

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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Dateline, the World: Countdown to "The Day After"
Dateline, New York: "Jewish Life in America" a critique
Dateline, Jerusalem: Defusing "The Love Bomb"
Dateline, Petach Tikvah: Battle of the Seventh Day

JUNE 1984						
SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
					1	2
3	4	5	6 SHAVUOT	7 SHAVUOT	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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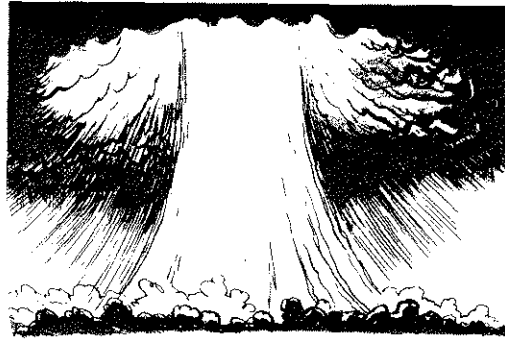
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in this issue . . .

Countdown to the Day After, <i>Aaron M. Brafman</i>	4
Battle of the Seventh Day, <i>Ezriel Toshavi</i>	9
Jewish Life in America—an Exhibit, <i>reviewed by Moshe Kolodny</i>	12
The Love Bomb, <i>Nehama Consuelo Nahmoud</i>	14
In Search of Freedom and Independence, <i>A. Scheinman</i>	22
Shedding Light on Recent History (book review)	29
Guardian of Jerusalem	
Heroine of Rescue	
Responsa From the Holocaust	
Escape to Shanghai	
The Yellow Star	
The Butcher of Lyon	
Books on "Nach" (reviews)	32
Samson's Struggle	
Tz'enah Ur'enah	
Shir Hashirim	
Ruth	
Koheleth	
Second Looks on the Jewish Scene	
Centrists: Between the "Right-Wing" and Whom?	34
And He Who Knows Not How to Ask, <i>Shanie Perr</i>	37
Of Peace and Pieces, <i>Faygie Borchardt</i>	39
Letters to the Editor	41



Countdown to the Day After

Does the Torah Jew Have His Own Approach to Dealing with Doomsday?

Doomsday talk has its cycles. Wherever a new weapon is unveiled, or international arms reduction talks falter, or a TV special on nuclear disaster is screened—such as the widely-watched “The Day After” last winter—the spectre of nuclear holocaust casts its shadow across the people’s consciousness.

The reactions are varied: Some people find hope in a unilateral nuclear freeze and even demonstrate for it. Some see salvation in outclassing the Soviets in megakill power. Some simply ignore the problem as too overwhelming to deal with—it won’t go away by ignoring it, but neither will it disappear by attempting to fight it. And then there are those that contend that it is not a real issue. No national leader capable of destroying another country is deranged or irresponsible enough to actually do so.

Do we Jews have a particular Torah-directed response to this dilemma, or are we to follow personal inclination and move along with one of the other groups? (There’s no shortage of impressive passages from Scripture, Talmud and Midrash ready to be quoted within- or out-of-context to bolster any opinion.)

I would suggest that nuclear doomsday is a real issue. It is a possibility we must deal with. Moreover, we, as Jews, can make a difference in the outcome when dealing with the threat of nuclear annihilation, and this invests us with a special degree of responsibility.

The Real Issue: Man, Not Weaponry

The majority of a group of strategic experts recently

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polled on the likelihood of a Soviet-American nuclear War before the year 2000, concluded the odds to be at a 1-in-20 or a 1-in-50 chance—giving mankind security of sorts under an umbrella of paralysis from fear of mutual annihilation.* The view is not surprising, for without optimism, man could not survive. But history continues to serve as the most accurate guide for predicting the future. And even a cursory perusal of world history shows a continuous pattern of war and conquest, of domination of the weak by the mighty, of internecine struggles for power, and of surges of power from unexpected quarters.

When gunpowder was invented, it was considered too awesome and destructive a force ever to be used in war—and so too with most increases in the power of weaponry. Yet, in the end they were almost always used. For at the heart of the issue is not weaponry, but man—his desires, his weaknesses, and his goals. If national character is merely the expression of the aggregate of the entire population’s strengths and weaknesses, then all the pent-up violence so close to the surface in individuals need only be magnified multi-fold to give us an idea of the potential for violence in our peace-loving nations.

We Jews are nurtured on the concept that only Torah, with its potent *Mussar* message and its powers to neutralize base impulses, can help man overcome his destructive and self-indulgent urges. But what can we expect from the nations that do not have Torah as a moderating force?

*Leslie Gelb, “Is Nuclear Threat Manageable?”, *New York Times Magazine*, March 4, 1984.

How Vast a Destruction?

We may accept, then, that nationalistic pride and natural tendencies toward violence may combine to thrust a nation into an aggressive posture and thus precipitate nuclear destruction. Still one may question whether G-d would permit such wholesale destruction to take place.

Again, historical precedents point the way: G-d Himself did destroy vast cultures, and where this did occur, the factors responsible for large-scale destruction are recorded to instruct us. Foremost in human experience is the Flood of Noah's time, which was preceded by a period marked by corruption in interpersonal affairs. Worst of all, according to the Talmud, was their *chamas*—robbery.

The destruction of Sodom—limited though it was, by comparison—can be considered another case in point, for the cities of the area were totally wiped out. The *Ramban* writes: "According to our Sages, [the people of Sodom] were notorious for every kind of evil, but their fate was sealed for their persistence in not supporting the poor and the needy. They were continually guilty of this sin, and no other nation could be compared to Sodom in cruelty."

How Helpless is Man?

If G-d puts His seal of approval on plans to destroy a particular culture or the entire world, it may seem futile to expect man to change this. But we are not expected to view the world crumbling, simply standing at the sidelines. Again we have precedents: G-d commanded Noah to devote 120 years of his life to constructing the ark—starting with planting the trees from which it was built—as an ongoing demonstration of warning to the world of impending disaster. The people scoffed, and his warnings went unheeded. Yet the Prophet called the deluge "The Waters of Noah," blaming him for not doing enough to save his generation.

In contrast, Avraham interceded on behalf of a culture diametrically opposed to everything he believed in. He was the pillar of lovingkindness, while Sodomites were the epitome of selfishness and exploitation. Yet Avraham pleaded, begged and bargained for their survival, while Noah accepted the decree of "the end of all flesh has come before Me" in silence. The concern, the commitment, the prayers of Avraham set a course for future generations to follow.

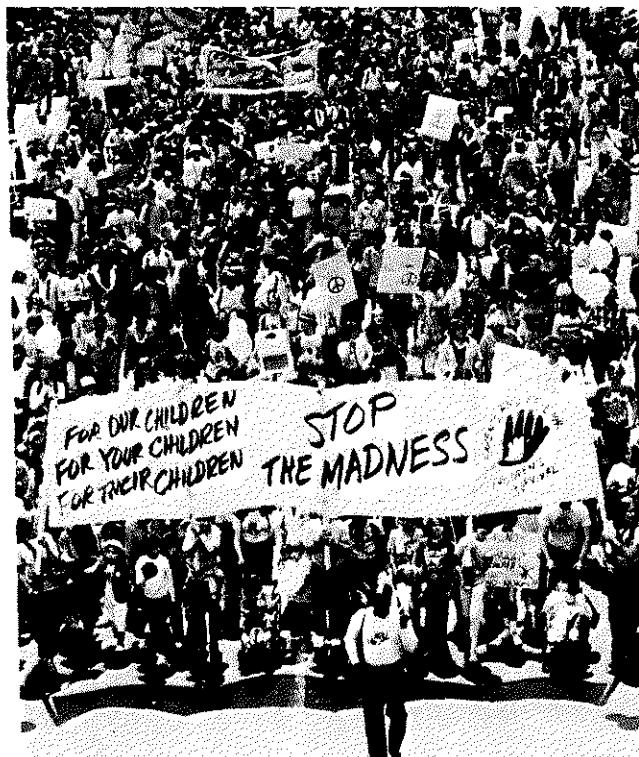
Facing Mortality: Warnings and Responses

Even if the world is tottering on the brink of extinction, it is not enough to rely on the general populace's growing awareness of this impending apocalypse, and expect them to help themselves. People prefer not to take note of crises if they can avoid doing so. . . . When

Lot alerted his sons-in-law to the fiery fate awaiting Sodom, they mocked him. As the Midrash elaborates, they said to him, "Fool that you are! Harps and violins are playing, people are partying in the streets, and you say that Sodom is to be destroyed?" Today, too, most people are too caught up in pleasure seeking pursuits to accept the sobering possibility of a bitter end. Facts may speak, but people prefer not to listen.

Even when facing the shocking truth of their own mortality, people tend to look the other way. As Eisav told Yaakov when he sold him his birthright, "Behold I am going to die, what need do I have for the *bechora* (the duties and privileges of the first born)!" Some interpret this as a dismissal not only of *bechora*, but of spiritual pursuits in general—a restatement of the classical, but decidedly non-Jewish: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die."

Moreover, Rabbi Dessler in *Michtav Me'Eliyahu II* cites the death-bed confessional prayer that disavows in advance any blasphemy a person might utter in his last moments. Encountering the prospect of his soul departing from corporeality must trigger an extreme reaction in the person—either an excited rush toward re-union with the Infinite One-ness of G-d, or an agonizing rejection of Him who is responsible for his final leave-taking from the physical pleasures of this world, which prompts the blasphemy. Death is never confronted with indifference.



Anti-nuke demonstration.

Yet, *Chazal* (the rabbis of the Talmud) advise overcoming an evil inclination by "recalling the day of death." How can the individual be certain that he will respond with discipline and responsibility rather than with indulgence and rejection? By following the prerequisites to the "day of death" approach: As first steps in combatting an evil impulse, the *Gemora* prescribes reciting "*Shema*" and studying Torah. If one is imbued with the two elements represented here—faith in G-d and dedication to Torah and its values—then the recognition of one's mortality can give added significance to every moment. It can elevate a person's sight above the smallness of his daily concerns and it can be a spur to achieve greater spiritual heights. Without the requisite preparation, however, awareness of mortality can lead to the nihilistic, destructive hedonism that we witness around us today.

Apocalypse and the Jew

It would seem, then, that only a person whose understanding of life is based on a "*Shema*-and-Torah perspec-

Letters of the Chofetz Chaim—#10, (1927)

We were recently shocked by the report of the earthquake in Jerusalem, our holy city. . . . We also hear of many frightening events lately occurring around the world—such as the floods in America and Germany, and other events that makes one's ears ring in fright.

G-d forbid that we dismiss these events as mere accident or happenstance, for we must know that G-d rules the world, as the Torah states: "So that you shall know that the earth belongs to G-d." Obviously these are signs from Heaven calling to us to do *teshuvah* and to better our ways.

In Letter #12, written later, the Chofetz Chaim writes:

Several weeks ago I wrote an essay concerning the earthquake in *Eretz Yisroel* in which I called Jews to *teshuvah*, pointing out that the earthquake was a warning to the world to repent. . . . Now we have heard more frightening news—a flood in Poland and an earthquake in Russia, in which thousands of men, women and children were killed or injured. . . . It is certainly cause for every sensitive individual to ask what has Hashem done to us. Isn't G-d good and merciful to all and not desire the untimely death of even the wicked? Obviously, *Hakodosh Baruch Hu* is urging us to *teshuvah*.

tive" can face the threat of death with responsibility—primarily the Torah-steeped Jew. This may sound like another page in the World-Crisis-and-the-Jews-Syndrome notebook. But the world is ruled by Divine Providence, and we see ourselves as children of Avraham, whose insistent prayers for Sodom were a plea-bargaining session, hoping to gain lives by finding meritorious citizens in the Cities of the Plain. . . . Our prayers can carry the same import, and we have the responsibility to offer them.

Moreover, the writings of *Chazal* and rabbinic literature are full of references to cataclysmic events befalling mankind in general as Divine summonses to Jewry to *teshuvah*. Indeed, in letter after letter, the Chofetz Chaim reacts to floods, earthquakes, and economic depression as calls to *teshuvah*. (See Box, and Collected Letters of the Chofetz Chaim 10, 12, 13, 41). The individual can better himself, to the advantage of his community, of *Klal Yisroel*, and even of the world at large.

In 1936, Rabbi Dessler wrote his son (Michtav Me-Eliyahu II) of the tragic suffering of Jews the world over—their terrible economic plight and the growing incidence of anti-Semitism—and he begs him to prepare for the upcoming Judgment Day, with an awareness of its significance. He then adds, "What should our thoughts be? If an individual or group of individuals resolve to repent and accept the yoke of Heaven in earnest, they can create a cloak of protection against suffering. . . . Don't we all realize that each of us has the ability to protect himself and to increase our communal merit for the protection of the entirety of Klal Yisroel?"

No, political and social activism in and of themselves will not shield us from impending destruction. One must be blind to the evil inherent in certain world powers to believe that we can change them for the better in their goals and policies through our speeches and public protest. But we do have influence where it truly matters, where the real decisions are made—in the Heavenly tribunal. As mentioned, prayer is a potent force in reversing a judgment against life. But more than that, the Prophet cries out (*Yirmiyahu* 5:1):

*"Run to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem
See and know; search in her streets
If you can find a man,
If there be only a person
that practices justice, that seeks truth, and
I will pardon her."*

One righteous individual can make a difference and tip the scales.

The *Rambam*, in *Hilchos Teshuvah* states it clearly: "A person should view himself as being half righteous and half guilty, and so with the rest of the world. If he commits one sin, he then tips his scale as well as that of the rest of the world to the guilty side, and brings about destruction. If he does a single *mitzva* (good deed), he tips the scales and that of the world to the side of merit, and saves himself and the world." Until now we were wont to view the *Rambam's* statement in allegorical or meta-

physical terms. Today, however, the description "all of the world hangs in the balance" can be understood very literally. And it is up to each and every one of us to determine how the scale will tip, with his every deed carrying the potential to make the difference.

Target Areas For Concentration

Facing the prospect of nuclear annihilation, burdened by the awareness that every individual's conduct can be pivotal in deciding the fate of our civilization, we search for some guidance regarding which areas to single out for improvement. The Chofetz Chaim, ever-mindful of the demands of the hour, ever aware of the particular needs of our people, put emphasis on interpersonal affairs, בין אדם לחברו (see the adjoining box). While

Letters of the Chofetz Chaim Letter #13

By all indications we are on the threshold of *Moshiach's* coming. . . . The many crises we are facing are part of what *Chazal* call "*Chevlei Moshiach*—the birthpangs of *Moshiach*," similar to the labor pains a woman suffers before giving birth. . . .

