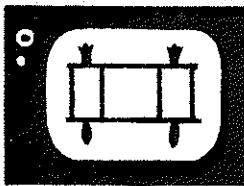
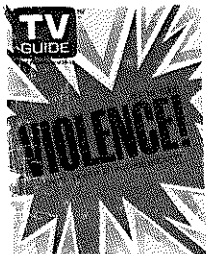


THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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עמוד ואהבת את
ך ובכ: מאדך והיו
על לבך ושננתם
ובל:תר בדרך



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How violence-prone is your home?

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*Should the Orthodox community
get involved in TV & Radio?*

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*Do inter-faith dialogues
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respectful of authority?*

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THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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A Challenge to Our Generation

Chapter I Illusions Shattered

The second anniversary of the Yom Kippur War has passed, and we are still left with a bewildering array of negatives and destroyed illusions. It is only through courageous and painful analysis that we can emerge with a plan for recovery and hope for the future.

Some beliefs have been forever shattered and hurled upon the junkpile of history. *And we are the better for it.* The State of Israel has suffered almost total social, economic and military upheaval. Who can now believe in previously established philosophies for the salvation of mankind?

There can no longer be faith in socialism or communism to solve the problems of society.

There is even no longer faith in democracy as the protector of human rights. Have not the democracies of the world learned the same perverse acts of exploitation, discrimination and injustice which reign in other political systems?

There is no longer faith in the Jewish State, as we have known it, as the antidote to anti-Semitism. Has there ever been such widespread anti-Semitism as we now see arrayed against the Jewish State?

There is no longer any faith in the concept of "Jewish Nationalism" and the hope of becoming a member of "the family of nations." Precisely when we seem closer than ever to achieving the status of "a nation among

others," we are experiencing the total rejection of that very "family."

The Israeli army, once crowned with seeming invincibility, has lost its magic. Even restored to its former power and invigorated by new weapons, it has lost its hold upon our confidence.

We can no longer believe in its power to withstand forces ten times its size. *Is it indeed physical power which led to its past successes? Did we, indeed, lack mighty forces during the long periods in our history of holocaust and tragedy?*

Wars no longer serve to solve our security problems; our confidence in cease-fires has long dissipated, since truth is no longer honored.

In short, man-made institutions have been totally repudiated. Parties and organizations no matter what their ostensible purpose — national, communal, religious, secular, humanitarian, ideological, cultural, educational — have been rejected. Anything benevolent in their nature has been negated by their multitude of detrimental effects.

After generations of progressive education, utilizing the most modern concepts, we are perhaps worse off than before. We stare out into an abyss of nescience — not knowing who we are, who is a Jew, and what is Israel.

Chapter II Challenge to a Confused Leadership

You, who occupy exalted positions of power, who pretend to guide our youth and legislate our laws — what answers have you to the urgent problems of the day?

What can you do to cure society of the decay that is slowly destroying us?

What answers do you have for our tormented youth which cries out: "Why do we deny the Arabs their rights?" "Why must we have a Jewish State?" "Why, indeed, a Jewish people at all?"

ELIYAHU KITOV, one of the great educators of our times, is author of many books that have become classics, including *Sefer Hatoda'a* and *Ish Uveiso*. In this essay, he reacts to the spiritual crisis in Israel.

The original essay of six chapters was printed in Hebrew in *Maariv*, Israel's popular evening newspaper. The basic translation into English was executed by DR. JOSEPH KAMINETSKY,

How do you propose to restore to our people its unique identity and culture, when you have systematically emptied Israeli culture of our own very unique heritage?

Now that you have removed the spiritual barriers which separate Israel from the nations, how do you propose to save our national identity? How can you prevent the flow of strangers from without and the growing tide of capitulation that threatens us from within?

National Director of Torah Umesorah, with the assistance of DR. HAROLD I. LEIMAN, well-known Jewish educator now residing in Israel. Extensive editing and adaptation were done by RABBI YAAKOV FEITMAN, translator and adapter of Rabbi Eliezer Ben-David's *Out of the Iron Furnace*, published by Shengold. Presented on these pages are excerpts from Rabbi Feitman's adaptation.

Now that Zionism *per se* has proven hollow, what can you say to your spiritual sons and daughters, the sad products of your educational system and false propaganda?

Do you doubt that the Arabs are serious when they announce their intentions to annihilate Israel, G-d forbid? The peril becomes ever more critical as the unfeigned hatred of Russia towards Israel is unleashed. Where are your plans for salvation?

How long can you continue to rely upon the support of the United States; and what if, in due course, American national interests do not coincide with ours?

And even should there be a semblance of peace, can there indeed be *true* peace with the Arabs who conspire to destroy us in war *and* peace? We may take the words of Bourguiba of Tunisia as a paradigm of Arab thought: "Give them peace for twenty years and there will no longer be a Jewish State." A potpourri of nations, a melange of faiths, devoid of any Jewish national unity — such will be the character of Israel after twenty years of peace!

You who have proclaimed yourselves captains of the Jewish Ship of State, in what direction are you steering us? How will we ever again replace the legacy of faith and security you have so brazenly destroyed?

Chapter III The Answers

The truth is, *you will find no answers!* Once you abandoned the "well of living waters," you forfeited any claims to wisdom and understanding. You may search long and diligently for the answers to all the above raised questions, but in vain, *for your very premises are at fault.*

There is, indeed, a source for the solution which you seek. But it is not where you have been searching. The eternal G-d-given Torah alone can guide us.

In it alone can we find the answers to the crucial questions which torment every mind and heart:

- ☐ Who are we?
- ☐ What are we?
- ☐ What is our purpose here?
- ☐ Why has all this travail come upon us?
- ☐ Where can we find a friend in our trouble?
- ☐ When will all our tribulations come to an end?
- ☐ What is required of us?

■ Who Are We?

We are *not* simply a member of "the family of nations." We are the descendants of Avraham "Ha'ivri" (*Bereishis 14:13*), which the Midrash explains to mean "the whole world is on one side and we are on the other" (*Bereishis Rabba 42:8*). As our essence we are "a people that shall dwell apart and not reckon itself among the nations" (*Bamidbar 23:9*).

We have nothing to learn from the family of nations; what good can arise if we try to squeeze ourselves into the dwarf-like frame allotted to us on "the family tree"? Yet, we have so much to give....Better that we should dwell honorably in splendid isolation, and let the nations stream to us to seek counsel, wisdom, and guidance.

■ What Are We?

Our essence is defined by our Divine mission: to perfect the world for the reign of the Al-mighty and help bring about the day when "the L-rd shall be King over all the Earth" (*Zachariah 14:9*). We accepted this Heavenly designation by covenant between ourselves and G-d. This covenant will never be abrogated and we can never shirk the responsibilities it places upon us.

■ What is Our Purpose Here?

We became a nation solely to fulfill our Divine mission and for this reason we were given the two precious gifts of Torah and the Land of Israel.

He gave us the Divine Torah as a detailed guide toward achieving our goal: to be a "kingdom of priests" (*Shemos 19:6*) so that there be one nation, in the world which would proclaim the sovereignty of G-d in the world.

He gave us the Land of Israel, singularly endowed with the qualities necessary as a base for the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and from whence to spread His rule over the entire globe. From the days of the Patriarchs, this land has clearly been meant only for us. Four hundred years later, we formally became a nation and inherited the Promised Land forever.

Even when exiled from the land, our right to it was never challenged. We have always been destined to return; it has always depended solely upon us, assured by our King in His very rebuke: "Your enemies shall dwell there in desolation" (*Vayikra 26:32*). Even those who have temporarily taken the land from us have been allowed no satisfaction from their iniquity. It has always been as stolen property in their hands.

The land within all its traditional borders continues to be ours, whether we *now* are in control of certain portions or not. The relationship of the people of Israel and the land of Israel is a universal one and its fulfillment will bring well-being to the entire family of man.

You who have proclaimed yourselves captains of the Jewish Ship of State, in what direction are you steering us? How will we ever again replace the legacy of faith and security you have so brazenly destroyed?

■ *Why Has All This Travail Come Upon Us?*

The peace and welfare of the world depends solely upon the eradication of evil and iniquity. This *cause finalis* can only be brought about when we fulfill our Divine mission. When Israel is not fulfilling its purpose, G-d does not absolve us of our responsibilities or free us from our unique status. He then deals with us as He promised through Ezekiel the Prophet: "If not (through your own free will), I will rule over you with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm and with fury poured out." This alone is the source of all the troubles which have befallen us throughout our history.

■ *Where Can We Find a Friend in Our Trouble?*

The people of Israel are unique constituting a single unit and having no ally except the Al-mighty.

If Israel heeds its covenant with the L-rd, it has no need of alliances with other nations. If, G-d forbid, Israel violates its covenant, no agreement with any nation will be of avail, and in the end she will be rejected by them all.

Israel is to be either alone or isolated. *Alone* — when it lives tranquilly, radiating the unique warmth of its own identity. It is then that the nations seek *its* favor. *Isolated* — when it tries to escape its true identity and seek security in blending in with the nations.

■ *When Will Our Tribulations Come to an End?*

The Al-mighty has already assured us in His Torah, and through His Prophets, that there will come an end to the long period of our travail and that salvation will come to us and the entire world.

The end is inevitable and it must come through repentance; only *the motivation* for that repentance is up to us. Either we will repent of our own free will, or G-d will move us to do so. At that time, even should all the nations of the world converge upon Israel to annihilate it, G-d forbid, they will crumble, and Israel will attain eternal redemption. It will have achieved its holy destiny of creating a Kingdom for G-d upon earth and will be cleansed of its past misdeeds.

■ *What is Required of Us?*

Every generation has the power to hasten the long-awaited redemption by returning to the essence of its being, to its appointed mission. In any event, the End will not be delayed any longer than its appointed time.

As you have observed the enemies of Israel gnashing their teeth and plotting against Israel, so may we look forward to the imminent arrival of the Moshiach. Listen carefully and you will hear the echo of his footsteps. Look deeply into the hearts of the people of Israel and see how close they are to repentance.

Chapter IV The Security of Faith

The lessons of recent events are many-fold and may be appreciated on deepening levels of understanding. Even if these events had only freed us from our past illusions without guiding us to the full truth, their occurrence would have been justified. How much more grateful should we be for them if they open our eyes to our Divine national mission and destiny!

Indeed, our great faith in the G-d of Israel and in the exalted destiny He has ordained for His people is not ambiguous or subject to skepticism. It shines independently as the light of day.

Is there an infant who does not acknowledge the mother who gave birth to him and nursed him? Is there a child who does not recognize the father upon whose shoulders he rode? Is there a person who does not remember the only source of his very breath of life?

Indeed, this very perception defines the quintessence of Israel. We recognize, in the most profound depths of our being, that our faith is the very matrix of our existence; from it we have grown and with it we have flourished, from the day we were created over 3500 years ago, to the present day.

Who will testify that our faith is absolute and secure beyond doubt?

Knesses Yisroel, who has suffered for thousands of years because of her devotion to the true G-d; *Knesses Yisroel*, who was scattered and dispersed among nations who villified and tortured her — Has she ever violated her sacred faith and gone astray to false gods?

Individuals may attempt to commit spiritual suicide and throw in their lot with strange nations. They find it pleasant and — as only the Jew can do — give totally of their energy and talents to the nation they have joined.

Suddenly and inevitably, the "hosts" evict the Jews from their midst, saying "You and we cannot share one world; it is either you or we." From the very rejection of these Jews, we realize to what extent even the Jew who has wandered furthest from his religion is yet deeply bound to his faith.

The Torah we possess today in all its detail of content, structure, and form, received in its entirety from our forefathers. . . . They, like ourselves, and even with greater care, guarded the Torah with their lives, so that this tradition remain true. — Has there ever been a man who dared say that the original generation of people who received the Torah were a generation of liars? If someone believed that a later generation distorted that tradition? Is such evidence anywhere recorded? — No!

We have never lacked fault-finders, renegades and false prophets. These have brought us shame in each generation. But their venom was aimed at traditional living in the present, or in the "enlightened" future. They never questioned the veracity of our past tradition.

Thus by continuous connection of generation to generation we trace this true and unaltered tradition to the first generation at Sinai, the three million who said, "We will do and we will listen", those who bequeathed the Torah to future generations.

In the Torah it is written: "When it is bad with you and all these things have come to pass" — how can you be saved? ". . . return to your G-d and hear His voice." That is your only salvation. There is no other recourse. Shall we read this today and still not believe?

Before the wise men of the nations and the modern non-believers of Israel built up visionary pictures of a world at peace, the Torah sketched realistic pictures of all the dreaded evils that face us today: all idealistic "issues" have been emptied of their true content, peace is crumbling, the danger of world annihilation is assuming frightening proportions, and the kingdoms of Ishmael rule over the world. These have all been depicted in our Torah and in the words of the wise from generation to generation.

Chapter V Before Repentance: Confession

If a man transgresses a commandment of Torah, he cannot attain atonement until he first confesses his sins. He must detail his sins and say to his Creator, with a broken heart and with tears in his eyes: "Oh L-rd, I have sinned and transgressed before You; thus and thus have I done. I regret and am ashamed of my deeds, and will never repeat them!"

Especially is this true of one who had deliberately transgressed many important commandments of the Torah, sinning himself, and even worse, causing others to sin as well. How much more so is this true of an entire generation which sinned before the L-rd, spurning His advice and causing great harm to itself and to all of mankind!

As long as we do not do so, but on the contrary hide our trespasses — knowingly and unknowingly — there is no true repentance and the sin is not eradicated. Each one of us places the blame on his neighbor and does not see the evil in his own heart.

We are, therefore, — each and every one of us — obliged to confess and say with a broken heart: "But we and our forefathers have sinned, ... אשמונו, בגרנו, גולנו, דברנו דופי. — we have *trespassed*, we have *dealt treacherously*, we have *robbed*, we have *spoken slander*!"

We have trespassed — when we turned a holy people into pursuers of vanity and avaricious mercenaries.

We have robbed — our people of the potential for repentance, when we withheld criticism and did not spell out for them the enormity of their sins and their evil-doing.

We have spoken slander — when we chastised others and had not yet purified our own souls. We thus were liable to charges of hypocrisy and duplicity.

We have trespassed — as individuals and as a nation in sins between man and his fellow and in sins between man and G-d; yet, we had the temerity to issue a challenge on the very day of our transgression, saying: "What have we done?"

We have dealt treacherously — with the entire world when we did not present to them a paradigm of ... "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" — which does not carry a sword and a spear but only the word of the L-rd so that all the nations might stream unto us and say: "Let us go up to the mountain of the L-rd, to the house of Jacob, so that they may teach us of their ways and we may go in their paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the Torah and the word of G-d out of Jerusalem." Instead of this noble potential, we set up a lowly state and went into the desert of all the peoples to learn the art of war and laws and judgments which are strange to us. And instead of providing moral leadership, we turned and followed in *their* decadent ways.

We have robbed — the world of the great good that could have come unto them. The main purpose of our coming into the world was to bring blessings upon all the families of the earth, and instead we have only added to the iniquity already rampant around us.

We have spoken slander — when we disbursed idle flattery to the wicked among us and said: "Peace, peace!" — when indeed there is no peace.

As members of a holy nation, we will no longer crave for "the better things of life." Nor — once they excel in spiritual realms — will our people aspire to lead the world in scientific or industrial achievement. . . except to demonstrate how the glory of G-d can be reflected in mundane affairs.

We have trespassed, we have dealt treacherously, we have robbed, we have spoken slander, we have committed iniquity and have done wickedly, we have acted presumptuously, we have acted violently etc., etc.... While we constantly repeated such platitudes as: unity of the people, love of Israel and love of friends, only falsehoods were we uttering!

The writer of these lines, too, wishes to be among the confessors. Because of inadequate contemplation and fear of man — he did not identify guilty factors by their true names, and was brief when he should have been specific. In fact, even this is not a true confession, for

he who hides iniquity cannot succeed. The writer invites others to come and complete the task he has begun.

Whoever is concerned about the well-being of his people must now stand up and be counted, adding his individual voice of anguish to an overpowering thunder-clap of remorse which will tear open the locked hearts of men and awaken the compassion of Heaven.

Yet, let us make very sure that our words be free of rancor, purified of animosity and directed only toward returning the hearts and minds of our people to G-d. Let us search our ways, and return. . . .

