Rabbi, principal, shamosh).

This is a great put-down because it kills three birds, not two, simultaneously.

1. It deprecates the ability of the individual (if he'd be any good, would he be a teacher?).

2. It puts down the position (what type of a job is that for a Jewish boy?).

3. It sets up the justification to take advantage of someone.

But we can go even one step further and hone this put-down until we make the taking advantage of someone not only justifiable, but an obligation—of course, all in the name of doing good for our organization. We can even develop this into a *mitzva* . . . saving every dollar of the institution's scarce money . . . totally failing to realize that it might be a convenient cop-out for us not to raise the additional needed money. What easier way is there to "save a dollar" than to refuse to raise salary?

If we don't respect the position, if we put down the person who is supposed to inspire us, if we make asking for a raise a dehumanizing experience, if we make people who are *klei kodesh* grovel to get benefits that we take for granted ourselves, we make it unduly difficult for them to do their job effectively. People tend to respect themselves in the way that we teach them. If we constantly put down people, they often oblige us by assuming that corresponding position. But even if the person is beyond the power of suggestion that he is insignificant, unimportant, undeserving, and so easily replaceable, what about our own obligation to respect (and while we're at it, what's wrong with "revere"?) our *klei kodesh*? You either honestly respect the person and the position . . . and express that respect in every method of communication . . . or you don't. You simply cannot have it both ways.

Leadership, inspiration, and the teaching of Torah require the delicate, intangible ingredient called "*yachas*," or rapport. It is the sensitive relationship between teacher and student, the invisible flow of chemistry between *rebbe* and *talmid*, Rabbi and congregant, that develops and matures only in the climate of great mutual respect. You can't handle it like so many yards of fabric or so many pounds of metal. Torah work in all its ramifications—the Rabbi from his pulpit, the principal as an educational leader, the classroom teacher, the administrator and all who work for organizations, have so many inherent difficulties in performing their work that they cannot possibly fulfill their potential if we don't at least support them on every level. To participate in putting down these people is to torpedo the very foundations on which institutions of Torah are built.

Strange as it may seem, some lay leaders do not like to see independence on the part of the Rabbis or teachers, and counter it with further put-down. How bad can this cavalier treatment of *klei kodesh* become? How much damage can it do to the institution? As a good friend once told me, "Sometimes the rules become very simple: incompetence is rewarded by advancement; excellence is rewarded by insecurity; and loyalty is rewarded by casual dismissal."

To be sure, there may be problems with personnel, and these problems deserve careful and thorough dis-

cussion and decisions. Then they merit action that is timely, proper, open, fair, and completely above board. Put-downs serve none of these purposes. They are degrading, demeaning, deprecating and cowardly.

## LESSON FOUR

*"My wife saw the Rebbetzin buying a new dress"*

and

*"The Rabbi's wife doesn't lift a finger for the school."*

This put-down is so subtle, so cute, yet it needs little explanation. They—the *klei kodesh*—are gluttons for punishment. Yes, they deserve to live . . . but not much more than that. The fishbowl syndrome means that because you're *klei kodesh*, you're always on display. . . . You belong to everyone, to anyone, and at all times! Because it is my money that pays your salary (usually said indignantly by someone who contributes little or nothing), you, your life, your belongings, your privacy, and your freedom . . . all belong to me.

The Rebbetzin has the right and the need as does her family, as does the Rabbi, to a personal and private life. Moreover, that privacy may well be providing the single oasis of sanity that enables her husband to perform his job effectively. But it goes so much further. If we want our people not only to survive, but to grow, we must be careful not only to prevent anyone from abusing them but to be careful to see that they don't burn themselves out. The hallmark of Torah work is giving of oneself, giving of one's heart . . . and you must take note of how people in caring professions tend to use themselves up, and within a few years burn themselves out.

Self-confidence is the very stuff that enables an average person to undertake and achieve great things. The ability to open new classes, to fund new buildings, to expand to additional congregants, to start new projects, are all the direct result of our *klei kodesh's* confidence in themselves. Not every *Rebbe*, not every fund-raiser, not every principal or teacher is exceptionally gifted in innovating programs or in persevering through difficult times. It has been said, "The exceptional person is usually a person of average ability who has an unaverage attitude to things that are seemingly impossible." Most often we—colleagues, parents, board members, congregants, officers—can make even some of our otherwise ordinary *klei kodesh* into exceptional people by infusing them with a tremendous amount of self confidence.

### *Shortchanging Klal Yisroel*

Whether I or my colleagues resent put-downs (and of course, we do) is not the real issue. This is the moral, ethical and *mussar* concept, and at this point, I'll leave that to others. It is the shortchanging of *Klal Yisroel's* motivators and activists, which must effect the quality of Torah observance, that really hurts. As just one example, so much of the "musical chair" position-

changes, whereby good people leave one position to fill another, may be prevented if we express confidence and respect rather than generate doubt and insecurity.

Moreover—and this I address to those of you who take pride in being hard-nosed industrialists or office czars, who are incurably contemptuous of all who are on the receiving end of checks bearing your signature—take note that people who have made a life-long study of behavior modification tell us that we can—just by using words—effectively upgrade a person's self-image. By using an abundance of honest compliments, by not taking anyone or anything for granted, by expressing a positive expectancy, we can considerably improve almost anyone's performance.

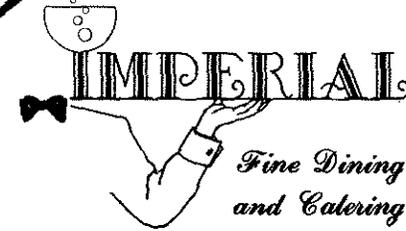
Now—especially for all who see themselves as watchdog committeemen making sure that the organization's money is well spent—doesn't it make sense to spend something as uncostly as warm words of praise, when we know that such actions will produce positive results?

The truth is that most of us deep down do have a healthy respect for the dedication and selflessness of our *klei kodesh*. Some of us may secretly envy *klei kodesh* who have traded off some of the "good life" for a more meaningful one. But the temptation, while sitting at a bar-mitzva or in a car, is to *kibbutz klei kodesh*, to be cute; to, for just a moment, be a hero with a smart put-down in front of our friends. And for this moment of glory, for the thrill of blasting a shoot-from-the-hip critique, we risk losing the very quality so precious to us—inspired Torah leadership.

The next time you're tempted to use a put-down, instead, find a member of the *klei kodesh* whose work you take for granted—the *Rebbe* who so lovingly and laboriously prepared the weekly *Parsha* sheet; the principal who cared about a special child; the Rabbi who taught a class well; the administrator whose sensitivity saved face for someone . . . and compliment them. Unexpectedly, honestly and wholeheartedly. Do it in person or by letter. Do it privately—and when you have mastered the art, do it publicly. Say something that conveys the feeling that you really believe in the person, and in his work, and in his abilities! You may surprise yourself and find that you both grow from the experience. T

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Culled from Chassidic literature, notably *Sfas Emes on Torah*,  
by EYTAN LEVI, translated by PESACH H. KONSTAM.

G-d commanded the Jews to count the days between the second day of Pesach and Shavuot, one by one, together constituting the *Sefira* period. These days measure the time elapsed between the departure of a motley group of former slaves from the depravity of Mitzrayim (Egypt) and their emergence as a nation at Sinai. *Sefira* is not merely a historical commemoration of the original period of Jewish development. It is a period that embraces an approach to serving the Creator, a period filled with potential for growth of the individual Jew as well as the nation as a whole. To appreciate this potential, we must begin with *Yetzias Mitzrayim* (*Exodus from Egypt*).

### Remember ... What?

The Torah has a vast number of fundamental *mitzvos* (*tzitzis, tefillin, Shabbos*) that are described as being *זכר ליציאת מצרים* in remembrance of leaving Egypt—"tagged," as it were, to summon up our awareness of the Exodus. These *mitzvos* do not recall our bitter enslavement there; the phrase does not bear this interpretation. Rather they focus on our *taking leave* of bondage. One wonders, what need is there in such reminders? The contrast in the status of slaves as opposed to that of free men—whether as individuals or as a people—is so all-pervasive and so obvious, why must we continually remind ourselves that we underwent this change?

Yet the words of the *Haggadah* also continually charge us anew: "In every generation, a person is obligated to view himself as if he left Mitzrayim."

One can assume that the need for

**Rabbi Levi**, who studied in various *yeshivos* and *kollelim* in New York and Jerusalem, is currently in private business in Brooklyn. **Pesach H. Konstam**, business manager of JO, wrote a chapter on Rabbi Meir Shapiro in *THE TORAH WORLD*.

this constant reminder must be associated with G-d's reasons for choosing to redeem us from Egypt in the spectacular manner recorded in the Torah, and this undoubtedly was designed to inspire us and to direct our attention to higher spiritual goals. It is of this spiritual aspect of our changed status that we must be constantly reminded. This emphasis is understandable, for: "All is in the hands of G-d, except the fear of G-d." While G-d could remove us physically from the geographic Mitzrayim and we remain forever free of Egyptian domination, only we can remove ourselves from the spiritual bondage imposed upon us in the individual Mitzrayims of our soul, the everpresent roadblocks that are in the way of our deep recognition of G-d.

## SEFIRA INSIGHTS

# Counting Toward Freedom

### The Mitzrayim Syndrome

What was there about Mitzrayim that casts so long a shadow over our existence, requiring reminders of the Exodus to this very day?

