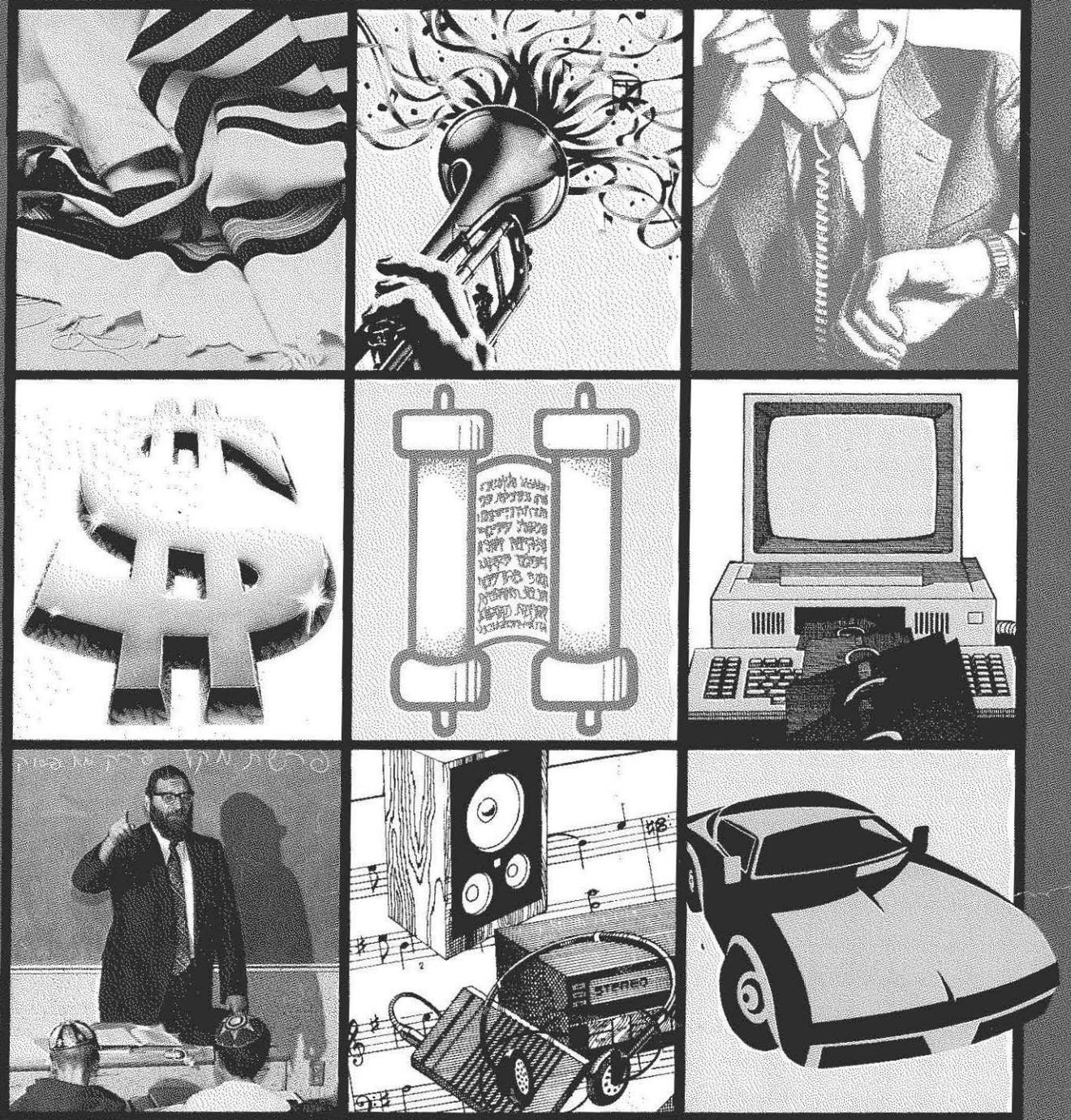


THE JEWISH OBSERVER

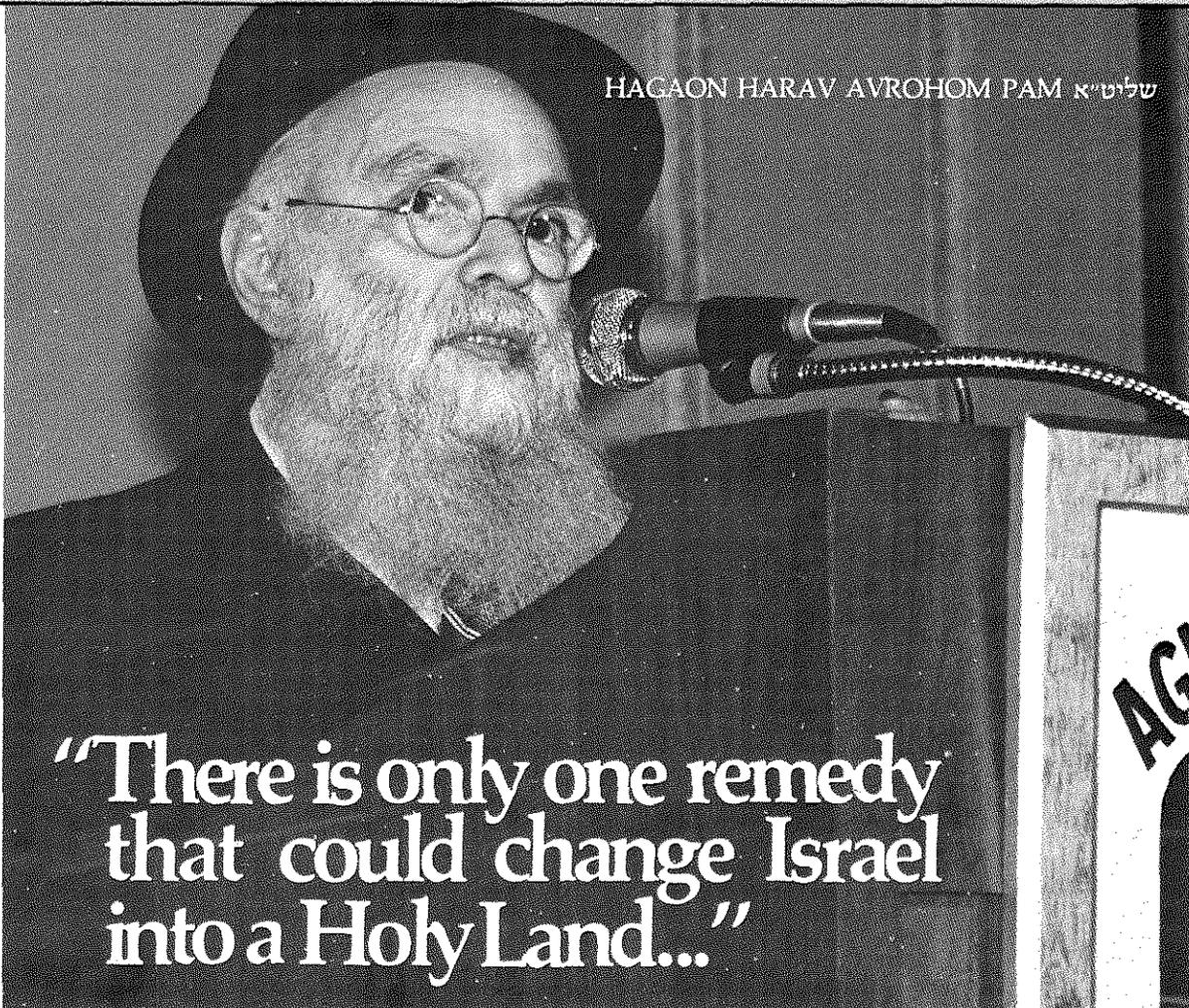
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THE JEW IN GOLUS

Making the Right Move

שליט"א HAGAON HARAV AVROHOM PAM



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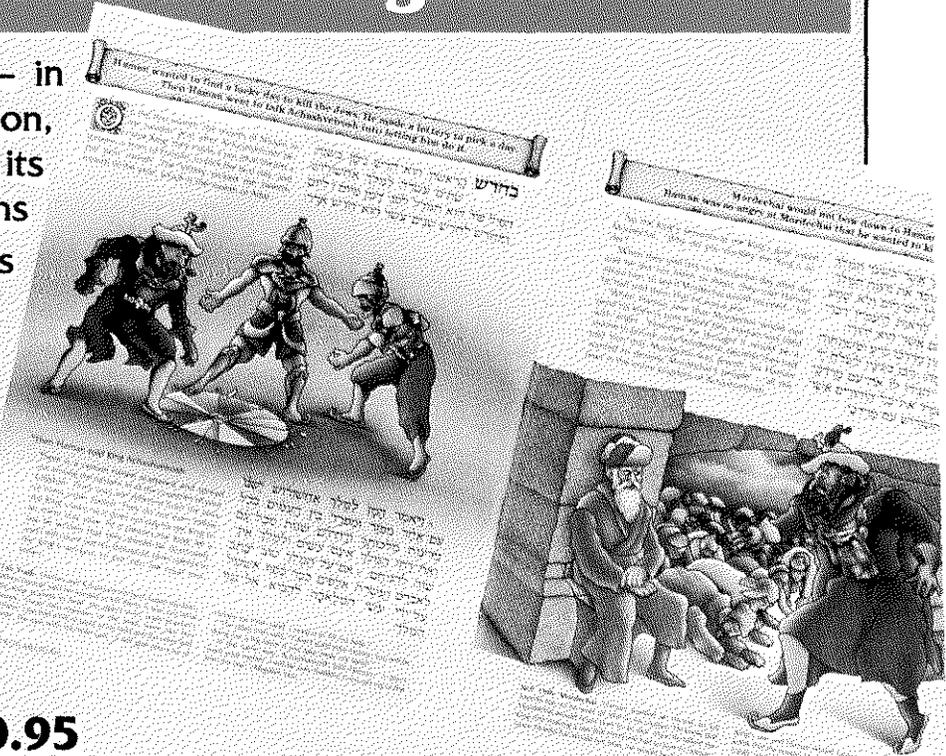
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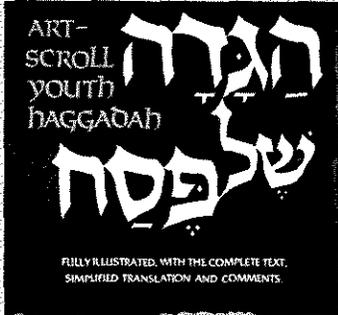
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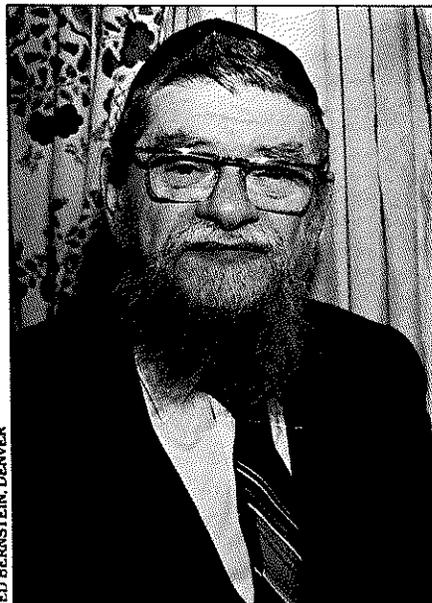
The Struggles of the JEW IN GOLUS

based on an address by Rabbi Mordechai Gifter שליט"א,
Rosh Hayeshiva of Telshe Wickliffe, Ohio, and a member of the
Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah (Council of Torah Sages) of Agudath Israel of America
delivered at the recent national convention of Agudath Israel of America

THE ROLE OF THE JEW IN GOLUS

The Jew in *Golus*: We are all aware that at specific points in history our conduct was unworthy, and as a result, we—the Jewish People—underwent a *churban*, suffering the destruction of our *Beis Hamikdash* and exile from our homeland. The prophets had warned us of the consequences of our conduct and, tragically, their admonitions came true—not once, but twice. ... In fact we are still in the midst of the second *golus*, yet to be redeemed.

Golus, however, is not simply a



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punitive state, but an expression of G-d's paternal concern, for "As a father punishes his son, so does G-d inflict punishment on you" (*Deva-*

rim 8.5). In that vein, *golus* is meant to be instructive, prodding us and guiding us to improvement as Jews and as ethical beings.

Yet, throughout history there have been those who have failed to respond to the teachings of *golus*, and instead of seeking to strengthen their commitment to Torah, they endeavored to blend in with their host culture. Not just in Germany, not only the Reform movement, but in all places of our exile, throughout our long *golus*, there have always been those who thought that assimilation would win them acceptance by their non-Jewish hosts, and total acculturation would win them

The Jew who guides his every step with Torah is a Jew who has purged himself of Golus from within, and is bringing us closer to the day when we are totally free of Golus.

respect and love. ... As one step toward accommodation followed another, it took the likes of a Hitler *ימשיך* to demonstrate that even after four successive generations of intermarriage, a trace of Jewish ancestry cannot be lost. Even the hapless offspring of so many generations of dilution was banished to the concentration camps as a Jew!

In its function as a means of instruction, *golus* is meant to refine the Jew, for the experience of being tossed about on the stormy seas of exile can ultimately serve to bring out the best in the Jew. Indeed, today the realization is growing: Survival—and for that matter, salvation—lies in discovering our heritage, and asserting it. We are witnessing the fulfillment of *Malachi's* prophecy: "I will return . . . the hearts of sons to their fathers" (3, 24). Who would have expected that the Shavler *Rav*, Rabbi Meir Atlas *ל"צ*, one of the founders of the Telshe Yeshiva in Europe, would have grandchildren in South Africa, drifting away from *Yiddishkeit*? And who would anticipate that one of them, a gifted surgeon, would thirst for a life of *Torah* and *mitzvos*, and would today—in Jerusalem—be studying Torah with depth, and be engaged in writing *seforim* for reaching out to our alienated brethren?