Chapter VI The Repentance of "The End of Days"

How obscure to us is the chapter on penitence in *Mishna Torah*: "When it will go hard for you and all these things will come upon you in the end of days — then shall you return to the L-rd, your G-d." — The concept of universal repentance is so foreign to us that we find it almost impossible to visualize.

Where can we find the spark to light the fire needed to awaken all of mankind? . . . Our early Sages described our people — and this designation applies to the whole people — as being close to penitence. Yet, we seem to see only the opposite, G-d forbid. We are, indeed, all of us far from penitence.

How is it possible to expect repentance from one in whom even a glimmer of faith does not exist, who did not inherit it from his fathers? In the early days of false prophets and followers of the Baal, later in the days of the Hellenists and Sadducees, the great majority of the nation was firmly rooted in unyielding faith. We had only to remove the thin layer of decay and the nation as a whole emerged in its pristine loyalty and could proclaim unanimously: "The L-rd is our G-d."

In our day matters are not so. Even were we successful in removing from power those who led us astray, will those who come after be different?

How far have matters gone? Here is but one terrible instance which teaches much about many similar ones: During the tragedy of Maalot, when death threatened scores of Jewish children, one of the teachers was reported to have said later: "We thought of singing 'Hatikvah' and so to end it all in glory."

Consider this well. Jewish children raised on Torah and

faith in a religious school with a religious teacher, facing slaughter at any moment — who caused them to forget "*Shema Yisroel*" in the hour of the soul's departure and chant the "*Hatikvah*" instead? Even were this the invention of a newspaperman, should not the story shatter us that such canards can be promulgated? — and yet the newspaper was not flooded by denials and complaints!

"When the foundations are shattered!"

Indeed, the redeeming penitence of the "end of days" will not come about until all the chiefs of State, its masters and rulers, rise up and make a new covenant of faith with the G-d of Israel, and confess and say: "*We have sinned — we have left the L-rd and abrogated the covenant. And now we return with a full heart to sanctify Israel whom we profaned, to sanctify the Sabbath according to its commandments, to sanctify the Land, to root out all forms of foreign worship from the land and no longer seek answers in cultures and religions which are not our own. . . .*"

Are the people and the hour propitious for this? Yet there can be no other way but to return to our mission of serving as a "kingdom of priests." And for the very first step we must take:

■ Let us forget about all parties, all trade unions, all economic cartels, and all official groups with all their masks and mantles — whatever their pretensions. For all of these — each and every one — is interested in his own profit, in himself, his party, his sect, his club, and his club members. They seek only their own good. *Will they be able to be priests serving their people and the*

entire world according to their mission? Obviously not. Therefore, the first condition is: let these bonds be broken, let self-interests be abrogated and let the entire people be of one heart for their divinely designated mission.

If this, indeed, be the beginning of the penitence demanded of the entire generation, then let each man consider in his own soul: which one of us is ready for this, who will begin it and who will achieve the desired result?

■ On the day when we will desire to restore the crown of "a holy nation" to our heads, we will no longer regard material things as our major accomplishments. We will completely remove from our midst the craving to pursue every desire for the "better things of life." This will be reflected in the State and by each individual in his private life.

A State comprised of people carrying a mission for the entire world will have no craving to be outstanding in scientific, industrial, or economic achievement. It is conceivable that in these matters the nations of the world will outstrip us and these "failings" will not bother us. We have come into the world to be "above all other lands" in spiritual matters, and have no need to excel in material areas.

To be sure, we have need for activities in these spheres — to show the world how the Torah and its commandments are performed with their aid, and how the glory of G-d is reflected in our achievements in medicine, technology, agriculture, and in the conduct of a State and a people. In all these matters, we are to show the unique trade-mark of Israel: the lifestyle of a holy people. Others want to see us as a holy nation, not a people which boasts idly that "You have chosen us" and in its deeds follows blindly the ways of other nations. This is

the way for the entire State — and for each individual as well!

■ The very essence of Jewish character is to be free of greed for monetary acquisitions, which leads to robbery, deceit, and is an embarrassment to the "image of G-d" which man carries. When the world will have been perfected, each person will find his own niche wherein he will receive the sustenance needed for himself and his dependents without intruding upon his neighbors' livelihood.

If G-d will be pleased with His people, blessings will be showered upon us. All this depends upon a total fulfillment of:

And You Shall Return Until G-d Your G-d

We know that the L-rd abhors the haughty and proud (see *Berachos* 51a, *Sotah* 5a etc.). The Torah therefore stresses that we must repent "until the L-rd" — in other words, as if we are standing before the awesome majesty of the L-rd Himself. Can anyone become haughty or arrogant?

"Until the L-rd" teaches us more — Just as everyone needs Him and He has no need of His creatures, so must we forget our own needs and care only for the concerns of others.

Another sense of the phrase "until the L-rd," as it is repeated by the Prophet Hosea (4:2): "Return, O Israel, to the L-rd your G-d, for you have stumbled in your iniquity." — Before a person has sinned, it is enough him to gradually improve himself. After he has sinned, he is like one who has climbed a tall ladder to his chosen rung. Suddenly, he breaks the rung and falls. He cannot return to the rung from where he has fallen, so he must jump, skip a step and reach "until G-d your G-d" (see *Berachos* 34b and *Sanhedrin* 99b).

For Whom These Words?


Intellectually, we know all about the great advantages of "return," but O how far our hearts are from putting it into practice! So we wonder, "Do we have it within us to achieve this goal — or even a portion of it?" And if the road to repentance seems so distant, for whom and why has all this been written?

Actually, all of the above is meant for both those completely "with" us and those who still linger spiritually far from us. For those "with" us, there is often a necessity to redefine goals, to crystalize the exact problem and what must be done. For those who are yet far, these words reach out with the hope that perhaps even a bit of doubt will creep into their minds and they will think "perhaps I have been wrong all these years."

When I say, those who are "far," let me be quite specific. The early founders of the State must sadly be included. It was they who first perverted our religion

into the present system and then stepped back and refused to recognize the disastrous products of their decisions . . . investing money, energy, and precious manpower to gain the friendship of the African lands . . . constantly reassuring us that the Arabs would never unite and that they would always be incompetent in war...consistently relying on the nations of Europe eventually coming around to supporting the "only democracy in the Middle East."

We must all say to them now: You have tried every false belief possible and you have not succeeded. Is it not time to try Israel's true belief? Do you not at least suspect we may be right? From where else can you be saved?

Trust what your inner soul and intuition has been telling you. Do not be ashamed. Admit your past errors and rejoin your glorious past — for the future! 

Uri Sondhelm

"Why Not Wednesday?"

A study of yeshiva students' attitude toward authority — both in the general scene and in religious life.

"The assignment is due on Monday."

"Why not Wednesday?"

The teacher now faces a familiar dilemma and several choices remain open.

- A student has demanded a rational explanation for a given instruction. So why not give it to him?

"We are behind in our work and will have to move on to chapter eight on Monday."

- Or — since a teacher must endure several questions of this sort, he may learn through experience to endure in silent toleration.

- The teacher has a third alternative:

"Because I said so." Authority has its place in the classroom and when challenged must be reasserted.

Authority is not popular today. In fact, it has a negative connotation.

Recent political and social developments in this country have reflected this trend, and it has extended into the more sheltered reaches of Orthodox Jewish Society. (See Rabbi Nosson Scherman's "The Crisis of Leadership" in the April, '75 *The Jewish Observer*.)

The Adolescent vs. Authority

EVEN IN LESS VOLATILE times adolescents did not readily accept authority. The adolescent is a rebel and challenger, eager to break away from restrictive impositions of the adult world. In its extreme, freedom to indulge in self and "do your own thing" have become catchwords of contemporary youth. Jewish society, however, does not see the adolescent in the same light, for the *bachur*,

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through acceptance of traditional authority, has always represented a continuation rather than an abandonment. True, challenging and questioning have always remained his privilege, if not his duty: "*Lo habyshan lomed*," one who fails to question is incapable of learning. On the other hand, questioning and challenging the right of authorities to lead and direct is alien to a tradition that equates the authority of parents, teachers and rabbis with the authority of G-d.

How has the yeshiva students' loyalty to authority fared in these rebellious times? Have their attitudes been affected by society's views and, more specifically, by the views of their contemporaries? Do students' attitudes vary in accordance with the type of yeshiva they attend? Most crucial of all, how has the general erosion of authority affected yeshiva students' attitudes toward Torah authority?

The Questionnaire

A TWO-PART QUESTIONNAIRE was recently given to tenth and eleventh grade high school students in six different yeshivos to determine their attitudes towards authority.

The schools selected represent a broad ideological spectrum of ideological commitment, ranging from high-schools attached to the traditional type all-day Bais Midrash, to schools that stress Ivrit and interschedule sacred and secular subjects. The first section of the sheet contained a list of statements presenting an authoritarian approach to problems in American society.

In the second part, students were similarly polled on their views toward Torah authority.

Sifting Through the Responses

THE INFORMATION from the responses is presented in two tables: *Table I* lists the numerical average of the responses to each question listed according to school. Obviously, 2.6 or more indicates a positive attitude, 2.4 or less indicates a negative attitude, and 2.5 seems to show passivity. This can, in some ways, give us a reading of the general class atmosphere regarding respect for authority.

This is balanced by the tabulations in *Table II*, which records the percentage of positive and negative responses to each question in each school.

The Findings: Overall Yeshiva Attitudes ...

RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY in general is a prevalent attitude among yeshiva students, homework assignments notwithstanding. 61% of the responses to the first part of the survey either supported or strongly supported an authoritarian approach to government and society. The overwhelming majority of the students polled strongly agreed to the government's authority to enforce law and order, specifically in strict enforcement

of anti-drug laws, reinstitution of capital punishment, and an effective police force. They almost unanimously held that our government can best function under a strong presidency. Here they seem to share the traditionally middle-class values of their parents. In response to authority directly above them, students were less enthusiastic. Only half of the students saw parents as having the right to a final say at home and considered the principal of a school most competent to act in matters of discipline.

In matters of religious authority the students were even more positively inclined; seventy percent of the responses were in support of Torah authority. It was strongly confirmed by 71% that "Who is a Jew?" should be answered on the basis of *halacha*. 84% agreed that Torah authorities have the right to take stands on political and community issues. However, responses supporting the authority of the rabbi over his congregants (question 12) were moderate — 51%. (No

doubt, students here echoed their parents' opinions voiced during *Chazoras Hashatz* or over a steaming plate of *cholent*!)

THE CLOSER religious authority came to regulating their own behavior, the more moderate the students' support became. With less enthusiasm, students gave the religious *hanhala* (administration) the right to have a say over the literature read in the classroom (question 17). (There was, however, a wide discrepancy between the responses in the different types of schools that were polled — see *Table II*.) Only 62% indicated that they would put great weight on the advice of a rebbe when making a personal decision (question 18). (Again, however, the discrepancy between *types* of schools was dramatic.) While 71% of the girls questioned enthusiastically supported the yeshiva's authority to make attendance at minyan compulsory (perhaps because in a girl's frame of reference, davening usually takes place during mid-morning in their schools), only

Place one of the following four numbers indicating the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements on the line beside each statement

No. 1 if you strongly disagree with the item
No. 2 if you disagree with the item

No. 3 if you agree with the item
No. 4 if you strongly agree with the item

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. New York State's anti-drug laws should be strictly enforced. | 12. The rabbi should have the final say over all decisions affecting his congregation. |
| 2. The United States government can best function under a strong presidency. | 13. The question "Who is a Jew?" should be answered solely on the basis of <i>halacha</i> (religious law). |
| 3. The principal is most competent to act in matters of student discipline. | 14. A yeshiva can rightfully make attendance at minyan compulsory. |
| 4. The Supreme Court's ruling against capital punishment is responsible for the rising crime rate. | 15. Recognized rabbinical authorities have the right to take stands on political and social issues as well. |
| 5. Censorship of the press is vital in matters of national security. | 16. An observant Jew should not run his business without consideration of Torah ethics. |
| 6. Parents rightfully have the final decision in all family matters. | 17. The principal and religious faculty should have a say in the choice of literature read in high schools. |
| 7. Laws hindering the effectiveness of the police should be revoked. | 18. I would put great weight on the advice of a rebbe (religious instructor) when making a personal decision. |
| 8. What the youth needs most is strict discipline, rugged determination, and the will to work and fight for family and country. | 19. Jewish community leaders should not act independently, without regarding the decisions of rabbinical authorities. |
| 9. The Constitutional amendment limiting the number of terms a president may serve should be reversed. | 20. A yeshiva may rightfully set standards of religious observance for its students, even outside of the school. |
| 10. Laws against sale of marijuana should be strictly enforced. | |
| 11. A yeshiva has the right to enforce a dress code based on <i>halachic</i> (religious law) criteria. | |

45% of the boys voiced their support. Surprisingly, one hundred percent of the girls (students in Bais Yaakovs and more modern yeshiva high schools alike) supported yeshiva's authority to enforce a dress code. (The term "dress code" does have different implications in the different schools.)

While on the overall average, students reluctantly acknowledged the authority of the yeshiva in school-related matters, they strongly challenged the yeshiva's right to regulate their behavior outside of school (question 20). On this issue, the students were asked whether the yeshiva could rightfully set standards of religious observance of its students even outside of school. 52%

of the students were opposed, and few of those supporting strongly agreed. Teachers and parents often hear students remark, "They can't run my life; what I do at home is my own business." The high value youth places on independence is evidently shared here by the general yeshiva population.

... and the Differences from School to School

YET THIS GENERALIZATION is strongly challenged when the responses of the traditional yeshivos are examined in isolation of the more modern schools: For instance (Table II) in the traditional-type girls' school (B) the sentiment was 100% for accepting yeshiva authority outside school (question 20), and in a parallel type

While the names of the schools where the students were polled are not listed, the type of school they represent is significant. A brief description follows:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>A. A boys' yeshiva high school attached to an all-day Bais Medrash that discourages college attendance.</p> <p>B. A girls' high school attached to a Teachers' Seminary.</p> <p>C. A boys' yeshiva high school attached to a day-time Bais Medrash, where students attend college at night.</p> <p>D. A boys' high school specifically geared to</p> | <p>continuation of secular studies at the college level.</p> <p>E. A boys' high school with strong emphasis on Hebrew language, Israeli culture, featuring integrated scheduling of sacred and secular subjects.</p> <p>F. A girls' high school with strong emphasis on Hebrew language, Israeli culture, featuring integrated scheduling of sacred and secular subjects.</p> |
|---|---|

Table I

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
A	3.3	3.2	2.9	2.4	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.4	2.5	3.3	3	3	3.4	2.8	3.2	3.7	2.9	2.9	3.3	2.6
B	3.6	3	2.5	3.3	2.7	2.8	3	2.5	1.9	3.5	4	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.6	4	3.8	3.3	3.8	3.4
C	3.6	2.9	2.5	3	2.7	2.6	3	2.7	2.3	3.6	2.9	3	3.4	2.4	3	3.7	2.8	2.6	3.3	2.5
D	3.2	3.1	2.2	2.5	2.3	2.3	3	2.7	1.8	2.8	2.5	2.5	3.3	2.3	3	3.6	2.3	2.8	3.4	2.4
E	3.5	3	2.2	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.1	2.2	3.2	3	2.6	1.8	2.5	2.8	3.3	2.5	2.2	2.6	1.8
F	3.4	3	2.1	3	2.5	2.1	2.7	2.3	2.1	2.6	2.7	1.7	2.3	2.1	2.9	3	1.9	2.6	2.9	1.6
Tot. Avg.	3.4	3.0	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.9	2.5	2.2	3.2	3	2.7	3.1	2.5	3.1	3.6	2.7	2.8	3.3	2.4

The average response for each question in each yeshiva polled, and the total yeshiva average.

