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The Vanishing Yeshiva Rebbe
a crisis and some solutions

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

in this issue . . .

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The Vanishing Yeshiva Rebbe

Rabbi Zev Schostak

As Rabbi Yitzchak Kohn looked over the rows of beaming faces this warm June morning, his eyes glistened with tears. He reflected back to a brisk fall day nearly thirty years before, when he was introduced as the new second grade rebbe of the yeshiva. How excited he was then, how full of enthusiasm, hoping to spark the souls of his young charges with the fire of Torah. His consistent success in his life's mission was attested to by the love and loyalty of his youngsters on this last day of school, one generation later. They, too, were turned on to Torah by the Rebbe, as they fondly called him. There was a special awe for the man who had also endeared himself to their fathers as "the Rebbe."

But this last day of school was sadder than most; it was the last day Rabbi Kohn would be teaching. He was retiring this year, after almost three decades of supreme dedication to chinuch. He had subsisted on a meager salary, which was only slightly above the designated poverty level. Rabbi Kohn was rarely paid on time. Back pay and post-dated checks were a way of life with the Kohn family. His wife, Yehudis, a true woman of valor, stretched and

scrimped to make the most from the least, with hardly a complaint. Yet, through it all, the Kohns carried themselves with a grace and dignity born of an inner conviction and commitment which made life not only bearable but meaningful. For Rabbi Kohn saw in his work a sacred mission to raise Jews loyal to our Torah and its teachings; and Yehudis viewed herself as the helpmate that would make this possible.

For the yeshiva, too, this was a sad day—the saddest in its long history; the Board had decided that the yeshiva would have to close its doors. Nothing—no emergency appeals, no special solicitations of major benefactors would save the school, for it was not a question of money. There was only one reason why this yeshiva, like so many others, was closing this year—the best of the rebbes had vanished. Rebbes like Rabbi Kohn had retired, or had gone into business—usually the line they had used to supplement their incomes as teachers. Their younger counterparts, though talented and dedicated, left the field after a brief stint. They were lured into professions where they could earn a living in dignity and be counted among the supporters of Torah institutions and worthy charities. Most of their contemporaries, forewarned of the trials and tribulations of yeshiva teaching, never even considered the field. And so, the best and the brightest were lost, and the closing of the yeshiva signified the end of an era, when "the Rebbe" vanished from the scene.

Rabbi Zev Schostak is headmaster of the Park East ESHI Day School in Manhattan. He is the author of two books and has contributed in the past to JO. This article is dedicated to the memory of Rabbi Alexander S. Gross ז"ל, a Torah pioneer of chinuch in the greater Miami area, whose last published article addressed this critical issue.

The Impending Disaster

If the picture we have painted looks bleak and seems exaggerated, be assured that the reality is not much better.

The stark facts are:

- The better-paid rebbes in New York City, for example, are presently paid \$15,000-16,000 to teach until about 1:00 p.m. each day, including Sundays. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, this is below the minimum income necessary for a family of four. In fact, if this were their only source of income, they would qualify for government assistance in New York City. Consider also the staggering costs of kosher food staples, especially meat and Pesach products, not included in the Bureau's figures, as well as the fact that most rebbes' families exceed the hypothetical two children. Then you can begin to appreciate their dire straits.

- The old standby, the Talmud Torah job, once a standard supplement to a yeshiva teacher's income, is fast becoming a thing of the past. Most available positions require teaching on Sunday morning, automatically excluding many rebbes.

According to the Board of Jewish Education, there are currently more children studying in yeshivos and day schools in Greater New York than in afternoon schools. This attests not only to the phenomenal growth of yeshiva education, but also to the decline of the Hebrew school.

- Many teachers must "moonlight" with one or two additional jobs in unrelated fields where their teaching talents are wasted and their energy reserves are drained. To illustrate, one rebbe works in the post office from 2 to 11 p.m., Monday through Thursday. How can he prepare for his classes and be refreshed to teach the next morning? Another sells life insurance. How can he keep his mind on his teaching when after school he works on a commission basis and must compete with aggressive full-time salesmen?

Most yeshivos and Hebrew day schools provide few basic benefits, such as major medical insurance, life insurance, disability income, or pension plans. Contrast this with the multiple benefit packages offered in the business world, and job incentives such as productivity bonuses and profit sharing. Compare this with the extensive benefits provided in any civil service job.

To add insult to injury, even those benefits which could be provided to yeshiva teachers without additional "out-of-pocket" costs to the school are not always available. Take tuition reductions for children at schools where their own parents teach. In many cases, only a token tuition reduction is granted, while in other cases a generous scholarship committee allows a 50% reduction. Rare is the school that offers teachers their rightful due as a job incentive—free tuition for their children! Consider, also, the parsonage allowance for rabbiteachers, as delineated in IRS regulations. According to these tax rulings, a clergyman teaching in a religious

school is entitled to tax-free income for such living expenses as rent or mortgage payments, certain home furnishing and utilities. This varies with the individual. Yet many schools do not go to the trouble of having their clergy report their individual expenditures to them and instead designate an arbitrary sum for parsonage allowance across the board.

- Top-flight teachers and administrators are leaving the field in droves and few are entering. Many talented young people are attracted to more lucrative fields like computer programming, for example, where starting salaries are commonly in the \$20,000 range. One prominent Beth Jacob Seminary figured that "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em"—it is now offering a computer education course for the first time.

A major reason why talented and dedicated people are leaving yeshiva education, however, is not financial. It is psychological: specifically, the humiliation and abuse they are frequently subjected to in parent-dominated schools, and the resultant lack of job security. Unlike the parents of children a generation ago, who basically supported the position and policies of the school, many of today's parents are of a different breed. In the first place, there are wide divergencies among them as to basic objectives, reflecting the insecurity and fluidity of existence in the society of the Eighties. This becomes a major problem when many of the parents feel that paying their child's tuition not only provides their child with a day school education, but also licenses them to publicly criticize any and every teacher, administrator and policy of the school. If they shout loud enough and long enough—especially if they are yeshiva graduates—they can be appointed to the Boards of Education or Directors. Unfortunately, these Boards become an official soap box for spouting their personal opinion. As a result of domination by a vociferous minority, yeshiva educators are not accorded professional respect and can be threatened with their very livelihood.

Job security is almost extinct and professional advancement is limited in the yeshiva and day schools. Indeed, the staff turnover in some schools is so great that parents often need an annual scorecard to discover "who's on first" from year to year. One principal ironically quipped that our schools should go into the long distance moving and employment agency businesses when recruiting staff. Sadly, there's more than a grain of truth in his humor.

- Hiring a capable faculty has become a major problem for yeshiva principals. To illustrate, years ago it was commonly considered unethical to "pirate" teachers from other schools by offering them higher salaries and better working conditions. Today, this practice is not only considered ethical, but an outright *mitzva* because it has the ripple effect of raising all teachers' salaries. Yet sadly, more than one yeshiva principal has lamented "There's no one left to steal!"

A Prescription for Survival

With staggering double-digit inflation, with increased operating expenses, with tuition covering only a small portion of costs and many benefactors tightening their money belts, executive directors are having difficulty in just meeting payrolls. To dramatically increase teachers' salaries and substantially improve their benefits, would strain most yeshiva budgets beyond the breaking point. Consequently, we must only consider alternatives that are within the existing framework of the day school movement and the Jewish community.

Creating Career Opportunities

A major breakthrough for the yeshiva educator would be for the school itself to provide for his necessary supplementary income. While the school may not be in a position to dramatically increase his salary for part-time teaching, it might be able to increase his hours to a full-time position with a commensurate salary, and provide attractive benefits.

Some recommendations on how this can be done:

1. Full-time teacher

If a *rebbe* is an excellent teacher, he should be offered a class in the afternoon. How would this work? Some *rebbe*s could be assigned groups for enrichment, or remedial work. Others, who are qualified, could teach a specialty, such as mathematics, or history from a Jewish perspective, in the general studies department.

In other cases, maintaining a superb *rebbe* would perhaps justify some grades studying secular subjects in the morning while learning Torah studies in the afternoon, to enable the *rebbe* to carry a double program. This is a break with traditional scheduling, and under conventional circumstances should not be contemplated, but an argument could now be made that here the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages. Naturally, caution would have to be exercised about scheduling Torah studies in the afternoon in the lower primary grades when students are first getting their foundation. Such caution would also be most prudent on the junior high level, where students are being prepared for intensive high school learning. Understandably, this plan has been implemented in some out-of-town day schools where it is exceptionally difficult to engage top teachers, and few other options exist; but the time may come to give it due consideration in large metropolitan area schools, as well. Of course, this must first be submitted to our *gedolim* for their evaluation and discussion.

2. Kollel and Publications

Yeshiva elementary schools and high schools affiliated with a *beis midrash* and Kollel should offer a substantial stipend for their own *rebbe*s to learn in the afternoon. . . . Even a second grade *rebbe* who studies in the afternoon teaches *Chumash* differently.

As another possibility, the yeshiva with a kollel, or the community at large, could establish an affiliated *kollel l'mechanchim*—a pedagogical fellowship program—where questions in yeshiva education would be explored in depth, and preparation of new curricula and learning material would be pursued by those most directly involved. Since there is a dearth of creative, quality materials for the Torah classroom, such a kollel could publish these items and market them to other schools. The proceeds would, in turn, subsidize the kollel.

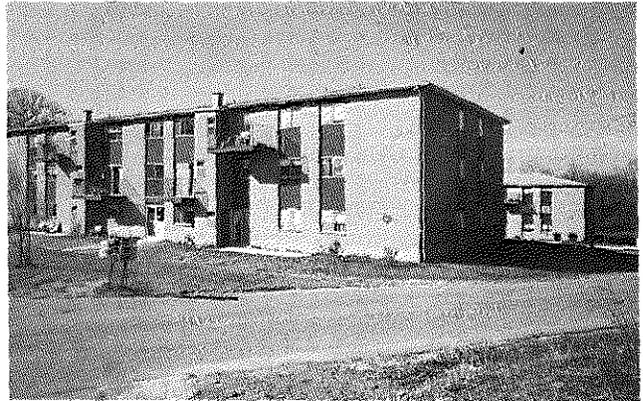
In the final analysis, the money for this will come from the community. Yet this need not pose a problem. Even when fundraising for the regular school budget may have reached a ceiling, other school-related items, such as a kollel, often inspire support from individuals who do not respond to conventional yeshiva appeals.

3. Housing

Low-cost housing should be made available to yeshiva educators through the school. The advantages are twofold. First, the benefits have cash value to the recipients, and are a form of increased compensation. Second, the teaching staff becomes more deeply rooted in the community, making moves and changes less likely, thus adding stability to the school.

This housing could take two forms:

a. Apartment co-ops. The school, by itself or in consort with other institutions, could acquire apartment houses to provide low-cost housing for yeshiva staff.



Faculty housing on the Ner Israel Campus in Baltimore.

Since the school is a religious corporation, it would be exempt from property taxes, and could pass along this saving in the form of a rent subsidy to its staff.

b. The school could lend an established *rebbe* (with tenure) a substantial portion of the cash needed for a downpayment on a house. Technically, the house would belong to the school, and would be free of property taxes. The loan could be written off as an advance on salary or deducted from the school's pension settlement. Eventually, after the mortgage has been cleared, the house could be legally transferred to the teacher as part of his pension arrangement.

These housing solutions are not unrealistic; several kollelim across the country already have purchased apartment complexes for their married scholars. If such a scheme appears radical, let us remember the daring vision of the late Ponevezher Rav, Rabbi Yoseif Kahaneman זצ"ל who established an entire community in Bnei Brak through *netzivim* (founding donors), to make his yeshiva self-sufficient and self-perpetuating. This approach calls for more money up front—hardly a sensible-sounding plan for institutions on the edge of bankruptcy. Yet it has the attraction of offering long-term savings. In addition, the schools may be poor, but the community is not. This sort of sound approach has a special appeal to business people as well as to families or groups that seek ways to enshrine someone's name in a yeshiva-related building.

4. Food

A yeshiva, or a consortium of yeshivos, could establish a food co-op which—through mass purchasing and direct negotiations with the wholesalers, distributors or manufacturers could sell food products at great savings to the teachers. In effect, this co-op would operate like an army PX or canteen, and would be a service exclusively for yeshiva teachers.

Operating such a food or apartment co-op is relatively simple. If one yeshiva is unable to do it alone, a number of schools could band together, forming an ad hoc Vaad Hayeshivos, with the sole function of providing these services for the teachers. This Vaad would be staffed by the teachers and their spouses, who would be in charge of solicitations, and managing the co-ops. The Vaad would be subsidized through the member schools by special fund-raising for this purpose.

Another suggestion, offered by Rabbi Fabian Schonfeld at a convention of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, proposed that manufacturers of kosher food products be taxed annually, with the revenues distributed among yeshivos. For this to work, many questions must be resolved—such as how the funds will be collected, and by whom. As for the formula for distribution of these funds, this could be determined and carried out by an independent Vaad Hayeshivos. Post World War I offers a glorious precedent—a similar Vaad, established and directed by the Chofetz Chaim and Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzenski.

5. Benefits

Tuition—Children of yeshiva teachers should receive a tuition-free education in the school where their parents are employed. This would not only be a major financial benefit for the teachers, but would give teachers a greater commitment to the institution. If the teachers choose to send their children to another school a substantial "professional courtesy" tuition discount should be automatically applied, without appearing before a scholarship committee.

Parsonage—Parsonage should be arranged on an individual basis with each rabbi on the faculty, rather than by an arbitrary, across-the-board allotment.

Insurance and Pension—A graduated program of basic major medical, disability and life insurance, and pension benefits should be offered as a portion of the annual increments. Unless the yeshiva provides these basic coverages, many teachers will be without them. An additional plus: a raise or increment paid as a benefit is non-taxable income; the teacher is getting his full-dollar value. Since these benefits cost hard-pressed schools money, it may be necessary in some cases to offer them as options in lieu of salary increments. But to make membership in a pension fund or health insurance plan more attractive, the school should contribute to them in greater measure than the amount of salary being withheld for this purpose. This will pay dividends in staff appreciation and security.

Professional Services—Parents who are professionals—such as doctors, lawyers, electricians, or plumbers—could offer a discount on their services to the staff of their children's school. The amount of this discount should either be considered a contribution to the school, or credited towards a give-or-get type fund-raising commitment—not towards tuition.

School Management

The red-ink deficit financing mentality is all too prevalent among the boards of our schools. Indeed, if the businessmen on the board were to run their concerns as they do the yeshiva, they would soon close down and file for bankruptcy. Some of the cost-efficient management and financing techniques of the business world should be applied to our schools. Of course, those techniques should not be used to contravene the educational domain and its legitimate needs, but instead be utilized in the logistical operations of the school, such as billing and collections, building plant management, and lunch and transportation.

Fundraising—In addition, boards should advise on more sophisticated forms of fundraising, such as estate endowments, assignments from stock portfolios, stock transfers (where tax deduction is based on current value, while income-tax payment is based on purchase value), and business investments.

Once again, we recall the Ponevezher Rav who foresaw the need to make his Torah institutions self-perpetuating, and consequently invested wisely in business and real estate developments. Although, in the short run, his operating capital was tight, in the long run the Rav established a sound financial base for his projects. When asked where such a venerable Gaon acquired his business acumen, he reportedly replied, "My father wasn't a Rav—he was a merchant!"

Board-Administration-Teacher Relations—Friction often results from a lack of clear definition of the roles of

Boards of Education (which directly govern principals) and Board of Directors (which oversee executive directors). They should serve only in consultant advisory capacities. They should be the sounding board in the formulation of school policy and programs proposed by their on-the-spot experts—the principal and executive director. Besides clearly delineating their roles and specific responsibilities, a *modus operandi* should be charted for the so-called "gray areas" where jurisdictions overlap.

This would replace friction and dissension with harmony. The Board would not countermand its administrator's decisions, nor even second-guess them. It would vest the professionals with the necessary authority to operate effectively.

Their relationship could be compared לְהַבְדִּיל to that of the owners of a ball club to the manager. If the team plays well, that's what counts. Pitching rotation and batting order are in the manager's domain.

Similarly, the board should have confidence in its professionals and give them the operational latitude necessary to manage the school successfully. They should not intervene in day-to-day decision-making. They should not appoint themselves resident *mavinim* on educational matters, any more than they would advise their own lawyer how best to represent them. If under the professional leadership, the school grows quantitatively and qualitatively, the board has a winner. If it does not, then the team's leadership and performance should be carefully evaluated and some personnel changes may be in order.

The relationship of the principal to his faculty should also be supportive. The principal has the responsibility of helping each teacher develop his personal pedagogic style and realize his full potential. He should not try to remake each teacher in his own image, thereby creating a

monolithic teaching personality. Rather, the diverse abilities of each teacher should be carefully nurtured by a sensitive principal.

The teacher, too, must always put forth his best. To pursue the previous analogy, he's part of a team, and if any player does not perform well, regardless of how well the others do, the team as a whole suffers. This means that lethargic and apathetic performance regardless of seniority and tenure should not be tolerated. (Of. *Igros Moshe Choshen Mishpat 77.*)

A Matter of High Priority

In the final analysis, it is simply a matter of our own values and priorities. Education is an intangible. In a society that measures success in materialistic terms, education—even yeshiva education—is bound to suffer. It is not valued for its true worth, taking into account its impact for generations to come. For if it were, it would be our highest priority. We are like the practical joker, who played havoc with sensibilities at Saks Fifth Avenue by switching price tags, and replaced \$10,000 price tags on furs with Woolworth \$4.99 stitches.

Too many of us have placed a bargain price tag on our most valuable responsibility—the education of our children. Too many of our schools have taken advantage of our most precious professionals—our underpaid, overworked yeshiva teachers.

Whether or not you agree with all or most of the proposals above, one point must be stressed: the situation is critical, and the time is drawing near when all our efforts—no matter how valiant—may be, G-d forbid, too late. For the sake of every *rebbe* and teacher now in the field, for the sake of their successors, and ultimately for the sake of the entire yeshiva movement, every Jew—man, woman and child—must make improving the lot of the yeshiva educator his top priority. 17

An Extraordinary Call to Action —and the Beginnings of a Response

Solutions to the day school/yeshivos personnel crisis must come from many sources, as outlined in the previous article. New teachers, *mechanchim*, and *melamdim*, however, can only come from the advanced yeshivos, kollelim and seminaries. For a variety of reasons—not all of them related to teaching conditions—not enough graduates have put their sights on teaching.

The Jewish Observer / April, 1981

Germination

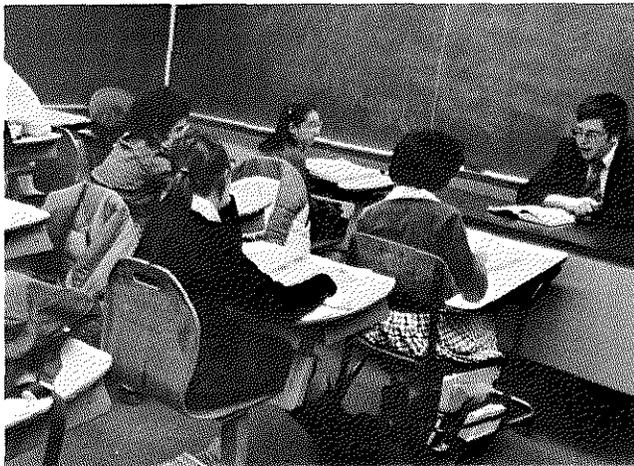
In an extraordinary meeting called by Torah Umesorah in Spring, 1980, leading *roshei yeshiva* addressed an audience made up of several hundred kollel fellows from the New York City area. The thrust of their message was a call to arms to the kollel fellows. These are men

who have achieved a great measure of Talmudic scholarship and might be reluctant to curtail their growth in their studies by concentrating on teaching younger children. These men heard the call, and the result of this assembly was a definite change in the climate of opinions in the yeshivos. (The texts of the addresses follow.)

Of perhaps even greater importance, this assembly gave the impetus to the founding of a visionary kollel-teaching-fellowship program in Minneapolis whereby four couples moved to this Midwestern community, with the men teaching in the local day school mornings while learning together in an afternoon kollel sponsored by the community, and devoting their evenings to adult education activities—in line with the program in the standard community kollel (see JO Oct. '79).

SEED

The Minneapolis Mini-Kollel, as it is called, had its beginnings in a successful Torah Umesorah SEED program that hosted a lively *beis midrash* for four-week visits



Member of the "Mini-Kollel" in the classroom.

during three consecutive summers. Local Jewry was excited by the presence of the *beis midrash* in its midst, but could not see its way to underwriting the expense of supporting ten or twelve couples on a continual basis, as larger communities such as Toronto and Los Angeles do.