GOLUS IN THE JEWS

Unfortunately, we tend to lose sight of the mere fact that we are still in *golus* and it is at this point that *golus* as a state of alienation from the Divine enters us, so to speak. I recall a conversation I overheard between Rabbi Elya Meir Bloch and Rabbi Mordechai Katz

ל"צ, during the early years of their heroic undertaking of transplanting Telshe to America's Midwest. Reb Elya Meir remarked that he was so unaffected by the change in his environment that "at this moment I'm not even in the United States. I'm sitting in Telshe."

Responded Reb Mottel: "You're so influenced by your environment that you've even lost your sensitivity to the fact that you're here—in the United States!"

In the case of such men of stature, "loss of sensitivity" was a very subtle matter. Our *gedolim* have always been concerned that their commitment to Torah values not be diluted by the *golus* environment. A hundred years ago, Rabbi Alexander Moshe Lapidus, *Rav* of Ratzin, wrote an unsigned *tzava'a* (ethical will) to his community, entitled *Divrei Emes*, in which he said: "My dear children, we live in a corrupt world. We have abandoned *mitzva* observance, and we are guilty of all sorts of major transgressions every day. [Whom was he addressing? Jews who during the month of Ellul close their businesses in mid-day and repair to the *beis hamidrash* not to escape an anti-Torah influence that pervaded the streets, but to avoid self-indulgence!]

"Study the *Sefer Chofetz Chaim*, my children, and see how we must guard our tongues, and how failing to do so brings such *churban* (ruin) in our lives."

He addressed Torah Jews as though they were the dregs of society! Yet we assume that our lives are fully consistent with the Torah's expectations and that by virtue of simply *approaching* the "ladder firmly planted on earth, with its top reaching toward heaven"—never mind attempting to climb it—we have already done our duty.

QUESTIONS WE MUST ANSWER

Before we can consider ourselves free of influence from our *golus* environment, we must answer some basic questions:

- Can our business activities stand up to a point-by-point examination by criteria based on the *Shulchan Aruch*? Are our financial dealings truly free of deceit, usury, and misleading practices? or are we infected by the atmosphere of greed and wealth-at-any-cost, so prevalent in today's marketplace of values?

- How important is Torah in our daily lives? Would it be dominant (as it should be), then we would not find ourselves spending thousands of dollars on vacations with such ease, when our Torah institutions are suffering so from financial hardships. Paying full tuition should not put a parent's mind at ease, as long as our children's *rabbeim* are paid an insufficient wage—to the extent that gifted, inspiring men are forced to leave the field of *chinuch* to find more lucrative ways to provide for their families.

- Is Torah study central to our day? to our week? I recall hearing the late *Ponevezher Rav*, Rabbi Yoseif Kahaneman *ל"צ*, speak in Baltimore, when I was a child. While most of his address was beyond me, I remember vividly how he decried the "*sandeh*" (*Litvish* pronunciation of *shandeh*—scandal) of being content with a Sunday school education, instead of a full-week *chinuch* for children. Our contemporary Sunday/*sandeh* is the lack of Torah commitment that permits a yeshiva graduate to spend less than four or five hours of his free day every week in the *beis hamidrash*.

A weekly opportunity to immerse oneself in Torah study for a good portion of the day should not pass, without being utilized to the maximum!

- There is another, highly significant reason to study Torah with intensity—as a means of combatting the influence of *golus*. Learning with depth transforms a person and endows his world-view with a Torah perspective. Indeed, the passage in *Tehillim* says: "*Gal aynai v'abita niflaos miTora-secha*—Open my eyes that I may see wonders from Your Torah." The word is "*from*" not "*in* Your Torah." In addition to the marvelous insights in Torah that one gains from study, one also acquires a new enlightening way of understanding the world and interpreting events taking place.

The imperative is to *study!* Immerse yourself in Torah! And then you can follow with: "Lift up your eyes and see: Who created this!"—Not *what* created this, not merely gaining a deeper appreciation of the marvels of science and the wonders of nature. But "*who*" and develop a profound awe over the Creator responsible for these marvels. Without the benefit of a Torah perspective, one can view the most breathtaking panorama in all creation, and echo the words of the Soviet cosmonaut, who was the first person to see earth in the spectacular setting of outer space: "I searched the broad expanse of the heavens and saw neither G-d nor

angels."

The *Rambam*, in his introduction to his *Sefer Hamitzvos*, advises a person to first witness the Creator's miracles in His Torah; then he will be equipped to see His miracles in the heavens. Without the prerequisite of Torah study, one can scan the heavens with great intelligence, and still see naught.

- The requirement for recognizing G-d's hand in daily occurrences is no different. Our sacred literature is full of precedents for this:

- When Yaakov *Avinu* left home to spend over twenty years of his life with Lavan in Charan, he detoured for fourteen years, which he spent in the Yeshiva of Shem and Eiver. His activity there is described as *hitmin atzmo*—literally, he hid himself in Torah, a term that connotes total immersion. This was necessary because passion for Torah and indulgence in worldly pleasures are mutually exclusive. Strengthening himself in the one—Torah study, he was prepared to reject the other—materialism and hedonism, which was the hallmark of Lavan's society.

- Upon approaching Har Seir, the Jews were instructed to travel *tzafona*—northward, to avoid the Edomites. The Midrash relates the word *tzafona* to *tzafun*—hidden, implying that they hide themselves—that is, immerse themselves fully—into Torah study so as not to be distracted by the blandishments of the Edomites' way of life.

GOLUS: A BREEDING GROUND FOR REDEMPTION

While *golus* is the antithesis of *geula*, the two are intertwined, in that *golus* is a preparation for *geula*. Indeed, Chazal tell us that *Chumash Shemos—Sefer Hageula*, the Book of Redemption—is introduced with the names of Yaakov's twelve sons, to tell us that all twelve have names that foretold the *geula*. During all two hundred and ten years in Goshen, where the Jews were eventually subjugated and then enslaved, they were preparing for their redemption. Especially *Shevet Levi*, which persevered in Torah study and *Yiras Shomayim*, preserving the essence of their Jewish identity, and was preparing for the *geula* actually ushering it in.

We can fulfill our role today in bringing this bitter *golus* to its final end by maintaining that same fidelity to Torah, that same deep involvement in Torah study as our predecessors did in their own *golus*. Unfortunately, some people in leadership positions today are under the impression that the battle for Jewish survival will be won on the front pages of our newspapers, while in truth seeking publicity is contrary to *daas Torah*, and can only be counter-productive. The Jew who guides his every step with Torah, is a Jew who has purged himself of *golus* from within, and is bringing us closer to the day when we are totally free of *golus*. ■

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THE JEW IN GOLUS:

THE FOUNDATION FOR HALACHIC GUIDLINES

To address the theme of "The Jew in Golus"—our relationship with the nations of the world in our *Golus* situation—we must first take measure of the greatness of *Klal Yisroel* in the context of the other nations. An incident recorded in the Talmud can help us gain insight into this relationship.

Rabbi Elazar's *talmidim* (disciples) asked him, what are the demands of the *mitzva* of *kibbud av v'eim*, honoring one's parents? Rabbi Elazar told them to learn from the conduct of a non-Jew in Ashkelon, Damma ben Nesina by name. His was the greatest expression of *kibbud av v'eim* imaginable: The sages once came to Damma to purchase a diamond for the *choshen* (the breastplate) of the *Kohein Gadol*, and they were willing to pay any price. But the key to the jewelry box lay under the pillow on which his father was sleeping (others say it was under his father's feet). He refused to awaken his father, forfeiting the gain of millions of dollars because of his respect for his father!

Now, the question of the *talmidim* was in regard to "*Kabeid es avicha v'es imecha*," one of the *Aseres Hadibros* (Ten Commandments). These were given only to Israel, not to the nations of the world. The answer to their query should have been based on *halacha*, or at least on the conduct of people who live by *halacha*. Why go for guidelines to Ashkelon—to an idolater, no less—and endow him with such importance as to refer to him by name? To be sure, it is fascinating that a heathen somewhere once did honor his father to such an extent, but that does not seem to answer their question.

In truth, there are two levels of *kibbud av v'eim*. One is universal, and applies to all mankind; the other is a *mitzva*, addressed exclusively to *Klal Yisroel*. The world existed for twenty-six generations from Creation, until Israel stood at the foot of Mount Sinai, on the basis of *derech erez*—civility and ethical conduct. Not only was mankind charged with *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*—the seven Noahide commands—it was instructed in the principles of *derech erez*, proper *midos*. Within

this context, the basic responsibilities of *kibbud av v'eim* belong to the entire world.

This is evident in an incident in *Chumash*: When Eliezer proposed marriage to Rivka on behalf of Yitzchak, the Torah records that, "Lavan and Besuel replied" (*Bereishis* 24,50). Rashi notes that from this passage, it is evident that Lavan was a *rasha* (wicked) because he spoke up before his father, Besuel, could reply. Now, Lavan was not a Jew; furthermore, honoring one's father is not among the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*. Nonetheless, *Chazal* (sages of the Talmud) declare him a *rasha*, for *kibbud av v'eim* is an aspect of *derech erez*, which a non-Jew is also expected to fulfill. It is a matter of *hakaras hatov*—gratitude for all that parents do for their children—especially when the parents are respectable people.

Apparently Nesina was a respectable man, and Damma ben Nesina carried the concept of gratitude to his father to its highest form. Thus when the *talmidim* had inquired about the *halacha* of *kibbud av v'eim*, Rabbi Elazar replied by first laying the ground work by showing

based on an address by Rabbi Shimon Schwab שליט"א Rav of
K'hal Adath Jeshurun of New York, delivered at the recent national convention of
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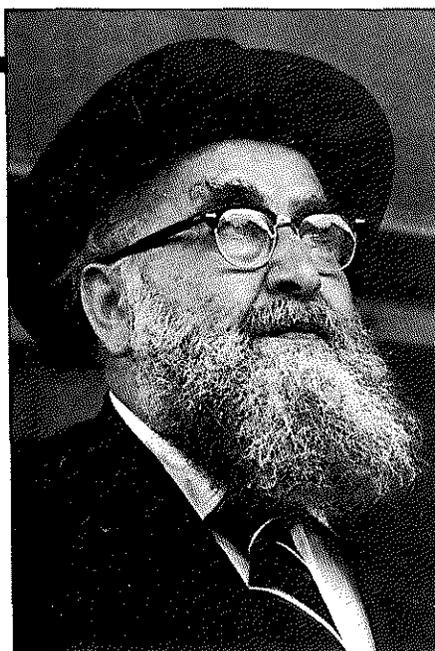
HOW HIGH A PROFILE?

how far a non-Jew carries this concept, without the guidelines of *halacha*. This response to the question tells us the extent of *kibbud av v'eim* as an expression of the human being as a *tzelleh Elokim*—formed in G-d's image. That is where it peaks with the non-Jew... and that is where the *mitzva* of *kibbud av v'eim* begins in the Jewish scheme of things.

The special nature of the Jewish mission is summarized in Moshe *Rabbeinu's* final words to *Klal Yisroel* before his passing: "How fortunate you are, O Israel... you will tread on the high place [of the nations]" (*Devarim* 33, 29). Where the non-Jew reaches his highest level of achievement, there, at that point, must the Jew begin to grow. Such are the demands being made of *Klal Yisroel*.

AN APPROACH TO THE NON-JEW

In one respect, the Jew must strive for prominence—the highest profile imaginable. This is based on *Klal Yisroel's* elevation from amongst the nations: "And you



shall be for Me an *Am segula*—a nation treasured more than all the nations" (*Shemos* 19,5). The *Seforno* points out that "although the entire human race is more precious to Me than all other, inferior creatures, for man alone represents My purpose, as our Sages say, 'Precious is a man who was create in the Image' (*Avos* 3,14), still you shall be to Me a treasure beyond all of them." If one simply looks with disdain at other nations, what is the gain of being treasured—the best of an ignoble heap? To bless G-d daily for being a member of the Jewish

nation is more than simply expressing gratitude for not having been born into a family of Nazis or PLO-members. The *bracha*, to be of value, must refer to being treasured as one of a group of noble creatures.

If all the nations of the world—and it's a tendency today to think this way—are depraved, foolish and wicked, it is no distinction to be better than those who are depraved, foolish and wicked. That is no basis for praise to the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. By the same token, gratitude for being given the Torah cannot be meaningful if all non-Torah science is nonsense, if all secular knowledge is without value. What glory is ascribed to Torah knowledge if its distinction is simply that it is superior to nonsense? To the contrary, *Chazal* have told us that there is indeed *chachma* (wisdom) amongst the nations. As a matter of fact, upon seeing a wise non-Jew, one pronounces a blessing, praising G-d "for having given of His knowledge to [a creature of] flesh-and-blood." But all their knowledge—all their sciences and all their wisdom—shrinks into absolute nothingness before the majesty of one

Gratitude for having been given the Torah cannot be meaningful if all non-Torah science is nonsense, if all secular knowledge is without value.

kutzo shel Yud (small stroke in the sacred Torah).

