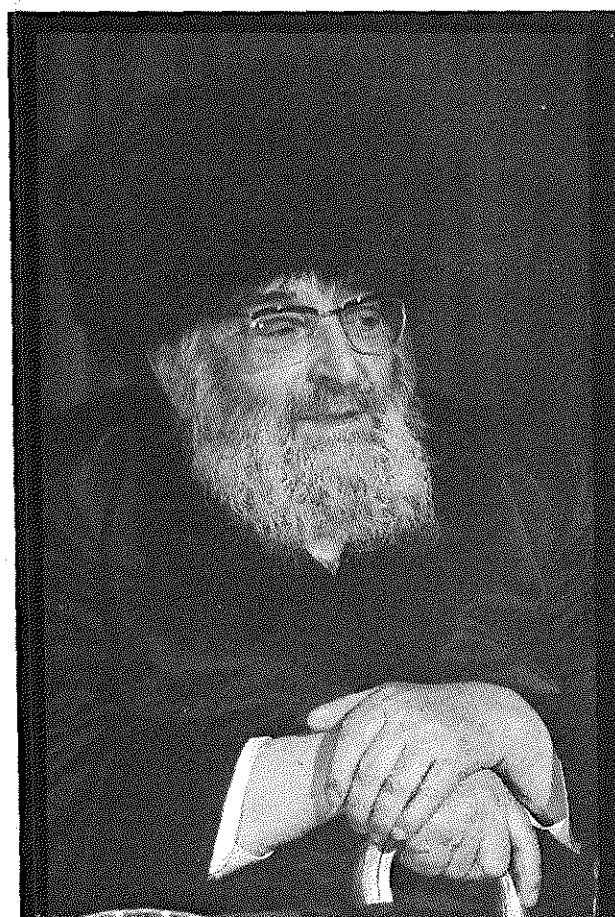


THE JEWISH OBSERVER

TEVES 5742/DECEMBER 1981
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Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner

זכר צדיק לברכה

*The Master Rosh Yeshiva as
Revealed in His Writings*



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Addresses and Report



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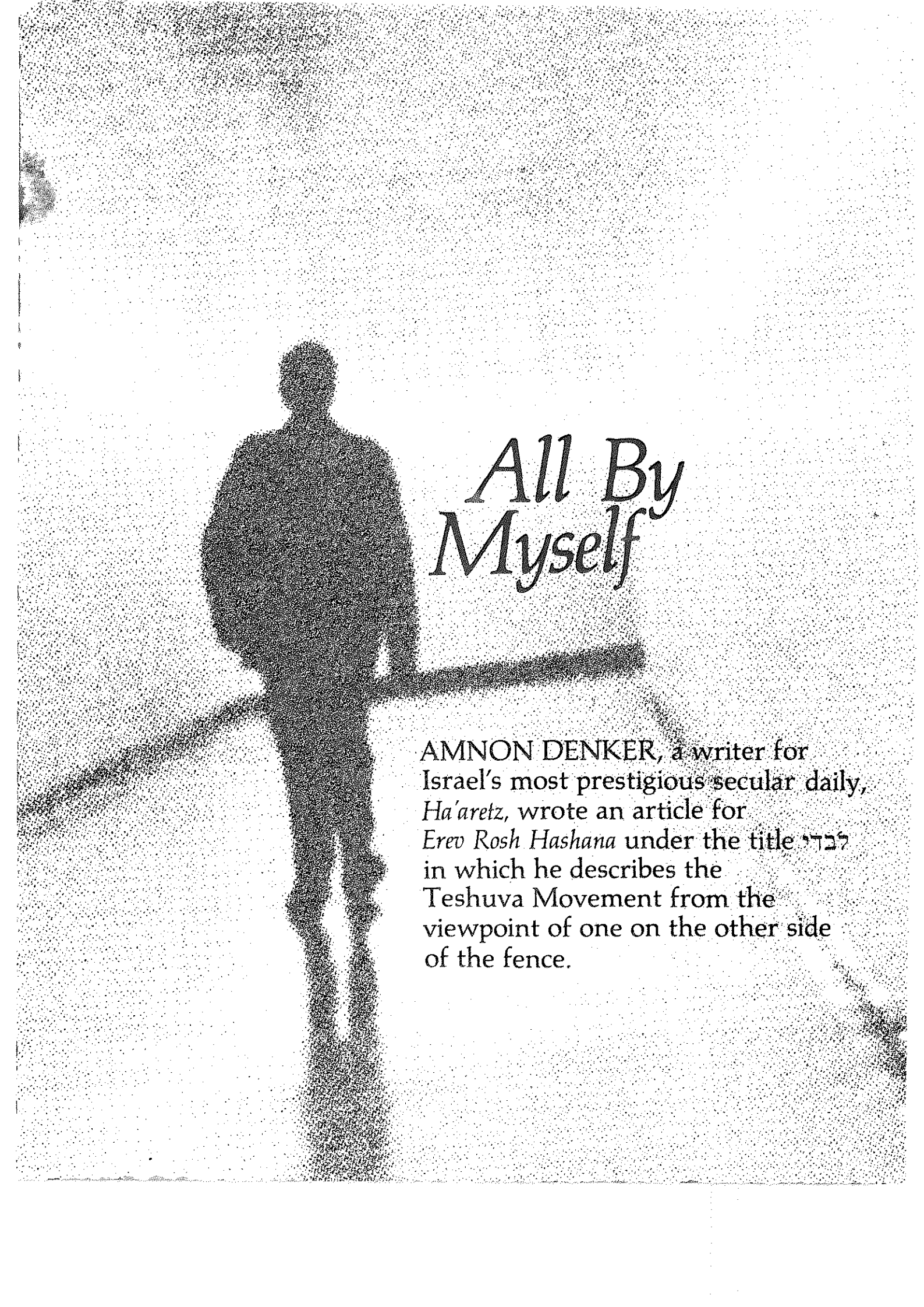
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in this issue . . .

All By Myself, Amnon Denker	4
Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner זכר צדיק לברכה	7
By the Writing Desk of the Master, Yisroel Mayer Kirzner	8
Selected Letters, translated by Eliakim Willner	10
The Different Ones, Helene Ribowsky	17
Hashem's Special Children, Lester R. Kaufman	20
Gems From the Roshei Hayeshiva Adaptations of addresses at the recent national convention of Agudath Israel of America: A Time To See and Be Seen, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky שליט"א	26
Of Harmony and Blessings, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein שליט"א	29
Criticism, Compromise, and Constructive Action, Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapiro שליט"א	30
Halacha in English—Continued, a review article	35
Letters to the Editor	40
More Rebbes Who Don't Vanish / Small Town Rabbis / Addiction Among Orthodox / Reachout / "Crooked Mirror"	



All By Myself

AMNON DENKER, a writer for Israel's most prestigious secular daily, *Ha'aretz*, wrote an article for *Erev Rosh Hashana* under the title לבדי in which he describes the Teshuva Movement from the viewpoint of one on the other side of the fence.

Suddenly I look around and I notice: What's going on around here? I've been left behind all by myself! When it happens bit by bit you don't notice it at all. First one goes, then another. You look for some face that seems to have vanished from the scene. The fellows just say: "He went there," and shrug their shoulders. You don't pay any attention. Then one day you start figuring and say to yourself: "Wait a minute. This is no joke, this has reached epidemic proportions!"

You know what it reminds me of? The time after the Yom Kippur War, when we came back and began to take a count—who was gone and who was left. Now don't get me wrong. I don't mean to compare the two. But still it reminds me of it. We used to come home and the first thing we'd hear was that one of our close friends had been killed and that another was in the hospital. Then we'd hear about others not so close to us. You noticed that someone was no longer around and you asked about him. And people would say: *Didn't you hear? He was killed "up there" or "down there."*

"Perhaps it all began with the war. . ."

Perhaps it all began with the war, perhaps not. Somehow I have the feeling that it all began with my class, those who were regulars when the war broke out and who swallowed it in a big way. So many are casualties of such an experience. We came out of it a little dizzy. There were some who made it—you know: university, lawyer, accountant, marriage, and all that stuff. But most have their heads askew to this very day. Now I don't mean to say that all of those heads got crowned with *kipot* immediately. But in all those years that have passed, each was thrown into many strange directions. Look, even one of my group who finally went into medicine—it would seem that everything would be alright, right? No. He has all of this stuff in his head. He finished his studies and began his tricks: acupuncture, sole therapy, gimmicks. Now he wants to set up a health farm in the Galil. And the others? Don't ask. They chase after every wind that blows and don't find a thing. These guys are the best of my peers—what they call the cream of Israeli society: Ashkenazis, high school graduates, officers, battle corps. This was our group.

Then this business of "doing *teshuva*" began. I find it hard to put my finger on where exactly this all began or how. We used to hear about all kinds of guys that would disappear and who would suddenly surface in town with black *kipot* on their heads and with a strange look in their eyes. It was a sort of happy-go-lucky look—really content. They'd come around for a week or two, and then they would disappear completely. You couldn't find them anywhere. These were

fellows that weren't from our immediate circle and we didn't pay too much attention to them. Another passing fad, we figured. But slowly it hit us.

You know what this meant? You would go over to a friend to get something up for *Shabbat*, and he would start hemming and hawing. It's not convenient for him; he's busy. Until you would draw out of him that for three months he has been travelling to Rechovot for *Shabbat*, to some rabbi who gives lectures on Judaism. "What's happening?" you ask him. "Are you crazy?" But nothing helps. After a month he's wearing a black *kipa*. Then he isn't even around. He travels every two days to Jerusalem. Starts acting strange, just slips out between your fingers. You stand and watch how he changes every day. It is frightening: one day a *yarmulke*. After a week he is eating kosher only. Another week and he shows up with *tzitzis* and kisses *mezuzot*. You sit down to drink a cup of coffee with him, he picks up the cup and before drinking makes the blessing: "Blessed are you Lord, our G-d, king of the universe by whose words all was created." You listen to him talking and ask yourself: Is this really him? After all this, he then evaporates and you hear he is in "Ohr Somayach."

*"They're not listening to 'Pink Floyd'
... but to lectures."*

Ohr Somayach is their Yeshiva. They send them all there after softening them up first for the deep plow. What's nice about it there is that they don't force you to do anything. When you are inside it doesn't look so dark like the darkness we always attributed to the religious. Feel like walking around in a tee shirt and jeans? O.K. You want to go into town and take off your *kipa*? O.K. It's almost modern. Some of the guys go about with cassette recorders, but the difference is that they are not listening to "Pink Floyd" but to Rav Shapira's lectures. Then you begin to feel free and happy and don't sense at all how this whole business closes in on you from all directions. You get more and more deeply involved and everything seems sweet to you. Take the studies, for instance. They don't come down hard on you right away. First they teach you easy things: the weekly Torah portion, a bit of Rashi, *Messilat Yesarim*. It's set up so that the appetite comes with the eating. Naturally you cannot help but to be impressed by the enthusiasm. If you ever laughed at religious Jews swaying before a book, you will find that you get involved and begin to sway yourself. And you see that it is very pleasant and aids concentration. It also injects a strong enthusiasm for the reading material. You go about the *Bet Midrash* of Ohr Somayach and see the guys swaying like devils, their hands flying

about in all kinds of motions: they're explaining the verses and the *sugiot*, with a bit of a shout. And when they make a break through in a difficult issue, their faces light up with true joy. This is just what draws you into it: the joy. It is a spiritual joy. Not the joy when you bought your new car or over the victory of Maccabi Tel Aviv at the Europe Cup Match.—When did you feel such enthusiasm last? Such joy?

"It's the real earthquake"

Sometimes when I read the papers talking about political or ethnic earthquakes, I think to myself: why don't they pay attention to the real earthquake? My fellows are leaving one by one, just as if the earth had swallowed them up. And the world keeps on going as if nothing had happened. Who will remain? The time I got the real shock, when I began to appreciate the scope of the matter, was when I went to Rami's wedding at Ohr Somayach. I came there and I was stunned. Since high school I hadn't seen so many of the old guys together. And all of them with black *kipot*, a bit of a beard. Their uniform was a long-sleeved white shirt with dark polyester pants. I look carefully and behind these strange garbs and beards I discern faces that I hadn't seen in ages—all kinds of guys that I used to sit with at the "White Gallery" or the "Hut" or at "Shmill's"—and faces that simply had disappeared. Suddenly they are all there. Happy. Dancing. I nearly fainted. All those dances that we used to dance as a joke at the school folk-dance club, with fake Chassidic garments—suddenly all of these guys are dancing them for real. I go over to them and ask:

"What happened?" They look at me with a smile and say: "Nu, sinner, when are you going to come over to us." I tell you, you can go mad.

I meet a good friend of mine from the neighborhood. He is standing next to me with a little kipa and a suit. And I say to him: "Nu, it's quite happy here at Rami's wedding." And what does he answer me? "Yes, yes, he is a very fine groom. A fine groom. Great in Torah." This, from a fellow with whom I used to go wild together! Suddenly, he takes me, startled, by the hand and leads me to two rabbis standing there and introduces me: "Here is a great sinner—we have to correct him." And they both look at me smiling pleasantly and say: "Well, how about coming? Look around, study a little, see what it's all about—we'll accept you with love." And their eyes—lit, warm and causing me confusion. These rabbis have got something, I tell you. I tell them, "Sure, sure, I will come in another year. In the meantime, I have other plans." And I escape.

At any rate, I thought I escaped. First of all, all the way back to Tel Aviv I was thinking about it all. The most frightening thing is that I was thinking: "Why not, really? Why not try?" On the one hand, I was

scared. Because I saw that this is not one of those stories like Yoga or Scientology, where you spend a half a year and then get out. This is a story for years—perhaps for a lifetime. But on the other hand, I look at my past friends (I have to say "past") dancing in pools of light. . . Happy is not the word.—Then why not try?

"Now Natan has gone . . . and I'm all alone"

Upon arriving home I find Naava at my entrance waiting for me. She is depressed. Naava is Natan's girlfriend, a good friend of mine. He is one of the last who have remained. I let her in, give her something to drink, and then—she starts to cry. When she calms down she starts telling me: under our very noses Natan has been to all the proper places: the Rehovot Rabbi and at Ohr Somayach. Now he's got a black kipa and he's kissing *mezuzot*. He's trying to teach her the weekly Torah reading. I pick up the phone to his parents. His mother answers with a voice emerging from a grave: "What is going to happen to him? He doesn't want to eat anything at home—it's not kosher. We are losing him. You can't talk to him. Pretty soon he'll be throwing stones on the Ramot Road. What will the neighbors say?" What could I tell her.

So now Natan has gone, too—and I am all alone, literally all alone. I remind myself of a poem by Bialik which we studied in high school:

*The wind has carried them all away
The light has sucked them on
And I am left alone.*

Except then it was the reverse: it referred to those who fled Yeshiva, in the Haskalah era. Today, the wheels have turned. No Haskalah, no university, no business, no Zionism, no army. Apparently, none of this is good enough. You go back to the sources. Look, everything I have told you, about the war, about mysticism, about each of their little affairs. All of that could be true. But sometimes I get the feeling that there is something more to it than that. It might be something in our genes. We are all Jews, aren't we? Maybe that whole act about Haskalah and Zionism was only an intermediate step, necessary to build a Jewish state. But now, it is all over and those generations have completed their historic task. Now we return to what we really are. To what we should be. And as I tell you these things, believe me, I am terrified. Because I know I am swaying like an apple on a tree. Another week or two. Maybe a month, or a year. I'll fall, too. One of the guys will invite me to spend *Shabbat* at Ohr Somayach. I will be seduced in a moment of weakness, and—here goes! I will be on the launching pad without a way back.

Somebody, something has to be done urgently to nail me fast to the tree. But who? What?

translated by Michael Vine

The Jewish Observer / December, 1981

A selection of the personal letters and papers of the late Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Chaim Berlin/Kolel Gur Arye, Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner זצ"ל, was recently published in bookform—*Pachad Yitzchok: Igaros uKesuvim*. Rabbi Yisroel Mayer Kirzner, a *talmid* of Rabbi Hutner, who spent many years in close association with him, offers his comments on these writings as they reflect on their author. . . . The style and the formal reference to Rabbi Hutner ("the Rosh Yeshiva"), totally omitting mention of his name, reflect the classical deference of a *talmid* toward his *rebbe*.

One thinks of a *gadol beYisroel* in general and Rabbi Hutner in particular in terms of being a great Torah scholar; a *tzaddik* and *adam gadol* (great and righteous individual); the leader of a particular institution; and a leader on a *Klal Yisroel* format; but it is especially as a builder of men and mentor to them and as a teacher and expounder of Torah that Rabbi Hutner emerges in his letters. We make no attempt at completing the picture with the few words that follow. Rather, it is to extend the canvas on which Rabbi Kirzner sketches his impressions that we offer several lines on Rabbi Hutner's background and activities.

* * *

Rabbi Hutner was heir to a rich, multi-faceted tradition that he successfully embodied within himself. He was born in 1904 to a Warsaw family celebrated for its Talmudic scholarship. He spent his teen years in Slobodka where *der Alter* (Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel) had a major impact on him, not only developing his potential for greatness but—by indirection, perhaps—teaching him how to develop others to their fullest. Also significant were the years Rabbi Hutner spent in *Eretz Yisroel*—in the Slobodka Yeshiva in Chevron, and close relationship with many of the *gedolim* then living in *Eretz Yisroel*. His attachment to *Eretz Yisroel* eventually achieved fruition in the Yeshiva Pachad Yitzchok, which he founded in Jerusalem in 1975.

After studying in Berlin, Rabbi Hutner arrived in the United States with his Rebbetzin in the early Thirties. He eventually joined the Mesivta Chaim Berlin as Rosh Yeshiva, elevating the institution into a throbbing *makom Torah*, transforming street kids into genuine *talmidei chachomim*. He founded the Kolel Gur Arye to crown the Mesivta and there he molded *talmidei chachomim* into inspiring teachers and effective leaders.

The analytical depth of his Talmudic study and novellae, as represented by his *sefer Toras Hanazir*, was complemented by his command of vast areas of *Aggada* and *Machshava* (philosophical thought). Many of his *maamotrim* (discourses on philosophical and ethical themes) were eventually published in the six-volume *Pachad Yitzchok*.