At the same juncture in the road, the principal of the local day school was becoming increasingly frustrated with the difficulty of holding on to good teachers for more than a year or two. He proposed that his board authorize him to hire inexperienced, but knowledgeable, enthusiastic yeshiva men as teachers; he (the principal) would supervise their professional training and growth. . . .

Taking Root

With the deep interest of the *roshei yeshiva*, the response of the kollel people, and the willingness of the Minneapolis community to join the day school in handling some of the expenses involved, the Minneapolis Mini-Kollel took root in September 1980. In advance of this program, and then continuing as part of it, the Rosh Yeshiva of Mir, Rabbi Shmuel Berenbaum, made the Minneapolis Day School his special concern, personally visiting the community twice. Testifying to the success of this pilot project is the interest in several other communities to emulate the Minneapolis experiment.

Offshoots

How do such stirrings begin?

As mentioned earlier, the extraordinary meeting of kollel men addressed by the *roshei yeshiva* was one starting point. As the words spoken there were inspiring to those who heard them, so should they be of interest to the readers of these pages. We are thus presenting brief essays based on transcripts of the addresses delivered at that occasion.

—N.W.

Personal Growth for Community Responsibility

based on an address by Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky של"מ

Every effort for a good purpose is automatically met by a counterforce of evil that must be surmounted. Rabbi Meir Shapiro זצ"ל is reported to have commented that after *Avrohom Avinu* refrained from sacrificing his son Yitzchak, he slaughtered in his place a ram "whose horns were entangled in a thorn bush"; the difficulty of freeing the ram from the bush testified to the sanctity of

his action. Had the ram been too easily available, the substitution of the ram would have been of questionable merit.

In fact, the very challenge of the *Akeida*—in which *Avrohom* was commanded to offer his only son as a sacrifice—was an incalculably difficult test, in that it called for action that was in direct opposition to his life

goal of combatting idolatry especially as it involved child-sacrifice, and threatened to put an end to his hopes for achieving continuity through Yitzchak. But—again—the difficulty of contending with this conflict only testified to the nobility of acting on the *Akeida* command. Indeed, his willingness to perform the *Akeida* in spite of its many obstacles earned him G-d's approbation: "Now I know that you are a G-d-fearing man."

The Painful Evaluation

Men who experience success in their Torah study must go through some introspection and self-evaluation, even if it be painful. Perhaps the pain of the experience can testify to its value. First, one must take stock of the various circumstances—the *Hashgacha Pratis* (Divine Providence) that steered him into his present position as a member of the elite group of Torah scholars—and then question why he merited such good fortune, and what is expected of him as a result. I recall several colleagues from my youthful days in yeshiva who were gifted with unusual capabilities and had achieved prominence as *talmidei chachomim*. Yet, somehow, they strayed from a Torah life. We who remained faithful to Torah surely owe Providence a full-throated blessing of gratitude for "having distinguished us from those who strayed. . ." and for "having placed us among the dwellers of the *beis hamidrash* (study halls)." There surely is a special *hashgacha* that guides the lives of those who chose to be teachers of our children, or otherwise give of themselves for the benefit of the community.

Rabbi Naftali Amsterdam related how his famed rebbe, Rabbi Yisroel Salanter, had intended to live his life as an ish hanistar—a recluse, concentrating on self-improvement and spriritual elevation in privacy. In fact, he had prepared himself to lead a life as an ordinary Jew whose greatness would be shielded from public recognition by memorizing Shas (the entirety of the Talmud) so others would not recognize his greatness as a scholar. He had already mastered half of the task when he came to the realization that personal growth was a luxury in times that called for forceful action. So he "went public."

As great as we know Reb Yisroel to have been, he undoubtedly would have been still greater—in both scholarship and *kedusha* (sanctity)—had he concentrated on his personal growth rather than on influencing others. But, on the other hand, the world would have been without Reb Yisroel's *mussar* teachings that so influenced his generation as well as those that followed.

What are we to say if we neglect our obligations to meet the needs of the Jewish community at large and, instead, only concentrate on personal growth?

An Appreciation of the Hashgacha

One can come to appreciate what it means to be a beneficiary of the *hashgacha* and what demands might be



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made on a person as a result, after taking into account the *hashgacha's* manipulations on the broader canvas of the history of the Jewish People as a whole.

The period of the Second *Beis Hamikdash* is a cryptic one, full of anomalies and paradoxes. Contemplating it provokes a number of questions, which in turn suggest several illuminating insights; for instance:

- Prior to the destruction of the First *Beis Hamikdash*, the King *Yoshiyahu* hid away the *aron hakodesh* (Holy Ark) with the *luchos* (Tablets) they contained. They had been the focal point of *kedusha* of the First *Beis Hamikdash*, yet they remained in hiding throughout the entire 420 years of the Second *Beis Hamikdash*, never to surface until this day. Why were they not removed from hiding to endow the Second Temple with the high level of *kedusha* of the First?
- The prophet *Yechezkiel* described in detail the construction of the Third *Beis Hamikdash* before the second one was ever built. What need was there for this prophecy so far in advance of its time?
- By assuming the power of monarchy (during the Second *Beis Hamikdash*) the priestly family of the *Chashmonaim*—Levites—defied the testament of *Yaakov Avinu*: "Never shall the sceptre depart from *Yehuda*" (according to the interpretation of the *Ramban*). How could this family—until the time of King *Yannai*, notably righteous men—violate the Patriarchal command?

Moreover, why did the rabbis of that era not rebuke them, and tell them to withdraw from the monarchy?

All of these strange-seeming manifestations of the *hashgacha*, make certain that no-one err in thinking the Second Beis Hamikdosh the ultimate Temple, and mistake that era as the time of the Final Redemption. Thus the incomplete state of the Temple—lacking the *aron hakodesh* and the *luchos*; the prophecies of Yechezkiel that focused not on the Second Beis Hamikdosh but on the Third; and the obvious shortcomings of the temporal leadership of the time: all testifying to the imperfection of the times, and that Moshiach had not yet come.

The Hashgacha on the Individual Scale

As the fate of *Klal Yisroel* at large is shaped by the *hashgacha* in accordance with the dictates of Divine Wisdom, so too are every individual's circumstances tailored to his and her particular destiny. The person equipped to teach Torah to others, as well as the one whose gifts will enable him to benefit the multitudes with Torah scholarship as a *Gadol b'Yisroel*—both enjoy a special guidance by the hand of G-d. And both carry a special obligation to subjugate personal plans to the needs of the community and to feel a sense of responsibility for its betterment.

Please remember what an old Jew is telling you today: In our present-day era no individual can afford to think only of himself. Instead, everyone must think how he can but serve Klal Yisroel. That is the "Kiddush Hashem" of our time.

One should realize how far-reaching the merit is for bringing *Kiddush Hashem* into the world. Haman and Sisra were each as wicked a person as one could imagine, yet both had offspring that were outstanding Torah scholars, in reward for the *Kiddush Hashem* they brought into the world through the defeat they suffered. True, they caused this *Kiddush Hashem* unwittingly, but the key word in regard to the *mitzva* is: "*venikdashiti*—and I will become sanctified," in the passive voice, not at all dependent on the person's intention. After all, the *Mishna* says that *Chillul Hashem* is punishable whether the act that provoked it is committed willfully or accidentally. Surely the reward for *Kiddush Hashem* is meted out more liberally, whether the actions that caused it were deliberate or accidental. [For a fuller discussion, see Rabbi Kamenitzky's article on the topic in *JO*, Jan. '80.] We must underscore the great responsibility and the great merit involved to bring about a *Kiddush Hashem* today.

May it be G-d's will that His Name be sanctified by this assembly and by the results of its efforts! 

Teaching—to Keep Klal Yisroel Alive

based on an address by Rabbi Shneur Kotler שליט"א

Laying the Foundations for Greatness

Chinuch—teaching children—is a very special mission, dedicated to the perpetuation of our Torah tradition. Our teachers are responsible for linking together the richness of the past with the future development of Torah, a role exemplified by Yehoshua Bin Nun, who was appointed by Moshe for just that purpose: transmitting the Torah tradition as he received it from Moshe, to the next generation.

Even teachers of very young children have the opportunity to inspire their charges when teaching them *Chumash* and *Rashi*. Indeed, many have wondered as to who instructed the Vilna Gaon in *Chochmas Hanistor* (mystical studies), which can only be mastered when taught by a *Rebbe*. We can assume that whoever taught him *Chumash* as a child instilled within him the capacity and the perspective that ultimately enabled the Gaon to use his own great mind for that pursuit. . . . And so have all *Gedolei Yisroel* grown by virtue of the fact that during their earliest years, their great *melamdim* (teachers)

opened to them all the wellsprings of holiness that lie in our sacred teachings.

Today, too, the youth of our generation is ready to be taught and uplifted to spiritual heights, if conscientious *mechanchim* only endeavor to imbue them with a deep appreciation of Torah.

Personal Growth—for Others

The Rabbis (*Midrash Kohelles*) interpret the *pasuk*: "If the clouds become full with rain, they will spill on the earth," as referring to *Talmidei Chachomim* whose life purpose is to give of themselves to others, for their personal growth in Torah [the fullness of the clouds] ultimately affects the success of others [raining down on the earth].

It was for this reason that Moshe Rabbeinu pleaded with G-d: "*Hodi'eni na es drochecha*—reveal unto me Your ways," upon having been commanded "Lead these people, for this great nation is yours." So he could successfully guide these people Moshe asked G-d to reveal to

him His ways, for understanding those ways is essential to leading the Jewish people.

We find, as well, that G-d declared "Do I conceal anything from Avrohom? . . . *Ki yedativ*. . . For I know that he will teach (the ways of Torah) to his children and to his descendants to follow." That is, G-d deemed it necessary to reveal the ways of Divine Providence to Avrohom as a vital prerequisite for bringing up his children. There is no doubt that a special spirit of wisdom prevails upon those engaged in transmitting Divine teachings to others.

In Times of Trouble

In times such as ours, which are so hazardous for Jewry, the reward for acting courageously to save other Jews is immeasurable. The Chofetz Chaim זצ"ל brought this point out in a discussion in which he questioned *Dovid Hamelech's* request of his son Shlomo to deal kindly with the children of Barzilai of Gilaad, who had remained loyal to him when he was pursued by Avshalom: Must a mighty king of Israel feel so indebted to a person of relatively minor status, such as Barzilai? In explanation, the Chofetz Chaim points out that when a king is in exile and is suffering terrible anguish, any small favor performed for him is magnified in importance, and the individual who treats him kindly is all the more rewarded.

These are troubling times, and the King of the Universe is in great anguish, so to speak. Every small step taken for the sake of Israel and their King is doubly appreciated and doubly blessed. This can actually be seen by the phenomenal success achieved by those who intensify their activities for Torah and all other sacred endeavors.

The task on hand—raising the stature of the Jewish People in Torah—is not only the responsibility of those already engaged in teaching; it is also the responsibility of our yeshivos and seminaries to encourage their students to become apprised of G-d's will and enter the field of education. Indeed, the yeshivos are the present-day *Ohel Mo'ed* where people find guidance.



Rabbi Kotler, Rosh Yeshiva of Beth Medrash Govoha, in Lakewood, N.J., is a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages) of Agudath Israel of America.

The *Ohel Mo'ed*, the temporary and portable sanctuary of the wilderness, served as a center for worship for the Jews as they wandered through the desert. Rashi explains the *Ohel Mo'ed*—literally, the tent of gathering—as the focal point for all who were inspired by the Torah; from there its inspiration emanated outward to the rest of the world. The yeshivos are thus the *Ohel Mo'ed* for our times in that in addition to instructing our youth, they continue to radiate their influence upon their students—even after they have left its portals. Yeshiva graduates who become teachers and endeavor to create loyal students should continue to maintain their ties to their yeshivos to better fulfill their sacred mission. The perpetuity of *Klal Yisrael* depends on their effectiveness in their chosen task. □

translated and prepared for publication by
Rabbi Yoel Schonfeld

Mobilizing for Crisis

based on an address by Rabbi Shmuel Berenbaum שליט"א,
Rosh Yeshiva, Mir

Think of *Klal Yisrael* in terms of a critically ill patient, requiring intensive care. Year after year, thousands of Jews are falling victim to the sweeping plague of assimilation. Entire communities that have graced the map of

America for generations are now disappearing. There is no preventive medicine for this plague other than Torah, which has always been the mainstay of our eternal people.



Rabbi Berenbaum is Rosh Yeshiva of Mir, Brooklyn.

Think of *Klal Yisroel* as a country under siege. As the enemy reinforces its armaments, poised for its destruction, no expense is too great for the beleaguered country to assure its survival. The people are ready to respond to every call for austerity, prepared to make any sacrifice to survive the threatened onslaught. *Klal Yisroel*, threatened by destructive ignorance and assimilation, must be fully armed with Torah—the “sword and bow” of Yaakov Avinu’s reference. So well known is

Torah’s central role in Jewry’s existence, that the Nazis שׂיטל put special emphasis on leaving no escape hatch open to “Talmud Juden” because they knew that as long as Talmudic scholars exist, Jewry’s future is secure.

From the Perspective of Torah

It is obvious that once a *ben Torah* views himself and his role in life from a perspective of truth, he realizes that his Talmudic studies are of supreme importance, and that no material benefits, riches, or worldly accomplishments can compete with them for genuine value. Then he will continue to pursue his goals of growing in Torah, and no public derision, no financial inconvenience or suffering, will matter to him.

By the same token, teachers of Torah are performing a task of inestimable value. Indeed, they actually emulate G-d in that they carry His title “*Melamed Torah*—Teacher of Torah to His People Israel.” Once they see themselves from this perspective, teachers can begin to appreciate how their profession is clearly the very foundation of our people’s existence.

We face a virtual life-and-death situation, and we must organize a *Vaad Hatzalah*—a Survival Task Force, to prepare ourselves, with Talmud in hand, and battle for our existence. Our sainted mentors of the previous generations assured us that people who go to far-flung communities for the betterment of *Klal Yisroel* will not suffer in the least in their children’s development, so do not permit this consideration to be a deterrent!

Thus every *ben Torah* and every kollel fellow planning for his future must allot a portion of his life to serving on the front lines of this battle for survival, to share their Torah knowledge with others, and to participate in the raising of a new generation loyal to Torah. **IT**

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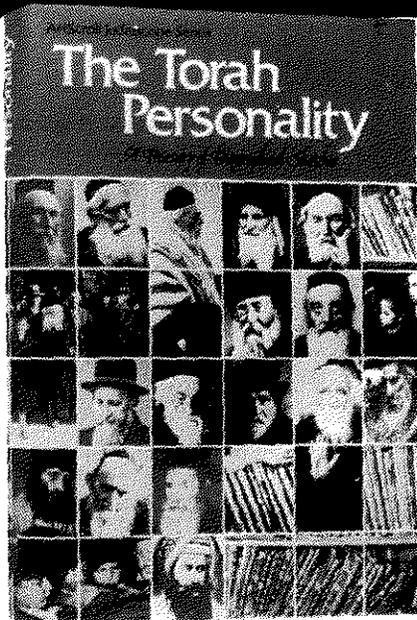
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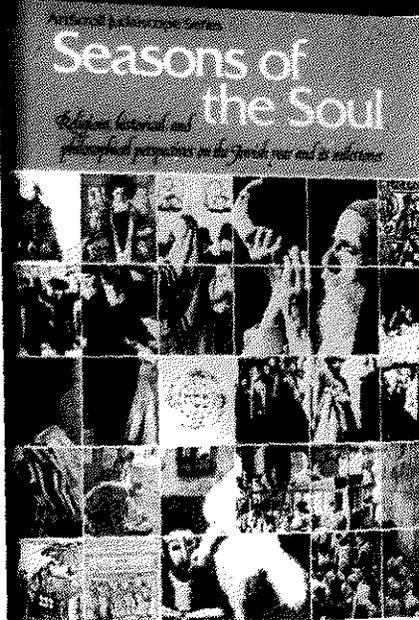
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Talmidim Recall an Inspiring Rebbe: Rabbi Moshe Schwab, זכר צדיק לברכה

*Two Years Since His Passing
in Adar, 5739*

I. The Man and His Background

The year was 5694 (1934). Moshe Schwab, a boy of 16, boarded the train in Frankfort to travel to the Yeshiva in Kamenitz—a rarity in those days. Moshe was following his older brothers who had preceded him to the great yeshivos of Lithuania and Poland. His father—Leopold (Yehuda) Schwab—and mother—Hanna, of the well-known Erlanger Family—had inspired all their children with a great love for Torah, *chesed*, and *emes*—truth.

After several days on the train, Moshe was met by his older brother, Mordechai, who was studying in Kamenitz. It was a horsedrawn-wagon-ride from the station to Kamenitz, and on the way the driver and the other passengers continually haggled in Yiddish over the fare. Moshe was taken aback by this rough-and-tumble exchange, and was tempted to turn back for genteel Frankfort.

When they arrived at the yeshiva town, matters changed. At the private home where their meals were served, with a number of boys sitting around the long table, an accident happened. Tea was being served, and Moshe took a seat and accidentally spilled his glass of boiling Russian tea over the pants of the boy next to him. The victim calmly rubbed his hands on his knee and asked the lady of the house, "Please, would you pour my friend another glass of tea?" Moshe was deeply impressed with this first "*Sholem Aleichem*" from the yeshiva community.

The Kamenitzer Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Boruch Ber Lebovitz, was famous for more than his analytical depth

*It was said that when Reb Boruch Ber was aboard a train travelling through Brisk he would stand up as *kapod* for his Rebbe.

in Talmudic study. He was also widely admired for his humility, and his total submissiveness toward his *rebbe*, Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk,* and these traits left their mark on his *talmidim*.

Baranovich and Mir

After a year, Moshe left for Baranovich, where he spent two and a half crucial years. The Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, made a lasting impression on the young man. The rapid pace of 60 *blatt* (folios) during the five-month winter semester did not compromise the stress on a *derech halimud* (methodology of Talmudic study). Reb Elchonon's approach remained a



Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman

guiding force for Reb Moshe—as a student, and later as a *rebbe*.

As the Yeshiva had no dormitory facilities, the boys stayed at a *stantziyah* with a local family. Reb Moshe had

the good fortune of eating at the home of the Yeshiva's *Mashgiach* (supervisor and counselor), Rabbi Yisroel Yaakov Lubchanski (see JO, June '70), the son-in-law of the Alter from Novarodok. Reb Moshe became very



Rabbi Yisroel Yaakov Lubchanski

close to his *Mashgiach* and was greatly influenced by his simplicity, deep *Yiras Shomayim*, and profound goodness.

Reb Yisroel Yaakov continually moved his lips as he walked about the yeshiva *beis midrash* supervising the *talmidim*. Nobody had dared question the *Mashgiach* about his practice until one Purim, when Reb Moshe did ask him what he was saying. After repeated questioning, the *Mashgiach* muttered "*Bobba Basra, Bobba Basra.*" He had committed the huge tractate to memory and would review it as he paced the study hall.

Many boys left Baranovich to spend Elul in Novaradok or Mir, two prominent *mussar* yeshivos. Though a Novaradoker, Reb Yisroel Yaakov advised Moshe: "I know my *derech* is not accepted in the Mir, but you will be better off there."

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz (see JO, June '76) was then *Mashgiach* in the Mir. The two months Moshe spent there—including the last Elul of Reb Yerucham's life—affected all the *sichos* (talks) he would later deliver. Indeed, Reb Yerucham's writings served as one of his major sources.

Wartime Decisions

In the meantime, Moshe's parents were forced to leave Germany and move to England. They left it to their youngest son to decide his own future. The moment of decision came on Simchas Torah. This was a day of great spiritual excitement in the Mirrer Yeshiva.

Reb Yerucham would honor each *talmid* with an opportunity to hold the *Sefer Torah*. When Moshe had his turn, he held onto the *Sefer Torah* with all his strength and vowed that he would dedicate his entire life to learning Torah. This firm resolve was reinforced when someone told him about a dream he had had:

A well-known *talmid chachom* in Baranovich dreamt on Simchas Torah that an elderly man instructed him to tell Moshe Schwab: "*Mashiv haruchniyus*, he raises the spiritual and—*morid hagashmiyus*, lowers the material"—a play on the phrase from the *tefilla* added the day before Simchas Torah. The fellow ignored the dream but when it recurred he related it to Moshe upon his return from Mir. Moshe asked details about the elderly person but the man did not know him. He recognized him, however, from a photograph as Reb Moshe's grandfather, Avrohom Erlanger of Luzern. Moshe sent a letter to his father describing the dream, and in the reply his father said: "*ואביו שמר את הדבר*—His father watched the matter" (a quote describing Yaakov's hopes in response to Yoseif's dreams of grandeur).

