

# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

TAMUZ, 5739 / JUNE, 1979  
VOLUME XIV, NUMBER 1  
\$1.25

*a noted Rosh Yeshiva delineates*

**THE YESHIVA GRADUATES' OBLIGATIONS**

*a Gemora rebbe examines*

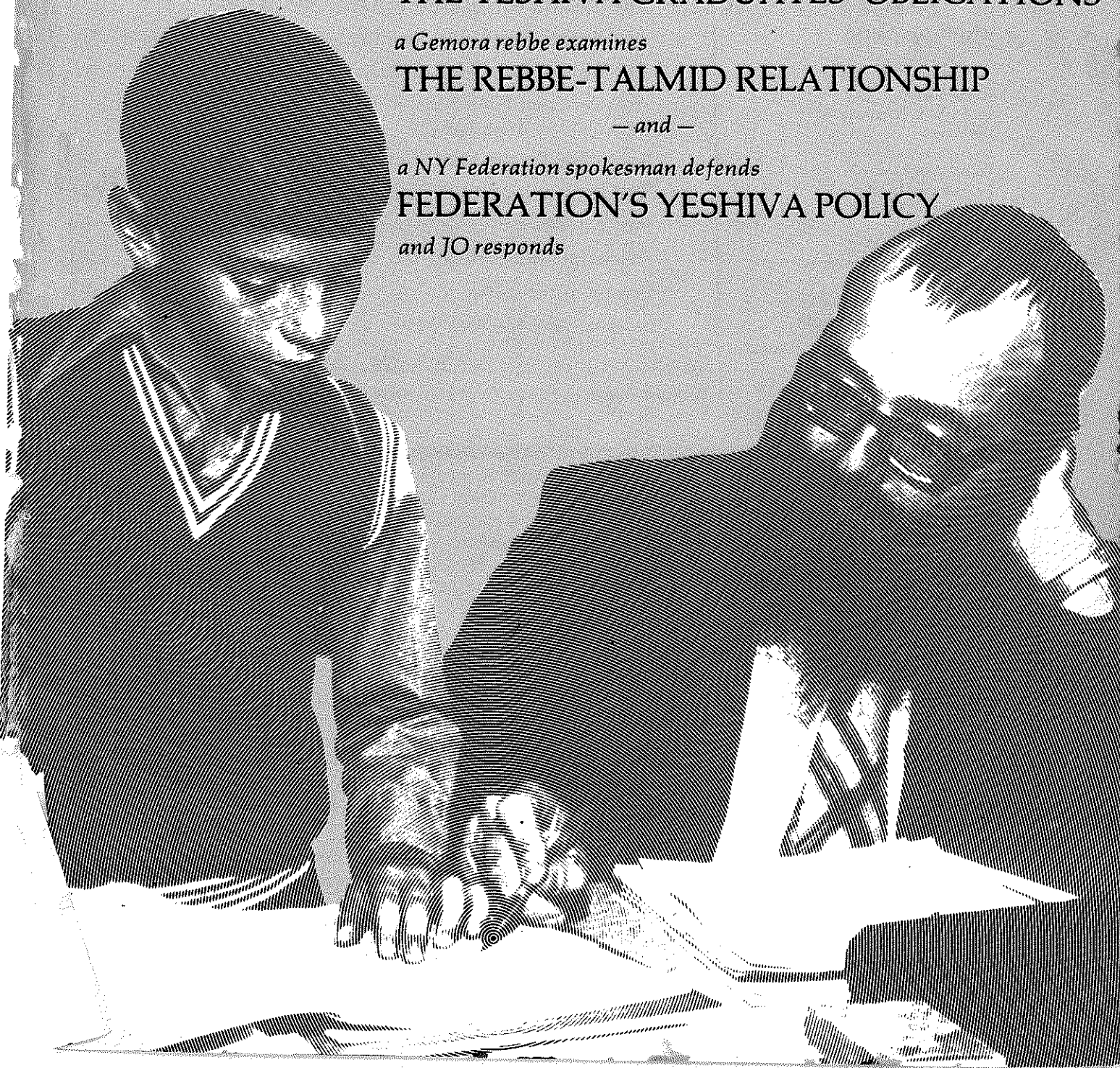
**THE REBBE-TALMID RELATIONSHIP**

— and —

*a NY Federation spokesman defends*

**FEDERATION'S YESHIVA POLICY**

*and JO responds*



# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

THE JEWISH OBSERVER (ISSN 0021-6615) is published monthly, except July and August, by the Agudath Israel of America, 5 Beekman Street, New York, N.Y. 10038. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Subscription \$9.00 per year; two years, \$17.50; three years, \$25.00; outside of the United States, \$10.00 per year. Single copy, \$1.25  
Printed in the U.S.A.

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JUNE, 1979 VOL. XIV, NO. 1

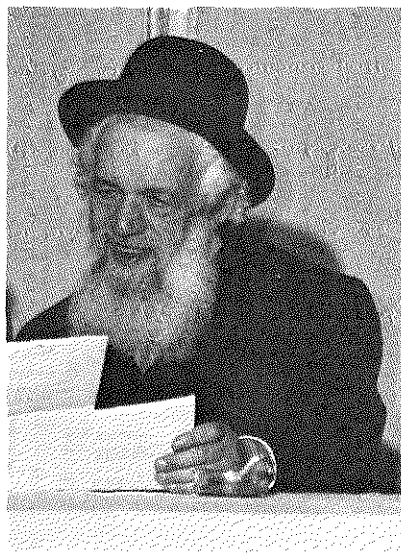
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As we go to press, we record with shock and deep sorrow the untimely passing of Rabbi Gedalia Schorr ז"ל on 7 Tammuz, July 1. He inspired thousands of *talmidim* of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, which he served as a Rosh Yeshiva for many years, with his brilliance of mind, his encyclopedic knowledge of *Toras Nigla* and *Nistor*, his warmth of personality and self-effacing modesty. His deep concern for *Klal Yisroel* expressed itself in his association with Agudath Israel of America from its founding days over a half century ago until the time of his passing, when he was a prominent national leader of the movement; an active member of the International Board of Governors of Chinuch Atzmai—Torah Schools for Israel, and its American section, which he served as Treasurer; and his leadership among the *menahalim* of the American Yeshivos Gedolos. Rabbi Schorr—a *talmid* of *Gedolei Yisroel*, himself a recognized *Gadol B'Yisroel*—left behind bereft *talmidim*, among them outstanding leaders in the Torah community.

יהי זכרו ברוך  
May his memory be a blessing.

# The Yeshiva Graduate's Obligation

*The maximal goals of the yeshiva are well known: the opening of the limitless vistas of Torah to its students and imbuing them with the ambition to become Gedolei Ha-Torah. Not all students succeed in realizing the yeshiva's highest goals; the yeshiva thus also has other lesser expectations for its students—goals that are more universally attainable. First among them is that all who pass through the portals of the yeshiva always reflect Torah values in their personal lives.*

*The following article, based on an address by RABBI AVROHOM PAM שליט"א to an alumni gathering of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, delineates two aspects of this overriding goal. This essay was prepared for publication by RABBI YONAH BLUMENFRUCHT and MATIS BLUM.*

TWO PRINCIPLE AIMS of the yeshiva are: a) to produce *talmidim* of outstanding personal character and integrity, who will reflect in their personal lives the ethics of the Torah which they learned in the yeshiva; and b) to imbue its *talmidim* with the spirit of dedication to the service of Klal Yisroel, and to encourage them to devote their energies and talents to the advancement of Torah.

These objectives were established and pursued by the founder of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, Reb Feivel Mendlowitz זצ"ל, whose entire life was dedicated to Klal Yisroel, thereby serving as a living inspiration to *talmidim* and *baalei batim* (laymen) alike. Let us pause to ponder these goals, however briefly, and rethink the direction of our own lives in light on these guidelines.

## I. Kiddush Hashem

The *Sefer Yereim* states that although the *mitzva* of *Kiddush Hashem* is incumbent on every Jew, there is a very special obligation on *lomdei Torah* (Torah scholars) to be cognizant of this obligation. He writes: ואם הוא לומד תורה צריך שישמור עצמו מן הכיעור ומן הדומה לו "One who studies Torah must take care to avoid any manner of repulsive behavior, and refrain from any action that bears any resemblance to it."

The *ben Torah* is expected to personify the teachings of the Torah, thus reflecting the image of the Torah itself. He can, on the one hand, be a living example of the beauty and sanctity of the Torah way of life, lending honor and glory to Judaism, and conveying *Kiddush Hashem* to Jews and non-Jews alike. The Prophet Yishayahu in his vision of the Children of Israel in the days-to-come, depicts them in these words: "And their children will be distinguished amongst the nations and their offspring amongst the peoples of the world, and all who behold them will know that they are the blessed children of G-d."

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Rabbi Pam is a Rosh Yeshiva in Mesivta Torah Vodaath, Brooklyn. Yonah Blumenfrucht, a musmach of Torah Vodaath in the professional world, and Matis Blum, a Beis Midrash student who edits the weekly Torah Lodaas bulletin, prepared this essay for publication.

On the other hand, if the *ben Torah* is not meticulous in his personal conduct, and is lacking in integrity, righteousness, and refinement, he misrepresents Torah, leading people to think that the Torah approves or condones unethical conduct. He is thereby unwittingly bearing false witness against it, for the Torah is *Toras Emes* (Torah of truth) and *D'rocheha darkei noam*—"Its ways are pleasant . . ."

We are witness today to an alarming decline in morality, both in the individual and in society. The continuous breakdown of age-old concepts of decency is shocking and causes us to wonder: What next? Where is the world headed?

There are the cynics and pessimists who say מנהגו של עולם כן היא This is the way of the world. Man's character is inherently corrupt and immoral; strife, greed, and lust are inevitables. That's the way it always has been, and that's the way it will always be. We Jews, however, believe that the Torah can mold the individual into a magnificent personality, instilling within him integrity, nobility, courtesy and dignity. We are persuaded that Torah can and will in the days to come create a righteous society that will reflect the glory of G-d.

But if *lomdei Torah* are found wanting in their personal ethics, they give rise to the belief that Torah does not have the capability of improving mankind and cannot cure the ills of society. אין לך בידן כבוד התורה גדול מזה! There can be no greater defamation of Torah than this.

### The Vital Obligation

There is a fascinating *psak halacha* in *Yam Shel Shlomo* (*Babba Kamma* 38a), in reference to misrepresentation of Torah. The Talmud relates that the Roman government once dispatched two officials to the sages of Israel to make a comprehensive study of the Torah and to report their findings to the government. Upon completion of their study, they told the sages: "We have delved into your Torah and have concluded that it is indeed a *Toras Emes*—except for one *halacha*, which seems to us to discriminate against non-Jews. However, we will not report it to the government."

The *Yam Shel Shlomo* raises the question: Why did the *Chachomim* risk the safety of *Klal Yisroel* by teaching this *halacha* as it is to the Roman agents? Could they not have altered this one *halacha* for their own protection, to avoid resentment and the likely consequences of repression and persecution? He answers: מכאן שאסור לשנות דברי תורה אף במקום סכנה וחייב עצמו עלי! From here we may derive that it is forbidden to falsify Torah even at the risk of danger to *Klal Yisroel*; one is obligated to sacrifice his life rather than misrepresent a *din* of the Torah.

In as much as Torah scholars are expected to reflect the teachings of Torah in their personal conduct, and—indeed—in the eyes of the public they do represent the Torah way of life, the responsibility they carry is a grave one. The extent of this obligation, as spelled out by the *Yam Shel Shlomo*, is awesome in its implications.

## II. The Sensitivity of the Royal Guard

Torah scholars are members of the divine militia, and as such they should be in the forefront of the *milchemes Hashem*—every battle for sacred causes. This is the essence of the second objective of *yeshiva chinuch*. Every yeshiva student should organize his life in the way that permits him to best serve *Klal Yisroel*, according to his capacity and the prevailing circumstances. There are no exemptions in this battle.

Shaul Hamelech (King Saul) once called in the members of his court and chastised them for disloyalty to him. He spoke harshly: "You have all conspired against me by not disclosing to me that my son is in league with the son of Yishai (in a plot against the Kingdom) and none of you is distressed by this threat to me" (*Shmuel I*: 22,8). As the commentaries explain, Shaul faulted his closest associates even if they did not perceive Dovid as a threat to Shaul's rule. They should have at least shared his anguish.

By the same yardstick, our loyalty to the Divine King can be questioned if we lack concern for *kavod Shomayim*; if we are not distressed over the fact that the vast majority of our youth is totally ignorant of Torah and could not care less; if we are indifferent to continuing distortion of Torah and its misrepresentation—in the name of Judaism; if we are not disturbed by the fact that our people is degraded, despised, maligned and abused by the nations of the world, and yet the philosophy of "Let us be like all the nations" dominates the policies of the political leaders who presume to guide the destiny of the people of Israel.

The current state of affairs in Jewish life should sufficiently touch every yeshiva alumnus to impel him to orient his life to the service of *Klal Yisroel* and to make his contribution to *kavod Shomayim* in one form or another.

A well-known Rosh Yeshiva once visited a wealthy businessman—a former yeshiva student—in his office to solicit a sizable donation for the yeshiva. It was during business hours, and the man claimed that giving such a sum would require a trip to the bank, and he was much too busy for that. Whereupon the Rosh Yeshiva said to him: "Do you think that you were sent down from Heaven to this world just to sell gatkes (underwear)? You were sent here to do something for the Ribono Shel Olam, His Torah, and His People."

THESE OBJECTIVES of the yeshiva *chinuch* assume added significance as we hope, pray, and yearn for the *Ge'ula Sheleima*, soon in our day. The vision of *Ge'ula Sheleima* entails the restoration of *Klal Yisroel* to its pristine dignity and its distinction as a Kingdom of Priests, a Holy Nation; the realization of the prophecy "And all Your sons will be learned of G-d"; the transformation of the land of Israel into The Holy Land, permeated with the *Shechina*—the Divine Presence, and radiating the glory of G-d. 17

# The Yeshiva of Tomorrow

## Will Yeshiva Education Become Depersonalized in the Computer Age?

It is the day after tomorrow. As Ruvi enters the *Bais Hamedrash* of his yeshiva high school, the alarm on his digital watch tells him that it's 9 a.m. and he's on time. His *chavrusa* (learning partner) had just called him on his car phone to tell him that he would be delayed for an hour. *What should I do until then?* he thinks. *How about reviewing yesterday's "shiur" (lesson) which introduced the new "sugya" (topic in Talmud) Rebbe had just begun?* So he walks over to his table in the brightly-lit study hall and sits down, activating his spot on the Mashgiach's attendance screen. Dominating his table is a large console with a keyboard of vari-colored buttons and an upright screen—a mini computer terminal and videotape machine combination.