Table II

School	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
A	75/25	88/12	81/19	56/44	63/37	75/25	69/31	44/56	56/44	75/25	69/31	81/19	88/12	63/37	94/6	100/0	75/25	75/25	81/19	63/37
B	92/8	75/25	42/58	83/17	58/42	67/33	83/17	50/50	25/75	92/8	100/0	83/17	92/8	75/25	100/0	100/0	100/0	92/8	100/0	100/0
C	96/4	70/30	48/52	65/35	61/39	57/43	74/26	65/35	39/61	87/13	74/26	78/22	96/4	43/57	83/17	96/4	74/26	48/52	87/13	43/57
D	75/25	75/25	35/65	50/50	55/45	40/60	70/30	55/45	10/90	75/25	55/45	45/55	70/30	40/60	75/25	100/0	50/50	65/35	99/1	45/55
E	87/13	62/38	25/75	62/38	62/38	25/75	38/62	38/62	25/75	75/25	100/0	50/50	13/87	62/38	87/13	100/0	50/50	38/62	62/38	13/87
F	94/6	81/19	56/44	81/19	50/50	44/56	63/37	50/50	44/56	63/37	69/31	12/88	31/69	37/63	75/25	69/31	25/75	56/44	69/31	6/94
Total	82/13	72/22	47/48	62/33	55/40	50/45	65/30	50/45	32/63	74/21	70/25	56/39	25/75	48/47	80/15	89/6	59/36	59/36	80/15	43/52

Percentage of student population indicating positive attitudes/indicating negative attitudes towards authority.

boys' school (A) the score was 63% while in more modern schools, the sentiments were as high as 87% or 94% against such regulation! Thus, responses did vary from yeshiva to yeshiva, the philosophy of the school and the home both contributing its own influence, with students in the more modern settings more challenging to the authority than their Mesivta and Bais Yaakov counterparts.

While not radically less moderate in their respect for Torah authority in some situations (questions 15,16,19), in questions of rabbinical authority and *hashkofah* a polarization did emerge. Down the line, students attending yeshivos with a stronger commitment to religious studies and Torah observance voiced stronger approval of Torah authority.

In response to the question if "Who is a Jew?" should be answered solely on the basis of *halacha*, 92% of the students attending Mesivta and Bais Yaakov-type institutions agreed, while only 45% of those attending "modern Orthodox" high schools responded positively.

An analysis of *Table I* also reflects a declining respect for authority as the modernity of the school increases. This is evidenced in the average score of each school for all 20 questions;

(A)2.95 (B)3.2 (C)2.95 (D)2.7 (E)2.55 (F)2.4

Taking only the questions of immediate concern to

students (3,6,11-20), the pattern remains the same, but the difference is sharper;

(A)3.05 (B)3.4 (C)2.87 (D)2.7 (E)2.4 (F)2.3
(Bear in mind that 2.5 means an even division of opinion in the school on the subject, and any divergence from this figure signifies either preponderant approval or disapproval.)

* * * * *

IN SUMMARY, the yeshiva student finds it difficult to come to terms with authority because it has so many different implications on so many different levels in Jewish life. He is well aware of the Torah ideal and what his outlook "should be." Nevertheless, his thinking is not totally unaffected by the consensus of the youth culture. Not surprisingly, the more exposed the individual and his school milieu is to the broad cultural mainstream, the more his attitude reflects its values. Although authority may have some acceptability to him, it is not necessarily "in." A perceptible urge towards independence exists especially in the face of authority directly over him. At the same time, deeper commitment to Torah seems to go hand-in-hand with greater respect for authority, especially in personal life.

Aware of the situation, educators can now attempt to consider a dynamic and creative response to "Why not Wednesday?"



Reuben E. Gross

The Honey and the Sting

Federation's "Greater New York Council"

A new move is afoot by the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York to obtain hegemony over organized Jewish life in New York City. To obtain cooperation, they will try to assuage the fears of the Orthodox Jews by the same arguments that we've heard for more than twenty-five years:

- (a) If you join us and make your voice heard, we will listen.
- (b) We are changing. The Federation of today is not the Federation of twenty years ago. Etc., etc.

It therefore behooves us to examine recent records.

REUBEN GROSS, a prominent attorney, is active in communal affairs. He is a vice-president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, is chairman of its Youth Commission, and was a founder of COLPA.

During the sixties Orthodox leaders built up pressure against Federation leadership, charging them with neglect of Jewish education and partiality to other forms of philanthropy. Federation acknowledged "growing concern about Jewish education in the Jewish community of Greater New York, as in Jewish communities throughout the nation." They also admitted awareness of resolutions "asking for greater Federation involvement in Jewish education" by national organizations. Accordingly, they commenced a long series of studies as part of an agonizing reappraisal of their position on this subject. A sub-committee drafted a report to the Executive Committee, after "four lengthy meetings," which in turn was adopted by the Executive Committee and submitted to the Board of Trustees on March 29, 1971, where it was finally approved. This report is now official doctrine as far as Federation is concerned.

The first question the report raises is, "Why Jewish

education?", and the first answer to that question is, "To equip a person to understand his Jewishness, not as a segregating force but as one which harmonizes American and Jewish identities into one simultaneous and significant composite." The only curricular matter mentioned for such education is "knowledge of history and current developments of the Jewish people and the facts about their Jewish heritage." G-d, Torah, mitzvot or even the *pareve* concept of religion are unmentioned.

It then notes that there are three kinds of schools — with day schools mentioned last. After conceding communal responsibility for Jewish education it observes, with obvious reference to day schools:

"Although many schools are of high quality and standards, the Committee finds that much of the Jewish education provided children is antiquated, obsolete and poor in quality. With an orientation and curriculum nurtured in an earlier period of Jewish life in a closed society, much of present day Jewish education is unsuited to the current need to teach children to live as Americans and Jews in a free, open society. Jewish education needs far-reaching reform and modernization in perspective, content and method."

The report then notes among its accomplishments in Jewish education:

1. Setting standards for good quality Jewish education . . . curriculum development.
2. Consultation service.
3. Maintenance of a Board of License to certify teachers and principals and arbitrate personnel problems.
4. Provision of Jewish cultural programs and materials — theater group and magazine (*World Over*).

It, therefore, recommended that Federation's central Jewish education agency (the Board of Jewish Education) be prepared to give much greater help to Federation agencies. It continued:

"In keeping with past and current practice, Federation sponsored Jewish education services should be available to all forms of Jewish education in the community. However, the Executive Committee reaffirms the long-time commitment and policy of Federation expressed as early as 1951, in a report which provided that Federation's financial aid should be extended only (underscored in original text) 'for the religious part of the instruction and not for the general education provided in said institutions.'"

The report rejected a new community fund-raising campaign for education as unacceptable. It commented on the idea that contributors be permitted to designate part of their contributions for education as having advantages and disadvantages and as worthy of exploration.

The final conclusion is that Jewish education will be a subject of continuing Federation concern and it applauded the activation in 1968 of the functional Committee on Jewish education with sincere appreciation.

The Old Attitude

It should be noted that not only were the words *Torah* and *mitzvos* not mentioned once in a fifteen-page report on Jewish education — a remarkable feat in itself — but the prejudices of Federation against a *Torah* and *mitzvos* orientation of Jewish education comes through loudly and clearly. Their concept of Jewish education is to "assure the wholesome continuity of the Jewish community as an integral part of American society." They are opposed to any understanding of Jewishness "as a segregating force." An education which fosters such understanding is "antiquated, obsolete and poor in quality . . . nurtured in an earlier period of Jewish life in a closed society. . . ."

It is the height of naivete to believe that people who subscribe to such principles will give any meaningful amounts of money for day school education. It would, indeed, be a turnabout for them to support institutions that are destructive of their most precious values — acculturation and assimilation.

Some may find comfort in that their reaffirmation of a policy at least twenty years old, that Federation would never support the general education provided in "such institutions" (the word *yeshiva* is never mentioned in the report) leaves the door open for support of religious instruction. Such comfort is illusory. This statement must be viewed against the well-known hard realism of Federation leadership. While the federal-aid issue waxed hot, they fought such aid for the general studies programs in the courts on the theory that such aid would, dollar for dollar, free up money for the religious studies program and therefore constitute state aid to religion. Obviously, they cannot have overlooked the same argument in reverse: that meaningful Federation aid to the religious studies program would free up money for the general studies budget, which they have sworn not to aid.

Some Orthodox leaders still cling to the idea that the cultivation of friendly relations and the fostering of amicable rapport will overcome the obstacles to Federation aid for yeshivos. It should be clear that the gentlemen of Federation cling to their belief in acculturation just as we hold fast to *Torah* and *mitzvos*. These optimistic Orthodox leaders undoubtedly would not abandon their *tefillin* and *tallis* because of any smiles or pats on the back. What makes them think that the gentlemen of Federation are less principled?

The current efforts of Federation to extend their powers from fund-raising to general policy-making should be considered wholly unacceptable to any tradition-minded leader and strenuous efforts should be made to oppose those efforts.

The background of the cover is a dark, textured surface with a pattern of light-colored, sharp, triangular shapes pointing outwards, resembling a starburst or a stylized sunburst. The overall tone is black and white.

TV GUIDE

25¢
CLP

Special Preview June 14-20

SPECIAL ISSUE

TV and the Jewish Home

Nisson Wolpin

THERE IS LITTLE AUDIBLE DEBATE regarding the place of TV in a Jewish home. Those that have a set cannot imagine themselves without it — completely cut off from the stream of culture, news, and entertainment that inundates their homes. Those that are without its dominating presence celebrate their freedom from its insatiable appetite for time, the lowest common-denominator culture it channels into homes, and the total lack of discretion — or any other Jewish values, for that matter — that it engenders. Each knows what the other has, but would not willingly trade its own riches for the "poverty" of the other. So what point would there be in debating, when neither side is really willing to listen? For who would consider admitting that his chosen life-style is categorically wrong?

Occasionally, however, jabs of insight enter the scene and evoke an awareness that normally would not register. Special televised events — UN debates, Congressional hearings, dramatic presentations relating to Jews and Jewry — these appear with enough regularity to tease the isolated non-owner; yet after passing unviewed, the events as reported in newspapers prove less time-consuming and often more to the point.

By the same token, an occasional examination of the impact of TV on the home moves a set-owner to rethink its place in his universe, and to contemplate alternatives.

The Word From Bnei Brak

A PAID NOTICE IN HEBREW that appeared in the last issue of *The Jewish Observer* presented a cautionary note by Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Schach (Rosh Hayeshiva in Ponevezh) and Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel Kanyevski (the Steipler) regarding TV's influence on the home. Some might be tempted to dismiss their message, emanating from Israel as it does, as without relevance to the American scene — too stringent in tone, too ambitious in reach, or simply not reflecting American conditions. But then one is reminded that much Israeli television fare is composed of American productions, and similarities dominate. So we quote:

Even casual viewing of scenes of immodesty, violence, or strange worship, which abound on television, threaten one's commitment to Judaism, for a person tends to emulate whatever he sees. There are G-d fearing families whose adults and grown children avoid TV-viewing as a matter of principle, yet permit their smaller children to watch at neighbors' homes, because "they're small, and a little viewing can't harm them." The folly of this approach is so obvious that it borders on deliberate neglect — Who is more given to imitation than a child? A child's tendency to copy whatever he sees is a key to his continued development. This is a cornerstone in education, and to ignore it is gross negligence.

When a child witnesses an exciting scene on the

TV screen it becomes engraved in his mind for the rest of his days as a life-like presence, and should he even grow up a Torah observant adult, the strength of his Jewishness will always suffer because of the impression that was made.

The words are strong, and make their point most forcefully. There is nonetheless a tendency among some to shut out the advice of rabbinical authorities, because they view things from a more rarified vantage point: Revered voices from Bnei Brak speaking to Bnei Brak, one might say.

Shop Talk on Violence

THEN IT CAN BE PROPITIOUS to consult *TV Guide* the weekly magazine of broadcasting schedules and shop talk. The June 14-20 issue featured a symposium on "Does TV Violence Affect Our Society?" Neil Hickey, the magazine's New York Bureau Chief, took the pro-side, stating:

It is virtually impossible for Americans, of any age, to avoid the depiction of violence on their TV screens. (One scientist's estimate that by the age of 15 the average child will have witnessed 13,400 televised killings.)"

He continued, citing the 1972 Surgeon General's Report on Violence and Television (based on an exhaustive \$1 million 3 year research project):

"There comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action. The overwhelming consensus (is) that televised violence does have an adverse effect on certain members of society." The evidence was "sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action," said the Nation's chief health officer, and he added: "These conclusions are based on solid scientific data and not on the opinion of one or another scientist."

Since '72, things are much the same, says *TV Guide*:

In the 1973-74 viewing period, for example, violence occurred in 73 per cent of all TV programs and in 54 percent of adult prime-time TV plays, according to the most recent Violence Profile, published in December, by Dean George Gerbner and Prof. Larry Gross of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

This violence is not limited to cops-and-robbers or Mafia programs.

An incredible 94.3 per cent of cartoon shows contained violent episodes in 1967 (according to data developed for the commission by Dean George Gerbner), and in 1968 there were 23.5 violent episodes per hour in cartoons.

Publishing these findings has little effect on existing programming, just as they had in 1972 when first released, just as they had after the publication of the

findings of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (headed by Dr. Milton Eisenhower, founded by President Johnson after the Senator Kennedy and Reverend King assassinations in 1968), which stated:

Violence on television encourages violent forms of behavior, and fosters moral and social values about violence in daily life which are unacceptable in a civilized society...it is a matter for grave concern that at a time when the value and the influence of traditional institutions...are in question, television is emphasizing violent, antisocial styles of life.

Nor will the Federal Communications Commission step in to regulate the blood bath for this would seem too much like interference with free speech. The only innovation is the instituting by joint agreement of the FCC and major network chiefs of 7-9p.m. as a sanitized "family viewing time," leaving the rest of the evening for "gore as before," as one writer put it.

Home Control

THE ONLY RECOURSE for avoiding the negative aspect of TV viewing appears to be home regulation. Again, if this seems like an opinion formulated in rarified atmosphere (TV Guide?) consider a note to parents issued from the renowned Horace Mann School of New York City. We offer some excerpts here:

At a recent staff meeting, members of the faculty expressed distress about the television programs and movies seen. The teachers feel that this is showing an impact in the classroom. They reported an increase in violent and frightening elements in the children's play and talk As a school, we feel that evidence of the detrimental effect of habitual television viewing warrants sharing our thoughts with you on this important topic It is hard to ignore the impact, positive or negative, that television has on our lives As teachers, our objections are quite specific. We know that learning comes primarily from four sources:

(1) Life experience/ (2) Identification with important adults / (3) The active manipulation of materials / (4) By relating to others through play and discussion.

Television, on the other hand, is essentially a passive, one-way experience. It requires no input on the part of the child as do his activities with peers, adults, materials and the like. Many hours

of viewing is the first subject of concern. Heavy television viewing intensifies the passive experience for the child to the point where it becomes the dominant one.

"According to the Nielsen Television Index, preschoolers watch television a average of 54 hours a week. During one year, children of school age spend more time in front of a TV set than they do in front of a teacher; in fact, they spend more time watching TV than any other type of waking activity in their lives." (Cline, Victor B. Ph.D. "TV Violence" in Ladies Home Journal) Therefore we feel that there should be a definite limit to the amount of television watched.

Our second area of concern is the type of shows seen. Programs which emphasize the resolution of problems through violence and aggression really should be eliminated entirely We strongly feel that television sets do not belong in children's rooms. They become too available and too difficult to control.

Great care should be exercised in choosing movies. General Public (GP) ratings for movies or television cannot be relied upon. Frankly, we were shocked to hear that any of our children had been to see movies such as ... (several popular films of violent theme, which) one of our teachers saw vividly reenacted in the destruction of all the buildings in the block area, with children screaming, "Earthquake, Earthquake!"

After some concrete suggestions for substitute activities, the letter concluded:

Substitute for the time spent watching television new activities in the home We know that this will require more time out of your busy lives but believe that it will pay off in the development of the children's ability to play creatively, independently and with greater concentration ... Recently, there have been some excellent articles on this same subject, very much in concert with our views...We hope you will accept these suggestions knowing we have a strong common interest and mutual love of the children.

Your Childrens' Teachers

Bear in mind that the letter was issued from a private non-sectarian school in Manhattan — not a Yeshiva or Beth Jacob school in Williamsburg. And the concern was only one of violence, not the full range of anti-Judaic values that are part-and-parcel of TV fare. The call is for very tight control bordering on the total eliminating of TV viewing. — So much for the Horace Mann suggestion.

Do we cherish our values or love our children any less? Or are we possibly more lacking in self discipline?



MOVING?

Be sure to notify us in advance so that your copies will continue to reach you.

Radio & T.V.

and the Orthodox Jewish Community

Without the Orthodox Jewish Community

Introduction

Based on the results of a preliminary survey of the Jewish interest programming in the New York metropolitan area taken by the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of the Agudath Israel, it has become quite evident that the needs of this community and in particular the needs of the Orthodox Jewish community are not being met. Thus, in a week of over 125 hours of programming, programs of interest to the Jewish community typically average no more than 15 minutes a week per station (with a few significant exceptions). To many radio and television stations in the area, the Orthodox Jewish community is virtually unknown.