Rabbi Hutner's counsel was sought in many communal matters, and he assumed an active role in the *Moetzes*

Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner

זכר צדיק לברכה

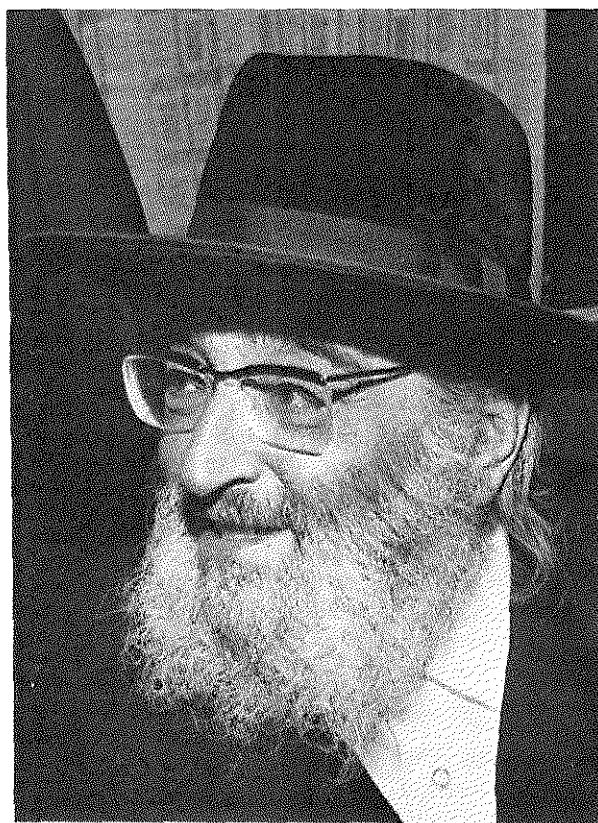


Photo: Kalman Zeines

on the occasion of
his first Yahrtzeit 20 Kislev

Gedolei HaTorah of Agudath Israel of America and in the leadership of Torah Umesorah. To truly assess Rabbi Hutner's commitment to communal affairs and *Klal Yisroel* concerns, however, one should not search for his name on letterheads or committee memberships. Rather, one need only take note of the prominent involvement of his many *talmidim* in top-level positions in yeshivos, pulpits, and communal institutions, where he directed them.

Yet the sum of these parts are not equal to the whole. In the final analysis, the greatness of a *gadol* remains elusive.

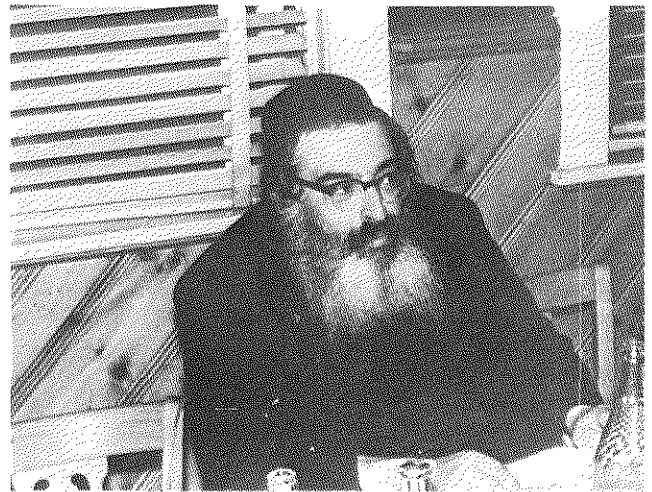
By the Writing Desk of the Master: Reflections on *Pachad Yitzchok: Igaros Ukesavim*

Unsystematic Reflections

The publication of this volume of letters and other shorter writings of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל has aroused an unusual—even an extraordinary—degree of interest in the Torah world. *Talmidim* and other *b'nei Torah* alike have displayed a keen eagerness to secure a copy of this new *Pachad Yitzchok*. And an apparently common experience has been that once one has begun to peruse it, one discovers the *sefer* to be extremely difficult to put down. Whence stems the fascination which this volume holds? What significance does it bear, for *talmidim*, for *b'nei Torah* in general, for the wider Torah public? What historical light does this collection of letters shed on the post-war renaissance of Torah in this country and elsewhere—a renaissance in which the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל played so central a role? What lessons does it hold for present and future leaders of the Torah community? What does this volume reveal about this Torah giant of our time? These are certainly legitimate questions; but definitive answers to these questions are not to be looked for in the following pages. Quite apart from other overwhelming inadequacies, this writer is—as one whose life bears the decisive and indelible imprint of close to thirty years of unmerited *chessed* extended by the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל—utterly incapable of achieving the detachment presumably needed to discuss this volume exhaustively and dispassionately.

What follow, then, are no more than some unsystematic reflections induced by a first study of this volume. This study, undertaken close to the first *Yahrzeit* of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל (כי' כסלו) has proven to be an inspiring—even an exhilarating—experience. There is no doubt that one will, with Heaven's help, be led to return to this volume again and again in the years and decades to come. But the flood of memories, hopes,

dreams, regrets and resolutions, evoked by this first study at this particular date, will certainly never again be replicated. The merciless torrent of onrushing seasons and events can hardly fail to sap the vitality of these memories and dull the poignancy of these regrets. Vainly, perhaps, one seeks to salvage what one can.



"Sharp Blade . . . Charming Poetry"

This volume consists of 264 letters and other writings. The unique character of this volume, as distinct from the other published volumes of the *Pachad Yitzchok* series, is spelled out in a brief, masterful introduction consisting of *divrei Torah* contributed by Rabbi Yonason David שליט"א (son-in-law of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל). The volume is divided into several sections: The first section contains letters dealing primarily with *Hilchos De'os Vechovas Halevavos* (duties of the heart and mind). (In the introduction there is a reference to a possible future volume of letters containing more general *halachic* exchanges with correspondents.) A second section con-

Yisroel Mayer Kirzner describes himself as "having had the privilege of maintaining contact with the beis hamidrash of Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin-Kollel Gur Arye for many years". He is a professor of economics in New York University and author of several definitive text books on the subject.

sists of longer pieces that had already appeared in print elsewhere. A third section is comprised of letters providing encouragement, advice, or reproof to *talmidim* or others. The fourth and fifth sections consist of letters of personal or private character. Within each section, the pieces are arranged basically in chronological order, with some thirty of them bearing pre-war dates. Most of these latter pieces date back to the 'twenties or early 'thirties (and include a searing *maamar* published by the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל after the '29 massacre at Hebron). The others are from the early 'fifties and later—so that a gap of some sixteen years makes the collection unavoidably incomplete.

A striking—and not necessarily superficial—feature of this volume is undoubtedly its unique writing style. In one letter (number 211) the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל expresses his admiration for his correspondent's ability to display simultaneously both the keenness of a sharp blade and the sweetness of charming poetry. This same combination is evident on every page of this volume: incisiveness and clarity clothed in an exquisite poetic prose. Each letter is a vivid reminder of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל's habit of expressing himself in conversation

through the spontaneous deployment of countless expressions of *Chazal*; and these letters will surely confirm that a more elegant or eloquent vocabulary could hardly exist.

But the permanent importance of this volume does not reside, of course, in its felicitous style. This permanent importance is, at one level, no doubt to be looked for in the *divrei Torah* which make up the first and second sections. Comprising well over half the entire *sefer* these letters and writings relate directly or indirectly to the countless *maamorim* which the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל gave over a period of decades in his *beis midrash*. In these *maamorim* only a portion of which we have been fortunate enough to see in published form in the series of *Sifrei Pachad Yitzchok*—the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל gave us an approach to *Hilchos De'os Vechovas Halevavos* that has had profound influence upon generations of *talmidim* and which was central to his lifelong *avodas hachinuch*. In the *Sifrei Pachad Yitzchok*, and in the extant tapes of many unpublished *maamorim*, there is contained a body of work towering in stature, embracing a conceptual framework for understanding the Aggadic teachings of our sages ז"ל, together with a veritable wealth of applications, an enormous storehouse of sparkling insights. No one



Rabbi Hutner with רבי Moshe Feinstein and Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman שליט"א.

who has been exposed to this treasury—studded with gems culled and interpreted from the greatest figures of all time, especially, perhaps, the *Ramban* and *Rabbeinu Yonah*, the *Maharal*, and the Vilna Gaon—can fail to have glimpsed at least something of the grandeur of the perspective that the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל brought to *Hilchos De'os Vechovas Halevavos*.

The Uniqueness of This Perspective

It is not easy to identify the uniqueness of this perspective. Undoubtedly the qualities that distinguish this perspective for one student may be different from those that are seen as distinctive by a second student. For this writer the distinctiveness of the approach contained in the *ספרי פחד יצחק* may perhaps be briefly expressed in terms of a little parable.

Imagine a tense, three-day summit meeting of international political and military leaders, at which issues directly affecting the very fate of the world are at stake. A competent, insightful account and interpretation of these fateful seventy-two hours might fill volumes. But to provide such an account is no simple matter. An account produced by an observer not thoroughly aware of the global implications of the events to be described, or not thoroughly familiar with the historical background of the issues to be discussed, or not well-acquainted with the relevant patterns and norms of diplomatic behavior, can in no way do justice to the events of these tense three days. A competent account will cover even apparently mundane and routine events at the meeting, insofar as these may indirectly relate to the central issues at stake.

But it is not only the *preparation* of such a competent account that calls for these extraordinary qualities on the part of the narrators. Even the very *comprehension* of the narrative by listeners or readers calls for considerable familiarity with the issues being discussed at the summit meeting, with their global implications, and with the normal patterns of diplomatic procedures. To those unaware of all these matters, the most competent narrative itself must appear puzzling and pointless. For these readers, the scholar who can clarify the true import of the narrative, rendering what appeared puzzling and pointless immediately illuminating and vitally significant—such a scholar can certainly be described as unlocking a veritable treasury.

An Essential Element in the Drama of Millennia

At the hands of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל each and every *maamar Chazal* emerges simply and naturally as part of a unified account of matters and issues of awesome, cosmic significance. At this level of seriousness, there are no coincidences. Each apparent detail is shown to fit as an essential element in the larger drama unfolding across the millennia. Of course this perspective is "uplifting" in permitting us at least to glimpse the true

level of the participants in this drama as described in *Midrashei Chazal*. It is further "uplifting" in permitting us to recognize something of the stature of the historians of the drama—our sages, *Chazal*. Finally, it is "uplifting" in forcing us to recognize that the drama is as yet unfinished; that we, too, even in our own pitiful spiritual poverty, so far removed from the stature of earlier generations—have a part to play that fits directly into the larger drama. Our own learning of Torah, our own *tefilla*, our own *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* are important in absolute terms. To absorb the message of these *seforim* is to recognize the utter seriousness of every facet of our *avoda*, in the piercing voice of our *shofar* on Rosh Hashana no more than in the mirth and ridicule with which *Klal Yisroel* on Purim derisively hoots *Avoda Zora* (Idolatry) off the stage of Hashem's creation.

New Material on "Maamorim"

The present volume contains invaluable new material to add to the already published series of *Sifrei Pachad Yitzchok*. Many letters address specific difficulties that questioners had raised concerning *maamorim* (or published versions of them). As such these letters represent important footnotes to these *maamorim*, and often in-

On the Subject of a Memorial to the Martyrs of the European Destruction

... Because of the multitude of our sins, there abounds about our present epoch of "A nation of remnants from the sword" a wealth of blasphemous and defamatory talk, including outright heresy.

It is incumbent upon us to sweep out such talk from our midst.

We believe with full faith that the inner source of genocide directed against Jews, the murder and the destruction, is, in the final analysis, the principle of "... for your sake we are killed all day long, we are considered as sheep for the slaughter" [*Tehillim* 44:23].

Wherever a Jew is found, can be found testimony to Hashem. [*Yeshaya* 43. *Chazal*: "When you are My witnesses, I am the Mighty One, when you are not My witnesses, I am not, as it were, the Mighty One."]

Wherever a faithful Jewish congregation is found, there can be found Divine inspiration [*Sanhedrin* 39b]. The evil among the nations understand and feel this, and in pursuing their illusory goal to uproot every testimony to Hashem, they kill, they burn, they annihilate Jews....

clude fresh insights not made explicit in the *maamorim* as originally presented, and substantial material in *Hilchos De'os Vechovas Halevavos* not available elsewhere. In addition, the entire volume contains many short observations (or *he'aros*) that characteristically exemplify the unique approach of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל. Innumerable *yesodos* are contained in this volume. Students of this volume will no doubt differ as regards the relative degrees of impact which specific letters or writings will make upon them. Among the themes which held perhaps the greatest impact for this reader might be included: (a) The treatment (in letter 30), unparalleled in clarity and incisiveness, of the meaning and status of a *machlokes* (disputes) between scholars of the Talmud; of the meaning of *אלו דברי אלקים חיים* ("These and those are words of G-d"). Surely few will go away from this letter without a more profound—if not a revolutionized—view of the status of the statements of our *Chazal*. (b) The discussions (in letters 54, 80, 85, 86) of the significance of the *history* of *Knesses Yisroel*. In these discussions is expounded the transcendent character of this history, as the manifestation of the Divine Will, and its necessary parallelism to the manifestation of the Divine Will in Torah itself. (It is in the context of these

discussions that one appreciates the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל's perception of the harrowing sufferings of the Jewish people over the generations and especially in our own time; see letters 63, 82.) (c) The concise clarification, in letter 54, of the role and purpose of the *maamorim* in their generality, and the manner in which they relate to the cultivation of *Yiras Shomayim* (fear of G-d). (d) The elucidation, in letter 51, of the *Rambam's* view in regard to *תחיית המתים* (resurrection of the dead). It is impossible to study these *divrei Torah* without gaining a profound feeling of deep gratitude to G-d for the illumination provided to our generation through these teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל.

Rekindling Our Memories

But the wealth of *divrei Torah* in this volume is by no means the *sole* source of the deep interest which it holds for those of us who, over the years, cherished the privilege of having our lives touched by the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל. For us this volume offers two distinct opportunities: (a) The opportunity to relive, to recall, to rekindle—to revive the memories of years during which one was warmed by the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל's teachings, by his



Rabbi Hutner with Rabbi Gustman (l.)



At meeting with Premier Begin at home of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.



Rabbi Hutner, as dean of Yeshivas Rabbi Jacob Joseph.



At Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah session

With Rabbi A. Kotler ז"ל

On the Perils of Expounding on the Jewish History

Because of the oneness that exists between *Yisroel* and the Torah, it has been taken as well-established in our *Beis Midrash* that the annals of *Yisroel* may be improperly expounded, just as the Torah may be improperly expounded.

Indeed, any student of the Talmud knows the difference between learning a tractate that has the commentary of Rashi and learning a tractate that does not. Without Rashi, one gropes like a blind man touring the market without a guide, who is sure to stumble and certain to fall.

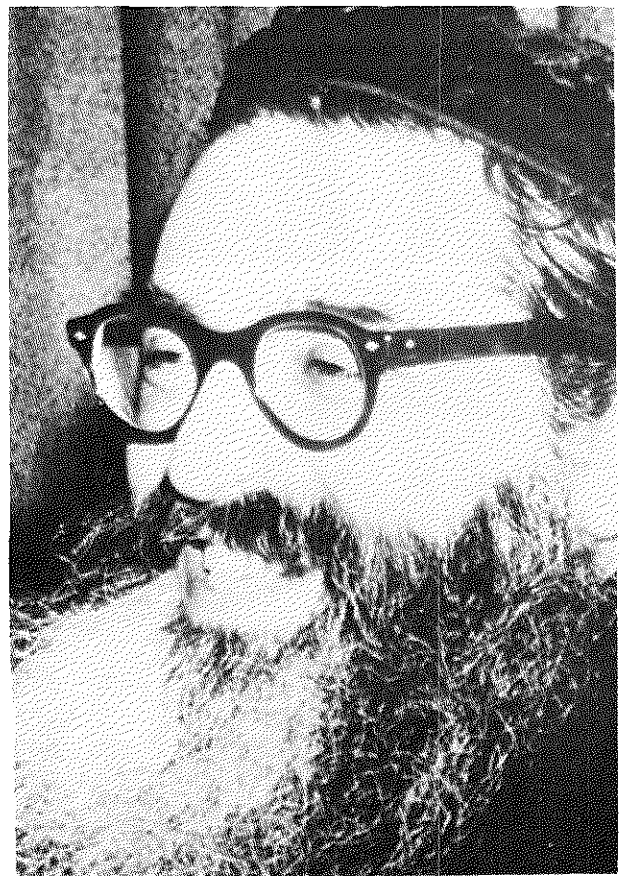
Consider, therefore, what must be said with regard to the chronicles of *Yisroel*, where every epoch is an entire topic unto itself, intricate and tangled. . . . And all this without the "commentary of Rashi"!

How great the danger, how numerous the obstacles and entrapments! And as we have said, stumbling and becoming entrapped in the attempt to understand an era in the history of *Yisroel* is akin to improperly expounding the Torah. *Yisroel* and the Torah are one. . . .

words of encouragement and reproof, by the vitality and *simcha* of his presence. (b) The opportunity to learn more than we ever did about our beloved Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל; to be admitted to sit by him, as it were, at his writing desk and to observe him over a period of well over half a century—from a tender age as a yeshiva *bachur* in Slabodka, until his very last years as one of the acknowledged contemporary *Gedolei Yisroel*—engaged in correspondence with old and young, with *talmidei chachomim* and with others, on matters lofty or on matters apparently mundane or personal. Let us consider the scope for each of these two kinds of opportunity.

For the rekindling of memories, while there is hardly a letter in the entire volume that fails to make its contribution, it is the contents of section III that are probably most significant. In the pages of introduction to the volume Rabbi Yonason David provides a brief but glowingly eloquent picture of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל as intensely and separately involved with so many *individuals*. If the other volumes of *Pachad Yitzchok* (and of course of the tapes the *maamorim*, where these exist) enable us to recall something of the sense of exaltation and spiritual uplift generated by the *maamorim* and *mesibos* (gatherings), to recreate in our ears the resonant tones and phrases with which the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל held us spellbound for hours while he wove his marvellous Torah-tapestries—the present volume evokes one's recollections of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל as personal mentor to hundreds upon hundreds of *b'nei Torah*. The outpouring of love in these

letters, the delicacy with which he gave the sharpest of reproofs, the passionate pleas with which he provided *chizuk* and encouragement, the lucidity and authoritativeness with which he clarified *yesodei hadas* (fundamentals of belief), the insistence on being kept informed of the most mundane details of the lives of *talmidim*, his inquiring after the welfare of a correspondent's spouse, reminds us dramatically of our own individual contacts with the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל. Who can forget the quite extraordinary interest with which he devoted himself to the personal concerns of the *talmidim* of his *beis hamidrash*? These letters bring to mind the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל being prepared again and again to spend hours on end in conversation with an individual young yeshiva *bachur*, probing, searching, healing and uplifting. They bring to mind the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל working ceaselessly with young men from a world utterly strange to Torah, inspiring them, guiding them, teaching them not only Torah but how and why to value and to love Torah. They recall for us the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל as the master craftsman engaged in fashioning—out of the crudest clay—nothing less than the noblest form of creation, the *talmid chacham*. These letters bring to mind the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל as a rock to which his *talmidim* turned with complete assurance in the midst of a seething ocean of



Words of Encouragement to a Student Lamenting Obstacles and Slumps

... A failing many of us suffer from is that when we consider the aspects of perfection of our sages, we focus on the ultimate level of their attainments. We discuss how they are complete in this or that area while omitting mention of the inner struggles that had previously raged within them. A listener would get the impression that these individuals came out of the hand of their Creator in full-blown form.

