

Readers React to
"WOMEN IN A TORAH SOCIETY"

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

THE BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL

*The Lonely Jew in
a World of Upheaval
A Long-Range Look at
the Yom Kippur War*

The Education of Sephardic Jewry

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

THE JEWISH OBSERVER is published monthly, except July and August, by the Agudath Israel of America, 5 Beekman St., New York, N. Y. 10038. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y. Subscription: \$6.50 per year; Two years, \$11.00; Three years \$15.00; outside of the United States \$7.50 per year. Single copy sixty-five cents.

Printed in the U.S.A.

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JANUARY, 1975 VOL. X, No. 7

Typography by Compu-Scribe
at ArtScroll Studios

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Letters & Responses



Last month's issue, devoted to "The Jewish Woman in a Torah Society," generated a great deal of comment and an unusual number of letters. Some of these letters, with response where warranted, are printed below. As comments continue to arrive in the editorial office, some letters are being reserved for publication in future issues.

Simplistic Treatment of Women

To the Editor:

Most men consider themselves experts on women. In the case of religious men, this knowledge is generally based on their observations of one woman, namely their respective wives. Thus, one man will state that "women" cry a lot, others that "women" are amazingly stoic. . . . The article "Jewish Women in a Torah Society" does not take into account individual differences in women, but is as simplistic as would be a comparable letter written by a woman whose husband learns all day, chiding all men for not doing the same.

It suffices that men look upon a life spent withing the Bais Medrash as an ideal, and women view a life spent within the home as an ideal, with both realistically aware that this ideal state may not be feasible for everybody. Just as men are not made to feel guilty for closing their *Gemoros* to make a living, women should not be made to feel guilty for working outside their homes for similar reasons of necessity.

Incidentally, there is no such thing as a "man's world," anymore; this is a people's world, and has been for some time. A woman cannot lose her femininity by working outside the home, because it is an innate part of her. Woman is feminine, whether she is rolling dough, typing her thesis or working at a machine. Yes, Virginia, there are as many individual differences among women as there are among

men. (I fear you are a male chauvinist lamb.) Possession of a master's degree does not mean that a woman cannot found a viable Jewish home, just as shuffling between stove and sink all day does not automatically guarantee that she will be a good mother. It all depends upon her *hashkofos*, capabilities and determination. I do believe, however, that it is generally wiser for her to postpone outside commitments until her children are all in school, if possible.

Traditionally, women have been competing in the marketplace for some time, and have thus enabled generations of men to reach great heights in Torah. I believe the key to success in synthesizing homemaking with outside pursuits is the motivation involved. If she is working to evade domestic responsibilities or to attain luxuries, she may find her dual role difficult. If, however, she is pressed by economic necessity, because of absence or incapacity of a breadwinner, or if her husband is engaged in Torah study and she does not want to passively bow to the ensuing poverty, then I believe she will be helped from Above to achieve her goals.

There is an air of condescension throughout the article, particularly evident when the author suggests women make tacky aprons at home, probably netting for themselves a munificent \$3 for a day of toil. There is also a veiled implication that it is somehow tawdry for a Jewish woman to work outside the home. Rabbi Wolpin, don't for one moment underestimate the flexibility or *gadlus* of the Jewish woman.

Though she works outside the home, she carries the *hinai Sarah b'ohel* concept around with her as a portable tent, surrounding herself with an aura of *tzenius* wherever she goes. The Torah-committed woman inspires the respect of all she meets and makes a true *Kiddush Hashem* in the world.

BAS YISROEL

Intellectual Stimulation — Unfortunate?

To the Editor:

Although I began reading Rabbi Wolpin's article "Jewish Women in a Torah Society, for Fulfillment or for Frustration" (Teves 5735) very eagerly, hoping to find, finally, an intelligent, reasoned discussion of the difficulties a Jewish woman may have in finding fulfillment within a Torah life, I completed the article feeling a great deal more frustration than would have met with Rabbi Wolpin's approval. After all, the article made me react intellectually, made me assess his arguments in the light of logic, as well as in the light of personal experience and the experiences of other Jewish women. This is not to deny Rabbi Wolpin's thesis that a woman's primary responsibility is to her home, to her family, and to the activities traditionally associated with the feminine role in Jewish life. This is not to put forth an argument for women's lib or equal rights. It is a challenge to all the Rabbi Wolpins who help to form the Torah society as we know it.

Rabbi Wolpin argues that one of the unfortunate by-products of the Bais Yaakov movement is that it stimulated intellectual activity on the part of its students. Unfortunate byproduct? Isn't it rather a sad comment on the Torah society that the intellectual awakening of its women is a threat to that society? Isn't it rather the responsibility of that society to put all its resources — and, yes, even the female mind does occasionally have its strengths — to good use rather than to suppress those resources for lack of imagination on how to take advantage of them?

Rabbi Wolpin does offer some suggestions to the frustrated female: personal involvement in the three *Mitzvos* that evolve upon the woman. Again, I can't fault the author in his premise — only in his romanticizing of the actual practice of those *Mitzvos*. "... allowing the loaves to grow, slipping the pans into the oven...serving and enriching the staff of life with love..." ... indeed! And this spiritual uplift is to take place during a day filled with doing laundry and scrubbing floors, or while the children are calling for a referee in their latest quarrel and the husband comes in growling for his supper because he has to go to a Sheur in ten minutes and so what if the wife hasn't had ten minutes of his attention all week, on top of which little Berel's Rebbe called that the child misbehaved in Yeshiva again. And when a woman does fulfill life and still finds herself seeking something more, something different, something to occupy her mind rather than her hands, what then? Then, Rabbi Wolpin says, she should become involved in public works and good deed projects. His practical suggestions tend in one direction and, although beyond reproach, they are rather weak for the woman whose mind is — must I say unfortunately? — active, curious, alive, frankly not interested in *chesed* work. Is she to be condemned because she does not fit the stereotype?

Furthermore, Rabbi Wolpin takes no account of those women who have completed their tasks as mothers, whose children have grown to independence. Where should these women turn for fulfillment — to those same cliched, tired, old outlets? And still further, Rabbi Wolpin takes no account of those women who have no families from which to derive their satisfactions and fulfillment. Is there no place for such females in the Torah society? Isn't it difficult enough for them to be already deprived without their being made to feel that the Torah society cannot accommodate them because, once again, they do not fit the stereotype?

Surely Rabbi Wolpin would do well to come to grips with the realities of some of these issues. I found the ideas presented in his essay, although elegantly phrased, far too shallow to be a definitive statement on how a woman should find sufficient satisfaction in a Torah society. Once more, perhaps the finger should be pointed at the Torah society for failing its responsibility to its women, rather than at the women for seeking that elusive fulfillment wherever it might be found.

EVE ROTH
Lakewood, New Jersey

**Men and Women
Shared Humanity:
Intellect, Also**

To the Editor:

You are so right! Man is meant to be man and woman is meant to be woman. The common denominator of humanity that you mention, however, refers to mind and *neshama*, and these are both shared by men and women.

The main problem regarding Jewish woman's role is not whether she belongs in the kitchen or in the intellectual world, but rather how much emphasis is to be put on her performance in the kitchen, and

how much her intellectual needs and self-realization are de-emphasized. A woman's greatest and most fascinating blessing is her children, and the upkeep of a spiritually enriched home. But as the Rebbe Reb Bunim said: "These are the children of Noach, Noach. . . . Noach's development was his greatest achievement. In man's involvement with his children, he must not forget to educate the child in himself." And that can take a lifetime. It would really be shortsighted to assume that the *hashkafa* (Torah philosophy) taught in high school or even in Seminary could last forever. As a woman matures and her inner and outer life experiences deepen, presenting new problems, it would certainly require new learnings and fresher application of the old.

Sure, it was natural for Avraham to ask Sarah to bake cakes for the *malochim* since she did make the kitchen her domain as much as Avraham supervised the farming and commerce connected with their possessions. But I am positive that Sarah's distinction was not totally based on her cooking skills any more than Avraham was just simply another wealthy land-owner. Her ability to reach out to women was, beyond doubt, built on her unusual intellectual and spiritual attainments. I would think that women are expected to emulate every aspect of Sarah's character.

Doing *chesed* should not simply be a vehicle for "getting away from the home," which was implied in your article. For this situation there is a classic joke: "Pity on her, she has noone to pity." A woman's lack of interest doesn't free her from the obligation to grow in *hashkafa* any more than it would free a disinterested man. By virtue of the humanity they share, they share this obligation to grow.

From a mother in love with her five children *בנותיה* who enjoys cooking and baking for them:

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

The Jewish Observer / January, 1975

Rabbi Wolpin Replies:

The three above correspondents are more in agreement with the premise of the article on Jewish women than one might infer from the tone of their letters.

The first letter (from Miss B.Y.) faults the article for projecting an ideal rather than facing reality. Indeed, the article was written on the assumption that women are fashioned biologically, emotionally, and spiritually to realize a specific ideal, and the article was aimed at encouraging pursuit of this ideal. Rather than inspire guilt, the intention was to spell out certain long-accepted goals which, for many of us, are in danger of getting lost in a scramble for liberation — a liberation that misconstrues our ideal to be a form of bondage. In addition, evasion of the ideal role can only result in frustration.

Of course, individual women do differ from one another, but there is an over-riding femininity common to all. Recognizing it should not make one a chauvinist or feminist, but a realist. As stated in the article, this femininity offers the basis for projecting the ideal, which revolves around the home.

For any number of reasons, work outside the home can be necessary at times, but certain considerations should be kept in mind. First, (as Miss B.Y. points out), outside activity should not be sought as an escape from home responsibilities. That would be fruitless, and in the long run, self-destructive. In addition, (as Miss B.Y. implies), outside employment and other involvements should not compete with home obligations for time or attention. . . . This is something would-be women physicians, editors and lawyers should take into account.

Finally, the circumstances of the work should not conflict with basic tenets of *tzenius* and modesty. Miss B.Y. appears to prefer to overlook this consideration; yet, the moral looseness of modern society is so obvious that it would seem to take

Spelling out an ideal is not meant to inspire guilt, but to remind ourselves of long-accepted goals under threat of oblivion because of assault by "liberationists."

wishful thinking or deliberate blindness to make one unaware of it.

To be sure, the "*Hinei Sarah Ba'ohel*" concept is more than a designation of place; it is also a frame of mind. But place is a factor, and should not be forgotten in the rush of our mobile society. A good deal of *siyato dish'mayo* — a generous assist from heaven — is needed for any of us to maintain the same levels of *tzenius* in an amoral society as in one's own home.

If this were truly a "person's world," conditions would be somewhat more compatible to Miss B.Y.'s portable *tzenius* concept. It takes more than a simple statement, however, to convert our universe into more than "a man's world." And it takes more than saying so to preserve a woman's femininity at a machine — or at a machine gun. *Chazal* expressed this long ago by frowning at any woman's tendency to leave home and hearth (even labelling the Matriarch Leah and her daughter Dina as *yotzantos* for "excessive" going-forth). Because of belief in pre-assigned sex roles, women are halachically excluded from specific occupations, such as any type of warfare, for being masculine. When working in a man's world, a woman should not lose sight of this.

The air of condescension detected was not intended. The various alternatives described in the article's Postscript were presented in only the broadest of terms. As for sewing and designing, Cocco Chanel's successor may be creating tomorrow's fashions in a Boro Park walk-in or a *kollel* apartment in suburbia; a typewriter may be pounding out the Great American Novel or feature articles for *JO* at the same address — both activities being performed with consummate creativity and fidelity to time-honored standards of *tzenius*. I did not put the \$3 price

tag on Jewish women's productivity.

Miss Roth (writer of the second letter) accepts the article's thesis regarding a woman's primary responsibility, but seems to misinterpret the critique of intellectuality. She is certainly correct in viewing stimulated intellectual activity as a valuable resource. To be considered unfortunate, however, is the resulting expectation that a woman's entire productivity and creativity be measured by a yardstick fashioned in the academe. Her touching vignette of "The Harried Housewife" really proves the point, for it portrays a challenge that can be met by a woman employing her full arsenal of patience, compassion — and, yes, intelligence. But, intellectuality as such simply does not come into play. The intellectual pursuits of her student days ideally would yield a fuller appreciation for the spiritual values inherent in the nitty-gritty of home-making. If, instead, it bred a contempt for the menial aspects of her job, something is amiss. (It brings to mind a famous Kutzker parable of the provincial bumpkin who visited the Bais Hamikdash and failed to see more than "a big slaughter house.")

Intellectual capacity is a gift, and like all gifts, should be nurtured and developed. Yet it should not, by any means, overshadow other obligations and other areas of activity. As a parallel, the woman who possesses unusual musical talents should by all means develop them in as much as they will afford her a means of expression and bring beauty and joy to the world. Beyond doubt, her musicality would find fullest expression as a concert performer or composer, but when these become a primary involvement, eclipsing her homebound activities, she should reconsider. While pursuing her career may result in a con-

summate gift to the music world, it would also constitute a denial to the full flowering of her feminine self. Feminists would surely say that full expression of the artistic self still comes first; that it can be shared with homemaking — so much could be delegated, or altogether avoided. But this would truly be denying the person's feminine aspects, with the one gift assuming a prominence out of proportion to the rest.

This does not mean that the intellectual gift inborn in some, nurtured in others, should be neglected. A Torah society does owe its women structured opportunities for intellectual growth after seminary graduation without forcing them to seek stimulation in the universities. If Miss Roth (and others) would consult local Beth Jacob Seminary alumnae associations, some synagogue and organizational groups, she would find that some significant strides have been made in this direction.

More important, women, especially in our society, should seek time and means to study on their own. In her vignette, Miss Roth weighed the elements too heavily against the heroine (or victim). Torah Society does not define the husband's role as a supper-growler with only ten dispeptic minutes to spend with his family. Rabbi Moshe Schreiber, (the Chasam Sofer), leader of European Jewry in the early 19th century, devoted valuable time to joining his wife in study of "*Orach Chayim*" — the section of *Shulchan Aruch* that deals with daily halachic procedures. Rabbi Schreiber is known for his anti-innovation dictum: "The new crop is prohibited by the Torah." His sessions with his wife were surely a reputable practice that reflected no new trends in women's liberation.... His father-in-law, the famed Rabbi Akiva Eiger, was an intellectual and spiritual giant of his time (1760-1837). He wrote a letter turning down suggestions that he remarry after the untimely passing of his wife (in 1797), saying:

"—How can I forget my wife and all she has done for me? She has raised my children and instilled in them the fear of the Almighty. Whatever Torah I have learned, I have to thank her for. She cared for me in my feeble health, and, as I have recently discovered, she hid from me financial embarrassments and worries so that I would not be disturbed in my studies. Many times I have had discussions with her on interesting religious problems, until the late hours of the evening."