In 5798-9 (1938) Reb Moshe returned to Kamenitz. As a German citizen, he was soon ordered to leave the country, so he joined his parents in England. He enrolled in "Rabbi Schneider's Yeshiva" in London, which was small at the time, but was receiving new boys daily. Reb Moshe and a friend undertook to raise the level of study at the Yeshiva to that of the great Lithuanian Yeshivos. They set up *chaburos* (discussion groups) to debate *Gemora* topics; and the *heft'l* (notebook) in which he had recorded Reb Boruch Ber's *shiurim* was circulated in the yeshiva. Reb Moshe also set up a TAT (student aid fund) for refugee students who were virtually penniless, collecting funds and purchasing clothing for needy students.

Internment and Release

With the outbreak of the War, Reb Moshe—a German national—was interned on the Isle of Man as an "enemy alien." With other young Jews there, he set up a "yeshiva" with fixed *sedorim* (schedule of classes) and strong *hasmada* (diligence). He personally delivered lectures based on *shiurim* of Reb Boruch Ber that he had heard.

A Jewish newspaper arrived, reporting the passing of Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, but the boys, never having heard of him, ignored the news. When Reb Moshe later saw the paper, he convened a memorial meeting and delivered a *hesped* (eulogy) for Reb Chaim Ozer. He also decried the boys' ignorance, explaining the great significance of Reb Chaim Ozer's *petira* (passing).

When Reb Moshe was permitted to leave, he returned to his parents in London, but soon afterwards they all left for the quiet of Letchworth. In 1942, Rabbi E.E. Dessler, who was also in Letchworth, went to

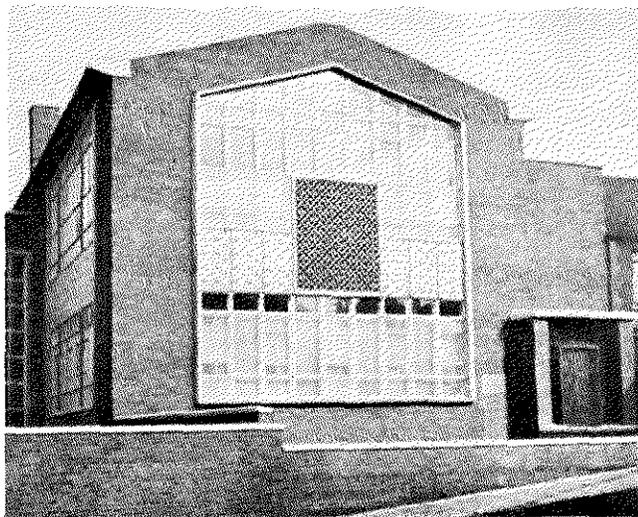
Gateshead to open a Kollel Harabonim, for married men. Reb Moshe, though still single, was invited to join.

The Move to Gateshead

During those years, boys released from concentration camps were coming to England. Over twenty fellows from Thereisenstadt were sent to a hostel in Gateshead. Kollel people attempted to help them in their emotional and spiritual rehabilitation, with little success. Then Reb Moshe tried his hand at befriending them, buying them cigarettes, chatting with them, until he gained their confidence. Many were of Chassidic background; and to recapture the warmth of the Friday nights they had been accustomed to, Moshe spent hours at a time singing *zemiros* and exchanging Torah thoughts with them. As a result, these young men regained the will to start life afresh and return to Yiddishkeit, forming a close attachment to Reb Moshe that lasted throughout his life. Today, the children and grandchildren of these refugee boys are studying in yeshivos and kollelim.

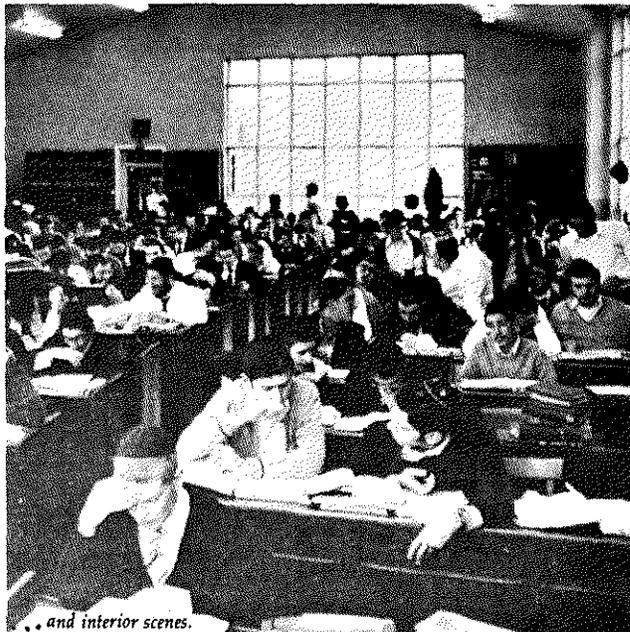
During the five years that Reb Moshe was in the Gateshead Kollel, he became very close to Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler—attracted by the depth of his *sichos* and his entire way of life. The attachment was mutual, as is evident in a letter Rabbi Dessler wrote to Reb Moshe, asking him to find him a room for the night: "If you don't manage, I will stay with you and rest on your chair—as I would rather sit in a chair and talk with you than have a bed with many pillows."

In 1942 he married Rochel Baddiell, the daughter of the late Dovid Baddiell,* one of the founders of the Kehillah-Congregation of Gateshead. With a small group of like-minded individuals, the Baddiells had established a small community, open only to strictly



Gateshead Yeshiva: exterior . . .

*Rabbi Dessler used logical arguments, Rabbi Abramski cited a *Rambam*, and Rabbi Lopian quoted *mussar* sources.



. . . and interior scenes.

Orthodox Jews. As a result, Gateshead is today one of the world's few non-Jewish cities whose Jewish inhabitants are strictly Orthodox. Gateshead is host to several outstanding institutions, including the yeshiva, kollel, and teacher's seminary.

While still a Kollel fellow, Reb Moshe was asked to teach *Mussar* to the *Talmidim* of the Gateshead Yeshiva. At the outset Reb Moshe used a text, such as *Mesillas Yeshorim* but later he delivered *shmuessen* (discourses). He continued *ad hoc* lecturing until 1946, when he joined the Yeshiva as full-time *Mashgiach*. He found it difficult to terminate his career as a kollel fellow, and before taking this step he consulted three great men: Rabbi Dessler, Rabbi Abramsky, and Rabbi Elya Lopian. Each in his own way encouraged him to assume the position*

II Middos:

The Measure of an Unforgettable Mashgiach

The Gateshead Challenge

When Reb Moshe came to the Yeshiva in Gateshead, it had but 50 students. The Rosh Yeshiva was Rabbi

*When Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman met Dovid Baddiell on a visit to Gateshead, he described him as "*der kleiner Chofetz Chaim*." Indeed, visiting *Rabbonim* would ask him for his *berachos* (personal blessings).

The strength of commitment of the founding Jews of Gateshead even impressed their non-Jewish neighbors, as is illustrated by a well-known story dealing with the bridge that joined Newcastle with Gateshead. Reb Dovid paid the gatekeeper a few coppers every Friday to allow Jews to use the toll bridge on *Shabbos*. One fellow, smoking a cigarette, expected to cross the bridge without paying, saying that Reb Dovid had paid for him. The gatekeeper said, "Mr. Baddiell only paid for Jews who keep the Sabbath, but you're smoking. He didn't pay for you."



Reb Moshe Schwab with a class in Gateshead's early years.

Nachman David Landynski and Rabbi Eliezer Kahn *Menahel Ruchani*. The concept of staying in a yeshiva for many years was foreign to the boys (many from non-religious homes) and much more so to their parents who were eager for their children to go to work. It was the task of the *Roshei Yeshiva* and the *Mashgiach*, Reb Moshe, to imbue the students with Lithuanian Yeshiva tradition—the *Kollel* concept and the obligation to spread Torah among others. Having been brought up in Frankfort where these concepts were generally unknown, Reb Moshe had first-hand familiarity with the students' problems, and he had a clear idea of his goal, which he had absorbed from his rebbes.

Despite his youth, Reb Moshe was remarkably successful as a *Mashgiach*. The *talmidim* could feel that he was actually living through their problems. He would spend hours in conversation, sitting or strolling with a boy, until the boy was open with him. Invited to his home, the boys would be disarmed by Reb Moshe's warm words and easy smile. More than one *talmid* said that he was closer to Reb Moshe than to his own father for he could confide freely in Reb Moshe. His interest in each *bachur* went beyond the spiritual to include his health and financial needs. One *talmid* recalls how, over 35 years ago, when he mentioned to Reb Moshe that he was engaged to be married, Reb Moshe asked him how he was going to manage. Realizing that he was in need of assistance, he offered help without waiting to be asked.

Reb Moshe's interest in his *talmidim* followed them after their yeshiva years. He knew where every *talmid* lived and what position he held. If they were in need of jobs or funds to start them off in their businesses, he would arrange loans for them—even for as long as ten

years, if necessary. As a result, he was approached for loans as if he himself were wealthy, while he in turn approached his many friends and acquaintances with urgency as if he himself needed the monies. (It was said that people were reluctant to offer him a ride, for they knew it would cost them money.)

More than once he and his Rebbetzin arranged weddings for impoverished or orphaned couples, making sure that nothing was lacking that the conventional *chassan* and *kallah* would have; and by virtue of their warmth, they also provided the couple with "parents."

His telephone was constantly busy with calls from parents and young people seeking his advice in marriage-related matters.

A talmid was interested in marrying a certain young lady, but his father was opposed to the match, and the boy did not want to defy his father. Reb Moshe agreed with the boy's choice. Without notifying either of the principals, he traveled to London and on to Geneva where he spent the day with the boy's father; and then returned the same evening. . . . As the journey each way took an entire night, Reb Moshe did not sleep on two consecutive nights. Nevertheless, he was back in Yeshiva next morning, following his normal schedule

Reb Moshe's selfless dedication to others was already apparent in his youthful years.

When in London after his release from the Isle of Man, he realized that the wife and small baby of a friend still interned had just moved to Letchworth. The young family needed help, so Reb Moshe travelled back and forth several times on the eve of Yom Kippur (an hour's journey each way) to help them, until they were completely settled. . . occupying him until an hour before Yom Kippur.

Reb Moshe would try to maintain his every friendship and association—especially with those he had been *mekarev* (brought close to Judaism) by visiting or inviting them for a Chanukah evening or some other special occasion.

He carefully avoided any recognition for helping others. A communal endeavor in which he had been involved was written up in a newspaper. His family was disappointed not to see his name mentioned in the article, but he was delighted. "Wonderful! The less I am mentioned, the better it is!" He repeatedly instructed his family to refrain from discussing their accomplishments—to put them out of mind, so as not to become proud.

Always with a Smile—"Beseiver Panim Yofos"

As *Mashgiach*, Reb Moshe carried the problems of 300 boys on his shoulders. Yet, he was not a troubled, worried man, and even when sixty, he kept his youthful spirits. His encouraging smile, accompanying his unfailingly warm "Good morning" or "Gutt Shabbos," could convert a morose passerby into a new person.

The smile emanated from the depth of his heart, for one of Reb Moshe's life goals was to cultivate *simcha* (joy)

as an integral part of his character. On Purim, Reb Moshe would urge the boys to sing "Yodu es HaShem besimcha (Serve G-d with joy)" and, entranced, would sing along for a great length of time: "One can't just sing a *niggun* (melody) for a couple of minutes. A person has to absorb himself in the *niggun* until he becomes *nissor* (inspired) from it."

On the last day of his life (the doctor had told him that he did not have much longer), people streamed in to visit him. As soon as they opened the door, he greeted them with that smile, conveying to his visitors how much he appreciated their company. During his very last hours, when he had lost his sight, he heard a friend walk in and—told who it was—welcomed him with a smile.

He considered himself undeserving and whatever good fortune he did enjoy he considered G-d's unmitigated *chessed*. At his own *chasuna*, as at the weddings of all his children, he opened his speech with: *Ma oshiv LaShem, kol tagmulohi olay*—How can I repay unto G-d, all that I enjoy from Him!"

His Davening

Reb Moshe stressed that a person must strive to embody Dovid Hemelech's expression: "*Va'ani tefilla—to be ah shtick tefillah.*"

"When *davening* to Hashem, I feel like a big '*shnorrer*'—undeserving of his largesse, yet asking for more and more. But the *passuk* says *Harchev picho ve'amaleihu*—Open your mouth and I will fulfill (your request)! The Torah permits us to ask for as much as we want . . . A person always has something to *daven* for. First he needs *hatzla-cha* in his Torah studies. . . in earning a livelihood; then in finding a mate, in having children, and success in bringing them up. He must ask G-d to grant them intelligence, success in their studies . . . and for grandchildren. One is asking for things an entire lifetime, and that is what G-d wants. View yourself as undeserving, and appreciate G-d's limitless generosity."

"One should not only *daven* three times a day; even in the middle of the day one should ask Hashem for anything, as the need arises." Reb Moshe lived by this rule. Talking to a *bachur*, and finding it difficult to influence him Reb Moshe would pause to mumble a few words to himself, in *tefilla*—entreating G-d for His help. . . . Beginning a *sicha* (talk) in the Yeshiva, and sometimes even in the middle, he would say: "Please *Ribbono Shel Olom* grant me *Siyatta Dishmaya* (Divine assistance)!"—and then continue.

Several photographs of the *Kosel* and other holy places in *Eretz Yisroel* were slipped into his *Siddur*, as an inspiration to his *tefillas*.

He lived with unflagging hope and *bitachon* (trust in G-d). During the Friday evening meal when his mother was extremely ill, his telephone rang as a signal that her condition was deteriorating. After *bentching* (Grace), Reb Moshe asked his son to join him in saying *Tehillim*. When

he reached the 28th Psalm ("*LeDovid HaShem Ori. . .*") he repeated the final passage ". . . Trust in G-d, Strengthen your heart and trust in G-d," time and again, with tears pouring down his cheeks. On *Motzaei Shabbos*, he learned that her condition had taken a turn for the better. . . . She lived for another 18 months.

Ahavas Yisroel

When in *Eretz Yisroel*, he would try not to miss a morning at the *Kosel*. Anyone near him would hear his broken-hearted cries to G-d, to have mercy on *Klal Yisroel*. . . . When standing at the *Kosel*, he said, he was ashamed to ask for his own personal needs.

En route on his many travels, he approached every likely candidate, to bring out the Jewish spark buried deep within.

On the street of a town near Gateshead, Reb Moshe spotted someone who looked Jewish. He engaged him in conversation and they talked about life in earlier times. As they parted company, the stranger turned back toward where he had come from. When asked why, he replied, "I was on my way to a treifa shop, but after our conversation, I just can't go there."

Besides saving many families from disintegrating by counseling each party independently, he also conducted discussion groups for *chassanim* and young married men regarding the basics of *shalom bayis* (family harmony).

His love for others was genuine, yet disciplined, consistent with a frequent topic of his *shmuessen*. "Opposing Forces of Man": *The Avos* had devoted their lives to developing a specific character trait (i.e. *Avrohom*—unlimited kindness), and yet were challenged to act in opposite ways (*Avrohom's* test at the *Akeida*—sacrificing his son). We, too, must become masters of our emotions, not prisoners of our natural tendencies or moods. Reb Moshe personified this principle; on the one hand, he expressed warm interest in every student, counseling each according to his specific needs and background. On the other hand, he would not hesitate to speak sharply when necessary:

At a rabbinical conference a speaker made a statement contrary to Chazal (a rabbinical statement). Reb Moshe pounded on the table and quoted the Chazal. He later explained that if someone contradicts a Chazal, you must protest; and if the statement was made publicly, then the protest must be a public one.

His Shmuessen

Reb Moshe would open his *shmuessen* (lectures) in the classical manner of addressing his words to himself, spoken aloud for others to hear. This was indeed the case for he would in fact be concentrating on improving himself along the lines of his projected *shmuess*, honoring Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin's requirement that no-one may say *mussar* unless he has reached the degree of perfection he demands from others. Thus he was forever engaged in self-improvement.

His talks usually developed the theme of "this world is but a *prozdor*—a corridor for the next world, and man is only here to prepare."

A *talmid* recently remarked that every *bachur* was changed by hearing this theme expounded. Whether the fellow "remained in learning," or entered the business or professional world, he knew that either setting was but a *prozdor*: "Whatever we do has to be judged on a criterion of *tachlis ruchni*—a spiritual purpose; this-worldly affairs for their own sake have no value whatsoever."

Bitachon was another dominant theme in his talks and in other sessions. Every *Shalosh Seudos* (the third Sabbath meal) he sang "*Becha batchu avoseinu*" ("Our Fathers trusted in You") with special fervor; he said that such *nigunim* helped him overcome all tribulations, for they expressed unquestioning trust-in-G-d as the core of life.

Reb Moshe also lived with exemplary *Emunas Chachomim*—trust in Torah scholars—even in *rabbonim* much younger than himself, when he deemed their role crucial in any issue. He said that the *rav* of a town, or a *Rosh Yeshiva* has *Siyatta Dishmaya* (Divine assistance) to determine the correct response for his situation. After consulting the local *rav* on a matter, he invariably followed the *rav's* decision without further question.

He called his lectures "unpopular speeches" because he knew that they flew in the face of all the interests and ambitions of a normal *bachur*. "It isn't easy to break a *middah* (character trait) and to think through how to improve oneself," he would say. "It's much easier to listen to uplifting inspirational *sichos*. But a person mustn't be afraid to face his shortcomings, and must not relent in his battle until he is able to overcome them.—There is no such thing as *Ich ken nisht*."

Power of Persuasion

After convincing a *bachur* to reassess his priorities and to devote himself fully to Torah study, he would persuade the parents to allow their son to continue on in yeshiva for a half year more, postponing other plans, until the boy was strong enough in his convictions to gain his parents' full agreement on his own.

Reb Moshe's powers of persuasion grew out of strength of conviction. When yet a student in the yeshiva, one of his more gifted friends told him that he was leaving the yeshiva to go to work. Reb Moshe wished him "hatzlacha," and returned to his studies. In his room that evening, Reb Moshe recalled the ma'amar Chazal (dictum), "Whoever leaves You (G-d) leaves his life," and analyzed it: Here was my friend "leaving his life-source," and I had spoken to him with equanimity! He rushed to his friend's room and with great fervor explained this ma'amar to him in all its ramifications. . . . The friend was overwhelmed by Reb Moshe's words. . . and is now a greatly admired Rosh Yeshiva.

A *talmid* who today is an outstanding Torah scholar and lecturer recalls coming to the yeshiva hardly capable

of studying a *blatt Gemora* on his own. On a stroll together—Reb Moshe's first move—Reb Moshe spoke to him about kollel . . . He said he remembered this chat all his years in Yeshiva. On that fateful stroll he realized what was expected of him and what his goal should be.

Reb Moshe did not talk to everyone that way the first time, but when he recognized unusual abilities in a person, he would even discuss the distant future.

His Daily Workload

How did Reb Moshe spend his day, carrying a vast spiritual and physical burden on his shoulders? First, he started early—he was up for a *kvius* (scheduled study session) at 5:30 AM, with a member of the Gateshead community, which he maintained for some twenty-five years. (He also had an evening *kvius* devoted to *talmidim* in need of special attention—bringing the *bachur* up to par.) He rarely missed delivering his morning *shiur* on *Gemora*; when he did, he would sadly say, "Today I didn't have the *zechus* (merit) to say the *shiur*."

His *shiur* sounded deceptively simple—few commentaries were quoted by name. But, following the methodology of Reb Elchonon זצ"ל, their views and interpretations were skillfully woven into his explanation of the



Rabbi Schwab with רבי רבי Cohen, menahel of Gateshead Teachers' Seminary (building in background), where Reb Moshe spoke to groups of girls every week, for thirty years.

text. . . only later telling an inquisitive student; "This is Reb Chaim Brisker's approach to the *Gemora*." "That's the way Reb Boruch Ber understood *pshat*."

Three times a week, Reb Moshe would deliver a *shmuess*, each time to a different class. In addition, he conducted a daily *vaad*—an intimate discussion group—focusing on a particular *hashkafa* topic.