First, our budding *talmid chacham* presses a button to activate the video-tape pictures of yesterday's *shiur*. His *rebbe* is shown methodically analyzing the *Gemora* (Talmud) and delving into *Rishonim* (medieval commentaries). Then, flicking the switch on his console, Ruvi moves the tape to the part of the *shiur* that he finds most difficult to understand: the intricate *Tosaphos* that challenge Rashi's interpretation of the text. After his *rebbe* explained the *Tosaphos* "once again," Ruvi feels that he really understands the *shiur*. Pleased with himself, Ruvi decides that it is time for him to review the *sugya* "inside." More button-pressing on the keyboard, a code is fed into the computer, and almost instantaneously bright green letters appear on the same screen that had displayed the video-tape. Now, with finger tracing the words in his open *Gemora* on the table, he refers periodically to the screen for a step-by-step analysis of the *sugya* in a sequential question format. Whenever Ruvi taps out the

appropriate answer on the keyboard, the screen lights up: "Very good—*yeyasher koach*—proceed to the next question."

And so it goes until 10:05 a.m. when his *chavrusa*, Eli, finally arrives. After an hour of communicating with the machine, Ruvi really looks forward to the fresh, original ideas and often unpredictable tangents that he and his *chavrusa* explore together—responses and solutions for which the computer was not programmed.

At 11:00 a.m., the boys in Ruvi's class file into their classroom, and the *shiur* begins. Rabbi Goldberg opens the *Gemora*, and one of the boys presses a button which activates a video-tape camera permanently perched on a shelf at the back corner of the room. This camera peers down on the lecture in much the same way closed-circuit TV cameras focus on the aisles of super-markets to spot unwary shoplifters. Later, as Yaakov asks a question from the back of the room, a special sound sensor located in the middle of the ceiling automatically directs the camera to focus on the speaker.

After the *shiur*, most of the students leave, with only a few lingering to clarify difficult points. Ruvi joins others in a small room directly adjacent to the *shiur* room, where a tape-copying machine is spinning out copies from a master tape of the *shiur* in a matter of seconds. A number of *bachurim* avail themselves of this very inexpensive service, so they can review the *shiur* at their leisure.

Lunchtime: Ruvi picks up his lunch in the school cafeteria, at a terminal of a freezer-to-microwave oven-to-dispenser conveyor system—all according to Ruvi's punched-out-menu card submitted minutes before. The freezer is supplied by a Kosher caterer under contract with the Board of Education.

The 45 minute break is over and Ruvi joins his colleagues for their next classes—*Chumash*, *Nach*, and Hebrew language. The *Chumash* class is typical of the classes that follow: While the students still use *seforim*, a large screen replaces the traditional

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blackboard at the front of the room. The teacher reaches for the computer terminal on his desk and presses the code for the chapter they are studying; the relevant *Pesukim* (verses) suddenly illuminate the screen. When the class studies a paragraph in Rashi and other *meforshim* (commentators), the screen displays the sources in *Chazal* as well as cross-references in *Tanach*. When the students encounter an obscure word or expression, the right computer code quickly reveals every known usage of the word—concordance style—on the screen . . .

Afterwards, in the Hebrew language "labs," the students, wearing earphones and speaking into the computer microphone, conduct dialogues in Hebrew with a recorded sound track.

Later in the afternoon, the students daven *Mincha* together (with a live *shaliach tzibur*, of course), and then go home "to take" their general studies subjects. The students of this yeshiva high school are required

to subscribe to a cable-TV general studies program. The students are able to participate in every required course in the traditional high school curriculum, plus some exciting electives (e.g. simulating a national election, in a government class, or analyzing the pollution level of a lake, for biology)—all taught by the best instructors in the district. Whenever the student wishes to question a teacher, he presses a button and addresses him.<sup>1</sup>

Some "progressive" yeshiva high schools in larger cities banded together to subsidize their own cable TV broadcasts in secular subjects, featuring instructors who were *yerei Shomayim* and able to present the general studies from a Torah perspective.

Once or twice a week, the students visit a district testing center where they take computerized tests in their subjects, as well as lab courses in chemistry, physics, and computer technology.

\* \* \*

### Tomorrow—Torah Technology or Fiction?

Will all this technological pizzazz really come to yeshiva education, or will it remain in the realm of the hypothetical could-be? To be sure, this technology is already developed and will be readily available to the general public in the near future. In fact, many of the systems described in our futuristic scenario, such as the mini computers, video-tape units, and participatory cable TV, are already operational. Indeed, one Israeli University has already programmed rabbinic responsa of the last 1500 years into its computers. The price for all this sophisticated hardware will probably be very inexpensive, if consumer costs in this field continue to decline as they have until now. In some respects the Yeshiva world has kept pace with technology and reaped its rewards. Witness the fact that ten years ago it was uncommon to tape *Torah shiurim*; today, as *shiurim* begin in yeshivos across the country, cassette recorders are dutifully flicked on to preserve these presentations for posterity. There are already a number of entrepreneurs who produce Torah tapes on a wide variety of topics for commercial purposes. Today some Hebrew day schools use video taping to record model lessons for student teaching and teacher in-service training.

But the question that actually concerns us is whether the yeshiva world should accept all the marvels of technology and harness them to its needs, or should it reject many of them as incompatible with its traditional educational philosophy and time-tested methodology?

### Torah and Technology—Man vs. Machine

Technology is a Divine gift presented to man for his

benefit, as long as man remembers that he is the master of the machine and will never permit it to de-humanize him. Even though society at large continues to replace human functions with machines, Torah Jews must be ever-sensitive to the fact that there can never be a substitute for man or for his intrinsic worth as a *tzelem Elokim*, molded in the image of his Maker. Primarily, we have an ethical responsibility to be ever sensitive to value man over machine.

To be sure, cassette recordings of lectures are a great boon to people who for any number of reasons are unable to attend their presentation in person. But there is also a tendency among some to choose to "stay home" and rely on subsequent recordings rather than take the trouble to attend a lecture in person. Aside from the loss in terms of personal participation in the public assembly or class, there is also an implied downgrading in the value of the lecturer as a person.

True, listening to a taped session with a Rosh Yeshiva is certainly a tribute to the man; he is *not* being replaced by a machine. But in no way does it approach the *kavod haTorah* and recognition that is expressed when sitting in at the session, live.

By the same token, no one would dispute the value of the Xerox machine for duplicating rare manuscripts or pages from a one-of-a-kind source. But when the student comes to permit his mind to wander because "Joe's

1. Warner Cable Corporation, a Manhattan based company, has recently developed such a "participatory TV" system which is already operational in Columbus, Ohio, and enables its subscribers to voice their opinions in local political debates, conduct garage sales, and bid for *objets d'art* in charity auctions—all for the low base fee of \$10.95 a month.

taking notes, and his are better than mine, anyway—and Xerox is only 7¢ a sheet,”—how much personal contact is lost because of over-reliance on sophisticated duplicating process!

### More Than a Source of Information

Substituting machines for the *Rosh Yeshiva* and *chavrusa* is totally incongruous with our educational philosophy which demands both intense involvement and personal introduction in Torah learning. In recent years, educators have postulated that there are two domains in education—the cognitive (or intellectual) and the affective (or emotional). It would appear that while secular education is chiefly concerned with the cognitive domain, Torah *chinuch* is equally concerned with both domains—and for good reason: Secular education is geared to communicating knowledge, but not necessarily to influence the student's way of life. However, Torah education was Divinely designed for “behavior modification” in every sense of the term—to mold true *bnei-Torah*, committed to learning Torah and observing *mitzvos* with total dedication. In order to achieve these dual educational objectives, Torah learning demands a total involvement in the learning process, of “toiling in Torah”, or immersing one's self, heart and soul, into its study. Indeed, when a Jew recites the blessings on the Torah each morning, he declares that G-d “has commanded us to engage in the study of Torah.” This blessing is an affirmation of our belief that Torah learning is not merely another academic subject we are compelled to study; it is our part-time vocation and full-time vocation. It is our very existence!

While Ruvi (in the opening narrative) was intellectually challenged during his hour-long *chazora* with the computer, it is at best only a vicarious encounter with the *rebbe*. And a vicarious experience—no matter how good—can never be the equal of the in-depth intellectual and emotional exchange of the *rebbe-talmid* and *chavrusas*. And at worst, even a taped *chazora* can become a humdrum mechanical experience, wherein a lackadaisical student tends to sink into a “Play-it-again-Sam” syndrome.

To the Jew, a *rebbe* is a spiritual father and the *chavrusa* a spiritual brother. To deny these relationships is to deny the very purpose of Torah study. Indeed, nothing can replace the *rebbe-talmid* relationship, where the *rebbe* reaches the heart as he teaches the mind. There can be no substitute for the intellectual give-and-take and emotional support of a *chavrusa*, where two young students navigate the sea of Talmud, charting a course together.

Illustrations abound in *Chazal* to support the need for these indispensable human relationships. For example, the Talmud (in *Kerisos* 6a) specifies that the

students be seated so as to enable each one to see and hear his teacher, in keeping with Isaiah (30:20): “And your eyes shall behold your teachers.” This is not merely a plan to enable students to see and hear the lesson better; nor is it a design for creating an informal classroom atmosphere (as opposed to the straight and rigid rows of seats found in most classrooms until this very day). Rather, this arrangement is meant to enable every student to see the teacher and take part in the soul-stirring experience of Torah study reflected in the *Rebbe's* countenance when he is teaching.<sup>2</sup>

Our rabbis describe the status of a man without companionship (*chavrusa*) as tantamount to death—“either *chavrusa* or *missusa* (death),” they proclaim (*Taanis* 23a). A prime aspect of both the *chavrusa* and *rebbe-talmid* relationship that cannot be simulated by a machine is the constant interaction between the two. With the *rebbe*, of course, the astute student is able to absorb his mentor's thought process through *shimush talmid chacham*. Of even greater importance, the student who serves his teacher emulates his conduct, absorbs his values, and ultimately is molded into a true *ben-Torah*. For, as we stated, the *rebbe's* role is not merely to communicate information to others, but in a greater sense, his purpose is to be involved in the formation of good character and *midos* of his charges. (More on this theme in the article that follows.) And, as the *Gemora* says, “I have learned much from my teachers, more from my companions . . .” (*Makos* 10a).

### Torah Technicians of Tomorrow

In the years ahead, we may well be inhabiting a brave new world in the yeshiva movement. Young *bnei Torah* may be trained technicians, programming entire Torah and Talmudic works into computers. Libraries may store video-tapes of *shiurim* on a variety of topics and microfilms of original manuscripts (*kisvei yad*) of our great rabbis throughout the ages. Cable TV broadcast time may be purchased by a consortium of yeshivos to produce educational programming to meet their needs, sparing yeshiva high schools the need to maintain general studies divisions; all their students would view their secular subjects over cable TV as part of their subscription fee.<sup>3</sup>

These are only a few of tomorrow's great opportunities and of the many possibilities which lie ahead, limited only by our imaginations. But, the crucial link in our chain of tradition—the human element in transmission of Torah and studying it—can never and shall never be replaced!

2. See *Aruch Hashulchan*, *Yoreh De'ah* 246:23. Also *Eiruvin* 136.

3. The great savings accrued from removing general studies departments from the aegis of yeshivos could be applied at long last to upgrading the salaries of Judaic faculty and for capital investment to purchase computer hardware/software and the like.

# The Rebbe-Talmid Relationship

*The talmid-and-rebbe relationship has been a crucial factor in our tradition since the giving of the Torah. Unfortunately, this bond appears to be in danger of dissolving today. This article discusses the nature of the ideal and the problems it now faces.*

## The Basic Link

The hallowed *rebbe-talmid* relationship, a basic link in our tradition from the time of *Moshe Rabbeinu*, seems to be eroding. To restore it to its proper level, we should attempt to analyze it: to see what it consists of and why it is of such importance.

Rashi, in explaining the verse, "And these are the ordinances that you should set before them" (*Shemos* XXI,1) comments:

"G-d said to Moshe: Do not say 'I shall teach them the chapter or the law two or three times, until it will be fluent in their mouths, as it is worded; but I shall not trouble myself to make them understand the reasons of the thing and its explanation.' . . . It is stated, *Which you shall set before them*—like a table that is set and prepared for eating before a person."

Apparently it would have been insufficient for *Moshe Rabbeinu* to teach the *halachos* to the people under the assumption that they would understand their underlying basis on their own. Rather, it was incumbent upon him to teach the explanation along with the *halacha*.

This same concept can be found in the introduction to the Rambam's *Mishne Torah*: "All the *Mitzvos* that were given to Moshe on Sinai were given with their explanation, which Moshe, in turn, taught to Yehoshua who passed it on to the elders." Every aspect of these teachings is meant to continue in an unbroken chain from *rebbe* to *talmid*, throughout the generations.

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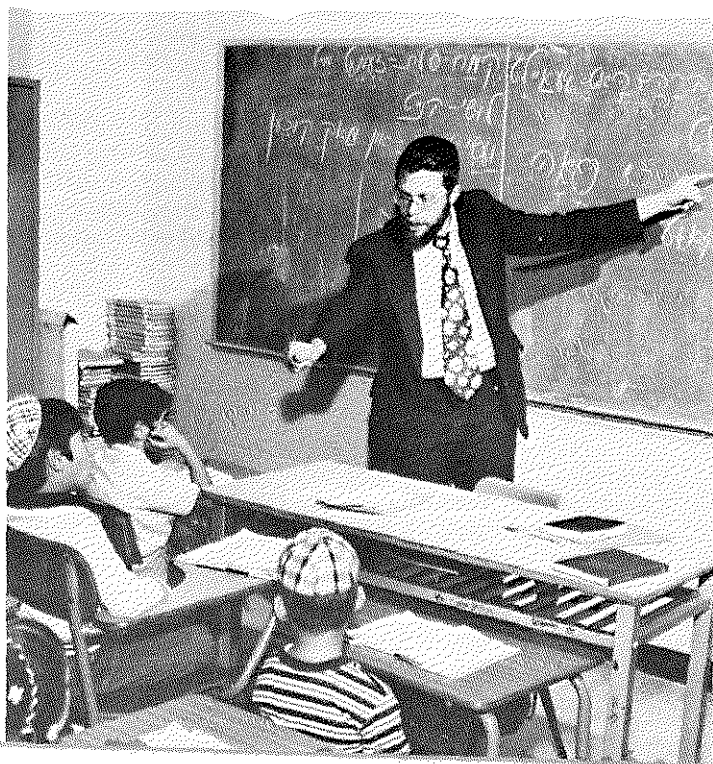
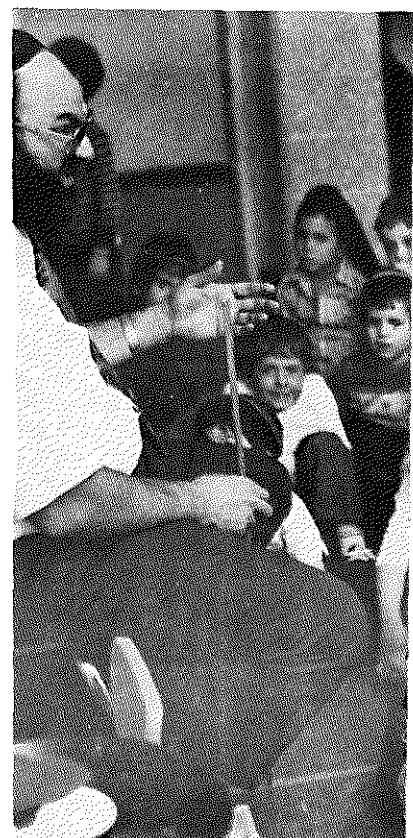
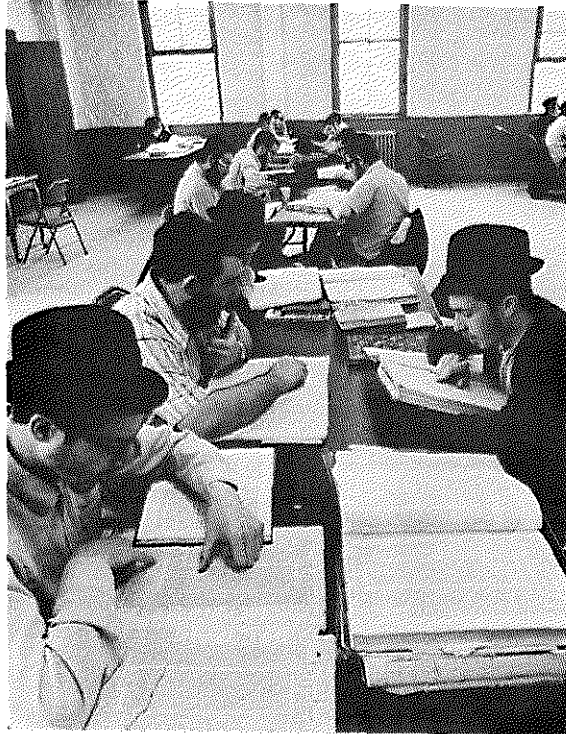
Menachem Greenfield, a talmid of yeshivos in America and Israel, is currently a Gemora rebbe in Yeshiva Bais Yehuda of Detroit and a member of its Beis Medrash—Kolel. He expresses a debt of gratitude to Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Leib Bakst שליט"א who discussed the topic of the article in countless shmuesen, for the ideas and insights in this article.