(translation by Rabbi Harold Leiman, from Dr. Leo Jung's *Jewish Leaders*)

Torah-study and analyzing "interesting religious problems" is indeed a prominent feature of marriage in a Torah Society.

As for the "public work and good projects" that Miss Roth finds "cliched, tired, and old" — I would remind her that cliches are not born; they develop through repeated use, and these particular ones do not wear out as long as there is a need for *chesed*. On the contrary, an educated woman has an obligation to join in reaching out to her sisters who are alienated from our heritage, applying her insights and understandings to stimulating fields where they are surely needed, without leaving the Tents of Sarah — much as Rabbi Field pointed out in his letter (which follows).

It is true that the article did not deal with the situation of many single women; even though all women are single at some time in their lives, almost all of them expect to change their status and visualize the basis of their fulfillment as someday sharing in the leadership of a household. This state of singleness is not the so-called norm situation, but surely does warrant a fuller discussion.

NISSON WOLPIN

THE JEWISH OBSERVER welcomes letters from the readers, but they must be signed to be considered for publication. Names are withheld upon request.

More Opportunities for Women

To the Editor:

Your treatment of the role that Jewish women play (or should play) in a Torah society was excellent. I am sure it will meet with ridicule in many circles, which sometimes is an indicator of how close to home you are.

Today's feminist movement, although perhaps conceived in and motivated by high ideals, has spawned forth a host of related problems in its wake. We find ourselves in the midst of a very real "identity crisis."

Witness the fashions for both men and women today, the hairstyles, even the mannerisms and speech habits: Men and women both are confused about who and what they are. Who is to say that the recent concentration on subjects relating to homosexuality is not also a direct result of this confusion? Even amongst the "Orthodox" many scoff at the Biblical injunction of "*Lo yihiye kli gever al isha...*" against wearing the clothing of the opposite sex. (See *Dvorum* 22, 5 and commentary of Rashi there, also commentary of *Taz and Shach* in *Yoreh Deah* 122, 2.) I would like to follow your lead in making some suggestions as to where the need is great for women to be active—without contradicting their Torah-ordained role.

Today a most essential area to Jewish survival is clearly *kiruv rechokim* — especially of young people lost in schools and universities across the country.

* One cannot over-emphasize the impact of a *Shabbos* dinner experience—including *candle lighting*, dinner and table preparations, and the special methods of cleaning up.— Who but women can help in this particular area?

* Today there seems to be (at least in this community) a widespread return to *kashrus*. Aside from giving

(Continued on page 28)

The Lonely Jew in a World of Upheaval

Chaim Dov Keller

A Very Real Dilemma

"THE LONELY JEW" of the title may strike the reader as a plagiarism from the theological gobbledegook so much in vogue nowadays. Indeed, not so long ago, one could have dismissed the whole premise: Those who are lonely probably do not feel Jewish. Those who are conscious of their Jewishness are not lonely. . . .

But the euphoric coasting along of the Jewish people since the days of the Six Day War came to an abrupt end with the Yom Kippur War, along with more recent rude awakenings, such as the reception give by the U.N. to Yassir Arafat. The impact of these events is not unlike the whiplash injury an automobile passenger can suffer in a head-on collision. Although escaping visible injuries, that sudden snap-back has its effect.

Some of us recall the first Munich, when the "free world" chose to appease the Nazi beast in order to assure "peace in our time" in 1938. Since then we have experienced the second Munich, when the Olympic games continued undisturbed on ground soaked with the blood of Jewish athletes. Now the two Munichs have blended into one continuing nightmare, as the community of nations votes once again that Jewish blood is expendable, to appease the forces that would enslave the world with the threat of economic disaster.

"*The World in Upheaval*" also is not a mere figure of speech. The governments of great and small nations are toppling at an unprecedented rate. War, depression, and famine threaten to engulf the world. The institutions of society crumble before our eyes.

To quote Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (who is not given to fanciful rhetoric) in a recent address at the University of Chicago:

"If current economic trends continue, we face further and mounting world-wide shortages, unemployment, poverty, and hunger. . . .An

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economic crisis of such magnitude would inevitably produce dangerous political consequences.

"Mounting inflation and recession. . . will fuel the frustration of all whose hopes for economic progress are suddenly and cruelly rebuffed. This is fertile ground for social conflict and political turmoil. . . ."

But more than only a world, *worlds* are in upheaval:

*The world that was America is vanishing as the institutions of democracy slide into the mire of which Watergate is just a small part. The people of the United States are not losing faith in one particular party or the other; people no longer believe in the integrity of the democratic process. Nor do they believe in "The American Way of Life" as an ideal. Norman Rockwell can no longer draw his Saturday Evening Post covers. Times Square, which used to be an innocent meeting place, has been turned into an open sewer of prostitution and pornography. Abortion is advertised in large signs facing our cities' expressways. "Gay" groups publicize their meetings alongside church social notices in the local papers. Not only can one not send his child to the movies, he can't even let him read the movie section of the newspaper.

* The inner world of the human psyche is in the throes of an upheaval. The National Institute of Mental Health reports that 125,000 Americans suffering depression enter hospitals every year; 200,000 undergo treatment in outpatient clinics, and four million need psychiatric assistance. Of the 50,000 Americans who commit suicide every year, half are known to have suffered from depression. In a report, Dr. Ivan Khorol, a prominent Soviet physician, said:

"There is evidence that the finest mental apparatus on earth, the human brain, has been brought to the brink of ruin" (A.P. - Nov. 8, '74).

* The Jewish world in Golus is in upheaval as the secular Jewish establishment grasps for spurious formulas for Jewish survival.

* Our own world — the Torah world, the Chassidic

world — is in turmoil as our values are transformed and corrupted.

All of these are aspects of *our* world in upheaval. Yet, there is a tendency to think that this can't really be happening, with the childish innocence displayed by my three-year-old. He was home from nursery, enthusiastic over the story of Noach and the Flood, which he had just learned. He took two cardboard boxes and made himself an "ark." He deposited his toy animals into one box, and he (Noach) sat in the other. Busy talking about how hard the rain fell, how he would have to feed the animals. . . he suddenly issued a sharp command: "Hashem! Stop the Mabul! I got to get out and go—"

Some of us seem to labor under the naive conviction that this upheaval is not real — that we can sit in our little cardboard boxes protected from the ravages of the flood — that any time we choose, we can just ask the Almighty to call it all off so we can attend to our affairs. But the severity of our crisis is too obvious now; we need no further signs of how ominous things are.

A Historic Condition

JEWS HAVE BEEN ISOLATED before and Jews have been caught up before in worlds in upheaval: The Crusades, the expulsion from Spain, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, the First and Second World Wars. Yet there is something unique about our present world situation. For the first time — perhaps in all history, certainly for the last 2,000 years — Jews are in the vortex of world conflict. The Mideast political situation, so fraught with danger, has, beside its awesome military implications, sent out economic storm waves which threaten to engulf the entire world. Never since the *Churban Bais Hamikdash* has peace in the entire world depended so on what happens to and what is done by Jews — most significantly Jews in *Eretz Yisroel*. The detente between the two greatest world powers — the United States and the Soviet Union — hangs precariously on two issues which seem totally unrelated to their own true national interests: the sovereignty of the State of Israel and Jewish emigration from Russia! It would seem that for the final act of the Divine-authored world drama, the protagonist nation has once again taken state center. And as the denouement draws closer, the role becomes ever more lonely, the isolation more complete. But the Jew has been conditioned for his role of loneliness. As Bilam said when he set out to curse the Jews, but could not:

"For I see them from the peaks of rocks and from the hills I view them. Behold a people dwells alone, not reckoned among the nations."

Rashi explains that in seeking to destroy them, he sought out their roots in order to strike them at their very foundation. "I look at their beginnings and I see them strongly founded, like the rocks and the hills, through the patriarchs and matriarchs." In looking to

their future he said, — "Behold a people dwells alone. This was gained for them by their fathers' merit. . . as the Targum explains, This people alone is destined to inherit the world."

Bilam's vision was that the Jewish People are indestructible because their roots are in the bed rock foundation laid by the *Avos*. . . This gives them the merit to inherit the world alone. But there is more in his prophesy. The *Avos* gave Klal Yisroel the ability to survive alone in a hostile world until that time. Without this they would never survive. The "deeds of the *Avos*" are indicators for the children. By examining the life pattern of the patriarchs, then, we can gain understanding in the destiny of the Jewish people, and chart a course through difficult times.

The Deeds of the "Avos"

THE TORAH ACCOUNT of the lives of Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov reveals a pattern that recurs in the lives of each. And this pattern has become the scenario for all subsequent Jewish history:

As soon as Avraham became aware of the Creator, he was ostracized — thrown into the furnace at Ur Kasdim. After he emerged, he left for Charan where he won converts — *completing the trip from isolation to acceptance*.

In Canaan he publicly proclaimed the Divine name, and people responded. Yet, in the upheaval of the war between the four kings and the five, the Torah relates that "the survivor. . . told Avraham *Ha'ivri*," denoting *evav* — side:

"The entire world was on one side, and he was on the other side." *When the world was in turmoil, Avraham was alone.*

After he entered the conflict and conquered the four kings, his status changed completely:

"And the King of Sodom greeted him in the Valley of Shaveh (equality or agreement) the Valley of the King."

Rashi explains, "All the nations equally agreed and crowned Avraham as the prince of G-d and their ruler."

From total isolation Avraham emerged as the ruler of the civilized world!

And now the life of Yitzchok: When Yitzchok sought refuge from a famine in Canaan, Avimelech, the King of the Philistines, welcomed him and treated him civilly. But when Yitzchok sowed the land, reaping a hundred-fold blessing from G-d, "And became great. . . [then] the Philistines envied him." His father's exalted position did not help Yitzchok. In fact, the Philistines repudiated the greatness of Avraham. "All the wells his father had dug . . . the Philistines. . . filled with dirt."

And then, as a final blow,

"Avimelech said to Yitzchok, 'Go from us, for you have become more powerful than us.' Leave,

From his struggle in the ultimate isolation of night, Yaakov emerged victorious — confirming the pattern of Jewish survival for all time.

Yitzchok! You're not one of us.

In his isolation, Yitzchok reopened his father's wells and dug new ones (signifying much more than sources of drinking water — see Ramban). Avimelech took note that Yitzchok prospered in his isolation: G-d was with him, and he had become a world power. With a group of intimates and Phichol, his military chief, Avimelech returned to Yitzchok.

"And Yitzchok said to them, 'Why have you come to me? — You hated me and sent me away from you.' And they said, 'We have seen that the L-rd is with you. . . let us make a covenant with you.'"

So, too, in Yitzchok do we see the pattern: *tentative acceptance followed by isolation, and finally a return to the company of kings.*

The pattern again emerges in the life of Yaakov Avinu. When Yaakov fled his brother Eisav, his uncle Lavan accepted him as a blood relative. Yaakov worked long years for Lavan, and Lavan conceded: "I have divined and seen that the L-rd has blessed me because of you." The Lavans recognize the Jewish contributions to their countries, and yet — and yet. . . .

"And the man [Yaakov] became exceedingly successful and possessed much. . . . And he heard. . . the sons of Lavan saying, 'Yaakov has taken all that belongs to our father and. . . has [thus] gained all this wealth.'"

So Yaakov stole away from Lavan. The Al-mighty forbade Lavan to do him any harm. An uneasy truce was set up, with "Gal Eid"—a pile of stones—as a line of demarcation. Yaakov was isolated, but not yet completely. He was then to face a far more formidable enemy — his brother Eisav. Yaakov tried subterfuge, a gift to Eisav, to avoid meeting him (see Ramban). He did not feel himself up to the encounter. But the Al-mighty wanted otherwise. Thus the moment of truth:

"And Yaakov remained alone." He did not have Aner, Eshkol and Mamre as did Avraham Ha'ivri. He did not have his children with him, as did Yitzchok when banished by Avimelech. He was about to face Eisav from a point of ultimate isolation — completely, totally alone. More ominous than an Avimelech, more foreboding than a Lavan, not simply his brother Eisav — his adversary was *Saro shel Eisav*, an angel, who was the embodiment of all the forces of evil. Yaakov wrestled with the angel in the only way possible — alone, on a spiritual plane, directing his entire mind and heart to the *Ribono shel Olam* in Torah and *tefilla*. In this state it was impossible for Eisav to overcome Yaakov, so in the

midst of the "battle," he told Yaakov of the sins of future leaders of his offspring. This dark vision caused Yaakov to hesitate in his Torah activity and "the sinew of his thigh was injured" (see *Sforno*).

A weakness remained in Klal Yisroel as a result, but not a weakness of essence. (The *Zohar* tells us it was to be manifest in the supporters of Torah.) Indeed, Yaakov emerged from this awesome encounter as "Yisroel" — a prince among men and angels.

While Yaakov was yet to suffer until he achieved royal recognition in Pharaoh's court, as well as from the kings of Canaan and of Yishmoel at his funeral, the eternal triumph of the Jewish spirit had already been determined; and so was the course of Yaakov's triumph over his ultimate enemy — only through ultimate isolation.

The Pattern Repeated

THE PATTERN OF OSCILLATION between acceptance and rejection, isolation and greatness established by the *Avos*, is the mold of Jewish history. The mere mention of Egypt, Spain, and Germany suffice to illustrate the point. This is what our sages meant in the Midrash (*Parshas Lech Lecha*):

Rabbi Avin said: Just as the world began with four kingdoms, so shall it end with four kingdoms. It began with Kedarlaomer the King of Elam, Tedal the King of Goyim, Amraphel the King of Shinar, and Aryoch the King of Elasar; and it shall end with four kingdoms: Babylon, Medea, Greece, and Edom."

The pattern of the complete Jewish historical experience, through the four *Goluyos* which the Jews had been destined to endure, was long established by Avraham Avinu. We have seen how, in each Golus so far, Jews were accepted to a point, then isolated, and finally emerged in regal glory. And so shall it be, with G-d's help, in this long and bitter Golus of Edom.