When was he home?—between 2 PM (after the *shiur*) and 2:15 (when the *vaadim* would commence—after which would come private counseling sessions with the boys) . . . and 8:45 or 9 PM, when he returned home—but then he would start preparing the next day's *shiur* at 9:15 or 9:30 . . . His vast *chessed* work would begin at 11 PM—usually on the telephone—to be resumed at pre-dawn, or before *davening*. . . While walking between home and the Yeshiva, he would repeat tractates of *Mishna* that he had committed to memory.

Would Reb Moshe ever have had an advance indication of the schedule on any particular day, he possibly would not have accepted a burden of such scope. His credo, however, was: "Never refuse to do a *mitzva* that comes your way; when the opportunity arises, act on it immediately." He strongly believed that whenever a person acts *Lashem Shomayim*—for the sake of Heaven, especially when he is responsible for the outcome, he is endowed by a *Siyatta Dishmaya* to manage it all.

Holding on to this Divine guidance called for vigilance. "The less one talks about what one is doing, the better, because as soon as one feels *ga'avoh* (self-importance), he loses all his *zechusim*," he frequently said.

On the Road—for "Chessed"

Reb Moshe would spend several weeks a year traveling England and the Continent raising funds. "The secret of raising funds," he would say, "is to be *misparallel* that the donor have the *zechus* to give. G-d has His ways of giving worthy institutions money, but not everyone with money has the *zechus* to support Torah."

A former *talmid* was in a kollel that had stopped accepting candidates because of financial problems. Reb Moshe argued that a person has *Siyatta Dishmaya* to achieve whatever he genuinely needs. The kollel policy of containment is ill-founded, he told the fellow.

When soliciting funds for the Yeshiva, he saw it as his mission to also reach for the hearts of fellow Jews. Before going to London, for example, he would run through a computer printout of former *talmidim*, supporters, and other contacts, and prepare a list of people to visit—to discuss communal and personal problems; to see how former *talmidim* were faring, and how he could help them. He would visit people even for a small donation—drop in on an impoverished widow simply to let her know that she was not forgotten.

Reb Moshe was also careful not to compromise *kavod HaTorah* (the Torah's honor).

A disinterested party once slammed the door in his face. Reb Moshe went to a nearby telephone booth, called him up and explained that he had violated kavod HaTorah. He was collecting for a yeshiva and even if the fellow did not choose to contribute, he should not slam the door. The gentlemen begged Reb Moshe for forgiveness, invited him to come back to the house, and gave him a generous donation.

When leaving for a fund raising trip, his students would wish him success. He would counter, "You sit and learn diligently, and then I will be *matzliach* with the *zechus* of your Torah."

* * *

The last words he spoke before departing from this world were to his wife—that the money they had set aside to pay for airfare to Canada to spend Pesach with relatives should be sent to his brother in Bnei Brak as a contribution to the latter's Free Loan Fund.

Rabbi Moshe Schwab ז"ר died as he had lived: with thoughts of others on his lips. . . and his lips testifying to the deepest concerns of his heart. T

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The Yeshiva Graduate in the Rabbinate— a re-examination

Undoubtedly, an article concerning the rabbinate should have been penned by someone of a greater stature and experience than myself. However, greater men than I have already declared the urgency of the matter, so I will venture to elaborate on a theme already discussed by them.

At the recent Sixth Knessia Gedolah of Agudath Israel, the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, Rabbi Betzalel Zolty, called for the rebuilding of the institution of *rabbonus*—the rabbinate. In the past, most of our *Gedolim* in Europe were *rabbonim*, who also served as the *roshei yeshivos* of the institutions of learning in their towns. After World War II, however, a marked division of function emerged, especially in America. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of this article, but the fact is indisputable.

The American Legacy of Ignorance

One significant point worthy of comment, however, is that the European *baalei battim* were generally more learned and more religious than their American counterparts. Some even wrote commentaries on the *Torah* and *Gemora*. By contrast, American *baalei battim* until recently were products of a society that had no real yeshivos until the First World War. They were, at best, religious immigrants who had come to America to avoid poverty and religious persecution, only to fall victim to Sabbath desecration, violation of *kashrus*, and the American dream that *parnossa* is the direct function of a solid education—not of G-d's Providence.

The American rabbinate thus found itself dealing with people of materialistic values whose Torah education was minimal. Whereas the European *rabbonim* generally instructed their *baalei battim*, the American *baalei battim* were telling their *rabbonim* what to do. In response to lay expectations, the American rabbinate evolved from a *rebbe-talmid* relationship to what has euphemistically been called a social directorship. In most cases, the rabbinate meant a downgrading of high yeshiva standards rather than an opportunity to enhance one's standing as a *talmid chacham* and to apply abstract teachings to

practical situations. Little wonder, then, that yeshivos did not gear their graduates for the rabbinate, and most idealistic *musmachim* entered *chinuch*—Torah education.

Since World War II, however, a vastly different picture has emerged, with a Hebrew Day School in every city with an appreciable Jewish population. Yeshiva high schools began to flourish in the Sixties, and kollelim have been appearing across the land in the Seventies. As a result, the ranks of the *baalei battim* include more and more people with a solid Torah education, people capable of giving *shiurim*, people whose values are Torah centered and who are involved in their children's Torah education.

Almost Full Circle

In a sense we have come almost full circle. All that is lacking is the revitalization of the American *rabbonus*. We need *rabbonim* who are capable of Torah leadership, who are authentic *talmidei chachomim*, who know what a *sheila* (halachic query) is and how to resolve it, and, most important, who know how to instill a love of Torah in their *kehillos'* members, young and old alike.

Should one wonder where we can find the individuals to fill this need, the answer should be obvious: the same source they always come from—the traditional yeshivos. That old wall of opposition still stands, but there are some cracks in the wall. Especially of note is the re-emergence of a strong *rebbe-talmid* relationship between the *rav* and his congregants. It should be hoped, then, that the yeshivos will re-examine their negative stance. It is true that the *rabbonus* is not problem-free, but then again, is there a guarantee in any other vocational field?

On the other hand, there are many benefits to be gained from entering *rabbonus*, once one has merely made the decision to become a *rav*. One can learn principles of *halacha* through proper education and *shimush* (understudying an accomplished *rav* and working with him): when to be lenient and when not; how *halacha* addresses myriad modern-day *sheilos*; how to perform simple rabbinical functions, like marriages and funerals. Then, as a functional rabbi, one can develop expertise in *halacha lema'ase*, practical application of Torah law, an area not really pursued in the yeshivos. Yet other areas

Rabbi Chill, a *musmach* of *Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin*, is a *maggid shiur* in *Mesivta Or Hameir* in New Rochelle, and serves as *Rav* of the *Young Israel* of Spring Valley, N.Y.

of personal development are achieved through working with people and influencing them—the responsibility inherent in this, and the opportunities for *chesed* this entails. Not surprisingly, *rabbonus* also encourages growth in Torah, as a teacher of adults. The *rav* has an open field to teach whatever he chooses in *shiurim* for men and women.

Even the serious problems of present day *rabbonus* can be vehicles for development. For example: *Rabbonim* today are faced with problems when performing various marriages: 1) when one of the partners is a gentile who only agrees to convert with reluctance; 2) when it involves individuals of questionable *yichus* (origins) especially when the male is a *kohein*; 3) when the ceremony is performed in a Conservative synagogue; 4) when the couple will not keep the laws of family purity. The solutions to these problems involve intensive Torah study and research, discussing the issue with an authority, and then rendering a decision, trying to effect a conclusion without any compromise of principle. Not always will the *rav* be successful, but the in-depth search for an approach to these problems is invaluable in itself.

The Leap to Reality

As is frequently the case, the leap from theory to reality can be an immense one. Rumors, bad examples, and self-doubts all attack the *ben Torah's* interest in *rabbonus*. If the yeshiva graduate could be induced to taste *rabbonus* for even a short period of time, without requiring a total commitment, a giant step will have been taken toward returning the *rabbonus* to its traditional status and glory.

I am just such an erstwhile hesitant candidate for

rabbonus who did enter the field, and was amazed to discover in it a gratifying new world. With these credentials I would propose a method of introducing other *bnei Torah* to *rabbonus*:

Similar to Torah Umesorah's SEED program, which succeeded in giving communities an insight into the dynamics of a *yeshiva gedola* while giving the students a taste of serving the community, I propose a SEED plan for *rabbonim*. The *bein hazmanim* (intersession) in yeshivos coincides with either a *rav's* busiest season—Pesach and Succos—or with his vacation. During the busy period, *bnei Torah* should be encouraged to live with and learn from those *rabbonim* who are themselves true *bnei Torah*, in an internship of sorts. Instead of spending the entire Pesach and Succos intersession at the home of parents or in-laws, the trainee should devote part of the time to being under the tutelage of the *rav*. Then, the week before the *rav* leaves for his summer vacation, he should instruct the candidate in what to do in his absence—providing him with a telephone number for emergencies, of course. The relationship between the *rav* and the candidate should, if possible, continue throughout the year.

The key word here is "*shimush*," learning by understudying an authentic source. Relying on *seforim* and guides is not enough. Thus, the cooperation of *rabbonim* who are willing to enter into such a program is the crucial factor. In this way, *bnei Torah* can be introduced into the *rabbonus* and gain an awareness of what is involved, without having to commit themselves to leaving the yeshiva.

Through this approach, I would suggest, we may begin to see a renaissance of the noble institution of *rabbonus* on these shores. □

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In a day when sermons are glorified book reviews, and a hesped is a scholarly treatise, we yearn for the Maggidim of old who ignited the hearts of those who had the good fortune to hear their fiery words, because they spoke

"Words From the Heart"

In the pages that follow, Chaim Shapiro describes the pyrotechnics of the Maggidim and Darshonim, Rabbonim and Baalei Mussar who inspired the inhabitants of the shtetl of pre-war Europe.

The System

The Prophets were called *Maggiddim*—those who tell—for they used their power of speech both to foretell the future and to chastise the people to guide them to improvement. Apparently this title was borrowed from the prophets to describe the men who roamed Eastern Europe preaching, chastising, and reproving the people.

While every Jew is obligated to give *tochacha*—to reprove his fellow Jew on an individual basis, it was generally left to the *Rav* to chastise a community. The *Rav* was primarily occupied in Torah study and community leadership, however, and would only speak in public twice a year (*Shabbos Shuva* and *Shabbos Hagadol*), leaving *tochacha* to the *Maggiddim*. In a Chassidic community, however, the *rebbe* would give *tochacha*,¹ leaving little opening to *Maggiddim*.

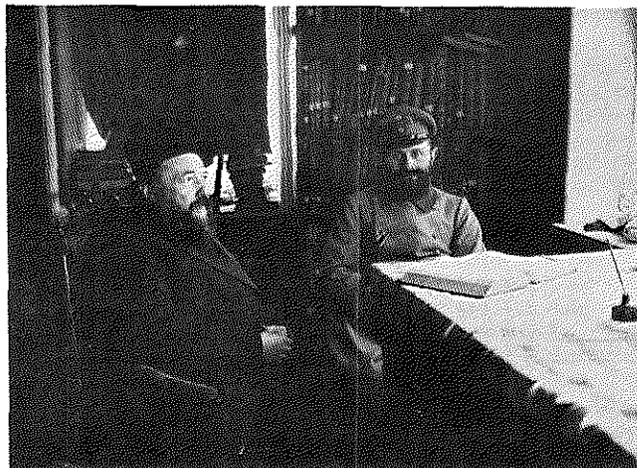
The official title used to be "*Maggid d' Mosse*" (the *Maggid* of the Town) or "*Maggid Meishorim*" (Speaker of Righteousness), for they pulled no punches—in keeping with "And you shall fear no man." Hence MM or MDM preceding a name identifies the man as a *Maggid*. (Sometimes it was *Moreh Tzedek MM*, which means a *Dayan*—rabbinical judge—and *Maggid*.)

Except for the city of Vilna, where the *Maggid* was salaried by the *Kehilla*, a *Maggid* earned his living by wandering the countryside. Upon his arrival in a town, announcements were made in all *shuls* that the *Maggid* from such-and-such place would be speaking at such-and-such time and place. They were never known by

their names, but by their town or residence, like the "*Dubner Maggid*" (of Dubno) the "*Kelmer Maggid*," the "*Bialystoker Maggid*." . . . A *Kaaro* (collection plate) was placed at the door of the *shul* where the *Maggid* spoke, and people would drop in their donations after the *drosha*.

The Makings of a Maggid

Needless to say, they were all gifted orators with a vast knowledge of *Tanach* (Scriptures), *Chazal* (Rabbinic writings), *Midrashim*, *Mussar Seforim* (ethical writings),



Rabbi Menachem Krakowski: *Rav* of Novaradock, Vilna *Maggid*.

Chaim Shapiro, a Baltimore resident, is a frequent contributor to these pages whose articles on pre-War Europe evoke a way of life that was all but destroyed, but not forgotten.

1) Notable exceptions were the *Rebbe*, Reb Dov Ber, who was the "*Mezeritcher Maggid*," and Reb Yisroel, the "*Kozenitcher Maggid*"—both of whom became Chassidic giants.

and *mesholim* (parables)—veritable store-houses of knowledge and wisdom! Moreover, their delivery conformed to: "Whoever says a *dvar Torah* in public that is not as sweet to the listeners' ears as milk mixed with honey should better not speak" (*Shir Hashirim Rabba*). On the other hand, a speaker with an excellent delivery but nothing to deliver might entertain people for the moment, but will certainly have no lasting effect on them, for what is there to remain in the listeners' minds?

They were masters of psychology (even though they may never have heard of the word) and easily manipulated the people's moods. They would inspire tears or laughter, happiness or sorrow within moments of each other.

Some had unusual powers of description. The Kelmer *Maggid* would describe *Gehinom* with such detail that the people would actually feel their toes burning! Or when Reb Zundl Kamenitzer would describe the plague of frogs in Egypt, people could hear the frogs croaking in their ears. (The latter—Reb Zundl, that is—would sometimes speak for up to six hours!)

Ready When You Are

Some *Maggiddim* were so full of ideas, parables and *Midrashim*, that they were like the memory bank of a computer ready to respond with the appropriate sermon at any time, on any subject. The Minsker *Maggid*, Reb Binyomin Shakovitsky,² was invited to nearby



The Minsker *Maggid*: Rabbi Binyomin Shakovitsky.

2) As told to me by Reb Benyamin Shakovitsky of Bnei Brak, a grandson and namesake of the Minsker *Maggid*.

Novaradok to speak at the funeral of Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (revered author of the "*Aruch Hashulchan*") who was the *poseik hador* (outstanding *halacha* authority of his time) and *Rav* of Novaradok. Needless to say, the *Maggid* had prepared an appropriate eulogy, but before ascending the lecturn, a delegation of yeshiva students approached him with a problem: Since *seforim* were prohibitively expensive, very few people owned even a *Shas*. In every *shul* a *Chevra Kinyan Seforim* (Society for Purchasing Seforim) collected nickels and dimes as dues, to buy *seforim* for public use. There was also a *Chevra Tikun Seforim* whose members voluntarily mended and bound *seforim* that became worn from use. In Novaradok the *gabboyim* were impatient with the yeshiva boys who were careless with the *seforim* and seemed never to return a book to its proper place, forever ripping pages, and so forth. Hence the *gabboyim* ordered the *shamash* to lock up the *seforim*, only handing them out to *baalei battim* (laymen).³

For some reason the boys never complained to the *Rav*—perhaps because he was old and ill—but they did approach the Minsker *Maggid* with their problem. The *Maggid* did not let them down and opened his *hesped* with a story.

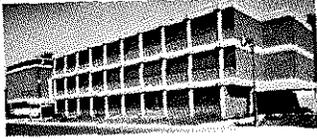
"There was a widow whose one and only son had died. As one can well imagine, she felt that her life was finished; the future held nothing for her except memories. Before every *Pesach*, like all other Jewish housewives, she would clean her house, carrying out the clothing from her closets for an airing. As she carried out each suit, tears rolled from her eyes—more suits, more tears. Someone passed by and said, 'Lady, you own all these beautiful suits, why are you crying? I'm the one who should cry, I wear these same 'shmattes' all year long.'

"To which she replied, 'My dear man, don't you understand? When you see a suit hanging in a closet, with no button missing, the pants without a wrinkle, what does it mean? It means that the one who should wear the suits is no longer here! He died! That's why I'm crying!'"

3) To have an idea of the great premium put on *seforim* in the days before photo-offset and other inexpensive printing processes, I refer the reader to an episode regarding the *Shaagas Arye*, the famous Torah giant who, as *Rav* in Volozhin, could not afford to own a *Shas*. He would borrow a *Gemora* from Rabbi Yitzchock-the-Parnes (president of the council of the city), the father of Reb Chaim Volozhiner. The *Shaagas Arye* once entered the Parnes's house to look up a passage in a *Gemora*, and became so engrossed that he stayed on for several hours. Little did he know that in the next room Rivka, Reb Yitzchok's wife, was in labor, a midwife at her side, but without medications or anesthesia. Normally the pains and screams were unbearable in such circumstances, but Rivka realized that the *Rav* was studying Torah in the next room and she restrained herself so as not to disturb him.

The *Rav* did not know what had transpired in the adjacent room until the following week, when he was invited to the baby's *bris*. He then gave her his *Bracha*: As the child's mother did not permit her screams to disturb him from Torah study, so should the baby never hold back his voice from Torah studies. The boy, Reb Chaim's younger brother, was named Zalmen—and indeed grew up to rival his older brother in Torah.

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The *Maggid* continued: "Hakodosh Boruch Hu has one daughter and one daughter only—that is, the Torah. Her beautiful clothes are the *seforim*. And when one sees *seforim* with no pages missing, no covers torn, what does it mean? It means that the Torah has died in Novaradok! The *Rav* of Novaradok, the *Aruch Hashulchan*, has died!"

Needless to say, all bookcases were opened the very same day!

Askanus (Public Service)

With the power of their speech, *Maggidim* influenced countless individuals for the better, to perfect their *middos* (character), and to engage themselves in Torah study. With the same mastery, they mobilized entire communities into action.

The Kelmer *Maggid* once visited a town and discovered that the Jewish hospital was about to close its doors. In those days, people only entered a hospital as a last resort, for knowledge of medicine was very primitive. Nonetheless, for the poor, a hospital stay guaranteed daily visits by a physician, constant nursing care, a clean bed, and proper nourishment—accommodations the well-to-do could afford at home. The Kelmer attacked the subject from the pulpit:

Chazal tell us that the Shechina (Divine Presence) rests at the head of the bed of the ill. I can picture the Shechina bringing a complaint before the Kisei Hakavod (G-d's throne), 'Why am I always in the homes of the poor? I find it absolutely intolerable! Hunger, poverty, children running around bare-foot, no doctors or medication! Why not permit me to dwell in the homes of the wealthy, where a clean bed, comfortable rooms, food and medicine are found—more in keeping with my dignity!'

"The Ribbono Shel Olam agreed. Soon all the rich folks began krenk'n (to get sick). Before long, they realized what was happening and they began to establish hospitals. The poor had clean, comfortable surroundings, and the Shechina had a proper place to visit. But now that the hospital will be closed, only the rich will krenk again!"

* * *

Rabbi Yaakov Mazo, the last official *Rav* of Moscow⁴ under the Czars, tells how the Kelmer *Maggid* helped establish a Free Loan Society in his hometown Mogilev (*Zichronos* [Memories], Book 3, P. 126). First he describes the far-reaching influence the Kelmer had on the craftsmen of the town: They all studied Rabbeinu Bachya Ibn Pakuda's *Chovas Halevavos* (Duties of the Heart), and Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto's *Mesillas Yeshorim* (The Path of the Righteous)—two ethical classics; they were all knowledgeable in *Chayei Adam*; tailors and carpenters became polished in *midos* (character)—all

⁴ Rabbi Mazo was the "Kazyonne Rabbin" i.e. government appointed *Rav* of Moscow, also known as the "Rav M'taam."

because of the Kelmer *Maggid*. Whenever he arrived in town, they dropped their work to welcome their *heiliger Rebbe*.

Once a craftsman complained to him that they desperately needed a Free Loan Society: True, the rich in Mogilev gave a lot of charity, but they—the craftsmen—did not need charity; in fact they gave charity themselves most of the year. But they had need to borrow money until the next harvest, when the peasants would pay off debts incurred for the purchase of crafts on credit. The problem was that the law required a minimum of 5000 rubles on hand to establish a bank of this sort, and there were only 2000 rubles in the fund.

"Who can put up the balance?" inquired the *Maggid*.