## Challenging the Link

Denial of this principle seems to underlie Korach's dispute with *Moshe Rabbeinu* and *Aharon HaKohein*, when he argued: "The entire congregation is holy." As Rashi explains, he contended that the entire people had heard the first two of the Ten Commandments from the mouth of G-d and should therefore not be considered inferior to Moshe and Aharon. Korach *did not* realize, however, that having spent forty days and nights atop Mount Sinai learning the entire Torah with all its explanations directly from G-d, only *Moshe Rabbeinu* was in a position to be a true teacher. Apparently, Korach had assumed that Torah is no different from any other area of knowledge, and can be completely grasped with human comprehension. He had failed to understand that just as Torah itself was given to Israel, so too was the means for understanding it—that is, the process of transmitting G-d's teachings from one generation to the next, from *rebbe* to *talmid*. . . . Moshe had absorbed fact, system of thinking, and methodology from his Teacher, *kaveyachol* (so to speak)—then passed all of these on to the Elders, who in turn, assumed his position as teacher when they taught all this to others.

Now that the Talmud and its commentaries have been written down and are accessible to all, some have suggested that the *rebbe's* role has become superfluous. There are, however, facets of the *rebbe-talmid* relationship that transcend book learning. This is strongly emphasized by Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky זצ"ל in his introduction to the third volume of *Birkas Shmuel*, his father-in-law, Rabbi Boruch Ber Leibowitz זצ"ל's *sefer*. Reb Reuven contends that the ideal *rebbe-talmid* relationship was exemplified by Reb Boruch Ber's complete dedication to his *rebbe*, Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik זצ"ל. Reb Boruch Ber maintains that this was predicated upon the concept that not only the *halacha*, but the methods of comprehending it, were given to Moshe on





Sinai, and passes on from generation to generation. Therefore, one must learn from his *rebbe* not only *halacha*, but also how to pose a question and offer an answer. The proper methods of study are as much a part of the Masoratic tradition as is the *halacha* itself. This is something very few individuals are able to obtain through only studying the written texts.

The need for a *rebbe* is not something that diminishes with time. Long after Reb Boruch Ber had become a famous Rosh HaYeshiva in his own right, he still consulted Reb Chaim for approval of his *chiddushim* (new interpretations).

### Beyond Methodology

Another aspect of the *rebbe's* influence on his students is the example he sets for them. Indeed, just as a *rebbe* views his disciples as his own children ("Bonecho—eilu hatalmidim"), so too do many students look upon their *rebbe* as a second father. And just as a son invariably emulates his father, even walking and talking like him, so too do many students imitate their *rebbe*. As a result of the close scrutiny his every gesture undergoes, a *rebbe* can shape his students' attitude and very character for the rest of their lives. This operates on the unconscious level, as well. A *rebbe's* involvement in study and his dedication to his mission has a contagious effect on the students, inspiring them to want to accept all that he has to offer.

*When I arrived at the Mirrer Yeshiva in Jerusalem and observed the Rosh Hayeshiva, Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz זצ"ל, his total immersion in Torah and his highly disciplined midos, it had a most profound effect on me. Like all who came in contact with him, I resolved then and there to become more dedicated to my Torah studies and to endeavor to improve my own midos. . . Such is the power of a rebbe.*

*A talmid once complained to his rebbe who had sent him to Bais Medrash Govoha to study that he found it difficult to understand Rabbi Aharon Kotler's shiurim. "Continue going," he was advised. "And if you still don't understand him, look at his face. It will also be worth it."*

These few lines are hardly a description of this crucial aspect of the *rebbe-talmid* relationship, let alone a full discussion of it. Let these comments at least serve to indicate its importance in the scheme of things, leaving a fuller development of this theme for another occasion.

### Behind the Erosion

The *rebbe-talmid* relationship is suffering an erosion today, and in view of the structure of the typical yeshiva high school it is not difficult to understand why. True, the morning and early afternoon are devoted to Talmudic studies, with the *rebbe* conducting the *shiur*. But then the secular studies teachers take over and the student shuttles from class to class. There

is usually a period set aside for night-time Talmud study, which the *rebbe* may or may not attend.

In such situations, the *rebbe* has little more opportunity to affect changes in his students than does a secular teacher. The assembly line from *shiur* to lunch to *chazora*, to one class and then the next, is not conducive to building a strong relationship between the *rebbe* and *talmid*; and if such a relationship is not fostered in the formative high school years, it is unlikely that the student will ever be motivated to establish such a bond in later years, when there is more time and opportunity.

### Overcoming Depersonalization in the High School

This depersonalization of the *rebbe-talmid* relationship is overcome when the high school *rebbe* refuses to limit himself to the job of a teacher, and extends his responsibilities far and beyond the realm of the classroom. In some instances, his teaching activities might constitute only a minor part of his total relationship with the student, for he must also function as a psychologist and social worker, all the while setting a living example for his students to emulate. To be sure, formal teacher training has its place, but anyone who stands out in the memory of his students as an outstanding teacher usually does so because of his characteristics as an outstanding human being. This often calls for a good measure of *mesiras nefesh* (self-sacrifice), for the conscientious *rebbe* rarely finds that the morning *shiur* affords him adequate contact with his students. This is best realized in after-hours sessions with the students, when the *rebbe* can express interest in all aspects of their lives. Participating in student Melave Malkas or inviting individual boys over for a *Shabbos* meal can go a long way in building a strong personal bond. Even discussing a student's secular studies or hobbies with him could have a salutary effect in helping him gain a more mature outlook on life and a proper integration of the secular and religious realms.

While one tends to remember the outstanding *rebbe* for "what he did for me," in the back of the mind one remembers how he was constantly aware of the uniqueness of each of the other students. Some students are highly motivated and will learn from anyone. Others seem never to become motivated, no matter how much attention is afforded them; this type of fellow must surely be treated very carefully and with an abundance of patience. However, the majority of students fall somewhere in between these two extremes. Sometimes a kind word or a little extra-curricular effort on the part of the *rebbe* is all it takes to propel the student onto great heights.—The results? "Whoever preserves a single soul of Israel is considered as though he had preserved a complete world" (*Sanhedrin* 37a).

\* \* \*

As a summary of sorts, I am reminded of an explana-

tion I had heard from Rabbi Bakst on the statement in the *Gemora*: "Only if the teacher is like a *malach* (an angel of the Lord of Hosts), should they seek Torah from him . . ." (*Chagiga* 15b). Which attribute of a *malach* could one expect to find in a *rebbe*? After all, we know very little about *malachim*, and that which we do know would seem next to impossible to emulate.

One aspect, however, is accessible: a *malach* was

created for one purpose only—to accomplish the mission entrusted to him by G-d. He is expected to devote his entire existence to that endeavor—no 9 to 5 "office hours," but totally occupied by this one obligation. The *rebbe* who approximates a *malach* in this way is the *rebbe* one should seek. Fortunate, indeed, is the young man who finds him. 17

Wolf Karfiol

## The Thirty Year Trip

IT WAS almost sunset and I was finding my way through some familiar Lower East Side streets. It had been a long difficult day: eight hours of business negotiations with representatives of a Far Eastern manufacturer. The meeting on Division Street had lasted beyond my expectations, and it had just about dulled my senses.

Division Street, that Lower East Side landmark, famous for so many years as a fashion center still conjures up great bargains in the minds of old timers . . . I bought my *Bar Mitzvah* suit on that famous street—or was it around the corner, where the bargains in men's clothing were better?

Today the grand old stores and little shops with the Jewish names are gone. Even some of the side streets no longer exist. The newly built Confucius Towers, over 30 stories high, stands there instead. This building was constructed with a new concept, combining a residential, educational and commercial complex all in one. For me it was also a new experience.

I'VE HAD many business meetings in my years in business, but I never did any buying from the Far East. A circular I had received in the mail from a Far East Trading Company caught my interest and after several inquiries we set up a meeting at the company office in Confucius Towers to work out the

details of a deal. Thinking it would just take a short time, I prepared neither mind nor body for eight hours of non-stop business talk. My hosts did not seem to be in any rush. Sometimes it struck me as though they were playing a game—either making themselves incomprehensible or making me feel as though they did not understand me. After the first two hours of relentless talk about prices, shipping schedules, and deposits, my head began to spin. The smoke from their cigarettes and pipes irritated my throat, and I would have welcomed a drink of soda, but when my hosts had brought in a variety of wines and fortune cookies, I had refused: "I don't drink alcoholic beverages," "My diet doesn't allow for sugar," and some other excuses. It seemed that asking for a simple glass of water would be out of place and could even offend my hosts. I wasn't about to lose this deal over such a minor thing.

The hours had dragged on until the final signature and handshakes. I was still in a daze when I left through the front door of the building. Remembering a Kosher Dairy restaurant just on the other side of Allan Street, I quickly headed in that direction.

I WAS JUST short of my destination when a voice called out: "*Reb Yid, a tzenter far a minyan far Mincha, please come in!*" There was such a plaintive note in the voice that although I was in no mood to stop to *daven* just then, I could not turn down the man's appeal.

Inside the store-front *shul*, it took me a minute to adjust my eyes to the scant light cast from the few uncovered bulbs hanging from the ceiling. I glanced around the room to see nine elderly men waiting for me, the tenth man. In my fleeting look I caught a

*Wolf Karfiol, a graduate of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, has a business in the shadows of Confucius Towers, and is active in communal affairs. "Rabbi Chaim Gold" in this story is modeled after Rabbi Eliyahu Moshe Shisgal, זצ"ל, who had been a Rosh Yeshiva in Torah Vodaath.*

glimpse of the face of the man who was standing up front, near the *Mizrach* wall. When he saw me washing my hands, he turned his face to the wall and started *davening*. The face had looked very familiar, but so do all the bearded faces of the elderly men that I encounter. I saw plenty of old Jews in the West Bronx where I grew up. But for the past 30 years I have lived on the North Shore of Long Island, and I don't see too many old bearded Jews there.

As I said "*Ashrei*" I looked around once more . . . it all seemed familiar—the long tables up front, the high-backed wooden benches—just like the old *shul* on 138th Street and Concourse, where we *davened* when I was a kid. But the *minyan* was *davening* and my study of the place was cut short. The face of the old man up front, however, had made a mark that lasted.

**I**T DID not take me long to finish the "*Shemoneh Esrei*"—it never does. I know it by heart, and I have been saying it daily for the past forty years, so it really presents no challenge to speak of.

While waiting for the rest of the *minyan* to finish, I again looked around the room, but this time slowly and with thought. As my glance focused at the front of the room it stopped.

There he stood, the bearded elderly man, holding the *Siddur* open in front of his face, his mouth carefully sounding each word as his body swayed in a constant forward-backward motion. Somehow he seemed so familiar to me. For a while I was entranced by the old man *davening* as if this were the first time, but my mind started to wander. *When would we finish? I'd love to get to that restaurant! . . .* I was just a block away and this had to happen. I was stuck, like it or not.

My watch didn't stop, and neither did my hunger pains, which were very real by now. But time in this *Shtiebel* did stop—there was not even a clock on the wall. Time was of no essence. These people *davened* for the *now*, for this specific moment. There was no rush to get it over-and-done with. Why I could have finished all three daily *tefillas*—and I usually do—in the time it took this *minyan* to reach the start of *Chazoras Hatefillah*!

Yes. Time was standing still, here in the midst of the changing, expanding Lower East Side. The walls, the benches, and everything else about this *shul* was at a standstill, just like the *mispallelim* in their *tefillah*. I had last seen the likes of it thirty years ago in the Bronx, and here it was again.

How can I compare this store-front to what I am accustomed to today? Why, just one month's electric bill in our Jewish Center must be more than the entire yearly expenses of this *shul*!

**F**INALLY the man up front, who I had in the meantime learned was the *rav*, finished his

*tefilla*; I sighed with relief.

The repetition of the *Shemoneh Esrei* did not take too long, and soon the *Kaddish* after *Aleinu* was being said. I reached for my coat and was about to leave. Several others had arrived late and my crucial role as the tenth man was no longer relevant.

I was about three steps from the door, and I came face-to-face with the *rav*. "*Sholom Aleichem*, and *Yasher Koach* for not passing up our request for a tenth man. It is pretty hard to find someone who is willing to stop from his work to come and join us," he said in a voice that somehow sounded familiar.

Then, I examined his features—familiar, yet different. Then it came to me. "*Reb Chaim Gold!*" I called out. My *rebbe* in first year *mesivta*!

His face suddenly lit up with his old familiar smile, "Yes, I am Reb Chaim. And who are you, may I ask?"

I started to explain, but before I brought him up-to-date, our conversation was quickly broken off. Reb Chaim gave a daily *shiur* and the people were all seated at the table, awaiting him.

I glanced at my watch. It had stopped and so did my hunger pains. To hear a *shiur* from Reb Chaim again was a chance of a lifetime. When I had entered his class as a youngster of thirteen, I was still a kid, both in learning level and in conduct. By the time I had left his *shiur* a year later, I had grown into a full-fledged yeshiva *bachur* and was a young man. (I'm sure you understand what I mean. You must have had such a *rebbe* in your school as well—the one who really put you on your feet, so to speak).

**I** SETTLED down on the bench, next to a *Gemora* and a glass of steaming tea. The glass, of course, from a burned-out Yahrtzeit lamp. The other men passed me a few egg kichel, and I was one of the rest of the *minyan* at the table.

