

# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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VOLUME XXVIII / NUMBER 1

## The World Around Us:

*The Risks of  
Exposure,  
The Costs of  
Insularity*

### A SYMPOSIUM

The Bostoner Rebbe,  
Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz

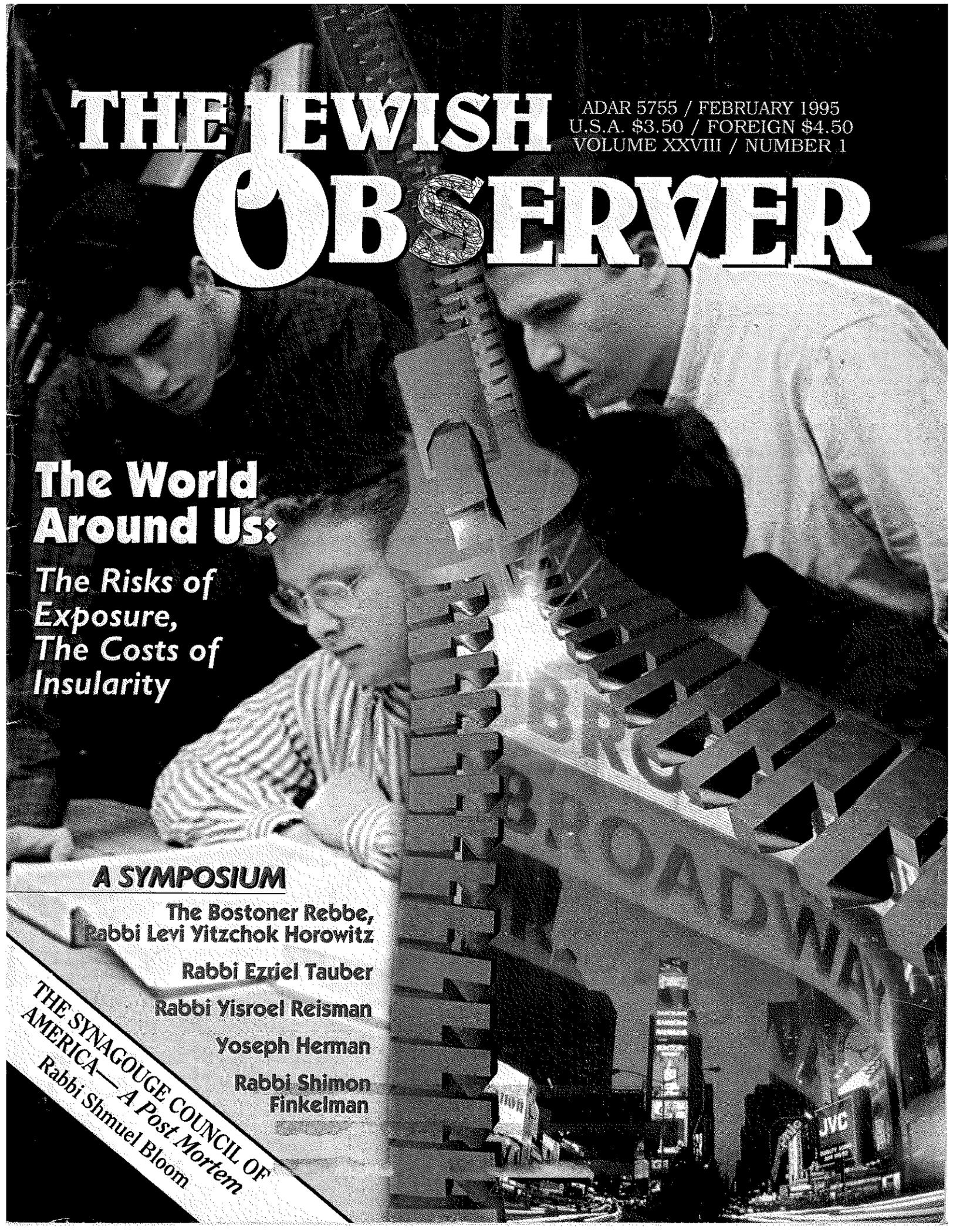
Rabbi Ezriel Tauber

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman

Yoseph Herman

Rabbi Shimon  
Finkelman

THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF  
AMERICA—*A Post Mortem*  
Rabbi Shmuel Bloom



# AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA

## 73RD ANNUAL DINNER

### COMMEMORATING FIFTY YEARS OF REBUILDING

# IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

**F**ifty years have passed since the liberation of the infamous death camps — and the end of an era of torment and death.

This milestone provides us with a unique opportunity to not only reflect on the terrible events that preceded the camps' liberation, but to harness every means of helping our children perceive the horror of *Churban Europe* through the unclouded lens of Torah Judaism. We have a solemn responsibility to assess the Jewish present through our unique Torah perspective on the recent Jewish past.



Agudath Israel of America has therefore undertaken a monumental project in conjunction with our Annual Dinner on Sunday, May 21, 1995: the creation of an oral and visual history of *Churban Europe* and beyond, seen through the eyes of Torah-observant survivors. *Tragedy and Triumph* will include:

- An audio-visual presentation that will chronicle *Churban Europe* and the subsequent years of Jewish history through the stories of individual families.
- A commemorative annotated hard-cover volume that will depict the recent Jewish past, both the unspeakable destruction of Jewish

Europe and the astonishing, inspiring rebirth of *Klal Yisroel*, its Yeshivos, *kebillos* and Chassidic courts, on new shores.

- An educational project encompassing yeshiva students around the world who will be learning *Mishnayos* in memory of the 6 million Jewish men, women and children who perished during the Holocaust.

This major commemoration of *Churban Europe* will be introduced at our annual dinner. Those in attendance will view a premier showing of *Tragedy and Triumph* and receive a copy of the commemorative volume.

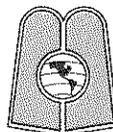
Additionally, the final *Mishnayos* of the educational project will be learned at the Dinner, which will culminate in a *siyum* in memory of the *kedoshim*.

We are presently in the process of collecting documents, photographs and artifacts to utilize in this special project. Individuals with relevant materials they are willing to lend to Agudath Israel of America for use in the production of *Tragedy and Triumph* and the commemorative album are asked to please call our offices at (212) 797-9000.

All materials, of course, will be returned in the same condition in which they were borrowed.

# TRAGEDY

# Triumph



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# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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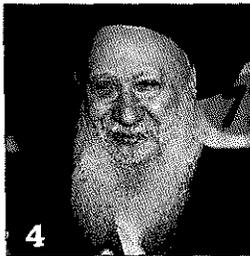
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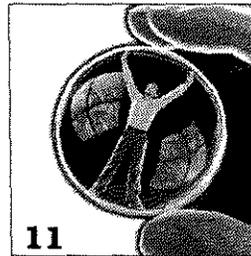
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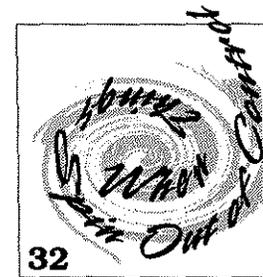
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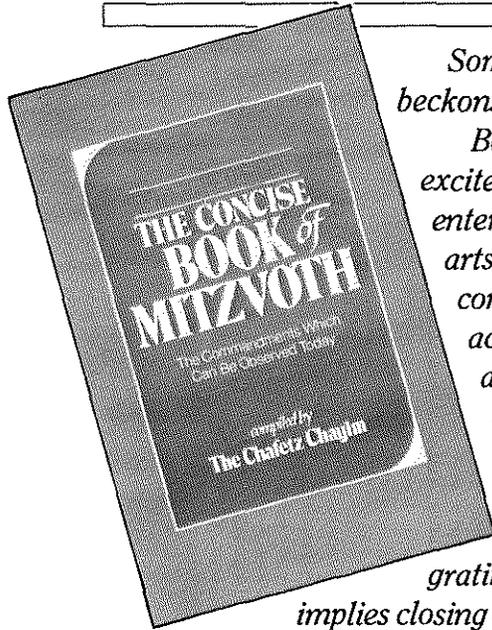
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Something out there beckons.

Beyond the glitz and excitement of the world of entertainment and lively arts, there are arenas of commerce, professional activity, political action and information. These are fields of gainful involvement and can be sources of deep gratification. "Insularity"

implies closing oneself off from these enterprises, and not everyone is willing to forgo them—at least not without compellingly strong reasons. To some degree, the reasons are there, especially in terms of how such exposure can affect some basic aspects of our Jewish essence.

We will touch here on two sources to give pause to the eager adventurer into the world around us—one sacred, one secular.

- In his *Sefer Hamitzvos HaKatzet* (The

*Concise Book of Mitzvos*), the *Chofetz Chaim* describes each of the 271 mitzvos (out of a total of 613) that pertain to the Jew who lives outside of Eretz Yisroel, when there is no Beis Hamikdash. Only a half page or so is devoted to each of such basic mitzvos as belief in G-d and obligation to study Torah (in the Feldheim printing, with English translation, 1991). By contrast, Mitzva 38, "To give charity to the poor," is spread over two pages. The *Chofetz Chaim* explains the reason for this emphasis: "We are duty-bound to be more careful about the mitzva of charity than about all the other positive commandments: for charity is a distinguishing characteristic of the descendants of Abraham.... So if anyone is merciless, his lineage has to be suspected; for the cruel lack of mercy is found only among the heathen."

Indeed, the *Gemora* (Yevamos 79a) points out that there are three prime indicators of Jewish lineage: "This nation [the Jews] is recognizable by three distinguishing features. They are compassionate, they possess a sense of shame, and are charitable." And if one is not careful in any of these crucial areas, his essence as a Jew is at risk.

## The World Around Us: The Risks

An Overview by the **Bostoner Rebbe**, א"ר ש"יט"א ba

*Fifty years ago we would not dream of discussing insularity versus exposure. We were weak, scared, unsure, ridiculed. Whatever gains we could realize were appreciated, and that closed the discussion. Today we can discuss the topic because we find ourselves strong and secure, with others envious of our position. What should our stance be?*

### THE NEED FOR INSULARITY

Without belaboring the obvious, let us first simply mention the positive advantages of living in that environment which we view as ideal. Only listen to the *pesukim* that trip off our tongues, the words of the *tefillos* that we say:

"A Jew is expected to delve into Torah, day and night." The benefits? "There is no free person, except for one immersed in Torah." And: "V'nismach—we will rejoice in the

**The Bostoner Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz** divides his year between Boston and Har Nof, Jerusalem. He is a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah* of Agudath Israel of Eretz Yisroel.

words of Your Torah study." A life of freedom and joy.

Then there are the negative advantages of avoiding the degenerate society of drugs and depravity, self-indulgence and violence, which is an outgrowth of the sense of purposelessness that pervades a life without Torah.

The description of our way of life in contrast to that of people not involved in Torah pursuit, as recounted at the celebration of the *siyum* of a *Mesechta* (completion of a tractate of *Gemora*), sums it up well: "*Anu ratzim, v'heim ratzim*—we pursue goals of eternity and they pursue goals that are void of meaning."

We make much of our cloistered,

When a person is exposed to the fullest thrust of the world about us, he is bombarded by messages that urge one to abandon any vestige of shame, to pursue licentiousness, to enjoy displays of callousness and cruelty, to join in the pursuit of a success built on self-centeredness and indifference to others. All of these threaten the essential Jew....

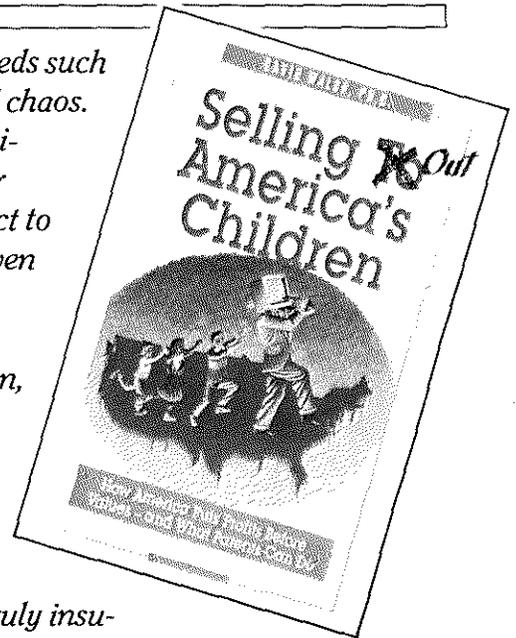
• A fascinating book, *Selling Out America's Children*, by David Walsh, PH.D., (Deaconess Press, Minneapolis, 1994) explores "how America puts profits before values," casting aside any concern over ethics, in its emphasis on selling products and a lifestyle that creates a sense of need, promotes a feeling of entitlement, abolishing any consideration of postponement of gratification. The result, according to the author's survey, is an America where: "Every twenty-six seconds, an American child runs away from home. Every minute of every day, an American teenager has a baby. Every nine minutes, a child is arrested for a drug/alcohol-related offense. Every three hours, gun violence takes a child's life in the United States."

We may claim that our homes are hermetically sealed from the media that promote the

mindset that breeds such social and moral chaos. Yes—and no. Ultimately, all of our homes are subject to some seepage, even under the most tightly closed doors. In addition, we—the adult population—do venture beyond our self-contained ghettos.

Few of us lead truly insulated lives. Yet, we dare not lose sight of the Rambam's words, which caution against assuming one is immune to the influence of a corrupting environment; instead, one should seek shelter from its effects, even to the point of moving away, if necessary. (Hilchos De'os VI, 1)

In the pages that follow, the extent of the problems and possible strategies to deal with them are explored.



## of Exposure, The Costs of Insularity

his address in a symposium at the recent National Convention of Agudath Israel of America.

protected life, but is our world truly insulated—even when not going far beyond our proverbial *daled amos*? Has not, in fact, the outside world penetrated ours? Just as pollutants invade the environment, we too are invaded by the secular world, and, like pollution, we are often totally unaware of it. The minimal exposure we undergo to maintain our financial and social agendas does reduce our isolation, and does take its toll.

For example: the ten minute *Mincha* break for the busy lawyer is commendable, but... And then there is the speed of the *davening* to get him to his next appointment on time.

How do we handle ourselves dur-

ing lunch time—during office parties? As we sip our ginger ale, is there not a *hashpa'a* (influence) on our *neshama* from the surroundings?

Professionals and business executives travel a great deal: Is our behavior on the road, the way we comport ourselves, consistent with Torah standards?

Ignore the realm of earning a living for a moment. What is the nature of our summer vacations? For that matter, what determines our post-Shabbos "weekend" activities? As soon as we have made *havdala*, do we change instantly, from the *Shabbos Yid*—the *Yid* of *Erev Shabbos*—to a *Motza'ei Shabbos* mode that ignores

the previous 24 hours, slipping into our leisure dress to go out, into another world? Even more important: How do we feel about the change—in which mode are we really more comfortable? Are we Torah-observant Jews who "happen" to be secular professionals for *parnassa* reasons, or do we think of ourselves chiefly as individuals living, accomplishing, and even thriving in the secular world—who also "happen" to be Torah Jews?

Even in ordinary phases of life, we are assaulted by sights and images. The media is truly invasive; one can hardly be insulated once one walks the streets, travels the subways, glances at a newspaper, or listens to

**W**e make much of our cloistered, protected life, but is our world truly insulated—even when not going far beyond our proverbial *daled amos*? Has not, in fact, the outside world penetrated ours?

a radio. Recently, someone commented that we see more *tuma* (indecent sights) on magazine covers, native dress and joggers in their athletic gear, than our *Zaydes* saw in an entire lifetime.

Moreover, a subtle, negative fallout of society has crept into our lives. We are virtually contaminated by the so-

cial impact of technological advances. The fax, disposable dishes, answering devices, computerized data retrieval have taught us that we need not be patient to see the results of our efforts. As a result, expectations of instantaneous gratification are no longer exclusive to the domain of machines: *If something does not work, throw it out, don't bother fixing it.* This attitude carries over to our personal lives: *If relationships don't work, they too are disposable.* Don't attempt to fix it if you don't see quick results. More frequently than ever before, we respond to crises with, "I have no more patience!" The sad results? A feeling of endless frustration in attempting to cope, adopting the strategies of the non-Jewish world in seeking to find relief through walking away from a problem, and, of course, a high and continuously growing divorce rate.

Do we ever seriously consider using the traditional support systems that we already have in place, such as a *kappit'el Tehillim*, consultation with

*daas Torah*, plus a dose of old-fashioned *savlonus* (forbearance)?

#### HOW REASONABLE IS INSULARITY?

**O**ur insularity, then, cannot be complete. But is it even a reasonable hope?

In personal terms, we are justifiably concerned about making a living. But how do we keep ourselves insulated and still have a *parnassa*?

Should our wives go to work, and then, amongst other problems, risk exposure to the evils of secular society?

On a communal level, at what point are we obligated to contribute our help to the community in which we live, and at what point must we hold back? At what point should we not even care what is going on?

We must know relevant information to identify with our brothers' plight and suffering...even if for the purpose of *tefilla*. Total insulation puts one in the position of not knowing how to talk to others, and ultimately, even losing the ability to communicate with *Hashem*!

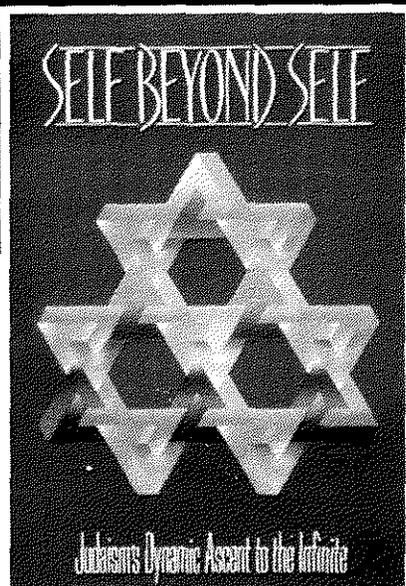
Furthermore, many individuals are temperamentally not suited to live a cloistered life. This factor should certainly be taken into account when deciding the direction one's life should take, in calculating the benefits versus the losses. In addition, some people do not have the intellectual capacity for the rigors of Talmudic study, and are ill-placed in conventional institutions of Torah study.

Both cases are included in the *Gemora's* saying: "A thousand enter to study *Chumash* and one emerges as an halachic authority."

Regarding our relationship with the non-Jewish community, even here in the United States, we are still only "tolerated." One must know the enemy. One must know how to protect his own rights.

The best example that comes to mind in this regard is the groundbreaking work done by Agudath Israel offices in New York and in Washington, D.C. How many threatening situations would have gone unnoticed if not for the efforts of those leaders of Agudath Israel? Their

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eyes and ears help protect the foundations of America's Torah-true Jewish community.

Another reason why we might consider not isolating ourselves within that ideal world is that it would eliminate opportunities for *kiruv*. Some very special souls would be lost, which may outweigh any insular agenda we may have.

How do we bridge the gap between our brethren who are captives in what we see as that strange secular world out there and our own value-system—that which we view as the *kedusha* of our own *frum* community?

I would offer the following formula for success: To the extent that we are insular in our *kedusha*, we are effective in bringing *Yiddishkeit* to the masses. We make a mistake if we think that we need to be "with it" on every subject in order to be effective in *kiruv*. If we assume that we must be sensitive to every wrinkle in the popular culture, we will sacrifice our *kedusha* and negate what we have to give. To keep up with Hollywood and Dior's latest is not the answer.

Nevertheless, I would suggest that during their years of total immersion in the Torah world, our *bnai Torah* should somehow be prepared to deal with the outside world. And parents should prepare their children concerning the problems they may encounter and how to handle them: in the workplace, as well as in marriage—and, of course, for those who send their children to institutions of higher secular education, in the university.