Everyone is awed at the purity of speech of the Chofetz Chaim זצ"ל considering it a miraculous phenomenon. But who knows of the battles, struggles and obstacles, the slumps and regressions that the Chofetz Chaim encountered in his war with the *yetzer horah* (evil inclination)? There are many such examples, to which a discerning individual such as yourself can certainly apply the rule.

The result of this failing is that when an ambitious young man of spirit and enthusiasm meets obstacles, falls and slumps, he imagines himself as unworthy of being "planted in the house of Hashem." According to this young man's fancy, flourishing in the house of Hashem means to repose with calm spirit on "lush meadows" beside "tranquil waters" [Tehillim 23] delighting in the *yetzer hatov*, in the manner of the righteous delighting in the reflection of the *Shechina*, with crowns on their heads, gathered in Gan Eden. And at the same time, untroubled by the agitation of the *yetzer hora*, along the lines of the verse "Free among the dead" [Tehillim 88:6].

Know, however, my dear friend, that your soul is rooted not in the TRANQUILITY of the *yetzer tov*, but rather in the BATTLE of the *yetzer tov*. And your precious, warm-hearted letter "testifies as one hundred witnesses" that you are a worthy warrior in the battalion of the *yetzer tov*. The English expression, "Lose a battle and win a war"

applies. Certainly, you have stumbled and will tumble again (a self-fulfilling prophecy is not intended) and in many battles you will fall lame. I promise you, though, that after those losing campaigns you will emerge from the war with the laurels of victory upon your head and with the fresh prey quivering between your teeth. Lose battles but win wars.

The wisest of all men has said, "A just man falls seven times and rises again" [Mishlei 24:16]. Fools believe the intent of this verse is to teach us something remarkable—the just man has fallen seven times and yet he rises. But the knowledgeable are aware that the essence of the *tzaddik's* rising again is by way of his seven falls. "'And He saw all that he had made and behold, it was very good.' 'Good': that is the *yetzer tov*. 'Very good': that is the *yetzer horah*." [Bereishis Rabah 9]

* * *

My cherished one, I clasp you to my heart, and whisper in your ear that had your letter reported on your *mitzvos* and good deeds, I would have said that I had received a good letter from you. As things stand, with your letter telling of slumps and falls and obstacles, I say that I have received a *very* good letter from you. Your spirit is storming as it aspires to greatness. I beg of you, do not portray for yourself great men as being as one with their *yetzer tov*. Picture rather their greatness in terms of an awesome war with every base and low inclination.

When you feel the turmoil of the *yetzer* within yourself, know that with that feeling you resemble great men far more than with the feeling of deep peace, which you desire. In those very areas where you feel yourself falling most frequently—particularly in those areas—do you have the greatest potential for serving as an instrument of distinction for the honor of Hashem.

conflicts, problems, and doubts. One has only to read letter 101 to relive the altogether unique *simcha* and inspiration of a *mesibas Succos* with the Rosh Yeshiva זצ"ל; one has only to read letter 94 to recall the articulated perspective from which he permitted or encouraged some of his *talmidim* to undertake careers for their *par-nasa* (livelihood); one has only to read letter 128 to appreciate anew the passion, the wisdom and the sensitivity that the Rosh Yeshiva זצ"ל employed in spurring a falter-

ing young student encountering obstacles on his way towards *gadlus*. A re-reading of the series of letters sent over the years to the alumni of Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin (letters 64-70) provides a historic reminder of the milestones in the development of the Rosh Yeshiva זצ"ל's plans for Torah dissemination. One has only to read a random sampling of these letters in order to recall that the *yira*—the awe—for *k'vod haTorah* that the Rosh Yeshiva זצ"ל instilled into us and with which he welled up

Encouragement to an Individual

... Let me now pinpoint the moment in the recent past to which my memory returns. The time is one of the evenings of *Chol HaMoed Succos*. ... The event is the gathering for *Simchas Bais HaShoeva*. The place is a spacious *succa* full of celebrating people, on a high roof top distant and apart from the people below. ...

The interior of the *succa* is full with the melody of intimate tunes aimed at the crux of the G-dly spirit which resides in the soul. One of the songs is a wondrous blend of a majestic melody with the words of "*Achas Shoalti* (One thing I ask)." The melody flowing from the violin and the words flowing from the mouth rise together to their climax in profound emotion at the words "... That I dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of my life; to behold the delights of Hashem and to meditate in his sanctuary."

My glance happened to fall on the face of the individual to whom you are related—"as an individual is related to himself,"—and the face was full of tears. It was nothing new to me to see tears on your face. I have seen you thus so many times. At those occasions, however, there was no one present but the two of us, and the discussion concerned those moments of distress that came and went in your life to which I was a party.

But those tears of the *Simchas Bais HaShoeva*—those tears that dripped and flowed before the entire assemblage—were of a different category entirely. Just as it is possible to draw water from a pitcher, or from a river, or from a fountainhead, so it is possible for tears to come from a "pitcher" of the soul, or a "river" of the soul, or a fountainhead of the soul. As you are aware, *Simchas Bais HaShoeva* is only celebrated when water is drawn from a fountainhead. It was plain to see that your tears then at the *Simchas Bais HaShoeva* were drawn from the fountainhead of your soul.

And wonder of wonders! Those tears transformed the skin ["*or*" with an "*Ayin*"] of your face to the light ["*or*" with an "*Aleph*"] of your face. I have never seen so concrete an example of the grammatical rule that an "*Ayin*" and an "*Aleph*" may be interchanged!

If your memory serves you, you have certainly not forgotten that at that moment I caressed your face with my finger, before the entire assemblage. Come, I will reveal to you the intent of my caress. My desire in touching was to transform the abstract light into something concrete, something touchable by the fingers. Did I succeed in my caress? You must answer that. ...

in us so spontaneously and with so much warmth.

"Scaling the Peaks of His Greatness"

For the opportunity of using this volume to learn more about the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל, this apparent paradox between our awe of and our love for him, is surely highly relevant. It is in the nature of *Klal Yisroel*, out of its love for Torah and its standard-bearers, to consider its *Gedolim* as something like national—and therefore wholly public—resources. There is no facet of a *gadol's* life that is not the object of intense interest. תורה היא וללמוד את צריכים ("It is Torah and we must learn.") Every aspect of a *gadol's* life is the embodiment of Torah, and seems thus the legitimate focus of studious scrutiny. The corollary of this intense interest seems to be the tendency for some to believe that it is a relatively simple matter to evaluate the *gadol*. Without oneself having attained the peaks scaled by the *gadol*, it is believed entirely feasible to describe those peaks in complete detail. It is doubtful whether anyone, even those who were fortunate enough to maintain the closest of contact with the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל, would be prepared to claim such complete understanding. The heights scaled by the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל were, we well knew, shrouded from us by a mist of *yiras hakavod* (awe)—at the very time that he both radiated and inspired *ahava* without bounds.

Distaste For Public Position

In a letter (number 186) the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל expresses a deep distaste for having to fill any public, official position. "Believe me," he wrote (according to a loose translation), "if it were possible for me to pursue my work in spreading Torah, ... without having to bear the seal of an official position—I would be enjoying the best of both worlds." Only after repeated attempts to avoid such public visibility, he continues, did he conclude that contemporary circumstances make this an impossibility. It is surely in fullest consistency with this revelation that we knew the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל to guard his privacy with tenacity. (In letter 198 he writes, in reference to a forthcoming visit to *Eretz Yisroel*, according to a loose translation: "... within the bounds of the possible I guard my privacy as I would a treasure precious beyond all measure.")

And if there were two things that the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל abhorred absolutely, these were surely the deployment of the modern tools of propaganda, and engaging in the slightest forms of *chanifa* (flattery). He saw propaganda as both antithetical to and unnecessary for the spread of Torah (see letter 85, p. 159). His abhorrence of *chanifa* is given expression in letter 188. Together, these passionately held beliefs and safeguards protected the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל's cherished privacy. (Even his public *maamotrim* were in many years published only in a form intended for those who had heard them in his own *beis*

hamidrash. And since the publication of the first volumes of the set of *Sifrei Pachad Yitzchok*, none have been offered for sale through commercial channels. They have all been—as is the present volume—available only through the office of the Yeshiva.) We, the *talmidim* of his *beis hamidrash*, seldom permitted our *ahava* (love) to overcome our *yira* (awe) to the extent that we dared pierce the veil of that privacy. That the peaks of Torah and *avoda* scaled by the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל whether in *halacha* or in *Aggada*, in *ahava* or in *yira*, were beyond our comprehension, was apparent to us in countless ways; that we might see more of his own life's goals, dreams and achievements then he chose to permit us to glimpse, never seemed even remotely possible.

"The Veil is Maintained"

רצון יראיו יעשה ("He performs the will of those who fear Him.") This volume, while revealing more than many perhaps knew, never tears aside the veil of privacy that the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל was so concerned to maintain. We are grateful for the few letters (including diary entries), eloquent in the lyrical quality of their prose, preserved from the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל's early years in Slabodka and in *Eretz Yisroel*. One notes that letters here (numbers 177, 191) confirm the authorship by the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל of the extensive and erudite glosses on the Rabbeinu Hillel on the *Sifra*, hitherto published anonymously. We are grateful for numerous additional insights gained from this volume. But in the end, the privacy of the Rosh



The Jewish Observer / December, 1981

To an Individual Embarking on a Career

... I do not need to tell you that I have never, under any circumstances, consented to a double life. . . .

I recall my visit to the hospital of Dr. Wallach (Shaarei Tzeddek) in Yerushalayim when I saw him approaching the bed of a patient about to enter the operating room. Dr. Wallach asked the patient the name of his mother so he could pray for him before the operation. When I related this incident to one of the great men of Yerushalayim, he exclaimed, "How envious one must be of this Jew, who has such marvelous opportunities to serve as an instrument for the honor of Hashem!"

Tell me the truth, my dear friend: Does the doctor's reciting *Tehillim* on behalf of the well-being of a patient about to enter the operating room constitute a double life?

And you, my cherished one, Heaven forbid that you turn double vision on yourself and see yourself leading a double life. "Whoever prolongs the 'Echad' [of *Shma*] has his days and years prolonged." To the contrary, your entire life should be as one who prolongs the "Echad"—unified, and not double. . . .

A multitude of points scattered, one under the other, certainly has the quality of disunity; but that same multitude of points arranged around a central point is ONE circle.

This, my friend, is your obligation: put the "Echad" at the center of your life, and do not at all concern yourself with duality. Each new "point" you acquire will but extend the circle, without disturbing its integrity. . . .

Translation of the letters is by Eliakim Willner, a talmid of Rabbi Hutner ז"ל.

Yeshiva ז"ל is left uncompromised. The כבוד (honor) of חקור דבר (investigative search) is overwhelmed by the חסתר דבר (seclusion).

A theme repeated in this volume (letters 87, 180) is the lesson drawn from Chazal that the Torah expounded by a *gadol* during his lifetime acquires a new degree of permanency after his passing from this world. At the close of the first year after the passing of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל, as we complete our year-long shattering calculation of what we have lost, we are grateful for the great disciples of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל, left to us בחסדו יתברך to help achieve this enhanced degree of permanency. For sharing these precious letters and writings with us—and for the painstaking task of producing so outstanding an edition—the family of the Rosh Yeshiva ז"ל have surely won our profound gratitude. י

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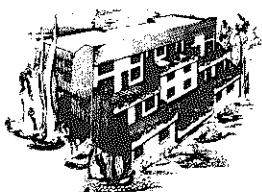
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"This one is different. I understand all my other children, but this one is a puzzle."

"He is so different from my others. He stands out like a sore thumb."

"I can't really believe she is one of my children. She is so different from all the others. She behaves so oddly at times."

"The others are all good in school ... maybe not brilliant ... but all good—but this one is just not like the others."

"All my others learn so easily—no frustration—but my son finds *everything* hard. That's not so surprising since he can't really read well at all, and just about everything he has to do in school depends on reading."

"Mrs. W., I'd like to conference with you about your son, Moshe. We're having problems with him in school—he's so different from his classmates. We're just not reaching him."

"Rabbi D., please come for a conference with your son's Rebbe. We just don't know if we can handle him anymore. You *know* he has a *kriah* problem, and now that he's in the third grade and can't really keep up, he's becoming the class clown and is disturbing all the others."

"Dr. N., your daughter is a sweet girl, but she is different and we're not sure she really belongs in our Yeshiva. She day-dreams constantly, she's totally disorganized, she always forgets her homework if she does it at all, and it seems to me that she's becoming somewhat depressed. That's not surprising if we consider that she's probably at least two years behind the rest of her class."

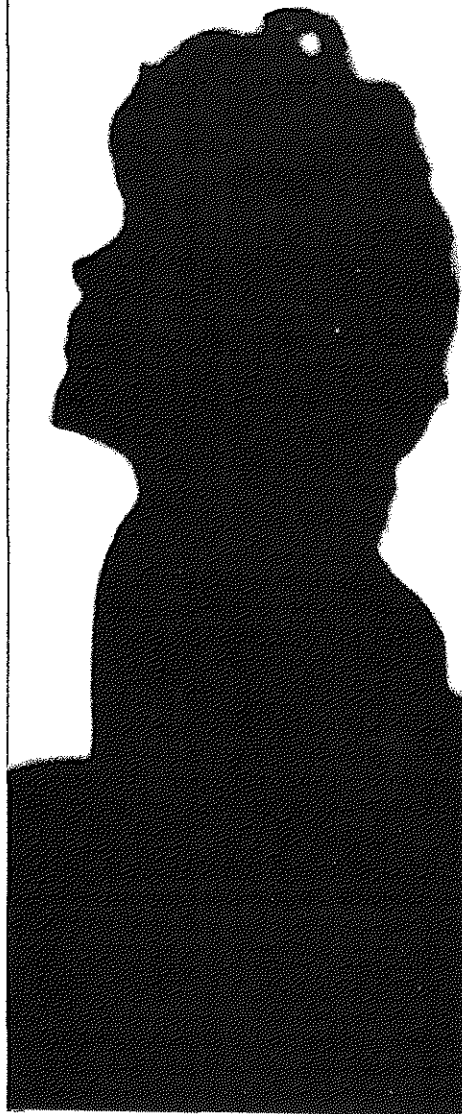
"I don't know what to do with my Dovid. He's *not* stupid, he's not sick, he's *not* different if you just look at him—but he can't read... he can't keep up in class, and I *mamish* don't know what to do."

Helene Ribowsky, M.S., is an educational consultant to Yeshivos, and has a private practice as a learning disabilities specialist. She is the co-founder and first principal of the Jewish Center of Special Education.

THE DIFFERENT ONES

A Real Story Told in Unattributed Quotes

by Helene Ribowsky



"Where should I put him? What Yeshiva is going to be willing to work with a child who really needs one-to-one attention? How is he ever going to catch up if he can't even read yet?"

"Is it my fault? I'm *frum* and I want all my children in a Yeshiva. I don't want my Yussie to be different. I want him to get a Torah education just like my others. What am I supposed to do? I have sick *kinderlach*, and I just haven't got the money to take a private Rebbe."

"Mrs. W., I just don't have an *aitza* for you. We can't keep Moshe. You have to appreciate my position. The other parents have rights too. They want *their* children in an organized classroom with a high level of learning. You can't expect them to sit idly by while your son absorbs the Rebbe's attention."

"I know that he's normal. I *know* that he's terrific in sports and that he has an ear for music. That's just terrific. When I go to *shul* each week and everyone's talking about his son's progress in *Mishnayos* or *Gemorrah*, I'll tell that my son hit three homers in his last game. Really, Rachel, you're asking too much of me. Let's face it. He's different—and I haven't found the words yet to describe our problem. Why were we *geshtrufed* with this problem?"

"You, Chana, are responsible for Shimi's problem. I tell you—I also raised children. I raised you and your brothers, and I tell you that there's nothing wrong with Shimi. He's perfectly normal. He's a boy! You should have seen what your brothers were like. Don't you remember the time Yitzi ran away from school. What a character! Shimi is just a lively child. He'll read a little later. You're making yourself *meshugah* over this learning disability-shmearning disability nonsense. You hear a new word and right away you have to be in style. He'll outgrow it, you'll see."

"Do you think I'm overreacting, Label? Am I causing the problem? My mother says it's me—and *your* mother also thinks I should have my

head examined. But how can I ignore Eli's problems? He's miserable in school. He just sits there not accomplishing anything. What's the future to be if we don't help him? I know that there were always kids that were *shlepped* along in school. Everyone had someone like that in class. But I don't want him to just *shlep*. I want him to learn—and he *can* do it. When we had him tested, everyone agreed that his potential is greater than what he is doing now, and that he could definitely do better if he were taught differently."

"Yes, of course we have heard that there is such a thing as special education for Yeshiva children. We are not living in a different world, Mrs. W. We know it exists—but our Yeshiva will not—no, make it cannot—cannot undertake the added expense of any kind of special program. We're having enough trouble keeping *ourselves* alive. I suggest you use private tutoring for Levi... Yes, I know it's expensive... Yes, I know that all your boys have always attended our Yeshiva... Mrs. W., I don't know what to tell you. I feel with you, believe me I do, but I can't help you."

"Sora, what's this I hear about you considering a special program for your Malkele? Listen to me, maybe your friends won't advise you honestly, but as your older sister, I feel that I *must* make you aware of what you'll be doing. She's nine now—but how many years away do you think it is before she'll be ready for a *shidduch*?... No, no, don't fly off the handle... Be realistic! There were plenty of girls in my day in school who just occupied space and it didn't hurt them. They're married, they're happy... How do I know they're happy? I don't go on visits to check, Sora, but they have families, friends—everything that normal people have. So Malkele won't *learn*—but at least nobody will label her."

"She'll be an outcast. The whole family will be shamed. We are a *chushuva* family, and we certainly never had any of these problems on our

side. Can't you just stop *tummeling* about the whole thing? Dress her nicely and teach her to smile and she'll get along fine. But a special class? That would be a *Geferleche Shandeh*!"

"Mommy, Mommy, please don't make me go to school. Please! Please! My stomach hurts, and I feel so sick. I can't go to school. I hate it! My Rebbe doesn't like me and my teacher makes fun of me."

"Tatti, why do all the other kids laugh when I read?"

"Zaide, do you love me? Do you really love me? Could you tell me why I'm different—why don't I have any friends? Why do they call me 'Shmichi' instead of 'Simshi'?"