Just as the students of Rav Elazar asked him, "What should one do to be spared the terrible conditions of *Chevlei Moshiach*?" (*Sanhedrin* 98b), we, too, should find ways to reduce any suffering in store for us. . . . (The Chofetz Chaim called for) devoting more attention to Torah study, a more careful and sincere involvement in *tefilla*, and an increase in *chessed* activities. There are various forms of *chessed*—too many to be enumerated here, but I have explained them in great detail in *Ahavas Chessed*. It is most important for a person to perform as many acts of *chessed* as possible, both with his money and his person, with regularity—not permitting a single day to pass without doing an act of *chessed*. In this manner, he inspires in turn the Heavenly attribute of *chessed*.

organized philanthropy amongst Jewry today is probably at an unmatched level in scope and volume, this in itself may also be a factor in reducing sensitivity and warmth between people. Missing is the personal involvement in *chessed*—such as visiting the sick or welcoming strangers, which brings the individual into intimate contact with his beneficiaries. The interest in the Chofetz Chaim's works generated by his fiftieth Yahrzeit, of course focuses on *Shemiras HaLashon* (*Guarding One's Tongue*) as a key means of avoiding friction and divisiveness, but it should also include his *Ahavas Chessed*—(*Love of Doing Charitable Acts*).

This begins with generally concentrating on people's

better aspects, as the late *Rosh HaYeshiva* of Beis Medrash Govoha, Rabbi Shneur Kotler זצ"ל, emphasized in a speech: The importance of seeing the good in everyone is implicit in the passage in *Tehillim*: "Who is the man who desires life, loves days that he may see good? Guard your tongue from evil" (34, 13). That is, to avoid slander, first dwell on the good in people, for if a person sharpens his critical eye to see everything's negative aspect, he will tend to find fault, become angry, bitter, and make the world virtually as miserable as he views it. (See נועם שיה, p.60)

We must learn to feel an affinity with our fellow Jews, share his joys and his problems, so as to create a sense of oneness amongst our people, and acts of *chessed*, such as the marvelous *Bikur Cholim* activities of our community, which extend help to all without discrimination. This type of unquestioning *chessed* has a salutary impact on Jew and non-Jew alike, creating an admirable *Kiddush Hashem*.

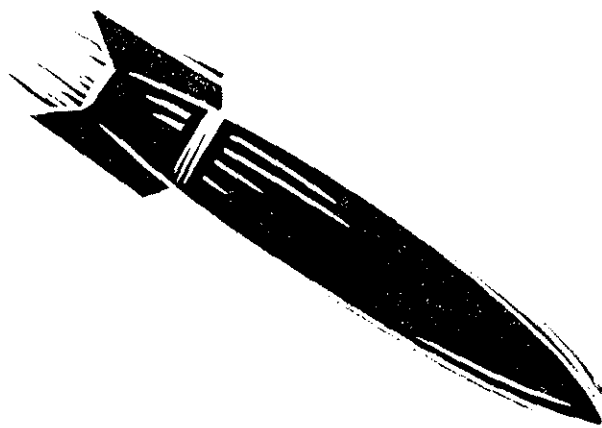
World of Love . . . or War

The last words of prophecy recorded in *Nach* speaks to us on the eve of *Moshiach's* coming: "I am sending for you *Eliyahu Hanavi*, before the Great and Awesome Day. And he will return the heart of fathers unto the children and the heart of children unto their fathers, lest I come and smite the entire world in ruin" (*Malachi* 3:24).

This passage presents two possibilities—the joining of hearts across the generations, or destruction of the world. These are actually options presented to us, and now—on the eve of the day after—we would be wise to choose life.

Rabbi Nachman of Breslav said that wars do not begin in the palaces of kings, or in the marble halls where diplomats disagree with one another, or even in the trenches where soldiers face off with each other. When a man leaves his home in the morning and closes the door behind him without saying "goodbye" to his family, that is when a war begins.

Isn't it possible, then, to reverse the process with a kind word uttered at a crucial moment?



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Left to Right
Menachem Shayovich,
Shmuel Lefkowitz,
John Amodio-CNB President,
Joseph Piazza.

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The Battle of the Seventh Day

Keeping the Gates of Hope Secure in Petach Tikva

Status Quo. It is written with capitalized initials because it is a noun of very uncommon implications in Israel. In 1948, Ben Gurion recognized that he would never win the cooperation of Agudath Israel to join in the declaration of Israel's independence unless certain ongoing religious features of life in the *Yishuv*, the Sta-

always been alert to such erosion of the Status Quo. Egged buses pulling out of their garages before the setting of the Sabbath sun, the recent threat of running public transportation in the seaside resort of Nahariya, relaxation of standards for "mitigating circumstances" to permit the running of essential industry on *Shabbos*—

"Carry no burdens on the Sabbath . . . Perform no labors and sanctify this day . . . so you may enter the gates of the city . . . [and it] will stand eternally" (YIRMIYAHU 17:21-25).

tus Quo, were guaranteed—prominent among them, the cessation on the Sabbath of all public transportation and other government activities that would involve violation of the Sabbath.*

Attempts have been made to challenge or whittle away this agreement, but the religious community has

all of these have triggered the protest of Israel's religious populace, as well as the objection of much of the non-religious, tradition-respecting citizenry. But nothing in recent memory has inspired as incensed a protest as the outrageous events in Petach Tikva. To fully appreciate these events, one must first take into



Ezriel Toshvai reports on the Israeli scene for THE JEWISH OBSERVER readers.

The Jewish Observer / April, 1984

*In addition, the Status Quo agreement guarantees religious criteria for matters of personal identity—marriage, divorce, and conversions—and *Kashrus* in all government sponsored jurisdictions.

account the background of this particular city, once known "The Jerusalem of the New Yishuv."

When Petach Tikva Set the Pace

One hundred and three years ago, on 25 Sivan 5641/June 22, 1881, a group of brave citizens of Jerusalem ventured to a swampy wilderness near the coast, risking malaria and other diseases, to establish the first religious settlement outside of the long-standing established communities. Petach Tikva, "the Gateway of Hope," opened the way, and the others followed.



Under arrest: Rabbi Boruch Shimon Salomon of Petach Tikva.

The spirituality of Jerusalem was not abandoned in the move. The by-laws of the community, drawn up on the day it was founded, had a special section on *Shabbos* and the Festivals. We quote:

On Erev *Shabbos* and Erev *Yomtov* afternoon a flag should be raised on the highest spot, visible to the entire region, and a shofar should be blown as a signal that work should be stopped because of the approach of *Shabbos*. Work in the fields should come to a stop. Whoever will be late by two hour after this flag is raised and will violate this three times, will be punished. *Shabbos* and Festivals should be holy for Torah and tefilla, for Oneg *Shabbos* and *Yomtov*. No one should inspect his properties on *Yomtov*. *Shabbos* and *Yomtov* are to be reserved for Torah study. *Shabbos* is for educating our children, and we should not change this.

In the interim, the entire area grew, and a small settlement founded subsequently in the Petach Tikva area—Tel Aviv—eventually dwarfed this town as it grew to become the major megalopolis of the Holy Land. But even with the change, Petach Tikva always remembered its origins.

Labor at the Helm

This past fall the municipality elected Dov Tabori (Labor Party) as mayor of Petach Tikva. One of his first acts as mayor was to write a letter to the city's Religious Council:

"Last Friday I was very disturbed in my house by the blowing [of the shofar] before the beginning of *Shabbos*."

He demanded that it should be stopped immediately. He continued:

"It has no use anyway, and the whole idea of the blowing is, in my view, similar to the ringing of church bells."

Adding injury to insult, Tabori sponsored a law in the municipal council empowering him to issue licenses to businesses and places of entertainment permitting them to operate on *Shabbos*. His request was granted, but the council action does not become law without the approval of the Interior Minister, Dr. Joseph Burg (Mizrachi). Not content, Tabori also requested that the Council give him the power to withhold—or withdraw—licenses of establishments that refuse to open on *Shabbos*, making it impossible to run a Sabbath-observing business in Petach Tikva.

At a hearing on this bill, the city's chief rabbis and *dayanim* came to personally voice their objection to such an anti-religious measure. The debate erupted into an uproar, with some secular members actually raising their hands against the rabbis. It is difficult to imagine such goings-on in Israel, in general, and surely in the Jerusalem of the New Yishuv, yet such were the tensions of the confrontation.

The mayor then urged the Heichal Cinema, the local movie house, to open on Friday night, offering free tickets to entice reluctant residents to fill the theater. He also persuaded the Garden of Eden Coffee House in the same area to open, inspiring an outrage throughout the land, which incidentally had the positive effect of uniting diverse elements in the broad spectrum of religious Jewry

For instance, on the first Friday night that Petach Tikva had "legalized" *Chillul Shabbos*, an outdoor peaceful demonstration was convened in Jerusalem's Kikar Ha-shabbos, with over 5,000 men joining in *Kabbolas Shabbos-Maariv*. The crowd included the broadest representation of Chassidic groups and the full range of yeshiva students, many of whom normally shun outdoor demonstrations of any kind, as well as Sephardim, various non-aiigned groups and others.

No Peace in Petach Tikva

In Petach Tikva, however, matters were not so peaceful. The Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Boruch Shimon Salomon, led a large protest march against the public Sabbath desecration—in the spirit of similar such marches that have been held whenever a breach was threatened in Sabbath observance—in New York, in Kamenitz, in Telshe, wherever Jews lived by the Torah.

On the following week, an outdoor *Mussaf* service was held in Petach Tikva's Guttman Street, opposite the Sabbath desecrating cafe, with thousands of people participating. But contrast, only a handful of die-hards were patronizing the cafe. Then Rabbi Salomon entered the cafe and requested of the proprietors that they close their establishment on *Shabbos*. Several customers objected to the "intrusion," and hurled bottles and chairs in the rabbi's direction. After he left and returned home, a patrol car drove up to his house and asked him to return to the station to "answer some questions." Rabbi Salomon insisted on going the considerable distance by foot, accompanied by several hundred sympathizers. Once the rabbi arrived at the station, he was arrested for precipitating a riot. After reconsideration, the police released him to avoid serious repercussions from the aroused crowd that was awaiting him.

Since that unconscionable act—a Jewish police court actually putting a city's rabbi under arrest for protesting *Chillul Shabbos*—the entire religious community of the land has galvanized in protest against Tabori's conduct of affairs. The country's Chief Rabbis as well as a number of yeshiva and Chassidic leaders—the Gerrer and Vizhnitzer Rabbes, among others, have expressed their backing of Petach Tikva's rabbis. Moreover, the

religious leadership is deeply concerned that one municipality legalizing public Sabbath violation will start a domino action, toppling the sanctity of the Sabbath throughout the land. Agudath Israel representatives to the Knesset threatened to bolt Shamir's coalition if the Status Quo were not restored in Petach Tikva. More recently, when the Shamir government did fall, Agudah MK Rabbi A.Y. Shapira met with Shimon Peres and made it very clear that under no circumstances could he count on Agudath Israel participation in a Labor-led coalition if Tabori is not brought back in line and *Shabbos* is given its rightful due in the Holy Land.

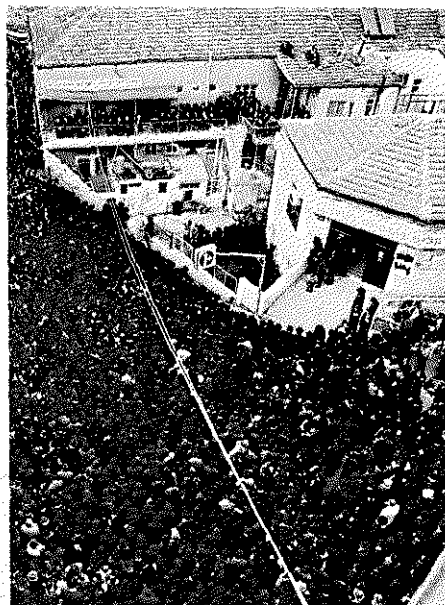
Puzzling, however, is Dr. Burg's reluctance to state unequivocally that he does not intend to put his stamp of approval on Tabori's anti-*Shabbos* law, declaring once and for all that his actions are not only reprehensible, but without legal basis, as well. For his part, Tabori is a bitter reminder of the fierce anti-religious convictions of the Socialist founders of Israel's Labor movement.

In the meantime, every *Shabbos* is an opportunity for religious Jews of all affiliations (and non-affiliation) to demonstrate their allegiance to the sanctity of the Seventh Day—both in Petach Tikva, and in the country at large. During the last week of March, for instance, a huge demonstrations of tens of thousands of Jews took place in Jerusalem, protesting the ongoing defiance of *Shabbos* in Petach Tikva.

Shabbos is the foundation of our people, testifying to our belief in G-d the Creator and His Providence. And, not incidentally, it is a prime guarantor of our physical security—not to be dealt with so capriciously in these beleaguered times. As Yirmiyahu said, "Sanctify this day . . . so you may enter the gates of this city . . . [and it] will stand eternally."



At the demonstration: Gerrer Rebbe, Slonimer Rebbe, Machanovke Rebbe, Rabbi Shomo Zalmen Auerbach, Rabbi S.Y. Elyashuv, amongst others.



Part of the 50,000 that crowded Kikar Hashabbos in protest of official Sabbath violation.

Jewish Life In America

A pictorial exhibit reviewed
by MOSHE KOLODNY

Americanization Becomes Evident



Family Reunion, about 1920

Three generations of the Freund family demonstrate the process of acculturation in America.



Young American Patriots, about 1928

Bert and Aaron Kruger of Wichita Falls, Texas, dressed in patriotic costumes.

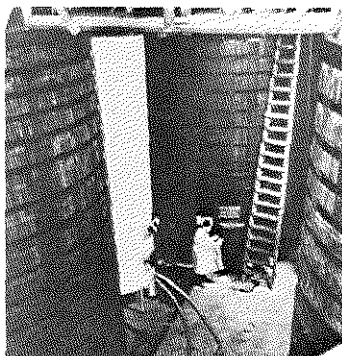
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURE



Battlefield Graveyard in France

Cemetery memorial for World War II soldiers who participated in battle in Normandy. The cemetery is located in St. Laurent, Calvados, France.

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION



Inspecting Passover Wine, Brooklyn, N.Y., 1945

Rabbi S. Cohen at the Manischewitz Winery in Brooklyn inspecting Passover wine.

"Jewish life in America . . . Fulfilling the American dream . . . Images of American Jewish life." These were the promises headlined on a flyer heralding a "unique exhibit" documenting the American Jewish experience from 1654, when the first group of Jews arrived in New Amsterdam, until the present day. The exhibition was designed to serve as a vehicle for Jews to learn about their heritage and for other Americans to be more familiar with Jewish contributions to America—so proclaimed the flyer.

The exhibit, sponsored by the Anti Defamation League of Bnai Brith, the N.Y. Public Library, and the American Jewish Historical Society, prepared by the Allon Schoener, author of the book *The American Jewish Album*, from which much of the exhibition was drawn, was shown at the N.Y. Public Library.

Having more than passing familiarity with our Jewish heritage, and somewhat aware of the enrichment our heritage has gained in the many countries where Jews have been hosted, I did not want to miss this exhibit. I went to the presentation, hoping to see how Jewish life has become enhanced by our being here. . . .

The exhibition, which consisted of mounted photographs and printed books from colonial times until the present, was divided into discrete time periods, with hundreds of items in each. The panorama of the Jewish existence in America did appear to be conveyed and flowed smoothly throughout the exhibit.