Yet an attitude of disdain for the other nations is to be expected, as a natural outgrowth of having suffered the recent decimating *churban* in Europe—and I am a witness to it. After such barbaric behavior by one of the world's most civilized nations, and silent indifference on the part of so much of the rest of the world, many of us have lost basic respect for the opinions of mankind. Because of our anger and our deep pain, we have developed an attitude of "Who cares what other nations say?" We have seen their civilization and culture collapse in a major catastrophe. We have been deafened by the silence of the so-called moral majority of decent people. We no longer care. *Let them say what they want!*

Permit me to share a personal experience: I cannot forget a trip I made, returning to Germany some twenty-five years ago; my father אבא had requested that I visit the burial places of my grandparents and great-grandparents. I arrived at the airport of my hometown, Frankfurt, where I had lived until thirty years earlier, and I saw these clean-shaven, immaculately dressed Germans, with their high-gloss shoeshines—so clean smelling, so vainglorious. *Guten Morgen, mein Herr*... I heard the old language, expressing the same haughtiness as before. I saw before me men of my age—among them must have been former SS men who had tortured little children. *They killed a third of my people!* In the clean smell that wafted about them, I choked on the stench of the gas chambers... A taxi took me to the *beis ha'olam* (cemetery), and from there to my former home on my former street, where I saw nothing but *churban*—desolation. Of the *shul*, just a piece of stone was left. Where the *beis midrash*

and the yeshiva had been, an office building and a garage stood. I looked up at every window, where I had known everyone who had once lived in those apartments, and I saw Germans looking down at me. And I felt sick.

At the time, I recalled Rashi's comment on the first *pasuk* in the Torah, and I wondered. Rashi asks why the Torah starts with "*Bereishis*" and not with "*Hachodesh hazeh lachem*—this is your first month"—the very first *mitzva* given to *Klal Yisroel*. He replies that the *goyim* will say, "*Yisroel listim atem*—Israel you are thieves! You are not entitled to the Land of Israel!" G-d's account of Creation demonstrates His right to award the Land to the People of His choice. At that moment in Frankfurt, I thought: *Who cares? Let them say it! Is it necessary to structure the Torah to appease these sadists, these cruel people? Let them say what they want!*

The Torah promises us that the Jews will be *chachomim u'nevonim b'einei ho'amim*—wise and understanding in the eyes of the nations. *Who cares what they say?*

As these thoughts were flowing through my mind, I suddenly caught sight of a fleet of military trucks passing by, loaded with American servicemen. I was so excited that had I not been embarrassed, I would have waved to them. At this moment, I realized that there are two kinds of nations—the *malchiyus horisha* (wicked nations) and the *malchiyus shel chessed* (kingdoms of kindness). The prophecy that "*The nations will be destroyed*," only refers to *certain* nations, the *malchiyus horisha*, the likes of Nazi Germany, Austria, Russia, and Libya... A *malchus shel chessed* is, by contrast, a place where we are permitted to develop ourselves as we wish, and create yeshivos, form

kehillos and establish our own houses of worship, without interference... a country such as America, where *Yiddishkeit* has developed and can develop, and is making such admirable strides forward. In regard to such nations, we are keenly interested in the type of impression we make. In regard to them, we are concerned that our "wisdom and understanding" be appreciated, so they may comment favorably in regard to Jewry: "This is a singularly wise and understanding people." And when we express our hope: "Let all nations praise G-d, all peoples extol Him" (*Tehillim* 117,1) we refer to such *malchuyos shel chessed*.

In all our dealings with others, we must distinguish between these two types of nations.

DEALING WITH A NATION OF EVIL

A word of caution is in order here. Religious Jews are often accused of having a "*gulus* mentality." We, for our part, must have the courage of our convictions even if they are unpopular, because we stand on firm ground. The *Ramban* in *Parshas Vayishlach* cites a Midrash that relates that whenever Rabbi Yannai went to Rome to deal with the government on behalf of the Jews, he would take along a *Chumash* and review *Parshas Vayishlach*, which describes the encounter between Yaakov Avinu and Eisav: Seven times Yaakov prostrates himself before his brother and calls him "*adoni*—my master," and refers to himself as "*avdecha*—your slave." The *Ramban* explains that *Chazal* recognized this as the *parsha* of *gulus*, telling us for all times how to deal with every *malchus horisha*, based on Yaakov's conduct in his confrontation with Eisav.

I recall from my days as a *talmid* in the Yeshiva of Telshe, how the Telshe Rav, Rabbi Yoseif Leib Bloch זצ"ל, described the entire episode as a comedy. I understood this interpretation later when I saw in the *Zohar Chadash* that the Torah never really says that Yaakov bowed down to Eisav. Yaakov Avinu saw G-d's presence before him. He knew that Eisav was nothing but a pawn in the hands of G-d, who had placed him temporarily in a position of power, for reasons of His own. When Yaakov bows down seven times, he bows to the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. When he says "avdecha," he refers to his status before the *Ribbono Shel Olam*: "I, Yaakov Avinu, am Your servant." And "adoni" is not addressed to his brother who is one minute older than he is; "adoni" means the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. Eisav, the vainglorious fool, believes that it is directed toward him.

Chazal instruct us to proceed this way whenever we deal with a *malchus horisha*. Even today, when we live in the free society of this *malchus shel chessed*, America, we must not abandon this guideline when dealing with hostile nations. Others, who do not know how to learn *Chumash*—and some who do know how, but seem to have forgotten the lessons—ridicule us for our "golus mentality." It takes a great measure of courage to have an opinion other than that of the majority, but we can draw strength from our knowledge that we have a solid precedent: We carry our *Chumash* in hand, so to speak, when we seek the counsel of *Gedolei Yisroel* before we embark on a project for the *hatzala* of *Klal Yisroel*. (This approach may not apply to problems in *Eretz Yisroel*, which is surrounded by a raging ocean of enmity. *Boruch Hashem*, G-d has placed our most eminent *Gedolei Yisroel* in *Eretz Yisroel*, and they are the ones to be consulted regarding their problems.)

Yaakov Avinu did make one error, *Chazal* say: he should not have sent emissaries to give regards to Eisav and pay his respects to him. They quote a *pasuk* in *Mishlei*, "Somebody who grabs hold of the ears of a dog will get into an unnecessary fight." Eventually he will get bitten. He should not have told Eisav a thing. When dealing with sworn ene-



mies of Jewry, there is only one approach: do not provoke them; do not anger them; do not embarrass them. Eisav never forgets, and only harm can come from antagonizing him. If anti-Semites in Austria want to elect one of their ilk, a former Nazi criminal, as their president, let them. Do not meddle. It is not our concern. ... If a foreign leader chooses to embrace Arafat or Waldheim, let him do so. He has demonstrated his inner leanings. We cannot afford to forget that whatever statements we make, whatever actions we take, can antagonize the *reshaim*, and may bring harm to *Acheinu Bnei Yisroel*. ... In Russia, more than two and a half million Jews are virtual hostages. There is a sizable Jewish population in South Africa and in Arab countries. Our primary concern in our *hatzala* efforts on behalf of our Jewish brethren must be in terms of actually helping them, not simply to show that we Jews can also raise our voices or make the newspapers in the manner that the others do. We are meant to be different from all the others, and so is our image.

People who choose to travel to Washington to demonstrate for Soviet Jewry should "take along the *Chumash*" and consult *Parshas Vayishlach*. If the tone of such gatherings is set by non-Torah leaders, who do not recognize *Toras Elokim* and do not accept the

authority of the *Chumash*, then we certainly are endangering ourselves as well as the welfare of our brethren, who might be helped in other ways. Quiet diplomacy entails a great *mesiras nefesh* of its own—avoiding the reassurance of headlines. The purpose of discreet activity is *not* to show that we also have a voice. To be sure, "We are not doormats anymore!" "Never again!" and whatever other slogans are currently popular may sound beautiful to the ear, and saying them, or hearing them shouted, can make one's chest swell with pride. But the basic question is: How do we truly help *Acheinu Bnei Yisroel*?

THE KINGDOMS OF KINDNESS

The rules of dealing with a *malchus shel chessed* are totally different from those for negotiating with hostile powers. The first point is never to forget that we are in *golus*, even when under the most benign circumstances. We should recognize that if at this juncture in history, we are blessed with the good will of the authorities in this country, that is the *Ribbono Shel Olam's* doings. He has His own Master Plan, and under this warm relationship with our host country, Torah is a thriving reality in the growing number of yeshivos, kollelim, Bais Yaakov schools, *kehillos*, and generally in communal life. But in this *golus* status of ours we dare not forget the letter that Yirmiyahu *Hanavi* sent to *Golus Yohoyachin* in Babylon. (The Jews were treated very decently there.) He says, "Further the welfare of the city into which I have exiled you. And pray to G-d for the welfare of the city [the country of Babylon]. For in its well-being, will you find well-being" (*Yirmiyahu* 29, 7). *Kavod hamalchus*—respect for the government—has been the hallmark of Jewish dealings with the host country wherever Jews have lived. Respect for the rule "*dina d'malchusa dina*—the law of the land prevails," as long as it does not conflict with Torah law, has been the guideline for Jewish con-

How high a profile? Unfortunately, when we identify the Kosher Jew with a Viennese table, it is a very low profile, indeed.

duct of affairs for generations. It should be no less in the case in our current stage of *golus*.

The second rule is always to endeavor to make a *Kiddush Hashem*—to bring glory to G-d's Name through our actions. The Prophets instruct us to emulate *Avrohom Avinu*, and invoke the respect of the nations as he did, earning the greeting: "You are a prince of G-d in our midst" (*Bereishis* 23,6). This fulfills G-d's vow to Avraham: "All the families of the earth will be blessed with you" (*Bereishis* 12,3). And indeed, they did feel that they were blessed because of his presence. In our time, too, we must present to the world a symbol of dignity. The *bracha* we recite every morning, "*Oter Yisroel besifara*—You crown Israel with glory," carries a message of avoiding boisterous behavior, and by contrast fulfilling the rabbinic dictum of "greeting every person first—even a heathen in the marketplace."

Also, we must beware of causing *Chillul Hashem*—desecration of G-d's glory through our conduct. Let us be in the forefront of those who are meticulously honest. Those who make the headlines through deceit and swindle and smuggling and forging and defrauding the government and the public—no matter how devout they are in their outward appearance—have the blood of *Klal Yisroel* on their hands. Stealing from a non-Jew is more severe than stealing from a Jew, for whoever is guilty of the former has no atonement, should he die without doing *teshuva* (repenting), because of the *Chillul Hashem* involved. *Chazal* have gone on record including those who lie or steal from the Gentiles among those who are *mechalel Hashem*, for they provoke non-Jews to say, "There is no Torah within Israel." Liars, swindlers, thieves who

appear to be *frum* Jews are actually considered as if they proclaim "There is no Torah unto Israel," for the Torah instructs the Jewish people not to commit dishonest acts, and they *וּפָרַח* put the lie to this command. Should they actually adhere to this directive, then the greatest *Kiddush Hashem*, in this respect, would result.

Several years ago, newspapers and magazines published stories about a great Jewish family renowned for both its remarkable business successes and its philanthropy. The stories stressed that everybody trusts them because they are honest; that their word is gold, because they are Orthodox Jews.

Another rule. Let us beware of *lama sisro'eh*—do not be conspicuous in your wealth even if it is honestly earned, as *Yaakov Avinu* warned his children: Why display yourselves before others as if you have sufficient food, when everyone else is going hungry? His sons did have enough, but others did not. Thus his admonition: *Don't flaunt your wealth!* How, then, does one deal with the public display of wedding extravaganzas, public celebrations covered by the media, detailing how many thousands of dollars the *kallah's* dress cost, and how many thousands were spent on the ring? Another example of imprudent excesses is the twenty-six page display advertisement in the *New York Times* to "sell" an institution of Jewish learning. Or for that matter any display of excessive luxury, lavish dress, and opulent appearance. These all send the wrong signals to the world at large. It creates greed, jealousy, and hatred. Listen to the old *zoken*, the father of the twelve tribes, *Yaakov Avinu*: "*Lama sisra'u.*"

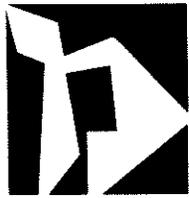
Another point that is somewhat similar centers on the widely-touted

gala exposition of kosher gluttony. The purpose of *kashrus*, says the *Chumash*, is to promote "Men of holiness you shall be unto Me" (*Shemos* 22, 30). An exposition dedicated to *Kashrus* should spotlight the *kedusha* of keeping kosher, rather than project the image of being a "*zoleil ve'sovai*—glutton and drunkard" of the highest magnitude. . . . How high a profile? Unfortunately, when we identify the kosher Jew with a Viennese table, it is a very low profile, indeed.

HIGH PROFILE ADVOCACY

Even in a *malchus shel chessed* we can face grave dangers to our existence, in the spiritual sense. When we face the prospects of a Gay Rights Bill, or the Equal Rights Amendment, it is a matter of *pikuach nefesh*—spiritual survival. Such issues call for vigorous action to protect our very existence. As time goes on, new areas of contention can arise, wherein the law of the land can interfere with leading a Torah-existence.

