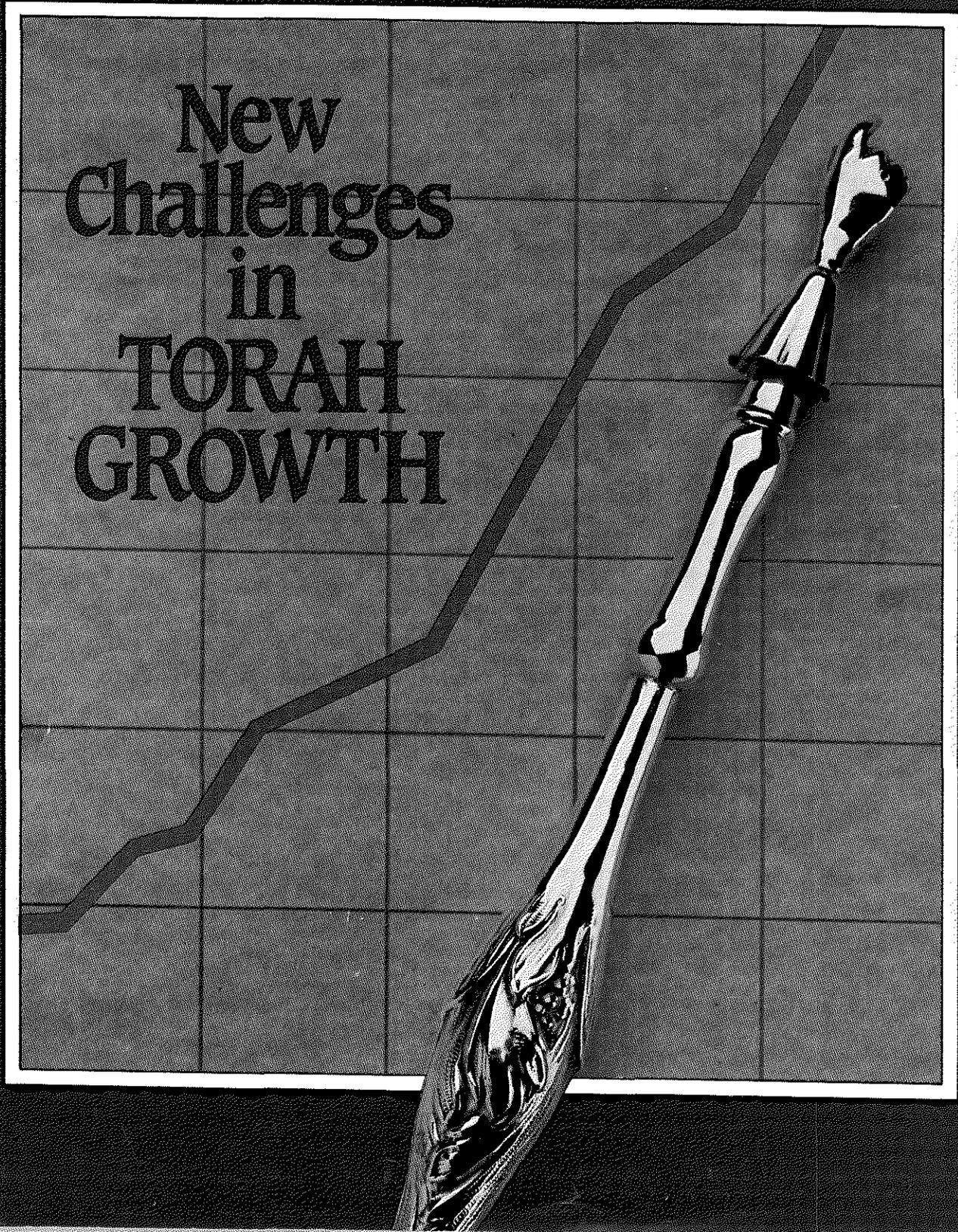


THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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Founders Dinner
Sunday evening, February 14th
The New York Hilton

Celebrating the Founding of Sanz Medical Center

The evening will mark the development of Laniado from a small community hospital into a major health facility. In its relatively short history, the hospital expanded into one of the most important medical facilities in Israel, occupying four spacious buildings, which contain 15 medical and surgical departments.

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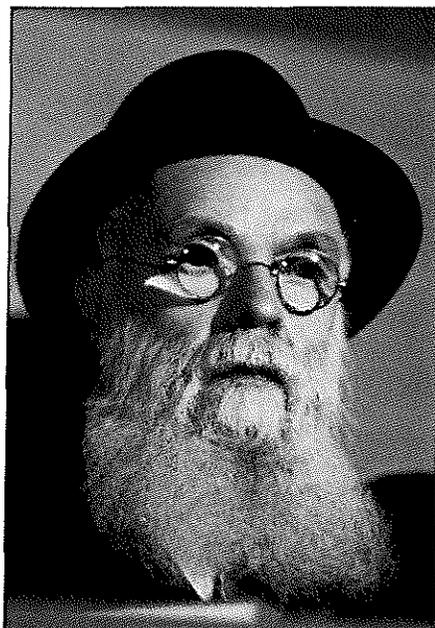
Reacting to Symptoms or Treating the Cause?

based on a public address by Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov Pam שליט"א, Rosh Hayeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath and member of Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah, delivered at the 65th annual convention of Agudath Israel of America.

FROM DUST TO STRENGTH

The beginning of *Parshas Va-yetzet* relates that while *Yaakov Avinu* slept in Bethel, G-d appeared to him and told him, among other tidings, "Your children will be like the dust of the earth and you will extend your borders to the west, the east, the north and the south" (*Bereishis* 27,4). The *Sforno* explains that these two predictions are sequential: that is, "First you will reach the ultimate depths of suffering—*tachlis hashiflus*, like the dust of the earth—and then achieve the height of glory."

We have surely more than fulfilled the prerequisite for achieving greatness. We were treated like the dust of the earth—despised, trampled upon, and killed. Surely nothing in the annals of history can rival the torture and dehumanization inflicted



upon the Jews during World War II. And now we are awaiting the next step—"and then: '*Uforatzta*—you will spread out'..." But this level of national glory and spiritual strength has not yet been granted us. After

the suffering should come the era of consolation. Why are we experiencing this delay?

EARNING THE PROMISE

A passage in the prophecies of Amos can explain the obstacle that might be preventing a free-flowing of fulfillment from one phase of the Divine promise—the suffering—to the next—the consolation that we so desperately want. But first, an incident in the life of my late grandfather, the *Shedlitzer Rav* שליט"א, can help us understand part of the message of Amos's prophecy.

■
The *Rav* and his *Rebbetzin* were well known for their *hachnosas orchim*, their warm hospitality. A *Shabbos* never went by without

guests at their table. As a rule, strangers in Shedlitz for a *Shabbos* would come to the *shul* for Friday night *tefillos*, and then report to the *Shammos* for assignment to a host. On a particular Friday night, two strangers came—one, a large, husky fellow with a ruddy complexion, and the other a thin, pale man, with a wistful, ascetic look. The *Shammos* approached the *Rav*, and whispered, "We have two guests in Shedlitz for *Shabbos*. May I assume that the *Rav* would prefer the thin gentleman?"

"No," said the *Rav*, "the heavy one."

The *Shammos* expressed surprise: "That stout man over there?"

"Yes," said the *Rav*. "I'm not inviting him to learn, I'm inviting him to eat. And I'm likely to have much more *nachas* from him. . . ."

In chastising Israel for a transgression that G-d cannot forgive, Amos says, "I destroyed the Emori, who was as tall as cedar trees, as mighty as the oak. . . . And I brought you up from Egypt, and led you through the wilderness forty years, so you should inherit the Land of the Emori. And I raised some of your sons to be prophets, and your youths to be Nazarites. But you gave the Nazarites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, 'Do not prophesy!'" (Amos 2, 9-12).

While studying this powerful indictment of Israel, one wonders: In what way is it served by the description of the Emori's physical stature? Does it in any way make Israel's sins worse?

One might say that Amos wanted to underscore how Israel had violated its refined nature, which was to have been enhanced by the spirituality inherent in the Holy Land. Indeed, that is why they were brought there. When Israel rejected spirituality in favor of a materialistic existence, however, the Prophet pointed to the earthiness of the Emori who had preceded them in the Land of Israel, to say, "If I had wanted a physically powerful, self-indulgent nation in My Land, I could have kept the Emori here. They are as tall as cedars, mighty as oaks. I expelled them

in your favor, to make place for you so you would be My prophets, My Nazarites, not to emulate them in the pursuit of earthly pleasures."

We in our time have also been granted an enviable opportunity to again enter the Holy Land and settle it. A million children and youths live in *Eretz Yisroel*. Yet, by and large, most of the children there are being brought up with a miserable *chinuch*, an education totally devoid of Torah and *Yiras Shomayim* (fear of Heaven). By all rights, these precious *neshamos* could be brought to the threshold of a loftier existence, but instead are being given the wines of a secular culture, and are being taught to reject the teachings of the Torah. This deplorable *chinuch*, which breeds rejection of religion and promotes hostility to Torah Jews, is the root of the present violent conflict between the Orthodox and the Secularists in *Eretz Yisroel*.

TREATING THE SYMPTOMS

When we react to the terrible strife that is tearing at the heart of Israel, we must not overlook the root of the problem, and content ourselves with only treating the symptoms. This would be woefully inadequate, as the *Gemora* teaches us:

Forty thousand Jews were killed in the battle against the tribe of Binyamin in the incident known as "*Pilegesh b'Giva*," in protest against brutal treatment of a concubine. The *Gemora* explains that although all of *Klal Yisroel* arose against the tribe of Binyamin for this atrocity, they were actually being judged for tolerating the transgression of *Pessel Micha* (an act of idolatry), many years earlier. "They objected to a violation of human dignity, but overlooked a desecration of My honor," said G-d (*Sanhedrin* 103b).

It seems strange that years should be allowed to pass from the time of *Pessel Micha* before G-d punished them for that sin. Furthermore, the rest of Israel did at least demonstrate some sensitivity at *Giva*, by

protesting man's inhumanity against a fellow man. Why punish them now for tolerating *Pessel Micha*?

The answer is, the *Ribbono shel Olam* said: Now you're outraged? Where were you when there was a *Pessel Micha*? If you hadn't tolerated a *Pessel Micha*, there would not have been a *Pilegesh b'Giva*! Anti-social behavior is a result of misguided *chinuch*.

Today we are incensed over the violation of *Shabbos* in *Eretz Yisroel* by the opening of movie houses on *Shabbos*, to screen indecent films. These are acts of deliberate provocation, and the religious community has responded by crying out publicly for the *kavod* of *Shabbos*. This is not a new phenomenon, but part of a pattern: The Mayor announces a plan to build a stadium on a hill overlooking Jerusalem, for Saturday soccer games, and the *Chareidim* strongly object. . . . A new highway threatens to bring *Shabbos* traffic to the foot of religious neighborhoods, and the inhabitants protest vehemently. . . . Bus stop shelters sport indecent posters all over Jerusalem, even in *Chareidi* areas, and irate citizens deface the pictures. . . .

In all of these cases, the objections are well founded, but unfortunately they only represent a reaction to the symptoms, not to the root causes. After all, what can one demand from people who were brought up in a non-religious environment, and were indoctrinated with anti-*dati* ideologies from childhood? They crave conventional types of entertainment and relaxation. They want their sports events and their evening at the movies. We must recognize that, considering their lack of exposure to the beauty and truth of Torah, their defiance of religious norms is to be expected.

Our protests may well be an articulate statement of what we stand for, and declare for the world that we find public *Chilul Shabbos* intolerable. But a protest is a response to the symptom, not a remedy to the deep-seated problems that trigger these confrontations.

A million children and youths live in the Holy Land, most of them being given an education totally devoid of Torah and Yiras Shomayim.

THE ROOT CAUSE

The root-cause is obvious: as stated, we are dealing with a generation brought up without any understanding or appreciation for Torah. Yet many of its members are weary and disillusioned with a secular life, devoid of Torah ideals and values. We could reach them, if we would but try, by embarking on a program to reach out to the parent generation with concern and compassion and Torah knowledge; on a concerted effort to teach the children of this rebellious generation; on a campaign to open more Chinnuch Atzmai-Torah Schools throughout the length and breadth of the land; to open wide the doors of Torah schools and fill them with thousands more *Yiddishe kinder*, and embrace these children and expose them to the richness of a life of Torah and *mitzvos*, so they become a source of pride and joy to *Klal Yisroel*. It is no longer a matter of knocking on doors to sell the idea of a Torah education to many of these parents. They have seen the alternative, and many are desperate to avoid it. We must do our utmost to reach out to them, to inform them of our willingness to share the wealth of our heritage with them; many of them *are* ready to respond. We possess the knowledge and we possess the ability to convey the Torah's teachings to them, if we but take this sacred cause to heart.

The situation in America is not appreciably different. Here, too, the disillusion with a secular life runs deep and people are more responsive than ever before. There are children crying out for an opportunity to collect their share of Torah, if we would but make it available to them. We must embark on more efforts to educate those who are so tragically



removed from our heritage, and do our utmost to strengthen existing programs aimed at spiritual outreach.

WE HAVE THE CAPABILITY

In the past, the Torah community was engaged in a desperate struggle to keep its own head above water. It lacked financial resources and manpower to maintain the few Torah institutions, but that is a matter of the past. Our ranks are growing, we have highly skilled people in our midst; our collective wealth has increased to the extent that we have the financial means to resolve all the problems that face us. As for our irreligious brethren, in a good number of cases, their resistance to Torah is only a facade that can easily be penetrated.

We have an overwhelming obligation to act when the hour is favorable. How important it is to seize the

initiative when the opportunity presents itself! This is illustrated by an incident in *Tanach*:

Hoshea ben Eila, the last of the kings of the Ten Tribes, is described as having "done evil in the eyes of G-d, but not like the kings of Israel that preceded him" (*Melachim* II:17,2). He had improved the spiritual status of Israel by abolishing the road blocks that Yeravam had set up hundreds of years before, to prevent the citizens of the Ten Tribes from making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem on the *Regalim* (festivals). In this way, Yeravam had hoped to weaken his people's bond to the Holy City, which was the capital of the rival kingdom of Yehuda. Now movement was free and the Jews of the Ten Tribes could visit Jerusalem as required. Yet the Ten Tribes of Israel were severely punished in Hoshea's time, and were conquered and exiled by Ashur. Why should the punishment take place when the status of Israel was improving?