According to *Chazal*, Mitzrayim was a land from which no slave was ever able to escape. In our times, it is difficult to conceive of a mere prison, let alone an entire land, from which no slave ever slipped out. It brings to mind impossibly complex surveillance systems, endless fences and armies of guards. But there was far more to Mitzrayim than barbed

wire. The basis of the slave system of Mitzrayim was an indoctrination process reinforced by what was perceived as the imperatives of human nature. Indeed, life in Mitzrayim was a total immersion in the physical aspects of life, which on the aristocratic level offered every allure in the world. Slaves harbored no doubt that it was better to serve as a slave in Mitzrayim than to be a prince elsewhere. In fact, to them it was simply inconceivable to live elsewhere; impossible to continue without at least being in close proximity to the self-indulgences of Mitzrayim ... such was the extent of the bondage in Mitzrayim. When the Jewish people left Egypt, they were not crossing an imaginary line drawn by political commissions in a far off capital. They were disengaging themselves from the cultural, mental and emotional underpinnings of their lives—from material and sensual involvement that was ancient Egypt.

### Completing the Process

The culmination of the process that was *Yetzias Mitzrayim* took place at Sinai when the Torah was bestowed upon us as a people. *Chazal* state: "The only free man is he who toils in Torah." As long as one is hobbled by the ties of worldly allurements, freedom cannot exist. Only when one is dedicated completely to Torah are his slaves' shackles destroyed. It follows that our emancipation could only be complete at the moment when we received the Torah, and the first of the ten commandments, *אנכי ד' אלוקיך אשר הוצאתיך ממצרים*—"I am Hashem your G-d, who brought you out of Mitzrayim," consummated *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. This was the Jewish people's declaration of independence, expressed as it was by G-d Himself. (Incidentally, one can now understand why G-d declares Himself in the first commandment as "Your G-d, who took you out of Egypt" rather than "who created Heaven and Earth," for this very declaration

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was an integral part of the Exodus, actually bringing the process to completion.)

The Exodus from Mitzrayim and all the spirituality that it entailed occurred with the barest minimum of preparation or groundwork by the Jews; the *mitzvos* of *mila* and *korban Pesach* served as their sole merit for redemption. Basically they were still bound by the materialistic constraints of Mitzrayim. Indeed, G-d lifted them out of Mitzrayim ביד חזקה, with a "strong arm," overriding the fact that the Jews were ill-prepared for spiritual elevation. Once this had been bestowed upon them from Above, it was now incumbent upon the Jewish people to achieve independently that which had been

wrought for them by external force; they had to internalize their status as free men. And indeed, in the 49 days between Pesach and *Kabbolas HaTorah*, the Jews accomplished this awesome task, so that on the 50th day, they were worthy of the Torah and freedom.

In fact, the *Zohar* comments that *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is mentioned fifty times in the Torah, corresponding to the forty nine days bridging Pesach with Shavuot, culminating on the fiftieth day of Receiving the Torah . . . fifty degrees of elevation from the confines of corporeality to the total spirituality of hearing G-d's command directly from His mouth, completing the Exodus process on Shavuot.

## The Potential Within

The initial *Yetzias Mitzrayim* 3300 years ago has endowed every Jew with the potential of freeing himself from the confines of a material existence. This penchant for freedom is so ingrained in the Jew that the Izhbitzer Rebbe, Reb Mordechai Yoseif זצ"ל, declared that if one falls victim to a desire and is unable to control himself from indulging in it, he violates the Biblical command: "Thou shall not return by (in) this way to Egypt," for *this* was an essential aspect of the slavery of Egypt: an addiction to the desires of this world until it appeared inconceivable and, indeed, impossible to live without yielding to them. The liberation of the Jews from Egypt marked their liberation from these mental and spiritual constraints.

The Jew's unique ability to lift himself above material concerns is renewed in the *Sefira* period every year, in every age and generation, beginning on Pesach.

## The Power of the Free

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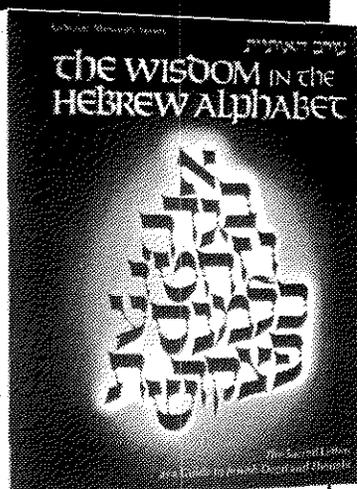
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CLASS ADV.

# Divine Manifestation in the Holocaust

## A Speculation

### Introduction

His students asked Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, "Why were Jewish enemies deserving of destruction in that generation [of Esther]?"

He said to them: "[Let me hear what] you [have to] say."

They said to him, "Because they enjoyed the feast of that evil man [Achashveirosh]."

"If so—those of Shushan should have been decreed for death—those of the whole world should not have been killed!"

They said to him, "[Let us hear what] you [have to] say!"

He said to them, "Because they had bowed to the idol [in the days of Nevuchadnetsar]."

They said to him, "And is there then condoning of such a matter [as actual idolatry]?"

He said to them, "They had only acted outwardly, so the Holy one, Blessed Be He, only acted with them outwardly, and this is what is meant in the verse (Eichah 3), 'For He did not intend it from His heart.'"

Megilla 12a

In addition to the central lesson of the causes of the danger in the days of Esther, there are two other important lessons we can learn from this Chazal.

The first is that our Sages were so deeply concerned with the well-being of Klal Yisroel, that they used the

euphemism "Jewish enemies" even when referring to a mere threat to Jewry that had taken place more than four hundred years before. They were unable to pronounce the word "destruction" in the same sentence as the words "Jewish people."

The second lesson to be learned is from the conversation itself.

The students ask a question of Rabbi Shimon, who obviously has an answer which he will eventually give—yet he responds only with "you say."

The students then attempt an answer, which proves unsatisfactory, and yet Rabbi Shimon does not volunteer to answer. Only when the students have seen that they have nothing satisfactory to say and have asked Rabbi Shimon for an answer a second time, does he give them his answer.

More than four hundred years after the story of Esther, our sages were still struggling for an answer to a threatened Jewish destruction.

And Rabbi Shimon, who had an answer, had to first teach his students how difficult it is to find answers, and how hesitant one must be in giving an answer—even more than four hundred years later.

With these lessons in mind, perhaps we can approach the subject of Jewish suffering with something that we have no right to call more than—a speculation.

### A Destruction Magnified by Technology

To be sure, the terrible destruction Jewry suffered in Europe forty years ago was not without precedent. Most European countries, especially Germany, have long histories of Jewish persecution and bloodshed. Nonetheless, there were profound differences between the Holocaust and the previous persecutions.

Outstanding among these differences was the sheer magnitude of

Rabbi Perr is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Derech Ayson of Far Rockaway, N.Y.

the destruction, a magnitude made possible by the great advances made in science and technology. If not for the developments in these fields, mass murder and cremation could not have been possible, and such vast numbers of people could not have been destroyed.

At first glance, one might conclude from this that the advances of science were not for the ultimate benefit of mankind. Perhaps man should have been more humble, more complacent, and been satisfied with the world as it was. Perhaps, one might also suggest, by making

these advances, man has not only created the physical means for his own destruction, but has also, in some way, created a metaphysical imperative for his own destruction. . . . A look from another perspective, however, suggests a somewhat different approach to this phenomenon.

### The Greatness of "Anshei Knesses Hagedolah"

The Talmud refers to the Sages who lived at the beginning of the Second Temple period as "Anshei

*Knesses Hagadolah*, the Men of the Great Assembly." They are called "The Great Assembly," the Talmud explains (*Yoma 69b*), because they succeeded in restoring meaning to the two of the three praises of G-d that had been incorporated into *tefilla* and then were dropped. These praises, "the great, the mighty, the awesome," were the only praises of G-d spoken by *Moshe Rabbeinu* in the Torah; and for approximately nine hundred years following his use of these words, they were part of the prayers uttered by all Jews. But with the destruction and desecration of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and the captivity and degradation of the Jewish people, two of these praises, "the mighty" and "the awesome," no longer appeared to be true. By contrast, "the great," which refers to the greatness of G-d as manifested in creation, remained unchanged. In the world of nature, G-d's "greatness" was still manifest.

"The mighty" and "the awesome" were no longer evident, for the world had entered a new period when G-d no longer showed Himself to be mighty and awesome as previously understood. How can we call Him "awesome," asked *Yirmiyahu*, when heathens are trumpeting in His Temple: (See *Yirmiya*, 32.) And Daniel wondered: When gentiles exile his children from their Land and enslave them, where is His might? (See *Daniel*, 9.) And so these Torah-hallowed words could no longer be used in prayer, because above all, G-d values man's integrity, and He does not want man to speak to Him in an "untruthful" manner, expressing praise that he does not recognize.

The *Anshei Knesses Hagadolah*, however, restored the praises "mighty" and "awesome" to the prayers. While G-d's might was no longer in evidence as Daniel had understood it, the *Anshei Knesses Hagadolah* made it clear that this attribute also referred to the great silence of G-d—G-d's silence in the face of the destruction and degradation of the Jewish people, which was an exercise in Divine

self-control as we would express it in human terms. Maintaining silence in the face of the horrors perpetrated up on His children was indeed a show of unusual strength, in keeping with the dictum: "Who is mighty? He who conquers his desire" (*Avos IV, 1*).

The same was true in regard to "the awesome." As the *Anshei Knesses Hagadolah* explained it, it does not refer exclusively to awesomely inspiring acts of retribution against the enemies of G-d and Israel, as *Yirmiyahu* had understood it. It refers as well to the survival of the Jewish people in a hostile and murderous world. Jewish resilience in face of discrimination and oppression, Jewish renewal following pillage and pogrom, Jewish rebirth after bloodshed and death, are truly awesome and it is in this way that G-d now manifests His awesomeness in the world.