Oh, the satisfaction and the memories! It was as if I were 14 years old again, sitting with my *Gemora* in class in the *Mesivta*.

Reb Chaim was the same. Each word was counted each laden with its own special meaning. Each change of tone was an explanation in itself. His delivery was just as it had been back then—in a slow, deliberate tone of voice. His was the voice of authority—no one had to be told that Reb Chaim was a genuine *Talmid Chacham* and *Gadol B'Torah*.

The *shiur* did not last very long and we were soon *davening Maariv*.

Reb Chaim *davened* in his usual manner, transporting me to an older time and place. He pronounced each word slowly, meaningfully. Without reading lips, one could still recognize exactly where he was up to. Even the slow swaying of his body was full of meaning . . . If you could see it you would understand what I mean—or maybe you do, anyway.

At the end of the *davening*, we bid each other farewell and I promised that I would come in again

next time I was in the neighborhood. Another minute, and I was out on the street and finally on my way.

**B**EFORE entering the subway station, I looked back once more. It was already dark, and the suites in Confucius Towers were lit up. They cast their glow over the entire area. The names on the stores all sported Oriental lettering alongside the English. In the place of the small dress and clothing stores, there were new stores featuring Oriental products.

Change had come to the area, and a new spirit had come to this corner of old New York.

In that little store-front *shul*, however, time had gone unnoticed. Reb Chaim was still there. Over 30 years ago, in the Bais Medrash, he had stood in the

very same fashion during *tefilla*. He always held the *Siddur* in his hand. There was no such thing as saying words by heart. Each word was counted, each *tefilla* had its time and place, and received its deserved attention.

**T**HE NEXT morning I got up a little earlier than previously. I was in *shul* before the rest of the *minyan*. I took my *Siddur* in my hands, and stood myself off to a side. I stood the entire *davening*, *Siddur* in hand, reading each and every word, slowly, clearly, distinctly.

Yes, I was late for work that day, and it has been taking me longer to *daven* the other *tefillas* as well.

Reb Chaim was still teaching, educating, and inspiring students. ✡

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## A Letter From Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York and a Response

April 16, 1979

The Editor  
The Jewish Observer  
5 Beekman Street  
New York, NY 10038

Dear Rabbi Wolpin:

I was very interested in reading your thoughtful piece in the January issue of the *Jewish Observer*, concerning the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, its attitude toward yeshiva education and the new Federation Fund for Jewish Education. Your article noted the growing interest in Jewish education by Federation and raised some apprehensions that it had about how these funds would be used. It is not the intention of this communication to debate the merits of the various plans for the use of these funds. Given the interest in Jewish education by the readers of the *Jewish Observer*, we seek only to describe how it now appears that this \$3 million per year will in fact be used:

1. A policy committee of the

Federation Fund for Jewish Education will recommend policy to the Board of Trustees of UJA and Federation for the use of these funds. The committee consists of Mr. Gruss himself, the philanthropist who gave this movement such great impetus; members of the former Program Development Fund Committee, a predecessor direct aid program for Jewish education; and representatives of Federation and UJA. There is a broad spectrum of belief in this committee and the orthodox are particularly well represented, although they are essentially people who would be described by the *Jewish Observer* as modern or neo-orthodox.

2. One major segment of the funds will be used to develop Education Welfare Benefits for the full-time teachers in yeshivos, day schools and supplementary schools, who are not otherwise covered by other employment nor through the employment of their spouses. Almost one-third of the full-time teachers in Jewish education are not even covered by Social Security,

and we are all familiar with occasions when the community has had to go begging to support a widow and family of a teacher or principal who has died suddenly. This Fund will encourage all schools to participate in Social Security and provide incentives for a basic plan of life insurance, major medical and pension.

3. Another major portion of the Fund will be in direct aid in blocks to day schools and supplementary schools which qualify by virtue of minimum size, willingness to provide audited books, and other non-ideological criteria. As to who will decide how teachers are to be qualified, a question raised in the *Jewish Observer* article, each school is asked simply to indicate how it qualifies teachers in accordance with whatever standard or qualifying body it purports to believe in. The net result of all of these standards will probably result in larger and more meaningful grants to fewer schools than under the smaller Program Development Fund.



4. The final major portion of the \$3 million will go towards innovative and demonstration grants— attempts to reach children who are now receiving no Jewish education; attempts to maintain children in supplementary schools beyond Bar and Bat Mitzvah by providing various incentives for that year of study, including partial subsidies for trips to Israel; encouragement of Shabbatonim and other family experiential learning. Requests for Proposals will be sent to all Jewish educational institutions and will be evaluated according to the criteria

for these various demonstration programs.

5. Finally, some very small amounts will continue to be set aside for some proven programs such as a small amount of operating money to the Hebrew Free Loan Society which frees up a large amount of capital for interest-free loans to day schools; the Survival drive of the Board of Jewish Education which through advertisements in newspapers and on TV and radio, followed by a hotline, annually enrolls up to a thousand children a year in various forms of Jewish

education and the like.

The Committee remains flexible and open to other suggestions and ideas for the most effective use of these funds and interested individuals or organizations in the Jewish community are free to contribute their suggestions.

Sincerely,  
DONALD FELDSTEIN D.S.W.  
Executive Director  
for Community Services  
Federation of Jewish  
Philanthropies of New York

## Reply to Mr. Feldstein:

### *Of Applause and Trepidation*

Mr. Feldstein's letter is welcome, demonstrating as it does further evidence that the "Federation Fund for Jewish Education" is a major new departure on the part of the New York Federation. The outline sketched by his letter has been further fleshed out in communications to yeshivos and other Jewish schools from the Federation's Board of Jewish Education. The historic nature of this undertaking should not be lost on the Jewish community: Federation's long-standing lack of concern with yeshiva education is beginning to change. Whenever a major organization undertakes a new policy designating approximately a tenth of its budget for a particular area of activity, it demonstrates an unmistakable commitment. For its newly intensified interest in Jewish education, Federation is to be applauded.

Unfortunately, however, there are equally unmistakable signs in Mr. Feldstein's letter, as well as in subsequent events, that the fears expressed by JO in January were not without substance.

### *Absence of Yeshiva Representation*

It would seem that Point 1 of Mr. Feldstein's letter betrays a fatal flaw that has already led to suspicion and acrimony. He says: "There is a broad spectrum of belief in this committee that the Orthodox are

particularly well represented, although they are essentially people who would be described by *The Jewish Observer* as modern or neo-Orthodox."

The description of the committee's Orthodox representation is not ours, but we will accept Mr. Feldstein's word for it. It is thus disturbing that a program designed to be of substantial assistance to yeshivos should, by Federation's own admission, be devoid of yeshiva representation. Would a Federation committee on aid to hospital medical programs be composed of political science professors? Obviously, a program formulated to meet a specific need must be formulated with the input of people out of that particular discipline, who are not only experts in the field but also totally involved in its problems. It should thus be axiomatic that Federation's committee on Jewish education include experts from the mainstream of New York's yeshiva education system. The point is not even primarily whether the composition of the committee is modern —, neo —, or even non-Orthodox. The point is that neither the committee as currently constituted, nor—even more important—the Board of Jewish Education bureaucracy which defines needs, formulates options and will execute policy, includes any people sufficiently committed to keep yeshiva education of the highest standard common to New York, who can be counted on to deal with its concerns

with sympathy and intelligence.

Even more disturbing than the glaring lack of yeshiva representation on the committee is the incredible fact that no invitation was ever extended to *Roshei Hayeshiva*, *menaholim*, or administrators, to meet with the committee. The Yeshiva position was presented—not very ably, it would appear—by the Board of Jewish Education. Indeed, several of the letters dispatched to the institutions during June, informing them of the final form of the various programs, were signed by lay members of the committee, but composed and dictated by an executive of BJE—as is apparent from the initials at the foot of the page.

According to the statistics used by Federation, 55,000 students attend yeshivos and day schools, far more than the total number receiving all other forms of Jewish education, no matter how limited. Yet the people responsible for educating these children were not even deemed worthy of a hearing. It is not nearly enough for Federation to declare that "the Orthodox are particularly well represented"—democracy, if not common sense, would dictate that the yeshivos and day school spokesmen be the ones to decide that. Indeed, the programs that emerged from the flawed formulation process demonstrate starkly that the fears we expressed in January were better founded than the projections of Mr. Feldstein's statement.



### *Are the Yeshivos Being Served?*

A thorough analysis of the programs announced by the "Federation Fund for Jewish Education" would reveal their many shortcomings and, in particular, their bias away from yeshivos and most day schools. Such a point-by-point analysis would be far too lengthy for the purpose of this reply, but some essential points should be made.

The only element of the total program for which a precise dollar amount was budgeted is for the Demonstration Grants Program which, as Mr. Feldstein summarizes it (Point 4 of his letter) attempts to encourage innovative programs for reaching out toward children and adults who are uninvolved or little involved in Jewish life. A total of 1,140,000, fully 38% of the Fund budget, is designated for these items. We do not quarrel with the need to bring Jewish awareness to the 57% of all Jews, who have no synagogue or organizational affiliation whatsoever. But the components of this program leave very little room for yeshiva participation.

By the way, the figure of "up to 1,000 children" enrolled by the BJE hotline has been contested, if not disproven—but this is not the place for the details.

Of the remaining 62% of the total expenditure, some is specifically designated for "supplementary schools" such as Talmud Torahs and Sunday schools. No total dollar amount is given, although grants are described as ranging from \$500-5000.

Of the section of the Fund for which yeshivos and day schools are eligible, grants are described as ranging from \$3,500 to \$15,000 to "provide basic support for eligible yeshivos and day schools." To qualify, an elementary school must have a minimum enrollment of 200; and a high school, a minimum of 100. There are a series of mostly reasonable conditions which must be met to qualify. Even then, one can only feel an enormous let-down when a program loudly touted as a savior of Jewish education is pre-

pared to offer no more than \$7.50 per elementary student and \$15 per high school student. And not all schools are guaranteed disbursements; even after meeting the requirements, they are assured only of "consideration."

In addition, one might well question why an elementary school of 150 children, or a high school of 60 not qualify for grants.

For larger schools—300 students for elementary and 150 for secondary—there is a program of one-time only block grants of up to \$25,000. In Federation's words, "The major purpose of the Block Grant is to support and improve the educational quality of a limited number of schools and to help those schools with unmet needs. Here, the eligibility criteria focus on innovation, reach-out, learning disabilities, service to immigrants, and special new programs and procedures.

Again, one questions the enrollment requirement for grants for innovation or schools for immigrant children. Both "demonstration projects" and work with immigrant children have been exceptionally successful in smaller schools.

The general picture emerging from a study of Federation's purported goals and criteria is this:

There is a heavy emphasis on non-yeshiva areas of the *Chinuch* field. All segments of Jewish Education are to be rewarded primarily for innovation, uniqueness, gimmickry, and special service to important, but limited constituencies. Programs of that sort, as every experienced educator knows, frequently lend themselves more to the prolific pen of the program-writing wizard than to the efficacious service of the teacher or student. One would have thought that by 1979, even BJE would have heard the general American backlash against expensive, untried, unsuccessful frills that swamped—and nearly drowned—public education in the aftermath of the free-spending, ill-planned days of the Great Society. America is demanding basic education while the BJE

bureaucracy is still squandering dollars that at best are too few, on the sort of programs that make better press releases than tangible results. Our January article questioned a Federation announcement that promised a bold new undertaking to help rescue yeshivos and day schools. Where is the rescue? In response to the staggering expenses and mounting deficits of Torah institutions, BJE says "Let them eat cake!" Even if the frills and puffery of romantic programs were truly substantive, they are a luxury that Torah institutions cannot afford. Instead of a new program, BJE's specialists are sewing up more of the same.

May we ask another question: Why is there no recognition of the fact that Torah institutions—which have by far the overwhelming majority of children receiving a Jewish education—have been serving refugees, have built a new *Chinuch* system while Talmud Torahs declined, have bred and trained superior and dedicated teachers? BJE's programs sound as though the yeshivos, not the Talmud Torahs, were the disaster area of Jewish education. Instead of being applauded and assisted, the yeshivos are patronized and asked to display their credentials.

### *Who Rates the Teachers?*

In points 2 and 3 of his letter, Mr. Feldstein deals with teacher needs. One can only welcome any benefits offered this group—probably the most valuable and most severely underpaid segment of the Jewish community. We must, however, reiterate a note of caution expressed in the January article, for Mr. Feldstein's letter gives us cause to question: he states that each school will be asked "simply to indicate how it qualifies teachers in accordance with whatever standard or qualifying body it purports to believe in." Such a request says both much and little. It implies that schools will have to submit a teacher accreditation standard that will have to satisfy the body that will disburse funds and confer recognition. At the same time, the standard can be

virtually whatever pleases the school. Of what value can such a standard have—other than to set the precedent that yeshivos must be found qualified by BJE in order to pass muster? This, indeed, forebodes a long term danger, compromising the integrity and independence of yeshivos. Moreover, it is surely an affront to the most dynamic and successful institutions in American Jewish life, the yeshivos, that they are asked to justify *their* educational standards to a body that represents primarily the declining Sunday school and Talmud Torah elements of Jewish education! Can we imagine that Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia would be asked to justify their academic standards to the local Federations that provide relatively small subsidies to their Hillel programs?

Even the New York State Commission of Education has come to recognize that in granting accreditation to the the general studies department of the yeshivos, the sole

criterion is the *results* of their educationalefforts—i.e. the skills and knowledge of the graduates. The State is completely foregoing the conventional requirements, such as accredited teachers, specifications for school plant, and so on. Should the Federation's BJE have less trust in the yeshivos it intends to service; than does New York State?

The only move thus far in the proposed Educator Welfare Program is a Federation commitment to pay for term life insurance of \$10–25,000 for each teacher, depending on his or her salary. The legitimate needs of these unsung heroes of Jewish education should, perhaps, have merited a larger slice of the total budget, but every bit of assistance is welcome. But—who decided that life insurance was more important than health insurance or a salary increase? Surely not the teachers or the schools. Again, there is a patronizing attitude here that is unwise, undiplomatic, and surely not inspiring for confidence.

### Dampened Optimism

Since the Federation first announced its intention to come to the aid of yeshivos, that first flush of optimism has been dampened a bit. That is unfortunate, for an historic opportunity to benefit the total Jewish community is at hand, and it would be criminal to fumble it. We would be guilty of wrong-headed chauvinism were we to suggest that every policy or safeguard suggested by Federation is incorrect, or that it has no right to insist on certain standards of its own choosing. But too much is at stake here in terms of sorely needed funds and potential, to allow it to be frittered away because the entrenched bureaucracy if the BJE insists on declaring that "papa knows best."

Federation has gone to great lengths, and undoubtedly has had to overcome much internal opposition to institute this program. It should take the last necessary step of consulting with and giving meaningful representation to the group it purports to help. N.W.