The explanation of *Chazal* (*Gittin* 88a) is that until Hoshea had opened up the roads to Jerusalem, the people could not be faulted for not being *oleh regel*—not making the pilgrimage. It was beyond their control. But once the road blocks were removed, making Jerusalem accessible, and the people still did not travel to Jerusalem, they were faulted all the more. For this reason their kingdom was destroyed, and they were sent into exile.

We now have the means to accomplish so much, to salvage so many precious *Yiddishe neshamos*. If will fail to do so now, ויח, we will be recorded in history as: The Generation That Missed Its Golden Opportunity. ■

THE CHALLENGES of our CURRENT GOLUS

An Agenda for Greatness

based on an address by Rabbi Elya Svei שליט"א, Rosh Hayeshiva of the Yeshiva of Philadelphia and member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah, delivered at the 65th annual convention of Agudath Israel of America.

THE ASSIGNMENT: PERFECTION

Every aspect of our existence as a people has its place in the Divine scheme of mankind's spiritual ascent—certainly the present stage of our current *golus*, as well. Somehow, the conditions in which we are currently living must also be designed to bring us closer to our goal of achieving *shleimus*, perfection. To better understand the specific role we are expected to play, we must first step back to gain a better perspective of the general purposes of *golus* and the lessons it is meant to teach us.

It is commonly known that Creation would have reached its ultimate purpose had *Adam Harishon* followed G-d's command not to eat from the *Eitz Hadaas*, the Tree of Knowledge. But, as we know, he did violate that first *mitzva*. After his fall, the task of bringing Creation to perfection was no longer his alone; it fell upon Adam's children, all of mankind. His descendants also followed with failures of their own, and as a result, this task was assigned to yet narrower groups: after the corruption of the *dor haMabul* (the generation of the Deluge) and the destruction of the *Mabul* that fol-

lowed, the sons of Noach remained to be charged with the task of striving for perfection; and then, with the rebellion of the builders of the Tower of Bavel, the circle of those responsible for the elevation of the world was further narrowed, placing the assignment exclusively on the shoulders of Avrohom's progeny—specifically, *Yaakov Avinu* and his children. It was now incumbent upon them to raise the world to its ultimate level of *shleimus*.

After the Exodus from Egypt and the forty years of wandering in the *midbar* (wilderness), *Klal Yisroel* was on the threshold of entering the

Generally speaking, golus does possess corrective powers, but it also has a strong liability: exposure to alien cultures; and this persists to this very day.

Promised Land, where it finally could have achieved its goal of *shleimus*, once it built the *Beis Hamikdash* and the people pursued a life of *kedusha* (sanctity), as described in *Shiras Haazinu*: "He [G-d] sought them [the Jewish People] out in a desert land, in the desolation. . . . He enclosed them [with the Clouds of Glory], instructed them [with the Torah], watched over them as the apple of His eye" (*Devorim* 32,10). In the Holy Land, Israel was expected to benefit from the fulfillment of G-d's promise: "He raised him to the lofty plateaus of earth" (*ibid*,13), referring to the *Beis Hamikdash*. For the *Beis Hamikdash*, the epicenter of *Klal Yisroel* in the Holy Land, represented the lofty level *Klal Yisroel* had reached when grouped around Sinai, and could have reached again. Jewry's growth to *shleimus* was to be facilitated by *Eretz Yisroel's* crops, notably its vineyards and olive groves. Demanding minimal care and yielding bountiful harvests, they could support a populace that makes spiritual growth its major concern, requiring relatively little time or effort from them for providing sustenance.

But instead of using the special features of *Eretz Yisroel* for achieving *shleimus*, *Klal Yisroel* endured the realization of a different, tragic prediction: "Then Yeshurun became fat and rebelled" (*ibid*,15). The name "Yeshurun" was not chosen at random to describe *Klal Yisroel* at this stage, *Sforno* tells us; it refers not to the dull, materialistic hedonists whom one would expect to reject G-d's leadership, but to those of *dakus ha'iyun*—keen sensitivity and insight (related to "Ashurenu—I will gaze at Him"). Even they would rebel against their Father, in the very



ED BERNSTEIN, DENVER

same way that a beast kicks at its provider who feeds it.

So *shleimus* was not Israel's in its own Land. Yet, *Klal Yisroel* was still charged with the task of reaching *shleimus* for itself, and in the process, for all mankind. To achieve this, *Klal Yisroel* was moved on to another stage of activity, another status of existence—that of *golus*. In *golus*, it was expected that the wanderings, sufferings and deprivation of exile would remove them from the numbing influence of luxurious living and materialism. *Golus* would sharpen the dulled sensitivities of those who were meant to be in the vanguard of our People's spiritual ascent, but were not, because of living a life of abundance. In *golus*, it would be different.

AFTER THE SUFFERING IS OVER

Looking back at two millennia of *golus*, one could well say that as a people, Jewry has been exposed to every type of persecution conceivable, climaxed by the

unprecedented death and destruction suffered during World War II. Our current state of affairs in the Western lands and in *Eretz Yisroel*, however, is (thank G-d) devoid of the oppression and persecution usually associated with *golus*. In fact, we are enjoying an abundance that is a dramatic departure from our earlier experiences. Does the life of plenty that we are now enjoying actually continue the process of fine-tuning our spiritual sensitivity, preparing us for *shleimus*, when it was the very cause of our downfall when we had been living in *Eretz Yisroel*, millennia ago?

One might suggest that our current, pre-Messianic era brings to a close the years of suffering, and our new more favorable condition is a final test of sorts, to see if, after all the grinding away at the grossness of our feelings, we can finally deal with affluence: If we can be exposed to material abundance as we once were, as a people in a land of our own, and this time not fall victim to "Vayishman Yeshurun—and Yeshurun grew fat and rebelled," and not lose our *dakus ha'iyun*, our capacity for keen sensitivity and insight—once more.

But the struggle to gain and preserve *dakus ha'iyun* in a *golus* setting is complicated by factors of its own. True, generally speaking, *golus* does possess corrective powers, but it also has a strong liability: exposure to alien cultures; and this persists to this very day. *Dakus ha'iyun* calls for clarity of thought, unadulterated by non-Jewish ideologies, and we, in our present setting, must endeavor to keep our thoughts, our values, and our frame of reference faithful to Torah. This calls for unusual vigilance, for even the slight-

est distraction can be confusing.

This can be understood against the background of two exceptional experiences recorded in Scripture. On two separate occasions, the entire world was silent—not one bird sang, no leaves rustled in the wind, to insure that the impact of the event be pure, unadulterated. The first time was when G-d uttered the first two of the Ten Commandments: "Anochi—I am the L-rd your G-d," and "Lo yihye—You shall not have any other gods." The second time total silence pervaded the earth was when *Eliyahu Hanavi* called upon G-d to bring a miraculous fire onto his offering, on Mount Carmel. In each of these instances, it was essential that no trace or suspicion of a foreign element be present, which might confuse the thousands of people witnessing the events: "Anochi" is exclusive, with no allowances for sharing of Divine sovereignty with any other power. To insure the purity of this message, no extraneous sounds could accompany the pronouncement of "Anochi." Similarly, the miracle of *Har HaCarmel* resulted from Divine intervention, with the presence of no other accompanying force. To make certain that the people make no mistake regarding the exclusivity of the Source of the miracle, no sound was heard.

Our hearts and minds are extremely sensitive, and are receptive to all sorts of confusing messages. In fact, *Chazal* (the rabbis of the Talmud) suggest that a person pray before consuming food, that it not affect his mind through the material substances ingested, rendering him incapable of studying Torah without any dilution or compromise of its message. This concern is in regard to interference provoked by food, which enters the digestive tract and only reaches the brain much later, in a highly refined form, after following a circuitous route. Yet *Chazal* were fearful of the possibility of it causing some confusion in a person's cognitive capacities! Imagine the care one must exercise to avoid the direct influence of false values and ideologies!

We who are fortunate enough to bring children into the world surely hope that they will grow to be counted amongst the children of *Yeshurun*, who will possess that precious *dakus ha'iyun*. Consider, then, the conscientious parent who is highly selective in regard to the school in which he enrolls his young son, the *rebbe* who teaches him, and the companions with whom the child spends his time. Surely, even after all his probing and selecting, the child will still need *Siyata diShmaya* to learn Torah and absorb it well in his tender mind, to become that select member of *Yeshurun*. Nevertheless, after a stimulating and strenuous day in yeshiva, many such children return home, often to turn on their television sets for entertainment and relaxation. There, within the *mezuzos* of the sanctuary of a Jewish home, an impressionable young child sits and fills his mind and heart with vivid portrayals of all sorts of blasphemy, immorality and violence. The evils and pernicious values of the marketplace do not enter his thinking and mold his attitudes by indirection, pursuing some circuitous route, but forcibly invade the seat of his intelligence and vigorously engage his emotions. Is it at all conceivable that, come the next morning, he will be able to absorb Torah with any degree of purity, that he will engage in his studies with the optimum degree of success? That the clarity of his mind will not be sullied?

A GUIDE TO CLARITY

Contemporary life is full of crises and challenges. To be sure, we can not rely fully on our own judgment to resolve these issues, but must be in constant consultation with *Gedolei Yisroel*. They truly carry the burdens of *Klal Yisroel*, suffer its problems, and view events from a perspective of Torah. Beyond doubt, the irreplaceable losses of the last few years have left us bereft of the towering leaders of the previous generation. They were our eyes, our hearts, our guides, and we have no one else even approaching their stature. Nonetheless, bear

in mind that when the Torah directs us to bring our questions to our sages, it tells us to consult "the judge that will be in those days" (*Devorim* 17,9) to which *Sifri* comments, "Even if he is not of the stature of his predecessors, you must listen to him, for you only have the leaders of your own time."

Fortunately, the Torah leadership has articulated its stance on many issues in public life today that cry out for intelligent, responsible assessment. For instance, the Conservative and Reform movements are putting immense pressures on the powers that be to grant them recognition in *Eretz Yisroel*. While they mouth appealing slogans, calling for "achdus," pluralism, and mutual respect, *Gedolei Torah* have pointed out that their true agenda is to institute changes in *halacha* and corrode the *mesora*. This calls for vigilance and a willingness to take unpopular positions. . . . Issues such as this are often dealt with by the lay leadership and bureaucracies of the establishment, without the guidance of a Torah perspective. Such an approach cannot succeed.

• Many look back at the events surrounding World War II and conclude that precious lives could have been saved if only people had taken more decisive action. Burdened by guilt for this lack of activity, they attempt to compensate for it with what often is a surfeit of action. Yet action is not always called for, and when not warranted, it can be counter-productive, even deadly destructive. And when action is warranted, it must be purposeful. Picture, if you will, a fire sweeping through a house. A passerby is desperate to do something—anything—to douse the flames. No water is available, but there is a bucket of gasoline. So he picks it up and throws it into the fire. . . . Obviously, "no action" would have been far more preferred to "any action, as long as something is done." The only way to determine if something at all should be done—and if yes, what—is by consulting with our *Gedolei Yisroel*. Without their counsel, we dare not act.

It is not easy to channel energies and devote finances to desperately needy Torah-and-tzeddaka causes when the major emphasis today is on spending time and money on self-gratification.

A TIME TO GROW

As we strive for *shleimus*, we must have some kind of vision, some sort of goal in mind. The *Ramban* (end of *Beretshis*) introduces *Chumash Shemos* as the *Sefer Hage'ulah*, the Book of Redemption. This redemption process continued through the Ten Plagues and all the miracles of the Exodus, on through the encampment at the foot of Mount Sinai. But it did not reach its fulfillment until the erection of the *Mishkan* (the sanctuary that travelled with Israel through the *midbar*, into *Eretz Yisroel*). With this, the *Sefer Hage'ulah* is complete. So, in our effort to scale the heights reached by the *Avos*, our patriarchs, we strive to emulate their ultimate achievement and make the *mikdash me'at* (the miniature sanctuary of our communities), our houses of study and worship, the focal point of our lives; studying Torah regularly and faithfully, growing in Torah, and living our lives in accordance with Torah and *mitzvos*, transforming ourselves into the People of the Torah in the fullest sense of the word.

Such an agenda may sound over-ambitious, especially in view of the terrible destruction we suffered just forty, fifty years ago. Indeed, one of the leading *Mussar* figures of the previous generation asked someone how severe he thought the Jewish losses of World War II were. "Six million Jews were lost," he replied.

"No," responded the questioner. "Much more. All of *Klal Yisroel* was diminished with the loss of the six million."

Such a comment might sound like a call of despair. Yet, after some thought, it should inspire encour-

agement, a rallying cry for more ambitious planning and more decisive action. If after such a devastating loss, we succeeded to some degree in repairing our ranks, and rebuilding Torah to its present level—with more young men studying Torah today in American yeshivos than in all the yeshivos in Lithuania before the War—with our numerically greater forces, and our vastly greater financial resources, we have the capability to accomplish much, much more. Surely, Rabbi Aharon Kotler זצ"ל (whose 25th *Yahrzeit* is currently being marked) had every reason for *yiush*—resignation and despair—when he arrived at these shores during the early years of World War II. All that he had created and nurtured—his yeshiva in Kletsk, his role in Agudath Israel—the society in which he flourished and developed to such greatness—all of this was almost completely destroyed. Nonetheless, he started from scratch and rebuilt on American soil a Torah institution of magnitude and stature that in no way condescended to American conditions. With herculean effort, he re-established Kletsk, and the Torah society that surrounded it, in Lakewood, in America. We, too, can look back at our own successes, realized in spite of unprecedented hardships. These should serve as an incentive to accomplish even more in the future.

"SHLEIMUS": WITHIN OUR GRASP

Of the three *Avos*, only *Yaakov Avinu* has his name associated with the *Beis Hamikdash*: *Beis Elokei Yaakov*. When *Avrohom* came upon the place of the *Mikdash*, he called it "*har*," a moun-

tain, seeing it as a height yet to be reached. *Yitzchok* called it a "*sadeh*," a field to be developed. *Yaakov* named it "*bayis*," house: it was still a mountain to be climbed, a field to be cultivated, yet he envisioned the completed *Beis Hamikdash*, and was not discouraged from striving for the ultimate achievement, from the very outset. We, too, must keep our vision and our hopes on an ideal, even if it seems unattainable at the time. *Shleimus* can be within our grasp.