In such cases, the first rule is to be unafraid, and not be ashamed because people may mock us. Yes, we are in *golus*, but the Torah is not in *golus*. This, of course, requires the guidance of *Gedolei HaTorah*: no step may be taken without the counsel of the most prominent *talmidei chachamim* of our time. In this respect, we must pay homage to Agudath Israel of America, which consults Torah authorities in formulating its policy, and in carrying it out so effectively. When the profile delineates loyalty to values and methods consistent with Torah, then the profile must be high, proud, and uncompromising. ■



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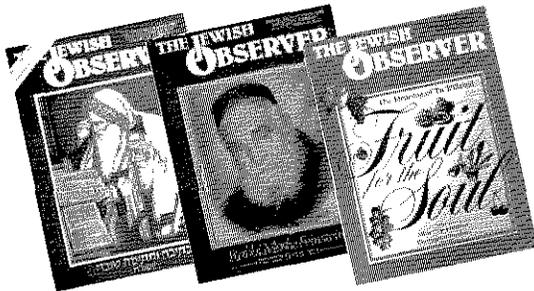
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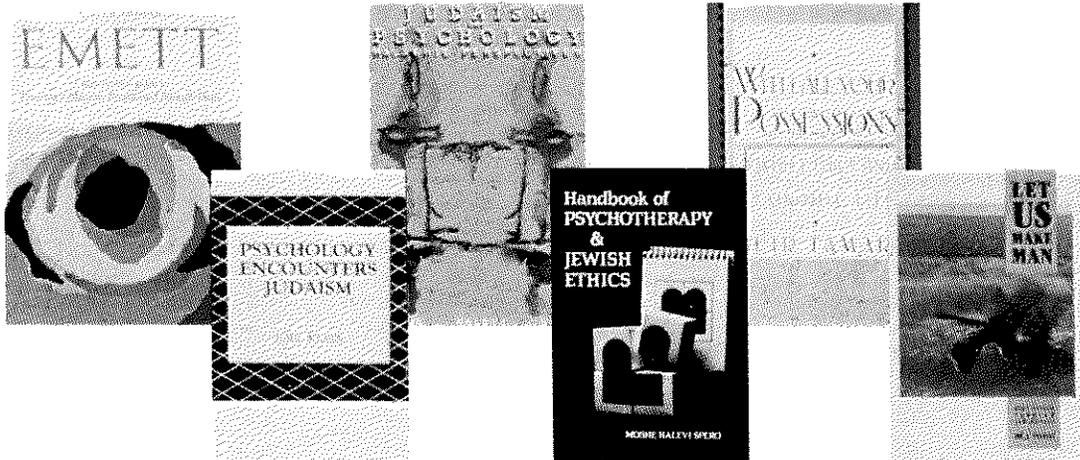
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BOOKS



THE TORAH JEW ENCOUNTERS THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

A Review Article

When we talk of points of contact, or conflict, between Torah teachings and scientific fields of study, we are apt to think primarily of such areas as biology or geology. Yet a number of important works have been recently published which explore the relationship between Torah and economics, as well as psychology and medicine.

ECONOMICS AND THE JEW

With All Your Possessions, Jewish Ethics and Economic Life, by Meir Tamart (Free Press, N.Y., 1987, \$22.50) is a comprehensive survey of the interaction between Torah law and the economic environment in which the Jew lives. Basic to the Jew's outlook and conduct in economic matters

has always been the principle that private property is given to him by G-d and that he is responsible for how he uses it. Positive duties and legal restraints are involved—and the author traces this theme in detail through such areas as competition, prices, and profits; wages and labor; money, banking and interest; charity and welfare; and even environmental issues.

Judaism does not prescribe a specific economic system but it demands the sanctification of any system in which the Jew finds himself (as it demands the sanctification of all of life), by imposing its own standards. The result is a specific "Jewish economic man," adhering to a detailed set of religious concepts. Of course, the individual Jew is often tempted to fall short of the ideal way in which to conduct his behavior—but overall it is extraordinary how fundamentally Jews have been molded by the Torah's precepts.

The author is an internationally renowned economist, and has ad-

Judaism does not prescribe a specific economic system but it demands the sanctification of any system in which the Jew finds himself, resulting in a specific "Jewish economic man."

mirably combined his economic expertise and his command of Torah codes and responsa to produce this fascinating work. His survey of Jewish economic history is necessarily brief and therefore suffers from oversimplification in some respects (e.g. the goal of the *mussar* movement, or the definition of "Kammerknecht" status), but this is really entirely tangential to the main body of the book which is truly beyond cavil.

Another significant work in this field is **Economics and Jewish Law Jewish Perspectives** (Ktav and Y.U. Press, N.Y. \$20.00 hc, \$14.95 pb), by Aharon Levine, a follow-up to the

author's **Free Enterprise and Jewish Law**. Whereas a book like Rabbi Z. Fendel's **The Halacha and Beyond** (previously reviewed in JO, Nov. '84) seeks to clarify the fiscal-ethical responsibilities of the Torah Jew, Professor Levine is concerned with the impact of the Torah's legal provision on a variety of areas of contemporary relevance, such as advertising and promotion, supply side economics, inflation, social welfare and financial speculation. In his discussions of this last topic, he raises the question whether it is tantamount to gambling (forbidden by the Torah) or permitted; and he seeks to answer it by analyzing

whether it fulfills a socially useful function. This is an example of the author's view that economic analysis can help sharpen the focus of halachic study and decision. His book, while very well written, is necessarily more technical than Professor Tamari's (e.g. touching even on such details as futures and options trading); but this does not reduce its interest for the serious reader.

PSYCHOLOGY, PSYCHIATRY AND THE THINKING JEW

An entirely different area of interaction between Torah and scholarship is the field of psychology. The particular urgency of their encounter lies in the fact that the issue at stake is all-pervading: the nature of man and the understanding and direction of his behavior are a central concern of Torah-teachings as well as the subject of all psychological study—and there are, of course, fundamental differences. In a recent issue of JO (Dec. '87) Rabbi M. Y. Friedman pointed out that there are various approaches to the problem, and suggested the development of a Torah theory of psychology and of methods of psychological guidance based on it—given the anti-religious underpinnings of most secular psychological theories, and the "morally neutral" counselling procedures based on them.

In contrast, M. H. Spero has eloquently championed the opposite viewpoint in two major works, **Judaism and Psychology, Halakhic Perspectives** (Ktav and Y.U. Press, N.Y., 1980, \$20.00) and **Handbook of Psychotherapy and Jewish Ethics** (Feldheim, N.Y., 1986, \$19.95). He stresses that there is no detailed organized body of Torah doctrines about human behavior and personality development and the variety of problems arising in these areas. The commonly accepted alternative is to take advantage of "certain 'approved' psychological techniques, while rejecting allegedly disagreeable philosophic underpinnings and actual techniques"

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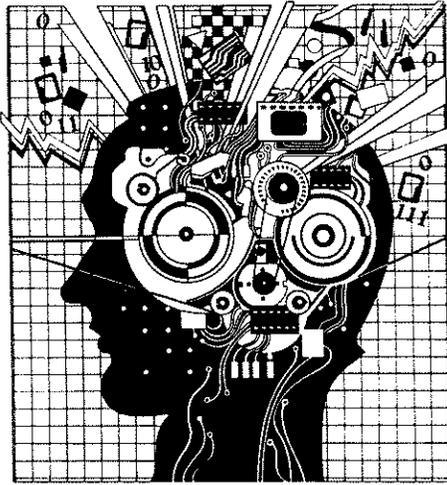
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("Torah ideology and psychological methodology," as this approach has been called). Professor Spero considers this alternative totally unnecessary and unsatisfactory. Practical methods divorced from a sound theoretical basis represent a dubious way of treating patients, and will not be of much help in solving many of the serious problems faced by the psychotherapist. Moreover, he feels that such an approach discourages efforts to synthesize the differences between Torah teachings and psychology which, he argues, could be resolved without doing violence to either set of tenets, and are crudely exaggerated by uninformed explications of psychoanalytic philosophy and popular misunderstandings of therapeutic techniques. He himself seeks to develop a theoretical basis for a unified approach applying psychoanalytic psychotherapy within a halachic framework. The case he makes for this effort is certainly a strong one; yet a closer examination raises serious doubt whether such an effort can succeed and, in particular, whether Professor Spero's approach is satisfactory.

TORAH MODELS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Spero's approach "posits specific halachic models representing analogies to modern psychotherapeutic principles and practices, which through

analogy lend specific halachic guidelines to modern practice" (Reviewer's italics). These analogies would allow "the extension of halachic norms" to specific psychotherapeutic applications. For instance, the psychotherapeutic endeavor is seen as a form of *viduy*—since *viduy* involves the communication of one's *aveiros*; by extension, their comparison would permit the full working through of the patient's problems even though this entails dwelling on—and talking about—*hirhurei aveira*, which one is normally forbidden to entertain. Is this a legitimate way to determine *halacha*? And how valid is the analogy on which the halachic conclusion is based? After all, *viduy* is

value-oriented and judgmental, whilst the psychotherapeutic approach requires the patient "non-defensively to probe, examine, and experience the realm of *hirhurim*." Professor Spero tries to deal with this issue by positing that the therapist fulfills his duty of *tochacha* by causing the patient to outgrow his problem, and that this process should be considered an act of *teshuva*.

Obviously, Torah concepts are given here an interpretation that raises many questions. At that same time, however, Professor Spero's approach will not satisfy the "orthodox" psychotherapist, for it flies in the face of what Spero acknowledges to be a "common psychological

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assumption that religious ideology and belief are projections of human consciousness and infantile processes," and introduces normative moral considerations into what is generally supposed to be a value-neutral therapeutic process. Not surprisingly, he himself has to call for a widening of the "self-limiting definitions" of modern psychotherapy. *Joel Klein's Psychology Encounters Judaism* (Philosophical Library, N.Y., 1979) argues, indeed, that Professor Spero is his own best critic: the details of the argument that he makes, point to irreconcilability of divergent disciplines, rather than the possibility of a unifying approach to religion and psychotherapy. Professor Spero's work displays great analytical depth and deals with a wide range of philosophical and clinical issues. But before his conclusions can lay claim to acceptance, they must be submitted to careful scrutiny of competent rabbinic authorities.

Overcoming a negative self-image is vital to physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, for it lies at the root of so many difficulties. Yet psychotherapy is not the answer to this problem.

A TORAH-BASED GUIDE TO SELF-HELP

Professor Klein, in rejecting Spero's approach, tries to outline in brief the basic principles on which a specific Torah system of psychotherapy can be based. At the same time, he points out that certain techniques advanced by secular psychologists may be of use to the religious therapists. Indeed, a number of books have appeared in the last years that set out to promote peace of mind and mental well-being by drawing on Torah sources (e.g. *Rabbi Zelig Pliskin's Gateway to Happiness*, reviewed in

JO, Oct. '85); and a recent work shows how techniques used in general counseling can be fruitfully adapted to our use: **Emett, A Step-By-Step Guide to Emotional Maturity Established Through Torah**, by *Miriam Adahan* (Feldheim, Jerusalem, 1987, \$14.95). This work is an exposition of the *Emett* method used in the classes sponsored by the *Emett* movement since 1978. The goal of *Emett* is to help people to internalize the teachings of the Torah pertaining to emotions and interpersonal relations. No claim is made that the "four-step method" presented here can take the place of therapy when serious problems make it necessary. However, by helping people cope with their negative feelings and emotions, while achieving better communication with their fellow-beings, the *Emett* approach can do a great deal to forestall the development of serious emotional problems. The guidance given in this highly structured book is based throughout on Torah teachings; and it is provided in a down-to-earth form that is easily absorbed (example: "avoid temperamental language: it leads to temperamental actions"). This is not a book to be read once, but to be reread and put into practice—it is a major aid in a person's quest for self-improvement.

Let Us Make Man, by *Dr. Abraham Twerski* (Traditional Press, Brooklyn, 1987, \$14.95 hc) approaches this goal from a different angle and in a different way. As indicated by the subtitle, "Self-Esteem through Jewishness," Dr. Twerski's concern is with the importance of self-esteem as a prerequisite for healthy and productive living. Overcoming a negative self-image is vital to physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, for it lies

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at the root of so many of our difficulties. Yet psychotherapy is not the answer to this problem; instead, working toward the goal for which man was created, as set out in the Torah, plays a pivotal role in the development of self-esteem. The author, in his usual inimitable style flavored by Talmudic and rabbinic stories, seeks to provide concrete guidance to this goal. To this end, he deals with many aspects of the issue, such as the particular problem of low self-esteem among women, and the challenges of adolescence (however, his statement that "adolescence as a phase which has legal status does not exist in Judaism" can be questioned). This book has a rare distinction: it is a primer for self-improvement that is actually enjoyable to read.

ORTHODOX SCIENTISTS SAY . .

The fullest possible perspective on the variety of interactions between scientific studies and Torah concerns is offered by the **Proceedings of the Associations of Orthodox Jewish Scientist**, of which volume 1 appeared in 1960, and the most recent one, volume 8-9, in 1987, (Sefer-Hermon Press, N.Y.). This series of publications has provided a tribune for the presentation and discussion of topics covering a wide spectrum of areas. It offers articles that furnish information of great value to the layman, such as Dr. Mandelbaum's discussion of **Molad Tohu**, Rabbi J. D. Bleich's article on the earliest time for *tefillos* (both in vol. 3/4), or Prof. Leo Levi's clarification of what *Kordiakus* is (vol. 1). At the same time, however, many of the contributions raise a variety of questions.

In considerable measure they flow from basic differences between the scientific approach to matters and the Torah approach. Thus, for instance, the editors chose to print some articles which they themselves considered questionable or not acceptable because they found value in the discussion of the issues raised.

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Can the concepts treated in *halacha* necessarily be quantified in scientific terms? Are the rules of osmosis relevant to salting meat—and the scientific definition of heat and fire to the laws of Shabbos?

Another issue: Can the concepts treated in *halacha* necessarily be quantified in scientific terms? Are the rules of osmosis relevant to salting meat—and the scientific definition of fire and heat to the laws of *Shabbos*? Professor Levi, as can be expected of him, is rightly very cautious in touching on this issue (vol. 3/4); but it requires clarification, taking into account pertinent comments of the *Chazon Ish*

on the subject (collected in the *Sefer Yoseid Ne'eman*).

There are distinctions between the approaches of the scientist and the Torah scholar that have to do with value judgments. It is bothersome to see an article on *kavana* (vol. 3/4) quote side by side the *Rambam* and *Reb Chaim Brisker* with Professor Heschel and Louis Jacobs. And what do we make of the author of an article on Mar Shemuel

who approvingly states that "he was modest, humble and honest in character" (this article is also shot through with basic Talmudic mistakes—not surprising, since the author considers G. Bader's *Jewish Spiritual Heroes* a reliable source).