The prophecy of Bilam regarding "A people that dwells alone" contains within it the formula for the survival and ultimate triumph of the Jewish people. The *Targum Yonasan* interprets it:

"This people will in the future inherit the world alone because they are not led בנמוסי אומיא (in the customs of the nations)."

The isolation of the Jew is not the problem. It is the solution to the problem. The *Ribbono Shel Olam* sweetens the bitter with bitterness. He solves the problem *with* the problem itself. Isolation is only a problem when one feels the urgent need to be at one

with the rest of the world. Loneliness only becomes bearable when we choose to be alone. If we seek to live among the nations on their terms, if we seek to accommodate the Avimelechs and Lovans and the Eisavs, we then fall prey to their whims. And when they finally reject us — *and reject us they will* — we are shattered.

If belonging to the United Nations is a goal of the Jewish State — then when they expel us, we are broken. If being accepted into the universities is our aim in life — then when quotas are established and we are rejected under the guise of “affirmative action,” we are devastated. If “making it - American Style” is our idea of the good life — then when hard times set in and we cannot afford the luxuries to which we’ve accustomed ourselves, we are destroyed.

The *zechus* of Klal Yisroel to inherit the world that we are not led by נמוסי אמיא that which passes by worldly standards for culture, sophistication, and the good life.

At such a time, when the world trembles, we can no longer sit in our little cardboard “arks” and delude ourselves that it will all go away when we wish it so. When the Jew remains alone, he must come to grips with his adversary. He can no longer equivocate, or put off the encounter. When he sees *Saro shel Eisav* in menacing reality, he must look him in the eye and do battle in the

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Rediscovering Our Priorities at Home. . .

MANY OF OUR PEOPLE have suffered a warping of priorities, throwing themselves headlong into the pursuit of materialism. Unbelievable sums of money are spent for the one night of a wedding celebration, while yeshivos pay their teachers coolie wages for lack of funds. Plush carpets and ornate furnishings have become status symbols among a people whose aristocracy was always measured in terms of Torah learning and personal *tzidkus*. This institution of *nadan* has undergone a renaissance, tending to blind prospective suitors to the real merits (or lack of them) in girls to be considered as life-time partners. The daughters of the less affluent are overlooked by budding young scholars in favor of the daughters of those who can plunk down 30 or 50 thousand dollars in advance.

. . .And in the Homeland

WHEN OUR BRETHERN in *Eretz Yisroel* face grave physical danger, when anti-Semitism rears its ugly head all over the world, when the dire economic situation threatens (*chas veshalom*) the very existence of Torah institutions in both *Eretz Yisroel* and the U.S., we *must* reconsider our priorities. We must see that our brethren in *Eretz Yisroel*, and yeshivos everywhere, receive the help they so desperately need to continue to exist — even if it means forgoing our own personal comforts.

Once and for all we must come to grips with ourselves and consider some painful questions: Dare we continue to dedicate our lives to material success? Can we afford to continue to blindly send the cream of Jewish youth to the universities to be initiated into the *nimusei umaya* — the agnosticism and amorality that pass for Western culture? Will we fritter away the G-d-given hours of our lives and our childrens' lives in front of the TV screens, which pollute our homes with everything that the Lavans and the Eisavs of this world hold dear?

The *Midrash (Vayishlach)* comments on “*Ein koKel Yeshurun* — There is none like the G-d of Yeshurun”:

Rabbi Brechya said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda B'r Shimon — “There is none like G-d except Yeshurun — the fine and noble among you. Whatever the Holy-One-Blessed-be-He will do in the Time to Come, He has done before through the tzaddikim. . . Just as it is written about the Holy One, blessed be He, V'nisgav Hashem L'vado — Hashem will reign supreme alone, so, to, is it written of Yaakov, Vayivaser Yaakov l'vado — And Yaakov remained alone.

We must pray to see — and endeavor to bring near — the great day when Yaakov's sublime solitude will usher in the majestic solitude of the L-rd of the Universe, when He alone will remain supreme.

A Response to the Yom Kippur War, in Retrospect

Ralph Pelcovitz

MOMENTOUS EVENTS tend to evoke reactions, but in truth, responses are demanded. More than a mere emotional reaction to a stimulus, a response constitutes a reply, an attempt to answer questions one cannot avoid.

When the Yom Kippur War erupted last year, Jews throughout the world understandably recoiled with horror and followed up with a sacrificial outpouring of support for, and solidarity with, the beleaguered Jewish state. Only when the battle-scarred weeks passed were profound emotions replaced with questions — How did it happen? Why were we so unprepared? . . . And the reassessment began.

Bit by bit, the myths had evaporated: the invincibility of the Israeli defense forces. . . the inability of the Arabs to use modern weaponry and their lack of will to fight. . . the Western world's sympathy and support for Israel. New facts entered the scene: the Arab oil weapon. . . Israel's shaky economy. . . the ongoing mobilization of civilians. . . her demoralization by internal political bickering.

Now that more than a year has gone by since that eventful October, it is vital to view the events in a Torah perspective. How should we respond to this abrupt, radical transformation of the stability of the Jewish State and the dark future that seems to threaten? The purpose of this article is to sift through the reactions, to find some responses that have been recorded, and to suggest others that as yet may not have been formulated.

Jewish "Normalcy" — Isolation

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE STATE, with its attendant growth and exciting newness, projected a picture-postcard view of Israel. After so long a period of dispersion and national non-identity in the conventional sense, Israel was recognized as a nation among nations with all the trappings of a modern state — U.N. membership, ambassadors, ministers, an army and air force. The

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sense of exhilaration experienced during that first decade of statehood was only briefly interrupted by the 1956 War. The 1967 Six Day War, however, electrified the world and elevated the spirit of Jews everywhere; its impact upon Soviet Jewry was truly miraculous. And the sense of euphoria lasted — until the bubble was pricked a year ago October.

The twenty-five years of Israel's independence with all its accomplishments and sense of national pride had convinced the overwhelming majority of Israelis that the philosophy of political Zionism had been justified: once Jews had a state of their own, the result would be "normalization of the Jewish people." A generation of Israelis had been reared with this idea that Israel was like unto other nations, no longer the isolated, dispersed, wandering people.

Normalcy, once realized, exploded with the Yom Kippur War. A leading Israeli novelist and journalist, Hanoah Bartov, expressed this in a *Commentary* article (March '74): "In the glowing aftermath of the Six Day War we lost all sense of reality, all sense of what it still means to be Jewish in a hostile world." The title of his article says it all — "Back to Abnormal." To a young Israeli, normalcy means being a nation among nations no different than others. When this illusion was shattered, it meant that we were still abnormal.

This, however, is a fallacious interpretation of the Jewish condition. To the Torah Jew, normalcy has always meant being totally different. Following the Six Day War, Dr. Yaakov Herzog delivered a most perceptive paper, "Behold A Nation That Dwells Alone." He cautioned his fellow Israelis to disabuse themselves of modern political Zionist ideology, for since the beginning of our history as a people, "aloneness" has been our normal condition. It is precisely our isolation from the family of nations and our unique position of a distinct entity in a hostile world that grants us our identity. Bilam understood this well when he said "Behold a people that dwells alone, not reckoned among nations" (*Bamidbar* 23,9). Contrast the point of view of a traditionalist with that of a secularist. Using Herzog's historic approach, Bartov's article would have been entitled "Back To Normal"!

One post-Yom Kippur response, then: Not only are we destined to be an "*Am l'vadad* — a nation alone," but more profoundly, our true strength lies precisely in our aloneness. Not only those reared in a Torah atmosphere but even secular Jews are reconsidering as they contemplate the bitter fruits of the past fifteen months. Perhaps they will yet fathom the wisdom in the Netziv's interpretation of "*Hain am l'vadad yishkon bagoyim lo yis'chashov* — Behold a Nation that dwells alone, not reckoned among the nations": If they are content to be "*levadad* — alone," then "*yishkon* — they will dwell in tranquility." If, however, "*bagoyim*" — they insist upon being a nation among nations, then "*lo yis'chashov*" — they will be totally without importance in the eyes of the world, and vulnerable as well.

Teshuva Fever and the Establishment

WITNESSING DESTRUCTION AND DEATH, experiencing the aloofness of an insensitive world community surrendering to oil blackmail, many Jews returned to their own source and to their own roots — if only for a moment. The sober spiritual revival at the time of the Yom Kippur War, the demand for *tefillin* by Israeli soldiers, manifested an overwhelming desire to identify with the authentic spirit of Israel and to reach out to the G-d of Israel who neither slumbers nor sleeps. The significance of the war breaking out on Yom Kippur could not be ignored, and somehow every Jew was shaken to his soul.

In the climate of introspection, sensitive Jews all over

the world were in a mood for reappraisal and even ripe for persuasion. Unfortunately, world Jewry's huge communal machinery was geared exclusively to fund-raising, not to soul-searching; while the Torah world's voice was relatively mute. As a parallel, with different results, one might take note of how Mordechai in ancient Persia did not attempt to raise funds to counter Haman's price of ten thousand silver pieces which he had paid to obtain license from the king to destroy the Jews. Mordechai understood this horrible decree as a signal from Heaven that the Jews deserved punishment for their transgressions. Mordechai was determined not to divert the Jews from a response of repentance and a radical change of life-style and values — their only salvation — by making an appeal for funds.

In a time of emergency, there is a tendency to find the lowest common denominator as a basis for unity rather than challenging people to excellence, which can also hold a nation together. Unfortunately, the broad community did not have such leadership in October '73, and although the funds raised for U.J.A. and Bonds were necessary, we must ask if that was the total response expected of world Jewry when a divine signal was beamed to us. Every *ma'amin*, once the initial shock wore off, certainly read that signal to mean that after twenty-five years of statehood and four bloody wars, we could not rely on our own might or on the mercy of the world; we desperately are in need of G-d's protection, which is only granted if we are worthy.

ONE YEAR SINCE THE YOM KIPPUR WAR:

New Challenges for the Jewish World

by M. Pins, Chairman
American Zionist Youth Foundation

Excerpts from keynote address presented at National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, San Francisco.

Much has changed in the Jewish world since the Yom Kippur War. Many old and more recent (post-1967) myths and assumptions — often based on wishful thinking — have been shattered. . . .

After the establishment of Israel in 1948 and certainly following the Six-Day War in 1967, many Jews believed that the long Jewish history of persecution and anti-Semitism, of powerlessness and individual and group insecurity, had ended. They believed that Israel, through its military strength, was in total control of its own destiny. . . . that the "normalization" of the Jewish people has begun. It gave Jews a sense of security as well as feeling of confidence and pride. This wishful thinking is gone. . . .

The classical Herzl Zionist dream that the establishment of a Jewish state would solve all the

problems of the Jewish people, which in recent years has not been accepted intellectually by most Jews, but was still felt emotionally by many, received its final blow. Anti-Semitism, now called anti-Zionism, has had a resurgence in new places and among new groups. Jews are still being killed, if not in Kiev or Dachau, then in Damascus and Maalot. . . .

We now realize that Israel and Jews generally are more isolated than we assumed likely ever to happen in our day. . . .

Another important and potentially dangerous development is the change in the mood of Jews and Jewish leaders since the Yom Kippur War. . . . This pervading gloom and fear. . . is more dangerous than our earlier exaggerated enthusiasm and confidence. This danger from within is greater than the threat from the outside.

A Maximal Curriculum in Faith

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST TWO WARS can be seen as part of a series of lessons in faith. The Six Day War can be interpreted as a call to a recognition of divine protection peculiar to *Eretz Yisroel* — a call transmitted through fantastic, swift victories. On *Yom Kippur* and *Succos* 5734, this call was transmitted through a miracle of a different kind, revealed through pain and suffering, temporary set-backs, and subsequent triumph. For there were many miracles which became apparent with the passage of time: the Egyptian and Syrian armies' decision not to penetrate more deeply into thinly defended Israel; Sadat's refusal to agree to a cease fire when the Egyptians were in a most favorable, forward position; the Israelis' successful counter-offensive on both fronts; the audacious crossing of the canal, cutting off the Egyptian Third Army — all as miraculous as many of the feats recorded during the Six Day War. The military observer and political analyst marvels. . . but the believer sees in all this the *hashgochas Hashem*.

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler speaks of two kinds of miracles in *Michtav M'Eliahu*. Both are meant to impress man that what he witnesses is not a natural occurrence, but G-d's revelation. At times, miracles are wrought for Israel's obvious benefit and welfare; other times, miracles occur in a "sea of suffering," when G-d seemingly assists our enemies. Then, the purpose is to bring Israel back to G-d. When they do repent, the nature of the miracle changes suddenly and dramatically from the negative, destructive kind to the positive, saving one. . . . When we review the eventful days of that Fall, we can see these words translated into reality. However, as mentioned, we somehow failed to bring these truths to our people, whose hearts were open at that time.

The Minimal Lessons

ALTHOUGH THE TESHUVA THOUGHTS of so many Israelis proved to be transitory, the Yom Kippur trauma left a deep imprint on many of their attitudes. A number of years ago, the publisher of a new magazine declared his ambition to "start little insurrections in the realm of people's convictions." The Yom Kippur War, its early frightening days and the huge toll it exacted, has brought forth a veritable revolution in the cherished convictions of many Israelis. Beyond realizing their terrible isolation in the world community, their self-confidence also suffered a severe blow, and their trust in their military leadership was shattered. At the same time, the universal Jewish response this War aroused also gave them a renewed appreciation of the oneness of Klal Yisroel — a salvation with no individual, towering saviors.

The Israeli election results demonstrated a similar anomaly — anger at the establishment, yet distrust of untried others. This much is certain, there are no heroes in Israel today. True, the eclipse of heroes is a common

phenomenon today — be it in the United States, or throughout the Western world. But the transitory nature of men's prestige and fame was most dramatically demonstrated in Israel when the Agranat Report was issued. Who would have believed, a few years ago, that Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan would be scathingly criticized by a committee of inquiry and become the targets of angry demonstrators? That glory passes and the armor of heroes becomes tarnished is not unknown to sensible, mature men, but in this case, the fall came with deadly swiftness.

Rather than lament the toppling of heroes, this can be seen as an advantage, a reminder of the traditional Jewish attitude toward temporal heroes. Long before the non-hero became the protagonist of modern literature, Jewish tradition rejected the larger-than-life figure. In the Hagaddah of Pesach, Moshe is not even mentioned so as to focus exclusively on the Almighty's deeds and not on those of any man who is but the instrument of divine will. The collective dedication of the Jewish people, bolstered by faith and courage, is more important than individual stars.