"Land of Opportunity . . . and We Made It"

A beautiful showing indeed: The Colonial Period, with the Sephardic emigration and acclimation to the American scene . . . the merchants, printers, and soldiers were all represented . . . The Jewish struggle for economic and social survival could be discerned, as the period of the German influx of the 1820's was captured on the mounts. Portraits of the Jewish founders of Macy's, Gimbels, Abraham & Straus, Sears and Roebuck—cigar manufacturers, political leaders of the old South . . . they all gazed at the viewer and seemed to say: "This is America, land of opportunity—and we made it!"

As I viewed more recent history—after the great Eastern European influx in the late 1880's—the Jews

Rabbi Kolodny, a musmach of Yeshiva Chaim Berlin, is chief archivist of the Orthodox Jewish Archives, maintained by Agudath Israel of America.

represented became less recognizable as Jews in appearance: Pioneers in the entertainment industry were represented with many photos. From Yiddish theater to vaudeville to radio to movies to TV . . . from labor unions to politics, Jews were getting more and more into the mainstream of American life. The last 20 years' segment displayed names of famous personalities—some of whom I did not even know were Jewish.

Yes, there were some illustrations of Jewish heritage. A scribe who looked like an ancient patriarch writing a Torah scroll, a Jewish wedding, a kosher wine cellar. . . . Yet there was something obviously missing from this display. I was trying to look at the exhibit without my strong yeshiva-bred prejudices, and to my surprise I was helped by a group of mature ladies and gentlemen who came on a tour from East Hempstead to view the display. I asked them their impression of the exhibit. "Wonderful!" they exclaimed.

"Was this really the Jewish heritage in the American setting?" I asked.

"Well," the spokesperson said, "they don't have much on Zionism and Israel."

"Perhaps the Bnai Brith didn't want to show that," remarked another. "It's not *American*; it's just Jewish, period."

I continued: "What about Yeshiva University? It's had an impact on American Jewish life, you know. It wasn't represented at all.—And what about Jewish holidays? The days of Succoth—the booths, the lulav and esrog, Simchat Torah. And as for Judaica—what about Art-Scroll publications, Feldheim books of Jewish classics translated into English?"

"You're absolutely right!" she exclaimed. "I didn't think of it."

The Absent Renaissance

To be honest, the exhibit did show some Jewish celebrations. It did picture a *succah*, constructed *inside* Temple Emanuel. There was a group of people on a beach dressed in sporty clothing running toward the waves. The caption read: "Tashlich Rosh Hashona, Los Angeles, 1978." A bride and groom under the *chupa*. A typical American family scene, captioned: "Seder."

But one could not find evidence of the genuine Jewish heritage, especially during the last forty years, without resorting to the quaint or the cutesy. A *real succah* booth under the stars. A traditional Seder. Baking matzos. Jewish children in present-day yeshivos. Day Schools. The Beth Jacob school system—all of which perpetuate Jewish survival, depicting the marvelous growth of *Jewish* Jewry on American soil.

The Lower East Side is represented, wrapped in squalid nostalgia. What about the more comfortable communities in contemporary America, such as Boro Park, Monsey, Monroe, Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and other places where the Jewish spirit is alive and vibrant? What about the role of successful Orthodox business-

men and professionals in American society who are recognizable as Jews? What about the harnessing of modern techniques to convey Torah to the multitudes, through radio, TV, and the brand-new Dial-a-Daf?

"Maybe today's youth is more interested in movies than in those things," she answered, apologizing for the preponderance of photos of Jews in the entertainment world over those engaged in religious pursuits.

"It just isn't so," I replied. "I'm sure you've heard of the return of many youths to authentic Judaism—it's called the Baal Teshuva movement. Perhaps the sponsors of the exhibit are squeamish about such things, like the proverbial ostrich pretending that nothing has really happened, as long as it doesn't see it . . . trying to reassure themselves that these conspicuously *Jewish* features were all left behind on Ellis Island. All it does is make our experience one of giving of the Jewish genius to America, keeping nothing Jewish in the process—WASPing ourselves into ethnic oblivion, stretching anti-defamation by way of invisibility to the ridiculous."

The Story to be Told

There *is* a story to tell. After all, in each country where Jews dwelled, their Jewish awareness and scholarship was enriched by the cultural climate of their host country. The rivers of Babylon, in terms of the thousand years of tranquility and autonomy enjoyed there, nurtured the *Talmud Bavli*. The Arab lands helped rekindle the thirst of knowledge for the Hebrew tongue, developing scholarship in grammar, poetry and *piyutim*, producing the *Ziknei Lashon Hakodesh* and *Meforshai Hamikra*, the translations of Saadya Gaon, and were incorporated in commentaries of *Rashi*, *Tosafos* . . . and so it has continued.

America has a very distinctive story to tell. Its gift of technological innovation in service of Torah, which I mentioned, could be documented with vigor and excitement. America as the haven of the oppressed has fostered the regeneration of many Jewish communities and traditions—from Satmar and Bobov to Mir and Kletzk (Lakewood)—far beyond anyone's ability to project fifty years ago. America the Melting Pot has brought together divergent streams of our Jewish heritage and mixed them so that we find a Sephardi Kollel, a Lithuanian Rosh Yeshiva heading a Chassidic institution, a Chassidic scion leading an authentic German-Jewish *Kehilla*, Hungarian-bred computer programmers and Yeshiva deans davening together . . . the list goes on, beyond the glatt shishkabob, kosher pizza level to a hybrid mixing of spiritual traditions, a truly American phenomenon.

For the meantime, the story of how America, with all its New World gifts, has added to the perpetuation of our Torah and our heritage, is left for the thinkers and writers to convey. It wasn't exhibited at the N.Y. Public Library.



Yad I' Achim "warning" handbill.

The Love Bomb

Dealing With the Missionary Threat in Israel

In 1980 the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation held a conference in Thailand, with the participation of Moshe Rosen, titular head of Jews for Jesus; and Menahem ben Haim of the Israeli Hebrew Christians' Alliance. This conference issued an instructive report called *Christian Witness to The Jewish People*.

According to this report, the founding of the State of Israel produced a new type of Jew who is extremely difficult to convert. This situation requires a different technique, according to the report, one which would open the hearts of Jews on *kibbutzim*, in the army, and in development towns. The technique in question is called the "love bomb" by anti-missionary workers.

The Thailand conference recommended the training of experts specifically for each of the above-mentioned areas, who would remove from themselves the label of "missionary" and, through friendly relationships and financial aid, would destroy the barriers to prepare the Jewish heart to receive the Gospel.

It works: at this time missionaries are making successful inroads into the army, the universities, the *kibbutzim*, the immigrant absorption centers, and even hospitals. Experts in the anti-missionary field estimate around 2,000 Jews now pray with Christian evangelical groups, while 10,000 more are caught in non-Christian cults.

Back in the "old days," as near as ten years ago, missionary methods consisted of outstretched hands, one holding a Bible and the other a wad of bills. Brother Dugger, a Seventh Day Adventist operating out of an

old Arab house in Bak'a, Jerusalem, enticed poor families with "We pray on Shabbat too, and by the way, here is a little something to tide you over." Then a law was passed which curtailed the Dugger-type operation, i.e., missionizing with money—but not missionizing *per se*. Except for this law, there is nothing in Israeli codexes that forbids missionizing.

Since the overwhelming majority of people in the government—at all levels—are personally very far from any kind of religion, and their private lives are not affected by Jews being converted to other beliefs, they are incapable of grasping what all the fuss is about. There are, however, a few government officials who are more receptive, who do assist anti-missionary efforts from time to time.

Heroes and Villains

I would like to tell the stories of some of the heroes and villains of this ongoing struggle, beginning with the heroes.

Dr. Samuel Golding is a warmhearted, dynamic individual with a red beard and British accent. Displaced by World War II, he was raised by a non-Jewish family; he later graduated from Sandhurst (England's West Point) and worked in military intelligence. When he left the army, he went on to study Christian theology, but when he discovered his true origins when 31 years of age, he became a *baal teshuva*. This background was a perfect preparation for his present work.

Dr. Golding is into every facet of anti-missionary work: lecturing, counseling, intelligence gathering, and many kinds of active measures against individual missionaries. He has a large staff of "workers"—actually

Mrs. Nahmoud, a frequent contributor to THE JEWISH OBSERVER as well as other publications, resides in Jerusalem. Her biography of Ribi Ya'akov Abu-Hasira was featured in the November '83 JO.

undercover agents, at least one of whom was a professional private detective in his pre-teshuva days. Others are paid investigators. They are efficient—the Golding archives occupy a room to themselves where there are hundreds of files on missionaries operating in Israel. Some of his missionary-discouragement methods will be illustrated further on in this article.

Old House, Effervescent Basement

The facade of the old house on its quiet street in Geula belies the effervescence in its basement. Here is a maelstrom of people and paper, reminiscent of a 1930's press room. Rabbi Porush, department head, sits at a beatup desk counseling a distraught woman whose husband is being wooed by an evangelist; the archives man shuffles through a ream of papers; an undercover agent types the report of her latest assignment. Others sit and stand around waiting for assignments, answering telephones, delivering verbal reports and newly acquired missionary tracts, or digging in mountains of documents. This is Yad l'Achim.


When I inserted myself into this scene, notebook and ballpoint in hand, one of the agents generously supplied me with a pile of literature and detailed answers to my questions, between phone calls. One call came from an Orthodox man, a concerned citizen, who wanted to report suspicious activities on Jabotinsky Street. He told of a group that had moved into one of the apartments. Neighbors thought it unusual to see streams of non-Jews constantly going in and out; then when one person mentioned seeing a known missionary among the visitors, our informant called Yad l'Achim.

Yad l'Achim's combat techniques include publishing—booklets with pictures, addresses and methods of various missionary groups and cults, and a regular bulletin with the most recent bad news on the subject. When a missionary is rumored to be in a given neighborhood, Yad l'Achim may send an investigator, posing as a prospective client, to check him out. Yad l'Achim's agents are men and women of all ages, personality types and ethnic backgrounds who volunteer full- or part-time to fight the missionary menace. A missionary can never know if the longhaired kid or the demure little grandmother he is talking to has a tape recorder running in a pocket or under a shawl—as they frequently do.


Yad l'Achim's investigators also interview neighbors about their suspect's lifestyle. If their man (or woman) proves to be a missionary, then the next phase starts. If he has a regular job, the organization may inform the missionary's employer of his extra-curricular assignments; landlords are often influenced to evict the troublemaker.

Sometimes Yad l'Achim gets a photograph of the missionary and prints handbills with a picture and description of him, his habits and activities, similar to an FBI "Wanted" poster, and it is put into all the mailboxes in the neighborhood. Other times, a missionary may awake in the morning to find a row of pickets outside his house, carrying placards announcing "This is a missionary."


Non-Jews coming to Israel are usually given a tourist visa of three months' duration. On occasion a missionary has been surprised to find that his visa renewal application has been refused—thanks to Yad l'Achim's information on his non-justifiable activities.



KIBBUTZ SHALOM
Overseas Missions Department of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada



ישראל
ISRAEL



Application Re Kibbutz Shalom

Kibbutz Shalom is a ministry of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada committed to "the Israel" with labor and love. We are looking initially for a two-month commitment on your part in an expressing our love to the children of Israel. This application forms a vital link in the chain of events that will lead to your potential involvement in a life-changing ministry. Please fill it out and with care and return it immediately.

Financial Policy:
Deposit with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada on or before pre-field onset amount of \$500.00 and the remaining amount a month in advance of departure. For missions the Kibbutz Shalom program will provide:
a) return air fare (air to Montreal return air extra)
b) six weeks of room and board while on a kibbutz and two weeks of room and board on return to Montreal.
We suggest that each participant bring extra money for spending on lunch, dinner (souvenirs, taxi, etc.)

Accountability:
Each participant must recognize his/her accountability to the Kibbutz Shalom co-ordinating Overseas Missions Department.

Overseas Considerations:
1. Do you agree to return to Canada at any time if requested to do so by the co-ordinating Overseas Missions Department?
2. Do you agree to abide by the Missionary Policy of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada as it applies to your situation?

A missionary application form.

Application for Approval:

Name: _____
 Marital Status: _____ Home Telephone: _____ Birthdate: _____ Sex: _____
 Address: _____ Business Telephone: _____
 City: _____ Province: _____ Living? _____ Postal Code: _____
 Father's Name: _____ Province: _____ Occupation: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Mother's Name: _____ Province: _____ Living? _____ Occupation: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Address: _____ Province: _____ Occupation: _____ Postal Code: _____
 If of Local Church you attend: _____ Province: _____ Occupation: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Date: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Have you completed High School? _____ College? _____ Postal Code: _____
 Have you attended Bible College? _____ College? _____ Major: _____
 Are you planning on returning to Bible College? _____ Graduate? _____
 Speak a language other than English? _____ What is it? _____ Fluently? _____
 Special awards or honors (e.g. special skills, athletic or musical talents) (also list such skills as first aid typing bookkeeping mechanics, etc.): _____
 References: _____
 When: _____
 Why: _____
 Where: _____
 How: _____
 Do you have a bank account indicating whether in Sunday School, Christ's Ambassadors Team, or other? _____
 How long? _____
 Where: _____
 How: _____
 Do you have a Kibbutz Shalom team member? _____

<p>KORECH <i>combining matzah and bitter herb.</i> THE SOP</p> <p><i>In the time of Kibal (Isid 100) and of Yeshua, when the temple was still standing, it was the custom to fulfill the task literally. With unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat (Ex. 12, Num. 9.) This combination, "The Sop" would be given at Jewish tables as a special mark of love, forgiveness or warning.</i></p> <p>YESHUA said: "One of you will betray me." John, lying close to the breast of Yeshua, asked: "LORD, who is it?" and Yeshua said: "He, to whom I shall give this morsel, when I have dipped it." And He dipped it, and gave it to Judas Iscariot, who, after receiving it, immediately went out; it was night. <i>(John 13: 21, 26, 27, 30)</i></p> <p>SHULCHAN ORECH <i>EAT THE meal!</i> <i>It is customary to begin with hard-boiled egg, dipped in salt water, traditionally the foot of manna, and this night - a tibia for foot of manna for the institution of the Temple. Yeshua: a tibia of manna for Messiah's death because of our sins!</i></p>	<p>פירוק הנהגה זו נהגה בתקופת בית המקדש, כאשר הוא עומד על יסודותיו. עם מצות המצה והחמץ הם יאכלו את המנהג הזה. זהו המנהג המסורתי, ויש להקפיד עליו. זהו המנהג המסורתי, ויש להקפיד עליו. זהו המנהג המסורתי, ויש להקפיד עליו.</p> <p>ישו אמר: "אחד מכם ימכור אותי." יוחנן, שכרם על חזה ישו, שאל: "אדוני, מי זה?" וישו אמר: "הוא, אליו אעלה את המנהג הזה, כשאוכל אותו." והוא הטיל את המנהג הזה, והעניק אותו ליהודה איש קריית ספר, והוא הלך מיד לאחר מכן. זה היה בלילה, והוא היה חשוך.</p> <p>אילנות עיר ישנהנהגה זו נהגה בתקופת בית המקדש, כאשר הוא עומד על יסודותיו. עם מצות המצה והחמץ הם יאכלו את המנהג הזה. זהו המנהג המסורתי, ויש להקפיד עליו. זהו המנהג המסורתי, ויש להקפיד עליו. זהו המנהג המסורתי, ויש להקפיד עליו.</p>
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Some missionary leaflets.