He was told of one elderly man, Reb Yeshaya Shur, a wealthy businessman. His only son was also rich, but he refused to donate the money. The Kelmer investigated the circumstances and learned that Reb Yeshaya Shur would not respond to pressure to give more money, even though he was a great *baal tzeddaka*. In fact, the 2000 ruble fund was mostly his money. He expected other people to join in the *mitzva*, which was only right! Besides, his will specified a fortune for various *tzeddakos*, including the Loan Society. Reb Yeshaya Shur was a *talmid chachom* who owned his own *Bais Midrash*, where a *Maggid* was never invited. However, one of the craftsmen was making a pair of shoes for the elder Mr. Shur, and induced him to invite the *Maggid* to speak in his *shul* and made certain that he would be there.

The Maggid began with a quote from Yishayahu (46:12): "Hearken unto me, stout of heart, those distant from tzeddaka." "Didn't the Navi know," he asked, "that those stout of heart do not listen, and those who are far from tzeddaka do not understand what tzeddaka means? To the contrary, the Navi is addressing the generous who dispense large amounts of tzeddaka, but in their haste to do tzeddaka, risk losing the very meaning of tzeddaka! It is the manner of the Navi to refer to people in terms of their ultimate status, should they persist in their ways. For instance the Navi first says 'We are almost similar to Sodom,' and in the next passage addresses Klal Yisroel as 'officers of Sodom.' And so the Navi called the large contributors 'distant from tzeddaka' because tzeddaka is evaluated in accordance with the amount of chessed it entails. The more chessed, the more tzeddaka. Bestowing chessed is more beloved before G-d than tzeddaka, than sacrifice, or than the merit of Fathers."

The Maggid then described a dispute in Heaven as if he—and all in the shul—were there witnessing the event: "Michael the Archangel, defender of Jewry, stood before the Heavenly Throne, and summoned the various craftsmen who were the Torah giants recorded in the Talmud: Here comes the old Tanna Shammai—the bricklayer, with his trowel and level in hand; then his opponent, the great Nassi Hillel—the woodcutter with his ax; then Yochanan—the shoemaker; and Reb Yosef Chlafte—the hide-maker. As they wait, Yehoshua—the tar-maker and Rabbi Yitzchok—the blacksmith enter, and Abba Zimra—the tailor, threaded needle in hand, follows.

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They all pray for the artisans below, in Mogilev, who follow in their path of labor, Torah, mussar and midos. G-d responds issuing the order that on the morrow at 12 noon the 3000 rubles must be delivered! Wait! Here comes the Malach Hamoves—the Angel of Death. He pleads 'Let me bring his neshama tonight, and the money will be there! That wealthy man designated in his will to give half his fortune to tzeddaka. Actually I will do him a favor, for then his money will go not merely for tzeddaka, but for a tzeddaka that entails gemilas chassodim!' "

Tears came to everyone's eyes, especially Reb Yeshaya Shur. The Maggid then turned directly to Shur: "Reb Yeshaya, I know you are a big ball tzeddaka—a very charitable man. Don't let the Malach Hamoves grant you the mitzva. Do it on your own! As the pasuk says, "Personally bless your soul while you're alive, you will be blessed, for it will do you good!"

Reb Yeshaya Shur stood up with tears rolling down his cheeks and promised to deliver the 3000 rubles the next morning. (3000 rubles then was the equivalent of \$50,000 today.)

The Conscience of the People

The reader should not get the impression that the listeners were naive or simple-minded. On the contrary, they were clever, learned and shrewd businessmen. Shur was a *talmid chacham* and a successful merchant, as was his son. But the *Maggid* was the conscience of the people. Everyone knew that the *Maggid* was right in all of his criticisms and demands, and the people were receptive to them. What were his demands? *Chessed*, improved *midos* and increased Torah studies. He was an embodiment of "*Losaguru—Do not fear any man,*" facing up to individuals and entire communities without trepidation. Shur knew in his heart that the *Maggid* was right, but he had wanted to share the *mitzva* with others and not supply the entire amount himself. The *Maggid* gave him an extra push with his story of the *Malach Hamoves*.

My home town of Lomza had a large beautiful central *shul*. The people ran out of money before they finished building, so they *davened* in the *shul* without a floor. Every Friday, the *shamash* sprinkled yellow sand on the ground in honor of *Shabbos*. One day a *Maggid* visited, and he chastised the people:

"I feel sorry for the Jews of Lomza," said the Maggid. "Chazal say that when Moshiach will come, all the shuls will be transferred to Eretz Yisroel (Megilla 29a). So the four walls

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and the roof will be lifted from Lomza and taken to Yerushalayim, while you will remain here, since there is no floor to carry you!"

By next Rosh Hashana a new floor was installed.

Didn't the Jews of Lomza know that a *shul* needs a floor? But it was a question of priorities, where the *tzeddaka* money should go first, and the floor was postponed. Then came the *Maggid* and gave an extra push in the direction of the basic dignity of a communal structure used for prayer. The prodding, the demands from the *Maggiddim*—by smiles or tears—produced the extra effort required.

The Niggun

No *Maggid* ever spoke without a *niggun*—the special sing-song melody of the trade. While they would employ all standard speakers' techniques—motions or gestures, facial expressions and phrasing—when it came to the punch line, words were simply insufficient. The *niggun* emphasized the point—a sweet, nagging, heart-tugging sing-song that softened the harsh words. Some used the *niggun* frequently, but for short intervals only; others sang their way along for longer periods, including the punch line with it. Words were the body of a sermon and the *niggun* was its soul.⁵

When the *Kelmer Maggid* published his *sefer*, *Tochocas Chaim*, he was asked, "Why doesn't the *sefer* have the same impact as your *drashos*?"

He replied, "That is the printer's fault. He didn't put the *niggun* into the *sefer*."

Rabbonim-Maggiddim

Unlike America, where one cannot die and be buried without a rabbi's eulogy (copied from the Gentiles), in Eastern Europe a rabbi would leave a *hesped* to others—except for either an outstanding *talmid chacham*, or an extraordinary tragedy. And unlike America, where the words of a eulogy can just as well be said for the guest of honor at a banquet without a change, in Eastern Europe a *hesped* aimed at bringing forth tears. And the audience always responded. What was the magic of drawing tears? Not the words so much as the *niggun*. Apparently *Rabbonim* listened to *Maggiddim* during their youth, then borrowed the *niggun* for the occasion—the key to the well-spring of tears!

I remember the *hesped* delivered by Rabbi Avraham Kalmanowitz, Rav of Tiktin, for his young *rebbeztin* who died leaving him with very small children. It was during the Three Weeks (the period of mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple), and his

⁵ Some listeners, tired from a day's work, would be lulled to sleep by the *niggun*. Once a *Maggid* heard someone snoring during his *drasha*. He called out to the *Shamash*: "Wake him up!" Replied the *Shamash*: "You put him to sleep, you wake him up."

voice, choked with tears, rang throughout the area with his particular plaintive *niggun*:

"Death crept into our palace, through our windows! (*Yirmiyahu* 20:9) Don't we have doors in Tiktin? Why the windows? Because death could never enter by the door, for it would be stopped by *בית רבן של בית רבן*, תנוקות של בית רבן, *נמולי חלב שלא פשעו, תנוקות של בית רבן*, 'Children weaned on milk, who have not sinned, little children of yeshivos'."

The entire assemblage responded with wailing and weeping. Even the cobble-stoned street joined in tears. The peculiar Kalmanowitz *niggun* imbued his moving words with gripping emotion.

I also recall the *hesped* our Rav, Rabbi Moshe Shatzkes, delivered for the Chofetz Chaim. All of Lomza was there. Rabbi Shatzkes suddenly stopped his speech, opened the *Aron Hakodesh*, and ordered everyone to sit down on the ground. He, too, sat on the floor in front of the *Aron Hakodesh*. His famous oratory, borne aloft by

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the peculiar Shatzkes *niggun*, rang over the heads of the crowd:

"All of Klal Yisroel is sitting shiva after its great rebbe, the Chofetz Chaim! There is only one left to perform the mitzva of *nichum aveilim*, comforting the bereaved. Only You, Kava-yachol, the Ribbono Shel Olam. So send us—now!—Moshiach Tzidkeinu!"

When he arose, the crowd did not. The people were crying bitterly, for the melody of the Rav's words and the impact of the *hesped* had mesmerized them. No *Maggid* could have done better!⁶

Moshol and Nimshol (Parable and Moral)

Just as a *niggun* is essential to a *Maggid's* delivery, so is the *moshol* an indispensable part of his baggage. Whether a brief simile or a longer parable, it enlightened a *pasuk*, clarified a subject. Every *Maggid* had a repertoire of *meshalim* for any subject and every occasion. The famed Dubner *Maggid* once challenged his listeners to quote any *pasuk* in the Torah, and he would ask a *kashye* (question) employing a *moshol*, and answer it with another *moshol*. They opened a *Chumash* and at random selected the *pasuk*: "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord. . . . Because they did not meet you with bread and water when you left Egypt . . . and they hired Bilaam to curse you" (*Devarim* 23:4,5). The Dubner's *moshol*-question was:

"A bride and groom lived a great distance from each other, so the families decided to hold the wedding in a town half-way between the two. After loading up their wagon with all the food and drinks for the reception, and the bride's entire family had climbed aboard, her father galloped off on a horse to meet his 'mechutten' to complete the arrangements. As the two were sitting and talking, his teenage boy ran in breathlessly, telling his father that an accident had occurred and the wagon had turned over—'Food is all over the road, all the whiskey and wine spilled onto the fields—and guess what else, father! Mother got killed!'"

6) Every Shavuot and Simchas Torah, the town dignitaries visited the Rav in his spacious *Beis Din Shtub* for *Kiddush*. Rabbi Moshe Shatzkes would say a *drasha*—with a *niggun*, of course. He would then sing Reb Levi Yitzchok Berditchever's *bayl* (exchange). He had a tradition from his stepfather Reb Itzele (Blaser) Peterburgher, to sing it on those two occasions:

Ribbono Shel Olam, I shall make with You an exchange.

רכונו של עולם, איך וועל מאכן מיט דיר א בייט.

Do you know what I'll be giving You in exchange?

ווייסטו וואס איך וועל דיר געבן אין בייט?

Avoinos, Chatoyim, Up'shoyim, Tatenyu! (sins and transgressions, Father)

עונות וחטאים ופשעים, מאמעניו!

Do you know what You will give me in exchange?

צי ווייסטו וואס דו וועסט מיר געבן אין בייט?

Slicha, Mechila, Vekapara, Tatenyu! (forgiveness, Father).

סליחה ומחילה וכפרה, מאמעניו.

(Again it's the publisher's fault, for he failed to put in the *Niggun!*)

The Maggid continued: "To this child, the food and drinks were the most important loss; that his mother got killed was secondary to him!"

"Now listen to the *pasuk*: 'They refused the Jews bread and water'—that's first. And the fact that they hired Bilaam to annihilate the Jewish People is listed second—is it logical to consider this secondary?"

He then answered his question with yet another *moshol*, as he had promised beforehand:

"A Jewish farmer was envious of his neighbor and decided that he too would get a *talmid chacham* as a son-in-law. He went to the Rosh Yeshiva who recommended one of his *talmidim* to him. . . . The farmer sat his new son-in-law at his table and shared his rough diet of black bread and onions with him. But the yeshiva fellow was accustomed to more refined, processed foods; he could not handle the rough food, so he shriveled away from hunger. The farmer was upset with his practice and hired two peasants to force the delicate son-in-law to eat his food. The young man could not take this treatment and sneaked away to the yeshiva. The farmer came after him, but the Rosh Yeshiva stopped him: 'A yeshiva student is not a farmer. He can't exist on rough food.'

"But I can't afford any other food," he protested.

"You can afford to hire two peasants to force your undigestible food on him, but to feed him proper food, you have no money?"

"The *nimshol* (message) of the answer to the question," continued the Dubner, "is that the Moabites may have argued that they could not afford to offer bread and water to the wandering Jewish tribes. Yet when it came to hiring Bilaam to curse the Jews and liquidate them, there was no shortage of money at all!"

Maggiddim versus Maskillim

Chief among the targets of the *Maggiddim* was the threat of assimilation caused by the *Maskillim*—the proponents of "enlightenment"—of Eastern Europe, not to be confused with the "enlightened" members of the Reform Movement of the West (Germany)?

7) Both were triggered by the emancipation set into motion by the French Revolution; and the Reform-winds blowing from the West, did, in a minor way, prepare the ground for the Haskalla Movement in the East, but there the analogy ends. While the fathers of the Reform—like their heirs—were barely literate in Torah, the *Maskillim* of the East were almost all well-learned. They had studied Torah for years and were experts in *Tanach* (scriptures) and *Dikduk* (grammar). They were classical cases of "*shana uperushniks*"—having studied and then departed from sacred teachings, becoming atheists. (Your standard Reform or Conservative rabbi can never be honored with the above title, for he never was "*shana*"—he never studied Torah in a genuine yeshiva.)

The German Reform produced a new religion—"Judaism" without a Divine Torah—and the children ended up in church. The *Maskillim*, however, did not want any religion. They wanted "culture"—Yiddish, Hebrew, and Russian literature. They naively believed that a people can exist on such a diet. Their children ended up in the ranks of political movements—socialists, social democrats, social zionists, bundists, communists. . . they grew up highly cultured, but far removed from the roots of the Jewish people.

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The assimilation process began with a small step, justified by a slight distortion of a Talmudical expression: חכמתו של יפת באחלו של שם "The wisdom of the Gentiles in the homes of the Jews." A great number of people subscribed to the slogan, and brought in contemporary culture, thinking it would stop there. This stage, however, deteriorated to the Haskallah Movement's next devastating step of "Be a Jew at home and a person in the street." As history demonstrates, once Yiddishkeit was locked up in the house, it degenerated

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to the final step of "[Be] like all nations, Jewish People."

They naively believed that the different-ness of the Jews was the source of anti-Semitism. *Let the Jews only be like "Vanke" and the Russians, Poles, Ukrainians and Lithuanians will love "Moshke" (Moshe, the Jews)!* It is amazing that people who had studied Torah could develop such feelings of inferiority with regard to any insignificant Russian that carried the title "poet," "professor" or "doctor"!

Their attempt to bring the "light" of Haskalla to the Jewish masses was met by three obstacles: Chassidus, which was an antidote in advance of the epidemic, the rabbonim and the Maggidim, who fought it head on.

In their publications, the Maskillim would make mockery of the Talmud, bitterly attacking their opponents: *The clerics, the fanatics, the ignorant rabbonim, rabbeyim and maggidim are preventing the light of Haskalla from reaching the oppressed Jewish masses. Permit the Jews to receive a Russian education and they'll gain all the benefits of equal citizenship!*

The Maggidim in turn discredited the Maskillim from the pulpit: *All but one of Mendelsohn's children joined the Church during his lifetime, and the children of the Maskillim will follow suit. Do you want this to happen to your children? Because the apikorsim have smothered the spark of kedusha in their own neshamos, the lick the boots of any little learned heathen. Can't they appreciate the Torah way of life? Do the 'Vankes' have a Shabbos? What a chutzpa to even suggest that we lower ourselves to their drunken level!*

In fact, it was the extremists among the Maskillim that instigated the Czarist education ministry against the Yeshiva of Volozhin, mandating the teaching of secular studies in the famed yeshiva, which resulted in the closing of the Yeshiva's doors in 1894.

The Last Word

When Mordechai Aaron Ginzburg, one of the leading Maskillim of Vilna, died, the local Maskillim insisted that Reb Velvele the Shotdt-Maggid deliver the *hesped* in his honor. Since the Maggid was in the employ of the kehilla, he could not choose whom to eulogize. Reb Velvele, who had fought the Maskillim all his life, apparently had no choice . . . But who has the last word if not the Maggid? At the memorial gathering, he delivered a *hesped* for two rabbonim from the vicinity who had recently passed away, and at the end of his oration he tagged on mention of M.A. Ginsburg.

The Maskillim were furious. One of them, the well-known poet Adam Hachohen, told the Maggid, "Your eulogy clarifies the description of the messenger who informed David of a Jewish defeat as 'hanar hamaggid'! (Shmuel II, 1:5). Why is the Maggid a nar? [In Hebrew "nar" means "a youngster," but in Yiddish it refers to a fool—editor] Because the most important tidings, that King Shaul and his son Yehonasan were killed, the Maggid saved for the very end, as if it were of secondary importance . . . Which only proves that the Maggid is a nar!"

Reb Velvele was not at a loss, and replied with a *moshol*:

"A Vilna merchant with extensive business dealings in Germany married off one of his children, and he invited some Jewish businessmen from Germany to the wedding. The German guests were extremely impressed with the badchen (an entertainer who sang original witty couplets about the principals), the famous Yitzchok Smargoner, who delighted everyone with his witty grammen, jokes and stories. Some time later, one of the guests invited the Smargoner Badchen to entertain at his daughter's wedding. In Germany, the badchen was a flop!

"The badchen apologized, explaining that he was accustomed to making grammen that rhyme with names like Yank'l and Sara. He had never made grammen for a Hans or Gertrude! 'But,' the badchen added, 'You just invite me to more German weddings and I'm sure I'll get better.'

"The same is with me," continued Reb Velvele. "I'm used to making a hesped for a rav or a tzaddik, but never for a Maskil. But let's have more and more Maskillim funerals and I'm sure I'll get better!"

"Reshus"—Permission to Speak

One could not speak in a *shul* without permission⁸ from the *mora d'asro* "the master of the place," namely the *rav*—mainly to establish one's credentials as being worthy of delivering rebuke. This primarily affected unknown speakers. Unlike secular society where a book or a speech is judged on its own merits, regardless of the personal life of the author or orator, *Klal Yisroel* demands that the speaker or writer be *tocho kebaro*—internally the same as his outer expression. No *Maggid* could preach what he did not practice. By contrast, famous *Maggiddim* hardly needed permission, for they were generally recognized as empowered with the *reshus* from the Torah's command: "You shall surely rebuke your friend" (*Vayikra* 19:12).

Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik refused to grant permission to a particular *Maggid* to speak in Brisk when he found out that he was lacking in *Yiras Shomayim* (fear of G-d). The *Maggid* appealed to Reb Chaim: "I quote Chazals and strengthen *Yiddishkeit!*"

To which Reb Chaim replied, "Kosher meat, when cooked in a *treife* pot, becomes *treif!*"

When the *rav* of Slonim, R'Eizele Charif, refused a *Maggid* permission to speak, a delegation of *baalei battim* came to plead his case: "Rebbe, being a *Maggid* proves he is a *Yirei Shomayim*."

8) A *Rav* seldom went to listen to a *Maggid*. But once a *Maggid*, while asking permission to speak, invited the *Rav* to attend his *droscha*. Afterwards the *Maggid* asked the *Rav* his opinion. The *Rav* replied, "The word *Maggid* is mentioned three times: '*Maggid dvarav leYaakov*—He tells His word to Jacob, His laws and statutes to Israel' (*Tehillim* 147). That is the teacher, the best type of *Maggid*. The second one is '*Maggid merishis acharis*. He relates the ends from beginnings.'—Drawing from History, relating it to our lives. The third one is '*v'ain Maggid*.' He challenged [pharaoh's] magicians, but they could not speak.' (*Shemos*). He says nothing, just wasting people's time!"

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The *Rav* replied, "That proves nothing. When the Torah tells us: 'He said to Yoseif, your father is ill,' Rashi says that 'he' is *echad min hamaggiddim*—one of the *maggiddim*, the reporters. Question: Is it possible that one of the Jewish *Maggiddim* came to ancient Egypt? Of course not! This teaches us that one can be both a heathen and a *Maggid* at the same time!"

There were also *Maggiddim* who would seem to have been unqualified for the task, but undertook it nevertheless for a source of livelihood. One such individual was known as the *Shtumer Maggid* (the mute *Maggid*). He was a well-known millionaire who had lost his entire fortune. He did not speak, his mere appearance in *shul* would awaken feelings of introspection and despair of material security, by demonstrating what can happen to a wealthy person. Thus he delivered the best *mussar droscha* without ever opening his mouth.