#### OVERDOING INSULARITY

**W**ith all the notes of caution, insularity can be overdone. Do we have the right to "protect" our children from playing with youngsters who are not exactly as *frum* as we are? Should we deprive the "less *frum*" kids of their opportunity of seeing what the other world—our world—is like? How would we feel if our children were rejected by a school that fashions itself to be "only for the learning elite"?

It is precisely the insularity—the ability to see and feel the purity of To-

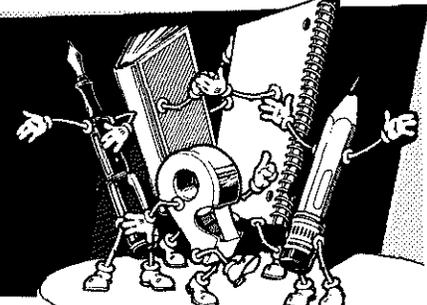
rah, the maintaining of a sense of *kedusha*, the separation from the *tuma* all around us—that gives us the understanding that all Jews need. So somehow a balance between risk and preservation of insularity must be found.

This need for balance applies to *hachnosas orchim* (hospitality). This often means inviting college students to the *Shabbos tisch*—which, by the way, may well begin with giving *Shalom* to the next person on your bench in *shul*, a part of the *mitzva* of welcoming guests that we may overlook. Some frown on the idea of bringing home these students because they do not want their children to hear the "terrible" questions that may be asked. Today's university student, however, does not question to antagonize. He, or she, simply wants to know. If your child cannot hear an innocent question being posed because he is too fragile, then you are remiss in fulfilling your obligations of properly securing your family by preparing them for whatever the future

**A**re we Torah-observant Jews who "happen" to be secular professionals for *parnassa* reasons, or do we think of ourselves chiefly as individuals living, accomplishing, and even thriving in the secular world—who also "happen" to be Torah Jews?

may bring—whether the student guest joins you or not.

A person who has hosted many uninitiated *Shabbos* guests told me that only twice in 30 years was a subject broached that may have been out of bounds because of the children



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present. In both cases, his wife simply cut off the discussion by saying, "This topic is not for the Friday night *tisch*."

### RISKING "OUT-OF-TOWN"

The members of the Torah world are involved in subject matter of a loftiness that is beyond human comprehension, and a person given to such aspirations feels that this is where he wants to spend his entire life. Those within the walls of the *beis midrash* will naturally look at the outside world where people sim-

ply lack understanding of Torah *Yiddishkeit*, as empty of values. This makes it, at times, difficult for an "out-of-town" *kollel* (a denigrating term for those allegedly on a lower "*madreiga*" than the rest of us) to recruit candidates; after all, who wants to go to a desert where even observant Jews are not on the *madreiga* of a *ben Torah*?

*I recall when, after my chasuna, the call came from Boston for me to return and pick up the mantle of my late father, זצ"ל. I wouldn't hear of it. I thought of my feelings a few years earlier, when Reb*

**W**ith all the notes of caution, insularity can be overdone. Do we have the right to "protect" our children from playing with youngsters who are not exactly as *frum* as we are?

*Feivel Mendlowitz had confronted the four Chassidische bachurim in the beis hamidrash of Mesivta Torah Vodaath and said to us, "I will tell you what you shall be in the future." When he turned to me, he said, "You, Levi Yitzchok, will be a Rebbe." I dreaded that comment. Me? I'm the last person in the world to fit that position...and, besides, who wants to go to Boston? I did not want to leave Williamsburg and Torah Vodaath. I wanted to stay in the beis midrash with my chavrusa, the late Reb Moshe Lieberman. I will do something on the side, I thought...just to survive....But not leave the Gan Eden in Williamsburg.*

*The Ribbono Shel Olam had other plans. Of course, one must not take the liberty of making this type of serious decision (which world he belongs in) without consulting a gadol, Rebbe or Rosh Yeshiva. Looking back at my own decision-making process, at the Ribbono Shel Olam's hand in the events, and the ultimate results, my youthful assessment of my mission in life was terribly wrong.*

When *bnei Torah* do venture out-of-town, they discover wonderful people who are concerned with observance, are anxious to learn, and are genuinely excited about the opportunity to absorb Torah values—yes, at times, more excited than their superiors in knowledge and background.

They come to learn Torah after a hard day's work. They have to deflect the demands of their wives, who become worn down taking care of the children all day, not having grown up with the pride and sense of purpose of *bnos Torah*. Every move they make resonates with *mesiras nefesh*. The *Kollel Yungerman* out-of-town could well tip his hat to that *am ha'aretz* (ig-

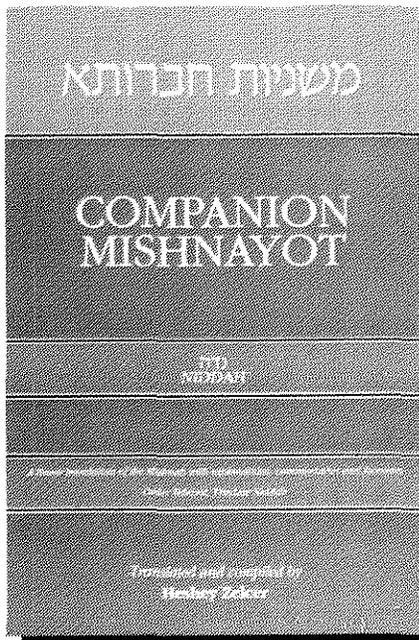
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noramus) sitting across the table, whom he is instructing.

A further fringe benefit that will accrue to the *ben Torah* who finds himself interacting closely with that other world is that he will develop a keener appreciation of who he is and what he is—in stark contrast to the secular world at large. His thrice-daily recitation of “*Aleinu*,” in which he thanks G-d that He has not made us like the other nations of the world, will be infused with a new measure of *kavana*.

In sum, he has ventured into another world, with different challenges than Lakewood, Telshe, or Brisk. But what is the reward?

*Neshamos!*

#### PROCEED WITH CAUTION

**W**hen one makes the ultimate decision to enter the outer world—if one is required, for any reason, to be in that other world—one must know the pitfalls. One must proceed cautiously; at times, reluctantly. You're walking across mine-fields. Be sure to put on your protective gear, as is stated, “*A tzaddik with his faith shall live.*” From a perspective of faith, the situation becomes not strictly secular, but rather a way to serve G-d.

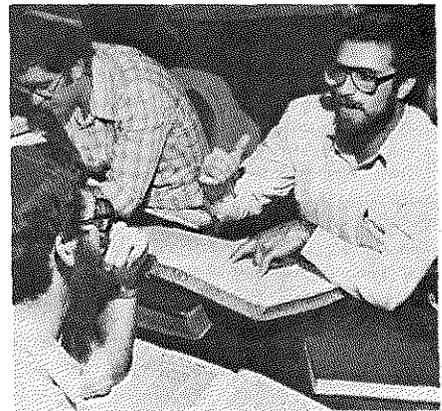
To underscore that other world's need to meet authentic *Yiddishkeit*, as well as our need for girding ourselves with Torah as insulation, let me relate some incidents. These incidents should also serve to reinforce my theme that by being more involved in the Torah world, one can more effectively influence those in that other world. There is a special *siyata d'Shemaya* for helping another *Yid* join *Klal Yisroel*.

*Several years ago a young lady sent me a note, informing me that she had become engaged to a yeshiva fellow in Jerusalem. She added, “I don't know whether you remember me. I observed my first Shabbos in your home. You asked me what I do. My answer was, ‘I am a sculptress,’ and you said, ‘Why don't you sculpt yourself? It is more important than sculpting stone.’ Those words started me off on my search for how to ‘sculpt myself.’”*

I never met a sculptress before or

since. The answer was extemporaneous. But these few—and seemingly Divinely-inspired—words saved a *Yiddishe neshama*. G-d provides those persons who act *lishma*—giving up personal gain for the sake of an ideal—with the words, the instruments, to make their endeavors a success.

This is the reason for the success story of our esteemed Reb Aaron Twerski: How many, many *neshamos* did he reach in the dark jungle of the university? This is the remarkable story of my *chassid*, Reb Dovid Gottlieb, a star lecturer and mentor in Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem. What number of individuals did he pull



from the depths of that other world, who were totally tuned out from Torah and *Yiddishkeit*?

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I do not know to what degree they, and others like them, prepare for their impromptu encounters. They, themselves, are the strongest argument. Their Torah personality is both the medium and the message.

**H**ow does one protect oneself through Torah observance?

*A woman professor of law of our acquaintance favors a tichel. She despises covering her head with a sheitel, but will not appear in class without one. In her view, it represents a greater level of*

*Yiddishkeit than she feels she has attained. But she wants to make sure she takes the system with her. The sheitel is her protective "space suit" in a hazardous environment.*

Being recognized easily through dress and behavior as an observant Jew is our greatest protection in hostile surroundings, and at the same time maximizes our message.

*When I first came to Boston, a prominent attorney told me, upon my entering his office, "You are a Protestant." After a pause, he said, "You are protesting the environment."*

Some readers may think, "The Rebbe is talking to outreach pioneers; it is *they* who need insulation from that other world—but ME? I live in a *frum* community. My family has not been influenced by that outside world." To you I say, "Think again!"

Yes, the outside world is influencing us—even in our Torah bastions. And we must protest this influence when we see how fashion-consciousness impacts on the *frum* society.

We are not talking about being in fashion in our style of dress. We refer here to the fads of status symbols that compel us to feel that "I must send my daughter to the most fashionable seminary, to the camp that is in." "My son must get into the yeshiva that is in vogue." Obviously, one seminary or yeshiva can not accept everybody, nor is the targeted choice necessarily best-suited for each child. We ought not feel "It's the end of the world if our child is not accepted." We are not part of the world of class distinctions out there that's aiming for Harvard, and nothing less will do. Our world is one of striving for Torah. In that other world, if you can't make it, you're out. In our world, if we make it in Torah, in our pursuit of the goal of increased Torah observance, Torah knowledge and *Yiddishkeit* in general, then we are in! But to do so, we must know what our goals are, as well as the best way of reaching them—for ourselves, for our children, for our future.

Let us learn from *Avraham Avinu*. Just as he made sure that he was standing on safe ground, so to speak, when he went out: "*Vayeit ohalo*—He secured his own tent," and he built an altar. Only then did he call out in G-d's Name and reach out to others, always making sure that he was secure first.

Today our position is more secure. We have arrived! And we are reaching effectively into that other world. But we succeed only because we have our protective space suit on.

By the same token, as comfortable and secure as it is to be in our own *daled amos*, our own *Kollel* or *Chassidische shtiebel*, are we continuing in following *Avraham Avinu's* scenario? Are we calling out in the Name of G-d, so that others may hear? ■

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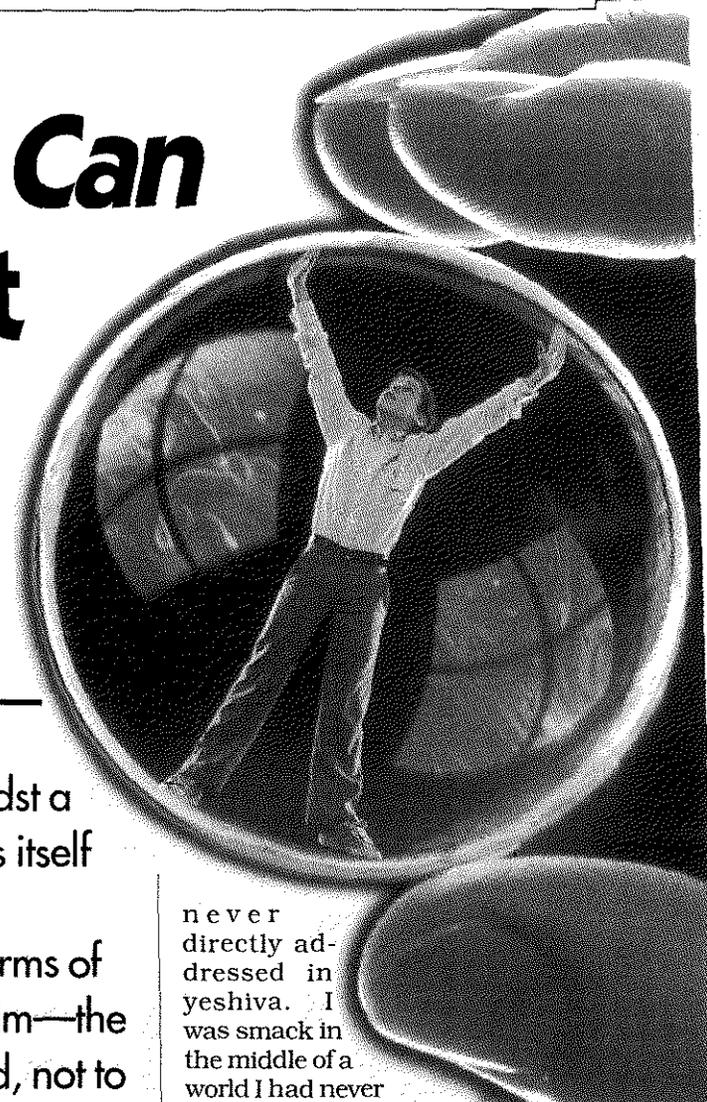
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**THE WORLD AROUND US:  
THE RISKS OF EXPOSURE,  
THE COSTS OF INSULARITY**

# You Can Take It With You

## *Insularity as a Frame of Mind*



*There can hardly be a more crucial topic for us today. How do we protect ourselves from outside influences—as we had for generations past—in a Jewish society that no longer is confined to the ghetto or restricted to the shtetl; living with the technology and communications network that can transmit its messages to our doorstep, into our living rooms? How do we stay insular living amidst a society that prides itself on exposure and openness to all forms of ideology and whim—the good and the bad, not to mention the non-Jewish?*

### **COSTS AND BENEFITS**

**M**y credentials for addressing this topic, I assume, are based on the fact that I—as

Rabbi Tauber lives in Monsey, N.Y., where he is active in communal affairs. He is the author of a number of books on Jewish themes and is the founder of Mechon HaHoyroa, a network of Kollelim designed to prepare young men to function as *dayanim* and *poskim*, as well as Shalhevet, an outreach organization that sponsors classes and seminars for helping people explore and grow in Torah Judaism. This article is based on his presentation at the recent national convention of Agudath Israel of America.

Yaakov Astor, also of Monsey, is a published author whose articles have appeared in these pages—most recently, “Children Helping Children” (Nov. '94).

**H**ow do we stay insular living amidst a society that prides itself on exposure and openness to all forms of ideology and whim—the good and the bad, not to mention the non-Jewish?

a businessman and a person involved with *baalei teshuva*—have had to confront this challenge in my own life. I was not trained to do outreach work with assimilated Jews. Neither was I trained to be a businessman. My entire upbringing—all I knew—before I married was the sheltered, protected environment of Yeshivas Nitra, where I warmed myself with the words of my *Rebbe*, Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl, זצ”ל. Then I married young and suddenly found myself thrust out of this protected environment, literally on the streets, to make a living, though I knew no English and had neither skills nor money.

It was not easy. I had to work amongst the lowest elements of New York City, confronting challenges

never directly addressed in yeshiva. I was smack in the middle of a world I had never been aware of.

In retrospect, I can now see that exposure to that situation has afforded me benefits I cannot deny. If nothing else, my confrontation with questions, never directly addressed in *yeshiva*, helped me come up with answers that have given me a perspective I have used to inspire assimilated Jews, *baalei teshuva*, and others I deal with. At the same time, my insular upbringing has given me a basis for dealing with this topic. Moreover, had I not made the effort to maintain that insularity in my own home to this day, I would have been in great danger myself.

Thus the problem: We must maintain insularity, yet, paradoxically at times there are benefits to be gained from exposure to the outside, despite the risks. What are we to do?

Fortunately, the question is not

new. In fact, the question was wrestled with by our Avos and Imahos (patriarchs and matriarchs) in the Torah. Indeed, the first recorded marital dispute came about over this issue.

**THE YISHMAEL QUANDARY**

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Avraham, mocking. And she said to Avraham, "Send out this bondwoman and her son...." And the matter was very difficult in Avraham's eyes (Bereishis 21, 9-11).

Avraham and Sarah had a *shalom bayis* problem: what to do with Yishmael. Sarah saw the detrimental influence he was already having on her son, Yitzchak. On a simple level, Avraham empathized with Yishmael, since he was his son, and he worried about the devastating effect banishing him from his house would have.

The *Chasam Sofer*, though, explains this passage, and in particular Avraham's concern, in a unique way: Avraham was raised in an idol

**Those of us who are exposed to the outside world should know that we are not there to make money. Money comes from Hashem. We are there to represent Hashem, to be *mekadeish Sheim Shamayim*, to "sanctify the Name of Heaven."**

worshipper's house. He was directly exposed to all the repulsiveness of the street as it existed in his day—yet, he made himself into a holy man, into *Avraham Avinu*. And that, the *Chasam Sofer* explains, is what he had hoped for Yitzchak. He reasoned that it was not ultimately unhealthy for Yitzchak to grow up with Yishmael. He would become a much stronger person for it, in the end, by overcoming the negative influences.

Sarah disagreed. Philosophically, Avraham's argument had merit. Women, however, have a certain intuition, *bina yiseira*, in these matters

and Sarah's told her to banish Yishmael. The matter was finally decided by Hashem when He told Avraham, "Listen to what she tells you." Sarah was right. Yishmael had to be thrown out.

Seemingly, then, we learn from this that children should be raised in a totally insular atmosphere. Do not expose your house to outside, negative influences. However, this is not necessarily so simple because not sixty years later, another dispute took place which apparently suggests a diametrically opposite approach.

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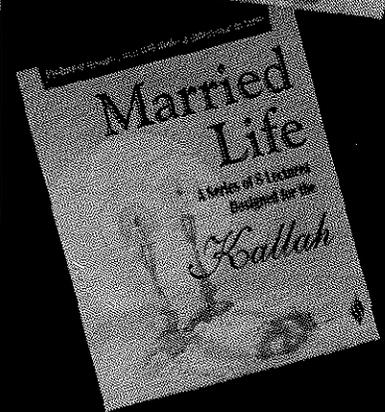
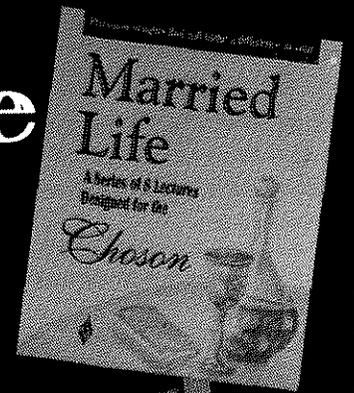
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## THE REVERSE ARGUMENT

**Y**itzchak and Rivka had the same argument as Avraham and Sarah, except they reversed roles. Yitzchak grew up in a house of *tzaddikim* and had wanted his house to be totally insular as well. He saw that his son Yaakov was a pure soul and Yitzchak wanted him to stay protected in his tents so he could grow to great spiritual heights. Yaakov should never be exposed to the world.

Eisav, on the other hand, was not the studious type—which was acceptable in Yitzchak's mind because he foresaw Eisav as a brother who would support Yaakov in learning for the rest of his life. Therefore, Yitzchak wanted to give the blessings of material well-being to Eisav.

Rivka, however, saw it differently. She came from a home similar to the home Avraham grew up in. She was not deceived by Eisav. She knew that if Yaakov had to depend on Eisav's generosity, he would starve to death. She therefore wanted the material blessings to go to Yaakov.

Again, *Hashem* resolved this dispute. Yaakov received the blessings for wealth and business success. Rivka was right in rejecting Eisav as recipient of the blessings, even though she took a stance in opposition to her husband.