N. Blasbaig, an engineer from the U.S. now living in Haifa, founded a group called Concerned Parents Against the Cults. This organization consists of ninety families who were drawn together by one tragic common denominator—a son or daughter in an Eastern cult.

• • •

The most important weapon in our anti-missionary arsenal is the interest of the Israeli citizen—the Goldbergs and the Abutbuls who live next door to all of us. These are the people who call Dr. Golding and Yad l'Achim when they see odd goings-on in the apartment upstairs; they are the teenage girl who brings in a missionary tract she received on the street, the soldier who comes to report an active Hebrew Christian in his tank crew. They are the student, the businessman, the housewife, who volunteer for active duty in the ranks of Yad l'Achim and Dr. Golding's organization. Without them there could be no resistance movement of any kind.

The Other Side

Every Jew who has espoused Christianity does not necessarily belong to "Jews for Jesus." J/J is the name of a San Francisco-based demi-cult headed by Moshe Rosen. There are Jews in nearly all the churches in Christianity, and they are called *Hebrew Christians* or *Messianic Believers*. These Jews either volunteer or are recruited for missionary work in Israel, a fact which complicates the missionary mess in several ways.

Non-Jewish visitors who come on the three-month tourist visa must either renew their visas or go elsewhere. A Jew, regardless of his religious affiliation, is eligible for citizenship under the Law of Return, as is a non-Jewish missionary who comes armed with a Reform

conversion certificate. The last two categories cannot be thrown out of the country for bad behavior as can someone bearing a tourist visa.

A McDermott family moving into a solidly Jewish neighborhood such as Ramat Eshkol or Bait Vegan would certainly be conspicuous; someone named Abraham Levy would not, especially if he put in regular appearances at the synagogue on *Shabbat*. Again, a born Jew knows how to talk to Jews, whereas a non-Jew might be less effective. Thus evangelical groups prefer to use apostate Jews on the front lines of their "Jewish mission."

- The Messianic Assembly of Israel is one of three small Hebrew Christian groups. Run by a Dr. Backhouse and Victor Smadja, an apostate Jew, they have an office, warehouse, and printshop (housing five presses) at Rechov Dina Monetta 3, Talpiot, Jerusalem. In league with another group called "Operation Mobilization," they run a bookstore in Haifa where they sell a variety of missionary publications, including a Pesach Haggadah in Hebrew and English, which weaves the Last Supper of the New Testament into the traditional Haggadah.

5/14/84

THE NEW YORK TIMES

TV Diversity Grows in Israel

Arab Station Vying With Christians

Israel Television had no choice, according to its executives. Situation comedies and dramas are too expensive to produce locally. Serials such as "Dallas" and "Taxi" are sold cheaply on the international market.

Middle East TV, on the other hand, aims to disseminate Western culture and a Western Christian message to the Middle East. Besides the standard American serials, it broadcasts its own Christian programs such as "The 700 Club," an evangelical talk program, as well as cartoons about the Bible.

The station director, John Tomczyk, from upstate New York, denies the station has a missionary role.

Dispute Over Christian Message

Some Israeli viewers have written to their newspapers to criticize the Christian message of the station. One letter complained about a segment from "Superbook," a cartoon about the Bible, which allegedly stressed "the Jewish conspiracy" to kill Jesus.

But another viewer wrote to The Jerusalem Post, the English language daily, defending MET. "No one in Israel is forced to turn on his TV set," or to watch the missionary programs, the writer said.

In general, Israelis have welcomed the Christian station. The Israeli Army provides it with security. Israeli customs has facilitated the entry of equipment. High-ranking Government officials have met with the station's executives in Kiryat Shemona, northern Israel, where the seven American staff members live.

MET produces a daily newscast in

- The Bethesda Congregation, 59 Allenby Road, Haifa, has a special prayer service on *Shabbat* for new Soviet Jewish immigrants.

- The Rehovot Church Messianic Congregation, Derekh Yavne 52, is run by Rev. Barukh Ma'oz. Ma'oz, who has a printing press in his apartment, is now writing a course on how to missionize Jews in Israel, in collaboration with the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tel Aviv-Yaffo. "In this new country they have no tradition," says Ma'oz, "and we are going to give them one."

Although many Hebrew Christians work with churches and evangelistic groups, there are also the independents. These, needless to say, are the easiest to neutralize. Dr. Golding tells the following story of one of them:

"Harlem Louis Weinstein's mother was not Jewish, but his father obviously was. His parents were more drawn to Christianity than to Judaism, and Weinstein grew up in a Christian atmosphere. Deciding to become a missionary and go to Israel, he first enrolled in a *ba'al teshuva* yeshiva in New York. With a name like Weinstein, no one thought to ask details about his Jewish status.

"Here, look at his file: a major in rabbinics with nearly straight A's. And what do you think of this photo? Beard, hat, black suit, *tzitzis*. Normal.

"Weinstein came to Israel with the Bnei Akiva youth *aliya* and immediately got a job at the Conservative Bernstein Youth Hostel in Jerusalem. Our office got wind of it, and I acquired copies of his birth certificate, transcript from the yeshiva, and so forth, showed the file to the rabbi in charge of the hostel, and informed him that he had a missionary on his hands. The kid was out of there in an hour. Then Weinstein went on to three more jobs in the social services, and each time I had him fired; his last one was with handicapped children.

"About this time Weinstein started running out of money and wrote home. This was what we had been waiting for. One of our workers monitored his mail. Mind you, the letters—and presumably, money—came not only from his parents but also from a church and an evangelical missionary organization.

"After a time, we invited Weinstein to the office here. I confronted him with his file, now updated with a list of

all the letters from the church and the missionary organization. I then handed him a one-way flight reservation, telling him that he could pay for it with the funds that had been mailed to him, and advised him to get out, fast. He did."

The Army

"Is it true that there are missionaries in the army?" I asked Dr. Golding, incredulously.

"And how!" he exclaimed, pointing to the archives room. "I have a pile of files in there just on that subject. Here is a typical story:

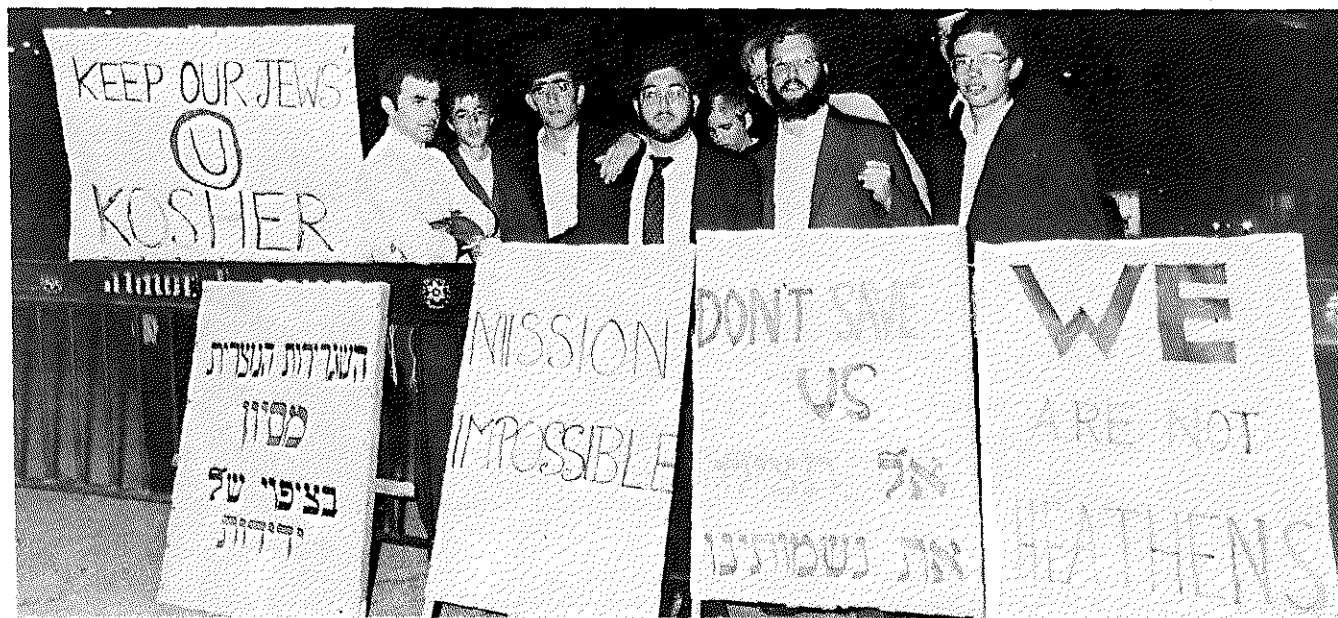
"An army officer told me that he and three fellow officers had been going to the Beit Immanuel in Jaffa for a weekly Saturday-night party with food, girls, and music. After a while the officers were sucked into the thing and got baptized.

"My informant found out that the two officers were issuing passes and giving privileges to soldiers in their charge if they attend the Beit Immanuel parties. That was enough for him, so he decided to come to me.

"I went to someone in the Ministry of Defense who acted immediately. The next week the officers were in jail and there were signs on Beit Immanuel: *Off Limits to Military Personnel*—any soldier caught on the premises would be arrested by the MPs."

Dr. Golding went on to tell about a new army technique: hitchhiking. Missionaries pick up hitchhiking soldiers on leave at the Lebanese border and take them home. The long drive provides an ideal opportunity to give the message.

Yad l'Achim reports that a nefarious establishment called the Christian Embassy is beginning to worm its way into the Soldiers' Welfare Association, an Israeli



Yad l'Achim demonstration against Christian Embassy.

version of the USO. This organization maintains canteens and clubs as well as rest homes for soldiers.

The Kibbutzim

One Christian Embassy brochure says: PROJECT KIBBUTZ, with a picture of a man blowing a shofar, a tractor, and the walls of the Old City. At the bottom of its cover we see:

"And they will rebuild ancient ruins, and they will raise up the former devastations, and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, and foreigners will be your vinedressers" (Isaiah 61:4,5). The passage may well be apt, but not as envisioned by the Prophet.

All *kibbutzim* accept volunteers to pick fruit, work in the kitchens and the cowsheds, and sometimes even in the children's quarters. Hundreds of non-Jews come every year to work on *kibbutzim*, many from sincere motives or for a "different" kind of vacation. But not all. Two missionary organizations have been reaping rich people-harvests at the *kibbutzim*.

"Because so many volunteers come and go over the years, *kibbutzniks* protect their feelings by avoiding closeness with new workers," cautions an Embassy newsletter. The Embassy therefore requires that volunteers commit themselves for a period of not less than one year of service to become "part of the family."

All candidates accepted by the Embassy's Project Kibbutz attend a six-week orientation seminar at Kibbutz

Dafna. With an appreciation of the culture and lifestyle in Israel, the volunteer will be prepared to discuss a wide range of issues with *kibbutz* members.

Once the volunteer is sent to a *kibbutz*, the missionary movement keeps close tabs on his actions. A supervisor to whom the volunteers must periodically report is assigned a group of fourteen. Refresher courses are given every two months to still any doubts which may arise, and the volunteers go back.

Here is what a Christian Embassy newsletter says to its missionary volunteers:

"Don't arrive at the kibbutz with missionary zeal, ready to convert the natives. But rather arrive quietly with the love which God has put into your heart for the land and the people. Talk about this first rather than of your love for the savior. Become a living witness by punctuality, work well done, and a cheerful spirit. Show them that you love them and want to know them and be their friend. Often you will have to 'break the ice' and then you will be amazed how warm and friendly these people are. One by one they will begin to invite you to their homes for afternoon coffee and cakes. In time, and with patience, the kibbutzniks will begin to see that you are not the usual run-of-the-mill volunteer."

"Kibbutz Shalom" is the name of an almost identical project sponsored by another big-money missionizer, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

Immigrant Absorption Centers

Israel has immigrant absorption centers all over the country where new families can stay at low cost until



Dr. Golding lecturing on refuting missionaries.

they learn Hebrew and find housing and jobs—usually for around eight months.

People who come on aliya to Israel usually come with ideals and are most likely to be a bit disoriented following a major uprooting. Such a set-up is custom made for missionaries, of whom there are plenty at every absorption center in the country.

Dr. Golding believes that while there may be organizations involved, most of the missionaries in absorption centers are probably independents. Mostly Jews, he said, but a few non-Jews as well.

"Non-Jews?" I asked. "How do they manage it?"

"Easy. Easy. Salvator Constantino and his friend Fuoco are examples. Salvator paid \$200 for a Reform conversion—see, here's our photocopy of his conversion certificate. After that, his immigration was perfectly legal under the Law of Return. His daughter came to Jerusalem to a school for Jewish children run by Youth Aliyah, and he went to the absorption center in Beersheva. He has been there eighteen months now. He can't get a job because we inform all his prospective employers."

"Is he evangelizing?" I asked.

"Not now. I went to Beersheva and arranged to give a lecture to all the residents of the absorption center. I told them the details about Constantino and Fuoco and stressed that they should not speak to the pair nor have anything to do with them. Fuoco left the country after that; but Constantino is still around, and I must say I admire his courage!"

Slum Neighborhoods—Bad Tidings for Musrara

When I was interviewing at Yad l'Achim, a woman came in to tell Rabbi Porush her story:

Down the street from Jerusalem's Musrara slum, not far from the border of Mea Shearim, there is a quiet looking little church surrounded by a carefully tended garden. The sign on the church, in Arabic and Hebrew, says "Beit Hamevasser—The House of the Bearer of Tidings." Across the street from the church is a Jewish youth center.

The woman reported that Beit Hamevasser had recently installed an inexpensive canteen, some pool tables, and a library (with missionary publications, of course) in one of the church's buildings. Apparently, this development was not overlooked by Musrara's unemployed youth. Snooker is much more interesting to them than basketball, which is what the Jewish center offers—the Jewish center cannot afford pool tables which, it seems, are outrageously expensive.

The woman's husband, she related, started to go to the missionary hangout after work, and now he has quit his job and stays there all day. When she told him there was no money for the children's nursery school, he retorted "So what? The missionaries will take 'em free."

Our Task

I am not an anti-missionary specialist, but I am a concerned citizen of Israel. I am taking the time from my work as a researcher of Sephardic studies to research, interview and write this article. I believe as many others do that if more people knew what was going on they, too, would be concerned. A neighborhood where the general thinking is a shrugged "Well, it doesn't touch me personally" is the kind of spot most favored by missionaries and cults. A neglected spot in a kitchen—for example, a dark, rarely cleaned area behind the refrigerator—is the one most likely to become a breeding ground for roaches.