### Beyond Prayer

These interpretations by the *Anshei Knesses Hagadolah*, however, should not be viewed as relating only to the use of the three praises in prayer. These praises refer to three aspects of G-d's ongoing relationship with Jewry—a relationship that must exist constantly, even if some of us recognize it only intermittently. These deeper insights were important, then, so that all three qualities could in fact continue to be manifested in the world, for in a way, our recognition of His Divine relationship with the world perpetuates it. . . . Thus, as the Talmud explains, the *Anshei Knesses Hagadolah* earned their title of "*Gadolah—Great*" for "having restored the Divine Crown to its ancient glory"; for having restored references to the previous praise for G-d's manifested glory.

### His Greatness in the Natural World

Since the time of Creation, G-d's greatness has been manifest along with His might and His awesomeness. Until recent times, G-d's Hand

had continued to be evident in the world to the same degree through the greatness of nature, through the power of His silence in the face of Jewish persecution, and through the awesomely miraculous survival of the Jewish people.

With the advance of science and technology, however, the inspiration for these three linked praises have become unequal to each other, as the greatness of G-d has become yet more dramatically apparent than it had been previously; for as the doors of the secrets of nature are being pried open, man is able to catch a glimpse into the macrocosmos of space and the microcosmos of matter. What was previously understood as a closed planetary configuration measured in millions of miles has through the advances of science exploded into a universe filled with galaxies that are measured in terms of hundreds of millions of light years. In his own world, man's knowledge both of the animate and of the inanimate rapidly is converging into one science; and his insights into the nature of matter has penetrated to the borders of antimatter.

As man has enlarged his understanding of the greatness of G-d, so has he thereby enlarged the very manifestation itself; for G-d's greatness is manifest in our ability to perceive the greatness of creation. There is, however, room to suggest that more than this was also taking place.

### The Enlargement

The advances of science and technology, which brought about an enlargement in the understanding of the greatness of G-d, may also have forced a greater manifestation of the silence of G-d to come about, to ascertain that all three praises remain equal in their degree of manifestation; for to whatever extent a particular manifestation is less than that of the others, to that same degree, it is also suffering a diminution. And this imbalance must be corrected. The only way in which a

greater manifestation of the silence of G-d could come about is for G-d to remain silent in the face of even greater provocation than in the past—that is, silent in the face of the Holocaust, which can be described as the most heinous crime in history.

\*This discussion is offered as a frame of reference for assuming a cosmic view of events. It does not in any way absolve the perpetrators of these inhuman crimes of their responsibility for their actions.

And it was an overwhelming silence, a staggering silence. It is hard to believe that flowers continued to bloom and birds continued to sing, while the crematoria performed their ghastly work.\*

If we carry this thought further, we can assume that, to maintain balance, there must also be in the offing an expansion in the third of the Divine manifestations, the awesomeness of G-d, which expresses itself through Jewish survival. And

if our interpretation is correct, this portends a great revitalization of the Jewish people; for how else is one to understand a heightened sense of survival if not in terms of revitalization!

Perhaps we have begun to witness the beginnings of this revitalization. May we be privileged to witness it in its entirety, with the redemption of *Klal Yisroel*, quickly in our days.

□



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# A Book Review Article

by Dr. Joseph  
Kaminetsky

**Why Have You Chosen Me?** Poems  
by Bernard Dov Milians. 164 pages.  
Shengold Publishers. \$11.95.

The *Netziv* (Rabbi Naftoli Tvi Yehuda Berlin), in his introduction to his commentary on Torah, explains why many of the *meforshim* refer to Torah as *shirah*—a song, a poem. This is because of the conciseness and beauty of its language; its frequent use of *melitzah*—dramatic figures of speech; and the lilt and cadence of its verses. All of which inspire us to the highest ideals and standards of true Jewish living.

These aspects of Torah come to mind as one peruses this most interesting collection of poems by Bernard Dov Milians. For, from all the different themes about which he writes, there emerges a deep-seated love for Torah and Jewish ideals, as well as purely human values. Moreover, the careful reader will be motivated to apply the lessons these poems convey to his own situation and tailor them, so to speak, to his particular needs.

## Arranged According to Theme

The themes are more or less arranged in clusters and cover many subjects: Jewish suffering and the inhumanity of man; love for our fellow-man; *emunah* (faith in Hashem); some great Jewish personalities in the Bible; the concept of prayer and *tefillos*; *Tehillim*, and the

Dr. Kaminetsky is founding president—now emeritus—of Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools.

inspiring seasons and moments in Jewish life.

The net result is that, instead of reading long essays on these themes, Milians' poems—full of sensitivity and, sometimes, pathos—present them in short uplifting form. We have here, then, a *miut hamachazik es hamerubah*, a brief version of many vital Jewish concepts. A most pleasant experience. The following lines from one of his poems (AS DARK RETIRES, p. 161) sums it all up for us:

"While other men immerse the soul  
In doleful  
Rue and ravage,  
I watch the sun  
Of dawn and noon and twilight wonder  
Set hope ablaze,  
And praise  
The ways  
Of Heaven."

Seldom have I seen or read a book of poetry that concentrates as this volume does on Judaism and Jews. Even in his purely human poems, one finds continuous creative rephrasing of Biblical verses, *maamarei Chazal* and Jewish idioms. He is a Jewish poet to the core.

## Plaintiff of His People

He, too, often takes on the great qualities of Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev and becomes the plaintiff of his people before the High Court, pleading for them and entreating Him in their behalf. Not only is this evident in the opening, stirring poem on the holocaust "Why Have You Chosen Me?" (p. 11), which gives the book its name, but also in "Why Do You Teach Me Love?" (p. 20), when he cries out:

"Teach me to hate like other men,  
In diplomatic wise,  
In du-faced guise  
Of men of motley hue  
And ism prism  
Who Seek but to destroy the Jew! . . ."  
(p. 21)

All of these thoughts reach a genuine crescendo in "Was It Anger?" (P. 17) through these powerful lines:

"Loved One, tell me:  
What befell me,  
Was it anger for my sin?  
It was You Alone, no other!  
Ask my heart  
That cries within.  
It was You Alone, no other,  
And has ever, ever been  
You Alone! . . ."

It is quite evident that Milians is a master of poetic language, creating new words and forming powerful word images. His cadences, rhythms and rhymes vary to fit the mood and bring the uplifting of the spirit that one expects from poetry.

## Useful Tool for Teaching

This extraordinary collection will not only delight and move the reader who enjoys poetry, but I can envisage some concrete educational approaches and techniques which the book can provide. (Imagine designating utilitarian use to a book of poetry!) For instance: a class or adult group, after studying the prayer "Shomer Yisrael", would read his poem of the same name (p. 148):

". . . Guardian, G-d of Israel,—  
Shomer goy echod—,  
Guard our oneness in Your one  
Lest Your remnant be undone . . .  
Keep us Thine and salvage whole  
The tattered shatters of a soul  
That cries its Faith in tears of blood:  
'The Lord is One. Hashem Echod! . . .'"

After a *mussar schmuess* on *hashgacha prattis*, these lines from "If Heaven Wills" could well round out the talk:

"How high the eye  
—If Heaven wills—  
How tall  
The small,  
The fallen!  
How quick the cold,  
The breathless-old,  
Renews,  
Imbues  
With breathing! . . ." (p. 110)

In this great age of *baalei teshuva*, who need our guidance and inspiration, who long to see and feel the beauty of our ideals—for them especially I commend this fine book of poetry. ✠

*We mourn the passing of  
Mr. William Lefkowitz, ז"ל  
ר' זאב דוב בן שמואל לעפקוויץ, ז"ל  
and extend our condolences to his son  
Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz,  
Executive Director of  
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and to the rest of the family:  
Mrs. Rochel Lefkowitz  
Rabbi Simcha Lefkowitz  
Mrs. Feigie Shuh שיחיי  
May they be spared any further sorrow*

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## The "Opsheren"

Insights into a  
custom associated  
with "Sefira" days.

Photo by CAROL GOOTTER



The difference is unmistakable. A short while ago, he was a baby, and suddenly he looks like a *cheder yingele*—a little yeshiva student. His sweet little face seems to have taken on a special radiance that wasn't there moments ago. What has caused this instantaneous transformation? The "Opsheren"!

An *Opsheren* is not just an ordinary haircut. It marks the third birthday in a little boy's life—a birthday that, according to a tradition within Judaism, carries special significance. To better understand this important milestone in a child's life, let us retreat for a moment to a period of unusual glory in a person's life—the nine months before his birth.

*Chazal* (the rabbis of the Talmud) tell us that never is a person in a more favored status than he is before his birth, for during those days a *Mallach*—an angel—is his Rebbi, and teaches him the entire Torah. At birth, however, a *Mallach* taps him on the mouth, and he immediately forgets all the Torah he has learned (*Nida* 30b).

### Mourning the Loss

This, we are told, is one of the

Rabbi Blau, a Monsey resident, devotes himself to full-time Torah study.

reasons for the "*Shalom Zachor*," the Friday night gathering in honor of a newborn son. The *Shalom Zachor* is a *Nichum Aveilim*, when visitors comfort the bereaved infant: Is any loss greater to a person than that of knowledge of the entire Torah? It is therefore customary to serve chick peas and beans at a *Shalom Zachor*—foods customarily served to mourners (just as Yaakov *Avinu* served his brother Eisav at the passing of their grandfather Avraham *Avinu*).

The question then arises: why don't we comfort the child immediately after birth instead of waiting until *Shabbos*, a time when we ordinarily do not comfort the mourner, for *Shabbos* is a day designated for happiness rather than grief?