How do we reconcile these contradictory positions?

The answer is that there is no contradiction. Different situations require different approaches. *In our homes, in raising our children, there is no room for a Yishmael.* However, once the child has been raised in an insular environment, there are times when it is possible to say that one may run the risk of exposure.

## ZEVULUN AND YISSACHAR

**W**e Jews cannot help but be high profile. A Jewish businessman usually is the best in his field. A Jewish lawyer usually is the best in his field. A Jewish doctor usually is the best in his field. And, unfortunately, a Jewish criminal is also usually the best in his field. Wherever we are, we have one pur-

pose: to create *kiddush Hashem*. Yes, even a Jewish criminal can cause *kiddush Hashem*.

I have the privilege to speak regularly to a "captive" audience of Jewish prisoners in a high security prison in Upstate New York. Some of them have developed beautifully in the past three or four years. I tell them, "You are not serving time. You are producing time. You are here for the same purpose I am: to make a *kiddush Hashem*, to sanctify the Name of G-d. You made your mistakes. But do you think you were put in here because your judge was an anti-Semite or your lawyer was incompetent? That's not so. There are many people who did what you did, were brought to trial, and nevertheless got away scot free. You are here," I tell them, "because *Hashem* sent you here. Therefore, you should find *Hashem* here. You should find yourself." And many of them do.

We Jews are a high profile people: in businesses, in hospitals, in bankruptcy courts, and in prisons. We can-

not avoid it. Yes, *Hashem* wants us out in the world. The point is, though, that He did not in the final analysis put us there to make money, but to make a *kiddush Hashem* wherever we are. Zevulun was blessed to be a tribe of merchants to work in partnership with the tribe of Yissachar, allowing the latter to remain insular, in a learning environment, for their entire lives. The partnership of Zevulun and Yissachar, however, is not one-way. It is not simply that Zevulun makes money, gives a share to Yissachar, and thereby earns a share of his Torah. You do not get Torah for money. It does not make sense to say that Zevulun was designated to operate in the work-world because *Hashem* has no choice but to use him as a pawn in keeping Yissachar insular. In actuality, Zevulun is out there for a positive reason — because Torah has to be disseminated in the business world. Zevulun is there to make a *kiddush Hashem*.

This is the point: Those of us who are perforce exposed to the outside

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world should know that we are not there to make money. Money comes from *Hashem*. We are there to represent *Hashem*, to be *mekadeish Sheim Shamayim*, to "sanctify the Name of Heaven."

The reverse is also true. Zevulun's success is dependent on Yissachar's diligence. The *Chazon Ish* once told one of his *talmidim* to close his *Gemora* to take up full-time efforts to save Jewish souls (*hatzolas nefashos*). This *talmid's chavrusa* asked if he too should do as his friend. "No," the *Chazon Ish* told him. "Your friend will not be successful without the merit of your learning."

Just as a Zevulun supports Torah by giving his money to Yissachar, so, too, does Yissachar support Zevulun, providing him with the Torah that enables Zevulun to remain a *ben-Torah* while he is exposed to the outside world. The reason we merit having Agudath Israel professionals represent us in Washington is because we have people learning in Lakewood.

The two go hand in hand—like one army. Yissachar is the general, far from enemy lines; yet his efforts have the broadest ramifications concerning events on the front. Zevulun is the fighting soldier, whose survival and success is ultimately dependent upon the Torah, *tefillos*, and *yiras Shamayim* of the leaders behind the lines, who direct and inspire him.

#### JEWISH COMMANDOS IN NEW YORK CITY

**B**ecause a person is out in the working world, we need not assume that he is exposed to all things evil. Nor can we say that merely because a person is sequestered inside the house, he or she is not exposed to outside influences. Nowadays, insularity or exposure does not depend exclusively on the physical environment.

*Shlomo HaMelech* said, "*Kol kevuda bas melech p'nima*—All the glory of the king's daughter is within." The glory of a Jewish woman is that

she is a *tzerua*, she is modest, and does not expose herself to the outside. But today's women assume careers to support their *kollel* husbands in learning. In terms of physical location, these women are not *p'nim*, "inside" — they are *chutz*, "outside." Are we then to surmise that *Shlomo HaMelech's* teaching is not applicable to today's situation?

The answer is, No. We need not concede one inch of *kol kevuda bas melech p'nima*. We can endeavor to be just as "inside" as our *Bubbies* and *Zaides* were, providing we develop a proper approach to true insularity.

Years ago insularity was a matter of physical isolation—there was a literal wall, a tangible town boundary. But today a brick wall does not insulate us. One can live in Me'ah She'arim, Monsey, or Lakewood, and allow the filth of Times Square to seep into the privacy of one's house — and, moreover, nobody will know. At the same time, the reverse can be true. If "Times Square" can penetrate into a Jewish home — into a Jewish *mikdash me'at* (a miniature sanctuary) — then a *mikdash me'at* can penetrate into Times Square.

I came to this realization through my own experience. I was raised in a very protected environment, which I attempted to maintain as much as possible. For years, however, I commuted to 47th Street in Manhattan. This involved parking my car on 8th Avenue and walking through several blocks distinguished by their moral depravity, just to get to work. At the same time I realized that after a *Shabbos* in Monsey, and Sunday immersed in learning and *shiurim*, a person need not feel he is in *chutz*—you can still be immersed in *p'nim*.

When the full impact of this thought struck me, I no longer thought of myself as commuting to work with a defensive attitude. It dawned on me that I and all the busloads of Jews who were arriving from the Five Boroughs and their environs were zeroing in on "enemy territory." *Davening*. Learning. Acting with integrity. Creating *kiddush Hashem*. We were literally an army of commandos penetrating the forty-ninth level of *tuma*—among the most exposed, defiled sections of

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New York City. Moreover, for decades we soldiers have been establishing a beachhead. We have been making money to set up *yeshivos*, Bais Yaakovs, *chessed* organizations, and so on. Our children study in *kollelim* all over the world. This is not just a defensive stance. This is

**It all starts in our homes. If the home front is shored up, then when we venture into the outside world—in whatever field it may be—we need not lose our insularity. We can take our *p'nim* state-of-mind with us wherever we go.**

where some of the most pitched battles for the soul of *Klal Yisroel* are being fought.

It is important that this approach is neither misunderstood nor left open for distortion. I do not suggest that a Bais Yaakov girl give up her ideals of being a teacher so that she can have the opportunity to "make a *kiddush Hashem* in Manhattan." Nor am I proposing that a Yissachar should leave the four walls of his physically insular environment to become a *Zevulun*. But I do believe that those who do find themselves in the working world or who are properly advised to enter a business or profession—for such people, your accomplishments, *your spiritual accomplishments*, can be enormous.

But it all starts in our homes. Our homes must be insulated to the utmost. They must never be permitted to be exposed to any external influences. If the home front is shored up, then when we venture into the outside world—in whatever field it may be—we need not lose our insularity. We can take our *p'nim* state-of-mind with us wherever we go.

#### LIVING IN INTERESTING TIMES

**F**our months ago, I was part of an Arachim Seminar in Los Angeles. Among the participants was an Israeli couple with several children; the husband's hair, in a pony tail, was longer than his wife's. He also wore the earrings in the family. I recently participated in another Arachim Seminar in Los Angeles, where a woman saw me and excitedly called out my name, "Rabbi Tauber!"

"Do I know you?" I asked.

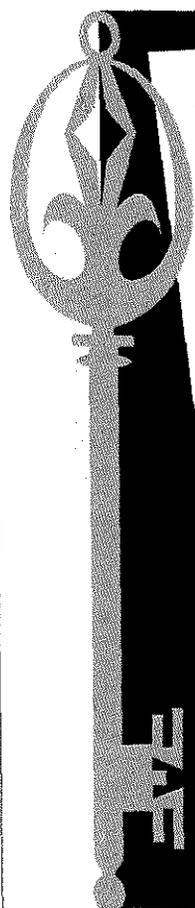
"Don't you remember me from the last seminar? And that's my husband." I didn't recognize her because her hair was covered, the husband's pony tail and earrings were gone, and the children—who had all since been enrolled in yeshiva—looked more like yeshiva kids.

Do we realize the nature of the times we live in? Do we realize what we can accomplish? And how fast things can be turned around? People claim that the drive for instant gratification is a major problem; at the

same time there is also a potential for "instant" *kedusha*.

This is not to say that there are short-cuts. However, a person's outlook can indeed be turned around in an instant: A person can actually feel *p'nim* while he or she is physically *chutz*. But it is a status not easy to create or maintain. In actuality, it may require the willpower, cunning, and ingenuity of a commando. But it is possible to learn very quickly how to accomplish great things in our own small ways.

Everything begins and ends, though, by maintaining our insularity, both in our homes and in our minds. We must have ultimate control over these battlefields. And the momentum of the overall "war effort" may depend on you and your next encounter with the enemy. If you remember that "insularity versus exposure" boils down to a state of mind, then you have the ammunition not only to survive the battle, but to make a very real and significant impact on the war effort. ■



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**THE WORLD AROUND US:  
THE RISKS OF EXPOSURE,  
THE COSTS OF INSULARITY**

# Minimizing the Risks of Exposure

## REB YAAKOV'S MESSAGE

It was the very last time that I had the privilege of hearing Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, זצ"ל, speak in Mesivta Torah Vodaath. The gathering was sponsored by Torah Umesorah, for young men who were ready to leave the yeshiva and were willing to consider positions taking jobs in *chinuch* or *Rabbanus* out of town. When word got out that Reb Yaakov was going to speak, the *beis hamidrash* quickly filled up with a few hundred *bnai Torah* of all ages, most of whom (myself included) were not contemplating leaving the yeshiva.

Reb Yaakov surveyed the crowd, and then spoke. His words (to the best of my recollection) were brief: "I was told that this would be a gathering of *talmidim* who are ready to leave the yeshiva to earn a livelihood. In fact, I see many *talmidim* who plan to remain in yeshiva. I have prepared an address for those ready to go out into the world; my words should not be heard by those who are not at this stage. Instead, let me tell you a *dvar*

**Rabbi Reisman**, *Rav* of Agudath Israel of Madison (a community in Brooklyn, NY), is a popular lecturer whose weekly series on topics in *Tanach* (sponsored by Torah Projects Division of Agudath Israel of America) attracts hundreds of participants. Several of his articles have been featured in these pages, most recently "Mystery of the Missing Year," regarding the *Shmittah* calculation (Jan. '94). This article is based on his presentation at the recent national convention of Agudath Israel of America.

Torah on this week's *parsha*. Afterwards, those who are indeed considering leaving yeshiva may accompany me upstairs to a classroom, where we can speak privately."

With these words, Reb Yaakov conveyed an important message. Torah is a guide to all aspects of a person's life; *ki heim chayeinu*. Yet, just as there are many facets to life, so too are there many facets to Torah. Those facets of Torah that guide a person when he is exposed to the secular society around him are not the same as those that guide a *talmid* through his sheltered years in yeshiva. Nor are the guiding principles of our yeshiva years enough to ensure success when the time comes to leave yeshiva.

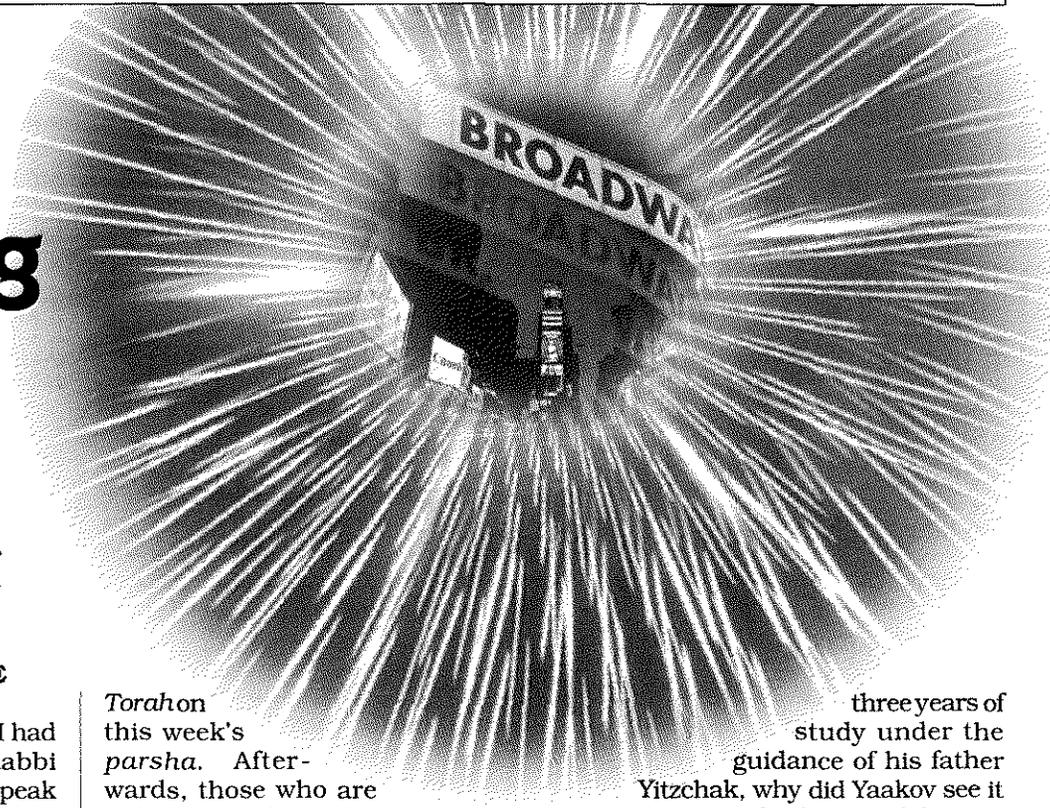
### THE TORAH OF SHEM AND EIVER

This message is spelled out more clearly in Reb Yaakov's commentary on *Parshas Vayeitzei*, in his *sefer*, *Emes L'Yaakov: Yaakov Avinu*, still a bachelor at the age of sixty three, is sent by his father to the house of Lavan to find his *shidduch*. On the way to Lavan's house, Yaakov stops to study at the *Beis Hamidrash* of Shem and Eiver—and remains there for fourteen years! After sixty-

three years of study under the guidance of his father Yitzchak, why did Yaakov see it as imperative for him to delay his marriage by stopping to study under Shem and Eiver?

Here, too, Reb Yaakov explains that there are two aspects to Torah: First is the Torah of the house of Yitzchak, which is geared to the student who has the luxury of living in a sheltered environment, protected by the *koslei beis hamidrash*. After sixty-three years, Yaakov was leaving this yeshiva to be exposed to the dangers of the house of Lavan. To prepare for this, he needed to master a second aspect of Torah, the Torah of Shem and Eiver. Shem and Eiver had lived among corrupt societies—Shem, during the generation of the Flood, Eiver, during the sinful *Dor Haflaga*. Both survived their exposure to surroundings with their personal integrity intact. Thus, the Torah of Shem and Eiver focuses on withstanding outside influences. For sixty-three years, Yaakov had no need to study Torah in this way. Upon leaving his father's home, Yaakov knew that he could not expose himself to the pernicious influences of Lavan without proper preparation.

In our yeshiva years, we are fortunate to study the Torah of Yitzchak. We spend these years maturing in a



controlled environment. The debased society around us seems distant. It is later, when leaving the *Beis Hamidrash*, that the Torah of Shem and Eiver must be absorbed. When a *talmid* fails to realize this, he will find himself thrust into a society that is far worse than the house of Lavan; and he will face a challenge for which he is ill-prepared.

In my years in yeshiva, I have seen many *talmidim* come and go. In general, our yeshiva is successful in preparing its *talmidim* for life after *beis hamidrash*. Yet, I often see a *talmid* who had excelled in the yeshiva, but falters badly when he is no longer sheltered. These *talmidim* may have mastered the Torah of Yitzchak, but have failed in the Torah of Shem and Eiver. I am delighted to note that the reverse is also true. Many *talmidim* who did not stand out during their yeshiva years, nevertheless emerge as outstanding *bonei Torah* after leaving the yeshiva. Their dedication to Torah and Torah values, despite the harsh demands of the business and professional world, is extraordinary. They have mastered the Torah of Shem and Eiver.

This discrepancy has bothered me. Why was it that some *talmidim* fail when exposed to the outside influences, while others thrive despite this exposure?

#### DR. ASCH'S EXPERIMENT

A psychologist named Asch conducted an experiment on a college campus, and his results shed light on our question<sup>1</sup>. Dr. Asch called seven students into a classroom and told them that they were to be subjects of an experiment. Actually, however, six of the students were planted there; only the seventh student was the subject of the experiment.

On the blackboard, two parallel lines were drawn. One was ten inches long; the other, twelve. The lines were close enough, so that their relative size should have been obvious.

The students were told that this was a test of their perception. They were asked to carefully examine the board and then decide which line was

<sup>1</sup> This experiment is cited, in part, by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, זצ"ל, in *Encounters (Moznaim 1990)* pp 69-70.

longer. The six students who had been planted were asked to answer first. One after another, each stated confidently that the ten-inch line was longer than the twelve-inch line. Then, the seventh student was asked the same question. In 60% of the cases, the student would respond that the ten-inch line was longer!

is longer than a twelve-inch line! This shows the degree to which a person is influenced by those around him, even in cases where a person has no personal attachment to these people.

Most people are sure that they would not have been fooled (if they had been subject to this test). But is this really so? The subjects of these tests

**Those facets of Torah that guide a person when he is exposed to the secular society around him are not the same as those that guide a *talmid* through his sheltered years in yeshiva. Nor are the guiding principles of our yeshiva years enough to ensure success when the time comes to leave yeshiva.**

In the other 40% of the cases, when the subject would answer that the twelve-inch line was longer, the other six students would argue with him and cajole him to correct his obvious "mistake." Under this pressure, an additional 30% would concede that the ten-inch line was indeed longer than the twelve-inch line!

This study revealed that under social pressure, 90% of people could be influenced to agree that a ten-inch line

were college students and professors, intelligent people, yet their judgment was easily manipulated by the social pressures of the classroom. It is interesting to note that a few years ago this experiment was replicated in Bais Yaakov Academy in Flatbush. The results were virtually identical to those reported by Dr. Asch.

In fact, we are all subjects of this test—in real life. Every young man or woman who steps out into a secular

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environment to become part of the work force is put to this test. People around them will insist that wrong is right, that dark is light and that night is day. The corrupt society tears away at the person, day after day. How can a person resist these pressures?

**THE EXPERIMENT: PART II**

**D**r. Asch's experiment was followed up by another, similar experiment. Here, seven students were again called into a classroom and shown the same two lines. This time, only five students were planted, so that the remaining two students were the subject of the experiment. Here again, the first five students would state with certainty that the ten-inch line was longer than the twelve-inch line. The remaining students were then asked their opinion.

The results of this study are revealing. In this experiment, when an individual answered that the twelve-inch line was longer, he had a second person to back him up. In this case, the individual could not be convinced to change his mind. No amount of ridicule would cause him to waiver from the truth.

This is our answer. A young man or woman who leaves yeshiva must remain attached to his spiritual source in a real and active way. This connection will help him withstand the onslaught of secular values (or antivalues) and moral corruption, which abound in today's business and professional world.

**STAYING CONNECTED**

**O**ver the last fifteen years in yeshiva, I have maintained a personal connection with many young men after they've left yeshiva. In analyzing the difference be-

**People around ...will insist that wrong is right, that dark is light and that night is day. The corrupt society tears away at the person, day after day. How can a person resist these pressures?**

tween those who feel that they have retained (or improved on) their spiritual level and those who feel that they have not, one common denominator stands out. Those who remained attached to a source of spirituality are best equipped to handle the challenges they face. This "source" may be in one of many forms. For some, it is an active attachment to a *Rosh Yeshiva* or a *chavrusa*. For others, it is the *Bets Hamidrash* where they *daven* and learn. For some, it is the participation in *Daf Yomi* that gives them this sense of attachment.