"Your son is clearly demonstrating developmental delay, compounded by dyslexia, disnomia and difficulties within the hierarchical structure of associative psycholinguistics. He is quite obviously in need of compensatory services geared toward overcoming his attentional deficit disorder. You realize, of course, that all this is probably due to minimal brain dysfunction. He will clearly not benefit from the dual rigors of a Yeshiva program. The choice is yours, Mr. & Mrs. T., but, as a professional, I can only advise you that the best place for him is in a public school."

"But... but... but, Dr., we're Orthodox. What do those words mean that you said? What is dyslexia? Does this mean that my Reuven can never learn if he stays in Yeshiva? I know you're busy, but couldn't you just explain a little more about his problem? It sounds so scary. I don't really understand what you said. He just didn't look that bad to me..."

"Mommy... Ma!... Mommy! My friends are coming over this *Shabbos*. Can't you hide Malky? She's so nutty, and I'm ashamed. My friends think she's cuckoo. She drives me crazy... I don't care if she doesn't have any friends because she goes to public school. That's the *whole* point. She's so different. Why do I have to have a sister with a

learning disability?"

"Label, I don't have the strength anymore. It feels as if the whole world is against us. No yeshiva wants to take him in, our parents won't help, our friends are brusque or overpolite, the psychologist at the hospital scares me... I have no one to turn to—no one who seems to understand. Sometimes, I just need to know that there is another *frum* human being who knows what we're going through. Are we the only ones? Were we singled out?"

"Emah, Abah, look! My teacher taught me a trick and I don't mix up the *Bais* and the *Vais* anymore. If it has a *pintele*, you *push* out the sound 'B' real hard. It's a *push pintele*. It's so much fun to learn—and I got a prize because she said I was so smart... I'm not so stupid now, am I?"

"Tatti, Mommy. I got an 80 on my *Chumash* test. I remembered all the words after I heard them on my tape recorder so many times last night. My Rebbe smiled at me."

"I have to admit, Rachel. He's a different child now that we got him the special attention he needed. So much calmer and happier. Even if he weren't actually learning, it's worth it because he became a *mentch* again. I just wish that you wouldn't have had to go to work for this. It's been so hard on you—running a home and working—staying up every night till one and two o'clock. A child with a learning disability in the *frum* world needs a rich father. I'm sorry, Rachele, that I can't bring in enough to cover the expenses and that you have to work so hard."

"Tatti, you can love me now. I'm not so different. I can read. I can *daven* in a *Siddur*. You can be proud of me."

* * *

Learning disabilities. Many questions, many issues. A societal problem for which there are no simple solutions. We must, however, become aware, as a concern appropriately labeled "the least we can do," of how complex the problem is when some Yeshiva children do not fit into the highly competitive class-

rooms into which we place *most* of our children. It is readily understood that academic and emotional problems exist among even children who are simply not the above average achievers who confidently handle the multi-faceted Yeshiva curriculum. It should therefore require far less fertile imaginative powers to conjure up the mental picture of the kinds of anguish faced by youngsters who do, indeed, have specific learning disabilities. These are the children who, though of average intelligence, encounter difficulties primarily in academic areas, but who often have underlying problems such as distractibility, short attention spans, language processing deficits, memory problems, disorganization and perceptual problems. There is no such thing as a *typical* learning disabled child, for each child presents his or her own unique pattern—and so, there is no such thing as a “one size fits all” program

of remediation. The crucial aspect, however, is that special educational approaches *do* work.

Learning disabled youngsters, though they may not look different, *are* different in their needs for individualized approaches to instruction. They *can* learn and they *can* achieve, but through different pathways for learning and within their own time schedules. Traditional time frameworks for curriculum coverage simply do not apply.

Learning disabled children can contribute to our society, but not if we reject them as lesser people. They can be ignored, and will blend into masses of *shidduched* but unhappy and secretly-ashamed people (if we are lucky), but at enormous cost to the mental health of present and future generations. Dangers of isolation and assimilation are frighteningly inherent in this problem, and we cannot afford the loss of even one *neshama* to *Am Yisroel*. Sure-

ly, too, *halachic* questions abound concerning the serious transgression of neglecting the *chinuch* of some of our youngsters because they are more difficult to teach.

The yeshivos would like to help (those who admit to the need), but are in serious financial straits. It is becoming difficult for all yeshivos to continue in face of spiraling inflation and reduced governmental aid.

Families would like to talk about their problems and seek community support, but are afraid of ostracism or embarrassment.

And yet, what does one answer the little seven year old who, through eyes watery with unshed tears, looks at his *Aleph-Bais* text and says in a low, anguished voice—painful to hear in one so young—“Please help me read . . . take me to a doctor so he can make me read. I don’t want to be different. I want to grow up to be a *Rebbe* and *daven* like my Tatti.”

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Hashem's Special Children— A Communal Responsibility

Lester R. Kaufman

Hundreds of Children Forcefully Removed from Jewish Community. Thousands More Believed in Jeopardy of Further Government Action.

If these headlines were to appear in the news media, the Jewish community would be in an uproar. A major campaign would be mounted by all national Jewish organizations. A legal battle would be waged to protect the religious liberties of these children. Street demonstrations would be launched against the perpetrators of such a crime, and our Jewish newspapers would headline the story as it progressed. How is it possible that in America in the 1980's such a tragedy could take place right under our very eyes? How could we not have known in advance that such a threat was lurking? Could we have done anything to save these children for whom it is now too late? Who will accept responsibility for allowing the loss of so many Jewish souls?

The frightful aspect of this scenario is that it is not fiction! Children who live next door or around the corner from each and every one of us in Jewish communities throughout the country are being lost forever to *Yiddishkeit*. In many instances, these children come from fully committed Orthodox families where the parents are active in Jewish communal life and the siblings of these children attend the finest Yeshivos. The reason the above headlines never appeared is because these children were not taken away in one single dramatic sweep, but rather through a constant silent flow of tragic actions.

Who Are These Children?

The "children" of whom we are speaking may be either minors or adults, chronologically speaking. What

Lester R. Kaufman ACSW is the Executive Director of Ohel Children's Home, the major agency within the Orthodox Community serving the needs of disabled children and adults. He is also the National President of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists, Past President of its Mental Health/Behavioral Science Section, and Past Chairman of the Board of the Health Systems Agency of New York City for the Boro Park/Bensonhurst region.



The fear that the disabled child's handicap will "rub off" or unduly influence our own children is unfounded. Quite the contrary, the midos (character traits) we demonstrate to our normal children by reaching out to all human beings including the disabled can exert a highly potent positive influence on them.

makes them all children, however, is that they must confront life without the usual complement of capabilities that G-d gave the rest of us. They are our children who have either physical, developmental or emotional disabilities. Physical disabilities include impairments of sight, hearing, movement and the nervous system (i.e. spinal bifida, cerebral palsy, brain damage, etc.). Developmental disabilities is a cross categorical term but commonly refers to conditions such as mental retardation, learning disabilities, language impairments, and the like. Emotional disabilities refer to disturbances of feeling or behavior and may be caused by organic or emotional factors. They include such conditions as neurosis, personality disorder, schizophrenia, and depression.



These disabilities may range from those that are mild—and therefore largely invisible to all but those closely involved with the child—to severe, where intensive treatment is necessary to maintain the child. Furthermore, some individuals have a combination of the above stated types of disabilities because of environmental factors such as severe chaotic and conflicting family situations, traumatic separations and/or neglect of their basic human needs.

What a Pity!

This is the point at which it is tempting to stop reading this article. *We all have our own problems and it is certainly not pleasant to read about others' miseries. After all, don't we pay professionals who have the constitution and the training to take care of these poor children?* Unfortunately, it is just such attitudes

that have given rise to the present state of affairs in our own committed Jewish community.

Let us go back again to the issue of who these children are. First and foremost, they are human beings created as the rest of us—*B'Tzelem Elokim*, in the Image of G-d. Hence, in the scale of Jewish values, the importance of their lives is not to be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders. Their disabilities are not of their own making, and there is no reason to saddle them with blame for their predicament. Rather it is our job to accept what G-d has given and do our best to enhance, to its fullest potential, that which He has made. Almost all of these children have a sufficient amount of understanding to experience their Jewish *neshamos* and are as obligated in the performance of *mitzvos* as any of us. Indeed, many of these children have full intellectual abilities. As for those who are *shotim*—halachically not considered responsible—they, too, deserve to receive basic care and to have the ongoing concern of a loving family that will exercise concern for their welfare.

Pity or ingratiating attitudes are also not being sought. "Special" is not just used as a euphemism to avoid the stigma of despair and suffering. Parents and others who know these children see that there really is something special in a positive sense about these children, more than with average children. Whether it is their extra dependency that fosters a closeness with others who care about them, their greater appreciation of all that they do have or can achieve, or just the absence of social pretensions which add the elements of deceit and selfishness to personality, these children do have an inner beauty that is truly unique. In other words, once the child's disability has been accepted, caring for the child can be every bit as fulfilling as caring for any other child, if not more so.

"Bracha" in Disguise?

If the special child is such a *bracha*, why do so many parents of disabled children seem to be carrying such a great burden? Obviously, because much more is required to meet the needs of special children. More than with average children, special children require a greater breaking down of tasks into their most elementary components. Also required is persistence, consistency of approach, repetition, and above all, infinite patience, understanding and encouragement. Simple tasks of everyday living often become major undertakings. The

services of professionals from numerous disciplines—such as medicine, special education, psychology, rehabilitation and social work—must be involved to link the child with the various educational and treatment approaches that hold the most promise. The parent also faces the extra financial strain of the cost of these treatments, special schools, and camps. In addition, there is a host of worries. On the one hand, the parents are bothered by the gnawing question of whether they are doing enough for the child. On the other hand, they worry about neglecting the other children in the family, an aging parent, or the marriage itself, all of which can compete with the needs of the special child. The task can be exhausting and demoralizing, to say the least. How easy it is for parents to break in face of all these obstacles, feeling that only the strongest can manage and still lead full lives of their own.



Handicap or Disability?

We have not used the word handicapped as yet because there is an important distinction to be made. Disabilities are innate to the individual. They are the "given" from which we start and which also define the limits of capacity. A fully blind child will never have his own sight, nor will a retarded child ever acquire additional intelligence. There are parameters within which the individual may progress, but dreams about transcending reasonable parameters are fantasies which sometimes cause parents to go searching for the "wonder cure" that doesn't exist. In contrast to disability, however, handicaps are obstacles that society in its insensitivity places before the disabled, making their way even more difficult. Orthopedically disabled persons can travel only if public transportation systems are designed with their needs in mind. Learning disabled individuals can learn to master deficit subject areas if special aids and learning methods are applied to help them compensate.

Most important, however, are the negative attitudes often operating on a subconscious level that the rest of society has toward the disabled, which seem to box

them in and keep them more different than they need be. Setting up negative expectations, rejecting all behaviors, expressions, or feelings that do not conform to given norms, focusing in on differences rather than similarities, and refusing to accept people with disabilities as unique individuals each able to contribute to society in his own ways and within his own abilities—these are all attitudes that isolate the disabled from the rest of the community, foster an exaggerated image of gross abnormality, and create an attitude of needless fear and anxiety. It is these negative attitudes toward the disabled that sometimes cause parents in our community to hide, experience guilt and shame, and seek to run away from the issues they must confront to implement effective ameliorative efforts. They also explain why people sometimes reject the establishment of group homes, which provide the only opportunity for



the disabled to live their lives to the maximum potential as fully participating members of our Jewish community rather than as regimented robots in cold institutions. These attitudes are contrary to Torah spirit. In addition, they tend to make the disabled a burden on society, which they need not be. Only by accepting the disabled as people with feelings, desires and goals to accomplish in life can we help these people realize their potential.

In fact, it is most important to avoid labeling a child as "different" or abnormal, for the mere label itself often becomes the basis for parents, professionals, school, or community to give up. Specific labels are important in as much as they permit professionals to properly diagnose a problem for the purpose of treatment. Nevertheless, these labels should not be used to exclude a child from an environment to which he might be capable of responding. As many opportunities as possible should be extended to special children to participate in activities with other children through integration in yeshiva, shul, youth groups and any other aspect of Jewish life. It is true that it may take more effort, more planning, more patience and sometimes even more than the usual resources to accomplish this, but the vast majority of the disabled can be integrated into many activities with others. To turn our faces and avoid contact is harmful to ourselves as well as to the disabled.

The fear that the disabled child's handicap will "rub off" or unduly influence our own children is unfounded. Quite the contrary, the *midos* (character traits) we demonstrate to our normal children by reaching out to all human beings including the disabled can exert a highly potent positive influence on them.

In the final analysis, who is to say what is "normal"? The world's people are not divided categorically into normal and abnormal groupings. None of us is perfect, and in that sense, we all have types of disabilities of one sort or another. As we live our lives, various types of disabilities may be acquired or shed. Disabilities run on a single continuum, which includes all of us.

A Communal Response

The Orthodox Jewish Community is in a unique position vis-a-vis dealing with the disabled. Because our shared values, commitments and life styles are so different from those of the larger American culture, we are always in the position of having to create responses to our own community's problems from within, so they can be tailor-made to our special needs and promote our religious purposes. Hence, just as a public school could never be the answer to educating our "normal" children, so also a non-Jewish institution, residence, foster home, or special school can never be the solution to providing for our disabled. Since we cannot rely on the solutions others have devised and we cannot take advantage of their services, the responsibility for the Torah community to respond is that much greater. As Hillel stated, "If I will not be for myself, who will be for me?" (*Avos* I: 14).

Recent court decisions and legislative actions on the American scene have for the first time highlighted the rights of disabled individuals—to live in the least restrictive environment, to receive equal opportunities to education, to have free access to public services, and to be free from discrimination in the workplace, higher education, housing and the like. These decisions have begun to have a major impact on making the disabled more

visible in American society and creating sensitivity on the part of others to their needs. No longer need the disabled be handicapped, isolated, or enveloped by fear, rejection and shame. We who live in accordance with the Torah, however, do not require court decisions or legal acts to direct us in our responsibilities for others. These concepts are implicit in the Torah, and it is our responsibility as the modern bearers of our eternal tradition to translate these ideals into realities. Rather than follow American society, our Torah equips us with the guidance to be in the forefront of progressive treatment and humanitarian care for every human being. We cannot afford to do less as Jewish souls are being lost each day, awaiting for us to awaken to our responsibilities to them.

Accepting the disabled as people with feelings and goals in life will help them realize their potential.



On Accepting Disabilities:

1. Accept our children who have disabilities with a warm heart and seek to integrate them into our yeshivos, shuls, youth groups and other community and neighborhood activities whenever possible.
2. Help Jewish agencies to provide preventive and support services to families—such as counseling, homemakers, medical services, tutors, and respite care so families can keep themselves whole wherever possible.
3. Support special education schools and supplemental programs that aim to couple modern effective techniques with a strong commitment to providing Torah education for all children.
4. Support the establishment of Torah-sponsored group homes for the disabled in every community and help their residents feel welcome.
5. Open your hearts and homes to Jewish children who are in need of foster homes and those who are in danger of being lost forever if no Jewish family is able to provide them with a permanent home through adoption.

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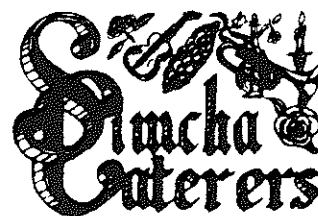
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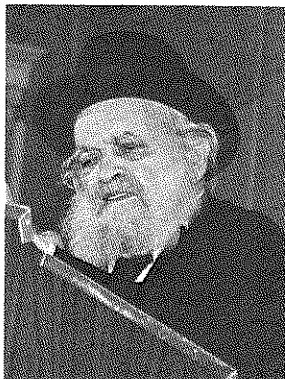
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Gems from the Roshei Hayeshiva

The National Convention of Agudath Israel of America offers an enviable opportunity to spend time in the presence of Gedolei Yisroel, to hear their explanations of Torah passages from the week's Sidra and to learn from the way they apply Torah principles to contemporary issues.

We present with pride excerpts from the addresses given by senior Roshei Hayeshiva at the most recent convention, in their order of presentation.



A Time To See and Be Seen

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky שליט"א customarily speaks at Shalosh Seudos at the Convention when he engages the entire assemblage in an intimate conversation, as it were. The following is culled from his remarks on that occasion.

I. Yahrzeit—a Milestone

The convention *Shabbos*, 2 Kislev, coincides with the nineteenth anniversary of the passing of the great Rosh Yeshiva, founder of Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, NJ, and chairman of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages of Agudath Israel of America), Rabbi Aaron Kotler זצ"ל. The significance of a *Yahrzeit* is explained by the *gaonim* (7th to 11th Century leaders), as cited in Rashi's commentary on the *Gemora* (*Yevamos* 122a). Rashi interprets the term *regel*, which usually refers to the three pilgrimage festivals, as a *Yahrzeit* and describes it as a time that scholars convene in a day of contemplation at the gravesite of the deceased. A *Yahrzeit*, then, is similar to a *regel*: On the *regalim* a Jew is commanded "*liros veleira'os—to see and be seen—*" by G-d. That is, he is commanded to visit the *Beis Hamikdosh* and witness the *avoda* (priestly service) there, which inspires him with awe before G-d. In addition, the pilgrim views himself as being observed, scrutinized by G-d, who examines a man from the inside out, rather than by a mere surface inspection.

Similarly, on the *Yahrzeit* of a great man, a *talmid* should picture himself as if on a pilgrimage. He should envision himself standing before this spiritual giant, and ask himself: "What would he be doing today? How would he identify the problems of the times, and how would he be responding to them? What would he demand of us?" Then he should visualize himself in the "*leira'os*" position: "How would the Rebbe view me? Would he find me living up to my potential? How would he fault me?" One can be sure that even weeks before such an intense examination, a person would hesitate to commit a sin, no matter how minor, for how would he then be able to stand up under the great man's scrutiny—and now under his own scathing introspection? In this respect, a *Yahrzeit* is a *regel*—a time "to see and be seen."

II. Learning From Reb Aaron—As a Colleague and a Disputant

On his *Yahrzeit*, we must picture Reb Aaron before us. While others remember him as their *rebbe*, their mentor, my relationship with Reb Aaron was as a colleague—usually on the same side on issues, but occasionally as opponents. A plea for peace in our ranks has been expressed here.* Perhaps there's a lesson to be learned on how to wage a battle and still preserve peace from the way Reb Aaron fought and still maintained a peaceful relationship with his opponents.

* Rabbi Perlow, Novominsker Rebbe, on Friday evening (after *Kabbolas Shabbos*) issued an impassioned plea for *Shalom* in Orthodox ranks: It is impossible to dissociate yourself from the battles raging among different factions within Orthodoxy. The bitterness of their disputes not only reflects on us, it taints us directly as members of one large Torah community. We must do what we can to achieve peace in our ranks.