A Sense of "Yiush". . .

WE HAVE SHOWN that a number of reassessments resulted from this war: a new understanding of Jewish normalcy, a degree of *teshuva*, a search for roots of strength and dignity, a recognition of Jewish solidarity and of the world's indifference to our fate, as well as the toppling of long-standing heroes. But coupled with these lessons we detect a most disquieting outgrowth of the Yom Kippur War. For the first time since the State was established, there is a subtle sense of *yiush* — if not surrender or despair, then dejection, weariness, and apprehension. The high casualty rate of a war which really accomplished naught, and actually placed an Egyptian presence on the eastern bank of the Suez and Syrians in Kuneitra, is like a deep scar on the collective soul of Israel. Murderous terrorist attacks have left the populace shaken and deeply vulnerable. Add to this the fear and anxiety of future political developments, constant pressures for more concessions from Israel, and we can appreciate how nationalism and the patriotism of the average citizen are being put to the test. — Not all are passing this difficult *nisayon*.

. . . and The Loyalists

THERE ARE THOSE WHO FALTER — for their god of "my might and the strength of my arm" has failed them. There are, however, many who are firm and resolute, the majority of whom are possessed by a love and loyalty to *Eretz Yisroel* that transcends nationalism and patriotism. Without thought of abandoning the State, these men and women have an attachment to the Holy Land formed by the special dimension of *kedushas Ha'aretz* — the sanctity of the land and the historic destiny of the people of Israel tied to this land as part of its covenant with the Almighty. Their determination is

unaffected by the events of the past year. I believe even secular Zionists who are knowledgeable and fair would agree, although reluctantly, that the chances of *shomrei Torah* Jews becoming *yordim* are far less than that of secular-educated *sabras*. By the same token, the reservoir of potential *olim* from the free world is far greater from this religious element — moreso than from the non-religious Jews who may be enthusiastic in their support of Israel but whose personal commitment to the land is superficial. How ironic, and yet so logical from a Jewish historic perspective, that after a quarter century of statehood the hope for Zion lies more with those elements who have been labeled as “non-” or even “anti-” Zionist rather than with card-carrying Zionists! Another myth exploded by the most recent war.

Consider a New York *Times* interview last summer with five Israeli high school seniors. The correspondent spoke to a cross-section of Israeli students representing an ethnic and political mix — *sabra* and immigrant, Ashkenazi and Sephardi, liberal and right-wing — but, unfortunately, all secularly oriented. They revealed a most disturbing picture of Israeli youth, expressing so many doubts and questions about our historic right to Israel. Shallow commitment and very little Jewish passion and devotion can be found in their remarks. A primary concern seemed to be for the poor Palestinians whose rights they had suddenly discovered! What is missing is far more important and revealing than what is present in this interview:

One of the young people lamented the loss of the pioneering spirit of the parent generation. Another used suffering under Nazi persecution as justification for the Jewish claim to the land. Not one, however, spoke of the special purpose of our peoplehood and our covenantal right to *Eretz Yisroel*. Had there been present but one of

the tens of thousands of observant young Jews and Jewesses who live in Israel today, the readers of the New York *Times* would be aware of their profound commitment to the land based upon the unique unalterable relationship of Israel to G-d. They would have been introduced to a segment of the population whose idealism and devotion is not less than that of the parents of these hesitant youngsters who nostalgically envy the “*chalutziot*” spirit — a spirit that can never be transmitted from father to son as effectively as the Torah spirit. Those whose attitude to Israel is shaped by factors far more sacred and far more profound than nationalism and patriotism are the maximalists in loyalty and perseverance, whom no wars or political pressures can move from their determination.

Why the Unlearned Lessons?

WE HAVE MENTIONED THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL that surfaced during each of Israel's wars. The return is always a temporary one, due to the secular “non-Jewish” environment prevailing in Israel. While it is unreasonable to simply hope for a lasting transformation, it is proper to examine, in the light of all that has been mentioned above, another question not sufficiently considered in recent years: The average Israeli citizen must be impressed by the consistent warmth and devotion displayed by observant Jews both in Israel and throughout the world in every critical period confronting Israel. If Israelis have learned that their only reliable friends are other Jews, they should also have learned that within Klal Yisroel, the observant, Torah-Jew is the most trustworthy of all. In spite of constant violations of religious sensibilities over the years, and in spite of frequent tensions between Torah Jewry and the State, the loyalty and profound commitment of observant Jews to

“From Within Your Own Ranks . . .”

When the Prophet said: “Your destroyers shall emerge from within your own ranks” (Isaiah 49,17), he spoke for all times:

* * *

BIZARRE CASE OF THE MURDERED GIRL SOLDIER (from a story in MAARIV - Jan. 3, reprinted in THE JEWISH PRESS)

When Rochel Heller, daughter of a prominent pioneering family, was found dead, it was first thought routine. . .but then the first bomb shell hit. She was part of a gang. . .all from good, well-to-do-homes.

The case involved a Trotskyite anti-Zionist group of Israelis. . .supporters of the terrorists, opposed to a Jewish state. Miss Heller was part of the group known as Avant Gard, as was her boyfriend. That a group of anti-Zionist, co-Palestinians was active, setting up cells in the army, stunned

Israelis and focused attention on a number of small leftist groups who are both Jewish and anti-Zionist:

Matzpen opposed to the existence of a Jewish state and which follows a Marxist position close to that of P.L.O. In 1970, two small groups broke away from Matzpen: Avant Gard is a Trotskyite group. Among its leaders are Menachem Karmi, 34, a doctoral student at Hebrew University, and Yigal Schwartz, 24, a student of history there. . . .The R.C.U. is a Maoist-oriented group also known as the Struggle, and its most famous member is Rami Livneh, son of a Communist Knesset member who is now serving a prison sentence for his part in the Arab-Jewish spy ring, Udi Adiv, and Dan Vered.

Another group formed in 1971 is the Red Front, whose opposition to imperialism leads them to backing Viet-Cong and

Palestinians.

There is no doubt that this is the end of the chapter.

* * *

YISROEL SHAKOK, instructor of chemistry in Hebrew University, after attending P.L.O. Conference in Amsterdam, was promoted to full professorship at the University.

reported by Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz in Knesset

THE JEWISH PRESS - Dec. 13, '74

A LABOR MINISTRY textbook quotes an Egyptian describing Israel: “a malignant sore. . .with satanic expansionist designs in the Middle East.”

(Baran defended the book: Only 1½ pages out of 200 are anti-Zionist.)

Menachem Israel, THE JEWISH PRESS - Dec. 20, '74

the *Yishuv* has at no time wavered. Government leaders know this full well, and perhaps this may have allowed the government to withhold from the Torah community concessions similar to those made to the deviationist camp. In a crunch, they could always depend on their support anyway.

In contrast to this truth, the public relations machinery of major Jewish organizations, including that of the Zionist groups, has succeeded in creating a climate of distrust by placing unfair labels of "*Sonei Yisroel*" on certain circles of the Torah community because of their religious demands. At the very same time, they give polite ear to unconscionable threats of those who are more acceptable to them — spokesmen for the Reform and Conservative movements who during the "Who Is A Jew" controversy actually threatened to cut off financial support for the government if the legitimacy of their movements was not officially recognized — the type of threat the Orthodox community never dared make. The question must therefore be asked: Why have Torah Jews been unable to project their true image?

The True "Religious Jew"

INDEED PART OF OUR RESPONSE to the Yom Kippur War, must be to question ourselves: why have we failed to impress our Israeli brethren with our sense of brotherhood with them — that we are the most trustworthy, concerned friends they possess? Could it be that, after twenty-five years of statehood, a major challenge facing Orthodox Jewry, regardless of party affiliation, is to change somehow our image from intransigents to inspirers, from religious authoritarians who want to impose their restrictive way of life upon a resisting populace, to custodians of our People's ideals and historic faith? We have learned that we cannot capture the imaginations of our Israeli brothers; but perhaps we can still *captivate* them. In today's climate of doubt and despair, which seems to have enveloped so many Israelis, we may be able to reach many of them by bringing them *chizuk* — a spiritual reinforcement that can best be conveyed by men and women, especially young people, who are themselves imbued with faith and trust, and can transmit this spirit with sincerity.

The Importance of a Positive Image

WOULD ISRAELIS NOT BE RECEPTIVE to this kind of approach, stripped of political ambitions and goals, geared only to demonstrate that all Jews are brothers, and that the new gods have failed them as those that failed our forefathers in this Holy Land in the time of the Judges and the Kings? Perhaps this will help formulate our *teshuvah*, our response to the traumatic experiences of the Yom Kippur War, Kiryat Sh'moneh, and Maalot. Hashem must be asking something of *Bnei Torah*, as well as Kibbutzniks, of *frum* Jews as well as the cafe patrons on Dizengoff, of *ma'aminim* as well as *kofrim*. If they were guilty of relying too much on "my might and

the strength of my hand," then we may be guilty of an excessive "peace unto my soul" syndrome.

To argue, as many of us have in past years, that we need not defend our love of Israel and all its inhabitants, is not the point. To protest with righteous indignation that our credentials of *Ahavas Eretz Yisroel* are far superior to those who question them, is not the issue. What is important to understand is that communicating this in the arena of public opinion can be almost as important as the (unrecognized) fact. That appearance is a vital necessity in the battle of ideas and in our ability to influence others. Toward this end, it seems to me, we must bend our every effort.

Filling the Void of Secular Zionism

THERE IS FREQUENTLY a lot of posturing and pretense in the meaningless actions and pronouncements of Jewish organizations. It has well been said, however, that pretense often hides, not evil, but emptiness. It is time for us to fill the void of secular Zionism with an imaginative program of substance, which can only be done through the power of Torah truth and integrity, in a spirit of *Ahavas-Yisroel* and *Eretz Yisroel*. The way has been shown by a number of commendable projects — some sponsored by political parties, others totally outside of partisan activity. It is only with substantive sincerity that we can hope to evoke a more lasting response from our brethren rather than the frenetic short-lived outbursts of Jewish identity, fired only by emergencies.

The times are changing. Many individuals are beginning to question their cherished values and scale of priority. In 1967 car bumper stickers proclaimed "All honor to the Israeli army." Today they read "Israel, trust in the Al-mighty." Should we not consider some little insurrections in our own position as well, and heed the signals from on high that call to us for a greater measure of unity and a greater effort to bring the Torah concept of *Eretz Yisroel* to Jews everywhere?

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From Germany to Baltimore



Rabbi Abraham Joseph Rice — The First Rabbi in America —

It is commonly thought that Jewish religious life in the United States only began towards the end of the nineteenth century. While it is generally known that New Amsterdam (New York), the first Jewish settlement in this country, was founded in 1654, the early centuries of Jewish life here show no evidence of Jewish learning or strong religious loyalty. This did not exist on a large scale until the mass immigration of East European Jews to this country, beginning in the 1880's. Nevertheless, there were some exceptions to this overall picture. A number of Jews pioneered for Torah in this country during earlier periods. While their accomplishments may not all have stood the test of time, they still earn our admiration and respect. In the front rank of these personalities stands Rabbi Abraham Rice, the first *musmach* (ordained rabbi) to act as a rabbi in this country.

Jewish life in the United States underwent a radical change in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Before 1825, only a small number of Jews were here, living in a few tiny communities. After 1825, large numbers of Jews began to emigrate from Germany to America. These Jews had seen the medieval restrictions on their lives first lifted by Napoleon, and then reimposed on them by their victorious German rulers after 1815. In addition, they were undergoing great economic hardships. A stream of immigration to the United States began, and soon became a flood. The population figures indicate the size of this movement: In 1825, there were 6,000 Jews in America; by 1848, there were 50,000; and by 1860, their number reached 150,000. One of the spiritual leaders and pioneers of this migration was Rabbi Rice.

Abraham Joseph Rice was born in Gagsheim, near Wurzburg, Bavaria, in 1802. The small towns and villages of south Germany were still permeated with the old uncompromising pre-Reform devotion to Torah and *mitzvos*. Abraham Joseph Rice first studied under Rabbi Abraham Bing (1752-1841), who was Chief Rabbi of Wurzburg and maintained a yeshiva there. Rabbi Bing had studied under Rabbi Nosson Adler at Frankfurt, together with the Chasam Sofer. Many of the great leaders of German Orthodoxy in the nineteenth century were products of the yeshiva in Wurzburg. These included the renowned Rabbi Jacob Ettlinger of Altona, and the Chacham Isaac Bernays of Hamburg, both of whom had a strong influence on Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

Rabbi Hamburger's Zeal

Rabbi Rice continued his studies at the yeshiva of Rabbi Wolf Hamburger (1770-1850) in Fuerth. Rabbi Hamburger was the acknowledged Torah authority in the Germany of his time. He was author of two collections of Responsa, *Simlas Binyomin* and *Sha'ar Hazekeinim*, containing *teshuvos* to queries from all over the country. Rabbi Wolf Hamburger bitterly fought the growth of Reform in Germany with uncompromising zeal. Indeed, he was forced to leave Fuerth eventually by the Reformers who succeeded in closing his yeshiva. He strongly influenced his students in their view towards Reform. Rabbi Rice became a close *talmid* of Rabbi Hamburger, received *semicha* from him, and corresponded with him even when in the United States. Among the other students at this yeshiva was Rabbi Seligman Baer Bamberger, the future great Wurzburger Rav.

SHMUEL SINGER studies at Bais Medrash Yeshurun of the Yeshiva Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, in New York. His article regarding Rabbi Jacob Joseph, New York City's Chief Rabbi, appeared in the May '74 JO, and generated much comment.

*1840: No qualified rabbis in the country at all; yet thousands of Jews were living in the United States, and every boat brought new arrivals.
... A perfect set-up for charlatans.*

For a short time after leaving Fuerth, Rabbi Rice served as Rosh Yeshiva in the private Beis Medrash of a wealthy man in Zell. However, the rabbis of Germany had become aware of the growing number of Jewish emigrants leaving for America, realizing that they would be facing many challenges to their religion in the new country. Worse, there was no spiritual leadership to help them withstand the temptations of their new environment. Consequently, in 1840 Rabbi Rice was prevailed upon by his teachers and colleagues to go to America as the country's first ordained rabbi.