This has serious implications, both internal and external. For one, Orthodox Jews, their needs, their assets, their opinions, their outlook remains virtually unknown to the community at large. Self appointed spokesmen without any constituency or following have often been able to totally misrepresent the attitudes of the Orthodox Jewish community on issues of compelling public interest. Stories regarding malefactors who happen to be Orthodox have given the community an extremely bad image as a result of the absence of any positive exposure of this community. Job seekers have suffered discrimination, public welfare policies have been misdirected, political decisions have been based on erroneous impressions because of this total lack of exposure. Perhaps even more serious has been the effect upon young Jewish children whose self-image undeniably suffers from a complete absence of Orthodox Jews from the media. Rarely has a program involving young people had a child wearing a yarmulka, for example. Styles and modes of behavior of young people never mirror the sedate behavior of Orthodox Jewish young. There is ample evidence that this has a negative impact on some of our young people.

Media Comments

When challenged with the inequity of the situation, responsible spokesmen in the field of radio and televi-

DR. BERNARD FRYSHMAN, who teaches at the New York Institute of Technology and at Brooklyn College, is involved in a wide variety of Jewish community activities, and heads AgudathIsrael's Commission on Legislation and Civic Action.

Any suggestion that the Orthodox community flex its muscles on a particular issue is bound to be attractive at a first glance. Why shouldn't Orthodoxy be recognized as *the* legitimate expression of Judaism? Why shouldn't it assume its rightful role as the prime representative of authentic Jewishness and the spokesman for Jewish causes? Why shouldn't it use modern media to communicate its ideas? So it may seem injudicious to throw cold water on Dr. Fryshman's forward-looking proposals. Before mobilizing the Orthodox leadership for the cause of better representation on the media, however, some questioning would be in order:

How Can TV Best Project Orthodox Jews?

—Dramatic programs? —Commercials? —Documentaries? —Talk Shows?

Any of the several ways in which Orthodox Jews can find their way on dramatic programs would be either obviously contrived or embarrassing. Dr. Fryshman surely does not prescribe liberally sprinkling ethnic Jews in the background of stock scenes along with the token Afro-coiffed Black girls and Hispanic kid. Nor would he (or I) welcome an Orthodox Jew as dramatic personae in the crooked mirror of sit-coms, soap operas, and adventure programs.

On the other hand, an occasional documentary focusing on Orthodox Jews seems tantalizing but unless we write the script, the situation invites distortions. Dr. Fryshman's bid for Orthodox Jews to gain equity with gay groups is a good indication as to why — even though, at first blush, the analogy may seem unpalatable. Social and sexual deviants have been featured on TV as misunderstood people who are deserving of our tolerance and compassion — or, in less "enlightened" times, as people struggling successfully or otherwise to shed their deviant tendencies and become straight. Orthodox Jews and "Hassids" — like Americanized Chinese or Amish — can easily be forced into the same dramatic mold . . . the mere thought is enough to make one relish invisibility. In sum, "The

MARTIN WAXMAN, a graduate of Mesifita Torah Vodaath, is a free-lance journalist and advertising copywriter.

...With Orthodoxy (continued)

sion commented:

(a) There is no one single representative of the Orthodox Jewish community and therefore splinter groups would continually demand equal time for their perspectives.

(b) Insofar as the Orthodox Jewish approach can be characterized as religious as well as cultural in nature, other religious groups will also demand equal time.

An Orthodox Response

That various groups might request equal time does not relieve license holders of the responsibility of making good faith efforts to provide meaningful blocks of time to the community. There have been many situations where the Orthodox Jewish community has acted in unison, and groups such as Agudath Israel can certainly use their good offices to establish an umbrella group that would ensure that the picture of the Orthodox Jewish community presented is both realistic and universally acceptable.

Too, there are program modes (interviews, news coverage, children's stories, documentaries and the like) which can ensure that this problem will not arise.

Religion is an important — nay, essential part of American life. In spite of the fact that religion involves a way of life and mode of behavior (in addition to a formal worship of a deity), it has been relegated by the media to the hinterlands of public consciousness.

Would we not very much welcome an increase of religious thought and opinion in all areas of public broadcasting? Young people emulate what they see. There is no reason that what they see should emanate from the licentious, from the mod, from the 'with it' generation. The homosexual has become acceptable as a subject of television programs. Is it not time that the religious also become so acceptable?

A Problem That is Also a Solution

It is impossible for the Orthodox Jewish community to open its own radio or TV station — as it has its own newspapers and magazines. There are a finite number of radio and TV outlets, and owning one is just not feasible for a variety of reasons, only one of which is money.

This poses both a problem and an opportunity. We must come, hat in hand, to the decision-makers in radio and TV, and try to convince them that our community is also worthy of coverage, that our views also merit airing, that our happenings are also news. Since we control none of the 'big' money that can buy time, since we are vastly under-represented among media employees — and since we must compete with communities far better situated, the problem we face in an attempt to be heard is serious indeed.

...Without Orthodoxy (continued)

styles and modes of behavior of young people (on TV) never mirror the sedate behavior of Orthodox young" (—Dr. Fryshman) because sedate behavior is just not as interesting as are the more prevalent, unrestrained modes — *unless* the sedate is presented as a problem. And we are not seeking to be projected as such.

One of the best ways to sell a book or a fresh idea is by lining up appearances for the author on various TV and radio talk shows. But Judaism is not a best-seller or a political movement. It is a very serious matter that cuts through all aspects of life. Talk shows require making scintillating conversation, the more sensational the better, and otherwise smiling through generous portions of silly, inane, or objectionable talk.

A representative of authentic Judaism, neither aiming for the viscera nor comfortable smiling through obscenities, should rather be alone at home than in someone else's parlor through the home screen In this context, the medium dilutes and distorts the message and it is not worth the effort to gain an outlet on it.

Who Shall Speak for Orthodoxy?

Dr. Fryshman is distraught by the problem: *who shall speak for Jewry?* Individuals without Torah loyalties, without minimal understandings of Judaism have spoken before the cameras on behalf of Jewry and Judaism, and this should not be.

Should broad-based Orthodoxy succeed in convincing the networks or the FCC that it is the authentic form of Judaism, a new problem will arise: *who shall speak for Orthodoxy?* —the rabbi whose *shul* has an apology instead of a *mechitza*? —the Judaic Studies professor who says that one is not really required to accept the Torah as a literal record of events? —the Yeshiva dean whose priority list places a law school above an enlarged *Kollel*? —the outspoken advocate of flexible *halacha*? — or are they to be ruled out as non-Orthodox? The danger of such modernists speaking on behalf of Orthodoxy can be more hazardous than (Conservative) Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum representing all Jewry on Group W radio — or Isaac Bashevis Singer or Bernard Malamud. At least people of a moderate degree of awareness can dismiss the cynicisms, distortions, and Conservative dilutions for what they are. Yet they might well be insensitive to seemingly subtle differences between those who evade the unequivocal authority of *halacha* in all areas of life and those who are genuinely Orthodox.

This does *not* preclude responding to the invitation of a network or local station to explain an aspect of Judaism or Jewish life in accordance with Torah, in a format of our own making Only one vital question would then be left, as follows:

...With Orthodoxy (continued)

But we are not powerless. Since there are but a finite number of outlets, the Federal government through the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) has formulated rules and regulations designed to ensure that all communities and groups have access to the media.

Periodically each license holder must re-establish itself as serving the public interest in a fair and responsible manner. There have been many instances where license holders have either lost their stations — or have greatly modified their outlooks and programming as a result of public pressure. Virtually the only public group that has not asserted its rights has been the Orthodox Jewish community — and this is undoubtedly why we remain, to all intents and purposes, invisible.

A Personal Note

Let no reader conclude that the purpose of this article is to encourage the viewing of TV among the Orthodox Jewish community. The author is well aware of the dangers of TV — as well as of radio. (Indeed, those who boast of not owning a television set would do well to reconsider their ownership of a radio. The objectionable material that can enter the home through this uncontrolled medium is often far worse than that which enters via TV; parents should take the trouble to listen to some of the ideas and concepts which enter their home in the guise of talk shows, Yiddish programs, musical presentations and the like!)

In homes where parents are in control of their children, the broadcast of legitimate material on TV will not affect the decision whether or not to keep a television set in the home. In homes where the child is boss, the problems are more fundamental than watching TV!

The purpose of this piece is to stimulate discussion and action; it is important that the media take cognizance of the strength, numbers, and vitality of the Torah world. It is important that our views also be heard by the decision makers — and in the opinion of the author, it is important that the wild, animal-like behavior which is projected by the radio-TV media be moderated by civilizing influences in general.

We do not live in a vacuum, and the mores of the population at large are willy-nilly encroaching the consciousness of our own young. We cannot escape the influences, and consequently must do everything possible to fight them.

Agudath Israel has over the past fifty years devoted its creative energies to producing Torah individuals capable of withstanding these influences — by strengthening the Yeshiva movement as well as through its own educational and youth activities.

It is time that we now undertake to combat these negative influences at one of their sources — in radio and on TV.

...Without Orthodoxy (continued)

Koshering the Medium

While Dr. Fryshman deplores the negative influences of TV and radio, he finds them inescapable, and "consequently (we) must do everything possible to fight them." The thrust of Orthodox opinion will do little to mitigate the most objectionable influences of TV — the spate of violence and immodesty as well as the unrelenting stress on lavish consumption that dominates the home screen. Attempts at modification would likely result in more Orthodox involvement in broadcasting, but negligible change. That is, should Orthodoxy achieve any measure of success in its attempts at a breakthrough in influencing the communications media, it would most likely be as an advisory presence with little real impact. "Fighting them" is a tall order akin to tilting at windmills. More likely an involvement in media will (a) tarnish the representation, and (b) endow the media with an undeserved scrubbed-up image. Altogether making it rather futile "to combat these negative influences at their sources."

As for dismissing the implied *hechsher* granted TV, it may be clever to bemoan the other more fundamental problems that plague homes where children rule the roost; but when this is complicated by the presence of an uncontrolled TV set in the home, one deals with a situation that is too widespread to shrug off with a bon mot. Any legitimization of the medium makes it easier for set owners to rationalize allowing the set free rein in their homes in spite of its negative aspects.

In sum, the best advice regarding launching a full scale campaign aimed at the imbalance on the airways is to keep as safe and respectable a distance as possible.



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Seeding the American Countryside With Torah

There are seventy faces to Torah, and, just as surely, there must be an equal number of ways of introducing estranged Jews to the joys of living a Jewish life in accordance with the Torah. But a library full of descriptive literature, a lecture center full of inspirational talks, a concert complex full of emotion-tugging musicales cannot add up to the impact of experiencing Torah. And even *living* Torah gains added dimension from total immersion in Torah study, joining the *limud* (learning) with the *lishmor v'laasos* (keeping and performing).

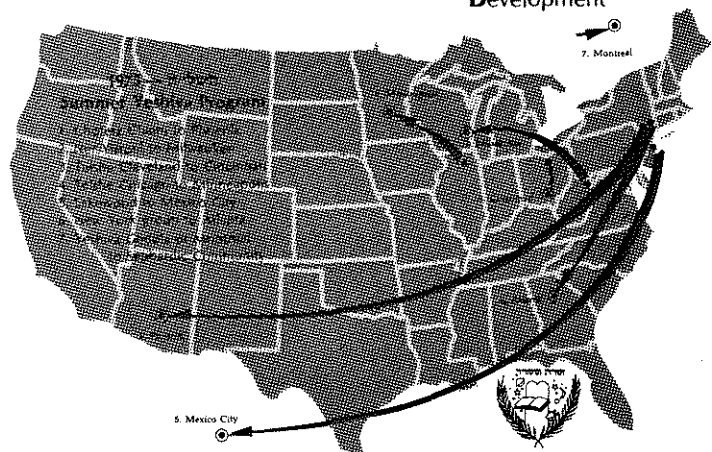
Toe-dipping into Torah is not really that full bodied *limud Hatorah* experience that can convert a Jewish dilettante into a fully committed Torah Jew. Joining a yeshiva is. But how many adults can leave their profession or business, say goodbye to their hometown, and — without advance knowledge of why — chuck it all to live in yeshiva? Not very many.

An innovative program, conceived by Rabbi Garvriel Ginsburg, Rosh Mesivta of Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim of Forest Hills (N.Y.), was been launched by Torah Umesorah (the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools) in summer '74, and repeated in 1975. Its aim: to bring intensive Torah study to the people — to children and grown-ups who cannot walk around the corner to step through the threshold of a neighborhood bais medrash.

The program is called Operation SEED, which stands



OPERATION TORAH Summer Educational Environmental Development



A Map of SEED '75.

The four yeshivos involved in the Torah SEED program in summer '74 and their host cities: Beth Medrash Govoha (Lakewood, N.J.) —Mexico City; Ner Israel (Baltimore) —Winnipeg; Rabbinical College of Telshe (Cleveland) —Cincinnati; and Yeshiva Toras Chaim (Denver) —Seattle.

for Summer Educational Environmental Development. And it was both: a *seed* of intensive Torah study — or, more accurately, a *transplant* from major American yeshivos: Chofetz Chaim (Forest Hills), Ner Israel (Baltimore), Telshe (both Cleveland and Chicago), Beth Medrash Govoha (Lakewood), and others — in the form of cadres of ten to twelve young men, including one or two married couples, planted in receptive host cities ranging from Winnipeg to Mexico City, Montreal to Phoenix, Seattle to Atlanta. And each created a brand *new educational environment* in its host community, with an impact far beyond expectation.

The general pattern was the same in all communities. Regular hours were devoted to daily study schedules, while special hours were set aside for lectures and classes on various levels, with some classes geared specifically for women. But — more important — the lights were always burning, the doors were always open, and rap sessions, inter-action with kids, and *chavrusa's* with local people were an all-day and half-the-night rule. Torah study was the dominant, the only pursuit of the young Yeshiva men, much to their obvious relish.

Every community, of course, has its own flavor, and responded to the SEEDing of Torah in its own way. The knock-on-every-door in the Sephardic communities of Montreal, with telephone lines buzzing in French, Arabic, and English, yielding fifty new enrollees in day schools ... the Melave Malke in Phoenix ... publication of *chidushei Torah* (novellae) created in Minneapolis ... thrilling to the words of a Telshe Rosh HaYeshiva in Cincinnati — these were highly individual experiences. Each of these could well justify an article of its own. But the essence of SEED is Torah study, and a letter written to Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky, National

Director of Torah Umesorah, is probably most telling in capturing the spirit of the program.

The writer is Dr. Velvl Greene, a well-known professor of biosciences and micro-biology in the University of Minnesota. His introduction to Yiddishkeit had been

through an encounter with a Lubavitcher Chassid (described, incidentally, in an article in *The Jewish Observer*, January 1971) which ultimately brought him to becoming an Orthodox Jew in the fullest sense of the word. The following are his words:

Dear Rabbi Kaminetsky:

This morning, the contingent of young men from Telshe Yeshiva-Chicago Branch left our city after a memorable five week Yarchei Kallah. Since I understand that your organization was instrumental in initiating and administering this program, I would like to address the following comments to you.

I would like to wax rhetorical and write an essay about the impact of the last five weeks on our city and on the synagogue in which the program was housed. I would like to become poetic and take advantage of the appropriate nomenclature (SEED) you applied to the program. And I could even pretend to mysticism and try to discern the hidden and esoteric influence that such intense Torah study had to dissipating the air pollution which blanketed Minneapolis this summer.

Perhaps I should revert to true character and provide you with an unsolicited critique of the program, defining its strengths and pinpointing its weaknesses, and culminating with expensive and brilliant suggestions for the future.

Instead, I will simply try to tell you in plain words about the effect the SEED program had on myself and on my family.

My wife and two daughters were literally swept into a sea of learning. Sessions in the morning, seminars and lectures at nite, discussions at all hours — Kohelet, Lamentations, Kuzari, Hilchos niddah, and who knows what else. The Oppens — both the rabbi and the rebbitzin were indefatigable! And so well informed! The real problem in our family was deciding who would have to stay home and look after the little ones while Gail (in her thirties) and Rochel (eighteen) and Peninah (fifteen) could attend the Shiyurim. I have never in my life seen so much table conversation and casual discussion and time given to Divrey Torah.