It is no simple matter to rise above the spirit of the society we live in, to screen out its subversive influences, to reject its corrosive values. It is not easy to channel energies and devote finances to desperately needy Torah-and-tzeddaka causes when the major emphasis today is on spending time and money on self-gratification. But then, *Reb Tzaddok Hakohein* of Lublin once commented that often when one engages in a number of undertakings, a specific one may prove to be exceptionally difficult as compared to the rest. At first impulse, one might be tempted to drop that one, and concentrate instead on the easier tasks on hand. But it is the most unyielding one that is the most significant one, and that is precisely why it is so heavily invested with obstacles.

This last phase of *golus*, our rehearsal for striving for *shleimus* from a setting of affluence and freedom in our own Land, is fraught with difficulties—difficulties of a sort that we never faced before, in recent history. Responding to the guidance of our Torah leaders, avoiding the pernicious influence of non-Torah values—with determination, enthusiasm, and optimism, we can be equal to the challenge. ■

IF THIS IS YOU

- You are a sincere, dedicated Jew, and you wish you could do more.
- You wish the true beauty and appeal of Torah could be held up before the eyes of all Jewry. You are frustrated by the false perceptions that prevail among many regarding Orthodox Jews.
- Your heart aches for the plight of the Jews fleeing Iran, and the Jews of the Soviet Union.
- You worry about your child's yeshiva. You wish you knew how to seek more government aid and cooperation.
- You care about increasing Torah-learning, your own and that of the whole community.
- You're concerned about assimilated Jewish kids who know little about Jewish learning and Jewish life.
- You want much more...a sense of Torah pride and responsible activism in Jewish life developed in our youth...more for the sick, the elderly, the jobless, the hopeless...an archives for Orthodox Jews, a Holocaust commission, community services, and on and on and on...

YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE

- ... **But** you don't know where to begin.
- ... **But** you can't personally reach out to them to teach them, give them hope, encourage them.
- ... **But** you have no time or know-how to learn the ropes in the Capital. And besides, you are only one person to a government official.
- ... **But** you're just not able to prepare the Daf on your own every day, much less give shiurim to others.
- ... **But** you personally can't possibly hope to locate all of them, let alone give them classes or have thousands in your home for a Shabbos.
- ... **But** you can't do all this by yourself.

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THE NEXT CHALLENGE

We must not only bring Torah to the people, but also bring the people to the beis hamidrash to fulfill the Rambam's admonition to make learning Torah primary and work secondary.

SURFING, AEROBICS ... AND TALMUD

A recent report in *U.S. News and World Report* states that "one in every four American jobs is filled by part time workers. By the year 2000, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates, the number of temporary workers alone is likely to grow by more than 80%. Part-time employment is becoming popular (among workers, as well as busi-

nessmen and professionals) for those who want flexible schedules ... for such pursuits as surfing, aerobics, or travel."¹

Not long ago, the late Sekulener Rebbe, זצ"ל, was told that a successful businessman would be devoting the first half of his day to Torah study. "Now I understand," he said, "why in the *Beis Din shel Maalo*, the question *Nososa venasata be'emuna* (have your business dealings been conducted properly and honestly)? precedes the question *kovata itim laTorah* (have you set aside specific times for the study of Torah)? Shouldn't the order be reversed,

since *Talmud Torah keneged kulom*—the study of Torah takes precedence over all else?"²

Said the Sekulener, "*Emuna* means honesty, but it also means faith and trust in G-d. One who believes that success and profits come from G-d and not from 'my power and the might of my hand' realizes that G-d can bring him success when he puts in four hours a day to earn a living as easily as when he works eight hours. A person with such *emuna* will have no problem keeping his set times for Torah study (or, for that matter, dealing in business honestly)."

Rabbi Yitzchok Alster heads the Kollel HaTorah, which meets in "Rabbi Landau's Beis Midrash" in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn.

Is this how the major Jewish cities in Europe looked fifty years ago, with many stores closed for hours during the day, while proprietors stole away to the beis hamidrash?

The Torah world has successfully harnessed the technological revolution for the dissemination of Torah through such means as Dial-a-Daf, Dial-a-Mishna, Dial-a-Shiur, Torah Tapes, the Institute for Science and Halacha, and so on. With modern technology, Torah has been brought to tens of thousands via telephone, radio, and tapes, in people's homes, in their cars, and even in their boats!

And now, a new challenge is on the horizon: We must not only bring Torah to the people, but also bring the people to the *beis hamidrash* to fulfill the *Rambam's* admonition to make learning Torah primary and work secondary.³

The American Torah community does not flinch from challenges. Meeting them, it has written history, and continues to do so. The first generation of Torah scholarship, created by the *Roshei Yeshiva* and *Admorim* who replanted authentic *Yiddishkeit* on this soil, has contributed a glorious chapter to Jewish history. In 1946, the chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary took his son to visit the fledgling Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, N.J., and he told him, "My son, observe this scene carefully, for what you see today is a picture of the Jewish past—a relic, that in several years will disappear and become obsolete."⁴

His prophecy, sadly, came true—but only for him and his ideological movement. For them, Torah *Yiddishkeit* is a relic, obsolete. For Torah Jews, the phenomenal growth and influence of the Lakewood Yeshiva has proven his prophecy false. The fire and zeal of Reb Aharon, זצ"ל, and his compatriots have created an irreversible momentum.



If the average American is beginning to realize that the profit motive is not a deity to be worshipped for its own sake, if he is willing to forgo greater earnings to have more time "for such pursuits as surfing, aerobics, or travel," what should be our response to this new turn in the technological revolution?

Modern technology has made affluence the province of the many instead of the few, as never before in the history of mankind. We are faced with new realities, undreamed of heretofore.

A NEW WORLD, A NEW OBLIGATION

Every man (says Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto)⁵ must ask himself: *Ma chovasi ba'olam*, What is my obligation in this world?

Having once answered the question, one proceeds to fulfill this obligation. ... But facing a *new world*, he must stop and redefine, "What is my obligation in this *new world*."

In America, Torah study on an advanced, scholarly level has been primarily the purview of the yeshiva student and kollel fellow. For the most part, this will always be true. Now, however, a new possibility for Torah advancement has appeared on the scene—*batei midrashim* and *kollelim* for businessmen and professionals, who arrange their work schedules to free the morning hours—when their minds are clearest and functioning at peak level—for in-depth Torah study.

Who are these people? Let us meet some of them, who have already made the transition:

- Reb Mendel was a *talmid* of Novaradok and Kamenitz until the age of eighteen when World War II broke out, destroying his family and his future. The ghetto of Mezritch, the horrible concentration camps, Maidanek, Auschwitz, "*tantzen*" (throwing oneself out of speeding cattle cars)—countless brushes with death—his survival can only be described as a *nes*, explainable in the light of the great *chassodim* and *mesiras nefesh* displayed by him toward his fellow Jews despite threats to life and limb.

For forty years after coming to America, he worked hard to support his family, unable to open a *sefer*. Two years ago, he retired and he started to learn again. Novaradok and Kamenitz came back to him. The *derech*? It obviously never left him. Today he devotes his entire day to learning, on a level comparable to

that of people his age who had never stopped.

• Reb Shmuel, age twenty six, was an outstanding *talmid* of Philadelphia and Stamford. When family obligations made it difficult to continue in *Kollel* fulltime, he started working as a mortgage broker from his basement, but only in the afternoons. He refused to give up his morning *seder*. His business succeeded, and today he employs fifteen people, including some *chaverim* of *Kollel HaTorah* who had originally joined the *Kollel* only temporarily until they would find a job. Now they follow Shmuel's schedule—learn in the morning, on a permanent basis. He was not enticed by the lure of expanded success, and continues to be the first one in the *beis hamid-rash*, and one of the last ones out.

• Reb Noach, age thirty five, a *talmid* of Torah Vodaath, whose thirst for Torah literally gives him no rest. Despite a most demanding schedule as an elected official, he makes time for a *Daf Yomi shiur* before *davening*, and a regular *chavrusa* to learn *Gemora be'iyun* every morning until 10:30 AM. "The rest of the day is a cinch," he claims proudly and sets an example for those with less demanding schedules.

• Reb Zvi, age thirty eight, an accomplished *talmid chacham* who just made a festive *Siyum Hashas* on the basis of completing the entire *Talmud*, studying *b'iyun* (in depth) for a number of years. His wife would not permit him to take the CPA test for fear that he would then go into private practice and not have sufficient time to devote to his Talmud studies. Instead, he lectures several times a week, leaving himself large blocks of time every day for learning. His *chavrusa*, Reb Noah, age thirty four, is a computer programmer who will only accept jobs that leave him time to learn four to five hours daily.

• Reb Zvi Hersh, age forty two, a jewelry manufacturer, but primarily a *Telzer talmid*, was overjoyed when he heard of the formation of a *Kollel* for businessmen. "I'll just have to work later at night. This is what I have been waiting for."

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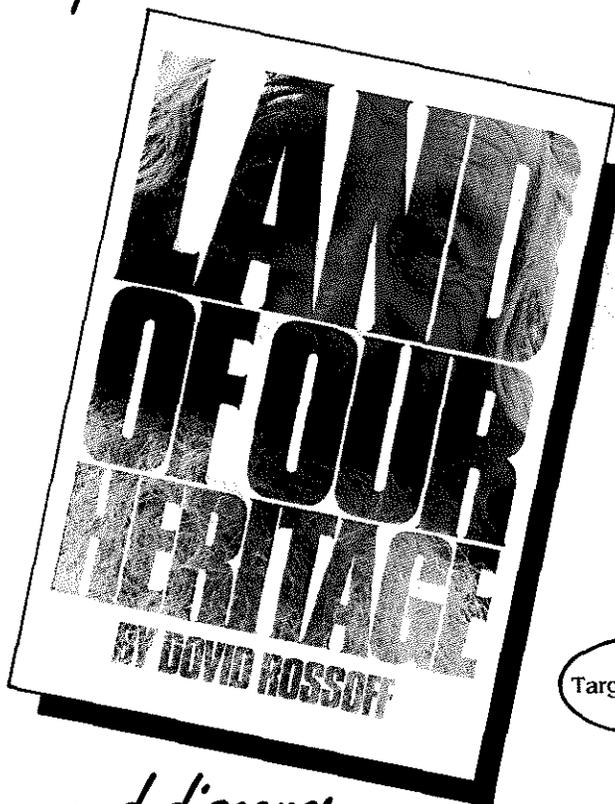
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• Reb Arye Leib, age forty seven, a Chaim Berliner, and Reb Shmuel, age thirty six, a Ponevizer, changed their entire daily routines to put learning up front "where it belongs"—at the start of the day, the *bikkurim* hours.

A PORTAL TO OLD-TIME ACHIEVEMENT

Is this how the major Jewish cities in Europe looked fifty years ago, with many stores closed for hours during the day, while proprietors stole away to the *beis hamidrash*? Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner, זצ"ל, related how as a young lad in Warsaw he had to avoid certain streets during the day, because they were "unsafe": Some storekeepers would always beg him to watch their stores for a "short while," so they could go to the *beis hamidrash* to "*chop arein a shtikel Toisfos*."

Is this possibly what Vilna looked like when bakers and shoemakers and candle-stick makers were *be-kiyim b'Shas*, their minds delving into the depths of the Sea of Talmud, even while they were kneading dough or fixing shoes with their hands? Are the programmers and the financiers of Flatbush, Boro Park, Monsey and Queens, the replacements of those bakers and shoemakers?

Is G-d, in His munificent mercy, giving us back the quality of Jewish life that was so brutally taken from us? Is opportunity knocking again?

In describing the era of *Moshtach*, the *Rambam* writes, "In those days it will be easy for a person to find his means for livelihood—with little work he will achieve much. To what end will this come about? So that people will have more time to learn, as it is said, *Ki malla ha'aretz de'ah* (The world will be filled with knowledge of G-d),"⁶

Is it possible that we are now being offered a foretaste of "those days"? ■

FOOTNOTES

¹ *US News and World Report*, Nov 23, 1987

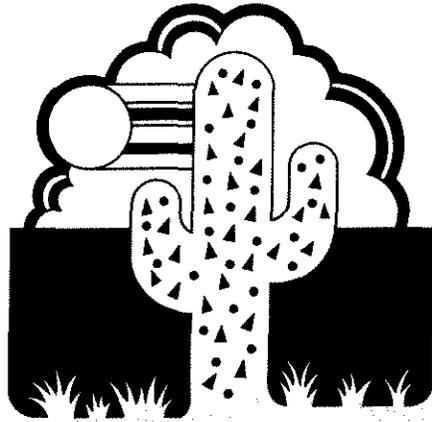
² *Shabbos* 31a

³ *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:7

⁴ Heard from Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner, זצ"ל

⁵ Introduction to *Mesillas Yesarim*

⁶ *Sanhedrin*, *Perek Chalek*



In America's Southwest, where the arid stretches are punctuated by wild sage, cactus and adobe huts, Torah can take root and blossom.

TORAH BaMIDBAR

The midbar, the wilderness, was chosen as the site for the giving of the Torah. G-d led His people far from population centers to present them with His gift. In his "Song of the Well," Moshe Rabbeinu promises that if one makes a transition to a desert mode of existence to receive the gift (Torah), it becomes his inheritance, raising him to new heights. This summer, we experienced the desert both literally and figuratively when we were fortunate enough to become involved with a group appropriately called "Torah Bamidbar."

We are a kollel family, living in an apartment building populated exclusively by members of the kollel and yeshiva rabbe'im. For a change of pace, we have spent our summers leading a Torah Umesorah SEED program in Atlanta, Georgia. SEED is designed

Rabbi Friedman, currently a member of the Kollel of Ner Israel in Baltimore, will be joining the new Atlanta Scholars Kollel, where aside from learning, he will be directing Kollel outreach activities.