Incredible though it may sound, too many *talmidim*-turned-professionals have none of these. Their attachment to their yeshiva is through the checkbook only (if that!); their local *shul* is only a place to catch a *minyan*, a place to which they've developed no attachment; and when I inquire regarding *chavrusos*, they tell me of their impending plans to start a *seder* with a friend. All too often these plans remain pending—on a permanent basis.

**THE ENTROPY PRINCIPLE**

**T**he scientific principle of entropy maintains that a system, when left unguided, will have an "irreversible tendency towards increasing disorder and inertness."<sup>2</sup>

Simply put, this principle states that chaos and disorder are the natural result of any action or reaction. When a window pane breaks, it does not break into smaller, usable squares of glass. Instead, the window shatters in a chaotic way, creating non-useful slivers of glass. Only when there is a guiding hand that controls the break-up of a pane of glass will it break into smaller and useful fragments. (This is one of the problems that scientists concede regarding their theory of evolution. Big explosions do not leave useful creations. When two cars collide head on, we do not find that they've melted into a limousine. Only a guiding hand causes a "big bang" to

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from RD Encyclopedic Dictionary.

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yield a constructive and useful product.)

The entropy principle applies to the spiritual world as well. The Torah often compares life to goodness and death to evil, as in the verse, "See, I have placed before you today life and goodness, death and evil...choose life" (*Devarim* 30,15). Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, זצ"ל, explains the analogy of life and death to good and evil.<sup>3</sup> A basic requirement for life is a constant source of sustenance and nourishment, without which life could not continue. This is not true of death. The state of death continues without active involvement from any outside source. This is a passive condition, which requires no guiding hand.

The same is true in regard to good and evil. Like life, goodness must be sustained on a constant basis. Even if one attains a level of righteousness, he cannot expect to remain on that level unless he infuses himself with constant sustenance—no matter what one has already achieved.

Evil, on the other hand, does not require this constant infusion. Evil, like death, is a passive state. When there is no spiritual sustenance, when a person ignores his spiritual self, his lifeblood of rectitude slowly seeps away. Entropy has taken hold. It is a natural consequence for the soul to fall into a state of chaos and disorder.

This is the challenge of the *ben Torah* who has embarked on a secular career. He must continue nourishing his soul or he risks losing the achievements of his yeshiva years. Like life itself, spirituality cannot continue without constant sustenance.

Entropy sets in when there is no guiding hand. It is the job of a *ben Torah*-turned-professional to ensure that he continues to control his life, that his spiritual self has guidance and direction. This is achieved by the connection he maintains to a source of spirituality, whether via his *Rosh Hayeshiva*, his *chavrusa* or his local *Beis Hamidrash*. It is this connection and this connection alone that en-

ures continued growth in the post-yeshiva years.

### THE KUNTZENMACHERS

The Vilna Goan spent his later days in his personal *beis hamidrash* in Vilna, in the constant study of Torah. He once asked the famed Dubner Maggid to visit him and offer him words of *mussar* (re-proof). Although he was reluctant at first (what *mussar* could one prescribe to the *Gra*?!), the Dubner Maggid accepted the invitation.

When he visited the *Gra*, he said, "Is it a big *kuntz*<sup>4</sup> to be a Vilna Goan when you stay locked up in your room, unexposed to outside influences? The simple tailor, butcher and tradesmen of Vilna who are exposed to the compromising values of the world, and nevertheless retain their Jewish identity, they are the true *kuntzenmachers* of Vilna!"

The *Gra* was not impressed. His

<sup>4</sup> *Kuntz* is a Yiddish expression for a trick, used here to refer to an unusual accomplishment. A *kuntzenmacher* (lit., trickster) is a person who can pull off unusual feats.

## INVOKE ONE OF HASHEM'S MOST POWERFUL PROTECTIONS.

When family members or friends are ill, there is a way to invoke one of Hashem's most potent protections — the great power of *Shmiras Haloshon*.

It was this protection that Yaakov called upon as he was on his way to Lavan's house. Knowing the dangers he would face there, the Midrash says, he asked Hashem to guard him from speaking *loshon hora*. This alone, he knew would guard him from all else.

"*Machsom L'Fi*" is a successful *Shmiras Haloshon* program that an individual or a family can undertake to gain Hashem's compassion and protection in a time of trouble. Through this program, an organized group commits to filling the day with the mitzvah of *Shmiras Haloshon*, engendering tremendous *z'chusim* on behalf of an ill friend, or oneself.

Each member of the group accepts upon himself, *b'li neder* (without a vow) to refrain from speaking or listening to *loshon hora* during a two-hour period each day. This effort may be dedicated to the recovery of someone who is ill, or to gain Hashem's assistance with a *shidduch*, *parnossa* or other difficulty.

It's simply *middah k'neged middah* (measure for measure). The compassion you show in judging and speaking of others favorably arouses Heaven's compassion for you and your loved ones. And the merit of every moment you spend engaged in consciously not speaking or listening to *loshon hora* accrues to the person who is ill or has some other difficulty.

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12:00PM - 2:00PM

6:00PM - 8:00PM

8:00AM - 10:00AM

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<sup>3</sup> *Pachad Yitzchak* (*Rosh Hashana* #8). In establishing this principle, Rabbi Hutner alludes to a question posed by another *gadol*. This appears to be a reference to Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman זצ"ל in *Koveitz Maamorim*.

response was simply, "The Torah does not command Jews to be *kuntzenmachers*."

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with the formidable task of turning the trick, of being *kuntzenmachers* in a world of values far lower than any the Dubner Maggid could have fancied in the furthest stretch of his imagination. To maintain a level of spirituality despite the crude society around him, an active Torah connection is needed. For anyone to imagine that he is capable of maintaining his spiritual integrity without great effort is to be self-deceiving.

**TOO LOOSELY AFFILIATED**

**A**ben Torah leaves yeshiva to begin a career. He is being exposed to the secular world for the first time. For many years, he has pursued spiritual delights. He has studied Torah, heard *mussar*, and been involved in his own personal soul searching. He has excelled in the Torah of Yitzchak. But he has not prepared himself for the transition, for the exposure he is about to endure. What happens when he goes out into the world?

The late Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Braun, זצ"ל, related an anecdote that reflects the experience of an unprepared *ben Torah*.

*A farmer had two horses, which he used to pull his wagon and help earn his livelihood. One night, a thief stole into his barn to steal the horses. The thief first took one horse, then returned for the other. The farmer was alerted to the noise in the barn, and went out to investigate. He arrived at the barn just as the thief was preparing to steal the second horse.*

*The thief sensed that he was cornered. Thinking quickly, he went into the empty stable where the stolen horse had been, and squatted down on all fours. The farmer entered the barn and discovered, to his amazement, that a man was standing in place of his horse!*

*The farmer asked the man who he was. He was astonished when the man replied that he was actually his faithful horse: "I was an evil person in my previous life. Hashem decreed that I return to this world in a gilgul, as your horse. For many years, I labored for you. Tonight, the heavenly courts decreed that my time was up, that I had redeemed myself. Tonight I changed back to Yankel, my human self."*

*The farmer was amazed. A miracle had occurred in his own farm! Hadn't his horse changed to this man before his very eyes? The farmer expressed his gratitude to his "horse," even giving him a few dollars with which to begin his new life, and sent him on his way.*

*The next morning the farmer, still marveling at the miraculous events of the previous night, set out for the market, to purchase a second horse.*

*The farmer arrived at the market and examined the horses that were available for sale. One horse looked strangely familiar. The farmer checked the horse carefully. Yes, there could be no mistake about it, this was his old horse!*

*The farmer sighed, and patted the horse on its back. "Oy, Reb Yankel. You're out in the world for one day, unshoin vider a ferd (and you're already back to being a horse)!"*

**THE CHALLENGE**

**O**ur community can be proud of its yeshiva graduates in all areas of life. We have lawyers, accountants, businessmen and doctors who are true *talmidai chachamin*. We can hold our heads up high.

Yet, we must seek to expand on our success. We must ensure that every one of us retains his spiritual integrity even in post-yeshiva days. This can only be done by keeping that spiritual connection intact, that every *ben Torah* retain his lifeline to his yeshiva days.

During the early years of this century, Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, זצ"ל, spearheaded the yeshiva movement, which established a system of yeshiva education for every Jewish child. Later, Rabbi Aaron Kotler, זצ"ל, set up the advanced *Beis Hamidrash* and *Kollel* system, which today encourages young men to remain in yeshiva through marriage and beyond. Our generation must complete the cycle. We must develop a system whereby people who are already out in the world, pursuing their livelihood, will still feel that they have a connection, a place where they can continue to grow and thrive. We must create an atmosphere that has professionals spending their Sundays and holidays in a yeshiva environment.

This is our challenge. ■

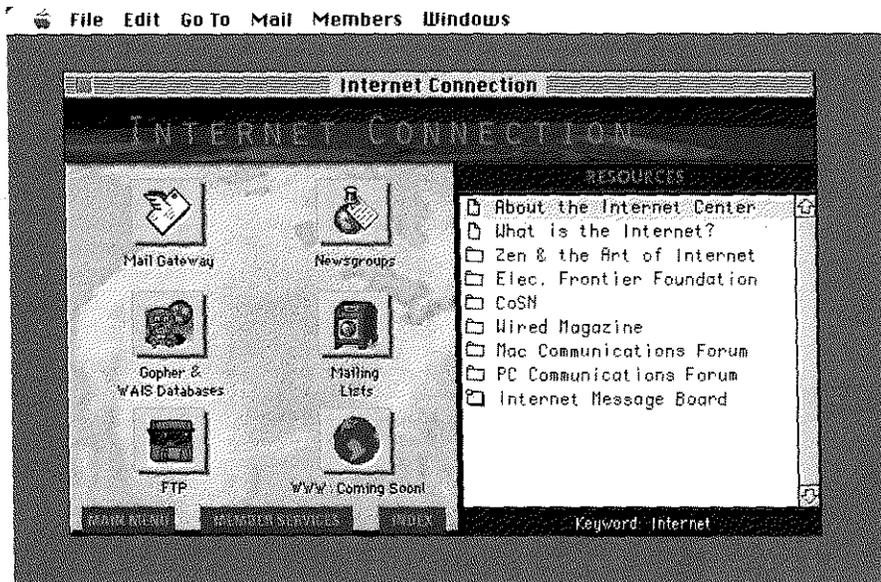
# LANDMINES ALONG THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY

## WELCOME TO MODEM COUNTRY

The personal computer (PC) is taking the secular world by storm. As it passes from the offices to more and more homes, many fine Orthodox Jewish families that would not dream of owning a television, now proudly display their PC. To the outside world, the home PC is largely an entertainment medium. To our Torah community, however, it provides not only a means of word processing and managing home finances, but a powerful potential source of income. We all know of *kollel Yungeleit* who are supported by incomes associated with computers. So when we see little Yankele or little Rochele playing with the computer, we are thrilled. After all, computer literacy is essential for today's and tomorrow's jobs. So what if Yankele wastes some time on an inane computer game? He is on the way to acquiring vital job skills in the safety of his home, without having to enter any university, with all its attendant risks.

Yet are we aware of the fact that the same universities, which have never been trendsetters in moral decency,

**Yoseph Herman**, of Monsey, NY, has used the benign features of Internet on the job for many years. When researching about the dangers of Inemet, he uncovered facts that shocked him, which prompted him to write this article to alert the reader to these problems and to search for options to minimize their effects.



## What Every Jewish Home Should Know About the Dangers of the Internet

are now rising in alarm? That they are setting up safeguards to protect their students from the unimaginable levels of moral depravity that can be accessed by anyone today through the use of computers? A person sitting at a computer can access filth far worse than available through television. He can communicate interactively with people whose sick minds should require that they be locked up for the sake of public safety. He can view pictures that even Times Square newsstand vendors dare not display. He can do all this without his parents or *Rebbe'im* ever suspecting the sewage that is penetrating his mind. This article is being written to alert *Rabbonim*, *mechanchim* and parents to the dangers of the Information Highway in general, and the Internet in particular.

The dangers we are mentioning here are not inherent in the isolated home computer. Once someone attaches a "modem" to this computer, however, this feature allows the computer to link into computers all over the outside world, using the telephone lines. It is that link to the

Internet that opens the channel to the vast world of information that exists. Most of that information is valuable or harmless. Much of it, however, does not belong on the computer screen of any decent person. This article will explain what the Internet is, what it can do, the types of information access that are available to computers equipped with modems, and possible defenses against the pitfalls.

### THE INTERNET

When President Clinton began his administration, he introduced the term "Information Highway" to the American public. This would be a vast electronic network that would allow information to flow at great speed, substantially increasing America's competitive position in the world. The ideas sounded attractive. Soon people discovered that there already is such a highway in existence, the Internet. With this new awareness, there began a continuing stampede by the masses to find and mount the "entrance ramps" to this vast Informa-

tion Highway.

The Internet was born over twenty years ago<sup>1</sup>. At that time the U. S. Defense Department was looking for a way to link together all the computers doing military research into a network in such a manner that should an enemy bomb attack knock out part of it, it would not be crippled in its entirety. That evolved into the idea of tying together large numbers of individual computers in such a way that they can still communicate with each other regardless of whether individual computers are added to or missing from the network. The military effort evolved over the years into

today's Internet. However, it is important to appreciate the significance of the starting philosophy. Anyone can link his computer to the Internet, whether it be a scientific laboratory, a government agency, a university, a business organization, or a depraved individual or group. All these and many other groups comprise the Internet community. To join, one does not fill out applications, does not pay dues, is not answerable to any supervisory agency. The only requirement for your computer to be a part of Internet is that it conform to established computer-related standards (and provide a fee to a service provider

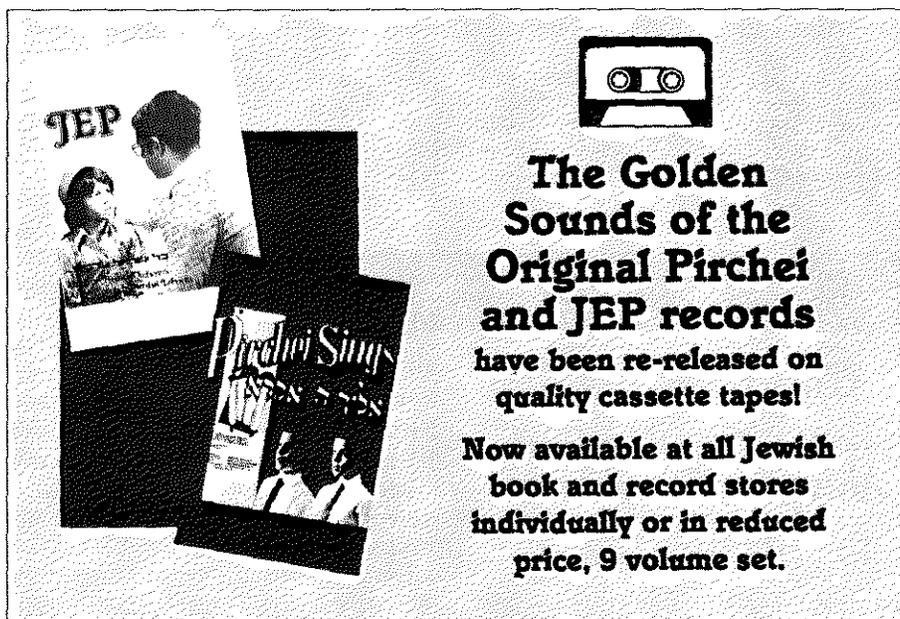
who could not care less what you do with your computer connection). Today's television has maintained whatever moral standards prevail because there still is some authority that exercises some supervisory control over it. Imagine how much lower television could sink if all the policemen were removed from it. That is the Internet.

Anyone with \$1000 to \$5000 can buy a computer, link it to the Internet and offer from his computer any information at all to the international community. In early 1994, there were 3.2 million reachable computers on the Internet<sup>2</sup>. The explosive growth of Internet is evidenced by the fact that there was an 81% increase in such computers over the last year alone! Our little Yankele or Rochele only needs a modem costing under \$100 to add to the home computer, an inexpensive special computer program to talk to the Internet and a subscription fee of about \$10-\$20 per month. With these, he or she can access over the telephone line many if not most such computers, and sample the information that they offer.

Most denizens of the Internet are not perverts. Most functions of the Internet are justified on constructive grounds. We will try in the following sections to explain the major services that the Internet offers and how these can be used for valuable functions. We will also demonstrate how they can be and are being subverted towards unsavory ends, and how difficult it is to marshal defenses against the problem areas.

#### SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE INTERNET: BENEFITS...

Most of the services available to the users of the Internet are not objectionable. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that most of the data that flow along the Information Highway today involve indecent information. This we will discuss later. Let us first consider the second most popular use, electronic mail or E-mail. Every user of a computer who has access to the Internet is assigned a unique address. Anyone on the Internet can send a message to anyone else, anywhere on earth. This is



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done by typing a message into the computer and directing it to the address of the recipient. There is no additional fee for this message service. When the addressee connects to the Internet, he is automatically informed that there is a message waiting for him, to be read at his convenience.

There is a much more personal version of this E-mail facility, called "chat." This is the computer version of having a group conversation. Any two individuals, or many people from all parts of the world, can each be sitting at his or her computer. Each in turn can type in some information, which will be printed out on the screen of every other participant. This allows interactive discussions and debates.

The Internet can transmit not only printed text, but also pictures. All such information can be stored in digital computer form in computer files. This allows one user to connect to any other computer and look at the contents of the files stored there, whether they be words or pictures (unless blocked from doing so by the creator of the file).

These facilities can be combined

for legitimate uses. People seeking information on topics from agriculture to zoology<sup>3</sup> can connect to the appropriate computer and find pertinent data. There are sets of tools that help in locating the exact information needed. One can access the weekly grain export files of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, for example. During the recent national elections, Internet users could follow the election return progress in California, on a minute-by-minute basis. The potential benefits of this system to international business are just beginning to be understood. Suppose that I am situated in New York and am a small importer of certain lines of toys. Until now I may have received a few catalogs or seen a few salesmen with a limited selection of toys and prices. With Internet, toy manufacturers in Hong Kong, Taiwan, or anywhere, can put a computer on the Internet. They can store their latest catalogs on the computer, complete with pictures. From New York, I will be able to scan tens or hundreds of catalogs. I will be able to do my price and delivery negotiations using E-mail and use

electronic bank fund transfers to handle the payment. The Internet can now give small businessmen the competitive advantage that only the large players enjoyed heretofore.

### ...AND THE FLIP SIDE

What happens when these powerful communication facilities are used by people with sick minds? The same computer that can hold a toy catalog complete with pictures of toys, can and often does hold indecent or perverted literature—and pictures. The Internet Yellow Pages<sup>3</sup> is a book that contains 359 pages of listings of information available on the Internet. Of these, a relatively small fraction is devoted to unsavory matters. Some of those listings, however, would make one's hair stand on end. Some of the topic names cannot be printed in a family magazine. Some of the less offensive sounding of these subjects include six pages of offerings called "Bizarre" including a group devoted to "Tasteless Topics," plus headings called "Cyberpunk," "X-Rated," or "Drugs."

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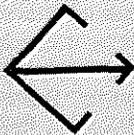
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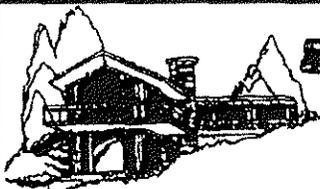
*Shomer  
Shabbos*

It is not hyperbole to say that our Yankele or Rochele can have their mind permanently maimed by the worst that man can produce, some of it in the form of pictures in full glorious color.