Finally, the treatment of complex halachic issues in this type of forum for lay readers is necessarily a risky business. An instance in point is the article on artificial insemination by Green (vol. 8/9). It quotes Rabbi Moshe Feinstein's responsa on A.I.D. (artificial insemination by donor) and the Israeli court decisions relying on it, but not his letter of Kislev 22, 1965, in which he in effect nullified his earlier decision. And while the author deals primarily with situations created by A.I.D. rather than its permissibility, the reader will not get a sense of that very definitive and total opposition to A.I.D. that is, for instance, clearly stressed by R. M. Halperin in his article on "Bloodtyping in Halacha," one of the many excellent articles in these volumes.

It is understood that every Jewish community has a *Rav* and *poseik*. Individual Orthodox scientist surely recognize that before making decisions involving a question of Torah law, they must present a *she'eila* to a halachic authority. Would it not be indicated that the editors of this type of publication should have one or more *poskim* of universally recognized stature to pass judgment on articles before they are published? ■

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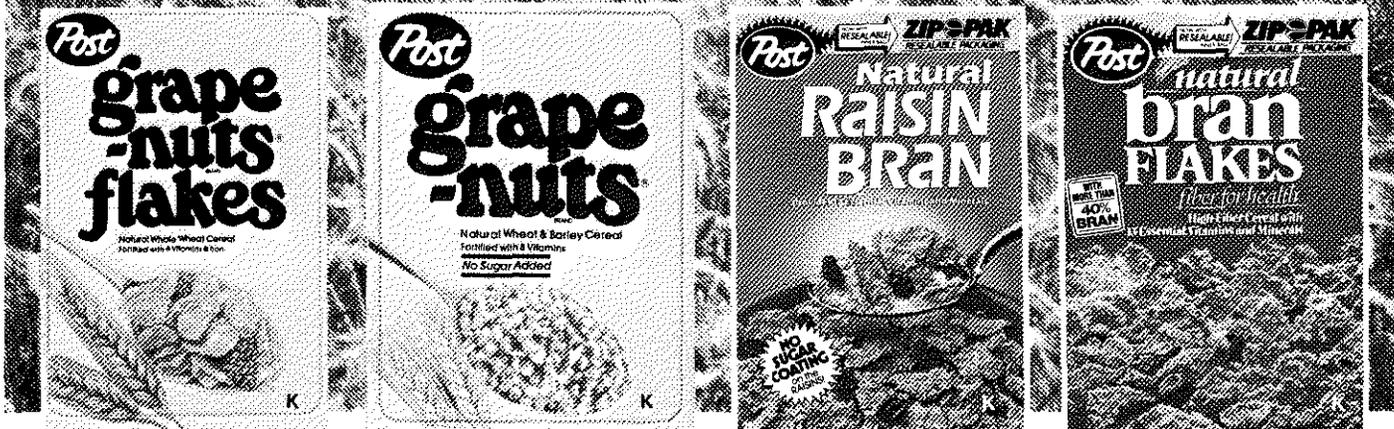
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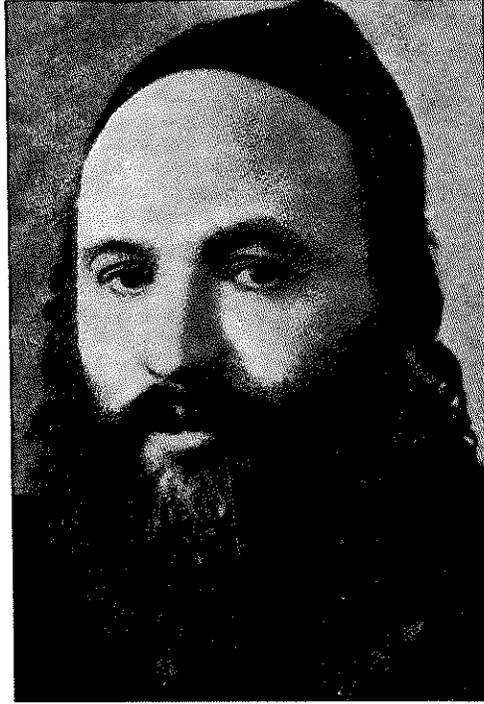
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RABBI SHAUL YEDIDYAH ELAZAR זצ"ל of MODZITZ

On His Fortieth Yahrzeit

AT THE TISCH

Rabbi Shaul Yedidyah Elazar Taub זצ"ל the late Modzitzer Rebbe, is remembered by Jews of all backgrounds with much respect and fondness—primarily as a creator of soul-stirring *niggunim* (Jewish song), but also as a *Gadol baTorah*. As he put it, in “*Yishtabach*” we say “*Habocher beshirei*

Mr. Nathan, a systems analyst with Chase Manhattan Bank, lives in Brooklyn.

zimra,” praising G-d for choosing song and melody. In the *Birchos Haftorah* we say “*Habocher baTorah uv'Moshe avdo*”: G-d is praised for choosing the Torah and *Moshe Rabbeinu*, His servant. Our task is to extol G-d for having chosen both, and to emulate Him in this dual choice.¹

To appreciate his approach to *Chassidus*, one would have had to

1. Found in *Imrei Shaul*, a collection of some of his *Divrei Torah*.

have visited his *Shabbos tisch*.² According to a visitor to such a *tisch* in Jerusalem, Reb Shaul began by saying *Sholom Aleichem*³. *Why isn't the Modzitzer Rebbe singing?* people wondered. He also recited *Ribbon Kol HaOlamim* and *Eishes*

2. This took place in the *Chassidishe Shul* in the *Batei Warsaw* section of Me'ah Shearim, in 1935.

3. In Modzitz, the custom is to say *Shalom Aleichem* and *Eishes Chayil* without any tune. *Ribbon Kol Haolamim* is said quietly between *Shalom Aleichem* and *Eishes Chayil*. *Azamer Bishvochin* is sung during the meal.

“When a Jew has a problem, he is so confident of G-d’s mercy, that he sings about His salvation before it happens.”

Chayil without any melody. After *Kiddush* and *Hamotzi*, the first course was served and *shirayim* (morsels of food left over by the *Rebbe* for the *chassidim* to partake) were distributed—a procedure that took close to an hour. Reb Shaul cleared his throat, the people quieted down . . . and he said *divrei Torah* for three quarters of an hour!⁴ Many people became discouraged, and a few quietly took leave of the *shul*. At the conclusion of the *divrei Torah*, Reb Shaul started to sing *Azamer Bishvochin*. Some who had left heard him from a distance and quickly returned. As he continued singing, more people came in, until there were more people present than at the beginning of the *tisch*.⁵ This pattern of a course of *Seudas Shabbos*, long *divrei Torah*, and

4. According to Ben-Zion Shenker, a well-known Modzitzer *chassid* and composer of classical *niggunim*, this *tisch* was the exception to the rule. Normally Reb Shaul said *divrei Torah* after he sang a *niggun*.

5. Told by Reb Dovid Shternshuss זצ"ל, who was at the *tisch*.

niggunim repeated itself throughout the evening.⁶

Reb Shaul often quoted the response by his father, Rabbi Yisroel Taub זצ"ל of Modzitz, when asked, what does *neggina* accomplish? Reb Yisroel answered, “*Neggina* causes people to do *teshuva* and brings them closer to *Hashem*. Let me explain this with a *mashal* (parable):

A miller once went to the city to buy an alarm clock. While wrapping the alarm clock for the miller, the clock-maker ridiculed him: “How can you use an alarm clock? Your mill makes so much noise and yet you sleep through it all. You’ll never hear the ring of the alarm!”

The miller answered, “You may be a clock-maker, but you don’t know human nature. I’m so accustomed to the mill, that I can sleep through all the noise it makes. But I’m not used to the

6. M.S. Geshuri, in his book *Beis Kuszmitr*, who was also present at the *tisch*.

alarm clock, so its sound will awaken me.”

“The same applies to *neggina*. Everyone has his regular lifestyle with its sounds and rhythms, but a *niggun* will break him out of his reverie, and can bring him to *teshuva*.”

BEINNING WITH A HOSHANNA

When Reb Shaul was born on *Hoshanna Rabba*, 5647⁷, his parents placed a *hoshanna* (willow branch used in the day’s ritual) in his cradle. His grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu זצ"ל of Zvolin, commented that the newborn baby should grow to be a *hoshanna* (savior) for *Klal Yisroel*. *Hoshanna Rabba* is the *ushpizin* day of *Dovid Hamelech*, the author of *Tehillim*, and Reb Shaul strove to reflect *Dovid Hamelech*’s *Torah* as well as his powers of singing and prayer.

Before World War I, Reb Shaul lived in Stopnitz, having married the granddaughter of the local *Rav*.⁸ During the war, Reb Shaul came down with typhus. He developed a very high fever, and began shouting and hallucinating⁹. After the fever broke, Reb Shaul was asked what had happened. He replied, “I was taken before the *Beis Din Shel*

7. The letters for 5647 תרמ"ז can be transposed to the word *zemiro* זמירה. The letters can also be transposed to form *hint*, which was the form of his *divrei Torah*. As a rule, he ended his *divrei Torah* with a *gematriya* and/or a *roshei teivos* of the main concepts of the *dvar Torah*.

8. His father-in-law, Rabbi Shaul *Hakoheln* Schwartz, succeeded his father as *Rav* of Stopnitz. The old *Rav* of Stopnitz, Rabbi Chaim Yitzchok *Hakoheln* Schwartz was known throughout pre-WWI Poland as a *Gadol* in both *nigla* (the revealed parts of *Torah*) and *nistar* (the mystical parts).

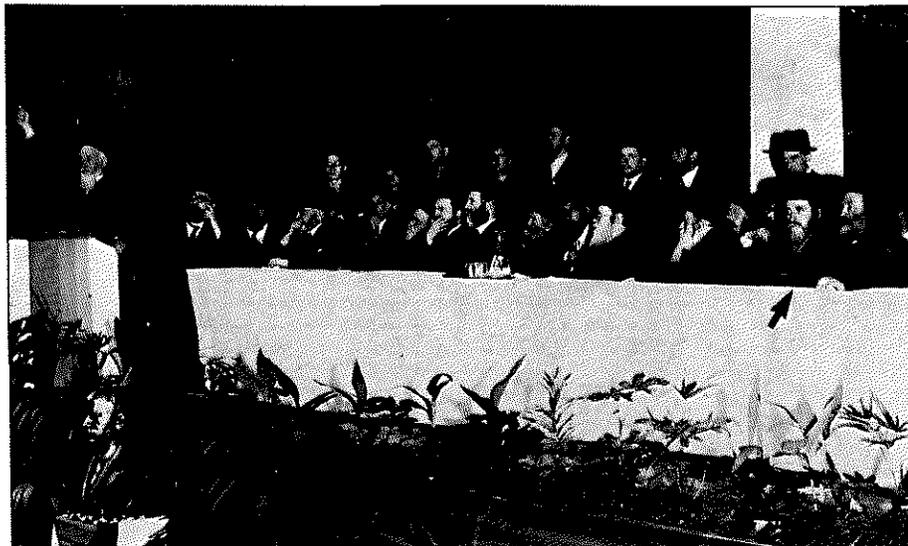
9. Told by Ben-Zion Shenker, who heard it directly from Reb Shaul.

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At the *Knessia Gedola* of Agudath Israel, in Marienbad (1950's).

Maalo (the Heavenly court), where I was told to recite everything I had ever learnt—by heart!" From that time on, Reb Shaul memorized whatever he learned. Based on what is found in his *Divrei Torah*, Reb Shaul mastered *Tanach*, *Shas* with *Rashi* and *Tosefos*, *Midrash Rabba*, *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Sifro*, *Sifri*, *Zohar* and the *Tikkunim*, *Rambam*, *Shulchan Aruch*, as well as many *Sifrei Chassidus* verbatim.¹⁰

After World War I, Reb Shaul became *Rav* of Rakov, one of the older *kehillos* in Central Poland, where he became known for his Torah knowledge and his skill as a *poseik* (halachic decisor). His father was *niftar* on 13 Kislev 5681, and Reb Shaul succeeded him as *Modzitzer Rebbe* while still *Rav* in Rakov. He spent three years as *Rav* in Karczew, until 5688 (1928), when he moved to *Otvotzk*, which was close to his *chassidim*, who lived mainly in Warsaw. Although he never functioned as *Rav* of the town, he did open a major *yeshiva* there, which became known as a major training ground for *poskim* in Poland.

At the same time, he was very actively involved in *Klal Yisroel* problems. Reb Shaul was a member

10. Rabbi Hershel Newmark of Montreal told me this. Ben-Zion Shenker commented that many times during saying *divrei Torah*, Rav Shaul stared straight ahead and would recite long quotations—as if he was reading it out of the *sefer*.

of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages) of Agudath Israel of Poland, and attended the *Knessios Gedolos* (International Congresses) in Vienna and Marienbad. He was active in the founding of a *Vaad Mishmeres Stam* in Poland¹¹ (which safeguarded *kashrus* of *sifrei Torah*, *mezuzos*, and *tefillin*), and the

11. The founding *Kol Koreh* has been reprinted by the *Vaad Mishmeres Stam* of New York.

Bobover Rebbe שליט"א remembers Reb Shaul playing an active role in fighting the anti-*shechita* laws in Poland.¹²

AN INTENSE LOVE FOR THE LAND

Reb Shaul had an intense love for *Eretz Yisroel*, having visited it three times before World War II. After his arrival in the United States, in 1941, he described himself as "a Polish refugee temporarily in the United States, on my way to *Eretz Yisroel*."

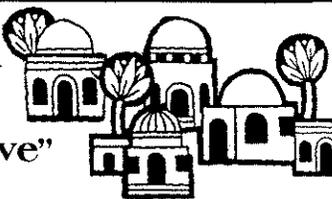
Indeed, he said that he was more inspired to compose *niggunim* in *Eretz Yisroel* than in *Chutz La'aretz*. After one of his trips to *Eretz Yisroel*, he was asked by a *chassid*, "What did the *Rebbe* bring home from *Eretz Yisroel*?"