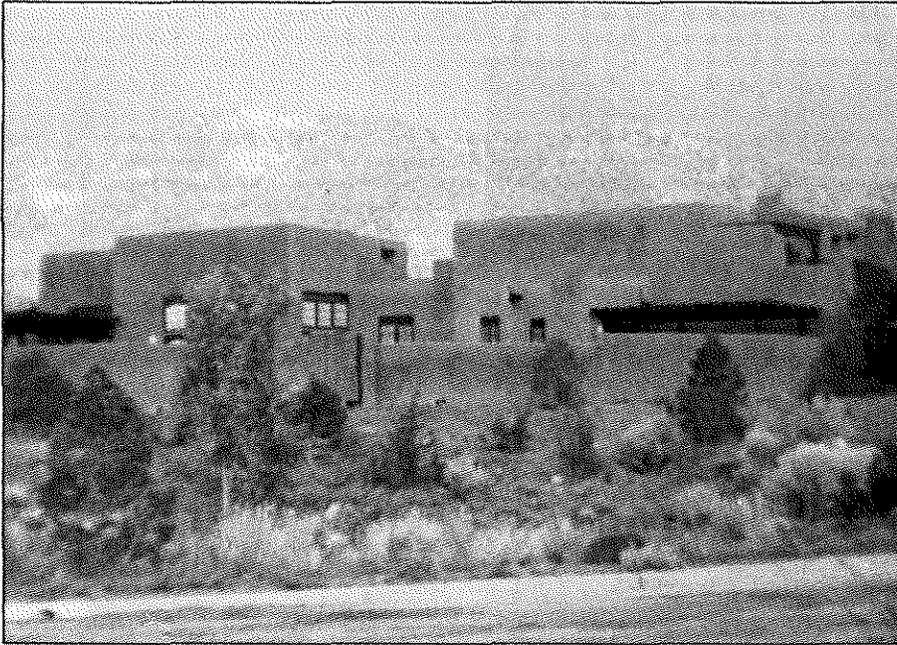
to introduce a community to the joy of *beis hamidrash* learning while providing valuable field experience to the kollel fellows and *bachurim* that staff it. In a "beginners" *beis hamidrash*, one is forced to clarify his concepts, think imaginatively and express himself succinctly. I benefited greatly from insights the local rabbis (father and son) shared with me, and Atlanta, in turn, quickly developed an appetite for learning. After four summers it became ob-

vious that these year-around Jews were ready for year-around Torah. As preparations began to establish a full-time kollel, we began to think about what to do with our summer.

ACTING QUICKLY ON INSPIRATION

"Remember what Amaleik did to you as you were leaving Egypt," warns the Torah. "Asher korchha baderech, they ambushed you along the way." The Kotzker Rebbe points out that the yeitzer hara (evil impulse) acts on a personal level, as Amaleik does nationally. As individuals, we must guard against ambush while travelling that long journey from thought to deed. If a thought occurs, act quickly, lest the yeitzer hara intervene.

We wonder: Who are these people and how can we relate to them? On the Santa Fe end, there is concern that we will be too judgmental and not sufficiently understanding of their struggles.



Some time around Purim, while lunching with my JO (Feb. '87), an article by Hillel Goldberg, editor of the *Intermountain Jewish News* of Denver, caught my eye. He described amazing acts of self initiative by Torah hungry Jews in his region. Small town builds *mikva*, persuades Reform Temple to allow *mechitza*, initiates long distance *shuirim* via speaker phone. A thought crossed my mind. *I had always wanted to do something on my own. Wouldn't it be exciting to face the challenges I had seen confront my mentors?* I re-read the article. My wife and I wanted to go some place really different and we had never been out West. Images of *shuirim* in the shadow of snowcapped Rockies danced through my mind. *Asher korcha baderech.* I picked up the phone and dialed Denver information. "Number of *Intermountain Jewish News*. . . ." "May I speak to Hillel Goldberg?" "Hello my name is . . . just read your article. . . . Would

they be interested in a rabbi for the summer?"

We talk, ask each other questions. Hillel thinks it's worth a try. He knows they can't afford it, but that hasn't stopped them yet. He'll call them and get back to me as soon as possible. "By the way, Hillel, what's the name of this town?"

"Santa Fe, it's a beautiful town."

I thanked him, hung up and walked over to my neighbor Mena-chem to borrow his Atlas.

ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL

We are excited, but more than a little anxious about this trip. My wife is the first to receive a Santa Fe call. "They say *Boruch Hashem!*" she blurts out as I walk through the door one evening. This is a good sign. During the next few months, Santa Fe and Denver became regular fixtures on our phone bill. Halachic questions have to be resolved. *Is kosher food avail-*

*able? How about meat? Who kashered the kitchens? How kosher is the mikva? mechitza? Practical questions need to be hammered out. Where will we stay? What will do for transportation? What about expenses? Will our children have playmates? Is there sightseeing nearby? Advice and encouragement is sought from, and provided by, my rabbe'im. I get to live out one of my favorite daydreams when I am forced to choose the essential *seforim* that will make the trip.*

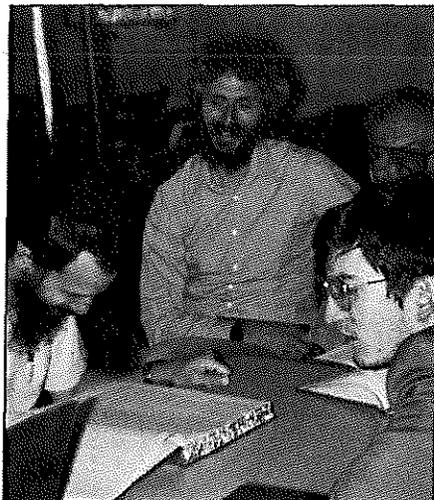
The main question, however, remains unresolved. *Who are these people and how can we relate to them?* This question is particularly unsettling to my wife. How could she know that by the end of the summer people would be begging her not to leave? On the Santa Fe end, there is concern that we will be too judgmental and not sufficiently understanding of their struggles. Eventually we all realize that only time will tell. Having heard "Santa Fe, isn't that in California?" and, "Do you have to speak Spanish there?" one time too many, we welcomed gratefully the day when *sheitel* boxes and "Uncle Moishy" records board a plane bound for Albuquerque.

Santa Fe's motto is "The City Different" and it would be difficult to argue otherwise. The elevation is 7,000 ft. The buildings are all one- or two-story adobe. The climate is "dry, southwest." This is Big Sky Country. So big, in fact, that one can see a thunderstorm complete with lightning to one side, while the other direction is flooded with dazzling sunlight. After the rainstorm you may have an opportunity to make a *bracha* over not one, but two rainbows. Wild sage and cactus line the often unpaved roads. The population is composed of three cultures—Spanish, Indian, and Anglo. The city and

mountains that surround it host scores of obscure religions, cults and groups. The mode of dress is decidedly casual, health food stores seem to outnumber supermarkets, and holistic healers are almost as prevalent as M.D.'s. Add to this melange of booted cowboys, beaded Indians and white-gowned sikhs a black-hatted man in dark suit, tie and *tzitzis*, and "The City Different" becomes a little more different. Walking the streets, I was very conscious of my external appearance. As I began to meet the Jews of Santa Fe, I also started to notice my internal appearance.

BARREN AS THE "MIDBAR"

The Midrash in parshas Chukas explains the significance of the Torah having been given in a midbar. ... One reason is to teach that the Torah only finds fulfillment in those that remove from themselves personal concerns, leaving themselves barren of everything but the desire to know the Torah.



One of our first undertakings is to organize daily *Shacharis davening*. At seven that first morning, five of us don *tefillin*. Approximately forty minutes later, I conclude *Tachanun* and begin *Ashrei*. The man behind me is also saying *Ashrei*, but not the one after *Shemona Esrei*. Soon it becomes apparent that these men are working their way syllable by syllable

through *Shacharis*, including *Korbanos*. Am I expending the same effort on my *tefillos*?

After *davening*, I try to sneak in a little Torah before everybody runs off to work. While they are putting away their *tallis* and *tefillin*, I begin to teach a *halacha*. "Just a minute, Rabbi, we can't concentrate on what you're saying."

They sit down and join me in a spirited discussion of the passage in *Mishna Berura*. Forty-five minutes later, one man rises and backs toward the door: "Excuse me, but I have an appointment. I'll try to rearrange my schedule for tomorrow."

A refreshing attitude. A meeting is organized to discuss what classes people are interested in. One woman requests Hebrew classes with emphasis on reading the *Siddur*. She explains why these classes are so important to her: "At night when I say the *Shema* with my kids, I read so slowly that it's all I can do to just finish the *Vahavta*."

What does *Krias Shma al Hamitta* mean to me? I wonder.

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NO PLOWING IN THE MIDBAR

Furthermore, states the Midrash, the Torah was given in a midbar to demonstrate that just as a midbar is free of planting and toil, so too, anyone who dedicates himself to the Torah will be granted relief from the burden of livelihood.

I had been told by visitors to Santa Fe that the people have a tremendous desire to learn. This is an understatement. *Shacharis* at seven, followed by *halacha* that frequently runs until nine. *Gemora shiur* starts at noon and consistently runs overtime 'till two. Evening classes start at seven and rarely end before midnight. In between, the time is filled with individual *chavrusos*, children's groups and planning sessions. Many have large businesses with many employees. "What's happening to your business while you're doing all this learning?" I ask.

They respond with the mischie-



Monday Chumash class at Los Alamos National Laboratories

vous look of a child who is skipping school. I also notice that most drive older, beat-up cars. "As long as it's still running, there's no sense getting a new one," they explain.

Wardrobes also are simple. Women don't change outfits on a *Shabbos* afternoon. Jewelry is kept to a minimum. The rich and the poor are virtually indistinguishable. Many of

these people have relocated successful careers here because the simple life-style liberates them from the rat race, allowing them more time for loftier pursuits. With this attitude, it is easier to understand how they could neglect their work for seven weeks for an opportunity to immerse themselves in Torah.

EXCLUSIVELY NO ONE'S

The Torah was given in a midbar rather than in Eretz Yisroel. This, the Midrash explains, ensures that no tribe could claim they had eminent domain over the Torah because it was given in their territory.

As the weeks flew by and our students became friends and then family, we learned to accept differences of life-style and attitude. We learned that *tabooli* (I ate it and I still don't know what it is) can be more savory than the best smorg, when prepared in a kitchen just made kosher. We learned from people that have been brought to Torah by groups espousing a very different approach than ours. His *Rebbe* might not be my *Rebbe*, but there is much I can learn from the *talmid*. Friendships were forged with Jews whose spouses and children are not Jews, walking a tightrope between encouraging the genuine searcher, and not condoning an illicit relationship.

Guests of all sorts passed through the summer. From beard and be-

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Soon it becomes apparent that these men are working their way syllable by syllable through Shacharis, including Korbanos. Am I expending the same effort on my tefillos?

keshe to bandana and backpack, and every attire and attitude in-between. Each one contributed from his unique resources and we all gained. At one point, I walked into a home to find a Lubavitcher, a Breslover, three Santa Feans and a *bachur* from Ner Israel in Baltimore studying *Gemora* together. "They'll never believe this back home," I thought.

WELL IN THE DESERT

Be'er chafaruha sarim, the well-spring that was dug by Israel's great ones sustained the people throughout their sojourn in the desert.

The *mikva* is the most cherished possession of the Torah Bamidbar community. Not only because of its central function, but because of what it symbolizes. There was a time before Torah Bamidbar, when only one woman observed *taharas hamishpacha* (laws of family purity). Then there was no *mikva*, so a lake a half hour out of town was used. Aside from the obvious difficulties of safety and assuring proper *tznius*, during the winter the temperature of this mountain lake is frigid. One winter evening, this *aishes chayil* (woman of valor) set out with a friend for the lake. As they left town, it began snowing. By the time they reached the lake, a blinding storm had set in. Searching for the lake, they became lost in the snow. Suddenly, the car slipped down an embankment, almost falling into the lake. These two woman struggled to get the car back on the road while lightning bounced off the water behind them. They were forced to return home not having achieved their goal.



The next night, under improved conditions, the mission was reattempted and successfully completed. A few days later, a dejected husband confided to one of his friends that he couldn't ask his wife to go to the lake another time.

A small group of individuals who had met each other at a traditional Saturday morning service run by the Reform Rabbi convened to discuss the problem. They decided to build this woman a *mikva*. Some exploratory phone calls were made. Soon a Lubavitcher *chassid* with *mikva*-building expertise was in town. The cost of the project seemed prohibitive, until one family volunteered its backyard as the *mikva* site and all pledged to do the work themselves. Upon its completion, the newly coalesced group made a *le'chaim* and was photographed in front of the *mikva* they had built with their own hands. This *mikva* represents everything its builders stand for: *mesiras nefesh*, personal courage and group determination to achieve goals, no matter what the obstacles. Living with these people, I became conscious of how much more I could achieve. I also became aware of *brachos* that I had taken for granted.

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I walked into a home to find a Lubavitcher, a Breslover, three Santa Feans and a bachur from Ner Israel in Baltimore studying Gemora together. "They'll never believe this back home," I thought.

CHOLENT STRONGER THAN CLASSES

On Shabbos, the community joins us in *seuda*. We have a few borrowed pots and pans but no electric appliances. Many of the kosher products that my wife is accustomed to are not available here. Many people are vegetarians. We are expecting about thirty-five people. The only tableware we have is plastic. Our furniture is folding chairs and tables. Feeling completely out of her element, my wife begins to prepare Shabbos. I attempt to reassure her—"Whatever you come up with will be good enough." It falls on deaf ears.



After *shul*, the group walks to our house. Entering our home, we are suprised by the radiance of Shabbos. It's just like at home. *Why am I so surprised? Did I really think that it is our material finery that brings a glow to our home every Shabbos? Wasn't the home of Sarah Imeinu devoid of bracha until Rivka entered?—and then. . .* The food is excellent. The vegetarian *cholent* is a smash, and the homemade *kishka* quickly disappears. Coupled with the *zemtros*, that *se'uda* accomplishes more than hours of classes. Most remain after the *seuda* to talk Torah and ask questions.

As the discussion turns to a debate of a G-d who is *shomeiya tefillos* vs. a (*lehavdil*) humanist god, I notice my wife leaving the room with a woman and children in tow. A few minutes later, we hear voices of children singing "Shabbos Yom Menucha." The Rebbitzin has just started the first-ever children's *Oneg Shabbos* in Santa Fe. Our conversation stops. All ears are filled with the sound of the little *Malachei Hashareis*. I read this question in the eyes of the guests: "Ayei Sarah *ish-techa?*—Where is Sarah your wife?" In my heart I realize: "*Hinei ba'ohel—Here in the tent.*" *Baruch Hashem.*

CONVENTION TAPES AVAILABLE

Tapes of the major weekdays sessions of the 65th Agudath Israel convention are available for purchase through the main office of Agudath Israel of America, 84 William Street, New York, NY 10038 (tel. 212-797-9000). The following recordings are available at \$5 per tape, \$20 for the entire set of five.