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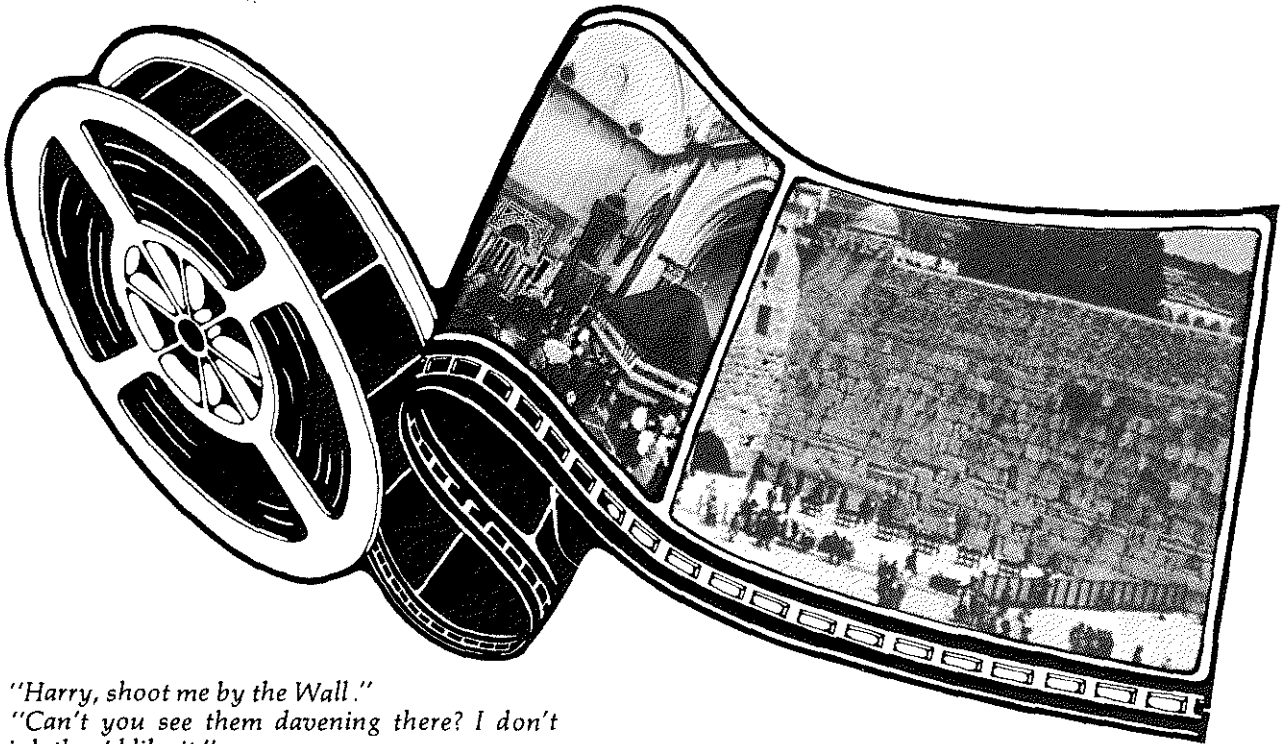
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## Shoot Me By The Wall



"Harry, shoot me by the Wall."

"Can't you see them davening there? I don't think they'd like it."

"Harry . . . Take the picture!"

"Well, alright—if you insist . . ."

"Malki, make sure that you get Abdul El Fawgi's glass factory into the picture of Maaras HaMachpelah!"

**T**HIS SUMMER, thousands of religious Jews, amongst them hundreds of yeshiva and Bais Yaakov students, will be visiting Eretz Yisroel. High priority in their itinerary will be visits to the many Mekomos Hakedoshim (holy sites).

There was once a time when just about the sole motivation for any Jew to visit to the Holy Land was to be able to say: כדי להפיל תחנוני ולבקש מאח מלכנו בוראנו ויוצרנו, ממ"ה הקב"ה, שתמלא רחמים עלי ועל כל עמך בית ישראל בכל מקום . . . שהם [לפיכך] הנני באחי היום ועניתי בזה הדרך. . . . *"Behold I have undergone severe hardships to come to this holy place to pour out my supplications, and request from You our*

*Father our Creator, . . . that You have mercy upon me and every Jew . . ."* Countless Jews uttered such prayers with the most fervent *kavana* and sincerity. They had made enormous sacrifices to reach those holy places, so insistent was their longing. By the time they finally reached their goal, the dramatic outpouring of their pent-up emotions was surely understandable.

Those days are fast disappearing, I propose, because for so many — the observant following close on the heels of the non-observant — the camera preceeded the *Tehillim* in priority among the appurtenances to take along. In addition, the resolution of the pilgrim has altered: Today, many an indigent father who wishes to marry off his children turns with more confidence to a *Gemach* (free loan society) than to *Kever Rochel*.

The urgency of the implorations has also lessened. The problems of modern Jewry do not seem as acute as those of the pogrom-beleaguered Jew of yesteryear. Many of today's Jews have trained their eyes on a variety of other salvation-options, besides pouring out their hearts to the A-mighty.

Hanoch Teller, an American studying in Mir-Jerusalem, is a frequent contributor to these pages.

Furthermore, today's pilgrim to a certain extent has become a "sightseer" and it has become increasingly more difficult for the average tourist to approach the burial sites of the *Avos* and *Emahos*, *Tannaim* and *Rishonim* with appropriate gravity when they are presented as mere scribbles on a sightseer's itinerary. The *Kapittel Tehillim* recited at the *kever* becomes reduced to a (*lehavdil*) benediction uttered by the excursionist over the tourist attraction — equivalent to the obligatory perusal of a guide book at any major site. For so many, only this token "benediction" separates the *Mekomos HaKedoshim* from Massada, Yad Kennedy, and the Israel Museum.

One might question the depth of emotion one can reasonably anticipate from a prayer recited from a *Tehillim* precariously balanced between a camera and a tour brochure, within the time pressures foisted by a hurried and harried tour-guide . . . the yield can hardly be expected to exceed the investment.

Not only does the pilgrim-cum-tourist suffer, *Mekomos HaKedoshim* also are dishearteningly mistreated . . . Friday night at the *Kosel*, for instance, as at so many other worthy assemblies *lidvar mitzva*, too many participants forget their primary purpose for coming, and "the gathering place of the exiles" is relocated from hotel lobbies to the shadow of *Har Habayis* (the Temple Mount).

"Lecha dodi likras kallah — Sam! it's a small world, Pnei Shabbos Nekab — Moish — you're here too!"

Who stops to ponder what was once on the other side of the Wall?

\* \* \*

WHEN I WAS a child, the camera man used to periodically visit the neighborhoods with his pony. The children would line up with their parents for their picture on the pony. No stage in childhood was complete without one . . . Today, who can return to America from a visit to Israel without his or her "picture at the wall"?

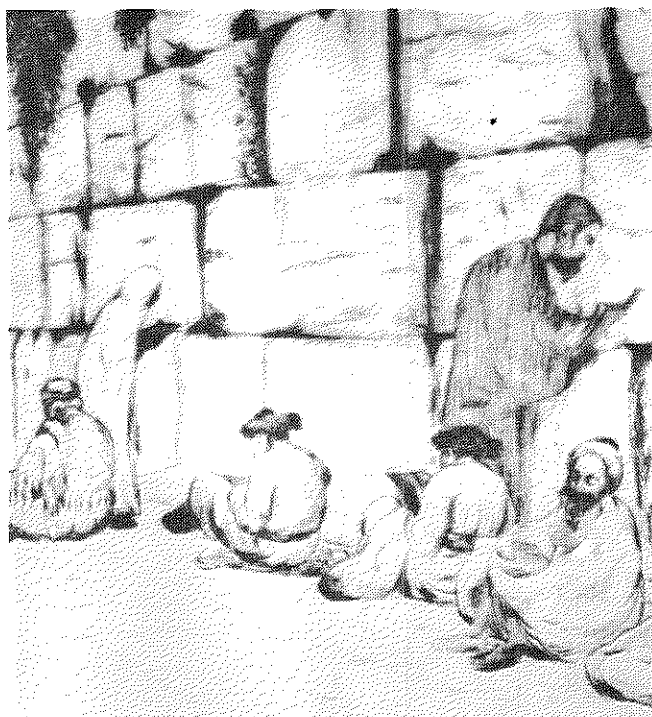
Some may blame the State of Israel for turning every thing into a tourist attraction, and undeniably there is some justification for this accusation — but the problem basically is cultivated in America. From the day the intended visitor purchases his airplane ticket, and probably long before, his tourist mentality grows . . . For some, the decision to visit *Eretz Yisroel* comes after facing a choice between *Yerushalayim*, Acapulco, or the Catskills. With such an impious beginning, a less than sacred denouement is not unexpected.

Reb Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk זצ"ל explained the verse in *Tehillim* (87:5) "But of Zion it shall be said, 'This and that man were born in her'" to mean that each person who comes to *Eretz Yisroel* must be born afresh to appreciate the country's numinous nature. Instead, however, the American tourist has been cogitating since the *Seder's leshana haba'a be'Yerushalayim*

(Next Year in Jerusalem) how he will get the most mileage or relaxation out of his two weeks in Israel . . . No different, indeed, than the person whose sole purpose for coming to *Eretz Yisroel* is "to visit relatives."

\* \* \*

THE ACCESSABILITY of *Eretz Yisroel* also has a share in the obscuring of the holiness of the Holy Land. The High Priest, who could enter the *Kodesh Hakodoshim* (Holy of Holies) but once a year, surely approached the sacred chamber with appropriate sobriety. In the same context, one can picture the elevated mien of the *shtetl*



*Yid* who had saved up his rubles for twenty years to make the long, taxing journey to *Eretz Yisroel*. For over a month he joggled and jostled with the sway of the ship, grasping firmly to his bench — and his *Tehillim*, which he continuously consulted.

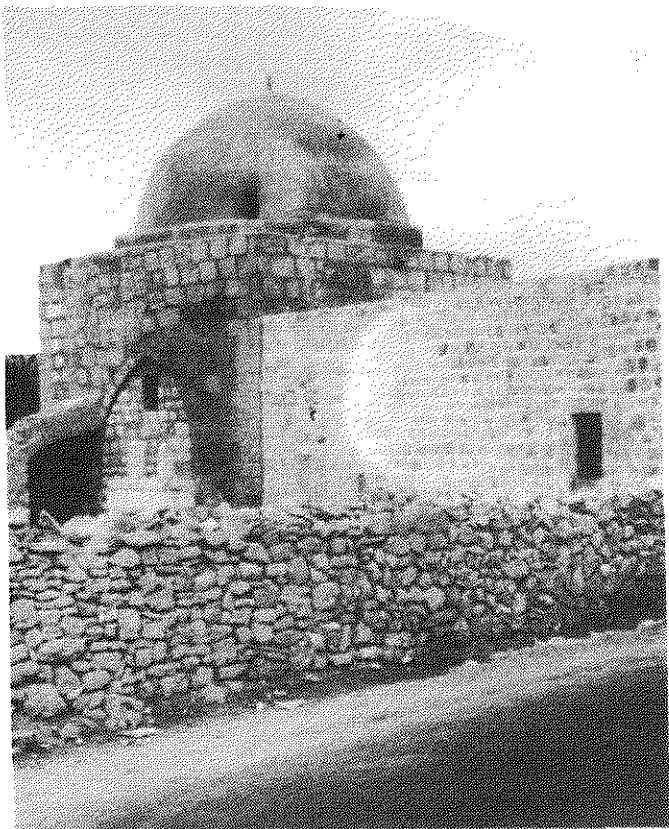
Times have changed, and we have changed . . . The days of the family representative leaving for *Eretz Yisroel* have been replaced by the family excursion. A mere twelve hours is the only time reserved for preparing oneself for the holy journey. Generally, these twelve hours are so preoccupied with creature comforts that it is difficult to concentrate on much else — what with the crew of flight attendants wining and dining the passengers, a movie playing overhead, and a "magazine of the air" under one's elbow. One has difficulty remembering the *Tehillim*, and when one finally reaches for it, a voice interrupts: "Sir, would you care for a *New Yorker* magazine? the *Times*? or the *Wall Street Journal*?"

Time for reciting a *Hineni Muchan Umezuman*, let alone contemplate its meanings — the most minimum

requirement before embarking on such a pilgrimage — is often very hard to come by. And once the moment is found, and held onto, the PA blasts out its: "Hava Nagilla" . . . Welcome to Israel!

\* \* \*

**W**HAT CAN BE DONE? As in all other spheres, proper education would go a long way toward reaping desirable results. Instruction that is not directed at *where* to



go, *why* to go and *how* to go is incomplete. Certainly, the major *Mekomos haTorah* and *Chassidus* deserve equal time with the *Mekomos Hakedoshim*. It is a pity that even many a serious visitor often limits himself to graves of the past and so does not avail himself of the many living "monuments" that bless Israel. A visit to the vibrant yeshivos of Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, a *Shabbos tefilla* or *tisch* with one of the salient Chassidic groups, a private audience with a leading Torah personality — can a visit to *Eretz Yisroel* be complete without all of these?

The virtual lack of organized religious tours is disheartening: "Egged" has cornered the market with tours that by-and-large are either *Mechallel Shabbos*, of strictly Christian interest, or of negligible religious Jewish orientation. When embarking on a visit to a particular place, the major emphasis must be on some enlightenment regarding the destination. (Could one

imagine a visit to the Alamo without some idea of Texas history—*lehavdil?*) For example, before visiting the grave of the *Rambam* in Tiberias one should take some time to read his *Iggeres Teiman* (Epistle to Yemen), and to study the last paragraph in the *Rambam's Yad Hachazaka* on Laws of *Shmittah* and *Yovel*:

"... And not just the tribe of Levi, but rather every individual whose spirit and intelligence has endowed him with the will to separate himself from the masses to stand before the L-rd . . . to serve Him, to worship Him, to know Him, and follow the just path . . ."

—If this means delaying the visit, so be it. It is a worthwhile investment in recognizing whose remains are buried there.

Then, in Safed, contemplate the *shul* that once stood there . . . But first get your bearings. To the north is Meron, the burial site of Rabban Shimon Bar Yochai, Hillel, and Shamai . . . A little to the west is where (according to one tradition) Mordechai and Esther are buried, not far from Yehoshua's Synagogue. To the east lie Rabbeinu Yehuda Hanassi, Abaye, and Rava. Every degree of the compass is sanctified with the graves of the *Tannai'im*, *Amoraim* and *Rishonim*. Walk through the narrow, cobbled streets which reverberate with *kedusha* at every step, past the *Menoras Hamaor Shul* and *Ari Beis Medrash*. Contemplate this *Shul* as it once was. It had quite an impressive *Mizrach vant*. The *rav* was the *Ari'zal*, the famed *Mekubal*. The *Posek* was Rav Yosef Karo, author of the *Shulchan Aruch*; Shlomo Alkabetz, the composer of *Lecha Dodi* was the *Chazan*; and the *Chareidim* was the *Shamash*. The mystery yet to be solved is — who was the *gabbai*? Perhaps the "*Ramak*," maybe the "*Mabit*" . . .