I could have expected this from the girls. Both have finished a Torah U'Mesorah Day School and both are continuing their Torah studies. Rochel in Bais Yaakov of Yerusholayim and Peninah at the Ida Crown Girls' High School in Chicago. But my dear wife, Gail? Raised in a tiny town in Southern California, confirmed in a Reform Temple? Granted that several years ago we came under the influence of Lubavitch and changed our life style.

But formal Torah learning was not quite Gail's thing — nor mine. The five weeks with the Oppens opened (excuse the phrase) a world of learning into the home which all of us could share and in which we could all participate.

My world changed too. I never had much opportunity to learn Torah, formally and systematically, neither in the pre-Lubavitch days nor subsequently. My efforts were sporadic, disjointed and quite frustrating. The last five weeks were like an oasis in a desert. Not only did I acquire a tolerant and patient and a capable teacher (one of the bochrin — about twenty years old), but there developed in the city the proper atmosphere (indeed, the environment) for serious Torah study. When twenty other guys are studying Talmud in the same room, it's not a bit strange and out of place to study Talmud too. When a chavrusa agrees on a given time and place for study, and there is a continuity in the material, the learning flows so much more smoothly. I knew this as a professor of some years standing. But I had never experienced it myself for Limudei Kodesh until this summer.

At any rate, Eli Meier Yundeff (of Cleveland, now Chicago) and I managed to get together nearly every day during the five weeks for one to two hours of effort in Sanhedrin. (My work forced me to leave the city for a few days; thus we agreed that Eli Meier would be our Shabbos guest so we could "make up" the missed parts on Shabbos.) The end result was a solid ingestion (I'm still digesting) of more than fifteen blatt of Gemora. More than I had ever learned before in my whole life cumulatively!

I said before that it was an oasis in the desert. It was more than that. At least people who reach oases have drunk water before and have seen shade before. To Gail and myself, this was a unique experience. It not only exposed us to Torah, it demonstrated to us that we were capable of learning it and participating with others to learn Torah — systematically and significantly.

For whatever part you played in making this possible, we want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We are looking forward to next summer, and hopefully to some kind of continuation in between.

VELVL W. GREENE, Ph.D.



The Jewish Observer / September, 1975



Simchas Yom Tov

Mincha.
Sh'moneh Esrei
in the gay,
 lilting,
melody of Sholosh Regolim.
Last chance to capture
the beauty of
 Yom Tov
in a Yom-Tov
davening.

 Washing,
 Scrambling
for seats.
Oh, How many guests!
Tables,
 sparkling,
 glistening,
laden with delicacies-
L'chaim!

 A nigun
 or two.
Come, Join us!
L'koved Yom Tov!
Congenial.
Friendly.

Warm.
The shmooze.
 Probing.
 Analyzing.
 Molding.
 Chastising.
 Encouraging.
Thought-provoking.
A new "derher" —
 Deeper insights.

Crystallizing
 man's destiny.
His ultimate goal
"We should takkeh
 be zoiche. . . "

 Thought—
translated into deed;
 Emotion—
transformed into ma'aseh.

(continued on next page)

A melody is started.
 Joyous.
 Lilting.
 Contagious.
 Feet tapping.
 Fingers rapping.
 Hearts beating.
 Spirits soaring.
 They're singing!
 "Tatte!
 What are the words?"
 Clapping-
 Tapping,
 Rising—
 Falling,
 Louder-
 Faster-
 Faces beaming,
 Hearts throbbing-
 It's getting darker.
 New nigan.
 "Oy, Tatte!
 The're singing
 the nigan!"
 Chairs scraping
 Blood racing
 Feet stamping-
 A bigger circle;
 a smaller
 circle.
 The Rikud.
 Throbbing.
 Pulsating.
 Electrifying.
 Voices,
 arms,
 spirit
 locked in
 perfect harmony.
 Eyes searing,
 Ears ringing,
 Lungs burning,
 Bodies straining—
 The circles
 converge.
 A new step.
 Accelerating.
 Invigorating.
 Exhilarating—

A sublime joy—
 intoxicating,
 elevating,
 transcending;
 the quickening tempo.
 eyes and minds
 blurred.
 The mind—
 stretching,
 clawing,
 grasping,
 groping,
 struggling
 reeling—
 as in one
 brilliant
 illuminating
 flash of
 comprehension—
 the awesome impact
 of
 the message of the words
 exploding:
 "Oy, Ribbono Shel Olam:
 Zol shoin takkeh
 zein di g'eulah!"
 A rising crescendo.
 exulting
 swelling
 rising
 blending
 roaring
 crashing
 thundering
 Ripping apart the
 very heavens—
 Identifying with the
 Ribbono Shel Olam
 and His
 all-embracing
 Cosmic Blueprint,
 "Yisroel
 V'Oraiso
 V'Kudesho B'Reech Hu
 Chad Hu!"
 around
 and around;
 Gyration.
 As if a great

 celestial
 generator,
 Infusing:
 Emanating
 penetrating
 Divine
 brilliance.
 The Mashgiach!
 Make way!
 The Mashgiach is
 dancing!
 Come, Join us!
 Arms and minds
 united;
 Locked in an eternal
 embrace of
 Oneness:
 with Fellow-man.
 with one's Creator.
 "K'ish Echod B'Laiv Echod."
 Barriers melting;
 differences dissolving—
 Oy, Tatte!—
 I want to come Home!
 Won't You please come and
 take me
 Home!?
 Shir Hamaalos.
 No!
 Wait! Not yet!
 Tatte, Please!
 Next year??
 in Yerusholayim?
 The heart
 for all its vast
 outpourings
 Yet strangely full.
 Crowded
 together
 swaying
 to and fro.
 "Loolay Soros'chah—"
 Hoarse voices crying—
 An indescribable
 yearning;
 An inexplicable
 longing
 for some intangible
 closeness—

Ani ma'amin.
 B'Emunah—
 yes
 B'Emunah Sh'laimoh—
 Shir Hamaalos.
 Benching
 Ma'ariv.
 The Shmooze—
 the Nigun—
 the Rikud—
 Blending
 Day to Night—
 and to all Eternity.

Regular seder tomorrow.
 Regular—

 but not regular.

The same—

 but different.

Chol—

 yet Kodesh.

Simchas Yom Tov.

—H.W.

The author of this poem studies in Beth Medrosh Govoha, Lakewood, New Jersey.



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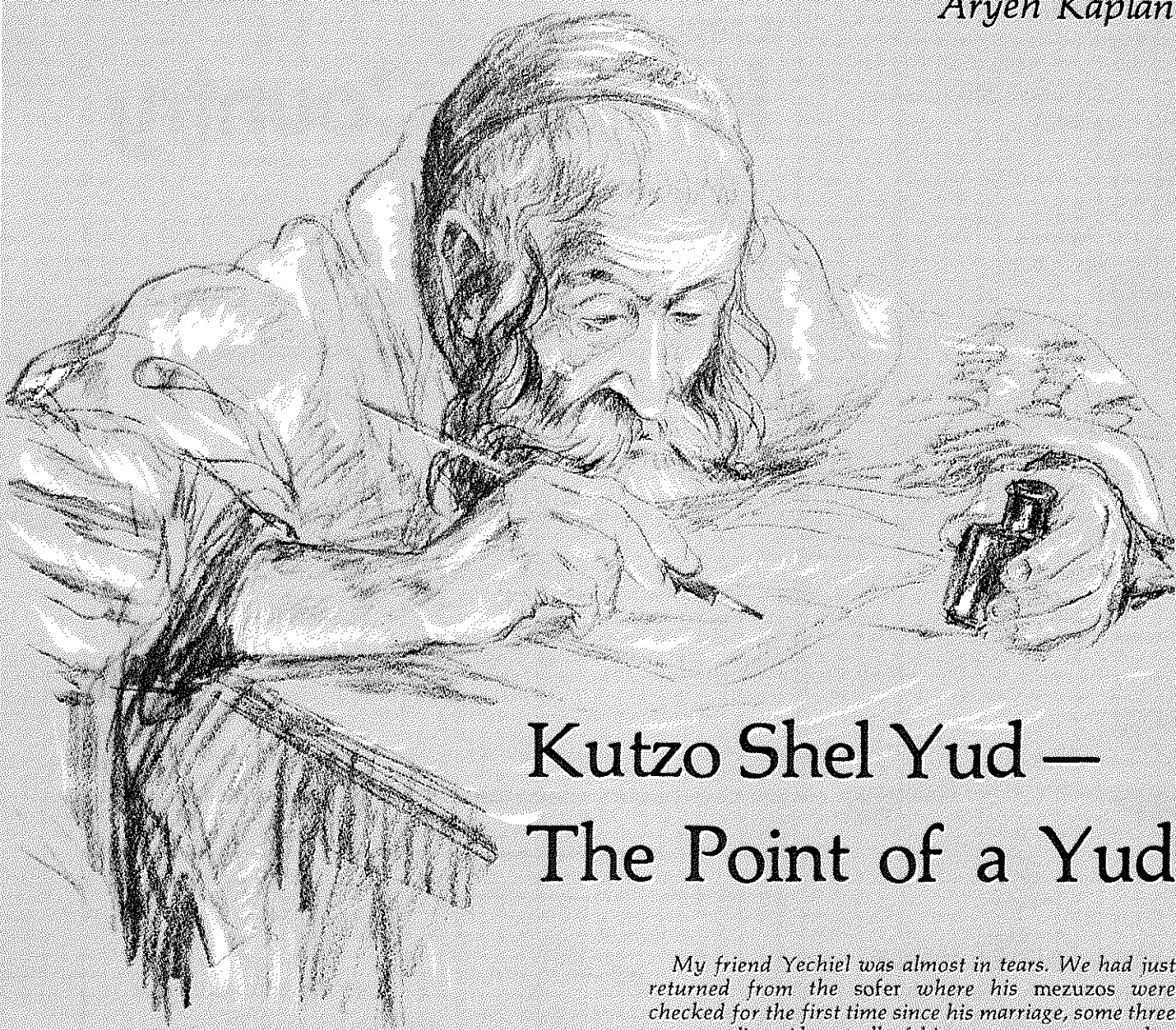
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Kutzo Shel Yud — The Point of a Yud

My friend Yechiel was almost in tears. We had just returned from the sofer where his mezuzos were checked for the first time since his marriage, some three years earlier. Almost all of his mezuzos were posul — unfit for use. He had paid eight dollars for each parchment, and at that price, he was sure that he was acquiring good ones. He had carefully wrapped them in wax paper before inserting them in their cases, and they had not been subject to any moisture. Could they have become posul? Worst of all, he had been living for over three years — the all-important first years of his marriage — without kosher mezuzos on his doors!

He was also in a quandary. The person from whom he had bought these mezuzos had a reputation as a pious individual and an honest dealer. If he could not be trusted, then who could? If he went out now and bought new mezuzos, how could he be certain that they would be good?

RABBI KAPLAN 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". He is a frequent contributor to these pages.

A young man discovers that the kashrus of mezuzos and tefillin can hang on a hair-line projection from the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

The Inspection

We had been discussing the obligation to check *mezuzos* twice every seven years. Yechiel was so confident that nothing could have "happened" to the parchment of his *mezuzos* that I challenged him. I took the parchments from the cases, and gave them a cursory examination. I had once studied the laws of *safrus*, but never had practical experience. While there was no obvious damage on the *mezuzos*, the writing was not neat — apparently written in a hurry. Still, my untrained eye could not find any obvious *p'sul*. And the bottom of each parchment scroll was impressed with the seal of a well-known rabbinical body, attesting to the *kashrus* of the *mezuzah*.

So we took the parchments to a professional *sofer* who is respected as an expert. He glanced at the parchments: the script was far from perfect, but this did not automatically render the *mezuzos* *posul*. He recognized the source of the script, however, and commented that many such *mezuzos* have been found to be unfit. This required a careful examination, ten to fifteen minutes per *mezuzah*. He would give us a verdict the next day. The nominal fee for inspecting the *mezuzos* was 75¢ a piece, no charge if the articles are *posul*.

The next day, the *sofer* informed us that most of the *mezuzos* were indeed *posul*, three for the same reason — at least one letter "Yud" in each had been written incorrectly.

Although *Yud* seems the simplest of letters, an entire body of *halacha* is devoted to how it must be written: The lower right side must have a small "foot," and the upper left side must have a similar protrusion. Even the most careless scripts usually adhere to this rule. A much more prevalent error involves the lower left corner of the *Yud*. Unlike a printed *Yud*, one in hand-written scrolls must be squared off, preferably with a small point or *kutz* descending. If but one *Yud* is rounded off, like the printed version, the entire *mezuzah* is *posul*!

Fortunately, according to the majority of authorities, this can be corrected. But until then, the *mezuzos* are indeed *posul*. Over the years, *halacha* authorities (both the *Pri Megadim* and the *Mishna Berura*) spoke out regarding the prevalence of this error — and it is still found, especially in cheaper *tefillin* and *mezuzos*. It requires extra effort to insert this "point" and if the scribe is in a hurry and not sufficiently trained, it is easily omitted.

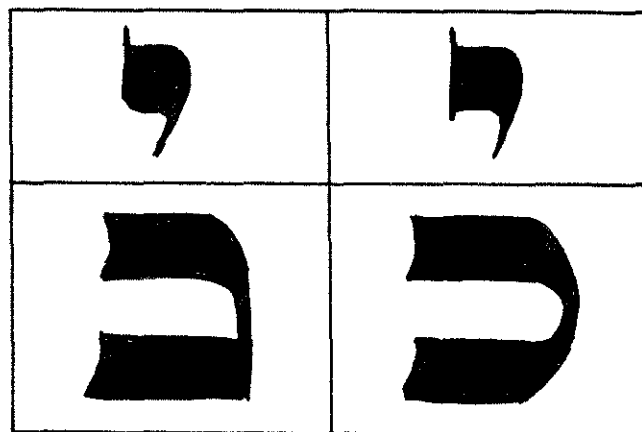
In a second *mezuzah*, the *sofer* pointed to a *Kaf*, noting that the bottom right corner was squared. Even though it looked like a *Kaf*, all authorities agree that a letter formed in that way renders the entire *mezuzah* *posul* — and this is an error that cannot be corrected: The law requires that the *parshios* of *tefillin* and *mezuzos* be written "in sequence" and most errors cannot be corrected after the *parsha* had been completed.

He then showed me a third parchment, covering an entire word except for one letter. "What letter is this?" he asked. When I identified it as an *Eyin*, he countered, "In the word 'Mitzvosai'?" The sloppiness of the script had made a *Tzadi* look like an *Eyin* — also not subject to correction.

He went through a number of *mezuzos*, and most had at least one fatal error, usually uncorrectable. Two of them were questionable, and were referred to a *posek* (halachic authority) for a decision.

Although most *poskim* do pass judgment on a script of doubtful *kashrus*, very few will actually examine a parchment — even for themselves. *Bedikah* (examination) requires a highly trained and skilled eye, and if one does not have the experience, he can miss important errors, even if he knows the laws. Like proofreading a manuscript, there are many who know all the rules, but only a few who are expert proofreaders, finding all the mistakes.

Of the two *mezuzos* submitted for a decision, one was totally unfit, while the other could be corrected.



The letters *Yud* and *Kaf* on the left are *posul* — unfit, while those on the right are *kosher*.



A section of a parchment of a Mezuzah that bore a rabbinical seal of approval. The enlarged letter Ayin is from the word Echod, which is correctly spelled with an Alef.

The Seal of Approval

I was deeply disturbed by the seal of approval on all these *mezuzos*, attesting to examination by a representative of a prominent Israeli rabbinical body. The *sofer* told me that he had seen the examination process: Most *mezuzos* were approved after a cursory glance, or at best, a rapid reading. It is an assembly line production, and a careful reading is all but impossible.

"But it's like putting a *hechsher* (seal of approval) on *treifa* meat!" I protested. "These parchments are clearly and unambiguously unfit!"

He replied that most rabbis rely completely on the *sofrim* who do the writing. Before receiving *semicha*, every rabbi must be thoroughly knowledgeable in the laws of *kashrus* of foods, but not in regard to the finer points of *tefillin* and *mezuzos*, and only a *sofer* thoroughly familiar with the vast literature on the subject is unequivocally qualified to "proofread" sacred parchments.

I pressed the point further: "How are these parchments certified? Doesn't anyone complain?"

The *sofer* replied, "A number of people did inquire. After persistent challenging, an acquaintance of mine was told that the certification only guarantees that the *parshios* are not missing letters."