It is related that a *Mallach* offered to reveal esoteric aspects of Torah to the Vilna Gaon, but the Gaon refused. Torah is different from all other fields of knowledge, for possession of Torah knowledge is secondary to the major goal, which is *עמילות בתורה*—toiling in Torah. The primary aim and value of learning Torah, reflected in the *bracha* לעסוק בתורה, is the effort exerted while learning. The Vilna Gaon rejected the *Mallach's* offer, for he recognized such knowledge as being in the

same category as Torah learned before birth—Torah proficiency acquired as a gift. It is a truly valuable gift, but a gift nonetheless, and, therefore, not as valuable as that which one learns through his own labors. (Perhaps, in the same vein, we can understand Yaakov *Avinu's* struggle to be born whenever his mother passed a *Beis Midrash*. To be sure, he was learning Torah in his mother's womb, too; but, Yaakov *Avinu* was eager to begin studying Torah on his own, acquiring knowledge through his own effort and toil.)

### The Consolation

This is the consolation being offered to the child at his *Shalom Zachor*. We are telling him: "True, you have forgotten the entire Torah, but don't mourn. Now that you've been born, you will have the opportunity to study Torah on your own, Torah which will have lasting value." This message of consolation is especially appropriate for *Shabbos*, for on *Shabbos* a person is required to exert special effort while learning—to be *mechadeish*, develop original Torah thoughts. In fact, *Chazal* tell us that when the *neshama yeseira*—the additional *Shabbos* spirit—takes leave of a



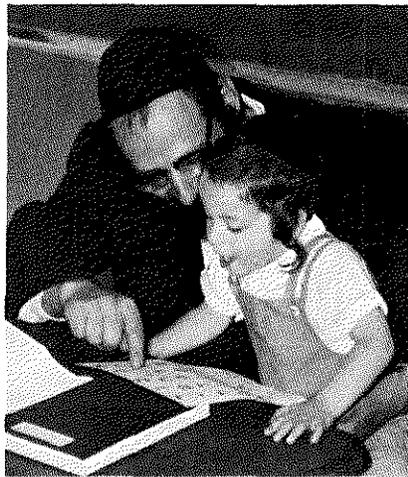
person after *Shabbos*, it is asked, "Did you develop new thoughts on Torah today?" If the answer is negative, the *neschama* is not permitted to return to its resting place. *Chidushim*, novellae, can only be developed through *עמילות*—through toil in Torah. Therefore, the message we offer the child—that now he will be privileged to learn Torah through his own efforts—is purposely given on *Shabbos*, a day especially conducive to *עמילות בתורה*.

### Like a Sapling in a Field

The custom observed by many—to cut a little boy's hair for the first



time at the age of three—actually has no fundamental source, but through a *Midrash Tanchuma* we can perhaps gain some insight into this ancient custom. The *Midrash* likens a child to a sapling in a field. Just as the fruit of a sapling, during its initial three years, is considered *orla*—its use is forbidden—and during the fourth year it is *kodesh*—sacred; similarly (in accordance with this *minhag*), one does not teach a child Torah during his first three years, but, in his fourth year, he is sacred and his father is obligated to begin teaching him Torah. His third birthday—when a child's formal *chinuch* begins—is an eventful day that is



marked by many beautiful *minhagim*. In fact, these *minhagim* are considered so sacred that some *Rishonim* (earlier commentary—11th-15th centuries)\* consider them worthy of special vigilance, and call upon Jewry to observe them faithfully.

Thus, according to this tradition, the *aveilus*, the mourning period that begins with a child's birth, actually continues for the first three years of his life, even to include one of the laws pertaining to a mourner—that he not cut his hair. When the child reaches his third birthday, however, it is marked by the *Opsheren*, a haircut, to demonstrate that the mourning period is over and he may finally begin to study Torah in earnest, taking his first step in a lifelong process.

### The Third Lag B'omer

There is a variation of this *minhag* observed by the *Arizal* (Rabbi Yitzchok Luria, 16th century Kabbalist) and continued by many *chassidim*: to coincide the *Opsheren* with the child's third Lag B'omer. In *Eretz Yisroel*, many parents take their three-year old sons to Miron (the burial place of the *Tanna*, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, author of the mystical classic, *Sefer Hazohar*) and amid much singing and dancing perform the *Opsheren* there. Perhaps the above explanation can shed light on this *minhag*, which binds together two seemingly unconnected events. The *Sefira* days preceding Lag B'omer are days of mourning, for during these days a great tragedy befell *Klal Yisroel*—the *talmidim* of Rabbi Akiva died in a plague. According to some authorities, Lag B'omer is the day the plague ceased, and it is thus considered a day of great rejoicing, when the *Sefira* laws of mourning no longer apply. Since the *Opsheren* also marks the termination of a child's mourning period, it is appropriate that these two *simchas* coincide.

"*Ashreichem Yisroel*"—how rich is our heritage, for even seemingly minor *minhagim* possess so much depth and so much significance! ❧

\*ספר האסופות, מחזור וטורי, וספר הדרוקה.

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the determining factor, a situation which is certainly unacceptable. We are lovers and pursuers of peace, but it should be clear that we cannot compromise on basic principles. We have principles sacred to us no less than those of the secularists—and we shall defend them.”

Since then the election continues to involve the participation of irreligious and anti-religious electors, people who are concerned as to how

far religion will impinge on their lives or to what degree the chief Rabbis will further their concept of a Jewish secular state than they are with who is most qualified to respond to the religious needs of the community—an evaluation they are not equipped to render.

#### Objections Expressed by Others

Strange how the anomaly of non-religious Jews participating in the

election of a religious leader is often best expressed by others. In one case, a member of the Chief Rabbinate council denounced members of the Liberal Party who voted against the extension of the term of office of the incumbent Chief Rabbi. “How could you be so ungrateful (to Rabbi Goren),” he protested in the Knesset, “and permit him to be deposed from office when he did so much for your cause by releasing the Langer brother and sister\* from their stigma as *mamzeirim*?” In other words, Rabbi Goren’s *halachic* decision (condemned at the time for being politically and sociologically motivated—see JO, Dec. ’72), earned Liberal backing as a *quid pro quo*, reducing *psak* to wares for political barter.

The situation was perhaps best summed up by a letter to the editor of HAARETZ (Mar. 7, ’83) Israel’s popular daily, that commented:

*“It would seem to me that there is no greater shame to the genuine religious Jew than the charade convened to elect the Chief Rabbi. Most grotesque of all is the role of secularists in determining who will render decisions in Jewish religious matters. Shouldn’t this be the exclusive domain of the religious populace? It’s an established fact that the Knesset is composed primarily of secularists, and that it does not draft legislation on the basis of halacha. Nonetheless, it assumes the right—by political criteria—to decide how the Chief Rabbi will be elected!”*

HAIM HATZORI  
Ayelet Hashachar

We could not have said it better. . .

\*The status of the Langer brother and sister was a *cause celebre* just prior to the election of Rabbi Shlomo Goren to the Chief Rabbinate in late 1972. They had been found to be *mamzeirim* in a rabbinical court, and were unable to marry their respective fiancés. The secular press created an uproar in favor of their intentions, and Rabbi Goren declared that *halacha* can be flexible enough to release them from their plight. As soon as he was elected to office he convened a secret court and overruled the earlier decision in a highly controversial manner. The secularists and Reform leadership applauded his “humanitarian” approach to *halacha*.

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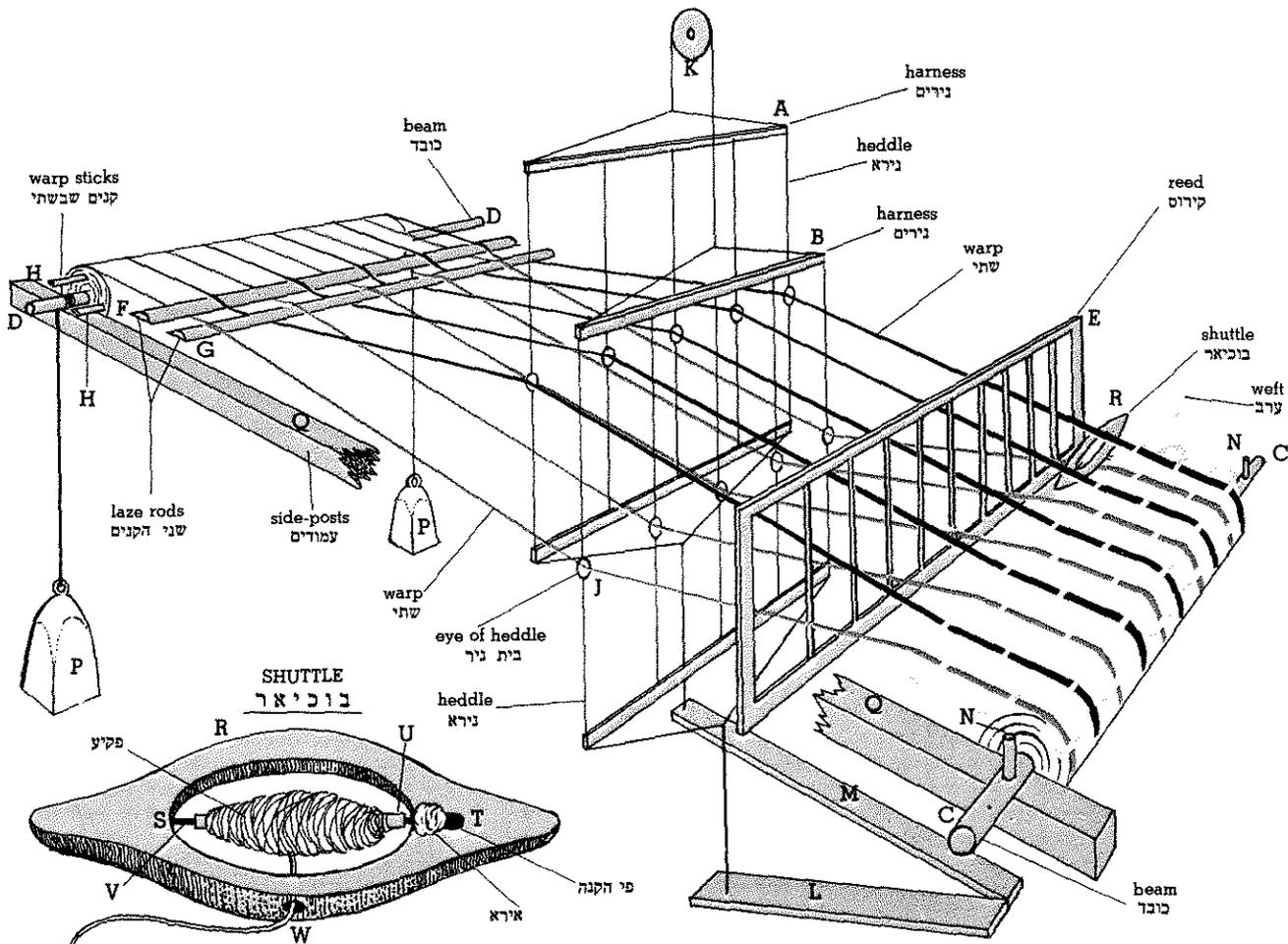
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# Weaving a Spell of Knowledge



Illustrations from Rabbi Gukovitzki's sefer.