Reb Shaul answered, "You'll hear the answer on Friday night"—when he sang *Koh Ribbon* at the *tisch*,¹³ with a *niggun* that he had composed in *Eretz Yisroel*.

He often quoted Rabbi Nachman

12. The Bobover Rebbe told this to Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu Taub זצ"ל, Reb Shaul's oldest son and successor, when the *Rebbe* זצ"ל came to visit the United States in 5744.

13. Most *chassidim* in Poland did not sing *Koh Ribbon*. This was told to me by Ben-Zion Shenker.



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*In 1941, Reb Shaul described himself as
“a Polish refugee temporarily in the United States,
on my way to Eretz Yisroel.”*



With officers aboard ship on his second return from Israel.

Braslover's reading of the passage "*Uk'chu mi'zimras ha'aretz bikleichem*—Take along a branch [*zimra*] from the Land," to refer to a *niggun* (*zemer*).

Reb Shaul visited a leading rabbinical figure, upon the latter's return from a brief visit to *Eretz Yisroel*, and asked him, "What did you see in *Eretz Yisroel*?"

He replied that he had shortened his stay, for whatever he did see was overshadowed by the presence of the secularists wherever he went. Reb Shaul brought the conversation to an abrupt close by saying, "You were in *Eretz Yisroel* but for a few days. It took the *Meraglim* (Moses' spies) forty days to find *lashon hora* to report about *Eretz Yisroel*!"

FLIGHT AROUND THE GLOBE

With the outbreak the World War II, the week before Rosh Hashana 5700 (September, 1939), Reb Shaul and his family began a flight from destruction, with a trip that eventually took them around the world.

His son, Rabbi Chaim Yitzchok Taub, described how they heard the *shofar* that Rosh Hashana. They were aware that a hidden *tzaddik*, who visited Reb Shaul on occasion, lived in a forest near Dubenka, where they were wandering. Suddenly, they heard a blast of a *shofar*. They followed the sound and, "I saw a little hut filled with burning candles. The *nistar*, dressed in white, was blowing *shofar*, unaware of all that what was going on outside of his immediate environment."

When Poland collapsed under the combined weight of the German and Russian armies, Reb Shaul fled to Russian-controlled territory with his family. Reb Shaul encouraged his *chassidim* to flee whenever and however possible—even if it meant traveling on *Shabbos*. When a Modzitzer *chassid* from Radom cried to Reb Shaul about being *mechallel Shabbos* to escape the Germans, Reb Shaul answered him, "Don't cry. I did the same myself."

The Rebbe spent Yom Kippur in the town of Kamin, near Kovla, where in response to the requests of local Jews he lead the *tefillos*. Two of his *chassidim*—former *talmidim* of his Yeshiva in Otvozk—entered the *shul* in the middle of *Mussaf* and fainted. They later explained, "We've been on the run since Rosh Hashana. We had thought that the *Rebbe* and his family had been perished in the bombings. Sud-

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denly, we heard our *Rebbe's* voice! We thought for sure that we were dead and had come to *Gan Eden!* Thank G-d, we are still alive and hearing the *Rebbe!*"

STOPOVER IN VILNA

After Succos, Reb Shaul and his family arrived in Vilna, then capital of Russian-occupied Lithuania¹⁴. Whenever Reb Shaul held a *tisch* in Vilna, the *shul* was packed by *chassidim* and *misnagdim* alike, all pushing to get as close to the *Rebbe* as possible. ... On the 19 Kislev, 5700, Reb Shaul spoke at the *farbrengen* of the Lubavitcher Chassidim in Vilna.¹⁵

While in Vilna, Reb Shaul developed a deep friendship with Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski זצ"ל, the leading Torah figure of the time, paying him frequent visits. After Reb Shaul told him the *divrei Torah* he had said at the previous *Shalosh Seudos*, Reb Chaim Ozer began sending his personal secretary, Rabbi Jaffe זצ"ל, to the *Shalosh Seudos* sessions, to later repeat Reb Shaul's *divrei Torah* to him. At a gathering in Vilna, one of Reb Shaul's *niggunim* was sung. A participant remarked to Reb Shaul that this *niggun* was composed by Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Barditchov. Reb Shaul commented, appreciatively, "It feels good to have one's composition called a Barditchover *niggun*."

At one *tisch* in Vilna, the crowd vying for *shirayim* got out of hand. Reb Shaul commented, "If the Germans understood the *sod* (secret) of *shirayim*, they wouldn't be fighting this war!"

An explanation then followed: "The *sod* of *shirayim* is to leave something over for others. If the Germans would only practice this, they wouldn't be fighting right now!"

14. Most of the information regarding Reb Shaul's stay in Vilna is found in the preface to the *Imrei Shaul*. The story about the exit visas is found in *Beis Kuzmir*.

15. The *Divrei Torah* are found in one of Reb Shaul's notebooks, mentioned further in the article.

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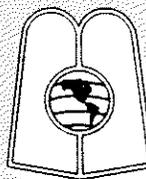
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The Russian occupation of Lithuania impressed Reb Shaul with the urgency of getting out of Europe. The Soviet government was not particularly inclined to granting exit visas to Polish refugees, even if they had entry visas for other countries.¹⁶ Reb Shaul decided to challenge this policy, and applied at the Intourist office in Vilna. He was invited by the NKVD for an interview. His inquisitor, a Jew, charged that the Torah was a capitalist document. Reb Shaul answered that the Israelites in the *midbar* (wilderness) were the first true socialists, as they had no need of material gain. In addition, *halacha* is designed to protect the poor. He requested that his socialist comrades award him an exit visa so he could live in a country where he could practice this religion. The NKVD agent relented, and issued visas for him and his family. This was followed by the issuing of many exit visas to a number of Polish refugees—including *talmidim* of the Mirrer Yeshiva and Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, as well as Rabbi Shimon Sholom Kalish—the Amshinover Rebbe¹⁷, Rabbi Aharon Kotler, and Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch זכרונם לברכה.

Reb Shaul and his family travelled by rail across Russia to Vladivostok,

16. The purpose of a exit visa was to be able to travel through Russia, enroute to a further destination. Many refugees miraculously obtained entry visas to Cuba, Curacao, Costa Rica, Paraguay and other Latin American countries. Most holders of exit visas crossed Russia, only to be caught in Japan after Pearl Harbor, forcing them to remain in the realm of the Japanese Empire—notably, Shanghai.

17. Reb Shaul had a very warm friendship with the Amshinover Rebbe in Poland prior to their sojourn in Vilna—a friendship that was renewed in the United States. Before Reb Shaul went to Eretz Yisroel, the Amshinover Rebbe came for an eight hour visit—just to say good-bye. When one of Reb Shaul's sons got married in the United States, after Reb Shaul's *petira*, the Amshinover Rebbe remained for the entire wedding. It was rare for him to stay beyond the *chupa*. (Told by Ben Zion Shenker.)



on to Kobe, Japan, across the Pacific to San Francisco, and then by train to New York City, where they finally settled in the Williamsburgh section of Brooklyn. At the start of this trip, Reb Shaul began composing a *niggun* to the text of *Min Hameitzar*, as a musical diary of his travels and travails. In one part of the *niggun*, he musically describes the

bombing of the road they were traveling. He continued composing this *niggun* in stages, throughout the trip. During the Erev Pesach *matza* baking¹⁸, in 5701, Reb Shaul was humming and tapping with his cane on the floor, and then announced: “I finally finished *Min Hameitzar*.”

**TRAVELS FROM STRENGTH
... TO STRENGTH**

The Rebbe traveled around the US and Canada, to give encouragement to those with family trapped in Europe. This was personally taxing, as he had lost two daughters in the war¹⁹. Reb Shaul composed a series of short *niggunim* in which he poured out his pain. Among the better known of these *niggunim* are *Shomer Yisroel*,

18. Also told by Ben-Zion Shenker
19. When Reb Shaul discovered, just before Pesach, 5705, that his oldest daughter had survived the war, along with her daughter, he composed eight *niggunim* in honor of the approaching Yom Tov.



At the Siyum Sefer Torah in Yeshiva Chachmei Lublin, in honor of the late Rabbi Meir Shapiro זצ"ל. 1. Rabbi Menachem Ziamba, 2. Rabbi Moshe Boyahner, 3. Reb Shaul, 4. one of his sons, 5. Sadigerer Rebbe, Reb Mordechai Sholem Yoseif (formerly of Crown Heights) זכרונם לברכה.

Lo Lemaaneinu²⁰, V'korev Pezureinu, and Habeit Mishomayim U'reh. David Hamelech says in Tehilim: "He took note when they were in distress, when He heard their outcry (*rina*— literally, their song)" (Tehillim 106,44). When the Jew has a problem, he is so confident of G-d's mercy, that he sings about His salvation before it happens.

He once commented, "Even the simplest Jew can enter the *Heichal Hanegina*—The Heavenly Palace of Song. Popular wisdom has it that the *Heichal Hanegina* is next to the *Heichal Hateshuva*, I say that the two are identical: A Jew is inspired to do *teshuva* through a *niggun*. . . . A Jew even says *viddui* (confession) with a *niggun*."

Reb Shaul was in constant contact with many *gedolim*. He continued his involvement in Agudath Israel in America and later in *Eretz Yisroel*. While in America, he frequently exchanged visits with the *Chassidic Rebbeim* of Boyan, Kopishnitz and Stolin, זכרונם לברכה, and renewed his friendship with the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Shneersohn זצ"ל, Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner זצ"ל, of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin, spent many hours in private discussion with Reb Shaul²¹. Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz זצ"ל became very close with Reb Shaul, and encouraged the *talmidim* of Mesivta Torah Vodaath to attend his *tisch*²². A group of Torah Vodaath *talmidim* visited him every *Rosh Chodesh* when he would say *divrei Torah* for them, even though he did not make a public *Seudas Rosh Chodesh*.

Reb Shaul spent summers in the Catskill Mountains as a private citizen. This was a far cry from the pre-World War II days, when he was

20. This *niggun* was sung for the first time at the *Chanukas Habayis* (dedication) of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva building on Bedford Avenue and Dean Street in Brooklyn.

21. Rabbi Hutner had been close with Reb Shaul in Poland, before he went to *Eretz Yisroel*. Rabbi Chaim Yitzchok Taub remembers Rabbi Hutner as a frequent visitor to his father in Otvozk.

22. Two *talmidim* of Rabbi Mendelowitz זצ"ל became sons-in-law to Reb Shaul: Rabbi Avrohom Tzvi Shenker and Rabbi Efraim Rosen.

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While travelling about America to give comfort to those who, like himself, had lost loved ones in the War, Reb Shaul composed a series of short Nigunim in which he poured out his pain.

refused entrance into all the hotels in Krenitz—a resort-town in Poland—due to his reputation: the hotels where Reb Shaul visited inevitably suffered damage due to the crush of the crowds he attracted.²³

In 5707, Reb Shaul finally was able to fulfill his lifelong dream. On 15 Tammuz, 5707, he landed in *Eretz Yisroel* and settled in Tel Aviv. Rabbi Yitzchak Yedidya Frankel זצ"ל, late Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, recalled for the writer how at the *kabbolas ponim* (reception) for Reb Shaul, he was slicing a *challa* to be given out

for *shirayim*, and cut very deeply into his hand. When the people around him were unable to stop the bleeding, Reb Shaul asked for a bowl of "*zeks-un-neintziger*" (pure grain alcohol) into which he dipped his hand until the bleeding stopped. He refused to leave the *tisch*, so as not to disappoint the people who had come. The sting of alcohol on the cut must have been very painful—yet there was absolutely no change of expression on Reb Shaul's face during this whole procedure.

FAREWELL WITH TEFILLA AND SONG

Yomim *Noraim* of 5708, Reb Shaul was the *shaliach tzibbur*, as always. On *Hoshanna Rabba*, his sixty-first birthday, he held an all-night *tisch*

for eight hours. Little did the people know that Reb Shaul was suffering from advanced arteriosclerosis. The only visible symptom, which no one had diagnosed at the time, was apparent in how he wrote his *divrei Torah* in a composition book on *Motza'ei Shabbos*—as was his custom after *Havdala* every week. Over the years, the writing became progressively more difficult to read. Many notebooks of these writings are currently being worked upon, prior to publication, projected for the near future. On Friday night, 16 Kislev, 5708, Reb Shaul became ill and was semi-conscious. (This was the day of the UN partition vote November 29, 1947, and the creation of the state of Israel.) The people in the room noticed him tapping his fingers rhythmically and humming a *niggun*. On *Shabbos* morning, Reb Shaul was *niftar*. When Reb Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz heard of Reb Shaul's *petira*, he told Ben-Zion Shenker, "I wish that I'll be able to sing before my passing."²⁴

Reb Shaul was accustomed to constantly learn through *Tanach*. A few days before his *petira*, the last time he had looked in his little *Tanach*, he left the *sefer* open to the last page of *Zecharia* where it is written that *Moshiach* will stop at *Har Hazeisim*. The family had wanted to bury Reb Shaul on *Har Hazeisim*, but it was dangerous to travel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, since the Arabs were rioting over the United Nations partition vote. That *Motza'ei Shabbos*, the Chazon Ish was consulted, and he advised, "A Jew who, after so many trials and tribulations, came to *Eretz Yisroel* to die, should be buried on *Har Hazeisim*, regardless of the dangers involved."²⁵ Reb Shaul was taken by armored car to *Har Hazeisim*, and

23. Rabbi Yitzchok Taub recalls a *Shabbos* that his father spent in Warsaw: the *chassidim* had admission-tickets printed for all the *tischen* (Warsaw had an *etruw* that had been set up by the *Chiddushei Harim* and used by all the *chassidim*). Not only were tickets purchasers "scalped," but someone even printed counterfeit tickets!