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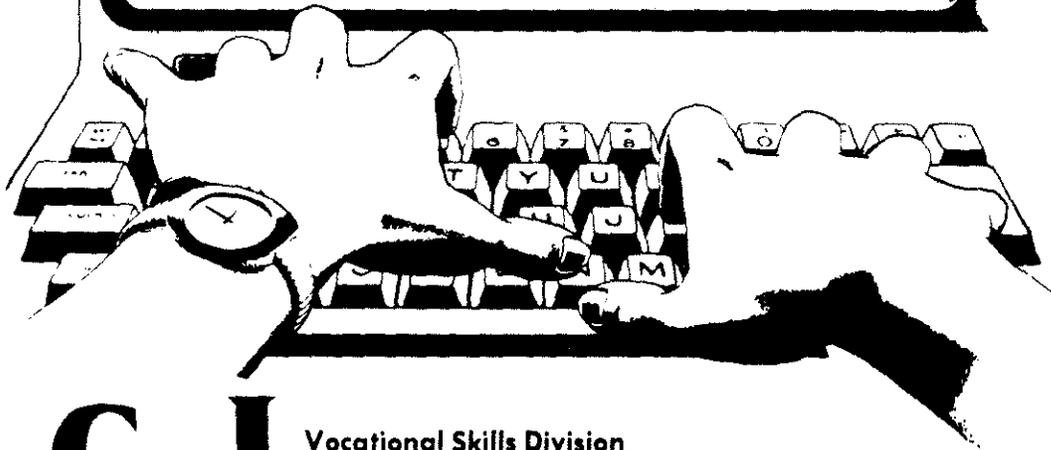
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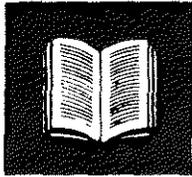
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New Halachic Literature in the Vernacular

About six hundred years ago, Rabbi Jacob Moelln (the *Maharil*), the outstanding Rabbinic figure of his time in Germany, wrote to Rabbi Chayim Hazaferati, in Augsburg, that:

"I am very surprised that you have been planning to compose in German [a booklet on the laws of family purity], for we are distressed by the earlier ones [i.e., earlier halachic texts in the vernacular]. Anybody who knows to read Rashi to the Chumash, or the Machzor, or learnt Tosfos in his youth and stopped long ago, or maybe never attended a Talmud Torah—they all indulge in the same foolishness; they look into the writings of our Rabbis, the [recent] authors, and decide halachic questions from their codifications. . . . Yet those were meant only for scholars who know how to decide [from a knowledge of the Talmudic sources of each law] . . . and now you want to come and add new things. . . . to make it possible to study and decide from your German text, halachos to which the earlier and later Rabbis devoted the greatest exactitude."

The *Maharil* suggested, instead, that the Rabbis and scholars, through their wives, should spread accurate knowledge about the laws of family purity among the womenfolk. Yet despite the validity of his fears, compendia of Jewish law have always made their appearance, and a number of them appeared in the popular tongue. It is true, however, that great care was taken with the scholarly exactness and the clarity of presentation, to forestall any possible misuse or misunderstanding.

An Excellent Translation

On past occasions, *The Jewish Observer* discussed some of the excellent halachic publications that have appeared in English. Many more such works have appeared recently. Some are monographs dedicated to specific areas of halacha, as summaries of the law in these areas or as enquiries into particular aspects of it; others aim to introduce the reader to the entire range of Jewish laws and customs, or to serve as an up-to-date *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*.

Mishna Berurah, by Rabbi Aharon Feldman (Feldheim, Jerusalem; 1980; regular-sized \$10.95; larger-sized \$13.95)

Unique and outstanding in its scope is a work that this reviewer approached with a certain degree of skepticism that turned out to be totally unwarranted: the first volume of *The Mishna Berurah*, an English translation with explanatory comments and facing Hebrew text, edited by Rabbi Aharon Feldman.

When completed, this gigantic undertaking will cover the entire six volumes of the Chofetz Chayim's basic halachic reference work on the Jew's daily prayers and the laws of Sabbath and Holidays. Like the Chofetz Chayim himself, the editor chose to begin with the laws of Sabbath (the present volume contains the first third of the third volume of *Mishna Berurah* which is dedicated to these laws). This reviewer's doubts about this undertaking were due to the obvious difficulty of rendering such a complex halachic work in an English form meaningful to the reader; however, thanks to the extraordinary amount of thought and work lavished on this endeavor, the great difficulties were totally overcome.

As the volume is opened, the righthand page presents the Hebrew text of the original work, while the lefthand page contains the English translation. Since the English text takes about twice as much space as the Hebrew counterpart, the editor adopted the ingenious device of printing each Hebrew page twice; in each case that part of the text not translated on the facing page is given in paler print. This makes it extremely easy for the student to follow the Hebrew and English versions at the same time.

Translation is exact, clear and easyflowing, and the material is presented in a lucid, easily grasped manner, aided by the outstanding typography and layout. The detailed glosses of the *Biur Halachah* are not translated; instead brief English footnotes provide any additional information required by the reader. Despite the clarity of the presentation, however, the editor stresses that

this work should not be read but studied, and that one should not make *halachic* decisions based on perusal of the text. This applies to those for whom this work is primarily meant: students who have some difficulty with the Hebrew text unless aided by a translation. It applies even more to those who are unable to study the *Mishnah Berurah* in Hebrew altogether, and therefore look to an English text; the editor urges them to undertake its study only with appropriate guidance.

Approbations from Torah authorities, a bibliography of the works quoted, and a glossary complete the scope of this work. (It is, incidentally, only in the glossary that this reviewer found room for suggesting even minor improvements—to say that *sha'os zemanios* are figured “from dawn to dusk” or that on Chanukah “special candles” are lit, is not quite exact enough for such a scholarly work.)

Original Works in English

Translation of a recognized *halachic* work is a difficult undertaking, but the writing of such works in English is

in many ways even more difficult. We have to remember that these works offer to provide the uninformed reader with definitive *halachic* guidance. This requires not only *halachic* scholarship, but also a fine sense of what should be included on any given topic, and the ability to present an authoritative consensus of the various opinions likely to be found on most points. Then there is required the skill to formulate the material in clear and unambiguous English, and to arrange it in a systematic manner. Finally, an adequate work of this nature should provide footnotes pointing out to the reader the source of the *halachic* decisions presented, as well as referring him to divergent opinions where this is called for. These requirements seem self-evident, but the *halachic* works that have appeared do not all meet them to the same degree

Birkas Hashulchan, by Rabbi Elyahu Glucksman (published by author; NY; 1980; hardcover-\$5.95; softcover-\$3.95)

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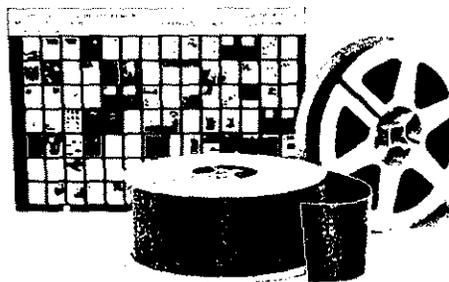
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Jewish Observer has reviewed previously, such as Eisenberg's *Guide for Jewish Women and Girls*, or Eider's publications, of which the most recent was discussed in our last issue. Another work living up to the required exacting standards is *Birkas Hashulchan* by Rabbi Eliyahu Glucksmann; a detailed clear and comprehensive statement of the laws of washing before meals, blessings before and after partaking of food, and *Birkas Hamazon*. People often wrongly assume that they are sufficiently familiar with these laws; yet anybody who never studied them in depth will find much that he may never have realized, e.g. that one should not say a *bracha* when washing his hands to eat less than an egg's equivalent of bread (*k'beytzah*)—and that, if he eats less than an olive's equivalent of bread (*k'zayis*) the blessing "*Hamotzi*" does not cover the other foods eaten at this meal! At the end of each section the author carefully lists his sources; he indicates where there are differences of opinion, and recommends a course of action in such cases. This reviewer only regrets that the author does not give the ounce or gram equivalents of *k'zayis* and *k'beytzah*; he undoubtedly did not want to take a stand on a subject on which there is major disagreement among the authorities, but the usefulness of the work would have been further enhanced if he had included the different opinions on the subject.

Taharas Am Yisroel, by Rabbi S. Wagschal (Gateshead, England)

Another author who has established his competence in the field of publishing *halachic* guidelines for laymen is Rabbi S. Wagschal. His *Practical Guide to Kashruth* was published in Gateshead in 1972; even though some of the subjects are treated against the background of conditions in England, this volume offers an excellent survey of the basics of *Kashruth*. The author's *Care of Children on Shabbos and Yom Tov* was a pioneering work which was printed in Gateshead in 1976 in a sixth edition. More recently, Rabbi Wagschal published two volumes on *Taharas Am Yisroel*, the first one dealing with the laws of forbidden marriages, *tznius*, *yichud*, family planning, circumcision, and *pidyon haben*, and the second one devoted to the laws of family purity. While the author strives throughout for clarity and completeness, and provides full annotations and source references, he stresses: "The intention of my *Sefer* was not to provide a modern *Shulchan Aruch* in which the reader will find an answer to all his questions, for this is only possible for the outstanding *Poskim* of our time, particularly since the various issues have not yet been sufficiently clarified to be put down in a popular text. Therefore I held myself back from this. I tried as far as possible to state the consensus of opinions, and not to take sides between various *Poskim*. On many occasions I quoted divergencies of opinion, or wrote that a Rabbi should be consulted. Where I

had to decide, I followed the established *Poskim* and what, to my knowledge, was the established custom."

Medical Halacha and Ethics

Of course the areas dealt with by Rabbi Wagschal lend themselves much more easily to this approach than, say, a field which has lately received much attention but did not previously receive systematic treatment in the classical codes—the field of medical *halacha*. Many of the questions involved are treated in diverse areas of the codes (e.g. *Shabbos*, *Kashrus*, etc.), and others are quite new, the result of the most recent advances in medical science and technology, and subject to lively debates in the recent responsa literature. At this stage of the field to distill from this raw material a reliable guide for the layman is indeed a daring undertaking.

Medical Halacha for Everyone by Dr. A.S. Abraham (Feldheim, N.Y., 1980; \$8.95)

Dr. A.S. Abraham, a concerned physician, some time ago published a comprehensive work *Lev Avrohom*, and has now put out a revised edition of this work in English, under the title *Medical Halacha for Everyone*. He set himself the important task of enlightening the public about the many and varied *halachic* laws that apply in all areas of health care.

In 211 pages the author covers a wide range of topics, from the laws of visiting the sick (and whether the flowers brought to them can be put into water on *Shabbos*) to the questions of abortion and contraception. As a result, he conveys to the reader a very clear and inspiring picture of the Torah's concern with life, health, sickness and death, and for this he merits our sincere gratitude. At the same time, however—and perhaps because of the title chosen—the book can be viewed (and has been described by one reviewer) as "an ideal handbook for deciding practical questions as they arise. . . . Unlike most books that try to cover complicated Judaic material at a layman's level, Dr. Abraham usually comes to a clearcut decision. Only in extremely delicate and complicated areas . . . does he resort to the expression 'competent Rabbanim authority must be consulted!' " This, however, is a misreading of Dr. Abraham's book. However interesting and informative, it cannot and should not be used as a handbook for *psak halacha*. The very breadth of its scope keeps it from dealing with all its many faceted subjects adequately. Sometimes it lacks detail (thus the *bracha* of "*Baruch dayan ha'emes*" is mentioned, but *Kriyah* is not (p. 147)); it is not always sufficiently exact (e.g., concerning gynecological examination with an instrument, (p. 159)), it occasionally reflects Sefardic practice (e.g. concerning meat in the Nine Days, (p. 91)); and the Hebrew footnotes do not furnish sufficient specific guidance for the determina-

tion of *halacha*. A second edition will undoubtedly be perfected in these areas.

Practical Medical Halacha, by Rabbi Dr. Moses Tendler and Dr. Fred Rosner (Feldheim, NY; \$5.00)

Judaism and Healing, by Rabbi J. David Bleich (Ktav Publ., NY; 1981; \$15.00)

Contemporary Halachic Problems, by Rabbi J. David Bleich (Ktav Publ., NY, 1978; \$17.50)

Practical Medical Halacha is a compilation of *Halacha* bulletins put out by the Rephoel Society (the medical-dental section of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists), edited by Rabbi Dr. Moses Tendler and Dr. Fred Rosner. These bulletins are intended for a professional leadership, to provide "first aid" guidance on critical *halachic* issues. They deal primarily with concrete questions faced by the medical student or practitioner, and seek to give concrete answers. Yet wisely the authors stress that, in dealing with the particular situations he is called upon to face, the doctor must "approach a *posek* of his own choosing for a final *psak*." The importance of this warning and the difficulty of the subject matter are highlighted by the fact that on a number of points, Dr. Abraham's book and these *halacha* bulletins—both in English, and therefore not for the *halachic* specialist but for the layman—offer contradictory advice!

Even more indicative of the basic difficulties in this field is the treatment of the *halachic* definition of death in *Practical Medical Halacha*. A definition is given, on p. 59; a *teshuva* (halachic responsum) of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein is quoted in full; and an English abstract and explanatory comments are added—yet this reviewer, for one, found himself quite unable to reconcile definition, *teshuva*, and interpretation with each other. Moreover, if the reader searches further, he finds a totally different evaluation of the clinical and halachic problems of establishing death on pages 146-157 of Rabbi J. David Bleich's *Judaism and Healing* (compare also Rabbi Bleich's *Contemporary Halachic Problems*, pp. 372-393).

The reader may well feel that such basic issues should not be presented to a wider public unless a *halachic* consensus is first clearly formulated by the *poskim*. However, in the introduction to *Judaism and Healing*, which seeks to offer "halachic perspectives" upon a wide range of the most complex questions in medical practice (such as test-tube babies, genetic screening, or again, transplants), Rabbi Bleich stresses that he "is keenly aware of the potential dangers and pitfalls attendant upon compilation of a precis of *halachic* material. Such considerations assume even greater proportions when the presentation is in the vernacular. Yet, particularly in areas which are the subject of discussion on the part of society in general, failure to articulate the teachings of Judaism in a readily understandable manner inevitably leads to misconstrual of Jewish law. On balance, the dangers of

silence are graver than those of publication. *Halachic* authorities of earlier generations repeatedly warned that one should not attempt to glean definitive answers to specific questions from *halachic* handbooks and compendia. . . . The final adjudication of any particular question hinges upon any number of variables. Accordingly, in any particular instance the reader is urged to present all pertinent details to a competent rabbinic authority for determination of the *halachic* ruling on a case-by-case basis."

This warning must be remembered whenever one studies *halachic* literature in the vernacular. However, it becomes particularly pertinent as we leave the field of ordinary daily practice, to face special problems or new questions. Here concrete *halachic* guidance is usually out of the question; at best, the author can provide background information on the *halachic* issues involved and throw more light on the way in which Torah law views such problems.

Rabbi Bleich himself has achieved this goal very well in both the works mentioned. *Judaism and Healing* provides a balanced and searching examination of many of the most important medico-ethical issues presently of concern—and his "Afterword" deserves special praise for its reasoned emphasis that even more important than the Jew's acceptance of suffering is his acceptance of the superiority of Divine wisdom over his own thinking. *Contemporary Halachic Problems* deals with a wide var-

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iety of topics from Shabbos elevators to black Jews and to *mitzvos* on the moon; of particular importance is the introductory essay on the methodology of *psak halacha*, with its insistence on the rigorous and objective nature of the legitimate *psak*.

"Maaser Kesofim"—Tithing

The Jewish Monetary Code of Ten Percent, translated by Rabbi Reuven Levitan (Yeshivas Ameley Torah, Jerusalem; 1978)

Ma'aser Kesofim by Prof. Cyril Domb (Feldheim, Jerusalem; 1980; \$6.95)

There are, of course, some subjects that are not part of our daily experience in the narrowest sense, but where there is enough guidance in classical literature to enable authors to provide practical guidelines for the lay public. Some years ago *The Jewish Observer* reviewed a very practical pamphlet on the laws of tithing one's income (*ma'aser kesofim*) by Rabbi Joesph Oppenheimer. Recently there appeared two more publications on this topic. *The Jewish Monetary Code of Ten Percent* is a translation by Rabbi Reuven Levitan of one section of a major work on the Torah ethics of business and charity by Rabbi Esra Basry. A small pamphlet, it provides concrete directives on how to determine one's *ma'aser* obligations and

for what purposes *ma'aser* can be used (the author suggests, incidentally, that *ma'aser* money like *ma'aser* of produce must be distributed by the end of each third year of the *Shmitta* cycle, a point on which the authorities differ). A more elaborate study of the same subject has been published under the name *Ma'aser Kesofim, Giving a Tenth to Charity* edited by Prof. Cyril Domb.

This book is the result of an investigation undertaken by the British branch of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists. They were concerned with the effect of modern economic trends upon tithing (depreciation and valuation of assets, corporate profits, deductibility of charitable donations, etc.). They were motivated by the attention that the *poskim* give to all aspects of this *mitzvah* and by their belief that only a fraction of Torah observers attempt to keep it properly. Their book was designed to encourage greater efforts in this direction. Moreover, the editors felt that once a man sets aside a fixed portion of his income for charity, his attitude to charitable causes changes; he is no longer a reluctant donor but the administrator of money that is no longer his and therefore he has no more emotional problems about parting with his money—a point cogently made at the last Agudah convention by the Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood, Rabbi Shneur Kotler.

This volume contains an excellent collection of source materials, as well as clarification of many problems. However, while it discusses English "Deeds of Covenant," it does not deal with the problems of U.S. private foundations, a subject of particular importance to the more affluent members of the Orthodox community. Perhaps a future edition could include this topic.

Jewish Jurisprudence, Vol. 1, by E.G. Quint and N.S. Hecht (Harwood Academic Publishers, NY; 1980; hardcover-\$28.50, softcover-\$10)

Of less general applicability but great interest is a work dedicated to the nature and functions of Jewish courts: *Jewish Jurisprudence, Its Sources and Modern Applications, Vol. 1*, by E.G. Quint and N.S. Hecht. This remarkable work, which follows the *Choshen Mishpat* chapter by chapter, aims to present the substantive principles of Jewish jurisprudence, relying exclusively upon authentic Rabbinic sources, without any effort at apologetics or modernization. The authors follow each subject through the works of the *Poskim* and down to our days. Thus the present volume, which deals primarily with the competency of our courts, gives particular attention to their contingency powers which are of particular relevance today. It is to be hoped that the future volumes in this series will help make the *Choshen Mishpat* more generally useful in our lives.

This review article has dealt essentially with monographs on specific areas of *halacha*. A future article will deal with works that seek to cover the entire range of Torah law.

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To Life

A Jerusalem Story

by Hillel Goldberg

Wealth need not manifest itself in elegant bone china, fine linens, or opulent jewelry. A certain aura of authority and sure-footedness usually envelopes the well-to-do, regardless of the cut of their clothing or the grain of their furniture. Wealth has found its way to our former neighbors, the Kleins, who, like typical Israeli workers, dress in old clothes, well-worn and sometimes patched. Neither they nor others give it a second thought.

The Kleins hail from a Hungarian sector of the Carpathian mountains

Hillel Goldberg, an American living in Sanhedria Hamurchevet, Jerusalem, is senior editor of the Denver Inter mountain Jewish News, and a frequent contributor to THE JEWISH OBSERVER.

now in Russia, where, 40 years ago, Hitler incinerated both sides of the family. The Kleins—there are now three grown children, too—emigrated to Israel eight years ago and immediately devoted their collective energies to a chasidic Rebbe or mentor unknown in Israel but famous in Russia. For months after we moved into our apartment, Russians knocked on the door daily in search of the Rimnitzer Rebbe. He had lodged with the Kleins for half a year, moving out just as we moved in.

The Rebbe, over 70, would go for days without food. He would pray for hours on end and receive childless couples, relatives of the sick, and other distressed souls for counsel and blessing. Everyone seemed to know that the Rimnitzer Rebbe resided with the Kleins. Because we lived on the first floor, they on the second, we served as an information center for the Rebbe's supplicants

even after he moved out of the Klein apartment.

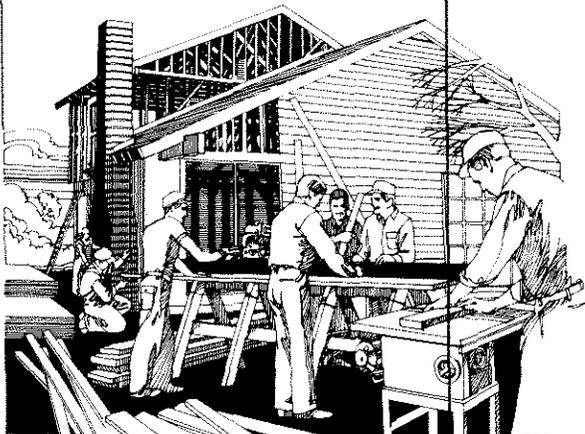
Incredulity and Reverence

"Yankel Klein"—a name pronounced with a mixture of incredulity and reverence by these former Russians who knocked on the door. Piece by piece his story unfolded.