Over two hundred fifty men paid their two dollar admission fee. They took their seats and waited impatiently while the young bearded man threw off his coat, opened his black steamer trunk and pulled out a variety of wooden frames, enough string to equip a dozen harps, and yarns of all colors. He leapt onto his makeshift stage—really two tables with a third pyramided on top of them—and for two hours mesmerized his audience. Magic? Absolutely. But—deft as his finger-work was—it was not sleight of hand. The man was a *dayan*—a judge on the London Rabbinical court—Rabbi Yisroel Gukovitzki, and his program was a clear exposition and demonstration of the ancient craft of weaving.

Now why, one might ask, would

250 men pay two dollars and crowd a Boro Park *Beis Midrash* to watch this arcane demonstration? And why did another 100 do the same two blocks away on a subsequent Sunday morning? And 200 more in Washington Heights ... in Far Rockaway ... and in Forest Hills?

Very simple. The *Daf Hayomi* is now studying *Mesechte Shabbos*. For years now, every child and most every adult who has studied the *Lamed Tess Melachos*—the 39 forbidden categories of labor—has lumped together *האורג*, *שני כתי נירין*, *האורג* as “three types of weaving processes,” and that was that—on to *קושר*—knotting.

Thanks to Rabbi Gukovitzki, author of a *halachic sefer* on the topic

(*Ma'asheh Oreig*), who had personally devoted months to researching every aspect of clothmaking from shearing through spinning to weaving (and thanks to Agudath Israel's Dof Yomi Commission, which sponsored his lecture tour), the warp and the woof, the shuttle and the heddle-board actually have meaning; and the vertical “women's loom” and those elusive “*shnei battei nirim*” assume an immediacy never ever possible otherwise.

A sign of an excellent lecturer? In part. More, it is an indication of how thousands of Jews are seriously involved in learning the *Daf-a-Day* of Talmud, and are deeply distressed if *Daf 74* is turned to without really understanding *Daf 73*. T

# One More Tragic Barrier Courtesy of Reform "Halachic" Legislation

Do Reform Jews have any idea as to how far astray their leaders are taking them? Do they have any inkling as to how many barriers the Reform leadership is erecting between them and the Orthodox community? Are they aware that even Conservative Jews will be distanced from them, thanks to the sociologically motivated machinations of the Reform rabbinate?

With their general rejection of the binding nature of Torah Law over a century ago, Reform Judaism dropped the necessity of a *get* to effectively dissolve a Jewish marriage. All they require is a civil divorce. Consequently, countless married couples have parted without benefit of a *get*, and—still married—join in illicit union with new marriage partners. The children born from such new, illicit unions are *mamzeirim*, and may not marry freely within *Klal Yisroel*. As a result, Reform Jews who are attracted to Torah must still be screened for tragic *yichos* factors that may be present—they may be children of such second marriages. Moreover, when children of Reform Jews plan to marry any other Jews, much to their shock they may discover that, through their parents' misguided action, they are *mamzeirim*. How much heartbreak could they have been spared if the Reform rabbinate would not be so insistent on circumventing *halacha*!

Mixed marriages have always been another source of divisiveness between the Reform community and Orthodoxy. Reform conversions are totally invalid, and as a result, Reform *geirim* (converts) are *ipso facto* still non-Jews. Imagine the deep dis-

appointment to the person who expects to become a full-fledged member of Jewry through his or her Reform conversion, and then discovers that his good intentions notwithstanding, to every other Jew he is still a Gentile!

Now the Central Conference of American (Reform) Rabbis (CCAR) has introduced one more barrier to unity, one more cause for personal tragedy. At their most recent convention, the Reform rabbinical group voted to accept all children of mixed marriages as Jews, on the basis of the Jewishness of either parent—that is, even when the mother is non-Jewish, and according to *halacha*, the offspring is non-Jewish, the Reform rabbis are accepting the child as a Jew!

In other words, non-Jews can enter the fold as members of good standing in Reform congregations without any conversion whatsoever. No ifs, ands, or buts. Their children will grow up thinking they are as Jewish as their fellow congregants, and may only discover otherwise when they are on the threshold of marriage with an Orthodox or—yes—Conservative Jew. At this point, we can only stand back in horror as we witness the leaders of Reform Jewry not only guilty of leading their flock away from Judaism, but even including non-Jews in their ranks, and as a matter of course bringing disunity, confusion and tragedy to the ranks of *Klal Yisroel*.  
—NW  
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# Falling from the Tree of Science, Gnawing at the Tree of Life

Rabbi Aaron Brafman said it best in a letter to the New York Times:

## Alibi for Permissiveness

To the Editor:

Your Feb. 3 editorial "The Anthropology of Anthropology" fails to address

Dr. Bernard Fryshman is a frequent contributor to our pages.

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the real issue and the significance of Professor Freeman's attack on Margaret Mead's "Coming of Age in Samoa." You are mistaken in minimizing the importance of the furor that the book has created.

To those of us who see our society rapidly deteriorating in the areas of private morality and civil responsibility, the recent revelations have the impact of a Watergate.

Margaret Mead's work became a bible for a generation of people who gave scientific credibility to the permissiveness which we feel is responsible for our social disintegration. That the scientific underpinnings of the present permissiveness, lawlessness and "anything goes" society may have been arrived at through slovenly research or conscious distortion is too much to bear.

(Rabbi) Aaron M. Brafman  
Derech Ayson Rabbinical Seminary  
Far Rockaway, N.Y., Feb. 8, 1983

Perhaps a word of explanation is in order for those who are not totally aware of the Margaret Mead controversy. Briefly, Margaret Mead, the most celebrated anthropologist of our time, was in turn a student of the famous anthropologist, Franz Boas of Columbia University. When but 23, she spent a relatively short period of time in 1925 on the Island of Samoa. Then, based on her observations, Dr. Mead published a book entitled *Coming of Age in Samoa*, which, among others, depicts Samoans as condoning free love among adolescents; the result of this practice, she reported, is that "adolescent turmoil was unknown." This "scientific" work then served as the validating basis for all those who promoted relaxed social norms, free-wheeling education, and a loosening of family ties. There is no question that those scholars whose works subsequently helped move society in a direction of relaxed social norms, permissiveness, and a revised attitude toward the basic family struc-

ture as crucial to society, took their lead from Margaret Mead's work.

Forty years later, anthropologist Derek Freeman published a book entitled *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (April '83, Harvard University Press), which in clear and unequivocal terms exposes Margaret Mead's observations as childish, innocent, with no basis in fact. Dr. Mead is described as having been a gullible 23 year old untrained graduate student, incapable of distinguishing between the deliberate duping from teenage Samoan informants and objective scientific evidence. Other anthropologists, not quite so charitable, suggest that Mead, like other students of Boas, simply fit the facts of a culture to the theoretical structure proposed by her mentor. To quote Freeman: "This is the first time in anthropology, or even in the human sciences generally, that such an established scientist has been proved so wrong. There was Piltown man, but that was a hoax. How could someone get things so astronomically wrong?"

Dr. Mead is not without her defenders, nor is Dr. Freeman without his attackers. Anthropologist David Schneider of the University of Chicago (quoted in *Newsweek*, Feb. 14, '83) claims that if Mead had a bias, so did Freeman. Freeman's attack, he feels, is personal in nature—as well as scientific. Moreover, he says that bias is a hazard of anthropological study: "A second ethnographer has never agreed with the researcher who came before."

George E. Marcus (Chairman of the Anthropology Department at Rice Univ.) wrote a critical review of Freeman's book (NYT, Mar. 27, '83), an attack on Freeman, a defense of Margaret Mead—and still admitted:

"Perhaps Mead's basic mistake as cultural critic was to accept the existence of an "adolescent crisis" in American

life as an indisputable, if culturally determined, fact; this presumption encouraged her to distort the Samoans, so that she could use them as a base of comparison."

So now we have our choice: Margaret Mead was "gullible and incompetent"—or "deceptive and a fraud"—or "biased and incomplete"—or "insightful." But one thing is undisputed. There was no justification for anyone to base his views of American society on Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*.