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24. Heard from Ben-Zion Shenker.

was the last person to be buried there until after the Six-Day War. There was no opportunity to put a *matzeiva* (stone) on his grave until 5727 (1967).

FINALE

In the early 50's, a Modzitzer *chassid*, waiting on line in a grocery in London, started humming one of Reb Shaul's *niggunim* (*Ashreinu Ma Tov Chelkeinu*, found on the Modzitzer Favorites #3 album). Suddenly he heard someone else humming along with him. It was the Gentile man at the cash register. The *chassid* asked him, "Where do you know this tune from?"

The cashier answered, "I come from a town in Poland, which you never heard of. The rabbi of the town composed many beautiful tunes. Once a year he would go out with his followers, carrying the scrolls, and sing and dance in the town square all day. All of the Christians came to watch and to hear the beautiful music. I've been in England now close to thirty years, and I've yet to hear anything as nice."

The *chassid* asked, "What town are you from?"

Answered the cashier, "Karcew."²⁶ ■

25. The *gabbai* of the Modzitzer Shtiebel, Reb Shmuel Rozenbuch ז"ל went to the Chazon Ish. He told Ben-Zion Shenker that the Chazon Ish was seen at the *levaya*.

26. Heard from Reb Dovid Shternshuss ז"ל and Yitzchok Eisenstadt.

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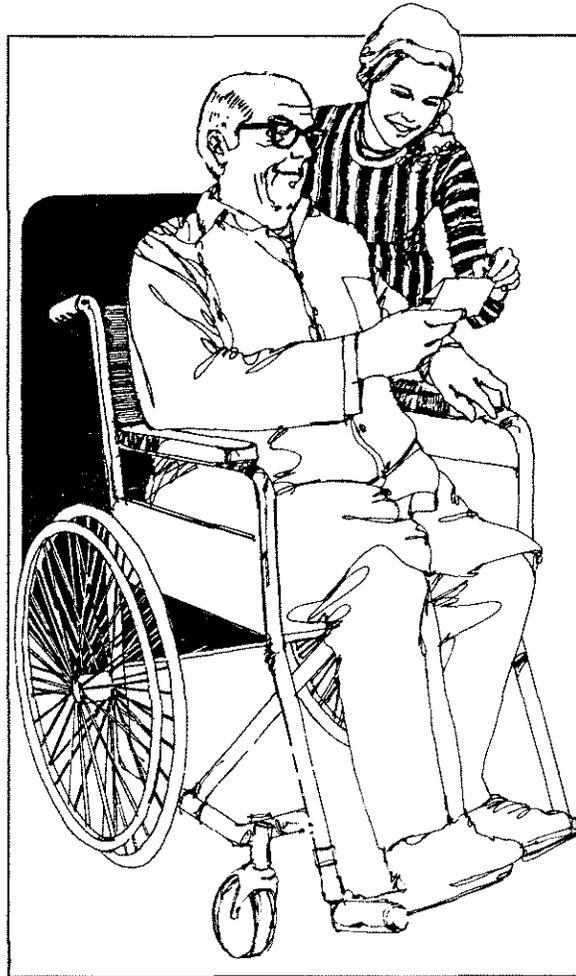
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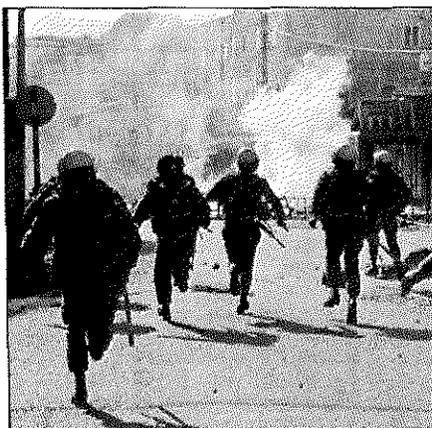
The Arab riots in Gaza and Israel's West Bank have pushed the stories of protest against Sabbath desecration in Jerusalem off the front pages of the newspapers. Is there any connection between the two? The following examination of this topic is based on a lecture by **Rabbi Zev Leff**, *Rav* of Moshav Mattityahu, presented by S. Chaimson of Jerusalem, who describes himself as a *talmid* of Rabbi Leff.

OF SANCTITY AND SECURITY

A PUZZLING PROMISE

Three times a year, during the pilgrimage festivals of Pesach, Shavuos, and Succos, every Jew who owns land in *Eretz Yisroel* is commanded to be *oleh regel*—to ascend to Jerusalem and bring *karbanos* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, the Holy Temple. Should he be concerned that in his absence, someone might seize his property, he is reassured by a Divine promise: "... and no man shall covet your Land, when you ascend to appear before the L-rd your G-d three times a year" (*Shemos* 34, 24).

We all know that the Land of Israel was chosen for us millennia ago, and that the Almighty promised our forefathers that we would inherit it.



We may expect an assurance from G-d that if we act in accordance with His commandments, we will merit dominion over the Land, and victory over any enemy who seeks to take this territory from our hands. But this particular verse in the Torah cites a further promise, beyond assurance of continued possession, that no one will even *desire* our land,

that it will not appeal to anyone else. This is an unusual promise that begs for clarification.

The Hebrew verb used here is *lachmod*—to covet, to want for oneself that which belongs to another. This same word is used in the *Asseres Hadibros* (Decalogue) in one of the most difficult commandments, "*Lo sachmod*..." The Torah demands of the Jew that he not desire (and take steps to make his own) anything that belongs to his fellow. Our initial response to such a dictum is surprise. After all, G-d can demand from us that we not take something that belongs to another, telling us that we must control our actions. But here He in effect is legislating that we control our inner desires! Is it so dreadful

Beyond assurance of continued possession of the Land, the Torah promises that no one will even desire our land—an unusual promise that begs for clarification.

if I admire my neighbor's original oil painting, and ask him to sell it to me? I'm not stealing it, I only want to own it in a legal fashion. I can't help wanting it, can I?

BEYOND ENVY

Rabbi Avrohom Ibn Ezra explains the rationale for this commandment in a manner that is basic to Torah thought: The Ibn Ezra begins with the parable of a peasant who sees the princess. If he is a sane man, he will not feel any desire for her, even if he finds her very beautiful. He knows that this woman is out of bounds for him, and that it is with a peasant girl, not a princess, that he will find happiness. Having this understanding, he may admire her, but he will not covet her for his own. This is the way the Almighty expects us to regard something He has allotted to someone else—whether it

is his wife, his home, or his money. Since Divine Providence assigned it to another, it is *by definition* undesirable to us. That which belongs to another will be understood as unsuitable to me. Once something is inappropriate for me, I lose interest in it, and do not covet it at all. (More familiar to us today than the case of a princess might be an example of a skilled professional and his highly specialized machinery. A radiologist will not envy the new machinery of the building engineer, though he may admire it, and appreciate its sophistication. It would only be some newly enhanced scanning equipment—which would be useful to him—that would arouse his envy, and give rise to covetousness. Each of us has a tacit awareness of the desirability of the tools of his own trade, and a disinterest in someone else's tools.)

This insight of the Ibn Ezra sheds light on the Torah's promise to the people of Israel cited above. The

Land of Israel was singled out, as was the Jewish nation, for a unique purpose. It is, in fact, the purpose for which the entire universe was created: the utilization of all material and physical phenomena for spiritual goals. Other groups had long ago demonstrated their inability to perceive such an objective, and had insisted on pursuing the pleasures of the moment, without regard to the ultimate aim of Creation. By contrast, our Patriarchs—and they alone—demonstrated their capacity to father a people who would fathom this principle, and act in accordance with it. Thus was the Jewish nation chosen to receive the Torah, blueprint and end-goal of Creation. And the Land of Israel was destined to be the only place on earth suitable for fulfillment of this end-goal.

So it is here, in this Land, that all the occupations and activities of this world can and must be sanctified. Here, and here alone, is there a potential for all activities that are normally associated with the material to be elevated to spiritual realms. This sanctification of the mundane is represented most concretely by the Land-related *mitzvos*, and the thrice-yearly pilgrimages of all Jews who own land, to spend the Festivals in Jerusalem.

SMALL, DESIRED AND PROTECTED

History has demonstrated that this Land, small though it is, has always been prized by the nations of the world. Whether its situation was deemed strategic, its natural beauty alluring, or its special qualities of holiness somehow irresistible, both ancient and modern rulers sought to conquer



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The Torah, however, promises us that by utilizing this Land for a unique purpose, qualitatively different from all other lands, we would obviate the desire of others for our small piece of holy soil. Seeing that our finest produce was consecrated to the Almighty, rather than to fill our bellies, that the entire operation of our society was geared to the fulfillment of spiritual, long-range goals, the peoples of other lands would fail to develop an interest in this Land. They would perceive immediately that this Land is the tool *par excellence* of our trade—as far from their trade as night from day. And they would, with a disinterested shrug, turn their backs.

So here we have a Divine promise of protection, and irony of ironies, we deduce its converse ... and witness its fulfillment!

NORMALIZATION: A PATH TO SECURITY?

A survey of secular Zionist literature, from the writings of Pinsker, Herzl, and Achad Ha'am, to the words of Abba Hillel Silver and others decades later, reveals a heavy emphasis on the theme of *normalization*. To make ourselves a nation like all others, many of these thinkers believed, would cure the malady of anti-Semitism, which had plagued us throughout the years of our abnormal existence as a people dispersed among the others, clinging to ancient customs, which set us apart. Having our land in which to set up, in the words of Jacob Klatzkin, "a free national life ... [and] to deny any conception of Jewish identity based on spiritual criteria" would be the solution to all our troubles (*The Zionist Idea*, Hertzberg, New York, 1959, p.319).

During the years before the emergence of the independent State of Israel, the devastation of European Jewry demonstrated unequivocally that blending into the nations by living among them, intermarrying and dropping all distinguishing observances, would

not only fail to be a deterrent to anti-Semitism, it would have a catastrophically opposite effect. And then, with the establishment of the State of Israel, as normal as any state could be (with only the most oblique reference to the Almighty in its declaration of independence)—a nation determined, apparently "to establish a new definition of Jewish identity—a *secular definition*" (*ibid.*,

italics are Klatzkin's)—an astonishing thing occurred, immediately. The surrounding Arab nations, unwilling to let go of this strip of land—minuscule by comparison with their combined territories—attacked our people ferociously. Although we have been miraculously saved from their hands repeatedly over the past four decades, they have not stopped coveting our Land. Which other

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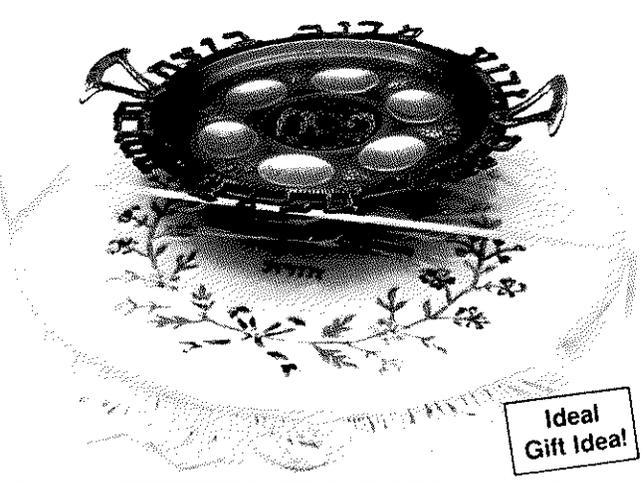
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The sworn enemies of Israel have no way of knowing how inappropriate the Land is for the achievement of their goals—for we have failed to demonstrate that our goals are in any way different from theirs.

nation, founded forty years ago by the consensus of the united nations (or the United Nations, if you will) of our planet, is still being challenged to demonstrate its title to the land of its inhabitants—even challenged as to its very right to exist!

One might suggest, then, that the correlation between increased desire of other peoples for this Land, and our failure to use it for its uniquely assigned end, is there for all to see. The Arabs who lay claim to our Land are so far removed from the goals—from the very way of life—associated with it, that they should see themselves as peasants who do not covet the royal princess. They are, in essence, aliens. Yet they have no way of knowing how inappropriate the Land is for the achievement of their goals, for we have failed to

demonstrate that our goals are in any way different from theirs. And when the holiness that for so many years has characterized the singular nature of the capital city, Jerusalem, on the seventh day, begins to crack; when those normalcy-seekers of old try once again to strip away that which distinguishes Israel from the nations; when the public observance of the Sabbath comes into question and religious Jews must come out shouting for the sanctity of this holy city—it should surprise us not at all that the Palestinian Arabs hurl rocks at Jewish settlers. They are acting in response to a basic law of nature and human psychology: If this Land is a vehicle for a this-worldly secularized existence, it is the tool of their trade, not of ours. In such a context, it is we who are the aliens, not *they*.

TO RE-ESTABLISH OUR CLAIM

Our enemies, we hope and pray—indeed, we trust—will not take our Land away from us *וְיָרִחַ*. Not ever again. But the miseries of their continued *desire* for this Land, which is ours by Divine assignment, cannot be dismissed. As long as “Palestinian” terror organizations function—broadcasting, publishing, and preaching hatred of our people and proclaiming their “rights” to our Land—we have reason to fear pain and loss of precious Jewish lives. Even though we are miraculously spared the overwhelming brunt of what such animosity would normally bring in its wake, our existence continues to be a troubled one while hostile neighbors chant, demonstrate and throw stones.