In a simple experiment I conducted while doing research for this article, I used an Internet search feature to find for me references containing the word "drugs." It produced a variety of suggestions involving legitimate medicines. After about two minutes of searches, however, I was looking at a selection of newsletters produced by groups dedicated to the propagation of the use of illegal, mind-altering chemicals.

The business community is not slow in capitalizing on the weakness of people. In the book *How to Advertise on the Internet*,<sup>2</sup> there is a chapter describing how to make money from the business of indecency. It even gives examples such as where, for a fee, an individual can connect to a live person over the Internet. It is advising its readers on how to take advantage of the lack of decency constraints on the Internet, to devise ad-

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vertising that really catches attention.

We are not finished. One of the features of Internet is the "Newsgroups." As originally envisioned, a newsgroup is a gathering of people with same interests who send E-mail messages to a central bulletin board. Everyone who subscribes to such a newsgroup (cost free) would see all of the messages that are sent. Thus, for example, there are newsgroups for nuclear physicists, for individual hobbyists, or virtually any topic of interest to anybody. These newsgroups allow discussions, debates and general communications between people of similar interests. Anyone can start a new newsgroup. With a simple computer command I can accept or reject the offer to subscribe to each newly formed newsgroup. If I accept, then I will automatically receive each day all of the notes that anyone addressed anywhere in the world to this newsgroup.

An example of the constructive use of such services (although strictly speaking not a newsgroup) is Project Genesis, run by Rabbi Yaakov Menken, who uses the Internet as an outreach medium to do *kiruv* work. He offers regularly dispatched items on the *parsha* of the week, on *shmiras halashon*, the daily translation of the *Halacha Yomis* portion of the *Shulchan Aruch, Ramchal*, and many other valuable items. On the other hand, each morning, as I connect my work computer to the Internet, I get a listing of the latest offerings of newly formed newsgroups. A sickening portion of these titles are oriented to distasteful topics. These newsgroups will guarantee that the participant is kept up to the latest perversions unleashed on the Internet.

The future promises to get worse. On one hand, new computer programs are coming out with increasing frequency, with the purpose of making the task of accessing the Internet as easy as possible. In another area, research is concentrating on perfecting video conferencing on the Internet. Ideally that would allow two businessmen an inexpensive way to use television cameras coupled to the Internet to hold face-to-face conferences from locations across the world. At the same time, this opens

It is very easy to push a single computer button to make the questionable Internet display disappear whenever someone approaches. A second push of the button will bring it back as soon as it is safe. Without the safeguard of shame, what keeps a person from getting caught in the trap?

even more offensive opportunities to spread smut on a personal and powerful basis. That technology is not yet perfected or pervasive. Once it is, Internet will sink to even greater depths as interactive moving pictures of all sorts will proliferate, complete with sound.

#### OTHER POTHoles ON THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY

Thus far we have concentrated on the indecency aspects of the Internet for two reasons. First, these dangers are of particular concern to the Torah-oriented home. Furthermore, it is true that most of the services available on the Internet are legitimate, as mentioned above. However, those who have measured the total amounts of actual information zooming over the communications lines between computers have determined that by far, most such transmitted information is in the indecency category. It seems that the staid businessman, who would die of embar-

rassment if he were seen purchasing questionable literature from a Times Square newsstand, feels free to indulge in the same or worse in privacy.

The Internet offers a much greater variety of dangers, however, as indicated by a growing number of newspaper reports. International police are just now waking up to the fact that international criminals, hate groups, and terrorists are turning to the Internet as a relatively safe and fast method of communicating with each other, free from the usual controls such as law-enforcement wire taps. Additionally, it should not take too long for a Jew participating in a multiparty "chat group" to receive a vile torrent of anti-Semitic hate messages, if it is discovered by the others that he is Jewish. It seems that the thin veneer of civility that makes overt anti-Semitism unfashionable is stripped away by the anonymity of the computer terminal, and the inherent Jew hatred of the typical *Eisav* comes barreling down the Information Highway. Further, digital ver-

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sions of a wide variety of frauds are beginning to separate the naive users of computers from their hard-earned money. Trusting children have given out their addresses and other vital information to those only too eager to prey on the innocent.

### HOW CAN WE PROTECT OUR FAMILIES?—PART 1

**T**he only way that we can protect our families with any certainty is to forbid any family member to access the Internet from our home or anywhere else. This aspect will be discussed further in the next section. Here, however, we will discuss the details of the options available to one who wants to use the Internet, but wishes to install safeguards as a protection from the dangers outlined above. It is important to comprehend these options in order to understand the degree of such protection available today, such as it is, and what can be developed in the near future.

For someone to roam the Internet from his home PC, the following three elements must be added to that PC:

- A modem to allow the PC to communicate over the telephone lines.
- A special computer "interface" program that can "talk the language" of the Internet.
- A service provider utility that provides the actual connection to the Internet.

Historically, five service providers have evolved that, over the years, have

made available, for a fee, many of the services now being offered more broadly over the Internet. It has been possible to use a modem to dial a local phone number anywhere, all over the country, and access these services. These are now expanding their facilities and are in varying degrees offering gateways to the Internet. The five service providers are CompuServe, America Online, E-World, Delphi and Prodigy. Probably, the easiest way to get on the Internet is to open an account with one of these services. Once you have your modem, they will provide the other requirements, the connection to the Internet, and the interface or program to communicate with the Internet.

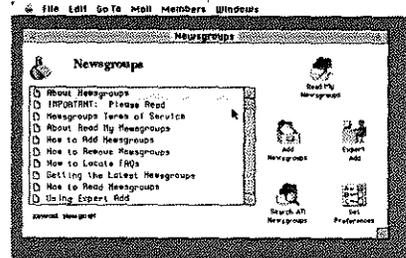
In response to the growing interest in Internet, many other local providers are now offering a more basic service, one that has only one function, to allow the PC owner to connect his modem to the Internet by dialing a local phone number.

New Internet interface programs are being offered to the public in an increasing variety. In addition, there is Microsoft, the company that is producing the popular "Windows" program that most of today's PCs require to perform their various functions. Microsoft has already announced that the next version of this Windows program, due in late-1995, will contain an Internet interface program. Therefore, by the end of 1995, most PCs will have available stored in their computer programs that will allow users to access the Internet merely by adding the modem and subscribing to a service provider.

In principle, the vast power of the computer information processing technology should be able to be mobilized to provide a credible defense against the widely perceived perils of the Internet. In practice, the use and abuse of the Internet has exploded so rapidly, that the defenses are lagging far behind. It is difficult at this stage to predict what defenses will eventually develop. However, a brief survey of what is currently available or envi-

sioned will be attempted.

The five service providers, CompuServe, America Online, Delphi, E-World and Prodigy, have always exercised forms of self-censorship for the Internet-like services that they had been providing. They are now starting to extend these to cover the connections that they are providing to the Internet. For example, at the time of this printing,



America Online has "Parental Control Features" that allow parents to block their children from accessing entire facilities of the Internet, such as instant messages, chat rooms, or public computer conferences. Concerned parents will probably find these five companies at the forefront of offering more forms of such censorship.

For those who purchase their own interface program, it will probably also be possible in the near future for a parent to instruct the interface program to block access to all features that have certain key words as part of their names. It is unknown at this time what parental control features the forthcoming Microsoft Windows package will have. That is the package that will be available on most PCs by the end of 1995.

Whatever censorship feature the parent chooses, its effectiveness at this point is very questionable. Most children are more familiar with computers than their parents. Even if effective parental control features are developed, will the average parent have the ability to make certain that it is used to its full power? Furthermore, it is difficult to conceive how one can block information sources that have names that one did not anticipate when these safeguards were being programmed.

### HOW CAN WE PROTECT OUR FAMILIES?—PART 2

**T**his article was written to alert the Torah community to dangers to our spirituality that most of us would not have dreamt of in our worst nightmares. The Internet

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is a far greater threat than, say, theater or television. Our Yankele and Rochele can explore the depths of Internet, usually without the supervision of the unsuspecting parent who may think that they are learning computer skills. It is very easy to push a single computer button to make the questionable Internet display disappear whenever someone approaches. A second push of the button will bring it back as soon as it is safe. Without the safeguard of shame, what keeps a person from getting caught in the trap?

The easiest solution to all the problems outlined in this article would be to ban PCs or at least modems from the Jewish home. Without modems, there cannot be any connection from the local PC to the Internet. The Jew in *golus*, however, has traditionally supported himself and the community institutions by excelling in business. It is becoming increasingly apparent that much of tomorrow's commerce will flow along the Information Highway. If we exclude the Internet in its entirety from the Jewish home, are we not placing the current and future Torah-observant generations at a serious competitive disadvantage in national and international commerce? We could, of course, mandate that the Internet be allowed in the Jewish office for business purposes only, but not in the home. One of the advantages of the computer is that business can be conducted from home—for example, by the housewife supporting her husband in *kollel*. In addition, the home computer allows us to provide vocational training to future businessmen, without need for formal higher education.

If it is agreed that some access to the Internet is desirable, then the question is how to draw the line allowing our families access to the good parts while avoiding the unsavory parts. A related question is whether it will ever be technically possible to draw such a line effectively. Today that cannot be done.

Protecting our homes from the dangers of the Internet requires guidance from Torah authorities. Working groups of technically knowledgeable people should be formed to monitor this rapidly exploding field and provide

data upon which our leaders can form their recommendations. These Torah leaders should then issue guidelines to allow us to protect ourselves and our children from the landmines along the Information Highway. ■

*Editor's Note: This issue of the Jewish Observer was transmitted from the editorial offices in downtown Manhattan to the*

*typesetter in New Jersey through E-Mail from: The JO 18@AOL.com*

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# SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA (1926-1994)

## A POST-MORTEM

### THE SCA'S MISSION

It was with surprisingly little fanfare that the Synagogue Council of America passed from the American Jewish scene this past November. A short release from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency noted the organization had disbanded due to its inability to meet its \$200,000 annual budget.

Reading the report, words used by the Ponovezher Rav, זצ"ל, in a different context, come to mind. "A poor man," he once said, "doesn't die for lack of money; he dies when his soul takes leave." The Synagogue Council of America disbanded for lack of life, not lucre. It no longer served any purpose.

To better understand why the Synagogue Council—a "major organization" that not only assumed a prominent role on the Jewish communal stage for many of its 68 years, but often claimed headlines in the Anglo-Jewish as well as the general press—became obsolete, it should be worth

while to research the organization's declared mission. This would be especially of interest to those who are unaware of the details of its history. In addition, of broader interest, the dissolution of this organizational bridge between religious groups may actually signal the opening up of pathways between segments of Orthodoxy that previously had found membership in the Synagogue Council a seriously divisive factor.

Created in 1926, the Synagogue Council assigned itself the tasks of serving as the forum for Jewish "interdenominational" communication and acting as the representative of American Jewry in dialogue with other "faith communities."

The latter area is one in which supporters of the Synagogue Council took great pride. But the shoulder-slapping even here was much muffled by the participation of the Synagogue Council's Orthodox partners, whose definition of "dialogue" was much more limited than that of their Conservative and Reform colleagues. Moreover, the involvement of other organizations—including the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith and

the National Jewish Community Relations Council—in such interfaith dialogue rendered the Synagogue Council's own involvement rather superfluous.

Which left only the other prominent *raison d'être* of the Synagogue Council of America: "interdenominational" communication. The Synagogue Council was indeed unique as the only national religious body to join representatives of the Rabbinic and Synagogue bodies of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements—a remarkable accomplishment that was duly exploited by each of the Synagogue Council's members for its own interests.

The Conservative and Reform leadership, during the Synagogue Council's infancy, was desperately seeking acceptance. For thousands of years, the fact that Judaism meant adherence to Torah and *mitzvos* was a universal truism. To convince the masses that there were alternative means of being "religious" Jews was a top priority for those groups, and the participation of Orthodox representatives in a tripartite organization of "Judaisms" lent unparalleled credence to the notion that Judaism was an odd bird indeed, one with three wings. It was this longstanding mindset, which viewed the Conservative and Reform's belief system as outside the pale of Judaism, that those movements' leaders had hoped to combat. How better to neutralize it, they reasoned, than to participate in an organization where "even the Orthodox recognize us as equals," where the blessings of legitimacy would be so effectively attained?

Unfortunately, today's Conservative and Reform movements no longer need an Orthodox imprimatur. Even in 1966, after the Synagogue Council of America's annual dinner had honored the leaders of the "three rabbinic seminaries in the United States," the *National Jewish Post and Opinion* (at that time, a major non-Orthodox paper) declared victory, stating that this "is not the beginning of the fight in the Orthodox camp to recognize that the Reform and Conservative communities are also Jewish. It is rather the end. The fight is over in the United States...."

Rabbi Shmuel Bloom is the Executive Vice President of Agudath Israel of America. He was represented in the Oct. '93 JO, by "Preparations for *Shmittah*: A Report from the Fields."

Tell a non-Orthodox Jew today that there is only one form of Judaism and he will look at you as if you come from another planet—or worse, are trying to unfairly denigrate your co-religionists. Except for committed Torah Jews, very few people realize what Judaism really is—and isn't. Thus, the Synagogue Council no longer served any purpose for the heterodox movements.

### THE ORTHODOX AGENDA IN THE SCA

The other force in keeping the Synagogue Council of America together was the Modern Orthodox rabbinate. The argument had long been that Orthodox participation on the Synagogue Council could act as a restraining force against further breaches of tradition and *halacha* by the Conservative and Reform members of the Council. Whatever merit this claim may have had in its earlier years, it certainly rings hollow today. Acceptance of patrilineal descent as a basis for Jewish identity by the Reform, and unhesitant presiding over intermarriages by Reform clergy, do not reflect Orthodox containment. Nor does the Conservative record of inclusion of women in a *minyán*, or ordination of women, among a host of other breaches in *halacha*.

Another motive for membership in the Synagogue Council was the Modern Orthodox aspiration to develop a "semblance of unity in the Jewish community," for which, in the words of one of their leaders in private correspondence with Rabbi Mordechai Gifter<sup>1</sup>, they were "willing to pay the price" of implied recognition. Unity—*achdus*—has always been a highly desirable goal in the Jewish catalogue of values. In the Torah community, however, there has always been a binding qualifier, reflecting Rabbi Saadya Gaon's dictum, "Our people are a people only because of the Torah." Surely, in a religious context, unity must reflect a shared acceptance of Torah as the central binding force of our people—Torah as presented to Moshe at Sinai, and as

<sup>1</sup> See "A Dissident Speaks Out," by Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, JO Jan. '67.

transmitted through the generations, to this very day. Yet where the Rambam said "Ani Maamir—I believe with a firm belief" thirteen times, these groups having been saying, "Not necessarily."

This defining criterion for religious association was articulated in a halachic decision by eleven leading *Roshei Hayeshiva*, in response to a query from their students in 1956, which found participation in a religious organization with representatives of non-Orthodox movements forbidden by Torah law (see sidebar). Jewish unity, based on common religious association, cannot sidestep basic tenets of faith. To do so would confer legitimacy to groups that have not earned it.

As of late, younger members of the Orthodox rabbinate, including many of the Modern Orthodox affiliation, have found membership in the Synagogue Council embarrassing

### THE OUTREACH FACTOR

There had been some amongst the champions of Orthodox participation in the Synagogue Council who spoke of a "united voice of religious Jewry in America" speaking ambiguously of basic tenets of

*emuna*, to make Torah and those who represent it palatable to a wider audience.<sup>2</sup> This philosophy was expressed as recently as this year's convention of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congrega-

<sup>2</sup> For particulars, see pp 4-7 in the same issue.

פסק דין

To dispel the confusion Jews as to the precise meaning we are publishing the English translation.

We have been asked by a number of rabbis in the country and by alumni and musmachim of yeshivos, if it is permissible to participate with and be a member of The New York Board of Rabbis and similar groups in other communities, which are composed of Reform and Conservative 'rabbis'.

Having gathered together to clarify this matter, it has been ruled by the undersigned Torah to be a member of and to participate in such an organization.

We have also been asked if it is permissible to participate with and to be a member of the Synagogues Council of America, which is also composed of Reform and Conservative organizations.

We have ruled that it is forbidden by the law of our sacred Torah to participate with them either as an individual or as an organized communal body.

May Hashem Yisborach have mercy on His people, and seal the breaches (in Torah life) and may we be worthy of the elevation of the glory of our sacred Torah and our people Israel.

Signed this fifth day, the week of Parshas Ki Seesoh, the Eighteenth day of Adar, 5716, in the City of New York.

— Avraham Joffen  
— Avraham Kalmanowitz  
— Ahron Kotler  
— Gedalia Shorr  
— David Lifshutz  
— Chaim Mordechai Katz  
— Yaakov Kaminetsky  
— Yaakov Yitzchok Halevi Ruderman  
— Yitzchok Hutner  
— Menachem Yosef Zachs  
— Moshe Feinstein

נו מכמה רבנים במדינה ומכמה וכי השיבות אם מותר להשתתף בג'ג'ני יודק באחד או ראונוס' ונסדות דומים לזה בשאר עיריות. אשר בים יחד עם 'ראבניס' הרפורמים ובהאשכנזי יחד לגבר הענין יצא מאתנו וזר על מי דין תורה' להיות חבר ולהשתתף בן כזה.

כמו כן נשאלנו אם מותר להשתתף בג'ג'סינאטוא קאונסילי האונסיו באמריקה אשר הוא מורכב ניכ עם ארגוני היימורמים והקונסרבטיביים. וינא מאתנו כי אסור ע"פ דין תורה' להשתתף עמם בין בתור יחיד בין בתור נש ארגון צבורי. והשיית ירחם עלנו ויגידו פרצותינו ונכה להרמת קרן תורה'ק וישרא.

ויראי אדר תשט"ז, פה ניו יורק.

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tions, by the National Director of Jewish Communal Affairs for the American Jewish Committee. A leading officer of the UOJCA publicly proclaimed "Shehechyanu" over the passing of the Synagogue Council from the scene. Nonetheless the AJC director was not ashamed to contend that "Jews do require different avenues and different points of connectedness to their tradition and it is in Orthodoxy's interest that there be strong Conservative and Reform movements."

This contrasted with the contention

of a Midwest rabbi and *kiruv* professional at the Agudath Israel convention, who spoke at a symposium on "religious pluralism" of the great difficulty of reaching Jews who had been exposed to the heterodox movements. Aside from the obvious problems caused by those movements' ersatz conversions, spurious divorces, non-halachic marriages and the like—the sad situations where the rabbi had the painful task of explaining to the people he was working with that they were not really Jewish or married, or that they faced restrictions on whom they

**E**xcept for committed Torah Jews, very few people realize what Judaism really is—and isn't. Thus, the Synagogue Council no longer served any purpose for the heterodox movements.

might marry in the future—there were more subtle problems as well. Legions of Jews, he testified, have been utterly disillusioned and reluctant to explore their heritage, as a result of the shallowness and hypocrisy they have come to associate with the Temple and the "Jewish" way of life they were taught by their Conservative and Reform rabbis.

The Midwest rabbi recounted how a woman searching for spirituality told her Reform rabbi that she believes in a personal G-d, in the concept of the Messiah, that every individual has a divine soul and that there will be a resurrection of the dead. The rabbi looked at her and said, "Sarah. These are all Christian, not Jewish beliefs." Hearing such from a "rabbi," she decided to explore Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Shaya Cohen of Priority One similarly tells of an individual who shouted out in the middle of an *Arachim* seminar Rabbi Cohen was leading, "Rabbi, where were you when we went to Hebrew School? This is not the Judaism they taught us!"