The New World's Chaos

Rabbi Rice arrived in New York late in 1840, finding total chaos in his new country. There were no qualified rabbis in the country at all; yet thousands of Jews were already living in the United States, and every boat brought new arrivals. It was a perfect set-up for charlatans. Anyone wanting to make an easy dollar claimed to be a European rabbi and discharged rabbinical functions. As Rabbi Rice later wrote: "In this country, men who have studied neither Bible nor Talmud have assumed the title of 'Rabbi,' donning the rabbinical cap on their heads in the same way that Napoleon placed the crown on his head."

Rabbi Rice was first advised to go to Newport, Rhode Island, where, he was told, he would be able to revive that city's once flourishing colonial Jewish community. He soon felt, however, that there was no possibility of organizing a Jewish community in that town. A *landsman* invited him to join him in Baltimore and become the first Orthodox rabbi there. He quickly accepted this invitation.

Joining "Nidchei Israel" in Baltimore

Congregation Nidchei Israel, the first and only shul in Baltimore at that time, had been founded in 1830 by a group of Bavarian Jewish immigrants. In 1841, Rabbi Rice came to serve as its *rav*.

Rabbi Rice soon became aware of the low state of observance of Torah and *mitzvos* in the United States of his day. The overwhelming majority of German immigrants had very little Torah knowledge. Soon after their arrival, they began to discard observance of one *mitzva* after another. The first and most serious casualty was usually *Shabbos* observance. Others soon followed.

There was also another serious development. As large-scale immigration to the United States continued, adherents of the growing German Reform movement began arriving, including prominent Reform rabbis such as Max Lienthal, Isaac Meyer Wise, and David

Einhorn. Under their influence, pressure for reform in *tefilla* and *mitzva*-observance began to grow even among nominally Orthodox Jews.

Of Kashrus and Supervision

Rabbi Rice attempted to deal with these developments as they arose. He received *halachic* questions from all over the country dealing with a variety of problems. One was the acceptability of West Indian *esrogim* for use on Succos. These *esrogim* were suspected of being hybrid with lemons, and hence not kosher. In his response Rabbi Rice showed a high degree of Talmudic scholarship. He concluded: "I think it my duty. . .to state that these *esrogim* are kosher; not a word can be found against them in all *poskim*, *rishonim*, and *achronim*."

Another problem he dealt with was the kashrus supervision of oil. It was suspected that lard was melted and mixed into oil sold as pure olive oil. Rabbi Rice published notices calling the attention of the Jewish public to this fact, advocating that *mashgichim* (supervisors) be appointed to oversee the production of the oil. When Reform spokesmen answered Rabbi Rice and attempted to show that consumption of such oil even with lard was permissible, they found that they had more than met their match. In a series of scholarly articles, Rabbi Rice completely refuted their position.

As the first rabbi in the United States, Rabbi Rice was also asked to set precedents in the writing of the names of various cities for *gittin* and *kesubos* (documents associated with divorce and marriage), where correct spelling is binding to the document's validity.

Editorial Contributor

When Isaac Leeser began to publish *The Occident* as an Orthodox monthly in English, Rabbi Rice quickly came to his aid. He wrote articles in *The Occident* expounding the Torah point of view on Reform and related matters. When Isaac Meyer Wise, the founder of Reform Judaism in America, published his *History of the Jews* in 1853 in which he denied the historical truth of the Bible, Rabbi Rice responded with a sharp attack in Hebrew in *The Occident*. In this article he refers to Wise as "*ho'ish hamishugah hazeh*" adding "*lo bosi lephalpel im ho'ish hazeh ki d'var Hashem bozoh*" ("... an insane man...I do not debate such a person, for he reviles the word of G-d)."

Call for Central Authority

Rabbi Rice felt that religious apathy and the success of Reform were in good measure due to the lack of any

?

Are West Indian Esrogim suitable for Succos use
Do they melt lard into "pure" olive oil
How do you spell "New Orleans" in Hebrew for a divorce document

organization in American Jewish life. A national *Beis Din* (rabbinical court) with a centralized rabbinical authority could combat Reform much more effectively. Isaac Leeser enthusiastically joined him in this idea. In 1845 Rabbi Rice wrote of "the great importance of selecting a spiritual Chief for a *Beis Din* for the purpose of regulating our spiritual affairs." In another article he explained the necessity for such a central body by saying, "It is surely necessary to prevent the uninitiated from giving their crude decisions, which are but too well calculated to do permanent injury to our faith." He was obviously referring to the Reform rabbis who were then arriving and assuming positions in America. Unfortunately, nothing was done to bring this plan to realization, and chaos remained the keynote of American Jewish religious life.

The Rising Tide of Change

In spite of all Rabbi Rice's efforts, the rising tide of Reform could not be stemmed. Even within Rabbi Rice's own congregation in Baltimore, demands for changes began to be heard. Rabbi Rice had originally forbidden *aliyos* to be given to Sabbath violators in his congregation. However, with more and more members desecrating *Shabbos*, Rabbi Rice was forced, by congregation demand, to allow this measure to be repealed. Nevertheless, in an act of defiance, he announced that, as a matter of *halacha*, when such individuals recited the

bracha over the Torah, no "*omain*" was to be answered by the congregation. Needless to say, this caused great hostility towards the Rabbi in the community.

His relations with his congregation were further exacerbated when a prominent member died: the deceased was a Mason, and the rites of that lodge were performed at his funeral. Rabbi Rice denounced these ceremonies as heathen practices, having no place at a Jewish funeral. This brought about further resentment against the Rabbi.

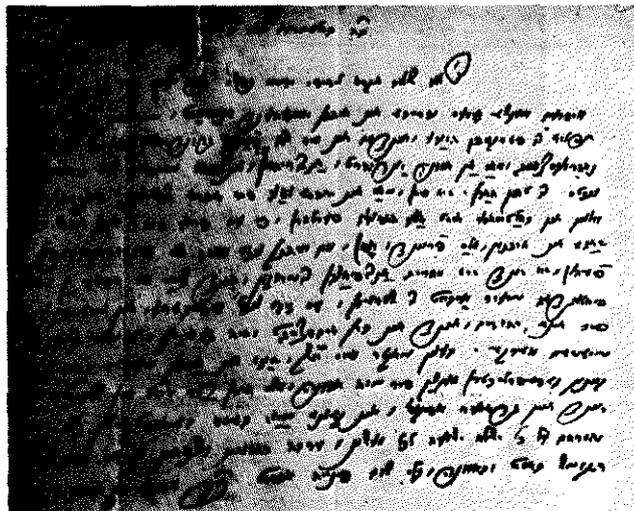
In addition, the congregation began to exert pressure to change the order of *tefilla*. The Rabbi was requested to allow certain *piyutim* to be deleted. Rabbi Rice knew that this was only the beginning. If he gave in on this relatively minor point, more substantial and serious demands would follow. Thus in 1849, rather than compromise his principles, he resigned from his position.

Farewell to the Pulpit

He continued to live in Baltimore and engaged in business to support himself. He first opened a dry goods store and eventually a grocery. In the meantime, he organized a private *minyan* which was absolutely Orthodox in practice. He served this *minyan* as rabbi without charge.

An idea of his feelings while acting as rabbi in Baltimore can be gained from a letter he wrote to his revered rebbi, Rabbi Wolf Hamburger in Fuerth: "I dwell in complete darkness, without a teacher or companion. . . The religious life in this land is on the lowest level. Most people eat foul food and desecrate the *Shabbos* in public." It is difficult to fully assess the terrible loneliness of this isolated *rav* and *talmid chochom* in the spiritual desert of mid-nineteenth century America. Rabbi Rice concluded by saying, "I wonder whether it is even permissible for a Jew to live in this land." Indeed, he seriously considered returning to Europe, but was obviously unable to do so.

Even while engaged in private business, Rabbi Rice did not forsake the Klal. He continued to speak and to write against Reform. When Dr. David Einhorn, the radical Reform preacher, set up a temple in Baltimore, Rabbi Rice spoke out. In the pages of *The Occident* he denounced innovations introduced by Einhorn as contrary to Jewish law. In his article he attacked the Reform preachers as having no right to the Jewish title of rabbi. "I deem it unbecoming to contend with such men," wrote Rabbi Rice. Again in 1855, he wrote a defense of Orthodoxy in *The Occident*: "The heavens may vanish in smoke, and the earth wear out with old age, and still not one iota will vanish from our religion."



Letter from Rice to Leeser (1831):
"In Baltimore all hope is lost."

Courtesy of American Jewish Archives

Rabbi Rice was deeply concerned over Jewish education. He opened a school in Baltimore where he tried to bring up an Orthodox young generation. He strongly opposed the use of German by the old generation, claiming that it only alienated children from religion, which was branded by its German language-packaging as an Old World, un-American institution. By increasing the use of English, he also hoped to limit the influence of the Reform Movement, which relied on materials from Germany for texts and documents. He explained his position by writing, "Though the great ocean divides us, the sparks scattered from the conflagration abroad are already kindling a flame in our dwelling."

A Brief Reprieve

In 1862 Rabbi Rice was invited to return to Congregation Nidchei Israel as rabbi. He accepted after he was assured of strict adherence to Orthodoxy. However, he was unable to accomplish much for Torah in his new position, for his years of struggle had taken their toll. Only a few months after accepting the appointment he passed away, at the age of sixty. His congregation did not remain Orthodox very long. In 1871 an organ was introduced and the Reform prayer book was adopted. Congregation Nidchei Israel became a full-fledged Reform temple. In a short while Rabbi Rice's children became irreligious and alienated from Torah Judaism. Thus ended the career of the first American *rav*.

This would appear to be the conclusion to the story of Rabbi Abraham Joseph Rice of Baltimore — both on the personal level and the communal level. In the first aspect, there is a fascinating postscript related to me by a former resident of Baltimore now living in New York City. While still in Baltimore, this man and his family became acquainted with a young man descended from Rabbi Abraham Rice. Totally irreligious and ignorant of Judaism, he returned through the influence of this person and his family and became a fully religious Jew, joining a Chassidic group. Today he lives in Brooklyn and is indistinguishable from his Chassidic neighbors. Thus after a number of generations, one can witness "the return of Torah to its former hosts."

It would be equally wrong to conclude that Rabbi Rice's contributions to Torah in America had no lasting

impact. Nurturing the growth of Torah life in a country is similar to planting a crop in a field. At first, the hard unworked soil must be broken up by a plow and a hoe. Only then can the seeds be planted and the crop raised. Perhaps the efforts of Rabbi Rice and his colleagues served to plow the hard unbroken soil of America, in preparation for the twentieth century crop of Torah flourishing here. In this way we can all be considered spiritual heirs of Rabbi Rice.

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Chassidism on the Modern Scene

a review article

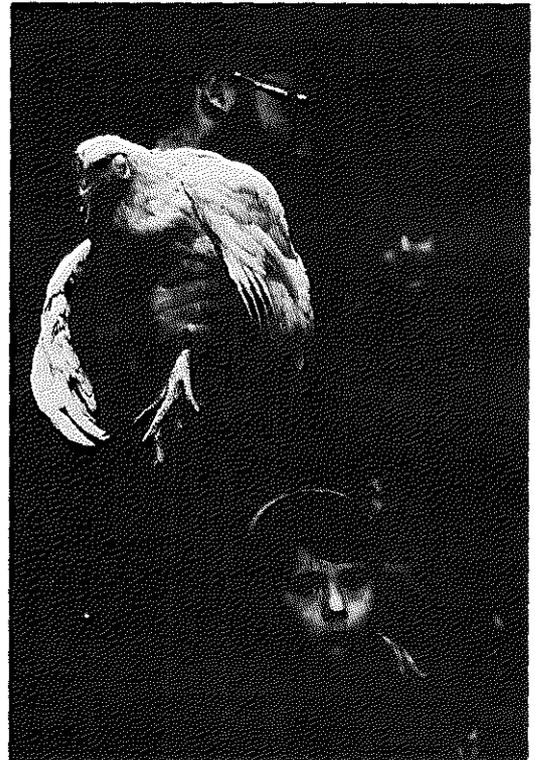
Fascination With Things Jewish

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY may well be considered a crucial turning point in the history of human thought. It saw man's self-assured, optimistic belief in his own control of his world and destiny give way to a bitter awakening. One by one, the pillars upon which his confidence rested were knocked down. The two world wars, economic catastrophes, the rise of communism and fascism, waves of violence and starvation, the threats to man's environment and his very survival, were paralleled by the breakdown of the established values and moral standards, and doubt in the power of human reason to solve man's problems.

The ultimate consequences of the crisis of confidence thus engendered cannot as yet be foreseen; but one result has been very obvious: the "discovery" of Jewish traditional teachings by people from the most diverse backgrounds who have been in search of a meaning, and order in life. There have been those who have been intrigued by the ability of a Jew to bridge the gap between the sacred and the mundane, and to sanctify the everyday world; and some of them came to realize that this was due to the *mitzvos*, the long belittled rituals which imposed a spiritual form (in the philosophical sense of the word) upon the material world, giving a real meaning to existence. Others did not see that far; they have simply been impressed by the ability of Judaism to survive and to remain relevant, as shown in the flowering of Torah, *Mussar*, Chassidism, or the thought of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, on American soil; somehow the committed Jew was seen standing with both feet in this world, yet at the same time tapping the well springs of a deeper reality.

Some of the curiosity aroused may account for the wide public interest in the works of contemporary American Jewish writers — little though they satisfy that curiosity. Within the Jewish community itself, the debate over the meaning of Jewishness is heated; and as shown, for instance, by Arthur A. Cohen's *Arguments and Doctrines* (a reader of Jewish thinking on the aftermath of the Holocaust), however little fruit the heart-searching may produce, ever again one encounters sparks of truth amidst the wreckage of futile speculation.

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"Kaporos Shlogan" FROM A PEOPLE APART

The Impact of Chassidism

Of vastly more significance, however, is the widespread interest shown in the various movements representing living manifestations of authentic traditional Judaism. Thus, there is, for instance, the remarkable and profound impact made by Chassidism upon the Jewish scene. A flood of books on its thought and ways of life has appeared, and there seems to be no let-up. Yet, there is deadly danger in this warm embrace; for in the very act of exploring — and exploiting — the movement, there emerges the tendency to change and adapt it to the patterns of thought and life of the observer. As a result, much of what has been published, far from opening better avenues to understanding, raises roadblocks in the way of the searching reader.