"But what can I do?"

There are many things. If you hear of a missionary or a cult in your neighborhood, get the address. (Yes it *could* happen in a religious neighborhood; it already has.) If you see literature being handed out on the street, resist your temptation to shout angrily at the missionary; just walk on by. Pick up a discarded brochure and pocket it. Then convey what you have, phone numbers and addresses imprinted on the paper, to one of the following:

If you live in Israel:

Yad l'Achim/4 Rechov Yonah/Geula, Jerusalem/
02-288-008

Dr. Samuel Golding/2 Rechov HaMa'alot/Jerusalem/226-896

The United States is by no means free from the missionary-and-cult menace. The cults in particular claim many young Jewish minds every year.

Scope & Vision

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Project Kibbutz

"Year in Israel"

TOPIC

Orientation Seminars

STARTING DATES

February, July, September, December.

INFORMATION

Project Kibbutz has established a six-week Orientation Seminar as preparatory to beginning the "YEAR IN ISRAEL" Program. Kibbutz Dafna has made their facilities available for four orientation seminars a year. The Seminars will combine 3 full working days with 3 days of in-class study. Following the successful completion of the orientation seminar participants will be assigned to the Kibbutzim for approximately 52 weeks.

CLASSES

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COST

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact your local or national Project Kibbutz Representative.

In the U.S., these are some of the addresses to contact:

Rabbi D. Goldwasser/Chizuk/5 Beekman Street/
New York, N.Y. 10038/(212) 791-1848

Rabbi Kravitz/Chabad Counter-Action/741 Gay-
ley Ave./Los Angeles, CA 90024/(213) 208-7511

Rabbi Dobin/17720 North Bay Road, Suite 8-D/
Miami Beach, Florida 33150/(305) 931-0001

If a missionary tract is stuck into your mailbox, keep it and turn it over to one of the above addresses. If you mail it in, be sure to mention your name and address and when it was received, so the anti-missionary organization will know where things are developing.

One of the best weapons is education. Hold an anti-missionary consciousness-raising meeting in your neigh-

borhood. Invite a speaker or speakers—Dr. Golding, N. Blasbalg, T. Gross, Rabbi Porush, if you live in Israel; or one of the names listed above if you live in the States.

If you know that a group of new Soviet immigrants is receiving Christian indoctrination, for instance, contact Jewish experts, to send in an outreach for some counter-indoctrination.

If a cult has taken over a cafe, a Jewish health-food tea shop could be set up nearby where patrons would receive liberal doses of the teachings of Rabbi Nachman of Breslav with their camomille tea and tofu. (This is currently being done in Jerusalem.)

And if you are interested in doing a very vital *mitzva*, inquire about volunteer work with one of the organizations listed above.

5



The International Christian Celebration during
THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES
שָׁבֻעַת חַג-הַסֻּכּוֹת שָׁנַת הַקְּהִילָה הַנוֹצְרִית הַבִּינְיָאוּמִית

We are delighted that you wish to visit an Israeli family - this will give you a first-hand opportunity to learn more about contemporary life in this land, and also give you a chance to show the Israelis that there are Christians who are genuinely interested and concerned for them.

* It would be good to know something about:

a) The Feast of Tabernacles (Succot) and its significance for you as a Christian. Be prepared to answer such questions as "Why are you celebrating a Jewish holiday?" or "Why do you love Israel?"

b) Israel: It helps to have some knowledge about Judaism, Israeli life and the problems that the country faces. When people can ask intelligent questions and hold a good conversation, it shows the Israelis that they are concerned and interested in them.

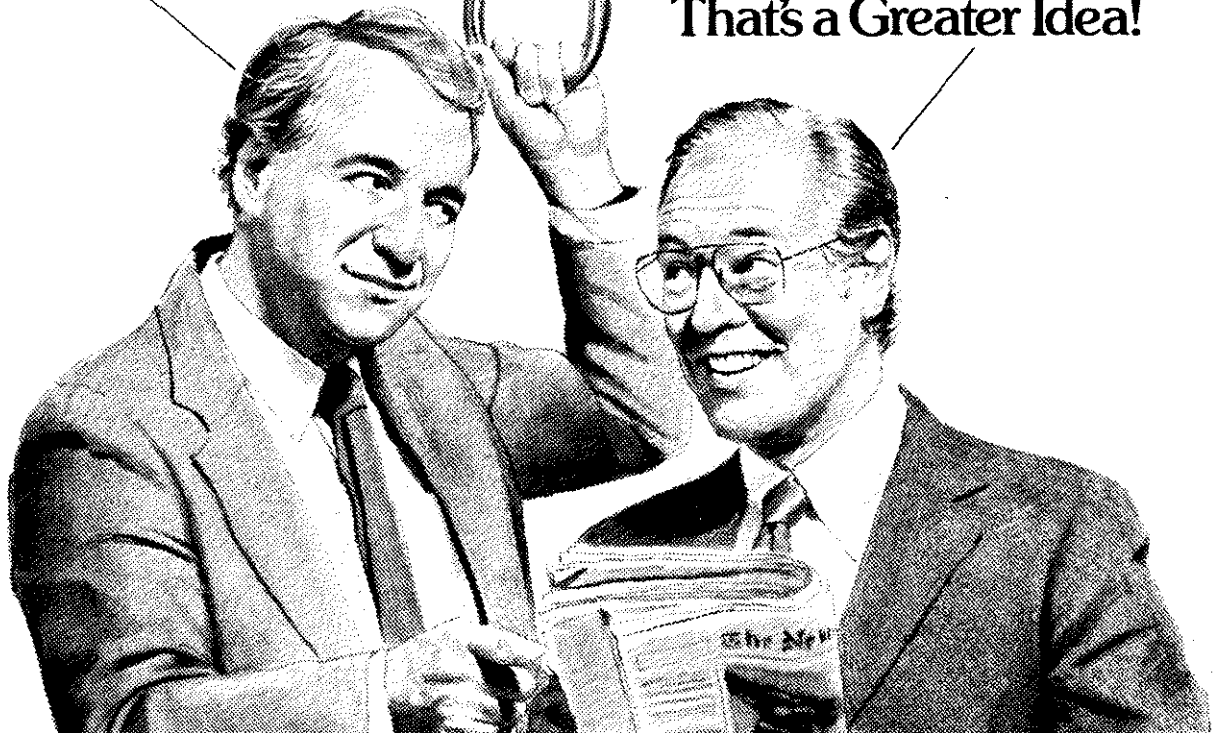
* Be sensitive about Israel's *problems* (i.e. war, inflation, its world isolation). Israel can be a difficult place in which to live. Try not to downplay life in Israel by overshadowing it with reports of affluence in the western world. Encourage them by stressing what you like and find unique about Israel and also by reminding them of God's promises.

* About *proselytizing*: The purpose of the Feast is to bless and comfort the Jewish people, not to proselytise them. Be yourself in a loving and kind way. Please do not bring tracts, books or Bibles for distribution: these are readily available in Israel. The love you leave behind is more important than any tract.

* In Israel it is customary to bring a small *gift* the first time one visits a home. Therefore it would be a nice token of friendship to bring a small gift from your native land, or alternatively a token gift from here (e.g. flowers, chocolates, or whatever you think nice).

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Contemplating the Jewish Calendar From a Pesach Perspective

Liberty or Death

The concept of "Give me liberty or give me death" is a deeply rooted sentiment in the human psyche. One might wonder why. After all what is objectionable about living a pleasant life under conditions dictated by somebody else? Basically, however, a human being is in essence a *bocheir*—a creature that exercises free will. It is this feature that distinguishes him from the animals, on one hand, and the angels on the other. Just as most people would welcome death over a vegetable existence—albeit a comfortable one—so too does a more sensitive person realize that he is the equivalent of a vegetable unless he is free to choose his own destiny. A nation, too, gains its existence on its independence day, in the same sense that an individual exists only when he is free to make his own choices.

At what point did the Jewish People begin its national existence? The *S'far Emes** explains that the *geula* from *Mitzraim*—the redemption from Egypt—was eternal, and the day it took place, Pesach, brought about our permanent freedom. Pesach, then, is not merely a commemoration of a historic act of redemption; it is rather the day that "freed us forever."

In The Realm of the Free

How do we understand this eternal freedom, in the light of the millennia of personal and national bondage that the Jews have been suffering? The answer lies in that *Geulas Mitzraim* was actually the beginning of a progression that culminated in *Mattan Torah*—the Giving of the Law, which lifted us into a different realm of free choice, a realm in which the other nations do not function: The *S'fas Emes* explains in numerous places that the era of the Patriarchs was characterized by *derach eretz kadma laTorah*. This was a seemingly normal pattern of life enhanced by profound contemplation, which can

bring a person to the discovery of G-d in nature, eventually leading to the discovery of the laws of the Torah deeply embedded within nature. While in that pre-Sinaitic state of existence, Israel had no means of national self-realization, and *Mitzraim* succeeded in imposing corporeal slavery upon the Israelites. Under Egyptian control, the Jews had lost all semblances of independence except for their language, their names and their manner of dress, which they managed to preserve.

With the Ten Plagues and the Exodus, G-d not only freed Israel from Egyptian dominion, but initiated the process that ultimately redeemed them from any possibility of future subjugation. For instance, with the Tenth Plague, the killing of the First Born, the ruling class of the country was destroyed; Israel was no longer enslaved to Egypt and instead entered bondage to G-d (Vilna Gaon in *Siddur HaGra*). In their earlier state, control of the Jews' destiny could easily have been transferred from one national group (i.e. Egypt) to another—be it Greece, Canaan, or Assyria. Once they became G-d's charges, however, no other nation could ever gain control over them, for "belonging to G-d" puts them into an entirely different realm.

All the occurrences in the seven weeks that followed added to this special status. Splitting the sea for Israel's sake, for example, raised it above all other groups, which are identified by their attachment to material concerns. (See Maharal in *Gevuros Hashem* Chapters 40-42.) This metamorphosis was completed with the giving of the Torah, when Israel completed its assumption of a new dimension of existence, and gained an entirely new stratum for exercising its *bechira*.

Since that time when the Jew achieved a higher level of existence, he is always free to choose, even under the harshest of conditions. His hands may be bound and his mouth sealed by his oppressors, but in his heart he is still free to choose to fulfill the *mitzva* of *emuna*—belief in

Rabbi Scheinman, an American-born Kollel fellow in Jerusalem, is a frequent contributor to these pages.

*Gerrer Rebbe, Rabbi Yehuda Arye Leib Alter (5607/1847-5665/1905).

G-d. True, he does not at all compare with a person free to choose to fulfill all six-hundred-and-thirteen *mitzvos* with everyone of his limbs. But his life is still not on the vegetable level. It is the life of a Jew, using his most human of capacities: free will.

Peoplehood With a Difference

As an example of Jewry's elevated field of choice since achieving its elevated peoplehood, the Bostoner Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz, commented on Rashi's remark that when the Canaanites fought Israel, they came dressed as Amaleikim (see *Bamidbar* 21). Israel overheard them talking in Canaanite language, and was confused as to their identity. So the Jews simply prayed, "Deliver this nation into my hands," without specifying whom they wanted vanquished: By appearance their foes were of Amaleik, by speech they were of Canaan.

But if the Canaanites were interested in confusing Israel, asks the Rebbe, they should have spoken Hebrew, and presented themselves as Israelites! National identity, he explains, is based on speech and appearance. Thus a Canaanite who dresses and speaks like a member of another nation, is ipso facto a member of that other nation. Just as Jews whilst in Egypt preserved their identity by *not* changing their language or their clothing, so too can anyone today *become* a member of

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another nation by fully assuming the culture of that nation.

Thus we find today that the Palestinian Arabs demand their own nation so as to have their own flag and their own passport; for these are not merely the trappings of a nation, for them they are the essence of nationhood.

Not so is Israel's lot. When Israel was given the Torah—that is, when G-d made the covenant with Israel, proclaiming them a nation, His treasured nation—עם סגולה—Israel was transformed, and its essence could no longer be contained in its language, its government, its anthem or its army, but rather in the Torah—and only in Torah. Had the Amaleikites spoken Hebrew, the Amaleikites would not have become Jewish. An elevated status as members of the Torah Nation is also required for such a transformation.

Torah as Our National Essence

Should Israel ever be threatened with *shmad*—spiritual extinction—its people are enjoined to sacrifice their lives even on account of the minutest of customs bearing religious significance (see Rashi who explains the reason for the wearing of ערקתא דמסאנא—see *Sanhedrin* 74b). On the other hand, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was even willing to surrender the capital city of Jerusalem to spare Jewish lives once he was assured of the continuity of Torah in Yavneh, with no fatal loss to Jewish nationhood. Torah guarantees Israel's integrity, the conventional trappings of nationhood do not.

Pursuing this line of thought, one will not question why 5 Iyar, Israel Independence Day, passes unmarked in Agudath Israel and most yeshiva circles, for the "State of Israel" is neither sacred nor profane, but rather mundane. Just as a person is enjoined to make a normal and reasonable effort to secure a job, a house, clothing, and so on, so too should the *Klal* defend itself against enemies, promote industry and commerce, retain reasonable relations with other groups or nations, and generally secure its communal or national interests. Furthermore, by virtue of its mundane status, the state can become sanctified when used as a means for furthering Jewish spiritual welfare; on the other hand, it can become degraded when used as hindrance or even

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worse י״ן . However, statehood is never an end or a goal unto itself. It is only a means for further accomplishment. In this context, rabbinical leaders have directed Agudath Israel to participate in Israel's national affairs, to secure Torah interests and the nation's security, without evaluating the desirability of the creation of the State *per se*.

We can find parallels to this in the milestones that occur in our personal lives. People are apt to celebrate their wedding anniversary, for they feel that on the day of their marriage they became a more complete person. Acquiring a home is a different matter. To be sure, a person without a home or dwelling place cannot form a family, which is why people rejoice upon acquiring a house, and even celebrate the acquisition with a *chanukas habayis*—a house warming dedication. Yet, no one would think of celebrating the occasion on a yearly basis. For the house is but a means, while the family is a goal unto itself.

The Essential Renaissance

Ika Israeli, a celebrated artist who today is one of Israel's more prominent *baalei teshuva*, was once asked on a radio interview why he does not celebrate Independence Day. He retorted sharply, "In my opinion, the day of the founding of Yeshivat Ohr Somayach (a leading school for *baalei teshuva*) is a more significant day in the history of Israel." The answer was more than just a smart-alecky retort. If one wishes to celebrate the rebirth of Israel, one must seek signs of spiritual rebirth. The *Ramban*, when explaining the characteristics of *Moshiach* and his era, clearly defines him as a spiritual giant redeeming Israel spiritually; the physical redemption that marks the Messianic era merely serves as the final proof that G-d's spirit has indeed rested upon the man chosen to be *Moshiach*.