And what of those precious Jews who become convinced that the heterodox movements are what they have been seeking? By moving the goal posts up a few yards (or half the field), the Conservative and Reform rabbis allow seekers to feel that they have reached their goal without having to

<sup>3</sup> Fortunately, the church failed to quench her spiritual thirst, and she ended up in the Orthodox rabbi's *kiruv* group.

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make major changes in their lives.

Thus, it has become painfully apparent to all but the most starry-eyed in the Orthodox community that the proclaimed goal of projecting a "semblance of unity" served no good end either. It not only was no portal to the *kiruv* experience, it was a terrible hindrance.

And so, as the last president of the Synagogue Council of America announced: "There don't seem to be enough people who are interested in maintaining the organization. It doesn't have a natural constituency. We can't keep afloat something that isn't sustained by the community."

A poor man doesn't die for lack of money; he dies when his soul takes leave. An organization cannot survive unless it serves some purpose.

#### EPILOGUE

The Synagogue Council's demise, whatever its cause, has thankfully removed a major bone of contention from between those who chose to become members of the organization and other segments of the Torah community.

At the most recent Agudath Israel convention, the Novominsker Rebbe, Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, welcomed the news of the Synagogue Council's passing from the scene and called for "a closer spirit of understanding and cooperation" within the Orthodox camp.

There do, of course, remain areas of strong disagreement. As the outgoing president of the Orthodox Union, Sheldon Rudoff, declared at the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations convention, "Fundamental differences which they [i.e., the *yeshiva* world] espouse as a matter of principle and which strike at what we regard as intrinsic, are at the base of the divide that exists between us... and if the event [the demise of the Synagogue Council] results in a rapprochement between us and the *yeshiva* world, then we should not be satisfied with a mere reunion between us, but insist upon a reconciliation."

We must agree in part with Mr. Rudoff. There are indeed strong differences that do divide the *yeshiva* world and many of those who speak for the UOJCA. And while we would certainly seek more venues for close cooperation, now that the thorny issue of the Synagogue Council has been removed from the scene, we also recognize that if reconciliation calls for yielding on issues of fundamental principle, it is simply not possible.

But there are numerous issues where we do share values, and where our respective agendas are close, if not identical. Let us look forward to an ever increasing number of occasions when we will realize that "closer spirit of understanding and cooperation" of which the Novominsker Rebbe spoke. ■

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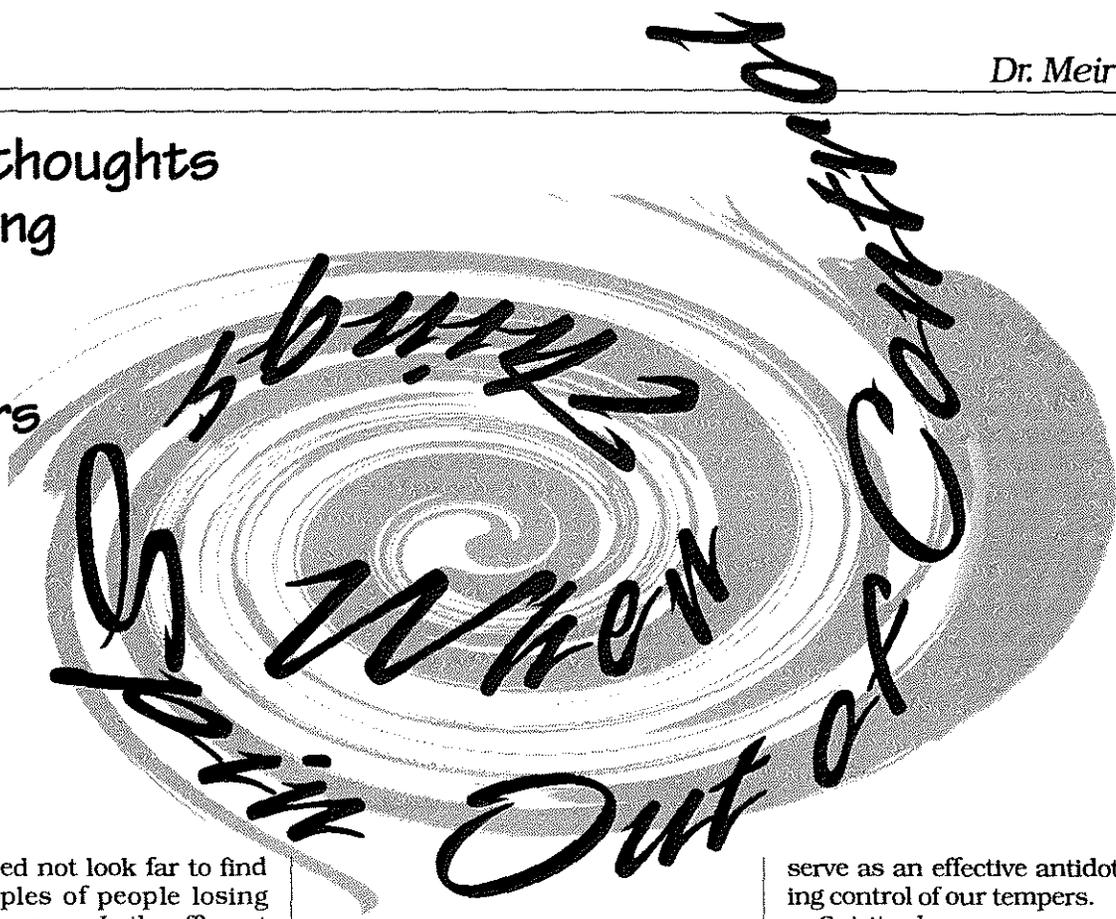
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## Some thoughts on taking charge of our tempers



One need not look far to find examples of people losing their tempers. In the office, at home and even, at times, in *shul*, you can see someone who has lost control of his/her self. The consequences are devastating, both to the one who has lost control and to those who are present. All are victimized when things spin out of control.

In order to begin to take charge of our tempers, first we should appreciate the full consequences of uncontrolled anger. Then we need to understand the root causes of the problem. Finally, we must find some remedies for this malignancy that threatens us spiritually and emotionally.

### I. THE SPIRITUAL LOSSES

**C**hazal (Rabbis of the Talmud) are candidly clear about the spiritual fallout from losing control of one's temper.

Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says in the name of Chilfa bar Igra who said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri, "One who tears his clothes in

Dr. Wikler, a psychotherapist and family counselor in private practice, lives in Brooklyn, New York. He is a frequent contributor to these pages, most recently with "Help Me Get Married!" in Feb. '94. This essay is based on an address that the author delivered at the 67th National Convention of Agudath Israel of America.

anger, and one who breaks his vessels in anger, and throws out his coins in anger, should be considered as if he committed idolatry." (*Mesechta Shabbos* 105b)

Idolatry is a cardinal transgression, one of three termed *yehoreig v'al yaavor*, which we are required to surrender our lives rather than violate (*Sanhedrin* 74a). To appreciate why losing one's temper is compared to such a serious *aveira*, we must first diagnose the spiritual ailment that induces violent outbursts of anger. Anger, it has been suggested, results from inadequate *emuna* (belief).<sup>1</sup> When we get angry at others, we are acting as if we believe that those others and not *Hashem*,  $\text{יְיָ}$ , are responsible for the injury, insult or injustice which we just suffered. If we really believed and acted upon the belief that everything which happens to us is the result of *Hashgacha prattis* (Providence), then we would see how ludicrous it is to lose our tempers.<sup>2</sup>

From this insight, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1.—People with full *bitachon* (trust) in *Hashgacha prattis* do not get angry, even when they are insulted or shown disrespect.

2.—Increasing our *bitachon* can

serve as an effective antidote to losing control of our tempers.

Spiritual consequences of losing control may be extremely severe, but they are not as readily apparent as the emotional aftermath of angry outbursts. The emotional reverberations of spinning out of control leave scars that are much more tangible and, consequently, much harder to ignore.

### II. THE EMOTIONAL SCARS

**T**hose who work in the mental health field can testify that a great many of the human tragedies confronting them daily can be traced to someone's uncontrolled temper. At times, it may be a faltering marriage that has been devastated by episodes of flared tempers. At other times it may be psychological disorders of depression, anxiety or low self-esteem that resulted from growing up as the target of a parent's unbridled hostility.

To peel away all of the layers of respectability and facade and reveal the full depth of human misery caused by anger, it will be necessary to present a case example. (All identifying information about the individuals involved has been disguised to the point where they would not even recognize themselves if they were to read this article.)

**The Case of Yitzchak**

**W**hen I first met Yitzchak, he had been married for almost ten years. Although he had been learning full-time in a *kollel* for a few years after his marriage, the financial pressures of supporting his growing family forced him to accept a part-time job selling furniture.

Yitzchak challenged me as soon as he entered my office. "I just want you to know that I do not believe in therapy," he announced.

"Alright," I accepted. "But perhaps you could just explain to me why you don't believe in therapy?"

Yitzchak then went on to remind me that all truth comes from Torah. Therefore, only those who are expert Torah scholars, such as *Roshei Yeshiva*, are in a position to diagnose and treat emotional problems.

"I cannot argue with anything you've just said," I conceded. "So tell me, then, why did you make an appointment to see me?"

After a long pause, Yitzchak sheepishly revealed, "My *Rosh Yeshiva* recommended that I speak to you."

It was so painful for Yitzchak to speak about his problem, that he sighed deeply and audibly.

"Sometimes...at home...I, uh...lose control. You shouldn't think, *chas v'shalom*, that I ever hit my wife. With the exception of an occasional *potch* to one of my children, I never raise my hand. But I raise my voice...at the kids...and my wife. They're all afraid of me at home. I terrorize everyone. They never smile or feel relaxed when I'm at home.

"But that's not all.... It's not that I shout but it's what I shout that hurts the most.... I say things...and I use words...that are totally unbecoming for a *ben Torah*. In fact, because I use such language I really don't consider myself a *ben Torah*, at all. I really feel like an imposter whenever someone refers to me as a *kollel yungerman*. I may learn in a *kollel*, but I am certainly unworthy of that title.

"If you don't think I'm crazy yet, you certainly will when you hear what I'm going to tell you now. Instead of loving *Succos* and fearing the approach of *Yom Kippur*, like most people, I actually look forward to *Yom*

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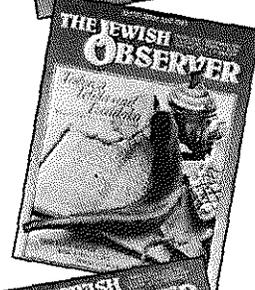
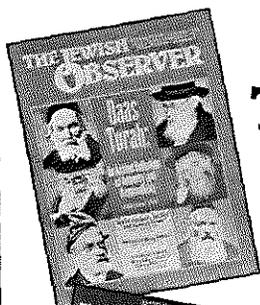
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Kippur and hate Succos. You know why? Because with the *aimas hadin* (fear of judgment) of Yom Kippur, I know I'm practically guaranteed not to lose my temper on that day. It's the one day I feel safe.

"Succos, however, is quite another story. I dread Succos. On Succos I can lose my temper just as easily as any other day. But during the rest of the year my shouting is at home, inside. At least I can pretend that the neighbors don't hear me. But on Succos, I know that all the neighbors are getting a good show. I can just

imagine how much fun they're having as they say to each other, 'There goes Yitzchak, again. Let's hear what he's blowing up about this time.' I feel so embarrassed that I want to hide until after Simchas Torah."

#### Treatment Summary

Therapy for Yitzchak lasted over a year and included two separate phases. Initially, Yitzchak was asked to monitor his thoughts immediately prior to each outburst. *Just what was he thinking? What*

*was happening and how did he feel about it?*

This was very difficult for Yitzchak. Before each outburst, he had no warning that he was going to explode. During the eruption he was totally out of control of his thoughts, not only his temper. And after each episode, he was so guilt-ridden that it was extremely difficult for him to deliberately review it. All he wanted was to forget about it.

Because he was so highly motivated to change, Yitzchak applied himself religiously to the assignment and overcame his own resistance through sheer force of will. His efforts bore extremely fruitful insights.

Yitzchak's temper was triggered by any put-down or even implication of lack of respect. If any member of Yitzchak's family addressed him in a way that he felt lacked proper regard, he would fly into a rage. In short, the underlying cause for his loss of control was what Yitzchak identified as his "*gaiva* (pride) problem."

#### The Source of Gaiva

Eventually, Yitzchak discovered that the reason he was so preoccupied with how much respect he was being shown at home was that inside, where it really counted, he felt worthless.

This insight led to the second phase of Yitzchak's treatment. We began to explore together the various ways in which Yitzchak, himself, undermined his own self-esteem. Once we were able to pinpoint how he denigrated himself, he was able to see what he needed to do to treat himself with more respect.

Here are two brief examples of how Yitzchak repeatedly put himself down. Yitzchak had a very unkempt appearance. Even though his sloppy image bothered him greatly, he never made the effort to look more presentable. In addition, except for *Shabbos*, Yitzchak never ate seated at the table. His kitchen and dining room tables were always cluttered up and Yitzchak wouldn't bother clearing a place for himself. His wife would always clear the table later when she fed the children, which was usually only after Yitzchak had finished his

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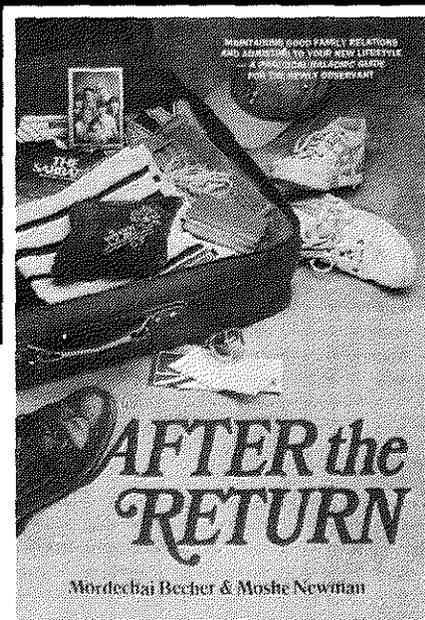
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meal—standing up.

After a year of therapy aimed at helping Yitzchak give himself more respect, he acknowledged that his outbursts of temper were drastically reduced. He no longer exaggerated every slight to his honor because he no longer looked to others to boost his ego. Once he was able to stop putting himself down, he was able to gain control over his violent temper. Then he not only felt less guilt-ridden but his entire family felt less fearful, tense and on edge whenever he was at home.

From Yitzchak's case, some general principles can be gleaned which can be applied to all cases of spinning out of control.

1. People with adequate self-esteem are less likely to lose their tempers.
2. People who have no "gaiva problems" are less apt to lose control, even when they suffer slights to their egos.
3. If the people above (1 and 2) improve their self-esteem, they can gain greater self-control.

Is it realistic to expect than even with full self-esteem, no *gaiva* problems and complete *bitachon*, a person can be capable of maintaining self-control when he is being verbally attacked? Perhaps David *Hamelech* was able to restrain himself (See *Shmuel Beis* 16,5-12), but is anyone today on that *madreiga* (level)?!

A number of years ago, I witnessed a scene that I sincerely wish I hadn't. Until preparing this presentation, I did not understand why I had to be at that place, at that time. Because of the lesson we can all learn from that painful experience, however, I can perhaps guess why I had to be there.

### III. A LESSON IN SELF-CONTROL

I was in a city that shall remain unnamed for reasons that will soon be apparent. A relative of mine informed me that a well-known Rosh Yeshiva and prominent lecturer (R.Y., hereafter) was coming to his home to address a private group that night, and he felt free to invite me.

The same R.Y. was scheduled to speak at a large communal gathering on the other side of town that same evening, and I wanted to catch both

presentations.

My relative explained that he was friendly with the R.Y.'s driver who would be whisking him from my relative's home to the communal gathering. If I duck out ahead of the R.Y., he suggested, I can be waiting in the car with the driver and ride together with the R.Y. to the communal function.

Like a trained commando, I executed my exit from the crowded home immediately after the R.Y. concluded his stirring address to an enthusiastic, overflow audience. Still glowing from the inspiration I had received, I opened the door to the back seat of the waiting car and identified myself to the driver.

"O.K., get in," the driver urged, rev-

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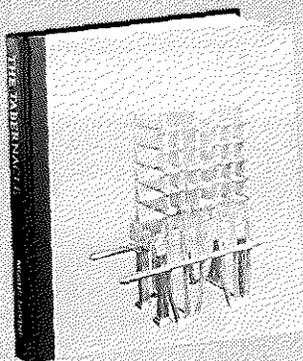
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ving up the car engine. "Just as soon as they let him out of there, we're gone."

Within moments the R.Y. came out, surrounded by an entourage of admirers, which parted for him like *krias Yam Suf* (the splitting of the Red Sea).

As soon as the R.Y.'s door was closed, the car sped away down the road.

Several seconds and a few hundred yards later, the R.Y. leaned over to the driver and whispered something into his ear. The driver glanced

into the partially empty back seat and then slammed on the brakes. He threw the car into reverse and zoomed back to the home we had just left. There at the curb was a much disgruntled *Rebbetzin*.

### The Rebbetzin's Drasha

No sooner did she enter the back seat, than the *Rebbetzin*, who has always endeavored to protect her husband from encroachments on his time, started her own *drasha*. "\_\_\_\_\_ (R.Y.'s first name), didn't you remember that I was coming along? Why did you leave without me? Did you expect me to walk home?"

The R.Y. apologized immediately. The driver then pointed out that it was the R.Y. who reminded *him* to return for the *Rebbetzin*.

At this point I was absolutely mortified by the thought that, perhaps the R.Y. and his *Rebbetzin* did not realize I was in the car as well. "Maybe I should jump out of the car now," I thought as the car sped along. "After all, the physical injuries I would sustain will pale in contrast to the embarrassment I'll feel if they notice me. Maybe someone will change the subject and they'll forget what happened."

No such luck. The subject was changed, but only for the worse. The *Rebbetzin* continued, "You know they're expecting you now across town. Why did you have to *schlep* it out at \_\_\_\_\_ (my relative's home)? Don't you know when to stop?"

The R.Y. made a weak attempt to defend himself. "They seemed so eager with their questions. It was difficult for me to leave. But I'm sure we'll still arrive in time."

The *Rebbetzin* launched her rebuttal. "I always tell you to keep it short. But you never listen to me. You always think you know better. You really could have ended a half hour ago."

### Stealing a Glimpse

During this entire ordeal, the R.Y. did not interrupt the *Rebbetzin's* harangue and made no further attempts to defend himself. Stealing a glimpse of the R.Y. from the driver's rear-view mirror, I

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**W**hile I sincerely hope the Rosh Yeshiva has forgotten the incident, I hope I never will. It stands for me as a classic example of how someone from this generation was able to take charge of his *middos* when things threatened to spin out of control.

was astounded by an undeniable expression of serenity on his face.

The actual car ride lasted only a few minutes, but to me it felt like hours. When the car pulled up outside the location of the next speech, a huge crowd warmly and enthusiastically greeted the R.Y. and then escorted him inside.

After the R.Y. was graciously intro-

duced, he approached the microphone, and the entire assemblage jumped up and stood in respectful silence.

I do not recall one word of the R.Y.'s address at that gathering. My thoughts kept returning to the scene I had witnessed only a few minutes earlier. The contrast between the respect the R.Y. was being shown then and the disrespect he was subjected to earlier was boggling my mind.

While I sincerely hope the R.Y. has forgotten the incident in the car (or at least that I was in the back seat), I hope I never will. It stands for me as a classic example of how someone from this generation was able to fully

take charge of his *middos* when a situation threatened to spin out of control.