THERE ARE, in the first place, the proud scientific studies, composed from the vantage point of comparative religions and folklore. Like the proverbial pathologist, they dissect a corpse in eager but vain search for its soul. Thus, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*,

IN PRAISE OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV, translated by Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz (University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1970; \$17.50)

a critical English edition of the *Shivchei Habesht*, excellently rendered by Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz, does honor to the scholarship of the authors and to the academic interest in Chassidism; but nary a breath of Chassidism wafts through the dead pages. The pitfalls of forcing Torah concepts into general folkloristic categories is illustrated by the authors listing as a taboo, the prohibition on talking while making *tzitzis* — whereas in reality it is based on a simple halachic principle that no stretch of the imagination could connect with the concept of a taboo.

In the same way, learned scholars delight in comparing and contrasting the *Mussar* movement with "other contemporaneous expressions of pietism," as if it has been part of an ecumenical pietistic tendency rather than on of the "seventy aspects of Torah" emerging as a unique response to the needs of the moment; as a result, of course, these scholars totally fail to understand *Mussar's* continued vitality.

Then, there are also those who eagerly espouse Chassidism in futherance of their particular misinterpretation of Judaism. The time is long past when Graetz and his contemporaries, upright rationalists all, saw in Chassidism a primitive, superstitious movement heading for an early demise. Ever since Martin Buber, it has been interpreted as an anti-nomian movement, preaching the message of love and spirituality in contrast to, and unfettered by, the arid demands of the law. Most of the volumes on Chassidism that have appeared in recent years pay tribute to Buber, and indeed carry the imprint of this philosophy — or, perhaps even more devastatingly, that of the ideas of Gerhard (Gershon) Scholem, widely and so very wrongly considered the expert on the history of Jewish mysticism. He sees Jewish mysticism as essentially inspired by non-Jewish sources rather than as a part of the oral tradition — but, on the other hand, he finds in it a constructive anti-nomian force, and indeed a precursor of Jewish secular nationalism, to which he is so fervently committed.

Small wonder, then, that Chassidism has been adopted, and adapted, in ways that can only be distressing to us. A recent advertisement in the *Jewish Press* invites readers to relax, "using meditation, yoga, zen, Chassidology, and personal growth techniques"; it promises, among other things, to help adjust the reader's body weight, and offers also lectures on "the world of Kabbalah." The *Hadassah Magazine*, November 1972, presented a picture of "old-new ways in Jewish worship" that liberally draw on pseudo-Chassidism — among them a "modern Chassidic coffee house" at the Little Synagogue in Greenwich Village where all Sunday Kabbala is studied "linked to the 20th

century through the passion and clarity of Martin Buber," and where the "Rabbi" in charge holds forth on the similarities between Jewish mysticism and yoga as pointed out by "no less an authority on Jewish mysticism than Gershon Scholem."

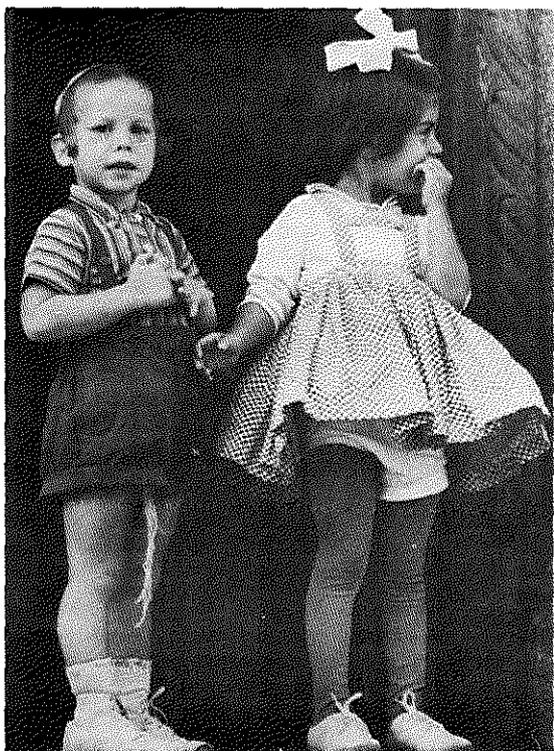
Such misuses of Chassidism may be far out; but the multitude of "Chassidic song festivals" and other social gatherings at which *Shirei Kodesh* are sung to "Chassidic" tunes with utter abandon, as well as other symptoms of the pseudo-Chassidic boom, actually have a much wider and ultimately much more dangerous impact. I am less concerned here with the shameless commercialization and vulgar desecration of Chassidism with which, particularly, Israeli entertainers and troupes complete with women stars are connected, but with the "Kumzitzes" and other "happenings" that are offered to our youth and provide a shocking misalliance between American pop-art counter-culture, and genuine Jewish motifs. Yiddishkeit is based on a very delicate balance between the enthusiasm and ecstasy of *Ahavas Hashem*, and the restrained seriousness of *Yirath Hashem*; when this balance is destroyed, when love, overwhelming, unrestrained, and uncontrolled, is declared supreme, it is no longer *Ahavas Hashem*, but can in fact become a destructive force. (*Chessed*, lovingkindness, is also the term applied to incest — where affection has exceeded its proper limits!) It brushes aside the limitations that the Torah imposes on us, both in relation to G-d and to our fellow man.

There is therefore a great need to present an accurate picture of authentic Chassidism on the American scene — both of what it has achieved and of what it can contribute to American Jewry in general. The establishment of noble Chassidic communities; their success in developing community action programs of major political, social and economic significance; and their ability to perpetuate their way of life and value systems — all this contains a significant message. Beyond this, there is the reaching out to others — as, for instance, by Breslav and of course, above all, by Lubavitch, with its publications and *Shlichim*, campus centers and broadcast *Farbrengens*, and its institutions serving those who seek a way back to Torah. The true picture of American Chassidism is impressively reflected in two "photographic essays" that have recently appeared.

THE FACE OF FAITH, by George Kranzler, photographs by Irving I. Herzberg, (The Baltimore Hebrew College Press, Baltimore, Maryland. \$12.50)

THE FACE OF FAITH, a collection of beautiful and moving photographs by Irving I. Herzberg, depicting all facets of Williamsburg life, with the text by George (Gershon) Kranzler, has faithfully captured the reality of this outstanding Chassidic community. The captioned pictures, and the chapter introductions by the

author, may not show the full range of the communal structure, but they reflect the inner strength and commitment of the people of Williamsburg.



"Williamsburg Children" from THE FACE OF FAITH

While it is difficult to single out any pictures as particularly outstanding, undoubtedly the children appearing on these pages will make a special impression upon any reader. Among the various chapters, I would single out that on women as "required reading."

Dr. Kranzler's perceptive text contributes greatly to making the reader understand the community different and yet self-assured in its American setting.

A PEOPLE APART, by Arthur A. Cohen, Photographs by Philip Garvin, (E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., New York, 1970; \$20.00)

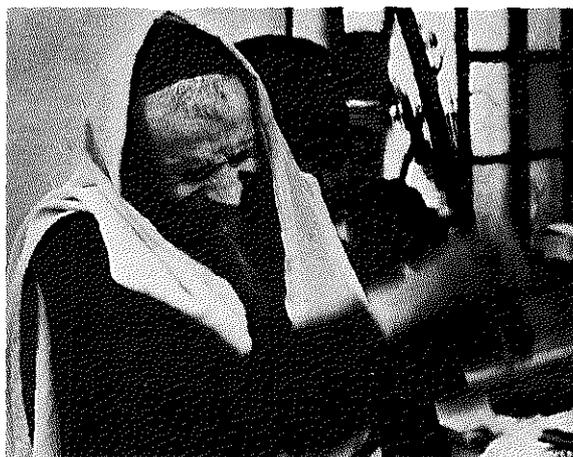
PHILIP GARVIN'S pictures in *A People Apart* are an equally fine effort to capture the Chassidic spirit in photography; this book concentrates primarily on the world of Lubavitch, in Crown Heights.

Many pictures capture high points of religious intensity, even though this book is the work of "outsiders." One readily senses how impressed they were by the world that they explored. Unfortunately, however, the book is somewhat marred by the text, written by Arthur A. Cohen. He is presented as "one of the foremost scholars of Judaica and a man well-known and liked by the Chassidim themselves"; but he hardly does justice to

this billing, either in his historical and interpretative introduction which follows *in toto* Buber and Scholem, or in his facile remarks about the "interior degeneration" of Chassidism (p.29) and, in particular, his intemperate comments on Satmar which he describes as "the paranoid extreme of Chassidic Orthodoxy" (p.30).

THE HASIDIM, by Ira Moskowitz and Isaac Bashevis Singer, (Crown Publishers, Inc., New York City, 1973; \$10.00)

ALSO, IN EFFECT a picture essay, but very different in its setting as well as in the manner and spirit of its execution, is *The Hasidim*, a volume of paintings and drawings by Ira Moskowitz. The quality of the reproduction is high, and the pictures, done mostly in Jerusalem, do capture much of the atmosphere that the artist set out to depict. Yet, somehow, the feeling of warmth and closeness that we would expect (and that, for instance, permeates the similar pictures of Herman Struck) is not here, so that one is led to wonder whether the artist had already become deeply estranged from the world he observed. (Remarkably enough, although he had a traditional upbringing, he misspelled the words on the Sefer Torah in "Holding Up the Torah.") Much more disturbing, however, is the introduction of I. Bashevis Singer which is full of mistakes and tendentious misinterpretations. Singer identifies traditional Judaism with the total isolation from the outside world practiced by Chassidism, for which he expresses a degree of admiration though he, of course, would not subscribe to it — at the same time, he totally ignores the fact that there is a non-Chassidic Orthodoxy alive and well, for he seems to feel challenged by it, or even threatened. How else can one explain his attack on Agudath Isreal for what he considers its compromises: "Many have donned short garments; others have trimmed beards and sidelocks" (p.12). Gratuitously he adds that "when Germans began to make reparation payments to victims of Nazi persecution, the members of the Agudath Israel at first grimaced and called it blood money as despicable



"Na'anu'im" from A PEOPLE APART

as idolatry. Later they relented. The gentile may be *treif* but his money is kosher. They applied this same principle to the Jewish goy!" This outburst of Jewish anti-semitism is truly noteworthy, coming as it does from a man widely touted as the interpreter of Eastern European Jewry.

THE WORLD OF HASIDISM, by Harry M. Rabinowicz (Hartmore House, 1970; \$6.95)

THOUGH SINGER may be doubtful about the ability of Chassidism to survive in the modern world, its continued flowering after the Holocaust is reflected in some detail in a new historical survey of *The World of Hasidism* by H. Rabinowicz. It is brief, and remains very much on the surface; but it does contain a large amount of factual information (listing many lesser figures in the Chassidic world) and brings the story of Chassidism into the post war years and resettlement in *Eretz Yisroel* as well as America and England. In the interpretation of the material that he brings, Rabinowicz makes use of a good many stereotyped ideas that cannot stand up to scrutiny. Thus, he writes that, "to the Goan of Vilna, the acquisition of learning was an intellectual exercise: it had broadened his knowledge, but not his outlook" (p.59). He quotes a criticism of the Chassidic Rebbes as being obscurantist opponents of the Russian government's progressive policy (p.132) — yet, on the following page, he quotes the government as admitting that its policy was designed to lead Jews to Christianity. He lists Buber (as well as Scholem) as a source but he points out that Buber has introduced new elements into Chassidism and has evolved a theory of Chassidism "that the Besht might not instantly recognize" (p.238).

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The Jewish Observer / January, 1975

In the absence of a better source in English, this volume is of some value to the interested student. However, a true and comprehensive study of Chassidism, which would set the record straight and serve as an antidote to the confusion of our time, must still be awaited.

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Ozar Hatorah and Sephardic Jewry

Aryeh Kaplan

RAMBAM, RABBI JOSEPH KARO (who wrote the *Shulchan Aruch*) RABBI ISAAC LURIA (the Ari-Zal, leading 16th Century Kabbalist) — these are the towering names in Judaism's glorious heritage . . . names in which all of Jewry takes deepest pride. All were Sephardim.

Today, Sephardic Jewry is threatened with extinction — not just cultural extinction as Sephardim, but total extinction as Jews. Yet, little of our information, discussion and concern focuses on this segment of Jewry. In Israel, where the majority of its citizens come from Sephardic and Arab lands, the awareness is somewhat sharper, and there are active programs aimed at maintaining the Jewish fidelity of the Sephardim, some geared more specifically for the preservation of the Sephardic heritage.

Hundreds of thousands of Sephardic Jews live outside of *Eretz Yisroel*, many of them recently uprooted from old communities where they had been secure in their Jewish heritage. Today, they flounder without fast anchorage in the values of their past.

Teaching Sephardic children should be a very distinct undertaking. First, their rich Sephardic heritage of *minhagim* (customs) and Torah leadership are to be perpetuated. In addition, the Sephardic temperament should be taken into account. This can mean preserving a *t'mimus* (wholesomeness) that has flourished for centuries without being exposed to the more corrosive elements of Western culture. It can also mean taking into account the capacity of Sephardim for extreme reaction to encounter with Western "sophistication" and mores—witness the Black Panther movement in Israel today.

A network of schools especially geared for Sephardic children has existed since 1944, and it is now being extended to accomodating them in new surroundings. This article is a survey of the Ozar Hatorah network.

The Old Pattern

Since the latter part of the 19th century, the only

RABBI KAPLAN, who is of Sephardic parentage, is a writer and lecturer on numerous Judaic topics. A number of his books have been published, including Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom, a translation of Rabbi Nachman of Breslav's "Sichos HaRan."

widespread education system serving youth in Sephardic lands was secular, under the auspices of the Alliance Israelite Universelle. Organized in 1860, one of AIU's aims was to set up training programs for backward Jewish communities. The emphasis was on secular education and French culture, with little regard for religious or Jewish education — with the net result that the process of assimilation was hastened.

For the most part, the world Jewish community seemed hardly aware of these communities; and members of the indigenous leadership, having completed their studies in France, sincerely believed that the road to salvation lay in cultural assimilation, looking upon Jewish religious studies as something of the past. Thus, Casablanca, for example, had a Jewish population of 80,000 in the early forties, but no community school. Funds were not lacking, but no one devoted time and effort to organize such schools. In various degrees, this same pattern prevailed throughout North Africa and Asia Minor.