Refraining from celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut is not a protest against the character of today's State—justified as such a protest may be. It is a proclamation that statehood is not an essential part of Israel's self. G-d has "lifted us from amongst other nations," and since the Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah, we have never been dependent on other nations or their recognition of us. We may have been oppressed, beaten or humiliated, but in our essence we were always independent. We are thankful to G-d for every opportunity for widening our range of *bechira* but never are we in a position that life has lost meaning or challenge for lack of choice.

For Whom the "Mi SheBeirach"?

The revered Mirrer Rosh HaYeshiva, Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz זצ"ל , would proclaim on Yom Kippur that a soldier who is killed for *Klal Yisroel's* sake is on the level of *Harugei Lud*—the martyrs of Lud—who have the great-

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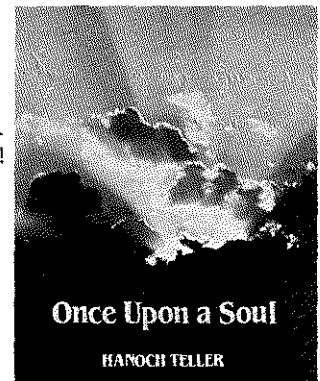
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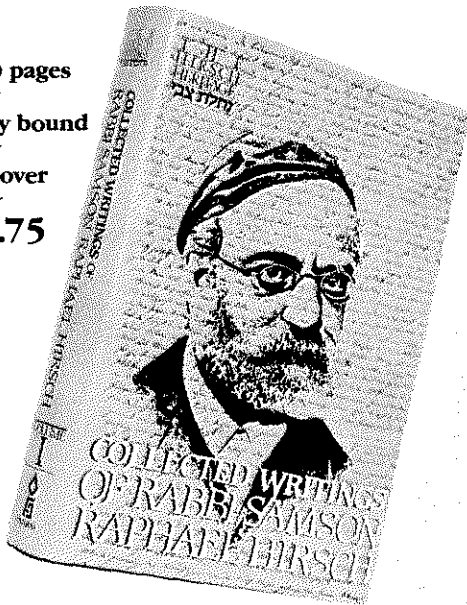
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est share in *Olam Haba*—the World-to-Come. If the role of the soldiers is so held in awe, why does the Mirrer Yeshiva—and all such places, for that matter—not say “*Mi Shebeirach*” prayers for the well-being of the State and the army?

As is, the *Shabbos* liturgy already includes two “*Mi Shebeirach*’s” in the form of the “*Yekum Purkan*” prayer for two institutions that are the mainstay of *Klal Yisroel*: the *Kehilla* (organized community) and the *talmidei chachomim* (Torah scholars). It is not the prime minister and/or the parliament that give *Klal Yisroel* its shape. It is the *Kahal*—the gathering of the people in *achdus* and in union that is *Klal Yisroel*, *per se*. The same is true of the inner core of *Klal Yisroel*, which is its *talmidei chachomim*. An army is a necessity of the moment and, to be sure, *Tehillim* is said as an ad hoc *tefilla* for its welfare. But the army as an institution, and the Jew as a soldier is not a permanent or intrinsic fixture of *Klal Yisroel*. The army does not “bring out the best in a Jew,” the *Beis Midrash* does. The army is a temporary answer to a temporary problem. The *Beis Midrash* is eternal. In a similar vein, Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook זצ”ל once commented that all important institutions in Israel pass on from the father to son, except for *Kohein Moshiach Milchama*, who was in charge of the wartime obligations of the priesthood. He explained that since war in essence is temporary, so too does the wartime office have no lineal continuity.

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Shedding Light on Recent History

Guardian of Jerusalem, The Life and Times of Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, adapted by Rabbi Hillel Danziger from the Hebrew biography by Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Sonnenfeld (New York, Mesorah Publications, 1983, \$15.95 hardcover, \$12.95 paperback).

This new volume in The Artscroll History series is a worthy successor to the previously published biography of Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman. (In this context, it should be stressed that Mesorah Publications has just published a special version of this biography for young readers, admirably written by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and beautifully illustrated by Rabbi Yosef Dershowitz — New York, 1984, \$9.95 hardcover, \$6.95 softcover — a must for every boy and girl.) Whilst the biography of Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman went beyond the life story of this outstanding Torah personality to give the reader an insight into the world of the yeshivos and *Gedolei HaTorah*, the biography of Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld also goes beyond the life of its hero to convey to the reader an understanding of Jewish life in *Eretz Yisroel* during the last hundred years — the glory of the Old *Yishuv*, the rise of secular Zionism, the battles that pitted causes and personalities against each other, and the deeper meaning of the issues involved for Torah Jewry. All the famous names of modern Jewish history, from the secular camps as well as from the Torah community, appear in these pages. At the same time, story after story touches our heart with its message of total commitment to Torah, love to the Holy Land, and longing for *Moshiach*. Without doubt, this volume will become a textbook for the study of Jewish History.

The original Hebrew biography, on which it is based, was criticized in *Neturei Karta* circles as in some respects depicting Rav Sonnenfeld in too "liberal" a fashion; these critics will probably take exception to this or that formulation in this volume too — but there can be no argument that the picture of Rav Sonnenfeld that emerges from this volume is authentic.

Heroine of Rescue, The incredible Story of Recha Sternbuch who Saved Thousands from the Holocaust, by Joseph Friedenson and David Kranzler (New York, Mesorah Publ. 1984, \$12.95 hardcover, \$9.95 paperback).

This is yet another volume in the Artscroll History Series. It is dedicated, in the first place, to a woman who, with her husband and associates, worked with extraordinary self-sacrifice through the war years and — overcoming the lethargy and outright opposition of governments and even Jewish organizations and leaders — saved uncounted individuals and families. The incidents recounted rival any fiction for sheer excitement — but they are fact and they provide insight not only into the heroism of the rescue workers but into the personalities and politics of that terrible era. Being focused on one person, this book is not a systematic study of the various aspects of the *Hatzolah* problem; but it throws a light on a wide variety of problems and issues that kaleidoscopically arose.

Responsa from the Holocaust, by Rabbi Ephraim Oshry (New York, Judaica Press, 1983, \$14.95).

This is another work that takes us back to the war period with searing impact. It is an abridged English version of the author's five volumes of Rabbinic responsa issued under the most tragic conditions in the Kovno ghetto. In these responsa, *Sh'eilos U'Teshuvos MiMaamakim*, there was not only reflected the horror inflicted upon the victims of the Nazis, but also — and above all else — their refusal to let themselves be dehumanized. The questions posed to Rabbi Oshry show that the Nazis could torture or even kill these Jews, but they could not break their spirit or take away their commitment to G-d and Torah. The questions (such as whether to recite a blessing before undergoing martyrdom) will deeply affect the reader. The abridgement of the replies makes them more readable for the lay reader, since the details of the halachic reasoning are omitted; of

course, this makes the volume of less interest to the informed student, but he can always turn to the Hebrew original for the details desired.

Escape to Shanghai, by Rabbi Elchonon Yosef Hertzman, translated by Rabbi Dr. C. U. Lipshitz (Published by Bais Veyelepole, N.Y. 1981).

This slim volume, attractively designed and prepared by Shimon Katzman, is the author's personal account of the odyssey of the Lithuanian yeshivos, from the early days of the war to their stay in China and Japan and their final reestablishment after the war in *Eretz Yisrael* and the United States. The Hand of Providence is clearly visible in many of the details recounted, and many of the personalities we encounter remain firmly etched in the reader's mind — not only *Gedolei Yisrael* but some most unlikely heroes such as the Japanese consul in Kovno. The photographs and documents included add further to the value of this book. Unfortunately, there are some printing errors, especially in the rendering of names, which should be corrected in a future edition.

The Yellow Star, by Simcha Bunim Unsorfer (N.Y., Feldheim, 1983, \$6.95 hardcover, \$4.95 softcover).

Personal experience of a different kind is the subject of this autobiographical volume, describing the ten months — in real life, an eternity — from the author's deportation from Hungary to his liberation in Buchenwald. It is impossible to read this book (which was briefly mentioned in the J.O. when it appeared) without being deeply touched.

The Butcher of Lyon, The Story of Klaus Barbie, by Brendan Murphy (N.Y. Empire Books, 1983, \$13.95)

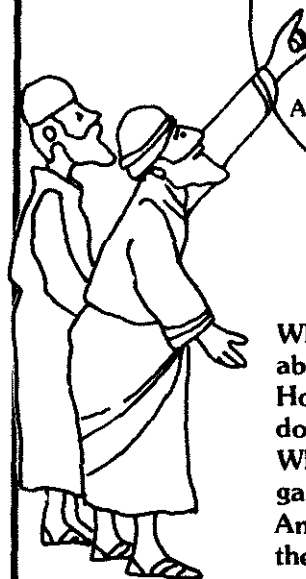
This book, which is another addition to the ever-growing Holocaust literature, occasioned by the arrest and deportation to France of Barbie, documents the indescribable crimes of this war criminal. In the process, it throws a painful light also on the attitude of many French toward the persecution of Jews. As one closes this carefully researched book, he has gained much information on a variety of topics — yet the central figure of the book remains a mystery; the reader is no closer to an understanding of this neat, civilized, competent, bureaucratic mass murderer, his mind and mental processes, than at the outset. Indeed, the flood of Holocaust literature leaves us, in general, with this puzzle. Perhaps there may be found a profound warning: we must be aware of what a perfectly normal human being is capable of doing if he frees himself of the G-d-given moral restraints.

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Samson's Struggle, by Rabbi Gershon Weiss, in collaboration with Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (Kol HaYeshivah Publications, 1984, \$11.95).

This volume, subtitled "The Life and Legacy of Samson, Reflecting Two Thousand Years of Jewish Thought," is the first volume in a Jewish Heritage Series, devoted to exposition of the lives and struggles of Biblical personalities, made relevant to the contemporary Jew. Without any question, this volume makes a most important contribution in clarifying—according to

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Torah teachings—one of the most difficult-to-grasp personalities in Jewish history, and some exceedingly complex and misunderstood chapters of *Tanach* (*Shoftim* 13:2-16:31).

Shimshon would seem to have been a man of profound contradictions—chosen by G-d to judge the Jewish people, yet drawn into marriages with Philistine women and provoking wild brawls with the Philistines. The reality, as it emerges from the comments of our Sages, and as is masterfully presented by Rabbi Weiss, is quite different. In following his exposition—consisting of translation of the Biblical text, commentary and elaborating footnotes, as well as several appended essays—the reader receives an insight not only into the role of *Shimshon*, the meaning of the events in which he acted, and the working of Divine Providence, but also into many related teachings of the Torah, such as the Messianic drama in Jewish history, the meaning of good and evil, and what marriage should be like. This volume will keep the reader spellbound—and it must be considered absolutely essential for any teacher.

Tz'edah Ur'edah, the Classic Anthology of Torah Lore and Midrashic Comment, translated from the Yiddish, by Miriam Stark Zakon (Artscroll Judaica Classics, 1983, vol. 1, *Bereshith*, \$12.95 hardcover, \$9.95 softcover, vol. 2, *Shemos-Vayikroh*, \$13.95 hardcover, \$10.95 softcover).

As Meir Holder, of the Hillel Press, co-publishers with Mesorah Publications of this work, points out in his introduction, the *Tz'edah Ur'edah* has truly been for centuries an indispensable feature of the traditional Jewish household. Written in Yiddish, it brought to the masses the contents of the weekly Torah reading and *Haftarah*, together with illuminating, enlightening, and instructive comments culled from Talmud, Midrash and later Rabbinic classics. The message was always clear; the reader was to be guided to the eternal spiritual verities of the Torah. The present English edition, illustrated with woodcuts from the 1726 Frankfurt edition, is most readable, and it will hold the interest of the

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second looks

Centrists: Between the "Right Wing" and Whom?

When the president of a major rabbinical group speaks at his organization's national convention and a report on his address is given prominent coverage in a popular publication, it should give the reader some insight into the thinking of the man and his organization. A case in point is the convention address of Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, president of the Rabbinical Council of America, which was featured prominently in the *Long Island Jewish World* (March 1, '84).

In it, Rabbi Klaperman declared himself in the "Centrist" camp of Orthodoxy. For those unfamiliar

with this term, those associated with the RCA have as of late shunned the title Modern Orthodoxy. It seems that they see it connoting a rush toward modernity, even if *halacha* is watered down in the process. Yet the extremes are unattractive to them, so rather than choose to identify with a position that might be labeled as maximal, this segment of Orthodoxy is staking out the middle-of-the-road turf for itself, leaving the extremes to everybody else.

To be a "centrist," however, one should be equally accommodating to both extremes, or equally negative toward them both. How does Rabbi Klaperman place his group in relation to the groups at "the extremes"?

Decrying the "Tyrannical" Right

According to Rabbi Klaperman,* RCA members are being "drawn to the right by the adamant inflexibility of those

*all quotations from the L.I. Jewish World

who are at the right. We are intimidated by the right. We react to events and ideologies around us, but frequently lack the courage to initiate because of the fear that we may be challenged by our brethren on the right."

"Why, for example" he added, "if I daven daily, Shabbos, Yom Tov and Yomim Noraim (High Holidays) in a yarmulka, must I put on a black hat to officiate at a wedding with other rabbonim (rabbis) who are thus attired? We do not have to collapse into miserable surrender because someone who claims greater piety favors a certain form of dress. There is a tyranny in self-declared piety that is as objectionable as the scorn of the left.

"I know of no major theological difference or religious belief that separates us from the so-called right wing Orthodox groups. Among our chaverim (colleagues) there are greater talmidei chachamim (scholars) than there are in that camp. Certainly, we are talmidei chachamim enough and intelligent enough to justify our being more secure in our practices and way of life."

It is difficult to defend the "right-wing" against Rabbi Klaperman's fault-finding because his criticisms are not very specific. As for his attitude toward the right, he wears it on his sleeve—as the headline of the article puts it, he "Decries the holier-than-thou attitude of the right wing." So they are sanctimonious and smug. But one is at loss to find out if Rabbi Klaperman is equally hard on the

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left-wing Orthodox, for he neither identifies them, nor comments on their sins. He does express very clearly, however, how he views the leaders of Conservative and the Reform Judaism, and it seems that—but perhaps he should be permitted to speak for himself:

Be Nice to the Deviant Left?

- On the Reform movement's outreach program aimed at conversion of "un-churched" non-Jews: "We have to teach and proselytize and attract our own people first and then perhaps look to the others."—"and then"? Is it all possible that the "Centrist" Orthodox believe that a change has come about in the halachic attitude of discouraging converts, and that at the appropriate time we should engage in active proselytization, *a la* Reform outreach?

- In regard to the widely-decried, now defunct Denver conversion program, in which RCA-member rabbis put an Orthodox seal of approval on Reform conversions: *The Traditional rabbis who participated in the joint conversion program with Conservative and Reform Rabbis in Denver had in their "excessive zeal" come "dangerously close" to sanctioning conversions that were invalid.* True, Klaperman did add that their actions "have raised serious questions as to their reliability, credibility, and integrity as rabbis." But "dangerously close" is a cautionary description that also expresses acceptability. In other words, the hundreds of Reform-sponsored and educated "converts," who complied with the rituals but not the substance of a halachic conversion, were only "close" to being invalid. . . .