A "Yahrzeit"
like a
pilgrimage
festival

a time
to see
and
be seen

Hillel And Shammai differed strongly in their interpretation of Torah law. For example, a specific leverite marriage** mandated by the Torah according to Shammai, is forbidden by Hillel, with the children of such a union *mamzeirim*. Yet, this did not by any means result in the splitting of the two, Bais Shammai and Bais Hillel, into separate communities. To the contrary, marriages between the two took place, but before any such union was contemplated, one would inform the other, "So-and-so is forbidden in marriage to a member of your group." Respect and affection prevailed in spite of diametrically opposed views.

dispute
without
animosity

Reb Aaron and I had grown up together. Eighty years ago, when we were children in Minsk, he had visited my home, and so impressed all who saw him that my mother later asked me, "Who's that boy? The *Shechina* (Divine presence) rests upon him!" . . . We were together in Slobodka . . . When I was *rav* in Toronto, during World War II, Reb Aaron was instrumental in bringing me to Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn. . . . Yet we fought each other bitterly on some issues.

In the early years of Israel's statehood, the government had set up four different education tracks: two were secular, the third was run by the Mizrachi, and the fourth—*Zerem Revi'i*—consisted of the traditional Talmud Torahs and *chadorim*, primarily located in Jerusalem, where the overwhelming amount of time was devoted to religious studies. In 1953, the government decided to consolidate this system into only two streams—*mamlachti* (secular) and *mamlachti dati* (religious), with the schools in the latter system comparatively weaker in Torah spirit. In response, Reb Aaron (with *Gedolei Torah* in *Eretz Yisroel*) undertook the founding of the Chinuch Atzmai Torah School System to teach Torah to children across the countryside. I had felt that since there were limits to our resources of energy and funds, the emphasis should be placed on the existing schools in the Tashbar network, as the single repository of pure, unadulterated Torah study. By contrast, Reb Aaron strongly advocated supporting the Chinuch Atzmai Schools as the item of first priority. In spite of our fierce disagreement, our close friendship was not affected. . . . In the interim, I visited *Eretz Yisroel* and it became obvious to me that Chinuch Atzmai was crucial to saving the broad masses of *Klal Yisroel* in *Eretz Yisroel*. Without Chinuch Atzmai, Torah would be relegated to a *vinkel*—ghettoized, totally isolated from the mainstream of life in Israel. Since our dispute was untouched by personal animosity, it was not difficult for me to state publicly that I was wrong and Reb Aaron was right: the emphasis must be on Chinuch Atzmai.

Reb Aaron
and I:
intimates
and
disputants

the
emphasis
must be on
Chinuch Atzmai

Stronger in opposition to Reb Aaron—and on many more issues—was the Satmar Rav זצ"ל. Yet at Reb Aaron's funeral, the Satmar Rav wept for his passing, underscoring the praise of "אחרן, שלא שינה" (quoting a Rashi in *Beha'alos'cha*) Aaron who did not deviate in the least from his tradition," even though it was different from his own tradition.

"Aaron
did not
deviate"

Indeed, the disputes between Chassidic leaders, as between different *Gedolei Yisroel* in general, had always been on issues, untouched with personal venom. Only their followers injected the personal dimension. . . . As a matter of fact, the Satmar Rebbe delivered his first Torah address in America in the *beis midrash* of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, even though the yeshiva represented an approach far

** צרת ערוה

doctrinal
differences
with
honor

removed from Satmar. . . . And the Klausenberger Rebbe, too, gave his first *shiur* in America in the very same hall. Neither the guests nor the "host," Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, saw the differences in doctrinal approach as reason not to honor one another.

III. Meeting Klal Needs—With Ma'aser

not
a gentleman
at tzeddaka's
expense

Chinuch Atzmai is in desperate need of funds, as are all of our Torah institutions. In the Torah reading ("Toldos"), an allusion is made to the obligation of tithing—taking *ma'aser**, in terms of Yitzchok giving a tenth of the land's produce to charity. In the previous generation (as recounted in "*Lech Lecha*"), Avrohom had also separated *ma'aser*—having given Malkitzeddek the *Kohein* a tenth of the booty gained in his battle with the four kings, which he had waged to save Lot. When the king of Sodom requested of Avrohom, "Give me the people, and take the material possessions for yourself," Avrohom refused to keep anything whatsoever. He would not enrich himself from the property of Sodom—not with "a bit of string nor a shoelace." All went back to the King of Sodom. Yet he did not hesitate to hold on to the tenth that he had separated as *ma'aser* and had turned over to Malkitzeddek. This was not an inconsistency on Avrohom's part. By right, all the booty was truly his, and by the same token, the obligation to tithe was also binding on him from the moment the property entered his domain. If he chose to be gallant and restore the possessions of Sodom to its ruler, that was his prerogative insofar as nine-tenths of the possessions are concerned, but he could not be a gentleman at *tzeddaka's* expense. *Ma'aser* by its very nature does not belong to the owner, but are charity funds from the start.

tithing
productivity
as it
is realized

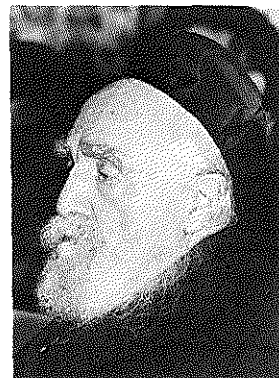
Would we but tithe the fruits of our productivity with the same sense of recognition that Avrohom had, segregating the funds as soon as they are earned, the task of giving would be far easier to fulfill. We would not be reluctant to part with them when faced with each request, responding to each crying need. Moreover, the yeshivos would no longer find themselves in their terrible, ever-intensifying financial bind; they would not be so dependent upon government funding, nor would they be forced into compromising circumstances. Our community is wealthy enough to take care of its own.

During the closing years of *Golus Bavel*, just prior to the Jewish People's return to Israel and the building of the Second *Beis Hamikdosh*, the Prophet exhorted the people in regard to their *ma'aser* obligations (*Malachi* 3:10). In reward for their dedicated preparation for this *mitzva*, they were soon back in the Land, carrying it out in practice. The time has now arrived for us to take the obligation of *ma'aser* to heart and to practice it in regard to *ma'aser kesafim*—tithing income for charity. Then, soon—very soon—we will again נחמנו be putting *ma'aser* into practice in every sense of the word. ✡

*Here, too, Rabbi Kamenetzky was expanding on remarks made by the Novominsker Rebbe.

Of Harmony and Blessings

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, שליט"א chairman of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah spoke to the convention through a film prerecorded in the Rosh Yeshiva's home.



I. No Internal Warfare

When Rivka was pregnant with Yaakov and Eisav, she felt them battling within her (וַיִּתְרוּצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקֶרֶבָּהּ), and therefore sought counsel from Shem and Ever. "Two nations are in your womb," she was told, and she was satisfied. There is no mention of a cessation of combat. Why did this prediction of continual battle appease her?

At the outset, she had also known that she was carrying twins, but she had thought that the two of them were destined to carry on the heritage of Avrohom and Yitzchak. Thus their battling distressed her, because it predicted an eternity of brotherly strife within the ranks of what would be *Klal Yisroel*. This she could not bear. When her condition was then explained as presaging conflicts between *two nations*, she was ready to accept the situation. That the one of her children that was chosen to carry on the patriarchal mission would face a constant external threat was bearable, as long as there would be unity within the ranks of the offspring of her chosen son.

It is most essential that in these times, when we face constant harrassment from without, that we eliminate strife from amongst ourselves as much as possible. Indeed, it is to the credit of Agudath Israel that it brings together disparate groups within Orthodoxy and endeavors to promote peace and harmony between different factions.

II. When the Blessings Begin

When Yitzchok began farming the land of Israel, his efforts were blessed by G-d. The *Chumash* recounts that even though the soil he cultivated was not fertile, and it was generally a year of hunger, his crop flourished. In fact, his yield was a hundred times more than he had expected it to be—a projection he had made so as to have some idea of how much *ma'aser* he would be giving. Truly, it would seem that his efforts were blessed, especially in view of the harsh conditions that had prevailed. Yet it was not until after all the details of his harvest were reported that the *Chumash* says: "And G-d blessed him" (*Bereishis* 26:13). Apparently, then, the actual blessing was bestowed upon Yitzchok after he had harvested his crop—after he had taken *ma'aser* (tithe for charity).

This follows the rule of "*aser te'aser*—you shall take a tenth"—a double expression. The rabbis interpret this as indicating "*aser bishvil yetis'asher*—tithe and you will become prosperous," which is engrained in nature. G-d's blessings take effect in their fullness after *ma'aser*. As we prepare ourselves to meet our *tzeddaka* obligations, we should realize that we are also on the threshold of G-d's most bountiful blessings.

*an eternity
of
brotherly strife?*

*to eliminate
quarrels
from amongst
ourselves*

*of bountiful
harvests
and
blessings*

*giving
and
getting*



Of Criticism, Compromise and Constructive Action

Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapiro שליט"א, Rosh Yeshiva of Beer Yaakov and member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah in Eretz Yisroel, was a special guest of the convention and addressed the keynote session of the gathering.

One of our most fervent prayers is: *רוח קדשך אל תקח ממני* Do not withdraw your *Ruach Hakodesh* (Holy Spirit) from us." This hardly seems to be an appropriate plea for our times, for *Ruach Hakodesh*—a Divinely inspired premonition of coming events—has been absent from our people since the beginning of the Second *Bais Hamikdash*, when the era of prophecy also came to a close. It does, however, have a contemporary application:

During the Third Knessia Gedola (International Conference) of Agudath Israel in Marienbad in 1937, the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* debated the issue of partitioning of Palestine. Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman and Rabbi Aaron Kotler זכרונם לברכה were opposed to backing the Pehle Commission's plan for partition, because they feared that the secularist Zionist movement would control the state that would then emerge, resulting in a mass departure from Judaism by the next generation that would be in their clutches. By contrast, the Gerrer Rebbe זצ"ל believed that partition was inevitable, even predicted by the prophet Avodia. It was therefore purposeless to oppose the state; rather, it was up to the religious leadership to take the initiative and wage a relentless battle to determine the religious nature of the new state that would emerge. . . . Years later, when the prospect of partitioning of Palestine became immediate, the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* voted formally not to oppose the emerging state.

The Brisker Rav, Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik זצ"ל, was not a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* and did not participate in its deliberations. He was known, however, to oppose the proposal of an independent state, and many were the times that he spoke out strongly on the matter. On the day after the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*'s vote, the Brisker Rav made absolutely no comment, which surprised his children. Explained the Rav:

"The *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* is the *Beis Din* of *Klal Yisroel*. Once the body has spoken 'Hashem Imo—G-d is with it'—Once G-d gives His consent to the *Beis Din*'s decision, no individual has the right to voice any contrary sentiment."

At this point, the Brisker Rav made reference to an incident in *Tanach*, explained further in the *Gemora*:

"When Chizkiyahu, the righteous king of Judah, faced the opposition of *Shevna HaSofer* to his plan to stand up against Sancherev, Chizkiyahu expressed fear that he may not be correct in face of *Shevna*'s challenge. *Shevna*'s faction consisted of thirteen men to his eleven, and as a majority their opinion would decide the issue. It was only when he was assured that *Shevna* and his company were *keshar resha'im*—a wicked group—that he acted according to his convictions. . . . Ordinarily, even a man of Chizkiyahu's

no voice
of
prophecy
today

partition
of
Palestine:
to accept
the inevitable
or combat it?

Moetzes
Gedolei
HaTorah:
the Beis Din
of
Klal Yisroel

stature must bend to the decision of the majority.

"Here, too"—said the Rav—"the majority of the *Beis Din* decides the issue for all."

Let the *kano'im* who speak in his name take note: Dissent has its place, and is of inestimable value until the *Beis Din* has spoken. After that point, the principle of "*Hashem Imo*" applies, and there is no room for disagreement.

In my six years of participation in the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*, I have witnessed a number of discussions, all carried out with the utmost of gravity and an overwhelming sense of responsibility for the affairs of *Klal Yisroel*. In retrospect, one can see how each and every decision benefitted from a Divine guidance. Indeed, it is precisely as Rabbi Boruch Ber Lebowitz, the revered Kamenitzer Rosh Yeshiva זצ"ל (1870-1939), explained the phrase "*Ruach Hakodesh*" in the contemporary setting—referring to the ability of *Gedolei Torah* to determine a proper course for the affairs of our *Klal Yisroel*.

Without Compromise

The *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* has demonstrated for us that on matters of principles there is no possibility of compromise.

There is simply no "middle ground" in such issues as draft of women, digging up ancient cemeteries, or in educational standards. In regard to those who plead for a more "reasonable approach" to religious matters—yielding on some aspects of an *halachic* issue and holding out for our view on others—the Chofetz Chaim commented:

"I was on a visit to Warsaw when someone ran into the room where I was sitting and excitedly told our group that in one of Warsaw's busiest shopping areas people were dumping merchandise into the street. While my colleagues were attempting to figure out why they were doing this, I remarked, 'One thing is certain. The people throwing out the merchandise are not the owners. . . .' By the same token, people willing to yield on religious principle are ready to dump matters of value because the values are not really theirs."

Heading the Agenda: The Torah Family

Conscription of women and the integrity of our Torah educational system are crucial issues, matters of principle regarding which there is no room for compromise, because they deal with the very foundations of our society: the perpetuation of our heritage through the family and the flourishing of our institutions of Torah study.

The *Ramban* points to the contrast between the way in which Avrohom and Yitzchok spread the word of G-d in the world ("*Vayikra beshem Hashem*—and he called out in the name of G-d"), and Yaakov's practice, regarding whom public declarations are never mentioned. The reason is that neither Avrohom nor Yitzchok succeeded in setting up a complete family—Avrohom had Yishmael and the children of Ketura in addition to Yitzchok, and Yitzchok had an Eisav besides Yaakov. Yaakov's twelve sons were all "*Shivtei Kah*," worthy of carrying on his divine mission as the G-dly Tribes' ancestors. Yaakov's family—complete in its perfection—was a living testimony matching in eloquence the public proclamations of the first two patriarchs.

"*Ruach Hakodesh*"
in the
contemporary
setting

not
their
values

the Torah family:
an eloquent
testimony
to G-d's sovereignty

a Chinuch Atzmai
nursery
—the initial
step

recreating
the mothers
of
a lost generation

public concern
and
royalty

Torah
support
and
nourishment
for the soul

Every measure of strengthening and preserving the family is extremely important:

Twenty-five years ago, when we were struggling to breathe the breath of life into Beer Yaakov—the yeshiva as well as the community that surrounds it—we founded a Chinuch Atzmai nursery in our town. Our faculty families needed the religious nursery for their own children, and at the same time it provided the initial step for the Torah education of the community's children.

Every Friday, the parents would assemble to watch the nursery children perform their assigned roles in their weekly *Shabbos* party: the "Ima" would light the *Shabbos* candles, the "Abba" would "come home from *shul*" and make *Kiddush*, and so on. One Friday, a little girl tied her apron around her waist, slipped a kerchief onto her head, lit the candles and covered her eyes to say the *bracha*. Suddenly a woman among the spectators began to shriek hysterically, ran forward and then fainted. When the woman was revived, she explained what had excited her so: She was the little "Ima's" mother. She had been a member of a religious family before the war, but after she had lost her mother in Auschwitz, she simply obliterated any recollection of religion from memory. "Now, when I saw my little girl in the apron and *tichel* (kerchief) go up to bench *licht*," she sobbed, "she was the image of my mother those Friday evenings before the war. There she was—my mother *bentching licht*!"

Not just on the nursery level, but the entire Chinuch Atzmai school system is bringing back the mothers of a generation past and creating them anew in the generations ahead . . . recreating in our children the greatness of Torah that once had thrived but was mercilessly destroyed.

The Crowning Touch

When Yaakov gathered together his sons to tell them their respective destinies, he did not simply bless each of the twelve with his own individual greatness. Actually each one's achievement was shared by the other eleven as members of one united *Klal Yisroel*. The *malchus* (monarchy) of Yehudah, for instance, was a blessing for all twelve tribes.

The benefits of *malchus* are shared on yet another level; concern for the public need is both a function of *malchus*, and a precondition for it.

Shaul Hamelech (King Saul) merited the crown, the Midrash says, not for his purity of character ("[like a child of] one year was Shaul as king—*Shmuel* I:13,1), nor for the innate modesty that he had inherited from the matriarch Rachel, but as a reward to his grandfather who lit lamps to light up the night on city streets. Royalty is a reward for acts of public concern.

Torah support, then, is not only a royal gesture; as an act of public benefit of the highest order, it also is a means for earning royalty. Moreover, a patron of Torah becomes personally attached to the Torah through the medium of the *talmid chacham* he supports—just as the fruit of a tree absorbs its nourishment from the soil through the medium of the tree to which it is attached.

Torah support is a guarantee of the future of *Klal Yisroel* and it endows the patron of Torah with both a touch of royalty and a soul-nurturing attachment to Torah. There is no higher calling, no more urgent need for our times. ✡

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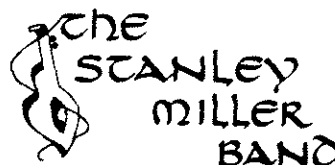
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Halacha in English—Continued

Some months ago, *The Jewish Observer* (April '81) reviewed a large number of works on specific areas of *halacha*, that had recently appeared in English. This review discussed the special problems involved in treating *halachic* topics in the vernacular, and indicated that a follow-up article would deal with works seeking to cover the entire range of *halacha*. Meanwhile, however, several important volumes on specific *halachic* topics have appeared and this review will be dedicated to them.

Halachos of Nidda, by Rabbi Shimon Eider (Lakewood, NJ, 1981, \$9.00 hardcover; \$8.00 softcover)

This volume is the first in a series that will deal with all aspects of family purity. It covers the laws about a woman becoming ritually forbidden as well as the steps by which she regains ritual purity. The book follows the basic pattern of Rabbi Eider's previous works on *Shabbos* and other topics—a very clear and systematic presentation of the law in simple English, full explanatory and supplementary footnotes in Hebrew, an excellent index, and an appendix providing *teshuvos* of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein שליט"א on a variety of the laws discussed.

More than any other area of Jewish law, that of family purity has been treated in a variety of publications designed for the guidance of those who are not scholars. They range from the brief pamphlets published by the *Iggud Harabbonim* and the Spero Foundation to the more elaborate *Laws of Nidda* of Rabbi Avrohom Blumenkrantz, the *Taharas Hamishpacha* of Rabbi Shostak, and finally the volumes by Rabbi Kalmen Kahane, *Taharas Bas Yisroel*, published in English and Hebrew by Feldheim Publishers, and *Taharas Am Yisroel*, by Rabbi Wagschal, reviewed in our last article. Yet none of these attain the encyclopedic completeness of Rabbi Eider's work, which it combines with clarity of presentation and ease of reference.