The Founders

Viewing this situation, a group of dedicated laymen met under the leadership of Mr. Isaac Shalom o.h., a well known Syrian born manufacturer in New York City, who was a magnanimous contributor to all Torah causes, Ashkenazi and Sephardi alike; and Mr. Joseph Shamah of Israel. They were later joined by Mr. Ezra Tuebal of Buenos Aires, originally from Aleppo, Syria. These men acted on the initiative of Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz z.t.l., who is known as the guiding hand behind the growth of Torah in the United States, through Mesifita Torah Vodaath (which he led for decades), Torah Umesorah (which he founded), as well as numerous other actions and institutions. Mr. Mendlowitz (as he insisted on being called) urged Mr. Shalom to recreate in Sephardic lands the Torah Umesorah plan of establishing a Torah Day School in every American community. Mr. Shalom and company recognized the need for immediate action and set about creating a cohesive network of schools without counterpart in America, by virtue of central funding and control.

An initial \$400,000 was raised, primarily by Isaac Shalom and Ezra Tuebal. An office was opened in Jerusalem, and large sums were allocated to assist existing educational institutions, especially primary religious schools. After the establishment of the State of Israel, 29 schools were opened there by the organization, but when Israeli government assumed responsibility for most primary education, and Chinuch Atzmai emerged as custodian of most of the religious schooling, Ozar Hatorah closed its operations in the Holy Land.

Iran

The first country outside of Israel where Ozar Hatorah set up schools was Iran, where 80,000 Jews lived. Most of these lived in spiritual and physical poverty, cut off from the centers of Jewish learning for many generations, and with little knowledge of the basic principles of Judaism. Local religious leadership had been virtually wiped out (in pogroms in the 19th century) and surviving leaders had shockingly little Jewish knowledge. Study of Talmud had been forgotten, and it was doubtful if a single fully qualified rabbi existed in the entire country.

The ignorance of the average Jew was abysmal. In the city of Meshed, for example, the entire Jewish community of 20,000 went underground and officially became devout Moslems. Only in the 20th century, when the late Shah reinstated religious liberty, did they openly return to Judaism, but with no knowledge of what it was all about. Other communities were not much different. The Alliance Israelite Universelle had set up schools in the main centers and in some small towns, but only half an hour per day was devoted to teaching prayers, and then only in primary grades.

Ozar Hatorah appointed Rabbi Isaac Lewi director of its Iran operation. He travelled extensively throughout the country, visiting small towns and villages. Wherever he could find someone who knew Hebrew, he opened a school, using whatever accommodations were available, no matter how primitive or unsuitable. An arrangement was also made with the AIU, whereby Ozar Hatorah would provide ten hours per week of Jewish education in all AIU primary schools, maintaining responsibility for both teachers and curriculum. This arrangement is still in effect.

When it became obvious that the Torah education of Iran would require more funds than Ozar Hatorah could provide, the American Joint Distribution Committee was approached for a subsidy. JDC opened its own office in Teheran, providing a general assistance program which included school lunches, medical aid, and a substantial education subsidy.

Today, Ozar Hatorah maintains a network of forty schools in Iran, servicing 8600 pupils. A yeshiva teachers' training school in Shira has graduates in Ozar

Hatorah schools across Iran. The Jewish population of Iran remains stable at around 80,000 due to a high living standard and the enlightened attitude of the Shah, with no trend toward emigration. Assimilation has to some degree been halted by the work of Ozar Hatorah, and the spirit of Jewish consciousness in Iran has to a large degree been revitalized.

Libya and Syria

Tripoli, Libya, had a Jewish population of 29,000 at the end of World War II, but only a few hundred pupils attended the religious schools, and the study of Torah had all but ceased. After the war, Yeshiva Neve Shalom was opened through the efforts of the chief rabbi of Tripoli, and the student body grew to eighty. A teachers' seminary was also founded, and Ozar Hatorah sent teachers from Israel to provide intensive courses. Jewish soldiers stationed there during the war had also organized a Hebrew School, but it was now faced with many problems, primarily a shortage of funding and staff. Ozar Hatorah sent teachers from Israel, and also assisted with part of the budget.

With the raising of Jewish consciousness in Tripoli, the entire community immigrated to Israel in 1950-51. No youth remained behind, and Ozar Hatorah closed its Tripoli operation.

The founders of Ozar Hatorah were born in Syria, and with its post-war Jewish population of 14,000, this became an important base of operations. Two primary schools are still operating in Damascus and Aleppo, with 350 pupils each. In 1971 the Damascus school was singled out by the governmental education department as the school with the highest marks — all pupils tested passed final primary school examinations with honors.

Morocco

Morocco was very different from Iran when Ozar Hatorah began operations there in 1947. Far from being indifferent to religious education and tradition, the majority of Moroccan Jews were fully conscious of their heritage, and proud of the influence of Moroccan Jewry when Fez (Fas) was a center of Talmudic scholarship—serving as the base of the *Rif* (Rabbi Yitzchak Al-fasi) and the *Rambam*. Up until the 19th century, this tradition of Jewish learning remained strong.

Since the 1890's, the French Alliance Israelite Universelle has been providing education geared to the needs of the contemporary labor market. Young Moroccan Jews obtained sufficient French education to become white collar workers and bank clerks, but very little Jewish education. Virtually nothing was done to qualify new rabbinical leaders to replace the learned rabbis of previous generations, and schools of higher Jewish learning existed only in Marrakesh, Menkes, and Sefrou. Meanwhile, thousands of Jewish children had

no education at all, secular or religious, and roamed the streets, dirty, ill fed, and unhealthy.

Nonetheless, the majority of Moroccan Jews remained true to their heritage, and when Ozar Hatorah entered the area, they responded enthusiastically. Within a short time, committees were formed in most Jewish communities, with a central coordinating body in Casablanca. Existing Talmud Torahs and Yeshivas were given financial assistance and new ones were created. Here, too, the Joint Distribution Committee gradually took over a major portion of the financial burden.

The creation of the State of Israel brought about a change in the Moroccan Jewish community. Although not especially harassed, many of its members looked towards a better life in Israel, and by 1966, some 100,000 had emigrated. Thousands more went to France, looking for a better economic future. Despite this massive emigration, however, the number of students in Ozar Hatorah schools has increased.

Today, the situation in Morocco is fairly stable. Ozar Hatorah currently maintains 23 schools there, and out of a total Jewish population of 32,000, some three thousand students, or 60% of the school-age population, attend these schools.

France

Today, France presents one of the great educational challenges confronting World Jewry. Unlike Iran, Syria and Morocco the situation in France is not at all stable. The intermarriage rate in France is over 60% — as high as 80% in smaller communities— and at the present rate, the Jewish community can become extinct within two generations. An intensive identity-through-education program is urgent.

The French Past

France has one of the oldest Jewish communities in Europe, and was famed as a seat of Jewish learning during the time of Rashi and the Tosaphists. The community suffered a significant decline over the centuries as a result of the Crusades, persecution, and plague; and during World War II, over 90,000 French Jews perished in the death chambers, leaving a post war population of 150,000.

Over the past 15 years, this relatively small population has been inundated by almost half a million North African Jews, mostly from Algeria and Tunisia, with a sprinkling from Morocco, Libya and Egypt. Educated in French, and with the same rights as overseas French citizens, these "Pieds Noirs," as they were called, settled

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mainly in the Paris area, Lyons, Marseilles, Nice and Toulouse, completely altering the Jewish complexion of these communities. Many settled in communities in southern France where no communal structure had ever existed.

Among these immigrants the situation is particularly appalling. Of some 120,000 Jewish school children between 6 and 16, only some 4,000 attend Jewish schools. Many of these immigrants do not comprehend the relevance of their Jewish heritage, and are overwhelmed by the advanced, sophisticated non-Jewish environment that they encounter. The indigenous Jewish community feared that the massive new influx of immigrants would lead to new anti-Semitism. This, in turn, led the older community to strive even harder to assimilate, as well as to disassociate themselves from the newcomers.

The French Jewish leadership that did work to help found their efforts unequal to the situation: the immigrants outnumbered the natives three to one. Many local communities were largely assimilated and made little effort to preserve the Jewish identity of the refugee children. The Fonde Sociale, the old established official body that looks after Jewish interests and is entrusted with Jewish education, suffers from a lack of funds, since the lion's share of money raised goes to Israel, with only a small fraction returned to the French community.

Assimilation is so rampant that a process that took four generations in America is taking place in a single generation among these immigrants. Most were religious when they came to France, and the majority still maintain *kashrus*, *taharas hamishpacha* and synagogue attendance, but observance is rapidly waning, with Sabbath observance the first thing to go. The generation gap is enormous, and many children who intermarry have parents who strictly adhere to the tenets of Judaism.

Even though the immigrants are Sephardim, they get along very well with their Ashkenazic counterparts, and in many ways, those who are religious have succeeded in vitalizing Jewish life in France. In many areas, they are the most insistent in demanding religious institutions, Hebrew schools, and kosher meat. Thus, in Montmartre, Paris, there are currently over thirty kosher butcher shops, catering mainly to the Sephardic immigrants. And even though most immigrants are lower-middle or working class and state schools are free, they pay comparatively high tuition fees to send their children to Jewish schools.

Thus, even though the situation is critical, fertile ground does exist for spreading Torah education. The immigrants do respond with great interest, encouragement and commitment. Even teachers are available, trained both in Morocco and in France. What is lacking, however, is seed money and people to get things started.

Some of the Successes

Ozar Hatorah came into France in 1961, opening its first school in Lyons. Since then, its program has expanded dramatically, and it currently runs twelve schools in France, with an enrollment of 1400 — double that of last year. Half of its maintenance budget of \$1.2 million is raised by the French community, with the rest provided by Ozar Hatorah. Still, the number of schools is inadequate, and a number of important communities have no schools at all.

Thus, for example, Nice had a population of 20,000 Jews, mostly from North Africa. Yet, it was not until 1971 that this community opened a kindergarten, primary school, and Talmudic Studies Center, with the help of Ozar Hatorah. The effect was so dramatic that one of the parents, who had a thriving law practice, decided to close his office and devote his full time to Torah study.

Marseilles had a population of 80,000 Sephardic Jews, but no communal center, and only a small Akiba School run by the Jewish Agency. A Mr. Philip Cohen bought a house, surrounded by a large tract of land, with borrowed money, and established a Kollel with ten married men. Soon a kindergarten and primary school were also started. When two large organizations paid off his debts, he borrowed more money to start a secondary school. The skeleton of a four story building has been completed for this purpose, but \$400,000 is needed before it can be completed.

Sarcelles, a Paris suburb, has 2000 Jewish families, who recently purchased a large tract of land to build four school buildings at a cost of \$1.5 million. The first structure should start going up imminently.

As the number of secondary school graduates increases so does the need for higher Jewish education. There are a handful of yeshivos in France, and many Ozar Hatorah graduates go on to higher Torah study. There is also a school for women teachers in Strasbourg, and plans exist for a school for male teachers as well. One of the most interesting yeshivos is run by Rabbi Eliahu Abithol, especially set up for post-graduate university students. There are currently forty students in this three year course, many who are graduate students in medicine, mathematics, law and other disciplines.

For most university students, the situation in France is considerably worse than here in the United States. A delegation of 500 students from the University of Nice recently came to the heads of the community, complaining about the total lack of Jewish facilities on campus, and asking for at least a Jewish canteen. This, however, only highlights the lack of Jewish facilities for university students outside of Paris, since there is no official organization to meet their needs. Montpellier, a university town with 1200 Jewish students, has no kosher food

nor center for spiritual guidance. The same is true of Grenoble, another important university town.

The four thousand students currently attending Jewish schools represent the French Jewish community's main hope for the future. Still, they represent less than two-thirds of one percent of the total Jewish population, and less than 3% of the school age populace. A tenfold increase would be needed to guarantee survival, and much more if the community is to flourish and grow. If nothing is done, *chas veshalom*, we may witness the demise of the entire French speaking Jewish community, once one of the most vital segments of world Jewry. This is a responsibility that cannot be taken lightly.

Future Plans

Among the future plans of Ozar Hatorah is the opening of a network of schools throughout North and South America. With more than half a million Jews, schools are still severely lacking in South America, and much effort is necessary if assimilation is to be abated. Montreal has over 50,000 Moroccan Jews, yet it has but one school for them with less than 200 students, and even this is insufficiently supported. In many Western Hemisphere communities funds are available, and all that is needed is organization and people to coordinate the effort.

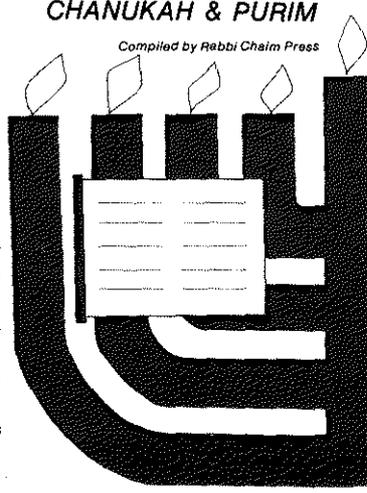
Our sages teach us that all Jews are responsible for each other. As long as the spiritual life of any Jew is in jeopardy, none of us can be at ease.

(Many facts in this article were provided by Rabbi Solomon D. Sassoon, vice president of Ozar Hatorah, in a personal interview. Some historical material was taken from an unpublished history of Ozar Hatorah, written by Joseph Shama.)

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practical suggestions regarding how to set up and maintain a kosher kitchen (leaving technical halachic questions to the rabbi), there is a need for direction on how and where to shop, what to look for, and so on. —Again, who but our Jewish homemaker?

* And is not the future of Klal Yisroel dependent so much on *taharas hamishpacha*? Who is to speak to the scores of interested, but oft-times ignorant young women on this all-important subject? —Of course, our *neshei chayil*!

Let us not forget the comment of Rashi that should serve as a pace-setter for all of Bnai Torah today: "... that they brought them (heathens) under the wings of G-d — Avraham worked with the men and Sarah worked with the women" (*Bereishis* 12, 5) and the Torah credits them (Avraham and Sarah) as if they actually made people.

RABBI BINYAMIN FIELD
Phoenix, Arizona

**In Response to the Anti—
"Anti-Sexism Memo" Memo**

To the Editor:

In his article, "The McGraw Hill Anti-Sexism Memo," Dr. Fryshman accuses McGraw Hill of posing a serious threat to the Jewish home by encouraging our daughters to seek living patterns outside the home.