\* \* \*

**A**LTHOUGH the *Gemora* (*Pesachim* 50b) emboldens *מחך שלא לשמה בא לשמה* "Out of doing good (*shelo lishma*) with an ulterior motive comes doing good for its own sake (*lishma*). There are, of course, no guarantees. The *Gemora*, however, does comment (*Pesachim* 8b):

Why were the sweet fruits of *Genosar* not created in Jerusalem instead? So Festival pilgrims should not say, "Had we merely ascended (*olinu*) in order to eat the fruits of *Genosar* in Jerusalem, it would have suffice<sup>d</sup> us" with the result that the pilgrimage would not be for its own sake (*lishma*). Similarly, Rav Doesthai son of Rav Yannai inquired: "Why were the hot springs of Tiberias not created in Jerusalem instead?" So that the Festival pilgrims should not say, "Had we merely ascended (*olinu*) in order to bathe in the hot springs of Tiberias it would have been reason enough to come" —with the result that the pilgrimage would not be for its own sake . . ."

Remarkably prophetic: "the result being an *aliya shelo lishma* . . ."

19

# The Brisker Legacy

The Lithuanian city of Brisk is celebrated as a home of Talmudic scholars, notably the famous Soloveitchik family—Reb Yoseif Dov ("Reb Yosha Ber," 5580/1820-5652/1892), Reb Chaim (5613/1853-5678/1918), and Reb Yitzchok Zev ("Reb Velvel," 5647/1887-5719/1959) וזכרונם לברכה, who in succession served as rabbis of Brisk. In addition to their lomdus (analytical approach to Talmud study) and their kano'us (zeal), there is yet another tradition, equally ingrained, but

## I. The Bach's Formula for Recovery

When the *BACH* Rabbi Yoel Surkis (16th Century scholar whose redactional notes appear in the margin of Talmud and *Shulchan Aruch*) was Rav in Brisk, he directed a Yeshiva that attracted students from all over Eastern Europe. His graduates became outstanding rabbinical leaders in a number of prominent commu-

One morning, when the *BACH* was on his way to the yeshiva, a woman came running toward him crying: "Rebbe, help me. My only child who attended your yeshiva took sick and was hospitalized for a full month. Now the physicians have given up on him and sent him home. Rebbe, help me!"

The *BACH* explained that his medical knowledge was in no way superior to that of the physicians, adding, "In what way can I possibly be of help? Even our forefather Yaakov told Rachel (when she pleaded with him 'Give me children'): Can I substitute for G-d?"

She begged: "Rebbe, I have not come for your personal aid in my son's behalf, but rather for the merit of

*Rabbi Balgley, a native of Brisk, served as Rav in Dubinova, Poland, and now resides in Monsey, New York. His "Growing Up in Brisk" appeared in Sept. '78 IO.*

not as widely known: the exceptional Brisker generosity.

Some stories regarding these traits were recounted by RABBI CHAIM LEIB BALGLEY שליט"א in the September '79 Jewish Observer. On these pages, Rabbi Balgley continues in his reminiscences, relating several incidents regarding outstanding rabbinical leaders of Brisk through the ages—incidents that exemplify the Brisker legacy.

your Torah study at the yeshiva."

"This is an altogether different matter," said the Rabbi. "What is your son's name, and what is your name?" He recorded these names and sent her home with his blessings.

At the *shiur*, the Rabbi related the incident to his students and asked them to concentrate on the Torah discourse he was about to deliver, in which merit G-d should send a complete and speedy recovery to that sick boy. Upon the conclusion of the Torah lecture, the Rabbi recited the customary *Mi Shebeirach* prayer for the sick.

The following day, the mother entered the yeshiva and with tears of joy, related what had transpired several hours after her street-side plea with the Rabbi—how her son had opened his eyes, then asked for water, and later for some food; and shortly afterward got out of bed and played about on the floor. The mother then publicly—before the assembly of students and teachers—expressed deep gratitude to G-d and took leave.

Later in the day, after she had returned home, the family physician stopped by to check on the child. When he saw the boy walking about and playing, he exclaimed: "This is beyond all wonders! We had expected his life to end in a matter of days. What in the world happened since he came home from the hospital?"

Upon learning the sequence of events, the physician exclaimed: "This is truly *tchias hamei'sim*—a revival of the dead! I am now a convinced man of faith."

(This incident is recorded in the Book of Records of Brisk.)

[illegible]



## II. Protector of the Schools

Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin (5577/1816-5658/1896) was a young man when he became *rav* of Brisk. At that time, the Maskilim were attempting to reform the Jewish educational system, assuming that once they have taken over the schools all other aspects of Jewish life would fall into place, gradually eliminating the older folks with their "old-fashioned ways."



At that time, the Mayor of Brisk was a well-known anti-Semite. He especially could not countenance the Orthodox Jews and their way of life. Hence, when young, inexperienced Reb Yehoshua Leib became spiritual leader of Brisk, the Maskilim seized the opportunity to meet with the Mayor and attack the religious Jews and their schools. They faulted the instructors as being totally inconsistent with the spirit of the times, the classrooms as unhygienic—plus several other "undesirable features." Without much difficulty, they convinced the Mayor that he should force the new young *Rav* to toe the line.

The Mayor sent for the president of the *Kehilla* and insisted that he update the Jewish School, but the president protested that all religious, spiritual, and educational matters were in the *Rav's* domain, and under his sole jurisdiction. The Mayor then invited the *Rav* for a discussion, congratulating him upon assuming the exalted rabbinical leadership of Brisk. He then informed him that a new educational system was being instituted for the benefit of the entire Jewish community, which the *Rav*, as supreme authority, was now to set into motion.

The *Rav* instantly explained that when the Creator gave the Torah to the Jews, He commanded them to study this Torah in accordance with a prescribed method and system, which has been going on for some three thousand years—generation after generation. No temporal authority had the right to change this educational system.

The Mayor was enraged at the *Rav's* calm independence, not aware that the *Rav* was merely conforming to: "Thou shall not fear any man."

This was the first time anyone had dared disobey the Mayor, who rose in a fit of anger, paced back and forth excitedly in his office and barked: "I'm busy right now and in a hurry to attend an important meeting out-of-town. When I return, I expect you to sign this document (with the order to modernize the educational system explicitly spelled out) on the dotted line and carry out its terms." — at which he exited in a fury, slamming the door behind him.

The *Rav* followed him out calmly.

The Mayor mounted his large white steed, and rode off. While he was crossing a bridge at full gallop, the bridge collapsed and horse and rider were plunged into the raging river below, to be drowned.

The Jewish community of Brisk maintained their Torah educational system, while the Maskilim continued to plot against it at their meetings. Today, we still speak of Brisker Torah with awe, while the Maskilim of Brisk have long been forgotten.

## III. The Road to Brisk

Prior to assuming the *rabbonus* in Brisk, Reb Yosha Ber was *Rav* in Slutsk—a position he relinquished on account of the following incident:

The Czar had a policy of conscripting young Jewish children into the army for a twenty-year term of duty. These children-soldiers were called "Cantonists." This decree of whisking away young Jewish children deep into Siberia, isolated from other Jews, was in essence *shmad*. The government set a quota for each community, affecting rich and poor families alike, without exception. The rich paid high bribes to avoid the decree for their sons, but the quota still had to be met, so children of poor families were kidnapped.



A young boy from a nearby town was studying in the Slutsk elementary yeshiva. Some wealthy citizens had this child snatched, and locked up in an out-of-the-way hut. Reb Yosha Ber learned of this and was deeply disturbed. He pleaded with the abductors for the boy's release, but was ignored. Seeing that he could accomplish nothing with negotiations, he investigated and found out where the boy was being held. He gathered some of his loyal followers at midnight, and broke through the door with a hatchet and freed the boy.

The wealthy group was infuriated at Reb Yosha Ber's arrogance in overriding them, and had him dismissed. . . . Others say that in view of the unsavory element to be dealt with, he simply resigned. He left Slutsk for the city of Brodt, where Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, would renowned *gaon*, was *rav*. There, in the atmosphere of the 24-hour Torah day, Reb Yosha Ber spent three happy months totally immersed in study.

Upon taking leave of Brodt and its famous *gaon*, Reb Yosha Ber said: "*Chazal* teaches us that a person should not part company with his fellow without a *halacha* discussion, to fix the occasion in his memory." Reb Shlomo Kluger replied: "I'll pose a *kushya* (difficult

question) for you, for which I am certain you will not have an answer. That is—"Kashya olei pri'das'chem—your taking leave is *kasha*—difficult for me to bear."

After the bitter incident in Slutsk, Reb Yosha Ber did not care to remain in the rabbinate. However, the rabbinical post was open in Brisk and a delegation was sent to Reb Yosha Ber to ask him to accept the position. He declined.

I had heard from the Chofetz Chaim that the community of Brisk was extremely anxious to obtain the rabbinical leadership of Reb Yosha Ber, and delegated a larger committee to entreat him not to reject a city of 50,000 Jews praying for his arrival. Reb Yosha Ber was so impressed that he and his Rebbetzin set out at once for Brisk. At this, the Chofetz Chaim declared: "Master of the Universe! Behold Yosha Ber! Upon hearing that a community of Jews are prayerfully awaiting his arrival he went there forthwith. All Israel has been awaiting Moshiach for so long. Isn't it surely time that You immediately send us the Redeemer?"

(Such was the Chofetz Chaim's way of inbuing every event with spiritual significance.)

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## IV. A Visitor to Brisk

It was after World War I, and the Slonimer Rebbe, Reb Avraham, who was universally admired as an exemplary servant of G-d, was visiting Brisk. I was at his *Shalosh Seudos* meal, and the Rebbe expounded on the maxim, "Be not like the servants who serve the Master with the expectation of receiving reward, but rather . . . without any such expectation," and "Let all your deeds be for sake of Heaven." He added, "One should be ready to offer his share in the World-to-Come for the sake of a *mitzva*." The Rebbe concluded saying that in our generation there actually is such a Jew, who had offered his share in *Olam Habo* for the sake of a *mitzva*.



After *havdalla*, the Slonimer Rebbe's closest followers asked him privately, "Who is the person who was willing to do that?"

He replied with the following story:

"When the Chofetz Chaim was in Warsaw to publish his works, he was staying at a hotel where several *frum* Jewish merchants were having a discussion around a nearby table. Overhearing their conversation, the Chofetz Chaim advised them that they were talking *lashon hora* (slander), and that they should stop. One of the merchants apparently recognized the Chofetz Chaim and spoke up: 'You write your books on *lashon hora* to gain yourself *Olam Habo*. Good for you. But, who gave you the right to tell me what I may say?'

"Replied the Chofetz Chaim: 'I would gladly forfeit

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my share in *Olam Habo* for these works of mine on the condition that you agree to cease talking.' To which the merchant retorted, 'For this alone—your very forfeiting your share of *Olam Habo*—you will receive a special share of *Olam Habo*.' The Chofetz Chaim answered, 'Your reservations can easily be resolved. Let's go to a lawyer to draw up a legal document to the effect that I am forfeiting my share of *Olam Habo*; furthermore, should I earn any additional share for this I forfeit that also—plus any accruing benefits of *Olam Habo ad infinitum*. And I'll put my signature to it.' At which the Chofetz Chaim broke into tears and wept.

"Upon witnessing the Chofetz Chaim's profound sincerity, the group of business men stopped their conversation."

Among these businessmen was a Jew from Slonim and it was he who had related this incident to the Slonimer Rebbe, who had referred to it at the *Shalosh Seudos* that late *Shabbos* afternoon in Brisk.

### V. Postscript in Bialystok

When I was studying in Bialystok after World War I, the Chofetz Chaim visited our city to strengthen the *Vaad Hayeshivos*. This was the fund that he had established with Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzensky, to which each Jew was to contribute two dollars yearly, as a basis for financing the Yeshivos. Some people questioned the advisability of taxing rich and poor alike, at a time when poverty was rampant in Bialystok. After all, there were enough rich people in the town to easily cover the entire budget on their own.

The Chofetz Chaim replied with a smile: "Should we give away everything to the rich? Don't they enjoy plenty of *Olam Hazeih*? Should we also grant them all of *Olam Habo* as well? Each person should have a share in Torah—scholar and layman alike. The poor laborer and tradesman have practically nothing of *Olam Hazeih*. Should they also have nothing of *Olam Habo*?"

At this very same time, the above-mentioned Slonimer Chassid happened to be in Bialystok. He told several of his fellow friends, "Come, let's join in welcoming the Chofetz Chaim."

One of his cronies replied: "What for? He'll have a warm welcome without us. The entire city is turning out to give him a grand public welcome."

But the Slonimer Chassid would not relent. "Don't be lazy. Let's all join the festive welcome. The Chofetz Chaim certainly deserves the participation of each and everyone of us!"

He then told his friends about the incident he had witnessed in Warsaw, and the Slonimer Rebbe's comments that late *Shabbos* afternoon at *Shalosh Seudos* in Brisk. Needless to say they were convinced.



### VI. Brisk—A Spiceshop of Goodness and Zeal

A number of years ago, a visitor from Jerusalem brought me regards from the Brisker Rav, Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik (Reb Velvel) זצ"ל. Reb Velvel had related to the visitor that my father had been respected by the *Beis Horav* as an individual who had absorbed both the *ahavas chessed* (selfless generosity) and *kano'us* (zeal) associated with his family. On the one hand, Reb Velvel would send sick people to my father for his blessing, even before sending them to Reb Chaim.



On the other hand, according to a magazine article about Brisk, my father was well-liked, and used this popularity to influence others to come closer to Torah.

After World War I, barbershops were for some reason very lax in Sabbath observance. A *Shmiras Shabbos* Society was organized, including in its membership *dayanim* (rabbinical judges), *Roshei Yeshiva*, and other *talmidei chachomim*.

On Friday afternoons, members of this Society would visit half the city's Jewish shops (especially the barber-shops!), while my father visited the other half—they

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were successful in persuading virtually all the shop-owners to close their stores in time for *Shabbos*. Apparently the would-be Sabbath violaters recognized that their visitors' *kano'us* for *Shabbos* was motivated by genuine *ahavas Yisroel*.

A particular incident during the War demonstrated for me how my father had absorbed the *chesed* of Brisk to the point of risking his life for others: We had been driven out of Brisk, site of a large army encampment, and we settled in Vayazma, a town near Moscow, whose population was 99% non-Jewish. My father sent me to Lubavitch to study. Some time later, as the war progressed and the Germans were advancing toward Moscow, my father came to Lubavitch to take me home.

One day, when I was at the railroad station, a soldier approached me: "*Sholom Aleichem*. Do you recognize me? I was in an advanced class in Lubavitch when you were in the yeshiva . . . I'm awaiting an army train, which should be arriving in about an hour. I'll be leaving for Minsk, on the front lines."

Minsk was not far from Moscow, and the Germans were advancing with heavy artillery, tanks, and their comparatively modern airforce, which was mowing

down men like so many weeds.—The men? The Czar had given orders to fight to their death. "New people are born," he said, "but not land. Fight for every yard of land!" Soldiers sent to Minsk were known not to return.

My father joined us and listened in to our conversation. I introduced the soldier: "This is a *Yeshiva bochur* I know from my days in Lubavitch."

There he stood, with a rifle on his shoulders, white as chalk—a picture of fear. My father thought for a moment, then said to him, "Don't go on the train. Don't stand around here. Follow us home."