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- Tape No. 4** "Contemporary Society vs. Jewish Family (Sholom Bayis)"—Rabbi Eliezer Horowitz, Rabbi Yissochor Frand.
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Copies of the 1987 Annual Report of Agudath Israel, distributed at the convention, are also available free of charge.

HOME FROM THE MIDBAR

My first Friday back from Santa Fe: I'm standing in a bakery crowded with more Jews than I've seen all summer. People are upset. It seems that they have not baked enough sesame *challos* to meet demand. A friend notices me, "*Sholom Aleichem!* I just heard you were in New Mexico for the summer. What's it like out there? Must be a real *midbar*."

"Yes," I answered "A real *midbar*."

P.S.

RAISING A FAMILY "OUT OF TOWN" Demystifying the Challenges, Pitfalls and Rewards

GOALS FOR OUR CHILDREN

Perhaps the greatest anxiety facing those considering a future as a rabbi or educator in a city lacking a strong Torah observant community is pondering the effect of that environment on their children. Besides the obvious problems of transmitting Torah values in an alien culture, the more complex uncertainty is the long-term effect on the child's educational development.

Though my family has chosen the option of frontier life, this article is in no way a sales pitch. To paraphrase the *Mesillas Yesharim*, one must have made it through a maze in order to guide others within it. These words are rather an attempt to demystify the subject by laying out the diverse factors for the reader's consideration.

I believe the educational goals of the yeshiva curriculum can be grouped into a few major categories: The development of analytic skills (*tyun*), mastery of material (*bekiyus*), love of Torah study (*cheishek*), transmission of *emuna* (*yira*, *emunas chachamim*, etc.) and personal development (*midos*).

Undeniably, the child educated in even the finest Hebrew Day School

will lag behind his yeshiva counterpart in *bekiyus* and in those analytic skills peculiar to Torah study. The most glaring difference between the two systems is the amount of time devoted to secular studies. The day school must project an image of excellence in secular disciplines to gain the support of even the Orthodox parents it serves, whereas the yeshiva is free to grant secular stu-



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Rabbi Ze'ev Kraines studied in Ohr Somayach and Yeshivas Mir in Jerusalem. He is presently Assistant Rabbi at Brith Sholom Beth Israel Congregation in Charleston, South Carolina.

dies the secondary status it deserves.

Those same analytic skills and study habits, however, though developed in secular modes, can be a strength to the yeshiva-bound child when he is able to begin his Torah studies in earnest. The truth is that many of our American-bred Torah leaders devoted a good part of their youth honing their skills on algebra before they were introduced to Rabbi Akiva Elger. A prominent speaker in yeshiva circles once confided in me

that he owes a major share of his ability to dramatize the subtleties of Midrash to Mrs. Magillicutty (fict.), his high school English teacher.

THE FLAME THAT DARE NOT BE DAMPENED

The danger of a Hebrew Day School education is that it limits the child's aspirations in Torah study: *cheishek*. Rabbi

Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל, among other leaders of our generation, has warned that the flame of *chshak* can be dampened by giving prominence to secular studies. This lowering of sights unquestionably harms most children in a Hebrew day school, especially those from unsupportive homes.

Experience has shown, however, that the children of *mechanchim* show great *cheishek* when they arrive at the yeshiva or seminary environment. They are fueled by the lesson of their parent's self-sacrificing dedication for the spread of Torah. They are graced with the blessings of our *gedolim* who consistently encourage appropriate *talmidim* and their families to teach in the less-than-supportive communities.

It is this special *cheishek* and idealism that, I believe, more than compensates for the belated technical development of these children. Have we not learned through the accelerated progress of the dedicated *ba'al teshuva* that the mature mind is capable of mastering great amounts of material in a few short years? Similarly, the halls of all conventional *yeshivos* and *kollelim* are filled with legions of students who did not begin learning seriously until after Bar Mitzva.

To be sure, in today's climate of intensified early study, a child should not delay his yeshiva years as long as he may have in a previous generation. One seasoned Torah educator recently told me that, although he himself was sent off at thirteen, he has found it necessary to allow his own children to leave home as early as eleven. It is because of these agonizing personal decisions that many families return from the front lines when their children come of age.

KINDLING THE SPIRIT

Beyond these considerations there are intangibles that will ultimately determine who will gain the crown of Torah. While for many, the intensive *cheder* background will blossom in the yeshiva

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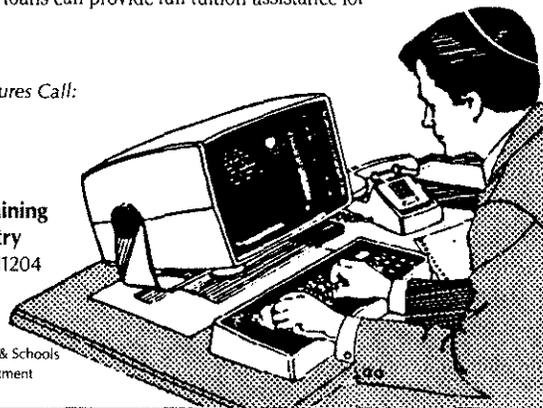
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environment, others who pass through the same process may lose steam. The homogeneous environment has afforded him no sense of urgency. Rav Meir Simcha Hakohein has noted in his oft-quoted commentary on *Parshas Bechukosai* (*Meshech Chochma*) that the children and grandchildren of Torah pioneers often sense that the goals of their ancestors have all been achieved and that their challenge lies only in the secular arena.

The child of the *mechanech*, on the other hand, comes early to a sense of self, in sharp contrast to his surroundings. The Torah and *mitzvos* stand out as "the quality of light is perceived from the darkness" (*Kohelles*). His parents' uniqueness in the community is a vivid lesson in the elevation of self, acquired through study. As he overcomes the childhood struggles of being different, he kindles that spirit which will drive him to prominence in the yeshiva world.

Frankly, there may even be some advantages in the unpressured small towns of America as an environment for *midos* education. Ironically, our Torah communities have flourished in the harsh spiritual climates of Northeastern cities. The pages of this magazine often decry the encroachment of crass materialism and urban coldness onto our society. Though there are corruptive influences in all contemporary society, the openness, discipline, and the genuine warmth of the surrounding culture in small-town America can nurture the Torah values fostered in the home.

The strength of the home is, of course, the crucial element. Any cracks in the *Yiddishkeit* of either parent will become schisms, without the aid of other role models and the social restraint of a *frum* community. The function of the parents as role models magnifies when there are few others in the community with whom their child should identify. On the other hand, the more subtle and perhaps more difficult challenge of setting a higher standard within a flawed *frum* society are absent.

One other consolation. A trip to the outer limits of Jewish America is not as far as it was before the advancement of Torah media. One can fill one's home with Dov Dov stories and Uncle Moishy tapes in Charleston as well as in Lakewood. Summer visits to Torah communities are also

an extremely important way of keeping children in touch with their true society.

Certainly the challenges of life away from a Torah community are for an appropriate few. It is the hope of the author that this article will inspire a few to become appropriate.

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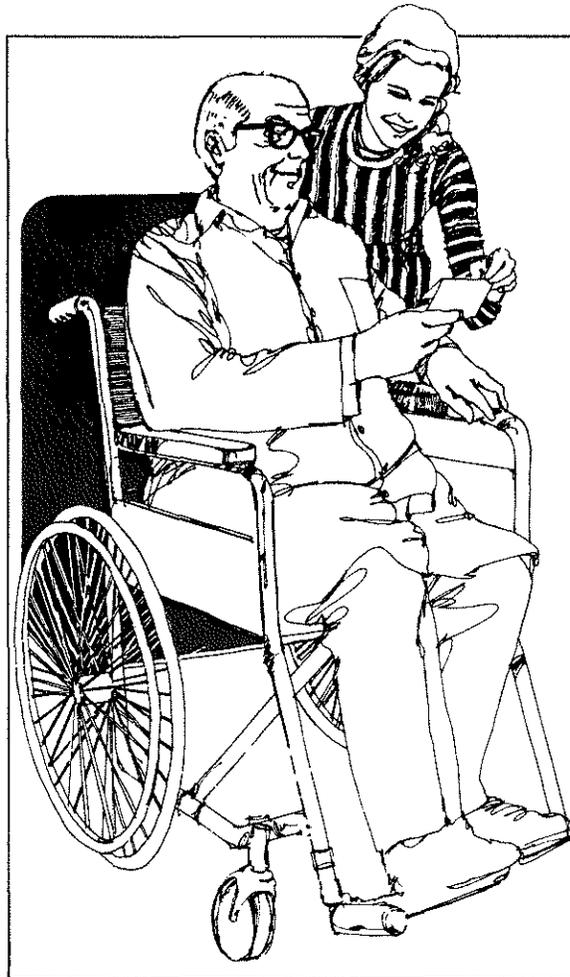
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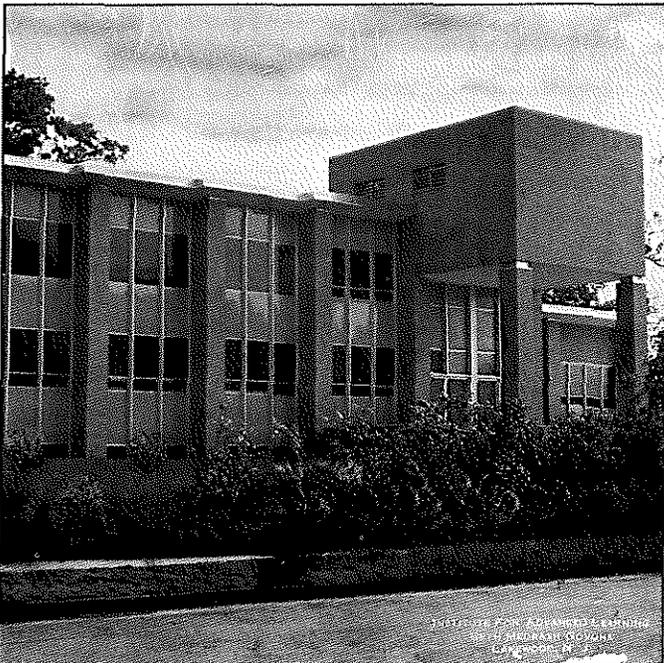
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You may have dodged a bull in a china shop, but have you ever considered the plight of a *shver* in Lakewood?—on Shavuos? Contemplate, then, Yehuda Sundack's experience:

A SHVER LAYBIN SHAVUOS IN LAKEWOOD

Written by a new-breed father-in-law,
with tongue in cheek, and foot in mouth.



"LEARN AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR"

I'm at the stage in my life when travel offers few inducements. "My own *shul*, my own table, my own *chavrusa*" is my motto. And I am not hesitant about expressing my views. Especially when my wife makes noises about "visiting the children," or some other silly notions.

This time she was not to be put off. Two days of Shavuos, no problems about getting to Lakewood after work, our own apartment, and a judicious mixture of promises and threats were all that I needed to spend Shavuos in Lakewood.

By the time we arrived, I had been adequately briefed about the consequences of attaining designation of "most obnoxious *shver* of the day." Although a lifetime of training would have me an odds-on favorite for this trophy, I selected discretion as the better part of valor. Marveling all the while how this wonderful mother of my children had taken the time to graduate from a course in Assertiveness Training.

Yehuda Sundack informs us that the JO, by permitting him to use a pseudonym, can add *Shalom Bayts* to its list of accomplishments.

I resolved to reinforce the image of a shver immersed in the problems of the world, who was at the same time a part of the world of Torah.

I felt better as soon as I came to the Yeshiva. Several fellow *shvers*, spirited young colleagues all, were following their sons-in-law with appropriate subdued demeanor: proper somber clothing and a hallowed, shuffling walk. Unquestioningly, each *shver* stopped at an assigned *shtender*, accepting the *Siddur* thrust before him. (One person didn't dare turn the page to which his *Siddur* had opened, and *davened* a weekday *Mincha* with eyes glued to a page of "*Al Chait*")

I made it through *Mincha-Maariv* without too much trouble, and even the "shake-hand" session at the end of the evening passed without incident. In fact, when a brief pleasantry ("My son-in-law wants to make sure I learn at least once a year") raised a smile on the lips of one Rosh Yeshiva, I perked up. This won't be so bad, I thought; these are my folk—the fact that there are about one thousand men and boys packed into the *bets hamidrash* shouldn't make any difference.

"I WANT TO GET A SHTENDER"

At the table, I was a ball of fire urging everyone to finish eating quickly: "I want to get a *shtender*," I said. "And I want to get *seforim*. Lots to accomplish tonight," I muttered.

We arrived early, with only a few hundred people there before us. Looking around, I noticed few if any other *shvers*, and was delighted that so many of the young men assigned to praise the *yungeleit* to their *shvers* made a point of coming over to do their spiel at my corner first. (I think Shmully was best, extolling my son-in-law's *has-mada* and dedication.) I thanked each modestly, adding a quip that "I had intended to *farher* my son-in-law all evening, but because of your comment it won't be necessary!"

I could almost feel the waves of awe and respect sweeping over these delightful young men. I resolved to rein-

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the *Roshei Yeshiva* would come over to say hello. I would nonchalantly raise a question I just happened to notice—and just as off-handedly propose a solution, which would undoubtedly have them rush off to examine with their fellows.

I could see it now; my son-in-law being asked to the *hanhalla* room. Could he arrange for me to come to Lakewood as a visiting scholar for a term? Just my presence—my *hasmada* combined with my innovative mind—would suffice to provide a role model for the yeshiva.

INSPIRATION IN THE DINING ROOM

This time the *Tikkun-sayer* woke me. "I'm sorry to disturb your learning," he ventured softly, "but there is an inspiring sight to be seen in the dining room." Inspiration is fine, I thought, but the night is designed for Torah. Nonetheless, I thanked him, and went off hurriedly.

At least one hundred young ten-, eleven-, and twelve-year-olds were sitting quietly, engrossed—as the world's most energetic *Rebbe* held them spellbound. I was impressed, noting at 1:15 AM my young coffee drinkers, alert and sharp-eyed.

I thought it over: Of course! Black coffee is fine in the middle of the day. But this late, the body needs energy. I prepared a cup of coffee—flavored sugar, with a half cup of milk as a chaser. The wiles of sleep are no match for the strength of a determined scholar.

I had at least six more cups of coffee between then and 4:00 AM; my son-in-law was suitably impressed to learn that, unlike most *shvers*, I hadn't covered ground that night, choosing instead to spend four hours on a *Mishna*. Everyone was impressed, too, that having stayed in the *beis hamidrash* until 4:00 AM, I was going to rest a little while so I could *daven* at the regular hour, with *kavana*. My spirits were elevated, enough to carry me past the scene of a dining room full of ten-year olds (including my coffee drinkers) and their *Rebbe*—still going strong. As I trudged home, I wondered: did the ten-year-olds imbibe a different brand of coffee?