The author himself is fully aware of the problems raised by publishing such a work in English. Even if meticulous care is taken to avoid any possibility of ambiguity and confusion, is there no danger of misunder-

standing when *halacha* is drawn from such a work rather than derive the *halacha* from the rabbinic sources? Does it not make it tempting to forgo the proper study of these sources? These dangers are very real; however, against them must be weighed the dire consequences of widespread ignorance of the laws of family purity, particularly in our days, when the chain of transmission from mother to daughter has been well nigh totally broken. Hence the need for a "comprehensive text, written in an organized manner, with an emphasis on comprehension."

Moreover, Rabbi Eider stresses that his work cannot and should not replace the proper study of *Hilchos Nidda*—nor serve as a source of *psak*. While it presents the *halachos* in a clear-cut manner, it continually points out the need for consulting a *rav* who can evaluate the specific circumstances of each situation, or provide guidance where there are differences of halachic opinion or custom. Rabbi Eider carefully points out these differences while indicating the common practice, where this is possible. As a result, instead of setting himself up as the *Posek Acharon*—the ultimate arbiter and authority—he provides the basis for an intelligent weighing of each situation, for consultation of a competent *rav*—when needed; of particular value, in this context, is his checklist of what details a *rav* has to be given in submitting a question. This approach is of special importance when writing in the vernacular for a public that, by and large, is tempted to take the printed word at face value, without seeking a deeper understanding or realizing the need for competent rabbinic direction.

Chol Hamoed by Rabbi Dovid Zucker and Rabbi Moshe Francis (Lakewood, NJ, 1981, \$8.95 hardcover; \$6.95 softcover)

Similar in general approach is *Chol Hamoed*, a comprehensive review of the laws of the Intermediate Days of the Festivals. They have always presented special problems of observance, being neither *Yom Tov* nor weekday. The authors have covered the entire range of possible

activities, the duty of honoring these days as well as the prohibitions that apply on them; full footnotes in Hebrew point out the sources, as well as adding details. Special attention has been given to questions occasioned by modern technological advances such as the typewriter, camera, calculator and taperecorder. Where there are differences of opinion among the rabbinic authorities, the authors will so indicate, leaving it to the reader to seek competent guidance. Of particular interest to the learned is the Hebrew section of the work, which contains a more detailed treatment of some of the more complex halachic questions as well as responsa and decisions from Rabbi Moshe Feinstein שליט"א and the Debreciner Rav, Rabbi Moshe Stern שליט"א. In all, this is a most comprehensive, useful, and enlightening work which will undoubtedly greatly further the proper observance of *Chol Hamoed*.

The Halachos of Muktzah by Rabbi Yisroel Pinchos Bodner (Lakewood, NJ, 1981, \$9.95)

Another valuable work along the same lines is *The Halachos of Muktzah*. The subject of *muktzah* objects, which it is forbidden to move on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, is extremely complex; the reader is here introduced to the

different categories of *muktzah*, with their specific halachic rules, and the most common applications are listed and explained. There is a full index, as well as Hebrew footnotes which indicate the sources of each *halacha* as well as enlarge on it; also, original response on the subject, from Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and Rabbi Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach שליט"א, are included in an appendix.

Of course, whether an object is *muktzah* or not is generally related to whether it may be used on *Shabbos* (or *Yom Tov*). Therefore Rabbi Bodner was forced to include many of the laws of *Shabbos* that are not directly concerned with *muktzah*—usually in the form of footnotes in English. The scope of his work is thus truly wide-ranging; yet—perhaps because it touches on so many aspects, there are bound to be some peripheral matters on which the reader may wish for further enlightenment. For example, the author lists *succa* decorations as *muktzah*, but does not touch on the question of whether they could be handled on *Yom Tov* if a condition to that effect were made at the time *Yom Tov* starts; and he lists jigsaw puzzles as forbidden on *Shabbos*, without discussing the distinction that some authorities make between puzzles with and without a frame. Yet a few such questions do not detract from the extraordinary comprehensiveness of this work which will undoubtedly become an indispensable reference in most households concerned with punctilious *Shabbos* observance.

* * *

Jewish Bioethics edited by Dr. Fred Rosner and Rabbi David Bleich (Sanhedrin Press, NY, 1979 \$12.50 hardcover; \$7.50 softcover)

All the books discussed so far aim to be exhaustive halachic treatments of their subject, and are little or not at all concerned to explore and interpret the rationale of the Torah's teachings; they do not seek to "sell" the Mitzva involved or even to explain its basic approach. In contrast, *Jewish Bioethics*, a collection of studies on many of the most important halachic issues in medicine, approaches its subjects from the broad perspective of Jewish moral and ethical philosophy—set against the background of secular thought—as well as from the halachic angles; on the other hand, in keeping with this overall aim, it does not include the detailed halachic apparatus in Hebrew, which is found in the previously discussed works, although the relevant rabbinic sources for further study are listed in the footnotes (and the nature of the topics involves wide-ranging references to old and recent responsa literature).

While most of the articles included in this work represent summaries of the Torah position (or positions) on the subjects discussed, some do put forth original suggestions for a Torah approach to their topic. This is particularly so in the approach Dr. Norman Lamm suggests for treatment of homosexuality—it provides a challenging basis for discussion, but will

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require much further detailed halachic study. Very interesting, too, is Professor M. Speró's discussion of "Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Halacha"—though the careful reader of this article may well emerge with conclusions at variance with those of the author. In essence he suggests that the potential conflicts between psychiatry and psychotherapy, on one hand, and Torah, on the other hand, have been exaggerated out of proportion, and that "a rapprochement between these two and their approaches to behavior disorder in certain circumstances should not be too difficult to imagine." Yet, while it may be true that "in principle, psychotherapy need not be in conflict" with Torah (reviewer's italics), it is also true that—as the entire article vividly shows—there are in actual practice extraordinary pitfalls which can only be avoided by a therapist "working within the religious belief system," with a solid and sympathetic understanding of the deeper issues, and guidance by halachic authority. While making use of psychotherapy where necessary, we must not gloss over the dangers involved.

The question of criteria of death has been a subject of halachic debate in connection with recent legislative action in New York State; three articles are devoted to this topic. Dr. Rosner has contributed a study of the controversy in Israel over autopsies—the reader should note, however, that since the time he wrote, a new autopsy law went into effect as a result of the coalition agreement between Prime Minister Begin and Agudath Israel.

This most interesting volume was not meant, and cannot be used, as a "Shulchan Aruch" for medical halacha—indeed, for some of the topics discussed, notably genetic engineering, halachic clarification has barely begun—but it provides an excellent introduction to the crucial subjects with which it deals.*

*Some of these subjects are also dealt with briefly in a pamphlet by Rabbi Moshe Morgenstern, "Halachic Perspective: Bio-Medical Ethics, Ohr Tsiporah" (Bais Meir Publications, NY, 1981). It is an impassioned plea against amniotic testing and abortion of embryos suspected of abnormalities, based on halachic and medical arguments; incidentally, the author also touches on related subjects such as organ transplants, criteria of death, and family purity. This pamphlet is planned as the first in a series of publications on halachic perspectives on contemporary issues, and the profits from their distribution are to finance an ambitious program of rabbinic research and publications, as well as scholarships for the study of *Shulchan Aruch* by kollel members and other related projects.



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The Festival in Halacha, by Rabbi S.Y. Zevin translated by Uri Kaploun (ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications, New York, 1981. Vol. I \$14.95 hardcover, \$11.95 softcover; Vol. II \$13.95 hardcover, \$10.95 softcover)

An entirely different type of work is ArtScroll's remarkable *Festivals in Halacha*, a three volume translation of Rabbi S.Y. Zevin's classic, dealing with the entire range of the Jewish year. So far, the first two volumes, on the month of Tishrei and on the Minor Festivals, have appeared. Prologues to each festival, explanatory footnotes, appendices and glossary have been added to Rav Zevin's work, and this itself has been translated in masterful and brilliantly readable fashion. It is not a code of law—rather, it gives the reader a panoramic view of the halachic issues at the heart of each festival, and how they have been dealt with by the masters of Torah law, analyzed, explained, elaborated and finally refined to today's practice. Such a work, needless to say, is not for the newcomer to Jewish learning, but rather for the knowledgeable layman with a background of Jewish learning as well as for the late beginner in Torah studies who has not yet advanced far enough to make use of the original. For them all this work will provide profound enrichment of their Torah understanding.

Lishmor Vela'asos by Rabbi Mordechai Katz (JEP Publications, New York, 1981, \$7.95 hardcover, \$5.95 softcover)

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Israel, which previously published *Lehavin Ulehaskil* on basic aspects of Torah thought, and *Lilmod Ulelamed* on the *Sidros* of the year, has now added a volume, *Lishmore Vela'sos*, as a guide to basic principles of Jewish law and their practical application. Written by Rabbi Mordechai Katz, this work is a summary of many of the most commonly applicable *halachos* in the *Shulchan Aruch*—prayer, Torah study, *tzitzis*, *tefillin* and *mezuzah*, the laws connected with eating (such as *Kashrus* and *brachos*), honoring parents and teachers, *tzedaka* and *Bris Mila*. The selection of areas treated was probably guided by the needs of the audience to which JEP caters in particular: the young who have not been introduced to the basics of Torah observance. In keeping with their limitations, the language and arrangement of the contents are clear and concise; the *halachos* are presented competently, albeit briefly; and for each topic there is presented a number of stories which throw a light on the significance and proper observance of the *mitzvos* under discussion.

The book is most readable and will undoubtedly prove of particular value as a tool to introduce youngsters from assimilated backgrounds to Torah. Even though such readers do not require it, it would have been worthwhile, in the opinion of this reviewer, to indicate next to each *halacha* where it can be found in the classical halachic works—particularly since the introduction that stresses this volume is merely an overview, and urges the reader to refer to the original texts of the major *sifrei halacha*. But, even without such

annotation, this volume represents a most interesting and worthwhile undertaking, and it is to be hoped that volumes dealing with additional *mitzvos* will be published in due course.

Pamphlets on Halacha

Hashovas Aveidah: The Laws of Returning Lost Possessions by Rabbi Moshe Goldberger (New York, 1980, \$2.00 in Hebrew bookstores)

Halacha is not always treated in elaborate volumes. There is room or pamphlets dedicated to specific topics. An outstanding example is *Hashovas Aveidah*. This slender volume deals in great clarity and depth with a subject which is unfortunately given little attention by most observant Jews. Every reader is sure to benefit from going through the fifteen sections of the book and the appended responsum, in Hebrew, by Horav Moshe Feinstein. This book should be of particular interest to boys studying "*Elu Metzios*", but is generally suited as a text for school use.

Knowing Your Tefillin and Mezuzos by Zev Rothschild (Stam Gemilas Chesed Fund, Lakewood, NJ, 1981, \$2.50)

This is a layman's guide to understanding and appreciating *tefillin* and *mezuzos*. It is an excellent publication that covers all aspects of the making and proper wearing of *tefillin*, the writing of *mezuzos*, and where and how to put them up. There is even a chart indicating the earliest times for putting on *tefillin* in winter, detailed drawings to illustrate what types of door openings require *mezuzos*. This pamphlet is highly recommended even to those who have some knowledge of the subject matter.

The Kiddush Connection, by Yehuda Cahn (Vaad Hara-bonim of Baltimore, 1979, \$0.95)

This pamphlet deals both with the ideas expressed by the *Kiddush*—which are spelled out in succinct form—as well as with the text of the *Kiddush*, and the laws governing it. It is primarily meant to bring to the uninformed the message of the *Shabbos* and of Jewish living (starkly underlined by Zvi Steinbach's illustrations) and has valuable footnotes and suggestions for further reading.

The Foods We Eat, by Rabbi Yosef Wikler (Yeshiva Birkas Reuven, Brooklyn, NY, \$2.50)

The Foods We Eat is subtitled "A Kashrus Handbook" and is a reprint of some 18 columns on *kashrus* questions that originally appeared in the *World Jewish Tribune*. They deal with such complex issues as *hashgachos*, problems connected with dairy products, pizza and wine, the nature of the additives listed on labels, and many other highly relevant issues (*mezonos* bread, non-Jewish help in the kitchen, *Shalach Monos* problems, etc.).

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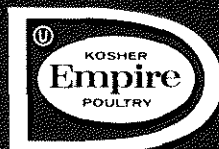
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Letters to the Editor



No Immunity to Addiction

To the Editor:

I wish to commend *The Jewish Observer* on publication of the timely and revealing article on the problem of alcohol and chemical addiction and dependency among Jews (Nov. '81).

I am now in the process of writing more extensively on the subject. Our people must be made aware that Jews of whatever degree of observance are no more immune to alcohol or chemical addiction than to the common cold virus. They should also be aware that involvement with groups such as AA, NA, and PA is indispensable to recovery, and that there is absolutely nothing incompatible with these programs per se and Jewishness.

Some effort to provide inherent exposure to Jewishness in the search for spirituality might help overcome some of the logistical problems associated with "Anonymous" groups.

I trust that this article will stimulate serious thought on this subject.

ABRAHAM J. TWERSKI, M.D.
St. Francis General Hospital
Pittsburgh, Penn.

Why Some Rebbes Don't Vanish

To the Editor:

Rabbi Zev Schostak alerted your readers about the problem of Yeshiva *Chinuch*. He stressed the fact that many capable young men and girls do not choose *Chinuch* as their goal in life because of the financial situation and the lack of recognition of *Melamdim*.

At the Agudath Israel and Torah Umesorah conventions and dinners, the *Gedolei Yisroel* impressed the audience with the fact that many

outstanding *Mechanchim* are leaving the field of *Chinuch* while the present Kollel Yunge Leit, Beis Midrash Bachurim and Bais Yaakov girls are seeking more lucrative positions in the computer field or other professions.

Pirchei Agudath Israel is trying to do its share by presenting, heretofore, 30 *Melamdim* of the elementary division of Yeshivos with plaques and gifts at its various national gatherings. Mr. David Scheinfeld, president of the Girso D'Yankuso Foundation, is the initiator and sponsor of this unique idea of honoring *Melamdim*, the unsung heroes of our generation.

Since we chose *Melamdim* from various Yeshivos of N.Y. City and out of town, the other *Melamdim* became aware that *Melamdim* are respected members of the community. The feedback, so far, is very encouraging.

We received letters from these honorees, their wives, and *talmidim* about the accomplishment of this outstanding Torah project. A teacher whose father and husband were both honored wrote: "The plaque is a source of strength and inspiration. Pirchei Agudath Israel and Mr. Scheinfeld gave us a boost, an injection... that makes us want to on. Sometimes it's rough; we feel tired, disgusted. People ask, 'How do you manage?' But really we love our work and want to go on."

Another Rebbe (Honoree) wrote: "We do indeed owe a great debt of gratitude to another pioneer, Mr. David Scheinfeld זצ"ל, who single-handedly is trying to elevate the status of the Rebbe. It was especially

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thrilling for me to be recognized with other true *Talmidei Chachomim* and *Mashpiyim* who were honored."

A third *Melamed* wrote: "I feel this award is a call for self-improvement and brings out the realization for the need to reach new vistas to help bring up a generation of strong, devoted and respectful *bnei Torah*."

This is only a beginning. We hope to initiate new ideas to build the image of *Melamedim* in their own eyes, and in the eyes of prospective future *Mechanchim*.

(Rabbi) JOSHUA SILBERMINTZ
National Director of
Pirchei Agudath Israel
New York City

The Role of the Rabbi in Small Towns

To the Editor:

In the Nissan 5741/April 1981 issue, Rabbi Michel Chill's article "The Yeshiva Graduate in the Rabbinat—a reexamination," the author clearly and cogently presents the role of the yeshiva *bachur* in the rabbinat.

In most small towns, the Conservative synagogue and its rabbi are financially much stronger than the Orthodox *shul*. The primary accomplishment of the yeshiva graduate in these towns has been to teach authentic Judaism to the members of the Orthodox *shul* and to articulate to the unaffiliated the critical differences between authentic Judaism and the variant interpretations presented by the Conservative and Reform spokesmen. A properly trained yeshiva graduate has the ability to present the vibrancy and growth of traditional Judaism in many towns that believe that non-orthodoxy is the wave of the future. The opposite is true, and we must be certain that Jews across the length and breadth of this land are cognizant of this fact. The yeshiva graduate has a prominent role to play.

BARRY D. HARTMAN, RABBI
Cong. Ahavath Achim
New Bedford, Mass.

"Crooked Mirror" & Doublespeak

To the Editor:

Just some observations concerning your recent article: The Crooked Mirror II.

The Torah camp is often labeled as being "ultra-orthodox" (excessive, extreme). While "excessive" *yiddishkeit* may be a derogatory term and not something to which we should aspire, what is wrong with being "extreme"? Would there be those who object to someone being *extremely* honest or *extremely* sincere? On the contrary, the *רמב"ם* seems to indicate that extremity in *מצוות* is the only way to the *דרך האמצעי*. (This term is also bandied about by many of our colleagues in justifying their strange ideologies). *רמב"ם* explains that the *דרך האמצעי* is a *מידות* position that can be reached only through the exacting performance of all *מצוות* (hence the *מצוה* of *תנענע* of *פרק ד'* *שמונה פרקים*, *פרק ד'* *שמונה פרקים*).

The word fundamentalist is an example of a good thing gone bad. The fact that some Protestant denominations have taken up the term to describe their literal interpretation of the Bible should not concern us. The word comes from fundamental—"essential," forming a foundation or basis. What are we if not fundamentalists? Orthodoxy believes—without compromise—that the Torah forms the foundation of and is essential to life.

"Zealot" is another term that gets our dander up. What is so bad about

being a zealot? How else would you translate the *זריזות* about which the *מסלת ישרים* speaks in *רמח"ל*? What do all our *זו"ל* have to say about *זריזות* zealousness?

George Orwell used to say, "If thought can corrupt language, language can also corrupt thought." We Jews—ever watchful for outside secular influence—must take this lesson to heart. We ought to watch our language!

(Rabbi) BINYOMIN FIELD
Worcester, Mass.

A Torah Layman's Question

To the Editor:

Thank you for including the article about my Father ז"ל among the sketches of "Torah Loyal Laymen" in the Tishrei issue of the "Jewish Observer". It was an honor that Father richly deserved.

However, perhaps due to my negligence in not stressing the point more, an inaccuracy appeared in the published abbreviated version of the original manuscript submitted, which must not be left uncorrected.

Towards the end of the article it was stated that Father ז"ל had asked the Gaon Rabbi Moshe Feinstein שליט"א the meaning of the last two verses of "Adon Olom." This was not so. Father had no need to ask that, but he did ask for the meaning of the fact that these two verses were constantly on his mind, day and night. To that Rabbi Feinstein replied (which I understood in the sense of a "Hatovas Chalom" which is to inter-




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pret a dream favorably) that the fact that they were constantly on his mind was a good omen (in the way he interpreted it) for Mother מרת for whom Father was sitting *shiva* at the time. And because I felt this interpretation applies equally to Father אבא , I included it in the article about him.