This, in essence, was an admission that all other laws regarding the precise shape of letters were being ignored. An entire body of *halacha* was treated as if it did not even exist. Yet this certification was relied upon by most reputable dealers.

The *sofer* stressed that even the few *mezuzos* that he found to be *kosher*, were only *kosher bide'eved* (ex post facto) — if one had already bought them, and can obtain no others, he may rely on them. But such *mezuzos* were certainly not preferable. Besides the script on these parchments was obviously sloppy, and the law actually requires that the letters be written as perfectly as possible.

The sloppy script and miswritten letters of cheaper *parshios* imply other problems besides the obvious ones. One must suspect that the *sofer* who wrote the

parchments was not overzealous with regard to other points that cannot be checked later. For example, before beginning to write, the scribe must verbally state that he is doing so for the sake of *tefillin* or *mezuzos*. If he omits this, the parchments are *posul* beyond rectification. Similarly, each time the *sofer* writes the Tetragrammaton, he must verbalize the fact that he is writing "for the sake of the holiness of the Name." In these areas, one depends entirely on the reputation of the *sofer*. If he is careless in his script, how careful is he in these other points?

A Question of Economics

Much of the problem of unfit sacred objects involves simple economics. Sacred objects have become big business, involving much money, and the temptation always exists to cut corners and make compromises. Producing a top quality *mezuzah* takes at least three or four hours. Each letter must be written carefully...individually...with adequate concentration, to avoid errors. The perfection and beauty of such a *mezuzah* is obvious even to the untrained eye. But economics dictate that such *mezuzos* cost \$25 or \$30, if only to pay for the labor involved, with the slimmest of profit margins. It takes at least two hours to write a minimally adequate *mezuzah*, selling for eleven or twelve dollars.

Now the economics of the cheaper *mezuzos* becomes apparent. The sloppy, highly questionable parchments that sell for seven or eight dollars are turned out in twenty minutes or less. The difference in price — between \$7 and \$11 — is far greater than the difference in labor involved. The profit margin on the cheaper *mezuzos* is far greater, while the more expensive parchment is a far better value for the money ... besides the all-important fact that so many of the cheaper parchments are not even kosher.

The same is true of the *parshios* for *tefillin*. It takes twenty hours or more to write a good set of *parshios*, approximately five times as long as a *mezuzah*. The price for such a set is, correspondingly, over a hundred dollars, with the very best selling for over two hundred. Considering the labor involved, this is really a good buy. The *battim* (leather boxes) of a good pair of *tefillin* also require extensive work, so it is not surprising to find the best sets priced between \$200 and \$300.

On the other hand, a set of *parshios* for cheaper *tefillin* can be made in two hours or less, and usually will be found to contain uncorrectable errors rendering them irredeemably *posul*. Such *tefillin* may sell for \$30 or \$40, with a much higher profit margin than the better *tefillin*. It has been said that it is impossible to obtain truly kosher *tefillin* for less than sixty or seventy dollars.

Devout Jews always have sought the best *tefillin* and *mezuzos* possible. People once travelled all over Europe, seeking out scribes who put loving care into each letter they wrote. Many *sofrim* were *tzadikim* of

wide repute, who would purify themselves, body and soul, before beginning to write. Much thought would be put into each word, and the result, besides being an object of calligraphic beauty, had also been enhanced with the sanctity of the *kavans* of the *sofer*. In Eretz Yisroel, many people think nothing of spending a month's wages for *mezuzos* for their home. It is thus surprising that some people in the United States who spend so much on vanities should consider significant the four or five dollar difference between highly questionable *mezuzos* and those of unimpeachable *kashrus*; it reflects rather poorly on their entire outlook regarding the fulfillment of *mitzvos*.

Do It Yourself

Many people claim familiarity with the laws of *safrus* (sacred script), and examine their own *mezuzos* when necessary. When I mentioned this to the *sofer*, he noted that occasionally hairline cracks develop, separating parts of letters, or more frequently, separating the *tagin* ("crowns") from the letters. These points are almost undetectable to a person with an untrained eye. A number of *rabbonim* have confirmed this to me in their advice: even *mezuzos* that were initially kosher should be submitted to an expert *sofer* for periodic examination.

Even the greatest *poskim* (halachic authorities) would not rely on their own eyes. While the *sofer* might refer difficult questions to the *Rav*, the *Rav* in turn consults the *sofer* for inspection of his own *tefillin* and *mezuzos*. Aside from the possibility of deterioration with age, the periodic inspection of *parshios* can also uncover initial errors, hitherto undiscovered. I heard a number of cases that clearly illustrate this point.

□ An elderly man had given his *tefillin* to be inspected — *tefillin* that had been checked by experts in Europe and America at least a dozen times, and in every case found to be perfect. This most recent inspection revealed that an entire word ("leimor") was missing! So obvious an error that no *sofer* had even looked for it.

□ Just prior to his wedding, a young man submitted his Bar Mitzva *tefillin* for their second inspection. The *parshios* had been written by a most highly regarded *sofer* — the *parshios* he writes sell for more than \$250. *Halacha* requires that the *sofer* examine the *parsha* every time he prepares to write a holy Name; upon completion, each *parsha* is checked again several times. Besides this, the *parshios* are carefully examined once more before they are placed in the boxes. It can be assumed that this *sofer* had carried out all these inspections most diligently — even more so than required by the *halacha*. Yet this "second inspection" found an error involving the closure of a final *Mem*, rendering the *parshios* invalid. This error had obviously existed when the *parshios* were first written. Upon learning this, the *sofer* who had written them sent the young man a letter of heartbroken apology and immediately replaced the *parshios* without charge. The lesson: even the best

parshios must be expertly examined. This is equally true of *tefillin* and *mezuzos*.

□ Another anecdote illustrates this even more clearly: In Europe, visiting *sofrim* would periodically pass through towns, examining *tefillin*, *mezuzos* and Torah Scrolls. In a larger city, the local *sofer*, who had won a widespread reputation, was too busy to perform inspections, and invited an itinerant *sofer* to handle the task. After *Shachris*, an announcement was made informing all who wanted their *tefillin* checked to leave them on a specific table, and to pay for the inspection fee when picking them up. The local *sofer* inadvertently left his own *tefillin* on the same table, and the visiting *sofer* checked them among the rest and found them to be *posul*. The local *sofer*, an extremely pious individual, fell faint when he heard this verdict.

A number of *sofrim* have told me this anecdote, underscoring that even the most expert *sofer* submits his own *tefillin* and *mezuzos* to another for periodic inspection.

A prominent rabbinical authority remarked that, as a general rule, only a *sofer* who has written *tefillin* and *mezuzos* should examine them. The laws regarding the forms of script are so complex — comprising a number of fairly large volumes — that mere theoretical study is not enough. One must have internalized this body of *halacha* through actually writing sacred scrolls, or the laws will not be vivid enough to him. In many cases, he may not even recognize the questionable case.

The Significance of the Scrolls

The Ramban (Nachmanides) writes that the reason a "positive command overrides a negative command" when there is conflict between the two is because the positive command has the greater importance. Punishment for violating a negative command is of limited duration, while failure to properly observe a positive command (such as *tefillin* and *mezuzos*) can cost a person part of his eternal reward. Furthermore, one can repent the violation of any prohibition, but even repentance cannot make up for that which has not been done. That is, the sin of *neglecting to perform* a positive command may be forgiven, but with regard to the lapsed observance itself, it is written: "The crooked cannot be rendered straight, and the missing cannot be made up" (*Koheles* 1:5).

In addition, there are extensive traditions regarding the special protection a *mezuzah* provides for the home: The Name, *Sh-ddai*, is inscribed on the exterior of the *mezuzah* scroll — one reason is that it is written with the initial letters of *Shomer Dalsos Yisroel*, "Guardian of the doors of Israel." Also, the word "*mezuzos*" had the same letters as "*Zaz Maves* — remove death" — indicating that the *mezuzah* protects against calamity ... whenever recurrent tragedy occurs in a house, our sages have prescribed a careful inspection of its *mezuzos*.

The same applies to *tefillin*. The *Gemora* states that one who fails to keep the *mitzva* of *tefillin* is called a "sinner in Israel with his body," and this is even true of one who, through neglect, uses *tefillin* that are *posul*. In addition, he recites a blessing in vain each time he puts on these *tefillin* — in itself a serious transgression.

The significance of these matters should be obvious to every observant Jew, but must be reiterated in the context of ascertaining the *kashrus* of such ritual items.

The Practical Measures

The best way to be certain of having the most perfect possible *mezuzos* and *tefillin* is to seek out a scribe of impeccable reputation and have him write them especially for you. Some *sofrim* will even welcome you watching them write the parchments. This approach can be difficult in America, where there are very few practicing scribes.

The best alternative is to buy these objects from an expert *sofer*, preferably one recommended by a trusted *Rav* or *Rosh Yeshiva*. Do not be ashamed to ask him if he has personally inspected his wares, since this cannot be taken for granted. As a practical matter, the *parshios* should be examined by another qualified *sofer* before using them. This costs less than a dollar for a *mezuzah* and between ten and fifteen dollars for a pair of *tefillin*. An additional advantage: if any question arises, the parchments can be immediately returned or exchanged.

* * *

A number of Rabbis and *sofrim* have suggested the establishment of a *Lishchas Haga'ah*, a sort of communal Vaad HaKashrus (Commission for Kashrus) for *mezuzos* and *tefillin*. While practically difficult, it would certainly do away with some of the most blatant abuses now prevalent. In the meantime, it is up to each individual to make certain that he knows what he is buying and using.

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A Second Generation of Halacha Publications



YESODEI SMOCHOS, by Rabbi Aaron Felder (New York, 1974; obtainable from the author, 359 Fort Washington Ave., New York 10033, \$5.00, hard cover.)

THIS VOLUME, "a compilation of Jewish laws and traditions dealing with death and mourning, with the addition of detailed studies of related problems arising from modern life situation," is an important contribution to a branch of Torah literature whose increasing popularity throws a keen light upon the development of American Torah Jewry. I refer to the manuals published in English on different areas of *halacha*.

The first publications of this type were brief and very simple, geared to a reading public with a very limited Jewish education that had to be informed of basics, and usually also had to be offered a rationale for the observance of *Mitzvoth* — hence usually an introduction or appendix explaining the importance of the *halachoth* discussed. For obvious reasons, some of the very first such publications dealt with the laws of *Taharath Hamishpacha*, but there were such pamphlets on the laws of *Yom Tov* (especially *Pesach*), *Kashruth*, and other *halachic* areas, published by Zeirei Agudath Israel, Merkoz L'Inyonei Chinuch, the Union of Orthodox Congregations, and other national and local groups.

There is still today a great need for publications on this level, and we must be grateful to all those who work at meeting this need. Where, years ago, such pamphlets addressed themselves to the Orthodox *Baal Habayith*, today they are of prime importance for the uncommitted and seeking youngsters whom we can reach — potential and actual *ba'alei teshuvah*. I would like to single out for particular praise a recent booklet, *Tefillin — G-d, Man and Tefillin*, by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, published by the National Conference of Synagogue Youth (which has such other publications to its credit as the "Guide to Blessings"). This booklet combines a truly inspiring discussion of the deeper significance of *tefillin* with an outline of the main laws (complete with diagrams). While it was written to meet the needs of the newcomer to Yiddishkeit, it will also give a great deal to the informed and committed reader. Obviously the good done by such publications written on a sophisticated level, but in the language that our youth "digs," is enormous.

Meeting a More Sophisticated Need

HOWEVER, SIDE BY SIDE with them there has grown up what might be called a "second generation of *halacha* publications" — differently designed and with a different purpose, which indicates the progress of American Torah Jewry. Those works are, by and large, much more comprehensive and complex. They do not usually bother to stress the importance or meaning of *mitzvah* observance. Instead, they are careful to furnish full references to the *halachic* sources from which they were drawn. This format reflects the evolution and needs of the Orthodox *baal habayith* as he is emerging today in ever increasing numbers — educated in *yeshivos* and *mesivtos*, eager to observe *mitzvos* with the greatest exactness, able and interested to go back to the sources when the occasion arises, but not sufficiently at home in *halacha* literature to be clear even in those varied matters that commonly arise, or to be able to clarify these matters from the sources themselves. The publications that we discuss cannot and do not want to turn him into a *posek*, deciding *halachic* problems by himself; but they do seek to acquaint him with the commonly arising cases and enable him to reach a better understanding of the laws by leading him back to the sources.

The need and demand for such publications have been described as a sign of progress. It is, of course, true that this is not an ideal situation. Ideally, we should all be conversant with all areas of *halacha* in the primary sources, Talmud and *Poskim*. The danger of drawing our knowledge of *dinim* from brief summaries was stressed by the Vilna Gaon who warned that "he who studies such summaries will in the end forget everything he ever learnt" (*Even Shlomo*, Ch. 8). If one is not able to master the primary sources by himself, he should certainly seek out the *shiurim* of a competent *Rav* who can present the teachings of *halacha* in multidimensional depth and practical applicability.

Yet, realistically speaking, even if one once studied certain *halachoth* in the most thorough manner, the constant review needed is not usually possible in equal depth (thus, *shochtim*, who must review the *dinim* involved in their work at regular intervals, have long utilized summary works). Moreover, there are those many more who seek to observe every *din* most punctiliously, but have never reached the point in their Torah study where they could master the primary sources. Hence, *kitzurim* (summaries) have not only

been accepted, reluctantly, but (as Rabbi Felder himself quotes from the "Peleh Yo'etz") bestow a major benefit upon the community. We must fervently pray for a time when total command of the *halacha* should be universal in *Klal Yisroel*; but meanwhile we may rejoice that we have an ever increasing stratum in our community that is so fully committed to the complete observance of the law and wants to know exactly what is demanded. It is for this public that such massive works as e.g. Rabbi S. Eider's *Hilchoth Shabbos* have been produced; and it is for the same public that *Yesodei Smochos* is meant.

Sources: Both Written and Oral

RABBI FELDER'S VOLUME is a model for this type of Torah literature. In the first place, it has approbations, *haskomoth* — from Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (with whom the author took up all questions that arose in the preparation of this volume) as well as from the author's father who is himself the author of notable *halachic* works. Secondly, the author has achieved remarkable completeness in including all relevant *dinim*, and in particular also touches on many questions peculiar to contemporary life (e.g., cemetery strikes, condolences over the telephone). Thirdly, the arrangement of the material and — most difficult — the formulation of each

din are exceptionally clear. Finally, the references are given in full at the end of each chapter; usually they direct the reader to a *sefer*, but on a goodly number of questions the author quotes decisions that he himself obtained from Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. This material, in fact, as well as the full references provided, make this a volume important to the *lamdon* too.

It is beyond the purview of this review to enter into any discussion of specific *dinim*, as this would properly belong in a rabbinic journal. However, it should be noted by the reader of this volume that just in the field of death and mourning there exists a wide variety of customs between communities from different countries of origin; some of these differences are noted by the author (e.g. on whether to pay condolence visits before the third day of *shiva*), but many more are not. When questions arise, it is therefore important to check what one's *minhag* is. Generally speaking — and this is a reminder which Rabbi Felder probably should have reiterated in the preface to his work — a volume such as this is meant for guidance; but from case to case the person not qualified to decide *halachic* questions must turn to his *rav* for direction. Even so, a work such as this is of the greatest value, and it is to be hoped that the author will continue to make such contributions to Torah life.

GUARD YOUR TONGUE, A practical guide to the Laws of Lashon Hora, based on *Chofetz Chaim*, by Zelig Pliskin, (Jerusalem, 1975; list: \$6.75, pre-publication: \$6.00)*

OF ALL RECENT compilations of *dinim* in English, this volume may be said to be of the most universal concern — and to deal with the most difficult and frustrating subject. Let me right at the outset pay tribute to the author by stressing that he has risen magnificently to this challenge. Moreover, the quality of the content is matched by an attractive manner in which the book is laid out and produced.

Lashon hora (derogatory speech) is ubiquitous. It pervades all the nooks and crannies of our society with its poisonous miasma, doing untold harm; and it stems from such deep-seated human frailties that it stubbornly resists all efforts to do away with it. Rabbi Israel Salanter is said to have observed that "it is worth putting in a lifetime of *mussar* study in order to come to suppress just one word of *lashon hora*"; and (in an anecdote quoted fittingly at the beginning of the present volume) told the sainted Chofetz Chaim that "it is worthwhile for someone to read your *sefer* on *lashon hora* even if the only result will be a sigh when he completes it."