Like a port in the storm, I found a small *shtiebel* in Lakewood for *Shacharis* and *Mussaf*, and came home for lunch quite at peace with myself. My family couldn't believe that I had come to the home of *Beth Medrash Govoha*—and davened in a *shtiebel*! "It's like spending a week in Israel without leaving your hotel room," my wife protested.

I reacted not a whit. Suffused with food, facing nothing but five hours of sleep ahead of me before the *Daf Yomi* shiur, I was in a magnanimous mood.

THE DAF YOMI DISTINCTION

With a smug self-confidence born of a decade-long love affair with the "*Daf*," I entered the small room resolved to distinguish myself. My son-in-law would hear of his father-in-law's exploits. . . .

I got blown away.

My family couldn't believe that I had come to the home of Beth Medrash Govoha—and davened in a shtiebel!

The young man giving the *shiur* did move somewhat quickly. He didn't translate the words. He raised some questions from the *Rishonim*. I followed smoothly, when a question came to mind. Without hesitation I asked. The young man disposed of my brilliant insight in a few well-chosen words. To all intents and purposes it wasn't even a question.

Evidently this young man wasn't used to teaching a *Daf Yomi* class. He did nothing to help draw me out of the hole I had dug myself. So I objected weakly with another comment.

The glimmer in his eyes resembled the expression of the volleyball player ready to spike the ball. And I was the ball! I looked around for support—but instead of a group of fortyish businessmen, I found myself in a roomful of sharp-eyed Lakewood *talmidim*. Watching avidly. There was one other *shver* in the room. His terror stricken eyes mirrored my feelings. Exactly.

This is it, I thought. For years I would be identified in Lakewood as the *shver* who was wiped out during *Daf Yomi*. . . It didn't happen. Instead, the young man saying the *shiur*—a paragon of *chessed*—smiled tightly, and went on.

At the meal that night, I was visibly disturbed. I had so far done nothing to distinguish myself. Will it be enough

that I had done nothing to disgrace myself? Will I vanish in the vast sea of *shverdom*? Will I leave nothing over in Lakewood, other than a check?

"HOW ABOUT A SECOND NIGHT . . .?"

"How about spending the second night in Yeshiva?" I suggested, waiting for the awe that would enter my son-in-law's eyes. I waited.

"You're sure, *Ta*? It's not too hard for you?"

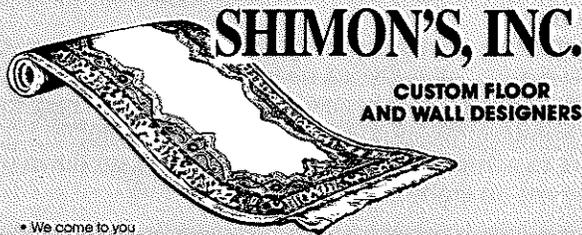
Young but respectful. Good stock, my Moishy.

"Is it possible that something is too hard for Torah?" Lay it on thick. My four little ones are listening hard. A lesson for the generations. "What a *zechus* to be in Lakewood and to be *mekabel* Torah two nights in a row."

Moishy looked down. "I won't be able to learn with you," he said quietly. I was prepared to be magnanimous; I understood. When I was a young man I only stayed up one night also. "You see, I already made arrangements with my *chavrusa* for the whole night."

I made it until 2:00 AM that night. Without coffee. On the way home I stopped by the dining room and found sixty or seventy ten-year-olds and their *Rebbe* still going strong. Did their mothers know what kind of coffee they were drinking?

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Shacharis in the *beis midrash*. Organized bedlam. People entering in droves. Every once in a while, a *shtender* or chair would rise into the air, seemingly from the exuberance of the *tefilla*. Actually it meant that another Jew would have a place to sit or stand this morning. Is this cacophony the vaunted Lakewood *davening*? Did Reb Aharon expect this kind of crowd in his *beis midrash*? Did Reb Shneur? Did they really build this *beis midrash* to attract 1500 men and boys?

The answer came from the very hall itself. By some strange happenstance, my seat projected into the aisle. Every person passing by brushed me, nudged me, touched me. Slightly. Each person passed by me gently, apologetically. How could I protest?

Why don't some of you help ease the crowding, I thought, by joining me in the *shtiebel*?

Again the answer seemed to come from the walls of the *beis midrash* as the reverberating responses to *Kaddish* and *Kedusha*, announced to the world the eternity of the Jewish People. The quiet during *layening*—and the thirty-odd voices of the *kohanim*, in unison, bringing a *shefa* of blessings on the Jewish People. I had never experienced anything like it...

Maybe the *beis midrash* wasn't meant to attract 1500 people. But if 1500 people want to learn here, shouldn't there be a *beis midrash* big enough to house them?

"OURS IS NOT TO SHINE"

Iwalked home in a benevolent mood, at peace with the world, touched by the spirituality of it all. I finally realized that my role, like that of all other *shvers*, was not to shine. Our role is to come and to appreciate what this yeshiva, like all other yeshivos, was doing for our children and for us. And our role is to support the yeshiva movement.

My feeling of magnanimity accompanied me into the late evening. "All yeshivos need our support, but clearly this substantial part of the Torah world needs help for a new building. We must exert ourselves to help."

And in a burst of altruism and charity, I sat down and wrote out an eighteen dollar check. ■

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Second Looks at the Jewish Scene



TALKING TO THE RUSSIANS

Undoubtedly refuseniks and Soviet Jews in general draw encouragement from a mass outpouring of sympathy by American Jews. But who can truly gauge the full range of Soviet responses to such demonstrations?

The Chofetz Chaim never let a day pass without shedding tears for the plight of the Russian Jews. In the half-century that has since passed, many changes have taken place—most of them for the better. But describe it as detente, or call it glasnost, the basic problems remain: it is forbidden to teach Torah to Jewish children in the Soviet Union and immigration is still severely restricted. The Jew in Russia is beset by many problems, indeed.

Our approach to helping our brethren in distress has been charted by *Chazal* (sages of the Talmud), for all time. Indeed, as Rabbi Shimon Schwab (Rav of K'hal Adath Jeshurun) put it so succinctly, "A Jew who sets out to accomplish things on

behalf of our Soviet brethren must go with his *Chumash* in hand." So our cues come from one source—the prototype confrontation between Yaakov and Eisav. *Tefilla*—prayer—looms large, as it did for Yaakov. And we, in our time, should—like the Chofetz Chaim in his time—emulate *Yaakov Avinu*, and nurture deep felt concern for our Soviet brethren in our hearts, and bring the words of *tefilla* on their behalf to our lips. But we must not be content with our *tefilla* alone. We must, as did Yaakov, ask: Is there more that can be done? If the answer is yes, then the agenda stands to be expanded. But each option must be carefully examined before it is adopted.

*At the recent National Convention of Agudath Israel of America.

TWO DECADES OF PUBLIC ACTIVISM

The movement for improving the lot of the Soviet Jewry through public, visible activism has been around for some eighteen years. Its many activities have ranged from writing Congressmen to organizing mass demonstrations in America's large urban centers. And now these efforts reached a climax with the convening of over 200,000 participants in a demonstration in the Washington (D.C.) Mall on the day before the Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting began last December.

Yet, not every segment of concerned Jewry was represented in Washington. Absent in large mea-

Let those who chose to remain at home out of conviction respect the motives of those who participated in that massive rally in Washington, and at the same time reinforce their own abstention as a conscious choice.

sure were the yeshiva world, the Chassidic communities, and generally, those who identify with Agudath Israel. From the inception of the mass movement to activism, these circles have eschewed public manifestation, in accordance with the directives of the Torah leadership.

This is not to say that every form of public expression has been ruled out. Seventeen years ago, when the Soviet Jewry movement took to the streets in a most dramatic, media-grabbing way, we abstained; but we did organize and participate in a mass public *tefilla* assembly that was convened on January 10, 1971, [in the words of the proclamation calling for the gathering] "to plead to our Father in Heaven to have pity and compassion on our brethren; to bring them forth from anguish to liberation from darkness to light." This call to *tefilla* was signed by the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages) of Agudath Israel of America—(according to the Hebrew alphabet) Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky זצ"ל, Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Halevi Ruderman זצ"ל, Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner זצ"ל, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל, Rabbi Nachum Mordechai Perlow (Novominsker Rebbe) זצ"ל, and יב"ל Rabbi Yisroel Spira (Bluzover Rebbe).

This was a deliberate step away from the demonstrations, which often erupted into ugly confrontations, as was clearly spelled out in another statement the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* issued at the same time. It did not condemn public demonstrations, *per se*. But it did sound a warning: "Every manifestation concerning Russia that is provocative and arrogant is a highly dangerous act which



can harm many. Therefore we cannot participate in any of the general demonstrations that are taking place, because it is impossible for us to control the character and nature of these gatherings."

Since the time of that *tefilla* assembly, the Orthodox community, under the leadership of *Gedolei HaTorah*, has continued to act on a growing concern for our Soviet brethren: For those in Russia through a series of discreet projects which some day can be told; for those who have succeeded in emigrating from the USSR, with special schools catering to Russian immigrants—such as Be'er Hagolah and the newly-founded Sinai Academy High School in Brooklyn, and Yeshiva-and-Kollel Shvut Ami in Jerusalem; with *klitta* and *ktiv* efforts such as Russian Immigrant

Rescue Fund, Vaad Hatzalas Nidchei Yisroel's programs and housing efforts for Russian *baalei teshuva* in Israel, and JEP and Bais Yaakov High School's activities in America, among others. Genuine concern can be demonstrated in highly effective ways that do not grab headlines.

GAUGING THE EFFECTS

Admittedly, the spirit surrounding mass demonstrations has changed since the riotous melees of the early 70's, but caution is still the byword in the Torah councils. Every step of the way, certain considerations must be addressed:

First, as a matter of course, we hesitate to participate in demonstrations if Torah authorities are not fully in control of the substance—and the tone of expression—of the gathering. We cannot waive our distinct identity as the *Am HaTorah*, and submit *carte blanche* to others to speak on our behalf.

Then, there is a second consideration: We can never know for certain what the outcome of even the most "successful" demonstration truly is. The core of this problem was eloquently summed up by Britain's wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill in a famous radio broadcast in 1939: "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." This gloomy observation on the impenetrability of Soviet society and politics, echoed by numerous Western analysts, remains a trenchant comment on the state of Sovietology in the Gorbachev era.

"To a great extent what Churchill said back then is still true today."

notes Arnold Beichman, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution who has studied the Soviet Union extensively. . . . No less, the Kremlin's attitude toward, and its treatment of, Soviet Jewry.

Undoubtedly refuseniks and Soviet Jews in general draw encouragement from a mass outpouring of sympathy by American Jews. But who can truly gauge the full range of Soviet responses to such demonstrations? Let us consider, for example, the recent Washington gathering. Gorbachev and company had been looking forward to the December summit as a climactic achievement in their effort to present a moderate, likeable image to Western society. A gathering of several hundred thousand on the day before Gorbachev's arrival, declaring that human rights is a myth in the USSR, was not likely to endear the Jews and their supporters to the Kremlin. Nor was the unrealistic demand that the Soviets change their entire social system. And, even if Gorbachev would have returned to Moscow to immediately release some of the more prominent refuseniks, what is to prevent him from then dealing even more severely than in the past with the two million Jews that remain in his grip? Can one—may one—risk trading off the welfare of the multitude for the freedom of the few? For those who see it as a

minor risk, bear in mind: it is *safeik pikuach nefesh*—one must be stringent when dealing with lives.

In fact, the point has been made repeatedly by some of the most effective workers for an improvement of Jewish life in Russia, that while demonstrations may help emigration, Jewish population increases through births outnumber the total of people who leave. That accentuates the need to maintain quiet contacts to permit activities aimed at preserving the Jewish spark in Russian Jewry—and surely to avoid aggravating their situation. This brings us to our third consideration which follows:

ANOTHER VOICE

Gedolei Torah, men of great wisdom, have constantly counseled as a matter of public policy that—irrespective of the debate of the efficacy of demonstrations—there must always be a segment within *Klal Yisroel* that should be perceived by the Russians as not being amongst those who talk to them from the streets or through the mass media. The Torah leadership has continually emphasized that, in a practical sense, it is wise to hold in reserve a battalion within *Klal Yisroel* which, because of its abstention

from public demonstrations, can serve a more valuable purpose in crucial moments in dealing with Soviet authorities, as the need arises.

It must be restated with emphasis that the Torah community, which considers itself part of this segment, goes beyond simply refraining from communicating through public manifestation. It expresses its concern in positive, admirable actions, engaging in activities that some day will be revealed for their singular contribution to the well-being of Soviet Jews.

One last word: Let those who chose to remain at home out of conviction respect the motives of those who participated in that massive rally in Washington, and at the same time reinforce their own abstention as a conscious choice: a choice that calls for increased support of those who carry out discreet missions of aid to Russian Jewry; a choice that makes educational efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry an item of top priority; and a choice that also summons a genuine outflowing of constant supplication on behalf of "*Acheinu Kol Beis Yisroel. . .*" By the same token, let those who chose to travel to Washington also understand that each pursues his own course, in response to his own genuine motivation and the guidance of his own leadership. ■

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URGENT CALL

REGISTER TO VOTE

February 19, 1988, is the last day to register to vote in order to participate in the New York State Presidential Primary Elections on April 19, 1988. Registration days for other states in the country vary but all are coming up quickly.

Our Gedolei Torah have recognized the importance of registering and voting. They themselves registered and voted, and made their views on the matter known to us.