Yankel Klein had served as a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) for innumerable Jews in Russia living hundreds of miles apart. He would travel days simply to slaughter an animal according to prescribed ritual and thereby provide kosher meat, all without taking a fee. Yankel Klein had secretly organized prayer quorums for the Rimnitzer Rebbe, and had, together with his wife, without benefit of Jewish schools, raised his children as Yiddish-speaking, observant Jews. They devised stratagems year after year to evade laws prohibiting Jewish expression and education.

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In Israel, after much effort, the Kleins purchased a small grocery. The family—parents and all three children—rose at 4:00 a.m. and worked until 8:00 p.m., making a great success out of the business. They purchased still another, much larger grocery, and of that, too, they made a great success, thereafter

purchasing three apartments for future grandchildren.

All along, they wore the same plain clothing, supported the Rinitzer Rebbe unstintingly, drove him wherever he needed to go at all hours of the day and night. They drove a hard bargain and provided a good service in business; they aided

unfortunates, charities, and even non-chassidic academies. Their East European Jewish simplicity and Russian peasant earthiness persisted unchanged. Their apartment (the first one) regularly filled with Russian immigrants who wanted to be with their own kind just after arriving in Israel.

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Celebration in Jerusalem

Following the marriage of the Klein's eldest son, the family invited my wife and me to *sheva berachos*, the ritual seven blessings recited during the seven days following marriage. Their apartment—the second one—was furnished with an old, oblong rug, a sofa covered with heavy Russian tapestries, a medium-sized bookcase, and a long table set with fruit, fish, cookies, wine, liquor and tossed salad. They were celebrating with friends.

The conversation was quiet, simple, mostly mazel tovs and good wishes extended to the groom (the women sat separately in an adjoining room). A quarter hour passed. A learned man of the neighborhood entered, a Jew who wended his way to Israel via Poland, Shanghai, and America. The murder of six million Jews, including his parents, had deeply scarred him. He asked for a Bible with commentaries. The Kleins did not own such volumes. It made no difference: he was accomplished at extemporaneous speaking, especially on occasions of moment.

Son of Ashes

"When Joseph named his sons, why did he not name them after his grandparents? Why did he choose the name Ephraim, for example, rather than Abraham or Isaac? One commentator notes that 'Ephraim' is plural of the Hebrew word for ash—a term Abraham applied to himself in speaking to the Almighty ('I am dust and ash'), and the spiritual state to which Isaac consigned himself by not resisting his father's binding him for human sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Joseph, then, named Ephraim after both his grandfather (Isaac) and great-grandfather (Abraham). Joseph marked his son, by name, with the significance and the merit of his ancestors.

"Thirty-five years ago, who among us—those of us who are European; the Israelis do not know of it, thank G-d—who among us would have imagined amid that ineffable suffer-

ing, destruction, annihilation, and horror, that somehow, someday, out of the uprooting, the hiding, the killing, the starving, we would sit down together, and not just anywhere but on the holy soil of Israel, not just to eat but to celebrate, not just to celebrate insignificant joys but the marriage of children, raised in purity, sanctity, observant of the 613 commandments, in freedom? Who among us was so utterly brazen to dream this dream? Who?

"Abraham became worthy of comparing himself to ashes, of comprehending his insignificance before the Almighty, after he had miraculously passed through the fiery furnace into which he had been thrown by Nimrod. This midrashic incident in Abraham's life represents the immolation of his ego. When his 'I' had been consumed, his statement 'I am dust and ash' became true. 'I,' represented by the Hebrew *anochi*, connotes the personality; the spirit of Abraham, not his body. His passage through the fiery furnace represented absolute self-abnegation: this, Joseph imbedded in the name of Abraham's great-grandchild, Eph-

raim: this, Abraham imbedded in himself. It constituted his power to affect history.

"By what right do the bride and groom sit down tonight to celebrate? By right of the immolation, the absolute self-abnegation, of their grandparents and ancestors; their willingness to commit their 'I's' to the fiery furnace—this time not metaphorical—the ovens and death pits and gas chambers of Hitler, may his name and memory be blotted out; their unhesitant will to martyrdom, to *Kiddush Hashem!* The fiery furnace!" our neighbor was shouting, pleading, by now. "They asked no question! People of simple faith, perfect faith, tailors, shoemakers, wagon-drivers, unwavering, utterly committed. Their 'I's' too, were consumed. By what right do we sit down and celebrate? By the right, the merit, of our ancestors alone."

Sighs. Moistened eyes. Silence which momentarily prolonged itself. Finally "Well said, well said." Heads picked up, turned back to the groom. Clinking of glasses. Schnapps, liquor. "Mazel tov," "*Lechayyim*—to life." 



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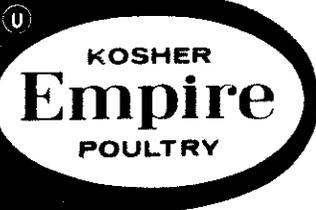
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second looks at the jewish scene

The Gunman, the President, and Our Open Society

A deranged gunman took aim at the President of the United States and fired, hitting the president in the chest just a few inches from his heart, penetrating his rib cage and puncturing his left lung. From shock to outrage to analysis, the news media focused on this attempt on the president's life. And they found that the would-be assassin had taken his cues from an X-rated film that told the story of a psychotic who stalked a U.S. Senator, eventually killing him.

The public expression of shock—"Oh, no!"—was punctuated by one more phrase: "Not again!" *Not again!* Attempts at the lives of public figures have become commonplace in America: five different presidents and presidential candidates have been targets of assassins' bullets in the past thirty years, compared to three in the previous seventy years. Why this escalation of violence?—And what should be done to halt it?

Beyond doubt, the sensation-hungry media—both the journalism and entertainment segments—have a significant share in the steady erosion of society's standards of decency and common sense. By striving for ever larger subscription rolls or higher Nielson ratings (depending on the medium), the lowest common denominator is constantly being sought, to satisfy the widest possible audience; and new thresholds of shock are forever being

crossed—for yesterday's excitement, when repeated, becomes today's *deja vu*.

The public at large does not mobilize itself to fight against creeping vulgarity, obscenity, and pornography—especially since the Supreme Court has decreed that just about anything goes as long as it has some "redeeming social value." Violence, however, should be another matter, especially as mounting crime rates are disrupting life in our cities, and the handgun is rewriting American history—and these can be traced to violence in the media. Yet we know too well that no significant change is in the offing. Legislation to limit violence on the tube will never surmount constitutional hurdles, and self-policing by the networks has a proven track-record of ineffectiveness. Even a short-term reduction is unlikely—witness how reports of the most recent assassination attempt ignored dictates of good taste and sensibility by broadcasting replay after replay of the shooting, with effects that were either numbing or nauseating.

As concerned Americans we can join lobby groups and press for some minimal type of improvement—with limited expectations. As concerned Jews, however, we cannot face the situation with a defeatist shrug of the shoulders. We have too much at stake. Our fidelity to our values and sensitivities has withstood the assault of direct frontal attack. Throughout our history, we Jews have defended our beliefs and convictions at all costs—even the costs of our lives, at times. Today, however, we are facing seepage and this is another matter. The news and entertainment media have been pip-

ing a relentless message of moral permissiveness and unbridled violence into Jewish homes—as sure as yesterday's newspaper and today's TV schedule—affecting the way people talk, and openly conduct their lives. We surely must face this challenge head on, for we are certainly capable of controlling the environment of our own homes without an eye toward constitutional strictures or the dictates of commercial considerations. Our primary concern, as always, must be focused on survival as Jews and survival as decent human beings, both of which are under seige. The time to say NO MORE on the individual level is long overdue.

—N.W.

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Something New Under the Sun

While we are assured that generally there is nothing new under the sun, some changes do take place from time to time, from era to era. And what better way to measure an era than by the Hebrew word for it: "tekufa"?

The word *tekufa* also refers to the twenty-eight year cycle marking the time it takes for the sun to return to the precise location in the sky where it was during its creation, on a Wednesday morning 5741 years ago. There is a *bracha* ordained for viewing the sun in that position, praising G-d who "performs the act of creation . . . *oseh ma'aseh Bereishis*."

The *bracha* is not as singular as the occasion that prompts it. It is also recited at other times that testify to G-d as Creator, such as upon seeing

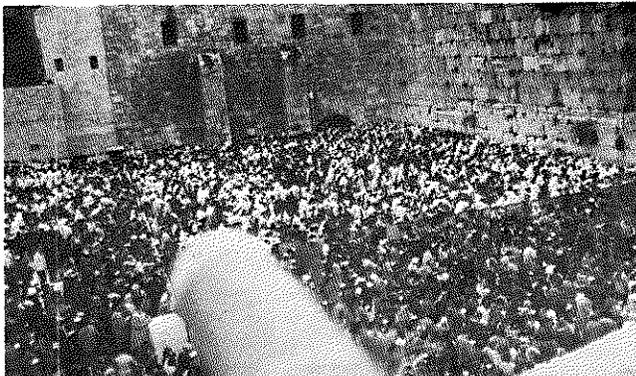
the ocean, or lightning, or a spectacular mountain. But then, what visible condition distinguishes the sun on that Wednesday from its appearance on the previous day, or the following day? Obviously the difference is truly in the mind of the beholder—strictly a matter of faith. Faith in G-d as the Creator of the world, and trust in our Rabbis as those who are knowledgeable in the timing, the inner nature, and the ultimate purpose of creation.

It would follow, then, that people of faith all over reasoned that reciting this special *bracha* at this special time had to be more than a casual occurrence. Pity the poor fellow who stumbles over the doorstep into the dazzling sunlight, mumbles ". . . *oseh ma'aseh Bereishis*," and continues on his way, unchanged. Preparation, proper frame of mind, choosing the right setting all make a difference, and enhance this pronouncement of faith. Thus people in

the New York Metropolitan area prepared to make reciting this *bracha* an experience with an impact. After all, it had to last for 28 years.

Man's creations tend to obstruct the majesty of G-d's creation, so groups assembled where they would be free of any such hindrances. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein greeted the dawn from the west bank of the East River, accompanied by some 500-600 fellow *mispallelim*. . . . The Bobover Rebbe led a throng of thousands in a playground on the edge of Boro Park, with a choir of some hundred voices singing appropriate verses from *Tehillim*. . . . The Satmar-Sighet Rebbe led a *tzibbur* of at least ten thousand in the streets of Williamsburg. . . . A band accompanied the singing from one Brooklyn yeshiva's rooftop, simple unalloyed joy ringing from another's.

In Manhattan, where the buildings reach higher, more ingenuity was required, and atop the 110-



Crowding the Kosel Plaza.



A Boro Park (Brooklyn, N.Y.) street scene.



story World Trade Center a group of 150 people from Agudath Israel of America *davened* with the rising sun, then greeted it with the appropriate *bracha*, Psalms, and "*Adon Olam*."

The *NY Times* also took note of this unusual event. It focused its report, several miles uptown, on the Empire State Building observatory deck, where an American Jewish Congress-sponsored gathering also *davened*, blessed and sang. Yet this celebration was different from the others, with folksongs and a selection from the rock musical *Hair* coloring the proceedings, along with the release of "70 balloons representing the nations of the earth"—some liturgical flourishes without precedent in Jewish tradition. The rest of us might look askance at the noises from the Empire State Building. But there is also reason to rejoice. After all, 28 years ago, who would ever have imagined the AJC

sponsoring a *Shacharis* in the middle of the week! Who knows? Another 28 years—another *tekufa*, that is—and we'll all shout in unison, together from the mountain peaks from the river banks and from the building tops: "... *ose ma'ase Bereishis! Blessed is the Master of all Creation!*"

In *Eretz Yisroel*, the occasion was celebrated in a scope beyond anything experienced on these shores. On the steps of the famed Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak, 30,000 people joined Rabbi Elazor M. Shach in pronouncing the blessing. In Jerusalem, things were even more vast. For details, we quote the Jewish Telegraphic Agency:

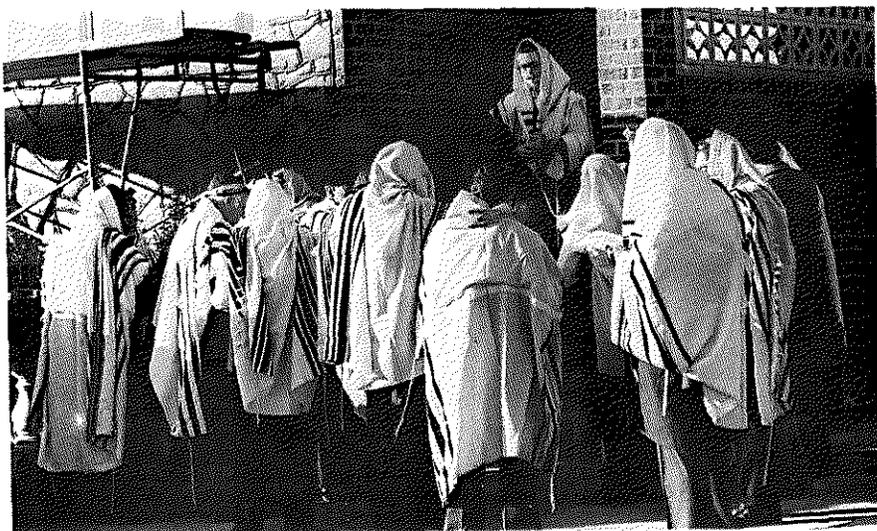
JERUSALEM (JTA)—In what many veteran Jerusalemites say was the largest-ever religious gathering this city has seen in modern times, a police-estimated throng of 120,000 people marked the *Birchat Hachamah* (The Blessing of the Sun) service at the Western Wall plaza at dawn last week.

The service—comprising the recitation of a blessing and various Psalms—is held only once every 28 years, on the day when, according to the Jewish calendar, the sun is in the exact same spot in the heavens as it was on the day it was created 5741 years ago.

The Western Wall ceremony was organized by Agudat Israel in Jerusalem, but it took on a national and political aura as thousands of people came up from Tel Aviv, Bnei Brak and other towns to join Jerusalemites converging on the Wall before dawn.

By 5 a.m., the entire Wall plaza and its approach road was solidly packed with worshippers. The sun, however, failed to cooperate—the sky was overcast. Soon enough, a space opened up between the clouds and the sun shone through. The rabbis then led the gathering in an enthusiastic and devout rendition of the blessing.

—N.W.



London, England.



A Letter from Jerusalem

Dearest Family,

It was 4:00 when the alarm clock rang. For a minute I was ready to turn right back over and forget the whole thing. It was dark and cloudy outside, and as I looked out [from my room in the Bais Yaakov dormitory] toward Unsdorf and Mattersdorf, lights were being turned on in every apartment, cars were starting and people were gathering at the Egged bus stops. It was then that the *Penimiya* got up. It was also then that the electricity in the *Penimiya* went off, and so we got dressed in the dark, and ran down to the bus we'd rented to take us to the *Kosel* to *bentch* the sun—a once in a 28 year occurrence!

Traffic was streaming through the streets. People came in all kinds of vehicles and, of course,

Egged buses. Every bus route started out at its regular station and ended up at the *Kosel*. We had to get out in the middle of the way and continue by foot—through the Armenian Quarter, down the hill, and to the *Kosel*.

What a sight! I've never in my life seen so many people. The entire area in front of the *Kosel* was packed solid, as were all the neighboring rooftops and porches . . . the steps up to the *Rova* and the new construction sights were all lined with people—our people.

We davened *Shacharis* and then witnessed a massive *Birkas Kohanim* . . . followed by announcement (on a public address) that we should all move toward the gates because the *Kosel* would block the sun, as it was going to rise over the Intercontinental Hotel, on top of *Har Hazeisim*.

Another announcement advised us that we'd have to wait until the *beis din* (rabbinical court) decided that we could say the *bracha*.

(Ladies were to answer "*Amein*" to the *bracha* and then say "*Boruch Oseh Ma'ase Bereishis.*")* First a boys' choir (Gerrer) sang a special song composed for the occasion, and then the band played—they were set up in a small van. . . .

We looked up to see a black cloud looming overhead, and then felt a few drops of rain. I can't tell you how heart-broken we were! Here we are once in 28 years—waiting, waiting for sunrise, and it was going to be a cloudy rainy day. We just stood there wondering, waiting, hoping. . . .

**This is in deference to an opinion that Birkas Hachamah is a time-bound mitzva from which women are exempt.*

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Then they announced that we should say *Tehillim* for "Acheinu Bnei Yisroel," and all of us—thousands of us—together said a few *kapitlach*. Suddenly, in middle of *Shir Hama'alos* we looked up to see a ball, shining very dimly behind the gray cloud. For a moment it looked as though it would disappear all over again and all faces were turned upward, waiting anxiously. Would the looming cloud darken over us once again? Or would the blue skies prevail and reveal the sun? . . . Out it came, first behind a gray cloud and then in all its glory—it rose up high and shone brightly.

The *simcha* each of us felt at that moment was indescribable, as if no one had ever seen the sun before! And then, quickly, so as not to miss it, all of us—thousands and thousands of our *Yiden*—*bentched* the sun together. It was one of those rare moments when one realizes how fantastic it is to be part of our wonderful nation. An ordinary sunrise becomes extraordinary—and in the process, so do we. We all said the "*Seder Hachammah*," voices rising together, praising Hashem for His wondrous creations.

Exhilarated, we walked through the Old City, the band started playing as we filed through *Shaar Yaffo*—all the Arabs and non-Jewish tourists stood back, amazed. We marched on *Rechov Yaffo*, men and women separately, singing with the band. For the first time in my life, I didn't feel funny marching down a street, we all felt so happy! *Is this what it was like, being "oleh regel" (on the festival pilgrimage) or bringing "bikkurim" (first fruits) to the Beis Hamikdash in the days of Shlomo Hamelech, or 2,000 years ago in the time of the Mishna?*

Up *Yaffo* and *Rechov Strauss* we marched, down to *Kikar Hashabos*, singing and dancing all the way. All kinds of people, young and old, little children and elderly people, all part of one *Am Kadosh*. . . One circle (this was on a rooftop at the *Kosel*) was made up of a

Chassid in a long frock, a *chayal* in green, a young *kipa-sruga'nik*, a boy in jeans, a *Yid* in a short jacket, one man in a *tallis*—arms linked, dancing around for the joy of blessing.

So it went: an old man with a cane danced all the way to *Ge'ula*. It was probably his third or fourth *Birkas Hachammah!* Next time? May all *Klal Yisroel* be *zoche* to *bentch* the *chammah* together in *Yerushalayim* 28 years from now.

ESTHER KARFIOL

(Miss Karfiol is a Brooklyn girl studying in the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Jerusalem. The above was excerpted from a letter she wrote to her family.)

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(With and Without Comment)

The Jewish Observer's discussion of the recently passed autopsy law ("A Post-Mortem on Autopsies," by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Jan. '81) praised the law for introducing the Western procedure of making it illegal for physicians to perform an autopsy without the prior written consent of the deceased or agreement of next of kin. Some observers have faulted the law as having too many loopholes, permitting abuses to continue unchecked. In response we offer the following:

AUTOPSY LAW WORSE THAN EXPECTED

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post
Sir,—When the new law on autopsies requiring family consent was submitted by the religious parties, most doctors feared it would have a negative influence on Israeli medical standards. Now that it has been approved by the Knesset and actually applied, we all realize its dramatic results for our society: it is

impossible to obtain written consent for post-mortem examinations from the next of kin in most hospitals.

When the doctors in charge of a patient who has just died ask the family for permission, is it always refused. No argument influences the family—neither the need for more accurate diagnosis, nor the protection of close relatives, nor the search for better treatment, nor the study or discovery of new diseases which could save other lives in the future. Everything is rejected.

Practically no autopsy has been performed in the past few months. . . . We realize too late that this new law on autopsies, which was the result of a political agreement meant to provide a stable coalition, is a real disaster for the people of Israel.

DR. ANNETTE SIEGAL
Pathology Department,
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Community Leaders To Receive Awards At 59th Agudath Israel Dinner

Three prominent Orthodox Jewish community leaders will be feted at the 59th Anniversary Dinner of Agudath Israel of America on Sunday evening, May 31st, in the grand ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria, New York City. World-renowned rabbinic and lay leaders from every part of North America are expected to participate in the event.