* Obtainable in U.S.A. from 2204 E. Fairmount Avenue, Baltimore, Md. 21231 / 222 Oceanview Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11235 / Vaad Le'orer Yeshainim, 23 West Maple Ave., Monsey, N.Y. 10952.

Rabbi Pliskin's adaptation in English of the Chofetz Chaim's classic work on *lashon hora* might therefore be assumed to be a well-meaning but ineffective effort. What a pleasant surprise, then, to find a volume that is eminently readable, down-to-earth, clear in its exposition of the *dinim*, and practical in its recommendations for their observance! The result, in this reviewer's view, is that the reader inevitably not only carries away from this work a greater awareness of the need to guard his tongue, but will be inspired and concretely guided to do so in actual life situations.

A Magnificent Work in Four Parts

THIS VOLUME consists of four parts. The first part lists and explains the 31 prohibitions and positive commandments of the Torah which are involved in speaking or in listening to *lashon hora*. The last part consists of *mussar* selections — thoughts culled from ethical works of the Chofetz Chaim that deal with *lashon hora*. The heart of the volume, however, is parts two and three, dealing with the laws of *lashon hora* (derogatory speech) and *rechilus* (tale bearing), respectively. They are based on the *Sefer Chofetz Chaim* but are not an exact translation, for it was felt, very correctly, that an adaptation would make the laws more easily understood. Even more important, the author has added true-to-life examples to each paragraph to illustrate the practical application of the laws. It is these examples, above all, that hit home. They could have been tape-recorded any day anywhere — and they hurt! Therein lies the effectiveness of this volume.

Since so many complex *dinim* are involved, it is important to stress that the work meets all the previously mentioned requirements for this type of writing. Specifically, it has an approbation (*haskomoh*) from Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, Telshe Rosh Yeshiva, which includes some *halachic* comments; as well as a detailed list of sources for every *din* stated, which also embodies supplementary material and cases drawn from rabbinic literature. While these references are of primary interest to the *ben Torah*, a glossary of Hebrew terms and a list of common "excuses" for *lashon hora* are of particular value to the layman. All readers will benefit from the excellent index, which runs from "absence from class" to "yourself including," and makes it possible to locate at one glance the wide variety of cases covered in such exemplary fashion.

Despite the extreme care taken by the author in presenting the *dinim* in the clearest and most practical form, there can of course be here or there a question of whether perhaps a case could be presented with somewhat different emphasis. This reviewer wondered about two or three instances.

On page 32 the author states that "if your parents or teacher ask you for information about an incident and you know that a reply will involve *lashon hora*, you are forbidden to answer them, despite your obligation to honor them! Of course extreme care must be taken to word your refusal in a respectful manner. However, if this information is required (reviewer's italics) for a beneficial and constructive purpose, and you are not able to censure the wrongdoer yourself, then you are permitted to relate this information to them." In his concern with the *dinim* of *lashon hora*, the author may appear to do something of an injustice to parents and teachers, and some harm to the cause of *chinuch*. Should it not be assumed that if an "incident" takes place, say, in a classroom, it is normally necessary and therefore "beneficial and constructive" for the teacher to be informed, so that he or she can discharge their obligations to better the students involved and the management of the class? Naturally, the teacher has to be mindful of how to pursue the truth (as stressed in the *Igroth Moshe* quoted); naturally, too, there can be exceptions where it is clear that no educational benefit is served by responding to the teacher. But the rule as stated here is all too likely to provide an excuse for something akin to "thieves' solidarity" for which there is no room in *halachah*.

On page 69, the author discusses doing *teshuvah* for *lashon hora* and states: "Even if the victim is not aware of the *lashon hora* you spoke, you are still obligated to inform him about what you said and ask for forgiveness. Normally you are obligated to specify the wrongdoing when you ask someone to forgive you, but if this will cause the person embarrassment, you should not be specific." The author's formulation is correct but unrealistic — and it is a pity, for the immense value of

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his work lies in the fact that usually he is so very realistic. The fact is that *normally* (to use the author's word) telling someone the *lashon hora* that one spoke about him, and of which he was unaware until this moment, is likely to do vastly more harm than good from practically every angle, and therefore the *normal* practice should surely be to ask forgiveness without being specific.

For the same reason — facing up realistically to the human limitations of our age — it can be assumed that the average reader will find it difficult to be guided in practice by the author's statement that "even though you are permitted to state your innocence (when wrongly blamed for an improper action), it is meritorious to accept the responsibility yourself in order to save the other person from embarrassment" (p. 124). Paraphrasing the Rebbe Reb Sussya, we may be tempted to feel that in due course we will not be held to account for not being like Shmuel Hakoton (who acted in this manner), but not for being what *we* could and should be.


The fact that so very few questions came to this reviewer's mind in going through Rabbi Pliskin's work — and those only questions of emphasis rather than substance — indicates most clearly how very well he has discharged his difficult task. As *sinas chinom*, the hatred that so often is fuelled by *lashon hora*, was the cause of our present exile, may his work help bring about spreading the redemption which the Chofetz Chaim sought so fervently to achieve through his battle against *lashon hora*.

AIDS TO TALMUD STUDY, by Aryeh Carmell (Jerusalem, 1974; distributed by Philipp Feldheim, \$2.00)

THIS LITTLE BOOKLET is a *must* for every one who sets out on the study of Talmud, young or old. It has only 66 pages; but in these few pages it conveys information that is truly helpful and indeed essential to proper progress in *Gemora* study.

The bulk of the pamphlet is taken up by a dictionary of "key words and phrases" found in the *Gemora*, where the student can e.g. find the difference between *tanyo* (it has been learnt — in a *Beraitha*) and *t'nan* (we have learnt — in a *Mishnah*) as well as many less well-known *Gemora* phrases. This reviewer vividly remembers being drilled by his Rebbe, many, many more years ago, in the difference between *hechy* (how), *hechoh* (where), *hochy* (so), and *hochoh* (here); and he is also keenly aware of the difficulties encountered in the understanding of the *Gemora* text, and the actual mistakes made in the course of learning, by so many *Gemora* students because they are not familiar with such basic Aramaic word forms and phrases. Very wisely the author has therefore also added a simple summary of the grammar of Talmudic Aramaic, complete with tables of pronouns, numerals, and other essential forms.

A special note on Hebrew vocalization draws attention to the fact that accuracy in vocalization and pronunciation is often essential to clarity of thought, and gives examples of how the entire meaning of a passage can be changed by a mistake in this respect. Again, this reviewer was reminded of the observation by one of our *gedolim* that a certain publication, years ago, propounded a totally faulty halachic thesis — due to a grammatical mistake made by the author in reading a passage of the Rambam.

Finally, our booklet contains a list of commonly used abbreviations, and charts of the *Tanaim* and *Amoraim* mentioned in the *Gemora*. These charts, which are accompanied by an index of names, visually show the chronological and family relationships between the different personalities, and also the transmission of Torah from teacher to student. It is to be hoped that this useful booklet will find wide circulation. 

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The Student

He was not a student in the usual sense of the term. He never attended a Jewish day school, or a yeshiva. Nor did he ever attend a college, high school, or even elementary school. But the yearning for learning was always burning within him with the constant glow of a *Ner Tamid* in a dark, still synagogue.

Should this be so strange? Was he not descended from generations of sages and writers who spent their hours and days stealing time from their other preoccupations for study? But his immediate past was not so fortunate as to give him — or his father — frequent respite from their efforts toward meeting basic needs. Yet when but a child, fettered to working the fields, retaining an identity with the physical world, he was seeking its deeper meaning. And that deeper meaning he found in his heritage. Indeed, he did have one source for instruction and for quenching his intellectual thirst: his father.

And teach he did. This slight, yet energetic elder literally burned the midnight oil to transfer the knowledge of his tradition to his son (no brothers arrived until he was thirteen). And while the father firmly instilled and instructed, the child just as eagerly learned.

Nor did he learn in a passive fashion. As he absorbed understanding from sacred and semi-sacred texts, insights and appreciations expanded. Questions would arise to be evaluated, possibly answered, leading to further perceptions and questions. Differing views of the masters would be compared; contrasting opinions would be blended or at least accepted and put into proper perspective.

There were even times when the youngster's alertness and brightness may have taxed the patience of his presumably more self-contained elder. More than once he was told that "a fool can ask more questions in an hour than a wise man can answer in a year." ...Conflict did arise, but rarely. Not for lack of zeal, for the same sages who decry competitiveness for worldly goods extol it in pursuit of Torah.

This dual relationship of teacher/pupil and parent/child roles meant for the lad the giving of dutiful respect, in return for the warmth, total attentiveness and concern of this one-to-one interaction.

But there was one flaw. Life in the small village was simple; the inhabitants did not have, nor did they seek, material goods, remaining thoroughly "satisfied in their portion."

Then, what did this younger member of the community miss? Starting to learn from infancy, the two in due time exhausted the shelf of sacred volumes found in the kitchen of the small, bare cottage. In fact, it was in this very kitchen, the only warm room in the house, that the two studied. Of course, they did review these same texts to ascertain their secure grasp and knowledge, as well as to seek new meanings. Yet, neither was content with sheer repetition. The father had wanted to expand the horizon of his pupil to the whole "sea of the Talmud," itself a life undertaking, to other Biblical interpretations, to "musar" (i.e., moral) literature, and to so much more.

In addition, the boy had other directions. Through his tradition, he was also attached with the world of nature, searching, reaching out into the mysteries of creation, of the nature of matter — of concepts and abstractions.

But chance discoveries are not everyday experiences; serendipities are nice but infrequent. This youngster wanted sources and texts to broaden his perspective. Were not the sages of the Talmud well versed in the languages of all nations and equally acquainted with all the medical and scientific knowledge of the time? — Shouldn't he emulate them in this pursuit?

So, at least, thought our lad. So, first he scoured the synagogue until he exhausted its few additional texts, beyond those in the home. He also found one small Hebrew volume, dealing with chemistry and astronomy. It explained the essence of matter and its elements, the solar system and the changes on earth caused by the movements of the moon....All this whetted his appetite while giving some intellectual nutrition.

The next step was to seek elsewhere. Where to go? Only to the next village a few miles down the road. As frequently as time allowed, this eager, determined pupil would, like the plowman, plod his weary way after a day's work to borrow a text for the night's studies.

Yet here, too, there rested a contradiction. In the warmer spring and summer seasons, when the distance was easier to cover, the time was unavailable and the work overwhelming, leaving less energy for mental concentration. During colder months, with the frost and snow on the ground and the atmosphere chilling, the body resisted the journey by foot — even though the time to study was plentiful.

Fortunately, the strength of spirit overcame the weakness of flesh. More fortunately, there was a scholar, Reb Shmuel, abiding in the adjacent town. Actually, he had moved to this small place because of concern for the townspeople, for their lack of learning and his desire to elevate their appreciation of their own lore and tradition. His needs meager, this sage devoted his time to visiting the villagers' homes and working with the children. For the elders, he arranged periods of study during the evenings.

Reb Shmuel willingly gave of himself, his time, and his texts. When the lad visited him during the winter, he tarried, after exchanging the last volume for the next, to talk with this expansive, enthusiastic person. Over a glass of tea and a few cookies they could spend two — three hours, transversing the time-distance from ancient tales to recent history, from the life of the insect to that of man, from linguistic analysis to mathematic calculations — all in the realm of tradition.

So the relationship grew between the boy and his second teacher, who broadened his horizon and his intellectual experiences. His basic food for thought, the sustaining nutrients, were provided by his father — and so recognized. Yet, how many willingly give up a whole meal for the sake of the dessert!

The struggle of mind against body continued during the winter months. And, as mental food was consumed and the content of the texts devoured, the craving would get more powerful to challenge the physical environment without.

This particular day the snowy winds of the preceding weekend had painted the ground with its white brushes and then had risen to do likewise to the bare trees. But, that was in the past, for all was still as the lad peered through the frosted window undecidely. He wanted to make the trip, against his parents' advice. Naturally, they were concerned about his health. On the other hand, they could not deny his desire to learn, the highest aim to which a lad might aspire. So, reluctantly, they agreed.

He donned his fur cap, heavy coat, and high boots. With precious care, he wrapped the borrowed, ear-marked volume in heavy paper to protect its pages. As they said good-by, his parents admonished

him not to linger more than necessary — for no one could tell when the next storm might suddenly appear.

Waving impatiently and smiling, the youngster stepped out into the snow. He felt, at the moment, like the forefather Abraham, leaving his birthplace and his home to go to the Promised Land.

To his good fortune, the sky was clear and the sun warming, but the temperature was too low for the snow to melt.

With preoccupied thoughts, the route to the village was quickly traversed — or so it seemed. As he approached his teacher's door, his sense of elation swept away his weariness. His knock was quickly answered; in this second home, he was always eagerly received.

Reb Shmuel lived alone — not by choice. The epidemic of the past year had removed his wife and two daughters from the land of the living. Always, Reb Shmuel kept the water hot and the cookies at hand. Hopefully, he knew — but not when — a young friend might arrive. Peering out of his frosted window, to his happy surprise, he saw the bent-over, chilled youngster approaching his cottage.

The door was quickly opened for the almost frozen boy and as quickly closed against the bitter cold. Warmly greeted, the lad thawed out within the heated room, with the help of a glass of hot tea.

Now, both were ready for the ultimate purposes of the journey; first, the volume brought was exchanged for the next Talmudic tractate — and as carefully wrapped as the first had been. Then, as the teacher sucked the rectangular cubes of sugar that sweetened the tea, our student listened attentively to tales of old, beyond the Biblical into the Midrashic and other sources. Wide-eyed, he absorbed more recent history from chronicles of the Middle Ages and later periods. Then, side-tracked to the world of nature, his mind and thought were expanded by a keener perception of the work of the Al-mighty beginning with the vastness of the solar system and the infinite stars to the most minute flora, fauna, and particles of matter.

Imperceptibly, the minutes lengthened into hours. Indeed, he had warned himself — but not his host — of the importance of returning directly. But it was so easy to succumb to the hypnotizing effect of this marvelous environment, where he was transported to different climes and times, becoming oblivious of where he actually was.

Suddenly, he was jarred out of his dream-like absorption.

"I must go," he said to Reb Shmuel, reluctantly but desperately. "A new storm may be coming up."

His host suggested that he stay overnight, looking forward to spending more time with him as well as to dissipating the shadows of loneliness for one night.

The boy, however, was adamant. He had given his word to his parents and it would soon be dark. Regretfully the teacher bid good-bye to his guest, enveloping him in an extra scarf and stuffing some cookies in the pocket at the side of his free hand. The other was grasping the large, leather-covered volume that would offer days of discussion and satisfaction.

Initially, he was in gay spirits despite an uneasy feeling that he had lingered too long. He had grown taller during this listening session as he had identified with the heroic figures in his own history. What was a little storm to weather; they had overcome greater hardships and had mastered more difficult feats.

Besides, he thought, there is so much I can tell my parents to show what I have learned. They will be overjoyed, realizing that I was not wasting my time in trivial activities.

The winds were beginning to rise but the view ahead was still clear. He decided to attempt a little experiment. Through the gloved hand, he counted the cookies in his pocket and then estimated the number of steps he had taken and would need to get home. Rough calculation established that he could eat throughout his whole trip if he took just one bite of one cookie every hundred steps. He would test his discipline.

Soon, however, the flakes began to fall, making the direction less clear, the way less direct. The speed of the wind accelerated with more abruptness than expected, soon dancing about in the virgin whiteness of the new snow, and scooping up large masses of the old, to toss about in cloak-like manner.

His coldness gradually increased — and his weariness — as he fought his way through the opposing forces of nature. He started munching at the cookies, relishing them indeed. The physical reality that penetrated his body momentarily drove out the resources of his imagination. Soon, much sooner than planned, the cookies were all gone.

The storm continued, the snow deepening. In the air, the swirling winds slapped his exposed face with flakey, stinging fingers. The distance must be getting shorter, he told himself, yet the way seemed longer as he lingered haltingly with lessening energy.

He peered ahead through the narrow slits of fingers

of his gloved right hand, protecting his eyes against the painful impact of the driving, rapidly shifting sand-like snows. A familiar, if not happy, sight awakened him! The *Bais Olam* — the "everlasting home" — the cemetery, which was a short distance from his village.

As he called up his last reserves of strength, a new thought took hold of him. It dawned on him that the cemetery might be a shortcut to life, to reaching his home more quickly. Yes, if he went through the hallowed ground, by taking the diagonal of its rectangular area, he could save a good distance — perhaps hundreds of feet; ...or yards...he could not be sure which.