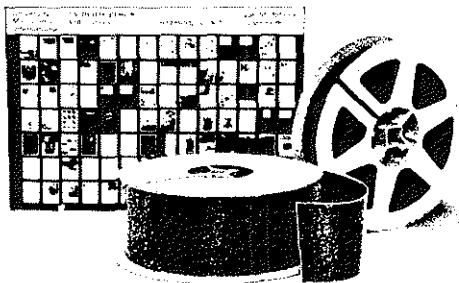
When we arrived home, my father set up temporary sleeping quarters in the basement and said: "To stay in the army and follow orders is absolute suicide. The Czar has said as much himself. You're my guest, but you mustn't go out or be seen. All our neighbors are non-Jewish. The Czar issued a decree that any soldier deserting the army or anyone sheltering a deserter will be executed. So don't leave this basement!"

We kept the boy hidden there until the war was over.

What amazed me throughout was my father's calm in the face of the daily danger involved—his matter-of-fact manner, as if we had simply invited a guest to stay overnight. I was even more moved by my father's profound respect for the young man as a Torah scholar—both attitudes reflecting the heritage of Brisk. It was precisely as the *Gemora* says: When one enters a spice-shop, sweet fragrances become attached to his clothing.

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CAN YOU imagine the horrified and indignant outcry that would be raised in our present day and age if the wearing of *arba kanfos* (four cornered ritual garment) in public were to be banned? Yet this is precisely what happened in the Italian port of Ancona in 1766 where, until then, it had been the normal practice to wear them in the street. The prohibition was not due to any wickedness on the part of the local authorities; it was imposed by the *Kehilla* itself in an effort to curb the flaunting of the *tallis kattan* which was deemed to be unnecessary. Only a *chassan* on his wedding day could still display his *tzitzis* in the open.

In many European Jewish communities of the past numerous similar measures to combat ostentation were taken. These *takonos* are recalled in *A History of Jewish Costume* by Alfred Rubens, published by Wiedenfeld and Nicolson. We hear much in today's permissive society about over-lavish wedding banquets, the enormous amount spent on the

clothing for these occasions, flashy and expensive cars, fancy holidays and — sometimes — the secret unhappiness of those who cannot really afford these luxuries but strive, often unsuccessfully, to keep up with their neighbours for the sake of appearances. Let us take a look at some of these ancient *takonos*, mainly concerning dress, designed as they were to ensure that Jews walked humbly before G-d and conducted all their affairs with the modesty that the Torah recommends — and indeed demands.

IN THE three famous German *Kehillos* of Speyer, Worms and Mayence no one was allowed to cut his hair according to non-Jewish fashion nor leave it to grow long. In addition everyone had to wear a cloak or topcoat when they attended *shul*.

The wearing of costly clothes by Jews after the manner of the Gentiles must cease, say the laws of the community of Frankfurt-am-Main (1603). Men were not allowed to

wear coloured or white wigs and women's shoes could only be black or white. A Barmitzvah boy could not wear a wig in front of the Torah neither could he distribute lavish presents to all and sundry. He was only allowed to give his teacher one collar as a gift!

Jewelry was heavily restricted in Italy from very early times. At Forli (1416) no man was permitted to wear more than one ring at one time whereas women were restricted to two or three. Husbands were held responsible for any breaches of the laws by their wives, and were fined accordingly. Those who refused to conform altogether were excluded from *minyanim* and were neither allowed to *lein* from the Torah nor perform *gelilah*. At Metz (1690) the wearing of diamonds — even imitation ones — was expressly forbidden, although a *kallah* could wear the jewels that had been given to her as presents but, even then, only on the first *Shabbos*.

AGAIN AT Forli, no fur cloaks could be worn although fur lined

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garments were allowed as long as the fur did not actually show. Black was the only permitted colour and this is, in general, an interesting point. The *Ramah* states that red is a colour favoured by the aristocratic classes and should be avoided in favour of black. Jewish people have long

abhorred the colour red in any case, considering it to signify cruelty.

Gold hair nets were denied to women in Forli as were belts for men if the silver buckles thereon exceeded six ounces in weight.

Dresses with trains were banned in Modena; neither could clocks,

repeater watches and jewel cases be carried uncovered in public. Likewise men could not wear plumes or similar ornaments on their hats.

HAMBURG disallowed the wearing of crinolines and Mantua clamped down on gold and silver embroidery.

In another place no more than three ladies and two maids could walk in the street together. In the laws of Hamburg (1715), no one but the bride and three bridesmaids could use a carriage at a wedding. Other guests were only permitted to travel in this manner if it were raining hard. No ribbons could bedeck either horses or coachman.

Special *talleisim* with gold *atoros* were allowed in Furth for *Shabbosos* and *Yomim Tovim*. When there was a doubt about the propriety of a certain garment, a picture of it was despatched to Poland for a rabbinical opinion. This occurred in the case of the rain cape, which the women of Furth first noticed in nearby Nuremberg. There was no objection to it on decency grounds — except regarding a *Shabbos* problem. Some argued that the cape could be considered as a coat whereas another school of thought deemed it a burden and therefore forbidden on *Shabbos*. When a picture of the cape was sent to Poland, it was promptly forbidden as *Shabbos* wear and thereupon it ceased to be fashionable.

OF COURSE, despite all these restrictions, members of the communities concerned did manage to "get round" the laws at times. The better clothes that *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* call for gave them these opportunities. However the laws had their point and a little of their spirit in today's free and easy atmosphere would not come amiss.

As the 1738 laws of Carpentras, France, state: "Everyone wants to look important and wealthy; rich and poor are indistinguishable."

Things haven't changed much. (Reprinted with permission from the London JEWISH TRIBUNE.)

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# P.S.

## Proselytizing the Unchurched

In the April JO, we commented on Alexander Schindler's proposal that Jewry engage in proselytizing non-Jews to replenish our diminishing numbers. Among the many reasons for objecting to the proposal, we mentioned that "one cannot help but wonder: how will we succeed in our efforts to persuade our Christian friends to deflect their missionizing efforts from our Jewish brothers to non-believing Gentiles, when others from our own ranks are seeking to win 'unchurched' Christians to Judaism, instead of concentrating on our own?"

It has not taken long for the prediction to come true. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which is the central body of Reform Judaism in the US and Canada, polled prominent Christian theologians as to their reactions to the Schindler Proposal. While a UAHC report expressed pleasure with the responses, we found them alarming, for—as the report itself stated—"several respondents made the point that seeking converts among the 'unchurched' was a two-way street and that the large number of unaffiliated Jews in the United States might be deemed legitimate 'targets' for Christian proselytizing."

Among the more specific comments quoted in the report we cite: "Dean Stendahl of Harvard University Divinity School expressed the view that reaching out to the unchurched was not proselytizing. He then asked: 'If your mission is non-proselytizing, is there also a way in which a Christian mission to the Jews can be seen as non-proselytizing?' . . .

"Dr. Fisher (on behalf of National Conference of Catholic Bishops) cautioned that 'many Christians will, in fact, attempt to use such a program as that suggested . . . to justify the intensification of existing 'outreach' efforts or even to aim these specifically at 'non-affiliated Jews, especially youth.' . . .

"Dr. Harvey G. Cox of the Harvard University Divinity School said that a person not born Jewish to choose to be a Jew 'further escalates the currently growing belief that any religion is something one chooses, not something due to an accident of birth,' Dr. Cox observed, adding: 'This in turn suggests that people born Jewish can choose another path, and should be allowed to do so if it seems more persuasive to them.'"

Why, then, was the UAHC pleased with the results of its poll? Because those polled all gave the Reform body high marks for "easing centuries old misunderstandings and tensions." It's nice to be liked by former adversaries, even if it also threatens your identity—if you are uneasy with it.

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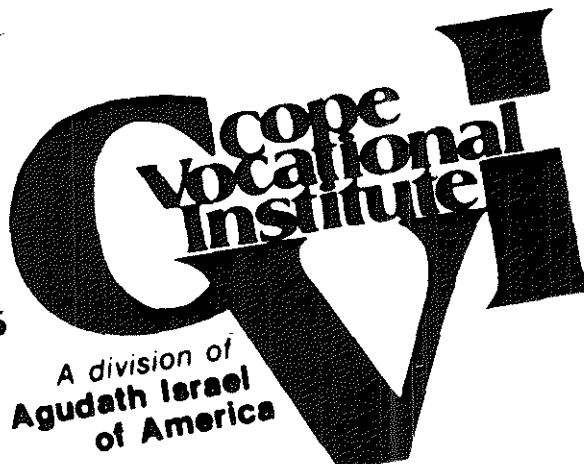
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## Letters to the Editor



### "Gedolei Yisroel": Facts and Psyches

To the Editor:

Having studied under Reb Chaim Shmulevitz זצ"ל for several years, I found the article written about him to have accurately portrayed the many facets of his great personality. However I fear that the reader may gain the impression that these aspects all manifested themselves equally in his personality. Reb Chaim was first and foremost a person permeated with Torah, and living in a world of Torah. For the majority of his life, he resisted any attempt to tear him away from Torah study—only in his last years, when necessity forced him into *Klal* work, did he leave his sheltered "world," and display his lofty character in *Bein odom lechaveiro*. And even then, one could see that it was only a temporary sojourn in the outside world, with an immediate return to his private domain of Torah. All this was foreseen by the great Mirrer Mashgiach, Reb Yeruchom Levovitz, זצ"ל, who had said, "Reb Chaim does not need to learn Mussar. His 'amolo' in learning Torah will bring him to those great heights that normally only learning Mussar can achieve." (As heard from Reb Wolbe שליט"א.)

I would also like to add a few details, based on how I had heard the stories from reliable sources; in all three instances, the additions render the incidents more comprehensible: (1) The *chavrusa* incident with Reb Shmuel Rozovsky happened on a *specific night*—the night before the fast of the Tenth of Teves. Reb Chaim figured that since they

would be fasting on the following day and would therefore be weak, they would do better to study the night before and sleep the next day. They learned that night. But instead of going to sleep the next day, Reb Chaim continued studying for another two days without stopping to eat or sleep!

(2) He had not "heard" that there were 14 questions on the topic they were studying." After Reb Chaim would learn a *sugya*, he would analyze it, "catalogue" its components, listing the questions he had asked on the *sugya*, and commit the information to memory. Thus the 14th question that he couldn't remember was his own.

(3) It was when Reb Chaim ate "kest" at his father-in-law's house (and not when he was the host) that he "quickly finished the fish, and joined a *chavrusa* waiting in the next room. . . ."

I would also like to take issue with a letter to the editor from a Y. A. Nora in the same J.O. in which he disagreed with certain points made in Dr. Mermelstein's article "Piety . . ." since I feel that Dr. Mermelstein's article is a classic, and that the points raised by Mr. Nora are incorrect: (a) There are two forms of "*dikduk bemitzvos*". One, is to be sure that one's concept of the *mitzva* agrees with the *halacha*. The second is to make certain that the *mitzva* is carried out properly from beginning to end. It is this second kind of care that marked the Brisker Rav's performance, which prompted the Chazon Ish's comments. (b) Extreme precaution in *mitzvos* is not a *derech* in *avodas Hashem*. It is a *result* of one. (It is important not to confuse the cause and effect.) (c) The Rav's

precision in his *Chiddushei Torah* does not in any way reflect on the correctness of the Chazon Ish's statement as understood by the writer.

Dr. Mermelstein specifically had written that no criticism was ever intended of the Brisker Rav. I believe that our Torah community should be mature enough to accept that *gedolim* also have distinct personalities, with different psychological make-ups that can be clearly discerned. To be sure, we cannot analyze *gedolim*, since psychology does not know the affects of *mitzvos*, *neshama*, etc. on a *gadol's* psychological make-up, but the Chazon Ish *did* explain the Rav's actions in such terms, and I do believe we can accept his explanation.

A. L. KOVNER  
Lakewood, N.J.

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## LETTERS CONTINUED

Rabbi Scheinman

("Growing into Marriage," Jan. '79)  
replies to criticisms:

I feel honored that so distinguished a Torah personality as Rabbi S. Carlebach chose to review and correct my article ("Letters" in JO May, '79). His suggestions have made me aware of the lack of clarity of a few points in my article, and I hope that my explanations will dispel the need for any such corrections.

(1) I acknowledge my omission of the word "*v'okir*—and I will love" (which incidentally is not מעיקר דין) in the discussion of the *kesuba*—marriage contract. However, I did not mean to negate the tremendous obligation for "love, honor, and respect." To do so is absurd, and contrary to the *ruach* of the Torah. It was my intention to emphasize that "love and honor" tend to be vague and nebulous, and that the most severe test of married life is to recognize the love and honor expressed in dealing with diapers, dishes, and *parnassa*. My point about the *kesuba* was that the main emphasis of this document is on the tangible manifestation of the *v'okir* and "מכבדה יותר מגופו"—honoring one's wife more than oneself.

(2) Rabbi Carlebach is correct in maintaining that so delicate a topic as *briya yeish me'ayin* should either have been omitted or explained more fully. Having printed it, however, I will try to add a few clarifying remarks:

As Rabbi Carlebach writes, no characteristic trait can exist *ex-nihilo* (i.e. only in man). However, there is one aspect of human existence that can only be applied to us, and that is as follows:

G-d is the Creator, and we are His *nivraim* (creatures). This is not a "characteristic-trait" embedded in

material existence; it is the basis for existence itself. To be a *nivra* means to receive one's complete existence from G-d, and thereby be a "taker" by one's very nature. By the same token, to create is *ipso facto* to give completely, for a creator can in no way be dependent upon his creations. Incidentally, the "taking" that Rabbi Carlebach refers to as *kaveyachol* (as if to say) a *midah* (attribute) of G-d is not to be associated with our *midah* of taking. We "take" to fulfill a need; while G-d "takes" to show His *ratzon* and pleasure with our *avoda*. Similar to the ruling in the *Gemora* in *Kiddushin*, which says that when a man of prestige accepts a gift it is as though he *gave* one, for his purpose in taking is to give satisfaction to the person presenting it to him.

(3) I regret that my article has been misconstrued to read as a "critique" on *bnei Torah*. I personally am a *kollel yungerman* and only by observing my *Rabbeim*, my elders,

and my colleagues have I begun to understand what a life of "giving" means.

My article was intended as a crystalization of the ideals of a *ben Torah*. The hyperbole of "naivete" at the beginning was meant as a medium for contrast rather than as a documentation of the prevalent attitude. Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe שליט"א has a small pamphlet for *chassanim*. The introduction is a "dialogue" between Rabbi Wolbe and a *chassan*, in which Rabbi Wolbe questions the *chassan* in regard to his ideals. The *chassan* replies with a vague, idealistic answer. Reb Wolbe then advises him that for the sake of a happy life he must be "more down to earth." This was the basis for my introductory remarks.

In short, I did not mean to denounce the ideals dear to every true *ben Torah*, but rather to translate them into practicality.

In conclusion, I would like to add that not everyone who steps into a

yeshiva is automatically a *ben Torah*; and someone whose conduct at home is not in line with what is taught in yeshiva, does not cast a shadow on all *bnei Torah*, but rather demonstrates that he himself unfortunately has strayed far off course.

A. SCHEINMAN  
Jerusalem

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## Granting Awards to Intermarried Jews

To the Editor:

With regard to your recent article on intermarriage, it is sad to note that a number of Orthodox organi-

zations and institutions have given public testimonials to intermarried Jews who have given them contributions.