(Rabbi) NOSSON LOMNER
New York City

P.S. Since the sketch about Father אבא was included among "Torah-Im-Derech-Eretz Personalities," it might be noteworthy to mention that Father had most of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch's writings in the original German and that one of the *shiurim* he gave in

Eiterfeld was on *Chumosh* with Rabbi S.R. Hirsch's commentary.

Reachout—Close to Home


To the Editor:

Your recent issues in *Kiruv Recho-kim* (Sept '80, June '81) has evoked an overwhelming response, even to the extent of individually changing their life's career and place of dwelling, as was evident in the "letter column" in a recent issue. Somehow, we tend to associate such reachout articles with exotic places, or suburban communities far removed from the more religious urban centers.

Surprisingly, right here in Flatbush, Brooklyn, in the midst of our


flourishing yeshiva community, there are children estranged from *Yiddishkeit*, some totally unaware of what it means to be a Jew. Most are America-born kids, others are Israeli *yordim* and Russian Jews. They all would benefit from *kiruv*—right in the heart of Flatbush. In our yeshiva (R'tzhad), we do our utmost to cater to the needs of these children, who make up the entirety of our 200-member student body. Leading *roshei yeshiva* guide us in our work (Rabbi Shmuel Berenbaum of Mir, Rabbi Abraham Pam of Torah Vodaath, Rabbi Aharon Schechter of Chaim Berlin), but one-to-one counseling and tutoring by volunteers will help immensely, as will any other kind of interest to help our work with children, whose parents feel they are doing more than enough by permitting them to attend a yeshiva. This is the situation that prevails in our school, as well as in similar schools such as Ezra Academy and Be'er Hagolah.

(Rabbi) DAVID E. LAPP,
DIRECTOR
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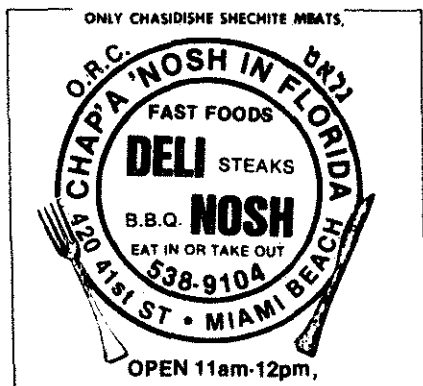
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4,000 AT AGUDAH CONVENTION HEAR TORAH SAGES CALL FOR DEFEAT OF FALSE JUDAISM



All convention photographs by KALMAN ZEINES, unless otherwise indicated.

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky addressing Agudath Israel Convention: Part of the three-tier dais at the Agudath Israel convention. Center dais, L to R: Rabbi Ahron Schechter (Mesivta Chaim Berlin), Rabbi Binyomin Paler (M'kor Chaim), Rabbi Moshe Shapiro (Yeshivas Be'er Yaakov, Israel), Rabbi Yaakov Perlow (Novominsker Rebbe), Rabbi Avrohom Yosef Shapiro (member of the Knesset), Rabbi Chaskel Besser (presidium-member of Agudath Israel),

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky (speaking), Rabbi Moshe Sherer (president of Agudath Israel of America), Rabbi Yaakov Ruderman (Yeshiva Ner Israel, Baltimore), Rabbi Mordechai Gifter (Telshe Yeshiva, Cleveland), Rabbi Levi I. Horowitz (Bostoner Rebbe, Boston), Rabbi Elya Fischer (Kollel Ger), Rabbi Avrohom Pam (Mesivta Torah Vodaath).

A national convention of Agudath Israel of America is a living experience in basic principles of the international movement: Jews from all walks of life unite under the banner of Torah—for four days of deliberations on a broad range of issues facing Jewry; and their response is determined in accordance with timeless principles as explained by Torah sages. The 59th national convention of Agudath Israel of America which took place here in the Rye Town Hilton (November 26-29) was an outstanding example of this.

The delegates, representing the Jewish communities from coast to coast, included rabbis and yeshiva deans, professors and physicians, students and clerks, all identifying with the Agudath Israel movement. The problems debated ranged from looking inward to assess the quality of the Orthodox community's religious observance, to an outward examination of the corrosive effects of spurious forms of Judaism and how best to combat them; and the speakers included some of America's leading Roshei Yeshivos.

Addressing the Issues

The keynote session of the convention, which attracted several thousand visitors in

addition to the nine hundred delegates that attended the full convention, was highlighted by a call to arms by **Rabbi Moshe Sherer**, president of the organization, who decried the "new stance of militancy and beligerency of the Reform and Conservative leadership against Orthodox Judaism," which he claimed is the result of Agudath Israel's insistence that only *halacha* (Torah law) be accepted in Israel on religious issues. He charged that the Reform and Conservative leaders are "seeking to influence Jewish Federations throughout the country to use the club of implied withholding financial aid to Israel to beat the Israeli government into submission to accept the concept of religious pluralism in the Holy Land." The Orthodox leader declared that Agudath Israel will launch a counter offensive to "halt the infiltration into Israel of 'synthetic Judaism' which has to its 'credit' the spiritual genocide rampant in the United States."

The Roshei Yeshiva Speak

This theme was clearly articulated by three of America's leading Torah sages, who joined in a call for "total mobilization of the forces of Torah ideology to help the Jewish masses to

reject the poison of fraudulent brands of Judaism," at the same keynote session. **Rabbi Moshe Feinstein** (Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem in New York), chairman of the *Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah* (Council of Torah Sages), speaking by a pre-recorded film from his home, said: "As our major line of defense, we must inculcate the Jewish masses with Torah values through Jewish education, by building and supporting our struggling Torah institutions."

Striking a similar note were **Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky** (Mesivta Torah Vodaath), and **Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman** (Yeshiva Ner Israel, Baltimore), both venerable members of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*, who also singled out the Agudath Israel movement for praise for "giving courage to Torah Jewry in its ongoing battle against fraudulent forms of Judaism." In addition, Rabbi Kamenetzky appealed for unity within the Orthodox Jewish community, noting: "It takes a special sensitivity to learn to survive in a hostile world and Agudath Israel has learned the lesson well." Rabbi Ruderman added: "Orthodox Jews have learned to expect quality representation from Agudath Israel in their effort to thrive as a viable community."

Orthodox Jewry Must Avoid Elitism

At the convention's opening session, dedicated to "Looking Inward: Are Our Personal Religious Standards Up to Par?", **Rabbi A. Henoeh Leibowitz**, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Chofetz Chaim Rabbinical Seminary in Forest Hills, Queens, called on Orthodox Jews to "attract unaffiliated Jews by setting an example of superior moral standards."

Addressing this introspective evaluation of religious standards in the Orthodox community, the Rosh Yeshiva said: "It is essential to address our alienated brethren as our equals rather than talking down at them, and to avoid an attitude of elitism in our relationship with other Jews. At the same time, we Orthodox Jews must strive to perfect our own religious observance before reaching out to others—not as an act of self-centeredness, but as a means of being worthy of helping others and inspiring them."

Two spiritual leaders of Agudath Israel chapters called on the Orthodox Jews to re-examine their observance of religious standards in kashrus and ethics in business. **Rabbi Moshe Heinemann**, of the Agudath Israel in Baltimore, said that the "Jewish community should be applauded for its success in making kosher food so widely available," but he criticized those that "make summary judgments about the validity of kashruth supervision without knowing the facts." He also congratulated rabbinical authorities in Israel for cracking down against fraudulent religious articles, such as *tefillin* and *mezuzos* exported to this country.

Rabbi Nisson Alpert, of the Agudath Israel of Far Rockaway, condemned the "abuse of specific religious laws pertaining to business ethics." He added: "We cannot accept that Jewish businessmen should conduct their business in an atmosphere where a word is not a word and a promise not a promise."

Orthodoxy Goal: "Revival of Old Glories"

At a session marking Agudath Israel of America's approaching its 60th year, a member of the organization's *Moetzes Gedolei Ha-Torah* (Concil of Torah Sages) and the presidium of the organization agreed that Orthodoxy's goal was "nothing short of a complete revival of its pre-Holocaust strength."

Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, dean of the Telshe Yeshiva in Wickliffe, Ohio, said that "Orthodoxy in America, which is the last Torah station before Moshiach's arrival, has a special responsibility to introduce Torah values to all Jews as a guide for their lives." He criticized "the synthetic Judaism promulgated by some secular Jewish leaders."



Rabbi Mordechai Gifter



Rabbi Henoeh Leibowitz



Rabbi Nisson Alpert



Rabbi Moshe Heinemann

Picking up on this theme was **Rabbi Moshe Sherer**, president of Agudath Israel of America and chairman of its world organization. Calling "the trauma of the three wings of Judaism" the biggest problem for world Jewry, he urged modern Orthodox groups to abandon religious umbrella organizations, which include Reform and Conservative representation. He added: "How much longer will they continue to mislead the public by being part of this soap bubble of synthetic Judaism!"

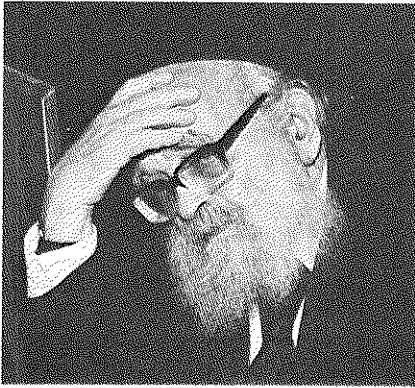
Orthodoxy and the Nation's Social Agenda

Two eminent authorities in Talmudic law, while taking different approaches, agreed at Sunday morning's session that Orthodox Jewry "should react to every national concern even if the issue does not directly involve Orthodox Jews or Jews in general." **Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld**, Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshiva Sh'or Yeshuv in Far Rockaway, New York, noted, however, that "Jewish education is our first priority and while it is important to take a stand on social issues, it is secondary to inculcating our youth with Torah values."

Rabbi J. David Bleich, Rabbi of the Yorkville Synagogue (New York City) and a Rosh Yeshiva at the Rabbi Isaac Elchonon Theological Seminary, stressed that "Jews have an age-old responsibility to promulgate the value system of our ancient heritage which includes explaining standards of moral behavior for all people." He cited numerous Talmudic and halachic resources supporting the contention that Jews must speak out on all issues confronting society. **Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky**, director of Government and Public Affairs of Agudath Israel, who served as chairman of the session entitled "Coming to Grips with America's Social Agenda: Should Orthodoxy React to Every National Concern?", said that "it is a sign of maturity of the Orthodox Jewish community in America that legislators seek out the position of our community on important issues."

Special Guests from Israel

The convention was graced by a number of visitors from Israel, including a prominent member of the *Moetzes Gedolei Ha-Torah* (Council of Torah sages) in Israel, **Rabbi Moshe Shapiro** (dean of Yeshiva Be'er Yaakov), who, in an address at the Keynote session, said that the recent decisions taken by the *Moetzes Gedolei Ha-Torah*, including the terms for Agudath Israel's participation in the Likud coalition, "are an education for generation to come on how the principles of our timeless heritage can be used to determine the contemporary political and social agenda of the Jewish people."



Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzsky



Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman



Rabbi Shneur Kotler



Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapiro

Laws to Halt Archaeological Digs First Priority

Rabbi Avrohom Yosef Shapiro, Knesset representative of Agudath Israel and chairman of the Knesset coalition, who was invited expressly to address the convention, said that the first legislative proposal of Agudath Israel in the new Knesset session would be a law to "halt archaeological digs in ancient cemeteries" promised by Prime Minister Begin in the coalition agreement with Agudath Israel. The Agudist deputy also pledged to work to amend the Law of Return "according to halacha" within the four month period promised in the coalition negotiations. Rabbi Shapiro threatened that Agudath Israel might bolt the coalition if the agreement was not fulfilled, adding that—as in all such matters—the final decision would be made by the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*.

Knesset member Shapiro continued: "We reject the slanderous accusations made by some that Agudath Israel is involved in religious coercion or is attempting to transform Israel into a 'Khomeini state.' We are merely trying to reclaim our rights as citizens and taxpayers, not to be treated as second class citizens. The religious issues we address are consistent with the Jewish character of the state, based on the tacit understanding between the Zionist founders and the religious community in Israel." Rabbi Avrohom Shapiro also read a message of greeting to the convention from Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

A special open session was convened to permit Knesset member Shapiro to respond to questions from the floor.

Convention Highlights: Torah Personalities

The outstanding Torah personalities that participated actively in the convention proceedings included: Rabbi Shneur Kotler, Rosh Yeshiva of Bais Medrash Govoha (Lakewood), a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*, who gave a *shiur* in *halacha* in honor of the 19th Yahrzeit of his late father, the famed Torah giant, founder of Bais Medrash Govoha and *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* chairman, Rabbi Aaron Kotler זצ"ל. In addition, the Rosh Yeshiva addressed the convention on the centrality of Torah in the scheme of Jewish communal structure, as promulgated by his late father, portraying major characteristics of the Torah giant's policies.

The Novominsker Rebbe, Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, presidium member of Agudath Israel, ushered in the convention *Shabbos* with a stirring call for unity among Jews, and total abandonment of any brotherly strife. In addition, the Rebbe called for a more widespread



Bostoner Rebbe



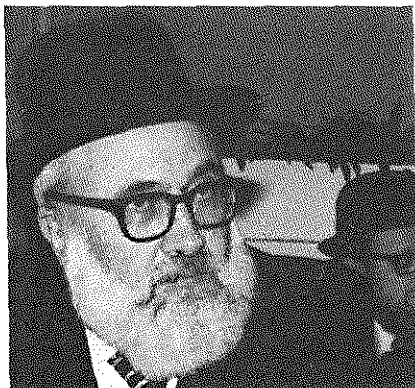
Novominsker Rebbe



Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld



Rabbi Avrohom Shapiro, M.K.

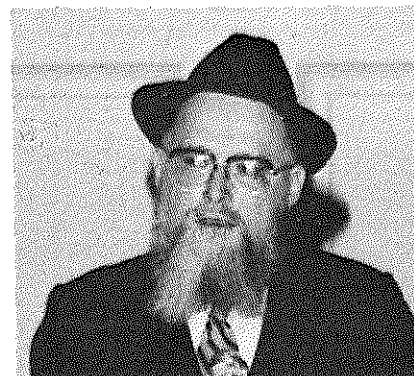


Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg

Photo: Nachman Wolfson



Rabbi Shmuel Faivelson



Rabbi J. David Bleich



Rabbi Chaim Schmeltzer

practice of *maaser*—tithing income for charity—as an obligation, and as a major means of solving our yeshivos' terrible financial crises.

At the Friday night, post-*seuda* session, the convention heard a call from the Bostoner Rebbe (Brookline, Mass.), **Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz**, to set inspiring examples for their families rather than rely on preaching to them. This theme was reiterated by **Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg** (Rosh Yeshiva Ner Israel, Baltimore), followed by **Rabbi Elya Fisher** (Rosh Kolel Ger, Brooklyn). Rabbi Weinberg also described the task of Agudath Israel as identifying the specific threat to the integrity of Yiddishkeit in every era, and then mobilizing forces to combat the threat. The session was chaired by **Rabbi Eliezer Horowitz**, rabbi of Agudath Israel of Boro Park—14th Avenue.

Other leaders that addressed the convention included (in the order of their appearance): **Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer** (Miami, Fl.), **Rabbi Chaim Schmeltzer** (Telshe—Chicago, Ill.), **Rabbi Reuven Feinstein** (Yeshiva of Staten Island), **Rabbi Shmuel Faivelson** (Bais Shraga, Monsey, N.Y.—who reported on the current status of Chinuch Atzmai, a topic which was featured at the convention), **Rabbi Yosef Frankel** (Brooklyn), **Rabbi Yekusiel Bittersfeld** (Rosh Mesivta Be'er Shmuel), **Rabbi Mordechai Shapiro** (Miami Beach, Fl.), and **Rabbi Levi Krupenia** (Rosh Yeshivas Kamenitz).

Binding Forces— The Special Shabbos Ambiance . . .

Agudath Israel's role as a unifying force for so many different groups within Orthodoxy is especially evident on *Shabbos*, when Chasidic satins and shtreimlach intermingle with plaid or herringbone finery and fancy fedoras, and *zemiros* of varying tones and accents blend in the spacious dining hall. The celebrated *chazan*, Ben Zion Miller, thrilled and inspired with his *tefillos* on *Shabbos* and *zemiros* at *Melave Malke*, accompanied by the Neginah Orchestra at the festive *Motzo'ei Shabbos* gathering.

. . . and Daf Yomi

Daf Yomi, the strict regimen which binds together Jews the world over by studying the same folio of Talmud per day, did not miss a beat throughout the long convention. Study groups, which were unusually well-attended, were led by **Rabbi Israel Leiter**, **Rabbi Aaron Zuckerman** (Agudath Israel of Flatbush), **Rabbi Yaakov Bulka** (Bronx), and **Rabbi Yitzchok Kleiman** (Rosh Yeshiva, St. Louis, Mo.).



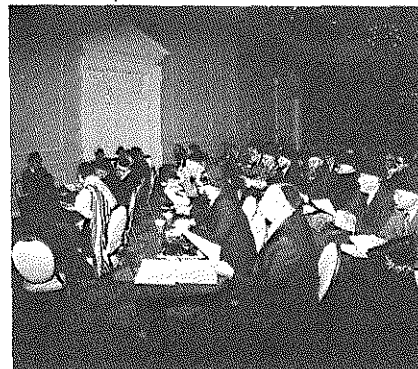
Rabbi R. Feinstein, Rabbi Y. Feigelstock,
Rabbi Y. Bittersfeld

Photo: Nachman Wolfson



Rabbi A. Schechter, Rabbi B. Paler,
Rabbi L. Krupenia

Photo: Nachman Wolfson



Daf Yomi



Melave Malke

Resolutions And Greetings

At the Saturday night keynote session, **Prof. Aaron Twerski**, chairman of Agudath Israel's Commission of Legislation and Civic Action, said the "Agudath Israel in America would continue to pursue constitutional measures to assist yeshivos which suffered unproportionally to other groups from the recent budget cuts."

This theme was reiterated in the resolutions adopted at the four day conclave. Others included a call for unity in the Orthodox Jewish community, and an appeal to President Reagan to include tuition tax credits in his next budget message. One of the planks adopted called on Jewish relief groups not to bow to pressures from the Jewish agency and to continue assisting Russian immigrants regardless of where they choose to settle, despite the preference that they choose Israel. The Reagan Administration was asked to continue to demonstrate concern for Israel's "defense and economic" concerns. A special commission was established to plan the festivities of Agudath Israel's 60th anniversary, when elections will be held for a new national administration.