Hence the outrage, the anger, the frustration and the sorrow felt by decent people over the needless deterioration of society, as so succinctly expressed by Rabbi Brafman. 57

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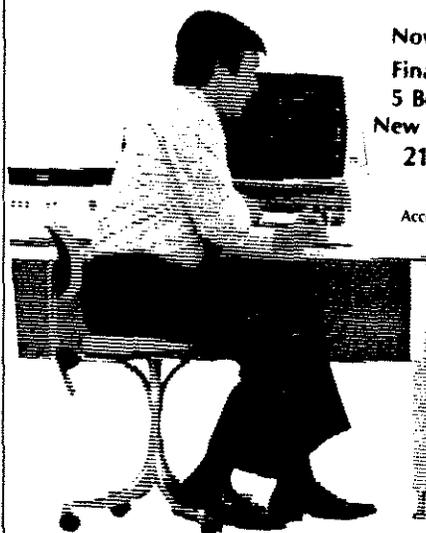
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PICTURE CREDITS for photograph of Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky in March '83: courtesy of Moshe Friedman.

**P.S.**

**Birth of the  
"Bobba Ma'ase"**

The "Zogerke"—  
Alive and Well in Baltimore

The "Zoger'kes" who read the Yiddish translation of the *Chumash* or the *Tzema Ur'ena* for the other women in the ladies' section of the *shul* were described (Oct. '82) as "reading the text aloud to a circle of women ... (with) a pair of glasses ... perched on the tip of her nose."

I discovered a print of a famous picture of "The Zoger'kes" in the Bais Yaakov of Baltimore, with all of the details captured by the artist's brush—one *sefer* for the entire group (plus one more for a literate older woman at the window at left—NW), the eyeglasses, and the total immer-



sion of the entire group—young and old, rich and poor—in another world, transported by the words of the *Zoger'ke*.

Incidentally, when I had the copy (above) made of the original, I met a supporter of the school who melted in nostalgia upon seeing the picture: "My mother couldn't read," he said excitedly, "and she used to go to the Russian *shul* to listen to a *Zoger'ke*, right here in Baltimore!"

CHAIM SHAPIRO

**"So He's Reading a Book!"**

"Leave him alone. So he's reading a book. He's going to be exposed to that stuff anyways."

"But he's too young to cope with that kind of literature."

"Better young. He'll talk to us, we'll explain what's wrong and what's right."

"What if you're wrong? What if it does affect him?"

"I'm not wrong. Kids have always wanted to taste the forbidden. You want him to grow up in a ghetto? We just got out of the ghetto."

"Look, I'm as modern as you are. I know he's going to be exposed to ideas. But he's just not ready for it..."

—*News Item*: In relating the history of Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, the *New York Times* reported:

He was born Aaron Lustiger, in Paris on Sept. 17, 1926, and was baptized in August 1940 in Orleans at age 13. He kept his first name, Aaron—it is still on his passport—and added Jean-Marie. His conversion, and later that of his sister, Arlette, deeply disturbed his parents, who remained nonpracticing Jews. Home alone in Paris at age 10 while his parents were tending their small textile business, the boy's involvement with religion began when he unlocked a cabinet of books and read a Protestant Bible.

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### CORRECTION—1

A line was transposed in Ruth Finkelstein's poem "Alone—But Not Alone" (March '83). The final part of the poem should have read:

The widow.

Alone  
but not deserted,  
forsaken  
but not abandoned,  
disconsolate  
yet comforted,  
uncertain  
yet secure,  
vulnerable  
yet protected,  
bereft of a human spokesman—  
But not alone!

For  
the  
All-Merciful  
is mindful and  
He takes her part.

And as He is  
merciful  
so shall we  
be—  
Are we?

## Letters to the Editor



### Conservatism— Unworthy of Attention

To the Editor:

I read your article on Conservative Judaism with great interest. Conservatism is one made-in-America product which Judaism could certainly live without.

Nonetheless, I question the wisdom of dignifying this non-movement by giving it front-page attention in so respected a publication as the J.O. Conservatism is no longer a driving force in the Jewish scene. Rarely do we see a Jewish community swept by a wave of conservatism. After all, what would they be swept into, other than some empty dust-bag devoid of any value?

If we do witness any growth in Conservative congregations, it is not due to any merit of their own. Rather it is because they are the beneficiaries of the tragic number of dropouts from observant Judaism, resulting from religious apathy in America—not because of any ideological draw to Conservatism. Anyone familiar with the plight of Conservative Judaism knows that as a movement its days are numbered.

To pay any attention to the Conservatives' insipid approach to Judaism is playing right into their hands. It would seem wiser to follow King Solomon's advice in Proverbs (26:4): *Al taane ksil k'evalto*—Ignore the fool, as is befitting him.

YOEL SCHONFELD  
Lakewood, N.J.

### Conservatism: Undeserving of Serious Debate

To the Editor:

I must take issue with the article "The Case of the Non-Conserving Conservatives" (Feb '83). Not that it was not a timely statement דבר בעתו, and not that I have a quarrel with the substance of its contents. Of course, you are right.

However, by engaging in ideological and even halachic polemics with the Conservatives, you have endowed them with a mantle of legitimacy and responsibility, which is entirely undeserved. As such, you have fallen into the same trap that has ensnared many serious Orthodox Jews in the past. And by discussing *halacha* with the Conservative, you would engage in a *pilpul* on the giving of *ma'aser* (tithing) on straw and salt with Esau—and far be it from me to compare my Conservative Jewish brothers with Esau!

Once and for all, it must be established that Conservatism is not a serious and legitimate religious expression, say, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Islam and others. In fact, the word Conservatism in *this* context must be read with the accent on the first syllable. It is some hucksterism—pure and simple. It found its heyday in the years after WWII, when American Jews were enamored by this melange of an external traditional veneer in juxtaposition to a ritual free-for-all, in the most literal sense.

### CORRECTION—2

The PS on Rabbi Illowy, "Rabbi of the Confederacy," in the March '83 issue, listed the date of his passing as recorded on his *matzeiva* (tombstone)

inaccurately, due to a typographical error. The precise information is: Day of death—Thursday, 3 Tamuz 5631—June 22, 1871; Burial—Friday, 4 Tamuz.

## Of Rabbis (Present) and Laymen (There Are None)

It must also be acknowledged that there is no Conservative laity. If you want to corroborate this, you can question any of the bigwigs in the United Synagogue or their constituent temples about their concept of Conservative ideology. All you will get is a rehash of platitudes garnered from the pages of the "United Synagogue Review" and the Rabbi's sermons.

Yes, there are Conservative Rabbis and they are the ones who count. The older ones, and more dangerous ones, largely stem from a good Orthodox background. Somewhere in their lives they have determined that being a Conservative Rabbi is a better, easier, more respectful—certainly more profitable way of making a clerical career within Judaism. They are the ones who call the tune, and for a price they will offer their constituents any kind of religion they might fancy.

Another common Orthodox fallacy is to lump Reform and Conservatism together. As reprehensible as Reform is, it still can claim some degree of seriousness. Reform may be compared to Foreign Exchange, which after all is negotiable. Conservatism, on the other hand, is nothing else but counterfeit.

I can venture that concern is growing in the Conservative establishments on 155 Fifth Avenue and 3080 Broadway. The great temples are tottering. They, who only decades ago were hailed as the movement of the youth and future, are now vastly over-aged. Membership rolls are declining; schools are being phased out. The national movement is deeply demoralized. Services to congregations had to be severely curtailed. The impossible is happening today. The youth is flocking to Orthodoxy; even the members of the Conservative U.S.Y. increasingly attend services in the neighborhood Orthodox shul. In recent years, just to maintain some degree of activity, a growing number of Conservative temples in the major metropolitan

areas have even introduced parallel "kosher" services in their Social Halls, with *mechitzah* and all.

### Two Kings: A Lesson in Contrasts

The *Maharal* in *Netzach Yisroel* contrasts the two kings of Israel, Jeroboam (ירבעם בן נבט) and Hosea (הושע בן אלה). The former, by erecting idols on the border of his kingdom and forbidding pilgrimage to Jerusalem on festivals (עלית הרגל) became the very prototype of חוטא ומחטוא—sinner who caused others to sin. The latter made idol worship or pilgrimage optional (see end of גמי תענית). Yet, Jeroboam's kingdom was untouched by enemy action. But, during the rule of Hosea, who offered his subjects any kind of religion they wanted, Shalmaneser, King of Assyria came and took many of the people of Israel into captivity. . . .

ZVI PRAGER  
Chicago, Ill.

### Editorial Response:

Regardless of how disdainful the more knowledgeable reader may be of the Conservative movement, it represents a visible presence in America through the Solomon Schechter Day Schools (there are over 60 now), and in Israel, by virtue of an aggressive million dollar campaign to gain a foothold there, aimed at changing the status quo by winning official recognition for their religious rites of identification, such as conversion, marriage, and divorce. The English—and even the Yiddish—press in both countries seems to be only too eager to help the Conservative efforts.

The discussions in the JO article were not aimed at *debating* any points with the Conservatives; rather they were meant to *expose* for the reader how much further from the *Mesorah* the Conservatives are taking their followers, with ever-growing implications for future generations. Only a well-informed Orthodoxy can combat this serious threat, and a major weapon in this drive is knowledge of the facts. —N.W.

## Come to the Siyum—Where?

To the Editor:

Allow me to comment on a previous response of yours to a letter in which you wrote that for the next *Siyum HaShas*, should the *Moshiach* come, you will rent out the largest facility in Jerusalem, with a section for women. Barring his arrival (*chas veshalom*), you have already rented out Madison Square Garden for seven years hence with a women's section. Had you done the opposite—rented out the largest facility in Jerusalem for seven years hence and worried about Madison Square Garden later—you would have shown real *emunah*.

Your actual plan of action demonstrated the lack of *emunah* which prevents *Moshiach* from coming.