It is perhaps because of the opportunity provided on these pages for us to learn from the R.Y.'s example, that I had to be a captive bystander during his ordeal:

Serving Torah [scholars] is even greater than learning Torah [because of the lessons they teach by example]." *Berachos* 7b

<sup>1</sup> Heard from the Skverrer *Dayan* of Boro Park, Rabbi Michel Steinmetz, שליט"א.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Orchos Tzaddikim, Sha'ar Hasina* (6), and *Seifer Hachinuch, Parshas Kedoshim, Mitzva* 241.

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**THE WORLD AROUND US:  
THE RISKS OF EXPOSURE, THE COSTS OF INSULARITY**

# It's Time to Face the Music

## ROCK BOTTOM

Recently, someone I know was offered a lift by a nice Orthodox young man. The passenger could not hide his disgust as unrefined Greek music spewed forth from the tape deck. The driver apologized, "I hope you don't mind, but I'm a composer of Jewish music and I'm searching for some ideas for my next release."

**Rabbi Shimon Finkelman**, a *rebbe* in Yeshiva Darchei Torah, Far Rockaway, N.Y., is a frequent contributor to these pages—including his recent article, "Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, זצ"ל: Teacher of Torah Perspective," in Nov. 91. He is the author of several biographies published by ArtScroll Mesorah Publications, as well as the recent book, *Shabbos Stories*.

Unfortunately, it is no laughing matter.

On a visit to the Lakewood Yeshiva, the Telshe *Rosh HaYeshiva*, Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, was honored to deliver an address during *Shalosh Seudos*. Before Rabbi Gifter spoke, another visitor offered a heartfelt rendition of *Yedid Nefesh*. Rabbi Gifter prefaced his remarks by commenting that it was a pleasure to hear such beautiful, soul-stirring singing. As for that which has come to be known as "Jewish rock," Rabbi Gifter summed up his feelings with a play on words: "*Rak ein yiras Elokim bamakom hazeh*" (*Bereishis* 20:11) — if the song can be classified as "rock" then it is devoid of *yiras Hashem*.

To paraphrase: When words from

*Tanach* or the *Siddur* are put to the tune of a contemporary love song (which, this writer has been informed, is the case with more than one popular "nigun"), the result is **not** Jewish music.

This article is not intended as an attack against some of today's popular Jewish singers. To the contrary, they have been blessed with an abundance of talent in a field which, as we will endeavor to show, is a most sublime form of Divine service. Nor is this article intended as a criticism of the *chassanim* and *kallots* (and their friends) who want very much for the bands to play this sort of music. Just watching the average *chassan* and *kalla* as they daven under the *chupa* is enough to assure us that, indeed, they are a G-d-fearing couple who yearn to build a home permeated with *Yiras Hashem*. The intent of this article is to convey some sort of understanding of what *negina* should and should not be.

## MUSIC TO AWAKEN BY

In discussing the command that trumpets be sounded at the offering of Temple sacrifices and at times of community distress (*Bamidbar* ch. 10), *Sefer Hachinuch* writes<sup>1</sup>: "Among the roots of this *mitzva* is...that a human being requires a great deal of *hisorerus* (spiritual awakening), and nothing will awaken him like the sounds of *nigun*..."

Rabbi Yisroel of Shklov quotes his teacher, the Vilna Gaon, as saying

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that in music lies the power to resurrect the dead.<sup>2</sup>

On a fundamental level, we can perhaps look at the structure of "Western" music, whose scale is comprised of seven notes, as being associated with *mitzva*-related groups that include: the seven-year *Shemittah* cycle and the seven cycles that culminate in the *Yovel* year; the seven (Scriptural) days of Pesach and Succos<sup>3</sup>; the seven weeks of *Sefiras*

**"Rak ein yiras Elokim  
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Hashem.**

*HaOmer* which are interrelated with the seven Heavenly *midos* (beginning with *chesed* and culminating with *malchus*); the seven wedding blessings (*Sheva Berachos*); the seven *ushpizin* (guests) whom we welcome into our *succa*; and, of course, the seven days of the week which culminate with *Shabbos*.

In the words of Rabbi Michael L. Munk: "The number seven denotes the spiritual values that were the purpose of Creation. G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, as it were. As *Maharal* puts it, "The physical world is represented by the number six...but Creation was not finished until there was a seventh day...a day of involvement with the G-dly."<sup>4</sup>

An integral part of the *Shabbos* meals is the singing of *zemiros*. *Menoras HaMaor* (3:3) relates the word *זמירות* to the verb *תזמר*, to prune (*Vayikra* 25.4). "Just as one who

prunes a vine cuts away the [dry, use-less] vines, leaving behind those that are soft [and will yield produce], so do the *zemiros* that we sing remove the impediments between ourselves and the Holy One — so that our prayers will be pleasing and hearkened to."

Rabbi Yaakov Emden writes: "One who recites *zemiros* brings good to the world. He brings about an attachment between himself and G-d and causes G-d to heed his voice; his ways are pleasing and he saves the world from destruction" (*Siddur Beis Yaakov*).

There is no greater *mitzva* than the study of Torah. Our Sages relate that *David HaMelech's* nighttime study was preceded by song: "A harp was suspended over David's bed. At midnight, a north wind would blow, causing it to play. When David heard the music, he would arise and engage in the study of Torah" (*Berachos* 3b).

Thus, it is clear that in Judaism song is far more than a joyous pastime.

Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner, זצ"ל, late Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin, had a keen appreciation for *negina*. His sensitivity was such that in his *beis midrash*, some of the *nigunim* sung at *hakafo*s on *Simchas Torah* were reserved for that occasion alone; these songs were not sung in the yeshiva the rest of the year. Similarly, he specified that certain *nigunim* be sung only at the Purim *seuda* and at no other time.

At *Shabbos kiddushim* in his yeshiva, Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld, late Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Sh'or Yoshuv, would approve each *nigun* before it was sung. It was not that Rabbi Freifeld lacked trust in his *talmidim* to sing songs with taste; he surely relied on them. Nevertheless, he attached such importance to *negina* that he wanted to be sure the *nigun* fit the occasion.

Surely, the *nigunim* he chose bore no resemblance to the one sung recently by a Spanish worker in a catering hall, who was so taken by a

particular beat, and had heard the song played so many times at weddings and bar mitzvas, that he knew not only the tune, but the Hebrew words as well!

### TRANSPORT TO ANOTHER WORLD

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to the place where he wants to be." As the following anecdotes illustrate, song can reach to the very depths of one's soul, and effect a complete transformation for the good.

When Aryeh<sup>5</sup> invited his brother Bob to spend *Shabbos* with his family on the occasion of his son's bar-mitzva, Bob demurred, since he had long ago abandoned the religious upbringing that they had once shared.

"If I come," Bob said, "I come as is, in a T-shirt and jeans—and I don't want to embarrass you."

"You won't embarrass me," Aryeh replied. "You're my brother and I really want you to come." In the end, Bob came.

Though Aryeh is not Chassidic, on Friday night he took his brother to a prominent Chassidic *minyán* well known for its beautiful singing. As Providence willed it, the *sheliach tzibbur* that night was a true master of *nigun*. As "*Lecha Dod*" was being sung, Bob suddenly burst into tears. The *nigun* had touched his soul. He ultimately returned to his roots.

In a similar incident, a young man who had forsaken Torah and *mitzvos* as a teenager was inspired to return when attending a *Sheva Berachos* meal at which many soul-stirring *nigunim* were sung.

Children, as well, can be inspired by true *nigun*. A prominent *mechanech* related that some forty years ago he brought a young student, who was from a non-religious home, to *Shalosh Seudos* in Mesivta Torah Vodaath. The *Shalosh Seudos* was held in the dark, and slow, moving *nigunim* were sung. At one point, the *Rebbi* asked the boy, "Are you sleepy?" "No," came the soft reply, "just thinking."

Forty years later, the *Rebbi* phoned this same student and invited him to be his guest for *Shabbos*. "Do they still have the same kind of *Shalosh Seudos*?" the man wanted to know.

#### THE OTHER SIDE

Just as song can inspire for the good, however, so can it excite in a very negative way. This needs no proof. There is no doubt that "hard rock" or the like awakens the

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most base feelings in a person and can infect a refined human being in a manner that can only be described as coarse and vulgar. There are other shades of secular music which, though not in the category of hard rock, are nonetheless harmful to the soul and have no place in the life of a *ben Torah* or *bas Yisroel*. And if we are not great enough to state unequivocally that such music stems from a source that is the antithesis of holiness and purity, the *tzaddikim* of yesteryear certainly were.

One Friday night, the *ba'al tefilla* for *Kaballas Shabbos* in Williamsburg's Moditzter *Beis Midrash* was somewhat of a prankster. He sang "*Lecha Dodl*" to the tune of a mournful love song. When *davering* ended, the Moditzter *Rebbe*, Rabbi Shaul Yedidya Taub, ל"ח, asked, "Where is that tune from?"

"Oh, it's just a song," came the evasive reply.

"Well, don't use it again," the *Rebbe* said firmly. "It smacks of *tuma* (impurity)."<sup>6</sup>

Some may contend: Did not the Chassidic masters of yesteryear

adapt Russian marches and shepherds' croonings, transforming them into *Yiddishe nigunim*?

This writer does not consider himself qualified to respond to this question in a definitive way, but a few

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suggestions do come to mind. Surely, today's composers of Jewish song do not view themselves as being on the lofty level of those *tzaddikim*, whose finely tuned spiritual ears knew with certainty that the songs they sang were pure and uplifting. Furthermore, there is a vast difference between the tunes of old and the secular music of today, upon which much of contemporary Jewish music is based. Proof is the inspiration that does or does not result from a given *nigun*. The *nigunim*

of old inspire *dveikus*, a feeling that one is in the midst of an intense spiritual experience. Hands join and a circle is formed: souls are bound up with one another and with their Creator. This writer can honestly say that the most beautiful weddings I have attended were those where the heart of the celebration was not the performer in the middle, but the concentric circles of guests dancing in step to *nigunim* of old—or new *nigunim* with an old flavor.

This last point is particularly im-

portant. The last few years have seen the production of some beautiful tapes filled with soul-stirring tunes and tasteful music. To the surprise of some, these tapes were instant hits and their tunes are played and sung at many *simchos*. There is a difference, though, between the kind of dancing and singing they evoke and that which results from the music on which our discussion has focused. The gyrations which the latter inspires (on both sides of the *mechitza*, I've been told) have no place in *Yiddishkeit*. How sad that the holiness and purity of the *chupa* should give way to such blaring cacophony and unrefined stomping!

#### SUBLIME CELEBRATION

A friend of mine observed: There is virtually not a *shul* anywhere that would use any of these tunes in their Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur *davening*. It seems that everyone senses that such singing has no place in these solemn and awesome days. Yet, there are many who feel that they do have a place at a Jewish wedding.

Perhaps it would be worthwhile for us all to study the words of *Chazal* regarding the loftiness of the wedding celebration and the privilege of participating in it. While such a study is beyond the scope of this article, the following quote from *Maharal*<sup>1</sup> is certainly food for thought:

"Our Sages liken [gladdening the groom and bride] to building one of the ruins of Jerusalem, because the union of man and woman is itself considered the building of a home. As the Sages ordained [as part of the text of the Sheva Berachos], 'And He [G-d] prepared for him [Adam] — from himself, a building for eternity'; thus, man and woman together complete a building. This building is not a human building but a G-dly one. Therefore, when one gladdens a groom and bride and [in so doing, helps to] unite them, it is considered as if he built one of the ruins of Jerusalem, for surely, the building of one of these ruins is something G-dly and sacred. Ponder these thoughts and know that gladdening a groom and bride is a sublime mitzva."

As is well known, the day of the wedding is like Yom Kippur for the *chassan* and *kalla*, a day on which

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they fast, recite "Al Cheit," attain atonement for their sins and pray that they merit to build a true Jewish home. They proceed from their Yom Kippur to stand under the *chupa*, where *chassan* and *kalla* utilize this most auspicious moment in their lives to pray for themselves and others, after which they become husband and wife through the marriage ceremony. The wedding meal can be likened to the spiritual joy of Succos and Simchas Torah that follows the repentance and awe of Yom Kippur. Moreover, the wedding celebration is reflective of another simultaneous celebration.

It is told that at the wedding of one of his children, Rabbi Yehuda Leib of Slonim reflected: "I rejoice when my child is wed, and Ivan the Cossack rejoices when his child is wed. What is the difference? My joy is the joy of G-d, 'in Whose abode is this celebration.'"<sup>8</sup>

It behooves us to ensure that the music and dancing at our weddings are, indeed, worthy of G-d's abode.

#### ALL YEAR ROUND

Our discussion has focused on wedding music. In truth, it is relevant to any music we listen to, any time, any place.

Some years ago, a suggestion was put forth that a committee be formed to assign ratings to Jewish books and tapes. A book or tape could be rated "excellent," "good," "fair," or "unacceptable." It seems that such a system is fraught with problems and unlikely to ever materialize. There is no reason, however, why parents cannot keep watch over what sort of music their children listen to. Given the importance of *negina*, such vigilance is basic to a parent's *chinuch* obligation. Of course, adults, both old and young, should be selective and exercise caution when choosing music for their own listening pleasure.

Most important, those who feel qualified to provide the religious community with music and song should give some thought to the responsibility which they have accepted upon themselves. It is in their power to help thousands of Jewish men and women, boys and girls, achieve a

heightened closeness with *Hashem*—and it is in their power to achieve the opposite.

The word *מקדק* can mean to dance<sup>9</sup> or to sift.<sup>10</sup> The Chassidic masters see a connection: when a Jew dances, the impurities within himself are sifted out, and what remains is a soul that exults as it renews its bond with *Hashem*.

But for this to occur, the song to which one dances must itself be pure. Only then can it achieve the lofty goal of true *negina*. ■

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Mitzva 384.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to *Pe'as Hashulchan*.

<sup>3</sup> *Shemini Atzeres* is a festival for itself.

<sup>4</sup> *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet*, p. 104.

<sup>5</sup> The names are fictitious.

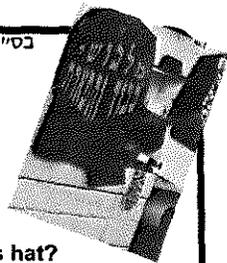
<sup>6</sup> Related by the *ba'al tefilla*.

<sup>7</sup> *Chiddushet Aggados to Berachos 6a*. For an extensive discussion of the loftiness of the wedding night and related subjects, one is directed to *Shehastmcha Bi'meono*, by Rabbi Nachman Yosef Wilhelm (Israel 1991).

<sup>8</sup> From the *Zimur* which accompanies *Birkas Hamazon* during the week of *Sheva Berachos*.

<sup>9</sup> As in *Keitzad merakdin lifnei hakalla?* (How does one dance before the bride?—*Kesubos 16b*).

<sup>10</sup> As in *Mishna Shabbos 7:2*.

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- Klugman, Rabbi Eliyahu Meir** *The Hebron Disaster: A Torah Perspective*, April '94
- Lazewnik, Libby** *The Spider* (poem), Sept. '94
- Magill, Alan** *Exodus From Work* (SL), Oct. '94
- Mermelstein, Dr. Jacob** *Revisiting: A Wake-up Call for Derech Eretz*, Dec. '94
- Meyer, Pinchas** *When Nachshon's Parents Led the Way*, Dec. '94
- Millman, Malka** *One Hundred and Twenty Reasons*, March '94
- Oriowek, Rabbi Noach** *Freedom: An Examination of the Gifts of Z'man Cheirusetnu*, March '94; *Striving to Forgive, Learning to Forget*, Sept. '94
- Perlow, Rabbi Yaakov** "Modernity versus Eternity": Two Letters and Responses, April '94
- Pollack, Yisroel Yehuda** *Books in Review, The Yearning Soul: Essays For the Thinking Jew*, March '94
- Prochko, June** *More Than Meets the Eye: Signals for Help*, Jan. '94
- Reisman, Rabbi Yaakov** *Thank You, Hashem, For The Four Sons*, March '94
- Reisman, Rabbi Yisroel** *Our Mandate to Create Kiddush Sheim Shamayim*, March '94
- Rogela, Raizy** *Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in the Third Grade*, Nov. '94
- Rosenblum, Yonason** *Rabbi Yehuda Zev Segal, ז"ר צדיק לבינה*: A *Chofetz Chaim* For Our Time, Feb. '94; *Good News From Israel?* April '94; *The Chickens Come Home To Roost: Zionism's Internal Contradictions and the Peace Process*, June '94; *As We Were Saying*, Sept. '94; *A Chofetz Chessed in Our Times*, Dec. '94
- Rostker, Yehuda** "It's Not That I'm Telling You What To Do, But..." Sept. '94
- Salomon, Yaakov** *Out of the Woods* (SL), May '94
- Samsonowitz, Miriam** *Farewell to Shmittah* (PS), Sept. '94
- Scherman, Rabbi Nesson** *Why Do They Say Those Things About Us? An Examination of Causes, and Some Responses*, March '94
- Schiller, Mordechai** *Our Hands Did Not Spill This Blood*, Sept. '94
- Schwab, Rabbi Shimon** *Parent Outreach: The New Horizon in Torah Education*, Feb. '94
- Shafra, Rabbi Avi** *In Challenge, Opportunity*, March '94; *Musings on the Cairo Conference* (SL), Dec. '94
- Shapiro, Rabbi Chaim** *Rabbi Moshe Rosenstain ז"ל, Mashgiach of the Yeshiva of Lomza*, Jan. '95
- Shapiro, Sarah** *Beyond the White Tablecloth*, Feb. '94
- Shulman, Avi** *Book Reviews*, June '94
- Tauber, Rabbi Ezriel** *Yamim Noraim*, All Year Through, Sept. '94
- Toshavi, Ezriel** *Pluralism Versus Unity in Israel* (SL), Dec. '94
- Twerski, Prof. Aaron** *Standing Up For Torah Principles—Battles on the Personal Front*, May '94; *Remembering Reb Mendel* (book review), Jan. '95
- Weil, Judith** *The Many Forms of Chessed*, Sept. '94
- Wein, Rabbi Berel** *Daas Torah: An Ancient Definition of Authority and Responsibility*, Oct. '94
- Wein, Dr. Simon** *Who Can Best Serve the Needs of a Modern Orthodox Congregation?* Dec. '94
- Weinberger, Rabbi Dovid** *What Do You Say To That?—Permissible and Forbidden Speech*, Summer '94
- Wikler, Dr. Meir** "Help Me Get Married!" Feb. '94
- Wolpin, H. D.** *Books in Review, Beyond Your Ego*, Feb. '94
- Wolpin, Rabbi Nisson** *Schindler's List—Unvisited*, (SL), Feb. '94; *The New Vatican-Israel Relationship: A Step Towards What?* (SL), March '94; "Modernity versus Eternity": Two Letters and Responses, April '94; *It's Hard/It's Easy To Be A Jew* (SL), May '94; *A Bridge Across Chasms of Divisiveness* (SL), June '94; *Through the Tears—Celebrate!*, Sept. '94; *Noted With Sorrow and Outrage, Prayer and Hope* (SL), Sept. '94; *A Mechanech For All Times, A Teacher For All Ages: A Tribute to Rabbi Yehoshua Silbermanitz ז"ל*, Oct. '94

## SUBJECTS

- Achdus (unity)** *Like One Man, With One Heart* (SL)/Shimon Finkelman, May '94; *Out of the Woods* (SL)/Yaakov Salomon, May '94; *A Bridge Across Chasms of Divisiveness* (SL)/Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, June '94; *Our Hands Did Not Spill This Blood/Mordechai Schiller*, Sept. '94