He must try it. — So he did! Dragging himself past the gate with his remaining strength, he went forward. But, not for long. Within a few steps, his leg sank below the snowy ground into the soft earth beneath. Startled, he struggled to save his body and soul. *Had he fallen into a freshly dug, unmarked grave? — or was he being pulled down into sheol, the dark nether-world, by some shadowy being?*

The conflict was short and exhausting. With his last ounce of drive, the tenacity of desperation, he tugged at his leg — and freed it, bootless. The inertia thrust him backwards, so that he suddenly found himself sitting on a nearby marble block dedicated to an ancient *tzaddik*.

There they found him the next day. He was still sitting upright, chilled to the bone, on a cold, horizontal slab of stone, with one boot on and the other missing, with his left arm clinging rigidly and dearly to the large Talmudic text against his body.

Almost frozen, he was carried home. Indeed, it was at first impossible to pry away the volume from him until he thawed out. Perhaps its proximity provided the warmth that sustained him during those benighted hours of peril and loneliness. Or perhaps the *tzaddik* on whose place of repose he rested had kept him.

At any rate, he survived. And to tell the tale, I am here, his son — to carry on!

DR. GOODNICK, a practicing psychologist, is president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Scientists. His articles have appeared in these pages as well as in other Jewish periodicals.

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Letters to the Editor



The Positive Results of Inter-faith Dialogues

To the Editor:

I have read with great interest your article in the March, 1975 issue of *The Jewish Observer* entitled, "Second Looks at the Jewish Scene." I read this article carefully as I am one of those who believe that only through honest and open communication can groups begin to fully understand and appreciate each other's sensitivities even without total agreement or acceptance of the other's point of view. The value in this kind of dialogue is, I firmly believe, the process which may lead to the removal of many prejudices and misunderstandings on both sides with a deepening of respect for each other's position. The end result of such intercommunication is the ability to disagree without malice.

In your final paragraph you state: "While the Catholic Church may need dialogue with Jews for any number of reasons, there is neither need nor justification for Jewish participation in such." This self-imposed isolation by segments of the Jewish community brings no enlightenment to anyone.

I would be the first to agree that the recent Vatican statement left untouched the subject of Israel, which is central to Jewish life. However, it is because of the relationship that has been established in Catholic-Jewish relations in the United States through the efforts of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and other organizations, that a number of Roman Catholic Bishops in our country have already spoken

out publicly. They declared that this was a great omission in the Vatican document and that they themselves were saddened that Israel was not mentioned.

I hope that we are leaving that totally unwholesome era of silence when, because of an absence of honest and open communication, anti-Semitism ran rampant with no major external force outside of the Jewish community to work to contain and control it. In the dialogue we do not forget the past lessons of denying one's heritage.

Although there are areas where we have not made so much progress as we would like, other great inroads have been made and friendships established. Your approach, that the Jewish community cut itself off from the rest of the world and exist in a vacuum, has been proven wrong and can only lead to grave and severe problems.

Finally, regarding your concern about proselytism, may I call your attention to the statement issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in their Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations that "proselytizing is to be carefully avoided in the dialogue." I do not believe that the Catholic community sees the dialogue opportunity as a ruse to entrap Jews. If there is an agenda which is hidden, then I must tell you that it has also been hidden from the Catholic dialogue participants. The Catholic Bishops' statement is clear-cut and to which participants have strictly adhered. This has been my experience as well as that of friends.

I would hope that as time goes on you will have the opportunity to be a part of Catholic-Jewish intercom-

munication. Only the experience and growth of awareness regarding the enormous positive results which can arise from such programs will encourage you to re-evaluate your position and share your re-evaluation with your readership.

NATALIE GORDON, *Chairperson, Intergroup Relations Committee New York Regional Board, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith New York City*

Editorial Response

Miss Gordon seems to suggest that the worst evils that can befall the Jewish community result from the ignorance that stems from lack of communication between different religious groups. In addition, she argues, if inter-faith dialogue is rejected as a bridge between religious communities, complete isolation is left as the only alternative — to "exist in a vacuum."

If the Jew's primary goal were fullest possible integration into the fabric of the broader society, then she might be correct and lack of understanding between groups would indeed be the major hurdle to overcome. But the primary goal on the Jewish agenda is survival *as a Jew* and the major hurdles to be surmounted are lack of knowledge of Torah imperatives and values, and confusion regarding the true meaning of Judaism. These can be overcome by intensive inquiry and study — a massive educational campaign about Judaism for Jews.

The exchanges of attitudes and values between Christian and Jew add nothing to Jewish self-awareness. Indeed, a good deal of confusion arises from the entire spectrum of inter-faith activities:

When the format of the dialogue is one of finding common ground between faiths, the results are bound to be superficial and misleading, for then coincidence of values is misrepresented as commonality. While "shared values" may make some Jews feel more comfortable in an alien, hostile

world the very concept is hazardous; for a given Jewish attitude in a specific area, such as sanctity of life or birth control, is rooted in the Torah, it cannot be changed by "reevaluation" or some Judaic "papal bull." Christian views on these matters, even when they appear to be the same, stem from a different source, and in their understanding are subject to legislative or executive change. Pretending that things are the same when they are not is dangerously delusive.

Moreover, presenting the alleged commonground of separate religions brings in the kind of oversimplified blurriness ("there are no real differences between religions") that invites intermarriage ("so why keep apart people in love?") and free (and destructive) borrowing of rituals and confessions.

Focus on differences can also be hazardous. First, one-upmanship becomes tempting, wherein the winning-cup goes to the better debater, not to the repository of truth.

In addition, we Jews are not interested in winning others to Torah (proselytizing is not a Jewish goal), nor are we interested in being won over to the "truth" of other religions.

Dialoguers may protest to the contrary in regard to their specific programs, but Christian doctrine in general is committed to "redeeming" the non-Christian world, and Jews are a prime target for their efforts. Activities proclaimed as non-proselytizing serve to disarm Jews in general and make them prone to other, more conversion-directed programs.

Perhaps the most important objection to dialogues is the halachic prohibition against studying any religious teachings other than Torah, except under certain specific conditions and these do not encompass interfaith dialogues. Religious insights abound in Judaic sources, and it is folly for Jews to probe other faiths for such insights. If Jews wish to experience greater

kinship with members of other groups through dialogue, one can only question their underlying motives. Do they suffer from a sense of inferiority? Self-worth can be better gained through self-knowledge. Do they fear the prejudice and discrimination that grow out of ignorance? Let them continue to work together with others in social and political action instead of in ideology swapping.

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LETTERS CONTINUED

Ironically, the most thorny barriers to inter-faith cooperation are the public stands on a number of issues taken by the secular Jewish organizations that are active in dialogue: Whereas Catholics oppose legalized abortion and certainly would welcome government aid to non-public schools, the American Jewish Congress, for one, has publicly endorsed legalized abortion contrary to Torah law; and

with the cooperation of Bnai Brith, has spearheaded PEARL, an umbrella organization formed for the sole purpose of combatting government aid to religious schools — extremely damaging to the financial equilibrium of yeshivos. The secular Jewish establishment has, by virtue of an anti-Torah bias, done more harm to the cause of Jewish acceptance by other groups than a calendar full of dialogues could ever repair.

While adhering to the *daas Torah* opposition to inter-faith dialogue, the Agudath Israel has engaged productively in undertakings in-

volving cooperation with other religious groups, in education and political arenas — such as joint efforts in gaining government aid to non-public schools. The result has invariably been a growing understanding of mutual needs coupled with a healthy respect for the integrity of each group, without any of the reprehensible blurring of lines and confusion of faith as result from dialoguing.

In sum, inter-faith dialogue does not mitigate the problems it is meant to solve, but introduces a host of new ones instead.

NISSON WOLPIN

AUTHORS

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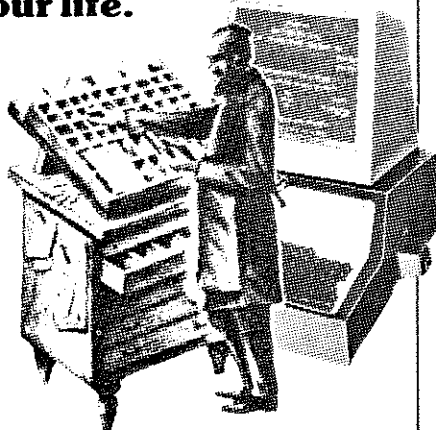
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Seforim in Post-War Germany

To The Editor:

It is not often that one can write to three JO correspondents in one letter: namely, Rabbis Nathan Baruch and Aryeh Kaplan, and Herman Landau of Furth — all featured or referred to in your Elul edition.

The year was 1946, and the Vaad Hatzalah, through the efforts of Rabbi Baruch, opened a Yeshiva in Windesheim-bei-Nuremberg. (I still have the *Shev-Shmaitza*, the *Ohr Yisroel*, a *Chumash*, and *Tehillim* published by the Vaad.) There was understandably a terrible shortage of *seforim* in stock. I then heard from a Hungarian Jew that a book store in Nuremberg had many *seforim* in stock. It was located near the court where Goering and the other top Nazis were being tried. I found the basement shop packed with all sorts of books, but no Jewish ones.

It turned out that the owner was a totally assimilated German Jew whom the Germans were using in their so-called "denazification" program. As a member of that denazification court, he would help them free scores of Nazis. The proprietor led me into a back room loaded with *seforim*. It struck me that the Nazis had collected these

seforim for a projected museum, to show later generations some remaining artifacts of the Jewish people they had totally wiped out, R"L. (Such an archive was rumored to exist.) To the store owner and his six or eight clerks, a *Siddur* published in 1720 was worth more than a set of Rambams from 1930. Hence he would look at the year published (and they were all old) and demand exorbitant prices. Even though our yeshiva needed the *seforim*, we didn't have that kind of money, so I left empty handed and returned the following day in the company of a Chaplain — a U.S. Army Captain — in uniform. Like all Germans, the store keeper respected authority; he turned pale, smilingly opened the *seforim* room, and dropped the prices.

One day he gave me a gift, free of charge. To him it was worthless — published in 1930 in Yiddish, it had nothing but pictures of Chassidic Jews. It turned out to be the report of the Second Knessia Gedola in Vienna. Published by the Monthly *Orthodox Yugend Bletter*, edited by Avrohom Meir Krongrad. And inscribed by hand "To our worthy leader . . . President of the Inter-

national Vaad Hapoal of Agudath Israel, Member of our Editorial Board, Horav Dr. Pinchas Hacohen in commemoration . . ." signed by "S. Rosenbaum and Y. Eisenberg, Warsaw, 6 Menachem Av 5690 (1930)." I then realized that the *seforim* must have been confiscated by the Nazis from the library of Dr. Cohen.

The past, indeed, is full of memories and treasures.

CHAIM SHAPIRO
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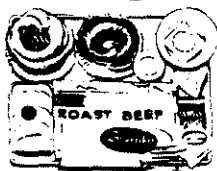
World Jewish Leaders at Agudah Israel's National Convention

Orthodox Jewish leaders from Israel, Europe and South America will participate in the deliberations of the 53rd National Convention of Agudath Israel of America, which opens Thursday evening, November 6th in Atlantic City. The large delegations from every part of the world will transform the gathering into an international congress, making the impact of the convention more meaningful than ever.

The three-day confab, which will continue through Sunday, November 9th, will focus considerable attention on the major problems facing the Jewish people in every part of the world, besides the crisis issues confronting American Jewry. The foremost Torah scholars in this country will address this unusual gathering of thousands of Orthodox Jewish activists from the grassroots of America. The convention's theme is: "A Vibrant Torah-Jewry Faces New Challenges."

A session will be devoted to the unveiling of new expansion plans by the leadership of Agudath Israel of America, which will undertake to increase its current sixteen divisions of service for Jews and Judaism to new areas. The women's Agudist organization, N'shei Agudath Israel of America, will conduct separate sessions of special interest to women over the convention weekend.

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Agudath Israel Launches Special Division For Russian Jews

A special desk to provide comprehensive guidance and counseling to newly arrived Russian Jews seeking employment was inaugurated by Project COPE, the manpower division of Agudath Israel of America. The new service is part of a broader program by Agudath Israel to help absorb the new emigres by providing assistance for their spiritual and physical needs.

The new desk will be manned by Heshi Kahane, who came to this country from Russia nearly three years ago, and whose native language is Russian. Mr. Kahane, who received his Jewish education upon his arrival at the Mesifita Torah Vodaath, brings with him a rich background of working with his fellow immigrants to help them settle in this country.

The special section for the Russian Jews will attempt to assist the immigrants in locating jobs through one of three major components of Project COPE: On Job Training, Classroom Training, and Vocational Education. Special courses in English as a Second Language and Remedial English are currently given to the immigrants in an effort to help them obtain better jobs. Nearly 300 Russian Jews have applied for jobs through Project COPE in the past five months.

In announcing the new service, a spokesman for Agudath Israel noted that the action by Project COPE is only "one facet of the growing program for Russian Jews within each one of Agudath Israel's 16 major divisions." He expressed the hope that the Jewish community would open "its hearts" to absorb these new immigrants, spiritually and materially, after more than a half-century under Communism.

Agudath Israel Leadership Conference

A two day national leadership conference, which gathered regional leaders of Agudath Israel of America, mapped out a broad expansion program in major cities. The national gathering, which was held in the Holiday Inn in Liberty, N. Y. on August 10th and 11th, underscored the organization's stepped-up efforts to mobilize Torah activists throughout the country to join Agudath Israel's accelerated program of community services.

The two day parley opened with an orientation session addressed by Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive president of Agudath Israel of America, who said that this new effort was part of the philosophy espoused by the Torah giants for over 60 years that Orthodox Jews should independently cope with the problems of Jews and Judaism in a genuine Torah fashion and not permit the secularist establishment to speak for Klal Yisroel.

The delegates heard reports from the directors and chairmen of the divisions operated out of Agudath Israel's national headquarters. After the opening orientation session, lectures were given by Dr. Bernard Fryshman, Commission on Legislative and Civic Affairs; Rabbi Joel Schnur, Commission on Social Services; Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, Project COPE (Career Opportunities and Preparation for Employment); Rabbi David Grossman, Mr. Barry Weiss, Commission on Senior Citizens; Mr. Zvi Kahane, Commission on Russian Jews; Rabbi Boruch Borchardt, Commission on Summer Camps; Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz, Pirchei Agudath Israel; Mr. Joseph Friedenson, Publications; Rabbi Shmuel Bloom, Commission on Branch Development; Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, The Jewish Observer. The Conference was also addressed by Menachem Shayovich, Special Assistant to New York's Governor Carey.

"Means Test" Termed "Undue Hardship" by Agudath Israel's Commission on Sr. Citizens

A proposed provision of the new Title XX Program of the Social Security Act which would subject a large number of elderly to a "means test", was sharply criticized by Agudath Israel's Commission on Senior Citizens as a measure "which will create undue hardships on the elderly as well as increasing the administrative costs and paperwork." The Agudath Israel agency represents 10,000 senior citizens in the city of New York who are members of the five centers for the elderly sponsored by the Commission on Senior Citizens, under a grant from New York City. Rabbi Joel Schnur, director of Agudath Israel's Commission on Senior Citizens also commended Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York for taking the initiative in the U. S. Senate to amend the Social Security Act to reinstate group certification.

The new Title XX Program of the Social Security Act, which is due to take effect on October 1, 1975, calls for senior citizens to undergo a means test recertification every three months. This eligibility requirement would end the current policy of allowing any senior citizen over the age of 60 to participate in the senior citizen center program. The experience of center directors has been that the majority of those who do participate are often in greater "physical and psychological need than monetary need."

JEP Enrolls 90 New Children in Yeshivos

A group of fifteen children from uncommitted Jewish homes in the metropolitan New York area who received special tutoring this summer joined 75 other children from minimal Jewish backgrounds who entered Yeshivos this September because of the work of the Jewish Education Program of Zeirei Agudath Israel of America.

The children spent several hours daily studying various subjects in Torah to enable them to join classes in Yeshivos with other students of their age. The children will also benefit from special scholarship grants from JEP paid directly to the yeshivos.

The JEP Program features a broad array of reach-out activities including release hour, Shabbatons, camp placement service, Yeshiva placement service, visitation programs, publications, recordings and Chavrusa programs. JEP is one of 16 major divisions of Agudath Israel and is funded by the parent organization.



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