But it is not too late. The Almighty is being patient with us, giving us the chance to re-establish our claim as a holy nation to a holy Land. This means fighting on all fronts at all times, to counteract with love and concern the ignorance of those who see no reason to keep theaters closed on the Sabbath day. This means the shouldering of responsibility by all members of the Torah community, those already living in the Land, and those still outside it. Who but we, after all, are in a position to understand this promise, to appreciate this principle, and to explain the way it operates? This means working arduously not only in times of crisis, but even harder when things are going “smoothly” to raise the level of sanctity of the chosen people in the chosen Land.

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*Little loved boy, you were sweet to teach,
Step by short step, growing each to each:
First a wise smile with the food you took,
And a small word—your mother heard, "Baruch."
Patiently taught, patiently you learned:
What a warm smile half a blessing earned!
Once you saw wine—water that was sweet:
Bread was just bread, food was just to eat—
Quickly you knew: Kiddush wine was more.
Now your face shone, and you stood in awe.
Who did not see greatness in your blood,
Abraham's son, a tzaddik in the bud?*

*Little lost boy, gone in half an hour,
Now a new world has you in its power:
World of dull pain, world of tinsel joys,
World where G-d's face hides from Jewish boys.
She who gave birth, whom you've never known,
Takes you with right, for you are her own.
She will love you well, love as best she can:
Buy you fine sweets, show you to her man,
Take you for walks, bring you the show—
But she won't teach what she does not know.
Now your half text of your people's law,
Baruch . . . borei pri ho-adomo—*

*How will you learn the Kingdom and the Name?
Who will make wine into something blessed?
Who will make Shabbos more than just a rest?
When your toys pall, when your pastimes bore,
When your young soul yearns for something more,
When you look back, past the gulf she crossed,
How can you know what you both have lost?
Briefly you'll miss what she cannot buy,
What you won't know, and you'll cry and cry,
Mother will fret, not know what to do;
Grandma will say, "They're like that when they're two."*

*Little lost sons and daughters of my race,
Torn from deep roots, wandering out of place—
If my one boy left my spirit torn,
Part of this soul that will always mourn,
How many tears must I cry for you,
Daughters and sons, every one a Jew,
From the King's house vanished very far,
With not one friend to tell you who you are?
Who can take each by his ready hand,
Bring him back here, to his Father's land?
Father, our King, helper we have none—
None but You. Soon, send us David's son,
With the lost lads clinging to his hem,
Back to Your House, and my boy with them.*

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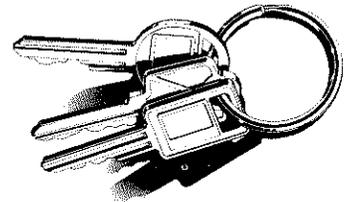
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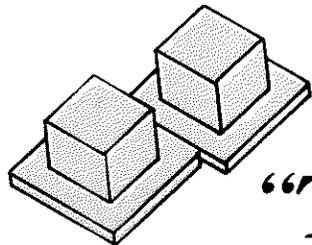
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Second Looks at the Jewish Scene

Eliyahu Mayer



"Today, I Put On Tefillin"

Today, I put on tefillin. Of course, so did tens of thousands of other men around the globe. So what's the point?

Putting on tefillin is a mitzva that Jewish men perform each and every weekday. But today it was different for me. Today I put a little more thought into this mitzva and a little more preparation. Instead of gobbling up the preparatory meditation by heart, for example, I opened a Siddur and said it more slowly.

So why was today different from all other days? Had I witnessed a miracle? Well, not really. But then again, perhaps I did. Let me explain.

Yesterday, I came into shul as I always do, just a bit behind what I would consider "on schedule." I began to put on my tallis and tefillin quickly, as I usually do, with more attention to efficiency and timing than to meaning and purpose.

As I yanked up my shirt sleeve, other men around me were doing the same. But then I looked over to the man next to me and I noticed a number tattooed on his forearm. Here we were performing the same mitzva at exactly the same time. But

I could not quite equate my observance with his.

Even after I had merged into traffic on the "Tefilla Turnpike," I couldn't push that brief encounter out of my mind. I had seen similar tattoos before, but for some reason, the experience yesterday had triggered an avalanche of soul-search-

ing questions about my anonymous neighbor in shul.

What ordeals did he go through? What miracles did he witness? What courage enabled him to survive, not only physically, but also spiritually? What sources of strength did he draw upon to maintain his faith and commitment after such unspeakable horrors?

Then I thought about my neighbor's observance of the mitzva of tefillin: How much mesiras nefesh had he gone through in the past, to put on tefillin? Did he do so at all, during the war? What thoughts does he have each morning as he bares his arm to don his tefillin when he sees that indelible

Rabbi Aryeh Schechter

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Eliyahu Mayer is a New York-based writer. His "Dilemma of an Out-of-Towner Living In-Town" appeared in the Oct. '87 issue of the JO.

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reminder of his suffering? Was I not, in fact, witnessing a spiritual miracle as I watched him wind the strap of the tefillin around his tattooed arm?

* * *

I later reflected on the merit of this man's observance. How is his putting on tefillin evaluated in Heaven? How much nachas does it give his Creator? Considering all that he has gone through, how much greater is his act of putting on tefillin than my own puny, perfunctory performance?

Shortly after we put on our tefillin each morning, we recite the tefilla requesting to be spared the ordeal of a nisayon. Yesterday was no exception. In fact, while reflecting on the tattoo on my neighbor's arm, I recited this tefilla with a shudder of deepened concentration. While I may have envied the value of his mitzva performance, I certainly was not looking for similar tribulations!

All during the day, yesterday, I thought about my humbling experience in shul that morning. By the end of the day, I was determined to do something to elevate my own performance of the "everyday mitzva" of putting on tefillin. So this morning I really made it to shul "on schedule" even a few minutes earlier than usual. I put the extra time toward fulfilling the mitzva of tefillin with more concentration.

Now, I do not know when I will arrive at shul tomorrow morning. Chances are, I may be a couple of minutes "off schedule" again. But regardless of what happens tomorrow, because of my observations and experiences yesterday, I can say with some degree of novelty, "Today, I put on tefillin!" ■

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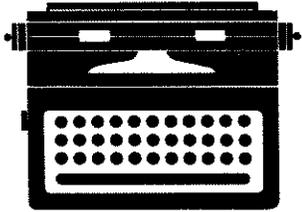
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Letters to the Editor

OUT-OF-TOWN, JUST AROUND THE CORNER

To the Editor:

In regard to Eliyahu Mayer's "Dilemma of an Out-of-Towner" (Oct. '87), may I suggest some solutions.

The truth of the matter is that the dilemma is not restricted to those who have grown up out-of-town. Our *chachamim* have said that when Elkana (an out-of-towner) went to be *oleh l'regel* to Shilo he would always travel a different route, to arouse the curiosity of the plain folk, who would ask him where he is going, and then follow him to the *Mikdash*.

Apparently then—as now—many Jews did not know much of *Yahadus*—so much so, that they forgot about coming to visit the *Mikdash*! Also, to be *mekarev* someone, we should not wait for them to come to us, but we must go out of our way and reach out to them, as did Elkana.

Today, in America, the largest denomination of Judaism is the branch of "unaffiliated Judaism." There's Jewish gold out there for the taking—one need only stretch forth his/her hand and find it. Most of us do not have to go out-of-town to be *mekarev* someone; the unaffiliated are probably right there in your own neighborhood ... so close, yet so far. Your own neighbors would probably be tickled pink should you extend them a Shabbos invitation. They may even finally brace themselves and ask you about those exotic sounding Jewish songs you sing every Friday night.

Furthermore, your local college has probably more Jewish kids from out-of-town than you realize! You would be amazed what a plain sign can do when hung up around

campus. Who wouldn't want to "Spend a Shabbos in a Jewish home—price: FREE!" or "Experience the Renaissance of Jewish living—Heavenly credit given. Call ..." There are many more ideas.

Why not make it a collective shul effort? One Shabbos in a Torah home is worth more than two semesters of a comparative religion course (not a bad idea for another flyer!).

Let's not forget senior citizens. Do you know how many elderly Jews there are in the New York area alone who are locked up in their homes, afraid even to get something to eat? Contact your local Tomchei Shabbos for these forgotten ones.

This dilemma, though, is not just for special individuals; it affects all of Klal Yisroel. Our generation is perhaps being given one last chance to reach out to our lost brothers and sisters. The next generation of unaffiliated Jews will not even know

who they are. With assimilation rampant, cults, missionaries, domestic fights amongst ourselves ... the picture for the "outsiders" is bleak. If this is the impression that we give them, then we have already lost half the battle.

If we won't help them, who will? If not now, when?

YEHOSHUA JACOBOWITZ
Kew Garden Hills, NY

WHOSE JERUSALEM, INDEED!

To the Editor:

The lesson that I learn from the ongoing conflict between the secularists and *chareidim* in Jerusalem differs from that which Ezri-El Tshavi concludes in your Oct. '87 issue, ("Whose Jerusalem?").

The entire episode (i.e. the opening of movie houses) would not have taken place if the leaders of all segments of Orthodoxy (who joined in prayer at the Kosei Maaravi) could agree on a candidate to oppose Kollek, and would urge their followers to vote.

Let us not shift the blame onto someone who is alien to us. ...

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**RIGHT BLESSINGS,
WRONG PAGE**

To the Editor:

The October '87 issue, page 38, mentions, that rejoicing at a wedding earns five blessings for the guests, and quotes the Gemora Berachos 5b. Since our weekly Talmud classes has just studied that topic we are able to see that this should read 6b. Other than that we find the magazine to be extremely enjoyable.

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**MORE ON AUTOMATION
AND TORAH**

To the Editor:

May I add to your fascinating discussion of "The Impact of Automation on the Torah World" (Sept. '87)?

I find that there is growing interest in the Jewish calendar and the conversion of the Jewish to civil (Gregorian) dates and vice versa. In response to this interest, I have prepared an extensive conversion program, to run on an IBM PC or compatible, which may interest your readers.

Briefly, while existing programs perform a simple conversion of one date against the other, my program goes well beyond that. For the Jewish date obtained, there is indication of its special significance—Lag B'Omer, Shavuos, any fast or holiday, or a Saturday and its Torah reading, etc. Conversely, in seeking a corresponding civil date, the Jewish date may be entered in the conventional day-month-year format or by day of special Jewish significance, and its year (Jewish or civil). For example, you can obtain the civil date of Chanuka, 1993, without knowing on what Jewish date Chanuka falls. The calendar covers the period from Day One of Creation until ... ?

You may contact me for further details.

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**LEAVING EARLY FROM
WEDDINGS: ON THE OFFENSIVE**

To the Editor:

Your article, "An Immodest Proposal" (Oct. '87), fails to consider why people leave weddings early and implicates caterers as encouraging the long delays usual at Orthodox weddings.

A caterer would rather serve quickly and finish early than drag out an affair until after midnight. He also doesn't appreciate too many guests for dessert since he usually doesn't have enough to go around.

Based on my observation, those who leave early on a weekday night, will also leave before dessert on a Sunday afternoon, or even during a breakfast celebration. I therefore conclude that there must be something offensive about weddings or about the people who leave early. Probably a bit of both.

I can certainly sympathize with someone who weighs the wisdom of going home against staying for an extra half hour of deafening, mind numbing, cossack music. Serve dessert immediately after the main course and you'll see how many more people will stay.

The caterer will do what you tell him to, and so will the photographer. Perhaps even the bandleader will be amenable to pressure and will soften his din somewhat. However if the baal simcha doesn't want things to be different, they aren't going to change.

EDWIN LEVI
Englewood, N.J.



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**TO TEACH OR
NOT TO TEACH . . .**

To the Editor:

The teaching profession has long been regarded in the Orthodox circles as the most laudable *derech* (approach) for the religious girl. A teaching job is, of course, the best recourse that an impressionable girl, fresh out of high school or seminary, can take at that point or any point in her life. It is a job that poses no risks in the way of influencing a girl in the wrong way. It is time, however, to analyze that "other" *derech*: working in an office. Unfortunately, many girls were just not born with the ability to oversee a class of children. Sadly some of these girls go into teaching anyway. The results are generally disastrous. The teacher suffers and so do the children, although they may be under the impression that they are having fun. We can all recall, I am sure, a teacher or two from our youth who just couldn't control the class. The loss of time and opportunity is incredible. The teacher will be miserable and the children will have wasted their year.

Working in an office is not as simple, from a *frumkeit* perspective, as a teaching job. There are constant challenges to one's *Yiddishkeit*.

There are hands not to shake, places not to be alone with a man, witty comments that would be better off not uttered by a *frum* girl, and work that can be unfulfilling to your *ne-shama*. The last point is especially disheartening, since the most fulfilling job that anyone can perform is teaching children. There is constant putdown by people who look down on girls who work in offices as inferior in *frumkeit*. G-d may not have given the individual the gift of being an effective teacher, but that is not to say that she cannot serve G-d through her job—or even work in *chinuch* in some other capacity. Whether one works as a school secretary, a computer programmer, or a bookkeeper, one's goal should be striving to be "a true Bas Yisroel." As long as one does not lose sight of this goal, both secretary and teacher can occupy the same spot in the *frumkeit* scale. It is not what one does, but how one does it, that counts.

FRAIDY COHEN
Brooklyn, NY

We concur with Miss Cohen that one can be a true bas Yisroel no matter what one does for a living, but the teacher's task is more conducive for the goal—by virtue of both activity and environment.

THE EDITORS



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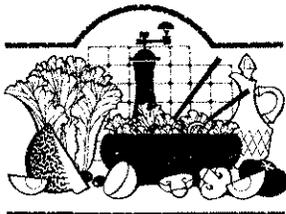


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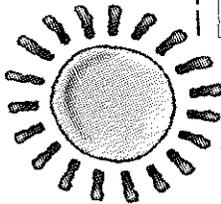
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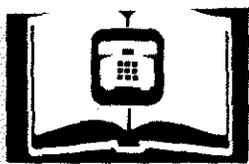
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