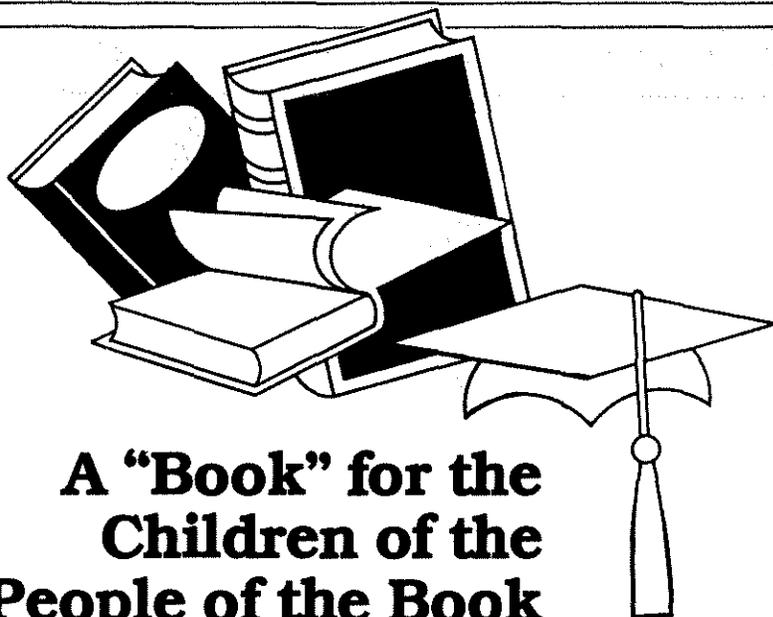
Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zt"l in a letter he issued many years ago to encourage voter registration, stressed the importance of voting as it affects, among other things, the security of Israel and the interests of Yeshivos. These issues remain as critical today as when he first expressed his opinion.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l wrote concerning the same question of voter registration: "A fundamental principle of Yiddishkeit is Hakoras Hatov - recognizing benefits afforded to us and giving expression to our appreciation. Therefore it is incumbent upon each Jewish citizen to participate in the democratic system which affords us the freedoms we enjoy. The most fundamental responsibility incumbent on each individual is to register and vote."

The charge of these Gedolim to us on this matter is clear and simple: 1) Register by the deadline. 2) Vote on election day.

For a voter registration card in New York City call (212) VOTER 88, 24 hours a day. Out of New York, contact your local Board of Elections for forms and information. If you are interested in sponsoring a voter registration campaign in your neighborhood, with your shul membership or yeshiva parent body, call Mr. Avigdor at the Agudath Israel Office, at (212) 797-7386.

Remember, before we register our opinion we must register our vote. We CAN make a difference.



A "Book" for the Children of the People of the Book

FOR WHOM THE PORTRAIT?

As it turns out, we have two eighth graders graduating simultaneously, one boy, one girl. And along with the talk of high school, there is the inevitable lobbying by the lady of the house in opposition to the yearbook.

Mind you, we aren't alone in our battle. In the case of our older girls, long graduated, we found yeshiva administrators delighted with parental pressure on the side of "less" rather than "more." Nor were we the only parents who felt this way. We were pleasantly surprised at the support we received from others who were unwilling—or unable—to articulate their views, but who were happy to support ours.

Indeed, in many schools the battle is quite different from what it was a decade ago. Here the professional glitzy yearbook, requiring students to bring two hundred dollars in "ads," is a thing of the past. Nowadays we are faced with thirty-five dollar photos for eighth graders. My wife says "no." Even though we can afford it, she says there's an important principle involved.

Why should families be forced to spend thirty-five dollars for a photo

of an eighth grader? Will the photos be used for *shidduchim*? Maybe, but it's my feeling that it would be a brave young man who would risk being blinded by the reflection of the braces that are the hallmark of eighth grade girls.

Memories? My daughters, on turning sixteen, each made me sign a document promising never to show

"that" picture to anyone, under pain of severe curtailment of visiting rights to my grandchildren.

Then what? One answer seems to be "everyone does it." For some children, this is the key to turning their parents into unwilling accomplices. But, any yeshiva worth its salt will teach its children how to determine right from wrong, and the fact that "others do it" has never meant anything in a Torah setting. Taken to its logical conclusion, "everyone will do it because everybody does it." Reasoning for, and of, the 80's.

SOLUTIONS, SOLUTIONS

Our proposed solution is a single class picture. With the money saved being used for some *chessed* project which will bear the names of the participants, and which a young woman will proudly show her *chassan* five or six years later.

As justification of yearbooks, we sometimes hear complaints that seniors "need something to do." If such young people do exist in this community of large families, of special

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Dr. Fryshman, a regular contributor to these pages, teaches physics at the New York Institute of Technology.

Any yeshiva worth its salt will teach its children how to determine right from wrong, and the fact that "others do it" has never meant anything in a Torah setting.

children needing help, of patterning, tutoring, nursing homes, *kiruv*... I will be happy to refer them to some useful activities.

A problem of a different order of magnitude lies in the two hundred dollars a child in another school must bring in for the yearbook. Here the question is not one of principle, but of penury. And we are joined in our penury by virtually all other yeshiva families. But here we are

offered a simple solution: Get ads! Children need just bring in two hundred dollars worth of ads from the baker, tailor, candlestick maker. And the obligation for the yearbook is met.

Only they aren't ads. Any businessman who feels he is going to get paying customers from the hundred or so yearbooks in which the ad will appear is probably doing too poorly to afford an ad anyway. The ads will

not be seen by the public, and will not likely be seen by the "private," either. ("If you want to see my yearbook, you have to wipe the peanut butter off your hands!") Some business people may not realize that all the ad money is to be used to pay for the yearbook. They may feel they are doing a charitable act on behalf of the institution. A child (or parent) who encourages this misconception probably didn't do too well in their *mussar* courses at yeshiva.

But don't organizations solicit ads for their dinner journals? Of course they do, only with a difference. Organizations live off these ads! In this case, the ads are an important form of charity—and the ads/greetings are precisely what they purport to be. Support for Torah, not money to pay for the ad book.

I LOSE, YOU LOSE

But hold! There's Bubby May and Zaidie Max, Uncle Harold, Cousin Zvi and the *mechutanim*. Twenty-five dollars each isn't much, is it? No. But there is another cost here, measured in the units of *hashkafa*. Children are learning to ask for charity in order to pay for something they want. And they are learning to do it in an "honorable" way. "Would you take out an ad?" they ask. What they really mean is, "Please give me twenty-five dollars."

We won't win, of course. My child will probably remain the only one in the class without a yearbook. (Although when the yeshiva administration hears about my son being left out, they will undoubtedly see to it that he gets a yearbook. Somehow.) If I've brought him up properly, he will understand. If not, the Fryshman house will get a session on what a Jewish family is supposed to do with a spare two hundred dollars that happens to be lying around.

Actually we all will lose. About ten thousand dollars will leave our community from this one class. As it does every year. For every eighth grade, for every twelfth grade, for virtually every yeshiva, and virtually every Bais Yaakov! ■

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MUSIC: To Tame the Heart or Incite the Beast?

AN AVALANCHE OF TAPES

Now and then a letter to *The Jewish Observer* or a short essay in its pages has acted as a springboard to healthy introspection by the Torah community. Talking during *davening*, bringing noisy children to *shul*, driving with consideration for neither fellow drivers nor pedestrians, were just some of the timely topics discussed in this forum, which led many of us to contemplate if indeed our own actions are meeting the standards we expect from others.

The problem as presented by this article and my proposed solution are by no means definitive. I just feel that by airing my personal contention, a viable approach would perhaps be coaxed out of hiding, and

appear on these pages in a subsequent issue. Here, then, is my point:

Have you passed the display of cassette tapes and records at your local *seforim* store lately? The psychedelic graphics and bold themes of Torah and *mitzvos* seem to leap

out at you from beneath the cellophane wrappers. The sheer mass of available recordings is amazing. It seems the public just can't get enough to satiate its stereophonic hunger.

Much of this avalanche of recordings is good solid educational material, sugar-coated with wholesome musical entertainment—something to stir the soul as it lifts the spirits, the advertisement might read.

Unfortunately, though, a lot of these productions reek of the immoral entertainment reek of the fringe element of society that inhabits it. The music—plagiarized from rock-and-roll often with only the slightest deviation from the original lyrics. The themes—unidentifiable or, worse, ridiculously silly and imitative, a reflection of the leading inspiration behind even the most kosher entertainment—the ubiquitous boob tube.

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Avi Menashe sings to his children when he is not playing pre-approved tapes for their entertainment.

KOSHER WITHOUT QUESTION?

The bottom line should really give us pause. A generation of people who have learned to demand only the most stringent of *hashgachos* (supervision) on the food they consume can yet be so naive as to assume the *kashrus* of a record without prior inquiry as to its content. It seems that the novelty of those original Pirchei and JEP records—featuring words from *Tehilim* and Torah-true themes on a soundtrack with *Yiddishe taam*—somehow, somewhere in our sub-

conscious, placed a *plumbo* (seal of approval) on all the recordings in the store.

The obvious rejoinder would be to simply say that after making their way through one playing, the offending recordings are immediately returnable to the place of purchase. The sad truth is that this just isn't as simple as it sounds. Perhaps it's because we are afraid of being branded old-fashioned or humorless, for once a tape has entered our homes it tends to stay there.

Basically, the solution lies in an increased awareness amongst the

kosher populace as to the dangers of indiscriminate tape purchasing. I, for one, would like to see this taken a step further. In recent years, the *Kashrus* industry has developed a highly sophisticated system of monitoring food production. Perhaps we could apply some of these practices to the products that we, and our children, consume with our ears and eyes.

The scenario: A respected education organization such as Torah Umesorah would appoint a commission on audio-visual *Kashrus*. This highly respected group of educators would evaluate a recording before it hits the market. If approved, it can now display the coveted symbol on its wrapper, identifying it as acceptable for the conscientious kosher consumer—a Good Chinuch Seal of Approval, if you will. If rejected, the producer can amend his product. This would correct the especially sorry situation of an otherwise excellent record going on sale with one or two sore spots.

Of course, the artist who takes umbrage at his masterpiece being criticized can market it without making any change. (He probably will be able to get a symbol of approval from one of the less stringent organizations that will surely pop up to claim his business!) At least the concerned parent and his children will be protected in the *seforim* store as they are in the grocery—by simply sticking with the *hechsher* they trust.

Once successful, who knows? Perhaps concerts and orchestras would agree to have their material scrutinized in advance and then stick to an approved routine on stage in return for a *hechsher*. . . . Imagine how more enjoyable a *chassuna* would be without all that mind-jarring noise we've come to accept as Jewish music.

NOTES AND NUANCES

A renowned *Mashgiach* commented that each nation's collective personality can be discerned from the nuances of its language. For example—French, with

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its absence of harsh consonants exudes a tone of romance, in keeping with the celebrated French preoccupation. Arabic, with its guttural enunciation, evokes a picture of uncultured, backward tribes. In fact, even one language, English, can be spoken so differently on these shores as to be a foreign tongue to a listener from Great Britain. One can hear in the hurried tempo of Eastern Seaboard American speech its obsession with acquiring wealth, while the upper-class British version smacks of pomp and formality, denoting its consciousness of status and social rank.

In the same vein, I venture that our music makes a clear statement about us, too. If we are allowing, and even enjoying the sounds of decadence in our homes and at our celebrations, we had best act quickly, before the way in which it describes us becomes too accurate.

It's time we sent a message to the bands and songwriters about what we are willing to hear, instead of having them dictate to us. ■

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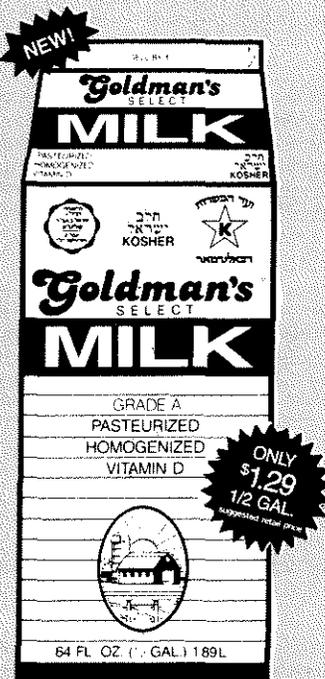
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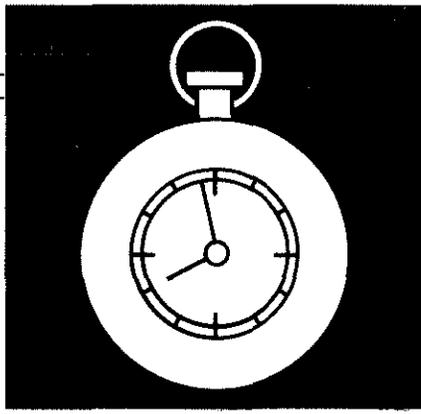
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The timekeepers of the world have informed us that the universe is slowing down a bit. In advance of the closing minutes of 1987, we were advised to count down the seconds: "... 3, 2, 1, Leap Second, 0." That's fine for those who attend to the 150 atomic clocks that note the passage of time world-wide, but what does it mean to the rest of us?

The question was posed to a friend. He did not hesitate—not even a second—and replied, "Don't the rabbis say that a person can acquire his world—the world-to-come, that is—in a single moment?"

"*Sha'ah achas*—one hour, or one unit of time of significance, yes. But a mere second?"

My companion recalled for me a discussion he once heard on the revenge taken by Dovid Hamelech's general, Yoav ben Tzruya, against Avner ben Ner (see *Shmuel II*: 3,27). Yoav surprised Avner and plunged a dagger into his fifth rib. Avner was a powerful man, and even as he felt his strength waning, he clapped his hands on Yoav in a life-threatening, crushing grip.

"Stop!" protested Yoav.

"But you have extinguished my light!" gasped Avner.

"Let us settle that in the next world. For now, *Klal Yisroel* needs me."

In his last second of life, Avner relaxed his hold on Yoav, permitting him to live and serve his people, changing history. And then Avner fell dead.