- As to the general tendency amongst the Reform toward runaway radicalism, in conversions as well as other areas, Rabbi Klaperman says: "If it were possible to have had a set of minimum requirements that would have satisfied the halacha and if we had the confidence and the relationship with the Reform group, I have reason to believe that some accommodation could have been made with them that could have avoided the patrilineal descent decision that has anguished

us so deeply." Again Rabbi Klaperman indicates that there could be a *modus vivendi* with Reform in regard to conversion. But halachic Judaism cannot even accept a Conservative conversion. Central to the conversion process is unconditional acceptance of the divinity of Torah from Sinai. Should the Conservative or Reform candidate for conversion accept this, he would cease to be a Conservative- or Reform-sponsored convert, because these groups do not themselves accept the divinity of Torah. As such, a requirement of this sort would never be acceptable to the Conservative or Reform leadership. Yet anything less demanding would be halachically unacceptable to the Orthodox. Where is there room for accommodation?

The "Centrists"—or at least the RCA president, if not the organization he speaks for—seem unusually soft and accommodating in their dealings with deviationist groups of

all shades, and then they wonder aloud why the "Ring-Wingers" are troubled with them. Is it really such a puzzle?

In the name of *Achdus* (unity), perhaps Rabbi Klaperman would consider creating a new mood by severing his ties with the Conservative and Reform—organizationally, by leading his group out of the Synagogue Council of America, and ideologically by stopping to try to please them with his statements. Instead, let him attempt to establish "confidence and a relationship" with the so-called Right Wingers. If he stops looking toward the deviationists, he might find that the "Right Wingers" aren't half as intimidating as he thought. T

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A Mother's Prayer

Help me to remember
that nobody else can raise my children—
not neighbors, or maids, or babysitters.

It can't be done
by yeshivos,
or camps, or shuls, (important as they are)

Not by Rebbes,
Counselors,
teachers,

Or by the hundred and one other people to whom
we entrust our kinderlach,
for so many hours.

I am sometimes bewildered
by this army of other people,
(good, important people for the most part)

I'm grateful to them;
but often I feel a little guilty
and concerned, too.

It's all too tempting
to depend on them,
to say:

"You teach the children,
guide them,
keep them busy—make them happy!

I've got so many other important things to;
for the community,
for *tzedakka* organizations, for my husband.

I mustn't forget myself either!
The experts say that I should feel free,
to study, to take a job, to express myself.

The family's better off,
(they say) if you don't live
just for them.

Sometimes I get very confused
about all this.

A deep nagging voice insists
that nothing is more important
than raising my own children—in the only
place they can truly be raised: their warm
Yiddishe home.

In these rooms,
at their own table,
with both parents present.

Where else can they learn manners,
or how to talk to each other,
or the lessons (not just in theory, but in
practice of consideration,
and *emes*, and love?

Who else (however dedicated)
can possibly care as much as we do
whether they learn these lessons,
and what kind of people they become.

The years of growing up
are so precious
and so fleeting.

Don't let me shirk the responsibility
that was given me along with the children.

Help me to sort out my priorities,
and to drop any activities that separate this family
instead of strengthening it.

Give me *סיעתא דשמיא* in the challenging job
of raising my children.
and a proud new joy in building a
בית נאמן בישראל.

Anonymous

And he who knows not how to ask Open for him

Shanie Perr

It was a magical moment. We were alone in the kitchen, just the two of us—mother and child caught in a fragment of time.

Bright sunlight streamed in from the window, unusual for a brisk November day. Supper, half cooked on the stove . . . productive sounds

Mrs. Perr is Program Director of Camp Bnos in Liberty, NY, Counselor and Therapist with Torah Umesorah Counterforce Program, and is currently in private practice. Her "They Don't Make Moms the Way They Used To" appeared in the December '82 JO.

from washer and dryer whispered the message that work was getting done, releasing me for the moment.

He was lying on the floor with the abandon only known to children, observing the world from a new perspective. Soon the others would arrive—big and small, each waiting to be seen, to be heard, to be listened to, to be loved, each one claiming his inalienable uniqueness. But not just yet.

"How come nothing comes out when you laugh?" he asked from nowhere.

I had been stunned before by the workings of his little mind, the scope of his imagination. "Prunes are raisins when they grow up," he once announced using all the reasoning and experience of his four years on this earth. "I love you till the end of counting," he once declared with all the poetry and intensity of his little being.

There is nothing second hand about children, I once read; no layers, no levels. In children, we see learning at its freshest. Hungry for

knowledge, they taste and touch the things they see. They test everything grown ups take for granted. They want to know. They dare to ask.

His little world had categories, information filed in tiny discs, amassed from his tiny wealth of knowledge. He made associations, drew conclusions.

Chickens lay eggs, cows give milk, crying produces tears, and laughter???

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יו"מ תרשי"מ

אל אחינו בני ישראל!

כבר חלפו חמישים שנה מהסתלקותו של רבינו הצדיק החפץ חיים וצוקללה"ה, ומשמיא קמוכו ליי. לזכות את ישראל בחיבוריו הנפלאים ובפרט בספריו על שמירת הלשון. וביה ראינו בשנים אחרונות החעוררות רבה כוירו ועידוד רבנים ומלמדים אשר קרבת אלוקים יחפצון ללמוד וללמד את ספר „חפץ חיים“ ושמירת הלשון ולהזהר בפיהם ולשונם. ובזכות הזהירות יוכה האדם לאור הגנוז שאין שום מלאך וכו"ו יכול לשער כמובא באגרת הגרי"א, וידוע מאמרו של הח"צ ז"ל שמעלת השמירה מביא שלום בעולם, ובעל השלום יעשה שלום, ויתקרב משיח צדקנו ע"י לימוד זה כמבואר בספרו ז"ל.

לכן כאנו על הכתב לחזק ולעודד אלו שכבר החחילו כמלאכת שמים ופונים אנו כקריאה לכל חבורות הלומדים בשיעורים קבועים, שיעורי חברה ש"ס, שיעורי דף היומי, חברה משניות וכדו' לקבוע את לימוד ההלכות בספר „חפץ חיים“ או שאר ספרים המדברים על שמירת הלשון כחלק משיעור הקבוע וללמוד לכה"פ הלכה אחת בכל יום אשר תועלתה גדולה מאד, והמגירי שיעורים ישימו לבם על זה וזכות הרכים תלוי בם.

וזכות מצוה זו נזכה כולנו לכרכות ישועות והצלחות ולביאת גוא"צ ככ"א.

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A Public Proclamation of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah

To our Fellow Jews:

7 Teves 5744

It is now fifty years since the passing of our teacher, the *tzaddik* of our times, the Chofetz Chaim זצ"ל. It was his merit to endow Israel with his outstanding publications, especially his works dealing with slander. ביה these past few years we have witnessed a renewed interest amongst many people—in great measure due to the encouragement of deeply dedicated rabbis and teachers—in studying and teaching the *sefer* "Chofetz Chaim," as well as in perfecting themselves in regard to proper speech. Through such vigilance a person can merit experiencing the "Hidden Light," which is beyond the comprehension of mortal or *malach*, as is recounted in the Letter of the Vilan Gaon. In accordance with the well-known statement of the Chacham Tzvi זצ"ל, vigilance in speech promotes peace, and the Master of Peace will then usher in peace and bring Moshiach as a consequence of this study, as is mentioned in his book.

We therefore have resorted to the printed word to encourage those already thus engaged, and to appeal to everyone who conducts regular Torah classes—*Chevrei Shas*, *Daf Yomi*, or *Mishnayos* groups—to include regular study of "Chofetz Chaim" or any other works that deals with this topic, covering at least one *halacha* daily. Such effort will bear salutary results. The lecturers need only devote themselves to the task for the merit of the multitude depends on them.

As a result of this *mitzva*, may we all merit blessings, salvation, success, and the speedy coming of Moshiach.

(Rabbi) Moshe Feinstein
(Rabbi) Yisroel Spira
(Bluzhover Rebbe)

(Rabbi) Yaakov Kamenetzky
(Rabbi) Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman
(Rabbi) Mordechai Gifter

"How come nothing comes out when you laugh?"

When was the last time I had asked a fundamental question?

Finding the universe as it is, we continue, accept the status quo, follow the daily routine. Our inability to ask results in our inability to dream.

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him," says the Prophet. "One should remain a child forever, always learning," says Reb Yisroel Salanter, "always asking in order to learn."

I've heard it told that the *cherubim* that covered the Holy Ark with their wings had the faces of children, telling us to learn as only children do with body and mind, with heart and soul, straining their very beings to find out, to discover.

The Torah speaks of four sons, three who ask, and one who cannot.

It is the custom at the Seder that the youngest child asks four questions, for he gets down to the heart of the matter.

If there are no children, only a wife at the table, then she asks, for women retain their childlike quality longer than men.

If one is alone—with neither child nor wife—he must summon up the child that lives within all of us but is deeply buried, and bid him to ask!

*Tnuas HaMussar

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Of Peace. And Pieces

by Faygie Borchardt

Peace. Poets extol it, soldiers fight for it, painters portray it in oils, sculptors in marble. And our people pray for it every day.

People dream of peace . . . we yearn for it . . . and its elusive quality makes it more precious than time . . . disappearing rainbow to pursue on a grey morning.

The other day, I heard a woman talking. A child, really. She was a captive child, a prisoner of history; an unfortunate who walks darkly with a rosy veil on her face.

"Why do they care about details?" she wanted to know. "Why can't they tolerate differences? One commandment less, one ritual omitted. . . . There are so many ways to be part of a people. Live and let live. Let there be peace. The traditional Jews have no monopoly on observance. Why the fire? Why the outrage? Let them be silent—and then there'll be peace."

I approached the woman and told her, "Our fight is not with you. We wish to be at peace with all of you, we're members of the same family. But can we be in harmony with your ideas—with bits of broken pottery? Torah is not a plaything, raw clay to sculpt into what-you-will. You ask, 'Why the fire? Why the outrage?' If you had an exquisite china vase in your home and I smashed it, wouldn't you protest? If I harassed your family, would you ignore me? When someone—completely unintentionally—tampers with our most sacred treasures, it's impossible to conceal our shudder.

"We cry out—not against people, but against the fragments of china

Mrs. Borchardt, a teacher in Torah Academy for Girls in Far Rockaway, NY, also wrote "Post-Blizzard Musings" (JO, March '83).

unwittingly shattered. What *you* hear from the distance as 'War!' is really a cry of, 'Danger, Careful—keep away!'"

Why Do I Struggle?

If peace is so good, why do I get involved in a struggle? Impulse versus knowledge; comfort versus fulfillment; apathy versus compassion. Wild creature caged within me—fighting to overpower me—struggle-conflict-war. And regarding this inner struggle, G-d said, "And it is *very good*." (See Ramban, Bereishis 1:31) "Very good"—this is the evil inclination."

But what of peace, which we dream of and pray for? I don't want a battlefield! I want a lovely garden. I don't want to challenge, and overcome mighty forces. I want to pluck succulent peaches from dark green foliage and drink from gentle streams.

If peace is good and desirable, G-d must want it for us. What is it?

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Peace is *shalom*—related to *shaleim*—
complete-whole. When am I at
peace? Not when I attempt to still
the raging forces, but when I accept
their presence and walk on, beyond
them, unafraid. Not when I walk
tranquilly on broken shard; I'll only
cut myself if I ignore its hazards.

Peace is when I help to bandage
cuts so they can heal; when I stitch
together the raw pieces within me
and help mend the fragments with-
out—to bring about שלום and שלמות,
shleimus . . . and *shalom*.

Peace is achieved when we are
with our Creator . . . when there is
harmony between heaven and earth,
and between people. When I peace-
fully look away from my friend in
trouble—that is war. When I strug-
gle against joining a gossip session—
that is peace. When I see brazenness
replace respect, and I peacefully go
along—that is war. When I fight my
laziness, my anger, my apathy—
that can only bring me greater peace.

How can I know? What wisdom
instructs me when to protest, and
when to be still . . . when to break,
and when to build?

There's only one way to know.

"*Shi'viti* . . . Sit in the House of
Hashem all my days to see the
sweetness of G-d. . . ." With that
awareness from that perspective, I
can come closer to knowing. 17

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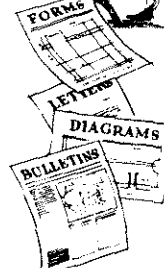
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Letters to the Editor



The Contagion of Teshuva

To the Editor:

I have just returned from a brief visit to *Eretz Yisroel* where I experienced first-hand the growth of the movement to *teshuva*. There, one can easily sense the depth of commitment and the beautiful spirit. This was exemplified by the experience of a university physics professor turned *Rebbe*, as well as my taxi driver David, who now learns and says *Tehillim* while waiting for a passenger.

The series of articles in the November JO penetrates so well to an understanding of the personal feelings of so many of our brethren world-wide. The phenomenon now is that *teshuva* is all around us and the sincerity of those we encounter is so very contagious. I feel humble when I view these people, their sincerity, and their accomplishments.

Thank you for continuing to inspire in your own very creative way.

(RABBI) JOSEPH M. GELMAN
Principal,
Torah Academy for Girls
Far Rockaway, New York



Criticism, Toys, and Love

To the Editor:

"The Critical Parent's Guidebook" (JO Nov '83) was truly wonderful. Just as the *Ramban* instructed his son

to read his letter to him once a week, so too would we parents all benefit if we would read this article regularly—perhaps marking paragraphs that are most pertinent to us.

Most parents *are* too critical. In our defense, our sharp words and impatience are often the result of undue daily strain. On the other hand, most of us overwork not out of necessity, but to obtain a newer car, a larger apartment, a better vacation spot. We women insist on producing fancy pastries, attending too many luncheons—when we could be excused with a mailed-in contribution. Parents often have an insatiable appetite for attending *simchos*, social events, and testimonials, staying until the last *le'chayim*, and then the next morning, letting it out on the children, not having the patience that is needed to "Train the youth in his way." We forget that, in its literal sense, *Shema* commands us to talk with our children about Torah—morning, noon, and night. Instead, the baby sitter is often expected to take over our parental duties. No wonder if our children repay us with like measure in our old age and transport us to some nursing home.

We must realize that there is nothing that money can buy which can substitute for GIVING OF OURSELVES to our children. My maternal *Zeida* and *Bubby* raised eleven children, working long hours for small wages here in America, but the evenings belonged to their children. Lacking a *Bais Yaakov*, he was his daughters' *Rebbe*. My mother would tell me how much his wonderful stories from the Torah and his instructions meant to her. He could have worked harder and bought toys for his children, or moved to a

bigger place. I am sure that all his children approved of *his* choice of utilizing the evenings. My beloved *Bubby* worked endlessly by doing factory "homework" at night. There were times when she could not afford a baby carriage and she had to carry her youngest in her arms. . . .