(Dr.) CHANA K. POUPKO  
Arzei Habira, Jerusalem

### Response:

Anticipating *Moshiach's* arrival is a state of mind, a bend of heart, a setting of priorities. It is not a cessation of activity. Yeshivos and philanthropic institutions are being built, campaigns are being planned, and—yes—convention halls are being reserved, all against the hope that they will not be used because we hope to be elsewhere, under radically altered conditions. We would be remiss in our responsibilities as Torah disseminators if we did not plan accordingly. After all, don't genuine *ma'aminim* even devote years preparing for careers in medicine, psychiatric counseling, and law—dealing with all sorts of afflictions that will no longer plague us with the advent of *Moshiach*?

Demonstrating our *emunah* in *Moshiach* calls for studying *Kod'shim*, and generally accruing merit by acts of *chessed* and Torah propagation. Reserving space in Jerusalem today is meaningless in terms of all the imponderables, for who can venture a guess as to how many people will attend a world-wide *Siyum HaShas* in *Moshiach's* time, and which currently existing building will be able to house the crowd? It would be foolish to reserve anything today. —N.W.



## Identifying the Rabbis

To the Editor:

I fail to understand why in your article, "The Case of the Non-Conserving Conservatives" (JO Feb. '83), you identify Conservative rabbis so copiously ("David Novak . . . Rabbi of Congregation . . . and Member of R.A. . . . etc.") while Rabbi Shubert Spero is simply described as ". . . of Cleveland Heights." Several interpretations do suggest themselves.

Jerusalem, Israel

### Editor's Reply:

Rabbi Spero is well-known as the rabbi (now Emeritus) of Young Israel of Cleveland, the largest Orthodox congregation in the area, and is a member of the R.C.A.

### "No" to New "Mems"

To the Editor:

Re: "They Don't Make 'Mems' The Way They Used To" (Dec. '82):

Children can readily absorb information and behavior patterns without being formally taught. Unfortunately, sensitivity cannot be acquired in the same way. Sensitivity must instead be transmitted person to person by persistently showing children the "spirit" that is miss-

ing even when the "law" is being upheld. It can sometimes take years before young people appreciate what they have been taught and only then begin to acquire their own sensitivity.

As a *limudei kodesh* teacher recently graduated from Seminary, my position symbolizes a close bridge between the generation that "hands over" and the generation that "receives." I wonder whether it would not have been better if Mrs. Perr, in her position as role model, would not have consented to the new "Mem" (which on the surface seems only a small compromise, but which is indicative of far more than just a new trend in letter design).

Since the "Mem" was only slightly changed, it is only sensitivity that could have stood in the way of its acceptance. It is the privilege of every *mechanech* (parents included) to be sensitive to change and to guide his followers in that same sensitivity. Perhaps the girls would have displayed resentment at the "old-fashioned" objections. But how will they ever acquire that sensitivity if they are not given the opportunity to learn from their teacher's feelings?

We must expose our students to our sensitivities, because only the most perceptive and ruthlessly honest child will be sensitive on his own.

If we are not daring enough to voice our objections, many children will be left wallowing in their blind acceptance of everything except that which is expressly forbidden. We will be left *נח* with a nation of boors—of "Where does it say in the Torah?" sort of people. Above all, the girls, without the *binah yeseirah*, which is their special form of sensitivity, will be left unequipped to perform their special tasks of *chessed* and *tznius* and raising their children.

It is true—a new kind of "Mem" will very likely lead to a new kind of mom. Can we keep quiet?

CHANA ELKA  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

(Chana Elka teaches in a Brooklyn inner-city girls' junior high school.)

### Mrs. Perr Responds:

First let me welcome a newly minted and very sincere *limudei kodesh* teacher into the ranks of "those who 'receive' and those who 'hand over.'"

Chana Elka is concerned about *נח* raising a nation of boors. Above all, she is concerned about the girls growing up "without the *binah yeseirah*, which is their special form of sensitivity."

Unfortunately, Chana Elka's prescription of imposed sensitivity is precisely that which will create the generation of boors which she dreads. Imposed sensitivity will rob the young girls of their innate potential for *binah yeseirah*. Sensitivity can not be dictated. It can only be nurtured.

Voicing our objections is imperative when we are defining Halachic norms and setting limits. It is inappropriate however for cultivating sensitivity. It is our job as role models (*mechanchim* or parents) to share our feelings honestly and try to cultivate the individual *ma'alos* of our charges allowing them to develop and blossom to fruition.

There is a growing tendency in *chinuch* today to force students into line, to stamp them out all the same like cookies from a cookie-cutter. This is not what "*chanoch le'naar al pi darko*" is supposed to mean.

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Chana Elka: I shared my discomfort with the new idea with the girls at camp, "giving them the opportunity to learn from my feelings." It was not a matter of "not daring to voice my objection." It was rather a decision not to insist on compliance with my wishes after a soul-searching process, which is the required homework of every *mechanech*. "Yes, it can sometimes take years before young people can appreciate what they have been taught and only then begin to acquire their own sensitivity." "Persistant showing" is often counter-productive. It is the standing by with prayer and patience, waiting for the right occasion to apply gentle guidance that is more conducive for growth.

Perhaps it is appropriate to quote Reb Yisroel Salanter in this centennial year of his *Yahrtzeit*. His insight into cultivation of sensitivity is as fresh and as relevant today as it was then:

"Spirituality is like a bird," he said. "Hold it too tightly and the bird will suffocate. Hold it too loosely and the bird will escape." Creating this balance is the art and challenge of teaching. . . .

SHOSHANA PERR

(Mrs. Perr teaches in the Torah Academy for Girls high school in Far Rockaway, lectures in teacher's seminary, and is program director in Camp Bnos.)

### Baale Teshuva and Turbulence

To the Editor,

I would like to comment briefly on the subject of *baale teshuva* recently covered in S. bat Avraham's "letter" (JO, Feb. '83). I am also a convert from ten years ago.

Although some *baale teshuva* come "out of disillusionment, out of despair" (D. Gottlieb), certainly not all do. And I suspect that very few (especially today, when there are so many *baale teshuva* and institutions catering to them) feel the "turbulence" to such a great extent as S. bat Avraham seemed to.

There may, yes, be periods of despair and difficulties in coping.

But everyone in life has a certain amount of ups and downs. I doubt sincerely if the average *baal teshuva* feels much more difficulty surrounded by other *baale teshuva* in his yeshiva, than a born-frum high school boy trying to decide whether or not to go to college (his parents say "yes," his rebbe says "no") or a born-frum girl who is not yet married at age 22.

However, the *baal teshuva* may feel that D. Gottlieb's words ("they suffer emotional problems, physical addictions, and failure in their endeavors") are mildly insulting. He may feel that these terms imply instability. The newcomer to *Yiddishkeit* who was not previously a drug addict or hippie may fear to be labeled "*baal teshuva*" if he suspects that he will be classified and grouped with those few *baale teshuva* who retain a degree of instability or "failure in their endeavors" (and these are not necessarily the ex-addict or hippie, who may be basically "stable" underneath it all) even after their "return" to Judaism. The more self-confident the *baal teshuva* is, the less likely he is to react negatively to D. Gottlieb's words.

I might add that other *baale teshuva* (especially ones who were *baale teshuva* a few years ago) may also often be guilty of pressuring new *baale teshuva* to conform to their own brand of *Yiddishkeit*. Often the *machlokeses* between various groups in Jewry are vibrantly displayed in vivid technicolor. This creates, quite often, a terrible *chilul Hashem*.

So rather than dwell on being "*baale teshuva*" or "converts" or "Chassidim" or "Misnagdim" or "born frum," let's all just try and dwell on being "frum Jews" to the best of our ability. If we can put our energy into self-improvement (rather than worrying too much about our fellow "frummies"), the other problems will be solved as a matter of course.

A note also in defense of Ruth. She may have had Naomi and "a roof," but the *halacha* that a "Mo-

bite but not a Moabites" were forbidden to enter into marriage with Jews was not yet publicized. (This was publicized with Boaz's marriage to Ruth.) Ruth, on her conversion, had no knowledge of this *halacha*, and converted despite the expectation that her prospects for marriage were zero. How many of us can boast to such an achievement? Let none of us demean the tremendous sacrifices and spiritual grandeur of Ruth.

(Mrs.) RUTH BEN AVRAHAM  
Bnei Brak, Israel

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## News From Agudath Israel

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Office of Government and Public Affairs  
of Agudath Israel of America  
Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, Director

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### WASHINGTON DAY

For 160 leaders of Agudath Israel from 13 states, March 14th will be a day to remember. Beginning with a briefing in the early morning at the State Department and concluding with a questions and answers session with a senior National Security Council official, the group had spent nearly eight hours in intense dialogue with leading officials in Washington. The broad scope of the agenda reflected the diverse issues of concern to the Orthodox Jewish Community. Some of the areas discussed included:

**Security of Israel**—The delegation made it clear that Jews were united in their concern over the security of Israel. From the Administration came assurances of a genuine commitment to the safety of Israel, despite well-publicized disagreements. Said Vice President Bush: "I see the President in his off-guard moments, and I know that this man is deeply, personally committed to the safety of Israel."

**Jews in Lands of Peril**—While the Agudath Israel leaders expressed their concern over repeated violations of religious rights, the Administration officials showed knowledge of what was taking place and explained that in many cases, Jews were merely victims of other global considerations.

**Aid to Yeshivos**—Appreciation for the organization's role in promoting such measures as tuition tax credits came from the President of the United States in his meeting



President Reagan with Rabbi Sherer in the Oval Room of the White House.

with Rabbi Moshe Sherer, President of Agudath Israel. This was echoed later in a remarkable testimonial to the value of a Yeshiva education by the Secretary of Education, Terrel Bell.

**Neighborhood Stability**—Recognition for Agudath Israel's efforts to stabilize various Brooklyn communities was highlighted by a surprise award ceremony personally presented to the Southern Brooklyn Community Organization by the Vice President.