One second. That was all it took. ■

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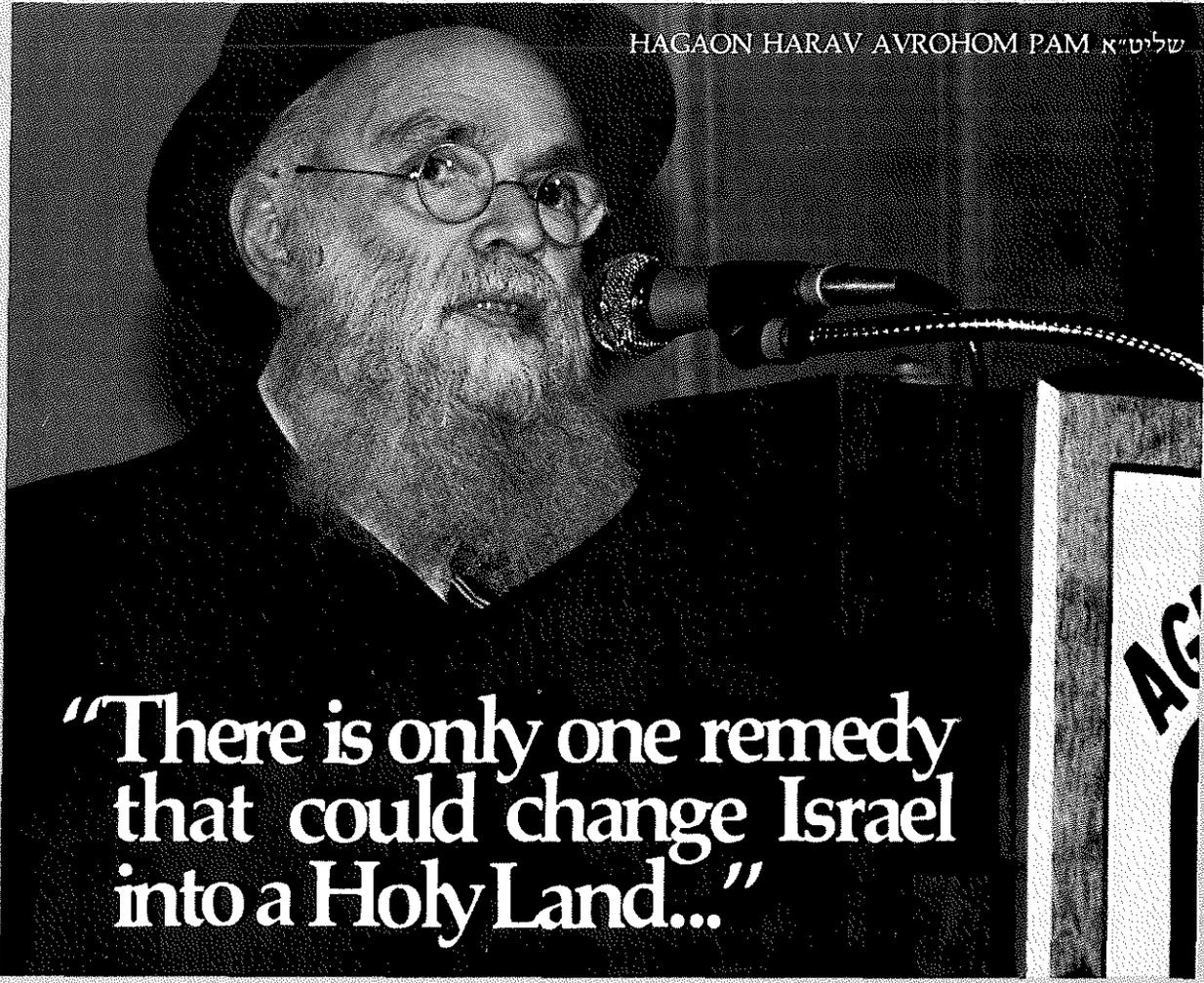
בשב"ק פי' ויצא, בסעודה
השלישית, שפכתי שיחי וצערתי בפני
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על זה שרבבות אלפי ילדי ישראל
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ומגדל שונאי הדת ומנאצי השי"ת.

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עם מצב שכזה, ולאמור שלי עלי
נפשי. חלילה לנו להתיאש ולאמור
"אין מה לעשות". כיום הזה יש בידינו
אפשרויות גדולות מאד לשנות את
המצב מן הקצה אל הקצה — במקום
זרע מרעים לגדל זרע קודש ברך ד'.
עלינו להתאמץ ולחזק את זרם החינוך
התורני "חינוך עצמאי", שנחסר ע"י
גדולי ומאורי ישראל בדור העבר
ומתנהל עפ"י גדולי התורה בדורנו —
לגדלו ולרוממו ולהרחיב גבולו שיוכל
להכיל עוד אלפי תלמידים ותלמידות.
מספר ההורים שמבקשים דוקא חינוך
זה הולך וגדל מיום אל יום, והם
דופקים על פתחי חינוך עצמאי
ומתחננים לפתוח בתי ספר
בשכונותיהם, להוסיף כמות, להוסיף
שעות הלימוד, וכדומה. ועל זה רוח
לבנו, שבגלל המצב הכספי אי אפשר
למלא את כל הדרישות, ולנצל כראוי
את שעת הכושר הזאת לעשות
מהפכה רוחנית באר"י בדרכי שלי
ונועם, ולהחיש בזכות התורה את
גאולתנו וישועתנו.

ובכן הנני פונה בכל לשון של
בקשה לשתף פעולה עם אנשי חיל,
העסקנים המסוריים בלב ונפש להצלח
הדורות הבאים מתרבות רעה, ולעזור
עורה ממשית באיזה אופן שהוא, אם
בגוף אם בממון ולהיות עושים
ומעשים לדי ולתורתו. ומי יוכל לשער
גודל הזכות בעסק זה שהוא בנן כלל
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"There is only one remedy that could change Israel into a Holy Land..."

My Dear Friends,

On שבח פ' ויגא at the Agudah Convention, I was privileged to address the great assembly, and I made a heart-rending appeal to "go all out" to promote and expand the Torah Chinuch in Eretz Yisroel.

How can we tolerate a situation, where hundreds of thousands of children are exposed to a non-religious or irreligious chinuch, which breeds שנאת

הדת and hostility to שומרי תורה ומצוות. This is the root of the escalating conflict between the Orthodox and the Secularists in Israel today.

There is only one remedy that could change the whole image of Israel and turn it into the Holy Land, the residence of the Divine people, that it should be. It is a peaceful, amicable remedy, without offense to anyone. Open wide the doors of Torah schools and fill them with

thousands more Yiddishe Kinder, and give them a Torah Chinuch, to become a pride and joy to כלל ישראל. Strengthen and expand the network of חנוך עצמאי. "Get involved," as the Novominsker Rebbe said at the Convention.

Let us mobilize all our efforts and dedicate all our resources to this מלחמה מצודה and we will achieve miracles even as in the days of the חשמונאים — בעזרה שייית.

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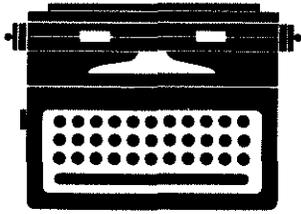
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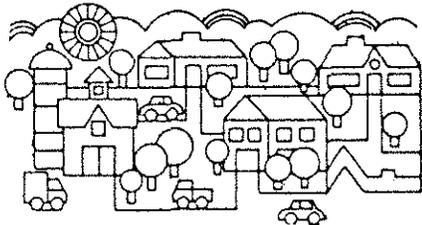
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TORAH FOR ONE DOLLAR A DAY



Letters to the Editor



TRANSFERRING "OUT-OF-TOWN" TO THE BIG CITY

To the Editor:

As a product of an "out-of-town" community, I appreciated Eliyahu Mayer's reminiscences of life "out-of-town" very much (Oct. '87). I would like to comment on the dichotomy and offer a suggested solution, with an added perspective.

As was indicated, living "out-of-town" presents a Catch-22 situation where the harm and help seem to go hand-in-hand. The danger of unwanted exposure offers, at the same time, a contrast to a child (or for that matter, adolescent and adult) that can be seminal to his/her development not just in degree, but in essence: not just in degree in a qualitative and quantitative sense, but even in essence, as one's entire development can be rooted in the experience of viewing such contrasts.* One positive result of such circumstances can be the strengthening, and even setting of one's perspectives.

Alongside the contrast/exposure element comes the advantage/dis-

advantage of possibly finding oneself in a situation headed upstream, fighting the flow of current. This experience can strengthen, and frequently even inspire a person to a deeper commitment.** On the other hand, should a person relax for a moment he can be swept away into a sea of decadence.

The primary question, then, would appear to be a more general, wide-ranging one, involving the advisability of exposure in every aspect of our lives, ranging from educational material for our children to guests invited into our homes, to everyday contact with the "outside" world.

The solution, in a very general sense, would appear to lie in a proper diagnosis. When necessary, exposure—both at school and at home—must be carefully controlled and guided. Contrasts should not be avoided when they can be discussed and explained. Struggles and hindrance should not be disregarded when they can be used as valuable lessons in spiritual growth and development. Difficulties and questions should not be overlooked when they can be used as valuable keys in learning and understanding.

With the proper focus and proper approach, many so-called disadvantages associated with "out-of-town" can be found in our "in-town" communities, and can be beneficially utilized to help our children reach greater heights and fulfill their potential.

N.Z. LEVY
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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*Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz זצ"ל in his *Sichos Mussar* (Shnas '32-'37) comments on the passage: "Had I not fallen I would not have risen, and had I not sat in darkness I would not have been enlightened by G-d... for the falling and sitting in darkness are that which bring a person to see the truth, and from [being] amidst the darkness will one [come to] recognize the light of G-d." This is because the main hinderance to growth is complacency and lack of ambition. Not only does the individual not feel the need to grow and reach greater heights, he also loses his sensitivity.

Taking this one step further, there is no safer method to recognize one's need to strive and grow than from the viewpoint of a spectator—constantly learning from the mistakes of others.

**This brings to mind an extreme example of a *ba'al teshuva* I met who became observant on account of an employer who challenged his religious commitment, in response to his request to take off on Yom Kippur.

**NEW BOOKS: WHY NOT
A PRE-PUBLICATION
REVIEW BOARD?**

To the Editor:

The October '86 issue of JO discussed the advantages of reading books written for the Orthodox Jewish reader. Today when educators and government officials are calling on parents to counteract the influence of television and indecent books on their children, it is surely incumbent upon us to combat that deluge of *taava* and *apikorsus* (self-indulgence and godlessness) more than ever. It would be a boon to Jewish education if our youth would have access to a wide assortment of quality Jewish books, fiction and non-fiction, to hone their language skills in their school years. Indeed, the Jewish books that are available now sell at a brisk pace because people realize their importance.

It is disconcerting, therefore, to find that some of our very own books are a far cry from the kosher appearance of their covers. I remember at least one JO book review that noted a questionable plot, which involved an activity that was perhaps a *yahareig ve'al ya'avur*, with no comment

in the book. My daughter just finished reading a "frum" best-seller that debates vigorously Jewish laws and customs, while providing ambiguous and inadequate answers—with what impact on the reader? My friends had the same reaction to that book. These books are at best a *mekach ta'us*—a faulty sale. People who purchase "Kosher" books, instead of buying the cheaper secular books, or borrowing them from the public library, have a right to get their money's worth, in much the same way they have the right to actually receive kosher meat when buying kosher.

I would like to propose a possible solution to this dilemma. Agudath Israel, or a similar group, should create a committee with three noted educators, writers, and rabbis, who will be in direct contact with the Torah leaders in America and Israel. Prospective authors will submit their manuscripts to the committee. Any possible objection will be directed by the committee to the Torah leaders. If the objection will be sustained, the committee will return to the author a written description and the response with the *Gadol's* name. Thus the author will not feel that the rejection was partisan or personal.

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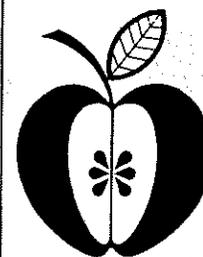
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Most authors would be delighted to ascertain that their books are right on target. After all, their purpose is to enhance *Kavod Shamayim* and now no inadvertent error in judgment will block their goal. They should welcome the opportunity to have an expert committee provide them with guidance. However, those who would choose not to submit their manuscripts to the committee would still not be able to market objectionable books under the guise of an innocent cover. The committee would read the book (perhaps before its publication—by agreement with the publishers). Should any objection arise and be sustained by the *Gedolim*, then JO and other Jewish publications could carry notices to the effect that the book is unacceptable, similar to those that *Kashrus* organizations place when there is a *Kashrus* breach. The impending explosion in English books for the Jewish Orthodox reader will thus be guided, and insured to deliver what it promises.

SHLOMO BARON
Woodside, New Jersey

See article by Avi Menashe in this issue on a similar suggestion.—The Editor

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MORE ON AUTOMATION'S POSITIVE IMPACT

To the Editor:

I enjoyed greatly Eliezer Bruckstein's article in the September '87 JO, "The Impact of Automation on the Torah World," in which he discusses various applications of modern technology to Torah.

May I mention an obvious omission in Mr. Bruckstein's list of applications of computers in enhancing *kiyum mitzvos*? Computers, having started out as greatly enhanced calculators, can still be used for their original function to calculate. Programming can tell us the proper *zmanim* according to *halacha* to put on *tefillin*, to *daven* our *tefillos*, to begin and end *Shabbos*, and more. For the individual, these *zmanim* change daily, and also according to location, i.e., when in summer resorts, on business trips, or other travels. I myself produce printed yearly charts of the more commonly used daily *zmanim*, others produce similar programs.

Computers can help us perform *mitzvos* in their proper time.

HERSHEL EDELSTEIN
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NON-ZIONISTS: BUILDER OF ZION

To the Editor:

On a number of occasions you and your columnists have written articles stating that you are non-Zionists. This has generated a certain anger and hostility among your Zionist readers, as though being a non-Zionist means being anti-Israel, and insensitive to *Kedushas ha-Aretz*.

The odd thing is that so many non-Zionists that I know have moved to Israel, or have invested personally in Israel with married children and their families studying Torah in that county, and settling there. By contrast, my Zionist friends continue to support *aliya* and the State—from a safe distance. Their support is important and so are their periodic visits. But it doesn't begin to approach the non-Zionist commitment.

MRS. CLARA KRASNER
Brooklyn, NY

QUESTIONABLE AD IN JO

To the Editor:

Having enjoyed your November issue, especially the wonderful article on Rabbi Ruderman of blessed and saintly memory, I feel I must express some surprise and disappointment that you carry an advertisement for wine which portrays a non-Torah gathering (i.e. mixed, with men whose heads are bare).

The non-verbal message of advertisements such as this to the impressionable young (and the impressionable not-so-young) runs counter to all we believe in.

ALAN BURLAND
Salford, England

The advertisement was delivered to the printer in a later-than-usual stage of production, and thus was not subject to normal scrutiny, which surely would have excluded its appearance.—

N.W.

CORRECTION

The date of passing of Rabbi Nachum Partzovitz זצ"ל (JO Dec. '87) was 18 Marcheshvan 5747.

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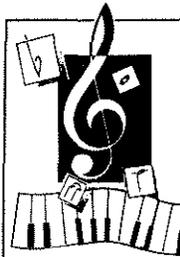
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דינסטאג	הלכה הרב אברהם חיים שפיצער	משניות הרב מיכל זילבער	
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