When my grandparents died, they were surrounded by eleven children, all Torah observant and all financially comfortable. They all gave their parents the highest respect, so much so that most parents would have envied them. All our bribery rarely yields the return that parents most covet: deep love and obedience. It is only the true value of life that we are obligated to pass on to our children, and that yields results.

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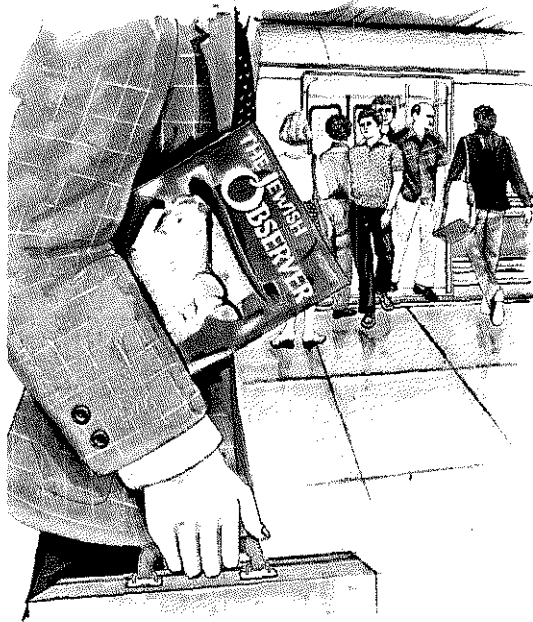
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100,000 MISHNAYOS BY HEART IN MEMORY OF THE SIX MILLION MARTYRS

New York—In memory of the six million "Kedoshim" (holy martyrs) who lost their lives in the Nazi Holocaust, Pirchei Agudath Israel of America conducted its 21st annual Siyum Mishnayos last week at the Yeshiva Toras Emes Kamenitz in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn. In what certainly has become the largest annual gathering of Jewish youth in the world, where the only entrance fee is the knowledge of Torah, over 100,000 Mishnayos were learned this past year. History was made when, for the first time, a 12 year old boy, Yisroel Stern, memorized the entire six volumes of the *Mishna*—a total of 4,190 *Mishnayos B'al Peh* (by heart).

Over 1,400 children, Pirchei leaders and parents watched with respect as the *Hadran* (completion) was said by Yisroel Stern, the *Mishnayos B'al Peh* champion, and the first *Mishna* was then said by Mordechai Hirschfeld and Aharon Stern—the two runners-up. The overflow crowd heard an inspiring address by Rabbis Henoah Leibowitz, Rosh HaYeshiva (Dean) of Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim in Forest Hills, who praised the children for attaining such great heights in Torah learn-

ing and emphasized how important they and their learning are to the Jewish nation.

Major awards were then bestowed upon four new members of the "One Thousand Club" (those who learn over 1,000 *Mishnayos* by heart): Yudi Glustein, Yechezkel Lehrer, Naftoli Leiser and Aharon Olshin. Honorable mention was given to 12 boys who learned more than 500 *Mishnayos* by heart.

Also on hand to receive honors were Pirchei Agudath Israel's newest Bar Mitzvah participants, a program in which some of the youngsters reaching the age of 13 study at least one of the six Sedorim of *Mishnayos* and say the *Hadran* at their Bar Mitzva. This year's major honors went to Zvi Hersh Rosenbaum, Ephraim Ginsberg and Shlomo Yitzchok Lauer (all from Monsey) and Dovid Yitzchok Korn of Staten Island, who learned all six Sedorim. Another 26 boys were rewarded for learning at least one Seder of *Mishnayos* in honor of their Bar Mitzvah.

Pirchei Agudath Israel is now preparing for the next major contests: the Hasmodoh Contest as well as the *Mishnayos Bifnim* and *Kedushas Shabbos* Contests.

CHINUCH ATZMAI LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN FOR FUND FOR NEW SCHOOLS

In response to a call by Rabbi Elazar Schach, שליט"א, for a special fund to make Torah education available to children in communities where there is no Torah school, the Board of Governors of Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools for Israel has called upon all friends of Torah among American Jewry to join in a \$5 million Fund for New Schools. As Rabbi Schach had told members of the Leadership Mission to Israel last Succos, "The problem used to be getting the children, while now we have the children but the problem is getting the facilities for teaching them."

The Fund will be initiated at the organization's 31st National Dinner, to be held Sunday, May 20, 1984/18 Iyar 5744 at The New York Hilton. Distinguished leaders of the Torah community will be honored at this function. A National Journal being prepared for distribution at the Dinner will be present an overview of the Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools network as "The Lifestream of Torah in Israel," as well as greetings and tributes to the educational program in Israel. Reservations and information may be arranged through the Executive Offices at 167 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, or by calling (212) 889-0606.

AGUDATH ISRAEL: YES TO SCHOOL PRAYERS, NO TO PROPOSED AMENDMENT

While Agudath Israel favors the concept of prayer in public schools, it cannot support the current constitutional amendments before the U.S. Senate, according to a statement released for the organization by David Zwiebel, Director of Government Affairs of Agudath Israel of America. The statement declares:

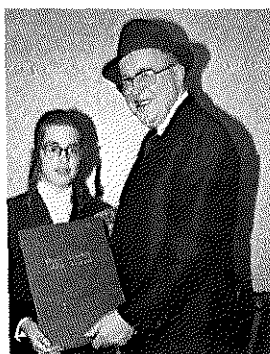
"In principle, Agudath Israel favors the return of American society to religious beliefs and values, and we feel that prayer in public schools could indeed serve as a vehicle to elevate the tone of religion in this country.

"On the other hand, we oppose any constitutional amendment, including those being debated in the Senate at this time, which is couched in terms that would leave the door open for the institution of sectarian prayers in public schools by parents or other groups with vested interests."

According to a spokesman for Agudath Israel, the ambiguity of the current versions of constitutional amendments under discussion could lead to unacceptable interpretations, which would encourage classroom disputes and the unwarranted intrusion of any particular "majority religion."



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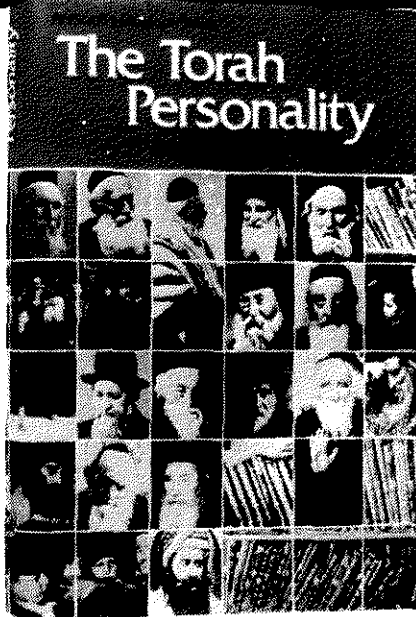
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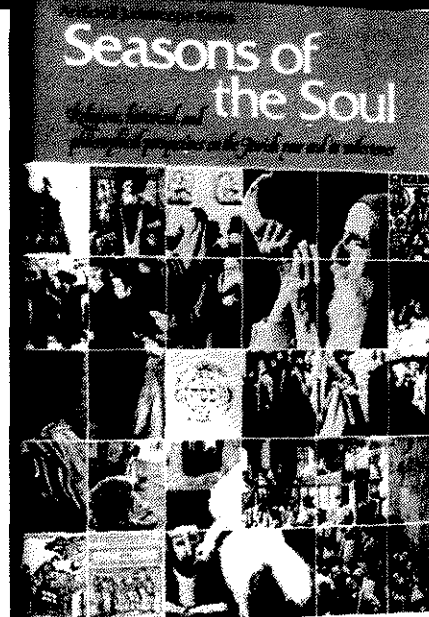
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**ORTHODOX JEWRY BACKS
PETACH TIKVA RABBI'S FIGHT
FOR SHABBOS OBSERVANCE**

"Torah Jewry in America has been following with deep concern the developments in Petach Tikva and stands with you in full support of your struggle to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath," Rabbi Moshe Sherer, president of Agudath Israel of America, declared in a cable to the chief rabbi of Petach Tikva in Israel, Rabbi Boruch Shimon Salomon.

"May it be the will of G-d that you succeed in your unbending efforts to prevent the desecration of the Sabbath in the City which is the 'mother of the settlements' in Eretz Israel," the cable states.

The message concludes: "Strengthen and fortify yourselves for the honor of Hashem and His Torah; the gates of hope and the doors of repentance are never closed. May the grace of G-d be upon you and may your actions meet with favor."

Agudath Israel of America also sent a strong cable to Prime Minister Shamir in Jerusalem, requesting that he personally intervene to put a halt to the Mayor of Petach Tikva's unprecedented brazen torpedoing of Israel's traditional "status quo" policy, which guarantees official Sabbath observance in the cities. The government dare no permit such a precedent to be established, for it would create a new worldwide controversy, which the Jewish people could and should do without at this crucial time.

In the cable to the Prime Minister, Agudath Israel also requested that the Ministry of Police apologize to Petach Tikva's Chief Rabbi for arresting him for the "sin of doing his duty as a rabbi, to halt the Sabbath violations in his community."

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AGUDATH ISRAEL FIGHTS GAY RIGHTS BILLS IN CALIFORNIA AND RHODE ISLAND

As part of the ongoing campaign since many years of Agudath Israel of America against the passage of "Gay Rights Bills" in City and State legislatures, leaders of the organization this week continued this battle in the states of California and Rhode Island.

In California, the newly-organized Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel of Los Angeles appealed to Governor George Deukmejian to veto the Gay Rights Bill which had been passed by the State Senate and Assembly (AB 1) "because the purpose of this legislation is not simply to protect the civil rights of homosexuals, but an attempt to obtain official government sanction for a 'lifestyle' that goes against the social and moral fabric of society." The California Governor subsequently vetoed the Bill.

This week, Agudath Israel of America's general counsel and executive secretary of its Commission on Legislation and Civic Action, submitted testimony to Representative Henry Boeniger, chairman of the House Labor Committee in Providence "vigorously opposing" the "Gay Rights Bills" (84H7627 & 84H7618) pending before this Committee.

The Agudath Israel attorney stated that "although Agudath Israel opposes discrimination of any kind against any individual group based on race, creed, religion or other factors, the 'Gay Rights Bill' by seeking government sanction for their 'lifestyle' would have a detrimental affect upon school children, families and the community in general." A previous effort by Agudath Israel in Providence to defeat similar measures four years ago helped cause their rejection by the local Legislature.

YESHIVOS TELL N.Y. BOARD OF REGENTS: DON'T TAMPER WITH EDUCATIONAL DIVERSITY

Albany, N.Y.—The New York Board of Regents was told here today (Wednesday, March 14), in a testimony delivered by Shmuel Prager, general counsel of Agudath Israel of America, that the Regents' "Action Plan" to upgrade education in the state, while it contains many commendable and positive aspects must, however, make sure that its requirements would not do harm to the unique role played by the yeshiva day schools. The Board of Regents hearings related to a Revised Action Plan, which mandates increased curricula requirements for all grade levels in public and non-public schools. Speaking for the yeshivos in New York, the Agudath Israel spokesman pointed out that despite the Board of Regents' revisions of its original Plan to delete many of the aspects which were objectionable to religious-sponsored schools, nevertheless, the yeshivos still have a deep concern about "both the tenor and certain specific provisions of the Revised Plan."

According to Mr. Prager, the Plan's specific unit requirements in grades 7 and 8 would force many yeshivos "to cut back significantly on the hours they devote to Judaic and Talmudic instruction, thereby seriously undermining these yeshivos' ability to carry out their singular mandate."

Similarly, the Agudath Israel attorney, speaking for the entire diverse spectrum of yeshivos in New York, urged that in determining whether a yeshiva requires remediation through state action, the state should recognize that many of the objectives of the proposed Plan are accomplished through the yeshiva's unique program of Judaic and Tal-

mudic instruction. He suggested that course requirements in subjects which touch on a school's religious and moral sensitivities "are best integrated within the total school program and should be devised to fit the school's educational philosophy"; that standardized tests administered by the state should be free of cultural, religious or linguistic bias; a school should be permitted to devise alternative means of measuring student achievement; languages other than those specifically mentioned in the Revised Plan, including Yiddish, should be recognized for purposes of the Plan's second language requirements; non-public schools be permitted to offer second language instruction as an elective in the pre-high school grades; and that the Plan's local diploma sequence options should be expanded to enable schools to offer their students a more flexible program of elective courses.

Mr. Prager asked that Agudath Israel and representatives of other non-public school groups be given the opportunity to assist in the drafting of regulations to resolve the Plan's numerous ambiguities and other concerns. He concluded his remarks by observing that the yeshivos were asking the state only that attempting to upgrade education, "the state not lose sight of its longstanding commitment to educational diversity and respect for the uniquely religious and moral components of our community's educational system. . . . We remain confident that New York State, whose enlightened and tolerant policies have long served as a model for the rest of the United States, will tread carefully in this most sensitive area."

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Close to 400 women attended the Annual Luncheon of Agudah Women on February 26 at the Vista International Hotel. Tribute was awarded to Rebetzin Chaya Frankel, Guest of Honor, to Mrs. Esther Katzenstein, Bella Schlesinger Awardee, and to Rose Feifer, Esther Klitnick, Rose Sommerfeld, Celia Zanziper and the Junior N'shei of Ocean Parkway. Rabbi Joshua Fishman, Executive Vice-President of Torah U'Mesorah, was the guest speaker, and Rabbi Moshe Sherer (chairman of the Agudath Israel World Organization) extended greetings on behalf of the movement.

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**ORTHODOX LEADERS  
 MEET WITH  
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Los Angeles, California—A delegation of Orthodox Jewish leaders from the State of California was warmly received by a host of legislators and government officials, led by Senator David Roberti, in the State's capital, Sacramento, on March 1 when they presented a "shopping list" of Jewish legislative concerns. The group consisted of members of the newly-formed California chapter of the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel of America, headed by co-chairmen Dr. Irving Lebovics and Stanley Treitel.

The goal of the day-long chain of meetings was to "establish a voice for Orthodoxy in California", according to Dr. Lebovics, "and to garner support for a long list of legislative issues that concern the Orthodox Jewish community of California, especially autopsies and divorce problems."

During an unusual conference aboard the plane flying from Los Angeles to Sacramento, State Senator Herschel Rosenthal discussed with the Agudath Israel commission leaders the various intricate aspects of the autopsy bill which he submitted, and expressed his hope that it will be passed into law in the near future.

One of the day's highlights included private conference with the majority Floor Leader, Assemblyman Mike Roos, where he spoke at length concerning these issues, specifically the autopsy and "Get" legislation, similar to the NY State "Get" Law.

At a luncheon meeting, Senator David Roberti, President Pro Tempore, agreed to sponsor a number of measures relating to the special needs of the Orthodox Jew which the California Agudah commission brought to his attention.

Joe Holsinger, Deputy Superintendent for Public and Governmental Policy, pledged his full support for yeshivos to obtain their rightful share from existing programs and to help Torah institutions overcome any administrative problems in dealing with the local governments.

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