I concur with Dr. Fryshman's recognition of the detrimental potential of the memo. However, its effect is negligible compared to those effects that have already stricken our young.

The "dangers to the Orthodox Jewish community" exist without the McGraw Hill memo. In the home, for example, parents leave the teaching of Torah values totally up to the yeshivos when it should also be an integral part of the *home*. Rabbi Wolpin writes in the same issue (p.15), "The home is the natural setting for transmitting values. . . . A school, . . . basically an institution of formal study, is bound [by com-

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parison] to be imperfect.”

Why blame McGraw Hill for driving many Jewish girls from the home when for the past decade their own mothers have been doing it?

The out-of-home-bound mother is already an increasing phenomenon in Orthodox Jewish society. And what about values concerning *loshon hora*, *tzenius*, *chinuch* (slander, modesty, education)? . . . The Torah prescribes the perfect prevention for generation gaps: “*V’shinantom l’vonecha* — and you shall instruct your children” — but how many learn from their parents? How many experience their homes as more than just boarding houses? Why is it that with the passing of every year, more and more young men and women who were educated in the finest yeshivos, and whose parents are Orthodox, pass from Judaism?

Why? Because their homes were not functioning as homes, a greater danger to Orthodox Jewish society than a publisher’s memo.

We have misplaced our emphasis on values imposed on us from outside our community rather than on those absorbed from within our community. If homes were what they should be—learning centers, sources of spiritual and physical guidance and development. If the Jewish homes were schools rather than dormitories, our children would not be reading literature with philosophies detrimental to our way of life.

Regarding the memo’s danger to society, I think we should be truthful. For too long, women *have* been discriminated against in the job market. They’ve been assigned low-paying positions even when their

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qualifications demanded otherwise. This bias against women is still going strong today. Women’s lib or no women’s lib, the fixation lingers on, and the continued characterization of this stereotype in literature, for example, only reinforces the fixation.

It therefore has become necessary for strong action to turn the tide and establish a balance, so that a girl seeking an income to help support her Kollel husband and their children will not be discriminated against, will not have her skills underestimated and underpaid automatically. So that a widow or a divorcee will be able to make ends meet. Etc., etc., etc. . . .

Does depicting women as bank tellers encourage Jewish girls to stay home any more than depicting them as bank directors? Both leave the home behind them each morning. It won’t do the Jewish home any more harm than the Jewish home’s already done itself.

Boycotting McGraw Hill will not solve a thing. We would only be reinforcing our ignorance as to where the problem *really* lies. We’d only be further overlooking the *real* hazards. . . those within ourselves,

within our leadership, within our communities, within our educational systems, and within our homes.

Let’s not blame something that’s been happening to us for years on a newcomer. When we are threatened by *external* forces, our only enduring solution is to strengthen our most powerful *internal* forces, and they are in the home.

GERSHON WINKLER
Brooklyn, New York

Dr. Fryshman Replies:

In 1974 McGraw Hill published over 600 books (Scott-Foresman, another company with a similar policy, published about 300 books). If these publishing houses are able to implement their respective “memos” with no appreciable reaction from communities (such as ours) that are adversely affected, it is clear that no publisher will be able to withstand pressure to institute similar policies. This will mean that children from all Jewish homes, whether they fit Mr. Winkler’s pattern or not, will be exposed to a new and distorted reality which will inevitably evade Torah values and commitment. The purpose of an

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organized rejection of McGraw Hill books is to put this publisher on notice that there are losses as well as gains associated with a capitulation to a strident minority of women. It is also intended to stiffen the backbone of other publishers similarly pressured.

To be sure, the Jewish home, in some instances, may be suffering shortcomings of its own, but that does not by any means entitle any group to further aggravate a sensitive situation. Nor does it mean

that homes should drop their vigilance toward corrosive influences from without. If, as I fully expect, there is no Orthodox Jewish reaction, we will have only ourselves to blame when our daughters opt for careers instead of homes — and look at the role of the Jewish woman as a vestige of an old, outmoded civilization.

I will add that I have no quarrel with the end of attaining equality for women in the job market. I do have serious objection to the distortion of reality and the restrictions imposed on authors who would present a balanced point of view as a result of McGraw Hill's supposed effort to attain equality.

Readers who want to judge the import of the "memo" for themselves can obtain a copy from Mr. Victor de Keyserling, Director, Public Information and Publicity, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N. Y. 10020. Ask for "Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes in McGraw Hill Book Company Publications."

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Editorial Note:

The early history of the Beth Jacob movement in America is rich with *mesiras nefesh*, unusual devotion, and admirable visionary planning. The several lines written as part of the pictorial feature in the Nov.-Dec. issue hardly pretend to do justice to this era. Beyond doubt, there were truly notable figures whose struggles and achievements would truly provide inspiring material for these columns — men such as Mr. Binyomin Wilhelm, who was so instrumental in actually founding the Beth Jacob elementary school in Williamsburg; Rabbi Avrohom Newhouse, who was the first Beth Jacob principal to successfully lead the school to its subsequent development, and founder of Camp Bais Yaakov and P'nimiya Residential School in Ferndale, N.Y.; as well as others. A number of readers have called our attention to the inadequacy of our

presentation, and we do of course recognize the poverty of our several lines in comparison to the richness of the subject.

Others pointed out that girls' schools not bearing the Beth Jacob name are not necessarily of different philosophy or "outside the system." Rather, the individualized school names are basically employed for identification reasons. We welcome the opportunity to clarify the matter.

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**Success Factor in Reaching Out:
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To the Editor:

There is a widespread misconception among religious elements in the United States that the lack of exposure to formal secular education on the university level prevents Bnei Torah from effectively communicating with the general public. Leo Levi's "The View From Jerusalem" (Sept. '74) repeated this view, bemoaning that the "native

[Israeli] Yeshiva element... have, at most, elementary education in secular subjects," which make them unsuitable to influence the average irreligious Israeli.

In fact, the most successful attempts to disseminate Torah among the larger public have been carried out by individuals and groups who had no extensive secular education. Dr. Levi himself listed them in a letter published subsequent to his article (Nov.-Dec. '74): Rabbi Grossman of Migdal Ha'emek, Tnuva L'Harbotzas HaTorah, and Agudath Israel's Reshet Shiyurei Torah, 90% of whose teachers are members of kollel. One might well have added the dedicated work done in this field by Israeli Lubavitcher Chassidim.

From my own experience in a nearly two-year stay in Jerusalem's largest yeshiva, I also found that my fellow students were quite effective in communicating with less religious audiences. In a "bein Haz'manim" project to strengthen Torah among Sephardim whose commitment to Yiddishkeit has generally declined since their arrival to Israel, the members of my group of eleven, twelve yeshiva *bachurim* gave approximately twenty unrehearsed talks in a single Shabbos morning. And this despite the fact that their secular education ended in the



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eighth grade, and they immersed themselves thereafter entirely in Torah study. On my part, on the other hand, my three college courses in "Speech" did not (to my knowledge) serve to any advantage.

Indeed, not only is lack of university experience not a handicap, it is a strongpoint. It gives the *mashpi'im* a greater zeal for Torah. And one can rest assured that the likelihood of success in spreading Torah is directly proportional to this zeal. Secular education on a higher level usually diminishes this zeal, to say the least. From personal experience, I can tell Dr. Levi that the "cultural background" of American yeshiva students, a veiled reference to their more extensive exposure to secular studies, is no boon to their effectiveness in spreading Torah.

Only learning Torah and more Torah gives one the Divine aid necessary to be a forceful *marbitz Torah* — Torah communicator. With Torah blessings,

SHMUEL LITTMAN
Wickliffe, Ohio

"Of Rights and Duties" — Critique of "Left" Only

To the Editor:

Rabbi Miller's excellent article "Of Rights and Duties" (Dec. '74) is flawed in that he limits consideration to those democratic political systems that maintain that an important function of government is to endow individuals and groups with certain rights. This liberal/socialist philosophy emanates from Marx's "To each according to his needs, from each according to his abilities," which not only leads to a diminution of responsibility, but also abrogates the rights of others.

Thus, a government of this kind might decide that a group of elderly people have the right to be supported in a dignified fashion. This removes the responsibility of children to support their own parents — but it also removes the rights of taxpayers to determine how the fruits of their labor are to be spent. There is no doubt that this

approach would be in conflict with the Torah.

The philosophy of government characterized as "right of center" generally espouses the concept that the function of government is to provide only those services which the individual cannot provide himself.

No doubt a careful analysis will show conflicts remaining between Torah and this political system, as well. However, I feel that the conflicts will not be nearly as fundamental as those pointed out in Rabbi Miller's otherwise perceptive piece.

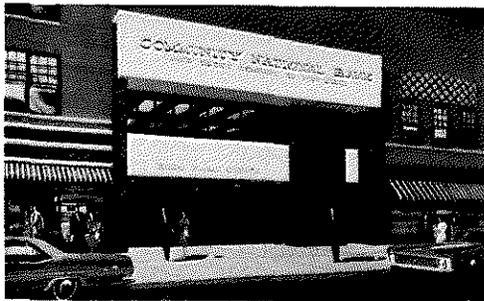
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THE FIRST CONTINGENT of girls who will be trained by Agudath Israel of America as youth leaders for South America arrived this week from Argentina, and immediately began an intensive two-month program of training.

Under the aegis of the Agudist girls' organization, Bnos Agudath Israel, the Argentines are benefiting from special courses, visitations to Bais Yaakov schools and Bnos Agudath Israel groups. They will observe Bnos Agudath Israel in action in different parts of the country and will learn how to adapt these methods to the South American environment.

Agudath Israel is arranging for a similar

group of South American boys to be trained during the months of January and February, which is the vacation season in that region. These activities are part of the program of the American Agudath Israel organization to help develop Torah life south of the American border. The major such accomplishment to date is the establishment last year of a Kolel (institute for higher Torah study) in Buenos Aires.

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ORTHODOX JEWS JOINING AGUDATH ISRAEL IN LARGE NUMBERS

Large numbers of Orthodox Jews from every part of the United States are joining Agudath Israel of America, during the course of the nationwide membership campaign which the movement is conducting. The drive to unite Torah-loyal Jews within the framework of Agudath Israel was launched by the organization's presidium headed by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, chairman. Other members of the Agudath presidium are: Rabbi Moshe Horowitz (Bostoner Rebbe), Rabbi Shneur Kotler, (Roshe Yeshiva of Beth Medrash Govoha, Lakewood), Rabbi Nochum Perlow (Noveminsker Rebbe), Rabbi Boruch Sorotzkin (Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe), Rabbi Chaskel Besser and Rabbi Moshe Sherer.

The response to the call of these eminent Torah leaders has come from rabbis and laymen, American-born and immigrants, professionals and businessmen, Kollel members and students — Torah-loyal Jews from every walk of life.

In the proclamation issued by Agudath Israel's presidium, they declare: "In our generation we see more than ever the urgency of a powerful umbrella-type Orthodox movement, led by the outstanding Torah authorities, even more than when the international organization was founded over sixty years ago. The historic goal of returning Torah sovereignty as the dominant factor in Jewish life can only be achieved when observant Jews, regardless of the differing customs of their lands of origin, unite through Agudath Israel under the authority of the Gedolei Torah (Torah scholars)."

The proclamation concludes: "Agudath Israel of America has led the movement to liberate Orthodox Jewry from the sense of inferiority that shackled its initiative in this country, and has endowed it with a new spirit of independence, dynamism and self-respect. It has trained a legion of Torah activists, and also has emerged as an Action Center for Jews and Judaism which provides a wide range of educational and advocacy services, in Israel and overseas, and community service programs which affect the lives of broad masses of young and old. By becoming an official member of the Agudath Israel movement, the Orthodox Jew helps the movement write history in its battle for authentic Yiddishkeit."

Sixteen divisions of activity operate out of the national headquarters of Agudath Israel of America at 5 Beekman Street in New York City and field offices in various neighborhoods.

PROJECT COPE LAUNCHED BY AGUDATH ISRAEL FOR MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT COPE (Career Opportunities and Preparation for Employment), a major manpower program, was launched in January by Agudath Israel of America. The vital services that Cope will provide include vocational guidance, on-the-job training, job-related education, placement in vocational schools.

In announcing this new program, Agudath Israel stated that, "Project COPE is part of the expanded role in extending social services to all members of the community, and is based on the organizations commitment to the Halachic precept that aiding a fellow-man to find gainful employment is the highest form of 'chesed' (charity)."

A staff of qualified professional counselors guide potential employees towards fulfilling livelihoods. Job training is provided with the goal of long-term employment, to enable the participants to become productive members of society.

The director of Project COPE is Rabbi Mencahem Lubinsky, former head of the Boro Park Senior Citizen Center of Agudath Israel. The director of the Vocational Education Division is Rabbi Shmuel Bloom, formerly the executive vice-president of the St. Louis Yeshiva. In its statement, Agudath Israel declared that these men "bring to their new task a rich background in community affairs which they will now apply to helping those whose livelihood is especially hard hit during the current economic recession."

The main office of Project COPE is located on a separate (the eighth) floor of the national headquarters of Agudath Israel of America at 5 Beekman Street, New York City. A Brooklyn field office has been established at 813 Avenue H, near E. 9th Street, to facilitate the Project's services within that borough and Staten Island.

This sophisticated manpower training program follows on the successful provision of social services to the aged by Agudath Israel's Commission on Senior Citizens, which since its inception over a year ago provides services to over 10,000 elderly.

Mark this Date:

Sunday, April 27th
at the Hotel Commodore
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53rd National Dinner of
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NAJR GIRLS MEET: ORGANIZE NEW PROJECTS

Over 100 girls of the NAJR Division of Bnos Agudath Israel met on Sunday, January 12, to review the progress made in the short period of its existence and forge ahead with new plans. The NAJR (National Association for the Aid of Jewish Elderly Residents) group was created by the Agudist youth organization to help alleviate the neglect, despair, and economic distress of the Jewish elderly and infirm, and bring warmth and hope into their homes. The group's activities include visiting homes of over fifty elderly persons in the Boro Park area every Shabbos, and delivering hot, nutritious lunches daily to the homes of numerous infirm residents. The lunch program is co-sponsored by the Boro Park Senior Citizen Center of Agudath Israel. In addition, the girls do shopping and household chores for these people. They also provide assistance in obtaining government sponsored social services to those in need of them.

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