*These and other domestic and foreign policy concerns were raised during the daylong session which included meetings at the State Department headed by senior Middle East experts and Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights. A respite from the grueling briefings and questions and answer sessions was the impressive Congressional Luncheon at which the Senators from Oregon, Missouri, Nevada, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York were present. A large*

*representation of Congressmen and high ranking officials from various agencies also sat on the dais of the history filled Senate Caucus Room.*

At the White House, in addition to Vice President Bush and Secretary of Education Terrel Bell, the Agudath Israel leaders heard a realistic view of the state of the economy from Dr. Martin Feldstein, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors and a review of Middle East concerns from Deputy National Security Advisor Robert C. McFarlane.

*When it was over, the Orthodox Jewish leaders had succeeded in bringing the unique view of religious Jewry to Washington and in turn received recognition for their enormous achievements in almost every area of Jewish life. This independent representation of Orthodox Judaism was best expressed in the meeting between President Reagan and Rabbi Sherer, at which the President personally thanked Agudath Israel for its support on the many issues of concern to the Administration.*

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### NUCLEAR FREEZE

Agudath Israel jumped into the debate on nuclear freeze not because it was compelled to take sides in the raging controversy, but to correct the misconception that "Jewish tradition" somehow teaches to be in favor of a nuclear freeze. As a response to the many Jewish organizations which invoked Jewish tradition or religion as a basis for their position, Agudath Israel issued a statement which was widely covered in the media. The statement read:

"We deplore the reports that various Jewish groups have injected Jewish tradition as a basis for their call for a nuclear freeze. Like all segments of society, we view with alarm

the constantly mounting nuclear arms buildup, and we believe that no stone should be left unturned in an effort to put a halt to this frightening race and to achieve genuine peace. It is, however, an oversimplification of Jewish tradition to interpret reverence for life as an argument for a nuclear freeze. Peace is a religious imperative; but so is a strong national defense. The hallowed Jewish concern for life extends to deterrence of a grave death threat.

"In democratic countries we have traditionally depended upon the governmental process for decisions relating to military and security issues. It is inappropriate to introduce Jewish tradition as an issue in the current pragmatic debate regarding nuclear freeze and the negotiating stance of the

superpowers. At stake is how to genuinely preserve world peace and ultimately reduce the world's nuclear arsenal. A complex decision of this kind must be left in the expert hands of those to whom we entrust the reins of government, who are thoroughly familiar with all the intricate facts.

"Judaism seeks the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of total disarmament when the nations of the world 'shall beat their swords into plowshares'. The route to realistically reach a goal of this nature at this time cannot be charted by pronouncements from religious groups; it must be hammered out in the normal democratic process which is the hallmark of our blessed government. Our tradition tells us: 'The hearts of kings and rulers are in the hands of G-d.'"

## ZAÏ'S NATIONAL TORAH ASSEMBLY

The fifth National Torah Assembly of Zeirei Agudath Israel had become an annual commitment during *bein hazmanim* for yeshiva students from throughout the country. The theme of this year's assembly was "Titen Emes L'Yaakov: The Relevance of Truth in Modern Society."

With 450 *bnei Torah* looking on, a panel of distinguished *Roshei yeshiva* addressed the gathering in a highly inspiring afternoon. After hearing messages from Rabbi Eliezer Ginsburg of the Mirrer Kollel and Rabbi Yisroel Mendel Kaplan of the Yeshiva Gedolah of Philadelphia, there was a talk by Rabbi Avrohom Pam, the Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, which was followed by Rabbi Yehuda Tirnauer of K'hal Shomrei Shabbos in Boro Park. Of special interest to the yeshiva students was the message of Rabbi Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg, Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Ohr in Jerusalem, who delivered the keynote address.

Greetings from Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, leader of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudath Israel of America*, were read to the assemblage. The Torah leader had addressed many previous gatherings of Zeirei Agudath Israel but was unable to attend this year because of his health. All of the *Roshei Yeshiva* touched upon the special relevance of the topic to yeshiva students who they said are, by virtue of their elite status, obligated to observe even higher standards in truth and honesty than others.

For Zeirei Agudath Israel's leadership, headed by Sruly Greenwald, the president, this was an opportunity for a special presentation to Rabbi Dovid Pitterman, the former director of Zeirei Agudath Israel for his role in establishing the Torah Assembly.

## DAF YOMI

A new listing of Daf Yomi groups throughout the world reveals that organized groups exist in at least 15 states in this country. The new Daf Yomi *shiurim* directory also reveals that study groups are conducted in English, French, German, Hebrew, Spanish and Yiddish. In South America, groups meet in Venezuela, Chile and Argentina. Several groups, some in Spanish, meet in Mexico. In Europe the directory lists Belgium, England, France, Holland and Switzerland. Australia and Canada are two other countries where active Daf Yomi programs exist. Israel, of course, has the largest number of Daf Yomi groups, but the directory lists only a sampling because it would take one additional volume to list all of the Israeli sessions.

## PESACH—5743

As in past years, Agudath Israel—worldwide and in this country—sponsored numerous Pesach programs. The programs ranged from educating youngsters on the significance of Pesach to the distribution of kosher-for-Passover food to the needy. A few highlights of this assistance effort included:

- **Chizuk—The Torah Link**, an agency of the Agudath Israel World Organization, helped locate homes for students for the Seder and for Yom Tov as part of year-round Jewish Student Hospitality Program.
- **Bnos Agudath Israel** volunteers distributed 5,000 greeting cards to the elderly and infirm in nursing homes, hospitals and private homes.
- **Agudath Israel senior citizen centers** served as distribution points for food for the needy.
- **Overseas**, many needy Jews received matzos and kosher l'Pesach food parcels through the annual effort of the international Agudath Israel network, with an assist from the American Agudah's Project YAD (Overseas Passover Campaign). A special elaborate Pesach program for Russian immigrants in Israel was sponsored by the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund.
- In programs sponsored by the **Jewish Education Program**, 350 children participating in release hour programs in public schools throughout the city visited *matzoh* bakeries, where they received free *shmurah matzoh*. In another JEP program, some 2,000 youngsters in Talmud Torahs and day schools were visited on the eve of Pesach, with special programs designed to bring the significance of the Yom Tov to the children.
- **Pirchei Agudath Israel** sponsored its 20th semi-annual Hasmodoh Contest. In previous contests to encourage youngsters to study Torah on their own during Yom Tov vacations, 10,000 youngsters studied between 10 and 150 hours.
- **Pirchei Agudath Israel** distributed some 35,000 *Sfiras HaOmer* charts and 25,000 *shiurim* [minimum-size for *mitzva* charts] of the sage Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (for use at the *seider*).

## SIYUM MISHNAYOS

The 20th Siyum Mishnayos of Pirchei Agudath Israel of America crowned 13 year old Eliyahu Hirschfeld of Montreal as this year's winner, thanks to his memorizing 3,100 *Mishnayos* by heart. His younger brother, Mordechai Hirschfeld, came in second with 2,900 *Mishnayos*. Runners-up Yehuda Glustein and Avrohom Teitz each had studied 2,000 *Mishnayos* by heart. Nesanel Pfeifer and Ari Leizer, who also joined the "One Thousand Club," received awards for their efforts. More than 1,500 people filled the auditorium of Yeshiva Toras Emes Kamenitz last month to mark the event.

The Siyum Mishnayos contest, which has become such an important activity for thousands of youngsters throughout the country, had even more reason to celebrate this year as the growing acceptance of learning *Mishnayos* to honor a bar mitzvah continues to expand. According to Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz, the national director of Pirchei Agudath Israel, a total of 61 boys learned at least one *seider of Mishnayos* in honor of their bar mitzvah in just the past few months. In addition to New York where the central Siyum Mishnayos celebration was held, there was a siyum in Montreal for 250 youngsters and also in Cleveland, Miami and Los Angeles.

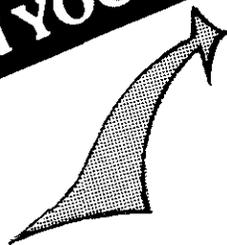
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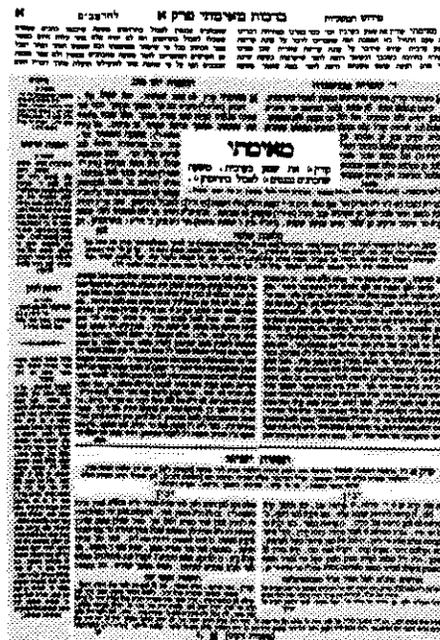
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Rabbi Shlomo Lorencz, Agudath Israel MK, addressing 1,000 guests at the 30th Jubilee Dinner of Chinuch Atzmai—Torah Schools for Israel at the New York Hilton on April 24. Seated on the lower dais from the right are Guests of Honor, Mr. Walter I. Hubert and Mr. Arthur Hubert, O.B.E., who flew from England to be present at the dinner; Mr. Amos Bunim, dinner chairman; Mr. George Klein, who presented Netzach Yisroel (citation to Mr. Joseph Berlin (Englewood, NJ)); Rabbi Shraga Grossbard, director general of Chinuch Atzmai; and Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, Rosh HaYeshiva of Ner Israel, who addressed the gathering. The dinner's theme: 100,000 Israeli children were reached by Chinuch Atzmai since its founding; reach at least 100,000 more in the next decade!

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