**Baalei Teshuva** Beyond the White Tablecloth/Sarah Shapiro, Feb. '94; The Seder/Anna Gotlieb, March '94; More Than Meets the Eye: Signals for Help/June Prochko, Jan. '94

**Biography** "Gedolim Books" and the Biography of Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky זצ"ל/Rabbi Aharon Feldman, Nov. '94; Remembering Reb Mendel (book review), Jan. '95

**Bitachon (trust)** "I Shall Not Fear For You Are With Me"/S. Frank, Nov. '94

**Books in Review** Yesterday Today and Forever: Exploring Contemporary Judaism from the Perspective of Jewish History, Feb. '94; Living Inspired, Feb. '94; Beyond Your Ego, Feb. '94; The Yearning Soul: Essays For the Thinking Jew, March '94; My Child, My Disciple, June '94; My Disciple, My Child, June '94; Jewish Artwork, June '94; Reb Yaakov [Kamenetzky זצ"ל], Nov. '94; Reb Mendel, Jan. '95

**Calendar** Letters, June '94

**Centrism** "Modernity Versus Eternity": Two Letters and Responses/Lawrence Kaplan, Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, Samuel C. Heilman, Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, April '94

**Charedim** "Modernity Versus Eternity": Two Letters and Responses/Lawrence Kaplan, Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, Samuel C. Heilman, Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, April '94; A Bridge Across Chasms of Divisiveness (SL)/Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, June '94; Who Can Best Serve the Needs of a Modern Orthodox Congregation?/Dr. Simon Wein, Dec. '94

**Chessed (Acts of Kindness)** Our Hands Did Not Spill This Blood/Mordechai Schiller, Sept. '94; The Many Forms of Chessed/Judith Weil, Sept. '94; When Children Help Children/Yaakov Astor, Nov. '94; A Chofetz Chessed in Our Times/Yonason Rosenblum, Dec. '94

**Chibas HaAretz (Love for Eretz Yisroel)** Visions of Zion Revisited/Rabbi Nachman Bulman, June '94

**Children** Thank You, Hashem, For The Four Sons/Rabbi Yaakov Reisman, March '94; When Children Help Children/Yaakov Astor, Nov. '94; Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in the Third Grade/Raizy Rogela, Nov. '94

**Chinuch** Thank You, Hashem, For The Four Sons/Rabbi Yaakov Reisman, March '94; (Books in Review) My Child, My Disciple, June '94; My Disciple, My Child, June '94; The Art of Tochacha/Rabbi Hillel Belsky, Nov. '94; When Children Help Children/Yaakov Astor, Nov. '94

**Conservative Judaism** It's Hard/It's Easy To Be A Jew (SL), May '94

**Conversion** One Hundred and Twenty Reasons/Mrs. Millman, March '94

**Daas Torah** Daas Torah: An Ancient Definition of Authority and Responsibility/Rabbi Berel Wein, Oct. '94; Letters, Dec. '94

**Day Schools** Parent Outreach: The New Horizon in Torah Education/Rabbi Shimon Schwab, Feb. '94

**Decorum** Let's Shmooze About Davening/Jacob I. Friedman, Sept. '94; "It's Not That I'm Telling You What To Do, But..."/Yehuda Rostker, Sept. '94; Letters, Jan. '94

**Derech Eretz** Revisiting: A Wake-up Call for Derech Eretz/Dr. Jacob Mermelstein, Dec. '94

**Eiruv** Eiruv in Modern Metropolitan Areas/Rabbi Yosef Gavriel Bechhofer, June '94

**Employment** The Next Challenge - Part II/A. Customer, March '94; In Search of a Livelihood (SL)/Dov Borenstein, April '94; Exodus From Work (SL)/Alan Magill, Oct. '94

**Emuna (faith)** When Nachshon's Parents Led the Way/Pinchas Meyer, Dec. '94

**Festivals and Fast Days** Freedom: An Examination of the Gifts of Z'man Cheiruseinu/Rabbi Noach Orlowek, March '94; Thank You, Hashem, For The Four Sons/Rabbi Yaakov Reisman, March '94; The Seder/Anna Gotlieb, March '94; Striving to Forgive, Learning to Forget/Rabbi Noach Orlowek, Sept. '94; Yamim Noraim, All Year Through/Rabbi Ezzriel Tauber, Sept. '94; Through the Tears—Celebrate!/Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, Sept. '94; News From The Home Front—Some Chanuka Reflections/Rabbi Moshe Eisemann, Dec. '94

**Fiction** Letters, April '94

**Forgiveness** Striving to Forgive, Learning to Forget/Rabbi Noach Orlowek, Sept. '94

**Freedom** Freedom: An Examination of the Gifts of Z'man Cheiruseinu/Rabbi Noach Orlowek, March '94

**Guttman Report** Good News From Israel?/Yonason Rosenblum, April '94

**Halacha (Torah Law)** Letters, March '94; Shmittah 5754: An Update From the Homefront/Rabbi Dovid Goldblum, April '94; What Do You Say To That?—Permissible and Forbidden Speech/Rabbi Dovid Weinberger, June '94; Letters, Nov. '94; Eiruv in Modern Metropolitan Areas/Rabbi Yosef Gavriel Bechhofer, June '94

**Hashkafa (Torah Philosophy)** (Books in Review) Living Inspired, Feb. '94; Our Mandate to Create Kiddush Sheim Shamayim/Rabbi Yisroel Reisman, March '94; Freedom: An Examination of the Gifts of Z'man

Cheiruseinu/Rabbi Noach Orlowek, March '94; Love of Chiddush—For Better or For Worse/Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller, May '94; Like One Man, With One Heart (SL)/Shimon Finkelman, May '94; Visions of Zion Revisited/Rabbi Nachman Bulman, June '94; The Chickens Come Home To Roost: Zionism's Internal Contradictions and the Peace Process/Yonason Rosenblum, June '94; Daas Torah: An Ancient Definition of Authority and Responsibility/Rabbi Berel Wein,

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Oct. '94; Jewish Survival—the Fact and its Implications/Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb, Oct. '94; "I Shall Not Fear For You Are With Me"/S. Frank, Nov. '94; *Yeridas Hadoros* and/or "Dwarfs on the Shoulders of Giants"/Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller, Dec. '94; Builders and Destroyers/Rabbi Aaron Brafman, Jan. '95; *Mezuzos, Machlokes, and Eilu va'Eilu Divrei Elokim Chaim*/Rabbi Yosef Gavriel Bechhofer, Jan. '95

**Hebron** The Hebron Disaster: A Torah Perspective/Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Klugman, April '94;

**History** The Past As Teacher—A Review Article/Rabbi Eliezer Gevritz, Feb. '94; *The Pinkus*(SL)/Rabbi Nachum Klein, March '94; Visions of Zion Revisited/Rabbi Nachman Bulman, June '94; Jewish Survival—the Fact and its Implications/Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb, Oct. '94

**Holocaust** *Schindler's List*—Unvisited(SL)/Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, Feb. '94; Through the Tears—Celebrate!/Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, Sept. '94; Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam, ז"ר נדיק לרביה, The Late Sanz-Klausenberger Rav/Sidney Greenwald, Nov. '94

**Holocaust Revisionism** Focus on Holocaust Revisionism/Rabbi Hershel Becker, Oct. '94

**Insularity** "Modernity Versus Eternity": Two Letters and Responses/Lawrence Kaplan, Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, Samuel C. Heilman, Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, April '94; Love of *Chiddush*—For Better or For Worse/Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller, May '94; The Invasive Spirit of Modern Values/Rabbi Yissochar Frand, May '94; Standing Up For Torah Principles—Battles on the Personal Front/Prof. Aaron Twerski, May '94

**Interpersonal Relations** Striving to Forgive, Learning to Forget/Rabbi Noach Orlowek, Sept. '94; Revisiting: A Wake-up Call for *Derech Eretz*/Dr. Jacob Mermelstein, Dec. '94

**Inter-Religious Relations** The New Vatican-Israel Relationship: A Step Towards What?(SL)/Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, March '94;

**Introspection** (Books in Review) *Beyond Your Ego*, Feb. '94; One Hundred and Twenty Reasons/Mrs. Millman, March '94; Striving to Forgive, Learning to Forget/Rabbi Noach Orlowek, Sept. '94; "I Shall Not Fear For You Are With Me"/S. Frank, Nov. '94

**Israel** The Hebron Disaster: A Torah Perspective/Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Klugman, April '94

**Israeli—Religion** The New Vatican-Israel Relationship: A Step Towards What?(SL)/Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, March '94; The Hebron Disaster: A Torah Perspective/Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Klugman, April '94; Good News From Israel?/Yonason Rosenblum, April '94; Farewell to *Shmittah*(PS)/Miriam Samsonowitz, Sept. '94; *Shmittah* 5754: An Update From the Homefront/Rabbi Dovid Goldblum, April '94; Pluralism Versus Unity in Israel (SL)/Ezriel Toshavi, Dec. '94; Israelism Versus Judaism (SL)/Elchanan Blumenthal, Jan. '95; The International *Shmittah* Contest (SL)/Sorah Cohen, Jan. '94

**Jews in Argentina** Noted With Sorrow and Outrage, Prayer and Hope (SL)/Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, Sept. '94

**Jews in Australia** Who Can Best Serve the Needs of a Modern Orthodox Congregation?/Dr. Simon Wein, Dec. '94

**Jews in Europe** *The Pinkus*(SL)/Rabbi Nachum Klein, March '94; Rabbi Moshe Rosenstain ז"ל, *Mashgiach* of the Yeshiva of Lomza/Chaim Shapiro, Jan. '95

**Jews in Israel** The Many Forms of *Chessed*/Judith Weil, Sept. '94; Farewell to *Shmittah* (PS)/Miriam Samsonowitz, Sept. '94; A Story That Just Won't Die (SL)/Dovid Freund, Sept. '94; Seek Peace and Pursue It (SL)/Sorah Cohen, Sept. '94; Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam, ז"ר נדיק לרביה, The Late Sanz-Klausenberger Rav/Sidney Greenwald, Nov. '94; When Nachshon's Parents Led the Way/Finchas Meyer, Dec. '94; The International *Shmittah* Contest (SL)/Sorah Cohen, Jan. '94

**Jews in USA** Parent Outreach: The New Horizon in Torah Education/Rabbi Shimon Schwab, Feb. '94; Report From L.A. (PS)/Rabbi Zvi B. Hollander, May '94; A *Mechanech* For All Times, A Teacher For All Ages: A Tribute to Rabbi Yehoshua Silbermintz ז"ל/Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, Oct. '94; Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam, ז"ר נדיק לרביה, The Late Sanz-Klausenberger Rav/Sidney Greenwald, Nov. '94

**Kahanism** The Hebron Disaster: A Torah Perspective/Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Klugman, April '94

**Marriage** "Help Me Get Married!"/Dr. Meir Wikler, Feb. '94; Letters, May '94; Letters, Nov. '94

**Media** *Schindler's List*—Unvisited(SL)/Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, Feb. '94; Why Do They Say Those Things About Us? An Examination of Causes, and Some Responses/Rabbi Nossou Scherman, March '94; The [In]Visible American Orthodox Jew/Rabbi Yitzchok Isbec, March '94; In Challenge, Opportunity/Rabbi Avi Shafran, March '94

**Modernity** Love of *Chiddush*—For Better or For Worse/Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller, May '94; The Invasive Spirit of Modern Values/Rabbi Yissochar Frand, May '94; Standing Up For Torah Principles—Battles on the Personal Front/Prof. Aaron Twerski, May '94

**Modern Orthodoxy** Who Can Best Serve the Needs of a Modern Orthodox Congregation?/Dr. Simon Wein, Dec. '94

**Mussar (Ethics)** Rabbi Yehuda Zev Segal, ז"ר נדיק לרביה: A Chofetz Chaim For Our Time/Yonason Rosenblum, Feb. '94; Rabbi Mordechai Schwab, ז"ר נדיק לרביה: Personification of a *Mussar* Life/Rabbi Binyomin Forst, May '94; Rabbi Moshe Rosenstain ז"ל, *Mashgiach* of the Yeshiva of Lomza/Chaim Shapiro, Jan. '95

**Narrative** *The Pinkus*(SL)/Rabbi Nachum Klein, March '94; Exodus From Work (SL)/Alan Magill, Oct. '94

**Orthodox Jews** Why Do They Say Those Things About Us? An Examination of Causes, and Some Responses/Rabbi Nossou Scherman, March '94; The [In]Visible American Orthodox Jew/Rabbi Yitzchok Isbec, March '94; Our Mandate to Create *Kiddush Sheim Shamayim*/Rabbi Yisroel Reisman, March '94; In Challenge, Opportunity/Rabbi Avi Shafran, March '94; Who Can Best Serve the Needs of a Modern Orthodox Congregation?/Dr. Simon Wein, Dec. '94

**Outreach** Parent Outreach: The New Horizon in Torah Education/Rabbi Shimon Schwab, Feb. '94; (Books in Review) *Living Inspired*, Feb. '94; Out of the Woods (SL)/Yaakov Salomon, May '94; Musings on the Cairo Conference (SL)/Rabbi Avi Shafran, Dec. '94; More Than Meets the Eye: Signals for Help/June Prochko, Jan. '94

**Peace Process** The Chickens Come Home To Roost: Zionism's Internal Contradictions and the Peace Process/Yonason Rosenblum, June '94

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**Personalities** Rabbi Yehuda Zev Segal, לבינה זצ"ל: A Chofetz Chaim For Our Time/Yonason Rosenblum, Feb. '94; (Rabbi Meir Shapiro) Letters, March '94; Rabbi Mordechai Schwab, זצ"ל לבינה: Personification of a Mussar Life/Rabbi Binyomin Forst, May '94; A *Mechanech* For All Times, A Teacher For All Ages: A Tribute to Rabbi Yehoshua Silbermintz זצ"ל/Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, Oct. '94; Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam, זצ"ל לבינה, The Late Sanz-Klausenberger Rav/Sidney Greenwald, Nov. '94; "Gedolim Books" and the Biography of Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky זצ"ל/Rabbi Aharon Feldman, Nov. '94; A *Chofetz Chessed* in Our Times/Yonason Rosenblum, Dec. '94; Rabbi Moshe Rosenstain זצ"ל, *Mashgiach* of the Yeshiva of Lomza/Chaim Shapiro, Jan. '95

**Pirchei Agudath Israel** A *Mechanech* For All Times, A Teacher For All Ages: A Tribute to Rabbi Yehoshua Silbermintz זצ"ל/Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, Oct. '94

**Pluralism** Pluralism Versus Unity in Israel (SL)/Ezriel Tshavi, Dec. '94

**Poetry** An *Erev Shabbos* Bath(poem)/G. Bachrach, March '94; All We Take With Us (poem)/Bracha Druss Goetz, Oct. '94; Love Grows (poem)/Bracha Druss Goetz, Nov. '94

**Population Control** Musings on the Cairo Conference (SL)/Rabbi Avi Shafran, Dec. '94

**Psychotherapy** "Help Me Get Married!"/Dr. Meir Wikler, Feb. '94; Letters, May '94

**Rabbinite** Who Can Best Serve the Needs of a Modern Orthodox Congregation?/Dr. Simon Wein, Dec. '94

**Rabbinical Authority** see *Daas Torah*

**Reform** Pluralism Versus Unity in Israel (SL)/Ezriel Tshavi, Dec. '94

**Remembering** Through the Tears—Celebrate! /Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, Sept. '94

**Review Article** The Past As Teacher—A Review Article/Rabbi Eliezer Gevitz, Feb. '94; "Gedolim Books" and the Biography of Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky זצ"ל/Rabbi Aharon Feldman, Nov. '94; Remembering Reb Mendel (book review)/Prof. Aaron Twerski, Jan. '95

**Shabbos** An *Erev Shabbos* Bath(poem)/G. Bachrach, March '94

**Shemiras Halashon (purity of speech)** Rabbi Yehuda Zev Segal, זצ"ל לבינה: A Chofetz Chaim For Our Time/Yonason Rosenblum, Feb. '94; What Do You Say To That?—Permissible and Forbidden Speech/Rabbi Dovid Weinberger, June '94; Letters, Nov. '94; Seek Peace and Pursue It (SL)/Sorah Cohen, Sept. '94

**Shmittah** *Shmittah* 5754: An Update From the Homefront/Rabbi Dovid Goldblum, April '94; Letters, '94; Farewell to *Shmittah* (PS)/Miriam Samsonowitz, Sept. '94; The International *Shmittah* Contest (SL)/Sorah Cohen, Jan. '94

**Singles** "Help Me Get Married!"/Dr. Meir Wikler, Feb. '94; Letters, May '94; Letters, Nov. '94

**Social Comment** "Help Me Get Married!"/Dr. Meir Wikler, Feb. '94; Beyond the White Tablecloth/Sarah Shapiro, Feb. '94; Why Do They Say Those Things About Us? An Examination of Causes, and Some Responses/Rabbi Nosson Scherman, March '94; The [In]Visible American Orthodox Jew/Rabbi Yitzchok Isbee, March '94; In Challenge, Opportunity/Rabbi Avi Shafran, March '94; The Next Challenge - Part II/A. Customer, March '94; Good News From Israel?/Yonason Rosenblum, April '94; Love of *Chiddush*—For Better or For Worse/Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller, May '94; The Invasive Spirit of Modern Values/Rabbi Yissochar Frand, May '94; Standing Up For Torah Principles—Battles on the Personal Front/Prof. Aaron Twerski, May '94; Musings on the Cairo Conference (SL)/Rabbi Avi Shafran, Dec. '94; More Than Meets the Eye: Signals for Help/June Prochko, Jan. '94

**Tefilla (prayer)** Let's *Shmooze* About *Davening*/Jacob I. Friedman, Sept. '94; "It's Not That I'm Telling You What To Do. But..." /Yehuda Rostker, Sept. '94; Letters, Jan. '94

**Terrorism** Noted With Sorrow and Outrage, Prayer and Hope (SL)/Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, Sept. '94; When Nachshon's Parents Led the Way/Pinchas Meyer, Dec. '94

**Teshuva** One Hundred and Twenty Reasons/Mrs. Millman, March '94; Striving to Forgive, Learning to Forget/Rabbi Noach Orlowek, Sept. '94

**Tochacha (reproof)** The Art of *Tochacha*/Rabbi Hillel Belsky, Nov. '94

**Torah Education** Parent Outreach: The New Horizon in Torah Education/Rabbi Shimon Schwab, Feb. '94

**Torah Umadda** "Modernity Versus Eternity": Two Letters and Responses/Lawrence Kaplan, Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, Samuel C. Heilman, Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, April '94; *Yeridas Hadoros* and/or "Dwarfs on the Shoulders of Giants"/Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller, Dec. '94

**Vatican** The New Vatican-Israel Relationship: A Step Towards What?(SL)/Rabbi Nissan Wolpin, March '94

**Yeminite Aliya** A Story That Just Won't Die (SL)/Dovid Freund, Sept. '94

**Yeshiva Alumni** The Next Challenge - Part II/A. Customer, March '94; In Search of a Livelihood(SL)/Dov Borenstein, April '94

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**Zionism** Visions of Zion Revisited/Rabbi Nachman Bulman, June '94; The Chickens Come Home To Roost: Zionism's Internal Contradictions and the Peace Process/Yonason Rosenblum, June '94; As We Were Saying/Yonason Rosenblum, Sept. '94

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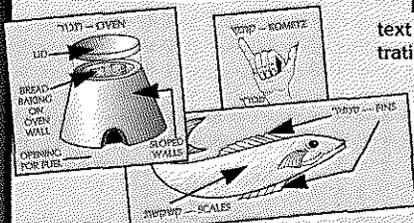
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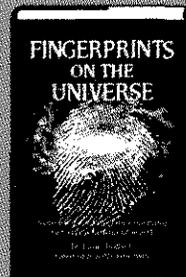
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