The *halacha* forbids the granting of such awards to Jews who are married to non-Jews and that

should be sufficient by itself for this not to be done. In addition, the devastating effect of such presentations on young Jews might be considered.

We hope all Orthodox organizations will follow the *halacha* and not grant awards to intermarried Jews. We can then make the simple truth clear to young Jews—that money cannot buy everything.

IRVING (YITZCHOK) POLLACK  
The Bronx, N.Y.

## Sephardi or Arab?

To the Editor:

On p.5 of your issue of October 1978 there is a picture illustrating the Sephardi gap in Israeli society, which purports to show a group of Sephardic youngsters on the streets of Israel in 1978.

In reality, the picture is one of Arab newsboys waiting for *Ma'ariv* to appear so they can commence to hawk it through the streets of Jerusalem. The picture was taken on Rehov Hillel, right in front of the *Ma'ariv* distribution office.

As one who has lived in Jerusalem for ten years, I personally recognize both the location and many of the Arab newsboys in the picture.

AARON RAKEFFET-ROTHKOFF  
Jerusalem, Israel

The photograph was taken from Challenge, a magazine published by the Sephardi Council of Jerusalem, which listed it as we did—incorrectly. NW

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## "Diversity is Orthodoxy's Strength," Torah Sage Tells Agudath Israel Dinner



Over 1200 rabbinic leaders, educators, community activists and guests who crowded the grand ballroom of the New York Hilton Sunday evening, May 20, at the 57th annual dinner of Agudath Israel of America heard Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, the senior member of the movement's *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages) tell the gathering: "We must respect our differences with each other, for Orthodox Judaism is not a monolith. On the contrary, diversity is the strength of Orthodoxy." The revered Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath added: "Our efficacy, however, lies in our unity under Torah. The various shades of our backgrounds and our lifestyles are only as meaningful as is our allegiance to Torah. All our problems must be viewed in the light of our Torah ideals and be resolved accordingly."

The venerable sage declared: "How fortunate we are that the diverse elements of Jewry have been banded together under Torah by Agudath Israel—which is the handiwork of the Torah leadership of the past seventy years. Under Agudath Israel, innovative programs of *Chessed*, Torah support and *Hatzalah* of every kind have been launched, all under the close guidance of our generation's Torah scholars. The dynamo that drives these undertakings is the diversity of Agudath Israel's constituency."

The vast ballroom was filled with representatives of every walk of life, including yeshiva deans, Chassidic leaders, prominent rabbinical figures, and lay leaders—among them professionals, members of the legislative scene, businessmen, and representatives of the academe—all who identify with the ideals of Agudath Israel.

The gathering also heard a stirring address by Rabbi Michel Twerski of Milwaukee, a scion of a celebrated Chassidic dynasty, who challenged the members of the august rabbi-

nical dais to "harness the vast untapped source of productivity that lies out in this ballroom—this resource of loyalty and energy; return the faith they have in you by issuing more challenges their way." Rabbi Twerski pointed to the impressive list of achievements of Agudath Israel during the three decades since World War II, and emphasized its generally endowing Orthodoxy with the strength of purpose that grows from realizing its goals.

Other speakers also reflected on the diversity of Agudath Israel's broad constituency: chairman of the evening was Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, dean of the Mesivta of Greater Miami, Florida, who praised the organization and its leadership for tapping young talent for key leadership positions. Rabbi Feuer introduced two young spokesmen who each represented two new areas of Agudath Israel activities: a recent Iranian emigre who was absorbed at an American yeshiva through the efforts of an Agudath Israel program, and a Russian youngster who was prepared to enter a Mishna class in a Brooklyn yeshiva by JEP, Agudath Israel's reach-out program.

A high point of the evening was the presentation of Agudath Israel's awards to the evening's guests of honor by Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive president of the organization: Hagon Rav Aharon Kotler Memorial Award for distinguished service to Torah was given to Schabse Sturm, a well-known lay leader of the Bobover community; the "Shearis Hapleitoh Man of the Year"—Reb Elimelech Tress Memorial Award for exemplary service was awarded to Berish Zolty, a Polish-born active leader of the Toronto Orthodox community; and the "Moreinu Yaakov Rosenheim Memorial Award" for distinguished service to Agudath Israel was bestowed upon Abraham Halpern, a young Israeli-born member of a family with a long association with Agudath Israel,

currently living in Manhattan, who has gained recognition for his activities on behalf of many religious undertakings.

Rabbi Shmuel Bloom, Agudath Israel's Director of Special Projects, presented special community service awards to Manny Chopp, Rabbi Judah Dick, Hersh Leib Gefen, Rabbi Yehuda Oelbaum, Hersh Yitzchok Reich and Israel Rosenberg—each of whom has a record of unusual devotion to and fruitful activity to the needs of *Klal Yisroel*.

Among the other rabbinic dignitaries and Yeshiva deans who graced the center table of the three-tier dais were: Rabbi Shlomo Bergman (Bnei Brak), Rabbi Yekusiel Bittersfeld (Mesivta Be'er Shmuel), Rabbi Mendel Chodorow, Rabbi Simcha Bunim Ehrenfeld (Yeshiva Chasan Sofer), Rabbi Elya Fischer (Gerer Kollel), Rabbi Joshua Fishman (Torah Umesorah), Rabbi Naftali Friedler (Ner Israel, Toronto), Rabbi Gavriel Ginsburg (Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim), Rabbi Yeruchem Gorelik (Yeshiva Zichron Moshe), Rabbi Naftali Halberstam (Bobov), Rabbi Shneur Kotler (Beth Medrash Govoha, Lakewood), Rabbi Levi Krupenia (Yeshivas Kamenitz), Rabbi Isaac Lewin (Agudath Israel World Organization), Rabbi Binyomin Paler (Yeshiva Mkor Chaim), Rabbi Yisroel Perkowski (Bais HaTalmud), Rabbi Yaakov Perlow (Noveminsker Rebbe, Rosh Yeshivas Samson Raphael Hirsch), Rabbi Aaron Schechter (Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin), Rabbi Gedalia Schorr (Mesivta Torah Vodaath), Rabbi Elya Svei (Yeshiva of Philadelphia), and Rabbi Pinchas Teitz (Elizabeth, N.J.). (Listed in alphabetical order.)

Chairman of the dinner was Mr. Louis Glueck, a prominent lay leader who heads the Commission on Social Services of Agudath Israel of America. The dais tables included the leaders of numerous educational institutions of all levels throughout North America.

**Sixth World Congress  
of Agudath Israel  
Jerusalem Jan. 7-13**



JERUSALEM—Thousands of Orthodox rabbinic and lay leaders from every part of the world are expected to participate in the Sixth Knessia Gedola (World Congress) of the Agudath Israel World Organization, which will take place here in the huge Bin-yanei HaUma, from January 7-13, 1980. They will join the top leadership of religious Jewry in Israel in evaluating current positions taken by independent Orthodox Jewry in the Holy Land and internationally, and chart a blueprint for the future course of the Agudist world movement.

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## Agudath Israel Hails "Definition of Death" Bill Defeat

The Health Committee of the New York State Assembly was commended by Agudath Israel of America for New York State Assembly was commended by Agudath Israel of America for rejecting two bills which would have defined death as the cessation of brainwaves. The Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel, chaired by Dr. Bernard Fryshman, has been fighting efforts in Albany to legislate the definition of the time of death, on the grounds that "issues which are so deeply interfaced with religious and ethical implications cannot be dictated by government."

Two bills on this subject had been introduced in the current session of the legislature, relating to a patient on a respirator. According to Bill A. 7104 a doctor can pronounce the person dead if in his opinion he experienced "a total and irreversible cessation of total brain function." Bill A. 5309, essentially establishes the same determination of death, but limits it to a person who willed his body to medical research (known as an anatomical gift). Such a determination is unacceptable to Orthodox Jews, for whom ordinary "brain death" is not the final consideration according to Halacha; "pulling the plug" on the respirator under such circumstances would be forbidden for a religious Jew.

Agudath Israel charged that if the bills were ever to pass in their present form, without even including an "exemption clause" granting the next of kin the right to object on religious grounds, it would be a flagrant violation of the religious freedom rights which our nation has traditionally upheld. To assure the defeat of these latest bills, the Commission on Legislation of

Agudath Israel of America contacted the top leaders of the New York State Legislature, as well as all 22 members of the Assembly Health Committee to alert them to the implications of this legislation for Orthodox Jews.

Dr. Fryshman declared: "Since 1975 Agudath Israel has thwarted the efforts of the medical lobby to define death through legislation, through bills introduced in various forms in each legislative session. Agudath Israel also could not accept the narrowed down version of Bill A. 5309, although it narrows its application to those who signed away their body as an anatomical gift, because it could possibly be utilized as legislative intent, for all general circumstances. The organization will continue being on the alert on this crucial issue."

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## 57th National Convention of Agudath Israel Called for November 22-25

An in-depth analysis of the course taken by independent Orthodox Jewry on all major Jewish issues will take place, under the guidance of the venerable Torah sages who comprise the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah, at the 57th annual convention of Agudath Israel of America over the three day weekend of November 22-25, it was announced by Rabbi Chaskei Besser, member of the organization's Presidium. The three day confab, which will take place at the Rye Town Hilton in Port Chester, New York, is expected to attract over 1,000 delegates and 2,000 guests who will join in the various public sessions.

The annual convention of Agudath Israel, which is one of the most colorful gatherings on the American Jewish scene, will bring together rabbinic and lay leaders of Orthodox Jewry from all walks of life to deliberate on a broad range of crisis issues, covering every area of Jewish concern in the United States, Israel and globally. In addition, a detailed report of the many-faceted activities of Agudath Israel of America is rendered at this occasion, enabling all the participants to join in studying these activities and planning the Orthodox Jewish coalition movement's future expansion course.

This year's convention will include the biennial task of electing a new administration for the organization. Also, the issues which will be tackled at the Sixth Knessia Gedola (World Congress) of the international Agudist movement will be ventilated at this convention.

## Inflation Hits Hard at Orthodox Jewish Unemployed

A random study of more than 100 unemployed Orthodox Jews who applied to Project COPE, the career guidance and job training agency of Agudath Israel of America, points to inflation as a major reason for the continued high rate of joblessness in this community. The findings of the study show that despite the recent improved job market in New York City, Orthodox Jews with their traditional larger families and higher living costs, are unable to take advantage of some of the new job openings because the entry level of the salary scale is below subsistence. In announcing the study, Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, director of Project COPE, said that his agency has opened a special desk to deal with such hardship cases.

According to the announcement, the study points to several groups of Orthodox Jews who have been particularly hard hit by the vicious cycle of inflation:

- Students leaving the Kolel (post-graduate yeshiva study) with large families. While the income of working wives with fellowship stipends from the institutions do somehow sustain the students during the early years of marriage, the increased size of the family puts an immediate strain on the financial stability of the family. As a result, many students who normally would have continued their studies for several additional years, are forced to enter the job market prematurely. The forced transition also results in the diverting of planned careers in Jewish education or communal work to more lucrative business endeavors.

In response, the Project COPE thrust has been to assist working women toward better paying careers to help support their student

husbands and their families. When students are forced to leave the Kolel, Project COPE, after consultation with their Roshei Yeshiva, often trains them in various careers or places them directly into jobs. Discussing this population, Rabbi Lubinsky stressed that "were it not for ravaging inflation, the pressures on the students would not have been so great."

- Another hardship group discussed in the study consists of Orthodox Jews with large families who are underemployed or whose income falls short of family needs. A number of these people are either employed in low-paying government positions or are teachers in the Jewish educational system where salaries have generally not kept up with inflation. As is the case with the Kolel students, COPE has retrained many of them in new careers.

- The study also lists Orthodox Jewish small businessmen and professionals who can no longer rely on their previous occupations as being hard hit. The decline of small businesses in many areas has left many without sufficient means of support. Similarly, professionals facing altered job-market conditions are also seeking career changes.

In summarizing the findings of the study, the Agudath Israel leaders point to the "continued pressure of the myth of universal Jewish affluence." The COPE statement concludes: "Because Jewish poverty and unemployment is not concentrated in self-contained communities as is the case with other ethnic groups, the enormity of the problems is not easily visible. However, the sum total of dozens of isolated pockets does make for an enormous problem. The future direction of COPE's plans and programs will in large measure aim at dealing with this problem area."

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## Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah Calls for Stepped-Up Action on Abortion Law

JERUSALEM, July 9—At a meeting of the Israeli Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah (Council of Torah Sages) of Agudath Israel on Sunday, July 8, the policy-making body adopted a resolution calling the Knesset's delay in abolishing Paragraph 5 of the current Abortion Law (which permits abortion on demand for "medical, social or economic reasons") a "breach of the Knesset coalition agreement with Agudath Israel," and instructed the Agudist Knesset Deputies to accelerate their efforts to assure abolition, it was learned from informed sources. The Knesset Deputies were asked to report in one month on any progress on this matter. The Moetzes meeting which was chaired jointly by the Ponevezher Rosh Yeshiva—Rabbi Eliezer Schach and the Gerer Rebbe, Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter, was well attended by prominent Roshei Yeshivos, Rabbanim and Chassidic Rebbes.

At the same session, the Moetzes discussed the current crisis surrounding the projected Olympic-sized Sports Stadium planned for

the Northern tier of Jerusalem, which is threatening the atmosphere in newer religious neighborhoods adjacent to this site. The Moetzes decided to accept Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek's most recent offer to halt construction of the stadium at its present location. This, in effect, is a capitulation from Kollek's previous stand, which caused the Agudist membership of the Municipality to threaten to leave the ruling committee if plans were not changed. The Mayor's new offer involves a guarantee that any new construction site for the stadium would be away from the populated areas of Jerusalem.

The Moetzes session also urged the Agudist Knesset Deputies to do all in their power to ascertain the return of ancient remains to their original burial grounds near Jericho from where they were taken. These remains have been stored in the Tel Aviv University's Archeological Department for the past three years. In addition, the Moetzes called for government assistance in meeting the religious needs of Soviet immigrants currently in Italy; and issued a proclamation calling for financial help for the *Shomrei Shmittah*.

In addition to Rabbi Schach and the Gerer Rebbe, the meeting was attended by Rabbi Sholom Noach Brozovsky (Slonimer Yeshiva), Rabbi Boruch Shimon Shneursohn

(Chebiner Yeshiva), Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov Zaleznik (Yeshiva Eitz Chaim), Rabbi Simcha Zissel Broyde (Yeshiva Chevron), Rabbi Nisson Karelitz (Kolel Chazon Ish), Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapiro (Yeshiva Beer Yaakov), Rabbi Pinchos Menachem Alter (Yeshiva Sfas Emes), Rabbi Yochanan Sofer (Erlauer Rav), Machnovker Rebbe, Mozhitzer Rebbe, and the Sadigerer Rebbe.

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The proclamation (facsimile appears on left) emphasizes that by becoming partners with the heroic citizens of Komemius and Kfar Gideon, we can hasten the final redemption in our time. It is signed by leading rabbis, Roshei Yeshiva and Chassidic Rebbes.

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