Reagan Promises Tuition Tax Credits

The Agudath Israel convention enthusiastically applauded the promise by President Reagan to work for tuition tax credits for parents of private schools. In his special message to the Agudath Israel convention, the

president wrote: "I welcome this opportunity to express my continuing high regard for your organization, which for so many years has worked to preserve the historical continuity of Judaic culture and history and contribute to the moral and religious fiber of our nation."

"I understand that an important item on your agenda for discussion will be the issue of tuition tax credits. As you may know, I firmly believe that the role of government in the field of education is to assist parents, to make their burden easier, not to interfere with them. Government's proper role is to ensure that parents have freedom of choice in selecting those schools which best reflect their own moral and cultural values."

"As I have said, let there be no misunderstanding. This Administration will keep its pledge to work with this Congress to formulate the kind of legislation which provides tax relief to those families which pay tuition in addition to supporting their public schools."

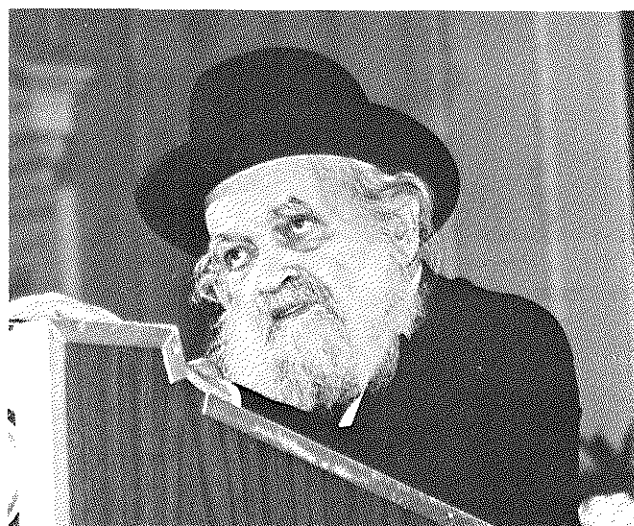
Convention Chairmen

Dov Levy, prominent leader in the Agudath Israel movement, served as chairman of the convention. **Rabbi Eliyahu Abramczyk** and **Rabbi Edwin Katzenstein** served as program co-chairmen, and **Rabbi Jacob I. Friedman** was convention coordinator. **Rabbi Chaskel Besser**, presidium member of Agudath Israel, served as chairman of the keynote session with his customary warmth and charm.



"Everyone must find a way to gain a share in the outstanding work of Agudath Israel—its chessed programs, its youth work, and its efforts to support Torah—whether by direct financial contribution or by participating first hand in its undertakings."

RABBI MOSHE FEINSTEIN, שליט"א, on film, screened at the keynote session.



"Belonging to Agudath Israel offers as an ideal format for the performance of Torah, Avoda, Gemilas Chassadim and a basis for Ahavas Yisroel of the highest order."

RABBI YAAKOV KAMENETZKY, שליט"א, at the keynote session.

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Same Setting: N'shei Convention for Agudah Women

On November 26, 29th of Cheshvan, the Agudah Women of America opened its convention concurrently with that of Agudath Israel of America, beginning with a special reception welcoming its members from near and far, America and abroad.

Mrs. Chaya Hubner, convention co-chairman, opened the convention with remarks regarding growth and expansion: "In *Eretz Yisrael*, we have grown from one day care center to a network of centers and kindergartens, to dormitory and trade schools." Mrs. Carmella Rottenberg, visiting from *Eretz Yisrael*, extended greetings as well.

The N'shei sessions throughout the weekend were attended by hundreds of women. On Friday, after *Kabbolas Shabbos*, Mrs. Charlotte Cohen, from Baltimore, introduced Rabbi Moshe Heineman, a Rosh Yeshiva in Ner Israel and Rav of the Agudath Israel of Baltimore, who spoke on *Hilchos Shabbos*, explaining some contemporary applications of these laws.

After the *Shabbos* meal, Rebbetzin Chaya Frankel, honorary president of N'shei, introduced Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, Telshe Rosh Yeshiva, who expounded on *Rivka Imeinu's* role, in the *Parshas Hashavua*.

At the *Seuda Sh'lisis*, Mrs. Aliza Grund, convention theme, "Activism in our Society"; convention theme, "Activism in our Society"; "N'shei Agudath Israel has a role to fulfill in the United States in addition to our work in *Eretz Yisrael*. There are specific problems facing our society today to which we must apply ourselves." She cited the example of the recently proposed Gay Rights Bill. Mrs. Esther Knobel, a former president of Agudah Women, had been invited to City Hall to testify against Gay Rights.

At a symposium that afternoon, a panel consisting of Mrs. Esther Bohensky, co-president of Agudah Women, Chaya Hubner and Aliza Grund, discussed the past, present, and future of the organization.

Mrs. Jaffa Barzakai of Jerusalem spoke stirring of the problems encountered in finding rooms and buildings in *Eretz Yisrael* to accommodate parents seeking the services of our N'shei Agudah institutions: "The Mayor of Ashdod, who is not religious, has recognized the success of our programs to such an extent that often, when there is an opening for a new center, he encourages and assists Agudah Women to step in," she explained.

Sunday morning's session, "Activism on a Local Level," dealt with the development of new programs in the United States. Rebbetzin Josephine Reichel, national co-president, introduced Mrs. Libby Brown (membership

chairman), Mrs. Rena Ebert (organizer of the new Cerebral Palsy Education Program), and Mrs. Esther Knobel. Mrs. Ebert emphasized that N'shei Agudah is the only national orthodox organization working with patients on an individual level in Cerebral Palsy group homes, to teach the educable something about Judaism. At that session, the ladies also heard from Mrs. Sternbuch of Zurich, who brought greetings from her local N'shei.

At the close of this final session, Rebbetzin Reichel told the crowd: "Let us work together. There is strength in numbers—for what can be achieved by a group far exceeds the achievements of individuals. We, therefore, hope that orthodox women throughout the United States and Canada will join the ranks of Agudah Women of America."

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United Nations General Assembly Adopts Declaration On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Religious Intolerance

The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted at its present session the text of a declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief initiated by the Agudath Israel World Organization.

The Declaration consists of a Preamble and eight Articles. The main provisions read as follows:

1. Parents have the right to organize the life within the family in accordance with their religion or belief.

2. Every child shall enjoy the right to have access to education in the matter of religion or belief in accordance with the wishes of the parents.

The freedom of religion shall include the freedom:

3. To worship or assembly in connection with a religion or belief;

4. To make, to acquire, and to use to an adequate extent the necessary articles and materials related to the rites or customs of a religion or belief;

5. To write, to publish, and to disseminate relevant publications in this area;

6. To teach a religion or belief in places suitable for these purposes;

7. To observe days of rest and to celebrate holidays and ceremonies in accordance with the precepts of one's religion or belief;

8. To establish and maintain communications with individuals and communities in matters of religion and belief at the national and international levels.

These provisions are only part of the Declaration. The full text, which has now become part of international law, will be published in the official U.N. documents.

The long, almost 30-year-old struggle for the adoption of the Declaration began in 1952 at a meeting of the U.N. Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Dr. Isaac Lewin, representing the Agudath Israel World Organization officially recognized by the U.N. Economic and Social Council, suggested to the Sub-Commission that a study of discrimination in religious rights and practices be included among other studies of various forms of discrimination which the U.N. was about to undertake. This suggestion was adopted.

Subsequent to this initiative, rapporteur Mr. Arcot Krishnaswami of India, was appointed. He submitted his report in 1956, which fully recognized Dr. Lewin's suggestion, after many delays. Only this year, however, did the Commission on Human Rights succeed in adopting the draft of a Declaration.

Final approval was achieved in the General Assembly, and the long struggle in which Dr. Lewin has been so greatly involved (and which he began in 1952) has come to an end.

The World Agudah's presidium member and U.N. representative, Dr. Lewin's 32 addresses in this matter, delivered before various organs of the U.N. between the years 1952-1978, have recently appeared in book form under the title *Towards International Guarantees For Religious Liberty* (Shengold Publishers, New York: 1981, 128 pp.).

Cope Vocational Institute Receives National Accreditation

The Business and Vocational Skills Division of COPE Vocational Institute (CVI) was recently granted accreditation by the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools (AICS), it was announced by Rabbi Yerachmiel Barash, the school's director. CVI, which is already recognized by the New York State Education Department, has received broad acclaim for its quality program, which has resulted in the placement of its graduates in some of New York City's largest industries.

In granting its accreditation, AICS noted that "the tone of the school is one of a highly professional nature where student welfare and education of students are always a priority." As a result of the accreditation, CVI students will now be able to benefit from such federal aid programs as Basic Grants and Guaranteed Student Loans.

CVI, which was founded by Agudath Israel

four years ago, has particularly been an important training source for Orthodox Jewish youth who value the special environment that CVI provides. Yeshiva students also receive extensive structured pre-placement orientation, which is particularly helpful in making the transition to the business world.

CVI recently launched new programs in both its divisions. Its Computer Center offers professional level IMS and CICS courses, a Sunday and evening 300 hours programming course, in addition to its regular 600 hour intensive computer programming course.

The Business Skills Division inaugurated its Training Plus Program, specifically directed to the needs of the American student. These courses, intensive and of short duration, will help train junior accountants, administrative assistants and executive secretaries for the world of business.

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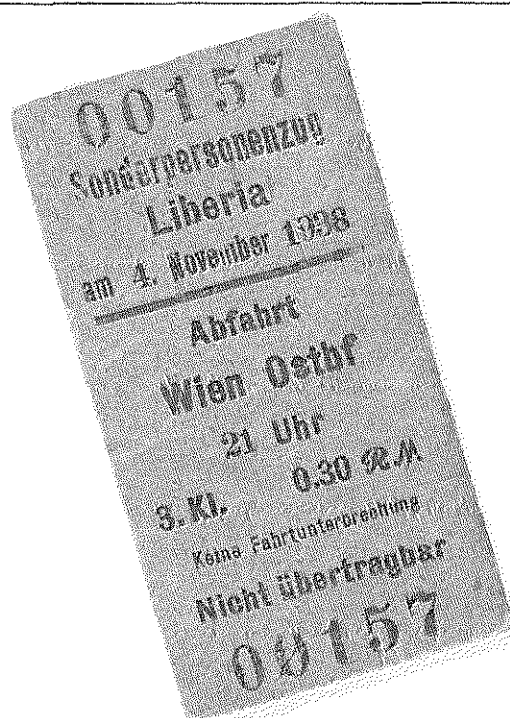
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From the Agudath Israel Archives

Ticket to Freedom

Agudath Israel of Vienna together with the Revisionists organized in 1938 illegal transports to Palestine, on which thousands of Jews emigrated from Hitler to Eretz Yisroel. These transports were approved by the Nazis, but every individual had to obtain a visa to a destination. An agreement was made with the Consul of Liberia in Vienna, and he issued such visas against payment of money. Eichmann then required that the people on the transport leaving on 4th of November 1938 on a ship from the Danube pier at "Reichsbruecke" in Vienna, meet at the train station "Ostbahnhof" and from there take a train to "Liberia." The ride on the train to the Danube pier took roughly 10 minutes. This is probably the ONLY railroad ticket from that railroad trip still extant.

From the CHARLES RICHTER PAPERS

Below is a sample Newsletter which is periodically mailed by Torah Umesorah to Bnei Yeshiva the world over. If you want to be on our mailing list please send your name and address to Bnei Yeshiva Newsletter, c/o Torah Umesorah, 229 Park Avenue South, New York, NY, 10003

המלמד תורה ומסורה

The Chinuch Newsletter For Bnei Yeshiva

ד"ר

Kislev 5742

Mazel Tov—Klal Yisroel

חז"ל have instructed one who has completed a מסכת to make a סיוע to which he should invite his friends. Besides the obvious הודאה factor, the purpose of the סיוע is of great motivational value in realizing the fruition of a major achievement. This stimuli will hopefully motivate the מסיים and his friends to continued, and even greater accomplishments. Not to take advantage of such a moment is a lost opportunity.

In the same light we at Torah Umesorah—and in a sense the greater yeshiva world—who frequently dream of great הרבצת תורה projects, should use the motivational value of "a dream that has finally reached fruition".

The Kollel in Melbourne, Australia which officially opened on Rosh Chodesh Kislev was the result of the Torah Umesorah dream and thousands of hours effort by staff members—in particular Rabbi Dov Lesser and Rabbi Yehoshua Fishman.

The initial contact with Melbourne was made in May 1977 to send a S.E.E.D. group. After a year of negotiations, when we all realized that the travelling expense made the S.E.E.D. program prohibitive, the idea transposed to develop a full time Kollel.

To further this, Rabbi Fishman visited Melbourne in November of 1978 and Rabbi and Mrs. Moshe Mendel Glustein, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshiva Gedolah Merkaz Hatorah of Montreal, Quebec went as Torah Umesorah representatives in July of 1979. During the ensuing years several leaders of the Melbourne community came to the United States and met with Roshei Yeshivos and possible candidates. The numerous meetings, letters, international phone calls, frustrations and leads that did not work out . . . can only be imagined! Scores of Kollel couples were interviewed and finally Rabbi Dov Lesser working with Beth Medrash Govoha (Lakewood) was able to coordinate the group that finally went. A great יישר כח to Rabbi Wurzbarger and Rabbi Dovid Nojowitz (who lead three S.E.E.D. programs), Kollel heads, and the ten couples of the Lakewood Kollel who joined in this historic moment.

It is important for all who "make-things-happen" in הרבצת תורה —Roshei Yeshivos, Torah Umesorah staff, Rabbonim, principals, Rebbis, administrators, Bnei Torah, and community leaders—to know that with HaShem's help dreams do become reality and that tremendous effort does bear wonderful fruit!

If anything, instead of our being "dreamers", we do not dream big enough! Mazel Tov to Klal Yisroel and יישר כח to all who worked on this project.

Avi Shulman
Avi Shulman

A "Torah bridge" between Israel and the United States to help returning American *Baalei Teshuva* in their spiritual adjustment when they reach these shores has been built by "Chizuk—The Torah Link," according to a six-month report just released. "Chizuk," an agency established in New York by the Agudath Israel World Organization after the Sixth Knessia Gedolah (World Agudist Congress), worked closely with the *Baalei Teshuvah* yeshivos in Israel, which supplied the agency with 300 names of American returnees, it was reported by Rabbi Moshe Sherer, chairman of the international movement.

According to Rabbi David Goldwasser, director of "Chizuk," these young *Baalei Teshuva* urgently need assistance at the critical juncture when they reunite with parents who are far removed from Jewish religious observance. "Chizuk" provides the students with guidance, counseling, home hospitality, Torah study classes and other services. As one prominent Rosh Yeshiva of an Israeli *Baal Teshuva* yeshiva declared: "Chizuk is protecting the investment that our yeshiva made in American students".

In addition, Chizuk assisted over 200 young American adults who had returned from Israel where they only had a brief encounter with Torah Judaism. A major instrument used by the *Baal Teshuva* agency is a home hospitality program, a group of 150 families throughout the United States who have opened their homes for these returnees.

"Chizuk" also conducted a broad range of other projects to encourage young people to become acquainted with *Yiddishkeit*. Its Jewish Information Hotline received 400 calls during the six-month period from young Jews seeking answers to questions on religion, of whom many were followed up with personal interviews and ultimately placed in Torah classes.

"Chizuk's" Adult Institute of Torah Studies organized two series of classes in basic Judaism: The Jewish Living Laboratory and Free Hebrew Lessons. Using special audio-visual materials and other innovative approaches, hundreds of young adults were given their first taste of Torah living and

encouraged to continue on to more intensive courses. "Chizuk" was also in touch with over 300 directors of Jewish student organizations affiliated with universities throughout the United States and Canada.

"Chizuk" is now publishing a new brochure "Reach Out and Touch Someone," to arouse the Jewish community to the huge opportunities to win over young people to *Yiddishkeit*. "Chizuk" also broadcasts a Torah message every morning from Monday through Thursday at 7:30 A.M. heard throughout New York and New Jersey on Station WFMU-FM (91.11). Its office is located at the Agudath Israel World Organization, 5 Beekman Street, New York City.

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Agudath Israel Helps Russian Jews Celebrate Chanukah Citywide

Russian Jewish immigrants living in communities throughout the New York Metropolitan area benefited from special Chanukah programs sponsored by Project RISE (Rus-

sian Immigrant Services and Education) a division of Agudath Israel of America. In a report presented by Mr. Willie Wiesner, chairman of RISE, and Rabbi Yisroel Verschleiser, its executive director, RISE noted that the unprecedented effort concentrated on local gatherings and on youth.

The festivities were kicked off on December 12th with a gathering for more than 600 Russian immigrants at Mesivta Torah Vodaath in Flatbush. Former Prisoner of Conscience, Iosef Mendelevich, addressed the immigrant Jews, urging them to make use of the new opportunities in their lives by coming closer to Yiddishkeit. RISE volunteers distributed Chanukah candles, special bulletins with information on the significance of the holiday, and particularly anti-missionary leaflets. Students of the Be'er Hagolah Yeshiva, under the direction of Mrs. Pearl Kaufman and Rabbi Goldstein, presented a special Chanukah play. The gathering was co-sponsored by Project RISE and the Kensington community under the leadership of Mrs. Dubinsky of Project RISE and Mrs. Belsky of the Kensington community. Be'er Hagolah students also visited a special exhibit at the Jewish Museum about Chanukah.

RISE volunteers also distributed menorahs, candles, bulletins and pamphlets on Chanukah (courtesy of Al Tidom) and dreidels to all students of Be'er Hagolah, the Mesorah Academy of Queens and children of

the Sunday school for Russian Jewish public school students. In all, 6,000 special Chanukah bulletins were distributed: 4,800 in New York City and 1,200 in cities throughout the United States.

Project RISE continued its efforts in behalf of the Bucharian community in Boro Park by organizing a special Chanukah festivity on Sunday, the day before the first candle. RISE has been extremely helpful in organizing the Bucharian community by helping them arrange special minyanim where they can daven according to their own customs.

Other Project RISE Chanukah gatherings were held at the Avenue N Jewish Center in Brooklyn, Beth Jacob-Beth Miriam in the Bronx, the Chaim Berlin Adult Culture Classes and in Brighton Beach.

In a joint effort with the Association of Orthodox Jewish Teachers, Russian immigrants visited the Jewish Museum. Be'er Hagolah students are also planning to spend a Shabbos in Lakewood next week.

A special emphasis of the Project RISE campaign was the anti-missionary drive. 3,000 special fliers were distributed throughout the New York City area to alert Russian Jews about the menace of missionaries. Members of a special task force fanned out throughout Brighton Beach and other areas to make personal contact with Russian immigrants so that they are not entrapped by missionary officials.

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