Mr. Barry Engel of Brooklyn, New York, president of the Kolel Avreichim D'chassidei Belz, with a long record of dedicated service to Torah causes in the United States and Israel, will receive the prestigious Hagoan Rav Aharon Kotler Memorial Award for distinguished service to Torah.

The "Shearis Hapleitoh" Man of the Year (Reb Elimelech Tress Memorial Award) will be presented to Mr. David Wassner, a distinguished resident of the Flatbush community, president of the Maimonides Hospital and active in numerous Torah causes.

Mr. Gerson Adler of Cleveland, Ohio, vice president of Agudath Israel of Cleveland and former board chairman of the Telshe Yeshiva, will be presented with the Moreinu Yaakov Rosenheim Memorial Award for distinguished service to Agudath Israel.

The dinner will also mark fifty-nine years of constructive accomplishment by the American Agudath Israel movement in every area of Jewish life in this country and overseas.

In addition to the three annual awards presented for outstanding service, "Avodas Hakodesh" Community Service Award will be bestowed at the dinner for their accomplishments for their respective projects to Dr. Boruch Adler, Agudath Israel of Flatbush/South; Rabbi Yaakov Bender, Zeirei Agudath Israel and Hatzoloh; Jacob I. Friedman, Esq., Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel; Julius Klugman, Agudath Israel of Washington Heights; Yitzchok David Rezinovitz, the Vishnitz Community; Joseph Safdieh of Deal, N.J., Iranian Rescue Fund; and Rivie Schwebel, the Jewish Education Program (J.E.P.).

The 59th Anniversary Journal of Agudath Israel of America, which will be distributed at the dinner to commemorate the occasion, will feature a new memorial section. The proceeds of this section will support the Agudah Torah Fund, enabling Agudath Israel to expand its Torah projects. These include: Reshet Shiurei Torah, providing Torah partners for hundreds of Jews; Pirchei Torah Programs, Mishnayos and Hosmodah Contests which have motivated youngsters to learn over 100,000 Mishnayos each year; and the Daf Yomi Commission, which has stimulated thousands of individuals to undertake the study of Shas through the Daf Yomi program.

Operating through nineteen departments out of a national headquarters at 5 Beekman Street, New York City, Agudath Israel's activities embrace the fields of authentic Judaism, education for youth and adults, legislation and civic action, rescue and resettlement, outreach to uncommitted Jews, social concerns, manpower training, senior citizens, neighborhood preservation, and children's welfare throughout the Americas, Israel and Europe.

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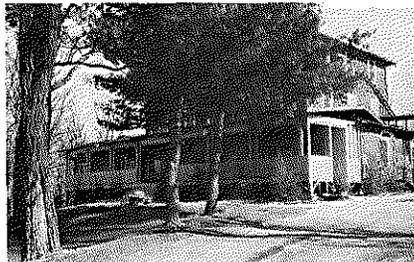
*Agudath Israel Camps:
Improvements for Summer '81*

The 1980 summer season had barely come to a close when both spiritual and physical preparations for summer '81 began.

Continuing the modernization program started at Camp Bnos several years ago, this years' activity concentrated on completely remodeling and extending two of the oldest



four bunks refurbishing the remaining two: by adding new bathrooms and showers. As another exciting development, a new 1000 sq. foot semi-enclosed porch was construct-



ed on the main building, to be used for activities as well as for an assembly area, as well as the improvements of the past years ... landscaping. ...

To help the Camp Bnos New Look, Rabbi Dovid Pitterman, was engaged as the resident director of Camp Bnos. Rabbi Pitterman, was engaged as the resident director of Camp Bnos. Rabbi Pitterman has been the director of ZAI for the past four years had been learning in Yeshivas Mir for over ten years ... bringing with him an appreciation of the values of Camp Bnos in addition to a technical knowledge of daily camp operations.

The spiritual tone of Camp Bnos and the study groups for the summer will be supervised by Rabbi Yoseif Rabinowitz, a well-known *Mechanech* and *Maggid Shiur* for fifteen years, who will be joining the Agudath Israel camping administration this summer.

To be sure, the special atmosphere that has endowed the Agudath Israel camps with the title "Ruach Country" will continue to prevail in Summer '81. Parents who would like their children be exposed to this experience are advised to register their children this coming winter for Summer '82, for the registration for both camps for the forthcoming season has been closed since early this past March.

Orthodox Jews Organize Tuition Tax Credits Drive In 30 States

A nationwide effort by Orthodox Jews to push for the passage of a tuition tax credit bill in the 97th Congress was launched in conjunction with the announcement of Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), Robert Packwood (R-Oregon) and William Roth (R-Delaware) in Washington, of the introduction of their bill. The "Campaign to Relieve Independent Education," the special structure established for the effort by Agudath Israel of America, will mobilize American Jews to support the measure through coordinators and committees in 30 states. The chairman of the campaign, Professor Larry Katz, dean of the University of Baltimore Law School, said that the Orthodox Jewish community has been working with the United States Catholic Conference and representatives of the private school sector in the country in coordinating the efforts for tuition tax credits.

A primary emphasis of the Orthodox Jewish community will be to convince secular Jews to rally behind the concept. National Jewish organizations who have previously opposed tuition tax credits in the belief that it would weaken the public school system, create havoc with the budget and is unconstitutional, will be the targets of the effort. In refuting these arguments, Prof. Katz said, "The current system of government grants and loans which apply equally to students attending public or non-public colleges has caused no such shift to private education. Furthermore, enrollment in non-public elementary and secondary schools has slipped from 13% to 9% of all pre-college students."

In defending charges that the program would cost as much as \$6 billion, the Orthodox Jewish leader said that "the impact on the budget will not be felt until 1983, by which time we hope that the Reagan economic program will have given us a balanced budget. It is high time that the budget of the United States is reorganized to give recognition to those parents who send their children to non-public schools and are taxed twice."

Arguing that the constitutionality question is also presumptuous, Prof. Katz said that since opponents of tuition tax credits agree that the constitutional issue is not absolute, in the very least they should permit a Supreme Court test.

In its statement of support for tuition tax credits, the Orthodox Jewish organization notes that there are more than 100,000 children who now attend Jewish day schools throughout the United States, from working and middle class backgrounds, groups already devastated by inflation, especially Orthodox

Jews who must bear the burden of additional costs for kosher food. According to an estimate by Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, director of Government and Public Affairs of Agudath Israel of America, Orthodox Jews in the Northeast, for example, have living costs of up to 25% above other Americans in the area.

Rabbi Morris Sherer, president of Agudath Israel of America, who was chairman of CREDIT (Campaign To Relieve Education Through Income Tax), representing 5 million children in private schools during the tax credit campaign in the early 1970's, claimed that "tuition tax credits is more than a measure to help the middle-class. It is a matter of justice which our society should seek to correct. America is ripe for tuition tax credits, but the success of the effort will largely depend on the mood that will be created in the nation for this concept." Agudath Israel urged Jews from all walks of life to join in this historic opportunity.

The Campaign To Relieve Independent Education has already participated in joint meetings with the United States Catholic Conference and representatives of other private schools in meeting with U.S. legislators. The U.S.C.C.'s Campaign for Educational Assistance also has coordinators in states where there are Orthodox Jewish coordinators, and the two groups are working closely together locally to influence legislators to support tuition tax credits.

According to the estimates of the Office of Government and Public Affairs of Agudath Israel of America, at least half of the U.S. Senate is now in favor of some tuition tax credit measure.

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Orthodox Globally Have Stake In Knesset Elections: Agudath Israel Warns Against "Religious Pluralism" In Israel

Jerusalem—A rousing call to Orthodox Jews throughout the world to mobilize their forces behind the struggle of the religious Jewish community in Israel reflected in the forthcoming Knesset elections, was issued at the close of a two-day session of the international executive of the Agudath Israel World Organization. The resolution emphasized the implications for authentic Jewish interests globally if the Reform and Conservative brands of Judaism win the recognition they seek in the Holy Land, as the impact of the Knesset election results reach far beyond the border of Israel.

The meetings were presided over by Rabbi Moshe Sherer of New York and Rabbi Y.M. Abramowitz of Jerusalem, chairmen of the world Agudist movement.

Sessions of the confab drew up constructive plans regarding the problems of the spiritual absorption of Russian Jews throughout the world, the reach-out programs to religious uncommitted Jewish elements, lifting the levels of Jewish education, the rescue of Jews from lands of peril, the serious problems arising from the large scale emigration of Israeli "yordim", emissaries to help the Jewish population of France from succumbing to assimilation, special global programs for *Baa-lei Tshuvah*—and a broad range of other issues facing the Jewish community.

In addition to the Israeli members, the participants in the deliberations of the world Agudist inner executive from the Diaspora were: Rabbi Chaskel Besser, Dr. E.L. Bodenheimer, and Rabbi Sherer from the U.S.A. and Mr. I.M. Cymerman (London), Mr. Moses Herz (Zurich), and Mr. Shlomo Klagsbald (Antwerp) from Europe.

Upon the close of the sessions, prior to his return to the U.S.A., Rabbi Moshe Sherer expressed his "shock and dismay" that the

head of the Mafdal (Mizrachi National Religious Party) faction in the Knesset, Yehuda Ben-Meir, told the recently-held convention in Jerusalem of the Conservative rabbis and congregations that the Mafdal "supports religious pluralism in Judaism." For a leader of a religious movement in Israel to openly encourage the Conservative group's efforts to obtain recognition in the Holy Land, which Israel's entire rabbinate and religious leadership is resisting with all its strength, is a blow to basic Torah interests which must be condemned by all Orthodox Jews, including members of the Mizrachi," the Agudath Israel leader declared.

Rabbi Sherer asserted: "We Americans bear witness to the spiritual havoc and confusion caused by the Conservative group, which by denying the divine origin of Torah and creating its own brand of man-made Halacha, has been the conduit for the loss of large number of Jews from Halachic Judaism. It is unthinkable that an Orthodox leader would approve importing this deviationist approach to the holy soil of Israel, where authentic Judaism still reigns supreme. Hopefully, Orthodox rabbis and leaders of all groups will rise in outrage to put a halt to the Orthodox fellow-travelers of the Conservative group who embolden the Conservatives in their frontal attack against the "monopoly of authentic Judaism in the Holy Land," Rabbi Sherer concluded.



"I Want To Be A Complete Jew," Russian Jew Tells Agudath Israel Gathering

Vladimir Yegutkin, 36 years old, one of 33 Russian Jewish men and boys to celebrate their *bris* and *pidyon haben*, told a celebration of more than 200 people that his dream was "to become a complete Jew." During the *seudas bris* at the Agudath Israel of Boro Park on 14th Avenue, which was sponsored by Project RISE (Russian Immigrant Services and Education) of Agudath Israel of America, Vladimir, now called Velvel, watched with excitement as several *kohanim* officiated at the *pidyon haben* ceremony for himself and for his 8 year old son, Sergi, now known as Eliyahu Dov. The *kohanim* were Eugene Fixler, Shmuel Roth, Binyomin Spitzer, Chaim Wollman and B. Brazel.

Rabbi Shlomo Shapiro (the Shepetivka Rav) explained the significance of *bris* and *pidyon haben* to the assembled Russians. Rabbi Ephraim Oratz, director of Project RISE, said, "Every father should follow the example of Mr. Yegutkin and his son and undertake *bris* on themselves and their children."

The *pidyon haben* celebrations were part of the general *bris milah* program of Project RISE under the leadership of Rabbi Hershel Augenbaum. Maimonides Hospital, which participates in the *bris* program, was represented by Rabbi Joseph Schiff, a staff *mohel*, and Mr. Marcel Biberfeld of the administration of the hospital. Mr. Willie Wiesner, chairman of Project RISE, distributed Project RISE *bris* certificates and *yarmulkas* embroidered with the Jewish names of the celebrants.

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Three Pirchei Boys Study 6,700 Mishnayos In Pirchei Agudath Israel Contest



The three finalists in this year's 18th annual Siyum Hamishnayos (from right to left): Eliyahu Yagod, this year's champion, and runners-up Yisroel Meir Glustein and Eitel Forman.

The three finalists in this year's 18th annual Siyum Hamishnayos celebration of Pirchei Agudath Israel of America studied an accumulative total of 6,700 *Mishnayos* by heart. The three were honored at a huge Siyum Mishnayos Melave Malke, which took place at the Yeshiva Toras Emes Kamenitz in Boro Park on March 29th. Over 1,500 youngsters, from the entire Northeast Seaboard, participated in the largest gatherings of Jewish youth where the entrance fee is Torah knowledge.

Eliyahu Yagod, a 12-year-old youngster from Monsey, New York, who had memorized 2,500 *Mishnayos*, was this year's champion. Runners-up: Yisroel Meir Glustein, 13, of Montreal, with 2,200 *Mishnayos*, and Eitel Forman, 12, of Staten Island, with 2,000 . . . contributing to a record national total of close to 90,000 *Mishnayos*. Each received a complete set of the Talmud.

The growing popularity of studying at least one *Seder* of *Mishnayos* in honor of reaching a Bar Mitzvah was in evidence: over 120 boys participated in the project this year. Three Bar Mitzvah youngsters, Tzvi Arye Yoffe (Montreal), Arye Meir Ginsberg (Monsey), and Eliyahu Yagod (Monsey), completed the entire *Mishnayos*.

During the Siyum Mishnayos celebration, Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld, Rosh Yeshiva of Shor Yoshuv of Far Rockaway, addressed the assemblage which was chaired by Rabbi Yehudah Oelbaum, *menahel* of Mesivta Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

The gathering honored the memory of three revered Torah leaders who passed away this past year: Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner, Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer, and Rabbi Shmuel Ehrenfeld, the Mattesdorf Rav, זכרונם לברכה.

In the New York celebration, Max Professorske, Yitzchok Bauminger and Aviesri Wagschal, were honored. Tribute was also paid to other activists who helped organize the siyum Mishnayos: Gershon Nathan, Shaya Yaros-

lawitz and Mendy Kofman. Mordechai Ben David Werdyger sang appropriate Melave Malke selections.

The Siyum Mishnayos celebration was the culmination of the 18th annual inter-branch Shabbos, at which youngsters heard addresses from Rabbi Silbermintz, Rabbi Eliyahu Stieger, Rabbi N.H. Basch, Rabbi Mutty Katz, and Rabbi Moshe Mendel Glustein (in the order of their appearance).

Detroit . . . Akiva Wagner, a 12 year old youngster from Toronto, won the top prize of the Midwest Siyum Mishnayos Contest at a celebration sponsored here by Pirchei Agudath Israel of America on March 7th. An overflow crowd of more than 400 people, including delegations from Toronto, Chicago, Cleveland and Columbus, participated in the Siyum Mishnayos celebration. 200 youngsters were part of an inter-branch *Shabbos* which preceded the festivities.

Runners-up were Yosef Saperman of Toronto (1,200 *Mishnayos*), Shimon Eistater of Cleveland (1,000 *Mishnayos*). Each of the top finalists received a full set of the Talmud.

Addressing the assemblage were Rabbi Leib Bakst, Rosh Yeshiva of Bais Yehuda of Detroit; Rabbi Eliezer Levine, president of the Vaad Harabonim of Detroit; and Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz, national director of Pirchei Agudath Israel.

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YOSEF MENDELEVICH TO ADDRESS AGUDATH ISRAEL DINNER

The internationally admired Russian prisoner of conscience, who was just liberated after 11 years of imprisonment in Soviet jails, Yosef Mendeleovich, will make a public appearance at the 59th anniversary dinner which he is expected to address.

Mendeleovich is highly revered for his self-sacrificing commitment to Yiddishkeit under the most excruciating circumstances. His observances of *Shabbos* and *kashrus* in Soviet prison camps, for which he was severely punished by the authorities, serves as an inspiration to Jews the world over. His participation in the dinner of Agudath Israel, which had for years mobilized public concern and activity for his liberation, has aroused intense interest.

Prominent leaders of government will participate in the dinner, which will also honor the primary sponsors of the tuition tax credit legislation for parents of yeshivos and other nonpublic schools, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York State and Senator Robert Packwood of Oregon.

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Agudath Israel: Budget Cuts Will Hurt Jewish Education

"The Reagan administration's proposal to consolidate education funds into two block grants, one for local education agencies and one for state education agencies, will hurt yeshivos and other nonpublic schools," was the conclusion of a study of the budget recommendations of the Reagan administration by the Office of Government and Public Affairs of Agudath Israel of America, directed by Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky. According to the study, "the return to the block grant system poses the danger of reverting back to the days when states and local education agencies would not mandate a fair share of education funds to the nonpublic schools."

Yeshivos currently benefit from many of the categorical programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including such programs as Title I for immigrants and other disadvantaged children and Title VII for bilingual education. Although money is channeled through the school districts, strong language in the law and in regulation mandate the inclusion of nonpublic schools.

In the proposed block grant concept, the states and local education agencies would theoretically be permitted to continue spending money for the programs they currently fund, but would be free to earmark funds for other programs of their choosing. Coupled with the block grant proposal is a 20% cut in funds for administration which would further reduce the total amount of money available to the schools, thus further diminishing the chances that nonpublic schools would receive their fair share.

Although current plans call for state assurances that private schools will participate fully and equitably in programs and activities funded through the SEA block grant, there is a possibility that state and local education agencies will earmark funds for the public schools that will be for areas other than those that are currently benefiting the yeshivos and other nonpublic schools. In addition, the Agudath Israel government affairs office notes that the block grant may also jeopardize funding for nonpublic schools in some states where state constitutions are more restrictive than the federal constitution.

The Agudath Israel study also covered other areas included in the first round of

proposed cuts by the Reagan administration which will have "a devastating impact" on the Orthodox Jewish community. Noting that Orthodox Jews are by and large lower working and middle class, the Agudath Israel analysis notes that Orthodox Jews already spend as much as 22% above other Americans for living costs peculiar to the observance of Orthodox Jewish law. Agudath Israel stresses that the ranks of the poor amongst Orthodox Jews are also increasing, even amongst Kollel students (post-graduate rabbinic fellows) who have come to rely on such federal programs as food stamps, Section 8 and Medicaid to survive. The study reaffirmed its contention that tuition tax credits more than the tax cut would be a small measure of relief to help the lower working and middle class in the Orthodox Jewish community: "While the tax cuts will be relatively small and in most cases will be just enough to offset higher social security taxes, tuition tax credits which the President has promised to support does provide some measure of relief."

In citing some examples of the negative effects the cuts may have on poor Orthodox Jews, the study notes that a family of four with an income of over \$11,000 would no longer be eligible for the food stamp program. Obviously, this does not take into account the 22% higher cost for kosher food and tuition. A similar case was made for the child nutrition programs where a family of four earning more than \$15,630 would no longer be eligible for the federal assistance given to schools for meals. This will create havoc for parents who will now be forced to pay additional costs for meals in the private schools, which, when added to rising tuition, will prove to be yet another unexpected increase for thousands of parents with children in yeshivos.

Various student loan programs that now can be stretched to accommodate middle income students would be eliminated, depriving large numbers of middle class youngsters from participating in higher education. The cost of college and other higher education has soared during recent years, which would prove impossible for parents who are already strapped by the rising costs of tuition and kosher food.

The Agudath Israel study also warns of the effects of the reduction of Section 8 financed housing as well as cuts in the Urban Development Action Grant and the Small Neighborhood Development Program on the communities. It noted that Section 8 will directly impact the ability of young couples to compete in the market for apartments in stable middle class neighborhoods. The cuts in

UDAG would reduce the number of young middle class couples who might benefit from renovated housing in previously blighted areas. The total effect of these cuts would effectively minimize the potential of neighborhood stabilization forces to develop these communities. The change to a block grant system for the Community Development Block Grants and UDAG would bring back the days when states and local governments used these funds for citywide purposes which were not always in the best interests of local communities. Similarly, HUD's Small Neighborhood Development Program, also on the hit list, assists these self help groups by providing them with seed money to administer other housing programs essential for stabilization.

The elimination of jobs from the Public Service Employment Program under Titles IID and VI of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act would eliminate many jobs for Orthodox Jews and also hurt many agencies which have used workers from the program to assist in various community tasks. While the elimination in the PSE program would be a loss to the Orthodox Jewish community, the preservation of ongoing other CETA programs is essential.

In its summary, the Agudath Israel study notes, "It is difficult not to support the motivation behind the President's budget proposals. Yet, in the end, how the community will be effected will not so much be in the dollar amount as in the philosophy that will dictate how the remaining portion is to be administered. The evidence to this point suggests that the Orthodox Jewish community will suffer out of proportion to other communities because of its largely lower middle class composition, but it will be impossible to render a final verdict until the President's plans are finalized and both houses of the United States Congress have spoken."

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